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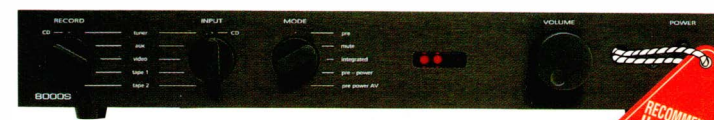
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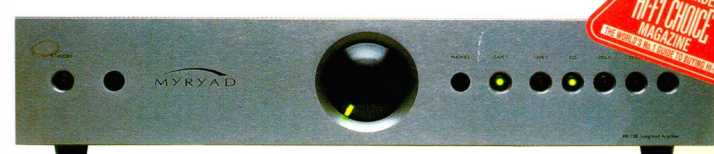
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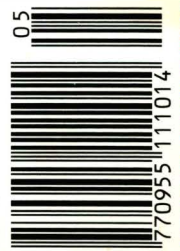
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# Editor's Notebook

Stan Vincent highlights the hot spots in this month's issue, views products of tomorrow, and sees a new future for cassette. Wow!

**H**ello and welcome to the May edition of *Hi-Fi Choice*. In this month's packed magazine, we're bringing you a monster test of some of the hottest amplifiers that money can buy — and I can tell you that it makes interesting reading. Let's just say that while UK audiophile stalwarts are represented in force, not all of them make the grade. To read the full test — conducted under our usual blind conditions, naturally — turn immediately to page 58.

And then we turn to subwoofers, which are rapidly proving to have fascinating effects on hi-fi sound — and not just for trouser-flapping bass effects. As you'll read in Jimmy Hughes's column on page 34, a good active subwoofer seems to have the greatest effect on music not in the nether frequency regions, but instead much further up in the midband and high frequencies. There's more subwoofer investigation on page 46, where Paul Messenger compares six of the hottest active subs around.

If speakers have you hooked, but their internal workings remain a mystery, help is at hand. On page 40 speaker designer Dave Berriman presents a succinct introduction to the basic principles underpinning loudspeaker design and construction. Never again feel out of your depth when the pub conversation turns to upper mid-bass suckout!

On page 24 you'll find the latest in our series of features in which we visit the home of a committed hi-fi enthusiast to listen to his system and hear how he assembled it. You'll note that the name of this feature has changed slightly, from 'Aspirations' to 'Inspirations', to reflect the fact that we are focussing not just on great systems, but also on dedicated audiophiles who

leave no stone unturned in their pursuit of musical pleasure! If you think your system should feature in our pages, why not drop me a line to tell me about it? Send a summary of the equipment, and three reasons why you think the system is special. Leave the rest up to us!

### Serve your country overseas

In February I was invited to attend JVC's European Key Dealer Meeting in Barcelona, which offered a fascinating chance to see the company's new products at first hand. These include several sleek minis and micros — currently the main growth area for audio sales — cheek by jowl with a startlingly high-end component system dubbed the *SD1*, which is built more like a piece of high-end gear than a mass market audio product.

The likely selling price of this unit was estimated to be several thousand pounds, so there is a debate whether it would actually sell well enough to warrant importing into the UK. But it serves to remind how we in the West judge large Japanese companies solely on the strength of the ranges they can sell effectively in the West. There is a story told in hi-fi circles of an international press trip to JVC's headquarters in Japan. A number of the world's most hardened hi-fi journalists were gathered together and asked to distinguish a pair of top-end Mark Levinson monoblocs from a pair of JVC's. The upshot was that the assembled throng got the amps completely mixed up. They simply couldn't believe that the Japanese mass-market company could do better than the high-end doyen. But they did. And if you still find such a fact hard to swallow, just turn to page 69 of the current issue...

### Let's make things older

In early March it was Philips's turn to present their products for this year. It is concentrating particularly on high-power mini systems that sound just a little bit better than the stereotypical 'mug'seyeful', and will have a new range of CD players and other separate components as part of a drive to restore their presence in hi-fi.

However, it has some intriguing long-term marketing plans, based on the premise that there is a vast untapped market for consumer electronics among older consumers.

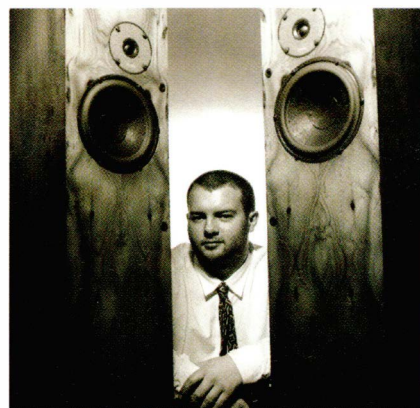


PHOTO BY SEAN BLOODWORTH

Naturally, it is hopeless to approach this kind of customer with an all-singing, all-dancing product adorned with flashing lights. The more mature buyer is liable to place much greater emphasis on ease of use and quality.

Another point that emerged was the increasingly limited opportunity to launch new formats, in the wake of some notable flops in the past few years. While it looks as if DCC is finding a niche in the semi-professional recording market, as a cheaper alternative to DAT for mastering purposes, the writing is on the wall for new formats: do business quickly, or die. I suspect that this will mean conglomerates taking a much more conservative approach to the launch of new formats, but at the same time, it may lead to much greater innovation with formats that exist already — the combined TV/video is one example that is already doing big business. Given the current fashion for clothing and music from the '70s, it can only be a matter of time before yet another stylistic staple rises from the grave: the music centre...

Talking of putting old wine into new bottles, I have had a fascinating demonstration of Technics's new cassette deck, in which the company has used high-tech thin-film technology in the deck's playback head — this was developed for DCC machines which play both digital and analogue tape, in effect Technics has recycled the technology. Key claimed benefits include reduced playback noise, a flatter frequency response, and minimised 'contour effect'. On the basis of a short demonstration, it breathes new life into pre-recorded cassettes, and we can only guess how this technology will change cassette recording if it is introduced for record heads in a couple of years' time. It just goes to show that the best way forward is not always to throw away what has gone before in favour of all-new trinkets. Very slowly, we are coming to learn that when it comes to new technologies, we should make more of what we have already.

### New kid on the block

Let me invite our new columnist, David Vivian, to introduce himself on page 130. Paul Messenger, meanwhile, has moved up to pole position on page 23, and is installing his soapbox as we speak.

*Stan Vincent*

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MAY 1996

ISSUE 154



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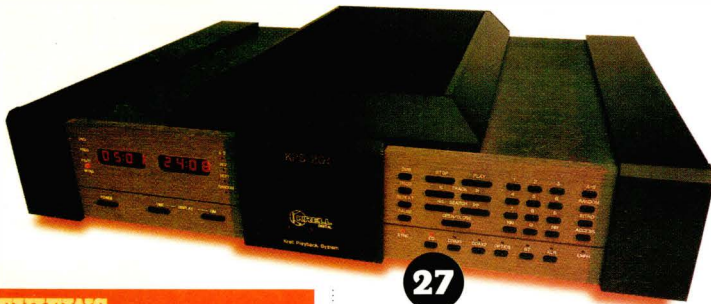
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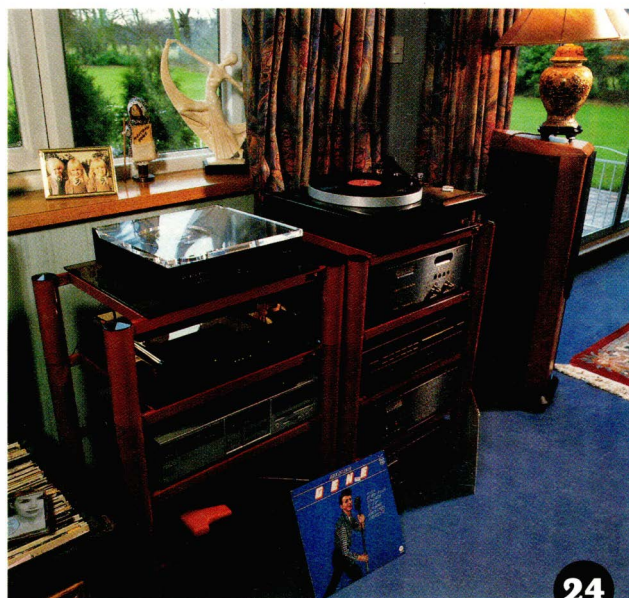
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The most up-to-date and comprehensive hi-fi product listing around. With knobs on.



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Paul Messenger moves about — to the front of our magazine, and to Denmark, where he visits Jamo.



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Jason and Clive decide to rob a hi-fi store. Then they realise they don't have to. Clive has got it all already...



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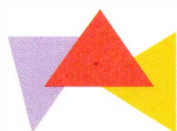
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# Update

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## Copland's desert storm CD

Danish manufacturer Copland established its reputation with a range of exquisitely finished amplifiers that aim to combine the finest qualities of both valves and transistors. It has now added a CD player with similar sonic intentions. However, the player represents a first for the company because it uses only transistors in its audio stages.

The elegantly styled CDA288 is an integrated design based upon a centrally-mounted Teac VRDS mechanism. Its HDCD-compatible electronics include two 20-bit Burr Brown converters per channel, and Pacific Microsonics' PDM100 filter augmented by Copland's own digital filters. The analogue stage uses pure class A circuitry. Design is pure minimalist — just two controls and a switchable display panel on the silver alloy fascia — but naturally there's a remote control. Mechanical construction follows Copland's usual battleship ethic and uses plastic, alloy and composite materials to provide a rigid structure with effective damping and isolation from external interference.

Available now through Absolute Sounds, the CDA288 costs £1,799. ☎ (0181) 947 5047.

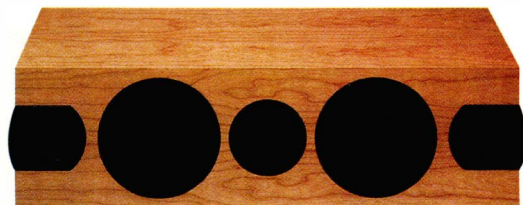


Copland's Appalachian Spring in Nevada.

## Linn speaks the word of multimedia

Linn Products is heartily embracing the multimedia future with new AV products and a site on the Internet. The AV5120 centre-channel speaker, designed to complement the AV5140 front speakers (whose driver array it shares), is optimised for both voice and music reproduction. Fully shielded, it will sit above or below a television. It can also be shelf or wall mounted using an adjustable bracket. Although engineered as a full bandwidth design it can be used in conjunction with the forthcoming AV5150 subwoofer for added impact. Available in Black Ash or American Cherry finishes, it costs £650.

Linn's dialogue speaker — with a Scottish accent.



The company has also upgraded its system remote control handset. Linn system owners can use the new controller to operate the *Knekt* multi-room system and non-Linn components such as televisions and VCRs. The new handset will be supplied as standard with all remote controllable products and can be purchased separately as an upgrade for £50.

Wired Linn fans can wander in wonderment through the company's products at its recently established World Wide Web site, which they'll find at <http://www.linn.co.uk/linn>. ☎ (0500) 888909

## Selling England by the £

After the success of its *Clock 2* modification and *Pulsar 1* DAC, Trichord Research has released an integrated CD player that incorporates many of the company's developments. Called the *Genesis*, the Trichord machine is based upon a Pioneer *PDS504*. Said to redefine the price-versus-performance equation, it sells for £549.

The *Genesis* features the acclaimed *Clock 2* and its dedicated power supply, as well as modifications elsewhere in the analogue circuits. Except for a change in badging, the *Genesis* looks and operates like a regular Pioneer. ☎ (01684) 573594.

## Cool carbon cartridges

Wilson-benesch have released the world's first totally carbon-fibre bodied cartridges — with innards of copper and boron, and nude diamond styli. Claimed to eliminate the damping problems with metal-bodied cartridges, the three new models are all moving-coil designs.

The range consists of the £686 *Matrix*, the £968 *Hybrid* and the £1,486 *Carbon*. They carry a one-year manufacturing defects warranty, and a re-tipping service makes ownership more cost-effective. Prices drop by £100 if you trade in another moving coil at the time of purchase. Owners wishing to trade up within the range will also benefit from trade-in facilities. ☎ (0114) 285 2656

Carbon is as carbon does!

## In brief

In-car specialist Alpine has produced the world's smallest CD shuttle, the six-disc *CHA-S604*. Designed for installation inside the car's cabin rather than the boot, the shuttle boasts a disc-swap time of under four seconds. Priced at £349, it's compatible with *Ai-Net* head units. Alpine has also announced the *CDE-7825* CD tuner, which sells for £399.90 and includes a 1-bit DAC and four 30W amplifier channels. ☎ (01908) 611556.

Roger Thornington is the winner of the Real Hi-Fi Campaign's "Win Your Money Back" competition. Having bought an Arcam *Alpha 6+* amplifier and *5+* tuner, he penned the slogan "I chose my Real Hi-Fi separates because they add up to so much more Real Music." His turn of phrase secured him a cheque for £569.80, the price of his tuner and amplifier. ☎ (0171) 226 4468.

Richer Sounds' founder, Julian Richer, has been named Communicator of the Year by the British Association of Communicators in Business. He is the youngest person to receive the award and joins a list of previous winners that includes the Body Shop's Anita Roddick and Rover Group CEO, John Towers. ☎ (01732) 459331.

Musical Images' newly refurbished store in London's Covent Garden has been equipped for comparisons of THX and AC-3 surround sound systems. It is open seven days a week with late shopping on Thursdays. ☎ (0171) 497 1346.

Audio T has created Home Cinema Centres within four of its seven stores. The Enfield, Gants Hill, Oxford and Swindon branches

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# New NAD goes power mad



NAD 304's big, 'ard brother, 314. Mister 314 to you, pal.

The 314 has six line-level inputs, including two tape circuits with dubbing, and a moving-magnet phono stage. The latter, like the rest of the amplifier, uses all discrete circuitry. There are pre-out and power-in connections to allow for upgrading, and bi-amping, along with by-passable tone-controls and a headphone socket that will drive virtually all non-electrostatic headphones. The loudspeaker outputs feature NAD's proprietary Soft Clipping circuit to protect speakers during prolonged high power operation. Circuit paths are kept as short as possible by placing switches close to the back panel connections and operating them through linkages to the front-panel controls. Finished in NAD's customary gun-metal grey, the 314 costs £259.95. ☎ (0181) 343 3240.

## More forte from JVC Adagio



JVC's new look — serious, sleek and sexy.

JVC has upped the power and feature count of its successful *Adagio* systems range for 1996. The 40W per channel *Adagio D2T* begins the series and the *D7T* tops it off with 70W per channel.

The *D2T*, *D4T*, *D5T*, *D7T* and *D8T* models all come with JVC's new Triple Tray CD mechanism, a three-disc player with the operating speed of a single-disc transport. The *D2T*, *D3S*, *D4T* and *D5T* all have the new IllumiMagic CompuPlay system, which provides user-friendly operation even in the dark, and uses an optical sensor to detect your hand approaching the system, flashing the buttons needed to instigate one-touch

operation. *Adagio* prices range from £279 for the *D2T* to £500 for the Dolby Pro Logic equipped *D8T*.

Two more serious and sexy systems are planned. The *F1 DigiFine* incorporates JVC's 'wide range' and straight-forward concepts with a discrete power amp and a 'presence' circuit. The *XL-F1GD* CD player is a bit short on modesty, boasting one of the best signal-to-noise-ratios of any CD player. The matt silver system will retail for £900 excluding speakers. Next is the silver-and-veneer finished *F3000* system, a four-piece mini with optional partnering speakers. Expect to pay around £900, or £700 for the system without speakers. ☎ (0181) 450 3282.

## Win Beer

(Gary Numan CDs and T-shirts too)

You've seen the ad, now drink the beer, listen to the CD and wear the T-shirt. Carling Premier have teamed up with Gary Numan and *Hi-Fi Choice* to give five lucky readers the chance to win the ultimate Premier prize. Five whole cases of Carling Premier, five copies of Gary Numan's *Premier Hits* CD and five Carling Premier T-shirts. Simply answer the following simple question — In a world that's losing its head, which beer doesn't? — and send your name and address on a postcard to *Hi-Fi Choice/Carling Premier Monster Lager Competition*, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ, by Friday 12th April 1996.



## The sink is sunk — long live the Sink (in 3D)

The Townshend *Seismic Sink* has sunk... only to be replaced by the new *3D Seismic Sink*. The patent-applied-for *3D* platform works in essentially the same way as the original design but seeks to improve performance by providing isolation in two lateral directions as well as in the vertical.

The redesign uses a single air bag, which limits the load capacity and flexibility when supporting components whose centre of gravity isn't central. Three provisions have been made to accommodate this: there's more range on the levelling feet; balancing weights are available to even the load. Other features of the new *3D* platform include a battery powered circuit that monitors the air-bag's inflation.

The *3DSSS* — *3D Seismic Sink Stand* — is a stand within a stand and a purpose-built *3D Seismic Sink*. The latter rests on the outer stand and the inner stand is suspended from the isolated top plate of the *3D Seismic Sink*. For more isolation you can replace the rack's shelves with *3D Seismic Sinks*. The small *3D Seismic Sink Model 1* (43cm x 36cm) costs £399, while the *Model 2* version (48cm x 40cm) costs £449. The four-tier *3D Seismic Sink Stand 1.4* costs £999 while the larger *Model 2.4* costs £1,199. Special sizes and finishes are available to order. ☎ (0181) 979 2155.

NAD has taken its award-winning *304* amp and improved the design to produce the new Model 314. Conservatively rated at 35W per channel, the new amplifier uses Extended Dynamic Power circuitry to deliver much higher output when transient demands call for it. It can produce 200W into a two-Ohm load, and so, NAD says, effectively competes with many conventional amplifiers that offer up to three times its continuous power rating.

The *314* has six line-level inputs, including two tape circuits with dubbing, and a moving-magnet phono stage. The latter, like the rest of the amplifier, uses all discrete circuitry. There are pre-out and power-in connections to allow for upgrading, and bi-amping, along with by-passable tone-controls and a headphone socket that will drive virtually all non-electrostatic headphones. The loudspeaker outputs feature NAD's proprietary Soft Clipping circuit to protect speakers during prolonged high power operation. Circuit paths are kept as short as possible by placing switches close to the back panel connections and operating them through linkages to the front-panel controls. Finished in NAD's customary gun-metal grey, the *314* costs £259.95. ☎ (0181) 343 3240.

## Four legs are better than three



Kenwood has been suping up its new range of separates. The amplifier range has started to use TRAIT-R (or 'thermally reactive advance instantaneous transistor') technology, developed in conjunction with the Sanken transistor company. This four-legged transistor has a built in thermal detector. So instead of transistor temperature being controlled by feedback from a separate (ergo slower) detector, it is internally controlled.

The first model to feature this will be the *KA-7080R* (due late September). Amplifiers due for more immediate release are the *KA-3080R* (£180), a 70W remote control model, and the *KA-1080* which delivers 60W.

Kenwood's DRIVE filter system for CD players has been refined, and is now called Fine DRIVE. This incorporates 32-times oversampling in an attempt to achieve a 120dB signal to noise ratio. Used with four parallel converters per channel this is claimed to produce a smoother waveform and lower noise floor. The first model to incorporate Fine DRIVE will be the *DP-7080*, and price is expected to be around £400. New CD players due in the shops soon include the *DP-3080* (£180) and *DP-2080*.

Other new product includes the *DM-7080* (£600) full-size MD recorder, a forthcoming THX/AC3 pre/power combo with OTT remote control called *KC/KMZ-1*, the *KT-3080L* (£180) RDS tuner and *KX-5080S* (£200) Dolby S cassette deck. ☎ (01923) 816444

## In brief

all now have dedicated home theatre demonstration rooms and carry expanded stocks of AV equipment. ☎ (01865) 60844.

Until the end of June, Scotch is offering a free tape head cleaner worth £1.15 with every purchase of special triple packs of its *BX60*, *BX90*, *CX60* and *CX90* audio cassettes. The packs cost £2.25, £2.99, £2.49 and £3.35 respectively.

Jamo has upgraded its 707 loudspeaker. The new 707i features a new port, terminal housing and bass drivers. Outwardly unchanged, the speaker's internal cabinet design has been improved. Price is £899.99. ☎ (01327) 301300.

Harman Audio has formed a small company to design and manufacture loudspeakers of exceptional quality and performance. Kevin Voecks will head what's temporarily being called "Newspeak", whose products will target the elite audio/video specialist dealer.

DJs working creatively with CDs should note that Pioneer has upgraded its *CDJ-500* digital turntable. The *CDJ-500 II* has increased RAM, an additional re-loop facility, improved cueing and extra anti-shock features. There's further information available on Pioneer's Web site at <http://www.pgb.pioneer.co.uk/pioneer/>. ☎ (01753) 789789.

One of the biggest names in budget hi-fi cables, Bandridge, has just announced the new *Profi Gold* interconnect cables. There are initially two cables in the range, the budget *PGA 201* — which is expected to cost around £20 — and the more up-market *PGA 301*, which should cost between £60 and £75. The *PGA 301* interconnect is a coaxial design and features a 0.95mm PC-OFC conductor and OFC screen. It also uses heavy locking phono plugs, with the signal section heavily plated in 24ct gold. A Sessions review of the new *PGA 301* is just around the corner. ☎ (0181) 543 3633

Fascinating fact number 683. Did you know that Paul McCartney's new Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts uses JBL speakers? Impress your friends ►►

# UNLIKE MOST SPEAKER COMPANIES, WE BUILD SPEAKERS. WE DON'T BUY THEM.

My, my. Things nowadays are not always what they're

cracked up to be. We're almost positive

it all started with the egg-free egg. Yum.

Then came caffeine-free coffee, with the

taste gone, too. In a matter of days, the

conscience-free politician followed, who

within moments was justly run over by his

own badge-engineered car. And now, here

comes the ultimate horror: The Dynaudio-

free Dynaudio speaker.

No way! Just kidding! In fact, it's just the

other way around; 90% of all other high-

end manufacturers do not painstakingly

develop and build their own speakers at

all. Instead, their designers tend to use

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tweeters, only to sell them to you, the

truth-loving American public, as their

own most expensive creations. We, being

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our works raccoon Knudsen is just checking

for alien intruders) is still meticulously hand

built by our dedicated Danish master

craftsmen.

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our incomparable first-order crossovers,

the flat driver membrane geometry and the

minimization of phase problems. From truly

superior materials, in extremely limited

numbers. To create beautiful, true music.

And nothing else.

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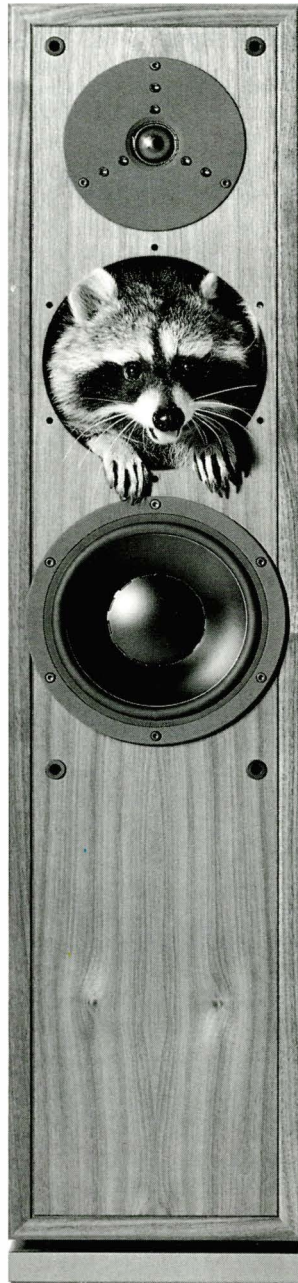
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## Aura's shiny SE-x machines



An Aura of SE-x appeal.

A quartet of new amplifiers is winging its way into the shops from the Aura camp. The first of these is a £249 Special Edition version of the established VA-80 integrated. Called the VA-80 SE-x, this upgraded 45W device is a UK special, and features improved-quality components, a phono stage and gold-plated connectors on all inputs and outputs.

Hot on its heels comes the new CA200 and PA200 pre/power combination. The CA200 pre-amplifier is a pure Class A design, while the PA200 power amplifier operates in class A through most of its range. The CA200 offers inputs for eight sources and two tape decks, and provides both balanced XLR and unbalanced phono outputs. A satin-anodised aluminium remote control handles input selection and volume functions, with information being fed back to the user by the amplifier's front-panel display, which dims after ten seconds to reduce noise and distraction. The class A headphone output offers two sensitivity levels.

The PA200 power amplifier is designed to produce high power with low distortion, and to provide good bass grip. Power output is claimed to exceed 100W per channel and the amplifier should work with loudspeakers presenting loads as low as two Ohms. It can be bridged to provide a hefty 250W.

Both halves of this combination come in mirror-black or chrome finishes. A black CA200 costs £699 while a matching PA200 is £1,199. Chrome units cost £50 more.

There's also a new integrated, the VA150, which draws on the design of the PA200 amplifier. Offering 100W per channel, it features a surface mount MM phono stage, four line and one tape inputs. It provides bi-wired loudspeaker connections and sells for £799 in black or £849 in chrome finish. ☎ (01903) 524806.

## Features aplenty from h/k



Inky black transients ahoy.

harman/kardon's new HD710 has a MASH Bitstream converter and a wealth of features including a 30-track memory, repeat, random play, program check, display on/off, variable headphone output and a coaxial digital output, all for £249.99. The £299.99 HD730 uses a Philips Bitstream converter. It sports music calendar, intro-scan, eight-mode repeat, program delete, tape edit, synchro copy, peak search and gold-plated sockets. Both use discrete components in their audio stages.

harman also has two new AV components: the AVR70 AV receiver and the AVR80 THX receiver. The £999.99 AVR70 delivers 70W to the front and centre channels, and 25W to each of the rears. Stereo mode operation gives 80W per channel. The receiver has 30 pre-set channels, a learning remote control, pre-amplifier outputs for all channels, composite and S-Video switching, subwoofer output and a raft of audio inputs and DSP modes. The £1,499.99 THX-certified AVR80 brings more power to the party — three 85W channels at the front and two 60W at the rear — along with Home THX re-equalisation, de-correlation and timbre matching. ☎ (0181) 207 5050

## Mo's better blues — well golds, really!

Monitor Audio has two new models joining the MA 700 PMC series. These are the 703 PMC floorstander and the 91cm tall 705 PMC, the latter being described with charming simplicity as a "Big Floor Stander".

PMC refers to the special bass-midrange Profiled Metal Cone drivers. These units feature gold-anodised, aluminium-magnesium alloy cones. These integrate effectively with MA's distinctive, gold-dome, alloy tweeters. Thus, only one component is required to match the bass driver to the HF unit.

The 705 is reflex ported with a claimed frequency response of 28Hz to 30kHz. Impedance is eight Ohms and sensitivity is high at 90dB. The 18mm MDF cabinets are finished in black as standard, or in Oak, Cherry, Mahogany and Rosemah veneers at a £100 premium; other finishes are available to special order. Prices for the black 703 and 705 are £799 and £1,399 respectively. ☎ (01223) 242898.



MA's All-gold selection.

## In brief

by confidently telling them that 42 rooms and five portable systems were all EQ'd and equipped with JBL pro audio systems.

Not content with being the world's busiest shop and one of the country's biggest hi-fi retailers, those jolly neat chaps at diverse Richer Sounds stores around the country are presenting a duet of roadshows in April, designed to highlight the qualities of products in the Richer portfolio. On the 17th April, at the Watford branch of Richer Sounds, Denon will be struttin' its stuff, while on the 18th, at the Leicester branch, Yamaha products will be showin' out. Free gifts, nibbles and an instant free raffle await those who phone the Watford or Leicester branches directly.

B-Tech's B726 is an inexpensive phono and microphone pre-amplifier that will supply a line-level output to any integrated or pre-amplifier not equipped with its own phono or microphone input. The phono stage is moving magnet only, and the microphone input is suitable for one stereo mic or two mono mics. The steel-cased unit comes with its own power supply and costs £26.95. ☎ (01689) 848535.

We now have prices for Rogers' new E Series valve amplifiers, whose arrival we announced in December 1995. The 20Watt push-pull Class A pentode E20a is priced at £1,090, while the 40Watt parallel push-pull E40a, sells for £1,900. The company has also established an International Audio Club on the Internet. You can obtain full details by e-mailing [gloots@rogerinter.win-uk.net](mailto:gloots@rogerinter.win-uk.net) or ☎ (0181) 640 2172.

## True Dynaudio Dealers.

HiFi Experience, 17 Coniscliffe Rd, Darlington, 01325-481418  
 Music Matters, 351 Hagley Rd, Edgbaston, Birmingham, 0121-4292811  
 Music Matters, 93-95 Hobs Moat Rd, Solihull, Birmingham, 0121-7420254  
 Harrogate Hifi Centre, 15 Commercial St, Harrogate, 01432-504274  
 Cornflake Shop, 37 Windmill St, London, 0171-6310472  
 Nichols Hifi, 430-432 Lee High Rd, Lewisham, London, 0181-8525780  
 Performance Hifi Systems, 5 London Rd, Sevenoaks, Kent, 01732-740425  
 Worthing Audio, 20 Teville Gate Precinct, West Sussex, 01903-212133  
 Music Matters, 156-157 Lower High St, Stourbridge, 01384-444184

Holburn Hifi, 441 Holburn St, Aberdeen, 01224-585713  
 W.M. Coupar, 8-12 Wellmeadow, Blairgowrie, 01250-872436  
 W.M. Coupar, 33 Reform St, Dundee, 01382-229588  
 W.M. Coupar, 9 Scott St, Perth, 01738-634809  
 The Music Room, 98 Bath St, Glasgow, 0141-3325012  
 Richer Sounds, 34 Wellington Quay, Dublin, 0103531-6719666  
 Richer Sounds, 40-41 Smithfield, Belfast

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# Choice sessions

THE FINEST NEW HI-FI PRODUCTS ARE GIVEN THE ALVIN GOLD TREATMENT — WHATEVER THAT IS

## Thorens TCD 2000 CD player

It's the first digital device from a brand whose reputation rides on turntables. Will it be a silver-platter spinner to equal its vinyl-biscuit forbears?

£900

Of all the major names associated with record playing hardware in its heyday, Thorens has been the slowest to produce a CD player. The TCD 2000 matches the TTP 2000/TTA 2000 pre/power amplifier combo, reviewed in issue 139: their shoe-box form is similar to that of models from Mission and a number of European brands, and is one of the most glamorous-looking designs I have ever encountered.

The CD mechanism resides beneath a motor-driven smoked glass lid that is hinged at the rear and opens upwards. The disc platform is resiliently decou-

pled (adjustment screws also lock the sub-chassis for shipping) and a heavy puck weights the disc during play. A great deal of the metalwork is gold plated, and all major functions are operated by a pair of push and twist controls. Philips' BitStream converters are fitted, and a remote control is supplied.

If this player sounded half as good as it looked, the world would be beating a path to its door. The TCD 2000 is by all means a decent-sounding player; but it is no better than the Cyrus DAD 7, the Meridian 508, and even a relatively inexpensive Technics player (the SL-PG570) to name but three. Sometimes the TCD 2000 was actually inferior to these references! In each case, the Thorens player lacked midband separation and clarity, and the overall sound was short on dynamics and the organic, expressive quality provided by most modern CD players of a certain calibre. Pity.

## Castle Isis Loudspeakers

Another hand-finished classic from the masters of the real-wood enclosure. With all-new drive units, we think it's a peach!

£229.90 most finishes;

£269.90 in yew as tested

Castle has always been an oddball. The majority of speaker makers buy drive units and knit their own crossovers, and then have them stuffed into boxes by a specialist cabinet maker. Castle, by contrast, has always rolled its own drive units and built its own boxes — which are second to none in quality and finish. This new front-vented Trent replacement remains true to form, thanks to a magnificent yew-veneered enclosure — proper tree veneer, not the plastic stuff that comes on rolls. Instead of Castle's quaintly old-fashioned drivers, this new model is equipped with a soft-dome tweeter and a high power polypropylene bass-cone driver, both of Castle design and build.

The Isis is an inverted system with an offset tweeter. One pair comprises differently-configured left- and right-hand enclosures (with an odd-looking, removable, asymmetric grille cover), and best results obtain with the tweeter innermost. The speaker is said to work best about 15 - 30 cm from the back wall, but in practice it wasn't too fussy.

The Isis is a peach. It quickly becomes expressive, and offers a full upper bass — which helps the speaker sound more expressive and tonally colourful. This is an especially impressive effect in such a compact loudspeaker. It is also more refined than previous generations of Castles. Isis bass is tightly focused, driving rhythms hard, and provides better than average extension.

Above all, though, this speaker gives a big, dynamic sound, and is capable of pumping more music into a room than seems reasonable for a speaker so small. The Isis should help rejuvenate a brand that at times has seemed more worthy than likeable.

Castle Acoustics ☎ (01756) 795333

Lift the lid to the sound of CD, Thorens style. But is it as good as the classic record players?





**Electrocompaniet ECI-2 Integrated Amplifier**

**Brass knobs! Rack handles! Perspex! And within that chic exterior this Norwegian amp creates an open window on your music.**

£990

Electrocompaniet was one of the great names in solid state amplification during the '70s. Its products were famed as much for the fragility of their output stages as for their musical luminosity and transparency. Today the company's designs have moved on.

As far as I can judge, the Electro amps now appear pretty bulletproof. However, they have not lost the remarkable transparency that always graced Electrocompaniet's older models. The 50 Watts-per-channel ECI-2, seen as 'the baby' of the range, is a supremely natural, explicit and open-sounding design, which is both smooth and dynamic. In effect



it is an open window on the music, and over the last couple of months I have used it extensively to explore the capabilities of other source components and loudspeakers. It completely lacks the mechanical fingerprint that pervades so many transistor amplifiers, but it is party to none of the losses that are endemic with all but the best valve gear.

If the ECI-2 has a problem, it is in its clean, dry overall balance. However, this characteristic is unlikely to be a problem if care is taken over partnering equipment, and it can even help overcome the residual boxiness of some loud-

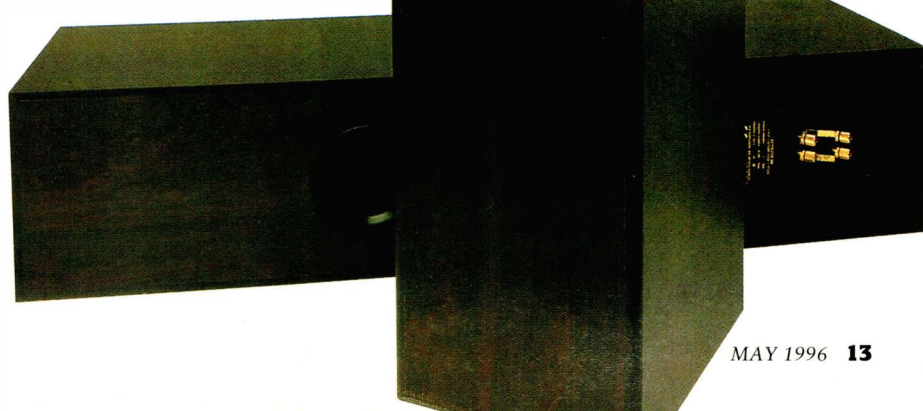
Castle's new Isis — the sort of speaker you could marry on the 5th day of May.

speakers. The ECI-2 works brilliantly with middle-size Spondor and Rogers speakers, and some large and capable Polk designs, for example; but it seems less happy with Mission 753s. Even in the worst case, however, it produces a crystalline account of the music, with a deeply extended and tuneful bass.

The amp is dressed in the standard Electro trim, featuring darkened Perspex with brass controls and rack handles, and it looks great alongside the Thorens TCD 2000 CD player. The ECI-2 is a line level design, with four inputs but no tape monitor, a limitation that is partly offset by the provision of an external processor loop and a separate pre-amp output to facilitate upgrading. Finally, vinyl fans should be reassured that an outboard ECP-1 phono stage is available, for £580.

Esoteric Audio Imports (01243) 533030

Electrocompaniet's cheapest amp is the one to beat, says Alvin.



**Revolver 260 Loudspeakers**

**This new pistol-totin' design aims to put the Loud back into Speakers. So break out the Party Seven and the Abba records, because it's time for a wing ding.**

£350

The 260 is the largest model in the current Revolver range, which is manufactured by JPW to Revolver's own designs. It is a slim, tall, spikeable, rear-vented enclosure fitted with two polypropylene-coned bass drivers. The tweeter is centrally mounted, at about ear level for a reclining listener. This speaker is clearly at its best a foot or so from walls, but the bi-wire facility made little sonic difference.

Revolver's 260 was presented to me as a kind of British Cerwin-Vega, making 'music on steroids' for those who like their music VERY LOUD. However, with a sensitivity that's only 89dB/w — average for a speaker this size — such an image is rather misleading. Nevertheless, the impression of an

Speakers of a new calibre, thanks to those six-gun speaker shooters, Revolver.

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## THE FRONT END

exceptionally sensitive design remains. One reason is the six-Ohm-rated sensitivity and the other is that the 260 has a bright, forward and genuinely unrestrained quality of the Cerwin-Vega kind.

This is a 'loud' speaker in the very best sense. At the same time, the 260 reveals a tendency towards tonal chilliness: a fine, almost lush recording of Bach on lute (Nigel North, Vol. 3 on Linn Records) sounded as though it was recorded in a stone courtyard. A sucked-out upper bass and lower midrange, meanwhile, tended to pull weight and body resonance from the instruments. There was a steely, tight quality about this speaker that transferred intact to a range of orchestral and jazz recordings.

I found the 260 to work better as a no-nonsense interpreter of rock, with plenty of dynamics, plus strong mid-band clout and drive, added to good confidence with timing cues. Don't buy it if you want a refined, subtle interpreter of naturally-recorded acoustic music, but add it to your shortlist if you're seeking an inexpensive and capable column speaker that is a little more upfront than its peers.

Revolver ☎ (0161) 973 0505

### NAD 512 Compact Disc Player

Look elsewhere for your pleasures, widget fans. This new CD player is focused purely on low-priced, high-value sound.

£249.95

No-frills CD players are widely available, but few have the conviction routinely injected into NAD's offerings. Out of most of the tricky bits, but something remains to ensure that sound quality is just that little bit special.

The 512 CD player is an excellent example of NAD's craft, with its simple-looking fascia concealing one of Technics's MASH D-to-A chips, and a quality analogue output stage downstream. NAD also claims that more care than usual has been applied to the design of the analogue filter in order to reduce out-of-band spurious.

There exists a small number of high-flying, modestly-priced CD players, including models from Sony and Marantz, and NAD's 512 is right up there with the leaders, though it sounds a little different. The NAD lacks some of the gloss of the new Sonys, for example: the 512 is capable of exposing the minutest detail while avoiding any excessive emphasis, which goes hand in hand with a little relaxing of presence and definition at the frequency extremes.

All of this happens in the context of a finely constructed, three-dimensional soundstage, with a realistic image scale

in a good system — unlike many CD players, that tend to shrink the scale of the events they reproduce.

Tonally, the NAD did tend to sound a little grey (like its fascia), but conversely the intelligibility of spoken voice was particularly good, which is always a positive sign. All in all, it's an excellent newcomer; put it on your shortlist!

NAD ☎ (0181) 343 3240

### Micromega Minium System

The company that brought you the famed 'Stage' CD players now turns its hand to an affordably-priced system. C'est si bon!

£1299.96

If you thought you couldn't afford Micromega, think again. The French hi-fi company has introduced the *Minium* system, a value-conscious package design to suit every pocket.

The *Minium* system, which is also available on a component by component basis, is fully remote controlled from a single system handset that is supplied with the CD player — and there are no rear-panel wire links to complicate matters further. The system is basically a 'minimum of gadgets' type, but you still get dimmable displays, a switchable CD digital output, an absolute phase switch, and independent control over speaker and headphone volume/muting. You also get style.

The little *Minium* speakers look deceptively simple, but turn out to be quite solidly engineered. The tuner is limited to FM, and claims good noise fig-

ures, although sensitivity appears modest. The amplifier is not particularly powerful, and the input sensitivity is set so that it is almost impossible to provoke audible distortion — a questionable strategy for an amplifier that may be used with 'foreign' components. While it may be well suited to the typically high output of a CD player ( $\approx 2V$ ), it is less appropriate for the typical 0.5 to 1 Volt output of other line sources.

The only important criticism of the *Minium* amp, however, concerns its over-zealous protection circuitry, which took a distinct dislike to certain speakers, including the Tannoy 631SE reviewed elsewhere in *Sessions*. This has been reported back to the importer, who has since claimed to have addressed the problem.

There is not a trace of idiosyncrasy about the little *Minium* speakers, which have more bottle than Schweppes, needle-sharp imagery, a surprisingly expansive and tuneful bass, but only marginally adequate sensitivity for the system amplifier. A good 100 Watter brings them to life, but at a price, of course. The CD player, which is essentially a *Stage 1* without the upgradability, is neutral and transparent, and the amplifier has similar qualities. As a system, the *Minium* is clearly well-matched, and if it is no ball of fire in the power stakes, it always sounded as attractively smooth and crisp as freshly-ironed silk.

As a system it comes on rather like a French version of Arcam: its software is typically Gallic and inventive. Take my word for it — this one will run and run.

Micromega ☎ (0181) 502 1416

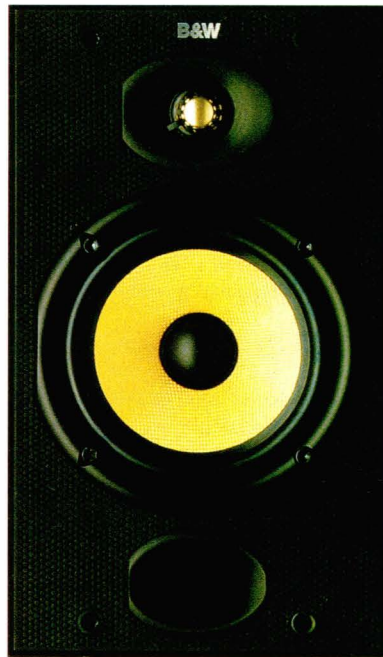
NAD stays in the grey with its new stripped-down 512 CD player for the masses.

Minium from Micromega proves that good hi-fi need not be expensive.



INTRODUCING THE NEW 600 SERIES

Don't believe all that  
you read in the press...



just this bit:

B&W has pulled the stops well and truly out for these speakers, and boy does the result sound good... the 601's sound like the voice coils of God. Up-to-the-minute design, gold-plated biwirable sockets: they're a bargain - magnificent for £200.



**What Hi-Fi, November 1995**



**LISTEN AND YOU'LL SEE**

For details and stockists of the 600 range of loudspeakers, phone B&W UK on 01903-750750



### Tannoy Profile 631 Special Edition

Take a highly-acclaimed small speaker, breathe upon its magnet, crossover and cabinet, then bestow the cherished 'SE' suffix. Is it a new budget wonder or just a slick piece of marketing?

£169.90

Tannoy has taken a leaf out of the book of its distributor, Marantz, in producing an audiophile 'special edition' of one of its key models, the Profile 631, which was awarded a Best Buy swing tag in issue 141. The 631 Special Edition, which carries a £40 premium, has been extensively revamped inside, the bass driver has had a supplementary magnet fitted to improve sensitivity, the crossover has also been tweaked, with better components fitted, and the enclosure has been strengthened.

The Special Edition is muted in the treble, giving darker, more sonorous tonal colours, but with no obvious detriment to clarity and vocal intelligibility. That's a tribute to the inherent resolving power of the design. The bass sounds more grown-up, too; there's more air and space, and plenty of low-end presence, tunefulness and control.

Somehow, though, the various bits don't quite knit together into a sufficiently convincing whole. The frequency balance is clearly contrived, and the result is an uneven treatment of recorded material that leaves more naturally-recorded music sounding rather dull and distant. There are also colorations which give a curiously synthetic effect with orchestral strings, for instance. In a hangover from the original, the mid-band can still show a somewhat murky, 'cupped-hands' quality.

Make no mistake: this is a fundamentally excellent speaker, but I have the distinct impression that the designer moulded it to give a particular effect with his favourite music, which has left other material out in the cold. It is an undeniably impressive speaker at times, thanks to a lucid midband and bags of presence, but the 631 Special Edition would need to be directed away from House and Ambient music before becoming as an all-purpose compact.

The 631 SE is up against some impressive opposition from the likes of KEF, Mordaunt-Short, Celestion and Mission, all of whom produce similarly-priced speakers that are more transparent in their treatment of a wide range of material.

Tannoy ☎ (01236) 420199



### Monarchy DIP Super Drive

If your digits jitter, your music may sound bitter. Could this new widget stop your hi-fi getting in a twitter?

£245

Jitter, or lack of precision in the digital on/off pulses that characterise music encoded on CD, is now well documented as a key factor in the quality of digital audio sound. (See issue 147 for a full treatment of this topic—Ed.) And tackling this problem is the task of the Monarchy Audio DIP (Digital Interface Processor) Super Drive reviewed here, which is designed to relock any digital output to give a cleaner, lower-jitter input to the D-A converter.

In common with its sibling product, the DIP, Super Drive features optical and electrical (S/PDIF/phono socket) digital inputs, and S/PDIF outputs. This means it can be used to connect an optical digital output to a coaxial digital input (on a DAC). In addition, the model tested here has a BNC (bayonet) socket, that supplies an S/PDIF output at a claimed 5V peak-peak. A single LED indicates signal lock, and would-be upgraders should note that the Super Drive is of no benefit to an integrated player.

Depending on which ancillary equipment it was used with, the DIP made differences ranging from the strongly positive to mildly negative. When used to connect a modestly-priced integrated CD player to an outboard DAC, the DIP provided a generally beneficial effect. With inexpensive Marantz and Sony players, and even the more costly Thorens player reviewed elsewhere in Sessions, the DIP had the effect of improving fine detail, dynamics and stereo imagery. These three factors go hand in hand, and can almost be considered different facets of the system's whole performance. The DIP had a strong effect on Arcam's Black Box 50, but cables, mostly vanden Hul and Audioquest digital interconnects, seemed to wield disproportionate influence.

In general, the



DIP made music sound less processed, less obviously digital in origin, and more relaxed in presentation, yet with greater detail. However, I still have my doubts. The case for jitter reduction by any and all means is unarguable. But the right place to optimise jitter is at the point of conversion, not half-way between the transport and the D/A converter. Devices like the Super Drive are system dependent: this unit could breathe new life into an ailing player, but before purchasing insist on a careful listening test with your own components.

Wollaton Audio ☎ (0115) 928 4147

### Sennheiser HD565 Ovation Headphones

This model is billed as a top-of-the-range dynamic headphone.

Is it equally top on top of one's head?

£139.95

The HD565 is the most expensive of a number of recently introduced Sennheiser models. It is an open-back, circum-aural model, with soft, felted pads bearing on each side of one's head, although the cushions are too tightly dimensioned to leave the ears completely unfettered. I found the 565 heavier and initially more claustrophobic than previous models, but low inward pressure on the head and good materials make long-term comfort surprisingly good. In fact, the 565 Ovation is unfatiguing, and at times I nearly forgot I was wearing headphones.

Similar comments apply to the sound. Imagery tends to be close and in the head, and there is some loss of definition at lower frequencies. But the midrange is clear, and the treble—though sometimes slightly muted—is of extremely fine quality, with no trace of grain, coloration or resonance. The tonal balance is definitely warm and lush, but it is so smoothly contrived. The 565 Ovation may lack the athlete's responses of some smaller siblings in Sennheiser's 400 series, but it remains a seriously accomplished design.

Sennheiser ☎ (01494) 551551

DIP into the murky waters of jitter control with the boffins at Monarchy.



Now you can have a standing Ovation while sitting down with Sennheiser's 565.

Will Tannoy's 631 Special Edition prove of limited appeal?

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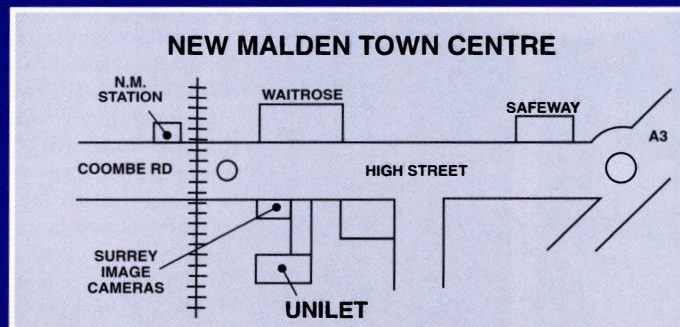
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# Ear Waxings

Records played backwards can make sense in Washington, and tweaked systems are not always what they seem. **Jason Kennedy** investigates...

**F**ebruary is not just a month of romance and cold weather. It's also show-time down in Bristol, which leaves me with little excuse (if any was needed) not to visit Tom Evans, who lives further west across the Severn. So I hitched a lift in his tweaked Scirocco and clung on. This car makes my Renault Satsuma Turbo seem like a Maxi, and Tom positively delights in showing off its potential for navigating roundabouts at speeds in the region of Mach 2.

Tom, by the way, is the hands-on electronics guy at Trichord. The system set up in his lounge burns with the white heat of phase linearity and he loves to play it loud. So loud that John Bamford and I were pinned to our chairs with sound pressure, but not so loud that it hurt. What has he got? Well, as you might expect, there's a somewhat more-tricked-up-than-usual Pioneer transport, a Trichord DAC, Michell amps (he designed their innards) and a pair of Sonolith 2.2is. This system is not a million miles away from my own: in fact, it's exactly the same except for a bit more fiddling on transport and preamp — oh and one extra *Black Box 1* conditioner. But those tweaks (especially to the disc drive, combined with a small and very solid room) made for a considerably more robust and dynamic set-up. I would never have believed that so much energy could be induced to spew forth from these speakers using a single pair of Michell Aleptos, and Tom claims that a prototype preamp currently in the pipeline, with an outrageous pot design, will make all this sound shabby!

We went on to play a whole bunch of marvellous music: Reef (*Feed Me* had me chuckling along at the end with the sheer enthusiasm of the track); the Chili Peppers; Little Axe (sounding very expansive and yet solid); and a selection of bootleg discs that Tom had managed to track down. These less-than-spectacular but much better than your average-tape-recorder-in-the-audience recordings took on tremendous presence and liveness when belted out at studio monitor levels. We listened to Zeppelin, Zappa and Hendrix — material that can't really go wrong if the recording's

okay, and the results were addictive.

Tom's very big on imaging, something he claims can only be achieved with phase linear equipment — and this excludes dome tweeters in his and Ted Jordan's book. However, despite good solidity and realistic levels of energy, I found that only a few recordings provided a special feeling of depth and space. This is due to several factors, not least that a lot of multi-track non-classical producers don't give a fig for imagery, concentrating solely on 'groove'.

There were a few impressive exceptions, notably Roger Waters' *Amused to Death*. This album uses space and dynamics to tremendous effect, even if it ends up sounding more like auto-therapeutic opera than rock. The Skylab disc that sounded so spacey at Definitive Audio took on another dimension because of the bass plumbing abilities of the Sonoliths. After the *Air Partners*, the Sonos muddy the pictures somewhat but resolve just as well across a wider bandwidth. This means that you hear some things less distinctly, but probably end up with more 'music' overall. Tom is not keen on what he calls 'playing with colours', by which he means equipment with a less-than-flat response in either frequency or phase, and his system makes a very good argument for the approach. Where am I going to find a concrete floor so that I can have the same thing, let alone neighbours who'll tolerate the results?

## Library music

One of the first really exotic pieces of kit I got my hands on as a reviewer was a Zarathustra turntable. The creator of

this brand was effectively relieved of it by the unscrupulous dealings of a European agent. The man behind the matt stainless steel turntables is still active however, and now trades under his own name: Simon Yorke.

Simon's latest creation is a substantial and extremely flexible record player that was commissioned via Cello for the Library of Congress in Washington, USA. This vast archive has a collection of recorded material going back to the year dot — dot being about the time they started making recordings, I guess. On the flat platter front, the Library has a variety of unusual discs that it needs to transcribe. These vary from 20-inch glass affairs, via varieties that spin anti-clockwise, to those recorded at speeds of up to 120rpm. What Simon has built is a twin-12-inch-armed (for the two directions of play), twin-belt-drive turntable with a power supply that has an RS232 serial port for computer connection. The latter means that with the appropriate software, parameters such as motor acceleration/deceleration, servo velocity, scale factor (speed calibration) and so on can be computer controlled.

Cello belongs to high end designer Mark Levinson, and when it provides the electronics and loudspeakers for what is a complete audiopackage, you know it'll be serious. Mark has long been a fan of Simon's work, so when Cello got this enviable contract it was to him that they turned for a turntable.

Should you fancy one yourself, the *Precision Analogue Disc Transcription System* (with turntable and arm) starts at £5,500. Call (01388) 730960 but be prepared to wait! ▲

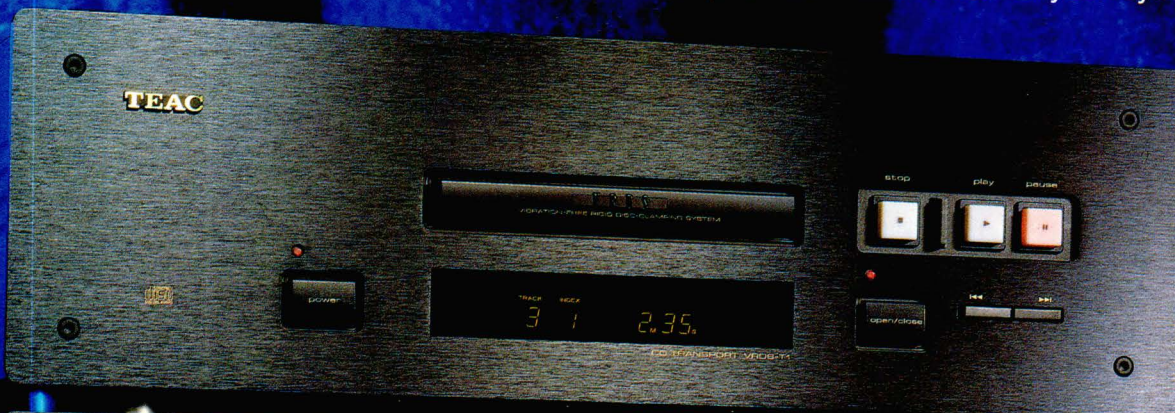


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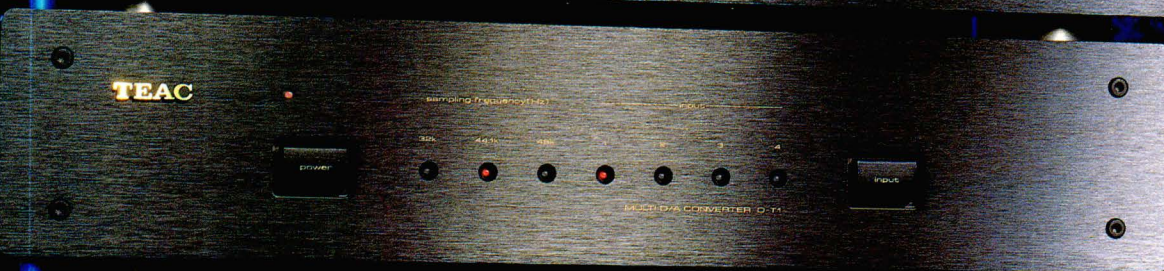
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# 21st Century

Digital surround sound has become a battle of competing formats. **Barry Fox** reports from the AV sound semi-final in Cannes.

# Fox

**C**annes, in the south of France, is famous for its yearly Film Festival, which draws liggers and posers from the movie industry all round the world. MIDEM is a similar magnet for revellers from the music industry, spending what we give them for over-priced CDs. Now Cannes wants to become famous for MILIA, a Festival of multimedia money.

I learned two useful lessons from visiting MILIA. One is not to go back there until the French organisers have got their act together. Anxious to be seen using multimedia technology, they fooled around with three electronic cameras and three computers trying to print badges for 850 people who were stuck queuing for literally hours on end.

The other lesson is to ask the companies that demonstrate multichannel surround sound to switch off the pictures, and play some well-recorded live music in addition to the obligatory train crashes.

## AV format split

Lesson two emerged from a series of very revealing seminars staged by Philips to answer claims made by Dolby Lab that AC-3 is the only multichannel surround system worth using for high density digital video disc. Philips wanted to put the case for MPEG-Musicam.

At first sight, this is a pointless exercise. AC-3 is mandatory for DVD in 525-line TV countries (eg the USA), with MPEG-Musicam optional, whereas MPEG-Musicam is mandatory in 625 line countries (the UK and Europe) with AC-3 as the option. Recent events have, however, shown that the movie studios may not stick to this ruling. They will use whatever sound system they think best. And Dolby vigorously claims that Warner, MCA and Paramount are bound to use AC-3 in Europe.

There is another side to this rebellion. Once the movie studios have turned their backs on the idea of a rock-solid audio standard, they can use MPEG-Musicam in the USA if they think it suits them better.

Koos Middeljans is Manager of the Key Modules division in Philips, which makes the

chips and raw components that player-manufacturers rely on. "The chip makers are looking at this as a world business," he states. "The decoder chip in the player will handle both systems. From the first players onwards, DVD hardware will be capable of decoding MPEG-1, MPEG-2 and AC-3 audio."

Whereas AC-3 runs at a fixed bitrate of 384 or 448 kilobits per second, MPEG-2 audio works at variable bitrates. The variable bitrate encoder adapts every 25 milliseconds to the complex-

was set in November 1992 and defines three Layers; the MPEG-2 standard (ISO/IEC 13818) was set in November 1994 and also defines three layers. In each case Layer 1 employs the simplest compression algorithm, and the cheapest hardware, but is least efficient in using fewer bits for higher quality. Layer 3 offers the highest efficiency at the highest cost. Video CD uses MPEG-1 Layer 2 as a compromise; DVD will probably use MPEG-2 Layer 2.

Although several European companies, including Thomson of France, co-developed Musicam, Philips is the only company actively promoting the system. Thomson of France no longer tries to promote anything, and its

UK subsidiary Ferguson is a broken reed. While Thomson and Ferguson slumber, Dolby's publicity machine has been firing on all cylinders.

In Cannes, Philips demonstrated both 5.1 and 7.1 channel surround. A Tascam eight track recorder replayed a signal which had been encoded, decoded and re-recorded on discrete tracks. Both demonstrations were deliberately without video, to let listeners concentrate fully on the audio.

The first recording was of live music recorded in a Dutch church, using a crossed-pair of mics for the main soundfield and spot mics for soloists. The result was very impressive, with airy subtlety and ambience. The second recording was what Middeljans refers to as "the effects machine", as favoured by home cinema demonstrators. Doors that open and close and birds twittering are followed by thunder, rain, aircraft overhead, rousing orchestral music and rock, culminating in a *Fugitive* train crash.

"From March onwards we will make MPEG-2 5.1 and 7.1 encoders available for the studios to try," Middeljans tells me. "We will loan them for a few months. That way the experience is mutual. They will go out worldwide. It's part of the learning curve."

Then he adds: "Ultimately, it will be up to Hollywood to decide which sound formats to put on the disc. We are an enabling company — not decision makers." ▲



The future of surround sound is Dolby AC-3 — or is it? Philips hopes not...

ity of the sound. So the bit rate can rise to a maximum of around 600 kilobits a second to cope with demanding sound, while falling to much lower levels in silent or quiet portions, with the rise and fall averaging out over time to 384 kilobits/second.

"The total available data rate for DVD is 4.7 megabits per second," says Middeljans. "If you keep on adding extra full bit rate soundtracks, you soon'll have nothing left for the video."

## Musicam decoded

Whereas Dolby AC-3 is a simple proposition, MPEG-Musicam comes in a variety of flavours which few people in the industry really understand. The MPEG-1 standard (ISO/IEC 11172)

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# Personal **Paul Messenger** visits Danish HQ of speaker maker Jamo; returns enlightened, several kilos heavier!

# Messages

I'm just back from my hols. Three days, it was, in Denmark. The sun shone brightly, if briefly; the temperature stayed below freezing; the wind chilled; and the sea was frozen. No wonder the Danes take their hi-fi seriously.

The purpose of this jaunt was to visit Jamo, widely regarded as Europe's largest speaker manufacturer: a company with which I — widely regarded as Europe's largest speaker reviewer — had yet to make any real acquaintance. I knew the products of course, from reviews and brochures, but nothing about the people behind an operation which has grown into a significant force in Britain since setting up a UK subsidiary in June 1990.

I suffered a degree of apprehension prior to this visit. Jamo is currently the Number Two European speaker brand after Bose in sales value, and is enjoying considerable success in the UK. Unfortunately this consummate commercial performance has tended not to be mirrored in my reviews of Jamo products to date. The *Classic 8*, for example, received a pretty lukewarm reception in *HFC 152*, which had just hit the streets as we were touching down in Copenhagen. I had brought along sheaves of performance measurement graphs, expecting that I would need to defend my position. Dismayingly, Jamo's engineering staff didn't disagree with my findings.

Two days on site isn't anywhere near long enough to get to know a company properly, especially when my relationships with some British speaker builders go back twenty-odd years. I travelled to Denmark not really knowing where Jamo was coming from, and wondering whether it was even capable of producing real hi-fi speakers. I came away beginning to appreciate the underlying philosophy, and realising that this company does indeed know exactly what it is doing.

So will this know-how be brought to bear on 'real' hi-fi speakers as they are traditionally defined? The bottom line is that Jamo is a loudspeaker manufacturer rather than a hi-fi manufacturer; it is primarily led by design and marketing. But

because people buy speakers to hook up to hi-fi, Jamo finds itself in the hi-fi business.

However, people buy loudspeakers for all sorts of other purposes, too, and Jamo has been busily identifying, addressing and even creating new niches with considerable imagination and skill. While it is rapidly approaching UK market leadership, its profile is somewhat skewed away from independent hi-fi retailers towards multiple stores, mail-order operations and low-cost products — alongside a strong presence in the burgeoning home cinema scene.

Considering the massive sales of aggressively-styled, bookshelf-size Jamo *Sonic* speakers, banged out by Dixons and Currys at £55 a pair, the hi-fi sector is the icing on Jamo's cake. It is profitable icing, to be sure, but not thick enough to keep the company's giant machines working two shifts a day.

And Jamo certainly has a major-league production facility. Believe me: I walked around it, for at least two hours. It's not that the machinery is any more advanced than the sort of stuff I've seen in Britain; rather, that everything is on such a large scale. And scale, of course, is the key to keeping costs down and prices competitive. One of the biggest indoor machines I've ever seen, with an equivalent area to a pair of squash courts, was busily chopping sheets of chipboard and MDF three times the size of those you'd find down the local timber merchant. The bigger the board, the less the percentage waste generated by any given cutting plan, and the lower the unit production cost.

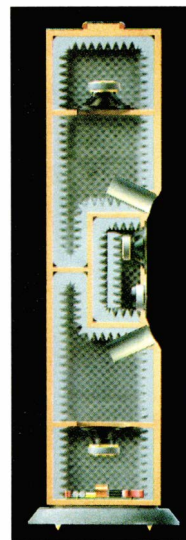
Another competitiveness boost comes from the fact that Jamo is a cabinet specialist. The company doesn't make any drive units, but relies instead on the host of OEM suppliers scattered across the globe. These in turn will compete fiercely to get on the company's shopping list, tailoring their products to whatever cost and engineering requirements are specified, and pro-

viding a much wider choice and greater combined resources than any one company could muster. This reliance on 'outsourcing' also accounts for the fact that Jamo's design and engineering department is an exceptionally lean and fit affair, and a modest overhead indeed in relation to the number of products and the turnover they create.

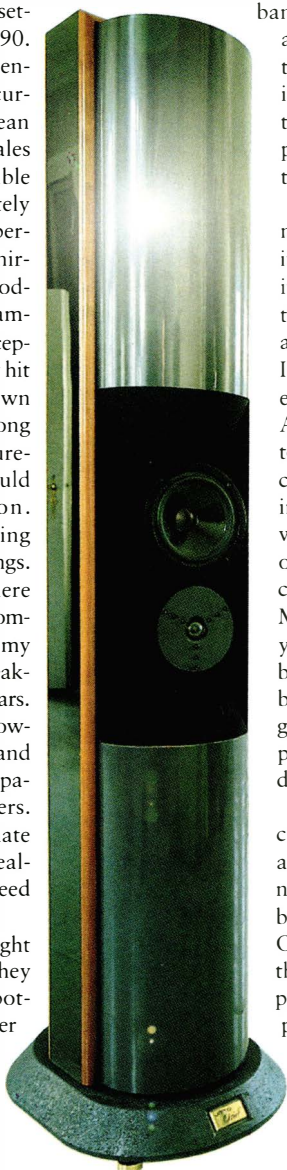
This appears to be paving the modern way. It's a policy that Mission has pursued with considerable effectiveness over the years. More recently, KEF took a step further still. Its highly successful budget *Coda* series uses Indian-made drive units, which are mated with cabinets in Denmark before appearing on the British retailer's shelf. Indeed, it is only in the serious high end of hi-fi where technological exclusivity, of both drive unit and enclosure, still carries a worthwhile cachet.

The Jamo *Classic 8* that I reviewed recently showed clear signs of being tailored for the German market — in the strength of its treble output, if nothing else. To its credit, Jamo made no attempt to deny this supposition. However, perhaps it does explain why the company has enjoyed most of its UK success outside hi-fi as she is traditionally known. If, as for Jamo, hi-fi is only one of half a dozen broadly-drawn sectors, there is always the risk of oversimplification. Specialist hi-fi speaker builders like B&W and Mission approach each of their major markets as independent niches, subtly tuning models to suit differences in national tastes.

Just as I was wondering whether Jamo would ever produce a speaker to get the genuine hi-fi enthusiast drooling, we were introduced to the *Oriel*, pictured left — all 1.78 metres of it. I had never seen it before, but it is a delightful speaker, both visually and sonically. The only snag is the £6,500 price tag; although a brief audition in Jamo's listening rooms suggests that, for the duration of the bank loan, one would be entertained in style. ▲



The *Oriel* is a two-way design, sandwiched top and bottom by a pair of coupled-cavity subwoofers.



# The system that Clive built



Jason Kennedy meets a legend in a living room, conceived way back in the quadrophonic '70s.

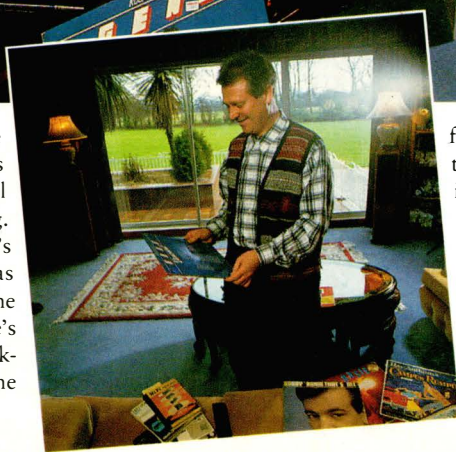
**The well tempered system.**

**On the near stack:** Micromega transport, DPA DAC and Revox tuner. **Far stack:** Wilson-benesch record player, Chord pre-amp and monobloks.

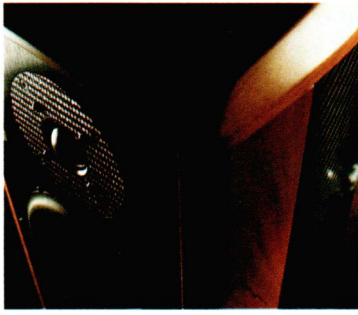
**F**or the dedicated enthusiast, the search for the perfect system is like the quest for the holy grail — apparently never-ending. The man behind this month's spectacular grail, Clive, has been on his quest since he became 'inspired' by rock'n'roll in the '50s. He's self-employed and has the luxury of working at home, so he has plenty of time

for music, and it's no surprise that he's turned out to be a particularly demanding listener.

In the early days Clive had a Dansette on which to play his Gene Vincent 78s. He later upgraded to a MasterRadio, but it was when he built his first corner speakers that the bug really got him. Clive didn't have the funds to seriously indulge his habit







Carbon fibre creations courtesy of Wilson-benesch's A.C.T. One speaker.

until the '70s, when he decided to get into quadraphonic in a big way. In fact, he built his living/listening room around the system. Even today, some twenty years later, there are grilles in the eaves where Clive made cavities for two pairs of Yamaha NS1000 loudspeakers. He built that system around a Dual turntable and a harman/kardon quadraphonic receiver, but — like many others at the time — Clive soon realised that this approach was not the way forward, and ended up selling one pair of speakers and using the other at a more conventional altitude.

When Clive next felt the urge to get more out of his record collection, he visited Doug Brady in Warrington. This was the step that set him on the road to the system you see before you, but not without some diversions along the way. Doug introduced a Linn LP12 turntable, Naim amplification and Linn *Isobarik* loudspeakers — a very popular set-up in the late '70s and early '80s. Let's face it: you were barely a man, let alone an audiophile, if you didn't have a Linn in those days.

So Clive set out on the path to nirvana as prescribed by the good burghers of Glasgow and Salisbury. However, he didn't just accept what was offered — he went on to borrow just about every variation on the theme and then selected what suited him. At one point, there were four LP12s in the house, each with a different arm or cartridge. The combination that Clive ended up with was a Syrinx arm and Koetsu cartridge. Amplification was a Naim tri-amp combo made up of a NAC32 and three NAP160s with a NAXO active crossover. The NAXO was, however, not of the ordinary kind. Having heard Doug tweak the internal controls of the latter, Clive decided he'd like to have the same controls to hand at all times, and managed to persuade Doug to put them on the front of the case. This flew in the face of Naim's hair-shirt approach, but gave Clive the chance to balance the system to taste.

Until about a year ago, this outfit pretty much kept things going, give or

take a few more of Doug's special amp mods, and a Meridian 206 — the first CD player that Clive really liked. Around that time he'd bought a CD jukebox for his kids and noticed how much better the bass sounded at low volumes compared to his Linn/Naim system. He had also been hankering after greater remote control, a desire that was partially sated by the addition of remote volume to the NAC32. With Wima capacitors and Spectral pots, this unit obviated any need to swap for a NAC 52.

The low-frequency-at-low-levels problem, however, required a fair bit of work. Clive's first step was a pair of Naim DBLs, but these were too dry, and gradually the entire system changed. The record player became a Michell *Orbe* with an SME Vanda Lyra cartridge (in fact all the Lyra cartridges); the amps were switched for Chord's CPA4000



DPA's PDM1024 DAC: over five grand's worth of state-of-the-art digit fonder.

fully remote preamp with a dedicated phono stage, and SPM1200B power amps; while the speakers multiplied into a pair of ProAc *Response 3s*, backed up by two REL *Studio* subwoofers. This time there were no holds barred.

The current Micromega *Duo 3.1* transport and DPA 1024 DAC weren't an easy choice, either. They followed players from Wadia, Naim and Krell which failed to make the grade. Clive felt that CD standards were being dictated by the exposed treble of the Chords, but this notion was fully dispelled by the loudspeakers you see here. However, as I'm sure you've noticed, they are not ProAcs but rather the latest and final part of the puzzle: Wilson-benesch A.C.T. *Ones*.

Now I'm jumping the gun slightly. Clive got on pretty well with the ProAc/REL combination and was planning concrete plinths (up through the wooden floor) for the subs. He'd even gone to the trouble of purchasing a Lladro porcelain scene to decorate one of them! Then Doug unwittingly set Clive

on the carbon fibre trail by bringing round the Wilson-benesch turntable, A.C.T. *Two* arm and very recently the new *Carbon* moving coil cartridge. So when the W-b loudspeakers came out late last year, Clive had to hear them, and then he had to have them. They completed and made sense of a capable system.

The final tweak for Clive was the carbon mounting plates for the tweeters. These removed any traces of sibilance that remained, leaving the balance sweet but defined.

The last serious source in the system is a Revox B260 *Stuner* which beat off competition from Audiolab, Naim and Meridian on counts including amount of presets and remote controllability for pride of place on the red Soundstyle racks.

This system offers broad bandwidth combined with tactile imagery and a degree of nimbleness that is rare. Obviously, every component plays its part, down to the DPA *Black Slink* interconnects and Audioquest *Jade 2* speaker cables, but nonetheless I'm quite taken with the speakers. They are unusually transparent, and the music emanates from a soundstage that's considerably wider than the cabinets are placed.

We initially listened to CD using DPA's clock-linked optical connections, but I much preferred the precision of the electrical connection, at present made by a piece of Audioplant cable. In my opinion, this link improved the sound of CDs to the point where they were pretty much on par with LPs, but Clive finds that the different links suit different discs.

LPs sounded very fine, especially a relatively new mono pressing of *Be Bop A Lula* which had tremendous vitality. It was down to Tina Turner, finally, to show off the system's powerful and agile bass.

Clive, with the aid of Doug Brady, has taken his time and built a remarkable music system, and I take my hat off to his dedication. ▲

High technology meets Gene Vincent on MFP vinyl. Wilson-benesch's new Carbon cartridge features innards from Empire.





