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JANUARY 2003

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WORLD

WORLD
WINNERS
2002

Our round up of the Year's
Best products

FREE XMAS SUPPLEMENT

xmas supplement
INSIDE THIS ISSUE!

& computer audio

TRI THIS FOR SIZE!

Musical Fidelity's new heavyweight Tri-Vista 300 integrated amplifier

● plus

- £200-£300 Bookshelf speaker group test
- Pioneer DV658 DVD-A/SACD player
- Cyrus 8 integrated amplifier
- Yamaha CDR-HD1300 hard disk CD recorder
- Exposure 22 CD player
- Arcam T61 tuner
- KEF Q7 'speakers
- DVD-A news feature - disc prices to plummet!

● Computer Audio World

- Pure SonicXplosion DVD soundcard
- Xitel Pro Hi-Fi Link
- JVC's KD-SH99RB MP3-CD tuner

JANUARY 2003



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- Hi-Fi World (August 2002)

"The scale and authority of their performance is breathtaking"

- What Hi-Fi? (August 2002)



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QUAD

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the crew

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simon pope

Some of you misguided souls out there may well think I have the enviable task of listening to the stuff of audiophile dreams all day and retiring to bed after a hard day on the listening sofa. If only - this is no life of Riley! Perhaps the worst part of it is lugging 70kilo amplifiers up the stairs with only a weightlift-

ing belt for assistance, and perhaps the second worst part of it is sitting for two hours on the M1 en route (very slowly) to an "essentially important" press launch only to be greeted with a demonstration of the latest cordless kettle and a plate of hard-crust-ed egg sandwiches. On return to the office you're then greeted with 145 e-mails.

However, I've just returned from a press launch that actually merited the effort. The amassed media troops weren't treated to the delights of a two-hour technical head-scratcher, but a line-up of about 25 varied but compatible players, a catalogue of 405 discs (of admittedly varying quality) and some common sense on how DVD-Audio could become a household format. More details can be gleaned from our report in this issue but basically it appears that the powers that be in the music industry intend to release titles of mainstream and contemporary artists on DVD-A. That's not all, though. These titles, we were told, will be launched at the same time as the equivalent CD release and, more importantly, at the same price!

All this makes sense if DVD-Audio is to take off. A DVD-Audio disc will of course play at CD quality on a DVD-Video machine and we're told there are no fewer than 80million of these around the globe. They are used as 'CD' players too. That's one hell of a target audience for a new format.

Soon, at least a quarter of all new DVD machines will soon be DVD-A compatible - at affordable prices. Add to this the impressive extra visual material such as lyric sheets, interviews and video footage available with DVD-A discs and you have a situation where DVD-A becomes a mainstream music carrier.

It's a convincing argument; all the industry has to do now is convince the buying public that the enjoyment possible from the format really does merit a room full of wires and boxes!

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.

£	NICE PRICE	- Represents excellent value for money.
● ● ● ●	EXCELLENT	- Superb sound, among the best available.
● ● ●	VERY GOOD	- Well worth a listen.
● ●	ADEQUATE	- Room for improvement.
●	POOR	- Seriously flawed. Forget it!
◐	Half globes are added for those products that we feel are between categories	

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HI-FI WORLD

SUITE G4, ARGO HOUSE
KILBURN PARK ROAD
LONDON, NW6 5LF

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

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competition

This month it's your chance to get a special gift from Santa in the form of a brilliant Cyrus 8 integrated amplifier and matching PSX-R power supply.



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 Merry Christmas to all our Readers



from Hi-Fi World





NAD'S LATEST HIGH END SPINNER

Although mostly noted for their giant-slaying budget products, NAD also have a high-end Silver range. At the top is the S 500 CD player that recently followed its affordable stablemates by being upgraded to 'i' status, resulting in what the company describe as their 'best ever' CD player. As well as the usual RCA outputs, the S 500i features XLR balanced analogue outputs for better quality in professional applications. An XLR digital output is also fitted, in addition to a co-axial output. The 500i's analogue sections operate in pure Class A and the player

is also DC coupled. Each section of the player has its own dedicated power regulators for freedom from noise and interference. A 24bit Crystal DAC is the chosen number cruncher for the 500i and a 5-pole filter is used in the analogue stage as opposed to the usual 4-pole. This apparently removes RF interference more effectively and reduces group delay. A three beam laser is used in the transport mechanism, which also uses a brushless motor (known as a Hall effect) to help minimise jitter.

Lenbrook UK Ltd.
Tel: 01908 319360
www.lenbrook.co.uk



ON THE CREST OF A WAVE

KEF have announced details of three new Cresta 'speakers. Following on from the success of the previous Cresta models, the Cresta 10, 20c and 30 follow the name's tradition of quality at an affordable price, but are designed by the same engineers as the company's top flight Reference range.

The £130 Cresta 10 is a two-way bookshelf model that features a 130mm bass/midrange drive unit, accompanied by a 25mm silk dome tweeter that features in all of the other models. The cabinet is reflex ported with a volume of 8.5 litres.

The £100 20c is a magnetically shielded, two-way centre 'speaker that uses two 100mm long throw units along with the tweeter.

Top of the range is the 30, a two-way bass reflex floorstander priced at £200 that uses the same drive units as the 10 but with a cabinet volume of 18 litres. All models are available in either maple, dark Apple or Black Ash finish.

KEF Audio Ltd.
Tel: 01622 672261
www.kef.com



REGA'S THIRD DIMENSION

Rega Research have announced details of a new range of products set to hit the retailers in December. It consists of a new pre/power combination, a new integrated, CD player and their latest FM tuner. All of the products are improved versions of current models and all retain their predecessors' prices.

The Rega Cursa 3 preamp is described as the company's most advanced preamp to date. It features a new 'satin metal' finish, like the rest of the '3' products that use the company's type 3 Alpha-Encoder control system. On the phono input there is a choice of a line, MM or MC plug-in configuration. Three different output levels (0.2, 0.6 and 1.2V) are available for connection to power amplifiers. The Cursa is joined by the new £498 Maia 3 power amplifier which delivers 85W per channel.

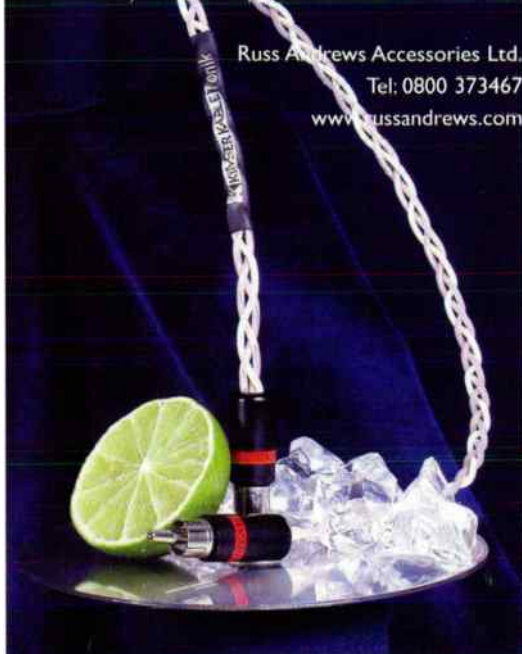
On the source front, there is an updated version of the Planet CD player. The new, "improved" Planet has a newly designed top-loading CD lid assembly, a custom-built, 24bit IC40 DAC, Evox film capacitors and a high performance Sony mechanism, display and DSP. There are Toslink and Co-axial digital outputs and an additional power supply is used for the digital section of the DAC. Price remains at £498. Lastly, the Radio 3 at £374 is Rega's new FM/AM tuner which replaces the Radio 2000 with 20 presets for each band, a high performance Sanyo chipset and the same vacuum florescent display as the Planet CD player.

Rega Research
Tel: 01702 333071
www.rega.co.uk

JUST THE TONIK

A new entry level interconnect from U.S. specialists Kimber has just hit the UK. The Tonik will retail for £45 for a 0.5 metre pair. The cable is fitted with Kimber's new Ultrakite phono plugs and uses the company's tri-braid Varistrand. It has "ultra-pure"

copper conductors and a "special recipe" PE dielectric. It's also available in studio grade XLR connections (for an extra cost) with silver-plated contacts.



A DAB HAND OUT FROM GOODMANS

It appears this Christmas will be the time for digital radio to reach a wider audience. After much speculation, and following the likes of Cambridge Audio and Acoustic Solutions, Goodmans are to release an affordable stereo digital radio (DAB) tuner, accompanied by a range of consumer friendly products ranging from £100-£200. Crucially, there's also an FM/MW analogue radio in each model, too, for those unable to receive DAB broadcasts. The GTS2000 tuner will be released alongside the GPS280 portable stereo CD player/digital radio, the GCD200 personal CD player with digital radio and active 'speakers, and an in-car CD/digital radio head unit, the GTS7007.



Prices are yet to be confirmed but the first products to be launched, in time for Christmas, are the GPS280 portable followed by the GCD200 personal stereo, both through High Street retailers. The in-car and tuner models will follow in early 2003.

Goodmans (Alba plc)
Tel: 02392 391100

next issue

Here is but a small selection of what we hope to bring you in four weeks:

MARANTZ DV8300

This is the first Marantz 'Universal' DVD player featuring playback of both DVD-Audio and SACD discs.

ECLIPSE TD 512

These curious egg-shaped monitors promise to offer a wicked combination of style and pin point accuracy of sound.

MUSICAL FIDELITY TRI-VISTA SACD

This is the company's first foray into new formats and represents the pinnacle of their digital players.

next issue

Performance: get it out of your system.



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Film soundtracks truly come alive, music is maximized – suddenly your entire cinematic experience is heightened with sensational sound. To fully appreciate how NAD takes music and home entertainment further, contact Lenbrook UK for your nearest specialist NAD A/V dealer.

Shown here: T562 DVD/CD Player and T762 Surround Sound Receiver.

www.nadelectronics.com

powered by passion **NAD**

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 **Lenbrook**
UK LTD

World Radio History

STAND AND DELIVER



There's a lot to be said for the humble standmount 'speaker, namely detail and accuracy as opposed to outright grunt. Noel Keywood works his way through half a dozen standmount 'speakers priced £200-£300.

In the loudspeaker world, being small has many advantages. A small 'speaker can outgun a big one quite easily in many areas, especially in its ability to throw a panorama of sound into the room that seems quite divorced from the boxes themselves. This little trick makes a small speaker sound large, although at present few small loudspeakers are sufficiently well engineered to do this effectively. One new model in this group I have reviewed did do so though, raising the issue - and the stakes - for the others. All six pairs gave a pretty good account of themselves all the same, showing just how good a small one can be.

With surround-sound now starting to appear on SACD and DVD-A the need for small, high quality loudspeakers becomes even greater. Upgrading to surround-sound means ditching the stereo pair for no fewer than five loudspeakers and a sub-woofer. Installing an unobtrusive pair of

small, high quality stereo front speakers is a good first step to adding a pair of rears and a centre channel at a later date, plus a subwoofer. Manufacturers commonly provide such an upgrade path by making complementary sets or individual loudspeakers, like centres and subwoofers, available. It's best to contact a manufacturer or retailer direct about options like this.

At present most surround systems 'in a box' are of comparatively low quality, yet both SACD and DVD-A provide better-than-CD quality on all channels, (i.e. on rear speakers, as well as the front centre speaker), so there's an innate contradiction here. To get the full benefit of either DVD-A or SACD, very high quality small loudspeakers like those reviewed here must be used if the full impact of modern 24/96 digital recordings is to be fully realised.

So small loudspeakers are a sensible modern choice, but they have drawbacks of course. The classic one of limited bass holds as

true today as it ever did. Very small loudspeakers just cannot go low and if you try to force the issue they will start to sound confused and overwhelmed. The general design aim is to get a small 'speaker down to 40-60Hz or so, allowing it to reproduce bass guitar or acoustic bass with believable impact. This will be sufficient for most people most of the time. If it isn't, a powered subwoofer can be used, good big ones being able to reach down to room shaking frequencies with useful levels of acoustic power.

Unfortunately, subs that are a rock bottom price aren't up to high quality audio - you'll have to splash out about £300 minimum for an adequate model. The subwoofer option is built into surround-sound modes, so again if you plan to upgrade in future, when DVD-A and SACD discs become more common, it's best to lay the foundations now by buying a pair of high quality small loudspeakers for which a subwoofer is likely available.

ACOUSTIC ENERGY AESPRIT 300C

The compact Acoustic Energy Aesprit 300C combines a small aluminium cone bass/mid-range unit with a fabric dome tweeter. It has a slightly smaller bass driver than the 300 we reviewed back in our July 2002 issue, a lower quoted power handling of 100W as a result and front firing ports to facilitate wall or shelf mounting.

SOUND QUALITY

Like the 300, the 300C could be a little enigmatic. Faced with Toy Matinee's well recorded 'Last Plane Out' on DVD-A its bass grumbled a little, which was distracting. Yet when the next track kicked in, without conflicting bass line, the AE 300Cs seemingly took off, sounding superbly detailed, lively and dynamic, yet also smooth. In fact the smoothness of these loudspeakers is almost syrup like; they seemingly border on sounding warm, yet that is not actually the case. DVD-A tracks like the Corrs Breathless sounded appropriately energetic at high frequencies, but the tweeter has very little colour of its own and remains acoustically hidden from view, as it were.

However, the apparently enigmatic sound of the 300Cs was

further explained by this Corrs track. It showed quite clearly that the front firing ports make internal cabinet coloration audible to listeners, bringing a peculiar warmth and heaviness to the sound. With bass grumble and

cabinet coloration the 300Cs may seem less than impressive, yet they are impressive all the same. They deliver plenty of detail, good insight into a performance and relatively strong dynamics. This last property made them fine for rock music, even if they may not be class leaders.

The smooth treble worked wonders with orchestral works, massed strings of the Berliner Staatskapelle sounding mellow, fulsome yet detailed and authentic with Beethoven's Eroica symphony on DVD-A. Moving back to Rock and Fleetwood Mac's Rumours, again on DVD-A, showed the constantly changing nature of the 300Cs. Whilst



there was a delicious sense of insight in Never Going Back Again that made it an intriguing listen, drum strikes on 'Go Your Own Way' were so boxily resonant the effect was distracting - and a little damning.

In a nutshell, the AE 300Cs sounded warm, smooth, coloured but often delightfully enthusiastic and detailed. They are both obviously flawed and delightfully entertaining.

Acoustic Energy
Aesprit 300C £300.00

Acoustic Energy Ltd.
Tel: +44 (0)1285 654432
www.acoustic-energy.com

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The Aesprit 300C has some bass lift in its frequency response, likely to add a little body and warmth to its sound. The tweeter response extends smoothly up to 20kHz, a small rise in output suggesting it works well past this high upper limit. As there is no top-end roll off bright CDs may well sound a little challenging.

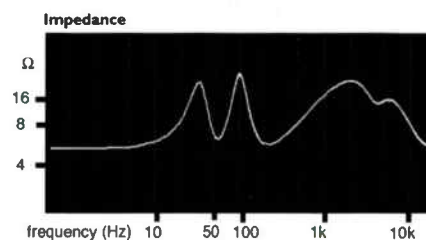
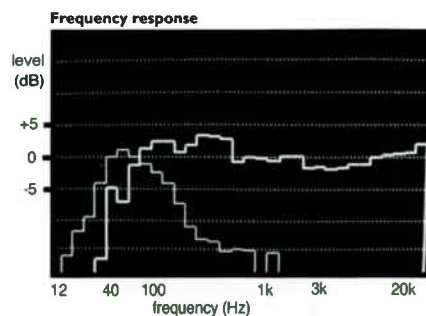
Forward bass output reaches down to 40Hz. Below this frequency the port takes over, extending output down to a low 20Hz or so. So the 300C manages to cover bass frequencies effectively.

With a sensitivity of 95dB a reasonably powerful amplifier of 60W or more will generally be needed to get good volume levels.

The 300C measured out at 8ohms nominal though, giving it a higher overall impedance than most rivals. This is a good balance of load properties, so the 300C should be reasonably easy to drive, although it is a little reactive over most of the audio band.

Acoustic Energy's 300C will sound a little warm and fulsome. Although treble is extended it is also very smooth. The 300C measures well. **NK**

W 185mm, H 290mm,
D 233mm; weight 6kg



World Verdict 
Smooth and warm, with great insight but a certain amount of cabinet coloration effects the overall sound. Good looking and well built.

CASTLE RICHMOND 3

The Richmond 3 is handed into left and right speakers, the tweeter being offset on the front baffle to be closest to the 'inside' edge of each speaker. This is meant to improve stereo imaging. Castle use a polyamide tweeter, rather than the increasingly common metal dome, and they match it with a small woven carbon fibre bass/mid-range unit, reflex loaded by a small port on the rear panel. The Richmond only accepts single wire connection; it cannot be bi-wired. This is a small loudspeaker, well finished with a choice of real wood veneers.

SOUND QUALITY

Live speech from the Steve Wright afternoon show on Radio 2 showed immediately that the Richmonds do things very differently to the metal coned loudspeakers in this group, sounding altogether darker in their basic presentation. Metal cones sound bright and vivid; carbon fibre cones seem much less forward by way of contrast. However, carbon fibre gives superb resolution of tonal colour within vocals and instruments and Steve Wright and others in the studio sounded natural enough as a result. Detailing was good, there was a fine sense of liveliness and dynamic.

However, there was also an obvious warmth and boxiness that made the Richmonds sound coloured, even without contrast to the other speakers of the group. This coloration is clearly revealed in measurement and proved to be a fairly major drawback to what was otherwise a very nice sound.

Toni Braxton's sumptuous tones were beautifully resolved in Spanish Guitar, largely as a result of the carbon fibre driver's great ability to resolve tonal colour, well revealing contrasts and inflexions. Accompanying vocalists were very well resolved as a group of individual singers, rather than as an homogenous group. In this respect the Richmond's were very detailed. However, this testing track had the small cabinet thrumming obviously, resulting in a box-bound sound.

Larisa Stowe's 'Living In Your Eyes', a dynamic DVD-A recording, came over as punchy and clear, but the port and general low-end loading was quite obviously running into problems here, bass sounding boxy and slow. Staying with DVD-A, Fleetwood Mac's 'Second Hand

News' kicked off with a coloured, boxy sound that although fast and dynamic was also a little laboured in its bass. The simpler Dreams was entertaining enough, but DVD-A could over stress the Richmonds if any volume was required. I suspect the small port was running into severe non-linearity.

The Richmonds are smooth and entertaining, if not pushed too hard. They image well and sound both lively and large. Yet their limitations are a little obvious for today's marketplace.

Castle Richmond 3 £280

Castle Acoustics Ltd.
Tel: +44 (0)1756 795333
www.castleacoustics.co.uk



MEASURED PERFORMANCE

I expected this latest version of the bookshelf Richmond to display Castle's brand-value sound - and it did. The noise test signal sounded silky rather than fierce, the latter being more common nowadays, and our response analysis clearly shows a gentle overall tilt downwards toward high frequencies. Treble is smooth and extended, and there is no crossover suckout to erase detail, so the Richmond is not lacking. Castle have balanced it to possess a small amount of warmth, as is their preference.

There is a strong lift in output at lower frequencies that will add body to the sound and may just add a little colour too. Bass output starts to roll away below 80Hz. The port works at 60Hz and damps the bass driver effectively, making the Richmond tidy enough at low frequencies. It doesn't

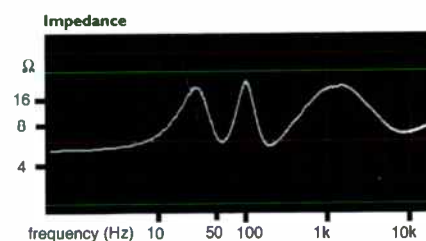
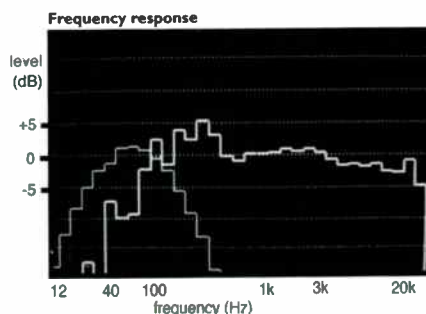
go super-low but it should sound fast in bass quality.

Like other Castles the Richmond is an easy load as far as an amplifier is concerned. Above 200Hz there's little reactance and impedance stays high. Castle use a 6ohm bass unit, which draws less current than most, and the speaker measures out at 8ohms overall - a high value nowadays. The downside is a mediocre sensitivity figure of 84dB SPL, so at any particular volume control setting the Richmond will not appear especially loud.

The Richmond is nicely balanced to give the Castle sound from a small loudspeaker. There may be

some colour from the upper-bass peak. **NK**

W 165mm, H 280mm, D 205mm;
weight 4.6kg



World Verdict Well finished and attractive, the Castle's image well and have good detail but could be a bit too warm and 'coloured' for some.

MONITOR AUDIO SILVER S1

Monitor Audio's S1 uses an attractive looking ceramic coated, aluminium-magnesium alloy cone bass unit with parasitic dust cap. It is mated to a gold anodised tweeter whose dome is made of the same alloy, only thinner to reduce mass. The S1s are neatly finished, and can be bi-wired. The rear panel carries a bass reflex port.

SOUND QUALITY

Renee Fleming's voice was projected with a vividness that defied the other speakers of the group. Madame Butterfly had never sounded so clear, although there was a little bit of creaminess to the sound suggestive of some loss of midrange detail resolution. Classical works were generally reproduced with a vivid clarity that was almost startling; massed violins in Wagner's *Reinzi Overture* were wonderfully resolved as a cohesive orchestral section, although again I felt that individual violins seemed a little smeared together as a result of limited resolution. Woodwind came over as full and fruity though and the general sense of orchestral scale was well conveyed.

Toni Braxton's Spanish Guitar rather shook the S1s. Strong dynamics

and an extended energy spectrum showed the tweeter has a distinct sting to it, heard as strengthening of sibilance in 'wish' and 'Spanish'. I have heard worse; the S1s have quite fierce treble with recordings like this but although it made them sound a little clattery, there wasn't the coarseness that characterises really poor tweeters.

Moving into DVD-A showed the S1s as clear, vivid and dramatically forward, but the drive units do at times sound a little metallic. There is also a little boxiness that tends to keep the sound box-bound; I could not divorce the sound stage from the speakers in my mind as a result. Vocal harmonies from the Corrs were projected with a vivid clarity that defied the other loudspeakers and similarly Fleetwood Mac's 'Dreams', also on DVD-A, came across well.

The S1s have enthusiastic bass and were able to deliver a fairly convincing bass line with Toy Matinee's 'Last Plane Out' on DVD-A. However, the initial drum strike of Angelique Kidjo's 'Agolo' was muted



and the accentuated bass line of this track lacked fundamental energy. The S1s try hard, but they are unable to reproduce real lows.

Live speech from Radio 2 studio DJs interestingly highlighted the very specific qualities of the S1s, with superb vocal clarity, but emphasised sibilance and some boxiness, yet reasonably convincing tonal balance. These speakers are both vivid and characterful.

Monitor Audio Silver S1 £299

Monitor Audio Ltd.
Tel: +44 (0)1268 740580
www.monitoraudio.co.uk

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The most unusual feature of this loudspeaker is a sharp rise in output at 20kHz from the tweeter. The output of most tweeters starts to decline here, as it should if dome behaviour is well damped. Although the +7dB peak in our analysis is visually obvious, luckily the effect should not be overtly audible, since the ear is insensitive at such high frequencies. A certain amount of "hiss" characterising treble quality may be evident with CDs that already contain strong treble though.

Otherwise, the Silver 1 has a flat frequency response that reaches down to 80Hz before forward output starts to roll away. A well damped port extends bass output downward, but all the same in small rooms the Silver 1 may well sound a bit dry or light in bass output. Measurement suggests the speaker is best used close to a real

wall to gain some low frequency reinforcement.

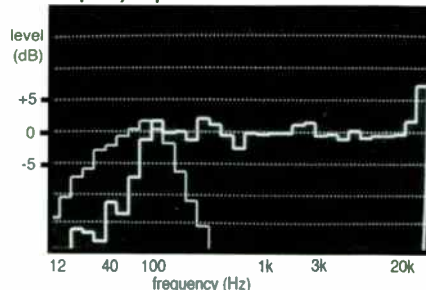
The impedance characteristic is reasonably well controlled as modern loudspeakers go, but it has the usual inconsistency that comes about when a nominally 4ohm bass unit is matched with an 8ohm tweeter to enhance sensitivity. There are minima of 3.6ohms where current will be drawn, making this a demanding loudspeaker. All the same, the Silver 1 does go respectably loud, delivering 87dB SPL for one nominal Watt of input (2.84V).

Measurement reveals a competently designed loudspeaker, adhering to current practice. It will likely have a bright, but detailed sound. The

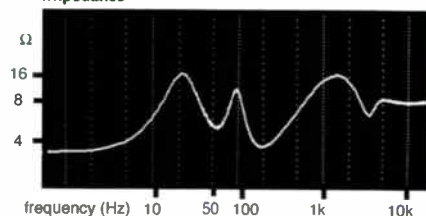
Silver 1 is fundamentally accurate. **NK**

W 175mm, H 300mm, D 258mm;
weight 6kg

Frequency response



Impedance



World Verdict

Fine clarity and dynamics but are naturally forward which, whilst exciting, also means that the Silver S1s can be harsh at the top end when pushed.

MORDAUNT SHORT MS912

The 912 is a large-ish speaker for a stand or bookshelf, but this should mean it has a little more bass oomph and in practice it does. Mordaunt Short use their own aluminium cone bass/mid-range unit, matched to an aluminium dome tweeter. A second-order crossover mates the two and bi-wire terminals are fitted. The rear panel carries a port.

SOUND QUALITY

Uniquely in this group the MS912 displayed a cohesiveness that seamlessly matched tweeter to woofer, giving it a smooth and natural presentation apparently divorced from the cabinets producing the sound. Good small loudspeakers can do this, where small size and good surface wave behaviour conspire to give them a degree of projection beyond that of even large expensive loudspeakers. Better still, the 912s were aided by using similar cone/dome material, aluminium, which further reduces tonal discontinuity.

In balance the 912s have solid but supple bass, which goes low enough to handle rock bass lines, such as that of Angélique Kidjo's *Houngbati*. The emphasised bass line

of this recording strode along firmly. There's a smooth, clear mid-band and easy, fluid treble, albeit with a little emphasis that on occasion can make itself known. Take a squeaky clean, dynamic DVD-A track like Larissa Stowe's *Living In Your Eyes* and the 912s really

deliver, with great dynamics, finely etched clarity and a good sense of revelation. They stay clean, although a little edginess to treble is there.

Going back in time to Janis Joplin's *Me* and Bobby McGee shows the 912s do a great job, in a modern way. They are a little bright in balance but resolve Joplin's gritty vocals superbly, bringing an old recording to life. Terry Wogan on *Radio 2* sounded full bodied, and a little chesty coloration was evident, but his voice hung between the speakers in a very convincing manner. The 912s sound dramatic in this respect. With orchestral classical, massed violins were projected clearly yet cleanly,

with superb detailing but natural tonal colour. The tweeter didn't screech or sound unpleasant here; the 912s handled classical well.

The 912 was nothing short of impressive. It offers levels of clarity, tonal resolution and dynamic contrast ahead of current standards. Together with superb imaging this loudspeaker offers extraordinary value.



Mordaunt Short MS912 £200

Mordaunt Short
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7827 9001
www.mordaunt-short.co.uk

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

This is a chunky loudspeaker that looks as if it will be a bass machine. However, measurement shows it has well damped bass output with no attempt at bass peaking to give the sound extra weight. The port operates around 40-60Hz, high up the band relatively speaking, and over the same range as forward output. The port exerts strong damping over a potentially large fundamental cone resonance and this will translate into tight but enthusiastic sounding bass.

