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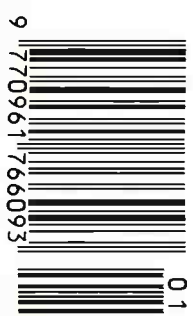
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IMEX HOUSE,
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Private & Trade Classified Ads
+44 (0)171 625 3134
Fax: +44 (0)171 328 1844

General Editor
Simon Pope
+44 (0)181 789 7344
edit@hi-fiworld.co.uk

Technical Editor
Richard White
Fax: +44 (0)171 328 1844
Individual queries cannot
be answered by telephone.

Design & Production
Faiza Chunara
+44 (0)171 625 3129
Fax: +44 (0)171 328 1844

Contributors
Dominic Todd
Jon Marks
David Price
Jon Clarke
Sara Davis
Stuart Lenz
Ian Nicolson
Stephen Priest
Frank Blake

Advertising Designer
Faiza Chunara
+44 (0)171 625 3129
Fax: +44 (0)171 328 1844

Photography
David Noble
+44 (0)171 625 3134

Sales and Marketing Manager
Amanda Sweeney
+44 (0)181 864 4760
Fax: +44 (0)181 864 4780

Accounts
Michael Ogazi
+44 (0)171 289 3533
Fax: +44 (0)171 328 1844

Credit Control
Louise Palfrey
+44 (0)1923 270833
Fax: +44 (0)1923 270833

Publisher
Noel Keywood

WORLD AUDIO DESIGN
Technical Manager
Nick Lucas
Tel/Fax: +44 (0)171 625 8032
wad@hi-fiworld.co.uk

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Christmas is coming, the Ed is getting fat....it's the time of year for feasting on paté de foie gras, Belgian chocolates and larks' tongues, swilling shampoo and singing carols round the tree (oh, the life of an audio journalist!). O well, back to my "bootiful" turkey joint . . .

This year, it's also 'all change' for the world of audio! It seems that the long wait for the next generation of players is finally over. DVD-A players from both Panasonic and Technics are due to be with the dealers by the end of December, along with Marantz's SA-X1 SACD player and Sony's SCD77ES SACD player - smaller brother of the flagship SCD-1 (reviewed this month and already on my xmas list, mum!). Obviously taking the bull by the horns, this means that Sony will have two players on the market - both well over £1000. With DVD-A players likely to clock in at the same amount, this technology will initially be for the audiophile few, rather than

the record-buying many.

From the outset Philips have proposed to enter SACD at the more affordable end of the market, but despite preliminary demonstrations, it seems that we will have to wait for another year before we see it. However, the Philips aim is to make it a truly universal player, incorporating SACD, DVD-A/V, CD-R/W and CD - all for under £500! Although Pioneer also have something similar in the pipeline, the expected price is at present much higher. So the Philips price puts it well and truly in the mass market bracket - consumers will be tempted. And by the time it appears, there could be more software (and hardware such as 'speakers) to justify mass purchase, instead of the usual array of demo and musically so-so

"audiophile" discs.

The music industry plays a much bigger role in audio than we like to think and artists and recording companies need to be persuaded that a new format is viable, before committing themselves. This could slow things up a bit - who would buy an oven when there's no food in the cupboard?



740 740 749-79
Simon Pope

How we test the products

● Hi-Fi World has its own advanced test laboratory and acoustically treated listening room.

● Hi-Fi World has a dedicated in-house team of experienced listeners. We review thoroughly by extensive auditioning, rather than by quick-fire group listening tests.



● Hi-Fi World's engineering team designs a wide range of products in-house. No other hi-fi magazine is so expert and dedicated.



OUTSTANDING -
Superb sound, something we'd use ourselves.



GOOD -
Has strong merit. Well worth an audition.



ADEQUATE -
Mediocre in several areas. May be worth auditioning.



POOR -
Seriously flawed. Not worth considering.

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The Inversion 50s are the replacements for the much-loved Avon loudspeaker and features Castle's new tapered-cabinet look. Noel Keywood besieges the ramparts.

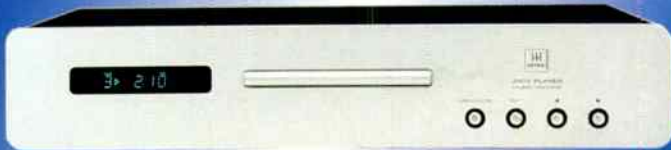


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After our recent encounter with Monrio's Asty integrated, we thought it only right to give its CD playing brother a listen. Italianophile Jon Marks does the honours.



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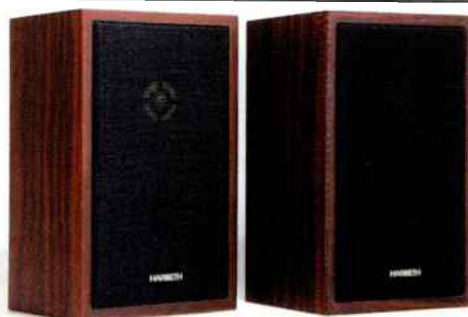
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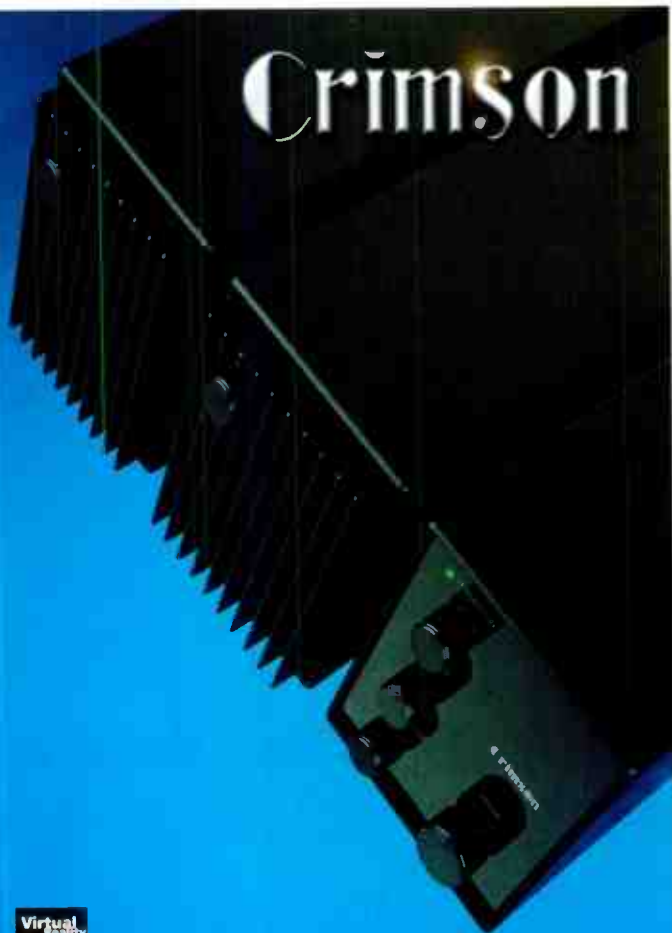
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GET THAT MOOD, INDIGO

Indigo Technologies are a new company formed at the start of 1999 in Huntingdon ("where?", I hear you cry). They specialise in a range of passive monitors known as the Home and Studio series. These are 'speakers using professional studio monitor technology for home use in either a hi-fi set up or home studio environment. The range consists of the Indigo One, Two and Three models. Each has a high quoted sensitivity, no internal wadding, 21mm MDF cabinets and controlled dispersion HF.

To add to the home appeal they are available in cherrywood finish as well as standard black. Prices range from £300 for the Indigo One to £500 for the Three. More models are to be introduced at the start of next year.



**Indigo Technologies Ltd.,
PO Box 2,
Stonely,
Huntingdon,
Cams PE18 0NY
Tel: 01480 861175**

PIONEERING SPIRIT



Three new and innovative products have arrived from Pioneer this month. First up comes their new PDR-509 CD-R/RW. This is their most affordable model yet - at around the £300 mark - and is one of the new breed of recordables that will copy all data, including HDCD and 5.1 encoded DTS CDs. Five erase modes are present as well as one-touch synchro

recording and a digital recording level for a consistent compilation level.

Next up are a pair of DVD players. The first is the PDV-LC10 portable which features a 7in LCD widescreen monitor.



The LC10, like all other Pioneer DVDs, has a 24/96 output and comes complete with rechargeable battery and a "credit card" remote for under £1400. The other DVD product is the DV-626D. This is Pioneer's first model to feature built-in decoding for Dolby Digital and DTS. It has 24/96 optical and coaxial outputs through which multi-channel information can be transferred. It also features a twin laser pickup and a "high speed" drive mechanism which can apparently load discs up to 30% faster than other models. On the visual front, there is a new generation Graphical User Interface that allows on-screen menus to be operated and overlaid during playback. It is expected to be hit the shops at around £450.

**Pioneer GB Ltd,
Pioneer House,
Hollybush Hill,
Stoke Poges,
Slough, Berks,
SL2 4PQ
Tel: 01753 789789**

MULTI-CHANNEL MONSTER



AV and multi-channel audio fans will welcome the launch of Denon's new AVR-3300 receiver. It features the same Analog Devices SHARC 32-bit DSP processor as their £2000 flagship AVC-A1D. It features both Dolby Digital and DTS decoding as well as 24-96 DACs on each of the channels. Taking up most of the innards must be the hardly wafer-light 6.5 kilo power transformer and the five power amplifiers that are claimed to deliver 105W to each of the five channel outputs.

Denon ensure that the AVC-A1D is just as adept with music as with dialogue thanks to the Dual Surround Speaker switching. This allows for the employment of two types of loudspeaker and placement. The diffuse 'speakers for film sound and direct sound for multi-channel audio discs. Movie and music lovers can pick up the AVC-A1D for £799.99.

Hayden Labs. Ltd.,
Hayden House, Chiltern Hill,
Chalfont St Peter,
Bucks. SL9 9UG
Tel: 01753 888447



STIRLING WORK

Limited stocks of the Harbeth LS3/5a 'Alan Shaw Signature' limited edition loudspeaker are available from Stirling Broadcast. Originally for the Far Eastern market, they feature gold tweeter mesh and all have the prefix '8' on the serial numbers - 8 is apparently considered a

lucky number in the Far East. They are priced at £648 per pair, with an extra £248 per pair for AB-1 bass extenders.

Stirling Broadcast,
Charter Alley,
Basingstoke,
Hants RG26 5PX
Tel: 01256 851001

AT ONE'S LEISURE

First came the ergonomically designed multi-coloured computer from Macintosh. Now it's the turn of the loudspeaker. Bigwigs B&W have announced the launch of their LM1 leisure monitor. Always recognised for their groundbreaking designs such as the Nautilus range, the LM1 is a stylish small monitor. Available in a range of five colours and explained in a highly chic little brochure, the LM1 is definitely an audio product for the image-conscious. It follows the trend of the 'put anywhere' designs from the bedroom to the bathroom.




The design of the 'speaker is such that it can be positioned vertically, horizontally, wall-mounted or shell-mounted. Despite its fairly modest dimensions of 280mm x 140mm x 191mm (hwd) the quoted specs are a power handling of up to 100W and a sensitivity of 91dB, hinting that they retain the B&W tradition of high quality engineering. A step up the audio style ladder will cost you £200 for a pair of LM1s.



B&W Loudspeakers Ltd.,
Meadow Road,
Worthing,
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e-mail: henley.designs@virgin.net

JUMP TO THE BEAT

Densen Audio Technologies have announced the arrival of their CD player in the Beat range. The B-400 is the result of apparently three years toil. Allegedly it's so eagerly awaited that some customers apparently coughed up for one several years ago. Well, patience is a virtue.

The B-400 features a custom built transport, made especially for Densen by Sony but the electronics such as the servo controls, scanning and motor controls are designed and made by Densen. There are two micro-computers housed in the chassis, one for digital transmission and the other for minor functions such as display and remote operation.

Also inside is a Pacific Microsonics chip, making the B-400 HDCD compatible and there are separate converters for each of the two channels. This potentially serious bit of kit is priced at £1280.



**Densen Audio Technologies,
Randersvej 28,
DK-6700 Esbjerg,
Denmark,
Tel: (+45) 75 18 12 14**

SHIP AHOY!

After a short lapse, the year 2000 sees the re-introduction of the British Federation of Audio Awards. These have previously been respected worldwide as a prestigious mark for audio products, so their relaunch can expect to be welcomed throughout the industry. They will take place on the River Thames on April 12th 2000 aboard the Silver Barracuda "cruising vessel". The nominations will be put forward by the industry and the final decision is down to you, the consumer.

Voting will be possible via forms available in trade journals and is to be completed by March 2000. One of the aims of the awards is for the BFA to "re-affirm its position as an impartial central identifying authority around which the industry can rally". We somehow think the Silver Barracuda won't be a ship of fools!

KEEP ON RUNNIN'

Sony have pulled out the stops to celebrate twenty years of the Walkman. The new MZ-R90 claims to be the world's smallest MiniDisc recorder. It weighs in at a mere 105g (without batteries) and has the dimensions to be slipped easily into wherever you find convenient and comfortable. Using both rechargeable and standard batteries it claims to supply those on the move with up to twenty-nine hours continuous playback. Features abound, including a Joint

Text function which allows text data on a CD to be transferred over to MD during recording - accomplished by



use of an optional cable. Also provided is a forty second ESP shock protection and a Name Bank function, where time is saved in titling recordings by using only three letters once the initial name is logged.

It's not just MD getting the birthday treatment either. A new CD Walkman is to be launched in conjunction with the MZ-R90. The D-EJ01 will be the first portable to feature Sony's new G-Protection Jog Proof Technology. Major research has apparently been done on the average jiggings of joggers to counteract the shocks caused by such movement. Both models are available from November.

**Sony UK Ltd.,
The Heights,
Brooklands,
Weybridge,
Surrey KT13 0XW
Tel: 01932 816000**

NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE

Here is a selection of the equipment we hope to bring you in just four weeks' time:

Bookshelf Bonanza

Is size everything? We group test mid-priced bookshelf/standmount loudspeakers to come up with the best of the bunch. We'll also highlight what stands they perform best with!

Music Maestro, please!

The Maestro is the new £1000 CD player from Audio Analogue. Will it better the musical talents of the old World Favourite, the Paganini?

Budget Bulbs?

Valves don't necessarily mean big money. We give a listen to the Mullard-based £700 EL34 valve integrated from the Affordable Valve Company.



BARE MINIMUM

The World editorial team opt for a touch of the simple life as they group test 3 CD player and amplifier combinations at three different price points.

There comes a time when the question is not "How much can I spend on my system?" but "What do I want?". We usually assume that a hi-fi assembled purely on economic considerations is likely to reflect compromises of one sort or the other. Let's look at it from the other side: assuming that money is not the immediate worry, how much stuff that you don't really want is likely to graft itself to your system by the time you've finished? Turntable, power supply, phono stage, tuner, outboard decoder, performance aerial, cassette, Minidisc, CD, DAC, pre-amplifier, left-hand monobloc, right-hand monobloc, pair of loudspeakers, sub-woofer (for list of associated cables see page 146). Admittedly, if the foregoing shopping list were not at least on the cards when someone decides to listen to some music, the whole hi-fi industry would soon find itself in a pretty bad way. On the other hand, there is a good case for scrapping most of it and ploughing the freed-up capital into fewer components of far higher quality.

Our group test this month puts this idea into practice. We have assumed that a good quality pair of loudspeakers is already on the scene and that the prospective punter is more interested in getting good music off-the-shelf than in being able to play anything from a wax cylinder to a MP3 internet offering. Like it or not, the most satisfactory route for such an one will be an integrated amplifier and a CD player. Two items - add the aforementioned loudspeakers and she shall have music wherever...

We decided on an integrated amplifier rather than the pre-power combination largely because the two items separately would tend to run away with too much of the budget, leading to a compromise with the CD player. We certainly don't take for granted that a system with all the bits from the same manufacturer is going to sound best, but this ought to be what any reputable manufacturer believes to be the case, otherwise why make the stuff?

We have gathered together a sextet of matching components with prices ranging

from Musical Fidelity's £1650, moving on to the £2500 bracket with Copland and scaling the dizzy heights of high-end with the £3500-plus Advantage offerings.

Although we exaggerated slightly with the over-comprehensive list of extras, there are those who have all of it - it tots up to fourteen items excluding cables and 'speakers. Fourteens into £2000 would allot around £140 per item which to be perfectly truthful is unlike to provided the utmost fidelity. Spend a thousand pounds or more on both an amplifier and CD player however and you have a very good chance of getting something worth listening to.

Called to the fray in this plethora of minimalism (eh?) are offerings from Copland with their CDA 266 and CSA 28, Musical Fidelity and their A3 amplifier and matching A-Ray, and a range new to us - Swedish manufacturer Advantage's CD 1 and I 200 integrated. With the sweet music which these items ought to conjure, there should be no bar to a distinctly enjoyable slab of listening.



In order to sneak Musical Fidelity's range into our lower price limits, we chose the A3 integrated (£850) and the matching A3 24-bit CD player (£800). It was tempting to squeeze the budget by employing the more powerful A300 but since the two amplifiers share everything except the last bit of the output stage, it seemed a better option to spend £500 less and sacrifice a few of those lovely cushioning watts for our first review of the A3. The line about the A300 and A3 sharing everything is not a figure of speech, it is literally true. The A3 was conceived, if not as a poor relation, at least as a less expensive version of the A300, in much the same way that the MF's X-P100 caters for those without the wherewithal for the NuVista.

So too the A3 CD machine. Inside that non-X-Series box lurks, to all intent and

warmed up and ready for work. The knob itself is styled with MF's somewhat nautical flavour and is a satisfyingly solid job - no fluffy grey bits here, shipmates, ahaa!

With all to play for and (for this test) none of those distractions like commenting on the phono stage and tuner inputs, first in the draw and into the drawer was the ever-green Christa Ludwig with RCA's Red Seal tribute re-issue. Let's face it, when Miss Ludwig sings she doesn't mess about. Exquisitely accompanied by the German Opera Orchestra of Berlin, the voice soared beautifully into the anguish which is Act III of Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*. This intensely dramatic music requires a degree of sheer dynamic competence which the Musical Fidelity combination seemed only too happy to deliver. German double-bass sections are not noted for their reticence,

piece of deceased tortoise and the transient is arresting, even if you'd rather it was the player who was arrested instead. Martin Wheatley's sparkling rendition of the tricky solo piece *The Buffoon* plinked its way to the loudspeaker in utterly convincing fashion. Playing and recording of this standard deserves a serious listen and serves to temper the yeee-haaar type-casting with which the instrument has sadly become saddled.

Staying with jazz for the nonce, the late Ben Webster was at it again Live in Stockholm. This is a truly knockout piece of recording which the A3 combination dealt with in the manner born. Every touch, from the old masters gloriously rich saxophone tone to the clink of glasses and the scrape of a match as one of the punters lit a cigarette was reproduced with full details. For a mercy, the double-bass

MUSICAL FIDELITY A3 CD PLAYER / A3 INTEGRATED

purposes, the well-known and much-respected X-Ray player. Minor layout differences have necessitated a change here and there but in all essentials, what you're getting is an X-Ray in a different box. Not that that's anything to worry about - the X-Ray garnered four well-earned globes when we looked at it in February last year.

The A3 integrated has a full range of inputs and a pre-amp out, and the controls are operated by relay from the external push buttons. A handy feature which sadly is going to become less common as tape recording dwindles is the source/tape monitor button. An LED lights up on the volume knob once the amplifier is

particularly in thunderous Wagnerian passages and we thoroughly enjoyed the stormy underpinning which this gave to the proceedings. This transfer from the old 1964 analogue masters has come out a little on the dry side, but the A3s contrived to bring out as much of the details as the transcription engineer had seen fit to leave on the record.

In the interests of quantifying this detail rather than just listening to the music (we can't have that!) we put on - don't quite know how to say this - we put on a banjo record. Although it hasn't as high an harmonic structure as you'd think, the much-berated banjo is all about attack. Pluck a taut steel string with a

player contented himself with the bass end of the instrument and showed the A3 amp to have no shortage of whump when it counts.

A difficult matter: is it relevant that we think that the A3 integrated is slightly less engaging than the much dearer A300? That's something which must lay with the taste and depth of pocket of the individual. On the other hand, the cheaper A3 truly sounds close enough to its cousin to make it seem an astonishing bargain by comparison. The A3 CD player is as good as the differently styled X-Ray, and that is saying a good deal. As an 'all you need' combination, the A3 team acquits itself A1.



This is easily the longest established pairing in the test. The CDA 266 CD player was launched in July 1997, whilst the CSA 28 integrated has been around in one guise or another for over five years.

Copland were one of the first European manufacturers to involve themselves in HDCD technology and within the CDA 266 lurks the Pacific Microsonics chip which lights a green LED on the stylistically minimalist front panel when activated. Also inside the weighty chassis are one Burr-Brown PCM 63P 20-bit converter per channel, a Sony mechanism with sprung isolation system and a Crystal Clock Oscillator.

The CSA integrated is Copland's flagship model with technology derived from the best selling CSA 14, but with the added advantage of full remote control. It

Chandos, proved an enlightening experience. The opening brass calls were beautifully balanced and controlled and the following string passages displayed a fine 'covered' sound of the kind that you expect with a high quality orchestra.

Dynamics were impressive, although climaxes did not always have the immediate slam that one associates with some other equipment. Instead, the Copland technology channels its power in a more subtle way. You always feel that there is sufficient but that it doesn't have to impress with brute force. Bass strings were uncoloured and naturally sinuous bringing focussed depth to the sound. Woodwind was particularly impressive and light, floating somewhere between the Magneplanars and the ceiling, creating an airy brilliance and a spatial sensation.

The same sense of restrained sophisti-

of the CD and amplifier were pleasantly emphasized. The bass drum thumped away as usual, but was powerfully integrated with the drive of the piece. The orchestra stretched into an arc behind the Magneplanar 'speakers to give as accurate a map of a symphony orchestra arrangement as could be wished in hi-fi.

Away from classical music, Soungarden's Superunknown was made very palatable through the Copland gear, without the grating and fatiguing onslaught that lesser equipment can deliver. Chris Cornell's pained vocals were given that extra bit of line and phrasing by the CDA 266, which also extracted every little bit of a tune from every guitar line, resulting in an undeniably impressive reading. Bass was firm, tight and sensibly balanced without any of the fatal blossoming-out, whilst the treble could only

COPLAND CDA 266 CD PLAYER & CSA 28 AMPLIFIER

retains the 14's two matched 6922 valves and the 60W per channel output level. Five rotary knobs adorn the front panel for power, volume, balance, tape monitor and input selection. Selecting 'RC' puts the amp into remote mode and the £60 RC 101 takes over all the duties - very flash it is too, with the volume pot on the chassis obeying the far-off call of the remote buttons!

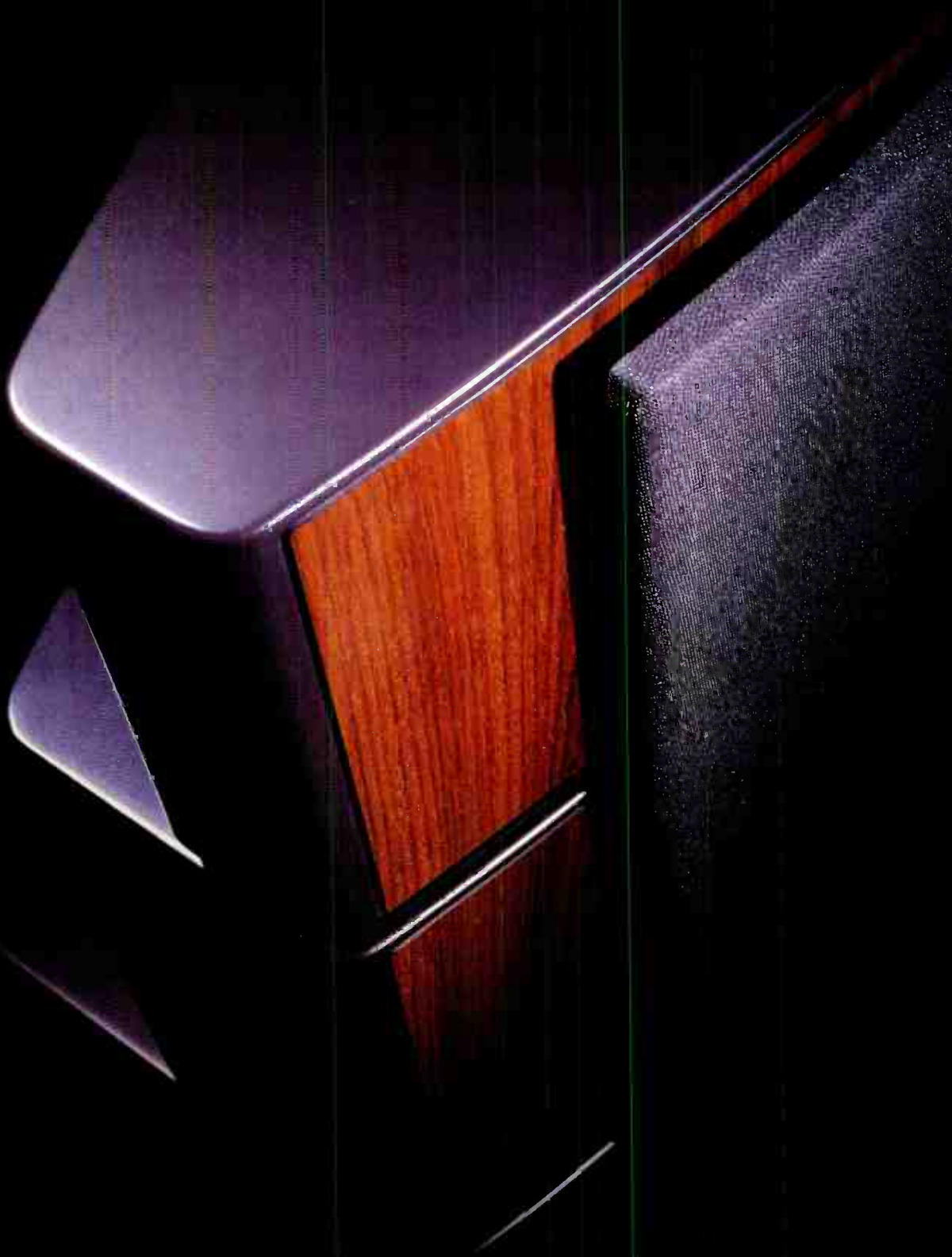
Right from the start the Copland pairing's quality is plainly evident. The combination gives an extremely smooth and very musical reading - especially with classical music. A spin with Mariss Jansons' reading of Tchaikovsky's fourth symphony, with the Oslo Philharmonic on

cation was evident with the minimal forces of Arvo Pärt's Stabat Mater. This is scored for three solo strings and three solo voices - a great test of detail and clarity. If a product is too bright then the recording can sound shrill. Conversely, with an over-smooth system some detail can be lost. With the Copland combo the gently hypnotic strains of Pärt's music sounded aptly meditative, involving and neutral-sounding. The voices were pure and focussed, with consonants produced accurately, not spat out. The Reference Recordings' Rite of Spring played by the Minnesota Orchestra under Eije Oue is one of our own 'reference' HDCD recordings. In this instance, the excellent staging

be described as sweet, smooth and shimmering - no fillings need be loosened here! Headbangers be warned though: this isn't an out-and-out rocking sound to make your nose bleed and your brain hurt.

It seems that the sonic hallmarks of the CDA 266 player are its wonderful neutrality and smoothness. When these are coupled with the powerful control and three-dimensionality that the CSA 28 integrated possesses, you have a recipe for musical success. A further slight edge is gained with facilities such as HDCD compatibility and the comprehensive remote functions. All-in-all a combination which not only sounds good but also has the added attraction of user-friendliness.

ultimate





Like their Swedish compatriots, Copland, the Advantage duo is very stylish. With a very thick, shiny-black fascia and side panels, both of these components are weighty and very well built. Being devoid of knobs of any kind gives them a Meridian-like look that looks very 'high-end' in appearance. This pair impresses mates no end.

Also like the Copland pair, we have a full remote control. This is perhaps the best build of any remote that has ever been held in my sweaty palm. A thick metal faceplate adorns the remote and at the top we have three LEDs for pre/CD and DAC (there is also an Advantage transport and DAC) which are automatically triggered by whatever function button you press to automatically select the correct source input. The lack of any con-

library and choose a CD by its cover. Mostly the music will match the cover - not always, but often. This is also true with some hi-fi. And it's true with this expensive Advantage pair. Sometimes what you pay isn't quite what you get, and sometimes it is. They deliver a very solid, secure and smooth sound; one that is controlled and powerful without smacking you 'round the chops. We started off with Anne Queffélllec gracing the piano keys with a selection of Scarlatti Sonatas on Erato records. Here was a delightfully smooth sound that flowed elegantly through a pair of Magneplanar SMGa 'speakers. The CD 1 highlighted the lightness of touch of Queffélllec, whilst the integrated had the knack of emphasising rhythm and attack with both control, refinement and an impressively deep

us!) you'll be quite happy.

With the classical collection itching to get back on the platter mat, Tchaikovsky took the honours. After the sweet-sounding brass opening calls of the Fourth symphony the Advantage's showed what they could do with orchestral strings. And mightily impressive it was too. Violins had a luminous yet nicely covered sheen to them and the double basses were free from bloom and possessed that sinuously tight sound that brings real life to the music, and a smile to the face. Next on the luxury menu was the sweet and airy woodwind. Piccolos and flutes fluttered butterfly-like, whilst clarinets were rich and woody. Indeed the whole of the orchestra was reproduced with precision and control married with simplicity and effortless ease.

ADVANTAGE CD1 CD PLAYER & I200 AMPLIFIER

trols on the amplifier, however, means that if you lose the remote you're pretty well stuffed - so hang onto it or fit it with a homing device!

The CD 1 features a modified Pioneer drive where the CD sits on a platter playing side up to be read from above. The conversion is achieved by use of Burr-Brown's 1702 20-bit DAC whilst the analogue section features class A single-ended circuitry with mosfet drivers. Digital outputs are present in the form of AES/EBU, coaxial and Toslink connections.

Now for the bread and butter - the sound. One way of hearing as much new music as possible is to join a record

sound stage.

Again rhythm and timing were the key words with Soungarden. The drum kit was placed nicely to the rear of the sound stage and kept strict timing to drive the music along and managed to retain musicality and phrasing. The title track of Superunknown bounced along powerfully with all of the instruments positioned exactly how the mix engineer intended; so imaging was spot on. We enjoyed the way that the Advantage combination handled this guitar-based, ballsy rock, although some fans of this type of stuff may want a bit more of an 'up front' sound to get their air guitars really flying. If you're a more refined type though (like

This Advantage pairing is very competent indeed and would quite happily find a place in any Hi-Fi World home (after a few months of saving!). They have the high-end classification of smoothness mixed with detail that separates the wheat from the chaff. If you're after a hi-fi to make you climb the walls with nervous energy, however, these may not be for you. Yes, there's plenty of power there but it's channelled into creating a sound that's not just volume, but rhythmic control and dynamics. These are subtle, sophisticated and refined performers that never bore the listener. At just the right side of £4000 these are not cheap, but then this kind of quality rarely is.

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We are by way of eschewing the 'gladiatorial' group tests at the moment, and faced with the three entries this month, our reasons for so doing seem all the more clear: with each of the systems we have reviewed, merits so far outweighed demerits that it came as a shock when we compared notes to find that all three sounded so different, not totally surprising considering the price differences.

As always, it greatly depends on the abilities and tone-colour of the associated loudspeakers. Even choice of cables could either make the best of a unit under test or else simply just take the edge off.

To begin with the least familiar of the

it's possible to have too much of. With this understood, the pair gave a creamily sumptuous account of themselves which demanded to be taken very seriously. They also have the distinct advantage (pun intended) of balanced XLR interconnection, which lifts their clarity even further.

By way of contrast, Musical Fidelity's A-Series coupling seemed all things bright and cheery-ful. Tried out back-to-back with the Advantages, the initial impression was of a touch of the chromium plate. This shows how misleading quick-fire testing can be: it would be all too easy to categorise our entrants this month under the smooth-smoother-smoothest bracket, with-

the side of A System For Life!

Copland's coupling uses valves; not the final desideratum - but a bit of an arm-twist to the World Towers brigade! Coming somewhere between the Advantages and the Musical Fidelities as far as smoothness/brightness is concerned, the Coplands were not found wanting in any attribute which an audiophile could reasonably want: dynamic, yet restrained; clear, yet smooth; punchy, yet controlled. Couple these virtues with the undoubted benefit of HDCD and the sum total becomes very enticing indeed.

Three firsts among three equals sounds like a bit of a cop-out, but not so. None of the systems we reviewed this month was

CONCLUSION

offerings; Advantage's outfit won high praise on its esoteric looks as well as performance. Advantage have designed a super-smooth 'hands-off' outfit which seems of its own will to push off the treacle finger-marks which can be the sorry lot of plainer domestic set-ups. As regards sound, smoothness was the key, with no sign of any tinplate nastiness despite some provocation. These two are by no means cheap, and some would even find the sound a little too rolled-off.

We'd caution anyone against using the Advantage with conspicuously warm loudspeakers or indeed even cables - smoothness is one of those things which

out troubling to ascertain whether smoothness is the be-all of high fidelity. For some people it is, in which case the A3s' sparkling sound may be too much. The trouble is that this self-same sparkle comes principally from the famous MF clarity, which is not an attribute anyone with ears would willingly sacrifice.

Assured dynamic control and unimpeachable value for money combine to give the Musical Fidelities a same-but-different high recommendation. For a touch of luxury, another £500 would buy the A300 amplifier which, for all its similarity to the A3, has just that touch of 'limitlessness' which would tip the scale down on

anything but excellent by its own terms of reference and each is right up there with the best at the price. No two listeners are likely to have the same aural taste, so whether its the smoothness of the Advantage, the super-detail of the Musical Fidelity or the square-meal middle ground of the Copland, any one of these systems will keep a musical soul well nourished.

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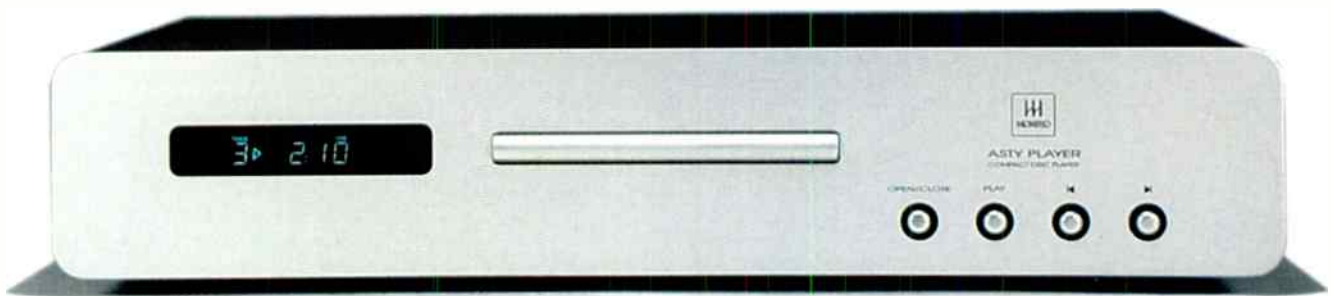
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VIRTUAL VIRTUOSO

Jon Marks mines the music in his CD collection with some help from Monrio's Asty CD player.



Seeing that Italians have music in their very blood, it's hardly surprising that they have a bit of a knack for making entertaining hi-fi, but their electronic prowess is almost a cliché now. After the success stories of Audio Analogue and Unison Research, Monrio are out to prove they know a thing or two when it comes to CD replay with the £695 Asty CD player.

The Asty joins a growing band of machines centred around a 24-bit DAC chip, in this instance Crystal's CS4390. But where many manufacturers at this sort of price will populate PCBs with components of moderate quality, Monrio have opted for tasty parts such as Burr-Brown output op amps, polystyrene and polyester capacitors (along with a couple of Os-Cons), and a sprinkling of Holco resistors. There are also two mains transformers, one for digital and one for analogue.

From the above you can guess that the Asty looks promising on paper. In real life, it's even better. To hear what this player is truly capable of, a burn-in period of around 80 hours is mandatory. Try it fresh out of the box and you'll discover a nicely-balanced but rather workman-like presentation that unravels digits in a dispassionate way. Once its innards have settled down, though, the Monrio's bass firms up and gains drive, the sound staging opens right out and music begins to flow.

Along with these tempting traits, the Asty has a winning way with that most testing of recorded sounds, female vocals. Where a lot of equipment is as subtle as sand-blasting, this Italian never adds grit, sibilance or thinness. Bonnie Raitt, Karen Matheson and Beth Orton all confirmed as much. But this smoothness comes with no coast either to clarity or impact, the, erm, 'loud' vocals on Reef's *Glow* and Soundgarden's *A-Sides* losing none of their power.

Tonality may be important, but the top target for any piece of hi-fi is enjoyability. In the past, some Italian kit has expressed a preference for a diet of Classical as opposed to Rock or Dance, but the Asty comes very close indeed to being happy with both. It might polish off the occasional rough edge from Heavy Metal numbers, but it remains more fun to listen to than any of the alternatives at the same price. And when you do feed it acoustic recordings (say Classical or Blues), it gets to the emotional heart of the music with a vengeance.

The Monrio leaves a lasting impression when it comes to detail and sound staging too. For many, CD's Achilles' Heel is in the latter of these two areas. A lot of listeners used to a good turntable find CD produces acoustics lacking in front-to-back depth, where image precision is compromised as well. Not so here; Southern States Sounds (an R 'n' B compilation) emerged through the Jamo Concert

8s in an unusually 3-D manner. And again, with tracks like Johnny Adams' *Body And Fender Man*, and Irma Thomas' *Baby I Love You*, there was more get-up-and-go than you could shake a very large stick at.

It may sound strange, but the best thing about the Asty is that it's an eminently forgettable player. By this I mean that you switch it on, put in a disc, press play and simply forget that you're listening to a box full of digital electronics. It possesses a freedom from the typical CD shortfalls, which lifts it above more mundane machines. Factor in attractive looks, solid construction and a remote control, and the Asty looks like pure audio value for money.

Monrio Asty CD £695

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An excellent all-rounder at the price, pure and simple.

Measured Performance see page 119

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dAD'S MY BOY!

Juvenile lead Richard White get's all filial with Cyrus's new dAD3 Q24 CD player.



Perhaps spreading their wings a bit after recent Verity/NXT group reshuffles, Cyrus are apparently determined to establish their independence from their not-loudspeaker-Mission ancestry. As a consequence, the dAD3 Q24 player's specification has every indication of being a piece of 'statement' engineering. Advertized key features include no less than nine regulated internal power supplies, post-DAC filtering and a regenerated master clock.

As regards the outlines of the well-known 'penny plain, tuppence plain' case, nothing much has changed from previous models, which is to say that Cyrus offerings remain a laudably compact option for the space conscious. The biggest outward clue lies in the Q24 badge affixed to the disc drawer. As hardened observers are doubtless thinking, '24' most likely indicates the use of a 24-bit DAC. 'Q24' is Cyrus's own answer to the DAC puzzle and they have apparently put a lot of work into optimizing the system.

First off the blocks was the Schindlof Quartet with the Dvorak American Quartet. Handy material this, because Dvorak's unshakable orchestrating competence ensures that all four instruments give of their best as regards range and that subtle thing - voicing. As the well-known 'American' (actually Bohemian) folk melodies wound their ways out of the loudspeakers, my first impression was that Cyrus's designers could pat themselves on the back for a very smooth and natural presentation. Force-fed with the exhaustively-discussed limitations of standard CD fare, it's not every 24-bit player that produces a good result - I'm not entirely

sure why this is: it would seem logical, Captain, that players which are effectively over-specified should sweep the floor but 'tain't necessarily so.

Diana Krall's Love Scenes record gave evidence of a distinctly appealing liveliness and sparkle. Miss Krall's close-miked huskiness didn't lose a sibilant syllable on its way through, and the dAD 3 steered well clear of the occasional glassy, or even stainless sheen which I've known some other players inflict on her. The quartet's excellent double bass player was not slamming away in vain either: his nimble-fingered efforts demonstrated real punch and indeed humour. Adding to this the Cyrus's smooth reproduction of sounds which are supposed to be smooth and the sum is a performance of considerable charm.

Having dealt with le CD ordinaire, I felt confident in dAD 3's powers of persuasion with a wide range of material. Even a Haydn string quartet record of mine which has unaccountably lost some of its track inside the outer plastic covering (how that could've occurred is a question I'm still boggling over!) failed to trip up the tracking - if 'surefooted' is a permissible adjective for a laser, then that's what it was.

Now for the piece of resistance - 24-bit records - and what better way to start flapping the super-critical ears than with A Sound Impression. This 24/96 disc is a sampler of records in the van den Hul catty; although for my taste, the material falls rather into the middle-of-the-road category, the excellence of both recording and 'pressing' is beyond dispute. Madeleine Bell's interesting dinner-jazz

interpretation of She's Leavin' Home gave the dAD the opportunity to display a clarity and sheer style which makes 16-bit something of a trial to return to. The percussionist's dead-artistic cymbal work was also a case in point - I felt I could hazard a good guess even as to which way he was brushing the brass, a wonderful result for plain two channel stereo. Even the subtle effect of Miss Bell's natural sway towards and away from the microphone could be pin-pointed to a nicety. A drop more clarity and I could have told you the make of her wristwatch, not to mention which lottery numbers she'd chosen that week.

24-bit players in this price range are competitive sorts. Bearing in mind what promises to be the Cyrus company's new slightly higher-end slant, they deserve congratulations on a player which fights its corner so convincingly.

Cyrus dAD3 Q24 £900

Cyrus Audio.
Huntingdon
PE18 6ED

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WORLD VERDICT



A new smoothie, the dAD3 Q24 is a well-pointed spear in Cyrus's march to the higher end.

