

# hi-fi WORLD

SEPTEMBER 2004 UK £3.40



## AB FAB

Sonus Faber Cremona Auditor loudspeakers

## X FACTOR

Roksan's new Xerxes X turntable



SEPTEMBER 2004

## POWER NAD

NAD's C352 amplifier blasts off



### VINYL SPECIAL:

- Thorens TD160 transformed
- Whest Audio PS20/MSU20
- olde worlde: NAD 5120
- six budget cartridges
- LP vs. CD - update
- turntable toolkit
- Koetsu Red



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*Scoop*



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World Radio History

# welcome

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**david price**

It was twenty-two years ago today that Compact Disc began to play. The format took off slowly, but as soon as player prices dropped, CD sales went ballistic - and the world's most popular music carrier had arrived...

Now, after a decade of soaraway success, the first 'digital audio disc' is beginning to flounder. Like any product in

the marketplace, its sales are following the classic 'bell curve'. Every marketing man will tell you this is a basic law of economics - in commerce as in life, what goes up must come down!

But what of the dear old vinyl record? Until 1992 it too appeared to be following this classic trend (launch-boom-bust), but when the time came for it to disappear off the map, sales began to rise again!

Don't get me wrong - the LP record is not about to usurp Compact Disc as the world's mass music carrier, nor will it challenge the stellar rise of DVD, but the fact remains that it simply hasn't fizzled out. There are a great many people for whom vinyl has something that the digital 'new kids on the block' plainly lack.

How so? Well, the club scene remains buoyant, many rock and jazz buyers still love the vinyl 'experience' and last - and probably least - us audiophiles can't live without it, either...

So we've devoted this issue to the beautiful black stuff. We have Roksan's brand new Xerxes X turntable - the reinvention of an eighties classic - on p13. Then there's a supertest of six affordable moving magnets on p17, and our giant 'turntable toolkit' feature on p34. Here, Noel Keywood explains everything you ever wanted to know about analogue but were afraid to ask...

On p40, there's the story of how one *Hi-Fi World* reader (re)built his classic Thorens into one of the best turntables in the world - for just a few pounds! Then we have the brilliant new Whet Audio phono stage reviewed on p44, and the classic Koetsu Red moving coil cartridge on p46. Finally Noel Keywood contrasts the decline of CD with the enduring appeal of LP on p48.

There's some stunning new digital kit in this issue too - from Linn's Unidisk 1.1 (p51) to Musical Fidelity's brand new X-DAC v3 et al (p55). Factor in NAD's punchy C352 amplifier (p58), the exquisite Sonus Faber Cremona Auditor loudspeakers (p60), the latest digital hi-res releases (p74) - plus five pages of comment, eight pages of letters and a twelve page buying guide, and *Hi-Fi World* - like vinyl - has something for everyone...

*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.

**hi-fi world**  
[www.hi-fiworld.co.uk](http://www.hi-fiworld.co.uk)

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KILBURN PARK ROAD  
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[www.hi-fiworld.co.uk](http://www.hi-fiworld.co.uk)

visit our website for a comprehensive list of all the products we have reviewed ever the past 11 years

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# Summer Systems Special

## Part Exchange and Interest Free Credit at KJ West One



**FEATURED SYSTEM**

SYSTEM 3 ★★★★★	
UNICO CD Plyr	£1175.00
UNICO Amplifier	£825.00
SONUS Concerto Spkrs	£999.00
<b>Normal System Price</b>	<b>£2999.00</b>
TRADE-IN or DEPOSIT	£600.00
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soon be enjoying your favourite music as you've never heard it before.

This exceptional offer is available through all of our branches but, please don't delay, there has to be a limit to the amount of trade-in stock we can accept so we reserve the right to end this promotion without prior notice. Call now for a valuation.

<b>SYSTEM 1 ★★★★★</b>		<b>SYSTEM 2 ★★★★★</b>		<b>SYSTEM 4 ★★★★★</b>	
ARCAM CD 73 CD Plyr	£399.00	CYRUS 6 CD Player	£599.00	LINN Genki CD Player	£1099.00
NAD C302BEE Amplifier	£219.00	ROKSAN Caspian Amp	£999.00	LINN Kolektor/LK 85	£1119.00
QUAD 11 Speakers	£379.00	DYNAUDIO 42 Spkrs	£399.00	LINN Ninka Speakers	£1099.00
<b>Normal System Price</b>	<b>£997.00</b>	<b>Normal System Price</b>	<b>£1997.00</b>	<b>Normal System Price</b>	<b>£3317.00</b>
TRADE-IN or DEPOSIT	£200.00	TRADE-IN or DEPOSIT	£400.00	TRADE-IN or DEPOSIT	£667.00
Balance to pay	£797.00	Balance to pay	£1597.00	Balance to pay	£2650.00
<b>36 installments of just</b>	<b>£21.64</b>	<b>36 installments of just</b>	<b>£43.87</b>	<b>36 installments of just</b>	<b>£73.61</b>
<b>SYSTEM 5 ★★★★★</b>		<b>SYSTEM 6 ★★★★★</b>		<b>SYSTEM 7 ★★★★★</b>	
SHANLING CDT-100	£1649.00	MERIDIAN G08 CD Plyr	£2249.00	AUDIONET ART V2 CD	£2299.00
PATHOS Classic 1 Amp	£1325.00	COPLAND CSA29 Amp	£1899.00	KRELL KAV400xi Amp	£2699.00
SPENDOR S6E Speaker	£1499.00	PROAC D15 Speakers	£1799.00	SONUS FABER Auditor	£2548.00
<b>Normal System Price</b>	<b>£4473.00</b>	<b>Normal System Price</b>	<b>£5947.00</b>	<b>Normal System Price</b>	<b>£7546.00</b>
TRADE-IN or DEPOSIT	£1000.00	TRADE-IN or DEPOSIT	£1500.00	TRADE-IN or DEPOSIT	£1500.00
Balance to pay	£3473.00	Balance to pay	£4447.00	Balance to pay	£6046.00
<b>36 installments of just</b>	<b>£99.39</b>	<b>36 installments of just</b>	<b>£132.14</b>	<b>36 installments of just</b>	<b>£167.67</b>
<b>SYSTEM 8 ★★★★★</b>		<b>SYSTEM 9 ★★★★★</b>		<b>SYSTEM 10 ★★★★★</b>	
KRELL SACD Standard	£4249.00	WADIA 301 CD Plyr	£3649.00	AUDIO RESEARCH CD3	£5189.00
AUDIO RESEARCH VS155	£2899.00	T+A V10 Amplifier	£3995.00	McINTOSH C2200/MC2102	£10,999.00
WILSON BENESCH Curve	£4999.00	SONUS FABER Cremona	£4999.00	MARTIN LOGAN Odyssey	£6798.00
<b>Normal System Price</b>	<b>£12,147.00</b>	<b>Normal System Price</b>	<b>£12,643.00</b>	<b>Normal System Price</b>	<b>£22,986.00</b>
TRADE-IN or DEPOSIT	£3317.00	TRADE-IN or DEPOSIT	£2643.00	TRADE-IN or DEPOSIT	£4326.00
Balance to pay	£8830.00	Balance to pay	£10,000.00	Balance to pay	£18,660.00
<b>36 installments of just</b>	<b>£270.00</b>	<b>36 installments of just</b>	<b>£277.78</b>	<b>36 installments of just</b>	<b>£511.10</b>



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# news

## G SPOT

Meridian Audio has announced details of its new G98 DVD-Audio Transport, which comes in two flavours: the G98DH DVD Audio Transport (£3,350) and G98AH DVD Audio Player (£3,625). Further down the range, the new Model G08 upsampling CD player, evolved from the award winning 588 and 800 players, clocks in at £2,250. All feature the latest-generation CD/ DVD-ROM drive mechanisms with custom, Meridian-written control, navigation, and error-correction software for speed and reliability of disc-handling as well as future upgradeability. Powerful re-clocking using RAM buffering completes the equation for full, permanent elimination of jitter as an audible factor.



Meridian G08

They all share industrial design by Meridian co-founder Allen Boothroyd, including full-width, all-metal construction and optional rack mounting capability. The sleek finish, available in pearly silver or all-black, is complemented by Meridian's traditional black glass accents and an elegant new user interface accessed by the softly-lit front panel, rotary volume control and flexible, customisable key layouts. This is Meridian's most successful look to date in our opinion - so watch this space for our verdict on the sound! More information can be found at [www.meridian.co.uk](http://www.meridian.co.uk).

## iTUNES HITS THE NET

After just one week online, the European iTunes music portal (that covers the UK, France and Germany) had sold over 800,000 songs online, with more than 450,000 sold in the UK alone. With pricing of just €0.99 and £0.79, this is sixteen times as many sales as OD2, its closest competitor. The iTunes Music Store (in the UK, France and Germany) offers over 700,000 songs in each country, a la carte pricing and seamless integration with Apple's brilliant iPod. Exclusive tracks from leading worldwide artists, including the Pixies and Alicia Keys, were on sale. It lets users play songs on up to five personal computers, burn a song to CDs an unlimited number of times, burn the same playlist up to seven times and listen to the music on an unlimited number of iPods. iTunes is available as a free download from [www.apple.com/uk/itunes](http://www.apple.com/uk/itunes).

## SILVER DREAM MACHINES

Regular readers will know how much we like KEF's Q Series loudspeakers - both the Q1 and Q4 got a great reception in last month's supertest. The news comes that, in addition to their attractive Maple, Dark Apple and Black Ash Finishes, the nine model KEF Q Series line-up is now available in silver. For more information visit [www.kef.com/products/qseries/qseries\\_home.html](http://www.kef.com/products/qseries/qseries_home.html).



## DUAL DISTRIBUTION

The global music industry is poised to launch a 'dual disc' that combines Compact Discs and music videos on a single disc, in a bid to bolster faltering recorded music sales. Warner Music is to launch it early next year in conjunction with Sony, with the three other music majors - Universal Music, EMI and BMG - supporting the plan. Under the proposal, a single disc would combine a music album on one side and a digital versatile disc (DVD) on the other. Falling demand for traditional CDs and rising sales of DVDs have driven the project. Recent IFPI figures showed the global value of music sales falling from \$34.5bn to \$32.2bn last year, with CD sales down from 2.37bn units to 2.25bn and demand for DVDs up from 34.7m to 62.8m. A Warner Music executive is reported as saying, "everyone wants to exploit the growth of DVD and a dual disc is seen as one way to safeguard sales"...

## RADIO GAGA

The Digital Radio phenomenon continues. At the end of 2003, DAB receivers were in 435,000 homes across the UK, and this figure is expected to rise

more than a million by this December. But as the first car units hit the shops, it's surely the portables which are proving most successful. Indeed, we're now seeing the big Japanese names move in to the market, such as Panasonic with its new RF-D1 DAB. It features the usual 'auto scan' feature, but with a twist. When a radio station broadcasts more than one event, for example

Radio Five Live,

the RF-D1 allows you to toggle between broadcasts by simply pressing the 'Primary/ Secondary' button. The RF-D1 is available from July 2004 for around £130. For further information, see [www.panasonic.co.uk](http://www.panasonic.co.uk) or call 08705 357 357. Meanwhile, Intempo Digital has a new range of DAB digital radios - the "cute" KT-01 in baby pink and the "sleek" KTB-01 in slate grey. High street retailers are selling them for around £79.99. For information about DAB digital radio, visit [www.digitalradionow.com](http://www.digitalradionow.com).



Intempo KTB-01



Panasonic RFD1



## SHAKEN, NOT STIRRED...

Aston Martin and Linn Products Ltd are pleased to announce that their brand partnership, which began with the lauded Linn entertainment system in the V12 Vanquish, continues with a bespoke range of audio solutions for the stunning new DB9. Using a radical new aluminium bonded frame, the new Aston is one of the most sophisticated and technically advanced sports cars in the world. Three levels of bespoke entertainment systems are offered, designed and manufactured by Linn for the DB9; 128W, 260W with Limbik and 950W with Dolby Pro Logic II. For more information, click on [www.linn.co.uk](http://www.linn.co.uk).



## LIGHT ENTERTAINMENT

Laser Vinyl Ltd. is launching a new range of laser turntables on the European Market. Twenty million dollars of development money has gone into the LT-2XRC Laser Turntable, which is claimed to play LPs, singles and 78s to 'audiophile quality'. The machines have been in full production since 1997 in Japan, with 1000 units sold to date. With no physical contact with the record, the turntable claims zero record wear, no

rumble or background noise of any kind, no cartridge induced resonances or frequency response anomalies, perfect channel separation, zero tracking errors, no inner groove distortion and no skating or jumping. By scanning below the surface, scratches are inaudible and even broken records can be played, if you need to transcribe those old 78s! The only downside is that the deck is reputed to be intolerant of dirty surfaces, so the discs, whether scratched or unscratched, must be scrupulously clean. The deck outputs a MM level phono signal, claiming a frequency response of 10Hz-25 kHz. A range of models are available to order, at prices ranging from £8,000 to £14,000. Retail outlets are to be confirmed, but click on [www.laser-vinyl.com](http://www.laser-vinyl.com) for more details.







## SAMPLE THIS

Arcam's new DiVA CD192 (£849.90) is an advanced new 24/192 upsampling CD player. Although the Huntingdon company does some superb DVD machines - which also make a fine job of playing 16bit music discs - this new top-of-the-DiVA range machine is a bespoke CD spinner for the best possible 16bit sound. It uses a range of technologies, from 24/192 upsampling (courtesy of four Wolfson WM8740 DACs per channel), a high stability 3rd overtone clock and DC coupled output stage to a 4-layer DAC PCB for ultra-low noise and a good old fashioned toroidal mains transformer. The sleek looking machine is compatible with CD and most CD-R and CD-RW discs, displays CD Text information and is available in silver or black. For more information, click on [www.arcam.co.uk](http://www.arcam.co.uk)



## MONSTER MAC

Monster Cable Products, Inc. has announced the introduction of a new line of accessories designed to enhance Apple Computer products including iPod, iBook, PowerBook and desktop Macs. It includes Monster iCarPlay for iPod (£19.95) which lets users play tunes through their car stereo cassette players, Monster iCable for iPod (£24.95) which connects iPods to stereo systems,

Monster iSpeaker Portable (£49.95) which is a lightweight, self-powered mini-speaker set and Monster iCable Fiber Optic (£34.95) which provides a high-performance optical audio connection from a Power Mac G5 to an AV receiver or processor.

Click on [www.monstercable.com](http://www.monstercable.com) for details.

## WIRELESS FOR SOUND...

Apple has finally unveiled AirPort Express, the world's first 802.11g mobile base station that can be plugged directly into the wall for wireless Internet connections and USB printing, or thrown into a laptop bag to bring wireless freedom to hotel rooms with broadband connections. Clever stuff, but the interesting thing about it for music fans is that it also features analogue and digital audio outputs that can be connected to a stereo, and AirTunes music networking software which works seamlessly with iTunes, giving users a simple and inexpensive way to wirelessly stream iTunes music on their Mac or PC to any room in the house. This shows Apple's continuing commitment to digital music, ranging from its iconic iPod digital audio portable to its new Apple Lossless music codec and the news that its favoured AAC format has just been approved by the DVD Forum for its next-generation High Definition DVD (HD-DVD).

AirTunes is Apple's breakthrough music networking technology, which works seamlessly with iTunes running on either Macs or PCs to let users easily create a wireless music network in their home. iTunes 4.6 automatically detects remote speakers and displays them in a simple pop-up list for the user to select. Once the remote speakers are selected, AirTunes wirelessly streams the iTunes music from the computer to the AirPort Express base station. AirTunes music is encoded to protect it from theft while streaming across the wireless music network and uses Apple's lossless compression technology to insure no loss of sound quality. AirPort Express provides a range of up to 150 feet, and multiple AirPort Express base stations can be bridged together to send music to extended areas. Its suggested retail price is \$129 (US). For more information, click on [www.apple.com](http://www.apple.com)

## next issue

'Sound value' is the theme of October's *Hi-Fi World*. We ask: is high end hi-fi worth it? There's an enormous range of kit out there, but is spending extra actually an audio investment, or merely inviting an ear-bashing from your nearest and dearest? So we're testing budget and high end gear from the same manufacturers to reveal their key (engineering and sonic) differences! In the mix, expect great new products from Linn, Naim, Arcam, Myryad, Marantz, Spendor and JMLab...

## next issue

# Walrus Systems

11 New Quebec St, London W1

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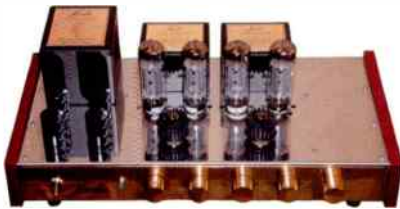
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web: www.walrus.co.uk



Amplifon WL25 (left): 28W/channel using 6P3, £795  
 Amplifon WT40 (centre): 40W/channel using 6C33, £1995  
 Amplifon WT30 II (right): 31W/channel using 6H13, £1395

Amplifon is proving to be a huge success both with reviewers and customers alike - we are delighted! Now made in the EC (a warm welcome to our Polish neighbours is in order), this range of three models, all superbly built, all featuring automatic biasing, and all with large, wide bandwidth toroidal output transformers suitable for 4 or 8 Ohms, offer superb value for money. Sound quality is reminiscent of the best classic designs of the past, but modern circuit techniques and transformers give an authority of presentation and power reserve often lacking in older designs. Truly modern classics!



The Jadis Orchestra Reference (left) from France, at £1699. Output of 40W/ch using KT90s, and even featuring that long missed attribute, tone controls - my, takes me back!

The Consonance M100S (right), £1595, is proving to be a reviewer's favourite, offering a delicacy which is a speciality of the 300B output valve, giving here 25W/channel.



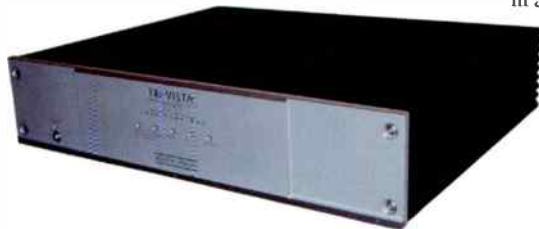
For people who prefer the authentic Star Trek look, the Shanling STP80 (left) fits the bill perfectly! With superb build quality, remote control, digital level indicator, 35W/ch output, all for a mere £1295. Oh, it sounds good too, by the way.



The Audiovalve Assistent 20 (yes, it is spelt like that) is a little gem from Germany, with a very musical performance - sweet as a nut, we say. 30W/ch output, in a neat chassis, for £1600.



The Musical Fidelity Trivista DAC: We have secured some of the last remaining UK stock of this brilliant device. An utter bargain for £1200 - and, as they say, once it's gone, it's gone! Don't delay - pick up the phone now.



Cawsey may not be the best known cable (others spend more on advertising) but it's quite possibly the best sounding. We have been selling these Australian made silver interconnects for several years and can recommend them without reservation. From £250 to £900 per metre set.



Slinkylinks are solid silver air dielectric cables with the latest bullet plugs, fantastic sound at an amazingly low price: £195 for a 1.2m set!



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

## CARTRIDGE MAN DIGITAL STYLUS FORCE GAUGE £225

Although you can get a humble Ortofon stylus balance for under £10, and the famous Shure SFG-1 for a tad over twice that, this expensive gadget still makes a case for itself. The styling is understated but functional, the instruction sheet is elegant in its simplicity and lack of complicated language, and the build quality superlative. The overall mass is so low as to allow one to place the device on even the most critically set up turntables and accurately measure the VTF with little or no compression of the turntable suspension.

The package comprises the unit itself and a charger. After charging the unit for the required time, the

voltage is checked by holding the power switch down, and if up to spec. the unit will calibrate itself and wait, ready for work. It's very easy to use - an enthusiast has obviously designed the device. The accuracy is quoted as being no worse than 0.02 grammes, but we found it more in the order of 0.01gms - achieved using a set of Avery scientific weights. This makes it possibly the most accurate on the market.

This is obviously a luxury item, and marketed as such. There's no real need for any analogue addict to know his tracking weight to within a fraction of a gram - so the superb accuracy of this unit isn't strictly necessary. At this low level, the human ear is the ultimate arbiter of what weight is

right, and what's not. But if you want to treat yourself or your cartridge to something beautifully made to last a lifetime, then this makes sense...! See [www.thecartridgeman.com](http://www.thecartridgeman.com).



## WIREWORLD ORBIT 5 SPEAKER CABLE £105/2M PAIR

After last month's brief sojourn into the stratosphere, we're back on earth with this affordable high end loudspeaker cable. Wireworld's Orbit 5 follows on from our very positive close encounter with its Oasis 5 interconnect a few months back. It was the high quality, non-gold plated, silver soldered connectors we liked, along with the patented 'Symmetricoax' construction, which gave it a very neutral and self-effacing sound. This design virtually eliminates inductance from all their cables and maintains an acceptable low uniform capacitance. Without this inductance component there can be no self-resonant frequency, and it's also very good at rejecting electromagnetic radiation.

A 120-strand OFC copper cable, it's made up from concentric bands of conductors separated by polythene foam insulation. The spacing between the conductors depends on the dielectric used and

its precision is very important for the performance of the cable, says Wireworld. This circular configuration distributes the electromagnetic field of the music signal evenly throughout the conductors. While most banana plugs are made of brass, Wireworld uses 'Power-Spring' gold-plated OFC types, with a tensioning system to ensure a consistent contact force over a long period.

We are very impressed with the sound, which is a little more upfront and rhythmically engaging than our reference Chord Odyssey 2 (£18/m). It lacks the beautifully velvety quality of this speaker cable, but makes it sound positively pedestrian in the timing stakes. Bass is very taut (quite similar to DNM Reson solid-core, in fact) and explicit with brilliant attack transients, a wide-open midband and

brightly lit, crisp treble that's very detailed, albeit less finessed than the Chord Company rival. Excellent - recommended to inject a little vim into otherwise well balanced mid-priced systems. Click on [www.wireworldaudio.co.uk](http://www.wireworldaudio.co.uk) for more information.



**A landmark loudspeaker for the last eight years, the legendary Virgo has been updated and has spawned two impressive offspring.**

**Virgo's**

offspring...?!.

Virgos are famed for their **HOLOGRAPHIC IMAGING**: "rich, tangible images, and the huge, three-dimensional, walk-in sound stage" and **MUSICALITY**: "I couldn't ignore the music... I was always drawn in, further and further..." (Stereophile on the new Virgo IIIs).

Now Audio Physic have refreshed the earlier slim Virgo floor-standing formula at a lower price level as the **PADUA**. This model is even more elegant and performs better than the earlier Virgo, with drive units and other improvements cascaded down from the high-level Avanti.

Padua offers the classic massive Audio Physic sound stage, but now with increased dynamics, better bass control and greater clarity and detail compared with the earlier Virgo II – at the old price of £3,000.

The other Virgo offshoot – **BRILON** – is a radical departure: a stand-mount speaker but using the same outstanding drive units as the new Virgo III. A very practical feature is that the speaker can also be tuned to work well on a shelf by reducing the bass output.

Of course, the ideal companion for the £1800 Brilon would be a **LUNA** sub-woofer (or better, two) to give the scale and control the room. As you know, we recommend Audio Physic subs with **ALL** speakers to drive bass properly in the room.

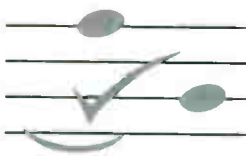
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Townshend supertweeters - brand new - one pair only	£600	£800
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Pro Ac Studio 200 - yew - nice - vgc	£900	£2150
Lavardin IS power amp. As new - 11 months - boxed - as good as new	£700	£1400
Musical Fidelity NuVista CD player - 18 months - boxed - as new	£1700	£3000
Revolver R33 bookshelf speakers - new - boxed	£300	£600
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**BorderPatrol**

# the X factor...



**Roksan's original Xerxes was one of the most important turntables of the nineteen eighties. With an entirely different - and some would say more accurate - presentation to that of its main rival, the ubiquitous Linn Sondek LP12, it had that certain 'something' that many audiophiles adored. But it wasn't without problems however, and now - with the new Xerxes X - Roksan has thoroughly re-engineered the deck in a bid to put it back on top. Stewart Wennem goes for a spin...**

**T**he original Roksan Xerxes was first introduced in 1985, and soon became extremely successful. Although lacking that famous Linn 'swing', it was manifestly superior to the Sondek in terms of pitch stability, imaging and depth perspective. As such, it offered a much needed alternative to the apparent hegemony of the LP12, a resting place for those who valued accuracy over character.

Still, it wasn't all good news - because the Xerxes soon gained a reputation for, not to put too fine a point on it, 'sagging'. Over extended use, due to temperature and humidity fluctuation, the arm board could warp. Rectification of this effect was simple to achieve, but required the turntable to be completely disassembled left in a

warm dry environment with substantial weights on the underside of the top platform until the top plate returned to the normal attitude.

Roksan's new Xerxes X differs from the original with a number of subtle design changes. Although the turntable looks the same, underneath the neat rosewood veneer lies a different deck! It still incorporates the triple isolation principle, although the main bearing and armboard are now completely separated from the outer plinth assembly. This is machined from a solid billet of acetyl and is attached to the sub plinth with absorbent damping material.

The bottom plinth supports the turntable and isolates the assembly from the room the turntable is located in. The outer plinth supports the motor and is not in contact with

the armboard save for the damping action of the drive belt. Platter material is of the highest-grade aluminium and is constructed as a conventional two-piece assembly. The main bearing has had the same care applied to the design and is machined from Phosphor bronze with a true single point contact bearing. The design is presented in an elegant timber veneer, which complements the overall visual impact of the complete turntable.

Roksan distributors Henley Designs supplied the Xerxes X complete with Artemiz pickup arm and Ortofon Rohmann moving coil cartridge. Motor speed control is taken care of with the Caspian power supply unit. This is an extremely simple device to use, as there are only three functions on the front panel. Henley also supplied a

Caspian DX2 phonostage device, which caters for all types of moving coil and moving magnet pickup cartridge.

The Artemiz arm has a relatively wide tube which is supported by a conventional arm pedestal, although it sports an unusual counterweight, dubbed "intelligent" (in an attempt to combat 'warp wow', Roksan has enabled the weight to pivot and so reduce vertical tracking force as the warp passes). This is a very good idea, and a boon to record collectors who are often unable to buy pristine copies. Although a little forbidding at first, it proved relatively simple to set up. Roksan supplied an arm template which is very accurate and is extremely easy to use.

### SOUND QUALITY

Offering superb performance, this new deck has that powerful and expansive sound that you associate with the original Xerxes, albeit with a tad more refinement and detail too. It displayed a fine midband with depth, height and width in their correct proportions. Musicians were firmly located within the soundstage. On my copy of Sinatra-Basie, the orchestra was described in a large arc located behind Frank Sinatra, who appeared in the middle of my listening room. It possessed lightning-fast transients and realistic decay - extremely important in the correct reproduction of music. Beethoven's Third Piano Concerto was almost as well reproduced as the last time I heard this piece played live in Manchester, the sheer scale of the music being displayed with consummate skill.

Moving down to the low frequencies, and here the Xerxes X was less neutral - indeed, it was actually quite warm. Bass reproduction is a vitally important part of the musical spectrum, as it

### XERXES - THE ORIGINAL

Back in 1986, if you wanted a quality turntable, then your dealer would direct you to a Linn LP12, Michell GyroDec or Pink Triangle. Yet, despite the growing pace of Compact Disc, vinyl experienced something of a renaissance in the mid to late eighties. One of the decks at the forefront of this was the Roksan Xerxes. It was a fledgling company, and Roksan's first product - with its unusual construction and the company's lack of heritage - did little to worry the competition. Yet, just two years later it was out selling every rival in its sector, barring the evergreen LP12. Bearing in mind that, at the time, the sector included some twenty or so turntables, and the Xerxes' rise up the ranks looks even more impressive!

The Xerxes' construction wasn't just unusual - it was ingenious. And the ensuing superb sound quality rightly led to those substantial sales. Although it looked as though the Roksan had a solid plinth, it was actually rather more complex than that. A peripheral frame supported the lid and base, but stayed clear of the rest of the plinth. The plinth itself sat upon a compliant mounting, and featured a decoupled cut out for the attachment of arm. The immaculately machined platter was made up of four sections, with a novel removable spindle sleeve. The idea of this was to totally isolate the record from the main bearing. Even more bizarre was the small motor mounted on a vertical bearing. A spring allowed the motor freedom of movement, and meant the motor, rather than the belt, vibrated. It was all highly unconventional and risky engineering, but it worked. Rather more conventional was the out board power supply which used two Class A amplifiers, one for each phase of the synchronous motor.

As I used a Xerxes for over five years myself, I well remember the sound quality. Even today it would stand out as a paradigm of power, control and neutrality. It didn't have quite the rhythm of an LP12, or the dry yet ultimately sterile punch of a Townshend Roek or Pink. Never the less, the wide dynamic response, powerful bass and superb focus and staging earned it a place in my affections. It was no SME Model 20 but, for the price, it was my choice every time. With a launch price of £545 and a final, 1996, tag of £865, the Xerxes was always good value. Proof of this was evident with the, only marginally superior, replacement Xerxes 10 signing on at a rather more exclusive £1,300...

Over its ten years of production there were a number of tweaks and two major upgrades to the PSU. You can often judge the age of a Xerxes by whether the XPS unit is a 1, 2 or 3. Secondhand, they still command a good price of £200 plus, but be very careful to check that the plinth sits flat. That compliant cushioning can disintegrate, causing the plinth to sag, and subsequent platter grounding. Get a decent one, though, (preferably with the Artemiz arm) and the Xerxes will still show a clean pair of heels to any of today's sub £1,000 players! **DT**

tells us an enormous amount about the room the music was recorded in. The Roksan was 'generous' in its assessment of any given programme material in this respect. Bass notes had real shape and size, with fast attack and decay, but there was

nevertheless a mild bloom evident that you wouldn't hear from more neutral tackle, such as Michell's GyroDec. It was tuneful, but rather too prone - with this arm/cartridge combination at least - to warmth. Not necessarily an objectionable coloration, especially with some systems, but coloration nonetheless!

Treble was smooth and open, and made the transition down to the midband seamlessly. This even, tidy nature (in the midband and treble, if not the bass) made for a very enjoyable sound. The music seemed to ebb and flow with a great sense of ease neither exaggerated nor diminished. Next on the turntable was the John Williams transcription of Bach's Suite number three. This piece of music is extremely difficult for any record player to get to grips with, but the Xerxes X acquitted itself very well. Most obvious was the sense of the size of the guitar and JW's breathing becoming laboured as



REFERENCE SYSTEM

Origin Live Aurora Gold/ Hadcock/ Music Maker turntable  
Custom-made passive preamplifier  
Crown DC 300A power amplification  
ATC SCM35 loudspeakers



the piece became more complex. Overall then, an impressive, open and commanding performer - with just a tad too much colour down south...

Compared to the Radius that I reviewed last year, the differences were subtle. The cheaper machine had a slightly exaggerated midrange and inferior frequency extremes, and the soundstage was neither as crisply reproduced nor as wide - so the newer and more expensive deck certainly got the cigar here! Then I compared the Roksan Xerxes X to my reference Origin Live Aurora Gold/ Hadcock/ Music Maker and was surprised to find the OL combination had the edge in terms of accuracy and neutrality. It had less obvious 'character', giving a more seamless sound. The new Roksan

wasn't in any way less enjoyable, but it was certainly less transparent. Its bass was obviously looser and more powerful - James Brown thundered into my living room with consummate ease, with an image that seemed to stretch outside the walls of the room, although Bootsie Collins sounded less skilful with his instrument.

CONCLUSION

The new Roksan Xerxes X is a considerable improvement over the original. Its blend of smoothness,

panache and musicality is a compelling one. Elegance in engineering is shown across the board - in everything from its handsome good looks to ease of use and superb performance. But as an immediate rival to Michell's Orbe Spyder Edition and Origin Live's Aurora Gold, it faces stiff competition indeed. Turntables are very personal things, and so it's perfectly possible that the Xerxes X will be the one for you, your arm/cartridge, system and room. An essential audition, therefore. Roksan, it's good to have you back!

“an impressive, open and commanding performer - with just a tad too much colour...”



**VERDICT** ●●●●

Excellent update on the classic Xerxes, with a powerful, open and fulsome sound - but faces very stiff competition from Michell and Origin Live rivals.

ROKSAN XERXES	£1,750
XERXES & REF PSU	£2,000
ARTBAZ TONEARM	£1,000
M SERIES PHONO STAGE	£1,000

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There may be better value propositions around to upgrade your system but if there is I haven't heard them...A fantastic product then from Origin Live and this particular audiophiles dream review tool."

TNT AUDIO MAGAZINE

"...the best tonearm I've heard"

HI FI WORLD

## The ultimate format deserves the ultimate design

The supremacy of vinyl quality over digital is set to continue - especially with the spectacular levels of performance now available through the new Origin Live tonearms. If you are in the slightest doubt as to the groundbreaking nature of these arms and their ability to transform your turntable's performance, we suggest you investigate the reviews and arrange an audition. Shown above is the new "Linn fitting" base with built in VTA adjuster, making the arms quick and easy to fit to LP12s among others. We guarantee all arms above the Silver to outperform any other arm regardless of price or your money back.

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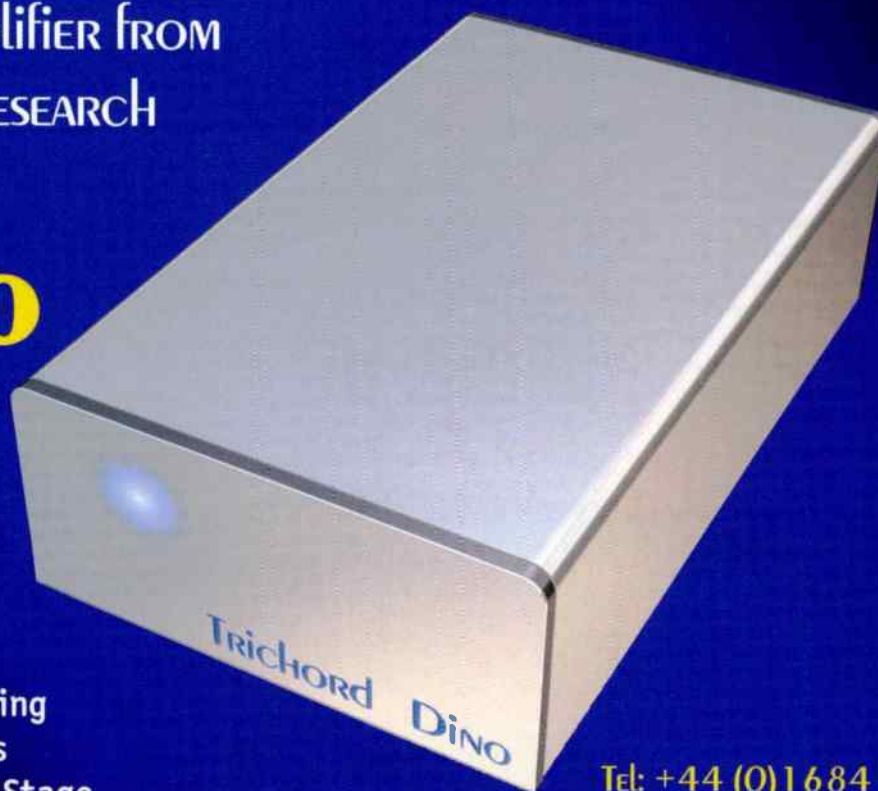


"Simply stated, the Origin Live Illustrious tonearm / Aurora Gold turntable produce the best musical results of any turntable I've ever heard, regardless of price....It sets a new reference"

STEREO TIMES

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# multi tracking

Hot on the heels of *Hi-Fi World's* great tonearm test several months back comes this round up of the best affordable moving magnet phono cartridges, from Audio Technica, Goldring, Grado, Ortofon, Shure and Stanton. David Price hosts, while Stewart Wennen does the listening.



Shure M97xE



Ortofon 510MK2



Grado Prestige Silver



Goldring 1006



Audio Technica ATT440



Stanton 681

It's all very well us audiophiles discussing the relative merits of the Van den Hul 'exorbitant' against the Lyra 'expensive', the Koetsu 'esoteric' versus the Kiseki 'exotica', but to be brutally frank, few of us will ever be able to afford such beauty in sound. Moreover, even if we could, the chances of us being able to make a case to our respective 'better halves' would be about - well, start at zero and work downwards...

In truth, the most important area of the phono cartridge market is the sub-£100 one, for two reasons. First, because most folk are prepared to buy a half decent transducer, but remain unconvinced about the need for a fully decent one. And second - Tiefenbrun's Law rightly states that the most money should be spend on the turntable, then the tonearm, and then the cartridge - last and least. A Linn Akiva in a Rega P3 does not a sensible, synergistic combination make.

So we find ourselves in Cheapsville, UK - a wretched land of decrepit nineteen seventies throwback products, a place where real audiophiles fear to tread, lest they prick their toes with a broken cantilever from an old Ortofon VMS20E... Okay, I'm exaggerating, but it's fair to say that whilst high end moving coil design has merrily rolled along - using expensive new stylus profiles, cantilever materials and body types - not an awful lot has happened in the 'affordable' cartridge market for at least ten years...

How so? Well, if you're as cynical as me, you'd point to the DJ scene. This is by far and away the largest driver of this end of the market, and well, they're not exactly highly evolved 'super hi-fi' beings are they? What does a DJ want from a cartridge? Well, aside from the obvious retort ("a free one"), then it's one that, ermm, doesn't break when you slip-cue. Stanton 500A tracking at 5gms - "suits you, sir!"

Despite this, there's a surprisingly wide variety of affordable moving magnets still on the market. While some of them haven't been significantly changed since the seventies, there are others that have evolved - and measure surprisingly well, too. Indeed, bolt several of the following in a decent budget disc spinner such as a Rega P3, and you might be amazed at the sound forthcoming - good enough to embarrass some serious CD players at four times the price.

## VINYL SPECIAL:

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OPINION: LJK SETRIGHT	80

**S**hure has been manufacturing pickup cartridges since the dawn of time and has acquired a reputation for building very fine transducers. Is this reputation deserved? The £100 M97xE is built in Mexico, and looks rather unusual as it sports a dynamic stabiliser. This is used to enable the cartridge to track even the worst record warps with ease. The brush also acts as a record cleaning device but the cartridge is difficult to set up with the stabiliser in position. The M97xE tracks at a characteristically low 1.25 grammes without the stabiliser in use but to use this device requires a complete reset of the pick up arm. Due to this device, the cartridge looks rather dated, or quaint at least!

Shure has built a reputation on the tracking ability of its products, so much so that any (older) Shure cartridge traced the vinyl with limpet-like tenacity. This rule does not apply to this unit, as the choice of materials and the shape of the stylus tip has compromised the resulting sound. Tracking at 1.25 grammes, the stereo image was wide with a subtly exaggerated depth portrayal and limited height displayed in the stereo image. I was unable to detect any differences with the damper in position and without the damper in operation. Except for the debris, which tended to clog the brush and make the cartridge start to mistrack...

The first test piece was John Williams, playing his flamenco guitar on Suite No. 3 in C (JS Bach). The sound was relatively thin, with little body save for the midband, which seemed slightly exaggerated. The transient attack of the cartridge was very good but the decay slower than normal. Although the scale of the instrument appeared correct, detail retrieval was not of the highest order. On the Sinatra-Basie, the music certainly had stacks of pace which suits big

band music. Due to the almost laid-back presentation of the cartridge, the pressing faults were not obvious. Beethoven's piano Symphony No. 3 had scale and attack but was let down due to, again, the decay not being correctly produced. Chick Corea's version of Central Park was restricted to the edges of my ATC

SCM 35 loudspeakers with a foreshortened image. The percussion was not as realistic as I am used to.

The M97xE is undoubtedly a competent performer. Its sound is big, expansive and quite euphonic - but it's also too woolly and vague for many tastes. An easy listening cartridge for easy listening music.



## MEASURED PERFORMANCE

At the recommended tracking force of 1.25gms the M97xE mistracked on the highest level test tracks and was marginal even with the stabiliser and maximum VTF of 1.5gms - not so good nowadays.

Frequency response has the classic high frequency roll off caused by generator losses, which gives a warm sound. On inner grooves additional tracing losses will give the M97xE a warm or dull sound. Again, modern cartridges commonly do better.

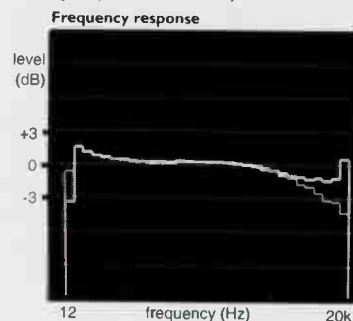
The stylus cantilever exits the body at a steep angle and vertical tracking angle was high as a result, measuring over 30degrees. This produced more than 8% distortion on vertical modulation, luckily mostly innocuous second harmonic.

The M97xE looks like an old design. It's measured performance is satisfactory, if not up with the best here. NK

Tracking force	1.25g
VTA	>30degrees
Frequency response (2dB)	20Hz-14kHz
Channel separation	27dB

Tracking ability (300Hz)	
lateral	65um
vertical	45um
lateral 1kHz	22cms/sec

Distortion (45um)	
lateral	1.3%
vertical	8.4%
Output (5cms/sec rms)	4.2mV



**O**rtofon's VMS series of budget moving magnets was great in its day (the nineteen seventies), but that day has now long gone, and the 500 series is the replacement. This latest £45 version of the 510 is also getting a little long in the tooth now, but has proved a solid seller nonetheless. It's a variable magnetic shunt (VMS, geddit?) moving magnet type that tracks at 1.6gms fairly securely, although not up with the standards of the best in the group - still, don't forget it's the cheapest here. The vertical tracking angle is high, which results in heavy distortion on high vertical modulation (the peaks in the music) although as a budget cartridge its audible response is acceptable at this level.

The first record on the turntable was a John Williams guitar piece, which displayed an unusual characteristic, with the upper strings presented further forward in the image than the two bottom strings on his guitar - this was due to the pronounced treble lift above 8kHz [see *Measured Performance*]. On the inner tracks of this recording, the 510/2 became much more neutral - this was because the stylus was introducing losses, which quite coincidentally cancelled this exaggerated treble!

The next record on the turntable was Sinatra-Basie. This is an amazing record, which was made in the heyday of vinyl reproduction by people who truly understand how to transcribe a piece of music onto black vinyl. Sinatra's voice was a little strident with very little image depth to the rest of the orchestra. Transient attack of this cartridge was good, but its decay did not quite match its abilities at the front of the response curve.

The width of the stereo image was again confined to the edges of my loudspeakers and the height of the image was dependant on frequency. Introducing more capacitance at the input of the Graham Slee phono stage did nothing to ameliorate this problem. In fact, it made the reproduction worse by a large margin! This is because we are moving the



knee of the rising treble response further down into the lower midrange, and end up destroying any spatial information that the record has to offer.

Despite it being the cheapest in the group, I am afraid that I can't wholeheartedly recommend the Ortofon 510/2. It's a relatively crude and charmless device, and shows the

swinging gap between the company's superb, state-of-the-art Kontrapunkt moving coils and a very 'also ran' moving magnetic range. It's not the best budget cartridge that the company has built, and can only be recommended in value for money terms. Now that Ortofon is under new ownership, I hope - and expect - a replacement soon.

## MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The 510 MkII has treble lift, output rising steadily above 8kHz to reach +3dB at 20kHz. Inner groove tracing losses of -6dB swing results the other way, so the 510 MkII will swing from bright to roughly neutral across the disc surface. There's quite a lot of variation, but basic frequency response is flat and the small fall off above 12kHz on inner grooves will tame inevitable distortions, minimising coarseness.

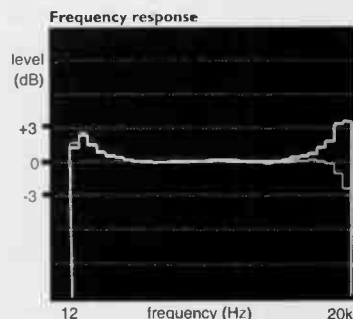
Tracking ability was good, if not up with rivals, since the cartridge would not tolerate peak level grooves either at 300Hz or 1kHz.

Vertical tracking angle was set high, above 30 degrees measurement showed. As a result distortion on vertical modulation was high.

The 510 MkII lags rivals in measurement, an unusual situation for Ortofon who are normally ahead. It's quite well balanced all the same. NK

Tracking force 1.5gms  
Vertical tracking angle >30degrees

Frequency response	30Hz-8kHz
Channel separation	22dB
Tracking ability (300Hz)	
lateral	63µm
vertical	45µm
lateral (1kHz)	20cms/sec.
Distortion (45µm)	
lateral	1.3%
vertical	6%
Output (5cms/sec rms)	5.3mV



ORTOFON 510/2 £45  
Henley Designs  
☎ +44 (0)1235 511166

**A**nother great name, Grado has produced some superb cartridges (and indeed headphones) in its time. It has been particularly strong in the budget area, with the likes of the late seventies FTE+1 winning many friends. These days, we have the Prestige range. The £90 Silver uses the same generator as the Prestige Gold, which costs a lot more. The Gold is a hand picked Silver, which is again checked and tested and boxed differently. Obversely, this makes the Silver tested here seemed particularly good value. The Silver tracked all of my test records with ease, although at times on very difficult passages started to 'spit' a little. It did not leave the groove at any time when running at 1.6gms. Its output is healthy at 3.2 mV, which is normal for this type of pickup cartridge.

Again, this cartridge displayed a little stereo image placement distortion in that the John Williams guitar piece did not sound quite right. I am sure this is as a result of the upper midrange drop that moving magnets display. The drop in response, albeit only 1dB, does add a touch of warmth in the sound of the recording.

The pace of his guitar work was reproduced well and the decay and attack of the cartridge was deemed very good. On the inner grooves of this record, tracing losses did not seem to impede the production of a wide, deep and high stereo image. Bass reproduction, this is where all the clues to the venues size lay, is very good and this cartridge has a full, warm sound. This again is unaffected by loading the input with capacitance. This is probably because the Prestige Silver has a lower impedance generator that remains unaffected by the load, giving Grado its distinctive house sound.

On the Beethoven, the orchestra was represented with exceptional stereo image width. The piano was gracefully reproduced and suggested that a pair of microphones were used at some distance from the instrument. Placement of microphones is very important

for solo instruments to denote their correct size. The Grado was no slouch in this department. Chick Corea on the track 'Central Dawn' uses a lot of percussion and I really felt the impact from the roto-toms. The other instruments were again correctly reproduced with a touch of added midrange warmth.

Grado seems to have got its sums right with the Prestige Silver, and as a result has produced a very good example of modern moving iron technology. Warm, expansive, open and endearing, it's a nicely musical listen with few obvious vices. It's a tad pricey, but fine value nonetheless.



## MEASURED PERFORMANCE

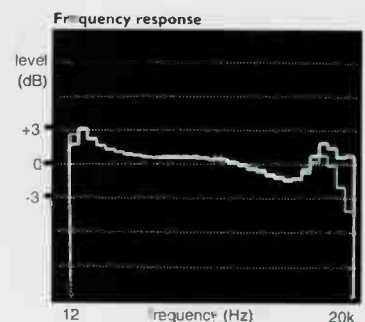
**The Prestige Silver cleared all tracking test bands, including torture tracks at both 300Hz and 1kHz. There was some slight shakiness at times with the latter, but then some cartridges skid right over this track, it is so difficult! The Prestige Silver is a confident tracker.**

Frequency response displays the usual upper midrange droop from MMIs that adds warmth to the sound of vinyl. It was unaltered by loading up to 400pF, as was the small amount of treble peaking around 10kHz. The Grado lags behind its rivals here, with more response variation than is common nowadays. The stylus tracked inner grooves quite well; tracing losses were acceptable.

A high vertical tracking angle, greater than 30 degrees under measurement, resulted in vertical distortion figure of 6%, mainly second harmonic.

The Prestige Silver has some measurable weaknesses, but they are not major. It tracks well, has a reasonably flat response and a low impedance generator unaffected by load, suggesting fewer coil turns. NK

Tracking force	1.5gms
Vertical tracking angle	>30degrees
Frequency response	40Hz-20kHz
Channel separation	22dB
Tracking ability (300Hz)	
lateral	90µm
vertical	45µm
lateral (1kHz)	25cms/sec.
Distortion (45µm)	
lateral	1.3%
vertical	6%
Output (5cms/sec rms)	3.2mV



GRADO PRESTIGE SILVER £90  
Veda UK  
☎ +44 (0)1279 501111

**T**his £80 cartridge shares the same body unit as the 1042, and indeed one can change the stylus to a 1042 type to effect an easy upgrade to one of the best moving magnet cartridges on sale - it's the only one in the group to offer such upgradeability. The body is constructed from Pocan and has an enormous mounting platform - the complete antithesis of the flimsy Shure. Because of the shape of the cartridge, it is not the easiest to mount into the pickup arm, however. The 1006 tracked extremely well with no hint of 'spit' on any of my test records. Vertical tracking force in the OL Silver was 1.8gms, which seemed to suit the cantilever construction ideally. This pickup displayed a very even frequency response that was much better than some of the more expensive cartridges in this test. Output was high at 6.8 mV due to the generator construction.

Beethoven in his piano symphony was reproduced with scale and weight that I have rarely heard from a cartridge at this price point. Its ability to paint a believable stereo image was exemplary. With correct height and width and an almost bottomless depth reproduction this cartridge suited all of the types of music that I played. The tonal balance is clean rather than warm, which sometimes makes groove noise a little exaggerated, but happily, designer John Rudman has not introduced the usual droop in the upper midband response. On the Chick Corea 12" single, the music was beautifully balanced. The spaces between the musicians seemed large enough to walk around in. Bass performance was judged extremely tight and well extended.