Like others, Mordaunt Short use a 4ohm bass unit to achieve good sensitivity with solid-state amplifiers and the 812 produces a healthy 88dB SPL from one nominal watt of input, more than most rivals. It will be louder at any particular volume control setting as a result. Mordaunt

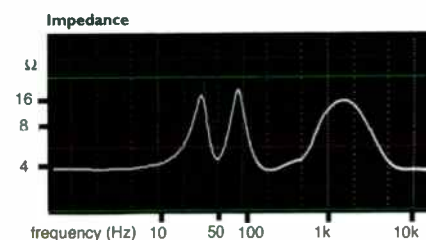
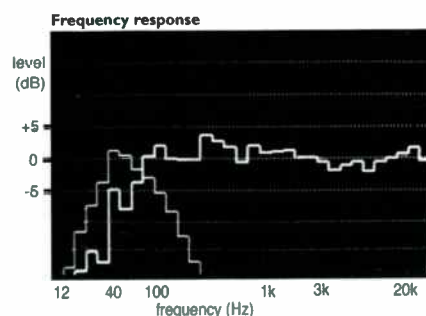
Short disregard the affects of reactance upon amplifier feedback behaviour though. With an impedance curve like a camel's back the MS912 is very reactive.

Our frequency response analysis shows the 912 is pretty accurate and has well maintained treble output to 20kHz. It will likely sound bright and detailed.

The MS912 measures well enough in most areas but it is a difficult load, which in practice means it will interact with amplifiers more than most and highlight amplifier differences.

NK

W 205mm, H 355mm, D 315mm;
weight 8kg



World Verdict £

A very sophisticated design for the money. A big, cohesive and dynamic sound with good bass and fluid treble. Highly recommended.



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World Radio History



REGA ARA

The small Ara uses a shallow fibre cone bass/mid-range unit matched to a fabric dome tweeter. It can only be single-wired; bi-wiring is not possible. Nicely finished, this diminutive unit has a small rear port and is really best off close to a rear wall, due to its limited bass output.

SOUND QUALITY

Live speech from Radio 2 showed the Aras don't suffer the same levels of box coloration as many of the other speakers in this group. However, they were quite obviously bright and even on Radio 2 - a mild and clean source - could sound strident.

Moving straight into the challenge of wideband DVD-A, the Corrs hit *Breathless* had the Aras again sounding very obviously bright, the tweeter coming across as relatively coarse by today's standards when excited by cymbals on this track. There was little sense of real depth resolution from the Ara and it seemed disinclined to eke out detail, offering a bland and cursory version of what was on this disc. The Ara, it seemed to me, sounded dated and crude, falling way behind the marketplace in general and today's

requirements in particular.

Things looked up with Toy Matinee's 'Last Plane Out'. Here the Ara was faster, tighter and rhythmically more on the ball than any of the loudspeakers of the group. It moved from note to note with astonishing precision, giving it a time domain footprint free from slur, smear or overhang. However, there was little deep bass and quite clearly this factor, together with low cabinet coloration was contributing to the loudspeaker's superb sense of timing. In a similar vein, Foreigner's *Juke Box Hero*, also on DVD-A, came across as clean and fast, but there was little in the way of real detail or stage depth, the two being linked.

The Ara gave a clean enough outline of events, but it did little to flesh out details. Toni Braxton's 'Spanish Guitar' better suited this loudspeaker's abilities, however, possessing razor sharp percussive transients and an almost-vicious grip on timing. Any listener focussing in



on this aspect of behaviour could well rate the Ara above its competitors, but I would not.

The Ara will appeal to particular tastes. It offers an unrelenting sense of time-domain control that escapes its rivals. However, I don't suspect that will worry them unduly because the Ara forsakes much to achieve this.

Rega Ara £255.00

Rega Research Ltd.
Tel: +44 (0)1702 333071
www.rega.co.uk

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The small Rega uses unusual drive units and in some ways stands current convention on its head. Where nearly all modern loudspeakers use 4ohm bass units for high sensitivity, Rega use an 8ohm unit equipped with what looks like a lightweight paper cone. As a result the little Ara is an easy amplifier load, demanding little current, but it is sensitive all the same, producing 86dB SPL from one nominal Watt of input.

It's likely Rega have designed it this way in order to give amplifiers an easy time, which optimises sound quality. To what extent it does so depends upon the amplifier though and in this case there's a qualification: above 2kHz impedance plunges and the Ara becomes reactive, which is less than ideal since it can affect amplifier feedback

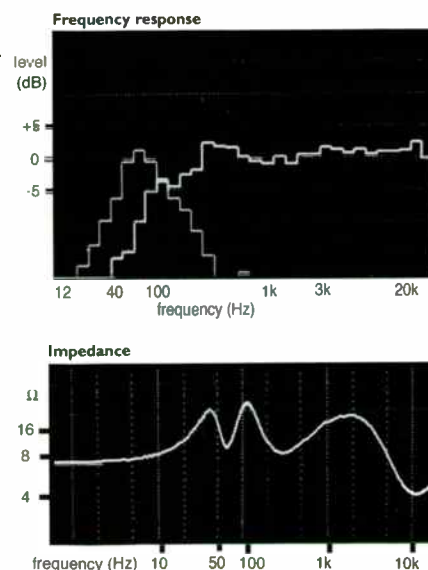
behaviour. This gives the Ara a peculiar range of properties as a load, both good and bad.

The Ara is a small loudspeaker and bass output from cone front radiation starts to roll down below 160Hz or so - quite a high value. However, the roll off is slow and suits wall mounting, so the Ara isn't likely to sound balanced out on a stand. The port works at 63Hz, just right for fast, bouncy bass. Otherwise, frequency response is flat enough right across the audio band, suggesting good resolution of detail and a fast, precise sound.

The little Ara measures reasonably well, but it does differ from the norm, and will likely have

its own type of presentation. **NK**

W 170mm, H 320mm, D 215mm;
weight 4.4kg

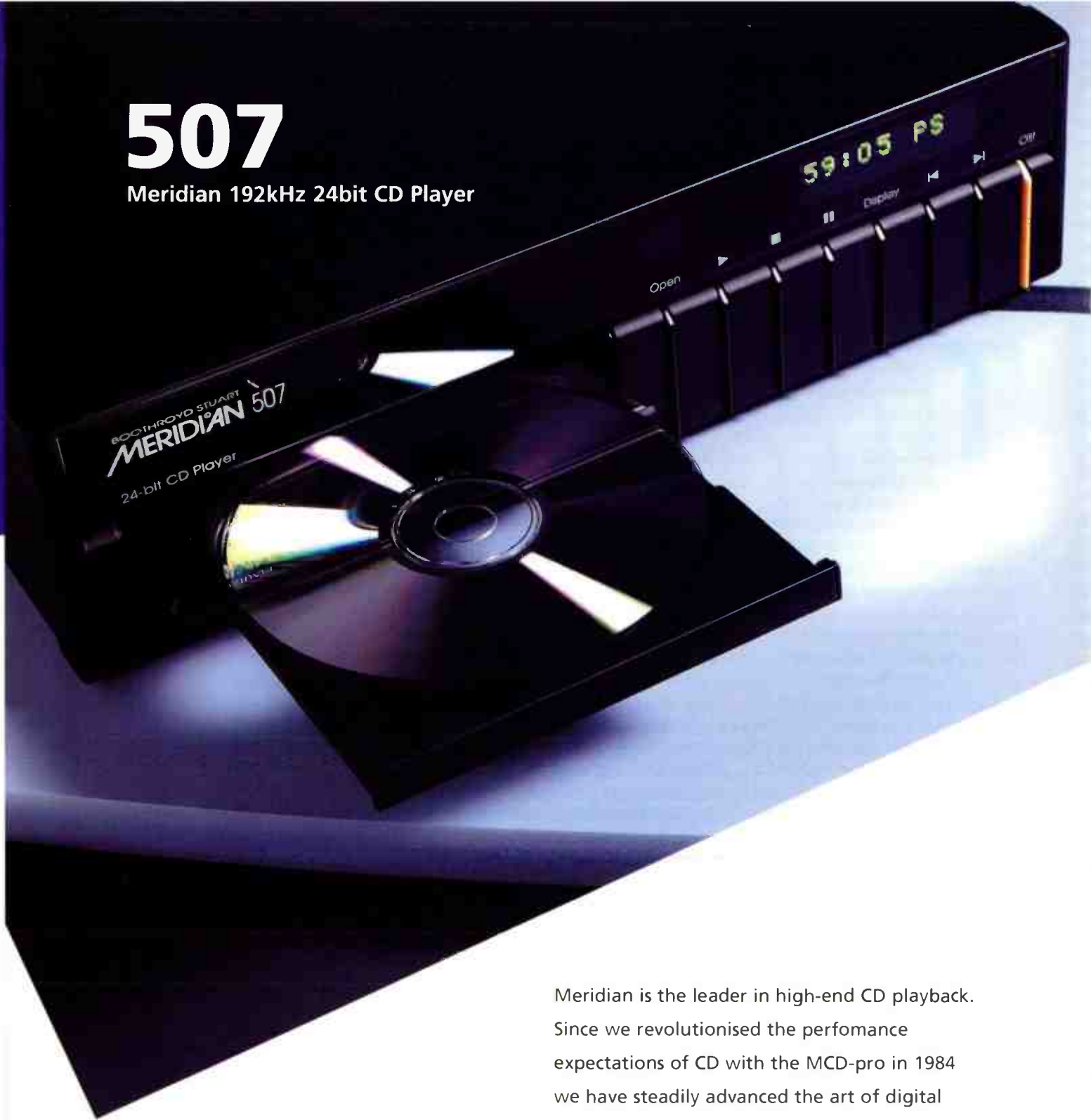


World Verdict

Very fast and immediate with no obvious coloration but the Ara also lacks real deep bass and detail and sounds thin and hard at times.

507

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UK SUBS

Hi-Fi World listens to two contrasting subwoofers from two British bass specialists.

MJ ACOUSTICS REFERENCE 1 £699



Although described as "compact"

by its makers, this is a medium sized (421x491x320mm) device which is very solidly built (at just under 21kg). The cabinetry is superb, constructed from a combination of sturdy 18mm and 25mm MDF panels, and looks beautiful if you're prepared to pay £100 extra for real wood finishes. Into this is bolted a down-firing bass driver sporting a solid die-cast aluminium chassis and 'one-piece' 10" long-throw aluminium cone, with a bonded aluminium voice coil.

Onboard amplification is a muscular 120W RMS DC-coupled affair. The Reference 1's crossover is interesting, being computer controlled. This gets the silly acronym DAMP (Digitally Accurate MicroProcessor)! A digital display is featured, so that the upper response limit can be varied in increments between 30Hz and 120Hz, with the option of bypassing the filter circuit altogether. Balanced low-level XLR ins and outs are provided, plus conventional RCA phonos and gold plated Neutrik connectors.

For its price, the sub proved pretty good. I always find it hard to assess the value for money that subwoofers represent - after all

they're pretty expensive things. It tightened the low bass up very impressively, and despite being able to deliver vast quantities of low frequency oscillations, it never buzzed or boomed once. The sub showed itself to be decently tuneful too. Despite its prodigious power, it showed impressive finesse and was able to seamlessly run up and down the fretboard of bass guitar without sounding rough or ragged. Well worth a dem then, if you've got an otherwise well sorted system needing some extra weight, although it doesn't quite cut the mustard as well as REL's Strata III, for example.

MJ Acoustics
Tel: 08707 44 50 80
www.mjacoustics.com

REL QUAKE £350

For a subwoofer this is small - very small! Measuring just 29.4 x 25.3 x 27.2 cm the Quake is smaller than many subs supplied with computer 'speaker packages. However, this is no 'multimedia' product, it's primarily meant for linking up to your hi-fi or AV system (although linkage to a PC is an option). As part of the company's superb Q Series it adheres to the rest of the range's specifications and performance requirements.

The Quake is a sealed box design that uses a very long throw 8" drive unit featuring a vented pole piece, to help avoid power compression, along with a 100W mosfet amplifier. Despite its humble dimensions and price the Quake features the company's "ABC" roll-off filtering for seamless integration. We have REL's usual choice of either a

Neutrik connection (high) input or a phono (low) input, each with its own gain control. There's also the usual four position mode switch for stereo/multichannel tuning and a slam/depth switch, plus a PC compatible input.

Providing you're not hoping to plumb the depths reached by the company's larger products, then the Quake is a real eye - and ear - opener. Using the Quake in both music and movie applications resulted in impressive listening. The depth setting should be used for music (the 'slam' is for movies where it delivers, er, less refinement). You'll get quite a civilised sound that can muster up impressive ambient sonics for classical music and deep tight bass with dance music or rock. It's tuneful and focussed with no slackness or flab.

This is a great choice for those with small or boomy rooms that want to use a sub that's not intrusive, yet is effective. It's not quite as visceral as the company's upper priced models but there's nothing with its small size on the market to touch it. Highly recommended.

REL Acoustics
Tel: 01656 768777
www.rel.co.uk



World Verdict

REL ACOUSTICS QUAKE £350
When it comes to performance for size there's nothing around to touch it. Small and effective, the Quake is a gem.

World Verdict

MJ ACOUSTICS REFERENCE 1 £699
Great build, fine sound, good power and easy ergonomics make this super value for money.

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PLUS SEVEN

Cyrus's newly tweaked 'audiophile DVD player' has just reached the shops. David Price sums up the new DVD7+.



When DVD players hit the market en masse, they set off a tsunami that transformed the hi-fi landscape. After many years of turning out similar CD players year on year, with only minor tweaks and facelifts to distinguish them, the manufacturers found themselves being forced to work with different transports (designed for reading DVDs) and new DACs (working at up to 24bit, 192kHz in 5.1 channels). Suddenly the world turned upside down and the old established order was broken. This has resulted in a welter of new DVD players selling at the same price point as CD players had just a few years back. It has left many buyers dazed and confused.

Fortunately some companies like Cyrus still offer the choice - its widely acclaimed CD7 remains on the books at £800 (with the tweaked Q version retailing for £1150), while you can purchase its new 'audiophile DVD player' you see here, the DVD7+ for £1000. Both products have the option of using the PSX-R power supply at an additional £350 - which I for one regard as a very worthy upgrade. Although the DVD7+ features video circuitry (obviously), much of its engineering and componentry is shared with the

CD7, which is no bad thing.

True to tradition, it boasts a beautifully hewn, half-width 78x215x360mm case weighing 3kg, which is both anti-magnetic and non-resonant. All video and audio circuitry is kept separate in 'dual domains', to eliminate interference between the two. A backlit LC display is used, which - unlike rival machines' fluorescent displays - doesn't generate interference. Extensive attention has been paid to clean power, with the result that the DVD7+ runs twelve fully regulated power supply lines, plus a toroidal mains transformer and star-earthing - as per Cyrus's original Discmaster high end CD transport.

The specially isolated transport mechanism uses a dual laser pickup for optimum DVD and CD replay compatibility. A single, high accuracy master clock drives all major signal processing functions including MPEG decoding, video encoding, the on-screen display and audio decoding. This new 'plus' derivative of the DVD7 has a better On Screen Display, improved video features, wider compatibility with early 'problem' DVD discs, plus the PSX-R upgradeability which powers the motor and disc servo mechanism directly, and the option of Cyrus's Q7 plug-in audiophile DAC upgrade.

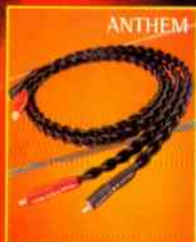
The result is a machine that

looks and feels very much like the CD7, aside from the different display and menu systems, and marginally increased track access times - the time it takes to load and play an audio disc is a little annoying if you're coming from a dedicated CD player. Still it's a versatile little thing, reading DVD Video, DVD-R, DVD+RW and Video CDs, plus the usual audio CD/CD-R/CD-RW discs. Usefully, a DTS decoder is also included, making it compatible with a number of high quality DTS audio discs. Connections are all via the crowded rear panel - aside from the usual video outs (Composite Video, S-Video, RGB via SCART), you get coaxial and optical digital outputs, RCA stereo line outs, plus Cyrus's MC-Bus remote connectors and the PSX-R port.

Suitably warmed through and hooked up to a Musical Fidelity A370 integrated and Yamaha NS1000M loudspeakers, the DVD7+ made deeply impressive noises for something whose major purpose in life is to play movies. Indeed, short of multi-thousand pound esoterica, I don't think I've heard a DVD spinner make a better job of my CD collection yet. Essentially, it's a very

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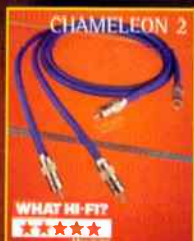


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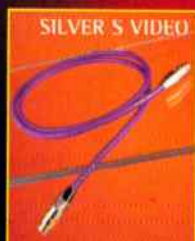
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clean and open sounding performer, with a particularly lucid midband and tight, tuneful bass.

Prefab Sprout's beautiful 'Cowboy Dreams' got a fitting rendition from the Cyrus. As soon as the first verse kicked in, I was struck by the DVD7+'s musical bass. Although a tad less sumptuous than a CD7, it made a sterling job of communicating exactly when each bass guitar note started and stopped, the result being a very bouncy and beguiling bottom end. Tonally it wasn't as fulsome as, say, and Arcam FMJ CD23T, but the Cyrus still made an extremely musically coherent job of things. Again, although it didn't describe the texture of each note with forensic precision, the musical fundamentals were there in abundance, making every timing and phrasing nuance as clear as day.

Midband was an interesting area of the DVD7+'s performance. In one respect - that of front to back image projection and soundstaging, it was simply superb. It pushed out the vocals of The Dandy Warhols' 'Bohemian Like You' with tremendous authority, along with stacks of detail. You could delve right into the mix and hear a welter of guitars pounding away with great clarity. Strangely

though, stereo perspective was someone curtailed - this player seeming unhappy to place images far to the left or right of the acoustic. The result was that this great slice of U.S. pop sounded a little shut in, and constrained.

Still, once again the Cyrus was rhythmically and dynamically right on the money. It's a very grippy performer by DVD standards (and pretty good by plain old CD player standards too), and just loves to go loud when called upon so to do. Yet it's also great with subtle dynamic accents, the result being a very engaging and musically satisfying sound. All in all - left to right imaging aside - this player boasts a superb midband for the money.

Its tonality was where it fell down a little. Unlike classic Cyrus CD players of yore, it doesn't have a particularly smooth and sumptuous sound. As Air's 'All I Need' proved, its upper midband is slightly 'thin' sounding. The player lacks the ability to really capture female voices in all their rich, resonant glory. The result is a rather matter-of-fact digital facsimile. It's not unpleasant to listen to, it's just that being so able in other respects, this kind of lets the side down. This is also obvious in the

treble, which lacks finesse or atmosphere - again it's perfectly pleasant but simply not as 'airy' as it could be. Methinks this is where the £350 Q24 DAC module would work wonders.

Picture quality is impressive, too, less we forget that the machine performs another function! Fight sequences on 'Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon' were fast, furious and exciting with good clarity and resolution.

Overall then, I'd say this is the best sounding 'realistically' priced DVD spinner. It really is good enough to hold its own in the company of decent hi-fi CD players. Better still is its tremendous upgradeability. Knowing what the Q24 and PSX-R do to the CD7, I'd expect them to transform the DVD7+ into a CD spinner to be reckoned with at any price. Aside from its slightly slow disc transport then, I can't recommend this DVD too strongly - a brilliant, genuine crossover product and great value too.

Cyrus DVD7+ £1,000

Cyrus Electronics
Tel: +44 (0) 1480 43 55 77
www.cyrus.co.uk

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

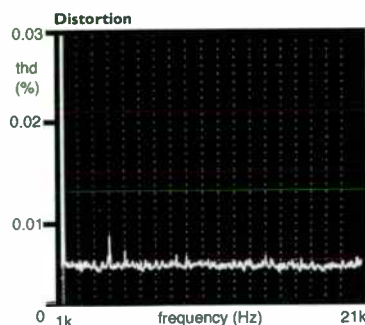
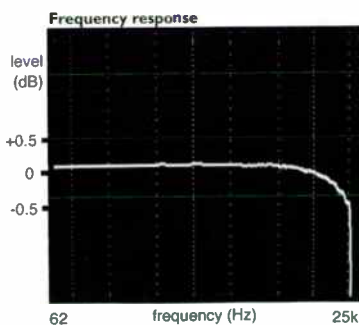
The frequency response of this player stretched to 21kHz - fine for normal CD but inadequate for 96kHz sample rate audio where this is provided on a video DVD. Video players now commonly reproduce (analogue) audio up 48kHz, to convey the music energy above 21kHz found in modern recordings, but the DVD 7+ will not, which was a little disappointing. A smooth roll off at high frequencies will give it an easy going presentation with CD however.

At higher audio levels there was little distortion, but as level decreased linearity fell below that of a good CD player, the DVD 7+ producing 0.6% distortion. Whilst this isn't out of line with current DVD video players it is no better either. Much the same figures were returned with 24bit sampled audio; little improvement occurred.

The DVD 7+ returned lacklustre results for CD and was unable to exploit 24/96 digital code, so in audio terms it's measured performance is not distinguished.

NK

Frequency response	4Hz-21kHz	
	left	right
Distortion		
-6dB	0.005	0.005
-30dB	0.01	0.01
-60dB	0.6	0.6
-90	12	12
Separation	left	right
1kHz	115	116
20kHz	103	104
Noise	-100dB	
Dynamic range	105dB	
Output	2.12V	



World Verdict 
Tremendously grippy, musical sound plus extensive upgrade options make this a true 'audiophile DVD player'.

Ortofon



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Bedford	Richards A/V	Leicester	Leicester Hi-Fi
Birmingham (Sollhul)	Music Matters	Lincoln	Sevenoaks S&V
Birmingham (Edgbaston)	Music Matters	London (East Sheen)	Choice Hi-Fi
Brentwood	Audio T	London (Euston)	Kamia
Bristol	Radford HiFi	London (Holburn)	Sevenoaks S&V
Bristol	Audio Excellence	Maldenhead	Audio Venue
Cambridge	The Audiofile	Manchester	Practical HiFi
Cardiff	Sevenoaks S&V	Manchester	Sevenoaks S&V**
Castleford	Eric Wiley	New Malden, Surrey	Unllet
Chester	Audio Excellence	Newbury	B&B Hi-Fi**
Colchester	Grayston S&V	Newcastle	LIntone Audio
Darlington	Hi-Fi Experience	Norwich	Sevenoaks S&V
Doncaster	The Hi-Fi Studios	Nottingham	Notts Hi-Fi Centre
Dunstable	Technosound	Oxford	Oxford Audio
East Grinstead	Audio Designs**	Peterborough	Sevenoaks S&V
Edinburgh	Hi-Fi Corner	Rainham (Kent)	Progressive Audio
Edinburgh	Russ Andrews*	Reading	B&B Hi-Fi**
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Huddersfield	Huddersfield Hi-Fi	Warrington	Sevenoaks S&V
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Ipswich	Sevenoaks S&V	Yeovil	Phase Three
Ireland (Dungannon)	Kronos Hi-Fi	York	Mike Manning*
Kidderminster	Midland Audio*		Vickers Hi-Fi

* Ortofon only
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For a full dealer list and more information contact:
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TUNING UP

If you think the days of analogue tuners are over, think again, says Simon Pope as he encounters Arcam's new T61 'budget' tuner.



Although a DAB tuner still exists at the upper end of Arcam's models (in the FMJ range), Arcam have resolutely stuck with analogue at the lower end. Their new £250 T61 FM/AM tuner is a bit of a bargain.

The T61 is well built and robust, yet with a modern, clean style. The display window is easy to read and comprehensive, with a signal strength meter on constant display between the preset number and the station name/frequency. The T61 is RDS compatible, the first such tuner from the company, and when no station name is available or one is required for AM (RDS is FM only), it can be programmed in by the listener. There

are 30 presets available for FM and 6 for AM and there are a number of features such as two sets of audio outputs and rear connections for remote switching that make it custom install compatible. It comes with Arcam's CR-3889 audio system remote.

A whole host of FM stations were easily found with just the supplied pink 'T' indoor aerial - and the strength of signal was good, too, in a usually poor area. This improved with a roof mounted external aerial. In both cases the sound was mightily impressive - matching that of the excellent and £150 more expensive Creek T43. Radio 3 was clean and voices well rounded and live broadcasts had a realistic quality.

Something the T61 had in

common with all the best tuners, in my view, was it's ability to make the best of studio processed stations. Radio 1 was full and rich sounding without the overt sibilance than can often occur. Bass was firm and tuneful and treble smooth - indeed with a good aerial the T61 almost matched the quality of my £750 reference Naim Nat 05, only lacking some of that tuner's low noise floor and ultimate refinement. A great buy and perhaps one of the last bargain analogue tuners.

Arcam T61 £250

Arcam
Tel: +44 (0) 1223 203203
www.arcam.co.uk

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The T61's frequency response runs smoothly up to 14.3kHz (-1dB) our analysis shows. This is a normal enough result for a good VHF/FM tuner. Above 15kHz a 19kHz pilot tone notch filter takes effect, providing a deep -70dB suppression to pilot and sub-carrier, so the T61 has a clean enough output.

Channel separation was a reasonable 35dB and distortion a low 0.1% or so under most conditions

Hiss measured -71dB (IEC A wtd) at full quieting. The norm is around -73dB so the T41 isn't the best. With a strong enough aerial signal to achieve full quieting, which measurement showed was 0.8mV,

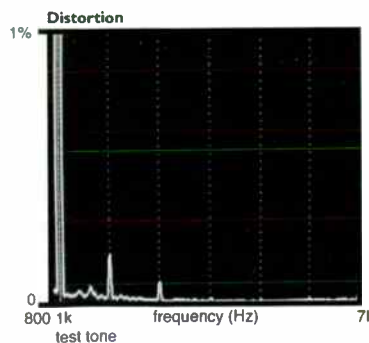
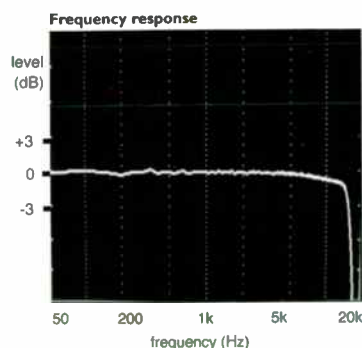
hiss will rarely be audible in use all the same.

Sensitivity was satisfactory at 50uV for stereo and 2.5uV mono.

The T61 turns in a neat set of results. It doesn't match the best, but measurement suggests it will offer a clean, natural sound.

NK

Frequency response	4Hz-14.3kHz
Stereo separation	35dB
Distortion (50% mod.)	0.1%
Hiss (IEC A)	-71dB
Signal for minimum hiss	800mV
Sensitivity	
mono	2.5µV
stereo	50µV



World Verdict £

A superb tuner for the money with a pleasant and full sound, plus great build and looks - a bargain.

HI-FI WORLD'S GREAT COMPETITION GIVEAWAY

WIN A SUPERB **CYRUS 8 INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER** AND MATCHING **PSX-R POWER SUPPLY** WORTH £1150 IN THIS MONTH'S COMPETITION.

Cyrus Audio is one of Britain's most respected audio manufacturers. In 1985 Mission launched the now-famous £150, 30W per channel Mission Cyrus One integrated amplifier (designed by Henry Azima) to create an amplifier line to accompany Mission loudspeakers. An inexpensive audiophile product range was created that has remained a competitive market force for almost twenty years.

