

HI-FI WORLD

FEBRUARY 2019

UK £4.50

www.hi-fiworld.co.uk

FREE READER CLASSIFIED ADS IN THIS ISSUE!



VINCENT CD-S7
hybrid cd player



AUDIOLAB 6000A
integrated amplifier



McINTOSH MT2
turntable

ROHDE & SCHWARZ
MEASUREMENT




COMPETITION
WIN A PAIR
OF ACOUSTIC
ENERGY AE109
LOUDSPEAKERS
WORTH £500!
(UK ONLY)

B&W 603
loudspeakers

iFi xDSD DAC
AUDIOLAB 8000A FEATURE
ZMF ATTICUS HEADPHONES
FiiO M9 HI-RESOLUTION PLAYER

FEBRUARY 2019



9 770961 766208



FIVE PAGES OF LETTERS - THE BEST WINS A KEF EGG WIRELESS DIGITAL MUSIC SYSTEM! (UK ONLY)



It's got to be Perfect

Your music deserves quality cables



We go to great lengths (and precise tolerances) to produce our class-leading cables. From solder upwards, every component is chosen for optimum performance.

At the higher end of things, we build strictly to order. Every Signature, Sarum T and ChordMusic product is tested visually, electronically and audibly, before being signed-off by our senior technicians.

All this care and attention helps maintain our international reputation for realistically priced audiophile interconnects and speaker cables - featuring our unique advanced screening, Super ARAY conductor technology, Taylon® insulation and our latest ChordOhmic connectors - backed-up with over 30 years' experience.

Designed and built in England by music lovers since 1985. Enjoyed by music lovers all over the world.

Demonstration cables available from all good Chord Company retailers. Find your nearest at: www.chord.co.uk



"the difference will be immediately evident, such is the transparency of the interconnects and loudspeaker leads."

Chord Signature Range
Hi-Fi World Dec 2015



"It's rare that something truly different comes along in the world of loud-speaker cables - but Chord's new Sarum T is just that."

Chord Sarum T Speaker Cable
Hi-Fi World Dec 2017

THE
CHORDTM
COMPANY

EDITOR

Ncel Keywood
e-mail: editorial@hi-fiworld.co.uk

DESIGN EDITOR

Faiza Chunara
tel: +44 (0) 20 8206 6018
e-mail: adproduction@hi-fiworld.co.uk

PRODUCTION EDITOR

David Ncble
tel: +44 (0) 20 8206 6017
e-mail: classifieds@hi-fiworld.co.uk

SALES MANAGER

Louise Palfrey
mcb: +44 (0) 7917 047 548
e-mail: louise@hi-fiworld.co.uk

ADVERTISING EXECUTIVE

Jcanna Holmes
mcb: +44 (0) 7958 602 347
e-mail: jcanna@hi-fiworld.co.uk

PUBLISHER

Ncel Keywood
e-mail: publisher@hi-fiworld.co.uk

FREE READERS CLASSIFIEDS

tel: +44 (0) 20 8 206 6017
e-mail: classifieds@hi-fiworld.co.uk

SUBSCRIPTIONS

tel: +44 (0) 1442 820 580
fax: +44 (0) 1442 827 912
e-mail: hifiworld@webscribe.co.uk

PHOTOGRAPHY

David Ncble
tel: +44 (0) 20 8206 6017

WRITERS

Paul Rigby, Jon Myles, Martin Pipe,
David Tull.



Everything from nothing – or so it seems. We expect a hi-fi system to be big, something with a few decent control knobs fit for a human hand and a bit of biological intervention! FiiO's M9 portable player I review this month – see p25 – starts to call this into question. It does most things except replay LP. You might think it won't drive loudspeakers, but it will drive powered Bluetooth loudspeakers. The tiny M9 and other Digital Audio Players like it flooding out of China and

Korea are increasingly able to do much of what a full size system does – but are a fiddle to use. Being small, their touch screens have tiny text and touch-areas purposed for pixies – no good for fingers like mine. But in News this month – see p7 – we reveal a voice activated loudspeaker from Klipsch and this raises the subject of Apple's voice activated loudspeaker that, with its microphones, tunes itself to your room, accepts voice commands and can speak back via Siri.

Will we see speech control like this brought to portables; could we soon see a mini hi-fi little larger than the M9, one that is speech controlled? Feeding self powered loudspeakers via Bluetooth, such a system is possible right now. FiiO's tiny M9 can be seen as a forerunner in effect.

In future full size audio systems of the sort you can interact with may be increasingly challenged by portable, battery powered and Bluetooth connected mini-players. Feats of micro-miniaturisation, they will be mass produced in the Far East by machines, cost little, and be unrepairable – just like a mobile 'phone. It's an interesting – perhaps depressing – prospect.

But then again Audiolab's new 6000A amplifier, reviewed on p14 by Jon Myles, represents the other side of the coin. A full size hi-fi unit with digital ability including Bluetooth on board, at a price little higher than a portable. Keeping power down to a more than adequate 65 Watts (6 Ohms) keeps both cost and size in check, whilst providing full hi-fi quality from a traditional Class A/B amplifier and linear power supply.

Audiolab again – this time the one once made in Britain. I'm talking about the ubiquitous 8000A. It's still available second-hand, it's repairable – and Martin Pipe tells you so much more about it on p59. Oh yes, and it costs less than any portable player!

As always we cover the expensive to the cheap in another great issue. I hope you enjoy it.

Noel Keywood
Editor



hi-fi world

Audio Web Publishing
Studio 204,
Buspace Studio,
Conlan Street,
London W10 5AP
www.hi-fiworld.co.uk

verdicts

●●●●● OUTSTANDING
●●●● EXCELLENT
●●● GOOD
●● MEDITOCRE
● POOR
£ VALUE

amongst the best
extremely capable
worth auditioning
unremarkable
flawed
keenly priced

testing (see www.hi-fiworld.co.uk for full explanations of all our tests)

To ensure the upmost accuracy in our product reviews, *Hi-Fi World* has extremely comprehensive in-house test facilities, and our test equipment - from big names like Rohde & Schwarz and Hewlett Packard - is amongst the most advanced in the world.

Loudspeakers are measured using a calibrated Bruel & Kjaer microphone feeding a Clio-based computer

analyser, using pulsed and gated sinewaves, in a large room to eliminate the room's influence. Pickup arm vibration is measured with a Bruel & Kjaer accelerometer.

No other UK hi-fi magazine has in-house testing, and none has access to such advanced tests across all types of equipment. That's why you can depend on *Hi-Fi World* reviews.



ELECTRONIC MAGAZINE

Go to our website www.hi-fiworld.co.uk to buy an electronic version of this magazine, individual issues, back issues or a subscription.

Distributed by Select Publisher Services Ltd. P.O. Box 6337, Bournemouth, BH1 9EH UK Tel +44 (0) 1202 586848

Printed by Precision Colour Printing Halesfield 1, Stitchley, Telford TF7 4QQ, United Kingdom Tel: +44 (0) 1952 585585

Our Agents in Malaysia Millennium Hi-Fi & AV Simon Chang Showroom & office, 500-1-3 First Floor Wisma Indah (Shen Court), Jalan Tun Razak 50400 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Tel: 603 9283 8171 Fax: 603 9281 3762 e-mail: info@millennium-audio.com

All unsolicited submissions and goods are at the owner's risk. We accept no responsibility for such submissions, nor do we undertake to return them.

No material may be reproduced from this magazine without the publisher's written permission. © Audio Web Publishing Ltd

contents



14 AUDIOLAB 6000A INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER



20 VINCENT CD-S7 CD PLAYER



47 iFi xDSD DAC



34 ZMF ATTICUS HEADPHONES

LOUDSPEAKERS

B&W 603 LOUDSPEAKERS 10

B&W recently launched a new range of budget loudspeakers. Noel Keywood reviews the top 603 floorstander.

DIGITAL

FiiO M9 HI-RESOLUTION PLAYER 25

A high resolution portable player that does it all. Packed with facilities, Noel Keywood gets involved.

VINCENT CD-S7 CD PLAYER 20

A CD player with a complex valve output stage. Noel Keywood loves the sound.

iFi XDSD DAC 47

It has DSD in the name and can produce DSD sound. This portable, battery powered headphone amplifier intrigues Noel Keywood.

AMPLIFICATION

AUDIOLAB 6000A INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER 14

Audiolab come up with a super-affordable amplifier, fitted with digital input and Bluetooth. Jon Myles is impressed.

HEADPHONES

ZMF ATTICUS HEADPHONES 34

Martin Pipe talks about woods and their sound in this review of esoteric headphones.



83 McINTOSH MT2 PRECISION TURNTABLE

FEBRUARY 2019

VOLUME 28 : NO. 12

OLDE WORLDE

59 AUDIOLAB 8000A

Martin Pipe looks at a classic amplifier now available cheap at your local car boot sale.

VINYL

80 NEWS

All the latest and greatest vinyl releases for you, from the pen of Paul Rigby.

83 McINTOSH MT2 PRECISION TURNTABLE

A vinyl spinner that glows gorgeous green – styled for a McIntosh system. Noel Keywood looks closely.

89 DS AUDIO STYLUS CLEANER

Paul Rigby considers sticky.

91 SOUNDBITES ALTO-EXTREMO LYD II ISOLATION FEET/VOODOO ISO-POD ISOLATION FEET

Feet that make a difference. Paul Rigby explains.

93 AUDIOPHILE BOOK

Ripped & Torn. A compendium of the short lived punk magazine, reviewed by Paul Rigby.



REGULARS

7 NEWS

Words from the world...

31 COMPETITION

Your chance to win a pair of Acoustic Energy AE109 loudspeakers worth £500.

37 MAIL

Pages of your views, wonderful as always...

50 SUBSCRIPTIONS

Ensure your copy every month and save money too!

52 WORLD STANDARDS

Updated guide to the latest and greatest hi-fi hardware on sale.

62 AUDIOPHILE CD

Paul Rigby rounds up the latest audiophile CD releases.

65,69,71,73 OPINION

The team get to grips with matters music, hi-fi and life!

74 WORLD CLASSICS

Brilliant designs that have stood the test of time...

90 DIAL-A-DEALER

A comprehensive guide to UK hi-fi retailers.

95 CLASSIFIEDS

Second-hand bargains.

96 NEXT MONTH

What we hope to bring you in the next sizzling issue...

97 ADVERTISERS' INDEX

98 CLASSIC CUTS

The Police and Zenyatta Mondatta – a classic album explained by music expert Paul Rigby.

Now with more depth
and more clarity



**WHAT HI-FI?
AWARDS 2017**

Stereo speakers
Best standmount speaker £400-£800
KEF Q350

Save 20% on KEF Q Series & KUBE Subwoofers
with trade-in* Visit KEF.COM or ask in-store for details

The new Q Series hi-fi speakers

The eighth iteration of this successful range continues to be centred on our legendary Uni-Q driver array, and is now enhanced with a new system design, beefier low-frequency drivers and a new damped tweeter loading tube. The result is superior bass performance and an even more detailed natural sound. Listen for yourself and experience pleasure in high resolution.

KEF.COM

*Terms & conditions apply - visit kef.com for details

KEF

OBSESSED WITH HIGH RESOLUTION

email:news@hi-fiworld.co.uk

news

AYRE CHECK

Colorado-based Ayre Acoustics' '8 series' of hi-fi components, seen by many for the first time at Germany's Munich High-End show, have now arrived in the UK courtesy of a new distribution agreement with Decent Audio. The first product in this 'entry-level' range, the EX-8 is a 100 Watt per channel (8 ohms) 'Double Diamond' integrated amp with dedicated headphone output, 'pure linear' power supplies and numerous input options. A 'scalable, flexible system' can be built around the modular EX-8 'as space and money allow' – hence Ayre's term 'integrated hub'. There are three analogue inputs (one balanced), with facilities for up to six digital inputs (Ethernet, USB, AES/EBU, S/PDIF and two TOSlink). With the Roon-ready Ethernet module installed, you can stream from Spotify, Qobuz and Tidal. Prices range from £5,850 (analogue only) to £7,750 (analogue, digital and streaming).

Contact: Decent Audio, + 44 (0)5602 054669. www.decentaudio.co.uk



70 YEARS OF THE 'BIG MAC'

Iconic US brand McIntosh celebrates the dawn of its eighth decade with a 'Limited Edition Commemorative System', only 70 of which will be built. For each sold, McIntosh will donate \$1,000 to the international Save the Children charity. The Commemorative System is comprised of two new tubed audio products. First is the C70 70th Anniversary Vacuum Tube Preamplifier, which features seven inputs (two balanced, three unbalanced and a highly-configurable phono stage catering for MM and MC cartridges), front-panel bass/treble tone controls and a High Drive headphone amp. It feeds the MC2152 70th Anniversary Vacuum Tube Amplifier, a striking 150 Watts per-channel design featuring eight KT88s and McIntosh's patented 'Unity Coupled Circuit' output transformer technology. Purchasers will also get a McIntosh History Book and a certificate authenticating the entire system. But be warned: only one of these systems will (officially at least!) be coming to the UK...

Visit www.mcintoshlabs.com

ASSIST ME!

American speaker brand Klipsch is the latest to embrace the ubiquitous Google Assistant hands-free voice control tech. The product in question is a new £450 version of 'The Three' Heritage Wireless table-top speaker, the walnut-veneer cabinet and heather-grey grille cloth of which give it a distinctively 'retro' appearance. Inside, though, is 21st-century tech that endows 'The Three with Google Assistant' with "award-winning acoustics and robust connectivity" as well as the ability to make "daily tasks faster and easier". Amongst other things, you can "ask questions and get information, stream music, hear the news, weather and traffic, add to shopping lists, control smart-home devices, make a phone call, and much more". And playing music? Soundwise, there's Bluetooth wireless technology to play smartphone libraries and an integrated subwoofer for enhanced bass.

Contact: Henley Audio, +44 (0)1235 511166.

www.henleyaudio.co.uk





CLEARED FOR TAKE-OFF!

Pro-Ject turntables often ship with Ortofon cartridges, but this relationship has just entered a new phase. As part of its ongoing collaboration with Ortofon, the European turntable giant is now introducing its very own cartridge range – made in Denmark, to Pro-Ject's exact designs. The £135 Concorde Pick-IT S2 with integrated headshell is pitched towards the many vinyl lovers using DJ-style turntables with an SME-type bayonet fitting. Features of the 18.5g Pick-IT S2 include a 6mV output and an elliptical stylus intended to track at 3 grams. Higher up the scale is the £525 Pick-IT DS2, which is described as an “easy to fit, high-fidelity moving-coil option”. The 9-gram device features a nude 8/18µm elliptical stylus, recommended tracking force of 2.2g and 0.5mV output. In the words of UK distributor Henley Audio, they “boast the sonic signature and price/performance ratio you'd expect from Pro-Ject products.”

Contact: Henley Audio, +44 (0)1235 511166. www.henleyaudio.co.uk



GETTING THE ROON READY

German audio brand T+A tell us that many of its products are now compatible with the Roon user-interface, which aims to make streaming music a more worthwhile experience by finding “photos, biographies, reviews, lyrics and concert dates” and making “connections between artists, composers, performers, conductors, and producers”. Among the T+A products to benefit are the MP 1000 E, R 1000 E, MP 2000 R MKII, CALA CDR and CALA SR ‘multi-source’ devices - all of which feature a high-performance FM/DAB+ digital tuner, Bluetooth, Wi-Fi/Ethernet streaming client and, bar the CALA SR, CD playback. The MP 2000 R MKII, meanwhile, features T+A's proprietary ‘True 1-Bit Converters’. If you already have one of these units, it can be made ‘Roon Ready’ – to the “highest level of certification and integration into the Roon ecosystem”, according to T+A - via a firmware update. Further T+A streaming devices are “currently undergoing the certification process” and will follow in due course.

Contact: Kog Audio +44 (0)2477 220650 www.kogaudio.com

WELSH STREAM

Leema Acoustics, the Powys-based operation (Wales) started by a couple of ex-BBC engineers, has launched a compact streaming music client as part of its ‘Elements’ range. The hand-built £1,295 Elements Streamer – a prototype of which was shown at last year's Bristol Show – features Tidal integration, a high-quality ESS Sabre 32-bit DAC with proprietary ‘Time Domain Jitter Eliminator technology’ and USB playback. Conceived by Leema co-founder Lee Taylor, who has overseen the project from initiation to final assembly, it's based on the same high-performance streaming module that you'll find in Leema's £3k Quasar amplifier. The Elements Streamer can both ‘push’ and ‘pull’ music to and from suitable DLNA/UPnP devices on the same network – smartphones, tablets, laptops, computers, NAS drives and streaming music servers like their Sirius. Control is via a free ConversDigital app, available for Android and iOS.

Contact: MIAN Audio Distribution: +44 (0)1223 782474. www.leema-acoustics.com



EVOKATIVE SPEAKERS

Dynaudio's five-strong Evolve series features ideas and concepts from the Danish company's existing ranges. Evolve, according to Dynaudio, aims to bring “true high-end technology, build-quality and luxurious finishes to every kind of lifestyle”. The new range consists of two stand-mounters (Evoke 10 and Evoke 20), two floorstanders (Evoke 30 and Evoke 50) and a dedicated centre speaker (Evoke 25C) for home-cinema applications. Developed at Dynaudio's R&D facility alongside “hours of old-fashioned listening”, these speakers are the first to employ the firm's Cerotar 28mm tweeter with Hexis inner-dome. Looking after the lower frequencies, meanwhile, are new Esotec+ woofers that feature MSP (Magnesium Silicate Polymer) diaphragms - 14cm for the Evoke 10 (£1,250), 20 (£1,800), 30 (£2,900) and 25C (£1,100); the

£1,800 Evoke 20 has a 18cm MSP driver. The £3,900 Evoke 50 also has a midrange driver, which is directly-derived from the acclaimed Contour 60's. All Evolve speakers feature high-grade crossovers and cabinets available a choice of four finishes - Black High Gloss, White High Gloss, Walnut Wood and Blonde Wood.

Contact: [Dynaudio](http://Dynaudio.com), www.dynaudio.com



HORSE TRADING

Tuscan manufacturer Audio Analogue has used the launch of sister brand Pegaso – named after the mythological winged-horse – to make its move into tubes. Pegaso will focus “purely on valve-based electronics”, leaving Audio Analogue to concentrate on the solid-state equipment it has been producing since the mid-1990s. The first Pegaso product, which was developed “in collaboration with a team of specialized valve electronics designers”, is the £5,750 P50A integrated amplifier. The fully-balanced P50A’s microprocessor-controlled preamplifier section, which is limited to input selection (two XLR, four phono) and volume control, drives a 50W Class-A power amplifier stage made up of four 6922s and four KT90s in a push-pull configuration. It allegedly “represents a perfect union between tradition and progress...the warm and involving sound of valves, married with the highly technical and sophisticated design philosophy of decades of solid state experience”.

Contact: Decent Audio +44 (0)5602 054669. www.decentaudio.co.uk



BACK IN BLACK

Specialist high-end distributor Padood has joined forces with SME to produce the £6,196 Model 10A Black Edition turntable. Featuring ‘all-new total-black detailing’ and matched with the SME M10 tonearm, the Model 10A Black Edition is pre-fitted with an Ortofon Cadenza Black moving-coil cartridge. An exclusively-UK product, only 30 of these tables will be built. The turntable at its core, the Model 10, has been an SME mainstay since 2010. This distinctive deck features damped three-point suspension, and a heavy 12in. platter belt-driven from a 3-phase motor under microprocessor control. Padood’s Black Edition is however the first to be packaged with a suitable cartridge, enabling customers to experience vinyl with minimal fuss; the Cadenza Black was chosen after many hours of listening tests. Each Model 10A Black Edition will feature a special laser-etched serial-number plate and a certificate bearing the name and signature of the technician who assembled it.



Contact Padood, +44 (0)1223 653199. www.padood.com

PICTURE-PERFECT POWER?

Among the latest offerings from Japanese hi-fi infrastructure specialist Furutech are Empire and Roxy, two new high-performance power cables that are “designed for the demanding listeners... in the professional studio or the home listening room”. Furutech tells us it has relied on “extensive feedback from musicians and recording professionals” when developing these cables. The £327 (1.5m) Empire features three proprietary ‘PC-Triple C’ 45-strand conductors enclosed within a complex construction of lead-free PVC sheath, low-capacitance PVC dielectric surround, multi-strand OFC wire braid and woven nylon yarn. At either end are Furutech’s renowned gold-plated power connectors. The cheaper Roxy (£233 for 1.5m) has 37-strand OFC conductors, five distinct layers of insulation and Furutech’s high quality connectors. The metal parts of both cables are treated with a ‘trademark two-stage cryogenic and demagnetization process’, to render them “stress-free, stable and highly electrically conductive”.

Contact: Sound Fowndations, +44 (0)1189 814238, www.soundfowndations.co.uk



QR-CODE

A couple of years ago Danish loudspeaker specialist, Audiovector, replaced its popular entry-level Ki lineup with the QR series. The QR brief was to offer “the most advanced technology in a perfectly finished compact high-end package”; particularly noteworthy was its use of ribbon tweeters. The QR series is now bigger by one model, with the launch of the range-topping QR5 floorstander – designed to ‘fit nicely into any home environment, regardless of style’. Its Gold Leaf AMT 2 ribbon tweeter will deliver usable highs up to 45kHz, while a pair of six-inch bass drivers (in conjunction with a ‘Q-port’ down-firing bass-reflex arrangement) look after the low end. Responsible for the presence region, meanwhile, is a 6in. ‘Pure Piston Mid’ driver. The resulting sound, reckons Audiovector, is “big and bold, dynamic, pleasant and detailed – excellent for all types of music”. Priced at £2750.

Visit: www.audiovector.com





Clear Difference

B&W's new 603 floorstanding loudspeaker has vivid clarity says Noel Keywood.

The Festival of Sound show, held at London's Novotel hotel end of September 2018, saw British loudspeaker manufacturer out in force. Amongst them were B&W with a lavish display of their high end loudspeakers. But when I crept in with my camera hoping to sneak some pics without getting accosted, I was accosted! My afro wig and shades didn't work. What B&W were keen to show me was their new 600 Series loudspeakers, premiere amongst them the 603 floorstander I am reviewing here. Price £1250.

In the new 603 B&W offer an exciting sound – relaxingly open yet vivid and punchy. I can't say I was ever unhappy with the outgoing 600s with their distinctive yellow Kevlar cones, other than they needed a very long run in of circa 150 hours (paper cones need 40 hours or so).

Kevlar has gone however. Instead the new 603s use a silver hued Continuum cone that is also a weave of synthetic material it appears. In this loudspeaker it takes the form of a relatively large 150mm (6in) 'midrange unit' as B&W label it, sitting just below the tweeter at top.

Being large I suspect the new drive unit it goes low – to around 300Hz. Below this two 165mm paper/Kevlar bass units take over to handle bass, working together into a chamber damped by a reflex port at rear. Concentric foam bungs are supplied to restrict or seal the port, should there be too much bass in a room. However, with bungs absent the bass units are strongly damped acoustically in any case (see Measured Performance) so only when room boom occurs are these bungs likely to be necessary.

At top sits an aluminium Double Dome (Ring dome?) tweeter of conventional 25mm (1in) diameter. It works from 3kHz upward as usual, our impedance analysis shows.

The cabinet stands 1055mm (41.5in) high on its plinth, is 190mm (7.5in) wide and 340mm (13.4in) deep. The plinth extends outwards slightly, being 320mm wide and 370mm deep. It comes with carpet piercing spikes or rubber feet for hard floors, both height adjustable for stability.

Cabinet finish was a lacklustre matt black on our review samples,

the plinths looking prosaically simple. But as budget floorstanders go the 603s are heavy at 24.1kgs (53.1lbs) and were solid, a rap of the knuckles producing no comeback.

Rear connection is via a bi-wire panel with removable straps between high and low inputs. Large gold plated terminals accept bare wire, spade connectors and 4mm banana plugs.

SOUND QUALITY

I connected the 603s to our Creek Evolution 100A amplifier through Chord Signature Reference cables. Music came from an Oppo BDP-205D Universal player spinning CD and accepting hi-res from our Astell&Kern AK120 player. The 'speakers had a long run-in.

The new 603 has more mid-range sheen than its predecessor – a less dark sound – but also less upper treble if I recall rightly – the tweeter isn't sonically obvious. Couple this with tight but deep bass and you come up with quite a distinctive sound.

Most immediately noticeable was the sheen of the new Continuum drive unit that pushed vocals and detail forward: Willy DeVille singing Spanish Harlem (CD) almost crackled in front of me, projecting out with vivid definition. This made every nuance in his voice obvious. The new Continuum unit is midband projective, giving the 603 very high resolution of detail.

Interestingly, where most loudspeakers today have raised treble from the tweeter and an often sharp sound, B&W have turned away from this in the 603. Instead my attention wasn't drawn to treble spit or such like, making the 603 mild up top. It's also neutral here, high treble having little obvious character; it's there but makes no imposition. I like.

B&Ws have always had solid, powerful bass – not overblown – and the 603s capitalise on this quality well. They are very tight,



The rear has a contoured flow control port and bi-wire terminals with interconnecting links. The plinth has adjustable spikes for wooden floors or, alternatively, rubber feet for hard floors.

"Tellurium Q Statements are no usual cable affair and if I've called the Silver Diamonds an Emotional Tour de Force what are then the Tellurium Q Statements!? Well, they certainly transcend any typical labeling and this time I'm elevating them on the throne, that they clearly deserve. Their stand out, extraordinary performance can only be recognized with the 2018 Editor Choice Award!"

-Matej Isak, Mono & Stereo

"...you have managed to surpass them [Silver Diamonds] in a truly grand way."



Tellurium Q[®] Statement

What has been achieved is a coherent sonic profile and performance across the whole Statement range and that is why we say this is the **Tellurium Q[®] Statement**.

telluriumq.com facebook.com/telluriumq.com +44 (0)1458 251 997

MONO  STEREO



High Fidelity_{pl}





A wire mesh protects the 603's aluminium 'Double Dome' tweeter.

super clean and controlled in bass delivery, made obvious by Toto's I Will Remember (CD) where the opening percussive sequence was fiercely gripped and dynamically dramatic, spreading wide across the room in front of me, with a nice sense of depth too.

The 603s excelled here, as they did with Loreena McKennitt's Gates of Istanbul where the deep background underpin from a regularly plucked Bazouki had visceral power – dryly delivered. There was obvious

deep bass – subsonics – from this track, making for a powerful presence in our room, a large 6500cu ft. Perhaps this is why those bungs are needed; smaller rooms may get a tad over-excited by such low bass power.

Nigel Kennedy's Stradivarius was highlighted by the 603s, seemingly picked out by a bright white light. Listening intently to Massenet's Meditation the instrument was clearly outlined in front of me and well detailed too. I did notice here that the big cone of the midrange unit has a little 'cuppiness' – sending violin out from a slightly enclosed space. This effect is subjectively mild in impact: musicians hear it, most of us don't.

With large orchestral works, such as Holst's Planets, kettle drums in Mars, Bringer of War (hi-res 24/48) had room moving impact – and their character was well conveyed too. I heard an acoustical instrument of richness and power, not a marshmallow like impersonation.

CONCLUSION

B&W do a lot different in their new 603, coming up with a sound that's both distinctive and impressive. The new Continuum midrange unit is forward, having an LED sheen to its sound: think

those bright car headlights. You get to see it all, as it were. Yet there's no stinging treble nor the occasional harshness from CD that results from it. Instead this loudspeaker has an easy, mild and natural quality to high treble. But with deep and powerful bass the 603 brings speed and punch to Rock whilst laying out Classical instruments clearly across a wide sound stage. All round a great performer then and also one that needs little power to rock the room – even make it shudder.



The large Continuum cone midrange drive unit has a silver hue – a change from the yellow of Kevlar in predecessors.

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

Our measurement of frequency response, a third-octave analysis of pink noise, shows a basically flat characteristic over a very wide band, stretching from 40Hz up to 20kHz within 3dB limits. Whilst the 603 isn't as smooth as some, with shallow loss around 2kHz likely due to crossover mis-match, there is no treble peaking so the 603 will not come across as bright, so much as smooth and easy going, yet natural. B&W have kept away from the treble emphasis common in current designs, meaning in a showroom demo the 603 will likely sound less bright in high treble than others, but it is more accurate and truthful.

Interesting that the 603 lacks raised output below 500Hz to add body to the sound, and it also has unusually flat and extended bass output – all the way down to 40Hz. There is a slight roll-off below 80Hz showing a well damped time-domain response that will lack boom or waffle. This suits near-wall positioning, giving quite dry and controlled bass behaviour, one that will

less excite room boom.

Our impedance analysis shows the port is tuned to a low 28Hz and applies very broad damping, shown by a wide dip at this frequency with residual peaks either side. Port output (red trace) in our frequency response analysis correlates, its acoustic output around 28Hz delivering deep bass down to 20Hz. In a large room around 20ft long this will be perceptible; in smaller rooms less so. In all however the 603 goes very low, producing subsonics audible in a long room.

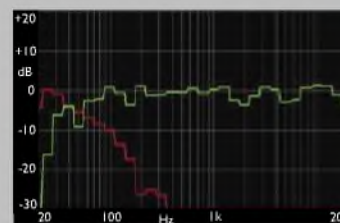
Sensitivity was high, a loud 88dB sound pressure level (SPL) produced from one nominal Watt (2.8V) of input. Amplifiers of 40 Watts per channel will go very loud with the 603s and less power sufficient to go loud even in a 16ft long room. Overall impedance measured 5 Ohms and d.c. resistance 3.8 Ohms, the latter being set by the bass units – likely 8 Ohm units connected in parallel. This is how most modern loudspeakers are configured.

The B&W 603s will give a smooth

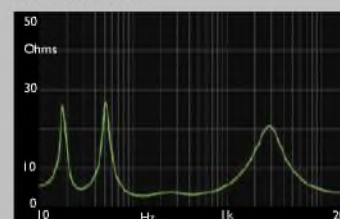
and accurate sound that lacks obvious treble – but they are accurate in doing so. Bass runs very deep but is unemphasised. Near wall placement is ideal. This is a well engineered loudspeaker. **NK**

FREQUENCY RESPONSE

*Green - driver output
Red - port output*



IMPEDANCE



B&W 603 £1250



OUTSTANDING - amongst the best

VERDICT

Vividly forward and detailed sound, with deep powerful bass. Any amplifier suits.

FOR

- intensely detailed
- very deep bass
- tight and controlled

AGAINST

- lacklustre finish
- prosaic plinth

B&W

Tel: +44 (0) 800 232 1513
www.bowers-wilkins.co.uk

Awesome Audiolab

A combined integrated amplifier/DAC from Audiolab sets a new standard at its price, says Jon Myles.

Audiolab has forged an impressive reputation for its range of M-DAC digital to analogue convertors in recent years. So much so that some of its other products have flown a little under the radar.

But the new 6000A is designed to change that. It's a stereo amplifier with a claimed power output of 50 Watts per channel (see Measured Performance for full details) that costs just £599.

It is also slim and trim – measuring 6.5cm x 44.5cm x 30cm

(H/W/D). But there's more to it than that. The 6000A also features digital inputs (two optical, two co-axial) trickled down from the M-DAC range with an ESS Sabre DAC at the core. There is also a pair of moving magnet phono inputs plus three line-level analogue inputs. Add in Bluetooth capability and I couldn't help but be impressed with this amplifier's range of features.

Also, if you are using the digital inputs there are three digital filters (slow roll-off, fast roll-off and minimum phase). Personally, I preferred the slow roll-off which

seemed slightly more detailed but it's worth experimenting with all three to find which works best with your partnering equipment and own tastes.

Design-wise it is typical Audiolab – nothing too flashy or over the top but a minimalist style where form follows function. Three rotary controls on the front allow you to control mode, input and volume – which can all be replicated via the supplied remote control – while a slim LED screen brings up basic information



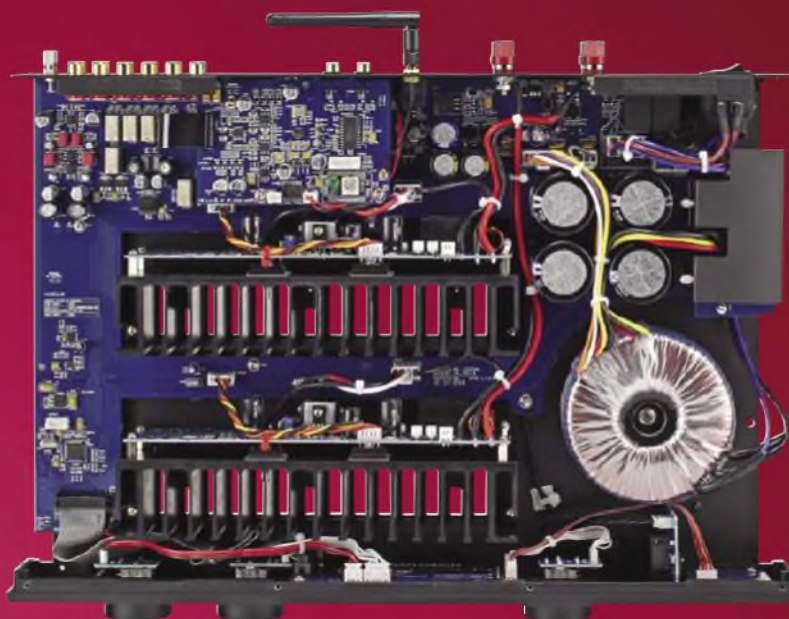
such as which input is being used.

It is well-constructed with an aluminium front panel and sturdy metal casework behind. In all it looks more expensive than its £599 price tag.

SOUND QUALITY

Connecting the 6000A to a pair of standmount Spondor AIs and playing CDs it was clear to me just how confident this amplifier sounds. Neil Young's 'After The Goldrush' saw his vocals pushed well to the fore with a lovely sense of presence. However, beneath that the backing drums and guitars were excellently laid out – giving the whole album a sense of vibrancy. Edges of notes were crisp while bass was taut and tight without being overblown. There was an organic, flowing nature to the sound that not all amplifiers at this price can manage.