The final piece of music on test was the Sinatra-Basie, a fine example of the producer's art. Image reproduction was very well described, as the image appeared to extend beyond my listening room - with Frank Sinatra standing about four feet in front of me and the orchestra spread in an arc behind him. Indeed, this cartridge is much better than



earlier samples of the 1006, which were by modern standards poor. The balance of the cartridge has been greatly improved, as has its tracking ability - it sounds neither dull nor bright, but presents a neutral balance to the recorded music. Be careful with set up when using this cartridge, as a slight alteration in vertical tracking angle can make this transducer sound dull and uninter-

esting.

Overall, the budget Goldring represents superlative value for money at £80. Obviously, it's no Shure V15VxMR (at four times the price), but still shows few obvious nasties and a real confidence in music making. It's the sort of thing that you can fit and forget about, which is a rare occurrence in the budget MM sector!

## MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The 1006 was a very good tracker, clearing even the most difficult torture tracks at 300Hz and 1kHz, albeit with a little shakiness on the latter. However, not so many cartridges stay in the groove at 25cms/sec rms, especially in this price bracket.

The 1006 has an unusually flat frequency response, now right up to 1042 standards. Inner groove tracing losses introduced some fall off above 6.3kHz, but this is no bad thing since distortion rises on inner grooves too and this lessens its subjective impact, whilst avoiding obvious dullness. Goldring have a nice balance here.

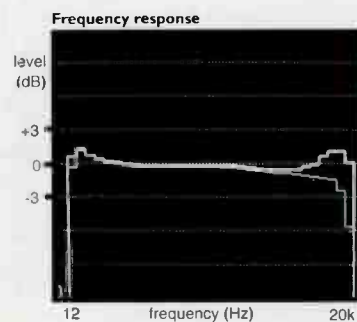
Output was healthy at 6.8mV from 5cms/sec rms, but as with many budget cartridges - and unlike the 1042 - vertical tracking angle was high at greater than 30 degrees. This raised distortion with vertical modulation, luckily innocuous second harmonic.

The 1006 has been greatly improved over the years, now giving a fine set of results. NK

Tracking force	1.75gms
Vertical tracking angle	>30degrees
Frequency response	16Hz-20kHz
Channel separation	32dB

Tracking ability (300Hz)	
lateral	90µm
vertical	45µm
lateral (1kHz)	22cms/sec.

Distortion (45µm)	
lateral	1%
vertical	6%
Output (5cms/sec rms)	4.8mV



GOLDRING 1006 £80  
Veda UK  
☎+44 (0)1279 501111



**L**ong time budget cartridge specialists, Japan-based Audio Technica launched a whole generation of eighties vinyl junkies with the AT93E, AT95E and AT110E moving magnets - either directly or in subtly altered form as the Linn Basik! This £100 AT440 ML is unusual in the materials used in the generator construction. Care and attention have been lavished on this most important part of the pick up cartridge - the coils have been wrought from PC-OCC (pure copper by ohno continuous casting) and the generator is directly coupled to the output terminals with no joins in the cable.

The AT 440ML sports a Fine Line stylus profile, claimed to last up to 1,000 hours provided that the maximum vertical tracking force is not exceeded, as well as having obvious sonic benefits. This type of stylus is used by various mid-price cartridges (such as Ortofon's MC25FL) because of the almost negligible amount of inner groove distortion it throws out. This was borne out by listening - tracking was great, and the Audio Technica did not so much as "spit" or even begin to harden up.

Sitting at just below 1.6gms, this cartridge produced a wide, stable, stereo image. On the Beethoven, the orchestra was correctly laid out with excellent depth perspective, and the AT440ML provided a gripping, dynamic performance. Although tonally a little bright for my taste, it gave a good account of itself on progressive rock, too. Attack transients were excellent - giving music a real seat-of-the-pants feel. It's rhythmically engaging and dynamically articulate, for sure. All this time, image location proved rock-solid - the Audio Technica has a very detailed, brightly lit and accurate nature. However, it can ultimately prove fatiguing - as the John Williams guitar transcription left me exhausted. Indeed on some programme material, this upper-mid forward character



was very reminiscent of Linn's old K9 - which I suspect is a blood relation! The cantilever, due to its length, is capable of producing a ring like resonance, which tends to make the performance of the AT 440 ML bright.

This is a shame, because it spoils an otherwise superb performer. But

all is not lost, as choosing this cartridge could inject life into an otherwise 'warm' sounding turntable [like a Linn LP12, "quelle surprise!" - Ed.] Overall then, a flawed gem that will sing with some systems and grate with others. It has the makings of a cult cartridge - seriously capable yet flawed at the same time.

## MEASURED PERFORMANCE

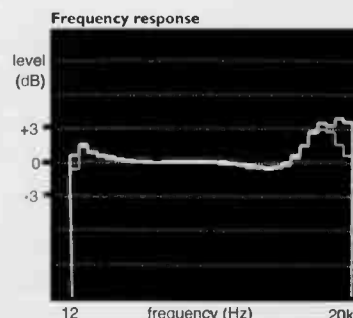
Like all Audio Technicas the AT400ML has a large and wide response peak at high frequencies, which our analysis clearly shows. Increasing capacitive loading only makes matters worse. With output +3dB at 8kHz and +2dB at 6.3kHz this will produce audible brightness. Inner groove tracing losses had little effect so the AT440ML will sound bright right across a disc. The Micro Linear stylus is good though, retrieving high frequencies well even at short wavelengths, although it doesn't match the Stanton.

Tracking was beyond fault, all bands being cleared. A vertical tracking angle of 20 degrees ensured low distortion on vertical modulation. Lateral distortion was low too, making this a low distortion cartridge.

The AT440ML is a fine cartridge but it will sound obviously bright, as ATs usually do. NK

Tracking force 1.25 gms  
Vertical tracking angle 20degrees

Frequency response	12Hz-8kHz
Channel separation	24dB
Tracking ability (300Hz)	
lateral	90µm
vertical	45µm
lateral (1kHz)	25cms/sec.
Distortion (45µm)	
lateral	0.5%
vertical	1%
Output (5cms/sec rms)	4.6mV



AUDIO TECHNICA 440ML £100  
Audio Technica UK  
© +44 (0)113 277 1441

**M**ost famous for its 'disco' cartridge, the 500AL, US-based Stanton has been responsible for some truly sweet sounding high end moving magnets in its day - so audiophiles shouldn't poo-poo what's a great and redoubtable brand. Stanton has packaged this £110 cartridge in an even plusher carton than the Shure, although the data sheet needs a magnifying glass to read properly! There are no surprises in the construction of the 681EEE - Stanton contain the generator in a steel case, and the cartridge-mounting platform is not very substantial being formed from a bent piece of steel which is adhered to the top of the cartridge body! Just think how much better this cartridge could sound with a mounting plate like the Goldring! Stantons generally measure very well and the 681EEE was no exception - even right down at just over 1gm, tracking ability was beyond reproach, with just a hint of a treble lift. It was one of the easiest to set up due to its body shape. The stabilising brush is very easily removed and the set up is very simple to achieve.

John Williams was played first and to my surprise, this cartridge sounded magnificent! Its ability to transcribe the flamenco guitar was almost breathtaking. The sense of "being there" was all too evident in the way the instrument seemed to hang in mid air. Frank Sinatra and Count Basie rewarded with an expansive stereo image with superb depth and height. Transient attack and decay was almost correct, with the 681EEE slower than just one other rival in this group. Music never sounded anything less than easy and unforced, with bass in abundance allied to a very smooth midband; the treble lift was almost unnoticeable. Although surface noise was evident with this transducer, it does not impede the music at all. On the Beethoven LP, I was soon lost

in the very fine piano playing at the front of the Cleveland Orchestra. Pitch changes were indeed very realistic.

Overall, a superb transducer, one that can be recommended without fear to anyone. It's a tad on the euphonic side, and all the better for

it. Fast and engaging yet smooth and expansive, this is most people's idea of how vinyl should sound. It provided me with a fine demonstration of the power and majesty of analogue disc - something you rarely hear from such an inexpensive cartridge. Delightful.



## MEASURED PERFORMANCE

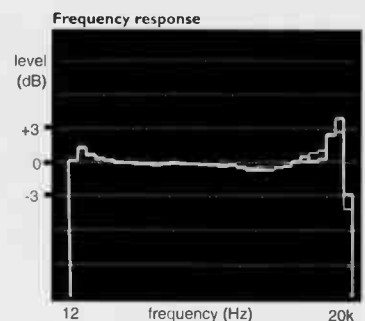
Stantons usually measure flat but the 681EEE III peaks sharply at 16kHz, our analysis shows. All the same it was flat to 10kHz, over the ear's most sensitive range, so subjectively it will sound detailed, forward and reasonably well balanced, but a sharp edge may be apparent at times, and possibly spitty disc surface noise. The stylus is superb, suffering virtually no inner groove loss. The cartridge will sound consistent in balance from first groove till last, but possibly a bit coarse on inner grooves as inevitable tracing distortions are magnified.

Tracking was superb too, channel separation wide but output quite low at 2.9mV at 5cms/sec peak. Vertical tracking angle measured 25 degrees, helping to keep distortion down.

The 681EEE III is a fine cartridge but it may sound a bit sharp at times. NK

Frequency response	12Hz-12kHz
Channel separation	26dB
Tracking ability (300Hz)	
lateral	90µm
vertical	45µm
lateral (1kHz)	25cms/sec.
Distortion (45µm)	
lateral	0.8%
vertical	2.4%
Output (5cms/sec rms)	4.1mV

Tracking force	1 gms
Vertical tracking angle	25degrees



STANTON 681EEE £100  
Lamba  
☎+44 (0)1582 690400



# conclusion

**A**n interesting group this, with some surprises and a few disappointments. When you're reviewing a brace of modern CD players, it's often hard to characterise the differences - they invariably use the same mechanisms, DACs and similar power supplies, and the only real sonic differences are those of nuances. Not so with phono cartridges - there's a swingeing gap between the best three and the rest! As a budget starter cartridge the Ortofon 510 has some good points, it tracks well and also paints, albeit with broad brushstrokes, a fairly wide stereo image. Although it sounds good in isolation, it certainly shows its bad points in a group test like this - although it's bargain-priced, we'd still recommend you save up for something better.

Next is Audio Technica's AT440ML, which was just too bright to be ranked with the best cartridges at this price point. Although it played music well and displayed one of the widest stereo images in the group, it did not quite have the stuff to lead the test... although is an obvious recommendation for those with excessively warm turntables or loudspeakers.

Shure certainly builds good pick up cartridges, but the M97xE was off the pace. Tracking ability was not as secure as most of the cartridges in this test although its stereo stage width was most acceptable. The overall sound produced was very pleasant, in an undemanding sort of way. Close, but no cigar.

In third place we have the Grado Prestige Silver, which reproduced all the test records with ease, displaying a realistic image with the correct pace and drive of the music. It's a fine buy, the only cloud on its horizon being the fact that it's got to fight the following two:

Stanton's 681EEE was the runner up - a very fine unit which deserves an excellent turntable and arm to partner it. It has a lovely, musical, beguiling balance and many may actually prefer it to the winner, which is...

Goldring's 1006 - is the finest pick up cartridge in this group. It punched above its weight at all times. Tracking ability was superb, as was the even-handed way it makes music. Stereo imaging was the best in the group, as was stage depth and height, and transient delivery. And when the time comes to replace the stylus, you can upgrade to the legendary 1042 by simply changing the stylus! A well deserved first place to a British manufacturer!



Shure M97xE

Ortofon 510MK2

Grado Prestige Silver

Goldring 1006

Audio Technica ATT440

Stanton 681

## REFERENCE SYSTEM

Technics SL-1200/2 turntable

Origin Live Silver tonearm

Graham Slee Gram Amp 2 Special Edition phono stage

Custom Built passive pre-amplifier

Crown DC 300A power amplifier

ATC SCM 35 loudspeakers

# announcing the Linn Multichannel AV Experience 2004!

Here's your chance to attend one of the greatest hi-fi events of the year! Linn Products, in association with *Hi-Fi World* magazine, proudly present the Linn Multichannel AV Experience 2004.

Following on from the hugely successful Linn/*Hi-Fi World* LP12 vs. CD12 event of 2001, we're delighted to bring you a second special event, providing a spectacular multichannel music experience!

This will be a unique opportunity to hear one of the very best multichannel hi-fi systems ever made, in the comfortable surroundings of a fine London hotel. The set-up comprises the Linn Unidisk 1.1, Linn Kisto System Control and Linn Artikulat Multi-Channel Loudspeaker System - the very first UK public preview of the latter.

It will be your chance to hear what an ultra high end, state-of-the-art multichannel music system can really do with DVD-Audio, SACD and Compact Disc sources. You'll be able to compare and contrast the system's two-channel performance with its surround sound capability, and decide for yourself how much multichannel 'brings to the party'!

And more importantly perhaps, you'll be able to relax and enjoy some great music - including Beck, Barber, Clapton, Coltrane, Eminem, Gabriel, Linn Records, Mozart, Pink Floyd, Talking Heads, Who and Led Zeppelin (and much, much more) - in the congenial company of the Linn and *Hi-Fi World* teams.

The last Linn/*Hi-Fi World* event was a tremendous success - lots of fun was had by all as Linn staff including Ivor Tiefenbrun and Brian Morris, and the *Hi-Fi World* team including Noel Keywood and David Price, chatted informally with the 500 invited guests on matters analogue, digital, stereo, multichannel and more - over drinks and sandwiches. This time round, we hope to repeat the successful formula, and to take a closer look at multichannel too...

If you'd like to attend this unique event, all you have to do is send your name, address, telephone number and/or email address on a postcard to: Linn Event, *Hi-Fi World* magazine, Unit G4, Argo House, Kilburn Park Rd. London NW6 5LF. Due to the limited space, we can't guarantee you a place - tickets will be issued on a first come, first served basis, so we advise you to get writing now!

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## NEW CYRUS DAC-X

Cyrus' new DAC-X is one of the world's finest Digital to Analogue Converters, allowing any CD player to be upgraded to the very latest 192Khz DAC technology. In true Cyrus tradition this new decoder can also be supplied - or upgraded - with dual mono, fully balanced, pre-amplifier cards built-in. This Pre-amplifier version will be known as the DAC-XP

CYRUS

## ARCAM DIVA CD192 UPSAMPLING CD PLAYER



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According to Arcam, the CD192 is "the highest performing model in the DiVA range, offering superior performance, a greater feature set and better value than has previously been possible in the DiVA product line."

ARCAM  
SOUND & VISION

## DENON AVR-2805 A/V SURROUND RECEIVER

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SOUTHGATE  
STAINES  
SWINDON  
SWISS COTTAGE  
TUNBRIDGE WELLS  
WATFORD  
WEYBRIDGE  
WITHAM (ESSEX)  
WOLVERHAMPTON

PLEASE SEE PAGE 7  
FOR ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE  
NUMBER DETAILS

[www.sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk](http://www.sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk)  
World Radio History



### HI-FI SEPARATES

**Michell Gyro SE**  
Turntable / RB300 Tonearm  
£1049.95



WORLD'S BEST  
Product  
of the year  
2003  
Best Buy  
2003

"The Gyrodec SE sounds great, combining the best sonic characteristics of rivals... Quite simply, the Michell Gyrodec SE is terrific. Nothing compares at this price point - it's well deserving another Best Buy."

**CLAIM £50 TOWARDS THE GOLDRING CARTRIDGE OF YOUR CHOICE\***



**Pro-ject 1 Xpression**  
Turntable (Black)  
£209.95

WORLD'S BEST  
Product  
of the year  
2003  
Best Buy  
2003

"Compared with a £200 CD player this deck sounds remarkable: dig out your vinyl and give the Xpression a spin."

**Pro-ject 1 Debut II**  
Turntable (Black) £119.95

WORLD'S BEST  
Product  
of the year  
2002  
Best Buy  
2002



THE PROJECT RANGE  
STARTS AT ONLY £119.95

**Arcam DiVA CD73T**  
CD Player  
£399.95



WORLD'S BEST  
Product  
of the year  
2001

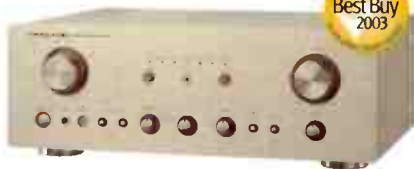
**FREE GRADO SR60 HEADPHONES WORTH £90** WHEN YOU PURCHASE AN AMP AND CD TOGETHER FROM ONE OF THE FOLLOWING MANUFACTURERS - ARCAM, CYRUS & ROKSAN\*

NOT IN CONJUNCTION WITH ANY OTHER OFFER OR PROMOTION



**Marantz**  
CD5400 CD Player  
£119.95

SAVE  
£30



**Marantz**  
PM7200 Amplifier  
£249.95

WORLD'S BEST  
Product  
of the year  
2003  
Best Buy  
2003

SAVE  
£80

"This is one of the most powerful amps in its class, at 95w per channel, and it sounds it with anything from dance to a big orchestral work, offering a delicious combination of poise and impact. Stick with fast, dynamic speakers such as B&W DM601 S3s or KEF's equally capable Q1s and the results will amaze."

"So do you buy a digital tuner? Or an analogue one? Now you don't have to pick: just buy Pure Digital's DRX-702ES! Whether on FM or DAB, this tuner sounds superb... The overall balance is powerful, clean and crisp, making this a fine tuner by any standards, and a superb buy given its excellent flexibility."



WORLD'S BEST  
Product  
of the year  
2001

SAVE  
£50

### DIGITAL RECORDERS



**Yamaha CDR-HD1300**  
CD-RW/HD Recorder  
£449.95

"No more wasted CD-Rs: in a stroke of genius, Yamaha had the idea of combining a CD recorder with a hard drive, enabling you to edit your music before burning it to disc. The result was the excellent CDR-HD1000, and the CDR-HD1300E is its younger, cheaper and vastly superior sibling. It's the best home-recording solution currently available."

**Pioneer PDR-609**  
CD-RW Recorder  
£169.95



WORLD'S BEST  
Product  
of the year  
2002  
RECORDERS  
Pioneer PDR-609

### DAB RADIO

**Pure Digital**  
DRX-702ES Analogue/DAB Tuner  
£279.95

experience more

experience more  
experience more



**Cyrus**  
**Pre X Pre Amplifier £999.95**  
**Mono X Power Amplifier (Each) £1199.95**

"This Cyrus pairing isn't cheap but listen to a well-run-in sample and its array of talents is hard to beat. Load your favourite CD into a capable player, turn up the Pre X and the sonic magic will be worth every penny."



WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND STYLE Aug 03  
★★★★★

SEE FREE GRADO SR60 HEADPHONE OFFER\*

**Mission**  
**780 SE Speakers £349.95**

"The revamped Mission 780s are hugely enjoyable: anyone with up to £400 to spend should consider these standmounters. Mission's clever move has paid off."

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND STYLE May 03  
★★★★★



FREE QED CABLE WORTH £60

**MJ Acoustics Reference 100**  
**Subwoofer (Black) £349.95**

"You get a high level of detail and the kind of impact most sub-£1000 floorstanders would struggle to match. The verdict's simple: buy with confidence."



WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND STYLE May 03  
★★★★★

FREE QED CABLE WORTH £60



FREE QED CABLE WORTH £60

NEW

**KEF Q4**  
**Speakers £399.95**

The Q4 is one of the latest additions to KEF's acclaimed Q Series. At the heart of this floorstander lies the Uni-Q driver array - a 130mm die-cast chassis housing a long throw cone and coincident mounted 19mm aluminium dome HF unit. This driver arrangement makes the speaker much easier to place in the room and alleviates the 'sweet spot' found on 'ordinary' speakers. This has been combined with a dedicated 130mm LF unit for extended bass output which belies the size of its diminutive cabinet.

**FREE QED SPEAKER CABLE WORTH**  
WITH ALL HI-FI SPEAKER PAIRS OVER £299\*  
**£60 WITH SPEAKERS OVER £299**  
**£80 WITH SPEAKERS OVER £499**  
**£120 WITH SPEAKERS OVER £999**

**B&W**  
**DM602 S3 Speakers £299.95**

"These solidly made standmounters perform well across the whole range of musical styles... Add these speakers to your hi-fi system and you're guaranteed magnificent integration between the drivers and an even tonal balance."

FREE QED CABLE WORTH £60



WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND STYLE Best Buy 2002

**Roksan Kandy**  
**KD1/III CD Player £649.95**  
**KA1/III Amplifier £649.95**

"Timing and rhythm are excellent. DJ Shadow is delivered with clarity and a tight bass, while at the other extreme the treble is sweet and detailed, getting the most from Wagner's *Ride of the Valkyries*. The result is a breathtaking Best Buy amplifier that betters its competition with ease." KANDY KA1/III AMPLIFIER - AWARDS :2003



WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND STYLE Best Buy 2003

"The Kandy KD1/III CD player offers a great array of talents - team it with its amp stablemate and you have something close to the ideal visual and sonic combination."

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND STYLE Dec 03  
★★★★★

**FREE GRADO SR60 HEADPHONES WORTH £90** WHEN YOU PURCHASE AN AMP AND CD TOGETHER FROM ONE OF THE FOLLOWING MANUFACTURERS - ARCAM, CYRUS & ROKSAN\* NOT IN CONJUNCTION WITH ANY OTHER OFFER OR PROMOTION

**PRICING POLICY**

We always try to ensure our prices are highly competitive. In the event you can find the same products and excellent service at a lower price, please bring it to our store managers' attention.

**FINANCE OPTION\***

Spread the cost of buying. 0% finance option is available on the vast majority of products we stock. \*Written details on request. Licensed credit brokers. Minimum balance £400. Subject to status.

PLEASE NOTE: SOME PRODUCTS MAY NOT BE AVAILABLE AT ALL STORES. PLEASE CALL BEFORE TRAVELLING.

\*ADDED VALUE OFFERS - FROM RANGE AVAILABLE IN-STORE. NOT IN CONJUNCTION WITH ANY OTHER OFFER. ADVERTISEMENT VALID UNTIL AT LEAST 25/08/04, E&OE.

# Sevenoaks SOUND & VISION



Musical Fidelity has unveiled two integrated amplifiers and a CD player as part of its revamped X-series. The 40 wpc, **X-80 (£599.95)** and the 80wpc **X-150**

**(£799.95)** amplifiers feature a dual-gang analogue volume control and high-output transistors for each channel. The X-150 also includes a high quality phono stage.



The **X-Ray™** CD player **(£899.95)**, is the replacement for the legendary X-Ray and uses the same DAC and upsampling principles as the acclaimed Tri-Vista SACD player. From a technical standpoint, the X-Ray<sup>2</sup> is equal of some of the most expensive players on the market.



## MUSIC ALL AROUND THE HOME

You've heard of hi-fi - now welcome to the world of wi-fi! Wi-fi devices allow you to network a range of devices together - from your music system to your PC - without the wires. For example, a multiroom server like Yamaha's MusicCAST can wirelessly send music to up to five 'client' playback systems dotted around your home. That music could be stored on the MusicCAST server device or other sources - existing hi-fi kit, maybe, or an internet radio station or MP3 files from your PC: plug-in adapters make it easy to wi-fi-enable products.



**YAMAHA MusicCAST**  
MCX A10 ..... **£599.95**  
(MusicCAST Client)  
MCX 1000 ..... **£1799.95**  
(MusicCAST Server)

**CYRUSLINK**  
Linkserver 160 ..... **£2999.95**  
(Four Zone HD Server 160Gb Drive)  
Linkserver 250 ..... **£3499.95**  
(Four Zone HD Server 250Gb Drive)  
Linkport ..... **£649.95**  
Linkwand ..... **£199.95**



**Cyruslink**  
AVAILABLE AT SELECTED  
SEVENOAKS SOUND & VISION STORES



## Linn Classik Music System (Ex Speakers)

**£799.95** When purchased with speakers over £299\*  
When purchased on its own **£849.95**

"The Classik sounds simply marvellous. Boasting fine impact and drive, it retains its grip even as it thumps out rock and dance tracks. Ask it to play quiet acoustic music and its smooth, liquid presentation impresses still further. The Classik offers the performance you'd expect from high quality separates in one lovely package - this is a very superior product."



## Denon DM31 UD-M31 CD Receiver

**£189.95** When purchased with speakers over £99\*  
When purchased on its own **£199.95**

"The D-M30 was exemplary, as its three What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision Awards clearly show. The D-M31 is even better, making it phenomenal value for money."

**OPTIONAL RECORDERS:**  
DMD-M31 MINIDISC RECORDER • DRR-M31 CASSETTE DECK  
NB - PRICE EXCLUDES SPEAKERS

**SAVE  
£40**

### B&W 704 Speakers

**£1399.95**

The 704 speakers are part of B&W's new 700 series. These floorstanding, two-and-a-half-way, vented box speakers and are available in a variety of attractive finishes. In a recent What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision group test the 704 offered "Remarkable openness and clarity that is unrivalled at this price."

**FREE QED CABLE WORTH £120**

**WHAT HI-FI? Mar 04**  
★★★★★

**PLEASE NOTE: SOME PRODUCTS MAY NOT BE AVAILABLE AT ALL STORES. PLEASE CALL BEFORE TRAVELLING.**  
\*ADDED VALUE OFFERS - FROM RANGE AVAILABLE IN-STORE. NOT IN CONJUNCTION WITH ANY OTHER OFFER. ADVERTISEMENT VALID UNTIL AT LEAST 25/08/04, E&OE.

experience more

# experience more

# experience more



**SEPARATE HI-FI SYSTEMS**



**SEPARATE HI-FI SYSTEMS**



**SEPARATE HI-FI SYSTEMS**

**Rotel**  
**RCD-02 CD Player**  
**RA-02 Amplifier**

HI-FI SYSTEM  
**1**

**Monitor Audio**  
**Bronze B2 Speakers**

For this recommended Hi-Fi System we have combined Rotel's highly rated RCD-02 CD player and RA-02 amplifier with Monitor Audio's beautifully balanced Bronze B2 speakers. This package gives a powerful, fresh and vibrant sound. The compact 'B2' speakers, available in a variety of finishes, were awarded 'Best Buy' by What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision, with the sound being described as "Super... Speakers don't get much better than the B2's".



The RA-02 amplifier features remote control and a phono input. The RCD-02 (★★★★ - What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision - August 2003) is HDCD compatible and includes a digital output for connecting to a digital recorder.

SYSTEM PRICE **£799.95** SAVE **£129**  
PRICE EXCLUDES CABLES & STANDS

HI-FI SYSTEM 1 - NOT IN CONJUNCTION WITH ANY OTHER OFFER OR PROMOTION



HI-FI SYSTEM  
**2**

**Arcam**  
**CD73T CD Player**  
**A65 Plus Amplifier**

**KEF**  
**Q4 Speakers**

Arcam and KEF both have an enviable reputation for producing great sounding kit without breaking the bank. This system shows why with a well balanced sound that's both musically involving and enjoyable.

At the front of this package is Arcam's upgradeable CD73T CD player - a What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision 'Product of the Year 2003'. We've coupled this with Arcam's complementary A65 Plus integrated amplifier and KEF's new Q4 floorstanding speakers featuring KEF's unique Uni-Q technology for easier room placement.

SYSTEM PRICE **£999.95** SAVE **£149**  
PRICE EXCLUDES CABLES & STANDS

HI-FI SYSTEM 2 - NOT IN CONJUNCTION WITH ANY OTHER OFFER OR PROMOTION

**Roksan Kandy**  
**KD1/III CD Player**  
**KA1/III Amplifier**

HI-FI SYSTEM  
**3**

**Monitor Audio**  
**Silver S6 Speakers**



The combination of Roksan's Kandy MK3 CD and amplifier is, according to What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision, "Something close to the ideal visual and sonic combination" (December 2003). We have partnered these with the Silver S6 floorstanding speakers from British speaker specialists, Monitor Audio. The combination of Roksan's excellent rhythm and timing, with its tight bass and sweet detailed treble coupled with the 'S6's' ability to stay unruined even when the music is at its most complex, makes this a remarkable system.

SYSTEM PRICE **£1889.95** **FREE SOUNDSTYLE RACK WORTH £300\***  
PRICE EXCLUDES CABLES & STANDS

HI-FI SYSTEM 3 - NOT IN CONJUNCTION WITH ANY OTHER OFFER OR PROMOTION

# Sevenoaks

## SOUND & VISION



### PRODUCT RANGE

An outstanding selection of products are on display and available for demonstration at all Sevenoaks Sound & Vision stores.

However, some products may not be available at all stores. Please call to check availability before travelling.

### TURNTABLES

Goldring GR1	£139.95
Michell Gyro SE/RB300 ES0 GOLDRING CARTRIDGE	£1049.95
Michell TechnoDec (Ex Arm)	£599.95
Project Debut Phono SB	£169.95
Project Debut II (Black)	£119.95
Project Debut II (Colours)	£134.95
Project 1 Xpression	£209.95

### TUNERS

Arcam DVA T61	£199.95
Cyrus FV X	£499.95
Denon TU260L MKII	£99.95
Harman Kardon TU970 DAB/AM/FM	£299.95
Marantz ST4000	£99.95
Pure DRX-701ES DAB	£199.95
Pure DRX-702ES Analogue/DAB	£279.95
Rolsan Kandy KT1 MKIII	£549.95

### CD PLAYERS

Arcam DVA CD73T	£399.95
Arcam DVA CD82T	£499.95
Arcam DVA CD93T	£699.95
Arcam DVA CD192	£849.95
Arcam FMJ CD33T	£1299.95
Cyrus CD6	£599.95
Cyrus CD8	£999.95
Cyrus DAC-X	£1099.95
Denon DCD485	£119.95
Linn Genki	£1099.95
Linn Ik-mi	£2199.95
Marantz CD5400	£119.95
Musical Fidelity X-Ray P	£899.95
Musical Fidelity A3.2	£999.95
Musical Fidelity A308*	£1999.95
Quad 99 CD-P	£999.95
Rolsan Kandy KD1 MKIII	£649.95
Rolsan Caspian M	£1099.95
Rotel RCD02	£379.95
Rotel RCD1072	£594.95

### CD RECORDERS

Pioneer PD609 CD-RW	£169.95
Yamaha CDR-HD1300 CD-RW	£449.95

### AMPLIFIERS

Arcam DVA A65 Plus	£ CALL
Arcam DVA A80	£599.95
Arcam DVA A90	£849.95
Arcam FMJ A32	£1149.95
Cyrus II	£599.95
Cyrus III	£799.95
Cyrus IPre X Pre	£999.95
Cyrus Mono X Power	£1199.95 (Each)
Denon PMA355	£179.95
Linn Kofektor Pre	£574.95
Linn LK85 Power	£544.95
Marantz PM4400	£149.95

Marantz PM7200	£249.95
Musical Fidelity X-80	£599.95
Musical Fidelity X-150	£799.95
Musical Fidelity A3.2	£979.95
Musical Fidelity A3.2 Pre	£999.95
Musical Fidelity A3.2 Power	£999.95
Musical Fidelity A308	£1999.95
Quad 99 Power	£549.95
Rolsan Kandy KA1 MKIII	£649.95
Rolsan Caspian M	£999.95
Rotel RA-01	£249.95
Rotel RA-02	£349.95
Rotel RA-1062	£594.95

### SPEAKERS

Acoustic Energy Aegis Evo One	£149.95
Acoustic Energy Aegis Evo Three	£279.95
Acoustic Energy Aelite 602	£449.95
Acoustic Energy Aelite 603	£749.95
Acoustic Energy AE1 MKIII (From)	£1699.95
B&W DM601 S3	£249.95
B&W DM602 S3	£299.95
B&W 704	£1399.95
B&W 705	£899.95
KEF 01	£249.95
KEF 04	£399.95
KEF QX1	£749.95
Linn Kutan	£649.95
Mission m31	£119.95
Mission 780SE	£349.95
Mission 782SE	£899.95
Monitor Audio Bronze B2	£199.95
Monitor Audio Silver S1	£299.95
Monitor Audio Silver S6	£599.95
Monitor Audio Silver S8	£799.95
Monitor Audio Gold Reference 10	£799.95
Monitor Audio Gold Reference 20	£1499.95
Quad 11L	£379.95
Quad 12L	£499.95
Quad 22L	£894.95
Rusark Epilogue II	£344.95
Wharfedale Pacific Evolution 30	£649.95

### HI-FI SYSTEMS

Denon 201 Ex Speakers	£499.95
Denon DF101 Ex Speakers	£299.95
Denon DM31 Ex Speakers	£199.95
Linn Klassik Music Ex Speakers	£849.95
Teac Legacy 600 Ex Speakers	£199.95
Teac Reference 300 Ex Speakers	£449.95
Teac Reference 500 Ex Speakers	£569.95

### DVD SYSTEMS

Denon ADV-M71 Inc SC-M51 Speakers	£499.95
Denon DVD-500SD Inc 5.1 Speaker Package	£499.95
Denon DVD-770SD/AVR-770SD Ex Speakers	£599.95
Jamo DVR50/A305PDD Inc Speakers	£649.95
Jamo DVR50/A355PDD Inc Speakers	£899.95
KEF KIT100 Inc Speakers	£1199.95
Linn Klassik Movie Di Ex Speakers	£2299.95
Teac Legacy 700/LS-L800 Inc Speakers	£799.95

### MULTI-ROOM AUDIO

Cyrus Linkserver 160	£2999.95
Cyrus Linkserver 250	£3499.95
Cyrus Linkport	£649.95
Cyrus Linkwand	£199.95
Yamaha MusicCast MCX A10	£599.95
Yamaha MusicCast MCX 1000	£1799.95

### DVD PLAYERS

MAKE & MODEL	REGION 2	MULTI REGION
Arcam DVA DV88 Plus	£599.95	£599.95
Arcam DVA DV78	£699.95	£699.95
Arcam DVA DV89	£799.95	£799.95
Arcam DVA DV79	£999.95	£999.95
Cyrus DVD8	£1199.95	£1199.95
Denon DVD-2200 Universal	£ CALL	£ CALL
Denon DVD-2900 Universal	£ CALL	£ CALL
Denon DVD-A11	£ CALL	£ CALL
Denon DVD-A1	£1599.95	£1599.95
Harman Kardon DVD22	£299.95	£299.95
Harman Kardon DVD31	£399.95	£399.95
Pioneer DV370	£ CALL	£ CALL
Pioneer DV565A Universal	£139.95	£159.95
Pioneer DV75A Universal	£149.95	£179.95
Pioneer DV668Av Universal	£ CALL	£ CALL
Pioneer DV868Av Universal	£ CALL	£ CALL

Toshiba SD330E	£69.95	£79.95
Toshiba SD240E	£ CALL	£ CALL
Toshiba SD340E	£ CALL	£ CALL
Yamaha DVD-S540	£119.95	£119.95
Yamaha DVD-S1500	£399.95	£399.95

### DVD RECORDERS

MAKE & MODEL	REGION 2	MULTI REGION
Panasonic DMR-E55 DVD-RAM	£ CALL	£ CALL
Panasonic DMR-E65 DVD-RAM	£ CALL	£ CALL
Panasonic DMR-E85 DVD-RAM	£ CALL	£ CALL
Pioneer DVR3100S DVD-R/RW	£379.95	£399.95
Pioneer DVR5100HS DVD-R/RW	£469.95	£499.95
Pioneer DVR-520H HDD/DVD-RW	£ CALL	£ CALL
Pioneer DVR-720H HDD/DVD-RW	£ CALL	£ CALL
Pioneer DVR-920H HDD/DVD-RW	£ CALL	£ CALL
Toshiba RD-XS30 DVD-RAM	£429.95	£ TBA

### A/V AMPLIFIERS

### RECEIVERS & PROCESSORS

Arcam AVR200 A/V Receiver	£599.95
Arcam AVR300 A/V Receiver	£1299.95
Arcam AV8/P7 A/V Pre/Processor/Power	£5499.95
Cyrus AV8 A/V Processor	£1099.95
Denon AVC-A1SR A/V Amplifier	£ CALL
Denon AVC-A1SR A/V Amplifier	£2199.95
Denon AVR1604 A/V Receiver	£ CALL
Denon AVR1804 A/V Receiver	£ CALL
Denon AVR2805 A/V Receiver	£ CALL
Denon AVR3805 A/V Receiver	£ CALL
Harman Kardon AVR330 A/V Receiver	£599.95
Harman Kardon AVR630 A/V Receiver	£999.95
Marantz SR4400 A/V Receiver	£269.95
Marantz SR5400 A/V Receiver	£349.95
Onkyo TX-SR601E A/V Receiver	£ CALL
Onkyo TX-NR601E A/V Receiver	£ CALL
Pioneer VSX-C501 A/V Receiver	£329.95
Pioneer VSX-D812 A/V Receiver	£319.95
Pioneer VSX-AX3 A/V Receiver	£649.95
Pioneer VSX-AX5i A/V Receiver	£ CALL
Pioneer VSA-AX10Ai A/V Amplifier	£ CALL
Rotel RSX1065 A/V Receiver	£1799.95
Rotel RSP1066/RMB1075 A/V Pre/Power	£1799.95
Rotel RSP1098 A/V Processor	£2294.95
Yamaha DSP-AX750SE A/V Amplifier	£ CALL
Yamaha DSP-AX640SE A/V Amplifier	£299.95
Yamaha DSP-Z9 A/V Amplifier	£ CALL
Yamaha RX-V550 A/V Receiver	£ CALL
Yamaha RX-V640RDS A/V Receiver	£349.95
Yamaha RX-V650 A/V Receiver	£ CALL
Yamaha RX-V1400RDS A/V Receiver	£ CALL
Yamaha RX-V2400RDS A/V Receiver	£ CALL

### A/V SPEAKERS & PACKAGES

Acoustic Energy Evo SB	£749.95
Acoustic Energy Aego P5/II	£499.95
Artcoustic Diablo	£994.95
B&W VM1/AS1	£849.95
B&W DM300 AV	£899.95
Castle Compact CC3	£999.95
Energy Take 5.1	£399.95
Energy Encore	£999.95
Infinity TSS750	£499.95
KEF KHT1005 £100 FREE QED CABLE*	£499.95
KEF KHT2005 £2 £150 FREE QED CABLE*	£799.95
KEF KHT5005 £200 FREE QED CABLE*	£1199.95
KEF Q7 AV £300 FREE QED CABLE*	£2199.95
M&K K5 £250 FREE QED CABLE*	£1699.95
M&K K3	£1894.95
M&K Xenon 25	£2249.95
M&K 850/CS35/850	£3699.95
Mission M30 AV Pack	£449.95
Monitor Audio Bronze B2 AV	£799.95
Monitor Audio Bronze B4 AV	£949.95
Monitor Audio Radius 270	£499.95
Monitor Audio Radius 5.1	£999.95

### SUBWOOFERS

MJ Acoustics Pro 50 (Black) £60 QED CABLE*	£299.95
MJ Acoustics Pro 100 (Black) £60 QED CABLE*	£599.95
MJ Acoustics Ref 100 (Blk) £60 QED CABLE*	£349.95
MJ Acoustics Ref 1 (Black) £60 QED CABLE*	£699.95
REL Q150E MKII (Brittix Black) £100 QED CABLE*	£499.95
REL Q201E (Brittix Black) £100 QED CABLE*	£724.95
REL Q400E (Brittix Black) £100 QED CABLE*	£999.95
REL Quake (Brittix Black)	£349.95
REL Stampede (Black) £100 QED CABLE*	£549.95
REL Strata 5 (Brittix Black) £100 QED CABLE*	£699.95

### PLASMA

Fujitsu P42VHA30 42"	£2999.95
Fujitsu P42HHA10 42" (ED)	£2799.95
Fujitsu P42VHA30 42"	£3499.95
Fujitsu P42HHS10 42" (ED)	£3799.95
Fujitsu P50VHA30 50"	£5799.95
Hitachi 42PMA400E 42" (ED)	£1999.95
Hitachi 32P5200 32"	£ CALL
Hitachi 37PD5200 37"	£ CALL
Hitachi 42P5200 42"	£ CALL
Hitachi 42PMA500E 42"	£ CALL
Panasonic TH42PW68 42"	£2399.95
Panasonic TH37PE308 37"	£ CALL
Panasonic TH42PE308 42"	£ CALL
Philips 37PF9965 37" (ED)	£2399.95
Pioneer POP434HDE 43"	£3999.95
Pioneer POP503HDE 50" (ED)	£3999.95
Pioneer POP504HDE 50"	£4999.95
Toshiba 42WP36P 42"	£ CALL
Yamaha PDM4210 42"	£3999.95

### LCD TV

Hitachi 28LD5200 28"	£ CALL
Panasonic TX22L32 22"	£ CALL
Panasonic TX28LDX1 28"	£ CALL
Panasonic TX32LDX1 32"	£ CALL
Philips 30PF9975 30"	£ CALL
Sharp Aquos LC-15B4E 15"	£ CALL
Sharp Aquos LC-15S1E 15"	£ CALL
Sharp Aquos LC-20S1E 20"	£ CALL
Sharp Aquos LC-22S2VE 22"	£ CALL
Sharp Aquos LC-22AD1E 22"	£ CALL
Sharp Aquos LC-30AD1E 30"	£ CALL
Sharp Aquos LC-30HV4E 30"	£ CALL
Sharp Aquos LC-37AD1 37"	£ CALL
Sharp Aquos LC-37HV4E 37"	£ CALL
Toshiba 26WL36P 26"	£ CALL
Toshiba 32WL36P 32"	£ CALL

### PROJECTORS

Marantz VP-12S3 DLP	£8499.95
NEC HT1000 DLP	£ CALL
Sanyo PLV-Z1 LCD	£999.95
Sanyo PLV-Z2 LCD	£1449.95
Screenplay SP4800 DLP	£849.95
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# turntable

**One of life's great ironies is that - in these heady days of 24bit/ 192kHz DVD-Audio and DSD SACD - the highest resolution music carrier is arguably still the humble microgroove vinyl LP, vintage 1948. And, despite the 'white heat' of such whiz-bang digital technology, the process of analogue disc replay is a tremendously intricate and complex thing. Here, Noel Keywood explains its history, theory and practice - to fully equip you for maximum enjoyment of the beautiful black stuff...**



**T**urntables, pickup arms and phono cartridges are now wonderfully honed contraptions - and so they should be with over one hundred years' development... Their roots lie way back in wind-up gramophones, the first being Emile Berliner's hand cranked belt drive model of 1887. Much like loudspeakers, most of the basic methods of spinning a disc had were tried out long ago, direct drive being used in 1921 for example. This also applies to pickup cartridges, patents appearing back in the 1920s. However, the turntable, arm and cartridge as we know them today spring from a need to trace a stereo groove in a soft, 'microgroove' LP, introduced in 1948, which subsequently went stereo ten years later.

The remarkable thing is that most of the major advances in LP replay technology came to fruition after the advent of Compact Disc in 1983. Those with long memories will remember many years of playing vinyl on simple, idler drive Garrards and BSRs. Aside from the ultra high end broadcast market, where Garrard 301s and SME 3009 tonearms reigned supreme, record players were fairly crude bits of kit for many years. Belt drive reigned supreme from the seventies, but in Europe Thorens preferred gear drive and the Japanese direct.

Most of the development in turntable design has been in the

adoption of better materials, improved structures and finer mechanical engineering tolerances. Just as today's digital designers are finding, careful honing, tuning and matching have a dramatic effect on sound quality. Back in the seventies, Linn's Ivor Tiefenbrun was the first to successfully make the case that the source was paramount, and then that rigidity was essential. It was from this time to today that turntables, arms and cartridges have been seen as having resonant properties that will feed through to colour the sound, to a greater or lesser extent, according to materials used and structural integrity. Since then, we've seen no end of different approaches in turntable, arm and cartridge design - all trying to eek out extra information from the infinitesimally small modulations of a vinyl record groove. Here's how:

## THE TURNTABLE

### [a] DRIVE SYSTEMS

Speed stability is of vital importance - without this, a turntable is nothing. Over the years, there have been several, obviously different approaches to solving this problem. None is inherently superior or inferior - there are good and bad examples of each. As usual, it's a question of engineering precision - and so the pricier a deck is, the more likely it's able to succeed. However, each system still has its own particular sonic footprint:

### [i] IDLER



An 'idler' wheel sits between the fast spinning motor hub and platter rim, to provide speed

changing. The tight coupling this provides transmits motor torque well, giving fast start up and good running dynamics. Compliant suspension to isolate the platter becomes near impossible and motor rumble can be a nuisance. As a result, idler drives traditionally sit on solid, heavy plinths for stability and to minimise rumble. This makes them large and heavy, but they can sound brilliantly tightly timed and dynamically fast when working well. Idler drive is stable, very easy to use and quick to change speed.

**Example: Garrard 301**

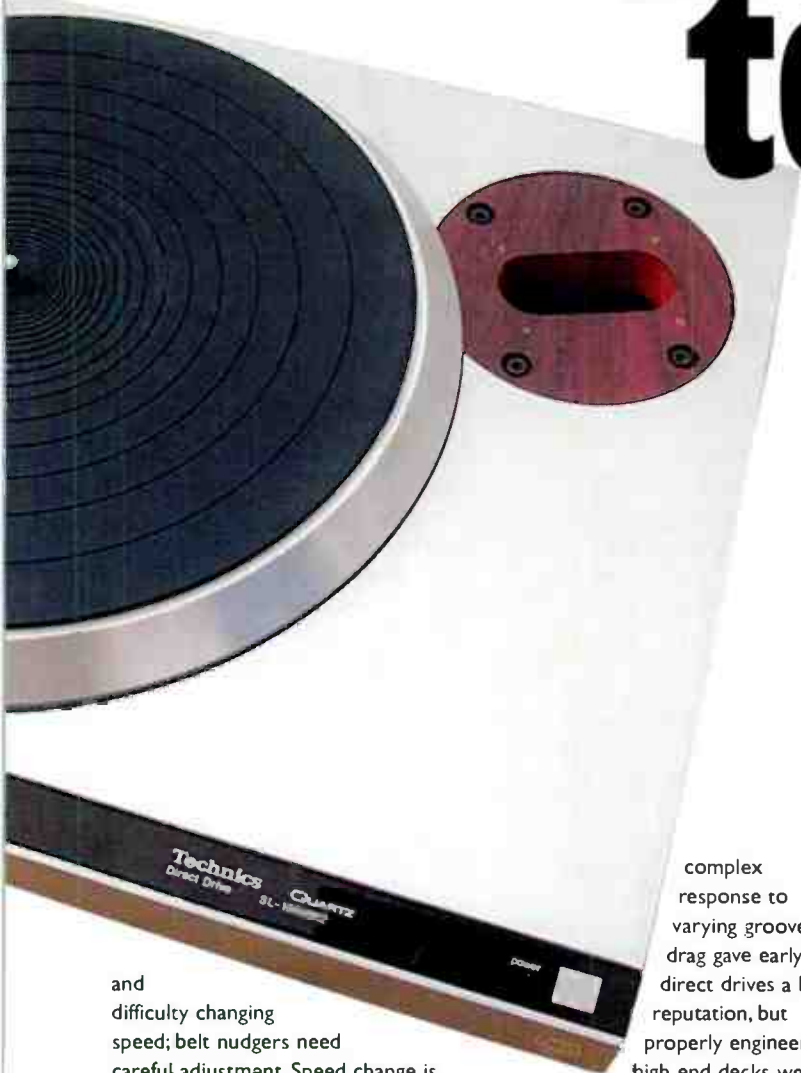
### [ii] BELT



A slim, compliant rubber belt transfers drive from a small hub on a fast

spinning motor to the large, heavy platter that carries the LP. The great advantage of this is isolation from motor vibration, preventing 'rumble'. It also lessens high frequency effects, known as 'flutter' and makes an isolated sub-chassis possible. Drawbacks are slow start-up, gradual performance loss as the belt wears,

# toolkit



and difficulty changing speed; belt nudgers need careful adjustment. Speed change is often manual only - very inconvenient if you wanted to play 45rpm singles. Belt drive usually gives a clean enough sound free from the 'greyness' of flutter and any type of rumble noise, like motor drone. However, lack of drive torque makes itself known as softened and slightly mellifluous timing. There was always speculation that dynamic flutter, caused by stylus drag, contributed much to this.

**Example: Linn Sondek LP12**

## [iii] DIRECT DRIVE



The platter sits atop the motor shaft; there is no intermediary transmission system to cause problems or wear out. This requires a good

low speed motor that can spin smoothly at 33rpm and 45rpm, possessing in-built speed selection and stabilisation, usually from a quartz crystal reference source and servo-feedback mechanism. Light, resonant platters, poor plinths and a suspicion that servo-feedback had a

complex response to varying groove drag gave early direct drives a bad reputation, but properly engineering high end decks were capable of startling grip and power - superior to all belt drives. Development introduced better plinths and stronger motors to counteract these problems, but it nevertheless became associated with budget turntables due to ease of manufacture for the mass market. Like idler drive though, to be effective the plinth must be heavy, non-resonant and firmly placed.