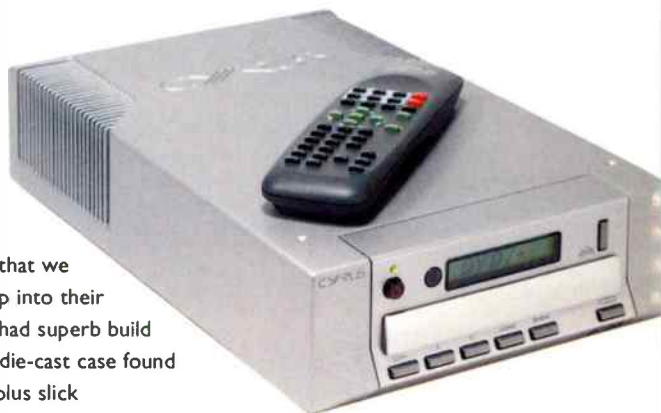
Much of the company's success has been in the way the products have developed throughout the period. No newly designed or styled revamps of the range have taken place. Instead, the products have evolved steadily, building on their fundamental strengths, the familiar 'Cyrus' backbone running through them. This way of working was evident with the launch of the Cyrus Two – an integrated with more power and double the output current driving ability of the One. Both amplifiers were duly re-worked and upgraded with time.

At the start of the nineties the

company launched the Cyrus 3 integrated. This product started the new wave of Cyrus amplifiers that we have seen develop into their current range. It had superb build quality, using the die-cast case found in today's range, plus slick microprocessor controlled electronic switching, along with remote volume control. It was also at this time that the PSX-R external power supply appeared on the scene – it was the natural upgrade path for the company's electronics and offered a large reserve of regulated DC power. This increased the quality of the sound by offering a smoother and more detailed midrange along with improved focus.

The Cyrus arm of Mission became an independent group in October 1998 but, like Mission, is based in the UK's hi-fi capital of Huntingdon, having sales in excess of three million units a year. The company immediately started work on its '7' range of products and they were launched onto the market in the year 2000. The Cyrus 7 integrated amplifier had technology passed on and refined from the '3' series. Crucially, it also had the same high quality casework. This was one of the company's most appealing products and became something of a reference among hi-fi journalists and pundits. It offered a clean, tight, musical presentation that was also great value for money. By adding the PSX-R you had a serious audiophile product on your hands.

Now, as 2002 draws to a close we have the latest generation integrated from the company, the



excellent Cyrus 8, reviewed in this very issue. There's no denying the 7 was a tough act to follow but the superb in-house R&D team at Cyrus have come up trumps with the Cyrus 8. The new amp has increased output power (80W per channel into 8ohms) thanks to the inclusion of the beefiest power supply that could practically fit into the slim line case.

This gives the 8 greater drive capability than the 7 - which was relatively impressive anyway. A new power supply to the preamp section and higher grade capacitors developed the design into a dedicated pre/power combination in one box. The resulting sound is, as we found, an improvement on the 7 and a supremely musical performer with grip, transparency and smoothness in one domestically acceptable package. Partner it with the PSX-R power supply and the resultant sound is something akin to electronics twice the price.

And we have a Cyrus 8 integrated and PSX-R external power supply to give away. Simply answer all four questions correctly on a postcard to arrive no later than December 31st 2002. The first name out of the hat will soon be playing their favourite discs with the aid of Cyrus amplification!

Competition Questions

[1] In what year was the Mission Cyrus One launched?

- [a] 1984
- [b] 1985
- [c] 1981
- [d] 2001

[2] Who designed the Cyrus One?

- [a] Henry Azima
- [b] Henry Kissinger
- [c] Henry Kelly
- [d] Henry Cooper

[3] In which hi-fi capital is Cyrus now based?

- [a] Tokyo
- [b] London
- [c] Huntingdon
- [d] Wolverhampton

[4] Which reference product was launched in the year 2000?

- [a] Cyrus 3
- [b] Cyrus 7
- [c] Cyrus 10
- [d] Cyprus Hill

Entries to:

January Competition
Hi-Fi World Magazine
Unit G4 Argo House
The Park Business Centre
Kilburn Park Rd.
London NW6 5LF

Hi-Fi & Computer Audio World Competition rules and conditions of entry

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

CONGRATULATIONS

...to Mr. Leonard Senior, of London the winner of our November competition.
A Celestion AV302/S10 Satellite Subwoofer Loudspeaker System is on its way to you!

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0% interest free option* is available on most products. *Written details on request. Licensed credit brokers. Minimum balance £400. Subject to status.



MUSICAL FIDELITY *Tri-Vista 300*

In celebration of the company's twentieth anniversary, Musical Fidelity have introduced the limited edition (500 only) Tri-Vista 300 'super' integrated amplifier. Delivering an enormous 340W per channel, the 300 uses Tri-Vista mini-tubes similar to the Nu-Vista tubes previously used in Musical Fidelity's highly acclaimed, limited edition, Nu-Vista series of products. During October, the Tri-Vista Series will be complimented with the addition of 800 Tri-Vista CD/SACD Players with 300 Tri-Vista Pre-Amplifiers and Power Amplifiers following soon.

Tri-Vista 300 Integrated Amplifier £3994.95 • CD/SACD Player £3994.95



KEF XQ series

By combining technologies from their Reference and Q Series, KEF have introduced the new XQ speaker range. Featuring KEF Uni-Q® 'point source' arrays for unrivalled off-axis performance and 'super audio' Hypertweeters™, the XQ range fully exploits the wide bandwidth of digital formats like SACD and DVD-A. The range comprises the XQ one and three stand mounters, the XQ five floorstanders and XQ two c centre speaker. All XQ models are available in a variety of finishes.



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PRO-JECT

Debut II Turntable (Black) £114.95

"The original Debut turntable romped away with a Product of the Year Award in 1999, and the MKII version continues the extremely good work. It's a simple affair, that's easy to set up, but don't let the price fool you - it sounds a whole lot more expensive than that. This

is a fine turntable, and it clearly reveals the benefits of listening to vinyl, with a rich and detailed soundstage, and a good dynamic response.

It's available in six funky colours, so you should find one to suit your decor, and at just a smidge over £100, you can have no excuse not to keep that old vinyl collection in employment for a good few years yet."

★★★★★ Awards 2000

Selected outlets are Project Turntable Centres. Colour Options are available at additional cost



Also Available
RPM4 • £324.95

Turntables & Tuners

Arcam DIVA T61 Tuner	£249.95
Denon TU260L MKII Tuner.....	£109.95
Marantz ST4000 Tuner.....	£119.95
Michell Gyro SE/RB300 Turntable	£1017.95
Project Debut Phono SB Turntable	£159.95
Project Debut II Turntable (Colours).....	£129.95
Project RPM4 Turntable.....	£324.95
Sony ST-D777ES FM/DAB Tuner.....	£549.95
Videologic DRX-601E DAB Tuner.....	£249.95

ROTEL RCD-02 CD Player £379.95 RA-02 Amplifier £349.95

RCD-02 CD Player "Whether it's the raw, and sometimes just plain barking vocals of Tom Waits, or the stinging guitar stabs of Pete Townsend on some old Who tracks, the Rotel is one of those players that can't help but bring a smile to the face - it's a breath of fresh air."

★★★★★ September 2002

RA-02 Amplifier "The amp has a fast, detailed and yet satisfyingly full presentation. That allows it to make a fine job of the beats of Groove Armada's *Goodbye Century* set without losing sight of the fine

details of the mix, and also husking out Marianne Faithfull's deliciously smutty vocals on *Kissing Time* with real relish. Add in decent levels of equipment - and the convenience of remote control, and we reckon Rotel has a winner on its hands."

★★★★★ August 2002



Also Available
Marantz PM4200 • £149.95



(((AE))) AEGIS EVO Series Acoustic Energy Evo One Speakers £179.95

"The original Aegis Ones were great speakers, to the extent that they were category winners in our 1998 awards. Since then a host of new models have raised the standards in the sub-£200 category, and the Aegis Ones soon went from stunner to also ran. AE's response to that is an EVO version.



The Aegis Ones genes are clearly evident. The original's refinement and bass weight are preserved and backed up with better openness and more free-flowing dynamic ability. The old speakers would have delivered a cool and calm version of Pink's *Missundaztood* set - they'd be enjoyable, but would lack a little drive and excitement. The new speakers, however, address those limitations... Add authority and good stereo imaging to the list of plus points and it comes as no surprise to find these speakers at home with classical, too. Indeed, running



Also Available
KEF Q1 • £249.95

through our test room's extensive CD library we couldn't find a genre that these AE's weren't happy playing."

★★★★★ July 2002

CD Players

Arcam DIVA CD62T.....	£369.95
Arcam DIVA CD72T.....	£449.95
Arcam DIVA CD92T.....	£899.95
Arcam FMJ CD23T.....	£1199.95
Cyrus CD7.....	£799.95
Denon DCD485.....	£139.95
Linn Genki.....	£994.95
Linn Ikemi.....	£1949.95
Marantz CD4000.....	£99.95
Marantz CD6000Ki Signature.....	£399.95
Meridian 507.....	£1194.95
Meridian 588.....	£2099.95
Musical Fidelity A308.....	£1999.95
Musical Fidelity Tri-Vista SACD.....	£3994.95
Rotel RCD1070.....	£494.95
Sony CDPXE570.....	£109.95

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World Radio History



Amplifier Selection

Arcam DiVA A65 Plus Amplifier	£369.95
Arcam DiVA A75 Plus Amplifier	£469.95
Arcam FMJ A32 Amplifier	£1149.95
Cyrus 5 Amplifier	£449.95
Cyrus 6 Amplifier	£599.95
Cyrus 8 Amplifier	£799.95
Denon PMA355 Amplifier	£229.95
Linn Kolektor Pre Amplifier	£494.95
Linn LK85 Power Amplifier	£494.95
Marantz PM4200 Amplifier	£149.95
Musical Fidelity A3.2 Pre Amplifier	£999.95
Musical Fidelity A308 Power Amplifier	£999.95
Musical Fidelity A308 Amplifier	£1999.95
Musical Fidelity Tri-Vista 300 Amplifier	£3994.95
Sony TA-FE570 Amplifier	£149.95



ARCAM
SOUND & VISION

DiVA CD82T CD Player

£599.95

DiVA A85 Integrated Amplifier

£799.95

DiVA CD82T "Arcam's latest sounds like a more mature version of its little brother. On an initial listen the increased solidity and refinement are obvious, but over time the subtler dynamic shading and more assured handling of transients come to the fore... The Arcam CD82T is one of the best CD players available at this price point." **WHAT HI-FI?** ★★★★★ September 2002

DiVA A85 "You'll have realised by now that we rather like this amp. It took us completely by surprise, and further strengthens Arcam's already impressive product range... The A85 is superb, and we can't wait to put it up against its peer in a group test." **WHAT HI-FI?** ★★★★★ March 2001



Also Available **NEW Arcam FMJ AV8 & P7**
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WHAT HI-FI?
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B&W Bowers & Wilkins DM602S3 Speakers £299.95

"But the B&W 602 S3 are our winners. They're big and not particularly beautiful, yet if it were our money they're what we would buy. No rival can match the wide ranging dynamics or low frequency performance of these not so compact standmounters. Add all-round sonic excellence and the choice is easy. Give them sufficient space to breathe, then sit back and enjoy the music."

WHAT HI-FI? ★★★★★ Supertest Winner August 2002

Also Available (Pictured Right)
B&W CDM NT Series • Prices start from £749.95



PURE DIGITAL DRX-701ES Digital Tuner £249.95

This new tuner from the recently renamed Pure is based on the 2001 Award-winning Videologic DRX-601ES, but under the lid is an all-new third-generation digital radio engine, in the form of Frontier Silicon's Chorus FS1010. Its biggest advantages are lower energy consumption and above all cost - it's the major reason why the DRX-701ES is £100 less than last year's model.

The tuner uses 24-bit/192kHz conversion with 4x upsampling and data interpolation, and is powered by a low-noise toroidal transformer - such attention to sonic detail pays off. Digital outputs are provided



Also Available
Denon TU260L/II • £109.95

on electrical and optical feed, but most people will use the analogue out, and these sound very good indeed. As usual the tuner is subject to the signal quality off-air, but when it's fed from a high-quality outdoor aerial and a good signal it's capable of a crisp, powerful and detailed presentation. Even more populist music stations like Radio 6 benefit from the mix of a neutral balance and fine weight, while speech is also neutral and easy to follow. If you want a quality home tuner for digital radio, you need look no further." **WHAT HI-FI?** ★★★★★ October 2002



WHAT HI-FI?
Product of the year
2002
HIFI & HOME CINEMA AWARDS
PURE
Pure DRX-701ES



CYRUS

CD7Q CD Player £1149.95
7 Integrated Amplifier £649.95

Cyrus 7Q CD "How it compares directly (with the competition) is a matter for a group test, but I can tell you now that it'll be a close one, because the CD7Q is a fantastic CD Player, offering all you'd expect from a disc spinner at this price, and more... The CD7Q's a major upgrade from the class-leading CD7. Its weighty, detailed sound puts it at the pinnacle of CD players at this price."

★★★★★ July 2002



Cyrus 7 Amplifier "This is a fabulous amplifier. It's fast, punchy and has bags of power on tap but crucially delivers huge sackfuls of subtlety when the music requires. Some of the other amplifiers in this group may be better with particular genres of music but as an all-rounder it takes some beating."

★★★★★

November 1999

ROKSAN Kandy KA1 MKIII Amplifier £544.95

"When we last reviewed Roksan's Kandy integrated amp in February it fought off serious competition to come top in a *Supertest*. This is its replacement, the MkIII. Internal changes include an updated power supply for the preamp section and identical mono modules for the left and right power amp sections. Roksan also claims 50 percent lower distortion on line-level inputs and a whopping 150 percent less on the phono input. The rated power output is an impressive 120 watts per channel into 8 ohms, and this amp has a confident, muscular way with music that bears this out. But don't be fooled into thinking this amp is raw but unrefined. With Van Morrison's *Down the Road* the Kandy has the guts to render the performance exciting and dynamic, but also the guile to deliver subtle details.



The upgraded Kandy MkIII is an excellent amp; the MkII version was impressive, but MkIII is a stunner. It betters all the amps here in the timing department, and has a wonderfully robust character that works well with all types of music. It manages to retain the good points of the MkII while adding extra resolution and subtlety. All the amps here have a place in the market. It's just that at £550 the Kandy really does set the pace."

★★★★★

October 2002



QUAD

11L Speakers £379.95

"Quad is best known for its superlative electrostatic designs, which start at £3500. So any £379 pair of speakers that carries the company's name has to be going some to avoid tarnishing the family reputation. The first surprise is that the 11Ls come in real-wood veneers covered with piano-gloss lacquer. This type of finish is almost unheard of at the £1000 mark, let alone at this price. Has anything been sacrificed for such a luxury finish? Here's the second surprise: apparently not.

The final surprise? Well, saving the best for the last, the sound quality of the 11Ls is phenomenally good. These are small speakers at just 33cm



tall, but the scale and authority of their performance is terrific. The laws of physics dictate bass extension limitations, but thanks to a clever dual rear firing port arrangement the 11Ls plumb the depths with the determination of a rottweiler, even when placed in free space.

If you're in the market for a pair of top quality standmounters these Quads are a must listen. Quite simply, they're good enough to scare the competition big time."

★★★★★

August 2002

Speaker Selection

Acoustic Energy Aegis Evo Three.....	£349.95
B&W CDM 1NT.....	£749.95
B&W CDM 7NT.....	£1249.95
B&W DM303.....	£179.95
B&W DM601 S3.....	£249.95
Cyrus CLS70 (Black).....	£799.95
KEF Q1.....	£249.95
KEF Q3.....	£399.95
Linn Katan (Maple).....	£634.95
Linn Ninka (Maple).....	£894.95
Mission 780.....	£269.95
Mission 782.....	£629.95
Mission m71i.....	£129.95
Monitor Audio Gold Reference 10.....	£799.95
Monitor Audio Gold Reference 20.....	£1499.95
Ruark Epilogue II.....	£344.95
Wharfedale 81.....	£99.95

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MUSICAL FIDELITY A3.2 Series

A3.2 CD Player £999.95
A3.2 Amplifier £979.95

Replacing the **WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION** Award Winning A3 CD and Amplifier, the new A3 2 models have been further refined and re-styled. The A3 2 CD Player now incorporates the same DAC, filter assembly and control mechanism as the highly-acclaimed Nu-Vista CD Player. The A3.2 Amplifier draws on experience gained through the development of the Nu-Vista M3 amplifier and as such has inherited many of its qualities, producing a sense of ease and flexibility that is normally only associated with far more expensive designs.



MONITOR AUDIO Silver S6 Speakers £599.95

British loudspeaker manufacturer Monitor Audio has introduced a replacement series for its acclaimed and award winning Silver Series speakers. "The aim has been to offer real advances in performance and value", says technical director Dean Hartley. Every single aspect of the existing range was analysed, every user comment studied. We could have improved what we had, but instead we decided to design a whole new range of speakers from the ground up." New models include the S1 and S2 standmounters, the S6, S8 and S10 floorstanders

"With a close-miked track such as James Taylor's *Line 'Em Up* from SACD they really deliver the character of the singer's voice and they're just as expressive with the cultured rhythms of Groove Armada's latest outing, having just the right mix of rhythmic control and fluidity. . . But amazingly the best is yet to come: these are simply beautiful speakers for classical music, once a few days' thrashing has tamed their initial rawness. With the latest release of Holst's *The Planets* on DVD-Audio, they thunder out *Mars* with true conviction.

These are rather magical speakers, with a poise and grace that belies their ability to turn on the power when required. Pair them with a good CD player and suitably accomplished amp, and you won't go far wrong."

WHAT HI-FI? ★★★★★ October 2002



Also Available
Gold Reference GR10 & GR20

Pioneer PDR609 CD-RW Recorder £199.95

"While it looks simple, the Pioneer has an impressive array of features, including the handy double-speed disc finalization and CD-Text compatibility. Internally, the PDR609 is a big step up from the Award-winning PDR-509 it replaced: the DAC is now a 24-bit/96kHz number, aided and abetted by Pioneer's Legato Link conversion technology, and it has 24-bit A-to-D conversion, which is ideal for copying your vinyl onto CD. If this is your plan, you'll appreciate that the Pioneer makes it easy to create first-rate copies from any source, helped by the manual recording-level controls. It was hard to tell our copy of Jim White's *No Such Place* from the original.



Also Available
Marantz DR6000 CD Recorder • £299.95

While the Pioneer's replay quality can't match the Marantz, it costs £120 less, which would buy you a lot of blank discs. If you've already got a dedicated CD player, we'd go with this recorder." **WHAT HI-FI? ★★★★★** August 2001

Recorder Selection

Marantz DR6000 CD-RW	£299.95
Sony MDS-JE770 MiniDisc	£229.95
Yamaha KX393 Cassette Deck	£119.95
Yamaha KX580SE Cassette Deck	£199.95
Yamaha CDR-HD1300 CD-RW	£599.95





TAG McLaren

Aphrodite Music System **£2994.95**

"TAG McLaren, by the company's nature, have always had it in their blood to produce a stylish product. After all, they are tightly linked to Formula 1 racing which very much has its own charisma. The alluring shape of the Aphrodite, reviewed here, is their attempt

Aphrodite

to bring some of that style into high-end audio. For too long the stylish one-box system has looked the business but more often than not failed to deliver the goods when it comes to sound and TAG wanted to put an end to that.

Firstly, there's the look and build of this beauty. The minute you lay your hands on the cold metal you know this is one very, very serious attempt to bring a one-box system up into the echelons of the real high-end. It weighs a fairly substantial 10 kilos and is housed in a classy, ergonomically rounded, brushed metallic chassis that's available in a variety of carefully judged colours. The case houses a CD Player, FM tuner and amplifier that delivers 50W per channel into 8ohms - enough muscle to run most modern speakers comfortably...

This system is a serious proposition for those in the market for a high-end sound from user friendly equipment. Few separates systems can deliver such quality, plus style, for the same cost... Although expensive, the Aphrodite offers good value for those in the market for a sophisticated product - and it's miles ahead of certain 'lifestyle' systems that offer poorer build quality and sound, for little less cost." **Hi-Fi World November 2002**



TAG McLaren • Calliope Speakers **£1994.95**

J A Michell Gyro SE Turntable **£1017.95**



Founded in Borehamwood by mechanical engineer John Michell. For over thirty years, Michell Engineering have been at the forefront of quality audio, with world-wide appreciated products like the GyroDec and Orbe Turntables. In the early eighties, the revolutionary GyroDec Turntable, with its elegant and effective suspension system, was introduced.

The Gyro SE is a smaller and cheaper package that retains the classy sound of the GyroDec and can be upgraded to the full GyroDec specification by adding a plinth and dustcover.

"The beautifully engineered Gyro SE not only looks the part but has a wonderfully clean and fluid sound." **WHAT HI-FI? ★★★★★ Awards 2001**

Price includes Rega RB300 Tone Arm



Systems Best Buy £1000 plus



LINN

Linn Classik Music System **£999.95**

The Classik Music System is an alternative to the sound and looks of mass market compact systems. Designed to be useful throughout the home, the Classik is simple and stylish with all the advanced features needed to satisfy the most demanding hi-fi enthusiast or discriminating music lover.



Classik • Movie System **£1999.95**

"Since the Scottish company added a tuner to the amp/CD player, mouths have gaped even wider in appreciation. The addition of colour options panders to the public's taste for kit to match their interior design, but it doesn't just look lovely in the lounge: the Classik sounds simply marvellous. Boasting fine impact and drive, it retains its grip even as it thumps out rock and dance tracks. Ask it to play quiet acoustic music and its smooth, liquid presentation impresses still further. The Classik offers the performance you'd expect from high quality separates in one lovely package - this is a very superior product." **WHAT HI-FI? ★★★★★ Awards 2001**

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Each Sevenoaks Sound & Vision outlet stocks a wide range of quality products, covering all categories of specialist home entertainment, from DVD Players to Widescreen Plasma Televisions and Projection Systems, all at highly competitive prices.

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We are delighted to announce that, subject to legal completion*, we have new stores opening in the following locations. Please telephone to confirm before travelling.

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From mid-November our Leeds outlet is moving to 62 North Street, Leeds. The new store has 3 dedicated demonstration rooms and an improved product range. The old store, at 112 Vicar Lane, will remain open until mid-January with a range of clearance and discontinued items. The telephone number remains unchanged.

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We are currently recruiting staff at several locations. If you are enthusiastic, knowledgeable, have good customer service skills and would like a career within the audio/visual industry, call Janys Ness on 01732 466214 for more information.

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With over forty outlets nationwide, the Sevenoaks Sound & Vision group stock and display a wide range of products. As technology delivers improvements in performance, so individual models and product ranges are changed or superseded. The preceding models are made available at a reduced price, for clearance. Visit our Website for an up-to-date list of the clearance stock, listed by outlet, within the Sevenoaks Sound and Vision group.

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ALL IN ONE



Pioneer seek to bring high resolution audio the mass market with their new affordable 'universal' player, the DV-656. Dominic Todd is suitably impressed.

Never has a DVD player had so much to live up to as the Pioneer DV-656. Before I even set eyes upon it I knew that, if Pioneer gets it right, the DV-656 will be the hit of the year. The reason is that the DV-656 plays just about any disc known to man, and costs only £400 into the bargain. The last player to be so versatile (another Pioneer as it happened) cost the best part of £1000. Just for the record, as well as DVD, VCD and CD, the Pioneer will also play DVD-Audio, SACD, CD-R, CD-RW, DVD-R, DVD-RW and Compressed Audio Compatible MP3 files. In short, it will just about play everything, and means you don't have to worry about the ongoing battle between DVD-A and SACD as both are covered here.

Pioneer hasn't skimped on the socketry or features. There's a component video output, two Scarts, two S-VHS and, of course, a six channel output. The menu is clear and comprehensive, even with MP3 discs, which can catch some rivals out. It's also good to see Pioneer have included a zoom feature, something previous models lacked.

It seems rather fruitless to list rivals as, in effect, there aren't any. However, Sony's DVP-NS905 is pretty good if you don't mind missing out on DVD-A, and Marantz's DV4200 OSE leads the field if you're not bothered by DVD-A or SACD!

To see if the new Pioneer really is a consummate all-rounder, or master of none, I began with a conventional video DVD, Swordfish, to assess picture and sound quality. In terms of picture quality the Pioneer is certainly a match for the best at this price. Compared with JVC's XV-SA72, which I tested earlier this year, the Pioneer had a far greater sense of depth. Images were bold and sharply defined, which allowed the DV-656 to still impress even on larger screens such as the 42" plasma I used for the test. Whilst flesh tones could have been a touch more realistic, I had no qualms with the contrast and colour definition which gave deep inky blacks and strong vivid reds.

In terms of sound quality, though, the Pioneer couldn't quite match the powerful dynamics of the Marantz DV4200 OSE. Digital steering was good though, and the Pioneer's overall level of refinement allowed for high volume levels without the viewer

suffering an aural assault.

Switching to DVD-A, with Tchaikovsky's Waltz of the Flowers, opened up the sound stage noticeably. Background noise was extremely low, which enhanced the dynamics and brought out detail nuances within the music. String tone was a little syrupy, although this could well have emanated from the recording. Over all, however, the DV-656 demonstrated that there is plenty of potential in the format. Its sound with DVD-A was spacious and lively, with ambience and air aplenty.

Unsurprisingly, much the same was true when using the SACD decoder. I had a David Bridie disc to hand that has both conventional and SACD layers. Again, the SACD format showed improved dynamics, fine detail and excellent timing. Having said that, against a conventional CD player of this price, such as the Rotel RCD 1070, with CD quality the Pioneer did lack a little in terms of weight and body of sound. Prokofiev's Dance of the Five Couples, played by the Berlin Philharmonic, sounded just a little too polite and lacking weight and authority. On the plus side, however, the timing was fleet of foot, string tone very sweet, and the whole performance well staged and refined - good traits at this

price. Instrumental timbre was far better than many DVD players can manage and I doubt its performance with classical music would offend too many.

Jennifer Warnes 'Big noise, New York' had similar characteristics. It lacked impact in the bass, which rather spoiled the dynamic contrast. But again, there was fine separation and a distinct vocal rendition. The whole song was portrayed in a fluid yet not especially engaging manner.

There's no denying the DV-656 is one heck of a bargain, but I have to say that it was a slight disappointment when it comes to CD replay. Compared to a conventional CD player of the same price it lacks the depth of sound and involvement. Rather like the JVC SA72 it reminded me of a competent, refined £200 CD player, but not one costing twice the price. However, things certainly

improve with SACD and DVD-A, yet not by as much as you might imagine. Strangely, I still preferred the standard performance of Bridie's 'Dive' on the Rotel than the two channel SACD version on the Pioneer.

That's the criticism's out of the way. Simply to compare the Pioneer with a CD player of the same price is rather missing the point. No CD player offers multi-channel sound or pictures, and these are areas in which the DV-656 simply excels. As a conventional DVD player the Pioneer is already one of the best at its price in terms of picture and sound quality. It certainly has JVC beaten, and can easily match rivals from Sony and Toshiba.

Music lovers should look upon the SACD and DVD-A chips as a handy addition rather than a crucial reason for buying this machine. If you do so, then you should be delighted with your purchase. Buy it expecting the

finest sonic performance available at the price though, and you'll be disappointed - remember it's only £400. It represents a good buy for an audiophile who still uses a top spec turntable and CD player yet wants a machine for A/V use that will also bridge the gap whilst the new audio formats develop.

The Pioneer's strengths lie in its astonishing features and compatibility at a price point which was previously unattainable. Because of this alone it deserves to succeed. It is a very tempting proposition for a whole range of customers, since it matches almost all needs.