Switching to high resolution through an Astell&Kern player the Audiolab had the ability to bring out the extra information on hand. For example, the piano notes on Keith Jarrett's live 'Paris/London Testament' (24/96) felt realistic and the leading edges were superbly rendered. Better still, the decay in the notes gave an atmosphere to his playing.



Inside the Audiolab there is a Class A/B power amplifier with linear power supply and an ESS Sabre DAC – plus Bluetooth connectivity.

It was similar with Robert Wyatt's version of Elvis Costello's classic 'Shipbuilding' where his plaintive, high-pitched vocals were excellently relayed and the piano backing had timbre and body.

But while the Audiolab does delicacy well it is also able to handle more upbeat tracks with aplomb. Loading up The Jesus And

Mary Chain's 'Upside Down' there was tremendous propulsive thrust on offer. Pace was snappy, instrumentation clear and there was no pause for breath as the track charged along.

All this was more than enough for me to try a slice of Led Zeppelin with 'Immigrant Song'. Again I could hear every single element of the track - John Bonham's drums cracked sharp, John Paul Jones's bass line was distinct but not too intrusive while



ortofon

accuracy in sound



2M

The 2M Series, named after the abbreviation of Moving Magnet (MM) technology, is an affordable range of pick-up cartridges with first-class audio design principles throughout. Featuring Ortofon's trademarked split-pole pin technology for a flat frequency response, all 2M cartridges have a high output for easy integration into any turntable system.

Designed in conjunction with celebrated design house Møller-Jensen Innovation Design, the 2M Series body represents the shape of a diamond, whose contours gracefully trace the grooves on a record's surface.



Red.Cartridges

A hugely popular all-purpose cartridge with a Tipped Elliptical stylus that delivers an open, dynamic sound with a slight touch of warmth.



Blue.Cartridges

An affordable step up in the range, which adds a greater resolution, dynamics, and detailed sound thanks to the Nude Elliptical stylus.



Bronze.Cartridges

Featuring a superior body, the Bronze picks up even the highest frequency information for a rich, detailed and deep soundstage, and can be further upgraded with ease.



Black.Cartridges.

The musician's choice and flagship of the range, the 2M Black features a Nude Shibata stylus which guarantees a true-to-life sound performance.



The rear includes both digital and analogue inputs as well as an antenna for Bluetooth reception.



Jimmy Page's staccato guitar riff overlaid everything wonderfully. I could just lay back and enjoy - which is what I did.

In many ways the presentation reminded me of the Naim Nait5si – an amplifier that costs almost twice that of the Audiolab. The Naim probably has a little more punch but in terms of overall detail there's little to choose between the two.

Turning to Bluetooth there was an obvious drop

"Loading up The Jesus And Mary Chain's 'Upside Down' there is a tremendous propulsive thrust on offer"

in sound quality, some tracks losing their definition and depth. That said, Bluetooth is more about convenience than absolute hi-fi quality and it is a nice feature to have. Additionally the 6000A paired immediately with my iPhone and never once lost the connection.

But to get the best out of this Audiolab I'd advise using it for its primary purpose – as the heart of

a good hi-fi set-up. Simply listen and enjoy.

CONCLUSION

As amplifiers go you'll be hard pressed to beat this Audiolab for its versatility – but most importantly its sound quality. It has delicacy but will also pump out hard rocking beats when needed. Digital connectivity and a price of just £599 make it a great bargain.

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

Power from the Audiolab 6000A measured 50 Watts into 8 Ohms and 86 Watts into 4 Ohms, enough for very high volume. The power supply has good regulation and a high for firm, punchy bass.

Frequency response was flat from a low 1Hz up to 100kHz and distortion very low at 0.003% from low levels (circa 1 Watt) all the way up to full power, into both 4 Ohm and 8 Ohm loads. The critical 1W/4 Ohm/10kHz figure, a measure of crossover distortion, was also low at 0.01% – as our distortion analysis shows.

The Phono stage needed 1.3mV for full output, where 5mV is common. This makes it suitable for high output moving coils (MC) as well as moving magnets (MM). Input overload was high at 50mV. Equivalent input noise (e.i.n.), a true measure of noise you hear at any volume setting, was a very low 1µV – quiet enough for moving coil cartridges. Frequency response measured flat down to 20Hz (-1dB) a warp filter rolling off gain to -7dB at 5Hz to lessen loudspeaker cone flap. An impressively good phono stage – better than most.

The S/PDIF inputs (elec. & opt) both accepted 192kHz sample rate PCM, frequency response measuring flat to

40kHz (-1dB) before roll off to the upper theoretical limit of 96kHz.

Distortion from 24/96 hi-res PCM measured a mediocre 0.08% from both preamp out and loudspeaker out. EIAJ Dynamic Range was on the low side at 113dB (pre out and ls out) with 24bit where 115dB or better is now common. With CD this is inconsequential, due to 16bit quantisation noise, but with 'quieter' 24bit it's not so good. Bluetooth measured 99dB EIAJ dynamic range as is common and flat frequency response to 20kHz, so worked very well.

The Audiolab 6000A measured well in all areas except its digital input. Here it's fine for CD but not for top hi-res results. NK

AMPLIFIER

Power	50W
Frequency response (-1dB)1Hz-50kHz	
Distortion (10kHz, 1W)	0.01%
Separation (1kHz)	96dB
Noise (IEC A)	-98dB
Sensitivity	300mV

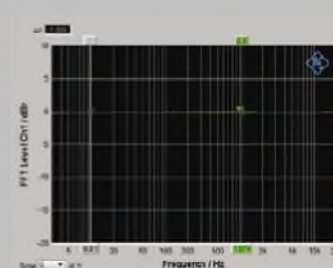
DIGITAL

Frequency response (-1dB)5Hz-40kHz	
Distortion (-60dB, 24bit)	0.08%
Dynamic range (EIAJ)	113dB
Noise	-112dB

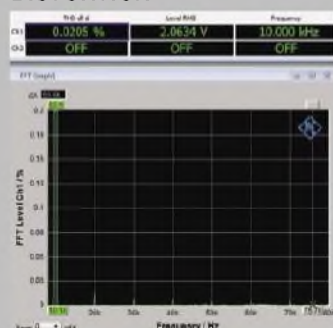
PHONO

Frequency response (-1dB)5Hz-20kHz	
Distortion (1kHz, 5mV in)	0.06%
Separation (1kHz)	67dB
Noise (IEC A)	-69dB
Sensitivity	1.3mV
Overload	50mV

FREQUENCY RESPONSE



DISTORTION



AUDIOLAB 6000A £599



OUTSTANDING - amongst the best.

VALUE - keenly priced.

VERDICT

A superb performer – one of the best amplifiers you can buy at this price.

FOR

- flexibility
- detail
- Bluetooth
- rhythmic ability

AGAINST

- nothing

Audiolab
+44 (0) 1480 447700
www.audiolab.co.uk

McIntosh[®]

LEGENDARY PERFORMANCE™



A gorgeous OLED displays a wealth of information, and with full remote control, high drive headphone amplifier, four user-nameable inputs and bass/treble tone controls, the McIntosh MA252 is all about incredible flexibility and versatility.



A beautiful polished stainless steel chassis compliments the stylish protective cages for the valves and custom McIntosh Monogrammed Heatsinks™. From any angle, the McIntosh MA252 is a work of art.



With 100 wpc (8 Ohm) and 160 wpc (4 Ohm), the McIntosh MA252 will handle most speakers with ease to deliver an incredibly natural enveloping sound of the highest order.



"The McIntosh MA252 offers an alluring combination of tube romanticism and solid-state resolution and authority... The ability to connect the listener to the music makes this tube-solid state integrated a special component by any standard. I could happily listen to the MA252 for a long, long time."

PartTimeAudiophile

"The MA252 is a component worthy of consideration as the core to an audio system that will allow the user to listen for hours without fatigue. And, based on McIntosh's reputation for long-term reliability and service, possibly listen for decades."

Stereo Times

"Once again, McIntosh presented us a high quality product, embracing the wonderful philosophy of the brand. The expectations were big on our end and from what I heard during these listening sessions, I can, without a doubt, affirm that McIntosh succeeded the test on all points."

TED Magazine



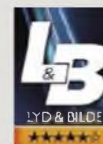
Winner of Diapason d'Or 2018 Hi-Fi Award



Winner of ON Magazine Top Audio Award



Winner of HIFI Live Magazine High Quality Award



Awarded 5 out of 6 Stars

To find out more about McIntosh and arrange an audition, please contact a specialist retailer below:

	Home Audio Reference Dealer	Home Audio Dealer	Design Installation Dealer	Authorised Service Center
Hard To Find Hi-Fi , Birmingham, B18 6DD 08456 803 489 www.hardtofindhifi.com	●			
Jordan Acoustics , Southern Store, Dorset, BH23 6BB 01202 911886 www.jordanacoustics.co.uk	●			●
Jordan Acoustics , Northern Store, Fife, KY7 6RU 01592 744779 www.jordanacoustics.co.uk	●			●
Kj West One , London, W1G 8TY 020 7486 8262 www.kjwestone.co.uk	●			
Nintronics , Welwyn Garden City, AL7 1HG 01707 320788 www.nintronics.co.uk	●			
Adair Acoustic Design , Devon, DT7 3SJ 07956 236 108 www.adairacoustic.co.uk			●	
Avande Uk , London, E14 9NN 020 7987 3555 www.avandeuk.co.uk			●	
Cornflake , London, W1T 2JU 020 7323 4554 www.cornflake.co.uk		●	●	
DB Hi-Fi , North Suffolk, IP23 7DS 01379 873451 www.dbhifi.co.uk		●		

	Home Audio Reference Dealer	Home Audio Dealer	Design Installation Dealer	Authorised Service Center
Finite Solutions , Fulham, SW6 2BW 0207 371 8761 www.finitesolutions.co.uk		●	●	
Hifi Lounge , Bedfordshire, SG18 8RH 01767 448 121 www.hifilounge.co.uk		●		
Icon Connect , Hertfordshire, SG6 1FJ 08702 330 044 www.iconconnect.com			●	
Ideaworks , London, W1W 5QJ 020 3668 9871 www.ideaworks.co.uk			●	
Kensington Home Technology , London, W14 0HN 0207 7314272 www.kht.co.uk			●	
Maxwell Audio Visual , London, W8 6BD 020 3384 6968 www.maxwellav.com			●	
Robert Taussig , London, W1U 7HP 020 7487 3455 www.roberttaussig.co.uk		●	●	
Soundstage AV , Barnet, EN4 0DB 020 8440 9509 www.soundstage.uk.com		●	●	

Hot CD



Vincent's CD-S7 CD player glows hot at switch-on. Noel Keywood thinks it has a sound to match.

A CD player with valves. Even better with Vincent's CD-S7 you get a valve in a window. It excites audio enthusiasts attracted by the warm sound and warm glow of a thermionic device from yesteryear. In case you are wondering, the idea here is to get the spacious sound stage and easy going

smoothness that valves typically provide, as a balm to the at-times harsh sound of CD. Hot things in windows are not the point!

I carefully said "with valves" because the CD-S7 is not an all-valve CD player; no such thing is possible nor exists. It is, like other valve CD players, a normal chip-based player with a valve output stage. All the same Vincent capitalise on its inclusion of valves by putting one in a window, stark centre, as you can see from our shots. As usual, there's an orange LED backlight to provide faux-glow just to

make the point this player is different to most, and also to make it stand out, unlike bland black-box CD players. Small-signal valves like the 12AX7 have a life of around 10,000 hours and are cheap to replace – around £10 apiece.

I'm very happy with valve output CD players as a concept, but the digital front-end feeding the valves must work well in itself, in order to feed the valves a clean signal they can work with. Often the valves do little, being used as line drivers with no gain. Here the CD-S7 looks different, even very different, because two 12AX7 (6922) double-triodes are used, one per channel, suggesting the valves provide both gain and impedance conversion (cathode follower) to drive an external cable effectively.

Even more surprising was Vincent also use a valve mains supply via a 6Z4 rectifier – the one in the window. So the valve stages of this player have been extensively crafted in true audiophile fashion to give purist valve sound quality. I was impressed to being taken-aback

by the complexity, something seen in the player's circuit board that is both very large and very complex. It's easy to cram in one 12AX7 to provide line drive on each channel, but Vincent have gone much further.

On review here is the CD-S7 player, not the CD-S7 DAC. Vincent don't identify the DAC chip in this player but peering inside I found it's a top quality Burr Brown PCM1796.

Size wise the unit is large, 430mm wide, 356mm deep and 132mm high. With so much inside, including valve power supply, it is also weighty at 9kgs. But some of the weight is down to sturdy build, with a thick extruded alloy front panel, anodised black in our sample; silver is an option. Behind it lies a strong sheet steel chassis and cover.

The front panel carries transport controls: Play/pause, Track skip forward and backward, Draw open, Stop, a Repeat button that will repeat one track or the entire disc. At right lies a 1/4in (6.3mm) headphone jack socket and a small, manual rotary volume control – unusual. The remote volume control varies

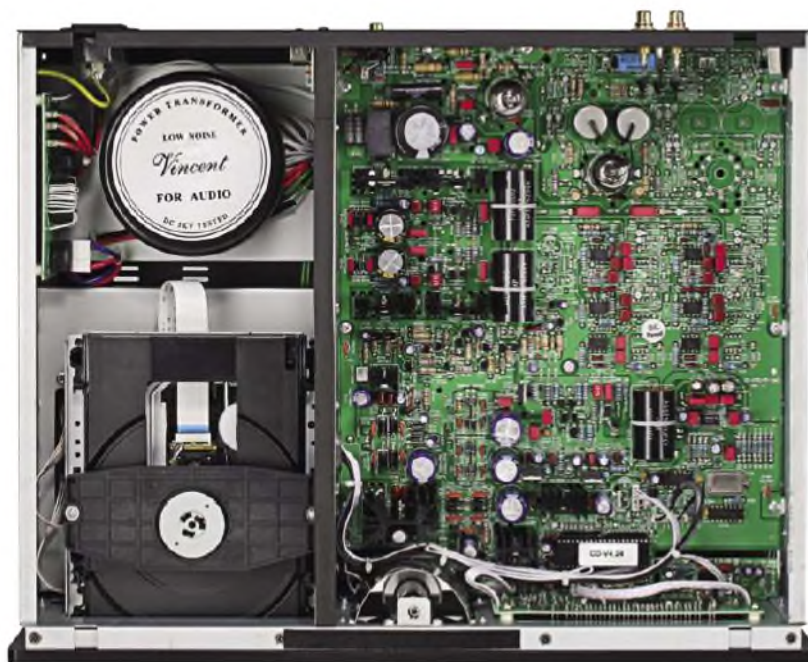


output to the rear sockets whilst the headphone rotary control attenuates this to a headphone amplifier feeding the headphone socket. It delivers a massive 7V (max) to headphones measurement showed, way more than the rear outputs. It's a comprehensive arrangement giving remote control of both line output and headphones. Vincent specify suitable headphones as 32 Ohms minimum, which accommodates most headphones, 40 Ohms being a common minimum.

At left lies the power button and a blue LED that flashes for 25 seconds until the valves have warmed up, creating a short start delay.

The rear panel has only unbalanced phono-socket analogue audio outputs, even though the handbook states (p28) there are balanced XLR sockets, but this applies to the CD-S7 DAC – the player lacks XLR outputs. There is a single S/PDIF digital output through 'coaxial' electrical output (RCA phono socket), allowing connection of an external DAC. Vincent fit a lamp brightness slide switch with three brightness positions and Off, plus a 12V trigger input for on/off control from other items. Power is via an IEC socket for a mains connector.

The player's remote control is large, weighty and comes with a wealth of options, including remote control of volume. This allows it to be connected direct to a power amplifier, forming a simple but pure system. The remote has a full array of controls including track programming, a numeric keypad, fast forward and reverse, a dimmer (no less!), plus much else not commonly seen nowadays, like A-B play and Intro play. All a bit yesterday, but useful to some perhaps. For me, it's the inclusion of volume control that's important – a



Inside the CD-S7 lies a large circuit board of unusual complexity, partly due to the need for valve power supply built around a 6Z4 valve rectifier. The 12AX7 (6922) valves can be seen at rear, whilst the Burr Brown PCM 1796 DAC chip is at right, surrounded by red capacitors.

real convenience factor.

The player was nice to use. It sits firmly and feels solid. The CD mechanism has the traditional flimsy sliding plastic draw – it isn't a slot loader. The remote is button-heavy and has small legends – not so easy in a dimly lit room. Rear outputs are Spartan. All the same, the CD-S7 remains a complex player internally and can do a lot externally, so although in some ways it appears simple, it is not.

SOUND QUALITY

I teamed this player with our Creek Evolution 100A amplifier and, alternatively, McIntosh MC152 power amplifier, driving Martin Logan ESL-X hybrid electrostatic loudspeakers. Mains conditioning courtesy of

an Isotek Evo3 Mosaic Genesis re-generator to eliminate mains distortion and noise.

Vincent's purist approach to its valve stages – more than paid off in sound quality – it was nothing short of eye poppingly dramatic in visceral power. The player had subterranean bass with Lady GaGa's Bad Romance and the slowly plucked bouzouki in Loreena McKennit's Gates of Istanbul permeated our large listing room in eerie fashion. Whatever I span the CD-S7 had a full and rich low end that was not only spacious but powerful and embracing beyond any CD player I recall reviewing. It was sort of like listening to a 16bit steamroller, normal players being bicycles. In this respect the Vincent stands out clearly from all else



A very simple rear panel with little in the way of outputs, specifically no balanced XLRs. But there is an LED dimmer/off switch and S/PDIF digital output (electrical, via RCA phono socket).

MUSICAL FIDELITY



M2 SERIES

Integrated amplifier and CD player with incredible sound performance offering exceptional value for money.

both products for just £799 each



M2sCD | CD PLAYER

Top-quality CD player with superb sound

The M2sCD is designed as serious hi-fi available at a modest price. From the fine fit and finish of its metal casework to the unique technology sitting inside. The M2sCD builds on our years of engineering expertise, uniquely featuring both a mains choke filter and a high-tech digitalstream noise filter.



M2si | INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER

High-class integrated amplifier at a low price

The M2si integrated amplifier takes our peerless premium amp experience and applies it to a more affordable price point. It boasts trickle-down technology from our mighty and legendary Titan flagship, plus other high-end touches such as solid metal controls.

around, including other valve output CD player's I've heard that, whilst sounding very nice were not so conspicuously dramatic.

Generally, the sound was easy going, although I wouldn't say mellow. The guitar of Antonio Forcione playing Tears of Joy overwhelmed with its vivid and full bodied presence, but there was no laceration to the strings – not the hard edge I am used to from this wide dynamic range test track. It sounded like an acoustic guitar, rather than a 'hi-fi version'. This encompasses the rich resonant sound of the instrument, so commonly and carelessly bleached by CD players.

A hugely spacious sound stage and feeling of deep power pushed Josefine Cronholm's In Your Wild Garden out at me, her voice hauntingly powerful.

The Vincent's panoramic sound stage and glorious dynamics suited Classical, orchestras like the Royal Philharmonic playing Tchaikovsky's Symphony No6 all but burst from our 'speakers. Instrumental strands such as violins were freely separated and easy to follow, whilst large percussion, tubas and bassoons had lifelike presence in front of me.

CONCLUSION

Vincent's CD-S7 hybrid CD player is, behind its simple physical interface, a complex machine well thought out and executed in design terms.

The two 12AX7 (6922) double-triode amplifier / line driver valves – big polyprop. and electrolytic capacitors close by.



Behind the front window lies the 6Z4 rectifier valve; it is back-lit by an orange LED. Brightness is switch adjustable.

The output valve stage, with its valve rectifier, delivers a spacious and powerful sound of enormous presence, largely due to fluidly delivered low frequencies that add

massive sonic weight. Orchestras loom large and Rock has a drive few others can match. I was taken aback by the S7's sonic ability – a great player well worth hearing.

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

Frequency response of the CD-S7 measured flat to 21kHz our convolved impulse response analysis shows, a fairly normal result with – in this player – no influence from the use of valves. There are no filters to change this result.

Whilst valves can just accommodate the dynamic range of CD there is always some distortion at peak

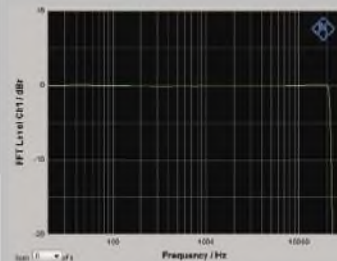
level (0dB), in this player measuring a small 0.17% – above the usual 0dB level of around 0.003% but still low enough not to be an issue.

At -60dB distortion measured 0.27%, as our analysis shows. Again it's close to the usual figure of 0.22% that is set by 16bit quantisation noise and harmonic distortion from CD. This resulted in an EIAJ dynamic range value of 98dB – a tad low by current standards where 102dB is possible. Although quoted noise looks low at -107dB this is due to muting; the dynamic range figure is a measure of the noise floor (+thd) without muting.

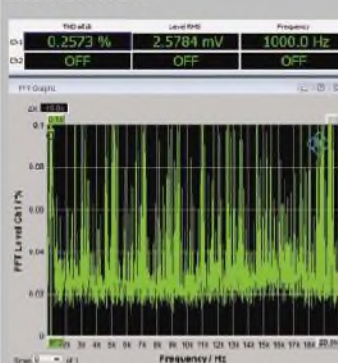
Output measured 2.5V, a little above the usual 2V standard. There are no balanced XLR-socket outputs. The headphone output with volume control gave 7V out at full volume.

Vincent have balanced this player well to avoid distortion at high output and noise at low output, giving a good all round set of performance figures from CD, when using valves. **NK**

FREQUENCY RESPONSE



DISTORTION



Frequency response	4Hz- 21kHz
Distortion (-60dB)	0.27%
Separation	93dB
Dynamic range (EIAJ)	98dB
Noise	-107dB
Output	2.5V
Headphone output	7V

VINCENT CD-S7
£1,800



OUTSTANDING - amongst the best.

VERDICT

Mighty sound of enormous presence from CD. Quite different from most else. Deeply impressive.

FOR

- spacious powerful sound
- volume control
- headphone output

AGAINST

- no balanced output

Classic Hi-Fi
+44 (0)20 8374 3958
+44 (0)7983 619671
www.vincentshop.co.uk



Announcing Our Fabulous New 300B Amplifier!



Designed by David Shaw

Some things are hard to improve on and that is especially true of the 1930s 300B valve. Directly Heated Triodes are considered by many to be the pinnacle of audio quality. At Icon Audio we have used all our skills in order to build an amplifier that gets the best out of this venerable tube. Warm, transparent, satisfying. With 30 + 30 Watts of power available from 20 Hz to 20kHz this amplifier is sure to please the most demanding listener. £3999.95



Hi Fi World "Best Valve Amplifier"



Stereo 30se

As regularly featured in HI FI World

Stereo 30se KT150 Valves Pure Class A 18w Triode, 28w UL £2,299



PS1 MKII MM/MC

Legendary pure valve phono stage only £1,299 MM or £1,549 MC/MM

Innovative Designs From Icon Audio

Up to 20% off B grade & Ex-demonstration items
 Technically perfect with minor cosmetic blemishes
 Come and audition in our showroom
 Supplied with full guarantee
 Most models available
 Our stock changes regularly
 See our website, ring us or email
 Subject to availability prices vary



HP8 MKII Only £899
 Pure Triode Headphone Amplifier Using Transformers

We manufacture 15 different Models of loudspeakers
 From the tiny BBC LS/3 to our Mighty 15" Horn based system
 From £599 to £10,000
 We have a speaker to suit your needs!
 Come and audition in our showroom
 Ask about ex-demo and B grade stock
 See our website, ring us or email
 Subject to availability prices vary

Play It All

A portable player that does it all. Noel Keywood reviews FiiO's affordable M9 that's packed with ability.



The FiiO M9 is a massively capable portable player that in FiiO's words "combines all of the functions people want". Understandable to want it all – but inevitably this adds complexity where arrays of facilities must be selected from multiple menu layers by peering at tiny text on a small screen. I'm trying to get the M9 into context here. It has massive ability – even able to play DSD via DoP, making this a player that will perform even the most obscure functions – ones of appeal to audio enthusiasts.

Size wise the M9 is pocketable at 60mm wide, 107mm high and 13.3mm deep, if a bit heavy for a shirt top pocket, weighing 139gms. However, in spite of one swathe of complex circuitry inside that includes balanced headphone amplifiers and output, plus two new Asahi Kasei Microdevices (AKM, Japan) AK4490 DACs from the silky smooth sounding Verita Series, there is a long claimed 10hour life from the li-polymer 2350mAh re-chargeable internal batteries. Play hi-res and life will go down slightly, by the way – as usual. The unit charges from a USB 5V (2A) supply / USB computer output as usual, charge time 2hrs.

FiiO claim fast performance from the Samsung Exynos 7270 CPU running a customised Android operating system but start-up was slow at 40 seconds, touch-screen response was tardy due to very small and insensitive active areas, whilst numerous swipes to transit from Home to Play also slowed things down. I had to be patient to get through all the many menus, especially the numerous Settings menus flagged by the same gearwheel icon but different in content.

With Android you must load music files into a Music folder using an Android loader window that appears automatically on a Mac, but it is



STORIED SOUND FOR EVERY MOMENT.

When sound is delivered with the utmost of clarity and brilliance, it turns every moment into an experience. Backed by 50 years of innovation, the new 600 Series from Bowers & Wilkins was designed to bring you closer than ever to the music and movies you love.

Discover more at bowers-wilkins.co.uk

THE NEW 600 SERIES

Bowers & Wilkins

seen natively on a PC. However, this player uses a USB Type C socket and USB 2.0 that my USB2 Mac hub was sniffy about; I had to plug in direct for a stable link, so data rate appears to be high. No problem here with the PC though.

There's a nice, if slow, edge-style volume control wheel with big on-screen colour readout (0-120), Play/Pause and Track Skip buttons plus a card slot to expand the on-board 2GB of storage (1000 CD tracks / 20 DSD tracks) to up to 1TB. The real use of a card slot is, I find, to carry a small curated collection around. Note that DSD tracks are vast at around 100MB so demand a large capacity card.

In addition to both unbalanced (3.5mm jack) and balanced (2.5mm jack) headphone outputs the M9 can also transmit music to a hi-fi or 'phones via Bluetooth, using aptX and aptX HD codecs, as well as LDAC (Sony 'phones) and HWA formats (SBC and LHDC). Standard aptX is pretty darn good, applying little compression (5:1) and giving about 98dB dynamic range so no need to get too worried about all this.

There's wi-fi for downloading files from a PC or for playing them via DLNA when Windows Media Server has it activated (Windows 10). Macs don't have DLNA as standard but it can be loaded as paid/free option. The M9 found my PC without trouble, with an amusing message 'I Servers Founded' and played music files without problem.

There's streaming from the 'net via pre-installed Tidal, NetEase Music,

Although Chinese players can rarely be software updated from Mac (due to hidden desktop files), when set to act as a USB DAC my Mac saw the M9 immediately. However, FiiO's USB DAC graphic said '48KHz 24bits' no matter what output sample rate was set in the Mac and appears a static graphic, not a genuine sample rate readout. All the same, the M9 worked all the way up to 192kHz sample rate. The player accepts DoP over USB in order to read DSD files played on a computer, but with Mac you need a paid-for Audirvana + for this. PCs just need a suitable Steinberg based driver. DSD files loaded into the player's memory played perfectly I found, in Iso, dsf and dff file format, up to DSD128 (double rate DSD).

Good news is inclusion of an S/PDIF digital output (electrical, not optical) through the 3.5mm headphone jack using a short adaptor lead (supplied), so a high quality external hi-fi DAC can be used, allowing me to hook up a mains powered Audiolab M-DAC+. The adaptor plug is a 4 pole 3.5mm – rare – and an ordinary 3-pole 3.5mm adaptor doesn't work properly here.

The player will run from external power whilst playing so it can be used as a transport in effect. The same 3.5mm socket can be switched to Line Out also, that cuts out the volume control and sets analogue output to 2V – the same as a CD player, so the M9 can act as a CD player, one able to additionally play hi-res and DSD.

To use the balanced output you



The M9 has a gold-hue rotary volume control, transport buttons and micro-SD card slot on its left face. At top sits the on/off switch.

2.5mm plug that I find snaps too easily to be practicable for use on the move.

The player arrived with 1.0.0 software. I updated over wi-fi to latest 1.0.2 (two successive downloads) via the 'net without problem but a 'TF card' is requested and must be inserted (SD card). I had no luck trying to understand FiiO's instructions on loading a zip file to the player direct, tried a few common methods (load zip to root etc) but none worked. This left a USB DAC driver update V4.47.0 unloaded, as no loading instructions accompany it.

SOUND QUALITY

The M9 had the speed and sound balance I heard from the M7, even though they use different DACs. Selecting Fleetwood Mac's Dreams (24/96 WAV) the sound sped off the mark with vivid pace and strong cymbal crashes from Mick Fleetwood's drum kit, even though I used Slow filter. His drums had firm impact too. It was an immediately impressive sound, if not as subtle and silky as I know AKM's Verita Series from mains powered DACs. The player has strong insight and it nicely sorted tracks like Tom Petty's Refugee (24/96 FLAC) that can come over as muddled and harsh through some players.

Similarly with The Eagles Somebody, a horribly upward



The headphone outputs – 3.5mm and 2.5mm jacks – sit on the bottom face, with symmetrical USB C connector alongside.

KKBox and Moov installed, with Qobuz, Spotify and other services compatible options.

need 'balanced' headphones, meaning independent headphone leads with no shared earth, terminated in a tiny



FLUID DYNAMICS

The best small DAC money can buy

The Qutest project miniaturised our award-winning proprietary DAC technology into a palm-sized device with devastating dynamics, timing and precision. Technically outstanding, with effortlessly fluid musicality and lucid coherence, Qutest is, quite simply, the best small DAC ever made. From desktops to full-size systems, Qutest is the smartest way into Chord Electronics' uncompromising world of hi-fi playback devices.

CHORDELECTRONICS.CO.UK



Qutest

◦ CHORD ◦

Chord Electronics Ltd.

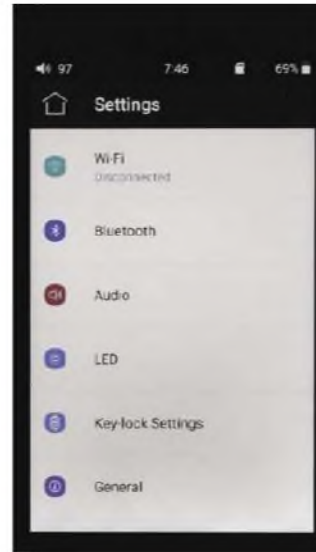
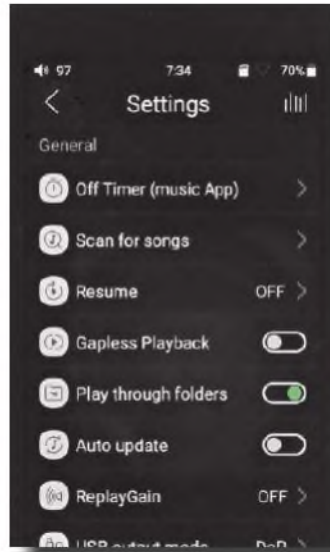
compressed CD track – but it came out well here, again with grippy sense of pace from the energetic bass line, Glen Frey's vocals clear centre stage whilst Hammond organ swirled menacingly left and right. The Audiolab M-DAC+ got more depth out of this track but the M9 made it exciting.

When lowering pace to the softer and slower Narrow Daylight from Diana Krall (24/96) the M9 player imposed hard outline on images and added firm grip to the slow plucked bass line. Swapping over to our Audiolab M-DAC+ gave an easier, more laconic presentation, the one I am used to from this track in my review suite on SD card; there was a greater smoothness and depth too.

However, I then loaded a DSD version (correctly flagged as 2822kHz meaning single rate DSD at 2.8MHz) and heard an easier and more open rendition with plucked bass sounding fulsome rather than 'fast'. This was really impressive, moving quality right up.

Double rate DSD (5.6MHz) was also played without problem. DSD came over as more open and natural than PCM but the files are huge at 100s of MBs.

With the Chicago Symphony



There are two – different – settings menus and both carry audio functions. Confusing.

Orchestra and Mahler's Symphony No8 'Veni Creator Spiritus' (24/96 FLAC) the choirs stretched wide and individual sections, such as male counterpoints, could be easily picked out. As with Rock I found the M9 able to avoid muddle, even with volume right up. There was more air and space with a DSD recording of The Trondheim Soloists playing Divertimenti, strings texturally rich yet free from harshness.

CONCLUSION

FiiO's M9 is a complex and capable player. Its ability to stream from on-line music services will be a key feature for many I suspect. Add in Bluetooth headphone connection and USB DAC capability and the M9 looks very attractive. It has a fast, punchy sound that will appeal to many – but at the expense of space and subtlety. So very good, if not an ultimate audiophile machine, except with DSD.

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

Frequency response of the M9 reached 50kHz (-1dB) before rolling off slowly to the upper theoretical limit of 96kHz, our analysis shows, with a 24/192 digital PCM signal and both Sharp Roll-Off filters (2). The Slow Roll-Off filters (2) reduced this to 40kHz – little change. With CD the figures were 21kHz and 12kHz respectively, Slow Roll-Off softening treble perceptibly by a small amount.

Distortion was on the high side at 0.13% (-60dB, 24bit) where 0.03% or less is common, our analysis showing an array of harmonics. This resulted in an EIAJ dynamic range value of 104dB – low by current standards where 115dB is common and 117dB quoted, as expected from AKM4490 DACs. We tested two samples, both running latest firmware (1.0.2). The problem was digital noise (wi-fi and Bluetooth set to Off), since S/PDIF out gave the same result via an Audiolab M-DAC+. Running the same test files (on SD card) through our Astell&Kern AK120 gave 0.03% distortion and 117dB dynamic range.

With CD distortion measured 0.18% which, as CD goes, is very good, dynamic

range being 101dB – little worse than hi-res. The M9 is fine with CD, less so with hi-res. There appears to a problem here, similar to an M7 tested August 2018 issue.