**Example: Technics SL1200**

## [b] SUSPENSION SYSTEMS

The other essential component to a successful turntable is its ability to isolate the stylus, cartridge and arm

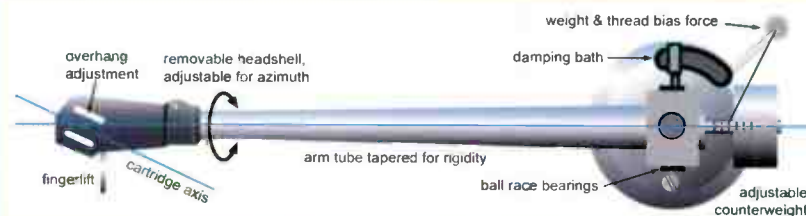
from air and ground borne vibration - which would otherwise be picked up and transmitted into the signal being read off the groove, as cartridges are microphonic. Poor isolation results in a coloured, muddy sound and ultimately acoustic feedback. There have traditionally been two approaches to solving this problem:

### [i] SOLID CHASSIS



A solid, heavy plinth is mechanically simple and can be made

resistant to vibration using heavy, inert, composites, marble or laminated woods. It offers a good, firm base for turntable and arm and eliminates variability in drive between motor and platter. It also makes arm cueing easy and eliminates sub-



**Modern pickup arms are engineered to be a vibration free platform for a cartridge. A variety of devices and adjustments allow performance to be fine tuned for best results.**

platter bounce and colouration. To work well such plinths must be large, massy and well located on a firm shelf, preferably away from corners. Very popular in Japan, but less so in Europe and the USA, where belt drive was popularised by Thorens and AR respectively.

**Example: Sony TTS-8000**

**[ii] SUSPENDED SUBCHASSIS**



Popularised by Thorens and Acoustic Research and adopted by Linn, the turntable platter sits

on a small 'sub-chassis' that floats on three or four springs which provide a degree of isolation from external disturbance. The motor is mounted on the main chassis and drive transmitted through a belt, to accommodate sub-chassis movement. It's a lot of complexity for not-always-effective isolation, floor bounce at low frequencies often unsettling performance badly - but it can work well if carefully implemented. Arm cueing is difficult too, due to chassis bounce. Along with belt drive, the suspended sub-chassis has formed the basis for the modern high end turntable as we know it. **Example: Ariston RD 11 S**

**THE TONEARM**

Otherwise known as the 'pick up arm', its sole function in life is to give as 'mechanically transparent' a platform to the 'pick up cartridge' (and therefore the stylus) as possible. Ideally a tonearm should locate the cartridge perfectly, so the needle can track the groove absolutely unhindered. This never happens, of course, because there's no such thing as an ideal tonearm. Indeed, there are so many variables to complicate things. Different designers use different solutions, with different results!

**[i] GEOMETRY**



A record is cut in a straight line by a cutter that runs linearly on a sled, but tracked by an arm that swings in an arc. The path difference produces angular tracking error, that causes distortion. A way of minimising this using an offset head was explained by Percy Wilson in 1924 no less! Today, all arms have a headshell offset 23 degrees or so, and the cartridge tracks inward on an arc that 'overhangs' the central

turntable pivot by approximately 18mm. This reduces tracking error to less than one degree in a 9 inch arm, which is better than can be achieved in installation accuracy. Views on the importance of all this have changed. Nowadays minimising tracking error distortion is balanced against maintaining mechanical integrity in the arm. Groove tracking is a distortion riddled mechanism in any case. So where the lower distortion of a 12in arm, such as this SME 312, was once seen as a decided advantage, the extra length is now seen as a compromise to structural rigidity and therefore sound quality. A shorter 9in arm is more rigid, easier to accommodate in the home and the best compromise. Carefully set up, distortion from tracking error will be satisfactorily low.

**[ii] MASS**



The mass of an arm as it affects a cartridge (effective

mass) acts in conjunction with a cartridge cantilever's compliance to produce a resonance, in the region of 5Hz to 12Hz. If an arm is heavy it will have a resonance down to the lower end of the range where record warps and floor movement set the whole thing off. To avoid this, arm mass must be kept low to push resonance up out of harm's way. Trouble is, if an arm gets too light it will lose rigidity, degrading sound quality. Also, if resonance rises much above 12Hz or so other problems appear, such as excessive output in the low audio band. Nowadays, arms from SME, Rega and Origin Live have lightweight but rigid arm tubes and headshells, which together give an effective mass of around 10-12gms, keeping arm/ cartridge resonance in a safe region. This gives good warp riding and low warp output, minimising loudspeaker cone flap. It also stops low-bass boost due to resonance becoming excessive. Low mass arms (6-8gms) are for high compliance cartridges, but there are few today so low mass arms are out of fashion. Medium mass arms (around 10gms) are right for general use, offering rigidity and good sound quality. High mass arms (above 12gms), such as this classic Zeta, are suitable for today's low compliance moving coil cartridges.

**[iii] BEARINGS**

A pickup arm must move very freely, with absolutely no restriction from friction. Precision ball races with

spring loaded pins as spindles are one solution, but variability caused by dirt, wear and deteriorating lubricant have prompted other solutions. Knife edge bearings for vertical movement



were used by SME and the Unipivot made respectable by Decca.

With a Unipivot the arm sits atop a spike, as it were. This gives good location and great freedom of movement, but it also allows the arm to rock laterally and demands lateral balancing to keep the arm upright. Unipivots are usually awkward to use. Rega returned to conventional ball race bearings with the RB300, persuading others that, done properly, this is the most stable, reliable and convenient way of ensuring free movement in all planes, with minimal affect upon sound quality.

**[iv] DAMPING**



The mass of an arm in conjunction with the compliance of a pickup

cartridge cantilever hinge will always result in resonance at some low frequency. It's possible to damp this resonance, lessening its effect. SME have used a paddle attached to the arm, moving in a bath of viscous oil attached to the stationary arm pillar, such as with this Series III. It works well but can be messy. Shure fit a novel damped stylus guard with brush to cartridges like the M97HE. It works well and is probably the best solution to damping arm resonance, performing other tasks like groove cleaning and stylus protection too! Unipivots usually have damping to prevent them rocking. Don't confuse arm resonance damping with structural damping, which is entirely different. These days the arm tube may be coated or filled internally to damp down mechanical resonances (ringing). Tap an arm tube lightly with a screwdriver to see if it has a 'sound' or rings - but be sure not to send the arm flying and wreck the stylus...

**[v] CONSTRUCTION**

The arm tube is, potentially, a resonant item that can significantly affect sound quality. In this the headshell is most crucial. It is subject to torsional forces and vertical

weight and thread (early SME), spring (Rega/ Linn) or magnet (Decca). This improves tracking stability and makes for a more confident sound less liable to the shakiness of sound caused by marginal mistracking.

**- ARM HEIGHT:**

is made adjustable so the arm tube can be set to be perfectly horizontal irrespective of cartridge body height. Height adjustment also allows fine tuning of stylus rake angle / vertical tracking angle, improving focus and detail retrieval.

**CARTRIDGE**

These ultra sensitive transducers convert the mechanical energy generated by the groove walls pushing the stylus and cantilever to and fro into very low level electrical signals which need to be amplified many, many times over before they reach the loudspeakers. Cartridge design is all about ultra high precision engineering, using the best materials, structures and profiles for the job. For something so small, they can be mightily expensive!

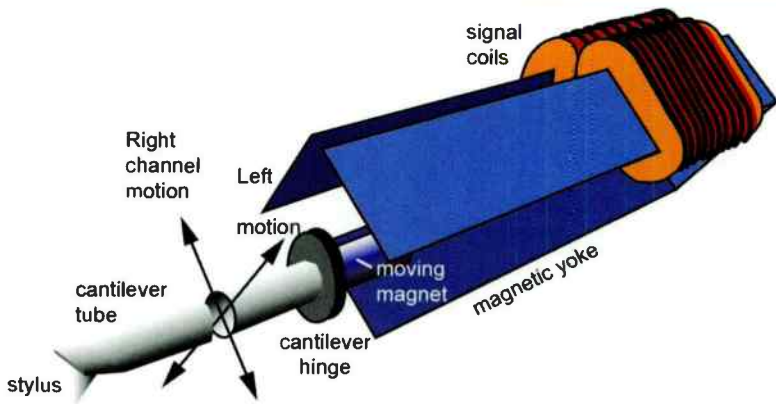
**[a] TYPES**

**[i] MOVING MAGNET (MM)**



The stylus wiggles a magnet attached to the top end of the cantilever.

The changing magnetic field this produces generates a signal in the coils, and this is lead out to the small gold pins at the back of the cartridge body. In most practical arrangements the magnet wiggles between the pole pieces of a magnetic circuit, configured at 45 degrees to the horizontal, in order to read left and right channel movements respectively. Inside the cartridge body left and right magnetic circuits convey the changing field through to the respective signal coils. Moving magnet cartridges are simple but effective. The stylus assembly is removable and by judicious design a whole range of differing properties can be designed in, from budget to audiophile. This means a budget stylus assembly can be swapped for a higher performance type without changing the body. Whilst MMs provide great results, getting a strong enough signal from them means using a lot of wire in the coils. Both wire quality and impedance impact the sound considerably. Traditionally MMs have sounded warm, dull and lacking detail. Powerful modern magnets,



**The generator assembly of a moving magnet cartridge showing how a signal is produced by a tiny magnet.**

forces, so a rigid but lightweight shell is needed, one without its own resonant signature. For best rigidity and least mechanical discontinuity a one-piece arm and headshell is ideal, as used by Rega with their



pioneering RB300. The arm tube is commonly tapered for strength and a strengthening web sometimes used between headshell and arm tube. These techniques result in a clean sound, with strong, well articulated bass. Much attention is paid to details of construction in modern arms, such as this magnesium SME Series IV.

**[vi] CARTRIDGE ALIGNMENT**



A cartridge must be aligned in the headshell so it tracks along the path intended by

the arm designer, in order to keep tracking error distortion to a minimum. Basically, overhang is set in this process, offset angle and arm length being fixed. It is important to ensure the cartridge sits on the axis of the headshell and is not skewed. In most arms the cartridge slides in the headshell, in order to set overhang. This alters effective length. SME choose to keep effective length fixed, sliding the whole arm instead. Some headshells can be rotated so that, looking from the front, the cartridge is not tilted. This notionally aligns the cartridge with the modulation axes of the disc, maximising channel separation. Dished records and poor internal generator alignment in pickup cartridges both conspire to

compromise such adjustment though. Consequently, arm manufacturers like Rega prefer to omit this adjustment to eliminate a mechanical joint in the arm that can affect sound quality.

**- VERTICAL TRACKING ANGLE:**

The angle a stylus and cantilever make with the groove. Ideally, it should be exactly the same as the original cutting angle, for least distortion and best retrieval of information. Cutting angle is set at around 22 degrees, a figure made approximate by an effect known as lacquer springback. An intrinsic problem here is that cartridges cannot easily be made with a VTA so low. Doing so results in a long cantilever or minimal disc clearance and poor warp riding. Most cartridges have VTAs of 30 degrees or so, which results in strong second harmonic distortion (6% or so) on vertical modulation. This mostly affects left and right images. This error is minimised by lowering the arm's pillar - but see stylus rake angle...

**- STYLUS RAKE ANGLE:**

The angle a stylus makes with the groove. It's fixed by the cartridge manufacturer, but will change as the arm pillar is adjusted vertically. Vertical arm adjustment will alter sound quality, because it alters this parameter and vertical tracking angle at the same time. Unfortunately, optimising for one record can make matters worse with another, due to variability in the cutting process. - BIAS: fixing a cartridge at an angle in the headshell (see Arm Geometry) causes an inward force to act on the arm, unbalancing its groove tracking. An counterbalancing outward force is applied by various means, like



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efficient magnetic circuits and lower output made possible by quieter phono stages all help overcome such drawbacks though. Nowadays, MMs such as this Shure V15VxMR can give great results.

## [ii] MOVING COIL (MC)



Tiny signal coils of very fine wire sit atop the cantilever, within a magnetic field.

Because the stylus assembly is electrically connected to the body, it is not user-removable, so if damaged the cartridge must be returned to the manufacturer for repair. To minimise moving mass (tip mass) the signal coils must be light and small, so they have few turns and give little output. Generator losses are minimal though and frequency response flat as a result. Sound quality gains in terms of transparency and detail, providing the stylus is up to the job and damping sufficient to control tip mass resonance. A low noise pre-amplifier or step-up transformer is needed for MC cartridges, except a few very high output types designed specifically to work into an MM stage. Otherwise, MCs come with high output to minimise hiss or, with top-end designs, low output for best quality, in which case they need a really quiet MC input stage. With prices of serious MCs starting at £350 and ending at £3000 they occupy the very top niche of vinyl replay - like this Linn Akiva. Good partnering equipment is essential. Frequency response can far exceed that of CD, by the way.

## [b] COMPONENTS

### [i] STYLUS

The profiled diamond that tracks the groove. A long shank will track through dust and fluff well, but high tip mass then limits high frequency tracking ability. A short shank diamond - in practice a tiny piece of diamond grit barely visible to the eye - gives best performance but demands frequent record cleaning. Stylus profile is crucial to distributing the tracking down-force into the groove, reading fine modulation accurately - especially on inner grooves - and contributing to a well damped high frequency tip mass resonance. Early styli were simple conical shaped 'sphericals', followed by the better elliptical stylus, with a narrower side radius better able to



### TIP FOR THE TOP

Modern cartridges, such as this ClearAudio Discovery, are incredible feats of micro-engineering - with a bandwidth twice as good as CD! Given good ancillaries, they show just how good LPs always have been - it's a shame we had to wait 50 years to find out, however...

### HOLY MASS

After many years of high mass arms, the 1970s saw the introduction of ultra low mass pickup arms, such as this Audio Technica AT1120, tracking high compliance cartridges at less than a gram. It didn't really work...



### CONVENIENCE, SURE!

Surely the most high tech turntable ever, Technics' 1978 SL10 combined quartz locked direct drive, parallel tracking, microprocessor arm control, a moving coil cartridge and built-in head-amp in a compact package the same size as an LP sleeve...

### WEIGHT HERE

Whereas European decks followed the Thorens model of belt driven, independently sprung subchassis, the Japanese went for ultra-massy solid plinth turntables, as this 1980 Technics SP15 avows...



read the groove. Modern stylus shapes like Geiger II (Goldring), Ortofon Fine Line and Van Den Hul have a more complex profiled side radius able to retrieve masses of fine detail from the groove, making for a highly detailed sound with great insight at relatively low tracking forces. The Quadraphonic Shibata stylus of 1978, which triggered interest in special profiles, allowed cartridges to reach 30kHz or more.

### [ii] CANTILEVER

This is the lightweight tube to which a stylus is attached and a crucial element in transmitting sound either to the moving magnet or moving coils. It effectively gears down movement and tip mass. Once simply an alloy tube, big and heavy with budget types, narrow and fragile with quality designs, it can now be altogether more complex. Tapered cantilevers are stiffer, and exotic materials such as beryllium and titanium may be used for strength coupled with stiffness.

### [iii] CARTRIDGE BODY

Every part in a pickup arm headshell can influence sound, including the cartridge body. Modern bodies are made from non-resonant plastics like POCAN, or machined metals. Weight must be kept down to 6gms or so, so light, non-magnetic alloys are popular. The fixed stylus assembly of a moving coil cartridge body gives it a small advantage. Moving magnet stylus assemblies now commonly have a locating spigot to help toward structural stiffness. The body must also mate with the headshell well, a broad smooth metal surface being good here. Parallel body sides aid visual alignment.

### CARTRIDGE SCREWS AND FINGER LIFT

To keep mass down these parts are usually lightweight. Aluminium is common, but stainless steel screws are stronger and slightly better. Finger lifts may be removed, where possible, to slightly improve the sound. However, this does make cueing difficult!

# classical



**When audiophile David Tutt needed a decent record deck, he had two options - buy a brand new high end turntable or modify his classic Thorens TD160BC/ SME 3009S2. He chose the latter, spending the princely sum of £28 for a deck that's up there with the best. He takes up the story...**

refined sound which I can only describe as pleasant but lacking at frequency extremes.

Partnered to JVC JAS II amplifier and my pair of home made speakers (derived from an early valve system based on Goodmans Audiom 201 12 inch bass drivers and

SME/ Ortofon and go for a Rega, Michell or Linn - or would I do something on my own? Funds for hi-fi rarely flow freely so an upgrade path was the only option. Actually, I'm rather keen on DIY, so it was obvious what I was going to do - but where to start? Should I purchase a new cartridge? Well the Ortofon tracked anything, being such a good combination with the SME. I couldn't see anything less than a Shure V15 III or IV being a better alternative. I certainly didn't want a groove gouger as many of my LPs are no longer available.

**M**any moons ago, back when Dual CS505s, Sansui SR222s and Garrard SP25s ruled the roost, I began to think about buying the ultimate turntable. At the time, Linn had only been making the Sondek LP12 for a few years, and even then was priced at more than my whole system, so was well outside what I could afford. But I'd already set my heart on the SME 3009 fixed headshell tonearm. It wasn't that I was overcome by the hype of it being 'the best in the world'. Rather, I simply didn't want to trade in my Garrard AP76 for yet another all-in-one solution, and so a deck with an SME on was the only obvious alternative...

The SME had already been relegated to the lower end of the hi-fi world by the time I acquired mine. It didn't like moving coils, being far too flimsy, and the combination of low mass and cartridge compliance pushed the resonance point well into the audible range and ruined the tracking. However, by using a lowish mass Ortofon VMS20E II moving magnet, I got a reasonably priced upgrade. Indeed, when fitted to my Thorens TD160BC, this popular arm/cartridge combination gave me a

Treblax(?) horn tweeters in huge cabinets), I lived with this through the early days of digital. It proved enjoyable and inoffensive, and despite various lead changes and additional capacitors to load the cartridge, no other changes were made for many years...

It wasn't until 1999 that I finally decided to take the plunge and seriously upgrade my vinyl replay system. A tough decision had to be made; should I scrap the Thorens/

## GETTING STUCK IN

I began to look at my beloved TD160 carefully, assessing its strengths and weaknesses. I soon realised that the deck's plinth had to go! Hardboard and chipboard does not a good sound make, especially when it's a hollow resonant box... But the worst part of the turntable was surely its ringing platter. This required some



*turntable top with new platter removed and deck out of plinth, showing the foam and the nylon bushes*



# music

element of engineering skills to put right, but if - like me - you can use a jig saw, a drill, tap wrench and file then you can do it. A light tap seeds the platter ringing even with its mat in place - it's never really acoustically dead. Indeed, even the application of a wide and thick elastic band (or old turntable belt) around the edge will improve things. So here's what I did:

My first task was to cut out a piece of 10-gauge aluminium, to exactly 12-inch diameter, carefully marking a centre hole and drilling so that it comfortably sits over the spigot. You will note that the Thorens platter is in two parts. A centre boss,

aluminium, I marked the new top plate with carefully laid out drilling points. You need to spread these over the inner boss and on the outer section, taking care not to go too near the edge of the outer section but still avoid aligning with the motor drive shaft and pulley. You end up filing down the screws to stop it clanking on the top of the motor shaft. I would suggest 12 holes all to be 5mm machine



view across the turntable showing the sandwich of materials

"I'm rather keen on DIY, so it was obvious what I was going to do"

which has the shaft of the bearing and takes the drive belt, and an outer section, made of the same cast

screw clearance holes with reasonably deep countersinks.

I drilled the top plate with a pilot

hole and used this to mark through onto the existing Thorens platter assembly. Then I opened the holes in the existing platter so as to allow for M5 first taper tap through the metal. I would suggest that you don't go right through with the tap, as you need to maintain plenty of meat in the hole to tighten up the completed assembly. The outer section contains three holes to help fit the drive belt. Make sure you mark and drill these through into the new top plate. These are vital if you don't want to have to keep removing the top plate to refit the belt should it come off! I found I had to do this initially, as I needed to adjust the suspension to counter the added weight.

Maplin can supply a sheet of conductive foam used for storage of static sensitive semiconductors. This can be cut into a 12-inch circle and fitted onto the assembled Thorens parts before the top plate is added. Be sure to cut out clearance holes in the foam where the screws will fit. The foam is around 4mm thick, and you'll note that as your new assembly ages it will become more compressed. This adds to the dampening effect. Eventually the foam becomes permanently 2mm thick and is almost oily to touch.

I found some M5-countersunk screws. Although I used brass, there is potentially an issue of some sort of electrolysis action going on here that could cause some chemical build up - but with a dry system I have yet to find any deposits on the screws. Steel will interfere with the cartridge magnets and you will hear them passing beneath the record. I tightened the top plate down and

## MY SYSTEM

I currently use a Marantz CD60SE CD player, Philips FT741 RDS tuner, JVC TD531 cassette deck and Cambridge Audio C500/ P500 pre-power amplifier combination. I have an Akai GX600D reel to reel tape deck, and a Philips CDRW796 to copy CDs. I use home made speakers based on a pair of Mordaunt Short MS69 units with the original fabric dome tweeter and a lovely smooth sounding 6 inch bass mid driver purchased through CPC in Preston. These now ported boxes are limited in their lower frequency extension deliberately to match up with my REL Stadium III subwoofer. The sub is not the quickest on the planet but it does make a nice sound! I am considering making some mods to help it out a little...

All interlink cables are home made OFC with gold, reasonable quality, connectors - with the exception of the turntable which has gone back to the original SME version which is definitely a good match. Speaker cable is standard 79 strand, but then it is buried in the floor and would take about a week and a strip out of the entire room to change it! Sub is fed from a spare output on the preamp via a dedicated twisted pair audio cable, also buried!

Headphone services are awaiting the completion of the build of a new headphone amp. All stands and mountings are custom made furniture for the hardware, plus tall stands for the speakers. I am lucky in that none of my equipment is anywhere near my speakers. This is a definite advantage when isolating feedback. Fortunately I never have this problem even with high sound levels.

I started with a Sinclair 605 amplifier way back in 1968, which compared to my parents' 1960 KB radiogram was a significant improvement. Together with the Garrard AP76, Shure M55E and Shackman Dynasonic 2T Mk3 speakers (EMI 350 13x8 drivers with twin nasty 2 inch tweeters tacked across the front!) I was on my way... but how things change! If only I had known then that I would have repaired and tried so many pieces of equipment then I might have taken up a different profession...



top view with the chamois leather mat

then tried the flick test to the platter, noticing how dead it was! The conductive foam damps the higher

How did it sound? Well, 'black' is probably a good description, significantly quieter with what seemed to

#### THE EDITOR SAYS:

Thorens' TD160BC was always a good middle range turntable, giving a slightly smoother and more three dimensional sound than equivalently priced Rega Planar 3s - although it was a long way off a Linn. The reason for this is, unlike the Sondek, it was built down to a price. Thorens themselves eventually offered a superior version, the TD160S, complete with superior damping and platter mat, but there was still scope to upgrade. Dave Tutt's modified machine shows precisely how the Thorens - or any similarly designed suspended subchassis belt drive deck (Ariston, Systemdek, STD, AR, etc.) - can be usefully improved. Superior isolation by a revised plinth, and a massier, less resonant platter lets the deck's innate ability shine out. The result is a more natural, confident and musically articulate sound.

resonance out whilst the ringing is killed off completely by the rigidity of the new structure.

Once assembled I had to slightly alter the height of the suspension. A few turns are all that's required to the suspension adjusters - don't overdo it, or you'll spend ages fishing around getting the belt on as it slips down when you change speeds! The platter now weighs nearly twice its original weight, although different grades of aluminium will add more or less to the total.

Of course the question of a mat came along, as the original was no longer suitable. I cut out a nice piece of chamois leather, as its adhesive properties with regard to vinyl seemed an ideal combination.

To finish I stripped the turntable again and cleaned and inspected the main bearing. With no obvious slack I used the best quality grease I could find and loaded it 80% grease 20% copper anti seize compound before re-assembly. I also found a slightly different belt in my collection that was marginally shorter. This was put into service as well.

be much better speed stability. The most remarkable thing though was the improvement in the midrange where no doubt the ringing of the platter had been smearing the sound. Added to this was the firmer and stronger bass, making it sound almost like a new turntable. Swapping between the Ortofon and a Shure M95ED, it was clear that the bass had become firmer, and anything up to

3dB louder especially with the Shure that has far more pronounced bass end than the Ortofon.

#### THE NEXT STEP

The bug had bitten and I wanted more, but what next? I had spent no more than £5 on the project so far. What should come next? Well, I decided that having so far swapped my £160 turntable set up for something closer to £220 I needed to make it look better. Out came the WorkMate!

Utile is a very hard wood from Ghana. It has a very fine grain, is a deep red brown colour and needs a fine blade saw to cut it. In fact, it cuts more like mild steel than wood. This was to be my new outer edge to my plinth. Internally there is a three part structure composed of two layers of kitchen worktop, a solid full size piece, one cut to be almost like a thick picture frame, glued and screwed together with a top layer i.e. the turntable support proper made from an off-cut of solid beech block kitchen worktop from Ikea. This whole concoction was glued and screwed together then given 4 coats of varnish and allowed to dry for a month.

The deck top plate sits on nylon spacers where the 50mm wood screws pull it down into the top recess. A rear panel was made to take a filtered IEC mains socket and a pair of insulated, gold plated phono sockets along with a single 4mm banana socket for the earth returns to the SME arm. No more captive leads here! Four large rubber feet (as fitted to early Dell servers) were fitted and the turntable lowered into position. Additional bottom plate damping was included. Large foam inserts were crushed into place as the turntable was screwed down onto the plinth. These take the last amount of metal noise from the

turntable top plate without screws located and aligned with the bottom parts



## SME arm base and its new shim



chassis and damp any tendency for it to ring.

One last thing was required. The extra height on the platter now required raising the arm board, else

unique and great sounding LP spinner. The M95 is a bit bass heavy and slow for this incarnation of the deck so now I have swapped back to the Ortofon.

“I have a totally unique and great sounding LP spinner”

the tracking angle is wrong and results in bass distortion with the Shure - although the Ortofon, being about 2mm shorter didn't seem to mind. I started with just some nylon washers here, then after some careful consideration went for a shim cut from a piece of aluminium, again lifting the arm by around 4mm. This was then screwed through with now longer small screws into the existing arm board using the original grommets as a buffer.

The shim was cut so it just fits around the centre arm support in an extended C shape, thus locking the arm in place by the sliding mounts as it is screwed home. You can therefore slide this in place by merely removing the arm fixing screws and sliding it in from the front. This means that better structural integrity has been obtained by changing the fixings linking the arm closer to the main sub chassis. Since the arm is already aligned, removing it and replacing it really shouldn't alter the settings too much. With the new shim in place the fixings I could now lock the bottom mounting plate onto the shim properly.

### THE RESULT

Now I have a record deck that seriously challenges the output of my Marantz CD in terms of detail and is very close in terms of bass extension. Treble is smooth and refined but full of detail. For the princely sum of £28, I have a totally

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dave Tutt works for BBC News Interactive Television. He has been involved in electronics since the age of 11, starting with valved 405 lines TV and radio repairs, moving through to modern equipment and the design and development of many projects for band and public address audio. He paints pictures in oil and acrylic which can be seen at his web site along with some of his electronic projects: <http://groups.msn.com/Artandwork>

two places to damp this out whilst not adding too much to the mass, hence throwing off the balance of the cartridge compliance and main arm mode.

I also have some ideas on remounting the motor. It seems to be about my only remaining source of unwanted vibration on the deck. I will go through a solution to this in the very near future. It is always a compromise to ensure fixing is substantial enough to stop the motor twisting or leaning whilst at the same time having enough damping to kill off any inherent background hash.

I have also wondered about making an air platform, not only for the turntable but as an option for all sorts of equipment. My idea is to make a plate of suitably thick and sturdy material with a recess around the edge. Into this is glued a bicycle inner tube! Simple! Not a fixed mount as in spikes and solid shelves but if you suffer from perhaps a local train service or heavy traffic it may be an ideal way of damping out this factor.

What's next? Well there are minor noises from the motor that I would like to reduce. These are more obvious now the foibles of the deck have been irradiated. I would like to try some adaptation to the arm to see if it's possible to cut down the obvious resonance that occurs where its physical geometry is just not stiff enough. I was thinking self amalgamating tape here in one or



...the finished product!

# Whest World

**There are enough phono preamplifiers on the planet to keep analogue addicts happy for decades, so what can Whest Audio's new PS.20/ MsU.20 bring? David Price listens intently...**

If you are to believe a certain loud, opinionated and gregarious Glaswegian hi-fi mogul, then the phono stage is the fourth most important part of your system. Vinylistas know how much difference upgrading their turntable can make, the effects a decent tonearm will have and the power of a top class phono cartridge. Well, after that, the Linn Products 'source-first' hierarchy dictates that that little box of transistors and/or tubes is the next most vital bit.

Its job is to take the infinitesimally low level signal (we're talking microvolts) and boost it up to a couple of volts, whereupon the preamplifier can do its thing (degrade the signal by running it around the houses, mostly) before the power amp and finally loudspeakers get it out in the general direction of your shell-likes. Oh, and it has to deal with the small matter of boosting the bass and cutting the treble precisely in accordance with the ancient directive of the Recording Industry Association of America, too...

This explains why good phono preamplifiers are often far more expensive than they apparently should be. After all, a QED Discsaver will do the job for just £20, but put it through your expensive ancillaries and you might think it's a false economy. Something more substantial than an op-amp in a box with phono socketry (which is what the QED is, bless it), is needed for true high fidelity vinyl replay.

To wit, since the hi-fi industry decided it was giving up on analogue discs, roundabout 1992, when it stopped including phono sections in pre and integrated amplifiers, us vinyl junkies have had to pay keen attention to the welter of 'offboard' phono stages, to ensure that we're not compromising our beloved black plastic with duff pre-pre-amplification.

Michell's ISO was what started it all. A cracker, to be sure, it was later replaced with the Trichord Delphini, which continued the former's feisty,

'game' sound but added depth and dimensionality. In the meantime, we've had all sorts of things from the likes of Audio Innovations, Creek, Densen, EAR, Graham Slee Linn, LFD, Pro-ject and more. In fact, it's been a curiously vibrant market servicing a supposed moribund music medium!

When buying a phono stage, the biggest decision - after how much money you have to spend - you have to make is whether you want tube or transistor. There are those, such as our own Noel Keywood, who believe subjecting that delicate cartridge signal to the brutishness of transistors is heresy - and that only valves will do. I have a World Audio KLP-PI (modded), which makes a stunning case for NK's contention - there's something 'other worldly' about a good tubular phono stage. Trouble is, there's not much in the way of gain, and also an unwelcome surfeit of noise too. If you can't live with this, then it's solid-state or bust. To wit, I've come to use the Trichord Delphini NC as my reference - a state-of-the-art IC based design, it's a brilliant all rounder. But having heard James Henriot's first attempt at the genre, I think I might be changing...

## GETTING GOING

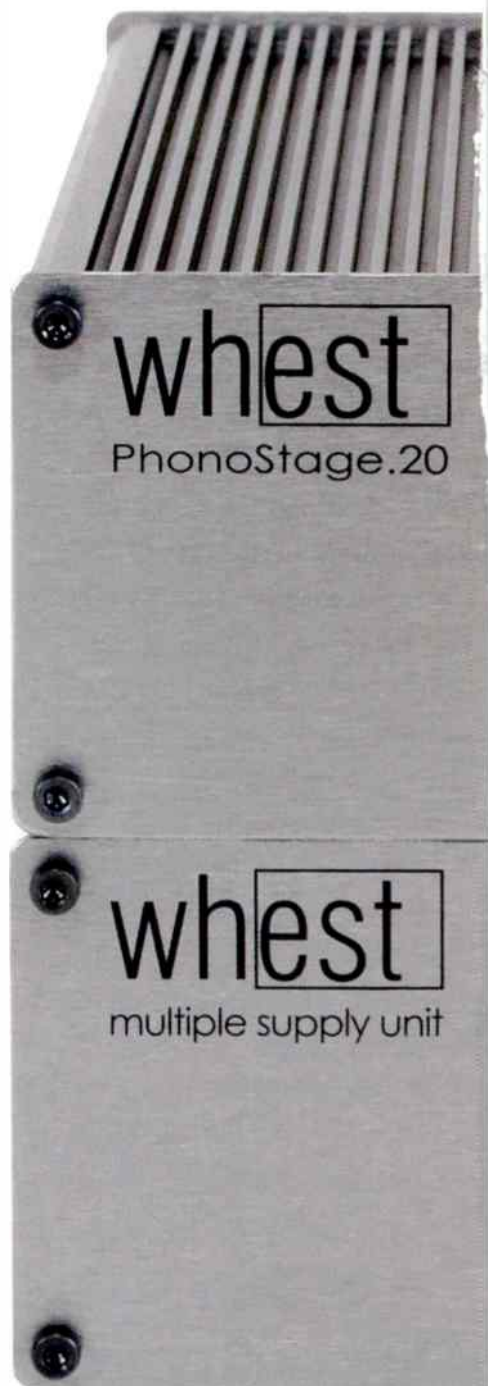
The package contains the PS.20 phono preamplifier and the MsU.20 power supply. As per Trichord's Delphini, they're connected to one another by an umbilical cord terminated by metal DIN plugs, Naim-stylee. The MsU.20 has an IEC input with its own integral on-off switch, although is supposed to be left on all the time, and on the front a pinhole sized red LED. As it's not blue, JH is obviously no dedicated follower of fashion...

The PS.20 is interesting inasmuch as it has a pair of RCA output sockets, a pair of RCA sockets, and a pair of RCA loading sockets. The idea is that you select the gain (MM or MC) on the rear-mounted switch and plug in the correct pair of loading plugs for your cartridge (which Whest supplies at the time of purchase). It's a novel approach, not

quite as elegant as Trichord's internal jumpers, but in some ways easier as you don't have to unscrew the case. Six of one, half a dozen of the other, I guess...

## SOUND QUALITY

During a recent 'car conversation' in a Maida Vale restaurant, LJK Setright sagely said to me, 'it is not for cars to have character, it is their owners



who should aspire to this'... Well, I think this goes for hi-fi too. In a sense, 'character' is another word for colouration - and as such there are many overly 'characterful' phono stages around. Shame, because what comes off the record is pretty special, and needs no embellishment. That, it seems, is the approach this phono stage takes. It is totally devoid of any discerning marks. It has nothing to offer - colouration included - which is precisely how it should be!

The first LP I played was, appropriately enough, Lynyrd Skynyrd's 'Nuthin' Fancy' - and a heavily distressed pressing at that. I'd listened to it through my reference Trichord, which had shown up all the surface imperfections (secondhand, seventies hard rock LP with sleeve burns - go figure!) without mercy. The Whest was no

different - proving it was as cacky as I'd thought, but behind the layer of mush (snap, crackle, pop, etc.) there was something I'd not heard before which stunned me - a beautiful analogue recording.

Where the Trichord had preoccupied itself with the surface noise and not really got beyond it, the Whest sliced through the crud like a hot knife through butter, to reveal all sorts of hidden pleasures. There was a beautiful Rickenbacker guitar sound, some soft vocals (albeit with some hard Southern accents), some lovely seventies keyboard sounds and shock-horror, a three dimensional soundstage. The Whest projected the vocals amazingly, and hung the rest of the instruments back. Meanwhile, that hitherto all-pervasive mush seemed to dissolve away...

Moving to Zero 7's 'I Have Seen', a track I've (like many I suspect), played to death, and this rather grainy recording assumed a new level of finesse. It was no seventies audiophile extravaganza, but there was once again lots more detail, beautifully proportioned with real depth and dimensionality that even my beloved Trichord couldn't muster. The Whest seemed to have dramatically lower distortion, a wider window on the world with greater depth of field.

The Crusaders' 'Rodeo Drive' was startling. So much faster than the Delphini, it was also more dimensional and had an obviously superior soundstaging, image articulation and left-to-right image placement. Instead of the lead instrument coming out of the nearest speaker to my ears at any given time, it boldly hung midway in front of the plane of the speakers. Percussion seemed faster and more expressive, with an immediacy that the Trichord lacked.

Most significant to my ears was the Whest's tonality. It is utterly neutral, showing the Trichord up as a tad brightly lit in the upper mid and fuzzy too. Bass is strong and supple, but not boomy or overhung, midband glass clear (I never realised the Quad 989s could sound this open) and treble utterly delicious - sparkling, delicate and with breath-taking speed, it made the

Delphini sound positively crunchy. Better still, it's not neutral in the old 'Audiolab' sense of the word (re: grey), because the PS.20/MsU.20 has tremendous textural resolution.

Listening to saxophones is amazing - whereas with the Trichord that 'reedy' sound made the cartridge seem to be mistracking slightly (i.e. distorting), the Whest simply gave it the rightful, raw, 'reedy' feel - leaving you sure in the knowledge that it was a solid as a rock.

Overall, this is a deeply special phono stage - the best I've heard to date at the price, or anywhere close come to think of it. Its combination of dizzying depth, dimensionality, grip, speed and evenness allied tremendous textural accuracy can only be ascribed to its exceptionally low distortion. Brilliant stuff - make no mistake, Whest Audio is on the ascendent.



**VERDICT** ●●●●●

Superlative sound quality leaves the best of the rest way behind - a landmark product for analogue addicts.

**WHEST AUDIO PS.20/MSU.20 £X**  
 Whest Audio Ltd  
 ☎ +44(0)20 8965 4535  
 www.whestaudio.co.uk

**THE STORY SO FAR...**

London-based James Henriot is the man behind Whest Audio. An audio engineer who has designed for both the professional and domestic audio fields, he specialises in professional live sound recording and audio research and development. The £899 DAP.10 'discrete analog processor', scoop-reviewed in the July 2004 issue of Hi-Fi World, was his first product - and what a revelation it proved too!

**MEASURED PERFORMANCE**

The Whest is distinguished by a very low noise MC stage that also has a high gain of x1450, making it suitable for high quality, very low output moving coil cartridges. At just 0.04uV equivalent input noise (IEC A weighted) it is amongst the quietest phono stages I have tested. Gain is a normal x110 on MM.

Equalisation accuracy was correct within fractions of a dB across the audio band, but gain started to lift (i.e. not fall in accordance with the 75uS characteristic) above 20kHz, on both MC and MM. It's likely that a modern, ultra low noise op amp has been used and out of band working conditions could be better optimised.

There was enough low frequency gain to get response down to 30Hz (-1dB), but no subsonic roll-off has been applied so there's almost full gain down to 5Hz on MM and MC. In use this means good, deep bass, but record

warps may cause cone flap. Overload levels were high, being output limited by rail volts, in this case to a high 15V.

The Whest is an ultra low noise stage very suited to high quality MC cartridges with miniscule output. It should be a helpful contribution to high quality LP reproduction. NK

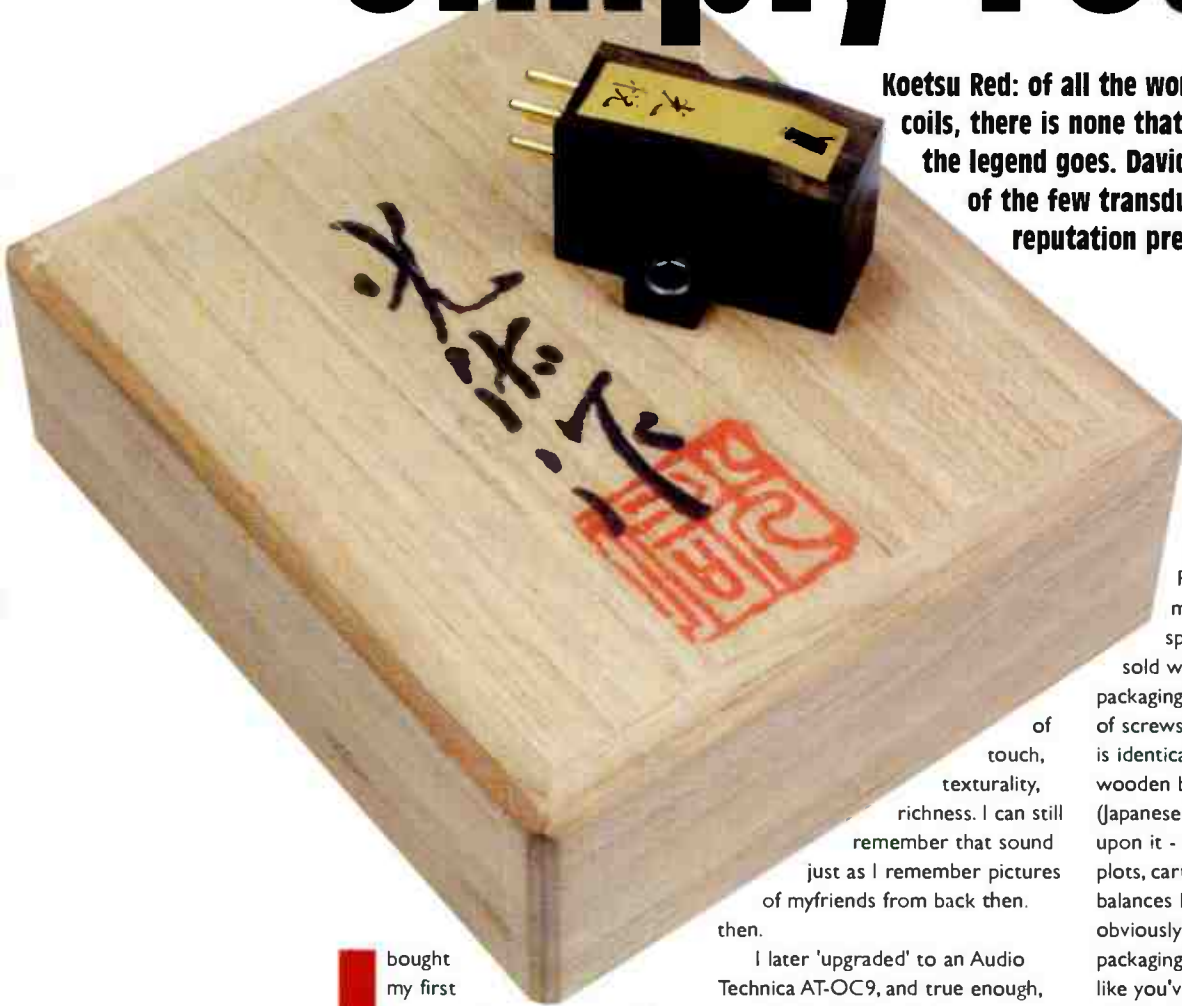
Disc MM	
Frequency response	30Hz-20kHz
Separation	78dB
Noise	-85dB/0.55uV
Distortion	0.006%
Gain	x113
Overload (in / out)	133mV / 15V

Disc MC	
Frequency response	30Hz-30kHz
Separation	73dB
Noise	-80dB/0.04uV
Distortion	0.006%
Gain	x1450
Overload (in / out)	11mV / 15V



# simply red...

**Koetsu Red: of all the world's great moving coils, there is none that can compare... or so the legend goes. David Price auditions one of the few transducers whose reputation precedes it.**



I bought my first moving coil cartridge in 1988 for the princely sum of £95. It wasn't a budget Ortofon, an affordable Goldring or even an entry level Audio Technica, but a 'new old stock' Supex SD900V Vital. Arriving in the post, it still had the original Linn Products sticker on the box - the company that, lest we forget, brought this transducer to the UK in the days before it launched its first Asak DC2100K in 1979...

In the mid seventies, you couldn't move for magazines which recommended the fabied 'Linn/Grace/Supex' combination. The LP12 was, back then, one of the very best turntables yet made, the Grace G707 a highly capable - if not outstanding - pick-up arm and the Supex SD900V the very finest phono cartridge available. The combination was cracking - a superlative mix which, possibly by pure happenstance, was brilliantly synergistic.

I used my Supex in a Linn Ittok LVII, and got similarly mesmeric results. It was almost eerie - the delicacy, smoothness, grace, lightness

of touch, texturality, richness. I can still remember that sound just as I remember pictures of my friends from back then.

I later 'upgraded' to an Audio Technica AT-OC9, and true enough, there was more detail, faster transients and more confident image placement. But something was lost and gone forever - that mystical, magical touch that I'd hitherto, mistakenly, thought was a feature of all coils, its ability to mesmerise, hypnotise, enchant, seduce. This, I later realised, was the Supex SD900V.

Yoshiaki Sugano was the man behind that cartridge. Later, he went on to do Koetsu, whose products bear a strong visual resemblance. The Red is perhaps the most famous of the breed. It's Koetsu's entry level model - more popular is the Red Signature, which offers a better matched core and coil set. Not that there's anything wrong with this 'cooking' version however, as our measurements show. Sugano-san sadly died in 2002, and with it the original generation of Koetsu cartridges. The range wasn't revised particularly, although there are people out there who swear the latest products are less 'romantic' sounding, and more 'hi-fi' - more of which later...

Funnily enough, the cartridge my

Supex replaced was a Rega R100 moving magnet - also manufactured (to Rega's specifications) by Supex, and sold with the minimum of packaging, without so much as a set of screws. In this respect, the Koetsu is identical. It comes in a small wooden box with Koetsu's 'inkan' (Japanese kanji signature) imprinted upon it - no frequency response plots, cartridge brushes or stylus balances here! In this respect, less is obviously more. The cartridge in its packaging is quite arresting - you feel like you've just bought something exotic - appropriately enough, because you have!

It took me just ten minutes to install the Red - a tribute to the brilliant ease of use of the SME Series IV tonearm in which I mounted it, complete with its fixed headshell and rack-and-pinion azimuth adjuster. I dialled in 2gms, confirmed it with my £6 Ortofon stylus balance, twiddled the VTA, tightened up all the appropriate bolts and screws, and ran it at low volumes for a couple of LP sides while my valve amp and Quads warmed through, and we were off.

## SOUND QUALITY

They say 'what goes round, comes round' - well the first thing that struck me was that I was listening to something eerily and spookily similar to that old Supex SD900V. The Japanese have the word 'natsukashi' (with no English equivalent) that they like to say when they feel or see something so obviously from their past. That's precisely how I viewed the Red - after umpteen Audio Technicas, Ortofons, Dynavectors and

REFERENCE SYSTEM

- Michell GyroDec turntable
- SME Series IV tonearm
- Trichord Delphini NC phonostage
- MF Audio Passive Preamplifier
- World Audio K5881 power amplifier (modified)
- Quad 989 loudspeakers
- Townshend Maximum supertweeters

Linns (and the rest), it was like finally coming home.

The most important, overriding attribute of the Red is its immediacy. After Ortofon's (admittedly superb) £1,000 Kontrapunkt C, it was like a layer of insulation tape had been peeled away from the front of my Quad 989s. The music was more upfront, more immediate, more tactile. It lacked the Scandinavian MC's beautifully tidy, smooth, cultured, hi-fi sound and instead was much more like being there - right in front of the orchestra, band or singer.

The reason for this is - in part - the Koetsu's startling attack transients. Listen to a simple drum beat and it has rhythm and inflection (i.e. timing and dynamics). It's brilliant at both, making the (cheaper) Ortofon sound like it's just serving time. For me, this was its most significant gift. Its ability to weave these two factors together is almost magical - and it's precisely why I loved the Supex, too.

Yet it all sounds so natural and effortless - by contrast, two famously musical cartridges - both of which I really rate - the Linn Akiva and Ortofon Kontrapunkt B - seem positively 'forced'. The Koetsu just pulls a rhythm (or three) from any instrument(s) with utter ease, like it's sleepwalking. The Akiva, by contrast, feels like it's been in training for this moment all its life, and it will succeed at all costs... Both are a hoot to listen to, but it's the insouciance of the Koetsu that is so cool...

This is an important point. The Red's own unique brand of musicality is something that has to be heard to be believed. Whether it's the heavily programmed, synthetic world of Zero 7's 'I Have Seen' or the virtuoso jazz-funk of The Crusaders' 'That Lady', it sings with a carefree joy that I've not encountered with any other moving coil and any where near the price, if at all. It succeeds by making any given recording sound like a group of musicians playing live music together, and loving it.

The next key point is its tonality and textuality - another major distinguishing mark on the old Supex

SD900, too. The Koetsu pulls off the impressive feat of sounding both rich and deep, but relatively neutral too. Its warm, sumptuous tonality isn't easily reducible to its frequency response trace - it's not obviously aberrant. Yet its portrayal of acoustic instruments and voices on all-analogue recordings, such as Chicago's 'If You Leave Me Now', is exquisite. The recorded acoustic was deliciously sumptuous and smooth, with that olde worlde Supex-style sweetness - that dark, deep, silky sound that SD900 users will remember fondly. All this time, however, those same aforementioned attack transients, rhythms and dynamics flooded out. The best of both worlds, to be sure!

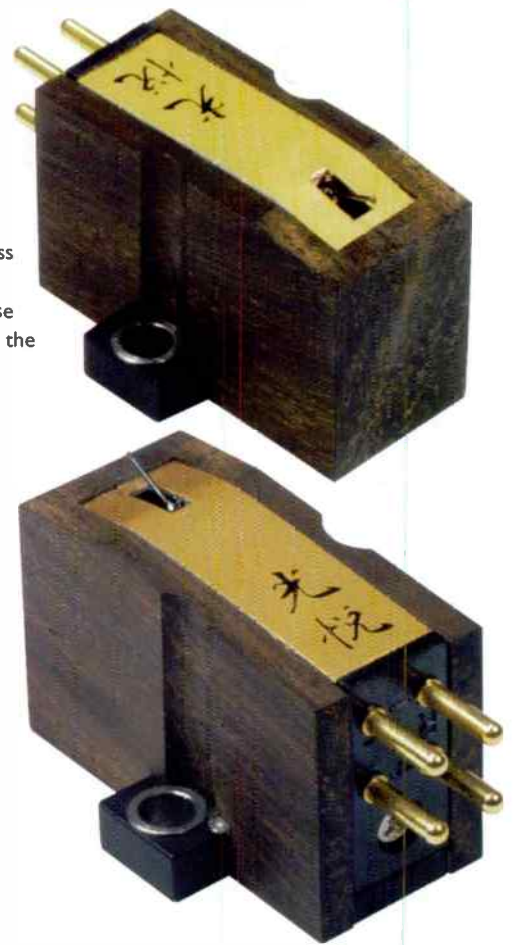
In fact, to anyone not used to this, the most basic Koetsu, such a 'full of flavour' sound will prove a revelation. It obviously strikes a 'rich, fruity' balance (an Audio Technica ART-1 it is not), but doesn't let that get in the way of superb textural detailing. Brass has a rasp, cymbals a sheen and - most profoundly - vocals a grain that other, highly regarded designs (such as the Ortofon Kontrapunkt C) simply can't achieve. It all sounds so believable, so tactile, so tangible. Female voice is sublime - you've never heard Kate Bush until you've tried a Koetsu Red, so direct, emotive, breathy and physical is the sound.