Pioneer DV-656 £399

Pioneer UK Ltd.
Tel: +44 (0) 1753 789789
www.pioneer.co.uk

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

Pioneer's budget universal player is no second-rate cousin to its first-generation DV-747A, despite the ~107dB A-wtd S/N ratio falling below the 110dB recorded for the inaugural machine. Its performance is largely determined by Pioneer's choice of Burr-Brown DACs, with PCM1738's at the front and dual-channel PCM1702's for the surround, centre and subwoofer channels. These DACs will accept both PCM (DVD-A and CD) and DSD (SACD) data, addressing both to a single bitconverter.

Distortion is low at just 0.009% with 16bit CD data but falls still further to 0.0006% with 24bit DVD-A and 0.0003% with SACD at -3dBfs. High frequency performance is far better than that achieved by the DV-747A, with 20kHz distortion reduced from 0.04% to 0.006% and maintained as low as 0.007% at 40kHz with 96kHz and 192kHz

DVD-A. Graph 1 shows that SACD's ultrasonic output is dominated by the characteristic sweep of noise (bright blue trace) which, while burying the harmonics and digital spurious present with DVD-A (dark blue trace), also progressively reduces its dynamic range at higher frequencies. This is one of the subjective trade-offs between the two formats, as is the susceptibility of the partnering amplifier to SACD's higher noise levels.

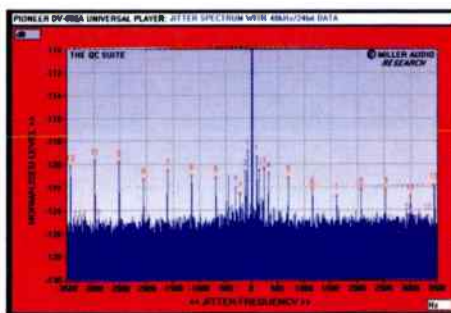
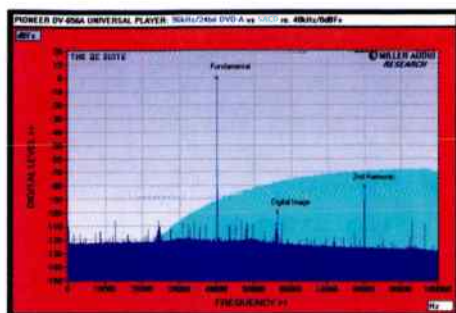
SACD does not require digital filtering, unlike CD/DVD's PCM data, but its response is still affected by the <analogue> filtering implemented to keep this noise under control. As such, the DV-656A is pretty flat to 30kHz, rolling-off thereafter to -0.9dB/40kHz, -3.6dB/60kHz, -8dB/80kHz and -14.7dB/100kHz. With 192kHz DVD-A, the player is just -5.5dB down at 80kHz. Finally, as depicted by Graph

2, digital jitter is impressively low at 180psec particularly bearing in mind the 'hybrid' nature of the player. The red markers show this is primarily low-level data-induced jitter in origin. Overall, the DV-656A represents a remarkable combination of technologies for the price. **PM**

Frequency Response

10Hz - 20.1kHz (CD)

Distortion	CD	DVD-A	SACD
-6dBfs	0.009%	0.006%	0.0003%
-30dBfs	0.005%	0.004%	0.003%
-60dBfs	0.14%	0.08%	0.07%
-90dBfs	2.5%	0.6%	0.4%
Separation			
1kHz			102dB
20kHz			90dB
Noise (IEC A)			106.8dB
Output			1.92V



World Verdict

Not the last word in super-quality audio (especially with CD) but as a machine that plays anything you chuck at it, for £400 it's simply a bargain.

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TRI THIS FOR SIZE



Musical Fidelity have hit the market with apparently their finest amplifier to date, the Tri-Vista 300 integrated. Heard it all before? Simon Pope thought he had. . .

The first products to be launched in Musical Fidelity's new Tri-Vista range are the 300 integrated amplifier seen here, and a stereo CD/SACD player. Both are of tremendous proportions, if not quite as gargantuan as the A-470 and A-570 of yore.

The 300 integrated has an external power supply that weighs nearly as much as the massively proportioned amp itself. It is connected by two fat, Neutrik terminated, connecting cables (one for each channel) and a single XLR-type pre-amp power cable. The beautifully finished front panel is adorned with two luxuriously oversized knobs - for volume and source selection - that have a wonderful weighted feel in operation.

This doesn't leave much for anything else! Four bright blue LEDs illuminate the centre section, one for each channel's preamplifier stage and one each for the power amp section. In the middle of these there is a button for tape monitoring and the remote control sensor. Gone is the gold trimming of the Nu-Vista M3 integrated for a cleaner and more striking look.

Perhaps most striking of all are the feet which - wait for it - change colour! Fear not, it's not actually as tacky as it may sound. Whilst in standby mode, the lights that illuminate the feet are red; when in operational mode they then turn to amber for around forty-five minutes until the amp is fully warmed up, then they change to - and remain - blue (breaking with the traffic light theme). This is all done quite subtly,

by the way, and doesn't detract from what you're listening to. Those expecting a light show in the style of a Wurlitzer juke box will be a tad disappointed.

As far as connections are concerned, the 300 is adequately geared-up. We have line inputs for CD, SACD (catering for the upcoming SACD player, no doubt), tuner, aux and a tape loop. There's also an internally switchable MM/MC phono input as found in most upper bracket Musical Fidelity amplifiers. Hefty bi-wire binding posts are located at the rear for loudspeaker connection.

BOMB TRACK

When it comes to internal design the most obvious difference this amp has to the competition is the inclusion of a 'trivistor' valve (see information

box). The 'trivistor' is, like the nuvistor, a miniature tube which was designed solely for military use. Its apparent sonic traits are low microphony, good reliability and a rugged, robust build. So tough are they that they were apparently designed in response to the effects of a nuclear explosion upon solid-state electronics - tough enough for you?

Musical Fidelity managed to procure a batch of these little monsters towards the end of the year 2000 and judged their anniversary range to be a suitable platform for this tube's tubes' strengths. Musical Fidelity's own tests have apparently shown that the

Analogue Maestro CD player and Musical Fidelity's own Tri-Vista SACD player (more of which next month) for the front end, my trusty Quad ESL-988s were hauled out for use and cabling was courtesy of the Chord Company and Ecosse Reference.

Being Musical Fidelity I expected the Trivistor would sound big, bold and transparent, with oodles of headroom. This was so. What I didn't expect was the innate smoothness of the 300 - a very different property from the latest batch of MF products. In this respect the Tri-Vista 300 was a total shock. Just as the company's statement Nu-Vista 3D CD player surprised with a decidedly different but highly effective way with the music's top end, so the 300

integrated does the same with not only the upper frequencies but also its comprehensive subtlety. For an amp with such evident power it also does delicacy very well. This is no muscle-bound fatneck, it's quite a sophisticate that has a way of playing music, first and foremost.

Mahler's Das Lied Von Der Erde on a wonderfully transparent

Reference Recordings CD showed immediately the 300's warmth. This is a highly detailed recording and as a result can sound a little cold and detached with much equipment. The 300 focussed in straight away on what mattered, such as instrumentalist's phrasing and orchestral section coherence. Instrumental colour was very impressive too, with woodwind and strings - especially violins - having a natural sounding tone. There was a good sense of space and air here that wasn't always realised with lesser recordings due to the 300's concentration on phrasing.

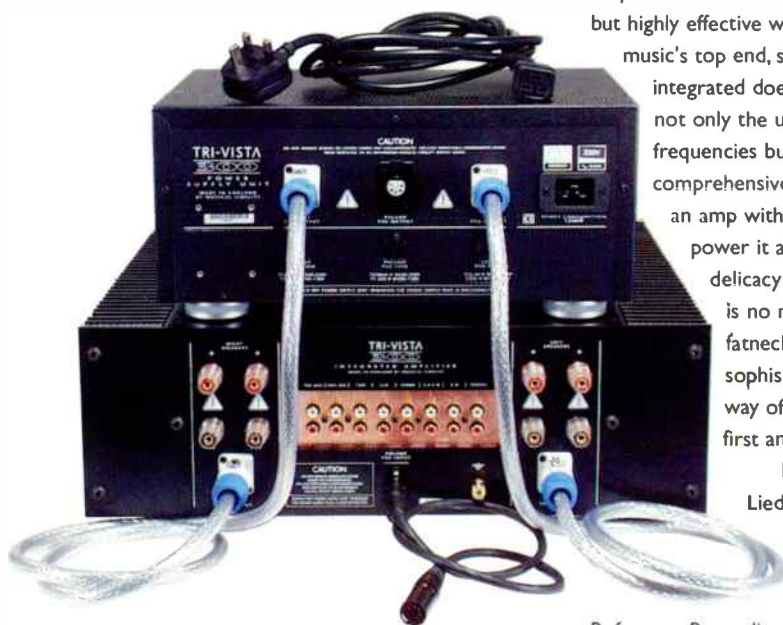
Equally impressive was a recording of Trevor Pinnock working his way through the sublime Bach Partitas on that most telling of instruments, the harpsichord. This is a splendid disc for testing out systems as it has great ambience and the instrument can stress both extremes of the frequency spectrum, as well as

speed. A harpsichord through a hard edged amp can take your fillings out (Beecham's comment about "two skeletons copulating on a tin roof" springs to mind) but with the 300 it sounded perfectly natural and neutral, too. Speed and dexterity were good, if perhaps not the zippiest I've heard (although this amp is no slouch) but the overall sound was beautifully focussed and 'whole', with detail exemplary. Feeding an SACD of Fauré and Ravel's piano trios into the 300 resulted in, again, a feast of phrasing and sheer enjoyment, with the string playing visceral and realistic. Piano had a good, rounded tone too, with no harshness or tonal 'hang-over'. This recording emphasises the depth and three-dimensionality of the amp. - the sound field stretched way back to the rear wall.

Miles Davis's ubiquitous 'Kind Of Blue' was next on and the silky smooth nature of the playing on this recording suited the 300 superbly. It wasn't too rich for the blood, though, as there remained a freshness of detail which stopped it all turning to slush. Drums had great detail (such as the subtle brushwork on the snare in 'Flamenco Sketches') and the natural tone of each instrument highlighted the individuality of each participant more than usual.

With rock and pop music the 300 doesn't have the forwardness and edge of other Musical Fidelity amps that some rock aficionados crave. It still sounds big and superbly powerful, though. Soundgarden's 'Superunknown' had a massive, fruity sound. In places a howler of a recording but the 300 made pretty consistent work of it, which is no bad thing in my book - although some purists may disagree.

Feed the 300 with a top drawer recording and it takes it to another level. There's an incredible amount of power and drive on tap but it's channeled into other areas such as depth of field and overall control as opposed to sheer ballsy clout. The detailed recording of Paul Weller's 'Stanley Road' was impressive, exhibiting for the first time the amp's simply awesome bass extension. Drums were fast and muscular and the overall sound had a grippy bounce that is often the trait of top quality pure valve designs with



trivistor has an approximate life of around 100,000 hours (lifetimes usage) from each set.

The 300 has a totally unique circuit topology and the output has its own, separate choke regulated power supply. It's a true dual-mono configured integrated. A separate power supply is also used for the driver stage, which has its own dedicated transformer.

Musical Fidelity claim that due to this configuration, large swings of output voltage and current do not affect earlier stages. An isolated power supply like this enables the 300 to produce a massive amount of power, without hum problems from the huge transformers required. Not only are the amp's dimensions big, so is its power output - the company claim no less than 340W into 8ohms.

BIG SMOOTHIE

I set up the 300 with an Audio

'proper' output transformers. Imaging was also impressive, stretching the soundstage wide through the electrostatics.

TRI'D AND TESTED

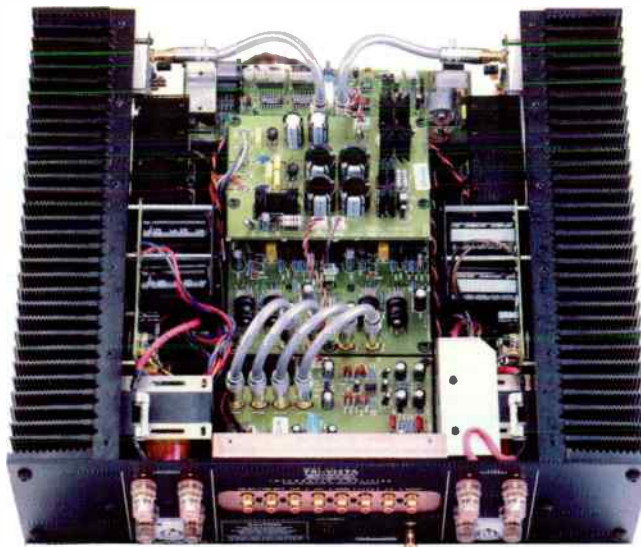
Whilst undeniably impressive the 300 is actually hard to describe. Just like the 3D CD player that surprised me last year, the 300 plays music and recordings you think you knew well with new insight - but you can't exactly pin point why. It sounds incredibly different to many rivals, which makes it a truly endearing product. To give you some idea, this isn't a high-end sound in the somewhat dry and sterilised (but still impressive) American tradition of, say, Pass Labs or Krell. Here, the sound is more in the high-end Italian or Sugden mould, but with more immediate slam, where music becomes the primary concern and very much a living thing.

It's also somewhat different in sound to the company's other amps and this point should be emphasised. It has their detail retrieval and muscle, but delivers it in an

altogether more complete way and with more fluidity. The result is that it excels with classical music ranging from solo piano to full orchestral, but those who crave Naim NAP500-like attack with their rock music may be a little disappointed.

Nothing is sacrificed for the smoothness though. Treble is smooth but remains highly detailed (although a bright front end in the shape of Sony's XA-555ES SACD player resulted in a harsher sound). Bass is still deep and tight but more rounded, and midrange is beautifully transparent without become scientific. There's smoothness and body to the sound but it remains incredibly neutral.

For a classical or jazz music lover its very, very difficult to get an amplifier as good or better than this at the price - or even at twice the price. Although incredibly powerful, hardcore rock fans may find its fluidity not to their liking, but that



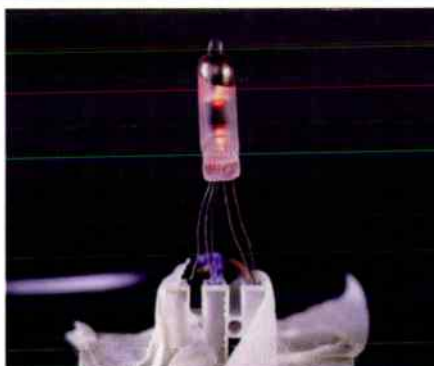
depends upon the type of Rock to be played and expectations. The speed and slam of upcoming DVD-A - in stereo of course! - is a potential counterbalance too. If you want extreme power with superb grace the new Trivista 300 is quite exceptional.

Musical Fidelity Tri-Vista 300 £3,999

Musical Fidelity Ltd.
Tel: +44 (0) 202 8900 2866
www.musical-fidelity.co.uk

WHEN IS A TRIVISTOR NOT A TRIVISTOR?

When it's a 5703WB! Actually, there's no such thing as a 'trivistor' valve. Just who was stringing who along here is a tough call but basically the valves found inside the 300 are 5703WB models made by an American company called Raytheon. The nuvistor was indeed called a nuvistor but in a metal casing - the 5703WB is glass, like a real audio tube! The 'tri' is relevant in as much as that it is a triode designed tube. This is indeed a military valve that was used, as the MF batch testify, by both the Army and Navy.



MEASURED PERFORMANCE

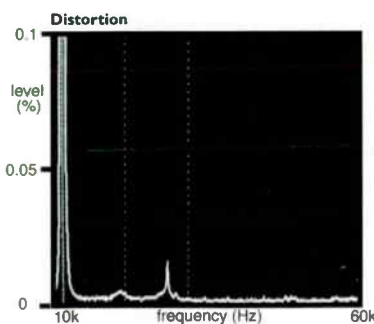
The Trivista 300 follows in Musical Fidelity's tradition of building huge power-house amplifiers, often with choke regulated power supplies. The 300 turns out no less than 300W into 8ohms and a massive 500W into 4ohms. It does it with alacrity too, distortion levels hovering right down at miniscule levels of 0.003% or so, much of this coming from the test generator.

It takes a large, multi-driver design to be able to absorb such power without overheating and turn it into reasonably undistorted sound in the room.

However, big amps like this, if well engineered, do sound both dynamic and relaxed in use when producing a fraction of their rated output and measurement suggests the Trivista 300 will sound refined as well as powerful, like its predecessors. It measures very well. **NK**

Power	312watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	7Hz-70kHz
Separation	111dB
Noise	-88dB
Distortion	0.004%

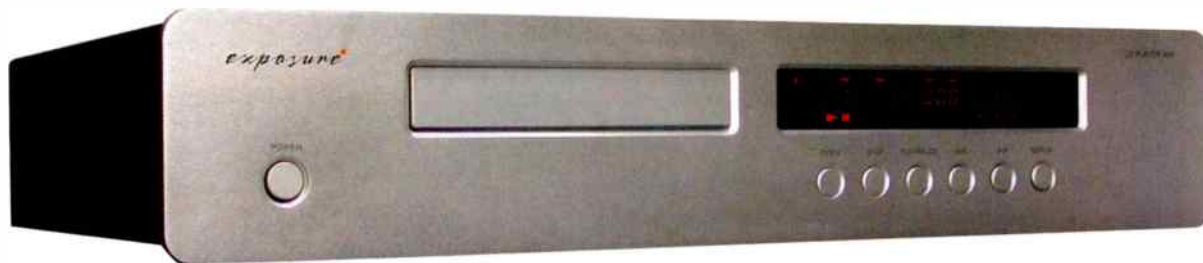
Sensitivity	300mV
d.c. offset	1/2mV



World Verdict

By no means cheap but undeniably impressive. A very smooth, powerful and sophisticated sound that often delights with subtlety as well as muscle.

FULLY



The next stage in the re-emergence of Exposure Electronics is the launch of the new Classic Range of products. Simon Pope listens to the CD player, the XXII.

The first range of products from the newly launched Exposure Electronics departed with the Roman numerals of the company's earlier models in favour of a '2010' series label. Now Exposure have re-introduced the Roman numerals for their latest, more expensive and specialist range, known as the Classis Series. This consists of a preamplifier, power amplifier, external phono stage and the XXII CD player featured here.

Gone are the bright blue LEDs of the entry level range for subtle red lights and displays. Basic design principles are just that. We have a solid but hardly Sherman tank-like chassis fronted by a fairly thick aluminium machined fascia. This houses a row of six metal buttons for basic operational commands and the red display window which reveals, when switched on, the familiar calendar configuration of a Sony mechanism.

Despite the somewhat uncharismatic look of the XXII, there's a serious number of quality components that make this an altogether different proposition to the 2010 CD player. It has one high quality PCM1704 DAC per channel (as opposed to the one PCM1716 stereo DAC in the 2010) which provide a high resolution signal to separate current-to-voltage

convertors. These in turn feed the filter and output stage which is based on discrete transistors (the 2010 uses an IC filter/output stage). The clock oscillator is fed from two regulators in series which Exposure say ensures a very stable low jitter clock for both the DAC and the transport.

The transformer has separate sections for the transport and audio stages and the audio stage is fed from a high capacity supply that uses multiple stages of regulation. Finally, the custom made smoothing capacitors are of a higher value and grade from those used in the 2010. Outputs consist of BNC and optical outputs, plus the usual two RCA analogues.

The XXII has to hold its own in this sector of the market, as it's very strong indeed with players such as the Meridian 507, Naim CD5, Arcam FMJ23 and, if its predecessor is anything to go by, the new NAD S500i. This is a mean line up, all of them have the strengths a quality player in this region should have, namely detail and musical insight, along with smoothness and superior build quality.

On the build quality side perhaps the XXII lags a little behind, as it has neither the weight nor robustness of any on this list. For another couple of hundred quid more you're in the up-sampling, heavyweight league of the super smooth Audio Analogue

Maestro (which we had around for comparison, along with a Meridian 507 and the NAD 'non-i' version S500).

When I first hooked up the XXII to the system (consisting of a Cyrus 7 & PSX-R power supply and Quad's ESL988s with an MJ Acoustics Pro 100 sub for lower duties) first impressions were somewhat unexciting. It sounded a tad veiled and uninvolved. However, after a good hour or so, when all the system components were in full flow, it started to sound like a genuine £1,000 mark player. More subtleties were discernable and detail increased, along with involvement. It showed itself to have a fast and grippy sound much in the Naim mould that although on the dry side was also very clear. This was displayed best in a JVC 20bit K2 'Blue Dumplings' disc of Japanese jazz pianist Mikio Masuda. The four instruments had great separation and there was a good, spacious spread of sound across the stage. The piano was solid and rounded, although the XXII appeared to concentrate more on the rhythmic qualities of the instrument as opposed to timbre and colour.

Initially the sound was very smooth, almost too smooth, but at the entrance of the ride cymbal it opened up and started to sparkle, which was a nice surprise. Bass depth was commendable but not as deep as

EXPOSED

the likes of the Meridian 507 or the Audio Analogue Maestro. However, the bass is very tight and tuneful and perhaps because of this a bit more natural, which ironically may not appeal to some. With 'Kind Of Blue' the same precision of sound was encountered. Good detail in the form of snare brushwork and even good old tape hiss was discernable. Whilst the instruments were again nicely separated and exact, when Coltrane's sax entered it had a slightly grey, shouty tone which distracted me somewhat from the laid back cool of the music.

Putting the Foo Fighters latest blistering album into the XXII's drawer saw the player reacting appropriately. After the dead-pan intro of Dave Grohl's guitar and

voice, the song erupts into an in-your-face onslaught. The XXII responded with a fully involving and precise account of what was happening, with good bass extension that wasn't revealed with the simple, acoustic jazz recordings. This music can make cheaper CD players sound pretty rough and harsh but as well as speed and involvement there was a sense of control and smoothness with the Exposure that wouldn't have been present with its half-priced 2010 brother.

The XXII is a more serious CD player than it, at first, seems. Whilst controlled and smooth to a certain extent, it is also quite realistic. This takes away some of the silky covering which many listeners like to calm down the natural harshness of the

CD format. 'Smoother' players such as the Audio Analogue Maestro deliver a more cohesive and organic picture and the Meridian house style is better balanced and more ambient overall, but the XXII gives a fine account of itself. Although its sound is fast and rhythmic, it never escapes the leash. The new XXII just about squeezes itself into the upper echelons of the CD market our comparisons show and, with its distinctive delivery, it is worthy of consideration.

Exposure XXII CD player £1,175

Exposure Electronics Ltd.
Tel: +44 (0) 1273 423877
www.exposurehifi.com

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

Having enjoyed some modest success with its 2010 CD player, Exposure has decided to tickle-up the brew by replacing its PCM1716 DAC with a PCM1704, a newer chip from the same Burr-Brown stable. In practice, distortion is fractionally higher in the XXII, not sufficiently to cause subjective alarm but more than enough to distinguish it from the 2010. So, at its 2V peak output, distortion reaches 0.003% (0.001%), increasing to 0.007% (0.001%) at -10dBfs and 0.009% (0.005%) at -30dBfs. The figures in brackets are those for the CD2010 under identical conditions. At 20kHz, the XXII's output includes a 2nd harmonic that adds up to 0.018%.

The response of our sample was

also modified with a much more obvious treble roll-off, amounting to -0.8dB at 20kHz. Figure (1) indicates that the CD2010's response is ruler flat though, having tested a number of XXII's at Exposure's factory, I can say that a figure of -0.3dB is more common. On a more positive note, jitter is reduced to a mere 140psec while the PCM1704's superior digital filter offers >105dB rejection of digital images, comparing favourably with the 79dB offered by the PCM1716. The overall S/N ratio is up too, with the XXII providing a 3-4dB advantage at 103dB.

Taking all this on board, while the XXII does not represent a significant technological advance on the 2010, it does offer an alternative

slant on a modern-day classic. It's all about choice. **PM**

Frequency Response

10Hz - 20.1kHz (CD)

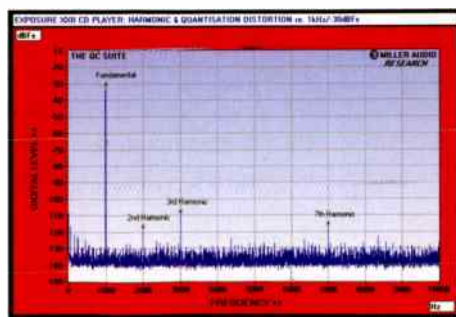
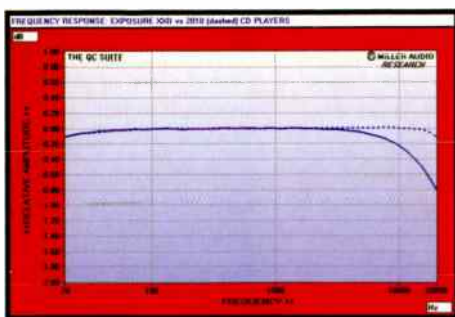
Distortion	Left	Right
-6dBfs	0.0065%	0.0042%
-30dBfs	0.0089%	0.0059%
-60dBfs	0.37%	0.30%
-90dBfs	3.2%	3.2%

Separation

1kHz	106dB	105dB
20kHz	98dB	99dB

Noise (IEC A) -103.0dB -102.9dB

Output 2.03V 2.02V



World Verdict

A better player than perhaps the fairly ordinary build suggests. It has great rhythmic grip and excitement with good detail but also a subtle and refined control.

FRONT O

KEF's famous Uni-Q designs are a perennial favourite with audiophiles. Alan Sircom listens to the top dog in the latest range to feature Uni-Q, the floorstanding Q7.

KEF is usually bang on the money with its loudspeakers, but every now and again it comes up with something special. The £800 KEF Q7 is a prime example of this – it's one of the best in the KEF catalogue, KEF's more expensive XQ and Reference speaker ranges notwithstanding.

The Q7 is top of the Q Series speaker system. It's a three-way design, two drive units being combined in one Uni-Q unit at top. This features a 19mm aluminium dome tweeter within a 165mm plastic midrange cone driver. Low frequencies come from a 228mm x 152mm oval plastic driver that KEF call a 'Racetrack' cone.

The speaker has a pair of ports; a small round one at the front which loads the Uni-Q unit, and an oval design round the back, which does allow a high degree of alteration and tweekery with foam bungs that are supplied. The Q7 is at its most free sounding when completely bung-free, but depending on

positioning, the front, rear

or both bungs in place can fine-tune out nasty resonances. This allows a good deal of personal tailoring to be applied, to suit the different characteristics of particular listening environments.

The Q7 can be bi-wired. It is magnetically shielded and beautifully finished in a wrap-round ash veneer. Despite the cabinet's fairly meaty proportions, it's not a particularly heavy speaker though, and the drivers make it top-heavy, so spiking into a wooden floor is best for stability. Unlike 'speakers from Mission and Tannoy, the Q7s have no chamber for mass loading with sand, reinforcing the need for spiking down.

For best results the Q7s must be run-in, bi-wired and partnered with good quality equipment. I gave the review samples a few weeks of replay to get the best from them. The loudspeaker sets a good standard straight away, but improves and improves over weeks. Bi-wiring – or better still – bi-amplification makes the Q7 considerably better at separating treble from midband and bass. It's not exactly muddy at the worst of times, but it is worth the extra.

