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Some people's professions invariably lay them open to questions of the, "oh go on, what do you really think?" variety. Restaurant critics always get asked where they eat when

they have to pay the bill at the end of the evening. Music reviewers are frequently dealt the, "so what do you actually listen to then, when you're at home alone?" treatment. Then of course there are hi-fi journalists for whom the, "what do you really use in your system?" line of enquiry is not an altogether novel experience.

Of course, the answers differ week by week, depending on the subject's mood or disposition, but often the interrogator is shocked and surprised by the reply. Just as one who eats out for a living often likes to settle down on the sofa with a fish finger buttie, so the over worked hi-fi reviewer often uses something simple and hassle-free as a source of musical edification. After all, at the end of a long day, accountants hardly go home and crunch numbers by choice, do they?

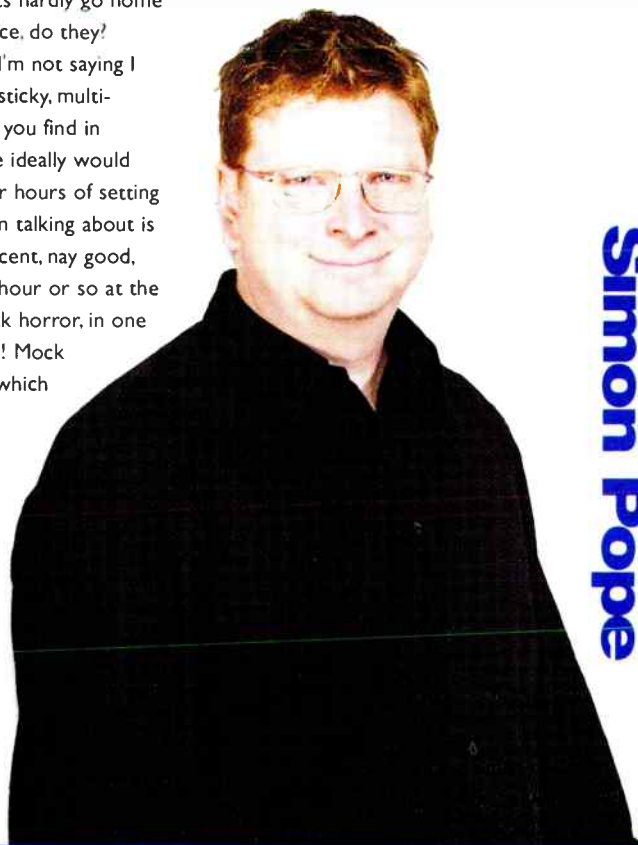
Hold on a minute there. I'm not saying I play one of those ghastly, plasticky, multi-coloured flickery light things you find in supermarkets. But what I use ideally would not take up acres of space or hours of setting up and fiddling with. What I'm talking about is something that will give a decent, nay good, even excellent sound for an hour or so at the most and preferably be, shock horror, in one box and shoveable anywhere! Mock not, there are a few around which rival separates - like Linn's Classik - no problem.

What they offer me is a little 'time-off' in the bedroom, dining room, or anywhere apart from the front room, in which sits my full-time beast in all its 100kg-plus glory. At least half of my Christmas period listening was done on a minuscule TEAC one-box system (reviewed in this

very issue, in fact), the performance against price factor of which surprised even myself. I imagined myself to be constantly comparing the sound staging, dynamics and slam to my reference system but the near impossible happened - I ended up listening to the music rather than the electronics.

Before you have me tarred, feathered and pursued by a howling mob of audiophiles through the leafy streets of Surrey, let me say that no one-box system will ever replace my 'hi-fi'. I'm much too far down the audiophile road for that, but a 'compact' really can make a nice change. Oh, and it's far more sociable according to the one who shares my domestic life and therefore has to put up with a good deal of anti-social behaviour!

However, the new year is finally here and my annual 'ears-off' period is over, so it's back to the tuning fork and toolbox as I prepare for another twelve months of audiophile newcomers - products and readers alike! ■



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 - Superb sound
- ——— VERY GOOD
- ——— 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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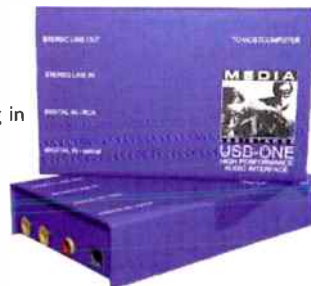


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from the masters of music sequencing comes this all-in-one MP3 and CD authoring package.

# world news

## TAG 'EXTEND' THEIR CALLIOPE RANGE



Tag McLaren Audio have literally extended their Calliope 'speaker range with the new 'Bass Extension Module' and a centre channel extension module is a floor mounted design which employs the Aluminium extrusion used by the

bookshelf 'speaker, which results in a strong cabinet construction with no parallel sides, preventing standing waves and reducing unwanted diffraction, say the company.

Using three newly-designed Calliope Bass

drive units driven in parallel, the Bass Extension Module doesn't act as a subwoofer. Instead of overlaying its frequency ability on the Calliope's existing sound it actually forms a three-way 'speaker, with a new crossover frequency for the bookshelf. It has two pairs of 'speaker terminals, a set at the bottom to connect the amplifier and a set near the top to connect to the Calliope bookshelf. This apparently guarantees that all the bass energy up to 4000Hz is fed to the Bass Extension Module whilst the bookshelf receives a "bass filtered" signal.

The Calliope Centre 'speaker employs two 150mm mid/bass units "chosen to match the low coloration of the cabinet" which were then optimised to suit the cabinet's shape. They are arranged in a D'Appolito configuration and voiced for installation below or above a screen. The high frequency unit is a 19mm coated textile dome.



Prices for the new products are £2,995 for a pair of Bass Extension Modules and £1,199 for the Calliope Centre.

TAG McLaren Audio  
The Summit  
Latham Rd.  
Huntingdon  
Cambs PE29 6ZU  
Tel: 0800 783 8007  
[www.tagmclarenaudio.com](http://www.tagmclarenaudio.com)

## BRISTOL SOUND AND VISION 2001

So another year starts and the hi-fi industry awaits the first major UK show of the season in Bristol on February 23-25. The Sound and Vision show is a firm favourite with the industry and public alike and this year's promises to be the biggest yet, with exhibitor bookings up 25% on last year. Hi-Fi World will be there in force, with a stand downstairs and a demonstration room for our sister company, World Audio Design, where our range of valve amp and loudspeaker kits will be on demonstration. Come along to meet the staff and hear the kits.

Many manufacturers use the Bristol show to launch important new products and this year appears to be no exception. Acoustic Energy will launch their new AEsprit Series and preview the forthcoming Aegis Evolution range. Arcam will show their new FMJ series high-end DVD player to the UK masses, B&W have no fewer than four new ranges of products, including something known

as Project X, Denon will be showing their DVD-3300 DVD-A/V player and Rega will be at the show for the first time ever with the launch of their 2000 Series of products. And that's not all, other companies with new products include ALR/Jordan, Cyrus, Elac, Exposure, Jamo, KEF, Mission, Myryad, Naim, Onkyo, PMC, Sennheiser, Sony (SACD), TAG McLaren Audio and Yamaha. It promises to be an exciting event for both the industry and public, and if last years attendance was anything to go by, this year should see the Marriot Hotel packed to the rafters.

Sound and Vision Show  
Friday 23-Sunday 25 February 2001  
The Marriot Hotel, Lower Castle  
Street, Bristol. Tel: 0117 929 4281  
Entry £6.00 for adults, £3.00 for  
concessions. Accompanied children  
under 16 are free.  
[www.bristolshow.co.uk](http://www.bristolshow.co.uk)

## ONKYO GO SOLO



News reaches us from Onkyo of their new one box solution to the AV multibox problem. The DR-S2.0 combines a DTS, Dolby Digital, PCM compatible DVD/CD/CD-R/CD-RW and CD Video player with a 30 preset AM/FM Dolby Digital receiver. The receiver has a quoted output of 5x30W and carries a sub-woofer pre out, two digital inputs and one digital output, four audio inputs and two inputs, two S-video inputs and outputs and a full function learning remote.

For this 'straight from the box' simplicity you can expect to pay somewhere in the not too high region of £900.

Onkyo, Jamo UK Ltd.  
Oakfield Park  
Bilton Rd.  
Rugby  
Warks CV22 7AL  
Tel: 01788 556777  
[www.onkyo.net](http://www.onkyo.net)



# CAMARGUE

SERIES



Camargue Satellite Camargue Front Camargue Center Camargue Front Camargue Satellite



**T**HE idyllic landscape of southern France, known for its wild horses, has been the inspiration for our finest loudspeaker series. Good food - good wine - luxury. Imagine the best chefs, the finest ingredients, - a feast. This is how the Camargue series was created. Our development team had no constraints, no time limits, no economic limits



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www.eltax.com

Some people still travel by car

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## Test drive the new NAP 500 power amplifier

### London

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Grahams Hi-Fi, N1, 020 7226 5500  
Oranges and Lemons, SW11, 020 7924 2040

### Near London

Infidelity, Kingston-upon-Thames, 020 8943 3530

### South

Audio Designs, East Grinstead, 01342 314569  
Audio T, Reading & branches, 0118 958 5463  
Jeffries Hi-Fi, Brighton, 01273 609431  
Phonography, Ringwood, 01425 461 230  
Soundcraft, Ashford, 01233 624441

### East

Rayleigh Hi-Fi, Chelmsford & branches, 01245 262245

### West

Audio Excellence, Bristol & branches, 0117 926 4975

### Midlands

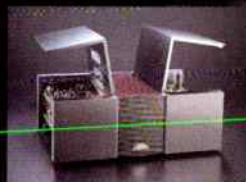
Creative Audio, Shrewsbury, 01743 241924  
New Audio Frontiers, Loughborough, 01509 264002  
Overture, Banbury, 01295 272158

### North

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Audio Counsel, Cheadle, 0161 428 7887  
Audio Counsel, Oldham, 0161 633 2602  
Audio Images, Sheffield, 0114 273 7893  
Fortissimo, Manchester, 0161 834 2545  
Linton Audio, Gateshead, 0191 477 4167  
Zen Audio, Hull, 01482 587397

### Wales

Audio Excellence, Cardiff & branches, 029 2022 6565



www.naim-audio.com

naim  
WORLD CLASS HI FI



## A BIT OF LIGHT MUSIC!



Always on the look out for something different in the world of consumer audio electronics, something quite, er, unique recently caught our attention. Camping-enthusiast audiophiles that simply can't live without music, but can live without the cost of batteries could find solace in the form of the Freeplay Plus - a wind up/solar/rechargeable battery powered radio and emergency light in one!

Designed as the "ultimate outdoor accessory that can provide music and emergency light anytime, anywhere", the Freeplay Plus can be powered from three power sources. The Freeplay Plus can be operated by winding up the spring for around thirty seconds which will result in approximately one hour play. Alternatively it can be placed in sunlight to let the solar panel do the honours, or an AC/DC adaptor will power up the rechargeable battery. It provides FM/AM and two SW bands covering 3-18MHz.

The light is tucked away into the main body of the radio and is made up of three white LEDs. It can be removed from the unit on a retractable cord. A magnet on the back of the light means it can be attached to any metal surface. Priced at £84.95, prospective purchasers of this ingenious box of tricks can ring the following number for stockist details.

Tel: 0800 731 3052

## MF GO DVD

Following on from their home theatre processor and five channel power amplifier, Musical Fidelity are the latest specialist hi-fi company to produce an 'audiophile' DVD player, the DVD1. Described as a Super Quality Audio DVD player, the first design aim of the machine was to produce 'superlative sound quality'. This has been achieved, say the company, by bettering the sound quality of both the A3CD and X-Ray CD players. The DVD1 is fitted with a new DSC and filter arrangement which apparently increase the dynamic range by approx. 5dB and reduce the noise floor by the same amount.

On the video side special attention was paid to the PCB layout, using a multi-layer, surface mount layout. Each video stage has

its own power supply and grounding system and all signal paths are kept as short as possible. The mechanism and all its primary digital processing has its own switch mode power supply. The DVD1's front panel is hand finished in the Musical Fidelity AV range aluminium and gold and all inserts are machined from high-grade brass and coated in copper and silver and finally 24K gold plating. The DVD1 will be available for £1,500.

Musical Fidelity Ltd.  
15-17 Olympic Trading Estate  
Fulton Rd.  
Wembley  
Middlesex HA9 0TF  
Tel: 020 8900 2866

## LUXURIOUS SURROUNDINGS FROM ATC



ATC's monitors are found in professional situations all around the world and are used by the likes of the BBC, Sony, Telarc, Pioneer and Warner Bros, to name but a few from their long list of customers which includes many studios. As you'd expect, being this well recognised doesn't come cheap, as their new ranges of loudspeakers confirm. Launched at the CES in Vegas, the three multi-channel new active "concept systems" range from a mere £7,500 for the C4 system, to a more sobering £21,500 for the C6 system, to a mind boggling £40,800 for the flagship C7 system.

Offering what the company describe as a

reference standard for surround sound formats such as DVD-A and SACD, each system sticks to the same design objectives but single components can be interacted due the house style voicing. Although each system has a total price the C range can be treated as 'mix 'n' match' products.

The C4 is based around another new product available separately, the T16 Active. This is a two-way standmount loudspeaker with a 150mm 200W bass unit and a 25mm fabric 50W tweeter and is constructed from cast aluminium. It has a variable 6dB bass boost for room versatility and comes with a 6-year "no quibble" warranty. The T16 costs £1,800 for a stereo pair, including stands.

ATC Loudspeaker Technology Ltd.  
Gypsy Lane  
Aston Down  
Stroud  
Glos GL6 8HR  
Tel: 01285 760561  
www.atc.gb.net



## MEN OF HARLECH

The latest model in the Castle Acoustics range of products is the Harlech. Whilst the new Harlech S2 resembles its predecessor in size and appearance, nearly everything else is different. The downward firing, twin pipe quarter wave design remains but incorporates new innovations. It now features 130mm woven carbon fibre bass/mid units with vented T-poles which are matched with a 28mm viscous-damped soft dome tweeter. The 'audiophile' crossover uses selected high grade components and the company say the 'speaker has an in room bass extension down to 40Hz, with a "high level of placement flexibility."

The new Harlech S2s are priced AT £999 per pair in 9 real wood veneers, with those who wish being able to have a finish of Santos Rosewood or Yew for £200 more.

Castle Acoustics  
Park Mill  
Shortbank Rd.  
Skipton  
N.Yorks BD23 2TT  
Tel: 01756 795333  
www.castle.uk.com



## JAMO DELIVER NEW BABY

Jamo have a new addition to their 'E' series of loudspeakers. The E 650 is a 'two and a half' way floorstander. It features two 165mm bass/mid drivers and a 25mm soft dome tweeter. The design also features the new Jamo Convex Tapered vent, a high flow design conceived to ensure less turbulence. Measuring 830x220x280mm (h,w,d) and finished in Black Cherry or Beech, the E 650 is priced at £329 per pair.

Jamo UK Ltd.  
Oakfield Park, Bilton Rd.  
Rugby  
Warks CV22 7AL  
Tel: 01788 556777  
www.jamospeakers.com

## HORN OF PLENTY

An example of a highly respected traditional hi-fi company seeking to further their customer base comes in the form of Klipsch. The high-end horn loudspeaker company are now launching their new multi-media range in the UK, starting with the Klipsch ProMedia 2.1. This is a unique THX-certified design that still uses the trademark Tractrix horn technology in the tweeter. Although targetted at PC users, this system, as early listening tests have shown, will fit in just as well in a small hi-fi set up. Klipsch feel they are narrowing the wide chasm between top computer technology and high audio fidelity with this design, comprising two high quality 2-way satellites and subwoofer powered by a 200W amplifier. This high-end desktop package is soon to hit the UK stores at a price of £170.

Klipsch UK Ltd.  
0131 333 5179  
www.klipsch.com



## next issue

Here's a small selection of what we hope to bring you in next month's edition...

### ARCAM DV88 DVD PLAYER

The first DVD player from the Cambridge-based hi-fi company arrives in World Towers. Read all about it in just two weeks' time.

### NAIM CD5

Naim's new entry level CD spinner promises to be a cracker. Find out what we make of it in next month's issue.

### CASTLE HOWARD S3

We get first crack at these new upgraded classics from Castle Acoustics. Will they compete with the best in their £1000 price bracket?

## feature |

Super Audio Compact Disc could be where hi-fi's heading next. David Price auditions the format's best exponent to date, Marantz's SA-1.



**R**ight now, Marantz's SA-1 represents the state of the art in high resolution digital audio thinking. Compact Disc has been around for some twenty years now, during which time it has been refined and streamlined to the very edge of its performance envelope. Marantz has proved particularly adept at squeezing a quart out of CD's proverbial pint pot, thanks to the redoubtable talents of its engineering figurehead Ken Ishiwata. Now, the man has turned his attentions to something altogether bigger and better, Super Audio Compact Disc.

SACD was announced some three years back. Using single sided, dual layer (SACD & CD) or single layer (SACD only) discs with Sony's proprietary Direct Stream Digital coding system, it has a number of theoretical advantages over Pulse Code Modulated CD and DVD Audio formats, not least of which is its very wide frequency range without the need for dramatic high band filtering. Running at a sampling rate of 2.8224MHz, it offers a theoretical frequency response from DC to over 100kHz, with greater than 120dB of dynamic range.

The SA-1 is Marantz's first cost-object attempt at getting the

best from the new format, and is a pretty impressive beast by any standards, even the company's own. Weighing in at nearly 20kg, this slickly finished front loader boasts machined aluminium-alloy casings painted in the company's trademark champagne gold. Large Play, Stop, and Pause buttons dominate the fascia, while there are smaller switches for SACD/CD and Display on-off, Open/Close and Track Advance/Back.

The rear panel has two single-ended RCA phono sockets, the ubiquitous (for Japanese high end audio, at least) pair of balanced XLRs, TOSLINK and coaxial digital outputs (only for use when playing standard Red Book CDs), an IEC mains socket, plus a 'Standard/Custom' Filter switch (a la Sony SCD-1). The 'Standard' setting curtails the SA-1's ultra high frequency output, which you get when the 'Custom' setting is selected. As this can upset some partnering amplifiers and loudspeakers, Marantz recommend the former for general use.

Inside the beast we find a veritable feast of digital audio goodies. The whole chassis is sturdily built, with internal resonance damping and electrical noise isolation as its goal. To wit, there's a copper-plated double-layer steel bottom

plate and shock-absorbent mounting feet, plus a large shielded toroidal transformer which boasts 'Super Core Ring' technology, housed in a cylindrical copper cage. There's also an additional, smaller transformer to drive the fluorescent display. As per usual Japan high end practice, the transport boasts a diecast aluminium disc tray using zinc parts. The dual lens pickup assembly reads both CD (and CD-R/CD-RW) and SACD. The digital audio section boasts four TDA1547 1-bit Dual Bitstream DACs (two per channel), and the analogue section has six dual Marantz HDAM (High Definition Amplifier Modules) op-amps in differential configuration, plus two in the unbalanced output.

### CD SOUND

Even with standard 16/44 CDs, this player is very special. Somewhat predictably (for yours truly), the first disc that went in the slot was 4 Hero's 'Escape That', a song I've heard on practically every high end CD player and turntable around, from Linn's CD12 to Immedia's RPM-1. At this point, I must confess some surprise. You see, although I've read rave reviews of the SA-1's great SACD performance in all manner of US, Japanese and European magazines, I wasn't really expecting

## DREAM

to hear Marantz's best ever CD player. Well, now I have and it just happens to play SACDs too.

Tonally, it is a riot. Its low frequency prowess is as if it was coupled to Mother Earth herself, its midband as lucid as Keats' ode 'To Autumn', and its treble response tangible enough to get the bats singing in the trees. Unlike Marantz's previous top silver disc spinner, the CD-17, it doesn't rose tint everything it plays. This means that if a piano or human voice is poorly recorded, it will say so instead of glossing over the problem. The upshot is a remarkably transparent player with a fantastically wide and varied palette of tonal colours which it deploys without so much as a second thought. To wit, 'Escape That' sounded closer to its superb vinyl pressing than I've heard to date - open, airy, sweet, spacious and engaging.

Okay, so it's one of those louche high end CD players that lull you into thinking you're listening to a half decent turntable, then? A kind of Copland CDA289 on steroids, right? Wrong, because when it comes to rhythms, dynamics and transient attack, the

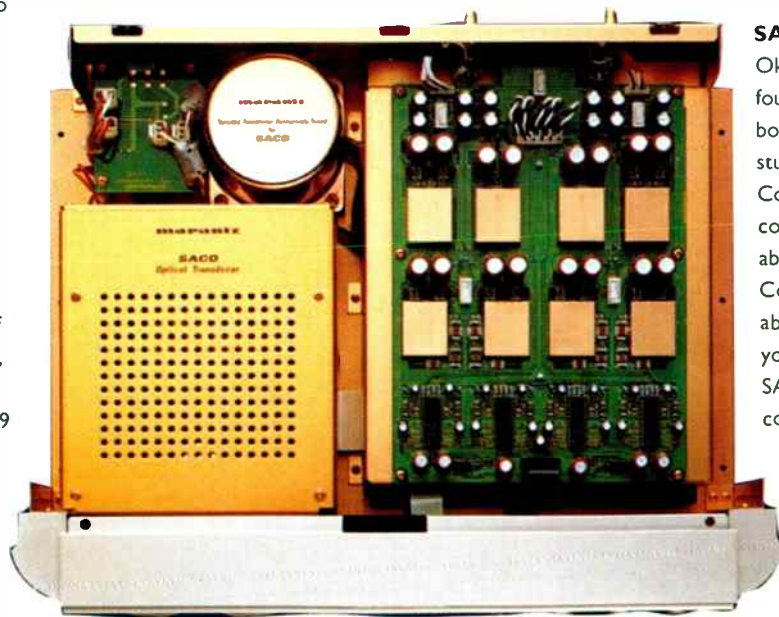
SA-1 is up there with the likes of Naim's CDX - which is no mean feat. Leading edges are meat and drink to this Marantz - with a natural affinity for starting and stopping on a

sixpence, music just sounds faster. Couple this to its talents with small dynamic inflections - another Naim-like trait - and it can follow the complex drum patterns of 'Escape That' with wonderful alacrity.

Information retrieval is no less seminal. Donald Fagen's 'Tomorrow's Girls' comes from the rather curiously mixed Kamakiriad album. It's a great torture track because most CD players turn it into a splashy mess - Meridian's £1200 506.24 is the cheapest player I've heard that even attempts to piece things together coherently. What of the SA-1? It just breezed through like it was on holiday, excavating vast amounts of low level detailing like there was no tomorrow. Suddenly Fagen's voice had a position in space, you could hear guitar licks decaying

collection, the SA-1 remained creditably consistent. It's as open and transparent as the CD format permits. You couldn't call it 'glass clear' because olde worlde sixteen bit just doesn't have that on the menu, but it's as good as you'll realistically encounter. Rarely have I come across such an addictive combination of musicality, tonal accuracy and sheer hairy-chested, muscular grunt.

Is it the best CD player in the world, as others have said? No. I'm not sure if I'd go that far, simply because I recently had the pleasure and the privilege of laying my lugholes on Linn's latest spec CD12. If anything relegates the Marantz to runner up status in the sixteen bit stakes, this is it. But then again, the Linn costs over twice as much and doesn't play SACDs - yet.



### SACD SOUND

Okay, so it's a twenty four carat, copper bottomed (literally) stunner as far as Compact Disc is concerned, but what about its Super Audio Compact Disc replay abilities? First, if you've tried to buy SACD discs over the counter it may not have escaped your notice that they're rather hard to get hold of - a good source is Vivante [[www.vivante.co.uk](http://www.vivante.co.uk)] -

away naturally, and there was even - Heaven forfend - a touch of timbral detail to be enjoyed too.

As I ran the gamut of my CD

so I wasn't in a position to put the SA-1 up against everything in my vinyl and CD collections. But judging by the limited amount of discs I was able to try (although apparently up

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## FROM DSD TO SACD



to 300 are in existence), Marantz's SA-1 could just be what the hi-fi world has been waiting for. Marvin Gaye's 'Midnight Love' (Columbia/Legacy CS 63856) - not a state of the art recording even back in 1982 - is hardly the audiophile pick of the current SACD releases. What it is good at, however, is ripping replay equipment to shreds. Most turntables I've played the vinyl pressing on make it sound blurred and compressed - only when you go up to Linn Lingo or Michell QC levels do you start to hear things as the producer intended. Ditto the CD - whose modest coding system struggles to sift the music out from the silt. Four bars of 'Sexual Healing' on the SA-1 however, and I was grinning ear to ear.

From the opening beats of that horrid 'period' Roland drum machine, you're aware that you're listening to something special. Rather than being just another generic drum machine, what you get is something with all the finesse of a 'Speak and Spell' toy - which is exactly how those early Dr. Rhythms sounded! Then, seconds later, one of the sweetest, smoothest, silkiest voices ever committed to magnetic tape cuts in. The contrast between the song's gravel-like electronic percussion and the creamy patina of the singer's voice is utterly arresting, and something you'll never hear unless you run high end vinyl. You have now entered the SACD zone.

The space around Marvin's voice is incredible. Hanging out of the speakers yet surprisingly far back in the mix - those drums are beating away forcefully in front - you begin to realise how deliciously lucid this new format can be. Combining fantastic rhythmic snap - everything about the SA-1's sixteen bit performance holds

true for SACD, and then some - with a delightfully organic nature, it simply takes you closer to the music.

It doesn't stop there though, because even in that uncouth electronic percussion, you can hear tiny dynamic inflections that sixteen bit CD completely misses. It's as if the drum programming has all been changed, and the producer has kept the patterns but shifted the accents. Suddenly, something that previously sounded as if it was played on a Casio calculator lives and breathes! SACD is packed full of surprise and delight. Whether it's hearing guitar strings decay for bar after bar - rather than just vanishing into the electronic ether - or delighting in the wonderfully thick and full bass guitar sound, it's a true festival of the senses.

Up the ante to a decently recorded slice of DSD like Jacintha's 'One for my Baby from 'Autumn Leaves: the Songs of Johnny Mercer' (Groove-Note GRV1006-3) and you hear the SA-1 really strut its stuff. The best way to describe it is like this: At the end of the day when you've a drink in one hand and a cigarette in the other, on which format would you prefer to spin your precious jazz discs - LP or CD? Previously I wouldn't have given it a second thought - and out would come the vinyl. Now though, SACD comes a very close second, even if it doesn't quite win the day. Effortlessly dynamic with a noise floor that goes down to your listening room's very foundations, I've rarely heard a drum kit, electric guitar, piano and double bass sound so eerily, spookily life-like.

Where CD fails most dismally is its reproduction of female vocals. Its coding spec is simply too ragged in the sensitive upper midrange region into which these fall, and the result is

a dulling and a coarsening of what - in some cases at least - can be one of the great wonders of the world. Again, high end vinyl tears ahead of CD here, and again SACD follows very close behind. If a moving coil cartridge of the calibre of say, Linn's Archiv has just one drop more body and presence, then the Marantz makes up for it with its gobsmacking transparency and lack of coloration. Sweet if the occasion demands it or strident when called to be, the SA-1 is incredibly even handed whatever you throw at it.

I ran through a selection of SACDs - from Chesky's ubiquitous 'Introduction to SACD' (Chesky SACD204) to Tony Overwater's 'Op' (Turtle Records TR0008) and on every track the Marantz simply behaved like an optically perfect window on the recording. To its eternal credit, it isn't showy or in-your-face - Sony's SACD players are more conspicuously 'hi-fi' in my humble opinion. It just opens the music up and lets you in. Ultimately, I don't think it's got the best vinyl replay systems licked yet, but it's one hell of a first attempt.

The only criticism is that it sounds just one scintilla too 'cleanly etched', which is of course how digital distortion manifests itself to analogue ears. Nevertheless, it's still plain bloody magic. Even if you can't afford to buy one then try your best to hear it, if only to remind yourself why you're into hi-fi and music! ■▲▲

Marantz SA-1 £5000  
 Marantz UK Ltd.  
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 575-583 Bath Rd.  
 Longford  
 Middlesex  
 UB7 0EH  
 Tel: 01753 680868

Sony developed a type of Bitstream coding called Direct Stream Digital for transferring its CBS music division's deteriorating analogue master tape stock into the digital domain. Sony said that using PCM ADCs was a needlessly complicated and lossy process, involving converting analogue to bitstream digital, bitstream to CD's 16-bit PCM and then PCM back to bitstream for the one-bit DACs of modern CD players. Why not just keep the digits bitstream all the way down the chain? It was simpler and less prone to losing data while being converted to and from PCM.

Unlike PCM, with DSD the sampling frequency determines both resolution and bandwidth. A one bit word is oversampled 64 times at a master clock frequency of 44.1kHz, giving an overall sampling frequency of 2.8224MHz. This seems stratospheric compared to DVD-Audio's 192kHz PCM, but comparisons are misleading because of the differing word lengths. DSD's 64 times oversampling can give four times the bandwidth of CD with the same Signal to Noise ratio, or four times the S/N with the same bandwidth, but Sony have set it at 120dB S/N and 100kHz bandwidth.

Apart from its simplicity, there are other benefits to DSD. One is that unlike PCM, its wide 100kHz bandwidth has no dramatic brickwall filter at the top of its frequency range. This means the music's harmonics are allowed to gently tail off by themselves, rather than being sliced off at one arbitrary point. DSD is also particularly well suited to 'downconversion' into other formats such as Redbook CD or MiniDisc, because its 2.8224MHz sampling frequency is a multiple of the current 44.1kHz standard. Rather than using interpolation (i.e. 'guesstimation') to squeeze 96kHz PCM data down to 44.1kHz, DSD can be converted relatively simply. Super Audio Compact Disc is the first commercial, disc-based implementation of the DSD coding system.

## World Verdict



Possibly Marantz's best ever product. An exquisitely voiced device that excels in replaying both CDs and SACDs.

# CRESTA RUN

Noel Keywood listens to the floorstander in KEF's entry level 'speaker range, the Cresta 3

**T**he Cresta 3 is KEF's budget floorstander. Priced at £249.99 it is a two-way with small 5.25in bass driver and 1in silk dome tweeter, the same line up as the smaller Cresta 2. KEF quote the same measured performance for the two except for the bass corner being at 40Hz instead of 42Hz, showing that bass extension is the only difference between the two.

The Cresta 3 is part of a range designed for both budget hi-fi and audio-visual surround sound use. For higher quality KEF have their Uni-Q Reference series which I like very much.

Finished in teak veneer the Cresta stands 850mm tall, 204mm wide and 252mm deep. Links can be removed on the rear terminal panel to allow bi-wiring, a technique that can tidy up the sound of any loudspeaker. Less bass current is drawn down the high frequency line, and vice-versa, which usefully reduces cable effects. So although a budget model, the Cresta 3 has some embellishments.

Listening to radio through the KEFs to run them in told me they had an easy, amenable sound with plenty of apparent stage depth, good, deep bass and little colouration. Heavy in bass and strong in treble too, Angelique Kidjo's *The Sound of the Drums* is a good way to get a take on any loudspeaker in one pass.

Although radio seemed nice enough through the Crestas the extended treble in Kidjo's recordings revealed the subjective impact of the Cresta 3's treble peak in a way radio had not. There was an accentuated 'hiss' to sibilance, almost a subliminally piercing effect. That's because the emphasis lies very high up the audio band, accentuating only upper musical harmonics. If the information isn't there in the first place, with radio and classical music for example, then the effect may go unnoticed. With wideband Rock though, where there's often a lot of treble, the Cresta 3s do

have a sting.

All the same these speakers are nicely clear and detailed, with a good sense of treble refinement, and the overall picture is balanced by this.

Minutes into *The Sound of Drums* a powerful walking bass kicks in. The way this both starts and plays says much about a whole load of cabinet engineering and driver-to-cab. matching. KEF know what they are doing here, like most of Britain's long established manufacturers - in fact I got a bit of a surprise. The bass kicked in with the sudden force I'd expect to hear from a considerably larger cabinet. Better still, it played convincingly, notes moving up and down the bass scale quite clearly, forming an easily discernible bass line.

Too often this particular recording, which is quite brutal measurement tells me, causes a lot of cabinet boofing and port puffing that rather loses the plot when it comes to conveying a bass tune. The Cresta 3s managed very nicely here considering their quite modest size.

Classical music can reveal a different set properties, both good and bad, in any loudspeaker. Here the Cresta's ability to convey scale and handle dynamic changes cleanly had the Royal Philharmonic sounding big and lusty in my living room with Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique*. Kettle drum rolled, brass sounded convincingly metallic but fulsome, whilst bassoons were big and fruity. I detected box colouration here though and was always a little aware that the performance seemed to be coming from the boxes, rather than existing freely in space away from them.

Although imaging was quite good, it wasn't to Mission standards. I suspect both the surface acoustic wave properties of the Crestas and the box colouration were combining to anchor the sound and compromise imagery a little. However, they were smoother than a lot of today's loudspeakers, lacking the hardness and sterility than



seems to come with exotic-compound synthetic cones. At the end of it though their ability to sound smooth yet powerful carried the KEFs through. I enjoyed them with classical.

OK, they are not perfect. But the Crestas are fundamentally honest, quite revealing, and have a big, powerful sound that, I found, conveyed the excitement in music. These days I'm coming across a lot of loudspeakers that measure well but sound dull and lifeless, as if there were no magnets on the drive units! The Cresta 3s have life and vigour, and they are thoroughly entertaining, if not perfect. ■▲

Kef Cresta 3

£249.99

Kef Audio Ltd  
Tovil, Maidstone  
Kent ME15 6QP  
Tel: 01622 672261  
Fax: 01622 750653  
www.kef.com

### World Verdict



Big, tuneful bass, easy clarity and good dynamics together give an entertaining performance. Some blemishes, but still great fun.

Measured Performance  
see page 111

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WorldRadioHistory



# get the balance right

David Price finds Kenwood's latest KAF-3030R amplifier is a well fettled budget buy.

