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WORLD



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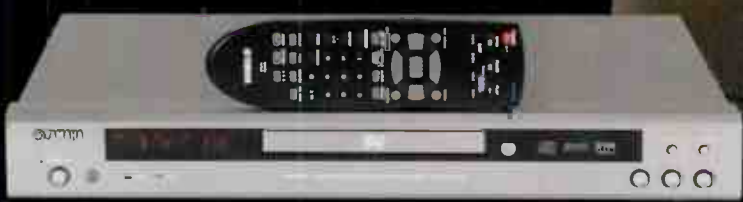
Sugden's HeadMaster/
MusicMaster amplifiers

DVD-AUDIO DREAM

Yamaha's super
new DVD-S830



DIGITAL SPECIAL
Dolby ProLogic IIx explained
Denon AVR-2803 7.1 receiver
Compact Disc: 1984 vs. 2004
digital recorder supertest



JANUARY 2004



MICHELL TECNOARM * CAMBRIDGE AUDIO DAB500

COMPUTER AUDIO - APPLE'S STUNNING NEW IPOD
MARKET PLACE - 100s OF BARGAIN CLASSIFIEDS INSIDE!
COMPETITION - WIN ARCAM'S BRILLIANT FMJ A32 AMPLIFIER



We're quite sad to notice

that a lot of our fellow retailers seem to have forsaken the ways of true two channel high fidelity and been seduced down the path of multi-channel surround sound systems. Sure, the films might be good, but the sonic merits of these digitally-processed many-speakered marvels can be summarised on the back of a postage stamp (not that we'll be seeing those for much longer the way things are going).
Meanwhile, truly decent sounding audiophile gear is blossoming, especially in the current climate of revival of the Vinyl LP.

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The Shanling CD player is a superb example of the quality coming out of China nowadays.



From our old friends, EAR, comes the beautiful 864 MM/MC phono preamp



Another Chinese line, Consonance looks set to sweep aside better known brands both in styling and sound.



Stax, legendary headphone manufacturers, present their valve driven Omega electrostatic 'phones



The Klimo Beltaine monoblocks, from Germany, with outboard power supplies are about as purist audiophile as it gets!



The UK's very own Papworth, with their bargain Class-A valve integrated.



The Heart modified Marantz CD with tube output stage is a genuine bargain.



From Serbia, the Korato line of valve amps are incredible value for money. Audiophile quality at pocket money prices (almost!).

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Aha! Bit misleading this one - The Sonneteer Byron CD - fabulous sound, and not a tube in sight!



The famous Musical Fidelity X-CAN valve headphone amp, now in v3 form.

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david price

There's never a dull moment with digital! Just when you've got used to the idea that Bitstream is better, you're told multibit was more musical. Then we find that a 16bit format, Compact Disc, sounds better with 24bit convertors. And what of upsampling, without which it's seemingly impossible to sell a CD player any-

more? Confused?

Well, times may change and fashions too, but a properly engineered CD spinner is forever. On p52 we've compared two great machines - one contemporary and the other from 20 years ago - and found that neither is comprehensively better despite all the aforementioned developments in digital audio technology since! Makes you think, doesn't it?

The fact is that much of the talk about digital is precisely that - talk. It's great advertising copy and the stuff that PR dreams are made of - but just because a CD player has all the latest tech doesn't necessarily make it any better - just different. This is the message of this month's special digital issue.

Want to record your prized CDs, LPs and tapes to MD, CD or hard disk? Our supertest on p11 shows that there are some fine bits of kit out there, but despite all the clever digital trickery, sonically nothing compares to analogue - as the Nakamichi cassette deck we threw in as the 'joker' of the pack had the last laugh. It's only in terms of convenience that digital comes up trumps.

DVD-Audio is really cranking up now, but everyone seems to prefer the sound of SACD, despite its technical inferiority. On p19 we've found a really sweet sounding DVD-A player from Yamaha, always one of Japan's most impressive manufacturers. Then, if you want music to play on it, turn to p97 for our countdown of 2003's greatest 'high resolution' releases.

Apple's new iPod (p34) is a stunningly styled hard disk portable, using Advanced Audio Coding for thousands of hours of music in a case no bigger than a cigarette box. It's an amazing piece of packaging and one of the most significant digital audio products for years. As far as most digital developments are concerned, don't believe the hype - but with the new iPod at least, be amazed!

David Price

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.

WORLD VERDICTS:

As a rule we only review products we find interesting, so don't expect too many low scores. Likewise, five globe awards will be few and far between because there's only one superlative product of its type. The £ sign denotes great value for money.

- ● ● ● ● **OUTSTANDING** - Simply the best.
- ● ● ● **EXCELLENT** - Extremely capable.
- ● ● **GOOD** - Worth auditioning.
- ● **MEDIOCRE** - Unremarkable.
- **POOR** - Seriously flawed.
- £ **VALUE** - Keenly priced.

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This is one of the most unusual sounding DVD-A players we've come across – inasmuch as it sounds as smooth and sweet as SACD, says Noel Keywood!

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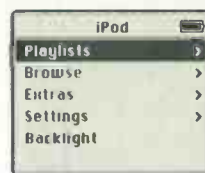
Noel Keywood turns on and tunes in to the strains of this affordable new Digital Radio tuner...

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David Price has a few gift ideas for Christmas – leave the magazine open on this page on the sofa, with a pen craftily pointing at the one(s) you want...



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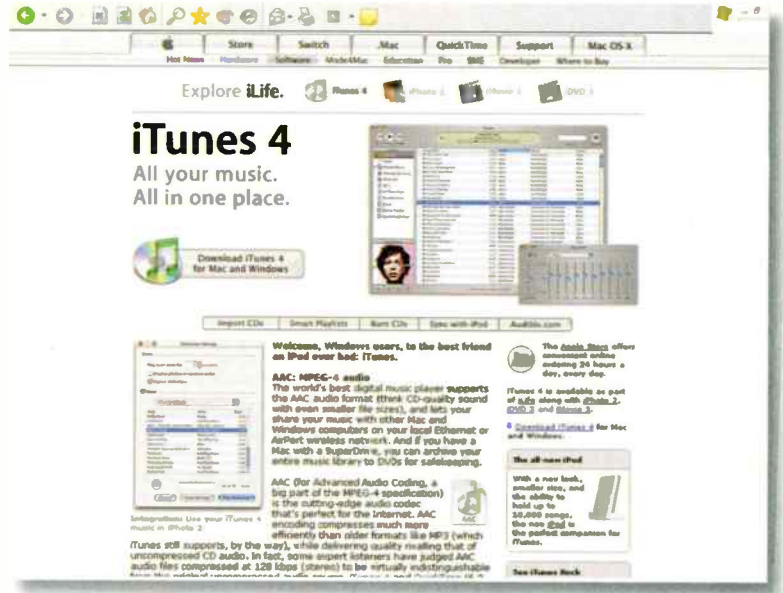
NEWS

ACES HIGH!

KEF Audio's new flagship 'lifestyle' loudspeaker, the KHT9000 ACE, claims an impressive technical specification for 'true audiophile quality'. The 165mm KEF Uni-Q driver array is the same unit found in KEF's high-end Q and XQ Series, and on either side is a matching pair of long throw bass drivers with KEF's Acoustic Compliance Enhancement (ACE, geddit?) technology, claimed to give a level of bass extension normally only obtainable from much larger speakers. There's a choice of two subwoofers: the PSW3000 (300W) and the high-end PSW4000 (500W). There's an option of wall brackets or infinitely adjustable desk or floor stands, plus a choice of compatible powered subwoofers. The speakers are sold individually for flexibility, and cost £499.99 each. Adjustable height floor stands are available at £124.99 each, and adjustable height desk stands at £99.99 each. For more details, call 01622 672261 or click on www.kef.com.

HUGE TUNES

Apple Computer says its version of iTunes for Windows has proved extremely popular. The software, freely downloadable from Apple's website, is said to have been embraced with great enthusiasm according to the company's chief executive Steve Jobs. Apple's director of marketing, Peter Lowe, added that, "the downloads have been going full tilt constantly... we've been delivering a lot of Windows software over the last 24 hours". iTunes is commonly agreed to be one of the very best computer audio applications ever. Windows users can get version 4.1 for Mac and Windows from www.apple.com/uk/itunes. It requires a Mac running Mac OS X version 10.1.5 or later, or a PC running Windows XP or Windows 2000. [See p34 for a full review of Apple's all-new iPod.]



CLOCK THIS

TEAC's new CD Radio, the SR-L50, is part of its new Compact Audio range of quality hi-fidelity products. A mere £179.95 buys you a quartz PLL synthesized AM/FM stereo tuner, digital clock with sleep and daily timer and a quality CD spinner. A dimmable, backlit LC display is fitted, along with a 3.5mm chrome plated headphone jack. A built-in sub-woofer with variable bass control is featured, and the unit comes with a sleek remote control. Call 01923 819630 or click on www.teac.co.uk for more details.



CORRECTION TRUE COLOURS INDUSTRIES

Powerblock & Powerlead, reviewed in Dec 03 issue page 57
The correct telephone number is: 07710 196 949



SPIRIT OF '78

Arcam's new £699 DiVA DV78 claims "stunningly natural 'film-like' video performance" and "class leading audiophile sound from CD and DVD". The highest quality PAL 625p Progressive Scan and 6 x 54MHz video DACs with 12 bit internal processing make for moving pictures, and special attention has been paid to sound quality and particularly to CD replay via the analogue outputs. Arcam's John Dawson commented, "When most of the world is chasing universal replay we introduce a pure DVD player. Why? Because by not wasting resources on the warring new formats, we have been able to engineer a DVD Player with picture quality better than many at twice the price and one that sounds better playing CDs than many universals do playing SACD or DVD-A". So there! Call 01223 203203 or visit www.arcam.co.uk for more details.

EIGHTH WONDER

Meridian has announced more details of its forthcoming G08 CD player. The exquisitely styled high-end machine boasts upsampling, with its 24bit DAC operating at 176.4kHz for maximum performance. The latest CD-ROM drive based transport allows over ten times better error correction than 1x drives. Balanced and unbalanced analogue outputs are standard, and multiple buffering is used for minimum jitter levels. Meridian says it plays any Compact Disc from CD-RW to MP3 CDs (up to 256kbps). A comprehensive backlit learning remote is provided. Watch this space for a review, or click on www.meridian-audio.com for more details. [See p52 to find out how Meridian's original CD spinner, the MCD Pro, stacks up against the new 508!]



LUCKY SEVEN

NAD's new C372 is the latest in its range of affordable audiophile amplifiers. It boasts a stonking 150W per channel into 8 ohms, rising to a peak of 460W into 2 ohms. There's a beefy Holmgren toroidal transformer, and all discrete circuitry with short signal paths from input to output. Seven line inputs, switched by relay, are provided. The amplifier is bridgeable (whereupon the power goes up to 350W RMS into 8 ohms), and boasts NAD's party-friendly Soft Clipping circuit. If you want speaker-clobbering power on a budget, this could well be the one! For more details, click on www.NADelectronics.com.



EVIL NAME

What would you call your new digital-to-audio convertor? It's a tricky one, as it's hard to get excited about a small box of chips and a couple of sockets at the best of times. Well, it looks like Apogee Electronics has surpassed even 'Digital Decoding Engine' or 'DACMagic', with its cunningly entitled 'Mini-Me' – which Austin Powers fans will recognise as Dr Evil's diminutive partner in crime! The Mini-Me boasts two channels of Apogee 24-bit, 96 kHz A/D conversion, top-quality 2-ch mic/instrument preamps and line-level inputs. This plug-and-play device connects directly to any USB equipped computer. AES/ EBU and S/PDIF digital outputs are fitted, as is a headphone output with level knob. Find more info at

www.apogeedigital.com/products/minime.php

THE THIRD COMING

Denon is becoming increasingly prolific – no sooner do we review one DVD spinner and it has another out! The latest is the £599.99 DVD-2200, a high quality multi-format 'universal' machine with DVD, SACD, DVD-Audio, MP3, WMA and photo CD compatibility. The baby brother of

the DV-2900 (reviewed in our October 2003 edition), it is Denon's third Universal player and boasts many of the technologies and construction elements developed for the range topping DVD-A11. For more information, call 01234 741 200 or click on www.denon.co.uk.



HEAD-LINE NEWS!

Sennheiser claims that its new £299 HD650 is 'one of the best sounding headphones ever made' – tough talk, but anyone who's lived with its previous range-topping can, the HD600, might just agree. The latter is a truly great headphone, but lacks a touch of warmth and fluidity. The HD650, says Sennheiser, addresses precisely this criticism. Millions of Euros in research and development have gone into it, and new technology developed for the £1000 MKH40 microphone is employed to reduce distortion and deliver unprecedented clarity. Better still, the company says the sound balance is based on its now-discontinued £10,000 tour-de-force, the Orpheus, so it should be very soft and calming. An extraordinary frequency response of 16-30,000Hz (± 1 dB) is claimed, along with low resonance transducers with damped fibre frames, black stainless steel grilles and a high-quality



titanium/silver finish. Call 0800 652 5002 for more info, or point your browser at www.sennheiser.co.uk

WIRELESS WORLD...

Coming soon: Bluetooth hi-fi! Audio Processing Technology (APT) has announced what it calls "the world's first digital audio wireless solution, technology that is going to revolutionise the personal hi-fi industry of the future". The concept is to provide the highest sound quality possible, wirelessly, using existing proven standards. APT's technology has applications in wireless headphones, wireless loudspeakers, wireless PC audio, true 'multi room' audio and device interconnectivity – what it means specifically for hi-fi is speakers that can operate without using wires. Although serious digital audio processing is involved – with repercussions for sound quality – expect to see it moving in at the lifestyle end of the market soon. Indeed, APT is currently licensing its technology to companies like Open Solution in Korea, which is developing products for consumer electronics companies such as Samsung.

ON AIR

The BBC switched on three more new national digital radio transmitters across the country in October 2003 as part of its commitment to increase BBC national digital radio coverage to 85% of the UK population by mid-2004. Now the three transmitters are on air, around 870,000 new people have been brought into BBC national digital radio coverage and BBC coverage now stands at over 70% of the UK population. The three new transmitters are Angus (Dundee) with 320,000 new listeners, Blunsdon (Swindon) with 240,000 new listeners and Churchdown Hill (Cheltenham/Gloucester) with 310,000 new listeners. These join the ten others switched on in August and September, which together have brought over 3.2 million people into BBC national Digital Radio coverage for the first time. For advice on receiving BBC Digital Radio listeners can ring 08700 100123 or go to www.bbc.co.uk/digitalradio.

OBITUARY

John Michell, founder of Michell Engineering, passed away on Friday 24th October 2003. As well as being a most gifted designer, with an incredible eye for detail, he was also one of the kindest and most sincere people in the industry. John was proud of the fact that Michell Engineering was Britain's longest running turntable manufacturer. His brilliant craftsmanship and flair for design resulted in some of the most striking looking (and sounding) turntables ever made. He had been suffering from cancer for several years, and showed tremendous bravery and determination throughout. His family, friends, colleagues and customers alike will miss him dearly. *DAVID PRICE [see DP's column on p79]*

next issue

New Sounds, New Styles
Why does so much hi-fi look the same? Is there really no other way to do a CD player than a 430mm box with a front loading mechanism? Why are so many amplifiers a carbon copy of one another? Why do so few loudspeakers ever bring anything new to the party? February's issue sees the team taking a close look at innovatively styled and proficiently engineered audio. LJK Setright bemoans the culture of computer aided design. David Price looks back at the glorious contrivances of yesteryear. And we're also reviewing some seriously seductive kit:

MEL AUDIO REHAV II
You've never seen anything like this arresting Italian CD spinner.

EAR 864/890 AMPLIFIER
Where valves get seriously sexy.

CLEARAUDIO REFERENCE
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FINAL ELECTROSTATICS
the flat response in 'speakers.

next issue

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World Radio History

for the record...

A generation ago, people wishing to record their favourite albums or radio programmes would need to pay hundreds of pounds for a cassette deck, and then suffer a limited frequency range, pitch instability and tape hiss. Digital recording has changed all that, banishing the aforementioned nasties to the history books. But is it as good as it's cracked up to be? David Price compares MiniDisc, CD-R and hard disk-based machines from Sony, Pioneer, Yamaha and Perception Digital – oh, and throws a classic Nakamichi cassette deck into the mix for good measure!

The past few years have seen some remarkable developments in consumer audio. Although new recording technologies have been long talked about (for example, recordable CD and hard disk recording), it is only recently that fully rounded, affordable domestic products have got to market. Even just a decade back, when the average man in the street wanted to make compilations, it was cassette or nothing – and as every audiophile knows, most cassette decks were pretty dire!

Now, he has a real choice – he can buy into the ageing but still very convenient technology of MiniDisc (MD), invest in a hi-fi Compact Disc recorder (CD-R) or choose one of the many hard disk (HDD) based machines – or stick with his beloved cassette!

This group test is an investigation into which format is best suited to domestic recording – making compilations for friends, for the car, or for yourself to save wear and tear on your prized CDs or LPs. And although this issue is a digital special, we're still throwing the legendary Nakamichi ZX-9 analogue cassette deck into the mix. Why? Well, as one of the very best exponents of the Compact Cassette art, it shows precisely what is (and was) possible from the now moribund format. This should give a sense of how things have progressed – after all, wasn't digital supposed to give pure, perfect sound forever? The Nak isn't going to be a likely purchase for the man in the street, but it shows what the allegedly superb digital formats he's interested in have to do to match (or beat) something that was designed in 1963 for dictation use. The shocking



Nakamichi ZX-9



Sony MDS-JE480



Pioneer PDR-609



Yamaha CDR-HD1300



Perception Digital PD Hercules

news is that this near-obsolete format gives all the 'high tech' recorders something of a pasting in some respects. Read on to find out how...

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top to bottom left: Nakamichi ZX-9, Sony MDS-JE480, Pioneer PDR-609, Perception Digital PD Hercules, Yamaha CDR-HD1300.

COMPACT CASSETTE

DIGITAL AUDIO TAPE (DAT)

COMPACT DISC-RECORDABLE (CD-R)

MINIDISC (MD)

DIGITAL COMPACT CASSETTE (DCC)

MP3

Music compression codec developed by Fraunhofer IIS as part of the MPEG standard. 16bit, 44.1kHz, user selectable bitrates up to 320kbps. Stored on computer hard disk (HDD) or in memory (RAM)

NAKAMICHI ZX-9 £600 (used)



So the first candidate in this month's digital recording special is an old, long deleted analogue cassette deck? Surely some mistake! Well, as soon as I decided to throw the Nakamichi ZX-9 into the mix, I just knew things were going to be fun. You see, this machine is one of the very best exponents not just of the Compact Cassette art, but of analogue recording period. As such, the Nak is here to show us just what a pre-digital recording medium can do, and how it compares to the best of the digital rest.

Now, it's not strictly fair to compare the ZX-9 on a price for price basis against the others here – because not only was it dramatically more expensive when new, but it is still far more expensive when a couple of decades old! You'd be hard pressed to find a good one second-hand for under £500, and if you're really keen you may pay twice that. As such, think of this bit of kit as something the others should aspire too!

The ZX-9 has no convenience aids – rather, it's stuffed with features that let the user squeeze the absolute maximum what whatever tape he chooses to use. The head assembly uses three discrete heads, made by Nakamichi and unavailable on any other rival machine. The full logic controlled transport is a three motor, dual capstan direct drive affair with pressure pad lifter and an FG servo on the capstan. Dolby B and C noise reduction is offered, along with a defeatable MPX filter. The recording

head azimuth, recording bias, and levels can be optimally adjusted before starting a recording – there's calibration mode with 400Hz and 15kHz frequency generators. The 16 segment LED display reacts instantly. The only concession to luxury is a master fader and record mute function!

Slot any tape – from TDK SA to Sony Metal Master into this machine, calibrate it and press the record button, and you'll be amazed. Switch the monitor to 'tape', and no matter how high you run the recording level, the sound simply doesn't seem to distort - I had TDK D consistently hitting +8dB with no adverse reactions! The other astounding thing is the minute difference between source and tape. Whereas the Nak's contemporary rivals would invariably add hiss, bass lightness and imprecision, the ZX-9 neither adds nor subtracts anything. It's quite uncanny.

The result is a brilliantly smooth, open, wideband recording with masses of speed and slam. Midband is incredibly deep, with oodles of detail and a 'walk around soundstage'. Treble is amazingly sweet, extended and beautifully finessed. Fascinatingly, all of this remains no matter what type of tape you use – the real difference between, say, Sony ES II (high bias) and TDK SA (ditto) being the tonal 'flavouring' of the music. There's also the issue of the levels that individual tape formulations can accept without overloading – TDK AD, for example, being capable of peaks of nearly +10dB, while BASF Chrome

being capable of just +4dB. This, ultimately, influences the perceived dynamics of the sound, but still the basic, architectural aspects of the recording are pretty much identical, no matter what tape you use.

Recording from CD, the Nakamichi introduces a subtle softening and smoothening of the sound (especially with sweet tapes like BASF Chrome), so rather like a euphonic valve amplifier, it can actually 'improve' digital. However, from vinyl or analogue radio, it is superlative – its massive resolution able to convey the extra information available from these analogue sources. It's proof positive that there's nothing wrong with the Compact Cassette medium – it's the hardware that let it down oh so very often.

If you're willing to shell out serious money, you can get a recording system that's better than any consumer digital format, CD included. The problem is that it's a pain to use (add the Nak's complex calibration system to Cassette's fiddly serial access orientation) – which is precisely why the likes of MiniDisc arrived on the scene a decade after the Nakamichi was launched.

SOUND: ●●●●●●●●

EASE OF USE: ●

DURABILITY: ●●●●

VALUE: ●●●●●●

OVERALL: ●●●●●●

SONY MDS-JE480S £130



SONY MDS-JE480S £130
 Sony UK Ltd
 ☎ +44 (0) 1932 816 000
 www.sony.co.uk

MiniDisc is on the decline. Sales are slumping, and the buzz that the format enjoyed in the late nineties is fast disappearing. It's a shame, really, because in many ways the format is better than ever – if only the early MD machines had been as good as this, methinks they'd have achieved far greater success. Think on this: in 1997, I reviewed the first 'fourth generation' MD recorder, the MDS-JE300, and was the very first reviewer to pronounce that, 'err, actually this doesn't sound half bad at all'. It might not sound such a big deal now, but six or seven years ago, MiniDisc was not thought of as a hi-fi format at all. It was the days before MP3 (and indeed DVD), when any kind of compression – no matter how well down – was seen as sacrilege.

The MDS-JBE80 was launched over a year ago. Originally selling for £139, it can now be had for under £100 at Richer Sounds stores. Ten years ago, a cassette deck that sounded this good at this price would have caused mass hysteria – it's a sign of the times that digital recording (often free, using PCs) has put excellent sound within the reach of the many, as such this Sony no longer seems the bargain it surely is.

It's obviously built down to a price, but is packed with clever features (which make the format far more flexible than it was when first released) and the latest ATRAC chip. This is called DSP Type –S, while ye olde ATRAC3 (vintage 1996) is used

for the machine's Long Play mode which offers up to 320 minutes of recording from a single 80m disc (with dramatically reduced quality, of course).

It also has Sony's Time Machine Recording which stores all incoming signals in a buffer, so you can press record a couple of seconds after your programme has started and the deck will still record it (it's like ESP Shock Protection in reverse), a pitch control (lots of musicians use MD for demo recording) and a sampling rate converter.

Available in black or silver, it's neat looking alright, although quite small and light at 430x95x285mm and 3kg respectively. All the buttons are easy to use, and recording, editing and titling follow the usual Sony convention – meaning it's a pleasure to live with.

Sound quality isn't half bad. The 480 is bright and punchy but with a decently smooth and couth demeanour. It's also impressively musical, and really gets you into the spirit of things. Frankly though, don't expect miracles through its internal DACs, which aren't the best at either frequency extreme.

The sins are those of omission though, meaning bass is light and high treble a bit rolled off. Its recording quality is good – clean, smooth and detailed, only the removal of some of 'air and space' signifies that this is compressed digital audio you're listening to. Generally speaking, there are no obvious compression artefacts to be heard, just a slight slimming of the soundstage and shallowing of depth

perspective.

There's a drop in sound quality when recording via the analogue inputs – especially compared to the reference Nakamichi. The sound thins a bit, and there's a loss of air and space. But doing a direct digital copy via its TOSLINK digital input, things are quite impressive – even more so considering its price. The Sony's party trick is when you feed it through a decent external DAC – such as Musical Fidelity's new Tri-Vista 21 – whereupon it becomes surprisingly smooth and sweet with just a bit of fuzz to the midband and splash to the treble.

The brilliance of MD is obvious as soon as you choose to edit your recording. Suddenly, nothing else in this group test can compare, and this tiny disc – only 64mm in diameter – becomes the most versatile thing on the planet. You can Move, Combine or Divide your tracks, and enter Title and Disc names. Despite its age, if the ability to make fuss-free compilations is paramount – the Sony MDS-JE480 wins. If not, then the story changes quite dramatically – read on...

SOUND:
EASE OF USE:
DURABILITY:
VALUE:
OVERALL:



PIONEER PDR-609 £190

PIONEER PDR-609 £190
 Pioneer GB LTD
 +44 (0) 1753 789789
 www.pioneer.co.uk



In a sense, this is as close as you'll come to those old cassette decks, of which the Nakamichi is the ultimate example. It's a purpose-designed digital recorder that works in real time (with a start button and a stop button), manual recording level control (for analogue and digital inputs).

It has basic editing functions, but frankly it's not ideal for compilation makers because you have to 'finalise' your recording at the end. And appropriately enough – just like the ZX-9 – it comes only in a very purposeful shade of black.

For £190 (less if you look around), it's quite a stunning proposition. It comes from Pioneer – a company that's famous in Japan (at least) for its technology-driven product range (the hi-fi equivalent of Honda cars). Think on this: back in 1996 when Sony was still doing wooden sounding, clunky and overpriced MiniDisc machines, Pioneer was selling state-of-the-art CD-R recorders that did 'bit for bit' (i.e. direct and uncompressed) digital recording with superb sound in its domestic market for around £600. The PDR-609 is the direct descendent of these machines, and isn't very different, save the massive price drop!

In truth, it's actually one of the most advanced 'real time' digital recorders around at or anywhere near the price. It boasts a 24bit digital to analogue converter complete with Legato Link

Conversion (claimed to add 'air' to the high frequencies), a high rigidity chassis, 'clean laser pickup circuit' and three-Beam differential push-pull laser pickup. It has a variety of editing features (for CD-RW discs), analogue and digital Synchro Recording, DAT ID Synchro (useful for DAT heads – and Pioneer also makes some superb DAT machines), fade in/out, manual or auto track numbering and full CD Text support. The 14 segment level display is almost as good as the Nakamichi's.

Of course, costing under £200, don't expect heroic build quality – but at 3.5kg the PDR-609 certainly doesn't feel cheaply made considering its slimline (420x 105x 295mm) dimensions. There's even a great range of connection options, including optical and coaxial digital inputs and outputs, two sets of analogue audio ins and outs a system remote terminal and a front mounted headphone socket.

Good as the Sony MiniDisc machine is at its price point, it's only when you do a direct digital copy on this Pioneer that you're reminded how good 16bit, uncompressed music can be. It makes copies that are, frankly, very close to what's being recorded. There's a touch of looseness in the bass, and softening of the treble, but it really is just a touch.

The midband becomes ever so slightly less dimensional (with more imaging around the plane of the speakers), and there's a very slight haze to the upper midband and

treble, allied to a thinning of the lower midband and bass (which also loses a little energy and articulation). Overall though, it still is really close. As I've said, by eighties cassette deck standards this is stunning stuff.

Via the analogue inputs, things aren't quite so special, the A-D converters introducing a further thinning of the tone and flattening of the stereo image, but it's still very good. Only when you compare the Pioneer to – yes, you've guessed it – the Nakamichi that you realise it's 'merely' a 16bit PCM digital machine which lacks the holographic soundstaging and 'out of the box' musicality of the ultimate in analogue.

It's important to put this into perspective. It's nowhere near as good as the best that cassette could bring, but beats the stuffing out of MiniDisc and makes very close copies of your favourite audio CDs. It's easy enough to use, but again MD trounces it in terms of immediacy and user friendliness. You can't have it all, it seems, but if sound per pound is what you crave, this comes close. Superb.

SOUND:
EASE OF USE:
DURABILITY:
VALUE:
OVERALL:



YAMAHA CDR-HD1300 £590



YAMAHA CDR-HD1300 £590
 Yamaha Electronics (UK) Ltd
 ☎ +44 (0)1923 233166
 www.yamaha-audio.co.uk

One of its most impressive aspects of this cool looking machine is the size of its hard disk drive – 80GB is still twice as large as the top-spec iPod about which everyone's raving, and four times bigger than the Perception Digital! Frankly, unless you've a massive music collection which you're determined to commit – in its entirety – to HDD, then you'll not want for anything better.

Being computer-based, it can of course record in MP3 too (i.e. compressed by a factor of five or ten), so if you're prepared to accept some sonic tradeoffs, then even John Peel's famed floor-bending vinyl collection could be stored in the CDR-HD1300! Up to 999 albums with up to 99 songs in each can be recorded, until its 80GB hard drive has swallowed some 120 hours of music at 16bit, 44.1kHz resolution. And if it's insufficient, you can actually change the internal HDD for an even bigger one...

Hard disk based digital recorders have another aspect to them, which is that they're easily editable, and the Yamaha is obviously better than the PD. It still isn't quite as easy to use as MiniDisc, but it's darned close. You record what you want on the hard drive, chop it up using the editing functions, and then burn your work to CD-R. It records via analogue ins, or will 'rip' your CDs via its internal CD drive at up to ten times normal speed. After editing, you burn the compilation to either CD-R or CD-RW on that

same CD drive at up to eight times normal speed. Frankly, it's hard to argue with convenience and functionality like that... If this product had come out five years ago, many folk would find it so advanced that they couldn't get their heads round such power and flexibility - it blows the ZX-9, MDS-JE480 and PDR-609 away.

And it's really nicely made, too. At 435x116x415mm and weighing 8kg, it has the feel of 'pro' recording gear – but the Nak still trounces it (there's nothing here that even comes close to its 'Swiss watch' quality). And aside from a rather baffling strip of pulsating blue and orange light under the fluorescent yellow-orange display, it's a brilliantly fuss-free design too.

Editing is simple: individual tracks can be combined, split, faded in/out, moved, erased and more – and it's all possible from your PC via the rear panel RS232C port and the free Title Editor software on the Yamaha website, which comes as a 111KB ZIP file.

When you've made your recording, there's special technology to ensure quality recordings from the CD-R burner. Yamaha's AMQR system is claimed to reduce the fragmentation of recorded data, increasing the linear recording velocity from 1.2m/s to 1.4m/s. In this way, the disc has larger pits and lands (the space between pits) burned onto it, which are more easily readable by other players and cause less jitter. It also automatically selects 4x recording, which Yamaha

engineers believe to be "optimum". When Audio Master Quality Recording mode is used, several minutes of disc recording time is lost – 74 minute discs can record 63 minutes while 79 minute discs give just 68 minutes.

Hard disk copies aren't quite identical to the original source CDs – there's a small amount of treble splash and fizz, a slight fuzziness to hi hat cymbals, along with a subtle diminution of air and space. Bass is also subtly lightened too. Still, the Yamaha doesn't flatten depth perspective like some other CD-R machines. CD copies made from the HDD were excellent, with a slight softening and smoothing effect which complemented the hard drive's tendency to do the opposite. The result was a very respectable sounding copy with just a scintilla of low level detail and focus missing compared to the original music CD.

Ultimately, Pioneer's PDR-609 does ever-so-slightly better on direct digital copies, and the Nakamichi is ahead in absolute sonic terms, but this is still a fearsomely capable all rounder all the same. The one to go for if flexibility is paramount.

SOUND:
EASE OF USE:
DURABILITY:
VALUE:
OVERALL:



PERCEPTION DIGITAL PD Hercules Jukebox II £350

PERCEPTION DIGITAL PD
HERCULES JUKEBOX II £350
www.perceptiondigital.com



Whereas Yamaha's CDR-HD1300 is probably the best of the first generation of HDD recorders, this is one of the cheapest. It boasts a 40GB hard drive, which can store around 1000 MP3 files (that's about 50 full uncompressed CDs, no less). Unlike the Yamaha, there's no internal CD burner to copy albums onto CD-R directly. Rather, you're supposed to keep your entire music collection on the internal HDD. Given the size of most people's music collections, this is fair enough, but methinks many *Hi-Fi World* readers will find this a little limiting.

It's almost half the price of the Yamaha, and frankly it shows – the case is plasticky and the fascia is cheaper looking than the Pioneer PDR-609, which itself is half the price of the PD. Still, finish aside it's quite solidly made (at 6kg) given its average (430x300x95mm) dimensions. All the controls are on the remote, with the minor ones under a hinged front flap. The 16 character, 2 row backlit display is small and not the easiest to read at just 64.5x16mm, but it does the job, I suppose.

The PD Jukebox works as a normal CD player, but will also play MP3 CDs. Either of these disc types can be recorded to its built-in hard drive in a choice of 128kbps or 320kbps MP3 format, or uncompressed WAV format. It will not only copy songs from its HDD, but record direct on to its HDD

from its analogue inputs – great for archiving your LP or cassette tape collections. You can transfer existing MP3s directly to it from a PC via the USB link feature (shame it's not USB 2.0 or FireWire though), or dump your favourite MP3s to SmartMedia cards via the built in slot. There's also a built-in, upgradeable, Gracenote CDDB database that contains full artist, title and track information on over 600,000 CD titles.

All this is very impressive stuff – and it's obvious that the manufacturers have thought long and hard about how best to make their machine as flexible as possible to use. The trouble is that its user-interface lacks the Yamaha's sheer effortlessness when it's time to edit your recordings or burn them to CD-R. It's not that its navigation and control logic is obstructive – it isn't – it's just that it lacks the ease and ergonomics of the Yamaha, which feels like a well rounded and ergonomic hi-fi separate. Now this is excusable, inasmuch as the latter costs nearly twice as much, but when you consider that it's also a fair bit behind the £100 Sony MiniDisc, that's not so excusable.

What then of the sound? MP3 quality is good – particularly at 320kbps. Its 24bit Cirrus Logic digital to analogue converter is unusually rich and creamy, making the Yamaha seem a little thinner and more analytical by comparison. In uncompressed mode it has a pleasantly warm and sweet demeanour. A little soft and

rounded, it's unable to show the midband detail of either the Pioneer or, to a lesser extent, the Yamaha. But still things flow along nicely, with a largish and soft bass. Soundstaging is quite good too. There's little of the Yamaha's detailed analysis but it still serves up an unusually expansive soundstage, with very wide left-to-right image placement.

Considering its price, the Perception Digital works superbly. The Pioneer has the legs on it in terms of overall focus and detail, but of course can't approach the flexibility that having a built-in HDD affords. It's comfortably better than the Sony MiniDisc, and very close to the more expensive Yamaha hard disk based machine. It's only when you put it next to the Nakamichi that you realise that hard disk recording at 16bit, 44.1kHz can't touch what analogue's capable of – at least, not in this context. This machine is a fine combination of flexibility, convenience, sound and price, but falls behind by trying to be all things to all men. We'll watch with interest the forthcoming replacement, the PD480, which could deliver the Yamaha a stronger knockout blow.

SOUND:
EASE OF USE:
DURABILITY:
VALUE:
OVERALL:



conclusion

Before I get into specifics, I'd just like you to put the last few pages into perspective. Think on this: In the mid nineteen sixties, when hi-fi hobbyists were struggling to get the best out of their extremely expensive, bulky, valve-aspirated open reel tape recorders (such as Revox's G36 for example), if you'd told them that two decades later, they'd have all this performance and more from a tape cassette about the size of a cigarette packet, running at just 1 7/8ips (they'd be running their Revoxes at 1 5ips, at least), they'd have thought you were mad. And now ponder this: Back in the mid-eighties, when the world was struggling to get the best out of cassette, if you'd told any audiophile that twenty years later he'd be able to buy a digital recorder using lasers to record on to digital discs, giving sound quality almost as good as a Nakamichi – for less than the price of a contemporary entry level cassette deck (in real terms), he too would have laughed in your face.

Amazing, isn't it? Progress is such that the four digital recorders we've just tested seemed impressive to me, but not mind-blowing in the least. And I think this is because of computer audio, which has well and truly moved the goalposts.

For me, the loser was Sony's MDS-JE480 MiniDisc machine. It's a shame, because I'm actually very into this format. In terms of ease of use, frankly I don't think anything can approach it (although the iPod on p34 has a good go). It's so small, cute, robust and durable. You can edit really easily on it, and powerfully too. And the sound isn't half bad – especially when you bypass its built-in digital convertors. But great value as the Sony is, it has the feeling of a brilliant but old design reaching the end of its life – a bit like the old Rover Mini did.

Just above the Sony comes the

...and the winner is Pioneer's PDR-609 - great sound per £!



Perception Digital. This is quite a fine machine, and the fact that it's fourth out of five is misleading – it's just that it's a good all rounder, but doesn't really excel at anything. Its ergonomics and editing aren't bad and its sound is fine but not up to either the Pioneer or the Nakamichi reference. Still, it's nearly the best value for money machine here.

Next comes the Yamaha CDR-HD1300, which is a deeply impressive bit of kit. It's more expensive than the Perception Digital, but I think it's worth the extra on account of its massive hard disk space (more than you'll ever need, realistically), superb build and ergonomics and very good sound. In a sense though, its sonics are disappointing, simply because the process of slotting in a music CD, ripping in to HDD (uncompressed) and burning it to CD-R seems to be a roundabout way of doing things – it's not the purist audiophile way.

The Pioneer, however, is the most focussed audiophile machine here. It does make quite superb CD copies (assuming you've got another CD transport with a digital output) when in direct digital mode. It's pretty well made considering its low, low price, but in other respects quite poor – it looks dated and its ergonomics are fussy. *Hi-Fi World* being what it is, we'll set these gripes to one side and go back to its single-minded, purposeful orientation – to make great CD copies – which is precisely why it wins the accolade of the best digital recorder in the group.

Which rather embarrassingly leaves the only analogue machine in the group – mischievously thrown in by yours truly to snap at the heels of the tail-enders – as the winner. It's by far and away the least convenient, most fussy machine here but it sounds sublime. Calibrated properly for any decent tape, it walks it. There's fantastic depth and

dimensionality, ringing harmonics, sweet and well extended treble, taut, tight energetic bass and a wonderfully musical, emotive character. The moral of the story is that – as far as consumer products are concerned at least – digital recording hasn't so much advanced the fidelity available as dramatically improved convenience and ease of use, while lowering prices. Some would say, 'twas ever thus the way...



Nakamichi ZX9



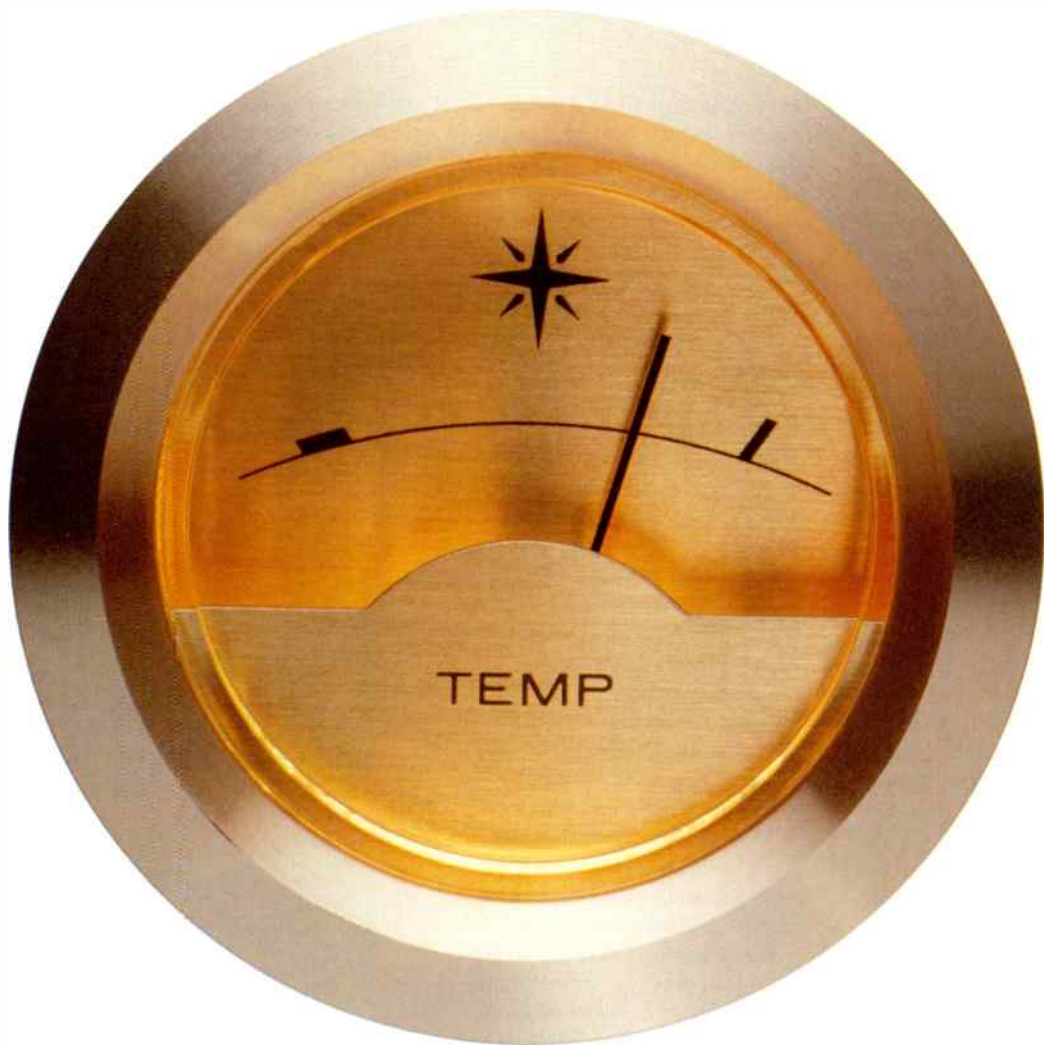
Sony MDS-JE480



Yamaha CDR-HD1300



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audio master



As the price of DVD-A players slides forever downwards, the worry is that the sound will suffer. So Noel Keywood was surprised and delighted by Yamaha's new DVD-S830, an unusually warm sounding machine for under £400...

DVD players seem to have a mind of their own. They resist my efforts to get them to work, but settle down in the end, perhaps realising I don't give up easily - or so it seems! It's just down to menu settings, but Yamaha's DVD-S830 put up more of a fight than usual. It resolutely refused to switch out of stereo until I noticed a multi-channel light wasn't on, whereupon a little button pressing righted things.

The remote control wouldn't work because it had dead batteries, video out was switched to S-Video and not RGB, giving a terrible picture, and the 'speaker level setup test suggested loudspeaker output levels were wrong when they were right. I was using the digital output whilst running the test tone; it works via the analogue outputs only. Which all goes to show how complicated DVD can be. All the same, once I'd set up the DVD-S830 and learnt its particular control methodology, life started to get interesting. Yamaha make great claims for good sound -

that I wouldn't dispute.

The DVD-S830 is a slim and elegant DVD Video player that also plays DVD-Audio discs. So you can hook it up to your TV for high quality video and run the audio through a stereo system or surround-sound setup. I used it in a surround-sound system optimised for music, with full range loudspeakers on all channels. I also used the Yamaha as a normal CD player playing stereo of course, and selected the stereo mixes on DVD Audio discs to see how it fared as a 24/96 stereo player for all those people for whom two loudspeakers is quite enough.

In spite of my initial difficulties with this player, it worked well enough once sorted. It is a little slow to read a disc and Yamaha fit a number of special video modes which didn't concern me much. Picture quality was fine using RGB through a quality Scart connector to a Philips widescreen TV. Fine picture adjustment is provided, but most TVs should have this in any case. I was

more concerned with audio adjustment.

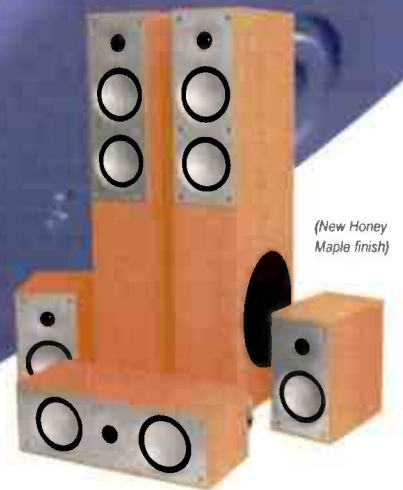
Because a digital connector hasn't been agreed for DVD-A surround-sound, due to fears about copying, connection is via analogue output sockets only, like most players. Loudspeaker sensitivity and time delay compensation for DVD-A must be carried out in the player as a result. The DVD-S830 sets speaker size (bass management on or off), time delay (loudspeaker position) and level (sensitivity). With full range loudspeaker bass management is turned off. Time delay for the rear speakers can be set to 200, 400 or 600cms difference from fronts, a reasonable range, and centre speaker delay set for 50, 100, 150, 200cms to compensate for it being closer than front Left and Right. No compensation is available for centre or surround speaker distances being greater than front Left and Right. Sensitivity range was a usable +/-6dB.

After a day spent warming up and running in, I put Toy Matinee's cleanly recorded and well mixed



It's business as usual round the back - the obligatory SCART, digital and analogue line outputs...

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YAMAHA - THE RIVALS

PHILIPS DVD963SA SACD/DVD PLAYER £400

Our 2003 World Winner, this machine is essentially a DVD spinner with bundled SACD multichannel and CD playback. The pictures aren't half bad, but it's the SACD sonics that truly amaze - it makes a brilliant fist of this new format, with a deliciously creamy treble, liquid midband and firm but fluid bass. It even works very well with CD thanks to its upsampling technology. The only problem is that it doesn't have DVD-Audio compatibility, so you pay your money and take your choice.

PIONEER DV-656 DVD-UNIVERSAL PLAYER £400

This machine doesn't do SACD as well as the Philips, while its DVD-A performance isn't quite as smooth and beguiling as the Yamaha, but then again it offers you complete immunity to the gathering DVD-A vs. SACD format war (and access to all the software on either format). It's no great shakes with CD either, but has a truly impressive DVD video performance - essentially, it's the logical choice if you want a do it all machine and as such is blistering value. Otherwise, specialists should look elsewhere.

MARANTZ CD6000 K1 SIGNATURE CD PLAYER £600

This is not a DVD player of any description, but what it does, it does passionately. Frankly, you'll not find a warmer, sweeter and more engaging CD sound at or anywhere near the price. Better still, its quoted price is often discounted very heavily, bringing it directly into price competition with the other machines here. It's a superb example of a traditional 'budget audiophile' CD spinner, offering a taste of superior at budget prices. It plays ye olde 'Red Book' Compact Disc dramatically better than any of the above, but then again you will have to buy a separate DVD spinner for the wife and childrer...

DVD in to the tray and selected the DVD-A tracks. I was met with a smooth and surprisingly fulsome sound with plenty of apparent bass grunt, more than expected from an inexpensive player. DVD-A can sound quite hard and remorseless, especially though budget players that roughen up the highs and neuter the lows, making for a bright, edgy sound. Budget Denons are none too clever in this respect.

So I was surprised and intrigued to be presented with a different balance from this player, almost the opposite in fact! It was DVD alright - big, clean and exciting - but there was a silkiness to highs that seemed almost uncanny. Even the big reference machines can deliver treble with the subtlety of a well swung cutlass, but not the Yamaha. Bright recordings like Fleetwood Mac's DVD-A 'Rumours' album lacked the sizzle displayed by other machines.

Characteristics like this tend to follow through, so I wasn't too surprised to find CD reproduction showed a similar balance. There's often a downside to excessive smoothness and whilst with Rock the DVD-S830 sounded fine, massed orchestral strings sounded

mellifluous, showing the top end to be a little ill defined and bland. Switching to a Marantz CD6000 KIS confirmed this readily enough. All the same, this player's presentation had me reaching for the volume control at times to crank things up, knowing I wouldn't be met by an ever-hardening sound.

Yamaha products have traditionally sounded a little smoother and apparently more refined than the opposition and this player continues the tradition quite markedly. If you want DVD-Audio without the usual stridency that comes from inexpensive players, this is one to choose. It doesn't manage nth level analysis, nor any clinical insight. But there's a lot to be said for erring in a direction that makes the wilder DVD re-mixes out there sound palatable. I found it a relaxing and enjoyable DVD Audio player. Once it had settled down and started to behave itself, that is!

VERDICT ●●●●●£

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YAMAHA DVD-S830 £399.95
 Yamaha Electronics (UK) Ltd.
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 www.yamaha-audio.co.uk



Inside it's typical contemporary DVD-A fare - cleanly laid out but little in the way of special componentry...