Although the Q7 works well with similarly-priced electronics – a Rega Planet CD player and the Audio Analogue Puccini SE amplifier spring to mind – it won't let the side down when partnered with exotic kit. This 'speaker works with valve amplifiers and decent, solid sounding CD players. It is slightly less happy with vinyl and rhythmically-oriented solid-state amplification (Naim-users take note!). That 'Racetrack' bass driver needs a lot of driving however, so either choose a big, powerful solid-state amplifier or a valve amplifier (4ohm) with a good set of transformers.

Good KEF Uni-Q designs are often an ideal tool for reviewers, as they offer stark insight into changes elsewhere in the system. The Q7 is no exception, although it is not as system fussy as it could be. Change a cable or table, or use a new gizmo and you can hear the difference readily through the Q7. This is both good and bad; good because that level of detail means there is a wealth of information on show, but bad because it can cause audiophilia nervosa, constantly switching components and accessories to find some unattainable hi-fi nirvana.

One of the joys of the Uni-Q system is its off-axis response. For example, there's no need to toe them in dramatically and consequently their 'sweet spot' is wider than most designs. The extended dynamic range of the speaker gives it a visceral, realistic presentation. This becomes especially noticeable with vocals, which stand out with great clarity and solidity in three-dimensional space. It also suits SACD and DVD-Audio's extended frequency range, although not as well as the new XQ range, with their dedicated 'hyper-tweeters'.

Overall, the Q7's sound coherent right across the audio range, without over or understatement. This also makes the speaker a great musical leveller, as it puts no emphasis on any genre of music over another, all of which suggests that finding the perfect disc to describe a particular aspect of the performance of the speaker is almost impossible. The Q7 is dynamic enough to make mincemeat of Mahler or Prokofiev, lucid enough to bring out all the detail in hi-fi oriented discs like Rare on Air or Bruce Springsteen's 'Ghost of Tom Joad' and even has all the drive needed to keep up with The Strokes, which sounded fast and



F T H E Q



controlled, without the 'muddle' that can occur with lesser designs. The only obvious fingerprint of the Q7 is its 'big' sound. Whatever you listen to, it sounds larger than most other 'speakers.

Big sound notwithstanding, the speaker has plenty of detail on offer. This becomes apparent with difficult to define vocals, usually male vocals that are deliberately badly recorded (like The Strokes, for example). For once, you get to hear past the distortion of the microphone and still follow the diction of the singer.

So, why spend any more money on a more expensive speaker? What is missing is that elegance and grace of a Sonus Faber speaker, the warmth of a top-end Castle design like the Howard, the gutsy punch of a Naim speaker or the absolute clarity of a Quad Electrostatic. The Q7 offers a

good sense of balance between all the value of which shouldn't be underestimated. It has balance - and if you want more whilst retaining this property, you need to part with a larger sum of money.

Ultimately, the KEF Q7 is a fantastic bit of hi-fi performance without a fantastic hi-fi price. It is also a fine no-nonsense speaker, too; it does best with high-end kit, but doesn't automatically require it. Tweaking and careful selection of matching equipment pay dividends I found and the Q7 may end up being the cheapest part of your hi-fi system!

KEF Q7 £799.99

KEF Audio Ltd.
Tel: 01622 672261
www.kef.com

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The Q7 is a little different from the norm. It uses KEF's own co-axial Uni-Q driver where a tweeter fires out through the centre of the bass/mid cone, providing a near-perfect point-source. The benefit is even dispersion and a consistent sound from all listening angles. The unit predictably gives smooth, even output right across the audio band under measurement. Our analysis shows this quite clearly. It also shows that output from the tweeter is rolled down smoothly at high frequencies, possibly to ensure that some peaking at 8kHz doesn't make itself aurally intrusive. With output up to 10kHz well maintained though the Q7 is likely to sound fairly clear and bright all the same.

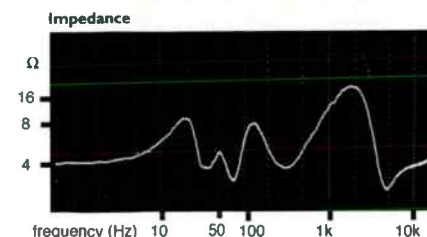
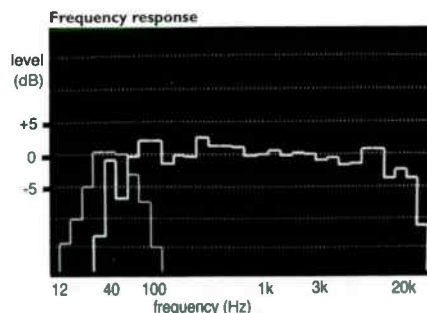
The main Uni-Q driver is loaded by a reflex enclosure with a front vent, whilst the large bass unit has its own chamber with rear vent. Forward radiation from the bass unit

reaches down to 40Hz, whilst the rear port works down to 20Hz. Not surprisingly the Q7 goes low and the dedicated bass unit will give it good power handling, plus low bass distortion.

Big floor standers are usually sensitive. However, although 88dB is good, in truth it isn't exceptional in view of the fact that the Q7 uses a 4ohm bass unit and has a measured nominal impedance of just 5ohms. It draws current as a result and is quite a tough load, made worse by significant reactance across most of the audio band. It may seem rather more amplifier sensitive than most loudspeakers as a result

The Q7 is likely to sound focussed and

muscular, in view of its drive unit line up and measured response. It needs to be partnered with a good strong amplifier though. **NK**



World Verdict Well balanced and even sounding. The Q7 is also very system and user friendly design that manages to combine all the aspects of other 'speakers in one good value package

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letters & emails

Letter of the month

LAST RIGHTS FOR ARABIAN NIGHTS

I have been buying Hi-Fi World since the first issue, although this is the first time that I have asked for your opinions. My hi-fi has remained unchanged for around seven years or so and consists of both turntable and CD front end - Roksan DP1 and DA1 and LP12 with Ittok. Over the last few years emphasis has changed from turntable to CDs. Amplification is generally all Rotel - RHB10, RHC10 and RHQ10 plus an EAR 845P which is used from time to time. Speakers are Sonus Faber Electa.

I am very happy with the sound quality. However, I feel that it is time for an update and I can use the Roksan in a second system (Quad 33/303 ESL57s).

As it will probably be my last purchase of a CD player I wish to update and improve my existing system without deviating too far from the sound style that I have. Would you please suggest a replacement for my CD and secondly make alternative suggestions for improvement that you feel would be beneficial. The budget for the CD is up to £4000 and say another £2000 for other changes if considered necessary.

One aspect that I find particularly irritating about my system is the difficulty in getting set-up instructions out of Linn for the LP12, so I would like to buy a "last" turntable to overcome this frustration. I could budget separately for this.

Regards.

Mike.

Abu Dhabi.

Greetings to all our readers in Abu Dhabi! Whilst this question may on the surface seem a simple one it opens up a real can of worms. Should you go for the best CD reproduction you can afford or would your money be better spent on a top-grade SACD, DVD-A or universal player? If you plan to make this your last purchase of a source player you have to make sure it will last you in years to come, not just when it comes to reliability but also in relation to software. This said though,

CD will be around for many years to come and its highly unlikely that either DVD-A or SACD will take over as primary music carriers for at least another ten years or so, if at all.

I take it that you're not interested in surround-sound and wish to stick with two channel only, too.

So, first let me recommend a few CD-only players. There are a couple of obvious choices that spring to mind. Audionet's awesome ARTV2 is a real German heavyweight contender, with strap-mounted transport, a granite base and top loading mechanism giving it esoteric high-end appeal. It also sounds superb, too. It has smoothness (not always the way with German hi-fi) and splendid detail and an overall grip over the music that is irresistible. It is pretty good value at £2,400.

Another option in your price bracket is Wadia's 'budget' 301 CD spinner at £3,650. This is one of the most 'analogue' sounding CD players around and has a variable output, so it can be connected straight to a power amplifier. Like the Audionet, build quality is superb and you'll want to play all of your collection over and over again just to remind yourself of how good it sounds. It's surprisingly uncomplicated and easy sounding for such a high-end disc player, with superb timing and delicate, subtle phrasing too.

Two 'limited edition' CD-only options to look out for secondhand are Marantz's excellent CD7 (when Marantz get it right, they really do) and Musical Fidelity's Nu-Vista 3D. Neither of these will be cheap secondhand buys as they're collectors' items, but they show what can be done with CD.

Next is to consider a 'combination' player. The first SACD player, the classic Sony SCD-1, is an excellent stand alone unit and offers the best build quality money can buy. It also plays CDs, of course, but only in two channel, so it's somewhat of a dinosaur in these days of multichannel hi-fi (although the latest Musical Fidelity Tri-Vista SACD player is only

stereo!). An SCD-1 can still be picked up from a retailer for not much above £2000, which is a top-rank bargain in my view.

For a multichannel CD/SACD option, the Marantz SA-12SI is a brand new and safe buy at £,3500.

Going the DVD-Audio route you can afford Meridian's 569 DVD-A player which will not only play DVD-Audio discs but also CDs to an extremely high standard, with the capability of movie-watching as an added bonus.

As for your turntable, keep the LP12/Ittok. I've contacted Linn and there is a dealer down the coast in Dubai that is trained in LP12 setup who could help you out. The address is: Dubai Audio Centre, P O Box 32836 Dubai. Tel: (00 971) 4 343 1441, Fax: (00 971) 4 343 7748 e-mail: dac-dubai@emirates.net.ae

As an added extra, it would be worth investing in one of the new Linn Lingo power supplies (recognisable from the old version by its 'full' size, not shoebox appearance). This will bring added sonic delights to your vinyl replay, with greater focus and depth. Staying with the Linn theme, their top specification MC, the Arkiv, although not cheap, will give a smooth and fluid sound combined with good detail.

Otherwise, if you like more top end detail spend your money on an Ortofon Kontrapunkt B for around £650. **SP**



Sony's SCD-1. Although an SACD player, also performs brilliantly with CDs

MISSIONS POSSIBLE?

My system consists of the following: Linn Sondek/Ittok 2/Roksan Corus Black, Arcam Alpha CD, Naim 72/140/Snaps, Linn Helix II Speakers. I'm very happy with the sound but following a major redecoration of the living room my wife has questioned the possibility of replacing the speakers with some floorstanders finished in a light wood veneer. Looking at past issues I came across Noel's review of the Mission M73 and wonder if they might fit the bill. They're about to be upgraded so are available at prices as low as £100.

My musical tastes are wide and varied - do you think these speakers could fit the bill? My next upgrade is likely to be a new CD player which I would look to acquire second-hand for up to £500. Any suggestions?

*Many thanks,
Colin*

The Mission M73s you mention are indeed fine loudspeakers for their (very) modest retail price, but your Linns were considerably more expensive when new and this fact is still reflected in their respective sound qualities. The Missions will not represent any kind of upgrade on your Linns - you'll find them more closed in, dynamically compressed and ragged, although they may well image slightly better and have faster bass (such are the oft-unsung benefits of standmounters).

If your budget is limited, as you imply, I'd advise you to think in terms of picking up a second-hand pair of early nineteen nineties Epos ES11, Harbeth HL-P3, ProAc SuperTablettes or even the original Linn Kan (in Mk 1 or Mk 2 guise).

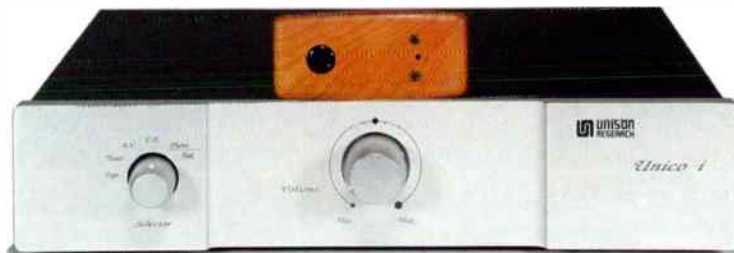
If you really must have a 'modern' looking standmounter then a great buy would be a pair of late nineties Mission 751s. For the best possible sound use Linn Kan II stands, or Atacama SE24s if you want something more visually contemporary. Any of these loudspeakers would give a considerably better sound than the M73s. And fortunately, the rest of your system is good enough to get the best from any of the aforementioned.

As for a sub £500 second-hand CD player, it depends on how old you want to go. Obviously you could afford some amazing early nineties designs (Marantz CD94, Pioneer PD-91 etc.), but I'd go for a reasonably 'fresh' Cyrus dAD3Q or Marantz CD-17KIS.

DP

DRIVE ME CRAZY

I need help with some conflicting advice. I have been listening for some months now to Harbeth HL-P3 "miracle shoeboxes" using Marantz CD19 and PM19 which are baby sisters to CD17 & PM17. The PM19 has a 'nice' 60W of output but I suspect not enough to control the 83dB, 6ohm Harbeths. I would dearly like to use a valve power amp but have been advised that the low sensitivity of the Harbeths means that affordable valve amps would be too low powered. Another opinion suggests 25W Class A solid-state is more than enough, whilst a local manufacturer says 120W MOSFET power is "adequate". What would be the minimum valve power rating you would recommend? Or should I forget valves and go for something like MF 3.2 or Arcam 85.



Another suggestion is to add Marantz SM17 and bi amp the Harbeths or just add a good solid-state power amp such as Cyrus SmartPower x 2 and replace the PM19 at a later stage.

Any other ideas apart from replacing the speakers? My budget is approx £800.

*Many thanks
Harvey Sutcliffe
Victoria, Australia*

Hi Harvey. If you're looking at pure valve designs at around £800 that will drive a pair of Harbeth HL-P3s (a fine 'speaker incidentally), unless you've got a best mate that's a secondhand hi-fi dealer, it's not good news! As for 25W of class A, then there's the fine Sugden A21a, which with its classic sound gives plenty of detail and musicality. It would just about drive the Harbeth's, but don't expect the floorboards to shake. You'd have to crank it a bit - not really ideal.

You will need at least the 60W that you currently use to be able to get the best from the power hungry Harbeth's. The best way to spend your money would be to go for a decent mosfet/valve hybrid or a simi-

lar sounding device. The obvious choice is Unison Research's £800 Unico integrated which has great build, a sweet little R.F. remote and a big, rounded and smooth sound with around 80W of muscular power.

Staying in Italy, an Audio Analogue Puccini SE would fit the bill nicely, too.

On UK shores, you're right to mention Cyrus. This company actually has a sound that is closer to the hybrid/Class A mould than most of the solid-state competition but has plenty of power to drive tough loads, too. A simple choice like the Cyrus 7 would do well, but a pair of SmartPower amps would give you the same sound with that bit more clout. **SP**

A big sounding 'hybrid' such as the Unico should be Harvey's choice for the Harbeth's.

SPANISH EYES

Thank you for your excellent informative mag, which fortunately is available in a department store in Malaga, near where I live. During the past few months I have upgraded my previous system consisting of Marantz CD 63 MkII KI Signature, Marantz PM 66 KI Signature and Ruark Templar II 'speakers to a mint second-hand Denon DCD3300 connected to an equally mint used Naim NAC 62 / NAP 92 / II combo, via Chord Cobra II interconnects. This feeds the same Ruark speakers through Naim NAC A5 speaker cable (chosen in preference over the Nordost Super Flatline bi-wired cable I had before).

I also followed your guidance and bought a Musical Fidelity X-Cans V2 headphone amp for my trusted Sennheiser HD565 Ovation headphones, which I use a lot. Both the CD player and the amp were vast improvements over the previous ones, taking me closer to listening to music rather than listening to CDs.

Trouble is, I am (of course) still not quite happy, but as we live in the Spanish countryside I don't have a local

90% of our customers prefer our "warm and old-valve" sound to their expensive transistor preamplifiers & power amplifiers. We have a signed testimonial to prove that one customer prefers £900 "EL34 Lim Signature" to £2,600 preamp / power amp/power supply made by a famous name.

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Roy Gregory Hi-Fi+ Issue 19 Sept-Oct 2002

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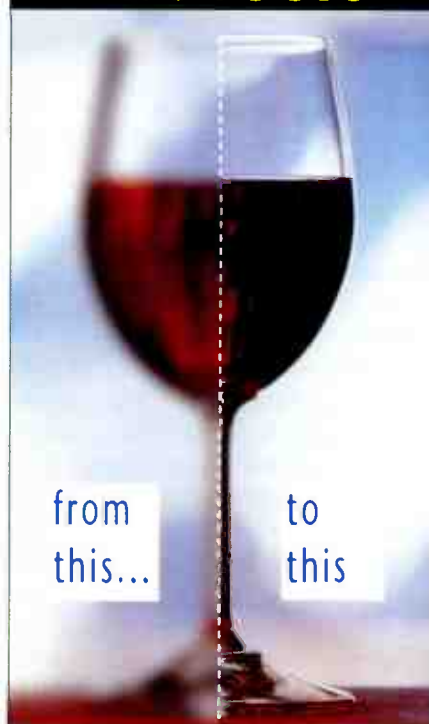
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PUTTING SOUND INTO FOCUS



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hi-fi shop I could badger with my questions. Right now the sound through the headphones is closer to what I am looking for - clarity, transparency, detail and involvement. At the same time, while I like the detail and the transparency of the sound via the headphones, quite a few recordings sound rather metallic and mechanical.

Although smoother the sound through the speakers is a lot less involving, but after the headphones I find myself straining to hear details, as though there was a filter somewhere along the line. With some recordings I can hear the singer but everything else seems to have moved several steps back on the soundstage. The music which sounds perfectly good to me on the phones thus becomes muffled, while the music which sounds too harsh on the phones is almost right but robbed of detail through the speakers!

I still remember how things livened up when I moved from a Linn Intek I briefly had to the Naim, hence I guess the culprit must be the speakers, as much as I like them for their looks and the way they have been assembled!

My question now is, what speakers do you think would help me achieve the clarity, transparency and involvement I look for, while at the same time opening up the rather messy soundstage? There's not much of a budget at the moment, I am afraid, but the sound bothers me so much that I would like to do something now. Anything in the region of £400 second-hand would be wonderful and I have been considering Spondor and Harbeth speakers recently, which from what I have read might fit the bill. What do you think?

I don't want to make a compromise which means that I'll have to trade-up again in a few months time, hence if there's nothing at this price I would rather wait for a few months and then be able to spend maybe £700 for something a bit better. I guess this would take me to the territory of speakers costing £1300 new.

We have holiday apartments in our house for people who come here for the peace and tranquillity, which means that for anything that requires high volumes I tend to use the headphones - hence the ability to play loud is not an issue, but good detail at low volumes would be very desirable. I would rather have a sound that is a bit too harsh but lets me know what is going on than one that is too smooth - that was the reason for selling the Marantz combo after all.

The other area I am thinking about is the front-end. Do you think a separate and more recent DAC would improve matters and would go some way towards overcoming the mechanical element in the music? If so, from which model upwards would this move make sense? I believe that this is the part of the player which has progressed most over the last ten years.

Also, I have been considering fitting Audiocom's replacement clock to the Denon. It is such a beautifully constructed solid beast, I would much rather try to improve it than swap it for something newer.

My listening room has a tiled floor with a rug and is roughly 20x14ft, opening up to a much larger open plan space, with the speakers facing across the narrower part.

My musical taste is as varied as can be, ranging from classical Western and classical Indian music through solo singers like Ismael Serrano, Mary Black, Natalie Merchant and Pablo Milanes. This then goes through to rock and Jazz/Art/Prog Rock with Yes being the clear favourites and most listened to.

Maybe it is too late and I have badly caught the upgrade bug, but I hope that this is not so and some fine tuning is all that is required. I would be very grateful indeed if you could help me chose the right path. Thank you very much in advance. Regards

**Vichar Kroehnert
Malaga, Spain**

I can imagine the kind of sound you're getting from your Denon DCD-3300, which was a magnificent multibit player in its day. The trouble is that its day was a long time ago now - fifteen years, nearly! As a result, its big, vibrant, punchy sound will also be rather ragged around the edges and also a little on the mechanical side. Those old Japanese battleship CD spinners really do sound powerful, but they're nowhere near as musical as, say, a Meridian 207 from the same era.

With this in mind, I think you should start with sorting your CD player, and assign funds to this as required. Although I have no experience of the Audiocom master clock modification, I can certainly vouch for the Trichord Clock 3. Indeed, I had my old Sony CDP-557ESD (more or less a direct rival to your Denon, with similar underpinnings) 'done' and I was gobsmacked by the differ-

ence. Clocking it really smoothed things out tonally, and gave it a good deal of additional subtlety and finesse. Timing vastly improved, and that mechanical 'hi-fi' sound you refer to virtually disappeared. The player became a much more beguiling and organic performer, but still retained much of its bold, audacious nature. So impressive was this that I'd have no hesitation in recommending this mod, but you'll have to phone Trichord first and check it can be done on your particular machine, as always.

This done, you may not feel the need to get an offboard DAC. Personally, I'm not a huge fan of the breed, but if you're still not happy then your Trichorded Denon would make an excellent transport. Look no further than Pink Triangle's Da Capo, which is one of the best offboard converters ever made, in my opinion. It's very warm and full and musical in a quintessentially 'analogue' way. The only problem is that of reliability - it's not the most sturdy thing ever built, so if you do manage to pick one up in the classifieds, make sure it's a pristine one-owner specimen that's had nothing more exciting than a monthly polish with a feather duster.

Another fine DAC is DPA's Enlightenment. This is an extremely lively and musical performer, yet a bit (pardon the pun!) more ragged than the PT.

Now, with your front-end sorted, it's time to look at speakers. Your amplification is of good quality, but not the most powerful around, so I'd counsel a pair of efficient floorstanding loudspeakers with high technology drivers such as Mission's 752 (or 752 Freedom) or Castle's Avon. These have HDA or Carbon Fibre drivers respectively, and give a very fast, punchy sound with plenty of detail and spatial accuracy. Your Ruark Templars, by contrast, will sound a tad woolly and vague. You should be able to pick these up for under £250 now, but don't overlook a pair of late model Epos ES14s either. These are tighter and punchier still, yet need a bit more driving - your Naim will only just be up to the job.

Change your headphones to a pair of Sennheiser sublime HD580s and you'll discover how harsh your 565s are - and find they're a far closer tonal match for your new speakers. Happy upgrading! **DP**



PT's Da Capo is one of the finest sounding DACs ever made

FOURTH TIME LUCKY!

Scribes. Like many of your correspondents I am in the throws of a long overdue upgrade. I have made the classic 'do it in stages' error. The original set-up was as follows: Sugden A28 II, Linn Axis/Basik plus/K9, Denon DCD1700 CD player into Ruark Sabre bookshelf on Ruark stands via 'quality' lighting cable (oops!) with freebie interconnects (okay, okay).

The niggle was predictable. It was soft, compressed and well, 'jolly boxy' really. All of the bits dated back to the late 80s and I was sure the 'speakers/cables would be the best place to start (note the flawed, piecemeal thinking already). I went to my favourite specialist hi-fi shop and did a lot of listening - resulting in a pair of B&W CM2s on stands, bi-wired with QED silver anniversary. Fantastic! - a detailed, spacious sound with a wonderful sound stage and efficiency of 89dB.

Another niggle is that the Denon is now revealing its age, with glassy and at times uncomfortable hard edges at higher frequencies. For all its well documented flaws, the Linn sounded great to me, thanks to Ringmat upgrade.

I went back to Eastbourne with the Denon to compare it to some new CD players, ending up with Arcam's FMJ CD23T and an Optimum Premier rack for good measure. Added some Monster Cable interconnects. Fantastic! Even more 'space' and definition with really sweet mid and upper ranges, plus an extended, cleaner bass. But there was another niggle - some low end coloration around 150Hz and the A28 preamp output didn't seem to enjoy right chan-

nel connection to my (newly added) Monitor Audio ASW100 (set to minimal gain and roll-off above 50Hz). There was no such problem with only the left channel connected. Hmm. I sent a question about this to Sugden - no answer.

I saw an 'ex-dem' Sugden A21a with phono stage, a steal at £695 with the full manufacturer's guarantee. A 'must have'. Twenty-four hours later, wow! Even more 'at a live performance' detail with a flat bass response, faster dynamics and. . . .oh dear! Initial impressions are 'a little bit of metallic harshness in the upper reaches of the violins and some sibilance on a few vocal recordings'. I haven't had the courage to re-connect the old A28 for a 'side-by-side' - I might prefer it. Aargh!

All is now well run-in (80+ hours). The new niggles seem to have, at least partially, gone away. Are my ears acclimatising or can it be sufficient 'cooking' of the equipment? Or both!

I wonder whether I should change the QED for something sweeter - DNM Reson or Chord Odyssey perhaps. I can't afford to ditch the B&Ws for Harbeth HL Compact 7s. Be ruthless!
Yours in hope,
Philip Darwall-Smith.

In a round about way, you've ended up with a really nice system that shouldn't require radical surgery to give of its best. Essentially you've got two fairly smooth and warm sounding sources in the shape of your Linn turntable and Arcam CD player, a very open and neutral amplifier and some fine speakers with a slightly bright metal dome tweeter. This is where the problems are arising, but the good news is that there are many worse HF units than those fitted to

your B&Ws, so with a bit of judicious tuning you should be able to smooth things out nicely.

First, get both sources as smooth as you can. This means that - in the case of the Linn Axis - you need a smoother cartridge. Buy a Dynavector DV10X4 (or ideally a DV20X-H). Not only will it give a much nicer tone but you'll get bags more musicality, too. Linn has just released a new tone arm lead too, reputed to give a far fuller tone. This would also be a fine mod.

Place both the Axis and your CD23T on Audiophile Furniture Base SP-01 sub-tables, along with your amplifier if possible. These will really smooth things out, giving a much bigger, fuller and more musical sound.

Next, turn your focus to your interconnects. Use LFD Spirolink III between the CD player and amp. This is the most neutral, self-effacing cable I've come across. Then sell your Monster Cable - which is perfectly good stuff, just a little forward - and get the aforementioned DNM Reson speaker cable.

Go through your entire system with Kontak, cleaning every last connection including your mains plugs, fuses and - if you're aware of the obvious safety and warranty considerations - the internal fuses inside your amp and CD player. Then run a Densen DeMagic 'demagnetiser' through it. This done, you'll be amazed how different your system can sound. It will be far sweeter yet more musically engaging. The only trouble is that with all this 'hands on' activity, you'll probably have caught the upgrade bug again. **DP**

WHICH WIRE WORKS?

Greetings O Knowledgeable Ones.

Help, help, help! My current system consists of a Michell GyroDec SE and Gyropower, running into an Exposure Pre 21 and 18 power amps via a Trichord Dino phono stage. On the digital side I have a Tag McLaren CDT20 feeding a DAC20. The whole lot sings through a pair of Monitor Audio 20SEs.

My first quandary is in relation to the analogue side of my set up. In the heat of the moment recently I purchased a Kontrapunkt B, to hook onto my Incognito rewired Rega RB300. While I am amazed by the sound quality when the ruby hits the groove, I am pretty sure that this is not the best of places to sit the Kontrapunkt, thus I am

not hearing what it really can do. So admittedly an upgrade is called for and this is where my problem lies. Should I go for a full Origin Live modification to my RB300 and can I keep the Incognito wiring if so (otherwise it will be a complete waste of £130), or do I sell the RB300 and purchase an SME IV which will probably provoke a dose of turntable 'upgraditis'?

My next question is in regards to CD replay. Is the DAC20 a bit long in the tooth now compared with current 24bit upsampling units. Will I notice a significant leap in performance if I replace my current converter with one of the newer fashionable models?

I suppose the logical step might be to go for something along the lines of Tag McLaren's DPA32. However, I don't think I could give up my Exposure units just yet.

Finally, while I still have your attention, what is in your opinion the best way of joining the Dino to the pre-amp? Would Nordost's Blue Heaven suit?