“Selling for a whisker under £250, Kenwood's KAF-3030R gives you all you could ever need in an amplifier and more. Indeed, if it's your first, you'll probably find that as you upgrade over time, you'll get fewer facilities than it offers. Aside from the usual power, volume, balance and input selector (six sources, including phono), you get A-B speaker switching, treble and bass controls and not one, but two 'Source Direct' buttons. One bypasses the tone and balance controls, the other the input selector as well. As usual on amps of this class, Kenwood has thought up a silly name for this valuable facility - "Adv. DA / CD DIRECT".

Build is better than you'd expect at the price. No, it's not a Krell and you wouldn't confuse it in the dark with the Copland CTA-402 reviewed elsewhere in this issue either, but at 7.8kg is it not as 'plastic fantastic' as some rival designs. Size is a slimline 440x95x400mm.

The Kenwood is a decent performer considering its modest price tag. Given a while to burn in, and partnered with smooth but detailed budget CD players (Marantz CD6000OSE, Arcam's Alpha 7SE) with good interconnect, you get a big hearted, open sound. Like most budget amps, this one is happiest in the midband. Treble is civilised enough to be quite enjoyable, but

don't go looking for tremendous extension or detail. Bass is light, lithe and quick, but lacks serious earthmoving ability.

This amp's trump card is its fast, detailed presence region. It is happiest with rock or dance, where a fleet footedness makes it a willing music maker. The heavily sequenced drums on MJ Cole's 'Crazy Love' were delivered with little overhang or slurring, plus enough gusto and enthusiasm to make the song a thoroughly enjoyable listen. Compared to my reference Cyrus 7 (three times the price, so it was used more as a guide to what good transistor amps are capable of), there was some loss of air and space, a touch of steeliness about the vocals, and a softening and slowing of the upper bass. On its own though, it proved a surprisingly engaging listen.

Move to classical and you'll notice the 3030's greyish, uniform tonality, and the way it seems to lose the shimmer of harmonics on strings and pianos. You'll also see how well it images, and how tidy its front-to-back soundstaging is compared to many more expensive integrations. Indeed, it's quite an analytical performer, giving good insight into the spacial information of recordings, especially towards the front of the acoustic. Left-to-right image location is good, and the soundstage is satisfyingly wide and spacious - there's nothing

'shut in' about the 3030.

The compromises show on jazz, where this amplifier's rather bland tonality makes every acoustic instrument sound like the other. Unlike entry level Arcams for example, no attempt is made to impart the timbre of strings or pianos. Rather, the 3030R gives a rather matter of fact rendition of acoustic instruments which does little to heighten the sense of 'being there'. Still, that didn't mean Lonnie Smith's 'Drives' wasn't satisfyingly quick and bouncy. While the 3030 doesn't care too much for accuracy, it's big on speed.

A capable entry level amp then, with plenty of useful, real world facilities. I also approved of the phono input which was good enough not to let the side down, if not a Michell Delphini. Power output is healthy too: the Kenwood can go surprisingly loud before it gets into trouble. So if you're after a starter amp with the whole gamut of facilities, then only the likes of NAD and Arcam will give you a better musical performance at this price. ■

Kenwood KAF-3030R £249.95  
 Kenwood Electronics UK Ltd.,  
 Kenwood House,  
 Dwight Road,  
 Watford,  
 Herts WD1 8EB  
 Tel: 01923 816444

## World Verdict



A lot of amp for the money, with a tidy and enjoyable sound. Not the audiophile's number one, but a fine real world budget product nonetheless.

Measured Performance  
 see page 111



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World Radio History

HI-FI WORLD'S

# GREAT COMPETITION GIVEAWAY

WIN A KENWOOD CD PLAYER AND AMPLIFIER IN OUR MONTHLY GIVEAWAY



**T**his month, we're giving away the winning combination of Kenwood's brand new DPF-3030-S CD player and matching KAF-3030R-S integrated amplifier. These are both products that we've recently reviewed to great acclaim and continue the excellent tradition of Kenwood's commitment quality to high fidelity.

Kenwood UK is the British subsidiary of the Japanese giant, Kenwood Corporation. The company was founded in 1946 by three like-minded relations, Mr. Kasugi, Mr. Musen and Mr. Shokai - two brothers and a brother-in-law. Its first products were small components for radios and amplifiers, but within ten years it was producing a large range of hi-fi, audio and communications equipment. From these humble beginnings it now employs over three thousand staff, with more than forty subsidiaries world-wide, from China to the US. The UK outfit was established in 1963 under the Trio brand name (taken from the three founders). Amazingly, although the Kenwood brand was virtually a world-wide household name, it wasn't adopted by the audio wing the UK until 1987 after permission was granted by Kenwood Appliances!

As well as hi-fi, Kenwood UK is also involved in manufacturing in-car audio and 'communications'. This division was established to develop the UK market in both professional and amateur radio and test and measurement equipment. The importance of the number three throughout the company is symbolised by its symbol

of a red triangle, representing style, quality and advanced technology. In addition to more traditional hi-fi products, Kenwood is always keen to embrace new technologies - it has many DVD products available, including two DVD-A players, and is due to launch domestic DAB products soon.

These two products were designed for the UK market by Japan in conjunction with the UK office. The KAF-3030R-S 50W per channel integrated amplifier is based on the previous, barnstorming 3020SE. Features like bass, treble and balance controls plus a remote commander, were needed for the UK model, the tone controls being bypassable for more discerning listeners. More audiophile touches, such as the wide bandwidth extending to 100kHz, give it the ability to cope with new high resolution formats like DVD-A and SACD. It employs the company's Linear TRAIT (Thematically Reactive Advanced Instantaneous Transistor) circuitry which makes the amplifier 100% thermally reactive, achieved by putting the idle bias current sensors in the output stages, creating five output device 'legs' instead of the usual three. DP found that, as well as its quality build, "this amp's trump card is its fast, detailed presence region, it's a lot of amp for the money, with a tidy and enjoyable sound".

The DPF-3030-S CD player matches the KAF-3030R-S integrated with its stylish aluminium front panel and slimline styling. The internals had the same 'UK' workout, with a centrally mounted mechanism for increased stability

and a board layout with short signal paths and a high quality power supply, plus the ability to fully synchronise with past and present Kenwood cassette decks. The heart of the player is a new 24bit DAC which uses the company's DRIVE II technology, ensuring maximum resolution up to 90dB using two low pass filters to help remove quantization and distortion. This results in a dynamic performer, as DT found in his review last month. "With all types of music you'll find a seamless frequency response seemingly free from any nasty peaks and troughs. Detail resolution, timbre and timing also all rate as above class average." He concluded, "the 3030 is simply one of the best players around under £200. Highly recommended." Who are we to argue?

Getting your mits on this fabulous pair couldn't be easier. Simply answer the following questions on a postcard, and send it to the address below before February 28th 2001. The lucky winner will be picked out of Hi-Fi World's well-worn baseball cap! ■

**CONGRATULATIONS ...to Mr. B. McAdam, the winner of our January competition. Your Musical Fidelity amps are on the way!**

**The response to our January Competition was fantastic, many thanks!!**

## Competition Questions

[1] In what year was Kenwood founded in Japan?

- [a] 1936
- [b] 1945
- [c] 1946
- [d] 1963

[2] The founders of the company were what?

- [a] Three brothers
- [b] Two brothers and a brother-in-law
- [c] Three sisters
- [d] Seven brides for seven brothers

[3] When Kenwood was first launched in the UK it was called what?

- [a] Quartet
- [b] Solo
- [c] Octet
- [d] Trio

[4] The KAF-3030R-S amplifier uses Kenwood circuitry known as what?

- [a] TRAIT
- [b] STRAIT
- [c] CRAIT
- [d] GRAIT

**Please send all entries to:**

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Noel Keywood listens to the Pi-30 floorstanders from Wharfedale's new Pacific range. Are the famous company back on track?

# as nice as Pi

Wharfedale designs and manufactures all its own loudspeaker components", the company tell us. In the Pacific series "the only item bought in is the raw Kevlar material", meaning the Pi-30 floorstander reviewed here is made by Wharfedale in its entirety. The result is "a pure, musical loudspeaker that is totally devoid of the usual compromises generated by the introduction of third party, off-the-shelf components". At £499.95 the Pi-30 has plenty of competition from KEF, Tannoy, Mission and Acoustic Energy. Does total control over manufacturing give this new floorstander enough advantage to trounce the opposition?

Nowadays UK loudspeaker companies usually buy in the parts of a loudspeaker driver, such as cones, chassis and coils, and assemble them in-house. Alternatively, they buy in final drivers, "as offered" or to their own specification. It's cost effective and means the diverse but specialised skills needed to produce a loudspeaker do not have to exist in-house. A specialist in cones, like Kurt Muller of Germany, obviously doesn't have to worry about cabinet design or the arcane wonders of applying veneer. Since cones are all about materials technology, but cabinets about acoustics (and woodworking) trying to design both and do a good job is not easy. As Wharfedale note,

they produce "loudspeakers in a manner seemingly long forgotten by the industry".

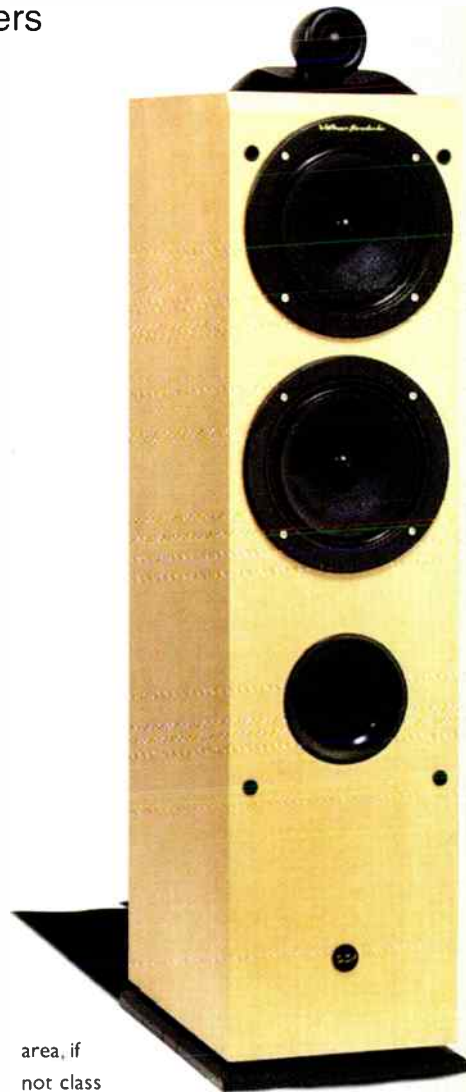
As an example, the Kevlar cone bass/mid drivers "are using a unique 'bi-directional weave structure to further optimise the Kevlar material to its task. Kevlar's low mass makes for an efficient, easy to drive loudspeaker and its notorious self-damping properties virtually eliminates cone resonance". By this, Wharfedale mean Kevlar has little sound of its own, avoiding for example, the 'quacky' nature of polypropylene, or the 'zing' and 'sting' of metal cones and domes. Few other manufacturers weave their own cones so the Pi-30s bass/midrange drive units are unique in this respect.


Wharfedale use two of their Kevlar drivers in the Pi-30 for raised bass power handling. They rate the loudspeaker at 200W 'programme', meaning amplifiers of up to 200W can be used. The power handling specification of a loudspeaker is not, on its own, a measure of loudness though, as many people think. It is a guide to how much power the 'speaker can absorb before flying apart or burning out. At Hi-Fi World we have always felt voltage sensitivity and efficiency are more important. They are, indirectly, measures of goodness. An efficient, sensitive loudspeaker will go loud without lots of power. The Pi-30s are good in this

area, if not class leaders, our measurements showed. Wharfedale don't quote a minimum power but the 'speakers will go loud with 30W or so, so a wide range of amplifiers can be used, which increases the options. Powerful amplifiers quite commonly offer muscle at the expense of quality, another reason for choosing loudspeakers that don't demand lots of power.

Standing 932mm high, the Pi-30s are quite tall overall, although they don't look it because this measurement includes the tweeter pod on top. The cabinets themselves are a little shorter. Spikes are supplied so the cabinets can be stabilised on floors, and bi-wiring is an option. To meet European regulations 4mm plugs cannot be inserted into the rear terminals until small blanking plugs are removed.

The silk dome tweeter pod sitting atop the cabinet is the main distinguishing feature of the Pi-30s. Putting the tweeter into its own enclosure like this allows it to be set back from the front panel, so it aligns vertically





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**MERIDIAN**



with the acoustic centre of the bass/midrange unit, meaning in practice the base of its cone and dust cap. The idea is to improve the time alignment, which in practice gives a little more solidity to percussion by removing a sense of vagueness that can otherwise exist. It's not a major effect by any means, but generally technical progress in hi-fi occurs one small step at a time. Time alignment has been offered many times before of course but the benefits are sufficiently unconvincing for companies to be bothered to continue with it. It should not be discounted though; every little improvement helps. The pod rotates too, so the cabinets can be pointed down the room, but the tweeter angled in slightly toward listeners. Wharfedale only make a brief reference to this in their instructions.

Beneath the drivers lies a large, front mounted reflex port. This back-loads the bass cone, damping its movement at resonance and providing acoustic output at low frequencies. It's common to put the port on the rear panel to lessen the audibility of coloration from it. Wharfedale have chosen front mounting to allow the Pi-30s to be used against a wall. This isn't the best position for a loudspeaker though, giving lumpy, often boomy bass, as well as vague stereo imaging. I used the Pi-30s away from the rear wall. Our review samples were nicely finished in light beech and they would blend in well with a modern home.

I ran the speakers continuously for a week, using radio, to bed them in. They were also given plenty of high volume work to really loosen things up, from a Cyrus 7 amplifier. The immediate impression these loudspeakers give is of an explicitly detailed, forward sound that makes loud and clear all the fine action and filigree percussion to be heard in complex backing arrangements like Sting's *Desert Rose*. The haunting background vocals of Cheb Mami were spot lit, thrown forward in the mix and made vividly clear. I had some reservation's here though because this vocal is meant to float through the song in a way that

touches on a listeners' awareness rather than dominating it. These 'speakers move detail retrieval to new heights, but at the expense of balance and, at times, artistic intent. Their portrayal of *Desert Rose* wasn't as I know it and prominence in high frequency output was the reason, I feel.

As drive unit technology progresses, the once-common dip in response between midrange and treble unit is disappearing. There's nothing wrong with this in principle, but in practice it can result in a forward and often sharp sound if once-suppressed frequencies around 3kHz suddenly become prominent. Wharfedale and others are moving into this territory, bringing out a new breed of 'speakers that in my view need to be matched with care. They sound great with LP but these days most people use CD, which in itself sounds bright and hard.

I've taken to the Cyrus 7 amplifier to cope with this sort of presentation, because it specifically lacks the hard edge of so many solid-state designs. Listening to the Pi-30s through it reminded me that brighter sounding amplifiers wouldn't be a good match for them. The Wharfedales sound clear and pleasantly neutral across the midrange, projecting vocalists forward with a crisp, clarity that can only impress. Their drive units meet Wharfedale's claims for low coloration.

They don't hang images in space with the precision and solidity of Mission's loudspeakers, for example. This surprised me a little, because there was nothing in their measured performance to suggest a weakness in this area.

Apprehensive about the prominence of the Pi-30s across the upper midrange I feared they might bring harshness to strings, but this wasn't the case. With the Chicago Symphony orchestra playing Rimsky-

Korsakov's *Scheherazade* violins were picked out clearly, placed in stark contrast against the background, with good resolution of their range of tonal colour. Tuba and bass trombones sounded rich and fruity, well defined amongst the sea of depth perspectives though. Instead of being layered backward the orchestra was in my lap.

Whilst testing the Pi-30s with pink noise I heard some boxy 'hollowness' from the port. With Rock music this brought a 'boof' to bass that made it sound a little box bound. The Pi-30s play bass well enough and they go deep but port output does need to be tamed. Deep male vocals induced the effect too, Everlast at times seeming to be singing from somewhere inside the cabinet on Santana's *Put Your Lights On*.

Wharfedale's new Pi-30 loudspeakers are forward sounding and highly detailed. With a bright balance and good, strong bass they'll make most showroom rivals seem positively dull by comparison. These are 'speakers for the listener who wants to hear everything. They were a little bright for my tastes, but then loudspeakers with a ruler flat frequency response always sound bright to me. The Pi-30s are certainly accurate and revealing, but they should be used with smooth sounding CD players and amplifiers. 🏠

WHARFEDALE Pi-30 £499.95  
 Wharfedale International Ltd  
 Sovereign Court  
 Ermine Business Park  
 Huntingdon  
 Cambs PE18 6WA  
 Tel: 01480 447700  
 www.wharfedale.co.uk

**World Verdict**



Forward, detailed and revealing presentation, but on the bright side and with weak depth perspectives.

Measured Performance see page 111

After a decade without a Linn arm or cartridge in his system, David Price auditioned the latest Ekos/Arkiv combination to find out how seriously the Glasgow company takes vinyl these days.

# hand in glove

## ▶▶ LINN ARKIV II CARTRIDGE

Originally introduced in 1992, the £1,200 Arkiv is Linn Products' top moving coil, following in a long line of cartridges from the Asak DC2100K and Karma to the Troika. Housed in a rigid all-alloy body (weighing 74.g) containing hand-wound coils, a boron cantilever holds a Line Contact new stylus assembly employing a more highly developed stylus shape.

Linn quote the Arkiv's vital statistics as follows: It has a compliance of  $12 \times 10^{-6}$  cm/dyne (100Hz), a coil impedance of 4 Ohms and a recommended load of >50. Output is a middling 0.4mV, and Linn quote a channel balance figure at 1kHz of 0.5dB, but my sample seemed closer to 1dB. The recommended tracking weight range is between 1.8 and 2.0g, and true enough my sample sounded solid as a rock at 1.9g. Build quality is excellent, and as you'd expect Linn's three point mounting system that the Arkiv shares with the Ekos makes for a superbly snug fit and perfect tracking geometry.

Where the Ekos's tonality is on the dry side of neutral - especially in the midband - the Arkiv II veers the other way. Here's a Linn product in the old mould - think late seventies Sondek and you'll get the picture. It's warm, this one. Sweet, rich and silky, the Arkiv II is not of the Audio Technica school of moving coil design. Ironically in fact, some aspects of the

Arkiv's sonic signature remind me of the old Supex SD900, a Japanese MC that Linn used to import before they did their own range of cartridges. This means that when used with a high quality transistor moving coil phono stage like Linn's Linto or the Michell Delphini I used - which by virtue of their solid state design are just a touch dry and over-clean sounding - you get a perfectly judged tonal balance. Not too warm yet not too bright, the Arkiv proves an extremely satisfying performer in the best analogue traditions.

Its silky, seamless tonality is one of the Arkiv's key attributes. The other is its musicality. Cue up some classic seventies rock like Al Stewart's 'Year of the Cat' and you get a deliciously liquid and beguiling performance. Tight and grippy yet devoid of any artificial harshness (which often gives the illusion of control), this cartridge seduces the listener by the end of the song's first four bar phrase. The piano is sumptuously resonant, the timing perfectly judged and the detail quite superb. As the guitars, drums and vocals kick in, the Arkiv is positively singing. The same goes for jazz, where this cartridge sounds equally at home - rarely have I heard 'Kind of Blue' as moody, brooding and atmospheric.

This cartridge's character predisposes it to acoustic rock and



jazz, but with orchestral music it is less at home. Once again we have the old Linn bugbear of lack of tonal variety. That boron

cantilever imbues everything with polish and sophistication, regardless of whether the original instrument actually sounds this way. This cartridge is less good at exposing the tonal contrast between, say, an oboe and a French horn as the likes of Dynavector's Te Kaitora. It's also less adept at capturing the rawness of electronic dance music than many cheaper moving coils. While The Prodigy's 'Your Love' was infectiously rhythmic, it wasn't as blisteringly powerful as, say, Lyra's Lydian Beta.

The new Arkiv II is one honey of a cartridge. A far more accomplished all rounder than its Ekos cousin, it has virtually no weaknesses (everything from dynamics, bass and treble extension, imaging and low level detailing are all very much in the premier league) save its marginally over-refined sound. Together with the Ekos, the Arkiv II is more than the already considerable sum of its parts. The two together are a cracking combination, each diminishing the other's shortcomings and encouraging its strengths. And this good news isn't just for LP12 owners either - you may be surprised to discover I did all my listening on a Michell Orbe, in which the Ekos/Arkiv positively sang. Rarely have I ever heard any turntable, arm and cartridge combination sound so sublime.

Linn Arkiv

£1,200

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Floors Rd.

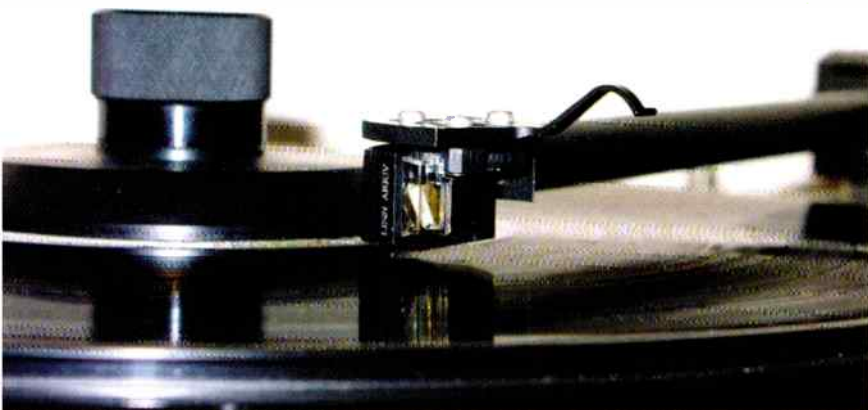
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Glasgow G76 0EP  
Tel: 0141 307 7777  
www.linn.co.uk

### World Verdict



A wonderfully fluid and musical cartridge, there are few better ways to play vinyl.

World Radio History







**LINN EKOS TONEARM**

One and a half thousand pounds buys you this hand built 'direct coupled transcription tonearm', and very nicely put together it is too. Although subtly updated a few years back (with revised bearings being the major improvement), the Ekos is essentially a higher tolerated, all-alloy Ittok. The latter was arguably the original super-arm, dating back to 1979 when the Boomtown Rats were last at Number One! Originally manufactured for Linn by the Denon Parts Company of Japan, it was designed by one Mr Ito to Linn's specification. As its name suggests ('Ecosse', geddit?), the Ekos is machined and assembled at Linn's Castlemilk factory in Bonny Scotland.

The arm itself comprises a large bore alloy arm tube which is glued to a perforated aluminium alloy headshell and a robust bearing assembly, housing standard ballraces plus a stainless tool steel central shaft. Very finely aligned, these bearings offer a single, rigid coupling right through to the arm pillar with its three point fixing. The sliding brass counterweight is decoupled to the rear end stub by hard rubber bushes, and thumbwheels set the spring-applied tracking force and bias. Cabling is low capacitance and inductance copper, terminated by high quality gold plated Linn phono plugs. With an effective mass of 12g, the Ekos is in the medium to high mass category, meaning it will work well with most MCs and MMs alike.

First the bad news. By modern standards - as evinced by the OL RB250 or SMEV - the Ekos isn't the most tonally neutral of performers. Most obvious is the midband, which has a tonal homogeneity or 'sameness' to it that its rivals most definitely do not. This is best heard on acoustic instruments, such as the brass section on Dexy's Midnight Runner's 'Geno'. Where the OL carries these instruments in all their full glory, with their rich harmonics and lush textural, the Ekos sounds rather thin by comparison. Rather than revelling in an instrument's timbral richness, it just conveys it in a rather perfunctory

manner.

This happens in all the registers, meaning cymbals lose their brilliance and sparkle, and low piano notes their grumbling, menacing resonance. You get the impression that whatever the Ekos plays, it's subtly veiled, as if the contrast has been turned down on the music. This is a shame, because vinyl is the only multicoloured music source around these days, and it's a treat to hear how eerily natural and brilliantly lit music can sound with the right analogue front end components.

With that over, I can now say that in all other respects the Ekos excels. If its texturality is a slight let down, its tunefulness is a delight. Chic's 'Le Freak' is a tightly syncopated workout for bass and rhythm guitars, drums and Fender Rhodes electric piano, and never have I heard it hang together quite so well. While the SMEV delights in conveying the track's seismic bass and subtle detailing but misses the musical plot altogether, the Ekos does the opposite. It jumps into the song head first and boogies, letting the bass guitar propel things along at tremendous pace. The reason for this lies in the Ekos's genius at catching the leading and trailing edges of notes in a song. By accurately describing the attack, detail, sustain and release of a plucked guitar string or a hammered piano cadence, it somehow manages to slot the tune together better.

By comparison, all its rivals are left wanting to a greater or lesser extent. The SMEV manages attack transients pretty well too, but singularly fails to knit them into a cohesive, musical whole. Unipivots like Naim's ARO or Graham's I.5 are worst of all at leading edges - giving the impression of a slightly soft sound - but best of all at weaving the body of the notes together.

Unlike the SMEV, the Linn's abilities at starting and stopping on a sixpence don't make it sound mechanical. Compared to the supple music making of the unipivots, the Ekos sounds a tad regimented, but this says more about the exceptionally fluid nature of the Naim

and Graham.

The Ekos's dynamics are a treat, if not quite the best of the bunch - the SME and OL don't sit on musical peaks and crescendos quite as much as the Linn. However, the Ekos makes up for this with its 'microdynamic' alacrity - those tiny inflections of phrasing and accents are better imparted by the Linn than the OL or SME. Low level detailing is great too, the Ekos throwing up all sorts of musical minutiae at the back of the mix which you struggle to hear with other arms.

Its imaging and soundstaging performance is a mixed bag. The Ekos doesn't sound shut in but instead chooses to throw everything out to the extremes of the soundstage, as if you'd pressed the 'stereo wide' button on your ghetto blaster. Listening in 'widescreen' is a pleasing effect, but the image location between the two speakers is rather vaguer than the SME or OL. Likewise the stage depth, which isn't the deepest you'll hear from vinyl. Frequency extremes aren't particularly special either, the SME V trouncing every other arm in the bass, but at least its low frequencies are delightfully tight and supple.

Overall then, Linn's latest Ekos is a flawed gem. A charmingly charismatic and engaging performer, it simply trounces the competition hands down when it comes to conveying music's rhythm, groove and swing. While not the most neutral or transparent pick-up arm ever made, in practice it proves to be a great half-way house between the musical fluidity of the Naim and Graham unipivots and the analysis, depth and detail of the SMEV and OL RB250. Ignore this beautifully built, designed and voiced piece of precision engineering at your peril. ■▲



Linn Ekos £1,500  
Linn Products Ltd.  
Floors Rd.  
Watertoot Eaglesham  
Glasgow G76 0EP  
Tel: 0141 307 7777  
www.linn.co.uk

**World Verdict**



Powerful, rhythmic and engaging like few others, the Ekos is not the best all rounder, but what it does, it does like no other.

# CONTROLLED



As well as being one of the world leaders in digital multichannel systems, Meridian still takes some beating when it comes to two channel. Simon Pope spent some time with the 502/557 stereo pre and power amplifiers.

inputs can be renamed and input sensitivities can be adjusted to create a uniform sound level when switching between sources, which is a natty little touch. There are also two 'comms' connectors to link up with other 500 Meridian components, for configuration into a two room system.

### SOUNDS ASSURED

I used Meridian's 506.24 24 bit CD player (which is a big favourite of ours right now) with this amplifier, a Michell GyroDec SE with QC power supply/ RB 250/ Ortofon MC30 Supreme, Linn Ninka floorstanders and Quad ESL-988s, plus Nordost's ruthlessly revealing SPM cable. I kicked off with a CD of Bernstein's excellent reading of Mahler's fifth symphony with the Vienna Philharmonic on DG.

When it comes to sound, Meridian's is traditionally as sophisticated as its aesthetics and ergonomics, and indeed often too much so. Similar to certain high end equipment like Mark Levinson for example, it has often suited smaller jazz and classical forces, giving a slight sheen that's great with subtle and delicate music but seems to leave rock and dance somewhat wanting. Not so



a switch for bridging and a power switch next to the mains input. The 557 has full protection against DC offset and thermal overload and 'soft start' using Meridian's proprietary circuit. Finished with a stylish smoked glass top plate, plus black aluminium heat sinks on either side, the 557 weighs a chunky 27kg, so unless you have the build of a WWF wrestler, it's a two man lift.

The 502 preamplifier, or analogue controller as Meridian prefer to call it, is also designed in dual mono to compliment the 557 power amp. There are balanced XLR outputs for use with all Meridian 500 series amplifiers or the M60 active 'speakers, completing a fully balanced analogue system should you so wish.

When it comes to inputs nothing has been left out. Versatility is the key to the 502. There are three balanced XLR inputs, plus four unbalanced - CD, Radio, Video, Cable, Tape and optional LP (MM or MC plug-in modules for each channel) plus independent control of the tape output. No stone has been left unturned.

There are front panel controls for Display (dimmed and off), Mute, Volume up and down and on/off. All this can be operated from the comfort of your armchair with Meridian's excellent, sexy looking, system remote available for an extra £75, or supplied with the equally excellent 506.24 CD Player.

Meridian's mastery of electronic engineering is evident in the 502. All its

It's a well known fact in the audio world that reviewers find it hard to give Meridian loan equipment back. This may surprise some enthusiasts, who think we crave a Mad Max-style mound of smoking metal for a hi-fi system. However, like the majority of buyers, I suspect, hi-fi reviewers often want something that's expertly engineered, sounds the biz and looks the part to boot. Enter Meridian.

Since the first amplifiers that Bob Stuart and Alan Boothroyd (Meridian's founding fathers) penned, the visually arresting Lecson ACI/API back in the early seventies, everything has had a sleek and stylishly understated look. Although Meridian has retained this house style for many a year, it has aged well, looking neither dated nor contrivedly futuristic - and if it ain't broken, don't fix it.

### UNDER THE BONNET

Meridian's 502/557 pre and power amplifiers reviewed here are their top two-channel products. The power amp is certainly one heck of a unit: twice the size and power of the 556, the 557 is a 200W (into 8ohms) dual mono design that employs no fewer than eight power transistors. Internal bridging allows full balanced operation and a quoted 1000W into 4ohms. At the rear there are balanced XLR and unbalanced phono inputs and twin loudspeaker outputs for bi-wiring, plus

# SUBSTANCE



here. The 557 is one fine power amplifier, offering significantly more insight, slam and dynamics than the smaller 556 to create an altogether different sound.

This awesome recording (in both performance and sound) has many cards up its sleeve which are only revealed by the best products around. One is dynamic range - at only three or four short climaxes in the whole seventy five minutes does Bernstein let the orchestra off the reins. If the equipment is up to it then the effect is startling, like a door opening beneath you. The 557 delivered these moments with tremendous authority and power. In the climax towards the end of the first movement, its frequency range was particularly impressive. The bass drum roll created massive space and depth in the listening room and, whilst the whole dynamic effect was powerful, it was never crude or overdone - just like a live performance.

Another trick this recording has is the odd deep, resonant 'Lenny Leap' - when this most athletic of maestros jumps on the podium and lands with a subtle but deep thump. He also stamps the podium at certain points in the score. I'm pleased to say that, being a live recording, DG have sensibly left these in the recording. The Meridian amps picked them all up (many are indiscernible with lesser equipment) to increase the excitement still further. Great stuff!

Orchestral tone was very good too, the infamous 'glassy' sound that some ascribe to Meridian proving completely absent. Brass instruments were clean and well rounded and the woodwind ethereal and light. The

overall sound was lyrical, smooth and open, perhaps emphasised by the transparent Nordost cable but a long way from what some would expect from Meridian.

Moving on to the more conventional strains of 'Once Round The Block' by Badly Drawn Boy, the Meridians impressed still further. Not the finest of recordings, this song has a limited frequency range with most of its energy pushed into the midrange. This can be ruthless for hi-fi, but the 502/557 combo delivered an aptly light and tuneful reading, with beautifully clean vocals and a fresh, open midrange. Acoustic guitars sounded lucid and percussion detailed and fast.

Full-on rock such as Primal Scream's 'Rocks' had speed and vitality but just lacked that last inch of grit to carry it off. Rather than the power amp which is very powerful with plenty of control, this was more down to the 502 control amp, which has a little more of the old-school Meridian sound which plays this kind of material over-politely. Apart from this, nothing was lost from the mix.

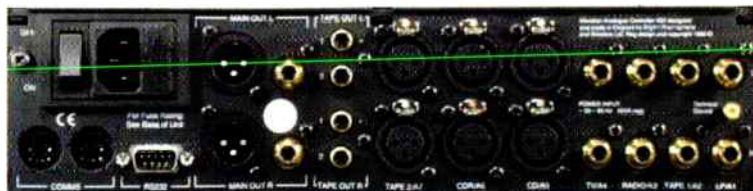
What of the moving coil phono stage supplied with our 502 I hear you cry? I selected a superbly cut 12" of Odyssey's 'Submerge' from LTJ Bukem's 'Earth: Vol III' from my vinyl shelf. This track has awesome bass that shakes the floorboards, and the Meridians detracted from it not a jot,

giving a remarkably deep and controlled response that had my proverbial flares flapping. The silky smooth synth chords floated effortlessly through the 'speakers, while the rhythms were tight and precise. The overall jazzy nature of the piece really suited the Meridians' sophisticated nature. Those who like their drum and bass a little 'ruffer' should look elsewhere, as although this isn't exactly pipe and slippers stuff, it's definitely a mature, considered sound.

This combination, and the 557 power amp in particular, is the best Meridian gear I've heard for a long while, plus it's also supremely versatile on the user front. It has power and control that brings it up with the best under £5,000, plus a smooth and sophisticated sound that's beautifully clean. Your archetypal mechanical solid state sound it is not. Partner it with an equally neutral source and cables and you have a sonic force to be reckoned with. Now, when did I have to give it back again? 📢 📢

Meridian 502  
Analogue controller £1,385  
Meridian 557  
Two channel Power Amplifier £1,525

Meridian Audio Ltd.  
Stonehill  
Huntingdon  
Cambs PE18 6ED  
Tel: 01480 434334  
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## World Verdict

Classy, confident and mature sounding with plenty of power and dynamic control, this is an essential audition. Supremely versatile, too.