Add a startlingly rhythmic, dynamic nature to its effortless, easy musicality, and factor in its beguiling tonality and superlative textural detailing - and you've got its measure. But what then of its downsides? Well, the Koetsu's obvious talents are so overwhelming that they're uncommonly elusive - but listen hard and they are there. Despite its obviously smooth and even sound, its high treble isn't the most finessed - Ortofon's Kontrapunkt C (despite being a lot cheaper) has a more sophisticated (albeit less tangible) hi-hat sound. The Red is never ragged, but treble isn't as silky as its upper midband.

Secondly, it's not as stable a tracker as the aforementioned Ortofon, or indeed the Linn Akiva - an immediate price rival. Although it has a very

strong, articulate and commanding nature, it doesn't have that 'fused to the groove' surefootedness of some. Together, these are doubtless the *raison d'être* for the pricier Koetsu Red Signature...

Despite these quibbles - and they are precisely that - here's one of the most innately musical phono pick-up cartridges yet made. That it could make my very neutral GyroDec, allied to the famously analytical SME Series IV, sing so lyrically is nothing short of amazing. It's so charismatic, endearing, charming, seductive and yet so nearly without vice that I feel it deserves our highest possible score!



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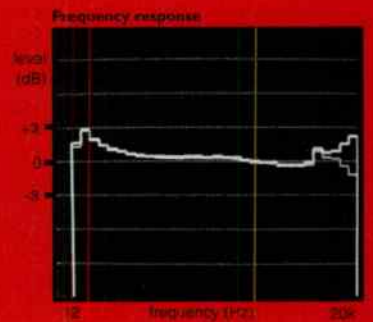
In tracking tests the Koetsu Red managed all but the highest levels at 300Hz and 1kHz, where it was marginal but still stayed in the groove - a good result. High tracking ability makes for a confident sound.

Although the Koetsu's low impedance generator coped with loads right down to 3ohms, it worked best into 10kohms. Frequency response was flat within tight 1dB limits from 40Hz up to 12kHz our analysis shows, with a small lift at 20kHz on outer grooves to compensate for tracing loss on inner grooves that amounted to just -1dB at 20kHz.

Vertical tracking angle was nicely set to 26 degrees, giving fairly low distortion on vertical modulation. Output was a useful 0.56mV at 5cms/sec rms, enough to keep hiss at bay in most MC phono stages.

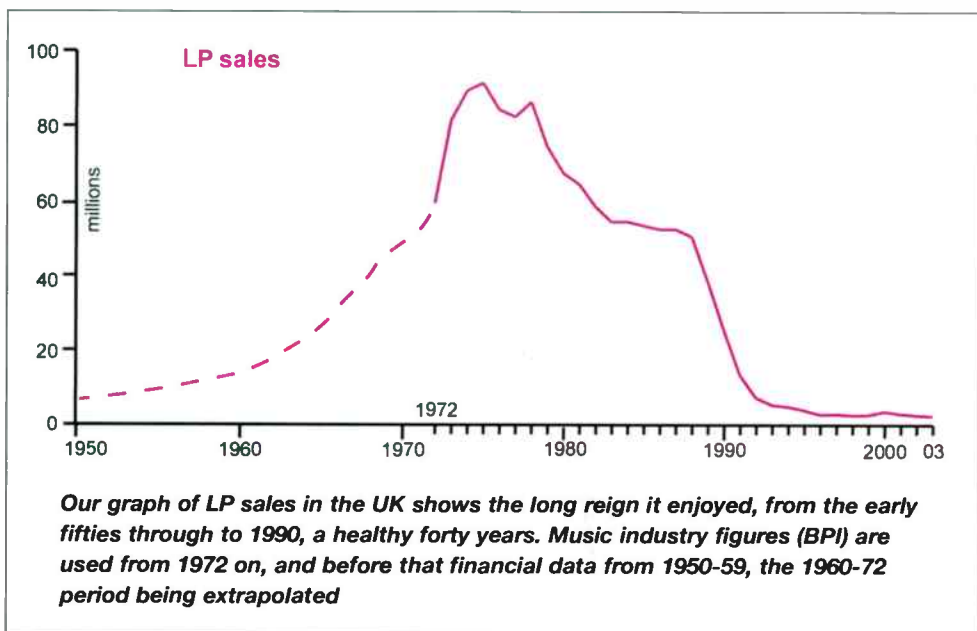
The Koetsu has no weak spots. It measures well in all areas and will sound both confident and accurate in use. NK

Tracking force	2gms
Vertical tracking angle	26degrees
Frequency response	20Hz-20kHz
Channel separation	30dB
Tracking ability (300Hz)	
lateral	80µm
vertical	45µm
lateral (1kHz)	22cms/sec.
D-distortion (45µm)	
lateral	0.8%
vertical	2%
Output (5cms/sec rms)	0.56mV



# 'round & round'

The LP versus CD debate raged hard in the eighties, but has recently taken a back seat as high resolution digital multichannel comes to the fore. Still, there's life in the old formats yet, and the old battle lines run deep. Noel Keywood discusses the Long Playing record, the Compact Disc, and their respective futures - together, forever...?



## VINYL DEMAND

The microgroove Long Playing record we have today originated in the USA in 1948, initially in mono form, moving to stereo in 1958. Both the quality of sound and durability of the LP were important factors in popularising music, bringing it to an audience who had never before had access to recorded entertainment in the home.

The image of teenagers spinning LPs on a Dansette illustrates this well; behind the LP came an entire industry devoted to the recording, production and distribution of music that it sold mainly to the young. Nothing like this had existed on any great scale before, but when artists like Elvis Presley and The Beatles appeared in the late 1950s and early 1960s music sales took off. They had international appeal and could stimulate massive worldwide sales, but only because of the LP. On this medium rode an industry and a new form of entertainment. Surprisingly perhaps, it is sales figures for CD that make this point, revealing that sales are tied to the medium, and that the medium has a life of its own, unaffected by the nature and value of its content.

In retrospect we can see the LP had massive impact worldwide, although this means primarily in those nations whose inhabitants could afford both records and replay equipment, meaning USA, Japan, Australia and Western Europe. In Britain LP sales peaked at 91 million in 1975 - interestingly well before the CD appeared in 1983. The analogue cassette took over until 1989, until it too went into sudden and steep decline from a peak of 83 million units per annum.

LP sales today stand at 2 million, but had declined to a residual level of 6 million by 1990. It was all over for analogue reproduction by then; CD was starting to make its mark...

## LASER LOVE

Representing signals as a digital code is an old idea, one toyed with by mathematicians and physicists as far back as the 17th century. Pulse Code Modulation or

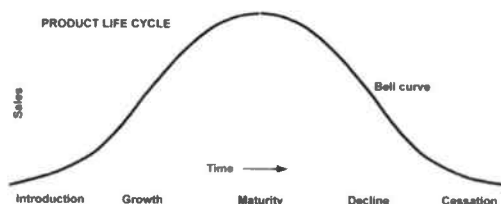
PCM, as used on CD, was developed by Alec Reeves in 1937. It took modern integrated circuits to make its use practicable though and PCM started to be used within broadcasting links in the UK during the 1970s.

The Compact Disc derives from work by both Philips and Sony on analogue optical discs such as Laservision, begun in 1969. Difficulties with analogue systems persuaded them to turn to digital and PCM; the CD was proposed in June 1980 and released as consumer product during October 1982 in Japan.

Philips were very unsure at the time that CD would take off, since it was expensive. Although sales were initially slow, in the UK CD sales finally got under way in the late 1980s. Our graphs show the sales history of CD from 1991 on, in the world's major markets: U.S.A., Japan, Germany and the UK. It has been a great success, as a hi-fi medium and - more potently - as a storage concept. DVDs are, after all, modeled on the CD - same disc diameter, same principle of operation and mechanical format. CD has become accepted as a wonderful way to store digital signals of all types.

Our graphs show quite clearly though that the CD, like the LP before it, has gone into decline even before a clear successor is available. What is the reason for this? And what comes next? Only in the UK are sales continuing to rise, but this is unlikely to last.

Products have a lifecycle that,



The classic bell shaped sales curve that depicts a product's life cycle. It applies to both LP and CD.



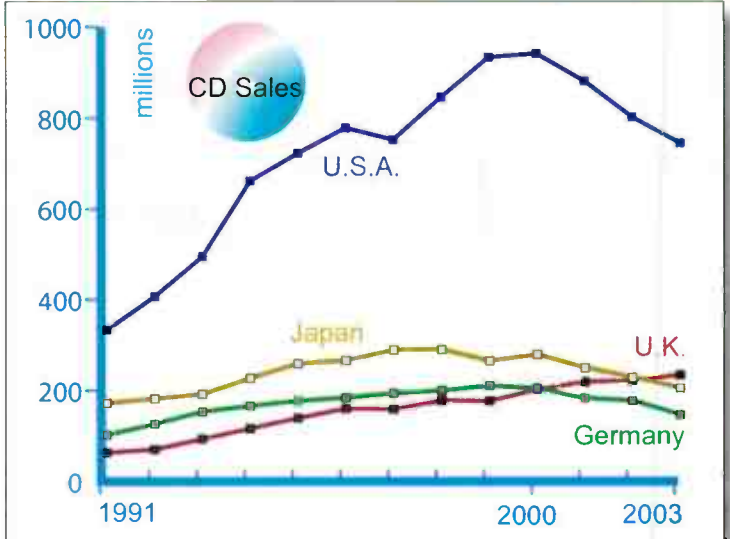
when under way, is largely resistant to outside influence. The downside to this is that decline is an inevitability, even when no successor or rival is available. Cost cutting may prolong life, but not indefinitely. And once into decline the end of a product comes quickly, as it did for cassette. The bell curve of a product's life cycle fatally struck the LP, then the cassette and now, after four years of decline, our graph shows it is clearly under way with CD.

**FUTURE SOUND**

The eerie and unexpected conclusion is that the medium is as important as the message. Ostensibly, people buy LPs and CDs for the music on them, but that's not entirely true, it seems. Once a medium becomes unfashionable, then the message is

potentially doomed too. This has some deep implications for the music business, who are reliant on the CD.

The CD outsold all before it by a substantial margin, especially in the UK where with an annual sale of 233million units it has eclipsed LP. What's little realised though is that massive worldwide CD sales have dominated music business turnover, driving it up steadily to reach a peak of \$39billion around 1998. Since then sales of recorded music have been following the CD downward. The suggestion here is that if



**CD sales around the world, showing decline set in around 2000. Only the UK bucked this trend. What eventually brought down the LP affects CD equally today.**

**LP ON TEST**

In its own approximate way, the LP achieved a level of performance CD barely matched. In fact, CD was inferior to LP in some crucial areas. Here's a comparison of the major factors:

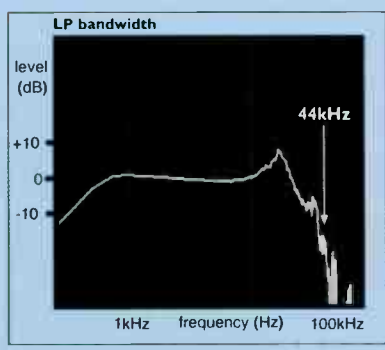
**Bandwidth** is the term used to describe the range of frequencies covered, generally the wider the better. LP stretched from 10Hz to 18kHz or thereabouts with a normal consumer cartridge. However, special types such as moving coils, Decca London and CD-4 Quadraphonic types reached 30kHz with ease. An analysis of the Stanton 681EEE III we review this month shows it reaches up to 44kHz! Output is irregular much above 20kHz, but it is there. In contrast CD reaches 21kHz, so it lags way behind. CD has been accused of sounding 'sterile' and 'shut in' as a result of this limitation. Recorded music harmonics nowadays reach well above 20kHz so there is a need for more bandwidth.

CD has a quoted dynamic range of 96dB and we measure up to -110dB or so, using weighting. Surface noise restricts the measured dynamic range of LP to 70dB our analysis shows, so CD appears much better. However, much below -60dB music on CD becomes distorted. Although distortion levels are not high at 0.3%, the harmonic structure is extended and subjectively unpleasant. Distortion on LP falls with signal level, so at ordinary playing levels it is very low, less than 0.3% second harmonic. This is the main reason LP lacks the hard, edgy quality of CD. So again, LP matches or arguably betters its successor.

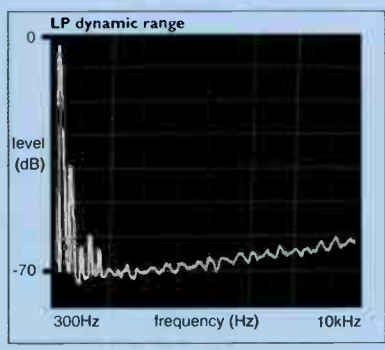
The 24bit/96kHz digital code of DVD better matches what LP could do, taking bandwidth out to 48kHz. 24bit coding gives less distortion than CD or LP. Only 24bit/192kHz digital code and SACD (ignoring supersonic noise) surpass LP by possessing not only lower distortion but an audio bandwidth to 90kHz.

It has taken digital a long time to match LP. Most recordings today are made at 24/48 so we still aren't experiencing the full benefits of extended analogue bandwidth a high sample rate digital system can bring. That's one reason LP remains sonically competitive even today.

Digital will never match the sound of analogue on LP because there's colouration in there too, but we still haven't reached a time when digital unarguably improves on some of its basic strengths...



**Running an extended frequency response sweep to 50kHz shows the Stanton 681EEE II reaches 44kHz - almost as high as 96kHz sample rate DVD...**



**Dynamic range of LP measures out at 70dB, using a good, modern cartridge, our analysis shows. Not as good as CD, but gritty digital distortion at low levels is absent**

music is to survive a successor to CD must be found, hence the development of SACD and DVD-A.

The CD has taken music into homes around the world, on a scale like never before. It has propelled music sales upward to record heights, but now it is dragging them downward. In other words, the music business is going out of business. What the LP started, the CD will finish.

The future appears to lie with video and DVD, whose sales are rocketing, or a successor like Blu-Ray. Neither are music-only carriers of course, but DVD video can deliver music satisfactorily all the same.

The LP and the CD were the first and last great music carriers. Tastes and technology march on, leaving behind an era of recorded music triggered by the LP's emergence back in the late 1950s. The LP was truly a great innovation, whose worldwide impact is little appreciated today.

# Winners Breed Winners



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# UNI-VERSAL

**Linn's UniDisk 1.1 is its first, most expensive and highest performing universal disc player. Offering multichannel and/ or stereo sound from CD, DVD-Video, DVD-Audio and SACD, it's this illustrious company's statement high resolution digital source. David Price takes up the story...**

**B**eam back fifteen years and the launch of Linn's Karik Compact Disc player took the hi-fi world by storm. Not because it was so good - and it was - but for the simple reason that it existed at all. This, lest we forget, was the first digital disc spinner from the company that had hitherto been the supreme champion of analogue's cause...

To be fair, Linn always maintained that it had nothing against digital audio per se, but it was just that the machines that played it were not - in its judgement - musical. There was also talk about CD's 16bit, 44.1kHz Red Book specification not being up to the job, but I think it's fair to say that the gist of the Castlemilk-based company's contention was that digital audio wasn't as musical as analogue - as played on a certain popular high end turntable of their own manufacture - was.

Imagine our surprise then, when the Karik arrived. To many fiercely anti-digital types like myself, it was tantamount to a sell-out on an epic scale. How could Linn cynically 'cash in' and swim with the tide rather than against it, in a bid to shift vast numbers of units - and to hell with the sound?

Well, the only problem with this thesis was that the Karik was indeed an extremely convincing music maker. It wasn't - in my opinion - a patch on the top LP12, but it was still in on another level to the likes of high end Sonys, Denons and Technics machines. It even made the very respectable top Meridian and Arcam players of the day sound formal, frigid, dispassionate and

disinterested. Five years later, the final evolution of the Karik (III) had become one of my all-time favourite CD spinners.

Warp forward to 1998, and Linn cheekily announced the Sondek CD12 - the first, and to date the only, digital disc spinner to carry that special imprimatur. Cynics thought it was having a laugh when they saw the £12,000 price tag, but having been forced - kicking and screaming, you understand - to live with one for a year, I can honestly say it was (and likely still is) the most well rounded, beautifully made and consummately musical production machine ever made. Put simply: it didn't sound like CD at all.

A couple of years later, Linn and *Hi-Fi World* ran an event in London, when readers were invited to decide which they preferred; a fully specc'd LP12 turntable or the new CD12 CD player. If I remember rightly, it came in around 55% LP12, 45% CD12 - a remarkable achievement for a 'digitally disadvantaged' machine having the make the most of a bad lot (i.e. Red Book CD).

It is now Spring 2003, and the UniDisk 1.1 is announced, to retail at £6,500. At the time of its launch, one of the problems with the concept of a £12,000 Linn CD spinner was its lack of DVD-A and SACD compatibility. Indeed, I can still remember the ever-erudite and affable John Bamford of Pioneer GB saying, "who the \*\*\*\* is going to buy that thing when 24/192 will soon be available for under £1,000?"...And he had a point, or so it seemed.

What we didn't know back in the

late nineties though was that - by and large - DVD-A/SACD players didn't do a particularly good job of ye olde CD. Not that it seemed to matter, in the excitement of those heady early days of DVD-A, but the fact remains that 'legacy audio playback' is terribly, terribly important. The best circa two thousand pound universal players, such as Denon's DVD-A11, are mostly quite superb. Build quality is excellent (in a Japanese corporate sort of way), as is the video performance - and the DVD-Audio and SACD sound is special too. But slip in a CD and you get a nice noise that wouldn't disgrace a decent £500 CD player, yet even against a great one like Rega's Planet 2000, begins to stumble and fall.

To me at least, this is why it is not unreasonable to contemplate buying a machine such as a UniDisk 1.1. Buyers will doubtless be conscious of its swooningly large price tag, but just about able to countenance it, if it delivers the promise of superb performance with ALL formats, from CD to DVD-A via SACD and DVD video. They'll likely not want to have a bespoke CD machine sitting next to a gargantuan Jap battleship DVD player, plus all the fuss and bother from awkward ergonomic and aesthetic conflicts. If the Linn does the business seriously well, in one small and exquisitely designed package, then they'll be prepared to splash out on it. So the question then is - does it?

## THE DESIGN

This is so not a re-badged Denon, Sony or Pioneer. Measuring 381 x 80 x 368mm and weighing in at 4.9kg, you won't find much common in its

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# X, RATED...

**David Price does the honours with Musical Fidelity's X-DAC v3 digital-to-analogue convertor, X-10v3 output stage and X-PSU v3 power supply.**

**D**o you remember the Kenwood DP-9010? Arguably the first audiophile CD transport, it presaged a brief fad for separate CD transport/DAC combinations. How clever it seemed - no longer was the CD player limited to its built-in digital-to-analogue convertor and accompanying analogue output stage; instead, you purchased the DAC of your choice and then replaced it when the technology advanced.

Shame it never really caught on. We had a series of transports and Black Box DACs from Arcam, the adventurously titled 'Digital Decoding Engine' from Audio Alchemy and Musical Fidelity's Digilog. Aside from a few other high end transport-DAC combos (from the likes of Pink Triangle, Deltec and Sony), that was it. Most of the major players simply abandoned the market.

Interestingly though, Musical Fidelity did not. Now we have the X-DAC v3, £400 worth of the latest digital electronics, and almost uniquely perhaps - it's upgradeable by the bespoke, matching £300 X-PSU v3 (and better still, this little box also services the X-CANS v3, new X-10v3 and X-LP v3 too). Then, last but not least is a new tube buffer, the X-10v3...

### X-DAC V3

This is a DAC in a box, and a very nice aluminium one at that. Inside, there's the very latest Burr Brown DSD1792/ SRC4192/3 chipset. Analogue, digital and interface sections get their own discrete power supplies. Outside, there's a row of blue LEDs on the neat brushed aluminium fascia (power, optical digital input, coaxial digital input, and 'locked'), and round the back the respective socketry,

including a TOSLINK and coaxial ins, plus a coaxial out, plus a power input

for a standard 'wall wart' power supply and an X-PSU v3 DIN input. Simple.

Using the X-DAC v3 is simple enough - just switch on and feed it a digital input. Interestingly, although no 96kHz capability is specified, Noel Keywood found it would lock onto one when offered the opportunity! The only problem was that there's no way of switching between the optical and coaxial inputs - you simply have to switch off the source you don't want, and wait till it locks onto the one you do... Still, I suppose switching adds extra cost, and this only costs £399, and you can't have everything...!

It sounds good for a £400 convertor - very good. But it's also very hi-fi. It's definitely ahead of your average £400 CD player (not that there are many around, these days), and it really upgraded my Yamaha CDR-HD1300, for example. It offers a truly clean and detailed sound, one that makes the DACs bundled with most low-to-mid price machines sound murky, noisy, mushy and drab.

It's actually quite hard to criticise, and for the selling price nigh on impossible. The midband is its forte - it's very tidy, even and brimming with detail. Image placement is positive, although depth perspective isn't particularly special. Bass is very taut, guitar notes starting and stopping with alacrity. Treble is smooth, dry and crisp.

I don't mean to damn it with faint praise - it's just that plugging the optional X-PSU v3 in made such a tremendous difference. Suddenly, we had a seriously big hitting digital convertor, with surprising depth and dimensionality, and brilliantly tactile, tuneful, strong and supple bass and highly atmospheric treble. The optional power supply really 'pulled the DAC out of itself', letting it really get into its stride. It put the X-DAC v3 up into the £1,000-plus CD player territory, bettering the X-RAY v3 and giving an extremely open, even, insightful and finessed window on the world.



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**X-10V3**

It's back! The original X-10D was one of Antony Michaelson's better ideas, although it's easy to say that from the purview of history and 48,500 sales beneath you. At the time, the idea of selling someone an active line stage which didn't, ermm, really do much except add a little valve colouration seemed a tad queer. But there you go, it worked. Essentially, it's because the analogue output stages on most budget CD spinners aren't as good as they might be. The X-10D boosted the gain slightly, and offered better current drive into the preamp or power amp, plus a slight, but not conspicuous, oupcon of tube flavour.

The new X-10v3 costs £299, and will be made in a limited edition of just 4,850 pieces. This is apparently due to 'rarity' of the 6112 'mu-vista' tube it uses. Designed to be used on the output of a CD player or in the tape loop of an integrated amplifier, it claims excellent technical performance with high input impedance, and low output impedance with excellent load driving ability - and our measurements indeed bore this out.

It works by offering a very high input impedance, about 500k, to the output stage (of a CD player, for example) driving it. This ensures that it has an incredibly easy load to drive, so that it will be able to perform optimally. It also offers a low output impedance, about 33 Ohms, meaning it can drive almost any length of interconnect cable and any conceivable input loading from any commercially available amplifier. This combination effectively soothes the troublesome connection between CD spinner and amplifier input, allowing both to perform at their respective best.

So much for the theory, how does it sound? Well, this was quite fascinating, as I have been a regular user of the original gas cannister-shaped X-10D and was able to make a direct comparison. First though, here's what it does in isolation: Hooked up to the X-DAC v3/ X-PSU v3 combo and driven by the latter, it proved quite an ear-opener. It injected no small degree of life into

the system. Part of this, I think is due to the very slight 1dB signal boost, which simply makes things slightly louder ("this one goes up to eleven", etc.), but it's not as simple as that.

There's an air, space and dimensionality which simply isn't there without it - in a sense it brings a similar subjective benefit to inserting Townshend Maximum supertweeters. David Sylvian's 'Orpheus' was undeniably more brooding - almost magical sounding. It makes CD sound - urrrgh - more 'analogue'. I think the sense of ease, of fluidity and flow is the most notable aspect, aside from that tiny level boost.

Interestingly, the new X-10v3 is more transparent and spacious than the X-10D. So it should be, I guess, with its superior measured performance. But where the oldster really did inject a subtle 'creaminess' into certain systems, the new one doesn't simply do this. Rather, it works more covertly - pulling the sound out of itself, if you like, rather than altering it. There's absolutely no discernable change in tonality, although it does improve on the textural quality of acoustic instruments - you can hear more of the body of the guitar, grain of the voice or rasp of the trumpet.

**CONCLUSION**

For around £1,400, this threesome effects quite a dramatic change on any CD player equipped with a digital output. Taken in isolation, the X-DAC v3 and X-10v3 have obvious beneficial effects, but aspirated by an X-PSU v3 and plugged into one another, and they'll transform even a classic high end CD spinner, such as my old reference Sony CDP-X77ES (£1,200 in 1989). The results are truly impressive - powerful, clean, expansive, subtle, spacious, smooth, neutral and incisive.

Now then, whether it's better to invest all that money in a new CD player instead is less clear. If your existing silver disc spinner isn't much cop as a transport, then I'd say go ahead and replace it (the £899 Musical Fidelity X-RAY v3 is an obvious choice,



here) and maybe add an X-10v3 sharpish, before they sell out. If you already have a good, contemporary mid-price machine that you can use as a transport, then this threesome makes much more sense.

Alternatively, if you want to upgrade bit by bit, spending a little money every month, it also makes complete sense. Whatever's right for you, these are excellent, finely engineered niche audiophile products - it's nice to have all this extra choice.

**VERDICT** ●●●●●

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MF X-10V3	£299
MF X-PSU V3	£299

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**REFERENCE SYSTEM**

- Marantz CD63 KI DP CD player
- MF Audio Passive Preamplifier
- World Audio K5881 power amplifier (modified)
- Quad 989 loudspeakers
- Townshend Maximum supertweeters

**MEASURED PERFORMANCE**

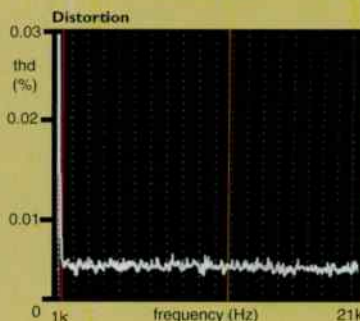
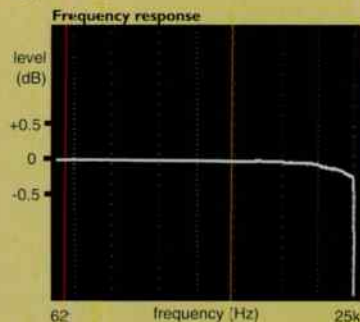
With CD the X-DAC v3 is very linear over the critical range of music, from around -6dB down to -60dB, where distortion figures are as low as they get, and there's little quantisation noise too, as our analysis at -30dB shows. Consequently, the EIAJ dynamic range value was the best possible at 112dB.	-60dB	0.18
	-80	4.2
	-80 dithered	1.7
Separation	left	right
1kHz	119	118
20kHz	113	114
Noise (IEC A)		-119dB
Dynamic range		112dB
Output		2.12V

With a convolved impulse from CD frequency response measured 4Hz-21.8kHz. Our analysis shows a small amount of top end roll down, just enough to avoid brightness in the sound. This continues to -0.6dB at 43kHz with a 96kHz sample rate signal, although such signals aren't commonly available. As claimed, word lengths from 8bits to 24bits are accepted too. With the latter, distortion measured just 0.1% at -80dB, so fundamental linearity is excellent.

Channel separation was wide, noise at muting low and output normal at 2.12V. No measurable jitter was imposed, so the clocking looks tight.

The X-DAC measured very well in all areas. It should give very good sound quality from CD. **INK**

Frequency response	4Hz - 21.8kHz
	4Hz - 43kHz
Distortion	
0dB	0.0018
-6dB	0.002



# POWER NAD



**With competition hotting up in the budget integrated amplifier market, NAD has responded with the muscular new C352. Does its power corrupt Dominic Todd? Absolutely...**

It hasn't been so easy for NAD of late. At one stage, the company pretty much had the budget audiophile amplifier market to itself. Recently though,

Cambridge's Azur range has been hogging all the limelight, and stealing not only reviewer and buyer interest, but sales too. Thankfully NAD has never been one to rest upon its laurels, and it was with eager anticipation that I found myself reviewing the new C352.

Rather than producing an all-new design, NAD has sensibly chosen to evolve, albeit substantially, the existing C350. I wouldn't argue with this as I, and many others, felt the C350 to be one of the finest amplifiers around £300...

The improvements centre around four areas of the amplifier. The first is a more substantial metal chassis. Now, whilst the C352 does seem more robust than NAD amps' of old, it is still rather plasticky. In comparison to the Marantz PM7200 (£330), Rotel RA-02 (£350) and even the much cheaper Cambridge Azure 640c (£250), it does look a little low grade. Still, let's not forget that this is a NAD, and NAD tends to spend money where it matters; on the inside.

Improvement number two, then, is to the power supply. The Holmgren Toroidal PSU now supplies 80 watts per channel, which is 25% up on the old C350 [see page]. NAD

tends to be conservative with power ratings, so you can be sure that the C352 will have little to fear from rival Marantz's PM7200, 100w output. In conjunction with the extra power also comes what NAD calls "PowerDrive." In a nutshell, this circuit senses speaker impedance characteristics, and adjusts the power supply settings to best cope. It's already been used, to great effect, in the C320 BEE and C370 models.

The Class A preamp and driver remain, but feature updated semiconductors to complete the third tweak. Finally, the tone control circuit and PCB have been revised, offering shorter signal paths. The hope here is to reduce distortion, especially when the tone controls are in play. We've already considered the slightly disappointing finish but, fortunately, the feature count is far more impressive.

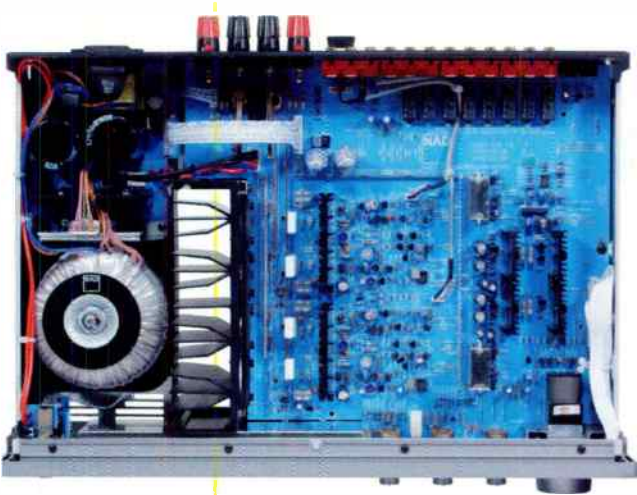
The standard remote control has been improved and is far more tactile than before, if not quite so weighty as an Azur's. However, as far as I'm aware, the 7 line inputs, twin recording loops, twin pre outputs and single line input, are better than anything else in the class. As the basis for a complex system, possibly involving bi-amping at a later stage, the C352 remains a class apart from its rivals. What a shame then, that a phono stage isn't part of the package, especially as NAD does them better than most!

## SOUND QUALITY

With the NAD connected up to a matching C542 CD player and pair of KEF Q1 'speakers, the listening kicked off with Tom Waits' 'Better Off Without a Wife'. The most noticeable characteristic was the highly focused vocal performance. Waits' dulcet tones had real presence and character. This came from the tight sound staging that didn't allow the vocals to shift from the central position, but also from the colour and texture imbued in his vocals. Another pleasant surprise, for what is a comparatively low budget amplifier, was the piano timbre. I've heard amps costing twice as much - or more - than the C352, that would struggle to match the resolve and realism here.

What did become clear, however, is that the C352 is not the sort of amplifier that will peel away layers of detail in a forensic manner. There was fair detail from both the audience and percussion, but you didn't get quite the insight into this that others would reveal. Nonetheless, for this price, I feel that NAD has got the balance right. Better to focus on the key elements of the music, rather than to try and reproduce too much information and end up sounding clinical or confused. I found the balance erred on the warmer side of neutral, which was reflected in the bass too. Whilst not being the deepest, with the Marantz PM7200





just pipping it here, it at least sounded natural and well controlled.

Dido's 'Hunter' again showed what a superb job the NAD makes with vocals. Once more, rock solid positioning was very much the order of the day. There was richness to the upper bass/ lower midrange that meant that the track didn't have quite the alacrity of some. Yet this didn't seem to affect the timing unduly. Again, I felt as though NAD had got a good balance, with the music being easy and enjoyable to follow, but also smooth and refined for good long term listening. If anything, though, the treble was a tad too polished for its own good, and missed out on some finer details. With most speakers I shouldn't think that this will be a problem, but it would be something to consider if you're going to match warmer/ duller sounding ancillaries.

Moving to Royksopp's 'So Easy and Eple' ambient tracks, and the C352 produced the most sumptuous sound stage. What really impressed was the depth of sound, which, together with the generous width, provided an impressively bold platform. There was a decent level of insight into the music, with the layering of instrumental effects reproduced to great effect. Bass proved strong yet unstrained; obviously the PowerDrive was doing its thing here. Compared with, say, a Naim Nait 5i, it wasn't the tightest, most focused of bass responses but, given its price, bass control was fine. Again, I would say it favoured warmth over agility, but not too the detriment of involvement. Even though every last detail wasn't stripped away from the mix, it still offered a captivating listen.



There was something almost valve-like with the reproduction of John Rutter's 'Candlelight'. No doubt the Class-A pre-amp and driver stage were playing a role here, with the flute in particular sounding most beguiling. String tone was equally sweet although, again, it wasn't the most analytical. To give an example of what I mean, although the flautist could be heard taking breaths, one couldn't really feel the breaths. Some of the intensity of a live performance was lost.

I felt that 'Candlelight' hadn't really pushed the NAD with the Classical genre, so it was time for a more challenging and complex piece. There's a part of Chabrier's 'España' that never fails to make the listener, if not exactly jump, then at least flinch. It's an intensely dynamic piece and a good test of any amps' dynamic resolve. The NAD passed the flinch test admirably with the Marantz PM7200 being the only competitor I've heard able to match its dynamic authority. Again, some of the subtle details were lost, but the general integrity of the music was well portrayed. Brass, for example, sounded suitably vibrant, and the C352 coped well in separating the various instrumental sections during the more complex passages.

**CONCLUSION**

It's hard not to warm to the C352. It's a thoroughly engaging

**THE POWER GAME**

Trace back the origins of the C352, and you'll find that, over the years, power output has quadrupled. The C352's direct ancestor, the C350 offered 60 watts, but the model that it in turn replaced, the C340, offered only 50. Mind you, the C340's predecessor, the 314, mustered just 35w RMS. Those with longer memories may well recall the NAD 304. It preceded the 314, matching its 35 watts output. At the time it rescued NAD from a depressingly average run of amps', led by the 3020's replacement, the charmless 302. Although the C352 isn't actually a direct descendent of the 3020, it has some connections with its bigger brothers, the 3225PE and, before that, the 3130. Power output from these, incidentally, was just 25 and 20 watts per channel. Figures, it seems, count for more than ever before!

design, which draws you into the music like few others at the price. Let's be clear, however, it is not a giant killer. It's no Naim Nait 5i beater, and a doubling of budget will show demonstrable improvements in sound. Ultimately the C352's weakness comes from being unable to reveal the last layer of music, the complexity of a breath, or the full force of a struck drum skin. Yet, it is unfair to expect this of the NAD, especially at the price, and anyway, this is far from being a serious criticism. As a study of balance and consistency, NAD should be awarded full marks. The comprehensive feature count adds further credence to this being one of the most complete amps' about.

Taken as a whole, the C352 has to be one of the very best amplifiers under £400 and, as such, comes highly recommended.

**VERDICT** ●●●●£

No giant killer, but one of the very best and consistent sounding integrated amplifiers at its price.

**NAD C352** £350  
**NAD**  
 ☎ +44 (0)1908 319360  
 www.nad.co.uk

- FOR**
- Consistent, musical, sound
  - Drives difficult loads
  - Connectivity

- AGAINST**
- Tough competition
  - No phono stage
  - Plasticity finish

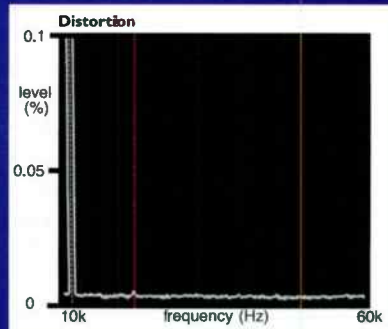
**MEASURED PERFORMANCE**

The NAD packs a fair old punch, delivering 120W per channel into 8ohms, although with some small shortfall into 4ohms where I expected around 160W or more but measured just 132W due to supply line droop. There's still plenty enough here for high volume levels though. Distortion measurement showed that at high volumes the C352 stays remarkably clean, producing just 0.005% distortion near full volume at 1kHz and a creditable 0.007% under the same conditions at 10kHz. NAD amplifiers are consistent in achieving this level of performance and it does ensure a smooth sound.

Input sensitivity was usefully high at 370mV for full output, noise low and D.C. offset minimal. Frequency response was wide and well suited to DVD-A, with an upper limit of 106kHz.

The C352 measured well, although it isn't as tightly regulated as some. Expect a clean smooth sound all the same. NK

Power	120watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	4Hz-106kHz
Separation	82dB
Noise	-112dB
Distortion	0.004%
Sensitivity	370mV
dc offset	0.3/3mV



# grace, space,

**Sonus Faber's Cremona Auditor high end standmounting loudspeakers offer a classic blend of desirable qualities, says Channa Vithana...**

If the eighties was the age of small, two-way standmounting mini-monitors (Acoustic Energy AE-1, Linn Kan, etc.) then the nineties begat the modern floorstander. Round about 1993, the fashion took off with a vengeance, and suddenly a tall, narrow-baffle, small footprint box full with a healthy complement of drivers was the only thing to have in your living room. Everything from Mission's 752 up to KEF Reference Series 4s got rave reviews, and all of a sudden the idea of the stand-mounter looked mightily unappealing.

In showrooms of course, floorstanders were an easy sell. Their proportions, allied to some nice, light, crisp modern wood finishes (thankfully black didn't last too long into the nineties), allied to the promise of all that bass, and even a small fillip for the efficiency figures, made many buyers wonder why folk bothered with small boxes sat on ugly metal columns anyway.

However, it was something of 'the Emperor's new clothes'. Nothing in loudspeaker design is for free, and that extra bass could often be a liability. Of course, mini-monitors often have small bass peaks engineered in around 100Hz, to give them extra apparent 'punch', and this was something that floorstanders usefully did without. But the extra octave of low frequencies that the floorstander's larger internal volume brings made for problems elsewhere.

Standing wave suppression was harder, and the often substandard, poorly braced cabinets could resonate like nobody's business - inadequacies in the design and build of any speaker are exacerbated when it's twice or three times as long.

Result: muddy sound with the bass about half a beat behind the treble. So there is actually a lot of sense in going for a high quality standmounter after all.

At 190x320x350mm, the Sonus Faber Cremona Auditor is no eighties-style mini-monitor, however. Rather, it walks 'the third way' of being a largish standmounter - and a thoroughly modern one at that. The design is quite exquisite. Obviously, they're premium priced, so you'd expect something special, but they really are quite exceptional with their beautifully finished, solid wood, Lute-shaped cabinets, sleek grille system and elegant swept-back stands.

A two-way, rear-ported bass reflex design, the speaker boasts a 29mm dome tweeter and 150mm 'hard paper' mid/bass unit, separated by a first order crossover. Sonus Faber claims a 46-40,000Hz frequency response, with a nominal impedance of 4ohms allied to a sensitivity of 88dB. Although a largely conventional design - no ribbon tweeters, electrostatic panels or strange cabinetry here - the Cremona Auditors impress with their superlative attention to detail.

## SOUND QUALITY

Compared to most floorstanders, the Cremona's impedance/ sensitivity numbers aren't terribly user-friendly - they'll need a serious transistor amplifier to aspirate them, but then anyone who doesn't possess such a beast shouldn't contemplate buying high end standmounters anyway! For this reason, the first part of the listening was undertaken at *Phonography* [see box].

Intriguingly, an unexpected match was formed between these loudspeakers and Alison Goldfrapp - now there's an odd coupling, if one recalls previous Sonus Fabers as being characterised as

sounding collectively polite, smooth and good for jazz or classical! As the review unfolded, I tried them with source material ranging from Metallica's 'Master of Puppets' and The Balanescu Quartet's 'Possession' to Star Wars 'Episode 2 OST' and Death In Vegas 'The Contino Sessions', with interesting results...

First, The



## THE NAME

Sonus Faber has something of a penchant for naming its loudspeakers after classical musical instrument makers, but Cremona is actually the northern Italian town from which some of that country's finest hail, including Amati, Guarneri and Stradivari.

# pace

## POSITIONING

Being rear ported, you can't slam these speakers back against a rear wall as you might do with sealed baffle mini-monitors. Rather, they work best about one metre out into the room, although you can always push them a tad further back for more bass reinforcement if need be. They also respond well to toe-ing in, but only ever so slightly. Their light weight (relative to floorstanders) means it's vital to ensure that they're as stable as possible - by applying the weight of your body to the top of the speaker

as it sits on the stand and pressing down - once you've positioned them correctly in the room, of course. It's easy to tell that you've got them right, as the Cremonas' soundstage should dissolve into space.



## THE LISTENING ROOMS

Two listening rooms were used. First, the *Phonography* room was 5x7m with block/brick walls, carpet, and bookshelves. The Auditors were spaced 2.5m apart and 1.5m away from back wall with 15° toe-in. Here a combination of Dynavector L300 pre and Hx 1.2 (180w!) power amps were used with a Densen Beat B - 400 XS CD player - £11,000 of serious equipment. Then a more modest set-up at home using a 4x6m room with block/brick walls and floating wood floor over concrete. Placement was 2.2m apart and 400mm from wall with 10° toe-in.

Balnescu's chamber version of Kraftwerk's 'The Robots' was beautifully rendered, its array of strings coming out so well, especially the rhythmic breaks, where solidity and colour issued forth from the Auditors. 'Dirge' by Death In Vegas, a tricky rock piece, grooved menacingly, but the Auditors controlled the recording's complexities, proving just able to grip the bass as this difficult piece crashed and burned.

Up next was Metallica's 'Orion' - an eight-minute leviathan and a curious piece, what with its lush drum and bass progression mixed with brutal guitar and a gorgeous jazz-folk interlude! Amazingly, the Auditors illuminated every strand of the mix, with some wonderful guitar texturing. 'Orion' sounded a tad slow initially, although this could be attributed to carpet/ stand interaction and/ or speaker running in.

Then came the drama. Starting with track 3 from Star Wars, this broodingly atmospheric piece builds up in many layers then suddenly you get a slap to your senses with brilliant percussion whizzing by, with huge immersive strings and horns panning from left to right. As the track gains momentum, bass swells magnificently, flying out of the speakers at an incredible rate, dispelling polite notions instantly. The Cremonas captured this in its entirety, and after recovering from that slap, I got the Ali 'butterfly and

bee' uppercut in form of a deliciously finessed pulsating bass from Goldfrapp's Crystalline green. Punch drunk, one cannot believe hearing a vocal as sexy as this! Goldfrapp's unique spectral style was staggeringly well intimated. Head back and eyes closed throughout, I thoroughly enjoyed this song.

At home [see box], the sound was leaner and faster - probably because there's no carpeting. The use of modestly priced Naim electronics was no deterrent; relatively speaking, surprisingly good performances highlighted the Auditors' enthusiasm. They adore strings, whether acoustic or abrasive electric guitar - and good synth compositions too.

Sonus Faber's Cremona Auditors are excellent achievers, even at this price. Although extremely detailed, faithful and transparent, they're not as critical of their source equipment as one might expect. They retain elements of the traditional SF sound, but offer great speed and punch, making them truly able with a wide variety of music from rock to classical. Yet they retain the brand's characteristic delicacy, subtlety and grace. Overall, they're living proof how capable the 'large standmounter' can be, and how it can actually offer better value than equivalent floorstanders, providing subterranean bass isn't your thing. A Sonus Faber experience quite unlike past perceptions.

## VERDICT



Superb all rounder, works fine using high quality mid price separates but excel with the high end.

## SONUS FABER CREMONA

AUDITOR £2,149

STANDS £399

Absolute Sounds

☎ +44 (0)208 571 3909

www.absolute-sounds.com

## MEASURED PERFORMANCE

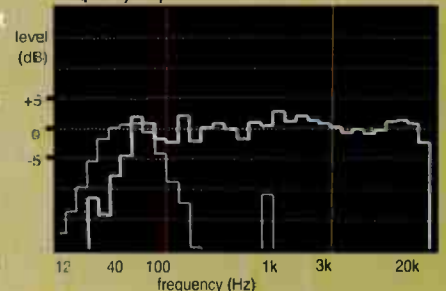
The Cremona has some midrange lift centred around 1kHz, just enough to give clearly enunciated speech and vocals, and a good sense of projection, without sounding unbalanced. Most speakers have an innate 'balance', part of what some designers term the 'voice' of the speaker, and in this case it differs from many, so the Cremona will likely have its own sound and its own appeal. With smoothly extended treble it will be both clear and totally well balanced. Measurement shows some bass undulations though, with strong forward output around 50Hz likely to give emphasis to those frequencies. The port works lower so deep bass will be apparent in larger rooms.

Sensitivity was normal at 86dB from one nominal watt (2.8V) but with an impedance of just 5ohms in fact the speaker is drawing more

(1.5W). All the same, the Cremona will seem fairly loud at any particular volume control setting, holding its own against rivals. So as a load it is fairly normal, needing 40W-100W or so.

The Cremona measures well enough. It will have some high bass emphasis and may sound a little enthusiastic here. It will also have good vocal projection. NK

Frequency response



## THANKS TO:

*Phonography*,  
Star lane,  
Ringwood,  
Hampshire  
Tel: 01425 461 230

# Not for conservatives



The comprehensive range of turntables by **Pro-ject**, design is perhaps a little less conservative than the norm and yes, products are available in blue, and red, and yellow, and green.

High quality record players are available from just over £100  
Contact us today for details of your nearest Centre of Excellence.

Centres of Excellence are our elite dealers who have shown commitment to customer service, attended regular product training seminars and offer demonstration facilities on the majority of the Pro-ject range.

# back to the future...

With its cool, retro styled SR-L30DAB portable digital radio, TEAC has got the fundamentals right, says Patrick Cleasby...

I had the following criteria; FM was required so my wife could listen to Trent FM in the morning; I wanted DAB in order to listen to 6Music away from the Sky box and the computer; and I thought it pointless to buy a device without the flexibility of digital output. Off the agenda was battery operation (although it would have been nice), and I wasn't particularly bothered about having the buffering capability new machines are starting to have. To my mind, there was only one candidate that fitted the bill...

I had visited the place whose name begins with C, and while many of the offerings had become quite cheap, this seemed to be due to the imminent clearing out of small DAB only units from the likes of Grundig. Even the Roberts units available were all lacking digital output. Further Internet research revealed the S/PDIF capable options, including the two successors to Pure's ubiquitous Evoke-1 - the stereo Evoke-2, and the alarm-equipped Tempus-1. The main problem for me was that I have never found the Pure family design to be particularly appealing, and so I was overjoyed to find the TEAC option online at Unbeatable (I have yet to see one in a shop) at a similar price - around £135 including delivery.

The side-perspective image found on the web is a fair represen-

tation of the sleek, low-down look of the SR-L30DAB. The deep speaker grille grooves give an appealing darkness to what is otherwise the usual maple and aluminium combination. The unit has a good, solid feel in the hand, and is about the size of a Roberts Revival which has been squashed downwards. It is powered by 12V DC wall wart only (no batteries), and the only other rear connections are the optical S/PDIF socket with covering flap, stereo phono analogue outputs and a 3.5 mm headphone socket. There are also twin speaker ports on the back surface. The top mounted control buttons all feel solid and positive enough, and the only detail which lets the side down slightly are the larger volume and tuning knobs, which feel slightly plasticky and I have a suspicion that their matt aluminium finish may be vulnerable to knocks or wear. Time will tell.

DAB set up was very simple - plug in, power on, raise antenna and hit auto-tune. With the antenna fully extended and vertical the stations on the BBC Multiplex were all showing full quality. A few weeks ago, 19 stations were available here on the Nottinghamshire/Lincolnshire border, but the end of April saw the Nottingham Commercial Multiplex switched on, so all of a sudden that FM requirement was history and the

station count was up to 27! If you require FM operation it is finicky - requiring the antenna to point backwards parallel with the floor to get a decent signal where I live.

Whether playing through its own speakers or through the S/PDIF output (this only works for DAB signals), this unit does emit a very pleasing sound which shows what DAB would be capable of if more stations could make use of the 192kbps bit-rate afforded to Radio 3. With its hiss, crackles and sensitivity to human proximity my trusty (admittedly mono) Roberts Revival is left seeming to be a very anachronistic device compared to the convenience and distortion free sound of the TEAC.

However, a switch to the 128kbps signal of the now incongruously-named Trent FM, and even the obviously capable sonics of the TEAC can't stop the music sounding thin and weedy compared to the Roberts. Spoken word can stand the lowering of the bit-rate, but unfortunately 5Live is afforded a meagre 80kbps in mono and the World Service a pathetic 64kbps! At these rates swooshing MPEG encoding artefacts tend to become audible. Still, it's a likeable machine, and if only I wasn't an eBay virgin I now find I could probably have got one for half the price. Oh well...