Output measured 2.4V from the 3.5mm headphone jack (unbalanced) – enough to drive all headphones, rising to 2.7V from the 2.5mm jack (balanced). Line output delivered 2V – the same as a CD player – with the same dynamic range and distortion values as Headphone out.

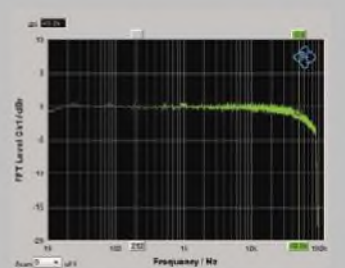
FiiO quote the 3.5mm unbalanced output in terms of power – 125mW into a low 16 Ohms (most headphones are either 40 Ohms or 300 Ohms) – the M9 just managed this. Into 40 Ohms it delivered full output (2.4V / 144mW).

The M9 has limited dynamic range with hi-res files, like the M7 tested previously, even though different DACs are used. Otherwise, it worked well. **NK**

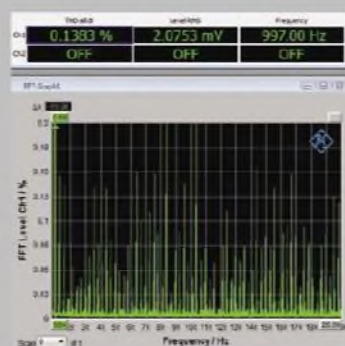
Frequency response 8Hz- 50kHz
Distortion (24bit, -60dB) 0.13%
Separation 102dB
Dynamic range 104dB

Noise -102dB
Headphone (unbal/bal) 2.4/2.7V
Line output 2V

FREQUENCY RESPONSE



DISTORTION



FiiO M9 £229.99



EXCELLENT - extremely capable

VALUE - keenly priced

VERDICT

An affordable player with "everything" on-board, including streaming. Exciting sound, but not svelte.

FOR

- small-ish and light-ish
- streaming
- S/PDIF out

AGAINST

- measured distortion
- low dynamic range
- sound lacks subtlety

Advanced MP3 players
 +44 (0)343 289 6880
www.advancedmp3players.co.uk

LINDEMANN.



Limetree Phono
RRP: £595



"The Limetree Phono is something of a bargain preamp. It offers outstanding levels of performance with moving-magnet cartridges alongside a more than respectable moving-coil showing too, should you choose to upgrade at a later date. At the price, this feels like a gift to any vinyl fans that are on the hunt for a good-value phono stage".

Ed Selley, Hi-Fi Choice



Limetree Headphone Amp
RRP: £595



Limetree Network Player
RRP: £795

Own the new Lindemann Limetree Phono, Headphone Amp & Network Streamer from **£148.88 per month.*** Full retail price for all three products: **£1,985**

*WITH 10% DEPOSIT AND 12 MONTHLY PAYMENTS ON 0% INTEREST-FREE CREDIT
CONTACT US TO ORGANISE A HOME DEMO & GET A PART-EXCHANGE QUOTE



WIN A PAIR OF ACOUSTIC ENERGY AE109 LOUDSPEAKERS WORTH £500 IN THIS MONTH'S GREAT GIVEAWAY!

www.acousticenergy.co.uk

Here's your chance to win a pair of Acoustic Energy AE109 floorstanding loudspeakers we reviewed in the March 2018 issue. Read

the review excerpt below and answer the questions.

"The AE109s are a two-and-a-half way design using a pair of 4-inch (100mm) mid/bass paper cone units similar to that used in the AE100 with the lower one augmenting lower bass response before rolling off. These are allied to a 1-inch (25mm) soft dome tweeter mounted in what

Acoustic Energy calls a Wide Dispersion Technology waveguide to project sound further into the room.

These drivers are housed in a relatively slim mass-loaded MDF cabinet measuring 800mm x 160mm x 240mm (HxVxD) with cone shaped spikes at the base.

A pair

of full-length magnetically-attached grilles are also supplied (although, as ever, I kept these off for reviewing) while finishes are Satin Black or Walnut vinyl veneer.

At the back is a single pair of 'speaker cable binding posts as well as a slot-shaped reflex port to reinforce the bass.

While not overly-flashy the AE109s are certainly well put together, weighing in at 17.5kg each and feeling solid and sturdy. A solid rap with the knuckles on the side of the cabinet produced no unwanted resonances.

Acoustic Energy claim a frequency range of 40Hz to 35kHz (see Measured Performance for full details) with an 89dB sensitivity – meaning they should be able to go loud with moderately-powered transistor amplifiers or even valves".

For a chance to win this great prize, just answer the four easy questions at right. Send your entries on a postcard only, by 8th February 2019 to:

**February 2019 Competition,
Hi-Fi World magazine,
Studio 204,
Buspace Studio,
Conlan Street,
Notting Hill,
London W10 5AP**

RULES AND CONDITIONS OF ENTRY

- ONLY ONE ENTRY PER HOUSEHOLD
- MULTIPLE ENTRIES WILL BE AUTOMATICALLY DISQUALIFIED
- PURCHASE OF THE MAGAZINE IS NOT A PRE-CONDITION OF ENTRY
- NO CORRESPONDENCE WILL BE ENTERED INTO
- THE EDITOR'S DECISION IS FINAL
- NO EMPLOYEES OF AUDIO WEB PUBLISHING LIMITED, OR OF ANY COMPANIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE PRODUCTION OR DISTRIBUTION OF THE PRIZES, ENTER



QUESTIONS

[1] The mid/bass cones are made of –

- [a] plastic
- [b] paper
- [c] steel
- [d] wood

[2] Is the tweeter –

- [a] electrostatic
- [b] ribbon
- [c] soft dome
- [d] plasma

[3] The grilles are attached by –

- [a] chewing gum
- [b] screws
- [c] nails
- [d] magnets

[4] The reflex port is –

- [a] tubular
- [b] slot shaped
- [c] triangular
- [d] variable geometry

**ENTRIES WILL BE ACCEPTED ON A POSTCARD ONLY
PLEASE ENSURE YOU PUT A TELEPHONE CONTACT NUMBER ON YOUR ENTRY**

**NOVEMBER 2019 WINNER: ISOTEK EVO 2 CORVUS MAINS DISTRIBUTION BLOCK
Danielle Frowde of Penryn, Cornwall**



SCANSONIC

AUDIO ANALOGUE
soundpleasure

DECENTAUDIO.CO.UK



TEL: 05602 054669

EMAIL: INFO@DECENTAUDIO.CO.UK

AUDIO ANALOGUE - KRONOS AUDIO - MAGNEPAN - RIVA AUDIO - SCA



Transfiguration

KRONOS
TIME FOR MUSIC™



DECENT AUDIO
SOUND DISTRIBUTION

ANSONIC - TRANSGURATION - USHER - VAN DEN HUL - VELA AUDIO

American wood

Want headphones that look and sound a little different? The ZMF Atticus is Martin Pipe's suggestion...

This particular story begins with the Fostex T50RP professional studio headphones, the performance of which transcends their modest pricing. They can be made to sound even better with tweaks, though, as Chicago resident Zach Mehrbach discovered. Several years ago he started modifying T50RPs for friends and family, and the work occupied ever-greater slices of his time. Saddled by student debt, he decided to turn these efforts into a commercial venture known as ZMF (Zach Mehrbach Films, apparently).

Aspiring guitar-maker Mehrbach, having exploited the potential of the T50RP as far as it would go, saw his own headphone designs as the way forward for ZMF. Among the results are the £1,100 Atticus featured here. As with the other 'ear-gear' born in ZMF's workshop, the cups of the 490g Atticus are made of wood – specifically camphor – which makes them distinctive both visually and aurally. Mehrbach "loves" camphor, which he describes as "a medium-density wood that machines and finishes well, with the added bonus of smelling great".

That said, ZMF offers its headphones in "limited-edition" woods too. Acorn Audio's Amer Qureshi, who imports and sells ZMF here, told me that he can also supply an Atticus in Manchurian Ash (£1,200) or Cocobolo (£1,300). The choice of wood influences how the headphones reproduce music, as Mehrbach points out; softer woods will have "more decay and more sense of roundness to notes", while harder woods will be "slightly more precise, with harder edges".

Both of the aforementioned woods are notably harder than camphor, but soft when compared to teak – which ZMF uses for another model, the Auteur. It's important to make the right choice from the outset, though, as ZMF doesn't "offer a cup change service...they're not user replaceable...changing them necessitates a complete rebuild of the headphone". Even in standard camphor form, the Atticus – supplied in a rugged plastic 'seahorse' case with two sets of cables (balanced 4-pin XLR and unbalanced 6.3mm, with 3-pin mini XLRs at the headphone end) – is indeed a joy to behold.

Interestingly, the earpads – only "regular, non-perforated" types are recommended – can be upgraded, although replacement is an option too. The Atticus comes with lambskin/suede 'Ori' pads, which are claimed to "add soundstage and treble". They are slightly smaller in diameter than ZMF's higher-end Eikon pads and keep ears "further from the driver, for a touch more stage and linearity". The Eikons are available in 'protein' finish, as well as lambskin and suede.

Naturally, the pads visually complement the cups – which don't just look good. According to Mehrbach, they are "highly-engineered acoustic designs" with damping and airflow characteristics that help to make "frequency response and tonal characteristics" meet expectations. All ZMF headphones go "through months or years of testing to get the specific sound" that Mehrbach is after. The Atticus is a closed-back design, but according to Qureshi "there now exists an open-back version called the Aeolus".

What of the (proprietary) dynamic drivers that live in the cups? Their diaphragms are made of TPE (thermo-polyethylene), an "extremely flexible yet durable plastic" that can remain "ridged and provide impact, while still being flexible enough to have clear treble and very engaging midrange". The electromagnetic circuit that pushes them has a 300-ohm impedance, and a sensitivity of 99dB/mW. ZMF reckon that "tube amps are a good match...as they match our drivers' damping factor well, but solid state amps can work great as well".

SOUND QUALITY

I used Atticus with the excellent Benchmark HPA4 headphone amplifier (also made in the USA) in balanced mode, my primary source being a Cambridge CXN v2 and Chord Qutest DAC playing music held on a NAS. My Focal Utopia 'phones were used as a reference. On the whole, the earpieces of the Atticus are – despite their bulk and weight – comfortable to wear. When lying down, though, I did note a tendency to slip off. Adjusted properly, they are a snug fit and as a result you're isolated from external noise that can spoil your enjoyment of the music.

They may slip off in bed, but to be honest these would be the last headphones to choose if getting sleep is on the agenda! In short, they place excitement and sheer energy over any pretence towards neutrality. The ZMF 'house sound' has been described by Mehrbach as "a synergy between analytical and musical... the uncanny ability to present detail without losing organic enjoyable attributes". That is, if my experience



is anything to go by, a fairly accurate summation. You won't miss any significant musical detail in decent 24-bit recordings (like the LSO/ Naseda recording of Britten's War Requiem I frequently turn to); indeed, it's probably a little too prominent!

An advantage of the closed-back approach is a decent bass response. And tonally, I do indeed note a bias towards the low-end. It's not as 'in your face' in this regard as some of the 'phones selling in large quantities to certain sectors of the market, but there's a definite 'punch' that brings the sheer scale of big basslines (like the synth of Kraftwerk's Man-Machine album) to the fore. This extends into the lower midrange, with obvious repercussions for male vocals. In terms of presentation, the

difference between the Atticus and Utopia – where a complete lack of character is its character – is obvious.

The Atticus immediately grips you by being more exciting to listen to than the more expensive French design – house music and searing guitar-driven rock benefit more than, say, orchestral works - but what, exactly, is hi-fi about? Ultimately, that's your choice.

Also 'big' and immersive is the soundstage; in terms of imaging, you're left in no doubt as to the spaces occupied by the players. There is however a smidgen of reticence when it comes to the treble. Percussion at the other end of the rhythmic scale to the big bass drums – cymbals, triangles and the

like - seem a little held back in the mix. Yet for all these traits, listening fatigue was never a problem. I found that the biggest surprise of all...

CONCLUSION

The 'meaty and beaty' Atticus, hardly the most neutral transducer on the planet, nevertheless engages musically. Listening to a wide variety of material, it's evident that the Atticus suits some genres (energetic ones!) more than others. Although these headphones spent most of their time here being fed by the HP4A, they also proved to be compatible with other gear at my disposal. I was thus able to enjoy the Atticus distinctive presentation with my FiO X3 portable player, no drive issues (like audible strain) being evident.

ZMF ATTICUS
£1,100 (STOCK
CAMPHOR WOOD
VERSION)



EXCELLENT - extremely capable

VALUE - keenly priced

VERDICT

The Atticus is not a natural transducer but it is nevertheless enjoyable to listen to.

FOR

- visually and aurally arresting
- comprehensive package

AGAINST

- presentation not tonally neutral
- can slip off under some circumstances

Acorn Audio
 +44 (0)7908 158085
 www.acornaudio.co.uk



BRYSTON

LEGENDARY
20 YEAR
WARRANTY



BP-17³
PREAMPLIFIER
AVAILABLE IN
BLACK OR SILVER



BP-4B³
POWER
AMPLIFIER
AVAILABLE IN
BLACK OR SILVER

TECHNOLOGY

Bryston's patented Salomie Circuit is a revolutionary way to reduce unwanted colouration unveiling never before heard details only hinted at by other equipment. The input stage operates at distortion of less than 0.001 percent!

POWER

Cubed Series technology is available in 10 different amplifiers ranging from the B135³ integrated at 135 watts per channel, the venerable 4B³ at 300 watts by two channels, to the incredible 28B³ 1000 watt mono block.

CONTROL

For the first time, Bryston brings Cubed Series to the front end. Our new BP-17³ Preamplifier features the Salomie Circuit from input to output reproducing higher resolution than ever before.

TO HEAR TECHNOLOGY, POWER & CONTROL BOOK A DEMONSTRATION AT:

Adventures in HiFi	Chester	01244 345576
Analogue Seduction	Cambs	01733 350878
Basically Sound and Vision	Norfolk	01362 820800
Fanthorpes HiFi	Hull	01482 223096
HiFi Lounge	Bedfordshire	01767 448121
HiFi Sound	Stockon	01642 267012
Moorgate Acoustic	Sheffield	01142 756048
Music Matters	Birmingham	01214 292811
Jordan Acoustics	Glenrothes	01592 744779
Paul Green HiFi	Bath	01225 316197
Sevenoaks Sound & Vision	Yeovil	01935 700078
Soundcraft HiFi	Kent	01233 624441
Unilet Sound & Vision	Surrey	02089 429567

PMC[®]
DISTRIBUTION UK

T +44 (0)1767 686300
www.bryston.co.uk

Mail

Visit our website at www.hi-fiworld.co.uk or send your emails to letters@hi-fiworld.co.uk. Letter of the month wins a pair of KEF EGG wireless digital music system

Answers by: NK - Noel Keywood; JM - Jon Myles; PR - Paul Rigby; MP - Marlin Pipe.

LETTER OF THE MONTH PRIZE



KEF EGG WIRELESS DIGITAL MUSIC SYSTEM

<http://uk.kef.com/egg>

[subject to availability - Gloss Black, Pure White or Frosted Blue]

For more advice see Letters from earlier issues at www.hi-fiworld.co.uk/letters

A KEF EGG WIRELESS DIGITAL MUSIC SYSTEM is on its way to DR. R J SIMMONDS, Letter of the Month winner in our January 2019 issue.

Letter of the Month

THE MOVE TO MC

I will have a budget of c.£10k by late October but am conflicted what to do. My system is an ageing Linn Sondek/Akito (generally looked after by Andrew at Doug Brady or Brian/Trevor at House of Linn) with Ortofon 2M Blue MM cartridge, Icon Audio MB90 MKII monoblocks and PSI MKII phono stage, and Klipsch La Scala II speakers with Townshend Super-tweeters attached.

My thoughts are either blow the lot on a much coveted SME 20/3 with appropriate arm and moving coil cartridge. Am thinking of an SME V and Ortofon Cadenza Black. This will be a bit over budget, but who says the kids need food!

Or revamp the existing systems. Perhaps add a Booplinth, plus some further upgrades such as new chassis, arm-board etc, new cartridge such as Linn Adikt or Ortofon Cadenza Blue/Bronze, and a decent mains cable block such as the Isotek EVO 3 Aquarius.

This option should leave some money to appease Mrs P and buy a Naim Core so she can listen to the CDs that are sat doing nothing (we all have to compromise) – and perhaps do a bit of tube rolling with the valve amps. What with other phrases such as



Technics SL-1200G. The latest Direct Drive from Technics. Buy it as-is with Technics arm or consider a Timestep modified version for a turntable that is deeply impressive in sound quality.

B-Type Plug, Breath Controller, Clipping and Double-ended Noise Reduction I think there might be a lot of BDSM types working in the hi-fi industry!

What would you do?

And, speaking of compromises, my room is far from perfect. I get great soundstage, and the positioning of the large settee near the left speaker doesn't seem to affect it at all. However, I sometimes wonder if adding

a subwoofer might help. What do you think?

I have included some pictures so that you can see what I mean about the room.

Regards,

Dr. Mark Pitchford.

Hi Mark. You are running LP and want good quality from it – but you use an Ortofon 2M Blue moving

GutWire Audio Grounding Cables



An extremely effective and simple way to improve the sound of any audio system. A single cable to enable the proper grounding of electronic components.

Simply attach the RCA (or XLR) connector end to any spare input socket on your integrated amplifier or pre-amplifier. The mains plug end goes into any spare wall socket, or into a mains distributor. This creates the shortest route to ground from the circuit boards and introduces a different ground potential into the system.

It takes moments to hear the sound stage increase in size, both depth and width, that the tonal balance has more weight to it and the sound is more natural, less "hifi". Increased transparency provides more resolution of detail and a sharper focus of images.

GutWire Audio Cables hand made in Canada
UK Distribution by Epicurean Audio

Far more effective than passive grounding boxes, wooden or metal, which also require the use of multiple additional cables. No compression of dynamics, or added colouration, which can occur with alternative systems.

An elegant and simple solution; a single cable does it all.

These ground cables only use the earth pin within the mains plug. The live and neutral pins are not used and are safely insulated inside the plug.

Two models available:

Perfect Ground – UK or Schuko plug	£399
Ultimate Ground – Schuko plug	£650
Ultimate Ground – Furutech UK plug	£699

Audition a cable in your own system; full refund if not completely satisfied.

UK exclusive from The Audio Consultants.



Dr. Mark Pitchford's Klipsch La Scalla II loudspeakers and (right) Icon Audio MB90 Mk II monoblocks with (above) Icon Audio PS1 MkII power supply and phono stage (top).

magnet (MM) cartridge. This is a budget MM!

Move out of yesterday with a modern turntable. Either get a Timestep modified Technics SL-1200G with Rega or SME arm for rock steady speed stability, or perhaps get a Rega P9 for its simplicity and Rega arm. Experiment with platter mats with both of them. Ask Mrs P about the visuals! Both are good looking turntables. Don't avoid the issue of location: they do not have suspended sub-chassis like the Linn so need a very firm base.

If you don't mind a bit of DIY then the Sheu Analog's Cello Classic turntable I reviewed in our November 2018 issue with Rega arm provides gorgeous sound. Great value in terms of sound quality, if a bit fundamental in construction.

With a Rega or SME arm your dreams of a moving coil cartridge can be fulfilled in all their glory. The Cadenza Bronze is the one to go for, with its smooth and golden top-end sheen. The Blue is brighter and sharper, the Black a tad laid back, but slickly smooth. All have solid and punchy bass in a good arm able to support this.

A sub-woofer will add little, unless you want a better headache. And they're very difficult to match in properly without a spectrum analyser. I'd advise a home demo if you can't resist the idea.

All this will cost much less than £10k. Book a holiday with the leftovers or stock up on modern 180gm quality LPs. **NK**

COLLECTING MEMORIES

Looking at my system now I see all the keepers I've collected over the last 24

years. Sansui 1000a, Leak Stereo 20, Townshend Elite Rock turntable, Technics SP10 Mk I I with TTWEIGHTS copper matt and Nagaoka crystal record weight, Thorens TD160 Super, Vacuum State Electronics FVP, Audiosphere full range 'speakers.

All of these pieces of kit have been modified and improved by my father with too much work to list here. Alongside them are the Chinese bits of kit I've collected over the past 18 months. A ten Watt single ended Class A solid-state amplifier based off the John Linsley Hood design of 1969, an 8 Watt EL34 single-ended tube amp, and a DAC with an input for CD and USB and a tube buffer in the output.

Interestingly, I substituted the original Chinese tube of the DAC with a NOS American military tube and was really underwhelmed with the sound. A twenty four hour burn in yielded little improvement. Listening to a Moby track that I'm very familiar with I noticed that during the vintage vinyl samples in the track the surface noise recorded from the original record was noticeably muted when compared with the Chinese tube, indicating to me that the Chinese tube was superior when it comes to detail retrieval. The NOS tube stayed however as the case was a pain to get on and off.

These

Chinese bits of kit were carefully selected. You can do well with some good Chinese equipment but you really need to know what you are looking for. I was only burnt once, with a cheap Chinese 845 amplifier. It ran super-hot and ended up dying. I can sum up my experience with it in two words: I survived.

Listening to my system now I'm happy with the sound, but to be honest, I'm not sure I'm having any more fun than I did when listening to my original system, a Sony Playstation hooked up to a vintage Akai receiver and a pair of no name paper cone 'speakers. That system really impressed me and started my interest in hi-fi.

I've found the developments in audio recently interesting. People's tolerance for audio jumbles seems to be further reducing, with the rise of the sound bar as evidence. Vinyl seems to be racing ahead, with the unfortunate popularity of the Crosley turntables tracking with a ceramic stylus at 5 grams. I've seen a few Youtube videos



A classic old Leak Stereo 20 amplifier, one of the 'keepers' in Ben North's collection of classic hi-fi products, renovated by his dad!



SPENDOR

BRINGING MUSIC TO LIFE

Spendor A-Line loudspeakers deliver sound with projection, character and sheer entertainment far beyond their modest dimensions. With their clear, open sound, they're outgoing, friendly and expressive, bringing a natural sense of life and articulation to your favourite music.

MADE FOR MUSIC. DESIGNED FOR YOU.

spendoraudio.com

with self-proclaimed vinyl enthusiasts grabbing their records by the playing surface and offering them up to the dark god Crosley.

While having way too much fun I decided to dust off my Thorens TD 160 Super with Michelle counterweight and rewired arm tube and lead outs, tracking with a modified Denon DL103 cartridge in machined metal body. My sleeve caught the tip of the stylus and bent it to a 90 degree angle! Oh well.

I was so impressed with the sound that I've since bought a new Denon, now awaiting mounting. I've only killed two cartridges over the past 24 years, I was having too much fun both times.

Now is a great time to pick up CDs for a good price. My brother has recently gotten into audio and has collected 130 CDs from op shops over the last few months, all for a dollar each.

I'm old enough to remember when CDs were 30 dollars each. I think we will see a repeat of what happened with vinyl, with the market crashing and the wise picking up some bargains.

I was without a turntable for a few months until I bought a replacement belt for my Elite Rock table. During this time I was listening mainly to music on YouTube. It made me realise how fortunate this generation is, with music and videos playing for free. We really do live in an audio/video world. Would Kirin J Callinans song Way to War be complete without visuals by auteur expat Australian director Kris Moyes? Keep up the good work fellas!

Ben North
Australia

Hi Ben. YouTube drives me a bit mad at times too because it can be addictive and a voice tells me I am being subverted. But then again you get to see great performances from real live musicians. Listening to Led Zeppelin's When the Levee Breaks then watching Zepparella actually play it (ignore the cheesy outfits!) and finally hearing the extraordinary finger picking of it's originator Kansas Joe McCoy – all conveniently lined up on YouTube – is a delight not so easily managed on a normal hi-fi. **NK**

TANNOY CHOICE

I'm toying with the idea of purchasing a pair of Tannoy Mercury 7.4s at a decent price of £330 new, but what I don't know is are they going to suit my system and was wondering if you could steer me in the right direction – or even to look elsewhere.

My hi-fi is Rega P3-24 fitted with a Nagaoka MPI 10 with full reference



YouTube carries unique music videos where you get to see the artist at work. Here's Sina, who now has her own channel "dedicated to the Sound of Classic Rock". Lightning fast drumming and great accompaniment, all in pro sound quality. Worth seeing.

upgrade from Groovetracer, Icon Audio PS1.2 and Icon Audio Stereo 25 MKII. Listening room is 20 foot by 12 foot and I have a Cambridge Audio CD player 650c. After using my faithful old Royd Eden Speakers for 30 years I'm aware that I haven't heard the best from my system. I'm a regular buyer of your magazine so please if you can help.

All the best,
John Smees.

Hi John. That is a lovely simple LP system, complete with valve amplifiers playing into a large room. I sense potential! But I won't recommend big Martin Logans (a fine match). Tannoy's Mercury 7.4s will suit your system in terms of affordability and sound balance and I suggest you buy them. You will find



Tannoy Mercury 7.4 loudspeaker. "Are they going to suit my system" asks John Smees.

more treble and a brighter sound but Tannoy keep this in check and it nicely balances vinyl warmth, so you won't be disappointed I believe. Be aware that like all loudspeakers they need a run in period of at least 40 hours. **NK**

A NATURAL SOUND

I can go back to the classic Decca and Argo pressings of the 1960s. Even today these LPs have never been surpassed in my opinion. The recordings were superb and the pressings were generally good. Modern recording techniques do not even come close!

Also, when reviewing audio equipment in those days, reviewers generally used classical music as a tool to assess equipment, because of the dynamic range produced. Over the years I have always tried to achieve a natural sound, usually using a well recorded piano, ECM recordings come to mind, or acoustic instruments. I can never understand that some equipment will play a certain type of music better than others.

Regards,
Mike Bickley.

Hi Mike. Yes, a lot of old recordings were almost shockingly good. One reason is the circumstances under which they were made. No complex mixing desks with arrays of cheap chips, just a simple but good microphone straight into quality valve amplifiers then onto tape. Artists that achieved early fame, such as Elvis Presley, went into well equipped studios – in his case by Westrex I recall. So we now hear Fever – recorded nearly fifty years ago – as a demonstrator at hi-fi shows.

In a similar vein I heard amazing sound at a show demo – and was

next generation

REFERENCE™

series

Klipsch®

REFERENCE

AVAILABLE NOW
FROM JUST
£220



90° X 90° Tractrix Horn



Spun Copper IMG Woofer



High Quality Cabinet Design

Klipsch's exclusive Tractrix® horn technology delivers the power, detail and emotion of the live music experience with the cleanest, most natural sound possible.

Injection Molded Graphite (IMG) woofer cones are exceptionally light while being extremely rigid - providing remarkable low frequency response, with minimal cone breakup and distortion.

The Reference Base range features a beautiful durable build, including scratch-resistant ebony wood grain vinyl, reinforced MDF and exposed fasteners for an industrial aesthetic.



Distributed by Henley Audio

T: +44 (0) 1235 511 166 | E: sales@henleyaudio.co.uk | W: www.henleyaudio.co.uk

confronted with an LP of The Shadows Greatest Hits. Don't laugh! It made me re-appraise the Shads, realising how good they really were, in spite of their easily digestible demeanour at a time when The Rolling Stones were shocking Britain. As experienced musicians they played live with an easy perfection and were well recorded in good studios, paid for by mums around Britain.

Like you I try as hard as possible nowadays to attain a natural sound. If we expect a "better" system to enhance music we already know by providing stronger bass, more detail and such like it leads inevitably to a sound that is artificially dramatic – to the point of obvious disconnect with reality.

Example? Loudspeakers. Manufacturers just cannot resist raising upper midband and treble to heighten detail, improve intelligibility etc – a problem our measurements make clear. But this also makes for a bright sound that moves toward obviously unnatural, as well as emphasising distortion harmonics that bring a harsh edge – especially to imperfect sources such as old CDs. This is 'enhanced' fidelity.

The natural sound you strive for is also my primary requirement. And it is possible for natural to be dramatic, as those old recordings in their purity show.

NK

CHOOSING A 'SPEAKER

How on earth do you go about the business of buying a pair of speakers today? At present my speakers are Posselt Albatross which were imported by the great Tom Fletcher of Nottingham Analogue. They were purchased in 1994 for a room sized 22ft x 12ft. They are now in a smaller room, 17ft x 12ft.

They are fed by a Marantz PM 10 reference amp and a Marantz SA 10 reference SACD player.

I have thought for a while of replacing the speakers but that is where the dilemma starts. Let's assume I have a budget of up to £10,000. There are a lot of speakers out there up to that price. It is the room size which is the main problem. Is there any point in buying a pair of Sonus Faber at £10k which would simply overpower the room? How do you listen to a set of speakers anyhow? You may have to travel many miles

to hear a certain speaker and then it would probably not be in a room the same size as mine – nor have the same partnering equipment.

You decide to buy a pair and get them home and they sound rubbish in your room. Get a home demo you say. The dealer of the said speaker is probably a hundred miles away and cannot provide this service.

In your review of the Focal Kanta No2 you say it works better in smaller rooms eg 350 sq ft. That equates to a room size of 25 x 14ft. Is that what you call a small room! That makes mine tiny.

I despair when reviewers talk about small, medium and large rooms – it is meaningless. Does a smaller cheaper speaker sound better in a "small" room than a more expensive one, or do you go for a small expensive one?

How much better does a speaker at £10k sound than one at £5k. Let's face it, £5k isn't cheap! But what is the point of spending £10k when £5k would do?

Some of the speakers reviewed in a rival mag look amazing but what good are they if they simply overpower a room? How many people in this country have rooms which are capable of doing justice to these speakers? I think there are probably a lot of people who would give their eye teeth for a modest room like mine, which is a dedicated music room in which I can blow my brains out



Focal Kanta 2 loudspeaker suits a 'smaller room' of 350 sq ft, say Focal. That's large says Nicholas Hodgson.



One of the 'old classic' LPs we play when reviewing. In fact it is a re-pressing from Pro-Ject, available from UK importer Henley, so on modern vinyl and in perfect condition.

because it is away from the main house.

You read reviews of a certain speaker, say a Martin Logan which gets rave reviews, and wonder whether it would be any good for you. The reviewer says it need plenty of room – back to that old question again? What is plenty of room?

Perhaps every speaker manufacturer should specify just what size of room is suitable for a particular speaker. At least it would give you somewhere to start from – and not 'small', 'medium' or 'large' which is meaningless.

There is probably a speaker out which would be the perfect partner for my equipment and room. I would suggest that trying to find that speaker is virtually impossible. I am coming up to my 74th birthday, so if I started looking now I reckon by the time I am 80 I might have a chance. But by then everything would have moved on so I would need to start again.

What would you do? If you had my room and my equipment and £10k to spend on a pair of speakers. What would you buy? The Vivid Audio Kaya range look very interesting but does the Kaya 25 in a 'smaller' room sound as good as a Kaya 90 in a 'large' room. Again that question – what is small, medium or large?

“Can you please develop a phono stage?”



PH1
Blackline

We listen to our customers



The perfect partner for v40...or other amplifiers

With moving coil and moving magnet options, the new PH1 phono stage provides a sound upgrade for turntable and amplifier systems where a pre-amplifier is required.



Hi-Fi World "Excellent"

blueaura.co.uk 



An open panel loudspeaker like a Martin Logan needs space behind – around 3ft will do. Soft wall hangings or a bookcase behind both help, providing absorption and diffusion respectively. Experiment!

And to hear them I would have to travel probably 200 miles and listen in a room nothing like mine. You would probably end up paying the cost of a decent set of speakers just trying to hear all the possibilities!

Help!!

Regards

Nicholas Hodgson

Hi Nick. Lots of good strong questions in there. I will try to answer them simply.

On the matter of small, medium and large rooms, in the UK I would suggest small is below 12ft longest dimension, medium is below 16ft longest dimension and large is anything above 16ft longest dimension. This is based on common convention in architectural practice rather than acoustic properties. Their floor area is determined by width as well as length of course and that's commonly less, around 75% let's say, a 16ft long room being 12ft wide.

This gives us some convenient break-point figures in floor area. Small is less than 100 sq ft, large more than 200 sq ft and medium anything in-between. This is UK-centric, imposed by high population density – Australians and Americans may laugh! Perhaps France with its

large land area justifies Focal's view that 350 sq ft is a "smaller space". Best to ignore that.

Here's the interesting bit. Musical instruments reach down to 40Hz, ignoring organs and synths. To reproduce that you need a room at least 14ft long, if you sit at one end and the speakers are at the other. That's 147 sq ft and a medium room. It conveniently turns out that 'medium' rooms are just acceptable for music reproduction. Your 17ft x 12ft is 204 sq ft and large by this metric.

So typical UK room sizes work reasonably well in basic acoustic terms, meaning the lowest notes they can fully support.

Large stand-mounting loudspeakers work down to 40Hz and drive a medium room well.

There's far more to this issue than just the lowest note a room can support, but as room volume (size) increases generally you get a better sound. Your 17ft x 12ft suits a wide range of loudspeakers and so you really need not worry too much. Even Martin Logans, with their open panels will suit; they ideally need 2-3 feet behind.

If you live far from a dealer check out the cost of delivery services – not a lot nowadays – and discuss this with a dealer. I suspect most have this issue covered however.

Loudspeakers vary, and listeners

tastes and expectations vary, making it impossible for us to be definitive about what you may or may not like. But you need not worry too much in that room. I hope all this helps. **NK**

OBSOLETE SACD?

Perhaps Noel you would like to inform Channel Classics, Chandos, Bis, Alia Vox, and Harmonia Mundi to name a few companies, that their brilliant quality SACD DSD recordings are obsolete. Every month in the Gramophone magazine there is a good amount of SACDs released. Containing superb new DSD recordings. They may not be around in the popular music scene, but they are certainly buoyant on the classical scene.

'Human interface'? it doesn't bother me. Marantz manufactures excellent machines along with quite a few others. So, please Noel don't spoil it for us by spreading rumours about things being obsolete, they are not. This month I bought ten of them with brilliant notes and illustrations – in some cases in lavish booklets. Ease it out, pop it in and play. Now that's what I call human interface.