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

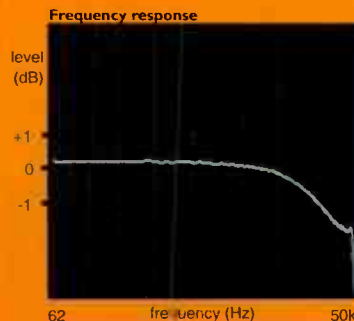
Our response analysis shows a pronounced high frequency roll off with DVD (96kHz sample rate) which I measured -2dB down at 48kHz, enough to soften the sound. Likewise with CD which also rolled off slightly.

Distortion levels were low at -30dB - typical music level - but higher than expected further down, both with CD and DVD. DVD (24bit) actually gave worse results than CD at -60dB. The D/A converters don't manage so well at low levels. As a result EIAJ dynamic range was limited. The S830 was linear at high levels, but not lower down.

Yamaha have engineered this player to give a soft sound with both CD and DVD. It is good at high levels but not lower down, where linearity is poor. NK

Frequency response	4Hz-20.7Hz	
Distortion (CD)	left	right
-6dB	0.002	0.002
-30dB	0.005	0.005

-60dB	0.6	0.6
-90	4.5	4.2
Separation	left	right
1kHz	100	101
20kHz	76	77
Noise (IEC A)	-123dB	
Dynamic range (EIAJ)	107dB	
Output	2.3V	



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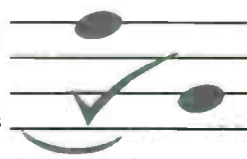
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Format Wars

Still unsure what's winning and what's losing in the DVD-A – SACD format war? So are the major record labels, it seems, as Patrick Cleasby reports...

The DVD Forum 2003 was dedicated to Music DVD in all its forms. Although you may not expect SACD to fall under that particular umbrella, its presence was felt in many of the discussions, and some of the tensions between the opposing camps were impossible to disguise!

The greatest shift of the last year in the SACD camp has been Sony's move toward hybrid discs. This is partly due to the increasing availability of plants capable of replicating these more complex discs, but the suspicion has to be that Sony's original strategy of releasing non-hybrid discs was more due to a wish to enforce SACD-only. As this strategy hasn't exactly set the sales charts alight, Plan B is to do something which enhances the appeal of the new format to the industry.

Hybrid discs contain a layer of CD Audio to ensure the disc is backwards-compatible, thus delivering to the record company and the retailer the considerable benefit of the fabled "Single SKU" or "Single Inventory" item. It is most likely for these reasons, and the thus-far uncracked encryption of SACD audio, that the largest record company in the world, Universal, have launched into SACD with some success this year.

On the DVD-Audio side of the fence, for most of the last year it has been common knowledge that Warners, the main proponent of DVD-Audio, were working to establish the viability of an enhancement to DVD-Audio which would permit the retro-fitting of backwards compatibility to the existing DVD-Audio spec, delivering the same MP3 convenience to the user, and "treat it like a CD" convenience to the retailer, that Hybrid SACD does. After the Hybrid SACD-like dual-layer model failed to work, (a large proportion of that vital market, DVD-Video players, saw the disc as a CD thanks to their own in-built backwards compatibility, and thus would have

deprived punters of the 5.1 benefits of DVD-Audio), the only option left to them was to consider DVD+, a disc made of a CD layer and a DVD-5 layer glued back to back!

The problem was that earlier versions of the discs were often too thick, and could easily jam in slot loaders such as car players.

Is next year going to see a real war in which Dual Disc mops the floor with SACD?

However at the Forum it was announced that such discs, for which Warners prefer the terminology "Dual Disc", could now be manufactured at a just-in-CD-spec tolerance 1.8mm thickness. All that was outstanding was official accreditation as a DVD by worldwide standards body The DVD Forum. Watch this space...

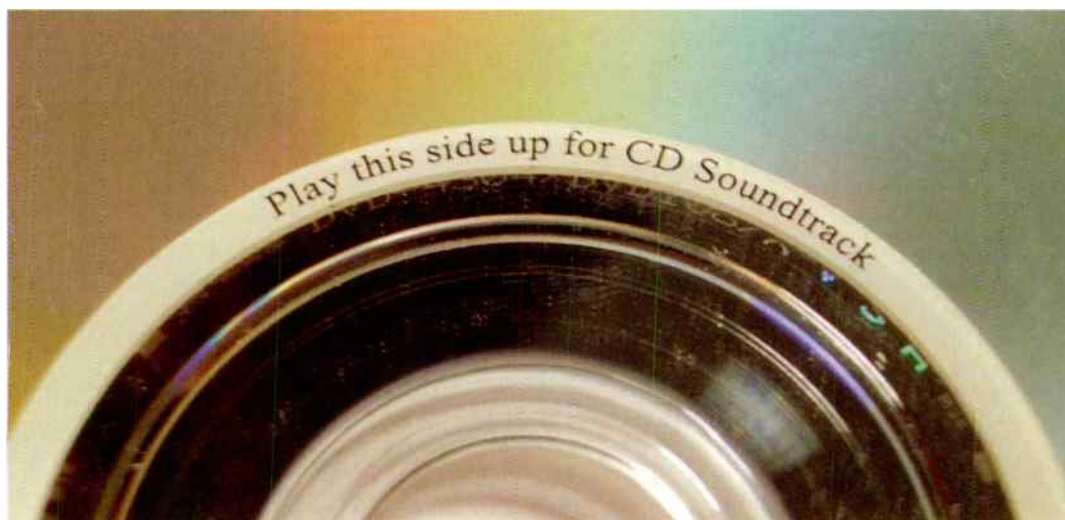
Back at the Forum, all was amicable until a question from the floor to Dirk de Clippeleir, the head of new formats for Universal International, highlighted the fact that in the States Universal were pursuing a combined SACD/DVD-Audio strategy, and this wasn't the case elsewhere. Dirk confirmed that Universal International are pursuing an SACD-only strategy because they prefer the format. This was like a

red rag to a bull for Frank Brunger of Warnervision International, who distribute Warners DVD-Audio product. He was insistent that they would be coming on stream with Dual Disc DVD-Audio in the first quarter next year, whether it was ratified by The DVD Forum or not, and that when they did, any reason

for SACD existing would be removed, and that SACD would die out! Frank's sentiment was later echoed by Pioneer GB's product manager, John Bamford,

who was also on the panel.

So, is next year going to see a real war in which Dual Disc mops the floor with SACD? Personally I doubt it, as the recent announcement of a merger between Sony Music and BMG is more likely to strengthen the SACD camp. (BMG are thus far only at the toe in the water stage with both formats). Moreover, if the much mooted EMI purchase of Warner Music takes place, and the Big 5 are thus consolidated into the Big 3, we are left with Sony/BMG and Universal barely in the DVD-Audio game, and with the EMI side of the Warners/EMI axis seemingly also more keen on SACD than DVD-Audio. My vote is that the two formats will struggle on, but may ultimately struggle to survive, which would be a shame...



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Digital Radio isn't good enough, it seems, so Cambridge Audio's new DAB500 tuner features digital signal processing to make it sound sweeter. Noel Keywood likes the new flavour...

With DAB you get what you're given - a digital system with quite obvious limitations when it comes to sound quality.

Cambridge Audio candidly note that "DAB radio may sound rather thin and undynamic compared to other sources". It isn't easy to do much about this, since the music comes stripped of information, courtesy of Musicam. So, like Videologic, Cambridge equip their new DAB500 tuner, reviewed here, with an improvement circuit to sweeten the sound.

Massive station choice and wide programme variety are a prime feature of DAB. The DAB500 scanned London's airwaves from my large roof mounted aerial and found no fewer than 53 stations in a matter of a minute or so. With DAB coming at me from two directions, Alexandra Palace in the North and Crystal Palace due South, signal strength isn't a problem. However, my aerial is almost line-of-sight to both, because I know from experience that, in the same area, it doesn't take much obstruction to eliminate the signal altogether. A basement or a ground floor concrete building are enough, so even if you have DAB transmissions in your area, your specific location remains important.

DAB availability is improving across the UK as new transmitters are brought into service. Much of the South coast has recently been DAB'd for example. But reception can be fragile even within a good DAB area. Cambridge supply a wire aerial with

the DAB500, fitted with the usual (for DAB) F Connector, and it will often be adequate. If not then you can connect up to a TV or VHF/FM aerial and this will usually do, although a proper DAB aerial is always best and Cambridge name three providers in the handbook.

With aerial connected the DAB500 auto-tunes at the press of a button, like all DAB tuners. The tuning knob is for station selection, normally in alphabetical order, but with the DAB500 this can be changed to favourite order. Manual tuning (174MHz-239MHz) across the channels is also possible, an unusual feature. Dynamic Range Compression is also possible, but this is really for cars, rather than the home. There are ten station pre-sets.

Cambridge have perhaps had to look closely at what Videologic, early DAB exponents, are doing to make sure they are competitive. They've equipped the DAB500 with NCT ('Natural Contour Technology') tonal compensation to make it sound more natural, selected by a rear panel slide switch. This offers a little bass boost, or bass and treble boost. The effect isn't great, providing just a little sweeten up of DAB's somewhat flat and anaemic sound. DAB's Musicam digital compression system is an early form of MP3. The world has moved on in this field (AAC for example) but DAB has not. As a result, DAB is already outdated and crude sound quality wise, especially when low data rates (128kbps) are used. The DAB500 has a good signal strength display, and it shows error rate, so it comes with all the tools

needed for getting best results. I used both the compensated analogue outputs and the digital output, running an optical cable into a surround-sound receiver for Pro Logic II surround-sound, as well as stereo.

My reaction to DAB remains much as always, even with a good tuner like this. The sound quality of DAB is flat, light in balance and bland. It's also tonally grey. These properties are all-pervasive, even at higher data rates it seems. However, there's no hiss or interference, unless it is transmitted (i.e. tape hiss within an early classical recording) and to those used to VHF from an inadequate aerial this in itself is a revelation (apparently!). VHF is neither hissy nor prone to interference if you have a decent aerial of course, and sound quality is obviously better than DAB.

However, I put matters such as this out of my mind with DAB. One great advantage is programme variety, from a good blast of Planet Rock to Nigel Kennedy on Classic FM. The DAB500 could put a little oomph into low bass with CNT and it helped a little most of the time, although sometimes it produced bass grumble. As a sweetener this little circuit helped matters a little.

Music from DAB won't draw you in like a good Leak Troughline with VHF/FM, but it's great for background music to - er - needlework perhaps. And the Cambridge DAB500 did a perfectly fine job in every area. If you want a well made, sensibly priced DAB tuner that's easy to use I would recommend this one.

Great HI-FI WORLD'S COMPETITION Giveaway

WIN ARCAM'S SUPERB FMJ A32 AMPLIFIER IN THIS MONTH'S GREAT COMPETITION!

Here's a great chance to win one of *Hi-Fi World's* favourite 'super integrated' amplifiers, Arcam's FMJ A32 worth a whopping £1,150! In last month's group test, Noel Keywood was highly impressed by its combination of useful 'real world' facilities and brilliantly strong and powerful sound. Here's what he wrote: "The A32 is both large and heavy, due primarily to the large toroidal mains transformer inside. This allows it to produce in excess of 100watts into 8ohms and almost 200watts into 4ohms, so it's got some punch as compensation for its weight and bulk! Not wanting to be criticised for missing out any facility it appears,



Arcam have laden the A32. It has tone controls and a balance control, all remote controllable. It has 11 sensitivity trims for each input, and it even has a bright green display with a selection of readouts, including large volume numerals visible at a distance. A phono stage is fitted as standard, with MM and MC sensitivities no less. These sensitivities can be adjusted too with phono trim. Two pairs of loudspeakers can be connected and each selected independently. Bi-wiring is possible using radial and axial connection. The preamp and power amp can be split and used independently. There are two tape monitors and a headphone output...

that the Arcam showed just what an agreeable amplifier it is to sit in front of... Strings rose and fell without any sense of restraint, giving a good sense of dynamic contrast. Ashkenazy's playing was conveyed with a relaxing sense of power combined with fluidity. Strings were well separated and vibrant. The A32 is a very well balanced amplifier subjectively. It does not have the immediate drama of some but it does all the same work well in every area to provide a relaxing but natural experience with rock as well as classical."

If you'd like to win this superb amplifier, then all you have to do is answer the following four easy questions. Send your entries to: January Competition, *Hi-Fi World* magazine, Unit G4, Argo House, The Park Business Centre, Kilburn Park Road, London NW6 5LF

The A32 really is a lovely listen; it drew me in steadily. With plenty of power it has strong dynamics and can deliver good strong bass, well controlled. Vocals sprang from the speakers and the general sense of detailing was good. The Arcam handles big performances like this without getting flustered or imposing restraint.... It was with classical and Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto No2

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Competition Questions

[1] What is Arcam an abbreviation of?

- [a] A&R Cambridge
- [b] Automatic Reality Configuration
- [c] A&R Oxford
- [d] Absolutely Really Cool And Magic.

[2] How much power does the A32 make into 8 ohms?

- [a] over 100W
- [b] 10W
- [c] 1W
- [d] 0.1W

[3] What phono sensitivities does it boast?

- [a] MM and MC
- [b] MMC
- [c] MC and MD
- [d] DMC and DMX

[4] How does it handle big performances?

- [a] without getting flustered or imposing restraint
- [b] without getting blustered or enclosed or restrained
- [c] without getting mustered and endowed with constraint
- [d] without getting custard or covered with wet paint

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Hi-Fi World Magazine
Unit G4 Argo House
The Park Business Centre
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Hi-Fi World Competition rules and conditions of entry

1. Entries will be accepted on a **postcard only**.
2. Only one entry per house hold.
3. Multiple entries will be automatically disqualified.
4. Purchase of the magazine is not a pre-condition of entry.
5. No correspondence will be entered into.
6. The Editor's decision is final.
7. No employees of Audio Publishing Limited, or of any companies associated with the production or distribution of the prizes may enter.

CONGRATULATIONS

...to Mrs J. Vaccaria of Ilford, Essex the winner of our November 2003 competition. A Denon DVD-2900 DVD Universal player is on its way to you!

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World magazine (Jan 2003) concurred, describing the Tri-Vista 300 as "quite exceptional".

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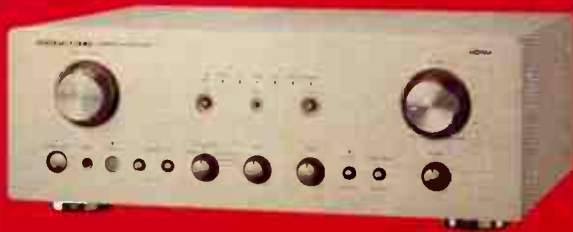
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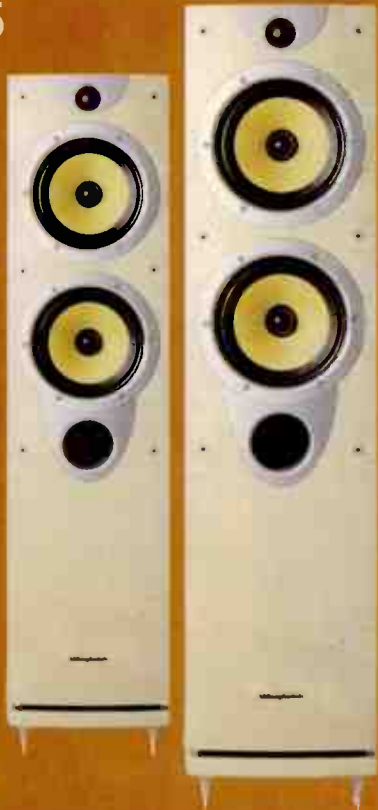
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WHO ARE SEVENOAKS?

Founded in 1972, Sevenoaks Sound & Vision is one of the largest and most successful hi-fi and home cinema retailers in the country.

Each Sevenoaks Sound & Vision store stocks a wide range of quality products, covering all categories of specialist home entertainment, from Hi-Fi separates and systems to DVD players, widescreen plasma televisions and projection systems, all at highly competitive prices.

Friendly staff are available in all stores to advise, demonstrate and guide you through the home entertainment jungle.

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We are pleased to announce both the new stores in Staines and Weybridge are now open. For more information visit our website.

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SEVENOAKS WEBSITE

The Sevenoaks Sound & Vision website has news and information on the Sevenoaks group and its stores.

There are regularly updated special offer and stock clearance lists with hundreds of products available and detailed pages to help you locate your nearest store. To find out more, click on www.sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk

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Our comfortable demonstration rooms are among the finest in the country, many complying with full THX specifications.



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With 49 stores nationwide, the Sevenoaks Sound & Vision group stock and display a wide range of products. As models and product ranges are changed or superseded, the preceding models are made available at a reduced price, for clearance. Visit our Website for an up-to-date list of the clearance stock.

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Whilst we do not claim always to be the cheapest, we try to ensure our prices are highly competitive. Take into account the expert advice, unrivalled product selection, demonstration facilities and excellent pre, during and after sales service and the lower price might not look such good value.

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Byte This!

If the eighties gave us CD, the nineties MD and DCC, then we can thank the noughties for the rise of the hard disk based digital audio player. Patrick Cleasby argues that Apple's brand new third generation iPod is its greatest exponent...

A confession: I have been a member of a strange cult for the last 18 months. I fell into it almost by coincidence and now it's taking over my life. That cult is the cult of Apple, and it inspires deep fervour in its initiates. Yet perhaps the one thing which surprised those who knew me was my resistance to one of the most pernicious afflictions which can strike cult members - devotion to the iPod.

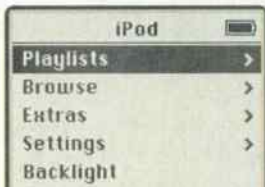
This was probably due to my

music store at the same time and had decided on protected 128 kbps AAC (MPEG-4 audio) files as its format. Despite claims of superiority to MP3 encoding, many were concerned that this bitrate was too low, and I decided to test for myself.

I auditioned a set of files using simultaneous playback in QuickTime on a G4 Mac, monitoring through a digital connection to a Yamaha DSP AX1 AV amplifier. I used Coldplay's 'Yellow and Trouble', checking .m4a files encoded at 128k, 160k and 192k against the original PCM audio and a variable bitrate 320k mp3 file. It was immediately apparent that the 128k file was on a par with the mp3 file, although both were flawed representations of the original. Up to 160k and the bass was starting to be more tight and focused, but the top end was still lacking in detail. Finally, at 192k everything clicked into place and I had a compression level at which I would be quite happy to encode my CDs and then chuck them away!

The iTunes 4 launch coincided with the introduction of the stunning third generation iPod range. Some old users bemoaned the addition of the four transport buttons, (the previous touch ring was used for all functions), and the new proprietary connection at the iPod end of the Firewire lead, (previously any standard 6-pin Firewire cable could be used), but without having played with the previous models, the current model is still arrestingly elegant and well put together.

At the time of my AAC testing, the brand new top of the range 3G iPod was the 30GB model. If I had bought one I would now be very fed




COURTESY OF APPLE

up, as six months later that model has been replaced with unseemly haste by the 40GB wonder I couldn't resist getting to complement my new G5 Mac. I still can't fit my collection on one, but at least I can now manage somewhere near the 7,500 songs the 30GB promised (Apple marketing is always based on 128k files - hence the claim of 10,000 for the 40GB iPod) at my desired 192k bitrate. Purchasers will need to take their own view of the quality versus capacity trade-off.

Apart from capacity, the other factors affecting a purchasing decision will be price and extras. The top of the range 40 GB models are slightly deeper in profile, but for your £400 you also get the headphone remote (right), case and docking station (left). All are worthwhile additions, (although the case



COURTESY OF APPLE

instinctive dislike of the idea of MP3 compression, having heard bad examples early on and dismissed it, even for mobile use. I was tempted back after I obtained an MP3 CD capable DVD player, and found the results of highest quality, variable bitrate 320 kbps encoding in iTunes 3 to be genuinely acceptable for all but the most critical listening.

But it was the release of iTunes 4 in April 2003 which really piqued my interest. Apple started the US iTunes



COURTESY OF APPLE

frustratingly allows no access to the controls on the unit), and the dock is essential if you wish to make use of a fixed analogue line out facility rather than the variable headphone output. The line out on the dock is in the form of a 3.5mm mini jack – very regrettably there's no digital output.

The same extras come with the mid-range 20GB model for around £300, but £250 for the entry-level 10GB iPod doesn't get you any accessories. They are available separately for around £29. PC Users who do not have Firewire capability will have to make sure that they have USB 2.0 and spend a further £15 on the optional USB connector. All models feature the proprietary Firewire cable, and an attachment to turn it into a mains recharging lead. All Mac users, and some PC users with Firewire will find that the iPod automatically charges when connected to the computer.

THE EATING

Mac users can take the iPod and use it straight out of the box if they have any OSX Mac pre-installed with iTunes 4. Those with earlier versions would do well to update using the disc supplied. If you have a new machine iTunes will most likely be preset to encode CDs as 128k AAC. The default settings are for the iPod to update automatically on connection, and if you wish to use the unit as a Firewire drive you have to explicitly check this option using the options button which appears at the bottom right of the screen when the iPod is highlighted in iTunes. The downside of doing this, or setting the iPod for manual update is that you then have to software eject the iPod before disconnecting each time. However this is good practice anyway as some have lost motherboards due to strange goings-on when hot-swapping. If you use the Address Book and iCal, iSync can be used to update your contacts and schedules for access on the iPod.

The current iPod package you purchase has been made immediately out of date in a number of ways. First and foremost, for PC users the sorry Musicmatch software should really be junked in favour of the free download iTunes for Windows. The constraints are that it only works with Windows 2000 or XP, and just as for Musicmatch you will need USB 2.0 or ideally Firewire capability. The benefits over Musicmatch are the ability to use Apple AAC encoding, pre-programming EQ to use album by album, and the great flexibility which Smart Playlists offer if you

wish to create random or dynamically updated (i.e. the new Sting album automatically joins the playlist set up for artist "Sting") selections.

Just as important is to update your iPod software by downloading the latest version for whichever platform your computer is. There are battery performance enhancements in it, but you will also need to do this if you want to avail yourself of the non-music functionality enhancements announced by Steve Jobs in mid-October, including dictaphone and photo viewing functionality.

HEARING IS BELIEVING

So if the 192k AAC files almost matched CD quality when playing out of the Mac, how did they sound on the iPod? The supplied headphones leave something to be desired, so I substituted my own Sony EX71

Fontopia in-ear phones – although Sennheiser's MX-500 would be better still. I began to hear the range, detail and accurate placement which I knew my AAC music could deliver. The wispy vocal, chunky guitar double-tracking and distant Flo' and Eddie backing vocals on the 2001 remaster of T Rex's 'Electric Warrior' were rendered accurately. Richard Hawley's gloriously deep voice on his 'Lowedges' album just haunts the centre of your brain – and it's all still there thanks to AAC.

Analogue playback using the dock is noticeably warmer than the somewhat harsh digital Mac playback. The incredibly dynamic 1997 remaster of Talk Talk's 'Spirit Of Eden' still leaps out of your speakers in its AAC version. Unfortunately the dock line out also produces some hiss. Still, it's a very convenient way of playing your collection when away from home on portable active speakers. Overall, the latest iPod is very impressive when

SPECIFICATIONS:

Battery: Fixed Internal, third party replacements and AAA cell backup packs available.

Supplied accessories : ear bud headphones, remote, carrying case, dock, proprietary Firewire cable, mains adapter, 6-pin to 4-pin adapter for PC Laptop (e.g. Sony Vaio i-link) connection, Mac and PC instructions, Mac and PC software CD-ROM

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:

Mac - Mac OS X v10.1.4 minimum, v10.2 or later recommended
iTunes 3 or later 4.1 or later recommended
iSync 1.0 or iCal1.0.1 or later (if using contacts and calendar)
Built-in Firewire

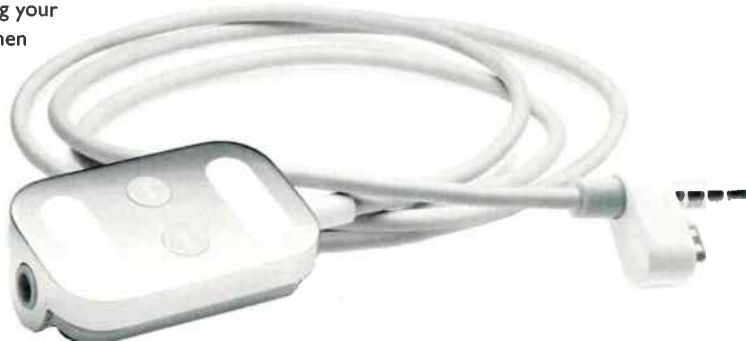
PC - Musicmatch Jukebox 7.5 or later:
Windows ME, 2000 or XP or later
300MHz or higher processor speed
96MB RAM (128MB for Windows XP)
Built-in or Windows-certified Firewire or USB 2.0 card

PC - iTunes for Windows:
Windows 2000 or XP or later only
500MHz or higher processor speed
128MB RAM (256 MB RAM recommended)
Built-in or Windows-certified Firewire or USB 2.0 card

playing top bitrate AACs – it's one of the very best sonic performers I've come across and easily as good as rivals from the likes of Archos and Creative Labs. It will also better any MD portable and hold a candle to a decent CD personal too.

In a sense though, this is to miss the point. Its audio performance is excellent, but the genius of the latest iPod is its ergonomics and packaging – which beats all its rivals comprehensively. As well as being a lovely object to behold, with exquisite build and state-of-the-art styling, it works so effortlessly. By comparison, everything else feels a bit of a pain. As such, I now find myself a member of another Apple-oriented cult...

COURTESY OF APPLE



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heavy duty!



With the advent of seven channel surround sound, AV receivers are getting ever bigger. Noel Keywood heaves a brace of loudspeakers into his lounge with Denon's new Dolby Pro Logic IIx-equipped AVR-2803 receiver, to experience the wonders of 7.1...

Car manufacturers are engaged in a space race with four-wheel drive vehicles. That is, the amount of road space they take up, as well as ceiling space in the multi-storey. I thought the Range Rover and BMW X5 were large enough, but now Porsche Cayennes are cruising my area like big basking sharks, and recently something even larger appeared outside my door, blotting out the sunlight, a 2003 LandCruiser Amazon!

Surround-sound receivers seem to be suffering the same effect: they're getting ever larger. Once upon a time, not so long ago, five channels was ambitious stuff. Then came six, so a centre-rear loudspeaker could be used. Denon's AVR-2803 reviewed here possesses no fewer than seven channels of amplification, equivalent the three and a half stereo amplifiers! What,

you may well ask, does anyone want all this for? Is there any better reason than a two-and-a-half ton, four-wheel drive in the centre of a big city?

Call me agnostic. I'm rather fond of big four-wheel drives, even though I'm more often to be found on a scooter. And whilst single-ended triode valve amps do, without any shade of doubt, give a sound that is sublime, at the same time these big receivers give a sound that is, with no hyperbole at all – awesome. Denon's is an attempt to be even more awesome than the others by providing yet more channels.

The AVR-2803 uses its on-board digital processor to produce 7.1, even from Dolby Pro Logic II surround-sound, which itself can be derived from stereo! Denon seem to aim this at cinema users, calling it 'wide screen mode'. However, one reason Denon UK was happy for me

to review this multi-channel monster is that I like Dolby Pro Logic II, which can sort out some of the undiscussed anomalies of ordinary stereo, such as ambient/ rear information folded into front channels, intentionally or unintentionally. Dolby recently introduced an extension of Pro Logic II called Pro Logic IIx which can give 6.1 or 7.1 surround sound, in addition to 5.1. It does this by extra processing, meaning there's no upcoming Dolby 7.1 surround-sound format! Pro Logic IIx derives signals for one or two rear loudspeakers from stereo, discrete 5.1 surround-sound or discrete 6.1 surround-sound (Dolby EX or DTS ES). The receiver has two rear channel amplifiers to cope with this format. The usual surround speakers Denon (and Dolby) suggest are moved forward to the sides of the listening position, to strengthen side images. Whilst fine for cinema,

it's easy to object to this for DVD-A or SACD mixed for 5.1, where the surround speakers are meant to be behind a listener, not at the sides. But this is what Dolby now recommends. The two rears handle differing (discrete) signals; they do not simply duplicate each other.

If you want standard 6.1 (one rear speaker), then one channel of the receiver becomes redundant (you can choose one or two Surround Back channels in fact). Denon recommend you use 5.1 and two channels in another room instead! Amongst various possible speaker layouts, the handbook curiously fails to depict a 6.1 audio setup.

I used KEF Q7 front floorstanding speakers, KEF Q1s on stands as Surrounds and a pair of Mission 780ses as Back speakers. My interest lies with audio of course, so full range loudspeakers are a must. A wall shelf can accommodate a couple of small, high quality Back speakers like Missions or KEFs. Experiment soon showed the two back speakers act almost as headphones,

putting strong images in and behind the head - a dramatic effect. They can be brought fairly close in, spaced only 3 feet or so apart.

The AVR-2803 has on-board power amps to drive all seven loudspeakers. And they're not measly 25W affairs either, like some scrawny cinema-in-a-box jobbies. Each channel is rated at 90W into 8ohms, 125W into 6ohms and 170W into 4ohms. In theory at least, this means around 700watts is available. In practice the power supply and heatsinks would be severely strained if it was all drawn at once for very long, but in practice the AVR-2803 is beefy enough to manage equivalent peaks. It also has thermal and overload protection. When you put high power through five or six loudspeakers rather than two, you end up with unusually clean, impactful dynamics, simply because each loudspeaker is doing less work. There's less bass distortion, plus huge swings of acoustic pressure of a variety not experienced with stereo - if once approached by giant loudspeakers of yore, like the big Tannoy's.

Denon has put in an eight channel preamp with eight analogue inputs through an eight channel volume control, feeding eight analogue outputs! Six channels can



7 channels pushing out approximately 100 watts each makes for some serious heatsinking and a 'take no prisoners' power supply...

be available in one room and two in another (defined as Zone 2). I am not sure too many people are going to either study or understand all the options. Home cinema buffs may well rejoice in the streets however - who am I to say? Denon says that with all this ability the AVR-2803 can cope with any future multi-channel sound format.

I have heard some pretty violent (literally) demonstrations of six channel though - like the Insane Clown Posse - and am impressed. A centre rear loudspeaker is quite an eerie affair when it carries a discrete vocal, rather than the simple difference between left and right rear. Rock music can artistically exploit this extra dimension to good effect, even though it isn't happening much as yet.

The receiver has masses of on-board computing power in order to provide not just all the many surround-sound options it, and its rivals, must have to be in contention, but also sophisticated adjustability of same. The best example is Dolby Pro Logic II. In a nutshell, Pro Logic II decodes matrix encoded stereo to give four discrete channels. The strangest example of this is a Persil television advertisement where birds tweet at you from behind. Okay,

don't fall off your chair with excitement! It does illustrate that matrix four-channel is about; it didn't leave us in the late seventies when SQ and QS died.

Of more use though, and certainly more impact, Dolby Pro Logic II does a great job with a lot of stereo CDs, clarifying the front sound stage and sending information to the rear channels to give impressive results. Where the AVR-2803 scores is in the options it provides with Pro Logic II. In addition to Cinema and Music modes, it has a Panorama control to give 'wraparound sound' (front/rear left and right blend I suspect), a Dimension control to move the sound stage forward or back and a Centre Width control to vary balance between centre, and left and right. It's a lot of tweaking but in a good set up, worth it to get the soundfield sounding balanced. I ought to mention that all these adjustments relate to recently introduced Pro Logic IIx but nowhere in the handbook do Denon claim it is fitted, a mystery Denon UK could not solve. DTS Neo6, Digital Theatre System's version of Pro Logic, is also fitted, but I feel Neo6 gives too much precedence to rear channels; Pro Logic is more subtle and believable.



We're quite sad to notice

that a lot of our fellow retailers seem to have forsaken the ways of true two channel high fidelity and been seduced down the path of multi-channel surround sound systems. Sure, the films might be good, but the sonic merits of these digitally-processed many-speakered marvels can be summarised on the back of a postage stamp (not that we'll be seeing those for much longer the way things are going).

Meanwhile, truly decent sounding audiophile gear is blossoming, especially in the current climate of revival of the Vinyl LP.

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Duevel speakers are winning more and more friends as customers realise how brilliant these difficult to ignore speakers are!



The Shanling CD player is a superb example of the quality coming out of China nowadays.



From our old friends, EAR, comes the beautiful 864 MM/MC phono preamp



Another Chinese line, Consonance looks set to sweep aside better known brands both in styling and sound.



Stax, legendary headphone manufacturers, present their valve driven Omega electrostatic 'phones



The Klimo Beltaine monoblocks, from Germany, with outboard power supplies are about as purist audiophile as it gets!



The UK's very own Papworth, with their bargain Class-A valve integrated.



The Heart modified Marantz CD with tube output stage is a genuine bargain.



From Serbia, the Korato line of valve amps are incredible value for money. Audiophile quality at pocket money prices (almost!).

Benefits of dealing with Walrus (apart from the very best sounding gear) - We don't believe in "hard sell", you decide in your own time. In-house service on many items, sometimes while you wait. We understand audiophile equipment, especially vinyl playing and valve amps inside out, and have many years experience to draw on. Big accessory range. Interest Free Credit on many lines, subject to approval. And so on, and on ..



Aha! Bit misleading this one - The Sonneteer Byron CD - fabulous sound, and not a tube in sight!



The famous Musical Fidelity X-CAN valve headphone amp, now in v3 form.

Walrus has never, ever, dreamt of being seduced by all this multi-channel nonsense, we prefer to leave that to others. Of course we like a good film as much as anyone, but we love realistically reproduced music much more. And as the ultimate, most engaging reproduction usually comes from vinyl sources amplified by a decent valve amp, this is what we unashamedly do. An ever increasing number of satisfied customers thankfully agree and tell us we are cutting edge in audio reproduction. Funny old world, eh?

...Turntable Specialist!

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air tangent amazon amphion amplifon apollo furniture argento audible illusions audio physic audiovalve breuer dynamic brinkmann cabasse cartridge man cawsey chord electronics clearaudio clearcover decca london dnm duevel dynavector ear yoshino ecosse es lab final lab graham slee hadcock heart incognito infinity jbl k2 klimo korato lavardin loricraft lyra michell engineering morch musical fidelity neat acoustics nordost nottingham analogue opus 3 origin live ortofon papworth pluto rega turntables ringmat roksan shun mook shanling shelter sme sonneteer spender stax sugden sumiko tci cables tivoli audio tom evans townshend audio transfiguration trichord trigon van den hul voodoo wireworld xlo

Like its rivals the big Denon will decode Dolby Digital 5.1 surround-sound and the DTS equivalent, which is less compressed and of better quality. When a centre-rear channel is added (6.1) we get Dolby Digital EX and DTS-ES, and the Denon handles both. It handles DTS 96/24 (you need a suitable player and software) too.

Time delays can be set on all eight channels independently, as well as levels. The handbook is hopelessly opaque with a lot of its explanations though, which are convoluted Japanese to English translations. I feel sorry for first time users. I have wrestled with many such receivers and they are never easy. I ended up resetting the Denon's microprocessor when it froze on me, and then its remote control when it had a fit (I pulled its batteries out)!

As with all such receivers there are masses of options, including various Hall modes, none of which I find convincing or useful. The Denon has a tuner with VHF/FM and Medium Wave and also has a Moving Magnet (MM) phono stage no less. There is full video switching, via S-video and phono connectors (no SCARTs).

The chassis is large, as you might expect, but at 434mm wide (17in) fits hi-fi racks. Weight is a normal for the type at 13kgs and standby power draw just one watt.

How well 7.1 performed depended much upon the recording being played, as Dolby Labs states. However, broadly speaking it is good news. Whilst some recordings conspicuously don't work, like Teldec's Beethoven DVD-Audio series, most do. With nicely constructed surround mixes on tracks like the Toy Matinee's 'Turn It On' Salvador rear harmonies were smoothly spread around the listening position and added to the overall enjoyment of the music. Foreigner's 'Juke Box Hero' had a pulsing bass smoothly panning around the room through a full 360degrees. This was as good as any test signal, clearly demonstrating how 7.1 can reproduce effects smoothly, without discontinuity, to add to a production. Then there's the Insane Clown Posse's 'Get Ya Wicked On' which is extraordinary in 7.1, with Rap from front, reply from behind, room shaking bass and events in the head! It's another world, quite different from stereo but so dramatic and



7.1 channel inputs make the Denon a veritable socket fest - forget property, these days the smart money goes into cable companies...

engaging, just impossible to ignore. The presence of two Back speakers rather than one (i.e. 6.1) proved itself here, convincing me that two either side are better than one right behind.

With DVD video, results were equally convincing. Panned audio effects giving aircraft flypasts in 'Dark Blue World' wrapped around successfully when rear panning was used. Front panning tends to predominate in most movies, and here 7.1 offered nothing extra. It is best to widen the sound stage by moving the loudspeakers apart and raise Left and Right levels to prevent Centre channel dominance, but Pro Logic IIx and the version in the AVR-2803 do have a Centre Spread option to ameliorate this problem.

I've become impressed by 5.1 and 6.1 surround-sound, and 7.1 offered a useful little bit extra. Whether you want to shoehorn even more loudspeakers into your lounge does depend upon your home and

how much you love the sight of loudspeakers in it of course.

I found the AVR-2803 none too easy to use, and the handbook poor. The clear displays and reasonably straightforward operation of the Marantz SR6300 I reviewed some months back makes it more attractive for both audio work and video playback in many respects. But Denon knows what it's doing technically and this receiver does offer an incredible amount of processing for audio or video playback. It has good sound quality, with forceful bass but smooth treble and was very entertaining – at an amazing price.

This is surround-sound's equivalent of one of those new, ever bigger four wheel drives and, like them, whether it is the greatest, or just a bit pointless will depend upon your circumstance and outlook. I liked it.

VERDICT ●●●●● £

Massive power and ability at a low price makes this a bargain. Difficult to use, but fun all the same.

DENON AVR-2803 £650

Hayden Labs
 (+44 (0)1753 888447
 www.denon.co.uk

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The AVR-2803 produced 120watts into 8ohms with one channel driven, rising to 196watts into 4ohms. These figures will fall a little with additional channels driven, but the Denon remains powerful. It also produces minimal distortion (0.005%), even at high frequencies, so the power amps are well developed.

As always with these receivers the analogue inputs feed an A/D. It limits bandwidth to 42kHz and adds a little noise, but was linear. The Ext. Inputs avoid the A/D and are -1dB down at 55kHz.

The phono stage was accurately equalised and quite quiet. The VHF tuner however was around 5dB noisier than expected at -67dB, but frequency response was flat and wide (10Hz-14kHz), ensuring good tonal balance. It wasn't especially sensitive so a good aerial is needed.

The AVR-2803 measured very well in all areas; it has been carefully designed. NK

Power	120watts	Sensitivity	200mV
CD/tuner/aux.		dc offset	4/3mV
Frequency response	10Hz-55kHz	Disc	
Separation	110dB	Frequency response	15Hz-42kHz
Noise	-90dB	Separation	65dB
Distortion	0.005%	Noise	-88dB
		Distortion	0.006%
		Sensitivity	2.6mV
		Overload	40mV
		Tuner	
		Frequency response	10Hz-14kHz
		Separation	55dB
		Noise	-68dB
		Distortion	0.2%

Seventh

Just when you thought six-channel surround was becoming the standard, along comes seven! Noel Keywood explains the new 7.1 channel Dolby Pro Logic IIx format.

To many, the thought of using seven channels of surround sound is madness, a Frankenstein experiment in high fidelity with wires and boxes everywhere and, in the midst of it all, the listener under acoustic assault.

Well, Dolby Labs' recently introduced 7.1 channel as the Pro Logic IIx system and it is now appearing on a number of products, including Arcam and Meridian separates here in the UK, and a number of Japanese designs such as Denon's AVR-2803 reviewed on p36 – so it's here whether we like it or not. And I'm impressed. People either love or hate surround-sound, but I think it's fun to listen to, and 7.1 isn't too complex either. Here's why I think 7.1 is actually easier and more sensible to use in the home than 5.1 surround-sound!

ANGLE DELIGHT

The loudspeaker layout recommended for 5.1 surround-sound in the home places the listener in the centre of a circle of loudspeakers and it based on large-theatre (e.g. cinema) practice. This is also the recommended layout for mixing rooms, where the surround-sound mix is created.

In the real world, walls exist and a 5.1 system in the home will likely end up as in our second diagram, where the rear loudspeakers (called Surround speakers) have moved forward, from 110degrees to 90degrees relative to centre front, to become side speakers. They also move in toward a listener to become much closer than the front loudspeakers. With this arrangement there's no rear sound.

To alleviate this, 6.1 was brewed up where one Rear loudspeaker is used to fill the rear gap. But it sits directly behind the settee, or right

behind your head. In this position it can add dramatic effect, as DTS ES discrete 6.1 surround-sound demonstrates, but a loudspeaker directly behind can at times sound a little odd.

With 7.1, two Rear loudspeakers are used, instead of one. This spreads the rear sound, forming a smoother and more convincing rear panorama. A centre rear phantom image is possible and I found it appears in-head, much like that from headphones – a fascinating phenomenon, and a great hook for 7.1. Dolby's diagram of suggested loudspeaker layout now shows an arrangement far more practical for the average British home than the old 5.1 layout.

Experimenting with this I found the Surround speakers at either side must not be moved forward or they suddenly start to set up a frontal image that seemingly takes precedence over the more distant Front speakers, which is confusing. Providing the Surrounds stay at either side of the listening position and the Rears are behind, then subjectively 7.1 works well and it does what's claimed of it. Surround speakers should be full range floorstanders or stand-mounters. Rear 'speakers can be wall mounted. A sturdy shelf is good enough.



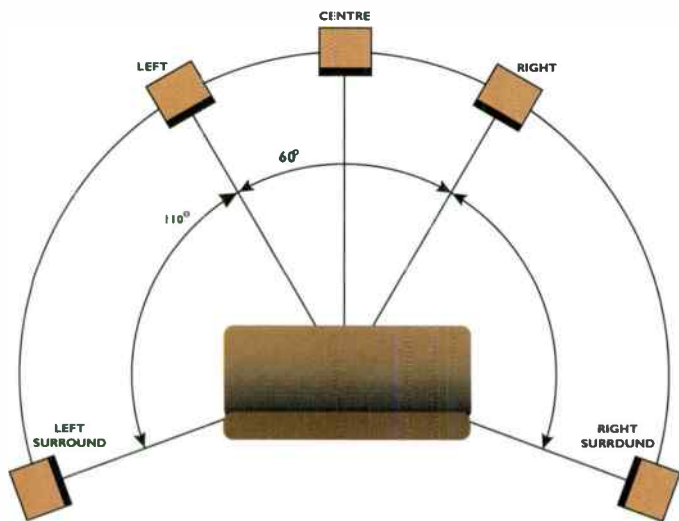
DOLBY
PRO LOGIC IIx

DOLBY PRO LOGIC IIx

This is an electronic processing circuit that derives extra channels from existing stereo information in 5.1 or 6.1 channel surround-sound. Put simply, you can play anything, except mono (early Beatles records!) and get 7.1 channels with good surround sound effect. You will get best results from 6.1 (DTS-ES or Dolby EX), then 5.1 (i.e. Dolby surround-sound) and, lastly, stereo. But even stereo unravels nicely with Pro Logic IIx. As noted in the Denon receiver review, there's more matrix four channel around than you would know about until you run a de-matrixing circuit like Pro Logic. Then all sorts of funny sounds are to be heard coming from the rear speakers, especially from television stereo. This is a bonus of running surround-sound.

There are a few special points to note. Firstly, 7.1 surround-sound is not a recording format and on whether it may be, Dolby say only, "possibly". You don't need 7.1 discs and they may well not appear, but since 6.1 is discrete, 7.1 could become so. The Rear speakers carry independently derived signals; they do not share the same signal. Both cinema and music sound balances are available, as well as one for games. And finally there is good adjustability

Heaven?



The suggested layout for a 5.1 surround-sound system. Ideal but impractical, as too much floor space is taken by 'speakers.

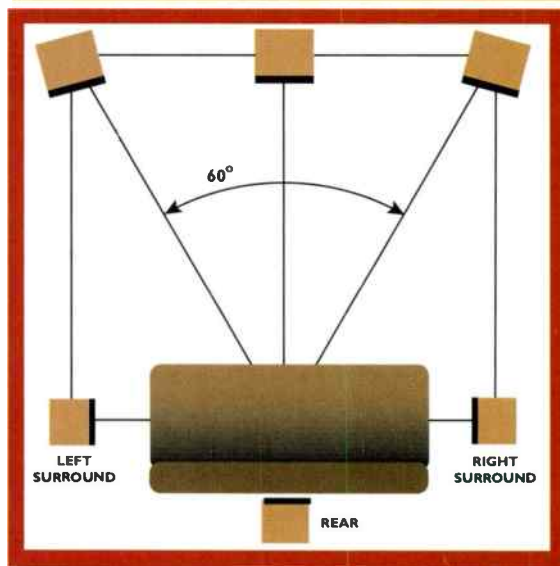
to counteract various effects that arise with surround-sound.

One obvious problem with surround-sound is centre channel dominance. In practice this can be so marked I've felt at times that I'm listening to mono with ambience. A

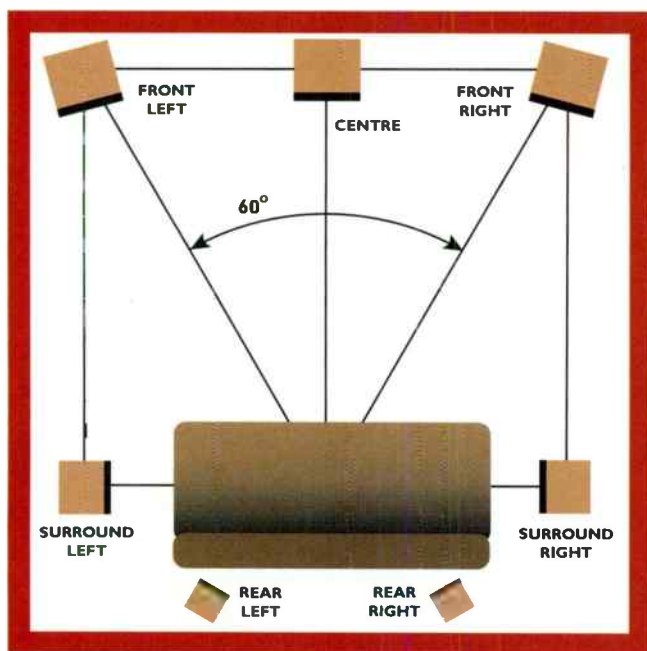
Centre Width control in Pro Logic IIx directs information back to Left and Right to give them a little more presence. There is also a Panorama control to give better warp around effect and a Dimension control to adjust depth of sound field.

BRITISH KIT

Meridian has a software upgrade for its 861 processor to produce 7.1 channels using Dolby Pro Logic IIx. Arcam will also be introducing a new receiver, the AVR300 in early 2004, equipped with Pro Logic IIx. Provisionally priced at £1299, it produces 120watts per channel with two of its seven channels fully driven, and around 100watts per channel with all fully driven. Arcam's current AV8 processor (£2,999) can be software upgraded to run Pro Logic IIx, too.



In a 6.1 system, the Surround speakers move to the sides and one Rear 'speaker is added.



With 7.1, two Rear 'speakers are used to give a smoother spread of rear sound and avoid a hard centre image directly behind the head. Arranged like this, the Rears act like large headphones, giving in-head images. Rear level and time delay can be set to avoid dominance, and Dolby Pro Logic IIx also provides Panorama (image wrap around), Dimension (front back depth) and Centre Width (front-centre de-emphasis) adjustment.

There's method in the madness of using seven channels of surround-sound. The biggest step I have found is re-arranging to accommodate a 5.1 system. Upgrading to 7.1 by adding a couple of rear loudspeakers, plus cables, wasn't difficult in comparison. In most homes I suspect a rear wall shelf is least intrusive and the most practical solution. The spread of sound with 7.1 and the in-head images it can generate are impressive. Most of my Rock surround-sound recordings, from Foreigner through to Fleetwood Mac panned out well through it, via Pro Logic IIx. Stereo CDs were cleverly processed too, the frontal sound stage sounding clean and well composed, whilst rear information was natural and not overly intrusive (unlike DTS Neo 6). I've been convinced by Pro Logic II after using it for some time and IIx is a useful improvement. A Frankenstein experiment perhaps, but enjoyable all the same!

mail

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Letter of the Month



MP3 – still paralysing the music biz?

COPY CATS?

A not inconsiderable number of people across the world shell out serious amounts of money on high end kit only to find that the current wave of copy protection systems get in the way of enjoying the music. The record companies attempts to mess with the accepted 'red book' CD format and their compromising of the full benefits of DVD-A and SACD seem to be pushing us all down the same mediocre quality path in the same way that their music output has done the same in the last few years. Of course, any new format requires the record industry's signature of approval in order to succeed but I cannot see how placing a straight jacket on how a format develops helps its early adoption and acceptance. Perhaps they see that they are not going to make a killing like they did with CD because there is no need to replace one's collection of music like there was when CD was launched (I for one didn't because I always have been a vinyl fan. but that's besides the point)...

