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# IS THIS THE FUTURE?



We test Alesis' hard disc recorder against Pioneer & Marantz CDRWs & Sony MiniDisc

**Plus**

- Elac Jet 330 speakers
- Tannoy mX2 speakers
- Arcam FMJ CD23 CD player
- Zingali Overture .3 speakers
- £200-£300 Interconnects

**And**

- Computer Audio World
- Arcam History Feature



JULY 2000



**Samuel Johnson PPA100 & PCA100 amplifier**

World Radio History

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Items of the New Millennium  
by The Independent Newspaper  
March 2000



SJ audio

• no compromise - just music •

[www.sjaudio.com](http://www.sjaudio.com)

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**A**t the risk of angry letters from the continent, I'd like to indulge in a game of European Stereotypes. In this issue we have gear from major hi-fi producing European countries: the UK, Germany and Italy. It is a little alarming that the designs and even the sounds often mirror the stereotypes of these nations as a whole.

For example, Germany is the heart of one strand of classical music. J S Bach has been described as 'the most stupendously gifted musical personality' of all time, and the German tradition continues to produce musicians of frighteningly high calibre. Germany's engineering is first class, with æsthetics sometimes playing second fiddle to functionality. Put these factors together and their hi-fi may often look a little plain or industrial but it should have attention to detail, a clean, bright sound and a reliability that can be passed down from genera-

tion to generation.

Italy too is a supremely musical country, with a long history of performing and composing that's still very much in evidence today. In addition to its pre-eminence in the 'latin' musical tradition, Italy is the country of style. As far as hi-fi is concerned, Italian gear looks good.

Britain doesn't have these advantages - for example, it takes Italians to show us how good our clothes can look! We're often stereotyped as a nation of lager louts. Despite this, we have a good musical tradition, with performers who compete with the best, both in classical and contemporary. British audio engineering has led the world in

its time. Samuel Johnson Audio are focussing on this history and moulding it for the 21st Century with just a dash of Britain's new-found style.

All the foregoing remarks needn't just apply to hi-fi and music. Consider football, food, cars, clothes. ... Hi-Fi as a European social indicator? Who'd've thought it!



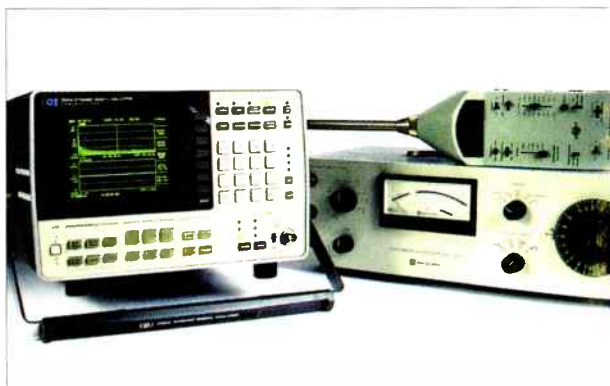
**Simon Pope**

## How we test the products

● Hi-Fi World has its own advanced test laboratory and acoustically treated listening room.

● Hi-Fi World has a dedicated in-house team of experienced listeners. 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.



**NICE PRICE -**  
Represents excellent value for money



**EXCELLENT -**  
Superb sound, among the best available



**VERY GOOD -**  
Well worth a listen



**ADEQUATE -**  
Room for improvement



**POOR -**  
Seriously flawed. forget it!



Half globes are added for those products that we feel are between categories



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**21. .Arcam FMJ CD23**



**27. .Tannoy mX2**

#### LOUDSPEAKERS

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Zingali returns to Hi-Fi World, this time with the .3 floorstander, featuring their horned tweeter design and solid woodwork. Simon Pope reviews the situation.

### 23. .ELAC JET 330



**23. .Elac Jet 330**

These German air movers feature ribbon tweeters and metal cabinets and come with their own heavyweight chic stands. Simon Pope checks out their metal mettle.

### 27. .TANNOY mX2

Always keen to introduce new models, Tannoy have launched the mX2 as the first replacement to their successful Mercury 'm' series. Has all the work been worth it, ponders Richard White?

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World Radio History

## MISSION FLATTENED!

Following on from their X-Space system, Mission have announced details of a soon to be launched product that could revolutionise the way we use 'speakers in the home. In an attempt to "reclaim valuable living space" the FS2 uses NXT flat panel technology to break away from traditional big box syndrome which affects domestic arrangements throughout the world. The panels themselves are 'ultra-thin', lightweight and of small dimensions, making them as discrete as possible. Designed to adapt to almost any domestic environment, the FS2 features mounting brackets that allows the panels to be placed across horizontal and vertical corners, flat on a wall, freestanding or at a 45 degree angle.

Sold as either a two or five channel package with subwoofer (a three pack satellite package is available for upgrade) the FS2 comes with a subwoofer designed to be used in 'dead space' corners. It employs an active circuitry of a 150W (55W rms) amplifier to drive the 17cm treated paper cone driver in a reflex port system. Also supplied is an equally discreet form of flat cable which transfers the signal from the sub to the satellites.



Apparently available in June, the FS2's suggested price is £450 for the two channel version and £800 for the five satellites (including sub and cabling).

**Symphonix Ltd.,  
Huntingdon,  
England PE18 6ED  
Tel: 01480 451777  
e-mail: info@mission.co.uk**

## SONY TO EXPAND SACD PLAYER RANGE

After the critical success of their two high-end SACD players, the flagship SCD-1 and SCD-777ES, Sony are set to show off a new, mid price range model this summer. The reasons for launching the first models at the upper end of the market have been explained by Jeffrey van Ede, Sony's European General Manager in Marketing. Sales of the first two players have exceeded Sony's "most optimistic forecast", says van Ede. He continues to explain that SACD is a migratory medium which will eventually replace CD, hinting that only certain consumers were able to afford the luxury of a specialist format, but now more titles software titles are available SACD will be more marketable to the majority of the music buying population. The new player, in the QS range, is expected to hit the shops this June, but will only be officially launched after demonstrations at consumer shows.



**Sony SACD: 01932 816417  
www.superaudio-cd.com**

## CORAL MUSIC

Audioquest have a new range of cables featuring Perfect Surface Copper technology. The first product to hit the UK is the Coral interconnect. Not too much detail can be given as the technology has no full patent, but it is made in the US by coating multiple-annealed copper with a further "high purity" copper layer. The Coral interconnect is triple balanced and has two signal conductors, a signal 'ground' and another screen conductor that's in contact with the outer braid.

Audioquest claim that the new copper "gets in the way of the music much less" and therefore "has little character of its own". It's finished in blue and red braid and terminated in RCA plugs, priced at £100 per metre pair.



**Goldring Products Ltd.,  
8 Greyfriars Rd.,  
Bury St Edmunds,  
Suffolk IP32 7DX  
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www.ukd.co.uk email: nick@ukd.co.uk

\*models illustrated: S6, £1600. SR1, £1250



## WORLD FIRST FROM ONKYO

Onkyo have released what they believe to be the World's first 'true' 7.1 channel receiver with 1HX Surround EX playback ability and 160W for each of the seven channels. The TX-DS989 features a 'powerful' programmable processor, 192kHz/24-bit DACs for all channels and 'professional' grade video switching, as well as DTS, Dolby Digital and MPEG decoding onboard.

Onkyo are very proud of the fact that the TX-DS989 is upgradable to future formats such as MPEG AAC and IEEE 1394 software and their exclusive Wide Range Amplifier Technology apparently insures bandwidth over 100kHz for SACD and DVD-A information. It's available now priced £2499.95.



Jamo UK Ltd.,  
Tel: 01788 556777  
e-mail: info@jamo.co.uk

## CD-Rs WITH GROOVE

With the rise of digital recording formats, TDK have jazzed up the look of the software to appeal to the younger generation of home recorder. Designed with "today's fashion conscious CD-R users in mind" the XS-IV (excessive - get it!) disc is packaged in bright colours with a 'crisp and powerful' design. Also realising the appeal of MiniDisc to the young, because of its portability, the CD-Rs are partnered by a new range of limited edition MiniDiscs - also with the XS-IV tag priced at £2.49. They will produce three collectable series each year, the first three designs, which come from Italian designers Massimo Giacon with a design called Happy Cyclop, Anna Gili with Pincuore and Bruno Gregori with Ikkun. This trio have CVs which include work for trendy kitchen appliance company Alessi and Swatch. Hmmmm. . .we wonder if their designer magic will work with an item that's largely hidden from view within the workings of an audio player?

TDK UK Ltd.,  
Tel: 01737 773773



### NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE

A selection of some of the goodies we hope to bring you next month:

#### Castle Pembroke

These tidy-looking floorstanders from Castle Acoustics are given the Hi-Fi World treatment. Will they prove to be as successful as their stablemates?

#### Cyrus 5

This is the latest entry-level integrated amplifier from Cyrus Electronics. Finished in the trademark shoebox style, could it be the new reference at the price?

Read next month's issue to find out.

#### DAB Group Test

We get together the available DAB tuners on the market and bring you the latest developments in the medium. Tune in for four weeks time for the low-down!



**Sony Super Audio CD. You want to hear every single detail?**

## OK, here goes.

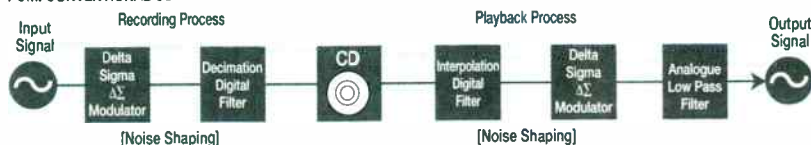
The beginning.

As good a place to start as any. In the beginning, there was CD.

Co-developed by Sony in the early 1980's, it revolutionised the way we listen to music.

CD used, and still uses, a multi-bit Pulse Code Modulation or PCM recording format that was the most advanced technology available at the time.

PCM: CONVENTIONAL CD



Notice the tense.

It was the most technologically advanced format available.

Skip forwards almost 20 years however and it's a different matter.

For just as music has progressed since the early 1980's, so has the technology for reproducing it.

### NEW TECHNOLOGY

This continuous progress in digital technology has allowed the original team responsible for developing the CD to create a new format.

Super Audio CD.

A format that is fully compatible with conventional CDs.

But one that acknowledges the fact that too much sound quality is lost during the recording of a CD.

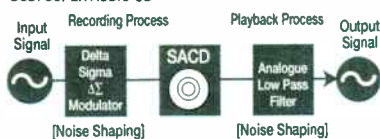
One that acknowledges that we've reached the end of CDs quality development cycle, so any innovations in PCM technology may no longer lead to dramatic improvements in quality.

One that ditches PCM technology in favour of the very latest in Direct Stream Digital technology.

One that leaves you searching for adequate superlatives.

DSD technology is a one-bit system and is fundamentally different to PCM.

DSD: SUPER AUDIO CD



Firstly, it simplifies the recording process, sampling the audio signal at a much higher rate than PCM. 2.8224 MHz as opposed to a mere 44.1 kHz.

This creates a dynamic range of over

120dB across the entire audible frequency range at an unprecedented bandwidth of over 100kHz. It allows the direct recording of a Super Audio CD.

No quantisation or decimation process. And don't worry fellow music lovers, we'll come on to what all this means for you in a moment.

But while we're on the subject of what this new DSD format doesn't do, we should talk about digital filtering. Because it doesn't need to do any of that either.

While CD technology relies on PCM's complex digital filtering process (decimation and interpolation causing distortion and limiting the frequency response to around 20KHz and dynamic range to below 98dB), Super Audio CD data retains all its freshness and purity.

Just high fidelity pure audio.

The closest possible representation of the artist's work.

And that means the atmosphere. The mood. Even the ambience of the room.

And unfortunately for any recording artists who happen to be reading, it also means every wrong note.

If it happens in the studio, your audience is going to hear it.

There really is so much more that we can tell you about Super Audio CD.

So we will.

As touched upon earlier, all Super Audio CD players also make great conventional CD players.

There is no need for any of that infuriating rebuilding of music collections. (Remember how long it took to replace all those old LPs?)

Your only reason for throwing away your existing music library will be shame.

Let's face it, some things will never come back into fashion and that probably includes some of your earlier tastes in CDs.

### COMPATIBILITY

This compatibility means a special kind of disc is available.

The 'hybrid'.

It's compatible with CD players *and* Super Audio CD players, as it features both a CD layer and a Super Audio CD high-density layer of information.

But while a Super Audio CD disc is exactly the same size as a current CD disc, its data capacity is in a different

league altogether. Even the basic single layer disc can store 4.7 GBytes rather than the 780 MBytes we've become used to with conventional CDs.

There is a third disc type as well.

The dual-layer disc. This is essentially two Super Audio CDs combined in one, with a maximum capacity of some 8.5 GBytes. Which means that as well as being able to hear more of everything, you can now hear *more* of everything.

All this capacity for information. But we haven't finished yet.

On each Super Audio CD disc, space is reserved for surround-sound recordings, conventional stereo recordings and for extra, non-audio data.

Perfect for text, such as song lyrics, as well as video or still images.

This system of allocating disc space should ensure that Super Audio CD is ready to handle all future applications.

See, when we say you'll never miss a thing, we mean you will never, *ever* miss a thing.

When you've gone to this much trouble producing something this detailed, obviously you want to protect it.

That's why Super Audio CD incorporates copyright protection technology not only on the hardware side, but on the disc itself.

Anti-piracy measures in the form of digital Watermarking are also present. Pit Signal Processing, to give it its full name, protects both you and artists alike against illegal copying.

No Watermark. No playback.

### PURE SOUND

So, let's have a brief resumé. (Obviously you took all this in the first time, but this is great news and as you know, great pieces of anything will always bear some repetition.)

Music recorded like never before.

Far richer playback quality.

Every nuance.

Every acoustic detail.

And a much greater capacity for recording. Super Audio CD really is the quantum leap forward in musical reproduction that you would expect from Sony.

You want more? Sorry, but this really isn't the right venue.

For no amount of words can describe just how good Super Audio CD sounds.

You'll have to hear it for yourself.

For a demonstration, visit your local Sony hi-fi specialist showroom.

Just one last detail you may wish to hear. Go with someone proficient in mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

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Or call our recruitment phone line on  
**01732 466214**



# BINARY FINERY

Hi-Fi World gather together four of the finest examples of digital recorders currently available. Which of them will cut the mustard?



It seems like only yesterday that we compiled our last round-up of full-sized digital recorders. It's frightening to comprehend that they've all been topped by bigger and better models, and it's happening more in this field of audio than any other I can think of, especially with CD recorders, which are extremely popular in Europe and the UK and even more so in the USA! Interesting times are ahead in the world of home recording, with DVD-RW's imminent arrival threatening to eventually dislodge VHS as the primary video recording medium, and this, of

course, paves the way for high resolution audio recording.

We've gathered together four of the hottest new digital recorders on the market. All have much to boast about and although three of the four are from big name consumer electronics companies, one is from an American professional audio manufacturer that we feel we just had to include it for its groundbreaking technology, which incidentally fits very easily into a domestic hi-fi set-up. It uses hard disc recording technology within a CD recorder to finally give CD-R the editing versatility it's

been waiting for, and badly needs. If more machines like this appear, it could well be the end for MiniDisc in the home. It could end up banished to the pockets, waistbands and rucksacks of the street-wise and hip!

As well as hard disc technology, CD-R machines now concentrate on ease of use in the shape of multisc machines such as the Pioneer model here, and not merely being a recorder, but a player as well, as demonstrated by Marantz's DR-17. If you want our opinion on the definitive recorder we think you should own, read on. . .

**SONY  
MDS-JA555ES  
£550**

**S**elling for around £550, this is an expensive way to record MiniDiscs. Even before you've opened the box, you can tell it's an earnest attempt to get serious sound from the format, thanks to its gold bullion-like mass. Outside you get a beautiful brushed aluminium front panel and every conceivable facility under the sun. Interestingly this Sony runs at 24bit resolution all the way through the signal processing chain, until the very last moment where truncation is required for MD's 16bit specification. This is no gimmick, because it means data is discarded intelligently rather than just being thrown away matter-of-factly.



Indeed its techno-trickery is plain to hear, especially when recording high resolution analogue sources. Of course, no heavily compressed music carrier is going to sound as good as 16/44.1 PCM from

instruments individually in their own spaces, unattected by what else was going on in the mix.

Like all top Sony ES players, bass was something special - punchy and powerful yet tight and fast. Treble was sweet enough for my analogue-shaped ears, and midband clean and even. The only downside was the Sony's tendency on

some recordings to introduce a slight upper-mid brittleness. While not really a major problem, it was nevertheless an unwelcome departure from Sony's

cheaper MD machines which if anything add extra warmth in the middle. Overall though, it's the best MiniDisc I've heard by a long chalk, and a cracking way to record anything. Ten years ago, few Nakamichis sounded this good.

**Sony: 01932 816000**

**PIONEER PDR-W739 £300**

**W**ith the PDR-W739 Pioneer have opted for a consolidation rather than a ground-breaker. Reasonably priced at £300, the machine is a big-value package containing a three-disc CD player plus CD-R/CD-RW recorder.

The back panel is fitted with the usual analogue in and out, digital co-axial and optical sockets. Interestingly, Pioneer are one of the few manufacturers who don't use the 'standard' Philips transport mechanism; they make their own. In a machine at this price it is unrealistic to expect the most solid build but despite some 'at cost' mechanical noises from the 3 CD changer, the PDR-W739's presentation is undoubtedly smart and functional.

As if to set the seal on the Pioneer's budget credentials, there is a x2 auto-dub facility, which obviously cuts down time spent making copies. 5.1 DTS multi-chan-

nel and HDCD enhanced discs will be copied entire, without losing the benefits of the 'sideband' information, although the player is not equipped to actually play these in full!

On playing a few plain CDs, it was noticeable that Pioneer have opted for a very smooth approach. This made for



pleasant if unchallenging listening and is probably a sensible choice, remembering the cheese-cutting propensities of cheap discs. Some immediacy and sparkle was inevitably lost, but stereo imaging did not seem to suffer. Overall the sound seemed well-suited for general domestic listening.

Copying internally from CD to CD-R or RW was practically a one button job - a real boon especially with the x2 feature in operation. Recording from other sources was little different, although it was noticeable that the best results were obtained with other digital sources. Recording from first-class FM stereo was fractionally over-bright and digital-sounding.

Apart from fading a track in and out, editing on CD-R is not possible; this is a very limited format, notwithstanding its CD player compatibility. CD-RW is a little better, but so it should be at nearly three times the price per disc!

For the serious recordist, the Pioneer PDR-W739 is too limited in scope. For the amateur who will increasingly need to think digital as cassette (which is still quicker to use!) fades away, this machine has much to recommend it. For all its limitations, it's a handy little item and good value.

**Pioneer: 01753 789789**

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we've  
moved on



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terminals for optimum signal transmission.

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And the end result? All the acoustic transparency of the original, with an even sweeter, more open sound.

There's no such thing as perfection - but now, you can get pretty close.



**Q**  
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WorldRadioHistory

**MARANTZ DR-17  
£1500**

The DR-17 is based on the excellent CD-17 CD player. It features the same chunky basic front fascia, with drawer to the left and sturdy buttons. As well as being the best-built CD-R we've ever come across, it's also without doubt the best sounding player of all the CD recorders that have passed through our portals. Such is the sound quality of the CD-17, it wouldn't shame itself on the rack of the most discerning hi-fi aficionado. Spinning a few of my favourite discs in the DR-17 resulted in a suprisingly long listening session, and led to my forgetting that this particular item was in fact a CD recorder as well as a player - which certainly says something about its playback quality. It has a very fast sound, without

an abrasive top end, resulting in a sublimely musical response. There's control and smoothness in abundance, with particularly open and detailed midrange

player and using the D-BUS remote system. This allows signal remote control operation for both analogue and digital recording.

Taking advantage of the HDCD compatibility I culled a few excerpts from the Rite Of Spring



information - something that sorts out the men from the boys.

The action of recording a CD is as easy and fuss-free as you'd expect from all latest generation players. All information that is transferred from the source will be copied by the DR-17, and that includes HDCD information. Also supplied is the usual shed-load of facilities, plus BUS recording. This is put to use by connecting the DR-17 to another Marantz CD

on Reference Recordings. Results were superb, none of the spacious nature of the recording had dwindled in the transfer and the attack and clarity was still marked. This has to be the best CD-R/W machine at present on the market. It's much more expensive than the competition but it's the only one that can be described as a quality high-end CD player that also happens to create cracking good copies as well!

**Marantz: 01753 680868**

**ALESIS MASTERLINK  
ML 9600 £1400**

Have you ever longed to be a record mastering engineer? Well now's your opportunity! Described by the manufacturer as a 'high resolution master disk recorder', this is in essence a hard disc recorder on which you can edit tracks to create a finished product on CD.

of course. This gets rid of the problem of wasting CD-Rs or wasting time re-recording over CD-RWs. Basically all the hard work is done on the hard disc - what goes onto the CD is the final product.

The first glance at the manual and the front panel invokes a dose of

disc. There is everything that a MiniDisc can do edit-wise; you can record new tracks, play back previously recorded tracks, adjust the volume of a track, delete tracks, alter track spacing, change the order, 'write protect' a track to avoid deleting it and apply fade ins/outs.

Once you've edited to your heart's content, the CD-R is inserted (CD-RWs are not necessary, due to the editing features of the machine), the required playlist

and format (Red Book or CD24) are selected and Bob's your uncle! This is quite an awe



Information can be recorded onto the hard disc in either 16, 20 or 24bit with a choice of sampling rate from 44.1 up to 96kHz. 24/96 recordings are mainly for professional editing use rather than the usual Red Book standard of 16bit/44.1kHz. The higher the resolution, the less the space available on the hard disc,

technological wobbles, but a calm read of the instructions and a few minutes fiddling show that it's not as complicated as it looks. The hard disc can store over 4 hours of 16bit/44.1kHz information, in sixteen 'playlists' of up to 99 tracks each. The best way to think of these playlists is as sample CDs stored on the internal hard

some bit of kit that will scare the pants off of certain European and Japanese companies who are no doubt currently working on their own versions as you read this! Awesome.

**Sound Technology: 01462 480000**



# A lot of changes - and still rather a lot of money.



Speakers as universally revered as our Reference Series are a tough act to follow. After all, what can you do to improve on excellence?

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So many small improvements can make a big difference to sound quality - and these do. You'll find the Reference Series~Two vastly more accomplished than its illustrious predecessors. Sweeter. Purer. Even more lavishly detailed.

Like all the best things in life, they still don't come cheap - but to anyone who really appreciates sound, they're better value than ever.



REFERENCE SERIES





**WORLD VERDICT**  
  
 A dreamboat for MD fans, but not quite the best sound per pound at the price.  
 Measured Performance see page 111



**WORLD VERDICT**  
  
 Good recording and capable playback. Slightly flimsy build but overall good value.  
 Measured Performance see page 111

# THE PRESENT

To say that things have come a long way in a relatively short time is an understatement. Our four candidates all offer excellent recording quality and playback facilities, although the best playback came undoubtedly with the Marantz DR-17. If, however, you want a pure recorder rather than a great player, you can't ignore the Alesis Masterdisk. This is a glimpse of the future as far as recording is concerned.

Companies such as Philips are working on similar developments in hard disc recording and are aiming to see their products in the shops by early next year - all being well. All being well? There could be a rather large spanner chucked in the works thanks to a European Union directive which many think has a strong chance of succeeding - more of which later! Although the Alesis design is mainly intended for professional and semi professional use it may come as a bit of a surprise to the major players in the consumer recording industry, who hoped to be the first to deliver such a machine to the general public.

Of course, with the current mess of available recording formats, the big question is: which of them will stand the test of time? After all the hype and relatively high sales, MiniDisc seems to have now found its niche in the market, and with it the development of better compression systems and hence better sound quality. The manufacture of full sized MiniDisc recorders has somewhat slowed down since the initial surge of machines from the likes of Denon, Pioneer and, of course, Sony.

The future of MiniDisc undoubtedly lies in its portability and its appeal to the younger generation. Ever since the launch of the

Walkman, the appeal of music on the move has always been targeted towards the young (or young at heart). MiniDisc portables are selling well, despite their high-ish price, and the main players such as Sony, Aiwa and Sharp are replacing their models on a six-monthly basis. No sooner have you bought your treasured miniature marvel, than it is replaced on the market by one even more miniature and marvellous.

Whilst CD recorders sell very well in the US, sales in England are good, but comparatively low. It seems the British public is waiting for something 'really new' before a true revolution will take place. The future of home recording could appear, then, to lie in the development of hard disc technology where, for example, you'll be able to store hours (or weeks?) of digital sound and vision on an internal hard disc built into your player/TV. Like with the Alesis Masterdisk recorder, you'll then edit it all, get rid of the dead wood and archive your finalised masterpiece. This sounds great in theory; certain companies are already masterminding the technology but there's a dark shadow being cast over this.

As Noel Keywood explained in a recent column, there is a European Directive brought on by heavy-duty lobbying from conglomerates in the record industry, which plans to put severe limitations on digital recording - all of it! A decision could come by the end of the year. Companies such as Philips see this as a potential nightmare, taking consumer technology "back to the Dark Ages" as one Philips PR representative commented. Technology is being developed which could effectively switch off



**WORLD VERDICT**



If you want a CD recorder that will also double as a high quality front end player, look no further!

Measured Performance see page 111

**WORLD VERDICT**



Combining awesome technology with user-friendliness, this quite outstanding gadget deserves an audition.

Measured Performance see page 111



# THE FUTURE

your recorder, and therefore deprive consumers of their current right to copy.

This may not be as bad as it first sounds. For example, all digital inputs on recording devices could be replaced by analogue ones, since the problem isn't with analogue recordings, but with pitch-perfect digital 'copies'. This will mainly affect mp3 and

other hard disc recording media, where little alternative to digital is possible. Unless manufacturers can come up with diplomatic or technological answer to satisfy the European powers that be, the directive remains a serious obstacle in recording development. The moral: make the most of that digital cable while you still can!

## David Price tips his racing certainty for digital recording domination.

It's difficult to argue for one digital format over another because they were all designed with different purposes in mind. CD must surely get the gong for bringing 'good' sound to the masses, but the way the record industry used it to elbow out vinyl LPs purely in the pursuit of profits still rankles. That they disingenuously tried to claim it sounded better only made matters worse.

DAT does sound remarkably good at its top 48kHz sampling frequency - it's amazing what the extra couple of kHz bandwidth does to 16bit's top end. Instead of that hard upper-mid

you get smoother highs with bags more air and space. All the more shame then that when DAT was in its heyday most recording engineers used it at 44.1kHz for backwards compatibility with CD! Don't forget every small studio used it religiously until very recently, and the techno music boom would certainly not have got as far without it. It deserves belated honours!

MD wins the cuddly teddy bear award for being the cutest and most loveable format. In its early years its indifferent sound quality drove me away, and then Sony introduced ATRAC 4.0 and the rest is history. For a data-reduced format it sounds very nice and is getting better, especially if you play it through a high end hi-fi DAC!

I hate to state the obvious, but mp3 has got to be the future. It wins my special 'organic music carrier' award for the format that was never invented in a music industry marketing department. It's still very early days for mp3, but with its variable bit rate coding, fast improving software and massive world-wide distribution, it's a dead cert for global domination. Windows' MS Audio? No chance.

# TRAVELS WITH MY AMP

**New boys Samuel Johnson Audio unleash their erudition with a pre and power amp package. 'Boswell' White chronicles their travels round his listening room.**

**S**amuel Johnson is a new name in hi-fi, although pretty familiar otherwise. Whether or not the hi-fi company are hoping to connect themselves with the Doctor's erudition, integrity and greatness, or whether their founder is one S. Johnson Esq. I am not certain. With any new appearance in the hi-fi firmament, it is always interesting to read the mission statements or to cast an eye over the sales slant. For a start, the SJ amps are tastefully styled in champagne colours and have the added caché of a polished wood inset on the front panel. Controls on both models are simple and employ high quality relays within the casework to do any switching required. The pca 100 pre-amplifier follows current fashion inasmuch as the record output can be set to a different input to the one being listened to, a very useful touch. Although there was none on the model we reviewed, SJ offer a phono stage as an option; the back panel is provided with a input in readiness for one. Bogglingly, there are no less than four pairs of outputs on the pre-amp, so even bi-amping is possible. There are no tone controls. Remote control is by a rather chic bronzey 'pebble' which might be just too great a temptation at the seaside!

The ppa100 power amplifier employs all the latest desirables in its power supplies, and is rated at 50W/8Ω, 100W/4Ω. Instead of banana sockets or screw terminals, the ppa100 uses patent 'Speakon' connectors for the 'speaker leads. Although this gives an admirable turn-and-lock anchorage, the connections within the plug are less impressive. Personally I found the bi-wire terminals visually confusing and, by the end of the review, one of the 'speaker leads had worked a little loose. Safety connectors are all very well but these examples need a bit of care.

For a comfortable warm up, I put on one of the Chandos Glazunov symphony series. These discs are perhaps a little ponderous in frequency balance, so the running in process was quite bearable. Immediate impressions were that the Samuel Johnson combination was capable of big things, with a sense of head-room quite at odds with the modest 50W output. In moments where Glazunov thickened the mixture, the loudspeakers were still giving out a full complement of sound. Better still, in view of the aforementioned glutinous consistency, the sonic balance was very nicely presented; sections of the orchestra contained individual players rather than the compressed 'chorus pedal' effect experienced with certain amplifier types.

Having seen no reason to doubt the ppa 100's power capabilities, I tried a task requiring delicacy of touch: Eric Bibb's Spirit and the Blues. It is an accomplishment for an amplifier to give such a sense of spaciousness and 'rest' within a busy musical environment; the SJs managed well. Exact, sharp yet delicate plectrum-on-steel sounds, coupled with the wails of

the mouth organ, gave this record a very live performance. Stereo imaging was immense - partly the record but amplifier fidelity helps too.

This pre- and power combination has considerable merit, and represents a very good start by Samuel Johnson Audio, for all the cumbersome brand-name. Sonically they are reminiscent of Musical Fidelity gear, which is no bad recommendation. For my money, I should be happy to see the price drop a little, but if you are happy to pay a style premium, you certainly won't be disappointed with the sound.

Samuel Johnson Audio Ltd.  
Tel: 01292 470000

pca 100 pre-amplifier £2115  
ppa 100 power amplifier £2585

## WORLD VERDICT



Very creditable solid-state amplifiers with well-maintained power. Clean and fully musical sound. Slightly expensive, but stylish.

Measured Performance see page 111



# «ZING-BOOW» «ZING-BOOM» «ZING-BOOW»

**Zingali's distinctive wooden horns make a return visit to World. This time, Simon Pope conducts the Overture.**

**W**ith their exquisite, heavy-weight, solid wood cabinets and beautifully sculptured horn tweeters you're under no false impressions about the Zingali Overture 3s at all. They are a luxury item. Standing well over three feet in height and weighing a goodly amount, they're not intended to be inconspicuous. Buyers of these 'speakers are making a statement that they like the good things in life, and like most other good things in life, the Overture .3s, unsurprisingly, cost a quid or two. Roughly three thousand!

Delivering the sound are two mid-bass units placed above and below the wooden horned tweeter. An inch-wide long vent at the bottom acts as the bass port. There are the usual deluxe bi-wire binding posts found on such up-market air movers. Around the sides and tops of the cabinets, separating the solid hardwood back and front, there is a thick, rubber-like material presumably used for added damping. After appreciating the woodwork for a while it was time to find out whether or not there's more to loud-speakers than cabinetwork!

Whilst the Zingalis were chez Pope, I took the opportunity to play virtually everything in my record collection through them, from audiophile-standard demo discs to the vinyl splendours of Max Bygraves - they were spared nothing! This thorough investigation sprung many surprises. Sometimes discs which sound great through ninety percent of hi-fi equipment failed to shine, and the opposite often occurred when truly rosy recordings were given a real boost by the kick and verve that the Zingalis dish out. Sometimes they played well known and favourite recordings with a little something extra - this was the case with my

cherished CD of Leonard Bernstein conducting Mahler's Fifth Symphony, the 1988 live recording with the Vienna Philharmonic on DG. I know this inside out and I've never heard it played so well, with so much detail and sheer drive.

Back in December's issue Richard White found the smaller models from the same manufacturer more than a little wanting in the bass department. This problem is elegantly solved by the larger cabinets of the 3s. The double basses as the Vienna bunch dug into their strings at the venomous start of the second movement produced power and depth, with the Zingalis opening out the music to conjure up space between instruments - light breathy woodwind and smooth and detailed violins.

Not all was rosy, however. Whilst they were generally good with acoustic recordings and most 'studio' stuff, heavily compressed rock records did not fare so well. Radiohead's OK Computer was one such victim. This is a recording with a lot of midrange information, such is the 'squashed' nature of compression, so the horn tweeter takes on a lot of work which the other drivers can't balance out. The resultant sound was slightly thin and 'cuppy' with a sucked-out feel. Other guitar recordings with more bass guitar and drum information could sound very good, though. These 'speakers obviously intend to be forward and exciting and if there's plenty of low level stuff present, they deliver it.

As far as equipment matching goes, they're reasonably sensitive, so will survive being driven by virtually anything. For all that, I found them happier with, say, 35W-plus valve amplification where the roundedness of the valve sound was matched with the space and depth that



the Overtures deliver. To really get the best from them, stick to recordings and music with a wide dynamic range.

These are most definitely idiosyncratic 'speakers. They sound marvellous with some equipment and recordings, and very so-so with others - this seems to be the nature of some Italian hi-fi. Their price is high, which loses a few Brownie points where value-for-money is concerned. If you're hunting for something different from the norm, and you've got the money, give them an ear - and take along plenty of different recordings!

**ZINGALI OVERTURE .3 £3195**

**Zentek Music Ltd  
Tel: 01892 616983**

## WORLD VERDICT



Something of an oddity but very entertaining, with beautiful looks. They are recording-fussy - stick to orchestral and well-recorded rock.

Measured Performance see page 111

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# TREBLE TOP!

**With their metal cabinets and ribbon tweeters, the Jet 330s look seriously cool customers. Simon Pope gets industrial with Elac's classy loudspeakers.**

**M**ost car fanatics will sing the merits of either Italian or German cars. There are those who worship the Latin flair that Italian styling brings, and there are those who swear by German engineering. This is the stereotype. Of course in reality it's slightly different - who can decry the sex-appeal of a Porsche 910 Carrera or a BMW ZX3?

The same stereotyping shows itself in hi-fi. If you want esoteric styling (often matched with esoteric, but enjoyable, listening) you pick Italian. If, on the other hand you want something that won't impress your mates with its immediate aesthetic appeal, but will be passed down to your great-grandchildren, you pick the German reliability. Completely bucking these trends, we welcome the Elac Jet 330 to the catwalk.

These are very stylish customers indeed. Check out the black, grey and steel materials, or the metal tightening wheel and industrial sized spikes on the matching stands - you could literally use them to crack open coconuts! The cabinets are made from 7.5mm extruded aluminium and although only 27cm tall, they are an amazing 36cm deep. The unusual shape is intended to reduce standing waves, which is ironic, because they're so flowingly styled that they could have been shaped by the sea itself.

Elac describe the Jet 330s as a lifestyle product. Where "lifestyle" can often signify more style than sound, the 330s can compete with the best at the price. Although the quoted sensitivity is 88dB/W/m, the 330s are a trifle power hungry. Their masculine looks need to be partnered with some heavy wattage. My Musical Fidelity 250W/channel A1001 had no trouble obviously, but 10W valve jobs are not ideal!

The first thing to notice about the sound is the smooth, yet sweet and open treble response. That thin, crimped diaphragm behind the fixed vent-like grill

really gleans the best of high frequencies with a panel-like transparency. Some mediæval "bells and smells" pieces (settings of the Carmina Burana poem cycle) on Radio 3 sounded suitably light and fluid. The bells glinted with texture and the singers were authentically nasal, so clear was the detail gleaned.

To hear what the Elacs could do with lower frequencies, I summoned up the beefy, bass-heavy orchestral writing of Wagner, in the opening scene from Siegfried. I was impressed with the exceptionally neutral bass sound that the 330s delivered. There was no obvious boom to be heard and the tuba and double-basses growled with appropriate menace. The 330s don't deliver bone-crunching frequencies - what you do get is quality over quantity. With the well-mixed rock music of the Foo Fighters single Learning To Fly, the Elacs relayed every last nuance of the recording. The long-throw bass/mid driver



delivered the bass drum of the kit with drive and lightning-fast energy. Again the bass here wasn't floor-shaking, but nevertheless distinctly good for the size of the 'speaker.