Stephen Flower

Whoops! Sorry to upset you Stephen. Good to remind us that Classical SACDs are still being made and provide enjoyment. All the same, I believe I am right in saying SACD is effectively obsolete (obsolescent perhaps), in that few players are made and few discs produced. The days of the silver disc are over – and SACD never really caught on whilst CD reigned. Not a rumour methinks!

I regularly listen to DSD recordings and both understand and agree that it offers superb sound quality, especially for classical music. You may like to consider also DSD downloads and their replay. There is increasing interest because of superb quality. **NK**



SACD players are still being made. We reviewed Arcam's CDS50 in the January 2019 issue.



IN ADMIRATION OF MUSIC

DALI RUBICON Trade-in Offer

Save 20% by trading in your old speakers!



We are offering a fantastic promotion on our superb DALI RUBICON SERIES. Trade-in your old speakers (of any make or model) and receive an amazing 20% off new purchases of DALI RUBICON loudspeakers.*

All RUBICON Series models are included in the offer, and, for example, you could save up to **£799** off the brilliant RUBICON 8 floor standing speakers, and even more for a full AV system!

This promotion will be available through the following DALI stockists (for full retailer details go to dali-speakers.com/uk)

Analogue Secuction, Peterborough
Aucio Affair, Birmingham
Aucio Emotion, Fife
Auciovisual Online, Bacup
Creative Audio, Shrewsbury
DB Hifi, Eye
Dcoleys Hifi, Macclesfield
Fanthorpes Hifi, Hull

Fidelity Sound and Vision, Doncaster
Harrow Audio, Harrow
HBH Woolacotts, Plymouth
Hifi Cinema, Reading
Hifi Corner, Edinburgh
Hifi Excellence, Coventry
Hifi Hut, Dublin
Hifonix, Birmingham

Igloo Audio, Tunbridge Wells
Lintone Audio, Newcastle
Nintronics, Welwyn Garden City
Richer Sounds, Selected Stores
Sound Academy, Walsall
Vickers Hifi, York
Wall Of Sound, York
Zouch Audio, Ashby de la Zouch

***Terms & Conditions:**

- The RUBICON Series trade-in promotion runs from 4th December 2018 until 31st March 2019.
- The discount will only be applied to new purchases of DALI RUBICON speakers purchased through authorised DALI stockists, and is only open to residents of the UK and Ireland.
- The discount will be applied to new purchases of any DALI RUBICON models; RUBICON 2, 5, 6, 8, LCR and VOKAL.
- Trade-in applies to any speaker of any brand.

Extra X

Noel Keywood checks out the xDSD portable headphone amplifier from iFi.

The little xDSD from iFi is a small but complex portable headphone amplifier, battery powered and purposed for the pocket. It's able to work with all headphones via cable connection, but not Bluetooth. It can however accept Bluetooth wireless communication from sources such as a mobile 'phone. And yes it accepts DSD via its USB input, hence the model name. That's the outline.

Being pocketable the xDSD is small, measuring 67mm wide, 19mm high and 96mm deep. The case is hard plastic to facilitate Bluetooth (a metal case screens radio waves), but it has a shiny chrome finish and feels every bit as solid as metal. Weight was 138gm on our scales and this includes internal re-chargeable 2200mAh batteries that provide 6-10 hours life between charges (low res MP3 etc draws less current than hi-res). A charger is not supplied, the assumption is everyone already has one (5V USB out) to charge their 'phone. A short 150mm charge lead is also supplied and the rear micro-USB socket to which it connects is for charging only.

Now to headphones, since this is a little complicated. iFi make much of the fully balanced topology of the player but I commonly use fully balanced Oppo PM1s when reviewing Digital Audio Players such as the FiiO M9 this month and don't find the benefit very great; generalising, there's a slightly cleaner outline to images and a tad more focus.

Where most Far Eastern players use the practically

small 2.5mm four-pole socket, iFi fit a 3.5mm four-pole socket that accepts a normal stereo three-pole plug correctly (which commons the earths) or four-pole for balanced phones – and this is rare. CPC Farnell stock many 4-pole 3.5mm plug variants including gold plated, as do Canford. You need to be dextrous and have good eyesight to solder these things (plus the right tools) so be aware of the realities of going balanced here; best to seek out proprietary cables.

Whether the xDSD is used conventionally with unbalanced 'phones or with balanced 'phones it is able to deliver massive output of 3.4V measurement showed – more than enough for all types, so iFi's enthusiastic claims are all met. And Line output is an option (fixed volume, 2V) to feed a hi-fi.

The big central On button glows brightly when on, colour changing to indicate volume level, set by a concentric knurled wheel – very natty. This is an analogue control iFi say; it's also well designed, not affecting frequency response with position, as some do.

Two tiny pinpoint LEDs at left of the volume control serve to show input sample rate and format (DSD, PCM, MQA) and input (S/PDIF, USB, Bluetooth). At right is an Option button that selects 3D+, Xbass+ (or

both) for out-of-head stereo and bass boost respectively.

Unusually, iFi have fitted a rear 3.5mm jack socket to accept an S/PDIF digital input in either electrical or optical form, supplying an optical TOSLINK adaptor. To use the input electrically a 3.5mm plug to phono socket adaptor is required, or suitable lead, neither of which is supplied. Optical worked up to 192kHz sample rate. This input suits old CD players with a digital output, the xDSD acting as an upgrade.

For use as a headphone DAC/ amplifier for a computer there's a USB A male plug and two convertors to USB B (printer) socket cable, plus a USB extension lead – unusually comprehensive. Most people will use USB for computer connection and it's the only way to get DSD in, using DoP protocol. To do this with Macs means buying Audirvana+ and with a PC the driver must be updated. iFi give instructions for using Audirvana on their website, and also provide (free) a PC driver update to send PCM higher than 96kHz sample rate, or DSD.

You can also transmit (stream) audio from a home computer or laptop via Bluetooth which allows online subscription music services to be sent to headphones (Spotify, Tidal, iTunes etc). The xDSD worked perfectly with my Mac, correctly identifying its output sample rate all the way up



Pursuit Perfect System

"WOW this cable is awesome - congrats!! Great skills. Mega impressed

Sonically I enjoyed a tighter more focused vocal, with fine details becoming easier to hear as part of a extremely well defined soundstage. Chord Electronics DAVE owners should give the **WAVE STORM Reference** cable serious consideration."

www.pursuitperfectsystem.com

WAVE STREAM PREMIUM DUAL BNC CABLES FOR THE HUGO MScaler

WAVE STORM REFERENCE DUAL BNC CABLES FOR THE BLU Mk2 MScaler

Listeners to digital music are realising that RF noise can have a significant effect on the music signal processed by a DAC. RF noise in the analogue stage of the DAC can add a hardness or harsh aspect to the music. **WAVE** cables are built to target the RF noise **before** it gets into the DAC. The word is spreading about our cables but try them for yourself. Free worldwide delivery and full money back guarantee if not satisfied.

Buy direct and read customer reviews at -

www.wavehighfidelity.com

Handmade in the Vale of Belvoir, UK.

WAVE

the Art of Music -
the Science of Sound

WAVE STREAM PREMIUM SPDIF AND BNC CABLES TO CONNECT SOURCES TO DACs



Audio Bacon review of Dual BNC Cables for the Chord Blu Mk2 MScaler

"The first thing I noticed about the **WAVE STORM Reference** was its bass extrusion capabilities. It has a huge bottom that protrudes into your listening space. It throws its weight outward with ease and authority. Kick drums have a chest-rattling impact (cannons from 1812 Overture) with tangible shape, tone, and tightness. **Definitely the punchiest out of all the cables I've heard so far..**"

(Actions speak louder than words and after the review the reviewer bought a pair of **WAVE STORM Reference** Dual BNC cables for his own use.)

to 768kHz. It played PCM and DSD flawlessly and also worked perfectly with an iPhone.

SOUND QUALITY

Using the xDSD as a DAC linked to the computer (Mac running Sierra), connected via USB, it came across as neutrally clean and punchy. I found it immediately engaging with Jackie

had a fulsome bass line and firm drum strikes within intro, plus a silky smooth rendition of his voice. Classical also benefited from the sense of space and scale, the Amsterdam Sinfonietta filling what seemed like a huge space around my head, strings lustrous and smooth

"the iFi xDSD came across as neutrally clean and punchy."

Leven's Call Mother a Lonely Field (CD) where drum strikes were fast and resonated in convincing fashion. Not a soft or romantic presentation so much as brisk and surgically clean. Running through a wide range of tracks in my review library the xDSD was an exciting listen, if not with the subtle sense of depth that higher spec DAC chips can provide – and also a little low-

in Dvorak's Serenade For Strings (DSD64). The xDSD had a warm balance with DSD, whatever I played, but the huge scale and easy flow was magnificent. This was an altogether different sound.

CONCLUSION

The xDSD from iFi is a battery powered headphone amplifier with broad ability. Bluetooth input allows connection to a mobile phone, portable player or computer, providing they have Bluetooth



At centre lies an illuminated on/off button that changes colour with volume. Concentric is a knurled volume control. The tiny input LED (left, bottom) changes colour to indicate sample rate, or DSD.

output of course – most now do. As a digital-to-analogue convertor (DAC) it's good, if lacking the svelte depth of higher dynamic range units (e.g. FiiO Q5), but this only matters when used in a hi-fi, rather than on the move. Headphone compatibility is superb: it can cope with them all – even balanced 'phones. And Xbass+ (but not 3D+) offers useful sonic enhancement appreciable on the move.



The rear carries a USB input, filter slide switch, micro-USB charger input (right) and S/PDIF digital 3.5mm jack socket input at left, optical and electrical.

end light. To ameliorate this however there is Xbass that added obvious heft to the sound due to its strong bass lift. Whilst Xbass+ had obvious effect, 3D+ did not: I could hear no difference with it in or out.

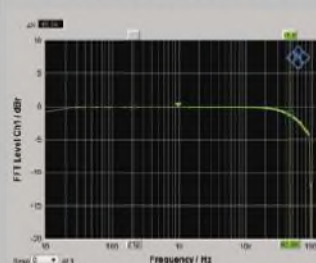
Connected to my iPhone through Bluetooth the xDSD again came over as clear and forthright with David Bowie's Suffragette City (DSD converted to CD by an Onkyo hi-res player on the 'phone). Used like this, quality is set by Bluetooth and aptX but it's still good.

With DSD from Audirvana+ on Mac there was a huge step up, the soundstage broadening and gaining space, having a less forced and more fluid feel to musical flow. Bob Dylan's When You Gonna Wake Up (DSD64)

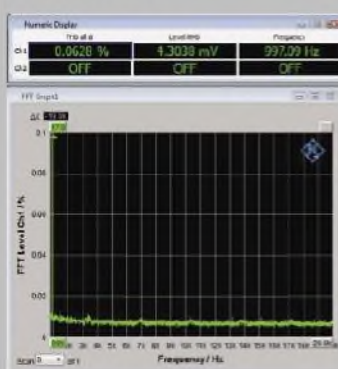
MEASURED PERFORMANCE

Frequency response of the iFi's xDSD reached 46kHz (-1dB) before rolling off slowly to the upper theoretical limit of 96kHz, our analysis shows, with a 24/192 PCM digital input, via both S/PDIF and USB. Switching between Measure and Listen filter made no difference; this has been disabled it

FREQUENCY RESPONSE



DISTORTION



appears. With CD, frequency response reached 18kHz (-1dB) the filter again having no effect. Xbass+ introduced substantial bass lift, +6dB at 40Hz – very obvious.

Distortion measured a low 0.06% (-60dB, 24bit) – good. EIAJ dynamic range came in at 111dB (S/PDIF and USB), low by current standards where 117dB is being achieved. Burr Brown quote 113dB for their DSD1793 DAC chip in the xDSD and iFi echo this figure, but the player's output amps likely contribute noise. With CD the EIAJ dynamic range value was 101dB and distortion 0.22% – both as expected from 16bit and good in themselves.

Output measured a high 3.4V, more than enough for all headphones. This falls to 3V when charging due to charge management but distortion and dynamic range are unaffected.

The xDSD measured well in all areas but its dynamic range is limited and behind rivals. **NK**

Frequency response	10Hz- 46kHz
Distortion (24bit, -60dB)	0.06%
Separation	102dB
Dynamic range	111dB
Noise	-103dB
Headphone output	3.4V
Line output	2V

iFi xDSD DAC £399



OUTSTANDING - amongst the best

VERDICT

Fine headphone amplifier with lots of ability. Lively sound with plenty of punch.

FOR

- Bluetooth input
- balanced h'phone output
- high volume

AGAINST

- light bass
- lacks depth (PCM)
- Bluetooth headphones incompatible

Select Audio
+44 (0)1900 601954
www.selectaudio.co.uk

A PERFECT NEW

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.hi-fiworld.co.uk

**A SUBSCRIPTION TO HI-FI WORLD
MAKES THE PERFECT GIFT FOR
YOUR NEAREST AND DEAREST.**

SAVE

...up to

26%

Subscribe today and you will get a special discounted rate giving a **saving of 15% to 26%** off the cover price. That's an amazing **£3.83 - £3.33 per issue including postage.**



So don't delay, take out a subscription today!

FOR BACK ISSUES ENQUIRIES PLEASE CALL

01442 820580

OVERSEAS SUBSCRIPTIONS IF YOU LIVE OUTSIDE THE UK,
PLEASE CALL FOR OUR LATEST PRICES

+44 (0) 1442 820580

SO WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? CALL NOW!!!

SUBSCRIPTION HOTLINE 01442 820 580

Lines open Mon-Fri 9.00-5.00 or (weekend answering service available)

FOR OUR
ON-LINE MAGAZINE
GO TO WWW.HI-FIWORLD.CO.UK

email:
hifiworld@webscribe.co.uk

YEAR TREAT

WHY SUBSCRIBE TO HI-FI WORLD?

- 12 issues a year delivered straight to your door.
- Be first to grab a bargain in our "Free Reader Classified Ads" section.
- Run by dedicated hi-fi engineers and enthusiasts.
- Subscribers receive a minimum 10% Discount annually.
- Hi-Fi World has become famous for its informative reviews and radical kit designs.
- **PLUS!** Subscribe by Direct Debit and receive a 16.5% discount on a yearly subscription (UK only).

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit



Please fill in this form and send to:

Originator's Identification Number

Hi-Fi World, Subscriptions Department Unit 4 College Road, Business Park, College Road North, Aston Clinton HP22 5EZ

4	2	7	0	4	9
---	---	---	---	---	---

Name and full Postal Address of your Bank/Building Society

To: The Manager	Bank/Building Society
Address	
Postcode	

Name(s) of Account Holder(s)

--	--	--	--	--	--

Branch Sort Code

--	--	--	--	--	--

Bank/Building Society Account Number

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Reference

HF

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society

Please pay Webscribe Ltd Direct Debits from the account in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Webscribe Ltd and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Signature(s)
Date

Bank and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit Instructions for some types of accounts
The guarantee should be detached and retained by the Payer

The Direct Debit Guarantee

- * This Guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay Direct Debits
- * If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit Webscribe Ltd will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If you request Webscribe Ltd to collect a payment, confirmation of the amount and date will be given to you at the time of the request
- * If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit by Webscribe Ltd or your bank or building society you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society
- * If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when Webscribe Ltd asks you to
- * You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us



TERMS & CONDITIONS: You will receive 12 issues per year. Minimum subscription term is 12 months. Prices include P&P and are correct at the time of going to press. All prices are quoted in sterling. Offer available for UK subscribers, only. For enquiries relating to overseas pricing call + 44 (0) 1442 820 580.

- I would like a years subscription to Hi-Fi World and receive a discount off the cover price (I have read and accept the terms and conditions).

I would like to pay for my 12 issues by:

- 6 monthly Direct Debit: Pay £22.00 every 6 months saving 19% off the yearly subscription rate of £54.00
- Annual Direct Debit: Pay £40.00 every 12 months saving 26% off the yearly subscription rate of £54.00
- Annual cheque/credit card: Pay £46.00 saving 15% off the yearly subscription rate of £54.00

Cheques made payable to Audio Web Publishing Ltd.

Your Details

Title _____ Forename _____

Surname _____

Address _____

Post Code _____

Daytime Tel: _____

Email: _____

Please debit my VISA MASTER MAESTRO AMEX (SWITCH)

Security No: (last three digits printed on the signature strip)

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Valid from Date: ____/____/____ Expiry Date: ____/____/____

Switch card issue No:

Cardholder Signature: _____

Outside UK:-

EUROPE Airmail **£50.00**

OVERSEAS Airmail **£70.00**



Send this form to:

Hi-Fi World, Subscriptions Department Unit 4 College Road, Business Park, College Road North, Aston Clinton HP22 5EZ



WORLD STANDARDS

Your guide to the best products we've heard that are currently on sale in the UK...

TURNTABLES

AVID INGENIUM £800
Great bass response and upper midrange detail allied to clarity makes this a must-hear at its price-point



CLEARAUDIO INNOVATION £6400
Expensive, but offers great results from a finely honed and beautifully finished belt drive turntable, with servo control from the platter to keep a grip on tempo like few others. Can be fitted with a Clearaudio tangential arm, or any conventional design. Awesome.



INSPIRE MONARCH £4,350
A rebuilt from the ground up Technics Direct Drive, having blistering pace and dynamics allied with smoothness, sophistication and purity of tone. A true reference.



LINN LP12SE £3,600
The UK's most iconic turntable, the legendary Sondek goes from strength to strength. New Keel sub-chassis and Radical DC motor add precision and grip to one of the world's most musical disc spinners. Expensive though

MICHELL GYRO DEC £1700
Wonderful styling coupled with great build and finish make this turntable a delight for friends and family. It has an attractive clear acrylic dust cover, and you can mount just about any arm. A current design standard



PRO-JECT ESSENTIAL DIGITAL £300
A budget turntable that turns in a great analogue performance, but also has a hi-res digital output. Send 24/96 across your lounge via optical cable to a DAC and get great audio quality. Or record LP to your laptop.



REGA RP3 £550
The first of the super-quality Regas, little comprised by price and featuring Rega's outstanding RB303 tonearm, suitable for MM and MC cartridges. A standard at the price point.

TIMESTEP EVO £2100
The famous Technics SL-1210 MkII Direct Drive but with improved plinth, isolation, main bearing and power supply, plus an SME arm (add £1500). DD convenience, rock steady pitch and fab sound at a great price. Our in-house reference.



TONEARMS

ORIGIN LIVE ENCOUNTER MK3C £1,745
Origin Live combines carbon fibre and ebony to marvellous effect in its new 12-inch arm. Creamy and rich in presentation, the Encounter delves deep into the mix for a satisfying listen.

HADCOCK GH-242 EXPORT £810
Consummately musical, lyrical sounding tonearm, but needs the right turntable.

ORIGIN LIVE ONYX £450
Easy, smooth, creamy nature that reminds you why you're listening to vinyl in the first place. Essential audition at the price.



REGA RB303 £300
A one piece tapered casting makes this arm's structure almost unrivalled. Great dynamics and superb imaging, for MM and MC. Reference quality for peanuts.

SME 312S £1,600
Twelve inch magnesium alloy tapered arm tube plus SME V bearings. An insightful yet smooth and relaxed sound. Superlative build completes the package. Our Editor's steed.



SME 309 £1500
A one-piece tapered 9in arm finished like a camera and slick to use. Superative SME quality and sound at affordable price.

SME V £3000
Offers rapid fire timing and a sense of precision, plus rock solid dynamics. Top dollar for deep pockets.

CARTRIDGES

AUDIO TECHNICA AT-OC9 MLIII MC £420
A fine sounding MC with strong bass and super fine treble from a great stylus – yet inexpensive.



AUDIO TECHNICA AT-F3/III MC £150
Great value entry level moving coil with detail and grip you just can't get from similarly priced moving magnets.

BENZ MICRO ACE SL MC £595
Smooth, lucid and full-bodied, award-winning, hand-made cartridge from Switzerland.

BENZ MICRO WOOD SL MC £945
Highly finessed Swiss moving coil that plays music with riflebolt precision.

DENON DL-103 £180
A popular and much loved budget MC with big bass, smooth treble and deep sound stage. Fantastic value.



LYRA TITAN I MC £3,500
Breathtaking speed and dynamics from LP, helped by diamond coated, boron rod cantilever.



ORTOFON 2M MONO SE MM £80
A mono cartridge purposed for The Beatles in Mono microgroove LPs. Fitted with a top quality Shibata tip. Fab for the four.



ORTOFON 2M BLACK MM £400
As good as it gets from MM. Fabulous detail and insight from a Shibata stylus, good bass and excellent tracking.

ORTOFON CADENZA BRONZE MC £1,400
A mid-price MC with a slightly livelier presentation than the super smooth Cadenza Black. High-end sound at midband price – great value.



ORTOFON CADENZA BLACK MC £1,800
Ultra smooth and dimensional moving coil with bass and punch aplenty. Lovely stylus.

ORTOFON A95 MC £3,750
Fast and extremely detailed, this is an MC cartridge that sets standards.

REGA CARBON MM £35
Budget price for a competent cartridge with a fairly unflappable nature. Ideal for beginners.



GOLDRING 1012GX MM £250
A glorious sounding cartridge with solid bass and strong dynamic punch, plus excellent treble from its Fritz Geiger stylus. Fun and affordable.



SHURE M97XE £80
Big warm sound, but great tracking and bullet proof stylus protection from damped guard. A survivor.

VAN DEN HUL DDT-II SPECIAL MC £995
Long-established cartridge from Holland with an open and dynamic sound.

PHONO PREAMPS
CAMBRIDGE AUDIO 651P £200
Clean, concise sound from MM and MC cartridges at a very low price. A real bargain.

ICON AUDIO PS3 MKII £2,500
All valve MM phono stage with MC transformer option, graced by big, spacious and relaxed sound.



LUXMAN EQ-500 PHONOSTAGE £4,495
A fully-equipped phono stage from Japanese manufacturer Luxman that offers comprehensive cartridge matching allied to superb sound.



LEEMA ACOUSTICS ELEMENTS ULTRA £1,199
Smooth and detailed sound with the ability to accommodate most modern cartridges. Exceptional value for money.



PRO-JECT TUBE BOX DS £425
Compact MM and MC phono stage with valve output circuit and a big sound.



QUAD QC24P £995
MM and MC, oodles of gain, a volume control – and valves! Looks superb and sounds even better: smooth, atmospheric and big bass.

TIMESTEP T-01MC £995
New, minimalist phono stage that sonically punches well above its weight.

PREAMPLIFIERS
ICON AUDIO LA-4 MKIII £1,400
Uses early 6SN7 triodes for liquid sound. Has plenty of gain and a remote control into the bargain.



MF AUDIO CLASSIC SILVER £4,500
One of the best preamplifiers we've heard at any price, this transformer-coupled marvel does very little wrong. It's powerful, clean and open, yet delicate. Its sound is unmatched at or near the price.

MING DA MD7-SE £1,520
A valve preamplifier with an open, effortless sound and a big soundstage. It has plenty of gain so will accept any source and drive any power amp. A real beauty.



INTEGRATED AMPLIFIERS
ARIAND PRO845SE £1,499
Pure single-ended valve magic. Low-powered but immediately gorgeous, easy-going yet fearfully dynamic at the same time.



AUDIO RESEARCH VS160 £3,500
Power house sound with enormous pace and punch from traditional U.S. muscle master Audio Research. Breathtaking, but expensive.



CAMBRIDGE AUDIO AZUR 651A £350
Dual-mono construction and meaty toroidal power supply combine to produce a solid and sharp sound with sonics far beyond its price point.

CREEK EVOLUTION 100A £1,500
Superb build and smooth confident sound make this powerful amplifier a benchmark.



CYRUS 8DAC £1,400
Trademark shoebox-sized Cyrus integrated now offering 88Watts per channel, plus DAC. Svelte delivery from a dainty case that fits in anywhere – and isn't Class D!

EXPOSURE 1010 £495
Entry-level integrated from Exposure has excellent upper mid-performance with an almost valve-like sound.



ICON AUDIO STEREO 60 MKIII £2,800
Excellent tube integrated with plenty of power and an expansive soundstage, plus KT150 tube option and bias meter for easy adjustment.



NAIM NAIT 5Si £925
Naim's fabled entry-level integrated amplifier is updated to si status. Demos Naim's superbly muscular sound at entry level.

SUGDEN A21SE £2,480
Class A amp with fantastic sound quality producing hard, sculpted images, deep detail and tight bass. Just don't expect disco-like sound levels!



POWER AMPLIFIERS

AUDIO RESEARCH VSI75 £7,498
Powerful, fast valve sound that makes everything else look weak at times. Needs careful matching but well worth the effort.

AUDIO RESEARCH VS115 £5,000
Oodles of power with enormous punch. Rafael Todes said it provided "shock and awe" while retaining incredible smoothness and texture.

ICON AUDIO MB845 MKII £7,600
With 120W from big 845 valves right down to low frequencies, this power amplifier has massive dynamics and bass swing, yet is easy on the ear.



ICON AUDIO MB81PP £15,000
Big Russian transmitter valves deliver 200W from these massive monoblock amplifiers. Frightening in every sense.

MCINTOSH MC-152 £4,995
Stunningly insightful sound with enormous bass punch from a uniquely designed transistor amp. Amazing audio, a league up, if expensive.



QUAD ELITE QMP MONOBLOCKS £2400 PR
The proverbial iron fist in a velvet glove. Plenty of power but delivered with an assured and confident nature. Smooth on top and easy on the ear but can rock out when needed.

QUAD II-EIGHTY MONOBLOCKS £6,000 PR
Powerful and expansive sound from modern design monoblocks that also look lovely. Superb – used by us as a reference.



LOUDSPEAKER FLOORSTANDER

B&W 803 D3 £12,500
B&W's updated statement floorstanders deliver depth and definition with breathtaking speed and authority, aided by a diamond coated tweeter. Expensive – but enormously impressive.

CASTLE AVON V £1,600
A big floorstander at a modest price that suits the average room. Refined ribbon treble and deep bass give it a great delivery.



EMINENT TECHNOLOGY LFT-8B £2,500
Excellent U.S. planar magnetic loudspeaker at bargain price. Utterly superb - a must hear.

EPOS K2 £1,000
A fun sound that is tidy all round and very engaging, with solid bass. Music as you hope it to be.

FOCAL ARIA 926 £1,400
Simple, clean, neutral sound – easy going but well engineered and affordable.

MARTIN LOGAN SUMMIT X £16,698
Matches Martin Logan's XStat electrostatic panel to a powerful subwoofer to provide extended, powerful bass. Dramatic sonic purity. Awesome – all but unmatched.



MARTIN LOGAN ELECTROMOTION £2,500
Martin Logan's budget baby XStat hybrid electrostatic. Fits into any lounge to give electrostatic levels of clarity and imaging.



QUADRAL CHROMIUM STYLE 8 £1,700
A supremely smooth yet open sounding loudspeaker. Clean and detailed treble from a fine ribbon tweeter. Accurate yet informative and enjoyable. Pure class.

QUADRAL ORKAN VIII AKTIVS £6,200
Active loudspeaker with tight, powerful bass, perfect accuracy and detailed treble from a ribbon tweeter.



Q ACOUSTICS 2050i £480
A large floorstander at a budget price. Offers high sensitivity and big sound and has very few flaws for the price.

SPENDOR SP100 R2 £6,495
Retro looks but a sound that's hard to match. Spendor's 12" bass unit provides massive low-end grunt with a room-filling sound.



SPENDOR A3 £1,300
Fine little floorstander with a smooth, natural midband and even tonal balance. Ideal for smaller rooms.

TANNOY DEFINITION DC10 Ti £6,000
Enormous power with great projection. Glorious subsonics too. Need little power to go very loud and have superb finish into the bargain.



TANNOY KENSINGTON £9,950
Big but not overpowering, punchy modern sound from classic cabinetry. Need little power to go very loud and suit a traditional home, or castle.



LOUDSPEAKERS STANDMOUNT

ACOUSTIC ENERGY NEO 1 V2 £225
Civilised sounding speaker with fast and tuneful bass.

ACOUSTIC ENERGY AE1 CLASSIC £845
Brilliantly successful remake of an iconic design; not flawless, but surely one of the most musical loudspeakers ever made.



ELAC BS243 £1,000
More transparent and spacious than they've a right to be at this price, these refined mid-price standmounters represent top value.



EMINENT TECHNOLOGY LFT-16A £1,200
U.S. planar magnetic bookshelf loudspeaker with unrivalled mid-band and treble. Hear it before all else.

WHARFEDALE DIAMOND 220 £200
Builds on the success of previous Diamond ranges with better bass, more detail and a greater sense of scale.



KEF LS50 £800
Supremely musical mini-monitors which sound much bigger than they look.



MARTIN LOGAN MOTION 35 £1,300
Folded Air-Motion tweeter gives a taste of Martin Logan's electrostatic sound in a standmount. Different from the standard mini-monitor and all the better for it.



PMC TWENTY.21 £1,575
Transmission line loaded standmount with a big box sound from a compact cabinet. Punches well above its weight.



Q ACOUSTICS 2020i £165
Great little bargain-priced stand-mounts with a friendly, fun yet surprisingly refined sound. Hard to better for a pair of starter loudspeakers.

WHARFEDALE DENTON £500
A beguiling mixture of retro looks with modern, high-technology drive units. The Denton has an easy-going, big-hearted sound with a touch of trad warmth that should appeal to many.



HEADPHONE AMPLIFIERS

CREEK OBH11 £150
Designed specifically for low to medium impedance (30 Ohm – 300 Ohm) headphones the little Creek has a marvelously well-judged sound.

CHORD MOJO £399
Class leading portable DAC and headphone amp with ability beyond all else. Big, open spacious sound.



EPIPHANY EHP-02 £99
PP3 battery-powered portable gives great sound quality at an almost giveaway price. Happy with the output from an iPod or CD player, the little epiphany is a true bargain.



ICON AUDIO HP8 MKII £650
The HP8 MKII valve-based headphone amplifier brings the spacious sound of valves to headphones. And it matches 'em all.



FIDELITY AUDIO HPA 100 £350
Great little headphone amplifier with a lively yet refined and open sound.

MUSIC FIRST PHONE BOX £276
Brings a big stage, plenty of detail and rich, deep colours to the sonic spectrum.



OPPO HA-2 £250
Remarkable performance and sound from ESS Sabre32 DAC in a slim portable package.



CD PLAYERS

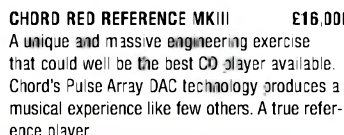
AUDIOLAB 8200CDQ £949
Inspired CD player and DAC with price-performance ratio like no other. Capable of matching designs costing much more.



CANOR CD2+ £3,100
Musically coherent and tuneful valve-driven CD player from Slovakia. Lovely liquid sound.



CAMBRIDGE AUDIO AZUR 651C £410
Snappy modern presentation from this budget CD player. Cracking audiophile entry point for any digital fan.



ESOTERIC K-03 £9,495
Superb high-end silver disc spinner that is beyond criticism. Devoid of its own character but has a flawless presentation.



EXPOSURE 101 £395
Detailed player with fine sense of timing should be an automatic entry on any demo list at this price.

ELECTROCOMPANIET EMP-1/S £4,650
Epic in scale, lavish in tone and exuberant in its musicality - this is a memorable SACD spinner. Quirky in operation and modest in finish, though.



OPPO BDP-105D £1200
Universal player and DAC that makes CD and Blu-ray (+DVD) sound deep, spacious and full bodied. Reference quality that's affordable.



REGA APOLLO-R £550
Rega comes up with a fine CD player again. Tremendous detail and an easy, unforced sound at all times. Few bells and whistles but made up for by its superb sonic ability.

ROKSAN KANDY K2 £900
A charmingly musical performer at the price - this is a surprisingly sophisticated CD player for the money.



TUNERS

CAMBRIDGE AUDIO AZUR 651T £299
Value-packed AM/FM/DAB and DAB+ ready tuner. Precise and detailed with excellent resolution of spoken word.



CREEK DESTINY 2 £550
Creek's tuner expertise shines through in the Destiny 2. This AM/FM receiver is wonderfully three-dimensional and smooth.



MAGNUM DYNALAB MD-90T £1,900
Exceptionally able, but commensurately priced, audiophile tuner that cannot fail to charm.



DACS

AUDIOLAB M-DAC £600
Excellent sound from ESS Sabre32 DAC and impressive flexibility with a unique range of filter options make this a stand-out product. Low price is the icing on the cake.



AUDIOLAB Q-DAC £250
Stripped-down version of Audiolab's M-DAC loses some features but retains much of the sound, making it a veritable bargain.

ANTELOPE ZODIAC GOLD/VOLTIKUS £3,095
DAC/preamp/power supply combination majors on detail but has a remarkable un-digital sound. One of the best at its price.



CHORD 2QUTE HD £990
Superb build quality and exceptional sound from this compact unit. Boasts the ability to handle DSD direct via USB and has an exceptional soundstage. One of the best DACs you can buy.



DCS DEBUSSY £8,000
DCS's bespoke 'Ring DAC' circuit gives a beautifully-fluid, almost analogue sound that encourages long listening sessions. Not cheap but worth every penny.

NORTHERN FIDELITY DAC £650
Packed full of features, including Bluetooth and USB, this ESS Sabre32 equipped DAC offers crisp, insightful sound at low price.



METRUM OCTAVE £729
Unique two-box digital-to-analogue converter with great sound at a great price. Cuts upper treble, though.

NAIM DAC £2,400
Superb high-end digital converter with a probing, punchy and forensically-detailed sound.



TEAC UD-501 £699
Feature-packed DAC with benefit of DSD playback. Superb sound means little to touch it at the price.



RESONESSENCE INVICTA MIRUS £4,499
One of the most highly spec'd DACs available, with a smooth yet entrancing presentation. Few approach it.



NETWORK PLAYERS

CHORD DSX100 £7,500
Chord's proprietary DAC circuit shines in their top-of-the-range streamer. Hear-through clarity with a sound rich in detail, dynamics and soundstage.