The record industry is so preoccupied with music sharing on the internet that it is completely blind to the reason why music fans might want higher fidelity formats. It is crass to think that somebody would actually buy a DVD-A or SACD player and then only listen to MP3s downloaded from the internet. Yes, some people do listen to

MP3s or WMA music files on their computer because this provides convenience (I for one have three hundred tracks loaded onto my PC for background music) and many businesses including radio stations and bars now find digital storage invaluable, especially given the enhanced features that it provides. For example, such features allow listeners to see detailed album information in real time and therefore aid purchasing intentions. The record companies would seem to be shooting themselves in the foot by limiting this valuable marketing channel for their products.

The people I know who do listen to MP3s do so because they have portable players, or they wouldn't consider buying the whole album. Or else they are kids and when they grow up they will start to buy profitable deep catalogue acts. The paralysis of the record industry to disengage itself from selling individual tracks in MP3 format means that instead of making \$1 for themselves, they prefer to encourage the black market to flourish in their place. Black market economics are quite simple to understand when the supply is restricted in order to maintain high margins.

I for one, will not even consider buying any CDs which are non red book standard because I have no guarantees that it will play, and if I return an offending CD I have no guarantee that the shop will refund my money (why should I have another defective CD in its place?). Basic consumer rights are being ignored by current trading standards in this respect, since their argument is that the audio equipment is at fault and not the non-standard CDs. Well done RIAA, you have

just done what you are trying to prevent – lose customers! And for that, I am branded a 'pirate' who just wants to rip off the artists. This attitude may well force people like me to search out somebody with the means to extract the digital stream from such CDs and make the apparent problem more real for the RIAA. "PC"

Since when has the music industry acted in its best interests - by giving the public what they want at a reasonable price? In my humble opinion the fact that for much of the eighties and nineties, CDs cost around £12-£15 when just a decade earlier we were paying under £4 (and for an arguably sonically superior – and far better packaged product) per album on LP, meant that there was an eager market for 'pirated' (i.e. 'non rights-protected') music. MP3 arrives and lo-and-behold, it's embraced with vigour by a music buying public that felt it had been taken for a ride with CD prices. If the music industry had tried harder with CD pricing and packaging (not to mention sound) from day one, then perhaps folk would have been less inclined to pirate it.

And now, the biz has just shot itself in the foot again with copycoding! Give music lovers a lovingly presented product at a sensible price (£5?) and buyers would come back in droves, but that would be far too easy, wouldn't it...?

DP



What next for a Swedish LP12?

FOR SHURE?

My trusty old Shure VST-V has finally worn out. I use it on a LP12/Valhalla/Akito and I've always thought it was a nice one, if a little polite and shy at times. The rest of my humble system is a Linn Classic and a pair of Sonus Faber Minimas. Now to the essence of my worries. I've tried a lot of cartridges over the years, both MCs and MMs, and I've come to the conclusion that MCs at prices I understand has too cheap stylus shapes. Everybody seems to love the Denon 304 - I don't! Female voices are all over the house as soon as they stop talking and just hint to sing out. Must be down to stylus shape, or am I wrong?

While I'm trying to decide what to do I use a Grado Prestige Gold, and I like the overall character of that, but it's those female voices again! Should I buy a new stylus for my Shure and stand the shyness or should I go for the Grado Reference Sonata, or maybe Linn Adikt. The cartridge should have a warm character, since the rest of the system, and my taste, would like that.

Niklas Löfmark
Sweden

The problem is that your Akito isn't really up to tracking anything special, so if it was me I'd save my cash for a better arm. Obviously, your stylus is kaput, so you'll have to buy something in the mean time, so may I suggest a Dynavector DV20xH (£350)? This is a brilliantly warm music maker, surprisingly capable at the price, and will happily work when you're able to afford a Naim ARO (which would be my choice of LP12 pick-up arm), or indeed the latest Ekos. **DP**

GOING DUTCH #1

My question is the following: After four years of living happily with my Sugden A21a amp, Tannoy D500 loudspeakers, Thorens 125 Mk2/modified RB250 arm/ Denon 304 MC combo, TEAC VRDS11/Meracus Auriga DAC combo, I have finally come to the realization that though my system makes nice sounds, it does sound a tad bass-slow at times, and that a Sugden/Tannoy mismatch is probably to blame. Although the Tannoys are nicely sensitive, they are not the easiest load on the planet and I think they are simply too big for my listening area (approx. 30 sq. m.). So, the Tannoys go and the Sugden stays, right? \

From your latest few issues I have been able to glean some advice as to better matches for the Sugden, such as Quad ESL 63s. However, I think my room is simply too small for Quads. Further suggestions I have found on the web include: Harbeths, single bass driver

Royds and QLN Qubics, Pro-ac Studio 100, Audionote / Snell loudspeakers and Audiovector 3 and 5. I am not sure if all of these are still available from the manufacturer, but I don't mind buying second hand. I listen to pop and rock, jazz and classical music and my budget stretches up to about £1500.

Just one more thing: occasionally I hook up a second hand Audio Innovations 300 Mk2 tube amp that I enjoy listening to as well, so ideally the speakers should work well with this amp also. Your advice in this matter would be most appreciated.

Peter Inghels,
Amsterdam

Hi Peter - I'd go for the Revolver R45s (£890) - these work superbly with the Sugden A21a, thanks to heroically high sensitivity and very benign load characteristics. They're also big enough to aspirate your room. They have a bright, engaging and fast sound, but with decent refinement and no small degree of finesse. The only other possible candidate would be Castle's Conway 3 (£930), which is a deeper, richer and silkier performer, but lacks the lightening transients of the Revolvers, and the ability to go louder than Concorde on a 1mW input! Seriously though - the former is big



Hand-me-down SME 3
- thanks Dad!

and bold, the latter sweet and rich - your call. As your room sounds bass slow, and the Castles aren't the fastest in that department, I'd plump for the former. **DP**

GOING DUTCH #2

Re: Table problems, Sept. 2003 issue, page 47.

Your reply to Mr. Slater's problem could possibly be extended by advising him to use a belt with a smaller diameter. I have a Sansui SR-222 as well, producing the same scrapping sound (but not with 45 rpm!). I installed a belt from my Thorens 160 with stunning result - silence all over the place. I don't know whether this will work on a DUAL but it is worth trying.

The Sansui SR-222 really is a remarkable turntable. Bought back in 1979 - after having read an article with the Ultimo cartridge, it still stands the tide (I made it a lot heavier by adding/gluing rubber mats everywhere) My SR-525 direct drive has gone to the scrap hill because its speed started varying in the most curious way and the arm lift did not work anymore (dried up oil I was told), But the (much cheaper) 222 + Shure V15Vmx does not have this problem and still works together with the long derelict Keesonic Kub (+REL Quake) on a Luxman L-100 (bought second-hand in Sheffield in 1985 thanks to your classified ads!).

Bert van Baren
Netherlands

Thanks for that Bert - I've got an SR222, and will be doing an Olde Worlde on it shortly. It's a very smooth and warm sounding deck - arguably too much so! I can imagine how its super-soft sound would suit the 'let me at 'em' sonics of the V15Vmx. Still, I love the styling and decent build, and the fact that you can pick one up for £30 doesn't hurt, either! Sansui devotees should check out www.classicsansui.com - the brand has made some serious stuff!

DP

STD CHOICE

Hi! My name is Matthew. I am 14 and have a paper round. My dad has given me a STD 305M turntable, SME Series 3 (not S) arm and a Roksan Corus Black cartridge. The stylus will need changing soon but I have found out that it costs £145. My musical tastes are the more the 60s generation and I am saving money to buy LPs as I prefer the sound to CDs. My amp is Cambridge A1 with a Graham Slee amp I.

My question is: do I save to replace the Corus Black stylus or could you recommend a different cartridge that would suit my arm and musical tastes? I am prepared to spend up to £150. Thanks for your help, my dad has bought himself an Origin Live!

Matthew

Hi Matthew – don't tell your Dad, but if you tweak your STD properly, it will run his Origin Live seriously close. It's a cool deck that's well worth spending money on, and the fact that you've got a SME 3 only makes things better! The trouble is that the rest of your system doesn't really justify you spending too much cash on the cartridge. Personally, I'd spend £25 on an Audio Technica AT-110E, and start saving for a really cool amp and/or speakers (write back when you've got £500!). Still, if you want to go for a serious cartridge now, then Goldring's G1042 would be my choice. The SME 3 is happier with moving magnets, and Shure V15V notwithstanding, this is the best. Meanwhile, clean your STD's belt, motor pulley and inner platter with isopropyl alcohol (from any dispensing chemist shop), along with the arm sockets and phono plugs, and change your bearing oil. Swab all the old stuff out with cotton buds, clean the bearing recess and spindle with the aforementioned alcohol, and then refill with a few millilitres of some of your Dad's 5W40 full synthetic oil he puts in the family car (he won't notice). Instant turntable upgrade for £3! **DP**



Digital Radio – the truth about bitrates

GOLDEN AGE OF BITRATES

I wonder whether Noel Keywood's article "The Golden Age of Wireless" (August 2003) is entirely correct in the facts quoted? He stated that DAB works at 128kbps or less, but my stepson found from a website that Classic FM and Radio 3 for example use higher data rates. He also pointed out that Kiss can be found on the VHF band at 100MHz (I checked it), although Mr Keywood claimed that Kiss is unavailable on VHF.

It would be interesting to know the source of Mr Keywood's claim that VHF/FM tuners give a data rate equivalent to 800kbps.

These matters arose during a debate with my stepson about the

merits or otherwise of digital radio, and having quoted from your magazine as my source of authority, I found had to back down - ignominiously, I might add. The worst of it was that he reckoned he could hear hiss on FM transmissions via my Quad FM4 fed directly from a 5-element aerial, so his ears as well as his facts were clearly superior to mine... I look forward to hearing from you or Mr Keywood!

Mike Thomson

Typical data rate is 128kbps; a majority of stations use this rate. Radio 3 uses 192kbps in an attempt to boost quality, whilst speech transmissions and others sink to as low as 64kbps, mono (try Capital Disney).

Kiss FM is a London station. The rest of the country meaning the majority of VHF listeners - cannot get it.

A good VHF tuner has an audio bandwidth of 15kHz and 76dB dynamic range. This is equivalent to 32kHz sampling rate with a little less than 13bit resolution, giving an equivalent data rate of around 800kbps with stereo (32k x 12.5 x 2). VHF transmissions carry much more data than DAB. By removing this in the digital domain using Musicam compression, band occupancy can be greatly reduced. This is the point of DAB: it is designed to cram a lot into a little space.

Perhaps you can hear hiss through your Quad. Most studio sources are still analogue and contain hiss, in which case it is being transmitted, commonly from mics and tape recorders. Or your aerial may not be supplying sufficient signal to put the tuner into Full Quietening, due perhaps to geographical location. **NK**

DO I OR DON'T I?

That is the question! Well, go on then, what's the answer? The problem I have landed myself is huge! Many moons ago I got involved in hi-fi and have watched trends come and go. I went to your match up of the heavyweights, the CD12 and a fully fettled LP12 from Linn and without doubt the LP12 won. I've been to many shows and walked out pig-sick with what I was going home to listen too. But it's not about that. It's about the enjoyment we glean from listening to our music on our systems.

My system consists of a NAD 3020 amplifier, Marantz CD63K1 Sig and a pair of B&W 602s I. My deck is a Pioneer PL550 and here is my question. I was given an absolutely immaculate Goldring G99 motor unit with not a hint

of bearing noise and even the paintwork on the screws is still there! (to stop tinkering by the tinkering society I feel) When you start it up there is a very tiny amount of hum from the wheel to the motor contact I think but that's it. Am I wasting my time putting it into some highly polished slate I have with 4 spikes as feet and loading it up with an RB250 arm with Origin Live mods and putting all this do-dah on a isolation platform, or forget the lot and opt for a Rega 3? I have all the bits except the arm and a budget of around 300 quid. Hope I don't sound too stupid and await you reply with anticipation so my head doesn't explode!

**Dougie Curl
Wiltshire.**

Dougie - I have to be honest and say that the G99 is not one of my personal fave vintage decks. It does have, however, quite a strong following. As far as I am concerned the worst part is the idler wheel drive system that does tend to push up against the inside of the platter, and can "rock" it 'too and fro' ever so slightly, inducing a weird kind of "out of phase" hum in your speakers. If your deck is in such good condition, this will be very, very mild, and the deck is still very capable. With any of these kinds of decks, such as Garrard 301/401, the plinth is the critical bit to get right and can transform the performance, or kill it. Prices of Garrards have gone a bit silly of late, although the odd bargain can still be found, especially with the 401.

The G99 remains a good and valid performer, capable of seeing off quite a few newer decks... Frankly given the same RB300, I would not be at all surprised that the G99 on a decent plinth would totally and utterly blow away the Rega Planar 3. So my advice would be simple: GO FOR IT! Do not forget to include some way of decoupling your slate bed from its surroundings though - good old squash balls may help here! **HB**

TOYS IN THE ATTIC

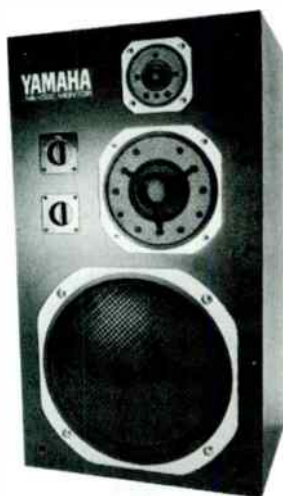
I have recently moved to our new house and on clearing out the loft I found two Quad II amps and a Quad Control 22! Can you please let me know more about them and also any help from clubs. One seems to work, the other the fuse is missing. Also, is there anyone in the Kent area who might be able to help with wiring them up?

Terry Borton

Quad IIs are still in my humble opinion one of the best valve amps

made. They were made between 1952 and 1969, replacing the original Quality Unit Domestic Amplifier of 1948. They are unusual in that they are only a "two stage" design, and require a good few volts of signal to gain full output (1.4 volts). Also, they used a cathode winding on the output transformer, which is still unusual, but highly sound practice. Technically, they are a very interesting amplifier. Sadly, being located up north I do not know of any good audio clubs to put you in contact with (perhaps some of our readers could suggest groups here?). The preamp is okay, but not as good as the power amps.

One major note of caution here: your amplifiers will need to be properly checked out by a decent technician before they are plugged in to the mains. If you plug them straight in you risk damaging the delicate transformers, and thus killing the amplifier. With age, all the "passive" components will have begun to fail, and some work will be needed to get the amplifiers back up to full strength. You may be lucky and only need very mild work, but one failed coupling capacitor could have the effect of killing off a KT66 output valve, and taking one of the transformers with it. So do get the units expertly checked out before you even put them near the mains! Check out our specialist dial-a-dealer page for suitable engineers to perform the work! **HB**



Yamaha NS1000M – the legend lives thirty years on!

YAMAHA PART 1

Dear Mr. Price, I've finally got a pair of NS1000M speakers. One careful owner - spotless and mint. I put an advert on a website as wanting a pair and after five months I got them. There is one small problem though. I'm in the process of auditioning some cables and the ones I want to borrow are all terminated

with spades, or plugs. Unfortunately the Yams have the old wire clips. Do you know any company that does a speaker terminal input kit that I can use for a replacement, or alternatively do you know where I can get instructions on carrying out the necessary modifications?

P.S. They work a treat with Lavardin IT amps! Thanks!

Lohan

Hi Lohan - Michell Engineering does a set of adaptors that you screw into the clips and offer up a banana socket - try the website or e-mail them for details. I used to use them with mine, but now I've just cut off the ends of the speaker cables to bare wire, which I've trimmed down and shoved in! (Works fine). May I asked how much you paid for them? What do you think of the sound? What do you set the mid and treble level controls to? Cheers, **DP**

Thanks for replying so soon David. In answer to your questions. I paid £600 for them, but the guy only wanted £500. The reason I paid a bit more was because they had some target stands, and better still they were unscratched and in absolutely mint condition - as if they came out the box, and were from the famous 'one careful owner'.

As to the sound - you were right - it's the closest speaker to 'live' music there is. I heard the Lavardin IT with a few speakers, but this just redefines synergy in my view. It is a mouth-watering sound in that they deliver on all the things I wanted: bass, imaging and placement, stage depth and extended treble - which contrary to what I expected was in fact smooth and well integrated!

At the moment I have the mid and treble set at half way between 0 and -3. By the way, I know a person who sold his NS1000M to Musical Fidelity - they use them as their set up and test reference since they stopped making their own speakers. I think that Yamaha should be persuaded to start producing these again.

Oh yes, lest I forget, I think your magazine is fab, and long may it continue - none of the elitist crap, or just price per pound - just fair evaluation in context. Thanks once again.

Lohan

YAMAHA PART 2

I found the comments from David Price about the Yamaha's very interesting. In particular the other speakers that he refers to in his comparisons (JBL, QUAD) are all speakers I have owned. In fact, I seem to have gone through a spiral of

speaker evaluations, just recently settling down from Klipschorns, to JBL L300s, to QUAD ESL 57 (quite a difference) and now to the Yamaha NS1000Ms.

At the moment it seems to me that the Yamahas combine the best attributes of all of my previous speakers. They have the low distortion detail of the Quads, with the attack and bass of the JBLs/ Klipsches. In fact they seem better than the JBLs. The bass is solid and undistorted, as expected from the non-reflex cabinet. The speakers are indeed very alive and dynamic.

As usual I like to dig into the equipment that I own but in the case of the NS1000s I am frustrated. I have managed to locate a two page user "manual", which is a pretty sad document - and that is about it. At the moment the only upgrade I can think of (but all advice gratefully accepted) is to replace the connectors (cheap spring loaded push-fit) with decent screw-down connectors. Without some guide I am not at all keen to start unscrewing the many screws holding the crossover in! Does anyone have access to a decent service manual or design review of these speakers?

It really amazes me that Yamaha have apparently walked away from this market sector. These speakers are certainly amongst the finest that I have ever heard and can usually be purchased for around £800. They make all of the equivalent priced modern speakers look silly and runs rings around most of the others.

**George Brooke
Linton, Cambridge**

Hi George - I refer you to the answer I gave Lohan some moments ago! Couldn't agree more about their special abilities - let's start an owners club? All Yam-fanciers e-mail in to me at the normal e-mail address and we'll compare notes? **DP**

YAMAHA PART 3

Dear Mr Price, I recently read your comments regarding the Yamaha NS1000M speaker. I have a pair in great shape. I need your advice as to what amp works well with them. First do they prefer tube or transistor? How much power should the amp have to drive them properly? Lastly, could you suggest a few amplifiers which would work well with the Yamahas.

Mark Fondas

With high sensitivity but a fairly low impedance, they'll work best with both high power tranny amps and medium power valve amps through the 4 ohm tap. If it's solid-state you're into, then you'd do worse than to try Musical Fidelity's A308 power. I

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had superb results from the old XA-200s a few years back, which really took the Yams by the scruff of the neck – usually, the situation is the complete reverse.

If it's tube amps you're into, then I'd go straight to Audio Research's Vsi55 – a big mutha of a valve amplifier, make no mistake. You'll find the two amps sound dramatically different through the NS1000Ms (which are the most transparent 'speakers I've heard'). The former will be tight, taut and dry with chest-pounding bass and just a touch of transistor veiling, the latter sounds wonderfully big hearted, fat, bouncy and just a little splashy across the treble. **DP**

POWER TO THE PRO-JECT!

Given as Haden Boardman found that the Pro-ject RPM 4 compared more than favourably with the Audio Note AN-TT 1 turntable, Henley Designs would likely happily supply you with the current specification Pro-ject 6.9 for Mr Boardman to review. It has been years since Hi-Fi World assessed an earlier version of the 6.9.

The current 6.9 has quite remarkable pitch stability, substantially more so than the Rega P3, good reproduction of rhythm and timing and good clarity of presentation. I prefer it to the RPM 6. It is well worth potential buyers of turntables being made aware of. And no, I do not work for Pro-ject, nor Henley – more the pity as I had to pay for my 6.9! I think it deserves to be in your new World Standards guide!

Chris Logon

Thanks Chris – I'll be on the blower to Henley Designs as soon as I've finished writing this! There's no doubt the original 6.9 was a capable bit of kit, it's just fallen out of the spotlight of late. Meanwhile, the aforementioned guide is due for an update any day now... **DP**

DOCTOR WHO SEEKS K9

Can you please help. I am looking for a K9 cartridge for a Linn Axis, but having no luck. I live in Londonderry Northern Ireland, so if there is an agent in my part of the world can you let me have their address?

Anon

Linn no longer make the K9, and have no direct replacement for it. This isn't such a shame as it's not a great cartridge anyway. I suggest you buy a Goldring G1042 (around £110) which will give better results. **DP**

The K9 was a budget Audio Technica. You could try getting an AT110E. But

as David says, it isn't so good. Budget Ortofonos give a similar balance. **NK**

Mr Leonard JK Setright. When you're not experiencing the heavy Gs

Drive time – Nakamichi's superb CD45z car CD tuner



DRIVEN BY YOU

Wow - someone mentioned the 'C' word in your hallowed pages! I'm sure many of the readers of your fabulous publication would be amazed to find that some high-end audio manufacturers also make incredibly high quality Car audio equipment too.

When most people think about car audio they associate it with the baseball capped boy racer 'banging out choones' at the local McDonalds drive through, but there seems to be a minority of individuals who go quietly about their business enjoying music on the move delivered by such revered brands like Nakamichi, MacIntosh, Dynaudio, Focal and many more! I bet even some of the staff at Hi-FiWorld would be entertained by a valve based automotive system (Precision Power, Panasonic!)

I've been running a Nak in my car for a while now but I'm upgrading to a Denon unit (that apparently has the same Alpha processing circuit as the domestic flagship DP S1 CD player!) I realise that you can't replicate the sound that most of us are enjoying at home (but it's good fun trying to!). Food for thought, eh?

Anyway, I'll let you get back to putting together what I feel to be the only hi-fi magazine worth opening and I'll slip another disc into the slot, wind my seat back and lose myself in mobile sound!

Simon Lock

Agreed – seeing as we seem to spend ever longer in cars (stationary, invariably), then the need for a decent auto sound system is ever greater. It's an area that's been overlooked - those of the public transport persuasion get lots of reviews of tasty portables to peruse, so what of us motor-heads? With this in mind, we'll be doing something soon on this very subject.

Meanwhile, the best system I've heard in-car isn't something with thirty speakers, a sub in the boot the size of a pub table and a baseball capped Ali G clone at the wheel, but that belonging to none other than

exerted by his Honda Prelude's V-TECH motor, his early nineties Pioneer radio cassette provides lavish sounds – thanks in no small part to the fact that his tapes are recorded on his Linn LP12 with a Sony Walkman Pro. Howzat! **DP**

Boo hoo! I can't consider any of this because the car will be instantly vandalised should anything of even minor value be visible. And there's not much point on two wheels with a crash helmet on. Oh to have a nice, secure garage! **NK**

REVOLVER

Thank you for your excellent recent articles on vinyl. I have been enthused to the point of confusion! My system comprises Alchemist Forsetti CD / transport combo (APD33a, APD34a), Forsetti pre-amp (APD21a) and two Forsetti power amps (APD20a) powering a pair of Mission 753f speakers. Cabling is by Kimber. This creates a wonderful visual and auditory experience - visitors have asked what the silver and gold space station is...

My question revolves round vinyl. I am using a Thorens TD160 with an SME series 1115 arm. Cartridge, ripe for changing probably to a Denon DL304, is an aged and sibilant Linn K9. I was amazed at the increase in sound quality on using a Hart Linsley Hood phono stage instead of the 'in amplifier' phono stage of the Alchemist. A muddy, grungy, ugly duckling emerged as a swan outshining the CD and forcing me to upgrade with a Trichord Clock 3 with Never-connected power supply – thank you to Colin Toogood for other tweaks too! This was an amazing upgrade. If I bypass the pre-amp and supply the power amps directly from a CD using the DAC potentiometer as a volume control the sound is still better. Even so, vinyl outperforms CD despite the K9's treble enthusiasms.

Bearing in mind the Alchemist styling would visually compliment a Michell Gyro SE, I would appreciate sonic advice on the differences between the Thorens, a Garrard 301 in a slate

bed I have in the garage (currently armless), or purchasing the aforementioned Gyro SE. An arm change might be to an Origin Live modded RB250 or the Origin Live silver 250 if I really saved up. Which would sound best, and which should I sell...?

Jonathan Pearce

Thorens vs. Garrard vs. Michell, huh? Right – here goes! The Thorens has a smooth, even, sweet sound – that classic (coloured) vinyl signature, you could say. The Garrard has brain-busting bass, is tremendously musically articulate and lyrical sounding, but is veiled in the mid and treble (especially). The Michell offers 'the third way' – it's closer to digital inasmuch as it's very neutral with little apparent character. In absolute terms, it has a wonderfully wide and expansive soundstage with superb depth (the others sound shut in, by comparison), sparkling treble and tremendously tight rhythms. Still, it's a little 'stark' compared to the soft Thorens, and analytical compared to the mega-musical Garrard. So you decide! If it was me, I'd plump for the Michell/OL Silver 250 on both sonic and aesthetic grounds, with a nice, warm cartridge like a Dynavector DV20X-H. **DP**

SHOT JRs

I wonder if you could help me please. I have a pair of JR 150 loudspeakers which are still giving excellent reproduction. I wonder if you would have any idea as to a company who could supply me with replacement acoustic foam sleeves, as mine have perished badly.

Keith Jones.

Try Wilmslow Audio – click on <https://secure.wilmslow-audio.co.uk/>
DP

CD - HELLO GOODBYE!

I've been into hi-fi since the early 1970s and enjoyed to varying degrees a number of different analogue systems. I'm currently using my old system resurrected from the loft which consists of a Sugden A21 Mk 2 (re-capacitored.), Tannoy 3 LZs, Fons CQ30 (heavily modified), SME 3009 Improved, Shure V151 I HE and a home built phono amp. This set-up, while having some limitations is, to my ears, pretty dynamic and revealing, and is a lot of fun to listen to.

In late 1997 I rather reluctantly entered the digital age due to a lack of available vinyl and bought a NAD514 CD player at a very good price from Richer Sounds. This beast produced a competent if uninspiring sound and did

what it was supposed to do until recently when it began to stop in mid track then either restart or switch off. As I've got the upgrade bug again, I looked in on my local hi-fi emporium to see what was available and rather liked the look of that Arcam Diva CD82. While chatting to the salesman I related the saga of the dying NAD and was told that a life of about 5 years was about all you could expect from a CD player due to deterioration of the laser. As a tough estimate I used my machine on average for about 4 hours a week which equates to around 1000 hours over 5 years. Would it be true to say therefore that a CD player laser is only expected to last around 1000 hours?

As I'm contemplating spending about £800 on a new CD player the expected running cost would be in the order of £120 per annum which seems to me a bit steep. Should CD players be expected to last longer than this? Is this the moaning of a reactionary old tightwad who should join the throwaway society? And will there be life after the death of FM?

Thanks for a great magazine which doesn't assume that you're either thick or loaded. Keep up the good work

**Jack Hobbs
Bristol**

Hi Jack - well, that does seem a bit steep, doesn't it? £120 a year for the pleasure of sixteen-bit digital audio? (I'd spend it on records, personally). Anyway - I'm not going to be drawn about the disposability of modern life (it's rubbish, isn't it?), the ephemeral nature of human existence and the meaning of it all (42!).

Suffice to say, you can save yourself £300 on your £800 CD budget by buying a splendidiferous Marantz CD6000 KI Signature and use the money to meditate over the meaning of it all down at your local pub - ermm, I mean church.

As for life after the death of FM - believe me, it won't go without a struggle. Bring back Radio Fab FM!

DP

Without wanting the rock the boat, dare I suggest you consider listening to a DVD-Audio player? I'm using a Denon DVD-2900, alongside a Marantz CD6000 MkII KIS and the Denon isn't left floundering when playing CD. It also plays DVD Audio and SACD, both of which you can listen to in stereo if you wish. SACD is very smooth and easy on the ear – quite delightful in many ways. **NK**

RAISING THE ALARM

I have recently bought a couple of editions of your excellent magazine

mainly, in the first instance, because it was cheaper than the rivals, and yet seemed just as fun packed as the rest. Also, I like Noel Keywood's comments, after the ones by the other contributors.

Your letter pages seem to be full of letters from real people, and not computer generated ones, like in some of your contemporaries' magazines. Noel's liking for Creek products also won my favour, as I am now on my second amplifier in just over 20 years. I did own a Creek tuner also, but I have recently upgraded to one of the new Pure DAB tuners, which is excellent with my roof mounted aerial.

Anyway, to the point! I also own, along with B&W 602 speakers, a superb, in my opinion - Project Debut Mk2 turntable and a very ancient Sharp RT 20 cassette deck. This copes manfully and manually with metal, chrome and ordinary tape and has a real-time clock and counts down or up by seconds or revolutions. Plus an alarm function. The latter was bought for a mere £65, and will take a stereo microphone and has separate balance controls for treble and bass. Should I ditch this deck for a more modern, if less well-equipped cassette deck or go for a MiniDisc machine? As I am now retired, I probably need an alarm function even more, but I am prepared to forgo this luxury if necessary.

**Ralph. T. Warfield.
Bath**

Hi Ralph – thanks for the kind words, we aim to please! We have a crack bunch of people thinking up letters for the mag, whom we call readers - and boy, don't some of them have interesting situations!

I must say that yours is not uninteresting, either - a 1978 Sharp RT20 vs. a new MD machine (with no alarm)... Hmmm? Nurse – the screens!

Frankly, the Sharp wasn't much cop even when it was new (despite the whiz-bang LCD display), so you'll find the latest Sony MDS-JB980QS (£229) MiniDisc recorder – which even has its own equivalent of your Sharp's APSS ('Auto Program Search System', trainspotters) - to be sonically far superior.

Now if you were asking me about spending £229 on a well-preserved Nakamichi (BX-300 or CR-1, for example) cassette deck, I'd have to say buy the Nak. But then that wouldn't have an alarm either, would it...? **DP**

REVOLUTION NO.909?

I have been a keen reader since the magazine was launched, largely because of the thoroughly down-to-earth stance

that you and your predecessors take to music and hi-fi. You don't have to spend five figure sums to enjoy good music.

Two points I would like to raise with you: Firstly the changes to World Favourites and World Standards are I believe a considerable improvement, but I was interested to note the demise of the Klipsch Klipschorn and the Tannoy GRF and Tannoy GRF Autograph from 'Classics'. The Klipschorn particularly must justify its continued inclusion as a 'classic' on two grounds. Firstly because it is a truly great loudspeaker but secondly because it must be the longest lived hi-fi product ever, having now been on the market for 57 years. I must confess to a having a small vested interest here - I have been a Klipschorn addict for 8 years and still love them to bits - we bought the house to accommodate them! They are not perfect and they are coloured but they have a way of immersing the listener and dragging him/her into a performance providing a musical experience that few others can match.

On to the main reason for this letter - I enjoyed Hayden Boardman's balanced review of the Quad 909 power amp and his comments on the use of the 909 with high efficiency loudspeakers. I have been using the 909 in an all-Quad system for the last 6 months with the Klipschorns and I find it superb on both classical and jazz, which tends to be my main musical fare. The sound is very detailed and easy on the ear with awesome dynamics and power when required and it can convey scale in a way I have never heard before. I also the find 909 very impressive on 1960s pop, which in my experience can be problematic on some systems, though some may find the sound a tad bass light. The key to getting the best from the Quad 909 (and the 405.2 which preceded it) is set up, supports and cabling.

My system is as follows: Linn LP12 / Lingo! Circus! Ittok LVII, Dynavector Karat 17D II, Quad 99 CD Player, Quad 99 tuner, Quad 99 preamp, Quad 909 power amp, Klipsch Klipschorns. As for cables, I use Kimber Reference Power Cords and RA Purifier Block, a dedicated ring main with earth spike, Kimber Select 1011 interconnects and Kimber Monocle X speaker leads. Supports are RA Torlyte Stands and Oak Cone Feet (3 point support throughout). My listening room measures 460 square feet.

When I bought the Quad system in March this year, after running it in I slowly added my various pet 'tweaks', leaving each for a week or two to size up its impact before moving on to make any other further changes. I started with the supplied Quadlink bus cables v Kimber KS1011 interconnect. The

KS1011 won hands down. I then added the RA jumbo oak cones. The effect of the cones was astonishing. The previously slightly woolly, dead sound of the 909 snapped into focus and there was enhanced detail across the entire frequency spectrum.

The system flies in the face of conventional wisdom as I suspect that few people would consider using a 140wpc solid-state amplifier with horn loudspeakers of truly frightening sensitivity. Most would see low power valves as a more synergistic combination. My experience is that while valves work well (I have used Unison Research Mystery I and Smart 845s and Art Audio Quintets with the horns) the Quad 909 and its predecessor in my system, the Quad 405.2, when properly set up with good mains and signal cabling and wooden supports, outclassed them all, particularly at the bass end.

I have been a hi-fi enthusiast for 35 years and I have come to the conclusion that there is no one route to nirvana in reproducing music. I do however believe that high efficiency systems that are able to reproduce dynamics realistically provide a more convincing and enjoyable musical experience than low efficiency ones, which can by comparison sound flat. I would appreciate any further comments you or Hayden have on this **David King**
Northampton

The stunning Klipschorns remain one of the most dynamic loudspeakers ever made. I had a set, but sadly not the house to go with them! I found a good Class "A" 50 watt push-pull valve design with feedback to be the best sound from them. The high impedance can "reflect" back to a low powered amplifiers output transformer and reduce its available power to "too low" a level, not properly driving the speakers.

I am a total advocate of high efficiency loudspeaker systems, and agree wholeheartedly that they produce the most lifelike sound. This is not a prerequisite for a low power amplifier; one of the best sounds I ever had was a set of 100 watt EAR 509 mono blocks feeding a pair of similarly efficient Lowther Acoustas, which could barely handle 20 watts!

I agree with all your comments concerning setting up the '909. Yet for me, ultimately it did not fully cut the mustard. And one final point, longest running hi-fi product is actually the Beyer DT-48 headphones, first sold in 1937! Although the Klipsch run them very close! **HB**

I've been running a 909 for several months now, and find it a very competent if rather uninspiring transistor amp. Whereas the likes of the Unison S4 had me grinning, the Quad seems to do its job well, uncomplainingly, and that's about all you can say. I've got it driving 989 electrostatics (at six times the price), so maybe it's a bit out of its depth? Methinks that with a nice warm floorstander (Castle Conway 3, take a bow), it would be far more comfortable. It's interesting that it works well with the Klipschorns - it's got loads of power but still seems to like easy loads.... **DP**

TIK TOK STOPPED!

I read a reprint (on the internet) of your 2000 review of superarms in which you said that Linn will rebuild an Ittok arm. Being in possession of such an arm I e-mailed Linn customer services to request a rebuild of my LV11. They have recently replied saying that unfortunately they do not provide this service and I got the impression, have not done so for some considerable time!

Have I got it wrong somewhere? If Linn don't provide this service do you know of anyone who does, as in 'The Cartridge Man'. I would be most grateful if you could provide me with any assistance in this matter. Keep up the good work with your fine magazine. **Charles Donnelly**

Well, it was written nearly four years ago, and things don't stay the same - even with Linn! Frankly Charles, I'd swap the Ittok for an OL modded RB250 (with upgraded wiring). The standard RB300 is better in the midband than a fresh LV11, and an OL modded RB250 is head and shoulders above a standard RB250. Get my drift? The Cartridge Man does fine cartridge rebuilds, but as far as I know, doesn't rework tonearms. **DP**



MA GR60 - metal mutha!

Thinking out

In the analogue domain, a little bit of synergistic matching doesn't go amiss. With a decent digital source, however, you want the most neutral and clean sounding system you can find. David Price found that MartinLogan's Clarity electrostatic hybrid loudspeakers fitted the bill admirably...

US exotica is all well and good, but frankly much of it doesn't suit most British buyers, thanks to the size of both our wallets and our listening rooms. So it's always interesting then, to see something from America that looks so very right for UK audiophiles, before you even set ears on it. MartinLogan's Clarity loudspeaker was just such a product – as soon as I saw it, I knew it could be good. So what's so special? Well, it's an intelligently engineered hybrid loudspeaker in an elegantly compact package, which at £2,895 is quite affordable too!

Measuring 1350x259x311mm, the Clarity is tall but slim and amenable to most Brit listening rooms. It's also exquisitely finished, coming in a choice of three beautiful colour palettes - hardwoods, metallic accents and fabrics, too. With the long metal electrostatic mid/treble panel and neat bass driver and 'stealth' tweeter, they look both impressive yet tastefully discrete.

Yet it's more than just a pretty face. Whereas most 'speakers at this price attempt to make the most out of essentially compromised moving coil drivers, the Clarity uses ML's latest 660mm 'Generation 2' electrostatic transducer for mid and treble duties. As any audiophile will tell you, 'stats have a very fast and delicate sound that is frankly impossible from conventional coned boxes – conferring upon the Clarity an instant head start over most price rivals.

However, life is never simple, and electrostatic panels do have – how can I put it? – areas where their competencies aren't quite so marked, such as the frequency extremes. To wit, it boasts a 203mm aluminium coned, reflex-loaded bass driver to augment frequencies below 450Hz,

plus what ML call a Natural Ambience Compensation driver (a 25mm soft dome tweeter) to enhance the high frequency response. Actually, the main midrange panel itself goes up pretty high, so the 'NACT' in effect works like a supertweeter – and can actually be turned on and off. Custom-wound audio transformer, air core coils and a low-voltage power supply completes the package.

The result is a classic example of a hybrid loudspeaker – a powered electrostatic panel to cover most of the frequency range, with a complementary woofer for low frequencies (where electrostatic panels struggle most) and a supertweeter to pep up the highs. That the whole shebang is so beautifully styled and executed it is a credit to MartinLogan – especially considering the fact that the same money can buy you some very ordinary boom-boxes... The fact that this company has made its good name manufacturing hybrids such as this is plain to see – and hear...

SOUND QUALITY

The second you power the Clarity up, you'll hear a sound quite distinct from most other equivalently priced designs. Quad ESL fans will recognise it instantly in its crystal-clear midband, which is as transparent as the ML panel itself. There's a beautifully open, wide and expansive demeanour to them – all the more impressive because the stereo pair simply dissolves into space. Mike Oldfield's 'Tubular Bells' sounded very detailed, tidy and ordered with truly fantastic transients – they're not breathtakingly impressive in a big, physical boom-crash sort of way, rather it's the finesse and delicacy that shows their speed. The keyboard stabs jumped out quite alarmingly – by contrast, the very fine Revolver B45s to hand (admittedly at half the

price) sounded quite compressed and sat-upon. Stereo imaging was excellent – seamless and wide, just as with all good electrostatics.

The bass integrated most successfully with the midband. Now, I won't pretend for a moment that you get as good driver matching as the all-electrostatic panelled Quad ESL-988 (at £2,000 more) but neither is there the sense that you're listening to 'two speakers in one' as with, for example, the Cadence ES I heard a few years back. The result was that the bass playing on 'Tubular Bells' was fluid and engaging, devoid of lumpiness. There's just the slightest



of the box

THE LISTENING PANEL

MartinLogan's patented CLS (curvilinear electrostatic transducer) is an ultra-thin transparent diaphragm driven by charged electrons. Weighing less than the air it moves, the diaphragm is super responsive and has very low distortion – classic properties of electrostatic designs. Wide dispersion is another bonus, along with the ability to work well in most rooms. But electrostatic panels aren't ideal – they can't move vast amounts of air – and so for this reason a conventional moving coil woofer is used. An aluminium cone is employed for a fast, tight sound (thanks to its low mass and high rigidity). The panels aren't famous for extended treble performance either, so once again the designer has employed a conventional tweeter to add air and space. Interestingly, a cloth (rather than a metal) dome has been used, presumably because its tone was a better, more organic match to the midrange panel.

slowing of bass transients (inevitable with a ported moving coil driver), but it's barely perceptible and generally manages to cohere very well.

A superb 1972 EMI recording of Rachmaninov's Piano Concertos in F sharp minor (op.1, vivace; Vladimir Ashkenazy) on CD showed the MartinLogans in their very best light. The speed, finesse and delicacy that



sympathy (or not, as the case may be), the Clarity's electrostatic panel proved a wonderfully open window on the music. Superb low level detailing (including tape hiss – hey, it's an AAD disc), excellent image definition and startling dynamics made this an ideal showcase. Best of all in my book was the rich timbral detailing on the brass, flute, piano and strings – the instruments veritably shimmered in front of my ears! Bass was most accomplished – smooth, even and taut with good speed and no small degree of extension.

So the Clarity is the very best loudspeaker at the price, right? Er no. You see, it won't be everyone's cup of tea. Essentially, it has tremendous ability in some areas, but it is merely 'good' in others. Switching to Janis Joplin's 'Move Over', and the MLs again proved very fast and spry, yet there was little in the way of 'rock and roll'. Although again I couldn't really fault the mid-bass integration, the treble was a tad veiled and the overall feeling a touch too 'cerebral'. An analytical sounding electrostatic? Shurely Shome Mishtake! If you've heard Quad ESLs, you'll know what I mean. They don't have big, bone-crushing physicality which seems so

is their stock in trade made for a beautifully clean and seamless sound. Rather than listening to the collective failings of a raft of moving coil drivers wobbling around in

essential in conveying the spirit (rather than the letter) of rock music. In a sense, this prim, tidy, ordered nature will be ideal for UK listening rooms (with neighbours and environmental health noise abatement teams!) – you can get a superb sense of the recording in all its three dimensional glory at low levels – but it won't (to use an American phrase) 'kick ass'. Put these against, say, big muthas like Monitor Audio's Gold Reference 60s, and you'll see what you're missing in this department...

Given that you don't want something to play your Saxon LPs through, and that you value finesse, order, analysis and speed over earth-moving, tree stump-pulling motive force, I can think of no other loudspeaker at or near the price as capable – only a move to Quad's towering ESL-989 at around six grand, for example, will get you an appreciably more able and multi-faceted electrostatic. But still MartinLogan's Clarity will not be for everyone – so an audition of this highly charismatic and capable loudspeaker is mandatory. I loved them, and you may well too.

VERDICT ●●●●●

Superb style and build allied to clever technology implemented to great effect makes this a seriously special loudspeaker – but auditioning is essential.

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MEASURED PERFORMANCE

Electrostatic panels can and should measure flat, and this one did. The response shown is far-field (2m) yet the panel is flat to 10kHz, after which high frequency energy rolls away a little.

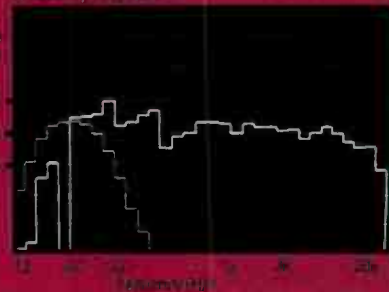
The distant bass unit only integrates in the far field. It comes in around 400Hz and, aided by the rear port, works down to 25Hz. Integration doesn't look perfect by any means, and bass output is a little raised overall.

The impedance curve is as mountainous as many electrostatics, and plunges to near-zero (10hm) above 15kHz. Low feedback valve amps best cope with this sort of thing; an Audio Research would be ideal. Sensitivity was a reasonable 86dB SPL from 2.8V in (one

nominal watt).

The Clarity needs a big room, preferably a long one (>18ft) to lose rear radiation. A good 40watt valve amp is ideal for drive. Tranny amps may be unhappy and an ES like this will brutally expose their shortcomings. It's a fine 'speaker that measures well, ignoring idiosyncrasies. NK

Frequency response



Laser Wars!



Each new generation of Compact Disc players promises better performance than previously possible, thanks to new developments in digital audio

technology. But just how much improvement – if any – is made? David Price put Meridian's classic 1984

MCD Pro against a 2004-spec 507 machine, and it proved a real ear-opener...

Ah, progress! Whether we like it or not, things change - and in the area of the digital audio, it's faster than most. Thanks to the exigencies of the IT industry, audio chips are being constantly updated, replaced and then deleted. Each generation uses new ICs from the likes of Analogue Devices, Crystal Semiconductors, Cirrus Logic, Philips and Wolfson. These fall into - and then out of - favour, and then rapidly go the way of the Dodo. And each time this happens, manufacturers have to launch new model ranges and claim improved performance (after all, what's the point of creating something new that doesn't purport to be a real upgrade on the last?).

With this in mind, you'd think that 16bit digital audio had improved massively since its inception in the early eighties. After all, each new generation is usually heralded by hi-fi journalists (and invariably by press people) as a 'significant advance over the last'. And if you add the (alleged)

cumulative improvements from all those updates through the years, surely the difference between the first and latest generation machines must be enormous?

Well, we decided to find out. To wit, Meridian (a company famous for its excellent digital disc players) was chosen, and a superb original example of its first generation of CD spinners procured - the MCD Pro is a 14bit machine harking back as far as 1984. Then, one of the same company's brand new designs was obtained - the £1,200 507, which I know to be one of the smoothest and musically convincing machines at its price point. Interestingly, it uses 24bit DACs, making it a fascinating contrast to Meridian's first machine, with an entire 10bits less!

TOP GUNS

Lest we forget, Meridian was the very first British hi-fi company to launch its own CD player, barely a year after the format had started back in 1983. It was called the MCD. Although obviously based on Philips'

first generation CD100 - sharing the same CDM1 Pro laser transport, diecast metal chassis and 14bit, Philips 1540 four times oversampling chipset - it featured a thorough reworking of its audio electronics to great effect. The MCD proved a tremendous sales success, and did much to silence CD's many doubters. So popular was it with the world's hi-fi press that it won awards for the best sounding CD player in seven major countries including Japan and the United States. The MCD Pro you see before you followed a year later, adding a number of features and taking the sound quality to an even higher level. £675 bought you the original MCD with beefier power supply arrangements, a low jitter master clock, absolute phase switching, error indication and a revised disc clamping system damped by a rubber mat.

At £1,195, the 507 is now famous for its very smooth, subtle and engaging nature - one that's far more finessed than its immediate rivals, if not quite so striking -

indeed, the formula is pure Meridian, as seen (and heard) in the very first MCD. Headbangers won't like it, but classical music aficionados with refined palettes do. It boasts 24bit, 192kHz DACs (running of course in 16/44 mode because this is a CD-only spinner), a direct-coupled audiophile-standard output amplifier, CD-ROM derived transport with low jitter achieved by double buffering techniques originally found in the 508. The digital output is precision re-clocked, and 6-layer PCBs, 4 separate power supplies, the latest surface-mount technology and 'selected' components are all used for the best possible sound.

SECONDS OUT...

There's no doubting the difference that twenty years makes in terms of ergonomics – the 507 is head and shoulders ahead. In fact, the MCD Pro is so far behind on this score that it almost wins bonus points for charm! Drop the CD down into the top-mounted disc recess, place the rubber mat on top, close the lid and press Start. You then have to wait as the poor old thing spools up to speed and the swing-arm laser transport waddles across the disc looking for the first track. There's no digital track display, and only very crude (and snail-like) track search facilities. Programming facilities? Pah! By contrast, the 507 is a beautifully conceived and executed modern design – all the commands (Open/Close, Play, Stop, Pause, Previous, Next and Off) are duplicated on the supplied 'Meridian System Remote'. My only lament is the lack of that wonderful chunky CD drawer of Meridians of yore – now it's the flimsy, plasticky computer CD drive type. By contrast, the MCD Pro feels more solid.

ROUND ONE

The listening started with Kraftwerk's 'Tour De France Etape 2', and the MCD Pro proved obviously more veiled across the midband; the keyboards lacking the lustre and brightness of the 507. However, the MCD Pro's bass sounded undoubtedly more impactful, with a menacing 'grumble' that the 507 lacked. The latter's low frequency performance was superficially warmer, but actually less grunty or committed – it seemed to run out of puff slightly when the music got more dense, whereas the MCD Pro held on firm no matter what else it was called upon to do.

Moving up to the midband and -

despite being less obviously transparent - the MCD Pro proved more beguiling. There was real interplay between the different keyboard parts - instead of just playing side by side, they played together. However, it didn't have it all its own way, as the 507 was obviously brighter, more atmospheric and more incisive in the upper mid and treble regions. Transients were

attack transients give plucked guitar strings more speed and bite too.

AND THE WINNER IS...

There's no doubting the quality of both of these Meridian machines – and in truth the two are surprisingly close not just in nature but in ability. Still, the MCD Pro boasts an obviously superior bass, whereas the 507 cleans up in the midband and

treble. And despite older machine's conspicuously veiled higher regions, it still manages to display its subtly more organic and tuneful sound. By contrast, the 507 is more obviously 'impressive' sounding,

with a warm, detailed and expansive nature that's also less controlled with looser bass and poorer fluidity. Tonally the 507 wins, musically the MCD is the better of the two. Its sense of cohesion, for which many use the word 'analogue' as shorthand, is clear to hear.

Despite twenty years of development and ten bits more (theoretical) resolution, in many ways the old machine is the more enjoyable. And that's not because Meridian's done a poor job with the 507 – quite the reverse – simply that they got it so right with the MCD Pro all those years ago. So, all those claims of 'improved performance' and 'better sound' due to superior digital engineering, jitter reduction and higher resolution convertors aren't necessarily so! If this pair of CD spinners are anything to go by – and experience teaches me they are – then the art of 16bit hasn't been advanced by the developments of all those years so much as it has been made more affordable and ergonomic.