Measured Performance see page 119



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King of the Castles

**Noel Keywood
encounters Castles
new Inversion 50
floorstanders**

Castle's Inversion 50 reviewed here is a large, floor standing two-way loudspeaker using a carbon fibre coned bass/midrange driver. Cone materials have their own characteristic sound that contributes strongly toward the sonic signature of a loudspeaker. Carbon fibre offers one of the most amenable sounds I know and the Inversion 50 exploits it well. It's one easy sounding loudspeaker.

The Inversion 50 replaces the Avon, which I reviewed in December 1996. In some areas it's quite a different animal though. Castle have replaced the conventional Avon cabinet with a new shape possessing gently tapered sides, narrowing toward the plinth. It's an eye catching design that will stand out in the showroom, distinctive enough to find favour with potential buyers if the shape appeals to their tastes.

Having seen innumerable shapes and styles over the years I am agnostic about departures from the standard box. In the past Castle have produced some beautifully veneered cabinets that I have found appealing so I'm surprised they have felt a need to produce an alternative.

They have maintained visual balance by using a large plinth, which gives the cabinet stability. It also serves to distance a downward-firing reflex port from the floor and add an element of resistive loading. The idea here is to support bass output by relying on floor reinforcement and also damp port resonance to keep deep bass sounding firm. A set of spikes are supplied so the Inversions can be spiked into a wooden floor to improve bass definition and stereo imaging. Connection is through a bi-wiring panel with gold plated terminals capable of accepting 4mm plugs once protective bungs have been removed.

Looking back at our measurements and comments on the Avon the Inversion strikes me as quite different in character. Although it has a similarly flat frequency response there is a small midrange dip that softens the sound a bit. The crisp vocals and shiny guitar chords of Exit Music, from Radiohead's OK Computer album, reflected this in the ease and warmth with which they were conveyed. Images were solid and well defined, vocals hanging in space convincingly between the cabinets, but there wasn't quite the hard edged precision of the Avon, nor its dramatic forward projection. Guitar chords drifted past easily, unchallenging to the ear. Always amenable, their smooth treble and warm midrange tamed even the most edgy of recordings.

From a modestly sized cabinet the Castle's produced firm, deep bass. Playing albums with measurable subsonics, like The Pink Floyd's 'Dark Side of the Moon' and Angelique Kidjo's 'Fifa', I was left in no doubt that the Inversions go low without losing control. The cabinets add a little additional 'thrum' when pushed hard like this but that's not uncommon. This apart the speakers made the room shake whilst keeping firm control themselves - an impressive performance. Castle's bass loading system works well in the home and will undoubtedly impress.

Being able to produce low bass and subsonic information helps a loudspeaker convey a sense of space in a performance, especially when the recording is live and contains ambience cues. There was plenty of air and space around the Chicago Symphony Orchestra performing Rimsky Korsakov's Scheherazade, as well as a credible front-to-back perspective with rasping horns to the fore sounding fulsome and real, violins finely layered to



one side and behind, woodwind more distant.

I've always enjoyed Castle's loudspeakers. From cabinet finish through to sound quality they hit a high standard. Manufacturers have an ideal that gives their products a recognisable signature. Castle combine accuracy with ease of listening, deftly avoiding the more irritating problems that sometimes arise in loudspeakers. The Inversion 50s offer a lucid yet easy going sound that I found both sweet natured and relaxing

Castle Inversion 50 £875

**Castle Acoustics Ltd,
Shortbank Road,
Skipton, BD23 2TT**

Tel: 01756 795333

WORLD VERDICT



A welcome addition to the Inversion range. Sweet and lucid performers with a solid, deep bass.

Measured Performance see page 119



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ASTAR is Born . . .



GT Audio raise the resolution stakes with their new 24-bit, 96kHz Star-Dac.

When it comes to CD replay this month, 'The Italians are coming!' is a pretty apt description. Not content with scoring high marks in the Monrio Asty one-box player, the leg-shaped land is aiming to chalk up another victory in the DAC section with the £325 Star-Dac from GT Audio. Designed in Italy by Marco Manunta who just happens to be Audio Analogue's Mr Digital, this 24/96 converter certainly boasts the right pedigree. Inside the case is the same sort of attention to detail which made AA's Paganini an outstanding player. Power is drawn from a pair of toroidal transformers fed by an RF-filtered IEC mains input. Multiple supplies and no less than 10 regulators ensure minimal interaction between the digital section (where Burr-Brown's PCM1716 DACs are located) and the analogue (with its discrete output stage).

Hooking up the Star-Dac to a range of transports was simplicity itself. RCA to RCA did the job with the Kenwood DP-X9010, Asty and Pioneer DV-505 as signal providers. In addition, TOSLink and AES/EBU are catered for on the rear panel. Even with only 30 hours' warm-up under its belt, the Star-Dac impressed with the Monrio Asty as its first partner. In spite of the latter being a superb one-box machine, adding its conversion compatriot brought significant improvements in all areas.

With albums like Unkle's Psyence

Fiction and Mint Royale's On The Ropes, this DAC lifted a veil off the music to reveal extra speed, detail and clarity, all of which meant a more adrenal presentation with these dance discs. On more subtle fare too, the Star-Dac's calibre shone through (no pun intended!). Unless you're already a firm fan, classical music on CD can be an acquired taste. With a converter that's capable of rendering tonal colour and dynamic contrast realistically - ie, one that doesn't squash the vitality and scale out of a work - the situation is very different.

Flowing through these Italian electronics, Elgar's violin concerto (Handley/LPO) had a spaciousness, grandeur and verve that kept me listening to this reviewing staple far longer than normal. A switch to the DP-X9010 gave the Star-Dac more of an opportunity to show off its talents. Aided by the Kenwood's more solid, focussed character, it was now producing very convincing sound staging and imaging on the R 'n' B compilation Southern States Sounds.

The tell-tale sign of quality here was the raised listening level on numbers like Dr John's 'Mac's Boogie'. Hi-fi with a rough edge and poor dynamics will invariably have people reaching to turn the volume down. With truly competent equipment, it works the other way.

As always with a 24/96-capable component, shifting to the higher resolution software (with discs such as Red Rodney's

1957) produced major gains in clarity, dynamics and, well, everything. Fronted by a Pioneer DV-505 as a transport, the Star-Dac confirmed the strengths it had shown with standard CD, but now the music had much greater impact, speed, tonal breadth and realism.

However convincing this converter may be with 24/96, the relative scarcity of such recordings and the likelihood of a battle between SACD and DVD-A mean that it makes more sense to consider the Star-Dac alongside 44.1/16-only devices. Either way, it heads the pack at the price and offers a persuasive argument in favour of the DAC/transport route to digital replay.

GT Audio Star-Dac £350

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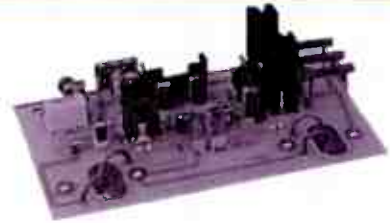
This DAC's extremely natural, fluid character gels with any type of music.

Measured Performance see page 119

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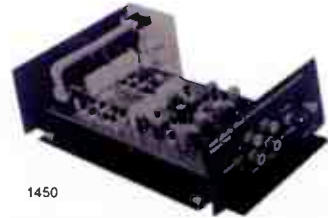
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METAL

ETTLE



Loudspeakers that appeal to the ears and the eyes? Too much to ask for? Jon Marks suggests ALR/Jordan's new Entry Stand mounters.

Unfortunately for aesthetes, most hi-fi is a triumph of sound over style, as a myriad tedious black boxes testify. Thankfully, every once in a while, along comes something that looks so tasty it has you reflex-reaching for your wallet. These occasional gems most often arrive in small, portable packages like MiniDisc recorders that ooze so much gadget 'must-have' appeal that there's no resisting their charms. One other form they take is that of loudspeakers, where tiny and technological meet. Blue Room's Minipods are one example, but ALR/Jordan's Entry S can be had for only £180.

These gorgeous miniatures match a soft-dome tweeter to a mini metal cone that you'd imagine would output midrange more than bass. But then the Entries have evidently been designed for appearance's sake as much as sound quality - their Beech veneer cabinets, black baffles and blue grilles add up to a very petite and seductive piece of audio engineering. The only question was, would they be as rewarding sonically as they were visually?

Having hooked up the Entry S twins to a modified Cyrus 1 via DNM Reson loudspeaker cable, the swift answer was yes. If you're after sound staging and imaging above all else, you'll find these tiny two-ways excel in both areas. In fact, since their front baffle is so very small, they

actually out-performed Jamo's Concert 8s in these respects, and that's no mean feat for a £1000 challenger, let alone one at a mere £170.

The bonuses above are normally counterbalanced by the penalty of seriously restricted bass, but somehow ALR and Jordan have managed to coax a decent bottom-end out of this design. Even positioned a couple of feet away from side and rear walls, the Entries avoided sounding anaemic. In an ideal world they would be partnered by a subwoofer, but a spin through the mellow House of Presence's superb All Systems Gone album never had me yearning for tone controls on the Cyrus.

The list of these loudspeakers' pros also includes crisp, clean dynamics (as well as the musicality which often comes with them) and a knack for wheedling subtle detail out of a recording. Bonnie Raitt's Luck Of The Draw had the drive and expression required to really bring this CD to life, and the slower, bass-heavy numbers emerged with their rhythms intact thanks to the lack of smearing at low frequencies.

Of course, these transducers aren't perfect, and Bonnie Raitt's vocals brought to the fore a slightly cool, dry tonal character that took some of the warmth out of the midrange and treble. At least the ALR/Jordans were free of the coarseness that all too frequently comes with lesser

metal-cone units. But for best results, matching amplification and sources should err towards the warm and smooth rather than the cold and clinical.

Bearing in mind their size and price, the Entry S stand mounters are impressive. They might not have the weight and scale of, say, the Tannoy Mercury m2s, or for that matter their broader tonal palette, but their transparency, speed and sound staging make up for it in spades. They were actually more reminiscent of ELAC's 310i Jets at £800 than your average budget box, and they look good too. In other words, they deserve to be on your Xmas list.

ALR/Jordan Entry S £180

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Measured Performance see page 119

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AIR TO THE THRONE

Simon Pope gets a taste of the future with Sony's SCD-1 SACD/CD player. And very tasty it is too!

After well over a year of speculation and gossip, and a multitude of demos and press releases, it's here. No, not the millennium, but perhaps the format that will define the audio standard for the early part of it. Ever since the inception of CD there have been complaints of its sound quality. Those who warm their houses in winter with a modest 100lb platter turned by a 200lb power supply, accompanied by a modest selection of DA100s and a whole throng of 300Bs, were largely devastated after their first listen of digital sound. Only when they realised that the music industry really meant it, and many titles were only to be released on CD and cassette only (classical especially) did they swallow their pride and invest in a CD player - the music industry actually has more influence on your audiophile home than you realise!

Various other digital formats then followed with varying degrees of lack-of-success. These were mostly developed for their ease of use and function rather than predominantly their sound quality, with perhaps MiniDisc being the most successful - but it's taken years. They were not so much formats for simply enjoying music, but formats that determined where and how you

enjoyed the music. The 44.1 kHz standard of CD was never surpassed. The average home system was, and still is, based solely around the CD, and CD quality sound.

Let's not be too harsh on CD. It is true that early technology was a bit ropy but developments in the digital domain resulted in 24-bit players and the introduction of HDCD hardware and software which helped CD in the quality stakes. But something was still missing.

Practically since the beginning of audio reproduction, the goal has been to recreate a performance, period. In most people's opinion this has never really happened. No matter how good the live recording, not one piece of audio hardware or software that I have heard - be it rock, pop, classical, folk, skiffle or country, be it played on a £150,000 set up or £15 Dansette - has made me think "this the real thing". It's been close, mind, but less frequently than you'd wish. Over the past few days, with the SCD-1 in my front room, it's crept just a little closer.

Like most major developments in technology, SACD has taken a while to get started. Any new audio format needs careful consideration, not all of it technological. For example,

the music business has to be persuaded that it's viable in order to persuade (force) the consumer to consider that it's viable. I'm sure there are some consumers who would buy regardless but the majority of the world's consumers isn't going to buy music reproduction systems just to look at.

Having just said this, the Sony is quite an attractive eye-fu. This beauty is apparently selling like hot cakes in Japan since it hit the shops in May last year. If you like your hi-fi seriously industrial and weighty - how does 30kg grab you? - you may fancy one of these brutes. It has one of those impressive loading mechanisms which manages to induce a little smile the first few times you open it. The 'lid' opens with a slight lift followed by a slow and deliberate movement to the right, stopping to reveal the pit into which your CD/SACD is placed to be stabilized by a heavy gold puck.

It certainly puts the sense of occasion back into playing music, for those who have been missing it since the demise of all things vinyl (whenever that's going to be!). A slow return for the lid is followed by a fairly long process (no procedure is particularly fast with the SCD-1, "something this good should never be rushed" appears to be the Sony philosophy!) in which the machine reads the disc information. After about ten seconds or so the display will show either CD or 'Super Audio CD' and you're off.

HI-TECH

Although SACD is eventually to encompass multichannel technology (the discs are in production as I write) the SCD-1 snaffles the audio title as the world's first 2-channel SACD player. Because of this there are a couple of internal gadgets that we haven't had previous close contact with. These are the Direct Stream Digital Decoder and the Accurate Complementary Pulse Density Modulation system (ACP system in lay terms).

First, the decoder. The decoder is the chip that reads the disc information and forms it into 1-bit DSD data. The disc signals are read by the optical pickup and are then "amplified" by an RF processor on the circuit board which in turn extracts the clock signal and deals with the synchronization and error correction. Analysis of the information is also dealt with by the decoder. It first reads the



copyright protection watermark which is found on an SACD disc, decodes the incoming data and then rearranges the outgoing data into a continuous 1-bit stream of audio with a little help from the master clock.

The ACP system is fundamentally more complicated but basically attempts to eliminate the switching distortion and increase the precision of the amplitude and time axes. Along with Sony's S-TACT pulse generator (already found in their CD players), a twin pickup mechanism, the 24-bit VC24 filter for PCM playback quality of CD, the sum total should build a recipe for sweet music indeed. There are also four filter settings for the customizing of both formats.

GOOD VIBRATIONS

Both Sony and Philips, the main backers of SACD technology, acknowledge that SACD is what's called a migratory format. They realise that to tempt the public into investing in SACD technology they have to make both the early hardware and software compatible with both SACD discs and existing CD discs. I therefore decided to check out the player with bog-

standard CD fare (if your idea of 'bog-standard' is Everything But The Girl and Tchaikovsky, that is!).

The first thing you notice is the inherent smoothness of the player. It has an unmistakable high end sound that extracts all of the detail and intricacies from the music whilst maintaining a highly sophisticated and effortless sound - it makes hard work sound easy. Tracey Thorn's

vocals on the title track of the album

Tempremental sounded fluid and laid-back whilst still remaining integral with the instrumental backing. The dead thumps of the percussion were fast and controlled.

The same sense of sophistication and musicality was evident in Tchaikovsky's fourth symphony. This Chandos recording harks back to ye olden days of CD, but is still well-recorded and pre-

serves a simply riveting performance, which covers up the sonic cracks in the paintwork. The smoothness and sheen of the Oslo Philharmonic strings was beautifully rich and luminous, a sound that's truly rare in CD players. This was coupled with a natural depth of sound that is retained with all of the subtle filter settings. If you like the classic sound of a flat frequency response, then you will appreciate the sound of the Sony.

AIR TODAY, GONE TOMORROW

"The Birth of Emotion" reads the brochure for the SCD-1. A hefty claim indeed. Nevertheless, there is something about the sound of this format that has been missing from digital sound hitherto. SACD seems to capture the air and space in a recording to create an ambience which was formerly only found in high-end vinyl. The very high (up to 100kHz) frequencies that SACD can theoretically transmit (although the SCD-1 only reads up to 20kHz) is phenomenal. What results is not so much a sound as a feeling - and this with hi-fi equipment not really designed to get the best from the format (Sony's forthcoming amplifiers and speakers incorporating their "super tweeter" are soon to follow).

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October '99

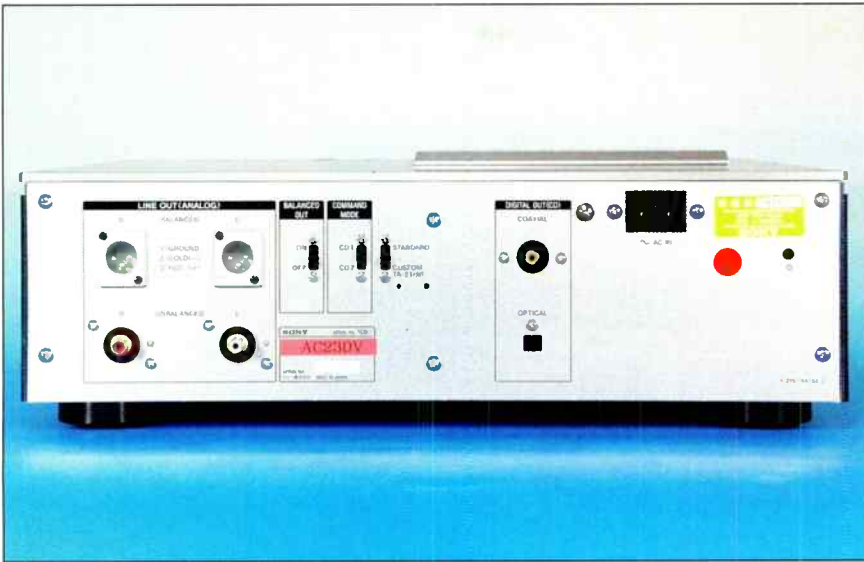
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(sound quality)

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A good example of this is a recording of two choral gems (Ubi Caritas by Duruflé and Stanford's Beati Quorum Via) sung by the Paul Hadley Chorus on a supplied sampler disc. The wonderful rich acoustic of the recording venue is transferred right into the listening environment - you feel as if you are right there. The echoed shuffling of feet and scores is clear and when it comes to the music the feeling is that of a very live performance with all its foibles.

This isn't the most accomplished of

chamber choirs and the odd flat note or two from the tenor section brings on a wince. Believe me, I don't usually do this with recordings. It feels like you're sitting in the front row. Consonants spit out and hit you and you can almost feel (or smell) the breath of the third bass from the right. Amazing stuff, and very, very revealing!

SACDs are available in two types of disc. One is the double layer which contains one layer of CD which can be played in CD machines, and the single layer DSD-only disc for SACD players.

The classic Miles Davis album *Kind Of Blue* is available on a single layer disc and it was duly put to the test up against the CD with a Roksan Caspian player and the vinyl album with a Linn turntable. The difference between the three was a revelation. The vinyl did its best to compete with the SACD in the ambience stakes but after listening to these two, ordinary CD sounded as if a wet blanket had been hung over my 'speakers - it was quite a shock. What I regarded as a good CD transcription sounded more like a musical box in the bathroom!

This is by some margin the most exciting bit of kit I've encountered for a long time. It is expensive, but compared with similarly-priced CD players it's way ahead in quality. As for SACD as a viable format it could easily become CD's successor. Admittedly the first discs were a little esoteric in the dreaded "audiophile" vein, but for staunch classical fans Philips Classics are even now working on an SACD-quality catalogue of titles, some of which should be available as we go to press. This is one bit of equipment that I shall definitely miss when it goes back to Sony, but I'm already weighing up my piggy bank!

SACD TECHNOLOGY

Super Audio Compact Disc incorporates five new "enabling" technologies. Of these the most significant is a new 1-bit coding scheme called Direct Stream Digital, a form of Pulse Density Modulation. Noise shaping has been added to improve signal-to-noise ratio. It replaces Pulse Code Modulation (PCM) used by conventional CD. PCM was developed in the 1970s, and on CD has a 44.1kHz sampling rate. SACD runs 64 times faster than CD at close to 2.8MHz. It's bandwidth is D.C.-100kHz, five times that of CD.

Sony and Philips claim this is wide enough to fully accommodate the output of a high quality studio tape machine that might reach 50kHz or so. There has long been speculation that the 20kHz limit of conventional CD, which demands steep filters at 21kHz in the recording and replay equipment, constrained CD sound quality. Sony and Philips also state that removing down-

sampling and oversampling filters in the record and replay chain improves sound quality.

The Direct Stream Digital system of SACD offers 120dB of dynamic range across the audio band, but not outside it because noise shaping increases noise above 20kHz. This makes it equivalent to a 20-bit PCM system. That's less than the 144dB offered by a 24-bit coding scheme but a useful step up from the 96dB of today's CD.

Improvements have been made to the CD optical system to get the extra capacity needed. Track pitch has been reduced from 1.6µm to 0.74µm, increasing track length and the amount of data that can be stored. The pits and lands (space in between) have been shortened from 0.83µm to 0.4µm (minimum), which increases information density by 50%, and a lossless coding scheme has been used to gain another 50%. Altogether this has yielded six times more storage capacity - a massive 4.7GB in all.

It is the development of shorter wavelength lasers, tighter manufacturing tolerances and better transport control electronics that has allowed a 4.7GB disc to be developed. However, a disc like this has no backward compatibility with old CD players.

To overcome this difficulty SACD has a clever trick up its sleeve: it has two layers, one above the other. The upper layer is a normal CD carrying 650MB of information that can be read by any CD player. Below it is a new high density layer that's transparent to old CD players but reflective to the new shorter wavelength laser of an SACD player. SACD reads the lower high density layer.

WORLD VERDICT



Fab build, fab looks. Sets a new standard for sound quality. What else do you need?

Measured Performance see page 119



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NAK for the future



The DR8 is the latest resurrection from the new owners of the Nakamichi title. Noel Keywood tries it out . . .

The return of Nakamichi. It's a bit like the return of Bugatti.

Nakamichis were far and away the slickest, most complex and ingenious cassette decks ever made but they disappeared from the UK market some years ago. The DR-8 tested here is a new two-head model, which means it is the least expensive of the current range.

Two-head Naks never displayed the awesome abilities of the three-head 'professional' machines, but since the later started at £500 and went up past £1000 they were a little more affordable, if not cheap. The words 'cheap' and 'Nakamichi' don't belong together. A Nakamichi is for someone who wants the absolute best from their cassette collection and is willing to pay for it. The DR-8 can justify its existence in my view.

It's a lovely machine to use, just like the best Nakamichis of the past. The transport mechanism is silky smooth, producing muted whirs and clunks as it shuttles forwards or backwards, or snaps into Play. The large transport control buttons fall to hand easily to hand and the long, orange record level display is attractive and easy to read.

The DR-8 even has a light behind the cassette window so the amount of tape on the hubs can be gauged, a distinctive feature of all Nakamichis. Another distinctive but less welcome feature retained on the DR-8 is manual tape type selection. Put in a ferric tape and you have to press a button labelled Type I to select bias and equalisation. Chromes are Type II and metals Type IV. Forget to press one of the three buttons and you end up with a ruined recording. There are no benefits to manual selection when bias and e.q. are

linked, so I was disappointed to see its presence on the DR-8.

Nakamichi fit the DR-8 with Dolby B and C, but not Dolby S. Because the head cannot cope with high record levels Dolby S would have been useful, but doubtless it would also have raised the price. Tapes in collections are likely to be recorded using B or C however, since Dolby S is relatively recent. Used as a replay machine the DR-8 will not be handicapped.

To accurately match in blank tapes Nakamichi fit variable bias, but tests showed it worked only with ferrics and chromes, having little affect upon metals. Although not an uncommon situation it was always Nakamichi who, in the past, ensured variable bias on their decks could tune in even exotic metal formulations. Not so the DR-8, and the handbook doesn't even offer the usual terse Japanese admission, like "bias effect is slight with metal tape".

Measurement showed the DR-8 had a classic Nakamichi treble lift in its replay response, meaning it will do a great job with prerecorded tapes - and it did. Golden oldies from the eighties like James Brown's 'How do you stop' from the album Gravity sounded neat, stable and tidy. Better recordings, like Frankie Goes to Hollywood's 'Two Tribes' showed the DR-8 has real bass weight and can tease out and degree of clarity and detailing beyond the abilities of the average cassette deck, setting up a great wall of sound. Traditionally, playing prerecorded tapes well was always a great strength of Nakamichi and the DR-8 lacked nothing in this area; I had a great time running through my collection and couldn't tault

this model.

Recording quality was a little less impressive, but then we are now talking about a two-head cassette deck trying to cut it in a digital world, surrounded by MiniDisc and CD-R. With TDK MA I heard some softening of transients and a little fluffiness in the treble. Reducing bias to its minimum helped sharpen things up a little. Clarity was good, as it usually is with metals, and hiss low with Dolby B engaged.

Chrome tapes could be tuned in effectively but treble was often a little soft. Quality ferrics like TDK AD and AR could be teased into delivering fine results by tweaking bias, using Dolby B and keeping record level to around 0dB and no more. The DR-8's head could not get high levels onto tape. I suspect the three-head DR-10 would manage better in this respect.

Nakamichi have maintained their focus with the DR-8. It delivers fine results in every area, something that requires a lot of delicate balances to be wrought, and it was great to use. For anyone keen to get the best from their old tapes, or for those who prefer the simplicity of recording to cassette I'd recommend the new DR-8.

Nakamichi DR8 £550
BBG Distribution
Tel: 0181 863 9117

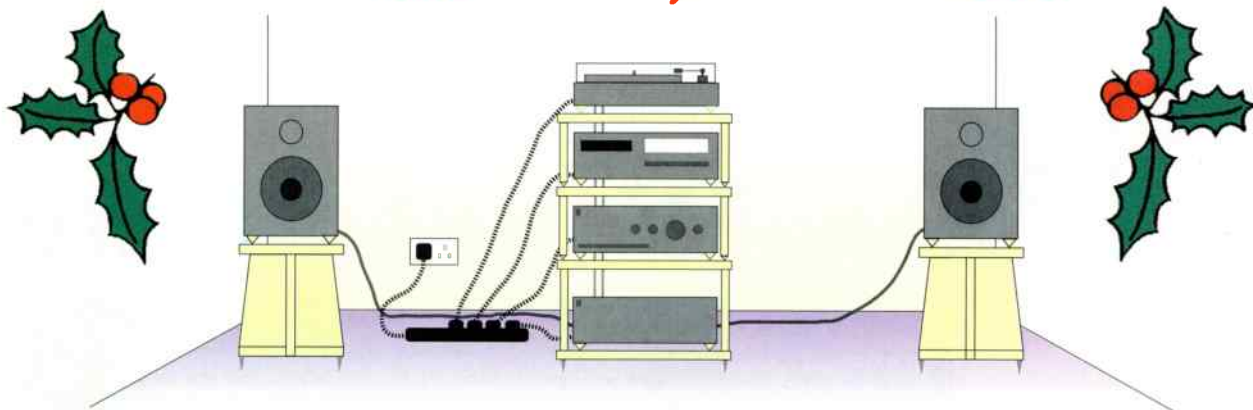
WORLD VERDICT



A good product that is worthy of the Nakamichi title. It could be the cassette's last stand!

Measured Performance see page 119

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Simon Pope Hi Fi World*



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Berriman Hi Fi News*

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Fantastic ELAC 'TIC

Elac's CL 82 MkIIs feature a tough pair of drivers. Simon Pope is suitably impressed.

Hi-Fi World's editor turned contributor Jon Marks had a recent enjoyable encounter with Elac's 810i Jet model. He found the tiny cabinet emitted a sound well beyond its dimensions with a solid bass and sweet treble emanating from its ribbon tweeter.

Although the Elac CL82 MkIIs are a little larger than their metal-cabinetted stable mates they still weigh a fair amount and exude an air of solidity rarely found at the cheaper end of the 'speaker market. Like the Jets, the 82s feature a composite metal sandwich-coned bass driver, with a metal domed tweeter instead of a ribbon model. You may get an idea of the drive these 'speakers can handle from the fact that apparently the bass driver will move 30mm peak-to-peak within its surround!

The crossover point is located at a fairly low 2.3kHz which hints that the tweeter should be as durable and robust as the bass driver promises to be. Elac designed these models to be able to deal with a whole range of equipment from budget up to 'affordable' high-end. Round the back are solid, plastic-covered bi-wire terminals and a rear-firing port designed with the help of gas flow techniques.

For the serious business of review listening I put them atop a pair of Target's better stands and fed them a bit of Paul Weller's brilliantly-produced Stanley Road with the help of Audio Analogue's Puccini SE integrated and Roksan's Caspian CD player. The resultant sound was exciting and involving, without being throat-grabbing; the latter being a trait which seems destined to become 'industry standard' at the moment.

The Elacs covered the wide frequency range of the drum kit excellently. In You Do Something To Me the bass drum pounded away subtly whilst the ride cymbals shimmered strictly in time through the tweeter. This was executed with a sweetness very uncommon amongst metal-dome tweeters - which seem to be breeding like rabbits in today's 'speakers, often with debateable results. Another highlight was the detail retrieval - little bleeps and scratches are prevalent in Walk On Gilded Splinters and I nearly jumped out of my skin with their clarity through the Elacs. Vocals and guitars were placed with pinpoint accuracy as the mix intended and the sound staging, whilst not being the deepest around, was better than expected at the price (it's more often than not a high-end trait).

Changing tack with some classical fare, I found that both Mahler's third symphony and Messiaen's Et Expecto Resurrectionem Mortuorum both had a sense of life and space that was mighty impressive. The huge crescendi of the tam-tam strokes in the third movement of the Messiaen piece are often a tweeter-killer; here the robust metal dome handled the extremities of dynamics and timbre excellently to make the amazing sound that a loud gong creates both shimmering and smooth - no hint of razor edge at all.

Mahler's mammoth orchestration was also handled adeptly and confirmed that the firm and deep bass I encountered with Paul Weller wasn't just due to studio production. The double basses of the Vienna Philharmonic (not shy players!) were suit-

ably hefty and tight as they sawed their way through what must be some of the best ever writing for bass strings. At the other end of the scale violins sounded as sweet as I'd heard from a metal-domed tweeter at this price. Trumpets and woodwinds were equally impressive in both lightness and balance.

The Elac CL82 MkIIs are not exactly neutral and uncoloured. There is a touch of lift in the bass dept, which manages to stay fast and tight, and there is a hint that the metal-domed tweeter has a touch of roll-off at the very top end. However, all this results in what is a very agreeable sound indeed. Forward-sounding without breaking your nose and smooth-sounding without the wet sock effect. You can put virtually any amplification or music through them and they'll make fine work of it.

Elac CL 82 MKII £400

**Sennheiser UK
3 Century Point
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Elac Infoline 01494 551571

WORLD VERDICT



Reliable German-made 'speakers that sound exciting with detail and refinement rare at the price.

Measured Performance see page 119

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LETTER OF THE MONTH

Hello!

My system comprises Sugden A21a and A21aP amps bi-amping a pair of Tannoy Definition 300s via Sonic Link Silver Aero bi-wire cable. My CD is an old Denon 825 - I'm waiting for SACD before upgrading.

What I'd like to know is can you recommend a 'fridge to complement this set up - not that the timbre is overly warm but I've suffered for ages as my kitchen is in an alcove off the living room and the fan noise is a major downgrade! Do you have any suggestions re. suitable models - constant ambient noise is what I must avoid. I can deal with surge clicks myself. Bye for now,

Steve Topping

'Fridges - I fully sympathize. Many is the long winter hour I've spent trying to find a supposed intermittent earth-loop only to find it's the wretched 'fridge drumming its merry hundred-cycle way into my sitting room.

One solution is to do without altogether: have a perforated zinc meat-safe to keep the bluebottles off the Sunday joint; perhaps a damp hole in the garden where you can bury the butter to keep it cool; have your milk delivered daily and enjoy the merry cry of 'Milko' as faithful Dobbin clops into the street, pulling the float; the cheery cries of the children as they bowl their hoops along the pavement; the rousing huzzahs as the redcoats march between barracks . . . In short you need a 'fridge probably.

All 'fridges are not alike obviously; some are noisier than others but the difficulty with an electric model lies in the use of a pump for compressing the coolant. There is always a limit to how quietly such a hefty mechanical operation can be done.

On the other hand, a gas 'fridge, which employs not much more than a candle-sized flame to circulate the coolant, is inherently practically silent. Naturally there is pressurizing noise and condensing noise but nothing to compare with the aggravating mains frequency pumping noises and motor hum, especially in the summer months when the things are working flat out to maintain even the most meagre cooling effect.

Having made a telephone call or two, I can say that your best route of enquiry will be in your yellow pages under Calor Gas. They should be able to help you with a suitable dealer in your area. Electrolux, for example, make several models of non-electric 'fridge (I suppose Gastrolux sounds too much like a bowel complaint!), as do Baumatic, who make the stackable 'fridge and freezer units in our picture. Their telephone number is: 0118 931 0055 Email: sales@baumatic.co.uk

Best of luck and, like, stay cool!

RMW



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John Hewitt has sent us a detailed and critical letter from which we print the following extracts:

...taking this particular edition (November) as an example may I offer the following criticisms:

The article by Richard White on p.59 can be easily summarised in one sentence: "The great majority of the public are quite happy with their mass market audio equipment and are not interested in / don't care about / don't know about / don't want to know about / can't afford high-end or higher quality audio equipment."

Similarly the article by Dominic Todd can be summarised: "Technological advance has made the CD and MD a more convenient way of listening to music, and vinyl LPs (although they can be superior in sound quality) are not so convenient."

I really don't think we need editorial articles stating the obvious.

Even the DIY Supplement has become an advertising booklet (including your own KEL80, the books section and all the usual adverts). The only non-advertising section comprises of the reader's DIY letters.

The Readers Letters section in the main magazine has become similar to the readers letters in the down-market British audio magazines in that it is a forum for people to list their audio equipment and ask what they could buy or replace to make it sound better. We really could be getting better than this, or perhaps that this topic is all that people are writing about these days.

I really think that you may have lost your way or perhaps this is a reflection that high-end / serious audio has become such a minority interest that you now have to pander to the masses to

Dear Sir,

I have been a reader of your magazine for a number of years and always thoroughly enjoy the content. However there is one thing which has been bugging me for a long time - why do you always vary the material (CD/vinyl etc.) to test the systems. Other readers must be as baffled as myself when the review staff rave about the reproduction of certain aspects of a recording. This has no meaning unless of course you own the same material.

I would suggest that you adopt certain standard materials or 'bench mark' recordings which you always use to test the systems. This is certainly my own approach when auditioning a piece of equipment and I am sure most of your readers will agree that it is the only objective method of making a comparison.

Yours faithfully,
N. MISTRY

Short of producing a Hi-Fi World standard reviewing record for distribution to all of our readers, it will always be against the balance of probabilities that we reviewers can truly share our listening experiences. If one reader in ten happens to own one record in ten of those which make up our own personal collections I should be surprised. Logically therefore, the more we vary the records we review with, the better the chances of hitting some of the targets - audio blanket-bombing of a sort.

keep your head above water.

John Hewitt

To take some of your points in order and deal with them as succinctly as possible:

The magazine's format is substantially unchanged as is our list of contributors: Jon Marks, Simon Pope, Richard White. Either we have all changed our writing styles beyond recognition or the new layout has misled you into believing that we have.

Columns. These are written primarily to entertain. You may dislike the style and content as much as you wish, in which case they obviously haven't entertained you, but at least let them fail on their own terms. By your reckoning "The angels beat Satan but Adam and Eve are turned out of Eden" would have saved Milton a lot of effort with Paradise Lost.

As regards letters, the vast majority of letters we receive tread the well-worn "My system comprises of" path. I fully agree that this can be petrifyingly dull, so naturally we attempt to highlight areas which may be of common concern to many of our readers. I stress 'common' concern: no point in answering a question so specific that only one of all our thousands of readers is interested in it. Therefore fairly commonplace kit is dealt with or else questions which are interesting in themselves. Sometimes we even select a letter because we think it's entertaining!

Emphatically, we are not a specialist high-end publication; we are a general interest hi-fi magazine with a slant against the "look what you can't afford" style sometimes found in other sections of the press and, I hope, a rather less 'ivory tower' approach than many. The fact that we, the editorial team, don't always take ourselves too seriously ought to be a point in our favour - it should help us keep a sense of perspective, the absence of which can be catastrophic for writers and readers alike.

RMW

To be honest, the sort of standardized procedure you recommend is what our measured performance is supposed to cover. We are more concerned with showing how an item measures up in general use. This is one reason why we are at pains to explain why we pick a particular record in certain circumstances. It may appear a touch pedantic to regular readers but we cannot assume that all our readers are familiar with the whys and wherefores of listening tests before we start.

The simplest "we listened to XXX because it demonstrates YYY" is, I believe, more genuinely informative than ploughing the same old records month after month, and assuming that everyone knows why we chose them. **RMW**



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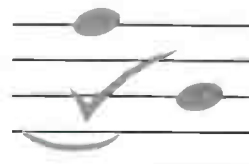
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My system: LP12/Valhalla/Ittok/Klyde/Linto, Marantz 63 KI Sig, Quad 44, NAD 402, Quad ELS 57s.

I have just moved to Amsterdam from England. I bought over some UK extension leads and haven't changed the plugs on my components - I have just put a euro-plug adaptor on the end of the UK plug coming out of the extension lead. It all works and sounds okay (although it's hard to tell as my room change has been massive) but is this the best and safest way to do it?

Also my new landlord will not let me put any shelves up, so my Mana wall-shelf is redundant. The floor is springy and is all wood, so I am stuck as to what to place my turntable on - please help.

Lastly, is there anywhere/anyone who I should check out (ie hi-fi dealers, shows etc) who might cater for my hi-fi tastes.

Regards, Tim

Euro regulations are so strict regarding electrical apparatus that your plug adaptor will have been tested to absolute-blinding-idiot levels before being allowed on the market. Since you say that things are working fine, it is probably better to leave things as they are than to incur the trouble and expense (not to mention possible hum) which replacing all your plugs entails.

Sorry to hear about your Mana shelf system - does your landlord have something to hide about the condition of the walls?

My favourite cheap method of mounting a turntable is as follows: find a strongish packing case, bedside table or anything to bring the works up to a useable height. Fill a strong plastic bag with dry sand to 'pillow thickness' and seal it up with parcel tape so that leaks are not too irritating. Place a tastefully coloured paving slab (around £2 from DIY stores) on top. Level the slab by thumping and bad language. Place cloth over this if desired. Place turntable on top. If landlord still complains, accidentally drop slab out of window when he knocks for the rent.

It's been interesting to see the growth of the 'retro' trends in valves, turntables and horns. I have ridden the waves of them all so far, but most amazing is the turnaround on direct drive turntables which really flies in the face of accepted thinking.

A recurrent issue is their tonearms. You've already described how to fit a better arm to the Technics. Is it possible (and worthwhile) to fit a better arm to those big Denons? Last week I was offered a Pioneer 550 for the price of a CD (disc, not player) and the next day came upon your July '98 issue with David Price's glowing account of the 600 model.

Of course I couldn't resist it, but am now wondering if it is advisable and practical to upgrade the arm? An easier alternative is rewiring the arm: easy if it is done externally, and particularly good if you run one bit of wire from cartridge to preamp: but is it as good as a new arm, and how good is the existing one? Could you also advise about suitable cartridges - I'm thinking of Ortofon MCs or maybe a

Sumiko BP Special?

(name & address supplied)

Direct drives needn't be inferior to belt drives (quite the reverse, in fact) if they're done properly. The problem is that this costs money and a good belt drive system is easier to implement at a given price point, hence the latter's popularity. As you rightly say, many seventies DDs were fine motor units in search of a decent tonearm. Many big Japanese manufacturers (Technics, Denon, Pioneer, Trio, Toshiba etc.) offered their decks without arms, and these are always the ones to go for.

The S-shaped pickups they fitted as standard weren't bad but a modern Rega RB250 would still trounce them. You can sometimes remove the original arms easily - just unbolt the armboard and pull them out - but some (such as my Pioneer PL600X) are fixed permanently. You'll just have to see for yourself, but I think Pioneer did an armless PL550 so you may be in luck. The deck itself is a good (but not spectacular) 1977-vintage upper mid-

I don't know about any Dutch hi-fi shops particularly . . . hang on - you live there, you should be telling us, surely?!

RMW



You could always treat yourself to a free-standing Mana Acoustics Reference Table!!

price design - you've got yourself a real bargain but it's still no Trio L-07D!

If the deck's existing arm bearings are intact (there should be absolutely no play or stick in the bearings), then it may well be worth rewiring as Pioneer's high end S-shapes were better than most: Rewire with a budget Litz wire, fit an ADC magnesium headshell (with its rubber washer removed) and get some SME LC-0FC headshell wires, superglue the headshell to the tonearm (for maximum rigidity) and fit an appropriate cartridge like a Goldring 1042 which matches the Pioneer arm mechanically and sonically. Track it at 1.8g and set the anti-skate by ear.

*You can also rewire the mains cable with Campaign Audio Design wire, fit a decent mains plug and use Foculpods under the deck feet - these work wonders for non-suspended subchassis decks. Using a moving coil is stretching things a bit with the standard arm, but if you must then get a Dynavector 10X4 or DV20X-H - both have true star quality and are light years ahead of the Sumiko BPS or low end Ortofons. **DP***



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Both myself and a friend own Axis 88 loudspeakers powered by a Rotel 985 5-channel amp. I use mine as a part of a home theatre set up and my friend uses his to bi-amp his loudspeakers. Recently we both embarked on a project to archive our extensive CD collections to computer. With some effort we managed to do this, and now use a Cambridge Audio DAC which gives very good sound from my system. For some reason though, my friend obtains a much softer, less precise sound when playing them via computer. This effect doesn't seem to occur on my equipment, but is quite noticeable on his. We've tried changing DACs and various other things to get to the bottom of this without success.

Considering (except for minor artefacts from the MP3 compression process) exactly the same digital signal should be going into the DAC, I'm at a loss to explain it. It's reached the point where he has deleted all the music files from his computer and returned to CDs, wasting all the work we did to get them onto the computer. We are both computer professionals and believe the future of audio is distribution and storage of music

via computers and the Internet. However problems like this will need to be sorted out before it can move to prime time. Any ideas what may be causing this?