This may be due to the rear port's length in that ultra-deep cabinet design. Dave

Grohl's vocal lines were well phrased, with an excellent balance that produced no extra sibilance.

The Jets play all types of music with equal ability - the 330s love rhythm of all sorts, but fall down a little with large scale orchestral music. They're not cheap, and can be very particular as regards positioning - your ears must be at tweeter height for optimum sound, though this can be adjusted with the heavy wheel at the rear of the stands. They could also seem a bit bass light for some tastes, but the magnificent build and excellent treble might make up for these small gripes. If you favour a clean and unfussy sound with a sweet treble, have a listen.

**ELAC JET 330 £2500 (INC. STANDS)**  
**Sennheiser, 3 Century Point**  
**High Wycombe, Bucks HP12 3SL**  
**Tel: 01494 55155**

## WORLD VERDICT



Great build and a clean, neutral sound with superb treble. Not cheap, though.

Measured Performance see page 111

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**“P**athos. *Quality in speech, writing, events, etc., that excites pity or sadness.*” -

Concise Oxford Dictionary 9th edition. Spying the name stamped on the box prompted me to check the true meaning of the Greek-derived word. Strange choice of name for an audio product, perhaps. Point taken about ‘quality in speech’, but the pity or sadness doesn’t really help to instill confidence in the product, does it?

I digress. Pathos, in this case, aren’t Greek but from Vicenza in northern Italy, and their Classic One is quite frankly one of the best-looking amps I have seen under £1000. The classic Italian trick of incorporating wood into valve amplifier aesthetics is featured here in a small section of the front panel on which is branded the company name. Two simple brass knobs poke out, both un-labelled in the true style of esoteric hi-fi. It is a trifle annoying though, as you have to remember what you’re playing through each input to select the right one! Such sacrifices are necessary in the pursuit of aesthetic perfection, it would seem.

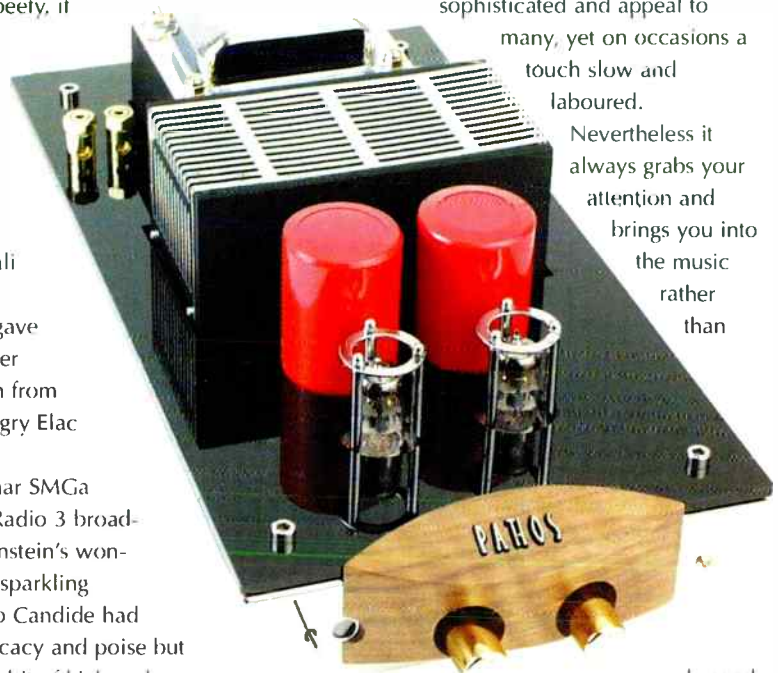
First impressions of this stylish customer are of an open and beefy, if pleasantly coloured sound. Partnering it with a pair of high sensitivity Zingali .3L floor-standers, gave slightly better results than from power hungry Elac Jet 330s or Magneplanar SMGa panels. A Radio 3 broadcast of Bernstein’s wonderful and sparkling Overture to Candide had depth, delicacy and poise but lacked that bit of kick and speed to raise it to the ultimate heights of musical edification.

The depth and spread of sound I dis-

fond of for the few weeks it sat in my listening room. It can sound broad and sophisticated and appeal to many, yet on occasions a touch slow and laboured.

Nevertheless it always grabs your attention and brings you into the music rather than

merely sending you to sleep, and less than £1000 for this type of build and beautiful styling is rare. It’s not maybe the top choice at the



# NOT SO PATHETIC

**Simon Pope listens to the Classic One integrated amplifier from Pathos. Will he find the experience enlightening?**

Another oddity is the ‘speaker outputs being placed on the top of the chassis. Pretty stylish - according to your choice of cable, of course. The chic minimalism continues onto the very smart solid hardwood remote with its two tiny buttons - one for volume up, the other for volume down.

Pathos are noted for their higher priced reference valve amplifiers, but the challenge for the Classic One design was to produce as affordable a valve amplifier as possible without sacrificing quality of build or performance. The result is a ‘hybrid’ design, a combination of solid state and valve engineering. The pre and power amplifier sections of the Classic One are completely separated and each have their own power supply. The pre-amplifier section is a class A valve design that Pathos claim has no feedback. The power amp section is a pure solid state, high bias current design that works in Class AB.

covered with Radio 3 was further emphasised by the vast sound-scapes of Bruckner and the Berlin Philharmonic. Whilst detail was slightly limited, the spread of the sound was near perfect, with both grunt and welly, yet poised and delicate when required. With rock music the sound was equally larger and inspired. Soundgarden’s Superunknown CD thundered through the ‘speakers more than adequately, although at times I felt the rhythm section sounded a tad ploddy and behind the rest of the mix.

With chamber and choral music the Classic One couldn’t quite pull out all the stops. For small forces, detail is required and although the sound was smooth and rounded, little important things such as bowing detail and the singers’ breathing was lost in the overall sound. It was just a bit too ‘beefy’ a sound to give an A1 performance.

The Classic One is a bit of a mixed bag, yet something that I became very

price for sound alone, but then again neither is it sad or pitiful. If you want great looks and build mixed with that extra roundness to the sound that valves can bring, give it a listen.

**Pathos Classic One**

**U.K.D**

**23 Richings Way,  
Iver, Bucks,  
SLO 9DA**

**Tel: 01753 652669**

## WORLD VERDICT



Fantastic looking integrated with a big and lush sound. Good with orchestral and well-mixed rock and pop.

Measured Performance see page 111

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# WINGED FEET

**Richard White catches a fleeting glimpse of Tannoy's new Improved Mercury loudspeaker. Can the £130 mX2 follow its father's footsteps?**

**T**annoy's Mercury series of loudspeakers have made quite a comfortable corner for themselves over the past three years or so. The problem is, as always, what next? Son of Tannoy Mercury? Breath need be bated no longer, the Mercury mX range has arrived, a creation which the manufacturers claim is 'every bit better' than the previous version.

As befits a new product range, we've had quite a bit of information of the various design considerations which have contributed to the mX series. The main differences lie in the cabinet, which has been strengthened with extra bracing, with screwed and glued front baffles further tightening the cabinet (and presumably sound) up.

Enough! Time to put the mX2 through its paces. By good fortune, Radio 3 happened to be playing Vaughan William's Wasps overture, a work which is not short on dynamic range. Contrary to my expectations, the Tannoys showed considerable willingness to follow the score; many of the sudden sforzandi took me by surprise, which is certainly what the composer intended! For a start then, the mX2s have little difficulty in moving air when required.

The next item on the programme, a 'fragment' of 'cello and piano music by Mendelssohn gave rather more mixed impressions. There was a tendency towards woolliness in the reproduction of the piano tone - a largely midrange instrument - whereas the 'cello, a sound which is very rich in overtones, was very sweet and subtle. Fearing a bad recording or a broadcasting anomaly, I put on a record of Saint-Saëns' weary old Swan. Bingo! - same result, with Tortellier sawing away sublimely but the piano apparently in the corridor outside. Pure chance had thrown

up this peculiarity, and I would not suggest for a moment that it is peculiar to the Tannoy; rather it seems to be inherent in the whole small bass reflex genre, certainly at budget level.

Much happier results were obtained with a Spohr clarinet concerto, with the

floor in the approved fashion and those steely high frequency stabs assaulting my ears without mercy. One point of major interest concerned a track which seemed to feature a sampled orchestral bass drum, adding its sustained whumphs to the ensemble in a stomach-wobbling manner.

Tannoy provide a foam bung for the reflex port; this is intended for use when the 'speakers have to be up against a wall. During this review I tried everything with bungs both in and out. For my ears, the overall sound was better with them in; the tendency of the bass to 'bloom' was checked in this way, but for out and out boogieing, many will prefer these 'speakers unfettered. For all the hype, the new Mercury mX2 is of necessity built to a price. It can't be denied that the finish is neat and workmanlike, but loudspeakers of this type are very seldom catch-all solutions. In this case, Tannoy seem to have catered for the more popular musical styles, which is fair enough.

Notwithstanding their commendable verve, they may become wearisome to the broader palette.



exceedingly able, if over-cute Emma Johnson playing the solo part. Here the Tannoy separated the individual strands of the piece well, especially the very woody tones of the solo instrument. The fashion for soft-dome tweeters has not always done its best for stereo imaging, but the mX2s gave a generous breadth of sound-stage, apparently extending (as it should) outside the confines of the cabinet placement.

One field in which small loudspeakers show their mettle is with heavily-beated rock/pop music. I wish I could be more specific here; unfortunately I must have chosen a time when a wholesale ban on informative announcements was in force! Let me say that with wholly processed music, the mX2s did all that could be wished for, with the kickdrum shaking the

**Tannoy Mercury mX2 £130**

**Tannoy Ltd.  
North Lanarkshire  
ML5 4TF  
Tel: 01236 420199**

## WORLD VERDICT



Strong and shouty contender in the popular bookshelf market. Lacks the subtlety for classical but fine for rock.

Measured Performance see page 111

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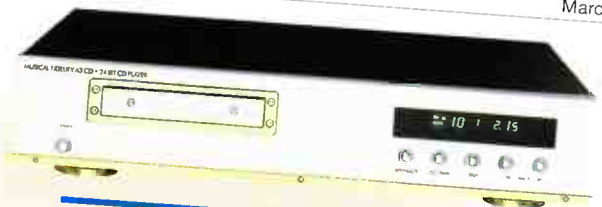


**ROKSAN Kandy KC1** CD Player

Bit Stream DAC ♦ Coaxial & Optical Connections



**WHAT HI-FI?**  
March 2000

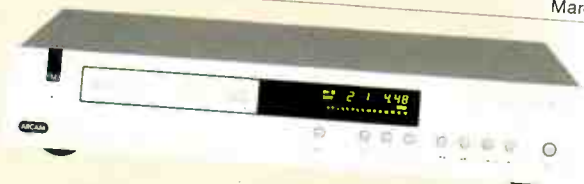


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**WHAT HI-FI?**  
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**ARCAM FMJ CD23** CD Player

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\* When purchased together with the X-Ray CD Player  
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WHAT HI-FI?  
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WHAT HI-FI?  
 April 2000



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**WHAT HI-FI?**

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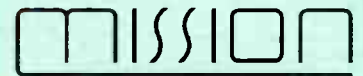
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# ALPHA, PLUS

**There's far more to Arcam than their popular range of hi-fi separates. David Price tells their intriguing story, and interviews company founder John Dawson.**



together so consistently. By marrying simple but effective circuit design with high quality build, A&R successfully made Britain's 'affordable audiophile' niche their own.

A certain Noel Keywood was one of the first journalists to champion the A60 back in 1977, and his enthusiasm spread like wild-

## BUILDING ON SUCCESS

By the late seventies the A60 was Britain's mid-price reference amplifier, A&R having established itself as a major player in the new British audio industry which included the likes of Linn, Naim, Meridian and Mission. The matching £190 T21 tuner soon followed a couple of years later, and then the £655 C200/SA200 pre-power combination. Offering extensive facilities, 100W RMS per channel and a neat wood sleeve it was a fine amplifier, but still struggled in the crowded, Naim-dominated high end market.

A&R surprised everyone again in 1981 by introducing a range of phono cartridges offering exactly the same magic formula as the original A60 amp. The £14.95 C77, £39.90 P77 and £69.00 P78 were A&R designed, Japanese built cartridges using interchangeable styli, making for an easy and inexpensive upgrade path. With medium (6g) mass and a characteristically rich and powerful sound they worked happily in budget and high end tonearms alike. The C77 featured a standard spherical stylus on an aluminium cantilever, the P77 a Weinz Paroc (parabolic oval cone) and the P78 added a Boron cantilever. All cartridges became instant hits and the C77 and P77 went on to sell in vast quantities, being joined by a mid range E77 brother and finally gaining a solid Magnesium body in place of the flimsy standard plastic item.

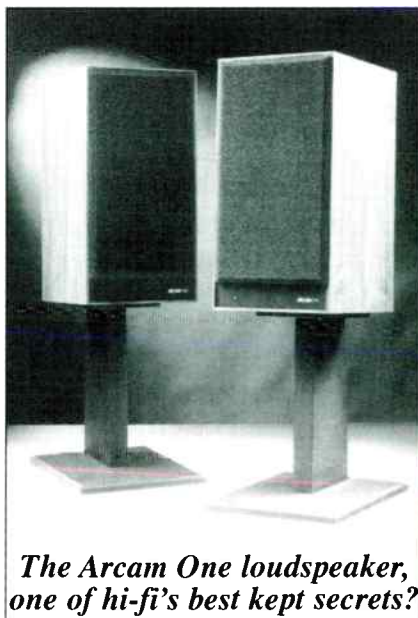
Next A&R set its sights on loudspeakers, and the Arcam One was born. An expensive (£299) high quality stand-mounter, it featured an A&R designed, Elac-sourced 200mm Cobex mid/bass unit and an A&R modified 25mm Vifa tweeter. The crossover was bypassable, meaning the speaker could be used in active mode using A&R electronics. Despite a slightly boomy bass, the Ones were extremely capable performers with fine stereo imaging, detailed soundstaging and a sweetly engaging musical performance. Strangely enough though

It all started in John Dawson's room at Trinity College, Cambridge back in 1971. With his friend Brian Whitnall, John began making amplifier modules for friends. When classical guitarist John Williams visited the town to play Rodrigo's Concerto for Guitar and Orchestra, he needed reliable live amplification which sounded great. John duly obliged.

When Brian subsequently moved away, John met Chris Evans at a Tape Recording Society meeting. In 1975 the two friends decided to make a hi-fi amplifier together, and the A&R A60 was born in September 1976. The Amplification and Recording Company (Cambridge) became a limited company in February 1977, when they'd sold about 50 amplifiers. To their delight, it was still going strong 32,000 units and ten years later!

With sound as good as the best British competition and build quality as high as the Japanese, it was a deserved success. It sounded great, but its killer punch was its combination of copper-bolted reliability and carefully judged features. There were many amplifiers around that offered one or maybe two of these qualities, but few served them all up

fire in the UK hi-fi press. Initially selling for £115 plus VAT, its smooth and punchy sound gave rivals like Sugden's A48 a very hard time. Every British hi-fi magazine soon agreed that it was a superb product, even if one or two journalists didn't quite warm to its looks - Hi-Fi Answers described its styling as 'a modest piece of solid British ugliness - hideous!'



***The Arcam One loudspeaker, one of hi-fi's best kept secrets?***



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they failed to capture buyers' imaginations like the A60 had, and became something of a well kept secret.

## MASS APPEAL

By 1984 budget superamps were setting the nation's dem rooms alight, the most remarkable of which was the NAD 3020. Although the A60 sounded better, many buyers were happy to spend more on an expensive source and make do with a decent budget amplifier. A&R responded by moving downmarket, adopting the snappier 'Arcam' name and launching a range of 'budget audiophile' products, the first of which was the Arcam Alpha amplifier.

Offering the usual array of facilities (including, unfashionably, tone controls) for £130, the new amp soon won many friends. Its garish moulded plastic fascia got a Design Centre Award, and the high quality build made it popular with dealers. This was, lest we forget, a time when many British cottage industry manufacturers displayed appalling quality control! Sound was superb for the money - indeed one magazine proclaimed it better than the A60!

Up to 1986 the A60 had been quietly upgraded every couple of years with circuit mods, a change from DIN to RCA phono connectors, a better phono stage and beefier components, but new rivals such as Audiolab's 8000a were taking ever more sales. Arcam took the difficult decision to replace it with the bottom of the new range of mid-price separates, the Delta 60. With its clean black design it was the epitome of eighties hi-fi chic, but the sound wasn't distinguished enough to win the critical acclaim its predecessor had once enjoyed.

## PLAYING THE BIT PART

Summer 1987 saw the first truly modern Arcam product, the £499.90 Delta 70 CD player. The company's first digital offering, it reflected Arcam's commitment to the new format in a number of ways. Being the first British company to hold a full CD manufacturing licence (costing a cool \$25,000 at the time), the 70 was more than just a Meridian MCD-style re-skin of a Philips player. True enough, it did use their classic multibit chipset and CDM4 transport, but boasted all-discrete analogue circuitry and custom master



## Ride on time? The black box DAC

clock. The results were spectacular, the player beating even the king of mid-price players, Marantz's classic CD94 in musicality terms.

Arcam were on a roll. Next came the Black Box in February 1989, the first separate digital to analogue converter. It was spectacularly successful (for a short while) thanks to the sweet Philips multibit sound it brought to middling Japanese players equipped with digital outputs.

Then the Delta 170 transport arrived, offering Philips' seminal CDM1 mk2 diecast aluminium transport, extensive internal damping and Audioquest Sorbothane feet. With a rich warm

sound, it was the only CD transport around good enough to compete with Kenwood's pioneering DPX-9010.

The next few years saw the Alpha and Delta ranges rationalised and developed. An Alpha CD player was launched, offering sweet 'British sound' on a budget, while the Delta 250/Black Box 50 took over the company's high end mantle. Arcam shocked the industry once again in 1992 with the £850 Delta 100 cassette deck. Just as the format was enjoying its last hours in the sun, this Dolby S equipped product complete with a superb Nakamichi-quality transport gave it a new lease of life. Unfortunately though the timing was all wrong, and the D100 joined ranks of hi-fi's great enigmas.

## PLAY FOR TODAY

Since then Arcam has gone from strength to strength. In 1996 the Alpha 7 CD player did it all over again, introducing

swoopy styling and class-leading sound quality to the budget market. In keeping with Arcam's modular upgrading philosophy first seen all those years ago with the 77 cartridge range, the 7 also boasts a comprehensive upgrade path. For £200 it can be upgraded to 8SE spec, bringing greater weight, depth and precision to the sound plus useful HDCD compatibility.

The Alpha 9 is also something of a milestone. From technology pioneered by Cambridge Consultants for military use, it uses a 24bit DCS 'Ring DAC', said to offer the advantages of both multibit and bitstream in one chip. It's a musically convincing player and an essential audition at £799, not to mention as a £350 upgrade from the 8SE.

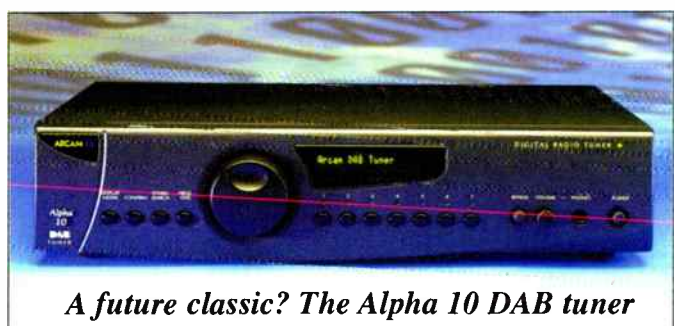
Considering its formative role in UK CD player design and interest in tuners stretching back to the 1970s, Arcam's Alpha 10 DAB tuner should come as no surprise. The first British hi-fi DAB (Digital Audio Broadcasting) tuner to reach the market, it

makes a great case for the new format. The combination of the Roke Manor Research decoder and bespoke Arcam electronics makes for an extremely pleasant sounding, versatile and easy-to-use unit. At £799 it's an expensive way to listen to the radio, but will doubtless become a future classic.

Arcam devotees may view the new FMJ ('full metal jacket'?) series as something of a curiosity. The company's traditionally sober styling - often obscuring constant engineering development work underneath - has been abandoned for sumptuous extruded aluminium fascias, machined control knobs and tough steel casework. It's an effective restyle which finally gives Arcam products the looks to



## The complete Alpha 7 system



## A future classic? The Alpha 10 DAB tuner

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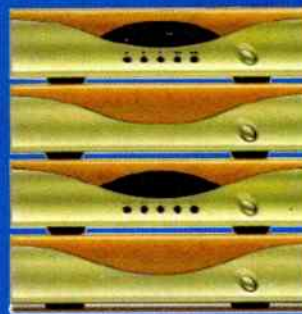
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The new £999.99 FMI 22 amplifier looks far more arresting than the old A&R A60 ever did, but in many ways revives its elusive blend of sweet sound, extensive facilities and future compatibility. Featuring a dot-matrix display and intelligent internal bus, it offers the MARC (multi area remote control) module option giving multi-room facilities. There's also Arcam's DAVE (digital audio video entertainment) option, which when hooked up to a 3-channel P25 power amp gives full 5.1 channel Dolby Digital and dts surround sound.

**TOMORROW'S WORLD?**

One of the few consistently successful British hi-fi companies, Arcam has been known to produce the occasional oddball product, but most of its designs hit the mark most of the time. Perhaps that's why the company has watched so many of its rivals come and go while it remains at the top. Although mainstream hi-fi separates might not be the sexiest game in town, it's an amazing achievement to find a British company with such an enduringly strong and successful presence. Of that, they - and we - can be proud.



Arcam, Waterbeach, Cambridge CB5 9PB,

Tel: 01223 203265  
www.arcam.co.uk

**JOHN DAWSON  
UNPLUGGED**



**DP:** What's the essence of Arcam?

**JD:** Enthusiasts who love to produce great sounding products that give excellent value to our customers. We get a real kick out of this. We are definitely at the affordable high end of the business and that is where we are likely to stay.

**DP:** What are your favourite Arcam products?

**JD:** [1] A60, because it put us on the map and I hear every day from someone that is still using one!

- [2] Delta 100 cassette deck, because I always wanted to build one and the result was good enough to be a collector's item.
- [3] Delta 150 NICAM tuner, because it's a great way to listen to TV.
- [4] Alpha 9 CD player (and its FMI CD23 counterpart), because it gives true high end sound.
- [5] Alpha 7SE CD player, because it sounds great and is selling so well.

**DP:** Why did you invest in the CD player license back in the mid eighties?

**JD:** Making CD players was the obvious choice, not least because there were then no specialist suppliers out there which would suit the needs of our dealer base and their customers. We didn't repackage someone else's design because you have little or no long term control if you do that, so we bought the full manufacturing licence. Our first Delta 70 CD player sold very well, especially to owners of Linn turntables! The Black Box concept gained us a huge amount of world wide publicity.

**DP:** Why has the company had such an abiding interest in tuners? Are you a radio freak?

**JD:** Like many of our customers, I have grown up with good quality radio thanks mainly to the BBC and suggest that if you want to sell lots of amplifiers you had better be able to supply excellent matching tuners to accompany them. DAB which provides, at its best, excellent sound quality, ease of use and a wider choice of programmes. We felt it important to be at the forefront of this newest way of broadcasting radio.

**DP:** Why did Arcam do the Delta 100 cassette deck? Shouldn't you have done a high end CD-R instead?

**JD:** Hindsight is a wonderful thing! At the time we developed our cassette deck, with excellent electronics and the brand new Dolby S noise reduction system, we were able to make A-B comparisons with CD that weren't easy to tell apart. Unfortunately soon after we launched the market became totally confused with the fight to the death between DCC and MD, and that rather sidelined what we'd achieved. So it goes ...



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Your system will sound better with a £3000 player than with a £2000 machine and a £1000 preamp, or even vice versa.

Of course, good preamps do have a role but be ready to spend at least £2000 and ideally more for really "harm-less" ones.

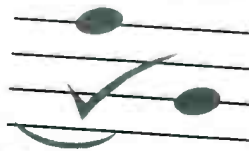
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# METAL MACHINE MUSIC



**With trick DAC technology and a svelte 'full metal jacket', Arcam's new FMJ CD23 CD player promises much. David Price investigates.**

**B**itstream's been with us now for a decade, and still the debate rages about its sonic pros and cons. To my ears at least, multibit done properly leaves it for dead in terms of musicality, yet I'll readily admit Bitstream is more refined. Oh for the best of both worlds! Well, in the shape of the new FMJ 23 CD player and its Alpha 9 brother, Arcam reckon they have just the solution.

Multibit converters work well when correctly adjusted, but are critically dependent both on the tolerances of their resistor networks and on glitch-free electronic switching. Unfortunately, time and temperature drift play havoc with them, causing high distortion and poor noise modulation performance. Bitstream overcomes this but gives a terrible signal to noise ratio which is only overcome by heavy oversampling and noise shaping. Problems here cause unpleasant in-band idle tones and sound degrading timing errors.

Arcam's Ring DAC is claimed avoid all these pitfalls by using technology refined by dCS (Data Conversion Systems) based on research done in the UK in the 1980s on military aircraft radar. Combining multibit and Delta Sigma technology, it works by continuously varying the number and positions of the selected current sources from sample to sample, as though around a circle. This ensures the inevitable slight variations in the values of the current sources are randomly distributed throughout the quantising range, effectively turning tolerance errors into random white noise rather than distortion. The result is said to be

high linearity plus very low noise and distortion.

The Ring DAC first appeared in the Alpha 9 CD some two years ago, but the FMJ CD23 adds strength to depth. To go with the Pacific Microsonics HDCD digital filter, low jitter Sony CDM14 transport and high precision analogue stages, there's a new motherboard, extra vibration damping, modified power supply and the exquisitely finished metal casing and front panel. Even the control buttons and packaging are upgraded, giving the look of a seriously high end bit of kit. The result is a classy looking product - it really does feel a league above the plastic-tastic Alpha 9.

Over the review period I tried the FMJ CD23 in several systems, and it never failed to beguile. Whether feeding a £5000 Naim pre-power or a top tube combo, it sounded remarkably sophisticated yet musically engaging. Stereolab's 'Emperor Tomato Ketchup' was first on, and the instant the vocals kicked in I knew it was special. In their quest for detail, high end CD players can make female voices edgy and cold, but through the Arcam they were rich and resonant. Rhythmic and dynamic information was superbly resolved and bass guitar notes underpinning the song bounced up and down as if on elastic. Here was multibit's emotion with Bitstream's focus.

Carole King's 'It's Too Late' was no less an ear-opener. All the lead vocal tracks on 'Tapestry' are a tad over-modulated and screechy, and this really punishes distortion-prone CD players. Not so the FMJ, which carried her dulcet

tones with total grace.

Piano accompaniment sounded powerful and brooding, with sparkling harmonics conveyed in all their glory. Drums were tight, bass supple and tuneful, and hi-hats sweet and sonorous. Most impressive though was the way the Arcam constructed a cathedral-esque acoustic around the speakers, with amazing depth perspective and brilliantly focused stereo images.

No matter what music I tried - from Kraftwerk to Karajan - the FMJ proved a joy. It offers most of multibit's glory with none of the fizz, and most of Bitstream's sophistication without the yawns. Arcam call their FMJ CD23 one of the best one-box players around. Naturally I thought that was hype, but after spending several weeks with it, they may just have a point. At £1100, it's the closest I've found to super-fi on a budget.



**ARCAM FMJ CD23 £1100**  
Arcam: 01223 203203  
[www.arcam.co.uk](http://www.arcam.co.uk)

## WORLD VERDICT



Supremely capable at the price, this player offers the best of both worlds - musicality and sophistication.

Measured Performance see page 111

# letters & e-mails

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## LETTER OF THE MONTH

### DVD v CD?

Whilst enjoying my monthly fix of your magazine, I felt I must make you aware of the seemingly contradictory views expressed in your publication with regard to the sound quality of DVD players.

Your views on the sound quality of DVD players when playing CDs have been, until very recently, very positive. For instance your test of the Panasonic DVD-A350 (Jul 1998) you believed that this machine "wipes out the CD-only competition at the price and threatens players up to £2000". It appears this view was generally at odds with the rest of the Hi-Fi press - from other magazines I had read at least. To my amazement I read the editorial by Simon Pope in the May 2000 issue - "After the past few weeks listening I've come to the conclusion that really won't surprise the majority of our readers..." (oh yes it will!) "If you want to get the best from your CDs at present, stick to something that plays CDs - and only CDs - alone".

I'm sure there must be readers out there who have replaced their CD players with DVD players (I was considering it) based on the strong reviews in your magazine. I can only assume they are now feeling rather confused and maybe a little angry. I am now certainly confused as to your opinions on the quality of DVD players at playing CD's only. Hope you can make your position clear.

P.S. Could you find your way to putting round the hat and club together to buy the editor a new t-shirt and trousers? - He's had the same ones on for the last 7 months!

Bill Smollett  
Darlington, Co Durham.

Well, Mr. Smollett hopefully we can make our position clear on the matter. The Panasonic DVD-A 350 is a great machine for playing music on, and one of the first DVD players on the market. The review was written by Jon Marks and actually predates the arrival of the current 'in-house' editorial team. And whilst we try to maintain an in-house policy of agreement, we all have our opinions, and our current (democratic!) one is that many DVD players on the market will play CDs with control and finesse, but do not match up to the equivalent-priced dedicated CD players, which tend to offer more detail with the majority of recordings.

Having heard the Panasonic player I can testify that it indeed does play CDs extremely well, perhaps more so than many current players, and it was one of the first on the market!. But you may find that it won't perform so well with bog-standard recordings as it does with specialist audiophile discs and 24/96 recordings. And this is also basically true with most DVD players on the market today. They can be found a little wanting in their performance with the majority of CDs you will pick up at your local high street store, with a few exceptions such as Pioneer's excellent DV-717, for example. Hence, they can sound good with demonstration standard discs - but who wants a demo every night in their front room? Not me, for one.

To answer your other enquiry, the team are saving up as much as they possibly can on their humble publishing wages to send me off to Saville Row for a fitting. I know it's time to face the awful truth when readers are agreeing with the staff about my appearance. And I honestly thought I was the epitome of sartorial elegance, alas. . . **SP**



**Pioneer's DV-717:  
"One of the better CD spinners from the DVD fraternity!"**

## TAKING A BEARING

I have a Garrard 301 that is somewhat rare in that it's a cream model but has the grease bearing. I understand that there were a few made like this as the changeover from grey to cream, and grease to oil was staggered slightly. The thing with mine is the serial number 30001 which must be significant but I can't find out if it is the first cream one. What do you think?

My main deck is an Oracle Delphi Mk I and if anyone else is using one they may like to try running it from two car batteries as I am. It's a cheap upgrade and makes a dramatic improvement. Just make sure it's one with the DC motor though!

Thanks for a great mag  
Mick Hill

*I'm afraid I can't answer this question with any certainty, so we're printing it to see what serial numbers or information other readers may have. First editions are always of interest but are seldom found in the public domain, since they most often end up in a company's own archive instead. An exception to this is Quad ESL57 number 1 which I understand is in the loving hands of our old friend, writer Geoffrey Horn.*

*Whatever we manage to discover, we'll pass on in these pages. I can't be sure that there will be any particular value to be attached to your turntable: the first of a changeover model from an extinct manufacturer of an obsolescent product is a little in the way of 'my best friend's brother's window-cleaner's sister', nevertheless it's always nice to know! **RMW***



*A bit of armless amusement.*

## CHANGING ROOMS

I have had a lot of speakers over the years and find that I can never predict how they will sound. Since I've also moved several times, I've found that what sounded good in one home doesn't always work elsewhere.

Have you any thoughts on this, and what sizes etc. are your listening rooms.

Many thanks,  
E. Safidel.

*Problems like this are common and are largely due to loudspeaker manufacturers not being able to predict the listening environments in which their products will be used. Although it ought to be common sense that a bookshelf speaker is not meant for a ballroom, nor yet an exponential bass horn for a box room, as you say, even when the purchaser gets it right once, domestic complications cannot guarantee success for always!*

*As a working rule, I have found that the further apart a stereo pair is placed, the better the general sound - provided that volume level can be kept up to fill the hole-in-the-middle. If you are unable to use your system at a vaguely realistic level - I don't necessarily mean loud - you will suddenly get very unsatisfactory results. On the other hand, speakers placed close together, monitor style, tend to create a sort of pseudo-stereo sludge if the wick is wound up too far.*

*I appreciate that this is a very rough-and-ready answer, but I have in my travels seen too many examples of poor placement and/or wrong volume setting between them trashing otherwise good loudspeakers to skip the obvious as an answer. The two factors have to work in tandem.*

*My own listening room is roughly 14' off-square, with several alcoves and a rattling window sash to contend with. With the speakers*

*I review, careful positioning and appropriate volume to suit the position are always my first objectives.*

*Good luck! **RMW***



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**b**

## BLAST FROM THE PAST

I want to purchase a turntable that can play 78rpm discs. Do you know if a suitable machine is on the market?

Thanks  
Paul Benjamin

Whilst I realise that 78s are scarcely hi-fi, we receive quite a number of letters similar to Mr Benjamin's, so I hope this stone will kill more than one bird. There are several ways of going about this. One of the easiest is Rega's dedicated Planar 78 deck (£224). This is an adapted one-speed version of their well-known budget deck and requires a suitable cartridge; Rega make their own priced £42.

Of course most old decks - Garrard, Lenco and Thorens are good-quality examples - had 78rpm as a matter of course, so one of these (try dealers in Marketplace or Classifieds) with a suitable cartridge will do.

The Vestax BDT-2000 turntable reviewed by Jon Marks in our September 1999 issue will play any speed between about 16rpm right up to 90rpm. This deck has a built-in MM phono stage, so for £225 plus a spare headshell (about £5) plus something like an old Shure M75 cartridge (c.£10 second-hand) plus an N75 3 (78) needle from Mantra Audio (£14) you will have a very versatile machine indeed.

I still play 78s and have found the Shure M75/Mantra needle combination quite adequate for general listening. The cartridges were made in tens of thousands at least, so again a call to one of the second-hand suppliers in our Marketplace section should find one easily.

Portable-style ceramic cartridges with sapphire double-sided needles are not recommended, they tend to plough rather than play. Similarly, I do not personally recommend using ANY form of acoustic gramophone.

You are likely to find your 78s have been cut to a different EQ than 'modern' RIAA recordings, so some form of tone control, and ideally a mono switch as well are useful. Using a mono switch helps to cancel some of the surface noise: if there isn't one, you can connect together the channels of your cartridge using a jumper lead in the (dedicated) headshell. Tone controls are not common now but amplifiers are still being made with them; you may have one already. If only Musical Fidelity were still making their late-lamented X-Tone... Generally a moderate amount of control produces more listenable results than whacking the controls over as far as they'll go.

Recovering 'priceless' historic performances from old records is a skilled and respected business these days - just see how many 'historic' re-issues there are on CD. The results of these dedicated transcribers are difficult to achieve at home, but trying is a fascinating process. Good luck!

RMW



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# BACH 250

**T**he music of J S Bach was never as accessible as that of the other great composers. Handel, Beethoven, Mozart, Brahms; all these have found a permanent place in the amateur repertoire, not to mention the gramophone catalogues. Bach is different, not to say difficult. For him, music was not only a sublime gift from God but also a testing intellectual exercise, requiring considerable craft in its construction. It has been said that if a page of his were to be sent into outer space as a demonstration to other worlds of Man's achievement, it would look like boasting!

When Bach died in July 1750, his music was almost immediately forgotten. Much has been lost. What remains is a body of work which is still exciting fresh responses and interpretations two-and-a-half centuries later. In the month of the 250th anniversary of his death, we list a few of our favourite recordings to his memory.