Measured Performance  
see page 111

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## Pioneer PDR509 CD-RW Recorder



**"Makes excellent recordings; fine value for money"**

Anyone looking at spending £300 on a digital recorder probably already has a CD player at least as expensive to feed it, and on which the copies made on the recorder are likely to be played. This is why the Pioneer PDR509 took Product of the Year gong in our 2000 Awards - not so much for its playback abilities, which are good but not stunning, but for the fact that here is a machine capable of high-quality recordings from digital sources.

WHAT HI-FI? ♦ NOVEMBER 2000



### The benefits of Recordable CD

With recordings which are virtually identical to the originals, CD-R has become the fastest growing recording medium. CD-R recordings are permanent and can be played back on any existing CD player, so they're good for making compilations or archiving irreplaceable records. CD-RW discs are ReWritable and may be re-recorded many times, however they will only play on the recorder itself or on some more recent CD players.

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Yamaha MDX596	MiniDisc Recorder	£159.95

*Please Note: Some products are not available at all outlets  
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### ARCAM Alpha 10 DAB Tuner

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### SONY MDSJB940 MiniDisc Recorder

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Musical Fidelity A3 Integrated	£849.95
Rotel RA971/II	£229.95
Sony TAFB940R	£229.95

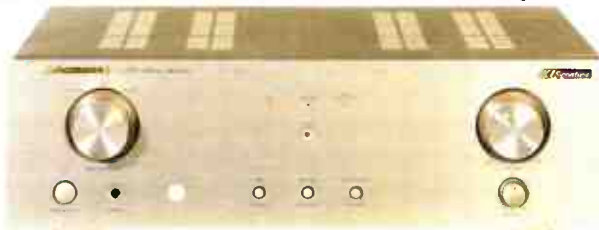
Mail Order not available on Arcam, B&W, Marantz and Monitor Audio Products

also available at **selected outlets**

Arcam FMJ A22, Linn Kolektor/LK85  
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Please Note: Advertisement valid until at least 14th February 2001, E&OE.

## marantz



### PM6010 Ki Signature Amplifier

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Ruark Prelude Reference	£774.95

also available at **selected outlets**

B&W CDM NT, Castle Classic Range,  
Jamo Concert Series and Ruark Classic Series.



MISSION

78 Series

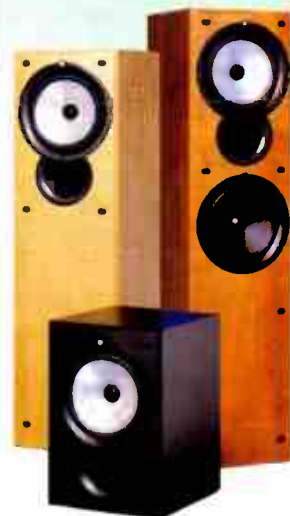
- ◆ Includes Award Winning 780
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- ◆ 30mm MDF Cabinets
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78 Series only available  
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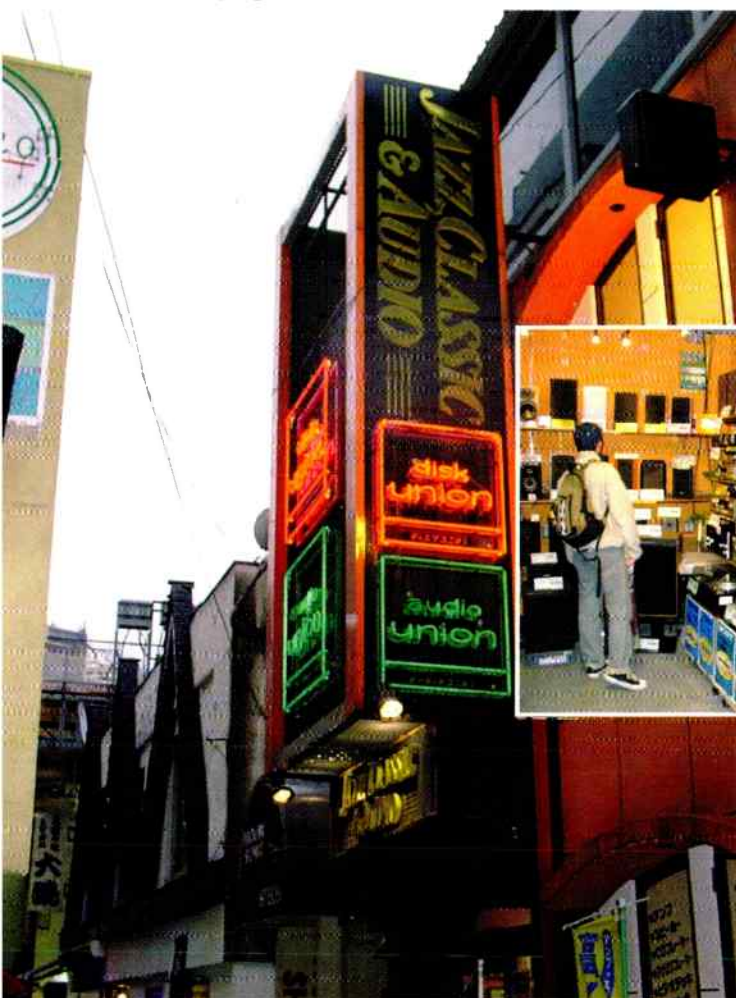
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# NIRVANA IN

Every good audiophile knows hi-fi heaven starts and stops in Japan, so late last



Single speaker dem rooms ▶  
are rare in Japan.

vinyl, valves, SACD, DVD-RAM:  
are rare in Japan.

eighty years of audio in one  
shop! ▼

Accuphase and Mark  
Levinson sit next to  
Macintosh and Sony. ▼

▶▶ It was grim up north, and down south, and east and west for that matter. Cast your mind back to November 2000 and all you'll see are storms, floods and misery. So I'm told. You see, I spent most of that tumultuous month some nine thousand miles away, on the other side of the earth, in the earnest and solemn pursuit of finding out what was happening on the Japanese hi-fi scene. Tough job I know, but sometimes you've gotta go the extra mile for quality journalism. Did I also mention it was 28 degrees and sunny?

I was last in the land of the Rising Yen (or falling as it was then) back in early 1998, when I'd been intrigued about what was going on hi-fi wise. Because it's around one-to-two years ahead of us here in Blighty, Japanese audio trends are a remarkably good way of predicting where the UK is going to go.

DVD video was just beginning to take off back in 1998 - the players were there, the software was there and the video libraries were starting to stock it - pretty much like Britain 2000. Three years ago, lest we forget, SACD and DVD Audio had both been 'announced' but a handful of demo discs and American audiophile releases aside, it was still a pipe dream. Indeed, Esoteric had just launched the P0 - very probably the world's best ever CD transport - and I remember asking a salesman in high end specialist Dynamic Audio in Tokyo's Akihabara why. Surely if DVD-A was just around the corner, what was the point of putting out the ultimate CD spinner? "It isn't," he politely observed, "and it won't be for a long time". He was right.

No, the king of the formats in Japan three years ago was MiniDisc. Quite unlike the UK, where Sony had only just launched its first serious mass market

player - the MDS-JE500 - the little recordable disc was everywhere. The difference was marked - whereas British hi-fi shops still lined their shelves with cassette decks (remember them?), the likes of Yodobashi Camera were cowering under the weight of Sharp, Sony and Kenwood MD recorders. With the portables selling for under £100, it was hardly surprising.

There were other interesting developments too. In a world previously devoid of AD (that's 'analog disc', or vinyl to you and I), early 1998 had seen the Japanese debut of a handful of turntables ('analog players', natch) from the likes of Sony and Denon. Not particularly remarkable by UK standards I grant you, but for the relentlessly forward looking, technology driven culture of Japan it was tantamount to Godzilla marching into Tokyo Bay. It was obviously a toe in the water job by the big companies, to see which way the

# NOVEMBER

year intrepid reporter David Price set out on a voyage of discovery. . .



◀ Classic 1965 Macintosh KT88 amp gathers dust on top shelf

store on the floor above selling everything from classic Blue Note releases on vinyl to Sony Music's latest SACDs.

Audio Union is a veritable treasure trove of the old and the new, its eclecticism proving a real treat for any Hi-Fi World reader (myself included). A smallish store - certainly no bigger than a specialist British dealer - it was packed with valves, vinyl, CD, SACD, DVD, horns, 'statics and subwoofers, all sitting side by side in perfect harmony.

Amps ranged from a Cello Encore IML preamplifier (¥580,000 or £3,625) to a gold fronted, Class A Sansui AU-a 607XR transistor affair costing just ¥39,000 (£240). A pair of Quad IIs weighed in at ¥380,000 (£2,350) while a couple of 1965 MacIntosh KT88-based valve monoblocs, rare as hens teeth, sold for a mere ¥1,000,000 (£6,250). Vinyl included countless Thorens and Denon budget record decks, plus a Kenwood GT-2000 for ¥118,000 or £720 and a mint Garrard 301/SME 3009S2/Ortofon SPU combination for ¥160,000 (£1,000). Speakers ranged from the obligatory JBLs to a prim pair of Tannoy Turnberrys for ¥330,000 (£2,035) and a couple of B&W Matrix800s for ¥650,000 (£4,010).

wind was blowing, and it had very interesting consequences.

Tubes and Japan have always been closely linked - the Krell school of music reproduction has never been practical in a country full of small houses and apartments with tiny listening rooms and paper thin walls. Earthquakes are strictly from Mother Nature, and are not man made in this country. It was interesting to see the inroads glass audio had made into mainstream hi-fi stores, with the likes of Luxman and Uesugi really going places that British valve amp makers could only dream of.

And so, after a few days relaxing in the beautiful, ancient (and very hot) city of Kyoto, plus a quick jaunt over to Nagasaki on the island of Kyushu, yours truly jumped on Japan Airlines and flew to Tokyo for a tour of the capital's hi-fi shops. This time I found myself in Audio Union in the trendy Kichijoji district. I stood amidst a sea of ancient and modern classic hi-fi, a team of passionate sales staff and - just for good measure - a mind blowing jazz record

MiniDisc was conspicuous by its absence at Audio Union. Although not exactly the shop's core business, the salesman explained that three years ago he couldn't sell enough high end MD recorders like Sony's MDS-JA5ES. Now though, the format has gone so far downmarket his customers just aren't interested anymore. In its place, in the hi-fi arena at least, is CD-R. Sony, which has avoided all contact with this medium until now, apparently cannot sell enough of its SBM-equipped ¥75,000 (£460) CDR-W33! This is a significant position shift for the erstwhile MD and DAT specialists. Pioneer continues to rule the roost though, being the first to market in Japan with an affordable CD burner some four years back.

The salesman told me that by carrying such a diverse and eclectic range of stock, the Audio Union chain of stores has been able to insulate itself from the ravages of the largely stagnant Japanese economy. Compared to the UK hi-fi scene, it seems, there is still far more money washing around, with the result that the major manufacturers can



▲ This Sound tube amp will set you back just £900.

◀ Seventies heavy metal: Luxman SQ-38D.

Kenwood's GT-2000 is a ▶ popular entry-level superdeck at £720.



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◀ SACDs are suddenly all the rage in Japan...

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...and this place is full of them! ▼



afford to be more daring and original in their thinking. Dealers are less hidebound too, and there's a large demand for British, European and especially American esoterica at extremely inflated prices.

With the sweet strains of Dave Brubeck issuing forth from one of the many loudspeakers wired up to the comparator, it was time to say my goodbyes and leave for the less rarefied climes of Kichijoji's Laox. This is more of an electronics superstore, but despite the seven storeys of rice cookers, air conditioning units and mobile phones, there's still a cavernous basement carrying high end hi-fi and AV. Indeed, the store has just expanded its audio section, which is something you don't hear too much of in Britain these days.

I got a shock when I walked in. Instead of the rows of MD portables I'd expected, I was confronted by a profusion of - yes, you've guessed it - MP3 players. Although a keen follower of the computer audio scene in the UK, I can honestly say I've never seen so many 'digital music players' in the same place at the same time. As well as the usual fare from s3 and Samsung, there were models from many major Japanese manufacturers, including AAC players from the likes of Sanyo and Panasonic. If nothing else, this proves how relentlessly Japanese consumers demand new products and technologies, and how casually they discard the old ones. If Japan is any measure, then it would seem MD is not long for this life.

Laox also surprised me with the number of turntables it was carrying. Ten years ago it was physically impossible to buy record players from any mainstream Japanese hi-fi emporium - I know because I tried. Three years ago it was do-able but choice was limited. Now though, Technics, Denon, Kenwood, Thorens and Sony are fielding multiple models against each other. Vinyl has come back big time, and this is reflected in the profusion of record shops selling new import twelve inchers and LPs, rather than dog eared old

seventies collectors items.

The shelves were lined with high end CD players too, but noticeably fewer than before.

Whereas three years ago you got the sense

that this was the sexiest area of Japanese high end, things now look very different. The arrival of SACD and DVD Audio players has already hit the 16bit market, as a Denon DCD-as I languishing in the corner proved. In 1998 this was the absolute King of the Castle as far as the major Japanese manufacturers were concerned, but here it was with a "50% OFF" sticker ignominiously attached to its front panel. How the mighty fall.

As the Laox shop display proved, the top digital disc spinners these days increasingly bear the DVD or SACD logo. Marantz's SA-1 (¥550,000 or £3,395) was praised to the hilt in the Autumn 2000 edition of Japan's leading hi-fi publication, Stereo Sound (and you can see what I made of it elsewhere in this very magazine). Pioneer's first DVD Audio player, the DV-AX10 (¥500,000 or £3,090) has also been an instant hit - 24kg of heavy metal, high quality 24/192 digital converters inside and Pioneer's expertise with DVD transports is a formidable combination. Accuphase's brand new DPI00/DC101 two box SACD transport and DAC combo (¥1,500,000 or £9,300) should also be



...Pioneer's first DVD recorder, the DV- R1000



◀ Victor's brand new XV-D9000 DVD Audio player...



◀ ...and Sony's SS-1ED loudspeakers, complete with supertweeters.

big considering the company's past efforts and popular following in Japan. Two notable 16bit exceptions to the fast breeding new format players were Linn's Ikemi (¥600,000 or £3,700) and CD12 (¥2,800,000 or £17,300), which have also gone down a storm in Japan.

Hi-fi is a fluid and constantly changing thing - it's just that in Japan it seems to flow rather faster. Audio Union and Laox proved to me that audio's as popular as ever. From AAC to SACD, there's a raft of new technologies coming onstream, yet amazingly, as in other parts of the Far East, valves and vinyl seemingly grow ever more common place. Any audiophile with spare time or cash would do well to visit Japan and see for himself. Out there, last November's weather was great, but the hi-fi was something else! ▶▲



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# GRAND OPERAS

Opera's lavish looking loudspeakers have earned a reputation for value. Simon Pope tries out the new Operetta.

**W**e've praised Italian hi-fi many times in these pages. As a nation they seem to get the balance between looks and sound just right. This isn't the Italy of singing waiters and hanging Chianti flasks, more your Raybans and Maseratis. 'Class' is the word that springs to mind, and yet so often with anything classy, you have to pay a refined price. Not so with Opera though, which has a knack of producing esoteric products for everyday money.

Superior cabinet work is a common trait in all Italian 'speakers and especially in those of Opera, which employ solid hardwood throughout the range. Factor in high quality drivers and passive componentry, and sensible prices, and you have the company's recipe for success. Opera's Operetta has all the attributes of a high end standmounter but costs just £795. Build and drive unit quality befits a design retailing for well over £1,000. The bass/mid Seas PI I uses a synthetic, transparent 110mm cone and the dome tweeter is another Seas unit found in top 'speakers from the likes of Jamo. I know both drivers well and finding them in a 'speaker so affordable makes a refreshing change.

Dimensionally compact with great solidity and depth, the Operettas have beautifully bevelled edges, a long port at the rear and two sets of Opera's signature chunky, gold plated brass speaker terminals. Cabinetry is nothing short of superlative, and is available in a selection of three solid hardwoods. They even come inside a luxurious blue drawstring bag, just like a bottle of select Chivas Regal!

This is apt, because the sound reminds me of that particularly noble tippie - warm and rich yet it clears the passages! Knowing that Opera's speakers are especially well suited to both classical and acoustic music, I started reviewing with neither. The Screaming Trees' ballsy rock album 'Dust' was inserted into the Meridian 206.24 CD player, fed through Audio Analogue's Puccini SE and into the Operettas. I was greeted by a rich and well detailed sound of deceptive substance.

Positioned within three feet of the rear wall, bass was lively and taut, relaying the pounding kick drum that anchors the track down with great speed. But it wasn't in the lower frequencies that I found myself most surprised - there's a very clean and open midband response that delivered vocals with real presence and also cooled down the over-forward electric guitars in the mix. Better still, the Seas tweeter treated me to perhaps the finest and sweetest treble this side of a thousand pounds. Ride cymbals had a natural shimmer and vibrancy, while other high percussion was subtle and smooth yet beautifully open. They proved unexpectedly capable with dirty, low down 'cock rock' too - fast yet devoid of harshness or crudeness that can often creep in with this music.

Best was their work with Guerrero's Battle Mass, sang by Westminster Cathedral Choir with Her Majesty's Sackbuts on Hyperion records. Recorded in the vastness of the Cathedral - known as the 'aerodrome' by the choir members, this recording of lush Spanish



Renaissance music blends vocals and brass together into a rich and full bodied whole. And that's exactly what I got from the Operettas too. The sweet treble from the Seas unit ensured that the brass was never raspy, and the boys' voices rarely screeched. The choir's voices blended well but still retained a certain amount of clarity to keep words and consonants clearly audible. Indeed these 'speakers have no problem keeping things together. This recording's aircraft hanger acoustics often fall prey to congestion, but the Operettas remained clear as fresh mountain air.

With sound that's equally well suited to rock/pop and classical, the Operas are indeed a class act. Clarity is mixed with an innate smoothness, resulting in a sound that will never tire you out. You couldn't describe them as typically high end, as they're actually a little less restrained than that, but it's all for the best as these are one heck of a quality 'speaker for the money. ■▲

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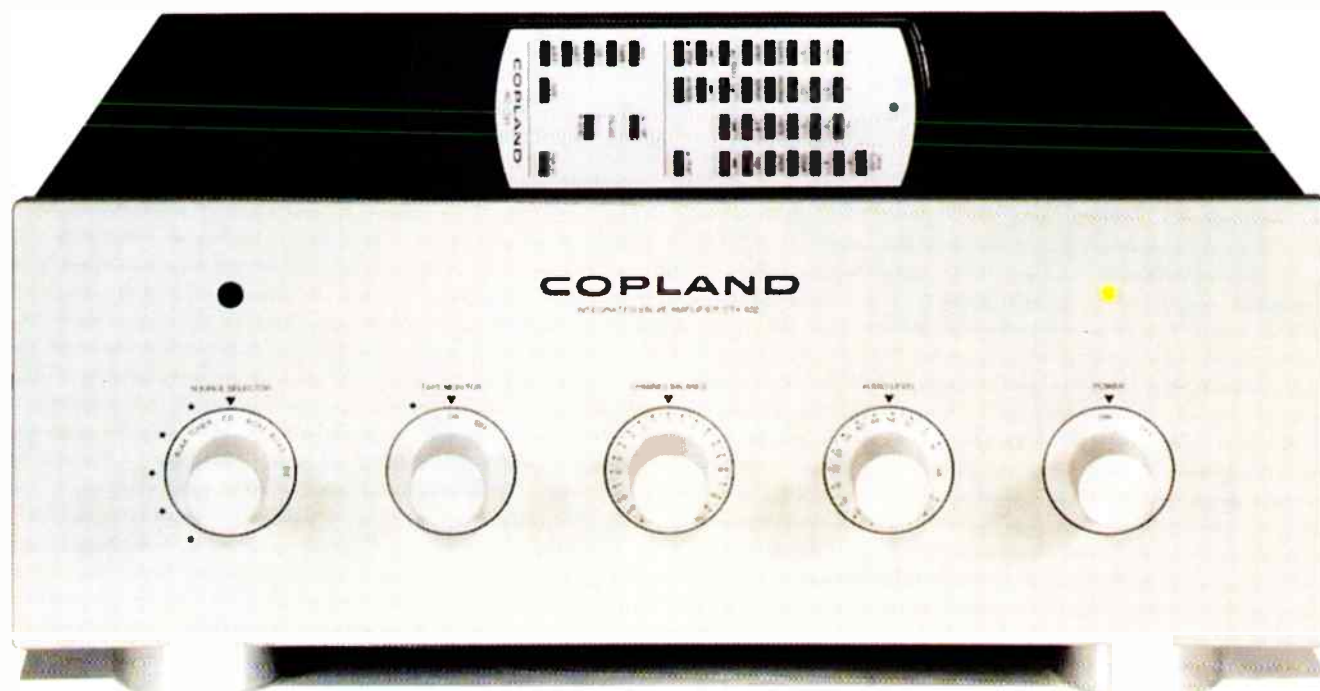
## World Verdict



Genuinely exciting to listen to with strong bass and sweet treble, they're equally proficient with both rock and classical. Beautiful build and excellent value for money.

Measured Performance see page 111

Copland's valve aspirated CTA-402 integrated amplifier is pretty as a picture, but is



# tubular belle?

When Hi-Fi World appeared on the scene ten years ago, the thermionic valve was about as fashionable an audio technology as ceramic pick-up cartridges or crystal wireless sets. No one in the specialist press believed tubes were a thing of hi-fi's future as well as its past - or if they did, they kept very quiet about it! Lest we forget, the eighties was still fresh in people's minds, and that meant big, high power transistor power amps, often heavily Class B biased, driving big, power hungry speakers with ancient drive unit technology.

It is to this magazine's credit that it appeared on the scene and rapidly started a debate about the merits of valves that's continued ever since. Of course, there are still many people who totally reject them out of hand, and more who've never heard them, and more still who don't want to. But you can now add to that a sizeable number of music lovers who use tubes everyday as their primary music source.

Good news then, but don't be fooled into thinking that anything that

glows in the dark is good. There are plenty of substandard valve amps around, and even the good ones have practical problems they have to deal with. What of Copland's CTA-402, then? It's an interesting proposition, offering as it does build quality far higher than many rival budget valve amps (and £1500 is about as cheap as you'll find a decent tube design).

For a little more than the price of a top flight transistor integrated, such as the Cyrus 7/PSX-R used as a reference in this review, you get an enormous (430x175x375mm) chunk of heavy (23kg) metal, inside which you'll find four nice glass bottles that light up when you switch on. The fascia is Copland's trademark vast expanse of aluminium alloy, into which five beautifully hewn rotary knobs are set, which look and feel a million dollars. Controls for power on/off, volume, balance, tape monitor and source selection are provided, which are duplicated on the remote control. Round the back, there are six gold plated pairs of line level phono inputs, plus the usual speaker connections.

Once powered up and run in, the CTA-402 is indeed a fine sounding integrated amplifier, but with reservations. It took some careful setting up to give of its best - the first thing you have to be aware of is that it's no Musical Fidelity XA-200. Despite its power output of some thirty or so watts - which is quite high for a valve amp - it isn't going to fry anyone's voice coils, if you see what I mean. PA purchasers or aspiring DJs should look elsewhere.

I found the Copland simply couldn't drive some more demanding speakers I had to hand, so I settled instead for my Mission 752s. These mid-nineties floorstanders use Aerogel cones to give great efficiency, transient response and load characteristics - meaning they're great for amps like this which are more Woody Allen than Arnold Schwarzeneger in the muscularity stakes. Choice of loudspeaker cable was important too - I came down in favour of home made silver stuff above the likes of Nordost FlatLine copper cable or DNM Reson solidcore, as it let the Copland 'breathe' more, giving a more



its sound attractive? David Price switched on this Danish delight...

varied tonal palette.

And what colour it has! This is the star attraction of this amp. Okay, it is a little too rosy for some tastes - put it up against a Cyrus 7/PSX-R as I did and you'll soon hear how far from neutral it is - but what it does, it does beautifully. Put Donald Fagen's 'Tomorrow's Girls' on the CD player, for example, and you're transported from the Cyrus's world of analytical rigour to a place where the last nth degree of detail no longer matters. Instead, the Copland just lays back and grooves with a tonal richness and variety that captures each instrument's individual texture (you could call it 'patina', I guess) with ease.

The devil's in the detail though, and this is where the Copland flounders. When you start to unpack aspects of the CTA-402's presentation, it begins to look more seriously flawed. That bassline, for example, which runs through the Donald Fagen track, is far softer and less urgent through the Copland than the Cyrus. With the latter you can hear the bass guitar's attack and decay far more explicitly. There's also more rhythmic urgency to the 7 too, with no doubt as to when and where the accents are. By contrast, the Copland serves up a nice warm bloom that pleasantly underpins the mix but doesn't push it along very well.

Were it not for the CTA-402's midband, the loose bass would make it sound slow and sat upon. Fortunately though, it reproduces voices and percussion in a very liquid and unflustered way. It gives a 'vibe' to the music which says that this a group of musicians in a studio jamming together, maybe having had a few beers or a smoke. With the Cyrus - a superb amp at its price - you get the feeling that the track is an immaculate, state-of-the-art example of early nineties rock production, and nothing more. So this is where the Copland really flies. Its ability to convey the big picture is rare in any amplifier costing just this little.

Move to simple acoustic music such as that of David Sylvian's 'Secrets of the Beehive' and you really begin to appreciate this amplifier's

strengths. 'Orpheus' sees the CTA-402 setting up a wide, sumptuous acoustic into which those deep, velvety vocals are set. Front to back soundstaging is mediocre - you get little 3D from this amp - as is left to right image location. Instead, the stereo mix seems larger than life, with big, fat, broad-brushstroked images pushing out from within. Again, power up the Cyrus 7 and you can see how far this amp is going astray - poor soundstaging and low level detail, unextended treble, soft bass - and again its musicality somehow means that its little foibles just don't really matter, compared to the bigger musical picture.

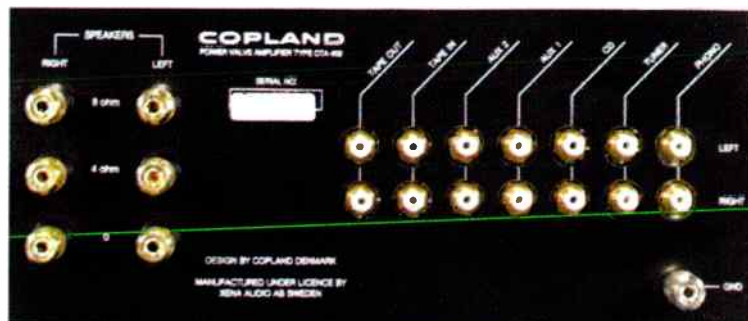
Or do they? Move over to pounding rock and techno, and the Copland really starts to lose the plot. Even with sympathetic matching, it just can't summon the urge to make songs like Nirvana's 'Come As You Are' worth listening to. The Cyrus, by comparison, has the bull firmly by the horns and is rocking out with the best of them. Likewise, cue up some dance in the shape of K-Klass's sublime 'Rhythm is a Mystery' and you'll struggle to keep your concentration. You can revel in that 'phat' piano sound (okay, so it was an Akai S1000 sampler), or big walking bassline, but somehow it just doesn't hold things together well enough to make it a musically coherent experience. Grippy it is not.

Therein lies the problem with Copland's CTA-402. It's a fine introduction to the glorious valve sound, offering a deliciously sweet and subtle tonality, but it's also a fine example of a budget valve amplifier that lacks sufficiently beefy output

transformers to really rock the house. Of course, output trannies are extremely expensive things, and if it's large amounts of clean, unrelenting tube power you want, you'll have to look elsewhere and pay a lot more. If you're aware of its limitations and compromises, and want a capable, beautifully screwed together integrated for simpler and less demanding types of music, you'll adore it. Highly recommended, as long as you bear this in mind.



Copland CTA-402 £1500  
 Absolute Sounds Ltd  
 58 Durham Road  
 London SW20 0DE  
 tel 020 8971 3909  
 fax 020 8879 7962

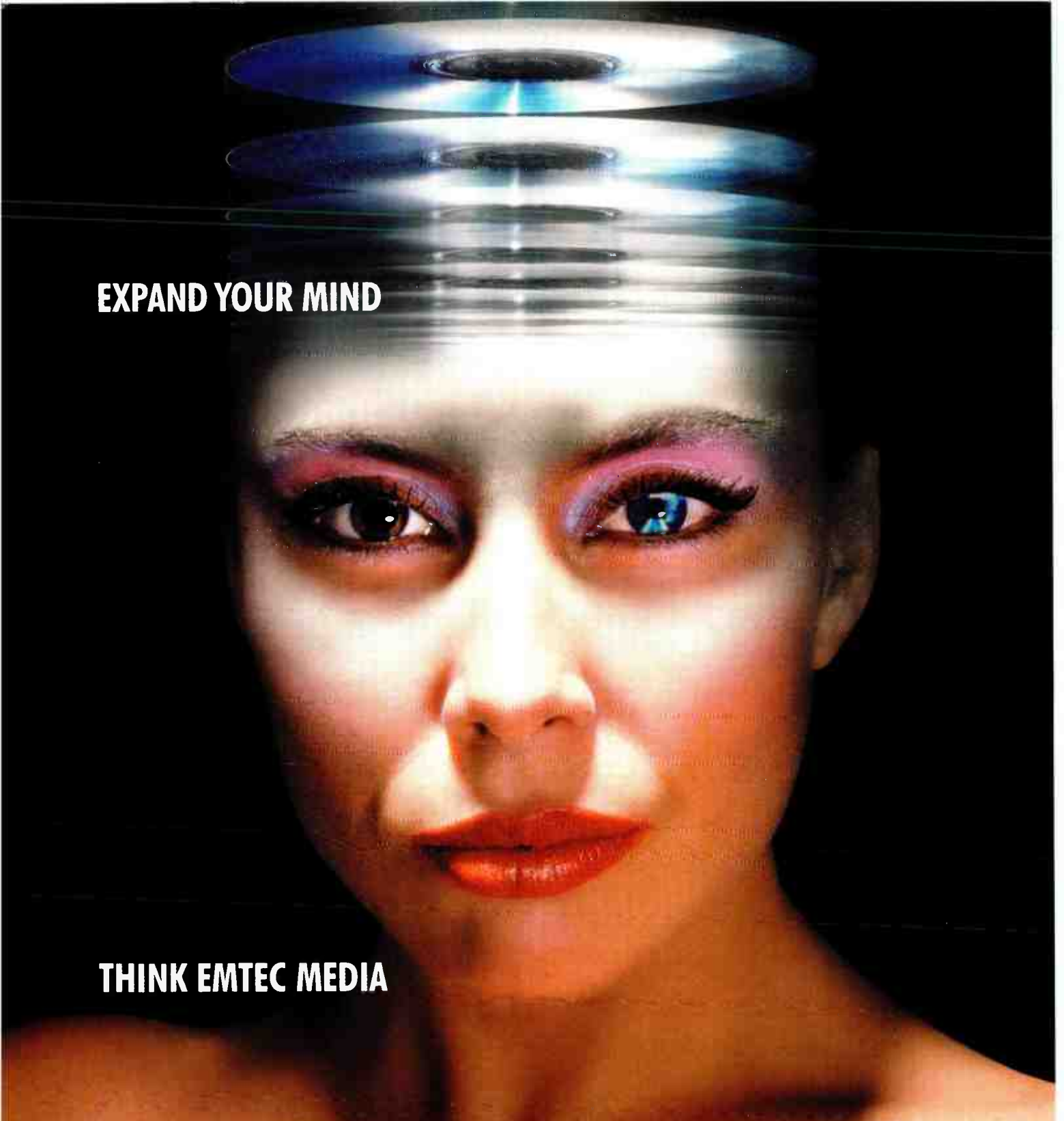


World Verdict



A great introduction to the joys of valves, but an all rounder it is not. Sweet, beguiling sound that lacks drive and grip. Some will find no better way of making music for the money, others will soon tire of it.

Measured Performance  
 see page 111



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World Radio History



# SOMETHING FOR THE WEEKEND



Simon Pope found his ideal bed partner in TEAC's CR-H100 CD/receiver.

If, like me, you need music throughout the house but have neither the cash nor the inclination for a full blown multi-room installation, this could be for you. At first glance you'd be forgiven for mistaking the TEAC CR-H100 CD/Receiver for a high end in-car unit, but it's actually a stylishly small hi-fi measuring just 175mm wide, complete with CD player and tuner, for just £230.

Part of the low-cost Reference 100 range of mini-components, it carries many of the high quality traits of its award-winning 300 and 500 Reference Series bigger brothers. It boasts 20W RMS per channel, AM/FM, RDS 'memory' tuner and Bitstream CD player, plus quality speaker connections with banana plug sockets, FM and AM antenna sockets, two tape loops for cassette and MD and an auxiliary input. The front panel has a clear and informative display window at the top, a smooth functioning CD disc drawer underneath and a good selection of buttons, plus TEAC's trademark rotary volume knob. There's a timer function for those who nod off to Radio 4 every evening, plus thirty presets and five EQ settings including (thankfully) 'flat', as well as individual bass and treble adjusters.

Had I not previously encountered TEAC's miniature Reference systems,

I would have been more dubious about this budget box's hi-fi pretensions. I do however know full well what they're capable of, and the CR-H100 continues the tradition with a sound and build that goes way beyond its humble price. It's also very easy to use too, with the remote control taking on much of the work.

I auditioned it with both TEAC's optional £70 L-S100U loudspeakers and a pair of KEF Cresta 2s. The tuner isn't obviously inferior to most separate units under £250. Ruthless Radio 3 with its puny transmission strength can be a tough test for lesser radios, but with even an indoor FM antenna I achieved commendable results from the CR-H100. Live choral music suffered little interference or hissing and the voices had a rich body to their sound. Impressive stuff, but the CD section was even better and without a doubt its strongest point. Lacking the harsh, mechanical sound often found in budget CD players, it proved a very fluid and musical performer. With both classical and rock/pop discs the TEAC sounded full and rich as well as rhythmically involving.