Bill Hobba
Canberra, Australia



Loading down to Rio . . .

If, as you say, you've swapped all the hardware around and still you get the same effect from your friend's system, the different sound quality is down to the MP3 CODEC. This is a little piece of software that encodes and decodes compressed MP3 audio files, and works similarly to the ATRAC system in MiniDisc recorders. Windows has its own bundled audio CODECs but they're not real hi-fi. One computer may be using an older CODEC giving a poorer sound than the other computer. This would account for the difference, as older CODECs were designed for little more than speech. What you both need to do is get the best audio CODEC available, which at present is the Fraunhofer IIS MPEG Layer-3, available at their website (<http://www.iis.fhg.de/amm>) as part of their free WinPlay3 MP3 player. When you've downloaded and installed WinPlay3 (size:983K), go to CONTROL PANEL/ MULTIMEDIA/ ADVANCED/ AUDIO COMPRESSION CODECS, click on the Fraunhofer CODEC (which will now be added to the menu and assigned the lowest priority), and reassign its priority to 1. As soon as you play an MP3 you'll be able to hear the difference - both computers should now give superb sound quality! **DP**
p.s. for more info on MP3, check out www.hi-fiworld.co.uk/caw

As a French hi-fi fan, I must say I am a little disappointed when reading English publications. I know every listener has his own ears and tastes whether he is a professional or not, but I don't understand the way two editors can have opposite conclusions regarding the same product. The example here is the integrated amplifier Audio Analogue Puccini SE: you people from Hi-Fi World seem very enthusiastic and positive, whereas two other well-known publications are not impressed, or even fundamentally disliked this amp. I have been looking for other reviews on the net all over the world, and I must say all reviewers find, like yourselves, that this amp is very exciting mainly thanks to its tube-like sound and drive capacities. My question is: who shall I trust? What could be so wrong with this amp? Is there a hidden "flaw" that only two reviewers have discovered? Thanks for your answer and for your advice regarding this integrated...

Gregoire Cretinon,
Paris, France

As the saying goes "one man's meat is another man's poison". When we first had a listen to the Puccini SE back in 1998 we found it to be one of the most fluid and transparent amplifiers we had come across in its price range. It doesn't however have the established sound of a typical

solid state amplifier of its power and price, which many ears are used to. Nowadays at the price we are more used to an upfront and immediate sound that typifies current Japanese kit.

The Puccini has what could be described as a more 'European' sound. It's a little more sophisticated and smooth than the current trend and consequently is an ideal partner for classical music. Its drive capability is excellent but the power is channelled into creating a sense of control rather than sheer brute force. It's simply very good value for money and has a cracking phono stage. Suffice to say the Puccini is one of the World workhorse amps at the price and is, indeed, often found hanging around on my rack!

The decision, as always, is down to you. If you haven't had the opportunity to give the Puccini SE a listen, do so - and trust your own ears rather than those of an audio journalist (me included!). **SP**



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Millennium Music

The new millennium is here with it begins hi-fi's second Century. What better time to look back on its first? In the first of a two-part feature, David Price traces the story of recorded sound from the past to the present.

It all started with the words 'Mary had a little lamb'. When Thomas Edison spoke them into a tinfoil cylinder phonograph back in 1877, he made history by being the first to record and reproduce the human voice. Although a long way from what we now call hi-fi, Edison's new invention sparked over one hundred years of development in the science and art of sound reproduction.



Lovely poem, Mr Edison . . .

The 1880s had barely arrived when recording got its first format war. Chichester Bell and Charles Tainter's 'Graphophone' soon appeared, using wax-coated cylinders cut with vertical grooves to store sound. Then came a more recognisable technology in the shape of Emile Berliner's 'Gramophone', which used a non-wax disc photo-engraved with a lateral-cut groove. Edison wasn't one to hang around either, and in 1887 dramatically



Ich bin ein Berliner !

improved the phonograph with a battery-powered electrical motor and wax cylinders, although he saw little future in the invention as a medium for music. Berliner replied with an improved gramophone using flat 7 inch discs with lateral grooves. Rotated by hand at about 30rpm, it gave two full minutes of sound reproduction!

By 1895 the Berliner Gramophone Co. had sold 1,000 players and

25,000 hard rubber 7-inch discs. The next

year Fred Gaisberg discovered that shellac from the American Durand Co. worked better than hard rubber vulcanite and the gramophone record substantially as it was to remain for fifty years, had arrived. Sadly, with a heavy steel stylus tracking at 9 oz., few

have survived!

Next came Valdemar Poulsen's 1898 'telegraphone', the world's first magnetic recorder using steel wire to store music. This forerunner of the tape recorder was exhibited at the 1900 Paris Expo and caused quite a stir. It was crude in the extreme - with wire spools flying around at high speeds, those early recording pioneers risked some very nasty accidents if their 'tape' snapped!

Emile Berliner launched the Victor Talking Machine Co. in 1901, using a certain 'little Nipper' dog as a trademark. By 1902 the competitor was hotting up.

Edison introduced mass-produced hard wax 'Gold Moulded' cylinders to the US market for fifty cents each, while

'Red Seal' 10-inch records retailed at a dollar a go.

These featured famous artists like tenor Enrico Caruso and baritone Mattia Battistini. By 1903 Victor was America's leading classical music record company

The new ten inch shellac

discs offered four minute playing times, a marked improvement on the two minutes of the seven inchers, but it wasn't until 1904 that the German Odeon label's double-sided discs gave ten minute playing times. A year earlier, HMV had recorded the first complete opera, Verdi's 'Ernani', on no less than forty single-sided discs! By 1912, Edison's cylinders could still only give four minutes, a fact which



caused him to surrender a year later when he started selling Diamond-Disc players and recordings.

Music for the Masses

Music reproduction really started going places after World War I, when 'popular music' took off. Countless independent record companies appeared offering jazz, classical and popular discs at ever cheaper prices. By the end of the 1920s America was flattered with syndicated commercial broadcast stations, any one of which had the potential to 'make' a recording star. The 'crooner' age had arrived.

Recording techniques got a crucial boost in 1925 with the first electrically recorded discs, which used Western

Electric technology developed over the previous 10 years. Before this, recording artists had to crowd around large metal recording horns and play or sing into them, as well as having to get their performances right in one take.

'Electric recording' using microphones with active amplification changed all that for good - although the first electric recordings were in fact far worse than the best acoustics. Three years on, Georg Neumann's Berlin-based Microphone company introduced the CMV3 'Neumann Bottle' condenser microphone. It was now practical to record full-sized orchestras and, by using relays of recording machines, whole symphonies and even soundtracks for motion pictures could be recorded in 'takes' substantially longer than the old four minute chunks.

Despite the grave effects of the world Depression in the early thirties, technological developments continued apace. In 1931 Alan Blumlein patented 'binaural' (stereo) recording in the UK, while in the US, RCA introduced 'Vitrolac' vinyl plastic discs that ran at 33 1/3 rpm for professional use. The world's largest sound recording

studio opened in 1931 at a little place in West London called Abbey Road.

The next year saw the genesis of tape as we know it today. BASF joined with AEG of Telefunken to develop magnetic tape recording and demonstrated their 'Magnetophone' three years later at the 1935 Berlin Radio Fair. Using paper tape coated with magnetic oxide running past a pick-up head it had an annoying tendency to snap but it was a start! By now 'hi-fi' had finally entered the lexicon, with the first American advertisements for 'High Fidelity records' in 1934.

Hi-fi takes shape

Soon after World War II ended, British Signal Corps Captain John Mullin found 'magnetophones' at Radio Frankfurt in Germany with thousand metre reels of half-inch ferric-coated BASF tape. He demonstrated them in San Francisco a year later, and the US company Ampex began work on developing a US-made magnetic tape recorder.

In 1947 EMI recording studios abandoned acetate recording, and suddenly the likes of Bing Crosby (an early supporter of the technology) were recording onto 'high fidelity' magnetic tape. Like anything new, it met with resistance. Recording engineers didn't like it because they couldn't read recording levels from the disc's groove patterns, while musicologists bemoaned the end of 'live' performances - artists no longer had to perform perfectly first time as mistakes could be edited out later!

If all this new technology seemed perplexing to some, hi-fi had scarcely begun yet. On June 21st 1948, Columbia introduced the first 12-inch 33 1/3 RPM micro-groove LP. Made of 'vinylite' with twenty-three minutes playing time per side, it had been developed by Peter Goldmark in 1947 using players made by Philco. The '45' followed fast, as RCA Victor intro-

duced their rival 7 inch 45 rpm micro-groove Extended Play disc.

Meanwhile audio hardware went from strength to strength. When Stefan Kudelski built the first Nagra portable audio recorder he started a boom that

saw open reel tape recorders in people's homes by the nineteen-fifties. These gave audiophiles the chance to make their own recordings for the first time, either live, off air or from disc. These unwieldy machines had crude ergonomics but were capable of good results.

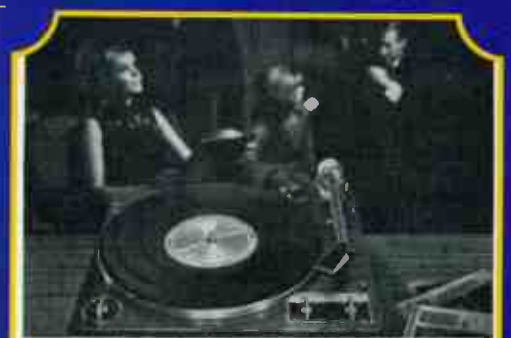
In Britain companies like Collaro, Garrard, Windsor, Pye and Vortexion began marketing tape recorders built into cases complete with amplifiers and speakers. After RCA Victor started selling pre-recorded open reel stereo tapes in America for \$12.95 in 1956, EMI replied with its 'StereoSonics' pre-recordeds and the golden age of open reel was truly here. By the late fifties, tape technology had come on in leaps and bounds. Superior coatings meant studios no longer needed to spin the tape past at 30ips, and 15ips became standard. Better heads and electronics began to offer real hi-fi quality,



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and recording techniques improved noticeably although at astronomical cost compared with simple record players.

Audio amplifiers had advanced considerably too. Constant pressure to innovate led to more versatile valves, increasingly refined circuit designs and superior passive components and output transformers. As a result, several classic power amplifiers emerged throughout the fifties, most famous of which were the Leak range in Britain, based on the immortal Williamson design, Peter Walker's Quad II and, in the United States Frank H McIntosh's Unity Coupled Amplifier, which achieved 50W at <1% distortion, 20Hz-20kHz. The specs race began in earnest, and hi-fi would never be the same again.

Transistors were invented in 1948 but it took some time for them to reach hi-fi. Only by the early-to-mid sixties were they usurping the valve, promising as they did dramatically lower distortion figures and substantially higher power outputs. Reliability was also an issue, and the transistor's ability to run Class B operation meant they weren't switched on all the time. This in turn brought cooler running and the promise of lower electricity bills (even if the heating bills crept up when the old valve amp was pensioned off).

Twice as nice

Going back a little, the world standard for stereo records was established in 1958, based on Alan Blumlein's 1931 patent, and the first stereo LPs were sold soon after. Late fifties audiophiles could choose from valve FM radio sets, open reel tape machines or the new fangled microgroove LPs. Vinyl offered better quality than its rivals, but unfortunately the hardware of the day couldn't exploit it. It was only with the advent of improved pickups that hitherto untamed vinyl nasties like rumble could be heard, let alone challenged. Tonearms improved too - SME's first 'precision pick-up arm' from 1959 offered a real alternative to the more agricultural designs of the day.

For many people, the late fifties were hi-fi's harvest years. The basic technology was there to make fine-sounding gear, but hi-fi hadn't as yet fallen victim to cost-cutting compromises dictated by the mass market - in short it was still expensive!. By now there was a plethora of quality audio electronics and loudspeakers available from the likes of Leak, Celestion, KEF, Tannoy and Wharfedale, to name but

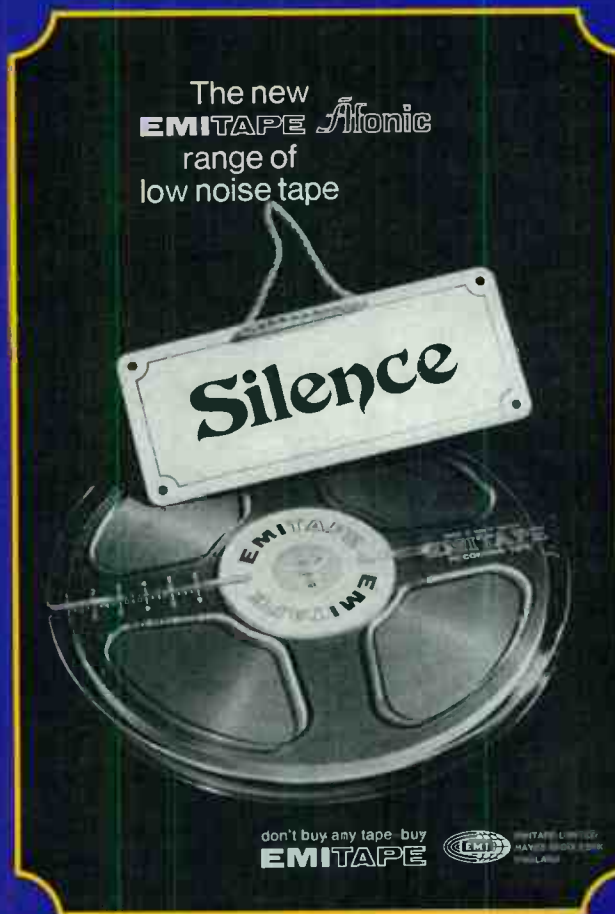
Three years later, another magnetic tape format designed by William Lear (of Learjet aviation fame), Ampex, and RCA was released in the United States. This used quarter-inch tape spinning at $3\frac{3}{4}$ ips to give four stereo 'tracks' which constantly repeated, with overall playing times long enough to record an entire LP's worth of music. Although primarily intended for cars, there was a large commercial push from a number of electronics manufacturers to get it to usurp open reel as an audiophile tape format for the home.

By now though, Philips' little cassette was really beginning to win friends, bringing as it did hitherto undreamed of levels of convenience. The only criticism was its marginal sound quality, but improved tape formulations, better hardware and the launch of Dolby Noise Reduction in 1959 pushed it ahead in leaps and bounds. Eight track seemed clumsy by comparison.

Hi-fi has always enjoyed its little controversies, and the mid sixties got a new one to join old favourites: the Japanese were coming! Just when British, European and American manufacturers had the market all to themselves, a number of cheap Japanese products appeared on the scene. At first, the designs just shameless copies of western products. But this state of affairs changed very swiftly, and soon the likes of Sansui, Trio and Pioneer were fighting head-to-head with Leak, Armstrong and Goodmans.

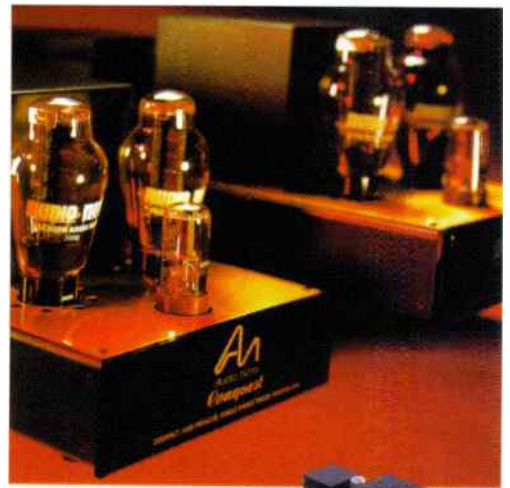
Thanks to an unbelievably weak Yen and some very accomplished ergonomics, Nipponese products soon made their mark. True, many were sold on feature count and specifications rather than sound quality, but reliable solid-state audio at a low, low prices was just what British buyers wanted. Sniffy remarks about 'Jap crap' from various quarters of Britain's audio industry failed avert the crisis, and countless old and respected names disappeared during the early nineteen seventies. The world of hi-fi was about to experience changes the like of which it had never seen before...

Part II next month . . .



a few. Quad's ESL57 electrostatic loudspeaker was also a true milestone which brought untold levels of clarity, balance and neutrality to loudspeaker design.

1963 was a big year for hi-fi, although it didn't seem like it at the time - it was, of course, the inception of the Compact Cassette. As The Beatles blitzed the charts, Dutch electronics company Philips demonstrated their new format using high-quality BASF polyester $\frac{1}{8}$ inch tape running at $1\frac{7}{8}$ inches per second. It was resolutely a convenience format, and Philips (like Edison ninety years before!) saw its main use as dictation. Little did anyone suspect that its popularity would spin into the stratosphere, for the best part of thirty years!



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Get The Nak . . .



The very best cassette deck ever made? You'd have to look long and hard to better the Nakamichi CR-7E, says David Price.

When you meet someone at a party or down the pub and get talking about hi-fi, here's a great way to find out just how well they know the subject: If they reckon Nakamichis are the best cassette decks ever made, they know something. If they say the Dragon is the best, they think they know a lot. If they say it's the CR-7E, they really do.

You see, the Dragon - wonderful, mad creation that it is - isn't actually the best thing the legendary Nipponese cassette masters did. It's a big, bold, lavish technological tour-de-force, that's for sure - but it was never their last word in terms of sound quality. That accolade went to the ZX-9, and then the CR-7E came along with better record/replay electronics and sounded even better still.

The Dragon isn't a one-off product. In Japan, Nakamichi have traditionally been known as cassette deck specialists, but actually produce a whole range of audio electronics - from receivers to CD players - most of which is pretty unremarkable stuff. Commonly available in Japanese hi-fi shops at prices some 40% lower than over here, it's seen as good, solid, respectable fare - quite like Audiolab used to be known here. To differentiate their high end 'statement' products they market a range of gear under the Dragon brand, including CD players and amps. It's madly expensive, complex and packed with high tech.

In 1988 though, Nakamichi decided that all their conspicuous technology used in the Dragon could be refocused towards getting the very best sound with absolutely no compromises. Out went mind-bogglingly complex auto-reverse mechanism with automatic electronic azimuth adjustment, and in came a beautifully engineered direct-drive, dual capstan unidirectional transport automated for convenience and given remote control too. At £1095, it cost £155 less than its flagship bigger brother, but sounded even more stunning. Its feature list is Spartan by comparison - the usual logic controlled transport keys in the middle, with fader up, down and REC MUTE buttons beneath. Counter mode selectors and timer controls made a token gesture towards domestic acceptability, and then there was the manual tape sector (for types I, II and IV cassettes) with switchable EQ. For the first time on a Nakamichi though, these weren't strictly necessary as the CR-7E could also chose tape types automatically if desired. Adjustable playback azimuth - a grand name for what NAD modestly call PLAY TRIM - meant the '7's record/replay head could be motor-adjusted by up to two-thirds of a degree to play tapes recorded on lesser decks to their best potential. There was switchable Dolby NR (B and C, but as per Nak tradition, no HX or S). You also got an amazing set of meters with switchable PEAK HOLD - and the claim

that they read up to +10dB was no idle boast! Although Nakamichi's rivals had offered auto tape calibration for many a long year, Nak debuted theirs with the CR-7E. It was simple to use - you just loaded a blank tape, pressed AUTO CALIBRATION, a light flashed for fifteen seconds and you were ready to record. Sound quality is startling - better than every other cassette deck in the world bar none; it even gives high quality semi-pro open reels (like Revox's B77) a sharp slap around the face. With a decent metal tape, you can casually record at +10dB, such are the Nak's stunning discrete heads, and even beer-budget ferric sound better than anyone else's cassette deck running the most expensive metals. Pitch stability, dynamics, depth perspective, noise levels - everything - is superb. Replay of pre-recordeds is a revelation - if they're decent all-analogue copies they'll trounce even a modern high end CD player. In fact, the Nak's resolution far exceeds CDs - to fully hear what it's capable of you need live recordings or a high end vinyl source.

£500 should get you a minter - not much for a piece of hi-fi history with performance that blows the very best MiniDisc recorder into the dust. Just make sure it's been looked after meticulously and is fully boxed. It's easy to tell a good used example - if it sounds like nothing you've ever heard on earth, then it's working properly!

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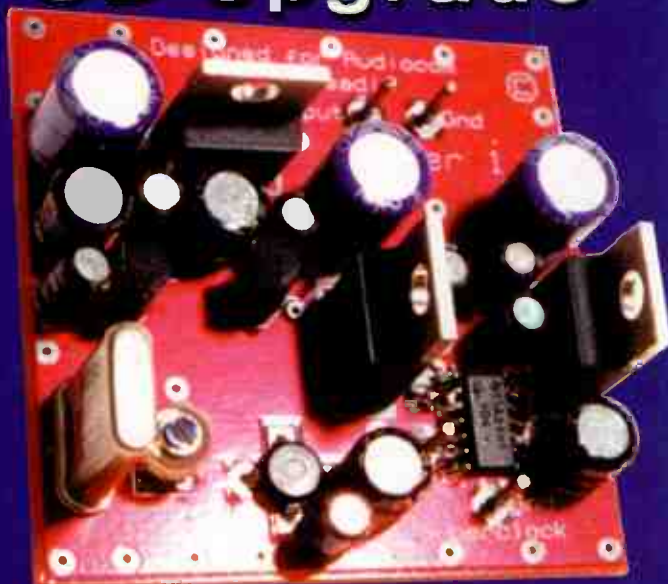
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At last a prayer of mine is being answered - we are getting an audio CD with hi-fi sound quality! Called SACD it is final acknowledgment that CD sound quality was never "perfect" as Philips claimed at its launch in 1983.

Whilst CD has undeniable strengths they don't lie in sound quality. The emergence of Super Audio CD finally proves my point - that the original CD specification was inadequate for true hi-fidelity. The strengths of the LP that CD swept away are being re-discovered. It looks like we are about to get the best of analogue and digital all rolled into one with Super Audio CD, according to early listening experiences.

I'm told by an industry insider who worked with Philips in the late eighties that even they were embarrassed by the claim of "perfect sound - forever". It's a great catch-line but it shut off all further development and opened them to

strong criticism, from people like myself who were able to show by measurement that CD was far from perfect.

Whilst measurement showed Philips claim of 'perfection' was patently untrue, that did not necessarily mean that CD would sound bad. The LP measures badly too, in a different way, but it can sound fantastic. Fate was less kind to CD. An absence of any sense of space and air, a hard sterility and a flat sound stage perspective characterise the format.

I'm not trying to suggest CD is all bad. It excels in some areas, such as bass strength, as well as treble brightness. But at the same time LP comes across as more natural and easier to listen to when good replay equipment is used. I can relax with an LP, whilst aware of its faults; CD by way of contrast is a hard, contrived experience I find unconvincing. CD has never been unable to match the LP in this respect but SACD gets very close. In truth LP is enhanced by euphonic colourations so SACD will never sound the same, but it will better convey the richness of ana-

logue master recordings.

I had to smile when Sony demonstrated SACD to audio journalists, myself included, at a Surrey press conference a few months ago. What did they play on this new Super CD? Miles Davis' 'Kind of Blue'. And that makes my point. Kind of Blue is a delightful old analogue recording from 1959. Released on CD it lost much of its magic, showing how the format is unable to retain important analogue information. Now this great recording has been transcribed to SACD to preserve its valuable analogue properties.

So what are the weaknesses of CD? It is strictly band limited to 21kHz. Complex filters must be used in the

” I can relax with an LP, whilst aware of its faults; CD by way of contrast is a hard, contrived experience I find unconvincing.

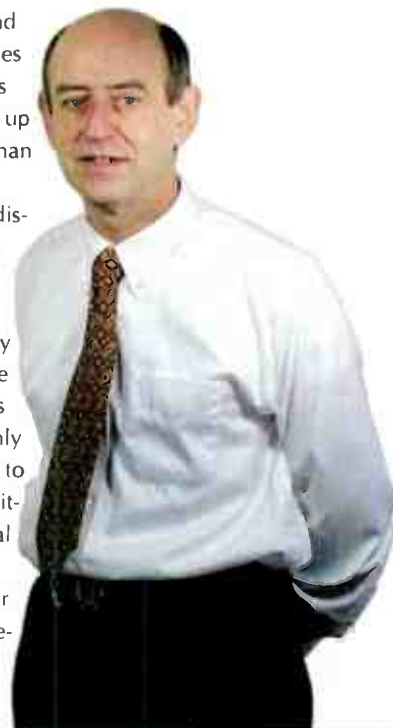
recording and replay chains to impose this limit and they affect the sound in a unnatural manner. LP cuts off above 20kHz too, but cartridge output trails away at a gentle -12dB/octave and this helps it sound more natural and open. Pioneer's Legato Link tries to achieve the same effect. It is also the reason SACD extends up to 96kHz - four times higher than CD.

Then there's the matter of distortion. Philips disingenuously quoted 0.005% as a standard distortion figure for CD. But this is the best case figure, only reached on musical peaks. The worst case figure is 30% ! This is never mentioned; I know only because I have the equipment to measure it. LP produces very little distortion (0.05%) at normal listening (modulation) levels and what it does produce is far less nasty (low order and correlated) than digital distortion (high order, uncorrelated).

Digital distortion is nasty sounding and it gets worse as level goes down, meaning distortion on ordinary music levels is much higher than specifications would suggest.

By possessing a wider dynamic range than CD music at all levels on SACD will suffer little from distortion. By the way, if you read technical bluster about how we don't need such dynamic range in the home, unless we want to reproduce Concorde, ignore it. No one is suggesting SACD is meant to do such a thing. Its dynamic range potential is there only to banish digital distortion, a nasty the ear seems very sensitive to.

The CD has now turned into a great computer storage format. That's a tribute to the CD if it ever needed one. Its late-70s music coding scheme was always questionable though. I'm glad we finally have a replacement. Let's not call it perfect, but it gets a lot closer. ●



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Reliability. Pick up any car magazine and chances are that somewhere in the consumer pages you'd find reference to particular cars that broke down regularly and others that didn't. In the hi-fi press, however, it's a subject that's barely broached. True, a broken hi-fi isn't going to leave you stranded on the hard shoulder, and assessing product reliability is a pretty subjective task. There's no AA or RAC of the hi-fi world to formulate statistics. The best that we can hope for is feedback from disgruntled customers and dealers.

Yet from my, subjective, point of view there have been recent trends in hi-fi reliability that consumers may not be aware of. For a start, I can honestly say that most hi-fi products seem to be more reliable than ever before. Certain brands such as Luxman, Technics, Sony, Onkyo and Rotel have, for as long as I remember, always had an enviable reputation for build quality. To see one of these products on the technicians desk was always a rare occurrence, unless it was particularly ancient or had been mercilessly thrashed by the owner. Other companies fared less well. I can well remember both Philips CD players and NAD products going through bad patches. At the higher end of the market, both Cambridge (pre Audio Partnership) and Audio Innovations had their low points too. Yet these days, all three manufacturers (with Audio Innovations effectively gone), appear to build products just as reliable as anyone else.

If it is the case that hi-fi is more consistently built than before (all the more remarkable when one considers it's cheaper too), then it may at first seem curious that workshops are no less busy than before. The reason for this is not so much down to any particular manufacturer, but is more format based. In a word, MiniDisc. First off let me make it quite clear, MiniDisc is not an unreliable format. In fact it's the very opposite. Let's face it, with so much riding on its success Sony had to make it reliable,

and they did. In the particular hi-fi store I work in, the Sony 520 MiniDisc was the best selling separate last year, and the percentage to return faulty within a year was less than 5%. Not bad going when most manufacturers reckon on a 10% return rate, even from an established technology. What's more the occasions when it was actually a fault of the machine could be counted on one hand. And here lies the reason for a constant level of faulty goods. In most cases, it's not the machine's fault, but the users. This isn't meant to sound like a cop out clause, "oh they all do that sir", but a genuine misunderstanding of a particular new format - or simple cack-handedness. At one time we had a series

” here lies the reason for a constant level of faulty goods. In most cases, it's not the machine's fault, but the users . . .

of Sony MiniDiscs returning to us that where wiping discs clear. It proved baffling, at first, but then looking at the source of most of the players, which was hard pressed semi-pro machines, the problem identified itself. What was happening was that a disc recognition lever had become bent, preventing recognition of stored material.

The reason for the bent pins was simply the fact that the discs had been rammed into the units rather than placed there, and allowed to auto-insert. Nobody was really to blame. DJs, quiz masters and entertainers the land over were simply used to cassette which could easily be slotted home with haste. All it took was some acclimatisation with a new product and for Sony to beef up the mech' for good measure.

It's not just the full sized products that suffer, either. Again, the problem here is that consumers used to durable cassette "walkmans" treat a

portable MD in much the same way, even though they contain far more delicate internals. Admittedly, the manufacturers really should provide carrying cases that are padded, rather than something that resembles a miniature clothes peg bag!

One final ongoing problem for retailers, is the inevitable return of blown amps' and 'speakers. Anyone reading this knows that a safe maximum volume for most amps is between 12 and 1 o'clock, yet for the totally uninitiated I suppose there's no reason why full volume shouldn't mean turning the control to max. Here, I would be more inclined to lay the blame with manufacturers. With pretty much all line level inputs being around a highish 1-2V and a dearth of truly inefficient 'speakers these days, isn't it time to recalibrate volume controls? Marantz is still one of the only mainstream companies who seem to get this delicate equation right. Yet their only thanks for this is a criticism of lack of punch at lower volume levels. Well at least the 'speakers don't take a pounding once the volume is turned beyond half way!

That completes this month's rantings and ramblings from a frustrated hi-fi retailer! Now, with that off my chest, it's back to the soldering iron! ●



Dominic Todd

CASTLE



Castle Acoustics Limited,
Park Mill, Shortbank Road, Skipton, North Yorkshire BD23 2TT England.

Tel: (01756) 795333 Fax: (01756) 795335

Email: sales@castleacoustics.co.uk www.castleacoustics.co.uk

I'm conscious of a touch of confusion this month. Assuming of course that you had your camp chair and thermos ready outside your newsagents as usual, you should be reading this just about into Advent. As I write this, I'm looking forward to Guy Fawkes Night. Judging by fact that the shops are selling off their Easter eggs and putting out the buckets and spades, Christmas can't be far away. Yet, with a disregard of the temporal continuum which even Dr Who might find a bit cavalier, the date on the cover says January 2000.

Judging by the glum faces and heavy sighs when the subject is mentioned, I guess people are about as geared up to the new Millennium as can reasonably be expected. To tell the truth, Millennium fever has been a smidge over-sold already; indeed I've become a little sceptical myself: we are all supposed to go overboard about the blindingly obvious fact that a year with three nines at the end will be followed by one with three noughts at the end. What else was it going to do?

I realize that most of us are unlikely to see another, but judging by the news bulletins on the radio, the genetics brigade are e'en now working on it - Older By Design. I suppose it's on the cards that a time will come when we shall be regretting that Methuselah died before his youthful promise had been fulfilled but in that case, what on earth will we do with the time? Take my tip and get into the 'Book of Patience Games' or perhaps the 12,547,983-piece jigsaw business - there's a mint to be made by someone!

Please let's not confound any treble-oh-so-weariness with a general disinterest in numbers; that would be irresponsible. Just suppose Newton had looked at the differences between an ascending series of quantities and just said "That's a pretty pattern" or "Fancy!", or something like that. How much richer the study of physical phenomena became in the wake of his triumphant cry: "Gosh! the Binomial Theorem: now there's a

thing!" - much as the world of letters was similarly enriched by pioneer Roget's discovery of the thesaurus, as it stumped along through the lush undergrowth of the primeval forest.

None of which brings me to the solution of the quandary I mentioned at the top of the page, viz: how to adapt the rather staid subject of hi-fi for the purposes of a jolly Christmassy-Millennium column. Personally I tend not to peer into the future - I'm rather reliant on it arriving sooner or later anyway. As for looking into the past, in approved retrospective style, I'm not sure that's entirely suitable for an up-to-the-minute Hit Parade type like me.

I suppose the trouble is that, unlike, say, mothers-in-law, or certain bodily



Hi-fi doesn't readily adapt itself to side-splitting sallies . . .

functions, hi-fi doesn't readily adapt itself to side-splitting sallies:

Mr Bones: My wife's going to buy an off-board DAC.

Mr Interlocutor: Jamaica?

Mr Bones: No, she decided of her own accord.

Mr Interlocutor: I don't wish to know that but tell me, Mr Bones, why does the chicken crossover the road?

Mr Bones: Because it's cheaper than sending a message bi-wire - I theng-yow . .

You see what I mean - not exactly bursting with chuckles, is it? Humorously incongruous, maybe; jaw-cracking, no. Well to be truthful, I laughed like drain whilst I was writing it, but after a seclative had been administered and the straps refastened . . well, anyway, "Try again" I thought.

Perhaps it's safest at this time of year to stick ye olde convivial approach like the Old Master hisself:

"Spirit," said Scrooge, with an interest he had never felt before, "tell me if Tiny Tim will live."

"I see a vacant seat," replied the Ghost "by the old equipment rack, and a line-contact stylus without an owner, gathering fluff; a Troughline with tears trickling from its magic eye; a clutch of dusty valves dimming their heaters as if in lament for he who is now no more; a pale old horn-loaded tweeter which none may sound with its old-accustomed mirthful note never no more not hardly ever; a 5-CD stack player endlessly repeating the same seventy tracks while the gentle hand of its owner mingles with the dust of his fathers in the deep delvéd earth; a box of reel-to-reel tape birds'-nesting itself in silent grief, as it to say . . ."

"Yes, yes, I see. So the signs aren't too good then?"

"I see a lonely uni-pivot tonearm swinging on a rusty . . ."

"Shutup!"

Well, that's my conviviality for the year over and done with, all, that is, except the following copyright© joke which I hope will sell for a handsome sum to a printer of literary Christmas cracker mottos:

Q. What do you call a stripy sheep which tastes of peppermint?

A. Baaaa, humbug!

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Millennium, and God bless us, every one!



Richard White

KITS HAVE NEVER



£295

Buy the KEL34 with the Upgrade Kit for an incredible knockdown price of: **£420**

KEL34 Upgrade Kit - with a superb Panasonic volume control, stargate electrolytics & paper in oil capacitors and fast recovery diodes. **£135**

KEL34 E&I VALVE INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER KIT

The KEL34 E&I version is our second generation budget class A stereo valve amplifier, providing a massive 40 watts of pure valve sound with 4 line level inputs and one tape output. The KEL34 E&I is a simple and elegant circuit design using a 6AU6 pentode input valve, an ECL82 triode triode phase splitter and a push-pull pair of EL34s. The result is a typically sweet, open valve sound with typical bass control and power. The KEL34 E&I will work to drive the speakers of average sensitivity. Jon Marks says, "usually the KEL34 E&I is a bit of a snob - it has a fast, dynamic valve pushed guitar sound that has dreamy chip leading edges and great impact. Clear mids and spacious sound staging meant voices and instruments really seem to live in the loudspeaker boxes. Overall the KEL34 E&I is a beautiful power amp." At the price, this kit is second to none and will open up the world of valve amplification to a whole new class of hobbyist. Weight 12kg. External dimensions with valves 370mm(w) x 275mm(d) x 140mm(h).

KEL80 MONOBLOCK AMPLIFIER KIT

Following the success of our budget KEL34 40watt val amplifier, we have come up with a 'bigger brother' design. The output stage utilizes two pairs of TESLA EL34 pentodes in parallel-push-pull mode, allowing KEL80 to push out 80 watts into an 8ohm load. Heading up the input stage we have the wonderful linear Russian 6AU6 working into an American 5687 phase-splitter. KEL80's output transformers are 4ohm and 16ohm tapped. With an input sensitivity at around 400mV for full output, it will happily power both passive and active pre-amplifiers. It is easy to assemble. Small Poole says, "The pros of the pudding is in the eating and the KEL80 is a feast for the ears, with solid bass attack, lightning fast reactions, that emphasises musicality as well as power. It's 80Watt with a definite valve warmth. Each monoblock weighs 12kg. External dimensions with valves 340mm(w) x 260mm(d) x 143.5mm(h).



NEW!

£590 A PAIR

HD83 VALVE HEADPHONE AMPLIFIER KIT

The HD83 is our new headphone amplifier, a beautifully simplistic design using Mullard ECL83 valves, a triode and power pentode housed in the same envelope. It works directly from any source be it a CD, tape, tuner etc., or from an amplifier's tape out or pre-amp sockets. The circuit utilises high specification output E and I output transformers that will drive any headphone load from 16ohms to over 100 ohms depending on how the secondaries are wired up. The HD83 is a single ended design with the power pentode wired up in triode configuration for that added purity and is a quiet as a mouse. For sound quality Jon Marks says, "The bass is punchy and controlled without becoming artificial, while treble has the crispness of the best solid state, with the tonal purity, delicacy and speed associated with valves. External dimensions 18cm(w) x 30cm(l) x 40cm(h) weighs 4kg.



£155

KLPP1 VALVE PHONO PREAMPLIFIER

KLPP1 has five line inputs, a tape input with monitor, and a unique low noise valve MMSE phono stage. There is a switchable attenuator to prevent output transformers of valve amplifiers saturating. The line stage has gain, so it will drive any power amplifier. Audio grade components are used and many parts are custom made for the best quality. KLPP1 has a super clear sound, sweet and detailed through line and pass D blocks. Weight 1.6kg external dimensions 210mm(w) x 210mm(d) x 30mm(h).



£465

KLPP1 & KLPP1 use the same chassis

K5881 MkII VALVE AMPLIFIER KIT

A 20watt, Class A power amplifier that uses reliable Russian 2E3 output valves, a military version of the American 6L6, designed for low distortion audio work. Now with a super shunt regulated push-pull (SRPP) input stage K5881 offers amazing sound quality. It can be used with a simple passive pre-amp or one of our own pre-amplifiers, and it matches modern loudspeakers well. Weight 15kg external dimensions with valves 40cm(w) x 32.5cm(d) x 17cm(h).



£365

MkII with SRPP input stage!

£25

KLP1 VALVE LINE PREAMP

The KLP1 line level preamp uses an electron cathode valve to give a sound of remarkable clarity and detail. The components are all high quality and include: Alps volume control, silver valves, silver plated sockets. With gain control it matches our sensitive power amplifiers. Beautifully built with solid mechanical alloy cases and gold plated sockets, it looks compact and elegant on the bench. Weight 1kg external dimensions 18.5cm(w) x 21cm(d) x 40mm(h).



£325

WAP SURPLUS PRODUCTS

Product	Price
KEL34 AMPLIFIER BUILT needs slight attention	£200.00 each
100W AMPLIFIER (120V PRIMARY MAINS TRANSFORMER)	£250.00 each
KEL34 chassis boards attention	£35.00 each
EL34 output transformer 16ohm primary 1/4ohm secondary 20000ohm pair	£100.00 each
6AU6 PHONO PREAMPLIFIER PCB + INSTRUCTIONS	£20.00 each
300B AMPLIFIER DRIVER PCB + INSTRUCTIONS	£20.00 each
300B AMPLIFIER BRASS CHASSIS BUILT needs slight attention	£400.00 each
KEL34 BUILT ALUMINIUM CASE PAIR (PROTOTYPE)	£50.00 pair
KLP1 LINE AMPLIFIER PCB + INSTRUCTIONS	£30.00 each
TRANSISTOR AMPLIFIER PCB	£25.00 each
KEL34 PCB	£40.00 each
HD83 PCB	£25.00 each
8 X SPEAKER SPIKES WITH NUT & INSERT	£6.00 each
WAD LABELLED ANSAR POLYPROPYLENE 22.5uF 630V DC	£10.00 each
LCR POLYPROPYLENE 22uF 420V DC	£8.00 each
KLS10 LOUDSPEAKER MAHOGANY VENEERED CABINET	£140.00 pair
KLS12 LOUDSPEAKER MDF CABINET	£50.00 pair
World Radio Kit PCB black chassis (not front plate)	£40.00 each

BARGAIN BASEMENT

K5881 MkII Upgrade kit
Upgrade your pre November 1996 K5881 amplifier to MkII status. The kit converts your amplifier to the new 7025 double triode input stage in place of the original EF86 pentode input.

BEEN SO GOOD!

KLS10 HIGH TECHNOLOGY COMPACT MONITOR



£365

This mini-monitor uses an Audax carbon fibre bass/midrange unit, married to the world's most advanced tweeter, the piezo-electric gold dome HD3P from Audax. KLS10 offers high performance in a small package. The main speakers are designed to work alone, or with a dedicated subwoofer to extend their bass. Alone, they are suited to near-wall mounting and can be tuned by port adjustment to suit personal taste and location. They are easy to drive and need just 10 Watts. KLS10 is unique. Technically advanced, yet compact and relatively inexpensive. There is little to match it. Sensitivity 86dB 1W/1m, 15mm MDF, internal volume 90Ltrs, external dimensions 11cm(w) x 31cm(h) x 23cm(d).

DRIVE UNITS & CROSSOVER KIT £365.00
DRIVE UNITS ONLY £329.00

KLS10 GOLD SUBWOOFER



£135.00

Designed to compliment KLS10 Gold standmounters by providing a deep and open bass. The subwoofer is inexpensive, easy to build, containing a simple crossover network to a high quality 4 inch Aerogel dual voice coil unit. A must for all KLS10 Gold customers. Sens. 89dB, volume 25 litres, external dimensions 28cm(w) x 43cm(h) x 34cm(d).

DRIVE UNIT & CROSSOVER KIT £135.00
DRIVE UNIT ONLY £65.00

KLS9 TWO WAY FLOORSTANDER



£205

Here's a treat for you - KLS9, with its BB4 aligned bass cabinet and Audax High Definition Aerogel 10 inch midrange unit. Designed by Noel Keywood, it possesses optimal bass distribution and a 23cm step response. Aided by a healthy bit of bass lift, KLS9 really thunders; it will rearrange your furniture. But it does not wobble. Talking about what there's no bass in the music. Aided by a high power 10 inch dome tweeter, KLS9 is detailed, evenly balanced and it sings superbly. It is an easy 120W in load and is 88dB sensitive. Free amps up to 70W. Easy to build and great for beginners. Internal volume 70Ltrs, 10mm MDF, external dimensions 25cm(w) x 93cm(h) x 40cm(d).