## THE CELLO SUITES

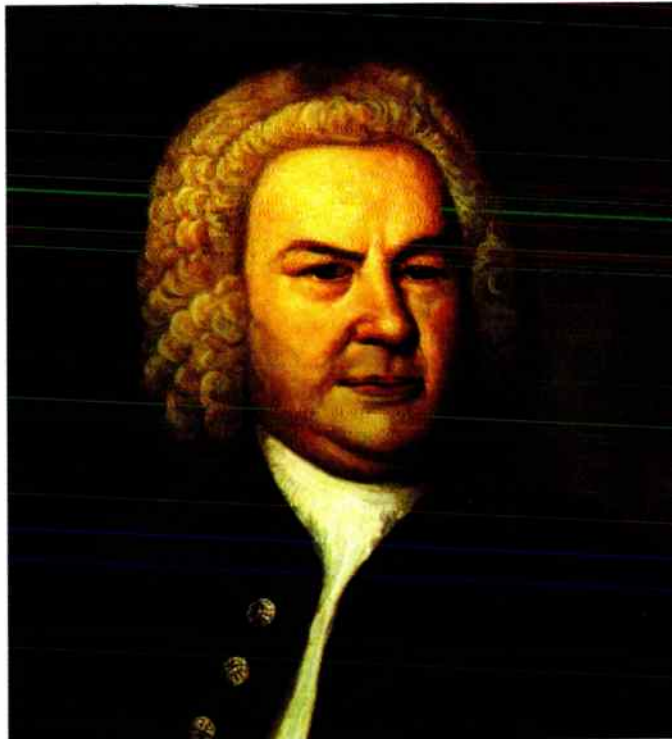
Yo-Yo Ma.

SONY CLASSICAL S2K 63203.

There are so many recordings available of these perennially popular gems to choose from that I almost didn't even try to pick one. However, this excellent recording on Sony Classical emphasises the fact that Bach's genius was not merely before its time, but is indeed timeless. An example of this is shown in a clip from the television film series accompanying this recording. Yo-Yo Ma sits busking in the middle of Times Square, bowing away oblivious of the mayhem of modern living that surrounds him.

Forget this as a spectacle a la nauseating marketing stunts like those of 'Kennedy' or Vanessa Mae, which claim to bring a 'wider audience' to classical music through contemporary images. This is different, the emphasis is on the compositions. Here we have a consummate artist demonstrating to us that this intense music is as relevant to the modern age as

it is to the Baroque. It touches us, makes us think, makes us forget, lets us escape and helps us cope with the utterly mundane. Forget munching on alfalfa beans and chanting mantras. This, in my opinion, constitutes true meditation. **SP**



## MASS IN B MINOR:

Academy and Chorus of St Martins-in-the-fields/Sir Neville Marriner/Margaret Marshall/Janet Baker/Robert Tear/Samuel Ramey.

PHILIPS 416 415-2.

One simply cannot consider the music of Bach without touching on this masterpiece, considered by Swiss musicologist Nägeli as "the greatest musical work of art of all ages or peoples". Of the many recordings, ranging from the researched period performance of Riefkin to Karajan's beefy Berlin effort, this one seems to get the balance just right. It benefits from that rarity: British choral singing both controlled and in tune. This is one heck of a difficult sing and the chorus are quite outstanding; they make it sound easy.

The soloists are a fine quartet, all at the peak of their careers when recorded in

1977. Robert Tear floats unstrained in the difficult tenor solos, Margaret Marshall's singing is confident and seemingly effortless, American Sam Ramey authoritarian and Dame Janet simply jaw-dropping, especially in the exquisite Agnus Dei. The fine band of instrumentalists have seldom sounded better. Full and rich, yet

restrained and perfectly balanced, with the strings, violins in particular, rich-toned and smooth. A wonderful recording that I play far more often than I had realised! **SP**

## THE ART OF FUGUE:

Academy of St Martins-in-the-fields/Neville Marriner.

PHILIPS 6747 172 2LP

We do not know whether Bach had any intention of this collection of studies being performed. As a consequence, there has been a wide variety of interpretations, ranging from solo harpsichord to full orchestra. This very intelligent edition by Marriner and Andrew Davis uses five strings, four wood-

winds, organ and harpsichord, giving a delightful variety of musical textures - a true performing version.

Twenty-two versions of essentially the same theme may sound on the face of it a bit samey, but to those who know and love this work, The Art of Fugue is a world to live in.

Most moving of all is the last quadruple fugue on three themes, the last beginning with the notes B-A-C-H. (In German notation, 'H' = B-flat). It's an obvious gimmick; as such it is notable that Bach very seldom used it. In this last immense contrapuntal exercise, it amounts to a signing-off. The fugue is unfinished, tailing off into nothing - Bach's final total blindness and his death.

It is a conclusion which always leaves me pausing to reflect both with sadness on our mortality, and with joy and admiration on one of mankind's greatest musical and intellectual achievements. **RMW**

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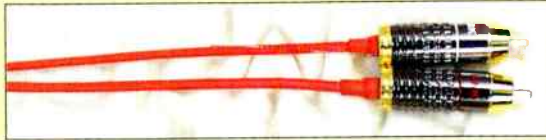
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# CONNECT 4!

**Simon Pope and Richard White listen to an interconnect cable quartet ranging from £200-300.**



**Soniclink Red Earth  
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Any more product with 'red' in the name and people will start to think we're competing with Marxism Today rather than consumer audio titles! What firstly

makes this interconnect this price is the use of molybdenum conductors, a highly expensive material never before used in audio

products.

Whilst not specifically designed for the purpose, Soniclink state that Red Earth is ideally used with valve equipment and equipment that favours bass instruments. And indeed, careful matching is required to get the best from the

Red Earth. It's a very subtle cable that indeed works well with high sensitivity 'speakers and valve amps such as World Audio Design's KEL34 integrated and Pathos' Classic one. Both have a beefy bass response and the Red Earth further tightened the sound and made the bass very tuneful. Well worth a listen if you have valve equipment, but they could sound a little too bright with overtly solid state sounding gear.

**Soniclink: 01332 361390**

**Chord Company Anthem  
£275 per metre**

The latest addition to The Chord Company's range is markedly different to their other interconnects. For a start, the cable is comparatively stiff, more like mains cable than usual interconnects. Second, as can be seen in the photograph, the stuff is woven in a sort of loose 'dressing gown cord' configuration, although naturally there is more to it than that! Three twisted pairs are plaited together, one of which carries the 'live' signal while the remaining two act as earths. Shielding is grounded to one end only in a pseudo-balanced arrangement. Silver-plated shielded plugs and some very solid fixing 'glue' make for a strong job.

The Anthem displayed what can be described as a chirpy neutrality. Certainly the reproduction was crystal-clear, which is one of the chief considerations for any cable. In addition, the Anthem possessed a pleasant freshness which makes for a strong recommendation for dull systems. For clarity with sparkle, the Anthem is a good choice.

**Chord Company: 01722 331674**



**van den Hul The First Ultimate  
£219 per .6m pair**

Given its common use for making resistors, carbon does not seem at first sight to be the ideal material for audio cable, van den Hul have looked beyond this though; carbon boasts an extremely stable molecular form - witness diamonds - consequently it has none of the tarnishing qualities which bug silver and copper.

Listening to music through The First Ultimate has proved an enlightening experience; this is one of the very few cables that has no discernable sonic signature. Connected to a system, you hear the components, which can be a shock if you're one of the many who use specific interconnects to help the shortcomings of your gear. On the other hand, you can eliminate cable considerations from any future audio equation, which is as it should be.

It's unusual to praise something for not being heard, but this van den Hul cable is not called 'Ultimate' for nothing - expensive it may be, but the performance is absolutely knock-out.

**van den Hul UK: 0208 997 4280**



**Nordost Red Dawn  
£300 per metre**

Audio cable is almost a sideline for the American company, some of the cable that they use for audio purposes can be found in use by such institutions as NASA! The Red Dawn cable uses balanced and varied conductors and each is made from 99.999999(!)% oxygen free copper (OFC) with an extruded silver surface and is "encapsulated" using Nordost's own patented extruded Teflon construction.

It's hard to imagine the Red Dawn improving on the cheaper Blue Heaven's, speed and clarity, and to a point, it doesn't. The improvements are more to the subtlety of detail and phrasing that the Red Dawns coax from the music. Still present is the wonderful transparency and feeling of space that the Blue Heaven has but with an added musicality that manifests itself in vocals and instrumental phrasing. This cable will lift any component out of the doldrums and inject a breath of fresh air mixed with subtlety and finesse. Pricey, but excellent.

**Nordost UK: 01352 730251**



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Mr K Brian, Stoke-on-Trent.

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don't blame manufacturers for being suspicious about hi-fi magazines. If I was on the other side of the fence the fact that products routinely get rave reviews in some British titles and poor receptions in others would hardly fill me with confidence. If you've spent umpteen thousands of pounds honing something to what you consider perfection, despatching it to magazines for a roller coaster ride is hardly an appealing prospect. Unfortunately though, if you're going to sell your stuff to punters on the High Street, it's just got to be done. You could say the hi-fi press is a necessary evil, so how do manufacturers handle it?

Well, like hi-fi magazines, they hardly present a united front. Some are outspoken, others apathetic, some shy, others casual, many friendly and businesslike. Whatever the company's media relations are, it's certainly a fascinating insight into its corporate character. As you'd expect, certain Japanese and European giants throw lavish jollies

(make that 'press receptions') in swanky London venues, complete with Krug and caviar. They use P.R. companies to organise these events, seeing such affairs as a form of publicity.

By contrast, larger British manufacturers more often rely on personal rapport with journalists and editors for good PR. A precedent was set by the awe inspiring duo of Raymond Cooke and Laurie Fincham that headed up KEF. Raymond founded KEF, Laurie was its technical director. Both were talented engineers who couldn't easily be challenged on their knowledge of loudspeakers; both were fluent communicators and both were large men who amply occupied any stage. When KEF held a press conference, everyone invited actually arrived! It was a tour de force other companies could only dream of. British manufacturers prefer to play it this way though. Linn fields its larger-than-life MD Ivor Tiefenbrun to do major media relations duties, then gets his slick sales team to ensure reviewers get the review kit on time, even at very short notice.

For journalists, the 'on-time at short notice bit' is everything. Forget lavish liquid lunches on company credit cards in bijou West End eateries. Getting review kit in quickly and efficiently is God. Take the case of Audiolab, a company which was plastered all over hi-fi magazine editorial pages for more years than I care to remember. This was helped by MD Phil Switt's skill at getting his gear into magazine listening rooms, leaving it there and not asking for it back. As a result, many mags used it as a reference simply because [a] it was always there and [b] it didn't break down and did a good basic job. The latter is crucial - I remember at least one British specialist whose superb sounding CD player threw a wobbly in the middle of a dem. To spare them embarrassment,

them, developing a rapport and fulfilling their wishes. Yes, it's quite a business being a manufacturer. Anthony could give a character analysis of everybody he needs to deal with.

Unsurprisingly, most hi-fi companies are started by 'engineers'. They may be highly qualified; they may be talented metal bashers or even cabinet makers. Whatever, they are commonly not skilled salesmen and this can raise difficulties in dealing with the press. Feathers are commonly ruffled, especially since most journalists are not engineers, so there's often something of a gulf in understanding between the two camps. Raymond Cooke famously instructed the Press about loudspeakers and, quite frankly, most were grateful to listen. But Raymond didn't brook dissent. If anyone disagreed they were simply wrong!

In spite of this "prickliness", KEF built a legendary reputation through quite extraordinary and conspicuous ability. They sold their skills so effectively the world came to believe their message. So it came as something of a shock when KEF got into trouble in the early nineties. Good press relations don't necessarily translate into success in the marketplace. Sometimes the buying public just don't bite, no matter what us journalists say. It's enough to make you feel sorry for any manufacturer! ●

## “ Good press relations don't necessarily translate into success in the marketplace.

the name of the company will not be disclosed.

While the big boys, from Arcam to Meridian, are never less than efficient and professional, moving slightly further down the hi-fi food chain reveals all sorts of eccentrics. From my end of the phone at least, SME gives the impression of boffins in white coats measuring everything to millimetric accuracy before they'll release it to anyone, let alone the hi-fi press. Should the club-footed clumsiness of your average hi-fi hack ever break something of theirs, you can rest assured that they've got the part, however small, in the post to us before we've put the phone down.

For belief in his product and for enthusiasm which translates into infectious energy, Musical Fidelity's Anthony Michaelson is a hard act to follow. Anthony knows how to sell and knows he must do so. That means meeting the journalists in whose hands his future lies, getting to know



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**T**hinking this month about the J S Bach two-and-a-half centenary, plus a chance conversation with a musical colleague has set me pondering on the nature of formal music - what for want of a better word we have to call 'classical'. At no time in the history of Western music has the influence of its masters, both popular and 'serious', been so widely disseminated. That Yo-Yo Ma, a Chinese-American 'cellist is considered one of the world's greatest classical musicians is a telling point. Of course broadcasting and recording are chiefly responsible for this spread. Despite the erstwhile cries of "cultural fascism", the process is happily not all one-way: Western ears are much more receptive nowadays to the musical traditions of other cultures but, again, recordings and broadcasts have been the means of this education. Interestingly, most of these non-Western musical heritages also have the equivalent of 'popular' and 'classical' forms, which I suppose is one in the eye for counter-snobbery!

The conversation which set me thinking concerned computer programs designed to help the process of composition. In effect these are a sort of electronic amanuensis - "you play it, I'll write it down" just about sums up their purpose. From their lowly beginnings quite a few years ago, when it could take five minutes to put in the key and time signatures, these handy tools have improved beyond all knowledge. Play your piece over on the keyboard, then sit back while the program extracts the individual parts, allowing you to re-jig as often as you want; then after some more button pressing it's possible to output all the required band parts, with correct clefs and keys and, what's more, guaranteed to be within the playable range of the chosen instrument. For amateur and professional alike, this is a godsend; I guess four-fifths of the lumber of composing lies in the chore of writing the damn' stuff out.

Unfortunately, I think this smoothing of the path has also blurred the lines

between what is, and what is not composition. Until these programs caught hold, there was a clearly marked line between formal composition on one hand, and improvisation on the other. This is not an elitist division. The great black-American musician Duke Ellington observed it rigidly: 'proper' band parts for the ensemble sections and then the space for his supremely individualistic sidemen to extemporise: the concepts of formal writing and extemporisation remained distinct. Now, with the wonders of the ever-improving music-writing programs, anyone capable of bashing out a tune on a keyboard is potentially 'a composer', all this without having to learn a crotchet of 'boring' music.

**Well, for one thing,  
all things to do with  
music are the proper  
province of hi-fi.**

I was talking recently to a modern 'classical composer' who has made his music available via the medium of the internet. Curious about his working methods, after some quizzing I discovered that in essence, he extemporised at the keyboard, recorded it and labelled it a 'composition' - strictly speaking a contradiction in terms, although I'm sure there are many who would disagree with me and side with him.

Whether you listen to Handel's Messiah, Mozart's Magic Flute, Beethoven's Emperor Concerto, Verdi's Requiem, Elgar's Gerontius, or Stravinsky's Firebird, you are not hearing the jottings of buskers who struck lucky; you are hearing the considered musical thoughts of extremely gifted individuals, doing the best they could in a medium they both loved and honoured. What has this to do with hi-fi? Well, for one thing, all things to do with music are the proper province of hi-fi. Strictly

speaking the rest is just the means to an end. More importantly, it is likely that without classical music, hi-fi would not have developed in the way that it did. The majority of the pioneers of audio/hi-fi were either keen amateur musicians or at least, lovers of 'serious' music. Also, like formal music, high fidelity reproduction results from deliberation and thought.

The urge to hear favourite (ugh!) classical music reproduced more musically has spurred on many to become interested in audio in the first place. That's not to denigrate the contribution of popular music, but it's an historical fact that 'pop' was originally a secondary issue - microgroove stereophonic records of the classics were well established at a time when most of us listened to pop on rather coarse-groove mono 45s.

A conclusion? Nothing worthwhile happens by accident and there is no Royal Road to either music or hi-fi. Next time you hear a pundit putting down classical music as remote from today's needs, it might be worth reflecting that if those 'needs' cannot encompass the achievements of genius, who needs 'em? As for J S Bach and computer programs, perhaps he'd be turning in his grave . . . if it weren't for the fact that his spirit is still springing to life with every new generation that discovers him. ●



**Richard White**

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To say the pros and cons of buying hi-fi off the Internet are 'well documented' is something of an understatement. It doesn't matter to what medium you turn, or to what particular brand, finding a feature is far from elusive. It could be the Financial Times or Richard and Judy. Whatever, there's no escaping the Internet and more often than not, buying things on it.

You'd have thought all this promotion and speculation would have hi-fi retailers in a state of flummox. Are they going to be able to afford to maintain their stores, or is it time to move out of the business, or grasp the new technology with both hands and go "online"? Well, as I write it seems that it will be some time before push comes to shove.

Yes, sales (in general) are growing over the Internet at an exponential rate, although this is hardly surprising starting from dot only a few years ago. Most figures also highlight that the only really big sellers so far have been holidays, books and CDs. The very categories, in fact, that have always prospered via alternative sales medium (teletext, direct mailing, music clubs, and the like). The sales of hi-fi separates per se, on the Net are still pretty small. So things don't seem as dire as some forecasters predicted for the hi-fi retailing industry. As ever though, it would be churlish to become complacent. Even if sales don't pick up via the web, itself rather unlikely, hi-fi dealers face a new threat which perhaps wasn't anticipated.

The fact that so many CDs are now being sold via the internet, and the increasing range of downloadable cyber music, has meant that the larger record outlets, such as HMV and Virgin, are left with the possibility that they won't be able to afford the up keep of their vast, prominent high street stores. I believe that one option Virgin are looking into is converting some of these stores into electronic centres. I understand that this would predominantly be based around mobile communications. This would

make sense as Virgin already have a strong foothold in the market place, and with the new wave of "mobiles" just around the corner, it could become a lucrative venture. Yet, as well as mobile telephones, there would also be an area selling DVD players and hi-fi equipment. Just how large an area this would be isn't clear yet, but it must be a concern for existing hi-fi stores. The huge marketing power and retail experience that Virgin already possess could pose a very real threat to the status quo. But all is not doom and gloom. Many of those in the industry know that, for the sake of the hi-fi separates continuity, expanding the market place is extremely important. If one looks at Virgin's existing cus-

tomers, I'd bet that a fair percentage had never even heard of even the largest hi-fi separate chain stores (Richer Sounds, Sevenoaks, Super Fi et al) that you and I know well. Further more, many of the specialist stores they'd find too intimidating. The big multiples that already dabble in hi-fi separates such as Dixons, Currys and the like are also a turn off, as their sharp-suited and often high pressure sales techniques don't appeal to the "bright young things" Virgin attracts. So, if Virgin do go ahead with the plan and hi-fi separates are represented, it's fair to say that there will be a whole new audience for quality hi-fi.

How the future of hi-fi retailing shapes out is very much in the hands of such companies; just how involved they decide to become and at what price basis. Whatever the

final decision, I don't see the better independents being effected. Many are in towns where there isn't even a mega record store in the first place. Others have loyal clients and, because of their size, will be quick to adapt to the new market place, filling the gaps left by Virgin and their ilk. If Virgin are extremely price competitive then the larger separate chain stores could feel the pinch, yet the better ones are already quick to respond to new technologies and competitors' prices. Whilst not having the buying power of Virgin there are always deals to be had, especially in this global age. So, the fitter hi-fi separates retailers, whilst not being complacent shouldn't face a threat from the new technology stores. The larger electrical retailers, on the other hand, are large enough and have such a diverse range that they, once again, may switch their hi-fi separates floorspace to something else. Especially as time goes by and Virgin's younger audience "grows up" with the company, as is already happening.

**” Many of those in the industry know that, for the sake of the hi-fi separates continuity, expanding the market place is extremely important.**



**Dominic Todd**

# KITS HAVE NEVER

## KiT88 VALVE INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER KIT & KaT88 VALVE POWER AMPLIFIER KIT

Here is the amazing KiT88. The circuit is similar to that of the ever popular KEL34 with a few changes to incorporate the Tesla, JJ branded KT88 power tetrode. This is a pure Class A push-pull design providing 36 watts into an 8ohm load. Gary Devon has come up with a gem of an output transformer (E/I). Combined with the KT08 it offers a virtually unmatched result for a valve amplifier. Frequency response measured 11Hz to 75kHz, separation 71dB, noise 98dB, sensitivity 400mV and distortion 0.03%. "As valve amplifiers go, the KiT88 is one of the best measured performances I have ever come across", says Noel Keywood. Jon Marks says, "The KiT88 pulled a series of surprisingly fast, meaty basslines out of its trickbag when dealing with Suzanne Vega's Nine Objects Of Desire album. As if this wasn't enough, the mid and treble were nice too -

### THE KaT88, THE POWER AMPLIFIER VERSION OF THE KiT88



£425

NEW!

cymbals had a deliciously natural, golden shimmer without sounding soft, and vocals were extremely transparent and crisply defined. KiT88 didn't hang around when it came to exploiting the virtues of its four output valves on numbers such as 'Leaves' and 'Suspect Sustain' from Cirrus' Land's End Jazz CD. Saxophone had a wonderfully smooth, realistic character, and acoustic guitar mixed speed with harmonic richness to very impressive effect. Asian Dub Foundation and Moloko showed no sign at all of the sluggish, woolly bottom-end and poorly-delineated bass beats that most valve amps are to blame for. Which makes the KiT88 an all-round, high-end bargain." Weight 16kg, external dimensions with valves are 30mm(w) x 300mm(d) x 190mm (h).

£440



## KEL34 E&I VALVE INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER KIT

The KEI 34 E&I version is our second generation budget stereo integrated valve amplifier, providing a massive 40 watts of pure valve sound. With 4 line level inputs and one tape output. The KEL 34 E&I is a simple and elegant circuit design using a 6AU6 pentode input valve, an ECC82 double-triode phase splitter and a push-pull pair of Tesla, JJ branded EL34s. The result is a typically sweet, open valve sound with atypical bass control and power. The KEI 34 E&I will work its magic into 'speakers of average sensitivity too. Jon Marks says, "tonally the KEI 34 E&I is a bit of a smoothie". It has a fast, dynamic sound, plucked guitar strings and bass drum enjoy crisp

leading edges and great impact. Clear imaging and spacious sound staging meant voices and instruments really jumped out of the loudspeaker boxes. Overall the KEL34 E&I is a beautiful power amp." At the price, this kit is second to none and will open up the benefits of valve amplification to a whole new class of audio nuts! Weight 12kg. External dimensions with valves: 33cm(w) x 27.5cm(d) x 18cm(h).

## HD83 VALVE HEADPHONE AMPLIFIER KIT

The HD83 is our new headphone amplifier, a beautifully simple design using Mullard ECL83 valves, a triode and power pentode housed in the same envelope. It works directly from any source, be it CD, tape, tuner etc., or from an amplifier's tape out or pre-amp sockets. The circuit utilises high specification output E/I output transformers that will drive any headphone load from 16 ohms to over 300 ohms depending on how the secondaries are wired up. The HD83 is a single-ended design with the power pentode wired up in triode configuration for that added purity and is as quiet as a mouse. For sound quality Jon Marks says, "The bass is punchy and controlled without becoming artificial, while treble has the crispness of the best solid-state, with the tonal purity, delicacy and speed associated with valves. External dimensions 18cm(w) x 30cm(d) x 8cm(h) weight 4kg.

£175



£315



**KEL34 Facelift** - if you want your KEL34 to look like the KiT88 this is what you need - £75.00

**KEL34 Upgrade Kit** - with a superb Panasonic volume control, stargate electrolytics & paper in oil capacitors and fast recovery diodes.

## KEL80 MONOBLOCK AMPLIFIER KIT

Following the success of our budget KEI 34 40watt kit amplifier, we have come up with a 'bigger brother' design. The output stage utilises two pairs of TESLA EL 34 pentodes in parallel-push-pull mode, allowing KEL 80 to turn out 80 watts into an 8ohm load. Heading up the input stage we have the wonderfully linear Russian 6AU6 working into an American 5687 phase-splitter. KEL80's output transformers are 4ohm and 8ohm tapped. With an input sensitivity at around 380mV for full output, it will happily partner both passive and active pre-amplifiers. It is easy to assemble. Simon Pope says, "The proof of the pudding is in the eating and the KEI 80 is a feast for the ears, with solid bass attack, lightning fast reactions, that emphasises musicality as well as power, at 590.00 GBP a pair, a definite valve winner. Each monobloc weighs 12kgs., external dimensions with valves: 14cm(w) x 8cm(h) x 43.5cm(d).

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A PAIR



## K5881 MkII VALVE AMPLIFIER KIT

A 20watt, Class A power amplifier that uses reliable Russian 5881 output valves, a military version of the American 6L6, designed for low distortion audio work. Now with a super shunt regulated push-pull (SRPP) input stage K5881 offers amazing sound quality. It can be used with a simple passive pre-amp or one of our own pre-amplifiers, and it matches modern loudspeakers well. Weight 15kg external dimensions with valves 40cm(w) x 32.5cm(d) x 17cm(h).

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They are easy to drive and need just 30-60watts. KLS10 is unique. Technically advanced, yet compact and relatively inexpensive. There is little to match it.

Sensitivity 89dB 1W/1m, 15mm MDF, internal volume 9Ltrs, external dimensions 19cm(w) x 31cm(h) x 23cm(d).

**DRIVE UNITS & CROSSOVER KIT** £394.00

**DRIVE UNITS ONLY** £358.00

£394

## KLS10 GOLD SUBWOOFER



Designed to compliment KLS10 Gold stand mounters by providing a deep and open bass. The subwoofer is inexpensive, easy to build,

comprising a simple crossover network to a high quality 8 inch Aerogel dual voice coil unit. A must for all KLS10 Gold customers. Sens. 89dB, volume 25 litres, external dimensions 28cm(w) x 43cm(h) x 34cm(d).

**DRIVE UNIT & CROSSOVER KIT** £149.95

**DRIVE UNIT ONLY** £71.00

£149.95

## KLS9 TWO WAY FLOORSTANDER



Here's a storm for you - KLS9, with its BB4 alignment bass cabinet and Audax High Definition Aerogel 8in bass/midrange unit. Designed by Noel Keywood to possess optimal bass damping and a clean step response. Aided by a teensy bit of bass lift, KLS9 really thunders; it will re-arrange your furniture. But it does not waffle, falling silent when there's no bass in the music. Aided by a high power 1in fabric dome tweeter, KLS9 is detailed, evenly balanced and images superbly. It is an easy 12ohm load and is 88dB sensitive. For amps up to 60W. Easy to build and great for beginners. Internal volume 70Ltrs, 18m MDF external dimensions 25cm(w) x 93cm(h) x 40cm(d).

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**DRIVE UNIT PACK** £160.00

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Finally, PSU-II is a power supply unit that feeds both the PRE-II and PHONO-II.

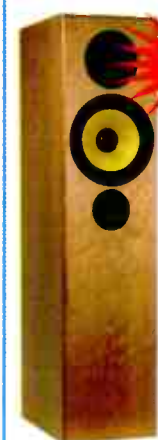
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KLS12 is a versatile budget loudspeaker that delivers fine sound quality at a low low price. It utilises Audax's HT210F0 woven fibre glass cone, mid/bass unit, beautifully married with the TW034X0, 34mm diameter doped fabric dome tweeter. Noel Keywood says, 'The KLS12 is a transparent, vividly detailed transducer with fine projection. It has tight well defined bass, which means it is best positioned close to a rear wall. Vocals possess a clean outline with an intense clarity.' At 89dB the KLS12 is easy to drive, thus, it is suitable for 20W and upward power amps. Internal volume = 34.1 litres

standmounter external dimensions = 58cm(h) x 24.2cm(w) x 34cm(d) floor stander external dimensions (with sand filled space cavity) = 58cm(h) x 24.2cm(w) x 34cm(d)

**DRIVE UNITS & CROSSOVER KIT** £175.00

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KLS3 uses extremely light and stiff carbon-fibre cone (drive units for a fast, accurate sound. A dedicated 4inch carbon-fibre midrange drive unit provides the clean, smooth and detailed midrange characterised by superb projection. Its high 90dB sensitivity and near flat 8ohm impedance make it one of the easiest loudspeakers to drive. An ideal loudspeaker for high-end valve amplifiers. 25mm MDF, internal volume 60Ltrs, external dimensions 26cm(w) x 100cm(h) x 35cm(d).

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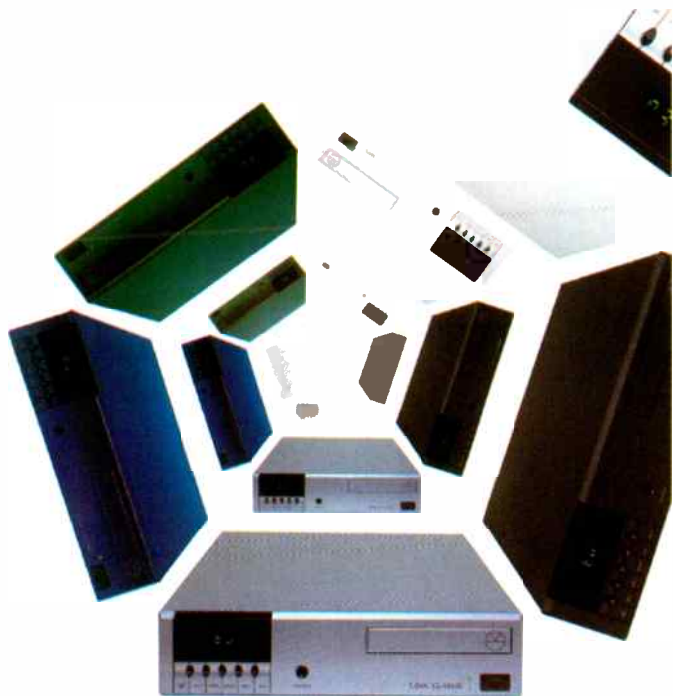
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KEL80 Valve Monoblock Amplifier kit (with valves).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£590	£500
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Drive Units .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£358	£311	
KLS10 SUBWOOFER Drive Unit + Crossover Kit etc .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£149.95	£130	
KLS10 SUBWOOFER Drive Unit.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£71	£61	
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25mm horn loaded 97dB .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£25	£21*	
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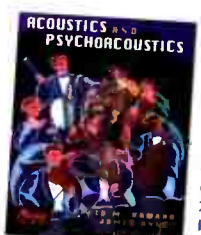
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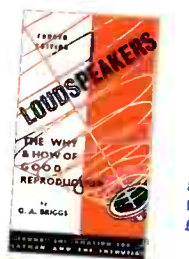
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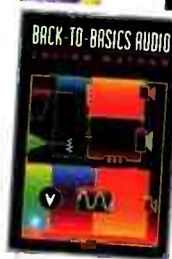
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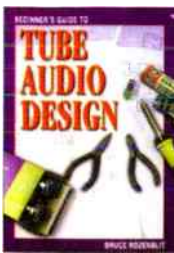
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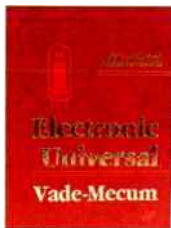
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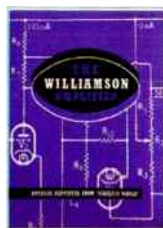
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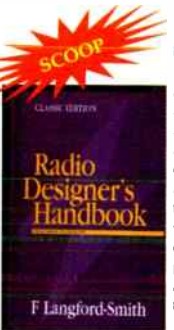
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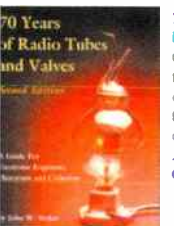
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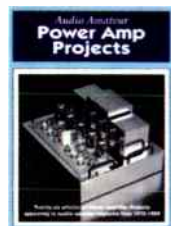
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# buying guide

## Loudspeakers £ Year Verdict

### Under £300

Prices shown are those at the time of review

Model	Price	Year	Verdict
Acoustic Energy AE100	£200	Jan 96	Reasonably neutral but ultimately lacklustre. Control of treble and mid-range poor.
Acoustic Energy Aegis One	£150	Sep 99	Weighty, powerful performers with plenty of character. Exceptional value for money.
Audio Gem Opals	£240	Dec 97	Partner the Opals with warm ancillaries and you get an involving sound. Avoid bright amps and sources.
Aura LSB-627M	£230	Aug 98	Energetic, bold and highly detailed, the Aura is one to consider for the budget-conscious.
Aura LST-627	£299	Oct 98	Like Aura's matching stand mounters, the 627Ms are lucid and controlled. Treble is brightish.
B&W 601	£200	Jan 96	Unrestricted and clean sound with satisfying musicality. An engaging subtlety not common at the price.
B&W DM302	£130	Apr 96	Clear open and detailed sound but balance too forward and weak bass.
B&W DM602	£250	Nov 96	Excel with taut hard-hitting bass with dynamic and uncoloured midrange. Metal dome tweeter bleaches out the treble.
Boston CR6	£150	Sep 98	With simple music, the CR6s work well, but not quite as well as the best of the competition.
Castle Isis	£230	Jan 96	A lively little animal, well worth the money.
Celestion 121	£119	Feb 98	The 121s' powerful, confident sound belies a rather poor measured performance.
Celestion Impact 15	£200	Jan 96	Big presentation but a rather distant quality. Could sound boomy and confined.
Celestion Impact 23	£299	Nov 96	Sterling performance in the bass with speed and control. Good midrange projection.
Chano Hiper 1000	£299	Feb 99	Quality construction and sound marry to produce a very capable 'speaker. Open treble and firm bass for the size.
Eltax Liberty 3+	£150	Jan 98	A lot of loudspeaker for the money. Punch and slam in the bass but sometimes thin in the treble.
Eltax Liberty 5+	£200	Sep 99	Immediate 'hi-fi' sound with little subtlety or finesse. Bass inclined to boom, although mass-loading helps.
Eltax Symphony 6	£240	Nov 96	Although bright, the Symphony 6s score for clarity and power. Bass is fast and accurate.
Gale 2i	£140	Feb 97	Smooth, balanced performers that do a good job on any genre. Free from the nasties that afflict many at the price.
Gale Mini Monitor	£50	Apr 97	Not the last word in midrange or bass clarity, but gives real hi-fi results for a paltry £50.
GLL ICT100	£170	Nov 95	For their size and price they offer some super qualities, especially stable imaging.
Heybrook Heylette	£199	Sep 99	Better suited to Classical than Rock or Heavy Metal. Smooth and refined sound will appeal to many.
Heybrook Optima	£259	Oct 96	Capable all-rounders, the Optimas combine smoothness, insight and control to great effect.
Heybrook HB1 S3	£269	Nov 96	Excellent imaging with clear treble and midrange. Bass slightly dry and boxy but would suit a smaller room.
Jamo CS5 Actives	£200	Oct 98	In spite of a few colorations, the Jamos are fine examples of budget active operation.
JPW ML510	£130	Jan 98	With greater transparency and a bit more get-up-and-go, the 510s could be leaders of the budget pack.
Kef 60S	£200	May 96	The 60S is open and detailed but coloured too.
Kef Coda 7	£129	Apr 95	Rhythmic push and tuneful bass are the plus points of these small standmounts.
Kef Coda 8	£200	Jan 96	Breezy presence, good dynamics and a sense of fullness. Not the utmost in clarity, some box colouration.
Kef Coda 9	£299	Jul 96	Strong bass can get out of control, as can treble. This tends to overpower the midrange.
KEF Cresta 2	£150	Oct 99	A highly entertaining bi-wire budget mini. The only slight let-down is sound staging.
Kef Q15	£199	Feb 97	Impressive bass and a sweet clarity make the Q15s 'speakers that'll put a smile on any audiophile's face.
Kenwood LS90UK	£129	Jul 98	The LS90UKs have dry bass and limited tonal colour, but staging and imaging are superb.
Linn Sekrit	£298	Apr 96	Well-behaved and with a decent tonal quality.
Mission 700	£130	May 98	The 700s are easily outclassed by Mission's own superb 731 Pros at a £10 premium.
Mission 702e	£199	Sep 99	Well constructed and engineered but top-heavy balance lets the side down with its lack of subtlety.
Mission 731	£129	Apr 95	An initially impressive, up front sound but ultimately a little uninvolved.
Mission 731 Pro	£139	Jul 97	Music makers with a clean, punchy sound. Real value for money.
Mission 731i	£130	Nov 96	Mission's babies are a truly worthwhile improvement on the original 731s.
Mission 731LE	£150	Nov 95	Excellent sound puts the competitors in the shade. Well built and pretty too!
Mission 732i	£200	Aug 97	If you've got £200 with 'loudspeaker' written on it, then the 732i should be on your shopping list.
Mission 771	£170	Jul 98	Superb stand mounters of real refinement and musicality. A touch bass light.
Mission 772	£230	Apr 99	Civilised standmounters which lack nothing in control, finesse or transparency.
Monsoon MM-1000	£200	May 99	A novel multi-media two-satellites-and-sub which nevertheless demands to be taken quite seriously.
Mordaunt-Short MS20i	£200	Jan 96	Very tight bass and an all-round big sound. Some sharpness in the treble but assertive and clear.
Nad 801	£100	Jun 97	Impressive bass with midrange clarity are pluses. Prominent treble stops the 801 from challenging the best.
Paradigm Mini Monitors	£230	Aug 97	The Paradigms have a generally enjoyable sound but treble is sharp and midrange recessed.
QLN 122	£270	Jun 96	Solid bottom end will drive a large room well, but they're a bit bright too.
RDL RA Labs Mini Ref	£99	Jul 95	Engineering is not tip-top, but with a smooth system they will produce a clear and open, if bright, sound.
Revolver Purdey	£200	Jan 96	Rather small sound for a big cabinet. Absence of deep bass hard to forgive.
Richard Allen Minette 3	£159	Sep 99	Very individualistic loudspeakers will need careful auditioning to ensure that they're right for you.
Rogers LS1	£149	Feb 96	Clear, bright and open but with weak bass. Best used close to or against a wall.
Rogers LS33	£250	Nov 96	Detailed and clear with a forward midrange. Could be a little rough on vocals; bass extension is limited.
System Audio 1005	£299	Aug 96	Excellent all-rounder that provides a real open window into almost every genre of music.
Tangent Monitor 11	£200	Nov 97	The Tangents' bass has attractive speed and impact, matched with smooth treble and open midband.
Tangent Monitor 2	£60	Jul 96	Good imaging as well as control. Tweets a bit too much but more than fine for the money.
Tannoy Mercury m1	£120	Jun 98	The best at the price and capable of embarrassing many more expensive 'speakers.
Tannoy Mercury m2	£140	May 97	For £140, you get a 'speaker with transparency and enjoyability unmatched at the price.
Tannoy Mercury m2.5	£160	Sep 99	A little brittle in the upper midrange but the virtues outweigh the faults many times over. Budget bargain.
Tannoy Mercury m3	£240	Nov 97	Even overall balance and taut secure bass, if not the deepest ever. Slightly lightweight and uninvolved.
Tannoy R1	£199	Nov 98	Worth an audition if you need to balance a bright source and amp, but treble lacks clarity.
TDL NFM 1	£120	May 97	Bright treble is partially balanced by taut, well integrated bass, but outclassed by the competition.
TDL Nucleus 1	£60	Apr 97	Clean, incisive, detailed and revealing, especially in the bass.
TDL Nucleus 3	£200	Sep 99	The more you listen, the more you appreciate them. Best with smaller scale music - not for headbangers.
W'dale Active Diamond	£180	Mar 99	Great value introduction to active. The sound is deep and powerful but could be a little coloured for some.
Wh D'm'd Anniversary 7.2	£150	Sep 99	Honest reproduction, but with a suspicion of bass boom. Lacking in finesse; little dated now.
Wharfedale Valdsu 300	£150	Jul 96	Can work well if partnered to give weighty bass and smooth treble.