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# Uptown **Krell**

As Krell's ten-grand KPS 20i defeats egalitarian CD player society, **Alan Sircom** is tempted by a life of crime.

It would be so easy to knock the Krell KPS 20i CD player. At £10,000, it is the most expensive single-box CD player *Hi-Fi Choice* has ever reviewed. Every other press review of the KPS 20i has been dripping with praise, which makes the army-surplus-wearing anarcho-punk in me desperate to rubbish this king of the high-end mainstream.

Sadly, it's been a long time since I wore that black star, and the Krell is every bit as good as previously claimed — better, in fact. It may cost as much as a small house in some parts of the country, but the fact remains that almost everything about it is state-of-the-art and has a sound quality to match.

The strong styling and control surfaces are on the brutal side, but not without charm. Charm in an arch-enemy-of-007 kind of way. This is technology writ large, The Right Stuff that puts men into space and makes every Big Mac taste the same. Only the Americans could invent monster truck spectacles; only the Americans could build the first atom bomb; only the Americans could make Krell.

The top-loading CDM9 pro mechanism, which is bolted to a heavy brass block and uses parts deriving from Gulf War technology, is hidden by a sliding door that makes a seriously butch whirring noise as it opens and closes. The spider that sits on top of the disc snaps home safely but with a purpose. The LEDs that bathe the disc in a green glow look like landing lights. All it needs is yellow and black banding and a big red-covered switch in place of the play button, and you'd think you were at the controls of a Pershing missile base during the Cuba crisis.

Internally, it's the same story. The KPS 20i uses a pair of PCM63 DAC chips per channel, and features Krell's own software on an EPROM for easy upgrades. Its discrete internal output stages run in Class A, and there are two balanced and two single-ended outputs. Although the KPS 20i is an integrated CD player, the user can connect it to other digital sources, as well as to other digital converters or tape units. This makes it more of a digital control centre than a CD play-

er, and if you opt for the KPS-20i/L variant, it becomes a control amp too. Overkill is cool.

Although the Krell Playback System (KPS — geddit?) is very well isolated from its surroundings, it seemed to perform best on a Mana table. I also felt that it benefited from a healthy warm-up. It's good to see that even the most

expensive kit needs to follow the basics.

The KPS 20i is seriously forthright, edge-of-the-seat stuff. If you like to be seduced by soft-sounding mellow music then skip the Krell. Place this in a peaky system, or partner it with brittle-sounding cables, and the Krell would soon push the sound into brightness. Back off the system-starkness a little and you get the thoroughly incisive sound quality that keeps Krell at the top of the audio tree.

A few months back, I was knocked out by the sheer depth to the bass of the Mark Levinson *No 36/37*, as well as by its control and solidity. The Krell has the same outstanding bass performance, yet it is also very tight and tuneful. Normally you either get deep bass or tuneful bass — so the two together almost justify the £10k price tag on their own.

There's that price tag again. Whatever you do, don't let it put you off playing non-audiophile records. That deep yet rhythmic bottom end makes the Krell as impressive with my old Bob Marley, Mad Professor and Dub Syndicate discs, as it would be with the Swedish jazz ukulele and nose-flute ensemble.

Deep bass will underpin the music regardless of the amp and speakers being used. However, unless you are playing a truly full-range system, deep bass

alone (even if it is the best I've heard from the format) will not justify the price of the KPS 20i.

Fortunately, there is a superb midrange, too. Play a vocal track — any vocal — on the Krell, and you'll discover what influences the microphone has on the vocal, as well as just how much reverb is added to a recording. Partnered with top-flight equipment, the Krell will let you hear into the recording studio with near-absolute accuracy. As you can imagine, such clarity hangs heavy with poor-quality recordings; yet even here, the Krell does not render the sound unlistenable. It just makes you aware of some of the more obvious faults of less than first-rate studio technique.

Since CD began to replace vinyl, pundits have been secretly cursing because the differences between mid-price and high-end CD players were not as great as they were with LP. Only a handful of exceptions have broken this rule and the new Krell CD player is among them. The KPS 20i is just the sort of CD player the high end has been waiting for. It is the best CD player I've heard to date by quite a margin, and it is the best justification for a life of crime that I've seen in hi-fi for quite a while. ▲

**A small house in Hull or a CD player from Krell? The choice is yours...**



# Help!

IS YOUR SYSTEM CAUSING SEVERE DEPRESSION? IF IT IS, OUR PANEL OF HIGHLY-TRAINED HI-FI SAMARITANS CAN HELP

## Query of the month

### Desperately seeking coherence

My system — Meridian 200 CD player with Trichord Clock mod, Deltec Little Bit DAC, Cyrus III amplifier and Mission 753 speakers — sounds well-defined, but is also shut-in and brittle at times, lacks depth, and the treble can be thin.

Would adding a Cyrus Power Amp just accentuate the sonic characteristics I wish to change? Or would it bring me closer to the coherent sound I seek? I have a budget of £800.

Antony Davidge, via the Internet

*Before spending big money, consider adding the PSX-R power supply to your Cyrus III. It makes a meaningful contribution to the sound of the amplifier. And it won't be a redundant purchase: you can still add a Cyrus power amplifier later and even another PSX-R to enhance its performance.*

*The increased midband resolution that comes from adding a PSX-R to the Cyrus III improves stereo imagery. However, you might need to experiment with speaker positioning to achieve the results you seek. Great image depth isn't always the strongest feature of speakers placed close to the wall.*

**A perfect couple: Cyrus III and the PSX-R power supply.**

### Buckling under the strain

I have a Sony CDP-313 CD player with which I'm extremely happy. The player has the ability to attenuate its line output, which has proved essential because it can clip the input stage of my old A&R A60 amplifier.

Is there any way to make the player store the attenuated setting (-4dB) so that I don't have to reset it every time I turn the

player on? Or could I buy a cable with this amount of attenuation built in? Needless to say, funds won't permit an expensive solution.

Andrew Whitehouse, via CompuServe.

*Unfortunately, the CDP-313 can't store that particular setting. You should instead return your amplifier to Arcam who will, for the princely sum of*

*£35 plus VAT, modify it to accommodate your CD player. For your information, Arcam tells me that your CD player isn't clipping the input stage because the first thing the signal sees is the volume control. Given the age of that device, it's likely that it's worn and buckling under the strain of all those enervated Volts flying out of your CD player.*

### Set the controls to affinity

I am about to purchase a Denon PMA350II amp to replace an old Kenwood model, and would like bookshelf speakers to replace a pair of Castle Trents. I am looking for extra bass while retaining as much midband and top as possible. I notice from an earlier issue that the PMA350II is matched to Tannoy 636 and 633 speakers. Does this mean that they are well matched to the amp, and would like the sound that I'm after?

Noel Matthews, Queensland, Australia

*Well matched yes, but there is no special affinity between Denon amps and Tannoy speakers. It could even be argued that the ideal amplifier for the Tannoy 633 and 636 (neither bookshelf designs, by the way) is a little more physical sounding than the crisp, refined Denon.*

*Nevertheless, another Tannoy model, the 632, which is a bookshelf design, probably has just the mix of qualities you are after.*

### Do you want to fly?

Before I buy an unswitched wall socket, are there any other specific considerations to take into account, such as surge protection? Or will an ordinary MK socket be suitable?

Mark Hooer, via the Internet

*You remember the old expression about how if God had wanted us to fly, He would have fitted us with wings? Well the same goes for amplifiers. If amplifiers benefited from surge protection, it would be fitted on the production line. My experience, which is wide but not, I stress, exhaustive, suggests that surge protectors and other mains conditioners at best make little difference, but more often just flatten and shrink the sound. Advice: don't. Next?*

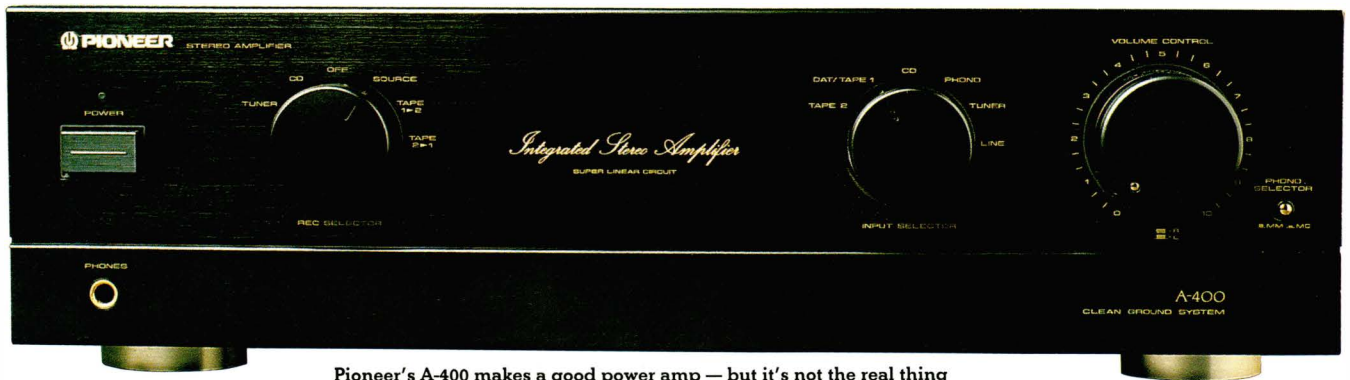
### Amplified improvements

I suspect that my Meridian 500/563 could do with a better amplifier than the Pioneer A-400 I'm currently using to feed my Mission 751 speakers. I could, of course, have the amplifier GTE'd for the moment and add a good pre-amp at a later date. I don't wish to change my speakers as they're ideal for my room, although I would consider adding a subwoofer.

Stuart, no address given

*Subwoofers in hi-fi systems cannot yet be recommended as a matter of course. Those that are musically sympathetic are few and far between, and invariably they are expensive. You would be better off buying another pair of speakers with greater LF extension.*

*I would advise against using the Pioneer A-400 as a power amplifier. If you really want a power amplifier, buy a power amplifier. For the best results*



Pioneer's A-400 makes a good power amp — but it's not the real thing

you should choose a matching pre and power amp from the same manufacturer.

This, of course, isn't a cheap solution in the short term, so you might want to look at a high quality integrated that was designed with later conversion to a preamplifier in mind. The Arcam Delta 290 and Audiolab 8000A, both of which I've mentioned more than once this month, provide this sort of flexibility.

They can also be configured for bi-amplification with the addition of a matched power amplifier. That would improve the low-end performance of your 751s.

#### And how

I was satisfied with my system — Marantz PM44SE amp, Sony CDP-597 CD player, Yamaha KX-580 cassette deck and Mission 731 speakers — until I heard a Linn system, which refreshed my thirst for quality hi-fi. I now have a £500 budget to liven up my mixed CD collection in a small size bedroom. But how?

B Reed, Kent

Your experience exactly mirrors my own with Linn systems back in the '70s. I cannot, in all honesty, say that I have felt the same in recent years. Be this as it may, I see no easy way of changing to a Linn system on £500. One course of action would be to a change to Tannoy 633 speakers, which will provide a measure of the muscularity that many Linn systems provide, though you may then find that you need a more forceful amplifier than the PM44SE.

#### Plan 9...

With £1,500 — £2,000 to

spend, I would like to upgrade my Marantz CD63, Denon PMA480R and Tannoy 605 system. Room dimensions are 5x3x2m and my music tastes are wide ranging. Should I start with the amp? I rather fancy the Mission Cyrus III/PSX-R. Chimera X80 and Alchemist Forsetti. Or should I start with the speakers?

Nick, Japan Adat, Singapore

Given the three very different styles of amplification named above, methinks you don't really have a game plan. The PMA-480R was a little less than the bee's knees, sacrificing a certain something for remote control, and many amps will provide a worthwhile improvement. The

Mission Cyrus III, with or without the PSX-R power supply, would represent a quantum leap in the right direction. Tackle speakers next.

#### How far should I go?

My current system consists of a Marantz CD63/Black Box, Arcam Delta 290 amp, Mission 733 speakers with Cable Talk Monitor 2 interconnects and Cable Talk 3 speaker cables.

I am happy with the sound, but would like to upgrade the CD player. With around £1,000 to spend, I have short-listed the Arcam Delta 270, Cyrus DAD7, Meridian 506 or Naim CD3. Or should I go one step further, for example the Meridian 508 or Arcam D250/BB50?

Peter Wright, Tyne & Wear

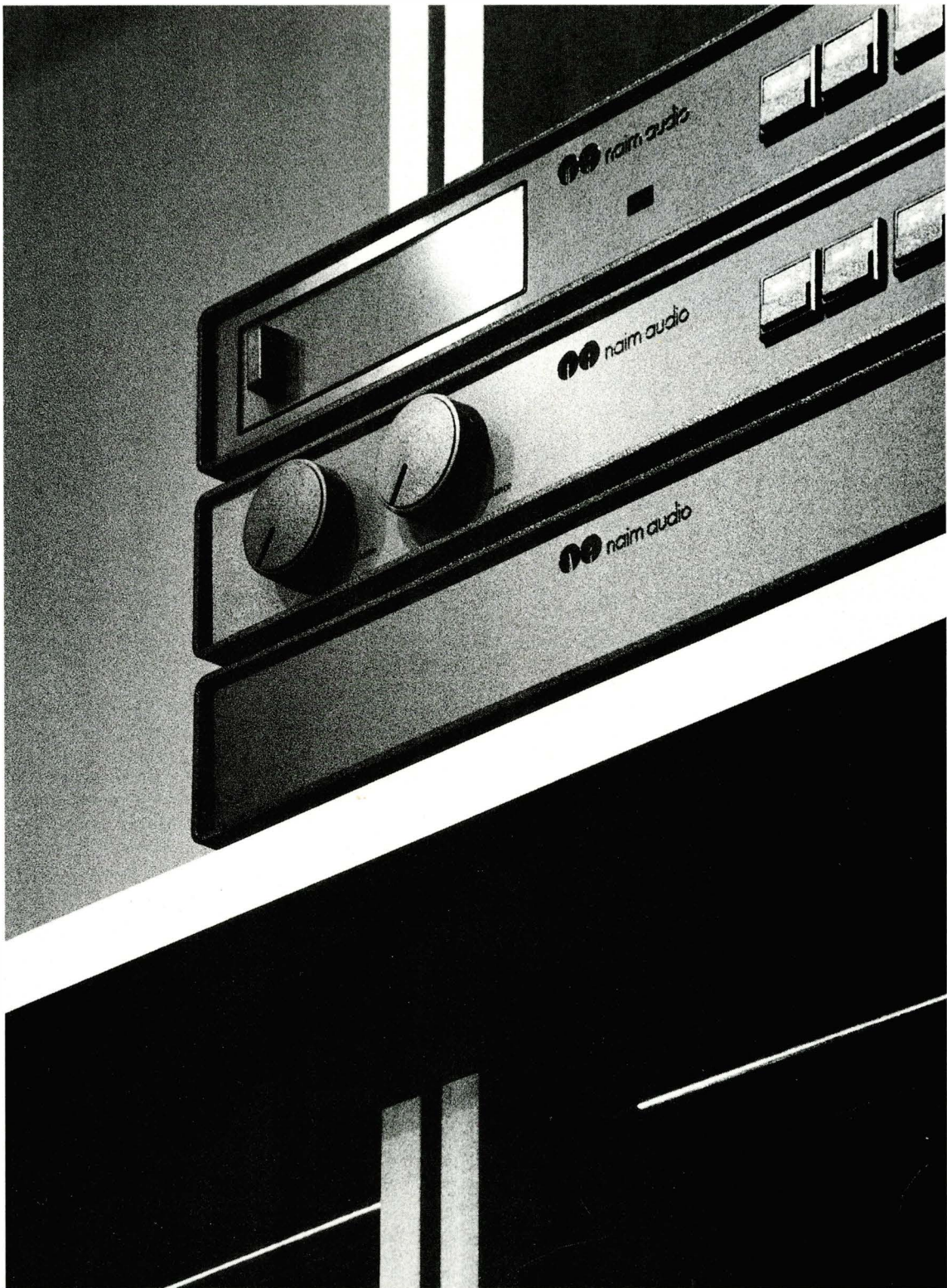
You haven't said what aspect of system performance you aim to improve. Are you finding that the sound fails to break free of the hardware, or that the music becomes increasingly frantic and congested as the volume is increased, and increases in complexity? If so, it is not the CD player that is culpable, but the loudspeakers.

The Mission 733 is a fine value big box, and works well with less demanding material at moderate volume levels, but it is not good enough to stretch the capabilities of the rest of your system.

With £1,000 to spend, I would strongly consider Mission's own 753 (£700), a much more capable floor stander, or the B&W Matrix 805V (£995), a tremendously



Mission 731 was great until Mr Reed heard a Linn system.



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## THE FRONT END

*refined large bookshelf design that concedes little in the bass, even to the larger Mission.*

### Communicating with Russians

I want to buy a CD player and amplifier to match my Russian-made Electronics loudspeakers (75W, 8 Ohm impedance, 94dB sensitivity).

From what I've read the best buys would be a Marantz CD-63 CD player with an Audio Alchemy DITB and Kontak Link 505 digital interconnect. But aren't the CD-72 and CD-72SE better than the CD-63? And what about other interconnects?

Amplifiers I'm considering include the Yamaha AX-1070, Denon PMA-1315, Kenwood KAV8500/7700 and the Technics SU-A900. Any better suggestions in this price range? *H Hovannisian, The Netherlands*

*Rather than spend over £500 mixing-and-matching budget components I'd suggest that you buy a high quality, one-box player such as the Arcam Alpha 6 or Micromega Stage One.*

*I don't know anything about your speakers but I doubt that you'll go far wrong matching them with a Technics SU-A900, Arcam Delta 290, Audiolab 8000A or Mission Cyrus III: just pick whichever proves the most communicative and sounds most appealing.*

In need of transparency? In need of a decent CD player!

### Mission mismatch

My system consists of a Pink Triangle Export turntable with Rega RB300 arm and an Ortofon Quartz cartridge, Rotel RCD-965BX CD player, Rotel RB/RC-960BX amplifiers and Tannoy 611 speakers.

What do you think about my plan to upgrade to an NVA preamplifier and A60 power amplifier with a separate phono stage? I'm also thinking about Mission 753 speakers.

*Carl Bryan, Nottinghamshire*

*NVA amplifiers wouldn't be my first choice to go with Mission 753s. I think you'd find the combination rather forward and aggressive. I'd listen to the Exposure XVII/XVIII combination, which mixes a fast, insightful presentation with a substantial, full-bodied tonality that will suit both the Tannoy 611s and the Mission 753s.*

*You won't need an out-board phono stage because those in Exposure's preamplifiers are well above average — the designer is a long-standing vinyl fan. I would also audition the Heybrook Signature*

*prepowers.*

*They're classy designs that mix power and panache very successfully, which I find is useful for exploiting the Tannoys' qualities.*

### Depth charge

I have a Marantz CD63SE CD player, Audiolab 8000T tuner, Audiolab pre-power combo 8000 C/P, Cable Talk Monitor interconnects and TDL RTL2 speakers.

The sound suffers from a grainy, grubby midband and an overall hollowness. I'm replacing the speakers and CD player, and hope to inject the system with air, transparency and a dose of deep, deep soundstaging. Any suggestions on a £1,500 budget?

*Tom MacLenman, Bois-Colombes, France*

*The RTLs will have to go; and the Marantz CD player, though excellent value, really belongs in a slightly simpler system than the one you're trying to build. Micromega, widely available in France, can provide an excellent replacement in the Stage 2*

Exposure pre/power amps should liven up a pair of Mission 753s.



(£700, though you can start with the £500 Stage 1 and upgrade later). To provide the kind of holographic imagery you're seeking, think in terms of improved speakers such as the Spendor SP3/1 (£795) or Rogers Studio 5 (£699). You could do worse than moving up to some more refined cables at the same time.

### Gift horse overloaded

My system consists of a Technics SL-PS620A CD player, RS-BX646 cassette deck, an Akai Nicam VCR, KEF Reference 102/2 speakers and a Tandberg TR2075 receiver that my father gave me.

I was using an Arcam Alpha 3 amplifier and this didn't have the power or the presence of the Tandberg. The problem is that the Tandberg doesn't have enough inputs and its tape input doesn't seem to match my recorder. Is there any way round this problem?

I wondered about attaching a separate preamplifier to the Tandberg, as it has both pre-out and power-in sockets. However, when I connected the preamp stage of an Arcam Delta 290 it seemed to overload the Tandberg's power stage.

*Ashley Canning, Surrey*

*You've looked this gift horse in the inputs and discovered that it's really not suitable for your system. Don't try cobbling together an arrangement to use it: buy a new amplifier that has sufficient connections and power for your requirements.*

*The KEFs demand a reasonably powerful amplifier that will drive 4Ohm loads, so I'd suggest an Audiolab 8000A as a starting point for your search. The problem is that a better amplifier will focus attention*

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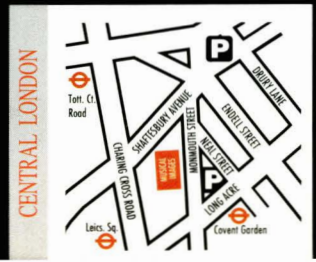
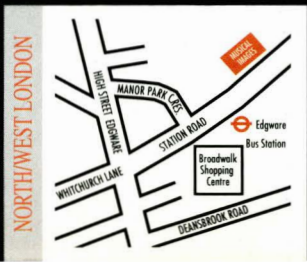
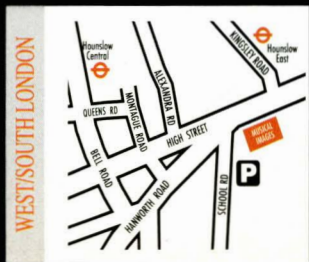
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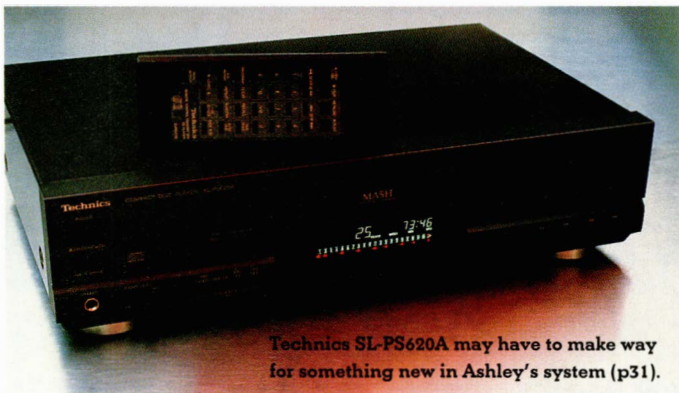
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Technics SL-PS620A may have to make way for something new in Ashley's system (p31).

on your CD player, which will find itself out of its depth.

Without wishing to add to your difficulties, I'd say that as well as changing your amplifier you also need to think about bringing your system into balance. In reality this means improving your CD player or downgrading your speakers.

#### The feeling has gone

I purchased a Marantz CD-63 that suffered a transport failure. My dealer replaced it without question for a brand new player, but the replacement didn't sound as good as the original: it had almost no bass and an unpleasant midrange. After a week I couldn't take any more and contacted Marantz. They suggested loading a disc and playing it on repeat for two or three days. This worked wonders: the player gained bass and the midrange lost its edge.

However, this machine still doesn't have the same "feel" as the previous one. It has the same marvellous soundstage and detail, but seems forward and hard on discs that sounded okay before. I substituted an old Technics player and this, while lacking detail, was much easier to listen to.

HJ Braids, Essex

There are two issues here: whether the CD-63 you currently have is as it should be, and whether your first player was other than it should be but more to your liking. All I can suggest is that you compare your current machine with a well run-in demonstrator at your dealer's showroom. No two examples of any player will sound absolutely identical but their characters should certainly be more similar than your comments suggest.

#### Yearning

My system consists of a Linn Karik CD player, Naim NAC 72 preamp, NAP 180 power amp, HI-CAP power supply and SBL loudspeakers.

I find this system very harsh and yearn for a more mellow sound. What would you suggest I do to achieve this?

Guy Ruddle, IOW

The problem lies with your CD player, which is not well suited to the system. If you can afford a replacement try and hear some of the following: Trichord Genesis, AVI S2000, Marantz CD-17 or a Meridian 506. All four of these are pretty relaxed compared to a Linn or Naim CD player.



Marantz's CD-63 lacks the feel of an easy listening Technics.

## DEALER DECISIONS

A trio of terpsichorean traders tussle with a teaser



Soundcraft recommends Karik!

#### The Query

I am currently sourcing a CD-based system costing around £3,000. I listen to soul and soft rock and I have a really small room of 3x3.5m. I have shortlisted the Meridian 506 CD player, the Copland CSA 14 amp and either the Rogers LS3/5a+AB1 or Totem Model 1, but I haven't been able to audition either of these models yet.

Mark Tay, via the Internet

#### Audio Council

The shortlist you have put together may be very difficult to demonstrate in just one dealer. If you can, you should audition the your choice of CD and amp against good alternatives from, for example, Naim and Linn.

Check out a high performance CD at the £1,000 point, like the Naim CD3, Linn Mimik and the Micromega Stage 3/6. With this — and the room size — in mind, we would recommend auditioning high-performance small speakers, like the Shahinian Super Elf.

If out-and-out musical enjoyment is your top priority, try dedicating the majority of the budget to the front end, like the Naim CD2, with a good integrated or entry-level pre/power amp from Naim, Rega or Linn and super mini speakers — for example Linn Tukans, System 905s or Rega Kytes.

Larry Ogden, Audio Counsel, Cheadle.

#### Soundcraft

First choose the right dealer — no wobbly walls of loudspeakers or those horrible switching boxes. A good dealer will allow you plenty of time to decide and not pressure you.

The Naim CD2 or Linn Karik CD players are both worth considering. Include the Naim Nait 3 or Linn Majik amplifier and the average set of speakers will start to move impressively. Talking about speakers, try the Musical Technology Harrier floorstanders. If you want bookshelf speakers, grab a listen to the Epos ES11. Finally, get your dealer to help set up your chosen system and position the speakers.

Geoff Matthews, Soundcraft, Ashford, Kent.

#### Phase 3 Hi-Fi

Despite describing your tastes and your room, recommendations without auditions is a recipe for disaster. We can point out some products that should suit you, but they are little more than starting points to finding a good system.

Try the Meridian 506 you mention, or possibly the new Marantz CD-17 or the Thorens TCD-2000 — all have a laid-back manner. The Densen DM-10 would be about the only integrated amp we would suggest. We would rather recommend a pre/power combination, such as the Audiolab 8000C/8000P, the John Shearne Phase 2/Phase 3, or the Meridian 501/555.

If you decide to stick to small box speakers, you need a quality model like the Harbeth LS5/12a. Otherwise, floorstanding speakers like the new Castle Harlech or the Epos ES22 might be better, although the latter may be a bit too up-front for your tastes.

Gerry Heeley, Phase 3 Hi-Fi, Worthing, W.Sussex.

# The Jimmy Hughes Experience

Why take one subwoofer into the listening room when two will give you the solution to one of hi-fi's most elusive problems? Jimmy Hughes explains.

**I**n last month's Sessions, I quietly raved about REL's *Q-Bass* subwoofer, which offers controlled, quality bass for a highly competitive £350. Its late arrival meant I was unable to spend as much time listening and comparing as I would have liked, before committing thoughts to paper. Now I've had a month or so to listen, and I'm fully convinced of its worth.

*Q-Bass* sounds quite different to the bigger and costlier REL subs like *Studio*, *Stentor* or *Stadium II*. Because it is smaller, and a sealed box rather than a ported enclosure, *Q-Bass* produces tighter, firmer, and less voluminous bass than its bigger brothers. It doesn't go as deep, yet despite limitations in some ways I actually prefer it to *Stadium II* from a musical point of view.

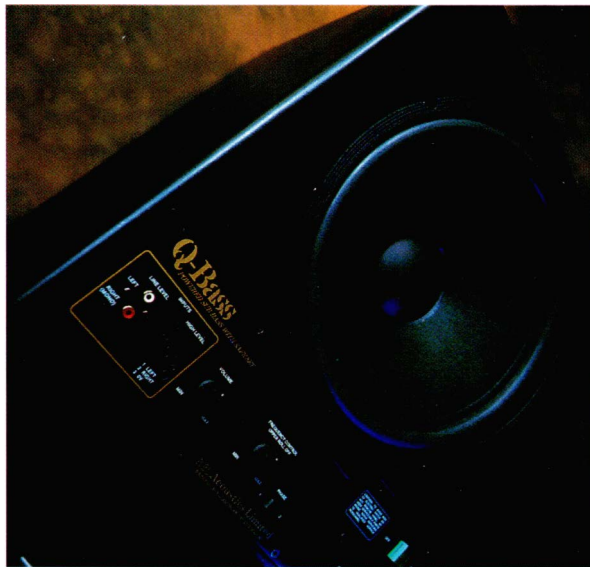
Speaking personally, I'm not overly worried about the reproduction of ultra-deep bass for its own sake. Okay, it's great once in a while to put on certain records and shake the windows! But the novelty soon wears off, and a good sub does so much more than just add extra grunt to heavy climaxes.

I like the gain in naturalness and realism, even on music that does not contain deep, powerful bass. It's the added presence the sub brings to a solo violin or, say, a guitar; the way it adds depth and solidity to voices and instruments; the extra subtlety and delicacy it imparts to recordings that would otherwise sound bright.

If you believe a good sub will only benefit heavy bass-drum strokes or deep organ pedals, think again. The effects are more far-reaching than that, and influence aspects of the sound that seemingly have very little to do with infra bass. Adding a sub changes the perceived treble and midrange just as much as the bass.

Play *Q-Bass* solo on massed violins and (unless the frequency control is set to maximum), you'll hardly hear a sound. Yet once the main speakers are switched back on, the extra depth and space added are very tangible. There's a richness and ease of reproduction that sounds natural and right.

*Q-Bass*, like other REL subs, is a mono unit that takes a stereo output from your amp and reproduces both channels through a single speaker. Don't worry about mono bass diluting left/right



One good, two incredible. That's Q-bass magic.

width: since the ear's ability to detect direction at low frequencies is quite poor, the problem hardly arises.

Yet communing stereo low frequencies to mono has effects that go beyond the possible reduction of left/right positional accuracy. Play a stereo source in mono and some cancellation of anti-phase signals (which give a sense of depth and ambience to the music) occurs. This is not always a bad thing; it can result in cleaner, more tightly focused bass. But mono bass will lead to cancellation of information on certain recordings.

Because of this, I've always wanted to try two REL subs in stereo. So a second *Q-Bass* was kindly supplied by distributors Harman Audio. As I believe there are strong advantages in a central bass box, I did not position the subs too far apart. The reason for using two subs was not left/right separation, but rather an attempt to reproduce spatial information, and the two subs worked better than I dared hope. The bass itself seemed deeper and more voluminous, but the main advantage appeared to lie in the midrange/treble. The extra delicacy and tonal sweetness seemed to make the music more expressive and subtle, and each recording sounded more like real music. A wider range of tone colours and dynamic shadings was also noticeable. Paradoxically, the music seemed to be

both subtler and more assertive at the same time. The quiet passages were more solidly focused and delicate, and climaxes came across in a more fulsome and weighty way.

In my view, CD invariably lacks the fine-grained treble delicacy of a good LP, and the problem seems to lie with the top-end, which lacks a certain refinement. Remarkably, the two *Q-Bass* subs imparted a sweetness to the treble that made CD sound much closer to analogue. How strange if the solution to such an elusive problem should lie in an apparently unrelated area!

Another bizarre result was the way two *Q-Bass* subs 'placed' the harpsichord continuo in baroque orchestral music. Instead of a vague background tinkling, the instrument now had a body and presence that allowed me to hear its rich overtones. The two subs somehow influence and enhance the reproduction of subtle pitch changes so that you could hear more of the music and its actual performance.

Yet solo, *Q-Bass* is not that good at bass pitch definition—the bigger REL subs are better, perhaps because they work up to a higher frequency. It's only when you've got the whole system up and running that *Q-Bass* magic occurs!

It's hard to explain in words, and (having demonstrated the effect to friends) not everyone picks it up immediately. Comparing *Stadium II* against the two *Q-Bass* subs, some plumped for the bigger unit because it went a shade deeper and sounded more impressive. However, when you listen to the music (rather than the sound of the music), the superiority of *Q-Bass* subs used in pairs is unmistakable.

Adjustment of volume and frequency controls on each *Q-Bass* is fairly tricky. I settled for volume at 11 o'clock and frequency at one o'clock with my efficient Impulse *H-1s*, but a lower volume setting will probably be necessary with less sensitive speakers. The effect is lost, by the way, if controls are set for a fat overblown 'home theatre' bass.

Of course you don't have to buy two *Q-Bass* subs at once. My advice would be to try one, see how you go, then add a second. If it works in your system as it's worked in mine, you won't be disappointed—promise!

See *Q-Bass* in Paul Messenger's group subwoofer test on page 46!

## HINTS & TIPS: TURNTABLE SET-UP BY JIMMY HUGHES

Since the most fundamental function of a turntable is to revolve at the correct speed without audible pitch variation, it's vital that the drive from motor to platter is good. The vast majority of modern turntables are belt driven, so the driving surfaces and belt need to be clean and in good condition. Over long periods of time, deposits of rubber may build up on the motor spindle and turntable sub platter, causing speed irregularities and perhaps premature belt wear. Cleaning these off using a light solvent (isopropyl alcohol) is obviously sensible, but it's not always a good idea to leave driving surfaces and belt squeaky clean — especially where an AC synchronous motor is used. This is because such motors tend to 'cog' between the poles; therefore a light treatment of furniture wax (preferably silicone free) on belt and drive pulley/sub-platter can be beneficial since it introduces a degree of slip that results in a smoother transmission. Where a flat belt is used it's vital that it sits on the motor pulley without riding up or down. Much depends on the individual turntable and whether or not the motor is adjustable for azimuth, but having the drive belt scraping either the top or bottom of the motor pulley is clearly not good. Apart from the likely adverse effect on sound reproduction, it can mean the belt unships itself every time the deck is switched on. If the motor itself cannot be reset, it may be the sub-platter/platter that's out of kilter in relation to the motor — a possibility with turntables that have a sprung suspension. So check that the plinth is level, then ensure that the platter sits true.

The centre bearing of the platter is perhaps the most important part of a turntable, and it may be worth checking to ensure that sufficient oil is present, just in case the shaft is running dry. Some decks (such as the Linn *Sondek*) have PTFE bushes at the top and bottom of the bearing shaft. They can take quite a large amount of oil, which should ensure lifetime lubrication. Other decks, like the Rega *Planars*, have a brass bearing housing with flush walls, that take only a drop or two of oil to be fully lubricated. In these cases, it may not be a good idea to remove the centre bearing unless you're certain the shaft could be running dry. The *Planar* bearing has tight engineering tolerances, and it's actually quite difficult to get it back in again once removed, because any trapped air has so little space to escape!

If you find that your turntable bearing is running dry, contact the maker for advice on which oil to use. Some design their bearing for a lubricant with very thin consistency, while others go for something much thicker, like engine oil. Certain turntables, like the Oracle *Delphi*, have bearings designed to run more or less dry. Even so, a light coating of oil on the bearing shaft and ball tip will prove beneficial.

With the motor and platter running correctly, it's time to look at the turntable's suspension. If it's a sprung-suspended sub-chassis type (such as Voyd, Linn, PT, Alphason and Thorens), adjusting and levelling the springs is

important. I used to think that it was a good thing to adjust the springs so that you got a free and unimpeded straight-up-and-down 'bounce' when the platter was pressed down. However, having a very free floating suspension can influence the motor, which in effect is trying to 'drive' the stylus — which again means that the two aren't tightly coupled. It's possible to address this problem by using flat leaf springs (Thorens), or by using the stiffness of the arm cable to impede lateral movement. This is why the arm cable, dressing and tight clamping before exiting from the plinth is so important on turntables like the *Sondek*; it helps reduce the tendency for the sub-platter to rotate around its central axis. On turntables like the Roksan *Xerxes* this problem doesn't arise because the 'suspension' is made from rubber and thus gives a much firmer, less compliant coupling. Unfortunately, having less isolation, it's also far more sensitive to structure-borne vibration! As so often with turntable design, you're between the devil and the deep blue sea. Improvements made in one area often cause problems in another...

If your suspended sub-chassis deck refuses to bounce up and down with a clean vertical movement, but judders from side to side, you might need a new set of springs. However, it can also mean that the sub-chassis isn't level, or (in the case of decks like the Linn *Sondek*) that the bolts holding the springs are eccentric. With the *Sondek* it can sometimes be difficult to get a nice, even bounce where a heavy tonearm is in use. Because the rear right spring becomes very compressed to obtain level adjustment of the floating sub-chassis, its spring rate alters in relation to its two partners. Ironically, Linn's own *Ittok* and *Ekos* are more problematic in this respect than the lighter *LVX* and *Akito* arms.

It's been known for a long while that what your turntable sits on can make a big difference to the way it sounds. A lightweight support stand will help reduce the effects of any structure-borne energy, such as footfall. However, the deck may actually sound better on one of the heavier stands that offers less compliance and decoupling. With decks like the Rega *Planar* and Roksan models, which have limited suspension isolation, this can lead to a difficult choice between isolation but a slightly less firm sound, or superior sound with a tendency to shudder every time someone walks past. Turntable adjustment cannot be assessed without consideration being given to the tonearm — its dedicated partner in crime. But that'll have to wait till next month as we've run out of space...

SME's heavyweight Model 30 takes no prisoners.





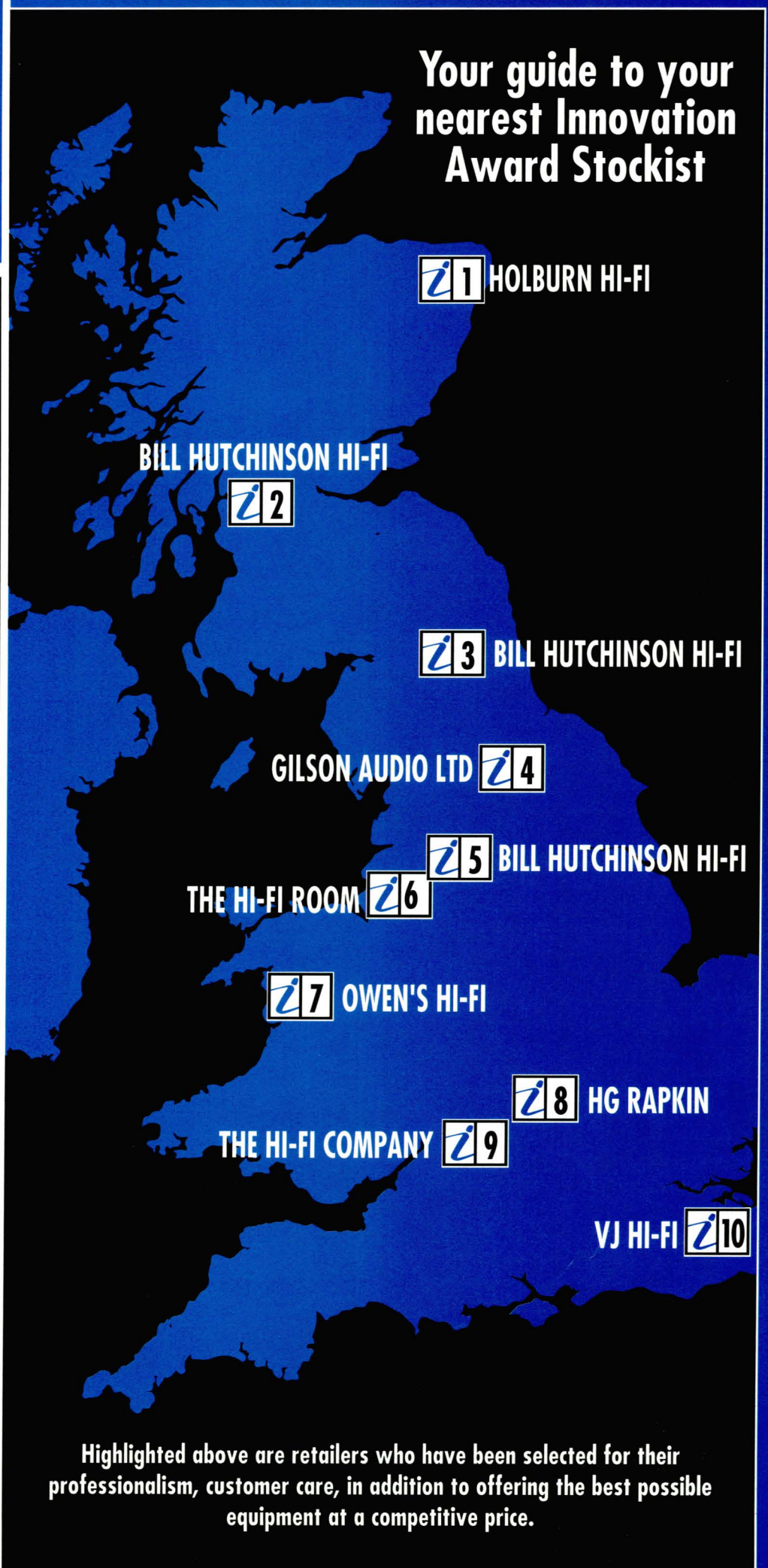
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# Speaking plainly

**M**odern loudspeakers date back to the early days of the telegraph and telephone, when headphones and the telephone earphone were the principal devices used to make electrical signals audible. At the turn of the century, the new technology of radio naturally adopted headphones and earphones as well, and when radio became widespread as an entertainment medium, headphones found their way into the home. Indeed, early illustrations of the period show families gathered around the radio receiver with wires trailing to individual headsets. Something to project sound into the room was obviously needed to do away with all that cabling. So some bright spark connected a headphone earpiece to a horn to amplify the sound, in much the same way that horn gramophones amplified the sound from the stylus. The loud-speaking headphone was born.

Back then only small signal powers were available—mere milliWatts, thousandths of a watt or less. To make the most of these, the

Who'd have guessed there was so much in a speaker? **Dave Berriman** explains all about the boxes that make bass and treble happen.

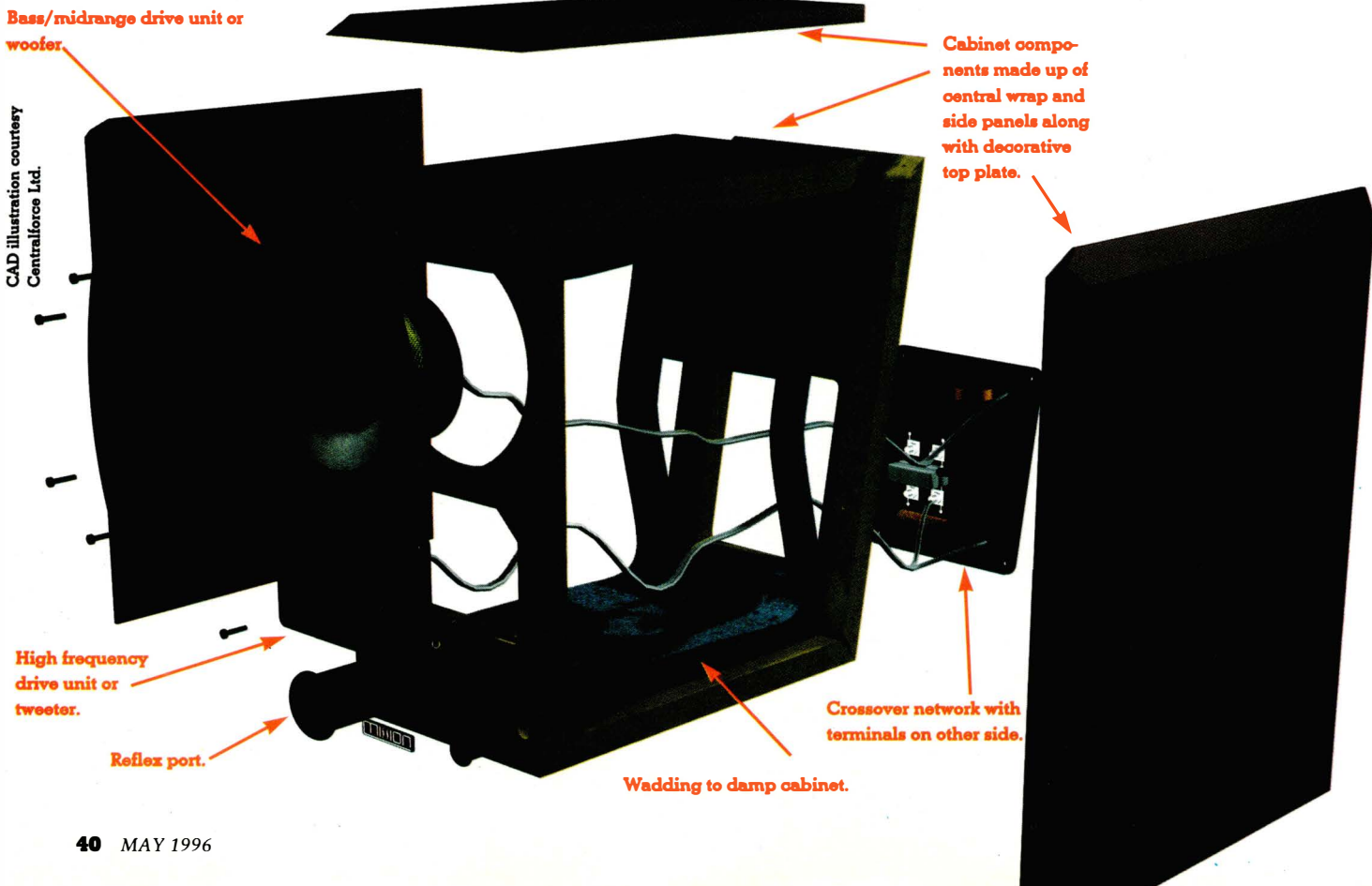
headphone mechanism was hooked up to an area of paper, card or treated silk, to move a large volume of air than the normal small metal disc. All manner of shapes emerged, including pleated discs and cylinders, but the cone shape is the stiffest way to form a flat sheet of material into a diaphragm, and so the cone loudspeaker evolved. Sometimes the cone was simply suspended on a frame, looking like a strange kind of table lamp. In other instances the diaphragm was housed in a furniture-style cabinet.

The crude moving-iron mechanism headphone suffered quite high levels of sound dis-

tortion by today's standards, due to the non-linear attraction between magnetic materials. If you've ever tried to put two magnets together gradually, you will have found that they overcome all your efforts to control them, and simply fly together, because the force that operates between them follows an inverse square law. For every halving of distance, the pulling force increases four fold.

### Waiting for your coil

Clearly, a more linear driving system was needed—enter the moving coil. Invented by Briton Oliver Lodge in 1898, the moving coil





## What's in a speaker?

Nowadays, the cabinet is not merely a piece of furniture, but in high-quality loudspeakers it is designed to match the characteristics of the other parts — particularly the drive units themselves. Cabinet design involves not only a form of bass loading, as explained below, but also an appreciation of subtleties such as cabinet vibration. Unwanted vibrations, which add unnatural colorations to the speaker's sound, can be tempered by internal bracing and/or panel damping. Alternatively, high-tech lightweight but rigid materials are used — all aiming to ensure a purer sound. A good test of a cabinet is to rap your knuckles on it. A dull thud means 'panel talk' has been tamed, but a hollow ring tells its own story. Additionally, acoustic wadding or foam is usually distributed strategically inside the cabinet to absorb undesirable air resonances, which, like cabinet vibrations, can colour the sound.



Courtesy of Jamo (UK) Ltd

### Bass loading methods

#### Open Baffle

Early loudspeakers often had no cabinet at all. The drive unit would simply be mounted in a flat sheet of board. However, the trouble with having no cabinet at all is that when the cone moves forward, pushing the air with it, some of the molecules it has moved simply sneak around to the back of the cone, which just sucks them in. The frontal pressure and rear suction effectively cancel (in techno-speak, the two sound waves are out of phase).

The net result is that when the cone movement is slow, in other words at low frequencies where each sound-wave is long, there is very little sound output. In effect, the sounds from front and rear are in anti-phase, and cancel out. At high frequencies, due to the shorter length of sound waves, they do not cancel anywhere nearly so completely, so they are not affected quite so badly.

To summarise: all this air movement causes a lack of sound output below a certain frequency, and a few variations in sound output in the bargain.

However, if you make the sound travel further from the front of the diaphragm to the rear, then the lowest frequency of operation is pushed lower, extending the bass. In practice this means enlarging the mounting board, though for effective low frequencies the baffle needs to be pretty large. For example, Paul Messenger has a pair of Tannoy drive units bolted into his listening-room wall. ▶▶



Look at the size of that voice coil.

of fine wire is bathed in a relatively constant magnetic force (flux) from a ring-shaped magnetic outer pole. This is placed around a cylindrical central pole, with the circular moving coil in-between. For years this device was a scientific curiosity, but in the twenties two Americans, Messrs Rice and Kellogg, coupled a moving coil to a cone diaphragm. Paul Voigt followed with his own versions shortly after, and the modern moving-coil loudspeaker drive unit was invented.

As a breed, moving coils generally required greater levels of power to make sounds; in essence, they were less sensitive than moving iron speakers. However, by this time valve amplifiers were becoming more commonplace, with Rice and Kellogg even developing a powerful one Watt amp to drive their new loudspeaker, which was magnetised using a bulky mains-powered electro-magnet. The whole thing was housed with its amplifier and magnetising power supply, in a large cabinet. The sound quality achieved by this loudspeaker (and Voigt's) was far in advance of anything that went before. They were

expensive items to build, but eventually the technology filtered down into every valve radio set sold.

Nowadays, magnets are permanent, and do not need expensive, cumbersome mains powering. The basic design concept was so successful that now-

days moving-coil speakers are found in all types of sound reproducing equipment, from humble transistor radios to the very finest and most expensive hi-fi, and studio monitor loudspeakers.

### Making waves

Though the moving coil is by far the most common method of reproducing sound, there are other types of loudspeaker including ribbon, electrostatic and ionic. Electrostatic loudspeakers work on an entirely different principle to moving coils. The latter rely on the interaction between two magnetic fields: a constant field from the magnet, and a field from the moving coil that fluctuates due to electric current from the amplifier. Electrostatic loudspeakers



## Five loudspeaker myths exploded

### 1 The more Watts the better.

Time and time again, people are heard to ask of a speaker: "How many Watts is it?" as if this were some measure of quality. Sure, it's good to know a loudspeaker will handle a certain level of power, but unless you need a PA system to fill a large hall, stratospheric power handling is simply not required. Speaker sensitivity is a lot more important. A speaker with 90dB sensitivity and a 50 Watt amplifier will sound as loud as a one with 80dB sensitivity partnering a 500 Watt amplifier!

### 2 The bigger the better

There is a lot of confusion about speaker size and power handling. Some people assume that bigger equals more power, rather like a car engine. However, there is simply no direct connection between the two. Generally, a bigger loudspeaker will have deeper bass and produce more low frequencies more cleanly, but this is a quite separate issue. It is also often the case that big speakers are more sensitive. So paradoxically, it is large loudspeakers that often require less power to drive them than small ones! If they can also handle more power, then they will go even louder still, if needed.

### 3 The more drive units the better

On the face of it this seems obvious. More is better. Well yes, in theory splitting signals three ways should bring improvements, but there are compromises and the extra components can spoil sound quality. Often a good two-way will out-perform a theoretic-

cally 'better' three-way. This has led to the inverse generalisation that three-way speakers don't work. This is plainly also nonsense: there are some very good multi-way speakers about. Just forget the number of drive units and listen to the sound.


### 4 Plastic cones are better

Plastic cones were developed to eliminate the colorations of paper. The first proposal was Bextrene, originally proposed by the BBC in the 1960s; next came polypropylene, which has come into widespread use. Just because a speaker uses polypropylene for its cones does not make it superior automatically. There are many good paper-coned speakers about, but manufacturers are so paranoid they spray the cones to look like plastic. As with three-way loudspeakers, buy with your ears, not your eyes or the specification sheet.

### 5 Metal domes are better than soft domes

This argument runs something like: metal is more rigid, so it behaves more like a theoretically 'perfect piston', so it is better. In some cases metal domes are indeed both rigid and light, operate like pistons and sound good. In other cases the sound is not so good, sometimes because just above the audible range there is a large peak in output due to bell-like 'ringing'. A good soft dome doesn't do this kind of thing, but flexes in a more controlled way within the audible range: theoretically it is less good, perhaps, but in some designs it sounds better, in others worse. Again, it's dangerous to generalise.

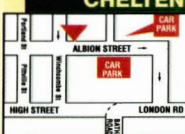
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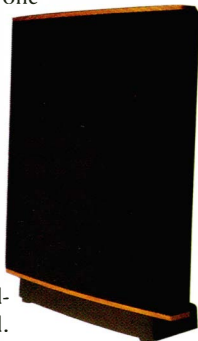
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ers, meanwhile, use the varying attraction caused by electrostatic fields. There is a constant field or fields from a high-voltage power supply, that exerts a steady force on a very thin, light plastic diaphragm, not unlike cling-film.

The amplifier's audio output is stepped up to a higher voltage inside the loudspeaker and this influences the field or fields. As a result, the diaphragm is pulled one way and the other as surely as a hair flies towards a comb on a dry day through electrostatic attraction, producing sound as it moves. The lightness of the diaphragm, and the lack of colorations that plague conventional cone speakers, give electrostatic loudspeakers a special sound. The absence of unwanted sounds from cabinet panels (most electrostatics are open baffle speakers with no cabinet) helps give electrostatics a very non-boxy, natural sound. The drawback is that maximum bass output is limited by how far the diaphragm can move before distortion or damage occur.



Quad's ESL 63: a classic electrostatic.

As for the ribbon, just imagine the coil of a moving-coil speaker opened out and laid onto a flat sheet of thin plastic film. Magnets, on both sides or just one side of the thin film, provide the static magnetic field, while power from the amplifier flowing through the flat 'coil' vibrates the diaphragm. The ribbon is, in a way, the magnetic equivalent of the electrostatic, and there are a few more variations on this theme to be found.

In the ionic speaker, a high voltage creates ultra-light, super-hot plasma that pulsates to create sound. Usually these are horn-loaded and suitable for high-frequencies only. Thanks to its complexity, expense and unpleasant ozone emissions, the ionic speaker has never been a raging success.

**Extending the range**

Those early loudspeakers in radios were single units, handling the whole range of frequencies from bass to treble, low to high frequency, and in general they were not particularly effective at reproducing highs. Radio transmission typically only had a frequency limit of around 9kHz, compared to the upper limit of audibility, which is around 18kHz-20kHz, so requirements were not so stringent as they are today.

With the advent of the LP record, domestic demand for more extended treble led to enthusiasts installing a smaller cone speaker with extended treble performance alongside the existing unit. The smaller drive-unit would draw its signal via a small capacitor that removed low frequencies. Over the years these add-on units became highly specialised drive-units with light dome diaphragms and delicate fine-wire coils. For reasons now forgotten, high-frequency units became known as tweeters and low frequency units became woofers. For loud-

**What's in a speaker? (continued)**



**Reflex**

Reflex loudspeakers are based on an effect known as Helmholtz resonance. Pick up a bottle with a narrow neck and blow across it. If you blow correctly you'll hear a pure sound at one frequency, which is the Helmholtz resonance. This might not seem ideal in a device designed to reproduce an accurate sound, but it can be made to work advantageously, thus. Take a narrow tube (a port to loudspeaker designers) and build it into one panel of a loudspeaker cabinet. The tube is proportioned to take account of the woofer's characteristics, so that when the woofer is driven by an amplifier at the port's Helmholtz resonance, the diaphragm hardly moves at all. In fact, the majority of the sound comes from the port. This reduces distortion, increases power handling and raises the maximum sound levels that can be produced around this frequency. More importantly from a domestic viewpoint, it enables a smaller box to produce deeper bass than a comparably-sized sealed box. The speaker designer can juggle with many parameters to achieve a wide variety of end results, depending on the brief from the manufacturer.



The Coda 7 with its sculpted reflex port.

the reflex port. A variation is the reflex transmission line, which features a cavity behind the driver and a short line, which behaves rather like a wide, long reflex port.

**Infinite Baffle**

The term infinite baffle is a misnomer. The name derives from the notion that if a baffle was to be infinitely large, the front and rear sound waves would never meet and so could not cancel. The Infinite Baffle (IB) achieves this effect by separating front from rear by folding the baffle into a closed cabinet. The penalty is that air inside the box acts like a spring pressing on the back of the drive-unit diaphragm, making its suspension stiffer and thus resonant at a higher frequency. Edgar Vilchur was the first to realise that this 'spring' should be designed as part of the speaker. He used this system to produce loudspeakers with deep, clean bass from loudspeakers that were relatively compact in their day.

**Horn Loading**

The horn can be viewed as a highly specialised baffle that 'couples' the diaphragm to the air more effectively; ie enables the diaphragm to move air more efficiently. The horn helps a diaphragm have more of an effect on a large volume of air. Diaphragm movement is reduced, while sound output is increased over a wide range of frequencies. It's rather like having a very large diaphragm without the weight penalty (which would reduce sound output and sensitivity).



Living Voice's horn of plenty, the Air Partner.

**Transmission Lines**

In transmission-line loading, a long folded pipe is built into the speaker cabinet, often with a taper towards the open end. The theory of a 'pure' transmission line is that the sound wave from the back of the diaphragm travels through enough absorbing material to greatly weaken it by the time it emerges. That way, it cannot subtract from (or add to) the sound reaching the listener from the front of the diaphragm. Real-world transmission lines employ less absorption than this. Sound from the open end has taken so long to travel down the line that it emerges in phase and so boosts the output from the front of the diaphragm (as the cone moves forward pressure from the preceding backwards movement exits the line). One advantage of this form of loading is that, unlike the reflex, reinforcement is spread over a wider frequency range than the narrow Helmholtz resonance of



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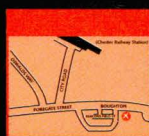
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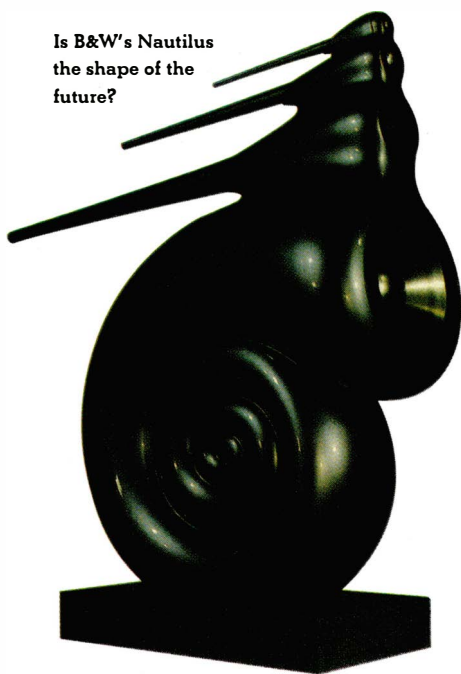
speakers needing to handle frequencies in-between the plateau of treble and bass, a further midrange drive unit was required — these were known affectionately as squawkers.

**The future of loudspeaker design**

There's an old saying that there's nothing new under the sun. Well, though that is a generalisation, there is very little new in speaker design. If there's a way to move air, it has already been proposed or put into practice. However, new technologies make old ideas practicable for the first time, and advances are made in little steps. For example, modern adhesives allow loudspeakers to handle more power than they did twenty years ago. Aerospace honeycomb, Kevlar or carbon fibre cabinets are unlikely to hit the mass market because of their prohibitive cost, although they can reduce cabinet colorations and will almost certainly appear more frequently in expensive designs.

Likewise, though metal-dome tweeters have become commonplace even in the last ten years, they are tricky to make

Is B&W's Nautilus the shape of the future?



**Four ways to get the best from your loudspeaker**

**1 Position**

Positioning your speakers correctly is probably the single most significant way to get the best sound. For a small loudspeaker, the worst place is undoubtedly on the floor, where treble disappears into the carpet and lows are boosted to bass-wallowing dimensions. Best place for a little one is up away from the floor. Some prefer to be positioned close to a wall, others away, but generally avoid corners where bass is boosted further. Read the instructions and take note, but decide by experimenting and listening.

**2 Support**

Once you have positioned your speakers, it is vital that you support them well. Place a speaker on a wobbly stand and the sound can be just that — ill defined and spongy. There are many good stands available to support a small speaker; or if you have a floor-stander, make sure it doesn't teeter on its feet. Spikes that dig into the floor are best, but if you have precious polished wood underfoot use protector caps, or alternative feet as supplied by the stand manufacturer.

**3 Cables**

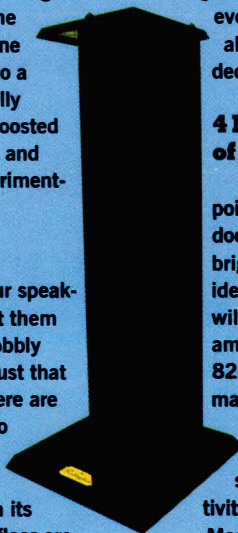
There's no doubt that cables have a significant influence on sound quality. Generally

speaking, thick multi-stranded types give the best bass, while single strands offer the smoothest treble. Purity of copper is important, and so is the insulation material. A sharp-sounding multi-strand may tip a harsh system over the edge, while a thin single-core cable can easily make loose bass even looser. There are so many variables that all you can do is listen and decide which suits your system best.

**4 Matching speakers to the rest of your system**

This may seem obvious, but it's pointless buying the latest fave rave if it doesn't sound good in your system. A bright sounding speaker may be the ideal panacea for a dull set-up, but it will be a disaster with a thin, bright amplifier. Likewise, a low-sensitivity 82dB/Watt speaker will struggle to make any sound at all with an otherwise excellent four Watt single-ended triode amplifier, which needs a speaker with over 90dB/Watt sensitivity for best results.

More power is required to drive insensitive loudspeakers to the same sound level as more sensitive ones, but beware. Just because a loudspeaker can handle 200 Watts doesn't mean it needs that much. Depth of bass can be traded for sensitivity and vice versa, which means that sometimes super-sensitive speakers just don't plumb the deepest bass depths.



and not everyone feels they are a genuine advance. There is still a lot of scope for improving cone materials, but it's a sobering thought that good old paper pulp, as used for those early original cones, is still an excellent choice if manufactured well. New fibrous materials, like Aerogel, Kevlar and carbon fibre, may become more widespread in use.

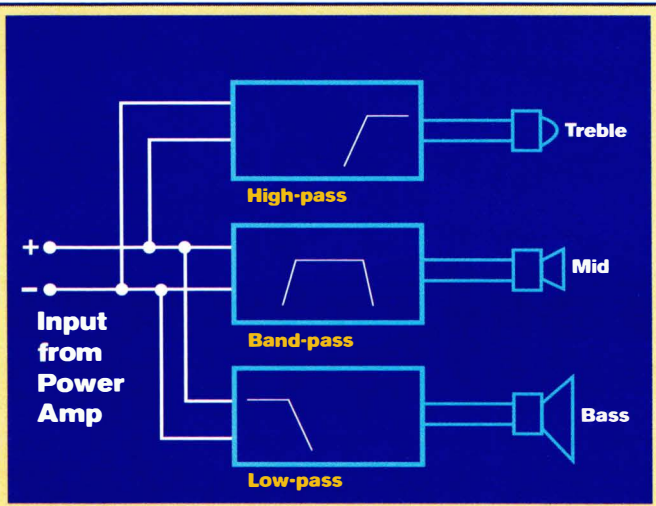
The biggest changes are likely to come through new applications of digital electronics. Using

built-in amplifiers, digital circuits can be used to create crossover networks and also correct for inaccuracies in the speaker's sound output. This could bring higher quality into the home, but will inevitably work out more expensive than a pair of moving coil drivers in a box with a conventional crossover. The latter will doubtless remain the mainstay of speaker design, and engineers will find better and more cost-effective ways of building it. ▲

**The Crossover**

With any multi-way loudspeaker, the voltage from the amplifier must be divided between the various drive units. The component that does this is known as a dividing network, or crossover. Its job is not only to protect the delicate tweeter or midrange from potentially harmful low frequencies. It also contours the electrical signals for the different drive units in such a way that the acoustic outputs of the different drivers add up correctly. This makes sure that the speaker's output blends properly, so that the listener does not hear separate bass and treble but a seamless amalgam of sound. Another job of the crossover is to ease the load on the amplifier.

The simplest crossover is a capacitor for the tweeter, which progressively filters off low frequencies; and an inductor (coil) for the woofer, which progressively filters off high frequencies. Adding an inductor to the tweeter section of the network and a capacitor to the woofer section sharpens the cut off. Midrange units have a combination of woofer-type (low-pass) and tweeter-type (high-pass) filters.



**ON TEST: SUBWOOFERS**

# BASS IN YER FACE (MISSUS)

Aha, but isn't all that bass bravado just a preconception?

Paul Messenger tests six subwoofers to see if they cut it as hi-fi.

**A**part from 'hi-fi', 'subwoofer' is probably the most misused term in the world of sound. A woofer is a bass drive unit, so a subwoofer obviously implies something that operates below the bass driver's working range. That laudable objective may have started the ball rolling twenty years ago, but the term has become depressingly devalued by our technohype world. TV sets now come with built-in, so-called 'subwoofers' that are barely capable of reaching much more than an octave below middle C, while delivering a passing imitation of breaking wind.

The subwoofer remained very much a minority interest in Britain for many years. Alongside devices primarily intended to

partner Quad Electrostatics and the BBC LS3/5A mini monitor, the Swedish *Audio Pro* model was probably the only example to carve out a real niche (as well as a *Hi-Fi Choice* Recommendation, many years ago).

The early '90s saw two events of great

significance: the arrival of Richard Lord (of REL Acoustics), and the sudden explosion of interest in home cinema sound. The consequence of the latter, at least, is that subwoofers now represent the fastest growing sector of the speaker market. However, the trouble with fastest growing sectors is that all and sundry jump on the bandwagon, often with ill-conceived 'me too' products that don't work too well.

*Choice's* last (and first) detailed examination of subwoofers appeared in March '94, at a time when the market was much less mature than it is today. A broad mix of eight active and passive types from £140 to over £2,000 set out the corner flags and established the broad rules of engagement, as well

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<b>REL Strata*</b>	<b>£500</b>
<small>*Previously reviewed; brought forward as reference; now being superseded by Strata II</small>	<small>£545.00</small>

## PASSIVE VERSUS ACTIVE: THE SUBWOOFER DICHOTOMY

### The passive cul de sac

Our group consists entirely of active subwoofers, all with built-in power amplifiers. However passive models, which are driven by the same stereo amp that drives the main speakers, have two crucial advantages making them superficially very attractive. They're cheap (typically under £150), and simple to connect up. The problem is basically that they don't work.

Passive subs woof away alright, draining precious current from your amplification in doing so, but the box and the drive units are usually no bigger than the sum of those found in a typical pair of bookshelf speakers. So the sub ends up generating more of the midbass output than the main speakers are already capable of reproducing satisfactorily. Sub-bass is not on the agenda, and level matching to specific satellites is not possible either.

The exception which proves the rule is B&W's PCS8 Home THX subwoofer. It's elegantly enormous, £750 a piece (you are expected to use two), and quite capable of doing the business if you feed each a couple of hundred Watts. Yes, passives can be made to work, but not by taking short-cuts over the ingredients.

A close relative of the passive subwoofer is found in three-box speaker systems, which substitute a hideaway bass unit and two small satellites for the normal stereo speaker pair. The bass unit is very similar to those supplied as passive subwoofers, but the combination has at least been conceived as a package. The satellites are usually less than half the size of even the smallest hi-fi speakers, so the

overlap between sub and sat is much reduced (in some instances it is effectively eliminated by means of carefully tailored crossover components). The net result can be a well-balanced total system performance. Bose did much to create the three-box marketplace, and its *Acoustimass* models remain among the most successful, high prices notwithstanding. Quite probably, this is due largely to the unconventional use of an overall two-way configuration with an unusually low crossover point.

### Active — the only way to go?

The inherent problems in passive subwoofer operation may well explain their limited success. In addition, manufacturers who were busy launching passives a year or three back are now enthusiastically introducing active models, which indicates a further endorsement of the built-in amplifier approach.

The advantages of active subwoofers are several and significant. First and foremost, there's no drain on the system amplifier — in some cases its workload is actually reduced — even if the subwoofer feed is taken from speaker- rather than line-level terminals.

Besides an amplifier that is presumably properly matched to the driver(s) and equipped with fail-safe protection against self-destruction, the active sub also has a volume control, a phase switch or knob, and a variable low

pass filter. Volume not only enables careful matching to the sensitivity of the main loudspeakers, but also provides some means of compensating for the room reinforcement differences, which vary according to siting. As the bass will have various places of origin, phase shifting helps to synchronise arrival times.

The filtering gives some flexibility in matching the upper rolloff of the sub to the (inherent) lower rolloff of the main speakers, which is essential to get good integration between the two. It's also an effective way of ensuring that the sub does not generate unwanted midrange output. Most examples alter only the rolloff frequency and not always over what I see as a sufficient range. A good theoretical case could perhaps be made for making the rate of rolloff adjustable, too.

A range of other potential benefits of an active drive are not always exploited. Equalisation, for instance, can be used to 'shrink' the box size and/or increase the bass extension, and there are several possible means of guarding against system/driver overload.



REL's Strata was the first subwoofer to cut the mustard in a hi-fi context. Now it has a little competition...

as throwing up a few interesting designs, notably the £500 REL *Strata* (which went on to dominate the marketplace).

Since that original group, I must have tried a couple of dozen alternatives, many for *Home Entertainment* magazine in a home cinema sound context. The most recent exploration was an attempt to pin down the performance-versus-price relationship. The broad conclusions were that there wasn't much point in spending less than £500, especially in a hi-fi context (the *Strata* again), and that higher price-tags tended to bring worthwhile quality improvements, with no obvious upper limit.

The law of diminishing returns does play a part, of course, but I'm currently having a great time with M&K's massive £3,000 *MX-3000THX* — and I have little doubt that a pair of these would bring further improvements! Then there are the amplifier/filter electronics from a REL *Studio*, which I have experimented with using my 15inch wall-mounted Tannoy drivers in a serious subwoofing role.

The familiar criticism is that it's all very

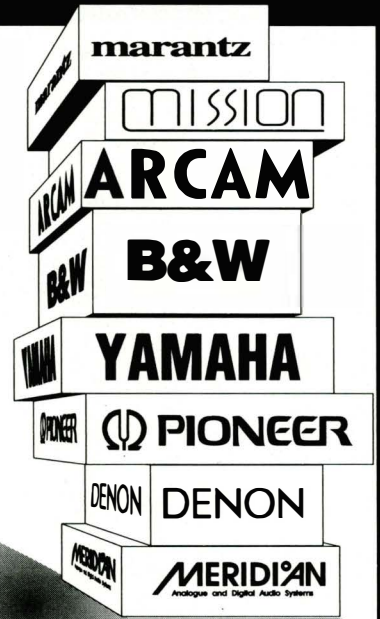
well for reviewers to play around with expensive loan equipment. However, there is a serious purpose involved this time. Without experiencing and exploring the ultimate, it's impossible to put the affordable into a proper perspective. Only the wealthy fanatic is likely to contemplate spending several thousand pounds to reproduce the bottom octave in the best possible fashion, and I don't propose to give such equipment more than a passing mention in this feature. But it has provided insights into how subwoofers operate *in extremis*, which is important in an attempt to get to grips with the affordable.

The main thrust of this feature review is therefore to take a close look at a bevy of potentially interesting contenders at or

below £500. Most are newcomers, all are actively driven, and the workout is expressly oriented towards music rather than movie reproduction. The original REL *Strata* provides the most relevant yardstick, even though it has been replaced by a £545 *MkII* version. However, for the purposes of continuity we have included it as a benchmark against which others can be judged.

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As discussed in the introduction, the success of REL's £500 *Strata* has been a major factor in establishing and growing the subwoofer market, and to me it has hitherto represented the realistic minimum performance for serious hi-fi (or movie soundtrack) use. REL is in the process of updating/upgrading *Strata* to *MkII* status (at £545), but not in time for this review.

Two years after its original launch, the *Strata* is now up against some hot competition. Two brand new entrants from traditional British rivals KEF and B&W are primarily movie-oriented and within the same £500 price point, but with quite different modes of execution on offer. At the same price, Danish Jamo's *SW600* is a longer-established and more hi-fi oriented model that has also attracted our scrutiny.

M&K is one of the newer kids on the UK block, but this Californian subwoofer specialist is rapidly earning respect in this country. The *VX-7B* is M&K's 'budget baby'. Its size — a fraction of the others included in this test — could prove a major selling point if performance is up to scratch.

However, the most interesting question must be to discover how close REL's £350 *Q-BASS* comes to the *Strata* and its price rivals, and whether this new 'budget' REL has moved the goalposts for 1996.