REFERENCE SYSTEM

- Sugden Headmaster preamplifier
- Quad 909 power amplifier
- Quad 989 loudspeakers

you'd think that 16bit digital audio had improved massively since the early eighties...

obviously faster, keyboards had more sheen, and images were more confidently and explicitly located; pushing forward and hanging back behind the plane of the speakers. The MCD Pro, by contrast, was less dimensional and more inclined to lazily hang the acoustic back behind the plane of the 'speakers.

The Pixies' 'Cecilia Anne' showed the MCD Pro to have a rather perfunctory treble. Despite being rolled off just a touch, it was nevertheless feathery and indistinct. Still, the bass again sounded fuller and more insistent, with an air of commanding authority that the 507 simply lacked. Indeed, by comparison, the new machine was more lightweight. The upside of this was the way its brighter treble and midband improved the sense of detail - you could hear instruments in the studio, whereas with the MCD Pro you could just hear the instruments. Fed with 808 State's 'Plan 9', the 507 again showed obviously superior detail resolution – the weird sound effects going on at the back of the mix that the MCD Pro alluded to were more obvious. Its superior



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Ooh la la!



Sugden calls its lifestyle components 'bijou' – and when you set eyes (and ears) on its HeadMaster/ MusicMaster pre-power amplifier combination, you'll find it hard to disagree, reckons David Price...

'Bijou' is a nice enough appellation, but does rather smack of pretension – which is not a quality you'd immediately associate with Sugden. This, lest we forget, is the same company that produced the likes of the A21a and A48 – which were the very antithesis of lavishly crafted, glamorously attired amplification. Indeed, I have seen fewer less chic bits of kit than the latter late seventies design, fully resplendent in orange and brown! Glad rags, then, are not something Sugden is famous for donning. But now, enter the HeadMaster/ MusicMaster pre-power amplifier...

LIVING THE LIFE

First, the £599 HeadMaster, what I'd call a 'superannuated headphone amplifier on steroids'. You see, it's not actually a preamplifier at all, but a headphone amplifier. But hang on, it's got three stereo line inputs and a preamp output, with full input switching and volume control facilities, and a tape output... so it is a preamplifier after all, complete with a, urmm, headphone socket. Well that's Sugden for you!

Speaking of which, although the latest A21a is indeed nicely finished, the HeadMaster gets all the stops pulled out. The sculpted casework (measuring 230x265x82mm and weighing 3.5kg) is precision engineered from high quality aluminium. Inside, the amplifier configuration is pure Class A, constructed completely from discreet components. The inputs are selected through a logic operated relay circuit to keep the input signal paths as short as possible. The relays used are twin gold contact bifurcated crossbar types with a claimed contact resistance of less than 0.05 ohms. These relays are used in all Sugden high end preamps. The single ended phono connectors are all high quality individual, gold plated connectors with Teflon inserts. A basic plastic-finished remote control completes the package.

The £1,299 MusicMaster power amplifier is no less unusual. A pure Class A, single ended design, it's the same width and depth but twice as high. The casework shares the same sumptuous titanium metal finish, but chunky anodised heatsinks run either side – and when it's been on for over an hour or so, you can see why!

Sugden says that a new DC-coupled circuit design that uses current (as opposed to voltage) feedback has been used, the result of a seven-year development program – and the result is a claimed 16W of pure class 'A'. The front end is a cascade input to prevent phase shift and the standing current is set at a massive 1.7A for instant power delivery and good tolerance of lower impedance loudspeakers. Round the back, two pairs of large gold plated brass binding posts can be found, along with a pair of gold plated brass phono sockets (with Teflon inserts) and an IEC mains input socket can be found.

SOUND QUALITY

First into my reference system was the HeadMaster. The MF Audio passive preamplifier I usually use – and very fine it is too – was elbowed aside and the gleaming Sugden plugged in. I found it brighter than the MF, which is itself very much on the dull side of neutral. The Sugden errs very slightly the other way – it's smooth and sweet alright, but quite 'well lit' and will certainly brighten up any sullen sounding power amp or speaker. There's a lot of detail, grip

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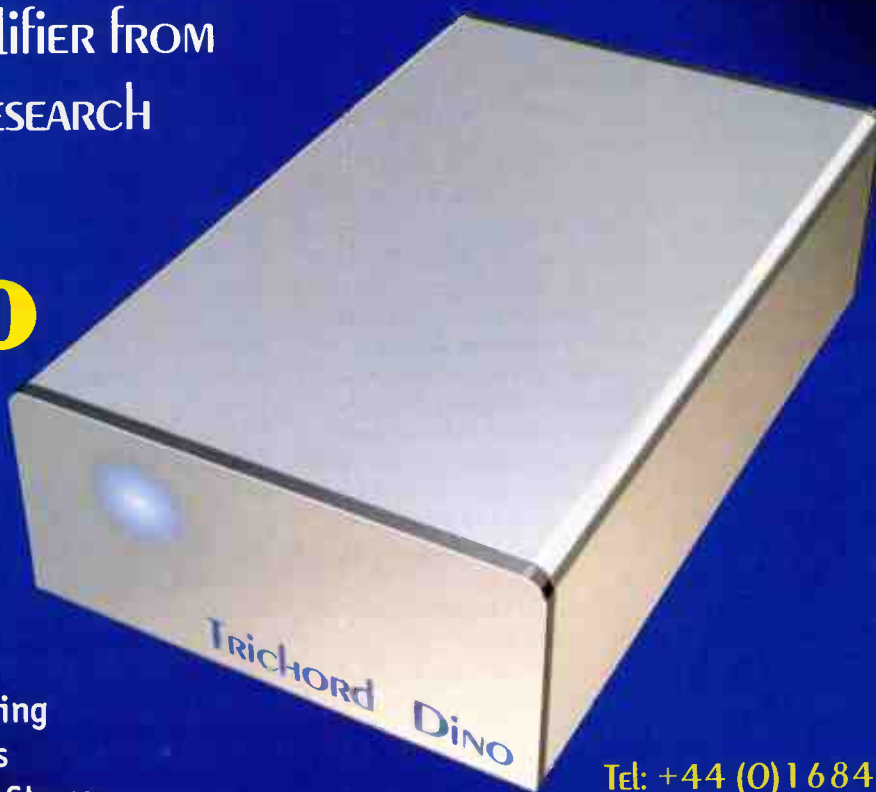
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and incision – and it rather confirmed suspicions ever-so-slightly (as indeed do all passive preamps, methinks).

Kraftwerk's 'Tour de France Etape I' proved brilliantly engaging with my reference Quad 909. Indeed it gave it 'a kick up the pipe and slippers', if you get my drift. With more life and bounce than the MF Audio (no mean feat, considering the latter's £1,499 price tag), it really sang. There's certainly none of that saccharine sweetness that you get from classic class A designs like Musical Fidelity's A1 – the HeadMaster doesn't smooth down rough edges one bit. The result is quite a forensic sound – it keeps digging for detail and dynamics, rather than serving up a contrivedly coloured sound.

Move to Herbie Hancock's 'The Prisoner' and you can see how sharp and lean it really is. There's little in the way of euphonic coloration, the HeadMaster preferring instead to scavenge for detail and shining a very strong and penetrating light on the proceedings. At £599 it is excellent then, but ultimately (by MF Audio standards, at over twice the price), it's ever-so-slightly ragged in the treble, light in the bass, and lacks that last, nth degree of low level detailing. I found that through my Quad 989s, the Sugden actually sounded better (on balance) than the MF, simply because it added some vim that both the MF Audio pre and Quad speakers lacked. But still, it is not the smoothest or most tonally varied in absolute terms.

What then of the MusicMaster? Well, it didn't do very well with the Quad 989 electrostatics, and perhaps this is to be expected (Sugden's own power figures claim only 16W into 8 ohms, 23W into 4 and 22W into 2 – see our measured performance). It was sweet and spry enough, but simply couldn't squeeze any volume out of them – an interesting contrast to similarly specified valve amplifiers. So, at no great inconvenience to myself, out came the Yamaha NS1000Ms. These have a greater sensitivity than the 989s, and lo and behold, so the Sugden drove them far louder without 'motorboating'. In fact, I was quite impressed by just how synergistically this little power amp worked with these famously fussy loudspeakers.

Sonically, the MusicMaster is very much in the mould of the HeadMaster. It is very open, spacious, smooth and uncoloured, and the transitory midband 'mush' that you get from so many solid-state designs – and that is oh-so-conspicuous

through the clear-as-day NS1000Ms – is totally absent. Simply Red's 'All Around the World' – a track that often sounds very nice – was shown up in sharp relief to be the FM-radio friendly mix that it really is. Switch over to 'Money's Too Tight to Mention' from the same artist many years earlier, and there was suddenly bass weight, slam and dimensionality. This showed the Sugden to be far more forensic (re: transparent, uncoloured, neutral) than, say, Musical Fidelity's fine A308 power – by contrast, the latter sounded quite bloated and ponderous; like a Harley Davidson to the MusicMaster's Honda CBR600R.

Moving to Guns'n'Roses' 'Paradise City', this amplifier's essential qualities were shown up in sharp relief. It is very open and detailed across the midband (like few others at or near the price), and the bass is tight and fast – if not exactly prodigious. The treble, however, is just ever so slightly harsh. I'm talking about the high treble here – hi hats have just a little too much 'zing', which is slightly confusing as the midband (right up to the lower treble) is so open and smooth. There's decent dimensionality, with a finely architectural quality to the soundstage – it's not exactly massive and capacious, but it's all there in perfect proportion nevertheless. Rhythms are excellent, the Sugden power amp showing its fast, lithe and fluid nature to best effect with rock or jazz music.

Overall then, we have two highly accomplished products, which

CANNED HEAT

As a headphone amplifier, the HeadMaster is very clean and open, with oodles of power (Sugden claim 5.5volts at onset of clipping). I'd say it has a marginally smoother upper midband than Musical Fidelity's X-CAN v3 (at half the price), and a slightly tighter bass with greater midband detailing – comfortably superior to this already fine bit of kit, but I'm not sure if it's twice as good, as befits the price.

together make great music. What you should be aware of however, is that this combo doesn't sound like a valve amplifier. Many folk, disillusioned with solid-state but frightened of tubes seem to gravitate to Sugden's Class A fayre as a sort of 'safe half way house'. What you get is absolutely none of the warm euphony of, say, Unison Research's S6 valve integrated, and little of the clout of Musical Fidelity's A308 transistor integrated. Rather, you encounter an incredibly clean, spry, fast, detailed sound that's smooth inasmuch as it lacks the midband 'scunge' of most solid-state stuff, but is actually tonally quite stark. To wit, listen before you leap!

I loved this combo – it's genuinely charismatic, quirky and most importantly – capable. There's little around that does what it does so well at the price, and the fact that it looks – ermm - "bijou" is a bonus. Partner with smooth, warm, sensitive 'speakers (Revolver B45s, natch) and it should sound positively heroic, but in the wrong system it's closer to anaemic. Recommended, but audition carefully first.

REFERENCE SYSTEM:

- Michell GyroDec/ SME IV/ Dynavector DV20X-H Trichord Delphini NC MF Audio Passive preamplifier Quad 909 power amplifier Quad 989 loudspeakers

VERDICT

Wonderfully crisp, spry, detailed and musical sound will win it many friends, but careful matching is essential.

Table with 2 columns: Model (SUGDEN H/M, SUGDEN M/M, Sugden Audio) and Price (£599.99, £1,299.99). Includes contact info: +44 (0)1622 672261, www.jesugden.co.uk

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

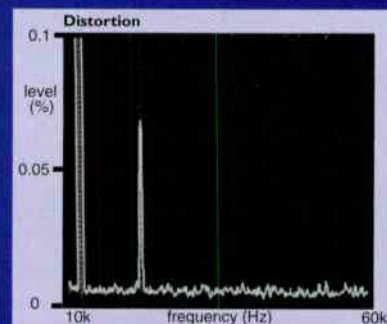
The Headmaster is a simple preamp with front headphone output. Most preamps have a gain of around x3 but the Headmaster manages x6.5, so it can handle low output sources like old tuners and cassette decks. A maximum output swing of 4V is sufficient to drive all power amps, most needing 1V-2V for full output. Distortion was minimal and noise very low too.

Sugden's small Class A amplifier produces 12watts into 8ohms and 4ohms too. Power supply regulation isn't the best, but the Sugden isn't meant to be a Naim style powerhouse. To make the most of low powers like this a big, sensitive, modern floorstander is needed. Castle, Mission and B&W can oblige. Distortion reached nearly 0.2% at high frequencies, but comprised second and third harmonics only, rather than the higher order crossover artifacts than sound nasty. All the same this isn't an amplifier to be pushed hard; overload into 4ohms was asymmetric, meaning there's a d.c. component. NK

Table with 2 columns: Metric (Noise, Distortion, Sensitivity, Gain, Max output) and Value (-90dB, 0.003%, 200mV, x6.5, 4V)

MUSIC MASTER

Table with 2 columns: Metric (Power, Frequency response, Separation, Noise, Distortion, Sensitivity) and Value (12watts, 5Hz-48kHz, 99dB, -112dB, 0.06%, 784mV)



HEADMASTER

Table with 2 columns: Metric (Frequency response, Separation) and Value (13Hz-200kHz, 88dB)

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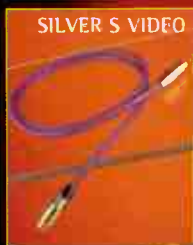
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Hi Tec

Michell's brand new TecnoArm 'a' is the last project that John Michell worked on. He was justifiably proud of his earlier tonearms, such as the late 1970s Focus arm, and was trying to come up with something just as special using the 'Rega platform'. Many months of development went into this, and Albert Lee feels it was time well spent...

As I opened the carton containing the new TecnoArm, I groaned to myself, "not another Rega rebuild!" How wrong I was. It is finished to a higher standard than both the Rega and the Origin Live variations, and sports a myriad of changes that both other the manufacturers seem to have overlooked.

The most obvious is the new finish - the arm tube has been beadblasted to make it stiffer and lighter in a bid to remove its bell-like resonance. Then there are the 22 holes cut in the underside of the arm, to further reduce the effective mass and dissipate resonance. Foam has been injected to remove any vestigial ringing. A new counter-

balance weight has been designed which is rigidly attached to the arm tube as with the OL modification. The physics are obvious - to lower the centre of gravity, thus lowering inertia at the vertical pivot and improving tracking performance.

Another point that caught my eye was the arm wiring, which really is good! As well as the variable height adjuster (which comes as standard) and the type of nuts (which are both knurled) this arm was much easier to install than the OL and the Rega RB250. Although the ground lead really needs another short parallel ground lead to enable the arm to be connected to the motor board earth point.

So this is not simply a rehash of someone else's design, but an

exhaustive redesign using all the engineering expertise of John Michell. After mounting an Ortofon MC25 FL in the pick up arm and plugging the leads into the Trichord Dino disc stage, the first record was



placed on the platter. The music that poured out of my ATCs was not what I expected. John Williams' guitar displayed real body and a sense of the size of the room was immediately apparent. This record is a very difficult pressing for arms and cartridges to track convincingly although it was recorded in mono and is 45 years old! Pink Floyd's 'The Wall' was played next, and I almost applauded at the end of the numerous guitar solos on the album. James Brown is still the 'Godfather of Soul', and the title track of the album, 'Get Up Offa that Thing' demonstrated why. The bass

line really propelled the tune along.

Natalie Cole's rendition of 'When I Fall in Love' on 12 inch was simply stunning. Not for her vocal performance but for the way this arm made it so easy to understand what the producer intended. The saxophone didn't dominate as with a lot of less well-engineered pick up arms.

The detail retrieval of this arm is amazing. Midrange instruments are so well presented that the listening sessions were getting longer and longer. Michell products are well known for their ability to transport the listener to the recording location

and this arm does not break the mould. It has the ability to project an almost holographic sound stage.

How then does the Michell compare to its obvious rival, the fully modded and rewired OL RB250?

Well, the latter has a narrower soundstage with less height, but has greater depth so giving a different feel to the music, and the Michell arm tracks the record groove with obviously more security than the OL. Now, I'm now going to upset many people in the industry by saying that I believe the new TecnoArm 'a' is almost as good as my SMEV! It has the same sound balance, but a slightly less well developed sound stage - in width, depth and height. So the new Michell is a very well designed piece of equipment. I can only give John Michell my respect for not only producing a giant killer but for doing it in such an understated package at such a low price. It's £50 or so pricier than the original, which came out this time last year, but dramatically better with it.



VERDICT ●●●●● £

Brilliantly clean, open and smooth sound makes this astonishing value. In most respects the best variation on the Rega theme we've come across to date.

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The Human Condition, in D minor

LJK Setright listens to himself and about 200 others – and prefers it in mono

Christoph von Dohnányi, interviewed before conducting Beethoven's 9th Symphony for the 2003 Proms, paid polite homage to the late great Otto Klemperer but asserted that the performance he would give would be right for our times. By the same token I suppose Furtwängler's rendition was right for his audience, and even the monstrously insensitive version of Roger Norrington and the Chipmunks might be right for a busy man who could only spare a few minutes. Surely, though, nobody who attended – let alone participated in – a performance conducted by the Rock of Ages would deny that Klemperer's Beethoven was, quite simply, right.

He did it several times with the full Philharmonia outfit (which included Setright) in the late 1950s, at a time when he was very ill and had no discernible beat but seemed to communicate with his performers by an irrefragable telepathy. It was not only the performers who understood exactly what he wanted; the audiences did so too, and were emotionally approbatory.

It would have been tragic had his Choral Symphony not been recorded by these forces, but with Walter Legge in charge there was not much danger of that. His 1958 recording was made in London's Kingsway Hall – a good venue only occasionally disturbed by the grumble of a tube train passing beneath it – with the Philharmonia Orchestra and Chorus and three of the regular soloists. Aase Nordmo-Lövberg was the lovely radiant soprano, Christa

Ludwig the noble but highly professional mezzo, and Hans Hotter the Wotan-calibre bass. The original tenor had been Jon Vickers, whose section with quasi-military band scoring had been delivered with the parade-ground incisiveness of a drill sergeant and sounded exactly appropriate; for the recording we had Waldemar Kmentt, who was rather better in the duet and quartet passages.

I have three recordings of this Ninth. The one I bought at the time was in mono (though a stereo version was also available), and occupies three sides of vinyl. The one in the boxed set of Klemperer's Beethoven cycle, on two sides, was digitally remastered in stereo for issue in 1985. Another digital remastering in 1990 provided for the CD. When I tell you that, without any changes in pitch, the timings for a certain passage are 15'42", 15'40" and 15'30" respectively, you may share my misgivings about what goes on – or does not, so to speak – in recording studios.

What the recording engineer and his cronies heard in their glazed and soundproof box I cannot tell; but I know what I heard while we were making the music, and am in no doubt that the mono version comes closest to it. The oboe solo floated out by Sydney Sutcliffe in the scherzo movement conjures the same exaltation; the tiny Saracen cymbals sparkle above the military pace-making, just as they did in what I still think of as the Jon Vickers passage (they are a scarcely audible fuzz in the digital versions); I can identify the unique sounds of Bernard Walton

playing his rather special 1906 Schmidt clarinets, or Cecil James who was the last of the leading British players of the French bassoon and could always be picked out of the crowd by the little angled reflector plate mounted nine inches or so above the bell of his instrument. Every tiny detail can be picked out in conspicuous clarity, or heard as part of the total musical expression, as I choose – and that is more than I can say for either of the insultingly doctored stereo versions.

The qualities of this record draw attention to the disgraceful indignities visited on others by the recording industry, which has grown more cynical with each passing year. My stereo LP has occasional echoes in it that sound like tape print-through!

I have said nothing yet about the music itself. Need I do so? In form and in content, Beethoven's last symphony deserves its reputation. Nothing was ever more daring in its own time. Nothing was ever more relevant to the human condition at any time. It should not be heard too often to amaze any longer, nor should one have recourse too readily to the infinite solace of the Adagio movement. It must never be cheapened, and this Klemperer interpretation of it must never be forgotten.



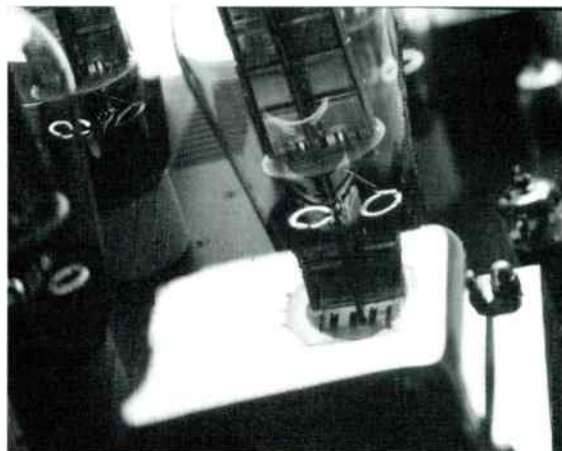
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noel keywood

How I envy people with new houses! Mine was built in 1910, and needs constant maintenance and repair. So the builders are in – again – replacing everything, or so it seems. It's a good time to include minor or even major adjustments to better accommodate the hi-fi, video and everything else more efficiently and effectively than before. Although the subject of room acoustics is fiercely technical, once you get the hang of what's going on, making improvements isn't so difficult and, cumulatively, it is worthwhile. Getting it right not only gives a better sound but usually a better living environment too.

Unfortunately the classic methods of tackling acoustic problems are ugly and intrusive – egg boxes on the wall are one example. Up to a point they work and are better than a plain, hard reflective surface. There's no need to use them over anything more than a few square feet and by disguising a panel of them with patterned cloth the resultant panel can add a bit of colour to a wall, or perhaps just blend in with it. However, this time around I will remove my sidewall diffusers and replace them with a less intrusive absorber. This will damp down the room more and narrow the stereo stage a little, but it will likely be acceptable. If it isn't, then I will simply swap back. You can hang a panel like a picture and simply swap a diffuser for an absorber. A shallow wall shelf in the right position could take plants, or ornaments and have such a panel hanging beneath. This way it's decorative as well as functional.

A diffuser (e.g. varnished egg boxes) scatters sound whilst an absorber not unsurprisingly absorbs it. Layers of soft materials of

different densities can achieve this, the deeper the better. Or you can buy properly dimensioned and tested panels (check out www.studiospares.com for 'sound diffusers' and 'acoustic tiles'). My diffusers are 9in deep and perhaps a bit more intrusive than most people would like, but I have to get it right.

Clearing an upstairs workroom for repair and decoration, I had to

addition to left and right. Rear channel loudspeakers can be accommodated on small wall shelves to get them out of the way. I use strengthened CD shelves for this purpose, as well as having firm bases on the floor to accommodate floorstanders.

My fireplace came out many moons ago and the cavity in the chimney breast houses a widescreen TV, getting another large object out of the way and freeing up floor area. There's room above it for the centre channel loudspeaker, housed on a rigid shelf (don't put it below).

Flat panel TV screens are selling well even though they have problems conveying fast movement, limited lifetime and high weight (plasma) and high cost. The eerie glow I see from many windows in my area after dark usually comes from a projector, and a vast image on a wall can often be spotted from the street. It's another solution, but ceiling hung projectors are unsightly, especially on a low ceiling, and of course, not inexpensive. For the time being I'm sticking to the good old cathode ray tube until various new screen technologies emerge.

If you're keen on video, then you should get a decent surround-sound system to handle the audio side of things. They aren't expensive any more and, done properly, give impressive results. Some regular readers don't understand how I can be using surround-sound one minute and valve amplifier based stereo the next. One said I'd sold out! It isn't so difficult to run one alongside the other. I do it because I have to, but also because I like to! There isn't really any contradiction. Getting all those boxes into a lounge is a challenge but if you've got the builders in, adding a few bob to the bill can get you better sound quality as well as a better home. ●

” **Getting it right not only gives a better sound but usually a better living environment too.**

move out three large bookcases. Bookcases help scatter sound and are commonly recommended as useful diffusers. What surprised me was just how effective they can be. When the last bookcase was moved out, the room suddenly developed a strong echo. It seems that one bookcase alone, a 2ft wide, 6ft high Ikea jobby, was enough to damp down a 16ft x 12ft room. If you buy upward extensions they'll hold a mountain of books, CDs, DVDs, LPs – as well as acting as acoustic diffusers – nifty.

Downstairs I had a large panel radiator removed and replaced by a shorter, squatter dual panel design. This got it down below a settee back completely, removing its effect as a sound reflector. At the same time the radiator has higher output and the lounge is warmer, solving two problems at once.

The floor has come up to lay underfloor rear channel surround-sound cables, getting unsightly wires out of the way. I'll be using loudspeaker terminals on the skirting board to connect up rear loudspeakers! If you do this don't forget to lay a centre-rear cable in

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NEW KIT

The Kecl82 is our latest introduction for the true beginner and designed by Andy Grove. A simple and elegant design based on the classic ECL82 valve, a triode and power pentode sharing the same glass envelope. The amplifier consists of two ECL82s per channel, the triode sections work as the input/phase splitter and the pentode sections work in push-pull for the output stage. The amplifier offers 8 watts into an 8 ohm load, the hum level is extremely low, comparison to solid state standards. The chassis is constructed of 1.6mm mild steel with a black powder coat finish. There is only one signal input pair controlled at the front by a volume control for that simple touch. The speaker connects are the standard 4mm banana type, positioned at the rear, as are the mains input which is received through an IEC lead, mains switch and earth post. We have made the construction as simple as is humanly possible with comprehensive instructions. The circuitry is based on a single printed circuit board. Ultimately this kit is for the guy who has always fancied a go at building a kit, but never dared. Simon Pope says, "It's a great introduction to the valve sound. For its humble price it delivers a full and rich sound with great detail and good depth." Kecl82 weighs 9kg. External dimensions are 30cm(w)x23.5cm(d)x11cm(h)

**£175.50****KECL82 VALVE AMPLIFIER KIT**~~£295~~**SALE OFFERS FROM
1/12/03 - 31/12/03****£566.50**

These are our new 6550 series amplifiers. A pure class A design providing 40 watts into a 8 ohm load (available in a 4 ohm version if required). A truly high end design by Andy Grove, using Svetlana 6550Cs in push-pull (any 6550 or KT88 tube can be used with this amp). It features valve rectification (5U4) a choke pi filter power supply and is hard wired. Weighs 19kg with dimensions

**£535.00**

390mm(w) x 330mm(d) x 190mm(h) with valves or 220mm(h) with cage. Simon Pope says - "If you favour attack and rhythmic grip, together with a smoothness of sound that's incredibly easy to live with, the Kit6550 could well be the kit amp for you. The 6550 is one for those who like a valve sound married to the attack and clout of a good quality solid state design".

KIT6550 VALVE INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER KIT~~£895~~**KAT6550 VALVE POWER AMPLIFIER KIT**~~£580~~

The Kel84 features a pair of EL84 valves per channel in push-pull configuration. They give 15 watts into an 8 ohm load. The output transformers are Ultra Linear. Up front the ECF80 input/phase splitter valve has an extremely smooth sound. The Kel84 has very low hum, for simplicity the kit is built on a printed circuit board. A strong steel chassis is fronted by a 3mm anodised front panel and attractive chromed custom made knobs. There are five line level inputs, plus one monitor input, with a tape output included, all controlled from the front panel. At the rear is a mains switch/IEC power input, earth post, phonos, and 4mm banana sockets. 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 that is almost exclusive to pure valve amps and is rare at this price point." Kel84 weighs 10kg. External dimensions with valves are 300mm(w) x 270mm(d) x 150mm(h).

**£271.20****KEL84 VALVE INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER KIT**~~£298~~

The 2A3 PSE integrated amplifier offers a seriously hi-end sound, but without the cost usually associated with single-ended amplifiers. The stereo chassis houses, on the output, 2 x 2A3 in parallel single ended configuration and a single 6SN7 as the driver tube per channel. The valve rectified power supply consists of a 5U4 and a 10h choke. This feedbackless design provides 8.5watts into an 8 ohm load, so a good sensitivity speaker is required above 90dB. It can accept 6 line-level inputs fully controllable from the front panel. We provide the excellent Alps Blue potentiometer as standard. The amplifier is hard wired so plenty of scope for tweaking in the future. Simon Pope says, "The 2A3 PSE is extremely impressive piece of kit, good imaging, wide sound stage, nicely extended on the high frequency and tremendous bass thump. Weight - 20kg, external dimensions with valves fitted - 390mm(w) x 360mm(d) x 220mm(h)

**£523.00****2A3 PSE INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER KIT**~~£570~~

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design

The PRE-II is a valve pre-amplifier with six inputs, tape monitor and two sets of output sockets. It utilises a high quality line driver transformer and x5 gain. The PHONO-II is a dedicated valve phono stage that incorporates a step-up transformer for MC users. Finally, PSU-II is a power supply unit that feeds both the PRE-II and PHONO-II.

Power Supply Unit (PSU-II)	£285.00	£184.50
Pre-amplifier (PRE-II)	£75.00	£193.50
Phono Stage (PHONO-II)	£110.00	£99.00
Moving coil step-up transformer	£72.00	£72.00
Passive pre-amplifier (PAS-II)	£285.00	£211.50



SERIES II MODULAR PRE-AMP KIT

£438.50



KIT34 is a 32 watt stereo valve integrated amplifier, featuring a pair of EL34s, in push-pull mode, per channel, plus an ECF80 pentode/triode as input/phase splitter. The power supply is valve rectified (2 x 5U4), using a heavy duty choke to achieve exceptional smoothing. The output transformers are 14% Ultra Linear tapped to keep distortion down to its lowest level and the kit is totally hard wired utilising three tag boards. It has five line level inputs, plus a tape-in and

£470.00



tape out, all controllable from the front. Simon Pope says, "This integrated brings together the best sonic virtues of our KiT88, kel34 and top of the range 300B PSE in an affordable package. The highlights of the sound are a deep and taut bass response, together with an open and highly detailed mid and high frequency response that only the best valve designs can achieve... a true valve classic." Weight 22kg, External dimensions with valves fitted - 390mm(w) x 360mm(d) x 210mm(h)

KAT34 VALVE POWER AMPLIFIER KIT

~~£480~~

KIT34 VALVE INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER KIT

~~£515~~

NEW KIT

Our Parallel Single Ended amplifiers offer ultimate sound quality. Each monobloc has two of the beautifully linear 300B directly heated triode in its output stage, producing 20 watts into an 8 ohm load. At the front we have a 6AU6 pentode and an ECC82 as the driver valve. This design utilises a 5U4 rectifier valve in the power supply, in combination with a 10H choke, giving an extremely quiet supply. Both mains and output transformers we E/I pattern.

For purists, feedback is switchable 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 a 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 £895.00 (UK price) excluding valves. Each



£805.50

monobloc weighs 23kgs., external dimensions with valves: 25cm(w) x 38cm(d) x 22cm(h) per monobloc.

The 300B PP monobloc shares the same look and chassis as the 300B PSE monobloc.

The 300B PP kit has been created for those who prefer a bit more dynamics and drive to their valve sound. With a pair of 300Bs in push-pull configuration providing 26 watts output, these beauties will drive most modern loudspeakers to perfection. Andy Grove's design is totally feedbackless, using a 6AU6 pentode as the input valve and a 5687 as the phase splitter, the power supply uses

a Russian 5U4 for rectification. The kit is constructed by point to point wiring so some experience is required. 300B PSE owners do have the option to buy the conversion kit for £250.00 to turn their monoblocs to push-pull status. Each monobloc weighs 23kg.

£805.50

300B PSE MONOBLOC KIT

~~£895~~

300B PP MONOBLOC KIT NEW

~~£895~~

The HD83 headphone amplifier is 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 out sockets. The circuit uses high specification 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 added sonic purity, and it is as quiet as a mouse. For sound quality Jon Marks says, "The bass is punchy and controlled without becoming artificial, while treble has the crispness of the best solid-state, with the tonal purity, delicacy and speed associated with valves." External dimensions 18cm(w) x 30cm(l) x 8cm (h) weight 4kg.

£175.50



HD83 VALVE HEADPHONE AMPLIFIER KIT

~~£195~~

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KIT6550/KAT6550 mains transformers
2 inch stack, 130mm(h)x120mm(w)x135mm(l)
drop through fitting with zinc cap. Secondaries
425V-0V-425V, 350mA, 0V-5V, 6A, 3.15V-0V-3.15V,
9A. Suitable for 120V & 240Vac opeation

KEL84 mains transformer
1.5 inch stack, 90mm(h)x 80mm(w)x 95mm(d)
drop through fitting with zinc cap. Secondaries:
0V-240V 300mA, 3.15V-0V-3.15V, 5.5A, suitable for
120/240V operation

KIT34/KAT34/KIT6550/KAT6550 choke
1.25 inch stack, 65mm(h)x105mm(w) with fitting
holes x 60mm(d), clamp fitting, 2.5 H, 350mA

300B PSE mains E/I transformer
130mm(h) x 95mm(w) x 115mm(d).
drop through fitting with zinc cap.
Secondaries: 380V-0V-380V, 180mA/150-0V-150V,
25mA/0V-5V, 1.2A/0V-5V, 1.2A/0V-5V,3A/3.15V-0V-
3.15V,0.4A suitable for 120/240V operation

HD83 mains toroidal transformer
80mm dia. x 35mm(h). Secondaries: 0V-
165V,75mA/3.15V-0V-3.15V,1A, suitable for
120/240V operation

PSU-II mains toroidal transformer
80mm dia. x 35mm(h). Secondaries: 0V-
270V,60mA/0V-10V,2A, suitable for 120/240V
operation

TRANS1 mains toroidal transformer
95mm dia. x 50mm(h). Secondaries: 0V-
370V,150mA/0V-6.3V,3.5A 300B E/I choke
65mm(h) x 70mm(d) x 80mm(w) open frame
fitting, 10H, 180mA,

KEL84 E/I choke
0.5 inch stack, 40mm(h)x 35mm(d)x 70mm(w)
clamp fitting, 1H, 250mA

PSU-II E/I
40mm(h) x 35mm(d) x 70mm (w) clamp fitting,
15H, 20mA

KIT34/KAT34 mains transformer
2.5 inch stack, 120mm(h)x115mm(w)x95mm(d),
drop through fitting with zinc cap,Secondaries
365V - 0V - 365V,300mA/0V - 5V,6A/3.15V - 0V -
3.15V,7.5A. Suitable for 120/240V operation.

2A3 PSE mains transformer:
2.5inch stack, on a 120 size lamination,
120mm(h)x115mm(w)x95mm(d), drop through
fitting with zinc plated transformer caps.
Secondary winding: 370V-0V-370V, 250mA, 0V-5V,
3A, 0V-4V, 2A x4. Suitale for
110V/120V/220V/230V operation. Can be used
for a valve rectified, dc heater (2A3), dc regulated
heater(input valve) stereo 2A3 PSE/PP amplifier.

KECL82 mains transformer:
1.25inch stack, on a 29 size lamination,
80mm(wide)x70mm(height)x70mm(depth), frame
type 2 hole fixing. Secondary winding: 0V-185V,
200mA, 0V-6.3V, 3.5A. Suitale for
110V/120V/220V/230V operation. Good for low
power amp, solid state rectification achieves a HT
of 240Vdc. Could be used for ECL82 PP/PSE
stereo amp.

MAINS TRANSFORMERS & CHOKES

KIT6550/KAT6550 E/I 16% TAPPED UL
push-pull output transformer 2 inch stack, 80mm
(w) x 95mm(l) x 100mm(h), drop through fitting
with zinc cap. Primary-secondary 4.5K, 16% UL
tapped. Secondary 4 Or 8 ohm, pls specify on
order. max output 45 watts, max current 180mA,
valves, KT88, 6550 etc

**KEL84 E/I Ultra Linear push-pull output
transformer**
1.25 inch stack, 76mm(h)x 65mm(w)x 76mm(d)
Primary - secondary, 8K with 12.5% UL tap -
8ohms, max o/p-15watts, max current 150mA
valves EL84 etc

KIT88/KAT88 E/I push-pull output transformer
80mm(w)x95mm(l)x100mm(h). Primary-secondary
10K - 8ohms, max o/p-40watts, max current-
160mA valves-KT88, 6550, EL34

Pre-II E/I driver transformer
80mm(w)x60mm(l) x65mm(h). 6:1 step down
transformer, max current-10mA valves-6922 etc
pre-amp stage

KIT34/KAT34 E/I 14% tapped Ultra Linear
push-pull output transformer
2 inch stack, 80mm(w)x95mm(l)x100mm(h), drop
through fitting with zinc cap. Primary-secondary
6.4K, 14% UL taps, Secondary 8ohm, max output
34watts, max current 150mA, valves EL34, 6L6,
6CA7

HD83 E/I single ended output transformer
40mm(w)x50mm(l) x55mm(h).
Primary-secondary 4K - 4 x 64ohms
windings, max o/p-1watts, max current-25mA
valves-ECL83 etc

**300B PSE E/I parallel single ended output
transformer**
130mm(h) x 95mm(w) x 115mm(d).
drop through fitting with zinc cap.
Primary 1K5 Secondary 8R, output .

2A3 PSE E/I output transformer:
2A3 parallel single ended transformer, 2 inch stack,
78 size lamination. Primary impedance is 2.5K,
secondary impedance is 4ohm or 8ohm, max
current is 100mA. Output is 8.5Watts.

KECL82 PP output transformer
ECL82 push-pull ultra linear. 1inch stack, on a 29
size lamination,
80mm(wide)x70mm(height)x60mm(depth), frame
type 2 hole fixing. Primary 7.5Kohm, secondary
8ohms. Max current 85mA,
Good for numerous low output pentode valves in
push-pull configuration.

300B PP E/I push-pull output transformers
2.5inch stack, on a size 120 lamination.
130mm(h)x95mm(w)x115mm(d) drop through
fitting with zinc plated cap. Primary impedance 4K,
secondary 6ohm. Will suit 300Bs, 2A3s etc in
push-pull configuration.

PRINTED CIRCUIT BOARDS

- add KECL82 Printed Circuit Board 200mm(w) x140mm(l) x1.6mm(d)
- Kel84 Printed Circuit Board 280mm(w) x 135mm(l)x 1.6mm(d).
- KIT34/KAT34 Printed Circuit Board 140mm(w) x 310mm(l) x 2.4mm(d)
- Kel34 Printed Circuit Board 140mm(w) x 310mm(l) x 2.4mm(d).
- Kel80 Printed Circuit Board (a pair) 120mm(w) x 215mm(l) x 2.4mm(d)
- HD83 Printed Circuit Board 140mm(w) x 160mm(l) x 1.6mm(d).
- PSU-II Printed Circuit Board 105mm(w) x 130mm(l) x 1.6mm(d)
- PRE-II Printed Circuit Board 105mm(w) x 130mm(l) x 1.6mm(d).
- PHONO-II Printed Circuit Board 105mm(w) x 130mm(l) x 1.6mm(d)

OUTPUT TRANSFORMERS

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These are expert kits, not for the inexperienced. You must be able to solder and read a circuit diagram. The valve kits contain lethal voltages. We cannot be held responsible for any errors arising from the construction of these kits.

wad



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PARTS DESCRIPTION	ORDER NO.	QTY	UK (inc vat & carriage)	OVERSEAS (exc. vat & carriage)
Kec182 (8 ohm)	Kec182 (with valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£195.00 £175.50	£170.00 £153.00
2A3PSE with valves (4ohm or 8ohm, pls specify)	2A3 PSE (with valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£570.00 £523.00	£485.00 £445.00
2A3PSE without valves (4ohm or 8ohm, pls specify)	2A3 PSE (without valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£470.00 £423.00	£400.00 £360.00
KaT6550 with valves (4ohm or 8ohm, pls specify)	KaT6550 (with valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£580.00 £535.00	£495.00 £457.00
KaT6550 without valves (4ohm or 8ohm, pls specify)	KaT6550 (without valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£450.00 £405.00	£380.00 £342.00
KiT6550 with valves (4ohm or 8ohm, pls specify)	KiT6550 (with valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£615.00 £566.50	£525.00 £483.50
KiT6550 without valves (4ohm or 8ohm, pls specify)	KiT6550 (without valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£485.00 £436.50	£415.00 £373.50
KaT34 with valves (4ohm or 8ohm, pls specify)	KAT34(with valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£480.00 £438.50	£410.00 £374.60
KaT34 without valves (4ohm or 8ohm, pls specify)	KAT34(without valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£415.00 £373.50	£354.00 £318.60
KiT34 with valves (4ohm or 8ohm, pls specify)	KIT34 (with valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£615.00 £470.00	£440.00 £401.50
KIT34 without valves (4ohm or 8ohm, pls specify)	KIT34 (without valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£450.00 £405.00	£385.00 £346.50
Kel84 with valves (8 ohm)	Kel84 (with valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£298.00 £271.20	£255.00 £232.00
Kel84 without valves (8 ohm)	Kel84 (without valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£268.00 £241.20	£230.00 £207.00
PSUII	PSU - II	<input type="checkbox"/>	£205.00 £184.50	£175.00 £157.50
PREII	PRE - II	<input type="checkbox"/>	£215.00 £193.50	£185.00 £166.50
PHONOII	PHONO II	<input type="checkbox"/>	£110.00 £99.00	£95.00 £85.50
PASII	PAS II	<input type="checkbox"/>	£235.00 £211.50	£200.00 £180.00
Step ups transformers for MC use with PHONOII	MC - step up (pair)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£80.00 £72.00	£68.00 £61.20
HD83 with valves	HD83 (with valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£195.00 £175.50	£167.00 £150.30
300BPSE with valves (4ohm or 8ohm, pls specify)	300B PSE (with valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£1107.00 £1107.50	£1120.00 £1043.50
300BPSE without valves (4ohm or 8ohm, pls specify)	300B PSE (no valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£895.00 £805.50	£765.00 £688.50
300BPP with valves (6 ohm)	300B PP (with valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£1107.00 £1107.50	£1120.00 £1043.50
300BPP without valves (6 ohm)	300B PP (no valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£895.00 £805.50	£765.00 £688.50
300BPP conversion pack	300B PP (conversion pack)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£250.00 £225.00	£215.00 £193.50

PARTS DESCRIPTION	ORDER NO.	QTY	UK (inc vat & carriage)	OVERSEAS (exc. vat & carriage)
2A3 mains transformer	2A3 PSE mains T	<input type="checkbox"/>	£115.00 £103.50	£98.00 £88.20
6550 mains transformer	6550 mains T	<input type="checkbox"/>	£120.00 £108.00	£105.00 £94.50
34 mains transformer	KiT34 - mains T	<input type="checkbox"/>	£100.00 £90.00	£85.00 £76.50
kel84 mains transformer	Kel84 - mains T	<input type="checkbox"/>	£60.00 £54.00	£47.00 £42.30
HD83 mains transformer	HD83 - mains T	<input type="checkbox"/>	£40.00 £36.00	£34.00 £30.60
PSUII mains transformer	PSU-II - mains T	<input type="checkbox"/>	£40.00 £36.00	£34.00 £30.60
300B mains transformer	300B - mains T (each)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£115.00 £103.50	£98.00 £88.20
34/6550 choke	KiT34 - choke	<input type="checkbox"/>	£40.00 £36.00	£34.00 £30.60
kel84 choke	Kel84 - choke	<input type="checkbox"/>	£20.00 £18.00	£17.00 £15.30
300B choke	KiT6550 choke	<input type="checkbox"/>	£40.00 £36.00	£34.00 £30.60
2A3 PSE choke	300B - choke	<input type="checkbox"/>	£40.00 £36.00	£34.00 £30.60
PSUII choke	2A3 PSE choke	<input type="checkbox"/>	£20.00 £18.00	£17.00 £15.30
6550 output transformer (4ohm or 8ohm)	PSU-choke	<input type="checkbox"/>	£130.00 £117.00	£112.00 £100.80
34 output transformer (4ohm or 8ohm)	6550 - O/P T (pair)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£130.00 £117.00	£112.00 £100.80
kel84 output (8 ohm)	34 - O/P T (pair)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£90.00 £81.00	£78.00 £70.20
2A3 PSE output transformer (4ohm or 8ohm)	Kel84 - O/P T (pair)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£130.00 £117.00	£112.00 £100.80
HD83 output (multiload secondary)	2A3 PSE O/P T (pair)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£100.00 £90.00	£86.00 £77.40
PRE-II driver transformer	HD83 - O/P T(pair)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£80.00 £72.00	£68.00 £61.20
300BPSE output transformer (4ohm or 8ohm)	PRE-II - driver T(pair)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£110.00 £99.00	£94.00 £84.60
300BPP output transformer (6ohm)	300B PSE - O/P T (each)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£110.00 £99.00	£94.00 £84.60
kel84 PCB	300B PP - O/P T (each)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£30.00 £27.00	£26.00 £23.40
kel34 PCB	Kel84 - PCB	<input type="checkbox"/>	£12.00 £10.80	£11.00 £9.90
kel80 PCB	Kel34 - PCB	<input type="checkbox"/>	£52.00 £46.80	£45.00 £40.50
HD83 PCB	Kel80 - PCB(pair)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£20.00 £18.00	£17.00 £15.30
PSUII PCB	HD83 - PCB	<input type="checkbox"/>	£20.00 £18.00	£17.00 £15.30
PREII PCB	PSU-II - PCB	<input type="checkbox"/>	£20.00 £18.00	£17.00 £15.30
PHONOII PCB	PRE-II - PCB	<input type="checkbox"/>	£20.00 £18.00	£17.00 £15.30
tag board	PHONO-II - PCB	<input type="checkbox"/>	£4.00 £3.00	£3.00 £2.00
ALPS 50K dual potentiometer	TAG	<input type="checkbox"/>	£14.00 £12.60	£12.00 £10.80
ALPS 100K dual potentiometer	ALPS - 50K	<input type="checkbox"/>	£14.00 £12.60	£12.00 £10.80
stepped attenuator (10K or 50K)	Attenuator + resistor pack	<input type="checkbox"/>	£75.00 £67.50	£65.00 £58.50
LCR 22.5uF 440Vdc polyprop. Cap	LCR - 22.5U	<input type="checkbox"/>	£10.00 £9.00	£8.00 £7.20
Jensen 0.47uF 630V, aluminium foil	JEN - 0.47U 630V	<input type="checkbox"/>	£20.00 £18.00	£17.00 £15.30
Safety gloves	SAFETY GLOVES	<input type="checkbox"/>	£25.00 £22.50	£21.00 £18.90
2A3PSE/6550/34 safety cage	2A3 PSE/34/6550 cage	<input type="checkbox"/>	£80.00 £72.00	£68.00 £61.20

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1A36	36W KT88 Integrated	£895.00	PA11	Valve pre-amplifier	£699.00
P20A	20W 5881 power amp	£795.00	PH11	Valve phono stage for PA11	£198.00

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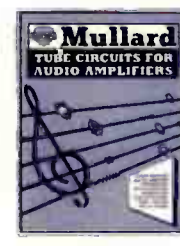
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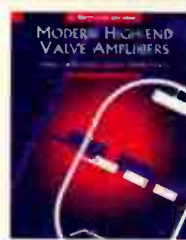
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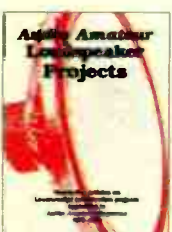
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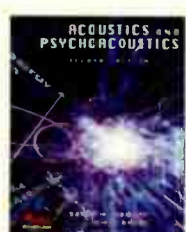
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Through The Past, Sharply

For almost a century now, Britain has been producing audio equipment of that is not only world class, but often world-beating. Noel Keywood continues from last month the story of the red, white and blues...

Whilst Cambridgeshire was unique for hosting a whole raft of new start ups in the 1970s, it wasn't the only place on the hi-fi map by any means. Linn hailed from Glasgow, Scotland, springing from a mechanical engineering company that set about making quality turntables in 1972. Naim was started in Salisbury, Wiltshire by Julian Vereker in 1974 and Rega was started by ex-Ford



The modern Linn factory in Glasgow.



Julian Vereker, founder of Naim.

engineer Roy Gandi in Southend-on-Sea in 1975. All were independent start ups, far from Cambridge and its environs. Although Britain was plagued by strikes and a turbulent economy in this period, the mood of the time very much favoured high fidelity. Growth in consumer electronics was fuelled by development of the transistor, and especially integrated circuits. Hi-fi had little competition and ranked high in people's spending priorities. A strong music business underpinned demand.

NAD was an infant of the early

seventies too, but of a different complexion. Born in North London in 1972, from the outset it relied on UK design and Far East (Taiwan) manufacture to keep prices low. This set a precedent that would be followed later as low cost Far East manufacturing, in China, Malaysia and Taiwan gathered pace. Designer Erik Edvardson, a Norwegian who studied electrical engineering in Britain alongside Ray Dolby, eventually disappeared to live in China. Co-

founder of Arcam, Chris Evans, joined NAD then left to set up Myryad in Waterlooville, Hampshire, in effect joining "the South Coast mob".

Musical Fidelity was another London start up. It set out tentatively producing valve amps in the early 1980s, a theme founder Antony Michaelson adheres to today. In Central London Roksan (est. 1983) got going from premises above a chemist shop on the Edgware Road. Just north of London Creek got under way at much the same time, 1982 and was eventually acquired by Mordaunt Short. It was bought back in 1993 by founder Mike Creek and investors, then acquired the Epos loudspeaker brand name in 1999. John Michell produced models for the film industry in Borehamwood, north of London and moved into turntable manufacture after taking on manufacture of Transcriptors turntables.