## VERDICT ●●●●

Very tidy looking stereo unit with appealing sonics and the convenience of S/PDIF out for the home recording enthusiast.

TEAC SR-L30DAB £135  
TEAC UK  
[www.teac.co.uk](http://www.teac.co.uk)

## FOR

- Attractive Looks
- Compelling Sound
- Intuitive Operation

## AGAINST

- Not Portable
- Fixed Antenna
- Slow Response



# PROBABLY THE BEST DIY KITS IN THE WORLD



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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)



**KECL82 VALVE AMPLIFIER KIT**

**£195**



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



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**

**£615**

**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 brushed aluminium 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).



**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)



**2A3 PSE INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER KIT**

**£570**

# PROBABLY THE BEST DIY KITS IN THE WORLD

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)	£205.00
Pre-amplifier (PRE-II)	£215.00
Phono Stage (PHONO-II)	£110.00
Moving coil step-up transformer	£77.00
Passive pre-amplifier (PAS-II)	£235.00



## SERIES II MODULAR PRE-AMP KIT



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



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

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 use 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



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.

## 300B PSE MONOBLOC KIT

£895 per pair

## 300B PP MONOBLOC KIT NEW

£895 per pair

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.



## 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 operation

## 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/150V-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

## TRANSI 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. Suitable 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. Suitable 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 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.

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Kit ECL82 Printed Circuit Board 200mm(w) x 140mm(l) x 1.6mm(d)

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Kit HD83 Printed Circuit Board (a pair) 120mm(w) x 215mm(l) x 2.4mm(d)

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Kit PSU-II Printed Circuit Board 105mm(w) x 130mm(l) x 1.6mm(d)

Kit PRE-II Printed Circuit Board 105mm(w) x 130mm(l) x 1.6mm(d)

Kit KIT34/KAT34 Printed Circuit Board 105mm(w) x 130mm(l) x 1.6mm(d)

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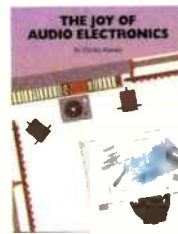
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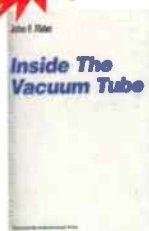


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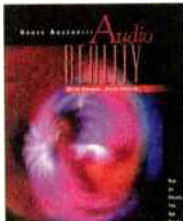
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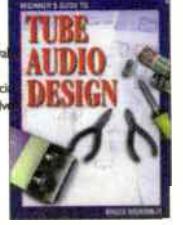
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# CZECH, MATE



**Dubbed variously, 'the plastic pig', 'Wacky placky' and 'the bouncing Czech', rarely has a hi-fi separate been the recipient of so many derogatory nicknames. Yet although this Czechoslovakian turntable was the butt of so many jokes, there was much to celebrate, says Dominic Todd...**

**D**espite its much lauded idiosyncrasies, NAD's 5120 was actually extremely well specified in some respects. At a time when nearly all its rivals [see box] used a solid plinth, this tiny turntable boasted a true floating subchassis - amazing at the price! Yet, as befits a budget deck, the 5120 required the minimum of setting up. The suspension needed no alignment as it used leaf springs as opposed to the more conventional coil spring set-up. Yet, because there was only a lightweight platter to support, the springing was rather soft and bouncy, hence the 'bouncing Czech' sobriquet...

The platter itself was also the source of much amusement. The thickest rubber mat you've ever seen topped a wafer thin alloy platter. No doubt it was the mat that contributed most of the platter's mighty 1.15Kg of mass! In terms of drive the NAD was conventional. A fairly standard, slow speed synchronous, motor drove a plastic

sub-platter via a belt. Speed could be switched from 33 to 45 via a mechanical switch. Whilst this certainly looked, and felt, rather crude, at least the platter remained in place during speed change.

Yet the serious ammunition for its detractors was that tonearm. Something quite special, it was euphemistically described as 'interchangeable' - meaning that the whole arm separated from its bearing via four contact pins. At a time when Rega was singing the praises of rigidity and structural integrity, the 5120's tonearm looked less than convincing - even after modifications part way through its life. Still, it did at least make changing cartridges easy, and it also had a few other technical intrigues.

For a start, the counterweight was underslung below the arm end stub, in line with the cartridge. This was also a technique used by Roksan in its high-end Artemiz arm because it improved tracking efficiency. Furthermore, the weight itself was isolated, or "floating", thereby

reducing resonance and again mirroring Roksan's concept of minimum surface contact of arm and weight. An Ortofon OM10 was fitted as standard and even today remains a leading budget cartridge.

Styling was not, perhaps, its strongest suit. The whole shebang was wrapped in a particularly ugly plastic plinth that, whilst not content to assault the eyes with an especially grim hue of grey, rose up from the plinth to meet the lid, thus forming some - shall we say - rather distinctive 'shoulders'. Compared to the elegant simplicity of Rega's Planar 2, it wasn't a sight for sore eyes - but it certainly stood out from the crowd...

For all its wacky styling and oddball engineering, the NAD 5120 actually sounded rather good. I well remember first listening to it, and finding a surprising level of scale to the sound. For a budget deck, bass was exceptionally full, if a little soft, and indeed very bouncy. In terms of soundstaging it was no Roksan Xerxes, but proved competent

enough, and even had decent timing. There were low levels of colouration and decent pitch stability. Compared to some of the rather wobbly and smeared opposition, it actually made for a highly enjoyable listen.

As far as what goes wrong with the 5120, you might be surprised to hear that (given the less than 'solid' build) it's remarkably little. The suspension can become rather stiff, and even rusty, especially if the deck has been kept in a garage! Make sure you give the platter a good bounce test, and visually inspect the suspension for any signs of spring seizure or damage. Otherwise faults tend only to be cosmetic. Those plastic shoulders are rather prone to knocks and scrapes and the front mounted cue switch could also have taken a knock, but both of these are easy to spot. Belts are still readily available - and if you're struggling to

find a nearby stockist then you could always try one of the many Internet sites, such as [www.musonic.co.uk](http://www.musonic.co.uk) who'll sell you one for a reasonable £7.50.

The much-maligned 5120 may never have won any style awards, but brought many to the joys of vinyl. For proof of this you need only see the years of letters in hi-fi magazines that have begun, "My first system consisted of a NAD 5120..." The time of its demise actually heralded a low point for the budget turntable, as it was after the glory days of the budget Ariston and

PRICES

For most of its life, NAD's 5120 was way ahead of its immediate rivals, although these did change regularly as the fashion for turntables waned and the NAD itself fluctuated in price. Beginning at around £109, it was at first a natural rival for the Dual CS-505, but a price drop in 1987 to £89 saw it more on an even keel with the Dual CS-503. It finished its career at £129, and so actually proved to be an unusually stably priced product over a time when many doubled in price. At its demise in December of 1995 it was still considered to be one of - if not the - best in its class. Yet from a class that now offered only a handful of rivals, this wasn't impressive as it once had been. Today the NAD is recognised as something of a budget classic and, as such, prices vary enormously. You can expect to pay anything from £5 for a tatty car boot sale/ junk shop model, to up to £140 for a minter - more than it was new! A quick search through the small ads and I found three models at £50, £79 and £125. Clearly you pays your money and takes your choice, although I would be surprised if £80 wasn't ample for a good example of the breed.

Dual decks, but just before Project set the market alight again with the Debut. Had it been around today, I'm in no doubt that it would give the Debut a very good run for its money, and even surpass it in some areas.



An early rival for the NAD 5120. Dual's stalwart CD-505

THE RIVALS

Several price realignments and a general decline in the budget turntable population meant that there was no single, consistent rival for the 5120. Perhaps the most troublesome of rivals for NAD was Dual, with its CS505 and CS503 models. The CS505 is, like the NAD, every bit a classic deck. Through its various incarnations it was in production for even longer than the 5120, although eventually became too expensive to be considered a true competitor.

Yet, in 1986, the £109 price tag of the CS505-2 exactly matched that of the NAD. Like its rival it was a suspended design, although used a more conventional quad coil spring design. Also like the NAD it featured semi-automatic operation and even the same Ortofon OM10 cartridge as standard. In terms of build quality it put the 5120 to shame, but the same wasn't necessarily the case when it came to sound. Although a consistent performer with plenty of punch, it could also come across as a tad muddled and rather forward in balance. Its inherent decent build quality makes it a good second-hand buy, although today it's worth no more

than the 5120, and perhaps even slightly less.

At the same time as the NAD was reduced to £89, the Dual CS505 moved up to £125, leaving the rather lacklustre CS515 as Dual's only contender. It became clear that a new model was needed and a simplified version of the 505, called the CS503, was quickly put into production. It was similar to the CS505 but, in order to reduce costs, featured a solid plinth. Unfortunately, although better than the CS515, it wasn't a patch on the CS505. At the time it was considered rather vague and ragged sounding, and certainly not on a par with the 5120. Still, this didn't stop the latter Mk2 variation from eventually commanding a price of £169! Once again this left Dual without a 5120 rival, and so they reeled in the even cheaper CS435, priced at a NAD equalling £129. By the end of its life the NAD's original rival, the Dual CS505, was £219. If the Duals had been the closet conceptual rivals then the Rega Planar 2 was the most distant. In mid-'86 its price tag of £125 was little more than the NAD, yet its build quality was in another league. At this stage it had just been upgraded and fitted with the legendary RB250 tonearm. This arm was light years ahead of the NAD's, and did make the 5120 look even tackier. Unlike the NAD it had a solid plinth and fully manual operation,

yet its sound usually managed to better the NAD. I say usually as the Planar 2 was very location sensitive and would often sound horrid in a heavy, floor cabinet, whereas the NAD would be fine. Otherwise it sounded sweet, powerful and had excellent imaging. Today it's one deck that can command higher prices than the NAD. Ironically, it's still available pretty much as it was in 1986. These days, however, it's known as the NAD 533!

Amazing to think now, but back in 1987 the NAD 5120 also had rivals from Sansui, Denon, Hitachi, JVC, Pioneer, QED, Kenwood, Rotel, Technics, Yamaha and a handful of tiny specialists. There isn't enough space to cover them all here, but something like the £85 Technics SLBD-22 was typical. Although just £4 cheaper than the NAD it sounded constrained by comparison. Build was better, but it lacked the floating suspension. Like many of its contemporaries it was a fair if ultimately forgeable deck. Something that could never be said of the NAD 5120...



The evergreen Rega Planar in, er, blue



**BEYONCÉ**  
***DANGEROUSLY IN LOVE***  
**(HYBRID SACD: STEREO AND MULTI-CHANNEL DSD)**

The lot of a multi-channel evangelist is not a particularly happy one. The high resolution and surround production fraternity are already beset by the problems of long development lead times, widespread consumer indifference and the rush to inferior quality downloads, legal or otherwise. Beyoncé's SACD is the harbinger of the latest addition to that list of woes – copyright payment disagreements.

Announced earlier this year for the conventional both-sides-of-the-Atlantic release, 'Dangerously In Love' was rapidly withdrawn from the US release schedules. The reason given was that copyright holders had started to suggest that they wanted paying for each instance of their song on a disc – a tally which maxes out at three times for SACD, but can easily reach five for DVD-Audio. Industry sources say that this tussle is now preoccupying the lawyers in America, and that the issue may be partially responsible for the slowing down of both SACD and DVD-Audio release schedules. They may have even realised that the same concern exists on plain old DVD-Video! That particular train will not be so easily derailed, but high resolution looks vulnerable.

It is a great shame (for them) that the Americans will have to jump

through the importation hoops which more commonly afflict the European enthusiast when tracking down these hard-to-find discs. Sony Studios engineer Thom Cadley, on his third Destiny's Child-related surround job after the SACDs of 'Survivor' and Kelly Rowland's 'Simply Deep', has done a great job in animating what was already a highly inventive sonic mélange. You won't need to go back to the stereo version, good though it is. That having been said, with long, eclectic R&B albums not really being my thing, it is very hard to get past the supreme initial trio of singles that kick the disc off without simply looping back to the beginning. I think I'm going to have to track down those other two discs...

**BON JOVI**  
***THIS LEFT FEELS RIGHT***  
**(HYBRID SACD: STEREO AND MULTI-CHANNEL DSD)**

I was never much of a Bon Jovi fan – thankfully my hard rockin' tendencies had more or less abated before the dreaded 'hair-metal' phase – but it is hard to deny that they have been a hugely successful group.

I have not heard the non-hybrid multi-channel SACD version of 'Bounce', the album which preceded this one, but it did not set the world alight by sonic reputation. This one may not do either, but for different reasons. It's a curious beast: a more-or-less acoustic version of their most

popular songs, (hence the "greatest hits with a twist" subtitle), but with much "reimagining" of the tunes, apparently inspired by producer Patrick Leonard's from-the-ground-up approach. All but the most faithful would probably run a mile at the prospect of a ballad-ised 'Living On A Prayer', a completely deconstructed 'Bad Medicine' and 'Wanted Dead Or Alive' with bizarre cross-rhythms, (I could go on), but that's what you're in for here.

I can't point to one single reworking which improves on the original in any way, although a rootsy take on 'Lay Your Hands On Me' gets closest. The swinging blues version of 'You Give Love A Bad Name' has to be heard to be believed. Those who have never heard a Bon Jovi tune would simply say "that's not very good, is it?". The crying shame is that longtime Bon Jovi pal and engineer Obie O'Brien's mix is sonically clear (when production "innovations" haven't lead to JBJ sounding like he's singing down a drainpipe), with a pleasingly enveloping surround field. It's also a great shame that limited record company resource is being put into oddball projects like this one when surely what the market needs is straight surround reworkings of 'Slippery When Wet' and 'New Jersey'? Finally, it's a worrying first that both versions on the DSD layer refuse to play on our review sample Sony XA9000ES – caveat emptor!





**BRIMSTONE BUTTERFLY**  
***NORMALITY KILLED THE CAT***  
**(DVD-AUDIO: 24/96 STEREO**  
**24/96 MULTI-CHANNEL)**

Along with the spectacular French-language rock SACD 'Calogero 3', Brimstone Butterfly qualify as my unexpected find of this year. Admirably, these Danish surround enthusiasts have put together a DVD-Audio which not only demonstrates the full potential of the format, but also contains some cracking contemporary rock music. Not for nothing was this disc lauded at the last European DVD Audio Council meeting as an example of the great things people are doing with the format.

As the disc contains 224kbps MP3s of the album in a ROM section (as well as PDF lyric sheets annotated with the chords!), I spent some time familiarising myself with the stereo version on my iPod before auditioning the surround. I was instantly addicted to the hooky, brattish power-pop, which is given that very trendy new wave vibe by the vintage analogue keyboard sounds of Kristian Vensgaard, at times redolent of The Cars. The album is sung in English, and although the recording may sound slightly less polished than major label projects and some could find Thomas Krämer's nasal vocals slightly wearing, this sounds like a real band having a great time playing together. The stereo MLP version gives real

punch to the recording, but the surround mix opens it out brilliantly with massed guitars, a live, open sound and some discrete centre usage.

The band add maximum value is by including interesting and varied videos for all eleven tracks and much textual background. If you wish to support a pioneering attempt to make DVD-Audio away from the majors, and get some great surround rock music as part of the bargain, I can't recommend this disc highly enough. European readers should be able to order by hitting the "English" link from [www.brimstonebutterfly.com](http://www.brimstonebutterfly.com) (sample downloads available) and the band promise that they will pull out all the stops to ship it further afield too. You know it makes sense!

**GRANDMASTER FLASH, MELLE MEL & THE FURIOUS FIVE**  
***GREATEST HITS***  
**(DVD-AUDIO: 24/96 MULTI-CHANNEL)**

Those old die-hards of DVD-Audio fundamentalism, 5.1 Entertainment, through their Silverline records arm, are about the only company putting out DVD-Audio product in sizable numbers at the moment. The most heartening aspect of this phenomenon is that the quality of their work has improved immeasurably as they move away from simple unwrap versions of dodgy Sanctuary catalogue, to new

projects with close artist involvement.

Along with the equally impressive Sugarhill Gang best of disc, in the US this one will be released later this Autumn by the Warners reissues label Rhino, so for once we have beaten the Americans to the punch. The surround mix breathes space into the layered vocals on the classic 'White Lines', which leads off this collection, but I wish the bass kicked a bit more. Maybe the taut kick drum is constricted in the centre of the front soundstage deliberately, but the equally classic 'The Message' has plenty of oomph, with the synth tweets and burbles and the guitar fills traversing the room just as you would have expected them to do. Jesse just reminds you how great some of Prince's early funk excursions would sound in this format.

Ageing B-Boys should love having the ability to play out (and sample!) such seminal tracks on a surround rig, and it can only be hoped that more eighties hip-hop is brought to the format – the combination of tight rapping, sparse beats and primitive keyboard washes seems to work incredibly well when spread around the room – the backing vocals on 'Step Off' are huge and everywhere. Unfortunately the stereo presentation is only Dolby Digital 2.0 (The Sugarhill Gang do get stereo MLP), but Mr. Haynes of the 5.1 Group has done an excellent job with the MLP surround here – I just need to track down his Britney disc somewhere...!

# meet your maker

A reference guide to Britain's manufacturers and distributors

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# noel keyword



**A**lthough iTunes might be a big success for Apple, it has sowed seeds of doubt about the future of quality audio in Britain's hi-fi industry, where I detect a frisson of fear. This isn't how it was all supposed to pan out - high quality surround was seen as the future of audio, from SACD or DVD-A. In this ambitious picture of the future, even DVD abandons its original role of delivering quality video, turning over all its disc space to audio. High fidelity would reign supreme, as it has done in the past. Instead it looks like mp3, or at best a tweaked up successor, is what we are going to get...

The unexpected success of Apple's iPod/iTunes takes us forward to a world where audio steps backward, to a format theoretically worse than CD, and of such little consequence it is fit only for casual entertainment. A lot of people are worried by this new direction since it hardly points toward a future where high quality sound underpins enjoyment of music! But I believe we are in a transitional phase and future technologies, especially high definition video on high capacity discs like Blu-Ray, will bring light into audio darkness!

No one has been more surprised by the success of Apple's iPod than me, even though I'm Mac savvy and download aware. But I've seen failure in this arena before. On TV we've got a cool dude sauntering down the streets of New York wearing an iPod, reminiscent of Sony's advertising for their MD players many years back...

Then came the Rio mp3 player, pursued through the courts for promoting the illegal download of music from file swapping sites like Napster. Diamond Multimedia won, gaining fabulous press coverage in the process. Suddenly mp3 was a household word, rather than a secret file whose value was only understood

by computer geeks. But after a short spurt of popularity, where people wrestled with uploading from file libraries of unfathomable complexity only to find they could enjoy 20 minutes or so of often tinny sounding music, many doubtless found their way onto shelves and stayed there!

The iPod has likely become popular in light of these earlier failures because of the support

rates and with an effective codec I have to admit they give good results in all the controlled listening tests I have carried out, certainly good enough for hi-fi in the home as most people hear it. Even mp3, properly coded by a Fraunhofer engine and running at the maximum 328kbps is all but indistinguishable from original CDs!

(Still, it's worth bearing in mind here though that CDs are not necessarily critical sources full of detailed information. We've got used to them and modern recordings sound clean and punchy, but really detailed

they are not. This is 1970s code technology, declared bad even back then! If you want to hear just how barren CD is, try listening to a 24/192 DVD-A or two. The quality limitation of CD helps compressed audio no end in any A-B demo, because there's little in there for compression to destroy. All the same, the Motion Picture Expert Group (MPEG) say mp3 had some weaknesses that Advanced Audio Coding (AAC), used in MPEG 4, overcomes.)

It's DVD music videos where sales are taking off. Here is the future of audio - it will be compressed by one scheme or another whether we like it or not. And this worries a lot of people in the audio business. In the home it looks like the future lies with video discs carrying compressed audio at higher quality than the Dolby Digital we use today.

Coming over the horizon right now is High Definition video, its picture compressed using advanced coding schemes like H264. Delivered on a new generation of high capacity video discs like Blue Ray the audiostreams will likely be 24/96 code as a matter of course. Just how good will this audio sound? With sensible data rates, very good - better than CD today. It isn't the future anyone quite expected but it isn't so bad either... ●

## “ I detect a frisson of fear in Britain's hi-fi industry... ”

provided by iTunes, which is delightfully easy to use and a far slicker experience than any of the OD2 sites offering Windows Media Audio (WMA) downloads at 99p a hit, often with restrictive playing conditions. I gave up on the Rio and the anarchy of mp3 sites and dodgy CDs burnt from them. I'm not too keen on WMA from OD2 either, if you'll pardon the acronyms. Apple have finally come up with a better solution, making a success of something the music business has been dreaming about for a long time - paid for delivery of music via the internet.

You won't be surprised to learn then that Sony are planning their own site, whilst re-born Napster opened a UK site recently powered by OD2, as have Microsoft (MSN). Check out [www.pro-music.org](http://www.pro-music.org) for a list. There's real pressure to make music downloading work and if it does then CD would seem to have a pretty shaky future.

Audio downloading has been made practicable by the development and acceptance of music compression schemes. First there was mp3 and from it has sprung many rivals, notably Advanced Audio Coding (AAC), WMA (Windows Media Audio) and Sony's ATRAC, used primarily in Minidisc. At high data

# david price



**W**ho'd have thought that back in 1983, when the music buying world was desperate to ditch its cheapo fully automatic direct drive turntables for shiny new 'Digital Audio Disc' players, that so many would one day crave the vinyl experience once again?

You don't miss it until it's gone - and by 1993, vinyl was indeed there or thereabouts. Pick up the pages of mainstream hi-fi magazines from back then, and it was all about replacing your 'ageing vinyl deck with a new CD player'. It was assumed that the world was irrevocably going this way - just as cars moved from dynamos to alternators, TVs went from VHF to UHF and politics from Labour to Tory...

Yet something happened around that time that perhaps nobody will ever be able to explain (still, that won't stop me having a go) - as vinyl began to stage a comeback...

The first thing, I believe, was that CD moved from a yuppie fashion accessory (for all of the nineteen eighties, it really was an impressive thing to announce at dinner parties that you'd just bought a Compact Disc player!) to a mass music carrier - and sales soared. At the same time, pre-recorded Compact Cassettes began their terminal decline. This kind-of suggests that the typical, casual, buyer of the latter switched to the former...

As soon as this transition began, those to whom the politics of music formats meant something began getting twitchy. At one end of the market, the 'trendy teenage' demographic, turntables came back into vogue. After all, your dad and your sister had a CD player - so vinyl was your natural 'countercultural' refuge, a sort of 'sonic subculture'.

The club scene - at that time thriving with acid house music - was all about mixing old northern soul singles with breakbeats; something you couldn't do digitally (back then, and not easily now either).

At the other end of this music buying demographic were the disenfranchised, and invariably

was, etc.), but many carried on with vinyl regardless.

Cumulatively, I think these three constituencies maintained a small but strong residual demand for the format, one which the music industry - being first and foremost an industry and then pertaining to music thereafter - simply couldn't ignore.

Some thought they were trying to kill vinyl, but in truth they were just chasing where they thought the money was. When they realised there was still some of it in vinyl, they went back to chasing that, too.

These days, I think there's another group of people coming back - the switchers. They may well have been completely digital for fifteen years now, and have upgraded their players several times - possibly right up to a seriously capable high end design. But they've still got LPs in the loft, or they're noticing a welter of cheap and interesting stuff on sale in trendy record shops, dodgy car boot sales and oddball secondhand emporiums. They've realised Compact Disc hardware has got pretty much as good as it's going to get, and now they're interested in something new. Then they're seeing lots of tasty new turntables, from Roksan's Radius 5 right up to ClearAudio References.

All it takes is a quick listen to a decent modern deck, and people like these will be sold. The sound that LP is capable of - with the latest cartridges, arms and motor units - is better than ever, and will amaze with its expansiveness, colour and sheer musicality. This explains why companies such as Pro-ject are currently working around the clock to satisfy demand. There's something in the air, and it's the sweet smell of vinyl - if you've not tried it, then you've an as yet unknown pleasure ahead! ●

“ vinyl was a natural 'countercultural' refuge, a sort of 'sonic subculture'... ]

middle-aged, musos. Although by this time, specialist jazz labels like BlueNote had released most of their back catalogue on digital disc, there were few who really enjoyed listening to this type of music on CD. Then, as now, jazz just sounds better on vinyl. We can argue until the cows come home about why, but I know precious few jazz aficionados who'd say otherwise. Although greying guys with JBL loudspeakers, black 'turtlenecks' and 'fragrant' tobaccos ("nice!") hardly constituted an assault on the mainstream music industry, they proved a tough nut to crack for the music business marketeers hell bent on turning the world digital. In Japan, and then the UK, labels like BlueNote, Impulse and even EMI began reissuing their classic cuts on wax.

The third part of the equation was us hi-fi guys. Some just didn't buy the hype. By this time, we were all using CD (we are, after all, the classic 'early adopters'), and that's maybe why - assuming we hadn't flogged our turntables - we could hear the difference. We might have been a tad curious about why so many of the hi-fi mags were writing stuff completely contrary to our own experience (how much better CD

# dominic todd



**W**ell built. No, I don't mean Will Carling, but the term often used by fellow scribes when describing an audio component's build quality. Yet what exactly does it mean? It's a phrase that's very much open for interpretation.

However vague the description may be, it represents an important aspect of hi-fi separate design. Hi-Fi separates are, by and large, exclusive products. Often they carry exclusive price tags and, consequently, consumers rightly expect greater quality. That comes from superior sound over lesser hi-fi, but should also include superior quality of construction.

Personally I would break up the rather ill-defined term 'build quality' into three sections. First, there's the finish of a product. For example this would take into account how smoothly applied the paint or veneer was. Next is mechanical integrity. This involves the operation of the controls and mechanisms but also electrical issues such as shielding and earthing. Finally there is the longevity or reliability of a product. Unfortunately the final measure is nearly impossible to judge over the course of a review but it is often the case, although not always, that the first two measures give a good indication of the latter.

You only need to take one look at a range of budget 'speakers to see how much the finish of hi-fi separates has improved over the years. It wasn't all that long ago when I remember 'speakers with bubbling veneers and slight gaps where the edges didn't quite meet. The odd blob of glue and errant piece of damping material wasn't totally uncommon either. As good as 'speaker as it was, the KEF Coda 7 was one such transducer. It was by no means alone, but I've singled the Coda 7 out so as to show the remarkable progress made by

KEF. Take a look at the Coda 70 and the improvement in finish is truly remarkable. Instead of vinyl there is real wood, where there were bubbles, now total smoothness, and there's not a hint of glue to be seen!

Yet it's not just budget 'speakers that have seen improvements. I well remember unpacking the occasional pair of Quad ELS63 electrostatics a decade or so ago to find a series of

**” improvements in the finish of hi-fi separates have been near universal...**

small, but annoying for the price, flaws. Contrast this with the Quad L-series of more recent years and the difference is palpable. In short the L-series was, and still is, lauded by the journalists for its finish whilst the, more expensive, ELS63 was anything but.

Much is also true of electronics. Where Arcam used to use a plastic front panel as thick as your thumbnail for the front panel of their Alpha range, now they use sleek metal. Naim and Exposure used to typify the British cottage industry approach with superb sounding products that looked as though they'd literally been banged together in a cottage [come on DT, that's a bit harsh on the Naim stuff – Ed.]. These days, both are slick and contemporary. Recent Naim products, in particular, have really moved the game on, with a level of finish that is truly class leading, right down to the countersunk bolt heads beneath [agreed on that – Ed.]

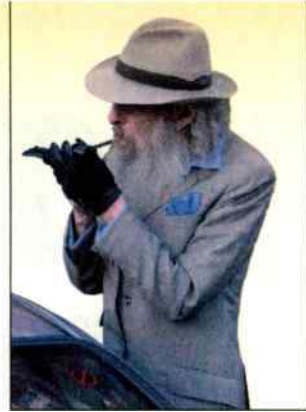
Improvements in the finish of hi-fi separates have been near universal. If only the same could be said of mechanical integrity. In some areas this has improved. Many units feature controls and mechanisms with smoother, more progressive actions. Yet, sadly this isn't universal. One of

the most recent culprits appears to be due to the adoption of CD-ROM drives for stand-alone CD players. I can understand the reasoning for using such drives, in that they play a greater range of discs. However, their quality of installation is at best patchy. I can live with the "zoom, zoom" sound affects as a disc is loaded, but the ticking and burring noises whilst the disc is in play are less easy to stomach. CD transports have never been totally silent, but some of the latest crop of players I've reviewed have taken the background noise levels to new highs. Manufacturers take note; a customer could easily decide not to purchase your machine on the basis of a noisy transport.

Even more worrying are the noise and vibration problems of some hard disc players. I'm sorry to single out the Perception Digital HD480, for I do like the machine, but its levels of noise and vibration left me truly aghast! Such were the levels of vibration that I could even feel it from the floor underneath the isolation table, even with the HD480 placed upon an Isoplat. Some allowance has to be made for manufacturers getting to grips with new components and technologies. Yet, equally, manufacturers must realise that consumers really don't like being treated as guinea-pigs, and can only stand so much "shake down" time. If hi-fi separates are to remain a premium product, then they must have the mechanical integrity to match.

Yet I remain hopeful. Considering the huge leaps in finish made by manufacturers over the past decade or so, there's no reason why the same can't be repeated with mechanical integrity. It is now pretty much impossible to buy a truly 'bad' car, so let's hope the day will soon come when the same can be said for hi-fi? ●

# ijk setright



**A** futurologist is one who combines the unrealism of the nerd with the technical comprehension of the anorak, adding to that sad amalgam a frightening flair for imaginative extrapolation unfettered by even the slightest degree of cynicism. I heard one on the radio recently, telling us how we should listen to music in the future

He described in glowing admiration a scene in which we shall all, each and every one of us, be able to summon at any time and in any place a hearing of any selected piece of recorded music from a repertory garnered from all around the world and running into millions of items, all with the aid of a little electronic contraption portable in purse or pocket. How does one learn how, and what, to choose? How distasteful, how horrid! And even if the idea actually appeals to you, how stupid! Can you imagine the business world being so silly as to allow it?

I do not doubt the technical feasibility of the idea. We already have the ability to incorporate the flexible equivalent of a personal computer in the fabric of a T-shirt and expect it to survive laundering. What this futurologist was suggesting was child's play by comparison – but already there is evidence that the market is moving away from its recent uncritical adulation of mere technological marvels as a kind of supertoys, moving away so smartly that there is no longer much danger (or hope?) of your silly little iPod being stolen. People are beginning to dress better; more women are wearing skirts; more people are attending concerts of chamber music; more are questioning the dictates of government on such issues as smoking, schooling, justice, speed limits, and other social sore-spots beyond listing.

If this retroaction should continue, we might well find that the domestic enjoyment and appreciation of good music through genuine high-fidelity apparatus will recover its once respectable social standing, and that people will listen and marvel – as they used to marvel and listen in the days before the mass-marketing money-grubbers grabbed the reins and steered the whole enterprise off

## “ Consider the architectural extravagance of some of the latest wonder-spinners... ”

in the direction of gross profits and uncultivated tastes.

If people respond like this, there is no telling how far back their tastes will take them. Good heavens, they might even revert to stereo gramophones! Just consider the possibilities for technology should that happen...

No, not new technology; no digital nonsense, nor any of the other novelties that can so readily be persuaded to ruin the music and insult the performers. There is no need for such things: there is abundant existing technology, established and understood, that could well be applied to a machine such as the gramophone, a machine that has not had anything really fundamental happen to it in the last twenty years.

Consider the architectural extravagance of some of the latest wonder-spinners, their towers and blocks and superposed platforms all contrived to make the poor blessed thing stand still. Here surely is the place to repeat that splendid address 'Do not do something, just lie there!' Why should not the whole assembly

of platform, bearing, turntable and arm be integrated as a single immutable entity which simply lies, perfectly level, on three bubbles of nitrogen which are supported by linked columns of incompressible liquid? Why should not the conventional motor and drive be replaced by a linear motor of which the platter rim constitutes the armature, without physical contact with the other half of the motor which can be part of the surrounding structure? Speed control could be immensely rigorous in such a case: if the driving wheels of an electric train can be made to spin and checked again within one-third of a revolution, do not tell me that optical feedback could not ensure the pitch stability of a gramophone.

There is other work for optical sensors. Have you ever found a truly satisfactory cueing device? Neither have I, but there is no good reason why the cartridge should not be lowered quickly and then stopped when the stylus is just a millimetre (better still, 1/32 inch – the metric system is neither absolute nor inviolable!) from the surface of the disc. At that point, the final lowering could be regulated in all sorts of ways, including stepping motor, hydraulic bleed, or servo-controlled electromagnet. The scope for control of all arm movements is enormous, and seems never to have been investigated.

Nor need the arm be either a swinging cantilever or a parallel-bars device. The inventory of kinematic linkages offering straight-line motion is quite considerable; there are many alternatives to the hackneyed Watt linkage so vaguely familiar to motoring enthusiasts.

Then, and perhaps only then, we can turn and attack such other problems as loudspeakers, recording engineers, and... oh, yes, and clothed futurologists. ●

# patrick cleasby



It has been some time since I have worn my Apple evangelist hat (in these pages at least), so it is blessed relief that the launch of the European iTunes Music Store in June now gives me the opportunity to discuss the previously missing part of the Apple music offering from a fully informed position. It seems faintly ridiculous to be advocating the purchase of relatively low bit-rate compressed digital audio to an audiophile audience, but if I can find a use for it, many of you may be able to as well.

I apologise for adding to the mountains of hype which accumulated around the launch date, and which will by now have passed another peak as the iTunes worldwide download total passes the magic 100 million songs mark, but so much of that verbiage appears to be generated by journalists who have little appreciation of iTunes (describing it as a website?) or the real life behaviour of iPod owners that I feel duty bound to explain the self-evident reasons for the success of Apple's music distribution model.

As ever the comments of Steve Jobs reveal how acute his appreciation of consumer behaviour in the modern age is. When asked if he had ever downloaded illegally he replied that he had, for research purposes, but that the experience was morally questionable, and that the duration of the search for what you wanted and the quality you got was a lottery. He was, of course, completely correct on all counts. It is at this point that the potential iTunes purchaser constituency splits into two. We can bypass whether people really wrestle with their illegal download morals (very few do), but

the larger part will fall for the convenience argument - the way in which music available for purchase appears almost exactly the same as your own library of ripped CD data is a masterstroke and once you are

entirely free of artifacts is a real boon. (The current 40GB iPod can occasionally stutter playing lossless, presumably due to the demands of buffering the higher variable bit-rate). After all 60GB iPods are just around

the corner...

You will notice that I have barely mentioned iPods, although their success is the real reason that Apple are able to make all this happen.

Well it is a given that most

iTunes downloaders will be transferring music to iPods, but not all. Some actually play stuff off their computer. The other new iTunes related announcement is another masterstroke. The Airport Express wireless base station, which can pipe music (Airtunes!) from your computer to any room in the house, using Apple lossless as its transmission stream and offering S/PDIF connection to retain maximum quality. Who needs sophisticated jukebox solutions when a simple device can provide ideal quality from your computer to your existing hi-fi? This will even work for wi-fi equipped PC iTunes users. So we can send our lossless CD rips around the house losslessly and if Apple start to sell lossless maybe we can finally dispense with the CD.

How long can it be until Apple offers larger lossless downloads for the discerning (broadband-equipped) punter? Until such time as they do I will continue to download exclusive sessions and serendipitous findings such as Rickie Lee Jones' version of 'Sunshine Superman'. I didn't even know it existed and it is not only great but also sounds great, and I can now purchase it for 79p without having to spring for the whole "Party of Five" soundtrack. That's the real joy of iTunes. ●

## Apple's new AirTunes is another master stroke...

set up it is scarily easy to transact your purchase. The smaller split is us, the audio quality-conscious, and it should be the inherently superior quality of AAC as a compression codec which piques our interest.

It is easy to see that the non-audiophile population may regard the quick download of a decent enough sounding version of the Beastie Boys album as being infinitely preferable to spending a couple of extra pounds and having to rip the album yourself in order to listen to it on your iPod. But what if you want to listen to it at home? The audiophile in me would always want to have a non-compressed version, and it is for this reason that I will never purchase entire albums as 128kbps AAC files.

It is here that two other recent Apple innovations kick in. The first, the Apple lossless codec, is a pretty smart idea. Just like the Vorbis Ogg addicts, some FLAC and SHN users will complain that Apple should have got onboard with their odd little codecs, but Apple lossless is AAC-based, and just works - compress and decompress a file and the new file is a bit-for-bit copy of the original. For an audiophile, the opportunity to get twice as much music on a portable device compared to uncompressed PCM and get playback which is almost

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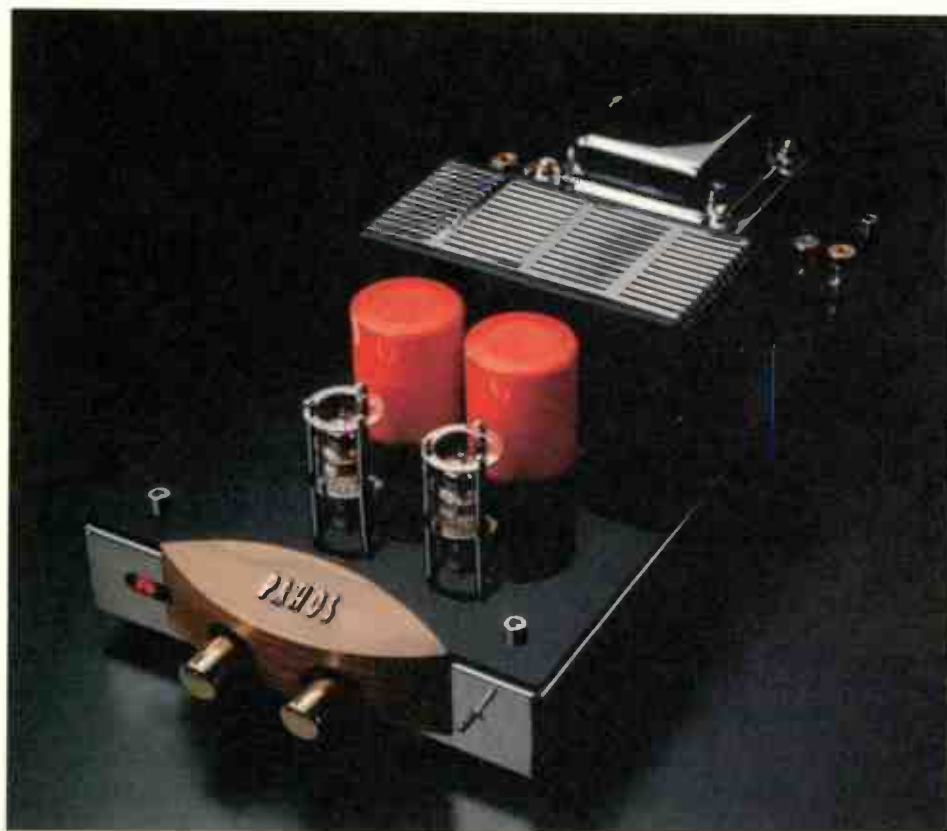
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# PATHOS

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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 CD1** 1986 [£1500]  
Inspired Stan Curtis redesign of Philips CD104, complete with switchable digital filter. Lean but tight and musical performer.

**CAMBRIDGE AUDIO CD4SE** 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 207** 1988 [£995]  
Beautifully-built two-box with pre-amp stage. Very musical although not as refined as modern Bitstream gear. No digital output.

**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.

**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.



**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.



**SONY CDP-701ES** 1984 [£890]  
Sony's first ever bespoke high end audiophile machine used a 16x2 DAC to provide a clinically incisive sound; supreme build quality allied to the pure unadulterated luxury of a paperback-sized remote control.

**YAMAHA CD-X1** 1983 [£340]  
Nicely built 16x2 machine with a very sharp and detailed sound; sometimes too much so. Excellent ergonomics, unlike almost every other rival of the time.

## COMPACT DISC TRANSPORTS

**TEAC VRDS-T1** 1994 [£600]  
Warm and expansive sound made this a mid price hit. Well built, with a slick mech.



**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.

## 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.

**PIONEER PL12D** 1973 [£36]

The beginning of the end for the British turntable industry. When vinyl was the leading source, this bought new standards of noise performance and stability to the class, plus a low friction S-shaped tonearm. Later PL12D was off the pace compared to rivals

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**THORENS TD124** 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 ROCK** 1979 [£ 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.

**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.

**AUDIO TECHNICA AT 1120** 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.

**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.

**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.

**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 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.

**HADCOCK GH228** 1976 [£46]

Evergreen unipivot with lovely sweet, fluid sound. 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.

**NAIM ARO** 1986 [£875]

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

**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/COMBOS****DELTEC** 1987 [£1900]

Fast, dry and with excellent transients, this first DPA integrated is the real deal for eighties obsessives. Ridiculously punchy 80W per channel from a tiny, half-size box. Radical, cool and more than a little strange.

**ROGERS A75** 1978 [£220]

The prototypical Audiolab 8000a – lots of sensible facilities, a goodly power output and nice sound in one box. The later A75II and A100 versions offered improved sonics and were seriously sweet and open to listen to.

**EXPOSURE VII/VIII** 1985 [£625]

Seminal mid-eighties Exposure pre-power, offering most of what rival Naim amps did with just that little bit extra smoothness and sweetness. Still, it's by no means 'sweet' by today's standards, being lean, punchy, musical. It's also possessed of that quintessentially eighties look – frumpy black steel boxes with rough silk screened logos!

**SUGDEN C51/P51** 1976 [£130]

Soft sounding early Sugden combo with a plethora of facilities and filters, complete with seventies-tastic DIN socketry. A sweet and endearing performer as you'd expect, but lacking in power and poor load driving ability, so partner carefully.

**VTL MINIMAL/50W MONOBLOCK** 1985 [£1,300]

Vacuum Tube Logic was one of the Europe's biggest tube names in the eighties, and it shows. Rugged, professional build and finish allied to a lively and punchy sound (albeit with limited power) make them an excellent used buy.

**A&R A60** 1977 [£115]

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

**CREEK CAS404** 1983 [£150]

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

**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.

**MCINTOSH MA6800** 1995 [£3735]

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

**SUGDEN A21** 1969 [£ N/A]

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

**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.

**NAIM NAIT** 1984 [£350]

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

**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.

**MYST TMA3** 1983 [£300]

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

**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.

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

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

**AUDIO RESEARCH SP-8** 1982 [£1,400]

Beautifully designed and built high end tube preamplifier with deliciously sweet and smooth sound. Not the last word in incision or grip, but that didn't matter to those who aspired to it.

**CONRAD JOHNSON****MOTIV MC-8** 1986 [£2,500]

Minimalist FET-based preamplifier from the Yank valve specialists is brilliantly neutral and smooth with a spry, light balance in the mould of Sugden high end stuff. Something of a curio, but worthwhile nonetheless.

**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!

**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.

**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.

**LECSO AC-1** 1973 [£ N/A]

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

**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 STEREO 20** 1958 [£31]

Excellent workaday classic valve amplifier with decent power and drive. Surprisingly modern sounding if rebuilt sympathetically. Irrepressibly musical and fluid.

**LECSO 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!

**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.



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



**RADFORD STA25 RENAISSANCE** 1986 [£977]

At the time, very possibly the least cool amplifier on the planet – and we're not talking heat dissipation here. This reworking of Radford's original late sixties design was possessed of a wonderfully rich, old school valve sound with enough power (25W) and lots of subtlety.



**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 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.

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

**KRELL KMA100 II** [1987] £5,750  
Ludicrous monoblock version of the giant KSA-100 is one of the seminal eighties transistor power amplifiers. Massive wallop allied to a very clean and open Class A sound makes this one of the best amplifiers of its type, ever.

**PIONEER M-73** 1988 [£1,200]  
Monster stomp from this seminal Japanese power amplifier, complete with switchable Class A and Class B operation. Clean, open and assured sounding, albeit a tad behind the pace on high speed dance music. Rosewood side cheeks and black brushed aluminium completes the eighties-tastic experience.



**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**

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



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

**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.

**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.

**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.



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

**QUAD FM4** 1983 [£240]  
Supreme ergonomics and styling allied to a pleasingly lyrical sound with plenty of sweetness and detail made this one of the best tuners around upon its launch.



**REVOX B760** 1975 [£520]  
More of a semi-pro machine than a domestic bit of kit, the Revox offers superlative measured performance although the sound isn't quite as staggering as the numbers. Fine nonetheless, and surely the most durable tuner here!

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

**ROGERS T75** 1977 [£125]  
Superb mid-price British audiophile design, complete with understated black fascia. Fine sound in the true Rogers mould – smooth and sweet with fine dimensionality.

**SANSUI TU-9900** 1976 [£300]  
A flagship Japanese tuner designed to steal sales from the likes of Accuphase and Revox. It boasts superlative RF performance and an extremely smooth and lucid sound, along with very fine build and finish.

**SONY ST-5950** 1977 [£222]  
One of the first Dolby FM-equipped tuners, a format that came to nought. Still, it was Sony's most expensive tuner to date, and boasted a very good sound quality allied to brilliant ergonomics.



**TECHNICS ST-8080** 1976 [£180]  
National Panasonic's specialist hi-fi brand was a big hitter back then, and this is no exception. Superb FM stage makes for a very clean and smooth listen with lots of detail and depth.

**ANALOGUE RECORDERS****YAMAHA TC-800GL 1977 [£179]**

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

**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.

**PIONEER CTF-950 1978 [£400]**

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

**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.

**DIGITAL RECORDERS****SONY MDS-JE55SES 2000 [£900]**

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

**PIONEER PDR-555RW 1999 [£480]**

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

**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.

**KENWOOD DM-9090 1997 [£500]**

Serious and sophisticated sound thanks to well implemented ATRAC 4.S; surprisingly musical MD recorder.

**SONY TCD-8 DATMAN 1996 [£599]**

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

**LOUDSPEAKERS****ACOUSTIC RESEARCH****ARI8S 1978 [£125]**

Yank designed, British built loudspeaker became a budget staple for many rock fans, thanks to the great speed from the paper drivers, although finesse was most definitely not their forte...

**BBC LS3/5A 1972 [£88]**

Extremely low colouration design is amazing in some respects - articulation, stage depth, clarity - and useless in others (both frequency extremes). Came in wide variety of guises from various manufacturers building it under licence. Partner with Rogers AB1 subwoofers for an extra two octaves of bass!

**LOWTHER PM6A 1957 [£18 EACH]**

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

**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.

**JR 149 1977 [£120]**

Infamous cylindrical speaker that was ignored for decades but now back in fashion! Based on classic KEF T27 / 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.

**SPENDOR BCI 1976 [£240]**

Celestion HF1300 tweeter meets bespoke Spendor Bextrene mid-bass unit - and the result is a beautifully warm yet well focussed sound. A little bass bloom necessitates careful low-stand mounting, but these prove that the seventies did have some fine designs after all!

**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.

**KEF R105 1977 [£785]**

Three way Bextrene-based floorstander (complete with castors!) gave a truly wide-band listen and massive (500W) power handling. A very neutral, spacious and polite sounding design, but rhythmically well off the pace. The quintessential nineteen seventies loudspeaker.

**IMFTLS80 1976 [£550]**

Warm and powerful nineteen seventies behemoth with transmission loading and a mixture of KEF and Celestion drive units. Impressively physical wideband sound but rhythms aren't its forte.