The six models on test show quite large differences, both in size and *modi operandi*. The B&W with its large driver, ports and enclosure is likely to have the greatest headroom and loudness capability, although sealed-box loading (*Q-BASS*, KEF and M&K) tends to give greater bass extension for the box size. Jamo uses a coupled-cavity approach that is a combination of the two. It's beyond the scope of this feature to explore these alternatives in any detail, but the specifics of a particular implementation are likely to be more significant than the principle of operation.

## STYLE

B&W AS6	★★★★☆
Jamo SW600	★★★★☆
KEF Model 30B	★★★★☆
M&K VX-7B	★★★★☆
REL Q-BASS	★★★☆☆
REL Strata	★★★☆☆

Style? You've got to be kidding. Subwoofers have the innate elegance of a pedal bin, and there's not an awful lot the manufacturer can do about it. However, they do their best — KEF's little plinth and Jamo's glass top are brave attempts to soften the blow.

Compactness must carry off the prizes here, so top marks go to the discreet little 'bookshelf'-size M&K. The KEF is also comparatively small, and beats the rest with its fine detailing — check out the contoured heatsink. Bonus points to Jamo for hiding all gubbins underneath, supplying an outboard connection box, and chamfering the top edge. The importance of styling will depend where you're planning to put the beast!

## CONNECTING UP

This will depend to some extent upon the individual system and subwoofer. All subwoofers are provided with some means of linking them into the speaker wiring. The amp's speaker terminals can therefore be connected to the subwoofer, either alongside the normal speaker feed, or in some cases as a stepping stone along the way. It all depends on which is more convenient with regard to room layout and speaker siting.

An alternative way of connecting powered subwoofers is via line input sockets, which are usually provided. This ought to sound better in absolute terms, as the subwoofer feed avoids the degradation of the system power amp, but REL reckons it's worth accepting such degradation for the sake of improved sub-to-main integration. The debate is still open on that one, but all the subs covered here provide the option either way, although some integrated amps may not have pre-out sockets.

Some subwoofers (such as Boston and KEF) go a stage further and provide a high pass filtered output on the sub, which is then fed back to the system power amp. The extra signal processing involved is not ideal from a hi-fi purist perspective, but it should ensure more precise integration between main speakers and sub, helping to avoid the problem of an over-abundance of midbass boom. It also protects both the system power amps and the speakers from the powerful bass signals, and has the effect of increasing overall loudness capability and power handling.

## FLEXIBILITY

B&W AS6	★★★★☆
Jamo SW600	★★★☆☆
KEF Model 30B	★★★★☆
M&K VX-7B	★★★★☆
REL Q-BASS	★★★★☆
REL Strata	★★★★☆

In the first instance, flexibility is primarily a measure of how the subwoofer operates in conjunction with a wide range of main speakers. As such, the more flexible the low pass filter the better.

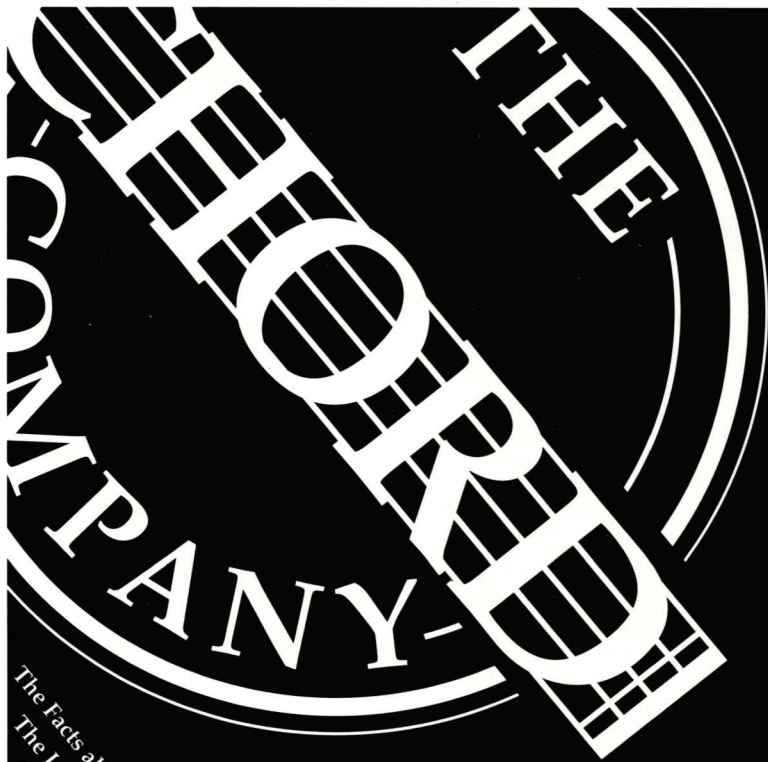
Here REL sets an example which others would do well to follow, registering -6dB ref 20Hz in-room at any frequency from 60 to 130Hz (*Q-BASS*). *Strata* is similar, but *Q-BASS* pulls down the upper bass (120Hz upwards) more effectively than the earlier model. M&K gets pretty close (-6dB 70Hz-120Hz), but doesn't pull down midbass (50-60Hz) in the same way, and lacks a phase switch to assist crossover integration.

The B&W generates a maximum output of 30-60Hz, with -6dB from 70-140Hz. The KEF's main output is concentrated in the mid-bass (50-100Hz) with -6dB 120-150Hz, while the Jamo peaks at a strong 50Hz, with approximately -6dB at 70-100Hz.

All but the RELs incorporate some form of high-pass filtering (high and/or low level), which may (or may not) be used in the feed to the main speakers. For the ultimate quality it's best to avoid this option, which is why

B&W AS6: good value and a respectable performance above 30 Hz.





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SUBWOOFERS



**KEF Model 30B: a looker, but limited bass means it's best suited to a sub/sat rôle.**

this capability is not incorporated into our marking scheme. However, where it is available, flexibility does increase. Using it will almost certainly improve the power handling and hence loudness capability of the system, which is essential for any application using tiny, satellite style left/right speakers.

HOW LOW?	
B&W AS6	★★★★☆
Jamo SW600	★★★★☆
KEF Model 30B	★★★★☆
M&K VX-7B	★★★★★
REL Q-BASS	★★★★★
REL Strata	★★★★★

For this part of the test, we used in-room measurement techniques very similar to those employed for *Choice's* regular speaker reviews. Because of interaction effects specific to the room, the value of our ratings is of limited universal application, but the relative differences between the subwoofers are

entirely relevant. The data obtained can also be related to the large accumulated database of full range speakers. It may be no coincidence that the three models which deliver exceptionally deep bass are those made by the subwoofer specialists (the two RELs and the M&K). All three are capable of delivering 20Hz in-room output, within about 3dB of the 55Hz room mode peak.

Of the others, the B&W gets closest, registering -13dB for 20Hz ref 55Hz, whereas both KEF and Jamo are down somewhere below -20dB (which many a pair of modest bookshelf speakers can match). The Jamo holds up better 30-50Hz, but neither really justify their 'subwoofer' classification.

SOUND	
B&W AS6	★★★★☆
Jamo SW600	★★★★☆
KEF Model 30B	★★★★☆
M&K VX-7B	★★★★★
REL Q-BASS	★★★★★
REL Strata	★★★★★

Defining the sound quality of a subwoofer is always a problem. In a test, most sound is carried by the main speakers, but only a small proportion goes via the sub itself.

Thus the sound assessed will always be that of the combination, so it depends significantly on the chosen main speakers as well as on a degree of chance in the relative placement of main speakers and subwoofer.

**Jamo SW600 with controller (right): good styling, dynamics and headroom, but limited ultimate bass.**

The resultant interaction (especially in phase terms through the frequency band, where all three sources are making significant contributions) is very unpredictable, leaving the reviewer haunted by the realisation that a slight adjustment could have considerable repercussions.

Various small main speakers were tried, including the new B&W 302, the Rega Kyte and Totem *Model One*, and great care was taken to optimise integration. Even though this factor will always remain a grey area, audible differences in extension (how deep) were detected, as was the impression of headroom and dynamic freedom which each sub added.

Only the RELs and the M&K deliver really deep bass, setting them a class apart from the rest. The baby M&K is a little thick and congested, without the dynamic openness of the bigger RELs. However, it's quite remarkable that such a small box can deliver such deep bass, and in sufficient quantities to keep up with the loudness capabilities of a typical pair of miniature speakers.

While the Q-BASS is a very effective device, especially considering its modest price, there's no denying that the *Strata* is a classier act, less obvious in its activity and altogether more transparent in supplying the weight without adding as much of its own sonic signature.

Of the others, the KEF proved commendably discreet with a good sense of timing, although its bandwidth contribution was inevitably limited. The B&W has a little more weight and sounds particularly free from strain, with the promise of massive headroom in reserve if required. The Jamo suffered from the coincidence of its main output



**THE LOUDNESS FALLACY**

In the general perception of subwoofers, loudness is usually equated with goodness. This is a total fallacy. There's little point in owning a subwoofer which is able to generate massive excess loudness over and above the capabilities of your main amplifier and speakers.

Even movie fans, who are supposed to prefer a much 'bassier' balance than 'broad neutrality', are only likely to over-stress a relatively modest active subwoofer when showing off to friends or trying to intimidate the neighbours. Unless your speakers have very high sensitivity and/or your main amp is very powerful, massive subwoofers are naught but an expensive luxury.

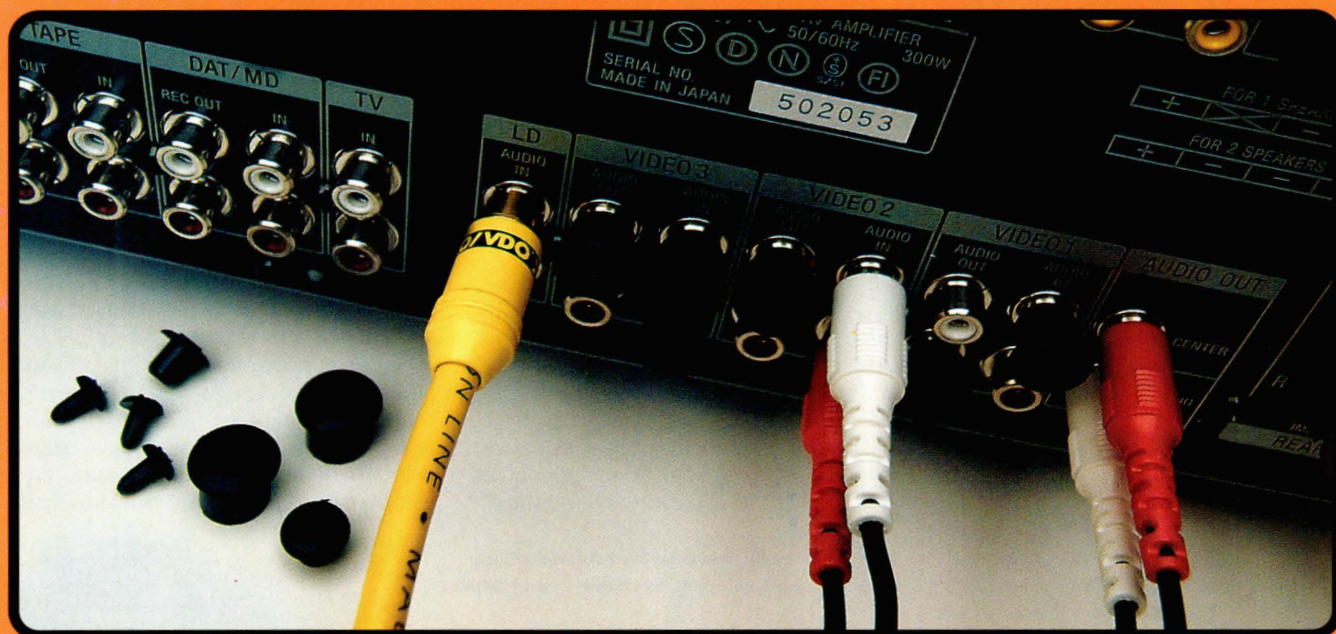
That's not to say it's money wasted — the extra sense of ease and headroom are audible enough even at normal levels with a 'flat' system balance, and all the more so if the bass is wound up for movie reproduction. However, loudness *per se* is not the crucial factor. Dynamic range, tension and control are the essential criteria when assessing boxes of boom.



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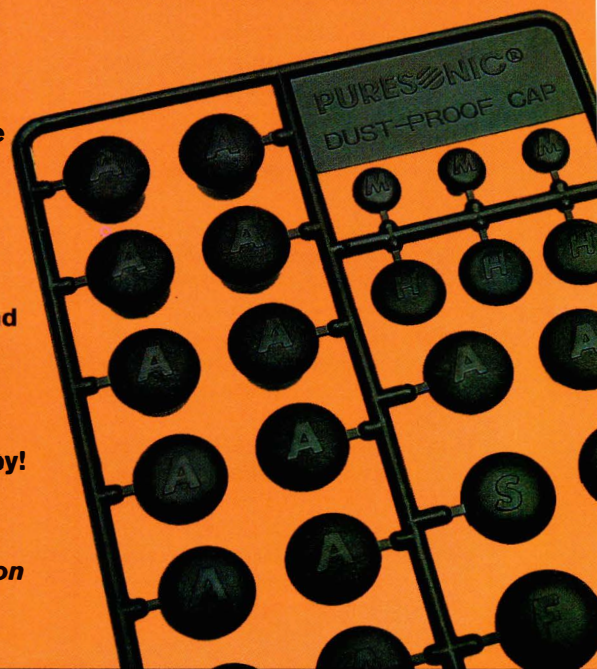
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## SUBWOOFERS



Miller & Kreisel  
**VX-7B:** produces an  
 amazing depth of bass  
 from a modestly-sized box.

frequency with a major room mode, resulting in 'one-note' tendencies under our conditions, but dynamics and headroom were impressive as always.

## OVERALL

B&W AS6	★★★★☆
Jamo SW600	★★★★☆
KEF Model 30B	★★★★☆
M&K VX-7B	★★★★☆
REL Q-BASS	★★★★★
REL Strata	★★★★★

Working through the list alphabetically, the B&W AS6 is good material value for money, and at least it does deliver a fair amount of low bass, with quite flexible rolloff filtering. Its fine dynamic headroom and considerable loudness capability must be set against a fairly rapid rolloff below 30Hz.

The Jamo SW600 matches the B&W in pounds (sterling) per kilogram, and has some neat styling touches, plus the undoubtedly convenient remote control unit (one co-ax cable). However, its coupled-cavity design uses space inefficiently, so deep bass is limited and output quite heavily concentrated around 50-60Hz.

The KEF Model 30B is the prettiest of all, showing all the signs of top quality industrial

design. Compactness is also a major plus, but limited ultimate extension and upper filter flexibility suggest it's best suited to partner sub-miniature satellites: a part-powered variation on the three-box speaker theme.

The diminutive dimensions of the M&K VX-7B fly in the face of our subwoofer preconceptions, but there's no denying this miniature really does deliver genuinely deep bass in sufficient quantity for music applications, albeit without quite the transparency of larger models. More flexible filtering (with an earlier rolloff) would have been helpful.

That REL can sell the Q-BASS for £350 is an achievement, especially as it works very well. The filtering is flexible, with sharper rolloff rates than the Strata, which should be an advantage when partnering larger main speakers. However, even in original guise, the Strata still justifies its extra cost on sound quality grounds. It reveals a more subtle, airy transparency that's likely to be enhanced by the Mk II's tougher enclosure. And if you like the sound of that, check out the £700 Storm — it's even better.

## CONCLUSIONS

Sadly reflecting the findings of two years ago, most of the subwoofers tested fall short of my definition of the word, as they don't offer significantly deeper bass extension than, say, a typical pair of 20-litre bookshelf speakers with eight-inch (frame) drivers.

It's pretty clear that if you want a sub-

### SITING YOUR SUB

The first golden rule of subwoofer positioning is to experiment for the best effect in your room and system. If practical, try placing your sub between the main speakers and at the same distance from the listening zone of the room. Point any drive units or orifices away from listeners if the design doesn't already direct them towards the floor.

Proximity to the floor is taken for granted. Proximity to walls will have a considerable effect on the inevitable ups and downs through the bass region caused by the basic room characteristics. So avoid the corners and try to make sure a subwoofer isn't placed halfway between any two walls.

woofer to supply genuinely deep bass, you're better off going for specialist subwoofer brands than the mainstream speaker builders. REL's new Q-BASS smashes the price barrier for deep bass performance, while M&K's VX-7B smashes the size barrier, and both deserve due recognition for these achievements.

Having tried a number of more upmarket models, including several from M&K and REL, these two brands do show good consistency throughout their ranges, and the more you spend the better the end results, assuming your system is good enough to reveal differences.

I can't claim that a three grand subwoofer is a cost-effective upgrade for any old system, especially as a sub only operates discreetly across a small segment of the audio range. But bass addiction is a particularly virulent strain of hi-fi disease. Pop into your dealer some time and see whether you end up inoculated or hooked! ▲

## CONTACT &amp; NUMBERS

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KEF Audio (UK) Limited	(01622) 672261
M&K c/o Mafia Trading Co. Ltd	(0589) 325363
REL c/o Harman Audio Ltd	(0181) 207 5050

**REL Q-BASS:** a bargain buy, and flexible enough to get on with a wide variety of speakers. Only bested by big brother Strata.

## HOW SUBWOOFERS WORK (AND DON'T WORK)

The basic subwoofer rationale is that the ear relies only upon midrange and high frequency signals to provide stereophonic image information. The average pair of lugs is relatively insensitive to the direction from which bass signals emanate.

On that basis it is perfectly reasonable to take the bass out of the very visible main speakers and put it into its own dedicated enclosure — normally just the one box, though sometimes a second is used — which can then be tucked discreetly out of line of sight.

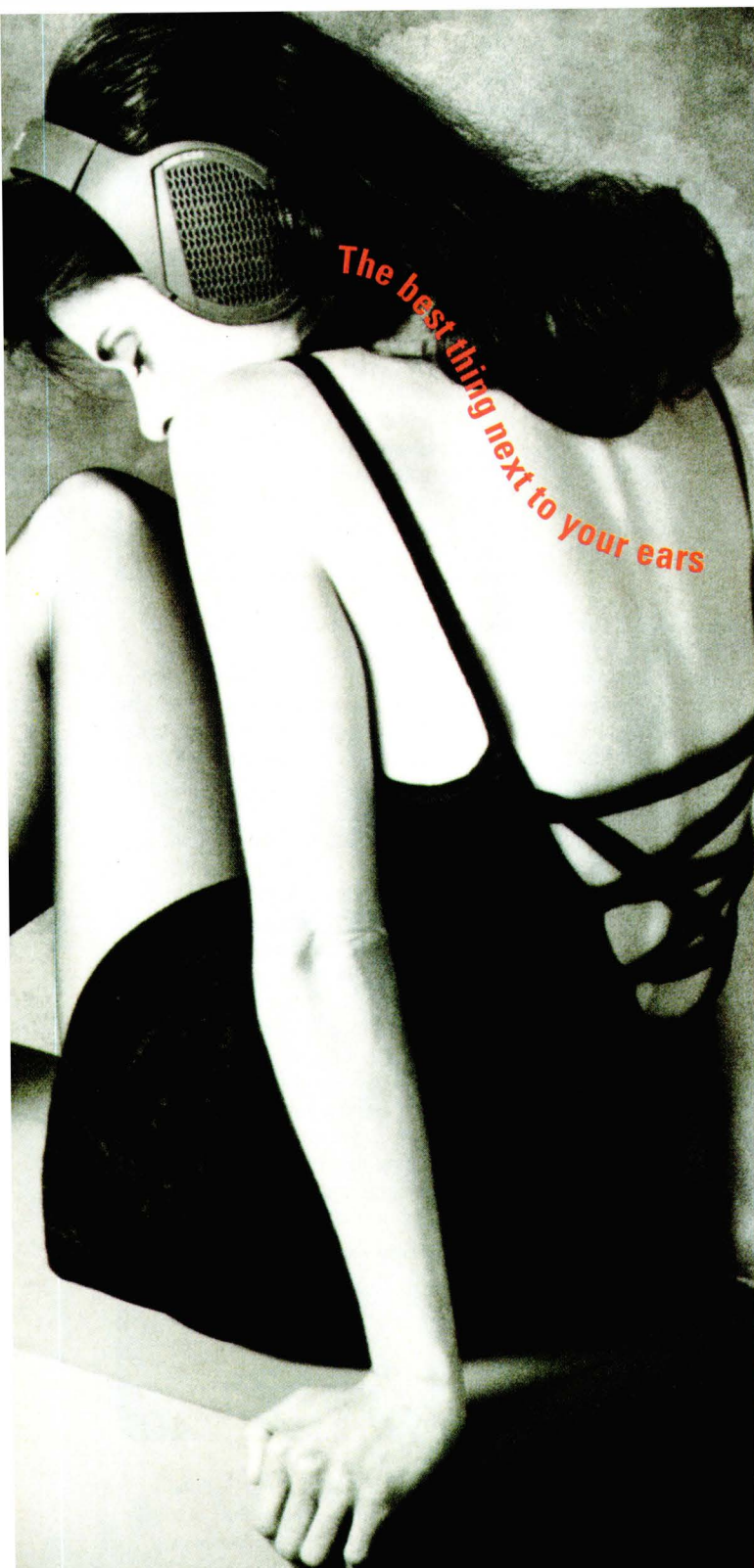
Given the right combination of sub and main speakers, it should be possible to achieve a truly extended in-room bass, with little more physical intrusion into your lounge than that demanded by a small pair of small miniature speakers.

That's the positive side. The negative is that good

balance is not everything. Arguments persist about how much relative phase relationships matter sonically, and even high class normal speakers don't manage phase very well, especially through the bass region. Physically detaching the bottom end of the audio band and delivering it from a single point somewhere else in the room makes accurate phase coordination an impossible task — but does it really matter? Well, maybe.

It's also worth remembering that bass generation from a single point source close to the floor (and maybe one of the walls) is quite different from using two stand-mounted speakers. Twin sources, wherever placed, seem to give a more even bass balance, which is why several manufacturers (such as Mordaunt-Short and B&W) suggest that subwoofers work better in pairs.





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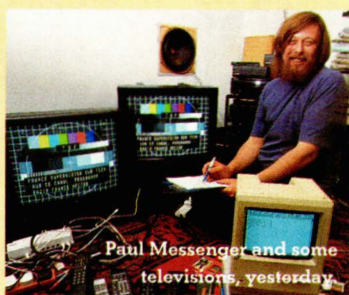
# Write on!

THE PEN IS MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD, AND ALSO SAFER TO CHEW UPON WHILST COMPOSING YOUR LETTER...

## LETTER OF THE MONTH

### Good morning with Paul and Alvin

Jeremy Clarkson, Jancis Robinson, Delia Smith and a whole host of other people have shows about various different hobbies and fantasies. Judging by the number of magazines being published, it seems that there are plenty of hi-fi enthusiasts — so why doesn't *Choice* start its own TV programme? You could review some of the systems that dealers own. I have been reading into the business since my A-levels (roughly seven years), and have since bought a number of hi-fi components and upgraded to my present system. Searching for the right thing in one's mind is not an easy matter. Along the way, some will get really sucked into this bizarre world and I think that a hi-fi TV show would be successful. The only time I managed to see some hi-fi on the telly was accidentally during *The Learning Zone*, where there was a ten minute preview on Julian Vereker's training scheme for Naim Audio. *Khalrul F Mohammad, Nottingham*



First, there is a little matter of the extremely large amounts of raw, throbbing cash entailed by the making of a TV programme. Secondly, hi-fi is rather less photogenic than cars or food (but that doesn't explain or justify snooker). Finally, hi-fi is considered a specialist hobby, like fishing, and you know how many fishing programmes there are at the moment... *Media Commentary Editor*

### Universal blind testing

In Internet audio newsgroups, there is considerable discussion on the merits or otherwise of high-end CD players, transports and DACs, now that mid-price units like the latest Sony XA3ES and TEAC VRDS-10S are producing such good results.

Are you brave enough to try a blind test of known good players and multi-box units across the whole price spectrum? You could start with units such as the Sony 561, Technics 770, Pioneer 904 and the abovementioned, then move up through the Audiolab units, Pink Triangle's best, the Meridian 508, all the way to the Krell KPS20i and Mark Levinson 36/37 units.

While there might indeed be

major embarrassments I'm sure readers would be fascinated to know if high-end gear sounds just as good when you can't see that beautiful alloy casework!

I suspect that in 1996 there is disturbingly little between the best of the beer-budgets and the 'sell the Merc' inch-thick front panel brigade. Just compare the comments about the £8,000 Mark Levinson 36/37 on page 27 of the February edition, with the comments about the £350 Sony XA2ES on page 68 of the same issue... *Stewart Pinkerton, Leicestershire*

### Tales from the other side

As an owner of a second-hand record shop, I see all the musical reproduction problems from an

opposite angle. The problem is record pressings: after the oil crisis of the '70s the quality of record pressings are, quite honestly, crap.

There's nothing like a mint condition LP from anywhere up to the early '70s. Check out the first four Led Zeppelin LPs (Jimmy Page insisted they were pressed on the same vinyl as classical records). Stick to original pressings—in my view they sound better than CD, even on cheap turntables. Or search for any sort of audiophile pressing. Above all, avoid anything with the word Dynaflex on the label. *Matthew Poulton, Bideford, N Devon*

### Sony score draw

I was extremely sorry to read of the problems experienced by Mr Griggs regarding his Sony CDP-715E ('Marantz 2, Sony 0', *Write on!*, issue 153).

I was heavily involved in the design of this particular model, and was very concerned by the remarks made. I have investigated the matter with our service department and now understand the problem he has experienced—it is one that can indeed be remedied very easily, probably in about 15 minutes by a trained Sony Service Engineer.

There is no common fault in this Sony model — or, indeed, any Sony CD players. The critics have been most generous in their praise of our hi-fi separates range, and I am very sorry to read of Mr Griggs's disappointment.

I would be happy to speak to Mr Griggs personally to explain this in more detail.

*Eric Kingdon, Technical Marketing Manager, Sony Consumer Products, Weybridge*

### Linn line-up logistics

I wholeheartedly agree with the answer given to the Query of the Month in the February 1996 issue of *Hi-Fi Choice*, namely that a Linn

*Sondek LP12* should be set up by a Linn dealer. Last year I bought a second-hand Linn *Basik Plus* tonearm and fitted it myself to my ageing *LP12* (all of 17 years old). I thought I'd done a pretty good job but I've just got the deck back after having a full service done by Audio Projects in Leeds. The transformation in sound quality is staggering and all the faults mentioned in the query, which were also evident in my own system, have disappeared. Records which I previously didn't enjoy listening to, thinking they were bad pressings, now sound superb. *Keith Watson, Whitley Bay*

### Marantz? Schmarantz!

How could *Hi-Fi Choice* possibly suggest that the Marantz CD63mkII is superior to the Arcam Alpha 5+? (February issue). Is the reviewer a former employee of another leading hi-fi mag? *P Jones, Wrexham*

## Couture!



This is our stylish *Hi-Fi Choice* garment, which will be awarded to the writer of the most interesting letter of the month. Available only in capacious, figure-hugging XL size!

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COMPETITION

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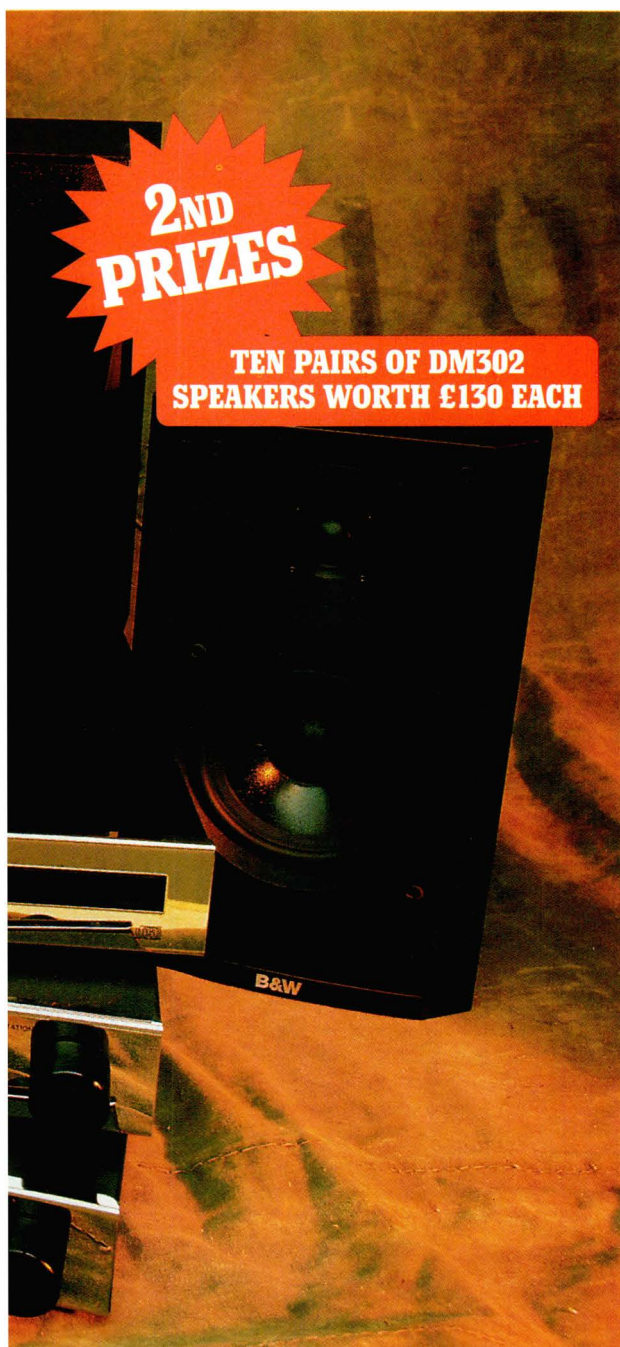


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What is the name of the unique in-box anechoic chamber used by B&W?

- a) Phase Technology
- b) Prisma Technology
- c) Prism Technology
- d) Prime Technology

## TO ENTER, PHONE NOW ON 0891 866939

- You will be asked to state the answer to the question above. Please speak clearly, and don't forget to leave your name, address and daytime phone number. Winners will be picked at random from all correct entries. You will be asked to inform us if you do not wish to receive details of further offers or promotions.
- Calls cost 39p per minute cheap rate, 49p per minute at all other times. Calls should take no longer than two minutes.
- Lines open at midnight on Friday March 29th, 1996, and remain open until midnight on Friday May 10th, 1996.
- Alternatively, write the answer on the back of a postcard or sealed-down envelope, together with your name, address and daytime telephone number. Please state whether you are over 18 years of age.

Address this entry to:

Hi-Fi Choice Competition (CHFC605A)  
Bradley Pavilions,  
Bradley Stoke North,  
Bristol BS12 0BQ.

All postal entries must arrive by first post, Friday May 10th, 1996.

## COMPETITION RULES

- The Closing Date for this competition is May 10th, 1996.
- Winners of the ProAc competition will be judged from all correct entries submitted by telephone and post, and drawn at random on the Closing Date.
- All winners will be notified by post.
- The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.
- This competition is not open to employees of Dennis Publishing Ltd., B&W UK, nor their suppliers, agents or associates.
- We regret that this competition is open to UK residents only.
- No cash alternative will be offered.
- The act of entering the competitions will be taken as acceptance of the rules.
- You must notify us if you do not wish to be informed of any special offers or promotions. On postal entries, please indicate clearly on your entry if you do not wish to receive details of further special offers.
- We will assume you are over 18 years of age unless you state otherwise.
- For a list of winners of the B&W/Aura competition, write enclosing a stamped, addressed envelope, to: *Hi-Fi Choice* Winners, Dept 154/1, 19 Bolsover Street, LONDON W1P 7HJ.

# POWER UP

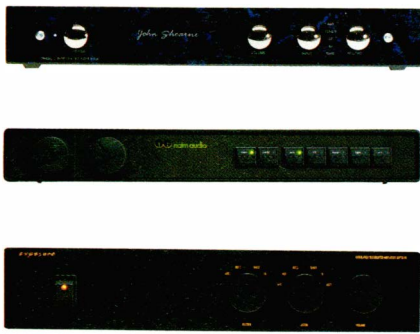
Integrated amps from £220 to £700 are among hi-fi's hottest performers. **Alan Sircom** listens and **Paul Miller** measures to sort the men from the boys.



**G**iven the state of the economy and the impecunious nature of most of us Britons, you'd think that the most popular hi-fi amplifiers would be the cheapest. However, like cans of beer and Lada cars, this is not the case.

The big movers and shakers in the separates hi-fi market all do their thang between £220 and £700. Below this band, amplifiers are usually built down to a price, not up to a quality level. Above £700, one quickly enters the realm of the specialist design. By nature, those products are low-sales-volume, high-quality designs, which would seem out of place here.

Instead, in this market, we have the top end of the audio mainstream of both home and abroad, standing side-by-side with the entry-level products of ultra specialist hi-fi manufacturers. Between them lie a handful



of semi-specialist companies that fall into neither camp: small operators making mainstream-style products as if to defy the big boys in the electronics playground.

On the whole, these amps are bought by two kinds of people: first-time buyer and first-time upgrader. Generally, those who have been upping the ante of the hi-fi system for some years will have moved into the domain of pre-power amplifiers, and are looking at electronics well into four figures.

A first-time buyer in this price range is likely to be putting together a system for about £1,000-£2,000. The upgrader, on the other hand, will already have an existing system, and is either seeking the next step forwards or is replacing a worn-out amplifier. Generally, if one is upgrading with an amplifier in the lower parts of this price band, it should be replacing a really low-priced amp.

A curious hi-fi buying trend is habitual amp-swapping, changing a £300 amplifier of a few years back for a newer model of the same price. This is often based on rave reviews and the buyer is led to believe — often erroneously — that the replacement is

going to transform their system. Disregarding the effect of inflation, dramatic improvements in budget amplifier technology are not as common as marketing hype would have you believe. Even CD player developments have slowed somewhat of late, with a few notable exceptions.

If you listened to all the products in your price range five years ago, it is unlikely that you will find a new one that is significantly better at the same price. Instead, try adding 50 per cent or more to the original price-tag and audition the new products against the old one. If your existing kit still holds its head up, then you chose wisely.

Ultimately, however, if you upgrade one piece of equipment in the hi-fi chain without considering the rest of the system, you may be dragging the sound down. In most cases, it is pointless to radically upgrade your amplifier if your turntable or CD player can't keep up (or vice versa). The bottom line is that auditioning upgrades in your own system is the only way forward.

**What to buy, what to avoid**

Although it sounds obvious, if you are still a turntable user, make sure that the amplifier has a phono stage, with an input sensitivity that matches your cartridge. More and more amplifiers today are line-only designs, even though the word 'phono' may be screen-

printed on the front, while others now only offer the phono stage as an extra-cost option. If in doubt, ask!

Most amps at this price have a tape monitor circuit. This allows you to monitor off-tape on a three-head cassette deck. If you do little taping, or do not have a three-head deck, this facility is not vital, but those with an unquenchable desire to tape everything in the world will want more advanced taping facilities than some amps provide.

When it comes to amplifier power output and speaker matching, the rules are there to break. I have heard amplifiers that barely produce five Watts sound louder than ones churning out ten times that output. Likewise, speakers with a 'power handling' rating of 10-100 Watts can be used with well-designed power-house amps without problems, as long as you use some due care and attention. Once again, trying to determine matching between amp and speaker on paper is impossible — get thee to a dealer. Lastly, beware of highly capacitive loudspeaker cables on some amplifiers, as they can cause damage.



THE CAST LIST	
Alchemist Maxim APD30A .....	£299
AMC 3050 .....	£220
Arcam Alpha 6+ .....	£350
Audiolab 8000S .....	£650
Creek 4240SE .....	£350
Densen Beat B-100 .....	£600
Exposure XX Super .....	£700
John Shearne Phase 2 .....	£649
JVC AX-A662 .....	£329
Musical Fidelity E10 .....	£300
Myriad MI 120 .....	£539
Naim Nait 3 .....	£550
Orelle SA 100 .....	£449



Each amplifier was auditioned under strict double-blind conditions at precisely matched listening levels. During the two-day test, Paul Miller acted as operator throughout, and as such, both the panel and I had no idea of what amplifier was under scrutiny at any time. Such blind tests — at precise listening levels — are crucial, yet remain unique to *Hi-Fi Choice*. These amplifiers were tested in Paul Miller's reference system, using Sony's late, lamented CDP-715E CD player, DPA-100S

**THE LISTENING TEST**

pre-power amps and Audio Note AN-E loudspeakers, all connected up with Silver Sounds cable. All the amplifiers were thoroughly warmed up on the test bench for 48 hours before listening commenced.

However, as amplifiers are inherently speaker-dependent, an impromptu secondary sighted test was performed — without the panel — using an AVI S2000MC CD player, Cable Talk and Bandridge cable and a pair of Neat *Mystique* loudspeakers. Also,

any noted systems we have encountered outside of the formal listening test have been cited, where appropriate.

Finally, no *Hi-Fi Choice* test would be complete without its panelists and our dearest, most cuddly, warm and furry thanks go to John Bamford (Pioneer), Roger Batchelor (Denon), Simon Byles (Infidelity), Gary Mardell (Mordaunt-Short), Guy Sargeant (Audio Innovations) and Andy Whittle (Rogers), whose golden ears and golden prose are the very life-blood of these tests.



# Alchemist Maxim APD30A

**A**lchemist Products makes some of the most distinctive looking amplifiers around. Witness the wacky *Kraken*, for example, or the new, enormous Class A amplifiers with great big bakelite dials on the front. Whatever the situation, an Alchemist amp gets noticed.

On saying that, and despite a chrome front and golden knobs, the class A/B £299 *Maxim APD30A* is quite restrained by Alchemist standards. This amp is mercifully bereft of the worst ravages of features, sporting only a on/off switch and LED, a volume control and an input selector — so three-headed tape psychos should look elsewhere.

Alchemist has also released a line-only variant of the *Maxim*, called the *Axiom* (£249). In the UK, the latter is sold exclusively in Richer Sounds stores.

### Sound Quality

Just like the mens' magazine of the same name, subtlety was not a strong point of the *Maxim*. Its performance was likened to a Sony *Trinitron* TV screen, because of its vivid



use of tonal colour. Any music, no matter how subtle or refined, comes out big, bold and brassy when played through the *Maxim*.

The colour analogy continues with the suggestion that this is a painting-by-numbers amplifier, painting in primary acrylic paints only. The delicate gradations and shades normally found in music seem lost to the *Maxim*. Consequently this gives everything a mechanical air, that can lapse into edgy brashness and even shouting, especially when the volume is wicked up a little.

*Maxim* is the Spinal Tap of amplifiers. Like a bad sound-check of a bad band, it tries to make everything louder than everything else. This made very hard work indeed of Eric Dolphy's *Out To Lunch* album.

Paradoxically, this lack of subtlety and shade helped to make things sound quite clear and transparent, and you could really hear into the studio and the mechanics of the recording process. This effect, however, seemed to appear by default, and could have more to do with the edgy and metallic nature of the *Maxim* than any true delicacy.

There was also a curious property surrounding all things temporal. At first, the

amplifier was noted as being a bit one-note, slow and ploddy. As things progressed, this was replaced by a sense of weirdly disjointed timing, as if it would occasionally skip a beat. Generally, though, the timing was on the ploddy side and — in a bold move beyond painting-by-numbers — was likened to an overcooked white sauce.

The moving-magnet-only phono stage was dark-toned and better than line inputs (thanks to nice old LPs), but traded the Spinal Tap approach for a vague and stilted character. Moreover, it heightened the rather jerky sense of timing heard on the line stage. Bass was also sparse, but at least it makes a more acceptable analogue sound than any of the others in the group.

### Conclusion

This amplifier will attract many a buyer before it is even switched on. Its rough and ready performance has a fair degree of brutal charm to match the slick styling, especially for newcomers to the world of hi-fi. At £299, such qualities appeal strongly. However, the *Maxim* could probably do with a higher amount of finesse to win the hearts of audiophiles with a few more hours flying time at the controls of hi-fi.

**VERDICT**

**SOUND** ★★☆☆☆

**VALUE** ★★☆☆☆

**PRICE** £299

▲ Shiny looks with a shiny sound to match.  
▼ Too much spit, not enough polish.

✉ Alchemist Products, Unit 1, Furzewood House,  
Cranbourne Ind Est, Potters Par, Herts EN6 3JN  
☎ (01707) 664607

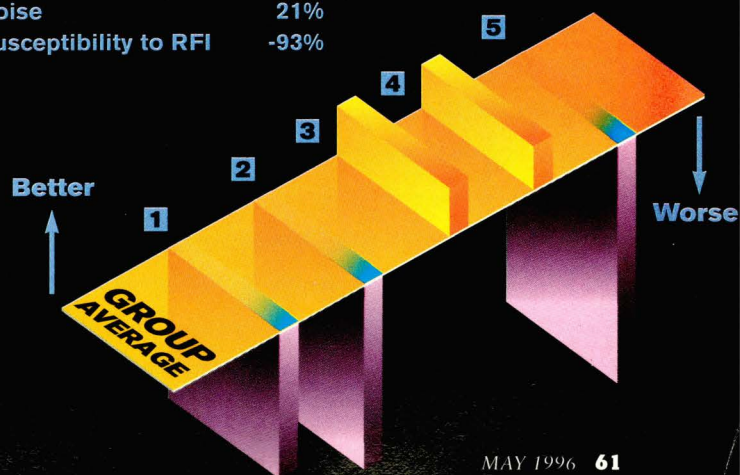
## THE LAB REPORT

This amplifier might look the part but, behind the chromed fascia, there lies an unhappy design. Distortion creeps upward at every opportunity, with increasing output, increasing frequency and decreasing load impedance. Distortion reached our limit of one per cent at just 15W into four Ohm, even though the true clip point is closer to Alchemist's optimistic 49W specification. Meanwhile, I could only squeeze a maximum current burst of 3.1A by relaxing the limit to two per cent THD, all of which suggests that the *Maxim* will definitely not be at home with low impedance or low sensitivity loudspeakers.

While the *Maxim* is second-from-bottom in the ability to drive tricky speakers, it's the amplifier most likely to be upset by RF interference across a wide 1-300MHz span. Furthermore, the *Maxim* has a massive 1.3 Ohm output impedance (more typical of a valve amplifier), which will tend to soften its bass and exaggerate any response anomalies in the partnering loudspeakers. As a result, this amp could sound very different, depending on both system and location.

## HOW IT COMPARES

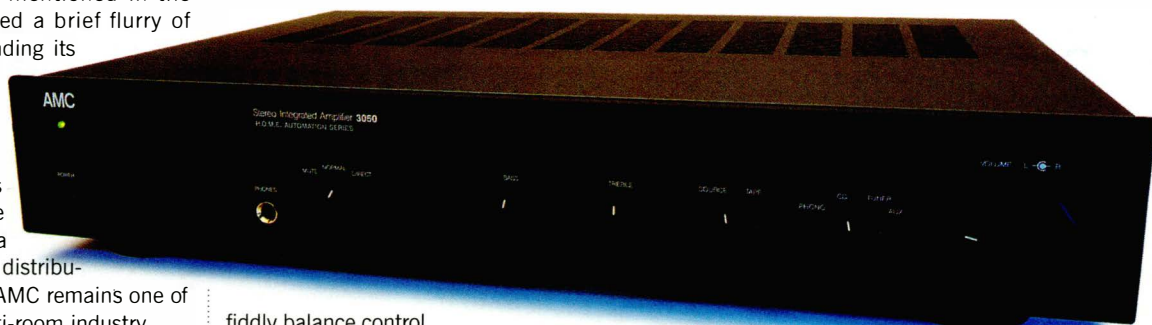
- 1 Dynamic Power Output -57%
- 2 Speaker Load Tolerance -71%
- 3 Audible Distortion 22%
- 4 Noise 21%
- 5 Susceptibility to RFI -93%



# AMC 3050

**A**MC is one of those companies that is hardly ever mentioned in the press. It enjoyed a brief flurry of activity surrounding its hybrid valve/solid-state integrated amplifier a few years back, but otherwise it has remained one of the backroom boys. As a maker of multi-channel distribution systems, however, AMC remains one of the stalwarts of the multi-room industry.

The 45-Watt 3050 amplifier is a return to the hi-fi source from whence all AMC style seems to hail: NAD. A conventional budget (£220) integrated amp with built-in phono stage, the AMC 3050 bears a strong external resemblance to the classic NAD 3020 amplifier. Even the box and the manual look like classic NAD. Consequently, as even NAD has moved into the '90s with its new design, the 3050 looks seriously dated. It also has one phono, one tape monitor and three line inputs, which is a little lacking in this multimedia age. That aside, the 3050 has a good facility count for the price, with defeatable bass and treble controls, a headphone socket and a mute control. It is also just possible to use the ganged volume controls as a rather



fiddly balance control.

## Sound Quality

This is one of those amplifiers that is very difficult to write about. The very best and very worst products make the reviewer's life easier, as they are never a problem to describe, while a decidedly average piece of kit is always hard to pin down.

One critic likened the 3050 to "a midfield runner in the 2.30 at Kempton". Everyone on the listening panel — independent of one another — wrote the words 'average', 'modest' or 'moderate' about its performance. At times, it was moderately exciting, while at others it behaved quite insipidly. In particular, the softening of guitar sounds and reduction of ambience weighed against the AMC as a dynamic performer in the group. It also had an even-handed but dark and wooden tonal character that soon became apparent throughout every track we played. So although this is the cheapest amplifier in our test, the fundamental character of the 3050 is likely to work against it in any grouping.

The nicest thing said of the AMC's line-level stage was that it had a nice sense of completeness, in a modest kind of way. Yet

the questionable bass and 'shushy' vocals were strongly criticised. There was an initial sense of detail, which proved good at defining male and female backing vocals in the Michelle Shocked track. Sadly, it quickly paled and — by the time we approached the Rachmaninov piece — the detail had turned from a finely-etched performance to brass rubbing with a Brillo pad.

After the moderate performance of the line stage, the 3050's phono section came as a slight surprise. While maintaining that wooden quality, it shows more detail and less congestion. However, in the end, the 3050 came across as an unemotional performer.

## Conclusion

In fairness, the AMC 3050 is fighting out of its weight. The cheapest amp in the test is not the worst, but it is hardly the best either. In a cheaper grouping I firmly believe that it would shine compared to the rough sound quality of the competition. In this test, however, the 3050 fails due to its rather uninspired performance. It is moderately better through its disc stage, but still it lacks that get-up-and-go which marks the true stars.

## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★☆☆☆  
**VALUE** ★★☆☆☆  
**PRICE** £220

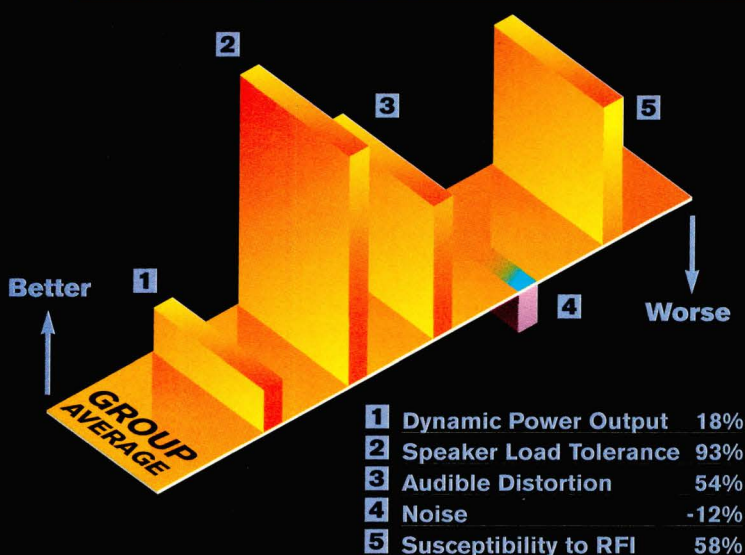
▲ Cheap and inoffensive.

▼ Lacks that vital spark.

✉ AMC, St Giles House, Narcot Lane, Chalfont St. Giles, Bucks HP8 4LH.

☎ (01494) 874366

## HOW IT COMPARES



## THE LAB REPORT

Rather like Arcam's *Alpha 6+*, this AMC amplifier packs a fearsome clout. Sufficient, in fact, to sustain bursts of 420W into just one Ohm — not bad for an amplifier rated at 45W into eight Ohms. In practice, the AMC 3050 can maintain up to 65W into eight Ohms and a full 105W into four Ohm loudspeakers with some +1.1dB of dynamic headroom to cope with orchestral peaks. However (like the *Alpha 6+*), just because the 3050 will perform very consistently, this does not imply that it will sound consistently invigorating...

The amplifier is also relatively immune to RF interference, though this has been achieved by input filtering rather than as by-product of the main circuit design. And this sort of EMC-compliance, while measuring well, can have an uncertain effect on sound quality. The line stage is also a little noisy, particularly by the standard of its own MM disc input, which boasts an 80dB S/N ratio with a very compatible 2.4mV input sensitivity and +30dB overload margin.

# Arcam Alpha 6+

Those keeping tabs on what is selling in the hi-fi shops claim that the £350 Arcam Alpha 6+ is Britain's best selling amplifier. The very fact that it outsells the Alpha 5+ amp (nigh on £100 cheaper and second most popular amp out there in dealer-land) is a tribute to the loyalty and professionalism of Arcam's dealer base.

To the casual glance, the two Arcam amps are near identical, with their defeatable tone controls and slim-line casing. Closer investigation shows that the bigger Alpha 6+ sports a remote-control facility, and under the hood you'll find a different design, equipped with a switchable mm/mc phono stage.

A noticeable foible is that the earthing rings of the rear phono sockets are remarkably easy to dislodge when plugging and unplugging the tight phono plugs found on some interconnect cables. In truth, this should not affect the end user, unless the cables are switched on a regular and slightly



heavy-handed basis, but such a weakness should be corrected by the manufacturer.

### Sound Quality

In the grand scheme of things, it was a shame that in our blind test, this amplifier followed directly after the JVC model (which suited the reference system perfectly). At its best, and despite a touch of treble grain, the Alpha 6+ played everything pretty well. Yet the listener's attention was soon lost, as it gave a bright and 'in yer face' presentation that also paradoxically sounded undynamic, lacking detail and bland. The Alpha 6+ was also criticised for lacking a sense of dimensionality and soundstage, and for being rather constricted.

At times it seemed as if the Alpha 6+ was only concerned with presenting the midband information. This made it appear impressively explicit, but in a very fatiguing and unnatural sounding manner. Surprisingly, the phono stage was felt to be even less ambitious than the line stage. While it was smoother than the line stages, there was a clear lack of definition.

Subsequent listening in a variety of less esoteric systems, however, revealed a different side to the Alpha 6+. At the Bristol Hi-

Fi Show in early February, for example, another Alpha 6+, partnered with a Marantz KI Signature CD player and a pair of budget Mordaunt-Short MS10i speakers, was givin' it large-style, making a loud, fun, vivid and powerful sound that was quite at odds with our listening panel's findings. More interesting still, these thoughts were echoed by one of the panelists who just happened to be in this demonstration room at the time. On this occasion at least, the value of experimenting with different partnering equipment cannot be denied.

### Conclusion

Arcam's amplifiers seldom do as well in our blind panel tests as their remarkably solid sales performance would suggest. The Alpha 6+ was no exception. In our blind test, there was little to commend it in absolute terms, and as such the Alpha 6+ cannot be awarded a Recommendation. Yet, our experiences with the amplifier as part of different set-ups imply that the appeal of the Alpha 6+ may be with systems that are a mite less revealing than the reference. As these normally fall better into the Arcam's budget bracket, it would be folly not to listen to the biggest seller around.

**VERDICT**

**SOUND** ★★☆☆☆  
**VALUE** ★★☆☆☆  
**PRICE** £350

▲ Lively and bravehearted in the right system.  
 ▼ Grainy; woolly; phono sockets fall off.

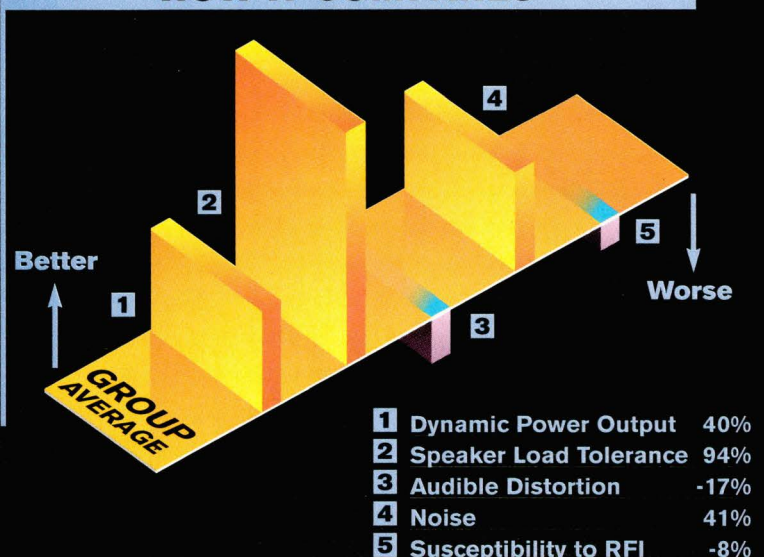
✉ A&R Cambridge (Arcam) Ltd. Pembroke Avenue, Denny Industrial Centre, Waterbeach, Cambridge CB5 9PB.  
 ☎ (01223) 440964

## THE LAB REPORT

We last tested Arcam's Alpha 6 over two years ago (in issue 129), and the model compares very favourably with its 'Plus' derivative. Both versions offer a massive 22.6A maximum current delivery (equivalent to some 511W into one Ohm!) and will happily wrestle with the most recalcitrant loudspeakers. The pattern of distortion also remains unchanged, with THD hovering around 0.006 per cent mid-band, increasing to 0.09 per cent through the treble where harder and colder-sounding odd harmonics tend to dominate.

Arcam's latest modifications have realised a substantial widening of the amplifier's S/N ratio, up from 80.4dB in the 6 to 88.1dB in this 6+ (both ref. 1W/eight Ohm). This puts Arcam in the top bracket for low noise but, perversely, is also likely to expose its sensitivity to spurious RF noise between 30 and 70MHz. Many CD players kick out RF rubbish in this region, a coincidence that's unlikely to work in Arcam's favour. So, make sure you listen to the Alpha 6+ with your own player before making any decisions!

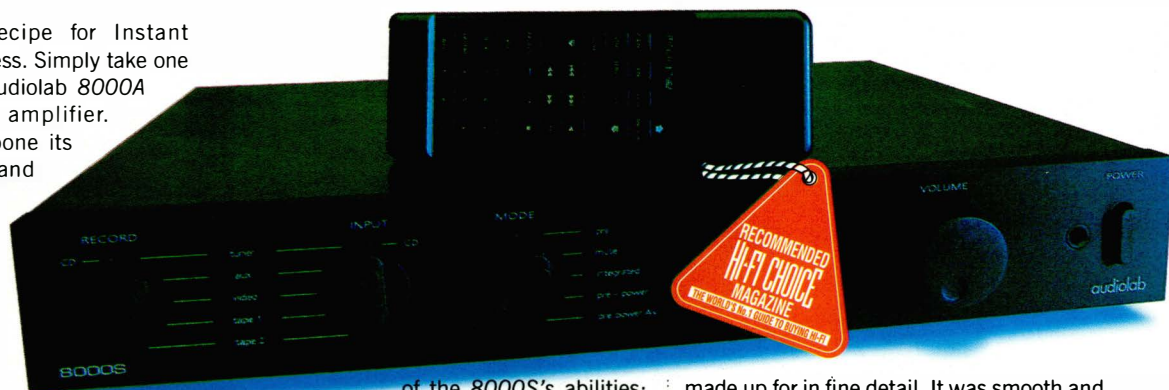
## HOW IT COMPARES



# Audiolab 8000S

**A**nd now, a recipe for Instant Amplifier Success. Simply take one ever-popular Audiolab 8000A integrated amplifier. Delicately de-bone its tone controls and phono stage. Mix with a touch of 8000Q line preamplifier. Whisk in a remote control, a microprocessor and some wholly new ingredients. Stir and bake until slightly more expensive than the original 8000A. Serve to a hungry public on a bed of rave reviews and garnish with the interconnect cable of your choice.

Basically, this sums up the new £650 8000S, in the sort of rank oversimplification we journalists are good at. It features a microprocessor-driven control circuitry that switches on the front panel only when in use. This front panel also includes a 'mode' knob, which allows the end user to drive the 8000S as an integrated amplifier, an audio preamp, a power amp, a strawberry pavlova, a bi-ampable unit and as part of an AV system. Unlike most of the other amplifiers in the test, this only skims the surface



of the 8000S's abilities: go read the brochure.

## Sound Quality

This amp has a fine bounce to it, with a tonal balance that is spot-on, save for a touch of zinginess in the treble. The bass weight that graced the Bruce Springsteen track was also particularly of note, as it had a sense of rhythmic tautness that seemed to lack in all but the select few. The 8000S was also one of the few that gave us a sense of a tactile, three-dimensional soundstage.

But the 8000S was not without its detractors. One, in particular, didn't like what he felt was its fierce, dirty, stilted and mechanical musical presentation. He further felt that this made the mouth organ of Bruce Springsteen far too razor-edged.

Most panelists, however, were less discouraged by the 8000S, and liked its endearing qualities. Whereas the Naim Nait 3 sacrificed accurate tonal color for good timekeeping and the Musical Fidelity E10 traded all for a sense of high-end warmth, it was generally felt that the 8000S was a good all-round compromise. So, for example, what it lacked in dynamic range, it

made up for in fine detail. It was smooth and refined in the Tate & Lyle manner, but without being so syrupy that the music lost all its passion. Guitar sounds on the Ezio track were a bit too slurred and the strings lacked bite. However, this comes as a pleasant change after sharply etched noises. A similar effect was also apparent on classical music: while the 8000S sounded slightly bland and soggy on strings, it still remained highly informative.

Although all of this seems limited in ambition, information is communicated very well, albeit in a somewhat cerebral manner. The 8000S seldom puts a foot wrong, but it probably wouldn't hurt if it summoned up a little more passion about the music.

## Conclusion

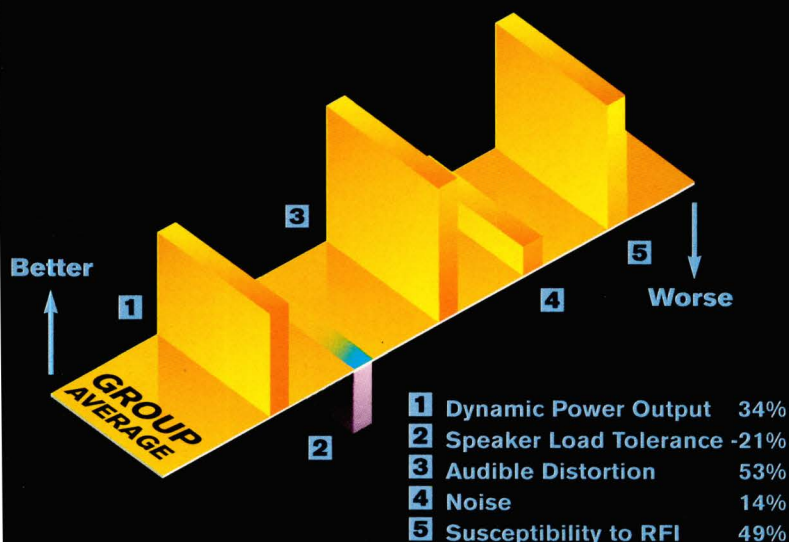
Phew! In making the 8000S, Audiolab has produced something of a future-proofed nerve-centre of an amplifier, which is just as happy in fit and forget mode. This is not some twitchy prima-donna amp, but a largely successful attempt to improve upon the original Audiolab 8000A. It can sound just a little too staid and sober at times, but earns a Recommendation nevertheless.

## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★  
**VALUE** ★★★★★  
**PRICE** £650

- ▲ Sophisticated design; nicely balanced sound.
- ▼ Too safe for its own good at times.
- ☒ Cambridge Systems Technology Ltd. Spitfire Close, Ermine Business Park, Huntingdon, Cambs PE18 6XY (01480) 52521

## HOW IT COMPARES



## THE LAB REPORT

As I've noted with previous Audiolab amplifiers, the 8000S's maximum output is pre-empted by a parasitic burst of RF that causes a momentary lurch in distortion before the true clip point is reached. This in itself is of little significance, although it does reflect the fact that the 8000S is a very wide-bandwidth design with sufficient compensation (feedback) to squash midband distortion to just 0.001 per cent. Importantly, this low distortion is unaffected by power output, despite an increase towards 0.03 per cent at higher frequencies.

Stick with conventional eight or four Ohm loudspeakers and the 8000S will maintain outputs of 78W and 129W respectively. The amplifier would, I'm sure, quite happily drive more difficult loads, but Audiolab has retained its typically conservative output protection, clamping down on bursts in excess of just 60W into one Ohm. Otherwise, the low output impedance, excellent channel balance, low noise and sensible input loading all point to a very thoughtful design.



# Creek 4240SE

In the boom-time of the late '80s, Creek was one of the mainstays of British audio. With amps like the 4240 and the new £350 4240SE, Creek has stayed true to its 'audiophile amplifier for the masses' image.

The 4240SE has garnered glowing praise from a well-known high-end US magazine, and some pundits are touting it as the best amp in its class for driving the more difficult loudspeaker loads.

The quickest way to tell the 4240SE apart from its 4240 sibling is by the SE's gold-coloured lettering on the front panel. Underneath its panel, however, a very different design has taken residence. Both amplifiers are minimalist models, forgoing the pleasures of tone controls in the attempt to get a cleaner signal path. It simply offers a volume and source selector knob, a smaller balance knob, and a button for power and tape monitor. There is also a headphone socket. Like its predecessor, the 4240SE seems to benefit from a 20-minute warm-up before any critical listening.



### Sound Quality

To say that this amp did poorly in the blind test is the sort of understatement that even politicians would wince at. For whatever reason, the Creek bombed out big time. At first, it was likened to a louder version of the Musical Fidelity E10, but that would deny the E10 some of its positive attributes, making it seem like an amp with no interest in driving or controlling its loudspeakers.

In fact, one vitriolic listener felt that 'wooden', 'shouty' and 'honky' were the only positive words that could be elicited on behalf of the 4240SE. Every other comment was far less complimentary — and even less printable. While another listener commented on the big and loud sound the Creek produced, the rest of our panel found it rather uninteresting, save for the harsh and unpleasant character to male voices.

At best, its performance was even in a bland sort of way, normally when handling simple compositions. On such music the treble was quite well handled, but it tended to turn harsh and shouty at the first sign of musical dynamics. In the end, our panelists were quite keen to get the Creek listening over with, and the last CD was ripped out of the tray before I had a chance to get to it. The 4240SE's plodding performance

strongly suggests that Spear & Jackson have headed in the wrong direction on their mission to ameliorate the company's fave amp.

In subsequent and sighted listening, the Creek fared only slightly better. Using a pair of Neat *Mystique* speakers and an AVI 2000MC CD player, the 4240SE enforced a tidy, ordered beat. However, there was an overall lack of 3D soundstage and a fair bit of grain. At low levels, the bland sound returned, only to be replaced by brashness at higher listening levels.

With simple rock music, the Creek was distinctly better, despite getting more and more disordered as the music became complex. Classical music, such as Bach's *Mass in B Minor*, was a bit of a non-starter: everything was too bright and forward, and the grain on voices became even more noticeable than ever.

### Conclusion

Can this be the same amplifier that one US magazine claimed was about the finest integrated at its price-level? Can this be the same integrated that is said to show such promise in 'difficult' demonstrations and with demanding loudspeakers? If so, perhaps we have found the chink in the Creek 4240SE's armour. And a rather big, grainy and unconvincing chink it is too!

### VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★☆☆☆  
**VALUE** ★★☆☆☆  
**PRICE** £350

▲ Is rumoured to be better at driving 'difficult' speakers than it appears; reasonable timing.

▼ Didn't work at all well in our systems; grainy.

✉ Creek Audio Ltd, 2 Bellevue Road, Friern Barnet, London N11 3ES.

☎ (0181) 361 4133

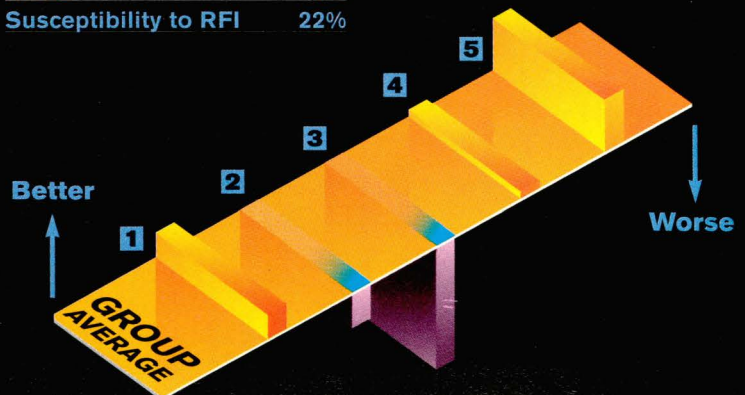
## THE LAB REPORT

Although this model looks superficially similar to the 4240 tested in issue 134, the intervening period has witnessed something of an internal revamp. Power output is up from 49W to 63W, while the maximum current delivery has risen from a sad 5.5A to a less-sad-but-not-exactly-thunderous 8A. Distortion has been squeezed from typically 0.025 per cent to as low as 0.0014 per cent in this instance, though THD increases both with increasing output and frequency — hence the inauspicious bar graph rating.

This internal re-think has also compromised the 4240's noise performance, reducing the original 92dB A-wtd S/N ratio to just -84dB here. The upshot? Another sagging bar on our graph. On the other hand, this 4240 does enjoy a far lower 0.007 Ohm output impedance, so it won't be fazed by speakers with a 'wobbly' response. Once again, even if the L/R channel tolerance of Creek's balance knob is very accurate, it has no centre detent position and no 'bypass' facility so you'll still have to adjust the relative R/L level 'by ear'.

## HOW IT COMPARES

- |   |                        |      |
|---|------------------------|------|
| 1 | Dynamic Power Output   | 9%   |
| 2 | Speaker Load Tolerance | -8%  |
| 3 | Audible Distortion     | -48% |
| 4 | Noise                  | 7%   |
| 5 | Susceptibility to RFI  | 22%  |



# Densen Beat B-100

**D**anish-built Densen amplifiers are based on a curious design criterion called 'the air guitar factor'.

According to the blurb, all Densen amps (there's a big-ger integrated and a pre/power too) have to be able to make any listener want to get up and spank the imaginary plank. The company also supplies a picture of a semi-clothed bloke with a hat doing it to the real thing as a guideline. One comment springs to mind: are we supposed to want to play air guitar whenever we hear the Densen? 'Cos it seems a little inappropriate during a performance of *Tosca*. Air tenor, perhaps?

Air guitar notwithstanding, the £600 *Beat B100* is the budget baby in the Densen range. You can tell by its knobs — they're not fully grown by Densen standards, you see. One golden knob controls the volume, while the other is a source selector. Unless you count the on/off switch at the rear and a red power indicator LED between the two knobs, that's it in the facility stakes.



## Sound Quality

While the *Beat B100* never sounded more powerful than it actually was, it had a sense of control that was easy to enthuse over. Music was never allowed to drift into waywardness, instead towing the path of civility. One panelist even went as far as to claim that it seemed a little anally retentive — but I think his Freudian slip was showing.

Its control did make for a relatively dry performance, almost lacking a touch of drama and verve at times. This may keep the *Beat B100* from being a first choice for the more dull-sounding speakers around. There was solidity aplenty, but no vivacity to add to the music, if required. This honest approach is highly praised by our panel, who grew to like the amplifier with each successive track. What began as 'unimpressive' mellowed to 'really not bad at all' in the space of ten minutes.

By the end of the test, most panelists were intrigued by the *Beat B100*. One even claimed that this was the kind of product you'd love to investigate. The Densen occasionally seemed to lack the finer details, especially in the treble, which could turn it into a shut-in sounding performer at times. However, this also meant that it very rarely

sounded fierce or offensive. One of the few exceptions to this was the Michelle Shocked track, which sounded more forward than usual. Another peculiar attribute was that it had a strange lack of stereo depth, which made distant voices simply sound small.

One last important factor remains: Did we 'air guitar'? Well, certainly not during the Rachmaninov and Eric Dolphy tracks. But in fairness, the *Beat B100* did have a pretty good sense of rhythm, although not noticeable enough to be commented upon in a favourable light. Instead, this amp simply got on with the rhythmic task in a workman-like manner, eliciting no real comment — good or bad. As rhythm is generally noted more in the breach than in the observance, this is a sign of good breeding in an amplifier.

## Conclusion

The *Beat B100* almost sounded a bit too Victorian Dad in the reference system, but despite this its authority may not go amiss with mid-price speakers that need the firm hand of discipline. As such, on a system that needs a few firm corrective measures, this is a recommendation that almost passed us by. In the real world of speakers, Densen's control freak could be just right. A bit of a grower.

## VERDICT

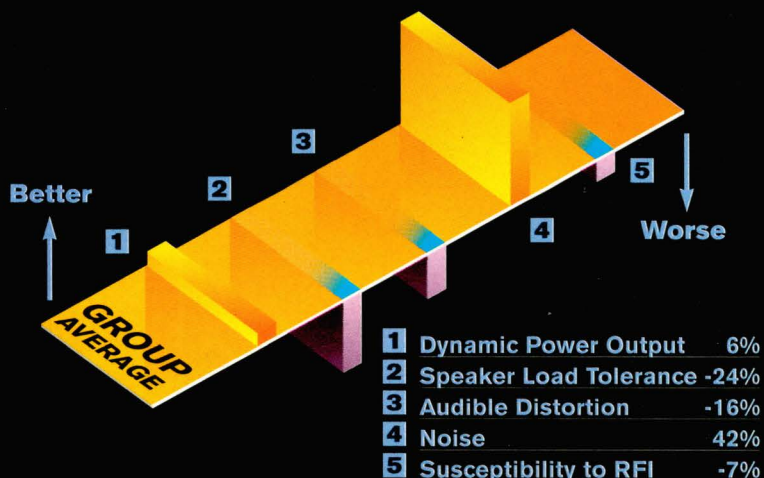
**SOUND** ★★★★★  
**VALUE** ★★★★★  
**PRICE** £600

▲ Controlled and refined; more honest than most.  
 ▼ Not every system needs such rigid control; lacks ultimate detail.

✉ Densen Audio Technology, Randersvej 28, 6700 Esbjerg, Denmark.

☎ (01582) 561227.

## HOW IT COMPARES



## THE LAB REPORT

One or two unusual specifications are cited in Densen's literature, including an unnecessarily wide 2Hz-200kHz frequency response and a DC offset which is 'typically less than 40mV'. Few manufacturers bother to mention DC offsets, and fewer still will choose an arbitrary figure like 40mV. In practice, this *B-100* suffered a -90mV DC offset on its right channel, which is more than sufficient to bias the bass driver on some loudspeakers.

Fortunately, the *B-100* meets its 60W/100W eight/four Ohm power specification with 'real' figures of 67W and 118W respectively. This represents an increase of some +2.5dB, which suggests that Densen uses a very stiff, well-regulated power supply (which also diminishes its dynamic headroom). Unfortunately, electronic protection prevents it from tackling really tricky speakers head-on.

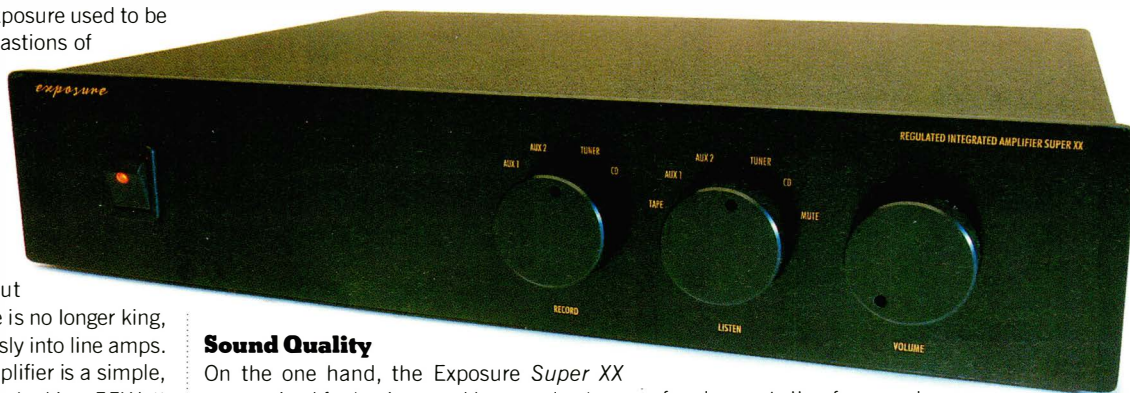
There's also a massive increase in distortion from 0.04 per cent in the midband to 0.63 per cent at HF with extended even-order harmonics dominating the spectrum, almost regardless of power output. So why the extended frequency response?