DRIVE UNITS & CROSSOVER KIT £205.00
DRIVE UNIT PACK £145.00

KLS3 3 WAY CARBON-FIBRE DRIVER LOUDSPEAKER



£320

KLS3 uses extremely light and stiff carbon fibre cone driver units for a fast, accurate sound. A dedicated 10mm carbon fibre midrange driver unit provides the clear, smooth and detailed midrange, balanced by superb projection. The high 70dB sensitivity and near flat drivers impedance make it one of the easiest loudspeakers to drive. An ideal loudspeaker for high end valve amplifiers. 25mm MDF, internal volume 60Ltrs, external dimensions 26cm(w) x 70cm(h) x 33cm(d).

DRIVE UNIT & CROSSOVER KIT £320.00
DRIVE UNIT PACK £200.00

KLS7 2 WAY CARBON-FIBRE DRIVER FLOORSTANDER

Compact and affordable two way reflex loudspeaker. KLS7's slim dimensions make it easy to accommodate, but it uses top quality carbon fibre drivers, so performance isn't compromised. An audiophile bargain. Sensitivity 86dB 1W/1m 12mm MDF, internal volume 18Ltrs, external dimensions 15cm(w) x 80cm(h) x 22cm(d).

DRIVE UNIT & CROSSOVER KIT £180.00
DRIVE UNIT PACK £100.00

KLS12 TWO WAY FLOORSTANDER/STANDMOUNTER



£155

KLS12 is a versatile budget loudspeaker that delivers fine sound quality at a low low price. It utilises Audax's HT210F0 woven fibre glass cone, mid/bass unit, beautifully married with the TW034X0, 34mm diameter tapered fabric dome tweeter. Noel Keywood says, 'The KLS12 is a transparent, vividly detailed transducer with fine projection. It has tight well defined bass, which means it is best positioned close to a rear wall. Vocals possess a clean outline with an intense clarity.' At 89dB the KLS12 is easy to drive, thus, it is suitable for 20W and upward power amps. Internal volume = 34.1 litres

standmounter external dimensions = 58cm(h) x 24cm(w) x 14cm(d)
 floor stander external dimensions (with sand filled base) = 58cm(w) x 24cm(h) x 14cm(d)

DRIVE UNITS & CROSSOVER KIT £155.00
DRIVE UNIT PACK £80.00

KLS11 3 WAY DESIGN



NEW

Our newest design is a wonderful three way bass reflex enclosure stand mounter. Another star performer, featuring the superb gold dome tweeter, the HD3P. This, married perfectly to a HM100Z0 midrange unit and utilising the deep full sound of the 10 inch PR24OZ0 bass unit. All units are from Audax. As both these units use high definition Aerogel cones they have similar sonic signatures, providing a deliciously gelled sound. Our KLS11 is a quality three way, with powerful bass and midrange driver that ensures vocals are handled with high fidelity. The treble is both smooth and sweet. Sensitivity 88dB

Volume 45.5 litres External dimensions 31cms (w) x 37.5cms (h) x 64cms (h)

DRIVE UNIT & CROSSOVER KIT £565.00
DRIVE UNIT KIT £450.00

KLS8 TWO WAY HIGH SENSITIVITY

With a sensitivity of 94dB, KLS8 needs very little power. Its 10in. professional bass driver and horn loaded tweeter give it a BIG sound. Ideal for low power amplifiers. Internal volume 50.5Ltrs, external dimensions 29cm(w) x 65cm(h) x 36cm(d).

DRIVE UNIT & CROSSOVER KIT £240.00
DRIVE UNIT PACK £160.00

KLS3 GOLD MK II



£535

ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY THREE WAY LOUDSPEAKER

KLS3 Gold uses the latest creation of Audax's innovative dual gold dome piezo electric tweeter, giving it the sweetest and most extended treble. Married to a 4in. carbon fibre cone midrange driver for neutral and clear reproduction, and a powerful 10in. bass driver for superb depth, this is our most desirable reflex speaker. Sensitivity 90dB at 1W/1m, 25mm MDF, internal volume 60Ltrs, external dimensions 26cm(w) x 70cm(h) x 35cm(d).

DRIVE UNIT & CROSSOVER KIT £535.00
DRIVE UNIT PACK £430.00

Upgrade your KLS3s to Gold status. Includes latest oval gold dome piezo tweeter and all components.

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WAP SURPLUS VALVE TOROIDAL MAINS TRANSFORMER



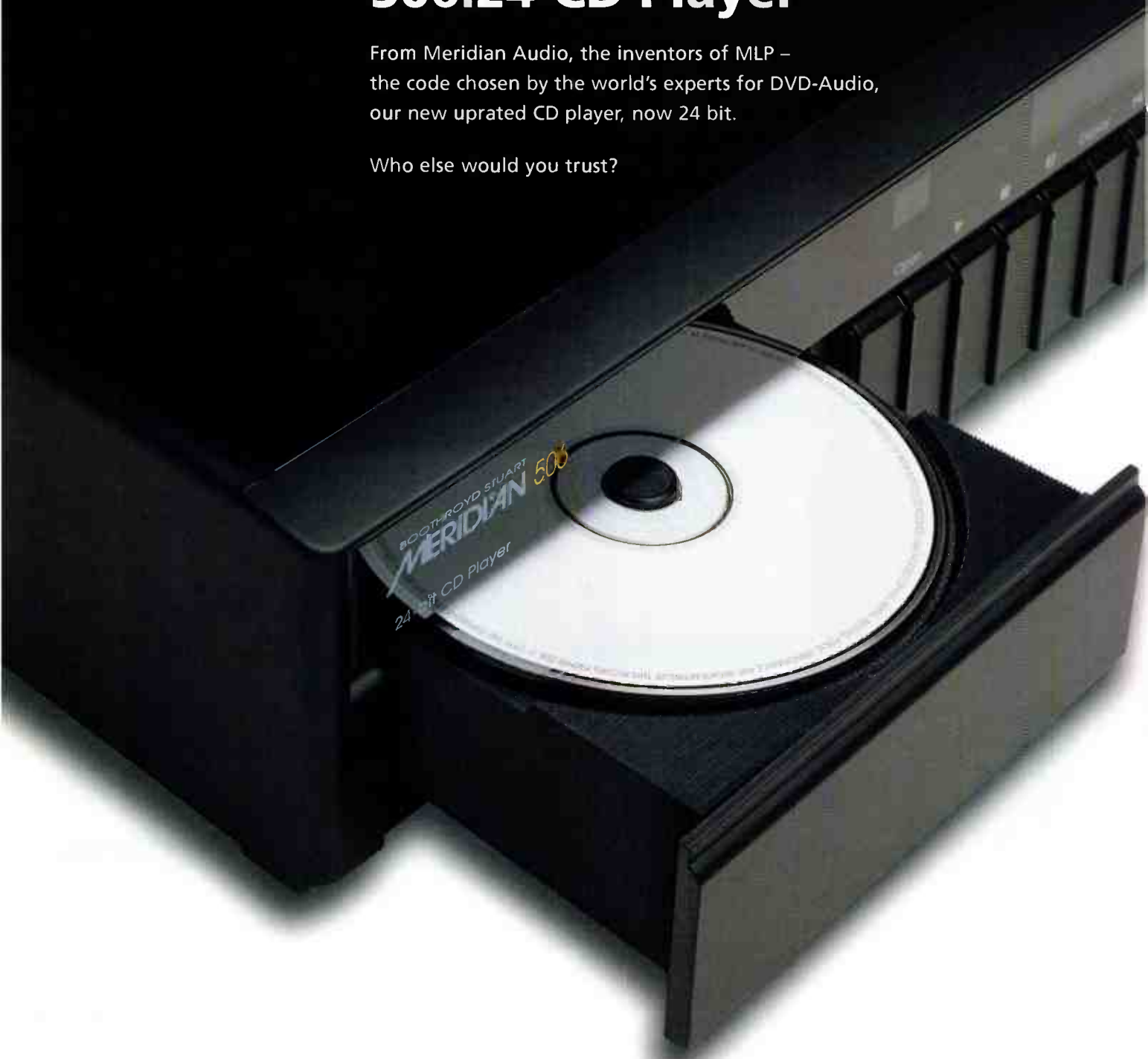
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KEL34 Upgrade Kit.....	KEL34 Upgrade Kit.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£150 £135	£125 £110
KEL34 E&I 40W push-pull integrated amplifier.....	KEL34 E&I -K240/120(with valves).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£315 £295	£270 £250
KEL34 E&I (without valves).....	KEL34 E&I -K240/120(No valves).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£270 £240	£230 £205
KEL34 E&I Transformer set (1 main & 2 outputs).....	KEL34 E&I -K240/120(T. set).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£130 £115	£110 £100
KEL34 E&I Output Transformer (pair).....	KEL34 E&I -K240/120(OPT).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£80 £70	£60 £60
K5881 MkII 20W push-pull valve amplifier.....	K5881-K240/120.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£395 £365	£350 £310
KLP1 line level pre-amplifier.....	KLP1-K240/120.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£345 £325	£295 £275
KLPP1 valve phono pre-amplifier.....	KLPP1-K240/120.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£495 £465	£425 £400
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Drive Units + Crossover kit etc.....	KLS12-C.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£175 £155	£150 £135
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KLS11 3-way aerogel standmounter loudspeaker with piezo gold tweeter		<input type="checkbox"/>		
Drive Units + Crossover kit etc.....	KLS11-C.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£595 £565	£505 £480
Drive Units.....	KLS11-D.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£470 £450	£400 £380
KLS10 2-way carbon-fibre standmounter loudspeaker with piezo gold tweeter		<input type="checkbox"/>		
Drive Units + Crossover kit etc.....	KLS10-C.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£394 £365	£343 £310
Drive Units.....	KLS10-D.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£358 £329	£280 £280
KLS10 SUBWOOFER Drive Unit + Crossover Kit etc.....	KLS10-SubC.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£150 £135	£130 £115
KLS10 SUBWOOFER Drive Unit.....	KLS10-SubD (1 x HM210Z2).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£71 £65	£61 £55
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Drive Units + Crossover kit etc.....	KLS3-C.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£350 £320	£300 £275
Drive Units.....	KLS3-D.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£230 £200	£200 £170
KLS3 Gold 3-way carbon-fibre driver floorstanding loudspeaker with piezo tweeter		<input type="checkbox"/>		
Drive Units + Crossover kit etc.....	KLS3-C.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£575 £535	£500 £460
Drive Units.....	KLS3-D.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£450 £430	£392 £355
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Drive Units.....	KLS7-D.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£110 £100	£95 £85
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Drive Units.....	KLS8-D.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£175 £160	£150 £135
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Drive Units + Crossover kit etc.....	KLS9-C.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£230 £205	£200 £175
Drive Units.....	KLS9-D.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£160 £145	£160 £125

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* Not applicable to overseas prices

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3inch midrange, 93dB.....	HM100Z0.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£35	£30*
4inch midrange, 92dB.....	HM130Z0.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£47	£40*
6.5inch bass/mid, 91dB.....	HM170Z0.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£53	£45*
8inch bass, 91dB.....	HM210Z0.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£64	£55*
10inch bass, 90dB.....	PR240Z0.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£76	£65*

Carbon Fibre Drivers

4inch midrange, 90dB.....	HM130C0.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£41	£35*
6.5inch bass/mid, 90dB.....	HM170C0.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£47	£40*
8inch bass, 90dB.....	HM210C0.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£58	£50*

Paper Cone Drivers

10inch paper cone bass, 95dB.....	PR240M0.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£67	£55*
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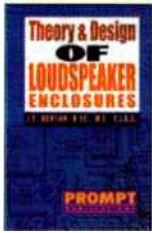
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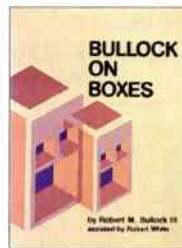
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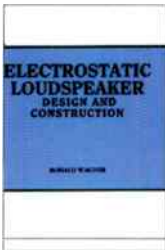
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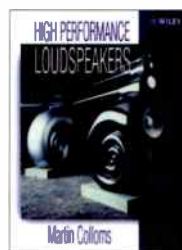
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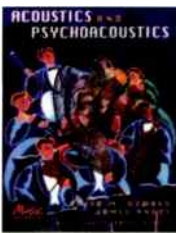
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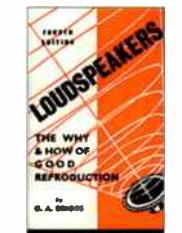
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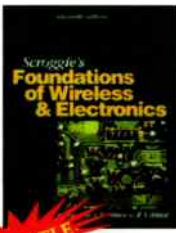


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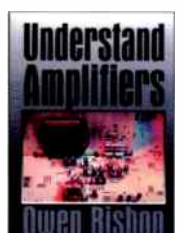
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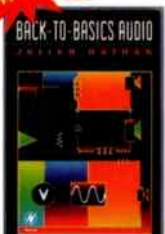
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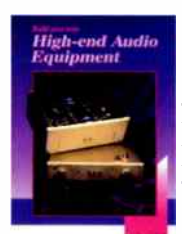
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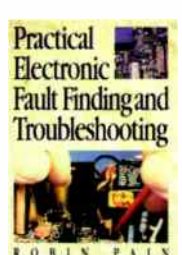
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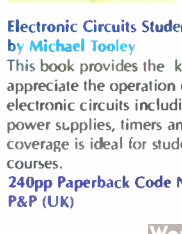
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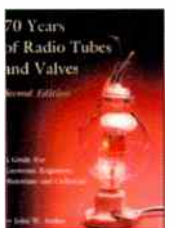
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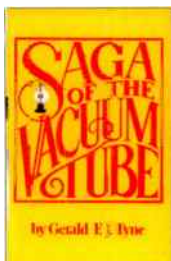
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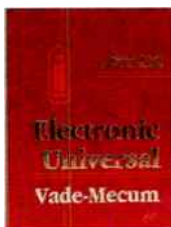
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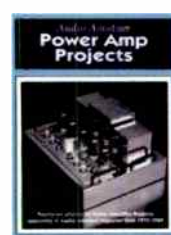
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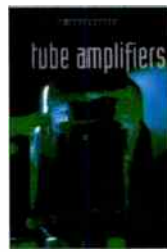
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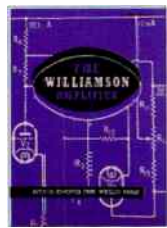
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In this occasional feature, Simon Pope and Richard White highlight a recording which has lightened up their lives a little.



KILLING JOKE
WHAT'S THIS FOR...!
EG RECORDS EGMDS.50 (1981)

I'm going to get some stick for this, I know, but here goes. Killing Joke were a love 'em or hate 'em affair. It's true to say that not all of their output is, er, quality - but some of it was. They share something in common (not musically!) with the Cocteau Twins in that at the time there wasn't anything else quite like it, and

there still isn't really - it was a truly one-off sound.

This, their second album, is perhaps the best and most ahead of its time musically. If you want to know where The Prodigy's Keith Flint pinched his highly tuneful vocal technique from, look no further than this - or any other Killing Joke record. Jaz Coleman was ranting with serious intent - lower jaw poking out - well before Keith was making a twerp of himself on MTV! It's very hard to pigeon-hole early Killing Joke - although they were sometimes daftly referred to as 'punk' (punk with synthesisers??). It has relentless intense rhythmic drumming, very much akin to the heavy dance stuff of today (Propellorheads spring to mind). Jaz Coleman snarls convincingly and Youth, on the bass, kicks ass with vengeance - surely a candidate for best bass player since 1980?

What's interesting here is the way that this music foreshadows the type of dance music we have today, with its heavy, deep beats and swirling 'wall of sound' guitars.

Consider an earful of the truly pummelling Follow The Leaders or The Fall Of Because, or the heavily syncopated beats of Madness - these guys were seriously angry. Here is aggression in abundance, it makes me want to chew very hard on a piece of leather. It's not easy listening and doesn't pretend to be - thirty minutes of it is easily enough. But I find it numbingly addictive. The recording quality is fairly typical early 80s; pretty flat and undetailed but very well balanced tonally and dynamically - just right for high volumes!

What makes the important difference is that there is definitely something strangely musical there, albeit verging on the avant-garde. Subsequently bass-player Youth became one of the leading producers of dance music and vocalist/key-boardist Jaz Coleman moved down under and became something like Composer in Residence of the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra - a truly killing joke! Finally, do I play it often? About once every two years and I thoroughly enjoy it! My neighbours, however, prefer Sibelius. **SP**



MENDELSSOHN
String Quartet No 4 & Four Pieces
Opus 81
The Gabrielli Quartet
DECCA ACE OF DIAMONDS SDD 469
(1975)

The work of Felix Mendelssohn is viewed with a deal of ambivalence by many 'serious' listeners. They would admit his exceptional technical competence, his monumental ability to dazzle and, possibly, the sheer musicality which runs

through the main body of his work.

Over a hundred-and-fifty years after his death, and nearly a century after the death of his Royal patroness Elijah has been rehabilitated, largely by having been done 'properly' by professionals, and for sheer longevity his work obviously has something to recommend it. As regards the British composers he supposedly wiped out, given the choice between one of Sterndale Bennet's scholarly compositions or the Hebrides Overture, there is little doubt what the popular choice would be. Although we might view the 'authentic performance' movement with misgiving at times, there is little doubt that Mendelssohn's music is not best served by the now-standard late Romantic symphony orchestra - it's too subtle for that.

One area of Mendelssohn's output which has maintained a steady following is his chamber work, in particular the various piano and string works, and the string quartets.

This recording of the Quartet No 4 and the collection of leftovers formerly known as the Quartet No 7 is played in, well, rip-

ping style by the Gabrielli Quartet. Although there is much that is tender, even in the fastest movements, the Gabriellis wisely opt for attack and passion to bring off these demanding works. Mendelssohn played at a gallop is inclined to sound a little like Suppé, so, despite the exhilarating tempi, the players obviously intend that enough 'bite' is present to point the composer's ideas.

My copy of this record had done yeoman service in the Lancashire Library service before being offered for sale second (or hundredth) hand. Given these inauspicious circumstances, it says a lot for the typically generous Decca cut that the record is still in very playable condition - just try playing a Deutsche disc after the same treatment!

Neither composer nor players are exactly at the top of the pantheon, but this well turned can do much to wipe away the prevalent somewhat superior attitude to the work of a man who, whether you like him or loathe him, was never less than a master musician.

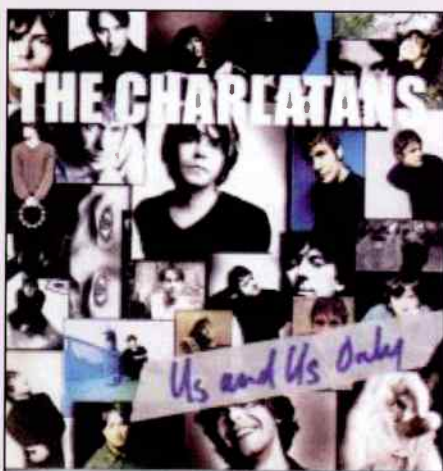
RMW



rock & pop

by Jon Clarke & Stuart Lenz

RECORD OF THE MONTH



Charlatans
Us and Only Us

While the 'Mondays have become a parody of themselves, the Inspiral Carpets a distant memory, and the Stone Roses legends in their own right, the Charlatans keep on keeping on. With this their sixth studio album, the last of the big North-West bands of the decade show not only that life can improve after Madchester, but it just gets better and better.

Always a few steps away from the

intense Manchester-based scene, which sprung up in 1989, the Northwich based fivesome, were nonetheless lumped into the Bez, Mani and Moose melting pot. So when fickle fashion dumped drugs, trips and raves out of the window in favour of Seattle's finest, the Charlatans looked high and dry.

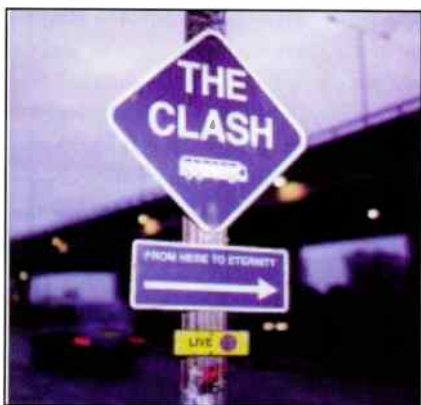
But not so - despite a press blackout (out of fashion! out of fashion!) - they developed, experimented, survived banging ups for armed robbery and the fatal car crash of their keyboard player Rob Collins on the eve of appearances supporting Oasis at Knebworth and Loch Lomond, to become one of the mainstays of the British music scene.

After their last album *Tellin Stories*, which pipped Supergrass to No1, we could rightly expect something special. And *Us and Us Only* doesn't disappoint. Arguably their best album to date, surprisingly it was recorded at break-neck speed after a long break. Employing the services of new keyboard player Tony Rodgers, it comprises a delightful mix of folk, rock, blues and even country, stuff never heard from the boys before. A

moodier, blacker, and distinctly more moving album, it shows an enviable maturity and self-belief.

Opening with a belter, *Forever*, which glides in on a swirling Hammond organ, and driven by punchy bass and an escalating clatter of percussion, the 11 tracks here hardly show an Achilles heel. The short but brilliantly catchy raindrop keyboard and haunting mood of a *Good Witch/Bad Witch*, which is to return later in full, sets an early mood, and is quickly followed by *Impossible*, a cleverly crafted Bob Dylanish mid-American ditty. Tim Burgess's voice, which at times in the past has lacked real passion, has never sounded stronger.

There are many more gems to be found here. The *Blonde Waltz*, a sad, poignant ramble, *I don't Care Where You Live*, an optimistic acoustic number, and *Beautiful Friend*, a blindingly catchy southern US drawl, to top them all. With hints of Nick Cave, the Stones and Dylan, *Us and Us Only*, shows a band coming of age. That it has taken 10 years and six albums shows how fashions rise and fall. Perhaps the ghosts of Madchester can finally be put to rest.



The Clash
From Here To Eternity

When they imploded in the middle of 1982, torn apart by drug addictions and violent internal rifts, they were on the road

to being as big as U2. No stadium was too large, no country too isolated. Everybody knew the Clash - the greatest punk export ever. While the Pistols had quickly become a laughing stock, the Stranglers got stuck in a rut, and Siouxsie and the Banshees went all weird and new age, Topper, Joe, Tim and Mick embraced rock and reggae to keep up with the times. The result: punk, with melody and tunes.

Across five, or was that six, cutting edge albums, the Clash produced music to keep the UK firmly on the map. Perhaps it was the frisson between them that kept their edge, perhaps it was the musical talents of songwriters Strummer, Simonon and Jones, perhaps it was just their attitude that kept them so relevant. Whatever, even a classic disco track like *Rock the Kasbah*, released in their twilight months, had important

political connotations, and a wicked dance groove.

From Here To Eternity is about the best retrospective live album you are ever going to get. With venues as varied as London's Music Machine and New York's Shea Stadium, and songs as mixed as punk classic *Career Opportunities*, to the clever white reggae chatter of *Armagedeon Time*, with the excellent vocals care of Mikey Dread, it goes down as a classic slice of history. It is in fact with *Armagedeon Time*, recorded at Lewisham Odeon, on February 18th, 1980, that the Clash are possibly best summed up. Off the brilliant *Black Market Clash* EP, it shows the experimental side of the West London foursome at their best. Employing dub and ska, they cleverly managed to bridge, for the first time, the gap between punk and the much put upon

rock & pop

by Jor Clarke & Stuart Lenz

West Indian culture. It was their greatest success.

That said, *Train in Vain*, is undoubtedly the album's high point. Recorded in 1982, in New York, with a fanatic and rapturous audience, it summed up what the Clash were ultimately all about, as well as their eventual downfall. An upbeat track it included the confident, optimistic chorus 'stand by me, stand by me!', a tenet which the band always tried to encourage, but were ultimately unable to do themselves. And it is this sad rift and fallout in their prime that makes final track *Straight To Hell*, all that bit sadder.



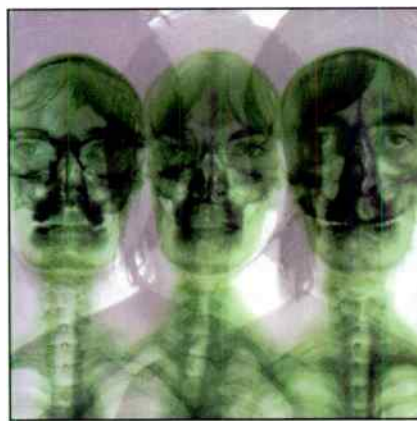
Brendan Perry *Eye Of The Hunter*

Dead Can Dance principals Brendan Perry and Lisa Gerrard are the stuff of legend. Always disinterested in fashion they were forever associated with the interminable 'bandwagon-jumping' goth bands that stepped out in the early eighties. The name didn't help obviously but the music always tilted more towards the shimmering orientalism of say, 4AD stablemates Cocteau Twins instead of the spiky edginess of the Southern Death Cult.

More than that they were perhaps the most eclectic and versatile musicians around, tapping into Celtic folk music, South American incantations as well as er, the ley lines of the soul, man. With such grandiose works as *Spleen And Ideal* in the can, it was not hard to see why they were

deemed 'out-there' even by their record label's outlandish standards. After more than fifteen years together Brendan has finally got the itch to do a solo record and a rewarding debut it proves to be, if moody hypnotic impressions and bizarre instrumentation are your bag.

It seems almost fitting then that where Dead Can Dance's peak was arguably their cover of Tim Buckley's classic *Song To The Siren* (under the collaborative mantle of This Mortal Coil with the Cocteau's Liz Fraser on vocals) Brendan has now included another, *I Must Have Been Blind* on his debut. Without quite achieving the five octave range of Buckley himself, Brendan manages to deadpan his way through the song impressively with a vocal pitched somewhere between Leonard Cohen and Scott Walker. *Must Have Been Blind*, *Voyage Of Bran* and the soaring Saturday's Child are magnificent and should ensure that the album has more than just a shelf-life.



Supergrass *Supergrass*

Supergrass's songs have always been a bit wacky. A zany mix of '60s and '70s officially certified rock'n'roll, that always pulled up a few inches short of a Parental Advisory sticker. In the name of youthful exuberance they stepped out to win over the world's sixth form students. And they didn't half do *Alright* (to recall their popular anthem) at it.

The dilemma inevitably occurred as the Oxford boys began to struggle with maturity, fame and keeping their sideburns neatly in check (an insurmountable problem for Gaz). And much of the recent interesting material surrounding Supergrass has happened away from the music field. Firstly offered a Calvin Klein modelling contract, they were next suggested for their own TV series by Spielberg who thought they were the Monkees for the nineties. The fact that both offers were swiftly turned down, if nothing else, shows the 'serious' direction that the band now want to take.

Their thrilling debut 1995's *I Should Coco* was a delight - a feast of vintage riffs by a bunch of guys with permanent erections (how did you come by this one? - Ed) and cheesy grins. This was followed by the equally impressive and perhaps more flamboyant *In It For The Money*, with the boys having the temerity to release the gritty *Richard The III* and the Floydian panoramic *Late In The Day* as singles.

Supergrass are keen to carry on with their pop sensibilities and wear their rather obvious influences on their sleeves. So really it is not a case of *All Change* but business as usual. However, what Supergrass the album lacks in innovation it more than makes up for with a variety of gaily coloured tunes. There's *Moving*, a dreamy acoustic number in the vein of Radiohead (their close mates from Oxford) with Gaz's vocal completely on song; *Beautiful People*, a reprise of the *Alright* groove; *Shotover Hill*, like the Stones circa *Beggars Banquet* with its 'psychedelic' backward guitar motifs and, *Eon*, a Can soundalike of funky loops. All quite acceptable.

Elsewhere there are strong traces of Syd Barrett, Lennon and Bowie. And with all these rich and varied reference points it's difficult to imagine how this could ever be construed as their 'enigma' album. The thing is they never stop sounding like themselves, which is either brilliant news to die hard fans or a case of the joke beginning to wear thin for the neutrals.

classical

by Frank Blake



MATTHIAS WECKMANN
Sacred Concerti and Harpsichord Music

Susan Gritton soprano
Paul Agnew high tenor
Julian Podger tenor
Stephen Varcoe baritone
Robert Woolley harpsichord
The Purcell Quartet

CHACONNE (CHANDOS EARLY MUSIC)
CHAN 0646

Judging by the cover illustration, one might be forgiven for thinking that Matthias Weckmann specialised in Gothic flesh-creepers after the manner of Boëllmann's *Suite Gothique* of perhaps Saint Saens' skeletal fantasies. In the glow of a new techno-Millennium, we may easily forget that the possibility of entire populations being wiped out did not arrive with the splitting of the atom. 'A plague on all your houses' Shakespeare might have written with more truth; several of the pieces included on this album were written in the aftermath of the Hamburg outbreak of plague in 1663, an epidemic in which two of Weckmann's colleagues died and in which he too expected to succumb. Some excuse then for the reflective laments which comprise

this Chandos Early Music collection.

Weckmann (1616-1674) is not a well-known composer outside of the perhaps too inward-looking ranks of early music fans. On the evidence of this album, he deserves a much closer listen. Unfortunately, this is by no means easy since very little of his mature work has survived. I can give no better indication of his style than by saying that he forcefully reminds me of

Purcell; the same elbowing space within the rigid musical conventions; same lingering over favourite cadences; the same repetition of his 'best bits'.

Purcell is of course artistically unassailable, and I am tempted to say that, in his own slightly more primitive style, so is Weckmann. Every effect he attempts is achieved with economy and grace. Whilst there is nothing quite like the English composer's 'All We Like Sheep' motet, Weckmann's music give the same glorious sense of incipient freedom and the (to post-Classical ears) surprising lack of concern about false relation, consecutive fifths and all the other nineteenth century composition paraphernalia.

The composer's life was as uneventful as J.S.Bach's - the usual round of appointments as organist or kappellmeister under the patronage of the petty principalities of the day. That this system produced such richness should no longer surprise us but there are still those who consider, say, Beethoven great because he was a rebel. Nice work if you can get it! The majority of professional musicians before his time managed to produce coruscating masterpieces whilst in the pay of the Urban District Council and under obligation to provide music to order, by order. Rebellion has very little to do with it; professional ability has a very great deal.

Taking part in these nicely balanced recordings are five singers and The Purcell Quartet. Whilst it is invidious to single out an individual from such a close-knit group, Susan Gritton (soprano) manages the difficult task of singing in an 'authentic' (who knows?) baroque style without raising any sniggers. Praiseworthy too is her sure intonation and her eschewal of the androgynous horrors of the 'Violet Elizabeth' school of early music singing - indeed within the confines of the somewhat mannered style she sounds distinctly feminine!

The other singers too are well suited to the work in hand, and although one might occasionally raise a quibble about the odd distinctly English sounding syllable in this desperately Germanic text, these slips are not sufficient to jar the sensibilities in ordinary listening. Intonation is good throughout and the blending in the concerted items is both controlled and yet vigorous - there is a thoroughly enjoyable sense of the singers joining forces rather than just standing together.

The Purcell Quartet, with a little help from its friends, plainly enjoys itself throughout, too. Ensemble work with just violins and bass viols gives rise to some interesting 'open' textures, although the continuo naturally tends to bind things together. Robert Woolley both directs the group and plays two klavier suites, recorded here for the first time. Other manifestations of this artist occur in the organ accompaniments in the choral works, which are played on a splendidly 'woody' modern 'period' instrument. For savants the world over, mean-tone temperament has been employed - less versatile than modern equal temperament but closer to 'perfect'.

If you love not-so-desperately early music, don't miss this disc - it's something of an education in itself. On the other hand, if your interest is purely historical, it should be noted that Matthias Weckmann was born in Thuringia, a region of Northern Germany in whose soil various branches of a family tree named Bach had taken firm root. Is there really 'no such thing as coincidence'?**FB**
(Stephen Priest is on holiday)

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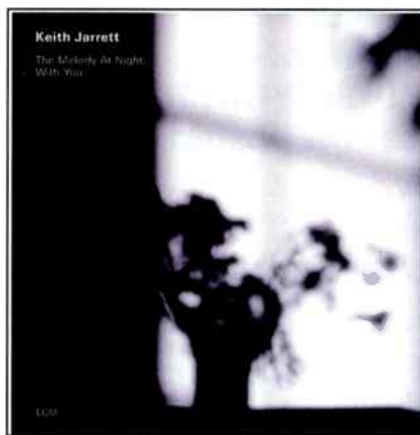
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jazz

by Ian Nicolson



KEITH JARRETT
The Melody At Night, With You
(ECM 1675)

For years now, Jarrett live performances have been lit up by his knack for dropping thrillingly or evocatively deconstructed quotes from well-known songs into another piece. And despite the success of his Standards Trio, this is the first time he has compiled a solo album of standards alone.

Behind the music itself lies a harrowing story of illness and disability that adds resonance to these fragile, minimalist reworkings of the apparently irredeemably familiar. For the last couple of years, the piano player whose concerts have become legendary for their intensity and length has been suffering from a form of chronic fatigue syndrome that has profoundly restricted his art.

The Melody At Night also breaks with Jarrett's tradition of recording in concert to capture the act of improvisation "on the wing". These eleven songs were recorded - by the pianist himself - in his own studio, the Cavelight, at his home in New Jersey during 1999. Dedicated to his wife, Rose Anne, they arc revealingly from traditional folk tunes like Shenandoah and My Wild Irish Rose, through tenor Mario Lanza's fifties pop smash Be My Love, to standards like I Loves You Porgy and I Got It Bad And That Ain't Good. If you've never heard Jarrett before, this may sound like another collection of lift

music noodlings by a faceless or derivative player who couldn't afford a band, but, as ever, Jarrett has come up with the goods.

There's an almost post-coital tristesse about these recordings, a sense of beauty fading, yet worth capturing before the sunset dips beneath the horizon of recollection. Sometimes almost whispered - as though across a pillow - Jarrett's piano glides and dance through roomfuls of memories like a fey, liquid spirit.

Imagine an anteroom to Paradise, where we all wait to be assessed on the value of our lives. This album captures that moment in tender, fragile yet stirring explorations of the architecture of composition - the moment when the mysteries of a lifetime become plain only to reveal a vast landscape of greater mysteries beyond.

Without fuss or bluster, yet rooted still in stunning technique, Jarrett has made his most broadly listenable, evocative and charming album to date. It is a measure of the artist that he has married that achievement to a magical musical experience.

CAETANO ELOSO
Federico and Giuletta
(UNIVERSAL 5466382).



Recorded live in Italy - well, San Marino - in 1997, this is a potted musical biography sung in Portuguese, Italian, Spanish

and English and ranging lightly over classic sambas like Coração Vagabundo and Lua, Lua, Lua, Lua jumbled up with Nino Rota's Come Tu Mi Vuoi, Jobim's Chega de Saudade and Berlin's Let's Face The Music And Dance.

Backing Veloso's frisky, rhythmic guitar are contrabass, the splendid - and sensitive - Carlos Balla on drums, plus cello and violin, and an enthusiastic audience in the turn of the century Teatro Nuovo. Close-miking and consummate stage technique keep the context intimate, while the mix of magical melody, angelic singing and theatrical context make for a rich experience.

Argüelles made his first mark as a saxophonist with the free-wheeling, massive sound of Loose Tubes during the middle eighties, but his solo sets since - Scapes in 1995, Home Truths in 1996 and Skull View in 1997 - proved that the magpie sensibility needed to match the Tubes catholic tastes was allied to a profound compositional talent. His latest may well find itself on a Mercury or Mobo list by this time next year.

Argüelles has teamed up with ace British players like guitarist Mike Walker, tenorist Django Bates and Steve Watts on bass, to range across themes, moods and continents in impressive style. From the delicious opener of Gallows Humour - which blurs the bouncy, infectious neo-classicism of The Penguin Cafe Orchestra into a funky, martial improvisation led by Argüelles' twisting, snaky soprano saxophone, threaded through by Mário Laginha's rippling piano - it's clear there's Jazz and talent to spare here.

In the free-flowing Powwow for example, as the instruments play Peter and the Wolf to what sounds like Lambeth Council coming to a decision on parking permits, the delightful sense of watching a pearl in progress is even stronger, while the measured, fin-de-siecle romanticism of 9 Grammes of Lead echoes Satie or Debussy. Snappy Salsoul percussion, stinging guitar and progressive horn charts chase each other around Coffee and Diesel, then dissolve into a dreamy Metheny-style cameo for Walker's succinct blues-inflected guitar on Mind Your Head and the playful brass of Ace of Trumps.

dance & ambient

by Sara Davis



Various
Essential Millennium
Essential Recordings
 PM10295

Another in a flurry of millennium titles but definitely a representative

selection of tunes from three of the decades biggest DJ names. Pete Tong opens the party of three CDs with a whole host of classics including Stardust's Music Sounds Better With You and Pete Heller's Big Love. None of the tunes exactly burst out at you in terms of originality or sur-

prise, all of 'em being very popular, very safe tunes that most people already have on a million other compilation CDs. All in all it's very Pete Tong; Moloko's Sing it Back summing up the '99 vibe perfectly. Fatboy Slim's second CD takes the compilation back to an early house sound with funkier take on the millennium theme. This mix is more adventurous than Tong's using the best of current largish beats and throwing in old favourites such as Underworld's Born Slippy.

Who better to polish the evening off than Mr Oaky himself? Purveyor of the finest cheesy house anthems ever? Yes indeed. There's nothing better than a round of Hooj Choons or React after a Norman Cook set so it good to see the likes of Gamemaster and You're Not Alone nestling there on CD3. Again, the selection isn't hugely creative but it really doesn't matter when the records are that good. This triplicate party album has a side for every mood and will be the perfect companion to millennium parties the country over, especially for all those too tired and emotional to manage a mix themselves.



BIG BUD
'Infinity + Infinity
Good Looking Records
 GLRMA001

'n' bass, L T J Bukem signs a new face it's usually when he has good reason to and if you give these tunes half a chance it's easy to see how. Take Chill for example. Anyone questioning the point of drum 'n'

As the opening tracks unfold and definitely by the third, Pure Re-mix, this album adheres to the good Looking vibe; sophisticated hi-hat 'n' bass and smoochy soulful dub. It's kinda safe - too safe - because this genre has been quiet for months, dominated by the breakbeat thing. But when the master innovator of drum

bass has their answer right here, it's the perfect blend of subtle bass beef with gorgeous chilled melody. Even on first listening the mood mesmerises, a halfway sound between infectious beat and lullaby tunes. High Times does the same, but on a far funkier level and equally as strong but in a bouncy vein. As Infinity + Infinity progresses it starts to feel like a concept album, the sound is subtly engaging.

The first to pick up on Big bud's production skills was Radio One's Fabio but it has taken the backing of a key label like Good Looking to really launch the studio-obsessed recluse from Southampton. Those who caught earlier releases on Logical Progression 3 or Earth 3 now have the offer of nine more luscious tracks, this makes ambient drum 'n' bass classier; it oozes universal appeal.

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Our comprehensive new guide contains over 1,000 hi-fi components, all tried and tested by HI-FI World's listening team. Backing up each one is our performance verdict to help you select the perfect upgrade or first purchase. Happy reading!