The 20W amplifier section won't win any prizes for power or dynamics but does the job well enough, producing a warm and well detailed sound that - if not the cleanest around - is nevertheless easy to listen

to. With an exciting if slightly boomy sound, the Eltax-sourced TEAC L-S100U 'speakers are by no means bad, yet the nature of the CR-H100 calls for a more detailed and cleaner performance than they're capable of. To wit, KEF's Crestas proved a perfect match.

As David Price found with Linn's more expensive Classik one-boxer, to knock single box systems without listening to them first is foolish. Of course, there's no way the CR-H100 is going to compete with a £600 separates system, but that isn't what it's about. For its lightweight retail price however, the quality is superlative.

One thing that might surprise you about these mini marvels is how tweakable they are - you can get noticeably better results just by using a good £100-plus pair of 'speakers from the likes of KEF or Tannoy. Factor in decent speaker cables and sensible supports and you've got a lot of sound per pound. Suitably set up, TEAC's CR-H100 may well have you staying in bed longer than usual at the weekend... ■▲

TEAC CR-H100 £229.95  
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The Croxley Centre  
Watford Herts WD1 8YA  
Tel: 01923 819630

**World Verdict**  
  
 Easy to use and great to the ear. Partner with high quality pair of 'speakers and you'll be pleasantly surprised at the results.  
 Measured Performance  
 see page 111

# letters & e-mails

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**LETTER OF THE MONTH**

**HYBRID**

**EXPERIMENTATION**

I recently upgraded to Hi-Fi World from certain other publications whose hi-fidelity and inconsistency in relation to certain products I had become rather bored with. I am sure you know what I mean from being flavour-of-the-month in one issue, then relegated a couple of issues later when the latest star striker comes along if you'll forgive the soccer analogy!

You guys are consistent in the products you regularly recommend, and I am especially pleased that in your World Favourites spot you're keen on Roksan. Great, because in the last 12 months I have rebuilt my system into a Caspian CD player, integrated amp and power amp, biamping and wiring a pair of elderly TDL Studio 3 speakers. I also have the Musical Fidelity X LP and X-Can2 (two other products you recommend in World Favourites) with the X-PSU power supply. I also have as sources the Caspian tuner and a Michell Syncro record deck with Rega RB300 arm and Linn K9 cartridge, the latter 15 years old but still playing my occasional vinyl forays like a dream. Interconnects are van den Hul D102 MkIII

HB and QED Qnect2. Speaker cable is van den Hul The Teatrack.

Apart from the Michell deck, the speakers are all that is left from my old system. They are massive, built like the proverbial brick whatsit and produce mighty bass, being transmission line speakers. However, I've recently fallen in love with the looks of the Martin Logan Aeries I electrostatic hybrids and I wondered if they would work OK with the Caspian set up, or at £2,300 would they be just a little OTT? Is it a set-up you think I would be happy with? My musical tastes are mostly jazz and vocals, acoustic guitar and classical - reviews I have read say the Martin Logans are stunning at reproducing vocal and classical music. Or are there any other speakers you might recommend, bearing in mind that my Studio 3s cost me £1100 over a decade ago and I don't want change just for the sake of it?

**R Stockdill**  
Watford, Hertfordshire

Couldn't possibly comment about the other mags, aside from the fact that they're all wonderful and great. Right, moving swiftly on, the £2000 plus speaker market is a tricky one about which to make recommendations,



Magneplanars are as flat as a pancake... but only in looks!

simply because at this price, loudspeaker designers tend to stop trying to do everything and focus in on particular aspects of the listening experience. By definition, these are extremely subjective and one guy's goose is another's gander! I have heard Martin Logans at length, and like them. As with Michell turntables, many people look at them and think they're far too pretty to sound good, but also

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as with Michell turntables the appearance is the result of the engineering rather than a substitute for it!

Martin Logan hybrids are an interesting alternative to Quad's more conservative take on electrostatic design. With moving coil bass units built in, they're as transparent as Quads and better at shifting air, but are still conspicuously flawed. Whereas conventional multi-driver 'speakers are uneven all the way up and down the frequency spectrum, and 'statics are seamless throughout, the MLs are smooth down from the treble to the upper bass, and then cross over to a lumpy moving coil driver rather conspicuously. The effect is that their glorious treble and midband integration highlights the lumpy bass. This means MLs aren't to everyone's taste - they either have the best, or worst, of both worlds depending on your point of view.

My opinion is that they're a fascinating product which I could see myself owning, but I'd want to make sure my listening room and system was right before I did. As you know, we like the Caspians, and I think they'd be just about up to the job of driving the MLs, but don't expect to buy them and stop upgrading. The MLs will show them to be fine mid-price electronics, rather than the serious high end stuff they crave. You'll find a far cleaner, tidier presentation than your TDLs, one that takes you much closer to the recording studio or concert hall, but it may be less physically gratifying. Bass, for one, will be lighter and less grin-inducing - nothing drives a room like a big pair of transmission lines speakers. If I were you, I'd go for the MLs and add two small REL subs (one per side) to restore some of the lost bass, then think about upgrading the Caspians, starting with the CD player or DAC. Once you've committed to these 'speakers, you'll find you have to build your system around them, regardless of your love for Roksan!

**DP**

Apologies for this little addition but I can't help butting in! If you like the transparency that Martin Logans bring to the sound, you could always try a pair of Magneplanar SMGa panel 'speakers which can be picked up second hand (there's a fair number around) for in the region of £350. Alternatively the more affordable new versions start at around £1200. Being a

'one panel' design there's none of the crossover problems that can be experienced with Martin Logan's 'hybrid' designs. They're especially superb with classical music. For the bass depth David's above advice is spot on, a pair of REL's Strata subs would plumb the depths both forcefully and subtly. And it's indeed this combination that sat for a very long time in my front room, giving hour upon hour of enjoyment! ■

**SP**

### THE SINGLE LIFE?

*My system consists of a TEAC VRDS T11DT1, Roksan Radius/Tabriz/ Sumiko Blue Point, NAD Silverline S100 & S200 pre-power, Mission 753's Speakers, LAT IC200 interconnects and SonicLink S130 biwire speaker cable. The amps were a recent addition, and the system as a whole now gives me the greatest musical enjoyment yet in terms of detail, expression and weight. It is still in keeping with the bright but not harsh sound I like, but with some spare cash and a bit of interest free I feel another purchase coming on!*

*A change of speaker will have to wait as a move of house is on the cards so it's going to be the TEACs. I've always wanted a TEAC P30 transport - reviews have been excellent - and I was looking to combine it with a Theta Pro Basic DAC. I could probably buy both ex-dem for under £3,000, but the problem is that over the years, there has been a significant move from two box to single box players. This leaves me with the obvious choice of the Marantz CD7 in my price range. Will it significantly out perform the TEAC/Theta combination, or have I simply got to let my ears be the judge? I listen to RnB, Jazz and a little rap so SACD and DVD-A are not an issue. Your comments and advice would be greatly appreciated!*

**Listiel Woodrofe**

**Via email**

Your problem is that, with three grand in your pocket, you have a lot of choice available to you. I don't think you should look at things in terms of one or two box solutions, but rather the product(s) that give the sound you want. First, you're right to say the TEAC P30 is a fine transport. In the company's native Japan, the Esoteric P0 is widely considered to be the very best CD transport ever made. Esoteric is TEAC's super-fi brand and the P30 uses technology trickled down from



Marantz's top CD spinner is a real peach!

the P0, so it should be taken very seriously. By contrast, the Marantz uses the top current Philips mechanism, which is a nice bit of kit but not quite as sexy in transport terms.

DACs are a different matter, and as we know the Marantz uses the last surviving premium Philips sixteen bitters, and sounds all the better for it. It's an incredibly musical player as a result - possibly the most fluid this side of a £12,000 Linn CD12. The Theta, by contrast is a more muscular sounding device with stronger and more accurate bass and a wider tonal palette. You'd find the music was driven more from the bass and less from the midband, a la CD7. Then there's always Linn's Ikemi, which has a rhythmic mid and a very taut bass, but lacks the tonal colour and sweetness of the Marantz. Copland's CDA289 brings much of the Marantz's sweetness back, but offers a lazier and more effortless style of music making for some £1500 less.

If it was my money, I'd plump for Marantz's CD7 for the following reasons: One - it's an extremely well voiced, modern sounding player that may offer less improvement in hi-fi terms from your current TEAC combo, but will be a big step forward in terms of musicality - crudely put, it will sound more analogue. Two - it can function as a DAC, meaning you can also experiment with transports. Three - it's a future collector's item and a really nice thing to have. It's still far from perfect - everything sounds a little too rosy and the bass isn't the best around - but it will probably suit you best. Ultimately though, you should find a good dealer(s) and listen, listen, listen. You wouldn't spend £3000 on a car without a serious test drive, now, would you? ■

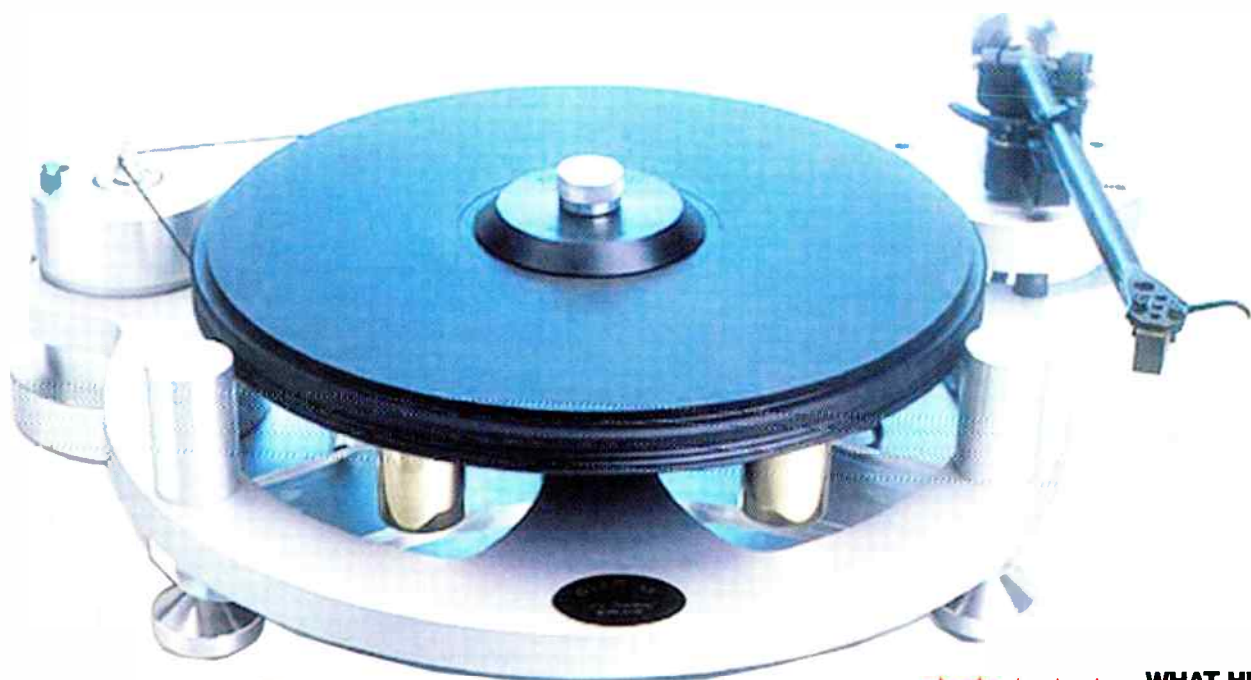
**DP**

### CONSTRUCTION TIME AGAIN

*I am looking for some objective advice on purchasing a system that will hopefully give me satisfying listening pleasure for the next*

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**WHAT HI-FI?**  
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twenty five years. I was once the proud owner of a Thorens TD 160S/ Mission 774/ A&R turntable, Nytech active amplification and ARC 101s. I also purchased an Arcam Alpha 5 CD player in 1994. I am planning to build an extension which will include a separate music room - dimensions will be 15 feet by 10 feet widening to 15 feet by 12 feet. What advice do you have in building the extension to accommodate a hi-fi room?

With a budget of up to £3000, what system could I use in it? Musical tastes are very varied, but I prefer involvement, accuracy and transparency to loudness and 'in your face' sound. Should I keep the Arcam 5 CD player and if so what amp, speakers, cable would be suitable for the room? Looks are not so important but would be nice if equipment choice had nice aesthetics as well. Should I dump the Arcam 5 and upgrade the CD player? If so, what amp and speakers would you recommend to match to stay within budget? I would like to add a turntable at a later date with a budget of a further £1000. Hope you can help! I am overwhelmed by the choices and hype that is out there.

**Tony Greenaway  
Curry Rivel, Somerset**

First things first - in the context of a £3000 system your Arcam will be way out of its depth, fine player though it is. Second, you seem to be saying that 'nice aesthetics' are a factor, meaning you don't want a mish-mash of midi and full sized black and silver boxes.? With that in mind, maybe you want a premium one-make system?

As 'transparency' is all then we can discount the first thing that springs to my mind, which is the Naim CD5/NAIT 5 combo. Arcam's FMJ 23CD would make a superb front end, but I'm not convinced by its matching amp. The likes of Musical Fidelity, Sugden and Roksan all do excellent stuff too, but at this very moment I think it would have to be either Cyrus or Linn. I'm currently using a Cyrus 7/PSX-R (£700/£350) as a reference amp, and it's a cracker - it has power, grip, accuracy and neutrality in spades, and never once veers towards harshness. The matching CD7/PSX-R (£800/£350) is no less of a star, and they're available in black or silver to suit your taste with the option of the strangely named but stylish HARK rack at £500.

SP reviewed the Linn Genki/

Kollektor/ LK 140/ Ninka system in the March issue, and came out extremely impressed despite its high £3200 price. Traditionally, Linn electronics are very bouncy and musical but also extremely dry and therefore not quite as tonally neutral as they could be. However, Simon reports that this new Linn system marks a departure from the old ways and heard some real variety in its tonal palette, and - dare I say it - even a bit of warmth and body. As both systems are so well made and voiced, the choice between the two is very much down to personal preference - whichever you choose you'll be buying state-of-the-art stuff.

At this level, it often makes sense to buy the matching speakers because they are tuned with the manufacturer's electronics in mind. For example, Cyrus's own CLS70 (£800 plus £200 for the Tripod stands) can sound slightly loose in the bass when driven from less grippy amplifiers than the Cyrus 7/PSX-R but properly matched are excellent, although they can sometimes sound a tad dry. By the same token this slight 'looseness' makes for more fluid low frequencies when correctly matched. You can also take this view on the Linn Ninka loudspeaker too. So audition the systems together and see what you think. Other recommendations include Harbeth's HL-K6 standmounters (£975) or Mission 782s (£700) floorstanders.

As for the room, a separate mains spur from your junction box, high quality, thick gauge copper mains cable and socketry and clean earthing are all important. When designing the internals, make sure it doesn't end up square inside (i.e. 12x12x12 feet) which will be a nightmare for standing waves - small alcoves, skylights, doors and window recesses are useful for diffusing reflections. If you have large patio doors or French windows, make sure they're covered with drapes or blinds, as large areas of glass are the last thing you want in a listening room. Use good equipment supports and consider a Base SP01 subtable to isolate your CD player. Finally, the best turntable for £1000 is Michell's GyroDec SE (£775), by a country mile. Fit an Origin Live modded

Rega RB250 and a Dynavector DV10X4, and pray it doesn't show up your new CD front end too much! ■  
**DP/SP**

**A DAB HAND**

Dear Noel,

As a very regular reader of Hi-Fi World, (I've read it since the very first issue way back in March '91!) I would like to let you know how much I enjoyed your contribution in February's issue on DAB. I considered your review of the Videologic v Denon very balanced overall, while your column was the most refreshingly honest "how it is" of DAB I have yet to read!

I thought it so appropriate for you to mention how, in general, people are all-in-all, quite satisfied with FM, and the reference to the one used in the shower really does sum things up very well. Down here on the South Coast, I've no hope of getting DAB for the time being. However, I do have access to Sky Digital, which provides me with many stations directly through



Cyrus-ly good stuff!

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my hi-fi system. I would say this has it's strengths: clarity is very good, and of course, noise absolutely inaudible, and the increase in listener choice good too.

However, when it comes down to sheer listener involvement, my inexpensive Denon TU260LH fed by a 3 element roof VHF antenna beats it hands down. That "extra octave of hiss" really does matter at the end of the day. You are right to point to the strengths of FM. My little Denon has to compete with my other sources (Arcam Alpha 7SE CD, and Rega Planar 3/Elysia LP phono stage) and with good quality material, it sounds very impressive to my ears.

Whilst writing, I would just like to add that I am very pleased with the general content of Hi-Fi World, despite the fact I have no interest in Computer audio whatsoever! But this is better than Panasonic's first ever DVD player being hyped up, as it once was, as a serious CD machine!

I would say also that David Price is continuing to write some superbly interesting and relevant stuff for the mag each month, although how he has room for all that older kit in his house he mentioned this month is beyond me. He's clearly not married! So many of the components he went through, I owned as well, as I'm sure many of your readers did.

Do continue your involvement in the reviewing side in the mag, as well as the technical measurements. It's always a very interesting and honest read.

Regards,

**Ian Appleyard**  
Eastbourne, East Sussex

Thanks for re-enforcing my views. I spoke to many, many people deeply involved in DAB and it became quite clear they were defensive about the whole business. From their point of view I was a heretic, luddite, etc for daring to suggest that VHF could possibly be satisfactory for most people. One senior engineer curtly terminated our conversation by saying "Well, DAB is coming whether you like it or not". This seems to summarise the industry view that it will be forced down people's throats, come hell or high water, something I find both distasteful and worrying. It broaches no concern for other people's views. The general public have been given no say over DAB, but they will be expected to pick up the tab. I believe people have better things to do

with their money than to fund this sort of unnecessary technological change.

Even if DAB's benefits are justifiable people in Britain have a right to make a free choice on such a matter. That the BBC should adopt DAB unilaterally and then promote it to the stage where there's talk of VHF "transmitters being turned off", to force people to adopt something they quite clearly have no interest in, is breathtaking. It is estimated that only 8000 DAB radios have been sold to date, a miserably small listening audience.

By way of contrast it is interesting to see how America is attempting to woo listeners to new digital radio systems. Freedom of choice is intrinsic. If somebody dared tell Americans they would all be forced to trash their radios I think there would be another revolution!

As you note, measurement can play a strong role in separating specious claims from fact, the superiority of DAB over VHF/FM being one of the most contentious I have come across.

■  
**NK**

### SET THE BALANCE RIGHT

Dear Mr Keywood,

In your review of Quad's QC twenty four pre-amp, you wrote that there is no tape monitor switch as, "This little item is not needed with digital recorders, since no monitor signal is available."

I just don't see the point of that, and there's a kind of implied arrogance that I find unsettling. Are you suggesting that Quad are just not interested in the several zillion potential customers still using cassette decks (some of them probably quite high end decks) - and even open-reel decks - but only in the digital market? Or are you merely reflecting some new anti-tape, anti-analogue policy adopted by your own magazine?

Underneath the volume control is

what looks like a slider of some kind. Is that a balance control? If not, what is it? Why didn't you mention it?

Lastly, why didn't you bother telling your readers what other media you were using - CD or LP, eg? And what make of CD player/turntable were you using?

P.S. - I seem to recall that a few years somebody (possibly Sony) released a 4-head DAT machine, which certainly did offer off-tape monitoring; conceivably there are other such models around.

**Kindest regards**  
**Peter Simon**

Whoops! Of course there are hundreds or perhaps thousands of three-head analogue deck users (I'm not quite certain about a zillion, unless you are including the population of Alpha Centauri). I should have remembered. Perhaps I am becoming "digitalised" without knowing it. That's the trouble to listening to industry hype all day long (I'm feeling a little cynical!).

Digital recorders measure identically off-tape as via the A/D, D/A chain. Letting record level go either too low or high I suppose does affect sound quality, though, and user intervention can correct matters, so I take your point. A monitor button would be useful.

The thing under the volume control is a balance control, as you rightly guess. Perhaps I should have mentioned it. By and large I do not go on about sources simply for lack of space. I know readers are interested but it isn't always directly relevant. The strengths of the Quad's came over irrespective of source.

Thanks for the corrections. It's important I know how readers feel.

■ **NK**



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computer audio



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All the latest happening in online audio...

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Design classic or dud? Sony's very first digital Walkman gets the full treatment here.

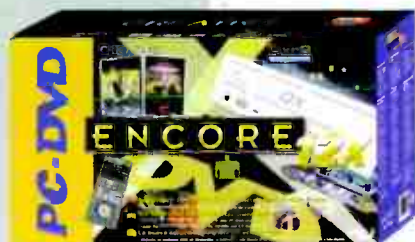
### Sony MDS-PC3

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A PC drive bay-sized MiniDisc recorder controlled by your computer, this is one interesting bit of kit.

### Calxwalk Pyro 58

From the masters of music sequencing comes this all-in-one MP3 and CD authoring package.



## NEW (MEDIA) BRITAIN

According to the new Official Yearbook of the United Kingdom from the Office of National Statistics, Britain is a nation of technology addicts. Nearly half of the adult population now use the Internet, with the proportion of those online steadily decreasing with age. 69% of 16-24 year olds access the net, compared to only 6% of over 75s. An MMXI survey also shows that on a global scale, the UK is still leading the way in terms of Internet

penetration. In October 2000, 12.5 million people in Britain accessed the Internet from home, compared to 11.3 million Germans. The main reason for this is language, the majority of websites being in English due to the huge Internet market in America. An Ofcom survey also showed that the number of Britons using mobile phones has more than doubled in the last 18 months, from 14.8 million in March 1999 to 33 million in September 2000.

## MARIAN MADE

This is just what notebook using PC audiophiles have been waiting for! Marian's £139 USB-One USB audio interface is an external device that connects to your notebook via its USB port, and gives you an S/PDIF digital input (both RCA and optical), analogue input via quarter inch jacks, plus a built in 'high quality' 20bit DAC giving a stereo line output. It's about the size of a cassette and needs no external power supply. Click on [www.etcetera.co.uk](http://www.etcetera.co.uk) for details, and look out for a review soon!



## AAC ADVANCES

Dolby Labs have announced that the new MusicMatch Jukebox 6.0 supports the much vaunted AAC (Advanced Audio Coding) format. In a technology tie up, MMJ software was chosen as the first jukebox for music fans to experience hundreds of AAC-encoded singles and albums offered by BMG Entertainment via digital download. Dolby's director of business development Ramzi

Haidamus said, "AAC technology delivers the most efficient and best-sounding audio available on the Internet. MusicMatch Jukebox users will be thrilled with the great sound they get with AAC, and we're excited that AAC will now be accessible to millions of new users". A free MusicMatch Jukebox 6.0 AAC plug-in is available at [www.musicmatch.com/plug-ins](http://www.musicmatch.com/plug-ins)

## OGG ATTACK!

OggVorbis is a new open-source, royalty-free audio encoding format which is said to be used in forthcoming software players, portable devices and game software. Astute observers of the compressed audio scene may be asking themselves whether this is really what the world is waiting for, what with the amazing success of MP3, and a whole raft of new formats coming? The answer is that German audio research lab Fraunhofer, which holds

12 patents on underlying MP3 processes, has announced that it might start charging royalties on MP3 encoders and even MP3 files. This has sounded a wake-up call to an industry that until very recently had believed MP3 was completely open source. The first official release of Ogg Vorbis is said to be launched on January 10, 2001



## REMOTE POSSIBILITY

Creative Labs' PC-DVD Encore 12x iNFRA is claimed to be the fastest DVD-ROM around right now, and also comes with the added benefit of wireless remote control. This makes listening to music CDs or watching DVDs on your PC possible without having to leave your armchair! Its 'DynamicXtended Resolution' picture enhancement technology is claimed to give flicker-free image quality and it can feed Dolby Digital content to a multichannel decoder/amplifier for surround-sound.

Creative's popular multimedia LAVA! software comes bundled, for an all in price of £169. [www.creativelabs.com](http://www.creativelabs.com)

## VIRGIN GOES OFFLINE

Virgin Megastores is scaling back its ecommerce efforts, and discontinuing its much hyped Web-based ordering scheme. As from January consumers can shop for music and movies, but will have to email or phone in their orders. According to PC Data, Virginmega.com had just 160,000 unique visitors during November, compared to Cdnw's 8.2 million and Amazon's 26 million (Amazon.com currently handles 30% of online music sales). Industry analysts are speculating that Virgin are trying to drive 'foot traffic' back into 'bricks and mortar stores', where they can view Virgin's new products and services at first hand. [www.virginmega.com](http://www.virginmega.com)



# LETS STICK

The NW-MS7 Memory Stick Walkman is Sony's first audio product to use Memory Stick solid-state memory. David Price went through Autumn floods and Winter snow to give it the most thorough roadtesting a digital portable can get.

It's dead handy, this new Sony Walkman. It fits in the pocket easier than any mobile phone.

Impressive too is the 64MB 'MagicGate Memory Stick' that holds the music. It clicks in and out as easily as your Connect card in the local 'hole in the wall', but it's around one sixth the size, at 21.5x50x2.8mm!

Right now, this much solid-state storage costs a goodly portion of the total purchase price, but in a couple of years' time it should have come down by a factor of ten. When this happens, you'll be able to click in Memory Sticks like you do MiniDiscs.

What is unusual - indeed unique - about the new NW-MS7 is the ATRAC3 music compression system it uses. It has 'digital rights management', which - rather like CD's Serial Copyright Management System - means you can't copy your music files 'willy nilly'. Rather, Sony says, "In order for electronic music distribution to really expand, we need good content and a secure environment. The new Memory Stick Walkman allows you to download current MP3 sites but will also allow access to legitimate, secure sites being promised by major record labels such as BMG, Warner Music and Sony Music later in the year."

In my view, the Sony's main contribution to the game is that it is precisely that - a Sony - which means a slick, high tech piece of industrial design, beautifully built in Japan (not even farmed out to a neighbouring Far East production facility, a la Aiwa). Sony's new Memory Stick technology means future compatibility with a whole range of forthcoming VAIO audio and multimedia products is assured. If you buy one now, you'll be able to plug the Memory Stick into a slot in a Sony computer or car hi-fi and play it, not to mention forthcoming Sony camcorders, digital still cameras, digital notetaker or PDAs.

Standards in MP3 portable design are rising fast, and not before time. There are still some lemons around, but products from the likes of s3, Samsung and Thomson are nicely done, while Aiwa has really pushed the game along recently. Sony has gone one better with this player, producing something that looks great and feels like it's already part of your hand. True, it is plastic, whereas several others boast slick aluminium casings, but the plastic is of high enough quality to justify its premium price tag, and its ergonomics are the best I've seen so far.



# TOGETHER

The NW-MS7 works as simply and intuitively as you'd expect from the company that also invented the cassette, DAT, CD and MiniDisc Walkman. Vital stats are 66gms, 37mm width, 96.3mm height, 19.2mm depth. Oh, and the Memory Stick weighs an additional 3gms. Open the box and you find a bundled white MG Memory Stick, carrying case, connecting adapter, headphone set, USB cable, AC adapter and the OpenMG software on a CD-ROM.

With the supplied 64MB of memory you can store around 60 minutes of music in the top EX mode (132kbps), 80 minutes in the middle SP mode (105kbps), or about 120 minutes in LP (66kbps). The unit comes with an internal Lithium-ion battery pre-installed, giving around four hours of continuous use. The supplied software is designed to meet SDMI requirements to safeguard copyright owned by artists, music producers, and record companies.

Duly installed, you can make

ATRAC recordings from music CDs, as well as download MP3 and WAV files from the internet and convert them to ATRAC3. You can of course also convert your existing tunes to ATRAC3 too, but you can't actually record in MP3 format - for that you'll need an MP3 ripper like MusicMatch Jukebox. The MagicGate copy protection lets you make a maximum of four copies of digital audio content. Setting aside one for direct playback from the hard disk, this means three copies of the song can be transferred to Memory Sticks.

Set-up and installation was as painless as you'd expect from Sony, and the OpenMG Jukebox is superb. It's not quite up there with that bundled with Creative Labs' DAP Jukebox reviewed in February, but it's not far off. You can record ATRAC3 files from your PC's CD-ROM drive at one of three user-selectable bitrates, import files from hard disk or the net, get track information from the CGDB database, and squirt files to and from the NW-MS7 with ease (a process Sony amusingly calls 'check in/check out') via the simple USB link. Absolutely no probs here, aside from Sony's decision to call the playlisting sort facility a 'filter', which will confuse old hi-fi types to whom it means something rather different!

After delighting in the player's impeccable ergonomics, superb build and great software, I was unconvinced by its sound. ATRAC3 at

132kbps is actually quite different to MP3 at 128kbps - it's far more vivid and alive, with loads more detail and a more dramatic take on whatever rhythms lie inside a song. The problem is that it sometimes seems to take on too much and fall over itself, whereas MP3 is more modest about its real world abilities and doesn't trip up. ATRAC bounces round all over the place, pumping out stacks of detail with fantastically compelling verve, but you can hear that 'swimming' effect where the treble sounds slightly phasey on some types of music (like drum and bass, where there's lots going on). By contrast, MP3 is smoother and slower but doesn't betray its compression algorithm at work. The penalty is less detail and a more curtailed treble, but ultimately a more sorted sound.

Overall then, the NW-MS7 is a hoot to listen to if you can overlook its occasionally conspicuous signal processing activities. Bass is strong and fluid, midband alive and on simple material treble is slick and incisive. By comparison, s3's Rio 600 MP3 at 128kbps sounds softer, smoother and more woolly - 'analogue' to the Sony's 'digital' - and less involving with inferior dynamics. You pay your money and takes your choice. **■**

SONY NW-MS7

£299

Sony UK

01932 816 000

## what is a memory stick?

Sony developed the Memory Stick in July 1997 with Casio, Fujitsu, Olympus, Sanyo and Sharp. A recordable IC memory card, it was designed for use with both personal computers and a wide range of digital audio visual (AV) products. Small, thin and light, it can be used to store, transfer, and playback AV content such as images, sound, and music as well as computer information including data, text and graphics. It is sturdily built with a flat 10-pin connector with guide grooves to protect data and ensure it is highly reliable. It also has an erasure prevention switch. Sony says it is totally compatible with future products and future higher capacity media. It's available in 8MB, 16MB, 32MB and 64MB capacities, with 128MB and 256MB coming soon. Sixty six companies have signed license agreements for the technology to date. Cumulative shipments have reached approximately 2 million units world-wide, expected to rise to 20 million by the end of fiscal 2001.

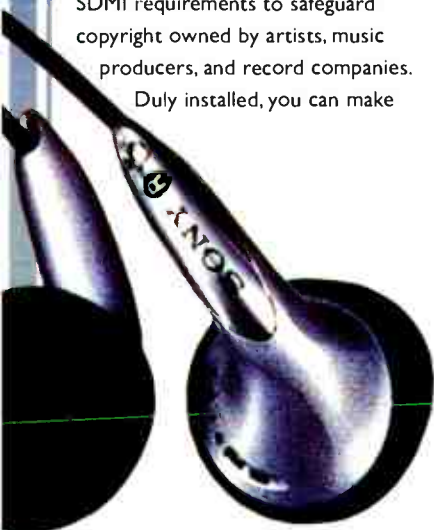
## system requirements:

- IBM PC/AT and compatibles - OS : Windows98 -CPU: Pentium MMX 233MHz and above
- RAM: 64MB and above
- Hard Disk Space: 15MB
- CD-ROM Drive (internal or external)
- Sound Board, USB Port

## World Verdict



A stormer in so many ways ATRAC3 implementation isn't quite there yet though, we reckon.



# Analog is everything



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THE PERSPECTIVE



CLASSIC CHERRY



CLASSIC 9



Nick Tate tries out Sony's brand new MDS-PC3 PC-linked MiniDisc recorder, and discovers that it's more fun to compute.

# OKAY COMPUTER

The idea of a small, compact, easily re-recordable and editable disc is brilliant, but in practice MiniDisc's strengths have been harder to implement. The problem has been that to control its many facilities (Track Erase, All Erase, Move, Delete, Divide, Title, Undo, etc.), you've had to wade through an obstructive Edit Menu involving more button pushing than your average NASA flight controller. And if you wish to title every single song on your disc, you're talking about a seriously intensive workout on the remote control or front panel 'jog dial'.

What better idea then, than to link your MiniDisc recorder to a computer, where text entry is quick - thanks to a full sized QWERTY keyboard - and the intricacies of compiling MDs can be more quickly and efficiently handled? Enter Sony's MDS-PC3, the third in a line of PC-linked MiniDisc machines that started with the (yes, you've guessed it) PC1 back in 1998.

Since then, the deck has got smaller, small enough indeed to occupy no more space than a PC CD-ROM drive, although I'm not sure if anyone's actually tried physically slotting one in to a computer drive bay. Sony certainly makes no mention of this. Anyway, suffice to say that at 152x 52x 255mm, it isn't going to take up much space on your desktop. Weight is just 1kg, thanks

to a very plasticky (but not cheap looking) build, although a largish plug-in AC adapter comes supplied to take care of motive power.

Round the back is the usual collection of sockets. There are analogue ins and outs (using 3.5mm minijacks, rather than RCA phonos) and optical digital ins and outs using the standard TOSLINK sockets. There's also a headphone socket (3.5mm), and power in socket (9v from the supplied external PSU) and the PC LINK socket. This is where the fun starts, because if you connect this up to the supplied PC LINK connecting kit, you suddenly find your computer can control the deck's myriad functions. There's also a rather natty card type remote control - shame Sony don't supply this with all its full size MD machines, instead of the house brick sized, rubber button festooned standard item.

The PC adapter plugs in between your computer (via its USB socket) and the MDS-PC3 deck itself. It comes with a set-up CD, which must be inserted when you first plug in the unit, so that Windows can tell you it's found a new USB audio device and is locating the drivers for it. This it does, but needed some prompting on my PC, as I had to show it the file in which the drivers were kept on the Sony set-up disc. I was also prompted to dig out my

Windows 98 system disc and feed it into my CD-ROM in the middle of the set-up process, for some reason. This I did, and it duly installed happily enough. Next, I had to install the 'M-crew' software (a typically silly Japanese-English name) which lets you do all those clever things with the PC3 via your computer. This went in easily enough, and after a reboot we were ready to go.