# Exposure Super XX

Alongside Naim, Exposure used to be one of the great bastions of the British 'Flat Earth' school. Many a Linn turntable and speakers were partnered with Exposure amps during the '80s, and the company's supporters were loyal and vociferous. But times change, the turntable is no longer king, and Exposure is now seriously into line amps.

The £700 *Super XX* amplifier is a simple, solid and rather unexciting-looking 55Watt amplifier, now with bigger knobs than usual. There is no denying the elegance and simplicity of the thick, brushed-black front panel. There isn't a plethora of controls: only source and tape selector dials, volume control and an on/off switch. Even so, the amp still takes a time to warm up each time it is turned on. Anyone seeking headphone sockets, remote controls or tone controls should look elsewhere.

Exposure stipulates its own brand of multistrand copper cable. However, as the *Super XX* does not appear as cable-fussy as Exposure suggests in its literature, it was tested using the usual reference cables.



## Sound Quality

On the one hand, the Exposure *Super XX* was praised for having good bass and coherence, with a fine sense of flow and rhythm. Indeed, it came as a breeze of freedom after earlier products in the test. The most vociferous supporter of the *Super XX* pointed at its ability to give each instrument its own sense of dynamics. Bass lines were also considered to be deeper and more fluid than many other amplifiers in our test.

However, its plus points were offset by a serious lack of attention-grabbingness. While it didn't bite off any more than it could chew, the *Super XX* was so conservative in its expressiveness that one listener felt a strong urge to reach for his pipe and slippers. One panelist (who was very conversant with Exposure products) expressed some surprise about this result, but then noted that Exposure often sounds more successful with speakers that are fundamentally characterful and quite zingy.

Subsequent listening on a pair of metal-domed Neat *Mystiques* confirmed this by sounding considerably more lively — especially at higher volumes. The transistorised quality was not subsumed, but it separates things out well and made a sound that is

fundamentally fun and extremely musical.

On the second listening day — using Exposure's own cable — the panel was even less impressed by the less-than-engaging character of the *Super XX*, and found it rhythmically flat and lifeless. Curiously, given the company's reputation, if ever there was a justification for pace, rhythm and timing, this was it — because it didn't seem to have any. While even the most curmudgeonly felt it was a good ear-massager in the bass, the musical performance was not to everybody's taste.

## Conclusion

This was very definitely an amp with a flavour, but not a flavour that appeals to every set of audio tastebuds. Judicious system matching is likely to elicit better results than those we got in the blind test, but the fundamental fluidity and conservatism will impinge on any system. While the blind test weighs heavily against formal recommendation, the *Super XX* should not be dismissed out of hand. It's worth a listen, especially with zesty speakers full of character. ➡➡

## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★☆☆☆  
**VALUE** ★★☆☆☆  
**PRICE** £700

▲ Distinctive musical quality; good bass and some flow.  
 ▼ Grey and grainy until it is wicked up; needs careful speaker matching.

✉ Exposure Electronics, The Works, 59 North Street, Portslade, Sussex BN41 1DH  
 ☎ (01273) 423877

## THE LAB REPORT

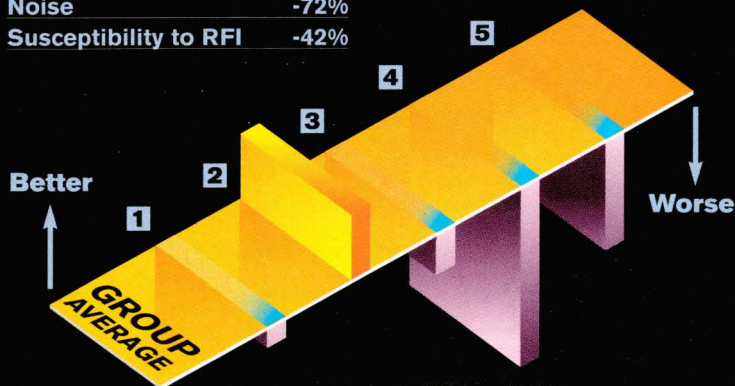
This is a very 'characterful' amplifier. Its L/R channel balance, for example, is marvellous at all volume levels, although channel separation (crosstalk from L to R and vice-versa) is relatively poor by modern standards. This also points to unwanted capacitive coupling between the parallel circuit tracks running across the depth of its PCB.

Second only to the Alchemist, this *Super XX* is also very sensitive to interference from on-line RF noise, and especially in the 45-80MHz region populated by many CD players. Fortunately, this effect may be clouded by the amplifier's relatively poor 73dB S/N ratio (ref. 1W/eight Ohm). Otherwise, distortion decreases with increasing power output (swamping crossover distortion caused by inadequate biasing) but remains relatively high through the treble frequencies.

At lower frequencies, the reproduction of good, strong bass is hampered both by the relatively high 0.3 Ohm output impedance and the meagre +0.4dB dynamic headroom. These are just two likely factors behind the soft and sluggish sound of the *Super XX*.

## HOW IT COMPARES

1	Dynamic Power Output	-6%
2	Speaker Load Tolerance	30%
3	Audible Distortion	-16%
4	Noise	-72%
5	Susceptibility to RFI	-42%



# John Shearne Phase 2

John Shearne amplifiers were among the first to stress the importance of looks as well as sound quality. The first amplifier, produced back in the early '90s, was the hefty *Phase 1* pre/power combo, but from the start the blue marbled effect front panel and silver knobs were a clear trademark. Opinions are divided as to whether this is the height of amp fashion or slightly gaudy and very '80s, but who am I to comment? I found out that Armani wasn't a sporty Fiat only last week.

Beneath the slick skin of the £649 *Phase 2* is a Class A/B, 50W line-only integrated amplifier. But there are a number of options, such as one of two phono stages; a £76 moving magnet stage, or a moving-coil stage, set up at the factory to the exact specifications of the cartridge, for £86. Then there's the £45 headphone option. Plus, there is an extra set of inputs at the rear of the *Phase 2* to allow it to be bi-amped (or even tri-amped, if your speakers can take it) with a £619 *Phase 3* power amp to drive the bass unit. It is even possible to upgrade by disconnecting the preamp stage at the



factory and adding an £895 *Phase 6* preamp. Just about the only option not available is the built-in microwave oven.

## Sound Quality

This amplifier was initially liked by most listeners for its sheer finesse and its clean, tidy and unassertive manner, even though, occasionally, it seemed that 'clean' to some appeared as 'nasal' to others. Voices, however, were never strained or edgy, especially when it came to the backing vocals on the Michelle Shocked track.

All agreed that the *Phase 2* lacked some clarity, as the music came across as being a bit over-damped, especially in the bass. Here, the *Phase 2* was a little less than solid and hard-hitting on bass guitar notes.

However, about halfway into the second track, the comments from the panelists began to diverge dramatically. It quickly became apparent that there was something very odd happening. In the red corner, those who liked the *Phase 2*'s character were basking in its glorious sound. In the blue corner, those who didn't like it were trying to turn off every CD placed in the draw like a pack of unruly schoolkids. Difference of opinion is one thing, but this was ridiculous.

The oddest thing was that no-one sat on the fence. "Unlistenable," scrawled one panelist as the Eric Dolphy track was playing. "Vivid, bold and colourful," enthused another.

For every panelist who enjoyed the 'fresh, up-beat and musically open' sound, there was another who compared it to 'cooking in olive oil instead of lard'. Even very strong attributes were divided. For example, the positive sense of acoustic felt by one panel member became a lack of separation to the ears of another.

In short, I could not get the panel to agree on a single thing, which is surprisingly rare. Good thing there wasn't a phono stage, or they'd be lamping each other with bits of hi-fi by the end of the first track.

## Conclusion

This amp split our panel with a fire-axe. Those that liked it, loved it; those that didn't, hated it. Few products have caused so polarised a listening test. As such, I cannot award this amplifier a formal recommendation. While I hate to fall back on the biggest cliché in the reviewer's lexicon, go and try the John Shearne *Phase 2* for yourself. If the reactions of our blind listening panel is anything to go by, nearly half of you will never look back.

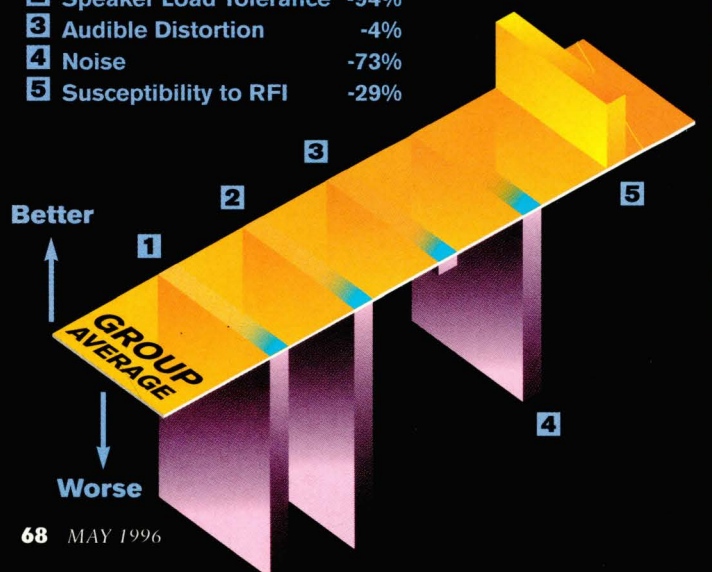
## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★☆☆☆  
**VALUE** ★★☆☆☆  
**PRICE** £649

▲ One of the best mid-price integrated amps around.  
 ▼ One of the worst mid-price integrated amps around.  
 ✉ Shearne Audio, PO Box 22, Stevenage, Herts SG2 8HF  
 ☎ (01438) 740953

## HOW IT COMPARES

- 1 Dynamic Power Output -88%
- 2 Speaker Load Tolerance -94%
- 3 Audible Distortion -4%
- 4 Noise -73%
- 5 Susceptibility to RFI -29%



## THE LAB REPORT

Having just supplied us with one test sample of Shearne's *Phase 2* amplifier, the company insisted on replacing it with a second sample that, apparently, "sounded better". Sadly, this second sample proved distinctly lacklustre, affording 40W into eight Ohms but only 29W into four Ohms, where some 70W would have been more appropriate. The *negative* dynamic headroom and paltry 2.1A current delivery explain why the *Phase 2* is the least speaker-tolerant amplifier in our survey.

I could squeeze out progressively more power at higher frequencies, although this was accompanied by a relatively low frequency (0.5MHz) RF oscillation that, in turn, prompted an increase in harmonic distortion. The complex distortion pattern, poor -73dB S/N ratio (re. 1W/eight Ohm), high output impedance and lack of power all contribute to this amplifier's downfall. If the *Phase 2* proves to be faulty, I am left wondering about the nature of Shearne's quality control procedures.

# JVC AX-A662

In the realm of the hi-fi industry, JVC is one of the strong, silent types. It produces consistently competent products that sell very well in less specialist shops. In Japan, JVC produces the sort of ultra-high-end components that can give even the likes of Mark Levinson a run for its money. By contrast, JVC's presence in the pukka UK hi-fi marketplace is conspicuous by its near-complete absence.

This may be due, in part, to the rather austere appearance of the £329 AX-A662 amplifier. By comparison to the other entries in our test, this is the feature-meister, for the JVC positively drips with almost every facility one could wish for in an integrated. The AX-A662 is also by far the biggest amplifier this time around, which in some way reflects the 90 Watts it's got under its bonnet.

### Sound Quality

This amplifier stood out thanks to its tidy, ordered performance, with all sorts of low-level detail clearly defined. Independently of one another, all the members of the panel noted for the very first time the subtle patter of fingers on sax keys on the Eric Dolphy track.



Then came the bottom end, which was both superbly well-extended and capable of holding down a good — but not first-class — rhythm. This almost bottomless pit of bass was not only well controlled but also gave all instruments a sense of solidity unheard of in this grouping — even when the instrument in question had no bass content to speak of. Such bass potency and solidity helped to make the AX-A662 one of the largest images in the group, with even the most sound-stage-resistant member of the team commenting positively.

Unlike most of the Recommended products in this test, the JVC did not try to colour the sound of the music playing. It was fundamentally neutral in character, which makes for honest portrayal of voices and instruments on all the recordings. Yet this may not prove so successful a prospect when connected to 'real world' speakers from the same price bracket, as these may sound too flat and lifeless with such an accurate amp. Regardless, the JVC was one

of the only amps to break through the difficult two-minute Eric Dolphy Best Buy barrier with a sound that was just that bit more articulate and informative than the rest.

When it came to quality, the A662 more than satisfied. It could push its dynamic range to the edge, but never over it. The panel noted a certain lack of space around the instruments, along with the slight lack of rhythmic drive and a treble that verged on the strident and unrefined. These minor reservations aside, the JVC made an almost flawless performance on the line stages. By contrast, the phono stage was too bass-light and cloudy. But at this price-level, it is best to opt for a separate phono preamp anyway.

### Conclusion

Languishing in the back of the JVC catalogue, it is with some regret that we came across the AX-A662 amplifier so late in its life, as we have been informed that it is just been discontinued. While we look forward to its replacement, our only advice is to buy now, while stocks of this clearly Best Buy amplifier last.

**VERDICT**

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £329

▲ Big, fluid sounding amp; huge bass; tidy and controlled.

▼ A trifle shut-in; phono stage less good; not many left.

✉ JVC UK Ltd, JVC House, JVC Business Park, Priestley Way, London NW2 7BA.

☎ (0181) 450 3282

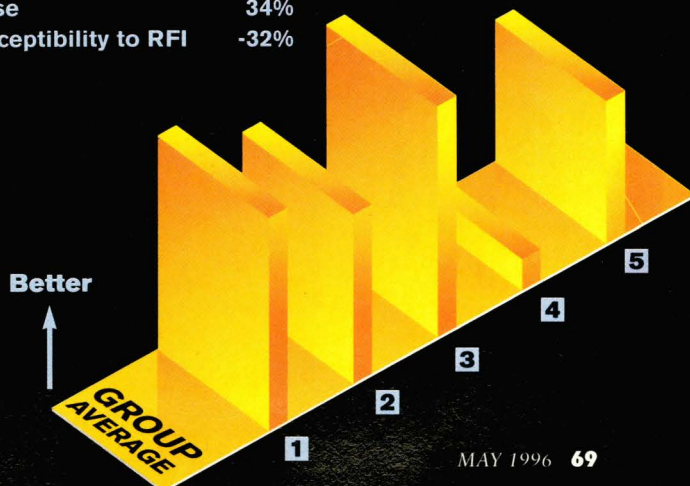
## THE LAB REPORT

By all accounts, JVC's AX-A662 has proved to be a real trooper, with the highest power output (dynamic or otherwise) and lowest distortion trend of any amplifier in this test. It will maintain a full 200W into four Ohm loads although this sags, relatively speaking, to bursts of 188W into one Ohm. If the amplifier were a perfect 'voltage source' then this latter figure would have been closer to 800W! So the AX-A662 is not quite as speaker-tolerant as, say, the AMC, despite the latter being less powerful on paper.

Distortion is very low, typically 0.001-0.0025 per cent and, importantly, remains consistently low with changes in power output and frequency. This is a thoroughly welcome but unusual feature for what is, in all honesty, a fairly traditional moderate-to-high feedback design. Both CD and MM inputs have a very extended bass response with a slight upward tilt at HF (+0.4dB and +0.7dB at 20kHz, respectively), while the input sensitivities, input loading and S/N ratios are all textbook stuff.

## HOW IT COMPARES

- 1 Dynamic Power Output 42%
- 2 Speaker Load Tolerance 66%
- 3 Audible Distortion 17%
- 4 Noise 34%
- 5 Susceptibility to RFI -32%

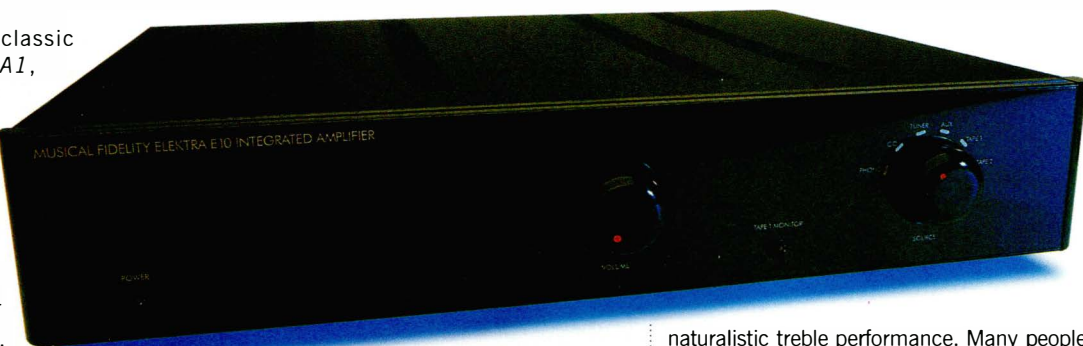


# Musical Fidelity E10

In the past, with classic amplifiers like the A1, Musical Fidelity has defined the sound for audiophiles on a tight budget.

However, stringent safety regulations make high-bias Class A amps, hot enough to fry an egg on, a thing of the past. MF has moved with the times, and recently launched its £300 E10. It is a sleek, glossy-looking amplifier that comes with a matching CD player and tuner. All three boxes can be purchased for just under the £1,000 mark, so that you can afford a bag of chips to celebrate on the way home.

A line-only design, the E10 hides a 40W line-only amplifier behind the piano gloss front panel. Yet another minimalist design, this MF amp only has an on/off and tape monitor switch, and a volume and input selector sporting — as a wild concession to luxury — LEDs on both dials. There is also a headphone socket hidden away on the side panel. Best of all, however, is the nine-page manual, which has the slick, professional design often missing from home-grown electronics, with the likes of Naim, Arcam and Audiolab excepted.



## Sound Quality

The E10 is not the kind of amplifier that screams 'buy me' at the first audition. Consequently, in our blind test it fared quite poorly at first, compared to more immediately-rewarding amplifiers. The E10 initially came across as a somewhat bland-sounding amplifier, described by one wag as rather like a currant bun, without the currants. Once again, the pipe and slippers analogy reared its head, especially on the Eric Dolphy track. Here, the normally laconic track took on an unengaging character due to a lack of speed in low-level detail. Instead of expressing much through little, the E10 just went for little, making this performance even more avant-garde than usual.

As the listening test progressed, our team began to warm to the amp. One panelist particularly liked the feeling of earthiness and the sense of real musicians playing their instruments. All agreed that it was more natural than 'hi-fi' sounding. Yet, also all agreed that it was one of the least dynamic performers in the test.

There was much to commend in the E10's presentation of vocals — especially female vocals in the Michelle Shocked track. This was felt to be due to the very sweet and

naturalistic treble performance. Many people are put off hi-fi when they hear the rasping treble that often accompanies lower-cost gear. Unless this amplifier is partnered with the most vicious of metal dome tweeters, those people will find nothing of fault in the E10.

Perhaps the most elegant way of describing the E10's overall performance is to compare it to dark chocolate. The texture of the sound is slightly gritty and grainy and the tonal balance is on the rich, warm side, but it is definitely something for a more adult palate — for those who want something a little different from yer average Kit-Kat.

## Conclusion

While not the most exciting amplifier in the test, the MF E10 does offer glimpses into the sound produced by considerably more expensive high-end amplifiers. You can't get something for nothing, though, and consequently the E10 is a trifle over-ambitious in its sonic styling and just falls short of receiving the laurels. Getting a sound close to the high-end takes more cash than this. If you crave warmth and softness at the expense of some dynamic range and rhythmic drive then check it out, but if you're after the perfect amp to play up-beat Sly and the Family Stone discs, you should look elsewhere.

## VERDICT

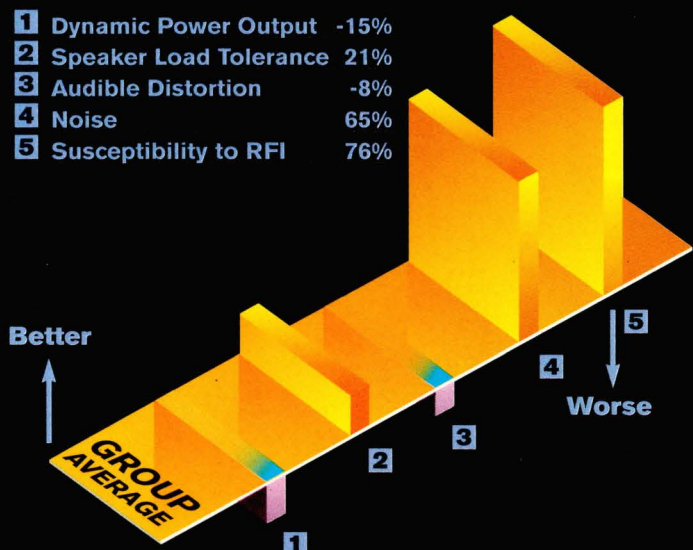
**SOUND** ★★★★★  
**VALUE** ★★★★★  
**PRICE** £300

▲ Good attempt to bring high-end sonics to new low cost.  
▼ A bit too warm and fluffy.

✉ Musical Fidelity Ltd 15/16 Olympic Trading Estate, Fulton Road, Wembley, Middx, HA9 0TF  
☎ (0181) 900 2866

## HOW IT COMPARES

- 1 Dynamic Power Output -15%
- 2 Speaker Load Tolerance 21%
- 3 Audible Distortion -8%
- 4 Noise 65%
- 5 Susceptibility to RFI 76%



## THE LAB REPORT

The baby of Musical Fidelity's E-Series is no powerhouse, but it does have one or two claims to fame. Instead of suddenly running out of steam, for example, the E10 'soft-clips' (not unlike NAD's amplifiers), producing a gradual increase in distortion rather than an abrupt and harsh waterfall of harmonics. However well disguised, the E10's limited output is not really suited to difficult or low sensitivity loudspeakers, but at least there's plenty of dynamic headroom to help convey a 'louder' sound with easy-drive loudspeakers.

Distortion increases with frequency rather than power output (from 0.002-0.09 per cent) on both CD and MM inputs, while the disc stage suffers slightly more intermodulation (-72dB instead of -86dB for the CD input). There's no sensitivity to RF noise which, bearing in mind the fabulous 91dB S/N ratio achieved by the relatively low-gain line stage, is a very good thing. As a result, the sweet sound of music (this amp has a slightly tailored treble) should not be contaminated by the rough hand of RF interference.

# Myryad MI 120

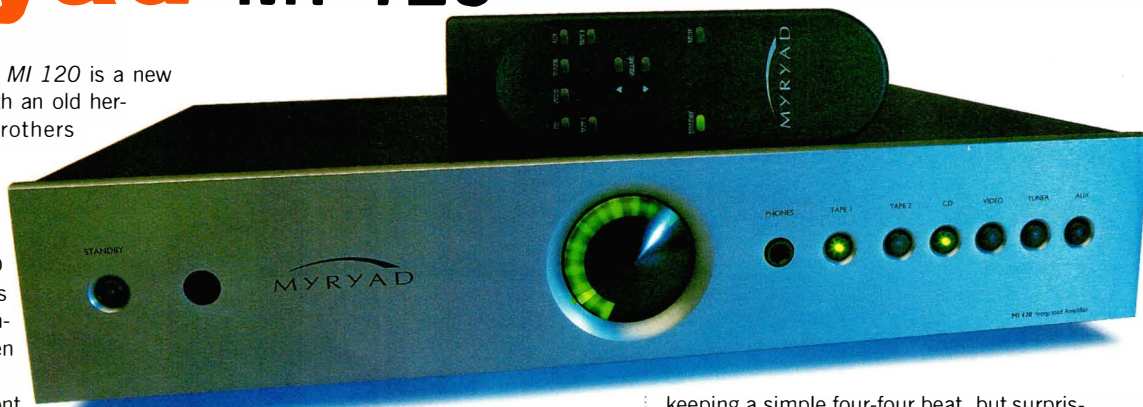
The £539 Myryad *MI 120* is a new 60 Watt amp with an old heritage, for the brothers behind it — Chris and David Evans — were the creators of such hi-fi amplifier alumni as the classic NAD 3020 and the sort of amps that made Arcam's reputation back in the days when it was A&R Cambridge.

The *MI 120* has a front panel that reveals its noble background. The combination of silvered front panel, and big, remotely-controlled knob, makes the Myryad look sophisticated and very up-to-date. It is also well specified, as its front panel suggests, with a functional remote control and neat green LEDs throughout.

This amp is designed to be the first in a series of Myryad products, as it can be readily bi-amped using a £449 *MA 120* power amplifier. In addition, it sports 'My-Link' system connections at the rear to allow the remote control to operate forthcoming Myryad hi-fi gear.

## Sound Quality

We were not wholly taken in by the Myryad amplifier. Although tonally fairly neutral and



keeping a simple four-four beat, but surprisingly, the music didn't appear to flow very well. In all, this sounded like a small amp trying hard, but sometimes stumbling. "I bet it measures well," was noted down by one panelist, somewhat sarcastically.

Even a second blind visit to the land of Myryad did little to sway the results. While not openly hostile, our next set of Three Stooges were unimpressed by its chrome-plated and over-explicit initial performance. We also noted that beneath this sheen lay a complete lack of musical synergy, flow and involvement, which gave the already seemingly random Eric Dolphy track all the involvement of a car-park.

One panelist felt that the bass was punchy, slick, and quite tight on the Michelle Shocked track — but that's quite a punchy piece of music anyway. He further enjoyed the slightly clinical, forthright presentation, describing it as clear and articulate. Yet even he didn't find the overall presentation especially exciting.

The rest of the troupe complained of soft dynamics that led to a compressed, restrained sound, in need of some 'freeing up'. Then there was the cold, dry tone, with a considerable high-frequency haze, hardness and glare. This — allied to a lack of low-level detail — helped undermine the ring of the strings of the guitar in the Ezio track. Rhythmically, the Myryad was good at

keeping a simple four-four beat, but surprisingly, the music didn't appear to flow very well. In all, this sounded like a small amp trying hard, but sometimes stumbling. "I bet it measures well," was noted down by one panelist, somewhat sarcastically.

Even a second blind visit to the land of Myryad did little to sway the results. While not openly hostile, our next set of Three Stooges were unimpressed by its chrome-plated and over-explicit initial performance. We also noted that beneath this sheen lay a complete lack of musical synergy, flow and involvement, which gave the already seemingly random Eric Dolphy track all the involvement of a car-park.

## Conclusion

I found the *MI 120* to be the most attractive and bang up-to-date-looking amp in the test. However, looks alone do not an amplifier make, and wrapping a rather old-fashioned sounding amp in a neat box is not a recipe for success. While it is on the forthright yet pleasant side of things, the Myryad only just stays out of the realm of the boring. On the up-side the *MI 120* is quite rhythmic and dry, but it's a shame that it is simply too lightweight and well controlled for its own good.

**VERDICT**

**SOUND** ★★☆☆☆

**VALUE** ★★☆☆☆

**PRICE** £449

▲ Stylish design: cold, dry tone suits very rich-sounding speakers.

▼ Its beauty is little more than skin deep.

✉ Myryad Systems Ltd, 2 Pipers Wood, Waterbury Drive, Waterlooville, Hants PO7 7XU.

☎ (01705) 265508

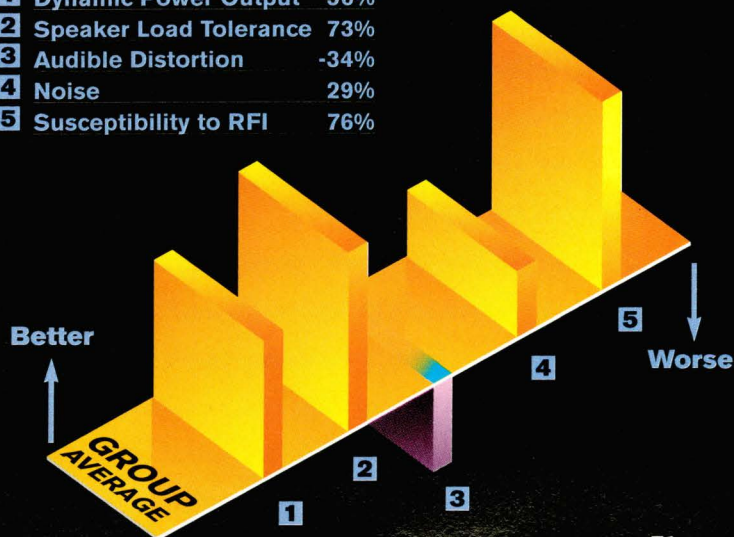
## THE LAB REPORT

Thanks to its thumping-great mains toroid, the *MI-120* is a very solid performer with plenty of power in reserve to thrash recalcitrant loudspeakers. However, while bursts in excess of 400W look pretty impressive, the wide power bandwidth, very abrupt clipping and low output impedance are also indicative of a tightly regulated design with plenty of compensation at work — features that look great on paper but which can also result in a slightly cold and unsympathetic sound.

This is reflected in the sagging 'distortion' bargraph, which indicates the changing nature of the *MI-120's* non-linearities. With this amplifier, distortion varies through both changing power output (0.001-0.006 percent) and through frequency (0.001-0.013 per cent), preventing it from adopting either a neutral or consistent personality. EMC-countermeasures effectively block any incoming RF but, once again, this may have unforeseen side-effects in the sonic arena. Otherwise, this looks to be a very well-built, flexible (with remote control) and inherently reliable design. A good first effort.

## HOW IT COMPARES

- |   |                        |      |
|---|------------------------|------|
| 1 | Dynamic Power Output   | 56%  |
| 2 | Speaker Load Tolerance | 73%  |
| 3 | Audible Distortion     | -34% |
| 4 | Noise                  | 29%  |
| 5 | Susceptibility to RFI  | 76%  |

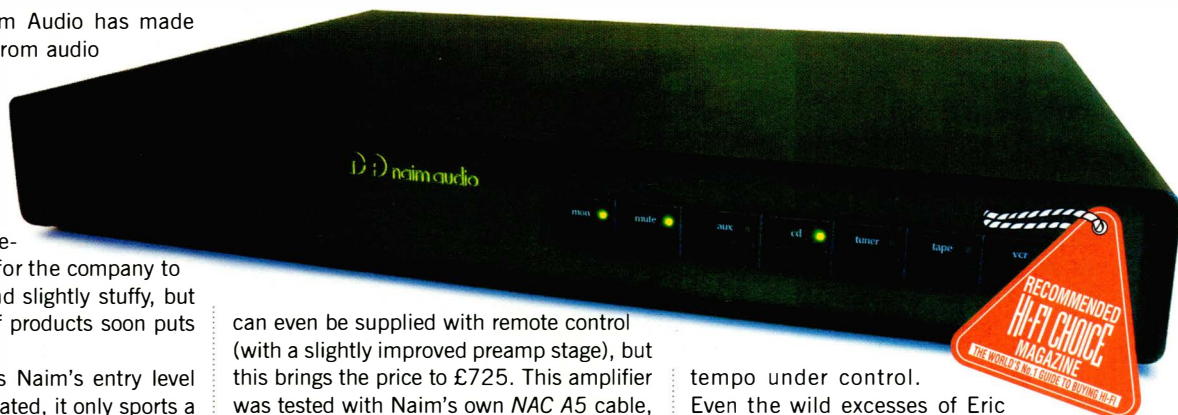


# Naim Nait 3

Salisbury's Naim Audio has made the transition from audio heretic to audio mainstream in under a quarter of a century. Then it took on the establishment and won. At present, it would be easy for the company to become complacent and slightly stuffy, but one look at its range of products soon puts paid to that thought.

The £550 *Nait 3* is Naim's entry level amplifier. A 30W integrated, it only sports a volume, balance and source selector array on the front panel. Unlike previous *Naits*, the *Nait 3* comes in the rounded, slimline, full width style introduced two years ago, which retains the green front-panel light and Naim look without recourse to the expensive casing used on the more traditional Naim kit. Even the on/off switch is at the rear, so you'd better leave the amp on at all times, especially as there is a noticeable thump when it's powered up or down.

The *Nait 3* can be upgraded, by the addition of a £317 *Flat Cap* power supply and a touch of modification, and it can be fitted with Naim's respected £75 phono boards. It



can even be supplied with remote control (with a slightly improved preamp stage), but this brings the price to £725. This amplifier was tested with Naim's own *NAC A5* cable, as the design suggests.

## Sound Quality

Not what you'd call a paragon of neutrality, this rather coloured amplifier was nonetheless impressively weighty and dynamic. Its treble was clean and focused, its bass deep and dark toned, and the mid-range, while somewhat reticent, was lucid and coherent. I found that we kept the music playing for longer than usual, which is a very good sign.

One listener felt that the *Nait 3* had a touch of the Dunn & Co tailoring with a rolled-off top and softened sharp edges — suits you, sir — as well as a general sense of image vagueness. But the rest of the group praised the *Nait 3*'s busy, informative presentation. While the sound was considered slightly too thin and immature with the massed strings of Rachmaninov's *Second Symphony*, all were impressed by the live 'feel' to the overall performance.

The *Nait 3* keeps everything temporal neat and tidy. No matter how complex a rhythmic structure, the humble *Nait 3* delves deep into its rhythm bag to keep the

tempo under control.

Even the wild excesses of Eric Dolphy's *Hat and Beard* were made understandable and listenable.

This, combined with the coloration, might suggest that the *Nait 3* imposes too much character on the music, and all conceded that it was moderately better on rock music than classical. While the least *Nait 3*-friendly panelist found it to be a lot better than the grey sound associated with most of the amps in the group, the rest of us simply felt that it was the most musical of the group by a country mile.

## Conclusion

Given the caveat about coloration and the amplifier's slight propensity toward rock programme, it is easy to see why Naim has earned its reputation.

While most amplifiers in the group concern themselves with prissy hi-fi attributes like imagery and the like, the *Nait 3* cuts to the quick and simply lays down music. If you feel that music is for playing and not studying, then the *Nait 3* is for you and (in the nicest possible way, of course) it's nice if you like it dirty!

## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★☆  
**VALUE** ★★★★★☆  
**PRICE** £550

▲ Cuts through to the core of the music; infectious sense of rhythm.

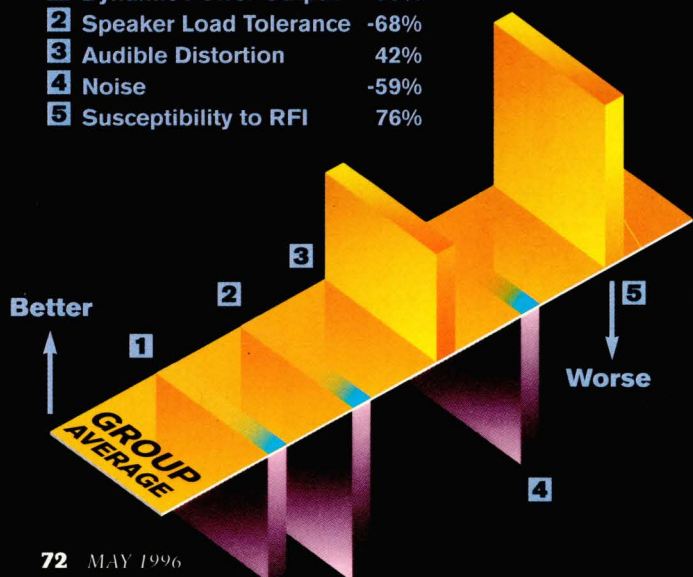
▼ Uncompromising stance will not suit everybody.

✉ Naim Audio, Southampton Road, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP1 2LN.

☎ (01722) 332266

## HOW IT COMPARES

- |   |                        |      |
|---|------------------------|------|
| 1 | Dynamic Power Output   | -50% |
| 2 | Speaker Load Tolerance | -68% |
| 3 | Audible Distortion     | 42%  |
| 4 | Noise                  | -59% |
| 5 | Susceptibility to RFI  | 76%  |



## THE LAB REPORT

Naim's *Nait 3* is a somewhat quirky but intriguing amplifier. For example, with no centre detent for its balance control, the ideal channel matching for this sample was achieved with the balance knob slightly to the right of centre. Meanwhile, the law of the volume control has been chosen to offer a 20dB cut at the 12 o'clock position (very sensible). However, due to the high input sensitivity of line input, the useable range of this control is restricted to just seven o'clock (min) to ten o'clock (max) when connected to a conventional 2V-output CD player!

Clearly, the 59mV input sensitivity (for full output) is more closely matched to the lower output tuners of yesteryear than today's digital sources. The application of extra gain also compromises the amp's S/N ratio (just 75dB, re. 1W/eight Ohm) although this, its pleasant-sounding 2nd harmonic distortion, bass-softening 0.27 Ohm output impedance and -1.1dB treble droop all contribute to its very... colourful sound. Oh yes, with a mere 36W/eight Ohm output and 3.3A delivery into one Ohm loads, sensitive speakers (like our Audio Notes) are a must.



# Orelle SA 100

**L**ike Naim, Orelle has been one of those manufacturers that we have left untouched for some time.

Although considerably smaller and younger a company than Salisbury's Finest, Orelle — the Perivale Punisher? — churns out a range of products that make high-end sense at mid-fi prices. The company has recently branched out into the realm of the high-end with its shiny XTC brand and it will be interesting to see what effect this as-yet-untested range will have on the high-end scene.

This £449 SA 100 50W integrated amplifier goes for simplicity of design in a big way. On the outside there is only a volume knob, input selector, tape monitor and on/off switch. Not only is there the barest minimum of knobs on the front panel — internally it is directly coupled, so that there are no capacitors in the signal path whatsoever. Added to this is a 200VA transformer and a MOSFET output stage. Also, the entire amplifier sits on a single PCB with no messy extraneous wiring at all.



## Sound Quality

“Musically rewarding,” was how one panelist began his listening notes on the Orelle, and that was almost the most negative thing he had to say about its performance. The others were no less impressed. And as the listening test progressed, it became clear that the SA 100 was going to be one of our favourites.

Given that amps like the John Shearne Phase 2 split the feelings of the panel, the notes for this amplifier were so similar that they could have been written by one listener. As we put on the first track of the session — Michelle Shocked's *Dead Man Walking* — all panelists wrote down words like ‘tight’, ‘extended’ and ‘tidy’. Likewise, all commented on the clarity, humanity and diction of the vocals, and how they were able to hear exactly how many backing singers there were on the track. In addition, the voices never wavered, regardless of the musical complexity.

In fact, the only blot on an otherwise flawless copybook is a touch of coarseness in the upper mid/lower treble. Unless you opt for a pair of brash tweeters this will never be more than a minor failing, but it comes across as a slight thinness to vocals here, a touch of

glare and lack of body to horns there. Once again, even this flaw was noted by all.

In general, however, the SA 100 is a true star performer in the unruffled, Sean Connery vodka-martini-shaken-not-stirred style. It had a great sense of orchestral scale and drama, born of good low-level detail and control. Of all the amps in the test, only the JVC could better its bass weight, but even here the Orelle was leaner and less ‘home cinema’ sounding.

This amp was also one of the few that could be classed as ‘measured’ in the good sense, without it sounding stilted or bland. In all, Orelle has made one hugely enjoyable amplifier that will keep everything musical in order, without making the whole process sound regimented and dull.

## Conclusion

Few amplifiers received such consistent praise in this blind test. The combination of sophisticated, high-end sound with good attention to fine detail and excellent bass make this Orelle SA 100 the one to beat. If your tastes have moved on from the compressed sound of the Top 40, you will be doing yourself a grave disservice if this amp is missing from the audition list. Anything less than a Best Buy would be churlish. ➡

## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★  
**VALUE** ★★★★★☆  
**PRICE** £449

- ▲ More musical than most; sound quality hard to fault.
- ▼ A bit of glare in the upper mid if you are feeling picky.

✉ Orelle Hi-Fi, Unit 12, I-MEX House, 6 Wadsworth Road, Perivale, Middx UB6 7JJ.  
 ☎ (0181) 810 9388

## THE LAB REPORT

In contrast to earlier Orelle designs, which I criticised for overheating and sagging when driven near full output, this design will deliver some 50-60W into eight Ohm loudspeakers without collapsing after a few moments. Nevertheless, its output is progressively limited at higher frequencies as distortion increases while, into very tricky loads, there could be more ‘oomph’ to drive home the musical message (I squeezed out bursts of just 75W into a one Ohm load).

As I've suggested, distortion increases from typically 0.03 per cent midband to a full 0.3 per cent at very high (treble) frequencies — a trend that remains virtually independent of power output. This means that any coloration imposed by the distortion should remain consistent throughout the music's dynamic range, which is a good thing. Other ‘good things’ include the amplifier's excellent channel balance (within 0.4dB over a 60dB range), its wide 88dB S/N ratio (re. 1W/eight Ohm) and very mild susceptibility to RF interference.

## HOW IT COMPARES

- |   |                        |     |
|---|------------------------|-----|
| 1 | Dynamic Power Output   | 42% |
| 2 | Speaker Load Tolerance | 4%  |
| 3 | Audible Distortion     | 56% |
| 4 | Noise                  | 42% |
| 5 | Susceptibility to RFI  | 64% |

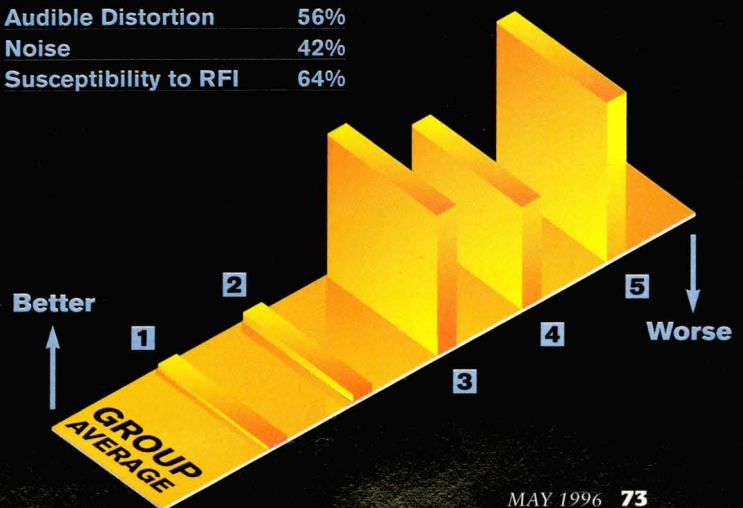




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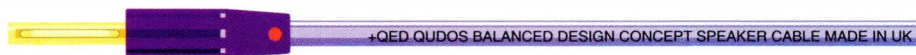


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# Conclusions, Best Buys and Recommendations

With a few exceptions, the state of the amplifier art in this price range is getting steadily better and better. Many of the amplifier manufacturers in this sector of the market produce budget products as well. Many more have second and even third generation products, all showing definite signs of improvement over cheaper (or earlier) products.

At this price, it is clear that system matching is crucial. Despite this, as a rule of thumb the better the product the less careful one has to be about partnering loudspeakers.

This rule caught out both **Alchemist's Maxim** and **Creek's 4240SE**. Perhaps a more enthusiastic performance could be obtained with more careful system matching than was possible in a blind test, but subsequent testing (with other CD/speaker combinations) suggests otherwise.

The **AMC 3050** was similarly adrift in the context of this test, but if nothing else it proves that you get what you pay for. Out-priced by all and out-classed by most, it was soft-sounding and polite, but a little too uninspired to garner much enthusiasm.

Of the similarly-priced quartet smack in the middle of the test, **Myriad's MI 120** is an elegant-looking and somewhat future-proof remote control integrated, which sounds slightly old-fashioned and transitory beneath the brand-new styling.

Also noted for its transitory sound was the **Exposure Super XX**. It was capable of reproducing tidy rhythm and sounded pretty good under pressure, but was just a little too civilised for our panel.

Both the **Musical Fidelity E10** and the **Arcam Alpha 6+** produced a sound that errs on the conservative side. Where the **E10** tried to emulate the high-end sound by warming everything up, the **Alpha 6+** polished music with a touch of treble grain, but was too midband ori-



ented for those of us blessed with full-range speakers.

The most diverse results of the test were produced by the **John Shearne Phase 2**. Half the group loved it, the other half hated it — and for exactly the same reasons! Clearly taste is a factor here and very careful listening is advised to see if the John Shearne is the amp for you.

Fortunately for **Densen**, the **Beat B-100** had brought its music-quality passport, so it got through the Recommendation check-point. What seemed initially to be a rather over-civilised and under-detailed performer, soon turned into one of the panel's faves, due to its tidy rhythm and sense of order.

The new technology-driven **Audiolab 8000S** line amp (Rec) sounded far less clinical than Audiolabs of the past. Despite a mildly chaotic character, it is the best integrated amplifier Audiolab has ever made, building upon the obvious charms of the **8000A**, without seriously highlighting any shortcomings.

**Naim's Nait 3** (Rec) has bags of character — too much for some tastes, right on the nail for others. In a sea of bland, faceless products, the distinctive **Nait 3** comes as a relief. Its tidy dynamics and tight rhythm will attract many; its tailored sound will discourage others. If our panel is indicative of the public, then two-thirds of music lovers would buy Naim, which makes the **Nait 3** highly recommendable.

The last **Orelle** we tested was coolly received, but many of the obstacles to a swing-tag have been swept away by the **SA 100** (Best Buy). In particular, our listeners praised its smooth tonal balance, reminiscent of a high-end valve amplifier, only without the high-end price tag. Of course, a true high-end amp has greater levels of transparency and detail and (usually) a greater driving ability. On the other hand, a true high-end costs far more than the **Orelle** ever could. And that makes it a bit of a bargain. Best of the test by a nose was

the **JVC AX-A662** amplifier (Best Buy). It was level-headed, clean and open — all the things a good amplifier should be — and at a price tag that doesn't leave the bank accounts smarting. Sadly, as we closed the test, it was announced that this **JVC** is on its way out, soon to be replaced by a still-unnamed replacement. So buy now while stocks last! ▲

## BEST OF THE REST

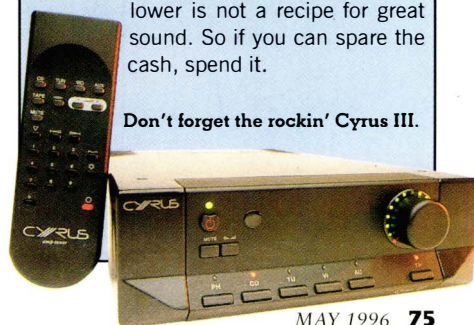
This is such a wide band of amplifiers that there are many Recommended and Best Buy products still in the frame. At the top end of the price range are the lush-sounding **Magnum Class A** and the vibrant **Musical Fidelity E100**, both of which are still on the right side of £600.

Right in the middle of the grouping are the three big £500 front-runners: the **Arcam Delta 290**, the **Audiolab 8000A** and **Mission Cyrus III**. All three of these will give the better models in this group a run for their money. Just £50 below this is the **Technics SU-A900 Mk2**, which will fulfil the amplifier dreams of many — except those with turntables.

Moving into tighter purse areas, the **harman/kardon HK1400** is a relaxed, yet confident performer for £400 and the **Audio Innovations Alto** sounds natural, if a little bass shy for £330.

Finally the **Pioneer A-400X** and the **Rotel RA970BX** at £300 are both worthy of consideration. As the **AMC 3050** demonstrates, dropping the price any lower is not a recipe for great sound. So if you can spare the cash, spend it.

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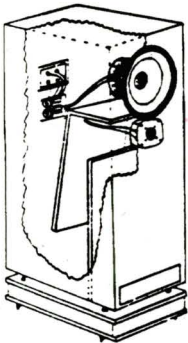


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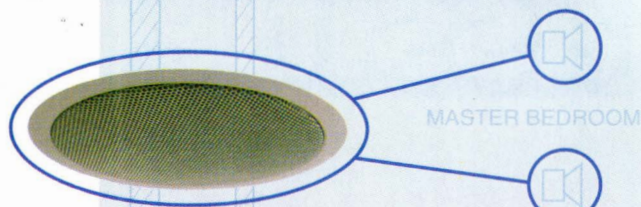
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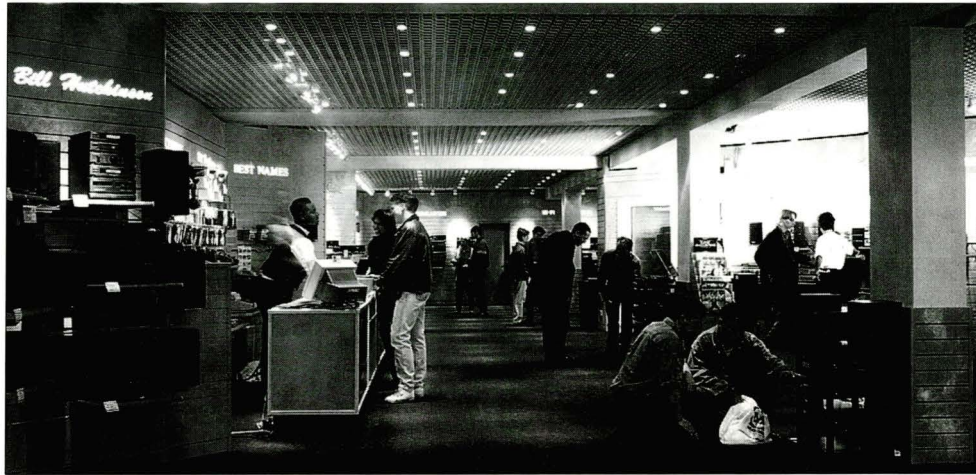


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# THE ALL NEW HI-FI CHOICE — DIRECTORY —



## Best Buys & Recommendations

The most influential symbols in our Directory are the **B'BUY** and **REC'D** commendations found at the end of the entries for particularly fine products.

■ **B'BUY** A product carrying the Best Buy swingtag is of excellent quality and good value for money in its price category.

■ **REC'D** Recommended products are runners up, but they are still definitely worth considering within their price bands.

Please note, however, that an expensive Recommended product will nearly always sound

better than an inexpensive Best Buy.

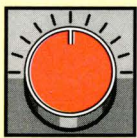
An ideal situation would be to choose suitably priced **B'BUY** or **REC'D** products from relevant categories and create a Best Buy system. However, due to the varieties in tonal balance that exist in many audio products, and differences in taste, system building is unfortunately not that simple. These ratings make a useful guideline for short-listing components, but only by experiencing the actual combination in a dealer's listening room will you be able to decide whether it works for you.

### BUYING HI-FI EQUIPMENT

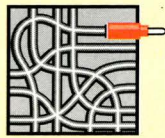
The key to putting together a great hi-fi system is finding a dealer with whom you can communicate, and who is sympathetic to your requirements. So the first stage in your quest is to look up your local dealers in our Dealer Directory, at the end of the product Directory, and go to see the people behind the counters. Listen to the sound they make, check out their record collections, sip their coffee and find the store with the right attitude. Then take your records in and listen to them through a variety of components within your budget. Use our Recommendations and Best Buys to narrow options down, but bear in mind that dealers have a lot of experience in putting systems together, so don't worry if parts of the system are not Best Buys. It's the end result that counts. Listen for the system that shows you the greatest differences in your software, (regardless of musical content, records should sound distinctly dissimilar). This is a good way of assessing which system is the most revealing.

If you can borrow equipment to try at home, do this before you buy. Loudspeakers in particular can sound very different according to the room they are in. Don't forget that cables and supports play an important part in the sound of a system: if you take your bits home and plonk them on the sideboard with a bit of mains flex to connect them up, don't expect sonic ecstasy!

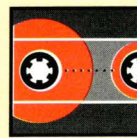
## PRODUCT CATEGORY INDEX



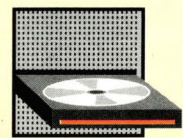
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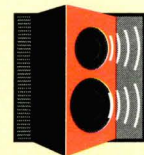
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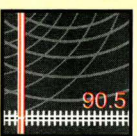
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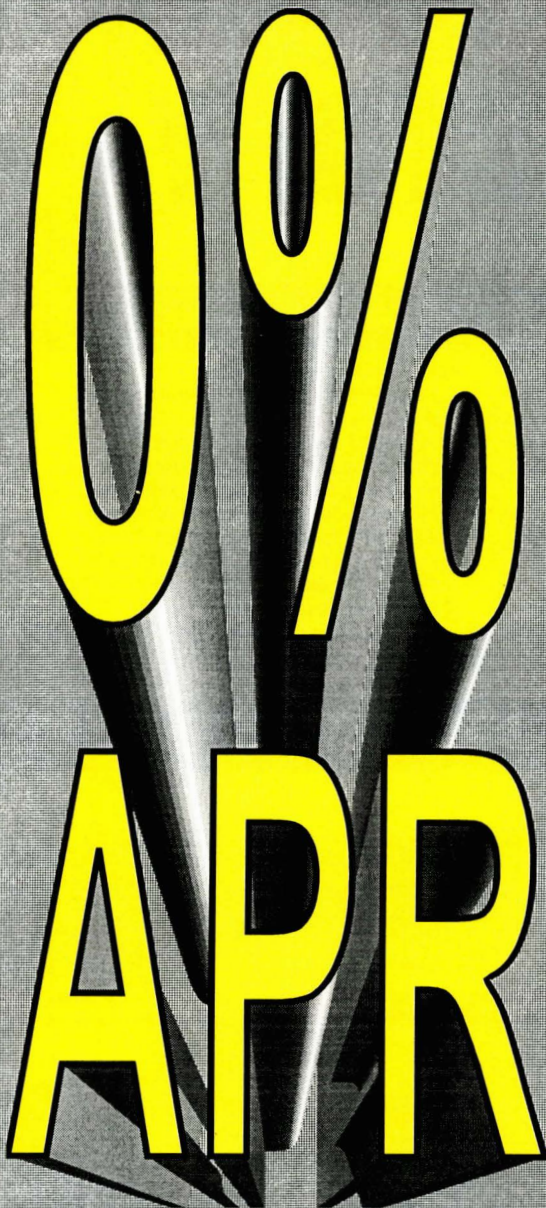
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 Arcam Delta 280 Tuner (F/L) ..... £399.00  
 Denon Tu 260L Tuner ..... £119.00  
 Linn Kudos ..... £775.00  
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 Naim NAT 03 Tuner ..... £549.00  
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### CASSETTE

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 Denon DR5640 ..... £209.00  
 Denon DRW 580 ..... £199.00  
**NAD 613 ← NEW ..... £229.00**  
**Nakamichi DR3 (Was 399) .... £449.00**  
**Nakamichi DR2 (F/L x 2) ..... £699.00**  
**Nakamichi DR1 (F/T) ..... £799.00**  
**Nakamichi Dragon (F/Lx2) .. £2350.00**  
 Yamaha KX380 ..... £169.00  
 Yamaha KX480 ..... £199.00  
 Yamaha KX-W482 ..... £249.00  
 Yamaha KX580 (F/L) ..... £249.00

### LOUDSPEAKERS

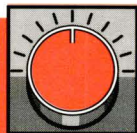
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**B&W 601 (New) ..... £199.00**  
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**Mission 753 (Free C.T. Blwire) £699.00**  
**ProAc Tablette 50 ..... £599.00**  
**ProAc Response One ..... £999.00**  
**Quad 10L (New) ..... £699.00**  
**Quad ELS63 on Demonstration? YES!**  
 Rega Kyte (Blk or Wal) ..... £198.00  
 Rega Ela (Black) ..... £498.00  
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 Tannoy 631 /se ← **NEW** ..... £169.00  
**Tannoy 633 (Free C.T.3) ..... £299.00**

### AUDIO VISUAL

- A/V AMPLIFIERS & PROCESSORS**  
 Arcam Xeta One ..... £999.00  
 Arcam Xeta Two ..... £649.00  
 Yamaha DSP580 ..... £449.00  
**LASER DISC PLAYERS**  
 Pioneer CLD-515 ..... £499.00  
 Pioneer CLD-2950 ..... £699.00  
**SURROUND - SPEAKER SYSTEMS**  
 B&W HCM2 + Power Bass ..... £399.00  
 KEF 30B, 80C, 60S System ..... £999.00  
 KEF 90 (Centre) ..... £259.00  
 Mission 73S (Surround) ..... £99.00  
 Polk RM3000/2 System ..... £699.00  
 Pioneer V201 Sat/Sub System £249.00

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# Amplifiers

The amplifier sits at the heart of the system, processing the outputs from the various music sources as necessary and then driving the loudspeakers. These two (quite separate) functions are integrated into a single box at the low-to-middle price points; but separated pre and power amplifiers, even separate power supplies, become increasingly common as one moves upmarket.

■ Bear in mind that output power and sound quality are not necessarily related. Some of the finest amplifiers around have outputs as low as 12 Watts, but team them with high efficiency loudspeakers and you can achieve loudness aplenty. Only when using loudspeakers of low sensitivity (below 87dB/W) or difficult load do you need lots of power.

■ As general rule, the more widgets an amplifier has (ie

tone controls, remote control, DSP) the more money will have to be spent on it to match the sound quality that can be achieved with a minimalist design. The sort of facilities that are useful include tape monitor switching and a source direct button on models with tone controls.

■ An increasing number of amplifiers are supplied without vinyl disc stages, or with the phono stage as an optional extra. If you use a turntable, make sure that the amp has an MM or MC stage to suit your cartridge.

**A/V amps**

In practice an A/V amplifier provides all the standard CD, tuner, tape, aux and phono inputs offered by a standard stereo amplifier. In addition many also incorporate an AM/FM tuner section, making them A/V receivers.

■ More importantly an A/V amplifier includes a Dolby Pro Logic decoding chip along with extra circuitry to effect the rear channel delay. Naturally there are at least four channels' worth of amplification under the bonnet to feed the five loudspeaker outputs. The rear surround channels are mono.

<b>Key</b>	
integrated, preamp, power amp	.....amplifier type
A/V	.....includes surround sound capability
50W	.....power output per channel in Watts RMS
MM, 5L, 2T	.....number of inputs of each type (L - line, T - tape, .....MM - moving magnet cartridge, MC - moving coil cartridge
hdph	.....headphone output available

## PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

AMPLIFIERS				
Analogue Saturn	75	preamp • MM		
Analogue Saturn MC	75	preamp • MC		
Creek OBM-8	99	preamp • MM • 10,6,11cm • Phono stepup		
Sherwood AI 1110	100	integrated • 55W • MM,4L,1T • hdph		
Creek OBM-9	110	preamp • MC • 10,6,11cm • Phono stepup		
Creek OBM-11	129	0.3W • 1L • hdph • 10,6,11cm • Headphone amplifier		
Pioneer A-103	130	integrated • 30W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 42,11,31cm		
Aiwa KA-003	140	integrated • 40W • MM,2L,1T • hdph • 2 speaker circuits		
Kenwood KA-1060	140	integrated • 140W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 44,13,25cm • 'Logical Flow' construction		
Moth 30 Passive	149	109 preamp • 4L,1T • 5,10,35cm • <b>Modular system gives cracking results. Passive pre/power amp warrant Best Buy (tested with 30/Stereo 60).</b>		<b>B'BUY</b>
Marantz PM-34	150	integrated • 40W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 42,14,28cm • Source direct		
Pioneer A-203	150	integrated • 45W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 42,11,31cm		
Sony TAF211B	150	integrated • 30W • MM/2L • hdph • 43,14,31cm • Source direct		
Denon PMA-250 III	160	121 integrated • 30W • MM,3L,1T • hdph • 44,10,28cm • <b>High resolution amp, can loses its grip but is engaging and enjoyable.</b>		<b>REC'D</b>
Grundig V11	160	integrated • 50W • MM,5L,1T • hdph • rem • 44,9,30cm • Tone defeat		
Kenwood KA-2060R	170	integrated • 65W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,13,30cm • System control		
Sherwood AI 5010	170	integrated • 70W • MM,3L,2T • hdph		
Technics SU-V300	170	integrated • 25W • MM,2L,1T • hdph • 43,13,32cm • A/B speaker select		
Rotel RC970BX MkII	175	144 preamp • 3L,2T • hdph • 44,8,29cm • <b>Confident, consistent sound. reviewed (in Sessions) with RB970BXMkII power amps</b>		<b>REC'D</b>
NAD 302	189	116 integrated • 25W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • <b>A spritely and uplifting performance. Sounds loud, but never intrusive or fatiguing.</b>		<b>B'BUY</b>
Moth 30 RIAA	199	preamp • MM/MC, • 5,10,35cm • Stand alone phono stage		
QED Vector One	199	preamp • 4L,1T		
Harman-Kardon HK610	200	integrated • 30W • 4L,2T • hdph • 45,11,37cm • 2 speaker pairs		
JVC AX-R5BK	200	149 integrated • 45W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,15,31cm • <b>Versatile, and ovs of even-handed, articulate detail; but let down by superficiality</b>		
Kenwood KA-3020SE	200	134 integrated • 50W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 44,14,35cm • <b>UK Special Edition</b>		<b>REC'D</b>
Luxman A-312	200	integrated • 40W • MM,4L,2T • hdph • 13,44,36cm • CD direct, A/B speakers		
Marantz PM-44 MkIIse	200	134 integrated • 40W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 42,14,28cm • <b>Two generations on from the PM-40SE, this new model gives a disappointingly grey view of music</b>		
Marantz PM-43	200	integrated • 55W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 42,14,30cm • Twin speaker sockets		
NAD 312	200	integrated • 25W • 6L,2T • hdph • 44,10,29cm • Soft clipping		
Nakamichi IA4s	200	integrated • 30W • 3L,1T • 43,7,32 cm • 'Harmonic Time Alignment'		
Onkyo A-801	200	integrated • 40W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 46,12,33cm		
Pioneer A-303R	200	134 integrated • 45W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 42,13,36cm • <b>Fresh and uncomplicated sound bests much of the audiophile competition.</b>		<b>REC'D</b>
Sony TAF244B	200	integrated • 40W • MM/2L • hdph • 43,14,31cm • MOSFET power stage		
Teac AR300	200	integrated • 45W • MM/MC,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,13,36cm • Mic input		
Technics SU-V500	200	integrated • 30W • MC/MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 43,13,31cm • New Class A		
Rotel RB970BX MkII	225	144 power amp • 60W • 44,8,29cm • <b>Tested with RC970BX MkII in Sessions (see above)</b>		
NAD Monitor 1000	229	preamp • MM/MC,3L,2T • hdph		
Rega Brio	229	integrated • 30W • MM,3L,1T • 43,7,15cm		
Denon PMA-350 II	230	134 integrated • 50W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 44,12,28cm • <b>Mods give this amp a powerful up-front and compelling performance.</b>		<b>REC'D</b>
Denon PMA-480R	230	integrated • 50W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,12,29cm		
JVC AX-V6BK	230	integrated • A/V • 50W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,13,46cm • Dolby Pro Logic		
Kenwood KA-3060R	230	142 integrated • 45W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,13,30cm • <b>Classy engineering, but sound is over-dry, often frustratingly restrained and rather unsophisticated.</b>		
Pioneer A-300X	230	116 integrated • 40W • MM,3L,2T • 42,13,36cm • <b>This revamped version of the A300 sounds more confident via CD than MM, yet our panel was unmoved.</b>		
Technics SU-V620	230	integrated • 70W • MM,MC,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 43,13,32cm • R-Core transformer, THCB		
Technics SU-A600 Mk2	230	149 integrated • 37W • MC/MM,3L,2T • hdph • 43,13,32cm • <b>An amplifier that's great fun to be with, but a little untidy from time to time</b>		
Moth 30 Series Power	239	power amp • 30W • 5,10,35cm		
Yamaha AX-490	239	149 integrated • 85W • MM,MC,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,15,39cm • <b>Widgets aplenty, but unemotional sound evoked an uncertain response from panel</b>		
Arcam Alpha 5 Plus	240	149 integrated • 40W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 43,8,30cm • <b>Detailed improvement on predecessor, but lacks 'air'</b>		
Alchemist Axiom	249	integrated • 30W • 6L,1T • 47,8,25cm • Alloy/gold finish		
Magnum IA120	249	integrated • 50W • MM,5L,2T • hdph		
Moth 30 Active	249	preamp • 4L,1T • 5,10,35cm		
NAD 304	249	121 integrated • 35W • MM,4L,2T • hdph • <b>Good with CD and vinyl, this is a successful and entertaining amplifier for your shortfall.</b>		<b>B'BUY</b>
JVC AX-A472BK	250	142 integrated • 65W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 44,15,36cm • <b>Unpredictable performer that is initially impressive but often ends up sounding starchy and tiring.</b>		
Luxman A-331	250	integrated • 60W • MM,4L,2T • hdph • 13,44,36cm • Inc CD direct		
Marantz MA-500	250	power amp • 125W • 9,15,45cm • D-bus, monoblocks, bridgable		
Marantz PM-53	250	integrated • 65W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 42,14,30cm • Remote control		
Rotel RA935BX MkII	250	integrated • 50W • 3L,2T • hdph • 44,10,35cm • Separate listen/rec selectors		
Sony TAF444E	250	142 integrated • 50W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 43,15,38cm • <b>Sheds all frippery for an audiophile approach, but till sounds grubby and stilted.</b>		
Teac AR500	250	integrated • 90W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,13,36cm • Mic input		
Lecson 380X	255	integrated • 35W • MM/MC,6L • 44,6,27cm		
Pro-ject Model 7	259	142 integrated • 40W • MM,3L,2T • <b>A minimalist amplifier brimming with good intent, but too quirky for its own good. Either MM or MC.</b>		
Onkyo A803	260	142 integrated • 60W • MM/MC,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 46,12,33cm • <b>This amp sounds lifeless, vague and disinterested in the music at hand.</b>		
Magnum IA170	270	142 integrated • 96 • 5L, 1T • hdph • 43, 7, 26cm • <b>Disarmingly powerful, capable of recreating a deep and naturally colourful sound.</b>		<b>B'BUY</b>
Creek P42	279	preamp • 4L,2T • hdph • 42,6,20cm • Plug-in modules available		
Creek A42	279	power amp • 50W • 42,6,20cm • 150 watts in mono		
Creek 4240	279	134 integrated • 40W • 3L,1T • hdph • 42,6,20cm • <b>Bearing no relation to earlier Creek designs, this radical rethink is more successful via MM than CD.</b>		
Denon PMA-450SE	280	142 integrated • 60W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 44,14,36cm • <b>Based on the original '450 and offers a fast, furious and entertaining sound.</b>		<b>REC'D</b>
Harman-Kardon HK620	280	integrated • 40W • 4L,2T • hdph • 45,11,37cm • High current design		

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
Kenwood KA-4060R	280	integrated • 70W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,14,35cm • System control	
Technics SU-A700 MkII	280	integrated • 45W • MC/MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 43,13,32cm • THCB low resonance base	
AMC AV81 Control	289	preamp • A/V • 8L,2T • rem	
Lescon Stereo 383X	295	integrated • 60W • MM/MC,6L • hdph • 44,6,27cm	
Alchemist Maxim	299	integrated • 30W • MM,5L,1T • 47,8,25cm • Alloy/gold finish	
AMC 2445	299	power amp • 45W • 4 channels	
Moth 30 RIAA 100VA	299	preamp • MM/MC • 5,10,35cm • Standalone phono stage	
QED Vector Reference	299	preamp • 4L,1T	
Yamaha AX-590	299	integrated • 100W • MM,MC,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,15,39cm • UK specified, system remote	
Denon PMA-715	300	integrated • 60W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,16,40cm	
Harman-Kardon HK1200	300	integrated • 25W • 5L,2T • 45,11,35cm • Discrete, low feedback circuit	
Kenwood KA-V3700	300	integrated • A/V • MM,4L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,14,30cm • Dolby Pro Logic	
Marantz PM-63	300	integrated • 70W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 42,14,30cm • Remote control	
Mission PSX-R	300	power supply • 22.8,36cm • Outboard PSU	
Musical Fidelity E10	300	154 integrated • 40W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 44,10,34cm • Smooth high endish sound that is marred by a lack of dynamics and a touch of grain.	
Onix OA30	300	integrated • 40W • 5L,1T • hdph • 43,77,33cm	
Pioneer A-400X	300	138 integrated • 50W • MM/MC,4,2 • hdph • 42,13,36cm • <i>On second audition, this amp was tonally unchanged but less compelling.</i>	REC'D
Pioneer A-503R	300	138 integrated • 70W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 42,13,36cm • <i>Best via MM disc, the dull and claustrophobic sound is otherwise deeply uninspiring.</i>	
Rotel RA970BX	300	138 integrated • 60W • 4L,2T • hdph • 44,7,35cm • <i>Lively, fresh and perky with plenty of power, but not so clever with complex recordings.</i>	REC'D
Sony TAF542E	300	integrated • 90W • MM/MC,3L,2T • hdph • 43,15,38cm • UK optimised sound	
Naim Flat-Cap	317	power supply • 43,56,30cm • Power supply	
Moth 30 Integrated	320	integrated • 30W • 8L,T • 8,18,35cm	
Lumley Reference PP70	325	preamp • 6L,1T • 36,46,6cm • Passive, bolts to ST70	
Lumley Reference PP40	325	preamp • 6L,1T • 29,40,6cm • Bolts to ST40	
Lumley Reference PP1	325	preamp • 6L,1T • 29,44,6cm • Passive, stand alone	
Audio Innovations Alto	329	138 integrated • 35W • 4L,2T • 43,8,30cm • <i>Despite a lack of bass, it still sounds open, natural and relaxed.</i>	B'BUY
Magnum Quartet	329	121 integrated • 36W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • <i>An integrated model that incorporates four monoblocks optimised for bi-wiring, but sound is sandy in the treble.</i>	
Analogue Jupiter	330	integrated • 30W • MM,4L,1T	
Aura VA100 II	330	138 integrated • 70W • MM,4L,1T • hdph • 43,6,31cm • <i>Big, smooth yet slightly disjointed sound was equally familiar.</i>	
JVC AX-A662	330	154 integrated • 90W • MM/MC,3L,2T • hdph • 44,13,31cm • <i>Huge, tidy and ordered sounding behemoth amp of an amp. Soon to be discontinued.</i>	B'BUY
EMF Audio Sequel	349	109 integrated • 50W • MM,4L,1T • hdph • 43,65,28cm • <i>Relaxed and restrained design from Mike Creek.</i>	
Moth 30 Active 100VA	349	preamp • 4L,1T • 5,10,35cm	
NAD Monitor 1000S	349	124 preamp • MM/MC,3L,2T • hdph • <i>Sounds a little restrained.</i>	
NAD 306	349	integrated • 50W • MM,4L,2T • hdph	
Arcam Alpha 6 Plus	350	154 integrated • 50W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 43,8,30cm • <i>A new MOSFET design with a subtle and melodic sound.</i>	REC'D
Audiolink Sterling II	350	integrated • 60W • MM/MC • 43,7,270cm • Available in chrome	
Creek 4240SE	350	154 integrated • 50W • 3L,1T • hdph • 42,6,20cm • Optional MM/MC	
Inca Tech Oberon Pre	350	preamp • MM/MC,6L,2T • 43,8,22cm • CD direct & Two outputs	
Kenwood KA-5050R	350	129 integrated • 95W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,15,40cm • <i>A listenable but neither particularly communicative nor captivating amplifier.</i>	
Luxman A-353R	350	integrated • 60W • MM/MC,4L,2T • hdph • rem • 13,44,37cm • Motorised volume control	
Onkyo A-911	350	integrated • 70W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 28,12,33cm • Mini component, 40hm rating	
Pioneer A-602	350	integrated • 80W • MM/MC,3L,3T • hdph • 42,17,44cm	
Rotel RC980BX	350	109 preamp • MM/MC,3L,2T • hdph • 44,7,33cm • <i>Powerful, expansive but lacks poise, control and detail - disappointing (tested with RB980BX).</i>	
Technics SU-C1000	350	preamp • MM/MC,3L,2T • rem • 43,70,31cm • <i>Partner with SE-A1000</i>	
Technics SU-A800 Mk2	350	134 integrated • 55W • MC/MM,3L,2T • rem • 43,14,37cm • <i>Long term listening shows this model is a little bit bluff.</i>	
Quad 306	364	power amp • 50W • 33,7,21cm • Stereo power amp	
Audio Innovations P1	369	preamp • MM • 25,10,30cm • Phono stepup	
Audio Innovations L1	369	145 preamp • 3L,1T • 25,10,30cm	
Onkyo A850	370	integrated • 60W • MM/MC,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 46,15,35cm	
AMC 1030	379	preamp • MM	
Alchemist Kraken/Pre	380	124 power amp • 60W • 32,9,25cm • <i>Quirky Class A design with an equally warm and colourful sound.</i>	REC'D
Alchemist Kraken/mono	380	power amp • 60W • 32,9,25cm • <i>Mono version of Kraken power amp</i>	
Credo PMP003	385	preamp • 22,6,24cm • Phono amp MM/MC, & PSU	
Credo HMP003	388	preamp • hdph • Class A headphone amp	
Rega Elex	398	116 integrated • 50W • MM,3L,1T • 43,7,25cm • <i>Minimalist amplifier tsounds forward, hard and unforgiving.</i>	
Alchemist Kraken/Pwr	399	124 integrated • 60W • 3L,2T • 32,9,25cm • <i>Hardly accurate, but entertaining nevertheless.</i>	REC'D
EAR 834P	399	preamp • MM/MC • 40,40,15cm • Valve phono stepup	
Arcam Delta 290P	400	141 power amp • 75W • hdph • 43,9,30cm • <i>Crisp dynamics and detail - tested in Sessions</i>	B'BUY
Harman-Kardon HK1400	400	129 integrated • 40W • MM/MC,3L,2T • 45,11,37cm • <i>Relaxed, confident sound is only troubled by the most dense of recordings.</i>	REC'D
Harman-Kardon PA2100	400	power amp • 45W • 45,11,37cm	
Inca Tech Oberon Pwr	400	power amp • 70W • hdph • 43,8,22cm • Two inputs	
Luxman A-373	400	integrated • A/V • 80W • MM/MC,4L,2T • hdph • rem • 13,44,37cm • Also has AV inputs	
Onix OA24	400	preamp • MM/MC,2L,2T • 75,23,37cm • Internally switchable MM/MC	
Onix OA401	400	power amp • 50W • 75,23,37cm • With internal supply for OA24	
Sony TAF-A3ES	400	integrated • 70W • MM/MC, 3L,2T • hdph • 43,14,38cm • Toroidal transformer, MOSFET	
Sony TA-AV570B	400	integrated • A/V • 70W • MM,4L,5T • hdph • 43,15,36cm • Dolby Pro Logic	
Technics SU-A800D	400	integrated • 55W • MM/MC,3L,2T • hdph • 43,84,35cm • Two box pre/power combination	
Technics SE-A1000	400	power amp • 70W • hdph • 43,14,35cm • <i>Moving coil meters. Partner with SU-G1000</i>	
Michell Iso	412	preamp • MM or MC • smallcm • Phono stage	
Quad 34	414	44 preamp • MM,2L,T • 33,7,21cm • <i>Good filtering and above average tone controls, but lacks detail and dynamics</i>	
Naim NAP90/3	416	power amp • 30W • 43,56,30cm • Latest style. Suits 92	
Lescon Quattrra	420	integrated • 30W • MM/MC • N/A • 44,6,27cm • Pre out/main in	
Audio Innovations T2	425	preamp • MC • 12,16,8cm • MC stepup transformer	
Onix OA21S	430	97 integrated • 50W • MM/MC,3L,1T • 75,23,37cm • <i>CD input sounds dead, but via MM disc, this amplifier has a fresh, vibrant sound.</i>	
Naim NAC92	435	preamp • 5 (L or T) • 43,56,30cm • Latest style. Suits 90/3	
Credo MMP002	439	preamp • Mic amp, phantom power	
AMC 2030	449	power amp • 30W	
EAR 834L	449	preamp • 5L,1T • Valve, line-only	
Orelle SA-100	449	154 integrated • 50W • 6L,1T • 44,7,23cm • <i>Clean, natural and articulate sound</i>	B'BUY
Crimson CS610C	450	preamp • MM/MC,3L,1T • 9,10,35cm	
Crimson CS620C	450	power amp • 40W • 9,10,35cm	
Harman-Kardon HK640	450	integrated • 55W • 4L,2T • hdph • 45,14,37cm • ELNA reservoir caps	
Inca Tech Oberon	450	integrated • MM/MC,6L,2T • hdph • 43,8,22cm • Preout, biwire	
Marantz PM-700AV	450	125 integrated • A/V • 45W • MM,5L,2T • hdph • rem • 42,16,34cm • <i>Sounds just great through front and centre channels but surround sound is very weak.</i>	
Rose RV-23	450	77 preamp • MM,2L,1T • 33,9,26cm • <i>You can pay more to get a more transparent sound, but it's hard to criticise at the price.</i>	REC'D
Rotel RB980BX	450	109 power amp • 120W • 44,12,33cm • <i>Sound is expansive but lacks poise, control and fine detail - disappointing (tested with RC980BX).</i>	
Technics SU-A900 Mk2	450	138 integrated • 90W • MC/MM,3L,2T • rem • 43,14,37cm • <i>Jeckyl and Hyde amplifier with a dismal-sounding phono stage but transparent CD input.</i>	REC'D
Moth 30 Mono/40	459	power amp • 40W • 5,10,35cm • 2x monoblocks	
Audiolink P400	467	preamp • 4L • 43,7,270cm • Available in chrome	
AMC S84	479	preamp • A/V • 8L • rem • Multiroom, bal/unbal inputs	
Denon AVC-1530	480	integrated • A/V • 70W • MM,2L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,14,34cm	
Onix OA31	480	140 integrated • 60W • MM/MC,4L,1T • hdph • 43,77,33cm	
Grant CD10	482	preamp • 4L	
Arion Adonis (kit)	495	integrated • 20W • 4L,1T • Pre Class A integrated kit	
DPA DSP200S	495	124 preamp • 5L,1T • 22,30,8cm • <i>Dramatic but detailed and transparent sound belies modest power rating (tested with DPA-200S).</i>	REC'D