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- Graham
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- J M Lab
- KEF
- Krell
- Lexicon
- Linn
- Loewe
- Lutron
- Lyra
- Mark Levinson
- Michell Eng.
- Musical Fidelity
- Naim
- NEC
- Nordost
- Oracle
- Ortofon
- P.M.C.
- Plinius
- Primare
- Project
- Quadraspire
- REL
- Rockport
- Roksan
- Rotel
- Ruark
- Selecto
- SME
- Soundations
- Straight Wire
- Sugden
- Tara Labs
- Teac
- Theme Scene
- Tom Evans
- Totem
- Transfiguration
- Trichord
- Trilogy
- Van den Hul
- Vienna Acoustics
- VPI
- Wilson Audio
- Wilson Research
- YBA

H I F I

HOME CINEMA

MULTIROOM INSTALL

BUY / SELL

## Quarterly Sale items

	Our Price	Original Retail Price
ClaraVox Magnifica (Final Offer)	£2,995.00	£14,500.00
McCormack Line Drive	£395.00	£995.00
Audio Refinement Pre 5	£395.00	£895.00
Quad 33/ 303	£195.00	-
Rogers LS55	£195.00	£430.00

## New this month

POWER AMPLIFIERS		
Jeff Rowland Model I	£1,295.00	£ -
Bel Canto Evo 4i	ASK	£3,895.00
VTL MB450 Sig	£995.00	£7,000.00
Gamut D200 mkIII "Hi Fi Choice Product of the Year"	£On Dem	£3,990.00

PRE AMPLIFIERS		
Krell KRC	£1,995.00	£6,000.00

LOUDSPEAKERS		
Sonus Faber Amati Homeage	£8,995.00	£12,000.00
JM Lab Alto Utopia BE	£On Dem	£11,000.00

CD PLAYERS & DACS/DVD PLAYERS		
Audio Synthesis DAX	£1,395.00	£2,200.00
Audio Synthesis DAX Decade	£1,695.00	£ -

TURNABLES, ANALOGUE, VARIOUS		
SME 20/2A	£On Dem	£5,273.53
SME 30/2 A	£10,495.00	£12,289.00

AV COMPONENTS		
Primare A30.3	ASK	£1,300.00
Primare A30.5	ASK	£1,700.00
Parasound C2 (Halo)	ASK	£3,500.00
Parasound CI (Halo)	ASK	£5,500.00
NAD	ASK	-
Marantz	ASK	-

PLASMA PROJECTORS		
From NEC/ Panasonic/Pioneer/Sharp		ASK
Panasonic TH-42 PWD6	FROM £2500	ASK
In Focus 5700	ASK	£3,000.00
In Focus 7200	SPECIAL	£6,000.00
SIM 2 Domino 20	ASK	£3,750.00

## MULTIROOM INSTALLATIONS \*\*

- Linn Knekt
  - Living Control
  - Lutron Lighting
  - System-Line
  - Helvar Lighting
- Each system tailor made to your requirements

## Power amplifiers

Musical Fidelity F15	£995.00	£2,000.00
Cello Duet 350	£4,995.00	£10,000.00
Krell Showcase 5	£3,995.00	£4,995.00
Tesseract TAM 60 Monoblocks	£2,750.00	£7,000.00
Muse Model 300 Monoblocks	£2,495.00	£4,500.00
Plinius SA 250 mk IV	£2,995.00	£6,350.00
Unison Research SMART 845 Monoblocks	£Offers	-
ARTV760	£995.00	£2,395.00
Krell FPB 250m Monoblocks	£4,995.00	£10,000.00
Melos 402 Gold Tiodie Plus Monoblocks 400wpc	£3,990.00	£9,000.00
Krell FPB 600	£5,995.00	£12,000.00
Bryston 4BSST	£1,895.00	£2,350.00
Conrad Johnson Premier 140 SA	£5,250.00	£7,000.00
Krell KSA 80B	£1,995.00	£3,600.00
Naim Nat 3	£3,750.00	£6,000.00
Cary 805 C Monoblocks "new"	£4,500.00	£8,250.00
Cary SLA 70 mk II Silver	£995.00	£2,250.00
Conrad Johnson MF2500	£2,795.00	£4,000.00
YBA Passion Monoblocks	£4,995.00	£9,500.00
Audia Flight 100	£On Dem	£6,500.00
Audia Flight One Integrated	£On Dem	£4,500.00
Linn Klimax 500 Solo (4)	£3,995.00 each	£6,000.00
Musical Fidelity NuVista 300	£2,695.00	£3,300.00
Boulder 500 AE	£2,495.00	£5,500.00
ES Lab DX-S4	£1,395.00	£2,000.00
Roksan Caspian Integrated	£On Dem	£895.00
Roksan Caspian Power	£On Dem	£645.00
Krell FPB 700cx	£11,995.00	£15,000.00
ES Lab DX-S8	£On Dem	£2,995.00
Plinius 8200P	£On Dem	£1,550.00
Plinius SA 102	ASK	£3,750.00
Bryston 4 BSST	£On Dem	£2,350.00
Radis Defy 7 mk III	£2,750.00	£6,000.00
Linn Bass Active Card	£69.00	£120.00
Krell MDA 300	£4,995.00	£12,000.00
Linn Klassik CD/Amp silver	£895.00	£1,030.00
Boulder 1060 Power "new"	£On Dem	£16,500.00
Primare 30.1 mk II Integrated	£1,350.00	£1,500.00
YBA Passion Stereo "new"	£3,995.00	£5,995.00
Plinius 250 mk IV "new"	ASK	£6,350.00

## AV components

AV COMPONENTS		
Parasound A51 - 5 Channel	ASK	£3,500.00
Lexicon MC1	£1,995.00	£5,500.00
Lexicon MC8/ MC8B	ASK	£5,500.00
Lexicon RT10 DVD Player	ASK	£2,300.00
SIM 2 HT 300	ASK	£9,000.00
Primare P30 Processor	£1,295.00	£2,000.00
Linn Klassik DVD	£On Dem	£2,000.00
Lexicon MC12 / MC12B	ASK	£8100.00
Parasound C2	ASK	£3,500.00

PLASMAS/LCD/PROJECTORS		
Selec/Sony/Sanyo	-	ASK

## Pre amplifiers

Audio Research LS9	£1,200.00	£2,000.00
Musical Fidelity F22	£395.00	£ -
Cello Palette Pre	£7,995.00	£ -
Tesseract Tara Pre	£495.00	£1,195.00
Audio Research LS25 mk II	£3,995.00	£5,995.00
Unison Research Mystery One Pre	£1,599.00	£ -
Audio Research LS7	£695.00	£1,750.00
Mark Levinson 380 S	£4,495.00	£6,995.00

Krell KRC HR	£2,750.00	£6,949.00
Boulder LS4E Pre Amp	£1,750.00	£3,500.00
Klein 7X 3.5B	£2,000.00	£5,400.00
Audio Research LS3	£1,995.00	£1,997.00
Cary SLP98L Remote Pre x-dem	£1,295.00	£2,794.00
Conrad Johnson PV14L	£1,650.00	£2,250.00
Audia Flight Pre	£On Dem	£4,500.00
Musical Fidelity NuVista	£995.00	£1,200.00
YBA 2a Line	£1,295.00	£1,995.00
Tom Evans The Vibe Pre	ASK	£2,700.00
Boulder 1012 (pre amp/ 24.96 dac/ Phono)	£On Dem	£13,000.00
YBA Passion Pre (inc Phono)	£3,995.00	£5,995.00
EPCOA	£On Dem	£30,000.00
Plinius 16L "new"	£On Dem	£3,200.00
C.A.T. ultimate reference Pre Amp Inc/Phono "new"	ASK	£7,350.00

## Quality speakers

JM Lab 926	£995.00	£2,200.00
JM Lab Nova Utopia	ASK	£21,500.00
JM Lab Diva Utopia BE Signature Finish	ASK	£7,600.00
JM Lab Micro BE Utopia 7 Stand	ASK	£4,400.00
Wilson Benesch Act 2 (I upgrade)	£4,995.00	£9,000.00
REL Stentor III	£1,795.00	£2,500.00
ART Audio Stilleto	£695.00	£900.00
Sonus Faber Electa Amator II (no stds)	£1,695.00	£ -
Revel Studio	Coming Soon	-
Revel Salon	Coming Soon	-
Linn Kielihids (+ Active Cards)	£3,995.00	£1,000.00
Wilson ACT 2 (Upgrade)	£4,995.00	£9,000.00
JM Lab Sib & Cub (1 spk sys)	£695.00	£289.00
JM Lab Mezzo Utopia	£3,000.00	£7,899.00
Audio Physic Avanti	£4,995.00	£7,800.00
Wilson Audio System 5.1	£6,995.00	£19,000.00
Avante Garde Trio	£9,995.00	£17,000.00
Revel Ultima Studio	£7,495.00	£13,000.00
ATC SCM 10 Passive Black	£495.00	£1,100.00
JM Lab Utopia	£9,995.00	£18,000.00
Reference 3A	£1,795.00	£2,750.00
Audio Physic Spark	£1,150.00	£1,795.00
Talon Kite Centre & Bracket	£795.00	£1,750.00
Aerial Acoustic SW12 Sub Woofer, Maple/remote	£2,995.00	£5,200.00
Mirage M3 si	£1,595.00	£4,100.00
Rel Q 200 E	£On Dem	£650.00
Rel Q 150 E	£On Dem	£500.00
Audio Physic Luna Sub (wood)	£On Dem	£1,799.00
Audio Physic Yara	£On Dem	£999.00
Vienna Acoustics Mahler	ASK	£6,000.00
Vienna Acoustics Mozart	ASK	£1,700.00
Vienna Acoustics 5.1	ASK	£3,500.00
Cabassee io 5.1	ASK	£2,170.00
Blue Room Minipod (White)	£225.00	£298.99
Blue Room Minipod + Sub (Blue)	£625.00	£749.00
Blue Room Minipod Sub	£415.00	£468.99
Genelec 205 Active Monitors	£On Dem	£750.00
Audio Physic Virgo III "new"	ASK	£4,000.00
Audio Physic Tempo III "new"	£On Dem	£2,000.00

## CD players & DACS

Theta Pro Prime 2	£695.00	£1,900.00
Mark Levinson 390S	£4,400.00	£6,500.00
Acuphase DP87	£4,795.00	£4,400.00
Audia Flight CD I	ASK	£4,500.00
P5 Audio Lambda Transp/ dac	£1,695.00	£5,000.00
Wadia 860 x	£3,995.00	£7,500.00
The Data Pro Prime II	£1,195.00	£ -
Gamut CD1R mk II	ASK	£2,950.00
Acoustic Arts Drive I	£1,995.00	£2,890.00
CAD DSP9000 Pro Series III	£2,795.00	£8,000.00
Wadia No 27 Dac	£3,750.00	£9,000.00
Mark Levinson 31.5 Transport	£3,995.00	£9,600.00
The Data Pro Geny	£4,995.00	£1,295.00
Acoustic Arts Drive I/Dac I mk II	£On Dem	£6,500.00
Linn Sondec CD12	£7,995.00	£12,000.00
Linn UNIDISK 1.1	£On Dem	£6,500.00
Linn CD12	£On Dem	£12,000.00
Linn Numerik	£595.00	£1,500.00
Roksan Caspian CD	£4,995.00	£995.00
Trichord PD-S 503	£295.00	£500.00
YBA CD1 Delta (Twin psu)	£3,995.00	£5,500.00
YBA CD 3 Delta	£On Dem	£2,200.00
Audiomeca Damnation CD Transport	£750.00	£1,600.00
Primare V20 DVD/CD	£750.00	£1,000.00
Audio Aero 32/1192 Capote CD (Ver. 4)	£On Dem	£4,500.00
Primare V25 CD/DVD	£On Dem	£1,000.00
Boulder 2020 dac	£8A	£24,000.00
The Data II Transport AT + link	£1,995.00	£4,000.00
YBA CD Integre "new"	£On Dem	£1,195.00

## Turntables & analogue

PS Audio Power Plant 300 + Ultimate Outlet	£1,300.00	£1,900.00
Nottingham Analogue Hyperspace	£995.00	£2,000.00
Nottingham Analogue "The Analogue" 12" arm and deck	£4,495.00	£8,000.00
Oxford Crystal Reference/Alr Tangent	£3,995.00	£ -
Fanfare FT1 Tuner	£95.00	£1,500.00
Tara Labs 10m Bal The 2 Interconnect	£2,000.00	£5,000.00
Tara Labs FGS (Mono) pair	£500.00	£1,000.00
Tara Labs The 2 Speaker Cable 4ft	£1,300.00	£3,000.00
Roksan Xerxes 10/DSI.5/ Artemiz/ Jubilee	ASK	£4,500.00
Ortofon Jubilee	ASK	£1,500.00
Roksan Caspian Phono se	£On Dem	£950.00
Roksan TMS2/ Artemiz	£On Dem	£8,500.00
Michell Orbe/ VC/ RB300	ASK	£2,350.00
Project RPH 6 "new"	£On Dem	£500.00
Project RPH9 arm	£On Dem	£1,000.00
VPI TINT mk IV/ Rockport 6000/ Flywheel/ VPI Stand/ Clearaudio Accurate/ Pump etc "new"	£8,500.00	£16,000.00
Roksan Radius 5 (Acrylic)/ Nima arm "new"	£On Dem	£850.00
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Earmax Pro	£On Dem	£425.00
Moth Record Cleaning m/c	£395.00	£ -
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Plinius 14 Phono "new"	£On Dem	£2,750.00
Nackamichi DR 3	£195.00	£400.00
Tom Evans - The Groove "new"	ASK	£1,795.00
Clear Audio Reference Mc phono stage X-demo	£1,695.00	£2,065.00
Clear Audio Symphono phono stage X-demo MM/MC	£640.00	£740.00

\* Reduced this month

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Peter Comeau-designed standmounters with an amazingly lyrical yet decently refined sound. Good enough to partner with very high end ancillaries, yet great with budget kit too. A classic.

**CELESTION SL6 1984 [£350]**  
Smallest two way design complete with aluminium dome tweeter and plastic mid-bass unit set the blueprint for nineteen eighties loudspeakers. Very open and clean sounding, albeit course at high frequencies and limp in the bass. Speakers would never be the same again...



**LEAK SANDWICH 1961 [£39 EACH]**  
Warm sounding infinite baffle that, with a reasonably powerful amplifier can sound quite satisfying.



**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!



**MISSION X-SPACE 1999 [£499]**  
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Arcam CD82T CD Player - New (2Yr G/tee) . . . . .	(599.00)	<b>£499.00</b>	Loewe Aconda 32" Flat widescreen TV (1Yr G/tee) . . . . .	(1800.00)	<b>£799.00</b>
Arcam CD93 CD Player - New (2Yr G/tee) . . . . .	(979.00)	<b>£699.00</b>	Nain CDS2/XPS Player & Power Sup (2Yr G/tee) . . . . .	(6265.00)	<b>£3495.00</b>
Arcam DV88 Plus DVD Player - New (2Yr G/tee) . . . . .	(999.00)	<b>£499.00</b>	Naim Nait 5 Amplifier (1Yr G/tee) . . . . .	(890.00)	<b>£659.00</b>
Arcam DV89* DVD-A Player - New (2Yr G/tee) . . . . .	(1299.00)	<b>£739.00</b>	Naim NAC 112 Preamp (2Yr G/tee) . . . . .	(660.00)	<b>£499.00</b>
Arcam A65+ Amplifier (2Yr G/tee) . . . . .	(369.00)	<b>£249.00</b>	Naim NAP 150 Power Amp (2Yr G/tee) . . . . .	(785.00)	<b>£595.00</b>
Arcam A85* Amplifier Black - New (2Yr G/tee) . . . . .	(799.00)	<b>£549.00</b>	Naim NAP 180 Power Amp S/H - (1Yr G/tee) . . . . .	(1225.00)	<b>£795.00</b>
Arcam A85* Amp inc Phono- Blk (2Yr G/tee) . . . . .	(909.00)	<b>£599.00</b>	Naim Hi-Cap 2 P/S - old casework (2Yr G/tee) . . . . .	(930.00)	<b>£695.00</b>
AVI Pro 9 Plus Speakers - Cherry (2Yr G/tee) . . . . .	(799.00)	<b>£569.00</b>	Naim NBL Speakers - Beech (2Yr G/tee) . . . . .	(7700.00)	<b>£4995.00</b>
Linn Kolektor Preamplifier (2Yr G/tee) . . . . .	(575.00)	<b>£375.00</b>	Pioneer DVD656S Multiplayer (1Yr G/tee) . . . . .	(349.00)	<b>£249.00</b>
Linn Kaim Pro Line Preamp S/H (1Yr G/tee) . . . . .	(1400.00)	<b>£599.00</b>	PMC TB2 Speakers - Black (2Yr G/tee) . . . . .	(740.00)	<b>£539.00</b>
Linn Numerik Dac S/H (1Yr G/tee) . . . . .	(1100.00)	<b>£349.00</b>	PMC DB1 Speakers - Cherry (2Yr G/tee) . . . . .	(555.00)	<b>£399.00</b>
Linn Trikan Centre Spkr - maple (2Yr G/tee) . . . . .	(549.00)	<b>£349.00</b>	Yamaha DVD 530* DVD Player (1Yr G/tee) . . . . .	(199.00)	<b>£79.00</b>
Linn LP12/Ekos/Arkive Boron (2Yr G/tee) . . . . .	(5350.00)	<b>£2675.00</b>	Yamaha RXV 630 RDS A.V. Amp (1Yr G/tee) . . . . .	(459.00)	<b>£299.00</b>
Linn Keilidh Speakers R/nut inc stands S/H . . . . .	(995.00)	<b>£375.00</b>	Vibe Zeta SubWoofer (2Yr G/tee) . . . . .	(600.00)	<b>£475.00</b>

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# 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

**ANTTI/ARM ONE/IQI 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.

**MICHELL TECNOARM A2003 £399**  
John Michell's brilliant reworking of the Rega RB250 theme, using blasting and drilling techniques usually seen in motorsport! The result is the best sounding arm at £400, and as good as most at four times the price. Runs SME V very close in all except bass, and betters it for musicality. Stunning.



**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.

## TO NEARMS

**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.

**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.

**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

**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!



**AUDIO TECHNICA AT-110 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.

**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.

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

**DYNAVECTOR DV20X-H2003 £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.

**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.

**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.

**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 CD50II 2004 £699**

Extensive revisions make this an altogether more beguiling machine, and one of the best at its price. Extremely musical sound that's surprisingly upfront for a Creek design. Excellent mid-price purchase, with only its Marantz rival to challenge it.

**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**

Oft-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.

**NAD C54II 2002 £330**

Highly musical and articulate budget machine in the classic NAD mould. Second only to Cambridge's CDS00SE 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.

**MERIDIAN 507 2003 £1195**

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

**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!

**DENON DV-2900 2003 £850**

Superbly designed and built do-it-all player that delivers fine sound and great vision. Sonically class of the sub-£1000 DVD universal field, but the i-Link and HDMI direct digital capability of arch rival Pioneer DV-868AVI may swing some towards the latter, and its DV-2200 baby brother is even better value, though.

**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.

**ARCAM FMJ CD33T 2003 £1,300**

Superbly detailed midband allied to excellent bass extension makes this a powerfully musical machine in the best traditions of Arcam CD spinners. Nothing to criticise at the price, everything to recommend it!

**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.

**MARANTZ SA-17S1 2003 £1400**

Brilliant CD playback comes close to the best at any price, while SACD performance is almost as convincing - superbly warm and three dimensional nature makes listening a joy. However, the lack of DVD-Audio decoding and poor feature count makes it look middling value compared to some of the universal players here.

**CAMBRIDGE AUDIO 640C 2003 £250**

Tremendously well-rounded yet engaging sound makes this the best budget silver disc spinner by far. Build quality is excellent at the price, and the styling bang up to the minute. Blistering value for money.

**CREEK CD50II 2004 £699**

Extensive revisions make this an altogether more beguiling machine, and one of the best at its price. Extremely musical sound that's surprisingly upfront for a Creek design. Excellent mid-price purchase, with only its Marantz rival to challenge it.

**MUSICAL FIDELITY TRI-VISTA2I DAC 2003 £1,200**

Superbly neutral and expansive sound makes this offboard digital-to-analogue converter an excellent upgrade to any mid-price CD player - fed by a decent transport, few 16bit players at any price come close.

**DENON DVD-2200 2003 £499**

Superb do it all mid-price player; fine DVD-A and SACD sound allied to excellent video performance will be all many could ever want. Ultimately it's a little bright and mechanical sounding, but you have to go into high end territory to truly better it. Stunning value.

**PANASONIC DVD-S75 2002 £120**

Real ability and fine measured performance for an unbelievably low price. Impressive in its own way, if not truly audiophile. If you just want a cheap DVD spinner with DVD-Audio as a bolt-on goodie, this is the one.

**PIONEER DV-868AVI 2003 £799**

Pioneer's most accomplished mid-price machine to date, this boasts full DVD-A/SACD playback, a welter of facilities and the all-important HDMI video and i-Link audio digital outputs, making it nigh-on future-proof. Factor in fine - if not outstanding - sound and superb pictures and it's practically impossible to fault.

**SONY SCD-XB790** 2003 £250

Quite unlike any other budget Sony CD spinner we've heard, here's a very 'analogue' sounding machine that's smooth and warm and even. Factor in fine SACD playback and this machine is a brilliant budget buy – unless you want DVD-Audio that is, which it lacks.

**ORELLE CD100EVO** 2003 £1,200

Extremely engaging and musical sound, but maybe a tad too bracing for some tastes. Superb aesthetics complete an attractive package.

**DIGITAL RECORDERS****APPLE IPOD 40GB** £399

Genre-defining best of breed, thanks to supreme ergonomics and build allied to fine sound.

**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 no-nonsense budget buy. Fine direct digital copies, but analogue input poor. Middling sonics, but there's a digital output!

**YAMAHA CDR-HD1300E2002** £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.

**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.

**MUSICAL FIDELITY****XLPSV3** 2003 £249

Fine all rounder at the price, which a satisfyingly full bodied sound that's smoother than the Creek but a tad less engaging. Only Trichord's Dino, with its easy upgradability for just £50, reflects badly on this fine bit of kit.

**PROJECT PHONOBOX LE2004** £99

Great little box that improves on most bundled phono stages found in budget integrated amplifiers, adding detail and definition and a measure of smoothness too. If £100 is all you're prepared to spend, then do it happily on this, but you'll get obviously better results from the £250 brigade.

**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****PUCINNI** 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 upgradability 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.

**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.

**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 CS41i CD player.

**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.

**HEADPHONE AMPLIFIERS****SUGDEN HEADMASTER** 2003 £600

Unusual combined preamplifier and headphone amplifier, this boasts a surprisingly smooth and open sound which suffers only when compared to preamps at twice the price.

**MUSICAL FIDELITY****X-CANS V3** 2003 £249

Mr Michaelson's best headphone amplifier to date, with an extremely open and explicitly detailed sound plus serious bass wallop and the ability to drive any phones to very high levels. Errs towards brightness with some headphones, so match carefully and use smooth cables.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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.



**NAIM NAP150** 2002 £795  
Driven by a decent source and a NAC112, this gives highly enjoyable results - providing you like the Naim sound! Taut, fast and feisty despite its relative lack of power.

**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.

**CROFT TWIN STAR** 2003 £1750  
With a taste of the best of both tube and transistor, this latest update of the Croft classic is a truly endearing experience.



**GRAAF GM20 OTL** 2003 £3,300  
Awesome output transformer-less valve power amp gives dazzling speed and incision, with an ethereal soundstaging and delicious filigree detail. Tremendous punch belies its humble 20W power rating. Factor in one of the most exquisite finishes this side of an Aston Martin and it's very hard to say no...

**SUGDEN MUSICMASTER2003** £1,300  
Quintessential Class A Sugden sound is not warm as many expect, but extremely neutral and open with real tonal colour. By comparison, tubes sound bloated and standard solid-state hazy and brittle. Superb when partnered with efficient loudspeakers like Revolver R45s, but many will find it underpowered.

**INTEGRATED AMPLIFIERS**

**AUDIO RESEARCH VSI552003** £2,895  
The Naim NAP250's tubular alter ego; oodles of power allied to a strong bass and smooth open midband makes this a brilliant all round amplifier. Lacks the subtlety and finesse of the low powered single-ended brigade but makes up for it with sheer brio.

**CREEK A50IR** 2004 £550  
Consummately smooth yet engaging sound makes it a serious player at the price, but don't expect Creek's traditional sumptuousness. Fine value nonetheless.

**MONRIO MC207** 2003 £1,100  
Powerful, muscular sound allied to real finesse makes this unusual integrated an essential audition at the price.

**MARANTZ PM-17MKII KI MODIFIED** 2004 £1,500  
Gloriously offbeat do-it-all design with a truly warm, smooth and three dimensional sound. Think of this as a latter-day Audiolab 8000a - with a good deal more colour and finesse - and you'll have its measure. Lowish power output at the price, but fine real world speaker driving ability.

**UNISON RESEARCH S6** 2002 £1,625  
Tremendously musical and lithe sound with real finesse and subtlety too. Very slightly upper mid forward encourages careful partnering with ancillaries (Revolver R45s are ideal), but overall fantastic value for money.



**ORELLE SAI00EVO** 2003 £1,200  
Fine build, exquisite design and a wonderfully lucid sound make this an essential audition at the price.

**AV AMPLIFIERS**

**DENON AVR-2803** 2003 £650  
Superb mid-price 7.1 channel extravaganza with nearly all the decoding power you'll ever need. Powerful, open and clean sound (at the price) makes it capable with music, and superb on movies. Fine ergonomics and great build makes this receiver hard to beat as an all-rounder.



**NAIM AV2/NAP 150/NAPV 175** 2002 £4,190  
Brilliant audiophile multichannel pre-power amplifier combo; not as good with music as a two-channel Naim set-up at the same price, obviously, but surprisingly close. Elegant control layout plus a strong, clean and brilliantly engaging sound make this a serious crossover product. Ultimately lacks power compared to similarly priced Arcam gear, but is more musically involving.

**PIONEER VSA-AX51** 2004 £1,000  
The ability to hook up to Pioneer's DV-868i via i-Link (nee FireWire) means that this multichannel AV amplifier can do all the digital conversion onboard makes the a very special product, which when used with the aforementioned DVD spinner sounds better even than the sum of its parts.

**LOUDSPEAKERS**

**EPOS ELS-3** 2003 £200  
Plenty of brio and a decent degree of refinement makes this budget baby a fine value contender.



**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.

**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.

**TDK S-80** 2002 £90  
Ingenuous NXT multimedia sub/sat system has a wonderfully even and open sound - like baby electrostatics.



**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.

**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.



**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.

**REVOLVER R45** 2003 £899

Wonderfully easy to drive floorstanders that are a dreamboat for tube amplifiers, and great for party-minded transistor users too. Great attack transients, fluid and musical bass and midband and couth treble make them fine all-rounders.

**MORDAUNT SHORT 9142002** £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.

**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.

**MARTIN LOGAN CLARITY** 2003 £2,895

Supremely transparent and open with brilliant depth perspective and image projection. The midband is up there with the very best at any price, while the bass and treble integrate well but don't especially shine. Dynamically limited, with middling bass punch, but that's not the point - that deliciously fluid and intricate midband wins great respect.

**TANNOY EYRIS DC1** 2003 £699

The combination of dual concentric treble/midband drivers plus supertweeters make for a very spacious and expansive sounding loudspeaker, albeit one that's a little bright and loose in the bass. An excellent mid-price design well worth auditioning.

**MONITOR AUDIO GR60 2002** £2,295

In some ways, these come close to Yamaha's legendary NS1000Ms, thanks to their tremendous clarity, great transients and 'full-fat' wide bandwidth performance. Bright and clean, but never fatiguing or uncouth. A truly accomplished all rounder that gives a real taste of 'super-fi' at a reasonably affordable price.

**TOWNSHEND MAXIMUM 2003** £800

Another brilliant niche product from Max, these ribbon aspirated supertweeters add space and atmosphere to any good high end loudspeaker, and more surprisingly perhaps make things more fluid and musical too. Superb affordable esoterica.

**HEADPHONES****JECKLIN FLOAT TWO** 1998 £99

Wonderful panel-like sound from these esoteric-looking headclamps.

**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.

**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.

**INTERCONNECTS****WIREWORLD OASIS 5** 2003 £99/M

Excellent mid-price design with a very neutral, silky and self-effacing sound. Superb value for money.

**CHORD CO. CHAMELEON 2** £90/M

One of our favourites, these are musical performers with a smooth yet open sound.

**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.

**DNM RESON** £40/M

Neutral and transparent - a steal!

**TCI CONSTRICTOR 13A-6 BLOCK** 2003 £120

Top quality 'affordable' mains outlet block, with fine build and good sonics. Well worth the extra over standard high street specials, which sound coarse and two-dimensional by comparison.

**NORDOST BLUE HEAVEN** £150/M

Some of the fastest and most transparent cable around.

**VINYL****CLEARAUDIO REFERENCE** 1996 £4,070

Fine bass articulation and power allied a stunningly open and atmospheric midband and beautifully etched treble makes this one of the very best sounding turntables at any price. Michell's Orbe offers marginally more impactful bass, but can't touch that amazing mid. Exquisite.

**ORIGIN LIVE AURORA GOLD** 2004 £1,470

Seminal 'entry level high end' deck showing Mark Baker's characteristically obsessive attention to detail. The result is an extremely wide open and natural sounding machine that lacks the Michell GyroDec's slightly 'mechanical' nature - along with some of its scale and accuracy. Ideal for those seeking that classically beguiling vinyl sound.

**GOLDRING GR-1** 2004 £140

Essentially a Rega P2 built down to very low price and bundled with a decent Goldring MM, this is cracking value for money. Head and shoulders above its immediate rivals, it offers a surprisingly musical and detailed sound that will stun those new to vinyl - which is precisely what it was designed to do.

**THORENS TD190** 2003 £290

Ease of set up and use, allied to fully automatic operation mean that, although hardly the last word in performance, this deck is most certainly a model of convenience.

**"One might expect the Stereo 40i to cost in the region of £2,000..."**



**Stereo 40i** EL34 integrated 40+40w (or 19+19 Triode)

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**ROKSAN RADIUS 5** 2003 £750

Fantastic value allied to intelligent, interesting and 'out of the box' design makes for a wonderful entry-level superdeck. Open and musical sound is more inviting than Michell TecnoDec rival, and the bundled Nima Unipivot arm is a superstar.

**TUNERS****ARCAM T61** 2002 £250

This sleek looking and refined sounding FM/AM tuner isn't the last word in musical involvement, but is fine value, nonetheless.

**ARCAM DT81** 2003 £650

A fine radio, hampered only by its seriously compromised DAB medium. Probably the best DAB tuner ever, but one for Digital Radio enthusiasts only...

**CAMBRIDGE AUDIO DAB300** 2003 £150

Fine ergonomics allied to great ease of use and respectable DAB sound makes this superb value.

**DENON TU-260L MK II** 1998 £130

If you want the best FM sound at the lowest possible price, then this ancient tuner remains peerless after all these years. There are better analogue designs around, but are either near-impossible to find or are now long-deleted.

**CYRUS FM X** £500

Great for Cyrus users, but its dry and precise sound can't match the best of the rest at the price. Worthy, nonetheless.

**MYRYAD MT 100** 1999 £600

One of hi-fi's nice surprises, this is a beautifully designed and built bit of kit with a deliciously sweet and svelte sound which really does justify its high price.

**PRIMARE T21** 2002 £600

Seriously accomplished design with mature sonics, great styling and fine build.

**NAD S400** 2003 £600

Highly accomplished specialist high end analogue tuner with a deliciously open and lucid sound, but it can't quite match the Myryad all the same.

**PURE DIGITAL DRX-702ES** 2003 £249

Great with Digital Radio, but thin a tad sounding on FM at times. It's a top hybrid, nonetheless...

**SYSTEMS****DENON D-M31** 2003 £250

Excellent CD receiver package with surprising sonics and a brilliant tuner as a bonus, although its amplifier section doesn't quite match the Onkyo. Optional speakers are mediocre.

**ONKYO CS-210** 2003 £300

Superb value thanks to excellent sound, great build and ease of use, but the bundled 'speakers' rather let the side down.

**LINN CLASSIK MOVIE SYSTEM DI** 2002 £2,995

Superb ergonomics and performance from this one-box beauty, but it's just a tad expensive and in value for money terms, compares poorly to the original Classik Music System.

**PIONEER NS-DV990** 2003 £799.95

Whiz-bang technology fest with DVD universal playback, discrete display and NXT flat panel speakers. Superb for the spare room or study - truly intelligent and elegant design - but don't expect it to match the sonics of AV separates.



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## Letter of the Month

### METHOD AND MADNESS

With reference to Dominic Todd's suggested £1,000 setup in the July 2004 issue, I would like to know if the selection of the KEF Coda 70 speaker in the system is to demonstrate the skill of tweaking using interconnect, speaker cable, speaker stand, etc., or if a Coda 70 is really the best speaker adding to the system under the budget constraint? I am sure that there are many £200-£250 speakers Dominic likes in standalone consideration, such as the AE Evo 1 (which he mentioned before that he likes very much), the EPOS ELS3 (which he reviewed for the magazine) and the KEF Q1 (which is just £50 above Coda 70).

I, like many other readers, would be interested to learn how is the final decision on choosing Coda 70 arrived at, as choosing a pair of suitable speakers is a demanding yet rewarding task? Why not tell us what are the undesirable effects when choosing each of those common speakers? No wonder so many inexperienced guys, including myself, scratched their heads in various audio forums in selecting a pair of speakers!

Second, why do no institutions quantify (or at least finely categorise) the sound of individual audio components, so that they would be more easily compared and mixed and matched? After all, we have already standardised many qualitative perceptions in various industries, like colour palettes in the textile industry, temperature scales to describe how warm we feel, etc. Do most businessmen in the audio industry actually benefit from such vagueness?

**Gary Tsang**

Hi Gary - you've raised some very good points there. The crux of your interest, it seems, is how equipment is evaluated. I'll try and answer this before I come onto the specifics of how the 'speakers were chosen for the budget system test. Unlike some other magazines we do measure equipment, however, this can only be useful as a rough guide. Rather like buying a car, a full technical specifi-

cation will only give you a basic idea of what it's like to drive. For a full assessment, a reviewer has to use subjective terms. The same is the case for hi-fi. What you may be surprised to learn is that, to make it easier to cross reference, reviewers tend to stick to the same terminology. For example, I'm sure you've seen the terms "harsh, bright, boomy" and so on crop up in all the various publications. What's more, and perhaps more surprisingly still, reviewers tend to agree. What's considered "bright" by reviewer A is also "bright" by reviewer B. The subjective part is whether or not they actually like a bright sound!

You're quite right in mentioning the EVO 1, Epos and KEF Q1 as fine 'speakers. They are all excellent 'speakers and ones that I would recommend. However, the purpose of this review was to choose as cohesive a system as possible, and then tweak it. I did actually try the EVO 1s with the system but found that they didn't suit the NAD and Cambridge as well as the Coda 70s. I also knew, from experience, that the others wouldn't make quite such a good match. Unfortunately this is another area where figures alone are a wholly inappropriate way of relying upon what will match with what. In the end a choice such as this comes down to experience, but that's not

to say that you or another reader may prefer a different 'speaker. The system chosen was designed to appeal to as many people as possible but, as is always the case, won't appeal to everyone. **DT**

'Businessmen benefiting from such vagueness', eh? What an interesting turn of phrase! I'd think of it more in terms of 'the subjective nature of music listening creating market opportunities'. Why so? Well, we're back to that old car pub conversation we were having a few months ago - remember? Some cars are brilliantly engineered but dull to drive, others middlingly engineered yet brilliant to drive, others both, others neither. It's different strokes for different folks. Trying to describe these qualitative judgements in a quantitative way would be to make a 'methodological' (if not an ontological) hornet's nest - to say the least. That's why I'm still a bit baffled about a certain other UK magazine's percentage ratings. Five globes/stars are problematic enough to argue a case for, but to say that equipment X sounds 1% better than equipment Y is logically as wobbly as saying, "this one goes up to eleven" (if you don't get the allusion, I would ask you to get 'This is Spinal Tap' on DVD as soon as humanly possible...) **DP**

**KEF Coda 70, a two-way with metal dome tweeter.**



## SKATING OVER THE ISSUE

I wonder if one of your vinyl experts could possibly help me with this problem, or give me an explanation? The relevant pieces of equipment are: SME Model 309 Magnesium, Ortofon Rohmann moving coil cartridge, Linn LP12/Lingol Cirkus turntable. When I lower the stylus onto the record (using the cueing device on the SME), it frequently skips three or four grooves and begins playing part-way through the first track. I decided to investigate further, using my ancient (but good condition) Decca stereo test record, specifically the central ungrooved portion. I appreciate that this is not an accurate method of determining anti-skating force, but I would have thought that any arm/cartridge combination should be capable of achieving stability here. Here I find a quite vicious pull to the centre of the record, so that, given the extra width of the ungrooved section, the arm swings violently in and skips at least half-a-dozen grooves of the ensuing recorded section.

The deck is as level as I could ever hope to get it, tracking force is 2.5g, and the anti-skate spring set to 3 (the maximum possible on this arm). Further investigation showed that with an anti-skate setting of 3 it was necessary to reduce tracking force to about 1.5g to achieve stability on the ungrooved section (but this is well below the tracking force recommended for the cartridge). Thus, I concluded that the anti-skate spring is working, but perhaps wrongly calibrated.

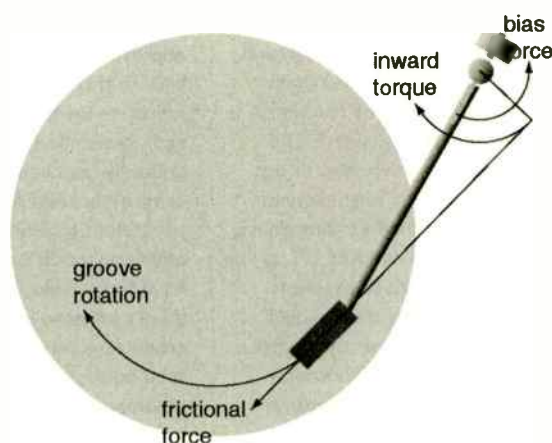
I discussed this with the technical department at SME, and they told me that this is a well-known phenomenon with this arm, but were unable to offer a satisfactory explanation. However, they offered to recalibrate the anti-skate spring, and I returned the arm to them. An inspection of the bearings was done, and a small re-calibration was carried out, but this unfortunately produced no noticeable change.

My old Pioneer PL12D, with similar spring arrangement, can be set to "hover" indefinitely on this disk, and my memories of an SME 3009/Shure V15 weight-and-string anti-skate arrangement were that this behaved

perfectly well too. Should I be able to achieve stability on the ungrooved record, and use this as a starting point for listening tests? Or, can you possibly give me an explanation as to why this is not achievable or, it seems, desirable.

**Ken Middleton**

For readers unacquainted with arcane matters such as side thrust correction in pickup arms, our diagram shows the essence of the problem. Tangential forces at the stylus, arising from its contact with a moving record groove, try to twist the arm inward. This produces more force on the inner groove wall (left channel) than the outer wall. Unbalanced forces here reduce tracking ability, causing mistracking to occur in right channel before left. To counteract this a small 'outward'



**Headshell offset angle produces an inward force that bias counteracts.**

bias force is applied to the arm, by a weight and thread, spring, or pair of magnets in repulsion.

The objection to Decca's blank test area on their test disc, much criticised in its time I should note, was that the single frictional force acting on a tip skating over a smooth surface was less than that of two groove walls acting on each stylus side. So there should be less inward force when using this disc and you should achieve stability with it. Since in your case the arm still skates inward I can only surmise that the skating force is too low. That you achieve balance with 1.5gms of down-force, seems to confirm your suspicions - the arm is unable to compensate satisfactorily for 2.5gms tracking force.

I'm a bit surprised at this conclusion, because I use an SME 312 for cartridge testing, where the issue of mistracking comes up every time I put a cartridge through

tracking tests. Both channels are fed to a dual-trace 'scope and bias force adjusted so that mistracking occurs simultaneously on each. I always manage to achieve balance. This suggests your arm is not behaving as it should, but if SME say it is okay, then there seems little else you can do but trade it for something that does do the job, and you know I'm going to point you in the direction of a much vaunted Origin Live arm, at least an illustrious, or a more expensive Encounter! **NK**

## IN THE PINK NO MORE

It has been about a year now since Pink Triangle finished trading and to my knowledge this has not been recognised in any of the hi-fi publications. I find this very sad for what seems to have been an important company producing exciting equipment to reproduce music. Even sadder is the thousands of people who are now without the manufacturer of their gear to go to for advice, spares, etc. I am one of those sad people! I own a Tarantella turntable which with an Origin Live modified RB300 arm and Reson Recca cartridge produces some very good music. Now, after about five years of use the flat sectioned belt is becoming a bit slack and will need replacing soon. I had to contact Pink Triangle twice since I purchased it and found them to be quick to respond and very helpful but now after their demise I am up 'ship creek' without a paddle. Can you help at all? Have you any suggestions of how I might obtain one of those belts?

**David Woods**

Yes, it is a pity about Pink Triangle, since their products were in many ways quite exceptional. Much like DPA though, when high fidelity gets as specialised as this it doesn't seem able to find a big enough market to justify the higher development and production costs. You may well be able to get a belt from [www.elexatelier.com](http://www.elexatelier.com). Unfortunately, this U.S. supplier is P.O. Box only, no address or phone number. Worth the risk for a low cost item though. **NK**

## PUBLIC TRANSPORTS

I finally realised that I have gone a bit too far in my pursuit for the last detail and ultimate transparency in my system. With my current set up of LAT power cabling/ Isotek Mainline/ Exposure 2010 as transport/ LAT digital interconnect/ Trivista 21 DAC/ Blue Heaven with Bullet plugs interconnect/ Bryston B25 pre-/ another Blue Heaven/ Bryston 4B ST/ QED XT

400 speaker cable/ ATC SCM 35 speakers, I can almost hear what that woman is talking about at the table drinking her wine and listening to Bill Evans Trio on "Waltz For Debby". But it's not quite what we all are looking for, is it? Somehow the sound is thin, lacks body, space, dimensionality and that tonal richness that makes the music so exiting. What would you change here?

I am naturally thinking of a better transport, but I am not sure at all how much does my Exposure contribute to the sound. Musical Fidelity claims that its DAC can be used with virtually any budget player thanks to Trivista's re-clocking of the digital data. Well, just put wooden cones under the Exposure and you will hear, as you guys say "dramatic" difference. So, even with its magical re-clocking the DAC is not immune from a source! And here I have another question. Most of my friends who used to dismiss outboard DACs a couple of years ago, now are considering a good DAC to upgrade their CD players, so that later on they can swap it for a proper multi-format player and still can be sure they won't miss on CD-replay quality.

So we seem to have a kind of a new trend here, which is to use good quality DACs with multi-format players, CD recorders and even DVD-players. Outboard DACs are definitely not dead (although increasingly difficult for find), and as far as I am concerned, it's a very good solution for those with huge 16-bit collections and ageing CD players in the era of 'new format uncertainty'. Dedicated CD transports clearly do not fit here and seem to be doomed. The big question here (and I cannot find an answer) is - how to tell whether your old CD player or that new shiny CD-recorder or a DVD could have a decent transport, worth pairing with, (as in my case) a Trivista 21?

**Alex**

Disc reading technology moves on, making old certainties redundant. Once solid and reliable CD transports can now be easily outrun by modern DVD mechanisms, which have better optics and servo control mechanisms. Meridian, who know a thing or two about all this, choose to use a DVD-ROM in their top CD player, the 588, saying it reads data with less corruption and loss than traditional audio mechanisms. Jitter levels are not up to audio standards but they correct this by sequential re-clocking.

In a similar vein I recently abandoned a good, modern, working PC fitted with normal DVD ROM drive in favour of a machine I built for video editing, equipped with a

Sony DRU-500 DVD recording drive, because the latter was almost magically able to read CDs previously rejected by all other drives as faulty. This suggests the basic read mechanism (i.e. laser and optics) can have a dramatic impact on data integrity, which with audio means reduced error rates.

Although we hear little about it, lasers, optics, drive and control mechanisms are all constantly being improved. They are a crucial, cutting edge technology in both computers and consumer electronics. You won't find top mechanisms in dedicated CD players anymore. I would endorse a move to a quality DVD player, like a Denon DVD-2900 or perhaps a Meridian 598 DVD-Audio player, with your external Musical Fidelity Trivista DAC. NK

'Listening' is the only way to see how much your existing CD transport is contributing to the sound - I'm afraid it's that simple. Transports do actually have an effect on the sound, and

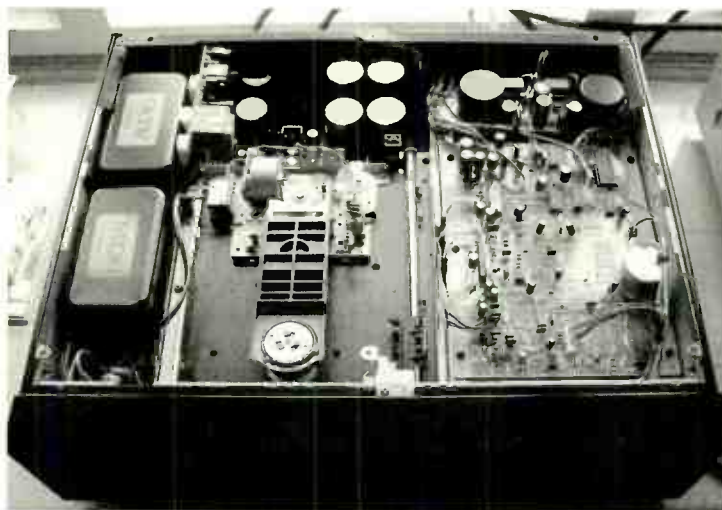
never been bettered... Then there's the CD transport cognoscenti, who believe the very best device ever made was the Esoteric P0 - complete with user adjustable laser focus and tracking from front panel buttons! In short, there are thousands of contributory factors, and it's simply not possible to reduce it to one



**Trichord Clock 4 brings improved stability to CD. They claim +/-5 parts per million, with a nominal sampling frequency of 44.1kHz. "This gives a range of 44,099.78Hz to 44,100.2205Hz giving a speed tolerance of 0.0005%. A 'normal' accuracy consumer clock operating at the same sampling frequency could be anything from 44,055.9Hz to 44,100.441Hz giving a speed tolerance of +/-0.1%", Trichord say.**

simple explanation.

So, in this world of digital suspense and intrigue, the only thing to do is suck it and see! If you're not prepared to listen to every transport ever made, then simply get your Exposure upgraded to Trichord Clock 4 specifications, which gives it



**Trichord Clock 4 - upgrades even top CD spinners like Sony's CDP-X77ES.**

some are better than others. CD gurus like Ken Ishiwata believe the original Philips swing-arm laser transports, such as the CDM 0 mech, were the best. But he'll then tell you that the likes of Sony's CDP-338ES was better sounding still, not because of its mech, but the digital output driver IC, which he reckons has

a new, far more accurate master clock complete with its own power supply to ensure very low jitter indeed. It brought extra focus, speed and dimensionality to my Sony CDP-X77ES, which already has one of the nicest mechs around!

Then, make sure it's as vibration-free as possible by the judicious

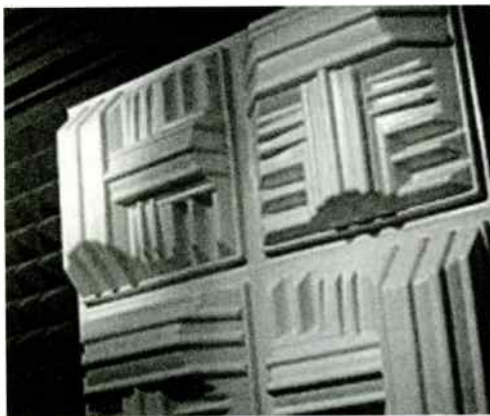
application of FoculPods and/or an Audiophile Furniture BASE SPO1 sub-table (a Townshend Seismic Sink is better still, but three times as pricey). Then you'll have the jitter and external vibration 'bases covered', and your Exposure should really make the excellent Musical Fidelity DAC sing. **DP**

### GETTING TREATMENT

*I read your article on acoustics in the current issue with interest. You wrote that you use diffusers in your own listening room. Where do you get them from? They are not the sort of thing advertised in hi-fi mags. Grateful for any pointers.*

**Kevin McHale**

My long-wavelength diffusers are not available in the UK. You can however find a range of Auralex diffusion and absorption panels at [www.auralex.com](http://www.auralex.com), plus lots of interesting practical info that I feel certain will fire the imagination of a lot of DIYers. There are ceiling tiles, wall tiles, bass traps and, of course, the ever popular absorbent foam panels, all with interesting explanations about their affect on sound in a room. It's worth experimenting with room treatments like this because they really can make a great improvement. In the UK, Auralex products are available from Studiospares Ltd, located at Staples Corner, London NW2. Go to [www.studiospares.com](http://www.studiospares.com) or phone 08456 441020. **NK**



*Diffuser panels have a randomly varying 3-D surface to disperse sound. Probably best not painted custard yellow like this though.*

### GETTING INTO THE GROOVE

*I caught the vinyl bug about a year ago and since then have not bought or barely listened to a CD. I used to think CD was the best and couldn't understand why people harked on about the wonderful sound of vinyl. Anyway I don't know how or why I*

*made the change but my appreciation of music has rocketed!*

*What I've got at the moment is a Thorens TD 160 Super with SME 3009 Improved arm, fitted with an Ortofon 510 cartridge. This source feeds an Edenlake MC34-B 22W valve amp and two pairs of speakers, some Marantz HD 345s and a pair of those dodgy Dynabox things that you get from shifty*



*Get a Goldring - always a good choice for decent sound from LP.*

*white van drivers (my foolish brother fell for that one!). Okay, it's not the high-end stuff that you guys are used to but I'm not made of money! I don't know what to go for next though - a new cartridge? Speakers? Phano stage? Or one of those Moth cleaners (I've a lot of second hand vinyl) You see, I don't want to get a new cartridge if the speakers aren't gonna do it justice and vice-versa. I'm really new to all this please help. I'm on a budget of about £250 a month.*

**Guy**

With a 22W per channel valve amp and some dodgy speakers out of the back of a van, I'd say you should first think about a pair of inexpensive but good floorstanders. Others might howl about the front end, but in this case your rear end needs most attention, if you'll pardon the observation. Look at Mordaunt Short 914s or Monitor Audio B4s, both of which are sensitive, have a friendly impedance characteristic and sound really good too. Alternatively, check out B&W's 600 series, which are very sensitive.

As lovely as the SME3009 Improved arm is, it could well be bettered. I'd suggest you consider an Origin Live OLI arm fitted to your Thorens TD160, carrying a Shure M97XE or Stanton 680EEE cartridge. This will improve your front end enormously, elevating it to a good modern standard. **NK**

Hi Guy - I'd agree with NK, but you might like to do it this way: Month 1

- OLI arm. Month 2 - Goldring G1042 cartridge. Month 3 - Trichord Dino phono stage (although go for a Graham Slee Era Gold V if you can wait two months instead of one). Month 4/5 - start saving for Revolver R45 loudspeakers (that's four months - good luck). After about a year, you'll have a really serious vinyl-based system, and you can start tweaking your TD160 in the meantime! **DP**

### CONCRETE PRAISE

*I have been a keen reader of Hi-Fi World for over ten years and rate it highly, but I must confess that I am slightly surprised that it has taken so long to move the debate onto deficiencies in room acoustics rather than equipment. Tales of audible differences in components, circuit topologies and so on are all very well, but the room in which music played in any form is heard is at least as critical as the technology, so Noel Keywood's article in the July 2004 issue came as a very welcome development...*

This piece interested me for another reason. Seven years ago, being an architect who was then working on the design of a rehearsal space for a London orchestra with a leading firm of acousticians, I was asked to write an article on room acoustics by a friend, then Deputy Editor of a competitor hi-fi magazine. Two further articles followed, including one that suggested ways of dealing with the problems of sound transmission between flats or houses caused by loud music and televisions, which is so often the bane of urban living.