CAMBRIDGE AUDIO NP3D £399
Budget offering from Cambridge offers a great introduction to network streaming.

CYRUS STREAM X £1,400
Gorgeous sound quality even from compressed digital music. New control app makes everyday operation a doddle.



CONVERT TECHNOLOGIES PLATO £2999.00
A network player with amplifier that does it all, including turn LP to hi-resolution digital, and add cover artwork from the 'net.



NAIM NDX £2,995
Clean, incisive and very detailed sound with Naim's traditional pace and timing make this one of the best network music players around.

NAIM ND5XS £2,175
Great sound quality with traditional Naim heft. A wonderful DAC with full 24/192 handling. Only the display could be better.

NAIM NAC-N172 XS £1,650
A pre-amp/DAC/streamer package provides a taut, rock-solid presentation with a tonally rich midband and a superior sense of rhythm.



PRO-JECT STREAM BOX RS £1,095
Unusual valve-based streamer/preamp with variety of inputs and a lovely liquid sound. Not the most detailed but compensates with sheer musical verve.

QUAD PLATINUM DMP £2,500
Combined CD/network player has all the usual Quad elements but with added zest and detail that brings life to everything you care to play.



DIGITAL SOURCES

ASTEEL&KERN AK100 MKII £569
Portable high-definition digital player with superb sound quality. Punchy and fast.



FiiO X3 £150
Fabulous value player with nice easy sound and full range of abilities. Small and light. For newbies.

LOTOO PAW GOLD £1,500
Reference quality sound; it's like carrying your hi-fi in your pocket. Equivalently large too, but stunning headphone quality.



NAIM HDX £4,405
Interesting one-box network-enabled hard-disk music system that gives superb sonics together with impressive ease of use.

NAIM UNITILITE £1,995
A 50W amplifier with traditional Naim heft, a CD player and vhf/fm radio, plus network input and Bluetooth make this a great all-in-one.



PORTABLE SPEAKERS

BAYAN SOUNDBOOK £149.99
Superb design and great sound make for one of the best portable Bluetooth speaker/radios on the market. Not the cheapest – but worth every penny.



IRIVER IBA-50 £69
Big, warm sound with plenty of volume and clean at high levels. Muscular sound compared to many rivals.

CABLES

BLACK RHODIUM TWIST £71/3M
Twisted to fight off radio frequency, the Black Rhodium speaker cable is easy on the ear with a fine sense of clarity and focus. A remarkable performer at the price.



MAINS CABLES R US NO.27 £95
Offers a sprightly pace with a precise nature. Fast performance enhance frequencies and beautifully etched detail.



CHORD SIGNATURE REFERENCE £900
Majors on timing, detail and openness. Capable of getting the best from most systems and a recommended upgrade.



TELLURIUM Q BLACK 280/3M
A deep, dark, velvety performer that's nevertheless highly musical, it represents excellent value as mid-price cables go.

TELLURIUM Q SILVER DIAMOND £804/M
An open, natural and transparent sound that is difficult to beat, from these great loudspeaker cables.



HEADPHONES

AUDEZE LCD-3 £1,725
A planar magnetic 'phone that offers monitor quality. Strong sound with silky, dark quality that others struggle to match.



B&W P3 £170
Beautifully presented headphones from the loudspeaker specialists. Feed them a good quality source signal and they reward with excellent sound.

JAYS V-JAYS £49
Wonderful little budget over-ear portable 'phones with a clean, clear sound to beat the best of the rest at the price.



NOBLE K10 INC. FITTING £1,279
Custom fit in-ear phones with 10 drivers deliver a sound that is out of this world. Personal and perfect.



OPPO PM-1 £950
Planar magnetic phones with a warm, easy but big bodied sound that draws you in. Need a lot of drive, but deliver superb bass.



SENNHEISER HD700 £599
Tremendously fast with a strong, focussed, lower-frequency range and a firm bass punch.



YAMAHA HPH-MT220 £150
Purposed for indoor monitoring yet light and comfortable enough to be used on the move. Excellent sound quality marred only by a slight warmth to vocals.

PowerLine *20th Anniversary Edition*



Vincent SP-20 Hybrid Tube Class A Power Amplifier
Sweet, Warm, Analogue Sound For Less...

For more information of these products please contact us:
 T: +44 (0)20 8374 3958 M: +44 (0)7983 619671 E: sales@vincentshop.co.uk W: www.vincentshop.co.uk



High End Audio Accessories to Transform your Music System



Power Connectors



Headphone Cables



Turntable Accessories



Audio Connectors



Digital Audio Cables



Magnetic Distortion Reduction



For the full range of Oyaide products available in the UK, please go to www.blackrhodium.co.uk or visit your Black Rhodium Oyaide dealers.

Cambridge tales

Martin Pipe revisits the Audiolab 8000A – once the default choice, when it came to mid-range amplification.



Audiolab was formed in the early 1980s by engineers Philip Swift and Derek Scotland, who originally met at Imperial College. Whilst in London, they worked part-time for Audio T - the retailer had a tendency to employ students who were mad about hi-fi. Physics graduate Swift looked after repairs for the store.

Working at Audio T gained the duo valuable experience with the hi-fi that audiophiles could buy – and its failings. Existing products were in their view expensive, user-unfriendly and - as Swift recalls - “very sensitive to the loudspeakers they were used with”. Like others of entrepreneurial zeal, they had a hunch that they could do better.

Swift stated that the goal of his new company was to “create well-engineered products that offered a high order of sound quality and were good value...they had to be attractive and reliable”. The Huntingdon-based firm’s first product was the slimline 8000A integrated amplifier featured here. “Put together over a number of years”, according to Swift, the 8000A was finally launched in October 1983 - and became a hit, notably among those looking to upgrade from their budget NADs, Marantz, Nytechs and so on; “in terms of quality and price”, observes Swift, “we were always more BMW than Rolls Royce”. Pitched at a sensible midrange price-point – it sold for £250 when launched – the well-designed 8000A boasted a great spec

and plenty of features, coupled with fine subjective performance. Your money bought two tape loops (with separate record and listen selectors), defeatable tone controls, a phono stage with provision for moving-coil cartridges and two channels of Class AB solid-state amplification - each capable of delivering a genuine 60 Watts of power to whatever speakers took your fancy.

Following Japanese amplifiers of the time, the 8000A’s ‘pre’ and ‘power’ sections were separable for upgrade flexibility. And probably most of all, the 8000A proved to be exceptionally-reliable - at a time when home-grown fare was being seen as inferior in this regard to the gear flooding in from Japan.

The 8000A’s success meant that, in time, Audiolab “went from a bedroom” in Swift’s Cambridge house “to a small unit, and then a 17,500 square-foot facility in Huntingdon”. Flushed by success, the brand then followed with other 8000-series components – the 8000C preamplifier, the 8000P stereo power amplifier and 8000M monoblocks. A highly-regarded tuner was then launched - as were CD players, transports and DACs. Audiolab was acquired in 1998 by TAG McLaren, and the result was a range of technologically-advanced and visually-striking hi-fi and AV products that are still sought after today.

Unfortunately, the TAG McLaren Audio venture wasn’t a success and the parent company called time in 2003. Audiolab’s assets were sold to the Chinese International Audio Group (IAG), where it joined other



Heat-generating components, like the heatsinked Japanese power output transistors, are kept away from devices like electrolytic capacitors. Note too the large toroidal mains transformer, which allows the amplifier to achieve its distinctive low profile.

AURALiC

'The Aries G1 is a beautifully realised streaming platform that delivers the Auralic experience to a variety of DACs at an attractive price. If you have a DAC, this is the most transparent way to add network music streaming to your system and leads the way in this field.'

auralic.com

ED SELLEY, ARIES G1 WIRELESS STREAMING TRANSPORT, HIFI CHOICE



Ultimate Stream Farnham	01252 759285	Igloo Audio Tunbridge Wells	01892 532995
Audio Destination Tiverton	01884 243584	Moorgate Acoustics Sheffield	0114 275 6048
Audio Emotion Levan	01333 425999	Lintone Audio Gateshead	0191 477 4167
Oxford Audio Consultants Oxford	01865 790879	Harrow Audio Harrow	020 8930 9933
Acoustica Chester	01244 344227	Audio T Brighton	01273 609431
The Audiobarn Harlow	01279 454860	Ripcaster Reading	0118 321 8292
Midland Audio Exchange Belbroughton	01562 731100	Strictly Stereo Greater Manchester	0161 917 0642
Audiovenue Ealing	020 8567 8703	Loud & Clear Edinburgh	0131 555 3963
Doug Brady Hi-Fi Warrington	01925 828009	Holburn Hifi Aberdeen	01224 585713
Vickers Hifi York	01904 691600	Hifonix Sutton Coldfield	0121 382 5444

KirmussAudio

KA-RC-1 Ultrasonic Record Restoration System



Three years of design and engineering have brought this award winning record restoration system to the industry.

Professors, Engineers, Designers and Audio Professionals are astounded by what we are achieving. At an affordable price.

Safely removes fungus, mould, soap and chemicals left by other cleaning products and systems.

We have proved that we don't just clean -

We Restore

Safely Restores Vinyl, Shellac and Glass Records.

2 x 12", 1 x 10", 1 x 7"
Simultaneously.

Available now in Europe.

Visit our Website for more Information, Videos and details of where next we will be demonstrating.

www.KirmussAudio.net

Email: sales@kirmussaudio.net Telephone: 01305 871010

iconic marques like Wharfedale, Luxman, Quad, Mission and Castle. Among the initial IAG-era Audiolab products was the 8000S integrated – basically, a remote-controllable version of the 8000A without tone controls. But much had changed in the marketplace and the 8000 series was no longer considered to be the ‘class leader’ it once was.

But back to the 8000A. Early versions were equipped with DIN input connectors, but by the end of the 1980s Audiolab had – thankfully! – switched to phono sockets. From the outset, though, one of the two non-tape line-level inputs was labelled ‘CD disc’. Swift and Scotland evidently understood that digital was to play a key role in hi-fi’s future.

Between 1983 and the TAG takeover that saw its disappearance, the 8000A saw many internal tweaks

can feed both MM and MC phono inputs simultaneously. Unfortunately, you have to switch between the two using a big red button that’s mounted inconveniently on the rear panel!

And how does the 8000A stand up today? Very well with a variety of music, sources and speakers if my experiences are anything to go by. It’s exceptionally-detailed although such analytical prowess will lay bare the shortcomings of imperfect recordings in your collection. The

I’ve heard that some use their old 8000As as phono preamps with other gear.

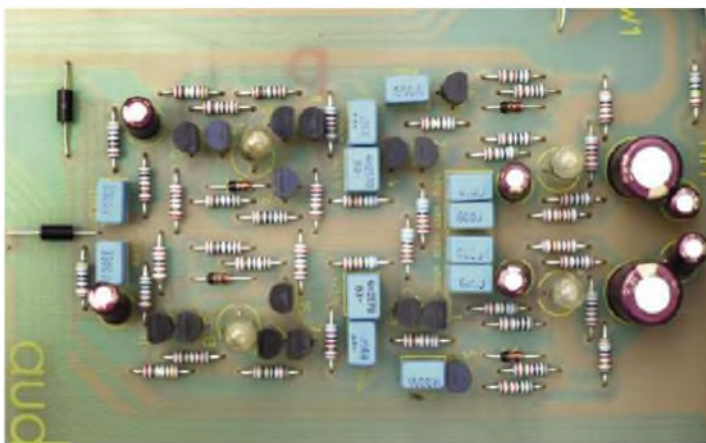
The tone controls, should you choose to engage them, are far subtler in their effect than most. A clockwise twist of the relevant knob increases bass; however turning the treble control in that direction effects a cut.

The 8000A may be built to last, but some have complained that phono sockets are starting to fall apart due to plastic decay. Furthermore, electrolytic capacitors will probably need renewing – especially if the amp was left permanently switched on, a daft practice that was frequently-advised in the 1990s.

Because so many 8000As were sold, they are common buys. I was lucky to find mine for £10 at a car-boot sale. More typical prices? Expect to pay £50 for one sold ‘as is’; £400, on the other hand, will get you a fully-restored (and recapped) 8000A that will be good for another thirty years or so. Many believe that the



There are two sets of speaker outputs. One (‘direct’) is ‘always on’, while the other can be ‘muted’ with the front-panel’s ‘speakers’ switch.



Today, most affordable phono stages are built around op-amp chips; the 8000A used discrete transistors - in conjunction with passive components of a high standard.

and revisions – seven of them major redesigns – to improve performance, and enhance further an already class-leading reliability record.

Another change affects my own unit, as featured here, which is of late 1980s vintage. Its MM input has separate pairs of phono sockets for ‘input’ and ‘loading’. The cartridge of your turntable is connected to the inputs, while plugs containing resistors are plugged into the ‘loading’ sockets. Said resistors were chosen to effect the best match between cartridge and phono stage. Later models lost the loading, the MM phono stage instead being designed for the ‘best compromise’. On all models, the MC input’s characteristics are ‘fixed’. Interestingly, you

8000A fares well in the rhythm and timing departments (albeit not quite up to Naim NAIT standards), creates an enveloping soundstage and is very clean in its presentation of your music – congestion is rare, although traces of dryness are perceptible on occasions. High-end treble – notably percussion - can sound a little recessed; in contrast, the 8000A’s uncannily good treatment of vocals suggests a slight midrange prominence. I am also impressed with this amp’s ability when it comes to basslines - they’re solid, taut and well-defined.

More praise can be heaped on the phono stage, which is revealing yet musical. It’s more than a match for some modern designs; indeed,



The Audiolab 8000A’s phono stage can be used with MM or MC cartridges. Both can be connected simultaneously - handy if you have two turntables.

best-sounding versions are the late-1990s ones sold just before Audiolab was taken over, although that could be down to components that aren’t so ‘aged’. A second-hand 8000A still has much to offer, then – especially if you’re trying to assemble a system on a tight budget.



EDDIE & THE HOT RODS

Teenage Depression
Caroline

If you ever see one of those TV documentaries on the history of punk you're bound to have a brief introduction of the range of pub rock bands that laid the foundation. People like Ducks Deluxe and Brinsley Schwarz reigned supreme. Then you had those bands who infused the genre with ambition, reaching out but possibly not quite entering the punk fold. Dr Feelgood were one such outfit, Eddie & The Hot Rods were another.

Released in 1976, the music packing this disc is loud and disrespectful, it offers high energy, rage and frustration and is a testament to youth and youth culture. It even connects strands of earlier youth movements with its inclusion of a few covers: Pete Townshend's 'The Kids Are Alright' (a live cut), Joe Tex's 'Show Me' and a frantic version of Sam Cooke's 'Shake'. The essence

of the covers is to link the sixties ethic with contemporary punk.

The original LP was released before much of the classic punk output hit the streets. It provided a call to arms and a sense of what was on the horizon.

The album can be found on a new clamshell-type CD box set that covers the band's Island years and also includes 'Thriller' (1977), 'Life on the Line' (1977) plus BBC sessions, and an 'In Concert' disc and a 'Fan Club LP'. It's a brilliant collection, packed with value.

For a 'mere' value pack, I was impressed by the structured 3D soundstage, the drum roll of the first track placed way back at the rear of the soundstage, before the guitars began front left and right. Mastering is good, relatively low noise providing a spacious, airy feel to the midrange with a well behaved bass that never swamps or blooms.

AUDIOPHILE CD



ANTHONY PHILLIPS

Field Day
Esoteric

For those who may not be aware, Anthony Phillips was one of the founders of the then prog group, Genesis. The Genesis fronted by Peter Gabriel. When Phil Collins' backside was stuck to the drum stool and he contributed a few high pitched backing vocals. Phillips added cultured guitar and a sense of the subtle and introspective. He was there on the LPs, 'Trespass' (although he would leave the band after suffering from stage fright) but his work is all over the following LP, 'Nursery Cryme'.

Phillips' subsequent solo career mirrors the early Genesis style, infused with classical tones, spanning a range of thoughtful albums as well as a host of work for TV and film.

This double CD album pack (plus an accompanying DVD disc) sprawls across sixty one tracks. Initially issued in 2006, the release proved to be Phillips' first solo guitar album since Private Parts & Pieces, Vol. 5: Twelve

(1987). Quite a gap, then.

As such, the man plays a range of acoustic guitars, often integrating them into imaginative arrangements with background synths. The first track, the 'Voyage Out' is a case in point.

Other than these occasions much of the work here sees Phillips finger picking – and very nicely indeed. Fans of Leo Kottke, for example, will have smiles all over their faces. The Phillips' style is gentle, flowing, technically impressive yet thoughtful and emotive. The brash and the bold are not often heard here.

Sound quality from this CD set is good with no indiscipline to be heard from any included frequencies. Everything is where it should be. Perhaps there is a slight glow in the upper mids during the acoustic guitar pieces but nothing more. Detail is abundant, whilst the broadly neutral presentation allows the music to speak for itself.

Like his cultural compatriot, Syd Barrett, Alexander Spence - at least in those quarters unfamiliar with his brief creative output - is best known for his spectacular crash and burn at the hands of drugs - triggering mental illness.

In terms of his day job, Spence was the original drummer in the first lineup of Jefferson Airplane, even though he was really a guitarist. When he left that group his string playing skills were better applied, along with his singing and writing duties for the band, Moby Grape. He left MG in 1968 and headed off into an uncertain solo career. The now cult favourite result of that was the 1969 LP 'Oar'. It is that album that this three disc set is based upon.

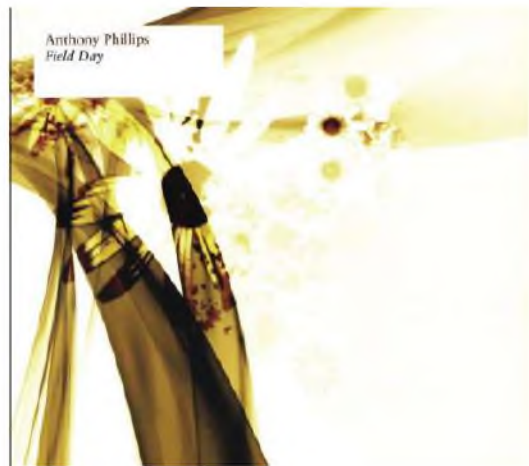
What you get here is the original album, bonus tracks found on a 1999 issue and two further hours of unreleased material

presented in a nice hardback book.

Oar is a stripped back, sparse, to the point album. The content has emerged from Spence and has been slapped onto disc directly - without any filtering. This is an emotionally direct album which means that, when listening, you take its rough edges along with the smooth.

The extra material is valuable as context but don't seek out the extras in an effort to find clarifications or reasons. They just provide more soup. It's rich tasting fare, though.

The mastering on this disc is restrained when necessary, detail cutting through. The master never springs nasty surprises upon the ear - a testament of the sonic improvements enjoyed by the CD format in more recent times. This CD is also a reminder why we shouldn't give up on the format just yet.



ALEXANDER SPENCE

AndOarAgain
Sundazed

AUDIOPHILE CD

Presented as a slip-case CD box set, this package from R.E.M. squeezes in eight CDs and a single DVD. It features a host of rare and unreleased live and studio recordings, culled from the BBC and band archives.

The sort of thing you can expect to hear is a John Peel Session (1998), Drivetime and Mark and Lord appearances (2003) and a Radio 1 Live Lounge performance (2008). Live broadcasts include a show from 1995's Milton Keynes Monster Tour (their first after a six-year break) and an invitation-only 2004 show at London's St James's Church.

And the DVD? You'll find a sixty-minute retrospective of the band's performances at the BBC in the 'Accelerating Backwards' film - previously broadcast only in the UK and available commercially for the first time here. 'Accelerating Backwards' also includes interviews

with Peter Buck, Mike Mills and Michael Stipe. The DVD additionally offers a complete 1998 'Later... With Jools Holland' episode, TV appearances on Top of the Pops and more.

Despite the BBC name attracting a reputation for excellence, I have often been left disappointed by the sonic qualities of other released sessions, heard in numerous boxed sets or via disc extras. The BBC sessions presented in the recent large Emerson Lake & Palmer box, for example, is a case in point. Many BBC Radio sessions are so bright they could illuminate the Royal Albert Hall. This set is a pleasant exception, though. They're not perfect, the John Peel Sessions (1998) sound a little flat and lifeless with a reasonable sound balance while the Nicky Campbell Sessions (1991) do offer more complexity in sonic terms. There remains a slight midband edge but the final output is pretty good.



R.E.M.

At The BBC
Craft

Over 160 brands booked
with more to come!

THE BRISTOL SHOW

ORGANISED BY AUDIO T

22nd – 24th February 2019. 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. every day at the Bristol Marriott City Centre Hotel



**SAVE TIME
& MONEY**
Buy Your
Tickets
Online*

www.bristolshow.co.uk

ADMISSION

Adults

£12.50 on the door
£11 online*

Students & Seniors (over 65)

£11 on the door
£9.50 online*

Multiple day tickets
available online only

Accompanied Children
Under 16 FREE

*online booking fee applies

BRANDS INCLUDE: Acc-Sees Pro Vinyl, Acoustic Energy, ADL, Advanced MP3 Players, AIAIAI, AKG, Amphion, Apollo Hi-Fi, Arcam, Astell & Kern, Astin Trew, Atacama Audio, ATC, ATI Amplifiers, Atlas Cables, Auden Distribution, Audeze, Audio Detail, Audio Note, Audio-Technica, Audiolab, AudioQuest, AV Tech Solutions, Avid HiFi, AVM, AVTech Media, Big Red Sales, Blue Horizon, Bowers & Wilkins, Bryston, Canton, Cayin, CH Precision, Chord Company, Chord Electronics, Clearaudio, Clearer Audio, Cowon, Creek Audio, Cyrus, Dali, Decent Audio, Diverse Vinyl, DS Audio, Dunu, Dynamic Distribution, Dynaudio, ELAC, Elipson, Emotiva, Epos, Esoteric, Exertis, Exposure Electronics, Falcon Acoustics, Focal, Funk Firm, Furutech, Fyne Audio, Gallo Acoustics, Glanz, Harbeth Audio, Harman Consumer UK, Hegel, Henley Audio, Hi-Fi Racks, Hi-Fi World, Hi-Fi+, HIFICRITIC, hORNS, IAG, iBasso, iFi Audio, Innuos, IsoAcoustics, IsoTek, Jamo, JBL, Jico, JL Audio, Kanto Audio, Karma AV, KEF, Keith Monks, Kirmuss Audio, Klipsch, Knosti, Kudos Audio, Larsen, Leema Acoustics, Lehmann, Lester Industries, Linn Products, Loewe, Malvern Audio Research, Mark Levinson, MCRU, Melco Audio, Mellow Acoustics, Meze Audio, Mian Audio Distribution, Michell Engineering, Ming Da, Mission, Mitchell & Brown, Mitchell & Johnson, Miyajima, Monitor Audio, Monkey Banana, Musical Fidelity, Nagaoka, Naim Audio, Neat Acoustics, Neo by Oyaide, Novafidelity, Onkyo, Ophidian Audio, Ortofon, P, Pink Triangle, Pioneer, Plananalogue, PMC, Primare, Pro-Ject, ProAc, Puritan Audio Laboratories, Q-Up, Quadraspire, Questyle, Rega, REL Acoustics, Revel, Revo, Rogers, Rohde & Schwarz, Roksan, Roon, Ruark Audio, Russell K, SCV Distribution, Sennheiser, Seto-Hori, Sony, Soulines, Sound Foundations, Spendor Audio, Straightwire, SVS, SweetVinyl, Talk Electronics, Tangent, Teac, Technics, Tellurium Q, Timestep, Tonar International, Torus Power, Totem Acoustic, Townshend Audio, Vinyls Best, Vogel's, Von Gaylord Audio, Wharfedale, What Hi-Fi?, Wilson Benesch, Yamaha and many more

**HI-FI, STREAMING, HOME CINEMA,
VINYL, HEADPHONES - THEY ARE
ALL AT BRISTOL!**

Witness the launch of dozens of new products, with many brought directly from the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas

- ▶ The UK's largest & longest running Hi-Fi Show now in its 32nd Year
- ▶ Experience the latest Hi-Fi and talk directly to the manufacturers and designers

**THOUSANDS OF £'s WORTH OF HI-FI
TO BE WON IN THE MASSIVE
SHOW COMPETITION**

- ▶ Exclusive product launches
- ▶ FREE headphones for students
- ▶ See all the major industry players, large and small, from Arcam to Wharfedale
- ▶ Pick up a fantastic Show bargain... with deals on most purchases!
- ▶ Visit the What Hi-Fi? stand for a demonstration or an answer to any questions you might have
- ▶ Right next to Cabot Circus - a £500 million shopping centre, with exciting shops, restaurants and the 13 screen Cinema de Lux

GETTING TO THE SHOW

BY TRAIN: Temple Meads Station is a short distance from the Marriott.

BY CAR: From the M4 take J19 (M32 - Bristol). Follow signs for City Centre and RAC signs to the Show. For those using satellite navigation systems the hotel post code is BS1 3AD. Easy local parking in Cabot Circus car park and Broadmead and Bond Street NCPs.

50
YEARS OF
audio T

www.bristolshow.co.uk

For the latest news and a full list of brands exhibiting please visit our website

Organised by

audio T

In association with

WHAT HI-FI?



"The Far East leads in electronics because of vast investment"



Noel Keywood

This month's column is sort of about trains. No, I am not a train enthusiast: I don't stand on windswept platforms to spot a rare one – if that happens anymore. Trains that prompted this column – linked to hi-fi as I will explain! – are Crossrail and HS2, the investment they require and whether that money might be better spent on UK industry in order to provide jobs. Jobs in the industry of today – electronics. And where they're needed – in the north of Britain that once was our industrial powerhouse.

We must catch up with the Far East in this field, who are now so far ahead it is worrying. Britain seems to be sinking back to a place where we are unable to create jobs in electronics for the future, which includes the design and manufacture of audio products, as well as the objects everyone recognises but come magically 'from somewhere else' – mobile 'phones.

Martin Pipe lists all the illustrious hi-fi brand names now being built in China in his *Olde Worlde* feature on Audiolab. Ironically, Philip Swift who started Audiolab and now runs Spondor, is backed by an Indian company in the same way as Jaguar Land Rover. The pattern here is that basic commercial concept and product design can be both British and successful – but forget the rest. Manufacturing is conveniently done by others.

The idea that cheap labour somewhere else is something we can afford to overlook is simplistic and misleading. The Far East leads in electronics because of vast investment in skills and industrial infrastructure; I've been there and seen it. The products I review every month from China and Korea, Britain is now incapable of either understanding or making. Which

brings me back to trains.

I am not a train fan but I do admit to watching YouTube offerings on Crossrail and being suitably impressed by the scale and audacity of the thing. Reminiscent of Brunel's vision to connect London to New York with a regular train and boat service – back in 1845 no less – Crossrail has seemed wondrous. Not only was the civil engineering fascinating in its scope, but all the confident claims for being on-budget and on-schedule satisfying to hear. So we can still get it right in some areas of engineering in the UK I thought.

Then, as I'm sure you are aware, it all went pear shaped. Those claims were incorrect and totally misleading. The project wasn't close to meeting its targets and now needs an extra £1.5bn of investment. A few months ago we were told opening had been postponed one year, from late 2018 to late 2019, to allow for "testing" and now that has gone out of the window too. Now, no date is offered for the line's opening; it could never open – absurd.

Whilst this farrago is taking place it seems that London has been given the go-ahead for Crossrail 2. What? The scale of investment in these projects is enormous and from where I sit the benefits of Crossrail 2 elude me.

And, whilst on the subject of trains, London will get a high speed link to Manchester in the form of HS2 at another £15bn. Perhaps this will benefit other areas of Britain, but I believe there are better ways of spending such vast sums.

London is a powerhouse; I know because I live and work in its centre. But what about the rest of the UK? Surely there's enormous potential across the swathe of industrial Britain stretching from Liverpool through Manchester and all the other towns and cities that supported traditional

manufacturing and 'smoke stack' industries? A BBC report quotes both the Mayor of Manchester and the Mayor of Liverpool calling these London-centric projects "outrageous". I agree.

Apparently, 60% of the funding for Crossrail was provided by London, so as not to be a burden on the rest of the UK. Sounds good. But that statement on Crossrail's website draws our attention away from the fact that the other 40% – a mere £6bn – came from taxpayers across Britain. If Crossrail 2 goes ahead make this another £10bn on top. It makes me uncomfortable: London should pay its own way and can afford to do so.

Taxpayers across Britain should not be expected to further fund London's continued expansion. Investment is needed elsewhere – investment in jobs fit for both today and the future. And that means highly skilled jobs in electronics with associated software programming skills that are now not just integral part of electronics but an overwhelming part of it. Even today's hi-fi needs to be programmed up in serious fashion; the control systems are challenging to understand. I believe we should be investing the huge sums being spent on prestige trains on industrial regeneration and – ultimately – jobs. But there's little will.

The will and the skill now exist elsewhere – think Germany and the Far East. They have implemented successful strategies that promote modern skills. Britain needs to be looking closely at those strategies and their implementation to bring back highly skilled jobs in electronics. That would be a better way to provide for Britain than ever more complex and expensive trains for Londoners. And of course provide us with better hi-fi. ●

HARD TO FIND[®]
Hi-Fi
 Supplying Audio Since 1991

**NEW STORE LOCATED IN BIRMINGHAM'S
 HISTORIC JEWELLERY QUARTER**
www.hardtofindhifi.com



📍 No. 1 Spencer Street The Jewellery Quarter Birmingham B18 6DD United Kingdom
 🕒 Monday - Saturday 10:00 to 17:30 ☎ 0121-448 84 84 ✉ sales@hardtfindhifi.com

Next Day Delivery Available 	McIntosh Reference Dealer The majority of the McIntosh range is on demo	FREE Vinyl Recording Workshops In-store Learn how to digitise your vinyl collection
---------------------------------	--	--

McIntosh Technics **GOLD NOTE** **SME**

<p>HTF Vinyl Recording Software</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The fastest and most efficient way to digitise your vinyl Convert to WAV, FLAC, MP3, WMA, AAC/MP4 simultaneously Enter track meta-data during recording, including album artwork Record a full side of an album unattended with auto track split 192khz 24 Bit Free training <p>Free updates for life</p> <p>Dozens Of Features Windows 7, 8 & 10 £ 24.95 /v.2.2</p> <p>CALL US TO BOOK A FREE TRAINING SESSION TODAY</p>	<p>SweetVinyl</p> <p>SugarCube SC-1 In Store Demo Essential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Real-time click & pop removal device for vinyl records <p>£ 1,549 Free HTF Recording Software Worth £25 </p> <p>CALL US TO BOOK A DEMO TODAY</p>
---	---

<p>Technics Direct Drive Turntable SL-1000R</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coreless direct drive Separate control unit Complete with tonearm Probably the best DD turntable in the world <p>£ 13,995 24 Months Warranty </p> <p>CALL US TO BOOK A DEMO TODAY</p>	<p>Technics Direct Drive Turntable SL-1200G / 1200GR / 1210GR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The legendary turntable reborn Available in black & silver <p>24 Months Warranty </p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>SL-1200G £ 2,995</td> <td>SL-1200GR £ 1,295</td> <td>SL-1210GR £ 1,295</td> </tr> </table> <p>ON DEMO</p>	SL-1200G £ 2,995	SL-1200GR £ 1,295	SL-1210GR £ 1,295	<p>Mytek</p> <p>Manhattan & Brooklyn DACs</p> <p>In our opinion, probably the best digital-to-analogue converters on the market</p> <p>24 Months Warranty </p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Manhattan DAC £ 4,995</td> <td>Brooklyn DAC+ £ 1,795</td> <td>Brooklyn ADC £ 1,599</td> </tr> </table> <p>CALL US TO BOOK A DEMO TODAY</p>	Manhattan DAC £ 4,995	Brooklyn DAC+ £ 1,795	Brooklyn ADC £ 1,599
SL-1200G £ 2,995	SL-1200GR £ 1,295	SL-1210GR £ 1,295						
Manhattan DAC £ 4,995	Brooklyn DAC+ £ 1,795	Brooklyn ADC £ 1,599						

<p>SME Turntable Model 20/3 + Series V Arm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gold detailing Dampened Model 20/12 also available <p>£ 12,439 24 Months Warranty </p> <p>ON DEMO</p>	<p>SME Turntable Model 10 + Series IV Arm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High density construction Dampened Includes dust cover <p>£ 7,065 24 Months Warranty </p> <p>ON DEMO</p>	<p>SME Turntable Model 10 Ltd Black Edition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited edition of 30 pieces Free Ortofon Cadenza black cartridge worth £1,825 Completely Black finish <p>£ 6,195 24 Months Warranty </p> <p>ON DEMO</p>
--	--	--

<p>Transmission Line Stand-Mount Kerr Acoustic K300</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6.5" wood-fibre cone 2" true ribbon tweeter Frequency response: 33Hz – 45kHz Satin or gloss finish Available in any colour at no extra cost <p>£ 2,795 /pair 36 Months Warranty </p> <p>AVAILABLE TO ORDER</p>	<p>Transmission Line Floor-standing Kerr Acoustic K320</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6.5" wood-fibre cone 2" true ribbon tweeter Frequency response: 24Hz – 45kHz Satin or gloss finish Available in any colour at no extra cost <p>£ 3,395 /pair 36 Months Warranty </p> <p>AVAILABLE TO ORDER</p>	<p>Transmission Line Loudspeaker Kerr Acoustic K100</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12" high-performance long-throw driver 3" true ribbon tweeter Frequency response: 16Hz – 45kHz Satin or gloss finish Available in any colour at no extra cost <p>£ 11,995 /pair 36 Months Warranty </p> <p>AVAILABLE TO ORDER</p>
--	---	---

<p>Audio-Technica Cartridges AT-ART1000 Available in-store only</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moving coil <p>£ 4,450 24 Months Warranty </p> <p>ON DEMO</p>	<p>Audio-Technica Cartridges AT-OC9ML/II</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moving coil <p>£ 399 24 Months Warranty </p> <p>ON DEMO</p>	<p>Audio-Technica Cartridges AT-ART9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moving coil <p>£ 899 24 Months Warranty </p> <p>ON DEMO</p>
---	--	--

**Belt Drive Turntable
McIntosh MT2**

- Inc. moving coil cartridge
- Includes dust cover
- Backlit McIntosh logo



£4,995 36 Months Warranty



ON DEMO

**Belt Drive Turntable
McIntosh MT5**

- Inc. moving coil cartridge
- Includes dust cover
- MT10 flagship available



£8,999 36 Months Warranty



ON DEMO

**Stereo Integrated Amplifier
McIntosh MA252**

- 160 watts per channel
- Hybrid design: vacuum tube preamp and solid state power amp



£4,499 36 Months Warranty



ON DEMO

**Stereo Vacuum Tube Amplifier
McIntosh MC275 MK VI**

- 75 watts per channel @ 2, 4 or 8 Ω
- Vacuum tube design
- Legendary design now in Mark VI form



£7,100 36 Months Warranty



ON DEMO

**Stereo Integrated Amplifier
McIntosh MA9000**

- 300 watts per channel
- 8-band tone control
- DA1 digital audio module
- MA7200 also available



£12,995 36 Months Warranty



ON DEMO

**Monoblock Solid State Amplifier
McIntosh MC611**

- 600 watt quad balanced
- Monogrammed heatsink
- 2, 4 and 8 Ω outputs



£19,995 /pair 36 Months Warranty



ON DEMO

**Stereo Vacuum Tube Preamplifier
McIntosh C1100**

- Separate audio & control sections
- 12 analog inputs including MM & MC
- Full digital inputs, massive specification



£15,590 /pair 36 Months Warranty



ON DEMO

**2-Channel Solid State Amplifier
McIntosh MC462**

- 450 watts per channel
- Quad balanced design with McIntosh Autoformers™



£12,495 36 Months Warranty



ON DEMO

**2-Channel Solid State Amplifier
McIntosh MC312**

- 300 watts x 2 channels
- 27% increase in dynamic headroom compared to previous model
- McIntosh Autoformers™



£9,995 36 Months Warranty



ON DEMO

**SACD / CD / USB Player
McIntosh MCD600**

- Premium 8-channel, 32-bit PCM/DSD quad balanced DAC
- Plays CD/DVD data discs & USB flash drives



£7,995 36 Months Warranty



ON DEMO

**Phono Stage
PH-10**

- 2 separate inputs
- 6 EQ curves
- 4 GAIN options
- For use with MM & MC cartridges



£1,135 24 Months Warranty

BOTH UNITS ON DEMO IN-STORE



**Super Inductive Power Supply
PSU-10**

- Worldwide voltage
- Optional external power supply for Gold Note PH-10



24 Months Warranty **£809**

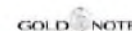


**Integrated Amp & Streamer
IS-1000 DAC+**

- Phonostage
- In black, silver or gold



£4,499 24 Months Warranty



ON DEMO

**Belt Drive Turntable
Giglio**

- 33mm Sustarini® platter
- Quadral-core power supply
- Dust cover included



£3,495 24 Months Warranty



ON DEMO

**Belt Drive Turntable
Valore 425 Plus**

- 9" tonearm derived from B-5.1 model
- Available in acrylic, black, white, walnut or black leather



£1,359 24 Months Warranty



ON DEMO

**Loudspeakers
XS-85**

- 5 driver design
- Available in gloss black, gloss white or italian walnut



£34,720 /pair 24 Months Warranty



ON DEMO

**Gold Note Cartridges
Vasari (Gold)**

- Moving magnet



£319 24 Months Warranty



ON DEMO

**Gold Note Cartridges
Donatello (Gold)**

- Moving coil



£865 24 Months Warranty



AVAILABLE TO ORDER

**Gold Note Cartridges
Tuscany (Gold)**

- Moving coil



£6,635 24 Months Warranty



AVAILABLE TO ORDER

THE VINYL REVOLUTION



The EVO and the new EVOke Now you have a choice of *any* SL-1200! The new EVOke has world beating performance figures that are comparable with the world's most expensive turntables. The ability to fit any arm or cartridge to any SL-1200 new or old, means you can now have the EVO that you want at the price you want.