PRODUCT

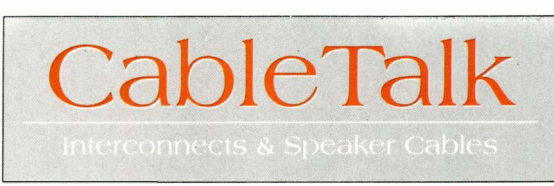
£ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

Unison Res Simply Phono	495	preamp • MM/MC • For Simply series	
Alchemist Kraken/Pwr A	499	power amp • 60W • 32.9,25cm • Stainless steel/gold finish	
AMC AV81 H.T. Control	499	preamp • A/V • 8L,2T • As AV81 plus Dolby Pro Logic	
Art Audio Minuet	499	preamp • 5L,1T	
CR Developments Kalyso	499	integrated • 15W • 5L	
Credo IMP702	499	integrated • 70W • 6L • 44,6,31cm	
Harman-Kardon AP2500	499	preamp • MM/MC,6L,2T • 45,11,35cm	
LFD Integrated Zero	499	140 integrated • 50W • 5L,1T • 30,6,37cm • <i>Lively and brisk, but at the same time cold and unsympathetic</i>	
LFD Linestage LSO	499	preamp • 5L,1T • 30,6,37cm • Zero feedback	
LFD Powerstage PAO	499	power amp • 50W • 30,6,37cm • Stereo MOSFET	
Arcam Delta 290	500	116 integrated • 75W • 4L,2T • hdph • rem • 43,9,32cm • <i>Combines dry restraint with detail, dynamics and musical colour.</i>	REC'D
Audiolab 8000A	500	140 integrated • 60W • MM/MC,2L,3T • hdph • 45,8,36cm • <i>The 8000A remains a highly disciplined and mature sounding amp.</i>	REC'D
Mission Cyrus III	500	140 integrated • 50W • MM,5L,1T • rem • 22,8,36cm • <i>The classic Cyrus II sounds convincing, masterful and musical.</i>	B'BUY
Pioneer VSA-701S	500	integrated • A/V • 55W • MM,2L,2T,5V • hdph • rem • 42,17,42cm • Dolby Pro Logic	
Rotel RC990BX	500	preamp • MM/MC,2L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,7,33cm	
Sentec PP9 RIAA MM	500	preamp • MM • 5,12,23cm • Phono step-up - MM	
Technics SU-A900D	500	integrated • 70W • MM/MC,3L,2T • hdph • 43,84,35cm • Pre/power, Master Series caps	
Thorens TTP2000	500	139 preamp • MM/MC,4L • <i>Minimalist shoebox preamp, rhythmical, warm balance. Tested in Sessions with TTA2000</i>	
Magnum MF125	515	power amp • 140W • Monoblocks	
Audiolab 8000C	520	97 preamp • MM/MC,2L,3T • hdph • 45,8,36cm • <i>Distinctive, stark neutrality that will not appeal to all. Good value engineering.</i>	
Linn Majik-1 (Line)	524	integrated • 33W • 4L,2T • hdph • 32,8,33cm • <i>Works as preamp or integrated; multiroom capability</i>	
Rose RV-23S	525	preamp • MM/MC,2L,2T • 33,9,26cm • Tube, separate PSU	
AMC CVT3030	529	116 integrated • 30W • 6L,1T • hdph • <i>Attempt to mix transistors with valves only shines with simple musical styles.</i>	
Myryad MI120	530	154 integrated • 60W • 4L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,10,31cm • Optional MM or MC modules	
Credo IMP703	538	integrated • 70W • MM/MC, 6L • rem • 44,6,31cm • As above, with remote	
Rose Scion	545	integrated • 50W • MM/MC,3L,2T • 42,7,30cm • 2-box, purist design	
Alchemist Kraken A	549	integrated • 60W • 5L,1T • 32,9,25cm • £50 MM option, alloy/gold	
Alchemist Kraken Anniv	549	integrated • 60W • MM,3L,2T • 25,9,25cm • Stainless steel/gold finish	
Linn LK100	549	power amp • 50W • 32,8,33cm • Stereo	
Moth 30 Stereo/60	549	109 power amp • 60W • 5,15,35cm • <i>Tested with 30 Passive - see comments earlier on page 113</i>	
Naim NAIT 3	549	154 integrated • 30W • 3L,1T • 43,56,30cm • <i>Distinctive and highly musical sounding, perhaps too distinctive for some tastes</i>	REC'D
Stemfoort Audio SF60	549	integrated • 60W • 4L,1T • 43,8,35cm • Passive line amplifier	
KAL Magician	550	preamp • 3L,1T • hdph • Tube	
Rose RP-190 (Dual Mode)	550	power amp • 75W • 33,9,30cm • Low feedback monoblock mode	
Thorens TTA2000	550	139 power amp • 35W • <i>Tested with TTP2000 (see above) in Sessions</i>	REC'D
Heybrook Integra	555	integrated • 75W • MM/MC • hdph • 77,44,30cm	
Adyton PSU	569	power supply • PSU for Chorus, Temper, Modus	
Tube Tech Seer Line	575	preamp • 5L,1T • 35,8,25cm • Entry level, 10 yr guarantee	
Naim NAC32R	579	preamp • 5(L or T) • rem • 43,56,30cm	
Electrocompaniet ECP-1	580	preamp • MM/MC • 24,7,16cm • Self-adjusts to cartridge	
Audiolink PR401	583	power amp • 100W • 43,10,37cm • Available in chrome	
Linn Majik-1 (Phono)	593	129 integrated • 33W • MM,MC,3L,2T • hdph • 32,8,33cm • <i>The cornerstone of Linn's modular hi-fi system is innovative, but sounds vague and confused.</i>	
DPA Renaissance	595	140 integrated • 40W • MM,4L,1T • hdph • 40,28,8cm • <i>DPA's first integrated amp is typically innovative, but a little too 'crisp 'n dry' for our tastes.</i>	
Magnum MF300	595	power amp • 180W • Monoblocks	
Monrio ADN	595	preamp • MM/MC • 14,8,36cm • Phono preamp, ext PSU	
Fullers Pre 1	599	preamp • MM,5L,2T • 48,9,30cm • Optional MC stage	
Magnum Class A	599	116 integrated • 60W • MM/MC,3L,1T • <i>Lashings of rich and compelling music, but the Class A trades lushness for accuracy.</i>	REC'D
Musical Fidelity E200	599	145 preamp • 5L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,12,35cm • <i>Weighty, luxuriant but hardly scintillating. Tested with MF E300</i>	
Musical Fidelity E100	599	140 integrated • 70W • MM,4L,1T • hdph • rem • 44,12,35cm • <i>Beautifully crafted with a vibrantly colourful, almost dramatic sound.</i>	REC'D
Art Audio Headline	600	preamp • hdph • Single ended triode Class A	
Kenwood KA-V7700	600	integrated • A/V • MM,1L,1T • hdph • rem • 44,13,30cm • Pro Logic, learning remote	
Nakamichi IA2	600	integrated • 50W • MM/MC,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 43,12,36cm • 'Harmonic Time Alignment'	
Pioneer VSA-D802S	600	125 integrated • A/V • 55W • MM,2L,2T,5V • hdph • rem • 42,17,42cm • <i>The grey sound lacks attack and confidence, undermining tension</i>	
Sentec PP9 RIAA MC	600	preamp • MC • 5,12,23cm • Phono step-up - MC	
Shearpe Phase 3	619	power amp • 50W • Can biamp with Phase 2	
Meridian 501	625	145 preamp • MM,4L,T • hdph • 33,9,34cm • <i>Tight, positive sound, but dispassionate; intense at high levels. Tested with 555</i>	
Meridian 555	625	145 power amp • 60W • 33,9,32cm • <i>Tested with the 01 - see comments above</i>	
Bryston .4	641	preamp • A/V • 4L,1T • 48,5,25cm	
Fullers Pre 1+	649	preamp • 6L,2T • 48,9,30cm • No phono option - hard wired	
Heybrook SIG CA	649	preamp • MM/MC,5L,2T	
Naim Hi-Cap	649	power supply • 21,76,30cm • Power supply	
Shearpe Phase 2	649	154 integrated • 50W • 5L • MM/MC phono i/p £87 extra	
Tube Tech Seer Phono	649	preamp • MM,4L,1T • 35,8,25cm • Tube phono stage	
Alchemist Nemesis	650	integrated • 80W • 6L,1T • 44,8,34cm • Alloy/gold finish	
Audiolab 8000S	650	154 integrated • 60W • 3L,3T • hdph • rem • 45,8,36cm • <i>Mode switch, biwire terminals</i>	REC'D
Harman-Kardon HK660	650	integrated • 65W • 4L,2T • hdph • 45,14,37cm • 50 amp peak current	
Quad 77	650	139 integrated • 50W • 2L,T • 33,6,30cm • <i>Stylish remote driven amp, bright and lively. Tested in Sessions</i>	
Triangle TE60SE	650	integrated • 70W • MM/MC,3L,1T • hdph	
Lecson Quattra Plus	655	integrated • 50W • MM/MC + N/A • 44,6,27cm • Separate PSU	
Naim NAC72	670	preamp • 2MM/MC, L,2T • 21,76,30cm • Upgradable with PSU, MC I/P	
Bryston BP1	673	preamp • A/V • MM or MC • 48,5,25cm • <i>Phono stepup, balanced and unbalanced operation</i>	
LFD Int. Zero (Ph)	679	integrated • 50W • MM/MC,5L,1T • 30,6,37cm • Phono version of Int. Zero	
Lynwood Opal	685	integrated • 80W • 7L,1T	
Meridian 562	685	preamp • MM,8L,T,6D • 33,9,34cm • Digital main out. MC option	
Meridian 551	695	integrated • 55W • MM,4L,T • hdph • rem • 33,9,34cm • MC option	
Monrio MJ	695	integrated • 50W • 5L,1T	
Heybrook SIG MNEX	698	power amp • 140W • Mono, uses ext SIG/DCPS PSU	
Exposure XX Super	699	154 integrated • 55W • 4L,2T • 43,85,35cm • Upgraded model	
Gamma Acoustics Gemini	699	148 integrated • 12W • 3L • 33,23,8cm • <i>Genuine single-ended triode design, but low power, mundane sound and poor build</i>	
Marantz AV-500	699	preamp • A/V • MM,7L,2T • rem • 42,10,34cm • Dolby Pro Logic	
Musical Fidelity E300	699	145 power amp • 100W • 44,12,35cm • <i>Tested with E200 - see comments above</i>	
Naim NAP140	699	power amp • 45W • 21,76,30cm	
Onix OA601	699	power amp • 70W • 75,46,36cm • Regulated PSU	
Thule PR200	699	preamp • 5L,2T • hdph • rem • Balanced in and outputs	
Audiolab 8000P	700	power amp • 100W • 45,8,36cm • Bi-wire speaker terminals	
Aura CA200	700	preamp • MM,7L,2T • hdph • rem • 43,6,34cm • Chrome finish, add £50	
Harman-Kardon PA2200	700	power amp • 70W • 45,14,38cm	
Micromega tempo 1	700	integrated • 50W • 6L,1T • hdph • 43,9,28cm • Optional MM/MC	
Teac A-BX7R	700	integrated • 60W • MM,3L,2T • rem • 44,10,38cm	
Technics SU-C2000	700	preamp • rem • 45,13,35cm • Rotary resistor attenuator	
Woodside SC27 Line	705	preamp • 2L,1T	
Michell Argo	715	preamp • 3L,1T • 33,7,19cm • 2 pairs of outputs	
Quad 606	718	124 power amp • 140W • 33,14,24cm • <i>Amplifier with classic lineage but compromised by an equally dated, soft and undynamic sound (tested with 66).</i>	
Naim NAIT R	724	integrated • 30W • 3L,1T • 43,56,30cm	
Sonic Link DM30	725	integrated • 25W • MM/MC,3L,1T • 23,8,43cm	

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- PETERBOROUGH**  
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- PLYMOUTH**  
The Hi-Fi Attic  
01752 669511
- POOLE**  
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- PORTSMOUTH**  
Now That's Hi-Fi  
01705 811230
- PRESTON**  
Goodfrets  
01772 257528  
Practical Hi-Fi  
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- PRESTWICH**  
Richer Sounds  
0161 773 0333
- RAMSEY**  
Island Compact Disc  
Centre  
01624 815521
- READING**  
B&B Hi-Fi  
01734 583730  
Reading Hi-Fi  
01734 585463  
Richer Sounds  
01734 591111
- ROTHERHAM**  
Moorgate Acoustics  
01709 370666  
Richer Sounds  
0191 2301392  
Lintone Audio  
0191 232 3994
- SAFFRON WALDEN**  
Hi-Fi Western  
01799 523728
- SCARBOROUGH**  
Audio One  
01723 355654
- SEVENOAKS**  
Performance Hi-Fi  
Systems  
01732 740425  
Sevenoaks Hi-Fi  
01732 495555
- SHEFFIELD**  
Moorgate Acoustics  
0114 2756048  
Richer Sounds  
0114 2661616  
Superfi  
0114 2723768
- SHREWSBURY**  
Creative Audio  
01743 241924  
Shropshire Hi-Fi  
01743 232317
- SLOUGH**  
Fraser's Hi-Fi  
Video  
01753 520244
- SOUTHAMPTON**  
Richer Sounds  
01703 231311  
Southampton Hi-Fi  
Centre  
01703 228434
- ST. ALBANS**  
Radlett Audio  
01727 855577
- ST. AUSTELL**  
E.T.S.  
01726 75400
- ST. NEOTS**  
A N Audio  
01480 472071
- STAMFORD**  
Stamford Hi-Fi  
Centre  
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Richer Sounds  
0161 480 1700  
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- STOKE**  
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Superfi  
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- STOURBRIDGE**  
Music Matters  
01384 444184
- SWANSEA**  
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Visual Systems  
01792 773644
- THAME**  
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Cheiston Hi-Fi  
01803 606863
- TRURO**  
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01872 79809
- TUNBRIDGE**  
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- TUXFORD,**  
nr Newark  
Chantry Audio  
01777 870372
- UXBRIDGE**  
Uxbridge Audio  
01895 230404
- WALLINGFORD**  
Astley Audio  
01491 839305
- WARRINGTON**  
Doug Brady Hi-Fi  
01925 828009
- WATFORD**  
Hi-Fi City  
01923 226169  
Richer Sounds  
01923 218888  
Sevenoaks Hi-Fi  
01923 213533
- WEST WICKHAM**  
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- WYBRIDGE**  
Cosmic  
01932 854522
- WYEMOUTH**  
Weymouth Hi-Fi  
01483 771175
- WILMSLOW**  
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Wilmslow  
01625 526213
- WITHAM**  
Sevenoaks Hi-Fi  
01376 501733
- WOKING**  
Bartletts Hi-Fi  
01483 771175
- WOLVERHAMPTON**  
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01902 772901
- WORCESTER**  
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01905 612929  
West Midlands  
Audio  
01905 458046
- WORTHING**  
Bowers & Wilkins  
01903 264141  
Phase 3 Hi-Fi  
01903 245577
- WREXHAM**  
Acton Gate Audio  
01978 364500
- YEovil**  
Mike Manning  
Audio  
01935 79361
- YORK**  
Vickers Hi-Fi  
01904 629659



For further information please write to:  
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Tel: 01252 373434. Fax: 01252 371818

Please quote HFC 05/96

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
Rega Elicit	730	integrated • 70W • MM,MC,3L,1T • 43,7,25cm • Full dual mono	
Art Audio VPL	741	preamp • 6L,2T	
Audio Innovations L2	749	preamp • 4L,1T • 50,12,30cm	
Audio Innovations P2MM	749	preamp • MM • 50,12,30cm • Phono stage	
Electrocomp1 ECP-1 SF	749	preamp • MM/MC • 24,7,16cm • auto-adjusts, black stone facia	
Arcam Delta 110	750	preamp • MM/MC,2L,2T • hdph • rem • 43,7,30cm • On-board DAC, 2 inputs	
Art Audio Conductor Phono	750	preamp • MM/MC • Separate PSU, upgradable	
Audiolab 8000M	750	145 power amp • 125W • 45,8,36cm • <i>Strong, controlled sound; confident bass, but colourless. Tested with 8000Q</i>	
Bryston 2B-LP	750	power amp • A/V • 75W • 48,5,25cm • Bridgable	
DPA 200S	750	124 power amp • 60W • 22,30,8cm • <i>Dramatic but crisp, open sound belies power rating (tested with DSP-200S).</i>	REC'D
KAL Harlequin	750	preamp • MM/MC,2L,1T • hdph • Tube	
Rotel RB990BX	750	power amp • 200W • 44,12,38cm	
ECA Vista S	760	145 preamp • 4L,1T • 39,10,39cm • <i>Wind up the volume and blow a breath of fresh music into your system (tested with Lectern).</i>	B'BUY
Grant G100P	764	preamp • MM,2L,1T	
Meridian 501V	785	preamp • A/V • MM,4L,T • hdph • 33,9,34cm • As 501, plus video switching	
Michi RHC-10	795	preamp • 5L • 47,8,34cm • Passive	
AVI S2000MI	799	integrated • 100W • 4L, 1T • rem • 31,25,9cm • Includes S200RC handset	
Credo CPM004	799	preamp • 6L • 44,6,31cm • 3 outputs	
Exposure XIX	799	preamp • 5L • 43,85,35cm • Line only version of XVII	
Exposure XV Super	799	integrated • 55W • MM,MC,3L,2T • 43,85,35cm	
LFD Int. Zero LE	799	integrated • 60W • 5L,1T • 43,7,33cm	
PS Audio 6.1	799	preamp • 4L,1T • 43,6,19cm • Outboard PSU	
Chimera X-150C	800	preamp • 4L,1T • Balanced CD in, balanced out	
Chimera X-80	800	138 integrated • 80W • 4L,1T • <i>Stinking looks, powerful, but ultimately lacking in dynamics. Tested in Sessions</i>	
Crimson CS630C	800	power amp • 90W • 9,10,35cm	
Sentec SC9	800	preamp • 4L,2T • hdph • 34,7,15cm	
Sherwood AM/AVP8500	800	A/V • 230W • hdph • rem • A/V Pre/power amp	
XTC PRE-1	800	preamp • 5L,1T • hdph • rem • Single ended MOSFET preamp	
Bryston BP4	802	preamp • A/V • 4L,1T • 48,5,25cm • Balanced out	
Heybrook SIG CAP	829	preamp • 6L,2T • Line only	
AVI S2000MA	849	power amp • 105W • 31,25,9cm • New reference model	
AVI S2000MP	849	preamp • 5L,1T • 31,25,9cm • includes S2000RC handset	
Exposure XVII	849	142 preamp • MM,MC,3L,2T • 43,85,35cm • <i>Superbly rhythmic; maybe a tad overpowering in the midband. Tested in Sessions with XVIII Super</i>	REC'D
Exposure XVIII Super	849	142 power amp • 70W • 43,85,35cm • <i>Upgraded model</i>	REC'D
Onix OA801	849	power amp • 190W • 75,46,36cm • 2x monoblocks, massive PSU	
Stemfoort Audio SF100	849	integrated • 100W • 4L, 1T • 43,8,40cm • Passive line amplifier	
Audiolab 8000PPA	850	preamp • MM/MC • 45,8,36cm • Phono preamplifier	
Alchemist Forsetti Pre	870	preamp • 6L,1T • 47,8,39cm • Balanced option	
Michell Iso HR	879	preamp • MM or MC • smallcm • Phono stage	
Moth 30 Mono/100	879	power amp • 100W • 5,15,35cm • 2x mono, separate PSU	
Shearpe Phase 5 Mono	879	power amp • 100W • 44,6,31cm • Monoblocks - bal/unbalanced	
ECA Vista HD	880	preamp • 4L,1T • 39,10,39cm • High definition version	
ECA Lectern S	880	145 power amp • 50W • 39,10,30cm • <i>Tested with £60 Vista S - see above for comments.</i>	B'BUY
ECA Prisma	880	preamp • MM,MC • 39,10,23cm • Phono stepup	
Woodside SC27 MM	881	preamp • MM,2L,1T	
Bryston BP5	889	preamp • A/V • MM/MC,3L,1T • 48,5,25cm • MM or MC, balanced out	
Dawn Audio Cmd 2 by 200	890	power amp • 200W • 38,11,26cm • Single monoblock	
Meridian 562V	895	140 preamp • A/V • MM,8L,T6D • 33,9,34cm • <i>As 562, plus video switching</i>	REC'D
Monrio MC-200S	895	integrated • 60W • 6L,1T • 43,10,37cm • Simplified version of MC-205	
Monrio MC-25	895	power amp • 80W • 43,10,36cm • Dual mono construction	
Shearpe Phase 6 Pre	895	preamp • MM,6L • Bal/unbal, can use battery	
Quad 66	897	124 preamp • MM,4L,2T • rem • 33,8,26cm • <i>Amplifier with classic lineage but compromised by an equally dated, soft and undynamic sound (tested with 606).</i>	
Alchemist Forsetti	899	integrated • 100W • 4L,2T • 47,10,39cm	
PS Audio 6.2	899	preamp • MM/MC,3L,2T • 43,6,19cm • Outboard PSU	
PS Audio Phono Link	899	preamp • MM/MC • 43,6,19cm • Outboard PSU	
Woodside ISA230 Disc	899	116 integrated • 30W • MM,2L,1T • <i>Smooth and inoffensive valve amplifier, though it lacks the sparkle and euphony required for a truly entertaining sound.</i>	
Woodside ISA230 Line	899	integrated • 30W • 4L,2T	
Concordant Exhilarant	900	preamp • 5L • 6 tube pre, wood case option	
Marantz SC-22	900	preamp • 4L,1T • 25,9,22cm • Audiophile micro component	
Micromega Tempo 2	900	integrated • 75W • 6L,1T • hdph • 43,9,28cm • Optional MM/MC	
Minstrel Ultra Linear	900	integrated • 26W • 3L,1T • 38,310,16cm • Low feedback hybrid	
Heybrook SIG/SPX	922	power amp • 140W • Stereo power amp	
Meracus INGREDI	925	preamp • MM/MC,6L • hdph • 46,9,31cm • Optional phono & case colours	
Audio Innovations P2MC	949	preamp • MM/MC • 50,12,30cm • Phono stage	
LFD MC1 Phonostage	949	preamp • MC • 30,7,36cm • Discrete circuit	
Thule IA100	949	integrated • 100W • 5L,2T • rem • Fully balanced operation	
Woodside ISA 240	949	power amp • 40W	
DNM 3 Start	950	preamp • MM/MC,2L,1T • 27,13,16cm • Solid core, slit foil caps	
Monrio PWR1L	950	preamp • 6L,1T • 43,7,27cm • Twin outputs	
Dawn Audio Prelude +50	951	preamp • MM/MC,2L,2T • 38,9,26cm • Pre out line driver	
Art Audio VP1	952	preamp • MM,5L,2T	
Lynwood Ruby	985	power amp • 120W	
Naim NAP180	987	power amp • 60W • 43,76,30cm	
Electrocompanion EC1-2	990	integrated • 50W • 3L,1T • 46,11,38cm • New entry level integrated	
Conrad-Johnson PV10AL	995	preamp • 5L • Line version of PV-10A	
Counterpoint Solid 1EM995	995	power amp • 100W • 25,6,27cm • Mono	
Michi RHB-05	995	power amp • 100W • 47,8,36cm	
Michi RHQ-10	995	preamp • MM,MC • 47,8,34cm • Phono equaliser	
Michi RHA-10	995	preamp • 5L • rem • 47,8,34cm • Active	
Roksan ROK-L2.5	995	preamp • 4L,1T • 43,8,33cm • Revised	
CR Developments Romulus	998	integrated • 35W • 5L	
Linn Kaim Pro	998	preamp • 4L, 2T • 32,8,33cm • Multi-room compatible	
Arcam Xeta One	999	integrated • A/V • 50W • MM,5L,2T • hdph • 43,13,32cm • Video switching, 5ch Dolby	
Audio Innovations Ser 800	999	148 power amp • 25W • 41,15,34cm	
Gamma Acoustics Era Std	999	preamp • MM,3L,1T • 44,17,30cm • Triode, fully regulated	
LFD LSI Linestage	999	preamp • 4L,1T • 48,7,33cm • Zero feedback	
LFD PA1 Powerstage	999	power amp • 60W • 48,7,33cm • MOSFETs, custom parts	
LFD PPS	999	preamp • 2L,1T • 13,6,27cm • Switched attenuator, passive	
Musical Fidelity F22	999	preamp • 5L,1T • rem • 49,12,33cm • Optional phono/digital boards	
NAD Monitor 208	999	124 power amp • 250W • <i>Truly a beefy amplifier</i>	
Teac A-BX10	999	integrated • 100W • MM/MC,3L,2T • 44,10,38cm • Balanced input	
Woodside SC27 MC	999	preamp • MC,2L,1T	
YBA Integre Line	999	integrated • 45W • 4L,1T • 43,9,33cm	
Audiolab 8000Q	1,000	145 power amp • 3L,3T • hdph • rem • 45,8,36cm • <i>Tested with £750 8000M monoblocks - see comments</i>	
Graaf WFB Two	1,000	preamp • MM,6L,1T • 41,10,30cm	

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
Harman-Kardon HK680	1,000	integrated • 85W • 5L,2T • hdph • 45,14,40cm • Optional phono stage - £30	
Harman-Kardon PA2400	1,000	power amp • 120W • 45,16,41cm	
Lumley Reference LV1	1,000	preamp • 6L,1T • 29,44,6cm • Active valve circuit	
Marantz PH-22	1,000	preamp • MC,MM • 25,9,22cm • Phono stepup	
Sentec PA9	1,000	power amp • 60W • 20,8,30cm • Monoblocks	
AVI S2000MP + P	1,049	preamp • MM,4L,1T • rem • 31,25,9cm • includes S2000RC handset	
Meracur CIERE	1,095	power amp • 60W • 46,9,31cm • Discrete design	
Meracur INTRARE	1,095	integrated • 60W • MM/MC,5L,1T • hdph • 45,9,31cm • Optional phono & case colours	
Sonic Frontiers SFP-1	1,095	preamp • MM/MC • 45,12,28cm • Tube/J-FET phono stage	
Audio InnovClassic 25	1,099	integrated • 25W • 4L,1T • 46,15,34cm • Enclosed valves	
Copland CSA-14	1,099	<b>148</b> integrated • 60W • MM,3L,1T • 43,13,38cm • <i>Great sound and looks, but watch out for high capacitance cables</i>	REC'D
LFD Integrated 1	1,099	integrated • 65W • MM/MC,4L,1T • 48,7,37cm • <i>A more powerful Integrated 1</i>	
Musical Fidelity FX	1,099	power amp • 90W • 49,12,38cm • Bal/unbalanced in	
Tube Tech Unisis Pwr Amp	1,099	power amp • 30W • 35,17,27cm • Stereo power amp	
Art Audio Conductor	1,100	preamp • 6L,2T • hdph • Upgradable	
Technics SE-A2000	1,100	power amp • 100W • rem • 45,19,44cm • Meters, R-Core, MOS AA	
Credo CMP005	1,119	preamp • 6L • rem • Remote controlled preamp	
Bryston BP20	1,126	preamp • A/V • 8L,1T • 48,5,25cm • Balanced in/out	
Grant G50A	1,128	power amp • 60W • Monoblocks	
Unison Res Simply Two	1,148	integrated • 12W • 4L,1T • 25,16,40cm • <i>Looks fantastic, but sound is confused</i>	
Arion Eros Line Mk II	1,150	preamp • 4L,1T • Dual mono construction	
Michell Alecto Stereo	1,150	power amp • 50W • 32,20,36cm	
Copland CSA-303	1,155	preamp • MM,3L,1T • 43,13,38cm • Hybrid, Sovtek 6922 tubes	
Bryston 3B-NRB	1,159	power amp • A/V • 150W • 48,13,23cm • <i>Balanced and unbalanced operation</i>	
Counterpoint SA-1000E	1,195	preamp • MM/MC,3L,1T • 49,12,32cm	
Counterpoint Solid 8E	1,195	preamp • 3L,1T • 49,6,27cm	
Dynavector L200	1,195	preamp • 3L,1T • 44,6,24cm • Line preamp	
Audio Innovations S500	1,199	integrated • 25W • MM,3L,2T • 41,15,34cm	
Audio Innovations S700	1,199	<b>116</b> integrated • 25W • 4L,1T • 41,15,34cm • <i>Turns the roughest of digital sounds into understated and graceful music.</i>	REC'D
Tube Tech Prophet	1,199	preamp • 4L,1T • 35,8,25cm • Two box pre, separate PSU	
YBA 3 Power	1,199	<b>72</b> power amp • 45W • 43,9,33cm • <i>Tested with £1250 3 Pre - see below for comments.</i>	
YBA Integre	1,199	<b>121</b> preamp • 45W • MM,4L,1T • 43,9,33cm • <i>Audiophile spec French integrated with good resolution and nice phono stage.</i>	
Aura PA200	1,200	power amp • 110W • 43,10,34cm • Balanced & unbalanced in	
Chimera X-150P	1,200	power amp • 150W • MOSFET, balance, bridgable	
Chimera X-100	1,200	integrated • 100W • 4L,1T • Outboard PSU, s/steel & chrome	
Fullers A10	1,200	power amp • 10W • 48,13,30cm • Single ended Class A	
Woodside MA50 Class A	1,224	power amp • 50W • 1 channel monoblock	
AVI S2000MM	1,249	power amp • 150W • 31,25,9cm • 2x monoblocks	
Alchemist Forsetti Pwr	1,250	power amp • 150W • 47,14,39cm • Alloy/gold finish	
Conrad-Johnson PV-10A	1,250	<b>139</b> preamp • MC,4L • <i>Beautiful imaging, superb detail, plenty of gain on the phono input; classy build too. Tested in Sessions</i>	REC'D
Lumley Reference ST40	1,250	power amp • 40W • 30,40,17 • Pentode	
Micromega Amp	1,250	power amp • 100W • 43,9,28cm	
Micromega Tempo P	1,250	preamp • 7L,1T • hdph • 43,9,28cm • Optional MM/MC	
YBA 3 Pre	1,250	<b>72</b> preamp • MM,3L,1T • 43,9,33cm • <i>See-through, ethereal stereo images, but more convincing towards centre of soundstage (tested with £1199 3 Pwr).</i>	
McIntosh MC7100	1,259	power amp • 100W • 45,9,54cm • System controller	
Bryston THX3B	1,262	power amp • A/V • 150W • 48,13,23cm • 2 channels, THX approved	
Magnum MA500	1,295	power amp • 280W • Monoblocks	
Arion EOS Export Mk II	1,299	power amp • 18W • With volume control	
Classe Audio Audio 3D	1,320	preamp • MM/MC,4L,1T • 48,7,28cm	
Woodside STA35	1,323	<b>100</b> power amp • 35W • <i>Synergistic with SC26, with a cool, controlled sound, good focus and transparency. More poise than grunt (tested with SC26).</i>	
Michell Argo HR	1,339	preamp • 3L,1T • 36,8,22cm • 2 pairs outputs	
Copland CTA-301MkII	1,349	preamp • MM,3L,1T • 43,13,38cm • Upgraded, tube, soft start	
Arion Eros Phono Mk II	1,350	preamp • 3L,1T • Dual mono construction	
Art Audio Quintet	1,393	<b>109</b> power amp • 15W • <i>Switchable triode, ultralinear output stage. In triode mode, these are 15 of the sweetest Watts around. Surprisingly gutsy.</i>	REC'D
Sonic Frontiers SFL-1	1,395	preamp • 4L,2T • 45,12,28cm • Tube/FET hybrid line stage	
Linn Kairn Preamp	1,398	preamp • MM, MC 3L,2T • 32,8,32cm • Multi-room compatible	
Arion Triton Mk II	1,399	power amp • 10W • Triode, volume control	
Arion Elektra Export Mk	1,399	integrated • 18W • 4L,1T • Class A valve amp	
Classe Audio Audio 70	1,399	power amp • 75W • 48,12,30cm • Single ended, balanced	
Musical Fidelity A1000	1,399	integrated • 50W • MM/MC,3L,1T • 49,13,36cm • Separate PSU	
Shearpe Phase 1 Pre Ref	1,399	preamp • MM/MC,5L,2T • 43,6,31cm • <i>Owners of old non-ref model can have their amps upgraded</i>	
Tube Tech Unisis S'Line	1,399	integrated • 30W • 4L,1T • 35,17,27cm • Line level version of Unisis	
Tube Tech Unisis	1,399	integrated • 30W • MM,3L,1T • 35,17,27cm • One tube phono stage	
Exposure XIV	1,400	preamp • MM,MC,3L,2T • 48,8,30cm • Needs 9 power supply	
Electrocomp't EC-4 Line	1,420	preamp • 5L,2T • 48,9,23cm • inc XLR balanced in/out	
Woodside SC25 Line	1,420	preamp • 2L,2T	
Papworth TVA50	1,425	power amp • 50W • 43,19,33cm • Tube stereo	
Electrocompaniet EC1-ZSF1	1,440	integrated • 50W • 3L,1T • 46,38,11cm • As EC1-2 + Black Stone facia	
Arion Talos Line Mk II	1,450	integrated • 10W • 4L,1T • Triode Class A valve amp	
McIntosh C712	1,479	preamp • 6L, 2T • hdph • rem • 45,9,45cm • System controller	
ECA Lectern HD	1,480	power amp • 50W • 39,10,23cm • High definition version	
Counterpoint SA100E	1,495	power amp • 100W • Hybrid	
Counterpoint Solid 1E	1,495	power amp • 100W • Mono	
Dynavector P100	1,495	preamp • MM,MC • 44,6,22cm • Phono stepup	
Roksan ROK-S1.5	1,495	power amp • 70W	
Sonic Frontiers SFP-1 Sig	1,495	preamp • MM/MC • 45,12,28cm • Tube/J-FET phono stepup	
Unison Res Simply Four P	1,495	integrated • 24W • 4L,1T • 35,16,40cm • Single ended Pentode	
Art Audio Integra	1,499	integrated • 30W • 5L,2T • Class A Pentode	
LFD Phonostage MC2	1,499	preamp • MC • 30,7,36cm • Hand tuned MC1	
Minstrel Partridge	1,499	integrated • 26W • 3L,1T • 38,31,16cm • Zero feedback hybrid	
PS Audio 100 Delta	1,499	power amp • 120W • 42,15,35cm	
Audio Note Oto SE	1,500	<b>126</b> integrated • 24W • MM/MC,4L,1T • <i>Transparent, dynamic, clear and subtle, but limited power.</i>	REC'D
DNM 3A Start	1,500	preamp • MM/MC,2L,1T • 27,13,16cm	
Lumley Reference PV1	1,500	preamp • MM,5L,1T • Phono version of LV1	
Monrio MC-205	1,500	integrated • 80W • 6L,1T • 43,10,36cm • Inc pre-out sockets	
Tesseract TAADA	1,500	preamp • MM/MC	
Tesseract TALA	1,500	preamp • 5L,1T	
Thorens TRP3000	1,500	preamp • MM,3L,1T • hdph • Inc Class A headphone amp	
Thorens TRP3000	1,500	preamp • MM/MC • Phono stepup, valve	
Grant G100AMS	1,528	power amp • 100W	
Naim NAP135	1,529	power amp • 70W • 43,76,30cm	
Naim NAP250	1,529	power amp • 70W • 43,76,30cm	
Unison Res Simply Four T	1,545	integrated • 11W • 4L,1T • 35,16,40cm • Single ended triode Class A	
Audio Research PH-3	1,550	preamp • MM/MC • 48,14,26cm • Hybrid phono preamp	
Triangle Nemo Allion 02	1,550	integrated • 80W • 5L,2T	



PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

EAR 859	1,595	integrated • 13W • 6L • 40,40,15cm • Single ended valve	
Copland CTA-501	1,599	power amp • 30W • 2L • 43,18,38cm • Tube, has vol control	
EAR 834	1,599	integrated • 50W • 6L • 40,40,15cm • Valve	
Exposure XVIII (pr)	1,599	power amp • 65W • 43,85,35cm • Upgraded 2x monoblocks	
LFD Linestage LS2	1,599	preamp • 4L,1T • 48,7,37cm • Hand tuned LS1	
LFD Powerstage PA2	1,599	power amp • 75W • 48,7,33cm • Hand tuned PA1	
Marantz MA-22	1,600	power amp • 50W • 23,9,22cm • Audiophile monoblock x2	
Arion Talos Phono Mk II	1,650	integrated • 10W • MM,3L,1T • Triode Class A phono amp	
Michi RHB-10	1,650	power amp • 200W • 47,19,37cm	
Art Audio Concerto	1,669	power amp • 50W • 2x mono triode/pentode	
Counterpoint SA-2000E	1,695	preamp • 4L,2T • 49,12,33cm	
Sonic Frontiers SFS-40	1,695	power amp • 40W • 40,18,32cm • Stereo tube power amp	
Classe Audio Audio 4L	1,697	preamp • 5L,1T • 48,9,34cm • Remote option	
Copland CTA-401	1,699	integrated • 30W • MM,3L,1T • 43,18,38cm • Tube push/pull ultra-linear	
Credo PMP154	1,699	power amp • 150W • 44,16,31cm	
Credo PMP303	1,699	power amp • 30W • Class A power amp	
YBA 2 Pre	1,699	56 preamp • MM,3L,1T • 43,9,33cm • Superbly finished, good space and transparency. Needs transformer for MC cartridges (tested with £2150 2 Pwr). REC'D	
Classe Audio Audio 4	1,735	preamp • MM/MC,4L,1T • 48,9,34cm • Remote option	
Audio InnovFirst Audio	1,749	power amp • 7.5W • 41,15,34cm	
DNM PA1	1,750	power amp • 45W • 27,13,18cm • Triwire output	
LFD Linestage LS2P	1,750	preamp • MM/MC,4L,1T • 48,7,37cm • As LS2 with phono stage	
Unison Res Mystery One	1,750	preamp • 4L,1T • For Smart 845	
Bryston 4B-NRB	1,756	power amp • A/V • 300W • 48,13,39cm • Bridgable, bal & unbalanced	
Electrocomp't EC-4 SF L	1,790	preamp • 5L,2T • 48,9,23cm • XLR in/out, black stone facia	
Sonic Frontiers SFC-1	1,795	126 integrated • 50W • 4L,2T • 45,19,43cm • Smooth, sophisticated Canadian valve amp with a decent direct inPut and more features than average.	
Sonic Frontiers SFL-1 Sig	1,795	preamp • 4L,2T • 45,12,28cm • Tube/FET hybrid line stage	
Thule PA200	1,798	power amp • 200W • High power balanced design	
Audio InnovSer 1000	1,799	power amp • 50W • 41,15,34cm • Monoblocks	
Tesserac TAHA	1,800	preamp • MC, • hdph	
Bryston 7B-NRB	1,815	power amp • A/V • 500W • 48,13,39cm • Single monoblock	
Audio Research LS-3	1,845	preamp • 5L,1T • 48,14,26cm • 1 direct input	
Arion Tycho Pwr Mk II	1,850	power amp • 50W • Pure Class A	
Bryston THX4B	1,858	power amp • A/V • 300W • 48,13,39cm • 2 channels, THX approved	
Linn Klout	1,895	power amp • 80W • 32,8,33cm • Stereo, tri-wire connectors	
Musical Fidelity F15	1,899	power amp • 100W • 49,19,38cm • Bal/unbalanced in/hybrid	
Naim Super-Cap	1,909	43,76,30cm • Power supply	
Bryston THX7B	1,917	power amp • A/V • 500W • 48,13,39cm • 1 channel, THX approved	
Woodside SC26 Phono	1,931	100 preamp • MM/MC,3L,2T • Synergistic with STA35, with a cool, controlled sound, good focus and transparency (tested with STA35).	
Concordant Exquisite	1,950	preamp • 5L • 10 tubes, 2 line out, ext PSU	
Lumley Reference ST70	1,950	power amp • 70W • 36,46,18cm • Switchable triode/pentode	
Electrocompaniet EC-3MC	1,953	preamp • MC,4L,2T • 48,9,23cm • XLR in/out, adj MC input	
Michell Alecto Mono	1,989	power amp • 100W • 32,20,36cm	
Adyton CHORUS	1,995	preamp • MC • 44,3,25cm • RIAA phono stage	
Counterpoint NPS-100E	1,995	power amp • 100W	
Dynavector L100	1,995	preamp • 3L,2T • 44,6,24cm • Line preamp	
Monrio HP1	1,995	power amp • 135W • 43,11,43cm • Dual mono, high current	
Unison Res Phono One	1,995	preamp • MM,MC • For Mystery/Perf/Absolute	
Naim NAC82	1,997	preamp • 6 (L or T) • rem • 43,76,30cm	
Arion Tycho Int Mk II	1,999	integrated • 50W • 4L,1T • Pure Class A integrated	
Copland CTA-504	1,999	power amp • 50W • 43,18,38cm • Switchable tetrode/triode	
LFD Linestage LSB	1,999	preamp • 4L,1T • 48,7,37cm • Balanced LS2	
LFD Powerstage PA2M	1,999	power amp • 90W • 30,7,37cm • Mono PA2	
Art Audio Conductor Export	2,000	preamp • 6L,2T • hdph • rem • Separate PSU, mono	
Thorens TRA3000	2,000	power amp • 90W • 8x EL34 tubes	
Thorens TRA3000	2,000	power amp • 90W • Valve	
XTC POW-1	2,000	power amp • A/V • 175W • 4 channel multi-purpose amp	
Electrocomp't AW100DMB	2,080	power amp • 100W • 48,13,36cm • High current (80A)	
McIntosh C38	2,095	preamp • MM, 5L,3T • hdph • rem • Multi-room, balanced out	
Copland CTA-505	2,099	power amp • 67W • 43,18,38cm • Switchable tetrode/triode	
McIntosh C22	2,099	preamp • 8L • hdph • rem • Retro style valve pre	
YBA 2 Power	2,150	56 power amp • 70W • 43,9,33cm • Superbly finished, but with slightly softened bass (tested with £1699 2 Pre). REC'D	
Credo PMP102	2,181	power amp • 100W • 44,21,31cm • Class A power amp	
Electrocompaniet EC1-1	2,188	integrated • 100W • 5L,2T • 45,13,36cm • High current (80A)	
Bryston 8B-NRB	2,195	power amp • A/V • 150W • 48,13,39cm • 4 channels, bridgeable	
Counterpoint SA-3000E	2,195	preamp • MM/MC,4L,2T • 49,12,33cm • Separate PSU	
Dynavector HX75	2,195	power amp • 75W • 22,13,37cm • High current design	
Meracus PRETARE	2,195	preamp • MM/MC,3L,1T • rem • 42,12,44cm • Dual mono, case colour opt	
Exposure IV	2,199	power amp • 80W • 48,13,35cm • Fully regulated	
Shearpe Phase 1 Pwr Ref	2,199	power amp • 100W • 43,14,36cm • Owners of old non-ref model can have their amps upgraded	
Graaf 5050	2,200	power amp • 50W • 41,20,33cm	
Meracus TENTARE	2,245	power amp • 75W • 42,12,44cm • Dual mono	
McIntosh MC7108	2,249	power amp • A/V • 40W • 45,16,51cm • 8 channel (5-way) 8x45 watts	
Audio Research LS-3b	2,250	preamp • 5L,1T • 48,14,26cm • 1 direct input	
Conrad-Johnson PV-12L	2,250	preamp • 5L • Line version of PV-12	
Roksan ROK-L1.5	2,250	preamp • 4L,1T • 43,8,33cm	
Electrocomp't EC-3MC SF	2,270	preamp • MC,4L,2T • 48,9,23cm • XLR in/out, black stone facia	
PS Audio 200 Delta	2,279	power amp • 200W • 42,15,45cm	
Electrocomp't AW100DMB	2,280	power amp • 100W • 48,13,36cm • High current, blk stone facia	
McIntosh MC7150	2,295	power amp • 150W	
Classe Audio Audio 10	2,299	power amp • 125W • 48,17,42cm • Single ended, bal bridgable	
Matisse Fantasy	2,300	preamp • A/V • 6L,2T • Line stage	
Classe Audio Audio 5L II	2,395	preamp • 5L,1T • 48,15,43cm • Remote option	
Bryston THX8B	2,400	power amp • A/V • 150W • 48,13,39cm • 4 channels, THX approved	
Marantz MA-24	2,400	power amp • 30W • 21,17,36cm • Class-A monoblock x2	
Electrocomp't EC1-1 SF	2,460	integrated • 100W • 5L,2T • 45,13,36cm • High current, blk stone facia	
PS Audio 200b Delta	2,490	power amp • 200W • 42,15,45cm	
Adyton TEMPER	2,495	preamp • MC,2L • 44,3,25cm • Phono & line source preamp	
Counterpoint Solid 2E	2,495	power amp • 200W • 49,17,49cm • Hybrid	
Art Audio Tempo	2,499	power amp • 30W • 2x mono Class A triode	
ATC SCA2	2,499	preamp • 6L,2T • rem • 44,36,10cm • Balanced & unbalanced in/out	
Audio InnovSer 1000SE	2,499	power amp • 50W • 41,15,34cm • Silver circuit board	
Gamma Acoustics Rhythm2	2,499	integrated • 22W • MM,3L • 38,30,21cm • Single ended phono integrated	
Credo PMP252	2,509	power amp • 250W • 44,21,31cm	
Adyton OPERA	2,595	integrated • 50W • MM/MC,3L,2T • 21,33,13cm • Optional phono	
Meracus ONESTA	2,595	integrated • 75W • MM/MC,3L,1T • rem • 42,12,44cm • Dual mono, case colour opt	

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE	SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
EAR 802MC	2,599	63	preamp • MM/MC,2L,2T • <i>Tested with £3499 509 Mk II - see comments</i>	REC'D
Tube Tech Genesis	2,599		power amp • 100W • 35,15,27cm • 2x monoblocks	
Audio Research VT60	2,645		power amp • 35W • Single end tube mono	
Papworth M100	2,645		power amp • 100W • 25,17,38cm • Tube monoblock	
Classe Audio Audio 5 II	2,657		preamp • MM/MC,4L,1T • 48,15,43cm • Remote option	
McIntosh MC7104	2,729		power amp • A/V • 100W • 45,16,51cm • 4 channels	
Conrad-Johnson PV-12	2,750		preamp • MC,4L • Tube	
Meridian 601	2,750		preamp • MM,4L,T • hdph • rem • DSP tone control, MC option	
McIntosh MC150	2,855		power amp • 150W • 45,14,45cm • Blue meters	
Jadis JA-30	2,880	60	<b>power amp • 30W • 21,21,46cm • French tubes, JP-30MC has beautiful build, nostalgic styling and delightful midrange (tested with £5978 JP30).</b>	REC'D
Adyton MODUS	2,895		preamp • 4L,2T • 44,5,25cm • Line control amp	
Audio Research PH-2	2,895		preamp • MM/MC • 48,14,26cm • Balanced	
Sonic Frontiers SFS-80	2,895		power amp • 80W • 45,22,35cm • Stereo tube power amp	
PS Audio 250 Delta	2,980		power amp • 250W • 42,15,45cm • Monoblocks	
Counterpoint NPS-200E	2,995		power amp • 200W • Rated at 4 Ohms, hybrid	
Unison Res Smart 845	2,995		power amp • 24W • Single ended triode monoblocks	
Audio Research LS-2 II	2,997		preamp • 5L,1T • 48,14,26cm • 1 direct input/hybrid	
DNM 3B Twin E	3,050		preamp • MM/MC,4L,1T • 27,13,16cm	
McIntosh C39	3,129		preamp • A/V • MM, 10L (6 Vid) • hdph • rem • 45,17,45cm • Two zone, THX compatible	
McIntosh MC7300	3,195		power amp • 300W	
Lumley Reference M120	3,200		power amp • 120W • 29,44,18cm • 2xmono, triode/pentode	
McIntosh C40	3,239		preamp • MM, 6L, 3T • hdph • 45,14,45cm • Balanced in/out	
Audio Research D-200	3,248		power amp • 110W • 48,14,31cm • Single ended, balanced	
Audio Research SP9 III	3,290		preamp • MM/MC,4L,2T • 48,14,26cm • Hybrid pre	
Audio InnovSecond Audio	3,299		power amp • 15W • 41,15,34cm • Monoblocks	
Krell KSL-2	3,331		preamp • 4L,1T • 48,7,36cm • Opt. MM/MC stage	
Audio Research V35	3,355		power amp • 30W • 48,18,37cm • Balanced in, hybrid	
Audio Research LS-2b II	3,398		preamp • 5L,1T • 48,14,26cm • 1 balanced direct input/hybrid	
Classe Audio Audio 15	3,399		power amp • 175W • 48,19,42cm • Single ended, bal bridgale	
McIntosh MC7106	3,425		power amp • A/V • 100W • 45,16,51cm • Six x 100W THX amp	
Mark Levinson 29	3,450		power amp • 50W	
Grant G350A	3,455		power amp • 350W	
Classe Audio Audio 6L II	3,469		preamp • 5L,1T • 48,15,43cm • Remote option, sep PSU	
Adyton CORDIS 1.6	3,495		power amp • 120W • 45,9,35cm • Stereo power amp	
EAR 509 Mk II	3,499	63	<b>power amp • 100W • 36,20,25cm • Combining sonic strengths of transistors and valves, this amp warrants attention (tested with £2599 802).</b>	REC'D
Conrad-Johnson Prem 11A	3,500		power amp • 70W • Baby Premier 8	
Matisse Reference	3,500		preamp • A/V • MM/MC,5L,2T	
Art Audio Maestro	3,524		power amp • 100W • 2x mono triode/pentode	
Counterpoint SA4	3,575		power amp • 140W • Hybrid	
McIntosh MC275	3,595		power amp • 75W • Classic valve amp	
DNM 3B Primus E	3,630		preamp • MM/MC,4L,1T • 27,13,16cm	
KAL Empress	3,660		preamp • MM/MC,2L,1T • hdph • Tube	
Krell KSA-50s	3,690	141	<b>power amp • 50W • 48,22,40cm • Sustained Plateau Bias</b>	
McIntosh MA6800	3,735		integrated • 150W • hdph • rem • 45,18,51cm • Blue meters	
YBA 1 Pre	3,750	62	<b>preamp • MC,4L,1T • 43,9,33cm • Tested with £4250 1 Pwr - see below for comments.</b>	REC'D
Grant G200AMS	3,760		power amp • 200W • Monoblocks	
McIntosh MC300	3,765		power amp • 300W • 45,16,46cm • Bridgale to 600w, blue meters	
Jadis DEFY-P60	3,774		preamp • MM/MC,4L,1T • 43,17,30cm • Tube	
Sonic Frontiers SFL-2	3,795		preamp • 4L,2T • 45,12,33cm • Tube, dual mono, balanced	
Classe Audio Audio 6 II	3,817		preamp • MM/MC,4L,1T • 48,15,43cm • Remote option, separate PSU	
Papworth M200	3,825		power amp • 200W • 46,20,31cm • Tube monoblock	
Conrad-Johnson Prem 10	3,900		preamp • 5L • Line version of Premier 7B	
Electrocomp't AW250DMB	3,983		power amp • 250W • 48,22,45cm • High current (100A)	
Alchemist Alchemist Stereo3	3,995		power amp • 200W • 47,18,52cm • Alloy/gold finish	
Counterpoint SA-5000E	3,995		preamp • MM/MC,4L,2T • 49,12,27cm • Separate PSU	
Counterpoint SA-9	3,995		preamp • MM/MC • 49,12,37cm • Phono stepup	
Dynavecator HX1 2	3,995		power amp • 130W • 44,13,37cm • High current capability	
Mark Levinson 38	3,995		preamp • 6L,2T • rem • Fully remote, balanced	
Gamma Acs Space Ref	3,999		power amp • 18W • 3L • 43,22,31cm • Line integrated	
Gamma Acoustics Era Ref	3,999		preamp • MM,3L • 44,17,30cm • Single ended Triode	
Musical Fidelity F18	3,999		power amp • 220W • 49,19,67cm • Bal/unbalanced in/hybrid	
Tube Tech Synergy 1	3,999		integrated • 150W • 5L,1T • rem • 47,18,47cm • Bias monitor, soft-start	
Exposure XVI	4,000		power amp • 125W • 48,13,35cm • Pair of regulated monoblocks	
Counterpoint Nat Progress	4,125		power amp • 150W • Mono, hybrid	
Krell KRC-2	4,190	141	<b>preamp • 6L,1T • rem • 48,7,36cm • Opt MM/MC stage</b>	
Electrocomp't AW250DMB	4,195		power amp • 250W • 48,45,22cm • High current stereo, blk stone	
DNM PA2BE	4,250		power amp • 90W • 27,13,18cm • Triwire output	
YBA 1 Power	4,250	62	<b>power amp • 85W • 43,14,33cm • Well finished pre/power amp with front rank imaging and transparency (tested with £3750 1 Pre).</b>	
KAL Emperor	4,375		power amp • 9W • Single ended tube Class A	
Counterpoint NPS-400E	4,395		power amp • 400W • Rated at 4 Ohms, hybrid	
Audio Research V70	4,480		power amp • 60W • 48,18,40cm • Balanced in, hybrid	
Mark Levinson 331	4,495		power amp • 100W • High current	
LFD Disc Preamp	4,499		preamp • MC • 30,5,36cm • Battery powered	
RoksanR OK-M1.5	4,500		power amp • 160W • 48,11,34 • Pair of monoblocks	
Unison Res Performance 1	4,500		integrated • 25W • 4L,1T • Single-ended triode	
Classe Audio Audio 25	4,639		power amp • 250W • 48,20,53cm • Single ended, balance bridga	
Electrocomp't AW180MB	4,673		power amp • 180W • 28,29,48cm • High current, price per pair	
EAR 519	4,699		power amp • 100W • 43,14,20cm • Valve monoblock x1	
Jadis JPL	4,720		preamp • 5L,1T • 43,17,30cm • Tube	
DNM 3B Six E	4,780		preamp • MM/MC,4L,1T • 27,13,16cm	
Audio Research D-300	4,800		power amp • 160W • 48,18,33cm • Single ended, balanced	
Electrocomp't AW180MB	4,900		power amp • 180W • 28,29,48cm • Black stone, price per pair	
Jadis JA-80	4,956		power amp • 60W • 23,26,58cm • Tube, 1x monoblock	
Alchemist Control	4,995		preamp • 10L,2T • rem • 47,18,41cm • Dual mono, alloy/gold finish	
Jadis JPP-200	4,998		preamp • 4L,1T	
Naim NAC52	5,006		preamp • 6 (see note) • rem • 43,76,30cm • Optional phono board	
DNM PA2BS	5,250		power amp • 90W • 27,13,18cm • Triwire output	
Jadis DEFY-7	5,290		power amp • 100W • 49,23,63cm • Tube	
Tesseract TAP-A	5,300		preamp • MM,3L,2T	
McIntosh MC2600	5,395		power amp • 600W	
Mark Levinson 27.5	5,399		power amp • 100W	
Sonic Frontiers SFS-160	5,495		power amp • 160W • 45,22,35cm • Twin tube monoblocks	
CAT SL1 Sig line	5,500		preamp • 3L,1T • 31,48,14cm • 2 outputs, valve	
DNM PA2BS-1	5,650		power amp • 90W • 27,13,18cm • Triwire output	
Audio Research LS-5 II	5,690		preamp • 5L,1T • 48,14,30cm • Full balanced in/out	

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
Krell KSA-100s	5,843	power amp • 100W • 48,22,50cm • Sustained Plateau Bia	
Jadis JP-30MC	5,978 60	preamp • MM/MC,4L,1T • French tubes, JP-30MC has beautiful build, nostalgic styling and delightful midrange. (tested with JA30).	REC'D
Audio Research VT130	5,994	power amp • 65W • Stereo tube, balanced	
CAT SL1 Sig phono	6,000	preamp • MM,2L • 31,48,14cm • 2 outputs, valve	
McIntosh MC500	6,265	power amp • 500W • 45,27,51cm • Blue meters	
Mark Levinson 332	6,495	power amp • 200W • High current	
Mark Levinson 38S	6,495	preamp • 6L,2T • rem • Special Edition, balanced	
Audio Research D-400II	6,600	power amp • 200W • 48,23,33cm • Single ended, balanced	
Conrad-Johnson Ev20 SP	6,700	preamp • MC,4L • Poor man's Premier 7B	
Krell KRCS	6,949	preamp • 6L,1T • rem • 48,7,36cm • Opt MM/MC stage	
EAR 549	6,999	power amp • 200W • 43,27,22cm • Valve monoblock x1	
EAR G88	6,999	preamp • MM/MC,3L,2T • Valve	
Conrad-Johnson Prem 12	7,000	power amp • 140W • Monoblock pair	
Conrad-Johnson Prem 7B 11,000Col		preamp • MC,4L • The 7 is designed without compromise, and is clearly one of the finest (valve) preamplifiers money can buy.	REC'D



## Cables

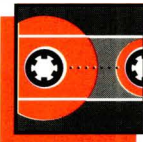
Cables are not accessories, but an integral part of a system. Inevitably some cables are greater than others. The best cable for your system will be found through trial and error, but by combining our Recommendations with those of a dealer, you will end up with something suitable. Generally speaking, budget to spend about ten per cent of the total system cost on cables. ■ Analogue interconnects are the leads that connect source components to amplifiers and pre to power amps. The cables in this section are priced for a one metre terminated pair, which should be adequate for most applications.

■ Symmetrical indicates where a twisted pair of conductors are used. Coaxial means that there is a central 'hot' conductor and a shield that carries the negative signal. Stranded cables have multiple strands and solid core uses individually insulated strand(s). ■ Digital interconnects connect CD transports to DACs, and are traditionally coaxial with a 75 Ohm impedance. They come in optical and electrical varieties, the former being made of plastic or glass. The prices shown are for a terminated linear metre. ■ Speaker cables are used between the amplifier and speaker. Our prices are per unterminated metre.

**Key**  
 loudspeaker; interconnect;  
 digital, electrical; digital, optical .....these are the different types of cable  
 this information is followed by . . .  
 for loudspeaker cables .....construction type, materials used, .....capacitance (high, med. or low)  
 for analogue interconnects .....construction type and topology, .....materials used  
 for digital interconnects .....type of cable (elec. or optical), .....materials used, impedance in Ohms

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
<b>CABLES</b>			
QED 42 Strand	1	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • med • low • copper • PVC outer, figure-of-8	
Tech + Link OFC79	1	loudspeaker cable • stranded • low • copper	
Tech + Link OFC42	1	loudspeaker cable • stranded • low • copper • ie 49p/mtr	
Cable Talk Flat One	2	speaker cable • stranded • 6N copper • low intrusion budget cable	
Cable Talk Theatre 2	2	speaker cable • stranded • copper • entry level for AV purposes	
Ixos 603	2	133 Loudspeaker cable • stranded • copper	B'BUY
QED FI-4	2	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • med • low • copper • Flat construction, poly outer	
QED 79 Strand	2	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • low • low • copper • PVC outer, fig-of-8	
Cable Talk Talk 3	3	133 speaker cable • stranded • 6N copper • budget hi-fi cable	B'BUY
Ixos 601	3	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • OFC • 6 core	
QED RI-4	3	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • med • low • copper • 4-core, round construction	
QED Qudos	3	145 Loudspeaker cable • stranded • low • low • OFHC copper • Polyethylene cover	B'BUY
Cable Talk Overture 2	4	6N speaker cable • stranded • copper • Scaled down Concert series	
Heybrook Heywire	4	109 Loudspeaker cable • solid core • copper • This well-meaning facsimile of earlier ribbon cables ends up sounding lumpy and uneven.	
Cable Talk Talk 3 Biwire	5	speaker cable • 6N copper • 4 conductors, 6N	
Cable Talk Talk 4	5	speaker cable • stranded • 6N copper • Up-rated version of Talk 3	
Ixos 604	5	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • copper • Bi-wire	
Ixos 602	5	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • OFC • 12 core	
Nordost 2-Flat	5	Loudspeaker cable • solid core • copper • Flat construction	
QED Qudos Profile 8	5	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • OFHC • Flat 8-core OFHC poly	
Cable Talk Concert 2.1	7	speaker cable • stranded • copper • Signal Return Flow System	
Chord Rumour	8	loudspeaker cable • stranded • low silver/copper • PTFE dielectric	
Cable Talk Talk 4 Biwire	8	speaker cable • stranded • 6N copper • Up-rated Talk 3, 4 conductor	
Chord Flatline Gold	9	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • solid core • low • copper	REC'D
Mission Quartet	9	133 Loudspeaker cable • solid core • copper • 4-conductor OFC solid core	
Nordost Flatline Gold	9	Loudspeaker cable • solid core • copper • flat construction	
Sonic Link First Mains	10	Mains cable • stranded • 12A • silver plated copper • PTFE insulated	
Arion LSO.5	12	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • silver • Priced per meter	
Cable Talk Concert 2.1 BW	14	speaker cable • stranded • copper • 4 conductor version of Concert	
Chord Flatline Twin	16	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • solid core • low • copper	
Nordost Super Flat Biwire	17	Loudspeaker cable • solid core • copper • flat twin construction	
DPA Opti-link	20	108 Digital, optical • plastic • Very similar to Bantbridge AL560; sound is lacklustre	
Ixos 104	20	131 Interconnect • coaxial • stranded • OFC • 24 karat plugs	B'BUY
Ixos 603/10	20	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • copper • Unterminated	
Mission Stranded	20	109 Loudspeaker cable • stranded • copper • This Swedish made cable proved a real fit with our listeners - a slick performer and Best Buy upgrade.	B'BUY
QED DigiFlex	20	108 Digital, electrical • coaxial • stranded • copper • An AV-cum-digital cable that nearly beats QED's DigiFlex, but emphasises sibilants.	B'BUY
QED P2 Gold	20	Interconnect • Symmetrical • stranded • OFHC copper	
Sonic Link Pure Mains	20	Mains cable • stranded • 3A • HPMC • PTFE insulated	
QED Incon P2 Screened	23	Interconnect • coaxial • stranded • OFHC copper	
Cable Talk Improved 2/CD	25	Interconnect • Symmetrical • coaxial • solid core • copper • Entry level CD etc phono-phono	
DNM ML125UK	25	Mains cable • solid core • 13A • High purity copper	
Ixos 105	25	131 Digital, electrical • 75 Ohms • copper • OFC screen	REC'D
QED Optiflex	25	Digital, optical • plastic fibre	
QED Incon P1 Screened	26	Interconnect • Symmetrical • coaxial • stranded • OFHC copper • Various lengths available	
DPA Digi-link	28	108 Digital, electrical • coaxial • stranded • 75ohms • copper • Can seem slightly impassive but there's no avoiding its exceptionally detailed sound.	B'BUY
Arion LSI	30	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • silver • Priced per meter	
Chord Chrysalis	30	Interconnect • stranded • copper	
Nordost Magic 1	30	Interconnect • Symmetrical • stranded • low • copper	
Sonic Link Super Mains	30	Mains cable • stranded • 30A • silver plated copper • PTFC insulated	
Sonic Link Light Brown	30	108 Digital, electrical • coaxial • 75ohms • PTFE • Deviates from the 75 ohm standard and provides an unbalanced sound.	
vdH MV Videolink 75	30	108 Digital, electrical • coaxial • 75ohms • copper • An AV-cum-digital cable that nearly beats QED's DigiFlex, but emphasises sibilants.	REC'D
Chord Codac	32	108 Digital, electrical • coaxial • stranded • 75ohms • copper • A connection with a stranded inner core and a sound that lacks integration.	
Chord Cobra	32	Interconnect • stranded • copper	
QED Qudos Terminated	33	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • low • low • OFHC copper • Various lengths, terminated	
DNM TCC75	34	131 Analogue • solid core • medium • low • high purity copper • Non-coaxial	B'BUY
Cable Talk Advanced 2	35	Interconnect • Symmetrical • coaxial • solid core • 6N copper • phono-phono, for CD etc	
Sonic Link Pink	35	Interconnect • coaxial • stranded • silver plated copper	
Kimber Cable PSB D'link	37	108 Digital, electrical • copper • An analogue interconnect inappropriately pressed into digital service. A visible deterioration in the digital signal results.	

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
Ixos 103	40	131 Interconnect • coaxial • stranded • OFC • Double shielded, locking plugs	REC'D
Sonic Link AST150	40	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • low • copper	
Naim NAC05	44	109 Loudspeaker cable • stranded • copper • Described as a 'dinosaur of a cable', this stiff wire rod doesn't belong outside Naim systems.	
Audioquest F-14	45	109 Loudspeaker cable • solid core • copper • Ideal for laying under c.arpets, F-14 encourages a slightly warm and vibrant sound	REC'D
Monster Interlink LS100	45	108 Digital, optical • plastic • Well constructed stepped-index fibre with polished ends and connectors. Lean, fuzzy, engaging performance.	REC'D
Monster Datalink 100	45	108 Digital, electrical • coaxial • 75ohms • copper • A colourful coaxial interconnect with an equally colourful and up-beat sound. Very compatible.	REC'D
Sonic Link Red	45	Interconnect • coaxial • stranded • HPMC	
DPA Slink	47	Interconnect • coaxial • stranded • low • silver • phono terminated	
Kronos Konnekt 3	49	Interconnect • coaxial • stranded • copper	
Arion LS-2	50	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • silver • Biwire, priced per meter	
Audioquest Video Z	50	108 Digital, electrical • coaxial • stranded • 75ohms • copper • The very best available, with an expressive sound, but generously priced.	B'BUY
Cable Talk Monitor 2	50	Interconnect • 6N copper • Signal Return Flow System	
Cable Talk Improved 2/T1	50	Interconnect • Symmetrical • coaxial • solid core • copper • Phono-phono for tape	REC'D
Chord Prodac	50	131 Digital, electrical • 75ohms	REC'D
Nordost Black Knight	50	Interconnect • Symmetrical • stranded • copper	
Sonic Link AST75X2	50	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • copper • Biwire	
Sonic Link Green	50	131 Digital, electrical • coaxial • 75ohms • PTFE	
Sonic Link Derwent	50	Interconnect • stranded • silver plated copper	
vdH The Clearwater	50	109 Loudspeaker cable • stranded • silver/copper • Despite its evocative title, the Clearwater turns out to be a disappointingly murky sounding cable.	
Kimber Cable KC-1 D'link	52	108 Digital, electrical • copper • This cable adopts a woven construction with the addition of a conductive screen. Music lacks detail and spirit.	
Nordost Blue Heaven	58	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • low • low • silver/copper	
Kimber Cable Opti-link	59	108 Digital, optical • plastic • Hardly cheap for what appears to be a bog-standard PMNA fibre, yet it sounds a little brighter and livelier than most.	REC'D
Ixos 102	60	Interconnect • coaxial • stranded • OFC • Double shielded, locking plugs	
Trichord Pulsewire 75/D	64	digital interconnect • Symmetrical • coaxial • solid core • 75 ohms • silver plated copper • mono	
Cable Talk Studio 2	65	Interconnect • Symmetrical • coaxial • solid core • 6N copper • Enhanced version of Monitor 2	
Chord Siren	65	Interconnect • coaxial • stranded • Silver plated copper	
Chord Chameleon	68	Interconnect • stranded • copper	
Arion SA0.5	75	Interconnect • Symmetrical • stranded • silver	
Audioquest Type 4	75	109 Loudspeaker cable • copper • Four 18-gauge OFHC copper conductors wound in a Litz-type fashion increases capacitance but restrains the cable's 'bite'.	
Cable Talk Digital 2	75	digital interconnect • Symmetrical • coaxial • solid core • 75/110 ohm • 6N copper • CD drive - DAC cable	
DPA White Slink	75	interconnect • coaxial • stranded • silver plated OFC • polyethylene/PTFE dielectric	
Nordost Blue Angel	80	Interconnect • Symmetrical • stranded • low • copper	
Sonic Link AST150X2	80	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • low • copper • Biwire	
Cable Talk Professional 2	85	interconnect • Symmetrical • coaxial • solid core • 6N copper • MGT Multi Ground construction	
Sonic Link Violet	85	Interconnect • Symmetrical • stranded • HPMC	
Audioquest Digital PRO	90	108 Digital, electrical • coaxial • stranded • 75ohms • silver • A silver cable with all the drive of Video Z but lacking its clear cut transparency.	
Sonic Link Grey	90	109 Loudspeaker cable • solid core • silver plated copper • A spaghetti-thin silver plated cable lacks bass impact and treble 'air'	
Kimber Cable KC-AG D'link	95	108 Digital, electrical • silver • An asymmetric cable using silver conductors that deviates from the 75ohm standard. Not ideal for digital applications.	
Arion DAC1	99	Digital, electrical • coaxial • stranded • 75ohms • silver	
Chord Solid	99	131 Interconnect • coaxial • solid core • silver/copper	REC'D
Kronos Konnekt 2	99	Interconnect • coaxial • solid core • copper	
Nordost Red Dawn	99	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • low • low • silver	
Audio Note AN-D	100	109 Loudspeaker cable • solid core • copper • Supplied in linear, non-polarised lengths that should be twisted into stereo pairs. Sounds rather grippy and forward.	
Audioquest Optilink Z	100	108 Digital, optical • glass • Good level of midband detail but frequency extremes lack depth and tension.	
Electrocomp't EC-K3 Mk 2	100	Mains cable • stranded • 13A • copper • terminated, woven conductors	
Ixos 101	100	Interconnect • coaxial • stranded • silver • plated OFC • Double shielded, locking plugs	
Sonic Link Blue	115	Interconnect • solid core • HPMC	
Nordost Blue Heaven	120	Interconnect • Symmetrical • low • copper/silver	
Moth Leyline Datalink	140	108 Digital, electrical • coaxial • 75ohms • copper • A thin, coaxial version of Leyline Black with a rather hard and unforgiving character. Too expensive.	
Sonic Link Care Music	150	133 Loudspeaker cable • stranded • low • silver plated copper	
Trichord Pulsewire 75	150	interconnect • Symmetrical • coaxial • solid core • 75 ohms • silver plated copper • stereo	
Audio Note AN-B	165	109 Loudspeaker cable • solid core • copper • High capacitance Litz-type cable may act as a taming influence in many systems.	REC'D
DNM LBC8500	170	109 Loudspeaker cable • solid core • copper • High impedance can influence the treble response, but this was a winner on sound per pound.	B'BUY
Audioquest Midnight H'litz	260	109 Loudspeaker cable • solid core • copper • Similar to Type 4, but with a delicate smoothness.	
van den Hul The Magnum	265	109 Loudspeaker cable • stranded • copper/silver • Touted as vdH's most prestigious twinlead cable, Magnum sounds soft and old fashioned.	
DPA IS19	275	109 Loudspeaker cable • solid core • silver/copper • Clear, neutral and transparent sound of the older 8S without the clarity of Gortex Black 16.	
van den Hul The Wind	330	109 Loudspeaker cable • stranded • silver/copper • The Wind kicks up a storm with its lush midrange and bone-crunching bass!	REC'D
Audio Note AN-SP	1,270	133 Loudspeaker cable • silver • Some 15 individually insulated silver strands make up this a civilised and exceptionally detailed sounding cable.	REC'D



## Cassette Decks

The compact cassette is still the world's most versatile and ubiquitous music storage medium. Buffs may wrinkle their noses, but they're happy to use cassette decks to make up tapes for the car. ■ There should be no problems in connecting a cassette deck to any normal amplifier, but some care needs to be taken in choosing the best tapes for a specific machine.