Thanks

Andrew Omotosho
London

Greetings - seeker of wisdom and truth! No, don't junk your RB300. Get the Origin Live mod. and keep the wiring. I'm sure Mark Baker at Origin Live is prepared to admit that 'other Rega arm wiring types are also available' and can live with it! The new counterweight stub will bring untold joys to you and your Kontrapunkt B, and get you chomping at the bit for more. To wit, I'd forget about lavishing all that cash on a new SME and give your GyroDec the DC motor mod, which will do to it what the OL tweak did to your arm - bring oodles more depth, power and grip.

Next, think about the new Dino power supply mod. which I haven't had time to review fully yet, but is reputed to - you've guessed it - do to the Dino what the DC motor does to the Gyro. Hook it up with LFD Spirolink III.

As for upsamplers, I really have to say how underwhelmed I am with what I've heard so far. Yes, there is a difference and yes, you could say a marginal improvement, but to my ears at least it's a profoundly small one considering the funds you have to part with. Frankly, putting your CDT20 on a Townsend Selsmic Sink will reap greater rewards at a frac-

tion of the price.

I'd save the rest of the money, and put it towards a serious DVD-Audio/SACD player in around six months to a year from now. There are some darn good ones around at the moment (Marantz DVD-12, Denon DVD-A1, etc) but I'd still hold fire until the market's settled down a bit before I make a purchase.

The main thing we're all holding our breath for (at the time of writing) is the universal fitment of a full 24/192 digital output to these players. Once this arrives you can go ahead and buy with confidence, knowing you can upgrade at a later with an external convertor if need be. High resolution 24bit digital audio is far better than upsampled 16bit, but still not quite there yet. **DP**

DAB-LING HERE AND THERE

After reading Simon's leader page on DAB, I felt that I had to put finger to keyboard (still doesn't sound as good as pen to paper, but that's progress I suppose!) to comment.

I do think that Simon is living in a bit of a virtual reality world with analogue radio. Now before people start jumping around about my comments, let me first state that I personally choose vinyl replay over CD any day of the week. The difference in sound quality, in my opinion, is marked - and vinyl is cheaper than CD in the shops anyway!

I have only ever used radio to listen to live sport. If I want to listen to music, I want to listen to what I want, when I want - and on vinyl. And if I haven't got it, I'll go and find it!

With music on the radio, you never get that personal choice - just some inane chattering "personality", who prefers his own voice to playing records.

I recently acquired a Sony D777ES (a DAB, FM and MW machine), solely for the additional Radio 5 Live sports channel. You probably know that 5 Live was previously only available on medium wave and let me tell you that DAB sounds fantastic compared to that! I can even listen to test match cricket (previously on long wave only!!) in crystal clear,

quality sound. I can also say that I have never listened to FM or MW for longer than checking that they worked on the Sony, except when friends want to compare FM to DAB. I have even discovered the delights of Planet Rock - another digital only station, which does get "tuned in" on a frequent basis (at least once a day - even if over my Cornflakes!). Now, I will admit that DAB is probably not as good as a top quality FM tuner, but it really depends on your use of radio as a medium, I would suggest.

Surely I am not alone out here?

DAB is useful for a huge number of scenarios and those who are beginning to mourn the loss of their Troughlines - go and get a decent turntable - it will pale into memory rather quickly I would suggest!

Best regards

Alex Furneaux

Hi Alex. I think the main point here is that you don't primarily use the radio for listening to music! Not that I'm one to preach the classical gospel by any means, but if perhaps you listened to BBC Radio 3 regularly then you'd think differently. You certainly don't get an "inane chattering personality" announcing the latest Wagner production live from the Met - God forbid! I actually find that programs such as the station's much heralded Late Junction offer a brilliant variety of decent music from pretty much across the board that seem to press all the right buttons. I

As a hi-fi magazine concerned with music and its reproduction, I was trying to put across in my editorial comment that for BBC Radio 3 to drop their bitrate from 196kbps to 128kbps is kind of defeating one of the objects of the station, the maintenance of quality in the broadest sense, and does absolutely no favours for digital radio. It's pretty obvious that appealing to discriminating listeners isn't at the top of the agenda for the powers that be. After all, the majority of radio listening is in short stints in the car or shower, as opposed to languorously in the front room - or in bed! **SP**



DAB may not be the future of radio for audiophiles

HARD



Hard disk drive-based CD recorders are very much the machines of the moment. In the CDR-HD1300, Yamaha has one of the very best, says David Price.

Flick open the CDR-HD1300's instruction manual and you'll see that one of the lead sections is entitled, "Copying from a CD onto the HDD". These very words will doubtless send shivers of fear through every self-respecting music industry executive, for it is products like this that are dramatically re-shaping the market for recorded music.

Global music sales are in deep decline (down from \$37 billion in 2000 to \$33.6 billion in 2001), but music consumption is rising strongly (6 billion tracks consumed per month in 1996, 9.3 billion in 2001). Machines like the Yamaha have been conceived as a direct result of this information. People love CD as a music carrier - it's become the digital descendent of the Compact Cassette - it's just that they don't want to pay for them anymore, unless they're of the 'ten a penny' CD-R variety of course.

The CDR-HD1300 is the pinnacle of the CD recording breed. It has a large 80GB hard drive (that can be changed for an even larger one, should the need arise), onto which music CDs are 'ripped' at ten times normal speed via the built-in CD drive. You can then edit them,

move or delete them to your heart's content and then burn them to either CD-R or CD-RW via that same CD drive at eight or four speed respectively. Neat, as the Americans would say.

Moreover, the Yamaha functions as a fully functioning digital recorder that records direct to its HDD (Hard Disk Drive) from one of two digital inputs (optical or coaxial) or one analogue input via its internal 24bit analogue-to-digital converter. Full sampling rate conversion is offered via the digital inputs, recording from 32, 44.1, 48 and - interestingly - 96kHz. Up to 999 albums with up to 99 songs in each can be recorded, until its 80GB hard drive has swallowed some 120 hours of music at 16bit, 44.1kHz resolution. Oh, and it also plays conventional CDs through its 24bit DAC too...

Pulling it out of the box, this Yamaha feels quite different to other HD-based recorders I've tried. At 435x116x415mm, and weighing 8kg, it feels solid as a piece of 'pro' recording gear. Aside from a rather baffling strip of pulsating blue and orange light under the fluorescent yellow-orange display, it's a brilliantly fuss-free design too - no funny buttons, legends and lights as per Onkyo's MusicBank here. The

transport controls are neatly positioned on the right, while two buttons labeled HDD and CDR let you switch between the two drives. This system is elegantly simple, but it's a pity you can't open the CD drive while the HDD is playing. To copy a music CD, it's simply a case of inserting one, pressing the COPY button, stabbing PLAY and you're off - seven minutes later it's committed the entire contents to its internal drive.

This done, you can edit the recording at great length - individual tracks can be combined, split, faded in/out, moved, erased and more. Editing is possible from your PC via the rear panel RS232C port and the free Title Editor software on the Yamaha website, which comes as a 111kb ZIP file. It's also possible to compile playlists called 'Albums' by selecting songs on the hard disk and marking them with bookmarks - up to 999 Albums, each with up to 99 songs can be stored. If you have a monitor, then all this can be followed on the OSD (On Screen Display) via the rear panel S-Video or video connectors - clever, but it's a shame there's no RGB SCART jack.

As with DAT or MiniDisc machines the Serial Copyright Management System is used, but in

STUFF

an interesting way. Yamaha's Digital Move system lets you transfer copy-protected data from the hard disk to CD-R, but then erases it from the hard disk automatically. Not everyone will like this - myself included - but it has to be said that it does follow the true spirit of SCMS! I think this is more about pleasing lawyers than a genuine attempt at 'rights management', because if you first copy the music CD on a PC and then rip it to the Yamaha's HDD then you can keep it there forever, as PC CD authoring packages don't write the SCMS flag to the first copy.

How then does it sound? As CD player, the Yamaha is uncannily similar to the company's own late nineties budget silver disc spinners like the old £230 CDX-590. It's smooth and svelte with bell-like clarity, excellent low level detailing, sharply drawn stereo images, good strong bass and crisp and open treble. Rhythmically it's probably a little better in fact,

AUDIO MASTER QUALITY RECORDING

Yamaha's AMQR system is claimed to be exclusive technology that gives better quality CD burns. It works by reducing the fragmentation of recorded data increasing the linear recording velocity from 1.2m/s to 1.4m/s. In this way, the disc has larger pits and lands (the space between pits) burned onto it, which are more easily readable by other players and cause less jitter. It also automatically selects 4x recording, which Yamaha engineers believe to be "optimum". This tallies with my findings that "slowest is best". The result is that the transport (and ultimately the DAC) of the playback machine has to work less hard, making for smoother sound. When Audio Master Quality Recording mode is used, several minutes of disc recording time is lost - 74 minute discs can record 63 minutes while 79 minute discs give just 68 minutes.

with a decently musical and fluid sound that lets the likes of Roxy Music's 'Angel Eyes' bounce along with aplomb. Despite the fact that a computer CD-ROM drive is used, there's certainly no sense that this product is compromised.

Hard disk copies aren't quite identical to the original source CDs. Just as Onkyo's MusicBank

introduces a small amount of treble splash and fizz, so the Yamaha does too. When listening from HDD you're aware of a slight fuzziness to hi-hat cymbals, along with a subtle diminution of treble 'air' and 'space'. Bass is also subtly lightened too, meaning that Kraftwerk's 'Metropolis' lacked the grunt of the CD drive. In other respects, there was little difference between the two sources, the midband being practically identical. The Yamaha didn't fall into the trap, like other HDD recorders, of flattening depth perspectives. CD copies made from the HDD were excellent, with a slight softening and smoothing effect which complemented the hard drive's tendency to do the opposite. The result was a very respectable sounding copy with just a scintilla of low level detail and

focus missing compared to the original music CD.

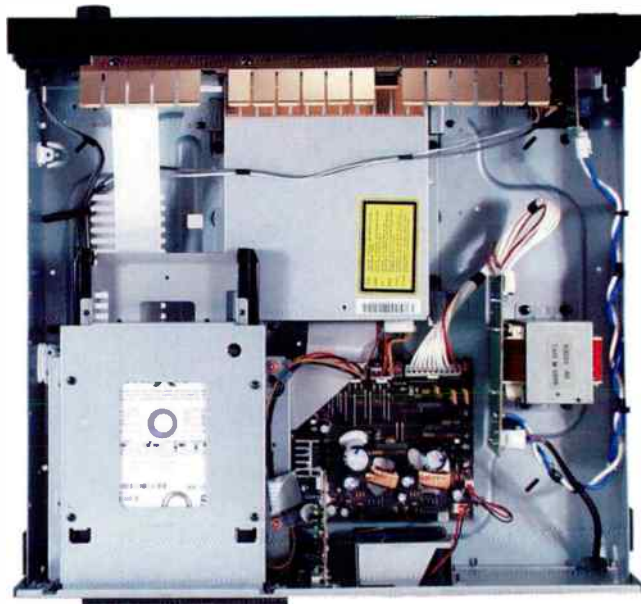
An excellent product, then - I think this is the most mature and evolved hard disk recorder I've yet encountered. I'd like to have seen a PC editing software CD-ROM supplied, along with a USB interface instead of an RS232 port, the deletion of Yamaha's Digital Move system (fat chance!) and most importantly the ability to go online and get artist and track titles for the hard drive automatically. These quibbles aside, it's a superb effort.

Yamaha CDR-HD1300 £599.95

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World Verdict 
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HIGH RESOLUTION SOLUTION

The music business wants DVD-Audio to succeed. In the first of a two-part feature on this new high resolution disc, Hi-Fi World's Simon Pope reports from a recent DVD-A Seminar held in London.

London traffic is bad any time of the day. It's much worse when it rains - and when it rains on a Friday it moves into chaos. How much more bearable it might have been with full surround-sound in the car I thought, as I crawled four miles in fifty minutes on my way to Olympic Studios in Barnes, South West London, to hear the latest news on DVD-Audio, a potential successor to CD.

When I say the "latest" news I was expecting a re-run of the speeches and seminars I'd heard in the past, with maybe the bonus of a few more new titles at inflated prices to tempt (or enrage) a few of the press and an even smaller section of the public. Admittedly the weather didn't help my mood, but neither did

past experience.

Once parked up (another fifteen minutes) I entered - sodden and late - the upstairs studio, to be greeted by at least 25 pieces of current DVD-A hardware to my right and a wall of 250 or so DVD-A titles ahead of me - a sobering reminder that the discs do exist. To the left on a long table sat an important looking array of software and hardware experts, plus record company executives, many from the US. The turnout was impressive...

NEXT PLEASE

Warner music were the first major record company to see the viability of DVD-A and released a good number of varied titles over a year ago. Other smaller companies have also released selected titles and a

good number of classical discs are available, but until recently the only Rock or Pop titles available were by no means mainstream. Now, however, the DVD-A catalogue has expanded to over four hundred titles, so things are changing.

All the same, David Dorn, Senior Vice President of Warner's Media division stood up to pledge further allegiance to the cause and to outline their plan for the future. We were told how music consumption had increased but the revenue from recorded music sales had slumped. The music business is convinced people are listening to more music - it's just that they don't want to pay for it! Warners, and others, hope that the emergence of a new music carrier format will put a stop to this trend and get people back into the

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Of the four hundred DVD-A discs available there were over two hundred on show

high street shops. They see DVD-A as having the potential to achieve this.

Whether DVD can boost music sales the way it has boosted film sales remains to be seen, but there's no doubting the company's commitment to the format. Latest releases from Warner deliberately include titles that will attract not just older music lovers or audiophiles, but future buyers of discs - the younger generation. Titles from bands such as Linkin Park, Bjork, Missy Elliot and REM are now available which could help whip up interest.

Whilst relatively few people will initially be able to play DVD-A discs to their full potential, there are a reported 80million DVD video players being used around the world, and this doesn't include computer DVD ROM drives, Xbox or Playstation 2 units! All DVD-A discs would be playable on these machines in both stereo or multi-channel, if only in CD quality. As DVD players replace the CD players in the home - which is happening at the lower end of the market where real market penetration occurs - then DVD-A has an enormous platform on which to develop - the largest of a new format ever.

That's all well and good, but how will they get the public to buy into DVD-A if the discs remain at the prices they are now (£16-£20 in the UK)? This is where it gets interesting. All credit to Warners for realising the current retail price of the discs is crippling sales. From now on, Warner told us, those new titles selected for DVD-A release will be launched coincidentally with the CD at the same price as the CD. On the cover

of these DVD-A discs will be a sticker stating that the discs will play on all DVD players, including the aforementioned gaming machines, therefore targeting DVD video owners with a DVD-A disc. Whilst these discs will not play on a CD player in a hi-fi system, which may be a drawback to some, the likelihood of bonus material may well swing a floating buyer.

ARTISTIC INTEGRITY

Due to the vast storage capability of a DVD-A disc, material such as video footage, lyric sheets and interviews can all be added, making it an attractive interactive experience. Robin Hurley of Rhino Records (a subsidiary of Warner) emphasised this aspect of the format as one way of tempting buyers by giving them something they can't get with their current CD - such as the video footage we were shown of a presumably stoned Neil Young grumbling monosyllables in a farm field!

To the music companies the most important aspect of any new format in these times of rampant piracy is the matter of copy protection. With the vast proliferation of CD burners, both artist and record company want to ensure the same can't happen with DVD-A as happened with CD. Here the DVD Forum had Meridian's Bob Stuart to throw a few facts around.

Firstly, the 'dreaded' watermarking that audiophiles fear will ruin any potential sound quality improvement is actually discretionary - it needn't be there if the artist or record company don't want it. Copyright encryption is also optional

but it is accurate and has "zero impact on sound quality" we were told. The encryption process basically stops pirated discs from being played on a DVD-Audio player, so the pirated discs can go into the usual duplication process of mastering and mass production, but they will be rejected by the player, which will have to be CPPM (encryption) compliant.

HARD WARING

So, finally all seems in place for the development of the format itself, but what of those who want to play DVD-Audio discs to their full potential (two channels of 24bit/192kHz or six channels of 24bit/96kHz music)? A DVD-Video-only device will play a DVD-A disc only in surround-sound (5 channels and subwoofer) or two channels of 16bit/44.1kHz (i.e. CD quality). If you want to get the best from a DVD-A disc you need a dedicated player with the compatible mechanism and digital to analogue conversion.

There are currently thirty models of DVD-A player in the UK, ranging from specialist units from Meridian to a portable compatible DVD player from Panasonic! Whilst these are more expensive than your average DVD-Video player you can get hold of one for around £250 and Pioneer have a "universal" player - reviewed in this issue - which will also read SACD discs for around £400. As time goes on, so prices will drop - and there are a good number of compatible players waiting for launch date. Watch out for the first DVD-A player on your supermarket shelves sooner than you think!

We were also told a number of car manufacturer are signed up or interested in including DVD-A compatibility in their vehicles.

It's taken a long enough for the record industry to see the full potential of DVD-A. It was once viewed as too specialist for general use. Now there's no doubting that DVD-A has great potential. A list of over four hundred software titles and thirty players is a good start for a medium and there's much more to come - crucially at lower prices.

Next month David Price continues our DVD-A feature, interviewing key industry figures and discussing the format in detail.

PICTURE THIS



With the advent of Digital Versatile Disc, it's getting hard to imagine a world without video. David Price listens in to Denon's entry level DVD-900.

Denon doesn't make budget CD separates any more. Such is the speed the market has moved that the company once famous for its eighties 'budget audio-ophile' designs no longer has a conventional silver disc spinner on its books. Strange isn't it? I for one remember the likes of the DCD-820 cleaning up in the early nineties £250 price point.

Nowadays, if you want a Denon in a full-width box that plays audio CDs, it's a DVD - not a CD - that you must buy. The 900 model here is the company's cheapest to date at just £250, but is still claimed to be serious about both audio and video. To wit, it has 24-bit/192kHz high resolution audio DACs, although it is a DVD video player, so it doesn't actually play DVD-A discs. It will, however, play the older type of 24/96 super (video) discs (if you can find any) and olde worlde 16bit CDs - plus DVD videos of course. DVD-R, MP3 CD and CD-R/RW playback is also provided.

Whereas budget Denon CD players of yesteryear were substantial affairs, the DVD-900 is a slight, slim-line design (at just 75mm high) that packs more than its fair share of air inside. Still, what there is of it is nicely finished. The brushed

aluminium fascia (available in a choice of black or gold) looks good and the buttons are tactile. Okay, so it's not a Denon DVD-A1, but nor is it a tacky supermarket special either.

Round the back you get the bare minimum of necessary socketry - including stereo analogue outputs via RCA phonos, optical and coaxial digital outputs, plus RGB on SCART, as well as Composite and S-Video video outputs.

It's important to note that the digital audio output can output pure PCM at up to 24/96 resolution. This is a nice surprise to find on a budget product. It also outputs Dolby AC3 and DTS, although alas there is no DTS decoding on board.

As DVD spinners go, this Denon is very easy to use. The On Screen Display (should you choose to use it with a telly) is clear and concise, and in conjunction with the front panel mounted, four-arrow keypad (duplicated on the remote control) you can scroll around its various set-up and cueing options easily. The usual playback modes (Resume Play, Slow Play, Repeat Play (A-B, Chapter, Track, Disc), Random Play and Program Play) are all there. The only other thing of note is an SRS TruSurround button, which gives enhanced stereo surround from DVDs encoded with two-channel stereo soundtracks.

Connected to my Cyrus 7/PSX-R/Mission 782 reference system, the Denon made nice enough noises playing 16/44 audio CDs. It's an interesting point that a high quality £250 DVD player such as this can make a sound that's easier on the ear than many purpose designed CD separates of ten years back. Think, for example, of Marantz's long-lost CD50 - its 16bit, four times oversampling chipset was musical alright, but could be quite strident. Denon's DVD-900 by contrast is smooth, smooth, smooth. In fact, it's bland. Fun Lovin' Criminals' 'King of New York' showed its bass to be warm - almost sumptuously so - but loose. Bass notes stop and start in a decently rhythmic fashion, but it's hardly razor sharp stuff. The Denon seems to be able to keep the momentum of the song going, but hardly thrills you with the energy and articulation of its low frequencies. Contrast this to NAD's £200 C521i (admittedly not a direct rival, as it isn't a DVD player) which is positively propulsive, and you realise it is possible to get true musicality at a beer budget price.

Still, moving up the frequency band, the Denon's midrange seems a tad crisper. Again, it's a little on the languid side as Nirvana's 'Come As You Are' proved. That famous lead guitar refrain was commanding as ever, but there was a slight lack of



urgency to it, as if the band was slacking. Still, it was nicely placed in the stereo soundstage, just a little ahead of the plane of the speakers, with the studio acoustic appearing to drop back quite some way. Although it hardly had the soundstaging of a high-end purpose-built CD spinner, it made a good stab at placing instruments in space, both left-to-right and front-to-back.

Also quite impressive was the Denon's tonality - it was less grey than some dedicated hi-fi players. There was a decent amount of grain and texture to Kurt Cobain's plaintive vocals.

Whereas the midband was a nice

surprise, the treble rather let the side down. Herbie Hancock's 'The Prisoner' showed it lacking in bite or definition. Whereas NAD's C5211 could get right into the hi-hat sound on this beautifully recorded BlueNote CD, the Denon always sounded rather perfunctory - uninterested in conveying the instrument's sheen and shimmer. On a more general scale, this resulted in a rather unatmospheric performance, the player appearing to strip recordings of their air and space.

This, combined with the warm, loose bass performance, goes a long way to explain the machines 'over smooth' and rhythmically ponderous sound.

If Denon's DVD-900 is anything to go by, then audiophiles should still go for a dedicated CD player, such as the aforementioned NAD, if sound is the priority. The Denon doesn't sound bad - far from it - it's just that it consummately fails to involve the listener thanks to its loose bass, relatively uninspiring dynamics and slightly 'closed in' treble.

For hi-fi buyers then, I would not recommend the DVD-900. But if you're after something that makes a good job of video discs then it really starts to shine. Its exceptional picture (at the price) makes it likely to be a success - it's just not a budget audiophile blockbuster like Denons of yore used to be.

Denon DVD-900 £249.95

Tel: +44 (0)1234 741 200

www.denon.co.uk

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

First and foremost, this DVD-Video player is incompatible with new DVD-A media. As such, the use of "192kHz/24bit DACs" as declared on its fascia is neither here nor there as, in practice, the maximum sample rate will be derived from 96kHz/24bit DVD-V music software. With 44.1kHz (CD) and 48kHz (DVD-V) media, the DVD-900 achieves a low 0.0009% distortion through the midrange at -6dBFs but this increases to a poorer 0.3% at -60dBFs and 0.015% at 20kHz/-6dBFs where the rejection of digital 'images' is just 54.5dB. Distortion increases still further with the extended HF output of 96kHz DVD-V media, reaching 0.04% at 40kHz. The rejection of digital images is also reduced to just 30dB with 96kHz DVD-V.

The latter is a function of the digital filter, which fortunately exerts

little influence over the player's gentle HF roll-off (-0.4dB @ 20kHz with CD). Provided the DVD-900 is not set to downsample 96kHz DVD-V software to 48kHz, its response extends to -0.15dB at 40kHz and -0.45dB at 44kHz. In any event, low-level linearity is affected by the relatively poor (sub-16bit) 94.5dB A-wtd S/N ratio, leading to errors of +/-1dB at -90dBFs. Channel separation is good at >105dB across the audioband but the channel balance, by contrast, is less impressive at ~0.15dB.

Jitter is well controlled at just 230psec, although the very low-rate artefacts (clustered about the central peak in Graph 2) could do with tidying-up. The remainder of the jitter (marked in red) is principally data-induced in origin and low enough to exert no subjective impact. Noise and increased HF

distortion are its key limitations, not jitter. Overall, the DVD-900 is a marked improvement on budget DVD players from a season or two back, but its performance is readily exceeded by costlier machines. **PM**

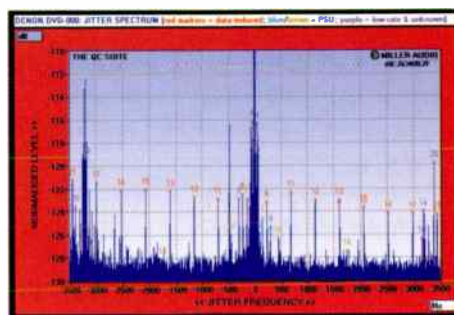
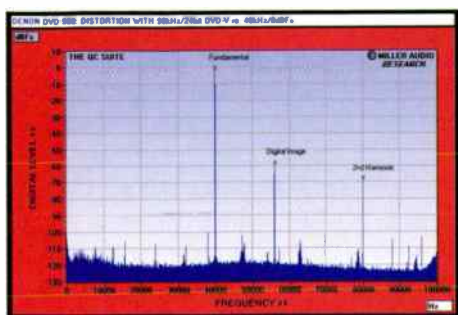
Frequency Response -
0.1dB (20Hz) to -0.35dB 20kHz)

Distortion	Left	Right
-6dBFs	0.0009%	0.001%
-30dBFs	0.009%	0.012%
-60dBFs	0.31%	0.28%
-90dBFs	5.6%	11.5%

Separation	Left	Right
1kHz	105dB	104dB
20kHz	107dB	108dB

Noise (IEC A)	Left	Right
	94.2dB	94.6dB

Output	Left	Right
	2.03V	2.00V



World Verdict

A fine DVD video player but, unsurprisingly perhaps, its audio capabilities are well behind purpose-built CD players at the price.

ON THE

The Cyrus 7 was one of the best integrated amps of the past two years. Now comes its successor, the Cyrus 8. It has a lot to live up to - so will it, asks Simon Pope?



As has been mentioned before in these very pages, the Cyrus design philosophy was perhaps way ahead of its time when the original plastic shoebox Cyrus I was launched way back in 1981. Here was a highly original looking, 'midi' sized integrated amp with audiophile ambitions before the phrase 'lifestyle' was even a twinkling in a marketing director's eyes. The appeal of it was undeniable, punters liked the different look and size and the pundits liked the sound.

Every bit of Cyrus Electronics since has kept the dimensions of that first hit, it's only the casework material and insides that have changed. There was also the PSX optional external power supply that elevated the electronics into the super league without needing a remortgage for the privilege - ex-retailers have told me, incidentally that this was one of the easiest sells in the business.

Whilst the amplifiers after the 1 and 2 continued the overall theme, it's perhaps true to say that the products didn't quite live up to the standards of the predecessors. This all changed with the launch of the £500 Cyrus 5 and £700 Cyrus 7. Both of these included some advanced software programming and had a smooth and controlled sound.

The Cyrus 7 with PSX-R could rival the sound of products twice the price. It was a reviewers dream - a good, mid-price sector reference product that not only did the job sonically but for once was small and portable - a veritable miracle!

All good things come to an end though, and as in-house design teams research and develop, so do products and now we have the launch of the brand new, unsurprisingly named Cyrus 8 priced, yet again un-surprisingly at £800 (it doesn't take Sherlock Holmes to see a pattern here!).

The 7 is a tough one to top. Whilst by no means perfect it nevertheless delivered an incredibly effortless yet powerful and controlled sound from its humble dimensions. The apparent brief for the 8 was to take the basic formula of the Cyrus 7 further and create more output power, higher output current and better power supply rejection. The overall control system has apparently been improved, too.

The Cyrus 8 delivers 70W per channel into 8ohms (an improvement of 10W on its predecessor) which is the most power ever squeezed from the classic chassis. Many of the improvements have apparently been possible due to new higher efficiency power amp circuitry, new "thermal management" techniques and a higher current output stage.