Heybrook Heylette



Mission 772

# Billy Vee

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## Loudspeakers £ Year Verdict

### £300-£799

Aleais M1 (active)	£549	Jul 99	Almost worthy of domestic bargain status, the M1s lack just a little smoothness and finesse.
Arcaydis AS2	£700	Oct 99	Quality drive units give smoothness, detail and imaging. Require hefty amplification and finish could be better.
Arcaydis ASC	£399	Jun 99	The ASCs have natural warmth and good imaging. Inclined to be a little power-hungry.
B&W CDM1SE	£600	Apr 98	Tuneful and confident, these 'speakers are well suited to Pop and Dance music.
B&W DM305	£350	Mar 97	All the ingredients for listening fun are in the DM305. Overall presentation could be more cohesive though.
B&W DM602 Series 2	£300	Aug 99	A fair design that needs partnering with smooth amplification in a well-furnished room.
B&W P4	£600	Mar 95	Good-looking solid 'speakers with great spirit and tenacity but with a dry treble. Not fans of classical music.
Blue Room Minipod	£400	Jan 97	Arresting style allied to an engaging sound makes the Minipods attractive. Best with smooth amps and source.
Castle Avon	£699	Dec 96	Taut, dry bass and lucid midrange but need matching to warm ancillaries to avoid sounding bright.
Castle Harlech	£799	Aug 96	Bass power and extension will impress but overall sound is uneven and rather sterile.
Castle Inversion	£425	Aug 99	Unusual styling will polarize opinion, but sonically the '15s are fair performers. Imaging could be better.
Castle Kendal	£450	Mar 98	The Kendals have great clarity but need coupling to warm ancillaries.
Castle Severn II	£579	Jul 98	Apart from some hardness in the tweeters, the Severn 2s are accomplished all-rounders.
Chario Hiper 1	£399	May 95	Music makers through and through with a great feel for rhythm and dynamics.
Chario Lynx	£549	Apr 99	The Lynxes are superbly built but their rising bass and treble suit home cinema more than hi-fi.
Dali 450	£700	Feb 96	A powerful and rich sound from these competitively priced floorstanders makes them worth a recommendation.
Epos ES12	£495	Oct 96	Strong, punchy bass allied to detailed and articulate midrange and treble.
Heybrook Heylios	£339	Mar 97	The Heylios stand out for their bass depth, dynamics and sound staging. Overall balance prefers Classical to Rock.
Heybrook Heylio	£389	Oct 95	Posses a neutral, fast and dry sound. A good match for soft sounding systems.
Jamo 307	£300	Apr 95	Delicate, detailed sound, albeit with rather imprecise imaging. Will work well on a bookshelf.
JPW ML910	£300	Nov 97	The 910s aren't perfect but make music fun. Quality, power and extension, the Millenniums are worth a listen.
JPW Ruby 2	£395	Oct 98	Once allied to warm electronics, the Ruby 2s mix insight with plenty of involvement.
Kef LS3/5A	£599	Jul 95	Partnered with the Rogers AB1, this is a substantial marriage.
Kef Q35	£350	Nov 97	Very accomplished midrange and treble but the dry in the bass. For Rock fans the upper bass speed is appealing.
Kef Q55	£499	Aug 97	The Q55s look rather expensive at £500 with their 'boom and tizz' presentation.
Kef RDM1	£499	Oct 97	The RDM1s soundstage well thanks to their Uni-Q drivers. Can be uninvolved because of a lack of scale and impact.
Linn Tukan	£389	Dec 95	Highly musical standmounters that give similarly priced floorstanders a great deal to worry about.
Meridian A500	£750	May 95	Very polite and many will appreciate their civility. Deep powerful bass.
Mission 733	£300	Apr 95	Captivating floorstanders that bring music to life - what good hi-fi should do.
Mission 773e	£400	Nov 99	Nicely engineered slimline model. Some sonic trade-offs with the compact size.
Mission 734	£430	Sep 95	Engineered for low price and showroom appeal rather than absolute sound quality.
Mission 751 Freedom	£350	Apr 97	Charming little stand-mounters with a sweet, warm, musical sound.
Mission 752 Freedom	£578	Jan 97	Dynamic, punchy, and musical yet refined like few at the price. Bass lacks a little depth.
Mission 774	£500	Feb 99	With the right ancillaries, the 774s have a clarity and lack of colouration still rare at the price.
Mordaunt-Short MS251	£300	Nov 96	Sweet sounding metal dome tweeter although the dry bass and rather plasticky midrange work against it.
Musical Technology PM15	£474	Jan 99	Sophisticated, neutral sound and fine musicality put the PM15s near the head of the class.
Near 10M	£500	Jan 96	A thin and hard sound but precise with it!
Neat Critique II	£445	Jan 99	Deserving 'speakers with good looks and build. Can fail to shine with over-polite equipment.
NHT 1.3	£389	Aug 95	Very crisp sounding 'speakers best suited to smaller rooms.
Opera Mini	£300	Nov 99	A mini 'speaker made for music. Well built and versatile. At worst, ponderous, at best, immense.
Opera Prima	£495	Feb 99	The Primas offer a taste of the high-end at a sensible price. They are more fans of Classical than Rock though.
Ortofon ConCorde 6	£329	Oct 95	Good value floorstanders with clean enjoyable sound - not quite supersonic, though.
Polk PSW150	£500	Jul 97	The PSW150 adds depth to a system but can sound obvious at times.
Proac Tablette	£600	Aug 98	Amp-sensitive and slightly boxy in the lower treble, the ProAcs are still highly musical.
Rel Q Bass	£350	May 96	Needs care in setting up but this subwoofer offers serious quality bass for not a lot of money.
REL Q100E	£500	Apr 98	Another capable sub from REL that boosts bass and improves sound staging.
Rogers AB 1	£499	Jul 95	When used with the Kef LS3/5a this sub delivers the goods, beyond a doubt.
Roksan RokOne	£595	Feb 97	Musically involving 'speakers that many will enjoy, but a little unrefined at times.
Sequence 400	£329	Apr 96	Good at orchestral scale but coloured in the midband.
Soundcraft Absolute 4P	£799	Oct 97	The Absolute 4Ps excel in all areas except for the rather bright, hard treble. Bass is exceptional.
Soundcraft 2030	£599	Jun 96	Smooth and coherent in their delivery with deep and taut bass extension. Not the most spacious sound.
Systemdek 165	£400	Feb 96	Dry and clean sound, but can become hard and confused when pushed.
Tannoy Precision P10	£300	May 98	Though very even in their performance, the P10s lack ultimate clarity and punch.
Tannoy Profile 633 plus	£300	Nov 96	Weighty bass and rhythmic detail work well on dance. Less satisfying with classical music. Firm imaging.
Tannoy Revolution r2	£350	Oct 99	Lively and exciting, will appeal to many. Solid build and confident sound makes them well worth the money.
TDL RTL 4	£650	Feb 95	Easy going with plenty of detail and timbral richness. Better with classical fare.
TDL T-line 2	£550	Jan 97	Midrange and treble have good tonal colour, detail and speed. Bass is slow and blurred.
Technics SB-MO1E	£400	Nov 99	Punchy and dynamic, yet refined. In a small environment, these highly detailed 'speakers are excellent.
Technics SB-M300	£350	Nov 95	A great sound with solid bass from a compact and well priced 'speaker.
Technics SB-M500	£450	May 96	Clean, dry and taut with good imaging and sound staging. More neutral than Mission's 752s but less euphonic.
Titan Mini T2B	£600	Dec 99	Heftily built standmounts with terrific punch and attack. The metal drivers might make classical a bit harsh.
Triangle Comete TZXe	£475	Jan 95	Quite pleasant, inoffensive sound but others costing less can offer more.
Wharfedale Valdus 500	£300	Oct 95	Good for adding scale and power to a weak system or budget separates.
Yamaha MSP5	£449	Jun 99	Ruthless to poorly-produced material and can sound cold, but their detailing is impressive.



JPW Ruby 2.



Opera Prima

Prices shown are those at the time of review

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Cyrus 2/PSX Amplifier S/H	.....(649.00)	£349.00	Naim AV1 Surround Processor (1Yr G/tee)	..(1835.00) £895.00
Epos ES22 Speakers (Light Cherry)	.....(1185.00)	£799.00	Pioneer 515 DVD Player (NEW)	.....(399.00) £249.00
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Linn Kaber Aktiv (Walnut/Grey) inc cards	..(2850.00)	£1095.00	TAG T20 Tuner (2Yr warranty)	.....(1099.00) £749.00
Linn Wakonda Preamp S/H(1Yr G/tee)	.....(750.00)	£399.00	TAG PA10 Pre Amp (2Yr G/tee)	.....(899.00) £499.00
Linn Wakonda/Kudos Phono S/H	.....(1400.00)	£799.00	TAG 60P Power Amp (2Yr warranty)	.....(899.00) £579.00
Linn LK140 Power Amp (2Yr G/tee)	.....(750.00)	£469.00	TAG 125 Mono P/Amps pair (2Yr G/tee)	..(2398.00) £1695.00

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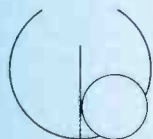


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## Loudspeakers £ Year Verdict

### £800-£1499

Acous.Precn Elkos RF1	£800	Nov 99	Bass-light, but excellent in every other area. A sub is on the way. Very revealing of ancillary components.
Audionote E	£1450	Mar 95	Big, bulky and ultra-sensitive with quick pace and a well balanced sound, but not without flaws.
Audiovector M1 Sig.	£1479	Aug 98	The M1 Sigs may be a little laid-back, but they have a pleasant and involving sound.
Audiovector M2	£1499	Jun 98	The M2s are marred by a boom 'n' lizz presentation that suits Heavy Metal but not much else.
B&W CDM7	£999	Feb 98	With warm ancillaries the CDM7s produce a weighty, open sound. Bass could be faster.
Castle Howard S2	£1099	Mar 96	Fantastically deep and tight bass but some treble sharpness requires careful matching
Celestion A2	£1499	Jun 98	Focus is not a strength, but bass extension and even tonality are. Metal tweeter can be bright.
Charlo Academy One	£1199	Dec 95	Musical realism and a great real-wood finish make these 'speakers enjoyable, if not perfect.
Diapason Karls	£1250	May 99	Small cabinet precludes the deepest bass, but a sweet little act for all that. Seriously imaging abilities.
ELAC Jet 310i	£800	Jul 99	Lovely fast, clear sound majors on musicality. 10 year guarantee too.
Epos ES22	£1185	Jun 98	Aside from a slightly cool balance, the ES22s shine. Dynamics, bass depth and control are tops.
Event 20/20BAS	£829	Sep 98	Warm, detailed and well-endowed in the bass, the Events lack only a touch of overall control.
Harbeth DPM1 Active	£849	Sep 98	Now HHB's Circle Actives, these loudspeakers mix the best of pro and domestic to produce first-class results.
Harbeth HL Compact 7	£1329	Jun 96	Dry and analytical but truthful with it. A first class monitor ideally suited to acoustic or classical music.
Harbeth HL K6	£975	Dec 96	Clean, musical and classy Harbeth have done themselves proud again!
KAR Torino	£895	Jan 97	The Torinos' stylish sound won't shame any system. That powerful bass does need space to breathe properly though.
Kef Reference 1	£995	May 95	Beautifully fluid and integrated mid band and treble but can be slow, with a little loss of bass control.
KEF Reference 2	£1499	Jan 95	Handles rock and classical with equal aplomb, with the ability to reproduce detail that flummoxes many other models.
Klipsch Heresy II	£1150	May 99	Horn and infinite-baffle hybrid with power to spare. Phasing and frequency accurate beyond belief.
KRK V8	£995	Sep 98	Ultra-detailed and revealing, the V8s are true pro more than domestic transducers.
Magneplaner MG 0.6 SE	£1370	Mar 95	Very clear detail and separation, but just fails to produce a fully 3-dimensional sound.
Magneplaner MG12/QR	£1200	May 99	Lightness of touch, dynamics and clarity in trumps. Needs powerful amplification for 77dB/W/m. Not a valve 'speaker.
Mirage 890i	£1075	Oct 95	An easy going, open and natural sound makes the mirages an attractive proposition.
Mission 754 F5	£1299	Sep 96	Articulate and informative sound with fine imaging and light, deep bass.
Mordaunt Short 860	£1450	Dec 95	Fast, tight and informative, but a poor tweeter casts a grey shadow.
Musical-Tech. Falcon	£895	May 96	Give a big sense of scale on rock and jazz but not subtle and even enough for the critical classical listener.
NEAR Soundmast	£1199	Aug 95	An interesting, musical floorstander that's good value even at this price.
Origin Live Sovereign	£1225	Jun 98	The OLs have transparency and detail in considerable amounts. Bass can be loose though.
PT Ventricle	£896	Aug 95	Smooth and refined floorstanders that some listeners will find captivating.
QLN Signature	£1499	Mar 96	Super sound staging, openness and detail. Well worth seeking out.
REL Stadlum 2	£995	Aug 95	Excellent bass performance means that this subwoofer is no toy.
Roksan Ojan 3	£1000	Jan 98	Unusual 'speakers with great rhythmic capabilities and bass. Could be more transparent.
Ruark Paladin	£1099	May 95	The Paladins possess a detailed and expansive soundstage but also a rather dry character
Ruark 2040	£899	Oct 96	The tweeter works well but a recessed midband and one-note bass are the Achilles heels.
Spendor FL8	£1275	Jun 98	The FL8s are warm, mellow performers which prefer Classical to Rock.
Tannoy D300	£1000	Apr 97	Impressive bass extension and control go hand in hand with precise imaging to make the D300s a snip at £1000.
Totem Model 1 Sig.	£1250	Sep 97	Good but the move from standard to Signature has taken speed and punch out of the Model 1s
UKD Callas Gold	£995	Jun 96	A rich and open sound, extremely musical if not strictly accurate. Great bass extension for their size.
UKD Divina	£1390	Jun 95	Not the most neutral 'speakers but they are extremely smooth with an overall coherence to the sound.
Veritas 7	£1000	Jun 99	The Veritas 7s combine neutrality and detail with fluidity and sophistication.
Zingali Concerto .1	£1100	Dec 99	Beautiful cosmetics but poor frequency balance. May be a partner for a subwoofer; otherwise too bass-light.



Klipsch Heresy

### £1500-

Audiovector 6	£4600	Jun 95	If you have enough room and money the 6s are capable of a highly musical, involving performance.
BKS 107 MkII	£1500	Dec 98	The 107 Mk2s may look slim but they have a solid sound and are fabulously revealing.
Cadence ES	£3500	Sep 95	Interesting design that incorporates an electrostatic tweeter. An impressive sound but an inconsistent performer.
Celestion A3	£1800	May 97	The A3s are quite simply superb. All you'll need to enjoy them is a large enough listening room.
Epos ES25	£1505	May 95	An extremely coherent and focussed sound, these are true audiophile speakers. Captivating with classical music.
Harbeth HLS8	£1999	Mar 97	Glassy clarity, bright treble, with bass that comes alive when given welly. Expensive though.
Heybrook Octet	£1800	Jul 98	The Octets are smooth, laid-back floor standers. Lack speed and transparency.
Jamo Concert 11	£2000	Dec 97	A worthy bigger brother for the Concert 8s, with a fast, transparent and even sound.
Jamo Concert 8	£1500	Jun 97	The Concert 8s are superbly clean and transparent. Their nature will show up any source shortcomings.
JBL S2600	£3500	Jul 96	Smooth, detailed and spacious with great scale and imaging. Capable of producing a real performance.
Kef Reference 3	£2000	Nov 95	For superb reproduction within large rooms, the 3s are a force to be reckoned with.
Kef Reference 4	£3099	Oct 96	Superb bass and near-electrostatic soundstaging make these involving 'speakers a bargain.
Living Voice Auditorium	£1500	May 99	Their strengths suggest a Classical 'speaker but they suit electronic compositions better. Rich tone but loose bass.
Proac Studio 150	£1500	Mar 99	Musically engaging but the tall ProAc's brightness suits them best for smooth valve amplification.
Slate Audio Stormforce	£8000	Feb 99	The best home for a reflex-loaded Tannoy dual-concentric, but they don't come cheap!
Spendor SP7/1	£1970	Jan 95	Gorgeous looking. Listening becomes an enjoyable experience, full of surprises from subtleties.
Spendor SP9/1	£3400	Apr 96	One of the clearest and most expressive loudspeakers you'll ever find for a large room. Easy to drive, too.
Tannoy AMS8	£2702	Aug 96	Bold, powerful sound with solid bass, focussed midrange and delicious treble. Well worth tracking down.
Tannoy D900	£3999	Sep 97	£4000 may be a lot to pay for a pair of 'speakers, but the Tannoys deliver to great effect in all areas.
Technics SB-M1000	£1500	Nov 96	Materially excellent value. Sound clean and extended but can lack involvement.
Thomas Transducers Brio	£4750	Feb 95	Capable of producing a captivating performance of lifelike proportions with a great air of naturalness.
Thomas Virtuoso Gold	£3395	May 98	Impressive horns that combine lightness of touch with power and clarity.



Jamo Concert 8.

Prices shown are those at the time of review

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Prices correct at time of press. E&OE

Integrated £ Year Verdict

## under £300

Alchemist Maxim	£299	Mar 96	Fluid and musical but upper bass is a little dry. Useful phono stage with but with a little sibilance and ringing.
AMC 3025	£150	Nov 96	A lot for very little money - sweet sound and good build make the AMC 3025 a great starter amp.
AMC 3050A	£170	Feb 98	Offers plenty of power for the money but sound quality is not class leading.
Arcam Alpha 5 plus	£250	Oct 96	Good with efficient loudspeakers but generally needs more power and control.
Arcam Alpha One	£230	Jan 99	In a smooth system with a warmish bias the Alpha One makes a strong case for itself.
Aura VA80	£279	Apr 95	Excellent value for money and will get the best from any component. Needs a separate phono stage.
Aura VA80 SEx	£250	Mar 96	The Aura has a smooth, civilised sound with fine detail. Bass punch really rolls along. Good phono stage.
Cambridge A1 MkIII integ	£100	Jul 98	Involving and finely detailed, the Cambridge pushes forward the boundaries for inexpensive amps.
Denon PMA 250SE	£160	Feb 97	A mix of control, delicacy and detail allows it to excel with any music.
Denon PMA 425R	£230	Sep 96	Good drive, punch and an open soundstage, but suffers from confusion plus a thin midrange and treble.
Harmon Kardon HK610	£180	Jun 95	Thorough-going down to earth liveliness. Bright but clean which gives appealing vivacity.
Harmon Kardon HK620	£280	Oct 95	Not quite a giant killer. The Harman is nevertheless a good solid budget buy.
Musical Fidelity E11	£299	Feb 98	A very capable integrated with a smoothness and warmth predisposed to classical rather than rock.
NAD 304	£239	Apr 95	Fine quality bass but rather lackadaisical as regards timing. Phono stage moderate. Needs careful matching.
NAD 310	£130	Jan 95	Good detail and a spacious open sound gives acoustic music and the majority of rock superb clarity.
NAD C320	£200	Apr 99	Younger sibling of the famous 3020 with many of its virtues to boot. Pre-eminently balanced and natural.
Pioneer A103	£130	Mar 95	Luxurious presentation doesn't compensate for the tendency to un-rhythmic effects. MM phono stage.
Pioneer A300X	£230	Apr 95	Another highly capable all-rounder although a touch sterile sounding for some tastes.
Pro-ject 7	£259	Apr 95	On a budget, the Pro-ject has strong merit, including an excellent phono stage. Not for all systems.
Rotel RA 970BX	£250	Oct 96	Fresh sound with sharp attack. A slight midrange emphasis can make certain music sound rather forward.
Rotel RA 931	£150	Dec 98	For the money there's no faulting such a gifted performer.
Sony TAF446E	£250	Aug 95	Bright clear and detailed, but needs a touch more refinement to prevail.
Teac A-E2000	£180	Sep 99	Unusual power supply and very clear treble. Mid and bass so-so hot but the Teac's not expensive considering.
Technics SU A700 mk3	£250	Jan 97	A smooth unassuming sound misses out on the subtlety which brings music to life.

Prices shown are those at the time of review



Audio Analogue Puccini.

## £300-£799

Affordable Valve EL34	£600	Feb 00	Low feedback integrated with plenty of slam. Not the ultimate in refinement but good value.
Alchemist APD43A Nexus	£799	Dec 99	A good looker with a smooth and powerful sound, if a tad sterile. Competition is strong at the price.
Alchemist Axiom	£300	Sep 95	Musically rewarding; deserves serious audition. Great British hi-fi on a budget.
AMC 3150A	£329	Nov 98	Not the most musical amp ever but good value. The tone controls and balance adjustment will appeal to some.
Arcam Alpha 6+	£350	Jan 96	Full and smooth sound, unfortunately with loose bass.
Arcam Alpha 9	£500	Dec 96	Excellent value. A detailed and open sound gives great atmosphere to all types of music
A. A. Puccini SE	£595	Dec 97	All the main ingredients like rhythm and dynamics present and correct. Natural smoothness and transparency.
Audio Analogue Puccini	£595	Sep 97	Excellent sound quality outstrips the competition at up to £1000.
Audiolab 8000S	£700	Dec 97	Powerful hefty sound which doesn't blench when driving awkward loads.
Cairn Aria	£450	Oct 99	Looks great and Rocks with the best of them, but treble could be smoother.
Cyrus 3	£500	Oct 96	Highly refined and detailed performance with a clear well-proportioned soundstage.
Cyrus Straight Line	£398	Nov 98	A good, honest bit of kit with a fine musical sound and no glaring vices.
Densen Beat	£650	Dec 97	If a musical adrenaline rush is what you seek, fine. Listening in bulk, rather clinical and cold sounding.
Edmund ESI 10	£400	Apr 99	Solid build and a big sound make the ESI 10 worthy of audition. Not perhaps the transparent at the price.
Holfi Audis	£750	Jun 98	Powerful and refreshingly pure; a sound investment.
Kenwood KA-7090R	£400	Apr 98	Excels with sound staging but lacks subtlety and tonal colour.
LFD Mistral	£499	Jun 97	An extremely enjoyable, lucid little amplifier that really gets to the heart of the music.
Marantz PM-65 KI-S	£400	Nov 97	An enjoyable and rhythmic sound but may be too lean for some bass-light 'speakers.
Monrio Asty RM	£500	Aug 99	Attractive integrated that offers a glimpse of real high-end performance. A touch bass light, though.
Monrio MJ	£695	Jan 97	An engaging musical performance; sweet overall sound. Doesn't cope with difficult loads so well.
Moth 30 Integrated	£320	Jul 95	A big open sound sets the Moth apart at this price. Low powered, though. Distinctly amateurish looks.
Musical Fidelity X-A1	£480	Dec 98	Two boxes don't form a pre and power in the X-A1 but the result is nevertheless a winning combination.
Myrrad T-40	£399	Nov 98	Couple the Myrrad with a warm system and enjoy. Possibly a little lightweight on the Reggae & Rap side.
Nad 317	£470	May 97	With 80 watts on tap, the NAD has power aplenty but is rather dynamically limited and ultimately uninvolved.
Naim Nait	£500	May 95	Rather monochromatic with midband emphasis and slightly dry bass. Good imaging but smallish soundstage.
Nakamichi RE-10 (receiver)	£400	Jul 99	A powerful performer in a competent package that is good value for money. Bettered by good separates though.
Orelle SA 100	£449	Jul 96	Clean, open, active sound. Smooth and detailed with good punch too. One of the best at the price.
Pioneer A-300R Precision	£400	Aug 97	A bargain at £400 pure and simple. Outclasses the competition in every area.
Pioneer A400X	£300	Oct 96	Complements all sorts of music with power and confidence. Outstanding value for money.
Quad 77	£595	Feb 95	Although classically orientated, the Quad will rock too. Precise and stable imagery and fidelity to tonal values.
Roksan Caspian	£695	Jun 97	Mixes the best of solid state and valve worlds (without valves!) to produce a seductive sound.
Rose Scion	£615	May 97	Great packaging and super sound make the Scion a winner.
Sonnesteer Camplon	£579	Jan 96	Highly detailed and smooth sound. Worth searching out.
Sony TA-FB920R	£300	Feb 99	Partnered correctly to counterbalance its forwardness, the Sony offers a fast, rhythmic presentation.
Teac ABX7R	£700	Jun 96	Big and powerful sound, but a little unsubtle with it.
Technics SE-A900 MkII	£300	Mar 99	Nominally a separate pre and power, but the pre can't work alone. Exciting but unsubtle.
Thule Spirit IA60	£450	Nov 99	Benefits from a calm, controlled presentation. Could ideally do with more fire in its veins.
Token K50	£345	Nov 99	Well-specified low-feedback design gives punchy results, if a little unrefined. Well sustained power.
Valve Audio Exclamé	£310	Dec 99	The Exclamé does an excellent job of being all things to the the audiophile on a budget.



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## Integrated £ Year Verdict

### £1500-

Audionote Soro Se	£1999	Mar 95	Needs the right loudspeaker but a good musical presentation is in there somewhere.
Copland CSA 14	£1099	Apr 96	A sweet and subtle sound. Fine midrange; transparent and open with vocals.
Densen DM 10	£1299	Jun 95	Dual mono construction gives strong stereo separation. Brutal resolution of detail but not the clearest ever.
Exposure Super XV	£800	Oct 95	A stringy-sounding transistor amp for rock. Build and finish could be better and price lower.
Gamma Rhythm	£2499	Jul 96	Partnered with sensible loudspeakers of good bass depth, the Rhythm is capable of impressive performance.
Lavardin IT	£3200	Apr 99	Has clarity in spades and an extremely rare tonal purity. Outclasses many transistor alternatives with ease.
McIntosh MA6800	£3735	Sep 95	A mighty confection of power, facilities and style, and it sounds good to boot.
Musical Fidelity A1001	£2499	Jun 98	Awesome power and seismic bass. A very good all-rounder with super-clean sound.
Musical Fidelity A300	£1400	Oct 99	High power integrated with phono. Exquisite manners and power to spare. Sets new standards at the price
MVL Integral A2	£850	May 99	An excellent performer with any music. Adept at handling subtle details. Difficult to beat at the price.
Papworth MVH-200	£1200	Jun 99	Very solid, enjoyable amp but not the smoothest top end or the most open sound-staging.
Sheame Phase 2	£800	Apr 97	Even-handed performer deals confidentially with music regardless of genre. Not as smooth as the best.
Sonic Frontiers Anthem	£1295	May 98	A characteristically competent and musical integrated. Prefers fairly efficient loudspeakers though.
Sonnentear Alabaſter	£900	Oct 97	Excellent high-end integrated with a real love of music and plenty of poke.
Teac AB X10	£1000	Sep 95	Very strong all round performer with excellent build and finish. Verging on the expensive though.
Unison Res. Simply 845	£2950	Mar 98	Allied to all the right 'speakers will handle all musical genres with smoothness and power.

Prices shown are those at the time of review

## Pre-amps £ Year Verdict

### Under £300

AMC 1100	£150	Mar 99	Tone controls cannot be defeated and the sum total is a little metallic but value in spades.
Creek OBH-11SE	£199	Apr 99	A very lucid, natural headphone amp which scores as highly on acoustic and Classical as it does on Rock.
Creek OBH-12	£200	Jul 98	Only poor cosmetics mar the Creek. Sonically it's a gem.
Moth 30 Passive	£149	Mar 99	Won't win prizes for best build but a flexible effort for a passive. Somewhat dry presentation overall.
Musical Fidelity X-Cans	£130	Mar 98	If you haven't yet experienced the world of quality headphone listening, the X-Cans is the way to start.
Musical Fidelity X-Pre	£200	Jan 98	A smooth, sweet and musical performer.
Musical Fidelity X-Tone	£120	Mar 99	Easy-to-use stand-alone modern tone control with subtle effect. At present deleted. worthwhile 2nd hand.
Project 7	£259	Feb 95	Immensely enjoyable and listenable, a rare mixture of sophistication and fun.
Rotel RC-971	£150	Mar 99	Five line-level inputs and tone controls make for flexibility. Partnered by the RB-971 power amp. good value.
Technics SU-C1000MkII	£299	Apr 98	Needs slightly more taut bass and a less grainy midrange to bring it up with the best.



Musical Fidelity A300

### £300-£799

Audio Analogue Bellini	£475	Apr 98	Organic and transparent. Free from transistor hardness.
Aura CA200	£749	Mar 97	A smooth and sweet sound devoid of roughness.
Crimson CS610C	£440	Nov 98	The phono stage is the main area of weakness. Can sound a touch muddled at times.
Croft Epoch	£600	Jun 96	A fine sounding preamp, but the phono stage is weak in the bass.
Cyrus Pre	£650	Feb 96	Pre-amplifier has plenty of facilities, but sounds a little unexciting and 'conventional'.
Heybrook Signature II	£549	May 97	Impressive smoothness and tonal colour, transparent as well.
Meridian 501.2	£750	Nov 99	Impressive with high octave music, but lacks that bit of warmth to bring out the best in laid-back material.
PM Audio Lab L1S	£650	Dec 95	This valve pre-amp is very good value indeed.
Rothwell Indus	£499	May 99	Passive pre of box-of-switches, whichever way you look at it the Indu is stylishly finished and well conceived.
Sumo Athena II	£767	May 96	More valve-like than transistor in sound; highly competent if not spectacular.
Talk Hurricane 1	£500	Jun 97	Flexible with a strong controlled sound, but won't suit all tastes.
Technics SU-C1000	£350	Feb 97	Good when mains powered, even better running on its batteries. One to consider at the price.
Thorens TTA2000	£550	Jul 95	Poor sound quality and engineering let this pre-amp down. Pricey too.
Unison Res. Feather 1	£795	Aug 98	Warm but still exciting, it is only let down by a slightly recessed midrange



Croft Epoch Elite

### £800-£1499

Audiolab 8000Q	£999	Jun 95	Highly recommended for its blend of operational sophistication, build and sound quality.
Croft Epoch Elite	£950	Oct 99	Fast and detailed with a breathtaking clarity and sweetness. Well worth saving up for.
Etalon PreampII	£1095	Feb 98	Smooth, even and transparent. Well worth the outlay.
John Sheame Phase 6	£895	Sep 96	Matched with a smooth amp and 'speakers the Phase 6 is capable of a transparent and rewarding performance
Linn Wakonda	£900	Apr 98	In terms of musicality and involvement it falls short.
Meridian 502	£1295	Dec 96	Transparent, detailed sound with good tonal range and very natural presentation.
Musical Fld. Nu-Vista	£1200	Sep 98	A truly competent pre-amp whose high-end sound comes with a very reasonable price tag.
Musical Fidelity X-P100	£800	Jul 99	Clear, fast and flexible. 'Son of NuVista' is a substantial chip off the same block.
Naim NAC102	£999	Apr 97	This even-handed performer images well and deals confidently with music regardless of genre.
Quad 7741	£850	Jul 96	Bright and detailed, but phono stage is inadequate at this price.
TAG McLaren PA10	£850	Nov 98	Justifies its price with a very musical and revealing performance.
XTC Pre-1	£1000	Nov 96	This pre-amp is highly detailed and spacious.

### £1500-

Audiolab PPP30	£1995	Mar 95	A bright and lean approach to the valve sound.
Canary 601 MkII	£1600	Apr 99	Very musical, very revealing. A credit to the valve tradition with considerable kick in reserve.
Chord CPA 1800	£1774	Mar 98	Has it all - detail, transparency, slam and rhythm. In a word excellent.
Final Music 5	£1500	Feb 99	Partner for the Final Music-6 power amp. Battery powered.
Focusrite Red 4	£2345	Feb 96	Smooth and detailed sound. Not as clinical as some professional amps can be.
Galactron Pre	£1630	Nov 95	Smooth, but dull balance makes it suitable for bright systems.
Marantz 7	£3500	Mar 97	Superb, combines delicacy and power, especially with a vinyl source.
Michel Orca	£1650	Oct 98	With its Panasonic pot, the Orca reaches new standards of transparency and involvement.
Unison Res. Mystery 2	£1750	May 98	Offers finesse, control and clarity for a very reasonable outlay.



AMC 2200

## Power amps £ Year Verdict

### Under £800

AMC 2200	£150	Mar 99	Super value separate with first-rate sound staging. Midrange subtleties sometimes suffer but at this price . . . !
Arcam 9P	£400	Dec 96	A detailed and open sound gives great atmosphere to all types of music.
Arcam Alpha 10P	£600	Jul 98	This power amp lags behind the best of the competition, and the build is flimsy.
Audio Analogue Donizetti	£575	Apr 98	As smart as an Armani suit, they sound powerful in a natural, organic manner
Aura PA100	£749	Mar 97	A smooth, sweet powerful sound free from the rough brightness that afflicts many solid-states.
Creek A43	£399	Mar 99	Shows what a skilled designer can do, even when hooked up with a passive pre. A very realistic approach.
Cyrus Power	£449	Feb 96	The Cyrus Power is simply impressive in all respects.
Linn LK100	£650	Apr 98	Well built, but judged purely on a musical basis they fall short.
Linn LK240	£750	Aug 97	The LK240 plays tunes exceptionally well, tonal colour and image precision are not its forte though.
Meridian 505	£795	Aug 97	Crisp, clear images are set in a broad spread between the 'speakers but the 505 lacks stage depth and grunt.
Monarchy SM-70	£595	Jan 99	The Monarchy is a smooth, warm amp most at home with 'speakers that are easily driveable.
Moth 30 Power	£249	Mar 99	Refined approach with the lighter acoustic music but lacking a little in overall clout.
Moth Stereo 60	£549	Dec 95	This power amp unfortunately suffers from sharp sounding treble and poor depth.
Musical Fidelity X-A50	£500	Jan 98	Very smooth, sweet and musical performers, not over-analytical but very involving.