(Trial and error is one effective technique, but many decks have manual bias adjustment and some match up to the tape automatically.) Lab performance and sound quality often go hand in hand, and are frequently somewhat dependent upon factory alignment. The mechanical integrity of the mechanism is another crucial factor. ■ Twin decks offer the option to dub tapes and play two cassettes sequentially. Autoreverse is a useful feature, but

usually with some mechanical compromise.

**Key**

single, twin .....type of cassette deck

Dolby B, C, HX-Pro .....noise reduction and other circuitry

2 head .....number of heads

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
<b>CASSETTE DECKS</b>			
Sherwood DS1150	80	single • Dolby B, C • 2 head	
Goodmans Delta 700W	100	123 twin • Dolby B • 2 head • 36,13,28cm • Compact and ultra-basic twin deck which is rough and bass shy, with a less than stable tape path.	
Sherwood DS1010C	100	single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • Mic input	
Sherwood DD1030C	100	twin • Dolby B • 2 head	
Sony TC-FX211B	100	single • Dolby B, C • 2 head • 43,12,29cm	
Teac V395CHX	100	single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,21cm • Dual capstan, remote control	
Aiwa AD-F450	120	136 single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • Basic but well designed budget deck, astonishing value, only the poor metering gives the game away.	B'BUY
JVC TD-W106BK	120	twin • Dolby B • 2 head • 44,13,24cm • Twin, one recording deck	
Sherwood DS3010C	120	117 single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • Good range of facilities, let down by poor transport and iffy electronics.	
Teac V-610	129	single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,14,28cm • Logic control, FL display	
Goodmans GSW650	130	twin • Dolby B • 2 head • 43,12,27cm • Both auto-reverse	
Sony TC-K215B	130	single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 43,12,31cm • Tape calibration	
Sony TC-K311B	130	single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 43,12,31cm • Auto calibration	
Sony TC-W445B	150	twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 43,12,31cm • Full logic control	
Denon DRM-540	160	146 single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,28cm • Exceptionally stable and well focussed sound quality and a bargain price.	B'BUY
Yamaha KX-380	169	single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,29cm • Play Trim, manual bias	
Aiwa AD-WX727	170	146 twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • High class twin for those who want bells, whistles - and music.	B'BUY
JVC TD-W218BK	170	twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,33cm • Compu' auto tape calibration	

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE	SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
JVC TD-X372BK	170		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,33cm • Entry level single deck	
Kenwood KX-W4070	170		twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,14,27cm • Auto bias function	
Kenwood KX-3060	170	139	single • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,12,37cm • Based on CD-53 DAC/filter, but with a more transparent, sober and insightful sound.	B'BUY
Pioneer CT-S330	170		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 42,13,28cm • Audio tape setup, FLEX	
Sony TC-K461S	180	146	single • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 2 head • 43,13,31cm • Transport is good, and sound quality is fine, though undynamic. Marginal with metal tapes.	REC'D
Sony TC-K415B	180	136	single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • 43,12,31cm • Mainly UK designed with audiophile intent, but spoiled by erratic output, at worst with metal tape.	
Teac R-560	180		Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,14,28cm • Logic control, FL display	
Teac W-760R	180		twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,14,29cm • R/C logic & FL display	
NAD 602	199	127	single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • Minimalist deck for the audiophile market. Unfortunately engineering is minimalist too.	
Yamaha KX-W282	199		twin • Dolby B, C • 2 head • 44,13,28cm • Twin auto-reverse, one records	
Yamaha KX-480	199		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,28cm • Auto-tape tuning, Play Trim	
Denon DRW-580	200		twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • Music search, hi speed dub	
Dual CC8000 RS	200		twin • Dolby B, C • 2 head • 44,13,25cm • Remote via 9000RS	
Grundig CCF3	200	146	twin • auto reverse • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,30cm • Unstable sounding twin thanks to a primitive transport mechanism.	
Grundig CCF3	200		twin • auto reverse • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,30cm • Elapsed time, display switch	
JVC TD-R472BK	200		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,33cm	
JVC TD-W318BK	200		twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,14,34cm • 'Silent' mechanism	
Kenwood KX-W6070	200		twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,14,27cm • Auto-bias function	
Luxman K-322	200	146	single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 13,44,18cm • Gives best value results with lower bias tapes, helped by a successful Dolby C installation.	
Marantz SD-53	200	146	single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 43,14,30cm • Modestly equipped player is short-changed by a rough transport, and dull prerecorded quality.	
Pioneer CT-W503R	200		twin • auto reverse • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 42,13,25cm • Auto NR, FLEX	
Pioneer CT-S430S	200	136	single • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 2 head • 42,13,28cm • Against the odds - a 2-head Dolby S deck that works. Well set up and fully equipped.	B'BUY
Sony TC-WR545B	200		twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 43,12,29cm • Auto calibration	
Technics RS-TR373	200		twin • auto reverse • Dolby B, C • 2 head • 43,14,29cm • Play transport unidirectional	
Technics RS-BX501	200		Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 43,13,30cm • Centre tray, ATC	
Denon DRS-640	210	140	single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,31cm • Drawer loading deck, with simple facilities and smooth, well adjusted sound.	B'BUY
JVC TD-V562BK	220	123	single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • 44,13,33cm • Ultra-sophisticated transport at a silly price; sound quality is stable but slightly opaque.	REC'D
Technics RS-TR474	220		twin • auto reverse • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 43,14,29cm • High speed FF/REW	
Aiwa AD-F850	230		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • Super DX head, twin capstan	
NAD 613	230		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,29cm • Block repeat, R/C links	
Pioneer CT-W603RS	230		twin • auto reverse • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 2 head • 42,13,25cm • Auto tape setup, FLEX, Dolby S	
Kenwood KX-5060S	235	140	single • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,12,30cm • Well engineered transport and Dolby S star in this refined and detailed design.	REC'D
Yamaha KX-W482	249		twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,28cm • Twin recording auto-reverse	
Yamaha KX-580	249	146	single • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,28cm • Stable and clean, if bright. Play Trim helps wake up recalcitrant recordings.	B'BUY
JVC TD-W718BK	250		twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,14,34cm • Tape calibration, stabiliser	
Marantz SD-535	250		twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 43,14,32cm • Synchro record	
Onkyo TA-RW313	250		twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 46,12,31cm	
Sony TC-WR645S	250		twin • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 2 head • 43,12,31cm • UK optimised sound	
Sony TC-K511S	250		single • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 3 head • 43,12,31cm • UK optimised sound	
Teac V-1030	250	105	single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • 44,15,29cm • Optional remote control	REC'D
Technics RS-BX601	250	146	Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • 43,13,29cm • Remarkably fast cassette wind means it will suit those with large collections. Good all-round sound.	REC'D
Denon DRW-760	260		twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,28cm	
Denon DRM-740	270	136	single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • 44,13,28cm • Breathed-on DRM-710, with good external treatment offers good, if somewhat detached sonics.	
JVC TD-V662BK	270	146	single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • 44,13,33cm • Assured, clean and agile sounding recorder, if not quite the most refined in its class.	B'BUY
Marantz SD-63	270		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • 43,14,30cm • D-bus	
NAD 614	270		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,32cm • Play Trim, CAR compression	
Harman-Kardon TD420	280		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 45,13,34cm • 3 motors	
Kenwood KX-W8070S	280		twin • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,14,27cm • Auto bias function, power load	
Technics RS-TR575	280		twin • auto reverse • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 43,14,29cm • Optical quick reverse	
Aiwa AD-S950	300	140	single • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 3 head • High-value, high-spec package is both well set up and musically well sorted.	B'BUY
Pioneer CT-W803RS	300		twin • auto reverse • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 2 head • 42,13,25cm • Twin record, mic i/p	
Pioneer CT-S630S	300	140	single • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 3 head • 42,13,38cm • 3 heads and Dolby S feature in an excellent deck that is underbiased with Type IV tapes.	REC'D
Sony TC-M611S	300	127	single • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 3 head • 43,12,30cm • Good Dolby S deck - slightly let down by lack of attention to detail.	REC'D
Technics RS-BX701	300	136	Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • 43,13,30cm • Costly, but well built, this decks is a pleasure to operate and listen to.	REC'D
Denon DRS-810	310	127	single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • 44,13,32cm • Drawer loading deck, carefully designed yet lacking in subtlety on audition.	
NAD 616	320		twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,29cm • Twin auto-reverse, R/C link	
Kenwood KX-7060S	329	146	single • HX Pro • 3 head • 44,13,30cm • Although slightly dull sounding with prerecorded tapes, this is a well equipped and fine sounding deck.	REC'D
Harman-Kardon TD450	350		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • 45,11,35cm • 3 head version of TD420	
Onkyo KR-609	350		Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 28,12,31cm • Mini component	
Onkyo TA250	350		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • 46,12,31cm	
Technics RS-BX747	350		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • 43,13,30cm • Fine bias adj, THC lo-red base	
Onkyo K-W606	370		twin • auto reverse • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 28,12,32cm • Mini component	
Pioneer CT-M601R	380		Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 42,14,38cm • Six tape record/play, r/ctrl	
Luxman K-373	400		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • 13,44,35cm • System bus, mic inputs	
Marantz CP-230	400		single • Dolby B • 2 head • DC portable, semi-pro	
Marantz SD-635	400		twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 43,9,32cm • Drawer loading	



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## Esoteric High Fidelity CABLES

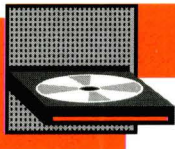
Dealers in: Absolute, Audio Note, Audioquest, Deltec, Electrocompaniet, Harmonix, Kimber, Mandrake, MIT, Siltech, Symo, Transparent, Van den Hul, WBT and others.

... the RIGHT cables  
... in YOUR system  
... for YOUR ears  
... in YOUR home

Contact us by phone, fax, or letter and we'll do our best to help you achieve your goal.  
(Auditions may be subject to a handling charge)

**CONNECTIONS** 13 John Princes Street, London W1M 9HB (A division of Connection 90' Travel Ltd.)

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
Technics RS-TR979	400	twin • auto reverse • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 43,13,28cm • Both decks record, quick rev	
Onkyo K-611	430	<b>146</b> Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • 28,12,32cm • <i>Cute drawer loading mini-size component with 3-heads and dual capstan transport.</i>	REC'D
Harman-Kardon TD470	450	single • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 3 head • 45,11,35cm • Dolby S version of TD450	
Marantz DC-1010	450	single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 42,8,31cm • Inc CD player module	
Nakamichi DR3	450	<b>123</b> single • Dolby B, C • 2 head • 43,10,32cm • <i>Refined, exquisitely detailed and solid sounding 'budget' Nakamichi 2-header.</i>	REC'D
Teac W-6000R	450	twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,15,33cm • Pitch control, remote	
Marantz CP-430	500	single • Dolby B • 3 head • Portable, dbx NR, anti-roll	
Pioneer CT-S830S	500	<b>146</b> single • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 3 head • 42,14,38cm • <i>High class mechanism, if lacking in battleship externals, and superb sound.</i>	REC'D
Yamaha KX-W952	599	twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,16,37cm • Twin record, remote	
Teac V-8030S	650	single • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 3 head • 43,15,35cm • Quartz locked, dual capstan	
Nakamichi DR2	700	<b>127</b> single • Dolby B, C • 3 head • 43,10,32cm • <i>Accomplished design with simple features (manual tape select!) but superb sound and serviceability.</i>	B'BUY
Arcam Delta 100	899	<b>111</b> single • Dolby B, C, S • 3 head • 43,12,34cm • <i>Superb transport and a ripe, spacious sound. Dolby S is more successful than some.</i>	REC'D
Pioneer CT-95	1,000	single • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 3 head • 44,15,38cm • Copper plated chassis	
Nakamichi Dragon	2,350	single • Dolby B, C • 3 head • 45,14,30cm • Auto azimuth correct	



## CD Players, Transports & DACs

Now established as the prime audio source, the CD player continues to evolve. Manufacturers have accepted that 'Perfect Sound Forever' (an early Philips slogan) was a trifle optimistic. Now the medium is being slowly transformed into something worthy of the audiophile's enthusiasm. All CD players offer a basic selection of facilities, and some can keep you entertained for hours as you programme in disc names and track orders. All but the excessively inexpensive feature remote control. Most CD

players can be upgraded by adding an outboard DAC (see below). To do this the player needs a digital output of either electrical or optical persuasion; sonically the former is preferable.

### Transports & DACs

A CD player can be split into two basic components: the disc drive or transport, and a device which turns the digital bitstream coming off the disc into an analogue audio signal. This is called a digital to analogue convertor, or DAC. Although most players are contained in a single

box, expensive players are usually two-box affairs. The first thing listed for a DAC is the type of converter chip employed. However, in much the same way that an amp's output is not indicative of its sound quality, the DAC chip is only one factor in a CD player's sound.

Key		
multibit, 1-bit	.....	DAC type
electrical/optical out	.....	digital output(s)
rem	.....	remote control

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
<b>CD PLAYERS</b>			
Eclipse CD101a	80	144 multibit • rem • 36,8,29cm	
Eclipse CD420	100	multibit • rem • 42,8,29cm	
Philips CD163	100	multibit • 36,29,8cm • Midi size	
Pioneer PD-77	100	1 bit • electrical out • optical out • rem • 44,13,33cm • Satin gold finish	
Goodmans Delta 700	110	<b>128</b> multibit • rem • <i>A 16-bit alternative to the CD650II that furnishes a colourful and animated sound.</i>	REC'D
Goodmans GCD360R	120	multibit • rem	
JVC XL-V184BK	120	1 bit • 44,11,28cm	
Philips CD711	120	multibit • 44,26,9cm • With Bitcheck	
Philips CD721	130	multibit • rem • 44,30,11cm • With Bitstream D/A conversion	
Sherwood CD3020R	130	<b>119</b> bitstream • <i>Although this budget wonder has little respect for musical convention, what emerges is still remarkably entertaining.</i>	B'BUY
Sony CDP-M302	130	1 bit • rem • 36,10,33cm • Midi-size, full remote control	
Technics SL-PG370	130	mash • 43,92,24cm • Remote control ready	
Dual CD1135RC	140	multibit • electrical out • rem • 42,8,28cm • Variable headphone output	
JVC XL-V284BK	140	<b>147</b> 1 bit • rem • 44,11,28cm • <i>Featuring a new set of bitstream innards, this flexible player also boasts a refined, if occasionally unpredictable sound.</i>	REC'D
Pioneer PD-103	140	1 bit • 42,11,28cm • Display off	
Teac CD-P1100	140	multibit • rem • 44,9,28cm • Headphone jack	
Aiwa XC-300	150	1 bit • optical out • rem	
Cambridge Audio CD4	150	<b>147</b> electrical out • rem • 43,9,29cm • <i>Basic appearance and sluggish track access/track search belies its up and at 'em sound quality.</i>	REC'D
Denon DCD-315	150	bitstream • rem • 44,11,28cm	
Dual CD1150RC	150	multibit • electrical out • rem • Variable headphone output	
Sony CDP-312	150	139 1 bit • rem • 43,10,29cm • <i>Something of a rough diamond, offering a raft of features and good build but a decidedly Technicolor sound</i>	
Teac CD-P3200	150	147 multibit • rem • 44,12,28cm • <i>A primitive looking CD player, housing primitive 16-bit electronics which deliver an equally primitive and uninspiring sound.</i>	
Technics SL-PG470AK	150	mash • optical out • rem • 43,96,24cm • CD edit	
Kenwood DP-2060	160	<b>147</b> 1 bit • rem • 44,10,26cm • <i>A player that bears absolutely no relation to the DP-3060, despite appearances. Sounds vague and thoroughly uninteresting.</i>	
Pioneer PD-203	160	1 bit • rem • 42,11,28cm • As 103, variable H/P output	
Yamaha CDX-480	169	<b>147</b> bitstream • rem • 44,10,28cm • <i>A dispassionately calm sounding player that delivers the musical goods with little or no apparent enthusiasm.</i>	
Dual CD1000RS	170	bitstream • electrical out • Remote control via CR9000RS	
Grundig CDII	170	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 44,9,30cm	
Philips CD740	170	139 multibit • electrical out • rem • <i>One of several Philips players using hybrid DAC technologies. Still sounds insufferably boring, however.</i>	
Technics SL-PG570AK	170	mash • rem • 43,103,29cm • Digital servo, THCB base	
Teac CD-P3450	179	1 bit • optical out • rem • 44,10,25cm • 8x o/sampling tape record edit	
Dual CD1180RC	180	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 44,9,29cm • Variable headphone output	
JVC XL-F116BK	180	1 bit • 44,13,40cm • 5-disc carousel	
NAD 501	189	139 bitstream • <i>A thoroughly typical frills-free player with a slightly too cautious, even restrained musical outlook.</i>	
Yamaha CDC-555	199	multibit • rem • 44,11,39cm • Entry level	
Denon DCD-825	200	<b>137</b> multibit • electrical out • rem • <i>Despite extensive revisions, this latest player still sounds like a typical 18-bit Denon, which is no bad thing!</i>	REC'D
Denon DCD-625	200	147 multibit • electrical out • rem • 44,11,29cm • <i>DCD-615 replacement is generously equipped but lacks sophisticated sound of its forebear.</i>	
JVC XL-F216BK	200	1 bit • rem • 44,13,40cm • 5-disc carousel	
Kenwood DP-R4070	200	1 bit • rem • 44,12,34cm • 5-disc tray loading	
Kenwood DP-3060	200	<b>139</b> 1 bit • rem • 44,10,26cm • <i>Based on the same filter/DAC as Marantz's CD-53, but with a more transparent, sober and highly insightful sound.</i>	B'BUY
Luxman D-322	200	147 bitstream • rem • 44,10,28cm • <i>Well bred player sounds smooth and cultured without appearing grey or boring.</i>	
Marantz CD-53	200	<b>139</b> bitstream • electrical out • rem • 43,9,30cm • <i>Looks identical to CD-63, but internal costs are cut, exposing a slightly ragged performer.</i>	REC'D
Onkyo DX-710	200	1 bit • optical out • rem • 46,11,31cm	
Pioneer PD-S504	200	<b>147</b> bitstream • electrical out • rem • 42,11,29cm • <i>More consistent than the old PD-S503 and capable strong atmosphere and 'occasion'.</i>	B'BUY
Rotel RCD-930AX	200	1 bit • rem • 44,9,29cm	
Sanyo CPM2403	200	bitstream • rem • 24 disc 'intelligent' changer	
Sherwood CDC5030R	200	132 1 bit • rem • 44,10,38cm • <i>This replacement for the 5-disc CDC5010R sounds messy, disjointed and generally unpleasant. A disappointment.</i>	
Sony CDP-561E	200	<b>147</b> bitstream • optical out • rem • 43,11,30cm • <i>Combines plenty of features with an open, transparent and sparkling sound.</i>	B'BUY
Technics SL-PS670AK	200	mash • optical out • rem • 45,12,29cm • Virtual Battery operation	
Yamaha CDX-580	229	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 44,10,28cm • UK specified o/p stage	
Sony CDP-C325M	230	1 bit • rem • 36,10,39cm • Midi size, 5-disc player	
Sony CDP-C345	230	132 1 bit • rem • 43,13,39cm • <i>Sony's Hybrid Pulse DAC sounds great in the CDP-311 but in this 5 disc carousel it provides a mere skeleton of a performance.</i>	
NAD 502	239	<b>119</b> mash • electrical out • rem • 44,108,40cm • <i>Updated 5425 trades spontaneity for precise, but mechanical style.</i>	REC'D
Denon DCD-825	240	multibit • electrical out • rem • 44,11,28cm • UK design	
Onkyo DX-703	240	1 bit • optical out • rem • 46,11,31cm	

PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

Yamaha CDC-655	249	bitstream • optical out • rem • 44,11,39cm • Tray load multi-player	
Harman-Kardon HD710	250	electrical out • rem • 45,11,33cm	
JVC XL-V574BK	250	139 1 bit • optical out • rem • 44,11,28cm	
Kenwood DP-M5570	250	1 bit • rem • 44,13,37cm • 6+1 disc changer	
Kenwood DP-5060	250	1 bit • optical out • rem • 44,12,31cm • D.R.I.V.E	
Marantz CD-45	250	bitstream • optical out • rem • 44,12,40cm • 5 disc carousel	
NAD 512	250	electrical out • rem • 44,9,26cm • Low output impedance	
Pioneer PD-M603	250	1 bit • rem • 42,11,30cm • Six disc	
Rotel RCD-940BX	250	137 multibit • rem • 44,10,32cm • <i>A sea change in transport and DAC technology lies behind this untidy-sounding and irritating player.</i>	
Sony CDP-761E	250	147 bitstream • optical out • rem • 43,11,40cm • <i>Tarted up CDP-561E with less widgets and a slightly overcooked performance.</i>	REC'D
Teac CD-3	250	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 45,13,28cm • Central mechanism	
Teac PD-D2200	250	multibit • rem • 44,11,38cm • 5-disc carousel	
Technics SL-PS770A	250	147 mash • optical out • rem • 43,13,29cm • <i>AA mellow sounding player that never quite rouses from its slumber to really tackle the music at hand.</i>	
Onkyo DX-7210	260	147 bitstream • rem • <i>Well-bred CD player features an unusual digital filter is smooth and cultured without appearing grey or boring.</i>	REC'D
Marantz CD-63MKII	270	151 bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 42,9,30cm • <i>Smooth sounding and highly satisfying player</i>	B'BUY
Onkyo C-711	290	1 bit • optical out • rem • 28,8,30cm • Mini component	
Harman-Kardon HD7325	299	bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 45,10,33cm	
Arcam Alpha One	300	137 delta sigma • electrical out • rem • 43,8,29cm • <i>The first UK-built player under £300 is hampered by a tidy but rather grey and uninspiring sound.</i>	
Denon DCD-1015	300	141 multibit • electrical out • optical out • rem • 44,11,28cm • <i>Excellent, middle range player - fast, fluid and lean</i>	REC'D
Grundig CDC14	300	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 44,9,30cm	
Harman-Kardon FL8450	300	bitstream • optical out • rem • 45,10,38cm • 5-disc carousel player	
Harman-Kardon HD730	300	optical out • rem • 45,95,33cm	
JVC XL-2674BK	300	151 1 bit • rem • 44,11,28cm • <i>Even handed, but glosses over the most intimate moments</i>	REC'D
JVC XL-M408BK	300	1 bit • rem • 44,13,32cm • Six disc	
Marantz CD-1010	300	1 bit • optical out • rem • 42,8,31cm • Slim Series component	
Musical Fidelity E60	300	bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 44,10,34cm	
Nakamichi MB4s	300	132 multibit • rem • 43,9,27cm • <i>Entry level Music-Bank player has plenty of dynamics and detail but little stereo depth.</i>	REC'D
Pioneer PD-S703	300	137 1 bit • optical out • rem • 42,13,27cm • <i>Legato Link and bitstream player sounds as manipulative and intriguing as ever.</i>	REC'D
Pioneer PD-M703	300	1 bit • rem • 42,13,30cm • Six disc, DSP soundfield cntrl	
Rotel RCD-965BX	300	100 bitstream • electrical out • rem • 44,10,32cm • <i>Exceptionally refined: transparent, exquisitely detailed and powerfully emotive. A landmark.</i>	B'BUY
Marantz CD-1020	334	1 bit • optical out • rem • 42,8,31cm • Slim Series, motorised cover	
Yamaha CDX-880	339	141 bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 44,10,29cm • UK specified components	
AMC CD6	349	124 bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • <i>Based on Rotel's RCD-965BX, but has a raunchier, beefier but less transparent sound.</i>	REC'D
Harman-Kardon HD7425	349	141 multibit • electrical out • rem • 45,10,33cm	
Micromega Minium CD	350	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 43,27,7cm	
Onkyo DX-7510	350	151 bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 46,11,31cm • <i>Strongly flavoured, assertive sound</i>	
Onkyo DX-750	350	141 bitstream • optical out • rem • 46,11,31cm	B'BUY
Teac CD-5	350	151 bitstream • rem • 48,12,29cm • <i>Bright, breezy and up-beat - but short in the trouser department</i>	
NAD 514	370	151 bitstream • optical out • rem • 44,108,40cm • <i>Boistrous sound, but undeniably attractive</i>	REC'D
Rotel RCD-970BX	375	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 44,8,30cm	
Rotel RCD-965BX D	375	141 bitstream • electrical out • rem • 44,10,32cm • Discrete output	
Kenwood DP-7060	380	141 1 bit • optical out • rem • 44,12,31cm • D.R.I.V.E	REC'D
Audio Innovations Alto	399	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 43,8,30cm • Dual diff DAC	
Aura CD100	400	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 43,6,28cm • Chrome finish, £50 extra	
Harman-Kardon HD7525	400	151 multibit • electrical out • rem • 45,10,33cm • <i>Glorious sounding player, if slightly inconsistent</i>	REC'D
NAD 517	400	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 44,108,40cm • 5-disc carousel player	
Pioneer PD-S904	400	151 1 bit • electrical out • optical out • rem • 42,14,29cm • <i>Too much legato - literally - in sound</i>	
Sony CDP-XA2ES	400	151 optical out • rem • 43,13,35cm • <i>Strong-willed, heavyweight sound; not for the faint-hearted</i>	REC'D
Rotel RCD-965BX LED	425	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 44,10,32cm • Discrete & slit foil caps	
Audio Innovations Alto Chr	449	151 bitstream • electrical out • rem • 43,8,30cm • <i>Lacks dynamic subtlety and discrimination of Alto amps</i>	
Pioneer PD-DM802	450	1 bit • rem • 42,14,31cm • Dual magazine 12-disc	
Arcam Alpha 5 Plus	470	151 multibit • electrical out • rem • 43,8,27cm • <i>Upbeat, dynamic sound disguises lack of transparency</i>	
Pioneer PD-S901	499	1 bit • electrical out • optical out • rem • 42,13,33cm • SPM, Legato Link, Twin DAC	
Aiwa DX-C100M	500	1 bit • optical out • rem • 100+1 disc autochanger	
Creek CD42	500	electrical out • rem • 42,8,30cm	
Nakamichi MB3s	500	multibit • rem • 43,9,38cm • 6+1 Music Bank, 18 x 8 o/s	
Orelle CD-100	500	multibit • electrical out • rem • 44,10,28cm • DC coupled	
Pioneer PD-TM3	500	1 bit • rem • 42,18,35cm • Triple magazine, 18-disc	
Harman-Kardon HD7625	550	multibit • electrical out • rem • 45,10,33cm	
Luxman D-373	550	multibit • optical out • rem • 44,11,35cm • System bus remote	
Micromega Stage 1	550	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 43,28,88cm • Upgradable	
Musical Fidelity E600	599	bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 44,12,35cm • Balanced XLR output	
Teac VRDS-7	599	bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 45,15,34cm • Twin BS, VRDS mech	
Arcam Alpha 6	600	electrical out • rem • 43,8,27cm • Upgradable from 5/5 Plus	
Kenwood DP-J2070	600	1 bit • rem • 44,19,38cm • 100 disc autochanger	
Marantz CD-72 Mk II	600	bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 42,13,30cm • DAC7	
Pioneer PD-F100	600	1 bit • rem • 42,19,40cm • 100 disc, Legato Link	
Micromega Stage 2	700	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 43,28,88cm • Upgradable	
Nakamichi MB2s	700	multibit • electrical out • rem • 43,9,38cm • 6+1 Music Bank, 18 x 8 o/s	
Teac VRDS-10	770	119 bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 45,15,34cm • <i>A basic analogue stage compromises performance. Lacks bass energy.</i>	
Linn Mimik	798	delta sigma • electrical out • rem • 32,8,33cm • BNC digital	
Arcam Delta 270	800	124 hybrid • 2 electrical out • rem • 43,9,28cm • <i>Dry, tightly-focussed sound will either beguile or aggravate, depending on taste!</i>	
Harman-Kardon HD7725	800	124 multibit • electrical out • optical out • rem • 45,10,33cm • <i>This flagship implimentation of RLS sounds impressively bold and dynamic.</i>	REC'D
JVC XL-MC100	800	1 bit • rem • 36,37,38cm • 100 disc player	
Sony CDP-CX100	800	1 bit • optical out • 43,13,38cm • 100 disc autochanger	
Thule CD100	849	bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • Balanced out, Crystal chipset	
Teac VRDS-10SE	850	bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 45,15,34cm • Imp. mechanism & chassis	
Meridian 506	875	delta sigma • electrical out • optical out • 33,9,34cm • Recently improved sound	
Quad 67	875	124 delta sigma • electrical out • rem • 33,8,26cm • <i>Powerful, fluid and captivating sound reminiscent of Meridian's 206.</i>	B'BUY
DPA Renaissance	895	bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 40,28,8cm • DPA DP16 DAC	
Micromega Stage 3	900	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 43,28,88cm • Upgradable	
Mission DAD7	900	145 multibit • electrical out • rem • 22,8,36cm • FSX-R o/b FSU option	
Nakamichi MB1s	900	multibit • electrical out • rem • 43,9,27cm • 6+1 Music Bank, 20 x 8 o/s	
Thorens TCD2000	900	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 21,9,34cm • Top loader	
Naim CD3	949	multibit • rem • 43,56,30cm • 1 box	
AVI S2000MCII	999	119 1 bit • rem • 31,25,9cm • <i>A stylish, midi-width player with an exceptionally refined and comfortable sound. Lacks passion.</i>	
Onix CD33	999	bitstream • 43,8,33cm • DAC7	
Technics SL-P2000	1,000	mash • optical out • rem • 45,13,33cm • THCB base, R-Core transformer	
Krell KSP20i	1,100	electrical out • rem • As KPS20i + remote volume	
Sentec Diana	1,100	multibit • electrical out • optical out • 12,5,23cm • 20 bit	
Marantz CD-10	1,200	bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 46,14,36cm • Twin DAC-7, heavy build	
AVI S2000MC Ref	1,249	multibit • electrical out • rem • 31,25,9cm • 20bit 8x oversampling	
Audiomeca Kreatura	1,299	multibit • electrical out • optical out • rem • 25,14,39cm	
Teac VRDS-20	1,299	bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 50,15,34cm • Twin DAC7, balanced output	
AVI S2000MC	1,300	multibit • electrical out • rem • 31,25,9cm • 'Reference' 20 bit player	

**PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS**

Meridian 606	1,350	1 bit	
Marantz CD-16	1,400	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 25,29,13cm • Twin DAC-7	
Audiomeca Kreatura SE	1,450	141 multibit • electrical out • rem • 25,14,39cm • Trichord clocked	
Meridian 508	1,475	140 <b>delta sigma • electrical out • optical out • 33,9,34cm</b>	REC'D
Roksan ATT-DP3P	1,495	delta sigma • electrical out • rem • 46,12,35cm • Player, four level isolation	
Linn Karik	1,497	144 delta sigma • electrical out • optical out • rem • 32,8,33cm • Based on early Linn transport, the Karik is dry but very positive, detailed and engrossing.	
Musical Fidelity FCD	1,499	bitstream • 2 electrical out • optical out • rem • 49,12,33cm • XLR balanced out, tube o/p	
Copland CDA-288	1,799	multibit • electrical out • optical out • rem • 43,13,38cm • HDCD compatible	
Mission Disc/Dacmaster	1,900	multibit • electrical out • rem • 22,8,36cm • Two box, inc Dacmaster DAC	
Naim CD2	1,997	multibit • rem • 43,56,30cm • One box	
McIntosh MCD7008	2,195	multibit • electrical out • rem • 45,14,45cm • Seven disc multiplayer	
Pioneer PD-95	2,500	1 bit • electrical out • optical out • rem • 44,16,34cm • Balanced output, Legato, SPM	
McIntosh MCD7009	2,635	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 45,14,38cm • VRDS CD player	
YBA 2	2,999	multibit • electrical out • optical out • rem • 43,10,33cm • Outboard power supply	
Marantz CD-15	3,000	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 46,14,36cm • Twin Star Mark DAC-7	
Naim CD5	3,642	multibit • rem • 43,56,30cm • Two box	
Micro-Seiki CD-M2DC	3,695	multibit • electrical out • rem	
Marantz CD-23	4,000	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 25,29,13cm • CDM-9/DAC-7 DAC	
Meracus IMAGIO	4,495	bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 42,12,44cm • Top load, isolated mechanism	
Luxman D500XS	4,500	multibit • optical out • rem • 44,12,39cm • Top loading	
Micro-Seiki CDM2000X	4,689	multibit • electrical out • rem	
Krell CD-DSP Mk II	5,000	rem • 42,13,28cm • Digital inputs facility	
Krell CD DSPII 5000	5,000	multibit • 2 electrical out • rem • 42,13,28cm • Has digital in, balanced out	
Wadia 16	7,395	multibit • Glass, plastic, BNC & AES/EBU	
Jadis JS-1	8,068	multibit	
Krell KPS20i	9,990	bitstream • electrical out • rem • Balanced output	

**CD TRANSPORTS**

Teac VRDS-T1	550	144 transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 44,15,33cm • Superb quality engineering is mated to tidy and composed sound (tested with D-T1).	
DPA Enlightenment	635	transport • rem • 40,28,8cm • Clock locks to DPA DACs	
Audio Alchemy DDS III	700	transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • Designed primarily as transport, has analogue output	
Micromega Drive 1	700	transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 43,28,88cm • Upgradable, AES/EBU out	
Arcam Delta 250	750	130 <b>transport • rem • 43,9,28cm • Arcam's best effort yet is a new design based on Philips CDM9 transport. Specification includes Sync Lock facility.</b>	REC'D
Pink Triangle Cardinal	795	144 transport • 46,8,36cm • Soud quality is warm and communicative, but over-polished compared to PT Ordinal (tested with DaCapo and DC PSU).	
Meridian 200	895	96 <b>transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 32,32,10cm • Light, fresh and very bubbly sound that is natural, engaging and unfatiguing.</b>	REC'D
Teac P-700	900	120 <b>transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 23,14,40cm • Tested with D-700, low resolution sound is warm, bubbly and entertaining.</b>	B'BUY
Audiomeca Damnation	950	transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 29,10,32cm	
Micromega Drive 2	1,000	transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 43,28,88cm • Upgradable, AES/EBU out	
Meridian 500	1,095	133 transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 32,33,9cm • Used with the 563 DAC, the combination is thin, brash and uncomfortable.	
Audiomeca Damnation SE	1,100	transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 29,10,32cm • Trichord clocked	
Audiomeca Kreatura	1,199	transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 25,14,39cm • Heavily modified CDM	
Audiomeca Kreatura SE	1,250	transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 25,14,39cm • Trichord clocked	
XTC CDT-1LE	1,250	transport • electrical out • rem • Philips laser, FRFB clock	
Roksan ATT-DP3	1,295	transport • electrical out • rem • 46,12,35cm • AT&T optical, AES/EBU optional	
Audiolab 3000CDM	1,300	transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 45,8,36cm • Precision master clock	
Meridian 602	1,750	120 <b>transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 32,33,10cm • With matching 606 DAC, Meridian's top player sounds distinctive and elegant.</b>	REC'D
Counterpoint DA-11.5E	1,895	130 <b>transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • This model elivers a remarkably vivid and natural sound.</b>	REC'D
Audiomeca Mephisto	2,100	144 <b>transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 43,15,33cm • Tested with Trichord Pulsar, the duo provides a highly composed and tactile sound.</b>	REC'D
PS Audio Lambda tr	2,250	133 <b>transport • electrical out • rem • 38,8,34cm • With Ultralink Two, sound positively sparkles with colour and resonant detail.</b>	REC'D
Theta Data Basic II	2,298	130 transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 42,8,34cm • Includes a budget version of Teac's VRDS mechanism in a fancy case: overpriced.	
Wadia 8	3,195	130 transport • rem • 35,16,41cm • Includes a budget version of Teac's VRDS mechanism in a fancy case; just too expensive for the performance on offer.	
ADT Drive 1	3,499	transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 44,9,34cm • Top load, BNC in	
ATD Drive 1	3,499	transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 44,9,34cm • Top load, 2-box acrylic	
Meracus AMAGO	3,995	transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 42,12,44cm • Top load, BNC in	
Teac P-2S	4,000	130 transport • rem • 23,14,49cm • The latest version of Teac's luxury P-2 transport sounds as over-engineered as it looks.	
Wadia 20	4,370	transport • Glass, plastic, BNC, AES/EBU	
Krell MD-20	4,999	transport • rem • 42,13,28cm • Top load, AT&T optical out	
Theta Data III NTSC	5,345	transport • electrical out • rem • 42,12,40cm • AT&T, AES/EBU option	
Theta Data III NTSC/PAL	5,879	transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 42,12,40cm • AT&T, AES/EBU balanced in	
Krell MD-10	7,990	transport • 2 electrical out • optical out • rem • 42,13,28cm	
Jadis JCDT	8,000	transport • rem • Top load	
Krell KPS 20T	8,490	transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • AT&T, AES/EBU balanced in	
Krell DT-10	9,090	transport • 2 electrical out • optical out • rem • 42,13,28cm • Front loader	
Wadia 7	9,995	transport • rem • 35,16,46cm	

**DACS**

QED Positron	85	Upgrade PSU for Digit	
QED Digit Plus	139	113 bitstream • electrical out • Bearing in mind its expensive but very forgiving performance, the Digit is almost embarrassingly cheap.	B'BUY
Cambridge A DACMagic 1	150	136 hybrid • Ridiculously under-priced, this DAC is best suited to high end transports.	REC'D
Audio Alc DAC-in-the-Box 230	150	127 multibit • electrical out • This giveaway DAC may still rescue the oldest of players from obsolescence.	REC'D
Counterpoint AD20	255	multibit • DACCard for DA-10E	
QED Digit Reference	299	136 <b>bitstream • No great advance on the basic QED Digit yet its enthusiastic sound is more than competitive at the price.</b>	REC'D
Counterpoint CS18	395	multibit • DACCard for DA-10E	
Audio Alchemy DDEv1.1	399	bitstream • electrical out • optical out • Upgradable external PSU	
Orelle DA-188	449	multibit • 22,7,23cm • DC coupled, optical & coax in	
Arcam Black Box 50	480	127 hybrid • electrical out • optical out • 43,7,28cm • Measured and sophisticated sound from a DAC that leaves plenty in reserve for future upgrades.	B'BUY
Teac D-T1	500	144 bitstream • electrical out • optical out • 44,10,33cm • Teamed with VRDS-T1 for test, this superb quality unit is tidy and composed.	
Woodside DAC2	509	101 <b>multibit • electrical out • optical out • Sharp, dynamic sound is captivating for its lack of grain and 'tizz'.</b>	REC'D
Roksan ATT-DA2	549	delta sigma • 22,10,33cm • DAC 4 inputs, optional AT&T	
DPA Renaissance	550	bitstream • 20,28,8cm • Unique DPA DX16 DAC	
Audio Note DAC1	600	127 multibit • electrical out • optical out • rem • Oddball DAC with manual deemphasis switch. Needs a high preamp input impedance or bass will suffer.	
Teac D-700	600	120 <b>multibit • electrical out • optical out • 23,14,40cm • With P-700, the D-700 may lack the resolution, but is bubbly and entertaining.</b>	B'BUY
Counterpoint BB69	655	multibit • DACCard for DA-10E	
PS Audio DigiLink II	688	multibit • 38,8,16cm	
Perception DAC	695	multibit	
Audio Alchemy DDEv3.0	699	multibit • Upgradable external PSU	
Sonic Frontiers Transdac	699	multibit • 24,5,17cm	
Sonic Frontiers U Jit Bug	699	multibit • 24,5,17cm • Jitter reduction interface	
Micromega DAC	700	bitstream • 43,28,88cm • AES/EBU input	
Thorens TDA2000	700	bitstream • electrical out • 21,9,34cm • 3 digital inputs	
Audiomeca Elixir	745	141 bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 25,39,9cm	
Arcam Black Box 500	750	136 bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 43,9,28cm • Sophisticated unit with Sync Lock and discrete DAC. Early samples sounded grubby and restrained.	
Meridian 563	750	127 <b>delta sigma • 3 electrical out • optical out • 33,9,34cm • Warmer but no less detailed than 200-series, the 563 can fly with a top rate transport.</b>	REC'D
DPA Enlightenment	795	multibit • 20,28,8cm • Unique DPA DX32 DAC	
Audiolab 8000DAC	800	127 bitstream • 45,8,36cm • Just as smooth and refined as its predecessor yet, sadly, still manages to obscure the passion or fire of music.	
Pink Triangle Ordinal	837	136 <b>bitstream • electrical out • optical out • 23,8,35cm • The cheapest dual-differential DAC7 converter available offers top-flight sound quality.</b>	B'BUY



PRODUCT

£ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

Monrio 18B2	850	multibit • electrical out • optical out • 43,8,36cm • 18x4 bit, inc onboard PSU	
Woodside DAC1	909	87 multibit • electrical out • optical out • <i>Fine but slightly dated and costly package in performance terms - but flexible, musical and well built.</i>	
Sentec Diana	993	multibit • electrical out • optical out	
XTC DAC-1	1,000	multibit • electrical out • optical out • 32 - 48kHz Vishay resistors	
Linn Numerik	1,075	144 multibit • 32,8,33cm • <i>A new 20 bit DAC and revised Karik transport have cleaned up; but sounds a tad dry and humourless.</i>	
PS Audio SuperLink 2	1,230	multibit • 38,8,16cm	
Counterpoint UA20	1,295	multibit • DACCard for DA-10E	
Meracus AURIGA	1,295	bitstream • electrical out • 46,9,31cm • Optional case colours	
Trichord Pulsar Ser One	1,395	144 hybrid • electrical out • optical out • <i>Richly detailed and honest sound</i>	REC'D
Counterpoint DA-11E	1,495	144 electrical out • optical out • rem • 49,6,27cm • <i>(Tested with DA-11E). Harsh and fatiguing sound.</i>	
Wadia 12	1,530	multibit • electrical out • optical out • Balanced and AT&T input	
Pink Triangle DaCapo	1,536	144 bitstream • electrical out • optical out • 46,8,35cm • <i>With Cardinal and DC PSU, the DaCapo is best with its 22bit option. It is warm but over-polished.</i>	
Pink Triangle DC Supply	1,590	144 46,8,35cm • Massive battery PSU for DaCapo	
Audio Note DAC3	1,650	multibit • rem	
Theta Pro Prime II	1,800	bitstream • electrical out • 42,5,23cm	
Counterpoint DA-10E	1,895	144 electrical out • optical out • rem • Interchangeable DACs, optional	
Meracus FLAGRARE	2,495	bitstream • electrical out • optical out • 42,12,44cm • CD link sync, Class A out	
Sonic Frontiers SFD-1/2	2,495	multibit • 48,10,33cm • HDCD compatible, tune output	
PS Audio UltraLink2 HDCD2	2,650	133 multibit • 38,6,20cm • <i>With Lambda transport, the sound positively sparkles with colour and resonant detail.</i>	REC'D
LFD DAC3	2,699	multibit • 48,7,37cm • Optional balanced output	
Theta Pro Basic III	2,990	multibit • 42,5,29cm	
DPA PDM256	2,995	133 bitstream • electrical out • optical out • 20,28,8cm • <i>Highly advanced, with adjustable dither, but the different settings only leads to compromise.</i>	
Krell Studio 2	3,198	multibit • 42,13,27cm • AT&T in	
Wadia 15	3,790	multibit • electrical out • optical out • rem • 35,9,41cm • Software upgradable	
Mark Levinson 36	3,995	multibit • electrical out • 20 bit, FIFO input buffer	
Audio Research DAC3	4,195	multibit • 48,14,26cm • 20bit, 8x o/s	
Theta Pro Gen V SE	4,200	multibit • 42,8,34cm • AT&T input option	
Krell Studio	4,450	multibit • 42,6,32cm • AT&T in	
PS Audio Ref Link	4,550	multibit • 38,8,36cm • AT&T input	
Wadia 64.4	4,750	multibit • electrical out • optical out • 35,8,28cm • Balanced output	
Sonic Frontiers SFD-2/2	5,295	multibit • 48,10,33cm • HDCD compatible, tune output	
DPA PDM1024	5,995	bitstream • electrical out • optical out • 40,30,8cm • Unique DPA DX128 DAC	
Theta Pro Gen V	6,500	multibit • electrical out • 42,8,34cm	
Wadia 9	12,790	multibit • electrical out • optical out • rem • 44,9,36cm • Digital volume, separate PSU	
Krell Reference 64	14,900	multibit • 42,13,39cm • AT&T in	



## Digital Recorders

Digital recorders come in a variety of different guises, but have yet to make much of an impact on the domestic market. At present there are four types to choose from: DAT (digital audio tape), MD (Mini Disc), and DCC (digital compact cassette) and CD-R (CD Recordable). DCC is backwards compatible inasmuch as the machines can play regular audio tapes. MD's claim to fame is its optical

disc format, which offers instant track access and can't be worn out like a tape. DAT has been on the market for quite some time now, but has never really 'made it' as a consumer medium. In the last year or so it has begun to carve itself a niche at the top end of the market, replacing reel to reel tape recorders as the audiophile's tape-based medium. Home CD-R is just coming into its own with the release of Pioneer's PD-R05.

**Key**

MiniDisc, Digital Audio Tape,	.....type of recording medium
Digital Compact Cassette	.....type of recording medium
electrical, optical in	.....digital input(s)
electrical, optical out	.....digital output(s)
bitstream, multibit etc	.....DAC type

PRODUCT

£ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

DIGITAL RECORDERS			
Philips DCC134	150	Digital Compact Cassette • bitstream • 11,10,4cm • Portable: Dolby B, charger	
Philips DCC730	250	Digital Compact Cassette • electrical in • bitstream • 44,30,9cm • 18 bit resolution	
Philips DCC170	250	141 Digital Compact Cassette • electrical in • bitstream • 11,10,9cm • Portable, wired remote	
Philips DCC951	280	139 Digital Compact Cassette • electrical in • optical in • electrical out • multibit • Turbodrives mech, 18 bit	
Sharp MD-M11E	450	139 MiniDisc • 8.3,11cm • Recorder, title generator	
Sony MDA-JA3ES	799	MiniDisc • electrical in • optical in • electrical out • optical out • bitstream • 43,9,35cm • Track title recording	
Pioneer D-05	800	Digital Audio Cassette • electrical in • optical in • electrical out • optical out • bitstream • 46,14,29cm • 96kHz sampling	
Sony MBS501	800	MiniDisc • electrical in • optical in • electrical out • optical out • bitstream • 43,9,35cm • Sample rate converter	
Sony DTC80ES	800	Digital Audio Cassette • electrical in • optical in • electrical out • optical out • bitstream • 43,11,55cm • SBM	
JVC XM-D1BK	900	MiniDisc • electrical in • optical in • electrical out • optical out • bitstream • 18,5,13cm • Minidisc record and player	
Pioneer D-07	1,150	133 Digital Audio Cassette • electrical in • optical in • electrical out • optical out • 44,14,38cm • 96kHz record, Legato Link	
Teac R-9	1,200	Digital Audio Cassette • electrical in • optical in • electrical out • optical out • bitstream • 45,16,36cm • Based on TASCAM technology	
Pioneer PDR-05	1,300	152 CD-R • electrical in • optical in • electrical out • optical out • bitstream • 46,14,29cm • Legato Link digital filter	
Meridian CDR	4,500	CD-R • electrical in • optical in • electrical out	



## Stands & Supports

Hi-fi furniture is more important than you might imagine; the effect it can have on the sound of your system is far from subtle. Hi-fi furniture can be split up into two categories — equipment supports and loudspeaker stands.

It is not entirely clear what makes a great equipment support, but some are definitely more equal than others.

There's a variety of approaches and materials used include particle board, hardwood, glass and all manner of steel tube and section. The majority are built for sound quality first, aesthetics second, but there are attractive examples.

Speakers stands come in a variety of sizes and styles to suit different models. Use dealer or manufacturer recommendations to narrow down the choice of types, but as a general rule the you want the tweeter at ear height.

**Key to stands & supports**

shelf pitch	.....gap between shelves
60, 39, 48cm	.....size width, depth, height in cm
MDF	.....medium density fibreboard
pillar/frame	.....multi leg stand
column	.....single leg stand

PRODUCT

£ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

EQUIPMENT SUPPORTS			
Ixos 800	35	equipment support • single shelf • Mini/midi pedestal	
Deadrock 701	40	equipment support • Single module	
Ixos 701	40	equipment support • single module	
JPW Add-on	50	equipment support • Add-on shelves (x2)	
Quadraspire Q4/S	50	Add on shelf for Q4 • wood finish • Adjustable shelf pitch	

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
Ixos 711	60	equipment support • 1 shelf • Toughened glass shelf	
Sound Organisation Z022	60	equipment support • Wall mountable • 50w,47dcm • Removable shelf	
Ixos 802	70	equipment support • 2 shelf • Mini component, 215mm spacing	
Sound Organisation Z230	70	equipment support • 3 shelf • 50,40,43cm • Satin finish, self assembly	
QLN Signature	75	Speaker stand • Pedestal • 13 inchcm • Available up to 24 inch	
Sound Organisation Z021	75	equipment support • 2 shelf • 50,40,36cm	
JPW 3 tier	80	equipment support • 3 shelf rack	
Ixos 803	90	equipment support • 3 shelf • Mini component, 125mm spacing	
Sound Organisation Z030	95	equipment support • 3 shelf • 50,40,43cm	
Alphason R24/24	100	equipment support • 3 shelf, MDF • 60,39,48cm	
Alphason R17/17	100	equipment support • 3 shelf, MDF • 60,39,34cm	
Alphason R12/12	100	equipment support • 3 shelf, MDF • 60,39,24cm	
Ixos 802P	100	equipment support • 2 shelf • mini - with pedestal/CD store	
Ixos 703	100	equipment support • 3-shelf	
JPW 5 tier	100	equipment support • 5 shelf rack	
Ixos 803P	110	equipment support • 3 shelf • mini - with pedestal/CD store	
Ixos 804	110	equipment support • 4 shelf • Mini component, 125mm spacing	
Sound Organisation Z060	115	equipment support • 4 shelf • 50,40,62cm	
Alphason TV24/17	120	TV base module • 3 shelves, MDF • 67,39,41cm	
DNM DOMOWS	125	Turntable wall stand • Lightweight • 37 deepcm	
DNM DOMOPS	125	Turntable support • Lightweight • 37,50,46cm	
Mana Acoustics Sd Frame	125	<b>equipment supports • 1 shelf • Used singly (glass) for equipment, or in pairs for speakers</b>	REC'D
Projekt A3	125	equipment support • MDF modular • 2 shelves, 2 dividers	
QLN Modulux	125	equipment support • MDF shelves • Extends up aad along	
Sound Organisation Z550	125	equipment support • 5 shelf • 50,40,77cm • Satin finish, self assembly	
Alphason GR24/24	130	equipment support • 3 glass shelves • 60,39,48cm	
Alphason GR17/17	130	equipment support • 3 glass shelves • 60,39,34cm	
Alphason GR12/12	130	equipment support • 3 glass shelves • 60,39,24cm	
Ixos 713	130	equipment support • 3 shelf • Toughened glass shelf	
Sound Organisation Z038	130	<b>151 equipment support • 5 shelf • 50,40,84cm • Too lively and lacking order - but cheap</b>	REC'D
Ixos 804P	140	equipment support • 4 shelf • mini - with pedestal/CD store	
Ixos 704	140	equipment support	
Alphason TV24/175	150	TV base module • 3 shelves, MDF • 67,39,34cm • Swivel top	
Mana Acoustics Mini Table	150	equipment support • Glass shelf	
Alphason VR24/24	160	equipment support • 3 shelves, rosewood • 60,39,48cm	
Alphason VR17/17	160	equipment support • 3 shelves, rosewood • 60,39,34cm	
Alphason VR12/12	160	equipment support • 3 shelves, rosewood • 60,39,34cm	
Projekt A4	165	equipment support • MDF, modular • 4 shelves	
Ixos 705	170	equipment support • 5 shelf	
SoundStyle X300	170	equipment support • 4 legs • 59,38,51cm • Glass shelves	
Mana Acoustics Snd Shelf	175	equipment support • 1 shelf, wall mount • The original, upgradable	
Target B5	175	<b>151 equipment support • 5 wood shelves • Free of colourations, fine grip and good value</b>	REC'D
Ixos 714	190	equipment support • 4 shelf • Toughened glass shelves	
Alphason AV24/17	200	AV base module • 5 shelves, MDF • 127,39,94cm • 'L' shaped	
Mana Acoustics Snd Stage	200	Upgrade unit • <i>Upgrades amp stand or Reference table</i>	
Quadraspire Q4	200	<b>151 equipment support • 4 MDF shelves • Easy to live with, and tonally neutral</b>	B'BUY
SoundStyle X305	200	equipment support • 3 shelf • 77,44,51cm • Glass shelves	
SoundStyle X053	200	equipment support • 4 shelf • 64cmcm • 3 pillar, 16.9cm shelf pitch	
SoundStyle X050	200	equipment support • 4 shelf • 64cm highcm • 3 pillar, 12.8cm shelf pitch	
Projekt A5	205	equipment support • MDF, modular • 5 shelves	
SoundStyle X100	210	equipment support • 4 glass shelves • 58,49,64cm • 16.9cm shelf pitch	
Stands Unique Snd Supp	222	Hi-fi/TV table • 3 shelves • 42,115,42cm • Adjustable shelves	
Alphason AV24/17S	230	AV base module • 6 shelf, MDF • 127,39,94cm • Swivel base for TV	
Ixos 715	230	equipment support • 5 shelf • Toughened glass shelves	
SoundStyle X058	230	equipment support • 5 shelf • 78cmcm • 3 pillar, 15.3cm shelf pitch.	
Mana Acoustics Snd Table	235	equipment support	
SoundStyle X310	240	equipment support • 3 shelves • 103,44,51cm • Glass shelves	
SoundStyle X120	240	equipment support • 6 glass shelves • 59,49,109cm • 16.9cm shelf pitch	
SoundStyle X105	240	equipment support • 5 glass shelves • 59,49,84cm • 16.9cm shelf pitch	
Projekt A6	245	equipment support • MDF, modular • 6 shelves	
Stands Unique Snd Tower	249	<b>151 equipment support • 5 glass shelves • 81,72,42cm • Adds colouration, and lacks weight. Optional Isolation Platform</b>	
Fi-Rax R4	250	<b>151 equipment support • adjust glass shelves • To speccm • Lively, exuberant sound, slightly weak bass</b>	
SoundStyle Select 6105	280	<b>151 equipment support • glass shelves • Respectable sonics, structurally solid and smart</b>	REC'D
Mana Acoustics 2 tier stnd	325	equipment supports • 2 shelves • <i>Infinitely upgradable</i>	
Mana Acoustics Ref table	350	<b>147 equipment support • 1 shell • King of its type</b>	B'BUY
Mana Acoustics 3 tier stnd	450	equipment supports • 3 shelves • <i>Infinitely upgradable</i>	
Audiophile Furniture Base	480	<b>151 equipment support • 4 shelves • Easy to set up, well ordered sound</b>	REC'D
Mana Acoustics 4 tier stnd	500	equipment supports • 4 shelves • <i>Infinitely upgradable</i>	
Mana Acoustics 5 tr stnd	600	<b>151 equipment supports • 5 shelves • Infinitely upgradable. Persuasive and thrilling</b>	B'BUY
Mana Acoustics 6 tier stnd	700	equipment supports • 6 shelves • <i>Infinitely upgradable. King among equipment stands</i>	

SPEAKER STANDS			
JPW WB	30	speaker supports • Wall brackets	
Alphason NC1-60	40	speaker stand • pillar type • 23w,60hcm • Double column, steel	
Alphason NC1-50	40	speaker stand • pillar type • 23w,50hcm • steel	
Alphason NC1-40	40	speaker stand • pillar type • 23w,40hcm • steel	
Sound Organisation Z023	42	speaker wall bracket	
JPW MS2	45	speaker stand • 3 leg • 39,29,45cm • for Sonata	
Ixos 903	50	Loudspeaker stand • single column • 60cm highcm	
Ixos 902	50	Loudspeaker stand • single column • 47cm highcm	
Ixos 901	50	Loudspeaker stand • single column • 39cm highcm	
Sound Organisation Z026	50	speaker stands • High - tripod base • 60cmcm	
Sound Organisation Z027	50	speaker stands • Mid - tripod base • 45cm tallcm	
Sound Organisation Z037	50	speaker stands • Low - tripod base • 30cm tallcm	
JPW MS3	55	speaker stand • 3 leg • 37,30,61cm • For Minim	
Alphason NC11-60	70	speaker stand • pillar type • 23w,60hcm • Double column, steel	
Alphason NC11-50	70	speaker stand • pillar type • 23w,50hcm • Double column, steel	
Alphason NC11-40	70	speaker stand • pillar type • 23w,40hcm • Double column, steel	
Sound Organisation Z040	70	speaker stands • Frame type • 45cm tallcm • Fixed top spikes	
Sound Organisation Z055	72	speaker stands • Frame type • 60cm tallcm • Fixed top spikes	
Sound Organisation Z010	76	speaker stands • Pillar type • 25cm tallcm	
Sound Organisation Z018	78	speaker stands • Pillar type • 46cm tallcm	
JPW MS1	80	speaker stand • 4-leg • 39,32,46cm • For AP2, AP3, P1	
Sound Organisation Z024	80	speaker stands • Pillar type • 61cm tallcm	
Alphason Titan S-50	100	speaker stand • Pillar type • 29w,50hcm • cast iron	

PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

Alphason Titan S-40	100	speaker stand • Pillar type • 29w,40hcm • cast iron
SoundStyle X024	100	speaker stands • 61cmcm
SoundStyle X020	100	speaker stands • 48cm tallcm
SoundStyle X016	100	speaker stands • 41cm tallcm
SoundStyle X012	100	speaker stands • 31cm tallcm
Sound Organisation Z128	108	speaker stands • Column type • 45cm tallcm • Adjustable top/bottom spikes
Sound Organisation Z129	110	speaker stands • Pillar type • 61cm tallcm • Adjustable top/bottom stands
Alphason Titan L-60	130	speaker stand • pillar type • 29w,60hcm • cast iron
Alphason Titan L-50	130	speaker stand • pillar type • 29w,50hcm • cast iron
Alphason Titan L-40	130	speaker stand • pillar type • 27w,40hcm • cast iron
Alphason Titan S-60	130	speaker stand • Pillar type • 29w,60hcm • cast iron
JPW HS2	130	speaker stand • For Ruby 2 • 26,29,45cm
JPW HS1	130	speaker stand • For Ruby 1 • 23,25,58cm



# Headphones

There are a variety of different approaches to headphone design. Among the more expensive models, electrostatic drivers are used in open-backed phones. The more down-to-earth models feature dynamic (moving coil) drivers in circular, open or closed-back designs. The advantage of open backs seems to be

correspondingly open sound, but one can also hear external noise, of course. Closed-back designs are useful in situations where it is necessary to block out noise. ■ There are three styles of headphone: circumaural models enclose the ear; supra-aural designs feature a flat pad which presses on the outer ear; and intra-aurals (in-ear) rest inside the ear itself, à la personal stereos.

**Key**

open back, sealed, in-ear	.....	headphone type
275g	.....	weight in grams
16 Ohm	.....	impedance

PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

HEADPHONES			
Aiwa HP-VX303	25	sealed • 230g • In-line controls, dual plugs	
AKG K33	25	open back • 90g • 50 Ohm	
Beyer DT111 Gamma	25	open back • 32g • 16 Ohm • With volume control	
JVC HA-D626	25	sealed	
JVC HA-D610	25	sealed • 120g • 32 Ohm • 3m, 6.3/3.5m jacks	
Kenwood KH-959	25	in-ear model • 32 Ohm • 3.5mm plugin -ear model	
Pioneer SE-52	25	open back • 104g • 40 Ohm • 2.5metre OFC cable	
Vivanco SR200	25	sealed • 32g • 32 Ohm • Titanium finish	
Audio Technica ATH-M2A	28	sealed • 115g • 22 Ohm • Mid size	
Sennheiser Vegas	28	open back • 118g • 32 Ohm • 3m lead, 3.5/6.3mm	
Sennheiser Manhattan	28	open back • 118g • 32 Ohm • 3m lead, 3.5/6.3mm	
Sony MDR-CD250EX	28	sealed • 3m, 3.5/6.3mm lead	
Maxell HP-3000	30	133 120g • 32 Ohm • <i>Solid, smooth sounding supra-aural headphone, but congested and undynamic. Includes in-lead controls.</i>	
Pioneer SE-15V	30	open back • 65g • 30 Ohm • 5m OFC cable	
Technics RP-HT77	30	sealed • 160g • 32 Ohm • 3m lead, OFC wire	
Vivanco SR300	30	sealed • 32g • 32 Ohm • Single cable design	
Beyer DT211	33	open back • 120g • 40 Ohm • Supra-aural	
Pioneer SE-330D	35	sealed • 165g • 35 Ohm • 3m cable, bass boost duct	
Pioneer SE-400D	37	133 sealed • 185g • 35 Ohm • <i>Acceptable, if unexciting all-rounder, this supra-aural phone has good long-term comfort levels.</i>	REC'D
Sennheiser HD60TV	38	open back • 118g • 32 Ohm • 6.8m lead (inc vol control)	
Aiwa HP-X705	40	sealed • 130g • Dual plug, 2m ext cable	
Kenwood KH-2020	40	sealed • 210g • 32 Ohm • 2.5m OFC lead, closed model	
Sennheiser HD445 II	40	121 open back • 125g • 52 Ohm • <i>Still the one by which others at the price are measured, though now slightly leaden sounding, with a cold treble</i>	B'BUY
Technics RP-HT300	40	sealed • Single sided cord	
Vivanco SR606	40	133 open back • 225g • 32 Ohm • <i>Although slightly overblown at times, this model is easy on the ears and essentially enjoyable</i>	REC'D
AKG K44	42	99 open back • 90g • 50 Ohm • <i>Good quality personal oriented phone, could have a better sense of space but is musically quite communicative.</i>	
Audio Technica ATH-M4A	42	sealed • 139g • 28 Ohm • Mid size	
JVC HA-D727	43	sealed	
Sony MDR-CD450	45	133 sealed • 260g • 24 Ohm • <i>Fair acoustic isolation and comfortable construction, moderate sound.</i>	REC'D
AKG K135	46	63 open back • 160g • 150 Ohm • <i>The K135s doesn't live up to the usual AKG standards, though it does have the ability to convey rhythm well.</i>	
Pioneer SE-500D	48	sealed • 175g • 35 Ohm • 3m cable, dual bass horn	
Beyer DT311	49	133 open back • 124g • 40 Ohm • <i>Uncharacteristically tight, unrefined sound quality from this otherwise well engineered 'phone.</i>	
Sennheiser HD414 Class	50	open back • 80g • 52 Ohm • The original lives on!	
Sennheiser HD455	50	open back • 3m lead, 3.5/6.3mm	
Sony MDR-IF210	50	infra-red cordless • 170g • Extra h/phone w/o transmitter	
Technics RP-HT400	50	sealed • Single sided cord	
Vivanco IR5700	50	Infra-red cordless	
Vivanco IR5000	50	Mono, infra red cordless	
Vivanco SR850	50	open back • Double bow design for comfort	
JVC HA-D710	55	sealed • 210g • 32 Ohm • 3m, 6.3/3.5m jacks	
Beyer DT331	59	open back • 210g • 40 Ohm • Circum-aural	
Pioneer SE-700D	60	sealed • 180g • 35 Ohm • 3m cable, dual bass horn	
Sony MDR-CD550	60	99 sealed • 270g • 45 Ohm • <i>Competent headphone creates remarkable space from a closed back design and sounds natural to boot.</i>	B'BUY
Technics RP-HT600	60	sealed • 3m lead, double headband	
JVC HA-D910	65	121 sealed • 220g • 32 Ohm • <i>Broadly acceptable if unexciting design with low level losses and some colourations.</i>	
Sennheiser HD465	65	open back • 3m lead, 3.5/6.3mm	
Beyer DT411	69	111 open back • 120g • 250 Ohm • <i>A reasonable but not very thrilling headphone that doesn't really offer enough at the price.</i>	
Kenwood KH-5000	70	sealed • 280g • 32 Ohm • 2.5m OFC lead	
Nakamichi SP7	70	open back • 150g • 45 Ohm	
Sennheiser IS360/UK	70	sealed • 240g • Budget infra-red model	
Sony MDR-D33	70	sealed • 120g • 45 Ohm • 1.5m, 3.5/6.3mm plug	
Technics RP-HT700	70	sealed • 5m lead, double headband	
Vivanco IR6000	70	Stereo infra-red cordless	
Vivanco SR909	70	open back • 285g • 600 Ohm • Remote control lead, all plugs	
AKG K141	74	open back • 225g • 600 Ohm	
Jecklin Float Model 1	75	55 open back • 400g • 200 Ohm • <i>Whilst very unusual in appearance, the Floats give remarkable sound quality and openness at a reasonable price.</i>	B'BUY
Sennheiser HD475	75	open back • Selected drivers/diaphragm	
Audio Technica ATH-M7A	78	sealed • 210g • 40 Ohm • Mid size	
Sony MDR-IF210K	80	infra-red cordless • 170g • Seven metre range infra red	
AKG K240 Monitor	82	63 open back • 240g • 600 Ohm • <i>Something of a classic, these AKGs are very user-friendly in all respects; sonically on the warm side of normal.</i>	REC'D
Sennheiser HD25 SP	85	sealed • 115g • 85 Ohm • Monitoring headphone	
Beyer DT431	89	open back • 210g • 40 Ohm • Circum-aural	
Audio Technica ATH911	90	open back • 280g • 600 Ohm • Dynamic, full size	

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE	SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
Audio Tech ATH910PRO	90	55	sealed • 280g • 40 Ohm • <i>The closed back 910s are an improvement on the 909s, with a nice rhythmic quality rarely found with headphones.</i>	REC'D
Sony MDR-D55	90		sealed • 120g • 45 Ohm • 1.5m, 3.5/6.3mm plug	
Sony MDR-CD750	90	111	sealed • 290g • 45 Ohm • <i>Reasonably comfortable and eminently listenable, these Sonys have characteristically good bass power and relaxed HF.</i>	REC'D
Vivanco IR6500	90		Stereo infra-red with charger	
Beyer DT511	99		open back • 200g • 250 Ohm • Circum-aural	
Jecklin Float Model 2	99	63	open back • 400g • 200 Ohm • <i>Helmet shaped, but open sounding and comfortable in long term, despite lack of adjustment.</i>	REC'D
AKG K222IR	100		infra-red cordless • Infra-red, rechargeable	
Sennheiser HD535	100		open back • 255g • 150 Ohm • 3m lead, 3.5/6.3mm	
Technics RP-F10	100	121	sealed • 300g • 32 Ohm • <i>Another very comfortable sealed circum-aural model, has modest sound isolation and uneven, sound favouring bass.</i>	
Vivanco SR10001FL	110		open back • 265g • 100 Ohm • In-front localisation	
AKG K270	112		sealed • 250g • 75 Ohm	
AKG K280 Parabolic	117	63	open back • 250g • 75 Ohm • <i>Revealing twin-driver design uses the same design principles as a satellite dish to beam sound into ear.</i>	REC'D
AKG K400	118	121	open back • 250g • 120 Ohm • <i>Comfortable over long sessions. Sound is exquisitely detailed, dynamic and uncoloured.</i>	REC'D
Sennheiser HD545 Ref	120		open back • 255g • 150 Ohm • 3m lead, 3.5/6.3mm	
Sony MDR-D77	120		sealed • 140g • 45 Ohm • 1.5m, 3.5/6.3mm plug	
Vivanco IR7100	120		Stereo infra-red cordless	
AKG K270 Studio	121		sealed • 250g • 75 Ohm	
Beyer DT531	129	144	open back • 245g • 250 Ohm • Circum-aural	REC'D
Beyer IRS790	129		open back • 270g • Cordless infra-red	
AKG K500	138	111	open back • 250g • 120 Ohm • <i>K500 offers impressive definition. Balance is on the light side but transparency is high.</i>	REC'D
Beyer DT1770 Pro	139		sealed • 250g • 600 Ohm • Circum-aural	
Beyer DT100	139		sealed • 350g • 600 Ohm • Choice of impedances	
Sennheiser HD565 Ovat'n	140		open back • 255g • 150 Ohm • 3m lead, 3.5/6.3mm	
Sennheiser HD265 Linear	140		sealed • 260g • 150 Ohm • Closed back	
Vivanco IR7600	140		Stereo infra-red cordless	
Vivanco SR2001FL	140		open back • In-front localisation	
AKG K333IR	150		infra-red cordless • Circum-aural, cordless	
Sennheiser IS450	150		160g • Infra-red cordless - hi-fi	
Beyer DT801	159		sealed • 250g • 250 Ohm • Circum-aural	
Sennheiser HD25	160		sealed • 140g • 70 Ohm • Professional, closed back	
Beyer DT990 Pro	163		open back • 230g • 600 Ohm • Circum-aural	
Stax SR34	169		open back • 170g • Electrostatic	
Beyer DT811	179		open back • 245g • 250 Ohm • Circum-aural	
AKG K444IR	180		infra-red cordless • Circum-aural, cordless	
Sennheiser IS550	180		170g • Infra-red cordless	
Technics RP-F30	180		sealed • 340g • 32 Ohm • 3m lead, XBS double drive	
Sony MDR-610k	190		infra-red cordless • 470g • Seven meter range infra-red	
AKG K340	191	75	open back • 380g • 400 Ohm • <i>Heavyweight cans in most respects, the K340 with its electrostatic tweeter is a very revealing headphone.</i>	REC'D
Beyer IRS890	199		open back • 270g • Cordless infra-red	
Beyer DT901	199		sealed • 280g • 250 Ohm • Circum-aural	
Sennheiser HD 580 P	200		open back • 260g • 300 Ohm • Flagship model	
Sony MDR-CD1000	200	111	sealed • 330g • 45 Ohm • <i>A fine sounding and comfortable headphone that's likely to work well with most sources.</i>	REC'D
Beyer DT911	219	111	open back • 275g • 250 Ohm • <i>Probably too revealing for many headphone amps, these are very subtle and fine, if expensive cans.</i>	REC'D
Stax SR Gamma	239	55	open back • 300g • <i>One down from the Lambda, the Gamma is an excellent headphone with little to criticise bar the price.</i>	REC'D
JVC HA-D1000	250		sealed • 340g • 32 Ohm • 5m, 6.3/3.5m jacks	
Stax SR84	259		open back • 160g • Electrostatic	
Audio Technica ATH9000	273	111	open back • 240g • 32 Ohm • <i>Electrets which connect to the amp's speaker outputs, they sound a little too smooth, but would suit aggressive amps.</i>	
Stax SR Lambda	349		open back • 325g • Electrostatic	
Jecklin Float ELS	399	55	open back • 600g • 8 Ohm • <i>These electrostatics have an openness of sound that is rarely found in the breed, with good dynamic range to boot.</i>	REC'D
Stax Gamma Pro	399	63	open back • 300g • <i>With SRD-X Pro, the Gamma Pro is like a stethoscope for your hi-fi, revealing subtleties that many loudspeakers fail to resolve.</i>	REC'D
Stax Lambda Pro	449	55	open back • 325g • <i>Tested with SRD-7B PSU, this is an industry reference, and is frighteningly revealing.</i>	REC'D
Stax Lambda Sig	549	72	open back • 325g • <i>With SRM-T1, the Signature must be the most transparent headphone available.</i>	REC'D
AKG K1000	646	99	open back • 270g • 120 Ohm • <i>One of the best dynamics on the market, hooks directly into speaker outputs.</i>	REC'D
JVC HA-F25	699		in-ear model • 32 Ohm • In ear	
Sennheiser IS850	860		330g • Digital audiophile infra-red	
Sennheiser HE60/HEV70	998		open back • 260g • Electrostatic with energiser	
Stax Omega	1,695		open back • 400g • Electrostatic	
Sennheiser Orpheus	9,652		open back • 365g • Electrostatic, valve energiser	

## Loudspeakers

As the last item in the hi-fi chain, the loudspeaker is merely the slave of what has gone before; it is capable only of reproducing a signal as good as it is fed. Nevertheless, the distortions (colorations and stereo effects) introduced by loudspeakers (and rooms) tend to be greater than those anywhere else in the hi-fi chain, so careful selection of models is very important.