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Contents

Loudspeakers £ Year Verdict

Under £300

Acoustic Energy AE100	£200	Jan 96	Reasonably neutral but ultimately lacklustre. Control of treble and mid-range poor.
Audio Gem Opals	£240	Dec 97	Partner the Opals with warm ancillaries and you get an involving sound. Avoid bright amps and sources.
Aura LSB-627M	£230	Aug 98	Energetic, bold and highly detailed, the Aura is one to consider for the budget-conscious.
Aura LST-627	£299	Oct 98	Like Aura's matching stand mounters, the 627Ms are lucid and controlled. Treble is brightish.
B&W 601	£200	Jan 96	Unrestricted and clean sound with satisfying musicality. An engaging subtlety not common at the price.
B&W DM302	£130	Apr 96	Clear open and detailed sound but balance too forward and weak bass.
B&W DM602	£250	Nov 96	Excels with taut hard-hitting bass with dynamic, uncoloured midrange. Metal tweeter bleaches out the treble.
Boston CR6	£150	Sep 98	With simple music, the CR6s work well, but not quite as well as the best of the competition.
Castle Isis	£230	Jan 96	A lively little animal, well worth the money.
Celestion 12i	£119	Feb 98	The 12is' powerful, confident sound belies a rather poor measured performance.
Celestion Impact 15	£200	Jan 96	Big presentation but a rather distant quality. Could sound boomy and confined.
Celestion Impact 23	£299	Nov 96	Sterling performance in the bass with speed and control. Good midrange projection.
Charlo Hlper 1000	£299	Feb 99	Quality construction and sound produce a very capable 'speaker. Open treble and firm bass for the size.
Eliax Liberty 3+	£150	Jan 98	A lot of loudspeaker for the money. Punch and slam in the bass but sometimes thin in the treble.
Eltax Symphony 6	£240	Nov 96	Although bright, the Symphony 6s score for clarity and power. Bass is fast and accurate.
Gale 2i	£140	Feb 97	Smooth, balanced performers that do a good job on any genre. Free from the nasties that afflict many at the price.
Gale Mini Monitor GLL ICT100	£50	Apr 97	Not the last word in midrange or bass clarity, but gives real hi-fi results for a paltry £50.
Heybrook Heylette	£170	Nov 95	For their size and price they offer some super qualities, especially stable imaging.
Heybrook Optima	£270	Jun 98	A mini monitor with more precision and dynamism than the size and price tag would suggest.
Heybrooks HB1 S3	£259	Oct 98	Capable all-rounders, the Optimas combine smoothness, insight and control to great effect.
Jamo CS5 Actives	£269	Nov 96	Excellent imaging with clear treble and midrange. Bass slightly dry and boxy but would suit a smaller room.
JPW ML510	£200	Oct 98	In spite of a few colorations, the Jamos are fine examples of budget active operation.
Kef 60S	£130	Jan 98	With greater transparency and a bit more get-up-and-go, the 510s could be leaders of the budget pack.
Kef Coda 7	£200	May 96	The 60S is open and detailed but coloured too.
Kef Coda 8	£129	Apr 95	Rhythmic push and tuneful bass are the plus points of these small standmounts.
Kef Coda 9	£200	Jan 96	Breezy presence, good dynamics and a sense of fullness. Not the utmost in clarity, some box colouration.
Kef Q15	£299	Jul 96	Strong bass can get out of control, as can treble. This tends to overpower the midrange.
Kenwood LS90UK	£199	Feb 97	Impressive bass and a sweet clarity make the Q15s 'speakers that'll put a smile on any audiophile's face.
Linn Sekrit	£129	Jul 98	The LS90UKs have dry bass and limited tonal colour, but staging and imaging are superb.
Mission 700	£298	Apr 96	Well-behaved and with a decent tonal quality.
Mission 731	£130	May 98	The 700s are easily outclassed by Mission's own superb 731 Pros at a £10 premium.
Mission 731 Pro	£129	Apr 95	An initially impressive, upfront sound but ultimately a little uninvolved.
Mission 731i	£139	Jul 97	Music makers with a clean, punchy sound. Real value for money.
Mission 731LE	£130	Nov 96	Mission's babies are a truly worthwhile improvement on the original 731s.
Mission 732i	£150	Nov 95	Excellent sound puts the competitors in the shade. Well built and pretty too!
Mission 771	£200	Aug 97	If you've got £200 with 'loudspeaker' written on it, then the 732i should be on your shopping list.
Mission 772	£170	Jul 98	Superb stand mounters of real refinement and musicality. A touch bass light.
Monsoon MM-1000	£230	Apr 99	Civilised standmounters which lack nothing in control, finesse or transparency.
Mordaunt-Short MS20i	£200	May 99	A novel multi-media two-satellites-and-sub which nevertheless demands to be taken quite seriously.
Nad 801	£200	Jan 96	Very tight bass and an all-round big sound. Some sharpness in the treble but assertive and clear.
Paradigm Mini Monitors	£100	Jun 97	Impressive bass with midrange clarity are pluses. Prominent treble stops the 801 from challenging the best.
QLN 122	£230	Aug 97	The Paradigms have a generally enjoyable sound but treble is sharp and midrange recessed.
RDL RA Labs Mini Ref	£270	Jun 96	Solid bottom end will drive a large room well, but they're a bit bright too.
Revolver Purdey	£99	Jul 95	Engineering is not tip-top, but with a smooth system they will produce a clear and open, if bright, sound.
Rogers LS1	£200	Jan 96	Rather small sound for a big cabinet. Absence of deep bass hard to forgive.
Rogers LS33	£149	Feb 96	Clear, bright and open but with weak bass. Best used close to or against a wall.
System Audio 1005	£250	Nov 96	Detailed and clear with a forward midrange. Could be a little rough on vocals; bass extension is limited.
Tangent Monitor 11	£299	Aug 96	Excellent all-rounder that provides a real open window into almost every genre of music.
Tangent Monitor 2	£200	Nov 97	The Tangents' bass has attractive speed and impact, matched with smooth treble and open midband.
Tannoy Mercury m1	£60	Jul 96	Good imaging as well as control. Tweets a bit too much but more than fine for the money.
Tannoy Mercury m2	£120	Jun 98	The best at the price and capable of embarrassing many more expensive 'speakers.
Tannoy Mercury m3	£140	May 97	For £140, you get a 'speaker with transparency and enjoyability unmatched at the price.
Tannoy R1	£240	Nov 97	Even overall balance and taut secure bass, if not the deepest ever. Slightly lightweight and uninvolved.
TDL NFM 1	£199	Nov 98	Worth an audition if you need to balance a bright source and amp, but treble lacks clarity.
TDL Nucleus 1	£120	May 97	Bright treble is partially balanced by taut, well integrated bass, but outclassed by the competition.
W'dale Active Diamond	£60	Apr 97	Clean, incisive, detailed and revealing, especially in the bass.
Wharfedale Valdus 300	£180	Mar 99	Great value introduction to active. The sound is deep and powerful but could be a little coloured for some.
	£150	Jul 96	Can work well if partnered to give weighty bass and smooth treble.

£300-£799

B&W CDM1SE	£600	Apr 98	Tuneful and confident, these 'speakers are well suited to Pop and Dance music.
B&W DM305	£350	Mar 97	All the ingredients for listening fun are mixed into the DM305. Overall presentation could be more cohesive though.
B&W P4	£600	Mar 95	Good-looking solid 'speakers with great spirit and tenacity but with a dry treble. Not fans of classical music.
Blue Room Minipod	£400	Jan 97	Arresting style allied to an engaging sound makes the Minipods attractive. Best with smooth amps and source.
Carlsson OA 50.2	£585	Dec 98	Acoustic music gels nicely. More artificial pieces sometimes don't work so well.
Castle Avon	£699	Dec 96	Taut, dry bass and lucid midrange but need matching to warm ancillaries to avoid sounding bright.

Prices shown are those at the time of review



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Loudspeakers £ Year Verdict

£300-£799

Castle Heritage	£799	Aug 96	Bass power and extension will impress but overall sound is uneven and rather sterile.
Castle Kendall	£450	Mar 98	The Kendals have great clarity but need coupling to warm ancillaries.
Castle Severn II	£579	Jul 98	Apart from some hardness in the tweeters, the Severn 2s are accomplished all-rounders.
Chaco Hiper 1	£399	May 95	Music makers through and through with a great feel for rhythm and dynamics.
Chaco Lynx	£549	Apr 99	The Lynxes are superbly built but their rising bass and treble suit home cinema more than hi-fi.
Dist 410	£700	Feb 96	A powerful and rich sound from these competitively priced floorstanders makes them worth a recommendation.
Epos ES12	£495	Oct 96	Strong, punchy bass allied to detailed and articulate midrange and treble.
Heylios Heylios	£339	Aug 97	The Heylios stand out for their bass depth, dynamics and sound staging. Overall balance prefers Classical to Rock.
Heybrook Hayte	£389	Oct 95	Posses a neutral, fast and dry sound. A good match for soft sounding systems.
Jamo 302	£300	Apr 95	Delicate, detailed sound, albeit with rather imprecise imaging. Will work well on a bookshelf.
JPW ML910	£300	Nov 97	Not perfect but they make music fun. Quality, power and extension, the Millenlums are worth a listen.
JPW Ruby 2	£395	Oct 98	Once allied to warm electronics, the Ruby 2s mix insight with plenty of involvement.
Kef LS50A	£599	Jul 95	Partnered with the Rogers AB1, this is a substantial marriage.
Kel Q35	£350	Nov 97	Very accomplished midrange and treble but the dry in the bass. For Rock fans the upper bass speed is appealing.
Kel Q55	£499	Aug 97	The Q55s look rather expensive at £500 with their 'boom and tizz' presentation.
Kel RDM1	£499	Oct 97	The RDM1s soundstage well thanks to their Uni-Q drivers. Can be uninvolved because of a lack of scale and impact.
Linn Tukan	£389	Dec 95	Highly musical standmounters that give similarly priced floorstanders a great deal to worry about.
Monitor A500	£750	May 95	Very polite and many will appreciate their civility. Deep powerful bass.
Mission 732	£300	Apr 95	Captivating floorstanders that bring music to life - what good hi-fi should do.
Mission 734	£430	Sep 95	Engineered for low price and showroom appeal rather than absolute sound quality.
Mission TX1 Freedom	£350	Apr 97	Charming little stand-mounters with a sweet, warm, musical sound.
Mission 752 Freedom	£578	Jan 97	Dynamic, punchy, and musical yet refined like few at the price. Bass lacks a little depth.
Mission 774	£500	Feb 99	With the right ancillaries, the 774s have a clarity and lack of colouration still rare at the price.
Montana-Spot MS20	£300	Nov 96	Sweet sounding metal dome tweeter although the dry bass and rather plasticky midrange work against it.
Musical Technology PM15	£474	Jan 99	Sophisticated, neutral sound and fine musicality put the PM15s near the head of the class.
Next 104	£500	Jan 96	A thin and hard sound but precise with it!
Next Critique II	£445	Jan 99	Deserving 'speakers with good looks and build. Can fail to shine with over-polite equipment.
Next 112	£389	Aug 95	Very crisp sounding 'speakers best suited to smaller rooms.
Opera Prime	£495	Feb 99	The Primas offer a taste of the high-end at a sensible price. They are more fans of Classical than Rock though.
Orion Car Castle II	£329	Oct 95	Good value floorstanders with clean enjoyable sound - not quite supersonic, though.
Polk RW150	£500	Jul 97	The PSW150 adds depth to a system but can sound obvious at times.
Proac Taurus	£600	Aug 98	Amp-sensitive and slightly boxy in the lower treble, the ProAcs are still highly musical.
REL C Bass	£350	May 96	Needs care in setting up but this subwoofer offers serious quality bass for not a lot of money.
REL C1000	£500	Apr 98	Another capable sub from REL that boosts bass and improves sound staging.
Rogers AB 1	£499	Jul 95	When used with the Kef LS3/5a this sub delivers the goods, beyond a doubt.
Rossini Rock III	£595	Feb 97	Musically involving 'speakers that many will enjoy, but a little unrefined at times.
Sequence 409	£329	Apr 96	Good at orchestral scale but coloured in the midband.
Soundcraft Absolute 4P	£799	Oct 97	The Absolute 4Ps excel in all areas except for the rather bright, hard treble. Bass is exceptional.
Spendor S030	£599	Jun 96	Smooth, focussed and coherent in their delivery with deep, taut bass extension. Not the most spacious sound.
Synthesix 160	£400	Feb 96	Dry and clean sound, but can become hard and confused when pushed.
Tethys Precision P10	£300	May 98	Though very even in their performance, the P10s lack ultimate clarity and punch.
Taney Profile £33 plus	£300	Nov 96	Weighty bass and rhythmic detail work well on dance. Less satisfying with classical music. Firm imaging.
TDL RTL 4	£650	Feb 95	Easy going with plenty of detail and timbral richness. Better with classical fare.
TDL T-line 7	£550	Jan 97	Midrange and treble have good tonal colour, detail and speed. Bass is slow and blurred.
Technics SB-M300	£350	Nov 95	A great sound with solid bass from a compact and well priced 'speaker.
Technics SB-M500	£450	May 96	Clean, dry and taut with good imaging and sound staging. More neutral than Mission's 752s but less euphonic.
Triangle Cornet TZ3a	£475	Jan 95	Quite pleasant, inoffensive sound but others costing less can offer more.
Wharfedale Vetus 300	£300	Oct 95	Good for adding scale and power to a weak system or budget separates.



JPW Ruby 2.



Soundcraft Absolute 4P.

£800-£1499

Audiophile E	£1450	Mar 95	Big, bulky and ultra-sensitive with quick pace and a well balanced sound, but not without flaws.
Audiotechnica M1 Big	£1479	Aug 98	The M1 Sigs may be a little laid-back, but they have a pleasant and involving sound.
Audiotechnica M2	£1499	Jun 98	The M2s are marred by a boom 'n' tizz presentation that suits Heavy Metal but not much else.
BAW CDM 7	£999	Feb 98	With warm ancillaries the CDM7s produce a weighty, open sound. Bass could be faster.
Castle Howard S2	£1099	Mar 96	Fantastically deep and tight base but some treble sharpness requires careful matching.
Collection A2	£1499	Jun 98	Focus is not a strength, but bass extension and even tonality are. Metal tweeter can be bright.
Chario Academy One	£1199	Dec 95	Musical realism and a great real-wood finish make these 'speakers enjoyable, if not perfect.
Deception Kara	£1250	May 99	Small cabinet precludes the deepest bass, but a sweet little act for all that. Seriously imaging abilities.
Epos ES22	£1185	Jun 98	Aside from a slightly cool balance, the ES22s shine. Dynamics, bass depth and control are tops.
Epos 2020BAS	£829	Sep 98	Warm, detailed and well-endowed in the bass, the Events lack only a touch of overall control.
Harbeth DPM1 Active	£849	Sep 98	Now HBB's Circle Actives, these loudspeakers mix the best of pro and domestic to produce first-class results.
Harbeth HL Concept 7	£1329	Jun 96	Dry and analytical but truthful with it. A first class monitor ideally suited to acoustic or classical music.
Harbeth HL K6	£975	Dec 96	Clean, musical and classy - Harbeth have done themselves proud again!
KEF Torus	£895	Jan 97	The Torinos' stylish sound won't shame any system. That powerful bass does need space to breathe properly though.
Kel Reference 1	£995	May 95	Beautifully fluid and integrated mid band and treble but can be slow, with a little loss of bass control.
Kel Reference 2	£1499	Jan 95	Handles rock and classical with equal aplomb, with the ability to reproduce detail that flummoxes many other models.

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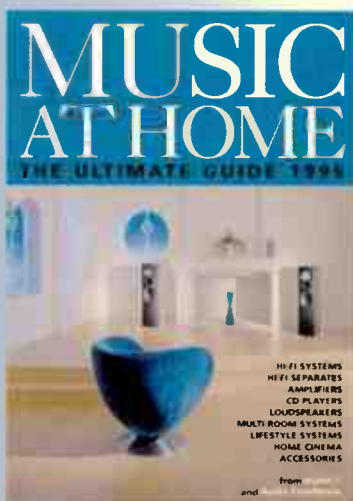
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*Subject to status. Written details on request

Loudspeakers £ Year Verdict

£800-£1499

Early KT3	£1199	Apr 98	The KT3s go very loud very easily but they don't possess the most even response.
Klipsch Heresy II	£1150	May 99	Horn and infinite-baffle hybrid with power to spare. Phasing and frequency accurate beyond belief.
KRK V8	£995	Sep 98	Ultra-detailed and revealing, the V8s are true pro more than domestic transducers.
Magneplanar MG12/QR	£1370	Mar 95	Very clear detail and separation, but just fails to produce a fully 3-dimensional sound.
Mirage 900	£1200	May 99	Lightness of touch and clarity in trumps. Needs powerful amplification for 77dB/W/m. Not a valve 'speaker.
Mirage 754 FS	£1075	Oct 95	An easy going, open and natural sound makes the mirages an attractive proposition.
Musical Front 850	£1299	Sep 96	Articulate and informative sound with fine imaging and tight, deep bass.
Musical Tech Falcon	£1450	Dec 95	Fast, tight and informative, but a poor tweeter casts a grey shadow.
NEAR Soundmax	£955	May 96	Give a big sense of scale on rock and jazz but not subtle and even enough for the critical classical listener.
Origin Live Sovereign	£1199	Aug 95	An interesting, musical floorstander that's good value even at this price.
PI Veneers	£1225	Jun 98	The OLs have transparency and detail in considerable amounts. Bass can be loose though.
OLN Signature	£896	Aug 95	Smooth and refined floorstanders that some listeners will find captivating.
REL Stadium 2	£1499	Mar 96	Super sound staging, openness and detail. Well worth seeking out.
Rakoon Dyan 3	£995	Aug 95	Excellent bass performance means that this subwoofer is no toy.
Rakoon Dyan 3	£1000	Jan 98	Unusual 'speakers with great rhythmic capabilities and bass. Could be more transparent.
Rakoon Palatin	£1099	May 95	The Paladins possess a detailed and expansive soundstage but also a rather dry character
Spendor 2050	£899	Oct 96	The tweeter works well but a recessed midband and one-note bass are the Achilles heels.
Spendor FL8	£1275	Jun 98	The FL8s are warm, mellow performers which prefer Classical to Rock.
Tannoy D300	£1000	Apr 97	Impressive bass extension and control with precise imaging make the D300s a snip at £1000.
Thorn Model 1 Bq	£1250	Sep 97	Good but the move from standard to Signature has taken speed and punch out of the Model 1s
URD Callia Gold	£995	Jun 96	A rich and open sound, extremely musical if not strictly accurate. Great bass extension for their size.
URD Diana	£1390	Jun 95	Not the most neutral 'speakers but they are extremely smooth with an overall coherence to the sound.



Magneplanar
MG12/QR.

£1500-

Audiovector 6	£4600	Jun 95	If you have enough room and money the 6s are capable of a highly musical, involving performance.
BKS 107 MkII	£1500	Dec 98	The 107 Mk2s may look slim but they have a solid sound and are fabulously revealing.
Cadence ES	£3500	Sep 95	Interesting design that incorporates an electrostatic tweeter. An impressive but inconsistent performer.
Carson 52.2	£1500	May 99	Unusual design which is placed back against a wall for optimum performance.
Celestion A3	£1800	May 97	The A3s are quite simply superb. All you'll need to enjoy them is a large enough listening room.
Epac ES3	£1505	May 95	An extremely coherent and focussed sound; these are true audiophile speakers. Captivating with classical music.
Harbeth HL56	£1999	Mar 97	Glassy clarity, bright treble, with bass that comes alive when given welly. Expensive though.
Haystack Octet	£1800	Jul 98	The Octets are smooth, laid-back floor standers. Lack speed and transparency.
Jamo Concert 11	£2000	Dec 97	A worthy bigger brother for the Concert 8s, with a fast, transparent and even sound.
Jamo Concert 8	£1500	Jun 97	The Concert 8s are superbly clean and transparent. Their nature will show up any source shortcomings.
JBL S2600	£3500	Jul 96	Smooth, detailed and spacious with scale, dynamics and imaging. Capable of producing a real performance.
Kii Reference 3	£2000	Nov 95	For superb reproduction within large rooms, the 3s are a force to be reckoned with.
Kii Reference 4	£3099	Oct 96	Superb bass and near-electrostatic soundstaging make these involving 'speakers a bargain.
Living Voice Auditorium	£1500	May 99	Their strengths suggest a Classical 'speaker but they suit electronic compositions better. Rich tone but loose bass.
Proac Studio 150	£1500	Mar 99	They may be musically engaging but the ProAc's brightness suits them best for smooth valve amplification.
State Audio Spinnaker	£8000	Feb 99	The best home for a reflex-loaded Tannoy dual-concentric, but they don't come cheap!
Spendor SP71	£1970	Jan 95	Gorgeous looking. Listening becomes an enjoyable experience, full of surprises from subtleties.
Spendor SP11	£3400	Apr 96	One of the clearest and most expressive loudspeakers you'll ever find for a large room. Easy to drive, too.
Tannoy AMS8	£2702	Aug 96	Bold and powerful with solid bass, clearly focussed midrange and delicious treble. Well worth tracking down.
Tannoy D100	£3999	Sep 97	£4000 may be a lot to pay for a pair of 'speakers, but the Tannoys deliver to great effect in all areas.
Technics SB-M1000	£1500	Nov 96	Materially excellent value. Sound clean and extended but can lack involvement.
Thomas Transducers Brio	£4750	Feb 95	Capable of producing a captivating performance of lifelike proportions with a great air of naturalness.
Thomas Wood Gold	£3395	May 98	Impressive horns that combine lightness of touch with power and clarity.



Jamo Concert 8.

Integrated £ Year Verdict

under £300

Anthemist Maxin	£299	Mar 96	Fluid and musical but upper bass is a little dry. Useful phono stage with but with a little sibilance and ringing.
AMC 3025	£150	Nov 96	A lot for very little money - sweet sound and good build make the AMC 3025 a great starter amp.
AMC 3050A	£170	Feb 98	Offers plenty of power for the money but sound quality is not class leading.
Arcom Alpha 5 plus	£250	Oct 96	Good with efficient loudspeakers but generally needs more power and control.
Arcom Alpha One	£230	Jan 99	In a smooth system with a warmish bias the Alpha One makes a strong case for itself.
Aura VAO	£279	Apr 95	Excellent value for money and will get the best from any component. Needs a separate phono stage.
Aura VASO 05x	£250	Mar 96	The Aura has a smooth, civilized sound with fine detail. Bass punch really rolls along. Good phono stage.
Cambridge A1 Multi Integ	£100	Jul 98	Involving and finely detailed, the Cambridge pushes forward the boundaries for inexpensive amps.
Denon PMA 200SE	£160	Feb 97	A mix of control, delicacy and detail allows it to excel with any music.
Denon PMA 425R	£230	Sep 96	Good drive, punch and an open soundstage, but suffers from confusion plus a thin midrange and treble.
Denon PMA 450SE	£280	Oct 96	Big and brutish but unfortunately bland with it. Something of a blast from the 1970s-80s past!
Harman Kardon HK610	£180	Jun 95	Thorough-going down to earth liveliness. Bright but clean which gives appealing vivacity.
Harman Kardon HK620	£280	Oct 95	Not quite a giant killer, the Harman is nevertheless a good solid budget buy.

Prices shown
are those at the
time of review

Nu-Vista 300
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X-P100
X-AS100
pre/power amplifiers

X-A50
also available
X-A200
monoblock power amplifiers

X-A1
also available
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Integrated £ Year Verdict

under £300

Musical Fidelity EX1	£299	Feb 98	A very capable integrated with a smoothness and warmth predisposed to classical rather than rock.
NAD 304	£239	Apr 95	Fine quality bass but rather lackadaisical as regards timing. Phono stage moderate. Needs careful matching.
NAD 310	£130	Jan 95	Good detail and a spacious open sound gives acoustic music and the majority of rock superb clarity.
NAD C300	£200	Apr 99	Younger sibling of the famous 3020 with many of its virtues to boot. Pre-eminently balanced and natural.
Pioneer A100	£130	Mar 95	Luxuriant presentation doesn't compensate for the tendency to un-rhythmic effects. MM phono stage.
Planeter A300X	£230	Apr 95	Another highly capable all-rounder although a touch sterile sounding for some tastes.
Pro-ject 7	£259	Apr 95	On a budget, the Pro-ject has strong merit, including an excellent phono stage. Not for all systems.
Relief RA 3708X	£250	Oct 96	Fresh sound with sharp attack. A slight midrange emphasis can make certain music sound rather forward.
Relief RA 321	£150	Dec 98	For the money there's no faulting such a gifted performer.
Sony TAF44KE	£250	Aug 95	bright clear and detailed, but needs a touch more refinement to prevail.
Technics SU A700 MK5	£250	Jan 97	A smooth unassuming sound misses out on the subtlety which brings music to life.

£300-£799

Alchemist Axiom	£300	Sep 95	Musically rewarding; deserves serious audition. Great British hi-fi on a budget.
ARC 2150A	£329	Nov 98	Not the most musical amp ever but good value. The tone controls and balance adjustment will appeal to some.
Arxam Alpha 6+	£350	Jan 96	Full and smooth sound, unfortunately with loose bass.
Arcom Alpha 5	£500	Dec 96	Excellent value. A detailed and open sound gives great atmosphere to all types of music
A. A. Pazzini SE	£595	Dec 97	All the main ingredients like rhythm and dynamics present and correct. Natural smoothness and transparency.
Audio Analogue Puccini	£595	Sep 97	Excellent sound quality outstrips the competition at up to £1000.
Audiobus 3000A	£500	May 95	Manages the rare feat of sounding powerful and lithe at the same time. Bass taut but not the last word.
Audiobus 3000P	£700	Dec 97	Powerful hefty sound which doesn't blench when driving awkward loads.
Benchmark Royenne SIA 1	£680	Aug 96	Too thin and crisp which makes prolonged listening fatiguing.
Cyrus 3	£500	Oct 96	Highly refined and detailed performance with a clear well-proportioned soundstage.
Cyrus Straight Line	£398	Nov 98	A good, honest bit of kit with a fine musical sound and no glaring vices.
Denon DSD	£650	Dec 97	If a musical adrenaline rush is what you seek, fine. Listening in bulk, rather clinical and cold sounding.
Edmund EBI 10	£400	Apr 99	Solid build and a big sound make the ESI 10 worthy of audition. Not perhaps the transparent at the price.
Hifi Audio	£750	Jun 98	Powerful and refreshingly pure; a sound investment.
Kenwood KA-T900R	£400	Apr 98	Excels with sound staging but lacks subtlety and tonal colour.
LD Multi	£499	Jun 97	An extremely enjoyable, lucid little amplifier that really gets to the heart of the music.
Marsatz PM-55 X3-S	£400	Nov 97	An enjoyable and rhythmic sound but may be too lean for some bass-light 'speakers.
Monro AJ	£695	Jan 97	An engaging musical performance; sweet overall sound. Doesn't cope with difficult loads so well.
Moth 30 Integrated	£320	Jul 95	A big open sound sound sets the Moth apart at this price. Low powered, though. Distinctly amateurish looks.
Musical Fidelity X-A1	£480	Dec 98	Two boxes don't form a pre and power in the X-A1 but the result is nevertheless a winning combination.
Myriad T-40	£399	Nov 98	Couple the Myriad with a warm system and enjoy. Possibly a little lightweight on the Reggae & Rap side.
Real 312	£470	May 97	With 80 watts on tap, the NAD has power aplenty but is rather dynamically limited and ultimately uninvolved.
Native Neil	£500	May 95	Rather monochromatic with midband emphasis and slightly dry bass. Good imaging but smallish soundstage.
Orion GS 100	£449	Jul 96	Clean, open, active sound. Smooth and detailed with good punch too. One of the best at the price.
Pioneer A-300R Precision	£400	Aug 97	A bargain at £400 pure and simple. Outclasses the competition in every area.
Pioneer A-300X	£300	Oct 96	Complements all sorts of music with power and confidence. Outstanding value for money.
Quad 77	£595	Feb 95	Although classically orientated, the Quad will rock too. Precise and stable imagery and fidelity to tonal values.
Relax Carpan	£695	Jun 97	Mixes the best of solid state and valve worlds (without valves!) to produce a seductive sound.
Ries Sclon	£615	May 97	Great packaging and super sound make the Sclon a winner.
Sony TA-F6320R	£579	Jan 96	Highly detailed and smooth sound. Worth searching out.
Sony TA-F6320R	£300	Feb 99	Partnered correctly to counterbalance its forwardness, the Sony offers a fast, rhythmic presentation.
Teac ASX7H	£700	Jun 96	Big and powerful sound, but a little unobtrusive with it.
Technics SE-A900 MHT	£300	Mar 99	Nominally a separate pre and power, but the pre can't work alone. Exciting but unobtrusive.



Audio Analogue Puccini.



MVL A2+.

£800-

Audiomote Sord 04	£1999	Mar 95	Needs the right loudspeaker but a good musical presentation is in there somewhere.
Copland CSA 14	£1099	Apr 96	A sweet and subtle sound. Fine midrange; transparent and open with vocals.
Denon D82 10	£1299	Jun 95	Dual mono construction gives strong stereo separation. Brutal resolution of detail but not the clearest ever.
Exposure Super XV	£800	Oct 95	A stringy-sounding transistor amp for rock. Build and finish could be better and price lower.
Garnier Rhythm	£2499	Jul 96	Partnered with sensible loudspeakers of good bass depth, the Rhythm is capable of impressive performance.
Leverdin IT	£3200	Apr 99	Has clarity in spades and an extremely rare tonal purity. Outclasses many transistor alternatives with ease.
Musichub MAM20	£3735	Sep 95	A mighty confection of power, facilities and style, and it sounds good to boot.
Musical Fidelity A1001	£2499	Jun 98	Awesome power and seismic bass. A very good all-rounder with super-clean sound.
MVL Integral A2	£850	May 99	An excellent performer with any music. Adept at handling subtle details. Difficult to beat at the price.
Rheine Phase 2	£800	Apr 97	Even-handed performer deals confidentially with music regardless of genre. Not as smooth as the best.
Sonic Transcend Anthem	£1295	May 98	A characteristically competent and musical integrated. Prefers fairly efficient loudspeakers though.
Somerset Alabaster	£900	Oct 97	Excellent high-end integrated with a real love of music and plenty of poke.
Teac AB X10	£1000	Sep 95	Very strong all round performer with excellent build and finish. Verging on the expensive though.
Union Rec. Simply 845	£2950	Mar 98	Allied to all the right 'speakers will handle all musical genres with smoothness and power.

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Pre-amps £ Year Verdict

under £300

AMC 1109	£150	Mar 99	Tone controls cannot be defeated and the sum total is a little metallic but value in spades.
Creek CDM 11EE	£199	Apr 99	A very lucid, natural headphone amp which scores as highly on acoustic and Classical as it does on Rock.
Creek CDM 12	£200	Jul 98	Only poor cosmetics mar the Creek. Sonically it's a gem.
Moab 30 Passive	£149	Mar 99	Won't win prizes for best build but a flexible effort for a passive. Somewhat dry presentation overall.
Musical Fidelity X-Cans	£130	Mar 98	If you haven't yet experienced the world of quality headphone listening, the X-Cans is the way to start.
Musical Fidelity X-Pre	£200	Jan 98	A smooth, sweet and musical performer.
Musical Fidelity X-Tone	£120	Mar 99	Easy-to-use stand-alone modern tone control with subtle effect. Rather a bargain.
Project 7	£259	Feb 95	Immensely enjoyable and listenable, a rare mixture of sophistication and fun.
Real Hi-Fi 971	£150	Mar 99	Five line-level inputs and tone controls make for a flexible unit. Partnered by the RB-971 power amp, very good value.
Technics SU-CY00AKill	£299	Apr 98	Needs slightly more taut bass and a less grainy midrange to bring it up with the best.

Prices shown are those at the time of review

£300-£799

Audio Analogue Bellini	£475	Apr 98	Organic and transparent. Free from transistor hardness.
Aura CA200	£749	Mar 97	A smooth and sweet sound devoid of roughness.
Chord CPA100	£440	Nov 98	The phono stage is the main area of weakness. Can sound a touch muddled at times.
Crest Epoch	£600	Jun 96	A fine sounding preamp, but the phono stage is weak in the bass.
Cyrus Pre	£250	Feb 96	Pre-amplifier has plenty of facilities, but sounds a little unexciting and 'conventional'.
Heybrook Signature II	£549	May 97	Impressive smoothness and tonal colour, transparent as well.
HiFi Audio Lab L18	£650	Dec 95	This valve pre-amp is very good value indeed.
Radwell Indus	£499	May 99	Passive pre of box-of-switches, whichever way you look at it the Indus is stylishly finished and well conceived.
Sono Athena II	£767	May 96	More valve-like than transistor in sound; highly competent if not spectacular.
Talk Hurricane 1	£500	Jun 97	Flexible with a strong controlled sound, but won't suit all tastes.
Technics SU-C1000	£350	Feb 97	Good when mains powered, even better running on its batteries. One to consider at the price.
Thornes TTA2000	£550	Jul 95	Poor sound quality and engineering let this pre-amp down. Pricey too.
Union Res. Feather 1	£795	Aug 98	Warm but still exciting, it is only let down by a slightly recessed midrange



Musical Fidelity X-Tone.

£800-£1499

Audiophile 80000	£999	Jun 95	Highly recommended for its blend of operational sophistication, build and sound quality.
Edison Preamp	£1095	Feb 98	Smooth, even and transparent. Well worth the outlay.
John Shearne Phase 6	£895	Sep 96	Matched with a smooth amp and 'speakers the Phase 6 is capable of a transparent and rewarding performance
Leak Woodcote	£900	Apr 98	In terms of musicality and involvement it falls short.
Merrillan 902	£1295	Dec 96	Transparent, detailed sound with good tonal range and very natural presentation.
Shannon Fd. No Vets	£1200	Sep 98	A truly competent pre-amp whose high-end sound comes with a very reasonable price tag.
Naim HAC102	£999	Apr 97	This even-handed performer images well and deals confidently with music regardless of genre.
Quad 7741	£850	Jul 96	Bright and detailed, but phono stage is inadequate at this price.
TAG McLaren PA10	£850	Nov 98	Justifies its price with a very musical and revealing performance.
XTO Pre-1	£1000	Nov 96	This pre-amp is highly detailed and spacious.

£1500

Audiophile PPD30	£1995	Mar 95	A bright and lean approach to the valve sound.
Canyon 931 Mod	£1600	Apr 99	Very musical, very revealing. A credit to the valve tradition with considerable kick in reserve.
Chord CPA 1800	£1774	Mar 98	Has it all - detail, transparency, slam and rhythm. In a word excellent.
Final Music 5	£1500	Feb 99	Partner for the Final Music-6 power amp. Battery powered.
Foccarte Red 4	£2345	Feb 96	Smooth and detailed sound. Not as clinical as some professional amps can be.
Geacotron Pre	£1630	Nov 95	Smooth, but dull balance makes it suitable for bright systems.
Marrantz 7	£3500	Mar 97	Superb, combines delicacy and power, especially with a vinyl source.
Millett Orca	£1650	Oct 98	With its Panasonic pot, the Orca reaches new standards of transparency and involvement.
Union Res. Mystery 2	£1750	May 98	Offers finesse, control and clarity for a very reasonable outlay.



Chord CPA-1800.

Power amps £ Year Verdict

under £800

AMC 2001	£150	Mar 99	Super value separate with first-rate sound staging. Midrange subtleties sometimes suffer but at this price . . .
Arcam 9P	£400	Dec 96	A detailed and open sound gives great atmosphere to all types of music.
Arcam Athena IEP	£600	Jul 98	This power amp lags behind the best of the competition, and the build is flimsy.
Audio Analogue Dominant	£575	Apr 98	As smart as an Armani suit, they sound powerful in a natural, organic manner
Aura PA100	£749	Mar 97	A smooth, sweet powerful sound free from the rough brightness that afflicts many solid-states.
Creek A43	£399	Mar 99	Shows what a skilled designer can do, even when hooked up with a passive pre. A very realistic approach.
Cyrus Power	£449	Feb 96	The Cyrus Power is simply impressive in all respects.
Line LX100	£650	Apr 98	Well built, but judged purely on a musical basis they fall short.

AUDIO ANALOGUE

In just a short while, Audio Analogue has won plenty of admirers. When Hi Fi World tested the *Puccini* Special Edition, they gave it their top star rating with the words

"Excellent sound quality ensures the *Puccini* S.E. outstrips the competition at up to £1,000". And the influential USA magazine *Stereophile* (Dec.98) praised its "harmonic richness, stunning purity of tone and sheer musicality". To top that,

the basic £475 *Puccini* won Hi Fi Choice's Best Buy for amplifiers in an up-to £1,000 group test (Feb. '98). In their words: "This is a first-rate budget amplifier that looks and sounds like an altogether more costly model. Check it out". The *Bellini* preamp and *Donizetti* power amp fared equally well. Ken Kessler in *Hi Fi News* (Jan. '98) had this to say. "A new benchmark in the value for money stakes". Now, we're proud to introduce you to the

latest member of the family: the *Paganini*. It's a real music-lover's CD-player. For more details contact:



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Power amps £ Year Verdict

under £300

Lex LK240	£750	Aug 97	The LK240 plays tunes exceptionally well, tonal colour and image precision are not its fortes though.
Meridian 505	£795	Aug 97	Crisp, clear images are set in a broad spread between the 'speakers but the 505 lacks stage depth and grunt.
Monarchy 2M-70	£595	Jan 99	The Monarchy is a smooth, warm amp most at home with 'speakers that are easily driveable.
Moth 20 Power	£249	Mar 99	Refined approach with the lighter acoustic music but lacking a little in overall clout.
Multis Stereo 80	£549	Dec 95	This power amp unfortunately suffers from sharp sounding treble and poor depth.
Musical Fidelity X-A30	£500	Jan 98	Very smooth, sweet and musical performers, not over-analytical but very involving.
Quad 2787	£600	Jul 96	With good punch, speed and attack its not bad all but can be a little uninspiring.
Rotel RB-871	£225	Mar 99	70 Watts a channel helps give lucid presentation with deep sound staging. Perhaps on the bright side.
Shoema Phase 2	£689	Apr 97	The Phase 3 possesses impressive clarity, detail and dynamics.
Talk Turnado 1	£500	Jun 97	A flexible power amp with a strong, controlled sound, but won't suit all tastes.
Technics SE-A1000	£400	Feb 97	Smooth, warm sound has plenty of grunt when needed and is very enjoyable to listen to.
Thomas TTP 2000	£500	Jul 95	Its best feature is the key on/off switch, otherwise its a case of poor sound quality and engineering.

£800-£1499

Chameleon Baby	£995	Jan 96	Well specified and powerful, but dry and short of life. Suits Rock on bass-heavy 'speakers.
Clear 3PA 400	£1325	Mar 98	This amp has it all - detail, transparency, slam and rhythm. In a word, excellent.
Chilton C8000	£800	Nov 98	These monoblocs have a tonal richness and bass speed rare amongst powerful amps.
Croft Series V	£800	Jun 96	Fast, clear and detailed sound will win friends in both the transistor and valve camps.
Delph Di Cash	£1469	May 95	Quality bass and a clear midband but the treble can be harsh at high volume.
DPA 2008	£1245	Jul 93	Serious audiophile product at an affordable price. Well constructed, pleasant to use and fine sounding.
Galactron Power	£1200	Nov 95	Smooth sound but dull balance make the Galactron suitable for bright systems.
HD Audio Duo	£1185	May 95	Not dissimilar to the Audiolab monoblocs, the sound has a sweet top and amazing clarity.
Hybrid Signature II	£1051	May 97	Not quite as transparent as it could be but impresses with its smoothness and tonal colour.
Meridian 557	£1400	Dec 96	Great control and dynamics allied to seductive smoothness. A rare combination of power and delicacy.
Musical Fidelity X-A200	£1000	Aug 98	Hugely powerful and controlled, the X-A200s are still superbly musical.
MVL Integral A2	£895	May 99	An excellent performer with any music. It is hard to imagine the A2 being beaten at the price.
Myrrid AA122	£1000	Apr 96	The sound is a somewhat acquired taste and a little rough in places.
Onak Jazzi One	£899	Jul 95	A lot of amplifier for the money. Big, warm, sweet sound places it ahead of most.
Quad 707	£800	Jul 97	The 707 embodies a rare blend of grace and power in its sleek grey casework.
Rothrack Rubicon	£949	May 99	Low on power at 8 watts but fairly musical for all that. Good resolution of detail and texture.
Sigma Posiva III	£898	May 96	More valve-like than transistor in sound; highly competent if not spectacular.
TAG McLaren 60A	£850	Nov 98	Fully justifies the cost with a very musical and revealing performance.
VIII Acta	£1495	Jun 95	Lovers of light piano-based fare and Baroque music will appreciate this amp's delicacy.

£1500-

Audioactive LCS	£1995	Mar 95	Eschews the traditional lavish tube sound for a brighter and leaner approach.
Cary 301	£3055	Nov 98	The 301 puts the 300B's traditional virtues to good use in a push-pull design that will drive most loudspeakers.
Cary 300B SE	£3975	Feb 95	Cary have a winning amplifier that is a prime example of how a 300B can sound.
Custom Amps	£2925	Feb 98	Very natural, substantial presentation with lots of power on tap.
Final Music 6	£1500	Feb 99	Battery powered amp puts convincing scale and three-dimensionality into suitably sensitive loudspeakers.
Force Audio Ltd 5	£2057	Feb 96	Powerful, smooth and detailed sound. Not as clinical as some professional amplifiers can be.
Galtron Amps	£4999	Apr 97	Sound quality of these monoblocs is impressive but marred by a rather obvious hum. Build could be better.
Marantz 3	£8000	Mar 97	These monoblocs are superb, producing a beguiling performance of great control and verve.
Michael Alezio	£1989	Oct 98	The new Alezio is crisper, cleaner and more controlled than earlier incarnations.
Onak PC150	£6600	Aug 96	A powerful grip on usic, but articulate and detailed too. A rare combination.
Shoema Phase 1	£1999	Oct 94	Good sound quality and an impressive tonal balance.
Suggden Systems	£1550	Oct 96	The Symetra monoblocs impress with their grip. They run hot and sound warm.
Tube Technology Genesis	£2599	Jun 94	Valve monoblocs that produce explosive bass, midrange as clear as a bell and shimmering treble.
Union Res. Stereo 3000	£4250	May 98	Powerful, neutral sounding amps thanks to their modified 300B valves, but a little expensive for the same reason.
Union Res. Power 35	£1525	Aug 98	A great compromise between delicacy, power and practicality. Very musically satisfying, too.
Yutu S11	£2350	Jul 98	The S15's purity and clarity are impossible to beat for the money. Bass is not brilliant, but still better than most.
YTC PQ W-1	£2000	Nov 96	This power amplifier is smooth and seductive, although a little pricey.

CD Players £ Year Verdict

under £300

AKC CD8	£150	Oct 97	The CD8 is free from grain but can sound too polished at times.
Cambridge CD4SE	£200	Feb 98	Natural and very life-like, the CD4SE embarrasses many pricier players.
Denon DCD-425	£150	Apr 97	Crisp, up-beat player which is inconsistent in its overall presentation.
Denon DCD-835	£180	Feb 98	Rhythmically slick and dynamic, the Denon errs to the cool side of neutral.
Denon DCD-835	£280	Nov 98	Warm and smooth, the 835 is laid-back rather than in-your-face.
Drumtag CD3	£240	Sep 94	Great for simple Jazz and Folk, but soft bass slows things down.
JVC XL-V300	£157	Jan 99	Slightly muddled in the bass, the '230 isn't the most rhythmic of players.