## Power amps £ Year Verdict

### under £800

Quad 77/67	£600	Jul 96	With good punch, speed and attack its not bad at all but can be a little uninspiring.
Rolei RB-971	£225	Mar 99	70 Watts a channel helps give lucid presentation with deep sound staging. Perhaps on the bright side.
Shearpe Phase 3	£689	Apr 97	The Phase 3 possesses impressive clarity, detail and dynamics.
Talk Tornado 1	£500	Jun 97	A flexible power amp with a strong, controlled sound, but won't suit all tastes.
Technics SE-A1000	£400	Feb 97	Smooth, warm sound has plenty of grunt when needed and is very enjoyable to listen to.
Thorens TTP 2000	£500	Jul 95	Its best feature is the key on/off switch, otherwise its a case of poor sound quality and engineering.

### £800-£1499

Chameleon Ruby	£995	Jan 96	Well specified and powerful, but dry and short of life. Suits Rock on bass-heavy 'speakers.
Chord SPM 400	£1325	Mar 98	This amp has it all - detail, transparency, slam and rhythm. In a word, excellent.
Crimson CS630C	£800	Nov 98	These monoblocs have a tonal richness and bass speed rare amongst powerful amps.
Croft Series V	£800	Jun 96	Fast, clear and detailed sound will win friends in both the transistor and valve camps.
Delph Da Capo	£1469	May 95	Quality bass and a clear midband but the treble can be harsh at high volume.
DPA 200S	£1245	Jul 93	Serious audiophile product at an affordable price. Well constructed, pleasant to use and fine sounding.
Galactron Power	£1200	Nov 96	Smooth sound but dull balance make the Galactron suitable for bright systems.
HD Audio Duo	£1185	May 95	Not dissimilar to the Audiolab monoblocs, the sound has a sweet top and amazing clarity.
Heybrook Signature II	£1051	May 97	Not quite as transparent as it could be but impresses with its smoothness and tonal colour.
Meridian 556	£950	Nov 99	Impressive with high octane music, but lacks that bit of warmth to bring out the best in laid-back material.
Meridian 557	£1400	Dec 96	Great control and dynamics allied to seductive smoothness. A rare combination of power and delicacy.
Musical Fidelity X-A200	£1000	Aug 98	Hugely powerful and controlled, the X-A200s are still superbly musical.
MVL Integral A2	£895	May 99	An excellent performer with any music. It is hard to imagine the A2 being beaten at the price.
Myryad MA120	£1000	Apr 96	The sound is a somewhat acquired taste and a little rough in places.
Omak Jewel One	£899	Jul 95	A lot of amplifier for the money. Big, warm, sweet sound places it ahead of most.
Quad 707	£800	Jul 97	The 707 embodies a rare blend of grace and power in its sleek grey casework.
Rothwell Rubicon	£949	May 99	Low on power at 8 watts but fairly musical for all that. Good resolution of detail and texture.
Sumo Polaris III	£898	May 96	More valve-like than transistor in sound; highly competent if not spectacular.
TAG McLaren 60P	£850	Nov 98	Fully justifies the cost with a very musical and revealing performance.
VRR Adur	£1495	Jun 95	Lovers of light piano-based fare and Baroque music will appreciate this amp's delicacy.

### £1500-

Audiovalve LC8	£1995	Mar 95	Eschews the traditional lavish tube sound for a brighter and leaner approach.
Canary 301	£3055	Nov 98	The 301 puts the 300B's traditional virtues to good use in a push-pull design that will drive most loudspeakers.
Cary 300B SE	£3975	Feb 95	Cary have a winning amplifier that is a prime example of how a 300B can sound.
Cyrus aPA7	£2000/pr		Jul 99 There's no shortage of clarity and control here, but the aPA7s don't come cheap.
Etalon Amp II	£2925	Feb 98	Very natural, substantial presentation with lots of power on tap.
Final Music 6	£1500	Feb 99	Battery powered amp puts convincing scale and three-dimensionality into suitably sensitive loudspeakers.
Focusrite Red 5	£2057	Feb 96	Powerful, smooth and detailed sound. Not as clinical as some professional amplifiers can be.
Gamma Aeons	£4339	Apr 97	Sound quality of these monoblocs is impressive but marred by a rather obvious hum. Build could be better.
Marantz 9	£8000	Mar 97	These monoblocs are superb, producing a beguiling performance of great control and verve.
Michell Alecto	£1989	Oct 98	The new Alecto is crisper, cleaner and more controlled than earlier incarnations.
Musical Fld NuVista 300	£3300	Dec 99	Simply beautiful sound and inexhaustible power. Higher price than usual for MF gear - limited edition product.
Orchid RC750	£6600	Aug 96	A powerful grip on music, but articulate and detailed too. A rare combination.
Shearpe Phase 1	£1999	Oct 94	Good sound quality and an impressive tonal balance.
Sugden Symetra	£1550	Oct 96	The Symetra monoblocs impress with their grip. They run hot and sound warm.
Tube Technology Genesis	£2599	Jun 94	Valve monoblocs that produce explosive bass, midrange as clear as a bell and shimmering treble.
Unison Res. Smart 300B	£4250	May 98	Powerful, neutral sounding amps thanks to their modified 300B valves, but a little expensive for the same reason.
Unison Res. Power 35	£1525	Aug 98	A great compromise between delicacy, power and practicality. Very musically satisfying, too.
Vadis S15	£2350	Jul 98	The S15's purity and clarity are impossible to beat for the money. Bass is not brilliant, but still better than most.
XTC POW-1	£2000	Nov 96	This power amplifier is smooth and seductive, although a little pricey.

## CD Players £ Year Verdict

### under £300

Aiwa XP-V74 portable	£80	Aug 99	Natural rendition uncommon amongst portables but a little compressed with it.
AMC CD8	£150	Oct 97	The CD8 is free from grain but can sound too polished at times.
Cambridge CD4SE	£200	Feb 98	Natural and very life-like, the CD4SE embarrasses many pricier players.
Denon DCD-425	£150	Apr 97	Crisp, up-beat player which is inconsistent in its overall presentation.
Denon DCD-635	£180	Feb 98	Rhythmically slick and dynamic, the Denon errs to the cool side of neutral.
Denon DCD-835	£280	Nov 98	Warm and smooth, the 835 is laid-back rather than in-your-face.
Goodmans Delta CMD	£199	Jun 99	Well-tailored CD/MD pairing and a doddle to use. Sound quality is spot-on for the price.

Prices shown are those at the time of review



MVL A2+



Focusrite Red 5

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CD Players £ Year Verdict

under £300

Goodmans GCD90K	£170	Aug 99	Portable. A secure performer thanks to its 20 second anti-shock system. Sound quality good.
Grundig CD3	£240	Sep 94	Great for simple Jazz and Folk, but soft bass slows things down.
JVC XL-V230	£157	Jan 99	Slightly muddled in the bass, the '230 isn't the most rhythmic of players.
Kenwood DP-2080 II	£180	Feb 98	One of the best budget all-rounders there is. A shade treble-heavy.
Kenwood DP-5050	£250	Aug 93	Waffly bass and enthusiastic treble mean the Kenwood prefers Classical to Rock.
Kenwood JPT-3010	£180	Jan 99	A fine performer. Lacks only some of the spirit of its predecessors.
Kenwood DPC-395	£100	Aug 99	Portable. Has build and appearance on its side but not the greatest sonic performer in portables.
Marantz CD-63	£249	Jun 94	Upholds the Marantz tradition of lively CD players.
Marantz CD-67	£270	Nov 96	Fine vocal projection and treble. Bass is deep if not that tight.
NAD 510	£200	Oct 95	Hard to criticise at the price, with a typically smooth, fluid NAD sound.
NAD 522	£170	Jan 99	Warm and smooth, this is a cultured player. Can be over-civilised at times.
Panasonic SL-SX410 port	£100	Aug 99	Portable with limited dynamics but nonetheless musical and finely detailed.
Philips CD721	£130	Feb 96	Not the most accurate machine, but holds its own at the price.
Pioneer PD-103	£140	Feb 95	Rolled-off treble limits detail. Light bass retains foot-tapping ability.
Quad 67	£?	May 93	One of the top players at the price with great speed and grip.
Rotel RCD-940BX	£230	Oct 94	Controlled and invigorating player albeit a touch sterile.
Teac CD-P3450SE	£200	May 97	Refuses to become flustered. Can lack emotion as a result, though.
Teac CD-P450S	£249	Nov 92	Like many of its contemporaries, the Teac is too smooth to shine.
Technics SL-PG490A	£100	Jan 99	In spite of a bias towards bass and treble, this machine remains a bargain.
Technics SL-P5570D	£200	Feb 98	Typical Technics' bright and bassy sound. Prefers Dance and Rock.
Yamaha CDX-480	£200	Mar 95	Mature, laid-back machine drops points for inferior timing and imaging.
Yamaha CDX-590	£230	Feb 98	Detailed, refined but not particularly engaging or exciting.
Yamaha CDX-593	£180	Jan 99	Lean and up-front, the Yamaha is involving on Rock but can sound rough.

Prices shown are those at the time of review



Technics SLPG490 CD

£300-£799

Alchemist Nexus	£599	Jul 99	Listening is 'sumptuous' but perception of fine detail a little more difficult.
AMC CDM7	£340	Jun 96	Very musical outfit which gains sweetness with optional valve output stage.
AR-07	£300	Jan 92	The '07 is even-handed but has no real forte.
Arcam Alpha 7	£320	Jan 97	Superbly-designed, instinctively musical player destined for success.
Arcam Alpha 7SE	£330	Nov 99	Refinement comes second to speed in the 7SE, so careful cabling is required for the best results.
Arcam Alpha 8SE	£599	Jun 98	The 8SE builds on the strengths of the standard 8 with HDCD filtering.
Arcam Alpha 9	£799	Dec 98	Apart from its tonal brightness, the Alpha 9 is a very capable machine.
Audio Analogue Paganini	£749	Apr 99	Effortless, wholly musical delivery. The Paganini does for CD replay what the Puccini does for amplification.
Audio Innovations Alto	£449	May 96	Grainless treble is detailed but the Alto misses that vital emotional spark.
Aura CD50	£450	Jul 93	High measured distortion mars the treble and bass is dry.
Creek CD43	£499	Oct 98	A competent player with a musicality that will seduce any music-lover.
Cyrus dAD 1.5	£398	May 99	Great detail and imaging. Classical and Jazz suit the 1.5 down to the ground but Rock can sound harsh.
Cyrus dAD3	£598	Dec 96	Lacklustre with Classical, dramatic and lively on Dance and Rock.
Denon DCD-1550AR	£350	Jul 98	Clean and precise, the Denon lags only in warmth and openness.
Denon DCD-1650AR	£700	Jul 99	Refined and enjoyable. Its in-built smoothness can get in the way of absolute transparency.
Harman/Kardon HD730	£300	Aug 96	Strong on dynamics and drive, but lifeless treble can dampen music.
Harman/Kardon HD740	£300	Jun 99	A smooth, musical and rhythmic player, but midrange best suits Classical rather than Rock.
Helios 3	£700	Jul 99	It is unusual to find a player with such definite loves and hates. First class with acoustic, otherwise maybe!
Linn Mimir	£798	Apr 95	Tonally hard but possesses many, if not all, of the Linn rhythmic strengths.
Marantz CD-63 KI-Sig.	£500	Sep 96	This is a rare player, greater than the sum of its parts.
Marantz CD-63SE	£350	May 95	Taken as a whole, the CD-63SE is one hell of a CD player. No digital nasties.
Myryad T20	£600	Dec 98	With its brightness balanced by warm ancillaries the T20 will win friends.
Orsis CD100a	£650	Mar 97	Clean and tidy on electronic music. Not so good with acoustic material.
Pioneer PD-S904	£400	Sep 96	Fluid midrange leads a dry bass and tonally-limited treble.
Pioneer DV-717	£550	Sep 99	Detailed and sweet-sounding, the DV-717 brings out the best in most discs. Not the last word in neutrality.
Rotel RCD-951	£300	Aug 99	Good with ordinary CDs, excellent on HDCD. Construction is very solid too.
Rotel RCD-965BX Discrete	£375	Dec 94	Fast, clean sound verges on the clinical at times.
Rotel RCD-971	£350	Sep 98	Refinement is a plus point, but lack of vitality holds the Rotel back.
Rotel RCD-975	£450	Sep 96	Tuneful, pungent bass are the pros, flat sound staging and tone the cons.
Sony CDP-X3000ES	£500	Mar 98	Neutral, dynamic and stylish but not quite up with the best.
Sony CDP-XB930E	£300	Dec 99	A classy customer with a sophisticated and smooth sound that's very hard to fault.
Sony CDP-XE900E	£300	Mar 97	In spite of fine sound staging and clarity, the Sony fails to involve.
Teac CD-5	£350	Jan 96	Clean and dry, the Teac is rather sterile compared to the competition.
Technics SL-PS840	£450	Sep 95	Not the last word in bass control. Midrange is more persuasive.
Thule CD100	£600	Apr 99	A very smooth and refined player with the added bonus of good detailing. Can lack rhythmic bite at times.
Trichord Genesis	£549	Sep 96	Warm and bassy, but extremely natural. Not the most consistent player.
Trichord Revelation	£799	May 97	When it's good, it's very good indeed. Can get confused on dense mixes.



Marantz CD63 KI-Sig.

£800-£1499

Audiolab 8000	£1000	Dec 96	Sweet treble and full midrange give the 8000CD a lucid sound.
Copland CDA 285	£1199	Feb 99	Perhaps lacks the last ounce of strength on Rock, nonetheless has winning all-round ability.
Symbol CDP12	£1279	Dec 97	Its warm, musical sound plus HDCD compatibility are a strong combination.
Cyrus dAD-7	£899	Jan 95	Up with the best at the money, the Cyrus simply sounds 'right'.
DPA Renaissance	£895	Jun 95	Breathhtaking imagery and dynamics. Not strictly accurate, but who cares?
Harman/Kardon HD7725	£800	Jan 94	Construction is price-correct, but not the excessively relaxed sound.
Heybrook Signature	£989	Oct 97	The Heybrook loses out because of its rough treble and lack of clarity.
Hofli Xara	£950	May 98	It's not cheap but the Xara scores for firm bass and exciting presentation.
LFD Mistral	£999	Nov 97	The Mistral is outclassed in areas like pace and bass depth.
Marantz CD-17	£800	Jul 99	Commendably solid build, smooth top-end and velvety overall sound.
Marantz CD-17 KI-S	£1300	Sep 97	The KI-S has a valve-like smoothness and clarity.
Meridian 505	£875	May 95	Characteristically dry Meridian balance which could do with more emotion.
Musical Fidelity X-Ray	£800	Feb 99	Bright, clear and well-built, the X-Ray's transparency can be hard on poor recordings.
Pink Triangle Numerals	£1099	Apr 98	This very natural one-box fully justifies its £1000 price tag.
Quad 77	£850	Nov 95	Competent, enterprising machine with neat styling and remote.
Roksan Caspian	£895	Aug 97	The Caspian is a gifted player well worth its asking price.
Shearpe Audio Phase 7	£1499	Dec 99	The Phase 7 leads the pack for smoothness and tonal colour more than for detail and excitement.
Sugden SDT-1	£850	Mar 93	A superb all-rounder with particularly convincing rhythms.
T+A CD 1210 R	£1150	Sep 99	Outstanding build married to outstanding build, at a price which isn't expensive considering what's on offer.
Teac VRDS-10SE	£850	Apr 96	Draws you into the music. Soundstaging fine but treble is a little bright.
Teac VRDS-25	£1300	Aug 96	Solid build doesn't make up for sound which lags in integration and detail.
XTC CDP 1	£1250	Dec 97	Rhythmically satisfying, but can sound hard in the wrong system.



Roksan Caspian CD.

£1500-

Anthem CD1	£1600	Mar 98	Sweet sound and numerous features make the Anthem fine value for money.
Burmester 937	£5460	Sep 94	Amongst the best with its belt-drive transport.
McIntosh CDM-7009	£2635	Dec 95	Unmatched quality from CD at a high but fair price.
Meridian 508 24	£1995	Jul 98	The 508.24 is one of the top performers at its price.





## CD players £ Year Verdict

### £1500-

Naim CD2	£1998	Apr 97	CD2 excites at the expense of subtlety. More at home in a Naim system.
Pink Triangle Litaural	£2099	Feb 98	Great sound, superb build and excellent upgradability make the 'spider' a wonder at the price.
Teac CD-X1	£2300	Jun 92	You'll either love or hate this machine's great flair and confidence.

## Turntables £ Year Verdict

### Under £800

Clearaudio Solution	£750	Feb 99	If you seek a powerful presentation where musicality takes precedence over absolute finesse, this could be the answer.
Linn Basik	£400	Sep 94	Definitely a turntable for devotees of attack and strong bass lines. Not strong on imaging.
Michel Gyrodec SE	£775	Apr 99	Great sound, superb build and excellent upgradability make the 'spider' a wonder at the price.
Michell Mycro	£539	Jan 94	Silent and beautifully made, with transparent reproduction.
NAD 533	£200	Nov 94	Based on a Rega Planar 2. Both pleasant to use and look at with a mature sound, all for £200.
Pink Triangle Tarantella	£575	Oct 97	Simply the best at the money. Combines PT's customary transparency with real authority.
Project 1 z	£200	Jun 97	A bargain at £200 with its substantial and involving sound.
Project 6	£350	Dec 93	Involvement and rhythm are priorities. Highly recommended.
Project 6.1	£435	Sep 94	The 6.1 gives a very full, strong sound. A very exciting deck.
Pro-ject Classic Cherry	£450	Jul 99	Emminently capable player that can be upgraded with superior cartridges.
Pro-ject Debut	£109	Dec 99	Produces an enjoyable and confident sound on a budget. There are better turntables around, but not at this price!
Systemdek 2X2	£500	Aug 96	Clear and precise sound through midrange and treble puts it up with more expensive rivals.
Systemdek IX900	£415	Sep 94	Detailed sound stage and broad imaging with a good, even range of tonal colour.
Systemdek IXE	£450	Jan 93	Combined with an SME 309 it achieves great results, with a massive sound stage.
Thorens TD166 Mk6	£405	Sep 94	Totally smooth with a warm midrange, but a little too laid back.
Thorens TD180	£180	Feb 95	A good, basic budget bargain.
Thorens TD280 Mk4	£199	Jun 93	Superbly lucid and clear midrange, but lower reaches are a little lightweight.
Vestax BDT-2000	£225	Sep 99	Price includes cartridge and phono stage. A fit-and-forget solution to LP replay, of exceptional versatility.
Virtual Reality Reson rs1	£600	Nov 95	With fine detail resolution, transparency and a neutral balance the Reson rs1 represents super value.
VPI Junior	£500	Oct 97	The Junior is a very good deck indeed, with an assured and involving sound.

### £800-

Alphason Symphony	£1860	Nov 92	The Symphony has to be one of the best the British can offer. It's expensive, but a true sophisticate.
Basil 2001	£2995	Jun 99	It's not cheap, but the 2001 shows just why vinyl is still a sonically viable format.
Michell Orbe	£1950	Apr 95	Fast and detailed with crisp sheer treble and clean, deep bass.
Opus 3 Continuo/Cantus	£900	Oct 95	Solid as a rock and almost as heavy, it's a satisfying performer, but not quite the best.
Origin Live Oasis-A	£950	Dec 98	Nice looks and a good sound, but can be bettered on price.
Origin Live Oasis-S	£2250	Oct 98	The Oasis-S is a cool, lean but very transparent performer thanks to battery power. Up against strong competition.
Pro-ject Perspective	£900	Aug 98	Aesthetically, the Perspective is a winner, but better sound can be had from cheaper decks.
PT Anniversary	£2390	Oct 96	With its battery supply and ultra-quiet DC motor, the Pink displays great accuracy and neutrality. A top-flight deck.
Roksan Xerxes X	£1295	Jan 97	An undoubted bargain and class leader in all areas with a precise, confident and well-balanced sound.
SME Model 20	£2500	Oct 92	This is a deck for those with a substantial record collection who demand the best. Exemplary sound.
Technics SL-1200 LTD	£1000	Apr 97	Looks expensive at £1000, but don't let that put you off the capable standard version.
Wilson Benesch	£1775	Jul 96	Gives a technically excellent rendition but fails to really communicate the emotion in music.
Wilson Benesch Full Circle	£2000	Mar 98	Offers clarity in abundance with a natural ease. Looks gorgeous too.

## Phono stages £ Year Verdict

### Under £500

Creek OBH-8SE/OBH-2	£160	Nov 97	One of the best MC phono stages on the market at the price
Creek OBH-9/OBH-1	£110	Nov 97	Smooth and truly musical, exceedingly worthy entry-level phono stage.
Densen DP Drive/DP-02	£350	Sep 97	A beautifully made, fine sounding device that looks great too.
Lehmann Black Cube	£395	Oct 98	Capable of involvement, neutrality and insight usually the preserve of stages three or four times the price.
LFD Mistral	£299	Sep 97	The most lucid and musical budget phono stage around - a true audiophile bargain.
Musical Fidelity X-LP	£130	May 99	First-class inexpensive phono. MM and MC inputs catered for. Low on distortion, high on clarity.
NAD PP1	£40	Sep 98	At this price the NAD is an accomplished all-rounder. Slowish bass will suit leaner systems though.
Pro-ject Phono Box	£40	Dec 99	Very competent little MM & MC stage at an astonishing price. First-rate starter package.
QED Discavivir	£35	Jan 97	A bargain. Beguilingly musical presentation, with more than enough detail and power for a mere £35.
Rotel RQ-970BX	£130	Nov 94	Combine with a good cheap line level integrated and it will show you how good vinyl can be.
Sonneteer Sedley MC/MM	£399	May 98	The Sedley combines transparency and fine dynamics with excellent rhythmic ability.

### £500-

Anthem Pre 1P	£899	Aug 98	Despite a sizeable price tag the Anthem offers a smooth, lucid sound and superb build quality.
Audio Innovations P2	£749	Feb 96	Fantastic bass and super insight make this one of the best phono stages around.
Audiolab 8000PPA	£800	Oct 94	Instruments can have a somewhat flat perspective, but excellent clarity
DPA DSP 200SD	£495	Oct 94	Could be too forceful for some, but with excellent detail and extremely powerful bass.
Kinshaw Perception	£525	Oct 94	Extremely impressive results, especially with MM cartridges.
Linn Linto	£850	Oct 97	Marries beautifully into the Linn family, but not too hot with other components.
Michell Iso	£528	Oct 94	Gives a thoroughly cohesive picture of a recording with a very tight and rhythmical bass.
Michell Iso HR	£850	May 93	Perhaps too good for some record collections. Extremely revealing.
Roksan Artaxerxes/DS5	£945	Oct 97	Doesn't worry about genre, it just gets on with the job of making music in an enjoyable way.
Sonic Frontiers Phono 1	£2000	Apr 98	Expensive, yes, overpriced, no. The Phono 1 is a superb all-round phono stage.
Unison Simply Phono	£495	Mar 96	Liquid sound with great dynamics, but a little hissy and muddled too. Beguiling, but not perfect.

## Cartridges £ Year Verdict

### Under £200

Clearaudio Alpha	£130	Apr 99	Tends to sound quite hard at the top but imaging and detail are good. Best in a warm system.
Damon DL103M	£110	Aug 97	First manufactured in 1963, it sounds mature and sure-footed rather than over the hill.
Damon DL110	£65	Mar 94	May be a little soft-natured for some. Splendid dynamics and an even tonal balance.
DNM Mica	£185	Feb 98	Betters Goldring's 1042 without difficulty. MC quality from an MM.
Goldring 1042	£90	Jan 93	One of the best MMs at the price with strainless delivery.
Goldring 1012GX	£60	Jul 93	Great with Rock music, the 1012GX is the best value low-price MM.
Grado Prestige Silver	£119	Apr 97	Good tracking and inoffensive sound, but somehow lacks sparkle in any department.
Linn R9	£58	Sep 94	Rhythmic bite compensates for a lack of vibrancy in music (MM).
Ortofon 510 MkII	£40	Jul 99	Excellent tracker at a good price. Warm amplification is needed to tame this sure-footed budget entry.
Ortofon 540	£100	Jan 93	Smooth operator and very good value for money (MM).
Ortofon MC15 Super II	£110	Mar 95	In the right system, can be masterful with its dry and accurate response.
Ortofon MC25E	£170	Sep 95	A considerable achievement that adds true verve a pizzazz to the MC15 Super II
Roksan Corus Black	£120	Jan 93	Light and dry presentation with good presentation (MM).
Slate Brazen MM	£185	Sep 97	If you like the V15 you'll love the Brazen. Works well with an SME 3009.
Sumiko Blue Point	£100	Oct 92	Excellent value for money. It does its job of transcribing the information on the disc without fuss or bother.

Prices shown are those at the time of review



Pro-ject Classic Cherry



Lehmann Black Cube



Clearaudio Alpha

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## Cartridges £ Year Verdict

### £200-

Cartridge Man Music Make	£549	Feb 99	Good price, high output and a winning musicality make this Moving Iron cartridge the one to beat.
DNM Lexe	£1300	Jan 99	A Goldring make-over that tracks well and sounds good. Pricey, though.
DNM Rica MM Cartridge	£255	Jun 98	This betters the Mica, has super-MM virtues.
Dynavector DV20X-H	£299	May 99	Delightfully musical sound makes the Dynavector a very strong contender in the budget MC stakes.
EMT HST6	£850	Oct 96	Solid bass and smooth, musical sound make this rare MC cartridge worth the money.
Goldring Excel VX	£495	May 97	Has fine midrange clarity, but is bettered in other areas by cheaper competitors.
Linn Arkiv	£1200	Dec 97	Linn fans will love it but it's up against strong competition.
Linn Klyde	£489	Jun 95	Sumptuous sounding cartridge that borders on the bass heavy but has a good feel for music.
Lyra Lydian	£649	Jun 95	Extremely smooth, civilised MC with no obvious weaknesses.
Ortofon Jubilee	£1250	Mar 99	Detailed, musical and sure-footed, the Jubilee goes a long way towards justifying its elevated price tag.
Ortofon MC25F	£225	Sep 97	Delightfully sweet, musical sound with added refinement on FL that takes some beating.
Ortofon MC30 Supreme	£450	Jun 95	Involving yet refined presentation but some could feel it's slightly coloured.
Ortofon MC7500	£2000	May 94	Conveys the full gamut of emotion from A-Z with the fervour of a live concert. Expensive, but the business.
Ortofon Rohmann	£1000	Apr 96	A top quality MC with superb tonal quality and excellent imagery.
Shure V15VxMR	£295	Mar 97	Warm, dynamic rendition of music with great detail and impact (MM).
Transfiguration Splrit	£1000	Jul 98	A balanced all-rounder that misses out only on the last ounce of detail and bass weight.
Van Den Hul MC10	£840	Jun 95	The MC10 is very hard to fault. A honey, pure and simple.
VDH Grasshopper IV	£3750	Dec 95	Allows music to flow with superb fluidity and reveal things which were previously unheard - at a price!

Prices shown are those at the time of review



Ortofon Jubilee

## Tonearms £ Year Verdict

Hadcock GH 228 SE	£595	Dec 98	Construction won't worry SME but its sound quality will unsettle a lot of the competition.
Origin Live RB250/RB300	varies	Nov 97	These modified arms are a considerable improvement on the originals
SME 309	£649	Jan 93	Tight, neutral sound with good tonality, but lacks the IVs pace and precision.
SME IV	£828	Mar 92	Sexy chassis and staggering engineering along with potent performance earn it a place in audio history.

## Tuners £ Year Verdict

### Under £200

AMC T7	£130	Jul 97	Although it has a tempting price, its sound quality is poor compared with its rivals.
Arcam Alpha 7	£230	Mar 97	An attractive, smooth sounding tuner that won't break the bank.
Cambridge T500	£180	Feb 99	The T500 is one of the most gifted tuners under £500; a very accomplished all-round performer.
Denon TU-260L MkII	£130	Jun 99	With its smooth, inoffensive sound and abundant facilities, the MkII is a worthy addition to the tuner line-up.
Harman/Kardon TU 550	£200	Jul 96	Sound quality is generally impressive. Let down by a rather constricted sound stage, but still good value.
Kenwood KT-2080	£130	Feb 97	Smooth, even balance allows the KT-2080 to convince with whatever it's receiving. £130 well spent.
Marantz ST-57	£150	Oct 97	The ST-57 is a smooth, warm tuner but lacks a little clarity and transparency.
Mission Cyrus FM7	£299	Apr 94	Musical, communicative and extremely detailed and a steal at the price.
NAD 412	£190	Jun 96	A remarkably musical and natural sounding tuner. Unbeatable at the price, or even twice the price for that matter.
Onkyo T401	£160	May 94	A competent machine, but time has taken its toll on the sound quality.
Rega Radio	£230	Jan 95	Sounds on the whole more than its price, but in other respects it isn't especially competitive.
Rotel RT-930AX	£175	Aug 94	The RT-930AX is a glowing little bargain, real quality at a very realistic price.
Sony ST-SA3ES	£250	Apr 97	The Sony is worth every penny of its asking price. If you're a fan of radio this is one to go for.
Sony ST-SE700	£180	Aug 97	The ST-SE700 is one of the best at this price. LW reception is a welcome bonus.
Teac T-460	£120	Oct 99	An inexpensive and versatile tuner, difficult to fault as such. Sound quality on the dryside.
Technics ST-GT-350L	£140	Jun 95	Not a bad buy at all and a very good fit for budget and mid-price systems.
Yamaha TX580 RDS	£200	Feb 95	If you want something for casual listening with superior aesthetics, this might be the one for you.



Hadcock 228SG

### £200-

Adcom GFT 555 .2	£399	May 93	Quite musical but does not rejuvenate the waves! Good solid performance but less than luxurious.
Arcam Alpha 10 DRT		Jul 99	Arcam's digital radio couldn't be simpler to use. Compared with good FM the benefits are marginal as yet.
Burmester 931	£4347	Nov 94	This is not a cheap tuner, but its cheaper than buying a radio station, which is the only possible alternative.
Creek T43	£399	May 98	A great little tuner. This is the one in the price bracket.
Cyrus FM7.5	£400	Oct 99	Fine, smooth and musical; commendably simple in style and operation. Only its price counts against it.
Denon TU-S10	£400	Mar 98	A stylish, well-built tuner which has a detailed sound but needs careful partnering.
Fanfare FT 1	£1350	Mar 95	Whether it's sweaty disco or symphony hall, the Fanfare comes up to scratch.
Kenwood KT-6050L	£300	Oct 95	A good value, excellent sounding rds tuner, but lacks full EON facilities
Linn Kremlin	£1645	Mar 92	Commendable basic performance but, considering the price there are limitations.
Magnum Dynalab FT101A	£749	Apr 92	Worth auditioning but bass rather dry and light.
Marantz ST-17	£600	July 99	Knock-out build quality and rich velvety sound. Poor-signal mute a bit too enthusiastic.
Meridian 504	£660	Mar 96	A clear, natural sound with good punch. Has strong rivals at the price, but acquits itself well.
Micromega Tuner	£700	Jul 95	An unusual design from Micromega that's well built but sonically unrewarding and expensive.
Myriad MT100	£530	Nov 99	Low on facilities, but when it comes to looks and sonic performance, it's the business.
NAD 702	£330	Jul 94	Well worth auditioning, even if you've never previously considered a receiver.
Naim NAT 03	£499	Sep 93	Soft and pure, especially across the midband. Speech very well reproduced plus solid weighty bass.
Nakamichi ST3S	£350	Dec 94	Looks good, but the sound quality isn't really worth the asking price.
Pioneer F-504RDS	£300	Dec 98	One sole mark against the class-leading transparency is its slightly dry character.
Pioneer F-504RDS	£350	Nov 95	Well engineered and competent tuner, but a little uninspiring.
Rotel Michi RHT10	£895	Mar 94	This classy looking tuner can hold its head up high amongst the best tuners at the price.
Rotel RT-990BX	£500	Apr 95	The price of twenty concert tickets, and for that you can listen as if you were there. A bargain.
TAG McLaren T20	£1100	Mar 99	Extremely well built with a lucid if slightly dry sound. The only real drawback is the high price.
Thorens TRT-2000	£500	Dec 97	An otherwise competent tuner is let down by a rather processed character.



Marantz ST-17

## Cassette £ Year Verdict

### Under £300

Aiwa AD F580	£150	Apr 98	No Dolby S, but three heads and two capstans make the Aiwa a bargain.
Denon DRM-550	£160	May 96	Good enough for the price and no worse than the competition.
Denon DRM-555	£150	Jul 99	Its slant towards features prevent the Denon taking the audiophile honours at the price.
Denon DRM-650S	£230	Aug 96	Top sound quality with ferric and chrome makes this deck a steal.
Grundig CF4	£250	Jan 95	Fair on pre-recordeds, OK when recording, but speed stability isn't great.
JVC TD-V662	£300	Sep 98	Only the lack of Dolby S conspires against the otherwise excellent JVC.
Kenwood KX-5080S	£200	Jan 97	Stable transport gives fine results on metal and chrome. Rough on ferrics.
Nad 613	£230	Jan 96	Decent playback and good recording when used carefully.
NAD 614	£270	Sep 95	Excellent electronics are let down by a low-grade transport.
Rotel RD-960BX	£230	Oct 95	A solid, competent machine which is reasonable value for money.
Sony TC-K311	£150	Dec 93	Auto-tuning is mediocre and the general results are unexceptional.
Sony TC-K490	£170	Jan 93	A mix of average heads and electronics doesn't make for happy taping.
Teac V-610	£100	Apr 97	The V-610's performance matches its price well, but audiophile it isn't.
Teac V-600	£150	Sep 94	Satisfactory for in-car recordings, but the low price shows.
Yamaha KX-580 SE	£250	Sep 97	The '580 lives up to its SE tag with a fine performance in all areas.

## Cassette £ Year Verdict

### £300-

Aiwa AD-S950	£300	Feb 95	<b>Vice-free playback is mirrored by impressive recording.</b>
Denon DRS-810	£300	Jan 92	On the right tapes, the Denon repays with delightful sound quality.
JVC TD-V1010	£400	Sep 92	<b>Disappointing on replay but recording is another kettle of fish altogether.</b>
Kenwood KX-7060S	£330	Dec 94	Convincing all-rounder except for heavy-handed noise reduction.
Nakamichi 1.5	£500	Jan 92	<b>The Cassette Deck 1.5 has no rivals in its ability to recreate a realistic performance.</b>
Nakamichi DR-1	£780	Jun 93	Not perfect but as close as you can get for the money.
Nakamichi DR-3	£300	Mar 93	<b>Unfortunately keeping the price down keeps performance below Nak's norm.</b>
Onkyo TA250	£350	Oct 94	Top transport but the electronics aren't on a par.
Pioneer CT-95	£1000	Mar 97	<b>On chrome and ferric, the '95 is smooth and natural. Not so good with metals.</b>
Pion't CT-S550S Precision	£340	Feb 99	Three heads, ease of use and high quality make the Dolby S equipped Precision a strong contender
Pioneer CT-S740S	£430	Jun 96	<b>Complex but superb in every important area.</b>
Sony TC-K611S	£330	Feb 94	A little muffled on pre-recordeds but pulls out all the stops on recordings, esp. with metal tape.
Teac V-6030S	£550	Nov 97	<b>Solid build and solid sounds. Top-notch at the price.</b>
Teac V-8030S	£650	Aug 95	One of the highest quality Dolby S decks available.
Technics RS-AZ7	£300	Jul 96	<b>Excellent bass but mid and treble lack dynamics. Auto-tunes poorly on metal.</b>

Prices shown are those at the time of review

## Minidisc £ Year Verdict

Aiwa AM-F70	£250	Oct 99	Solid all-rounder that doubles as a superb dictaphone. Not No 1 as regards MD portables though.
Denon DMD-1000	£300	Nov 99	<b>Sound quality up with the rest, wears its years well. Beginning to look expensive.</b>
Goodmans GMD 920	£160	Nov 99	Very good value; built quality a touch plastic-y but stylish with it. Sonically very worthy.
JVC XM-228	£230	Sep 99	<b>Well-built recorder. Good but not exceptional as Minidisc improves generally.</b>
Kenwood DMF 9020	£500	Aug 99	An excellent tool for home recording; combines convenience, superb sound and a fair price.
Pioneer MJ-D508	£200	Nov 99	<b>Sensible and well featured MD. Excellent transcriber of digital, shows up on analogue a little.</b>
Sharp 722 portable	£230	Aug 99	Flash looks with solid build. First-class portable with domestic potential, but it isn't cheap.
Sony MDS-JB930	£300	Nov 99	<b>UK Special Edition, so it sounds alright! Keyboard compatible with no difficulties in operation.</b>
Technics SJ-MD100	£230	Nov 99	Solid, obviously meant for serious use. Excellent editing features. Sound up with the rest.