The average loudspeaker consists of an enclosure (much of which may have begun life as part of a tree) plus a couple of drive units hidden behind a removable grille. Inside the box lurks a simple electrical circuit known as a crossover, which divides the incoming (full range) signal into the right bits for the drivers to handle. The designer's primary task is to balance the 'sensitivity' of the loudspeaker

(how loud it goes for a given electrical input) against the bass extension (how low it goes), for the given box size. After that, such subtleties as coloration (or lack of it) and dispersion come into the equation.

Careful placement of the loudspeakers within the room is as important as the initial choice of model. For good stereo the enclosures need to be more or less the same distance from nearby walls. Speakers with a rear port need to be a foot or two from the rear wall to avoid bass boom.

There are two subsections within the overall heading of loudspeakers: these are satellites and subwoofers, and active subwoofers. The former is a combination of small mid/treble units and a subwoofer. They are designed for minimum intrusion into the domestic situation. Active subwoofers have built in power amplifiers.

### Key to loudspeakers

horn, ported, sealed etc ..... cabinet type  
 2 driver ..... number of drive units  
 108dB ..... sensitivity @ 1metre for 2.83 volts  
 8 Ohms ..... nominal impedance  
 100W ..... manufacturer's power rating

### Key to satellites & subwoofers

89dB ..... sensitivity @ 1metre for 2.83 volts  
 70 W ..... power rating in Watts

### Key to active subwoofers

stereo ..... subwoofer type  
 50W ..... amplifier power  
 THX ..... THX-approved (where appropriate)

## PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

LOUDSPEAKERS				
GLL Arena	89		87dB • 6 Ohms • 70W • 26.23,14cm	
JPW Minim Pair Solid	89		ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 70W • 19,28,20cm • Shielded	
Jamo Cornet 20.4	90		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 21,16,13cm • Black/mahogany	
Advent Mini	99		2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 16,28,14cm • Bookshelf/stand mount	
Celestion Little 1	99		sealed • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 9,20,15cm	
Celestion 1	99	114	ported • 2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 16,27,21cm • <i>It sounds a bit scrappy and untidy, but its heart is in the right place.</i>	B'BUY
Wharfedale Diamond 6R	99		ported • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 16,27,22cm • Stand/bookshelf mount	
Yamaha NS-C80	99		2 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 80W • 14,45,17cm • AV centre speaker	

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE	SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
Allison AL100	100	94	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 33,24,19cm • Loud and lively budget wall-mount is big and beefy, but lacks sparkle and refinement	B'BUY
Gale Ref Monitors	100		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • Bookshelf, black finish	
Goodmans HT100	100		2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 25,53,20cm	
Interaudio XL1000	100		2 driver • 8 Ohms • 50W • 19,29,17cm	
Jamo Studio 110	100		ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 50W • 42,24,22cm • Black finish	
JPW Sonata Vinyl	100		ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 23,32,22cm	
JVC SP-X220TBK	100		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 24,66,24cm	
Mission 73S	100		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 15,26,15cm • wall brackets inc, shielded	
Mordaunt-Short MS05i	100	141	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 26,17,18cm • Tiny and hence bass light, but fine voicing (redesignated 'i' since review).	REC'D
Realistic Minimus Pro-77	100		ported • 2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 55W • 14,22,11cm • Revised design	
Revolver Beretta	100		ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 80W • 30,19,22cm • Bookshelf/stand mount	
Sony SS-J90AV	100		2 driver • 167 Ohms • 19,12,15cm • Shielded centre speaker	
Sony SS85E	100		sealed • 2 driver • 85dB • 4 Ohms • 70W • 9,32,24cm • UK optimised sound	
TDI Near Field Monitor	100		ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 30,18,17cm	
TDI NFM	100	130	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 18,30,17cm • A disappointing underperformer in our tests, at a low price	
Technics SB-CS75	100		ported • 3 driver • 8 Ohms • 60W • 27,49,25cm • Composite mica cone mid	
Wharfedale Valdis 200	109		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 180W • 38,21,22cm • Stand/bookshelf	
Wharfedale Modus Micro	109		ported • 2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 14,23,12cm • Shielded	
Canon SV-15	110		ported • 2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 24,17cm • Utility - wide dispersion	
Jamo Sat 160	110		sealed • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 14,20,88cm • With wall brackets	
Jamo D115	110		2 driver • 91dB • 75W • 42,24,22cm	
Jamo Cornet 30.4	110		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 55W • 32,20,23cm • Black ash or Mahogany	
Bose XL1000	115		ported • 2 driver • 8 Ohms • 50W • 29,19,17cm	
JBL Control One	115	90	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 24,156,14cm • Sub-miniature with forward midrange and real bass; price justified by build	
Mordaunt-Short CS1 St	115		ported • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 16,23,13cm • Shielded, Positec protected	
GLL Maxim	119	122	86dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 10,26,17cm • Budget miniature offers well balanced strengths and few weaknesses at a bargain price; a bit feeble.	REC'D
Wharfedale Modus Centre	119		ported • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 46,14,12cm • Shielded centre speaker	
AMC WM50	120		2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 19,28,7cm • Ceiling mount	
Jamo Artina	120		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 25,29,8cm • Small, flat wall spkr, bl/wh	
JPW Sonata	120	71	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 23,32,22cm • Fine sound if limited bass and dynamic range, wood veneered at a silly price.	B'BUY
Pioneer CS-3030	120		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 27,54,24cm • Bookshelf	
Sony SS125E	120		sealed • 2 driver • 86dB • 4 Ohms • 90W • 22,38,38cm • UK optimised sound	
Yamaha NS-E80	120		2 driver • 91dB • 6 Ohms • 50W • 27,20,7cm • AV surround speaker	
B&W Solid HCM15	125		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 17,24,17cm • White & black finishes	
Celestion Impact 10	129		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 75W • 31,19,21cm • Inverted drivers	
Celestion CSC	129		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 75W • 33,13,15cm • Centre channel	
KEF Coda 7	129	145	ported • 2 driver • 91dB • 6 Ohms • 70W • 18,30,24cm • 2-way stand/shelf	REC'D
B&W DM302	130		ported • 2 driver • 32,19,21cm	
B&W Solid HCM2	130		ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 14,20,14cm • White or black finishes	
Canon S-C10	130		ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 95W • 34,15,15cm • Dolby P-L centre speaker	
Jamo Sat 200 II	130		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 15,22,88cm • Stereo passive sub for SW200II	
JPW Subwoofer	130		ported • 1 driver • 95dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 26,51,27cm	
JVC SP-X550BK	130		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 24,66,24cm	
Mission 731L	130	141	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 31,17,20cm • Good looking and cleverly conceived high-tech miniature could have more brio.	
Visonik David 5001	132		50W • 10,17,10cm	
Boston Acoustics HD5	139	110	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 25,16,18cm • Pretty miniature lacks boxiness, but is short of drama and dynamic drive.	
Boston Acoustics 325	139		2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 50W • 17,17,5cm • Wall/ceiling white flush mount	
Celestion CS135	139	128	subwoofer • 2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 90W • 52,19,34cm • Compact hideaway passive sub lacks deep bass; for high sensitivity speakers	
Celestion 3 MKII	139	130	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 21,31,18cm • Smooth and polished by budget speaker standards, if a bit laid back for some tastes.	B'BUY
Heybrook Prima	139	110	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 60W • 20,29,18cm • Fine pace and timing, but balance is forward and bass is tight.	REC'D
Revolver Colt	139		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 30,19,22cm • Bookshelf/stand mount	
Wharfedale Modus Mini	139		ABR • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 14,39,12cm • Shielded two-way	
Genexxa GX650	140		90dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 23,76,26cm	
Interaudio XL2000	140		2 driver • 8 Ohms • 70W • 23,36,18cm	
Jamo Studio 140	140		ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 50W • 50,22,26cm • From Studio range	
Jamo Sat 300 II	140		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 15,21,8cm • Use with SW500 & SW300	
Jamo Cornet 40.4	140	130	ported • 20 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 32,20,22cm • Pretty presentation and a strong box, but poor driver fixing. Decent if bright sound.	
JBL TLX111	140		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 30,17,22cm • Titanium composite tweeter	
Mordaunt-Short MS10	140	130	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 19,31,22cm • Fine bass/mid but top is less appealing.	REC'D
Advent Baby 2	149		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 26,39,15cm • Bookshelf/stand mount	
Boston Acoustics CR6	149		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 26,15,20cm • Magnetically shielded	
Celestion MP1	149	140	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 22,30,15cm	REC'D
Celestion CS2	149		ported • 2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 16,29,22cm	
Harman-Kardon LS0200	149	130	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 21,35,30cm • Laid back to a fault but entertaining nevertheless, and a big box for the price.	REC'D
NAD 800	149		ported • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 60W • 20,32,24cm • 10 litre enclosure	
Rogers LS1	149	143	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 20,20,30cm • High grade miniature	REC'D
Tannoy 631	149	141	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 70W • 19,34,15cm • Balanced, open, unboxy and quite lively, but lacks muscle.	B'BUY
Wharfedale Valdis 300	149		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 180W • 47,25,23cm • Stand/bookshelf	
Yamaha NS-C110	149		2 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 120W • 15,47,18cm • AV centre speaker	
B&W CWM5	150		2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 16,22,7cm • In wall	
Canon S-25	150		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 33,21,22cm • Magnetically shielded	
Gale Model 2	150		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • Bookshelf, black finish	
Goodmans HT170	150		2 driver • 92dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 25,70,22cm	
Infinity SM65	150		ported • 94dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 34,20,19cm • Auto reset protection circuit	
Infinity Reference Ii	150		sealed • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 50W • 34,20,20cm • Pedestal	
JPW P1 Vinyl	150	102	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 26,44,25cm • Competent loudspeaker for the price, with a safe sound that won't disappoint.	B'BUY
Mission 73C	150		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 16,20,43cm • TV top, shielded	
Mordaunt-Short CS-1 DM	150		sealed • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 23,16,13cm • 2 compact paintable speakers	
Mordaunt-Short HT30	150		ported • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 25,43,29cm • Shielded, Positec protected	
Mordaunt-Short SW1	150	128	subwoofer • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 24,58,26cm • Pretty finished and inexpensive passive subwoofer is only really useful with sub-miniature speakers	
Technics SB-CS95	150		ported • 3 driver • 8 Ohms • 100W • 29,54,25cm • Composite mica cone mid	
Visonik Sub 4	154		100W • 36,49,31cm	
Wharfedale Modus One	159		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 22,41,29cm • Stand/bookshelf mount	
AMC WM75	160		2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 22,30,9cm • Ceiling mount	
Bose XL2000	160		ported • 2 driver • 8 Ohms • 70W • 36,23,18cm	
Denon SC-E313	160		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 23,36,23cm • Shielded, red mahogany veneer	
Denon SC-E313	160		ported • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 22,75,23cm • UK designed & built	
Grundig BX1	160		ported • 2 driver • 4 Ohms • 60W • 23,40,30cm • 16 litre	
Interaudio XL3000	160		2 driver • 8 Ohms • 70W • 29,46,23cm	
Jamo D135	160		2 driver • 94dB • 90W • 52,28,25cm	
Visonik David 6001	163	74	2 driver • 87dB • 60W • 13,20,12cm • Sharp styling, but the complex grillwork worsens a sound which starts off with too much top and not enough bottom.	
Boston Acoustics Runab't	169		2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 22,15,16cm • White indoor/outdoor system	
Celestion CS4	169		ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 18,33,23cm	
GLL Mezzo	169	141	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 21,36,25cm • Splendid midband but a dull treble. Could suit budget systems well.	REC'D
Allison AL105	170	78	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 24,37,21cm • Pretty enough in appearance; sonically the AL105 doesn't really make the grade at the price.	

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE	SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
GLL Imagio IC100	170		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 35,23,24cm • ICT coaxial driver	
Jamo Studio 180	170		ported • 3 driver • 92dB • 80W • 22,50,26cm	
Jamo Sat 500	170		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 16,21,14cm • Satellites for SW500	
JBL TLX121	170		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 53,25,31cm • Budget compact	
JPW P1	170	141	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 26,44,25cm • <i>Longstanding design is remarkable material value (real wood etc) and sounds pretty too.</i>	<b>B'BUY</b>
Pioneer CS-5030	170		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 140W • 31,53,25cm • Bookshelf	
Boston Acoustics 350	179		2 driver • 4 Ohms • 50W • 24,17,6cm • Wall/ceiling white flush mount	
Boston Acoustics 335	179		2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 18,9cm • Wall mount, white flush	
Boston Acoustics Satellites 179	179		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • Also A/V spkrs, black/white	
Wharfedale Modus Sub-B	179		ported • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 57,23,38cm • Two channel double tuned sub-w	
Bose XL3000	180		ported • 2 driver • 8 Ohms • 90W • 47,29,23cm	
Canon S-30	180	114	ported • 1 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 75W • 23,27,24cm • <i>Moulded design has lively coherence, with 'wide imaging stereo'.</i>	<b>REC'D</b>
Jamo Converta	180		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 235,235cm • Lamp-like appearance	
TDL NFM2	180		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 18,45,17cm	
Celestion Centre 2	189		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 17,16,42cm • Centre channel	
Celestion 5 MkII	189		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 90W • 25,35,21cm • Larger version of Celestion 3	
KEF Coda 8	189		ported • 2 driver • 91dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 20,32,29cm • Developed from Coda 7	
Tannoy 632	189	135	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 90W • 51,43,27cm • <i>Clever cabinet avoids boxiness and promotes focus imaging and bass</i>	<b>B'BUY</b>
Bose 101 M'ble Monitor	190		1 driver • 4 Ohms • 60W • 13,23,15cm • Black finish	
Polk RT3	190		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 19,32,22cm • Shielded stand/shelf	
Rega Nyte	198	114	ported • 2 driver • 87dBdB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 19,31,19cm • <i>Has splendid timing and coherence, sounds very explicit and informative.</i>	<b>B'BUY</b>
Royd The Herald	198		ported • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 31,20,18cm • Stand mount	
B&W DM601	199		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 26,21,25cm • Kevlar bass, metal dome	
Boston Acoustics CR7	199		2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 30,22,24cm • Magnetically shielded	
Celestion Impact 15	199		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 90W • 39,24,25cm • Inverted drivers	
GLL Magnum	199		86dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 25,42,29cm	
Harman-Kardon LS0300	199		88dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 21,38,80cm	
Heybrook Solo	199	90	sealed • 2 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 75W • 23,36,23cm • <i>Untidy bass and treble, but handles complex rhythmic material well.</i>	<b>REC'D</b>
KEF 60S	199		ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 60W • 15,25,17cm • Uni-Q, shielded, AV & hi-fi	
Revolver Purvey Mk II	199		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 120W • 75,19,22cm • Floor stand, spiked base	
Wharfedale Modus Three	199		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 22,57,29cm • Stand/bookshelf mount	
Wharfedale Valdus 400	199		ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 80,25,26cm • Floor standing	
ZYP AI	199	110	sealed • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 14,22,12cm • <i>Cute metal cased micro-miniature is quite coloured but great fun.</i>	<b>REC'D</b>
Acoustic Energy AE100	200		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 75W • 30,18,25cm • Internally braced MDF box	
B&W Solid Monitor	200		ported • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 17,24,15cm • Various colours	
Canon S-B20	200		subwoofer • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 48,39,37cm • Free standing, passive	
Cerwin Vega HED165	200		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 4 Ohms • 120W • 22,84,22cm	
Gale Model 4	200		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • Bookshelf, black finish	
Infinity Reference 11i	200		sealed • 6 Ohms • 75W • 39,22,34cm • Pedestal	
Interaudio XL4000	200		2 driver • 8 Ohms • 75W • 32,56,29cm	
Jamo Converta Light	200		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 235cm • Utility speaker, inc light	
Jamo D165	200		2 driver • 94dB • 100W • 60,31,27cm	
Jamo Cornet 60.4	200		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 42,23,22cm • Black ash - Mahogany	
JPW AP2	200	106	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 26,44,25cm • <i>Real wood finish, and performance is cleaner but similar to P1 Vinyl overall.</i>	<b>REC'D</b>
Kenwood LS-200G	200		ported • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 60W • 21,35,30cm • European design	
Mission 732	200	141	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 41,20,30cm • <i>Attractive presentation but a rather dull and thick sounding speaker, and a tad pricey too.</i>	
Monitor Audio MA301	200		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 27,17,20cm • Gold dome teeter	
Monitor Audio Monitor 1 G	200		sealed • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 16,24,16cm • Miniature stand/shelf mount	
Mordaunt-Short CS-1 T	200		ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 16,23,13cm • Shielded, Positac protected	
Mordaunt-Short MS20i	200	135	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 22,37,22cm • <i>Alloy tweeter, MCS woofer</i>	<b>B'BUY</b>
Philips Legend FB720II	200	122	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 75W • 21,37,31cm • <i>Liveliness, coherence and fine information retrieval justifies the odd looking baffle.</i>	<b>B'BUY</b>
QLN QuBic111	200		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 33,21,25cm	
TDL SBR	200		ported • 1 driver • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 30W • 40,20,50cm • Supplementary bass radiator	
Technics SB-M20	200		ported • 2 driver • 60W • 20,32,23cm	
Boston Acoustics 360 SII	209		2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 22,15,7cm • Wall/ceiling, flush mount	
AMC WM100	210		2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 26,36,10cm • Ceiling mount	
Canon V-100	210		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 75W • 25,33,17cm • Corner mount, wide dispersion	
Advent Graduate	219		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 210W • 28,44,17cm • Bookshelf/stand mount	
ZYP A1T	219		sealed • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 14,22,12cm • Magnetically shielded	
Allison MS200	220		2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 75W • 13,25,14cm • Boundary, stand mount	
Allison AL110	220	102	2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 24,40,23cm • <i>Compact bookshelf model is a little dry and mid-forward, but bass is extended and solid.</i>	<b>REC'D</b>
Bose XL4000	220		ported • 2 driver • 8 Ohms • 100W • 57,32,30cm	
Polk M3 II	220		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 17,29,21cm • Multi-app, incl wall bracket	
Visonik David 8001	228		80W • 16,25,17cm	
Castle ISIS	229		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 17,35,20cm • Available in 9 finishes	
KEF Q10	229		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 19,32,26cm • Uni Q, shielded	
JPW AP3	230	46	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 26,52,29cm • <i>Good stereo and well balanced overall; character is well suited to vinyl replay.</i>	<b>REC'D</b>
JVC SP-X990BK	230		ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 31,86,27cm	
Pioneer CS-7030	230		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 190W • 35,70,28cm • Bookshelf	
Boston Acoustics CR8	239		ABR • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 39,22,27cm • Magnetically shielded	
Celestion 7 MkII	239		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 31,45,24cm	
B&W CWM6i	240		2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 23,32,8cm • In wall	
Monitor Audio M7 Gold II	245		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 17,35,17cm • Stand/shelf mount	
B&W Solid HCM1	249		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 17,24,17cm • White or black finishes	
Boston Acoustics 380	249		2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 31,24,8cm • Wall/ceiling white flush mount	
NAD 802	249		ported • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 80W • 20,40,26cm • 11.5 litre enclosure	
Rogers LS33	249		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 36,24,21cm • Biwire terminals	
Bose VS100	250		2 driver • 8 Ohms • 23,15,15cm	
Canon S-35	250		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 75W • 23,27,24cm • Wide Imaging Stereo	
Cerwin Vega VS8	250		ported • 2 driver • 94dB • 4 Ohms • 100W • High sensitivity	
Cerwin Vega VS8	250		ported • 2 driver • 94dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 28,51,29cm • Bookshelf	
Infinity SM85	250		ported • 98dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 46,29,27cm • Auto reset protection circuit	
Jamo Classic 4	250		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 100W • 47,20,25cm	
Jamo Art	250		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 35,40,9cm • Slightly bowed front, bi/wb	
JBL TLX50	250		ported • 3 driver • 88dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 48,27,28cm	
Pioneer S-4UK	250	139	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 80W • 21,37,28cm • <i>Latest version now balances pretty well, with a coherent lightweight bass.</i>	<b>REC'D</b>
Polk RT5	250		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 22,39,25cm • Shielded stand/shelf	
QLN QuBic 121	250		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 41,21,26cm	
System Audio 905	250	142	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 15,27,21cm	
Yamaha NS10M	250		2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 21,38,20cm	
Keswick Audio Palermo	259		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 38,21,25cm • Angled profile cabinet	
Royd Minstrel	259	135	ported • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 69,18,12cm • <i>Not much wellie or loudness but fine coherence and timing a bit bright.</i>	<b>B'BUY</b>
Wharfedale Modus Five	259		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 22,65,29cm • Stand/bookshelf mount	
Dali 102B	260		88dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 21,32,26cm	
Celestion 9	269	102	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 21,50,25cm • <i>Nicely presented and fair material value, with impressively flat mid to bass balance.</i>	

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Heybrook HB1	269	sealed • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 29,47,23cm • Boundary, shielded option	
Bose 151 Environmental	270	2 driver • 6 Ohms • 60W • 24,14,16cm • Waterproof	
Pioneer S-60	270	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 80W • 22,47,28cm • Bookshelf	
Bose 161 Freestyle	275	2 driver • 6 Ohms • 60W • 25,14,16cm	
Mordaunt-Short MS30i	275	<b>152</b> ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 25,43,28cm • Slightly shut in and coloured, compensated by fine bass and impressive communication.	REC'D
Mordaunt-Short HT50	275	ported • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 25,87,33cm • Positec, integrated subwoofer	
ZYP A2S	275	sealed • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 22,14,12cm • Studio nearfield monitor	
Boston Acoustics CR9	279	ABR • 2 driver • 91dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 50,25,29cm • Stand/shelf, shielded	
Celestion Impact 20	279	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 47,28,29cm • Twin vented, shielded	
Allison AL115	280	2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 28,51,26cm • Boundary, stand mount	
B&W DM602	280	<b>152</b> ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 49,24,31cm • Prefers tall stands and space, offers impressive midband dynamics and musical tension	REC'D
Monitor Audio MA100G	280	sealed • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 16,24,16cm • Shielded for AV use	
Pioneer CS-9030	280	ported • 3 driver • 92dB • 8 Ohms • 220W • 39,75,29cm • Bookshelf	
Origin Live OL-IB	289	135 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 20,30,19cm • Pretty miniature has a punchy, dynamic midband, but costs a lot for the engineering on offer.	
Bose 201 Ser III	290	3 driver • 8 Ohms • 60W • 38,20,25cm • Direct/reflecting technology	
ZYP A25T	295	sealed • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 22,14,12cm • Magnetically shielded	
Linn Sekrit On Passive	298	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 60W • 26,13,48cm • Bi-wire or bi-amp ready	
Linn Sekrit In Passive	298	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 30W • 20,28,90cm • IB or bass reflex	
Rega EL8	298	<b>122</b> ported • 2 driver • 8 Ohms • 17,72,20cm • Kyle drivers in compact floorstander gives more bass but less coherence.	REC'D
Royd Merlin	298	ported • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 31,20,18cm • Veneered	
Advent Prodigy	299	2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 300W • 24,68,20cm • Floor standing, free space	
Boston Acoustics Voyager	299	2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 26,16,17cm • White indoor/outdoor, metal	
Celestion 11	299	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 31,57,24cm	
KEF Coda 9	299	coupled cavity • 2 driver • 91dB • 4 Ohms • 120W • 20,84,30cm	
KEF 70S	299	sealed • 2 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 17,25,12cm • Uni-Q, shielded, AV surround	
Wharfedale Valdis 500	299	ported • 4 driver • 91dB • 4 Ohms • 350W • 108,25,29cm • Floor standing	
Allison CD6	300	2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 29,29,29cm • Cuboid, wall mount	
B&O Beovox CX50	300	sealed • 2 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 12,21,21cm	
B&W Solid Powerbass	300	subwoofer • 75W • 33,39,34cm • Active sub to match Solids	
B&W CWM8i	300	2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 100W • 28,38,9cm • In wall	
Bose Computer RoomMate	300	active • 2 driver • 60W • 24,14,16cm • Self powered AC/shielded	
Bose Video RoomMate	300	active • 2 driver • 60W • 24,14,16cm • Self powered AC/shielded	REC'D
Bose Roomate II	300	active • 2 driver • 60W • 24,14,16cm • Self powered AC/12V DC	
Castle Durham 900	300	<b>135</b> ported • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 85W • 22,40,23cm • Lovely veneer and lots of engineering create a very upfront, coherent and exciting sound.	REC'D
Celestion Impact 23	300	<b>152</b> ported • 2 driver • Big, cheap and loud. Sounds coloured and old fashioned, lacks subtlety	
Cerwin Vega HED265	300	ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 4 Ohms • 140W • 22,88,26cm	
Cerwin Vega SAT-6	300	subwoofer • 95dB • 4 Ohms • 125W • 22,25,32cm • 3 box satellite/subwoofer	
GLL Imagio IC110	300	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 73,23,29cm • ICT coaxial driver, shielded	
Infinity Inf IV Sat	300	sealed • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 80W • 16,24,18cm • Wall mount, shielded	
Jamo D265D	300	ported • 3 driver • 95dB • 150W • 68,44,33cm	
Jamo 307A	300	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 70W • 31,18,26cm • Stand mount	
JBL TLX60	300	ported • 3 driver • 89dB • 89 Ohms • 150W • 54,31,28cm	
JVC SX-SW10	300	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 29,39,45cm • Satellite subwoofer system	
Kenwood LS-300G	300	ported • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 21,35,30cm • European design	
Micromega Minium MSI	300	ported • 2 driver • 20,32,24cm • Black/rosewood finishes	
Mission 733	300	<b>139</b> ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 84,20,30cm • Stylish and a lot of speaker for the money, and sounds pretty good too.	B'BUY
Mission 751	300	<b>125</b> ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 75W • 17,32,27cm • Great sonic potential, but our review samples have been marred by sample variations.	
Monitor A Sub W/200/92	300	8 Ohms • 100W • 48,25,36cm	
Monitor Audio MA201	300	<b>135</b> ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 22,41,40cm • Lively and coherent with good power handling, but also a bit shut in and coloured.	REC'D
Mordaunt-Short MS25i	300	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 73,21,21cm • 2xMCS bass drivers, biwireable	
Polk RT7	300	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 24,48,29cm • Shielded stand/shelf	
Polk M5	300	ported • 2 driver • 91dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 21,33,23cm • Multi-app, inc brackets	
Tannoy 633/II	300	<b>152</b> sealed • 3 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 29,75,28cm • Impressive bass and balance from compact floorstander. Upper mid could be cleaner.	REC'D
TDL RTL2	300	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 20,73,22cm • Reflex transmission line	
Triangle Titus TZe	325	2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 20,25,32cm • New tweeter, lifetime warranty	
Audio Innovations Alto	329	<b>152</b> ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 38,20,26cm • Styling makes competition look old-fashioned, but sound is thin and cold	
Keswick Audio Aria II	329	<b>148</b> ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 21,42,24cm • Bookshelf	B'BUY
Ruark Swordsman Plus II	329	sealed • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 20,38,27cm • Near wall/stand mount	
Jamo Classic 6	330	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 100W • 84,20,29cm • Inc spiked feet	
Wharfedale Modus Seven	339	ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 22,81,20cm • Floor standing	
Faraday SG	345	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 4 Ohms • 75W • 27,26,25cm • Matt black or granite effect	
Advent Legacy 2	349	2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 500W • 38,67,22cm • Floor standing, free space	
Origin Live OL-2B	349	2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 19,80,19cm • Floor standing	
Royd The Squire	349	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 80,18,10cm • Sand filled, shielded	
Cerwin Vega VS10	350	ported • 3 driver • 95dB • 6 Ohms • 125W • 33,70,29cm • Floor standing	
Grundig BX3 Mk II	350	ported • 3 driver • 4 Ohms • 120W • 24,107,34cm • 3 drivers, 2 way	
Infinity SM105	350	ported • 100dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 53,30,30cm • Auto reset protection circuit	
Jamo BX100A	350	ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 54,31,27cm • Floor or stand mount	
Jamo 407A	350	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 4 Ohms • 80W • 40,22,26cm • Stand mount	
JBL TLX151	350	ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 160W • 58,28,32cm	
Monitor Audio M 9 Gold II	350	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 20,37,21cm • Stand/shelf mount	
Sony SA-W90	350	2 driver • 70W • 22,49,51cm • Active subwoofer	
Technics SB-M300	350	ported • 4 driver • 85dB • 70W • 22,37,34cm • 3-way, 4-driver	
Ruark Icon	359	ported • 2 driver • 6dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 35,19,26cm • Inverted drivers, handed L/R	
Castle York	370	ported • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 26,43,22cm • Real wood compact has an engaging transparency: fine balance and timing, but could use some authority.	
Dali 104B	370	<b>152</b> 93dB • 4 Ohms • 120W • 86,22,27cm • Lively, rich sounding and communicative. Shame about bland styling and dull balance.	REC'D
Pioneer S-80	370	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 4 Ohms • 80W • 23,56,28cm • Bookshelf	
Heybrook Trio	373	<b>118</b> sealed • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 24,47,25cm • HBSI drivers in real wood enclosure give a sweeter and more forgiving sound.	REC'D
Lumley Reference LM4	375	<b>126</b> ported • 2 driver • 86dB • 6 Ohms • 120W • 18,36,22cm • Metal diaphragm and wood veneer, balance uneven upper and has suspect timing	
QLN QuBic 222	375	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 85,21,30cm	
KEF Q30	379	<b>126</b> ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 125W • 19,73,30cm • Fine focus from Uni-Q driver, but lacks drive and time coherence.	
Allison CD7	380	3 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 24,70,24cm • Floor standing, free space	
Bose 301 VM	380	3 driver • 8 Ohms • 75W • 24,43,27cm • Direct/reflecting technology	
Jamo Graphic	380	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 44,39,90cm • Decor model, switch panels	
Polk RT8	380	ported • 2 driver • 80dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 19,80,26cm • Shielded floorstander	
Celestion 15	389	<b>114</b> ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 21,100,25cm • Big box and but short on subtlety and control though long on both enthusiasm	REC'D
Heybrook Heylo	389	<b>152</b> ported • 2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 73,23,19cm • Good vocal reproduction, but sounds thin and bass seems an afterthought.	
Clements 300Si	395	89dB • 90W • 24,36,36cm • Compression line	
KAL Mini-Ref MKII	395	2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 23,27,17cm	
Celestion Impact 25	399	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 82,28,29cm • Magnetically shielded	
Fullers Sultan	399	ported • 2 driver • 91dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 24,51,30cm • 3 finishes	
Origin Live OL-1AS	399	2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 199W • 20,30,190cm • Floor standing	
Origin Live OL-1A	399	2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 20,30,19cm	
SD Acoustics SD3R	399	<b>106</b> ported • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 20,38,30cm • New SD3 has the agility and charm of a quality miniature, good bass and low sensitivity.	REC'D
Spendor 2020	399	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 25,33,19cm • Slate grey satin, shielded	

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Tannoy Subsat3	399	ported • 3 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 11,16,9cm • Subsat system with ICT tech	
B&O Beovox CX100	400	sealed • 2 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 200W • 12,32,21cm	
B&W CDM2	400	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 32,22,25cm • Kevlar bass, metal dome treble	
B&W Solid Verticale	400	subwoofer • 88dB • 4 Ohms • 100W • Lifestyle, 3 boxes	
Infinity Inf Micro II	400	ported • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 21 x 127dcm • Two satellites and passive sub	
Jamo Classic 8	400 152	ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 90,22,29cm • <i>A lot of speaker for the money; good when quiet, but boom 'n tizz character sounded crude</i>	
Jamo D365D	400	3 driver • 96dB • 200W • 78,46,35cm	
JBL TLX70	400	ported • 3 driver • 88dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 88,27,28cm	
JBL TLX161	400	ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 8 Ohms • 160W • 58,25,31cm	
Monitor Audio MA302	400	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 200W • 50,17,20cm • 2 bass units, front port	
Musical Tech Harrier	400 152	ported • 2 driver • <b>Very pretty package, good measured performance and even sound. Sensitivity is low, and dynamics limp</b>	REC'D
TDL RTL3	400 126	ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 20,90,37cm • <b>Bargain price floorstander has rich, heavy and bright sound with a good scale.</b>	REC'D
Tannoy 636	419	sealed • 3 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 120W • 29,75,28cm	
Allison AL120	420 98	2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 200W • 28,61,29cm • <i>Pretty well balanced if slightly mid-forward, but sound quality is disappointing at the price.</i>	
GLL Imagio IC120	420	ported • 3 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 130W • 91,23,29cm • ICT coaxial, shielded	
Jordan Watts JHFLG	420	ported • Flagon pottery colour	
Celestion Impact 30	429	ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 82,24,25cm • Magnetically shielded	
Celestion SL6Si	429 94	sealed • 2 driver • 84dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 20,38,27cm • <i>This stereotype luxury compact can sound a bit dull and congested; favours CD.</i>	
Rogers LS55	429	ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 125W • 88,24,22cm • Black - biwire extra	
Bose 305	430 78	ported • 3 driver • 8 Ohms • 100W • 23,45,28cm • <b>Fine dynamic liveliness and a good room match counter strange imaging and treble.</b>	REC'D
Mission 734	430 152	ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 84,21,33cm • <b>Fine all rounder, and good value, but dynamically a bit lazy, and tweeter quality limited.</b>	REC'D
Fullers Sultan H.E.	439	ported • 2 driver • 98dB • 8 Ohms • 90W • 24,51,30cm • High sensitivity, 3 finishes	
Wharfedale Modus 1-3	439	ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 22,109,29cm • Floor standing	
Polk RT10	440	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 22,86,26cm • Shielded floorstander	
Epos ES11	445 94	ported • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 20,38,25cm • <b>Integral baffle/driver gives remarkable colouration, transparency and speed.</b>	B'BUY
Faraday Siren	445 94	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 80W • 27,25,46cm • <i>High mass concrete cabinet is let down by imbalance of ageing driver combination.</i>	
Boston Acoustics SW10	449 128	subwoofer • 2 driver • 100W • 34,17,42cm • <b>Clever powered subwoofer system integrates well and improves system loudness and power handling.</b>	REC'D
Boston Acoustics SubSat 6449	449	subwoofer • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • Passive subs and two satellite	
Celestion CS6i	449	ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 19,85,31cm	
Linn Tukan	449	sealed • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 30W • 19,30,18cm • Multipurpose	
Polk LS f/x Surround	449	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 22,28,16cm • A/V surround & utility speaker	
Royd Doublet	449	ported • 89dB • 4 Ohms • 120W • 91,18,17cm • Double ported	
Ruark Sabre II	449	sealed • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 23,37,27cm • Wall/free, on stands	
B&O Beovox RL6000	450	ported • 3 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 41,54,18cm • Simplified RL7000	
Infinity SM115	450	ported • 3 driver • 100dB • 8 Ohms • 175W • 76,34,32cm • Auto reset protection circuit	
Jamo Silhouette	450	3 driver • 90dB • 5 Ohms • 80W • 122,25,17cm • Elegant design	
Jamo Atmosphere	450	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 37,26,16cm • Gives light, sound & movement	
Jamo BX150A	450	ported • 3 driver • 92dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 63,37,30cm • Floor mount	
Manticore Minaret	450	sealed • 94dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 23,15,11cm • Nearfield monitor	
Monitor Audio MA202	450 139	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 22,89,27cm • <b>Uneven, informative and easy-listening floorstander delivers decent scale.</b>	REC'D
Mordaunt-Short MS40i	450	ribbon • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 23,82,28cm • Alloy tweeter, MCS woofer	
Sony SSA1L	450	sealed • 2 driver • 85dB • 4 Ohms • 120W • 19,30,32cm • Bio-cellulose tweeters	
Technics SB-M500	450 152	ported • 4 driver • 8 Ohms • 25,78,37cm • <i>This model offers a clean, open sound, offset by midbass heavy balance and low sensitivity.</i>	
UKD-Opera Prima	450	ported • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 20,33,25cm • Solid oak/mahogany	
Origin Live OL-2AS	469 122	2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 19,80,19cm • <b>Compact floorstander sounds open, transparent and evenly balanced; needs a big amp.</b>	REC'D
Pentachord A	469 139	sealed • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 21,28,20cm • <b>Direct coupled</b>	REC'D
Origin Live OL-2A	470 152	2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 19,80,19cm • <b>Fine dynamics and well engineered package, though presence bland and treble restrained.</b>	REC'D
B&O Beovox 4500	475	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 90W • 45,38,8cm	
Triangle Comete 1Ze	475	2 driver • 91dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 22,28,40cm • High sensitivity	
Prof Monitor Co TB1	481	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 20,40,25cm • Shielded version available	
Dawn Audio Chorus BS	482	sealed • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 26,38,21cm • Bookshelf	
Roksan Roksan 1	495	ported • 2 driver • 21,44,33cm • Rosewood £50 extra	
Rega ELA Mk II	498 139	ported • 2 driver • 8 Ohms • 30,80,20cm • <b>Floor stand</b>	B'BUY
Advent Laureate	499	3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 500W • 21,80,29cm • Floor standing, free space	
Audio Note AN-KB	499	2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 28,46,23cm • Free space, stand mount	
AVI Neutron	499	ported • 2 driver • 83dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 26,24,20cm	
Celestion CS8i	499	ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 19,100,31cm	
Heybrook Heystak	499 141	ABR • 3 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 98,22,28cm • Inc stands	
Lumley Reference LM5	499	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 25,46,21cm • Stand mount	
Origin Live OL-1	499 106	2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 20,30,19cm • <i>Luxury miniature has very good overall balance, sacrificing sensitivity for bass.</i>	
Rogers AB1	499 143	ABR • 1 driver • 82dB • 8 Ohms • 35W • 57,19,16cm • <b>Designed as partner for LS3/5a or similar miniatures</b>	REC'D
Rogers Studio 3	499 118	ported • 2 driver • 85dB • 8 Ohms • 505W • 19,30,16cm • <b>Pricey LS3/5A derived miniature, excitingly coherent if lightweight, can't go loud.</b>	REC'D
Ruark Templar	499 122	sealed • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 19,70,27cm • <i>Striking baffle gives decent bass/mid but dull treble; could tame over-bright system.</i>	
Tannoy 637	499	sealed • 3 driver • 91dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 33,86,32cm	
TDL Studio 0.5	499 94	ported • 2 driver • 85dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 20,62,30cm • <i>Tiny floorstanding transmission line lacks coherence or the balane of Studio 1.</i>	
B&W AS6	500	subwoofer • 1 driver • 100W • 51,45,46cm • Active, self powered	
B&W DM603	500	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 85,24,31cm • 2-way, ABR, port foam plugs	
B&W Signature 7	500	2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 28,37,10cm • In-wall monitor, Kevlar cone	
Bose A'mass AM3 II	500	2 driver • 50W • 36,20,20cm • Acoustimass technology	
Bose 401	500 110	3 driver • 4 Ohms • 100W • 30,30,76cm • <i>Cheaply built but distinctively styled, the 401 suffers from heavy midband.</i>	
Castle Severn	500 152	ported • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 110W • 23,77,20cm • <b>Light and bright, but sound is open and communicative. Looks good too.</b>	REC'D
Infinity SSW-10 Sub	500	active sub • 34,34,33cm	
Jamo BX200A	500	ported • 3 driver • 93dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 72,43,32cm • Floor mount	
Jamo 477A	500 138	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 4 Ohms • 100W • 77,19,28cm • <i>Very prettily styled, but build and sound quality are disappointing at the price.</i>	
JBL TLX171	500	ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 86,26,32cm	
JPW Ruby 1	500 139	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 120W • 32,19,21cm • <i>Very pretty but pricey luxury metal-cone miniature has good, if slightly edgy balance.</i>	
Kenwood LS-500G	500 118	ported • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 100W • 22,44,28cm • <b>Japanese designed and built luxury compact delivers an invigorating ad exciting sound.</b>	REC'D
Mission 752	500 138	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 20,88,26cm • <b>Brilliant style, engineering and sound</b>	REC'D
Monitor Audio MA303	500	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 200W • 92,17,20cm	
Monitor Audio M 14 Gold II500	500	ported • 3 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 20,76,24cm • Floor/shelf standing	
Monitor Audio MA700PMC	500 152	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 22,35,26cm • <b>Good looking luxury compact with metal cones, lovely midrange, but occasionally edgy</b>	REC'D
Jordan Watts JH200	510	sealed • 1 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 19,33,17cm • Full range design	
Pentachord B	519 139	sealed • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 52,35,52cm • <b>Active crossover</b>	REC'D
Celestion Impact 35	529	ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 4 Ohms • 200W • 90,28,29cm • Magnetically shielded	
KEF Q50	529 139	ported • 3 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 19,83,30cm • <b>Compact twin-driver floorstander with Uni-Q treble and a rather midbass, heavy overall balance.</b>	
GLL Imagio IC300	530	ported • 4 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 111,23,29cm • ICT coaxial, shielded	
Celestion 100	539	sealed • 2 driver • 84dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 21,42, 26cm	
Boston Acoustics SubSat 7549	549	3 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • Passive sub & 2 satellites	
Allison CD8	550	3 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 200W • 27,73,27cm • Floor standing, free space	
Cerwin Vega VS12	550	ported • 3 driver • 97dB • 4 Ohms • 250W • 42,81,38cm • Floor standing	
Cerwin Vega DC10	550	ported • 3 driver • 96dB • 4 Ohms • 200W • 29,94,35cm • Floor standing	
Infinity SM125	550	ported • 3 driver • 100dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 89,37,32cm • Auto reset protection circuit	
Mordaunt-Short MS50i	550 138	ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 25,87,33cm • <i>Big value big box with fine engineering content and a big, laid back sound; lacks charisma.</i>	
UKD-Opera Seconda	550	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 23,35,34cm • Solid oak/mahogany	
Heybrook Quartet	575 122	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 24,41,22cm • <b>Solidly large bookshelf model with good sensitivity and a lively, forward sound.</b>	REC'D



PRODUCT	£	ISSUE	SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
Advent Heritage	579		3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 600W • 25,89,31cm • Floor standing, free space	
Polk RT12	580		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 19,93,32cm • Shielded floorstander	
Clements 600si	595		88dB • 100W • 24,81,36cm • Compression line	
Neat Petite	595	102	ribbon • 2 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 20,30,18cm • <i>Among the most entertaining and enjoyable, despite colourations</i>	REC'D
Royd The Sorcerer	595	139	ported • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 31,20,18cm • Front port, near field monitor	REC'D
Tannoy 625	595		active • 90W • 58,49,45cm • Servo, current drive subwoofer	
Proac Tablette 50	599		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 28,17,23cm • Special finishes £60 XTRA	
Spendor 2030	599		ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 86,18,26cm • Slate grey satin, shielded	
Tannoy 638	599	138	ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 6 Ohms • 175W • 33,96,32cm • Big value vinyl big box has good balance and lots of loudness, but needs a good amp.	
B&W CDM1	600		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 37,22,28cm • Angled tweeter sub-baffle	
B&W P4	600		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 20,81,24cm • 3 real wood veneers	
JBL TLX181	600		ABR • 4 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 95,30,32cm • Ported enclosure + ABR	
Mission 735	600		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 106,20,33cm • Floor stand, boundary	
Monitor Audio Studio 2	600		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 27,17,20cm • Shielded for AV use	
Pioneer S-200	600		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 4 Ohms • 120W • 26,90,34cm • Biwire, floor standing	
QLN 313	600		ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 4 Ohms • 250W • 103,21,30cm	
KAL Mini-Tower	619		2 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 17,90,22cm	
Celestion Impact 40	629		ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 4 Ohms • 225W • 100,33,29cm • Magnetically shielded	
Keswick Audio Volante	629	150	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 85W • 21,85,27cm • High sensitivity	REC'D
Spendor LS3/5A	630		ported • 2 driver • 82dB • 8 Ohms • 40W • 19,30,16cm • BBC inspired location monitor	
Fullers Pharaoh 1	649		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 20,30,20cm • Curved sides, various finishes	
KEF LS3/5a	649		sealed • 2 driver • 82dB • 11 Ohms • 30W • 19,30,16cm • Raymond Cooke Special Edition	
Linaeum LFX Wood	649		hybrid • 90dB • 16,22,18cm • Modified ribbon/dynamic	
Linn Kelidh Passiva	649	114	sealed • 2 driver • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 60W • 20,83,28cm • <i>Stunning timing and coherence, and awesome bass drive.</i>	REC'D
Origin Live QL-2	649		2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 19,80,19cm • Floor standing	
Tannoy D100	649		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 25,36,22cm • 6.5 inch Dual Concentric	
Allison AL125	650		2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 200W • 28,78,29cm • Open space, free standing	
Cerwin Vega DC12	650		ported • 3 driver • 98dB • 4 Ohms • 300W • 36,98,35cm • Floor standing	
Infinity SM155	650		ported • 4 driver • 102dB • 8 Ohms • 300W • 102,45,32cm • Auto reset protection circuit	
KAL Compact Ref	650		2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 140W • 23,36,27cm	
Lumley Reference LM6	650		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 25,81,21cm • Floor standing	
JVC SX-911WD	660		ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 38,63,35cm • Walnut finish	
UKD-Opera Operetta	660		ported • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 22,30,26cm • Solid walnut, stand mount	
Royd Abbot	665	118	ported • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 81,20,30cm • <i>Dynamic and fine transient qualities are hampered by a rather coloured mid-forward balance.</i>	
Epos ES14	675	98	ported • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 23,49,29cm • <i>Substantial stand mount delivers delightful midrange focus and delicacy with good bass control.</i>	REC'D
Polk RT16	680		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 22,102,39cm • Shielded floorstander	
Polk RT16	680		ported • 3 driver • 8dB • 90 Ohms • 250W • 22,102,39cm • Shielded floorstander	
Meridian A500	695		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 100W • 83,20,28cm • Shelf/stand, shielded	
Dawn Audio Chorus FS	698	11	sealed • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 26,88,21cm • <i>Compact floorstander with superb coherence but rather forward midband. Would suit smaller rooms best</i>	
Audio Note AN-K/SP	699		2 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 28,46,23cm • Free space, stand mount	
Harbeth BBC LS3/5A	699	66	sealed • 2 driver • 82dB • 10 Ohms • 30W • 30,19,18cm • <i>Still a classic miniature, though not to every taste, and none the better for the recent update.</i>	
Naim S-NAXO 3-6	699		21,76,30cm • Active crossover	
Naim S-NAXO 2-4	699		21,76,30cm • Active crossover	
Orelle Orator II	699		ported • 2 driver • 91dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 27,40,30cm • Time aligned, biwire	
Proac Studio 100	699		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 41,20,25cm • Stand mount	
Rogers LS3/5A	699	143	sealed • 2 driver • 82dB • 12 Ohms • 35W • 19,31,17cm • <i>Clever AB1 stand/subwoofer helps the classic 3/5A monitor give its best shot.</i>	REC'D
Rogers Studio 5	699	138	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 25,25,48cm • <i>Luxury finish bookshelf size model has genuine monitoring capabilities.</i>	REC'D
TDL Studio 1	699	78	ported • 2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 23,77,33cm • <i>Genuinely extended bass from a compact enclosure, very detailed but a shade clinical.</i>	REC'D
Castle Chester	700	98	horn • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 23,91,25cm • <i>A brilliant throwback, using a horn type approach to provide startling dynamics and coherence.</i>	B'BUY
Cerwin Vega VS15	700		ported • 3 driver • 102dB • 4 Ohms • 400W • 46,90,47cm • Floor standing	
Jamo 507A	700		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 22,36,91cm • spiked feet	
JPW Ruby 2	700		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 43,22,25cm • Alloy cones	
JVC SX-500	700		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 180W • 27,45,28cm • Super Digifine	
Mission 753	700	114	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 21,88,32cm • <i>Georgous presentation and potential for open transparency.</i>	
QLN 929	700		ported • 4 driver • 92dB • 4 Ohms • 250W • 113,24,32cm	
KEF Q70	729		ported • 4 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 175W • 19,105,30cm • Uni-Q, shielded, floor stand	
Pentachord Pentode	729		sealed • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 80W • 20,74,20cm • Active crossover	
Ruark Talisman II	749	118	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 23,84,32cm • <i>Less ideologically committed than some, strength lies in fine all-round coherence.</i>	REC'D
Manticore Minaret F1	750		sealed • 94dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 23,15,11cm • Nearfield monitor	
Keswick Audio Torino	759		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 90,24,27cm • Angled profile cabinet	
Bose SE-5 Ser II System	760		2 driver • 100W • 90,100,18cm	
Bose A'mass AM511	760		2 driver • 200W • 49,35,19cm • Acoustimass direct/reflecting	
Spendor S20	760	102	ported • 2 driver • 84dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 22,38,26cm • <i>Maintains Spendor's tradition for peerless mid-to-treble coherence and perspectives..</i>	REC'D
Acoustic Energy AE1	764	102	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 26,30,18cm • <i>Exceptional mid focus and coherence, but it is pricey and could be more agile.</i>	
Naim IBL Active	776		65W • 25,80,28cm • Boundary, floor standing	
Shahinian Super Elf	790		sealed • 2 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 21,26,37cm • Finnish birch cabinet	
Faraday FS10	795		ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 4 Ohms • 100W • 27,25,93cm • Matt black or granite effect	
KAL Tunejal	795		2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 23,100,27cm	
Roksan Ojan Sub	795		subwoofer • 1 driver • 28,54,55cm • Passive/pr. Rosewood + £200	
Roksan Ojan 3 Black	795	132	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 28,76,46cm • <i>Squat, stylish and black, great bass extension and somewhat uneven balance.</i>	REC'D
Spendor SP3/1	795		ported • 2 driver • 85dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 40,22,28cm • Stand mount, free space	
Audio Note AN-J/B	799	110	2 driver • 93dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 38,58,25cm • <i>Light damping and local unevenness adds some colouration, but doesn't spoil the very speaker.</i>	REC'D
Castle Harlech	799		horn • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 20,94,32cm • available in 9 finishes	
Harbeth HL-P3ES	799	118	sealed • 2 driver • 83dB • 6 Ohms • 45W • 31,19,18cm • Shielded, biwire/biampable	
Allison AL130	800		2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 200W • 32,95,34cm • Open space, free standing	
B&W P5	800	144	ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 20,90,28cm • 3 real wood veneers	
Monitor Audio MAG901	800		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 27,17,20cm • Metal bass cone, wood veneer	
Polk LS50	800	138	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 27,83,29cm • <i>No enthusiast tweaks here, but powerful and beautiful balance</i>	REC'D
QLN Classic One	800		ported • 2 driver • 86dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 35,25,27cm • Trapezoidal enclosure	
Celestion SL600si	820	68	sealed • 2 driver • 82 dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 20,37,24cm • <i>Some will find this speaker irresistible, but it needs careful system and room matching.</i>	
Jordan Watts JH400	820	106	sealed • 1 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 28,38,21cm • <i>Piano finish hexagon has controversial sound, with uneven balance but delightful mid.</i>	REC'D
Bose A'mass AM7	830		2 driver • 100W • 35,49,19cm • Acoustimass direct/reflecting	
Fullers Sphinx	839		ported • 3 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 25,91,30cm • various finishes	
Audiovector 2X	850		2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 17,90,22cm • Black ash	
Cerwin Vega DC15	850		ported • 3 driver • 100dB • 4 Ohms • 500W • 44,103,46cm • Floor standing	
Chord SysAudio Sig	850		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 27,15,25cm • Cherry, rosewood, black ash	
JBL L20	850		sealed • 2 driver • 86dB • 86 Ohms • 150W • 42,26,28cm • 3 layer MDF baffle	
Meridian DSP6000	850	140	133,28,43cm • Digital active DSP based	REC'D
UKD-Opera Super Pavarotti 875	875		ported • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 23,55,23cm • Solid mahogany, stand mount	
Bose 601 MKIII	880		3 driver • 8 Ohms • 200W • 32,31,76cm • Direct/reflecting technology	
Lumley Reference LM3	895	106	ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 27,87,28cm • <i>Despite indifferent bass alignment, LM3 is fast, coherent, solid and informative</i>	REC'D
UKD-Opera Callas II	895		ported • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 34,22,32cm • Solid mahogany/ash, Focal	
Pink Triangle Ventral	896	142	hybrid • 86dB • 11 Ohms • 100W • 15,80,32cm • Ribbon hybrid	
Sonus-Faber Minuetto	898		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 23,35,28cm • Compact, stand mount	
Canon S-75	899		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 25,78,25cm • Wide imaging stereo	

**PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS**

Keswick Audio Figaro Ev	899		ported • 1 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 19,28,27cm • Piano lacquer, shielded	
Rogers Studio 7	899	122	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 30,63,30cm • <i>Latest variation on classic BBC-monitor theme has beautifully voiced, laid back sound.</i>	REC'D
Ruark Broadsword II	899		sealed • 2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 29,43,38cm • Free space, stand mount	
Spendor 2040	899		ported • 3 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 104,18,26cm • Slate grey satin, shielded	
TDL Studio 1m	899	118	ported • 2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 23,77,34cm • <i>Transmission line helps bring the best from metal cone driver.</i>	REC'D
Jamo 707A	900	132	ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 200W • 26,38,104cm • <i>Superb styling and cosmetics and decent balance apart from detached bass.</i>	
Monitor Audio Studio 6	900	118	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 22,35,25cm • <i>Metal diaphragm compact has transparent midband but lacks vigour and drive.</i>	REC'D
Naim IBL Passive	905	94	86dB • 6 Ohms • 65W • 25,80,28cm • <i>Outstanding dynamics, speed and detail marred by pronounced upper mid forwardness.</i>	REC'D
Spendor SP2/3	930		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 28,55,33cm • On stands, free space	
Acoustic Energy AE2	950		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 200W • 24,40,32cm • Twin bass, metal cone	
Pioneer S-400	950		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 4 Ohms • 160W • 27,96,38cm • Biwire, floor stand, shielded	
Jordan Watts JH400M	970		sealed • 1 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 38,28,21cm • Full range speaker	
Origin Live OL-3	975		ported • 3 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 19,83,23cm • Floor standing	
Triangle Antal	975		2 driver • 92dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 22,102,30cm	
Royd The Prior	978		ported • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 96,37,26cm • Floor standing, free space	
Magnepan SMG-C SE	990		electrostatic • 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 43,122,-cm • 2x Quasi-ribbon	
Lineaum LSII	991		hybrid • 90dB • 30,150,38cm • Modified ribbon/dynamic	
ATC SCMI0	995		sealed • 2 driver • 80dB • 8 Ohms • 300W • 18,38,26cm • Minimum 100wpc, wall/free use	
B&W Matrix 805 V	995	98	ported • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 33,33,21cm • <i>Stylish, remarkable imaging, good balance and low colouration.</i>	REC'D
Clements Reference 1	995		86dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 20,43,29cm • Ribbon tweeter	
Infinity Kappa 6.1i	995	132	ported • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 31,95,25cm • <i>Good extension, but bass is fat and slow, and dynamics are unconvincing.</i>	
Roksan Ojan 3 Rosewood	995		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 28,74,46cm	
Totem Model One	995	122	ported • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 120W • 17,31,23cm • <i>Utterly delightful but exasperatingly expensive luxury miniature sets the benchmark for its size.</i>	REC'D
UKD-Opera Callas Gold	995		ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 34,22,32cm • Solid mahogany, ScanSpeak	
Prof Monitor Co LB1	998	110	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 4 Ohms • 300W • 18,53,25cm • <i>Delightful smoothness and transparency, though bass and treble are both limited.</i>	REC'D
Audio Note AN-J/SP	999		2 driver • 93dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 38,58,25cm • Free space, stand mount	
Keswick Audio Milano	999		ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 8 Ohms • 100,29,30cm • Angled profile cabinet	
Proac Response IS	999		ported • 2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 30,18,23cm	
B&W DM604	1,000		ported • 4 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 100,24,41cm • 3-way, twin bass drivers	
B&W P6	1,000		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 20,100,30cm • Time aligned tweeter	
JPW Ruby 3	1,000		ported • 3 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 75,19,22cm • Alloy cones	
Monitor Audio MAG902	1,000		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 50,17,20cm • Dual metal cone, wood veneer	
Monitor Audio Studio 12	1,000	143	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 92,17,20cm • <i>A real looker, but sound and content are a bit on the small side for the price.</i>	
Morel 704/2	1,000	143	sealed • 4 driver • 88dB • 150W • 80,23,21cm	
QLN Signature	1,000		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 37,27,36cm • Trapezoidal enclosure	
Rega XEL	1,040	132	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 40W • 20,82,30cm • <i>Looks and sounds great: balance bright but even, with delightful coherence and timing.</i>	B'BUY
Impulse Kora	1,095		horn • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 1,86,31cm • Floor standing	
Celestion 300	1,099	118	2 driver • 84dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 21,97,33cm • <i>Splendid bass extension and fine panel-like openness, but dynamics and timing are suspect.</i>	
KEF Model One	1,099		coupled cavity • 3 driver • 89dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 23,86,30cm • Uni-Q, floor stand, shielded	
Ruark Paladin	1,099		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 88,29,38cm • Floor standing	
Castle Howard S2	1,100	132	horn • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 26,104,41cm • <i>Ably fills the gap between Chester and Winchester; has a rich, laid back balance.</i>	REC'D
JBL L40	1,100		sealed • 3 driver • 88dB • 4 Ohms • 200W • 65,30,33cm • titanium dome tweeter	
Hybrook Sextet	1,129	102	ported • 3 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 27,90,20cm • <i>Coherent and highly analytical, partly due to distinct upper-mid forwardness.</i>	REC'D
Linn Keilidh Aktiv	1,144		sealed • 2 driver • 20,83,28cm • Floor standing, boundary	
Epos ES22	1,185		ported • 3 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 175W • 88,21,25cm • Light cherrywood veneer	
Infinity Kappa 7.1i	1,195		ported • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 225W • 36,108,26cm • Floor standing	
Roksan Ojan 3X Black	1,195		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 300W • 28,76,48cm • As Ojan 3, improved drivers	
B&O Beolab 4500	1,200		active • 45W • 45,38,8cm • Attaches to wall, display	
Fullers Pharaoh 2	1,200		ported • 3 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 39,100,31cm • Pharaoh 1 with added bass	
JBL L60	1,200		sealed • 2 driver • 88dB • 4 Ohms • 200W • 90,26,33cm	
Kenwood LS-700G	1,200		ported • 83dB • 4 Ohms • 120W • 30,90,30cm • European design	
Polk LS70	1,200	132	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 31,94,37cm • <i>High sensitivity, but balance has too much midbass boom; mid-top is laid back.</i>	
SD Acoustics SD5	1,235	132	ported • 3 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 20,110,30cm • <i>Bass suspect but forward midband is delightfully smooth. Has ribbon tweeter.</i>	REC'D
Harbeth BBC LS5/12A	1,259		ported • 2 driver • 81dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 30,18,23cm • BBC broadcast mini, biwire	
Electrocomp't The Qube	1,265		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 16,40,28cm • D'Apollo nearfield monitor	
Audio Note AN-E/B	1,299	106	2 driver • 94dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 36,84,28cm • <i>Coherent dynamic and transparent, with extended bass and high sensitivity - but ugly!</i>	REC'D
Audio Physic STEP	1,299		ported • 2 driver • 84dB • 4 Ohms • 60W • 14,33,23cm • Time aligned, with frame stand	
Keswick Audio Alto	1,299		subwoofer • 1 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 19,70,27cm • Subwoofer to match Figaro	
Carwin Vega 1515	1,300		ported • 6 driver • 103dB • 4 Ohms • 600W • 44,135,46cm	
JBL L80	1,300		sealed • 3 driver • 89dB • 4 Ohms • 250W • 94,30,33cm • Polypropylene midrange	
JBL L90	1,300	143	sealed • 3 driver • 91dB • 200W • 94,24,35cm	B'BUY
JPW Ruby 4	1,300		ported • 3 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 200W • 90,22,26cm • Alloy cones	
Manticore Matisse	1,300		sealed • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 100,28,22cm • Fibrelam honeycomb cabinets	
Monitor Audio MAG903	1,300		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 92,17,20cm • Dual metal cone, wood veneer	
Philips DSS930S	1,300		active • 2 driver • 75W • 58,33,22cm • Active digital loudspeaker	
Harbeth HL Compact 7	1,329		ported • 2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 52,27,32cm • Free-space, shielded, biwire	
Spendor SPI/2	1,330		ported • 3 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 90W • 30,63,30cm • Stand mount, free space	
Apogee Centaur Minor	1,345		hybrid • 88dB • 4 Ohms • 100W • 30,88,20cm • Ribbon/dynamic	
Keswick Audio Amber	1,349		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 21,100,30cm • Magnesium cones, shielded	
Magnepan MG-0.6 SE	1,370		electrostatic • 2 driver • 85dB • 4 Ohms • 250W • 48,127,-cm • 2x quasi ribbon	
Thiel SCS	1,379	114	active • 2 driver • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 2,23,41cm • <i>Class leading coherence and communication, but can sound shut-in and dark</i>	REC'D
Linn Kober Passive	1,389	118	sealed • 3 driver • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 60W • 20,90,28cm • <i>Dry, bright balance emphasises dynamics and transients, but can sound unforgiving.</i>	REC'D
UKD-Opera Divina	1,390		ported • 85dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 24,39,40cm • Solid ash, stand mount	
Roksan Ojan 3X Rosewood	1,395		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 300W • 28,74,46cm • As Ojan 3, improved drivers	
Vandersteen 2Ce	1,395	86	ported • 4 driver • 88dB • 7 Ohms • 160W • 41,101,27cm • <i>Elegant staggered baffle contributes to a refreshing freedom from boxiness.</i>	
Lineaum LFX Corian	1,399		hybrid • 90dB • 16,22,18cm • Modified ribbon/dynamic	
Proac Studio 150	1,399		ported • 3 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 98,19,25cm • Special finishes £140 extra	
Triangle Zays	1,399		3 driver • 92dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 99,22,28cm	
Celestion 700SE	1,435		sealed • 2 driver • 82dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 20,37,24cm • Aerolam lightweight enclosure	
B&O Beolab 6000	1,450		active • 80W • 20,110,21cm • Column, two amps, shielded	
Lowther Fidelio	1,465		horn • 96dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 29,100,43cm	
Tannoy D500	1,470	143	ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 6 Ohms • 31,93,34cm • <i>Plenty of muscle and stereo, but short of poise and delicacy. Hard work for amps.</i>	
Sonus-Faber M Amator	1,498		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 20,34,31cm • Compact, stand mount	
ATC SCM20	1,499	86	sealed • 2 driver • 83dB • 8 Ohms • 300W • 24,44,31cm • <i>Massively built, invariably informative but the rather forward presentation can be uncomfortable.</i>	
KEF Model Two	1,499		coupled cavity • 4 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 200W • 23,101,30cm • Uni-Q, floor stand, shielded	
Thiel 2	1,499		active • 2 driver • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 22,28,63cm • 15 wood veneers + black	
Thiel CS-5	1,499		active • 2 driver • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 20,28,80cm • 15 wood veneers + black	
Audiovector 3X	1,500	143	ported • 3 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 19,32,98cm • <i>Superior time coherence, a wide dynamic range and exception bass/mid balance.</i>	REC'D
B&W Solid 800ASW	1,500		subwoofer • 200W • 43,50,58cm • Active, Matrix enclosure	
JBL L90	1,500		sealed • 3 driver • 90dB • 90 Ohms • 300W • 40,60,34cm • Horizontal array	
KAL Trans-double	1,500		2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 23,112,36cm	
QLN Prestige	1,500		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 300W • 99,23,30cm	
QLN Sig Splitfield	1,500		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 37,27,36cm • As Signature, ext crossover	
Rogers LS5/9	1,531		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 28,46,27cm • BBC monitor	
Rogers Studio 9	1,549		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 22,91,25cm • free space	

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE	SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
Rehdeko RK115	1,550		ported • 104dB • 8 Ohms • 34,42,28cm	
Harbeth HL-SES	1,559		ported • 3 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 64,32,31cm • Free space, biwire/biampable	
Genelec 1019A	1,572		active • 28W • 23,31,25cm	
B&W Matrix 804	1,595		ported • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 26,92,26cm • Matrix enclosure	
Impulse Lali	1,595		horn • 91dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 25,99,36cm • Floor standing	
Prof Monitor Co AB1	1,598	114	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 400W • 26,79,43cm • <i>Lovely panel-like transparency, slightly shut-in balance, needs a big room.</i>	
Audio Note AN-E/SP	1,599		3 driver • 94dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 26,84,28cm • Free space, stand mount	
Ruark Crusader II	1,599		ported • 3 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 24,92,32cm • Free space, floor standing	
JBL Ti 1000	1,600	118	sealed • 2 driver • 89dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 20,30,13cm • <i>Performance compromised by over enthusiastic midbass output from port.</i>	
KAL Warlock	1,600		2 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 250W • 25,113,36cm	
Origin Live Conqueror	1,600		ported • 3 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 23,87,23cm • Floor standing	
Pentachord P'column	1,649		sealed • 2 driver • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 80W • 21,108,20cm • Including active crossovers	
Bose 901 VI	1,650		9 driver • 8 Ohms • 33,53,32cm • Direct/reflecting technology	
Castle Winchester	1,650	90	ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 42,108,23cm • <i>Large for its bass extension but engagingly agile, open and airy.</i>	REC'D
Magnepan MG-10 SE	1,650		electrostatic • 2 driver • 85dB • 4 Ohms • 250W • 26,173,-cm • 2x quasi-ribbon	
Epos ES25	1,655	143	ported • 3 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 200W • 90,24,35cm • <i>Handsome floorstander with a rather uneven and bass heavy balance.</i>	
Shahinian Arc	1,675	110	sealed • 3 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 35,69,25cm • <i>Occasionally wonderful small floorstanding omni, bright but coherent and revealing.</i>	
Naim SBL Active	1,692		75W • 27,89,27cm • Bound, floor standing	
Mordaunt-Short Perf 860	1,695		90dB • 6 Ohms • 225W • 86,26,35cm • Time-aligned, ResinRock box	
Kenwood LS-1000G	1,700		ported • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 160W • 34,110,38cm • European design	
Polk LS90	1,700		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 31,94,37cm • Floorstanding, biampable	
Jordan Watts JH1 +1 Asp	1,730		sealed • 2 driver • 85dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 92,40,22cm • Metal cone speaker	
Audio Physic SPARK 2	1,749		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 4 Ohms • 70W • 17,40,25cm • Time align, space-frame stand	
Apogee Ribbon Wall	1,750		hybrid • 89dB • 27,120,7cm • Ribbon/dynamic	
Tannoy Sterling TW	1,750		ported • 2 driver • 93dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 48,70,31cm	
Magnepan MG-1.5 SE	1,780		electrostatic • 2 driver • 85dB • 4 Ohms • 250W • 48,163,-cm • 2x quasi-ribbon	
Sonus-Faber Electa	1,790		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 38,27,24cm • Compact, stand mount	
KEF 104/2 REC	1,799	60	coupled cavity • 5 driver • 92dB • 4 Ohms • 200W • 28,90,41cm • <i>A reference point for dynamics, best without KUBE, suited to many rooms.</i>	REC'D
JBL L100	1,800		sealed • 3 driver • 90dB • 90 Ohms • 300W • 94,40,37cm • 3 layer MDF enclosure	
Lowther Academy	1,805		horn • 98dB • 4 Ohms • 100W • 29,100,43cm • 16 Ohm option	
Naim SBL Passive	1,821	143	88dB • 6 Ohms • 75W • 27,89,27cm • <i>Lively and punchy - smoother but more upfront than before.</i>	REC'D
Ruark Equinox	1,849	140	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 25,88,34cm • <i>Free space, stands included</i>	REC'D
Proac Studio 200	1,850		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 117,23,28cm • Floor standing	
Triangle Aitinis	1,950		3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 300W • 104,22,22cm	
Spendor SP7/1	1,990		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 85,30,35cm • Floor standing	
Acoustic Energy AE1 Sig	1,995		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 26,30,18cm • Special Edition version of AE1	
B&W Matrix 803s2	1,995		ported • 4 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 26,101,34cm • <i>Matrix enclosure</i>	
Clements Reference 7	1,995		88dB • 4.5 Ohms • 200W • 25,114,4cm • Ribbon tweeter	
Dawn Audio Symphony	1,995		sealed • 3 driver • 91dB • 8 Ohms • 34,113,32cm • Floor standing	
ATC SCM20 Tower	1,999		sealed • 2 driver • 83dB • 8 Ohms • 300W • 24,103,34cm • Floor standing SCM20	
Audio Physic TEMPO	1,999	143	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 22,107,47cm • <i>Tall and unusually styled floorstander has stunning stereo but suspect bass tuning.</i>	
B&O Beolab 8000	1,999		active • 100W • 15,132,15cm • Shielded column, int amps	
Gamma Acs Epoch 5	1,999		2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 28,26,90cm • Time aligned, piano black	
KEF Model Three	1,999		coupled cavity • 5 driver • 91dB • 4 Ohms • 300W • 27,114,34cm • Uni-Q, magnetically shielded	
Boston Acs Lynfield 300L	2,000		2 driver • 83dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 23,34,28cm • Inc stands, black	
JBL Ti 2000	2,000		sealed • 3 driver • 89dB • 4 Ohms • 200W • 33,82,30cm • Asymmetric, double wall	
Proac Response 2S	2,000		ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 175W • 46,23,28cm • special finishes £200 extra	
QLN Reference	2,000		ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 4 Ohms • 300W • 114,24,34cm	
Spendor SP100	2,030		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 37,70,43cm • Classic monitor, free space	
Lowther Bel Canto	2,035		horn • 97dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 28,132,44cm • Including adjustable stand	
Genelec Blamp 1031A	2,068		active • 104W • 25,39,29cm	
Tannoy D700	2,100		ported • 3 driver • 93dB • 6 Ohms • 200W • 37,99,36cm • Ten inch Dual Concentric	
Linn Kaber Aktiv	2,135		sealed • 3 driver • 20,90,28cm • Integral stands	
Monitor Audio Studio 20SE2	2,200		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 20,92,26cm • Floor stand, metal cone bass	
Posselt Albatros	2,200		ported • 93dB • 6 Ohms • 200W • 31,186,32cm • Ultra sensitive	
UKD-Opera Caruso II	2,250		ported • 3 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 22,97,28cm • Solid walnut, floor standing	
Martin-Logan Aeries	2,288		hybrid • 89dB • 23,122,30cm • Two-way	
Apogee Centaur	2,300		hybrid • 88dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 33,102,25cm • Ribbon/dynamic	
Jordan Watts JH1 +1 AspK	2,310		sealed • 2 driver • 85dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 92,40,22cm • Metal cone speaker	
Helius Syrius II	2,395		ported • 95dB • 4 Ohms • 300W • 36,107,16cm	
Apogee Centarus Slant 6	2,400		hybrid • 88dB • Ribbon tweeter, dynamic bass	
TDL Studio Monitor m	2,449		ported • 3 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 27,112,43cm • TLS, metal drivers, int stands	
ECA SERVO A.2	2,450		ported • 2 driver • 80dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 22,102,30cm • True ribbon tweeter	
Shahinian Obelisk	2,490		sealed • 3 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 200W • 37,74,32cm • Omni-directional	
Fullers Pharaoh 3	2,499		ported • 4 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 46,118,45cm • Pharaoh + bass & subbass encls	
Allison I.C. 10	2,500		3 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 200W • 48,102,27cm • Floor standing, free space	
Audiovector 5	2,500		4 driver • 91dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 24,110,34cm • Black ash + cube	
B&O Beolab Penta 3	2,500		active • 150W • 22,165,34cm • Line array column, display	
Celestion Kingston	2,500		sealed • 2 driver • 84dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 99,21,35cm • Polymer box, inc stand	
Lumley Reference LM2	2,500		ported • 4 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 33,110,29cm • Open baffle, floor standing	
QLN Ref HDII	2,500		ported • 3 driver • 92dB • 4 Ohms • 350W • 114,24,34cm	
Lowther Delphic	2,525		horn • 98dB • 4 Ohms • 100W • 28,137,44cm • With adjustable stand, 16ohm o	
Magnepan MG-2.7 SE	2,650		electrostatic • 2 driver • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 250W • 56,180,-cm • 3x quasi-ribbon	
Impulse Ta'us	2,695		horn • 94dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 31,121,49cm • Floor standing	
SD Acoustics SD1E	2,695	80	ported • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 30,125,30cm • <i>Large scale, airy and unusually detailed, with excellent dynamics.</i>	REC'D
Ruark Accolade	2,699		ported • 3 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 29,100,38cm • Free space, floor standing	
JBL Ti 3000	2,700		sealed • 3 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 200W • 46,105,35cm • Asymmetric, double wall	
Proac Response 2.5	2,700		ported • 3 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 107,22,25cm	
Tannoy Edinburgh TW	2,700		ported • 2 driver • 95dB • 8 Ohms • 180W • 66,102,42cm	
Jordan Watts Asp JH1 +1	2,745		sealed • 2 driver • 85dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 40,93,23cm • Matt - other finishes extra	
Thiel CS2.2	2,749		active • 3 driver • 86dB • 4 Ohms • 250W • 30,33,106cm • 15 wood veneers + black	
Rehdeko RK125	2,750		ported • 102dB • 8 Ohms • 34,61,28cm	
B&W Matrix 802s3	2,795		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 500W • 30,104,37cm • Matrix enclosure	
Helius Syrius I	2,850		ported • 93dB • 4 Ohms • 500W • 36,107,16cm • Floor standing, biwire	
Triangle Altair	2,850		3 driver • 92dB • 4 Ohms • 300W • 35,120,30cm • Proprietary tweeter	
Quad ESL-63	2,860	60	electrostatic • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 66,93,27cm • <i>Classic electrostatic lacks punch, but has strengths some can't live without.</i>	REC'D
Sonus-Faber Amator	2,992		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 37,22,35cm • Compact, stand mount	
Martin-Logan Stylos	2,993		hybrid • 2x2 • 88 Ohms • 23,35,28cm • In wall	
Acoustic Energy AE2 Sig	2,995		ported • 2 driver • 91dB • 6 Ohms • 200W • 24,40,32cm • Special edition version of AE2	
Meridian DSP5000	2,995	140	225W • 90,21,30cm • <i>Digital active DSP floor stand</i>	REC'D
Gamma Acs Epoch Ref 5	2,999		2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 95,26,26cm • Time aligned, floor stand	
KEF Model Four	2,999		coupled cavity • 3 driver • 92dB • 4 Ohms • 350W • 30,127,48cm • Uni-Q, shielded	
Genelec Triamp S30	3,055		active • 108W • 32,50,32cm	
Jordan Watts JH2K	3,230		sealed • 47,82,40cm • Line driver array	
Audio Physic VIRGO	3,399		ported • 4 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 16,100,42cm • Decoupled tweeter	