Prices shown are those at the time of review



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CD Players £ Year Verdict

under £300

Kenwood DP-3000/1	£180	Feb 98	One of the best budget all-rounders there is. A shade treble-heavy.
Kenwood DPF-3010	£180	Jan 99	A fine performer. Lacks only some of the spirit of its predecessors.
Marantz CD-43	£249	Jun 94	Upholds the Marantz tradition of lively CD players.
Marantz CD-67	£270	Nov 96	Fine vocal projection and treble. Bass is deep if not that tight.
NAD 510	£200	Oct 95	Hard to criticise at the price, with a typically smooth, fluid NAD sound.
NAD 522	£170	Jan 99	Warm and smooth, this is a cultured player. Can be over-civilised at times.
Philips CD721	£130	Feb 96	Not the most accurate machine, but holds its own at the price.
Pioneer PD-103	£140	Feb 95	Rolled-off treble limits detail. Light bass retains foot-tapping ability.
Quad 67	£7	May 93	One of the top players at the price with great speed and grip.
Rotel RCD 940EX	£230	Oct 94	Controlled and invigorating player albeit a touch sterile.
Teac CD-P450SE	£200	May 97	Refuses to become flustered. Can lack emotion as a result, though.
Teac CD-P4500	£249	Nov 92	Like many of its contemporaries, the Teac is too smooth to shine.
Technics SL-PG890A	£100	Jan 99	In spite of a bias towards bass and treble, this machine remains a bargain.
Technics SL-PG710D	£200	Feb 98	Typical Technics' bright and bassy sound. Prefers Dance and Rock.
Yamaha CDX-493	£200	Mar 95	Mature, laid-back machine drops points for inferior timing and imaging.
Yamaha CDX-581	£230	Feb 98	Detailed, refined but not particularly engaging or exciting.
Yamaha CDX-593	£180	Jan 99	Lean and up-front, the Yamaha is involving on Rock but can sound rough.

Prices shown are those at the time of review

£300-£799

ARC CD87	£340	Jun 96	Very musical outfit which gains sweetness with optional valve output stage.
Arcam Alpha 7	£320	Jan 97	Superbly-designed, instinctively musical player destined for success.
Arcam Alpha 8SE	£599	Jun 98	The 8SE builds on the strengths of the standard 8 with HDCD filtering.
Arcam Alpha 9	£799	Dec 98	Apart from its tonal brightness, the Alpha 9 is a very capable machine.
Audio Analogue Paganini	£749	Apr 99	Effortless, wholly musical delivery. The Paganini does for CD replay what its stablemate Puccini does for amplification.
Audio Innovations Alto	£449	May 96	Grainless treble is detailed but the Alto misses that vital emotional spark.
Audio CD50	£450	Jul 93	High measured distortion mars the treble and bass is dry.
Chark CD43	£499	Oct 98	A competent player with a musicality that will seduce any music-lover.
Cyrus 64D 1.3	£398	May 99	Great detail and imaging with intimate music. Classical and Jazz suit the 1.5 best but Rock can sound harsh.
Cyrus dAD3	£398	Dec 96	Lacklustre with Classical, dramatic and lively on Dance and Rock.
Denon DCD-155CAR	£350	Jul 98	Clean and precise, the Denon lags only in warmth and openness.
Harms/Kardon HD730	£300	Aug 96	Strong on dynamics and drive, but lifeless treble can dampen music.
Linn Moka	£798	Apr 95	Tonally hard but possesses many, if not all, of the Linn rhythmic strengths.
Marantz CD-63 Ki-Sig	£500	Sep 96	This is a rare player, greater than the sum of its parts.
Marantz CD-63SE	£350	May 95	Taken as a whole, the CD-63SE is one hell of a CD player. No digital nasties.
Myryad T20	£600	Dec 98	With its brightness balanced by warm ancillaries the T20 will win friends.
Orbits CD120a	£650	Mar 97	Clean and tidy on electronic music. Not so good with acoustic material.
Pioneer PD-S20	£400	Sep 96	Fluid midrange leads a dry bass and tonally-limited treble.
Rotel RCD 965B3 Deppan	£375	Dec 94	Fast, clean sound verges on the clinical at times.
Rotel RCD-971	£350	Sep 98	Refinement is a plus point, but lack of vitality holds the Rotel back.
Rotel RCD-975	£450	Sep 96	Tuneful, pungent bass are the pros, flat sound staging and tone the cons.
Sony CDP-K3000ES	£500	Mar 98	Neutral, dynamic and stylish but not quite up with the best.
Sony CDP-X300XE	£300	Mar 97	In spite of fine sound staging and clarity, the Sony fails to involve.
Teac CD-8	£350	Jan 96	Clean and dry, the Teac is rather sterile compared to the competition.
Technics SL-PG840	£450	Sep 95	Not the last word in bass control. Midrange is more persuasive.
Thule CD120	£600	Apr 99	A very smooth and refined player with the added bonus of good detailing. Can lack rhythmic bite at times.
Trichord Genesis	£549	Sep 96	Warm and bassy, but extremely natural. Not the most consistent player.
Trichord Revelation	£799	May 97	When it's good, it's very good indeed. Can get confused on dense mixes.



Sony CDP-X3000ES.



Marantz CD-63 Ki-S.

£800-£1499

Audio 8000	£1000	Dec 96	Sweet treble and full midrange give the 8000CD a lucid sound.
Copland CD4 208	£1199	Feb 99	Perhaps lacks the last ounce of strength on Rock, nonetheless has winning all-round ability.
Cyrus CD15	£1279	Dec 97	Its warm, musical sound plus HDCD compatibility are a strong combination.
Cyrus dAD-7	£899	Jan 95	Up with the best at the money, the Cyrus simply sounds 'right'.
DPA Renaissance	£895	Jun 95	Breathtaking imagery and dynamics. Not strictly accurate, but who cares?
Harms/Kardon HD7725	£800	Jan 94	Construction is price-correct, but not the excessively relaxed sound.
Heybrook Signature	£989	Oct 97	The Heybrook loses out because of its rough treble and lack of clarity.
Hoff Xara	£950	May 98	It's not cheap but the Xara scores for firm bass and exciting presentation.
LFD Mistral	£999	Nov 97	The Mistral is outclassed in areas like pace and bass depth.
Marantz CD-17	£800	Mar 96	The CD-17 has a presentation which excels in musicality and lucidity.
Marantz CD-17 Ki-S	£1300	Sep 97	The Ki-S has a valve-like smoothness and clarity.
Meridian 506	£875	May 95	Characteristically dry Meridian balance which could do with more emotion.
Musical Fidelity X-Ray	£800	Feb 99	Bright, clear and well-built, the X-Ray's transparency can be hard on poor recordings.
Pink Triangle Numeral	£1099	Apr 98	This very natural one-box fully justifies its £1000 price tag.
Quad 77	£850	Nov 95	Competent, entertaining machine with neat styling and remote.
Roksan Caspian	£895	Aug 97	The Caspian is a gifted player well worth its asking price.
Sigtec SDT-1	£850	Mar 93	A superb all-rounder with particularly convincing rhythms.
Teac VRDS-10SE	£850	Apr 96	Draws you into the music. Soundstaging fine but treble is a little bright.
Teac VRDS-25	£1300	Aug 96	Solid build doesn't make up for sound which lags in integration and detail.
XTC CDP-1	£1250	Dec 97	Rhythmically satisfying, but can sound hard in the wrong system.

CD Players £ Year Verdict

£1500+

Anthem CD1	£1600	Mar 98	Sweet sound and numerous features make the Anthem fine value for money.
Burmeister 937	£5460	Sep 94	Amongst the best with its belt-drive transport.
McIntosh CDM-7009	£2635	Dec 95	Unmatched quality from CD at a high but fair price.
Meridian 508.24	£1995	Jul 98	The 508.24 is one of the top performers at its price.
Naim CD2	£1998	Apr 97	CD2 excites at the expense of subtlety. More at home in a Naim system.
Pink Triangle Liturgical	£2099	Feb 98	One-box player with sound capable of mixing it with the best.
Teac CD-X1	£2300	Jun 92	You'll either love or hate this machine's great flair and confidence.



Roksan Caspian CD.

Turntables £ Year Verdict

Under £800

Clearaudio Solution	£750	Feb 99	If you seek powerful presentation with musicality over absolute finesse, this could be the answer.
Linn Borek	£400	Sep 94	Definitely a turntable for devotees of attack and strong bass lines. Not strong on imaging.
Michel Gyrodec SE	£775	Apr 99	Great sound, superb build and excellent upgradability make the 'spider' a wonder at the price.
Michael Myers	£539	Jan 94	Silent and beautifully made, with transparent reproduction.
NAD 333	£200	Nov 94	Based on a Rega Planar 2. Both pleasant to use and look at with a mature sound, all for £200.
Pink Triangle Tarantula	£575	Oct 97	Simply the best at the money. Combines PT's customary transparency with real authority.

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The Audio Salon is a suite of four showrooms in dedicated premises situated ten minutes from Glasgow's International airport ... and about the same from a city centre transformed over the past two decades. "The Salon" is unique in Britain for tranquillity, selection, and dedication to the world's most inspired and crafted products. It is a refuge from the High Street mentality, and a surprise to the majority of audiophiles who have made the journey. Most people feel limited to the two alternatives. First, the domestic names which seem affordable until you consider the constant upgrading and dissatisfaction; and the exotica which presents a serious process of decisions and plans.

As we enter the 21st century, I urge you to make real progress in your music at home, neither downloadable multi-media mediocrity, nor nineties nostalgia. Listen to inspiring products. Products that can touch souls ... and change lives. Pure sound is emotive; processed is a turn off.

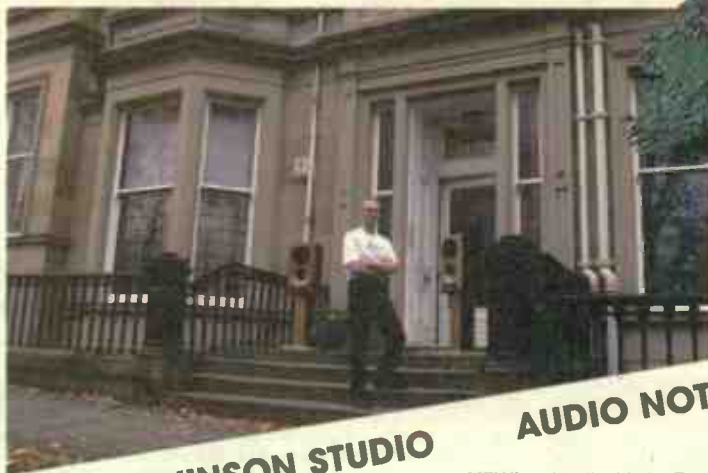
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Meridian 508.24, as new,		
Highly acclaimed integrated	£1,990	£1200
PT da Capo, with 20 bit (1307) Filter, £400 upgrade to 24 bit		
Brand New DC battery, natural	£3,500	£1495
Theta DS Pro Gen II, 5 years old		
Theta built, Theta sound	£4,600	£1450

AMPLIFIERS

ATC SCA2 Line Pre-amp, 1 year old. Mint, see also		
ATC SCM20 below	£2,499	£1200
Audio Note Japan Ongaku, 27 wpc privately owned mint sample. One of the last Kondo SE amps	59k	£14995
Audio Note Japan Kassai Silver Ex-dem, slight mark 18 wpc		
One of the last Kondo SE amps		
Audio Note Japan Kego-C 18 wpc	33k	£12000
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Gryphon Limited, MM,MC,line		
Twin mono, 4 x psu. An ultimate		
Pre-amp at medium price	£8,500	£2995
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Exquisite, ultimate, musical	£9,580	£4995

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ATC SCM20A active/passive speakers,	£4,650	£2750
Rosewood, 6 months mint, as new ProAc Response Three (mahogany)	£3,500	£1500

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Digital Superconductor+ (1.0 m)	£199
AES/EBU Neutrik Gold XLR	£299
Digital Superconductor 2 (1.0m)	£499
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Musical ambience depends on much more than careful choice of equipment. We can reliably advise on mains purity, equipment support, room acoustic treatment and perhaps most important of all, interconnects and speaker cables. Make it your 4-point plan if you want your system to work for you.

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Solving problems of distant customers by phone, son of Audio Salon has grown up. AudioSource is the mail order and online division; it occupies our spacious lower ground level. We even make our own interconnects and prepare Audio Note cables. When you visit us online, you will see not just an extended catalogue, it will be a unique guide to serious Hi-Fi, but still no substitute to lending us a day of your life ... no one leaves disappointed or without a focus on the optimisation of their budget. We have customers who travel from afar, and our Travel Guide is available on request.

Our Information sheets in print are **Leading Questions:** on Cables and Interconnects; **Power Corrupts ... (your music)** - 2am sound all day; **You Need Some Support** (or rather your equipment does); and finally **Confused? So Are We** - the choice of digital formats.

If you expect to get music from dirty mains, contaminated arteries, and vibrating shelves, then carry on wasting more money on equipment. Significantly, Levinson is one make closest to plug'n'play, with great attention to fully balanced signal transmission, mechanical integrity against microphony and pure power (mains regeneration in the reference level).



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Turntables £ Year Verdict

Prices shown are those at the time of review

Under £800

Project 1.2	£200	Jun 97	A bargain at £200 with its substantial and involving sound. Involvement and rhythm are priorities. Highly recommended.
Project 5	£350	Dec 93	The 6.1 gives a very full, strong sound. A very exciting deck.
Project 6.1	£435	Sep 94	Clear and precise sound through midrange and treble puts it up with more expensive rivals.
Systemdek 2XC	£500	Aug 96	Detailed sound stage and broad imaging with a good, even range of tonal colour.
Systemdek 3X300	£415	Sep 94	Combined with an SME 309 it achieves great results, with a massive sound stage.
Systemdek 3RE	£450	Jan 93	Totally smooth with a warm midrange, but a little too laid back.
Thorens TD168 Mk6	£405	Sep 94	A good, basic budget bargain.
Thorens TD180	£180	Feb 95	Superbly lucid and clear midrange, but lower reaches are a little lightweight.
Thorens TD290 Mk4	£199	Jun 93	With fine detail resolution, transparency and a neutral balance the Reson rs1 represents super value.
Vinyl Friendly Reson rs1	£600	Nov 95	The Junior is a very good deck indeed, with an assured and involving sound.
VPI Junior	£500	Oct 97	

Turntables £ Year Verdict

£800-

Aphision Symphony	£1860	Nov 92	The Symphony has to be one of the best the British can offer. It's expensive, but a true sophisticate.
Michael Orbe	£1950	Apr 95	Fast and detailed with crisp sheer treble and clean, deep bass.
Orbe 3 Constellation	£900	Oct 95	Solid as a rock and almost as heavy, it's a satisfying performer, but not quite the best.
Orion Live Oasis-A	£950	Dec 98	Nice looks and a good sound, but can be bettered on price.
Orion Live Oasis-S	£2250	Oct 98	The Oasis-S is a cool, lean but very transparent performer thanks to battery power. Up against strong competition.
Pro-Ject Perspective	£900	Aug 98	Aesthetically, the Perspective is a winner, but better sound can be had from cheaper decks.
PT Anniversary	£2390	Oct 96	With its battery supply and ultra-quiet DC motor, the Pink displays great accuracy and neutrality. A top-flight deck.
Robson Reson A	£1295	Jan 97	An undoubted bargain and class leader in all areas with a precise, confident and well-balanced sound.
TMC Model 30	£2500	Oct 92	This is a deck for those with a substantial record collection who demand the best. Exemplary sound.
Technics SL-1200 LTD	£1000	Apr 97	Looks expensive at £1000, but don't let that put you off the capable standard version.
Wilson Research	£1775	Jul 96	Gives a technically excellent rendition but fails to really communicate the emotion in music.
Wils. Research Full Circle	£2000	Mar 98	Offers clarity in abundance with a natural ease. Looks gorgeous too.

Phono stages £ Year Verdict

Under £500

Creek ODH-555/GBH-2	£160	Nov 97	One of the best MC phono stages on the market at the price
Creek ODH-308H-1	£110	Nov 97	Smooth and truly musical, exceedingly worthy entry-level phono stage.
Derean DP OndaDP-42	£350	Sep 97	A beautifully made, fine sounding device that looks great too.
EAF 834P	£340	Oct 94	Very fine phono stage with precise imagery and a bargain at the price.
Linnport Black Cube	£395	Oct 98	Capable of involvement, neutrality and insight usually the preserve of stages three or four times the price.
LFD Mineral	£299	Sep 97	The most lucid and musical budget phono stage around - a true audiophile bargain.
Musical Fidelity X-LP	£130	May 99	First-class inexpensive phono stage. MM and MC inputs catered for. Low on distortion, high on clarity, build legendary.
NAD PP1	£40	Sep 98	At this price the NAD is an accomplished all-rounder. Slowish bass will suit leaner systems though.
QED Observer	£35	Jan 97	A bargain. Beguilingly musical presentation, with more than enough detail and power for a mere £35.
Rebel RO-870BX	£130	Nov 94	Combine with a good cheap line level integrated and it will show you how good vinyl can be.
Sennheiser Sedley MCM	£399	May 98	The Sedley combines transparency and fine dynamics with excellent rhythmic ability.

£500-

Anthem Pre 1P	£899	Aug 98	Despite a sizeable price tag the Anthem offers a smooth, lucid sound and superb build quality.
Audio Innovations P2	£749	Feb 96	Fantastic bass and super insight make this one of the best phono stages around.
Audiolabs 6000PPA	£800	Oct 94	Instruments can have a somewhat flat perspective, but excellent clarity
DPA DSP 2000D	£495	Oct 94	Could be too forceful for some, but with excellent detail and extremely powerful bass.
Kishinoue Perception	£525	Oct 94	Extremely impressive results, especially with MM cartridges.
Linn Linn	£850	Oct 97	Marries beautifully into the Linn family, but not too hot with other components.
Michael Lee	£528	Oct 94	Gives a thoroughly cohesive picture of a recording with a very tight and rhythmical bass.
Michael Lee PP1	£850	May 93	Perhaps too good for some record collections. Extremely revealing.
Robson Arteson/DBE	£945	Oct 97	Doesn't worry about genre, it just gets on with the job of making music in an enjoyable way.
Sonic Frontiers Phono 1	£2000	Apr 98	Expensive, yes, overpriced, no. The Phono 1 is a superb all-round phono stage.
Uvicon Simply Phone	£495	Mar 96	Liquid sound with great dynamics, but a little hissy and muddled too. Beguiling, but not perfect.

Cartridges £ Year Verdict

Under £200

Clemons Alpha	£130	Apr 99	Tends to sound quite hard at the top but imaging and detail are good. Best in a warm system.
Denon DL100M	£110	Aug 97	First manufactured in 1963, it sounds mature and sure-footed rather than over the hill.
Denon DL110	£65	Mar 94	May be a little soft-natured for some. Splendid dynamics and an even tonal balance.
Orion Mica	£185	Feb 98	Better Goldring's 1042 without difficulty. MC quality from an MM.
Goldring 1042	£90	Jan 93	One of the best MMs at the price with strainless delivery.
Goldring 1012GX	£60	Jul 93	Great with Rock music, the 1012GX is the best value low-price MM.
Orion Prestige Silver	£119	Apr 97	Good tracking and inoffensive sound, but somehow lacks sparkle in any department.
Linn K2	£58	Sep 94	Rhythmic bite compensates for a lack of vibrancy in music (MM).
Orion S40	£100	Jan 93	Smooth operator and very good value for money (MM).
Orion MC15 Super II	£110	Mar 95	In the right system, can be masterful with its dry and accurate response.
Orion MC2SE	£170	Sep 95	A considerable achievement that adds true verve a pizzazz to the MC15 Super II
Robson Const Black	£120	Jan 93	Light and dry presentation with good presentation (MM).
SME Bronze MM	£185	Sep 97	If you like the V15 you'll love the Bronze. Works well with an SME 3009.

£200-

Cartridge Man Music Maker	£549	Feb 99	Good price, high output and a winning musicality make this Moving Iron cartridge the one to beat.
Orion Linn	£1300	Jan 99	A Goldring make-over that tracks well and sounds good. Pricey, though.
Orion Rica MM Cartridge	£255	Jun 98	This betters the Mica, has super-MM virtues.
Dynavector DV20X H	£299	May 99	Delightfully musical sound makes the Dynavector a very strong contender in the budget MC stakes.
EMT H5TB	£850	Oct 96	Solid bass and smooth, musical sound make this rare MC cartridge worth the money.
Goldring Excel VX	£495	May 97	Has fine midrange clarity, but is bettered in other areas by cheaper competitors.
Linn Arkiv	£1200	Dec 97	Linn fans will love it but it's up against strong competition.
Linn Klyta	£489	Jun 95	Sumptuous sounding cartridge that borders on the bass heavy but has a good feel for music.
Linn Lyllian	£649	Jun 95	Extremely smooth, civilised MC with no obvious weaknesses.
Orion Jubilee	£1250	Mar 99	Detailed, musical and sure-footed, the Jubilee goes a long way towards justifying its elevated price tag.
Orion MC2SE	£225	Sep 95	Delightfully sweet, musical sound with added refinement on FL that takes some beating.
Orion MC30 Supreme	£450	Jun 95	Involving yet refined presentation but some could feel it's slightly coloured.
Orion Reference	£1000	Apr 96	A top quality MC with superb tonal quality and excellent imaging.
Shure V15VnFR	£295	Mar 97	Warm, dynamic rendition of music with great detail and impact (MM).
Transfiguration Spirit	£1000	Jul 98	A balanced all-rounder that misses out only on the last ounce of detail and bass weight.
van den Hul MC10	£840	Jun 95	The MC10 is very hard to fault. A honey, pure and simple.
Vdh Grasshopper IV	£3750	Dec 95	Allows music to flow with superb fluidity and reveal things which were previously unheard - at a price!



Pink Triangle Tarantella.



Sonic Frontiers Phono 1.



van den Hul Grasshopper.

Tone arms £ Year Verdict

Hadcock GH 228 SE	£595	Dec 98	Construction won't worry SME but its sound quality will unsettle a lot of the competition.
Origin Live RB250RB300	varies	Nov 97	These modified arms are a considerable improvement on the originals
SME 519	£689	Jan 93	Tight, neutral sound with good tonality, but lacks the IVs pace and precision.
SME IV	£828	Mar 92	Sexy chassis and staggering engineering along with potent performance earn it a place in audio history.

Prices shown are those at the time of review

Tuners £ Year Verdict

Under £300

AMC T7	£130	Jul 97	Although it has a tempting price, its sound quality is poor compared with its rivals.
Arcam Alpha 7	£230	Mar 97	An attractive, smooth sounding tuner that won't break the bank.
Cambridge T500	£180	Feb 99	The T500 is one of the most gifted tuners under £500; a very accomplished all-round performer.
Harrison/Kardon TR 890	£200	Jul 96	Sound quality is generally impressive. Let down by a rather constricted sound stage, but still good value.
Kennwood KT-2080	£130	Feb 97	Smooth, even balance allows the KT-2080 to convince with whatever it's receiving. £130 well spent.
Mareszki ST-57	£150	Oct 97	The ST-57 is a smooth, warm tuner but lacks a little clarity and transparency.
Mission Cyrus FM7	£299	Apr 94	Musical, communicative and extremely detailed and a steal at the price.
NAD 412	£190	Jun 96	A remarkably musical, natural sounding tuner. Unbeatable at the price, or even twice the price for that matter.
Orayc T401	£160	May 94	A competent machine, but time has taken its toll on the sound quality.
Rega Radio	£230	Jan 95	Sounds on the whole more than its price, but in other respects it isn't especially competitive.
Rotel RT-930AX	£175	Aug 94	The RT-930AX is a glowing little bargain. real quality at a very realistic price.
Sony ST-843ES	£250	Apr 97	The Sony is worth every penny of its asking price. If you're a fan of radio this is one to go for.
Sony ST-SE700	£180	Aug 97	The ST-SE700 is one of the best at this price. LW reception is a welcome bonus.
Technics ST-GT-500L	£140	Jun 95	Not a bad buy at all and a very good fit for budget and mid-price systems.
Yamaha TX340 RDS	£200	Feb 95	If you want something for casual listening with superior aesthetics, this might be the one for you.



Hadcock 228 SE.

£300+

Adcom GFT 855 J	£399	May 93	Quite musical but does not rejuvenate the waves! Good solid performance but less than luxurious.
Sumaster 931	£4347	Nov 94	This is not a cheap tuner, but its cheaper than buying a radio station, which is the only possible alternative.
Orayc T43	£399	May 98	A great little tuner. This is the one in the price bracket.
Denon TU-S10	£400	Mar 98	A stylish, well-built tuner which has a detailed sound but needs careful partnering
Fanfare FT 1	£1350	Mar 95	Whether it's sweaty disco or symphony hall, the Fanfare comes up to scratch.
Kennwood KT-600L	£300	Oct 95	A good value, excellent sounding rds tuner, but lacks full EON facilities
Linn Kestrel	£1645	Mar 92	Commendable basic performance but, considering the price there are limitations.
Magnan Dynalab FT101A	£749	Apr 92	Worth auditioning but bass rather dry and light.
Mareszki ST-17	£600	May 99	Knock-out build quality and rich velvety sound. Poor-signal mute a bit too enthusiastic.
Meridian 504	£660	Mar 96	A clear, natural sound with good punch. Has strong rivals at the price, but acquires itself well.
Micromega Tuner	£700	Jul 95	An unusual design from Micromega that's well built but sonically unrewarding and expensive.
NAD 710	£330	Jul 94	Well worth auditioning, even if you've never previously considered a receiver.
Naim NAT 03	£499	Sep 93	Soft and pure, especially across the midband. Speech very well reproduced plus solid weighty bass.
Nuancen 0130	£350	Dec 94	Looks good, but the sound quality isn't really worth the asking price.
Pioneer F-504RDS	£300	Dec 98	One sole mark against the class-leading transparency is its slightly dry character.
Pioneer F-504RDS	£350	Nov 95	Well engineered and competent tuner, but a little uninspiring.
Rotel Michi RMT10	£895	Mar 94	This classy looking tuner can hold its head up high amongst the best tuners at the price.
Rotel RT-9003X	£500	Apr 95	The price of twenty concert tickets, and for that you can listen as if you were there. A bargain.
TAD McLaren 720	£1100	Mar 99	Extremely well built with a lucid if slightly dry sound. The only real drawback is the high price.
Thomas TRT-3330	£500	Dec 97	An otherwise competent tuner is let down by a rather processed character.



Rotel Michi Tuner.

Cassette £ Year Verdict

Under £300

Altec AD-F580	£150	Apr 98	No Dolby S, but three heads and two capstans make the Altec a bargain.
Denon DFM-500	£160	May 96	Good enough for the price and no worse than the competition.
Denon DFM-500S	£230	Aug 96	Top sound quality with ferric and chrome makes this deck a steal.
Grundig CF4	£250	Jan 95	Fair on pre-recordeds, OK when recording, but speed stability isn't great.
JVC TD-V882	£300	Sep 98	Only the lack of Dolby S conspires against the otherwise excellent JVC.
Kennwood KX-10800	£200	Jan 97	Stable transport gives fine results on metal and chrome. Rough on ferrics.
Nad 913	£230	Jan 96	Decent playback and good recording when used carefully.
NAD 614	£270	Sep 95	Excellent electronics are let down by a low-grade transport.
Rotel RD-9600X	£230	Oct 95	A solid, competent machine which is reasonable value for money.
Sony TC-K211	£150	Dec 93	Auto-tuning is mediocre and the general results are unexceptional.
Sony TC-K490	£170	Jan 93	A mix of average heads and electronics doesn't make for happy taping.
Tasc V-610	£100	Apr 97	The V-610's performance matches its price well, but audiophile it isn't.
Tasc V-690	£150	Sep 94	Satisfactory for in-car recordings, but the low price shows.
Yamaha KX-680 SE	£250	Sep 97	The '580 lives up to its SE tag with a fine performance in all areas.

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Arcam Alpha 8 CD S/H (1 Yr Warranty) . . .(449.00)	£319.00	Naim NAP140 Power Amp (2YR warranty) .(793.00)	£589.00
Arcam Alpha 8 Amp S/H (1 Yr Warranty) . .(399.00)	£299.00	Naim NAP180 Power Amp (2YR Warranty)(1122.00)	£839.00
Arcam Delta 270 CD Player* (WOW!) . . .(799.00)	£299.00	Naim NAP250 Power Amp (2YR warranty)(1755.00)	£1299.00
Epos ES12 Speakers (Dark Cherry)(499.00)	£349.00	NAP135 P/Amps(pair) (2YR warranty) . . .(3510.00)	£2590.00
Epos ES22 Speakers (Light Cherry)(1185.00)	£865.00	Naim Intro Speakers (2Yr warranty)(700.00)	£499.00
Linn Numerik DAC S/H (2YR warranty) . .(1200.00)	£895.00	Naim 82 Preampifier (2YR warranty)(2290.00)	£1595.00
Linn Keilidh inc Stands (Rosenuit)(985.00)	£689.00	Pioneer A300R Precision Amp(399.00)	£295.00
Linn Kellidh inc Stnds (Blk) S/H (2 Yr G/tee)(985.00)	£450.00	Pioneer PDR04 CD Recorder New (WOW!)(449.00)	£299.00
Mission 773 Spkrs (WOW!)(349.00)	£199.00	Roksan Attesa CD Player S/H (WOW!) .(1390.00)	£599.00
Quad 606 Power Amp S/H(750.00)	£459.00	Rega XEL Speakers (BLK) (WOW!)(1040.00)	£479.00
Naim CD3 CD Player S/H (1 Yr warranty) .(1000.00)	£649.00	Rotel RCD 951 CD Player(300.00)	£239.00

Cassette £ Year Verdict

£300-

Alaris AD-5950	£300	Feb 95	Vice-free playback is mirrored by impressive recording.
Denon D2ES-811	£300	Jan 92	On the right tapes, the Denon repays with delightful sound quality.
JVC TR-V1018	£400	Sep 92	Disappointing on replay but recording is another kettle of fish altogether.
Kenwood KX-7000S	£330	Dec 94	Convincing all-rounder except for heavy-handed noise reduction.
Nakamichi 1.5	£500	Jan 92	The Cassette Deck 1.5 has no rivals in its ability to recreate a realistic performance.
Nakamichi DR-1	£780	Jun 93	Not perfect but as close as you can get for the money.
Nakamichi DR-3	£300	Mar 93	Unfortunately keeping the price down keeps performance below Nak's norm.
Onkyo TA220	£350	Oct 94	Top transport but the electronics aren't on a par.
Pioneer CT-96	£1000	Mar 97	On chrome and ferric, the '95 is smooth and natural. Not so good with metals.
Pioneer CT-6550S Precision	£340	Feb 99	Three heads, ease of use and high quality make the Dolby S equipped Precision a strong contender
Pioneer CT-5740S	£430	Jun 96	Complex but superb in every important area.
Sony TC-9011D	£330	Feb 94	Muffled on pre-recordeds but pulls out all the stops on recordings.
Teac V-6020S	£550	Nov 97	Solid build and solid sounds. Top-notch at the price.
Teac V-6130S	£650	Aug 95	One of the highest quality Dolby S decks available.
Technics RS-A27	£300	Jul 96	Excellent bass but mid and treble lack dynamics. Auto-tunes poorly on metal.

DVD £ Year Verdict

Denon DVD-3000	£700	Aug 98	The Denon is a fine performer with CD and better still with 24/96.
Denon DVD-5000	£1500	Mar 99	Build is second to none. Sound is very solid convincing, but not as musical as the 3000.
Philips DVD-A350	£700	Jul 98	The A350 wipes out the CD-only competition at the price and threatens players up to £2000.
Panasonic DV-N110	£1000	Nov 98	Isn't cheap, but it's an outstanding portable and a capable domestic device.
Sony DVP-R113	£700	Aug 98	The Sony is warm and smooth but lacks clarity and precision.

Minidisc £ Year Verdict

Denon DMD-1100	£300	Sep 98	With its uncoloured and natural approach, the Denon is digital done right.
Grainomatic Dalia CMC	£199	Apr 99	Well-tailored CD/MD pairing and a doddle to use. Sound quality is spot on for the price.
JVC XM-238	£230	Sep 99	Well-built recorder. Good but not exceptional as Minidisc improves generally.
Kenwood CMF-9000	£500	Aug 99	An excellent tool for home recording; combines convenience, superb sound and a fair price.
Kenwood DM-7300	£500	Apr 97	If your heart was set on a Nakamichi cassette, have a listen to the Kenwood Instead!
Kenwood DM-9000	£500	Jan 98	One of the best MD machines to date but CDR has the sonic edge.
Kenwood DM-5000	£330	Feb 99	Analogue recordings are especially good. Lack of digital recording level is a small setback.
Kenwood DMC-03H	£330	Mar 98	This portable offers fair performance on the move but isn't the last word in sound quality.
Sharp 722 portable	£230	Aug 99	Flash looks with solid build. First-class portable with domestic potential, but it isn't cheap.
Sony MDR-ES300 MD	£300	Feb 97	Impressive sound and unmatched convenience make an excellent buy.

Headphones £ Year Verdict

Ergo Model 2	£140	Mar 99	Wonderfully lucid and transparent panel-like sound.
Irwin First 2	£100	Mar 99	Clarity and openness are their traits, rather than slamming bass, but still good value.
Smithsbar MD-500	£200	Nov 98	In the company of a smooth, warm system the 580s can shine.
Sennheiser HD500V15	£1000	Feb 95	Electrostatic that set a class standard and can put a case for chucking out your power amp and 'speakers.
Wansee FMH-6800	£80	May 98	Have a lot of potential but basic operating problems have to be cleaned up first.
Wansee SP500	£50	Nov 95	Excitement that is rarely heard in headphones, but have a little trouble with heavy orchestral loads.

CD Transports £ Year Verdict

Audiotek 8000 CDM	£1249	Aug 94	Distinguished by a wide array of facilities, thoughtfully designed and high quality.
Cyber Disc Master	£1800	Jul 94	Smooth and cohesive. The Disc Master looks good and comes with the Disc Master within the price.
GRA Espritmaster	£695	Mar 95	Solid and lifelike sound with Rock music and full bodied on Classical.
Kenwood DP-900H	£530	Feb 92	Superb build for the money and a very musical sound. Benefits greatly from clocking.
Microsonic DP-3435	£3435	Apr 93	Excellent build quality and a sound quality to match.
Monarchy D1-40A	£1595	Jun 94	Isn't cheap but has a solid dependable sound with a big, powerful presentation.
Parasound CSD-2000	£1695	Jun 97	The belt drive is an interesting idea but the Parasound is bettered by cheaper transports.
PT Cardiva	£1440	Feb 95	Heart-stopping speed and impact contribute to what is an exceptionally good machine.
Real ROD-990	£450	Jul 96	Good, clean dynamic sound with a neutral and pure midrange tone.

Prices shown are those at the time of review



Panasonic DVD.



Sharp 722 portable.



Sonic Frontiers 3.

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Rega Mira Amplifier	£450.00
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Rega Cursa Preamp (new)	£450.00
Rega Maia Power Amp (New)	£450.00
Rega Alya Speaker (New)	£350.00
Rega Jura Speakers (New)	£450.00
Rega ELA Speakers	£498.00

Prices correct 29/11/98 E&OEO

CD Transports £ Year Verdict

Audio Frontiers 3	£6999	Sep 98	A handsome machine both sonically and aesthetically. We love the camera aperture-style loading system.
Audio Frontiers BFF-1	£2295	Aug 96	Top flight machine with an easy, musical and enjoyable sound, for those that can afford it.
Basic 4-30	£2500	Jun 97	Costs a lot of money and sounds nothing short of superb.
Basic VPS 51	£499	Feb 95	Enjoyable player with good insight. Good finish and keen pricing make it a thoroughly good buy.
Technics TCD 2000	£900	Jun 96	A soft and warm sound will please vinyl lovers, but it's not the last word in detail.
KTC C01	£1200	Apr 96	A warm and musical sound with a taste of high-end refinement and detail.

Prices shown are those at the time of review

CD Convertors £ Year Verdict

Archonist TC-D-1	£300	Jan 99	Smooth, natural and relaxed on the ear, highly persuasive with acoustic material. A bit soft on Rock and Dance.
Arman BB800	£750	Aug 97	Smooth and accurate treble and easy-going rhythm. Measured and engaging; good value too.
Audio Research 00011AC	£900	Aug 97	Treble roll-off serves to remove some of the music's sparkle; lags behind the group leaders somewhat.
Cambridge Design	£150	Jun 95	Instant upgrade for a budget player but out of its depth with in a properly designed hi-fi CD player.
David DAC 903 DAC	£1700	Dec 98	The Chord combines smooth composure with musicality and transparency. Fort Knox build and priced to match.
Clarek OBH-14	£239	Jun 99	Combined DAC and passive pre-amp; at the money there is no competition.
DPA Esbjerg DAC	£795	Mar 95	Powerful, taut bass and remarkably solid higher frequencies. A nice touch with acoustic music especially.
DPA Enlightenment	£825	Aug 97	An engrossing listen with good manners to boot. Never uninviting or lacklustre, plays with realism.
DPA Line 013	£300	Nov 95	Don't be misled by the name - it's the budget convertor to have. Impossible to criticise for the money.
DPA X012 DAC	£8000	Jun 98	A real smoothie for high-end conversion. Given the right transport, an outstanding sound is on the cards.
Marantz Shunyata PSU	£895	Aug 97	If detail is high on your list of priorities, with a more forceful, hard-edged presentation, this looks like a very good bet.
Midiman Flying Calf	£109	Feb 99	A great little DAC which simply can't be beaten at the price. A bargain in all areas.
Midiman Flying Calf	£300	Jun 98	First-class as a DAC; doubles as an ADC for archiving to CDR - great value.
Monarchy Audio Delta 1B	£595	Aug 97	Never offensive; its multi-bit convertor packs a mighty bass punch. Useful analogue volume control.
Monarchy Delta 1B	£795	May 95	Delicate brightness does a lot to open out music and create a sense of space.
Musical Fidelity X-DAC	£300	Jan 99	Crisp, detailed and dynamic, the MF is a genuine music maker, if a touch hard and bright at times.
Musical Fidelity X-DAC	£300	Nov 97	Outstanding value for money. Excellent sound in the usual attractively styled package.
Ortofon DA100	£399	Jun 95	Nicely built using quality components, with a lively sound. Solid bass, tidy midrange and crisp treble.
Peak Transport Da Capo	£1400	Feb 95	Old hand at the game. One of the first HDCD-compatible convertors still a fine piece of gear.
Peak Audio	£699	Nov 95	A fine musical performance makes this Idiosyncratic CD convertor worth searching out.
RDP 830	£450	Jul 96	An affordable route into two-box players. Good, clean dynamic sound with a neutral and pure mid-range tone.
Basic Frontiers DAC kit	£240	Jan 95	Easy and fun to build, competitively priced and delivers fine sonic results.
San-Ford Processor 3	£7000	Sep 98	An awful lot of money - use it forever. Quality which can outlive any amount of cheaper purchases.
Basic Frontiers Transdac	£699	Jul 95	The transdac has a smooth and focussed sound, but partnered with the Ultra Jitterbug looks expensive.
Technics TDA2000	£700	Jun 96	Partnered with the TCD 2000, produces a sound that is certainly focussed, detailed and spacious.
KTC DAC	£1200	Apr 96	A taste of the elegantly smooth, slightly laid-back sound - the epitome of American good taste.



Midiman Flying Calf.

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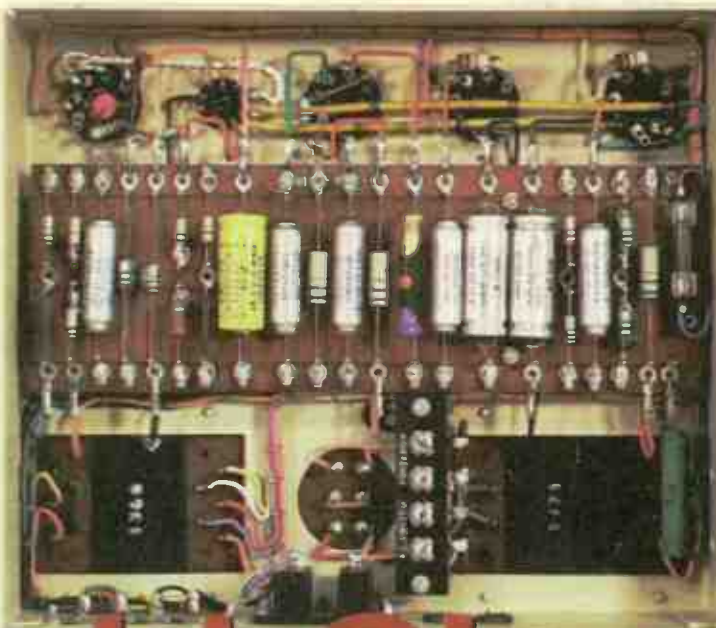
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Naim CD 14 CD Player	£1800.00
Naim CD 15 CD Player	£2000.00
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Naim CD 17 CD Player	£2400.00
Naim CD 18 CD Player	£2600.00
Naim CD 19 CD Player	£2800.00
Naim CD 20 CD Player	£3000.00
Naim CD 21 CD Player	£3200.00
Naim CD 22 CD Player	£3400.00
Naim CD 23 CD Player	£3600.00
Naim CD 24 CD Player	£3800.00
Naim CD 25 CD Player	£4000.00
Naim CD 26 CD Player	£4200.00
Naim CD 27 CD Player	£4400.00
Naim CD 28 CD Player	£4600.00
Naim CD 29 CD Player	£4800.00
Naim CD 30 CD Player	£5000.00



World Classic

Cassette

Nakamichi (various)
Yamaha TC-800GL

See main Guide

Early classic in serious cassette. Its ski-slope looks got it a cult following once it had ceased to be simply ugly.

CD Players

Meridian 207
Pioneer PD-91

Beautifully-built two-box with pre-amp stage. Very musical although not as refined as modern Bitstream gear. No digital output. Built-to-last player with easy upgrade routes for modifiers. Not knockout as it stands but get one cheap and have a go!