The EVO was used by Hi-Fi World to evaluate the Beatles In Mono records and is now used as their everyday reference. The EVO comes fitted with a tonearm of your choice and a cartridge of your choice.

We have worked with direct drive turntables and moving coil cartridges for nearly 40 years. We can supply completely new units with 6 year guarantees, used ones with 5 year guarantees, or we can convert your own.

Technics SP-10R & SL-1000R Many combinations available
Hi Fi World said:

This is a spinner of vinyl for the serious, where you just want to punch a button and get on with it. It offers a degree of unarguable perfection for professional studios and anyone working with vinyl. If you want such unerring focus on the basics of playing LP it's time to check the piggy bank.

Hi Fi News said:

Any great turntable gives you a certain frisson when you hear it. It's that old 'shivers down the spine' feeling, a sense of being let into a world to which you had previously not been privy. This is a remarkable turntable, and arguably the apex of vinyl playback. It's difficult to see how the SP-10R motor unit can be improved upon. It is a definitive statement of engineering prowess, and marks the return of direct drive to the top tier of turntables.

Miyajima - Stereo - Mono - Denon DL-103 - Audio Technica AT33 & OC9

Turntables & Tonearms - Technics SL-1200 & SP-10R - Furutech - Klipsch - 78rpm - SL1200 Mods

Tax free best prices for World wide mail order by Fed Ex

Sound Hi Fi Dartmouth Devon 01803 833366 www.SoundHiFi.com



Introducing
Dekoni Blue



electromod
the sound connection
www.electromod.co.uk

MrSpeakers

Introducing **NEW**
ETHER 2



"...A Game Changer!"

- Matt,
TCG Head-fi Oct 3

"If a solo artist gets things badly wrong they can crash and burn"



Paul Rigby

I've been examining the concept of 'the band' and the 'solo artist' of late and I've been wondering about the idea of success.

Success can mean many things to many people. To some it is fame, riches, fast cars and faster women/men. To others it's an artistic goal, or just a living and no more – to live their hobby, as it were. Once those respective goals have been reached or crossed, happiness ensues for the creative artist.

Let me look around at the history of music and at the solo artist first. If a solo artist gets things badly wrong, if he or she doesn't make it as far as wanted, they can crash and burn – perhaps getting stuck in a creative cul-de-sac that few people either understand or appreciate, or entering a 'middle of the road' area of quality and content. A place full of others. If any or all of that happens then, in broad terms – and there are exceptions, yes – it's that solo artist's fault.

They've either done or said something that has not been good enough. Made the wrong choices. Outside demands have forced them into the situation. Their ambitions have not been up to seeing this and finding a solution. And so on.

You can't say the same for most bands. I'd say many more band members, in percentage terms, have lost control of their future and their career than solo artists. Again, there are exceptions, it's true but, in broad terms, when a band doesn't 'make it' (whatever that term might mean for them) then many band members are more than justified to point the finger elsewhere.

As I was writing these very words, Toronto metal band Witchrot

(I'm not too familiar with their music, I must admit) posted a heartfelt message on Facebook. Bassist Peter Turik stated that, "Due to the unfortunate reality of our guitarist f*****g my girlfriend of almost 7 years WITCHROT will be taking an extended hiatus". He posted this message with an image of his broken bass guitar. He then added, "Also our drummer died...".

None of this is Mr Turik's fault, of course. But it has surely put a cramp in his career ambitions. When you involve yourself with people, you are forced to trust and rely upon for the many critical elements that go to make up a career, the chances of it 'going Turik' are high!

I've just received a very nice box set from Universal. Based on the early career of Mott The Hoople, 'Mental Train - The Island Years 1969-71' contains four commercial albums (three of them absolutely brilliant, the fourth still being pretty good) plus lots of rarities over six CDs. It's a top notch box set. After listening to it, you may very well ask yourself, why didn't this band achieve superstar status? My goodness, they gave it a go. They even collaborated with David Bowie on the (albeit later) hit, 'All the Young Dudes'. So why isn't their status up there with Bowie?

Bowie was a man in control. Mott The Hoople were not.

So it was intriguing that it was Bowie who offered to talk to his own manager to lever them out of their record deal with Island and away from the influence of their manager ("...who we managed more than he managed" said Mott the Hoople lead singer, Ian Hunter, in his book, 'Diary of a Rock'n'Roll Star') and produce their next album. Perhaps even more

crucially Bowie encouraged Hunter to take sole control over the direction of Mott the Hoople.

"We were looking at people like Roxy who had steady management – there was a plan" said Hunter. "There was no plan with us. It was chaos. And we didn't know what to do about it. It wasn't cohesive".

Bowie said "You've got to lead because it's not working. You're not getting any answers to questions". The thing is, any decision had to be 5-0 in Mott the Hoople. It couldn't be 3-2. And there was always one guy who was pissed off, so nothing ever really got done".

So friend Bowie moved onwards and upwards. Mott the Hoople stuttered.

But let's get back to the notion of success. I can see why people split from a band. I understand the reasoning. Part of it is because the band can – as you've learnt above – stand in the way. You have no choice but to remove the barrier, the band itself. Then success, in whatever terms, becomes a possibility.

I, for example, am successful. Not in monetary terms but that doesn't matter. But because, for the past 30 years or more, I've enjoyed what I do for work. Mott's Ian Hunter echoed the thought in a recent interview with The Guardian. "If you're lucky enough to have a passion – most people aren't – grab it. And that's what you do for the rest of your life. It might take a while and it might not be easy. But grab it and you'll be happy. F**k the money. That'll come or it won't. But you'll be doing what you want to do and that's what life is supposed to be". Fame, riches, fast cars and faster friends may not be the point; a happy life as an artist may be. ●

Black Rhodium

Waltz Loudspeaker Cable

Waltz starts with the outstanding design of our award winning Quickstep and applies tightly braided electric field screening to reduce the effects of radio frequency interference.

Waltz is based on the design of Quickstep  Upgrade your system with Waltz

Capture the Excitement, Emotion and Drama of your Music



For more information on Quickstep and Waltz, please contact Black Rhodium: sales@blackrhodium.co.uk



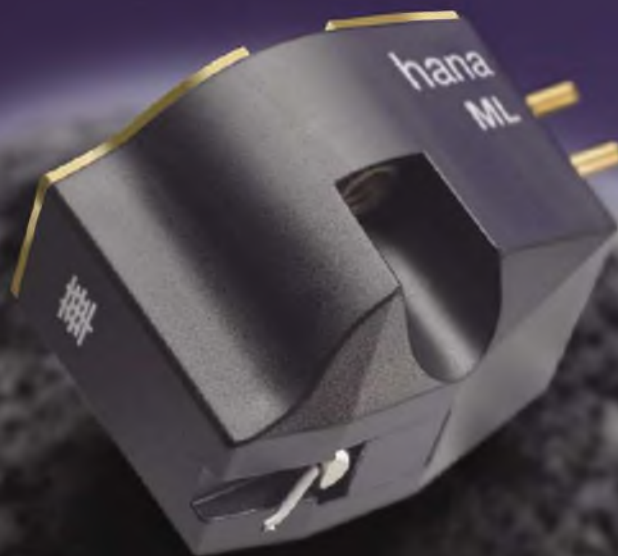
"In this price point, they are the most even-handed set of speaker cables that I have come across in a long time".
- The Audiophile Man

HANA ML&MH

NEW
M Series
Deluxe Models

HANA SH & SL
High (SH) and low (SL)
output Moving Coil models

HANA EH & EL
High (EH) and low (EL)
output Moving Coil models



High output moving coil is for use with a MM phono stage.

"To compare the Hana with a cartridge costing 10 times as much seems madness, but 'blind' I would have believed they were in the same class – extraordinary."

GEOFF HUSBAND, TNT FRANCE



Telephone: 01491 629 629 or for dealer list, visit: www.airaudio.co.uk/dealers/

"It looked as if someone had taken a pick-axe to its front panel"



Martin Pipe

As the 1980s gave way to the 1990s, decent quarter-inch reel-to-reel tape machines could be picked up for very modest sums. A Music and Video Exchange (MVE) shop, not far from London's Notting Hill Gate tube station, was jam-packed with large quantities of musical instruments and hi-fi equipment in various states of disrepair. It was a Mecca for students, with big imaginations and little disposable income – if they lived within practical travelling distance!

Among the goodies I found there were the Kenwood KD600 quartz-locked Direct-Drive turntable featured in *Olde Worlde* in 2012. It was collected in an elderly Ford Escort van, the gearbox of which disintegrated during the trip home. My reel-to-reel acquisitions ranged from a Sony TC630 (designed to be the hub of a hi-fi system, with integral 15W amps) to a Tandberg TD20A. I came across a wide range of machines, including Akai 4000s, Sony TC377s and Revox A77s.

DAT was an expensive luxury at the time, certainly as regards home listening, while new compressed-digital formats like DCC and Minidisc were still in development.

Reel-to-reel hardware and software was bulky and costly; a plethora of different tape speeds and track formats caused confusion and compatibility issues. Lacing up tape wasn't a particularly consumer-friendly activity, either; no wonder the majority of 'regular' listeners had migrated to analogue cassettes by this time.

For consumers, analogue cassettes and decks sufficed. They may have lacked the fidelity of quarter-inch tape running at four

times the speed, but cassettes were cheap – and could be played 'on the move'.

Cassette decks were at MVE too. I remember once seeing in the shop window a Marantz 'Compudeck', a glorious 3-head affair with additional 'double-speed' recording mode, finished in champagne-gold. In the chaotic bowels of the store, meanwhile, lurked an Akai 3-head front-loader that looked as if someone had taken a pick-axe to its front panel.

How did the latter end up there? MVE had a policy of not refusing 'anything legal' from sellers who carted their once-cherished items to Notting Hill. That seems incredible today, given how valuable space in London is. A fast turnover was essential, and low prices helped ensure this. I paid a mere £45 for the Kenwood KD600 turntable and the Sony TC630 was mine for a mere tenner, while on another occasion I got the Tandberg TD20A – a big logic-controlled deck with 10.5in spool capacity, working but tatty – for £25.

It certainly helped back then that analogue was unfashionable. CDs had become the format of choice, thanks to the machinations of a music industry making a killing out of reissuing albums we loved (and already owned!) in the new format, and vinyl suffered accordingly. Dual and Thorens turntables were cheap second-hand buys from Loot, Exchange and Mart and weekend car boot-sales, although Technics SL-1200s held their value thanks to the burgeoning DJ culture. Garrard 301s and 401s, then cheap and unloved, were being shipped en masse to canny Japanese audiophiles. Today, such hardware fetches high prices; oh, how things change!

It follows that MVE paid sellers little for their space-consuming gear. I can remember staff – often students and part-time musicians – telling me that they were paid poorly too!

The store is long gone, as is its pioneering computer equivalent on the other side of the street. During a recent cycle ride through that perma-scaffolded part of the world, I could find no sign that either shop existed; London seems to be in a permanent state of change nowadays. The clothing, comics and record-shop interests of MVE (registered in Nevada, for some reason) are thankfully still around. When I used to visit, the record shop was a good source of radio station cast-offs – LPs, singles and reel-to-reel tape that could be reused.

Now it's time to get the recordings I made on those second-hand tapes into the digital domain. The majority are of live material, typically from Radios 1 and 3. BBC programmes like 'In Concert' were worth capturing. Featuring an hour's worth of live performance from well-known acts (or two half-hours from lesser-known performers) this was a Saturday-afternoon Radio 1 staple. Some of them have been rebroadcast late on Friday nights as part of 6 Music's 'Classic Concert' series – but most haven't. Performances were frequently excellent, and in some cases even preferable to official album versions. BBC engineers did a damn fine job recording these gigs. My transfers from broadcast to tape have raised a number of issues, ranging from the tape itself (some suffering from 'sticky-shed syndrome') to issues like track configuration, recording level, azimuth and what have you. Reel-to-reel tape is a subject I hope to explore more in future columns. ●

2NDHANDHIFI.CO.UK

Guaranteed used and ex-demo audio equipment from HiFiSound - the UK's premier source

Call : 0845 6019390 Email : News@2ndhandhifi.co.uk



Thinking of selling? Think of us!

Best prices – guaranteed!

Hassle free collections!

Cash or payment direct to bank!

Thinking of buying? Think of us!

Better sound for your pound!

Everything sold with warranty!

New stock arriving daily!...

Thinking of saving? New special deals!

55-70% off brand new end of line Piega AV speaker packages!

35% off ex demo Bryston stock clearance!

50-70% off brand new end of line Usher loudspeakers!

55-70% off end of line Cairn electronics!

"Swing arm CD players are not worth anything; the laser and its mechanism cost well over £120"



Dave Tutt

One of my customers arrived with his entire system that had been stored away for some time. He had Technics, Philips and Acoustic Research products from the early 1980s that had suffered some decay not only from use but also from storage. The biggest looser were the Acoustic Research 'speakers. The foam surrounds on these 'speakers always end up in the cabinet or behind the grill – after almost 40 years you have to expect that.

New drive units, LS04695 types, seemed suitable. The original drivers are close to 6 Ohm but also not quite 4 ohm either so it's a judgement call as to which to fit. I chose the 4 Ohm version which sounded somewhat better in the box, having earlier tried the 8 Ohm version LS4690 and found the result less than suitable. The 8 Ohm unit would have required adjustment to tweeter level to match, as it was then rather a bright sounding speaker and in need of the system's tone controls.

The complete system came with the SH-8018 graphic equaliser which I am always rather loathe to use. They have to be put in one of the tape loops of an amplifier – which is not ideal. More advanced amplifiers than Technics SU-V3 here have pre-power split points that make inclusion of a graphic equaliser more viable.

With the new drive units in place there was no lack of clarity or bass for that matter from the loudspeakers. The graphic equaliser worked but didn't really help a whole lot as you would expect.

The turntable, a Technics SL-D202 is a Direct Drive type and well worth investigating if you want to try Direct Drive. This particular unit

was bound up by hardened grease. The hard wired phono leads were nasty and broken too so they came out and were replaced with some OFC types with nice new plugs.

Why is it that none of the manufacturers at that time owned an alignment protractor? All of these turntables, no matter who makes them, put the cartridge in pushed to the back or the front of the headshell – when neither is correct!

With errors corrected, playing Gallagher and Lyle's Breakaway proved the Technics was working nicely. I have seen these units priced at between £75 and £200 so they are probably not going to be around long. A bargain, one worth more.

The cassette deck, an RS-M225, is not exactly one of Technics best but it worked fine once the switches had been cleaned. All switches fail, especially when not used. A liberal dose of switch cleaner and repeated operation got them working, sound then coming out of the machine.

The main mode switch of an RS-M225 is always a prime candidate for producing problems, as it is a complex device carrying low level signals. It is also only used when making a recording so it never gets its contacts wiped until then. It is ripe for corrosion and decay – and this is the same for any cassette deck no matter who makes it. It is quite often the only cause of cassette deck failure on the electronic side.

The Technics is not a powerful recorder. With a standard 0dB maximum recording level for music the sound was less than dynamic. Compared to that made on my JVC or Akai machines it seemed soft and quiet. In fact running an Akai recording on this machine overloaded the head preamps, resulting in distortion which just

isn't there using the Akai for playback. But again there isn't really anything wrong with the Technics with its own recordings, just as it was designed. No amount of internal adjustment helped here – so leave it alone Dave!

The amplifier, an SU-V3, is something of a Technics stalwart. The basic design is fine, the tape switching, with dubbing for two machines, is probably unique for its age. Noisy pots aside (volume control etc) this thing just worked. No signs of age at all. Impressive! Probably with the turntable these two items would suit a new audiophile well.

The only non Technics piece of electronics in this system was a Philips CD303 which is an early swing arm CDM4 mechanism that, like most of these things, was dead. Much as I would like to say they are repairable, swing arm CD players are not worth anything as the laser and its mechanism cost well over £120. There are a few refurbished ones which mostly end up as part of CD juke boxes as renovation projects but availability and life is an unknown – and forget the salvaged e-Bay ones. Sadly the Philips was scrap.

Want to know if your CD is a swing arm type? Look at the tray. If the laser slot in the tray is curved you have a CD player with a laser that's no longer available as a spare. Marantz CD52 and 60 are typical examples. Of course the fact that they have lasted 25 years or more shows just how good they were to start with. Current linear-running lasers do not need a curved slot for clearance and since they cost less than £10 you can't really justify the parts cost of a swing-arm. A new CD player is less expensive nowadays! ●

+44 (0)7759 105 932
dave_london@hotmail.com
www.tutt-technology.co.uk

We do not sell these products. It is for your information only.

WORLD CLASSICS

Here is our list of the great and good from audio's glorious past, products that have earned their place in hi-fi history. 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.

TURNTABLES

EAT FORTE 2009 £12,500
Lavishly finished two box, two motor turntable with gorgeous Ikeda 407 tonearm bundled. Exceptionally stable and unfussy performer with a relaxed but highly enjoyable gait.



FUNK FIRM VECTOR II 2009 £860
Innovative engineering gives a nimble, pacy and musical sound that's one of the best at the price.

REGA P2 2008 £300
Excellent value for money engineering, easy set up and fine sound.

MCINTOSH MT10 2008 £8,995
Big, expensive, controversially styled and glows more than some might consider necessary, but an astonishingly good performer.

REGA P3-24 2008 £405
Seminal affordable audiophile deck with fine bundled tonearm. Tweakable, and really sings with optional £150 outboard power supply.

ACOUSTIC SOLID ONE 2007 £4,050
Huge turntable, both in terms of sheer mass and sonic dynamics. Fit up to three arms and enjoy, just don't damage your back moving it...

AVID VOLVERE SEQUEL 2007 £4,600
Stylish high end vinyl spinner with industrial strength build quality and a sound to match. Sound is edge-of-the-seat stuff.

MICHELL GYRODEC SE 2005 £1,115
Design icon with superlative build. Sound is beautifully smooth, effortless and exceptionally expansive.

MARANTZ TT-15S1 2005 £1,299
Cracking all in one deck/arm/cartridge combination, this must surely be the best sound/plug and play package at this price point.

MICHELL TECNODEC 2003 £579
Superb introduction to Michell turntables - on a budget. Top quality build and elegant design mean it's still the class of the mid-price field.



MICHELL ORBE 1995 £2,500
The top Michell disc spinner remains a superbly capable all rounder with powerful, spacious sound that's delicate and beguiling.

SME MODEL 10A 1995 £4,700
Exquisitely engineered deck and SME V tonearm combo that's an extremely accomplished performer with classical music.

LINN AXIS 1987 £253
Cut-price version of the Sondek with LVX arm. Elegant and decently performing package. Later version with Akito tonearm better.

ROKSAN XERXES 1984 £550
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.

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.

MICHELL GYRODEC 1981 £599
Thanks to its stunning visuals, this bold design wasn't accorded the respect it deserved. Clean, solid and architectural sound.

TOWNSHEND ROCK 1979 £ N/A
Novel machine has extremely clean and fluid sound. Substantially modified through the years, and capable of superb results even today.

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



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

SONY PS-B80 1978 £800
First outing for Sony's impressive 'Biotracer' electronic tonearm. Built like a tank with a clean and tidy sound, albeit lacking involvement. Scarily complicated and with no spares support - buy with caution!

TRIO LD-7D 1978 £600
The best 'all-in-one' turntable package ever made. Clean, powerful and three-dimensional sound, ultimately limited by the tonearm.

ADC ACCUTRAC 4000 1976 £300
Bonkers 1970s direct drive that uses an infra red beam to allow track selection and programming. More of a visual and operational delight than a sonic stunner.

PIONEER PLC-590 1976 £600
Sturdy and competent motor unit that performs well with a wide range of tonearms. Check very thoroughly before buying due to electronic complexity and use of some now-obsolete ICs.

PIONEER PL12D 1973 £36
When vinyl was the leading source, this brought 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.



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.

LINN SONDEK LP12 1973 £86
For many, the Brit superdeck; constant mods meant that early ones sound warmer and more lyrical than modern versions. Recent 'SE' mods have brought it into the 21st century, albeit at a price.

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.

GOLDRING Lenco GL75 1970 £15.6S
Simple, well engineered motor unit with soft, sweet sound and reasonable tonearm. Good spares and servicing support even today.

GARRARD 301/401 1953 £19
Tremendously strong and articulate with only a veiled treble to let it down.



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.

TONEARMS

REGA RB251 2009 £136
Capable way past its price point, the new 3-point mount version of the classic RB250 serves up a taut and detailed sound. A little lean for some tastes, but responds well to rewiring and counter-weight modification.

HELIUS OMEGA 2008 £1,595
Stylish and solid lump of arm with fabulous build quality that turns in a dynamic and weighty performance.

AUDIO ORIGAMI PU7 2007 £1,300
The classic Syrinx PU3 updated to spectacular effect. Hand made to order, with any mass, length and colour you care for. Fit, finish and sound truly impressive.



GRAHAM PHANTOM 2006 £3,160
Sonically stunning arm with magnificent bass celerity and soundstaging. Build quality up to SME standards, which is really saying something!

TRI-PLANAR PRECISION 2006 £3,600
Immaculate build, exquisite design and one of the most naturally musical and lucid sounds around.

MICHELL TECNOARM A 2003 £442
Clever reworking of the Rega theme, using blasting drilling and rewiring!

SME 309 1989 £767
Mid-price SME comes complete with cost-cut aluminium arm tube and detachable headshell. Tight, neutral sound with good tonality, but lacks the IV's pace and precision.

NAIM ARO 1987 £1,425
Charismatic unipivot is poor at frequency extremes but sublime in the midband; truly emotive and insightful.

SME SERIES V 1987 £2,390
Vice-like bass with incredible weight, ultra clear midband and treble astound, although some don't like its matter of factness!

NAIM ARO 1986 £875
Truly endearing and charismatic performer - wonderfully engaging mid-band makes up for softened frequency extremes.



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 SERIES III 1979 £113
Clever variable mass design complete with Titanium Nitride tube tried to be all things to all men, and failed. Charming nonetheless, with a warm and inoffensive sound.

TECHNICS EPA-501 1979 £ N/A
Popular partner for late seventies Technics motor units. Nice build and Titanium Nitride tube can't compensate for middling sound.

LINN ITTOK LVII 1978 £253
Japanese design to Linn specs made for a muscular, rhythmic sound with real dynamics. The final LVIII version worth seeking out.

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.

HADCOCK GH228 1976 £46
Evergreen unipivot with lovely sweet, fluid sound. Excellent service backup.

ACOS LUSTRE GST-1 1975 £46
The archetypal S-shaped seventies arm; good, pulsive and involving sound in its day, but ragged and undynamic now.

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 and stunning build has made it a cult, used prices unjustifiably high.

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.

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.



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.

INTEGRATED AMPLIFIERS

NAIM NAIT XS 2009 £1,250
With much of the sound of the Supernait at half the price, this is powerful, articulate and smooth beyond class expectations.

MUSICAL FIDELITY PRIMO 2009 £7,900
Seriously expensive, but one listen explains why. Wonderfully exuberant sound that can only come from a top quality tube design.

SUGDEN A21A S2 2008 £1,469
Crystalline clarity, dizzying speed and forensic detailing. Power limited so needs sensitive speakers.

CREEK OBH-22 2008 £350
Brilliant value budget passive, with remote control, mute and input switching, plus an easy, a neutral sound.

CAMBRIDGE 840A V2 2007 £750
Version 2 addresses version 1's weaknesses to turn in a mightily accomplished performance, offering power, finesse and detail.

SUGDEN IA4 2007 £3,650
Goodly amount of Class A power, icy clarity and a breathtakingly fast, musical sound make this one of the very best super-integrateds.

NUFORCE P-9 2007 £2,200
Impressive two box preamp with superb resolution and an engaging sound.

MELODY PURE BLACK 101D 2007 £3,295
The clarity and openness of valves plus firm grip and fine detail make this a preamplifier masterclass.

AUDIOLAB 8000S 2006 £400
In another life, this sold for three times the price, making it a stand-out bargain now. Very clean, powerful and tidy sound.

MCINTOSH MA6800 1995 £3735
Effortlessly sweet, strong and powerful with seminal styling to match.

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.

EXPOSURE VII/VIII 1985 £625
Seminal pre-power, offering most of what Naim amps did with just that little bit extra smoothness. Lean, punchy and musical.



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.

VTL MINIMAL/50W MONOBLOCK 1985 £1,300
Rugged, professional build and finish allied to a lively and punchy sound (albeit with limited power) make them an excellent used buy.

MUSICAL FIDELITY A1 1985 £350
Beguiling Class A integrated with exquisite styling. Questionable reliability.

MISSION CYRUS 2 1984 £299
Classic 1980s minimalism combines arresting styling with clean, open, lively sound. Further upgradeable with PSX power supply.



NAIM NAIT 1984 £350
Superb rhythms and dynamics make it truly musical, but tonally monochromatic. Fine phono stage, very low power.

CREEK CAS4040 1983 £150
More musical than any budget amp before it; CAS4140 loses tone controls, gains grip.

MYST TMA3 1983 £300
Madcap eighties minimalism, but a strong and tight performer all the same.

CLASSICS

ROTEL RA-820BX 1983 £139
Lively and clean budget integrated that arguably started the move to minimalism.

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.

ROGERS A75 1978 £220
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.

A&R A60 1977 £115
Sweet and musical feature-packed integrated; the Audiolab 8000A remains a classic.



SUGDEN C51/P51 1976 £130
Soft sounding early Sugden combo with a plethora of facilities and filters. A sweet and endearing performer but lacking in power and poor load driving ability.

SUGDEN A21 1969 £ N/A
Class A transistor integrated with an eminently likeable smoothness and musicality. Limited inputs via DIN sockets.

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.

CHAPMAN 305 1960 £40
Smooth pre/power combo with a sweet and open sound. Not quite up to Leak/Quad standards but considerably cheaper secondhand.

POWER AMPLIFIERS

ELECTROCOMPANET NEMO 2009 £4,995 (EACH)
Norwegian power station as cool as a glacier tonally, yet impresses with sheer physicality and fleetness of foot. 600W per channel.

NUFORCE REFERENCE 9SE V2 2006 £1,750
Brilliant value for money monoblocks with massive power and super-clean, three dimensional sound.

QUAD II-80 2005 £6,000 PER PAIR

Quad's best ever power amplifier. Dramatic performer with silky but dark tonality, blistering dynamics, serious power and compellingly musical sound.



QUAD 909 2001 £900
Current dumper has a smooth and expansive character with enough wallop to drive most loads. Not the most musical, but superb value all the same.

NAIM NAP 500 2000 £17,950
Flagship amplifier will drive just about any speaker with ease. Factor in the company's trademark pace, rhythm and timing and it all adds up to one effortlessly musical package.

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

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



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

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 experience.

KRELL KMA100 II 1987 £5,750
Monoblock version of the giant KSA-100 is one of the seminal 80s transistor power amplifiers. Massive wallop allied to clean and open Class A sound makes this one of the best amplifiers of its type.

RADFORD STA25 RENAISSANCE 1986 £977

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 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 incisiveness.

HH ELECTRONICS TPA-50D AMPLIFIERS 1973 £110

Simple design with easily available components, solid build quality and fine sound make for a surprisingly overlooked bargain.

LECSON AP1 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.

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

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.



LEAK STEREO 60 1958 £N/A
Leak's biggest valve power amp offers 35 Watts per channel and more low end welly than the smaller Stereo 20. Despite concerns over reliability rarity value means high price.

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.



LEAK POINT ONE, TL10, TL12.1, TL12 PLUS 1949 £28

Early classics that are getting expensive. Overhauling is de rigueur before use, using original parts if possible. Surprisingly crisp and musical. Deeply impressive in fine fettle.

PRE AMPLIFIERS

AUDIOLAB 8000C 1991 £499
Tonally grey but fine phono input and great facilities make it an excellent general purpose tool.



CROFT MICRO 1986 £150
Budget valve pre-amp with exceptionally transparent performance.

CONRAD JOHNSON MOTIV MC-8 1986 £2,500
Minimalist FET-based preamplifier is brilliantly neutral and smooth with a scrupulous light balance in the mould of Sugden. Something of a curio, but worthwhile nonetheless.

AUDIO RESEARCH SP-8 1982 £1,400
Beautifully designed and built high end tube pre-amplifier with deliciously sweet and smooth sound. Not the last word in incision or grip.

LINN LK-1 1986 £499
A brave attempt to bring remote controlled user-friendliness to hair-shirt audiophile hi-fi. Didn't quite work, but not bad for under £100.

NAIM NAC 32.5 1978 £ N/A
Classic high end pre. Brilliantly fast and incisive sound that's a joy with vinyl but a tad forward for digital.

LECSON AC-1 1973 £ N/A
Amazing styling courtesy of Allan Boothroyd can't disguise its rather cloudy sound, but a design classic nonetheless.

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



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!

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

LOUDSPEAKERS

WHARFEDALE DIAMOND 10.3 2010 £290
Great small standmounters for audiophiles on a budget; dry punchy sound with impressive sound-staging at the price.



YAMAHA SOAVO 1.1 2009 £3,000
Musical, transparent with impressive dynamics and cohesion. Excellent build and finish.

USHER BE-10 2009 £10,500
Clever high end moving coil design with immense speed and dizzying clarity allied to epic punch. Needs the best ancillaries to fly, though...



SPENDOR A5 2009 £1,695
Multi-talented floorstanders with generous scale and punch and Spendor's classic mid-range detail. Deliver a sound that thoroughly engages whatever you care to play.

MONITOR AUDIO PL100 2008 £2,300
The flagship 'Platinum' series standmounter has a lovely warm and delicate sound with superlative treble.



MARTIN LOGAN SOURCE 2008 £1,600
Brilliant entry level electrostatics, giving a taste of loudspeaker esoterica for the price of most moving coil boxes. Tremendous clarity, evenness and delicacy, although not the world's most powerful sound.

PMC OB11 2008 £2,950
Cleverly updated floorstanders give scale and solidity in slim and well finished package.

ISOPHON GALILEO 2007 £2,100
Big standmounters that really grip the music and offer quite startling dynamics and grip.