## Recordable CD £ Year Verdict

Marantz DR700	£600	Oct 99	<b>A very solid all-rounder with impressive playback sound quality. Dearer than many though.</b>
Philips CD-R 880	£500	Oct 99	Spot on with digital sources and impressive with analogue; playback a touch cold sounding.
Philips CDR-765	£360	Oct 99	<b>Big value package. Whether the 'free' CD player function will earn its keep is a moot point.</b>
Pioneer PDR-555RW	£500	Oct 99	Worthy of consideration but a bit of a mixed bag all round. Plenty of drive.
Traxdata Traxaudio 900	£500	Oct 99	<b>Not the cheapest on the market but has an obliging way with playback which may turn the scale.</b>

## DVD £ Year Verdict

DVD-3000	£700	Aug 98	The Denon is a fine performer with CD and better still with 24/96.
Denon DVD-5000	£1500	Mar 99	<b>Build is second to none. Sound is very solid convincing, but not as musical as the 3000.</b>
Panasonic DVD-A350	£700	Jul 98	The A350 wipes out the CD-only competition at the price and threatens players up to £2000.
Panasonic DVD-L10	£1000	Nov 98	<b>Isn't cheap, but it's an outstanding portable and a capable domestic device.</b>
Sony DVP-S715	£700	Aug 98	The Sony is warm and smooth but lacks clarity and precision.
Sony DVP-S7700	£700	Oct 99	<b>Looks good, sounds better. Deserves very serious consideration.</b>
Sony PBD-V30 (portable)	£700	Jun 96	The Sony is an engrossing performer in a sturdy and attractive design.

## Headphones £ Year Verdict

Ergo Model 2	£140	Apr 99	<b>Wonderfully lucid and transparent panel-like sound.</b>
Jecklin Float 2	£100	Apr 99	Clarity and openness are their traits, rather than slamming bass, but still good value.
Sennheiser HD-580	£200	Nov 98	<b>In the company of a smooth, warm system the 580a can shine.</b>
Sennheiser HE60/V70	£1000	Feb 95	Electrostatic that set a class standard and can put a case for chucking out your power amp and 'speakers.
Vivanco FMH-6800	£80	May 98	<b>Have a lot of potential but basic operating problems have to be cleaned up first.</b>
Vivanco SR850	£50	Nov 95	Excitement that is rarely heard in headphones, but have a little trouble with heavy orchestral loads.



Sharp 772



Sony PBD-V30



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## CD Transports £ Year Verdict

<b>Audiolab 8000 CDM</b>	£1249	Aug 94	Distigulshed by a wide array of failities, Thoughtfully designed and high quality.
Cyrus Disc Master	£1800	Jul 94	Smooth and cohesive. The Disc Master looks good and comes with the Dac Master within the price.
<b>DPA Enlightenment</b>	£695	Mar 95	<b>Solid and lifelike sound with Rock music and full bodied on Classical.</b>
Kenwood DP-X9010	£530	Feb 92	Superb build for the money and a very musical sound. Benefits greatly from clocking.
<b>Micromega Duo</b>	£3435	Apr 93	<b>Excellent build quality and a sound quality to match.</b>
Monarchy DT-40A	£1595	Jun 94	Isn't cheap but has a solid dependable sound with a big, powerful presentation.
<b>Parasound C/BD-2000</b>	£1695	Jun 97	<b>The belt drive is an interesting idea but the Parasound is bettered by cheaper transports.</b>
PT Cardinal	£1440	Feb 95	Heart-stopping speed and impact contribute to what is an exceptionally good machine.
<b>Rotei RDD-980</b>	£450	Jul 96	<b>Good, clean dynamic sound with a neutral and pure midrange tone.</b>
Sonic Frontiers 3	£6999	Sep 98	A handsome machine both sonically and aesthetically. We love the camera aperture-style loading system.
<b>Sonic Frontiers SFT-1</b>	£2295	Aug 96	<b>Top flight machine with an easy, musical and enjoyable sound, for those that can afford it.</b>
Teac P-30	£2500	Jun 97	Costs a lot of money and sounds nothing short of superb.
<b>Teac VRDS T1</b>	£499	Feb 95	<b>Enjoyable player with good insight. Good finish and keen pricing make it a thoroughly good buy.</b>
Thorens TCD 2000	£900	Jun 96	A soft and warm sound will please vinyl lovers, but it's not the last word in detail.
<b>XTC CDT1</b>	£1200	Apr 96	A warm and musical sound with a taste of high-end refinement and detail.



Sonic Frontiers 3

## CD Convertors £ Year Verdict

<b>Alchemist TS-D-1</b>	£300	Jan 99	Smooth, natural and relaxed on the ear, highly persuasive with acoustic material. A bit soft on Rock and Dance.
<b>Arcam BB500</b>	£750	Aug 97	Smooth and accurate treble and easy-going rhythm. Measured and engaling; good value too.
Audiolab 8000DAC	£900	Aug 97	Treble roll-off serves to remove some of the music's sparkle; lags behind the group leaders somewhat.
<b>Cambridge Dacmagi</b>	£150	Jun 95	<b>Instant upgrade for a budget player but out of its depth with in a properly designed hi-fi CD player.</b>
Chord DSC 900 DAC	£1700	Dec 98	The Chord combines smooth composure with musicality and transparency. Fort Knox build and priced to match.
<b>Creek OBH-14</b>	£239	Jun 99	<b>Combined DAC and passive pre-amp; at the money there is no competition.</b>
DPA Digital SX64	£800	Aug 99	Combines lack of grain and tonal richness with typical DPA speed and lucidity.
<b>DPA Enlightenment dac</b>	£795	Mar 95	<b>Powerful, taut bassand remarkably solid higher frequencies. A nice touch with acoustic music especially.</b>
DPA Enlightenment	£825	Aug 97	An engrossing listen with good manners to boot. Never uninvolving or lacklustre, plays with realism.
<b>DPA Little Bit 3</b>	£300	Nov 95	<b>Don't be misled by the name - it's the budget convertor to have. Impossible to criticise for the money.</b>
DPA SX512 DAC	£8000	Jun 98	A real smoothie for high-end digital conversion. Given the right transport, an outstanding sound is on the cards.
<b>Link DAC 2</b>	£300	Nov 99	<b>Bargain price, priceless performance. A DAC to take very seriously indeed.</b>
Marston Silhouette/PSU	£895	Aug 97	If detail is high on your list of priorities, with a more forceful, hard-edged presentation, this looks like a very good bet.
<b>Midiman Flying Calf</b>	£109	Feb 99	<b>A great little DAC which simply can't be beaten at the price. A bargain in all areas.</b>
Midiman Flying Cow	£300	Jun 98	First-class as a DAC; doubles as an ADC for archiving to CDR - great value.
<b>Monarchy Audio Delux 18</b>	£595	Aug 97	<b>Never offensive; its multi-bit convertor packs a mighty bass punch. Useful analogue volume control.</b>
Monarchy Delux 18	£795	May 95	Delicate brightness does a lot to open out music and create a sense of space.
<b>Musical Fidelity X-24K</b>	£300	Jan 99	<b>Crisp, detailed and dynamic, the MF is a genuine music maker, if a touch hard and bright at times.</b>
Musical Fidelity X-DAC	£300	Nov 97	Outstanding value for money. Excellent sound in the usual attractively styled package.
<b>Orelle DA188</b>	£399	Jun 95	<b>Nicely built with quality components, the DA-188 has a lively sound. Solid bass, tidy midrange and crisp treble.</b>
Pink Triangle Da Capo	£1400	Feb 95	Old hand at the game. One of the first HDCD-compatible convertors still a fine piece of gear.
<b>Pros Audio</b>	£699	Nov 95	<b>A fine musical performance makes this idiosyncratic CD convertor worth searching out.</b>
RDP 980	£450	Jul 96	An affordable route into two-box players. Good, clean dynamic sound with a neutral and pure mid-range tone.
<b>Sonic Frontiers DAC kit</b>	£240	Jan 95	<b>Easy and fun to build, competitively priced and delivers fine sonic results.</b>
Son. Front. Processor 3	£7000	Sep 98	An awful lot of money - use it forever. Quality which can outlive any amount of cheaper purchases.
<b>Sonic Frontiers Transdac</b>	£699	Jul 95	<b>The transdac has a smooth and focussed sound, but partnered with the Ultra Jitterbug looks expensive.</b>
Thorens TDA2000	£700	Jun 96	Partnered with the TCD 2000, produces a sound that is certainly focussed, detailed and spacious.
<b>XTC Dac</b>	£1200	Apr 96	A taste of the elegantly smooth, slightly laid-back sound - the epitome of American good taste.

Prices shown are those at the time of review



Midiman Flying Calf

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# World Classic

## Cassette

Nakamichi (various)  
Yamaha TC-800QL

See main Guide  
Early classic in serious cassette. Its ski-slope looks got it a cult following once it had ceased to be simply ugly.

## CD Players

Meridian 207  
Pioneer PD 01

Beautifully-built two-box with pre-amp stage. Very musical although not as refined as modern Bitstream gear. No digital output. Built-to-last player with easy upgrade routes for modifiers. Not knockout as it stands but get one cheap and have a go!

## Amplifiers

Leak Point One, TL12 & TL10  
Leak Pre-amps  
Leak Stereo 20  
Leak TL12+  
NAD 3020  
Quad 33  
Quad II  
Sugden A21  
Technics SE-A5 Mk2

Ancestors of hi-fi, consequently expensive nowadays. As with all vintage stuff, overhauling is de rigueur before use. Line of 'good for their time' pre-amps. Use of EF86 pentode for high gain rules out ultra performance. Not the highest-fi. Excellent workaday classic. In good order the 20 will not disgrace itself. Various upgrades are available from specialist repairers. Plentiful monobloc equivalent of Stereo 20. Reasonably inexpensive and a tweakers' dream. Genuine hi-fi on a budget. You can't argue with success! NAD's budget integrated gave thousands their first taste of hi-fi and remains great value. By no means a bad job and value for money. With its matching 303 pre-amp makes a good introduction to audio classics. One of the all-time classic mono amplifiers. Unusual circuit but it works beautifully. 22 pre-amp not up to today's standards. Seventies transistor integrated has an eminently likeable smoothness and musicality. Limited inputs via DIN sockets. Nice transformer and electronics, shame about the casework. With tweaking, this 150watter can sound sweet.



Leak TL12 Point One.

## Loudspeakers

Klipschorn  
Leak Sandwich  
Lowther PM6A  
Magneplanar SMGA  
Mission 770  
Quad ESL57  
Tannoy GRF & Autograph  
Wharfedale Super 0 RS DD  
Yamaha NS1000M  
Tannoy York, Lancaster etc.

Not exactly plentiful or cheap but a splendid beast. For efficiency they have seldom been equalled. Space hungry! Rather warm sounding big infinite baffle but cheap with it. With reasonably powerful amp can sound quite satisfying. High quality full-range driver; still manufactured. High sensitivity, as fitted to many classic horn designs. Touch dry in the bass but a technological 'speaker with genuinely musical abilities. Usual warnings re: dipoles apply. Father of the 77 range which continues to this day. Well mannered with a warm sound and a kind load to amplifiers. Unrivaled. Properly serviced there is nothing like 'em. Their natural presentation may make them caviar to the general. Folded horn monsters which certainly sound good if you have the space. For Tannoy vintage see HFW November 1998. Ideal experimenters' driver. High sensitivity - 14,000 Gauss magnet and extended frequency range. Inexpensive too! Hi-tech favourites of the Japanese and Americans. Viewed more warily in the UK but can give excellent results. Many similar models of infinite baffle or reflex design. Not the last word in tautness but the drivers work well in modern cabinets.

## Vinyl

Acas Lustré  
Alphason HR100S  
Ariston RD11  
Garrard 301 & 401  
Goldring Lenco 88 & 99  
Hadcock 228  
Linn Axis  
Michell Focus One  
Shure M75  
SME 3009 IIS  
Thorens TD124  
Thorens TD150  
Trio L-0/D

Very honest piece of kit, well made and easily adjusted. Vinyl beginners could do very much worse. First class arm, up to present-day standards. Buy carefully, though, as there's no service available now. A one-time king of turntables very similar to the Linn LP12. Now deposited but worth a look at the right price. Legendary and fairly plentiful. Excellent back up available; many different custom plinths available. High quality. Great deck for the kitchen table enthusiast. Garrard fans won't look at 'em but cheap and capable. Servicing available. Recently out-classed by Hadcock's updated 228 Special Edition but a proper hi-fi arm for all that. Makers still service. Uncomplicated, lower-price version of the famous Sondek. Considerably less expensive than some of its stablemates. 20 years and still going strong. Early runner in the 'modern' turntable cycle with a first class arm. Factory servicing available. Recent line-contact improvements have left the M75 behind but the wide range of needles make it a handy tool. Everlasting classic tone-arm. Spares permanently available from SME. No longer the last word but peanuts second-hand. Best classic deck ever? Judging by the prices they fetch it's possible - 78rpm too! Mid-price deck with a keen following. No real difficulty with servicing - novices may find the suspension system unnerving. Knockout heavyweight from 1980 with stainless bearing and 11lb platter! Not a give-away and beware! - spares scarce.



Thorens TD124.

## Tuners

Leak Troughline (original)  
Leak Troughline II & III mono  
Leak Troughline III Stereo  
Marantz ST-6

Interesting ornament but no longer hi-fi. Bandwidth limited to 88MHz to 100MHz only. Arguably the best-sounding tuners ever. Adaptation for stereo easy via phono multiplex socket. Excellent tuner with incoherent stereo decoding circuit. Best when adapted to use modern outboard decoder. Possibly the ultimate Tardis console, including an oscilloscope for checking the strength of signal. Expensive even now.



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ANTHEM INT 2 AMP	XD £1800	£1399
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AVI BIGGATRON LOUDSPEAKERS	XD £600	£479
AVI S2000 MM MONOBLOCKS PAIR	XD £1400	£999
CASTLE EDEN LOUDSPEAKERS	XD £500	£349
CASTLE TAY LOUDSPEAKERS	XD £350	£249
CHARIO ACADEMY 1	NEW £1500	£1099
CHARIO ACADEMY 1	XD £1500	£950
CHARIO ACADEMY 2	XD £1750	£1199
CHARIO ACADEMY 3	XD £8500	£4995
ELECTROCOMPANIET EC4R	XD £1495	£1099
ELECTROCOMPANIET EC1-2 (STONE)	XD £119	£799
GAMMA RHYTHM	XD £2500	£1995
HARMON KARDON HK630 AMP	XD £230	£169
HARMON KARDON TU 950 TUNER	XD £200	£149
JM LAB MICRON (CHERRY)	XD £449	£279
MCINTOSH MCD 7008 MULTI CD	XD £3000	£1995
MERIDIAN 500 CD TRANSPORT	XD £1325	£1125
MERIDIAN 502 PRE AMP	XD £1385	£1159
MERIDIAN 556 POWER AMP	XD £950	£759
MERIDIAN 505 MONOBLOCK (EACH)	XD £845	£679
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## S/hand and ex-demo clearance items - July'00

	Was	Now		Was	Now
<b>CD Players &amp; DAC'S</b>			<b>Amplifiers</b>		
Audio Alchemy DDE1.0V D/A Converter	399	149	Alchemist Forsetti Power amplifier	1999	1299
Audio Alchemy DDE1.1V D/A Converter	399	179	Audion Sterling Power amplifier	599	349
Audiolab 8000 DAX D/A Converter 24Bit	1099	599	Audion Sterling Integrated Line	799	449
Audio Note CD2 Valve CD Player	1000	499	Audio Innovations 800 Anniversary Valve Power	1499	749
Audio Note CD2 Valve CD (New & boxed)	1000	695	Beard M1000 125W Monoblock 6550 Triode	6500	2250
DPA Renaissance CD Player (Lastest 24/96)	995	695	Graff 50/50 Push Pull Power amplifier (New & Boxed)	2100	1795
DPA Enlightenment DX32	800	350	Graff GM20 OTL Ex-Demo Re-Valved	2995	2395
Meridian 203 DAC	499	119	Plinius 8150 Remote Integrated Phono (New & boxed)	1900	1299
Monrio Privilege 20Bit CD Player (New & boxed)	950	750	Quad 33/303 Amplifiers (New caps Fitted)	N/A	250
Monrio Bit Match Transport	950	650	Quad 33/405 Amplifiers	N/A	350
Monrio 18B2 DAC	950	599	Quad 405/2 Amplifier	N/A	229
Nakamichi DV10 DVD DTS/5.1	799	599	Unison Research Pentode 35 Valve Integrated (4xEL34)	1500	995
Theta TLC	229	125			
Theta Goliath	199	99	<b>Loudspeakers</b>		
<b>Turntables Tonearms &amp; Cartridges</b>			Acoustic Energy Aegis 2 Beech	299	199
Ariston RD40/RB250/Blue Point	569	249	Audio Note AN-E/L Rosewood Loudspeakers	1680	950
Aphelion Audio 401 Plinths (New & various finishes)	250	169	Audio Note AN-J/SP Light Oak Loudspeakers	1230	750
Decca London Gold (Garrot Re-build)	N/A	195	Audio Note AN-K/SP Light Ash Loudspeakers	1070	629
Decca London Gold (J.Wright Re-Built/Podded)	N/A	250	Epos ES30 Dark Cherry	2700	1399
EMT HSD15 Special MC Phono Cartridge (New)	995	650	Impulse Maya Loudspeakers	695	399
Linn LP12 Lingo Cirkus/Ekos Troika Black	3250	1599	Impulse Lali Cherry	1895	999
Linn Troika (No cantilever)	N/A	150	Spendor SP7/1 Black Ash	1900	850
Lyra Parnassius (600 hrs)	1895	599	Snell J MK2 Loudspeakers Black/ Huygens Stands	900	349
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Ortofon MC 30 Supreme (150 hrs)	550	299	VelodyneTX810MK2 Subwoofer	695	379
Roksan Xerxes X Blk/ Turntable	1295	750	<b>Cables &amp; Accessories</b>		
Roksan Artemiz (Latest version)	895	650	Air Sus Cherry Platform	169	99
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Roksan Radius 3 Tabriz/DSU	1170	499	Einstein Octopus 8 Way Main Block (Ex-demo)	199	169
Roksan TMS Piano Lacquer Turntable	2750	1995	DPA White Slink 1M	99	45
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Roksan Xerxes X Black/Tabriz/Corus (New & boxed)	2072	1200	Shakti Stones (New & boxed)	195	120
Roksan XPS V Filter System	325	255	Van den Hul D102 MkIII 1M Balanced	N/A	65
Tubaphon TU2 Stereophile Class B (50 hrs)	695	425	<b>Tuners &amp; Tape Decks</b>		
Wilson Benesch Act 2 Tonearm	2000	1199	JBL ESC 200 Surround Package	299	129
<b>Preamplifiers</b>			Magnum Dynalab FT11 Analogue Tuner (New & boxed)	599	399
Alchemist Forsetti Preamplifier	1299	549	Magnum Dynalab FT101 Analogue Tuner (New & boxed)	850	679
Audio Note M1 Phono Preamplifier	750	599	Magnum Dynalab Signal Sleuth (New & boxed)	225	179
Audio Note M2 Line Preamplifier	999	750	Meridian 565 DTS/AC3 7.1 Processor	2850	1499
Audio Research LS7 Valve Preamplifier	1599	750	Quad FM3 Stereo Tuner	N/A	75
DPA Enlightenment New Style	799	599	Quad FM4 stereo Tuner	N/A	175
Gate Audio Line Valve Preamplifier	1699	650	Revox B77 fi Track 3fl - 7fi MK1 Reel to reel	1600	549
Sony Reference Preamplifier Esoteric TA 1ES	3000	2399	Roksan Caspian Tuner AM/FM	599	449
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ATC S1A2-150 INT AMP	SH	£1195	£1449
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CREEK T43 TUNER	XD	£400	£299
DIAPHASON ADEMANTES III INC STANDS	XD	£2450	£1795
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LEXICON DC1 PROCESSOR	XD	£5000	£2500
LINN GENKI CD	SH	£995	£695
LFD MISTRAL PRE/PWR	SH	£1200	£650
MARANTZ CD67 OSE	XD	£300	£199
MARANTZ SD57 TAPE	XD	£200	£129
MIRAGE M1 LOUDSPEAKERS	SH	£6000	£2495
MUSICAL TECHNOLOGY HARRIER	SH	£649	£299
PIONEER PDS505 PRECISION	XD	£460	£249
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PIONEER CLD515/2 LASER DISC	XD	£550	£249
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Prices shown are those at the time of review

## Cassette £ Year Verdict

### £300-

Aiwa AD-S950	£300	Feb 95	Vice-free playback is mirrored by impressive recording.
Denon DRS-810	£300	Jan 92	On the right tapes, the Denon repays with delightful sound quality.
JVC TD-V1010	£400	Sep 92	Disappointing on replay but recording is another kettle of fish altogether.
Kenwood KX-7050S	£330	Dec 94	Convincing all-rounder except for heavy-handed noise reduction.
Nakamichi 1.5	£500	Jan 92	The Cassette Deck 1.5 has no rivals in its ability to recreate a realistic performance.
Nakamichi DR-1	£780	Jun 93	Not perfect but as close as you can get for the money.
Nakamichi DR-3	£300	Mar 93	Unfortunately keeping the price down keeps performance below Nak's norm.
Onkyo TA250	£350	Oct 94	Top transport but the electronics aren't on a par.
Pioneer CT-95	£1000	Mar 97	On chrome and ferric, the '95 is smooth and natural. Not so good with metals.
Pioneer CT-S550S Precision	£340	Feb 99	Three heads, ease of use and high quality make the Dolby S equipped Precision a strong contender
Pioneer CT-S740S	£430	Jun 96	Complex but superb in every important area.
Sony TC-K611S	£330	Feb 94	A little muffled on pre-recordeds but pulls out all the stops on recordings, esp. with metal tape.
Teac V-6030S	£550	Nov 97	Solid build and solid sounds. Top-notch at the price.
Teac V-8030S	£650	Aug 95	One of the highest quality Dolby S decks available.
Technics RS-AZ7	£300	Jul 96	Excellent bass but mid and treble lack dynamics. Auto-tunes poorly on metal.

## Minidisc £ Year Verdict

Aiwa AM-F70	£250	Oct 99	Solid all-rounder that doubles as a superb dictaphone. Not No 1 as regards MD portables though.
Denon DMD-1000	£300	Nov 99	Sound quality up with the rest, wears its years well. Beginning to look expensive.
Goodmans GMD 920	£160	Nov 99	Very good value; built quality a touch plastic-y but stylish with it. Sonically very worthy.
JVC XM-228	£230	Sep 99	Well-built recorder. Good but not exceptional as Minidisc improves generally.
Kenwood DMF 9020	£500	Aug 99	An excellent tool for home recording; combines convenience, superb sound and a fair price.
Pioneer MJ-D508	£200	Nov 99	Sensible and well featured MD. Excellent transcriber of digital, shows up on analogue a little.
Sharp 722 portable	£230	Aug 99	Flash looks with solid build. First-class portable with domestic potential, but it isn't cheap.
Sony MDS-JB930	£300	Nov 99	UK Special Edition, so it sounds alright! Keyboard compatible with no difficulties in operation.
Technics SJ-MD100	£230	Nov 99	Solid, obviously meant for serious use. Excellent editing features. Sound up with the rest.

## Recordable CD £ Year Verdict

Marantz DR700	£600	Oct 99	A very solid all-rounder with impressive playback sound quality. Dearer than many though.
Philips CD-R 880	£500	Oct 99	Spot on with digital sources and impressive with analogue; playback a touch cold sounding.
Philips CDR-765	£360	Oct 99	Big value package. Whether the 'free' CD player function will earn its keep is a moot point.
Pioneer PDR-555RW	£500	Oct 99	Worthy of consideration but a bit of a mixed bag all round. Plenty of drive.
Traxdata Traxaudio 900	£500	Oct 99	Not the cheapest on the market but has an obliging way with playback which may turn the scale.

## DVD £ Year Verdict

DVD-3000	£700	Aug 98	The Denon is a fine performer with CD and better still with 24/96.
Denon DVD-5000	£1500	Mar 99	Build is second to none. Sound is very solid convincing, but not as musical as the 3000.
Panasonic DVD-A350	£700	Jul 98	The A350 wipes out the CD-only competition at the price and threatens players up to £2000.
Panasonic DVD-L10	£1000	Nov 98	Isn't cheap, but it's an outstanding portable and a capable domestic device.
Sony DVP-S715	£700	Aug 98	The Sony is warm and smooth but lacks clarity and precision.
Sony DVP-S7700	£700	Oct 99	Looks good, sounds better. Deserves very serious consideration.
Sony PBD-V30 (portable)	£700	Jun 99	The Sony is an engrossing performer in a sturdy and attractive design.

## Headphones £ Year Verdict

Ergo Mod II 2	£140	Apr 99	Wonderfully lucid and transparent panel-like sound.
Jecklin Float 2	£100	Apr 99	Clarity and openness are their traits, rather than slamming bass, but still good value.
Sennheiser HD-580	£200	Nov 98	In the company of a smooth, warm system the 580s can shine.
Sennheiser HE60/V70	£1000	Feb 95	Electrostatic that set a class standard and can put a case for chucking out your power amp and speakers.
Vivanco FMH-6800	£80	May 98	Have a lot of potential but basic operating problems have to be cleaned up first.
Vivanco SR850	£50	Nov 95	Excitement that is rarely heard in headphones, but have a little trouble with heavy orchestral loads.



Sharp 772



Sony PBD V30

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## Cartridges £ Year Verdict

### £200-

Cartidge Man Music Maker	£549	Feb 99	Good price, high output and a winning musicality make this Moving Iron cartridge the one to beat.
DNM Lexe	£1300	Jan 99	<b>A Goldring make-over that tracks well and sounds good. Pricey, though.</b>
DNM Rica MM Cartridge	£255	Jun 98	This betters the Mica, has super-MM virtues.
Dynavector DV20X-H	£299	May 99	<b>Delightfully musical sound makes the Dynavector a very strong contender in the budget MC stakes.</b>
EMT HST6	£850	Oct 96	Solid bass and smooth, musical sound make this rare MC cartridge worth the money.
Goldring Excel VX	£495	May 97	<b>Has fine midrange clarity, but is bettered in other areas by cheaper competitors.</b>
Linn Arkiv	£1200	Dec 97	Linn fans will love it but it's up against strong competition.
Linn Klyde	£489	Jun 95	<b>Sumptuous sounding cartridge that borders on the bass heavy but has a good feel for music.</b>
Lyra Lydian	£649	Jun 95	Externally smooth, civilised MC with no obvious weaknesses.
Ortofon Jubilee	£1250	Mar 99	<b>Detailed, musical and sure-footed, the Jubilee goes a long way towards justifying its elevated price tag.</b>
Ortofon MC25F	£225	Sep 95	Delightfully sweet, musical sound with added refinement on FL that takes some beating.
Ortofon MC30 Supreme	£450	Jun 95	<b>Involving yet refined presentation but some could feel it's slightly coloured.</b>
Ortofon MC7500	£2000	May 94	Conveys the full gamut of emotion from A-Z with the fervour of a live concert. Expensive, but the business.
Ortofon Rohmann	£1000	Apr 96	<b>A top quality MC with superb tonal quality and excellent imagery.</b>
Shure V15xMR	£295	Mar 97	Warm, dynamic rendition of music with great detail and impact (MM).
Transfiguration Spirit	£1000	Jul 98	<b>A balanced all-rounder that misses out only on the last ounce of detail and bass weight.</b>
Van Den Hul MC10	£840	Jun 95	The MC10 is very hard to fault. A honey, pure and simple.
VDH Grasshopper IV	£3750	Dec 95	Allows music to flow with superb fluidity and reveal things which were previously unheard - at a price!

Prices shown are those at the time of review



Ortofon Jubilee

## Tonearms £ Year Verdict

Haddock GH 228 SE	£505	Dec 98	Construction won't worry SME but its sound quality will unsettle a lot of the competition.
Origin Live RB250/RB300	varies	Nov 97	<b>These modified arms are a considerable improvement on the originals</b>
SME 309	£689	Jan 93	Tight, neutral sound with good tonality, but lacks the IVs pace and precision.
SME IV	£828	Mar 92	<b>Sexy chassis and staggering engineering along with potent performance earn it a place in audio history.</b>

## Tuners £ Year Verdict

### Under £200

AMC T7	£130	Jul 97	Although it has a tempting price, its sound quality is poor compared with its rivals.
Arcam Alpha 7	£230	Mar 97	<b>An attractive, smooth sounding tuner that won't break the bank.</b>
Cambridge T500	£180	Feb 99	The T500 is one of the most gifted tuners under £500; a very accomplished all-round performer.
Denon TU-260L MkII	£130	Jun 99	<b>With its smooth, inoffensive sound and abundant facilities, the MkII is a worthy addition to the tuner line-up.</b>
Harman/Kardon TU 950	£200	Jul 96	Sound quality is generally impressive. Let down by a rather constricted sound stage, but still good value.
Kenwood KT-2080	£130	Feb 97	<b>Smooth, even balance allows the KT-2080 to convince with whatever it's receiving. £130 well spent.</b>
Marantz ST-57	£150	Oct 97	The ST-57 is a smooth, warm tuner but lacks a little clarity and transparency.
Mission Cyrus FM7	£299	Apr 94	<b>Musical, communicative and extremely detailed and a steal at the price.</b>
NAD 412	£190	Jun 96	A remarkably musical and natural sounding tuner. Unbeatable at the price, or even twice the price for that matter.
Onkyo T401	£160	May 94	<b>A competent machine, but time has taken its toll on the sound quality.</b>
Rega Radio	£230	Jan 95	Sounds on the whole more than its price, but in other respects it isn't especially competitive.
Rotel RT-930AX	£175	Aug 94	<b>The RT-930AX is a glowing little bargain, real quality at a very realistic price.</b>
Sony ST-SA3ES	£250	Apr 97	The Sony is worth every penny of its asking price. If you're a fan of radio this is one to go for.
Sony ST-SE700	£180	Aug 97	<b>The ST-SE700 is one of the best at this price. LW reception is a welcome bonus.</b>
Teac T-460	£120	Oct 99	An inexpensive and versatile tuner, difficult to fault as such. Sound quality on the dryside.
Technics ST-GT-350L	£140	Jun 95	<b>Not a bad buy at all and a very good fit for budget and mid-price systems.</b>
Yamaha TX580 RDS	£200	Feb 95	If you want something for casual listening with superior aesthetics, this might be the one for you.



Hadcock 228SG

### £200-

Adcom GFT 555.2	£399	May 93	<b>Quite musical but does not rejuvenate the waves! Good solid performance but less than luxurious.</b>
Arcam Alpha 10 DRT		Jul 99	Arcam's digital radio couldn't be simpler to use. Compared with good FM the benefits are marginal as yet.
Burmester 931	£4347	Nov 94	<b>This is not a cheap tuner, but its cheaper than buying a radio station, which is the only possible alternative.</b>
Creek T43	£399	May 98	A great little tuner. This is the one in the price bracket.
Cyrus FM7.5	£400	Oct 99	<b>Fine, smooth and musical; commendably simple in style and operation. Only its price counts against it.</b>
Denon TU-S10	£400	Mar 98	A stylish, well-built tuner which has a detailed sound but needs careful partnering.
Fanfare FT 1	£1350	Mar 95	<b>Whether it's sweaty disco or symphony hall, the Fanfare comes up to scratch.</b>
Kenwood KT-6050L	£300	Oct 95	A good value, excellent sounding rds tuner, but lacks full EON facilities
Linn Kremlin	£1645	Mar 92	<b>Commendable basic performance but, considering the price there are limitations.</b>
Magnum Dynalab FT101A	£749	Apr 92	Worth auditioning but bass rather dry and light.
Marantz ST-17	£600	Jul 99	<b>Knock-out build quality and rich velvety sound. Poor-signal mute a bit too enthusiastic.</b>
Meridian 504	£660	Mar 96	A clear, natural sound with good punch. Has strong rivals at the price, but acquires itself well.
Micromega Tuner	£700	Jul 95	<b>An unusual design from Micromega that's well built but sonically unrewarding and expensive.</b>
Myriad MT100	£530	Nov 99	Low on facilities, but when it comes to looks and sonic performance, it's the business.
NAD 702	£330	Jul 94	<b>Well worth auditioning, even if you've never previously considered a receiver.</b>
Naim NAT 03	£499	Sep 93	Soft and pure, especially across the midband. Speech very well reproduced plus solid weighty bass.
Nikamichi ST3S	£350	Dec 94	<b>Looks good, but the sound quality isn't really worth the asking price.</b>
Pioneer F-504RDS	£300	Dec 98	One sole mark against the class-leading transparency is its slightly dry character.
Pioneer F-504RDS	£350	Nov 95	<b>Well engineered and competent tuner, but a little uninspiring.</b>
Rotel Michi RHT10	£895	Mar 94	This classy looking tuner can hold its head up high amongst the best tuners at the price.
Rotel RT-990BX	£500	Apr 95	<b>The price of twenty concert tickets, and for that you can listen as if you were there. A bargain.</b>
TAG McLaren T20	£1100	Mar 99	Extremely well built with a lucid if slightly dry sound. The only real drawback is the high price.
Thorens TRT-2000	£500	Dec 97	<b>An otherwise competent tuner is let down by a rather processed character.</b>



Marantz ST-17

## Cassette £ Year Verdict

### Under £300

Aiwa AD-F580	£150	Apr 98	No Dolby S, but three heads and two capstans make the Aiwa a bargain.
Denon DRM-550	£160	May 96	<b>Good enough for the price and no worse than the competition.</b>
Denon DRM 656	£150	Jul 99	Its slant towards features prevent the Denon taking the audiophile honours at the price.
Denon DRM-650S	£230	Aug 96	<b>Top sound quality with ferric and chrome makes this deck a steal.</b>
Grundig CF4	£250	Jan 95	Fair on pre-recordeds, OK when recording, but speed stability isn't great.
JVC TD-V662	£300	Sep 98	<b>Only the lack of Dolby S conspires against the otherwise excellent JVC.</b>
Kenwood KX-5080S	£200	Jan 97	Stable transport gives fine results on metal and chrome. Rough on ferrics.
Nad 613	£230	Jan 96	<b>Decent playback and good recording when used carefully.</b>
NAD 614	£270	Sep 95	Excellent electronics are let down by a low-grade transport.
Rotel RD-960BX	£230	Oct 95	<b>A solid, competent machine which is reasonable value for money.</b>
Sony TC-K311	£150	Dec 93	Auto-tuning is mediocre and the general results are unexceptional.
Sony TC-K490	£170	Jan 93	<b>A mix of average heads and electronics doesn't make for happy taping.</b>
Teac V-610	£100	Apr 97	The V-610's performance matches its price well, but audiophile it isn't.
Teac V-600	£150	Sep 94	<b>Satisfactory for in-car recordings, but the low price shows.</b>
Yamaha KX-580 SE	£250	Sep 97	The '580 lives up to its SE tag with a fine performance in all areas.