Amplifiers

Leak Point One, TL12 & TL10
Leak Pre-amps
Leak Stereo 20
Leak TL12+
NAD 3020
Quad 33
Quad II
Sugden A21
Technics SE-A5 Mk2

Ancestors of hi-fi, consequently expensive nowadays. As with all vintage stuff, overhauling is de rigueur before use. Line of 'good for their time' pre-amps. Use of EF86 pentode for high gain rules out ultra performance. Not the highest-fi. Excellent workaday classic. In good order the 20 will not disgrace itself. Various upgrades are available from specialist repairers. Plentiful monobloc equivalent of Stereo 20. Reasonably inexpensive and a tweakers' dream. Genuine hi-fi on a budget. You can't argue with success! NAD's budget integrated gave thousands their first taste of hi-fi and remains great value. By no means a bad job and value for money. With its matching 303 pre-amp makes a good introduction to audio classics. One of the all-time classic mono amplifiers. Unusual circuit but it works beautifully. 22 pre-amp not up to today's standards. Seventies transistor integrated has an eminently likeable smoothness and musicality. Limited inputs via DIN sockets. Nice transformer and electronics, shame about the casework. With tweaking, this 150watter can sound sweet.

Loudspeakers

Klipschorn
Leak Sandwich
Lowther PM6A
Magnepplanar SMGa
Mission 770
Quad ESL57
Tannoy GRF & Autograph
Wharfedale Super 8 RS DD
Yamaha NS1080M
TannoyYork, Lancaster etc.

Not exactly plentiful or cheap but a splendid beast. For efficiency they have seldom been equalled. Space hungry! Rather warm sounding big infinite baffle but cheap with it. With reasonably powerful amp can sound quite satisfying. High quality full-range driver; still manufactured. High sensitivity, as fitted to many classic horn designs. Touch dry in the bass but a technological 'speaker with genuinely musical abilities. Usual warnings re: dipoles apply. Father of the 77 range which continues to this day. Well mannered with a warm sound and a kind load to amplifiers. Univalued. Properly serviced there is nothing like 'em. Their natural presentation may make them caviar to the general. Folded horn monsters which certainly sound good if you have the space. For Tannoy vintage see HFW November 1998. Ideal experimenters' driver. High sensitivity ~14,000 Gauss magnet and extended frequency range. Inexpensive too! Hi-tech favourites of the Japanese and Americans. Viewed more warily in the UK but can give excellent results. Many similar models of infinite baffle or reflex design. Not the last word in tautness but the drivers work well in modern cabinets.

Vinyl

Acos Lustré
Alphason HR100S
Ariston RD11
Garrard 301 & 401
Goldring Lenco 88 & 99
Haddock 228
Linn Axis
Michell Focus One
Shure M75
SME 3009 IIS
Thorens TD124
Thorens TD150
Trilo L-07D

Very honest piece of kit, well made and easily adjusted. Vinyl beginners could do very much worse. First class arm, up to present-day standards. Buy carefully, though, as there's no service available now. A one-time king of turntables very similar to the Linn LP12. Now deposited but worth a look at the right price. Legendary and fairly plentiful. Excellent back-up available; many different custom plinths available. High quality. Great deck for the kitchen table enthusiast. Garrard fans won't look at 'em but cheap and capable. Servicing available. Recently out-classed by Haddock's updated 228 Special Edition but a proper hi-fi arm for all that. Makers still service. Uncomplicated, lower-price version of the famous Sondek. Considerably less expensive than some of its stablemates. 20 years and still going strong. Early runner in the 'modern' turntable cycle with a first class arm. Factory servicing available. Recent line-contact improvements have left the M75 behind but the wide range of needles make it a handy tool. Everlasting classic tone-arm. Spares permanently available from SME. No longer the last word but peanuts second-hand. Best classic deck ever? Judging by the prices they fetch it's possible - 78rpm tool. Mid-price deck with a keen following. No real difficulty with servicing - novices may find the suspension system unnerving. Knockout heavyweight from 1980 with stainless bearing and 11lb platter! Not a give-away and beware! - spares scarce.

Tuners

Leak Troughline (original)
Leak Troughline II & III mono
Leak Troughline III Stereo
Marantz ST-8

Interesting ornament but no longer hi-fi. Bandwidth limited to 88MHz to 100MHz only. Arguably the best-sounding tuners ever. Adaptation for stereo easy via phono multiplex socket. Excellent tuner with indifferent stereo-decoding circuit. Best when adapted to use modern outboard decoder. Possibly the ultimate Tardis console, including an oscilloscope for checking the strength of signal. Expensive even now.



Leak TL12 Point One.



Thorens TD124.



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CD players & DAC's			Preamplifiers		
Arcam Alpha One CD player	299	149	Audio Note M3 Phono Preamplifier	4650	2750
Audio Note ANCD2 Valve CD player new boxed	1000	695	Conrad Johnson PV10 AL New Style	995	550
Aura CD 100 CD player	399	225	DPA Enlightenment Preamplifier new style	795	599
Copland CD266 HDCD CD player	1295	950	Electrocompaniet EC 41/2 Preamplifier	1095	699
DPA Renaissance 24/96 CD player (New style)	995	695	Naim Audio NAC 32mm/mc Preamplifier	N/A	129
Mission DAD 4000 CD player	599	125	Onix OA24/SOAP2 Preamp /PSU	N/A	399
Primare D20 24/96 CD player	695	575	Rega HAL Pre Amp mm/mc Remote	998	459
Radford/Woodside WS2 CD player	1200	299		Was	Now
Roksan Attesa DP3P CD player	1595	995	Amplifiers		
Roksan DA2 Converter	595	429	Audio Innovations 800 Series III power amplifier	999	499
Roksan DP1 Transport	995	399	DPA Enlightenment Power amplifier (New style)	995	695
Sony MDS JE520 Mini Disc recorder	299	129	Electrocompaniet AW60 Power amplifier	1095	799
Theta Progeny DAC	1099	750	Musical Fidelity P180 Power amplifier	N/A	375
Turntables Tonearms & Cartridges			Onix 100W monoblocks	1500	499
Aphelion Audio 401 Plinths (New & various finishes)	250	169	Roksan Caspian Power amplifiers	599	449
Decca London Gold (Podded & re-built)	600	250	Sugden A21 with phono stage (Ex- Demo)	900	695
Heybrook TT2 Turntable Black	N/A	149	Unison Research Simply 845 Valve Integrated	3095	2250
Linn Axis / Basik / K9	599	249	Unison Research Smart 845 mono single ended valve	3450	2099
Linn Sondek LP12 / Ittok / LVII / K9	N/A	495	Loudspeakers		
Lyra Parnassius 600 hrs	1895	750	Acoustic Energy AE109 (Black Ash)	350	195
Rega RB300 Tonearm	174	119	Impulse Lali Loudspeakers (Cherry)	1750	1199
Roksan DS5.PSU	549	479	Impulse Maya Loudspeakers	695	459
Roksan Shriaz Cartridge 300hrs (Black body)	995	650	Musical Fidelity MC5 Loudspeakers / Stands	899	379
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The Outstanding V20 Integrated Amp



Small but perfectly formed MC3

SPECIAL OFFER
Croft's new Valve Pre with Phono Stage a ideal partner for Vintage Amps or a upgrade from solid state
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Spendor Z/2 spks	£295

Shippy/Clarvox spks ideal match for single ended amps
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Meridian 100 series tuner, power amp & PSU	£795
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Fisher x 100 integrated valve amp	£145
Rodgers Cadet III valve amp mint	£350
Rodgers LS 35A BBC Monitors 15 ohm Walnut Boxed	£625
Audio Innovations S200 Valve Pre with MC	£275
Meridian 500 Transport	£125
ProAc response 1S Burr walnut finish as new £1400.00	£795
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Lumley 120 valve monoblocks Triode/Petode 120 watt chrome black finish	£399
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Quad 77 Tuner as new boxed	£399
Quad 77 Integrated amp with quad system remote	£399
Pye FM Tuner valve with rose gold finish	£595
Leak stereo 60 mint & professionally rebuilt	£695
Meridian 602 Transport	£995
Meridian 601 PRE/DAC	

Producing the very best from vinyl has long been a black art and it's no wonder with so many permutations involved. Most people agree that Moving Coil cartridge design is technically superior than the Moving magnet but demands much more from it's ancillaries, especially the phono stage.

E.A.R./Yoshino have just launched the MC3 Cartridge Transformer with a band width of 3Hz-100KHz, facilities for a wide range of quality cartridge outputs and twin isolated earth terminals for maximum noise reduction.

The MC3 captures all the subtleties from the most complex recording without resorting to thrusting or spitting it out. Its extreme clarity and grainless presentation makes for a superb vinyl experience.

ART DUDLEY: Leading American hi-fidelity critic.
I'm impressed with the MC3, and from a musical point of view, I think it's worth every penny of the price. Those of you who have tube-based systems & can afford it should pester your local dealer until he lets you take one home and try out ValueQuality *****

Meridian 604 Tuner	£895
Leak Stereo 30 amp mint	£50
Arcam Alpha 8 CD player 12 months old	£250
Leak TL10 monoblocks with spare valve	£395
Quad 101 spendor spks as new	£395
Quad II pair various	£300
Leak TL12+ pair	£300.00
EAR 834P	£235.00
Revox B77 Open Reel mint	£495.00
Leak Troughline 3 Tuner	£95.00
STD Turntable	£145.00
Cary 300B kit amp professional build	£495.00
Stax head phones and engrisers various models	(phone)
Various Open Reels, Revox, Ferrograph, Sony	(phone)

Due in:
Leak TL 50 + bronze & black, Quad 77 system, Leak Stereo 60, Meridian 601, 602, 604, PX 25, XT 61, 8T88 (valves new boxed), Quad boxed ESL57 mini, Thorens 124, Garrard 301, Revox G36, Radford STA15, SME 12" Tonarms (various models)

V20
Introducing Tim De Paravicini's latest masterpiece, the outstanding V20. Using no less than 20 ECC83 triodes operating in Class A with no overall feedback, the result is the most natural and uncoloured sound available today.
HI-FI NEWS: Ken Kessler: 'What I think we're witnessing here is Tim De Paravicini's finest moment and that's scary, when you consider that even his disasters are better than most designers' triumphs!
WHAT HI-FI: Verdict *****
Leading French magazine Diapason voted the V20 Amplifier of the year. To hear what all the fuss is about phone now for a personal home demonstration

Used Equipment For Sale

Quad 66 CD Player boxed	£350
Quad 606 Power Amp boxed	£350
Quad FM4 grey boxed	£275
Quad 44 Pre Amp grey boxed	£195
Nakamichi 1000 2SL Tape Deck complete with wrotten sleeve, outboard, Dolby unit, remote, full service by B&W 3 mths age, superb	£995
Cary 572 SE monoblocks 20 watt, Ex dem	£1,500
Goldring Lenco GL75 with SME 3009	£125
Ferrograph seven open reel with Dolby	£150
Pioneer TX5300 FM/AM Tuner	£50
Ortofon 25FL MC Cartridge - 4 mths old	£125
Kerr McKosh 40 watt monoblocks with pre very rare	P.O.A.
Golden Tube SE 40 power amp 12 mths old	£795
ProAc Response 2S Spks cherry finish ow R1 stands	£1,195
Counterpoint SA6 Valve MC step up board PSU, silver connections, new £1500.00	£395
Audio Research Classic 30 Re Valved	£895
Audio Research VT60 as new	£1495
Audio Research V70 pwr amp 3yrs old boxed new £2500	£1495
Audio Research L57 pre amp	£895
Audio Research L51 pre amp	£895
ATC SCM 10 spks black finish	£595
Ruark Swandown spks walnut finish	£150
Heybrook Sextet Ribbon tweeter rosewood	£95

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DL 110	£75 £59 EX	Goldring G800 Super E £14.00
OL 304	£200 £170 EX	JVC DT 55, DT 60 £10.00
Goldring		National EPS 24 CS, P 30 D, P 33 D £10.00
1012 GX	£76 £50	Ortofon FF 15 E II, VMS 20 E II, DM 20 £14.00
1022 GX	£94 £62	Pioneer PN 210, PN 220, PN 240 £10.00
1042	£115 £76	Shure N 75 C, SC 35 C, £10.00
Eroica (LX or H)	£108 £78 EX	N 75 ED T2, N 75 EJ T2 £12.00
Elite	£212 £153 EX	N 95 ED, N 95 EJ, N 75 J (78) £14.00
Excel VX	£468 £342 EX	VN 35 E £16.50
Grado		N 95 HE, N 97 HE, VN 35 HE £22
Prestige Black	£44 £24	Sony ND 142 G, ND 150 G, ND 155 G £10.00
Prestige Gold	£134 £74	CN234 £12.00
Reference Series	EPOA EPOA	
Ortofon		
510 Mk II	£34 £22	
MC 15 Super II	£120 £102 EX	
MC 25 FL	£226 £190 EX	
MC 10 Supreme	£283 £240 EX	
MC 20 Supreme	£355 £300 EX	
MC 30 Supreme	£420 £358 EX	
Rohmann	£779 £690 EX	
Jubilee	£950 £850 EX	
Shure		
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SE's can play bass!

BorderPatrol 300B SE Power Amplifier



"It (the BorderPatrol) makes triode amps sound thick and earthbound with its superb transparency and fleetness of foot. It doesn't quite match good triode bass but it does a far better job than any other SE I've heard. What's more you get the purity of midrange and treble that such amps are renowned for. Add to this superb high frequency extension and you've got some idea of its prodigious capabilities."

"The BP isn't just about power, it's about the ability to reproduce music with its timbral and dynamic elements fully intact. You tend to take good tone for granted with tubes but when it's created with so little colouration as it is here, you can fully appreciate its beauty and richness. The 300B, when used with this much attention to detail, appears to add no colour of its own and combines the skill with lightning speed, removing any sense of electronic colouration."

"By going to town on the power supply, however, the BorderPatrol puts pay to the notion that SE's can't play bass."

Jason Kennedy Hi-Fi Choice Jan 1999

The BorderPatrol 300B SE is a state of the art single-ended power amplifier that uses a single output valve for each channel, zero negative feedback, inter-stage driver transformers and a heavy-duty external power supply that contains no less than three independent valve rectified choke input filter power supplies. Clear and fluid with effortless dynamics and powerful, tight bass this is a milestone product that combines the traditional qualities of single-ended operation with real low frequency performance.

The BorderPatrol 300B SE: £3995.00 and £4495.00 with Western Electric, 300B valves



BorderPatrol
Take control

For more information please contact: BorderPatrol
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We now have the following new products on permanent demonstration. PROAC Tablette 2000, Studio 125, Response 3.8 and 1.5 loudspeakers, VERITAS loudspeakers including the H3 horns, the complete AUDIONOTE Zero system, SUGDEN Masterclass pure Class A amps - In fact the whole SUGDEN range, the complete AUDIO SYNTHESIS range, GRAAF GM 20 OTL valve amplifier, PATHOS Twin Towers amplifier, INNERSOUND Eros and Isis hybrid loudspeakers, MUSIC FIDELITY A3 CD player, A3 and A300 integrated amp[s], BOW TECHNOLOGY Wizard and Wazoo CD and amp, CHORD 1200C power amp, 3200 pre amp and DSC 1500E Dac plus of course all our regular range of products. Please call for more information.

We have the following ex demonstration and secondhand equipment for sale:

- Conrad Johnson MV55 power amp. S/H. Mint £1195
- Impulse H2 horn loudspeakers. Mahogany. S/H. Mint £1350
- Audion Silver Knights. Just re-valved. S/H. £1195
- Mirage M3SI loudspeakers. S/H. Mint £1750
- Sugden AU 51 CD transport and dac. S/H. Mint Pair £1295
- Teac T1 CD transport with Trichord clock 3 mod. S/H. Mint. £475
- DNM PA2 100W mono blocks. S/H. £1500
- Voyd Valdi/RB 300/Micro Benz Glider turntable. S/H. Mint £795
- Audionote CD2 CD player. 1 year old. S/H. Mint £695
- Audioquest Argent loudspeaker cable. 4m pair. As new. £725
- Tube Technology Synergy 150W Integrated valve amp. New. £4995
- Muse Model 18 subwoofer. S/H. Mint. £1995
- Gamma Aeons 211 valve mono blocks. S/H. Mint £2995
- Audion Golden Knights. S/H Mint £2250
- 2 x Graaf GM20 OTL valve amps. Superb. S/H. Mint. £2250 each or £4200 the pair.
- Teac P700 and D700 CD transport and Dac. S/H. Mint. The pair £750
- Heybrook Sextet loudspeakers. S/H. Mint £500
- Albary 50w mono blocks. S/H. Mint £325
- Musical Fidelity P270 Mk 11 power amp. S/H. £650
- Musical Fidelity pre amp 3A. S/H. £125
- VDH The First interconnect cable. S/H. 1m pair £110
- VDH The First interconnect cable. S/H. 0.8m pair £95

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Alchemist Forsetti pre + power	£2398	EPOA
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Anthem CD player (5 star What Hi-Fi)(ex/d)	£1699	£1150
Audiomeca Mephisto CD transport	£2400	£1050
Audio Research D240 Mk.II	£3500	£1195
Audion Black Shadows 845 valve monoblocks	£4000	EPOA
Audion Silvernight 300B monoblocks	£2250	EPOA
Chario Academy 1 solid walnut (ex/d)	£1299	£800
Chario Academy 2 solid walnut (ex/d)	£1649	£1100
Conrad Johnson PV10AL Pre	£995	£550
Copland CSA 14 Int. Amp	£1195	£700
Dynaudio Contour 1.3 MKII	£1198	£650
Genesis Gen 400 spks (ex/d)	£4000	£2499
Genesis Gen 500 spks in Built Active Bass (ex/d) SUPERB	£11000	£6499
Krell Kav 300I	£2495	EPOA
Lexicon DC1 point II AC3/DTS pre (factory upgrade)		£1995
Macintosh 7106 6ch. THX pwr. amp	£4000	£1999
Meridian 204 Tuner		£350
Meridian 205 Monoblocks		£395
Meridian 208 CD. pre + r/c		£495
Nakamichi CR1E Cass		£150
Quad 34+FM4+306+rack		£600
Quad 77 Int. Carbon	£700	£400
Quad 606 pwr.		£350
Sonic Frontiers SFD II Dac (Ex/D)	£5300	£3995
Spendor SP 7/1 spks.	£1995	£650
Tube Tech. Unisis Sig.Int.	£2300	£1250

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Triangle Spks., Trilogy Valve Amps, Vand den Hul.

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Audio Note Kit Amplifiers -

Power-Amp Kit

The Audio Note Kit One *(Illustrated)*

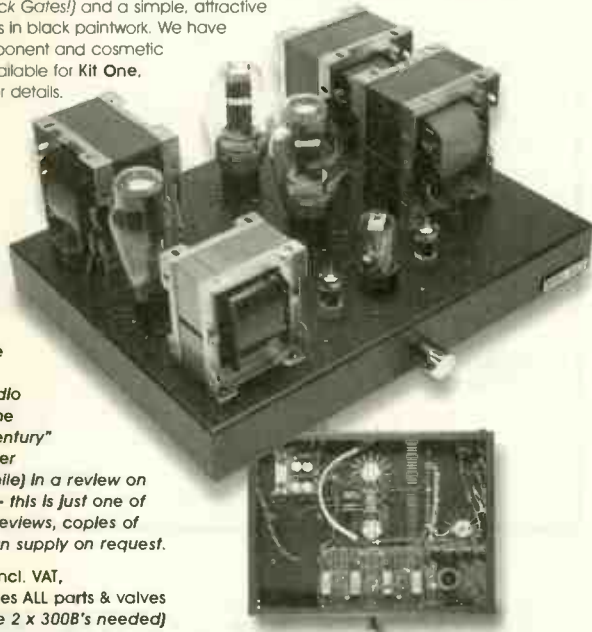
Based around the justly famous 300B directly heated triode, we see this kit as the introduction to *real* Audio Amplification, as it covers all the Important aspects of design necessary, Single Ended, No-Feedback, Class A, Directly Heated Triode, to become a member of this exclusive club of amplifiers.

Kit One has one 300B per channel running at 420 volts with 75mA current giving 8-9 watts of the cleanest power you will ever hear, the input stage consists of a 6SN7GT with a 5687 double triode driver stage running in SRPP. The power supply is capacitor-choke-capacitor configuration with a 5U4G HT rectifier, the 300B's have a DC filament supply for hum-free operation whilst the other valves are AC heated. Component quality is similar to our Level 2 finished products, **Audio Note** paper in oil signal capacitors, Beyschlag 1 watt 1% metal film resistors, good quality electrolytics *(sorry NO Black Gates!)* and a simple, attractive stereo chassis in black paintwork. We have several component and cosmetic upgrades available for **Kit One**, please ask for details.

The Kit One has recently been awarded the title "The Greatest Audio Bargain of the Twentieth Century" by Dick Olsher (ex-Stereophile) in a review on the Internet - this is just one of many rave reviews, copies of which we can supply on request.

Price: £799 Incl. VAT, which includes ALL parts & valves *(yes, also the 2 x 300B's needed)* but not postage/packing which to UK customers is £12.00.

KIT ONE ORDER CODE: AN-KIT-001



The Audio Note Kit Two

Kit Two features a single 6550 tetrode running in Single-Ended mode, yielding some 12 watts of pure Class A. With a valve rectified HT for the output stage, stereo chassis, and 6SN7GT input and 12AX7/ECC83 SRPP driver stage, componentry and chassis as **Kit One**.

Kit Two costs **£599 Incl. VAT**, includes valves, but not postage/packing.

KIT TWO ORDER CODE: AN-KIT-002

The Audio Note Kit Three

Kit Three features 2 x 300B's per channel running in single-ended parallel yielding 16/17 watts in pure Class A. This kit is on two mono chassis with valve rectified HT supplies, no signal feedback, it uses a 6SN7GT double triode as input valve and a pair of 5687 double triodes running in SRPP as drivers. The **Kit Three** is essentially a mono version of the **Kit One** with double the power, the same component choices and on two chassis' instead of one.

The Kit Three costs **£1,550 Incl. VAT** but excluding delivery.

KIT THREE ORDER CODE: AN-KIT-003

The Audio Note Kit Four

The **Kit Four** is really our introduction to valve amplifier kit building, the circuit and power supply being mounted on a single printed circuit board. The high-quality push-pull output and mains transformers are all mounted in a small aluminium chassis covering everything so nobody will be able to see that you have succumbed to the lure of the valve amplifier which is sweeping the world. The circuit consists of two 6V6GT tetrodes running in Push-Pull class A, yielding about 10 watts, driven by a 6SN7GT and a 12AX7/ECC83 input stage. Easy to build, even for the beginner. Visually **Kit Four** matches the **Audio Note** Pre-amplifier shown here but with a single chrome-plated volume control. As with all **Audio Note** kits everything *(except solder)* is included.

The Kit Four costs: **£299 Incl. VAT** but not delivery.

KIT FOUR ORDER CODE: AN-KIT-004

Audio Note Driver, Interstage & Pre-Amplifier Output Transformers

Here is a product group that you do not see advertised every day! As usual we start small with the intention to grow quickly.

Audio Note Paper In Oil Signal Capacitors

These handmade signal capacitors are sonically superior to any of the plastic or other paper types we have come across. If you have never experienced the difference that a really good paper / oil capacitor can make in a valve amplifier, then you really should try.

Audio Note Paper In Oil Tin Foil Signal Capacitors

The tin foil is better than alu-foil for most applications, we recommend you try them.

Audio Note Paper In Oil Copper & Silver Foil Signal Capacitors

These copperfoil paper signal capacitors are considerably better than both the standard offerings and the tin foils. To start with there will be a few values / voltages of each available and we shall expand as fast as we can to cover all the popular values.

Audio Note Acid & Chloride Free Silver Solder

The best solder available, used in all our amplifiers from OTO to the mighty GAKU-ON.

Audio Note Cables & Wires

Audio Note manufacture a range of high quality copper and silver coax, speaker and wiring cables, which, depending on the overall price of the project, will do justice to any hi-fi system, regardless of price. Please call for prices and details.

Audio Note High Quality Stepped Attenuators & Switches

These handmade attenuators and switches are manufactured by a friend of Mr Kondo of **Audio Note**. They are the best you can buy.

Audio Note High Quality Valve Bases

All of our valve bases are of the highest possible quality materials. Ceramic, Teflon and gold and silver plated. If you want the best look no further - they are the ultimate!

Audio Note Resistors

Audio Note endeavour to stock the entire E12 range of all the different makes of resistor, since most are used in our products stock is generally available within four weeks.

BEYSCHLAG - HOLCO - SHINKOH Tantalum Film Resistors

AUDIO NOTE 1/2 Watt Tantalum Resistors

AUDIO NOTE 1 Watt Tantalum Resistors

AUDIO NOTE 2 Watt 1% Tantalum Resistors

AUDIO NOTE Precision Carbon Film Resistors

ALLEN BRADLEY 1 Watt 5% Carbon Film Resistors

Audio Note is happy to provide a wide range of complete kits, output and mains transformers, chokes, paper in oil, aluminium, tin, copper or silver foil signal capacitors, Black Gate, Cerafine or standard electrolytic capacitors, tantalum, carbon and metal film resistors, silver wires, interstage and driver transformers, switches, balance controls, potentiometers, attenuators, chassis's and fittings for the quality oriented DIY'er, whether you are a beginner or hardened experimenter, male or female, we have the best *(and not always most expensive)* parts for most projects.

Audio Note Loudspeaker Drivers & Kits

We shall be offering the speaker drivers that we use in our own loudspeakers for general sale from now on. You can buy the drivers individually or together with matched and tested cross-overs, cabinet drawings and reflex ports.

Audio Note Circuits, Valvedata & Basic Technical Information

If you would like some suggestions which to base a future project around, then we shall be happy to provide you with a circuit pack containing good circuits like ONGAKU, KEGON/KASSAI, NEIRO, GAKU-ON plus several other power amplifier circuits and the M7Tube & M10 pre-amplifiers, which are the best sounding pre-amplifier circuits we have come across.

Audio Note Quality Output Transformers

We are in the process of building up four separate ranges of **Audio Note** output transformers, in order to offer the best possible outputs at different pricepoints, they will fall into four categories.

Economy range Selected to ensure quality audio in a price efficient package.

Mid-price range Top quality with specially selected components.

High Quality range Double C-core outputs for single-ended circuits exclusively.

Super High Quality range All-silver wired outputs of the best possible quality.

Audio Note offer a design, prototyping and production service, where we can supply for almost any requirement. Please telephone for details.

Audio Note Mains Transformers

Available for most popular designs. We shall continue to expand the range as opportunities become available.

Components & Valves

Pre-Amp Kit

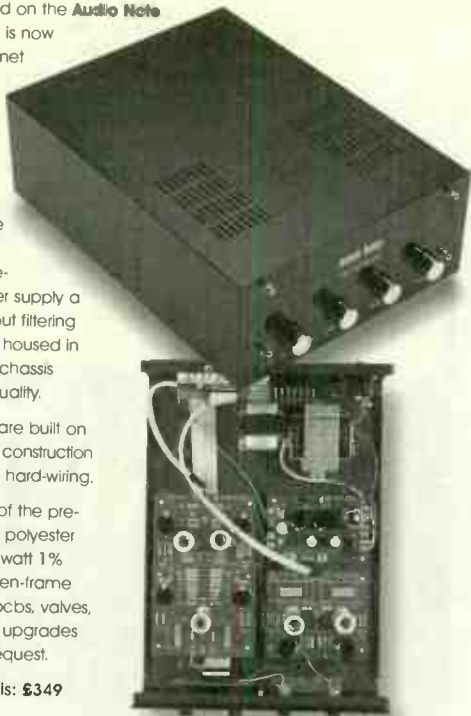
The Audio Note Pre-Amplifier Kit (illustrated)

A complete kit loosely based on the **Audio Note M7 Tube** pre-amplifier circuit is now available. The moving-magnet compatible phono stage consists of a cascode input, with passive RIAA equalisation and anode-follower output using the 12AX7/ECC83. Line buffer/amplification for the four line inputs consists of an ECC82 configured in parallel anode-follower mode. For the power supply a valve rectifier and choke-input filtering are employed. All circuitry is housed in a non-magnetic aluminium chassis giving the very best sound quality.

Both phono and line stages are built on 'track-less' pcbs allowing easy construction but with the sonic benefits of hard-wiring.

The standard-quality version of the pre-amp kit includes Roederstein polyester film capacitors, Beyschlag 1 watt 1% metal film resistors, Noble open-frame style potentiometers and all pcbs, valves, wire etc. Various component upgrades are available, details upon request.

Cost of The Pre-Amplifier Kit is: £349 Incl. VAT but not delivery.



Audio Note Black Gate Electron Transfer, High Performance, Graphite Foil Capacitors

Audio Note is currently the sole source in Europe that holds any significant range of values in stock, we use literally 1000's in production, as we were the first company to realise the tremendous benefits that Black Gate capacitors offer, and we are to date the only high-end audio company in the world to incorporate Black Gate capacitors consistently in our finished products.

There are very few audio parts that promise a guaranteed improvement when replacing practically any other part, but this is what the BLACK GATE capacitors actually do. Exchanging any electrolytic capacitor anywhere in the circuit of an amplifier or in the crossover of a speaker will greatly improve sound quality. We are working on some guidelines as to where, how and which types of Black Gates to use in different circuits, the first such technical guideline is available now and is called "Improving your CD-Player" and can be obtained by sending a stamped addressed envelope to us requesting this leaflet. All AUDIO NOTE Level 2 Signature products use Black Gate Electron Transfer in critical signal / power supply functions.

Audio Note Cerafine Powdered Ceramic Electrolytic Capacitors

We have at long last secured a reliable source for these fine power supply filter capacitors, a must in any single-ended project. The Cerafines really cover many of the Black Gates values and where the prices for the BG's are prohibitive the Cerafine is a fine sounding alternative. We have increased the range of Cerafines we stock quite recently, and strongly recommend all the Cerafines as a far superior replacement or substitute for ordinary electrolytics, and at the prices offered that should be within most budgets. All power supply Cerafines are supplied with a capacitor clamp and are upright mounting.

Audio Note Potentiometers

The best available from a sound quality / price viewpoint, made by Noble in Japan, utilising high quality conductive plastic film. However a better alternative is the KO-ON volume controls which are used in pre-amplifiers like the M7 Tube, M7Line, and in a mono version on the input in the NEIRO, KASSAI, KEGON and GAKU-ON, these are very good sounding pots by any standard.

Audio Note also carry large quantities of STANDARD TYPE SWITCHES, STANDARD ELECTROLYTIC CAPACITORS (good quality industrial types), RCA, BNC, BANANA, PLUGS, RCA SOCKETS, SPEAKER & GROUND TERMINALS & LOUDSPEAKER SPADES.

Audio Note Moving Coil, CD Line & Input Matching Transformers

Audio Note now offer moving coil, CD and Input matching transformers for general sale. Common to all of these small signal transformers is that they come in a metal screening can with a threaded spindle with a nut for mounting.

Stock Clearance SALE

In anticipation of the arrival of the new in-house made Audio Note copper foil paper in oil signal capacitors, we are pleased to offer a **60% discount on current list price** on all Tobias Jensen made paper in oil aluminium, tin and copper foil signal capacitors.

Offer strictly limited to availability, while stocks last.

**Minimum Order
4 pcs single or mixed values or £20.00.**

Audio Note Selected Audio Valves

Our valves are selected from the best available sources and are tested to the same stringent standards that we apply in the production of our own amplifiers. They fall into two categories, standard production items and rare, mostly NOS (New Old Stock) valves which are no longer in production. We have compiled a special list of the NOS items, which is available against a stamped self addressed envelope, if you live outside the UK, send US \$2. You should be aware that the valves on this list are NOT cheap, but we have stock of original GE, RCA and United Electronics 211, both standard versions and reinforced anode type for the US airforce, 845 Westinghouse, VT25/10/10V, VT62/801A, WE300B, STC4300A, Mullard GZ34/CV1377, Tungsol 5U4G (best sounding 5U4G we have ever heard!), Chatham 5R4WGY and many others.

Audio Note now has a dedicated division to keep pace with the growing demand for amplifier kits and specialist components.

Music's Finest Conductor Limited will now be able to provide a specialist service to DIY enthusiasts and record collectors.

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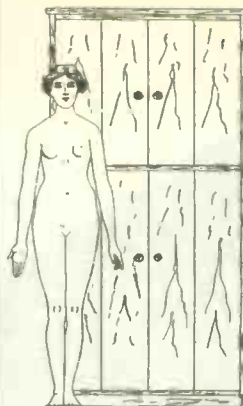


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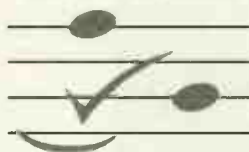
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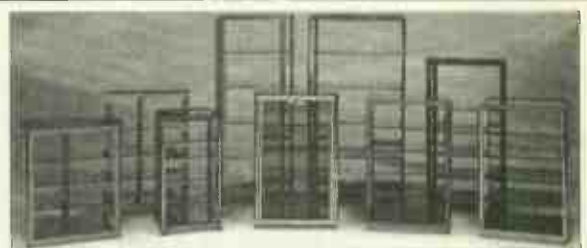
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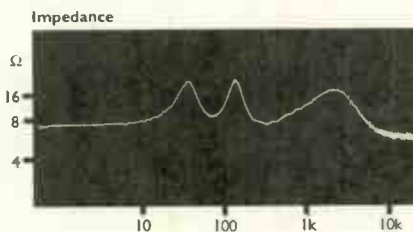
loudspeakers

ALR JORDAN S

The ALR Jordan S has some bass lift around 160Hz. It improves the impression of bass and emphasises 'speed', especially on percussion instruments like hand drums. The port was well damped and reached down to 40Hz - low for such a small cabinet. This will generate an impression of deep bass, according to how the port combines with forward output in a room.

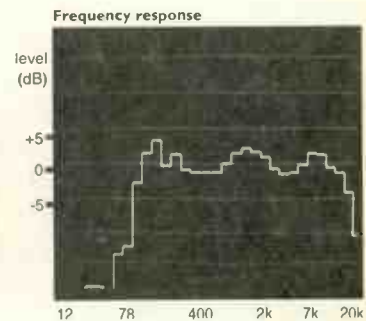
A smooth hump in midrange output, centred around 1250Hz, will project vocals forward and enhance intelligibility. The tweeter peaks up smoothly too, around 8kHz, and this may make it sound a little bright and obvious.

Impedance measured exactly 8Ω and our impedance analysis shows a well controlled, predominantly resistive characteristic that will be an easy amplifier load. Sensitivity measured 85dB, a low value but about right for such a small loudspeaker. The ALR Jordan will need 40-60watts,



according to room size.

The ALR Jordan S will be characterful but it has been neatly engineered in every area and should give good results. NK



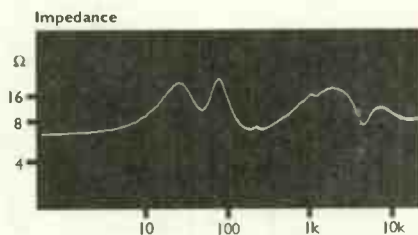
CASTLE INVERSION 50

The on-axis frequency response of Castle's Inversion 50 varied according to listening position height. On, or just above the horizontal forward axis, which represents a common seating/listening height, a shallow but broad midrange suckout of -3dB above 2.5kHz will soften the sound a little. Otherwise, their response was flat and even across the audio band.

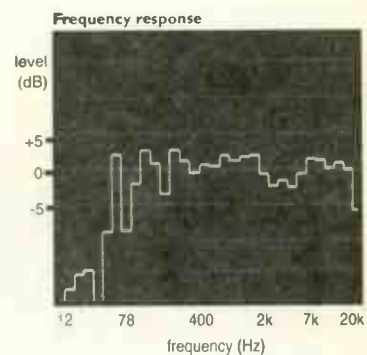
Bass extension was good, reaching down to 60Hz. Below this, the down-firing port takes over, giving a broad spread of output down to 30Hz. Big Castle loudspeakers like the Howard have delivered strong, firm bass in the past, using this

arrangement.

A smooth impedance curve shows the Inversion offers a resistive load, measurement giving them an overall impedance value of 9.5Ω. This is high, but sensitivity was good all the same, measuring 89dB from one nominal watt of input.



The Inversion 50s measured well in all areas. They will sound smooth, a little warm and have good bass. They are an easy amplifier load too. NK



ELAC CL82 MkII

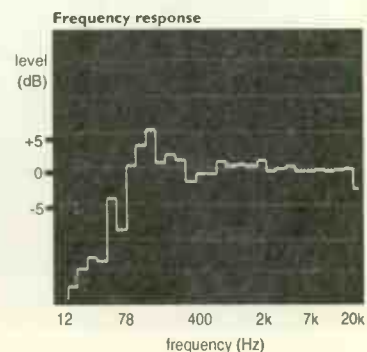
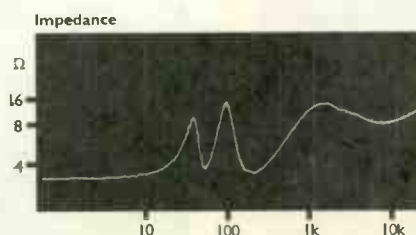
The CL82 MkII has one of the flattest frequency response plots I have ever seen. Unfortunately, in my experience super-flat loudspeakers usually sound bass light and treble sharp in the average room. Elac have obviously felt a need to compensate by lifting bass because the CL82 MkII has a bass peak centred around 160Hz. Below this low frequencies roll off smoothly, suggesting an overdamped bass characteristic to suit wall placement. The tweeter is so flat it will certainly sound smooth and well integrated.

Sensitivity was high at 88dB, largely because the bass/midrange unit has a low impedance of 4Ω, so it draws a lot of power

from the amplifier. The treble unit measures 8Ω so it is considerably more efficient, resulting in a peculiarly unbalanced impedance curve. Measuring 5Ω overall, the impedance characteristic of this loudspeaker varies a lot, which shows the Elac will draw current and is not the 'easiest' load. It

is best matched to beefy amplifiers.

The CL82 MkII looks a bit different from the norm, but measures well. It's an interesting design. NK



cd players

CYRUS dAD 3 Q24

There was no measurable distortion from this player at ordinary music levels. It has a highly linear digital-to-analogue converter, which bodes well for sound quality, since digital distortion adds roughness into the sound.

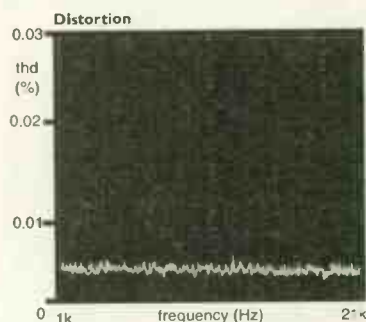
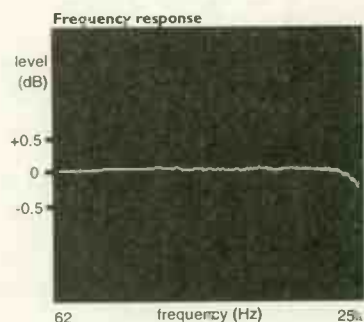
At lower levels, below -60dB, distortion rose as it must do with the 16-bit digital description used in tests (24bit test discs are not available). The figures were still amongst those of the best players available. The Cyrus should sound smooth and inoffensive as a result.

Frequency response measured ruler flat out to 15kHz, above which it rolled off gently. Again this sort of characteristic helps toward an easy and cohesive sound.

With output normal at 2V and channel separation wide at 116dB the dAD 3 Q24 measures well. It will sound clean and smooth. NK

TEST RESULTS

Frequency response	4Hz - 21kHz	
	left	right
Distortion		
-6dB	0.005	0.005
-30dB	0.006	0.006
-60dB	0.46	0.46
-90	30	29
Separation	left	right
1kHz	116	111
20kHz	90	88
Noise		-110dB
with emphasis		-111dB
Dynamic range		108dB
Output		2.1V



STAR DIGITAL CONVERTOR

The new generation of 24-bit/96kHz convertor chips have excellent linearity, producing little distortion through their operating range. Our distortion analysis shows a complete absence of harmonics at -30dB.

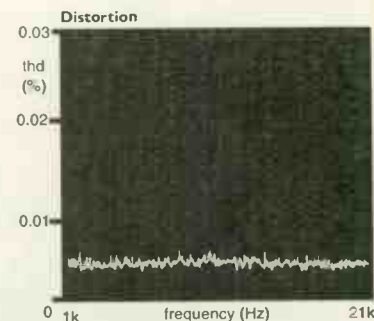
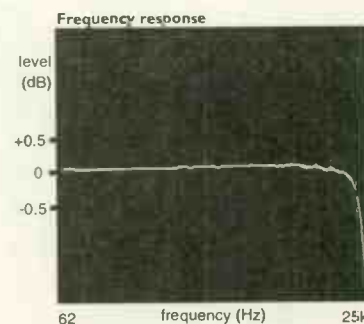
A low value of 0.34% distortion at -60dB was returned by this convertor, showing it gets the best from CD. This results in a dynamic range of 110dB using the EIAJ test, which is as good as it can get. Noise was very low and output normal at 2.2V.

Frequency response has been rolled off gently above 15kHz, as our analysis shows. This ensures a smooth cohesive sound, but the upper limit is a bit lower than usual at 18.6kHz. In my view this is no bad thing however. The figures might look marginally worse but the sound usually benefits through softening of the treble.