So what does it do, then? Via M-crew, you can use your PC to operate all the transport functions on the PC3 remotely, play audio CDs in your CD-ROM drive and tune into internet radio stations. You can record music CDs in your CD-ROM drive to MiniDisc, or copy .WAV files onto MD digitally. You also get full editing control over the MiniDisc inserted into the PC3, and can go through it track by track entering names or other text information. You can keep track of played or recorded music via a Disc Library, access related websites to the tracks you're playing, while you're playing them, set recording and playback timers and even print out MD labels automatically! In short, it's a great way to do all your MD management stuff, with several provisos.

First, the M-crew software hardly looks or feels the most user-friendly in the world. It's not that it's crude and underdeveloped - quite the opposite in

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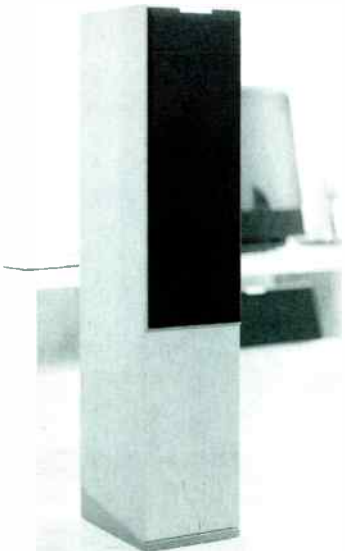


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World Radio History

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◀ M-Crew software isn't the easiest to use at first, but rewards practice with a fine feature set.

fact - it rather assumes too much knowledge on the part of the user, meaning that when it first loads up it feels rather uninviting. There are lots of icons, with no text visible at all, although if you move your mouse cursor over the relevant icon a little bubble does at least pop up to tell you what it means. It works well enough, but could be far more inviting.

The bar over the top of the screen has icons for MD, PC-CD, File, Disc Library, Rec Window and Options. MD simply displays your disc's contents in a long list of tracks descending down the screen, divided into Track Number, Track Name and Time sections. There's also a bar graph to display total playing time, and the currently selected track is highlighted in yellow. It's amazingly easy to enter titling information - you just click on the track you want to label and type away. Instead of taking around 20 minutes to label a 14 track MiniDisc with a Sony MDS-JB940, it took under 5 minutes through my computer keyboard. There's also a menu bar underneath the track info, which lets you Edit (Erase, Divide, Move, etc) on the computer. Again this proved easier to use than via the 940's Edit Menu and jog dial, although not dramatically so.

PC-CD displays the disc in your CD-ROM, along with any CD text there may be, in the same way. You can tick boxes next to tracks you want to record, click the REC button and the software will digitally extract the audio on your CD and record it direct to MD, retaining the track IDs and text if available. File does the same, but with .WAV files on your computer. Disc Library functions rather like a playlist on an MP3 jukebox program, but I can't say this was particularly useful this time. Rec Window lets you choose between recording from the PC3's analogue input, the optical digital input included in

the PC LINK box of tricks, or the computer's internal CD-ROM. All in all the M-crew software is a useful bit of kit. It makes everything from recording to titling easier (especially the latter) and you don't realise how good it is until you go back to faffing around with remote controls. If you're someone who likes (or needs) to catalogue your recordings, this will

*“ it's a far from cheap sounding product ”*

prove a godsend. I imagine that radio stations up and down the country will be snapping these units up, as they use MDs intensively for jingles, promos, ads and trails these days.

Of course, the sixty four million dollar question is 'how did it sound?' It's not an audiophile machine - you won't find any of Sony's UK tuning trickery inside, and it hardly has the build of Sony's awesome MDS-JA555ES 'king of MD' flagship. Nor does it have - as far as I can discern - the latest DSP-Type R ATRAC coding system, so I guess it's running Sony's ATRAC 4.5 with 20bit words - which is what its other entry level decks use.

This said, it's a far from cheap sounding product. You don't get the depth and detail of its budget audiophile designs like the MDS-JB940 (tested in January's issue), but it really isn't a million miles behind. What I like about MiniDisc, at least in its post ATRAC 3

incarnations, is how warm and bouncy it sounds, even in its cheapest budget incarnations. Audition a cheap CD player and you get rather too much midband, with light bass and rolled off treble (these days, at least). Budget MD seems to sound more beefy and fulsome, with plenty of power and drive around in the lower frequencies and a wide, boldly projected soundstage too. Funnily enough, this isn't a million miles from how budget turntables used to sound. What cheap MD (and indeed budget turntables) lack is decent low level detailing, treble extension and dynamic light and shade.

The same can be said of the PC3. Fundamentally a very bouncy, enjoyable and 'up for it' performer, it makes music with aplomb. It's involving, fun and full bodied, but scratch the surface and it bears rather less inspection than the likes of the MDS-JB940. There's little in the way of ambience or atmosphere, the soundstage melts away as soon as it goes back behind the plane of the speakers, bass lacks firmness and extension, and the treble is sweet enough but still feels a tad perfunctory.

Still, it's churlish to criticise it against the high standards of more expensive and very able machines. Basically, it's a budget audio separate with a fascinating twist, which is that you can link it up to your PC. A notebook computer and a Sony MDS-PC3 make a very happy couple, and if you're a serious MiniDisc user you might want to buy one just for its editing and titling facilities. Highly recommended for its superb flexibility and good sound. I await the PC4 with interest! ■▲



Sony MDS-PC3  
£350.00  
www.sony.co.uk

World Verdict



Solid sound plus superb flexibility equals an interesting and worthy product - serious MD users will love it.

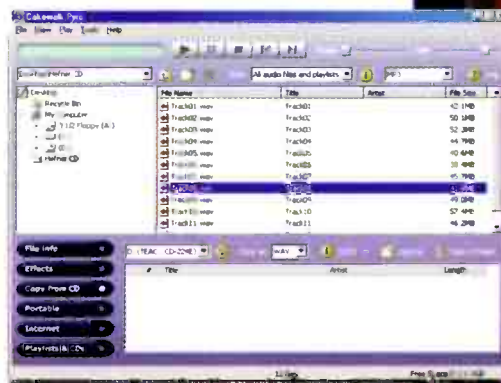
# computer audio firestarter

Nick Tate tries out Cakewalk's new Pyro music management software.

There has been music management software for the PC since it first gained a pair of speakers and a CD-ROM drive, but the quality has been patchy to say the least. Computer Audio World has reviewed a number of MP3 jukeboxes and CD authoring systems, but Cakewalk's Pyro is the first we've come across that plays and records MP3s, WMA's and WAV files, burns CDs and handles digital audio portables all together.

The main screen has a toolbar at the top, containing transport controls, a display window, plus a volume control and a playback time slider. Underneath this to the left is a Windows style file menu, which is used to find the music you wish to use. To the right is a list of your selected music files, be they MP3s, WAV files or WMA's. The lower half of the screen comprises a left hand menu bar, offering Pyro's various functions. According to which option you select, the lower right part of the screen changes to display, variously, artist and title information, playlists, the music CD inserted in the CD-ROM drive etc.

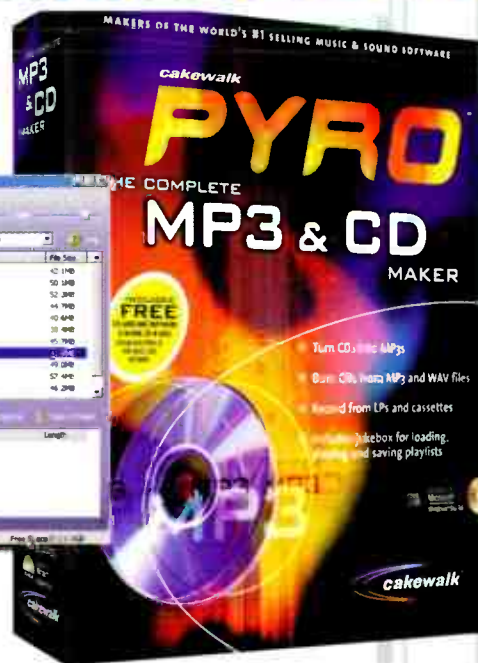
Using Pyro is easy and logical. With no hidden surprises, it's simple enough to work without having to read the user manual or check out the excellent on-screen help. For example, if you wanted to copy one of your CDs - purely for your own purposes of course - you'd insert the disc into the CD-ROM drive, and click on the top left file menu to select the CD-ROM. A display of all the tracks would then appear in the top left window, and you could select one, several or them all, and then click on the COPY FROM CD tool. You then get a choice of WAV, MP3 or WMA formats. Pyro then gets on with digitally extracting the music from the disc and storing it in your hard drive in whatever format you've chosen.



Having recorded the music in WAV format, for example, you can then use the CONVERT TO option to compress the music files to MP3 or WMA. You can go onto the CDDb database and download all the Track and Artist information automatically, and then make a playlist of what you've just recorded for playing back later. You can then record your playlist onto a CD-R, or send the music to a digital portable - although right now Pyro is only set-up for Creative Labs' Nomad (not available in the UK) or s3's Rio 300 or 500. You can also go onto the net and download MP3s or program updates, news, etc.

There's more too - the EFFECTS option performs digital signal processing on-the-fly, offering you a choice of 'concert hall', 'chapel', 'desktop enhancer' and 'earphone enhancer' among many others. You can then get Pyro to permanently re-equalise all your music files in this way, should you so desire. There's also a RECORD AUDIO option hidden away in the TOOLS menu - which records audio from whichever source you select using Windows' Volume Control at up to 16bit, 48kHz oversampling quality.

I loved it, with reservations. There's no doubt Pyro is an immensely polished audio application which seamlessly blends all the disparate strands of music on computers. Rather than faffing around with MP3 rippers, playlists, CD extraction programs, CD authoring software etc., you just click on Pyro and it does the job with



the minimum of fuss. In this respect it's one of the best I've seen so far, although Windows Media Player is superior in some respects (apart from the fact that it doesn't record in MP3 format).

There are some downsides, though. First is the issue of MP3 sound quality. Unlike recent releases of MusicMatch Jukebox, Pyro does not come with a Fraunhofer MP3 codec, which is a great shame, and means that unless you get one from somewhere else (by downloading MP3 Producer Pro from one of the many MP3 sites, for example), your MP3 sound will be compromised. Second is the issue of 'tweakability' - unlike the likes of WinAmp and MMJ, there's little control over the finer points of sound quality. You can set the MP3 compression ratios (up to 320kbps) but have no say over issues like error or jitter correction, digital audio extraction speed etc. Basically, Pyro is a general purpose package, rather than a specialist tool. Third, as Pyro brings together all the various computer audio activities so well, it would have been great to have had a Windows Media Player 7-style internet radio tuner. 🌟🌟

Cakewalk Pyro £39.95  
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- automatic CD titling via internet CDDb database
- Digital Signal Processing options
- free Neato, CD labelling software
- free Verbatim CD-R
- support for DirectX audio effects

#### system requirements: -

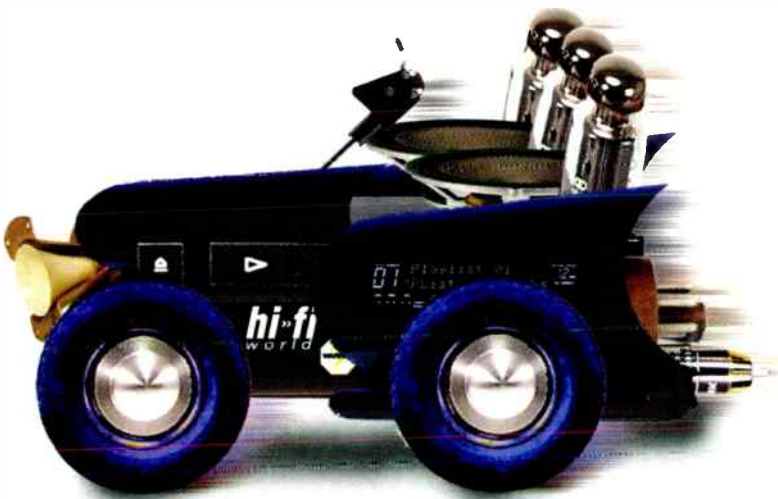
- Windows 95/98;
- Pentium-class 200 MHz PC or higher
- minimum 32 MB RAM
- CD-ROM drive
- CD-R drive for creating audio CDs

#### World Verdict



A great value entry-level computer audio application - beautifully designed and presented and faultless to use. Advanced users should look elsewhere, though.

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easily accessible, the mains is received via an IEC lead, an earth post is also positioned at the back. This kit is suited to the beginner in that the instructions now include pictures as well as diagram, making them very easy to follow. At a UK price of £250.00 all inclusive you cannot ignore this kit. Simon Pope says, "The quality that can be gleaned from this amp is a fine introduction to the joys of the valve sound. The KEL84 will highlight all the intricacies and depth of detail in your favourite recordings whilst retaining a warmth and fullness. This combination of both detail and warmth is almost the exclusivity of pure valve amps and is rare at this price point."

The Kel84 weighs in at 10kg. External dimensions with valves are 300mm(w) x 270mm(d) x 150mm(h).



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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 (E1). Combined with the KT88 it offers a virtually unmatchable 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 - 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 330mm(w) x 300mm(d) x 190mm (h).



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Our Parallel Single Ended amplifiers offer the ultimate sound quality, featuring two of the beautifully linear 300B directly heated triode in the output stage (per monobloc) pushing out 20 watts into an 8 ohm load. At the front we have a 6AU6 pentode and the famous ECC82 as the driver valve and the kit utilises a 5U4 rectifier valve for the power supply in combination with a 10H choke, giving an extremely quiet supply. For the mains and output transformers we have used the E/I type. Feedback is

switchable for all those purist out there and the kit is totally hard-wired. For those that require valves we provide the superb Tesla 300Bs, Russian 5U4s and European 6AU6s & ECC82. Simon Pope says, "Not to put too fine point on it, the sound these monoblocs create is among the finest that can be encountered in hi-fi." Our 300B PSE kit bears an affordable price of £795.00 (UK price) excluding valves. Each monobloc weighs 23kgs., external dimensions with valves: 25cm(w) x 38cm(h) x 22cm(d) per monobloc.



**NEW**

**£795.00**

## KEL80 MONOBLOCK AMPLIFIER KIT

Following the success of our budget KEL34 40watt kit amplifier, we have come up with a 'bigger brother' design. The output stage utilises two pairs of TESLA EL34 pentodes in parallel-push-pull mode, allowing KEL80 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 KEL80 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).



**£590 A PAIR**

## 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 a 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(l) x 8cm(h) weight 4kg.



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Our mini-marvel uses an Audax carbon fibre bass/midrange unit, married to the world's most advanced tweeter. The piezo-electric gold dome HD3P from Audax. KLS10 offers high performance from a small package. The main speakers are designed to work alone, or with a dedicated subwoofer to extend their bass. Alone, they are suited to near-wall mounting and can be tuned by port adjustment to suit personal

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 Drive units & Crossover KIT £394.00  
 Drive units only £268.00



£394

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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.

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£230

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The KLS14 is an extremely simple design and was designed to complement our new KelB4 budget amplifier. It uses a H26TG-35-06, a 26mm fabric dome tweeter from Vita and a Seas CA21RE mid/bass 8 inch doped paper cone, driver from Seas. It is a 20 litre, sealed box design and is a friendly load so will work well with most amplifier types from 10 - 100 watts. Simon Pope says, "The sound of the KLS14 is exciting and immediate, it also has an overall fluid and smooth response which adds a touch of sophisti-

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- b. BLACK GATE 4700uF, 16V electrolytic
- c. JENSEN 0.47uF, 630V paper in oil capacitor
- d. LCR 22.5uF 440Vdc polypropylene capacitors (wire leadouts radial) 100mm(h) x 45mm diameter
- e. ANSAR 22.5uF 630Vdc polypropylene capacitors (wire leadouts radial) 85mm(h) x 45mm diameter

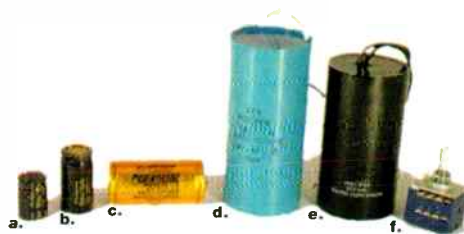
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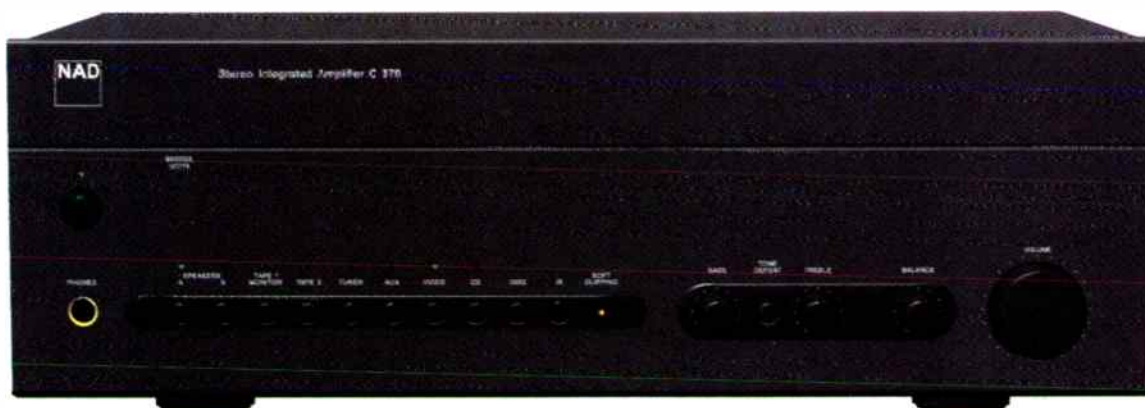




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I was not surprised to learn that Philips have had their best year for a long time in audio. The way they see it is the way we see it: computers and audio are merging. But that isn't the way many in Britain's hi-fi industry see it. We constantly meet manufacturers who refuse to acknowledge the presence, growth or importance of computer based audio, let alone its future influence. I believe this is the way audio is going and Philips are good enough proof.

Philips have the benefit of perspective. Their history in Britain stretches back to 1925 when they set up Philips Lamps. Back then, making light bulbs qualified you for a future in electronics, because the first valves were based on light bulbs. Philips started manufacturing in Britain two years later after acquiring Mullard valves. Even then the Dutch headquarters, based in Eindhoven, had to introduce more sophisticated and efficient valve manufacturing methods and I feel we need to be looking yet again at what Eindhoven are doing.

Philips have had bad times of course. One of their great failures has been an inability to design and sell top end audio. As far as I am aware, the last time they tried was way back in the 1970s with a range called Black Tulip. Rapidly re-christened Black Turnip by one of Britain's more imaginative hi-fi journalists it was a lesson in how not to approach the hi-fi market. The Japanese had moved in and nowhere could Philips new range excel over what was already on offer. The company has a reputation for budget audio, an image it has never been able to shake off.

In another demonstration of how failure can easily follow success, Digital Compact Cassette - uniquely a Philips invention - flopped, even though the CD, which they launched nine years earlier, had been a success. By now though, I suspect Philips were getting a grip on things, because they had always seemed lukewarm about DCC. My suspicion is that, internally, a lot of people preferred the idea of the recordable CD, which back in the late 1980s was dubbed CD-E (Erasure). It was hated by the music business, Polygram effectively preventing Philips from launching it.

Perhaps because of this internal wrangling Philips decided in the end to sell off Polygram, a move which gave the company freedom to become more active and innovative toward the consumer electronics market. It was still slow off the mark with Rush, the company's first MP3 player introduced last year, well after the Koreans brought the idea of portable MP3 to market. It has been quick with Expanium, a portable CD that will also play MP3 discs. The idea here is that one CD-R/RW, compiled at home, can provide ten hours of MP3 listening - great for long journeys. Philips people are excited by Tivo too, where television is recorded to and from computer hard disc, so live programmes can be paused for up to 30 minutes.

I've talked before about this rapid merger of computer technology with

## “ dumping DCC and promoting CD-R/RW, Philips have left Sony in the dust”

audio. The computer business sees audio as one of the most popular domestic uses for the home computer and, of course, Philips have been successful in selling recordable CD drives for computers. In this area they must be feeling a bit smug in Eindhoven, because this is an instance where the company pulled success out of failure. DCC's great rival was Sony's MiniDisc. By dumping DCC quickly and promoting CD-R/RW Philips have left Sony in the dust; now it's Sony's turn to catch up. Fast entry to new computer audio technologies, with effective products of course, is the key to Philips success.

Back in the UK, we are seeing precious little movement from Britain's hi-fi manufacturers who seem to be wedded to the notion of hi-fi as a collection of black boxes, each with its own, simple well defined function. That's how the world was. It won't be how it is. "We intend to put internet capabilities into many products" said a Philips spokesman at the CES in Las Vegas recently. They are putting internet radio into a mini-system due out soon.

Another company to watch in this new arena is Videologic. "Think of us as

a DSP (digital signal processing) company, Noel", Videologic president Kevin Dale told me when trying to explain the company's profile. "We employ 145 digital engineers", giving me a guide to their size. Videologic have never produced a full-on hi-fi product before, but they have suddenly come out with a DAB tuner. This is all about digital signal processing of course, again showing which way audio is going.

I don't want to move into the side issue of home cinema here, but in a nutshell, for Britain's amplifier or loudspeaker manufacturers, five channels of amplification promises to move a lot more audio kit than an MP3 player, so this is where their interest often lies. Fair enough, but it is video, to which audio is merely an adjunct.

Hi-Fi World is not a home cinema magazine, it is about the enjoyment of music. How it is delivered, by internet to a Rush player, a DTS 5.1 disc into a multichannel amp, or from an LP through a valve amplifier is equally valid to us.

Digital audio and the internet are coming together to expand the range of options available to music listeners, potentially increasing our freedom to listen to music anywhere, anyhow. Philips success in this field is a good vision of the future path of audio. The days of a hi-fi built from a pile of single-function black boxes is fast coming to an end. ●



Noel Keywood

# bearing good news

David Price is pleasantly surprised by Vistek's Aurios Isolation Bearings.



▶ If you maintain a healthy disinterest in ludicrously overpriced accessories claiming to transform the sound of your system, you'll doubtless think £197.50 for three Aurios Isolation Bearings is cheekier even than the latest UK rail fares or the price of one gallon of unleaded. Well, I couldn't agree more - but.

The price looks at least half-sensible when you [a] look at the quality of engineering that's gone into them and [b] consider the improvement in sound you get for your two hundred spon.

Unlike most cones, spikes, subtables and what have you, these are isolators rather than absorbers. Bits of sorbothane (such as FoculPods) placed under your CD player will work wonders considering the cost of the tweak, but they merely absorb part of the structural vibrations emanating from your loudspeakers. These things however, attempt to isolate the component as if it was floating in air. Vistek, the people behind them, claim they significantly reduce the broadband intermodulation distortion generated when a media component is shaken. In language that anoraks will understand, these are a kind of hi-fi cloaking device, Captain.

The bearings come in sets of three, and very pretty they look too with their superfine mirror polished finish. They're not quite as easy to use as bunging a couple of cones under your CD player. Rather like a turntable, you have to 'set them up' to get their isolation properties to work properly.

They have to be placed on a flat, level surface, under the component you wish to isolate and near to its outside edges, preferably in a triangular pattern with two bearings forward and one to the rear, or vice versa.

Then you have to tune 'em by aligning the top and bottom halves of each bearing. This is best done with both hands, aligning two bearings at the same time - doing just one at a time can push both the others out of adjustment. If you find you can't do this properly, it's because the surface you're using isn't completely level.

When all three are perfectly aligned, suddenly and as if by magic the supported component will start to float before your very eyes! Push it gently in one direction and watch it gently sway to and fro (about a tenth of an inch) before settling in the centre. Kind of reminds me of those executive desktop toys they used to have back in the seventies.

The improvement in sound can be quite staggering, but - and this is an important caveat - only if your system's good enough in the first place. Place them under a 1985 Amstrad stack system and you won't be astonished. Likewise a budget CD player such as a Marantz CD600005E - there's definitely a change for the better, but not a dramatic one because there are more pronounced weaknesses elsewhere in the replay chain. Put them under the

likes of, say, a Cyrus CD7 and the change starts to be more dramatic, and by the time you've got to real high end stuff, it's night and day.

The improvement they make is easy to describe - walk around with dirty spectacles or sunglasses on, and then clean them. The Aurios bearings simply remove a level of hash from the sound - the loud bits don't go louder, but the quiet bits definitely go quieter, making for a far more dynamic and involving listen. They also seem to smooth things out too - so as well as the sound getting punchier and more rhythmically engaging, it also gets sweeter and less edgy. Together, this makes one hell of an upgrade, and suddenly all that money seems worth it. Obviously the effect is system dependent, and some hi-fis are naturally better isolated from vibration than others anyway. But I tried these things under CD players, loudspeakers (they'll support 450kg loads!), isolation platforms (under turntables) and MD recorders, and they always made a worthwhile difference. I hate myself for saying it, but these come highly recommended. ■ ▲

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# logical progression

Linn's LP12 turntable has had many rivals over the years, each claiming to offer a worthwhile improvement in sound. Back in 1981, Logic's DM101 was the new pretender to the Sondek's throne, says David Price.



For much of the seventies and eighties, Linn's LP12 was the undisputed king of vinyl. New title challengers came and went, but the Sondek remained on top. Ironically, because these aspirant kings of vinyl didn't turn out to be quite as good, they ended up unfairly overlooked and ignored. This always seemed strange to me - rather like saying if you're not Number One in the charts, nobody will play your song on the radio or stock your records! Such were the politics of hi-fi magazine publishing back then.

The upshot is that there are a large number of fine high-end turntables around that most people have either completely forgotten about or never even heard of in the first place. Along with Ariston's RD11, the JBE and the original Dunlop Systemdek, Logic's DM101 is just such a deck. No, it isn't the greatest device ever to spin a Long Playing record, but Olde Worlde aficionados should find it well worth a look.

Costing £299 in 1981, it was an expensive piece of kit. Like the Linn it was a well finished, belt driven design using the familiar Philips/Impex 24 pole AC synchronous motor, modified with a quarter inch thick steel mounting plate to reduce vibration. The 356x483x153mm plinth was a solid Medite affair finished in satin black, with a wonderfully nineteen seventies smoked Perspex dustcover. Again, 'a la Linn', it used a two-piece

cast aluminium platter with a hardened steel spindle set into the inner platter. The 2.5kg outer platter was machined to have almost all its mass at the rim, and topped by a Michell Focus-style bonded red felt mat. The aluminium bearing housing contained two plain bronze bushes, together with a hardened steel thrust pad with a ground and lapped face, with a ball concentrically located in the end of the spindle.

This is all pretty conventional stuff, but the Logic's design had a twist. The 8mm aluminium subchassis took tonearms directly via adaptor plates, obviating the need for sound-degrading armboards. This was then suspended at three points using an ingenious double spring arrangement - both springs were attached to round steel plates at one end, and at the other to brackets mounted opposite each other on the plinth, meaning the brackets hung in the middle. This meant that if the chassis movement caused one spring to compress in one direction, the other spring would have to extend by the same amount. The result was more effective damping, and less long term drift out of adjustment. Chassis levelling was done by a simple screw adjuster.

Overall then, the Logic was an extremely thoughtful design, a fact born out when you listen to one. Compared to a similar vintage Sondek, the DM101 sounds slightly

lighter, faster and breezier, with a firmer bass that lacks just a bit of the LP12's extension. Move on up the frequency range and there's noticeably less clutter, with a clearer and more neutral lower midband that images more positively. Soundstaging is tighter with better image location - this was always a weak point of the Sondek - and there's a touch more detail too. What the Logic doesn't have is the bounce of its Scottish rival. More interested in neutral, even-handed information retrieval, the DM101 proves less rhythmically and musically engaging, which is probably why hi-fi journalists of the day came out in favour of the Sondek.

Nevertheless, it's still an extremely pleasant listen, especially when you consider how cheap these babies are second-hand. Pay around £100 to £150 for a good one, and you've got yourself a front end that's both dramatically better than Regas or Projects, and far superior to any CD player under a grand. Many Logics were partnered with SME III's, Mission 774s and Syrinxes, but you can easily fit a modern SME 309 or the ubiquitous Origin Live/Rega RB250 if you can find an adaptor plate. The result will be most enjoyable, especially when you remember how little money you've spent to get sound this good. In the thrusting new digital world of 2001, this twenty year old stalwart is still a surprisingly logical choice. Captain. ■▲

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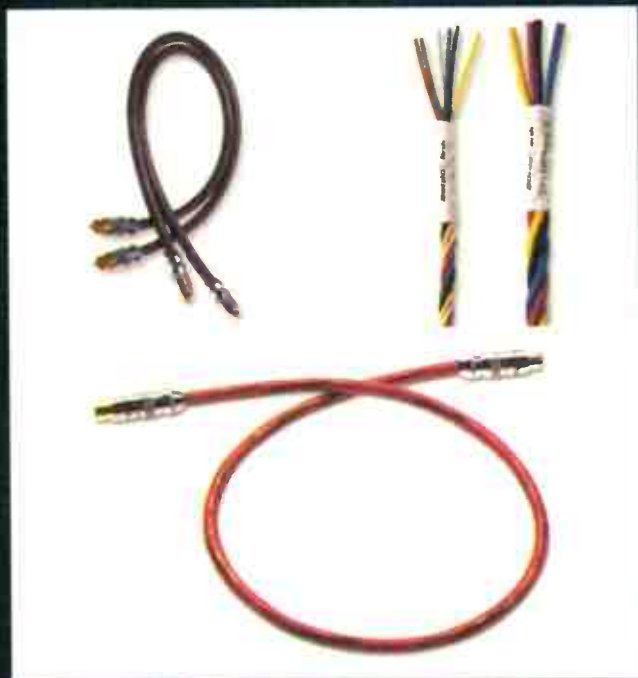
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**R**emember John Major taking those first early steps in the prime ministerial shoes previously worn by Mrs T? Or when Gazza released one of the most criminal pop- football crossover singles ever, 'Fog on the Tyne'? On TV, do you recall Vic Reeves being man of the moment, or the arrival of a new post-Bros teen sensation called Take That?

Nineteen ninety one was the year. The recession was biting hard and the music business was 'culling' artists from its rosters in a fit of post-party panic. In the charts 'indie dance' was king. The Stone Roses, lest we forget, had recently released 'Fool's Gold' and turned popular music upside down. Acid House propelled the likes of Adamski, The KLF and 808 State from obscurity onto the nation's TV screens. Mighty indie labels like Creation and Factory were teetering on the brink, just about to go under.

In hi-fi, the epic 'vinyl vs. CD' battle had just about been won - by CD, so it seemed. Every record shop on the High Street was dropping vinyl like a lead weight, and talk of its 'death' seemed an absolute fait accompli. Whether you liked it or not, hi-fi came in black boxes and had transistors inside. Many Japanese products sounded abysmal, while some British designs were so poorly made that they'd probably be illegal to sell in a post 'CE' world. If you wanted decent sound, you were forced to buy from a handful of British high end manufacturers to whom convenience and flexibility were anathema - 'what do mean you want a remote control? Sorry, no can do, it's not real hi-fi!'

Almost all loudspeakers used materials developed in the 1960s or 1970s. Be it Plastiflex, doped paper, Bextrene or Polypropylene, drive unit technology was still in the Stone Age. Slow, distortion prone, quacky and inefficient, the only way to get decent levels from most early nineties 'speakers was with a high powered transistor amp. Together they made for a tragically grey, mechanical and uninviting sound, which was impossible to

ameliorate with the relatively low power output of tubes.

Into this climate Hi-Fi World was born. Exactly ten years ago this month, this magazine was launched to an unsuspecting public. Being an independent (don't forget that all the other monthlies are owned by huge publishing houses that run numerous 'titles'), many predicted a swift demise. Unlike its rivals, World lacked the usual glossy production values, relying instead on passionate writing and an eclectic editorial mix to get into peoples' living rooms.

Right from the start, we managed to rub much of the industry up the wrong way. While there's no shortage of talent and charisma in hi-fi, there are also people who don't like to hear dissenting or contrary views. With this in mind, World's

design and a resurgence of the home constructor market. As someone once said, "what are the chances of that happening?"

Without getting too full of ourselves (but hey, it is our tenth birthday), much of what Hi-Fi World has been discussing preaching and cajoling manufacturers about for the past ten summers has now come to pass.

Of course, this magazine isn't about setting trends as much as reflecting the thoughts and impulses of its readers. While our rival titles give themselves expensive makeovers, we're trying our hardest to reflect the passion that you show for high fidelity music reproduction. Against all the Prophets of Doom, focus groups, market researchers and naysayers, people are still listening to music and loving it. Ten years old this month, this remains as glaringly obvious to us as ever! ●

## ” Exactly ten years ago this month, this magazine was launched to an unsuspecting public

abiding interest in valves, vinyl, classic hi-fi, loudspeaker design and DIY made it easy for its detractors to pigeonhole as 'quirky' or 'anachronistic'. A decade on though, we're seeing a renaissance in glass audio, an audiophile-driven vinyl revival, countless 'retro' products inspired by past glories. mass market 'speakers with space-age driver



**David Price**

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Cary 300B SE1 triode line integrated amplifier	£1700	£4000
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**A**nother year and another hi-fi season has just passed by. Despite the best efforts of the rains, weather and fuel protesters, it's been strong for most retailers.

The season has seen an interesting shift in hi-fi buying habits. Some of the greatest changes in category sales have occurred since the advent of Compact Disc. The new formats are really starting to kick in, and it is changing the picture.

It's hardly a surprise to see sales of cassette decks dwindle. CD-R sales appear to have held firm, yet MiniDisc sales have shown a slight decrease over last year's figures. It would appear that the computer based MP3 and other 'memory' type formats are beginning to take their toll on the traditional hi-fi recording mediums. I get the impression that MiniDisc in particular could be one of next year's greatest failures. The fact that the USA hasn't taken to the format does not bode well for its future.