The new amp also features a traditionally designed power supply with an "oversize" (but obviously not that big!) 330VA power transformer and extra-larger audiophile electrolytic reservoir caps. Higher grade audiophile components have been chosen for improved transparency of sound.

Like its predecessor, there's a lot going on inside the Cyrus 8, and although it has 'plug and play' simplicity about it, it also has

advanced engineering in the shape of both circuit design and electronic system switching and control. On the technical side, dual charge pumps and linear post-regulators are used in an attempt to increase the voltage and stabilise the power supply for the voltage amplifier stage. This apparently creates extra headroom which swings the current amplifier further towards its rails resulting in the improved power output. Cyrus's designers have effectively doubled the peak current capability of the power amp section and halved its output impedance to result in a greater transfer of energy from the power supply into tough 'speaker loads.

There's also been a concerted effort to improve the amplifier's performance with the external PSX-R DC power supply. In the Cyrus 8 the PSX-R is applied solely and directly to the pre-amp stage through a solid state switch. The internal power supply is then kept entirely for the power amplifier. This separation of power sources makes the system closer to a true two box pre/power combination. New circuitry has been introduced for "soft" standby switching (a traditional feature in Cyrus's electronics) which aims to make operation more sophisticated and effective.

So, there's a list of 'improvements' as long as your arm but do they have any effect on the sound and is it better than the Cyrus 7? To answer this question I hooked

EIGHT BALL

up the Cyrus 8 to a pair of unforgiving Quad ESL988s, with an Audio Analogue Maestro CD player and Sony's XA-555ES SACD player for sources. I also had our 'reference' Cyrus 7 to hand and a PSX-R power supply for comparing the 'upgraded' versions.

Although thankfully very subtle, the Cyrus 8 does have a different overall sound signature to the 7. Immediately I noticed improved clarity. The Cyrus 7 was always well detailed for the money but at times when compared to more expensive equipment, it could sound a tad muddled in the midrange, but this has been improved. There's a nice feel about the midrange which keeps the 7's excellent fluidity and smoothness but increases the separation of instruments and detail to great effect. With the 8, an SACD of Fauré and Ravel Piano Trios played by the Florestan Trio on the Hyperion label had a more realistic and insightful sound when compared to with the 7. Details such as the sound of the bow on the cello's strings were heightened further, creating a life-like, visceral sound to the playing. The

piano, too was brought more to life with a slightly less synthetic sound. Other improved traits were also discernable, such as an extension of the depth of field.

One of the appealing factors of the Cyrus 7 was its ability to relay the delicacy and musicality of chamber music, yet also provide solid and controlled reproduction of rock and dance music. The 8 has not lost any of this. Thrashing out the Queens Of The Stoneage's superb 'No One Knows' saw the Cyrus rocking with the best of them. However, it may not appeal to out and out headbangers as it does it with an amount of control and smoothness that manages to take nothing away from the involvement, speed or impact, but rounds off the rough edges, resulting in what I feel is a highly listenable and ultimately non-fatiguing sound.

Linking up the easily connected 'plug 'n' play' PSX-R resulted in a great value and easy upgrade. Your extra £350 buys you added control and smoothness with increased detail and insight - this is one company's power supply that actually justifies

the outlay (not all of them do). It improves the sound of the Cyrus 8 (or 7 for that matter) to the performance of something twice the price - for a third of it! Bass is tighter and the treble sweeter and the midrange has increased transparency. It also works equally effectively with all types of music and recordings.

So, it's thumbs up all round for the latest Cyrus integrated amplifier. It's a worthy successor that retains the sonic appeal of the 7 but adds a few more audiophile traits. The only slight downside that remains lies with those who want more pound for pound clout and power to the sound. You don't always get the ultimate slam that other amps (albeit more expensive) can deliver. On the flipside, though, they don't have the endearing 'big boy in a little box' appeal of the Cyrus 8. Good stuff, indeed.

Cyrus 8 £800

Cyrus Electronics Ltd.
Tel: +44 (0) 1480 435577
www.cyrusaudio.com

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

For such a small package the Cyrus 8 produces a surprising amount of power, our measurements showing no less than 78W into 8ohms, rising to 132W into 4ohms. That's plenty enough for most domestic situations, as it is for most loudspeakers. The PSX-R auxiliary power supply makes no difference to these power figures. Even into a low 4ohm load the Cyrus 8 receives no current boost, measurements show, from the PSX-R.

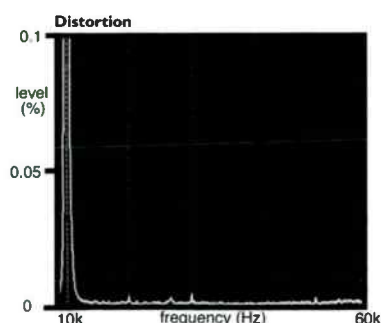
The Cyrus 8 has a frequency response tailored to be suitable for SACD and DVD-A, its -1dB upper limit being 60kHz with a gentle roll off above this frequency to a few dB down at 100kHz. With a lower limit at 4Hz the Cyrus covers subsonics


as well as supersonics.

Always low in distortion, Cyrus amplifiers are noted for their clean, easy delivery and it looks like the new 8 will be no different. It produces a negligible 0.003% in the midband and 0.007% at 10kHz, these figures holding constant at all power levels. The figures deteriorated little into a low 4ohm load, reaching 0.01%, still a very low figure.

With useful input sensitivity and low dc offset the Cyrus 8 measures well in all areas, much like its predecessor. **NK**

Power	78watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	4Hz-60kHz
Separation	52dB
Noise	-102dB
Distortion	0.005%
Sensitivity	270mV
dc offset	11/10mV



World Verdict 
Smooth, detailed and controlled, the Cyrus 8 is one of the best hi-fi products on the market. With the PSX-R it offers superlative performance for a reasonable cost.

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KORA BLIMEY!



For those of you unfamiliar with the name, Kora - known for their top-range Kronos valve monoblocks - they are French valve amps. Dominic Todd starts at the other end with their entry level hybrid integrated, the Explorer.

We all have our hi-fi wish lists. If only we could have the dynamic drive of a

Naim amp combined with the exquisite fluidity of a decent 300B valve amp, for example. It seems that the French company, Kora, has been thinking along the same lines. This is by no means the first time that an amp has combined valves with transistors, yet it's one of the most carefully thought through designs I've seen in some time.

Essentially the pre-amp stage is valve based, designed around the Russian Electro Harmonix 12AT7EH (ECC81). Refreshingly, Kora also suggest a list of alternative valves and the effect they have upon the sound quality. Clearly, here is a company keen to involve their customers.

The power amp stage is a mosfet design. Mosfets are renowned for their efficiency and high power handling capacity, but they can sound a little harsh at times. So the combination of a smooth valve pre-amp and punchy mosfet power amp should give an ideal balance.

It's good to see that Kora haven't just left it at that though. There's a toroidal power supply with separate feeds for pre and power, an Alps

volume pot and 10k of Kendeil output capacitors. The claimed 60 watt power output should be ample compared with most rivals, although the wildcard NAD C370 takes some beating in the oomph stakes with a mighty 120W. Also, Unison Research's Unico hybrid integrated takes some beating with its powerful wattage and superb build for £800.

With the valves thoroughly warmed through, I began by listening to Coldplay's 'High Speed'. My initial impression was that given the colourful characteristics usually associated with both types of amplification involved, the outcome was surprisingly neutral. The bass response was slightly soft, and it certainly didn't have the authority of something like the C370. That having been said, this didn't distract from a balance that was quite beguiling and drew the listener into the music without them really being aware of the hi-fi. I would say that this was brought about by the natural, articulate vocal rendition, and the finely textured guitar.

The Kora certainly responded well to a decent recording, as was shown by Jennifer Warnes's 'The Nightingale'. The sound stage really opened up here, and there was a strong vocal presence from Warnes. The only downside I found to the

vocals was a very slight harshness at higher frequencies. I suspect the mosfets have stamped their sonic trait here.

Other than that, there was much to praise. Whilst the bass lacked a little control with the deepest notes, the upper bass response was strong, and the timing still good. The guitar had the same natural timbre as it had had with Coldplay, and the layers of backing vocals were well structured and easy to identify. Similarly, the piano showed fine definition, giving a sense of realism to the whole track.

The Pet Shop Boys's, Birthday Boy showed similar characteristics. Again there was something of a mid range/bass split. Whilst the bass lacked solidity and was somewhat ponderous, instruments and vocals within the mid-range excelled. The slightly stodgy bass response was a little one-note and spoiled the timing to a degree. Yet the wailing electric guitar had a strong character with plenty of fizz - enough to encourage listeners to join in with their air guitars. Percussion was detailed, with good separation and staging. Vocals too, were well resolved, and finely judged; not too recessed within the mix, yet not too forward sounding either.

Perhaps Copland's Appalachian Spring wasn't the best classical

BARGAIN BULBS

£195



If you've always thought of valve amps as temperamental and expensive beasts, think again. World Audio Design's latest kit is designed with the budget conscious beginner in mind.

The Keci82 was created from a brief that demanded simplicity, ease of build and a super low cost. In order to achieve a reasonable power output we went for a push-pull amplifier.

We chose the ECL82, a triode/output pentode. This tube is readily available and has a good sound. In push-pull mode it delivers 8Watts. Realistically you need a speaker of around 89dB or above. This is possible at a budget price - try the smaller Triangle models, or a Tannoy mX3 or even one of the older Missions like the 773e, or if you like building your own speakers, try the Adire Audio HE10.1, as reviewed in HFW October 2002 issue.

You will see that the front has only a volume control, and it is fed by one pair of phono sockets. A selector and tape/source switch were not used in this amplifier as they are tricky to wire up, and the aim was to make it easy to build. In fact, in many ways the Keci82 would be great powering a second system, using a CD player as a source, and will definitely give you a taster of what valves can offer. Measuring 30cm wide, 23.5cm deep and 11cm height with feet, it is entirely self-enclosed. The valves are visible through the four upper circular vent holes (one directly above each valve). We have kept the look simple with the minimalist front panel holding the volume potentiometer. The two-part chassis is constructed from 1.6mm mild steel with a durable black powder-coat finish. The whole unit is very sturdy, weighing in at 9kgs.

The signal input is in the form of a pair of gold plated RCA phono sockets that sit at the rear of the chassis. The speaker sockets accept 4mm banana plugs as well as bare wire. The mains switch is positioned at the rear of the amplifier, on the right hand corner for easy access. Mains power is received via an IEC lead. The Keci82 is based on a printed circuit board (PCB). The PCB is easy to follow with all component names, locations and orientations shown clearly. The amplifier requires no set up, you just turn it on. The kit will come with comprehensive instructions taking you through the build step-b-step.

SOUND QUALITY BY SIMON POPE

Purity is the key to this amplifier's design and sound. Because there's very little to get in the way of the signal what you get is an exceptionally sweet and simple sound that also has a superbly wholesome roundness to it. A high quality recording of Mahler's Das Lied Von Der Erde on Reference Recordings showed that the Keci82 faithfully reproduced all the depth and space of a full symphonic orchestra without any problems. Violins were smooth and sweet, as was percussion (which virtually sparkled) and the woodwind section was especially impressive, with a spacious and airy sound.



A run through Miles Davis's Kind Of Blue saw the little integrated delivering a detailed and precise sound that highlighted the warmth of Coltrane's tenor sax and the rich, deep sound of the upright bass. Rock and Pop records such as Radiohead's 'Lucky' demonstrated that the valves inside the amp, whilst small, are quite robust sounding, with commendable clout and bass depth for a humble budget 8W valve amp. This is a great introduction to the sonic art of the valve amp and a big upgrade for anybody with a mid-price solid-state amp that wishes to swap over to something more musically engaging, for a price that's virtually as cheap as chips!

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

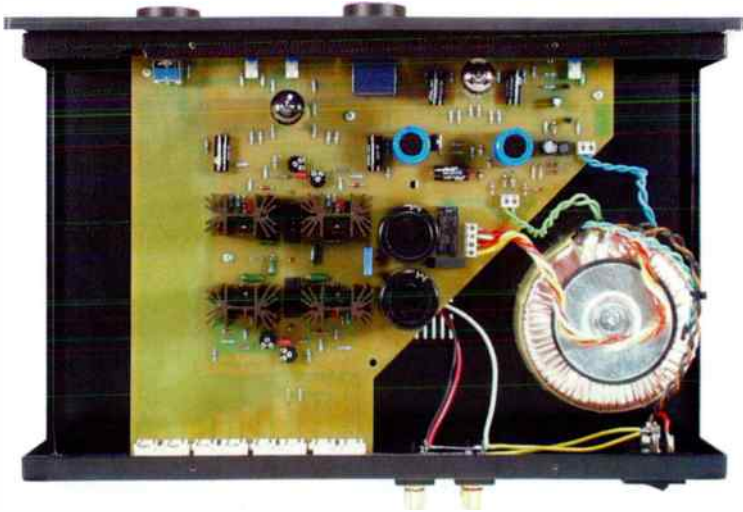
Frequency response	+/-3dB 15Hz - 75kHz
power output	8 watts into an 8 ohm load
sensitivity	850mV (suitable for CD)
hum	0.5mV

**The Keci82 amplifier kit is available from World Audio Design
Tel/fax: 00 44 (0) 1908 218836 or order on-line at
www.worldaudiodesign.co.uk**

**Keci82 amplifier kit (UK price) £195.00
(inc. vat & carriage)**

**Keci82 amplifier kit (EU price) £195.00
(inc. vat, exc. carriage)**

**Keci82 amplifier kit (Overseas price) £170.00
(exc. carriage)**



choice to display the Explorer's virtues. Those familiar with the piece will know the swift dynamic changes within the music, and these were moods that the Kora wasn't always entirely happy with. Starting with the good news, the gentler passages involving the flute were delicately relayed, subtle and moving. Yet when the pace quickened, the Kora simply wasn't strident enough. The brass lacked sufficient rasp, and deeper notes from the wind section could 'bloom' somewhat. In short, it just didn't seem terribly enthusiastic, softening the dynamics rather than driving them through. To add salt to

the wound, there was some grain with high frequency string notes. All in all then, I found my attention wandering, only to be engaged again during the more pastoral sections.

Just as the Explorers internals are something of a mixed bag, so are its sonic characteristics. By and large the mixture of valve and mosfet is successful. Certainly with acoustic and smaller scale music, the Kora can sound fluid and beguiling in the manner of the best valve amp. designs. There's texture and subtle detail to be found in instrumentation and vocalists that would elude many a pure transistor design. Likewise, the

sound staging appeared well judged, without being too flat or upfront.

Yet whilst this amp. shows the positive characteristics of both technologies used, the negative sides of both were unfortunately present too. Higher frequencies from vocal and violin weren't quite as smooth as they could be. Similarly, the bass response was rather too soft for my liking, surprisingly lacking the control that mos-fet designs are often good at. Perhaps a change of valve would tighten things up here - and that is the Kora's real forte. If one doesn't like the sound it's quite straight-forward to tweak it by means other than changing cables.

Those wanting a little more involvement with their hi-fi without going the whole valve hog, could find the Explorer ideal. Given a sympathetic 'speaker partner and a little tweaking, it could prove a rewarding listen. One to put on the demo wish list. However, there's very strong competition.

Kora Explorer £600

Worthing Audio
Tel: +44 (0)1903 212133

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The idea that lots of distortion from solid-state devices is no different from lots of distortion from valves is a dangerous one. Valves become increasingly linear at low levels, unlike transistors, and their harmonic structure is more benign. The ear is more sensitive to patterns than levels and here the Kora amplifier injudiciously ignores the audibly perceptible patterns of solid-state. It produces high amounts of distortion even at low power outputs, around 0.5% at 10kHz/1W, and distortion harmonics are extended.

I would expect the Kora to sound quite obviously a little coarse, and the presence of third-order at high levels will likely make the sound a little sharp too.

Even if the primary aim has been to reduce feedback to improve

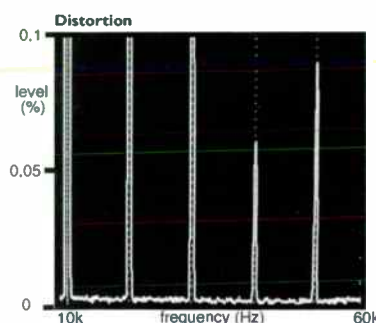
sound-stage depth, this isn't something that solid-state devices, fets or transistors, are very amenable to, unlike valves. There is a trade-off here of course: stage-depth against smoothness. The judgement of such a thing is ultimately subjective.


High levels of distortion apart, the Kora measured well enough, producing 55W into 8ohms and 90W into 4ohms - useful amounts of power. Input sensitivity was high at 260mV and noise low, even though a valve is used in the preamp stages.

An amplifier as radical as this needs to be auditioned with care. It produces large amounts of distortion, even at low signal levels, and the distortion pattern changes strongly with level. I'd expect a not-too-smooth sound, but one that

perhaps conveys atmosphere and ambience. Only listening tests can tell. **NK**

Power	55watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	5Hz-40kHz
Separation	-62dB
Noise	-91dB
Distortion	0.46%
Sensitivity	260mV



World Verdict 
Good detail in vocals and midrange but still a mixed bag. Can be a tad harsh when pushed.



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KECL82 VALVE AMPLIFIER KIT

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

NEW KIT

~~£195~~



KIT6550 VALVE INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER KIT & KAT6550 VALVE POWER AMPLIFIER KIT

~~£595~~

£550



**KIT6550
upgrade kit now
available £130**

£120

These are our new 6550 series amplifiers. A pure class A design providing 40 watts into a 8 ohm load. (available in a 4 ohm version if required) A truly high end design by Andy Grove, using Svetlana 6550Cs in push-pull (any 6550 or KT88 tube can be used with this amp). It features valve rectification (5U4) a choke pi filter power supply and is hard wired. Weighs 19kg with dimensions 390mm(w) x

~~£530~~

£535



**KAT6550
upgrade kit now
available £120**

£110

330mm(d) x 190mm(h) with valves or 220mm(h) with cage. Simon Pope says - "If you favour attack and rhythmic grip, together with a smoothness of sound that's incredibly easy to live with, the KIT6550 could well be the kit amp for you. The 6550 is one for those who like a valve sound married to the attack and clout of a good quality solid state design".

Kel84 VALVE INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER KIT

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

~~£278~~

£255



2A3 PSE INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER KIT

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

~~£550~~

£505



SALE! SALE!

ALL NEW SERIES II MODULAR PRE-AMP KIT

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

Power Supply Unit (PSU-II)	£195.00	£175.00
Pre-amplifier (PRE-II)	£195.00	£175.00
Phono Stage (PHONO-II)	£110.00	£100.00
Moving coil step-up transformer	£77.00	£72.00
Passive pre-amplifier (PAS-II)	£215.00	£195.00



KAT34 VALVE POWER AMPLIFIER KIT & KIT34 VALVE INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER KIT

~~£480~~

£440

NEW KITS

~~£495~~
A pair

£455



KAT34
upgrade kit now
available **£120**

£110



KIT34
upgrade kit now
available **£130**

£120

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

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

300B PSU MONOBLOC KIT

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

For purists, feedback is switchable and the kit is totally hard-wired. For those that require valves we provide the superb Tesla 300Bs, Russian 5U4s and European 6AU6s & ECC82. Simon Pope says, "Not to put too fine a point on it, the sound these monoblocs create is among the finest that can be encountered in hi-fi." Our 300B PSE kit bears an affordable price of £875.00 (UK price) excluding valves. Each monobloc weighs 23kgs., external dimensions with valves: 25cm(w) x 38cm(h) x 22cm(d) per monobloc.

£135

300B PSU
upgrade kit now
available **£130**

~~£875~~
A pair

£790



HD83 VALVE HEADPHONE AMPLIFIER KIT

The HD83 headphone amplifier is a beautifully simple design using Mullard ECL83 valves, a triode and power pentode housed in the same envelope. It works directly from any source, be it CD, tape, tuner etc., or from an amplifier's tape out or pre-amp out sockets. The circuit uses high specification E/I output transformers that will drive any headphone load from 16 ohms to over 300 ohms depending on how the secondaries are wired up. The HD83 is a single-ended design with the power pentode wired up in triode configuration for added sonic purity, and it is as quiet as a mouse. For sound quality Jon Marks says, "The bass is punchy and controlled without becoming artificial, while treble has the crispness of the best solid-state, with the tonal purity, delicacy and speed associated with valves." External dimensions 18cm(w) x 30cm(l) x 8cm (h) weight 4kg.

~~£195~~

£180



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Kit84 Upgrade kit
1 x 100K Alps blue Potentiometer
2 x 1000uF, 16V Black Gate
4 x 100uF, 50V Black Gate
4 x 0.22uF, 400V Jensen paper in oil

£90

£100

Kit6550 Upgrade kit
1 x 100K Alps blue Potentiometer
2 x 2200uF, 16V Black Gate
4 x 1000uF, 100V Black Gate
4 x 0.22uF, 630V Jensen paper in oil

£120

£130

KaT6550 Upgrade kit
2 x 2200uF, 16V Black Gate
4 x 1000uF, 100V Black Gate
4 x 0.22uF, 630V Jensen paper in oil

£110

£120

KitT34 Upgrade kit
1 x 100K Alps blue Potentiometer
2 x 1000uF, 16V Black Gate
4 x 100uF, 50V Black Gate
4 x 0.22uF, 630V Jensen paper in oil

£120

£130

KaT34 Upgrade kit
2 x 1000uF, 16V Black Gate
4 x 100uF, 50V Black Gate
4 x 0.22uF, 630V Jensen paper in oil

£110

£120

300B PSE Upgrade kit
2 x 470uF, 16V Black Gate
4 x 100uF, 100V Black Gate
2 x 0.22uF, 630V Jensen paper in oil
2 x 0.47uF, 630V Jensen paper in oil
4 x 35A Bridge Rectifier KBPC3502
4 x 4700uF, 16V

£135

£150



"KitT34 Upgrade Kit"

BARGAIN BASEMENT

E/I mains transformer 120 lam, Primary:110/120/230/240Vac
Secondary: 4 x 0V- 4Vac, 2A
(suitable for 2A3 heaters for DC), 0V-5Vac, 3A (heater for 5U4 etc)
0V-6.3V, 2A and 370V-0V-370Vac, 250mA **Price - £65.00**

2A3 PSE chassis and base plate (without face plate), slight flaw on paint work, can hold 1 x 120 lam, 2 x 78 lam E/I transformer, 3 x octals and 4 x UX4s, hardwired. **Price - £50.00**

Kit84 chassis and base plate (Without face plate), slight flaw on paint work, can hold 1 x 78 lam, 2 x 29 lam E/I transformers and 6 x B9A. **Price - £40.00**

Audax drive unit, HM130Z0, aerogel, 5 inch mid/base unit
UK price £35.00 each

5687 valves, double triode
UK price £7.00 each

Kit34 chassis - **UK price £50.00 each**

Pls fax/tel
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to order

Mains transformers & Chokes

KIT6550/KAT6550 mains transformers
2 inch stack, 130mm(h)x120mm(w)x135mm(l) drop through fitting with zinc cap. Secondaries: 0V-240V 300mA, 0V-5V, 6A, 3.15V-0V-3.15V, 9A. Suitable for 120V & 240Vac operation

KEL84 mains transformer
1.5 inch stack, 90mm(h)x80mm(w)x95mm(d) drop through fitting with zinc cap. Secondaries: 0V-240V 300mA, 3.15V-0V-3.15V, 5.5A, suitable for 120/240V operation

KIT88/KAT88 mains toroidal transformer
120mm dia. x 60mm(h). Secondaries: 195V-0V-95V, 450mA/0V-27V, 100mA/3.15V-0V-3.15V, 9A, suitable for 120/240V operation

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

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

KEL80 mains toroidal transformer (encapsulated)
130mm dia. x 65mm(h). Secondaries: 195V-0V, 95V, 390mA/0V-27V, 100mA/3.15V-0V-3.15V, 7.5A, suitable for 120/240V operation

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

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

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

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

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

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

Output transformers

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

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

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

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

HD83 E/I single ended output transformer
40mm(w)x50mm(l) x 35mm(h).
Primary-secondary 4k - 4 x 64ohms windings. max o/p-1watts, max current-25mA valves-ECL83 etc

Pre-II E/I driver transformer
80mm(w)x60mm(l) x 65mm(h). 6:1 step down transformer, max current-10mA, valves-6922 etc pre-amp stage
300B PSE E/I parallel single ended output transformer
130mm(h) x 95mm(w) x 115mm(d).
drop through fitting with zinc cap.
Primary 1K5 Secondary 8R, output .

Printed circuit boards

Kit84 Printed Circuit Board 280mm(w) x 135mm(l) x 1.6mm(d).

KIT88/KaT88 Printed Circuit Board 140mm(w) x 310mm(l) x 2.4mm(d)

Kit34 Printed Circuit Board 140mm(w) x 310mm(l) x 2.4mm(d).

Kit80 Printed Circuit Board (a pair) 120mm(w) x 215mm(l) x 2.4mm(d).

HD83 Printed Circuit Board 140mm(w) x 160mm(l) x 1.6mm(d).

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

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

PHONO-II Printed Circuit Board 105mm(w) x 130mm(l) x 1.6mm(d).



Hi-Fi World in Malaysia at Millennium Hi-Fi & Av. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

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Also available are products by World Audio Design, Michell, Trichord, Lowther and ReThm loudspeakers.

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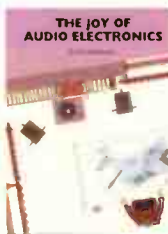
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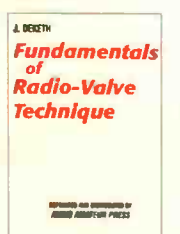
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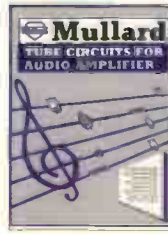
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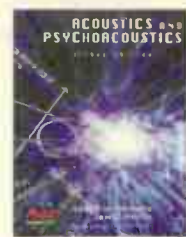
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CLASSIC CUTS

Andy Giles opts for Van Morrison's *Moondance* as a true Classic Cut in preference to the much praised *Astral Weeks*.

Yes, I know *Astral Weeks* is a fine album – I've played it to death over the years, believe me. I dug out my original vinyl copy for this review and it was, as you would imagine, largely unplayable (more's the pity). Yes, when the night is dark and the atmosphere heady with herbal smoke and wine, talk of Van Morrison's greatest moment regularly rests on his debut (post Bang recordings) solo album. But for me, good as *Astral Weeks* was (is) – the 1970 follow-up, *Moondance*, surpasses anything he did before or has done since. And that is a pretty tall order in anybody's book. The man is almost faultless – and *Moondance* is flawless.

It has been said that *Astral Weeks* and *Moondance* are so dissimilar it is hard to believe the same person created them. I couldn't agree more. With *Astral Weeks* having established Van Morrison as a major figure in a burgeoning world of more serious musicians and as a truly exceptional performer, he took his time over putting together its successor.

Another collection in a comparable style, regardless of its merit, was guaranteed to be criticised by a rapacious press – second albums to an adjudged masterpiece always are. Aware of this and, even then, being highly distrustful and irritated by the likes of *Rolling Stone* magazine (I know, I was a contributor in 1969) he devised an album which succeeded absolutely in making comparisons unfeasible.

Brilliant as it is, *Astral Weeks* is dense, often inexplicable, makeshift, impulsive, and in parts untried. I've always heard an unqualified (though

justified) sugary Irishness in some of the songs but there is no real overall thematic quality. *Moondance*, on the other hand, is almost in your face from the opening track, wholly transparent, comprehensible, understandable, tidy, structured and clearly influenced by Morrison's musical preferences and roots.