The Star DAC measured very well in all areas and will give a high standard of sound quality. NK

TEST RESULTS

Frequency response	4Hz - 18.6kHz	
	left	right
Distortion		
-6dB	0.006	0.006
-30dB	0.007	0.007
-60dB	0.34	0.34
-90	28	28
Separation	left	right
1kHz	110	112
20kHz	88	89
Noise		-107dB
with emphasis		-107dB
Dynamic range		109dB
Output		2.2V



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Linn LP12 Ittok Cirkus Goldring 1042	n/a	695
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Meridian 203 Dac	450	150
Meridian 263 Dac	650	250
Meridian 501 plus Phono	850	450
Meridian 518 Digital Preamp	985	695
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Micromega Minium Tuner	350	175
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Rogers LS35A (6 mths old) Black	800	395
Rotel RB 971 (power)	225	95
Rotel RC 972 (pre)	225	95
Sony CDP707-ESD	1500	295
Sony MDS JE520 (mini disc)	300	95
Stax Lambda Nova Signature + SRDX Pro (new)	800	495
XLO 2.1 Signature Balanced 1/2metre	400	195

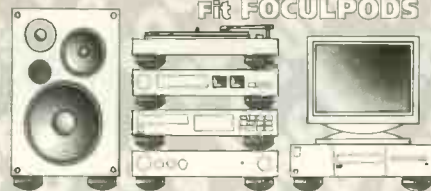
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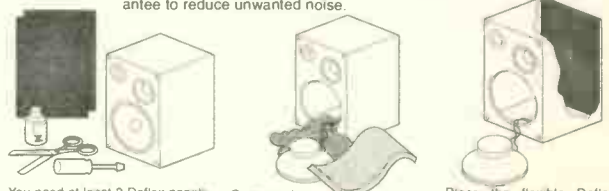
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Audiophile - January 1994

the result was sharper imaging, wider dynamo and a more natural sound"
Hi-Fi Choice - January 1994

CHOICE VERDICT

Sound Quality ■■■■■
Value for money ■■■■■

a marked improvement was obvious from the first few bars of REM's Automatic for the people album
Hi-Fi News & Record Review March 1994

But one thing for sure - the Deflex panels are no gimmick. They work
Audi News - December 1993

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cd players

MONRIO ASTY COMPACT DISC

The Monrio Asty was not keen to reproduce the usual pulse test signal, which is convolved to generate a high resolution frequency response plot. Players with unusual digital processing schemes often behave like this. An unusually low distortion value of 20% at -90dB confirms that this player has a few tricks up its sleeve. Analysis with steady tones shows the Monrio's frequency response is normal enough for CD, running flat to 15kHz, above which there is a small roll-off down to -1dB at 20kHz.

Linearity was extremely good at all signal levels, if not quite as good as Denon's Delta-Sigma scheme. All the same it is ahead of conventional CD players, which at 90dB can do no better than 30% distortion. Differences are smaller at -60dB, where I measured 0.38% - a low distortion value but not unmatched. All the same I would expect this player to sound more analogue-like than most.

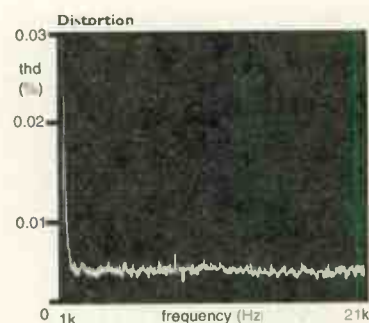
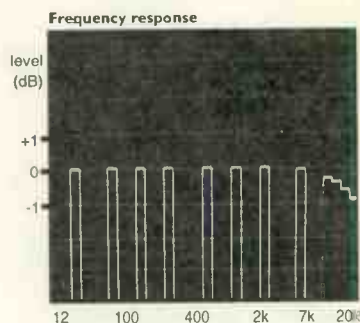
With normal output of 2V and good channel separation, low noise and minimal

spurious output the Asty measures very well in every area. Measurement suggests sound quality will be good. **NK**

TEST RESULTS

Frequency response 4Hz - 20kHz

	left	right
Distortion		
-6dB	0.009	0.009
-30dB	0.008	0.008
-60dB	0.36	0.38
-90dB	20	20
Separation	left	right
1kHz	100	101
20kHz	76	85
Noise		-110dB
with emphasis		-110dB
Dynamic range		110dB
Output		2.0V



cassette decks

NAKAMICHI DR-8 CASSETTE DECK

In most areas of measured performance the DR-8 is a classic Nakamichi. Replay frequency response has a treble lift of +2.5dB at 20kHz. This compensates for tape losses and improves Dolby tracking, overcoming the dullness pre-recorded tapes often suffer. The transport was stable too, with minimal flutter - another Nakamichi strength.

Blank tapes tuned in very well, ferrics, chromes and metals all reaching up to 20kHz. This machine even had the peculiar subsonic bass hump of a Nakamichi which brings extra weight to bass.

The only area of disappointment was in the head's overload levels. It managed 0dB (MOL315) with metal tape, no better than any other machine, so record levels cannot be taken further than 0dB on the record level display before serious distortion (3%) sets in.

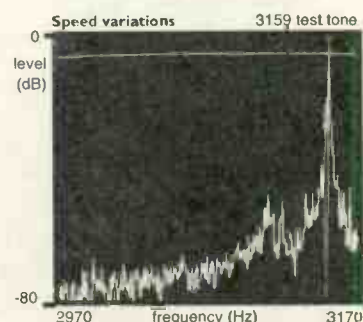
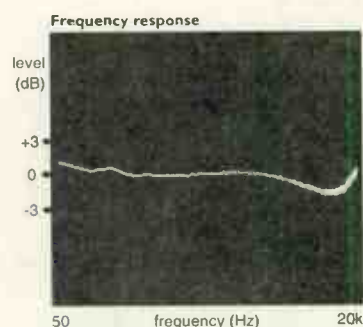
The DR-8 measures well enough to give a standard of sound quality above the norm, providing record levels are not pushed up too far. **NK**

REPLAY (pre-recorded tapes)

Frequency response (-2dB)	30Hz-18kHz
Speed accuracy	+1 fast
Hiss (70uS, Dolby out)	-59dB

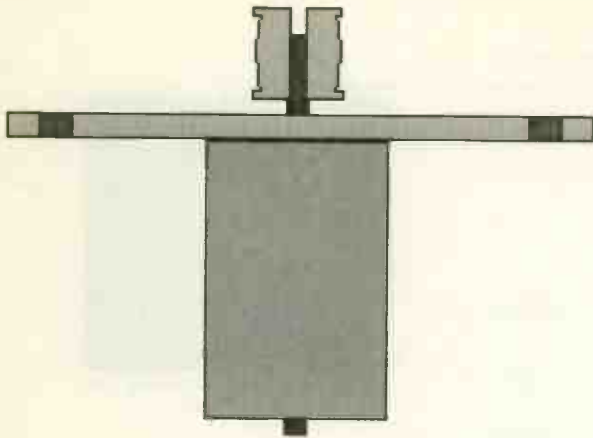
RECORDING (blank tapes)

Frequency response (IEC Primary Refs.)	
ferric (IECI)	5Hz- 20kHz
chrome (IECII)	5Hz -20kHz
metal (IECIV)	5Hz- 20kHz
Separation (1kHz)	57dB
Distortion (315Hz)	1.2%
Hiss (70uS, Dolby out)	-56dB
Speed variations (DIN total)	0.08%
MOL/SAT (IEC Refs)	315/10k
IEC I (ferric)	4dB/-9dB
IECII (chrome)	1dB/-6dB
IECIV (metal)	0dB/0dB



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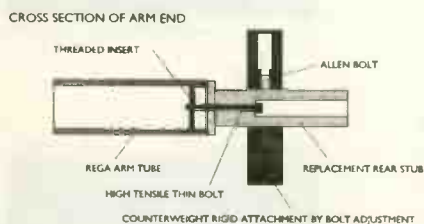
HI-FI WORLD, FEB 1999

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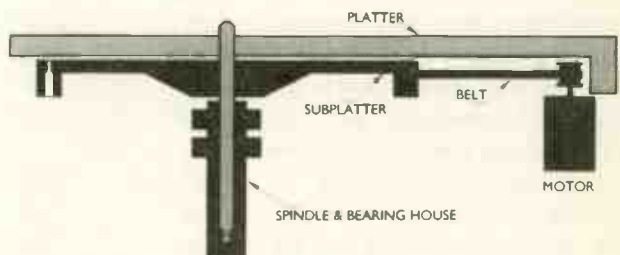
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" the standard came up with crystal clear images set in a broad sound stage"... "With all these goodies in place, the standard would give turntables at the £1200-£1400 mark a hard time."
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MERIDIAN 200 Transport, updated by Meridian October 1999. Includes Audio Synthesis special low jitter output board £300. Theta Pro-Prime DAC, tremendous performance £600. Both boxed, perfect condition. Tel: 01509 215 230 (Jan/I)

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NAIM 140 New style £380. HiCap old style £350. NAP250 old style £680. Linn Kans s/n 7665/6 with Linn stands £250 or £1400 the lot. All mint. Tel: 0181 952 2044 (Jan/I)

REL Q BASS sub woofer, vgc, £210. Kef 100C Dialogue speaker, mint condition, £195. Lexicon CP2 sound processor, mint condition £290. Teac A450 cassette deck, old classic, vgc, £75. Tel: 0116 271 5439 (Jan/I)

SONY TAF30Es amplifier £250. Castle Harlech speakers £440. Nakamichi DR2 cassette £300. Teac DT-1 transport CD £275. Musical Fidelity X-DAC £180. Musical Fidelity X-Pre £120. All excellent condition. Tel: 01803 865 406 (Jan/I)

CYRUS dAD3, mint, boxed £300. Teac P700/D700 transport/Dac, boxed £550. Meridian 204 tuner, marked, £200. Kenwood DPC 981 Personal CD player, boxed £70. Sennheiser HD250-2 headphones, boxed £60. Cardas Golden Cross interconnect pair half-metre phonos £225. Tel: 0181 871 2345 evenings, 0181 871 5089 day (Jan)

ROGERS LS3/5A, new, £450. Copland CTA401, mint £850. Copland CTA505, mint £1250. Naim NAT01, new £1250. No offers. Teac VRDS-7, £150. Linn Kan II stands £75. Tel: 0181 856 1047 (Jan/I)

RUARK PALADINS light oak veneer, excellent, very efficient floorstanders. Cost £1050 now £550 ono. Tel: 01962 841 268 evenings. Email: zoecatrin@msn.com (Jan/I)

VPI 17 Record cleaning machine, boxed £495. Yamamura Churchill Millennium 5000 speaker cable, 2.5m £295. TDS Harmonic Enhancer £150. Goertz copper interconnect, 0.5m £30. Goertz Silver interconnect, 1m £50. Tel: 01844 347 729 (Jan/I)

Classified Ads

Special Internet offer
see page 138 for details

SPENDOR SP/7 speakers, rosewood, boxed £900. ATC 10 speakers, black ash £550. LFD MCI phono stage £495. Audio Synthesis Passion, 8M passive pre amp, boxed £800. Tel: 01844 347 729 (Bucks) (Jan/I)

ALLECTO MONOBLOCS £1200. Hi-Fi World 300B amp £750 (with valves). Trichord Digital turntable £350. Trichord Pulsar DAC, HDCD £650. Audio 8 TL speakers £200. Audio 10 TL speakers £275. Offers, PX. Tel: Mike 0118 969 3377 (Jan/I)

QUICKSILVER AMERICAN Valve monoblocs £795. Musical Reference valve preamp, superb sound and condition £375. Revox B750 amp £275. Eddystone valve short wave receiver £75. Tel: 01432 275 203 (Hereford) (Jan/I)

AVONDALE POWER Amplifier (not hybrid), 150wpc, £375 ono. Avondale preamp and power supply £225 ono. SME Series 3009 Mk1 detachable headshell (mint) £135 ono. Connoisseur turntable, Sau tonearm £75 ono. WANTED: old style Naim HiCap. Tel: 0151 353 0930 (Jan/I)

ACOUSTATS Mk212.2 £400. Croft monoblocs £600. Quad 606 amplifier £350. Luxman tuner £80. Magneplaner USA panel speaker £750. Tel: 01342 850 056. Croft monoblocs £550. Magneplaner £700. Tel: 01902 835 868 (Jan/I)

THULE PR-200 preamp with PA-200 monoblocs. Cost £2700, 200wpc, priced to sell £750. Meridian 203 DAC £115. All in very good condition. Tel: 01904 763 157 (York) (Jan/I)

BALANCED AUDIO Technology VK-3i remote pre-amp. 8 months old, mint, boxed £1300 ono. Tel: 0171 226 7481 (Jan/I)

NAIM CDI CD player, immaculate, boxed. Upgrade forces sale. £850. Tel: 01709 550 893 (Jan/I)

Jadis JA80 monobloc valve amplifiers plus Jadis JPL line pre-amplifier. Mint condition with recent new quality valves fitted. Price £5150. Tel: Steve (work) 0181 975 2311, (home) 01962 713 832 (Jan/I)

FOR SALE: Kef 107 loudspeakers £900. WANTED: Quad 606 Mk2. WANTED: Denon D99 or D250 Midi System and Teac 500 Midi Series Gold. Will collect with cash. Tel: 0121 788 1028 or 0797 170 1293 (Feb/I)

DYNACO STEREO 70 valve amplifier, superbly restored using Audio Note components, new valve, £495 ono. Tel: 01296 623 573 (Jan/I)

MUSICAL FIDELITY E100 amplifier £325. Rega Radio £110. Thorens TD160 £45. Goldring Elan, unused £15. Tel: Malcolm Lee (day) 01274 582 266 ext 2321 (Jan/I)

NAIM NAC32.5 £195. Naim NAP90 (old style) £195. £375 the pair. Tel: 0956 329 067 (Jan/I)

MERIDIAN 200/263 Transport DAC £425 ono. Meridian 563 DAC £300 ono. May p/ex. WANTED: Linn Ittock, Naim Hi-Cap, Naim 72 Pre. Tel: 0191 422 3415 (Jan/I)

TEAC VRDS 10 SE CD player, excellent condition, boxed (£850 new) £375. Tel: 01582 758 049 (Luton) (Jan/I)

NAIM NAP250 power amplifier. Beautiful unmarked casework, must sell £500. Naim 32-5 preamp. MC and CD boards. Excellent condition £100. Tel: 0181 783 1250 or 0181 783 1250 (Jan/I)

CD TRANSPORT and DAC. Teac P700 with quality remote plus Audio Note (20 bit, valve) Dac1. mint, boxed, instructions. Vinyl-like quality, superb detail and imaging, £650. Tel: 01733 350 681 (Peterborough) (Jan/I)

QUAD 30/303 £175, Quad FM3 tuner £125. Thorens TD125 MkII turntable with lid. Ortofon VMS10E MkII and Shure V-15 cartridge £185. Mordaunt Short MS400 speakers £350 pair. Teak Hi-Fi unit £35. Tel/Fax: 0181 943 2881 (Jan/I)

REL STRATA II, 20 hours use, boxed etc, £375 or swap Bose Acoustimass or Quad 77 tuner. Meridian 208 CD/Preamp, remote, 204 tuner, M30 active speakers £995. Tel: 0181 355 4320 (Jan/I)

LEAK STEREO 20, good condition, new valves, bargain at £150. Tel: 01228 674 537 (Cumbria) (Jan/I)

ROKSAN XERXES with a brand new Tabrizi arm and Chorus Black cartridge, £250 ovno. Tel: 0171 928 9669 day week-day or 0181 567 7696 eves weekend (Mar/I)

ALPHASON SONATA HR100SMCS, Ortofon MC25FL £400 ono. Arion Elektra valve amp £400 ono. Audion Sterling valve amp £250 ono. Will demonstrate at my home. Tel: 07712 584 265 after 5.30pm (Grimsby) (Jan/I)

MONITOR AUDIO 1200 GMD floor standing speakers. Black, look and sound superb. Boxed, will demonstrate. Cost £1200 new. Sell for £400 ovno. Tel: 01384 235 230 after 6pm (West Midlands) (Jan/I)

WANTED: LINN LK280 poweramp with or without power supply. Tel: 01484 426 902 (Huddersfield) (Jan/I)

CYRUS DAD7 CD £250; PSX-R £225. FM7 tuner £250, or lot for £650. Revox B160 RDS tuner £245. Tice Audio power block £200. Tel: 01384 834 341 (Jan/I)

SONY TC-377 Open reel tape recorder, three head, four track stereo, with 12 seven inch tapes. Mint, £99. Leak Delta-75 receiver/tuner/amplifier £10. Tel: 01925 755 580 (Cheshire) (Jan/I)

LINN SONDEK, black ash, Troika, half life serviced, perfect £675. Spendor 2030 floorstanders, World Favourites, little used, excellent £275, Naim NAC62K, old style, excellent £170. All boxed. Tel: 01920 870 449 (Jan/I)

SONUS FABER Amator II, new 17/10/98. Adjustable iron-wood stands, mint, (cost £3300) bargain £2200. Concordant Exquisite pre-amp, cherry finish, latest spec and casework. New 14/10/98 (cost £2000) mint, bargain £900. Tel: 01902 786 818 (Jan/I)

CROFT SERIES 3 OTL monoblocs, 65wpc (£3500) £1200. Snell Type J2's, Pirate stands, 92dB, suit valve amps (£1200) £450. Stax Lambda Nova classic system (£750) £450. Tel: Roy 01902 892 613 (Jan/I)

MAGNAPLANAR MG1.6 QRSE speakers, USA rave reviews (£1950) £1050. Denon Beat B100 + DP02MC phono stage, new, boxed, will split (£1000) £450/£200. 200 unplayed LP's - offers. Tel: Roy 01902 892 613 (Jan/I)

TANNOY EMPTY Lancasters. 15in woofers: Gauss 2x5840, RCF/JBL 2xL15PO6. Altec 2x418. Lowther single mini Acousta. JBL 4x4502 bullets. Altec horns 511/808. Vitavox horns S2, Hiwatt 200w poweramp 4xGEC/KT88. POA. Tel: 0171 625 8966 (Jan/I)

*Special Internet offer
see page 138 for details*

CLASSIC 1980s amplifier/speaker combination. Meridian Modular pre-amp (MC only), Crimson 100wpc kit poweramp with fixed and variable outputs. Celestion SL600 speakers. £375. May split. Tel: 01621 772 884 (Jan/I)

NOTTINGHAM ANALOGUE Space 50 corner loudspeakers. Free-standing and finished in black ash. Beautifully natural sound and suit all types of music. £350. Tel: 0115 937 3783 daytime/evenings (Nottingham) (Jan/I)

STD M TURNTABLE fitted with ALT1 arm, 4 plug in heads and 2 spare cartridges. Silver and black design award model. Box and instructions. Perfect £110. Tel: 01287 623 587 (Jan/I)

NAIM CD2, boxed, with all cables, instruction manual and remote control, pristine condition £1250 ono. Tel: 01603 432 354 after 7pm (Norwich) (Jan/I)

NAIM 250 £995. NAC102 £850. Hicap £450. All new style. Naim cable bi-wired £50. Audio Alchemy DDS3 £300. DDE3 £200. Power Station 2 £100. Apollo stand £50. Plus record collection for sale. Tel: 01708 760 571 (Jan/I)

HARBETH HLP3 ES Loudspeakers. Walnut, immaculate and boxed £350 ono. Sonic Link mains leads x2 £50 each. Sonic Link 4 way extension £100. Nordost Blue Heaven interconnect, boxed £50. Tel: Kevin 0171 454 0520 (Jan/I)

BILL BEARD BB100 Mk2 slight fault, little used £350. Quad II, resprayed red and blue with Oakley Image Six preamplifier £375. May split. Creek 4040S2, not used £35. Earmax headphone amplifier with spare valves £100. Tel: Roger 07909 775 584 between 8am-4pm (Sheffield) (Jan/I)

AUDIO NOTE DAC3, mint £975. Teac 700 transport, mint £495. Audio Note Miraa 'Special' phono stage, mint £595. Impulse H2's, superb £1125. All ono. Tel: 01765 677 639 (Jan/I)

MERIDIAN 501 Preamp £475. M20 active speakers (teak) £435. 5m vdH 'Source' £90. Superb, will demo. Sony ST-S260 RDS tuner £55. Target 6-tier stand £115. Tel: 01425 655 940 (Hampshire) (Jan/I)

ROKSAN XERXES (black ash) with Rega RB300 arm, two Xerxes top plates, one Rega, one Linn, £325. Ear 834P phono stage, MM/MC with volume control, mint, boxed £225. Tel: 01642 363 988 (Jan)

SHAHINIAN ARCS speakers, 12 months old £1295. LINN LP12 black, Ekos Lingo £1095. Karik Numerik £1650. Plus a selection of name leads. All in excellent condition and boxed. Tel: 01920 424 831 (Jan/I)

VPI AMERICAN made turntable. Piano black finish, sorbothane suspension, vibration absorption. Linn Basik Plus tonearm with Linn K5 cartridge. £375. Tel: 01525 874 726 (Jan/I)

B&W DM2 Speakers including stands. Excellent quality, sound and condition. Hard wood teak cabinets. £100 ono. Can demonstrate. Tel: 01604 403 588 (Jan/I)

CONVERGENT TECHNOLOGY Preamp LSI MkII (£2000). Excellent condition. Kimber Kcag interconnects, three metres, excellent. £450. Tel: 01942 811 880 (Jan/I)

MISSION 704s, excellent condition. Sale forced due to limited space at Univ. Cost £450. Only £225, bargain price for very large sound and easy for smaller amps. Tel: 01425 403 481 (Jan/I)

WILSON BENESCH WBTurntable, Act Two arm, Triptych stand. Wilson Benesch's top turntable/arm combination plus dedicated stand was £3700. Now only £1250. Tel: 0181 672 4319 (Jan/I)

KLS3 LOUDSPEAKERS, professionally built with light oak veneer, waxed finish. Beautiful sound, too big for my room. Funds needed for KLS10! £650. Tel: 0117 956 7718 or 07971 956 202 (Bristol) (Jan/I)

NORDOST RED DAWN speaker cables, 4 metres, bi-wired speaker end. Excellent sound, cost £1000, £450 ono. Nordost SPM 1m interconnect cable, super sound, cost £860, £325 ono. Tel: 01795 870 157 (Kent) (Jan/I)

VINTAGE HI-FI for sale. Leak Stereo 70 amplifier £40. Leak Troughline Three tuner £65. RCA and Pye FM tuners £25 and £45 ono. All items in good condition. Tel: 01203 678 094 (Coventry) (Jan/I)

SYSTEM: LINN Sondek Zeta, MC30, Lumley ST40, Audiovalve M2R, Rogers LS7 with stands, vdH cables £800. Tel: 0181 2366 374 (work), 01582 671 839 (home) (Jan/I)

ARGO HERA £160, B+W P4 one bass unit needs replacing £75. Tel: 0181 556 9102 (Jan/I)

KENWOOD KRV7030 Receiver, six inputs, Dolby surround sound, Pro Logic £100. Aiwa XC777 CD player, optical output £60. Aiwa ADR707 cassette deck £40. Ariston Pro 1200 turntable £50. Tel: 07974 967 550 (Wirral) (Jan/I)

AUDIO RESEARCH SP9III, serviced £1000. Krell KSA100S £3000. Osbourne Titan speakers £950. Meridian 508-24 £1200. Sale due to 'perfect' wife. Tel: 01628 627 406, mobile 0410 786 864 (Jan/I)

AUDIO NOTE ANE/B speakers on MAF stands £750. Meridian 500 CDT and 563 DAC, upgraded to 24bit spec £1250. Tel: 0131 220 0780 (Jan/I)

BARTOLOMEO POWER-AMP £500, Lecturn Poweramp £375. Arcam Delta 110 pre DAC £175. Perreux SM2 pre £375. Magnum 1A.170 II £375. Kef 105.4 £350. Michaelson Audio Odysseus Electrovoice Nidau £200. Quad 575. Pioneer RT909 reel to reel recorder in good condition for £275. Tel: 01626 774 246 (Jan/I)

AUDION SILVERNIGHT (SE) stereo £590, unused spare valve set Mullard, 2x300B (Audion) £110, Spondor SPL with Target sand filled stand £350, both vgc. Buyer collects. Tel: 01865 454 964 (Oxford) (Jan/I)

SPENDOR PRELUDES Speakers £135. Naim 42 preamp £125. Marantz CD player, remote control £75. Project stereo amplifier £130. Denon stereo tuner £80. Sony TC377 reel tape deck £100. Armstrong 400 watt power amplifier £100 vgc. Tel: 0181 680 1341 (Croydon) (Jan/I)

YAMAHA B2, Teac 35-2 tapedeck, Exposure XI/VIII/IX, Pioneer SX950. Leak TL10 +Pre/FM, Cambridge C/50, Mullard 4xEL37 new, TD124/II, SME3012/II. Ortofon SL-20E, Decca FFSS. 50s/60s: 3000 classical, +500 jazz LPs, mint. POA. Tel: 0171 625 8966 (Jan/I)

PIONEER A300R Tom Evans modified £300. Rotel RCD971 CD player £249. Sony CDP920E CD player £169. Moth 30 preamp £150. DNM 610/630 pre/pwr amplifier £850. SME 309 tonearm, £450. Acoustic Precision FRI speakers £595. All below 3 months. Tel: 01582 724 414 (Jan/I)

Special Internet offer
see page 138 for details

CROFT EPOCH Preamp £350. Bronze Quad grilles, offers. Quad Multiplex Decoder £45. Various original audio books. Garrard 301 power supply £80. Michell Electronic Reference, offers. RB300 tonearm £90. Quad II £160. Tel: 01274 599 234 (Jan/I)

WANTED: QUAD 77 poweramp, must be in mint condition. Tel: 0171 282 4056 (Jan/I)

AIWA TWIN Cassette WX828 HX Pro, auto reverse, Dolby B&C, mint, genuine less than ten hours use, original owner, boxed, manual £95 ono. Sony tuner, RDS ST 311, mint condition, less than 20 hours use, original owner, boxed with manual £85 ono. Leak Stereo 20 amplifier, matching bronze Varislope preamp, refurbished regardless of cost, perfect £350 ono. Carriage negotiable. Tel: 01392 860 182. Email: tjm296@freeuk.com (Feb/I)

QUAD 606 Early model good condition with box and manual £325. Leak 20 serviced £200. Sony SA3ES tuner boxed as new £150. WANTED: abandoned single ended amplifier project. Tel: 01623 812 455 (Mansfield) (Jan/I)

KEF REFERENCE Model 3 loudspeakers, rosetta burr finish. Good condition £1250 ono. Musical Fidelity X-24 K DAC, boxed with guarantee £200. Tel: 0117 960 6289 (Jan/I)

NAIM NAIT 3 (MM phono boards) £450 (£692). Only 18 months old, immaculate, manuals, boxed, receipt (Graham's Hi-Fi) Sale due to upgrade. Can demo. Tel: 0181 691 0098 (Greenwich) (Jan/I)

AUDIOLAB 8000S and 8000P £375, £395 respectively. WANTED: 8000M x2. Tel: 01543 415 628 (Jan/I)

CONRAD-JOHNSON PV-10A preamp, Technics Sea2000 power amp, Onkyo DX G10 CD player (very rare), Rotel Michi RHT10 tuner. All mint/boxed, with manuals. WANTED: Digital camera - Swap? Tel: 0181 651 5711 (Croydon) (Jan/I)

HIGHPHONIC MC-A5 superb MC cartridge, truly new £160. 2x6.5" woofers for Sequerra Met-7 II new £50. WANTED: Triode integrated amplifier new/mint. Offers to: J. M. Romero, Ctra, Castellar, 235, 1o 2a, 08226, Terrassa, (Barcelona) Spain. (Jan/I)

CELESTION SL700 Loudspeakers with stands £450. Krell KSL preamp with phono stage £995. Tel: 01832 280 236 (Jan/I)

JORDAN WATTS Metal cone speaker drive units recently reconditioned by Bandor £95 pair. Pickering XLZ 7500S cartridge, as new £65. Musical Fidelity A100 Class A amplifier, mint £170. Tel: 01277 219 639 (Essex) (Jan/I)

MICHELL GYRODECK with QC power supply, OL modified RB250, MC25FL, £625. Audio Note CD2 valve CD player £575. Both 18 months old. Assemblage L1 preamp, ST-40 poweramp, both full upgrades, 6 months old, perfect build £450 each or £825 together. Owner moving abroad. Tel: 01530 831 357 or 0831 565 010 (Jan/I)

STUDER A80 Vu-Bridge stereo £600. Studer B67 30ips stereo £750. PR99 mono £100. EMT 950 £600. EMT 948 £400. Revox G36 mint £500. Tannoy PA speakers £45. Technics SP10 £150. Technics SLP1200 CD £300. Tel: 0113 243 5649 or 0831 311 009 (Apr/I)

CROFT 'ABSOLUTE 1' preamp, mint, walnut fascia £1575 (£2750). Meridian 200 MkII transport, mint (recently serviced by Meridian) £275. Trichord Clock 3 + power supply (includes fitting instructions) £100. Tel: 01780 754 694 (Jan/I)

LINN WAKONDA, 14 months old £700 ono. Creek 52SE poweramp, almost new £400 ono. Quad 306 £110 ono. Tel: Steve 0374 809 410 daytime or 01707 390 736 after 8pm (Jan/I)

NAIM HI-CAP, new style, boxed £460. Dynavector DV20XL cartridge, 2 months old, mint £200. Linn Sara 9s with stands, boxed £350. Tel: Rob 0976 695 218 or 0181 337 1725 (Jan/I)

DBF CABLES, Azure interconnect 0.5m £28. Black Velvet interconnect, one metre £20. Fathom speaker cable, 2m bi-wire pair £45. Other cheap cables phone for details. Tel: 01293 786 453 (Jan/I)

MERIDIAN 502, new £1385, sell £875. Free MSR worth £70. Musical Fidelity X-A200 monoblocks, new £999, sell £550. Both 11 months old, boxed as new, mint with manual. Tel: Charles 0181 660 4101 (Jan/I)

ARCAM BLACK Box 1 DAC £125. Creek CD60 CD player. Double Crown TDA1541 multi-bit DAC, dynamic driving sound compared to bit-stream. (new price £600) Tel: evenings 01903 214 134 (Jan/I)

MONITOR AUDIO Studio 20.SE with plinths, rosewood, boxed, mint condition. £875 ono. Tel: 0121 326 8829 (Jan/I)

QUAD 909 Power amplifier, 140 watts per channel, brand new, 6 weeks old (£900 new) £575. Tel: 01536 763 737 (Jan/I)

NAIM 72 Pre new model £370, HiCap old style £350. NAP 250 old style £700. All mint condition. Exposure CD mint £550. Tel: Brian 0181 908 4633 or 0181 952 2044 home. (Jan/I)

AUDIOPHILE RECORDS Mobile Fidelity Rolling Stones boxset £500. Sgt. Pepper UHQ boxset sealed £295. Simon Yorke Zarathustra turntable Series Seven arm £3500. Tel: 01638 661 671 or 0410 759 047 (Newmarket) (Jan/I)

ARCAM ALPHA 5 Plus CD player, remote, handbook, British built, highly rated by reviewers, mint, boxed. £200 (£470) Tel: 020 7637 7045 daytime or leave a message. (Jan/I)

FOR SALE: Pair Kef R107 floorstanders £950. Tel: Tim 0181 994 9657 (London) (Jan/I)

NAIM 52 250 SBL Linn LP12 Aro Armageddon 17DV2 Prefix £6000. May split. Records also available. Tel: 07931 318 903 or 0171 775 3816 (office) (Jan/I)

TWO DYNALAB SDA 2.8 speakers, brand new, boxed, unused. Change in circumstances. Worth £1800. Bargain at £1000. Tel: Matt 0973 426 551 (Maida Vale, London) home 0171 289 8114 (Jan/I)

MERIDIAN 518 Digital preamp processor £500. Meridian 563 18bit DAC £350. Sonic Link Vermillion half metre interconnects £80. All mint. Tel: 01292 266 697 evenings (Jan/I)

B&O OVERTURE system, blue panels, remote £1200. Nakamichi 1000ZXL deck in flightcase, instruction manual, excellent working order £1000. JBL 1000Ti speakers, hardly used, boxed £650 (was £1600). Tel: 07887 700 799 (Jan/I)



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LINN LP12 Valhalla Ittok LVII K18II cartridge (plus Troika with broken stylus). Black ash, boxed £600. Quad FM4 tuner, grey, boxed £200. Tel: 01566 86225 (Jan/I)

VAN DEN HUL Pure silver headshell wires with gold plated cartridge clips. Brand new £12 per set. 2 sets available. Tel: 0181 883 5618 (Jan/I)

ARCAM ALPHA 3 amplifier, Arcam Alpha 2 tuner, Linn Basik record deck. Linn Index speakers with stands. Marantz 52 Mk2 CD deck. Sony TC-K690 tape deck £500. Tel: 01256 461 613 after 7pm. (Basingstoke) (Jan)

LFO MC2 2 box phono (£1500) £375. Linn Klyde, boxed, 2 years (£500) £110. Quad FM3/33/303S 110v, boxes, manuals, fantastic condition, will post £200. Lexicon CP2 processor (£800) £95 Tel: 0161 762 9884 or 0161 764 8888 (Jan/I)

GOLDRING LENCO GL85/P/C turntable, complete, immaculate £60. Cambridge T55 stereo tuner £50. Leak Stereo 30 amp £30. Sansui T7071 tuner £30. Quad MC module for 34 preamp, new £15. Tel: 01372 467 264 (Jan/I)

MARANTZ CD63 KI Signature £200. Marantz PM66 KI Signature amplifier £200. Rotel RQ970BX phono EQ £65. Tel: R. Burton 01403 250 570 after 6pm and weekends. (Horsham, West Sussex) (Jan/I)

B&W 802 speakers, excellent condition £495. Sony EVS1000E Hi 8 video recorder, little use, mint £395. Quad II amplifier, 22 control unit, all original £195. Rega Planar turntable arm with RB100 cartridge, excellent condition £165. Various 4 ch. amps etc. Tel: Barry 01472 870 367 (Jan/I)

WANTED: LINN LK280, must be in good condition. Tel: Roy 01782 543 821 (Jan/I)

TUBE TECHNOLOGY Synergy remote controlled integrated valve amplifier £3500 (£6900) Proac Response 3.5 loudspeakers, yew finish £2300 (£4675). Both items in excellent condition, boxed with instructions. Tel: 01703 601 222 (Southampton) (Jan/I)

JAMO CONCERT 8's, new and mint, piano black finish £900. Tel: 0181 994 2030 after 6pm (Jan/I)

ALPHASON SONATA turntable with Atlas power supply £495. The Voyd turntable, three motor, split phase power supply £695. Ixos 103 interconnect cost £45 new, accept £20. Tel: 01634 268 660 (Jan/I)

QUAD FM4 Tuner, phono, mint £250! Audio Alchemy DLC pre-amp + power station 4, £195. Optimus LX5 Pro speakers £65. Target LR4 (+2 shelves) dark blue £100. Tel: 01978 780 580 (Wrexham) (Jan/I)

AUDIO ANALOGUE Bellini and Donizetti, hardly used £625. Lyra Lydian Beta MC £325. Ear 834P phonostage £285. Possible exchange old valve amps. All as new. Tel: Steve Shiels 01964 551 436 (E.Yorks) (Jan/I)

SENNHEISER HD565 Ovation headphones £60. Extension lead £8. vdH CS 122 loudspeaker cable, 2 metre stereo pair unterminated £20. Michell gold plated banana plugs. 2 sets four £5/set, mint. Tel: 01752 773 369 (Jan/I)

NAIM 102 Pre MM £600, Naim 180 power £625. Both boxed, manuals. Ruark Talisman, rosewood £375, boxed. Chord cables DIN to phono for above. All mint condition. Tel: 01620 824 346 (Jan/I)

REL STADUIM 2 subwoofer, black, superb upgrade (boxed) £575 ono. Audio Note DAC4 awesome musical DAC, reluctant bargain (cost £5000) £1875 ono. Tel: John 01865 862 745 (leave message) (Jan/I)

AUDIOLAB 8000C preamp, excellent condition, boxed with manual £250. Tel: 0181 508 8932 (Jan/I)

AUDIOLAB 8000S and 8000P, excellent condition, boxed with instructions and remote control £875. Tel: 07977 270 847 (SW London) (Jan/I)

MUSICAL FIDELITY A1000 amplifier £750. Quad 77 integrated amplifier with remote £400 ono. DPA Renaissance CD player DX16 processor £350. Tel: George 01262 606 089 (Jan/I)

TRIO L-08 preamp with matching cables £175 ono. Receiver/CD player/twin cassette deck and loudspeakers £120 ono. Pye Mozart FM valve tuner £30. Aurex Pre/Pwr tuner and tapedeck with Minimax speakers £120. Tel: Jon 0181 904 8023 (Jan/I)

MARANTZ CD94 and CDA94 £550. Pioneer PD73 CD player £280. Pioneer CT91A cassette £280 mint or swap for Cyrus gear. B&W 802 Series 3, walnut (£3000) £1400 ono. Ferrograph Series 6 £35. Tel: 0121 742 2015 (Jan/I)

WANTED: LINN Aktiv crossover with Dirak. Also Linn LK280 or LK280 Spark power amplifiers. Reasonable prices. Also Naim 4 speaker cable. For Sale: Technics SL10 'Jacket Sleeve' turntable, offers? Tel: 00 3531 295 4076 (Jan/I)

NORDOST RED Dawn bi-wire bi-amp (4m pair) speaker cables (£1000) £495 ono. Nordost Red Dawn 1m interconnects (£300) £145 ono. Tel: 01482 641 217 (Jan/I)

MERIDIAN D600B Digital active speakers (rosewood) digital and analogue inputs £1300. Tel: 0181 746 0220 evenings (Jan/I)

NAIM NACD3, mint condition, boxed £500. Tel: 01905 458 473 (Worcester) (Feb/I)

WANTED DESPERATELY. Your price paid. Martins speakers (circa 1970). Tel: 01270 567 717 (Jan/I)

NAD 402 tuner £90. NAD 1300 pre £100. Rotel RC972 pre £150. RB981 amp £240. RQ970 BX-phono £90. Mission 762F black £350. All mint, boxed. Tel: 01444 413 782 (Sussex) (Jan/I)

REL STRATA II Subwoofer, 3 months old. A superbly subtle and tuneable bass playing system that adds true depth and scale to any system. Mint condition, boxed, all leads and manual £300. Tel: 01702 421 304 (Jan/I)

LUMLEY LV1 preamp (£1150) £390. Trichord Pulsemaster (£350) £170. BBE Sonic Maximiser £90. Tel: 01772 314 151 (Jan)

FOR SALE: One pair of 'Genesis One' loudspeakers. Very last model with mono bass amplifiers. Price \$55000. Tel: 33 4 93 360 911 (France) (Jan/I)

WANTED: NVA A60 power-amp. Old style matt case & NVA cables (soundpipes/LS1) Also wanted Acoustic Energy AE1 rosewood speakers. FOR SALE: NVA AP50 £300 mint. Tel: 07801 695 785 (Jan/I)

LINN LP12 Lingo Ittok LV2 Sumiko Blue Point £850. Naim NAP 90/3, Naim 92 with MM/MC boards £675. Tannoy PBM 6.5 II speakers with Apollo stands £250. All items boxed. Tel: Keith 01256 465 750 (Jan/I)

AVI 2000 Series preamp, FM tuner, MCII CD player £450 each. Elite Townshend 600 Series pre-power amplifier rebuilt by Manticore 85 WPC £350. Hi-Q balanced phono preamp £250. Tel: 01302 370 578 (Jan/I)

Most cables have a sonic signature or tonal character to match specific components. In well-matched systems these cables are often found to be harsh or dull.

Petros cables were designed for AudioSOURCE to complement transparent components in a well-matched system: the goal was neutrality - musical flavour transmitted as water flows along a smooth pipe. If our cables sound bright or blurred, be confident that it is the equipment that you are hearing! **Stratos** cables have the greatest differentiation of all interconnects we have compared, that is to say that different recordings and different components just yield their own characters, transparently.

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Stratos Series II (launched in August) is a major leap forward in interconnects which exceed the sonic performance of all but one extremely expensive (**NBS**) digital and stereo interconnects we have tried in a wide variety of equipment. Series two features our own RCA state-of-the-art phono plugs which use our tried materials (solid phosphor bronze, not bent copper) for enhanced contact and noise rejection. **Do not judge the performance by the price.** Customers are disposing of major brands now shamed by Stratos II because our cables are sold direct to end-users without marketing costs. This saves at least 75% when you consider that packaging and promotion double the cost of cables and dealer margins and vat double it again. One stereo metre of Stratos II thus sells for only £125. Stratos II Digital costs £59. Terminations are RCA or Neutrik Black Gold XLR from stock; others to order.

"These cables are everything you said they were ... this has been the cheapest and by far and away the most significant upgrade I've done to my hifi in years. I ordered cables, and when I opened the box, the contents looked like cables but these Stratos cables are much, much more than that. They have made such a huge difference to my listening pleasure that it's the equivalent of replacing one or more of the key items of hardware. At £120 [series II now £125] a 1 metre pair, they are the cable bargain of the decade." - Mr E.H., Aberdeen, 12/08/99.

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AMPLIFIERS

Last month I spoke mainly about speakers, and interestingly the response has generally been in agreement on their importance, in contradiction to the myth perpetuated by much of the Hi-Fi press about front ends. The next most vital thing in the chain is to achieve that synergy between amplifier and speaker, which is not easy. Regular readers will know of my regard for the AVI range of electronics, which are all extremely neutral, will drive most speakers with aplomb, and are realistically priced. The AVI integrated with R/C and 100 W/CH at £1000 is still my favourite, but now could have some competition from the new Electrocompaniet ECI power which replaces the old ECI-3, but now has R/C, power increased from 50 to 75 watts and has pre-amp outputs for bi-amping, at the same price as the AVI. One of the great things about all the E/C amps is their ability to produce huge amounts of current when required, so that the ECI-3 can give 60 amps, the AW120 DMB power amp gives you 80 amps, and the 250R gives you 100A. Even the ECI-3 is stable down to a 0.5 ohm load, and although nominally 75 watts that is into 8 ohm, and it gives you 100 watts into 4 ohms and 160 watts into 2 ohms. The new EC4.7 pre-amp is fully balanced, has R/C and 6 inputs plus 2 tape loops and now costs a mere £999. Add to that the ECP1 MM/MC phono pre-amp (£499) and their long awaited EMC.1 reference CD player (24 bit/95Khz plus balanced out) at £2249, and you can now build a complete E/C system, as I still have their QUBE speakers, which have now been discontinued. If that's not enough there's the AW180 monoblocks at £4K and the 600 watt NEMO monaural class A reference power amp at £7.5K each.

More on amps next time.

V'audio Hi-Fi Consultants
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(Jan(l))

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