The performance of tuner sales has come as more of a surprise. This time last year I really would have expected Digital tuners to have a hold on the market place by now. Yet, as I write, one can still count the number of such tuners on two hands. Again, the States' reluctance to adopt this broadcasting system would appear ominous for its long-term survival. Hence, sales of analogue tuners remained pretty steady on last year's figures. The broadcasting agencies threat to switch off the FM transmitters in the medium term doesn't appear to be deterring buyers just yet.

The greatest surprise is Compact Disc players, which are notably down on last year. Poor old CD faces an onslaught from not just Internet based download systems, but also from the increasingly popular DVD. The growth of DVD sales, from where I stand in retailing, has been nothing short of phenomenal and I understand other retailers have had huge success with the medium this season too.

Last summer saw the beginning of a trend for our store. The best selling separate ceased to be a CD player or the ubiquitous Sony 500-series MiniDisc player, instead becoming Toshiba's fine DVD player, the SD2109. Startling as it may have

sounded just a year ago, over the busy period from November to December, DVD players have regularly featured as top selling models and have even reached the stage of the highest selling category, full stop.

I know this is causing concern to certain hi-fi purists. After all, the sound quality of budget DVD players is far from great. The same goes for the sound of the surround amps' they're often used with. Yet my response to this would be two-fold. The first is that the new format is growing the market place, and bringing a



**Recordable DVD I don't think will turn out to be quite the**

**blinder that many people would have thought.**

wider range of people into specialist hi-fi shops. These new buyers are not only getting something that will sound better than a micro/midi system, they are also being introduced to hi-fi separates, possibly for the first time.

Secondly, as DVD is a primary source offering high quality, in both picture and sound, it provides a stimulus to upgrade. This raises opportunities for amplifier, loudspeaker and accessory manufacturers. Unsurprisingly, most loudspeaker manufacturers have been quick to latch onto this potential expansion of their market, offering centre, rear and subwoofer 'surround' systems.

There's even a clamour amongst manufacturers to produce Bose type cube sub/sat systems. Odd really, when many have tried and failed before, but it proves there must be a demand, no doubt coming

from the 'lifestyle' sector of DVD sales.

Most of the medium and larger sized electronic companies haven't missed a trick when it comes to matching Dolby Digital surround sound amps' either - despite the fact that I well remember certain ones stating they would never enter the arena of AV!

It does seem rather odd then, that the sector I'd expect to adapt the quickest, that of accessories, has been one of the slowest to respond. Many of the larger accessory firms have only just launched suitable Scart and S-VHS leads. Some have still to launch any. Those with a full range already in production must be revelling in the fact that they're marketing a product that must be the fastest growing accessory of the moment.

So what of next season? Well, gazing into my crystal ball I detect a further slow down in MiniDisc sales and I expect CDR will remain strong. Recordable DVD I don't think will turn out to be quite the

blinder that many people would have thought. A standard system has still to be decided, and when you combine this with competition (of sorts) from hard drive television recorders and cheaper software prices it could turn out to have less impact than originally anticipated. It does look like the retail market will remain strong though, because of innovation. ●



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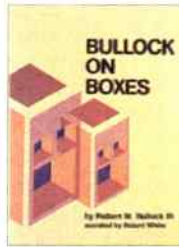
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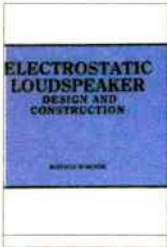
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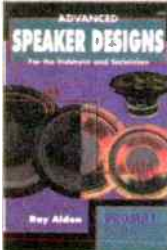
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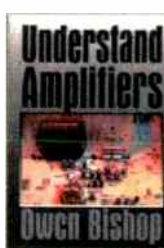
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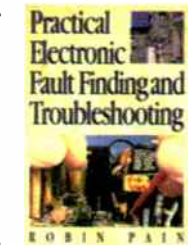
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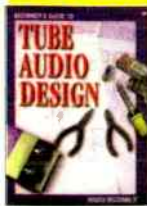


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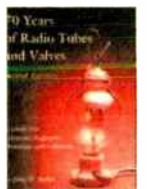


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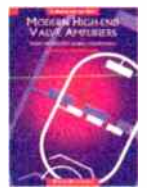


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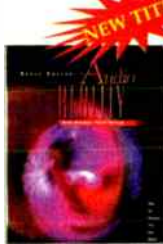


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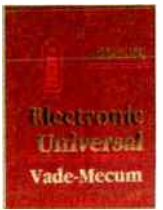


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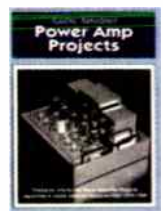


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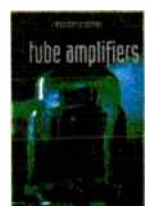
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**TEACS** Martin House, The Croydon Centre, Warford, WDI 8YA. Tel: 01923 819630. Fax: 01923 236790. Teac has already established a virtual world dominance in the manufacture of precision recording equipment and data storage products and the company is now turning its attention to its core hi-fi and audio related products. The Teaco Audio Acoustic Company (hereafter TEAC) was formed in 1956. Over the years TEAC has produced a long list of the world's most outstanding recording equipment, including many excellent affordable home cassette decks for which the name TEAC became almost synonymous and by the time of the dawn of the digital age at the beginning of the 1980's it was internationally acknowledged as a world leader in audio technology with a strong of high fidelity first to its name. 1997 saw a significant turning point for TEAC with the launch of its superb new mini-system, a newly developed VRDS mini CD player and a British designed CD player.

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# welcome to world favourites

Here's a list of products that are a good buy. We've tried to cater for a range of tastes, identifying strong products in every area. We're agnostic so you'll find a wide range of products, from valve pre-amps through to MiniDisc players. Products marked \* are recently out of production but make a good second-hand buy.

Prices shown are those at the time of the review



Roksan Caspian CD player  
Solid as a ROK

## COMPACT DISC

- ARCAM FMJ CD23** £1100  
This British-built player is extremely versatile. Controlled and detailed with a musical insight that few match. (Jul 2000)
- CAMBRIDGE CD4SE\*** £200  
A touch soft in the treble but outstanding in every other respect. (Feb 98)
- KENWOOD DP-3080/II\*** £180  
Has great clarity and presence for the price. Not as naturally expressive as the CD4SE though. (Feb 98)

- LINN KARIK III\*** £1775  
Under rated and overlooked, the final Karik was a gem. Superb transport gives a brilliantly tight, grippy dynamic sound, albeit tonally rather dry.

- MARANTZ CD-17 KI-S** £1100  
The Marantz excels in all areas. Without doubt this is one of the most involving CD players on the planet. Build quality is also exemplary. (Sep 97)

- MARANTZ CD-63 MKII KI-S\*** £400  
Similar to the CD-63SE but more powerful bass and an all-round smoother sound. The famous KI tweaks pay off again. Whether or not it is still pre-eminent against the vastly improved competition is a matter of opinion.

- MERIDIAN 506 20-BIT\*** £1100  
Very detailed and revealing player. More cerebral than visceral sounding, however. (May 95)

- MUSICAL FIDELITY X-RAY** £800  
Commonsense sturdy CD player of exceptional ability. Clear and detailed with high quality internal processing system. The X-Ray is inclined to show up poor recordings, but it's only doing its job! (Feb 99)

- NAD S500** £1000  
This dynamic top of the range Silverline spinner delights with any type of music. Exciting, sophisticated sounding and highly recommended. (Jun 2000)

- ROKSAN CASPIAN** £895  
The Caspian has a smooth, slightly bright sound with some of the clearest treble in the business. Very engaging, dynamic character. (Aug 97)

- ROTEL RCD 951** £300  
HDCD capability at a midrange price. Plain Jane looks but solid construction. There is some higher than average measured distortion which may take the edge off this otherwise tempting product. (Aug 99)

## COMPACT DISC TRANSPORTS

- SONIC FRONTIERS TRANSPORT** £6999  
Cutting-edge design and technology combine to make this one very desirable product. The only problem is the fantasy hi-fi price. (Sep 98)

- TEAC P-30** £2500  
Cheap it isn't, but then it sounds like a million digital dollars. Nothing short of superb. (Jun 97)

- TEAC VRDS-T1** £600  
Excellent mid-price silver disc spinner with a powerful, expansive and warm sound. Easily beats most sub-£1000 designs. A good choice for the budget conscious who want the best. (Feb 95)

## CD TRANSPORTS

- CAMBRIDGE AUDIO DACMAGIC 3\*** £99  
Superb value for money with extensive facilities and solid, detailed sonics. Upgrades any sub-£300 player.

- DCS ELGAR** £8500  
Future-proof convertor which will handle 24/96 and 24/192. Extremely open and natural performer. (Nov 97)

- DPA LITTLE BIT 3\*** £299  
A taste of the high end on a budget. Rich, clean, punchy sound transforms budget CD players.

- MIDIMAN FLYING COW** £299  
Excellent as a DAC and doubles as an ADC for archiving to CDR. (Jun 98) Great value, as is junior version Flying Calf at £109. (Feb 99)

- MUSICAL FIDELITY X-DAC\*** £300  
A bargain for normal CDs and even better with HDCDs. (Nov 97)

- SONIC FRONTIERS PROCESSOR 3** £6999  
Quality never comes cheap! This DAC oozes class and when matched with the Transport 3 is certainly up with the best. (Sep 98)

## TURNTABLES

- LINN SONDEK LP12 BASIK** £1100  
Off the pace these days in many respects but still an extremely sweet and engaging listen with a quintessentially analogue sound.

- MICHELL GYRODEC SE** £775  
Exquisitely built, infinitely upgradeable deck that gives true high end sound at mid-fi prices.

- MICHELL ORBE** £2000  
Fantastically capable all rounder with commanding, powerful, detailed sound that gets the best from almost any arm and cartridge. Supreme build, brilliant value. (Apr 95)

- ORIGIN LIVE STANDARD (KIT)** £145  
Good in standard form with AC motor; frighteningly good with a DC motor and battery PSU.

- PINK TRIANGLE TARANTELLA** £680  
Not only does the Tarantella have more style than a catwalk full of models, it also combines PT's usual clarity with real authority. (Oct 97)

- PRO-JECT DEBUT** £110  
Straight out of the box and onto the shelf! Nothing short of a bargain. Vinyl's never had it so good, so cheaply!

- REGA PLANAR 2** £214  
Brilliant starter deck with extremely polished manner. Better built £274 Planar 3 is a great all-in-one package that eats mid-price CD players for breakfast.

- ROKSAN XERXES X** £1295  
DSU or XPS 3.5 power supply £150/170 extra. Excellent pitch stability from a new Swiss motor and outboard power supply. Very tight bass, fine dynamics and revealing clarity. (Jan 97)

- SYSTEMDEK IIX900\*/RB250** £330  
A fine all-rounder and easy to upgrade too. More depth and breadth than Rega Planar 3. (Sep 94)

- VESTAX BDT-2000** £225  
A stylish looking deck with infinitely variable speed 16-90 rpm, DC belt drive and built-in MM phono stage. Good value, with plenty of chassis room for alternative arms, if required. (Sep 99)

## TOEARMS

- HADCOCK 242 SE** £649  
Latest of a long line of unipivot arms. Added mass makes the 242 suitable for both low compliance MCs and straw-in-the-wind high compliance types. Revised geometry and chromium plating completes a first-class job. (Jun 2000)

- NAIM ARO\*** £975  
Truly endearing and charismatic performer - wonderfully engaging mid-band makes up for softened frequency extremes

- REGA RB300** £180  
Some may prefer the simpler RB250 at £130. Detailed, tight, rhythmic sound but tonally rather grey and cold-sounding. Still excellent value, though.

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Hi Fi World Feb 98 **Outstanding** ●●●●●  
What Hi Fi July 98 ★★★★★  
Home Entertainment Oct 98 ★★★★★  
Stereoplay (Germany) Feb 99 **Outstanding**  
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Prices shown are those at the time of the review



Musical Fidelity X-Cans2  
Warm, sumptuous, sweet sound

**SME 3009SII** £309  
Once state of the art, but no longer. Weak at frequency extremes and detail, but its legendary serviceability makes it a cult in Japan. Can be picked up for peanuts second-hand. (Jan 93)

**SME 309** £689  
A down-market version of the IV and V with aluminium armtube and detachable headshell. Tight, neutral sound with good tonality, but lacks the IV's pace and precision. Like the older SME 3009 series, this arm is also available in 10" and 12" versions. (Jan 93)

## CARTRIDGES

**AUDIO TECHNICA AT-110E** £30  
Great starter cartridge that's refined, detailed and musical beyond its price. Best value MM under £50

**GOLDRING 1012GX** £74  
An accomplished MM with a solid bass, slightly forward midband and clean transients. Very reasonable price for such an able performer. (Jul 93)

**DNM MICA** £185  
Better Goldring's 1042 and costs only £135 on trade-in. An assured and transparent MM. (Feb 98)

**DYNAVECTOR DV20X-H** £299  
The best modern budget MC combines deliciously sweet sound with fantastic get-up-and-go. High output version works a treat with valve phono stages too.

**MUSIC MAKER** £575  
When mated with a good quality arm, this hand finished high-output pick-up gives an ear-boggling account of itself. Very high compliance ensures maximum information retrieval. An absolute (grain orientated) gem. (Feb 99)

**ORTOFON MC 7500** £2000  
Conclusive proof that there's hope for the world. It's a long time ago now but this high-priced favourite still earns its niche - CD lovers would die if they heard it. (May 94)

**ORTOFON MC 15 SUPER II** £140  
Not quite as good as the dearer Supremes but the Super II is a splendid introduction to the joys of moving-coil cartridges.

**GOLDRING 1042** £130  
One of the best Moving Magnet cartridges going, with beautiful treble and muscular bass. New low price makes it a bargain.

**ORTOFON ROHMANN** £1000  
In a way it's MC 2000 meets MC 7500 with great tonal strengths and a dynamo sound. (Apr 96)

## INTEGRATED AMPLIFIERS

**AUDIO ANALOGUE PUCCINI SE** £595  
This superbly-built Italian integrated has a lucidity and control which leaves others nowhere. Sound stage a wow. (Dec 97)

**AUDIOLAB 8000a \*** £495  
Well rounded integrated with smooth and detailed sound plus a huge feature count. Great build makes later versions a top used buy.

**DENON PMA-250SE** £160  
It might not have bags of grunt but the Denon can sound exceedingly natural and open. (Feb 97)

**McINTOSH MA6800\*** £3735  
The MA6800 not so much plays music as takes control of it, with effortless bass drive. (Sep 95)

**MISSION CYRUS 2 \*** £299  
Classic eighties minimalism combines arresting styling with clean, open, lively sound. Further upgradable with PSX power supply.

**MUSICAL FIDELITY X-CANS2** £160  
Warm, sumptuous, sweet sound h/phone amp. gives startling results with a decent set of headphones.

**NAIM NAIT 3 \*** £575  
Superb rhythms and dynamics make for great music making, but tonally monochromatic. Super optional phono stage makes it ideal for vinyl junkies.

**ROKSAN CASPIAN** £695  
Smooth, warm integrated with remote control that works happily into most 'speakers. (Dec 97)

**SONNETEER ALABASTER** £995  
Builds on the strengths of the Campion with ample control, colour and drive. (Oct 97)

## PHONO STAGES

**CREEK OBH-8 SE** £180  
Punchy, rhythmic character with oodles of detail makes this a great budget audiophile product.

**LFD MISTRAL PHONO STAGE \*** £300  
The Mistral has a warmth and involvement that make many pricier stages sound overpriced.

**MICHELL DELPHINI MONOBLOCS** £1995  
Analogue tour-de-force gives supremely clean, detailed and finely resolved sound with breathtaking dynamics. Great value, even at this price.

**MUSICAL FIDELITY X-LP** £125  
One of the famous MF X series. Full marks throughout for clarity and detail. Switchable between MM and MC. Indestructible build! (May 99)

**PRO-JECT PHONO BOX** £39  
Not the last word in many respects but a thoroughly honest piece of work. Inexpensive introduction to all that vinyl has to offer. MM and MC provision plus choice of two impedances.

**ROKSAN ARTAXERXES X** £950  
With the Atessa PSU the Artaxerxes X MM/MC stage still shines. Great stage depth, neutrality and tonal colour. (Oct 97)

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## SONNETEER SEDLEY £399

Combines transparency and fine dynamics with excellent rhythmic ability. (May 98)

## PRE-AMPLIFIERS

### AMC 1100 £150

Suffers from un-defeatable tone controls but an extremely good value piece of kit. Partners the similarly budget level AMC 2200 power amplifier, also at £150. Comfortable beginners' choice. (Mar 99)

### AUDIO ANALOGUE BELLINI £475

Showcases AA's characteristic mix of clarity and musicality and blasts the competition. (Apr 98)

### CHORD CPA1800 £1800

Clarity, insight and control are second to none - an addictive mixture. (Mar 98)

### CROFT VITALE £350

A modestly priced valve pre-amp with exceptionally transparent performance. MM phono stage plus three line stages are standard. Volume controls are separate for each channel, thus giving balance adjustment. A remarkable item in all respects. (Feb 2000)

### XTC PRE-1 \* £1000

Almost valve-like in its smoothness, the line-level Pre-1 is warm and seductively clear. (Nov 96)

## POWER AMPLIFIERS

### ARCAM 9 \* £400

With 70W on tap, the 9P will drive most loudspeakers with a spacious and detailed sound. Good bass welly too. (Dec 96)

### CHORD SPM400 £1400

There's a sense of effortless power to the Chord that gives music real scale and presence. (Mar 98)

### MARANTZ MODEL 9 \* £8000

Authentic reproduction monoblocs still more than cut the sonic mustard. Highly expensive and highly sought after. (Mar 97)

### MICHELL ALECTO £1989

Crisp, clean and beautifully controlled with gorgeous styling. Partnered with the £1650 Orca this is a superb winning combo. (Oct 98)

## MUSICAL FIDELITY X-A200 £1000/pair

200W of high-end monobloc power in a grooved tube. (Aug 98)

## NAIM NAPI80 £1060

Partnered with a NAC82, this has classic Naim control, and a superbly rhythmic presentation.

## TUNERS

### CAMBRIDGE T500 £180

An extremely engaging tuner with a performance at odds with its low price. Not exactly a Troughline, but you may not notice... (Feb 99)

### CREEK T43 £399

Excellent detail, separation and dynamics. A great little tuner and unbeatable at this price. (May 98)

### MARANTZ ST17 £600

A positive dreadnought of a tuner. Sweet and refined but with a heavy punch when needed. A tuner of this quality demands a decent aerial. (Jul 99)

### MISSION CYRUS FM7\*\* £300

Clear and lucid sound puts it up with the best. Superb build too. (Apr 94)

### NAIM NAT03 £595

The NAT03's warm, atmospheric sound is further proof of Naim's proficiency with tuners. (Sep 93)

### SONY ST-SA3ES\* £250

Beguiling RDS tuner for the sonically discerning. Good ergonomics and sensitive too. (Apr 97)

## CASSETTE DECKS

### AIWA AD-S750\* £200

Sonically a very decent machine at the price. Comes fitted with Dolby B, C and the dead handy Dolby S. (Apr 96)

### AIWA AD-S950\* £300

A stable transport, superb head and Dolby S make the AD-S950 an excellent all-rounder. (Feb 95)

### KENWOOD KX-3080\* £160

A simple deck, but excellent-quality head and transport give top quality sound. (Oct 96)

## PIONEER CT-S740S £430

A great piece of engineering from Pioneer, with first-rate sound. (Jun 96)

## YAMAHA KX-580SE\* £250

The 'SE' tag is more than a marketing gimmick. Sound is solid and clear with Dolby S. (Sep 97)

## LOUDSPEAKERS

### CASTLE EDEN £469

Impressively vice-free 'speakers that offer great transparency and involvement. One of a select band that simply makes music regardless. (Mar 97)

### EPOS ES12 \* £495

Strong, punchy bass is allied to finely detailed, articulate midrange and sparkling treble. (Oct 96)



Kef Cresta I loudspeakers  
A very musical sound

### KEF CRESTA I £100

Delightfully sophisticated presentation for the price. Won't blow the roof off, but will deliver a very musical sound. (April 2000)

### KLIPSCH HERESY II £1100

An outstanding high sensitivity loudspeaker with midrange and treble horns coupled with infinite baffle 12" bass driver. Effortless, fast and accurate. (May 99)

### MISSION 752 \* £495

Cracking mid-price mini towers combined HDA drive units and metal dome tweeters with surprisingly warm results. Benign load characteristics makes them great for valves.

### MISSION 771 £170

Characteristically fast, punchy Mission sound from the Aerogel mid/bass and silk-dome tweeter. (Jul 98)

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CD Master Player £1249

Head & Ampmaster £1148

**QUAD ESL 63 \*** £3450  
A reference against which all other loudspeakers are judged, the '63s have superb imaging and genuine transparency.

**TANNOY AMS8 \*** £2700  
Bold sounding pro active monitor with solid bass, clear midrange and delicious treble. (Aug 96)

**TANNOY MERCURY m2 \*** £140  
A true audiophile bargain which embarrasses many more expensive boxes. Never mind the price, let your ears decide. (May 97)

## MINIDISC PLAYERS

**KENWOOD DM-9090** £500  
One of the best MD players yet. ATRAC 4.5 gives clean and very musical recordings from this Kenwood. (Jan 98)

**SONY MDS-JB930Q** £250  
Great mid-price machine that adds better build and facilities to the '530's already excellent sonics.

**SONY MDS-JA50ES \*** £1300  
This Sony can put the wind up Nakamichi cassette decks when used with better blank MDs. (Apr 98)

**SONY MDS-JE55ES** £520  
MiniDisc recorder  
The best sounding MD deck made so far, thanks to awesome build and heroic ATRAC-DSP Type R coding.



Alesis Masterdisk  
A glimpse of the future

**SONY MDS-JE510** £300  
An impressive sound and unmatched convenience make this MiniDisc player an excellent buy.

## DIGITAL RECORDERS

**ALESIS MASTERDISK** £1400  
A groundbreaking hard disc recorder with a built-in CD drive. An amazing bit of kit, and a glimpse of the future. (July 2000)

**KENWOOD DMF-9020** £500  
An excellent tool for home recording, combines convenience, superb sound and a fair price. (Aug 99)

**MARANTZ DR-17** £1100  
Probably the best sounding CD recoder on the market. Built like a brick out house with a true audiophile sound. HDCD compatible. (July 2000)

**PHILIPS CDR-765** £360  
One of the first twin deck recorders/players that boasts high speed dub facility. Playback could be warmer, but still a bargain. (Oct 99)

**PIONEER PDR-555RW** £480  
Excellent mid-priced CD recorder that both plays and records with equal panache. (Oct 99)

**SONY TCD-8 DATMAN \*** £599  
Super clean and detailed sound makes this an amazing portable. Not as robust as it should be though.

## DVD PLAYERS

**DENON DVD-5000** £1600  
Monster build, as you'd expect at this price. Facilities and gadgets galore and drop-dead high end looks. A very smooth and sophisticated sound, although not as good as similarly-priced CD players. (Mar 99)

**PIONEER DV-717** £700  
Well built and a solid performer, with a 'true' 24/96 digital output. Facilities in abundance and a controlled, exciting way with CD replay. Shame it lacks a Dolby Digital decoder! (Sep 99)

**SONY DVP-S725** £490  
One of the best buys in the DVD market. Available in a dodgy white case, but the facilities and performance more than make up for this. Excellent with both music and visuals, and a whole host of up to the minute facilities to keep you occupied. (Mar 2000)

## HEADPHONES

**JECKLIN FLOAT MODEL TWO** £99  
Wonderful panel-like and open sound from these esoteric-looking headclamps. Do not wear in public unless you like being made a fool of!

**SENNHEISER HD-490** £50  
Good value cans with an exciting and bassy sound. Everything one should look for in headphones at a sensible price.



Nordost Blue Heaven  
A simple and effective upgrade

## INTERCONNECTS

**CHORD COMPANY CHAMELEON 2** £90/m  
One of our favourite favourites, the Chameleons are musical performers with a smooth yet open sound.

**DNM RESON** £40/m  
Neutral and transparent, and a steal at forty quid!

**NORDOST BLUE HEAVEN** £150/m  
Some of the fastest and most transparent cable around. A simple and effective upgrade.

**VAN DEN HUL ULTIMATE THE FIRST** £260/0.6m  
Carbon interconnects that help you forget the electronics and concentrate on the music. Miraculous transparency.

## LOUDSPEAKER CABLE

**CHORD COMPANY RUMOUR** £9.95/m  
The Rumour is our reference at the price. Tight and tuneful bass mixed with air and space results in a cracking cable for the money.

**DNM RESON** £6.95/m  
This cable has a transparency of sound that's rarely heard at the price. Excellent value for money.

**NORDOST BLUE HEAVEN** £375/3m pair  
This isn't cheap, but it sounds absolutely fab. An open and spacious sound that simply carries music.

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Linn Mimik CD Player S/H (1Yr G/tee)	(875.00)	£475.00	Naim CDX CD Player E/D (2Yr G/tee)	(2335.00)	£1639.00
Linn Kairn Preamp S/H (1Yr G/tee)	(1400.00)	£800.00	Naim NAC 82 Preamp S/H (1Yr G/tee)	(2360.00)	£1650.00
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Linn Kaber Passive S/H (1Yr G/tee)	(2000.00)	£795.00	Naim NAP 135 Power Amps S/H (1Yr G/tee)	(3610.00)	£2690.00
Linn Isobarik Aktive Speakers (1Yr G/tee)	(3500.00)	£995.00	Naim SBL Passive Speakers S/H (1Yr G/tee)	(2475.00)	£1595.00
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Naim NAC 72 Preamp E/D (1Yr G/tee)	(790.00)	£499.00	Nakamichi DR3 Cass/Deck S/H	(449.00)	£249.00
Naim NAP 140 Power Amp E/D (1Yr G/tee)	(815.00)	£569.00	ProAc Tablette 50 Speakers	(599.00)	£350.00
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Naim NAC 92/90 Pre-Power S/H (1Yr G/tee)	(978.00)	£675.00	Rotel RB981 Power Amp (2Yr G/tee)	(400.00)	£299.00

# World classics

## CASSETTE

### NAKAMICHI DR-2

A great machine with Nakamichi's legendary heads. The lowest cost 'true' Nakamichi at the time, retailing for £600.

### NAKAMICHI CR-7

The last of the great ones, and definitely the best Nakamichi ever (yes, better than a Dragon)

### YAMAHA TC-800G

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

Beautifully-built two-box with pre-amp stage. Very musical although not as refined as modern Bitstream gear. No digital output.

### PIONEER PD-91

Built-to-last player with easy upgrade routes for modifiers. Not knockout as it stands but get one cheap and have a go!

### CAMBRIDGE CDI

The first two box player with weighted mechanics and even an optional Dropout/error counter. Radical and effective at the time - a classic.

## AMPLIFIERS

### LEAK POINT ONE, TL12 & TL10

Ancestors of hi-fi, consequently expensive nowadays. As with all vintage valve stuff, overhauling is de rigueur before use, using original parts if possible.

### LEAK PRE-AMPS

Line of 'good for their time' pre-amps. Use of EF86 pentode valve for high gain rules out ultra performance. Not the highest-fi.



Garrard 401  
A legendary turntable.

### LEAK STEREO 20

Excellent workaday classic valve amp. In good order the 20 will not disgrace itself. Various upgrades are available from specialist repairers.

### LEAK TL12+

Plentiful monobloc equivalent of Stereo 20. Reasonably inexpensive and a tweekers' dream. Genuine valve hi-fi on a budget.

### NAD 3020

You can't argue with success! NAD's budget transistor integrated gave thousands their first taste of hi-fi and remains great value.

### QUAD 33/303 PRE/POWER

Great style and construction, also bullet proof. Warm and wooly sound, but easy going. A good introduction to early transistor audio classics.

### QUAD 22/II PRE/POWER

One of the all-time classic valve amplifiers. Unusual circuit but it works beautifully. 22 pre-amp not up to today's standards.

### SUGDEN A21

Seventies transistor integrated has an eminently likeable smoothness and musicality. Limited inputs via DIN sockets.

### TECHNICS SE-A5 Mk2

Nice transformer and electronics, shame about the casework. With tweaking, this 150watter can sound sweet.

## LOUDSPEAKERS

### KLIPSCHORN

Not exactly plentiful or cheap but a splendid beast. For efficiency they have seldom been equalled. Space hungry!

### LEAK SANDWICH

Rather warm sounding big infinite baffle but cheap with it. With a reasonably powerful amp can sound quite satisfying.

### LOWTHER PM6A

High quality full-range driver; still manufactured. High sensitivity, as fitted to many classic horn designs.

### MAGNEPLANAR SMGa

Touch dry in the bass but a technological loudspeaker with genuinely musical abilities.

### MISSION 770

Father of the 77 range which continues to this day. Well mannered with a warm sound and a kind load to amplifiers.

### QUAD ESL57

Unrivalled. Properly serviced there is nothing like them. Their natural presentation may make them caviar to the general.

### YAMAHA NS1000M

Hi-tech favourites of the Japanese and Americans. Viewed more warily in the UK but can give excellent results.



**TANNOY GRF & AUTOGRAPH**

Folded horn monsters which certainly sound good if you have the space. For Tannoy vintage see HFW November 1998.

**WHARFEDALE SUPER 8 RS DD**

Ideal experimenters' driver. High sensitivity ~14,000 Gauss magnet and extended frequency range. Inexpensive too!

**TANNOY YORK, LANCASTER**

Many similar models of infinite baffle or reflex design. Not the last word in tautness but the drivers work well in modern cabinets.

**VINYL**

**ACOS LUSTRE**

Very honest piece of kit, well made and easily adjusted. Vinyl beginners could do very much worse.

**ALPHASON HR100S**

First class arm, up to present-day standards. Buy carefully, though, as there's no service available now.

**ARISTON RDI I**

A one-time king of turntables very similar to the Linn LP12. Now deposited but worth a look at the right price.

**LINN AXIS**

Uncomplicated, lower-price version of the famous Sondek. Less expensive than some of its stablemates.

**GARRARD 301 & 401**

Legendary turntables, once fairly plentiful. Excellent back-up available; many different custom plinths available. High quality.

**GOLDRING LENCO 88 & 99**

Great deck for the kitchen table enthusiast. Garrard fans won't look at 'em but cheap and capable. Servicing available.

**HADCOCK 228**

Recently out-classed by Hadcock's updated 228 Special Edition but a proper hi-fi arm for all that. Makers still service.

**MICHELL FOCUS ONE**

20 years and still going strong. Early runner in the 'modern' turntable cycle with a first class arm. Factory servicing available.

**SHURE M75**

Recent line-contact improvements have left the M75 behind but the wide range of needles make it a handy tool.

**SME 3009 IIS**

Everlasting classic tone-arm. Spares permanently available from SME. No longer the last word but peanuts second-hand.

**THORENS TD124**

Best classic deck ever? Judging by the prices they fetch it's possible - 78rpm too!

**THORENS TD150**

Mid-price deck with a keen following. No real difficulty with servicing - novices may find the suspension system unnerving.

**TRIO L-07D**

Knockout heavyweight from 1980 with stainless bearing and 11lb platter! Not a give-away and beware! - spares scarce.

**TUNERS**

**LEAK TROUGHLINE (ORIGINAL)**

Interesting ornament but no longer hi-fi. Limited coverage of 88MHz to 100MHz only.