A second article advocated the notion of using room proportions to accord with what in architect speak is called the Golden Section, to achieve good acoustic conditions within domestic-scale rooms. A Golden Section is generated using the half diagonal of a square as the radius for projecting a part circle outside the square. The resulting rectangle has a ratio of 1.618:1, which also happens to coincide with ratios derived from one of the Fibonacci series.

A year or so before writing the articles, I made a decision to put my money where my mouth was and test the Golden Section theory on a new house extension I was designing for a music room and home office. Although some compromises were inevitable because of the size of the building plot, room proportions were essentially based on the Golden Section, with a ratio of 1:1.618 (3 metres wide by 4.85 metres long) in plan. A ceiling height was chosen to avoid coincident

resonances between the vertical axis and those generated by the horizontal dimensions. It may or may not be coincidental that two out of the three of Beranek's most highly rated concert halls in the world - Boston Symphony Hall and the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam - both have a similar width to length ratio of approximately 1:1.6.

That said, I agree with Noel that there isn't an instant solution to the question of what the proportions a room should be to support good sound and there is flexibility to use other dimensions to prevent room resonances. I also agree that flimsy partitions should be avoided like the plague as they vibrate in sympathy with bass notes, thereby muddying the sound.

However, given Noel's dismissal of flimsy partitions, I was surprised by his assertion that concrete floors aren't too clever either, which I disagree with profoundly. There are two basic structural ways of constructing floors - concrete or timber. By their nature, even firm timber floors are prone to vibration, so when 'speakers are spiked to a floor, sound is transmitted structurally into the floor, effectively turning it into a giant sounding board. Airborne sound from 'speakers has the same effect of making the floor vibrate at various resonant frequencies. To avoid these problems, the floor of my music room consists of pre-cast concrete beams and blocks, a resilient layer of Rockwool insulation, and a sand/cement screed topped with a finish of oak parquet blocks laid in bituminous adhesive.

I also wonder why Noel's article appeared to recommend the use of what seemed to me to be excessive amounts of curtains, carpets and sofas to control reflections. My experience is that rooms containing large areas of soft furnishings tend to suck out all mid and treble energy from the sound, leaving it dull, lifeless and lacking in clarity. Acousticians' specify absorptive banners and drapes in concert halls to damp down the reverberation time (RT) so that the hall can be adapted for either large symphonic works, which require typically require an RT of 2.2 seconds, or for small scale acoustic works where the RT should be much less. However, in a domestic situation, RT is not really of great significance because the size of a typical domestic room means there is little delay between direct and reflected sounds. My approach has always been to use as little as possible absorptive material in a room, but to carefully position diffusion using bookshelves and shelves full of records at the sides and rear of the room to control unwanted room reflections. I admit that I do have a tendency to prefer a slightly live sound but, in my case, I achieved sufficient

damping through careful selection of a rug for the centre of the floor.

Moving on to my electronics. I have owned most of the equipment used in this room for more years than I care to remember, yet I rarely feel the need to change it much because the sound has been improved dramatically from being in a new room with the right proportions. Vinyl sources include a Michell Mycrof RB 300/ Reson Aciore and a Garrard 401 mounted on a solid multi-layer plywood plinth, fitted with an SME 309 arm and Sumiko BPS. Both turntables feed into an EAR 834P phono stage. Airwaves come through a GT Audio modified Leak Troughline Stereo III tuner, which is gradually being usurped by a more convenient Tivoli Audio Model 2 stereo radio. CD player is a Cambridge Audio Discmagic 1 Transport and Isomagic D to A converter. Signals pass through a RATA passive pre-amp fitted with an Alps pot (replacing the original Sfernice), into a GT Audio restored Leak Stereo 20, which I still find amazing and dynamic given that it is a design dating from the late 1950s. Loudspeakers are also home made, based on David Berriman's DBS6 kit, which I bought and built many years ago and have used ever since. All interconnects and 'speaker cables are DIY using aerospace-grade Teflon-sheathed cables.

What's next? Not much, but I might at some point change the sometimes overly euphonic valve phono stage for a Trichord Dino, swap the BPS for either an Ortofon or Dynavector cartridge, or get Origin Live to do a number on the RB300 arm. I might also think about adding a super tweeter to supplement the Morel HF unit in the DBS6 'speakers. Does the HFW team have any thoughts on this?

**David Lewis**

Thanks for your expert views and experience on room acoustics, David. Since every room is different it's a subject cloaked in uncertainty at a real-world level, making additional experience like yours important.

I have covered room acoustics a number of times in Hi-Fi World, always trying to make the point that, worked cleverly, a good sounding room can also be a very comfortable room. Egg boxes on the walls and bass traps in the corners are not mandatory by any means!

Concrete floors appear to have advantages, for precisely the reasons you suggest. They don't misbehave - and they are great platforms for a turntable table too. However, I recall seeing a warning about concrete some time ago and well remember being very happy to vacate a

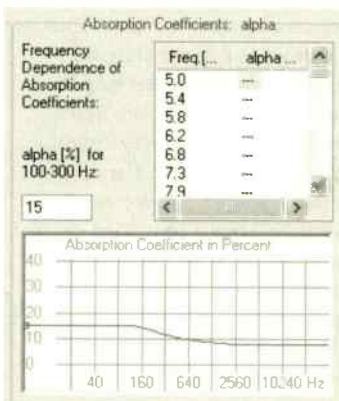
concrete floored room that never sounded right. Because of its mass and composition a suspended wooden floor behaves as a solid surface across the audio band, becoming progressively more influential only at low and very low frequencies. Its absorption coefficient is typically 0.15 at 125Hz, against carpeted concrete's minimal 0.02 - a



**Cara room acoustics data for concrete, showing very low absorption.**

big difference. A concrete floor in combination with solid brick walls and plastered ceiling consequently makes for a very reverberant enclosure at low frequencies.

Subjectively, it is best if some absorption exists at all frequencies,



**Cara room acoustics data for a wooden floor, showing rising absorption of low frequencies.**

to obtain what seems a natural rate of decay, otherwise the sound is too lively and muddled. A reasonably solid, suspended wooden floor gives a nicely balanced result. Perhaps concrete will too if other surfaces or furniture act to control decay times at low frequencies (below 200Hz). The floor cannot necessarily be considered alone.

In my article I talked about the value of diffusion at key reflective points in a room, especially side walls and ceiling. These areas influence



**The Mordaunt Short MS914 loudspeaker - sweet as a nut and sensitive too.**

higher frequencies, above 200Hz or so. It's best to diffuse here, not absorb, as you suggest. Below 200Hz though, energy levels rise steeply and wavelengths lengthen to make diffusion unwanted and physically impossible. Absorption by large, well padded settees is a wonderful way of taming room modes.

Full height curtains can also work wonders to damp things down by just the right amount. Opening or closing the curtains effectively adjusts the amount of absorption. In my situation I always close the curtains, covering a 16ft long, 9ft high wall completely with heavy, lined cloth to give a very critical listening environment. Cara room acoustic analysis ([www.cara.de](http://www.cara.de)) confirms a nicely controlled, optimal Rt under these conditions. Final preferred balance will always be subjective, but a reviewer like myself needs to hear more direct than reflected sound, otherwise I'm reviewing the sound of my walls rather than a loudspeaker under test! So my ideal room is likely to be well damped and less lively than yours.

My own reality check is the sort of grunting sounds made by manufacturers whose products are being reviewed, when they hear them in-situ. Gentle grunts of approval are what I hope for, rather than squeals of anguish. As part of the psycho-war I also keep to hand a spare spectrum analyser and measuring mic, to prove the room works well, plus a few animated computer analyses to show this is so under scrutiny by rigorous ray tracing analysis, such as Cara's.

Although I joke a little here, it is understandable that manufacturers should hope or expect a reviewer to possess a reasonably 'normal' room that gives a balanced but revealing sound. I seem to have achieved this.

Meridian talk about sound in a room at length ([www.meridian.co.uk](http://www.meridian.co.uk) Go to: Library / Gentle Art of Room Correction) in a White Paper on room acoustics, pointing out that controlling decay time improves intelligibility. In this manner, and in the way a good room sounds naturally balanced, as well as free from flutter echoes and bass boom, good acoustics contribute significantly to sound quality, revealing the full potential of a system playing within it.

On the equipment front, I would suggest you consider getting some modern loudspeakers, since a Morel HF is not the sweetest thing in the world! As always with valves you need a sensitive floorstander of good quality. For the Leak I would suggest Mordaunt Short 914s, or if you can stretch to them, Castle Howard 3 or Revolver RW45s. B&W also have some effective contenders in this bracket, such as the budget DM603s.

The EAR 834P is a rather heavy and lush sounding phono stage, primarily because its RIAA equalisation favours bass. A Trichord Dino will sound more accurate, if less embracing, shall I say. Look at other letters published this month for praise of Origin Live products: they're currently setting the pace. But if you go for a moving coil cartridge start with at least an Ortofon MC10 Supreme, whilst with moving magnet, modern Shures or Stantons are a good bet, and also the much regarded Goldring 1042 of course. **NK**

### END OF A DREAM

*I'm hoping you can help me. After around ten years of dithering, from the days when I was a student, I'm finally nearing the purchase of my dream turntable - probably a Michell Orbe. I've heard it twice at Bristol and loved the sound - although I've never heard anything like the similarly priced Wilson Benesch or Nottingham turntables for comparison.*

*Anyway, my confusion surrounds partnering arms and cartridges. Your April issue was great, and the tonearms test pointed me toward the OL Silver at £600, although a comment in another article made me wonder about the new SME M2-9. The problem is: how do you get to compare these as a consumer?*

*Will good hi-fi shops bolt and unbolt arms onto one or two turntables for a listening session?*

*My music tastes are lots of Beatles, Dylan, Queen, Springsteen, Dire Straits, and a wide range taking in 60s Motown, Roy Orbison, Johnny Cash, Norah Jones, Pulp, Radiohead, REM, the Stones ... classic albums like Graceland, Rumours, Pet Sounds, and the odd classical piece as well.*

*My current system is a Rega Planar 3 plus Elys, Naim Nait 3, Dynaudio Audience 60s. I have no plans to change speakers or amp for the time being as this outlay will clean me out, but I'm sure it's going to be worth it! My current system is great, but some albums seem a bit 'flat' and uninvolved (find myself turning the volume up to try to compensate), and think the Naim and Dynaudios unlikely to be the problem.*

*My budget is £3,000 for the whole set-up. So would Orbe, OL Silver and, say Dynavector DV10X4-2 or Ortofon MC25E (I haven't got a clue on cartridges) seem a good choice? What other combos would you suggest? Many thanks for any advice. I think I shall give copies of your Analogue vs. Digital article to all my friends who think I'm mad still buying vinyl. The arguments started when we were at school!*

**Dave Rose**

I would never accuse a Naim amplifier of being flat and uninvolved! Dynaudio Audience 60s may well be worth replacing on this score however; I've used Dynaudio drivers in the past in prototype loudspeaker designs and soon thought better of it. A Nait 3 would work well with a fast but solid sounding small loudspeaker like the Mission V60.

If you get a new turntable set up, be careful not to buy too cheap a cartridge. We've said it many times before, that the inexpensive Ortofon MC25E moving coil offers little in the way of MC benefits, notably transparency. For this you need to move up to the Supreme range at least, the MC20 Supreme being a good compromise between speed and smoothness. A Kontrapunkt B is an even better choice. Always bear in mind that a good MC demands a good MC input stage. If you don't want to spend so much I would suggest you save your pennies and buy a good MM like a Shure V15 VxMR perhaps. **NK**

Metinks that flatness is very probably down to the Rega, with has a rather polite sound - although I do

love its superb transparency. You're right to surmise that the Michell Orbe - especially with its new Orbe Controller NC PSU - will really change things. You'll find a dramatically large scale to the sound, with greater depth and dimensionality, plus oodles of extra focus and obviously superior transients. I'd say the best arm at this price would be the matching Michell TecnoArm a - better even than the OL Silver on the Orbe. I'd use the hundred pounds or so saved to invest in either an Ortofon MC25FL or better still the Kontrapunkt B - which, as Frank Carson used to say on Tiswas, is a 'cracker'... **DP**

### SILVER SURFER

Just thought I would jot a few lines to say how impressed I am with my most recent purchase of an Origin Live Resolution Turntable with OL Silver Taper Tonearm. A few years ago I more or less gave up with turntables, as I could not seem to get total satisfaction from my records, whereas my (at the time) Linn Karik/ Numerik CD player was giving me superb music through an active Linn system.

I hasten to add that the turntable I said good-bye to was a fully kitted Linn LP12 with Cirkus mod, Lingo and an Ekos tonearm! I have been reading lots of good things in Hi-Fi World magazine about the progress made in recent years



Origin Live Silver arm, a much modified Rega.

with turntables so decided to have another go (fortunately I had not sold my 500 or so LPs).

Initially I bought and constructed an OL ultra TT kit and a Silver tonearm. I added a Dynavector DV20X-L and was amazed at the music this combination was capable of. After reading your review of the new OL Resolution and hearing so many good things about it I decided to take the plunge and invest in one. I was also lucky to source a surplus Silver Taper tonearm direct from OL at a good price! Well, this record player is just sublime. Every record I put on it sounds so good musically that it is almost beyond my belief. My Linn Ikemi CD player sounds very good, especially with HDCD encoded discs, but the Resolution trounces it in every way possible. The LP12 I used to own was never able to do this consistently, although it was good

at rhythms (but the OL is just as good in this respect). All I can say is that I concur with your view, that analogue has indeed advanced massively in recent years and now stands well above all other formats, provided you get the right equipment.

**John Hills**

Hurrah! Proof positive that I haven't been hallucinating the past few years... It's nice when at least one person finally agrees with me. **DP**

### TABLE TALK

I've just sat down and thoroughly enjoyed rereading your April issue. What strikes me about this particular issue is the sheer volume of content - seven pages of letters and serious responses alone. Several other thoughts came to mind. First, that the world is going mad. The advertisement on p16 features sixteen different turntables, mostly at the mid-to-high end. I share your belief in the superiority of vinyl (I recently invested in an Oracle Delphi Mk III/3009), but I know so few people who share this passion that I just don't understand the economics. Soon there will be a smaller choice of LP records available new than there are decks to play them on!

Second, I enjoyed your CD/analogue comparison. You comment that, "pound for pound, we reckon vinyl still wins by a country mile" gave me an idea. It would be intriguing to see this assertion put to the test at several price points - say £200, £500, £2,000 and £5,000 (you may have covered £1,000 already,

but read on). To spice things up, you could set a challenge to a digital enthusiast and an analogue fan to come up with the best they can at each price point (within the limitations of magazine reviewing)? And finally, your sense of humour is never far from the surface, as demonstrated by your inclusion in 'sound bites' of an Ikea coffee table; how appropriate for April.

**Lance Doughty**

What is it with you guys - almost everyone, from hi-fi PR svengali Rob Follis downwards, thought my Ikea coffee table piece was a joke? It wasn't. I was just trying to say, "look, if you don't want to spend £300 on a hi-fi support, then be my guest. You should try this - it works almost as well". Oh well, it's good to know that lots of folk dwell under the

impression that I have a sense of humour. Now for the "£200 Technics kicks butt" front page shocker... **DP**

### AUDIO DRAB. UPGRADE PLEASE?

I have been steadily upgrading and trying to balance out my system for years and have now come to a point where I simply don't know where to go... My system comprises Audiolab 8000Q preamp, 8000M monoblocks, B&W P5 speakers, Rega Planar 3/Super Bias with Coph Nia phono stage. The problem is I don't have a clue where to go with regards to a CD player or cabling. My trusted old Sony CDP-X3000ES stopped working and I'm not sure it's really worth repairing in context with this system. Also, I haven't got the faintest clue what cables to use as I've been using QED Qunex 2 for some time. I like a sound that while being neutral and even, has good bass depth and power. Any ideas and comments would be hugely appreciated. Continue the fine work guys.

**David Crosbie**

Trying to balance your system for years and ended up with Audiolabs, huh? Oh well, the less said the better about that... Suffice to say that you need a digital disc spinner will oodles of warmth and texture to inject some colour into the proceedings. To wit, I can think of nothing better than Marantz's SA-8400 (£700) - it's a big improvement on your ex in all respects, has true depth and a sweet tonality (it doesn't sound like a computer soundcard, unlike the CDP-X3000ES) and even plays these new-fangled SACDs. Cabling - LFD Spirolink 3 (£150 approx.) if you can afford it, Wireworld if you can't... **DP**

### MONEY, MONEY, MONEY?

I have a pair of Tannoy GRF loudspeakers - one corner horn and one rectangular - in the original enclosures. The 15" 'drivers (red magnets LSU1 HF1 15.F) are in good condition. I have owned them for twenty five years. Can you tell me what they are worth?

**Dwight**

Tannoy GRFs - what terrific loudspeakers! Sadly, as an 'odd couple', they're worth a fraction of what a nice matched pair of corner horns would be, and the rectangular GRF is not popular. A nice pair of 15" Monitor Reds (and do make sure they are 'metal' covers on the backs of the tweeters, a nice strawberry colour) in original condition would fetch between £1000 and £2500. I reckon the single cabinets are worth around £600-£800 for the single

rectangular, and double, for the corner unit. Just finding a buyer who has a matching set! Splitting units from the cabs would get best price.

**HB**

### A TAD UNUSUAL

*I just started subscribing to Hi-Fi World. I live in Hong Kong and I am more interested in experimental audio than changing equipment every few months, which is what seems to be driving most audiophiles nowadays. Reviewing classics such as the ESL-57 and the Leaks, which nobody is going to make any money out of, is a great service to readers. I must say that our hobby has become much more image or market*



**TAD's PT-R9 ribbon tweeter for DVD Audio. "Featured in this new wide-range tweeter is a Super-Light Beryllium Vibration Board for excellent range of audio reproduction from 5kHz to 120 kHz. Also featured is our newly developed, Full-Surface Drive technology which is made possible by the use of advanced Alnico 750 magnet, with its high-precision magnetic structure" they say.**

driven, instead of technology driven as it was during the Golden Age.

I read with interest your comments on the Japanese company Pioneer. It is interesting that readers in the UK think of Japanese audio equipment as mass market and 'non-specialist'. When I was living in the UK during the 80s and early 90s, that was the impression I got as well. When you stated that Pioneer isn't into things like 'TVs, motor boats', you were of course only half-correct since Pioneer does make some of the best plasma screens on the market. This however does not make them a mass market audio company.

What you failed to mention, and what Pioneer is probably best known for in the professional audio circle, is of course their Technical Audio Devices division. Pioneer hired away some of the best engineers from JBL in the 1980s to set up this division, and TAD, not the modern day JBL, is the true descendent of the great company that produced classics such as the Lansing Iconic, the Hartsfield, the 375 compression driver, the 077 bullet tweeters etc. The new

TAD drivers such as the 4001 compression midrange and the 1601C woofers are the best drivers money can buy. As one compression driver, without horn, will cost you the price of a pair of good high-end floorstanders, these drivers are not for the feint of heart.

Looking at the quality of drivers used in some of the mega-buck audiophile speakers, one just wonders how "high-end" manufacturers can justify charging those prices. One very well known American speaker model, now in the mark 7 guise and costing well-over \$10,000, has a parts cost of maybe \$5500. Another small American company, Classic Audio Reproductions, which makes replicas of classics such as the JBL Hartsfield, also produces a line of professional monitor speakers using TAD drivers and horns, which they charge barely more than the retail cost of all the components. And you can guess which brand sounds better.

The sound quality of speakers is determined by the quality of the drivers, period. There is no amount of tweaking, voodoo rites or snake oil that can make poor quality drivers sound good in a finished product. I find professional audio products much more realistically priced and also much better value for money.

**Adrian Wu**

I think we both agree about TAD. I went to AIR Studios in London recently, which Pioneer co-owns, and heard the latest TAD studio monitors, complete with Beryllium drivers, and they were awesome. I've asked for some to review, but due to their scarcity here in Europe, I think the chances are in the 'start at zero and work downwards' league... Here's hoping, all the same. **DP**

### MISSIONARY ZEAL

Your article on the Nytech and ARC 101 partnership brought back many happy memories of being moved by the music that passed its portals. My amps and speakers are now in the possession of a friend. I would like to know if you concur with my advice to my friend to modernise the sound. The amps are 'playing up' and I suggest he gets them repaired. Me thinks the amps are the stronger of the partnership, especially

as the active cross-over have such an impact on the sound. So much less distortion, and a tightening up of the bass. This is the effect, still, on my adding an active cross-over to my Naim system.

The next step is to build a pair of 'speakers without cross over, checking with the supplier that the units will be suitable... I've suggested a smaller pair of 'speakers as they image well and then get a REL sub to suit the room size. He's moving, so the room size is unknown. He can then sell the 101s to finance the changes.

The only other alternative is to sell the X-over amp and 'speakers to a CTA receiver owner and keep the amp to power some off the shelf 'speakers, again adding a sub to suit. I still think it's worth staying active. He is my best friend, I'd like to keep it that way!

Oh, yes thanks for a very useful and entertaining read. The primary school children, especially the boys, in my class like the look of the vinyl players. If only they could hear... Oh hallelujah the converted! Does that make me a missionary?

**Anon**

Yes - you are duly blessed - by the (Simon) Pope, no less! **DP**

### PERSONAL SERVICES

I wonder if you could help me, after all you are partly responsible for my problem? I have followed your recent articles on the Yamaha NS1000M speakers. I have recently purchased a pair, however I am a little stuck on what amp to drive them with. I have access to the following options, Krell KSA 50S, Classe CA100 or Sugden P28 as a bridged pair. Preamp will be Audio Research LS2 with Sonic Frontiers SF-P1 Phono. Room is 6.2x4.2m and is dedicated to Hi-Fi. Also, how close to the rear wall do you place the NS 1000s? **Ken**

I'd go for the Krells - without a doubt. For those less solvent, a second-hand pair of Musical Fidelity XA-200s works wonders. I can still remember hearing Alex Reece's 'Feel The Sunshine' on 12" vinyl (via my Michell Orbe turntable and WAD KLP-P1 tube pre). I thought I'd blown one of the bass drivers, as I could hear a strange, other worldly rattle. It turned out to be the kitchen door shaking on its hinges downstairs... How close to the rear wall - about 30cm-100cm, depending on room size and ancillaries, although I've used mine as close as 15cm with 10kg of old books on top of each! **DP**



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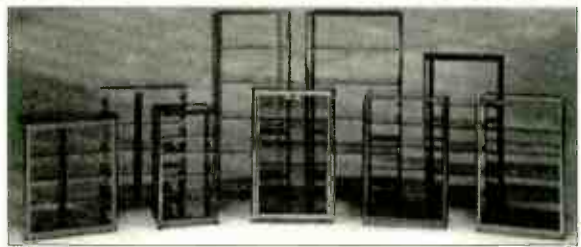
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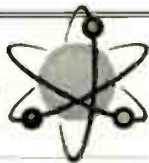
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**LAT INTERNATIONAL Inc USA - Analogue, Digital and Video interconnects and Speaker cable better than most at double the price.**

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 Toughplug. 0.90cm £62, 0.90cm £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 highest quality 13amp sockets. It has no fuses, circuit breakers, surge protection transformers, resistors, capacitors, LEDs, 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 Interconnects IC-200, IC-100, IC80, IC50, Video VI-6, VI-6 Component, Digital -DI-20, Speaker SS800 and SS1000.



LAT AC-2 Power cord compare with products costing ten times as much, then decide



**GNLM 05/2.5 (CSA2.5)**  
£48 for 1.0m, £58 for 1.5m, £68 for 2.0m.

**GNLM 05/04**  
£58 for 1.0m, £72 for 1.5m, £86 for 2.0m. Both GNLM cables are available off the reel and for export.



S.5000e  
2 x 250w  
power  
amp



Stasis  
pre amp

**Acoustic Solid  
Small Royal**



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*since 1828, the world's oldest piano maker*



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PERSONAL CALLERS

## ● Vinyl

ACOUSTIC RESEARCH EB101	£275	£148	E.A.D T8000 LD/CD Transport	3950	948	COPLAND CSA 8	£1250	£796
CONOISSEUR BD2	£250	£125	Enlightened Audio by Design (EAD)			COPLAND CSA 14	£1500	£745
CHORD REF Phono stage	2000	1195	2box DAC	2495	598	CYRUS II	£275	£125
DUAL CS506 (Black)	£175	£ 80	EXPOSURE CD Player	£999	£629	CYRUS Smart Power		£448
DUAL CS 505 Silver	£150	£ 88	KENWOOD DP7090 CD Plyr	£399	£129	CYRUS AV Master	£450	£198
DUAL CS503-1 Concept	£180	£88	KENWOOD DP-X9010 Trans	£400	£199	CYRUS Pre	£700	£345
ETALON 3 Box Phono stage	1300	595	KINSHAW Perception DAC	£1000	£498	CYRUS Power	£700	£358
FIDELITY RESEARCH			KRELL KAV250CD	£3500	£1698	COPLAND CSAB Int	£995	£596
FRT-4 (Phono Trans)	£500	£198	KRELL 300 CD Player	£3750	£2495	CYRUS PSX-R	£350	£ 225
GARRARD 401 / SME 3009 II	£950	£495	LINN Karik CD	£1850	£998	CYRUS One Int	£195	£128
GARRARD 401 + SME 3009II + V15III	£950	£595	LINN MIMIK CD	1000	348	DENON PMA 250	£200	£95
GOLDRING Lenco GL85 white	£175	£ 75	LINN Numerik DAC/Karik CD Trans	£3350	£2296	DNM Pre + 3 PSU	£2000	£498
KOETSU CARTRIDGE	1495	695	LINN NUMERIK DAC	1500	996	DNM Pre2/PA1	£2800	£898
LEHMANN Audio Black Cube	500	195	MARANTZ CD675E	379	198	ELECTOR MFL Pre	£500	£148
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£795	£445	MARANTZ CD17	£895	£598	EXPOSURE 7/8 Pre & Pwr	£1100	£405
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD85	£450	£ 195	GALACTRON MK2121	£1200	£598
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD75	£350	£ 125	HARMON KARDON AVR85 AV Rec	£1000	£498
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	HARMON KARDON Citation Pwr	£1200	£249
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	KENWOOD L07C Pre	£500	£155
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	KRELL KST100 Power Amp	£2995	£1596
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	KRELL PAM 5 POWER AMP	1500	728
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	KRELL KSA 50S	3500	1695
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	LECSON AC1/API		£475
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	LFD LSI Pre	£1000	£375
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	LINN LK1	£450	£194
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	LINN LK2	£550	£299
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	LINN LK280	£600	£398
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	LINN LK280/Sparks P5.	£1100	£698
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	LINN MAJIK INT	975	378
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	LINN LK100	600	378
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	LINN LK140 ( X 3)	875EA	496EA
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	LINN CAIRN	1400	896
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	LUMLEY A2100 Power	£750	£398
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	MARANTZ (orig) SM10 Power	£700	£498
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	MARANTZ PM66SE	£295	£195
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	MARK LEVINSON No33	£15500	£3495
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	MARK LEVINSON 27.5 Pwr	£6000	£2398
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	McINTOSH C200 (2box pre amp)	7500	4498
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	McINTOSH 1201 monoblocks	15000	10698
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	MERIDIAN 562V	1295	698
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	MERIDIAN 501.2 Pre	£780	£476
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	MERIDIAN 551 Int.	£900	£698
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	MERIDIAN 565 Processor	£3300	£1796
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	MERIDIAN 557 Power	£1695	£1195
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	MERIDIAN 601 DSP Pre	£2700	£1695
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	MERIDIAN 541 Pre/processor	£1250	£498
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	MICHELL Argo	£575	£395
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	MICHELL Argo/Electro Mono's	£2495	£1496
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	MICHEL Alecto	£1989	£898
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	MICROMEGA Tempo 2	£750	£398
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	MUSE (300W) MONOBLOCKS	4500	2198
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	MUSICAL FIDELITY A3CR Power	£1500	£696
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	MUSICAL FIDELITY A3CR Pre	£1500	£696
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	MUSICAL FIDELITY A3CR	£1500	£678
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	MUSICAL FIDELITY F22 Pre	£1500	£595
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	MUSICAL FIDELITY Dr Thomas	£699	£275
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	MUSICAL FIDELITY P140	£395	£ 195
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	MUSICAL FIDELITY E10	£300	£ 195
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	MUSICAL FIDELITY A3 Int	£1000	£648
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	MUSICAL FIDELITY XA200	1000	495
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	MYRYAD A120 Power	£500	£255
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	NAD C340	£225	£148
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	NAD 370	£395	£225
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	NAIM NAC 42 Pre	£400	£125
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	NVA AP30 Int.	£350	£175
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	NYTECH CA302		£198
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	ONKYO TX-DS 656	£1500	£395
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	PARASOUND HCA1506 6 Chn Pwr	£2995	£1296
LEHMANN Axis/Akito/Ortofon MC15	£600	£345	MARANTZ CD-67 MKII OS	£350	£228	PS AUDIO IV Pre Incl. MC/MM	£600	£295

## ● Amplifiers Solid State

## ● Digital Sources

ARCAM Alpha One CD	£300	£149	ALBARRY AP3 Passive Pre	£295	£175
ARCAM Alpha 8CD	£450	£245	ALBARRY M408 Monoblocks	£800	£448
ARCAM Delta 250/Black Box 50	£875	£ 395	ALBERRY DPM1 Pre/PSU	£600	£198
ARCAM Alpha 6CD	£350	£ 125	ARCAM A75	400	275
ARCAM Alpha 7 CD	£349	£195	ARCAM P75	£435	£296
AUDIO AERO CD Player	£5000	£3506	ATC SCA2 Inc Phono	£2900	£1498
AUDIOLAB 8000CDM	£1400	£ 595	AUDIO ANALOGUE Donizetti	£650	£455
AUDIOLAB 8000CDM/DAC	£2300	£ 898	AUDIO ANALOGUE Bellini (blk)	£595	£355
AUDIO MECHA			AUDIOLAB 8000C Pre	£495	£295
DAMNATION Tran + Upgrade	£1250	£439	AUDIOLAB 8000LX	£650	£455
AUDIONOTE DAC 3 Signature	£2100	£1495	AUDIOLAB 8000S	£800	£395
AUDIO SYNTHESIS Transcend	£1200	£596	AUDIOLAB 8000P	£900	£ 475
DCS Purcell	£4500	£2495	AUDIO RESEARCH D400	£3498	£1998
			CAIRN EZO Int.	£995	£595
			CHORD SPM900	£1550	£798
			CHORD SPM600	£2200	£1195

QUAD 33 Pre	£200
QUAD 303 Power	£200
QUAD 34	£400
QUAD 44 Pre	£450
QUAD 44 Pre (scratched case)	£450
QUAD 405 Power Amplifier	£350
QUAD 66 Pre Amp	£700
QUAD 606 Power	£695
QUAD 77 Int. Amp	£496
QED A240 SA	£195
RED ROSE Spirit Int (as new)	£1200
ROKSAN Caspian DSPAV Pre	£900
ROTEL RB985 Power Amp	£900
ROTEL RMB-1075	£850
SPECTRAL DMC12 PRE	£4200
SPECTRAL DMA 100S Power	£4200
SPHINX Project 2 Pre	£1600
SPHINX Project 12 mono,s	£3000
SONY SDPEP9ES (Digital)	£600
SONY VA333ES (AV System)	£799
SONY TAE-1000ESD Pre	£495
TAG McLaren F3 Prator	£1500
TALK ELECTRONICS Storm	£650
TESSERAC Pre	£1500
THORENS TTA 2000 Power Amp	£1000
TOWNSEND Elite 600 Pre	£500

£95 NAKAMICHI DRAGON	1995
NYTECH CT206	£1000
PANASONIC SU-V3700	£200
QUAD FM2 tuner	£200
QUAD FM3 tuner	£300
QUAD FM4 tuner	£1550
REVOX S Series System	£1148
REVOX D36 (Reel to reel)	£348
REVOX E36 (Reel to reel)	£298
REVOX Pto HS77 (Reel to reel)	£950
REVOX A77 2 track (Reel to reel)	£750
REVOX B77 2 track	£1000
REVOX PR99II 2 track (7.5/15ips)	£1500
REVOX B910 Pro cassette deck	£1500
ROGERS Ravensbrook Tuner	£150
SHUM MOOK SUPPORTS	£230
SILTECH HF-963 S.E.DIG. (1M)	£158

1195 SONY STS 555ES (cali)	£495	£198
SONY STS730ES	£700	£295
SONY JA 20ES Mini Disc Recorder	£350	£178
SONY WMD60 Pro. Walkman	£250	£128
STAX 3030 Basic L/Phones	£550	£376
STAX ELECTROSTATIC HEADPHONES INC		
TTI VALVE ENERGIZER	1950	798
TEAC A1500 (Reel to reel - 7" spools)	£400	£198
TEAC 3340S	£795	£395
TRANSPARENT Ref Spkr (0.75M)	£2250	£1495
TRANSPARENT Ref XL SE (3M)	£4611	£2875
TRANSPARENT Ref XL SE (1M)	£3915	£2295
TRILOGY VTI Integrated	£2500	£1398
UNISON Mystery One	£1750	£998
UNISON SRI	£1250	£895
UNISON RESEARCH 300b Monos	£4200	£2995
YAMAHA TC800 GL (classic)	£300	£ 95

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### ● Amplifiers Valve

AUDIO INNOVATIONS 800 Monos	£1200	£598
AUDIO INNOVATIONS 800 Mk11	£1500	£688
AUDION Premier Pre + HCPS (Gold)	£1250	£ 498
AUDION Sterling Monoblocks		£698
AUDIONOTE 070 Phono SE Int.	£1500	£998
AUDIONOTE 'ANKORU' (70 Watt S.E. Triode)	£14995	£6998
AUDIO RESEARCH VT60	1995	1395
AUDIO RESEARCH CLASS 60	£3300	£1795
AUDIO RESEARCH LS15 Pre	£3000	£1495
AUDIO RESEARCH VT100 Mk1 Pwr	£5500	£2996
BEARD M70 Monoblocks	£1800	£996
CARY Pre-amp	£3500	£1296
CARY CAD300SE Monoblocks	£5000	£2998
CONRAD JOHNSON PV 10 Pre	£1600	£845
CONRAD JOHNSON PVII Pre	£1950	£998
CONRAD JOHNSON PREMIER 7B 2BOX PRE	10000	5698
CONRAD JOHNSON Prem 8 Monos	£16,000	£8995
CONRAD JOHNSON PV14L (Remote)	£2200	£1596
CONRAD JOHNSON PV12L	£2000	£1296
COPLAND 301 Pre	£1250	£798
COPLAND 504 Power	£1995	£995
CR DEVELOPMENTS Carmeto (Pre)	£900	£345
CROFT Micro	£295	£175
GAMMA Era Reference Pre	£4000	£1998
GAMMA HBC 'The Beastie'	£2000	£1298
HOVLAND HP 100 + MC Phono	£5750	£3496
JADIS DA30 Integrated	£3500	£1746
JADIS Defy 7 Power		£1998
LAMM LL2 PRE	4000	2198
LUMLEY Ref 120 Monoblocks	£3500	£1998
MANLEY REF VTL MONOBLOCKS	6000	2898
McINTOSH MC2200 Gold (New)	5500	2898
McINTOSH MC2000 Limited Edition	12500	9998
PAPWORTH TVA50	£2000	£998
PM COMPONENTS 845 mono,s	£3000	£1295
QUAD 22 Pre	£145	£145
QUAD 40II Pre/2 Monos	£4000	£2796

### ● Tuners Tape Misc

ACOUSTIC RESEARCH RD-06	£200	£48
BEYER DT990 Headphones	£200	£98
DBX 118 noise reduction unit	£250	£ 65
DENON DRM 22	£200	£55
DENON TU450L	£150	£ 65
DENON DR-MO7	£150	£65
DENON D250 Mini System	£1000	£295
Dynalab FT101A Tuner	1400	698
LEAK FM Stereophetic Tuner	£150	£75
Linn Pekin	545	376
LUXMAN ST50 (Rare)	£900	£555
LUXMAN T210	£295	£145
LUXMAN T50A	£695	£395
MAGNALAB 101 Tuner		POA
M.I.T. 330 1m pair Phono	£475	£338
M.I.T. 330 1.5m pair Phono	£520	£358
M.I.T. 750 3m pair Speaker / Spade	£1000	£678
MYRIAD T30 tuner	£250	£128
NAD 402 Tuner	£125	£ 68
NAIM NAT 01	£2500	£1298
NAIM NAT 03		£498
NAKAMICHI 480 black	£495	£196
NAKAMICHI 481Z (Silver)	£495	£166
NAKAMICHI 600	£400	£198

ACOUSTAT Spectra 1100	£1500	£578
ACOUSTIC ENERGY AE120	£800	£ 295
AJ ACOUSTICS Ref 1 (active sub)	£700	£495
APOGEE Caliper Signature	£3800	£1998
AUDIONOTE ESP (Inc stands)	£1850	£1098
AUDIO PRO B250 Sub	£1000	£356
AUDIOSTATIC ES300 Electrostatics	£1500	£578
B & W CM1 (white)	£195	£ 75
B&W P4 (Cherry but marked)	£700	£349
B & W Matrix 801	£5995	£1998
B & W CC6 (centre)	£200	£ 75
B & W FCM8 THX (R.L. & Centre)	£2400	£696
B & W DM1400 (Oak)	£495	£298
BKS 107 II Hybrid ribbons	£1750	£995
CASTLE Chester (Walnut)	£799	£378
CASTLE Howard S2	£1400	£498
CELESTION F20	£249	£148
CHORD LS 3/5/12a (Piano black)	1995	1448
CYRUS CL550 Incl. Stands		£378
DALI 400	£1000	£356
DCM Time Windows	£600	£245
DYNAUDIO SDA 2.8	£800	£ 378
ELAC CL310i	£850	£548
ENSEMBLE Primadonna RARE	£10,000	£2,995
GAMMA ACOUSTICS Epoch 5	£3000	£495
HALES Signature System 2	£4000	£798
HARBETH HL Monitor (Series II)	£500	£178
HECO 10 SH	£150	£88
HEYBROOK HB2R	£279	£125
HEYBROOK Heystack (Rosewood)	£500	£196
HEYBROOK Halos	£450	£278
IMPULSE H7 (Black)	£1000	£299
IMPULSE H6	£1200	£448
JBL TLX12	£250	£128
JBL Century 100 (scratched cabinets)	£750	£195
JPW AP3 (Black)	£295	£175
J.R. LPA Subwoofer inc. X-over	£600	£298
JWS Quinty (Bik)	£300	£175
KEF Reference Model 1 (Burr/walnut)	£1295	£695
KEF Ref 101/2	£500	£155
KEF Ref Mod 1	£1300	£798
KEF Reference 4 (Burr Walnut)	£4500	1998
KEF Ref Model 1.2 (black)	£1500	£898
KEF REF 105 (circa 1978)	£1000	£398
KEF Q35 (Black)	£350	£179
KEF Cube (EQ Box)	£700	£246
LEAK (orig.) Sandwich 12 ohm 12"	£400	£148
LEAK Mini Sandwich (8 & 15 ohm versions)	£ 98	£ 98
LEAK Sandwich 200 Black	£250	£ 95
LEAK Sandwich 2030 Black	£175	£ 75
LEAK Sandwich 250	£200	£ 95
LINN Nexus (Black + stands)	£500	£239
LINN Kaber (Rosewood) ACTIVE	£2500	£896
LINN KALEIDH ACTIVE (ROSE)	1225	796
LOCKWOOD 'Majors' Studio Monitors (15" Tannoy Dual Concentrics)	£1500	£898
MAGNA PLANAR 1c Imp	£1400	£595
MAGNA PLANAR MG 2.5 (Oatmeal)	£2950	£1498
MAGNAPLANAR MG3.3	3500	1796
MARTIN LOGAN Aeon (As new)	£3200	£2296
MARTIN LOGAN CLSII (walnut)	£6700	£2995

McINTOSH ML-1C Rare (circa '65)	£500	£298
MERIDIAN M3 Active	£1000	£ 298
MERLIN TSM-SE (Mint)	£1600	£998
MISSION 753 (Rosewood)	£799	£425
MISSION 77IE	£195	£135
MISSION 760SE (blk)	£149	£75
MISSION 773 (L.Oak)	£295	£195
MONITOR AUDIO R252 (Teak)	£195	£98
MONITOR AUDIO Monitor 2 (Rose)	£400	£195
MONITOR AUDIO Studio 12	£1200	£596
MONITOR AUDIO Studio 14 (Marked)	£900	£299
MORDAUNT SHORT Ci (centre)	£295	£145
MORDAUNT SHORT 40i	£650	£295
MORREL Bass Master Oak (Marked)	£1600	£599
MUSE 15" OAK SUBWOOFERS (2)	5000EA	2148EA
NAIM SBL	£1500	£898
PINK TRIANGLE Ventral	£1500	£750
PMC DB1 incl. stands (as new)	£795	£595
PROAC Tablette 2000	£649	£495
PROAC Super Towers	£1000	£595
PRO-AC Response 2 (cherry)	£1895	£998
PRO-AC Studio 125 (Cherry)	£1050	£695
PRO-AC Studio 200	2000	995
QNR Monitors (Black)	£1200	£369
QUAD ESL-63 (Teak)	£3000	£1295
QUAD 21L	695	495
RED ROSE R3	£3500	£2228
REGA XEL (Black)	£990	£640
REL STORM	750	498
REVOX Elegance (silver)	£450	£376
ROKSAN Ojan 3 Black	£995	£398
RUARK Broadswrd (Rosewood)	£700	£329
SNELL JII Inc. Stands		£378
SNELL J3 High Sensitivity Monitors	£770	£349
SONUS FABER Concertino's	£595	£475
SONUS FABER Grand Piano	£1695	£1196
SONUS FABER Amati	£11,800	£7996
SONUS FABER Electa Amator II Inc. ironwood stands	2800	1796
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TANNOY DC2000	£200	£ 95
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TRIANGLE Icare	£1500	£345
TRIANGLE Comete XS	£450	£295
WHARFDALE S19	£275	£ 95
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WILSON GRAND SLAM X1 (SERIES II PLATINUM)	69000	39998
WILSON BENESCH Act One (upgraded to incl. tactic drivers)	£6999	£4498
YAMAHA NS-C80	£120	£75
ZINGALI Colosseum Sub/Sat	770	568

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**CD players DACs & Transports**

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Audio Analogue Paganini CD X-demo	895	599
dCS Purcell Upsampler Non Firewire S/H	2999	1695
dCS Delius 24/192 DAC Non Firewire S/H	5999	2995
Krell KAV280CD x-demo	3999	2999
Mark Levinson No 360s x-demo	7495	3999
Naim CD2 Player S/H	1989	875
Primare D30.2 CD Player "B Stock"	1500	995
Rega Jupiter CD Silver X-dem	998	699
Rega Planet CD Black X-dem	498	349
Theta Pro Basic II DAC with Oscom/Balanced S/H	2990	1195
Theta Generation V Balanced S/H	6290	2499
Thule Spirit CD balanced O/P x-demo	900	449
Unison Research Unico Valve CD x-demo	1195	895

**Turntables Tonearms & Cartridges**

Clearaudio Solution/RB300 x-demo	1595	999
Kuzma Stabi/Stogi S Turntable New& Boxed	N/A	1299
Lehmann Audio Black Cube SE New& Boxed	650	449
McCormack Phono Stage New and Boxed	650	399
Rega Planar 3/Heed PSU/Bias S/H	630	269

**Preamplifiers**

Audio Analogue Bellini Remote Preamplifier X-demo	625	499
Krell PAM7 2 Box Preamplifier with Phono MM/MC S/H	N/A	599

**Amplifiers**

Audio Analogue Corelli Stereo Power Amplifier X-demo	695	479
Audio Analogue Donizetti Mono Power Amplifiers X-demo	1050	729
Audi Analogue Puccini Integrated X-demo	525	399
Bel canto EVO2i Integrated x-demo	3195	2399
EAR 509 Anniversary Balanced Valve Mono (New&Boxed)	5998	3999
Graaf Venticinque Valve Integrated S/H	1799	699
Primare A30.1 Integrated B stock new and boxed	1500	995
Red Rose Sprit Integrated x-demo	1000	649
Sirius D200 ( Now Gamut) S/H	3299	1599

**Loudspeakers**

Martin Logan CLSII Anniversary Electrostatics 7 months Old S/H	6700	4595
Martin Logan Aeries I Light Oak S/H	2298	1399
Naim Audio Intro Black Ash S/H	875	499
Rega Jura Floorstanding Black Ash S/H	450	199
Rega ELA Cherry X-demo	749	579
Target R1 Stands S/H	359	199
Target R2 Stands S/H	379	215
Verity Audio Fidelio Piano Lacquer x-demo	7995	3999
Velodyne DD12 Subwoofer x-demo	3000	2499

**Cables & Accessories**

BCD Opera Lux 3 Tier Table X-demo	950	499
Cardas Neutral Reference 1m RCA-BNC S/H	550	375
Madrigal CZ Gel 1.5m Balanced new&boxed	599	299
Madrigal MDC 2 1m Fatboy Digital cable new&boxed	319	159

Madrigal MDC 2 0.5m Fatboy Digital cable new&boxed	279	139
QED QNEXII 1m RCA-RCA Interconnect S/H	N/A	22
Siltech SQ58G3 2x4m Balanced Interconnect x-demo	2370	1499
Siltech SPX10 0.5m mains cable New Boxed	105	55
Siltech LS 25 2x 2.5m speaker cable x-demo	499	249
Spectral MH-330 15ft Interconnect RCA-RCA x-demo	800	499
Spectral MH-750 15ft Interconnect RCA-RCA x-demo	1400	799
Spectral MI-350 20 ft Speaker cable x-demo	2100	1199

**Tuners & Tape Decks, Power Supplies**

Audio Analogue Cherubini AM/FM Tuner X-demo	725	599
Magnum Dynalab FT-R Remote Switcher for FT101A/Etude (New&Boxed)	450	279
Primare T21 RDS Tuners "B Stock"	600	399

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Roksan Caspian CD	£400
Roksan Caspian integrated amplifier	£300

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Naim Nap 180 power amplifier. Mint. Boxed.	£ 799	Croft Vitale SP. Valve pre amp. Boxed. Cherry.	£ 350
Audionote valve amplifier 10W/ch. K4. Revalved	£ 450	Linn LK100 power amplifier. Excellent condition.	£ 395
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Marantz PM66SE KI signature integrated amplifier	£ 199	Nytech CP112 pre amplifier. Excellent condition.	£ 99
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CR Developments Carmenta Line valve pre-amp.	£ 450	Harmon Kardon HK1400 line amplifier. Mint/boxed	£ 199
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Quad 77 integrated amplifier. Mint. Boxed. Instr.	£ 399	Quad 77 remote control for amplifier etc. Cost £300	£ 149
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Quad 11s in various condition and prices	EPOA	Pioneer A400 integrated amplifier. Good cond.	£ 125
Leak Stereo 20 valve power amplifiers from....	£ POA	Harmon Kardon integrated valve amp. 110V. V rare	£ 299
Quad 303 power amplifiers from ...	£ 125	Arcam Alpha 2 amplifier. Mint. Boxed/instr	£ 95
Nakamichi CA5 pre-amplifier. Ex cond. Cost £750	£ 375	Nakamichi PA5 100W/CH power amp. Cost £1300	£ 650
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Thorens TD126 MK11 CW Dynavector MC&am	£ 249	Michell Synco and Alphason Xenon MCS tone arm	£ 399
Sarsui XP-99 turntable. Semi auto. Superb at only	£ 125	Sansui SR717 DD turntable. Top of the range deck	£ 149
Garrard 401. Boxed. With book. Mint condition.	£ 300	Thorens TD160 with thorens tone arm.	£ 95
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Snell J11 loudspeakers. Walnut. Original boxes.	£ 399	B&W DM4 speakers. Black finish	£ 85
Kef Cresta 2's. Cherry. Standmount. Mint & boxed	£ 80	Celestion F30 floorstanders. Mint. Boxed. Black ash	£ 129
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Heybrook Heylins. Black. Boxed. Ex condition	£ 199	Rogers LS55 speakers. Rosewood. Boxed. Ex cond	£ 199
Tannoy Chatsworth with 12 inch monitor golds.	£700	Mordant Short MS201 pearl. Brand new. Black	£ 169
Kef C20 Bookshelf monitor speakers in black	£ 60	Magneplaner MG 1.4 . Boxed with £400 oak stands	£ 999

#### OTHER ITEMS

Cyrus DAD 1.5 CD player with remote. Excellent.	£ 199	Phillips 101 top loading cd player. Collectable.	£ 125
Marantz CD63 top loader cd player. Collectable.	£ 125	Cyrus DAD3 Cd player with remote. Ex condition.	£ 275
Trio KT880L synthesiser tuner. AM/FM. Black.	£ 75	SME 3009 tonearms from.....	£ 125
Decca London international tone arm. New. Boxed. £ 175	£ 175	Marantz CD52 Cd player. Ex condition.	£ 79
Quad 77 RDS FM tuner. Mint. Boxed. Instructions	£ 399	Nakamichi CDP 2E CD player. Ex condition.	£ 250
Marantz SD275 twin cassette deck. Dolby B/C	£ 49	Technics SL-PG440A Mash CD player/remote.	£ 75
Aiwa AD-S750 Dolby B-C-S/HX pro cassette deck	£ 75	Technics SL-P5620A CD player/remote.	£ 75
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AUDIOQUEST LAPIS 1 METRE PAIR		£175
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**entries will be accepted on a postcard only**

# announcing the Linn Multichannel AV Experience 2004!

Here's your chance to attend one of the greatest hi-fi events of the year! Linn Products, in association with *Hi-Fi World* magazine, proudly present the Linn Multichannel AV Experience 2004.