Then there is the South Coast Mob, as they are sometimes called, a disparate collection of individuals and companies, with tenuous links. Peter



John Dawson, founded A&R Cambridge with Chris Evans.

Quortrop followed in the wake of his Danish ancestors, got lost in the North Sea and landed in Brighton in 1984 to form Audio Innovations, then Audionote. A stone's throw away, in Portslade, amplifier designer John Farlowe got Exposure going, albeit much earlier, in 1973.

Havant is home to Goodmans, another name with a history stretching back to 1926. A volume drive unit manufacturer, Goodmans has always had one foot in high



Mission's first product of note, the energetic sounding 770 loudspeaker.

fidelity. It worked in conjunction with Tannoy as the TGI Group, formed in 1987. Goodmans then sold off Creek, Epos and Mordaunt Short in 1999. The TGI Group now has a partnership with Danish TC Electronic, forming The TC Group, showing how resilient Goodmans and Tannoy have become as long-established names in UK audio.

Mordaunt Short was snapped up by a new force emergent in the 1990s, Julian Richer of Richer Sounds. Forming Audio Partnership in



Farad Azima, founder of Mission, later to head up Verity Group and start NXT with brother Henry.

London as a product arm, he also added the hapless Cambridge Audio after a long and turbulent life which had seen it all but disappear.

Continuing along Britain's south coast, Heybrook was formed in



Henry Azima helped his brother Farad build Mission Loudspeakers. Later, as Verity Group, they rescued both Quad and Wharfedale, and took on the moribund Leak brand name. All three were sold on to IAG, behind which lies a Chinese investment group. The deal was promoted by Stan Curtis, originally of Cambridge Audio.

Plymouth, Devon in 1978 and is now run by Audio Group, based in Saltash Cornwall. This conglomeration of names sprung from JPW Loudspeakers (est. 1979) a company that used labour from Dartmoor Prison to assemble loudspeaker cabinets. From here sprung Audio



The Ditton brand name in the Far East was derived from Thames Ditton, Celestion's original home. Ditton was used by GP Batteries to market locally produced hi-fi.

Group International (AGI, not to be confused with IAG, nor TGI). When AGI got into trouble, Peerless of India (an offshoot of Peerless Denmark) jumped in, seeking to retain the value of the brand names. Now, products from Audio Group are designed in Cornwall and manufactured in India, from where they are shipped worldwide. Low prices give them penetration into

low cost markets and JPW claim to be Vietnam's number one loudspeaker brand! It's a long way from Dartmoor.

Close to them is another South Coaster, Mike Jewitt, ex-Mordaunt Short and Heybrook, now running Revolver in Saltash, Cornwall (est. 1978). Some like to keep far away from Huntingdon, he remarks!

All the same, by the end of the formative 1970s Quad had around it in Huntingdon a string of names still strong today, including Mission, started in 1977 by Iranian born, but London based Farad Azima. From the start Mission were to occupy a brand new, state of the art factory, emulating Linn in this respect. From Mission loudspeakers was to spring Cyrus, the electronics arm, and NXT to exploit flat panel loudspeaker technology. Whilst Farad Azima retired from audio recently his brother Henry remains, running the technical side of NXT. Having created first Mission, then hi-fi groups handling Quad, Wharfedale and others, as well as new technology company NXT, the Azimas have been unusually influential.



Stan Curtis in the 1970s when he was with Cambridge Audio.

GO EAST

Britain's post war hi-fi industry had largely re-formed itself by the end of the 1970s. However, whilst Tannoy and Goodmans traded through various commercial difficulties, the Wharfedale brand was passing from owner to owner and Quad was in decline. Huntingdon was to play another important card, showing it was still in the game, and very much in the modern world.

That world was - and still is - changing. Japan had, through the 1980s, been moving its manufacturing plants out to less expensive regions, notably Malaysia, Singapore, China and Taiwan. These areas in turn were becoming major manufacturing centres in their own right, attracting not just the big Japanese names, but



Quad and Wharfedale products are now manufactured at this massive new plant in a Chinese economic zone close to Hong Kong. Beneath the Chinese script is the word IAG (International Audio Group).

Intel, Philips and others.

Which brings us to a new and recent phase in the UK hi-fi business where, due to its comparative success at producing high quality brand name goods, often with a charismatic figurehead to clearly convey product philosophy, the companies have gathered a worth to Far Eastern manufacturers beyond simple book value. It's perhaps surprising that the Union flag on a box sells hi-fi in China, but it's true. And China is far and away the world's biggest market. Events there were to affect Britain's cottage industry in a profound manner.

By the early 1990s, KEF was having difficulties, hampered by UK economic stagnation. In a sweep, Gold Peak Industries, Hong Kong based battery manufacturers (GP batteries), purchased them and Celestion too. A few years later, in 1997, Wharfedale, Leak and Quad was gathered up by International Audio Group and manufacturing partly moved to China. Gold Peak maintain UK plants, but Quad and Wharfedale products are designed in the UK and manufactured exclusively in China. It's interesting to speculate that as China industrialises these

names could well become, to the Chinese, in effect local brand names.

Julian Richer's Audio Partnership designs in the UK (London) and manufactures in Far East and India (courtesy of JPVV), and Exposure is



Far East manufacture of high fidelity. China is busy importing jobs. Low labour rates, a vast and industrious workforce, plus skill in electronics has drawn in manufacturing from around the world.

Malaysian funded. Founder John Farlowe now runs a club in Thailand and still designs for the Malaysian group.

So a string of UK hi-fi names now have strong Far East links: Cambridge, KEF, Celestion, Quad, Wharfedale, Mordaunt-Short and Exposure. This is a testament to the attraction of British hi-fi products to consumers around the world. It also helps stabilise distribution into other territories. However, Britain's audio companies have always been vigorous exporters: when Harold Leak

attended a New York Audio fair in 1949 it meant four days at sea on a liner!

As source technologies become increasingly complex and subject to international patent and cross industry agreement (e.g. SACD, DVD, etc), small manufacturers everywhere could potentially be progressively excluded from development. High license fees present another barrier.

This is a gathering difficulty for Britain's small producers. But Linn, Arcam and Meridian have all managed to enter into special arrangements that give access to DVD and SACD. Meanwhile, with Blue Ray just coming over the horizon DVD may itself be in for hard times. Commercial rivalry could well benefit the UK's smaller players as large groups seek to spread their technology, using high value brands as vehicles.

Audio and in particular high fidelity are now under pressure from other consumer electronics technologies as buying priorities. Counterbalancing this is increased leisure spending. UK manufacturers are resilient, resourceful and imaginative, with an array of products popular world wide. Having survived so well for so long it's likely they will continue to do so.



Celestion stand in Far East with prominent Union Jack to show UK origin.

Xmas Xtras

Well, it's that time of year again, so David Price decided to take a look at some great gift ideas – just leave this page open inconspicuously on the sofa in front of your other half...

SHURE SFG-2 STYLUS GAUGE £25 ●●●●

There's a lot of rot talked about tracking forces. If you're serious enough about vinyl to care about how heavy your cartridge is tracking, then you're well able to hear whether it's too heavy or too light – as it will mistrack, producing unpleasant distortion which wasn't on the original recording (unless it's an early Jesus and Mary Chain LP, of course...) Anyway, this said, some of us like to have visual – as well as audible – confirmation of how heavily (or not) our prized bit of diamond is carressing our precious record grooves. For this reason, your tonearm manufacturer has thoughtfully provided a tracking force dial, which is often accurate to within a quarter of gram (or if it's an SME, within a tenth). Still, independent corroboration never hurt anyone, so for this reason there are a number of stylus pressure gauges on sale. The best in my opinion is that made by The Cartridge Man, but this is jolly expensive. Second is Technics SH-50PI – an exquisite bit of kit long since



discontinued. If you're looking to spend less, then Shure's evergreen SFG-2 is the answer. It's well made – although it lacks the stunning build of the two aforementioned devices – and does the job very accurately (it tallies with my SH-50PI very closely). The only fly in its ointment is Ortofon's own gauge, which costs just one third of this and is just as accurate, although it's very plasticky and can easily break.

With this in mind, this comes highly recommended. Never underestimate your lugholes though, as they are more accurate still.

GOLDRING EXSTATIC INNER SLEEVES £12 PER 25 ●●●●

It's kind of funny really – most vinyl junkies are desperately worried about the damage their stylus could be doing to their prized LPs, whereas one of the most fraught moments of the record playing ritual is taking records out – and putting them back in – their sleeves. How so? Well, most UK pressings come with cardboard or paper inners which are as tough as old boots. All it takes are a few small dirt particles on the record surface and every time you slip them in and out of 'bed', your playing surface gets a severe scrubbing! It's interesting that in Japan – home of the very best vinyl pressings and an obsessive attention to detail – that every new LP comes with a very soft sleeve such as Goldring's Ecstatic inner. Treated for resistance to static electricity and soft so as to not damage the disc surfaces, it's no wonder that Japanese vinyl has in general lasted longer – as any trip to a second-hand record shop in Tokyo will attest. These aren't so much an accessory as an essential if you're serious about your record collection lasting the distance. They're a tad less easy to manipulate than the nasty bits of paper that come with British pressings – but hey, you'll learn to live with it! Brilliant – every LP should have one.



BRILLIANCE SYNERGY ANALOGUE INTERCONNECT £55/M ●●●●£

This tiny UK manufacturer has a range of products including mains leads, noise filters and interconnects, all beautifully made despite the sensible prices. The interconnects are available in increments of 0.1m, so if you only need 0.7m, you don't need to buy 1m – meaning you save money and get better sound, because as with all bits of hi-fi wire, in terms of sonics, less is more! Be warned though – you'll have to order two weeks before the big day if you're wanting to surprise someone! Well, the wait is worth it. This cable sports Teflon coaxial cable and Canare RCA terminators, the low capacitance of the former

making it suitable for longer runs. The sound per pound ratio is superb. It has a truly open and neutral demeanour, far better than the average clanging sounding £50

interconnect. In fact, it rather resembles far more expensive VdH and LFD Spirolink in its depth and neutrality – you really get the sense that you're listening to the hi-fi and not the cable. Tonally it's quite dark (ironic considering the name), but with an airy and extended treble all the same. Ideal for 'budget audiophile' applications where sound is as much an issue as price. Contact: **Brilliance Hi-Fi, 35 Cumberland Road, Urmston, Manchester M41 9HR**, or email: Brilliance@ntlworld.com.

GOLDRING SUPER EXSTATIC £12 ●●●●

Once you've managed to find some inner sleeves that don't sandpaper your record surfaces every time you take them in and out, then it's time to keep them clean. Here, Goldring has another solution – the Super Exstatic. It's a carbon fibre record cleaning brush which works as well as almost any other I've tried, and is well made and presented to boot. The basic idea is – buy a new record, apply this from the inside (i.e. spindle side) slowly moving out to the run-out groove for about 3-5 seconds, gently lifting off the surface dust. That, plus decent inners, is all you'll ever need for record care. Simple as that. Unless of course you're a denizen of second-hand shops, or like to have to odd party or three when, in a drunken haze, your sacred disc care routine goes up in smoke. In this case, the Super Ecstatic will help, but it won't remove serious scunge – for this you'll need a proper record cleaning machine – or alternatively ask your local hi-fi dealer if he has a Keith Monks record cleaner (assuming he knows what vinyl LPs are, of course, as not all of them do these days...) I'll be covering this subject in a later issue – as it's a big one – but if it's everyday record care you need, this and the Exstatic inner sleeves will be all you'll ever need. Heartily recommended.



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David Price



This is one of the hardest columns I've had to write. As I type it, it's only about two weeks since I last spoke to John Michell on my mobile phone. I was walking to the post office and John called to see if I'd received his new version of the TecnoArm (reviewed p59), and was – as usual – determined that I knew the precise reason for every individual engineering detail.

To be frank, I was more worried about him. I and various others in the industry had known he'd been suffering from cancer, but also that he seemed to have it on the backfoot. And with the sheer force of his character - the *joie de vivre* he showed - I'd always thought he'd be able to overcome it.

I'd just got over shingles – which isn't much fun I can assure you – and John was telling me to take it easy, not work too hard, take Echinacea and generally chill out. I agreed, as you would, but couldn't help feeling slightly more concerned by him, and his news that he'd had a slight relapse.

Born in 1936, John was the same age as my father. I'd never really known him as a friend, but had enjoyed an unusually good working relationship with him. I first met him in 1993 as a customer – before my association with this magazine. I was a plain punter, and he gave me time on the telephone to explain all about the second-hand GyroDec I'd bought (out of curiosity) to partner my Linn LP12. The result was that I ended up driving over one hundred and fifty miles to the factory, where he duly had my deck completely refurbished – while I waited – and took time to explain why he'd designed the Gyro in the way he did.

To be honest, I'd always thought

that the GyroDec was a stunning looking 'functional ornament'. The magazine reviews had always decried its sound quality (essentially because it didn't sound like the reviewer's (then obligatory) LP12. But when I took my deck back home, with John's own personal set up instructions

“ John Michell was an engineer, a brilliant one, and a gentleman too... ”

fresh in my mind, I was blown away by how good it sounded and I never listened to my Linn again.

This, as my friends and family will tell you, was about the most dramatic conversion I'd ever had. I was passionate about the Sondek – and still really rate it now – but had just found something that gave me more of what I wanted in a turntable.

In my humble opinion, the GyroDec was John's greatest achievement. It was the ultimate exemplar of his ability to marry form and function. Many audiophiles were transfixed by this turntable's striking styling, but automatically assumed that it couldn't sound good because all the money had been spent on 'making it look nice'. They couldn't have been more wrong - the Gyro looked as it did because that was how it worked - it was one of the very first exo-skeletal decks. Back in 1981, no other turntable was made this way - but 23 years later most are.

Anyway, what really surprised me was that during my factory visit, John treated me with real kindness and courtesy - even though I was 'just' a punter, and one who wasn't spending

much money. He was obviously very busy, but still made all the time he could for me. I was deeply impressed.

Warp forward several years, and I was a *Hi-Fi World* hack. John treated me just as he had before. He was keen to explain the engineering features of his products, and didn't so much enjoy as relish getting into the nitty gritty!

A few years later, I contracted severe pneumonia, which nearly killed me and put me out of action for a very long time.

John actually called my parents (he'd got the number from the magazine) to enquire about my state of health. In hindsight, this was typical for a man who was always busy, but never too busy to remember what mattered – human kindness.

There are lots of politics in this industry, and all sorts of people briefing against one another. Kind of strange really, as we all share a common love (music), and it's not like there's too many audiophiles to go round in the first place. John never joined the treadmill. Frankly, his PR was useless, and he admitted as much. He'd phone you up, tell you why something worked the way it did and hope you'd remember. No press conferences or press releases. He freely admitted he wasn't really interested in 'that side of things', and let his designs speak for themselves.

John Michell actually seemed happiest machining components on a lathe, or talking about why something (car suspension, arm tubes, what have you) works in the way it does - and how it could be improved. He was an engineer, a brilliant one, and a gentleman too. He'll be dearly missed by his friends, family, customers and colleagues alike. ●

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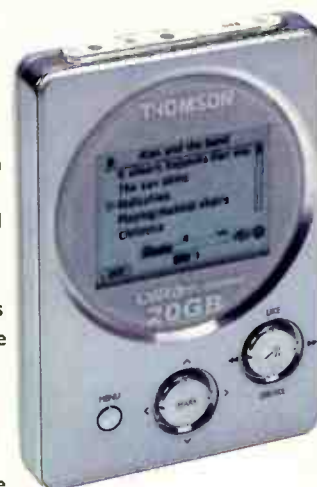
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dominic todd



Christmas is almost upon us once more, and much of the talk in hi-fi retail circles is of whether it will be DAB or portable jukebox systems that prove to be the season's must-have gift. In all honesty I think both formats look set to sell strongly, but 'jukeboxes' are certainly on the ascendant right now – just look at the new iPod! Although Apple didn't dream up the idea, this little gadget could well prove so ubiquitous that it becomes the Walkman of its day. Products are usually popular for good reasons, and the iPod is no exception. So good, in fact, that for many weeks of this year it was sold out right across the country...

It's now possible to squish an incredible 40GB onto an iPod, for a not totally outrageous £400. For the less technical of us that equates to around 10,000 songs! Of course, this amount of music won't be the best quality, but it's still a great deal of storage space even at CD quality. Certainly 40 gigs is more than most people are ever going to need from a portable!

The key question is - can anyone challenge Apple this Christmas? Well, you won't be surprised to find that there are already a good number of new products eager for a taste of the action. Most surprisingly of all is that Sony doesn't really appear to be in the game - at least not yet. Despite coining the term 'stickman' and jumping on the portable jukebox bandwagon early, they only have a solitary model available on the UK market. The NWMS70D is tiny and, like the iPod, achingly cool. Yet it can only hold a meagre 256MB in its flash memory and another 32 MB on a stick. This would have been alright a few years ago, but this type of memory can be put on a key type flash unit for less than £100 these days. Creative Audio's Muvo may only

have half the memory, but at £90 is very nearly as stylish as the Sony and a lot cheaper than the £230-£250 you'd need to find for the S70. Sony has, rather unusually, missed the market in going for size over memory.

Old time rival and CD collaborator Philips is much more on the ball. The HDD100 looks remarkably like a black version of the iPod. Its 4

” The key question is - can anyone challenge Apple this Christmas? ”

level grey scale display and scroll system also lends it an ease of use and sense of techno cool familiar to iPod owners. Even the sound quality is good, especially if you ditch the standard headphones for some Sennheiser MX500s. The only thing going against the Philips is the slightly anorexic 15GB memory. Again, this would have been plenty a year ago but at its price, which varies enormously from between £250-£350, Apple will now offer you 20 GB (£300). I like the Philips and, if you can get one cheap, I'd recommend one as a cool left field choice.

Philips isn't the only one with an Apple clone, though. We've already mentioned Creative's Muvo model; well they also do an iPod rival called the Zen. Being a specialist computer company they are right on the ball with new products and able to react quickly to falling market prices. The advantage of this is that Zen has a very capacious 30GB for between £250-£300. It's not quite as nice to use as the Apple or Philips, but you can't argue with memory for money ratio, nor with the spec', which includes USB2 compatibility.

Another computer accessory company offering up a rival is Rio.

Longer term readers and followers of fashion will remember Rio (originally Diamond Multimedia) as being one of the founding companies involved in this type of product. These days they don't

seem quite so competitive, yet the 20GB Rio Karma still looks the business, if you can find one in this country that is. A more surprising entrant, perhaps, is Thomson, with their good value PDP2840.

The name's not exactly catchy but your £250 buys you something compact, well made, and, with it being sold in most of the high street stores, likely to be heavily discounted if you can wait for the sales! Its 20 GB memory and USB2 connectivity probably makes it the best value of the clones.

Or will Santa have a sackful of DABs this year? You never know. As we report in News this issue the BBC are fast switching on new transmitters, so keen are they for DAB to gather acceptance. Quality is likely acceptable to most people and there is fantastic variety, with stations catering for all tastes, especially if you're into real Rock. Off-the-mark Radio 1 and Hel stations have a job surviving in a radio spectrum with the likes of Kiss FM and X-FM blasting it out.

So which will be the most popular buy this Christmas? With so much competition for Apple's iPod that's where I'll put my money. Prices may well vary enormously, so don't be surprised or upset if your machine is replaced by one twice as powerful for half the cost next Christmas! Just be happy that Santa had something to bring you this year, be it a rockin DAB or a shiny iPod. ●

True Reflections



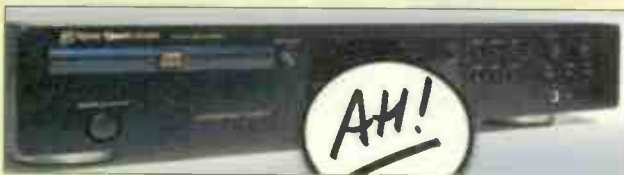
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world classics

In this heavily revised section, you'll find the great and the good from audio's glorious past. Most are seminal designs which have earned their place in hi-fi history, but you'll also see some oddities which aren't classic as such, but are great used buys. The year of introduction is given, alongside the original UK launch price. Think we've overlooked something? Then write in and let us know!

DIGITAL

CAMBRIDGE AUDIO CD11986 [£1500]
Inspired Stan Curtis redesign of Philips CD104, complete with switchable digital filter. Lean but tight and musical performer.

CAMBRIDGE AUDIO CD 4SE 1998 [£200]
A touch soft in the treble and tonally light, but outstanding in every other respect.

LINN KARIK III 1995 [£1775]
The final Karik was a gem. Superb transport gives a brilliantly tight, grippy dynamic sound, albeit tonally dry.

MARANTZ CD73 1983 [£700]
A riot of gold brushed aluminium and LEDs, this distinctive machine squeezed every last ounce from its 14x4 DAC -super musical

MARANTZ SA-1 2000 [£5,000]
The greatest argument for SACD. This sublime Ken Ishiwata design is utterly musically convincing with both CD and SACD, beating most audiophile CD spinners hands down.



MERIDIAN MCD 1984 [£600]
The first British 'audiophile' machine was a sweeter, more detailed Philips CD100. 14x4 never sounded so good, until the MCD Pro arrived a year later.



MERIDIAN 207 1988 [£995]
Beautifully-built two-box with pre-amp stage. Very musical although not as refined as modern Bitstream gear. No digital output.

NAIM CDS 1990 [£ N/A]
Classic Philips 16x4 chipset with serious attention to power supplies equals grin-inducing sonics.

SONY CDP-101 1982 [£800]
The first Japanese CD spinner was powerful and involving. Brilliant transport more than compensated for 16x2 DAC, and you even got remote control!

SONY CDP-R1/DAS-R1 1987 [£3,000]
Sony's first two boxer was right first time. Tonally lean, but probably the most detailed and architectural sounding machine of the eighties.

COMPACT DISC TRANSPORTS

ESOTERIC P0 1997 [£8,000]
The best CD drive bar none; TEAC's Tokyo boys pushed the boat out in style. Brilliantly incisive, ridiculously over engineered.

KENWOOD 9010 1986 [£600]
The first discrete Jap transport was beautifully done and responds well to re-clocking even today.

TEAC VRDS-TI 1994 [£600]
Warm and expansive sound made this a mid price hit. Well built, with a slick mech.

DACs

CAMBRIDGE AUDIO DACMAGIC 1995 [£99]
Good value upgrade for budget CD players with extensive facilities and detailed sonics.

DCS ELGAR 1997 [£8500]
Extremely open and natural performer, albeit extremely pricey - superb.

DPA LITTLE BIT 3 1996 [£299]
Rich, clean, rhythmic and punchy sound transforms budget CD players.

PINK TRIANGLE DACAPO 1993 [£ N/A]
Exquisite: the warmest and most lyrical 16bit digital audio we have ever heard. Clever plug-in digital filter modules really worked!

QED DIGIT 1991 [£90]
Budget bitstream performer with tweaks aplenty. Positron PSU upgrade makes it smooth, but now past it.

TURNTABLES

ARISTON RD11S 1972 [£94]
Modern evolution of Thorens' original belt drive paradigm, Scotland's original super-deck was warm and musical, albeit soft. Still capable of fine results today.

DUAL CS505 1982 [£75]
Simple high quality engineering and a respectable low mass tonearm made for a brilliant budget buy. Polished, smooth and slightly bland sound.

GARRARD 301/401 1953 [£19]
Heavy metal - tremendously strong and articulate with only a veiled treble to let it down. In many respects, better than the seventies 'superdecks' that succeeded it.

GOLDRING LENCO 88/89 1963 [£15.65]
Simple, well engineered middleweight with soft, sweet sound and reasonable tonearms. Good spares and servicing support even today from specialists.

LINN AXIS 1987 [£253]
Simplified cut-price version of the Sondek complete with LVX arm. Elegant and decently performing mid-price package. Later version with Akito tonearm better.

LINN SONDEK LP12 1973 [£86]
For many, the Brit superdeck; constant mods meant that early ones sound warmer and more lyrical than modern versions. Beguilingly musical but now off the pace.



MARANTZ TT1000 1978 [£ N/A]
Beautiful seventies high end belt drive with sweet and clean sound. Rare in Europe, but big in Japan.

MICHELL GYRODEC 1981 [£599]
Thanks to its stunning visuals, this bold design wasn't accorded the respect it deserved until recently. Early examples sound cold and mechanical, but now right on the pace. Clean, solid and architectural sound.

REGA PLANAR 3 1978 [£79]
Brilliantly simple but clean and musical performer, complete with Acos-derived S-shape tonearm. 1983 saw the arrival of the RB300, which added detail at the expense of warmth. Superb budget buy.

ROKSAN XERXES 1984 [£550]
Supposedly the first to 'better' the LP12. Super tight and clean sound, with excellent transients. Less musical than the Sondek, but more neutral. Sagging plinth top-plates make them a dubious used buy.

TECHNICS SP10 1973 [£400]
Seminal Japanese engineering. Sonics depend on plinths, but a well mounted SP10/II will give any modern a hard time, especially in respect of bass power and midband accuracy.

THORENSTD124 1959 [£ N/A]
The template for virtually every 1970s 'superdeck', this iconic design was the only real competition for Garrard's 301. It was sweeter and more lyrical, yet lighter and less impactful in the bass.

TOWNSHEND ROCK1979 [£ N/A]
The product of academic research by the Cranfield Institute, this novel machine has an extremely clean and fluid sound. Substantially modified through the years, and capable of superb results even today.

TRIO LO-7D 1978 [£600]
The best 'all-in-one' turntable package ever made, Trio/Kenwood threw their 'engineering best practice' book at this one with startling results. Clean, powerful and three-dimensional sound, ultimately limited by the tonearm.

H I - F I

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Arcam Delta 110 pre amp	£295.00	£750.00
McCormak Line Drive	£395.00	£995.00
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Boulder 500 AE	£2,495.00 £5,500.00

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CD PLAYERS & DACS/DVD PLAYERS	
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AV COMPONENTS	
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Parasound 2205 - 5 Channel	£1,795.00 £3,000.00

Power amplifiers

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Chord DSC 1600E (dac/pre)	£3,250.00 £6,500.00
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JM Lab Micro Utopia + Stand	£2,195.00	£4,349.00
Reference 3A	£1,750.00	£2,250.00
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SME 30/2 A "new"	£395.00	£ -
Moth Record Cleaning m/c	£245.00	£325.00
Project RPM4/ Ortofon S10 "new"	£On Dem	£1,050.00
Ortofon Rohmann	£On Dem	£500.00/
Ortofon Kontrapunkt a/b "new"	£750.00	£1,100.00
Michell Gyro SE/ RB300 "new"	£495.00 *	£ -
Audio Synthesis Phono Eq mm/mc	£695.00 *	£1,600.00
Gryphon Phono Pre-Amp (dual mono) Head Amp	£1,350.00	£1,650.00
SME Series V Arm "new"	£495.00	£ -
Pink Triangle PT Ext psu	£On Dem	£2,750.00
Plinius 14 Phono "new"	£195.00	£400.00
Nackamichi DR 3	£On Dem	£1,795.00
Tom Evans - The Groove "new"	£1,695.00	£2,065.00
Clear Audio Reference Mc phono stage X-demo	£320.00	£423.00
Rega Planer 3 + Hi Fi News Out Board Power Supply	£640.00	£740.00
Clear Audio Symphono phono stage X-demo MM/MC	£On Dem	£2,500.00
Lavardin Reference Phono "new"		

* Reduced this month

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- DNM
- Egglaston Works
- Electrograph Delphi
- Genelec
- Gryphon
- Graham
- Imerge
- J M Lab
- Krell
- Lexicon
- Linn
- Loewe
- Lutron
- Lyra
- Mark Levinson
- Michell Eng.
- Musical Fidelity
- Naim
- NEC
- Nordost
- Oracle
- Ortofon
- Plinius
- P.M.C.
- Primare
- Project
- Quadraspire
- REL
- Rockport
- Roksan
- Rotel
- Ruark
- Seleco
- SME
- Straight Wire
- Sugden
- Tara Labs
- Teac
- Totem
- Transfiguration
- Trichord
- Trilogy
- Van den Hul
- VPI
- Wilson Audio
- Wilson Research
- YBA

TO NEARMS**ACOS LUSTRE GST-1 1975 [£46]**

The archetypal S-shaped seventies arm; good, propulsive and involving sound in its day, but ragged and undynamic now.

AUDIOTECHNICA AT1120 1978 [£75]

Fine finish can't compensate for this ultra low mass arm's limited sonics - a good starter arm if you've only got a few quid to spend.

ALPHASON HR100S 1981 [£150]

First class arm, practically up to present-day standards. Buy carefully, though, as there is no service available now. Totally under priced when new, exceptional.

GRACE G707 1974 [£58]

This early Japanese example of the tonearm art has a smooth, lyrical sound. Imported by Linn, fitted to early LP12s. Sonically way off the pace now, though.

HADCOCK GH228 1976 [£46]

Evergreen unipivot with lovely sweet, fluid sound - although bass and dynamics are limited. Excellent service backup.

LINN ITTOK LVII 1978 [£253]

Arguably the first 'superarm'; Japanese design to Linn specs made for a muscular, rhythmic sound with real dynamics. Now off the pace, but the final LVIII version worth seeking out.

NAIMARO 1986 [£875]

Truly endearing and charismatic performer - wonderfully engaging mid-band makes up for softened frequency extremes.

REGA RB300 1983 [£88]

Inspired budget esoterica. Detailed, tight, neutral sound but tonally grey sounding in absolute terms. Responds well to tweaking, and its cheaper RB250 brother better still.

SME 3009 1959 [£18]

Once state of the art, but long since bettered. Musical enough, but weak at frequency extremes and veiled in the midband. Legendary serviceability has made it a cult, used prices unjustifiably high.

SME SERIES III 1979 [£113]

Clever variable mass design complete with Titanium Nitride tube tried to be all things to all men, and failed. Charming nonetheless, with a warm and inoffensive sound.

TECHNICS EPA-501 1979 [£ N/A]

Popular partner for late seventies Technics motor units. Nice build and Titanium Nitride tube can't compensate for middling sound.

INTEGRATED AMPLIFIERS**A&R A60 1977 [£115]**

Sweet and musical feature-packed integrated; the Audiolab 8000A used its blueprint to great effect.

AUDIOLAB 8000A 1985 [£495]

Smooth integrated with clean MM/MC phono stage and huge feature count. Extremely reliable, too. Post '93 versions a top used buy.

CREEK CAS4040 1983 [£150]

More musical than any budget amp before it; CAS4140 loses tone controls, gains grip.

MCINTOSH MA6800 1995 [£3735]

Effortlessly sweet, strong and powerful with seminal styling to match.

MISSION CYRUS 2 1984 [£299]

Classic eighties minimalism combines arresting styling with clean, open, lively sound. Further upgradeable with PSX power supply.

MUSICAL FIDELITY A1 1985 [£350]

Beguiling Class A integrated with exquisite styling. Questionable reliability.

MYST TMA3 1983 [£300]

Madcap eighties minimalism, but a strong and tight performer all the same.

NAD 3020 1979 [£69]

Brilliantly smooth, sweet and punchy at the price and even has a better phono stage than you'd expect. The archetypal budget super-amp.

NAIM NAIT 1984 [£350]

Superb rhythms and dynamics make it truly musical, but tonally monochromatic. Fine phono stage, very low power.

ROGERS CADET III 1965 [£34]

Sweet sounding valve integrated, uses ECL86 output valves, even has a half useable phono stage, sweet, warm a good introduction to valves

ROTEL RA-820BX 1983 [£139]

Lively and clean budget integrated that arguably started the move to minimalism.

SUGDEN A21 1969 [£ N/A]

Class A transistor integrated with an eminently likeable smoothness and musicality. Limited inputs via DIN sockets.

PREAMPLIFIERS**AUDIOLAB 8000C 1991 [£499]**

Tonally grey but fine phono input and great facilities make it an excellent general purpose tool.

CROFT MICRO 1986 [£150]

Budget valve pre-amp with exceptionally transparent performance.

LEAK POINT ONE STEREO 1958 [£ N/A]

Good for their time, but way off the pace these days. Use of EF86 pentode valve for high gain rules out ultra performance. Not the highest-fi!

LECSON AC-1 1973 [£ N/A]

Amazing styling courtesy of Allan Boothroyd can't disguise its rather cloudy sound, but a design classic nonetheless.

**LINN LK-1 1986 [£499]**

A brave attempt by the Glasgow boys to bring remote controlled user-friendliness to hair-shirt audiophile hi-fi. Didn't quite work, but not half bad for under £100.

Billy Vee

SOUND • SYSTEMS

In the eye of the storm

Linn have recently released three new groundbreaking products featured on the right. Their performance and flexibility confirm Linn's position in the forefront of the digital technology revolution. We believe that they will change the way that you perceive your music and your home entertainment system. Book your audition and let us show you. This is way beyond Hi-Fi & AV.



Based around Linn's Silverdisk engine, the Unidisk 2.1 is a universal source component designed to deliver reference standard video and pitch accurate audio.



The Kisto AV51 System controller offers a totally comprehensive solution delivering premium levels of stereo, video, and multi-channel processing.



The New Akurate Loud speaker system features Linn's new 3K driver array that creates a consistent single point source. Acoustically matched they deliver a superb definition in either stereo or multi-channel systems.

NAIM NAC32.5 1978 [£ N/A]
The Salisbury company came of age with this, their classic high end pre. Brilliantly fast and incisive sound that's a joy with vinyl but a tad forward for digital.

QUAD 22 1958 [£25]
The partner to the much vaunted Quad II monoblocs - cloudy and vague sound means it's for anacrophiles only.

QUAD 33 1968 [£43]
Better than the 22, but Quad's first tranny pre isn't outstanding. Responds well to tweaking/ rebuilding though...

POWER AMPLIFIERS

LEAK POINT ONE, TL10, TL12.1 1949 [£28]



Early classics that are getting expensive. Overhauling is de rigeur before use, using original parts if possible. Surprisingly crisp and musical sound, that's far more modern than Quad IIs. Deeply impressive when in fine fettle.

LEAK STEREO 20 1958 [£31]
Excellent workaday classic valve amplifier with decent power and drive. Surprisingly modern sounding if rebuilt sympathetically. Irrepressibly musical and fluid.

LECSON API 1973 [£ N/A]
Madcap cylindrical styling alluded to its 'tower of power' pretensions, but it wasn't. Poor build, but decently clean sounding when working.

MARANTZ MODEL 9 1997 [£8000]
Authentic reproduction monoblocs still more than cut the sonic mustard. Highly expensive and highly sought after.

MICHELL ALECTO 1997 [£1989]
Crisp, clean and beautifully controlled with gorgeous styling. Partnered with the £1650 Orca this sounds delicious!

MUSICAL FIDELITY XA200 1996 [£1000PR]
200W of sweet smooth transistor stomp in a grooved tube! Under-rated oddity.

QUAD II 1952 [£22]
The all-time classic valve amplifier, with a deliciously fluid and lyrical voice. In other respects though, it sounds hopelessly dated. Low power and hard to partner properly.

QUAD 303 1968 [£55]
Bullet proof build, but woolly sound. Off the pace, but endearing nonetheless. Some pipe smoking slipper wearers swear by them!

QUAD 405 1978 [£115]
The first of the current dumpers is a capable design with smooth, effortless power and a decently musical sound. 606 and 707 continue the theme with greater detail and incision.

PHONO STAGES

CREEK OBH-8 SE 1996 [£180]
Punchy, rhythmic character with oodles of detail makes this a great budget audiophile classic. Partner with a Goldring G1042 for an unbeatable budget combination.

LINN LINNK 1984 [£149]
Naim-designed MC phono stage built to partner the original Naim NAIT - yes, really! Fine sound, although off the pace these days.

MICHELL ISO 1988 [£ N/A]
This Tom Evans-designed black box started the trend for high performance offboard phono stages. Charismatic, musical and punchy - if lacking in finesse.

TUNERS

CREEK CAS3140 1985 [£199]
Excellent detail, separation and dynamics - brilliantly musical at the price. T40 continued the theme...



MARANTZ ST-8 1978 [£353]
Marantz's finest radio moment. Warm, organic sound plus an oscilloscope for checking the signal strength and multipath.

NAD 4040 1979 [£79]
Tremendously smooth and natural sound allied to low prices and good availability make this budget analogue esoterica. Needs a good antenna to work properly, however.

LEAK TROUGHLINE 1956 [£25]
Series I an interesting ornament but limited to 88-100MHz only. II and III are arguably the best-sounding tuners ever. Adaptation for stereo easy via phono multiplex socket. Fed by a modern outboard decoder they're deliciously lucid with true dimensionality.



NAD 4140 1995 [£199]
Brilliant affordable digital tuner has a smooth, detailed musical sound plus sensible real-world facilities.

NAIM NAT03 1993 [£595]
The warm, atmospheric sound is further proof of Naims proficiency with tuners.

PIONEER TX-9500 1976 [£295]
Another of the serious classic solid-staters. Boasts the usual high end Jap package of fine sound, brilliant sensitivity and superb build.

YAMAHA CT7000 1977 [£444]
Reputedly the best of the classic Jap analogues, this combines sleek ergonomics, high sensitivity and an explicit, detailed sound.

ANALOGUE RECORDERS

AIWA XD-009 1989 [£600]
Aiwa's Nak beater didn't, but it wasn't half bad nonetheless. Massive spec even included a 16x4 DAC!

NAKAMICHI CR-7E 1987 [£800]
The very best sounding Nakamichi ever - but lacks the visual drama of a Dragon.

REVOX A77 1968 [£145]
The first domestic open reel that the pros used at home. Superbly made, but sonically off the pace these days. B77 better, but couldn't match the Japanese.

SONY WM-D6C 1985 [£290]
Single capstan transport on a par with a Swiss watch, single rec/replay head better than most Naks. Result: sublime.

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Arcam DT26 DAB Tuner (2Yr G/tee)	(999.00)	£549.00	Mission M51 Speakers - Rosanut (2Yr G/tee) . .	(299.00)	£209.00
Arcam CD62t CD Player (2Yr G/tee)	(369.00)	£259.00	Mission M52 Speakers - Maple (2Yr G/tee) . .	(449.00)	£295.00
Arcam CD72t CD Player (2Yr G/tee)	(449.00)	£329.00	Mission M53 Speakers - Beech (2Yr G/tee) . .	(549.00)	£369.00
Arcam A85 Amplifier (2Yr G/tee)	(799.00)	£549.00	Marantz DV7000 DVD Player (1Yr G/tee) . . .	(599.00)	£169.00
Arcam DV88 DVD Player - Blk (2Yr /Gtee)	(999.00)	£499.00	Naim Nait 5 Amplifier (2Yr G/tee)	(845.00)	£659.00
B&W CMC Centre Speaker (2Yr G/tee)	(350.00)	£199.00	Naim NAP 150 Power Amplifier (2Yr G/tee) . .	(795.00)	£595.00
B&W AS2500 Sub Woofer (2Yr G/tee)	(895.00)	£479.00	Naim Credo Speakers (2Yr G/tee)	(1350.00)	£595.00
K.E.F. Q3 Speakers-Cherry - Dam (2Yr G/tee) . .	(399.00)	£219.00	PMC TB2 Speakers (2Yr G/tee)	(700.00)	£495.00
K.E.F. KHT 2005 AV Spkr Pack (2Yr G/tee) . . .	(799.00)	£479.00	PMC DB1 Speakers (2Yr G/tee)	(555.00)	£375.00
Linn Trikan Centre Spkr - maple (2Yr /Gtee) . .	(549.00)	£349.00	Rega Mira 2000 Amp Silver (1Yr G/tee) . . .	(498.00)	£365.00
Linn Ninka Speakers - Blk (2Yr G/tee)	(1145.00)	£695.00	Rega Radio 2000 Silver (2Yr /Gtee)	(374.00)	£219.00
Linn Espek Speakers - maple (2Yr G/tee) . . .	(2800.00)	£1795.00	Rega Ara Speakers - Cherry (2Yr /Gtee) . . .	(255.00)	£149.00
Linn Klimax Twin Power Amplifier (2Yr G/tee) .	(6000.00)	£4395.00	Spendor S3 Speakers Maple (2Yr G/tee) . . .	(600.00)	£399.00

PIONEER CTF-950 1978 [£400]

Not up to modern standards sonically, but a great symbol of the cassette deck art nonetheless.



YAMAHA TC-800GL 1977 [£179]

Early classic with ski-slope styling courtesy of Mario Bellini. Middling sonics by modern standards, but cool nonetheless!



DIGITAL RECORDERS

KENWOOD DM-9090 1997 [£500]

Serious and sophisticated sound thanks to well implemented ATRAC 4.5; surprisingly musical MD recorder.

MARANTZ DR-17 1999 [£1100]

Probably the best sounding CD recorder made; built like a brick outhouse with a true audiophile sound and HDCD compatibility.

PIONEER PDR-555RW 1999 [£480]

For a moment, this was the CD recorder to have. Clean and detailed.

SONY TCD-8 DATMAN 1996 [£599]

Super clean sound makes this an amazing portable, but fragile.

SONY MDS-JE55SES 2000 [£900]

The best sounding MD deck ever, thanks to awesome build and heroic ATRAC-DSP Type R coding.

LOUDSPEAKERS

JR 149 1977 [£120]

Infamous cylindrical speaker that was ignored for decades but now back in fashion! Based on classic KEFT27 / B110 combo as seen in the BBC LS3/5a. Doesn't play loud, needs a powerful transistor amplifier, but rewards with fine clarity in imaging.

LEAK SANDWICH 1961 [£39 EACH]

Warm sounding infinite baffle that, with a reasonably powerful amplifier can sound quite satisfying.

LOWTHER PM6A 1957 [£18 EACH]

This seminal full-range driver is still manufactured. High sensitivity, as fitted to many classic horn designs.

MAGNEPLANAR SMGA198X [£800]

Technological loudspeaker with genuinely musical abilities; fast, smooth, open, dry.

MISSION 752 1995 [£495]

Cracking Henry Azima-designed floor-standers combined HDA drive units and metal dome tweeters with surprisingly warm results. Benign load characteristics makes them great for valves.



MISSION 770 1980 [£375]

Back in its day, it was an innovative product and one of the first of the polypropylene designs. Warm, smooth, clean and powerful sound.

MISSION X-SPACE 1999 [£499]

The first mass production sub and sat system using NXT panels is a sure-fire future classic - not flawless, but a tantalisingly unboxy sound nevertheless!



QUAD ESL57 1956 [£45 EACH]

Wonderfully open and neutral sound puts box loudspeakers to shame. Properly serviced they give superb midband performance, although frequency extremes less impressive. Ideally, use in stacked pairs or with subwoofers and supertweeters.

QUAD ESL63 1980 [£1200]

An update of the ESL57, with stiffer cabinets. Until the 989, the best of the Quad electrostatics.

YAMAHA NS1000 1977 [£532]

High tech Beryllium midband and tweeter domes and brutish 12" woofers in massive sealed mirror image cabs equals stunning transients, speed and wallop allied to superb transparency and ultra low distortion. Partner carefully!



TANNOY WESTMINSTER 1985 [£4500]

Folded horn monsters which certainly sound good if you have the space. Not the last word in tautness but can drive large rooms and image like few others.

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Arcam CD72 CD Player Silver (6Mth /Gtee)(399.00)	£259.00	Linn 5103 AV Processor Sil LCD (1Yr G/tee) .(3250.00)	£1249.00
Arcam DV88 DVD Player Silver (2Yr /Gtee)(999.00)	£479.00	Linn 5103 AV Processor Sil VFD (1Yr G/tee) .(3250.00)	£1749.00
Arcam FMJ DV27 Player (1Yr G/tee)(1599.00)	£1199.00	Linn LK100 Power Amp (1Yr G/tee)(695.00)	£349.00
Arcam A85 Amplifier (1Yr G/tee)(799.00)	£549.00	Linn Lingo Old style (6Mth /Gtee)(495.00)	£325.00
Arcam Alpha 7 Tuner (6Mth G/tee)(279.00)	£139.00	Naim NACD5 CD Player (1Yr G/tee)(1125.00)	£785.00
B&W CDMCse Centre Spkr - Blk (6Mth G/tee) .(400.00)	£199.00	Naim NAP 150 Power Amp (6Mth G/tee) . . .(799.00)	£525.00
Denon TU260L Tuner (6Mth G/tee)(139.00)	£95.00	Naim NAC 202 Preamp (1Yr /Gtee)(1375.00)	£949.00
Linn Karik 2 C D Player (6Mth G/tee)(1850.00)	£625.00	Naim CDS Head Unit (1Yr G/tee)(4165.00)	£3195.00
Linn Numerik D A Converter (6Mth G/tee) . . .(1100.00)	£499.00	Naim PSX Power Supply-CDX (1Yr G/tee) . .(2100.00)	£1695.00
Linn Majik Amplifier - Phono (6Mth G/tee) . . .(849.00)	£449.00	Pioneer DV909 DVD/Laser Sil (6Mth G/tee) .(899.00)	£199.00
Linn Kolektor Preamp (1Yr G/tee)(495.00)	£369.00	ProAc Response 2.5 Speakers (1Yr /Gtee) (2700.00)	£1195.00
Linn Kaim Pro Preamp (1Yr G/tee)(1400.00)	£599.00	Ruark Talisman Speakers (6Mth G/tee) . . .(499.00)	£179.00
Linn Kaim Phono Preamp (1Yr G/tee)(1700.00)	£799.00	Spendor S3 Speakers (1Yr G/tee)(600.00)	£399.00

World standards

These are the best products we've heard that are currently on sale in the UK, complete with the date they were originally launched and their current retail prices. Watch out for regular updates...!

TURNTABLES

AN TT I/ARM ONE/IQ1 1998 £725
Redesigned Systemdek IIX now off the pace, but the arm and cartridge are both star performers.

LINN LP12/ LINGO 1973 £2100
The quintessential belt drive superdeck offers a beguilingly musical midband at the expense of lumpy bass and nebulous imaging. Latest Lingo brings a new lease of life, with even more punch and polish.

MICHELL TECNODEC 2003 £575
Superb introduction to Michell turntables on a budget. Top quality build and elegant design make it the class of the mid-price field right now.

MICHELL GYRODEC SE 2002 £870
Its beauty is more than skin deep - superbly build and finish allied to clever design equals class leading performance. Latest DC motor with 'Never Connected' PSU make it all the more unassailable.

MICHELL ORBE SE 2002 £1916
Cost-no-object evolution of the Gyro adds massy acrylic platter and two-stage isolation. Fantastically capable all rounder with commanding, powerful, detailed sound that gets the best from almost any arm and cartridge.



PRO-JECT DEBUT II PHONO SB 2002 £170
Fuss-free all in one starter turntable, complete with built in phono stage. Not a star performer, but a fine midi system upgrade all the same.

REGA P3 2000 £298
Great entry level audiophile deck with fine bundled tonearm. Tweakable, and responds well to careful siting on a Base platform.

REGA P25 2001 £619
Until the TecnoDec, the best mid-price turntable package. Fine build and elegant styling. Clean, open sound but limited at frequency extremes in absolute terms.

SME MODEL 10A 1995 £3333
Exquisitely engineered deck and arm combo, but dry and clinical sounding compared to rivals. Accomplished performer with classical music, nonetheless.

TECHNICS SL1200/III 1973 £395
Slick build makes it a respectable performer, although the cheapo arm limits it - fit a Rega RB250 and it's suddenly a serious mid-price machine.

TONEARMS

HADCOCK 242 SE 2000 £649
Latest of a long line of unipivots, with added mass, revised geometry and better finish. Musical like few others at or near the price, but poor frequency extremes.

LINN EKOS 1987 £1700
Subtle mods over the years, including revised bearings and the recent new wiring has kept it a serious contender in the superarm stakes. Lacks the SME's slam, the OL's clarity or the ARO's emotion, but has a feisty musicality all of its own.

MICHELL TECNOARM 2003 £346
John Michell's brilliant reworking of Rega's classic adds a classy counterweight and end stub, plus Cardas cable. The result is a near transparent sound with plenty of power and poise.

NAIM ARO 1987 £1425
Charismatic unipivot is poor at frequency extremes but sublime in the midband; truly emotive and insightful.

ORIGIN LIVE SILVER 2502001 £625
This fully developed and expertly fettled Rega boasts a superbly even, transparent and tuneful sound. Gives away only a small degree of finesse and dimensionality to top arms.

ORIGIN LIVE ILLUSTRIOUS 2002 £1570
A modern superarm with battleship build. Extremely strong, even and open sound in the mould of the late, lamented Zeta, plus fine tonal colouring. Exquisite.

REGA RB250 1984 £112
Sold through Moth Marketing, this is capable far beyond its price point, with a tight, lean and detailed sound. Responds brilliantly to Origin Live counterweight modification, and well to rewiring.

SME 309 1989 £767
Entry level SME complete with cost-cut aluminium armtube and detachable headshell. Tight, neutral sound with good tonality, but lacks the IV's pace and precision.

SME SERIES IV 1988 £1127
Offers nine tenths of the SME V's magic at just over half price. Exquisitely built and finished, and a design classic. Faces stiff competition these days, but lovely nevertheless.