**LEAK TROUGHLINE II & III MONO**

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# Massive Reductions on Selected items for One Month Only

## Clearance Items

	Our Price	On Sale Price	Original Retail Price
Audio Alchemy DDS 2 CD Transport	£395.00	£295.00	£900.00
McCormack DAC	£395.00	£295.00	£995.00
Micromega Tempo 2 Integrated	£395.00	£295.00	£900.00
Pink Triangle Ordinal 1307	£395.00	£295.00	£900.00

## New in This Month

	Our Price	On Sale Price	Original Retail Price
<b>POWER AMPLIFIERS</b>			
Quad 606 Mk II amp	£595.00	£400.00	£800.00
Copland CSA 14	£795.00	£695.00	£1,295.00
YBA Passion Stereo	£On Dem	-	£5,995.00
Krell FPB 300c	£8,500.00	-	£10,000.00
Krell FPB 200c	£7,500.00	-	£8,500.00
Sunfire 300 Power Amp	£1,795.00	£1,395.00	£2,400.00

	Our Price	On Sale Price	Original Retail Price
<b>PRE AMPLIFIERS</b>			
YBA Passion Pre + mc	£On Dem	-	£5,995.00
Boulder 2010 Pre	£p.o.a.	-	£25,000.00
Conrad Johnson PV10 al	£795.00	£650.00	£1,100.00
ATC SCA 2 + remote	£1,895.00	£1,695.00	£3,000.00

	Our Price	On Sale Price	Original Retail Price
<b>SPEAKERS</b>			
JM Lab Micro Utopia	£On dem	-	£3,300.00
JM Lab Mini Utopia	£On dem	-	£4,500.00
JM Lab Mezzo Utopia	£On dem	-	£7,300.00
B & W Nautilus 801	£6,995.00	-	£8,500.00
B & W Nautilus 804	£1,995.00	-	£2,500.00
Ruarik Crusaders	£795.00	-	£1,600.00

	Our Price	On Sale Price	Original Retail Price
<b>CD PLAYERS &amp; DACS</b>			
Boulder 2020 dac	£p.o.a.	-	£24,000.00
California Audio Lab Sigma II dac	£1,495.00	£1,200.00	£2,400.00
California Audio Lab Delta Trans			

	Our Price	On Sale Price	Original Retail Price
<b>TURNTABLES, ANALOGUE, VARIOUS</b>			
Nackamichi DR 3	£225.00	£150.00	£400.00

**AV COMPONENTS/TV/Plasma**  
New in stock Loewe Televisions & NEC & Electrophil Delphi plasma screens

## Power Amplifiers

	Our Price	On Sale Price	Original Retail Price
Sugden Master Class	£1,995.00	-	£3,000.00
Pinus 50s	£On Dem	-	£3,000.00
Krell FPB 250M Monoblocks	£7,990.00	-	£10,795.00
Krell FPB 200	£4,750.00	-	£7,000.00
Sugden Auditor c	£599.00	£400.00	£799.00
Musical Fidelity XASO Monos	£950.00	£300.00	£500.00
Pinus 250	£On dem	-	£6,000.00
Audio Note Kass	£14,950.00	-	£30,000.00
Lavardin Model IS Integrated	£1,495.00	£1,295.00	£2,200.00
Boulder 500 AE	£3,495.00	-	£5,500.00
John Shearm Ref 5 Mono blocks (as new)	£1,995.00	£1,095.00	£1,700.00
Adcom GF 565	£1,295.00	-	£2,200.00
Audio Note Nero (as new)	£7,995.00	-	£16,500.00
Audio Note Ongaku (new)	p.o.a.	-	£45,000.00
Audio Research Classic 150 M/Blocks	£4,995.00	£3,750.00	£12,000.00
Audiobab 8000 S	£2,500.00	£300.00	£300.00
Burmester 650 Monoblocks	£1,295.00	-	£3,000.00
Cary 300 se LX20 Monoblocks	On Demo	-	£5,250.00
Cary 572 SE Monoblocks	£1,950.00	-	£2,350.00
Cary 805 C Monoblocks	On Demo	-	£7,995.00
Counterpoint SA12	£495.00	£1,400.00	£1,500.00
Exposure IX Power supply	£795.00	£585.00	£700.00
Exposure VII	£450.00	£295.00	£400.00
Jadis Dely 7i MK III	£2,000.00	-	£4,795.00
John Shearm Reference Phase 2 Integ.	£575.00	-	£799.00
John Shearm Reference Phase 3 Power Amp	£250.00	-	£749.00
Kenwood L1000C pre/ L1000M Power Amp	£1,495.00	£995.00	£2,500.00
Krell FPB 300	£6,500.00	-	£9,990.00
Krell FPB 600	£8,995.00	-	£12,900.00
Krell KSA 250	£2,750.00	-	£6,700.00
Micromega Intrane 6 (int) X-demo	£1,795.00	-	£2,000.00
Sugden AUS1	£395.00	£795.00	£1,500.00
Pioneer A300 Int	£395.00	-	£1,800.00
Quad 77 Integrated	£450.00	£300.00	£300.00
Quad 306	£275.00	£150.00	£400.00
Quad 405	£225.00	£150.00	£ -
YBA 3x Pre/PWR	£1,495.00	£1,195.00	£2,400.00

## Pre Amplifiers

	Our Price	On Sale Price	Original Retail Price
Pinus 16L	£2,800.00	-	£3,200.00
Cello Audio Palette mv	£12,000.00	£8,000.00	£28,000.00
Krell KS1_pre	£1,295.00	£995.00	£ -
Sugden AUS1 c Pre	£695.00	£495.00	£ -
Audible Illusions L1	£1,795.00	-	£2,000.00
C.A.T. ultimate reference Pre Amp Inc/ Phono Stage X-Demo	£5,195.00	-	£5,750.00
Tube Tech Seer Pre Amp	£650.00	-	£935.00
Audible Illusions P3A Pre MM/MC	On demo	-	£3,140.00
Audio Research LS9	£1,995.00	£595.00	£2,500.00
Exposure VII	£395.00	£295.00	£1,195.00
Electrocompaniet EC 4.5 (new)	£295.00	£200.00	£600.00
Exposure VII	£795.00	£500.00	£1,500.00
Exposure XI pre XII psu	£3,750.00	-	£8,000.00
Jeff Rowland Consumate + phono (3box)	£695.00	-	£900.00
John Shearm Phase 6 Pre	£2,250.00	£1,395.00	£4,000.00
Mark Levinson No 28	£650.00	£395.00	£1,095.00
Mendian 541 Dolby Surround	£195.00	£100.00	£450.00
Naim 42.5	£475.00	£300.00	£767.00
Naim Nac 72			

## Quality Speakers

	Our Price	On Sale Price	Original Retail Price
Tannoy G R F	£2,495.00	-	£4,000.00
Sonus Faber Guarnen + Stand	£3,895.00	-	£5,500.00
Cello Serafin (Active Speakers)	£6,995.00	£4,000.00	£12,000.00
JM Lab Electra 915 1	Ex Dem	-	£1,895.00
Sonus Faber Grand Pianos + Bases	£1,395.00	£1,295.00	£1,900.00
Audio Physica Tempo III	£On Dem	-	£2,000.00
Jamo Concert 8 Anniversary Piano Black	£1,395.00	-	£1,850.00
Cadence Arca	£6,995.00	-	£10,000.00
Naim SBL's	£1,695.00	-	£2,225.00
Cadence ES	£1,495.00	£795.00	£3,500.00
Tanoy Westminster	£7,995.00	-	£16,000.00
BC Acoustics Tibre	£795.00	£600.00	£1,100.00
Clarivox Magnifica	£9,500.00	-	£14,500.00
B & W CD M7	£995.00	£500.00	£1,000.00
BC Acoustics Araxe	£995.00	-	£1,195.00
Ensemble Speakers PA1	£995.00	£850.00	£2,000.00
Acoustic Energy AE1 P/BK + Strd	£795.00	£600.00	£1,500.00
Acoustic Energy AE120	£350.00	£250.00	£500.00
Alon Adriana (new)	Special	-	£10,000.00
Alon V MK III	Special	-	£5,500.00
Audio Physica Caldera	On demo	-	£10,000.00
Audio Physica Libria	X-demo	-	£4,799.00
Audio Physica Rhea Sub	£2,350.00	£1,995.00	£3,099.00
Audio Physica Spark	On demo	-	£1,749.00
Audio Physica Steps	On demo	-	£999.00
Audio Physica Virgo	X-demo	£2,000.00	£3,295.00
Audio Stab DC1 + (Audi Silver)	£2,295.00	£1,500.00	£4,250.00
Electrocompaniet Qube	£995.00	£500.00	£1,400.00
Jamo SW3105 active sub	£495.00	£295.00	£800.00
Orpheo Swings	£2785.00	£500.00	£1,200.00
Rogers AB1 Sub (new)	£450.00	-	£598.00
Rogers LS3/ 5A Black (new)	£275.00	-	£798.00
Rogers LS55 (new)	£330.00	£200.00	£430.00
Shahinian Arcs	£1,195.00	-	£1,875.00
Soundlab Quantum	£1,495.00	-	£2,400.00
Wilson Cubs	£4,995.00	-	£6,000.00
Wilson System 5 1	£9,950.00	-	£18,000.00

## CD Players & DACS

	Our Price	On Sale Price	Original Retail Price
Pink Triangle De Capo & Battery p.s.u.	£1,795.00	£1,200.00	£3,500.00
Meracus Tanto CD	£1,195.00	-	£1,495.00
Cyrus Dac Master & Cyrus Dac Master	£450.00	£600.00	£999.00
Forrell Air Ref Transport MK II	£4,995.00	-	£8,000.00
Helios Model 3	£495.00	£300.00	£700.00
Krell KAV 250 CD	£1,895.00	-	£2,599.00
Krell KAV 300 CD	£2,750.00	£2,250.00	£4,290.00
Krell KPS 25ac	£18,995.00	-	£23,498.00
Marantz CD14	£1,295.00	-	£1,800.00
Mark Levinson 30.5/31	£11,500.00	-	£24,000.00
Mark Levinson No.39	£4,250.00	-	£5,000.00
Mendian 565	£1,495.00	£800.00	£2,500.00
Micromega CD 3.1	£1,065.00	£995.00	£1,995.00
Musical Fidelity X-ACT	£395.00	-	£1,300.00
Oracle CD 2000 Transport	P.O.A.	-	£7,299.00
Pink Triangle De Capo	£795.00	-	£1,595.00
Teac PS50	£395.00	-	£600.00
Theata Delta II Transport AT + Ink	£1,995.00	-	£4,000.00
YBA Integre	On Demo	£795.00	£1,095.00

## Turntables & Analogue

	Our Price	On Sale Price	Original Retail Price
Ortofon MC7500 Cart. (NEW)	£1,495.00	£1,295.00	£2,000.00
Nakamichi 202E	£295.00	£200.00	£600.00
Tom Evans - The Groove	£On Dem	£900.00	£1,500.00
Clear Audio Reference Mc phono stage X-demo	£1,695.00	-	£2,065.00
Tube Technology Max Phono Unit	£695.00	£495.00	£1,100.00
Raga Planer 3 - Hi Fi News Out Board Power Supply	£320.00	-	£423.00
Raga SuperExact Cartridge MM	£190.00	-	£248.00
Roksan 10 Turntable with Antimo Tone ARM (black)	£1,995.00	-	£3,200.00
Symphonic phono stage X-demo MM/MC	£340.00	-	£740.00
Clear Audio Evolution - ARM	£995.00	£800.00	£1,475.00
Helios Cylene Tonearm ANS 6 Wire	£895.00	£200.00	£ -
Lavardin Reference Phono	£ -	-	£2,500.00
Micheli Synco RB300	£450.00	£300.00	£ -
Musical Fidelity XLP2	£395.00	£295.00	£495.00
Musical Fidelity XLP Phono Stage	£395.00	-	£1,499.00
Oracle MK V Turntable	P.O.A.	-	£4,199.00
Pink Triangle PT Too Ref Bearing/ platter/ clamp	£395.00	-	£1,095.00

## AV COMPONENTS

Denon AVC A10 AV Processor/ Amplifier	£1,195.00	£2,000.00	
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## TELEVISIONS & DVD PLAYERS BY LOEWE

Loewe DVD	On Demo	£495.00	
Loewe Aconda	-	POA	
Loewe Planus	-	POA	
Loewe Xelos	-	POA	

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From Electrophil Delphi	-	POA	



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## S/hand and ex-demo clearance items - March'01

### CD Players & DAC'S

	Was	Now
Audio Research CD2 CD Player (Class A Stereophile) S/H	3500	1795
Cary CAD 855 Valve CD Player	995	399
Densen Beat 400 CD player (New & boxed) HDCD	1280	999
DPA PDM1 MKII DAC S/H	399	175
Jadis JD3 Deluxe CD Player/Transport S/H	3600	1795
Kenwood 9010X Clock 3 moded Transport S/H	N/A	275
Levinson 31.5 Transport S/H	9500	4095
Marantz CD 7 S/H	3500	2795
Monrio 18B2 DAC Ex-demo	950	399
Monrio Bit Match Transport Ex-demo	950	499
Rega Jupiter Transport/I/O DAC Ex-demo	975	750
Resolution Audio D92 24/96 Dac/Processor Ex-demo	1500	995
Resolution Audio VT960 DVD Transport Ex-demo	3500	1999
Roksan DA1 Converter S/H	495	149
Technics SL-P720 CD Player	599	199

### Turntables Tonearms & Cartridges

Alphason Sonata/Atlas/HR100MCS S/H	2000	649
Benz Micro Ruby (New & Boxed)	1500	899
Dias Turntable Motor Unit Only S/H	N/A	199
Decca London Gold (J. Wright Re-Built/Podded) S/H	N/A	250
Densen DP02 Drive MC Phono Stage Ex-demo	350	229
Counterpoint SA-2 MC Valve Step-Up S/H	1599	375
Garrard 401/Aphelion/SME 3012/V15 S/H	N/A	499
Linn Trioka MC( 650 Hrs) S/H	N/A	250
Mantra Manticore Reference/Musician/Eroica S/H	2100	995
Roksan Artemiz Tonearm (Latest Version) Ex-demo	895	650
Roksan Artexerxes MK1 Phono Stage S/H	495	195
Roksan DS 5 Atessa PSU Ex-demo	549	399
Roksan Radius 3 Turntable (98) Ex-demo	470	250
Roksan Xerxes Piano Lacquer XPS 1 (SME Cut) S/H	1295	450
SME Series V (1 year old, boxed) S/H	1471	995
Thorens TD 125 (needs attention)	N/A	50
Trio K500/SME 3009/E77 S/H	N/A	150

### Preamplifiers

Audio Research LS9 Remote Solid State (Ex-demo)	1999	1399
Audio Research PH1 Phono Stage S/H	1599	749
Densen DM20 Preamplifier Ex-demo	1380	899
DPA Enlightenment New Style Ex-demo	799	449
Michell ArgoHR/Hera S/H	N/A	475
Mod Squad Line Drive AGT S/H	599	299
Naim Audio 32 MM/MC Preamplifier S/H	N/A	129
Naim Audio 72 Preamplifier	790	395
OCM 55 Preamplifier S/H	995	399
Quad 33 Preamplifier	N/A	45

### Amplifiers

Audio Innovations 1st Series 7.5 watt S/H	1795	650
Audio Note P1SE Ltd Edition (Silver) S/H	1600	849
Audio Note P2SE Valve Power Amplifier S/H	1499	795
Audiolab 8000S Integrated S/H	900	499
Audion Sterling Integrated Line Ex-demo	799	399
Bartolomeo Transperenza ST140 Power Amplifier S/H	1500	695
Graaf 50/50 Push Pull Power amplifier (New & boxed)	2100	1695
Graaf GM100 (New & boxed)	4450	3299
Jadis JA80 Mono 60W Valve Amplifiers S/H	9950	3499
Michell Alecto MK2 Mono Power amplifiers Ex-demo	1995	1599
OCM 200 Power Amplifier S/H	1599	799
Quad II Anniversary Mono Valve Power Amplifiers Ex-demo	6000	2999
Quad 33/303 Amplifier	N/A	250
Rega Big Brio Amplifier Ex-demo	298	199
Rega Maia Power Amplifier Ex-demo	475	349

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### Loudspeakers

	Was	Now
Audio Note AN-J/SP Light Oak Loudspeakers Ex-demo	1230	750
Audio Note AN-K/SP Light Ash Loudspeakers Ex-demo	1070	629
Audio Note AN-Z Two Floor standers (Black) Ex-demo	549	395
B&W CDM1SE Cherry Loudspeakers S/H	599	399
Diapason Adamantes III & Stands (New & boxed)	2400	1899
Diapason Karis Walnut 2 Way Monitor (New & boxed)	1250	950
Final 0.3 Hybrid Electrostatics (Ex-demo)	1500	1299
Indigo Centre Ex-demo	199	129
JM Lab Colbalt 807 Cherry Ex-demo	595	425
Martin Logan Prodigy Hybrid Electrostatic Ex-demo	9450	7999
ProAc Tablette 2000 Light Oak Ex-demo	695	450
VelodyneTX810MK2 Subwoofer S/H	695	379

### Cables & Accessories

Air Sus Cherry Platform Ex-demo	169	99
Audio Research BL1 Balanced Converter S/H	888	399
Audio Sculpture 2m RCA Interconnect Ex-demo	380	149
Deskadel 1m Interconnects WBT/RCA S/H	300	150
Einstein Octopus 8 Way Mains Block (Ex-demo)	199	149
Lindsey Audiophile 2m Satin RCA Interconnect New	495	199
Madrigal HPC 2m Balanced Interconnect Ex-demo	310	149
Magnan 1m Balanced Interconnect Ex-demo	695	250
Shakti On Lines (New & boxed)	85	45
Shakti Stones (New & boxed)	195	120
Sicomini Platform (Made for AS) S/H	99	45
Slate Audio Stands 21" S/H	489	199
Tara Labs Master RSC Gen II 2x3m Balanced S/H	1250	499
Target 5 Tier Silver Stand MDF Shelves Ex-Demo	249	145
Vdh CD 102 MkIII 1m Interconnects RCA-RCA S/H	149	65
Vdh Skytrack 2x4m Bi-wire Speaker Cable	75	39

### Tuners & Tape Decks

Cymbol C DAB Digital Tuner (Ex-demo)	1000	750
Magnum Dynalab FT101 Analogue Tuner (New & boxed)	850	679
Rega Radio R Tuner (Ex-demo)	350	249
Roksan Caspian Tuner AM/FM (Ex-demo)	599	399
Quad FM3 Tuner	N/A	75
Technics Twin Cassette RSTR212	N/A	45

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- Clearaudio : ProAc
- Conrad Johnston : Rega
- Copland : Resolution Audio
- Dcs : Sonus Faber
- DNM / Reson : Spectral
- Einstein : SPM
- Electrocompaniet : Sugden
- Final : UKD
- Finite Elemente :

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## CLEARANCE BARGAINS

		WAS	NOW			WAS	NOW
ACOUSTIC ENERGY AEGIS 2	XD	£250	£179	NAKAMICHI CR-4E	SH	LOTS	£229
ACOUSTIC ENERGY AEGIS 3	XD	£350	£250	MARANTZ CD6000	XD	£250	£179
ARCAM ALPHA 7 SE CD	NEW	£300	£249	MARANTZ CD6000 KI	XD	£500	£399
AUDIO ANALOGUE BELLINI	XD	£495	£389	MARANTZ CD6000 OSE	XD	£300	£225
AUDIO ANALOGUE DONIZETTI	XD	£595	£395	MARANTZ DR6000 CDR	XD	£500	£379
AVI NUNEUTRON	XD	£499	£389	MARANTZ PM6010 OSE	XD	£230	£169
AVI BIGGATRON	XD	£600	£469	MARANTZ PM6010 OSE K.I.SIG	XD	£400	£299
AVI S2000 MC 24-BIT CD	XD	£995	£695	MARANTZ SR5000	XD	£500	£349
ALR JORDAN NO 4	NEW	£1200	£719	MONRIO ASTY CD	XD	£700	£495
ALR JORDAN TAKE 2	NEW	£1700	£995	MUSICAL TECHNOLOGY OSPREY	SH	£250	£125
ANTHEM INT2 AMP	XD	£1800	£995	MUSICAL TECHNOLOGY PM15	XD	£475	£229
ATC SCM10 YEW	XD	£1240	£849	MYRYAD CAMEO SYSTEM	XD	£1500	£995
AUDIO ANALOGUE PAGANINI	XD	£750	£599	NAD C520 CD PLAYER	XD	£170	£129
AUDIO ANALOGUE PAGANINI CD	XD	£750	£569	PROJECT 1.2	XD	£200	£149
AUDIO ANALOGUE PUCCINI R	XD	£575	£459	ROTEL RA-931 MK2	XD	£189	£139
B+W P4	SH	£675	£399	ROTEL RA-972	XD	£450	£349
CASTLE HOWARD S2 MAHOGANY	XD	£1299	£799	ROTEL RB 971 MK2 PWR	XD	£250	£179
CASTLE SEVERN 2 SE	XD	£699	£499	ROTEL RC971	XD	£175	£129
CHARIO ACADEMY ONE	XD	£1450	£799	ROTEL RC1070	XD	£350	£259
CHARIO ACADEMY TWO	XD	£1700	£919	ROTEL RCD951	SH	£375	£269
CHARIO ACADEMY THREE	XD	£8500	£3995	ROTEL RCD991	XD	£825	£599
CREEK OBH-11	XD	£129	£89	SONIC FRONTIERS TRANSPORT 3	XD	£7000	£4500
CRIMSON 610c PRE	SH	£450	£250	SONNETEER ALABASTER	XD	£900	£599
CRIMSON 620c PWR	SH	£450	£250	SONNETEER CHAMPION	XD	£600	£399
CRIMSON 630c MONOBLOCKS (PAIR)	SH	£850	£450	SONUS FABER CONCERTO W	XD	£945	£729
DIAPHASON ADEMANTES III INC STANDS	XD	£2450	£1795	TANNOY MX2	NEW	£150	£99
ELECTROCOMPANIE ECI-3	XD	£999	£749	TANNOY MX3	NEW	£230	£149
HARMAN KARDON AVR200	XD	£400	£249	TANNOY REV R1	NEW	£199	£129
JBL XT120 (BEECH)	XD	£400	£299	TANNOY REV R2	NEW	£400	£265
JBL XT140 (BEECH)	XD	£500	£379	TANNOY REV R3	NEW	£550	£399
KEF Q35	SH	£350	£125	TANNOY CANTERBURY 15HE	XD	£8500	£4995
KENWOOD DPF3030-S	XD	£180	£129	TEAC AV H500	XD	£380	£249
KENWOOD KAF303R-S	XD	£250	£175	TEAC REFERENCE 300	XD	£599	£449
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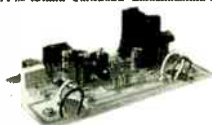
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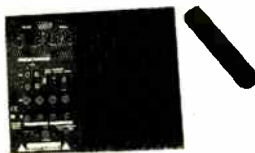
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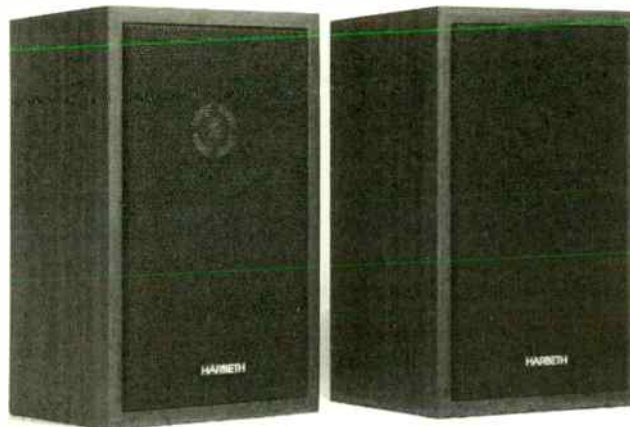
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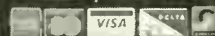
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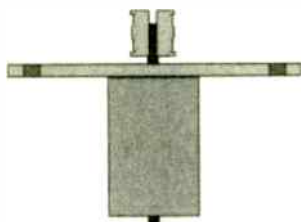
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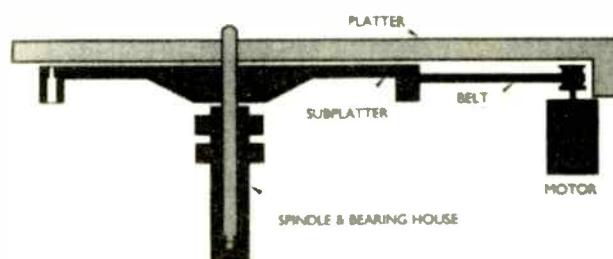
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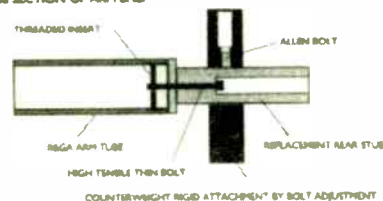
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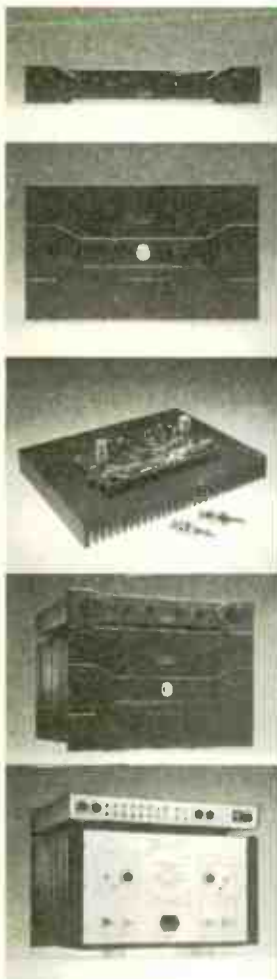
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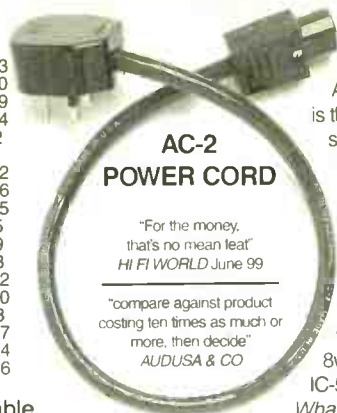
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AudioSource

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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.

# Ortofon WARNING

We have recently been advised that there may be some non-original and / or defect cartridges available on the UK market. Needless to say, these items are offered at very attractive prices and appear to be excellent value for money. Do not be fooled, only Ortofon products purchased from an authorised dealer are guaranteed authentic and are covered by the distributors and manufacturers warranty.

Please contact Henley Designs should you have any doubts or wish to locate your nearest authorised dealer.



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## VINTAGE AND MODERN HI-FI SOLD, BOUGHT.

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**Identity**  
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DRIVE UNITS

	LIST	SALE
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GUARNERI HOMAGE	1,800	799
LUXURY STANDS + GRANITE BASE beautiful finish, suit all SF speakers	599	430
CONCERTINO	945	750
CONCERTO	1,550	1,290
CONCERTO GRAN P.	2,849	1,950
ELECTA AMATOR 2	5,795	3,750
GUARNERI HOMAGE	1,250	999
SIGNUM	N/A	2,850
EXTREMA	11,450	8,750
AMATI HOMAGE		

Prices refer to new/mint condition and sealed

**WHARFEDALE** mod. AIR DALE, huge cabinet £ 200 the pair! **LOWTHER** Acoustat Cabinet £ 100 the pair, Belcanto £ 1,500 (piano finish) rare, few made; Fidelio £ 1,100. Drive Units: (each) PM6A £ 235; PM7A £ 290; PM2A £ 350. **MAUHORN** beautiful cabinet for PM2A £ 1,000. **QUAD ESL** Black or Bronze £ 600; **AUDIO NOTE** ANSP Pure Silver Speaker Cable £ 300 (2 x 1.5m) £ 500 (4 x 1.5m) **A.R.T.** simply the best (for Sonus Faber) from £ 100 per meter!!

**AUDIO VALVES**  
PX4 POA; PP3/250 POA; KT61 £ 15; KT66 G.E.C. £ 50/60; EL34 MULLARD POA; EL84

**POA**; ECC82 Mullard £ 8 each, ECC83 Mullard £ 10 each; E88CC Brimar/Mullard/Pinnacle £ 7 each; also GZ32/34 and other rectifiers. Please phone for details and prices.

**VINTAGE/MODERN AMPS**  
Introducing the new Italian NIGHTINGALE valve integrated/power amps: AFS 20 £ 1,250; AFS 30 £ 1,699; ADM 20 TBC; **LEAK** TL 10 £600/650; TL12+ £ 350 (pair) or £ 150 single; TL12.1 £ 1,300-1,450 (pair); Stereo 20 £ 450; TL 50 POA; QUAD II good/mint £ 550/600; QUAD 405 mint £ 280; **RADFORD** STA 15 with preamp £ 800; STA25 £ 1,000; **UNISON** **RESEARCH**; SMART 845 bargain £ 2,800!!!; SIMPLY 2 £ 999; PENTODE 35 £ 1,490; **AUDIO ANALOGUE** PUCCINI £ 350 (mint); PUCCINI SE £ 550 (mint); **ROGERS** HG88 £ 300, Cadet III £ 200; **BEAM ECHO DHT** etc £ 1,300; M7 preamplifier phone £ 5,000; **CONCORDANT EXHILARANT** line preamp (£ 900) £ 450; **CROFT** Vitale £ 475; **GRAAF** Venti-cinque £ 900; **JADIS** DEFY 100 £ 2,000;

**TUNABLES/CARTRIDGE/ARMS**  
**GARRARD** 301 POA; 401 £ 0; **MICHELL** Gyrodeck MKII ex-demo £ 750; MicroGyro Arm £ 500; **NOTTINGHAM ANALOGUE** MENTOR REFERENCE (one of the best in the market) mint condition £ 2000; Interspace £ 350; Spacedeck £ 550; HyperSpace £ 1,190; **NOTTINGHAM** The Foot (12" tone arm) £ 850; SME 309 £ 550; SME 3009 £ 130; SME 3012 £ 250; **ORTOFON** Rohmann mint/sealed £ 750; MC10 Supreme £ 210; MC20 Supreme £ 375; MC30 Supreme £ 425; **AUDIO NOTE** IO-V £ 1,000; **SUMIKO** Blue Point S £ 199.

**CD PLAYERS/DAC**  
**G.E.C.** TL2 Belt Drive as new £ 1,350; **AUDIO NOTE** DAC 4 bargain £ 2,500. **AUDIO ANALOGUE** PAGANNINI £ 650.

**CASH WAITING for the following valves: PX4; PX25; PP3/250; P650/P15/250; P12/250; AC044; PP3/400; RS241; 300BWE; KT61; KT66 2A3; 211; EL84 (Mullard); LEAK; RADFORD; QUAD I and II; DYNATRON, any RGD amp; GOODMANS AXIOM 80 - TANNAY & LOWTHER**

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### CD PLAYERS

HELIOS MODEL 3	£700	£375
CYRUS DAD3Q24	£900	£700
CYRUS CD7	£800	£700
LINN GENKI	£995	£875
LINN IKEMI	£1950	£1650
COPLAND CDA266	£1399	£1199

### AMPLIFIERS

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-A1	£480	£350
MUSICAL FIDELITY A300	£1400	£1000
MUSICAL FIDELITY X-10D	£120	£100
LINN MAJIK with phono	£845	£645
LINN WAKONDA with phono	£945	£700
LINN LK140	£750	£650
LINN KAIRN	£2400	£2000
TALK ELEC STORM 2	£650	£350
TALK ELEC TORNADO 2	£600	£300
CYRUS 7	£700	£600
CYRUS APA7 pair	£1900	£1500

### SPEAKERS

OPERA PRIMA	£495	£345
LINN AV5140 cherry	£2150	£1800
SONUS FABER CONCERTO	£945	£745
PMC TB2 cherry	£600	£500
PMC FB1	£1275	£1125
PMC TB2 centre	£325	£275
HOME CINEMA		
DENON AVCA1SE	£2500	£2200
DENON AVC10SE	£1300	£1150
DENON POAT10	£500	£425
CYRUS AV5	£1000	£800

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Alchemist Kraken Anniversary MkII	£599	£POA
Alchemist Forsetti R/C Int Amp	£1250	£650
Alchemist Genesis monoblocks	£1500	£695
Anthem CD player (5 star What Hi-Fi)(ex/d)	£1699	£899
Audio Research D240 Mk.II	£3500	£1195
Audion Black Shadows 845 valve monoblocks	£4000	£POA
Audion Silvernight 300B monoblocks	£2250	£POA
Audio Alchemy drive 3 + V3DAC + 3PSU	£1649	£759
AVI S2000MP Pre + Rata PSU	£1450	£750
AVI S2000 Monoblocks	£1400	£750
Chario Academy 1 solid walnut (ex/d)	£1299	£800
Chario Academy 2 solid walnut (ex/d)	£1649	£1100
Conrad Johnson PV10AL Pre	£1095	£595
EAR 859 pwr. amp	£1599	£750
Krell Kav 3001	£2495	£POA
Krell KSA 80 pwr. amp	£3498	£1495
Krell KSA 250 pwr. amp	£6700	£2500
Krell KSL pre amp	£2298	£995
Krell KAV-S Prologic, AC3, DTS, THX PRE	£13500	£6500
Macintosh 7106 6ch. THX pwr. amp	£4000	£1999
Meridian 207 CD + PRE		£350
Proac Response 4 spks	£12000	£3995
Pass Aleph LFP PRE	£3800	£2195
Quad ESL.63 + Stands	£3500	£1395
Spendor SP7/1 spks.	£1995	£650
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Quad FM2 tuner	£ 60
Quad QC1 Pre-amp (early model)	£120
Quad QC II Pre-amp	£ 40
Quad FM1 Tuner	£ 40
Quad II mains transformer	£100
Quad II output transformer	£100
Quad II output transformer (100v line)	£ 50
Quad II choke	£ 30
Quad II Fuse Holder	£ 7
Quad II chassis - wiring loom	£ 35

Please phone for details of other  
Quad/Leak/Garrard spares

**Leak**

Leak TL12.1 (pair)	£1700
Leak TL12+ (single)	£150
Leak Stereo 20	£250
Leak Stereo 60	£550
Leak Troughline 3 Tuner (Mono)	£ 75

**Most Models Of Leak Mono +  
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Colton MC101 arm	£ 30
Garrard 301	(from) £150
Garrard 401 (Mint)	£175
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Nakamichi Remote Control Unit RM-610	£ 20
PYE HF5/8 Amps (pair)	£450
SME 3009 II (in original box)	£120
SME 3009 III + Fluid Damper	£100
Tannoy HPD15" gold crossover (single)	£ 50
Technics SLD-202 Turntable (No Lid)	£ 25
Thorens TD124 II	£250
Thorens TD135	£120
Thorens TD150	£ 40

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Pickering TL2S (boxed/unused)	£ 20
Decca London Gold (boxed/unused)	£200
Shure Stylus Pressure Gauge	
SFG2 (boxed)	£ 25

**Moving Coil**

Ortofon SPU-TE used/good	£150
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**Valves (G.E.C. Mullard etc.)**

PX25, KT66, ECC81/84, EF80  
Many Others. Please Phone For Details.