Following on from the hugely successful Linn/*Hi-Fi World* LP12 vs. CD12 event of 2001, we're delighted to bring you a second special event, providing a spectacular multichannel music experience!

This will be a unique opportunity to hear one of the very best multichannel hi-fi systems ever made, in the comfortable surroundings of a fine London hotel. The set-up comprises the Linn Unidisk 1.1, Linn Kisto System Control and Linn Artikulat Multi-Channel Loudspeaker System - the very first UK public preview of the latter.

It will be your chance to hear what an ultra high end, state-of-the-art multichannel music system can really do with DVD-Audio, SACD and Compact Disc sources. You'll be able to compare and contrast the system's two-channel performance with its surround sound capability, and decide for yourself how much multichannel 'brings to the party'!

And more importantly perhaps, you'll be able to relax and enjoy some great music - including Beck, Barber, Clapton, Coltrane, Eminem, Gabriel, Linn Records, Mozart, Pink Floyd, Talking Heads, Who and Led Zeppelin (and much, much more) - in the congenial company of the Linn and *Hi-Fi World* teams.

The last Linn/*Hi-Fi World* event was a tremendous success - lots of fun was had by all as Linn staff including Ivor Tiefenbrun and Brian Morris, and the *Hi-Fi World* team including Noel Keywood and David Price, chatted informally with the 500 invited guests on matters analogue, digital, stereo, multichannel and more - over drinks and sandwiches. This time round, we hope to repeat the successful formula, and to take a closer look at multichannel too...

If you'd like to attend this unique event, all you have to do is send your name, address, telephone number and/or email address on a postcard to: **Linn Event, *Hi-Fi World* magazine, Unit G4, Argo House, Kilburn Park Rd. London NW6 5LF.** Due to the limited space, we can't guarantee you a place - tickets will be issued on a first come, first served basis, so we advise you to get writing now!

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**PLACE: LONDON VENUE TO BE CONFIRMED**



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Marantz CD6000 OSE	£155
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MYRAD CD10	£215
MYRAD CD20	£295
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Nagaoka CD NG7700[LINN]	£195

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**NAIM NAC52 Preamplifier & Supercap.** £2,495. Naim Prefix £195. Both Excellent. Tel: 020 8642 6516 Daytime Only. (Sep/1)

**NAIM AUDIO HiCap power supply,** olive green, 1998, unmarked mint condition, SNAIC lead, manual and box, £445 ono. Tel: 023 8090 5264 or 0795 2067738 (Sep/1)

**CYRUS III int amp,** Cyrus power amp 2x PSX-R power supplies mint condition and boxed cost £1700 sell £650. Tel: 01869 241 358 (Oxen) (Oct/1)

**PROAC STUDIO 125 floor** standing speakers, yew finish, excellent condition, superb sound £500 ono. Tel: 01525 854 652, Mob 07796 366 347 (Beds) (Sep/1)

**REL STRATA III active sub-**woofer. Cherrywood finish, perfect working condition, some fine scratches and one small nick on top. £350 inc delivery. Tel: 07754 976 443 or Email: magurry@supanet.com (Sep/1)

**PINK TRIANGLE**  
Anniversary SME arm, Pink Triangle Ventrical speakers, Sugden Bijou CD player, EAR 834P phono amp, DPA pre amp, power amp, best offers accepted. Tel: 0777 912 3411 (Oct/1)

**LEAK TROUGHLINE 3 Stereo** tuner and Stereo 30 amp together in teak sleeve. Tuner in original condition amp 1 channel down. £130 ovno. Tel: Peter 07780 786 437 (Hants) (Sep/1)

**QUAD 303 + 33 + FM3 tuner** £400. Marantz CD50 £60. Kef Concord speakers £50. Tel: 01689 856 606 (Sep)

**FOR SALE: Quad 99 pre and 909 power.** Excellent condition. Boxed, manuals, remote, links (£1650) asking £1250. Tel: 0131 664 5433 or Email: phillip@evans1952.freeserve.co.uk (Oct/1)

**LYNWOOD MAINS**  
Conditioners (two). The Advanced £50. The Mega £125. Nordost Silver Shadow digital interconnect 0.6mtr £225 ono. Tel: 01249 821 288 (Sep/1)

**WANTED: AUDIO ALCHEMY**  
Power Station 3 DAC power supply. Tel: 077 1254 1254 or Email: nut.comery@virgin.net (Sep/1)

## FROM AUGUST 2004 ISSUE

**AVANTGARDE UNO Horn** speakers £4500. Sonus Faber Cremona speakers £3500. Aloia PSTII.01i pre-amp, Aloia 15.01i power-amp 60+60 watts £1800. E.A.R. V20 integrated amplifier £1700. Tel: 020 8531 5979 or 9790 326 5205 (Aug/1)

**PAIR MONOBLOCK WAD**  
K5881 amps plus KLPP1 pre-amp £500 complete. Also STRDA50ES Sony digital surround receiver Rogers centre and surround speakers - offers. Tel: 01603 867 599 or Email: alan-karen.howard@mailbox.tv (Aug/1)

**TECHNICS SP-10MkII, RB-250,** plinth, Quad ESL-57, black, Quadropod stands, Revel M-22 Target-R stands, Thorens TD-166-VI, RB-250, Delphini Mk-1, Exposure XVII preamp, MF-MX preamp, Trichord Delphini Mk-2-NC, Pioneer F-91. Tel: 0117 955 6555 or 07979 514 450 (Aug/1)

**REGA PLANET II,** immaculate, boxed £250. Quad 34, 405, excellent, boxed, £180 each. Castle Richmond speakers, boxed as new £150. Cambridge P110 amplifier £55. Kef 104AB speakers £50. Tel: 01455 822 070 (Aug/1)

**LUMLEY REFERENCE 1.5**  
chrome valve preamp £250. AVI S2000 MP phono preamp £300. Wanted: Single Quad ESL57 under 16000 serial number. Tel: Tom 020 8986 1762 (Aug/1)

**CREEK 4330 Mk2 SE integrated** amp £300. Rotel stereo tuner RT-830AL £35. Aiwa 3 head cassette deck AD-F850 £35. Target Audio stand, 4 tier in black £25. All in excellent condition. Tel: 01274 418 322 (Bradford) (Aug)

**MICHELL ALECTO**  
monoblocks, 125 watts per channel, exceptional power and quality. Superb valve-like sound. Excellent condition. As new £995. Tel: 020 7263 0825 (Aug/1)

**CREEK A42 Power amplifier** 50+50w £100. Tel: 01442 874 749 (Berkhamsted) (Aug/1)

**ARCAM CD82T, Arcam Amp** 85, excellent condition little use, boxed, sell both together £400. 16 months old. Tel: 0118 375 0406 (Reading) (Aug/1)

**AUDIO RESEARCH SPII Mk2,** mint, boxed, manuals, full service and new valves 6 months ago. £2000 ovno. Fantastic two box pre-amp + Audio Research VT50 also boxed, manual etc. Little use £1900. Tel: Chris 020 8543 5531 evenings (Aug/1)

**NHT VT-2 Front speakers,** 48"Hx8"Wx18"D. VS-2 centre speaker. HDP2 dipole surround speakers, all black gloss laminate, excellent condition, new £2600+, £1100 ono. Tel: Paul 07753 200 936 evenings (London) (Aug/1)

**DPA Enlightenment DAC** £400. Trichord Pulsar Series One DAC £450. Nakamichi DR1 tape deck £400. Rotel RT990BX tuner £200. Sony DVP-S735D DVD player Region One £200. Tel: 01296 398166 or 0780 1909912 (Aug/1)

**SONY SCD-XB940 SACD** player £150. JVC digital VHS video recorder HM-DR10000 £350. Soundstyle four shelf four pillar stand £150. Soundstyle four shelf tripod stand £85. Tel: 01296 398166 or 0780 1909912 (Aug/1)

**VAN DEN HUL interconnect** cable (balanced) Model XLR Integration 0.8 metre, original box, very good condition £120. Tel: 01224 625 928 or Email: barmonte@aol.com (Aug/1)

**PINK TRIANGLE Cardinal** transport (new laser) £495. Da Capo four filters spares £495. Pye Mozart singe-ended pre/power amplifier, rare £395. Musical Fidelity A1 £100. Nytech 252XD tuner/amp £50. Tel: 01363 83072 (Aug/1)

**SHUNYATA POWERCORDS -** Buck Mamba £350. Viper 2 £480. Acoustic Zen Hologram II biwire 3M £650. Isolda DCT300 balanced interconnect £150. Nordost Shiva 2M powercord £170. Black Rhodium Super 25 3ft £45. Tel: 0131 443 7686 (Aug/1)

**Turntableworld - A selection from our stock**  
**Most of our turntable combinations come fitted with free cartridge**

Alphason	Sonata - ex, black	399
Alphason	Alcaeus - ex, add on power supply	249
AR	EB101/AR arm - vgc, black	99
Garrard	301/SME 3012 - recon unit in Martin Bastin plinth	749
Garrard	401 - nr mint motor unit	179
Garrard	401 - nr mint, boxed motor unit	249
Garrard	401 - ex, Plinthed c/w SME3009	299
Garrard	401 - ex, gorgeous Aphelion plinth	499
Heliuss	Scorpio - Ex, black/brass	149
Heybrook	TT2/RB300 - vgc/ex, heavyweight LP12 challenger	199
Linn	LP12/Lingo/Ekos/Troika - nr mint, black, boxed	1499
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Linn	LP12/Lingo/IttokLVII - nr mint, black, boxed	999
Linn	LP12/Valhalla/IttokLVII - nr mint, black, boxed	699
Linn	LP12/Armageddon/Aro - ex, afromosia	1799
Linn	LP12/Valhalla/Akito - vgc, black	599
Linn	LP12/Valhalla/LVX - vgc, black	479
Linn	Basik, LVX - vgc, black	199
Linn	Ittok 12" - ex, black, apparently one of only 20 made	999
Logic	Tempo Electronic/LVX - vgc	149
Michell	Gyrodec/RB300 - vgc, gyropower ps, Orbe platter, smoked case	999
Michell	Gyrodec SE/RB300 - ex, brand new arm	699
Michell	Orbe/RB300 - ex/ex, boxed	1399
Michell	Orbe - ex, smoked	1199
Michell	Orbe/SME309 - ex/ex, boxed	1699
Michell	Orbe/Wilson Benesch Act 2 - nr mint, boxed...Stunning!	1949
<b>Michell</b>	<b>Technoarm - Best Trade ins</b>	<b>ON DEM</b>
<b>Michell</b>	<b>Technodec - Best Trade ins</b>	<b>ON DEM</b>
<b>Michell</b>	<b>Gyrodec SE - Best Trade ins</b>	<b>ON DEM</b>
<b>Michell</b>	<b>Orbe SE/VC - Best Trade ins</b>	<b>ON DEM</b>
Micro Seiki	DDX1000 - ex, 70s wonder, multiarm capability	799
Mission	774 - ex, fab 80s tonearm	159
Musical Fidelity	XLPS v3 - ex display, nr mint	179
Musical Fidelity	XLP - nr mint	119
NAD	5120 - ex, wacky placky	79
<b>Origin Live</b>	<b>Rega Arm mods - Best Trade ins</b>	<b>ON DEM</b>
Pink Triangle	LPT/RB250/Reson - ex/ex,	379
Project	Debut - ex display, black, boxed	89
Project	Classic - ex display, cherrywood plinth, boxed	299
QED	R232 - good, Rega like deck with Helius type arm	99
Rega	Planar 2/RB250 - ex/ex	149
Rega	Planar 2/RB200 - ex, wood plinth original	119
Rega	Planar 3/RB300 - vgc/ex	179
Rega	Planar 78/RB250/Mono Cart - ex/ex	175
Revolver	Revolver/LVX - ex/ex	119
Roksan	Tabriz zi - nr mint	199
SME	309 - nr mint, boxed	479
Thorens	TD150 - great starter deck	69
Thorens	TD160 - vgc, smart silver model	149
Townsend	Elite Rock Mk2 - c/w plinth and lid, nr mint	499
Townsend	Elite Rock Mk2/Excalibur - c/w plinth and lid, nr mint	649
Transcriptors	Skeleton/Vestigal - ex/ex	799
Transcriptors	Satum/Vestigal - fair	499
<b>Trichord</b>	<b>Dino - Best Trade ins</b>	<b>ON DEM</b>
Voyd	Voyd - beautiful 3 motor deck, light ash, stunning	799
Voyd	Valdi - vgc, mahogany, fab twin motor deck	499
<b>Tape &amp; Tuners</b>		
Arcam	Delta 280FM - ex, black	79
Arcam	Alpha 7 - ex, black	99
Arcam	Alpha 8 - ex, black	149
Arcam	T21 - ex display, boxed, silver	179
Arcam	T61 - ex display, boxed, rare black	149
Cyrus	FM7 tuner - black, digital, presets, nr mint	229
Cyrus	Original 'Mission' tuner - vgc	99
Denon	TU260L tuner - ex, black, digital, presets	59
Marantz	ST4000 - ex display, boxed, black	99
Marantz	SD4050 - ex display, boxed, twin cassette, black	89
Nakamichi	580 cassette - nr mint, black	99
Nakamichi	BX125 - vgc, black	129
Ratel	RT02 - ex display, boxed, silver	199
Sugden	DTFM - ex, rare, matches A48mk3 etc	179
TAG McLaren	T20 - ex display, boxed	699
Teac	TX3000 tuner - ex, digital, presets	69
Teac	V1010 cassette - ex, 3 head	75
Technics	STG90L tuner - ex, digital, presets	89
<b>Digital CD, DVD etc</b>		
<b>Many more inexpensive CD players in stock</b>		
Arcam	Alpha 8 - nr mint, remote	199
Arcam	Alpha 8SE - nr mint, remote	349
Arcam	CD62 - nr mint, boxed, silver, remote	179
Arcam	CD72 - nr mint, silver, remote	279
B&O	CD3500 - ex, silver/black	279
Cyrus	Dad1 - nr mint, black, remote	199
Cyrus	Dad7 - nr mint, black, remote	399
Cyrus	PSX-R - nr mint, black	249
Kenwood	DP1100 - ex, v, underrated	89
Krell	CD-DSP - ex, clear and smoked lids, remote, stunning	1499
Marantz	CD60 - ex, remote	69
Marantz	CD46 - ex, remote	49
Marantz	CD63SE - nr mint, remote	99
Marantz	CD52SE - ex, remote	69
Marantz	DV4100 - nr mint, remote, boxed	99
Marantz	DV4100 OSE - nr mint, remote, boxed	129
Meridian	200 transport and matching dac - ex, superb combination	449
Meridian	200 transport - ex, Trichord mod, excellent	349
Micromega	Stage 4 - ex, sweet sounding machine	299
Micromega	Stage 2 - ex, smooth sound on a budget	199
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Musical Fidelity	X10D - nr mint	119
Myryad	T20 - black, nr mint, boxed, remote, bargain!	249
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Pioneer	CLD SB15 - Laserdisc, vcd, cd, PAL, NSTC	119
Roksan	Caspian - ex, silver	449
Sony	CDP333esd - ex, manual, remote	129
Sony	MDP850D - nr mint, remote, laserdisc, VCD, CD, PAL, NSTC	149
Teac	CDP4500 - ex, remote	89

Acoustic Energy	AE505 - ex display, superb floorstander	249
Acoustic Energy	AE505 - new sealed box, superb floorstander, were £800!!!	299
Acoustic Energy	AE1 - new tweeters, scruffy grilles	279
Acoustic Energy	AE1 mk2 - vgc, rosewood	379
Castle	Durham 900 - nr mint, larger bookshelf	149
Castle	Howard - ex, mid oak	549
Castle	Kendal - nr mint, new model in light ash	195
Celestion	5000 - vgc ribbon standmount	249
Celestion	7000 - fair/good, huge ribbon and twin bass bargain!	379
Celestion	DL6 - ex, black, boxed	75
Dynaudio	Audience 10 - ex,boxed, black	149
Epos	M15 - nr mint, light cherry, boxed	449
Epos	ES11 - fair, 80s classic	99
Epos	ES14 - nr mint, boxed 80s classic c/w dedicated stands	325
Gallo	5.1 - ex display, boxed, gorgeous!	999
Heybrook	HB100 - vgc, superb vfm	79
JPW	Sonata 8 - ex, boxed	59
KEF	Coda 8 - nr mint	80
KEF	Q3 - nr mint, dark cherry	199
Leak	2030 - nr mint	79
Linn	Kan - ex, boxed with stands	279
Mission	763i - ex, black floorstander, boxed	119
Mission	70 centre - ex display, boxed	69
Mission	77ci - ex display, boxed	99
Mission Cyrus	781 - ex, black larger bookshelf	99
Monitor Audio	S6 - nr mint, boxed	299
Monitor Audio	R852MD - scruffy, bobbing wood and stands	79
Monitor Audio	Studia Centre - ex display, boxed	299
Monitor Audio	R700MD - nr mint, black	149
Mordaunt Short	912 - ex display, boxed	149
Mordaunt Short	914 - ex display, boxed	199
Musical Technology	Kestrel SE - ex, ery pretty floorstander	149
NEAT	Critique - ex, walnut, boxed	299
NEAT	Mystique 2 - nr mint v, underrated floorstander, boxed, light ash	349
<b>NEAT</b>	<b>Petite - Best trade ins</b>	<b>ON DEM</b>
QED	Aria - ex display, boxed mini surrounds	39
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Rega	EL8 - fair, wood floorstander	119
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TDL	Near Field Monitor - nr mint, boxed, mahogany	79
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Wharfedale	Diamond 7.1 - ex, black	49
Wharfedale	Diamond 70th anniversary prototype!	
Wharfedale	rosewood box like Quad 111, the only pair in the world!!	199
Wharfedale	Pacific P130 - nr mint boxed, light cherry, excellent	299
Wharfedale	505.2 - nr mint boxed, black standmount	75

**Amplifiers**

Albary	AP3 passive pre - ex, capable little unit	139
Arcam	Alpha 7R - ex, as above with vfm	149
Arcam	Alpha 10 power - nr mint, boxed	349
Arcam	A65 - nr mint, boxed, remote, silver	179
Arcam	A65+ - ex display, boxed, remote, silver	199
Arcam	A85 - ex, remote, silver	425
Arcam	P75 - ex display, remote, silver	199
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Audiolab	8000S - nr mint	119
Audion	Silver Knights - Stunning boxed valve monoblocks	1199
Creek	CA5040 - ex, boxed	79
Cyrus	PSX-R - nr mint, black	249
Exposure	X integrated - nr mint, boxed, black	199
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Harman Kardon	PM655 - nr mint, variable capacitance phono stage	119
Krell	2x KMA100 - ex	2495
Leak	2100 - vgc, c/w 2300 tuner	99
Linn	Pretek - ex, black	149
Linn	LK1/Dirak - ex, black, mm/mc exceptional vfm	199
Magnum Ref.	MP300 & 2x MF125 - ex/ex, mm/mc, fabulous!	479
Marantz	PM66SE Ki - nr mint, boxed	149
Marantz	PM6010 Ki Sig - nr mint boxed, black	199
Marantz	1072 - vgc, champagne finish	99
Marantz	SR4200 - ex display, boxed black av amp	149
Meridian	605s - ex pair boxed monoblocks	795
Meridian	505s - ex, pair monoblocks	949
Mission	Cyrus Two and PSX - gc, nextel finish	229
Musical Fidelity	E100 - vgc, remote, piano black	199
NAD	352 - ex display, boxed, titanium	249
NAD	302 - nr mint, great value	79
NAD	3020i - nr mint, renowned entry level integrated	119
Pioneer	A400 - ex, phono	199
Primare	A30.1 - nr mint, boxed	799
Primare	A20 - nr mint integrated	379
Quad	405/2 - nr mint, grey	279
Quad	405/2 - good, brown	225
Quad	405 - nr mint, early brass heatsink version	199
Quad	405 - ex, standard brown version	179
Quad	303 - vgc	99
Quad	33/303 - nr mint	175
QED	C300/P300 - Pre/Power, nr mint, proverbial steal at	179
Rega	Luna - nr mint, black, boxed, better than a Brio or Mira	179
Raksan	Caspian - ex, silver	449
Rotel	RB03 power - ex display, boxed silver	199
Shearpe	Phase 2 - nr mint, boxed, blue marble styling	279
Sony	STR-DB940 av amp - vgc, DTS 5.1 etc	199
Sugden	AU41 pre/power - ex, black	499
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Pure	Evoke - ex display	69
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## FROM AUGUST 2004 ISSUE

**TIVOLI MODEL** One radio white mint £50. Pure Evoke Elgar DAB £60. Cable pair VdH The First Classic £90. Accuphase T109 tuner, quite marked! hence £250. Tel: weekdays 020 8871 5089, othertimes 020 8871 2345 (Aug)

**CAIRN NANDA** Face Nord pre-amp £275. Sony CDPX3000ES player £175. STS3000ES tuner £75. Teac P700 transport plus D700 DAC £350. Videologic DRX601ES DAB tuner £90. Tel: weekdays 020 8871 5089, othertimes 020 8871 2345 (Aug)

**RESOLUTION AUDIO** Opus 21 full guarantee, just purchased, house move forces sale (£2850) accept £2525 ono. Quad 22L birdseye maple (£899), accept £710 ono. Both items mint, boxed complete. Demo Yorkshire. Tel: 07821 095771 (Aug)

**CROWN DC300A** Classic power amplifier in superb original condition, ex Greenwich Audio, 2x 150 watts into 8ohms at £450. Tel: 07932 664 480 (Sep)

**AUDIOQUEST CLEAR +** speaker cable 1.5m pair factory terminated silver and OFC Hyperlitz design, well reviewed. I've moved over to a Sugden/Spendor single wire combo. £230 (£650) Also wanted: Pink Triangle lid. Tel: 07931 366 860 (Aug)

**EXPOSURE VI/II/VIII** amplifiers £395. AR Legend, Linn LVX & A&R P77 £195. Nakamichi CR2e £125. Rotel RT824 tuner £45. Mission DAD7000 £45, all ono. Tel: 07793 117 383 (Surrey) (Aug)

**RUARK EQUINOX** speakers with dedicated stands which include external crossovers and bi-wire terminals. Rare chance to buy these lovely speakers. Mint condition in makers boxes, £750 ono (over £2000 new) Tel: 023 8073 8935 (Aug)

**PIONEER PD91** Reference CD player, immaculate condition £275. Audiovalve Assistant 35wpc valve amp, pristine condition £750. Tel: 01252 659 058 after 6pm (Aug)

**RED ROSE Spirit** system, amp ribbon speakers, 30 foot cable £700. Rotel RT02 tuner, R/C, £120. Celestion A1 speakers, cherry + stands £350. First Ultimate interconnects £120. Tel: 0121 246 0486 (Aug)

**RUARK TALISMAN II** loudspeakers, cherry finish, excellent condition, superb all rounders, easy amplifier load, £299 ovno. Dual 505/3 turntable, Trio 3030 amplifier - offers. Tel: 01483 834 906 (Guildford) (Aug)

**PROJECT SILVER PHONO** Speedbox £99. Mission M72 beech £59. Denon 250SE £49. Denon TU260L II £49. Sony CD930E £129. Musical Fidelity X-LP £89. Linn Basik plus arm + K9 £89. Tel: 07989 078 753 (South Yorks) (Aug)

**MUSICAL FIDELITY A3.24** 192k upsampling DAC £390. Northstar StarDac 24/96k DAC £150. X-Cans V.3 £190. Trichord digital output board/PSU £100. 3.2m pair TeaTrack bi-wire terminated £60. Collection only. Tel: 0151 608 4481 (Wirral) (Aug)

**ORTOFON ROHMANN** cartridge (£1150) £365. 1/2m AudioQuest Diamond (£389) £135. 1m AudioSynthesis SilverBluesQ (£140) £70. Both solid silver + Teflon. Various mains cables £40. Tel: 07958 944 424 (Cleveland area) (Aug)

**ELECTROHOME MARQUEE** 9501Acon projector. HD-GT17 lens. HDTV module. Extron 109xi VGA-UXGA interface. Faroudja VP400AU Quadrupler. Total cost £63,000. Presale specialist/manufacturer overhaul. Excellent condition. £14,750. Tel: 01945 463 077 5.30pm - 8.30pm (Aug)

**AVI SERIES 21, M.C.4.** Reference CD player, boxed, mint condition, 2 1/2 years old, very little use. £400. Tel: 01502 518 938 (Aug)

**DENON RECEIVER, CD** Player, cassette deck, F101 pair of speakers, boxed, £400. Tel: 01903 722 564 (Aug)

**AVANTGARDE UNO** Horn speakers £4500. Sonus Faber Cremona speakers £3500. Aloia PSTII.01i pre-amp, Aloia 15.01i power-amp 60+60 watts £1800. E.A.R. V20 integrated amplifier £1700. Tel: 020 8531 5979 or 9790 326 5205 (Aug)

**LUMLEY REFERENCE 1.5** chrome valve preamp £250. AVI S2000 MP phono preamp £300. Wanted: Single Quad ESL57 under 16000 serial number. Tel: Tom 020 8986 1762 (Aug)

**PAIR MONOBLOCK WAD** K5881 amps plus KLPP1 pre-amp £500 complete. Also STRDA50ES Sony digital surround receiver Rogers centre and surround speakers - offers. Tel: 01603 867 599 or Email: alan-karen.howard@mailbox.tv (Aug)

**CREEK 4330 Mk2 SE** integrated amp £300. Rotel stereo tuner RT-830AL £35. Aiwa 3 head cassette deck AD-F850 £35. Target Audio stand, 4 tier in black £25. All in excellent condition. Tel: 01274 418 322 (Bradford) (Aug)

**ARCAM CD82T, Arcam Amp** 85, excellent condition little use, boxed, sell both together £400. 16 months old. Tel: 0118 375 0406 (Reading) (Aug)

**AUDIO RESEARCH SPII Mk2**, mint, boxed, manuals, full service and new valves 6 months ago. £2000 ovno. Fantastic two box pre-amp + Audio Research VT50 also boxed, manual etc. Little use £1900. Tel: Chris 020 8543 5531 evenings (Aug)

**MICHELL ALECTO** monoblocks, 125 watts per channel, exceptional power and quality. Superb valve-like sound. Excellent condition. As new £995. Tel: 020 7263 0825 (Aug)

**REGA PLANET II**, immaculate, boxed £250. Quad 34, 405, excellent, boxed, £180 each. Castle Richmond speakers, boxed as new £150. Cambridge P110 amplifier £55. Kef 104AB speakers £50. Tel: 01455 822 070 (Aug)

**NHTVT-2** Front speakers, 48"Hx8"Wx18"D. VS-2 centre speaker. HDP2 dipole surround speakers. all black gloss laminate, excellent condition, new £2600+, £1100 ono. Tel: Paul 07753 200 936 evenings (London) (Aug)

**CREEK A42** Power amplifier 50+50w £100. Tel: 01442 874 749 (Berkhamsted) (Aug)

**VAN DEN HUL** interconnect cable (balanced) Model XLR Integration 0.8 metre, original box, very good condition £120. Tel: 01224 625 928 or Email: barmonte@aol.com (Aug)

**ARCAM CD82T, Arcam Amp** 85, excellent condition little use, boxed, sell both together £400. 16 months old. Tel: 0118 375 0406 (Reading) (Aug)

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## NEW RELEASES

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A Girl Called Eddy	A Girl Called Eddy	£15.90
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Bees	Free The Bees	£15.90
Bob Dylan	Live 1964(Bootleg 6) 200g	£77.95
Dido	Life For Rent 200g	£26.90
DJ Shadow	Live In Tune & On Time	£14.90
Hives	Tyrannosaurus Hives	£TBC
Hope Of The States	The Lost Riots	£15.90
Kings Of Convenience	Riot On An Empty Street	£15.90
Mull Historical Society	This Is Hope	£TBC
Orbital	Blue Album	£16.90
Ordinary Boys	Over The Counter Culture	£12.90
Polyphonic Spree	Together We're Heavy	£TBC
Razorlight	Up All Night	£12.90
Reuben	Racecar Is Racecar Backwards	£12.90
Sarah McLachlin	Afterglow 200g	£TBC
Sigur Ros	Ba Ba Ti Ki Di Do (Mini LP)	£5.50
Sonic Youth	Sonic Nurse	£14.90
The Cure	The Cure	£17.90
Warren Zevon	The Wind (Now In Stock!)	£19.90
Wilco	A Ghost Is Born	£15.90

## ALBUM OF THE MONTH

### SECRET MACHINES "NOW HERE IS NOWHERE"

Double Gatefold White Vinyl – Limited Edition £13.90

### NEW ROCK, POP AND AUDIOPHILE REISSUES::

Art Blakey	Moanin' – Mono 200g (Classic)	£TBC
Eddie Henderson	Comin' Through	£15.90
Elvis Presley	Elvis At Sun	£10.90
Black Sabbath	Never Say Die / Live Evil	£TBC
Howlin Wolf	The London Sessions	£TBC
Humble Pie	Rockin The Filmore (Classic)	£TBC
Ian & Sylvia	Four Strong Winds	£26.90
James Brown	Soul On Top 1969 (Verve)	£TBC
John Lennon	Plastic Ono Band (Mobile Fidelity)	£26.90
Nina Nastasia	Dogs	£12.90
Patricia Barber	Café Blue (3 x 45 RPM) Mobile Fidelity	£TBC
Pete Townsend	Who Came First (Classic Records)	£TBC
Sam Cooke	Wonderful World Of (Get Back)	£13.90
Status Quo	Ma Kelly's Greasy Spoon (Earmark)	£14.90
Wimble Winch	Atmospheres	£17.90
Yardbirds	Early Yardbirds (Get Back)	£13.90

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## SALE LIST

### NEW SALE

ARCAM ALPHA 7R AMP	£280.00	£189.00	D
IMERGE M1000 H/D Sound server	£1500.00	£0095	D
ARCAM DV88 DVD PLAYER	£1,000.00	£679.00	D+N
ARCAM FMJ A22 AMP	£1,100.00	£679.00	D
ARCAM FMJ A22 Inc DAVE AC3/DTS processor	£1,850.00	£895.00	N
AUDIO RESEARCH LSI6 PRE AMP - BLK	£3,500.00	£2,195.00	D
CELESTION - C2 - Floorstanders	£499.00	£299.00	D
CELESTION CI - Compact speakers	£199.00	£114.00	D
CYRUS 5 AMPLIFIER	£500.00	£329.00	D+N
CYRUS 7 AMP	£700.00	£479.00	D+N
CYRUS AV MASTER - PROCESSOR	-	£100.00	D
CYRUS DVD7	£1,000.00	£599.00	D
SUGDEN Bijou system (Pre/Power/CD - no spks)	£2647.00	£1795.00	D
AVANCE TECHNOLOGIES Active Subwoofer	£1200.00	£695.00	N
MARTIN LOGAN SCENARIO	£2,498.00	£1,629.00	D
Musical fidelity XCan V2 new	£129.00	£89.00	N
MERIDIAN DSP1500 Subwoofer	£1350.00	£895.00	D
MERIDIAN 556 - 2 CH POWER AMP	£995.00	£649.00	D
MERIDIAN 556 Power amp	£995.00	£595.00	D
MERIDIAN 562v.2 Controller	£1,500.00	£995.00	D
MERIDIAN 568.2 mm Smartlink (as new)	£4,305.00	£2,995.00	D
MERIDIAN 598 DVD Player smartlink (as new)	£3,195.00	£2,395.00	D
LINN Kairn (brilliant PSU) Pre Amp	£1400.00	£ 795.00	D
LINN ESPEK	£2500.00	£1695.00	D
MISSION 78 AS Active sub (new)	£700.00	£450.00	D
MISSION 780 - ROSEWOOD	£300.00	£219.00	D
MISSION 783 - BEECH (Good condition)	£1,000.00	£599.00	D
Denon DVDA11	£1699.00	£1295.00	N
MUSICAL FIDELTY XA100R - INT AMP	£900.00	£599.00	N
PROCEED AVP PROCESSOR.VGC/LIGHT USE	£4,700.00	£1995.00	D
PROCEED PMDT DVD PLAYER.VGC/LIGHT USE	£5,495.00	£2495.00	D
REDROSE Valve system (amp & speakers)1yr old	£10,000.00	£3,995.00	SH
SONUS FABER SIGNUM SPEAKERS	£1,250.00	£799.00	D
VIENNA MALHER (Beech)	£6000.00	£3295.00	D
TAG MCLAREN DPA32R (Digital pre inc DAB)	£1,990.00	£1,189.00	D
TRICHORD GENESIS CD PLAYER	£500.00	£150.00	D
VIENNA BEETHOVEN Speaker (Beech)	£2,500.00	£1,750.00	D
VIENNA MOZART Speakers (Beech)	£1,500.00	£1,050.00	D
VIENNA WALTZ centre Speaker (Beech)	£500.00	£350.00	D
YAMAHA HD1000 Hard Disc Recorder	£699.95	£500.00	D

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FROM AUGUST 2004 ISSUE

## PRIVATE SALE -

Reason for sale - thinking of emigrating.

### SPEAKERS Price guide

LEAK. 20-75 speakers choice of two pairs, immaculate, restored condition, they stand me in for £1000 a pair so substantial offers please, for these magnificent, superb sounding speakers. Warning they are big!

LEAK. 20-60s These speakers are in first class condition, in original boxes and wrapping including leaflets and instructions. £120.

LEAK. 20-30s choice of two pairs, £75.

### BOSTON ACOUSTICS.

A40 originals, £50.  
 TANNOY CHEVIOTTS. rebuilt dual concentrics, cabinets a bit scruffy. £250.

J.B.L. MODEL 431 I. professional control monitors. in BBC grey. £250.

MISSION. 710s. rebuilt drive units complete with original box instructions, and home made stands. £75.

PHILLIPS. 3 way hybrids, £25.  
 Large, Czechoslovakian 3 way speakers, in bits, interesting project! £offers.

WHARFEDALE. Ditton 2 or 3, one only, £10.

### CASSETTE DECKS

TEAC. V 870. 3 head, same as V 970, but without dbx. complete with box and book. £80.

TEAC. V 880 RX. dual autoreverse, top of the range, box & book. £80.

DENON. DR-M 44 HX. 3 head, box & book. £80.

DENON. DR-M 33 HX. 3 head, box & book. £80.

DENON. DR-M 20. 3 head, box & book. £75.

DENON. DR-M 10.HX 2 head £70.

TRIO. KX 780. 3 head, £80.

AIWA. WX 220. dual 2x hi-speed dubs both sides at once. £90.

MARANTZ. CP 430. 3 head PROFESSIONAL portable. £270.

### TURNTABLES

THORENS. TD 125 with very special modified S.M.E. arm, straight titanium arm, and ball

or roller bearing pivot.  
 Audiotechnica AT-F5/ OCC. cartridge, in nice possibly S.M.E. plinth with lid. knocks spots off Linn!! £275.

THORENS. TD 150. Thorens arm no lid, model Linn based on. Rega RB 300, arm available if required. as is £75.  
 GARRARD.401. in S.M.E. plinth, S.M.E. 3009, arm Shure V15 cartridge, superb condition. £350.

### TUNERS.

DENON. TU260L. choice of two both mint with book. £70.

HITACHI. FT5500 mk2. £70.

HITACHI. FT4500. £60.

LEAK. 2300. £45.

LEAK. Troughline mk 1 needs sorting. £25.

LEAK. Troughline mk 2 choice of two or three some working some not, prices vary accordingly. a good one £70.

LEAK. Troughline mk3 a good one £65.

LEAK. Troughline mk3 stereo. a good one £100.

LEAK. Stereopathic! never bothered to find out if this works! £15.

ROGERS. Ravensbrook. not sure this one works. £15.

TRUVOX. choice of two surprisingly good sound! £25.

TELETON. T300 goes with A400 amp. The pair £25.

PIONEER. SX535 Receiver-amplifier. nice. £65.

### AMPLIFIERS

LEAK. TL12 point one. pair of genuine BBC in BBC grey, new GEC KT66s interesting history, need reassembly £2750.

LEAK. TL12 point one plus. in gold, all genuine Mullard valves except EF86s which are GEC. superb condition £450.

LEAK. TL12 point one plus. one only graphite, mint! as above. £200.

LEAK. TL25 point one plus. in graphite, All Mullard valves including EL34s except EF 86s, GEC. condition as gold TL12s above. £600.

LEAK. point one mk 1 preamp mono, no front face, condition as seen, pot luck if it works! rarity value only. £30.

LEAK. point one plus preamps, various. good one, £30.

LEAK. point one varislope preamps various mono & stereo. £30.

LEAK. stereo 30. solid state

integrated amp good working condition. £30.

LEAK. srereo 30 plus. choice of two, good working condition, in wooden cases, £40.

QUAD. 405 mk2 slightly modified for studio work, mint, box, & instructions. £250.

TOSHIBA. SY335. preamp. £55.

TRIO. KA 2000A. small integrated amp. £35.

NAD. 3020. integrated amp £75.

B.G.H. Systems 250. power amp, professional studio power amp with hi-fi quality. £200.

AUDIOLAB. 8000 P. power amp. mint, box & book £450.

AUDIOLAB. 8000 C. pre-amp. mint, box & book. £400.

TELETON. A 400. integrated, goes with T 300 tuner above, the pair £25.

PIONEER. SX 535 receiver. £65.

THOMANN. T. Amp. TA 2400 PROFESSIONAL PA POWER

AMP. flight-cased new only used three times, 2X 1200 watts into 4 ohms. excellent. £425

### OTHER PROFESSIONAL GEAR

T AMP. TA2400. with book. £425

THOMANN. The Box. PA500P. speakers, with soft cases, only used three times, excellent

sound quality. with boxes & book. £450

BEHRINGER. Eurorack UB 2442-FX Pro rack mounted

mixing desk with built in effects. also only used three

times. with microlight, box & book. £335

BEHRINGER. Ultracurve pro. New! box and books. £163

TECHNICS. 31 band stereo graphic equaliser. nice bit if kit, all sliders have individual l.e.ds that

light up when switched on. £125

FLIGHT-CASE. for above, Eurorack, ultracurve, and tech-

niques EQ, including rack-light and drawer. £195

COMPLETE PACKAGE. mounted in flight-case as is now. £750

### MICROPHONES

A.K.G. D3700s 2off, new never been out of the boxes. each, £70.

CALREC. CM 1050. studio microphones, just been fully

reconditioned, as new. 6 off in wooden boxes, phantom power

supply available. each. £110

CALREC. phantom power supply for above. £50.

COMPLETE PACKAGE. above, i.e. PPU+6 mics. £650

SONY. ECM77S. lavallier microphone, as new box & book. £100

SONY. ECM 969. stereo microphone, in original case. £55.

MICROPHONE. stnds, each £15.

MICROPHONE. cables, from each £6.

### MIXERS

YAMAHA. EMX 300 stereo powered mixer, 12 mic/line in 4

out plus loads of other ins and outs 250 watts into 4 ohms,

good condition, church use only, never giked! good quality

professional bit of kit this. £450

SAMICK. SM 1200 mixer, 12-2-1. SIMPLE useful mixer. £100

DYNAMIX. 6-2 mixer, £50

REALISTIC. 6-2 mixer, £35

SPEAKER cables. various Offers.

### MISCELLANEOUS

TARGET. wall mounted turntable stand. as new boxed, £65

TARGET. 2tier hi-fi stands X 3 each:- £65

TARGET. low single tier stands X 2 each £65

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EQUINOX HEAD AMP MC LPHIOS ARM MK1 £299.00  
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AUDIONOTE TT1, ORIGIN LIVE RB300 £260.00  
SYSTEM DECK LIX WITH LINN LXX ARM £199.00  
THORNS TD150 £70.00  
LINN LP12 BASIC PLUS ARM IN SHELPHI £60.00  
MANTICORE WITH ARM & AUDIO TECHNICA CARTRIDGE, BLACK ASI £299.00  
NAD S120 - NEW GOLDRING ELAN CART £125.00

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AUDIO RESEARCH L57 LINE PRE £699.00  
RAIPAPORT - Russ Address modified £199.00  
BALANCED AUDIO TECHNOLOGY VK31 £299.00  
GATE VALVE PRE NEW £199.00  
HATLER PRE £120.00  
WATSLI ATOM LINE VALVE PRE-AMP £499.00  
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ROGERS RAVENSBROOK £35.00  
ROGERS MASTER EXCELLENT £599.00  
QUAD II MONO BLOCS GEC KT66's £499.00  
GATT'S 500B PUSH PULL SEE WEB £2,999.00  
VA 700MKII EL 34 PUSH PULL INTEGRATED £299.00  
ARION ELECTRA £399.00  
SHANLING POWER AMPS (SEE WEB SITE) £2,000.00

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QUAD 33 £90.00  
QUAD 405 £249.00

CRIMSON 630C MONO BLOCS & PRE AMP £1,199.00  
ARCAM 75 WITH REMOTE VGC £75.00  
QUAD 306 VGC £199.00  
MUSICAL FIDELITY L10 - EXCELLENT £150.00

**TUNERS, CASSETTE DECKS ETC.**

QUAD FM3 £99.00  
QUAD AM3 £99.00  
YAMAHA KA480 CASSETTE DECK £80.00  
YAMAHA KA500 CASSETTE DECK £85.00  
YAMAHA CT710 TUNER £45.00

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SHANLING CD THE HDCD (SEE WEB SITE) £1,650.00  
SHANLING SC D 1200 SACD EX DEMO £1,600.00  
SHANLING SC D 1200 SACD (SEE WEB SITE) £2,150.00  
MUSICAL FIDELITY A1 CD PLAYER £450.00  
MUSICAL FIDELITY 160 CD PLAYER £150.00  
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 OCTOBER 2004 ISSUE - 5TH AUGUST 2004  
 NOVEMBER 2004 - 8TH SEPTEMBER 2004

## THE BLUE NILE

### High 2004

**S**o here, finally, we have songs 25 to 33 of The Blue Nile's album track canon. The gap between 'Peace At Last' and this, their fourth album has stretched to eight years, but as they have repeatedly proved in the past, the end result always justifies the wait...

Although some of the delays could be put down to business intrigues (hopefully now resolved with the band installed at Sanctuary Records) a large part of the cause is the band's legendary perfectionism – the whole ethos is best summed up in this Paul Buchanan quote from the press release, "*The thing is, I write a lot of bad songs, hundreds of them, but because we have such high quality control, they never see the light of day. It's only the really good ones that make it, I know as well as anyone when the hairs on the back of my neck move.*"

There is so much mystery in the music and history of The Blue Nile, that reading pages of this press release explaining the background to this album risks that 'Director's Commentary' effect of diminishing the magic – thankfully in this case the information actually enlightens on the genesis of the record.

The notes reveal that the first three tracks were actually composed along with the ten tracks from its predecessor, during a peripatetic phase in the mid nineties when the band wrote songs in rented accommodation all around the world. This record makes 'Peace At Last' feel like a slight diversion into more conventional instrumentation and song structures, as from opener 'Days Of Our Lives' onward there are reminders of the tones and textures of their first album. The lyrics feature the now familiar musings of lost individuals on the striving for, and the difficulties of, companionate love and the rearing of family.

'I Would Never' is the favourite of band manager Ed Bicknell, and is likely to be the single from the



album. It's a simple song of devotion to a partner, hung on similarly simple synth beds and beautiful guitar arpeggios, with a low-mixed hint of the typical clipped Telecaster rhythm from Buchanan. 'Broken Loves' is a deliberately inscrutable piece with a great introductory spoken part which echoes the vocal. A hammering piano throughout builds a pent-up urge for the song to peak, but it doesn't really even feature a chorus – the track plateaus with a simple guitar solo, before the outro sees Buchanan's wail play around the soundstage while an exultant trilling single note synth part sits over big bass pads.

'Because Of Toledo' is one of the many driving songs on the album. Tape noise is retained as in many of their recordings and combines pleasingly with Buchanan's gorgeously rich and wistful vocal. A trumpet doubles the vocal beautifully as Buchanan sings of 'chasing rainbows back to Toledo'. 'She Saw The World' would be my choice for the single as it has the most conventional structure and is the most up-tempo track. There is a pop song trying to get out here but the mix is perversely non-commercial, with the drums sounding boxed in the centre, while frenetic synth pulses, hand-claps and funky guitar are suppressed in the mix. It is a classic PB observational song.

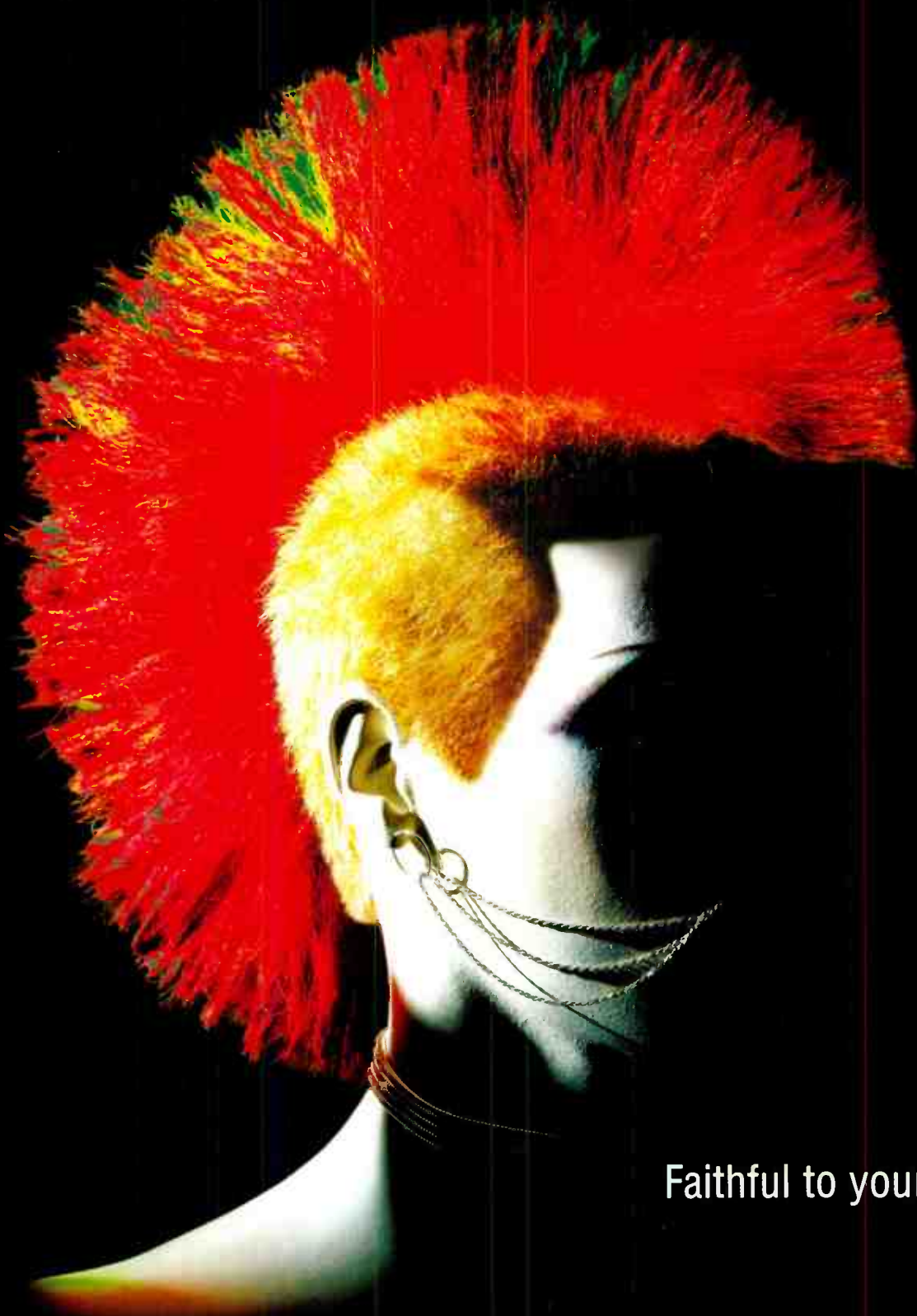
The title track is a mid-tempo piano ballad with an old-fashioned burbling synth bass part. Much like the heartrending 'Happiness' B-side

'Wish Me Well' this is a paean to the struggle for hope and positivity in a relationship, although expressed in more general, gnomic terms here. 'Soul Boy' contains less yearning and more confidence than usual in its sure declarations of fidelity. A solid big drum sound in the centre of the mix is adorned with distant low funk guitar stabs and synth intimations. The vocal features subtle self-harmonising and then counter-parts, before the fade with massive kick drum and the minimal bass grows its way out.

'Everybody Else' is a return to the more blurry vocal style of the preceding album. It is an "I woke up good this morning" mantra of positive individuality, over a very typical Blue Nile band arrangement. Finally we close with the epic 'Stay Close', reputedly a sequel to 'Family Life', which has a more orchestrated feel. Buchanan returns to his more accustomed impassioned imploring style.

The real magic of The Blue Nile is the depth of feeling Buchanan is able to convey with so few, sometimes seemingly random words. It is a rare thing to be able to say 'more of the same' and have it constitute the highest, rather than faint praise. The impossibly high songwriting quality control and the level of attention to sonic invention and detail of The Blue Nile has been maintained. As the gap seems to extend by a year each time, prepare yourselves to welcome them back with open arms in 2013! **PC**





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