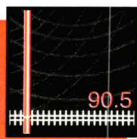
PRODUCT	£	ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
Martin-Logan Sequel II	3,399	hybrid • 89dB • 31,160,29cm • Dynamic bass/electrostatic	
Spendor SP9/1	3,400	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 106,37,44cm • Floor standing monitor	
Apogee CDD Subwoofer	3,490	hybrid • 87dB • 63,38,55cm • Active moving coil sub	
ATC SCM50	3,499	ported • 3 driver • 85dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 31,72,43cm • Passive/to special order only	
Audio Physic TERRA	3,499	subwoofer • Active sub, adjustable	
JBL S2600	3,500	horn • 2 driver • 92dB • 6 Ohms • 400W • 99,56,41cm • Assymetric enc, horn treble	
Tannoy GRFM TW	3,500	ported • 2 driver • 95dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 80,100,48cm	
Horning Agathon	3,570	horn • 2 driver • 96dB • 8 Ohms • 38,48,115cm • Lowther drivers	
Definitive BP2000	3,600	hybrid • 6 driver • 92dB • 4 Ohms • 500W • 13,43,23cm • Active bass, passive mid/top	
MAG Audio Audio A90	3,600	ribbon • 80dB • 3.7 Ohms • 300W • 52,150,8cm • Two-way full range ribbon	
Apogee Stage Sub	3,645	moving coil • 86dB • 58,25,42cm • Active moving coil sub	
Apogee Centarus Slant 8	3,700	hybrid • 88dB • Ribbon treble, dynamic mass	
JBL Ti 5000	3,700	sealed • 3 driver • 91dB • 6 Ohms • 300W • 48,114,38cm • Asymmetric, double wall	
Electrocompaniet Ellipse	3,760	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 43,120,23cm • D'Appolito monitor	
Sound-Lab Dynastat	3,790	hybrid • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 350W • 44,183,41cm • Oak or walnut finish £3990	
B&W Matrix 801s3	<b>3,795 81</b>	<b>ported • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 600W • 44,100,56cm • Lacks transparency and the drama of the best dynamics, but acoustically a tour de force.</b>	<b>REC'D</b>
Magnepan MG-3.5 SE	3,800	electrostatic • 2 driver • 85dB • 4 Ohms • 250W • 61,180,-cm • 3x planar, ribbon tweeter	
Thiel CS3.6	3,899	active • 3 driver • 86dB • 4 Ohms • 400W • 32,43,123cm • 15 wood veneers + black	
Triangle Octant TXe	3,950	3 driver • 94dB • 4 Ohms • 300W • 42,150,19cm • Ultra high sensitivity	
Apogee Caliper Sig	<b>3,998 81</b>	<b>ribbon • 87dB • 58,127cm • Remarkable transparency and delicacy; loudness and 'grunt' are a bit lacking.</b>	<b>REC'D</b>
KEF 107/2 REC	3,999	coupled cavity • 4 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 300W • 33,116,45cm • Raymond Cooke Special Edition	
Monitor Audio Studio 50	4,000	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 300W • 20,104,30cm • Floor stand, metal bass & mid	
Apogee Stage 1 GS	4,100	ribbon • 86dB • 55,82,5cm • Two way	
ATC SCM100	4,149	ported • 3 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 40,84,53cm • Passive/to special order only	
Jordan Watts Class JH2KM	4,250	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 47,82,40cm • Line tweeter array	
Proac Response 3.5	4,250	ported • 3 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 127,28,32cm	
Rehdeko RK145	4,250	ported • 102dB • 8 Ohms • 39,66,29cm	
Linn Keltik Aktiv	4,400	sealed • 3 driver • 26,104,37cm • Integral stands, Isobarik bass	
Boston Acs Lynfield 500L	4,449	3 driver • 85dB • 5 Ohms • 350W • 122,23,47cm • Free stand, separate bass/top	
QLN Artec 1600	4,500	93dB • 4 Ohms • 500W • 165,31,32cm • Line source design	
Martin-Logan CLS IIz	4,555	electrostatic • 86dB • 62,127,32cm • Full range panel	
Audiovector 6	4,600	ported • 3 driver • 92dB • 6 Ohms • 250W • 38,115,42cm • Black piano lacquer	
Prof Monitor Co MB1P	4,681	ported • 2 driver • 91dB • 8 Ohms • 500W • 38,87,53cm • Transmission line	
Bravura Brio	4,750	horn • 1 driver • 101dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 129,39,81cm • Coaxial Lowther driver	
Jordan Watts Classic JH5K	4,875	sealed • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 47,126,40cm • Floor stand, line array	
Shahinian Hawk	4,950	sealed • 3 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 250W • 43,95,32cm • Modular, omni-directional	
Apogee Centaur Major	4,980	hybrid • 88dB • 4 Ohms • 200W • 40,141,27cm • Ribbon/dynamic	
Genelec Triamp 1037A	4,982	active • 191W • 40,68,30cm	
ATC SCM50A	4,999	active • 8 Ohms • 350W • 31,72,48cm • With int x'over and amps	
TDL Ref Standard-m	4,999	ported • 7 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 800W • 56,121,50cm • Dual TLS, metal drivers	
B&W Silver Signature	5,000	ported • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 25,45,24cm • External crossover	
Martin-Logan Quest Z	5,350	hybrid • 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 42,160,29cm • Dynamic bass/electrostatic top	
Allison I.C. 20	5,500	2 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 400W • 53,122,31cm • Floor standing, free space	
Bravura Accelerando	5,500	horn • 1 driver • 103dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 129,39,81cm • Coaxial Lowther driver	
Sonus-Faber Guarneri	5,500	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 19,38,38cm • Compact, limited edition	
Tannoy Canterbury 12 ^	5,500	ported • 2 driver • 94dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 58,90,43cm	
Audio Physic AVANTI	5,599	ported • 4 driver • 86dB • 4 Ohms • 200W • 19,107,40cm • Decoupled mid/tweeter	
Wilson WAP Puppy II	5,600	subwoofer • 91dB • 25,53,35cm • Passive subwoofer for WATT	
ATC SCM100A	5,699	active • 8 Ohms • 350W • 40,84,59cm • With int x'over and amps	
Jordan Watts Class JH5KM	5,860	sealed • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 47,125,40cm • Line driver array	
Sonus-Faber Extrema	5,991	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 55,27,46cm • 'Reference Standard'	
Tannoy Westminster TW	<b>6,000 Col</b>	<b>ported • 2 driver • 99dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • These awesome horn loaded speakers are remarkably controlled and impressive.</b>	<b>REC'D</b>
Prof Monitor Co BB5P	6,754	ported • 2 driver • 91dB • 4 Ohms • 600W • 43,104,79cm • Transmission line	
Sound-Lab Pristine II	6,990	electrostatic • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 300W • 72,153,69cm • Steel frame, curved panel	
Naim DBL Active	6,991	200W • 65,120,40cm • Boundary, floor standing	
Tannoy Canterbury 15 ^	7,000	ported • 2 driver • 96dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 68,110,48cm	
Wilson Puppy 5	7,290	subwoofer • 91dB • Passive sub for WATTS	
Rehdeko RK175	7,750	ported • 106dB • 8 Ohms • 50,96,37cm	
Shahinian Diapason	8,350	sealed • 5 driver • 91dB • 6 Ohms • 300W • 58,100,38cm • Omni-directional	
Jamo Oriel	8,500	ported • 3 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 300W • 178,40,30cm • Coupled cavity, flagship model	
Lumley Reference LM1	8,500	ported • 5 driver • 89dB • 4 Ohms • 500W • 71,122,40cm • 2 box, floor standing	
Martin-Logan Monolith IHP	8,730	hybrid • 89dB • 59,163,28cm • ESL/dynamic, two-way	
Wilson WATT 5	8,800	ported • 2 driver • 91dB • 27,31,36cm	
Jordan Watts Class JH10K	9,340	sealed • 2 driver • 92dB • 8 Ohms • 500W • 47,156,40cm • Floor stand, line array	
Infinity ARS Epsilon	9,995	sealed • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 500W • 152,47,41cm • Includes own servo control amp	
Audio Physic CALDERA	9,999	5 driver • 91dB • 4 Ohms • 250W • 25,111,50cm • Pneumatic baffle, 3 cabinet	
Magnepan MG-20 SE P	10,300	electrostatic • 2 driver • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 250W • 74,201,-cm • 3x planar, ribbon tweeter	
Thiel CS7	10,476	active • 4 driver • 88dB • 4 Ohms • 500W • 35,48,140cm • 15 wood veneers + black	
Jordan Watts JH10KM	10,495	sealed • 2 driver • 92dB • 8 Ohms • 500W • 47,156,40cm • Line driver array	
Martin-Logan M'lith IIXP	10,950	hybrid • 89dB • 59,163,26cm • ESL/dynamic, active crossover	
Magnepan MG-20SE A	11,000	electrostatic • 2 driver • 88dB • 4 Ohms • 74,201,-cm • Active MG-20SE Passive	
ATC SCM200A	11,207	active • 91dB • 8 Ohms • 850W • 83,73,440cm • With ext x'over and amps	
Sound-Lab A3	11,990	electrostatic • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 300W • 78,187,23cm • Any finish, curved panel	
Proac Response 4	12,000	ported • 3 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 500W • 160,36,43cm • Special finishes £1000 extra	
Wilson WHOW III	12,500	subwoofer • 98dB • 88/65,36cm • Active subwoofer for WATT	
ATC SCM300A	12,999	active • 94dB • 850W • 93,88,48cm • With ext x'over and amps	
Tannoy Westminster Royal	13,500	ported • 2 driver • 99dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 98,139,56cm	
Thiel CS51	13,669	active • 5 driver • 87dB • 3 Ohms • 500W • 33,43,162cm • 15 wood veneers + black	
Sound-Lab A1	13,990	electrostatic • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 400W • 91,208,27cm • Curved panel, any finish	
Living Voice Air Scout	14,750	horn • 3 driver • 105dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 57,63,115cm • Vitovox drivers, exp horn	
Apogee Studio Grand	14,900	hybrid • 87dB • 63,160,55cm • Three way ribbon, active sub	
Audio Physic MEDEA	20,999	ported • 4 driver • 91dB • 4 Ohms • 400W • 24,110,50cm • Phase linear	
Living Voice Air Partner S	<b>27,200 138</b>	<b>horn • 108dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 64,160,90cm • Outstanding transparency, dynamics, ideosyncrasies are compensated by vitality.</b>	<b>REC'D</b>

SATELLITES & SUBWOOFERS			
JPW AV2	300	sub & 5 sats • 8ohms • 87dB • 51,26,27cm • Minim/Subwoofer	
JPW AV1	300	sub & 5 sats • 8ohms • 85dB • 51,26,27cm • Satellites/Subwoofer	
B&W Solid Verticale	400	Sub, 2 x sat • 89 • 19,34,45cm	
JPW AV4	400	2 sub & 5 sats • 8ohms • 87dB • 51,26,27cm • Minim/Subwoofer	
JPW AV3	400	2 sub & 5 sats • 8ohms • 85dB • 51,26,27cm • Satellite/Subwoofer	
Polk M Solution	999	sub, 4 sats • 8ohms • 89dB • 28,50,36cm	
Polk RM7000	999	8ohms • 89dB • 28,50,36cm • su, 2 x sat, 1 x centre	

ACTIVE SUBWOOFERS			
Aiwa TS-W5	150	Stereo • 50W	
Aiwa TS-W7	200	stereo • 100W	
Kenwood SW-500	250	stereo • 50W • 29,50,48cm • Active crossover	

PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

Kenwood SW-900	260	Stereo • 70W • 21,40,56cm • remote control
B&W Solid Powerbass	300	stereo • 75W • 33,34,39cm
Polk PSW100	499	1-box stereop • 65 W • 28,50,36cm
Triangle SAT III	650	stereo • 140W
B&W 800ASW	1,500	stereo • 200W • THX • 43,58,50cm



# Tuners & Receivers

The radio medium operates at a lower profile than TV, but in areas outside pop music the BBC service is the envy of the world. Live Prom concerts rival all other sources from a hi-fi perspective.

■ Only the FM (VHF) bands give stereo hi-fi sound, though AM (MW & LW) are useful for certain transmissions in the UK.

■ Something of a hi-fi afterthought, tuners are often selected merely to match the cosmetics of a chosen amplifier. However, the task they discharge is far from simple, since it requires the skills of RF (reception) and

audio (signal processing) engineering. The importance of the former will depend on local reception conditions, but money invested in a high-quality outside aerial system is well spent.

■ Tuners come in two basic types. Analogue models tune gradually (and usually manually) across the bands, and can have analogue or digital displays; they are often preferred for sound quality, and are certainly best for AM bands. Digital tuners offer convenient automatic tune facilities and pre-set memories.

■ RDS (radio data system) is a feature originally designed for in-car applications. Basically RDS tuners can identify

and display the name of the radio station being received, but they offer a variety of other features as well. ■ Receivers are amplifiers with tuners built in.

**Key**

FM, M .....wavebands received

A/V .....surround sound capability

75W .....power output/channel in Watts RMS

30 presets .....number of presets offered

MM,3L,3T .....number of inputs offered (see Amplifier category)

RDS .....has Radio Data System compatibility

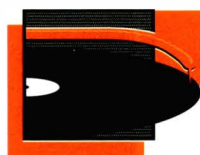
PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

TUNERS		
Goodmans GST650	90	FM,M,L • 36 presets
Sherwood TD1120	90	FM,M • 24 presets
Goodmans Delta 700	100	FM,M,L • 36 presets • 36,11,30cm
Sherwood TX1010C	100	FM,M • 30 presets
Denon TU-260L	120	93 FM,M,L • 20 presets • 44,8,24cm • Careful minimalist design promises a surprisingly open and vivacious sound.
Kenwood KT-1060L	120	FM,M,L • 30 presets • 44,8,26cm • Preset scan
Sherwood TX3010C	120	120 FM,M • 30 presets • Lots of features and fine FM discrimination for price. Sound is communicative but inconsistently tacky.
Teac T-R400	120	FM,M • 20 presets • 44,9,30cm
JVC FX362BX	130	129 FM,M,L • 40 presets • 44,8,30cm • Disappointing all-round performance - watch out for aerial overload in strong signal areas. Tuning knob unspecial
Pioneer F-203RDS	130	FM,M,L • 30 presets • RDS • 42,8,29cm • RDS at very budget price
Sony STS211LB	130	FM,M,L • 30 presets • 43,9,30cm • Station naming
Yamaha TX-480L	139	FM,M,L • 40 presets • 44,9,30cm
Kenwood KT-2060L	140	FM,M,L • 30 presets • 44,8,26cm • Built-in timer, RDS
Teac T-R450	140	FM,M • 20 presets • RDS • 44,9,30cm
Denon TU-215RD	150	FM,M • 20 presets • RDS • 44,8,24cm • RDS Radiote t
Marantz ST-55	150	FM,M,L • 59 presets • 42,10,34cm • D-bus
Technics ST-GT350L	150	142 FM,M,L • 30 presets • 43,7,30cm • Remote control capable
Onkyo T-401	160	FM,MW • 40 presets • 46,8,31cm
Grundig T12	170	FM,M,L • 59 presets • RDS • 44,9,30cm • Full RDS, user station name
Kenwood KT-3050L	170	120 FM,M,L • 39 presets • RDS • 44,10,28cm • Excellent RF performance and plenty of features including RDS, but ordinary sound.
Harman-Kardon TU930	180	FM/M • 30 presets • 45,8,34cm
Pioneer F-303RDS	180	FM,M • 40 presets • RDS • 42,8,29cm • RDS with FON
NAD 412	190	FM,M • 24 presets • 44,8,30cm • Stereo blend switch
Onkyo T-430RDS	190	142 FM/MW • 30 presets • RDS • 46,9,30cm
Yamaha TX-580RDS	199	FM,M • 40 presets • RDS • 44,9,30cm
Denon TU-380RD	200	FM,M • 40 presets • RDS • 44,8,24cm • RDS Radiotext/EON
Harman-Kardon TU950	200	FM,M,L • 30 presets • RDS • 45,8,34cm
Luxman T-353	200	FM,M • 30 presets • 9,44,36cm • System bus remote control
Sony STS311LB	200	FM,M,L • 30 presets • RDS • 43,9,30cm • RDS EON, 'Autobetical' select
Technics ST-GT550L	200	FM,M,L • 39 presets • RDS • 43,7,31cm • Remote control capable, RDS
Arcam Alpha 5 Plus	220	142 FM,M,L • 24 presets • 43,8,27cm • Signal strength meter
Rotel RT-950BX	220	142 FM,M,L • 20 presets • 44,8,24cm
Onkyo T-409	230	FM,MW • 30 presets • 28,8,30cm • Mini component
Pioneer F-502RDS	250	FM,M • 40 presets • RDS • 42,9,34cm • 2 ariel inputs
Sony STS05ES	250	FM,M,L • 30 presets • RDS • 43,9,35cm • UK optimised sound
Technics ST-GT650L	250	FM,M,L • 39 presets • RDS • 43,10,31cm • Class AA, remote control ready
Onkyo T-450RDS	260	FM,MW • 30 presets • RDS • 46,9,31cm
Onkyo T-411RDS	280	FM,MW • 30 presets • RDS • 28,8,30cm • Mini component
Harman-Kardon TU9400	299	142 FM,M • 24 presets • 45,8,33cm • This striking tuner exceeded our expectations. On stereo FM, it's HK's best yet
Kenwood KT-6050	300	FM,M • 39 presets • RDS • 44,10,33cm • IF switch, two antennae, RDS
Marantz ST-72	300	FM,M,L • 59 presets • RDS • 42,10,34cm • D-bus, IF switch, local switch
Micromega Minium FM	300	FM • 43,27,7cm
Musical Fidelity E50	300	FM • 20 presets • 44,10,34cm
Aura TU80	350	FM,M,L • 30 presets • 43,6,27cm • Chrome finish add £50
Nakamichi ST3s	350	FM • 30 presets • 43,7,32cm
Arcam Delta 280	399	120 FM • 20 presets • 43,7,28cm • Fine sound quality marred by mild synthesiser whine; RF performance only average. remote £60 extra
Mission Cyrus FM7	400	142 FM • 29 presets • 22,8,36cm • Remote control bus
Onix BWD1	420	FM • 75,23,37cm • In-house front end
Onkyo R-811RDS	420	FM,MW • 30 presets • RDS • 28,12,33cm • Mini component, incl timer
Thorens TRT2000	450	FM,M • 59 presets • RDS • 21,9,34cm • RDS, remote controllable
Musical Fidelity E500	499	FM • 20 presets • 44,12,35cm • AGC/IF switch, remote control
Rotel RT-990BX	500	FM • 16 presets • 44,8,29cm • Remote control
Naim NATO3	549	FM • 43,56,30cm
Magnum Dyalab FT11	550	FM • Analogue, black finish
Quad FM66	554	142 FM • 19 presets • 33,8,26cm • Very pretty and compact but technically unadventurous. Sound is smooth, but only makes sense in Quad system context.
AVI S2000MT	599	FM • 16 presets • 31,25,9cm • R/C via system handset
Meridian 504	625	FM • 30 presets • 33,9,34cm • System handset
Micromega Tuner	700	FM • 43,9,28cm • Digital output
Audiolab 8000T	750	142 FM,M,L • 39 presets • 45,8,36cm • Unusually combination of fine sound quality and RF performance (inc AM), and superb ergonomics
Magnum Dyalab FT101	825	72 FM • Although fairly expensive given its minimum set of facilities, its excellent sound provided ample compensation.
Michi RHT-10	895	FM • 16 presets • 47,8,34cm • Remote control
Musical Fidelity FT	899	FM • 20 presets • 49,12,33cm • Remote control, AGC/IF switch
Naim NATO2	998	FM • 43,56,30cm
Magnum FT101 Étude	1,250	FM • Analogue, black finish
Meridian 604	1,350	120 FM • 30 presets • Unique digital converter makes most sense in Meridian system context: smooth, sweet sound with fine front end.
McIntosh MR7084	1,550	FM,M • 50 presets • 45,14,45cm • Links to McIntosh r/control
Naim NATO1	1,599	142 FM • 43,56,30cm • There may be better sounding tuners in the world, but we have yet to hear one.

**PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS**

Linn Kremlin	1,995	142	FM • 80 presets • 32,8,33cm • <i>Controversially good sound at a very high price. The reviewer's saving up but you should check it out for yourself.</i>	REC'D
Day Sequerra FM Ref	5,937		FM	
Day Sequerra B'dcast Mon	14,640		FM	

RECEIVERS				
Sherwood RX1010	120		FM,M • 30W • MM,2L,1T	
Denon DRA-265R	200		FM,M • 35W • 40 presets • MM,2L,1T • rem • 44,12,31cm	
Dual CR9000RS	200		FM,M,L • 55W • 30 presets • MM,4L,2T • rem • 44,14,30cm • System component	
JVC RX-212BK	200		FM,M,L • 50W • 40 presets • MM,3L,1T • rem • 44,13,34cm • 4ch surround	
Pioneer SX-203RDS	200		FM,M • 35W • 30 presets • MM,2L,2T • rem • 42,14,29cm • RDS tuner	
Technics SA-GX190L	200		FM,M,L • 60W • 30 presets • MM,2L,2 • rem • 43,13,31cm	
Kenwood KR-AA4070	230		FM,M • 60W • 20 presets • MM,3L,2T • rem • 44,13,33cm • RDS	
Sony STRD311	230		FM,M,L • A/V • 60W • 30 presets • MM,2L,2T • rem • 43,14,30cm • System remote	
Denon DRA-365RD	250		FM,M • 45W • 40 presets • MM,3L,1T • rem • 44,12,32cm • System remote	
Harman-Kardon HK3250	250		FM,M • 40W • 30 presets • 3L,2T • rem • 45,14,37cm	
Pioneer SX-303RDS	250		FM,M • 50W • 30 presets • MM,2L,2T • rem • 42,14,34cm • RDS tuner	
Teac AG-V4200	250		FM,M • A/V • 60W • 30 presets • MM,4L,3T • rem • 44,13,32cm • Dolby Pro Logic	
Yamaha RX-385RDS	269		FM,M • 40W • 40 presets • MM,3L,1T • rem • 44,13,30cm • System remote	
JVC RX-416VBK	270		FM,M,L • A/V • 50W • 40 presets • MM,1L,3T • rem • 44,13,35cm • Dolby Pro Logic	
NAD 701	279		FM,M • 25W • 24 presets • MM,2L,1T • rem	
Sony STRD511	280		FM,M,L • A/V • 50W • 30 presets • MM,3L,2T • rem • 43,14,30cm • Dolby Pro Logic	
Yamaha RX-V390RDS	299		FM • A/V • 60W • 40 presets • MM,3L,2T,2V • rem • 44,14,30cm • AV amp, 'stereo' surround	
Kenwood KR-V5570	300		FM,M • A/V • 50W • 20 presets • MM,L,2T • rem • 44,14,34cm • Dolby Pro Logic, RDS	
Technics SA-GX390L	300		FM,M,L • A/V • 50W • 30 presets • MM,2L,2T • rem • 43,13,36cm • Dolby Pro Logic	
Denon DRA-565RD	320		FM,M • 55W • 40 presets • MM,3L,2T • rem • 44,12,32cm • RDS	
Sherwood RV503OR	330		FM,M,L • A/V • 80W • MM,4L,4T • rem • Dolby Pro Logic	
Sony STRD611	330		FM,M,L • A/V • 60W • 30 presets • MM,3L,2T • rem • 43,14,30cm • Dolby Pro Logic	
NAD 705	349		FM,M • 40W • 39 presets • MM,2L,2T • rem	
JVC RX-616RBK	350		FM,M,L • A/V • 50W • 40 presets • MM,1L,3T • rem • 44,16,41cm • Dolby Pro Logic, RDS tuner	
JVC RX-508VBK	350		FM,M,L • A/V • 50W • 40 presets • MM,1L,3T • rem • 44,13,34cm • 5ch Dolby Pro Logic	
Kenwood KR-V6070	350		FM,M • A/V • 70W • 20 presets • MM,4L,2T • rem • 44,17,34cm • RDS, Dolby Pro Logic	
Technics SA-GX470L	350		FM,M,L • A/V • 80W • 30 presets • MM,4L,1T • rem • 43,14,36cm • Dolby Pro Logic	
Kenwood KR-V7070	400		FM,M • A/V • 100W • 20 presets • MM,3L,2T • rem • 44,15,40cm • Dolby Pro Logic, RDS	
Pioneer VSX-452	400		FM,M • A/V • 50W • 30 presets • MM,2L,2T,2V • rem • 42,14,35cm • Dolby Pro-Logic	
Sherwood RV603OR	400		FM,M,L • A/V • 100W • MM,4L,4T • rem	
Teac AG-V6200	400		FM,M • A/V • 90W • 30 presets • MM,4L,4T • rem • 44,15,40cm • Dolby Pro Logic	
Yamaha RX-V590RDS	449		FM • A/V • 70W • 40 presets • MM,3L,3T,4V • rem • 44,15,39cm • True DSP	
Technics SA-GX690L	450		FM,M,L • A/V • 100W • 30 presets • MM,4L,1T • rem • 44,16,36cm • Dolby Pro-Logic, help function	
JVC RX-808VBK	500		FM,M,L • A/V • 70W • 40 presets • MM,1L,3T • rem • 44,16,40cm • 5ch Dolby Pro Logic	
Denon AV-1000	530		FM,M • A/V • 70W • 16 presets • MM,2L,2T • rem • 44,15,33cm • Auto input balance	
Marantz SR-73	599		FM,M • A/V • 75W • 30 presets • MM,3L,3T • rem • 43,15,38cm • Dolby Pro Logic	
Marantz SR-82	899		FM,M • A/V • 75W • 30 presets • MM,3L,2T • rem • 43,17,43cm • Dolby Pro Logic, multi-room	



## Turntables & Arms

Specialist turntables are what high fidelity sound is all about. CD players may offer silent backgrounds and flat frequency responses, but they can't match the dynamics and superlative timing that serious turntable users take for granted. Turntables at the

cheaper end of the market tend to be supplied with a matching tonearm, and often include a 'starter' cartridge. Still better quality is found at higher prices among the separate motor units and tonearms. Careful partnering and set-up is essential for these components, but many so-called 'sympathetic' combinations exist.

### Key to turntables

manual, automatic .....type of operation  
33/45 rpm .....speeds offered

### Key to tonearms

SME fit .....type of cut-out into which arm mounts  
233mm .....effective length of arm

**PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS**

TURNTABLES				
Goodmans Delta 700	55		semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • 36,90,37cm • Part of Delta system	
Genexxa Lab-710	60		manual • 33/45rpm • Includes MM cartridge	
Genexxa Lab-810	70		semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • Includes MM cartridge	
Sherwood PS1870	70		semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • Budget turntable with arm	
Dual CS3700/3701	85		semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • 36,10,36cm • Midi-sized turntable	
Sony PSLX150H	90		semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • 43,10,36cm • Player, with MM cartridge	
Kenwood KD-492F	100		auto • 33/45rpm • 44,10,39cm • Includes cartridge	
Pioneer PL-225	120		semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • 42,10, 36cm • Belt drive, fitted cartridge	
NAD 5120	129		semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • Includes arm	
Dual CS435	130		33/45rpm • 44,12,36cm • Turntable includes cartridge	
Systemdek I/920	136		manual • 33/45rpm • Semi-suspended deck	
Pro-ject 0.5	145		semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • 42, 11, 3cm • With Ortofon OM5 cartridge	
Pioneer PL-335	150		auto • 33/45rpm • 42,10,36cm • Belt drive, fitted cartridge	
Sony PSLX431B	150		auto • 33/45rpm • 43,11,36cm • Player, auto rec size select	
Ariston Pro-1200	160		manual • 33/45rpm • Semi-pro disco deck	
Technics SL-BD20	160		semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • 43,10,38cm • Belt drive, includes T4P cartr	
Dual CS503-2	170	91	semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • 44,13,37cm • <i>Coarse and woolly sound - not inoffensive, but bettered by the CS-505-3.</i>	REC'D
Moth Alamo	175		manual • 33/45rpm • Comes with RB250 arm	
Akai AP A950	179		manual • 33/45rpm • 44,12,35cm • Inc cartridge	
Grundig TT1	180		auto • 33/45rpm • Black finish	
Technics SL-BD22	180		semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • 43,10,38cm • Belt drive, includes T4P cartridge.	
Thorens TD180/AT91	180		semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • Belt drive	
Pro-ject 1	185		manual • 33/45rpm • 42, 11, 3cm • With Ortofon 510 cartridge	
Rega Planar 78	198		manual • 78rpm • 45,13,37cm • As Rega Planar 2, 78 only	
Rega Planar 2	198	48	manual • 33/45rpm • 45,13,37cm • <i>A remarkable product at the price, surprisingly articulate and confident.</i>	B'BUY
Moth Turntable	199		manual • 33/45rpm • Split-plinth design	
Dual 505-4 UK	200	103	semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • 44,15,37cm • <i>Consistent sounding and well isolated turntable. It is slightly lacking in oomph.</i>	REC'D
Thorens TD180/S500	200		33/45/78rpm • Belt drive, plays 78s	
Thorens TD280 IV/UK	200		semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • Electronic belt drive, AT95E	
Thorens TD166 VI/UK/BC	200		manual • 33/45rpm • Blank armboard, cut to shape,	
Pro-ject 1 (E)	209		semi arm lift • 33,45rpm • 42,11,32cm • Semi-auto version of Pro-ject	
Systemdek IIX/900	230	103	manual • 33/45rpm • <i>A high performance budget turntable that is particularly strong at fine detail resolution and imagery.</i>	B'BUY
Systemdek I/920/Moth	235	115	manual • 33/45rpm • <i>The motor is derivative of the Rega Planar 2 with a Moth arm. Uptempo, even bright at times but never lacks enthusiasm.</i>	REC'D
Moth Kanotk Mk I Arm	249		manual • 33/45rpm • Inc Rega RB250 arm	
Pro-ject 2	249		manual • 33/45rpm • 46, 12, 3cm • Metal/glass platter, clamp	
Rega Planar 3	260	48	manual • 33/45rpm • 45,13,37cm • <i>The '3 (with RB300 arm) sounded musical in a balanced and coherent manner</i>	B'BUY

Thorens TD166 VI/UK/AT	270	manual	• 33/45rpm • Inc TP50 manual arm, AT95E	
Pro-ject 2/Ortofon	275	manual	• 33/45rpm • 46, 12, 3cm • With Ortofon MC1 cartridge	
Moth Kanoot Mk III Arm	299	manual	• 33/45rpm • Inc Rega RB300 arm	
Thorens TD166 VI/UK/RB	300	103	manual • 33/45rpm • <i>Refined and solid sound with well focussed imagery; suitable for use with good MM and budget MC cartridges.</i>	B'BUY
Linn Basik	349	103	manual • 33/45rpm • 45,14,36cm • <i>Strong midband analysis and imagery; clean if sharp treble is matched to a good if occasionally wooden bass.</i>	REC'D
Dual CS750-1	350		semi arm lift • 33/45/78rpm • 44,14,38cm • Turntable includes cartridge	
Pro-ject 6	379		manual • 33/45rpm • 46, 17, 3cm • Suspended turntable	
Systemdek IIXE/900Ap	388	103	manual • 33/45rpm • <i>The acrylic platter IIXE is one of the most capable budget decks on the market: good resolution, dynamics and timing.</i>	REC'D
Michell Mycro	397		manual • 33/45rpm • 46, 14, 34cm	
Pro-ject 6/Ortofon	435		manual • 33/45rpm • 46, 17, 3cm • As above, with Ortofon MC15	
Dual Golden II	500		semi arm lift • 33/45/78rpm • 44,14,38cm • Piano finish CS750-1	
Technics SL-1210MKII	500		manual • 33/45rpm • 46, 17, 36cm • Quartz DD, no cartridge	
Technics SL-1200MKII	500		manual • 33/45rpm • 43, 10, 38cm • Quartz DD, includes T4P cartri	
Michell Mycro/arm	539		manual • 33/45rpm • 46, 14, 34cm • Includes Rega RB300 arm	
Manticore Madrigal	570		manual • 33/45rpm • 46, 36, 12cm • Turntable, lifetime guarantee	
Roksan Radius	595		manual • 33/45rpm • 45, 12, 35cm • Motor unit	
Notts Analogue Spacedeck	600		manual • 33, 45rpm	
Notts Analogue Illusion	600		manual • 33/45rpm	
Thorens TD3001BC	630		manual • 33/45rpm • <i>No arm, but various armboards are available</i>	
Pro-ject 6/Sumiko	699	138	manual • 33/45rpm • 46, 17, 3cm • <b>With Sumiko arm</b>	REC'D
Thorens TD2001	700	91	semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • <i>Similar to TD320 but much dearer - why? Sound is comfortable but not very detailed.</i>	
Linn LP12 Basik	745	103	manual • 33rpm • 45, 14, 36cm • <i>Trails the full LP12 significantly, but pace, rhythm, timing etc still top rank</i>	REC'D
Michell Gyrodek	765	55	manual • 33/45rpm • 53, 19, 41cm • <i>Sweet and natural sounding player, well matched with the Rega RB300</i>	REC'D
Thorens TD3001/UK	770	103	manual • 33/45rpm • <i>Excellent middle ranking esoterica, with strong all-round abilities rather than excellence in particular areas.</i>	REC'D
Roksan Radius/Tabriz	795		manual • 33/45rpm • 45, 12, 36cm • As above, with Roksan arm	
Townshend MkIII Rock	799		manual • 33/45rpm • Headshell end arm damping	
Alphason Sonata	835		manual • 33rpm • <i>Good sound in all areas - bass, clarity and neutrality all in top class (tested with HR100S MCS).</i>	REC'D
Manticore Mantra	890		manual • 33/45rpm • 46, 36, 12cm • Turntable, lifetime guarantee	
Linn LP12 Valhalla	894		manual • 33/45rpm • 45, 14, 36cm • Electronic PSU, upgradable	
Roksan Radius/Tabriz zi	895	103	manual • 33/45rpm • 45, 12, 35cm • <i>Musically it offers exceptional performance with a minimum of fuss.</i>	REC'D
Origin Live Oasis-S	899		manual • 33rpm • Suspended turntable	
Thorens TD520	900		semi arm lift • 33/45/78rpm • Pitch control, no arm	
Michell Gyrodek/arm	907		manual • 33/45rpm • 53, 19, 41cm • Includes Rega RB300 arm	
Pink Triangle Export	948	91	manual • 33/45rpm • 46, 15, 37cm • <i>The PT100 with built-in PS. Transparent and neutral, but review sample had high motor noise.</i>	REC'D
Kuzma Stabi/PS	1,200	91	manual • 33/45rpm • 51, 18, 4cm • <i>(Tested with Stogi Reference) Solid oak plinth; sound is very clear, detailed and extended.</i>	REC'D
Notts Analogue H.Space	1,200		manual • 33/45rpm	
Notts Analogue Graphic	1,200		manual • 33/45rpm	
Alphason Sonata/Atlas	1,235		manual • 33/45rpm • Motor unit inc PSU	
Linn LP12 Lingo	1,345	91	manual • 33/45rpm • 45, 14, 36cm • <i>The classic reference is improved by the Lingo, but charming character remains.</i>	REC'D
Roksan Xerxes 10	1,495		manual • 33/45rpm • 45, 12, 35cm • Black/rosewood veneers	
Wilson Benesch	1,550		manual • 33/45rpm • High-tech turntable	
Rivelin Audio Eclipse	1,595	144	manual • 33/45rpm • 45, 13, 38cm • Motor unit	
Audiomeca Romance	1,675		manual • 33/45rpm • With Romeo unipivot arm	
Pink Triangle Anniversary	1,797	91	manual • 33/45rpm • 45, 15, 37cm • <i>Possibly the most detailed, clear and neutral sounding deck around. Likeness to master tape is uncanny.</i>	REC'D
Well Tempered Rec Player	1,800	67	manual • 33/45rpm • 45, 18, 36cm • <i>Intriguing and challenging design. Has a limp quality and a lack of artificiality that sets standards.</i>	REC'D
Alphason Symphony	1,860		manual • 33/45rpm • Motor unit & PSU	
Michell Orbe	1,950		manual • 33/45rpm • 55, 29, 71cm • Inc QC power supply	
Pink Triangle Anni/DC PSU	2,173		manual • 33/45rpm • 45, 15, 37cm • Battery PSU version of above	
Notts Analogue Mentor	2,200		manual • 33/45rpm • 75lb alloy or graphite platter	
Audiomeca J1	2,500		manual • 33/45rpm • 50, 40, 2cm • Top of the range model	
Roksan TMS	2,750		manual • 33/45rpm • 45, 12, 35cm • Black lacquer	
Well Tempered Classic	2,800		manual • 33/45rpm • 48, 19, 39cm • The original Well Tempered	
Kuzma Stabi Ref/PS	3,000		manual • 33/45rpm • Two motor, belt driven	
SME Model 20	3,240		manual • 33/45/78rpm • 42, 16, 32cm • Precision turntable	
DNM Reson Rota 1	3,500		manual • 33/45rpm • 59, 14, 37cm • Inc arm & cartridge	
Well Tempered Super	3,500		manual • 33/45rpm • 49, 19, 39cm • Classic with carbon arm	
Manticore Magister	3,800		manual • 33/45rpm • 57, 46, 18cm • Special order only	
Voyd 0.5	3,940	144	manual • 33/45rpm • 51, 16, 42cm • <i>Cross between standard and Reference Voyds. Superb finish, colourful and dynamic.</i>	REC'D
Audiomeca J1/SL5	4,250		manual • 33/45rpm • 50, 40, 2cm • With parallel tracking arm	
SME Model 20A	4,535	118	manual • 33/45/78rpm • 42, 15, 32cm • <i>Supplied with Series V arm. Engineered to last a lifetime, giving excellent stereo and detail retrieval.</i>	
Basis Ovation II	4,800		manual • 33/45rpm • 58, 42, 14cm • Lead/brass, record clamped	
DNM Rota 2	4,800	144	manual • 33/45rpm • 59, 14, 37cm • <b>Includes arm and cartridge</b>	REC'D
Notts Analogue Mentor Ref	4,800		manual • 33/45rpm • 150lb platter, graphite top	
Well Tempered Reference	5,000		manual • 33/45rpm • 49, 19, 39cm • 'Fountainhead' base/carbon arm	
Voyd Reference	6,500	91	manual • 33/45rpm • 51, 16, 48cm • <i>Voyd's flagship, equipped with three substantial motors, is a strong contender for world's best.</i>	REC'D
Basis Debut Gold Std III	7,200		manual • 33/45rpm • 58, 42, 19cm • Belt drive, high mass	
Basis Debut Gold Vacuum	9,250		manual • 33/45rpm • 58, 42, 19cm • Includes suction platter	
SME Model 30	10,166		manual • /78rpm • 45, 22, 35cm • Flagship turntable	
SME Model 30A	11,460		manual • 33/45/78rpm • 45, 22, 35cm • As above, with Series V arm	

**TONEARMS**

Decca LI Arm	49		changeable armtube • proprietary fit • 212mm • Damped	
Moth Arm	95	60	fixed armtube • <i>The ultimate budget arm? Refined, sweet, detailed and natural.</i>	B'BUY
Rega RB250	95		fixed armtube • 237mm • Scaled down RB300	
Decca LIR Arm	99		changeable armtube • proprietary fit • 212mm • Rewired version of LI	
Rega RB300	139	60	fixed armtube • 237mm • <i>Despite its modest price it sets exceptional standards and could be used on many high end turntables.</i>	B'BUY
Moth Mk III	146		fixed armtube • Rebadged Rega RB300	
Linn Akito	209		fixed armtube • Linn/Alphason fit • 229mm • Statically balanced	
Roksan Tabriz Basic	275	91	fixed armtube • proprietary fit • 240mm • <i>Targetted at the Xerxes, this is a good alternative to the Rega arm in many cases - a touch bright though.</i>	REC'D
Alphason Xenon	286		fixed armtube • Linn/Alphason fit • 229mm • 1-piece titanium armtube	
SME 3009 Ser II Imp	294		fixed armtube • SME fit • 231mm • Fixed headshell, low mass	
SME 3009 S2 Ser II Imp	321		removable headshell • SME fit • 231mm • Detach headshell, medium mass	
Notts Analogue Space	350		changeable armtube • proprietary fit • Opt silver wiring, unipivot	
Alphason Xenon MCS	370		fixed armtube • Linn/Alphason fit • 229mm • vdH silver wiring	
Manticore Musician	395		fixed armtube • Linn/Alphason fit • 230mm • Handmade, lifetime guarantee	
Roksan Tabriz Zi	395		fixed armtube • proprietary fit • 240mm • 'Intelligent' counterweight	
Zeta as	469		Pivoted	
Alphason HR100S	490	86	fixed armtube • Linn/Alphason fit • 229mm • <i>S-shaped arm sounds smooth, but nevertheless reproduces transients with fine attack.</i>	REC'D
SME Series II 3009-R	490		removable headshell • SME fit • 233mm • Heavier version of Ser II S2 I	
SME Series II 3010-R	501		removable headshell • SME fit • 239mm • Detachable headshell, 10 inch	
SME Series II 3012-R	538		removable headshell • SME fit • 308mm • Detachable headshell, 12 inch	
Helius Orion 4 Copper	549		fixed armtube • proprietary fit • 254mm	
Alphason HR100S MCS	550		fixed armtube • Linn/Alphason fit • 229mm • vdH silver, top bearings	
Kuzma Stogi	600		fixed armtube • proprietary fit • Effective mass 13gm	
SME Series 300-309	657	79	removable headshell • SME fit • 232mm • <i>Beautifully made and finished: fully adjustable and a highly neutral performer.</i>	REC'D
SME Series 300-310	672		removable headshell • SME fit • 238mm • 10 inch (nom) version of 300-3	

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
Manticore Magician1	695	fixed armtube • Linn/Alphason fit • 230mm • Polished armtube finish	
Helius Orion 4 Silver	725	fixed armtube • proprietary fit • 254mm	
Notts Analogue Mentor	750	changeable armtube • proprietary fit • Silver wiring, unipivot	
SME Series 300-312	765	removable headshell • SME fit • 308mm • 12 inch (nom) version of 300-3	
Manticore Magician2	795	fixed armtube • Linn/Alphason fit • 305mm • Polished armtube finish	
Townshend Excalibur	799	fixed armtube • proprietary fit • 220mm • Outtrigger headshell damping	
Roksan Artemiz	895	fixed armtube • proprietary fit • 240mm • Flagship arm, new style	
SME Series IV	936	60 fixed armtube • SME fit • 233mm • <i>Superb engineering and finish with a finely balanced sound, impressive stereo focus and low colouration.</i>	REC'D
Naim ARO	963	changeable armtube • proprietary fit • Unipivot	
Wilson Benesch ACT1	975	fixed armtube • proprietary fit • Carbon-fibre armtube, unipivot	
Kuzma Stogi Ref	1,000	79 fixed armtube • proprietary fit • <i>Large, solid and well made arm, gives exceptionally clear sound with just a hint of brightness.</i>	REC'D
Notts Analogue Alien	1,200	changeable armtube • proprietary fit • Graphite tube, unipivot	
Linn Ekos	1,297	67 fixed armtube • Linn/Alphason fit • 229mm • <i>Superb, state of the art design which builds significantly on predecessor's strengths.</i>	REC'D
SME Series V	1,391	60 fixed armtube • SME fit • 233mm • <i>Excellent in all respects, this arm arguably sets the standards for pivoted arms, regardless of price.</i>	REC'D
Helius Cyalene 2	1,495	fixed armtube • proprietary fit • 254mm • Silver wired, pivoted	
Audiomeca SL5	1,999	fixed armtube • proprietary fit • Parallel tracking	
Dynavector 507	2,175	fixed armtube • proprietary fit • Biaxial design	
Graham 1.5T	2,550	changeable armtube • SME fit • SME base, unipivot	
Wheaton Tri-Planar 4	2,750	fixed armtube • proprietary fit • With terminal box	
Wheaton Tri-Planar 4C	3,000	fixed armtube • proprietary fit • As 4 with Cardas cable	
Air Tangent Tangent 10B	7,777	changeable armtube • proprietary fit • Air-bearing	
Air Tangent Ref. Sig.	11,000	changeable armtube • proprietary fit • Remote control version of 10B	



## Cartridges

Cartridges fall into two groups: high output MM (moving magnet) models, capable of working directly into most phono inputs; and generally more expensive low and very low output MC (moving coil) models. MC cartridges usually have better mechanical integrity, tighter tolerances and give better performance. Many amplifiers are no longer equipped

with the necessary phono input for a cartridge, and a separate phono stage is necessary. Phono input equipped valve designs need a transformer to cope with MC cartridges.

Cartridge/amplifier interfacing can be very subtle, but even basic high output MM designs benefit in overall balance from optimised amplifier capacitance loading. Cantilever compliance (how springy it is) needs to be

considered in the light of the effective mass of the tonearm. High compliance (ie soft suspension) cartridges are best used with low mass tonearms and vice versa.

<b>Key</b>	fixed stylus, moving coil, moving magnet .....cartridge type
1.4 mV .....	cartridge output in millivolts

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
<b>CARTRIDGES</b>			
Audio Technica AT-95E	19	48 moving magnet • 2.8 mV • removable stylus • 5.7g • <i>Clear and dynamic, though richly balanced.</i>	B'BUY
Pickering T-E	25	moving magnet • removable stylus • Elliptical	
Grado ZTE + 1	27	moving magnet • removable stylus • Moving flux, high output	
Pickering V15-DJ	28	moving magnet • removable stylus • Disco model	
Shure SC35C	28	moving magnet • 5mV mV • removable stylus • For broadcast use	
Arcam C77	30	48 moving magnet • 4mV mV • removable stylus • 6g • <i>A sensible moving magnet package with good bounce at a competitive price.</i>	B'BUY
Sumiko Oyster	30	moving magnet • removable stylus	
Ortofon OM Night Club S	32	moving magnet • 6 mV • removable stylus • 5.0g • Spherical stylus	
Ortofon 510/P	32	85 moving magnet • 3 mV • removable stylus • 5.0g • <i>For the price, a good blend of virtues - weight, clarity and neutrality.</i>	B'BUY
Shure M44C	33	moving magnet • 9mV mV • removable stylus • Professional, spherical stylus	
Rega Bias	34	67 moving magnet • removable stylus • 4.1g • <i>Difficult to mount in some arms due to its shallow build, the Bias offers a gentle, refined sound.</i>	
Rega RB78	34	moving magnet • 4.0g • for 78rpm records	
Stanton 500EL	34	moving magnet • removable stylus • Elliptical stylus	
Stanton 500AL II	34	moving magnet • removable stylus • Spherical stylus	
Pickering TL-E	35	moving magnet • removable stylus	
Grado ZCE + 1	37	moving magnet • removable stylus • Moving flux	
Ortofon OM Night Club E	37	moving magnet • 6 mV • removable stylus • 5.0g • Elliptical stylus	
Shure ME95ED	38	moving magnet • 5mV mV • removable stylus • Elliptical stylus	
Arcam C77MG	40	67 moving magnet • 4mV mV • removable stylus • 6g • <i>Punchy, with plenty of energy to liven things up. The solid body is well worth the extra £10.</i>	B'BUY
Ortofon Concord Pro S	40	moving magnet • 5 mV • removable stylus • 19g • Pro use, inc headshell	
Pickering XV15-350C	40	moving magnet • removable stylus • Conical stylus	
Shure M55E	42	moving magnet • 6mV mV • removable stylus • Professional, spherical stylus	
Shure M104E	44	moving magnet • 5mV mV • removable stylus • DualT4P & normal fit	
Pickering TL-2E	45	moving magnet • removable stylus	
Grado Z3E + 1	47	moving magnet • removable stylus • Moving flux	
Arcam E77	50	moving magnet • 4mV mV • removable stylus • 6g • Elliptical stylus	
Goldring 1006	50	moving magnet • 6.5mV mV • removable stylus • Elliptical stylus	
Pickering XV15-625E	50	moving magnet • removable stylus	
Pickering XV15-150-DJ	50	moving magnet • removable stylus • Professional cartridge	
Stanton 680ALX	50	moving magnet • removable stylus • Spherical stylus	
Sumiko Black Pearl	50	moving magnet • removable stylus	
Rega Super Bias	52	moving magnet • 4.1g	
Linn K5	54	67 moving magnet • 4.5mm mV • removable stylus • 6g • <i>Not as crisply focussed as the othe Linn magnetics, but the K5 is smoother.</i>	REC'D
Ortofon Concord NC S	55	moving magnet • 6 mV • removable stylus • 19g • Pro use, inc headshell	
Ortofon 520/P	55	67 moving magnet • 3 mV • removable stylus • 5.0g • <i>Sensitive to load capacitance, the 520/P has a lively, effervescent sound.</i>	REC'D
Pickering TL-2-S	55	moving magnet • removable stylus • Line contact stylus	
Stanton 680ELX	56	moving magnet • removable stylus • Elliptical stylus	
Arcam E77MG	60	48 moving magnet • 4mV mV • removable stylus • <i>Our sample had a disappointing stylus, but gave a coherent, rich and laid back sound.</i>	REC'D
Ortofon OM20 Super	60	moving magnet • 4 mV • removable stylus • 5.0g	
Ortofon MC1 Turbo	60	moving coil • 3.3 mV • removable stylus • 4.1g	
Ortofon Concord NC E	60	moving magnet • 6 mV • removable stylus • 19g • Spherical version of Concord	
Pickering XV15-757S	60	moving magnet • removable stylus • Line contact stylus	
Pickering XV15-625DJ	60	moving magnet • removable stylus • Broadcast cartridge	
Shure ME97HE	60	48 moving magnet • 4mV mV • removable stylus • 7g • <i>It won't turn a sow's ear into a silk purse, but it will produce an acceptable result.</i>	REC'D
Arcam P77	63	moving magnet • 4mV mV • removable stylus • 6g • 'Profiled' stylus	
Goldring 1012GX	65	85 moving magnet • 6.5mV mV • removable stylus • <i>Slightly harsh but plenty of life and detail. Some high frequency colouration apparent.</i>	REC'D
Denon DL110	70	48 moving coil • fixed stylus • <i>A fine all-rounder, this high output MC model is likely to perform well</i>	B'BUY
Pickering XV15-1800S	70	moving magnet • removable stylus • Line contact stylus	
Sumiko Pearl	70	moving magnet • removable stylus	
Arcam P77MG	73	48 moving magnet • 4mV mV • removable stylus • 6g • <i>Preferred to its cheaper partner thanks to a better tip. Channel balance poor</i>	REC'D
Rega Elys	74	67 moving magnet • removable stylus • 4.7g • <i>Clearly superior to the Bias, the Elys is both more detailed, accurate and convincing.</i>	REC'D
Shure M110HE	74	moving magnet • 4mV mV • removable stylus • 7g • Dual T4P & normal fit	
Ortofon OM30 Super	80	moving magnet • 4 mV • removable stylus • 5.0g • Fine line stylus	
Pickering TL3S	80	moving magnet • removable stylus	



PRODUCT	£	ISSUE	SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
Grado ZF1+	82		moving magnet • removable stylus • Moving flux	
Stanton 890AL/X	82		moving magnet • removable stylus • Professional cartridge	
Goldring 1022GX	85	85	moving magnet • 6.5mV mV • removable stylus • <i>As with 1012, a touch harsh; detail and transient purity improved</i>	REC'D
Ortofon MC10 Super	85	48	moving coil • 0.3 mV • fixed stylus • 7.0g • <i>'What a delightfully sweet-sounding cartridge this is....' we said.</i>	B'BUY
Ortofon 530/P	85		moving magnet • 3 mV • removable stylus • 6.0g • T4P fit	
Denon DL160	90	43	moving coil • fixed stylus • 6g • <i>Although listeners just preferred the 110, its brother here survived lab tests and is still 'thoroughly competent'.</i>	
Pickering XEV-3001E	95		moving magnet • removable stylus • Elliptical stylus	
Notts Analogue Tracer I	98		moving magnet	
Denon DL103	100	103	moving coil • fixed stylus • 9g • <i>Good performance in bass and good 'life' is seriously let down by its spherical stylus which kills subtle detail.</i>	
Goldring Eroica LX	100	84	moving coil • 0.5mV mV • fixed stylus • <i>Not the most subtle cartridge in the world: can sound edgy at times, but lively and informative.</i>	REC'D
Goldring Eroica	100		moving coil • 2.5 mV • fixed stylus • Gyger II stylus	
Pickering XLZ-3500	100		moving magnet • removable stylus	
Pickering TL-4-S	100		moving magnet • removable stylus	
Sumiko Blue Point	100		moving coil • fixed stylus • High output MC	
Goldring 1042	105	91	moving magnet • 6.5mV mV • removable stylus • <i>Not terribly subtle, and not such good value alongside 1012 and 1022. Quite lively though.</i>	
Linn K9	109	Col	moving magnet • 4.5mm mV • removable stylus • 7g • <i>Linn improved this model by beefing up the Basik's bodywork and adding a super stylus.</i>	B'BUY
Ortofon MC3 Turbo	110	103	moving coil • 3.3 mV • fixed stylus • 4.1g • <i>The 3 Turbo is bright, cheerful and bouncy, but unsubtle - take it as it comes.</i>	REC'D
Ortofon MC15 Super II	110	103	moving coil • 0.35 mV • fixed stylus • 7.0g • <i>A good all-rounder, with outstanding resolution, if slightly bright and clos up.</i>	B'BUY
Ortofon 540/P	110		moving magnet • 3 mV • removable stylus • 5.0g	
Roksan Corus Black	130	91	moving magnet • 6.5mV mV • removable stylus • <i>Recognisably related to the Corus Blue, but more civilised and smoother.</i>	REC'D
Pickering TL-3003	145		moving magnet • removable stylus	
Audio Technica AT-OC5	146	103	moving coil • 0.4 mV • fixed stylus • 8.0g • <i>Effortless and detailed, but rather relentless and tiring eventually.</i>	REC'D
Grado Signature Junior	149		moving magnet • removable stylus • Moving flux	
DNM Reson Mica	150		moving magnet • removable stylus	
Pickering XLZ-4500	150		moving magnet • removable stylus • Line contact	
Dynavector 50X	159		moving coil • 2 mV • fixed stylus • 4.9g • High output, exchange scheme	
Ortofon MC25E	160	139	moving coil • 0.5 mV • fixed stylus • 10.5g • High output, elliptical stylus	
Notts Analogue Tracer II	175		moving magnet	
Pickering TL-4004	175		moving magnet • removable stylus	
Dynavector 10X	189		moving coil • 2 mV • fixed stylus • 4.9g • High output, exchange scheme	
Linn K18/II	197		moving magnet • 4.5mV mV • removable stylus • 8g • Metal body	
DNM Reson Aciore	199		moving coil • fixed stylus	
London Decca Maroon	199	67	moving magnet • 5.0mV mV • fixed stylus • <i>Now manufactured under the London brand name, this Decca cartridge is as iconclastic as ever.</i>	
Denon DL304	200		moving coil • fixed stylus • Elliptical stylus	
Goldring Elite	200	103	moving coil • 0.5mV mV • fixed stylus • 7g • <i>The basics are right, and it will cheerfully tackle any source material, but its sound has a certain dirtiness.</i>	
Pickering XSV-5000U	200		moving magnet • removable stylus • High output	
Pickering XLZ-7500	200		moving magnet • removable stylus • Hybrid, low impedance	
Pickering TLZ-7500-S	200		moving magnet • removable stylus	
Ortofon MC25FL	210	139	moving coil • 0.5 mV • fixed stylus • 10.5g • High output, Fine Line stylus	
DNM Reson Recca	225		moving magnet • removable stylus	
London Decca Gold	239		moving magnet • 5.0mV mV • fixed stylus • Elliptical stylus	
Audio Technica AT-OC9	245		moving coil • 0.38 mV • fixed stylus • 8.8g	
Audioquest MC5	250		moving coil • 1.4mV mV • fixed stylus • High output MC, line contact	
Grado Signature 8MZ	250		moving magnet • removable stylus • Moving flux	
Ortofon MC10 Supreme	250		moving coil • 0.5 mV • fixed stylus • 10.7g • High output MC	
Sumiko BPS	250		moving coil • fixed stylus • Nude stylus	
van den Hul MM-1	250	103	moving magnet • 5.5mV mV • removable stylus • <i>If woody midrange could be tamed, imaging and security would pull it through</i>	REC'D
London Decca Maroon Dp	259		moving magnet • 5.0mV mV • fixed stylus • Deccapod mounting	
Shure V15V-MR	265	38	moving magnet • 3mV mV • removable stylus • 6.6g • <i>Extended familiarity gave the feeling of a lack of energy and a 'shut in' sound.</i>	
DNM Reson Etile	299		moving coil • fixed stylus	
London Decca Gold Dpd	299		moving magnet • 5.0mV mV • fixed stylus • Elliptical stylus, Deccapod	
Militek Aurora	299		moving coil • 2.0mV mV • fixed stylus • <i>An overall feeling of relaxed ease characterised this clear and atmospheric Kiseki-bu t cartridge.</i>	REC'D
van den Hul MM-2	299		moving magnet • 5.5mV mV • removable stylus	
London Decca S Gold	339	84	moving magnet • 5.0mV mV • fixed stylus • <i>Immediate and detailed, but coloured, nonlinear with a questionable effect on records.</i>	
Notts Analogue Tracer III	350		moving magnet	
Ortofon MC20 Supreme	350		moving coil • 0.5 mV • fixed stylus • 10.7g • High-output elliptical MC	
Dynavector 23RS	375		moving coil • 0.15 mV • fixed stylus • 5.3g • Jewel cantilever, exchange	
Grado Signature MCZ	375		moving magnet • removable stylus • Moving flux	
London Decca S Gold Dp	399		moving magnet • 5.0mV mV • fixed stylus • Deccapod mounting	
Militek Olympia	399		moving coil • 2.0mV mV • fixed stylus • As Aurora, sapphire cantilever	
Linn Klyde	449		moving coil • 150uV mV • fixed stylus • 8g • Alloy body	
Dynavector 17D2	450	91	moving coil • 0.15 mV • fixed stylus • 5.3g • <i>Clear, detailed, neutral and generally informative - excellent.</i>	REC'D
Ortofon MC30 Supreme	450		moving coil • 0.5 mV • fixed stylus • 10.7g • High output	
Kiseki Blue GS	499		moving coil • 0.4mV mV • fixed stylus	
Notts Analogue Tracer IV	550		moving magnet	
Audioquest 404L	599	84	moving coil • 0.5mV mV • fixed stylus • <i>Slight harshness detracted from the performance of this otherwise clear-sounding and detailed cartridge.</i>	
Benz-Micro The Glider	600		moving coil • 1mV mV • fixed stylus • Semi-nude design	
Audio Technica AT-OC30	619		moving coil • 0.4 mV • fixed stylus • 7.8g • Nude micro linear stylus	
Grado Signature TLZ	650		moving magnet • removable stylus • Moving flux	
Ortofon MC2000II	650		moving coil • 0.12 mV • fixed stylus • 9.6g	
Lyra Lydian	699		moving coil • removable stylus	
van den Hul DDT-II	699		moving coil • 0.4mV mV • fixed stylus • Silver coils	
Benz-Micro H200	700		moving coil • 2mV mV • fixed stylus	
Benz-Micro MO90	700		moving coil • 0.9mV mV • fixed stylus	
Benz-Micro L040	700		moving coil • 0.4mV mV • fixed stylus	
van den Hul MC-10	799	60	moving coil • 0.4mV mV • fixed stylus • <i>A neutral, balanced performer gives, fine depth and focus and a firm, extended bass</i>	REC'D
Audioquest 404MH	899		moving coil • 1.4 mV • fixed stylus • Boron cantilever	
DNM Reson Lexe	899	144	moving coil • fixed stylus	REC'D
Kiseki PHS	899		moving coil • 0.4mV mV • fixed stylus	
Audio Technica ART-1	944	72	moving coil • 0.4 mV • fixed stylus • 8.8g • <i>This is a delicate and very fluid-sounding MC that tracks well.</i>	REC'D
Ortofon MC3000II	950	84	moving coil • 0.12 mV • fixed stylus • 9.5g • <i>A real eye-opener. Nothing to criticise anywhere, one of the very best.</i>	REC'D
Grado Signature XTZ	975		moving magnet • removable stylus • Moving flux	
Roksan Shiraz	975		moving coil • 0.2mV mV • fixed stylus • 3-pt generator mount, no glues	
Dynavector XX-1L	998	84	moving coil • 0.25 mV • fixed stylus • 12g • <i>Very clear, very detailed; a response lift around 20kHz seems to do no harm.</i>	REC'D
Dynavector XX-1	998	84	moving coil • 2 mV • fixed stylus • 12g • <i>Good, but not immensely competitive at the price, and not helped by comparison with the low output version.</i>	
Linn Arkiv	998		moving coil • 150uV mV • fixed stylus • 7g • Three point mt, machined body	
London Decca Jubilee	999		moving magnet • 5.0mV mV • fixed stylus • Line contact, 0.5 inch mount	
van den Hul MC-One	999	60	moving coil • fixed stylus • <i>This extended all the positive qualities of the '10, but added greater authority and scale - worth all the extra money.</i>	REC'D
Lyra Clavis Da Capo	1,069	143	moving coil • fixed stylus	B'BUY
Benz-Micro Wood Ref	1,100		moving coil • 0.3mV mV • fixed stylus • Bruyere housing, boron	
van den Hul MC-One/Hi	1,149	84	moving coil • fixed stylus • <i>Slight softening on transients was the only real flaw, but it didn't quite seem to have that special touch one expects.</i>	
van den Hul MC-Two	1,349	72	moving coil • fixed stylus • <i>MC-Two rewards with a highly detailed yet fluid and musically convincing portrayal.</i>	REC'D
Audio Note Io HV	1,395	100	moving coil • fixed stylus • <i>One of the best, giving an extraordinarily relaxing midrange clarity. Needs a transformer.</i>	REC'D
Audioquest 700NSX	1,495	91	moving coil • 0.4 mV • fixed stylus • <i>Stunning stereo imaging and detail spoiled by poor tracking and high sensitivity to arms.</i>	
Ortofon MC5000	1,500	91	moving coil • 0.12 mV • fixed stylus • 9.5g • <i>Limited tracking ability, bright and forward sound, but good stereo</i>	



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Page Issue!

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June's *Hi-Fi Choice* will be a star-studded, celebrity-hosted, high-society night out! Using amazing Journ-ALISM digital compression software, we will be cramming a whole evening's worth of award-winning hi-fi into one bumper-sized Special Edition of your favourite hi-fi magazine.

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- CD Player up to £250 ■ CD Player above £250 ■ Tuner up to £250
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### Also in next month's issue:

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- Arcam *Alpha 6+* ● harman/kardon *HD7625* ● Linn *Mimik*
- Marantz *CD-17* ● Meridian *506* ● Naim *CD3*
- Orelle *CD100* ● Quad *77* ● Rotel *RCD975*
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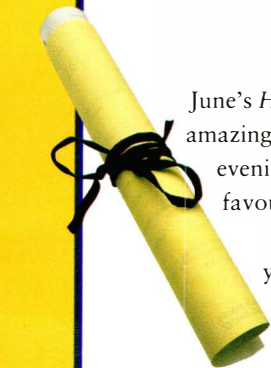
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*Hi-Fi Choice* will be thanking its parents, friends and God for this award, which wasn't down to us, really — all of you deserved to win, luvvies — on Friday 26th April, 1996.



# Ultra Vivian Scene

David Vivian believes that hi-fi doesn't have to be expensive to be good. He'll be writing on this topic for your delectation, every month!

**Q**uestions. Who am I? What am I doing here? Where has Paul Messenger gone? Am I staying long? What's on my mind? And do I know Jeremy Clarkson?

Uncanny thing to ask. Our paths occasionally cross. Now you can guess the answer to the first question. I'm a motoring writer. Go ahead, feel confused. The thinking behind my being here, as explained to me by Mr Editor-in-Chief Vincent, is nothing if not lateral.

I'm here precisely because I'm not a hugely experienced, wise and gifted vocational audio journalist. I'm no more hi-fi hack than I am particle physicist. My instincts are just like yours: impulse-driven. I've spent countless hours feeling guilty about the price of my 'hobby' (ie, spending too much on it), and I still get the cold sweats when I'm given an expensive piece of kit to audition. My fear is that it will sound so good, so effortlessly superior to what I'm used to, that I'll have to buy it. Even if I can't afford it.

I'd be lying if I said I've never been tempted, but one thing has always helped me to hold back. It's this plain and immutable truth: hi-fi keeps on getting better and cheaper. The process

is unstoppable. Moreover, the rate of improvement has accelerated in recent years. It's no good thinking in terms of diminishing returns. All you can do is guess how long it will take before your £1,000 CD player is taken to the cleaners by a £500 model. And the current rate of progress? Ten months tops.

Which is a good thing. It makes buying hi-fi much less daunting than some people would have you believe. If the trick is to acquire a truly engaging sound without spending more than we have to, the odds are with us. Because unless we're getting harder to please, the amount we need to spend on a satisfying system is, by definition, dropping year on year.

Of course, one person's 'satisfying' is another's 'shabby'. But it doesn't matter where your individual starting point is. The question I ask myself is, "can I spend less and still be happy?", rather than, "if I spend more, will I appreciate the improved sound quality?" From a purely psychological perspective, the first option is the better bet. You feel smart with a bargain, while you worry about a liability. And since progress will inevitably devalue your purchase, there's more to lose if price rather

**Hi-fi gets cheaper and better. Just think — this early 48-track AV studio once cost £39 10s 4d, but now it would be yours for fivepence!**

than satisfaction is your imperative.

Ever wondered why, at hi-fi shows, it is the small, modestly-priced systems that normally make the biggest impression? It's not because they sound best, but simply because they exceed your expectations rather than fall short of them. I'd like to think we're approaching this subject from the same direction. If there's a core theme in this column, it will be about hanging on to a sense of perspective.

To be honest, the only lower-midsuck-out that interests me is the sort that will ease the strain on the belt I no longer need to hold my trousers up. Perhaps I should spend more time listening to hi-fi and less going to the pub. If I bought one of those Reebok steps I could work out at the same time. And get a Walkman and go jogging. Become a Trappist monk.

Then again, perhaps I'd rather go for a stroll in the car. Don't get me wrong: I couldn't do without music and a decent hi-fi. But it's not a religion, it's not better than sex, it comes a poor second to falling asleep in the garden on a sunny day and, most of the time, it's no substitute for friends. At least not to me. I'd like to think that even on a magazine like *Hi-Fi Choice*, there's a natural order: life, hi-fi.

Having said all of that, the unacceptable scenario is the one where the family stereo is gathering dust, beaten into retirement by zillion-channel TV, personal computers and video games. In any intelligent list of priorities, good music in the home comes above all of these. They're distractions. Music, like beer, is good for you. So long as you keep it under careful control.

Paul Messenger? He's moved from this cosy stern cabin on the good vessel *Choice* to the heat of the engine room (page 23). I don't envy him. Hopefully, back here, I can see what's happening up ahead and still make a few waves. ▲



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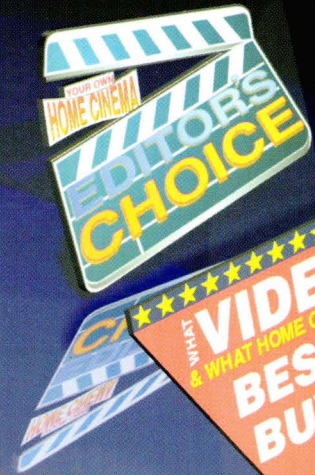
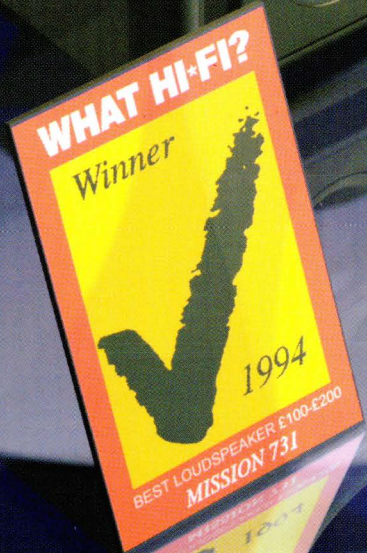
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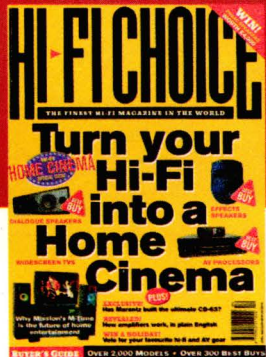
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