ONE THING AUDIO ESL57 2007 £1,450
One Thing Audio's modifications keep the good old ESL57 at the very top of the game.

MOWGAN AUDIO MABON 2007 £3,995
Massively capable loudspeakers that offer dynamics, scale and clarity in an elegantly simple package. Wide range of finishes, too.

B&W 686 2007 £299
Baby standmounters offer a sophisticated and mature performance that belies both their dimensions and price tag.

B&O BEOLAB 9 2007 £5,000
Technically impressive and visually striking loudspeakers with sound quality that more than matches their looks.



ISOPHON CASSIANO 2007 £12,900
Drive units featuring exotic materials allied to superlative build quality result in an immensely capable loudspeaker. Not an easy load to drive, however.

QUAD ESL-2905 2006 £5,995
The old 989 with all the bugs taken out, this gives a brilliantly neutral and open sound like only a top electrostatic can; still not a natural rock loudspeaker, though.

B&W 801D 2006 £10,500
In many respects, the ultimate studio monitor; dazzling clarity and speed with commanding scale and dynamics.



REVOLVER CYGNIS 2006 £5,999
Revolver pull out all the stops and show what they can do with this magnificent flagship loudspeaker. A superb monitor that is like a mini B&W 801D in many ways.

USHER BE-718 2007 £1,600
Beryllium tweeters work superbly, allied to a fast and punchy bass driver. The result is subtle, smooth and emotive.

USHER S-520 2006 £350
Astonishingly capable budget standmounters that offer detail and dynamics well beyond their price and dimensions.

ACOUSTIC ENERGY AE1 CLASSIC 2006 £845
Brilliantly successful remake of an iconic design; not flawless, but surely one of the most musical loudspeakers ever made.



MISSION X-SPACE 1999 £499
The first mass production sub and sat system using NXT panels is a sure-fire future classic - not flawless, but a tantalisingly unboxy sound nevertheless!

MISSION 752 1995 £495
Cracking Henry Azima-designed floorstanders combined HDA drive units and metal dome tweeters with surprisingly warm results. Benign load characteristics makes them great for valves.

TANNOY WESTMINSTER 1985 £4500
Folded horn monsters which sound good if you have the space. Not the last word in tautness but can drive large rooms and image like few others.



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 coarse at high frequencies and limp in the bass. Speakers would never be the same again...

HEYBROOK HB1 1982 £130
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.



QUAD ESL63 1980 £1200
An update of the ESL57, with stiffer cabinets. Until the 989, the best of the Quad electrostatics.

MISSION 770 1980 £375
Back in its day, it was an innovative product and one of the first of the polypropylene designs: warm, smooth, clean and powerful sound.

ACOUSTIC RESEARCH AR18S 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...

YAMAHA NS1000 1977 £532
High tech Beryllium midband and tweeter domes and brutish 12" woofers in massive sealed mirror image cabinets equals stunning transients, speed and wallop allied to superb transparency and ultra low distortion. Partner carefully!



JR 149 1977 £120
Cylindrical speaker 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 has clarity and imaging.

KEF R105 1977 £785
Three way Bextrene-based floorstander gave a truly wideband listen and massive (500W) power handling. A very neutral, spacious and polite sounding design, but rhythmically well off the pace.

IMF TLS80 1976 £550
Warm and powerful 1970s behemoth with transmission loading and a mixture of KEF and Celestion drive units. Impressively physical wideband sound but rhythms not a forte.

SPENDOR BC1 1976 £240
Celestion HF1300 tweeter meets bespoke Spendor Bextrene mid-bass unit. The result is a beautifully warm yet focussed sound. A little bass bloom necessitates careful low-stand mounting.



HH ELECTRONICS TPA-50D AMPLIFIERS 1973 £110

Simple design with easily available components, solid build quality and fine sound make for a surprisingly overlooked bargain. Not exactly stylish, however.

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.

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

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.

SYSTEMS

MERIDIAN SOOLOOS 2.1 2010 £6,990
Crisp styling, bright, colourful touchscreen, plus excellent search facilities. This is one hard disk music system with a difference. Best partnered to Meridian active loudspeakers.



NAIM UNITIQUE 2010 £995
Great little half width one-box system with truly impressive sound allied to a wealth of source options.

ARCAM SOLO MINI 2008 £650
Half the size and two-thirds the price of a full-sized Solo, the Mini gives very little away in terms of performance to its bigger brother.

MERIDIAN F80 2007 £1,500
Fantastically built and versatile DVD/CD/DAB/FM/AM unit, designed in conjunction with Ferrari. Ignore nay-sayers who sneer that it isn't a 'proper' hi-fi product. Just listen.

MARANTZ 'LEGEND' 2007 £22,000
The combination of SA-7S1 disc player, SC-7S2 preamp and MA-9S2 monoblocks delivers jaw-dropping performance.

SHANLING MC-30 2007 £650
Quite possibly the cutest all-in-one around with fine performance from the CD player, tuner and MP3 player input. Very low power, though.



AURA NOTE PREMIER 2007 £1,500
Lovely shiny CD/tuner/amplifier with fine sound quality and dynamic abilities.



ARCAM SOLO NEO 2006 £1,100
Excellent all-in-one system, with a warm, smooth and balanced sound to match the features and style.

PEACHTREE AUDIO IDECCO £1,000
Excellent sounding iPod dock, impressive DAC and fine amplifier section make this an excellent one box style system.



TUNERS

ARCAM FMJ T32 2009 £600
Excellent hybrid FM/DAB+ tuner with a smooth, engaging sound. Factor in its fine build and it's a super value package.



MAGNUM DYNALAB MD-100T 2006 £1,895
One of the best ways to hear FM that we know; superbly open and musical sound in a quirky but characterful package.

MYRYAD MXT4000 2005 £1,000
Sumptuous sound and top-notch build quality make for a tempting AM/FM package. Warm and richly detailed on good quality music broadcasts.

NAIM NAT03 1993 £595
The warm, atmospheric sound is further proof of Naim's proficiency with tuners.

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

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



NAD 4040 1979 £79
Tremendously smooth and natural sound allied to low prices and good availability make this budget analogue esoteric.

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

YAMAHA CT7000 1977 £444
Combines sleek ergonomics, high sensitivity and an explicit, detailed sound.

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



ROGERS T75 1977 £125
Superb mid-price British audiophile design, complete with understated black fascia. Smooth and sweet with fine dimensionality.

SANSUI TU-9900 1976 £300
A flagship Japanese tuner. It boasts superlative RF performance and an extremely smooth and lucid sound.



TECHNICS ST-8080 1976 £180
Superb FM stage makes for a clean and smooth listen.

REVOX B760 1975 £520
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?



SEQUERRA MODEL 1 1973 £1300
Possibly the ultimate FM tuner. Massive in terms of technology, size and features dedicated to extracting every ounce of performance from radio, including impressive multi-purpose oscilloscope display.

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. Deliciously lucid with true dimensionality.

HEADPHONE AMPLIFIERS

GRAHAM SLEE NOVO 2009 £255
Dynamic headphone amplifier with a great sense of timing. Crisp, clear treble and warm midrange gives an involving sound.



MUSICAL FIDELITY X-CAN V8 2008 £350
Open and explicitly detailed sound plus serious bass wallop. A great partner for most mid-to-high end headphones.

CD PLAYER/RECORDERS

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.

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.



SONY MDS-JE555ES 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 with a true audiophile sound and HDCD compatibility.



CAMBRIDGE AUDIO CD4SE 1998 £200
A touch soft in the treble and tonally light, but outstanding in every other respect.

SONY TCD-8 DATMAN 1996 £599
Super clean sound makes this an amazing portable, but fragile.

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

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

TECHNICS SL-P1200 1987 £800
CD version of the Technics SL-1200 turntable. Massively built to withstand the rigours of 'pr' use and laden with facilities - a great eighties icon.

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.

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.



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.

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



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.

SONY CDP-701ES 1984 £890
Sony's first bespoke 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.

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!



ANALOGUE RECORDERS

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

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



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.

PIONEER CTF-950 1978 £400
Not up to modern standards sonically, but a great symbol of the cassette deck art nonetheless.

YAMAHA TC-800GL 1977 £179
Early classic with ski-slope styling. Middling sonics by modern standards, but cool nonetheless!

SONY TC-377 1972 £N/A
A competitor to the Akai 4000D open reel machine, the Sony offered better sound quality and is still no slouch by modern standards.

REVOX A77 1968 £145
The first domestic open reel that the pros used at home. Superbly made, but sonically off the pace these days.

COMPACT DISC TRANSPORTS

ESOTERIC P0 1997 £8,000
The best CD drive bar none. Brilliantly incisive, ridiculously over engineered.

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

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

DACS

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.

CAMBRIDGE AUDIO DAC MAGIC 1995 £99
Good value upgrade for budget CD players with extensive facilities and detailed sonics.

PINK TRIANGLE DACAPO 1993 £ N/A
Exquisite; the warmest and most lyrical 16bit digital audio we have ever heard.

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

CABLES

MISSING LINK CRYO REFERENCE 2008 £495/0.5M
High end' interconnects, with deliciously smooth, open and subtle sound without a hint of edge.

TECHLINK WIRES XS 2007 £20
Highly accomplished interconnects at an absurdly low price. Stunning value for money.

VDH ULTIMATE THE FIRST 2004 £250
Carbon interconnects that help you forget the electronics and concentrate on the music. Miraculous transparency. Tight and tuneful bass mixed with air and space.



WIREWORLD OASIS 5 2003 £99/M
Excellent mid-price design with a very neutral, silky and self-effacing sound. Superb value for money.

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.

vinyl section

contents

FEBRUARY 2019

www.hi-fiworld.co.uk

MCINTOSH MT2 TURNTABLE 83

An attractive belt drive turntable from McIntosh, reviewed by Noel Keywood.

DS AUDIO STYLUS CLEANER 89

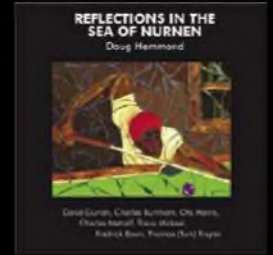
A pretty and sticky stylus cleaner, Paul Rigby finds.

SOUNDBITES ALTO-EXTREMO LYD II ISOLATION FEET/VOODOO ISO-POD ISOLATION FEET 91

Paul Rigby explains the value of feet (beneath your hi-fi!).

AUDIOPHILE BOOK 93

Ripped & Torn, a punk magazine compilation reviewed by Paul Rigby.



PURE PLEASURE

From the UK-based audiophile outfit (www.purepleasurerecords.com) come two releases.

Music Inc's self titled 1970 hard bop release featured new works from Charles Tolliver, Stanley Cowell plus thirteen others in the supporting orchestra. It's a bold, energetic, free flowing jazz excursion that moves Ellington to the next level.

Doug Hammond's 'Reflections in the Sea of Nurnen' (1975) takes a Tolkein reference (Nürnen is a large inland body of water in Mordor, Middle Earth fans) and mixes analogue and electronic instrumentation plus Afro jazz influences. Highlights? I love the quietly introspective pieces balancing Hammond organ and drums.

news



MUSIC ON VINYL

More releases from this busy company (www.musiconvinyl.com), beginning with Jeff Beck's 'Jeff Beck's Guitar Shop' (1989) with its brilliant sleeve art featuring classic Beck guitar and Terry Bozzio plus Tony Hymas. Wonderful stuff.

For 'Bless Its Pointed Little Head' (1969), Jefferson Airplane issued their first live album, offering densely arranged and harder versions of former album classics, adding new colours to the band's output.

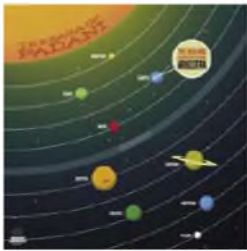
The Faces' 'A Nod is as Good as a Wink' (1971), featuring 'Stay With Me', is both honed to perfection while displaying superb song-writing skills and keeping the party going.

The Ethiopians made an impact on reggae's first important infusion and their superb debut, 'Engine '54: Let's Ska and Rock Steady' (1968) was part of that – although it was rather more rocksteady in tone.

'Headless Heroes Of The Apocalypse' (1971) from American soul artist Eugene McDaniels adds folk and funk – plus jazz – and remains a sampling favourite for contemporary hip hop acts.

First time on vinyl for Fear Factory's outing, 'Obsolete' (1998). Including a 4-page booklet, the album offered industrial metal – look out for a guest voice from Gary Numan!

Also look out for goth metal act, Within Temptation's new LP, 'The Dance', under-rated prog outfit Gravy Train and 'Staircase to the Day' (1974), German power metal act, Sinner's 'Dangerous Charm' (1987) while 'The Glass Passenger' (2008) was Jack's Mannequin's dark singer-songwriter excursion after a cancer scare.



MODERN HARMONIC

'Oakland Elementary School Arkestra – The Saga Of Padani' is the elaborate title for a collection of avant-jazz music from a rare 1994 CD ('Big Music, Little Musicians') and limited tape release ('The Thornhill Sound') via Marshall Allen, Fred Frith, Terry Riley and, erm, schoolkids. A remarkable collection that challenges the great Sun Ra himself!

AT THE MOVIES

Three contrasting soundtracks from the Music on Vinyl imprint include Donny Hathaway's 'Come Back Charleston Blue'. Shot in Harlem, it features jazz, soul and blues.

Limited to 500 copies on red vinyl with a booklet are two releases. Firstly 'Gotti' includes music from Pitbull and Jorge Gomez. 'Chicago' (1998), presented in a gatefold sleeve and on vinyl for the first time, is based upon the London cast recording (including Ute Lemper, Ruthie Henshell, Henry Goodman and Nigel Planer).



PIXIES

'Come On Pilgrim...It's Surfer Rosa' is a 30th anniversary edition. Consisting of the eight-track mini-album 'Come On Pilgrim' (originally released September 1987) and the band's first full album, 'Surfer Rosa' (released March, 1988), plus a bonus disc of 'Live From The Fallout Shelter', a concert/session that first aired in late 1986. On gold vinyl in a hardback book, it is a rather stunning release.



BANDCAMP GOODIES

A fond look backwards at black music can be found on Joseph Malik's 'Diverse Part 2' (ramrock.bandcamp.com). From classic soul to Motown-inflected vibes... its all here.

Ah! Kosmos' 'Beautiful Swamp' (ahkosmos.bandcamp.com) sees the Turkish-born electronica artist moving towards a Bjork-style of commercial, ethno-electro but with a different vocal style, of course.

Szun Waves' 'New Hymn to Freedom' (<https://szunwaves.bandcamp.com>) is a new avant-jazz outing offering experimental tones spanning long tracks that fully explore the complex moods.

Roosevelt's 'Young Romance' (iamroosevelt.bandcamp.com) offers guitar and synth-pop. Despite the vacuity of much of the genre, this one ain't half bad. As your coat might be trapped in the door of a speeding car, you're dragged along by the hooks.

...AND FINALLY

From Groundation is 'The Next Generation' (Baco.groundation.com) a new reggae/jazz fusion complete with that slight Roger Champman-esque vocal style.

Paradise Lost's 'Believe in Nothing' (2001). Quality metal with hooks a-plenty and a tight production.

Erdenreich's 'Tai Chi Tu' ([Sireena; www.sireena.de](https://Sireena.sireena.de)) combines diverse and wide-wide-ranging rock styles with varying cultural and genre notes to form a melange of tones. Worth investigating.

From the same label, look out for Snafu's 'Live Nottingham 1976'. The rocking supergroup were on the verge of splitting when around the time of this concert.

Black Roots' 'Take It' ([Khanti; blackrootsreggae.net](https://Khanti.blackrootsreggae.net)) takes a reggae look at the human condition and how we got here. They pull no punches and, for that (and the meaty grooves), God bless 'em!

The John Butler Trio's new release, 'Home' ([Because; www.johnbutlertrio.com](https://Because.johnbutlertrio.com)) takes its roots/rock and turns it into a relatively introspective affair. With noisy add-ons, of course.



m&rw

FROM MAINS TO MUSIC



VISIT
MCRU.CO.UK

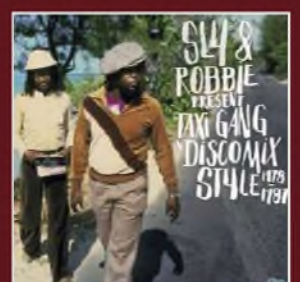
BROOKAUDIO

PURVEYORS OF
HIGH END
AUDIO EQUIPMENT



VISIT
BROOKAUDIO.CO.UK

The VINYL
ADVENTURE



Visit
THEVINYLADVENTURE.COM

Green Light



The green glow of a McIntosh MT2 turntable attracts Noel Keywood.

The recently introduced MT2 turntable from McIntosh (New York) is a 'budget model' in their range, priced below the MT5 I reviewed and was impressed by in our October 2016 issue – but still a hefty £5000. It is a two-speed design (33rpm and 45rpm) with fitted cartridge – a Sumiko Blue Point No2 moving coil – that comes as a package, styled to suit a McIntosh system. That means an elegant glass top with green lighting of the McIntosh name and plinth edges. Coupled with a classic rotary speed selector on/off switch it's a visually arresting unit that catches the eye.

Superficially, the MT2 looks pretty straightforward but measurement suggested it's subtly well honed; the arm in particular was an intriguing blend of simple but effective, something I will get to later.

Dimensionally the MT2 is

in with most others, measuring 45.2cms wide and 43.2cms deep. The problem with turntables is where to put them and this one, like most, needs a 16in (41cm) wall shelf or a 12in top with clearance for overhang, to accommodate feet 11in (28 cms) apart. I'm using Imperial here because shelves still come in this measure and because this is a US product. A weight of 13.2 kgms is no challenge and rear clearance isn't needed for a hinged dust cover because there isn't one; you get a formed clear acrylic sheet that is lifted on and off, needing space nearby to accommodate it when off. Not ideal and miserly at the price.

Where the MT5 had a massive clear acrylic platter that had big impact on sound quality, here McIntosh use a 1.18in thick unit made of polyoxymethylene they say, weighing a substantial 2.3kgs (5lbs) that sits on a belt driven aluminium hub. There's a thin, light felt platter

mat that slipped easily on the hard platter top face but a supplied puck holds the LP and mat down to prevent such slippage. All the same I secured the mat with double-sided tape to avoid any possibility of slippage – a problem that's affected turntable speed stability measurement in the past.

The hub is driven by a d.c. servo-motor that provides convenient electronic speed change: no need to move the belt physically to another pulley diameter, simply use the front rotary switch. Speed is adjustable at the rear of the plinth, using either a stroboscope or test record with frequency counter.

The arm is height adjustable but comes set for the Sumiko cartridge fitted. McIntosh supply comprehensive set up instructions in their manual but advise that the unit is best installed and set up by a dealer – wise advice it turned out. Our review sample came with the thread of the anti-skate system wrongly

IAN HARRISON HI-FI SALE!

HIFI AT DISCOUNT PRICES. FREE NATIONWIDE DELIVERY
 Email: ian.harrison@mercian.myzen.co.uk

SPECIAL OFFERS!! SALE! UP TO 40% OFF!!

CARTRIDGES UP TO 30% OFF PHONOSTAGES UP TO 25% OFF TURNTABLES & TONEARMS UP TO 25% OFF CABLES UP TO 40% OFF

VAN DEN HUL MC10S £775, ORTOFON CADENZA BLUE £950, ORTOFON QUINTET BLUE £299

TONEARMS

AMG
 CARTRIDGE MAN
 GRAHAM
 HADCOCK
 HELIUS
 MICHELL
 WOODHEAD
 MOTH
 ORIGIN LIVE
 ORTOFON
 PRO-JECT
 REED
 ROKSAN
 SUMIKO

HEADPHONE AMPS

CREEK
 FIDELITY AUDIO
 GRAHAM SLEE
 ICON AUDIO
 LEHMANN
 PRO-JECT
 SUGDEN

AMPLIFIERS

CREEK
 EAR/YOSHINO
 ICON AUDIO
 QUAD
 SUGDEN
 TOM EVANS
 VALVET

ACCESSORIES

DIGITAL STYLUS GAUGES, RECORD CLEANING MACHINES, CLEANERS, AUDIO CASSETTES

CARTRIDGES

AIR TIGHT
 BENZ MICRO
 CARTRIDGE MAN
 DECCA LONDON
 EMT
 GÖLDRING
 GRADO
 HANA
 IKEDA
 KOETSU
 MY SONIC
 NAGAOKA
 ORTOFON
 SOUNDSMITH
 TECHDAS
 VAN DEN HUL
 ZYX

SPEAKERS

ACAPPELLA
 CABASSE
 EPOS
 HARBETH
 ICON AUDIO
 OPERA AUDIO
 O. ACOUSTICS
 QUAD
 TAYLOR ACOUSTICS

CD PLAYERS

CREEK
 EAR/YOSHINO
 ICON AUDIO
 QUAD
 SUGDEN

PHONOSTAGES

EAR YOSHINO
 GRAHAM SLEE
 ICON AUDIO
 LEHMANN
 MUSICAL
 SURROUNDINGS
 PARASOUND
 PRO-JECT
 PURE SOUND
 QUAD
 ROTHWELL
 TOM EVANS
 TRICHORD
 WHEST AUDIO

CABLES

BLACK RHODIUM
 DXOS
 KUBALA-SOSNA
 PEERLESS
 PRO-JECT
 QED
 SUPRA
 TRANSPARENT
 WIREWORLD
 ZENSATI

RECORD CLEANING

PROJECT
 MOTH
 WIRELESS
 BLUESOUND

TURNTABLES

ACOUSTIC SIGNATURE
 ACOUSTIC SOLID
 AMAZON AUDIO
 INSPIRE
 LUXMAN
 MICHELL
 MUSIC HALL
 PRO-JECT
 REED
 ROKSAN
 SRM TECH
 T+A
 THORENS


HIFI FURNITURE

ALPHASON
 ATACAMA
 CUSTOM DESIGN
 HI FI RACKS
 MUNARI
 MUSIC TOOLS
 NORSTONE
 QUADRASPIRE
 SOUNDSTYLE
 TRACK AUDIO

HEADPHONES

BEYER
 ERGO
 GRADO
 PSB
 SENNHEISER

* PHONE FOR TERMS. PLEASE PHONE TO CONFIRM PRICE & AVAILABILITY PRIOR TO ORDERING. ALL GOODS ARE BRAND NEW & BOXED WITH FULL U.K. GUARANTEES. NO EX. DEM OR EX DISPLAY GOODS. NO GREY IMPORTS. GOODS ARE NOT SUPPLIED ON APPROVAL. SORRY, NO GENERAL CATALOGUES. PLEASE PHONE OR WRITE FOR SPECIFIC REVIEWS, BROCHURES OR PRICES. SUPPLIER OF HIFI PRODUCTS & ACCESSORIES SINCE 1986 MAIL ORDER ONLY FROM: IAN HARRISON, 7 MILL HILL, REPTON, DERBY, DE65 6GQ.
TEL: 01283 702875. 9am - 9pm INCLUDING SUNDAYS.



criterion audio

Criterion Audio is a premium hi-fi dealer in Cambridge. From vinyl and valves to the latest in streaming and headphones, we can help you find the perfect audio system to suit your budget and needs. Call us on 01223 233730 to arrange a demo.

Criterion House, Oakington Road, Cambridge CB3 0QH
www.criterionaudio.com info@criterionaudio.com



hear the music . . . not the equipment

WDKT88 32 watts per channel ultralinear push pull stereo amplifier. Single input power amp or integrated with multi-input relay switching

WDKEL84 15 watts per channel ultralinear push pull stereo amplifier. Single input power amp or integrated with multi-input relay switching

WDPhono3 All triode passive equalization valve phono-stage. Dual input option. MC step-up transformers available.

Requires WDPSU3 power supply

WDPre3 Transformer coupled single ended valve pre-amplifier. Low output impedance. Multi-inputs utilizing relay switching.

Requires WDPSU3 power supply

WDPSU3 High performance choke power supply

WDHD3S Transformer coupled single ended valve headphone amplifier. Multiple settings for headphone impedance matching



Kits and Components for the Audiophile Community

07972 055492 sales@world-designs.co.uk

www.world-designs.co.uk



An unusual version of falling weight anti-skate, where a loop of fine nylon passes around a pulley, a small adjustable weight applying outward bias. Also seen here is a standard damped lift/lower platform, and counterweight secured by rubber friction collar – it's pushed forward or backward to adjust tracking force.

located so it did not work, and tracking force was mis-set to 3gms when it is 2gms – and the counterweight should not have been on the arm during carriage. Since the unit is assembled in Germany from parts made in China I assume it was the German part of the operation that erred. I corrected downforce, put the bias thread (a loop) around its little pulley and also adjusted speed that was 1% slow as delivered. Our sample was not in a good state; it may have been a demonstrator or review mule.

Power comes from a small external unit that delivers 12V d.c. from 120V-240V mains, through a slim lead 11ft long overall There's

no mains earth so no possibility of hum from a hum loop – or so I thought.

SOUND QUALITY

The MT2 was connected to our Icon Audio PS3 Mk2 valve phono stage (with volume control) and thence to our McIntosh MC152 power amplifier driving Martin Logan ESL-X hybrid electrostatic loudspeakers. There was a slight buzz at high volume I could not eradicate by changing earth arrangements, where I knew the system should be and normally is totally silent. I tracked this down to the steel bottom plate being unbonded to earth. With bonding

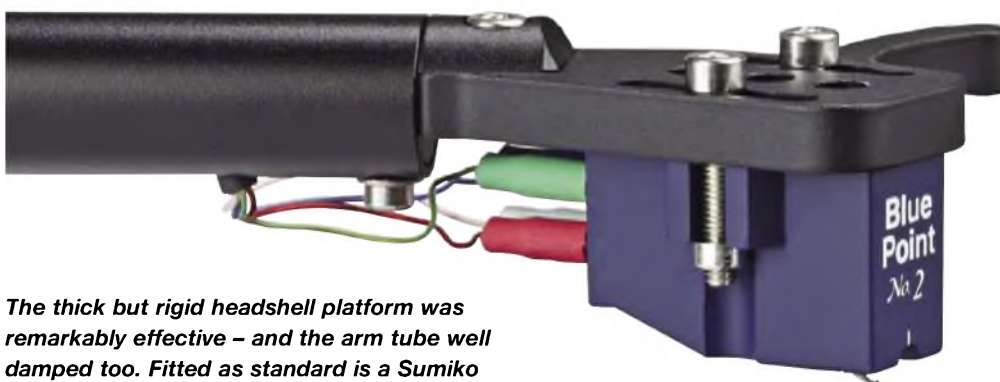
link installed externally (a piece of wire!) silence reigned. This could be a fundamental design problem or a build issue, where an internal bonding link was not connected during assembly.

The Sumiko Blue Point is a competent but lack lustre budget cartridge, ours sounding easy going but rather blurred and at times congested with massed strings of the Trondheim Soloists behind Marianne Thorsen playing Mozart violin concertos (2L, 180gm). It was all too vague for me; modern cartridges have improved way past this sort of presentation. I installed an Audio Technica VM750SH and was finally up and running, able to hear what the turntable really could do. And it was good.

Playing an array of LPs showed the general character was a sound of basic solidity, meaning firm bass, not over-emphasised but strong and tuneful. Jackie Leven's *Birds Leave No Shadow* gave me a clear example, bass guitar laying down a solid foundation, driving the song along with controlled strength.

The extra stress from a 12in single running at 45rpm, Amy Winehouse and *Tears Dry On Their Own*, nailed the underlying ability of the MT2. With the track's extended synth intro, the McIntosh had strong grip on timing, almost violent dynamics (CD eat your heart out) and a sense of clean order to the overall arrangement. What I was hearing here was the well damped arm coupled with good speed stability from the platter.

More succinctly I wasn't hearing the arm. Instead I heard nicely defined temporal progression free from zing and graced by apparently natural clarity. This is a quality of nothingness, no added flavour – it



The thick but rigid headshell platform was remarkably effective – and the arm tube well damped too. Fitted as standard is a Sumiko Blue Point No 2 cartridge.

FiiO



K3

Pocket-sized Power Flexibility

Headphone Amplifier & USB-C DAC



Hi-Res Audio



AKM AK4452



OPA926 x 2



OPA1612



Coaxial and optical



USB TYPE-C



USB 1.0/USB 2.0



Native DSD 256

Specifications			
Headphone Out 1	3.5mm single-ended output	Headphone Out 2	2.5mm TRRS balanced output
Line Out	3.5mm jack	Coaxial Out	RCA for 192kHz, support DSD64 DOP
Optical Out	Up to 96kHz	Drive Ability	16-150 Ω
Output Power 1 (3.5mm)	220mW(16 Ω); 120mW(32 Ω)	Output Power 2(2.5mm)	320mW(16 Ω); 200mW(32 Ω)
Gain Boost	L/H	Bass Boost	0/+6dB
Power Input	Recommend DC5V 500mA	Battery Capacity	N/A
THD+N	$\leq 0.004\%$	Output Impedance	$< 1.04 \Omega$
Frequency Response	20 Hz-80 kHz	SNR	≥ 113 dB (A-weighted)
Line Level	1.9Vrms	Crosstalk	≥ 70 dB (1 kHz)
MAX Output Voltage	7.39 Vp-p	MAX Output Current	81.5 mA/81.6 mA
Weight	82g	Dimensions	70 x 58 x 22mm

K3: £89.99 Discover more: www.fiiio.com/k3



FiiO K3



facebook



The rear carries solid gold plated output phono sockets, an earth terminal and 12V d.c. input at right. Beside this lie two speed adjusters.

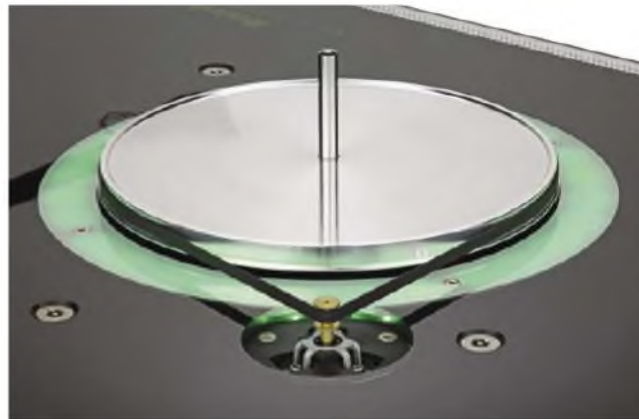
gave the MT2 a firm lower midband in dynamics and stability of imaging, whilst also making it clean and clear. The turntable is less spacious than the MT5, more confined, but punchy and powerful all the same. So not a romantic turntable, so much as controlled and powerful. A modern sound from LP, but a dramatic one.

Going back to our challenging 2L LP of the Trondheim Solistene with Marianne Thorsen the whole performance was confidently sorted into individual strands clearly laid out across the sound stage by Audio Technica's VM750SH in this arm. Tonally neutral in itself, it relayed the slightly bright balance of both the LP and the cartridge with brutal frankness. The MT2 lets through what is going on elsewhere in a system. Again at 45rpm, Moonlight Sessions from Lyn Stanley came across almost as live performance it was so good; this is a specially produced LP but the MT2 did it justice.

CONCLUSION

Our sample of McIntosh's MT2 needed a lot of sorting before its designed-in abilities could be appreciated. I don't know whether this was confined to our sample or is an assembly issue. Hum from a missing earth strap and mis-assembled anti-skate were serious problems. Once sorted however – and with a cartridge more advanced than the Sumiko fitted – the MT2 delivers fine sound quality in keeping with McIntosh standards.

£5000? Hmmm... It's a big price tag. I think the turntable is for those with a McIntosh system that want consistent style. And a McIntosh dealer able to ensure it is working properly. Fine sound quality when sorted.



Use of a 12 d.c. servo-motor allows electronic speed control to be employed, so the belt runs on a single pulley diameter.

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The MT2 ran 1% slow as delivered – just about perceptible to someone with a good sense of pitch (musician, music teacher etc). Pitch error of 0.2% is possible and commensurate with price and quality here. There are speed adjusters at rear so it was brought to nominal for listening.

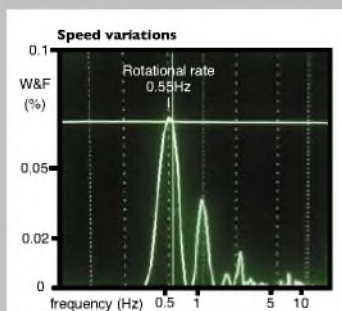
Low fluctuation of speed around nominal resulted in low wow, the unweighted DIN peak value being 0.13% and the DIN weighted value 0.07% – both good results. There will be no obvious change of pitch here, and sense of pitch will be firm rather than vague, if not as pin sharp as a Direct Drive.

Measurement of arm vibration with a B&K accelerometer showed an unusually well damped tube and headshell, likely because the latter is very thick. The main bending mode around 200Hz is hardly visible in our analysis, suggesting firm dynamics and good lower mid-band separation across the soundstage of instruments.

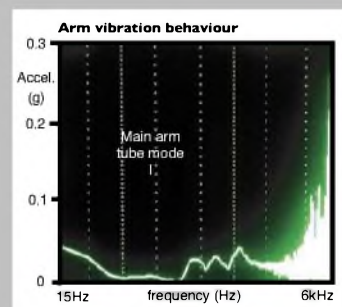
The MT2 gave good results all round, if not exceptional. Speed adjustment was poor however. **NK**

Speed error	-1%
Wow	0.13%
Flutter	0.04%
Wow & Flutter (DIN wtd.)	0.07%

SPEED STABILITY



ARM VIBRATION



MCINTOSH MT2 £4,995



EXCELLENT - extremely capable

VERDICT

Very good sound quality in essence, ignoring the fitted cartridge. But hugely expensive.

FOR

- ease of use
- sound quality
- appearance

AGAINST

- unhinged dust cover
- needs expert set-up
- no auto arm lift
- hum

Jordan Acoustics
+44 (0)1592 744779
www.jordanacoustics.co.uk

Pro-Ject
AUDIO SYSTEMS



The Classic

To celebrate the 25th anniversary of Pro-Ject Audio Systems, we decided to combine traditional design with modern technology in a brand new turntable model. This resulted in 'The Classic', which uses a frame design inspired by turntables from the 1950's and 60's, but implemented with our innovative technologies inside.