## PREVIOUSLY OWNED AND EX DISPLAY HI-FI EQUIPMENT

### PREVIOUSLY OWNED EQUIPMENT

Acoustic Energy Aegis One (Rosewood)	£ 79.00
Acoustic Energy AE 509 (£850.00)	£ 499.00
Arcam Alpha 5 Plus CD Player	£ 179.00
Arcam Alpha 8 CD Player	£ 299.00
Arcam Alpha 10 Integrated amp	£ 499.00
Audiolab 8000C (vgc, boxed)	£ 349.00
Audiolab 8000A	£ 329.00
Denon DCD 1560	£ 149.00
Exposure 20 Integrated amp	£ 299.00
Exposure Super 20 Integrated amp	£ 399.00
Marantz CD 52 se	£ 119.00
Marantz CD 84 (no remote)	£ 69.00
Mission 751	£ 149.00
Mordaunt Short MS20i Pearl	£ 99.00
Musical Fidelity B1	£ 99.00
Naim NAC72/NAP180 (optional Audioquest Quartz interconnects, please telephone for details)	£ 1149.00
Harman Kardon AVJ 250/ADP303	£ 449.00
Quad 34/405 (inc. phono boards)	£ 379.00
Talk Electronics Hurricane/Tornado 3 Pre/Power	£ 899.00
Thorens TD 160s Mk V inc. Cartridges (on behalf of customer)	£ 249.00

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2 x 5m lengths of Audioquest Midnight biwire (£475.00)	£ 359.00
various other cables available ex demo, please phone for details	
Arcam Alpha 10 DAVE inc. 3 ch power amp (£2500.00)	£ 1499.00
Arcam Alpha 9 CD player (£800.00)	£ 679.00
B&W DM302, Black (£150.00)	£ 129.00
Castle Severn 2, Cherry (£600.00)	£ 499.00
Denon DCD835 CD player (£280.00)	£ 239.00
Pioneer DV 525 multi region DVD player	£ 299.00
Rogers LS55, black (RRP £450.00) NEW	£ 199.00
Ruark Epilogue, standard black (£250.00)	£ 199.00
Tag McLaren 60iRV Integrated amp (£1000.00)	£ 649.00
Tag McLaren T20 Tuner ex display (£1100.00)	£ 699.00
Tag McLaren 60 P Stereo power amp (£850.00)	£ 549.00
Talk Electronics Cyclone 1 integrated amp (£550.00)	£ 469.00
Talk Electronics Thunder 3 CD player (ex display)	£ 849.00
Talk Electronics Hurricane/Tornado 4 Pre/monos	£ 1999.00
Yamaha KX393 Cassette Deck	£ 99.00

All "previously owned" equipment comes with a minimum of 3 months warranty, and all "ex display" equipment comes with a minimum of 12 months warranty. These warranties cover parts and labour but not carriage costs.

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<u>KRELL</u> KST 100 Power Amplifier (Grey)	Mint S'Hand	£3000+	£1595

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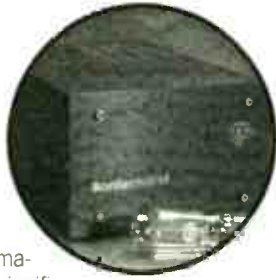
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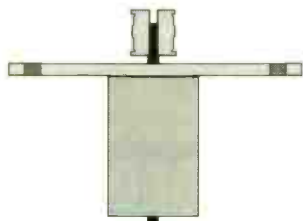
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## UPGRADE YOUR TURNTABLE

"If you are thinking of upgrading your system.....the Origin Live dc-motor kit should be high on your list for consideration" TNT AUDIO internet magazine April 2000.

"The single most important upgrade you can ever make to any record deck concerns the motor drive ....nothing can compare you for the shock of going DC, in a word Gobsmacking" COMMON GROUND MAGAZINE



Whether you own a Linn Lingo or a Rega, the results of upgrading to the Origin Live dc motor and advanced power supply are simply astounding. This high grade motor kit is designed as a drop in replacement for almost all turntable motors. Decks benefiting so far from this ultimate of upgrades include Linn, Roksan, Michell, Systemdeck, Rock etc. With a 12 Volt power supply it is safe and easy to fit. Guidance instructions are provided. At £250 with money back guarantee if not impressed this is a bargain out of all proportion to it's value in terms of performance. An optional, larger purpose made transformer is also available as an add on at £175

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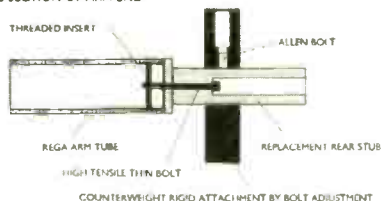
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"I have to say the Rega modifications turn this humble arm into a real Giant killer. Gone is the rather grey, sterile sound of the cooking Rega. Instead, tonal colour is fresh, dynamics have great speed and impact, and the sound stage is huge." HI-FI WORLD SUPPLEMENT (structural modification to a RB250) WHAT HI-FI gave this modification a 5 star rating.

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## ORIGIN LIVE TURNTABLE KITS

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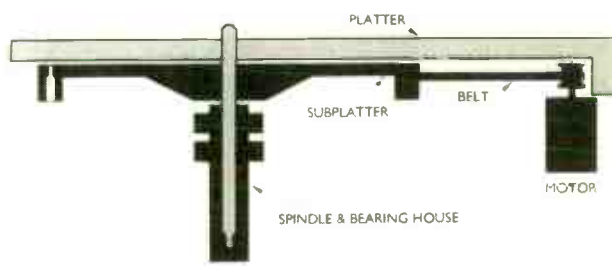
Now you can save money and build your own high performance deck. The standard kit version is offered at £195, and the ultra version at £279. Both decks come with a full set of drawings and guidance instructions. The kit allows for your creativity or there are optional parts that will enable you to assemble a tried and tested design within 1-4 hours. This is probably the easiest kit you will ever make.

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**AUDIO VALVES** new/used: 300B WE, ACO44, DA30, DA60, DA100, ECC32, ECC83, ECC88, EL34, GZ32, GZ34, KT66, KT88, PX4, PX25, PP3/250, PP5/400, RS241 any triode.  
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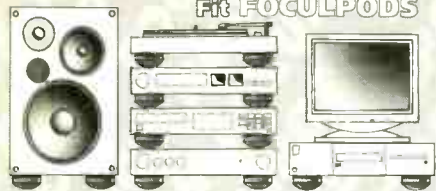
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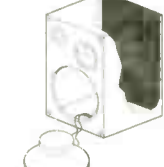
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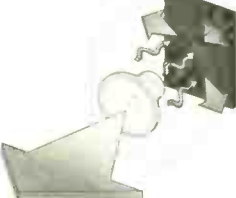
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# Measured Performance

## loudspeakers

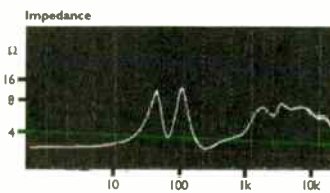
### ELAC CL330

This compact little loudspeaker has a low overall impedance of just  $5\Omega$ , reaching down to a minimum of  $3\Omega$ . Turn the volume up and it will start to draw a lot of current from an amplifier. This stresses the power supply and can double or triple distortion, giving a strained sound. A beefy amplifier must be used to get the best from the Elac. It is not an easy load.

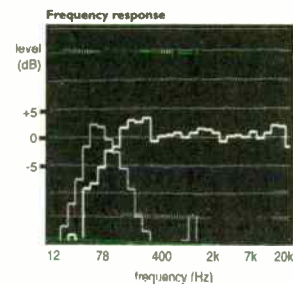
Frequency response was flat and wide, with a small lift around  $150\text{Hz}$  before roll off below  $80\text{Hz}$ . The port is centred at

$63\text{Hz}$ , extending output down to  $40\text{Hz}$ . It has narrow tuning so bass will sound lively but possibly a bit bouncy and under-damped.

The CL330 is a very accurate loud-



speaker and has a wide response for its size. It is a tough load though, so demands a good amplifier. **NK**

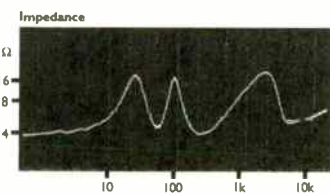


### TANNOY mx2

Small loudspeakers are often very accurate and Tannoy's mx2 was no exception. It has a smooth, broad frequency response with no emphases. There's a small amount of bass lift, a sign of an under-damped alignment, necessary to give good apparent bass freedom. Forward bass output starts to fall away below  $80\text{Hz}$ , below which the port takes over. It is broadly tuned and centred high, at  $50\text{Hz}$ . In effect, the port handles all low bass, working from  $80\text{Hz}$  down to  $25\text{Hz}$ . Tannoy know how to squeeze fantastic measured results from even a small box; the mx2 works from a low  $25\text{Hz}$  right up to  $16\text{kHz}$  with little deviation from perfect

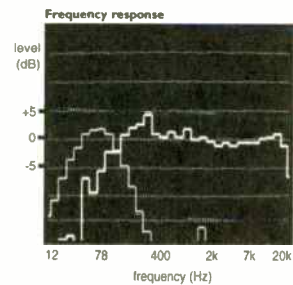
response flatness, an impressive result.

Small loudspeakers are, however, usually insensitive. This one delivers  $87\text{dB}$  from a nominal watt, about right for the size. However, although impedance measures  $6\Omega$  overall, our analysis shows a fairly unbalanced characteristic, peaking around  $30\Omega$  at  $1\text{kHz}$  and sinking down to  $4\Omega$  minimum. Wild variation like this signifies reactance and energy storage in the



load, not a good thing. Amplifiers can differ markedly in the way they handle such a load, so a listening test is advised. Tannoy have managed better in the past.

The Mercury mx2 measures very well but may well highlight amplifier differences. **NK**



### ZINGALI .3

This large floorstander from Zingali has both bass and treble lift. Treble rises steadily but smoothly. Absence of peaking means the loudspeaker will display a bright subjective balance, but without sharpness or overt inaccuracy. This characteristic, in conjunction with the absence of a crossover dip, will ensure the loudspeaker provides plenty of detail. It may, however, prove a little much with bright CDs.

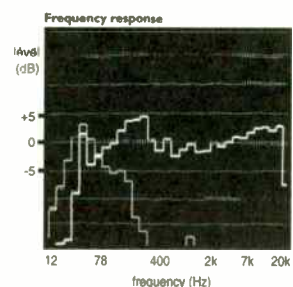
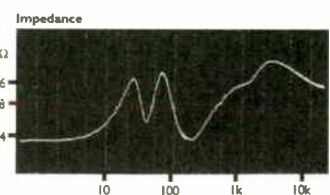
A bass peak around  $200\text{Hz}$  will add both warmth and some boom I suspect. It may also signal the presence of coloration. Bass output is supported by the front port that radiates narrowly around

$40\text{Hz}$ . This could well introduce an element of one-note type bass.

Developing  $90\text{dB}$  sound pressure level from one watt of input power, sensitivity was quite good. The Zingalis measured  $8\Omega$  overall so they would seem to be a very 'standard' load. Unfortunately, they swing from low impedance ( $4\Omega$ ) across the bass regions, where current is drawn, to high impedance ( $40\Omega$ ) above  $500\text{Hz}$ ,

so the characteristic is unbalanced and quite reactive too. The Zingalis will draw current and return energy to the amplifier.

In a nutshell, these loudspeakers do not measure very well, falling well below current standards in terms of accuracy and compatibility. **NK**



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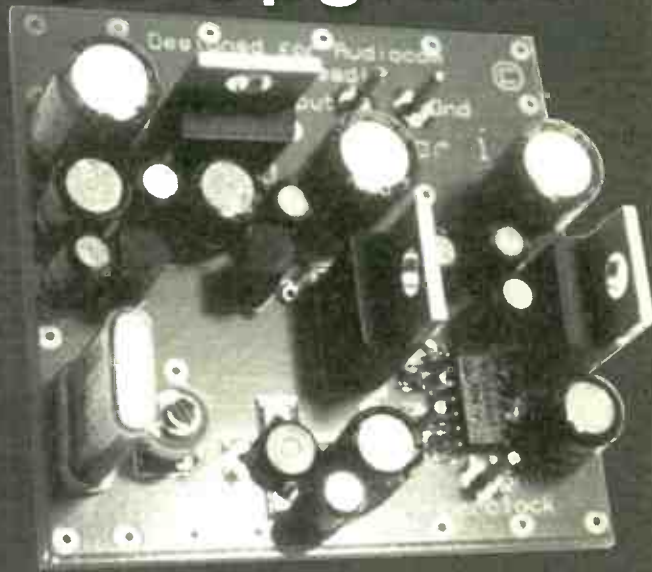
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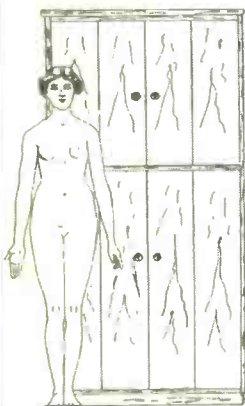
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Hi-Fi Choice magazine, Nov 1999.

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# digital recorders

## ALESIS ML-9600 HARD DISC RECORDER

The selectable word length and sampling rates of the Alesis come as a bit of a shock. It will record in 16-bit, 20-bit or 24-bit, at 44.1kHz and up to 96kHz sampling rates. This gives it an analogue bandwidth of 44.5kHz when set to the highest 96kHz sampling rate. High frequencies above 20kHz roll off slightly, but not so much as to have any in-band consequence. With a low frequency limit of 4Hz (-1dB) this recorder offers the best results possible today from domestic digital recording technology.

Long word lengths improve linearity and the Alesis was very linear in 24-bit mode - there's just about no distortion, as our figures show. It is the first time, in the 17 years since digital hit the consumer market, that I have been able to test a digital recorder with a performance unequivocally better than the best analogue recorders in this area. Recording with the Alesis will certainly give a smoothness and clarity unmatched by ordinary consumer recorders.

There's no record level control. An input of 1V maximum is expected, which will send the record level indicators up to 0dB, giving an output of 1V.

The input will overload much above 0dB/1V, so some way of controlling signal level is needed, since a CD player produces 2V.

Noise was very low, measuring -105dB in 24-bit mode. Noise increased to -91dB in 16-bit.

The Alesis is an impressive device, albeit a bit complex for ordinary domestic use. It offers full 24-bit/96kHz recording quality to hard disc, which gives unmatched measured performance figures. **NK**

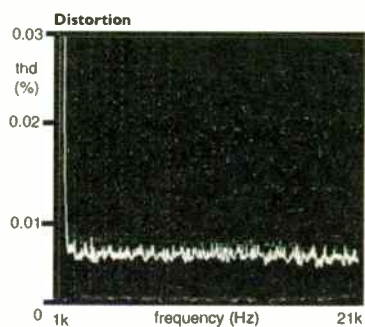
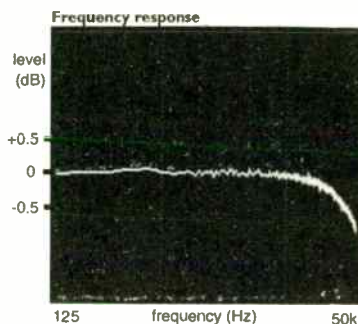
Frequency response 4Hz-44.5kHz

Distortion	left	right
-6dB	0.008	0.008
-30dB	0.01	0.01
-60dB	0.5	0.5
-90	10	10

Separation	left	right
1kHz	110	110
20kHz	99	99

Noise	-105dB
Sensitivity	1V
Output	1V

NB Frequency response is shown against 125Hz-50kHz axis



## MARANTZ DR 17 RECORDER

The Marantz DR-17 has a wide frequency response running from 10Hz up to 20.6kHz, with gentle roll-offs at either end. Our analysis shows a gentle loss of 0.5dB in output above 10kHz, just enough to give a smooth sound, without obvious dullness or warmth setting in. It measured well here.

Modern digital recorders are nowadays fairly distortion-free, but the DR-17 had problems. As signal level decreased below just -20dB, an extended digital distortion pattern appeared. Our analysis at -30dB shows an array of harmonics up to 18th, the higher order ones that are most discernible also being most prominent, an unfortunate effect. Although distortion level measured a reasonable 0.06%, the higher harmonics may well add brightness and roughness.

Below -60dB the convertor became more linear and the harmonic structure changed to a more analogue-like

low-order pattern.

In all other areas the DR-17 measured normally.

The DR-17 suffers unfortunate levels of high order 'digital' distortion. Otherwise it measures reasonably. **NK**

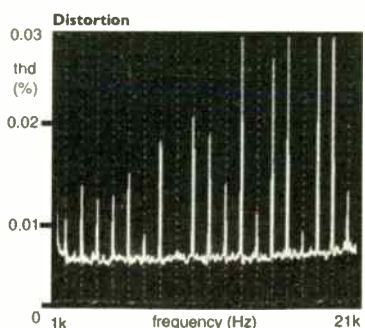
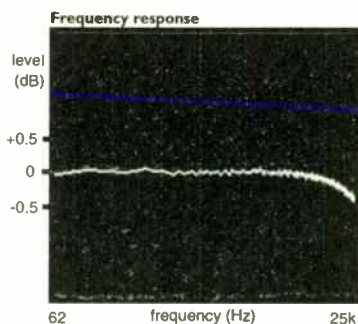
Frequency response 10Hz-20.6kHz

Distortion	left	right
-6dB	0.01	0.01
-30dB	0.06	0.058
-60dB	0.6	0.62
-90	2	2.3

Separation	left	right
1kHz	103	102
20kHz	97	96

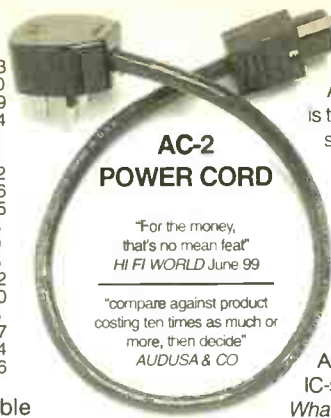
Noise -94dB

Output 2V



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## digital recorders contd.

### PIONEER PDR-W739 RECORDER

Pioneer offer a lot of product for the money here and in some areas performance has suffered. Bandwidth was a little curtailed, running from 10Hz up to 17.2kHz before rolling off. A small peak before this early roll-off point will brighten the sound.

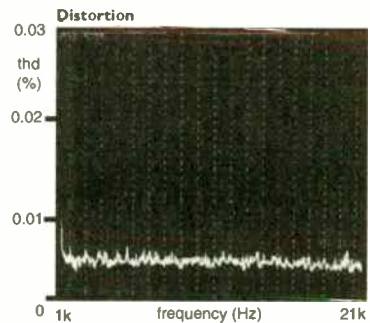
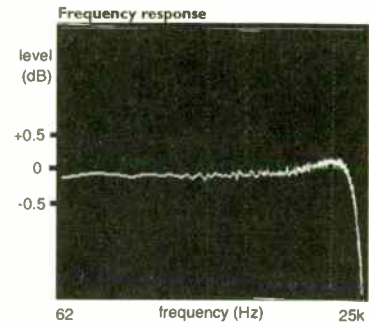
When set above -20dB the recording level control introduced noise and what appeared to be distortion. Noise rose progressively to reach a maximum of -76dB - quite high. It fell to a minimum below -20dB on the control but most sources will require more gain than this, so sound quality will be gain dependent.

Distortion figures were good with record level set low, but deteriorated by a factor of ten at high gain. For example, at -30dB distortion measured 0.02% at low gain and 0.2% at full gain. At -60dB the results were 0.5%/5%.

The PDR-W739 has some problems.

Although not major they hamper performance a little and label it a budget product. **NK**

Frequency response	10Hz-17.2kHz	
Distortion	left	right
-6dB	0.007	0.01
-30dB	0.02	0.02
-60dB	0.5	0.5
-90dB	25	10
Separation	left	right
1kHz	102	103
20kHz	92	93
Noise	-76 to -116dB	
Sensitivity	0.6V	
Output	2.3V	

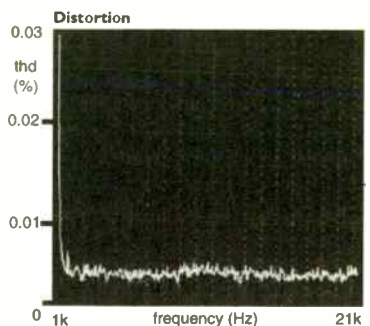
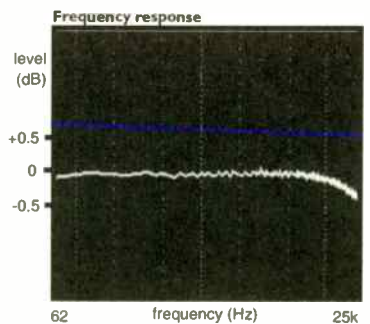


### SONY JA555ES MINIDISC

MiniDisc gives a very similar performance to Compact Disc, having a similar coding scheme - 16-bit at 44.1kHz sampling rate - albeit with ATRAC 5:1 data reduction to allow one hour of music to fit a 160MB disc. This doesn't hobble performance like MP3 compression though. The JA555ES has a good, flat frequency response that extends to 21kHz, a slight roll down at high frequencies being just sufficient to ensure there's no treble brightness.

Distortion was low throughout the machine's amplitude range, measuring 0.007% at -6dB to 0.3% at -60dB, both very respectable results. Signals were recoverable down to -90dB from the 555ES, where linearity was better than CD. Distortion measured 3.8% compared with a common value of 30% with CD. From the distortion and frequency response data I would expect the JA555ES to have a smooth and easy sound, free from roughness. **NK**

Frequency response	1Hz-21kHz	
Distortion	left	right
-6dB	0.007	0.007
-30dB	0.02	0.02
-60dB	0.03	0.03
-90	3.8	3.8
Separation	left	right
1kHz	110	119
20kHz	104	103
Noise	-100dB	
Sensitivity	0.7V	
Dynamic range	109dB	
Output	2.4V	



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# amplifiers

## PATHOS CLASSIC ONE

The solid-state output stage of the Pathos produces 50W per channel into 8Ω, enough for good volume when matched with reasonably sensitive loudspeakers. This increased to 72W into 4Ω. It isn't the sort of increase expected from a stiff power supply, suggesting a little softening in bass slam.

Bandwidth was wide measuring 7Hz-85kHz, giving good coverage to all audio frequencies. This is more than enough to reproduce subsonics from CD.

Although distortion at 0.06% was low in the midband (after the unit had spent some time warming up) at high frequen-

cies matters weren't so good. The 10kHz figure rose to 0.35%, with extended odd order harmonics. This sort of thing adds slight roughness to the sound. The higher current draw of a 4Ω load pushed distortion up to 0.6%. The Pathos wasn't so hot in this area.

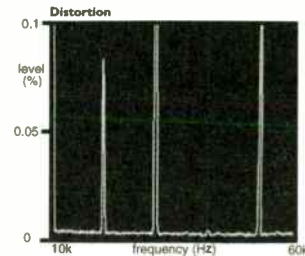
Sensitivity measured 500mV, high enough for the Pathos to need a pre-amp with gain, even though a CD player will drive it direct.

The Pathos may well sound clear and open, but high frequency distortion may well introduce a little edginess at times. **NK**

Power 50W

CD/tuner/aux.

Frequency response	7Hz-85kHz
Separation	110dB
Noise	-93dB
Distortion	0.35%
Sensitivity	500mV
dc offset	1mV



## SAMUEL JOHNSON PPA/PCA100

Although large, the Samuel Johnson PPA100 power amplifier produces a modest 55W into a standard 8Ω load. This increases to 90W into a 4Ω load. It's enough to get good volume out of most loudspeakers, if not blow the place down. The power supply has good regulation.

Frequency response was wide, stretching from 7Hz up to 130kHz. In conjunction with low amounts of high frequency distortion the power amplifier is likely to sound clear, fairly bright but clean.

Distortion measurement showed little increase at high frequencies or high pow-

ers, levels hovering around a respectable 0.06%.

Sensitivity was a normal 220mV, high enough to accept all sources, from old tuners and cassette decks (300mV) up to modern CD players (2.6V max). Noise was low and channel separation wide.

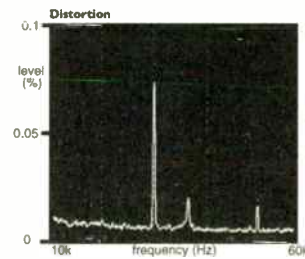
This amplifier combination has a neat measured performance and should work well. **NK**

Power 55W

CD/tuner/aux.

Frequency response 7Hz-130kHz

Separation	-70dB
Noise	-103dB
Distortion	0.06%
Sensitivity	220mV
dc offset	1mV



# cd player

## ARCAM FMJ CD23

The Arcam FMJ CD23 has an interesting frequency response characteristic, differing from the norm in being very flat, with a small amount of filter ripple close to the upper cut-off limit. The suggestion here is that Arcam are using an unusual filter arrangement, likely to impart a distinctive sound. In the past Arcam have relied upon a slowly falling top end to get a smooth, cohesive sound, so it's interesting to see how this will perform subjectively.

Distortion was low at higher signal levels but rose a little at lower levels, reaching 0.58% at -60dB where other machines now return 0.3% or so.

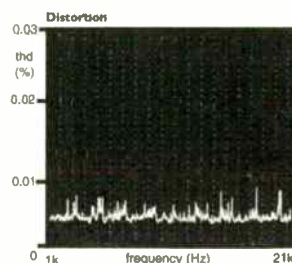
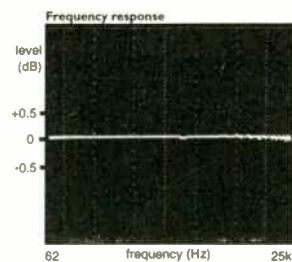
However, this is unlikely to have a great impact subjectively. The Arcam should sound clean enough because it produces no unusual sampling artifacts, keeping up with the best in this respect.

With wide channel separation, a good EIAJ dynamic range value of 107dB and healthy output of 2.34V on each channel, Arcam's FMJ measures well in all areas, even if it doesn't quite match the best. **NK**


Frequency response 4Hz-21.25kHz

Distortion	left	right
-6dB	0.006	0.005
-30dB	0.007	0.007
-60dB	0.58	0.58
-90	32	32

Separation	left	right
1kHz	99	100
20kHz	84	85
Noise	-103dB	
Dynamic range	107dB	
Output	2.34V	



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VERSALABS woodblocks £50 each, Red Rollers £20 each, OnAir Support Systems Airpod II's £40 each, Solid Glass Support Platform (18mm thick) £60, Audionote ANv Interconnect 1 Mtr (RCAs) Pair £50, Audionote ANv Digital 0.75 Mtr (RCAs) £25, Siltech Digital 1 Mtr x 2 (1 with gold BNCs, 1 with WBT RCAs) £50 each, CAD Anacreaon; Silurian; Czar (ask for prices). Tel: 00 3520 2128 5621, Email: barig@sbx.com (Jul/I)

CONRAD JOHNSON Premier Two pre-amplifier. The first Premier pre-amp and a classic, good condition. Noisy transformer hence £450. Be quick! Tel: 01509 215 230 (Jul/I)

LINN LP12, Mission Dynavector Ruby cartridge £450. Musical Fidelity A1 amp £125. Arcam Alpha Five CD £175. Rega turntable no arm £60. All excellent condition and boxed. Tel: 01642 591 409 (Jul/I)

THETA PRO-PRIME DAC mint condition, boxed. Original owner from new. Big effortless sound. £750. Tel: 01509 215 230 (Jul/I)

LOWTHER ACOUSTAS - early original - Birch ply throughout. Professionally renovated, finished in satin dark oak. New DX3 drivers. Total renovation cost = £1600. For Sale @ £895. Also new/ as new Lowther drivers. Half Price. Quad II Stereo complete. Recently overhauled by ATV to Quad spec. @ = £450. Tel: 01483 268 804, Email: \*\*\*@think-tank.softnet.co.uk (Jul/I)

LINN LP12, Aro, Lingo, Circus £950. Audionote Meishu amp (phono version) £1800. Audionote type E/SP inc. stands £900. Mana Reference table £250. Mana Mini table £100. All mint. Tel: Nick 0114 245 4601 (Jul/I)

LOWTHER PM6s in need of re-foaming in custom built Sapele cabinets (Accousta style) £280 ono Tel: 0115 950 6790 (Jul/I)

EXPOSURE VI, VII, VIII amplifier combo, excellent condition, just serviced, great sound £325. Tel: 01285 644 418 (Aug/I)

FOR SALE. Star-Dac DAC 24-96. Under guarantee. Boxed & manual. Genuine reason. £290. MF X-24K DAC under guarantee, boxed & manual £190. Tel: 01903 247 779 Sussex (Jul)

ART AUDIO Tempo's Class A Triode Monoblocs 30 wpc £895 pair (£2600). 8 VTL KT90's unused £25 each. 8 6L6/5881's £40 the lot. Tel: 020 8993 2006 (Jul/I)

NAIM 72/140 pre/power latest models, MC and MM boards. Mint £800. Tel: Andrew 01703 442 591 (Jul/I)

MARANTZ CD17 mint condition £380. Theta Chroma 396 DAC plus TLC anti jitter box £450 (over £1000 new). Free interconnects worth £100. Tel: 020 7916 0527 or 0973 278 216. Email: davidmundy@aol.com (Jul/I)

AUDIO SYNTHESIS Passion preamp £250 (£700). Audio Synthesis poweramp £750 (£1500). Trichord Digital turntable £250 (£700). Cabletalk 4.1 biwire speaker cable 7m pair £60 (£120). Kimber Analogue and digital interconnects £60 (£120). Tel: Mark 01330 811 978 (Jul/I)

QUAD ESL 63's excellent condition with American Arcici sand filled stands £1500 ono. Also Armstrong 626 receiver £100 Uher CR160 cassette recorder £250. Tel: Arun 020 8868 0369 leave message. Serious callers only. (Jul/I)

JT HORN loudspeakers. Fitted with Lowther DX-3 units. Superb sounding, retail for £2700. Accept £1250. Tel: 020 8994 2030 after 6pm (Jul/I)

NU-VISTA pre amp, new, perfect condition, remote control, boxed with manual £995. Castle Harlochs, oak finish, boxed £495. 4 Pure Henrys £55. Wanted: Sonus Faber Signums. Tel: 016974 763 98 (Jul/I)

MICROMEGA DUO CD player, Transport & DAC, as new with original boxes and manuals. Sale due to upgrade. Cost over £2200, sell £995 ono. Tel: Tim 01892 549 779 (Jul/I)

LEAK TL 12,1 Radford tuner Quad 33/405 FM3/303 Garrad 301/SME arm Leak T/Line tuner teak, Revox G36 reel/reel, PS Audio p/amp other amps also transformers chokes tapes valves EMI/BTR. Tel: 0131 332 7536 (Jul/I)

QUAD ELS 63S, recent service, mint condition £1175. Arcam CD8SE £320, Arcam Amp9 and poweramp 9, half price, both mint boxed, only weeks old. WANTED: Naim amps. Tel: 01423 864 754. Email: micwalters@aol.com offers (Jul/I)

E.A.R. 859 integrated amplifier. One year old but hardly used. 13W single ended pure Class A. Absolutely mint, boxed, £990 (£2000 new) ono. Tel: 020 7450 3889 (Jul/I)

NAKAMICHI DR10 cassette deck. As new. Unwanted gift. £550. Tel: 01302 761 058 (Jul/I)

NAIM NAC32 £150, Snaps £140, NAP160 £300, NAP110 £175, Linn Index £75, Index Mk2 £100, Rotel RCD965BX £75, RA820B £30, SNAICs (thick) £20. WANTED! Linn Intek/Pretek - Powertek. Tel: 0151 546 7949 / 07979 934 285 (Merseyside) (Jul/I)

NAIM CDS boxed immaculate £2500. Tel: Chris 01752 509 236 (Plymouth) (Jul/I)

Most cables have a sonic signature or tonal character to match specific components. In well-matched systems these cables are often found to be harsh or dull.

Petro's cables were designed for AudioSOURCE to complement transparent components in a well-matched system: the goal was neutrality - musical flavour transmitted as water flows along a smooth pipe. If our cables sound bright or blurred, be confident that it is the equipment that you are hearing! Stratos cables have the greatest differentiation of all interconnects we have compared, that is to say that different recordings and different components just yield their own characters, transparently.

The design is the attention to many details, based on simple physics and many listening tests. We are now so far ahead of the game - and still moving the goal posts - that we will disclose the basic principles. The two major principles are conductivity and contamination. Conductivity: low resistance, capacitance, etc, using the highest purity copper (silver content acid free solder) in very fine but many strands. In outer space, such cables would transmit Nothing But Signal (hence the esteemed American NBS brand! Incidentally, we have some of their amazing cables for sale at half-price). Contamination: since the invention of radio we are aware that your wires act as aerials. Designers cannot eliminate this in the equipment without serious degradation of the music signal. Planet Earth is now contaminated with EMI, RFI, you name it fields from cellular phones to AC mains. Coming from your neighbours, factories, and your own hi-fi and non-hi-fi devices. Our cables use twin axial (quasi-balanced) plus and minus wires, inside a triple-shielded braid earthed at source only and taken through to the plugs. We also apply Kontak cleaner to greatly reduce RF rectification and enhance surface conductivity. It lasts for about six months. If you haven't tried it, you don't know

what you are missing. £14.95 per bottle.

Stratos Series II (launched in August) is a major leap forward in interconnects which exceed the sonic performance of all but one extremely expensive (NBS) digital and stereo interconnects we have tried in a wide variety of equipment. Series two features our own RCA state-of-the-art phono plugs which use our tried materials (solid phosphor bronze, not bent copper) for enhanced contact and noise rejection. Do not judge the performance by the price. Customers are disposing of major brands now shamed by Stratos II because our cables are sold direct to end-users without marketing costs. This saves at least 75% when you consider that packaging and promotion double the cost of cables and dealer margins and vat double it again. One stereo metre of Stratos II thus sells for only £125. Stratos II Digital costs £59. Terminations are RCA or Neutrik Black Gold XLR from stock; others to order.

"These cables are everything you said they were ... this has been the cheapest and by far and away the most significant upgrade I've done to my hifi in years. I ordered cables, and when I opened the box, the contents looked like cables but these Stratos cables are much, much more than that. They have made such a huge difference to my listening pleasure that it's the equivalent of replacing one or more of the key items of hardware. At £120 [series II now £125] a 1 metre pair, they are the cable bargain of the decade." - Mr E.H., Aberdeen, 12/08/99.

Dirty mains has been neglected for too long in the UK but conditioners can degrade sound by limiting speed and power. The best place to clean up your mains is between your wall and the equipment. We are at beta test stage on effective AC mains cords, and can advise you on high-end products from America before you invest. Advice on speaker cables freely available.