SME SERIES V 1987 £1614
The so-called Best Pickup Arm in the World isn't, but comes close. Vice-like bass with incredible weight, ultra clear midband and treble. Does everything except beguile the listener.

CARTRIDGES

AUDIOTECHNICA AT110 1984 £29
Great starter cartridge that's refined, detailed and musical beyond its price.

DYNAVECTOR DV10X5 2003 £250
A distant descendent of the classic Ultimo 10X, this has warmth and sweetness in spades, allied to a punchy bass. Beats G1042 comfortably.

DYNAVECTOR DV20X-H 2003 £395
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.

GOLDRING G1042 1994 £135
One of the best MMs going, with sweet and extended treble and punchy, muscular bass.

LYRIA LYDIAN BETA 1998 £600
An altogether more beguiling listen than the MC30S, although not quite as incisive. Superb all rounder, nonetheless.

LYRA PARNASSUS DCT 1997 £1895
Jonathan Carr's masterpiece is a brilliantly lyrical and fluid performer, with a deliciously sweet tone and immense subtlety and polish.

ORTOFON MC25FL 1994 £285
Strong budget MC with a cleaner and more detailed sound than the Dynavector; more sterile and less emotive, however.

ORTOFON MC30 SUPR' 1995 £550
Beautifully clean and detailed device with real finesse, albeit a tad mechanical sounding.

ORTOFON KONTRA' B 1999 £720
Surprisingly articulate performer by Ortofon standards. All the brand's usual polish and detail allied to real vim. Loves making music!



MUSIC MAKER 1999 £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.

SHURE V15XMR 1994 £350
The most musical MM yet made - brilliantly dynamic and punchy in the classic Shure mould, yet refined and tidy too.

SUMIKO BPS 1995 £250
Charismatic performer with rhythm aplenty, but in other respects way off the pace - lacks smoothness and sophistication of the DV10X5.

DIGITAL DISC PLAYERS**ARCAM DIVA CD82T 2002 £600**

Oodles of finesse, but not the most gripping performer at the price. A fine all rounder in the classic Arcam mould.

CAMBRIDGE AUDIO**DVDS7 2003 £200**

Crisp, lively DVD-A sound makes this superb value for money, but 16bit playback is way behind similarly priced CD spinners.

CREEK CD50 2003 £699

Lyrical and musically engaging mid-price machine, but lacks its Marantz rival's tonal exuberance

CYRUS CD8 2003 £1000

Highly incisive, engaging, grippy and dynamic sound, but needs careful matching to smooth ancillaries. Optional PSX-R adds bass and dimensionality.

DENON DVD-A1 2002 £2500

Middling CD performance, but a genuinely strong DVD-A sound with masses of space and detail. Excellent pictures, too!

**LINN GENKI 1999 £995**

Undeniably fast, lithe, musical and fun - but some won't take to its dry, wry character. Works best in all-Linn systems, where it really rises to the challenge!

LINN IKEMI 1999 £1950

Has the brilliant focus and clarity of the previous Karik III with a dose more tonal richness and polish. More grip and poise than most at any price - still superb!

MARANTZ CD6000KI 2001 £500

Brilliantly warm and voluptuous sound will endear it to vinylphiles and tube lovers alike. Musical, colourful, polished and powerful like none others at or near its price.

MARANTZ CD17 II 2002 £800

Of-overlooked middleweight boasts a truly beguiling sound with lots of tonal flavour. Sits awkwardly between the £600 and £1000 price points, where some brilliant value buys reside, though.

MARANTZ DV8300 2002 £1500

An extremely well designed universal player, offering a beguilingly natural sound whatever you feed it.

MERIDIAN 507 2003 £1195

Quintessentially Meridian mid-price machine; smooth, warm, expansive and seductively musical. The best all rounder at this competitive price point.

MUSICAL FIDELITY**TRIVISTA 2002 £4000**

When playing SACDs, the sweetest, most lucid and lyrical digital disc spinner we've heard. Old school stereo, pure DSD design. CD sound is up in the £1000 class, too! Future classic.

NAD C5411 2002 £330

Highly musical and articulate budget machine in the classic NAD mould. Second only to Cambridge's CD500SE in the value stakes.

NAIM CDS 2001 £1195

Taut and grippy like no others at the price, but lacks the warmth of the Marantz CD6000KI at half the price. To wit, it's a very focussed product, best used in Naim systems.

NAIM CDX2-XPS2 2003 £4950

A fine high end machine, but add an XPS2 and it becomes one of the most charismatically engaging 16bit machines we've ever heard. Plays music with such passion!

NAIM CDS3 2003 £7050

The most polished Naim CD to date; tremendously capable and musical, but lacks the Rotweiler quality of the cheaper CDX2-XPS2.

PHILIPS DVD963SA 2003 £400

Creamy CD sound allied to superb SACD and DVD video playback makes this brilliant value for money.

REGA PLANET 2002 £498

Rhythmic and beguiling performer, although lacks the warmth of tone needed to better its Marantz rival. Superb ergonomics and design, nonetheless.

REGA JUPITER 2002 £1000

A Planet on steroids, this machine adds depth and breadth to its baby brothers already impressive sound. Good, but facing stiff competition.

DIGITAL RECORDERS**PIONEER PDR-609 2001 £200**

Brilliant value CD recorder that makes excellent recordings from its digital inputs. Half decent digital converters, too.

PHILIPS DVDR880 2003 £370

Poor CD audio playback, but makes great DVD video recordings and boasts fine ergonomics. Top AV value.

SONY RCD-W3 2002 £250

Usual superb Sony ergonomics make for non-nonsense budget buy. Fine direct digital copies, but analogue input poor. Middling sonics, but there's a digital output!

YAMAHA CDR-HD1300E 2002 £600

HD means MD-style ease of editing, but compromises recording quality ever-so slightly. Add decent CD replay and it's a fine all rounder nonetheless - top value.

**ONKYO MB-S1 2001 £1100**

An interesting machine complete with MP3 functionality, but high price, fussy ergonomics and over-smooth sound make it mediocre value against the Yamaha.

PHONO STAGES**CREEK OBH-2ISE 2003 £250**

Musically enjoyable yet highly refined for the price - a superb buy. Gives the Dino a real hard time.

EAR 834P 1993 £400

Classic tube design with a deliciously warm and expansive sound - shame about the loose bass and veiled treble!

LINN LINTO 2000 £900

A musical and incisive performer, with more speed than the Delphini at the expense of detail and tonal colour.

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-LP 1999 £149

Clarity and detail allied to decent smoothness make it a solid first phonostage. MM/MC.

QED DISCSAVER 1995 £35

Rhythmic, bouncy sound via battery, although it's bright and forward. Great value, but £100 more on the X-LP is well worth it!

TRICHORD DINO 2002 £299

Great all rounder with switchable MM/MC. Fast, fluid and smooth like no others at the price.

TRICHORD DELPHINI 2003 £995

The very latest 'Never Connected' variant is easily the best, bringing velvety smoothness to an already refined and engaging performer. Neutral to a fault - some will mourn the passing of the charismatic ISO.

AMPLIFIERS**ARCAM DIVA A65 PLUS 2002 £370**

Classic budget Arcam fare - decently sweet and open with sensible facilities and plenty of power.

ARCAM FMJ A32 2001 £1150

For those who value serious power and labyrinthine facilities over outright clarity or grip. A very impressive all rounder with an unusually muscular power amp at this price.

**AUDIO ANALOGUE****PUCINI 1999 £495**

Brilliant value mid-pricer is a real step up from budget designs. Smooth, fluid, natural sound with adequate power and no nasties. Fine phono stage too!

AUDIO NOTE OTO SE 2000 £1199

This baby tuber is beautifully sweet and creamy, but lacks solid-state's clarity, detail and incision. Low, low power means speaker choice critical.

AUDIO NOTE SORO SE 2000 £1699

Wonderfully out-of-the-box sounding tube middleweight is all about sweetness and fluidity. Limited power and loose bass, but little the worse for it.

CYRUS 6 2003 £600

Cracking do-it-all mid price design, bringing svelte sound, good connectivity and upgradeability and stunning style and build.

CYRUS 8 2003 £800

Unusually warm and lyrical for a solid-stater, with decent power and punch. PSX-R adds dynamics, detail and dimensionality.

**MERIDIAN 551 1994 £895**

Evergreen middleweight is a serious performer even now. Tonally a tad dry, it's still very smooth and svelte with bags of power, detail and grip. Class act.

MUSICAL FIDELITY**A308 2002 £2400**

Impressive monster integrated. Vast power delivered with clarity, even-handedness and finesse. Musical, with real tonal colour. Separate pre-power version better still, but less good value.

NAD C320 2002 £220

Not the giant killer that the 3020 once was, but a very strong budget design. A great starting point; forms a fine system with NAD's partnering C541i CD player.

NAIM NAIT 5 2001 £845

A fast and thrilling listen, thanks to taut and articulate bass and midband. Surprisingly polished for a budget Naim amp, both sonically and ergonomically.



SUGDEN A21A 1993 £1020

The most musical amplifier at the price, bar none. Delicious Class A sound is smooth, sweet and wonderfully transparent with true tonal colour. Low power, so match carefully.

PREAMPLIFIERS

CREEK OBH-12 2000 £220

Brilliant value budget passive, giving little away in sonics to far more expensive designs. Connectivity and build aren't great, but what do you expect at this price?



MF AUDIO PASSIVE PRE 2003 £1010

Novel and effective pre with switchable gain via a transformer, and balanced operation. Open and incisive sound, yet makes most active rivals sound edgy by comparison.

NAIM NAC112 2002 £660

Affordable admission ticket to the Salisbury high end experience. Detailed and dynamic, if tonally rather lacklustre.

POWER AMPLIFIERS

LINN LK140 2000 £800

Dry and grey sounding, but decently dynamic and musically engaging all the same. A worthy worker in a budget Linn system.

NAIM NAPI50 2002 £795

Driven by a decent source and a NAC112, this gives highly enjoyable results - providing you like the Naim sound! Taut, fast and felsty despite its relative lack of power.

MARANTZ SM-17 2001 £700

Useful budget power amp with plenty of clean transistor power. Not the most transparent, but sweet and clean all the same. Fine build completes a great value package.

MUSICAL FIDELITY



A308 CR 2003 £2400

Superb transistor behemoth, worth partnering with any high end CD player or preamp. Oodles of grunt served up with poise and purpose.

QUAD 909 2001 £900

The latest current-dumper has a smooth and expansive character with enough wallop to drive most loads. Not the most musical, but super value all the same. Lovely build, finish and Quad's legendary service are nice.

LOUDSPEAKERS

B&W CDM1 NT 2002 £750

Fine clarity and imaging allied to pleasing warmth and great rhythmic cohesion make these standmounters an essential audition.

CASTLE CONWAY 3 2003 £930

Superbly smooth and crisp performers, with a big hearted musical sound. Ultimately coloured though, with a slow, plummy bass.

CYRUS CLS70 2001 £800

Charismatic performer with a fast, tight and open midband, but lacks cohesion and scale..

EPOS ELS-3 2003 £200

Plenty of brio and a decent degree of refinement makes this budget baby a fine value contender.



KEF Q1 2003 £250

Highly polished and articulate standmounters at the price, but demand good ancillaries for best results.

KLIPSCH HERESY II 1997 £1100

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

LINN NINKA 2001 £995

Major on rhythms and dynamics, making them an involving listen. Reasonably refined, too - but tonally disappointing.

MISSION 782SE 2003 £900

Bright and tight design capable of brilliant speed and grip, at the expense of warmth. Demands high quality, high powered ancillaries.

MONITOR AUDIO B4 2003 £350

An unusually smooth and lucid performer at the price, and its 3-way design means it drives rooms well. Fine engineering, but build and finish so-so.

MORDAUNT SHORT 914 2002 £300

Warm, detailed and articulate performer, but a touch loose in the bass and veiled up top. Fine partner for budget valve amps.

NAIM ALLAE 2002 £1990

Taut and grippy like few others, this speaker majors on transient speed. Surprisingly smooth for a Naim box, with nicely etched treble. As always, tonally dry.

TDK S-80 2002 £90

Ingenious NXT multimedia sub/sat system has a wonderfully even and open sound - like baby electrostatics.



QUAD ESL-988 2001 £3400

Wonderfully neutral and self-effacing with sublime imaging and projection. Treble lacks extension, bass lacks weight - although the pricier 989 answers the latter resoundingly.

PERIGEE FK-1L 2002 £5000

Charismatic Aussie ribbon design with deliciously open mid and treble, allied to fine bass weight. The right room and ancillaries essential. Engaging, musical and powerful sound. Superb.

W'DALE DIAMOND 8.1 2001 £120

Still the best baby budget standmounters around. Tight and grippy thanks to Kevlar drivers, but invariably limited in the frequency extremes.



HEADPHONES

JECKLIN FLOAT TWO 1998 £99

Wonderful panel-like sound from these esoteric-looking headclamps.

SENNHEISER MX-500 1999 £19

Our unqualified recommendation for those seeking a serious sounding pair of in-ear phones. Smooth, detailed and musical.

SENNHEISER PX-100 2002 £29

Cracking pair of lightweight open back cans ideal for personals, but good enough for real hi-fi use. Superb build allied to a smooth and engaging performance make them the spiritual successor to the HD400s.

SENNHEISER HD-590 1998 £199

The company's best real-world cans to date. Open and smooth with plenty of detail. Brightly lit midband makes them an ideal partner for a valve headphone amp.



INTERCONNECTS

CHORD CO. CHAMELEON 2 £90/M

One of our favourites, these are musical performers with a smooth yet open sound.

DNM RESON £40/M

Neutral and transparent - a steal!

NORDOST BLUE HEAVEN £150/M

Some of the fastest and most transparent cable around.

VDH ULTIMATE THE FIRST £260/0.6M



Carbon interconnects that help you forget the electronics and concentrate on the music. Miraculous transparency. Tight and tuneful bass mixed with air and space results in a cracking cable for the money.

The Kit Parade

This has been a classic year for new hi-fi releases - with so many nominees, it was a tough job for the Hi-Fi World team to elect the twelve best bits of kit. Here's what we came up with, counting down to number one - not 'arf, great mate!

12

REVOLVER R45 LOUSPEAKERS £899

The R45 is a big floorstander with an array of drivers that make no secret of its forte - to provide plenty of bass. There's nothing wrong with this if quality can be maintained. What Revolver has produced here is a three-way loudspeaker with twin bass drivers for extra bottom-end oomph. A metal dome tweeter works with a large 165mm glass fibre cone midrange unit, below which sit two 165mm cone glass fibre bass units. The midrange sits in a sealed chamber (infinite baffle loading) whilst the two bass drivers are reflex loaded by a chamber fitted with a rear mounted port. Twin bass units

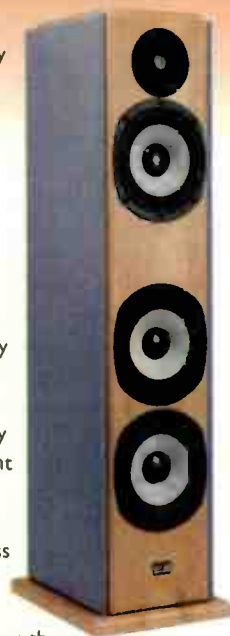
accept more power and move air more easily than a single driver of the same dimensions. The R45s are fairly big, standing 930mm high, 250mm wide and 318mm deep. At 17kilos, the R45s are hefty but look modern and sleek.

It seems a contradiction, but the bigger a loudspeaker gets, the less power it needs. At least, this is the case if efficient drive units are used. Tests showed the R45s fit this category neatly. They need little power: one watt gave a massive 90dB sound pressure level. The R45s have big bass. They go low but there is some prominence and fatness that rather draws attention to their activities further up the band, in the upper bass region around 100Hz. Some softness here fills out the sound and gives it heft. They have plenty of low frequency output and it helps them deliver such a high sensitivity figure.

The R45s give a broad, well

balanced and crisply clean sound that comes over as well integrated and accurate.

Here's a loudspeaker that does everything well. It gives a big, clean and accurate sound with the very latest standards of clarity and resolution, from any amplifier. If you want high quality floorstanders that can blow you across the room, give them a try. Or if you just want to hear the full might of an orchestra vividly conveyed, again give them a try. The market may be crowded with floorstanders, but there's plenty of room for one as good as this. **NK**



11

MARANTZ DV8300 DVD-A PLAYER £1500

Video quality was superb, as was detail. Outdoor scenes in Dark Blue World looked natural and rich. Of course, fine differences in video colour level settings affect our perceptions of a picture, so I'll add the caveat that the Marantz was superb 'as set', but it is undoubtedly a fine video player in absolute terms. Whilst in some ways the Marantz DV8300 was inferior in its handling of DVD-Audio to Denon's DVD3800, the situation isn't a simple one. The Denon was poor with CD, so poor that I chose not to use it as a CD player. Measurement shows the Marantz is far more linear in its

replay section, born out by its decent CD sound which is clean but a little bright, well detailed and with nicely portrayed depth perspective. Bass was a little mellifluous perhaps, but entirely satisfactory all the same. Violins in both digital and analogue recordings of Wagner highlights came over as vibrant and well separated, but also smoothly too. Drums and bass in Angélique Kidjo's 'Agolo' had all the power you normally get from a decent player.

The Marantz DV8300 very competently strode through just about every test I threw at it (including fine CD replay), I couldn't help but end up admiring it. This player does everything - and does it well. Both impressive and very relaxing to listen to, Marantz have used their considerable knowledge

and ability to ensure that the background weaknesses it has don't in practice make themselves known. While I would rate this player comfortably above Denon's DVD3800 in terms of sound and video quality - making it well worth its price - it still faces stiff competition from the likes of Pioneer's £500 cheaper DV-757. It remains a great player though, one which I have been happy to use at length. To date I can only say this of a select few players - so many machines I've encountered seem to have near-fatal weaknesses in one area or another, but not so this Marantz. **NK**



10

CASTLE CONWAY 3 LOUSPEAKERS £930

Standing 960mm tall in unspiked form, Conway 3 boasts a full complement of carbon fibre drive units, which ring all the right bells with me because I'm a great fan of this material. And it's also superbly finished, with the loveliest wood veneer you'll find this side of a vintage Bentley. Helping the Conway 3 blend in with domestic surroundings is a room-friendly width of 220mm and 250mm depth. The black fabric grill is easily removed to reveal the aforementioned twin carbon fibre cone bass/midrange drivers and a central fabric dome tweeter. Measurement showed the bass/mids handle the same frequency range; the lower one isn't just a supplementary bass driver. This means they work in D'Appolito arrangement to give improved

vertical dispersion, making seating height less critical. There isn't an inch of the Conway 3 that doesn't ooze quality.

Running the Conway 3s with Radio 2 for live speech, especially that chestiness you get from male presenters speaking close into the mic, showed they sound smooth and fulsome, with a generous balance of low frequencies. That the Conways are large bodied and very smooth, bordering on warm, is unarguable. This rich sound is underpinned by powerful bass and vivid dynamics. These big boxes were always relaxed and in control, even as the room gently moved as Hurford used the 32Hz Contre-Basse. Castle certainly knows how to make large loudspeakers, and these are another superb example. I hardly need say they go very low, quite how low being down to room size. In every sense a beautiful loudspeaker, Castle's new Conway 3 is easier to drive than nearly all its rivals, and can thus get the very best from even low powered amplifiers. It offers superb dynamics and a powerful sound. It does have a



characterfully 'full' balance by modern standards, plus bass that borders on over-large. All the same, if you want the power of a big floorstander coupled with mellow grace, there's little to match the beautifully built Conway 3. **NK**

9

MONITOR AUDIO GR60 LOUSPEAKERS £2,295

In the flesh, it's a physically impressive 'speaker, although not one of the most handsome or overtly 'modern' looking on the market. The quality of cabinetry is undeniable. Handmade by skilled craftsmen of many years' standing, the 22mm MDF cabinets (measuring 1070x225x342mm and weighing 24kg apiece) feel dead when you rap them with your knuckles. The aluminium/ magnesium alloy chassis combines with MA's Rigid Surface Technology to give a uniquely dimpled alloy driver cone surface that eliminates bending, increases stiffness and lowers mass. As the company's 'no compromise' full bandwidth design, the GR60 employs two 6.5" bass units and a single 6.5" midrange driver (both types using RST cones), plus a single gold C-

CAM tweeter that's exclusively used in the Gold Reference Series.

Unlike so many earlier metal-coned designs, they're not in the least bit shrill or even hard work. There's no sign whatsoever of 'clang' or 'crunch' – rather, they give a 'high contrast' rendition of whatever's on your disc. Transients are very fast. Better still, when fully warmed, dynamics were superb – cymbal crashes, heavily bowed cellos and crooning human voices were conveyed with tremendous gusto and remainder utterly stable on peaks. Indeed, it's the midband that pulls you into the Gold Reference 60s. There's no doubt that this is where these 'speakers absolutely excel. Brilliantly detailed, with tremendous clarity and evenness, you're instantly sold on it. Move up and you'll be impressed by the treble too. Of course, no loudspeaker is perfect – not even those costing £2,295 – but the Gold Reference 60 is an extremely intelligently considered compromise. It's a jack of all trades and master of some. Compared to its price rivals, it acquires itself



superbly and as such comes highly recommended. Clever design and superlative build makes for a superbly musical loudspeaker that's great value for money. **DP**

8

ROKSAN RADIUS 5/NIMA TURNTABLE £750

The new Radius 5 is available in both acrylic and timber plinth finishes, it's compact at 400x350x150mm and weighs in at 7kg. It sports an acrylic platter, and main bearing spindle that's precision machined from stainless steel. The main bearing housing is solid brass, and case hardened steel is used for the main bearing ball. The motor pulley is machined from aluminium alloy, and is powered by a 24-pole AC synchronous motor giving both 33.33 and 45RPM speeds. The motor board is coupled to the turntable support via three spikes, positioned to enable motor noise to drain into the support system. Interestingly, the standard Nima pick up arm is a wide-tubed unipivot design with a bearing yoke and headshell fashioned from

acrylic. Its effective length is 240mm and has an effective mass of 10g. The internal arm wire is made of a very flexible printed circuit board and has no less than three earth lines along with the normal signal lines.

With the Radius 5 properly sited, it was capable of extracting oodles of inner groove detail. Stage depth proved very good, with width and height of the highest order. The stereo image extended out into a vast a semi-circle in front of me. And after auditioning many types of music, I can't help but feel that at last we have not just another rival for the OL RB250, but a nemesis in the shape of the Roksan Nima tonearm! Here's a seriously capable mid-price turntable package with a naturally warm and engaging sound. Its bass is particularly generous – grippy but tonally fulsome in the way the



Garrard 401 is (albeit not to the same extent), while its midband is wide and deep and tall yet smooth and sweet. There's very little to criticise, save the fact that it can't scavenge the last nth degree of low level detail and treble air that Michell's TecnoDec can. As for its bundled Nima arm, suffice to say that this is Roksan's Rega RB300 – a brilliant budget arm that simply sounds far better than it has a right to at the price. **AL**

7

MICHELL TECNODEC TURNTABLE £599

Michell's new TecnoDec is essentially a latest-spec GyroDec with the expensive bits stripped off. To wit, it has no suspension to speak of, and lacks its bigger brother's beautiful suspended weights, in all their gold-plated splendour. Frankly though, if I was going to strip bits off the Gyro to slash cash, these are precisely what I'd bin. The advent of the new DC motor has made the new TecnoDec even more speed-stable than the old, QC-aspired AC Orbe complete with that massive mass-loaded acrylic platter. Suspension is of course important, but aside from some natty rubber-tipped aluminium feet, the TecnoDec hasn't got any. The TecnoDec also comes with the interesting option of a Michell-

modified Rega RB300, the TecnoArm. It boasts a redesigned counter-weight, albeit with no changes to the rear end stub (a la Origin Live) and wiring (reputed to be with Cardas cable). The result is a subtly upgraded tonearm which can be sold as a 'package' for those unwilling or unable to get the spanner out and do it themselves.

The TecnoDec proved an extremely impressive vinyl spinner. Essentially, it has a very open and neutral sound. So clean and clear is it that it doesn't suffer from any discernible budget turntable nasties at all. To wit, it is speed-stable, rhythmically coherent and secure, dynamically uncomressed and tonally neutral. As soon as you cue up a track, you find yourself getting into the groove of the music, rather than worrying about curtailed



frequency extremes, spongy bass or rocky imaging that plagues turntables at this price. In the same way that the Rega P3 succeeds by not doing anything obviously wrong, so the TecnoDec offers a clean and unassuming insight into the proceedings without distraction. The result is a brilliant argument for analogue – open, warm and musical but with all the grip and analysis the digital generation demands, it delivers a resounding kick in the teeth to similarly priced Compact Disc. **DP**

6

MUSICAL FIDELITY TRI-VISTA SACD PLAYER £3995

It's full of clever digital stuff like upsampling (at 192kHz), fancy power supplies (choke regulated) and fine tuned DAC and filters, bespoke for both CD and SACD. Specifically, a 24 bit 192kHz upsampling DAC is fitted, which not only does in-house conversion duties but has the facility to accept an external source – a brilliant feature. CD and SACD circuitry is totally discrete - completely separate digital paths mean that the SACD DAC, filter and power supply are specifically and only for SACD, and ditto with the CD side. This is unlike most other SACD players, and can surely be no bad thing, even if it is expensive. As its name cunningly suggests, the Tri-Vista series uses dinky 5703 subminiature valves, the result of scouring the world of military surplus for a

successor to MF's beloved Nuvistor.

Compared to my reference Sony CDP-X77ES, the MF sounded a good deal more organic – yet was also more dynamic too. Although lacking a fraction of the Sony's truly special, grumbling bass, it sounded altogether punchier thanks to its ability to sift through the mix and find the dynamic accents. The result was a very Naim-like ability to really carry the music's rhythms and phrasing – but it could also do tonal colour too. Where the Sony pushed out a big, phat (sic) bassline, the MF was just a touch less ballsy, yet as soon as the drums kicked in it really took the song by the scruff of the neck and hammered it out with gusto. However, there was an incredible finesse too – beautifully silky vocals



were reproduced in all their glory, deliciously rich and fruity. The Sony by contrast sounded altogether more artificial and digital.

This is a beautifully musical silver disc player – it has an almost enchanting quality that makes you want to keep listening. Importantly though, it is so smooth and open that you can keep listening for long periods without fatigue – just like vinyl. Indeed, I'd say that short of Marantz's long-deleted SA-1, this is the most analogue sounding digital player I've laid ears on. **DP**

5

GRAAF GM 20 OTL POWER AMPLIFIER £3,300

This is one of the most arresting valve amplifiers I've ever seen, courtesy of its squat triode output valves that glow brightly. Graaf achieves a standard of finish in its Italian Modena factory remarkable even by the best hi-fi standards. And the circuitry is amazing too. The GM20 is a direct-coupled amplifier with no output transformer or capacitor! Consequently, issues such as d.c. offset and loudspeaker protection arise. With most valves a fault in any direct coupled design could put dangerous voltages on the loudspeaker terminals, but because of the valves used in this amp, voltages are low. In any case, the GM20 has protection circuits to guard against excessive d.c. Rated at 20watts per channel from its 6C33C triodes

operating in push-pull the Graaf reportedly uses a Circlotron (1955) circuit, around which a small amount (6dB) of feedback is applied to aid loudspeaker matching. Output impedance is high so Graaf recommends loudspeakers of 8ohms or more are used. Its larger amps suit low impedance loudspeakers better than the GM20, but this amplifier is pretty large all the same at 22kgs.

From the first bar of 'Tubular Bells' you can hear the incredible insight it has. Fantastically explicit, it throws out masses of detail. Amazingly however, it gives almost nothing away to the barrel chested Audio Research Vsi55 in terms of power, having masses of stomp and thump down in the bass. The Graaf made a brilliant fist of pop, with tremendous grip allied to amazing articulation. Basslines were



wonderfully fluid yet gunned out with breathtaking power. Up top, its treble is exquisite – way better than the Audio Research and usefully more atmospheric even than the Unison Research. The GM20 is a stunning product, one that's both charismatic yet disarmingly self-effacing – it succeeds by taking you closer to the music than you'd think possible. **DP**

4

NAIM CDX2/XPS2 CD PLAYER £4,950

An intricately suspended transport and low mass magnetic clamping system are used, and a glass reinforced front-loading drawer mechanism along with a new cast and extruded anti-magnetic chassis to protect from resonance and microphonic vibration. Improved internal shielding, shortened signal paths separate regulated power supplies for each stage of the circuitry are featured. Correct earthing is used throughout and there are no digital or headphone outputs. Eight-times over sampled data is then sent to two (one per channel) Burr Brown PCM mono DACs. A separate, fully optimised master clock controls all main digital functions, and the clock configuration and layout are engineered to

minimise jitter. A seven-pole analogue filter follows the DAC to remove spurious noise. The CDX2 has a fully double-regulated power supply with twenty low-noise, regulated power supplies on the main circuit board, plus a separate supply on the servo control board and another on the display board. A stand-alone, mains powered machine, it may also be used with the XPS2 power supply which sports six separately regulated, ultra low noise outputs, featuring a toroidal transformer and six power regulators.

Properly partnered with an XPS2, this machine achieves greatness. I really have heard no other machine at or near its price range that takes you so deep into the music. It is a truly electrifying listen, and very much one of those



products that will have you holding musical 'sessions' with your friends that go on all night and leave the floor covered in CD cases strewn and discarded as you frantically search for something else from your collection. Indeed, I believe it is Naim's most characterful CD spinner – the sheer energy, commitment, and insight that this machine exudes is striking if you've been stuck with CD for the last ten years. As usual, it all gets very subjective at this price point, but for me at least this is one of the very best CD players money can buy, yet not one of the very most expensive. That, in my book, makes it excellent value. **DP**

3

MARANTZ CD6000 KI SIGNATURE CD PLAYER £600

This is the daddy of all the CD6000 models, making it Marantz's ultimate budget CD spinner. It includes a dual-differential mode delta sigma DAC which aims to decrease noise levels and give better overall performance. We also see the added bonus of Marantz's HDAM, which handles analogue audio output duties. Build is exemplary. It is beautifully finished for the money – the best in the test by far. The front panel is thick metal and the display is a high quality and easy to read dot matrix type. Front panel controls are kept relatively slim but the supplied remote is adequately comprehensive. We have the KI Sig trademark copper plated bottom, and wide use of the material within the



acoustically damped casework for that extra touch of class.

Make no mistake - the tweaks inside make for a high quality sound. Marantz's top of the range disc players are much smoother than the immediate sound of the lower range products and the 6000KI is as smooth as the proverbial baby's backside. Strings were silky smooth and warm, without any edge but still detailed and realistic with it. There's a great three-dimensional element to the sound, to boot, with good depth and a fine sense of space. This player can reproduce the whole spectrum of timbre and colours with acoustic instruments, which is the sign of a

truly great machine. The CD6000KI is one seriously good player indeed, with a highly polished sound. It's brilliantly constructed and the rich, warm performance shows that a lot of work and top quality components have gone into its design. Some may find it a bit rich for their blood, but the majority will favour this fluidity and smoothness over the opposite, and quite rightly. Although it performs brilliantly with acoustic and classical music it can also deliver the goods when it comes to power and clout – the sound is very big indeed – which would appeal to rock and dance music aficionados as well as classical lovers. **NK**

2

AUDIO RESEARCH VSI55 AMPLIFIER £2,895

It is a largish, imposing looking device, and by no means unattractive. It measures 14x8x16" and features a centrally mounted, milled, anodised aluminium top plate. Audio Research says that very short, high performance input relay paths are used, as per the sister REF2 MkII. The active circuitry is essentially that of the VS55, but with 7dB more gain for greater sensitivity. It also uses the same Class A input (with regulated DC heater supply) and driver stages utilising three 6N1P tubes, and partial cathode-coupled Class AB output stages with two pairs of 6550EH output tubes. Interestingly, three little rubber socks are provided for the input valves, presumably to minimise sound-impairing resonance. The control section is passive, utilising microprocessor-controlled relays

which contribute enormously to this amplifier's ease-of-use.

The Audio Research Vsi55 sounds quite spectacular. Hardened tubular types will doubtless be seduced by far more esoteric circuit designs, but audiophiles seeking a mixture of serious power and speaker driving ability and a wonderfully engaging and propulsive sound will love this. It actually sounds much like a valve version of a superb transistor integrated – by which I mean it has masses of grip, punch, power and precision – but adds real timbral accuracy and a highly lucid midband. Together, the Vsi55's many talents make for a riotously musical experience. You can throw many types of music at it, and sit back and be amazed. This is one of the most well rounded, best conceived, user friendly valve amplifiers I've come across. Its superb sound and drop-dead-



gorgeous looks will appeal to the aforementioned hardcore tube community, but the supreme ease of use, tremendous power reserves and myriad facilities will endear it to a completely new type of buyer – one which had previously only considered a high end transistor integrated or entry-level pre-power. It's an unashamedly do-it-all design, which – much to my surprise – manages to successfully fulfil its design remit. In short, it's 'tubes without tears'. Here's a product that brings the magic of valves to a wider audience.

DP

1

PHILIPS DVD963SA SACD/DVD PLAYER £400

The DVD963SA is much more than a £400 CD player. That money buys you a lot of technology nowadays, including full DVD video and SACD playback. It plays Super Audio CDs with six channels of super quality surround-sound, or just plain old stereo should you prefer it. The only thing it doesn't do is DVD-Audio. It reads the discs, and reproduces tracks containing stereo or surround-sound in compressed Dolby Surround or DTS, so you can get decent audio through any conventional amplifier without the need for a surround receiver with on-board decoding or a digital link. But what you don't get is the full six channels in 24/96 or two channels at 24/192 – the highest quality possible. Whether this matters much depends

on your ambitions in this area, of course.

It isn't 'just' a DVD player, but also a sublime CD player that's a joy to listen to. Gone was CD's typically mechanical footprint and in its place a fine, easy going and surprisingly delicate quality. It wasn't perfect, of course. The player loses a little definition and power down at the bottom end. There's no mule-like kick, but bass lines had plausible power, if not real punch. The machine's upsampling really does work though, helping it deliver a delicious sound from ye olde 16/44 CD. Yet it is with SACD that this player shines brightest. A simple

stereo recording like Eleanor McEvoy's 'Yola' shows just how smooth, clean yet punchy the format can be. With 'Isn't It a Little Late', kick drums gave the loudspeakers a good firm push and stroked cymbals had a smooth yet sweet presence you don't get with CD. An audiophile's dream, this player boasts superb sound from CD and especially SACD. The hard edginess of modern digital is banished, to be replaced by performances where any atmosphere captured in the original recording is faithfully conveyed in an almost magical manner. Factor in fine video and this player is a powerful package that's difficult to ignore. **NK**



Countdown!

Patrick Cleasby, Hi-Fi World's own 'multichannel music meister' lists his top twelve high resolution digital surround releases of 2003...

12

FRANK SINATRA *SINATRA AT THE SANDS* (DVD-AUDIO: 24/192 STEREO, 24/96 MULTI-CHANNEL)

Last year the producer of this DVD-Audio disc, Robin Hurley of Rhino/Warner Strategic Marketing, announced the intention to release several Sinatra titles as the company's first stereo-only discs. Well, it now seems likely that Neil Young's missing albums will beat Sinatra to that particular privilege, but as the remixer of both the stereo and surround tracks here, Elliot Mazer has somehow contrived to turn a four-track master into 5.1. Those four-track tapes were reputedly in good condition, and were transferred

at 24/192 resolution for remixing. This live album contains many Sinatra standards, and has the considerable benefit of having been recorded with Count Basie and his orchestra, using sympathetic arrangements by Quincy Jones. Whether you find Sinatra's extemporisations and interactions with the audience to be endearing or irritating is up to you.

The surround mix is not radical, although it does spread the horns of the orchestra around the room slightly. Solo instruments are sometimes given a very pleasant localisation effect in the front soundstage, such as the saxophone in 'I've Got a Crush on You'. Thankfully the centre channel is not used for the vocal, and the surrounds are primarily used for audience ambience. The only reason anyone could really object to this mix was if they found such placements more obtrusive than in the stereo version. It is that 24/192 track which most



audiophile listeners will gravitate to first, and it is quite remarkable to hear that glorious voice presented in such amazing clarity. At this resolution the stereo mix gives an expansive and more realistic feel to the double bass work with no need for an LFE track. Indeed, although I personally tend to go for the surround option with rock albums, this is one disc where I would definitely prefer to listen to the stereo version. Now we just have to look forward to Capitol dusting down some of their Sinatra archive in similar fashion.

11

STING *SACRED LOVE* (HYBRID SACD: STEREO AND MULTI-CHANNEL DSD)

Notable as one of the first new release single inventory hybrid surround SACDs to hit the racks in place of a CD, (if only for a limited time – it was soon replaced with standard CDs, although the SACD is now available as a separate item), this album shows the direction Universal intend to take with their big releases. As soon as the costs of hybrid disc production lower to approach those of CD we can expect to see a lot more of this stealth method of getting SACD into people's homes. It's a Sting album, and in common

with many of his recent albums, weak filler can be found along with some very interesting work. His last album, 'Brand New Day' came out a couple of years ago in a handy surround mix on DTS CD, and is soon to resurface in the states as a DVD-Audio. DTS now have many of their Sting surround CDs available here in Virgin and on play.com, but the sensible purchaser would do well to wait for the imminent release of their high-resolution equivalents by Universal.

Like 'Brand New Day', eastern flavours tinge the material, and first single 'Send your Love' is a good example, with great percussion and a phenomenal bass attack. The man's bass playing here, and on live renditions of this material I have heard, is on fire. Various parts seem to reference The Beatles and The Police themselves – such references have always seemed to amuse the fellow. The Mary J. Blige collaboration, 'Whenever I Say Your Name',



although not his greatest song, does demonstrate some lovely analogue synth sounds and chunky synth bass, along with beautifully well-recorded vocal parts from both protagonists, giving a great sense of freedom in the surround mix, rather than being chained to a planar sound stage. In fact, here's a confession – this surround mix is so entertaining that I have barely listened to the stereo! So, not one to recommend to those ambivalent to Sting, but much to commend to those who like him, of which there are many.

10

FLAMING LIPS YOSHIMI BATTLES THE PINK ROBOTS (DVD-AUDIO: 24/96 STEREO, 24/96 MULTI-CHANNEL)

The Flaming Lips were closely involved in the preparation of this psychedelic surround wig-out version of their highly successful current album. After toiling away on the fringes for many years they are finally convincing the paying public to both buy their records and come to their shows, now hopefully they can convince a younger demographic to try this new-fangled surround lark too. Surround is really what this one is about – in tandem with accomplished surround mix engineer Elliot Schiener the band push against the tame conventions of many mixes, and try to really work out what this baby can do! Depending on your personal preferences you may not

enjoy all of the results, but it is great to see them go wild.

For extras fiends this one has a feast of video and alternative versions, presumably explaining the backwards shifts in the release date during the latter half of the year. However, those who just want hi-res audio will not be disappointed, providing that they are happy to have stereo that is "only" 24/96, or that if they are surround fiends they are happy to listen to one of the more extreme mixes. Even the bonus remixes, live and obscure tracks are presented in a very acceptable 24/48



guise. It's just a shame that with all that space being eaten up, the versions of the tracks with animated visuals can only be afforded Dolby Digital soundtracks, in both 2.0 and 5.1. Having worked on this project the band have obviously been bitten by the audiophile bug, as their latest CD EP, 'Egotripping at the Gates of Hell', has been released with HDCD encoding. We can only hope that this augurs well and that by the time they get to doing the DVD-Audio of their true classic, 'The Soft Bulletin', we are treated to a 24/192 stereo track.

9

CHICAGO V (DVD-AUDIO: 24/192 STEREO, 24/96 MULTI-CHANNEL)

This year saw two Chicago DVD-Audio releases from Rhino, 'Chicago' (known as 'Chicago II'), and this one. Both surround mixes are impressively well-done, but 'Chicago V' features a superb 24/192 stereo track, a resolution which is just made for brilliantly lifelike horns. However, any serious early Chicago fan is inevitably going to need both discs. Apart from the desirability of a 24/192 stereo track, 'Chicago V' also gets the nod from me simply due to the fact that any self-respecting Frank Zappa fan would find a jazz rock (with horns!) album which leads off with a track named 'A Hit By Varèse' difficult to resist. There is also the bonus of a live version of 'Dialogue', which has the

kind of bass sound which you feel rather than hear, particularly notable on the stereo track. The studio version is slightly more tame in its bass tone, but the surround version in particular is a very enjoyable one, with subtle keys and backing horns supporting from the rear, until tambourines break out all around. As we cut to 'Dialogue (Part Two)' we get a more as-live feel, with a thoroughly convincing drum kit.

We are a long way from Chicago and Peter Cetera's synthetic and saccharine eighties output here. The compositions are

interesting, complex instrumentals are played with great panache, and everything is extremely well recorded. It is great to hear 32 year old recordings sounding as fresh as Steely Dan's latest effort. The mix production credit of John Kellog is a definite mark of quality, and hopefully he will continue to do more great work on Warners archive. The experience of listening to this brilliant reissue can only make you wish that some of Frank Zappa's contemporaneous horn-heavy excursions find a high resolution release one day.



8

**R.E.M
IN TIME: THE BEST OF R.E.M.
1988-2003
(DVD-AUDIO: 24/192 STEREO,
24/96 MULTI-CHANNEL)**

The year was topped and tailed by two superlative 24/192 stereo releases from REM. Capitol USA's January release of the last pre-Warners album 'Document' literally made me jump out of my seat when I put it on, as it had not been credited as 24/192 on the sleeve. Regrettably EMI has yet to release it over here, so anyone who admires this classic album should seek it out on the other side of the pond. (try www.cheap-cds.com). Now we have the November release of the first Warners years compilation, a useful selection of tracks which includes a couple of new tracks and a couple of those harder to find movie



soundtrack items, compiled on an REM album for the first time.

Confusingly the stereo versions of some tracks have already seen the light on the DVD-Audio versions of their parent albums at lower sampling rates. The upsampling for consistency is justified, however, as 'Green' at least is an analogue recording. Tracks from more recent albums also feel the benefit higher sampling rates can deliver, as both 'Daysleeper' and 'At My Most Beautiful' from 'Up' have that spooky 3D feeling which, only 24/192 or top notch analogue stereo

can give. For the DVD-Audio punter this can best be seen as a trailer to whet the appetite for the slew of releases, currently due in the middle of next year, which will bring the complete Warners era REM canon to the format. Nearly all the surround mixing has been done by Elliot Schiener once again, and while none of it is too extreme, most should be enjoyable for anyone who is into well executed surround. This disc definitely gives you the best of both worlds, stereo or surround, you take your pick.

7

**TALK TALK
THE COLOUR OF SPRING
(HYBRID SACD: STEREO AND
MULTI-CHANNEL DSD)**

It was a close call between this and its original successor, the sublime and strange 'Spirit of Eden', which was released on SACD together with 'The Colour of Spring' at the end of October. While the latter may be an acquired taste for some, this album should be on every audiophile's A+ list. Frustratingly for two albums of such panoramic and dynamic scope, the discs do not have multi-channel mixes as original Talk Talk main-man Mark Hollis wishes his work to stand in its original stereo form. In both cases the CD layer is the original 1997 remaster, and the DSD stereo layer has been newly mastered from the original tapes by an unaccredited



Peter Mew at Abbey Road, with a brief to match the 1997 master as far as EQ goes.

One of the great joys of this album was always the way it works as an organic bridge between the energetic synthesised pop songs of their second album 'It's My Life' and the unclassifiable amorphous pieces to be unveiled to the world a mere three years later on 'Spirit of Eden'. The common thread between the three is the introduction of producer Tim Friese-Greene, whose instru-

mental and compositional assistance made him a virtual fourth member of the band. On 'The Colour of Spring' muso collaborators already used on 'It's My Life', such as guitarist Robbie McIntosh and percussionist Morris Pert, are joined by legendary talents such as Danny Thompson, Stevie Winwood and David Rhodes to weave a tapestry of sound of such beauty that it has rarely been matched since. The thing that really makes it come across is the wonderfully dry sound, which has never been conveyed with as much range and finesse as it is by this SACD.

6

T REX ELECTRIC WARRIOR (HYBRID SACD: STEREO AND MULTI-CHANNEL DSD)

It is difficult not to compare this, perhaps Marc Bolan's finest hour, with the similar reworking of his friend Bowie's 'Ziggy' album. Both are among the finest examples of the peculiarly British Glam-rock era, although in the listening they really have nothing to do with make-up and glitter and everything to do with artfully and powerfully strummed Les Pauls and a tastefully augmented guitar-bass-drums line-up. Once again the original producer, in this case Tony Visconti, is used to rework this classic album for the SACD. He supplies a new sleeve note to complement the one he originally did for the 2001 CD remaster which also makes up the CD layer here. In common with Ziggy, the CD

remaster's extra tracks are dropped, leaving the original album to be appreciated in its new guise.

In common with many other producers revisiting their work from many years ago, Visconti believes if they had had today's technology at the time, they would have given the album a surround presentation. The corollary of that is that he wants the album to sound as if this rework had actually been done thirty years ago. And I feel that he has succeeded, as the main difference between 'Ziggy' and this album is that where the Bowie album feels cold and clean in its aural approach, 'Electric Warrior'

has a slightly more dense, claustrophobic feel to it. The stereo mix here has that big fat sound, and it is the juxtaposition between the several Les Pauls Bolan plays, located in various places around the soundfield - with the soft, double-tracked, insinuating vocal in the centre - which seems to develop the tension. This mood is faithfully reproduced in an appealing surround mix, although as sometimes happens, the side benefit of treating the multi-tracks using today's noise reduction technology is that there is less hiss in this mix than in the original.



5

DAVID BOWIE ZIGGY STARDUST (HYBRID SACD: STEREO AND MULTI-CHANNEL DSD)

Bookended by the SACD releases of the two most recent Bowie albums which were produced and surround-mixed by Toni Visconti, the October release of this disc by EMI also benefits from the involvement of the original producer, in this case Ken Scott, on the surround mix. It is an approach which always seems to yield the best results, and this album is no exception. Bowie fans fatigued by the multiplicity of CD releases of this album may be relieved to find that in common with many of the SACDs listed here, the strategy is to present the original album without the extra tracks. The result is a brilliantly clear and open version of this classic album, in both its stereo

and surround mixes.

From the off it's apparent that this is not going to be one of the most retiring of surround mixes, as the punchy kick drum and kit of the intro to 'Five Years' moves from the rear soundstage to the front. Throughout the surrounds are used to bring a great sense of space to the music, with those fantastic crunchy power chords being pulled out of the speakers, contrasting nicely with delicate strummed acoustics, perfectly rendered. Those nasal tones are centred nicely in the front soundstage, with the centre used to

gently support the stereo imaging. When things get more intense towards the end of the album with 'Suffragette City' there's a real 'everything up to eleven' feel but it still works. The bass throughout is creamy in tone, and for this reason I'd rather listen to the surround mix, as the stereo just doesn't do as much justice. This makes it doubly disappointing that this release was accompanied by stereo hybrid releases of 'Scary Monsters' and 'Let's Dance' - good as they are, surely those two equally deserved the surround treatment?



4

**FRANK ZAPPA
HALLOWEEN
(DVD-AUDIO: 24/48 STEREO,
24/96 MULTI-CHANNEL)**

Zappa is shortly to be honoured with the Surround Pioneer Award at the 2003 Surround Music Awards. He released a couple of albums in quad versions in the seventies and had a multi-speaker set up at home long before such things were remotely common! Were he still alive there is no doubt that he would be actively involved in one or other of the high-resolution surround formats.

In his absence what could be better than recalling Joe Chicarelli, the original recording engineer of these 1978 live tapes, to assist Zappa's eldest son Dweezil with the surround mix for this new DVD-Audio-only album? This is the second release from the Zappa family's new label,



Vaulternative records, and it's a cracker. Now available here since DTS Entertainment arranged UK distribution, this title has shot into play.com's DVD-Audio Top 10 sales chart, and the UK's residual Zappaphiles will be enjoying the immersive live experience this disc gives. Abandoning the 'proscenium arch' presentation more commonly used for surround mixes of live material, the intention here was to place the listener in the centre of a very noisy New York crowd. This may not be to everyone's taste.

Recorded one Halloween later than the fantastic performance

immortalised in the Baby Snakes film, which is shortly to be reissued on DVD-Video, the band here is the short-lived double bass player line-up, playing up a real storm, and for bass lovers the low end is wonderfully fat and rich. Vinnie Colaiuta was the drummer, and the 24/96 surround mix features Zeets a wonderful, although completely unreal, drum solo spinning around the room. Unfortunately there was only room for a 24/48 version of the stereo mix of the album, but as this was conceived from the outset as a surround project, in this case the nevertheless excellent stereo version can justifiably be considered a bonus.

3

**ROXY MUSIC
AVALON
(HYBRID SACD: STEREO AND
MULTI-CHANNEL DSD)**

A few issues back, our illustrious editor DP revealed that the sources for this re-release were 16bit PCM in origin. Alarm was justly sounded among the high-resolution contingent on the audiophile message-boards, particularly by our American brethren, who in a nice piece of table-turning could only lay their hands on the title by personal importation from Europe, and wanted to make a purchasing decision. Any that carried on regardless will not have been disappointed. Despite the non-optimal starting point for the project, this album has had a very fine facelift indeed.