The award-winning turntable has astounded audiophiles worldwide, and is the perfect addition to any modern home. The Classic's wooden chassis is available in three matte finishes; walnut, rosenut and eucalyptus.



Distributed by Henley Audio

T: +44 (0) 1235 511 166 | E: sales@henleyaudio.co.uk | W: www.henleyaudio.co.uk

A Swell Gel

You need to keep your turntable's stylus as clean as possible. Paul Rigby reviews one tool to help you do just that, DS Audio's ST-50.

Keeping your stylus tip clean is not only important, it is critical to maintaining and enhancing the sound quality from your vinyl, in addition to the well being of the same and the stylus itself. My preferred tool is the sticky pad option. This demands that you place the said pad on the platter, then you lower the cartridge and stylus onto the pad. The stylus tip enters the pad. You lift the tonearm once more, the stylus leaves the pad – and leaves behind the muck!

DESIGN

There are plenty of budget sticky pads on the market which are fine and work well but DS Audio's ST-50 is a high-end, relatively expensive option. Some see it as a crazy luxury. I see it as the best design of its type currently on the market. Here's why.

Firstly, I can see the stylus tip moving further into the gel than competing pads. More than this, the gel pad is perfectly flat and stays flat over time. Budget pads are either not flat or can become concave over time and use. The result? Most but not all of the tip is cleaned. In tests, I found that the ST-50 also removes more grime too.

Secondly, the lid of the ST-50



is loosely applied. For most other competitors, you need two hands to open them up. I tend to realise that my stylus tip is dirty when I'm holding the tonearm. The last thing I want to do is put the arm back in its rest to reach for the sticky pad. The ST-50 allows you to hold the pad with one hand and remove the loose lid there and then, for immediate use. You pick up the wide lower chassis area, not the lid part. So you never accidentally drop the thing.

Also, unlike some competitors, there's no hard container rim around the gel edge to cause possible stylus damage if an unfortunate slip occurs.

The ST-50 also forgives laziness. If you're in a rush and you decide to put the ST-50 on a record, not the platter, it's lower soft leather area prevents vinyl scratches.

Next, you can pull the entire gel pad away from the chassis for a thorough clean. You can then stand the gel pad on its flat end for air drying. It's very easily replaced back into its chassis.

Finally? Its elegant little metal container, aluminium with nickel plating, looks beautiful. It's aesthetically pleasing.

As for the sound? Well, this little unit cleans perfectly, restoring the stylus to its former clean glory – maximising sound quality.

CONCLUSION

There are other sticky pad stylus cleaners on the market and they are good performers at a value price but like anything in life, if you want the best, you pay for it. There's plenty of reasons why the ST-50 costs a lot but also plenty of reason why its the best at its job.

REFERENCE

Origin Live Sovereign turntable
Origin Live Enterprise 12 arm
Van Den Hul Crimson XGW Stradivarius cartridge
Icon Audio PS3 phono amplifier
Aesthetix Galypso pre-amp
Icon Audio MB845 Mk.II monoblock amplifiers
Quad ESL-57 speakers with One Thing upgrade
Vertex AQ & Tellurium Q cable
Blue Horizon Professional Rack System
Harmonic Resolution Systems Noise Reduction Components
Audio Desk's Ultrasonic Pro Vinyl Cleaner



DS AUDIO ST-50 £75



OUTSTANDING - amongst the best.

VERDICT

Easy to use, does the job brilliantly and looks the part – what's not to like?

FOR

- design
- cleaning performance
- easy to clean
- one-hand cleaning

AGAINST

- nothing

+44 (0)118 981 4238
www.ds-audio-w.biz

Dial A Dealer Directory

directory of Hi-Fi Dealers throughout the UK and Ireland.

divine audio

AnalogueWorks
Creek Audio
Croft Acoustics
Graham Audio
Jelco Tonearms
Neat Acoustics
Omega Loudspeakers
Rogue Audio
Supra Cables

www.divineaudio.co.uk
07918 728860 tim@divineaudio.co.uk

The Right Note



Music in the home

Music in the Home

Tel: +44 (0)1225 874728
Web: www.rightnote.co.uk

Digital: Accoustic Arts, Quiescent, VertexAQ.

Vinyl: B.M.C. Audio, Graham, Spiral Groove, Transfiguration.

Tuners: Magnum Dynalab.

Amplifiers: Accoustic Arts, Storm Audio, Quiescent, Vitus, VTL.

Loudspeakers: Kaiser Acoustics (Chiara & Vivace), NEAT, Toem, Velodyne (subs), Vivid.

Cables: Chord Co., DNM, Nordost, Siltech, Quiescent, VertexAQ.

Mains: Aletheia, Quiescent, VertexAQ.

Supports: Arcici, Hi-Fi Racks, LeadingEdge, Stands Unique.

Room acoustics: LeadingEdge

Refreshingly different!



01865 790 879

www.oxfordaudio.co.uk

9 High Street, Hampton Wick,
Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT1 4DA

Open: Tuesday - Saturday 10am - 6pm

0208 943 3530

Infidelity

MUSIC & CINEMA SYSTEMS

NAIM, LINN, REGA, ARCAM, B&W 800 SERIES, PMC, FOCAL,
DYNAVECTOR, KUDOS, VELODYNE, STAX, LYRA, OPPO,
TANGERINE AUDIO, TELLURIUM Q.

SEE AND HEAR THE VERY BEST

CEDIA MEMBER

clarity



sales@amp3.co.uk
0343 289 6880
amp3.co.uk

Introducing the CAYIN N5iiS Digital Audio Player

- Android 5.1
- 3.5mm and 2.5mm outputs
- 864GB Memory Capacity



SAVE 10% OFF ALL ORDERS AT AMP3.CO.UK
USE VOUCHER CODE HI-FI WORLD AT THE CHECKOUT!

Audiophile Buying Club

SAVE TWICE!!

1. Bulk discounts
2. Low/No supply-chain fees
(We source ex-factory direct)

istereos.co.uk
istereos@hotmail.com

TO ADVERTISE HERE
PLEASE CALL
JOANNA HOLMES ON
+44 (0) 7958 602347
OR EMAIL:
joanna@hi-fiworld.co.uk

ATLAS[®]

the performance connection

Eos

4dd

POWER CABLE

Eos

Modular 4.0

POWER BLOCK



atlascables.com



ALTO-EXTREMO LYD II ISOLATION FEET £425 (FOR A PACK OF 3 OR £560 FOR 4)

You'd be surprised at the amount of people on social media that look upon isolation feet as a con. Took me aback when I saw comments of that ilk, let me tell you. Patently, that's not so, and you will know too if you try

them for yourself. They lower intrusive vibrations, they lower noise and they do nice things to the sound. Simple as that, really.

These examples are stuffed with technology and they're very well made. They are aluminium pucks weighing 100g each, pretty substantial at 42mm in height and 64mm in diameter.

At one end there is a damping ring. At the other end is an M8 thread (about 8mm in diameter). If you have the right thread size then, you can replace your original component feet with the Lyd IIs.

Inside is a self-adjusting construction made from a piece of shaped stainless steel that sits on a

brass ball. This means that the feet can tilt to the side - at least a bit. Useful for use on uneven surfaces.

In use, you have two options. You can try the feet with the damping ring side uppermost or you can flip them over with the damping ring at the bottom, in contact with the shelving surface.

I played a mixture of David Bowie and Sonny Rollins during the sound tests. In place, the feet enhanced detail, lowered noise and improved instrumental separation with subtle effects becoming very noticeable when the feet were placed underneath my phono amplifier. I found the sound improved further with the damping ring uppermost but experimentation is worthwhile here.

Enhancing accuracy and precision, these isolation feet are essential to get the best from your hi-fi. **PR**

[+44 (0) 203 5442338
www.alto-extremo.com]

SOUNDBITES



VOODOO ISO-POD ISOLATION FEET £300 FOR A SET OF 3 FEET, £400 FOR 4 FEET

Tackling noise in its varying forms is an important task when tweaking your hi-fi. It can make all of the difference when you're looking to make the most from your important and often expensive component investments. These isolation feet are designed to be part of that toolkit. Arriving in anodised silver or black and made in the USA, they are designed to sit underneath a component such as an amplifier, CD

player and the like.

CNC machining is behind the construction of the core chassis for each foot. The company has used aerospace alloy as part of the process. Inside are three zirconium ball bearings. What you get, therefore, is upper and lower alloy casing sandwich, with the bearings acting as filler. The whole thing is secured by magnets which can be pulled apart. So be careful. Mr Curiosity here pulled the whole thing apart and promptly lost one of the bearings which bounced off into another

dimension, which was kindly replaced by the company. "Industrial-grade felt pads" sit at the base to protect the chosen surface. Each Iso-Pod supports up to 113kg. I placed them under varying pieces of my reference chain.

I used David Bowie and jazz from Sonny Rollins during sound tests and heard an enlargement in the size of the soundstage with the feet in place which, by that action, opened up the midrange, inserted more air and space into and around the instruments, enhancing their separation.

The low noise response coupled with the enhanced focus and precision across all frequencies benefitted every single hi-fi component they worked under, adding a sense of sonic discipline to each. Easy to use, easy to fit, the Voodoo isolation feet are effective performers. **PR**

[+44 (0)7905 362545
www.madkenziehi-fi.com]

Enjoy the Music.com[®]

Reviews

News

Show Reports

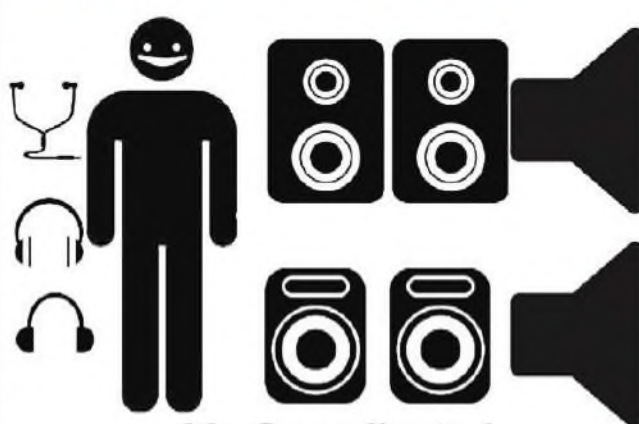
And More...



Single



In A Relationship



It's Complicated



Billy Vee
SOUND • SYSTEMS

London Linn & naim Specialist

CALL SALES: (020) 8318 5755 or 8852 1321 - 248 Lee High Road, London, SE13 5PL
Web: - www.billyvee.co.uk email: sales@billyvee.co.uk Full delivery and installation services.



Full Naim Uniti & Classic series available



Full Linn DS range on demonstration

Trade in your CD Player & claim up to £1000 against a new digital Streaming player
- offering you easier access to your music and better sound quality

Please call in or visit billyvee.co.uk for full details of this and other great new performance enhancing promotions



Peak HiFi

DEMONSTRATIONS

Available by appointment 7 days a week

PART
EXCHANGE
WELCOME



Audio Desk Systeme • Black Rhodium • Dynavector • Exposure • Glanz • Hana • Koetsu • Martin Logan • Michell Engineering • Musical Fidelity
Neat Acoustics • Oracle Audio • Ortofon • PMC • Project Audio • Siltech • SMD Acoustics • SME • Stirling Broadcast • Sugden Audio • Unison Research

www.peakhifi.co.uk

Tel: 01226 761832

Mob: 07801 821791

sales@peakhifi.co.uk

Punk's past

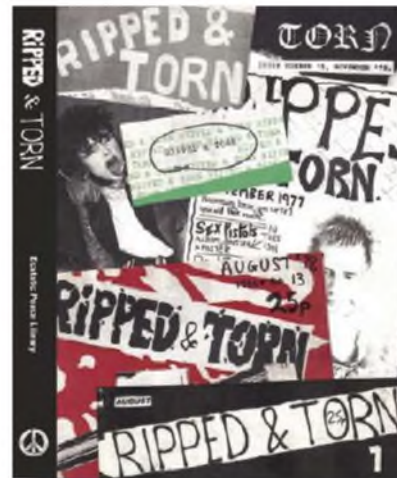
Paul Rigby looks at a compilation of Punk magazine Ripped & Torn, charting its short but illustrious life.

RIPPED & TORN

Author: Tony Drayton

Publisher: Ecstatic Peace Library

Price: £25



Spanning 326 pages, this book...isn't. At least, not in the classic sense. It's more of a bound compilation from the original punk fanzine of the same name. That is, every page of the seventeen issue run of Ripped & Torn from October 1976 to March 1979.

Because of that, the tome serves three distinct purposes. Firstly, and possibly most importantly, it provides a social history overview of the punk music scene across the published period from fashion, language and politics all the way to the big one, attitude.

This series of DIY fanzines might, like much of its competition, have looked amateurish (it was, by default), scrappy (yes) and naive (indeed) but it also tried to make readers aware of what was going on around them. Very important that. It tried to wake up its readers to the exploitative nature of business and politicians, "The Enemies of Liberation shackle your imagination in gloomy colours of doubt, taste, uncertainty, stifle your individuality with restricted choice... and lock up your freedom in their rule books and non-information centres" railed the text from Issue 16.

This reflection of social frustration was as much to do with the origins of punk as its reaction to established and, in punk's view, bloated studio bands.

Secondly, this collection does what other primary documents do wonderfully - it removes any sense of hindsight while providing opinion, not from professional journalists immersed in the music scene and surrounded by contemporaries who supplanted bias and influence, but from music fans on the street.

So the debut album from The Buzzcocks was given a lukewarm review as was 'Plastic Letters', Blondie's second album. While the classic Blondie album, 'Parallel Lines' is given short shrift. Despite offering music that is, in parts, "quite good", the magazine points an accusing sell-out finger at the band, comparing Debbie Harry to a "clean and refined Linda Ronstadt surrogate". Speaking as a Blondie fan myself, I winced at the harshness of these lines but I can't complain as Ripped & Torn dismissed the band as, "...not being punk related anymore..." The wonderful 'Heart of Glass' would have been Exhibit A, I suppose.

Which was fair enough. It was good to see hard critique, unadorned and unfettered by retrospective warming nostalgia.

Inarticulate those fans often were, you could accuse them of lacking grammatical skills and also of being ignorant to the finer elements of composition but there was a directness, energy and inherent flair in what they said and how they said it.

There was also plenty of insight. For example, the perils of being in a punk band, especially in the early days, could be bad for your health - as an interview with lead singer of Siouxsie and the Banshees, Siouxsie Sioux plus bassist, Steve Severin showed. The interviewer noted Sioux's use of an eye-patch, worn because she was suffering from conjunctivitis and contracted via "Gob I think! When we were up north we were just getting showered in it. Joe Strummer got hepatitis when somebody gobbed in his mouth. You never know what you're going to get (so if you trendy punks must gob, make sure you have approval from your doctor)".

Thirdly, it showed what was possible if you put your mind to it. That you didn't have to have professional printing/publishing equipment to make a point and that the very nature of the minimalist production was art in itself.

Drayton (then aged eighteen) started the magazine in Cumbernauld, a town just outside Glasgow. He took a week to write Issue 1 and another week to sneakily photocopy the pages at work. Later issues were created in a squat in London. The book features an introduction and a measure of context from Drayton. The book is largely untouched and unaltered from that point onwards. It isn't even bothered by page numbers. Very punk.

MIDLAND AUDIO XCHANGE

The Old Chapel
Forge Lane
Belbroughton
Worcestershire
DY9 9TD

t. 01562 731100

f. 01562 730228

e-mail. sales@midlandaudiox-change.co.uk

web . www.midlandaudiox-change.co.uk



**Midland Audio Xmas -New year sale Starts on
27th December at 10.00**

Ex - demo and second hand items

	Was	Now	Accessories & Cables		
Analogue			Analysis Plus Oval Digital 2m BNC digital	99	49
Audio Research PH9 xdemo	7498	5999	Atlas Asimi balanced 1.5m pr	4756	1799
Bergmann Sindre xdemo	14250	7499	Atlas Asimi balanced 1.5m pr	4756	1799
Burmester 100 phono stage xdemo	11540	6999	Atlas Asimi Speaker cables 2x2m S/H	12000	3999
Davinci Audio labs Gabriel Grandezza	80000	18999	Atlas EOS 4SQ MM 2.0m power cable	404	179
Heliuss Designs Viridia Omega xdemo	10000	6999	Atlas EOS 4SQ MM 2.0m power cable	404	179
Magnum Dynalab MD107T FM xdemo	4995	3499	Audioquest Leopard 1.2 arm cable BNIB	699	479
Pink Triangle PT1 RB250AT95e	N/A	899	Entreq Apollo eartha SS 1.65 ground	430	299
RogueAudio Stealth Phono xdemo	999	499	Entreq Apollo eartha SS 1.65 ground	430	299
SME v Gold decals boxed	4472	1999	Entreq Challenger eartha SS1.65 ground	230	140
Thorens TD160 Shure M75ed	N/A	275	Entreq Challenger eartha XLR1.65 ground	270	160
Well Tempered Labs RIAA xdemo	350	275	Finite Elemente Pagode signature xdemo	2290	1499
			Furutech TP60e 6 wat Shucko xdemo	316	199
			Magnum Dynalab MD108 mk1 S/H	6995	2995
Preamplifiers			MIT shotgun online S3.3IC 1m pair RCA	1100	399
Audio Research LS26 S/H	5800	2350	Musical Fidelity Stable 1 platform BNIB	199	99
Audio Research Ref 5	10762	4500	Nordost Tyr 2 1m RCA interconnect	2099	1199
Burmester 035 with MC phono xdemo	6140	3999	Revelation Audio Labs Prophecy Firewire	499	199
EMT JPA 66 MK2 phono pre	44000	31999	Transparent audio Reference power	1070	549
			Transparent Music Link Plus 2m RCA	485	199
Amplifiers			Van den Hul AES/EBU 110 Pro 1m	179	99
Audio Research VS110 S/H	3999	1999	Van Den Hul D352 hybrid 2x2.5m	220	119
Auralic Merak Mono amplifiers xdemo	4999	1999	Velodyne Impact 12 subwoofer xdemo	499	299
Burmester 036 power amplifier xdemo	6140	3999	XLO Pro100 2x3m speaker cable NOS	399	99
Musical Fidelity M3si BNIB	1299	950			
Musical Fidelity Nu Vista 600 exdemo	6500	3999			
T&AHV3000 integrated xdemo	11988	7500			
Technics SU G700 xdemo	1899	1299			
Unison Research Simply Italy xdemo	1750	1099			
Loudspeakers					
Avalon Acoustics NP2 Cherry xdemo	2999	1799			
Avalon Acoustics Symbol Maple BNIB	4500	2999			
LeContoure Stabile 160 Wenge S/H	5890	1999			
Magneplanar MG3.7 Ribbon panels	5999	2999			
Sonus Faber Olympica II Graphite ex dem	7998	4999			
Sonus Faber Olympica II walnut S/H	7998	4999			
Vienna Acoustics Beethoven Grand New	6500	4999			
Wilson Benesch Orator Cherry	N/A	649			
Wilson Sasha II xdemo	39000	27500			

Midland Audio X-change are looking for All high end audio separates best prices paid for good examples.

- Suppliers and installers of High Quality Audio Systems
- Atacama
 - Bergmann Audio
 - Chord Electronics
 - Conrad Johnson
 - Constellation Audio
 - Copland
 - Devialet
 - Dynavector
 - Emm labs
 - Entreq
 - Exogal
 - Finite Elemente
 - Harbeth
 - Hegel
 - Kii
 - Koetsu
 - Kuzma
 - Lavardin
 - Lecontoure
 - Magico
 - Martin Logan
 - Magneplanar
 - Meitner
 - Melco
 - Neat Acoustics
 - Primaluna
 - Primare
 - Rega
 - Shahinian
 - Shunyata Research
 - Sonus Faber
 - Sparkler Audio
 - Spendor
 - Synthesis
 - T+A
 - Technics
 - Tellurium Q
 - Transparent Audio
 - Vertere
 - Vitus
 - Wadia
 - Well tempered lab
 - Wilson Audio
 - Zanden

Midland Audio X-change are looking for Audio Research, Krell , Mark Levinson , Naim Audio, SME, Wadia.

free reader Classifieds

TERMS AND CONDITIONS: Only one advert per reader. No Trade adverts. This section is strictly for readers selling secondhand hi-fi equipment only. Maximum length per advert is 30 words. Adverts over 30 words will not be accepted. Telephone numbers and E-mail addresses are treated as one word. Model numbers are treated as one word i.e. Quad 303 = two words. Email your advert to; classifieds@hi-fiworld.co.uk or fill in the form on page 97 and post it to Hi-Fi World Free Readers Ads, Studio 204, Buspace Studio, Conlan Street, Notting Hill, London W10 5AP. Sorry, we cannot accept adverts over the telephone. The Publisher reserves the right to judge submissions.

KRELL S300i integrated amplifier. Meridian G51 integrated amplifier. Revox H1 Cassette. Ayre P5XE phono stage. Sony SCD-XA 333ES CD. B&W 805 stands. Teac V7000 cassette. Offers please. Tel: 01474 326 220 (Kent)

FERROGRAPH 5A mono tape recorder. Good working order. £150 ono. Audio Technica AT100 tonearm. £100. Denon 2910 DVD SACD player. £80. Buyer collects. Tel: 01522 703 582 (Lincoln area)

ROTEL 840BX3 amplifier, £65. JVC QL7 heavy-weight DD turntable, £500. Grundig transistor 865 radio, £45. Wharfedale Diamond Mk1 speakers, £50. B&W AS2 sub-woofer, boxed, £125. Tel: 01708 457 691

WANTED: NAKAMICHI 600 cassette deck with cover. Must be unmarked. For Sale: Nakamichi BX125E cassette deck, mint, £70. Arcam Alpha 5 amplifier, mint, £70. Buyer collects. Tel: 01494 864 969 (Great Missenden)

LEAK TROUGHLINE and Hi-Fi world valve decoder set up by Tim de Paravicini less than a year ago, one of the finest tuners anywhere! £700 Tel: 07940 607215 Email: rtodes@gmail.com

YAMAHA HIGH-END component set: CX-1000 pre-amp, MX-1000 amp, TX-1000 FM tuner. Complete, boxed, all manuals. £1750. Also Linn Classic-2 CD/Receiver, boxed, manual, £180. Tel: 01531 631 337

KEITH MONKS Unipivot tonearm. Excellent condition, rewired, superb with Decca's. Bargain. £90. Two Wharfedale Super Eight drivers. Require restoration. Free to collect. Tel: 0116 288 2338

ICON AUDIO Stereo 60 MkIII integrated amplifier. KT150 valves with PSI MkII MM + MC valve phono pre amp with MC transformers. As new. £3750 ono. Details. Tel: 01522 682 926

REVOLVER RW45 floorstanding loudspeakers. 90dB into 8ohm load. Unmarked. Cherry veneer. Spiked bases. Light use only. Complete with Chord Company jumper cables. £210 ono. Tel: 01639 641 043

CANADIAN GUTWIRE Synchrony 3 metre length speaker cables. Superb - totally new condition. £700. (Synchrony Interconnects available separately). Email: stephen.adolphus@gmail.com or Tel: 07787 574784.

LEHMANN AUDIO Linear headphone amplifier, very good condition, latest specification in black (£615), £325. Sony MDR Z7 headphones, less than 2 years old, pristine and barely used (£550), £250. Atlas Ascent Ultra digital coaxial i/c (red plugs), 1m, virtually unused (£224), £100. Atlas EOS 4dd power cable 1.5m, as new (£300), £125. All items boxed in original packaging. Tel/text Richard on (07772) 711432/01494 269889 (Bucks) or Email: richard.schofield@kcl.ac.uk.

VINTAGE VERY rare Audio Research SP6A valve pre-amp (not hybrid) which used to be mentioned regularly in Absolute Sounds advertising. £995 ono also Meridian rare black 101pre, 104 tuner, 105 (2xmono amps each with power supply) so stacked 3 high in pairs £695. Southport 01704 628968 or 07968769595

ALL AUDIOQUEST cables Sky RCA l/connect 1m £590 Sky XLR l/connect 1m £590 Eagle Eye coax digital 1m £270, Gibraltar speaker cable 2m spades both ends £390. Email: jamesmckendrick@btinternet.com or Tel: 01772 314 151 (Preston Lanc's)

WANTED: TOP quality Hi Fi separates and complete systems from Naim, Linn, Audio Research, Bryston, PMC etc, fast, friendly response and willing to travel/pay cash Please call me on 0781 5892458 or Email me at pogsonp@aol.com

MUSICAL FIDELITY A3 Amp £300. Arcam 7se CD player £75.00. AE Aegis 3 speakers £100. Pro-Ject 1 turntable £75.00. Videologic DRX-610e tuner £50. All excellent and boxed. Selling separately, or for £500 as system, including cables. Email: joelliott59@aol.co.uk Tel: 07921109741 (London area)

FOR SALE Marantz CD 5005 CD Player Marantz CD 5005 CD Player, just under twelve months left on warranty and boxed. Genuine reason for sale. Preferably, collect only, cash or cheque. £120 ono. Also Marantz CD 6000OSE CD player, transport issue, free to good home. Contact Mike Bickley on michael.bickley@hotmail.co.uk Birmingham area.

NEAT MOTIVE 1 speakers. Cherrywood veneer excellent speakers, excellent sound £475. London 07957384795 (Evan)

NEXT MONTH MARCH 2019 ISSUE

ICON AUDIO ST300 MKII

A compact valve amplifier with the romantic sounding 300B valve from long ago – a big power triode. 300B amplifiers usually cost a lot and are big – but not here. Next month we review Icon Audio's latest amplifier, one that recreates old values in modern compact form, the ST300 MKII.

Also, we hope to bring you –
HANA MH & ML MC CARTRIDGES
SONUS FABER SONETTO III SPEAKERS
MITCHELL & JOHNSON S815 POWER AMP
MITCHELL & JOHNSON S800 PRE AMP
MELCO N100-H20 HI-RES DIGITAL MUSIC LIBRARY



This is a selection of what we hope to bring you, not a complete list. We regret that due to a wide range of issues, we cannot guarantee that all products listed above will appear.

PICK UP THE MARCH 2019 ISSUE OF HI-FI WORLD ON SALE JANUARY 31ST 2019, OR SUBSCRIBE AND GET IT DELIVERED TO YOUR DOOR: SEE PAGE 50

ADVERTISERS INDEX

2nd Hand Hi-Fi 72
 Absolute Sounds OBC
 Advanced MP3 Player 90
 Air Audio 70
 Atlas 90
 Audio Consultants 38
 Audio Lounge IBC
 Audio T 64
 Audiophile Club 90
 Auralic 60
 B&W 22
 Billy Vee 92
 Black Rhodium 58,70
 Blue Aura 44
 Chord Electronics 28
 Classic Hi-Fi 58
 Criterion 84
 Dali 46
 Decent Audio 32,33
 Divine Audio 90
 Electromod 68
 Elite Audio 30
 Enjoy The Music.com 92
 FiiO 86
 Hard to find Hi-Fi 66,67
 Henley Audio 16,24,42,88
 Ian Harrison 84
 Icon Audio 26
 Infidelity 90
 Jordan Acoustics 18,19
 KEF 6
 Kirmuss Audio 60
 MCRU 82
 Midland Audio Exchange 94
 Oxford Audio 90
 Peak Hi-Fi 92
 PMC 36
 Sound Hi-Fi 68
 Spendor 40
 Tellurium Q 12
 The Chord Company 92
 The Right Note 90
 Wave Hi-Fidelity 48
 World Designs 84

FREE READER CLASSIFIED ADS ORDER FORM

STOP PRESS

TERMS AND CONDITIONS: Only one advert per reader. Maximum length per advert is 30 words, Adverts over 30 words will not be accepted. No Trade Adverts. This section is strictly for readers selling secondhand hi-fi equipment only. Telephone numbers and E-mail addresses are treated as one word. Model numbers are treated as one word i.e. Quad 303 = two words. Sorry, we cannot accept adverts over the telephone. The Publisher reserves the right to judge submissions.

You can email your advert to us at: classifieds@hi-fiworld.co.uk or write or type your advertisement copy in block capitals with one word per box and post it to us at:

Hi-Fi World Free Readers Ads,
 Studio 204,
 Buspace Studio,
 Conlan Street,
 London W10 5AP

We cannot accept adverts over the telephone

1	2
3	4
5	6
7	8
9	10
11	12
13	14
15	16
17	18
19	20
21	22
23	24
25	26
27	28
29	30

Name: _____
 Address: _____

 Post Code: _____
 Daytime Tel: _____

FREE READER CLASSIFIED ADVERTS COPY DEADLINES
 APRIL 2019 - 7TH FEBRUARY
 MAY 2019 - 6TH MARCH

THE POLICE

ZENYATTA MONDATTA
A&M



"...a frantic Andy Summers' guitar flying across the whole thing like a psychotic bee"

Oh, I agonised over this one. The obvious classic Police LP is 'Regatta de Blanc'. With the latter LP, the group emerged out of their raw 'Outlandos d'Armour' period. That semi-punk release was a superb debut with the likes of 'Can't Stand Losing You' and 'Roxanne' serving as a testament to the band's (well, Sting's) songwriting prowess. Yet it also showed rough edges and never provided the space for the band's growing confidence and more complex arrangements that would emerge later on.

That ambition was mostly realised within 'Regatta de Blanc' and classic ditties such as 'Message in the Bottle' and 'Walking on the Moon', inventive instrumentals such as the title track and songs with growing reputations such as 'Bring on the Night' and 'The Bed's Too Big Without You'.

And yet. And yet, there was something more to 'Zenyatta Mondatta'. It isn't my favourite Police album, oddly enough, but I feel that it reaches a peak in terms of the band's creative powers. There are a couple of tracks on this LP that do irritate the hell out of me. The single, 'De Do Do Do, De Da Da Da' is a waste of space and is the equivalent of space-filling waffle while 'Canary in a Coalmine' seems to have been created as a technical exercise to see if a song can be made entirely in the upper registers.

The other single from the album is decent, 'Don't Stand So Close to Me' features a narrative and a sense of flow.

Get past that lot and you get to the meat of the LP. You're faced with the innovative and even slightly avant-garde application of musical composition. There's a superb sense of rhythm, repetitive beats, looping sequences and experimental constructions that transcend the commercial inserts that were a sop to commerciality.

'When the World Is Running Down, You Make the Best of What's Still Around' offers a lengthy title to a wonderful underlying rhythmic track that impresses more than the lyric and shows how much The Police can really groove.

'Behind my Camel' is an instrumental excursion full of drama and big chords that conflict with Stewart Copeland's lively

percussive style. 'Shadows in the Rain' is a dark tale taking the notion of 'white man's reggae' to the nth degree, pushing the beat to almost scary levels with a frantic Andy Summers' guitar flying across the whole thing like a psychotic bee. Similarly, 'The Other Way of Stopping', steps on the reverb button to enhance and extend the percussive power of Copeland (and why not, he wrote the thing).

What really gets me is the long intro sequence of the track, 'Voices in My Head'. This sequence is quite possibly the best crafted piece of art The Police ever issued on LP. Simple yet layered. Repetitive yet evolving. Meditative yet groove inducing. Even when the non-intrusive vocals are introduced, thematic is still at the forefront. Then the jarring 'Cha' chant attempts to ruin everything but the middle eight reconstructs the entire arrangement while entering into an improv format.

I remember this track being used to back a TV documentary on a US-based Marathon event, not long after the LP was issued. The film began with the camera pointing at a road on a bridge. The camera pointed at the top of the curve of the bridge. It was a hot, sunny day and the heat shimmered off the surface. The song began at this point and just rolled for a while until the volume started to increase and the fractured images of the bobbing heads of the approaching runners began to emerge through the heat haze. It was an amazing piece of documentary tension in which The Police played a full part. It also showed how their music could be used effectively and dramatically in related cultural arts. In this case film making.

This LP has now been reissued as part of a recommended new vinyl box set. 'Every Move You Make: The Studio Recordings' is a six vinyl LP box set that brings together all The Police's recorded studio albums, as well as a 12-track sixth disc entitled 'Flexible Strategies' that contains exclusive bonus material of non-album recordings and B-sides.

The collection has been re-mastered at Abbey Road Studios by Miles Showell, using half-speed mastering. It also contains a twenty-four page, photo book featuring rare and unseen images from the band's personal archives. **PR**



Audio Lounge
LONDON

Pure listening pleasure

At Audio Lounge, our experts tailor exquisite, bespoke audio systems for your home, so you can immerse yourself in the most beautiful sound you've ever heard.



Why not make an appointment to visit
London's finest audio destination?

www.audiolounge.co.uk

138 Wigmore Street, London, W1U 3SG
0207 487 4080

ATC | Audionet | Bel Canto | Burmester | Boulder | Clearaudio | Crystal Cable | Nagra | Ortofon | Pro-ject | Siltech
Shelter | SME | Spendor | Vivid | YG Acoustics

THE ONLY SIGNATURE YOU'LL EVER NEED



"IT UNVEILED NEW SENSATIONS
IN TRACKS I'VE PLAYED A 1000 TIMES"

- KEN KESSLER / HIFI NEWS

Sonus faber Venere S

From the fertile minds of the artisans at Sonus faber, masters of sound reproduction, design and materials, comes Venere, a family of loudspeakers that exploits all of the brand's strengths. Every model has been developed with the same expertise and benefits from the same technology that defines the company's flagship speakers ... but at more affordable price points.

The made-in-Italy **Venere Signature**, the range's flagship, is the ultimate expression of Venere's design criteria, a mighty floorstander that looks as gorgeous as it sounds. While both will provoke surprise, the affordability will engender near disbelief. All you will say is "Bravo!"

 **absolute sounds ltd.**

International Distributors & Consultants of Specialised Hi-End Audio & Video Systems

58 Durham Road, London, SW20 0TW T: +44 (0)20 89 71 39 09

W: www.absolutesounds.com E: info@absolutesounds.com

For Your Nearest Dealer Please Visit The [Absolute Sounds](http://www.absolutesounds.com) Website

Sonus faber®