**Valve Alert**

Mullard ECC81 Genuine N.O.S.	
Blue Box, made in England	each £8
G.E.C. PX25 (single)	£120

Photocopies Of Circuit Diagrams  
+ Vintage Hi-Fi Literature  
Spare Parts For Quad + Leak -  
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**Speakers**

Celestion 12" bass drive units (pair)	£ 10
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Lowther Acoustas (PM6 Alnico) (pair)	£350
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CRIMSON 610c Pre + 610 P5 Power	£195.00
GARRARD 401 Turntable Chassis	£75.00
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Denon DR M2 Cassette S/H	£95.00
Dpa little Bit Dac	£325.00
Dpa DSP 200s preamp	£125.00
MUSICAL FIDELITY Digilog DAC	£995.00 in flight case
METAXAS Marquis Preamp	£395.00
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- Van den Hul First Ultimate interconnect. 1m set. £225. S/H.
- GRAAF GM 20 OTL valve power amp. £2250. S/H.
- DENON AVC-A1D AV Processor/amp. 4 months old. Mint. Boxed. £1150. S/H.
- SONUS FABER Solo centre speaker. Black. Unused. £425. S/H.
- NORDOST Quatrofil Reference interconnects. 1.5 m (x2) £875 PER PAIR. X/D
- CHORD 1400B Mono block power amps. Black. As new. Boxed. £5500. S/H.
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- VERITAS 7's. Piano Cherry. With stands. As new. £995. X/D.
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M/F DIGILOG DAC	-	69 S/H
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CYRUS DAD 1.5 CD MINT	400	239 D
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D = EX DEMONSTRATION, N = NEW, S/H = SECOND HAND

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# MEASURED PERFORMANCE

## LOUDSPEAKERS

### WHARFEDALE Pi-30

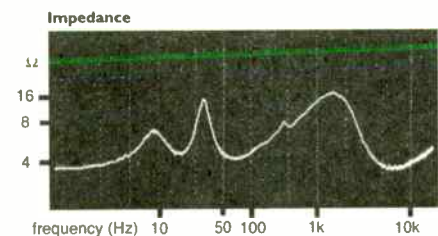
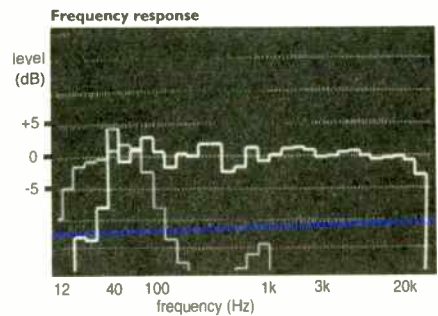
The bigger cabinet of a floorstander should provide extra bass depth, something listeners appreciate for the sense of scale it can bring to a performance. With twin bass drivers as well, to increase cone area, Wharfedale's Pi-30s should go low and have some punch. Frequency response measurement showed Wharfedale have been successful in pushing the limits here, forward output reaching down to 40Hz with relatively little response variation. The port takes over below this, reaching down to an impressively low 15Hz (-5dB). Although our analysis does not match port SPL to cone SPL, it shows the port goes low and has an unusually broad, flat response of its own, meaning it is well damped in itself and will also apply strong back-damping to the bass driver. Our impedance analysis confirms this in the breadth of the dip around bass unit resonance, which in turn reduces mechanical and reflected electrical reactance in the system. The Pi-30 is a slightly easier load at low frequencies because of this, although a low minimum impedance of 4ohms below 200Hz also means amplifiers must be able to push current without difficulty to cope well.

Frequency response measurement also showed excellent integration

between tweeter and the upper bass/mid driver, meaning the speakers will sound consistent whether a listener is sitting or standing, and that they should also be a little less room sensitive. Lack of crossover dip at 3kHz ensures strong detailing and a smooth upper treble characteristic means there should be no sting in the sound. The near-flat response at high frequencies also means the Pi-30s will sound quite bright in a sparsely furnished room with reflective walls. The tweeter can be swivelled away from side walls though.

Unfortunately, the tweeter is a low impedance device that draws high frequency current and puts quite a lot of reactance into the load at 3kHz where it takes over. This can push some amps into distortion, so listen first. Another minus point is a mediocre sensitivity of 87dB, in spite of a low impedance of 5ohms overall. Wharfedale have probably sacrificed sensitivity for extended bass, but the Pi-30s still needs an amplifier with muscle and a good high frequency performance if it is to give its best.

The Pi-30s have an impressively wide, flat frequency response for their size. They measure well in all other areas too, but need a quality amplifier to give their best. **NK**



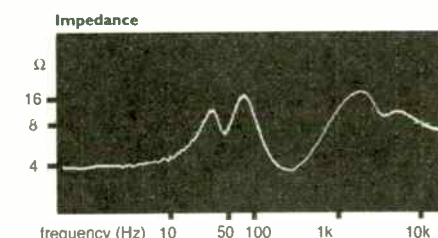
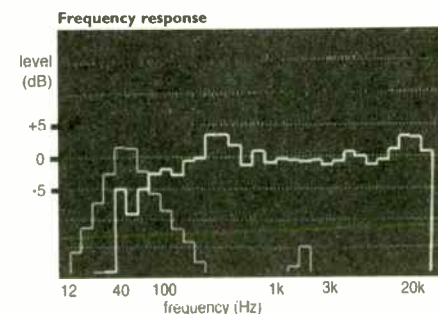
### KEF CRESTA 3

The Cresta 3 has +3dB of treble lift at high frequencies, our response analysis shows, the effect occurring above 10kHz. Below this, output reaches down to 500Hz, before another lift occurs, boosting lower midrange down to 250Hz. This may add some colouration. Below 200Hz output starts to fall away, until the port takes effect, maintaining output down to 40Hz. It's a somewhat characterful curve, meaning the Cresta 3 will have its own sound, that may or may not appeal. It is less accurate than KEFs usually are, but then this is a surround-sound loudspeaker built to a budget.

Like so many manufacturers KEF use

a 4ohm bass unit to boost voltage sensitivity. It is allied to an 8ohm tweeter, giving the usual impedance curve, but happily free from crossover V/I phase swings. Because the port impacts the curve less than usual the load is reasonably reactance free, possessing no sudden changes. This means the Cresta is quite a good load, although it will draw current. Sensitivity was high at 88dB SPL for one nominal watt of input, so the 'speaker will go loud for any particular volume control position.

The Cresta 3 will have its own distinctive sound, being a bit tiddled for surround-sound use. Otherwise it is well enough engineered. **NK**



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Marantz CD 50 CD player Ex condition Boxed	£ 80
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## OPERA OPERETTA

The small Operetta has a nearly ruler flat frequency response right up to 20kHz our third-octave analysis shows. This looks good but in practice it gives a rather hard, bright sound, ameliorated only by heavily furnished rooms. There's no bass lift either, so bass quality may well be 'dry' or light, unless the speaker is used close to a rear wall. The 'speaker will sound detailed though, and very clear and precise too.

Bass output rolls off below 60Hz and the port is tuned high, to 63Hz. It extends bass downward a little, but not much. Its narrow tuning means the bass driver is lightly damped, so it will sound a bit 'bouncy' at 60Hz and thereabouts, which in a small loudspeaker can give quite a good impression of lively bass.

## TEAC LSI00U

This little loudspeaker is made by Eltax for Teac. That it's a budget design can be seen in the unevenness of frequency response, which leads to tonal variation that produces 'character'. Although more Himalayan than most in profile, the response still manages to keep its variation to reasonable limits around the 0dB central reference line, so it's not such a bad effort. It's the low cost drive units that produce this result, rather than the basic engineering. Quite how the 'speaker will sound is best left to listening tests, but the upper midrange peak will make it a bit bright

There'll be no boom, because cabinet loading has been well executed to give a well damped function.

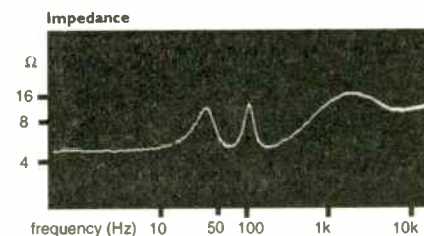
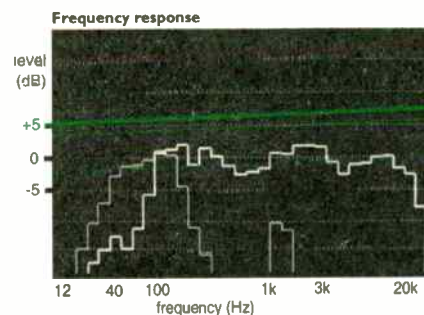
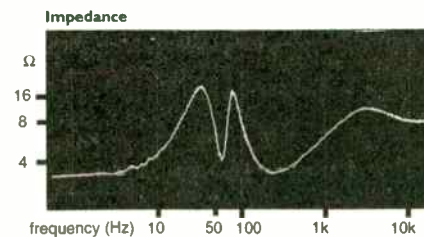
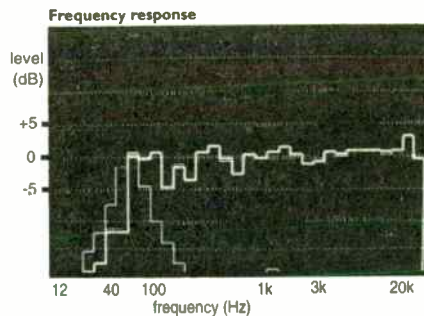
Small loudspeakers are insensitive by nature, the Operetta being no exception. It produced 84dB sound pressure level from a nominal watt of input, which isn't great. It has a fairly low overall impedance of 5ohms too, mainly due to use of a 4ohm bass driver, which will draw current. The tweeter is an 8ohm unit and the impedance characteristic reasonably smooth and reactance free, which helps amplifier matching.

The Operetta is best used close to a rear wall. It will sound bright but detailed. A smooth sounding solid-state amplifier of 60W is needed. **NK**

and 'shouty'. The bass unit rolls off below 100Hz, the port operating below this frequency. It is tuned high, to around 75Hz, but is well damped, giving broad output that stretches down to 40Hz.

Sensitivity is low at 84.5dB SPL from one watt input, into an overall impedance of 6ohms. All small loudspeakers produce little volume from large power though, contrary to what you might imagine.

The LSI00U is neatly engineered for its price. It's a balanced design with no glaring weaknesses. **NK**



## AMPLIFIERS

### COPLAND 402

The CTA-402 produced a good 36W per channel, which is respectable for a valve amplifier, and about right for the EL-34 output pentodes used too. Chunky E/I cores with plenty of iron gave good results at low frequencies, full output being delivered cleanly at 40Hz. Unfortunately, there was too much reactance (leakage inductance or distributed capacitance) in the coils, resulting in a rapid rise in distortion at high frequencies. The amplifier could not swing full output at 10kHz and there was a small resonant peak out at 60kHz. The transformers need more sectionalising or layering (which costs more of course), then the 402 could give a usefully improved high frequency performance. It's a little crude in this area.

Sensitivity (CD/tuner) was low at 380mV but frequency response quite wide at 13Hz-53kHz (-1dB).

Copland include a valve phono

stage, which is interesting. Done properly, valve phono stages reveal the wonder of the LP like nothing else.

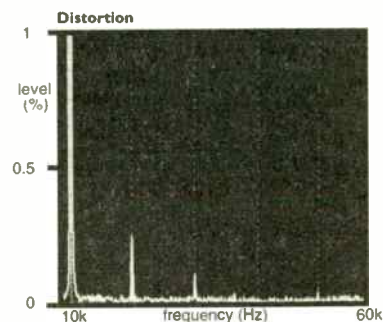
Unfortunately, equalisation wasn't too accurate with shelf bass loss on the 3160uS curve and treble lift on the 75uS curve that together will give a bright sound lacking deep bass. Noise was low at -76dB but this was partly because sensitivity was low at 3.8mV. It is good enough for moving magnet types though.

This is a good attempt at a powerful integrated valve amplifier, but it needs more attention to detail. **NK**

Power	36watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	13Hz-53kHz
Separation	82dB
Noise	-93dB
Distortion	0.04%

Sensitivity	380mV
dc offset	0/0mV

Disc	
Frequency response	70Hz-56kHz
Separation	66dB
Noise	-76dB
Distortion	0.006%
Sensitivity	3.8mV
Overload	270mV



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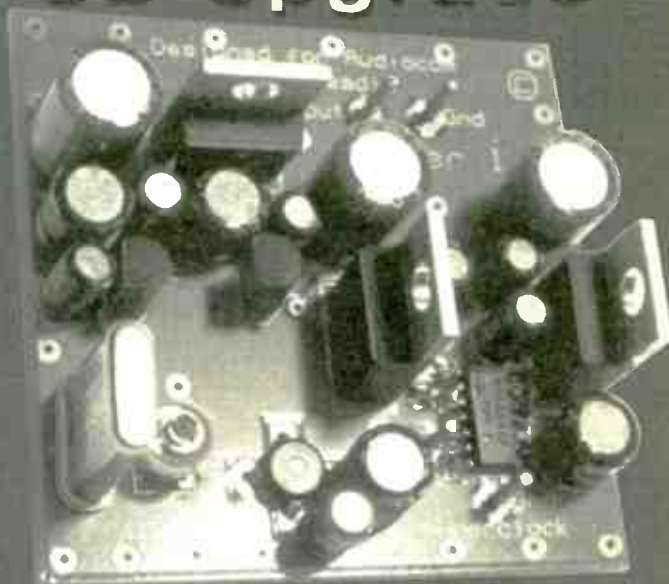
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## KENWOOD KAF-3030 R

For a budget amplifier the Kenwood turns out a useful amount of power, producing 66W into 8ohms and 100W into 4ohms. It's enough to produce plenty of volume from reasonably sensitive modern loudspeakers in a normal sized room.

The amplifier copes with low loads respectably well. Distortion rose when more current was drawn, but it didn't reach unacceptable levels. I have measured up to 0.3%, which is poor. The Kenwood managed 0.05% into 4ohms, which is relatively good. I'd expect it to sound fairly smooth.

The CD input was insensitive, needing 280mV for full output, but most sources will match, developing 300mV or more. At times volume may need to be cranked up a little more than usual though.

Distortion levels were respectably low under all conditions, from low power to full power, and right across the audio band. The worst the amplifier managed was 0.05% producing full power into a low load.

Kenwood's disc stage had plenty of

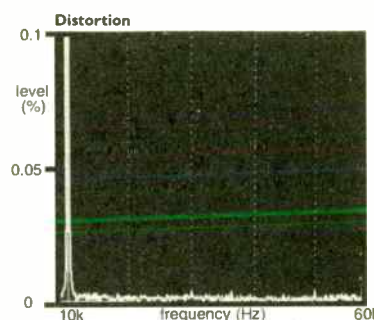
bass extension; Japanese amplifiers rarely employ warp filters. Equalisation was reasonably accurate, sensitivity normal for MM at 3.5mV and overload very high at 250mV. There was little hiss also, measuring -76dB.

The tone controls worked very well, applying precise amounts of boost or cut, up to a maximum of 8dB, and without affecting any other part of the audio band. Treble boost /cut occurred above 2kHz, whilst bass worked below 500Hz. Even small amounts of trim could be precisely dialled up - unusual.

This is a neatly engineered unit that produces useful powers and has no measured weaknesses. **NK**

Power	66watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	5Hz-46kHz
Separation	70dB
Noise	-100dB
Distortion	0.005%
Sensitivity	280mV
dc offset	1/0.6mV

Disc	
Frequency response	10Hz-41kHz
Separation	62dB
Noise	-68dB
Distortion	0.006%
Sensitivity	3.5mV
Overload	250mV



## MERIDIAN 502/557

Meridian's heavyweight 557 stereo power amplifier produced a healthy 200W into 8ohms and 360W into 4ohms. Output volts dropped little when switching from 8ohms to 4ohms, showing the power supply has very good regulation. As a result the amplifier can deliver huge currents with little dynamic droop, which should give excellent bass quality, even with difficult loudspeakers. Obviously, there's more than enough power here to go very loud without peak clipping.

Distortion figures remained low when driving heavy current into a low load, something that isn't as common as it should be. The power amplifier produced just 0.004% distortion at low levels in the midband, rising to 0.014% at high frequencies, so this is a low distortion design. The distortion figure rose little at full output, reaching 0.02%. Lack of high frequency distortion is a good sign in any amplifier. It suggests, although it doesn't guarantee, smooth treble.

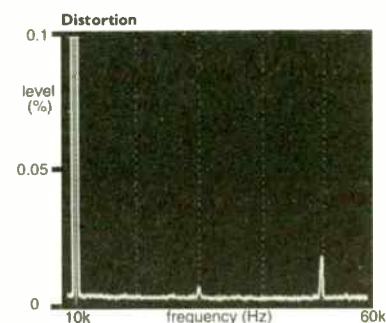
Input sensitivity with the 502 pre-amplifier was a very high 70mV, enough to ensure the amplifier will match all sources, even old tuners and such like.

Meridian's moving coil disc stage was sensitive but quiet too, as quiet as they can get when taking the massive amount gain available into account. There's no warp filter, frequency response reaching down to 10Hz, -1dB. This characteristic results in solid, deep bass from LP, but warped records might cause some cone flap.

This Meridian system is thoughtfully engineered to drive any loudspeaker loud, irrespective of how difficult it may be as a load, without strain. It will accept any source, having an MC phono stage as good as any available, including Linn's. This is an excellent product. **NK**

Power	200watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	5Hz-32kHz
Separation	78dB
Noise	-80dB
Distortion	0.004%
Sensitivity	70mV
dc offset	1/0.6mV
Disc	

Frequency response	10Hz-31kHz
Separation	71dB
Noise	-68dB
Distortion	0.006%
Sensitivity	0.14mV
Overload	5mV



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## TEAC CR-H100

The amplifier of this neat little unit produced 24W into 8ohms and 30W into 4ohms, so it is no powerhouse. With sensitive loudspeakers of 90dB or more (meaning floorstanders) this would be ample for loud volume, but the small bookshelf types supplied were insensitive at 84dB SPL and will not go very loud from this level of power. Expect entertainment levels, not high levels.

Distortion levels were low, however, the amplifier looking very respectable in this area, even at high frequencies. Frequency response was curtailed, but also a bit tailored to produce a bouncy sound it appeared.

Various equalisations (e.g. jazz) can be selected to spice the sound up a little, so the notion of a flat response is a bit redundant here. Overall, the amplifier measured well.

The CD player also measured respectably well, treble extending right up to 19kHz and the bass going down nicely to 8Hz. Again, distortion was reasonably well tamed by budget standards, with little sign of the sort of extended harmonic pattern that indicates coarseness. With broad separation and low noise this unit gives good results. **NK**

## AMPLIFIER

Power 24watts

CD/tuner/aux.

Frequency response 44Hz-44kHz

Separation 89dB

Noise -89dB

Distortion 0.005%

Sensitivity 200mV

dc offset 0.1/0.6mV

## CD

Frequency response

8Hz-19.2kHz

Distortion

left right

-6dB 0.037 0.04

-30dB 0.13 0.13

-60dB 0.8 0.8

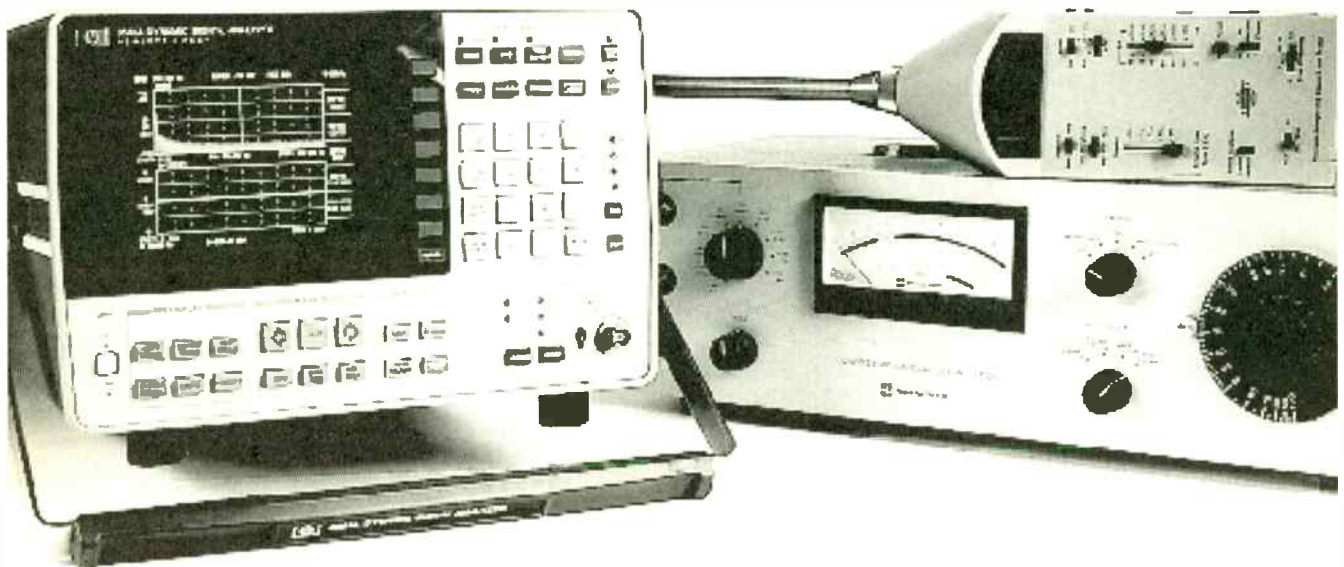
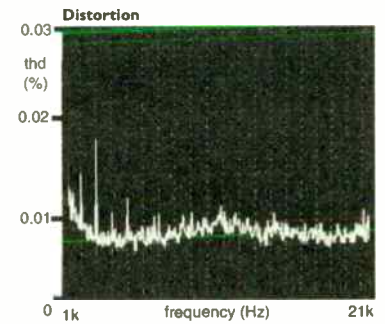
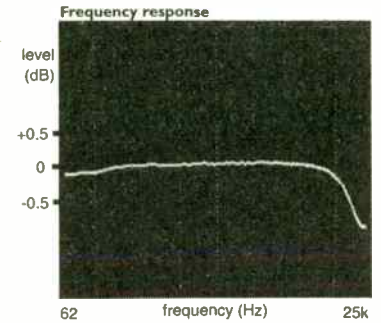
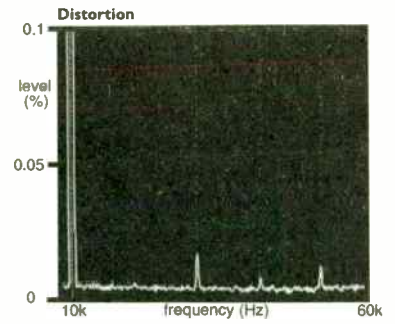
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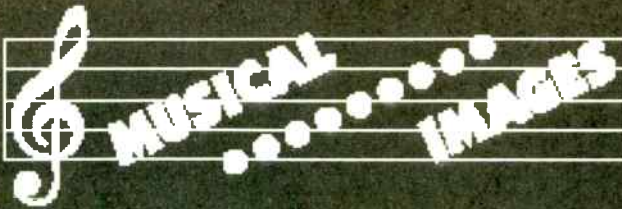
Separation left right

1kHz -86 -86

20kHz -82 -81

Noise -97dB





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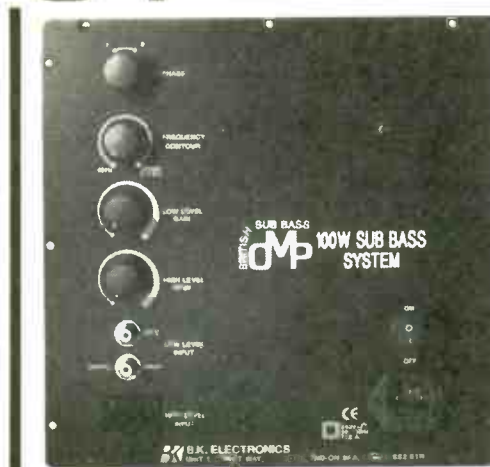
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LINN ACTIVE System LP12 Ekos Klyde Lingo, Kairn Pre Amp, 4No LK100 power amps, Keltik speakers, all cables £7450. Tel: 01977 643 629 (Mar/I)

SONUS FABER Electa 2, six weeks old, plus iron wood stands. (Cost £3000) £1900. Bow XL 5 months old, mint (cost £2500) £1500. Bow Wizard plus Wond (cost £3500) £1575 all mint and boxes. Tel: 01206 298 836 (Mar/I)

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CLEAR PHONO Stage and passive pre amp built by Ear £250 ono. Rega RB300 and Audio Technica OC-9 £120 ono. Wanted; Lecson AC-1 preamp and matching power amp, Meridian 101/103/104. Tel: 07939 116 779 or Email: alexkirkham@yahoo.com (Mar/I)

RADFORD STA 25 III valve amplifier/SC22 pre amp £650. Sugden A48 amplifier £100. Quad 33 pre amp £50. Goldring 1010 cartridge £20. B&W DMI loudspeakers £40. Tel: 01548 550 746 (S.Devon) (Mar/I)

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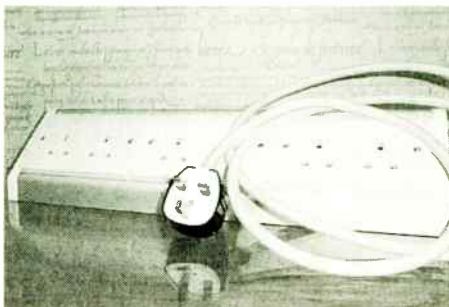
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QUAD FS263 loudspeakers brown, serial no. 10863, 10864, boxes, manuals £850. Tel: 01903 247 779 (Sussex) (Mar)

## GUIDELINES FOR BUYING AND SELLING SECOND-HAND EQUIPMENT

### FOR THE BUYER

1. Not everyone is honest - Buyer Beware!
2. Accept no verbal guarantees.
3. Have you heard the item or something similar?  
If not, why do you want it?
4. Don't pretend to have knowledge - it's your fingers that will get burnt!
5. Is it working? If not, why not?
6. Has it been modified and, if so, have notes been kept?
7. Was it any good in the first place?
8. **Don't send cash.**
9. If you are in the slightest doubt, arrange an audition (see point 4). If it's too far, wait for another time.
10. Either buy it or don't: vendors are excusably impatient with 'consultation' exercises.

### FOR THE VENDOR

1. Not everyone is honest - Seller Beware!
2. Make no verbal guarantees.
3. Even 'nearly new' is still second-hand. If the manufacturer's guarantee is no longer in force, your price should reflect this.
4. There is very little intrinsic value in second-hand hi-fi; it's only worth what someone will pay for it.
5. The best guide to pricing is last month's Classifieds: that a 'classic' was worth £xxx a year or two ago is no guide. Values fall as well as rise.
6. Amateur second-hand dealing is not a big money game: you win some, you lose some.
7. Be prompt with despatch. If in doubt about buyer's bona-fides, either wash out the deal or send C.O.D.
8. There will always be time-wasters; be tolerant within reason!

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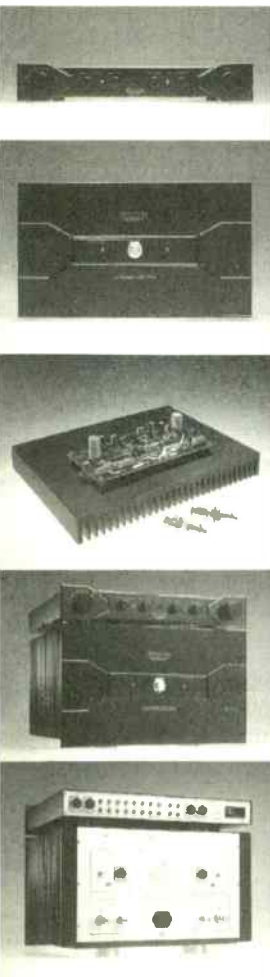
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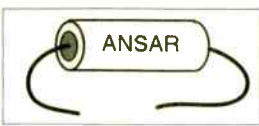
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CPP470P	Propax 470pF 630V	0.35
CPP680P	Propax 680pF 630V	0.35
CPP1N0	Propax 1nF 400V	0.45

Part No	Description	Price
CPP1N5	Propax 1.5nF 250V	0.45
CPP2N2	Propax 2.2nF 250V	0.45
CPP3N3	Propax 3.3nF 250V	0.45
CPP4N7	Propax 4.7nF 160V	0.50
CPP6N8	Propax 6.8nF 160V	0.50
CPP10N	Propax 10nF 63V	0.65
CPP22N	Propax 22nF 63V	0.75
CPP33N	Propax 33nF 63V	1.10
CPP47N	Propax 47nF 63V	1.30

**Audio Electrolytics Radial**

105 deg C +PLUS+ low impedance.

These superior electrolytics offer a low impedance path to the signal, resulting in a very open & detailed sound. The use of high temperature materials ensure that these capacitors enjoy a long & stable life.

Part No	Description	Price
1Y50	Lo Imp Hi Temp 1uF 50V	0.25
2U2Y50	Lo Imp Hi Temp 2.2uF 50V	0.25
4U7Y100	Lo Imp Hi Temp 4.7uF 100V	0.25
10Y63	Lo Imp Hi Temp 10uF 63V	0.25
22Y63	Lo Imp Hi Temp 22uF 63V	0.30
47Y63	Lo Imp Hi Temp 47uF 63V	0.35
100Y63	Lo Imp Hi Temp 100uF 63V	0.50
220Y50	Lo Imp Hi Temp 220uF 63V	0.75
470Y63	Lo Imp Hi Temp 470uF 63V	1.25
1000Y35	Lo Imp Hi Temp 1000uF 35V	1.50
2200Y50	Lo Imp Hi Temp 2200uF 50V	2.25
4700Y25	Lo Imp Hi Temp 4700uF 25V	2.50

**Trobo High Ripple Reservoirs**

Excellent for Audio. Long Life. High reliability 100VDC caps with screw terminals

10000uF: 50x87mm 8.97A ripple current  
22000uF: 65 x 103mm 15.19A ripple current

Part No	uF/Voltage	Price
10000C100	10000uF 100V	20.00
22000C100	22000uF 100V	30.00

**Alcap Bipolar Electrolytics**

Axial leads 50V Tol: 10%  
Primarily for use in speaker crossovers

Part No	Description	Price
CAB1	Alcap 1uF	0.25
CAB2U2	Alcap 2.2 uF	0.40
CAB3U3	Alcap 3.3uF	0.40
CAB4	Alcap 4uF	0.40
CAB5	Alcap 5uF	0.40
CAB6U8	Alcap 6.8uF	0.50
CAB8	Alcap 8uF	0.50
CAB10	Alcap 10uF	0.50
CAB16	Alcap 16uF	0.65
CAB20	Alcap 20uF	0.65
CAB25	Alcap 25uF	0.65
CAB35	Alcap 35uF	0.65
CAB50	Alcap 50uF	0.75
CAB60	Alcap 60uF	0.85
CAB80	Alcap 80uF	1.00
CAB100	Alcap 100uF	1.10

**Monacor Air Cored Inductors**



A range of professional air cored inductors for 80 or 40 crossovers/filters for use up to 300V. 1.2mm enamelled copper wire wound on air spaced plastic bobbins.

Part No	Specification	Price
P15	150uH 0.15Q 8x19mm	£2.00
P22	220uH 0.15Q 48x19mm	£2.50
P33	330uH 0.20 8x19mm	£3.00
P47	470uH 0.25Q 50x19mm	£3.50
P68	680uH 0.35Q 59x19mm	£4.50
P100	1mH 0.45Q 59x19mm	£5.50
P150	1.5mH 0.50 70x30mm	£6.50
P220	2.2mH 0.60 70x30mm	£8.00
P330	3.3mH 0.75Q 70x30	£10.00

**Monacor Ferrite Inductors**



A range of professional high efficiency ferrite cored inductors with very low ohmic losses for 80 or 40 crossovers or filters for use up to 400V. 1.4mm enamelled copper wire (1.3mm on F1000) wound on plastic bobbin.

Part No	Specification	Price
F220	2.2mH 0.15Q 400W 55x31mm	£6.50
F330	3.3mH 0.20 330W 65x39mm	£9.50
F470	4.7mH 0.25Q 140W 65x39mm	£11.00
F680	6.8mH 0.35Q 120W 65x39mm	£12.00
F1000	10mH 0.45Q 100W 65x39mm	£13.50

**High Quality Valves**

Part No	Description	Price
6550C	OUTPUT VALVE	£26.00
6L6GT	OUTPUT VALVE	£4.50

Part No	Description	Price
6SN7GT	OUTPUT VALVE	£4.50
6V6GT	OUTPUT VALVE	£3.95
EC811	TRIODE	£4.50
EC82	TRIODE	£4.50
EC83	TRIODE	£4.50
EF86	LOW NOISE PENTODE	£9.90
EL34	OUTPUT VALVE	£8.50
EL84	OUTPUT VALVE	£3.50
GZ34	RECTIFIER	£6.50
KT88	OUTPUT VALVE	£20.00

**Valve Holders - High Quality Valve Bases. Chassis Mounting With Screw Fittings.**

Part No	Description	Price
B9A	B9A VALVE HOLDER CERAMIC	£1.50
B9AC	B9 VALVE HOLDER PORCELAIN PLUS GOLD PLATED PINS	£3.00
OCTC	OCTAL VALVE HOLDER CERAMIC	£2.00
OCTG	OCTAL VALVE HOLDER PORCELAIN PLUS GOLD PLATED PINS	£4.00

**Fully Gold Plated Phono (RCA) Plugs with spring coil cable grip.**



Part No	Description	Price
PPG5A2	PAIR GOLD PLUGS for up to 5mm CABLE	£1.50 pair
PPG8A2	PAIR GOLD PLUGS for up to 8mm CABLE	£1.50 pair

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PPG8H2	GOLD PTFE PLUGS for up to 8mm CABLE	£3.50 pair

**Extra High Quality Gold Plated Phono Oxygen Free (RCA) Leads (pairs)**



Highly flexible oxygen free cable with extra moulded-in control / grounding wire.

Part No	Length/Colour	Price
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LPF20G	1.5 Metres/Green	£6.50
LPF50G	5 Metres/Green	£11.00

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A range of adjustable plastic ports for use in various sizes of loudspeaker cabinets. d=diameter L=adjustable length (mm)

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R35	d=35L=110-210	£2.50
R50	d=50L=150-280	£3.00
R70	d=70L=128-245	£3.50
R100	d=100L=160-122	£5.50
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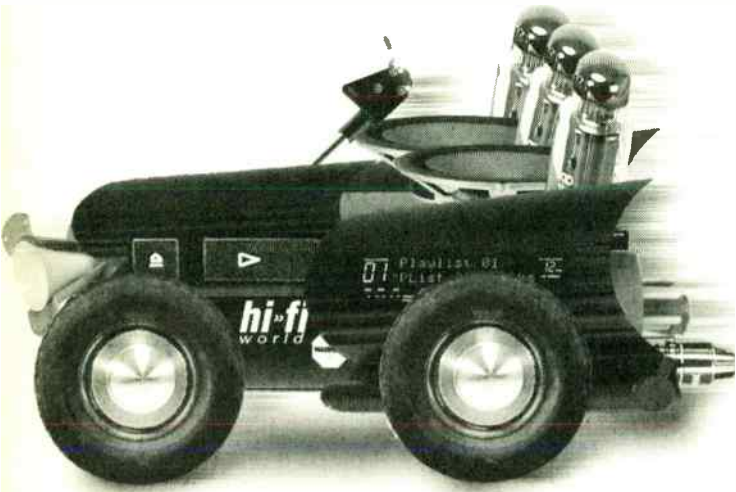
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