The quality of the package and



reprographics are outstanding, with an informative sleeve note from original album and reissue producer Rhett Davies. The one slip up is that the sleeve bares an HDCD logo, presumably a hangover from the previous CD remaster, but leading mastering engineer Bob Ludwig, who worked on all incarnations of this album, tells me that the CD layer was actually created from the new DSD stereo version of the album using Sony's Super Bit Mapping Direct process and as such is not HDCD encoded.

He also revealed that, "the SACD Stereo mix was made from the

original 30ips masters which were in great shape, not a single piece of PCM gear was used, so it is pure SACD and the magic of SACD clearly comes through, unlike when PCM processing must be used". So I guess we know which side of the fence Bob is on! Obviously this means the 16bit issue still pertains to the multi-tracks, a finding endorsed by Bob Clearmountain, who mixed both the original album and the new surround version. This said, you should beg, steal or borrow a copy of what Bob Ludwig has described as probably his favourite surround mix to date. You won't regret it.

2

BOB DYLAN BLONDE ON BLONDE (HYBRID SACD: STEREO AND MULTI-CHANNEL DSD)

Dylan reissues always cause his hardcore following to go through the latest versions with a forensic zeal, attempting to spot mistakes and discrepancies. In the past his CD reissues have often been forced to use new stereo remixes from the multi-tracks when the original stereo masters have become unusable, and 'Blonde on Blonde' is one of those cases. Legacy restoration projects are sometimes forced into these corners, but thankfully the approach with Dylan can only be to create as close a facsimile of the original mix as possible. The stereo mix here beautifully foregrounds Dylan's voice and harmonica in the centre of the soundstage, but the quieter and more distant supporting instruments



in each speaker are rendered with incredible realism. Other than the very sixties use of stereo, these recordings could have been made last week.

The first wave of 15 Dylan SACD reissues are all hybrid discs, and a handful of them have been given multi-channel reinterpretations, generally where the issues outlined above have made the multi-tracks conveniently available. A variety of mix artists are used, but for this seminal album the driving force of the reissue series, Sony's Steve Berkowitz, (the man who signed Jeff

Buckley), steps in to assist Michael H. Brauer. The results are revelatory – nothing is too extreme, but the mix gives a very subtle enhanced sense of depth and space to the fantastic music. This mix, like those on the other multi-channel Dylan titles, is so good that it just makes one regret that not all of the albums in the series were given the same treatment. Oh Mercy, from 1989, is a particular missed opportunity, as we are still waiting for one of Daniel Lanois' dense, multi-layered production masterpieces to get the surround treatment.

1

STEELY DAN EVERYTHING MUST GO (DVD-AUDIO: 24/192 STEREO, 24/96 MULTI-CHANNEL)

A perfect example of how to use the DVD-Audio format to best effect, Steely Dan had released well-regarded surround product before, but this one was right from the ground up. There is one reason which accounts for the success of this disc both musically and technically: the decision to record and mix the tracks in the analogue domain and then to make sure that the maximum possible resolutions were used for the presentation on DVD-Audio. It helps that the songs are as wry and intelligent as usual, but the real star turn here is the transparency that the recording method affords to the instrumentation. The barnstorming sax solos of



Walt Weiskopf could be happening in the same room when you listen to the stereo track.

The one down-side of this disc is that comparison of the surround tracks with the stereo makes one wish that the technology had been able to accommodate 6 channels of 24/192 at the time of DVD-Audio's conception – there is a clear difference in the realism conveyed when reproducing all the most complex tonalities; backing vocals, metals, horns, and pianos. That having been said, the Elliot Schiener surround mix is still a very playful

one, so you can choose which version of the album you wish to listen to according to your mood. Also very enjoyable is the main extra – a short feature in which Donald Fagen and Walter Becker are interviewed by a Vegas taxi driver called Rita, who has a TV show called Taxi Cab Confessions in the states. The boys are given ample opportunity to show off their devastating wit. It's a real shame that sales of this disc appeared to tail off after an initial rush – it is a much better album than its Grammy-winning predecessor.

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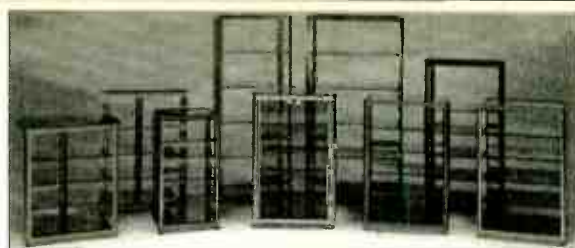
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The signature builds on the Classic 834P specification by adding a superb moving coil (MC) input stage, as well as the no-extra-price option of a high quality volume control. price £590.00

Top to the range, the Deluxe 834P comes in stunning chrome and gold cabinet, and has extra attention and quality control. With different moving coil input options, this unit will fit the most demanding of audiophile systems. For the true vinyl enthusiast. price £895.00

MC3 - The ultimate stage for MC matching with 3 fixed transformer taps to cover all types of moving coil cartridges, and separate left/right grounding. MC3 is used in the new £10,000 312 pre. price £630.00

Selected products from: ATC, Audio Physic, EAR Yoshino, Nottingham Analogue, Dynavector.

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COMPETITIVE FINANCE TERMS FOR

● Vinyl

ACOUSTIC RESEARCH E8101	£275	£148
ALPHASON Sonata		
Atlas PS./HR 100S-MCS	£2000	£995
ARISTON Q Deck	£199	£ 98
CONOISSEUR BD2	£250	£125
DUAL CS506 (Black)	£175	£ 80
DUAL CS 505 Silver	£150	£ 88
DUAL CS503-1 Concept	£180	£88
GOLDRING Lenco G185 white	£175	£ 75
LINN LP12 (Black) LX/K9	£1500	£575
LINN LP12 Afro (no tonearm)	£1300	£375
LINN LP12 Rosewood/Akito	£750	£894
LORIAN Transformer	£700	£356
LUXMAN PD282 (Rosewood)	£595	£320
MICHELL Gyrodec	£870	£740
MICHELL ISO Phono Stage Ex-dem	£895	£646
MICHELL ISO/HERA Phono Stage	£895	£448
MICHELL Gyro/Orbe Update		
QC/MEC/CL AUD	£3000	£1698
MICHELL ISO Phono Stage	£895	£298
ORACLE Alexandria	£1500	£650
ORTOFON MCA10 Phono Trans	£125	£55
PROJECT 6.9	£600	£300
REGA 25/Rega cart As new	£1695	£895
REGA Planar 2 (No arm)	£200	£75
SME 10A with 309 Tone Arm XDem	£3410	£2896
SME20/2A	£5273	£4486
SYSTEMDEK Mission 774/ATOC3	£600	£195
TECHNICS 1210 ind. Flight case	£600	£298
THORENS TD 318 (black lacquer)	£350	£195
THORENS TD160 No cover	£279	£160
THORENS TD150 Rare		£190
TRICHORD Dino inc large PS	£600	£398
UNISON Phono 1 + PSU	£850	£478
VOYD Reference inc arm	£14,995	£3998
WELL TEMPERED Record Player	£2,300	£1,695
WILSON BENESCH Full Circle	£1995	£1495

● Digital Sources

ARCAM Alpha One CD	£300	£149
ARCAM Alpha 5 Plus	£350	£148
ARCAM Alpha 9 CD	£799	£350
ARCAM Diva CD73	£400	£328
ARCAM Diva CD92	£800	£494
AUDIO ALCHEMY V1 + PSU	£489	£129
AUDIO ALCHEMY V3 DAC PSU	£900	£429
AUDIO MECHA Kreatura Trans	£1500	£439
AUDIO MECHA		
Damnation Tran + Upgrade	£1250	£439
AVI S2000MC REF	£1395	£598
CAMBRIDGE AUDIO CDi CD Plyr	£500	£95
COPLAND CDA288		£999
DCS Elgar	£9500	£5495
DCS Elgar	£9500	£6498
EXPOSURE CD Player	£999	£629
KENWOOD DP7090 CD Plyr	£399	£129
KENWOOD DP-X9010 Trans	£400	£199
KINSHAW Overture DAC	£300	£75
KRELL KPS 25 CD/Pre	£24,998	£12,996
LINN Karik CD	£1850	£1098

LINN Mimik	£875	£304
MARANTZ CD85	£450	£ 195
MARANTZ CD63 ki	£300	£ 175
MARANTZ CD17Ki	£1250	£748
MERIDIAN 203 DAC	£499	£228
MERIDIAN 207 CD/Pre	£700	£299
MERIDIAN 508 CD	£1500	£798
MERIDIAN 562 Digital Controller		£450
MERIDIAN 602/606 (Trans/Doc)	£3000	£796
MICROMEGA Stage 2	£750	£396
MICROMEGA Solo	£750	£255
MICROMEGA Stage 3	£1000	£398
MICROMEGA Micro-DAC	£499	£149
MUSICAL FIDELITY		
Nu-Vista 3D CD/Pre	£3000	£2198
NAIM CDI	£1999	£948
NAIM CD3	£1000	£495
ORELLE DA10T Trans	£900	£375
PERPETUAL TECHNOLOGY		
Upsampling DAC	£695	£496
PROCEED PDT3/PDP3		
Trans/DAC	£3999	£1800
QED Reference DAC	£500	£99
REGA Planet	£500	£350
ROKSAN kandy CD Player	£500	£199
ROTEL RCD99 CD Player	£799	£399
ROTEL RCD96SBX	£350	£175
SONY CDPXA2ES CD Plyr	£250	£98
SONY SCDX 940 SA CD	£700	£335
TEAC VRDS 10 (CD Player)	£699	£450
TECHNICS SLP2000 Ref	£1200	£198
THETA DATA Basic Trans	£2400	£749
THETA PEARL CD Trans	£1400	£898
THETA DS Pro Basic 111A DAC	£3500	£1698
THORENS		
TDC2000(Trans)/ TDA2000(DAC)	£2000	£1198
WADIA 860CD	£6995	£4998

● Amplifiers Solid State

ARCAM Delta 60	£280	£148
ARCAM P75	£435	£296
ARCAM Xeta 2	£500	£95
AUDIO ANALOGUE Donizetti	£650	£455
AUDIO ALCHEMY Kraken	£400	£156
AUDIO ANALOGUE Bellini (blk)	£595	£355
AUDIO ANALOGUE Puccini SE	£650	£345
AUDIO INNOVATIONS Alto	£395	£148
AUDIOLAB 8000A	£450	£175
AUDIOLAB 8000S	£800	£395
AUDIO RESEARCH D400	£3498	£1495
AUDIO RESEARCH LS38	£1300	£696
AVI S2000 Int.	£1200	£275
CHORD SPM900	£1550	£898
CHORD SPM600	£2200	£1395
COPLAND CSA 14	£1500	£745
COUNTERPOINT Solid One	£1950	£695
CYRUS ACA7 Pre	£600	£356
CYRUS II	£275	£125
CYRUS AV Master	£450	£198
CYRUS Pre	£700	£345
CYRUS Power	£700	£358

DENON AVP-A1D Digital Pre	£2500	£698
DENON AVP-A1D		
Digital Integrated AV amp	£2500	£895
DNM Pre2/PAT	£2800	£898
ELECTOR MFL Pre	£500	£148
ELECTROCOMPANIE EC3 MC	£2200	£1188
ELECTRO COMPANIE 2 Pre/Power	£1500	£355
EXPOSURE 7/8 Pre & Pwr	£1100	£405
EXPOSURE 18/21 Pre & Pwr	£2000	£795
GALACTRON MK2121	£1200	£598
GAMUT 200	£4000	£1998
HARMON KARDON AVR85 AV Rec11000		£498
HARMON KARDON Citation Pwr	£1200	£249
INCATECH Claymore Amp	£400	£175
KENWOOD L07C Pre	£500	£155
KRELL KST100 Power Amp	£2995	£1796
KRELL KAV250a	£3495	£2198
KRELL FPB300	£9500	£4995
KRELL KAV650 Monoblocks	£20000	£11998
LENTEK Integrated	£575	£175
LFD LSI Pre	£1000	£375
LINN LK1	£450	£194
LINN LK2	£550	£299
LINN Kairn Pre	£1700	£798
LUMLEY A2100 Power	£750	£398
LUMLEY Passive Pre	£250	£128
MARANTZ (orig) SM10 Power	£700	£498
MARK LEVINSON 27.5 Pwr	£6000	£2798
MINTOSH 7100 Power Amp	£1200	£495
MERIDIAN 501.2 Pre	£780	£476
MERIDIAN 556	£995	£698
MERIDIAN 565 Processor	£3300	£1796
MICROMEGA Tempo 2	£750	£398
MUSICAL FIDELITY A3CR	£1500	£678
MUSICAL FIDELITY E10	£300	£148
MUSICAL FIDELITY F22 Pre	£1500	£595
MUSICAL FIDELITY XA2 Int	£800	£296
MUSICAL FIDELITY 3a Pre	£1300	£155
MUSICAL FIDELITY Dr Thomas	£699	£275
MYRYAD A120 Power	£500	£255
NAD 910 AV Pre/902 2ch Pwr	£450	£175
LINN LK1/LK2	£1000	£495
LINN LK280 Spark PS.(2)	£1600	£495
MARANTZ PM7200G	£350	£245
MICHELL Argo	£575	£425
MICHELL Argo/Electro Mono's	£2495	£1496
NAGRA PL-P Bal Pre + remote	£5395	£3996

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NAIM NAC 32 Pre	£600	£195
NAIM NAC 42 Pre	£400	£125
NAIM NAC 82 Pre	£2500	£1298
NAIM Nait 3 Int.	£700	£296
NAIM NAP 110 Power	£500	£155
NAIM NAIT 5	£799	£595
NVA AP30 Int.	£350	£175
ORELLE SA100 Intgrid	£500	£198
PARASOUND HCA1506		
6 Chanel Power	£2995	£1296
PIONEER A400	£225	£ 75
PIONEER C90A Pre	£500	£175
PS AUDIO IV Pre Incl. MC/MM	£600	£295
SUGDEN CS1/P51 Pre/Pwr	£500	£248
QUAD 303 Power	£200	£ 95
QUAD 44 Pre (scratched case)	£450	£155
QUAD 405 Power Amplifier	£350	£198
QUAD 34	£400	£198
QUAD 66	£699	£356
QUAD 77 Int.	£450	£298
QUAD 77 Power	£350	£245
ROGERS Cadet 3 Int. vintage	£200	£ 95
ROKSAN Caspian DSPAV Pre	£900	£548
ROKSAN Caspian Pwr	£710	£498
ROTEL RC1070	£399	£195
ROTEL RB985 Power Amp	£900	£498
SPHINX Project 2 Pre	£1600	£798
SPHINX Project 12 mono.s	£3000	£1495
SONY SDPEP9ES (Digital)	£600	£298
SONY VA333ES (AV System)	£799	£495
SONY TAE-1000ES0 Pre	£495	£248
STEG ST350 Studio Power Amp	£300	£ 95
TAG McLaren F3 Prazor	£1500	£648
TAG McLaren F300 Pwr	£1200	£498
TALK ELECTRONICS Storm	£650	£375
TESSERAC Pre	£1500	£598
THORENS TTA 2000 Power Amp	£1000	£398
TOWNSEND Elite 600 Pre	£500	£195
YAMAHA C4 / M4 Pre Power	£800	£255

Amplifiers Valve

ARION Electra Integrated	£1200	£495
AUDIO INNOVATIONS 800 Mk11	£1500	£688
AUDIO PRISM Debut (Red Rose)	£2800	£1495
AUDIO PRISM Mantissa (Red Rose)	£3000	£1695
AUDIO RESEARCH LS1	£1500	£696
AUDIO RESEARCH LS2B Mk2 pre	£3000	£1495
AUDIO RESEARCH VT60	£1995	£898
AUDIO RESEARCH VT100 Mk1 Pwr	£5500	£3498
BEARD M70 monoblocks	£1800	£1296
CARY Pre-amp	£3500	£1495
CARY CAD300SE Monoblocks	£5000	£3998
CONRAD JOHNSON PV 10AL Pre	£1400	£676
CONRAD JOHNSON PV 10 Pre	£1600	£845
CONRAD JOHNSON PVII Pre	£1950	£998
CONRAD JOHNSON		
Prem 8 Monos	£16,000	£9755
CONRAD JOHNSON		
Premier 140SA	£7000	£5248
CR DEVELOPMENTS		
Carmeta (Pre)	£900	£345
CROFT Super Micro Pre	£450	£295
GRAAF 13.5 Pre	£3950	£2168
HOVLAND HP 100 + MC Phono	£5750	£3996
JADIS DA30 Integrated	£3500	£1946
JADIS JA50 Monoblocks (Current)	£5890	£4446
JADIS Dely 7 Power		£2698
LUMLEY Ref 250 monoblocks	£6500	£3996
LUMLEY Ref 120		
Monoblocks	£3500	£1998
PAPWORTH TVA50	£2000	£1098
PM COMPONENTS 845 mono.s	£3000	£1495
QUAD 22 + 2 monoblocks		£455
QUAD Forty two	£4000	£2995
UNISON Mystery One	£1750	£1198

Tuners Tape Misc

ACOUSTIC RESEARCH RD-06	£200	£48
AKAI 1721 (Reel to reel - 7" spools)	£250	£128
ARCAM DAB10	£800	£345
DENON DRM 22	£200	£55
HARMAN KARDON TK912 Tuner	£125	£58
LEAK FM Stereophetic Tuner	£150	£75
LUXMAN ST50 (Rare)	£900	£555
MICROMEGA FM tuner	£300	£145
MYRIAD T30 tuner	£250	£128
NAKAMICHI CR7E	£1500	£895
NAKAMICHI 480 black	£495	£196
NAKAMICHI 481Z (Silver)	£495	£166
NAKAMICHI CR7E	£1500	£895
NAKAMICHI RX202E	£600	£255
NAKAMICHI 600	£400	£198
QUAD FM2 tuner	£200	£125
QUAD FM4 tuner	£300	£198
REFERENCE Pagode rock	£2700	£1756
REVOX S Series System	£1550	£1148
REVOX D36 (Reel to reel)		£348
REVOX E36 (Reel to reel)		£298
REVOX Pra H577 (Reel to reel)	£950	£398
REVOX A77 2 track (Reel to reel)	£750	£378
REVOX PR99H 2 track (7.5/15ips)	£1500	£595
REVOX B910 Pra cassette deck	£1500	£548
REVOX A76	£500	£295
ROGERS Ravensbrook Tuner	£150	£95
ROKSAN Caspian Tuner	£600	£298
ROTEL RT820L Tuner	£120	£45
SILTECH HF-9G3 S.E.DIG. (1M)	£230	£158
SILTECH LS-100-G3 (2.5M)SPK	£1200	£698
SILTECH SQ-28BG3 BAL (1M PAIR)	£350	£228
SUGDEN T51 tuner	£250	£128
SONY ST5730ES	£700	£295
STAX 3030 Basic L/Phones	£550	£376
STAX Lambda Nova Classic Headphones	£700	£498
TEAC A1500 (Reel to reel - 7" spools)	£400	£198
TRANSPARENT Ref Spkr (0.75M)	£2250	£1495
TRANSPARENT Ref XL SE (3M)	£4611	£2875
TRANSPARENT Ref XL SE (1M)	£3915	£2295
TRIO KT9XL Tuner	£300	£128
YAMAHA TC800 GL (classic)	£300	£ 95

Loudspeakers

ACOUSTIC ENERGY AE2 MKII	£1500	£895
ACOUSTIC ENERGY AE3	£3500	£1795
ACOUSTAT Model 2 Electrostatics	£2500	£674
ACONSTAT Spectra 1100		
Hybrid electrostatics	£1500	£578
ACOUSTAT Model Cex,		
valve powered electrostatics	£2000	£ 748
ACOUSTIC ENERGY AE120	£800	£ 295
ACOUSTIC PRECISION Elkos	£650	£348
ARISTON Speakers	£300	£175
AUDIOMATIC ES300 Electrostatics	£1500	£578
AUDIONOTE AN/E (Inc stands)	£2900	£1498
AUDIO PRO B250 Sub	£1000	£356
B & W P4 (Cherry but marked)	£700	£349
B & W CC6 (centre)	£200	£ 75
B & W FCM8 THX (R.L. & Centre)	£2400	£696
B & W DM4 (circa 1975)	£200	£ 55
B & W 601 Mark III	£195	£95
B & W 601-3	£275	£178
BKS 107 II Hybrid ribbons	£1750	£995
CASTLE Warwick	£200	£ 88
CASTLE Chester (Walnut)	£799	£478
CASTLE Durham (Marked)	£230	£95
CASTLE Howard S2	£1400	£598
CELESTION SL65	£ 250	£ 155
CHARTWELL PM310	£250	£ 95
DALI 40G	£1000	£356
DCM Time Windows	£600	£155
DYNAUDIO SDA 2.8	£800	£ 378
ELAC CL310i	£850	£548
ENSEMBLE Primadonna RARE	£10,000	£2,995
GALE 401 With Stands	£500	£196
GAMMA ACOUSTICS Epoch 5	£3000	£495
HALES Signature System 2	£4000	£998
HECO 10 SH	£150	£88
HEYBROOK HB1	£150	£45
HARBETH HL III Monitors	£500	£198

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HEYBROOK Heystock (Rosewood)	£500	£296
IMPULSE H7 (Black)	£1000	£299
Impulse H6	£1200	£558
Infinity Alpha 40 (black lacquer)	£600	£255
INFINITY 8 Kappa	£1895	£1195
JBL TLX12	£250	£128
KEF 104AB (circa 1975)	£200	£ 75
KEF 70 Speakers	£250	£125
KEF Q15	£200	£ 98
KEF Ref 101/2	£500	£155
KEF Studio Monitors (circa 1965)	£400	£125
KEF Ref Mod 1	£1300	£798
KEF Q35 (Black)	£350	£179
KEF Cube (EQ Box)	£700	£246
LEAK (orig.) Sandwich 12 ohm 12"	£400	£148
LEAK Sandwich 200 Black	£250	£ 95
LEAK Sandwich 2030 Black	£175	£ 75
LEAK Sandwich 250	£200	£ 95
LEAK Sandwich 600	£400	£155
LINN Nexus (Black + stands)	£500	£239
LINN Kaber (Rosewood) ACTIVE	£2500	£999
LINN Katan (Cherry) As new	£795	£546
LINN Kan Teak	£500	£196
LINN Keilidh	£600	£248
MAGNA PLANAR 1c Imp	£1400	£595
MEADOWLARK Shearwater	£2990	£1498
MERIDIAN DSP5000 (24bit)	£4200	£2695
MERIDIAN M3 Active	£1000	£ 298
MERLIN TSM-SE (Mint)	£1600	£998
MISSION 733 (Black)	£200	£99
MISSION 751 (Black)	£330	£189
MISSION 753 (Rosewood)	£799	£425
MISSION 703	£250	£ 95
MISSION 752	£550	£275
MONITOR AUDIO Studio12	£1200	£646
MONITOR AUDIO		
Studio 14 (Marked)	£900	£299
MORDAUNT SHORT Pageant	£180	£75
MORREL Bass Master		
(Oak but marked)	£1600	£599
MUSICAL FIDELITY Ref 2	£250	£ 98
PINK TRIANGLE Ventrical	£1500	£950
PROAC Studio 1 Mk2		£380
PROAC Tablette 50	£600	£395
PROAC Super Towers	£1000	£695
PROAC Future 1	£5,995	£4,258
QNR Monitors (Black)	£1200	£1369
QUAD ESL63	£3500	£1495
REGA XEL (Black)	£990	£640
REGA Elo (Black)	£950	£646
RUARK Equinox (Black)	£2200	£999
RUARK Broadsward (Rosewood)	£700	£329
RUARK Solstice	£5000	£2998
SNELL J3 High Sensitivity Monitors	£770	£349
SNELL E2	£500	£245
SONUS FABER Solo (centre)	£399	£296
SONUS FABER Walls	£549	£356
SONUS FABER Guaneri (Blk Strds)	£5295	£3996
SOUNDLAB Dynastats	£3200	£1100
SPENDOR BC1 (scratched cabs)	£500	£ 95
SPENDOR SA1 mini monitors	£400	£155
TANNOY Buckingham	£5000	£1600
TARGET RS4 (circa 1977) scratched	£250	£125
TARGET TM1 (circa 1977) scratched	£200	£ 75
TANNOY Devan	£750	£298
TANNOY M3	£200	£ 75
THIEL CS2.2 Discoloured veneer	£2500	£996
TOWNSEND Ribbon Hybrid	£750	£195
TRIANGLE Icare	£1500	£345
WHARFDALE 519	£275	£ 95
YAMAHA NS200	£250	£175
YORKSHIRE Hifi 1-3	£195	£ 78

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ARIEL ACOUSTICS Mod 8 + stands EX-DEM	£5679	£3596	MONRIO MC-200S power amp silver	£1350	£497
ATC SCA2 including phono	£2700	£1698	MONRIO MP1 mono 110 watts	£600	£417
ATC 100's Active	£8995	£5998	MONRIO MP1 mono 135 watts	£700	£457
AUDIO ALCHEMY ACD2 CD Player	£1000	£246	MONRIO MP2 2-channel x 135 watts	£950	£697
AUDIO ANALOGUE Puccini, manualsilver	£595	£397	NAGRA PLL Pre EX-DEM	£5395	£3996
AUDIO ANALOGUE Donizetti Mono Silver	£550	£347	NAIM CD5	£1195	£954
AUDIO ANALOGUE Maestro Amp	£2900	£1797	NAIM Intro 2	£865	£694
AUDIO MECCA Mephisto Transport	£2200	£1398	NAIM NAC 112	£660	£524
AUDION Silver Knight 300B Intgrtd EX-DEM	£1125	£876	NAIM Nait 5	£845	£674
AUDIO RESEARCH DAC5 D/A	£2335	£1297	NAIM NAP 150	£795	£634
AUDIO RESEARCH VT200/2 Pwr EX-DEM	£11982	£9586	NAIM NAT 01	£2500	£1398
AUDIO RESEARCH LS25 Mk2 EX-DEM	£5795	£4636	NAIM NAC 82 Pre EX-DEM	£2500	£1994
B&W THX System EX-DEM	£4975	£1996	NAIM CDS/XPS Mk2 EX-DEM	£6265	£4994
EAR 834P Valve Phono Stage EX-DEM	£549	£436	NAIM CDX EX-DEM	£2470	£1974
GRAAF 13.5 Bil Pre EX-DEM	£3950	£2746	NAIM Credo EX-DEM	£1425	£994
GRAAF GM20 OTL EX-DEM	£2950	£2356	OPERA SP1 (Cherry) EX-DEM	£525	£426
GRAAF Venticinque	£2250	£1197	PATHOS Classic One (50 watt)	£1150	£797
GRAAF VT5.35.5 (five channel power amp)	£2500	£1397	PATHOS Twin Towers EX-DEM	£3250	£2596
KEF XQ1	£999	£744	PATHOS Logos EX-DEM	£3250	£2596
KEF XQ5	£1999	£1494	PIONEER DVR7000 DVD Recorder EX-DEM	£1299	£896
KRELL KPS28 CD Player EX-DEM	£8998	£6746	PIONEER SD-T 5000 50" (4:3) Projection TV	£3999	£1496
KRELL KCT Pre-amp EX-DEM	£9998	£7996	PIONEER PDP 503 HDE (50") Plasma	£6995	£5495
KRELL FPB300c	£10995	£5995	PRIMARE V20 DVD Plr EX-DEM	£2500	£1996
LINN LP12 / Lingo / Akito (black)	£2699	£1994	PROAC Response 1.5 (Rosewood) EX-DEM	£1970	£1296
LINN LP12 Ecos Archive inc Lingo (blk)	£3500	£1998	PROAC Response 2.5 (Lt Oak) EX-DEM	£2700	£2148
LINN Klassik Movie EX-DEM	£1995	£1596	REGA Naos (Cherry) EX-DEM	£998	£794
LINN ThemeSene SS Projector EX-DEM	£3500	£2794	REGA ARA (Cherry) EX-DEM	£255	£214
MARTIN LOGAN Aeon Speakers EX-DEM	£3148	£2646	REGA ELA EX-DEM	£750	£418
MARTIN LOGAN CLS II Limited Edition	£6700	£5776	REGA Cursa Pre Amp	£548	£434
MERIDIAN DSP33 Digital Speakers	£2595	£2076	REGA Moia	£498	£394
M&K VX100 Sub EX-DEM	£754	£634	REGA Jupiter CD	£998	£794
McINTOSH MC122 Power Amp FINAL	£1249	£796	SME 10A with 309 Tone Arm EX-DEM	£3410	£2896
McINTOSH MC7108 8Chnl Pwr Amp FINAL	£2549	£1496	SONUS FABER Amati Homage EX-DEM	£11850	£9996
McINTOSH MX135 AV Control Centre FINAL	£7990	£3996	SONUS FABER Concertino EX-DEM	£599	£529
McINTOSH LS320 Speakers EX-DEM	£1998	£1296	SPENDOR S6	£1299	£994
McINTOSH LS340 Speakers EX-DEM	£4798	£2996	SPENDOR S8 Cherry - Slight cabinet damage	£1700	£1346
McINTOSH CS36 Centre Speaker v	£2495	£1626	SPENDOR S9	£2499	£1996
MERIDIAN 596 DVD Player EX-DEM	£2549	£1996	TDS Audio Transformer	£349	£266
MERIDIAN 557 Stereo Power Amp EX-DEM	£2549	£1996	THETA Casanova Pre EX-DEM	£4478	£2996
MERIDIAN 563 EX-DEM	£700	£446	TRIANGLE Zays Ambre	£1295	£ 897
MERIDIAN DSP33C Centre EX-DEM	£1355	£1146	TRICHORD Pulsa Series One DAC	£1900	£1298
MERIDIAN DSP5000C (Dig Centre) EX-DEM	£1995	£1594	UNISON RESEARCH Unico 1	£775	£597
MICHELL Gyro SE EX-DEM	£870	£740	UNISON RESEARCH S2	£1295	£697
MICHELL Delphini Phono LPSU EX-DEM	£895	£738	UNISON RESEARCH S8	£3100	£1997
MICHELL Delphini Phono SPSU EX-DEM	£998	£798	UNISON RESEARCH Power 35	£1500	£897
MISSION 78C (Centre) EX-DEM	£350	£274	UNISON RESEARCH Feather One	£895	£447
MISSION 782 Speakers EX-DEM	£699	£554	UNISON RESEARCH Feather One Remote	£995	£527
MISSION M51 Speakers EX-DEM	£600	£474	WILSON BENESCH Full Circle	£1995	£1496
MONRIO Asty 55W line int.amp silver	£550	£347	WILSON Cub (Black Laminated) EX-DEM	£5495	£3496
MONRIO Asty PH55 W.line + phono silver	£650	£397	WILSON Cub (Glass) EX-DEM	£6890	£3996
MONRIO Asty ST, remote volume silver	£600	£447	WILSON Sophia (Black) EX-DEM	£11992	£9596
MONRIO Asty-Player (24/96) silver	£750	£527	WILSON BENESCH Orator EX-DEM	£2900	£2524
MONRIO HP-1 (120 watts power amp) silver	£895	£597	WILSON BENESCH Actor EX-DEM	£3999	£2998
MONRIO 188.2 (DAC) silver	£595	£227	WILSON BENESCH Act-1 EX-DEM	£6999	£4499
MONRIO Bitmatch CD-player/transport silver	£695	£297	WILSON BENESCH Act-2 EX-DEM	£8999	£5999
MONRIO MC-25 power amp silver	£900	£447			

HEATHCOTE AUDIO

TEL: 01992 653999 MOBILE: 07860 511111 E-MAIL ADDRESS: HeathcoteAudio@aol.com

VALVE AMPS

ROGUE AUDIO M-150 MONOBLDCS BRAND NEW CANCELLED ORDER (RETAIL £4000)
MICHAELSON AUDIO CHRONOS 4 BOX PRE/PSU & 2 MONOS SERVICED/REVALVED
UNISON RESEARCH S-6 REMOTE INTEGRATED EX DEM
GAAAF INTEGRATED
GOLDEN TUBE SE1-50 MK.11(REMOTE CONTROL)
JADIS DEFY-7 100 WATTS CHANEL
GAAAF GM-20 DISPLAY/DEM MODEL AS NEW (HUGE SAVING)
AUDIO RESEARCH VT-50 POWER AMP EX DISPLAY
AUDIO RESEARCH V-70 POWER AMP
JADIS JPS-2 TWD BOX PRE (WAS £8000)
EINSTEIN 'THE TUBE' REMOTE PRE AMP (£6000) DISPLAY MODEL
AUDIO RESEARCH LS-22 PRE WITH REMOTE UPGRADE & RE-VALVE
AUDIO RESEARCH SP-14 PRE C/W PHONO STAGE (£4000)
AUDIO RESEARCH LS-2 PRE AMP (MULLARD REVALVE)
CONRAD JOHNSON PREMIER 14 REMOTE CONTROL PRE AMP
DAKLEY AMERICAN VALVE PRE-AMP INC. PHONO STAGE
UNISON RESEARCH CSP PRE AMP WITH PHONO STAGE
MONRID ASTY VALVE PRE-AMP (VERY PRETTY) 3 MONTHS OLD
VINTAGE RADIO RESTORATION ADOR MONOBLDCS
LUMLEY REFERENCE LR-120 MONOBLDCS (TRIDIE SWITCHABLE) REVALVED
AUDIONOTE P2-SE POWER AMP

SOLID STATE

KRELL FPB 600 STEREO AMP
JEFF ROWLAND MODEL 5 POWER AMP VERY RARE
MUSICAL FIDELITY P-270 POWER AMP
TOCA SECA 20 WATT CLASS A AMP MARBLE FRONT VERY RARE /GDDO
MARANTZ SC-22 PRE & MA-22 MONOBLDCS
AUDIO SYNTHESIS PASSION 8M BALANCED/SE/REMOTE
REGA CURA REMOTE PRE AMP
AUDIO ANALOGUE MAESTRO EX DISPLAY MODEL HUGE SAVING
PINK TRIANGLE INTEGRAL (NEW PRICE £3995)
ELECTROCOMPANIE EC-1 HEAVY CLASS A
CAIRN 4808 REMOTE INTEGRATED
DRELLE SA-100R REMOTE AUDIOPHILE AMP
NAD C-370 INTEGRATED

CD

KRELL MD-1 TRANSPORT & SBP-64X TWD BOX DAC
ACUPHASE DP-80 TRANSPORT AND MATCHING DAC.(EXTREMELY RARE)
TECHNICS SL-21000/SH-X1000 FLAGSHIP TRANSPORT & DAC (GOLD/MAL/NUT)
DPA T-1 TRANSPORT/PSM-1 MK.3 TWD BOX DAC (BOTH DELTRAN)
THEATA DATA BASIC 11 TRANSPORT WITH DELTRAN MOD
THETA PEARL TRANSPORT
DRELLE CD10T TRANSPORT SILVER WIRED
THETA DS PRO GEN III (AT&T, COAX,ETC.)WAS £6000 APPROX
THETA DSPre GEN III (PRE-AMP/DAC)
THETA DS PRO GEN 11
THETA DS PRO PROGENY-A DAC
THETA DS PRO BASIC-11 DAC.
DPA ENLIGHTENMENT DAC (WITH DELTRAN)
AUDIONOTE DAC-1X SIGNATURE
MONRID 18B DAC & SEPERATE PSU.
PINK TRIANGLE ORDINAL DAC
NAIM CD-1 (HAD NEW LASER MECH)
SONY XA-50ES CHAMPAYNE GOLD
PIONEER PD-91

VINYL

FORSSELL AIR FORCE ONE REFERENCE AND ARM 24 KARAT GOLD (WAS \$30,000)
NOTTINGHAM ANALOGUE STUDIO MENTOR REFERENCE COVER & MATCHING ARM
AVID VOLVERE LTD ED. CHAMPAYNE GOLD FINISH EX.DISPLAY
LINN LP12 VAL HALA ROSEWOOD
TRID KD-500/SME 3009 ARM
SYSTEMDECK/LINN BASIK/ART.
ARISTON Q DECK-11
LEHMAN BLACK CUBE SE
McCORMACK MICRO DRIVE PHONO STAGE
TALK BREEZE PHONO STAGE MM/MC EX DISPLAY
DENSON DRIVE MC. PHONO STAGE
LINN ITOK II

LOUDSPEAKERS

KLIPSCH CORNER HORNS 104 DB BIRDS EYE MAPLE VENEER FANTASTIC!
WILSON SYSTEM 5.1 PIANO BLACK
HARBETH MASTERING SYSTEM MA-40 (EUCALYPTUS 2 MONTHS OLD £5000 NEW!)
B & W SILVER SIGNATURE, EXTERNAL X-DIVER3/METRE CABLES & SLATE STANDS
BKS 107 SUPREME
MARTIN LOGAN AERIUS
ALDN 11 OPEN BAFFLE FLOORSTANDERS
LIVING VOICE AUDITORIUM EX DEM
CELESTION A-2 FLOORSTANDERS
REGA XEL (WALNUT)
AUDIONOTE ANK/SP SILVER WIRED
KELLY KT-3 HIGH 95 DB SENSITIVITY CHERRY VENEER
INFINITY KAPPA-8 REFERENCE
SNELL C MK-IV AMERICAN DAK VERY RARE/GDDO
PRODAC STUDIO 150
EPOS ES-11 MK2
EPOS ES-14 WITH STANDS
ROKSAN DJAN 3X & DJAN 3S SUBWOOFER SYSTEM (ROSEWOOD) RARE/SUPERB

BRAND NEW £3495
MINT £4000
MINT/BOXED £1275
MINT £895
MINT/BOXED £650
EXCLT £3250
MINT/BOXED £1950
AS NEW/BOXED £2750
MINT £1950
£3450
AS NEW/BOXED £3450
MINT/BOXED £2950
MINT £2295
MINT/BOXED £1395
EXCLT £1995
EXCLT £495
MINT £695
MINT BOXED £995
MINT/BOXED £1650
MINT £650

EXCLT £6250
EXCLT £2950
EXCLT £600
EXCLT £1250
MINT/BOXED £1250
MINT £995
AS NEW £295
AS NEW/BOXED £1750
AS NEW/BOXED £2995
MINT £1150
MINT £375
MINT/BOXED £395
MINT £195

MINT £3750
EXCLT/BOXED £2450
BOXED £2450
MINT/BOXED £1095
MINT/BOXED £1095
MINT/BOXED £895
MINT/BOXED £395
MINT/BOXED £2395
EXCLT/BOXED £2295
MINT/BOXED £1050
MINT BOXED £595
MINT/BOXED £1275
MINT/BOXED £350
AS NEW/BOXED £650
MINT £675
MINT/BOXED £1095
MINT/BOXED £650
MINT/BOXED £495

BOXED £7500
MINT £3250
AS NEW £1395
EXCLT/BOXED £375
VGC £350
BOXED £195
BOXED/VGC £195
BRAND NEW/BOXED £450
NEW £550
NEW £250
MINT £275
MINT £250

MINT £3750
MINT/CRATED £7500
MINT/BOXED £2850
MINT/BOXED £2450
EX.DEM/BOXED £1295
MINT/BOXED £1195
MINT £1250
MINT/BOXED £1150
MINT £650
MINT £650
MINT/BOXED £575
MINT/BOXED £795
MINT £1450
EXCLT £1500
EXCLT £1050
MINT/BOXED £295
MINT £375
MINT/BOXED £1450

BOSE 901 MK IV & MATCHING EQUALISER (RECENT £700 SERVICE)
CELESTION A-2 HUGELY CAPABLE (ROSEWOOD VENEER)
TANNDY ARUNDEL 15'3839 HIGH POWER DRIVERS 95 DB SENSITIVE VERY RARE
SD OBS FLOORSTANDERS (OPEN BAFFLE) SMALLER BROTHER TD SD1
CASTLE HOWARD-2 PREMIUM BEECH FINISH
CASTLE AVDN FLOORSTANDERS
IPL ACOUSTICS TRANSMISSION LINE
CELESTION DITTON 25 VERY NICE ONE OWNER PAIR
REL STORM-1 ACTIVE SUBWOOFER
IMF PROFESSIONAL MONITOR V1

TUNERS/TAPE/DAT/MINIDISC/MISC

NAKAMICHI DR-3 (VERY LITTLE USE)
SONY 3000ES TUNER (GOLD)
DENON TU-600 TUNER
AUDIO RESEARCH BAL-1 BALANCED/PHONO CONVERTER

RACKS/STANDS

SOUNDSTYLE ST-105/ SILVER (AQUA DR JADE GLASS)
SOUNDSTYLE ST-105 DNYX BLACK
SOUNDSTYLE XS 105 5 SHELF BLACK OR SILVER (£320)
SOUNDSTYLE XS 105 5 SHELF CANCELLED ORDER 2 OFF
SOUNDSTYLE XS 100 4 SHELF CANCELLED ORDER 2 OFF
SOUNDSTYLE XS 250 CD STORAGE RACK CANCELLED ORDER 2 OFF
B&W STANDS FOR CD-INT SILVER/BLACK
TARGET 24 INCH STANDS
ACDUSTIC ENERGY AE-2 TWIN PILLAR LEAD FILLED STANDS

SPECIAL OFFER

BLACK RHODIUM S-130X2 BI-WIRE LOUDSPEAKER CABLE BRAND NEW LTD QUANTITY £10 PER METRE
BLACK RHODIUM S-300 BI WIRE LOUDSPEAKER CABLE BRAND NEW LTD QUANTITY £25 PER METRE

MAINS CABLES/BLOCKS/CONDITIONERS ETC

BLACK RHODIUM 8 WAY MAINS BLOCKS (CANCELLED ORDER)
BLACK RHODIUM 25 MAINS CABLE (BLACK CLOTH BRAID)
DPA 'THE POWER' MAINS FILTERS

CABLES

LOUDSPEAKER CABLE

TARA LABS PRIME 1800 18 FEET PAIR BI-WIRE
NIRVANA AUDIO SL-SERIES 2.3 METRE PAIR EX DEM.
VAN DEN HUL REVELATION 2 METRE STEREO PAIR
VAN DEN HUL REVELATION 1.5 METRE STEREO PAIR
MIT MH-750 8 FT. PAIR
MIT TERMINATOR 6 3.3 METRE PAIR
TRANSPARENT WAVE 200 2 METRE PAIR
CARDAS HEXLINK 2 METRE PAIR
AUDIONOTE AN-SP 2 METRE PAIR
AUDIONOTE AN-L 4 METRE PAIR
QED GENESIS SILVER SPIRAL 4 X 1.5 METRE
CABLE TALK CONCERT BI-WIRE 5 METRE PAIR
VAN DEN HUL MC CS 122 2 X 3 METRE PAIR
AUDIOQUEST CRYSTAL HYPERLITZ 2 METRE BI-WIRE
AUDIOQUEST INDIG 3 METRE PAIR

INTERCONNECT

HARMONIC TECH MAGIC LINK ONE 1 METRE
XLD SIGNATURE SEVERAL NEW PACKAGED INTERCONNECTS
MANDRAKE BALANCED XLR INTERCONNECT 2.5 METRES
GRYPHON 'THE GRYPHON GUIDELINE' 1.5 METRES
BLACK RHODIUM REQIEM-2 NORMALLY £1750/METRE LTD QUANTITY
BLACK RHODIUM DRATORIA 1 METRE
BLACK RHODIUM DRATORIA 0.5 METRE
BLACK RHODIUM SYMPHONY 1 METRE (SEVERAL) CANCELLED ORDER
BLACK RHODIUM SYMPHONY 0.5 METRE (3 OFF)
SONIC LINK VOICES 1 METRE
AUDIOQUEST DIAMOND 2 X 2 METRE PAIRS
AUDIOQUEST LAPIS 5 METRE PAIR
AUDIOQUEST TURQUIDISE 2 X 2 METRE PAIRS
YFERA 1.5 METRE PAIR
NORDDST BLUE ANGEL 1.5 METRE PAIR
NORDDST BLUE ANGEL 0.5 METRE PAIR
NORDDST BLUE ANGEL 1.0 METRE 5 PIN DIN TO PHONO'S
LFD-4 FEET PAIR

DIGITAL

XLD 4.1 DIGITAL COAX 1 METRE & 2 METRE NEW/PACKED
MADRIGAL AES/EBU 0.5 METRE
NIRVANA DIGITAL COAX LEAD 4 FT.
VAN DEN HUL FIRST 0.8 METRE
VAN DEN HUL D-102 MK.111 HB. 4 FEET
CABLE TALK DIGITAL -3
REGA DIGITAL INTERCONNECT 1 METRE (NEUTRIK PHONO'S)
VAN DEN HUL AES/EBU
AUDIOQUEST OPTILINK X TOSLINK
AUDIOQUEST VIDEOLINK X
BELDEN-M DATATWISTER AES/EBU 1 METRE
IXDS OPTICAL CABLE

MOST EQUIPMENT STOCKED IS ONE OWNER MINT/BOXED, SIMILAR QUALITY VINTAGE AND MODERN EQUIPMENT REQUIRED FOR IMMEDIATE CASH PURCHASE. PLEASE PHONE GEORGE 10-6PM

EXCLT/BOXED £795
BRAND NEW/BOXED £1250
MINT £1500
BOXED £495
MINT £795
MINT £450
VGC £350
£150
EXCLT PHONE £495
MINT/BOXED £250
MINT £195
MINT £75
£375
EX DIS/BOXED NEW £275
EX DIS/BOXED NEW £275
EX DIS. £195
BRAND NEW BOXED £225
BRAND NEW BOXED £195
BRAND NEW BOXED £195
VGC £95
MINT £75
MINT £375

BRAND NEW £225
BRAND NEW £65
£75
AS NEW BOXED ETC £750
FACTORY TERMINATED £525
TERMINATED £575
TERMINATED £375
£650
(NEW) £225
£175
(FACTORY TERMINATED) £275
(FACTORY TERMINATED) £375
(FACTORY TERMINATED) £225
TERMINATED £175
TERMINATED £100
(EACH) £75
TERMINATED £75
£50

EX DEM £475
PLEASE PHONE FOR DETAILS
£350
£300
BRAND NEW BOXED RING £400
BRAND NEW PACKAGED £275
BRAND NEW PACKAGED £65
BRAND NEW PACKAGED £55
EX DEM £75
(MINT) £550 EACH
TBA
(MINT) £35 EACH
BRAND NEW PACKAGED £60
£65
£50
£50
£50

£200
£150
£200
BRAND NEW PACKAGED £100
EX DISPLAY/NEW £40
(BRAND NEW PACKAGED) £50
£30
£40
£50
TBA
£65

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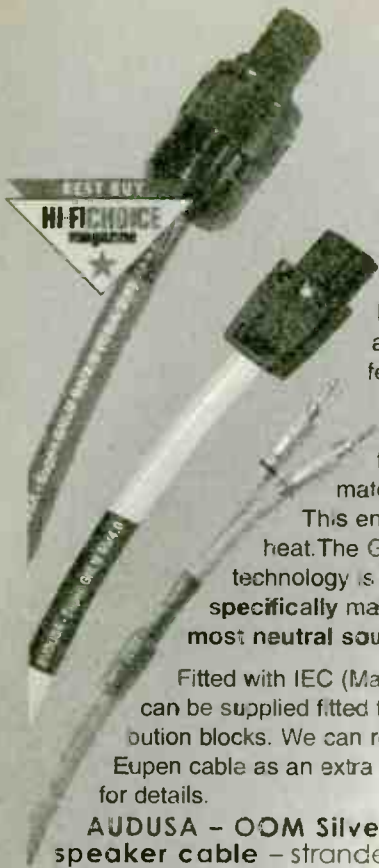
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HFV 1/04



AUDUSA



AUDUSA EUPEN CSA 2.5 AUDIO AC MAINS CABLE

GNLM 05/04 and GNLM 05/2.5 (CSA 2.5) Cable with FERRITE TECHNOLOGY - A polymer material mixed with a considerable quantity of homogeneously fine high quality ferrite powder is extruded around the copper conductors. As a ferromagnetic material, it will go through hysteresis loops whenever it is under influence of an alternating magnetic field. Consecutively magnetizing and demagnetizing the material will cause considerable losses of high frequency energy.

This energy is absorbed in the ferrite grains and converted into heat. The GNLM cables which in addition to the above described ferrite technology is further protected with a foil shield and a drain wire and specifically manufactured for High End audio use. **Said by some to be the most neutral sounding audio ac mains cable on the market.**

Fitted with IEC (Martin Kayser) and MK Tough plug Cable can be supplied fitted to our all steel 4, 6 and 8 way distribution blocks. We can rewire the distribution blocks with Eupen cable as an extra cost option. Refer to our web site for details.

AUDUSA - OOM Silverlink OCC balanced speaker cable - stranded, silver on OFHC plus three strands of OCC (Ohno Continuous Casting - single crystal copper) for improved bass performance. Mylar infill and with designed in protection against RF and EMI. conductor of 3mm diameter (approx 8 gauge). Cable Overall Dimension: 14.72 mm.

GNLM 05/2.5 (CSA2.5)

£48 for 1.0m, £58 for 1.5m, £68 for 2.0m. Off the reel £30 for 1st meter, £20 per m thereafter.