**PHONE 0141-357 5700. FAX 0141-339 9762.**

**E-MAIL:jack@audiosource.co.uk The web is at www.audiosource.co.uk.**

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*As reviewed by Richard White  
Hi-Fi World June 99*

### ARCAYDIS AS2



*As reviewed by Simon Pope  
Hi-Fi World October 99*

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Tel: 01562 865 788 Fax: 01562 865466

Special Internet offer  
see page 130 for details

**QUAD 606 £350 and 405 £150, 33 £50, FM3 £50, JVC KD21D cassette deck £30, Pioneer PLD12D turntable £30, Rotel RCD 930AX disc player £95, Quad sleeve £15. Tel: 01442 832 283 (Jul/I)**

XTC (ORELLE) preamp, line level, remote. Detailed and spacious. Martin Colloms reference. Excellent value at £550 (£1250). Technics auto-reverse cassette deck RS-BX501. Well reviewed. Little used. £75 (£180). Electrofluidics Monolith 20/20 speaker cables. 5m pair. £255 (£500). A HFW favourite. Mandrake silver interconnects, balanced, 1m pair. £255 (£550). van den Hul The Integration hybrid interconnect. New model. £95 (£180). Swaps considered. Tel: Jerry 01372 468 266 (Jul/I)

LINN ACTIV System. Isobarik speakers, LK1 pre-amp, Activ crossover, three LK280 power amps. Excellent condition. £1600. Tel: 01444 246 776 (Jul/I)

DPA.PDM1 Mk2 D.A.C. £175 ono. Nordost Flatline Gold Bi-Amp speaker cable terminated 5m pair £125. Siltech HF8.Si digital interconnect 0.6m £95. Chord Siren interconnect 1m pair phono £45. Reference Cable CS1. 0.5m pair phono £35. Ringmat turntable mat unused £35. Stands Unique Soundtower 10, cherry wood with extra shelk and turntable support. Phone for details. Tel: 01450 860 676 (Jul/I)

AUDIO ANALOGUE Puccini special edition integrated amplifier boxed as new £350. Tel: 0121 344 3598 (Birmingham) (Jul/I)

REVOX G36 reel to reel valve tape recorder. German instructions £325. Tel: 01379 783 334 Suffolk (Jul/I)

KLIPCH LA SCALA loud-speakers classic three way horn loaded. Lovely sound. £1250 ono. Audio Research Classic 60 valve amp £1300 ono. Tel: 01902 746 561 (Jul/I)

NAIM NAC52 preamp £2200. Supercap power supply with lead for NAC52 £1700. Tel: 01706 213 872 (Jul/I)

PATHOS ACOUSTICS Twin Towers hybrid valve, integrated amplifier, 2 x 35 watts. Beautiful appearance and sound, but won't drive Nautilus 802. Cost new £3200 asking £2200. Inc. remote control. Tel: 01296 437 314 (Aylesbury, Bucks) (Jul/I)

MERIDIAN 206 CD £350. EPOS ES11 £190. Philips CD850 including DACMagic £110. Rotel phono stage £80. Pink Triangle with Helios Scorpio £250. Tel: Philip 0831 139 678 (Ealing) (Jul/I)

MUSICAL FIDELITY A2 amplifier £250, A2 CD £250, E50 tuner £150, KEF RDM 2 £350, Target R2 stands £150, Rotel RQ97OBX £60, Chario Academy 2 walnut £900, all mint condition. Tel: 07967 646 089 (Jul/I)

NAIM CD 3.5 £670, Naim 180 £700, Naim 102 £700, Hicap 320 Flatcap 180. All boxed as new. Tel: 01953 606 311 (Jul/I)

SONNETEER CAMPION, mint, wonderfully transparent sound. £395. Also Mana three tier stand. £300. Reason for sale, desperately poor. Please call Steve 01483 894 659 (Guildford) (Jul/I)

NAIM CD3.5 £700, Creek T43 tuner £250, both immaculate, boxed and guaranteed, Sony WMDD33 personal stereo £60, Ixos Deadrock equipment rack £75, Sony Learning remote £50, Leaving country. Tel: Ben 020 8333 4187 (Jul/I)

AUDIO INNOVATION Series 500 valve amp. Good condition £285. Tel: 0161 626 7262 (Gtr Manchester) (Jul/I)

FOR SALE Arcici stands for Quad 57s £175. WANTED: Townsend Rock, also SME IV or V arm. Tel: 01661 852874 evenings or Email: alcav@yahoo.com (Jul/I)

SONY MINIDISC decks MDS-JE510 brand new £95 (£165). MDS-JA20ES little used, mint £250 (£500). Collectors item Marantz CD94. Mk1 CD player, used one week and stored, as new £600. Tel: 01483 282 364 (Jul/I)

NAIM NAC 62 NAIM NAP 140, both new style and boxed + 2 x Cobra interconnect cables all £575. Tel: Brian 0121 689 2805 (Jul/I)

CHARIO ACADEMY 2 loud-speakers real walnut boxed. Excellent condition £1650. New £900. Quadrashere HiFi cabinet cherry finish excellent condition £450 new £250. Tel: 0956 168 605 (Jul/I)

WADIA 27 processor upgradable 96kHz-192kHz, DSD £4900 ono. ATC sub-woofer 1000watt cherry £2900 ono. ATC 70SL-A speakers 50 pairs world wide £8000. No offers. Tel: Ian 020 7584 5784 or 020 7589 4840 (Jul/I)

12" TANNOY Monitor Golds reconditioned biwire crossovers large birch ply cabinets £750. Musical Fidelity A1 £135. Garrard 401 in oak plinth with SME 3009 arm £150. Tel: 07939 250 022 (Jul/I)

SONUS FABER Concertinos (speakers), walnut & leather. To include Atacama sand filled stands & Linn K400 Bi-Wire Cables. Mint. Boxed with manuals. Can demo. (£770 new) £400 ono. Tel: Richard or Karen 0113 275 5701 evenings (Leeds) (Jul/I)

WANTED: TRANSCRIP-TORS turntables and tonearms. Reference, Hydraulic Reference, Saturn, Round, Skeleton and Transcriber. Vestigal arm, Fluid arm, Sweep and Stylus brushes, Literature. Collector: Don Sellers, 7905 134th St., Seminole, Florida, USA 33776 Tel: (727) 397-5658, Fax: (727) 392 3474 or Email: audioacres@msn.com

WANTED: EARLY J.A. Michell turntables and tonearms. Hydraulic Reference, Prisma, Double Platter Prisma, Focus One with Unipivot arm, Fluid arm, Sweep and Stylus brushes, Literature, SME 3009 tonearms. Collector: Don Sellers, 7905 134th St., Seminole, Florida, USA 33776 Tel: (727) 397 5658 Fax: (727) 392 3474 Email: audioacres@msn.com (Jul/I)

RUARK SOLSTICE (Yew Finish) £2750. KEF Reference Model Four (rosewood) £2000. Cyrus DAD-3Q, FM7, ACA7 pre and power £1500. B&W CDM1-SE (rosewood) £450. All as new, complete with boxes/packaging etc. Tel: 0973 899 651 (Sep/I)

**MARK LEVINSON 332 200W and 333 300W power amps. Each Class A dual mono block, fully balanced, award winning power and refinement, immaculate, boxed, full documentation, guarantee. £3995 (£6500 new) and £4995 (£8500 new). Tel: 020 7706 8838 or 0589 0589 95 (Jul/I)**

WILMSLOW AUDIO SMII. Top quality near field monitor. Scanspeak D2905/9300 (£128.80) treble and Volt BM220.8 (£232) 8" mid/bass drivers. Costs £555 as kit. Sell for £210. Built but require cosmetic finish. Tel: 01423 861 645. (Jul/I)

# Van den Hul:

(all new, unused)

## Loudspeaker-cables:

CS-122 Hybrid: £ 9.50 m  
Teatrack Hybrid: £ 16.50 m  
New Royal Jade Hybrid: £ 7.50 m  
Magnum Hybrid: £ 25.- m  
Revolution Hybrid: £ 59.- m  
Revelation Hybrid: £ 69.- m

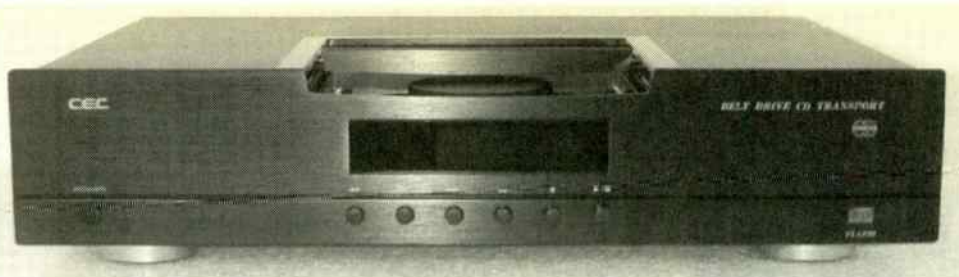
## Interconnect-cables:

The First Ultimate: £ 189.- 0.8m p.  
MC Gold: £ 299.- 0.8m pair  
MC Silver IT: £ 999.- 0.8m pair

## Cartridges:

MC One Super: £ 639.-  
The Frog HO: £ 1099.-  
Grashopper IV GLA: £ 1999.-

# C.E.C. TL-5100 CD-Transport



belt-drive, black coloured, Digital-out:  
Cinch+AES/EBU, 2 years warranty, new, boxed  
**was: £ 900.- now: £ 499.-**

## Sonic Frontiers SFD-2 MK II

Tube DA-Converter, 20 Bit Ultra Analog, ex-demo



**was: £ 5.700.- now: £ 2.600.-**

## NBS-Cable (new, boxed)

### Interconnects:

#### NBS Statement:

XLR 2,4m was:£ 7.500.- now: £ 2.900.-  
XLR 1,8m was:£ 6.250.- now: £ 2.500.-  
XLR 1,2m was:£ 5.000.- now: £ 2.200.-  
RCA 1,8m was:£ 6.250.- now:£ 2.500.-  
RCA 1,2m was:£ 5.000.- now:£ 2.200.-

### Digital-Connects:

#### NBS Statement:

AES/EBU 1,0m  
was: £ 2.500,- now: £ 1.250,-

#### NBS Professional:

AES/EBU 1,0m  
was: £ 1.500,- now: £ 750,-  
RCA 1,0m  
was: £ 1.500,- now: £ 750,-

## Burmester 935 II+933 II

Pre- and Poweramplifier, new, boxed



**was: £ 5.000.- now: £ 3.250.-**

## VAC Renaissance 70/70

8 x 300 B Tube, used, good condition



**was: £ 8.350.-  
now: £ 3.000.-**

## B+W MPA-810

Big Monoblocks, used, good condition, with box, price is for both



**was: £ 5.350.-  
now: £ 2.000.-**

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☑ Orders will be charged by COD, or can be paid by credit card or bank transfer

☑ Shipping costs are about £20 for an average 20 lbs. item. Loudspeakers and "heavyweights" on request.



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### Office Hours :

Monday - Friday : 9 A.M. - 6 P.M.  
Saturday : 10 A.M. - 2 P.M.

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*Special Internet offer  
see page 130 for details*

**FERROGRAPH S1**, 3 way loudspeakers, very easy load, perfect for valve amplifiers, fast, transparent, £225 ono. Tel: Jon 020 8546 6558 (Jul/)

**MERIDIAN 508.24 CD player**, 2 months old, only just run in, full warranty and boxed. New condition, £1600 ono. Tel: 01384 271 571 (Jul/)

**QUAD 34 Preamp** with 405/2 power amp £300, AVI pre amp, latest spec £450, AVI stereo power amp £400, Teac P500/D500 2 box CD player £475, Linn Keilidh speakers £350, Audio Innovation 400 integrated valve amp £300. Tel: 01977 643 629 (Jul/)

**TDL RTL3 rosewood finish** £190. Tel: 01283 734 025 eves/weekends. (Jul/)

**ORELLE SWING Loudspeakers**. Will demonstrate for appreciation of superb sonic and aesthetic quality. Unwanted prize. £825 (£1200) ono. Tel: 01642 511 369 (Middlesborough) (Jul/)

**TOWNSEND TURNTABLE**, Rega arm, Audio Technica AT-F3/0CC Stilton conversion plus spare Linn K5 cartridge £250. Tel: 020 8286 4930 (Jul/)

**SME MODEL 20 Mk2 turntable complete with Series V tonearm**. Boxed. £3000. Pink Triangle Anniversary £900. Linn LP12, Ekos, Valhalla. £750. Naim 01 tuner £900. LFD PA2M monoblocks, mint. Tel: 020 8452 4840 (Jul/)

**NAIM CD2**, Serial No:119392 36 months old with remote, manual, original box, all A1+ showroom condition, knocks spots off CD3.5, genuine reason for sale at £1149. Tel: David 01376 510 985 (Jul/)

**B&W DM604 5.2 floor-standers**, cherrywood, 4 months old, £600 ono. Castle Keep centre speaker, black, £80 ono. Tel: 0117 941 1729 (Bristol) (Jul/)

**NAIM 180**, 12 months old, first offer £750. Naim NAP 135's, current spec, recently upgraded £1695. All excellent condition. Epos 11's with stands, minor repair required £165. Tel: 0141 641 0496 (Jul/)

**SUMO POLARIS power amp** £850, Tannoy P4 speakers in cherry £850, Sugden 51 pre amp with 51 power amp £850, Lowther Horn speakers £375, Gale 401 speakers in walnut £275. Tel: 01977 643 629 (Jul/)

**APOGEE SCINTILLA** full ribbon loudspeakers, big transparent soundstage, excellent condition £650. DPA Black Slink, 3m pair, WBT plugs £150. Cyrus Discmaster Transport/DAC, boxed, mint condition £625. Tel: Ray 07909 697 060 (Jul/)

**LINN LP12**, Ekos II, Rega cartridge £850. Trio L07CII preamp and monos £550. Lowther PM6 speakers £265. Target 4 pillar 24 inch stands £125. Tel: 01273 727 476 (Jul/)

**BRAND NEW Pair of Mission 754F rosewood speakers** available for £699 due to unexpected upgrade opportunity taken. Tel: Kevin 01245 251 235 (or swops!) (Jul/)

**LINN LP12 + Lingo**, Trampolinn, Ekos + dead Clyde for rebuild £950. Isobariks stands, crossovers, triwire, last specification made £1100. Kairn + phono £800. LK280 £300. Goldring 1042 (20hrs) £70. All one owner. Boxed as new. Sony preamp £85. Superb. Tel: Steve 01702 548 926 or 07941 059 629 (Jul/)

**PINK TRIANGLE Rosewood Anniversary T.T.**, SME V T. Arm, Supex cartridge £1850. Pink Triangle PIP2 preamp, 3 box £1500. Pink Triangle Cordinal CD player £850. Mana table £200. All mint. Tel: Ian 01895 852 871 (Jul/)

**GAMMA ACOUSTIC Mk3 Space Reference pre and power valve amplifiers**. Mint condition, little use. Genuine reason for sale. Any inspection. Cost new £8000. Will accept £1995 for quick sale. Tel: 01726 824 114 (Jul/)

**THULE PR-200** with PA-200 monoblocks balanced and unbalanced connections with D.N.M. balanced interconnects 200 wpc re-advertised £750. Acoustic Energy AE-520 in antique ash £550. Upgrade forces sale all v.g.c. Tel: 01904 763 157 (Jul/)

**INTERCONNECTS**. vdH FIRST, 1m £85 (two). 1m £70. single (digital) £40. Chord Chorus 2m £115. 1m £85. 0.5m £55 (two). Stands Unique carbon feet, two sets small, one set large £15. Will split. Tel: 01752 773 369 (Jul/)

**NAIM CREDO floorstanding speakers** in cherry for sale, A1+ condition 20 months old. Original boxes etc. First to see & hear will buy at £859 Tel: David 01376 510 985 (Jul/)

**SONUS FABER Electa**, absolutely mint £800. Marantz - MA24 Class A monoblocks £1795; SC22 Preamp £495; MA22 monoblocks £495; CD94 Trichord clocked, digital out £375. Stax Valve energiser Signature Headphones, barely used £750. Slate Audio Stands £135. Meridian 506 £375. Audio Research SP9 MkII £700. Offers considered. Tel: 01727 866 908.(Jul/)

**MARK LEVINSON No.26** fully balanced preamp with PLS226 power supply and award winning Levinson m/c phono stage. Mint, boxed, superb £1795 (originally £5450). Tel: 020 8325 6147 (Jul/)

**ARCAM ALPHA 7R** integrated amp. 3 months old in manufacturers packing £150 plus postage. Straight wire Encore II interconnects., one metre pair phonos £50. No offers. Tel: 01524 63838 (Jul/)

**NAIM AUDIO pre/power**, NAC 92, NAP 90.3, excellent condition, boxed, manuals, still under warranty £575. Project phono box £20. Henley HSP 10 interconnect £5. Tel: Kevin 01305 779 692 (Jul/)

**BOW WAZOO 50 watt amplifier**. 5 line i/p's 1 balanced i/p and tape monitor switch/o/p. Pristine condition, 7 months old. £1150 (£2250). Naim CDI CD player 7 years old. Good condition. Great sound £720 (£2000). Contact Steve 01376 515 764 or Email: kulak@btinternet.com (Jul/)

**MARANTZ CD14** £1100. Audiolab 8000T £495. Bryston BP20 pre amplifier £850. Bryston 4BST power amplifier £1200. Epos ES12 speakers including stands £350. Target stands £100. All mint boxed Tel: 020 8741 5262 or 0956 136 421 (Aug/)

**NAIM NAIT 3** with lead, box and manual, mint £390. Mission 752F's in black. High quality floorstanders in excellent condition £285. Tel: 02380 905 264 (Southampton) (Jul/)

**LINN KAIRN pre Brilliant PSU** £699. Linn Linto phono £499. All boxed, mint. Tel: 0141 956 1440 (Jul/)

# SUPPORT YOUR HI-FI/HOME CINEMA

There are many ways of improving the sound your hi-fi equipment makes, including the type of interconnect, speaker cable, speaker stands etc., that you use, but one of the most effective, though not the cheapest, can be the equipment stand you sit your components on. There are numerous models on the market but most are simply variations on the same theme, but two of them stand out as being different by isolating the shelves from the floor using air suspension. The most common of these is the various types made by Max Townsend, starting off with the single 3-D Seismic Sink (£234), which can be placed on your normal existing rack, to the Seismic Sink stand (from 1 to 6 shelves between £1000 and £1500), and now also available in a stackable modular form at around £400/module.

Equally impressive are the speaker stands, which are a variation on the above 3-D Sink, working in just 2D (vertical and in the cone movement direction), which amaze everyone who hears them (£500/£600 a pair). Works equally well on stand or floormounted. Add the Isolda transmission line speaker cable which matches the impedance between the amp/cable and cable/speaker and you're another step up. Alternatively there is another excellent rack by Arcici from America which has the advantage that shelves can be spaced to your requirements and being more stable could be more suitable for some turntables. You will be amazed that these stands do just to the sound of your video recorder, or DVD player, and of course home cinema systems can benefit just as much (think of all those sub-woofer frequencies) and Townsend now do a cheaper A/V range to carry TV sets etc. Do phone!

**V'audio** Hi-Fi Consultants

36 Druid Hill, Stoke Bishop, Bristol BS9 1EJ  
Tel/Fax: 0117 968 6005

## EX DEMO HI-FI SALE

	WAS	NOW
<b>CD PLAYERS</b>		
HELIOS MODEL 3	700	475
MUSICAL FIDELITY X24K	300	235
MUSICAL FIDELITY X RAY	800	675
MARANTZ CD17 KI	1100	945
<b>AMPLIFIERS</b>		
MONRIO ASTY	400	300
TALK ELECTRONICS STORM2	650	450
TALK ELECTRONICS TORNADO2	600	400
ALCHEMIST KRAKEN POWER	550	300
MUSICAL FIDELITY XPRE	200	120
MUSICAL FIDELITY XA1	480	395
MARANTZ PM17KI	1300	1100
<b>SPEAKERS</b>		
OPERA PRIMA	495	375
OPERA PLATEA	800	500
AVI NUNUETRON	500	400
B+W CDM1 SE	600	475
QUAD 7710L	600	350

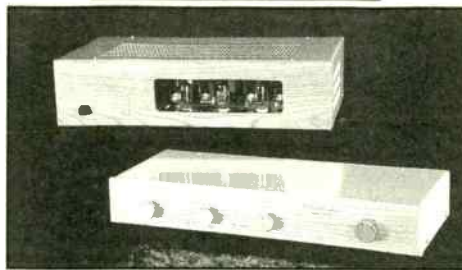
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551 INTEGRATED AMP	845.00	599.00 N
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see page 130 for details*

VISATON ALTO 111G floor-standing speakers. Tall, slim, 3 way deslgn, superbly finished in real beech veneer, with spiked plinths. 1" thick cabinet walls. Weigh a ton! 3 months old. Too large for my room. £450 ono. Tel: 01274 632 492 (West Yorkshire) (Jul)

**MARK LEVINSON No 39 CD player. Fantastic. Offers over £3000 (£5000). Proceed amp 2 power amp. 150wpc. Stunning clarity, detail and warmth of tone. £950 (£2000). Goertz Silver interconnect. Triode Quartz £55 (£110). 1m pair. Denon 260L tuner. Best buy. £65 (£120). Tel: 01372 468 266 (Jul)**

NAIM 72 & 140, MM boards, as new £800. Linn Kan II's Afro, stands, very late 'biwireable' originals, immaculate £350. All boxed. Tel: Peter 01325 484 151 or 07712 645 820 (Jul)

SPENDOR SP3/1 speakers, rosewood, one slightly marked, hence £425. Jamo Concert 8 speakers £790. AVI2000 F.M. tuner £390. AVI2000PP phono stage £75. Harbeth extenders £120. Tel: 01892 536 919 (W.Kent) (Jul)

**LINN ACTIVE Keilidh speakers, American cherry with plinths and 3 active cards, one year old. Boxed £800. Tel: 01206 503 603 evenings. Mobile: 07760 432 518 (Jul)**

DAY SEQUERRA studio tuner £2300. Mark Levinson No 29 amplifier £1750. Both items mint condition with boxes. Tel: 01347 823 467 (Jul)

FOR SALE AVI pre amp S2000M line output £480. Vgc. Tel: 01202 875 299 (Dorset) (Jul)

QUAD 34 preamp with MM + MC boards £150. Quad 606 poweramp (Mk1) £400. Excellent condition. Boxed with manuals. £500 for both. Tel: 01383 821 842 or 07939 571 186 (Fife) (Jul)

**FOR SALE Rega Planar 2 with SME 3009II arm and Audio Technica MC cartridge. Best offers. Tel: Ray Owens 020 8464 9059 or Email: ray@gaida-2000.freemove.co.uk (Jul)**

VELMAN K4000 valve stereo power amplifier, output 90 watts per channel, 15 watts Class A. Chrome and black chassis £300. Target equipment base's. Two off, £40 pair. Tel: 01225 333 194 (Jul)

KELLY TRANSDUCERS KT3 speakers. Custom built cabinets. Audiophile x/overs, hand built £1000. Linn Karik Brilliant £900 mint boxed. WANTED: AT637 stylus cleaner and OC9 cart, must be mint. Tel: 01226 764 272 (Yorkshire) (Jul)

MISSION 753 (black) £300. Linn Pretek, 2 x Powerteks £325. Teac VRDS T1 transport Deltec Little Bit 3 £375. Rotel RQ970BX phonostage £35. Puccini SE boxed mint £350. Linn LK280 + spark £350. Tel: 0114 221 5271/272 3621 (Jul)

ALPHASON SONATA turntable Atlas PSU £395, Audiolab PPA phonostage £495. Rotel Michi phonostage £495. Interconnects 1 mtr. Audionote ANS £65, Audioquest Quartz £65, Ixos IO3 £20, Ixos IO4 £10. Tel: 01634 268 660 (Jul)

SOUNDSTYLE QUARTO 5 shelf rack red £150. Sony TCD3 'Walkman' c/recorder boxed £100. 'TDS' harmonic enhancement passive 'Audiophile' box £250. Tel: 01279 815 723 or 0771 537 5096 (Jul)

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LINN KABER speakers latest specification, purchased March 1999, mint condition. £1000 (cost £2000 new). Tel: Steve 020 8850 0585 (Jul)

NAIM NAIT 3 amplifier MM phono board, mint condition, boxed, manuals £415. Arcam Alpha 5 plus CD player, remote, just serviced by Arcam, mint, boxed. £215. Tel: 01444 455 593 (West Sussex) (Jul)

FLAGSHIP SONY CD player 557 ESD mint £550. Beard CA-506 preamp £750. Beard P100 power amp £700. Beard P100-MkII £750. All revalved. N-T-W please. Tel: 01562 827 710 anytime (Jul)

NAIM CD3 mint, boxed £500. Hi-Cap, new style, boxed £395. Apollo modular rack, 3 tier £80. 24" speaker stands £40. Tel: Richard 07970 444 384 (Birmingham) (Jul)

AUDIO RESEARCH SP8II preamp new valves £850. SME 3009II arm unused since SME upgrade to new spec £125. Tel: 0113 257 7793 (Leeds) (Jul)

MISSION CYRUS 2Mk2 amplifier superb condition with box and instructions £150. Naim Nait 1 amplifier £130. Heybrook HB150 loudspeakers superb condition £135. Tel: Steve 01785 841 005 (Jul)

AVI Nu NEUTRON loudspeakers black ash £250 with Target stands. Sony TA-FB920 black amplifier £100. Tel: 01582 414 915, EMail: em9009009@compuserve.com (Jul)

SONY CDP-X1392OE CD player (£300), £200 ono. Lowther PM6Mk1 Acoustas X-overed (Wilmslow Audio design) to Shackman electrostatic tweeters. Very good sound indeed £400 ono. Tel: 01432 344 150 (Hereford) (Jul)

XLO PRO type 1200 biwire cable 2 x 17ft mint condition £230. Tel: Lee 01702 714 576 evenings (Essex area) (Jul)

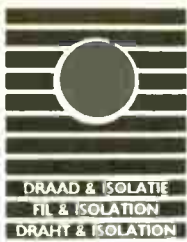
QUAD 303/405 preamp £175. Transcription Reference turntable with SME arm & Shure VN35 pickup £120. Leak 2075 speakers £275. Immaculate condition. Tel: 0121 707 0791 evenings (Jul)

REVOX B77 one owner from new, immaculate condition. Two speed, Nab reel adaptors, variable speed control £450. Revox Tuner 261 as above condition. High blend separation, threshold station stereo control, manual/auto tuning £350. Revox B710 cassette recorder, Multiplex filter, Dolby, tape bias, memory select, superb condition £350. Revox furniture, stacking system in walnut, base unit storage with glass doors, 2 of £75 each. More details Tel/Fax: 01305 772 150 (Jul)

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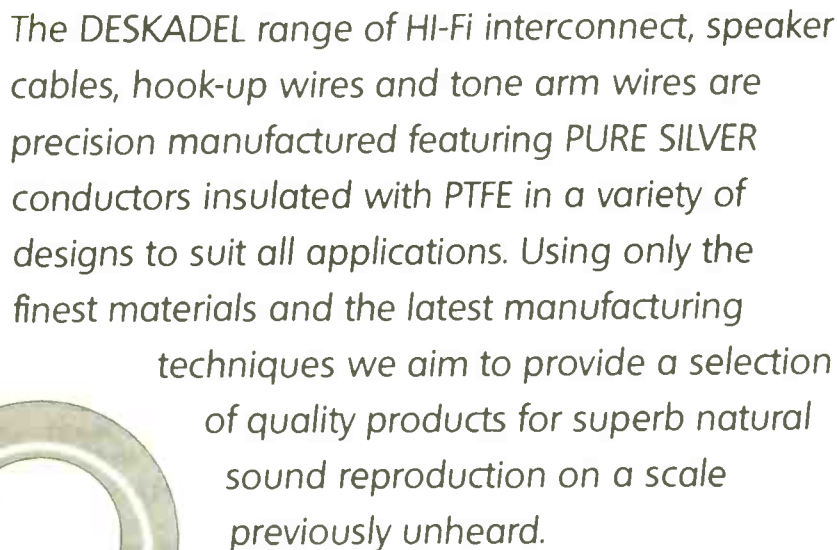
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**MUSICAL FIDELITY** The Preamp. P180 power amp with PSU vgc £1300 new. Accept £600 ovno. May split + Acoustic Research powered partner active speakers vgc rare. Offers (Active Diamond beaters anyway) Tel: 01269 596 326 (Jul/I)

**ADVANTAGE** 1-200 amp, 3 months old, £1300. Meridian 500 transport 3 months old £800. Kef Ref 3 speakers rosetta burr £1200. All boxed. vdH Revelation 4.5m cables £600. Tel: Bob 01206 762 056 (Jul I)

**ARCAM ALPHA 6+** amp upgraded £150. Alpha One CD £130. Alpha 5+ tuner £90. Rotel RQ970BX phono stage £60. Sony TCK661S cassette deck £80. Heybrook Heylo floorstanding speakers rosewood finish £160. All excellent condition and boxed. Tel: 0121 784 8037 (Jul/I)

**DENON TU 260L** £50. Leak Stereo 30 plus £35. Ariston RD80 turntable Sony double deck with Dolby S £90. Sony STS311 tuner £60. Akai 4000DB stuck on 3 3/4 ips £40. Tel: 01582 753 600 (Jul/I)

**LINN LP12 Lingo Cirkus**, Trampolin, LVII Klyde, in cherry plinth superb condition, would cost today £2975 on sale for £1100. Tel: 01942 810 908 or Email: stuart.ainsworth@btclick.com (Jul/I)

**LINN MIMIK II** £550. Wakonda phono £550. LK100 £450. Keilidh speakers (w/ th bases) In cherry £550. All cables included. Tel: 01942 810 908 Email: stuart.ainsworth@btclick.com (Jul/I)

**PINK TRIANGLE** Ordinal DAC good condition £299 or offers. Tel: Rick 01386 793 328 (Worcs) (Jul/I)

**EXPOSURE 15** Amplifier (phono inputs), boxed, little use £250. Naim CD3, boxed, mint, with interconnects £520. WANTED: Naim Nait 3, Rega 3. Tel: 01792 429 608, Email: chrisv.thomas@mailexcite.com (Jul/I)

**BEARD BB100** MkII valve amplifier. 50w/channel. Massive chrome monster. Recent military Sovteks. Fantastic sound and looks. Poverty forces reluctant sale. £590. WANTED: Inexpensive turntable. Tel: 01480 353 649, Email: david.kelly@napp.co.uk (Cams) (Jun/I)

**MICHELL ISO**, Hera, phono stage. Excellent £275. Hi-Fi World K5881 PSE parallel single ended valve power amplifier, professionally built, custom copper chassis £375. LP12 Valhalla, Ittok, Troika, vgc £600. Tel: 020 7372 1766 (Jul/I)

**LOUDSPEAKERS:** WHARFEDALE TSR110, teak £180pr., Chassis Tannoy Monitor Gold LSU/HF/12/8, monitor HPD/315/8 £30ea., Vitavox Klipschorn diecast horns with boxed S2 pressure units £500pr., Kelly Ribbons with Lenses £200pr. Tel: 01206 852 209 (Jul/I)

**MULLARD CLASS A** valve amps: 10w with C-Core transformer £60, 10w with Williams transformer £40, 20w with C-Core transformer £90, mono Williamson preamp £20, stereo Williamson preamp £30. Tel: 01206 852 209 (Jul/I)

**MERIDIAN 502** balanced preamp phono stage fitted. Perfect condition. Boxed with manual. £825 ono. Tel: 01293 411 500 (Jul/I)

**LIVING VOICE** Auditorium, walnut £750. Leak Stereo 20. Rebuilt £250. Tel: 0113 295 0885 (Leeds) (Jul/I)

**NAIM CD3** factory serviced, new transport, boxed, as new, complete with Chord interconnect £525. Tel: 01568 780 389 after 6pm (Jul/I)

**RARE PYE** amplifier 090091 2x round LS+ ribbon tweeter+ RC121 Mk2, for HF140/1/2/3 tuners, new old stock Mullard EL34 fitted. Offers. Rogers A100, offers. Rogers Cadet 3 £80. Arcam Alpha tuner £35. Rotel RA-311 amp £25. Sugden BD1 'Connoisseur', no turntable, Shure M75ED £20. Tel: 01323 500 174 (Jul)

**CELLO AUDIO** Suite pre-amp and master supply. Retail £29,000. Sell £5995. Mark Levinson No.20 Reference Class A mono amps £4495. Ruark Accolaid speakers £1595. Very reluctant sale. Tel: 07939 266 182 (Aug/I)

**TOWNSHEND AUDIO.** Seismic Sink Stand (Mod1, 3 tier) £500 (half price!). VersaLabs: Woodblocks £50 each (£160 new) Red Rollers £20 each (half price). Transparent Audio Power Cords (£50 each (£140 new) OnAir Support Systems Airpod II's £40 each (half price). QED Genesis speaker cables (1.5 Mtr pr.) £40 (half price). CAD Cables - Anacreon; Silurian; Czar (ask for prices). Tel: 0035 202 128 5621 or 0035 240 7811, Email: barig@sbx.com (Jul/I)

**MERIDIAN 502** Balanced preamp, mint condition, only 3 months old 3 year warranty £995. Meridian 500 Mk2 transport & 563 DAC, mint condition £1095. Sonus Faber Grand Piano loudspeakers, immaculate condition, complete with granite plinths & covers £1350. P.X. considered for home cinema equipment. Tel: 01450 860 676, Fax: 01450 860 750 (Jul/I)

**ALON V SPEAKERS** £2200 (£5500). Ruark Crusader II speakers £850 (£1650). Mark Levinson 331pw, 38pre £2650 (£5000), £2200 (£5000). Traxdata CD recorder £200 (£400) Tel: Kenny 01493 856 899 (Jul/I)

**ORIGINAL PINK** Triangle turntable with hand written manual and rosewood finish includes RB300 arm also rare D.C. gold bush motor with ruby bearing. Boxed. David Hafler 120 poweramp drives 4ohm speakers £200. Tel: 01323 729 971 (Jul/I)

**NAKAMICHI 1000** MkII superb condition, manuals, spare head block, brand new belt set, spare mahogany case, virtually as new. Only £1500 ono. Consider swap. Tel: Ian 0961 823 979 anytime. (Jul/I)

**QUAD ELS 63** speakers, excellent condition, boxed with manuals. Full Quad service September 99. Garient SW63 subwoofers and active crossover. Double as stands. May split. £1950. Tel: 01772 315 723 (Jul/I)

**MUSICAL FIDELITY E100** integrated amp (£700 new) mint, boxed £350. Crimson Elektrik 510 battery powered pre and 520 50w power amps £200. Tel: Neil 01694 723 438 (Jul/I)

**AUDIO NOTE** Oto phono SE, mint, boxed £1000. Leak Troughline Mk2 £80. Rogers loudspeakers GS8, boxed £300. Cadet 2 £60. Leak TL12+ pair £200. Control units Quad tuners. Garrard 4 speed autochanger, boxed £25. Tel: 01225 833 692 (Jul/I)

**WANTED: WORKING** or for spares. Rogers A75 amp, A100 amp, Pantera tuner. Tel: 01938 553 559 (Weshpool) (Jul)

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Ruark Prologue 1 cherry	£900	£575.00
Ear 859 integrated	£1,750	£950.00
Exposure XV integrated	£650	£350.00
Spendor SP2	£550	£350.00
Marantz CD80 Serafine caps	£550	£325.00
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Linn Basik/Akito/ATFS MC	£400	£220.00
Acoustic Energy AE2 inc stands	£1,400	£875.00
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Musical Fidelity X-A1 Integrated	479	289
John Shearne Phase 2 Integrated	689	399
John Shearne Phase 2 Reference	799	479
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John Shearne Phase 3 Reference	749	449
John Shearne Phase 6 Pre	999	599
Tag McLaren 60iRV Integrated	999	599
Tag McLaren 60i Integrated	799	479
Tag McLaren PA10 Pre	849	499
Tag McLaren 100P Power	1099	659
Tag McLaren PA20R Pre	1499	899
Tag McLaren PA20R pre	1499	899
<b>CD</b>		
Trichord Digital Turntable/Pulsar 1 DAC/PSU S/H	2700	1350
Tag McLaren CDT20R Transport	1499	749
Tag McLaren DAC20 DAC	1249	625
Tag McLaren CD20R	1249	625
Pink Triangle da Capo		699
<b>SPEAKERS</b>		
Dynaudio 1.8 MKII (cherry)	1895	1299
Naim Intro (black, old model)	699	399
Arcadyis ASC/rosewood	399	149
Ruark Prelude/rosewood	749	449
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Castle Inversion 15/maple	599	399
Castle Severn/mahogany (s/h)	599	349
Castle Avon/mahogany (s/h)	799	449
Castle Kendal/walnut (s/h)	399	249
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s/h	Quad 405 1 power	£200
s/h	Quad 34 preamp	£200
s/h	Counterpoint SA 3 valve preamp (much sought after)	£595
s/h	Audio Research LS1 preamp silver	£850
New boxed	Alchemist Forseti AP15 intergrated amp	£695
New boxed	Alchemist Kraken pre & power	£750
ex dem	DPA 200s preamp	£325
s/h	Cambridge P100 power	£199
	Radford STA 25 MkII	£600
	Radford preamps various available soon	
	Leak TL 30 plus monoblocks	SOON ASK
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ex dem	Teac Reference TBX10 tuner	SAVE £100 OFF
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	Thorens TD126 unused boxed MkV	£375
	As above used no cover c/w SME det 3009	£350
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	Well Tempered Turntable	£950
	Grace pickup arms	various
	Mission 774 pickup arm	£99
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REVOX G36HS £500. PR99MkII £650, Studer A80VU £750, A710 £500, A810 VU £800. B67VU £750, A807 VU £1200, Technics SP10 MkII £250, SLP1200 CD £450, Sony DTC1000ES DAT £300, Studer A730 £550. Tel: 01246 235 024, Fax: 01246 550 421 (Jul/I)

VINTAGE WIRELESS COMPANY LONDON Buy-Sell-Exchange. Vintage wireless and classical audio. Repairs, spares, restoration, modification to all valve equipment. Quad II, Leaks etc, shipped worldwide, best prices, call us at 17 Bell Street, London, NW1 5BY. Tel: 020 7258 3448 Fax 020 7258 3449 (Jul/I)

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AFFORDABLE VALVE COMPANY Model EL34. Quality 30 watts Class A valve amplifier £600. Thick aluminium front panel. Detachable safety cage for hot valves. FREE colour literature. 1 month HOME TRIAL. Tel: 01634 373 410 anytime (Oct/I)

VALVE PREAMPS! New valve preamps from £250. New class 'A' valve powers from £350. For further info tel: Audio Classics 01942 257 525. Email: audioclassics@hotmail.com (Jul/I)

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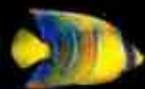
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