Eupen GNLM 05/2.5 (CSA 2.5) shown with Maringo IEC 320 will be fitted at extra cost.

GNLM 05/04

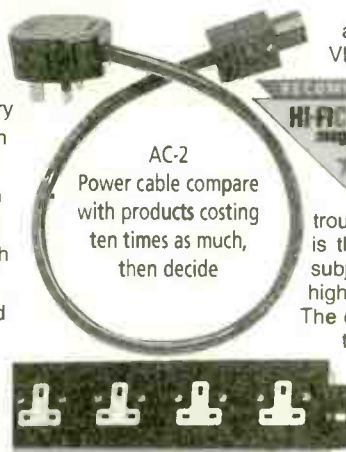
£58 for 1.0m, £72 for 1.5m, £86 for 2.0m. Also available of the reel.

Both GNLM cables are available for export.

SILVER SILVER - upgrade the cable with silver plated contacts on IEC and and MK plug for £6. AUDUSA - Eupen and LAT AC-2 mains cable available with 16 amp IEC (for certain models of amps by Krell, MF, Levinson etc), Maringo/Wattgate IEC 320, Figure of eight, Bulgin, Hubble, European Schuko, French, Australian, Swiss, Danish, Neutrik and other plugs see our web site for IEC's, MK plugs RCA and Banana connectors with silver plate contacts and other audio and ac mains connectors

LAT International AC-2 AUDIO AC MAINS CABLE

We have developed a cabling (weaving) pattern along with an unusual shielding/filtering system that gets rid of the garbage that contaminates your components. The difference you hear with our cord is astounding. Our power cord takes advantage of silver in its design through use of our proprietary Silverfuse conductors. The conductors are 10 gauge and with PTFE, the best insulation available. Fitted as standard with IEC / MK Tough plug. . 60cm £62, 90cm £75, 1.2m £88, 1.5m £101, 1.8m £112 etc Other lengths available and off the reel. **4,6 and 8 way all steel mains distribution blocks fitted with UK, Schuko or USA sockets.** CE tested & approved mains distribution units manufactured of heavy gauge steel, finished in black and fitted with high quality 13amp sockets. It has no filters, circuit breakers, surge protection, transformers, resistors, capacitors, LED's, on/off switches, chokes, regulators, just fitted with 1m of AC-2 mains cable From £166 for 4 way, £198, 6 way, £229 for 8 way.



AC-2
Power cable compare
with products costing
ten times as much,
then decide

SILVERFUSE is a near alloy of silver and copper. IT IS NOT SILVER PLATED OR SILVER CLAD. Plating (or clad, which is the same thing as plating) causes a dioding effect when signal is passed through resulting in brightness and distortion. The Silverfuse process starts with seven nines OFHC copper wire with a diameter that is slightly larger than the required size. It is then pulled through a trough of molten silver. The wire with a silver deposit, is then forced through a compacting die where it is subject to tremendous pressure. The silver and the high purity copper are fused together into a near alloy. The compacting fusion also reduces the wire diameter to the desired size. No dioding subsequently occurs with this process. The result provides for the benefits of silver, which are excellent definition and clarity, with the high purity copper benefits of warmth and mellowness.

LAT INTERNATIONAL Inc USA - Analogue, Digital and Video interconnects and Speaker cable better than most others at double the price.

SUNFIRE CORPORATION - Snohomish USA



New for 2003 Sunfire Ultimate - world's most powerful home cinema Receiver. 7 x 200 watts, Cinema Seven power amps, 7 x 200 and 7 x 400 Signature True SubWoofer 13 inch cube True Sub MKIV 11 inch cube and Junior Sub Woofer 9 inch cube -all with two drivers, to as low as 16hz, 116 SPL and 360 cu ins of air movement, 1200 or 2700 watt patented amp technology. Solid state power amps 2 channel (2 x 300 and 2 x 600) and 5 channel (5 x 220 watts and 5 x 430 watts patented amp technology (no heat sinks), Classic tube preamp and Theatre Grand III processor preamp

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X-Demo & Second Hand Items – January 2004

	Was	Now
CD players DACs & Transports		
Arcam CD 82 Silver S/H	600	399
Accuphase DP65V CD Player X-demo	4250	2995
Accuphase DP75V CD Player 24/192 S/H	7500	4995
dCS Elgar 24/192 Non Firewire S/H	8500	3999
dCS Purcell Upsampler Non Firewire S/H	2999	1695
Mark Levinson No 31.5 Transport S/H	9999	4999
Primare D30.2 CD Player S/H	1500	995
Resolution Audio Opus 21 CD Player X-demo	2750	1999
Theta Data Basic II Transport S/H	2397	995
Theta Generation V Balanced S/H	6290	2999
Theta Carmen CD/DVD Transport S/H	3499	1995
Wadia 301 CD player X-demo	3650	2995

	Was	Now
Turntables Tonearms & Cartridges		
Avid Acutus Turntable Chrome X-demo	6000	3799
Benz Micro LP New & Boxed	2200	1799
Kuzma Stabi/Stogi S Turntable New & Boxed	1295	1099
Lyra Helikon MC New & Boxed	1195	995
Lehmann Audio Black Cube SE New & Boxed	650	449
McCormack Phono Stage New and Boxed	650	399
Roksan Artexerxes MC Phono Stage S/H	549	179
Roksan TMS Piano Lacquer Turntable S/H	3250	1499
Roksan Artemiz Tonearm S/H	895	599
Roksan Xerxes/XPS 3/RB300/Corus Black S/H	N/A	449
Roksan Shiraz 600 hours S/H	1000	349

	Was	Now
Preamplifiers		
Audio Research LS1 Hybrid Preamplifier S/H	1525	599
Graaf GM13.5BII Valve Preamplifier X-demo S/H	4000	2999
Roksan L2 preamplifier S/H	1295	299
Spectral DMC12 s Phono X-demo	4750	3299
Spectral DMC30 Remote X-demo	8500	6500

	Was	Now
Amplifiers		
Audio Research D125 Valve Power Amplifier S/H	3360	1299
Audion Silver Knights 300b Mono S/H	3000	1399
Lavardin IS Reference S/H	2299	1699
Mark Levinson No334 Power Amplifier S/H	5995	3499
Unison Research S2K Remote X-demo	1295	995

	Was	Now
Loudspeakers		
Avalon Eclipse Maple X-demo	9800	7249
ATC Model10 R/W X-demo	1200	749
Harbeth Acoustics HL Compact 7 ES2 Eucalyptus S/H	1600	795
Indigo Model Two Centre Channel Cherry S/H	199	129
JM Lab Micro Utopia be Classic 4 months old S/H	4300	3399
Living Voice Avatars OBX-R Ebony X-demo	4000	2999
Sonus Faber Concerto Home Walnut S/H	995	649
Townshend Glastonbury II Black S/H	1800	699
Sonus Faber Leather Stands S/H	350	249
Verity Audio Fidelio Piano Lacquer X-demo	7995	4999

	Was	Now
Cables & Accessories		
Acoustic Zen Silver Signature Balanced 12ft	2700	1499
Audio Note AN-V 1.5m Interconnect RCA_RCA S/H	420	175
Cogan Hall EM-D 0.6m S/H	199	99
Kimber Illuminations AES/EBU 0.5m Digital cable S/H	169	99
Nordost Quattrofil Tonearm Cable S/H	735	399
Opera Lux 3 Tier Table Clear/Stainless X-demo	950	499
Roksan Short Table/Xerxes Stand S/H	119	59
Siltech LS38G3 2x4.75m Silver speaker cable/WBT S/H	1752	999
Something Solid 21" stands S/H	175	99
Townshend Audio Seismic Sink S/H	230	119
Transparent Music Link RCA-RCA 2m S/H	299	149
Transparent Reference Balanced 1.5m S/H	3299	1499
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	Was	Now
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CUSTOMISED 300BPSE monoblocks chromed chassis, Dact attenuators, three switched inputs, reviewed HFV Dec 2002. Jensens, Black Gates, DC power £1650. Crown ES-212 electrostatic hybrids, like Quads with subs £650. Tel: 01474 871 735 or Email: andydaish@aol.com (Jan/I)

MERIDIAN 506, Royd RRI, Rotel 1060, £600 the lot. Densen Beat integrated amplifier, £200. Buyer to collect. Lancs. Tel: 01744 736 218 (Jan/I)

QUAD ESL63 loudspeakers. Condition as new. Complete with manuals and boxes. Black stockings and brown woods. Ideal present for one who has almost everything. £1200 ono. Reluctant sale. Tel: 01480 411 203 (Jan/I)

WAD HD83 valve headphone amplifier plus Mullard ECL83 Nos valves x6 £150. Tel: 01248 853157 (Anglesey) (Jan)

AUDIO RESEARCH D70/II amp Absolute Sounds serviced £850, Quad ESL57's late black pair recent Quad service £750, Lumley Ref 120 monoblocks revalved £1100, Spondor SP100 monitors with stands £975, all in excellent condition. Tel: 0113 257 7793 (Jan/I)

CROWN DC300A power amplifier, 190wrms per channel, semi re-built, exemplary sound, very clean. £375. Tel: 07932 664480 or 07949 160 772 (Jan/I)

AUDIO MAGIC ST-1's, very like Wilson WATT's, £1200 (£3800). QIn Signature Splitfield speakers/stands, Nordost re-wired, HFV March '96, £800 (£2200). Wanted: AR-CD2, Wadia 830, AV rack. Tel: 0131 6610126, 07811 335060, or Email: zeb@relax.uk.com. (Jan/I)

NORDOST: SPM, 3m, bi-wire, £1250 (£2970). Red Dawn, 2.25m, bi-wire/amp, £250 (£730). Red Dawn RCA-DIN, DIN-DIN, £150. Acoustic Zen Hologram bi-wire shotgun, new, 2m, £800 (£1450). Tel: 0131 6610126, 07811 335060, or Email: zeb@relax.uk.com. (Jan/I)

PIONEER RTU11 open reel tape recorder, logic control, half track, 7 1/2 & 15 ips, permaloy heads, 10 1/2 reel, tape calibration, lovely condition £300. Tel: 01782 256 087 (Jan/I)

NAIM NAIT 3, boxed, instructions £275. Creek OBH-9SE M/C Pre, boxed £100. Harbeth HL-P3 £275. Nakamichi CR2-E, mint £100. NAD 3020, mint £50. Nakamichi BX-150 £60. Tel: 0772 962 0621 (Jan/I)

MUSICAL FIDELITY A308CR dual mono pre-amp and four M250 monoblock power amps, mint, boxed £3000. Less than one year old. Reason - going valve. Tel: 01623 861 103 or Email: dmjem@tiscali.co.uk (Jan/I)

MONITOR AUDIO speakers, PMC 703s, rosewood with plinths, boxed, mint £500. Speaker cable Audioquest Cobalt bi-amp runs £70. Audiolab 8000C pre-amp, boxed £150. Apollo AT5 table £50. Cerwin Vega IS15 speakers, mint £500. Tel: 07743 408717 or Email: johnhollander495@hotmail.com (Cheshire) (Jan/I)

QUAD SYSTEM: 44 pre-amp £225. 405-2 amp £200. FM4 tuner £200. All three on Quad rack £600. Quad serviced, all boxed, phon MM MC. Tel: 01268 758378 (Benfleet, Essex) (Jan/I)

AVI PRE-AMP, stereo power £475. Trichord Genesis CD £275. Teac VDRS10SE £300. Primare A20II integrated £300. Wanted: Lescon Cylinder power, Pioneer SA9900 amp, Target R1-R2 speaker stands. Tel: 01226 710 605 or 0777 927 4655 (Feb/I)

QUAD 77 Preamp + remote, CD player, FM tuner £795 ono. Ruark Crusader Mk2 floor standing speakers £545 ono. All superb condition with makers boxes. 2x 10m VdH CS122 speaker cable with Airloc connectors £65 ono. Tel: 023 8073 8935 (Jan/I)

DECCA S, checked by UK distributor. 78, FFSS, H4E heads all working. Mono LP head, C4E cartridge need retip. Decca arm. Decca head to SME arm adaptor. Collection - £500. Tel: Richard 020 8991 0762 (Jan/I)

AUDIOLAB 8000S £320, Audiolab 8000DAX plus Tag CDT20R transport £1100. No splitting this item. Epos ES11 £110. No stands. Will demonstrate North Somerset area. Tel: 01275 462 948 (Jan/I)

REVOX PR99 MkII £300. Revox A77-Dolby £225. Revox B77 MkII £275. Tascam Model 32 £275. Ferrograph Series 7 £150. Akai A000 D £65. Teac 3300 £200. Nakamichi BX300E £150. Nakamichi CR3 fault £90. Others available details 01388 815216 (Jan/I)

AUDIONOTE DAC I Signature £299 as new. Rothwell stepped attenuator pre amp £250 as new. Van Den Hul integration interconnect 0.6m £99. Tel: 01457 834465 (Jan/I)

HERTFORDSHIRE/NORTH LONDON Audio/Record Fair. Sunday 14th December 2003. 11.00 to 4.00. £3. 9.30am early entry £10. At Cuffley Hall, Maynard Place, Cuffley, Herts. 5 minutes from M25 Junction 25. Tel: 07944 909 209 for details (Jan/I)

MUSICAL FIDELITY NuVista integrated amplifier mint £1800. Quadraspire Six shelf equipment stand £150. Tel: 01977 620558 (Jan/I)

GARRARD 401, SME3, DL110 £415. Gale 401'S £395. Quad 34 (boxed) £135. Revox A77 £150. Rotel RT2100 tuner £85. Sony Quadophonic 2244 pre £75, B&O 1200 tape £45. Tel: 01273 541 462 (Brighton) (Jan/I)

MISSION 752F floor standing speakers £150. Project RPM4 turntable £160. North Star Model 3 24/96 DAC £120. NAD PP-1 phono preamp £10. DR66 two way crossover £10. Tel: 01248 853157 (Anglesey) (Jan)

CYRUS 2 amplifier with PSX. Cyrus tuner. Mission PCM 7000 CD. Ruark Sabres with stands. Comes with all leads, remotes, boxed. £600. Will separate. Tannoy Oxfords £80. NAD 402 £70. Tel: 01722 334694 (Salisbury) (Jan/I)

TDL RLT4's speakers boxed manuals rewired excellent condition £225. Buyer collects. Pioneer F-91 tuner boxed vgc £230. Tel: 01934 813666 after 6pm or Email: jpmc@supanet.com (South Bristol) (Jan/I)

CLASSIC ROTEL amplifier RA-820 BX3. Bi-wire, remote speakers, phones MM/MC phono stage £85. Kenwood cassette deck KX550HX. Dolby B.C. DPSS, timer mic. phones £65. Both excellent condition. Tel: 0113 273 3744 or Email: jsormerod@hotmail.com (Leeds) (Jan/I)

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AUDION STERLING EL34 STEREO CHROME	£499.00
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Now you can own a professionally built, high performance turntable at a fraction of the normal cost. All OL turntable kits are supplied in various forms:

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-The Complete Ultra Kit comes in two options. The Ultra Kit Classic offering a truly high end suspended sub-chassis turntable with beautifully finished solid wood plinth.

The Ultra Kit Modern offers the performance of the Ultra Kit Classic combined with the modern day skeletal styling.

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"I have to say the Rega modifications turn this humble arm into a real giant killer. Gone is the rather grey, sterile sound of the cooking Rega. Instead, tonal colour is fresh, dynamics have great speed and impact, and the sound stage is huge."
Hi-Fi World on structural modification

What Hi-Fi? gave this modification 5/5

Structural Modification - **£75**

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MERIDIAN 557 power amplifier, 200 wpc, under warranty until October 2004, mint, hardly used £995. Quad ESL-63 electrostatic speakers, fully serviced by Quad, fine condition £995. Tel: 01993 883523 (Jan/I)

NAIM AUDIO Allae speakers beautiful cherry finish, 12 months old, excellent condition, reason for sale upgrading, please call Rod 020 8689 8750 Home 020 8666 1309 Work (Jan/I)

CD TEAC VDRS transport TDI DAC boxed £600 ovno. May split. Tel: Mark 020 8547 2397 or 01959 572030 (Feb/I)

AUDIOLAB 8000 DAC £350. Con-Johnson PFIL-pre-amp £695. TubeTech Genesis monoblocks £1495. Marantz CD17K £595. Grant GM200 mono's (£4000) £1595. Meridian 601/602 (£4500) £1395. Audiostatic ES200 £1395. Apogee Calipers (new) £695. Tel: 07966 267404 or Email: coom@btinternet.com (Jan/I)

DPA ENLIGHTENMENT pre/pwr £695. Roksan DAC/PWR/supply £385. Nakamichi CRI £195. ECA Vista £395. Soundlab Quantums £695. Trichord Pulsar/pwr/supply £495. Meridian 500trans £595. Art Audio Quintet £695. Counterpoint SA12 £545. Tel: 07966 267404 or Email: coom@btinternet.com (Essex) (Jan/I)

2x LINN Ninka floorstanding loudspeakers, American cherry, perfect condition, £950 boxed. Arcam Alpha Nine CD player excellent condition, £350 unboxed. Contact Ed on 07753 662297, 01753 823468 or Email: edturkington@hotmail.com (Slough) (Jan/I)

RUSS ANDREWS The Powerblock 5 foot Reference Powercord £386 - £250. Four 5ft high current Power Cords fitted with 350 IEC £244 - £120. Tel: 0161 345 9804 or 07966 458940 (Jan/I)

MF A3.24 upsampling DAC £500. Northstar Stardac Model 3 multibit 24/96 DACS £250. Teatrack 3.2m biwire cable terminated £90. Marantz PM66SE amp remote mint £40. Original boxes. No offers. Tel: 0151 608 4481 (Wirral) (Jan)

LOWTHER DX3's £250, in JT Horn enclosures; complete speakers £1000. Dynavector Superstereo Adp2 processor, mint £350. Cartridge MAN5 Music Maker Two, unused £300. Tel: 01373 301423 (Jan/I)

TECHNICS SERIES 2000 pre-power amps, 100 watts channel, compact disc player, mint £975 (originally £2800) Thorens TD124 turntable, SME arm, plinth, mint £275. For details 01782 256087 (Jan/I)

MISSION CYRUS 2/PSX vgc £300 ovno. Tel: 01628 440073 Email: dav.ard63@ntlworld.com (S. Bucks). 2 KEF B139 bass, vgc £100 ovno Tel: 01628 440073 Email: dav.ard63@ntlworld.com (S. Bucks). Oscilloscope, Scopex 14D-10 dual trace, 10MHz, probes, instructions vgc £50 Tel: 01628 440073 (S.Bucks) (Jan/I)

VIENNA ACOUSTICS Mozart speakers (floorstanders), black piano finish, Hi-Fi Choice recommended v.g. condition with boxes £640 (£1500). Supra Lo-Rad power cable £25. Russ Andrews purifier block £320. Tel: 0131 4437686 or Email: autobahn11@aol.com (Jan/I)

CYRUS 2 + PSX £150. Kef Reference 101/3 speakers £200. Excellent condition and boxed. Tel: 07736 126028 or 01304 832681 or Email: peter_sandiford@lineone.net (Kent) (Jan/I)

WANTED - ROGERS, Harbeth or similar, one pair of BBC LS 3/5a speakers. Private buyer. Tel: 01394 388399 (Jan/I)

ZINGALI 212 Home monitors. Patented wooden compression horns. Fantastic sound from these beautiful Italian speakers. 18 months old, very good condition. Maple finish (£10,700) £5000 ono. Tel: 020 7439 1365 or Email: troy@runbox.com (Jan/I)

CEC BELT drive CD transport. Superb Japanese transport immaculate condition. One of the best transports money can buy. Wonderful sound great value (£5000) £2000 ovno. Tel: 020 7439 1365 or Email: troy@runbox.com (Jan/I)

TACT MILLENNIUM Mk2. The original and best digital amplifier absolutely brilliant. Immaculate condition. Move away forces sale of all. (£6250) £2500 ono. Tel: 020 7439 1365 or Email: troy@runbox.com (Jan/I)

MAGNEPLANAR SPEAKERS Model MGI Imp. Clear, detailed and dynamic sound very good condition £380. Tel: Peter 07967 487543 (South Staffs) (Jan/I)

AUDIO RESEARCH SPI6 valve pre amp with phono stage and remote control £1495 (£2499). American Acoustic Developments (AAD) E-48 slim-line floorstanding 3-way speakers, 90dB sensitivity, 5 stars What Hi-Fi, £395 (£595). Both mint with boxes & manuals Tel: 01202 767873 (Poole) (Jan/I)

WANTED: KEF T27 tweeter(s) type 1027 Tel: Steve daytime 01293 654749 (Jan/I)

TDL STUDIO 3 transmission line speakers walnut veneer vgc with spiked plinth, stands and original boxes. £200. Tel: 01635 676620 (Berkshire) (Jan/I)

MERIDIAN 504 tuner £300. NAD C370 amplifier £300. Rotel RCD 971 CD player £150. Pioneer PDR 509 CD recorder £150. B&W P4 loudspeakers light cherry £250. Epos ES14 loudspeakers £175. Tel: 0161 723 2835 evenings (Jan/I)

QUAD 22 pre, new, caps, gold phonos, wired for CD vgc 3125. Cambridge Audio CD4SE with remote and handbook £95. Tel: 01225 315401 (Bath) (Jan/I)

LEAK TROUGHLINE 3 GWO. KLS9 kit. Hagerman Bugle phono stage. Faulty Beam-Echo valve amplifier. Valve amplifier. 16" paper woofer. Target rack-ing. HK610. Speaker cable. Marantz RC-52CD. Auction: www.stores.ebay.co.uk/afewfewtrics Wanted: oak plinth turntable Tel: 07960 369666 (Jan)

MAGNEPLANAR MG 1.4 boxed mint £600. Leak Troughline III £110. Krell KSA50 boxed mint £750. Rotel pre amp MC & MM £65. Linn LP12 Valhalla with silver 250 arm (new arm) boxed, mint £750. Tel: 0121 530 0600 (Jan/I)

KEL 80 Valve monoblocks - (World Audio Design) Enchanting sound of valves with 80 watts per channel of valve power. Used as part of Home Cinema setup. Upgraded, matched Quad EL34 valves, Blackgate and Jensen capacitors. recently serviced. Cost over £1200, asking £600. Tel: 020 8205 4710 (Jan/I)

WAD HD83 valve headphone amplifier plus Mullard ECL83 Nos valves x6 £150. Tel: 01248 853157 (Anglesey) (Jan)

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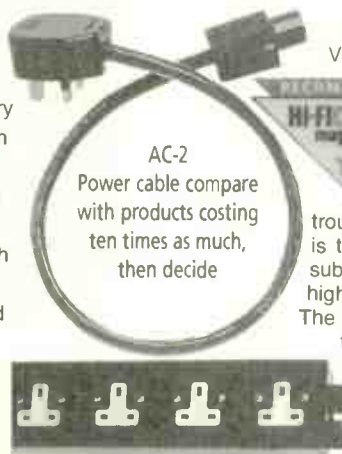
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FROM DECEMBER 2003 ISSUE

MISSION M-TIME home entertainment system. Built in tuner subwoofer and centre speakers includes rear speakers, excellent condition £450. Tel: 020 8462 3031 Email: reevopath@yahoo.co.uk (Dec/I)

ROKSAN ROK DPI transport excellent condition £275. Wanted: Sony SCD-1 compact disc player must be mint £1500. Cash waiting. Tel: 01904 763157 or Mobile: 07960 615375 (York) (Dec/I)

WANTED: MUSICAL

Fidelity A1 must be in excellent condition. Tel: 0790 5012997 (Dec/I)

NAIM 82 preamp Hicap two 250s serviced SBLs new units CDI £750. Linn Ittok Karma Naim Armageddon active passive crossover SBLs excellent condition, boxed. Offers. Tel: 01623 458628 (Dec/I)

BOW TECHNOLOGY XL integrated £1100 mint, boxed. Veritas 20 and stands £650 JPS semiconductor + 2x 6ft BI 400 JPS ACT Cord 5ft £150. Nordask SPM Ref Bal interconnect £275. Tel: 01903 721556 (Dec)

LEAK STEREO 20, rebuilt using high quality components, tests well, looks good, no tweaks. Perfect just as H.J. intended. A snip at £295. Tel: 0161 456 4649 (Dec/I)

LOWTHER ACOUSTAS, two non-matching, with renovated PM6A drivers. Original plywood cabinets sound but scruffy £250 ono. Tel: 020 8677 8183 (Dec/I)

TALK ELECTRONICS Hurricane 3 line preamp, Tornado 3 100w power amp. Black, remote, manuals, boxed, excellent condition (£1600 new) £600 ono. Tel: 01604 709541 (Northampton) (Dec/I)

WHARFEDALE PACIFIC Evo 20 loudspeakers. Only one month old. Genuine reason for sale £375 ono. Tel: 01383 416263 after 6pm or Email: ds8292@aol.com (Fife, Scotland) (Dec/I)

YAMAHA NS-1000-M exceptional condition, £1500. Sonusfaber Granpiano £1100. Musical Fidelity A370 £950. Trichord Delphini 2 PSU. New! £800. Orbe DC/VC boxed £1600. Mycro RB300 Goldring £400. Thorens TD 124-II 3012 Tel: 0117 955 6555 or 07979 514450 (Dec/I)

WILSON BENESCH Circle turntable with ACTO.5 tonearm (Full Circle without Ply Cartridge). Excellent condition. Great looking and sounding deck £1200. Tel: 07970 798099 or Email: mark@pearsem.freereserve.co.uk (Dec/I)

ROKSAN ROK L2.5 pre-amp, Artaxerxes Phono Stage and DS1.5 Power Supply. Five-star reviews - "sounds as good as it looks". Excellent condition £1200. Tel: 07970 798099 or Email: mark@pearsem.freereserve.co.uk (Dec/I)

E.A.R. 864 full function valve preamplifier excellent £985 ono. Thorens 124 turntable (mint) complete with heavy duty plinth £385. Tel: evenings 01745 331681, Mobile: 07714 530889 (North Wales) (Dec/I)

SPENDOR SPI speakers wanted in good condition. Would like demonstration, Tel: 01752 266753 anytime (Dec/I)

QUAD ELS 63's, good condition, good working order £975 ono. Tel: 01323 737 850 answerphone. (Eastbourne) (Dec)

CASTLE HOWARD S2 mint condition cherry £595. Rega RB300 tonearm £70. Tel: 020 8851 9198 (Dec)

LOWTHER FIDELIO speakers piano black finish factory made fitted PM5A units no service required £1600. Tel: 01293 824667 after 6pm or Email: jlc@beeb.net (Jan/I)

TEST EQUIPMENT Ferrograph laboratory test RTS-ATU, oscilloscope, B+O -W+F, spectrum analyser, AC/DC millivoltmeter, mains variac, FM generator, DC+DC supply, counter, magnifier lamp, calibration tapes, complete £1000 ono Tel: Roy Walker, 01253 875194 (Blackpool) (Dec/I)

LINN KARIK Numerik, can demonstrate £1150. Tel: 01621 860474 or Email: njrward@aol.com (Dec/I)

DENON C.D.R. recorder CDR M30 for R and RW discs mint £150. Mirage S.10 Mosfet class A-B bass reflex subwoofer little use black ash £100. Tel: 01785 850535 (Dec/I)

MUSICAL FIDELITY Tri-Vista SACD Super Audio CD player, mint, boxed £3000. Tel: 020 8531 5979 or 07903 265205 (Jan/I)

AUDIOLAB 8000Q preamp and Audiolab 8000P power amp. Both unmarked and in original condition. £795 the pair. Quad 66 CD player £195. DPA Enlightenment DAC £295. Tel: 01772 601288 (Dec/I)

GARRARD 401 turntable complete with manual, mounting template and original box. Had little use and in good condition, best offer over £150. Tel: 01952 510454 or Email: frbrown@hotmail.com (Dec/I)

CHORD SPM800 power amplifier, 160 watts per channel, superb sound, as used by BBC £725. AVI S2000MP preamplifier, with phono stage £350. Both boxed, mint, with manuals. Tel: 01597 860166 (Dec/I)

ROKSAN DAC/PWR supply £395. Audiostatic ES200 £1395. Soundlab Quantums £695. Apogee Calipers (brand new) £1695. Meridian 500 £595. C Johnson Pfil-preamp £695. Counterpoint SA12 £595. SA20 £895. Tunetech Genesis monos £1695. Tel: 07966 267404 or Email: coom@btinternet.com (Dec/I)

ART AUDIO Qunitet £695. Lumley pre/ref £795. Unison Smart 845 monos Mystery pre-amp (£6000) £2850. Grant GM200 monos (£4000) £1595. Mirage 10901 £395. Iso/Hera £295 Notts Analogue Paragrin £395. Tel: 07966 267404 or Email: coom@btinternet.com (Dec/I)

JVC 5456X Quadraphonic receiver, as new, £250. Sony TC177 cassette deck, flagship 3 head model as new £150. Mordaunt Short Pageant Series 2 speakers, vgc £50. Tel: 020 8281 0029 (Dec/I)

WANTED: MARANTZ Hi-Fi. CD 23 TT1000II turntable. SC-23 MA23, Model 7 pre amp, Model 9 power amp. Tel: 020 7359 3050 work or Email: martinb@burwin.co.uk (Dec/I)

LOWTHER PAIR Auditorium Acoustas. Each has 2x PM6 (Alnico). All with recent new surrounds and spiders. Superb, detailed sound. £650 ono. For more info or audition telephone: 01743 850 993 or Email: dnsy@aol.com (Dec/I)



X-Demo & Second Hand Items – January 2004

	Was	Now
CD players DACs & Transports		
Arcam CD 82 Silver S/H	600	399
Accuphase DP65V CD Player X-demo	4250	2995
Accuphase DP75V CD Player 24/192 S/H	7500	4995
dCS Elgar 24/192 Non Firewire S/H	8500	3999
dCS Purcell Upsampler Non Firewire S/H	2999	1695
Mark Levinson No 31.5 Transport S/H	9999	4999
Primare D30.2 CD Player S/H	1500	995
Resolution Audio Opus 21 CD Player X-demo	2750	1999
Theta Data Basic II Transport S/H	2397	995
Theta Generation V Balanced S/H	6290	2999
Theta Carmen CD/DVD Transport S/H	3499	1995
Wadia 301 CD player X-demo	3650	2995
Turntables Tonearms & Cartridges		
Avid Acutus Turntable Chrome X-demo	6000	3799
Benz Micro LP New & Boxed	2200	1799
Kuzma Stabi/Stogi S Turntable New & Boxed	1295	1099
Lyra Helikon MC New & Boxed	1195	995
Lehmann Audio Black Cube SE New & Boxed	650	449
McCormack Phono Stage New and Boxed	650	399
Roksan Artexerxes MC Phono Stage S/H	549	179
Roksan TMS Piano Lacquer Turntable S/H	3250	1499
Roksan Artemiz Tonearm S/H	895	599
Roksan Xerxes/XPS 3/RB300/Corus Black S/H	N/A	449
Roksan Shiraz 600 hours S/H	1000	349
Preamplifiers		
Audio Research LS1 Hybrid Preamplifier S/H	1525	599
Graaf GM13.5BII Valve Preamplifier X-demo S/H	4000	2999
Roksan L2 preamplifier S/H	1295	299
Spectral DMC12 s Phono X-demo	4750	3299
Spectral DMC30 Remote X-demo	8500	6500
Amplifiers		
Audio Research D125 Valve Power Amplifier S/H	3360	1299
Audion Silver Knights 300b Mono S/H	3000	1399
Lavardin IS Reference S/H	2299	1699
Mark Levinson No334 Power Amplifier S/H	5995	3499
Unison Research S2K Remote X-demo	1295	995
Loudspeakers		
Avalon Eclipse Maple X-demo	9800	7249
ATC Model10 R/W X-demo	1200	749
Harbeth Acoustics HL Compact 7 ES2 Eucalyptus S/H	1600	795
Indigo Model Two Centre Channel Cherry S/H	199	129
JM Lab Micro Utopia be Classic 4 months old S/H	4300	3399
Living Voice Avatars OBX-R Ebony X-demo	4000	2999
Sonus Faber Concerto Home Walnut S/H	995	649
Townshend Glastonbury II Black S/H	1800	699
Sonus Faber Leather Stands S/H	350	249
Verity Audio Fidelio Piano Lacquer X-demo	7995	4999
Cables & Accessories		
Acoustic Zen Silver Signature Balanced 12ft	2700	1499
Audio Note AN-V 1.5m Interconnect RCA_RCA S/H	420	175
Cogan Hall EM-D 0.6m S/H	199	99
Kimber Illuminations AES/EBU 0.5m Digital cable S/H	169	99
Nordost Quattrofil Tonearm Cable S/H	735	399
Opera Lux 3 Tier Table Clear/Stainless X-demo	950	499
Roksan Short Table/Xerxes Stand S/H	119	59
Siltech LS38G3 2x4.75m Silver speaker cable/WBT S/H	1752	999
Something Solid 21" stands S/H	175	99
Townshend Audio Seismic Sink S/H	230	119
Transparent Music Link RCA-RCA 2m S/H	299	149
Transparent Reference Balanced 1.5m S/H	3299	1499
Transparent Music Link Ultra Balanced 7.26m S/H	2349	1499

	Was	Now
Tuners & Tape Decks, Power Supplies		
AKG C1000 Condenser Mic S/H	241	120
Magnum Dynalab		
FT-R Remote Switcher for FT101A/Etude (New & Boxed)	450	299
Primare T21 Tuner S/H	599	349

Bargains under a £100

Sony TCK-461s 2 head cassette decks X-demo	199	99
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AUDIO ANALOGUE Puccini SE £325, dual mono 50w integrated amplifier in black. Very good condition. See review on www.hi-fiworld.co.uk Tel: 07866 734011 or Email: alex@lynx-web.co.uk (Dec/1)

LINN NINKAS, cherrywood, granite plinths £650. Kairn phono £400. LK400 2x 5m £50. Aktiv crossovers £100 (pair). VDH D102 Mk III, Eichmann Bullets 0.6m pair £45. Art DI/O D-A converter £100. Tel: 0113 266 0160 (Dec/1)

MERIDIAN 500 CD transport, Meridian 518 processor, superb condition (£2500) £700. Audiosynthesis DAX-2 converter, latest specification, immaculate (£2000) £700. Proac Response D15 loudspeakers, new, boxed, (£2000) £1000. Quality interconnect bargains. Tel: 0117 952 1341 (Bristol) (Dec/1)

NAIM XPS mint and boxed £1300. Naim NAP250, mint and boxed £1200. Tel: 07967 031286 and leave voicemail - will call back ASAP. (Gloucestershire) (Dec/1)

MICHELL TRANSCRIPTORS, Transcriptors arm, A&RP77 £595. B&W DM6's £375. Quad 44, 405-2 £355. Teac VRDS-7 CD £115. Luxman T112 tuner £90. Pioneer A400 £90. Leak Troughline Stereo £80. Tel: 01273 541 462 (Brighton) (Dec/1)

SME MODEL 10 with MCS150 wired Series V arm LV arm upgrade. Less than one year old, £3950. Van Den Hul Colibri XPM cartridge, less than 150 hours use, new \$6000, accept £3100. Tel: 01623 752 036 (work), 0115 964 1033 (home) (Dec/1)

FOR SALE: Audio Research PH3 phono amp: All new valves, manual and boxed £720. Tel: 01903 247 779 (Sussex) (Dec/1)

REL Q BASS, excellent £150. Pioneer 904 CD £75. Arcam Alpha 9 CD £300. Tel: 0191 422 1156 (Dec/1)

CANARY CA-608-LV amplifier £2500. Living Voice OBX-R maple £3200. Electrofluidics Monolith 20-20 speaker cable bi-wired, 4m £500, 1.5m £180. All less than one year old. Tel: 01623 752 036 (work), 0115 964 1033 (home) (Dec/1)

REL STRATA III, 6 months old in walnut £575 (£800). Michell ISO phonostage (just serviced) £175. Ortofon MC25FL new, £150 (£300). 2x 0.5 metre Kimber Silverstreak interconnects £75 each (£150). Tel: Paul 01536 763 737 or 01536 764 039 (Dec/1)

S.T.D. 305M turntable, Hadcock GI-228 arm £325. Garrard 301, Garrard PA12 arm, wood plinth, perspex cover. Garrard SPG3 gauge £350. Harman Kardon HK1400 line amp £165. Harman Kardon TU911 FM tuner £75. Sugden A25 amplifier £165. Tannoy 633 speakers £150. Tel: 01977 732 087 after 5pm. (Castleford, West Yorkshire) (Dec)

ARCAM FMJ22 amp, silver, 100wpc, 11 months, boxed, mint (£1000) £599. Marantz CD6000KI, black, remote, £249. Arcam P75+ £199. Quad III speakers, black £319. Teac MD100 MiniDisc, remote, boxed (£249) £99. Tel: 0115 960 3934 (Nottingham) (Dec/1)

BBC LOUDSPEAKERS legendary accurate monitors: Spondor SPI rosewood, Rogers Studios, black, Celef monitors teak £250 pair. Meridian 206 CD, boxed, remote, top Philips transport £250. Rogers compact monitors £150. Tel: 01704 530 928 (evenings) (Dec/1)

WANTED. A.D.C. Graphic Equaliser models. Soundshaper 2 IC hi-fi size or Soundshaper 3 19" rack mount. Maybe interested in other models. Any condition working or not working. Black or silver. Please contact Sat on 07947 469747 anytime or 020 8539 8513 after 7pm or Email: satriyat@btopenworld.com (Dec/1)

VADIS OTL, latest spec, new valves, recently serviced, excellent condition, one owner, £1400. Tel: 01208 872 316 (Cornwall) (Dec/1)

KLIPSCH LA SCALA speakers, 104dB horn loaded speakers, black laquer, boxed, Klappenburger x-overs. Excellent condition, buyer collect (£2950). Audionote ANJSP speakers excellent condition, boxed, new Audionote stands, light ash. (£600). Micromega Stage6 CD player, perfect condition, including remote (£400). Tel: 0771 185 5599. (Dec/1)

SHANLING CD-T100 CD player, 24/96 oversampling. HDCD valve or solid state output. Remote. Brand new, un-used, un-opened box, full manufacturers warranty (£1650) £1399 ovno. Tel: 07980 737 948 or Email: fono@fono.freereserve.co.uk (Dec/1)

JOHN SHEARN Phase 5 monoblocks £700 (£1600). 2x 100w phono and XLR balanced. Boxed and unmarked. Piano black and gold. I have four and now need only two. Tel: 01544 340 575 (Dec/1)

FOR SALE: Martin Logan Aeries £960. Quad ESL57, bronze, Quad serviced £495. Yamaha DSP2070 £125. Tel: 01286 660506, 07899 752810, 01278 421408 (Dec/1)

TURNABLES: REGA Planar 3 with Rega 100, AR Universal with Shure V15-4, Pioneer PL12D-II with Stanton 811S, £100 each in York. Tel: 01904 796428 or Email: cam@markland.net (Dec/1)

ALCHEMIST TSD-1 24bit DAC £120. Videologic DAB tuner DRX-601E £120. Rogers BBC studio monitors LS3/6 15ohm £240. All with boxes. Tel: 01904 796428 or Email: cam@markland.net (York) (Dec/1)

LINN LK100 x4 active modules £995. Linn LK280 Spark, boxed, mint £325 (4). Meridian 601 digital pre-amp, boxed, mint, £650. Luxman 75 watt integrated £80. Luxman 30 watt classic integrated £45. Tel: 00 3531 295 4076 (Dec/1)

REGA 'CURSA' remote-controlled line-level pre-amp £230. Rega 'Exon' monoblocks 125wpc £250 each. All mint condition, boxed with manuals. Tel: 01962 848 425 (Winchester) (Dec/1)

LUXMAN LV105 amplifier 80wpc, rare opportunity for this purchase £300. Castle Harlech S2 Santos, rosewood speakers, 12 months old, hardly used, boxed, £500. Eppo ESII speakers with dedicated stands, immaculate, boxed £200. Tel: 07742 201 188 (Dec/1)

PRIMARE D30.2 CD player £895 (£1500). Primare A30-1 amplifier £895 (£1500). Both less than one year old and completely like new. High quality accessories free if purchased together. Tel: 01529 410 171 (Dec/1)

NAIM 92-90 pre power amplifier £425. Naim CD3 CD player £375. Dali Royal Menuet 2 loudspeakers with Atacama stands £225. All mint condition, boxed. Tel: 01246 232 085 (Chesterfield, Derbyshire) (Dec/1)

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November 2003

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Tel: 020 7328 9275

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TECHNICS SP10 MkII £300, Revox C221 CD £750, A77 MkII £300, PR99 MkII £950, MkIII £1200, Amcron PB-One P.A. £600, Studer A710 £500, B67 VU £750, A807 £950, A80 VU £1200, Rogers LS5/8 pr £500. Tel: 01246 275 479 or Email: j.i.tipping@amserv.net (Jan/I)

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AUDIOQUEST OPAL Truth RCA, 1.0 mtr (£260) £175. QUAD 989 Brand new, cancelled order (£4600) £3900. Naim NAC 32.5 pre, with phono stage, mint condition £250. Telephone Jules on 01792 280061, Email info@sounddrjuleshifi.co.uk Web: www.sounddrjuleshifi.co.uk (Jan/I)

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The Keci82 was created from a brief that demanded simplicity, ease of build and a super low cost. In order to achieve a reasonable power output we went for a push-pull amplifier.

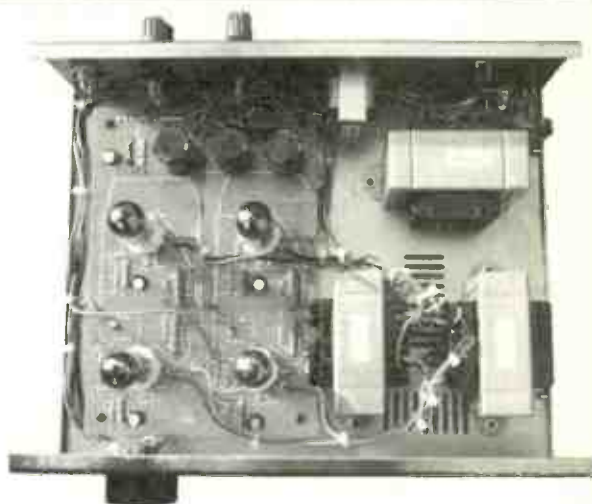
We chose the ECL82, a triode/output pentode. This tube is readily available and has a good sound. In push-pull mode it delivers 8Watts. Realistically you need a speaker of around 89dB or above. This is possible at a budget price - try the smaller Triangle models, or a Tannoy mX3 or even one of the older Missions like the 773e, or if you like building your own speakers, try the Adire Audio HE10.1, as reviewed in HFW October 2002 issue.

You will see that the front has only a volume control, and it is fed by one pair of phono sockets. A selector and tape/source switch were not used in this amplifier as they are tricky to wire up, and the aim was to make it easy to build. In fact, in many ways the Keci82 would be great powering a second system, using a CD player as a source, and will definitely give you a taster of what valves can offer. Measuring 30cm wide, 23.5cm deep and 11cm height with feet, it is entirely self-enclosed. The valves are visible through the four upper circular vent holes (one directly above each valve). We have kept the look simple with the minimalist front panel holding the volume potentiometer. The two-part chassis is constructed from 1.6mm mild steel with a durable black powder-coat finish. The whole unit is very sturdy, weighing in at 9kgs.

The signal input is in the form of a pair of gold plated RCA phono sockets that sit at the rear of the chassis. The speaker sockets accept 4mm banana plugs as well as bare wire. The mains switch is positioned at the rear of the amplifier, on the right hand corner for easy access. Mains power is received via an IEC lead. The Keci82 is based on a printed circuit board (PCB). The PCB is easy to follow with all component names, locations and orientations shown clearly. The amplifier requires no set up, you just turn it on. The kit will come with comprehensive instructions taking you through the build step-b-step.

SOUND QUALITY BY SIMON POPE

Purity is the key to this amplifier's design and sound. Because there's very little to get in the way of the signal what you get is an exceptionally sweet and simple sound that also has a superbly wholesome roundness to it. A high quality recording of Mahler's Das Lied Von Der Erde on Reference Recordings showed that the Keci82 faithfully reproduced all the depth and space of a full symphonic orchestra without any problems. Violins were smooth and sweet, as was percussion (which virtually sparkled) and the woodwind section was especially impressive, with a spacious and airy sound.



A run through Miles Davis's Kind Of Blue saw the little integrated delivering a detailed and precise sound that highlighted the warmth of Coltrane's tenor sax and the rich, deep sound of the upright bass. Rock and Pop records such as Radiohead's 'Lucky' demonstrated that the valves inside the amp, whilst small, are quite robust sounding, with commendable clout and bass depth for a humble budget 8W valve amp. This is a great introduction to the sonic art of the valve amp and a big upgrade for anybody with a mid-price solid-state amp that wishes to swap over to something more musically engaging, for a price that's virtually as cheap as chips!

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

Frequency response	+/-3dB 15Hz - 75kHz
power output	8 watts into an 8 ohm load
sensitivity	850mV (suitable for CD)
hum	0.5mV

**The Keci82 amplifier kit is available from World Audio Design
Tel/fax: 00 44 (0) 1908 218836 or order on-line at
www.worldaudiodesign.co.uk**

**Keci82 amplifier kit (UK price) £195.00
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FOR THE BUYER

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

FOR THE SELLER

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 some one 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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 MAGAZINE MARKETING

Metal Master

David Price looks at Sony's long lost TCK-81 cassette deck – its first ever metal tape machine...

The nineteen seventies are commonly thought of as the golden age of vinyl – what with triple album sets, coloured discs and record-breaking single sales. But it was also the beginning of one of the least likely format phenomenons the world has witnessed – Compact Cassette. By the end of the decade, the Japanese manufacturers had all but wiped out the European competition, and even added a new word to their country's lexicon, 'tepu rekoda' (i.e. tape recorder) as a tribute to the format that was transforming the bottom line of so many of their consumer electronics companies!

Nakamichi was the king of cassette – and everybody knew that. But it didn't stop some much larger companies trying to steal its crown. To wit, we saw some stunning stuff from the likes of Aiwa, Pioneer, Technics and even Hitachi! But the main rival was Sony – which threw vast amounts of its corporate muscle at the problem of making the ultimate cassette recorder.

The problem was that Nakamichi made its own heads, which were dramatically better than its rivals, and accounted for so much of the performance advantage. By the late seventies, companies such as Pioneer, Victor (JVC) and Akai had come up with stunning direct drive transports, but still couldn't touch Nakamichi on

heads. It was the advent of metal tape that finally gave them the fillip they needed – here was a formulation that could routinely take high levels at very high bias, and could at last give them the frequency response and dynamic range numbers that Nakamichi had been getting for years (with plain old Chrome).

Sony's TCK-81 was its first shot at Nakamichi's bows. It had made some seriously tasty stuff before, but here was something that could achieve the magical quoted 20Hz-20kHz using Sony METALLIC (Type IV) tape – at last! The company pulled the stops out, and created something that – by the standards of the day in 1980 – was truly exceptional.

Funnily enough, it actually lacked some of the trick transport bits that, say, Pioneer's rival CTF-1250 boasted. There was no multiple quartz phase locked loop direct drive motor array – instead it was a finely aligned brushless, slotless, linear affair driving the capstan via belts working with just one other. The heads weren't stunning either. Sony had repeatedly used Ferrite & Ferrite heads in the seventies, which didn't wear out overnight (unlike Pioneer's Permalloy, for example), but lacked the latter's fine high frequency response. The TCK-81 got Sony's new Sendust & Ferrite record and

playback, which lent it an extra few kHz up top, but it still wasn't quite state of the art.

The brilliance of the TCK-81 was its superb implementation of relatively modest technology allied to some truly excellent real world facilities. Its backlit LED meters with switchable peak hold were the best around. The calibration mode was the easiest to use, and one of the most effective. There were no silly track search facilities. It was simple, clean and purposeful inside and out – and exquisitely well executed and aligned.

The result was a truly superb sound quality. Back in 1981, only a mid-price (or better) Nakamichi could offer such warm, open and natural sonics. Very stable (perhaps not the very best in the business, though), wonderfully smooth and effortlessly musical, the TCK-81 was a joy to listen to. Feed it an 89p TDK D and you'd get a more extended treble than you'd have thought possible, give it AD and you could hit +6dB on peaks with ease. TDK SA was smooth and crisp like few others, and Sony's late, lamented Fe-Cr (FerriChrome) formulation had a treble sweetness that no Philips Chrome could match. Then, when you were really serious, it was time to slide the BIAS and EQ switches to Type IV and bring on the metal. TDK MA or Sony METALLIC formulations were blinding – brilliantly fast and incisive, with seemingly endless dynamics.

Here was a Nakamichi rival for two thirds of the price, that equalled (and occasionally bettered) them sonically, and ran rings around them in terms of ease of use and – some would say – style. It cost £300 – more money than a Linn LP12 back then, but many thought it superb value all the same. The good news is that they're virtually forgotten now – if you can find a good, well looked after example, you'll not pay more than £100. Something to make digital recording fans think twice, methinks....!





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