Looked at closer, nearly every characteristic of *Moondance*, from the compositions to the playing, manifest Morrison's strong wish to make a new album in the proper sense of the word and to, in a way, distance himself from *Astral Weeks*. *Moondance* is very much nearer to blues, soul (Van Morrison could always sing soul), arguably jazz and certainly the black rhythm and blues of the Chess, Stax and Atlantic recordings of the time.

The other striking difference between the two albums is based around Morrison's own confidence as a studio artist. Following such a tour de force as *Astral Weeks*, he had little need to prove himself. His performances on *Astral Weeks*, driven by the need to prove his talents as a singer (as if they needed it), were continually pushing at the strictures of meter, language, and range. On *Moondance* he is an almost swaggering, self-assured proficient front man who, instead of stunning his listeners with vocal pyrotechnics, is content with merely seducing them.

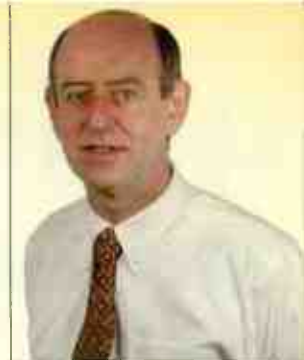
Mention must be made of *Moondance*'s instrumental moniker with the hermetically sealed harmonies created by Jack Schroer's alto and Collin Tillton's tenor saxophones. Although these eloquently melodious saxophone



elements may at first sound familiar you'll find it hard to find antecedents in jazz, rhythm and blues or soul as their true source lies in the traditional Celtic music so well known to Morrison. The resultant fusion is breathtakingly simple yet remarkably effective.

I don't intend to go through every track – there isn't space – but will briefly refer to some highlights. "And It Stoned Me," brilliantly demonstrates Morrison's fondness for locating mystical enlightenment in even the most mundane occurrences. You'll have to listen to it, I'm afraid, to fully understand that. Next, "Moondance," features one of Morrison's most sparkling melodies featured alongside a suave swing beat. Then there's "Crazy Love," an acoustic ballad delivered in a captivating falsetto, and the blockbuster "Caravan." Combined, these songs make known the overwhelming range of Morrison's compositional skills and performing prowess. The transcendent "Into the Mystic" contains enigmatic yearnings and wanderlust that communicate, with tremendous power, a kind of delirious mysticism. It is one of the greatest recordings ever made. And this album is amongst the best you'll ever hear – there isn't a bad track on it. Believe me.

Moondance is available on CD from Warner on 7599-27326-2. It is ten times better on LP – scour your local second-hand store for a copy.



I am surprised by the speed at which CD players have been phased out in favour of DVD players and unsettled by the precedent it sets. It appears to be a simple enough example of market forces. If a DVD video player that can also play CDs costs just £100, why buy a CD? At the same time I can't help feeling that there seems to be an indecent haste by manufacturers to phase them out. Is the CD next I wonder?

From a purely personal point of view I've got nothing against the disappearance of the CD. From the moment it was launched I felt it was pretty obviously flawed and measurement proved it. What I am talking about isn't the optical disc, which is a stunning success, but the old late-1970s digital coding scheme used to store music on it, namely 16bit at 44.1kHz sampling rate.

With SACD and DVD-A, we have not one but many shiny new coding schemes before us as a potential replacement and they offer superb results. I am happy about this, as you might expect, but at the same time, as I wander around HMV on Oxford Street I have reservations about how it's all going to pan out.

The CD is now a near-universal music carrier, one that people are familiar and happy with. Sound quality is a lot better than it was in the early days, due to SBM, dither and, most importantly, vastly improved digital recording equipment in the studios. Modern CDs generally do a good enough job and HMV on a Saturday before Christmas is a testament to this.

A rack holding SACDs and DVD-A discs is growing in size at a healthy rate. At present, whenever I go there I don't have to fight to see what's new. A few wandering shoppers squint at the packages and probably think they are looking at

music DVDs, which they are, but music DVDs are downstairs.

Er – yes. You see what I mean about the potential these new formats have for future confusion. Music on DVD is upstairs and downstairs at HMV and I pity the poor shop assistant who has to explain the difference between the two. "The ones downstairs have got

Modern CDs generally do a good enough job and HMV on a Saturday before Christmas is a testament to this.

Dolby Digital on them, but so have the ones upstairs. They're all stereo, and they're all surround-sound too, but the ones upstairs have MLP which gives you PPCM, but those downstairs have LPCM only."

Of course, you could say the ones downstairs have got video on them and those upstairs have only got still pictures and better sound, which may seem a little more succinct but I can't help feel that baffled shoppers will be asking "which can I use?" and "which is best?". To these questions there are no simple answers.

The universality of CD and the clarity of its purpose make life easy and hassle free for all those people who just want to listen to music and not worry about it. Gone are the days of bent styli and nervous excursions across bouncy floors to "change sides". No more do we have to extract mangled tape from capstans or feel sea sick when a cheap C-zero produces more wow than Copocabana. The CD isn't perfect by any means and it is doing, imperfectly, jobs it was never meant for, such as working in portables and cars. But the hoards of shoppers at HMV at least don't have to worry

about whether their disc will play or not, let alone which of many disc types to buy.

The SACD hybrid disc was a good way around this potential problem, having a CD layer that would work in CD players and a high resolution DSD layer that would work in SACD players. But this solution was cleverly turned into a problem when less expensive single layer discs without such compatibility appeared, so forcing buyers to distinguish between the two on shop shelves, introducing even more difficulty.

As things stand, CDs provide music and DVDs provide films. It all seems so well worked out. But will all this change?

The world's C.E. business (think Sony, Philips, Toshiba, Panasonic, et al) wants to sell kit; it isn't interested in stasis. And DVD is the new main chance. Dolby Labs interestingly note that Hollywood's fortunes were revived by the arrival of the video tape, contrary to expectation. The film companies have been given an even bigger boost by DVD, which was designed for them – hence surround-sound.

Experiencing this, it is hardly surprising that companies like Warner's feel they can revive music sales by giving consumers a new improved medium, as they did with DVD video, nor that DVD-A prices are to be dropped to compete with CD. They want change and I strongly suspect that the death of the CD player will be followed at attempts on the life of the CD. This means the hoards of teenage girls who constitute 99% of buyers for major acts like Robbie Williams are just going to have to learn about the meaning of '24/96, PPCM in 5.1 surround' if they want to hear and experience his every last word. I'm not convinced this is going to be good for music sales! ●

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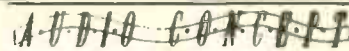
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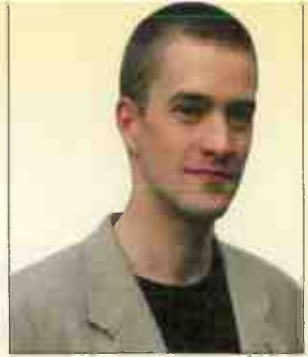
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Accessories, by which I primarily mean interconnects, 'speaker cables, racks and stands, used to be the preserve of the specialist dealer, but now they can be found everywhere. And I mean everywhere. Only a few years ago it would have been unheard of for Argos to be selling 'premium' interconnect and S-VHS leads for up to £25, and 'speaker stands that don't wobble when someone in the room sneezes.

Whilst £25 isn't a typical Hi-Fi World reader's idea of a premium lead, to an average Argos customer this outlay represents quite some leap of faith. When a lead costing a fifth of the price will do the same job why should they pay the extra? But it does appear that the public at large is now willing to pay extra for better quality leads and stands. So to whom does the accessory market owe their thanks and livelihood?

In actual fact the burgeoning accessory trade of today doesn't go back as far as you might think. Twenty-five years or so ago, there were very few tweeky bits for even the most die hard of audiophiles. Those that did exist, along with anti-static guns and sticky-roller record cleaners, were very specialist and often of questionable worth.

From the beginning of the 1980s however, the importance of decent hi-fi supports began to become clear to the hi-fi separates market. Companies such as Target, Sound Organisation and Partington were proving that a decent 'speaker stand and rack unit could actually improve the sound of your system.

This is still a busy market although, thankfully, many of today's equipment supports don't look like

GCSE CDT students' projects. Glass rather than black ash vinyl, and smooth, coloured paint or wood has replaced black Hammerite to form rather more harmonious designs. If you're really serious about supports then companies such as Mana or Torlyte will happily stretch your budget to 4 figures.

It took the increasing popularity of home cinema, incorporating DVD, to really give second wind to the market.

The accessory that changed the whole status quo was QED's 79 strand cable. Launched in the late 1970s, it was the 'speaker cable that was responsible for weaning the British enthusiast off scrawny bell wire. Ten years on and QED were still selling the stuff by the mile, yet by the late eighties the competition had caught up. DNM and the Swedish Supra cable were the new budget kings, and the Americans had very much arrived with Monster, Audioquest and Kimber all enjoying a high profile within the accessory market. Yet, despite the proliferation of brands, better quality cables and the like were still very much the preserve of the enthusiast even though, by now, pretty much all buyers of hi-fi separates were aware of the benefits.

It took the increasing popularity of home cinema, incorporating DVD, to give second wind to the market. By the late 1990s, leads that had previously only sold in relatively small quantities, were now beginning to motor out of retailers at an astonishing rate. Look to further than humble optical and co-ax digital leads as an example. Before the advent of DVD they had

only really ever sold to a tiny proportion of buyers with separate CD transports and DACs. Now, with record breaking sales of DVD players, a vast new market suddenly opened up for such leads, as they were needed to link a DVD to a surround-sound receiver or an active 'speaker package.

QED overlooked this market. In the early-to-mid 1990s it was companies such as Ixos, Vivanco and Bandridge that divided the spoils. Yet as the count down to the millenium began, QED did get its act together and produced the highly successful Scart range of AV leads. This time they were proving that enthusiasts at all levels would happily pay £50 for a Scart lead just as they had paid a heady £1 per meter instead of 10p for 'speaker cable 20 years ago. The trouble is that once you've paid £50 for a lead and noticed the difference, there can be no stopping the upgrade bug!

This is a phenomenon that cable specialist Russ Andrews is well aware of. Andrews has built a highly successful business around the adage that one should spend 90% of one's budget on cables and 10% on the equipment (fancy that!), rather than vice versa! This seems difficult until you see that it's quite possible to spend £8435 on a 3.4m pair of Kimber 'speaker cables, £923 on an interconnect and £1049 on a mains purifier block. That's before you've even taken into account racks, stands, bi-wirable jumpers and oak feet!

Clearly one could develop a serious fetish here. At these sorts of prices, the term 'premium' is truly justified. Somehow though, I should think that the chances of Argos stocking this sort of kit are pretty extreme. Then again, twenty-five years ago, paying extra for cables would be seen as a joke, so whose laughing now? ●

FAST TRACKER

David Price looks at one of Pioneer's most interesting products of the nineties, the D-07 double-speed DAT recorder.

Like most of Japan's electronics manufacturers, Pioneer does video and car audio in addition to its hi-fi range, but unlike many it does not make air conditioners, rice cookers or washing machines. This is a telling indication as to where the company's loyalties lie - it's seriously into audio and not just doing it to maintain a market share. As a result, it has come up with some pretty remarkable products over the years, giving it the deserved reputation (in its home country at least) of a forward-looking, go-ahead manufacturer.

Just as we've seen with DVD, Pioneer has often played a leading role in new formats and technologies as they've rolled out through the years. In the seventies, it came up with some cracking open reel tape decks (RT-707, RT-909) which led the way in user-friendliness thanks to superb quartz-locked, direct drive auto-reverse transports. It was a big shot in cassette too, making decks that pushed the format to the limit and gave it that all-important audiophile respectability (CTF-950, CTF-1000). Then there was LaserDisc (or LD as it's called in Japan) - Pioneer virtually single-handedly made this format the huge success it has been - in the Far East, at least.

When DAT arrived in 1987, it didn't come as a huge surprise to find the company right behind the new format. The D-1000 was the company's first effort introduced in April of that year. Built like a lead-clad brick outhouse and finished in classic eighties black with rosewood side-cheeks (nice!), it both looked and sounded the part. Pioneer

followed it up with the cheaper D-900, and then the D-50 and D-80, all of which offered sleeker ergonomics and more svelte nineties-style aesthetics. These all sold well, but the company's first real push into the big league was in October 1992, when Pioneer came up with a fiendishly good idea.

The D-07 borrowed an idea from the old days of analogue tape. Back in the late seventies, Marantz launched a cassette deck that offered a choice of two speeds - either the standard 4.75cm/s or 9.5cm/s. Obviously, double speed used the tape twice as fast, but offered stunning sound quality, particularly with the (then) new metal tape formulations. With the D-07, Pioneer did exactly the same, which in the digital domain equated to upping the sampling frequency from DAT's standard 48kHz to 96kHz. Thus was born the first 'Super DAT' recorder.

Two things determine the quality of a digital recording - bit depth and sampling frequency. The former describes the dynamic range and resolution of the sound, the latter the frequency response and - indirectly - high frequency distortion. Raising the sampling rate moves the upper end of the frequency range (where PCM is most ragged and distortion-prone) higher away from the audio band, making more a smoother, more natural and atmospheric sound.

While Pioneer couldn't increase DAT's bit depth from its existing 16bits without completely voiding its specification, fitting a front panel



switch allowing users to push up the sampling frequency to 96kHz was a clever wheeze. Users could choose 48kHz (or 44.1kHz or 32kHz) as per DAT's existing specifications, but if they wanted particularly high quality recordings (that would play back on Pioneer S-DAT decks only), they could twiddle their knob. The only trade-off was - of course - the playing time of the tape was reduced by half. Yet, a 120 minute DAT tape would still give an hour's continuous recording, so all was not lost.

Unlike Sony's Super Bit Mapping (SBM) system, which dithered the least significant bit to squeeze a little extra from DAT's 16bit digital word, S-DAT wasn't compatible with all DAT machines, but in its defence, it gave dramatically better results. The flat frequency response from 25-44000Hz made for a beautifully smooth and open sound - far better than that of Compact Disc and any rival DAT machine, for that matter.

These days, you'll have to look hard for a D-07. The internet is a good place, as they do come up from time to time as recording studios or home musicians sell their gear. It was a big (440x141x375mm), heavy (8kg) and expensive (£1,500) machine when new, so don't expect to get it for a song. Find a good one for under £500 however and you'll have a brilliantly effective way of recording analogue music and a perfect partner for a new PC-based 24/96 music system.



Reviewing Origin Live's Illustrious tonearm kind-of made me think back to 1987, the year that saw the economy boom, house prices soar and Kylie Minogue hit the top of the charts (any of this sound familiar?). It also gave us analogue addicts a mess of high-end 'super arms' to aspire to. Within the space of twelve months or so, three of the world's best ever tonearms arrived - SME's Series V, Linn's Ekos and Naim's ARO. Remembering my favourite Oscar Wilde aphorism, "I can resist anything but temptation", as a young Linn Sondek-owning vinyl junkie I felt compelled to hot foot it down to my local hi-fi dealer to get a piece of the action.

Having just blown most of my student grant (remember them?) on a shiny new Linn Ittok LVII, the solemn decision was made to audition the aforementioned new pickups and be prepared for the worst. Which was that I'd invariably have to blow another six months worth of 'bread, beer and book' allowance on the most expensive of the three. In fact, after auditioning them in three separate locations (thanks Reading Hi-Fi, Aylesbury Audio and Westwood and Mason - as was!) I came to the curious conclusion that none were as transcendently, transplendently or sublimely superior to my humble LVII, whatever the magazine reviews had suggested to the contrary. True, all of them bettered ex-'best arm in the world' in some ways, but none managed to comprehensively outclass it. Crestfallen, I emerged from my protracted listening sessions without the anticipated sizeable addition to my already well cultivated overdraft, and was forced to splash out on some vinyl instead,

by way of compensation.

This left me with a dilemma. I'd heard what my Ittok was doing wrong - or rather what it wasn't doing right - but still hadn't heard a musically convincing alternative without the Tik-Tok's faults. I'd learned that the Linn was a little course in the treble, had a tonally thin and slightly ragged midband

Within the space of twelve months or so, three of the world's best ever tonearms arrived.

with a good deal of low level muddle, and a bass that although tuneful enough seemed like that of AM radio compared to the SME Series V.

The new Linn Ekos sounded a good bit better than my Ittok - a little tighter, smoother, cleaner, more composed, better focussed and musically cohesive - but that's all it was, just a usefully 'improved' version of the same.

The SME was so dramatically different to the Ekos that my initial response had been one of shock - incredibly tight, tonally and texturally detailed, great dynamics and a bass to blow my socks off - it was a real stunner. However, protracted listening had me seriously worried about its rhythmic abilities, and capacity to musically involve me.

The ARO was the unexpected surprise. Initially quite disappointing, it was unshowy, dynamically curtailed and not particularly forthcoming. The longer I listened however, the more I was convinced of this arm's intrinsic rhythmic 'rightness' - to the point that after hour upon hour of wading through the first side of Kraftwerk's then just-released 'Electric Café', I seriously couldn't listen to any other

arm. Confusing stuff!

I returned to my Ittok and all its failings, only to live with it happily for another four years until I got the bug again. This time it was a plain, unmodded Rega RB300 that threatened the LVII's place on my Sondek armboard, and this time the Linn lost. I was amazed by how good the Rega arm was, and particularly

by its midband smoothness and detail. A simple yet complex one-piece casting with tapered arm tube and integral headshell, this arm was unique in its construction. Every detail had been well thought out and executed, from tungsten counterweight to low friction bearings. However, it was - perversely - a budget design built down to a price that introduced some compromises and I did realise it was miles behind in the bass and in the treble, where it sounded curtailed and uninvolved compared to my previous arm.

It was fortuitous that I moved to the Rega at this time, for the next decade saw a raft of mods to catapult it right to the top of the tree. Within months of its introduction in 1983, the RB300 established itself as something of a giant killer. Originally retailing for £88, it pasted a good number of arms at five times the price. More amazing was that the standard off-the-shelf item was a long way off giving of its best. A few well chosen tweaks could expunge its greyish, dry sound and turn it into an incredibly open and self-effacing tool. For this we have Origin Live's Mark Baker to thank. All his knowledge, time and effort has gone into the Illustrious, and the result is a tonearm that comfortably surpasses those in the class of '87. Twenty years after the launch of the Rega, who'd have thought that a company most famous for tweaking it would have come up with such a world beater? ●

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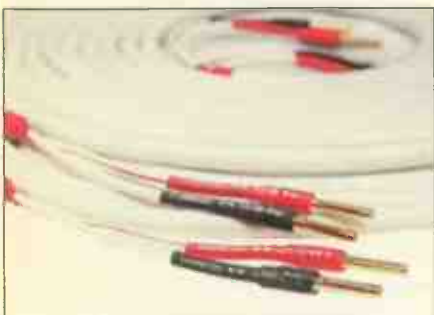
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LINKED BOXES

In this month's cable round-up Hi-Fi World's wire master listens to two 'speaker cables for the serious minded upgrader.

CHORD COMPANY ODYSSEY 2 £17.99 PER METRE



Chord hold a firm place in the market for delivering high quality cable that has a well balance sonic signature for relatively little money - a traditional 'real world' hi-fi product. Their range of 'speaker cable caters more for the affordable end of the market. Indeed at £17.99 per metre, the single wire Odyssey 2 featured here represents their top of the range 'speaker cable at a price that many other cables start at.

The Odyssey 2 is a two core construction (Odyssey 4 is the bi-wire version which uses four cores) and uses a twisted pair design with Teflon insulation, which attempts to keep capacitance low and maintain a consistently low dielectric constant. Each one of the twelve conductors consists of nineteen 0.045mm strands of silver plated oxygen free copper which are heavily plated because most of the signal travels on the conductor's surface.

Various terminations are available. We had Chords usual 4mm plugs. It's a fairly thick cable with a tough outer jacket, finished in pure white. This is apparently to ensure it looks "inconspicuous against a typical skirting board." Well, mine are stained wood but that's another matter!

Being the top dog in Chord's speaker cable range means that the Odyssey has more space and transparency than the lower priced cables. This manifests itself in good recordings such as Mahler's Das Lied von der Erde on Reference Recordings. The depth of stage was very deep and spacious and instruments had fine lucidity. Wood wind was especially light and realistic. Rock music relayed much of Chord's traditionally impressive traits such as excellent tonal balance and smoothness. There was little overt sibilance to Beth Orton's voice in her 'Trailerpark' CD and each layer of the mix was discernable and lyrical. Ultimately, this doesn't have the kind of transparency you'll find with the likes of Nordost's products, but then they're at least three times as expensive. So a great buy then, the Odyssey represents specialist audiophile sounding cable at a real world price and a great upgrade from your entry level fare.

Chord Company
Tel: 01722 331 674
www.chord.co.uk

HI-DIAMOND POWER +4 £110 PER 2 METRE PAIR (TERMINATED)



Exotically named Hi-Diamond hail from Italy. Although we're well aware of Italy's hi-fi industry, this is the first cable manufacturer from the nation of opera that we've encountered.

The Power +4 is an entry level 'speaker cable in the company's range so this is no budget minded operation and the product has to work at this price sector. It comes with forked connectors that whilst a bit fiddly, ensure a good signal when connected. Not much in the way of technical specification was available to us but there is heavy screening and sheathing involved and capacitance claims to be very low. There are two conductors, each made of eighty 0.22mm copper strands. The company claim to concentrate, among other things, in relaying realistic dynamic information. The outer layer is a very flexible, black PVC jacket and it's worth noting that Italians even like their cable to look and feel good - it's very well constructed and nice to the touch. To top it all, it even comes in a highly desirable and stylish blue drawstring suede bag!

This is impressive cable, especially in terms of transparency and openness. The soundstaging is wide and clarity is tip-top. In Das Lied von der Erde, the orchestra was very natural sounding with no synthetic timbre or harshness. The +4 cable managed to marry fine low level detail and good dynamics with a sweet treble that did not grate - violins were very rich, yet high percussion open and sparkling. Whilst not up there with the Mahler piece for ultimate showmanship, the Hi-Diamond made good work of Beth Orton's folkly warblings and acoustic guitar strumming. Vocals were very impressive and natural, yet also well controlled and balanced perfectly with the rest of the mix. Not cheap then, but a good performer, the Hi-Diamond range judging from the +4 promises much.

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PLAY IT AGAIN, CREATIVE

The people behind the innovative DAP Jukebox have come up with its replacement, the imaginatively titled Jukebox 2. Said to be Creative Labs' first MP3 player to feature fast USB 2.0 connectivity, it comes with a 10GB hard disk that

holds 2000 MP3 or 4000 WMA songs, as well as being able to back-up, store, manage, and transport photo, text and video files. Its rechargeable battery gives up to 16 hours of playing time, and the player is claimed to offer "exceptional audio quality" with a quoted signal-to-noise ratio of 98dB. It features AudioSync, which lets users synchronise music files with multiple PCs, a four-band custom equaliser and Smart Volume Management, which matches volume variations across tracks.

www.europe.creative.com

MORE MUSIC BIZ WOES.

MP3 piracy and CD copying are cited by the IFPI (International Federation of the Phonographic Industry) as reasons for the latest reported slump in music sales. It says the value of global recorded music shipments in the first six months of 2002 was down 9.2% from the same period last year, accompanying an 11.2% drop in units shipped

world-wide. This contrasts with the same period last year, where there was a value dip of 5%, and two years ago when there was a 6.7% decline in units. This appears to tie in with another study, which shows that soundtrack album sales have been hit of late, thanks to illegal downloading. Panelists at the Hollywood Reporter/Billboard Film & TV Music Conference in L.A. said that some 25 to 30 soundtracks reached gold disc status, or better, every year from 1996 to 99, but only 10 to 15 have sold as well since.

AUDIO STREAMIUM

From MP3 CD portables to digital audio players, Philips has long been at the forefront of computer audio devices. The new Streamium MC-i200 takes the idea a step further, as the world's first micro hi-fi system with a built-in broadband Internet connection. At the press of a button, it connects to the Internet and automatically streams music from all over the world, as easily as a conventional tuner selects a broadcast radio station. Philips says it offers 'always-on' access to thousands of online radio stations by working in conjunction with a dedicated website, which also lets users upgrade their system's internal audio codecs, effectively future-proofing it.

The company says this is 'only just the very beginning' of the Streamium concept. It has linked up with the likes of AOL Music, Andante, MP3.com, Musicmatch, Radio Free Virgin and LIVE365.com to deliver a selection of features and services available through my.philips.com. 'Personalised Internet Radio' lets users create their own customised radio stations, which seeks out and plays specific material from the huge range available online. There are even dedicated 'Online Music Charts', updated daily and ready to select songs from

the user's preferred musical genre. Insert a standard CD and the system goes online to get its text information, or even e-mail information about it to the user's registered e-mail address.

The £400 package plays regular audio CDs, CD-Rs, CD-RWs, MP3 CDs and even the new MP3PRO format. A full-function RDS FM/MW/LW radio tuner is included, plus a 2x50 Watts RMS amplifier and 'speakers featuring flat, aluminium-alloy speaker cones. As the first in a series of 'Internet infotainment' products that Philips says will become the mainstay of its strategy in years to come, it's a significant product. <http://my.philips.com>.



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MULTI-CHOICE

The notorious DVD format war could be coming to an end, with the news of new drives from Sony and NEC that read and write all formats. The Sony products, out around now, comprise the DRU500A internal and DRX500UL external drives, priced at £249 and £379

respectively. They offer 4x DVD-R writing speed, 2.4x DVD+R/RW and 2x DVD-RW writing, and can read all DVDs at 8x. NEC's MultiSpin ND-1100A internal multi-format burner will cost about £249 and promises to be the first to work with the new 4x DVD+R specification. It also reads DVDs at 12x and writes DVD-R at 4x, DVD-RW at 2x and DVD+RW at 2.4x.

PLAY ON

Imation's new MusicUS-B player/burner uses DataPlay digital media, which are double-sided micro-optical discs about the size of a fifty pence piece. They can

record 500MB of digital content (11 hours of MP3 music, or books, games, images, computer files, etc) on a single disc and play it back on any

DataPlay-enabled device,

such as digital music players, e-books, portable games or digital cameras. Available in a choice of amethyst, red and gold, the discs have an estimated archival life of 100 years. BMG has just shipped its first thirteen DataPlay disc releases in the US, including albums by Pink, Outkast, Brooks & Dunn, and Britney Spears. Priced at \$15.98, they also include music videos, cover art, bios, and other material.

www.imation.com



WHAT THE WORLD IS WAITING FOR!

This is it! The new recordable DVD-Audio specification has been announced, letting users record, edit and replay audio at very high resolutions, on writable DVDs. Not only can it record in Linear PCM or packed PCM (using Meridian Lossless Packing), but there's the option of using any one of six lossy codecs (such as Dolby Digital and DTS) for extended playing times. As well as audio, DVD-AR lets users store still pictures and text.

The v1.0 issue of recordable DVD-A was completed and approved by the DVD Forum's Steering Committee in late July, with the finalised v1.0 spec becoming a reality early in the new year. The only thorny issue now is - you've guessed it - copy-protection. 4C, the group behind the Content Protection for Pre-recorded Media (CPPM) scheme used for current DVD-Audio releases is now busy working on DVD-AR version. The Firewire (IEEE-1394) interface is said to make the transmission of copy-protected digital data to and from recorder and players possible.

DVD-AR discs can be created using both lossless and lossy compression, or lossy codecs alone - PCM (or either the packed or unpacked variety) isn't required on the disc. A welter of audio formats feature in its specification, at a dizzying number of bitrates. They include two channel Linear or Packed PCM at 44, 48, 88, 96, 176 or 192kHz sampling frequencies, or six channel at 44, 48, 88 or 96kHz. Dolby Digital is included at 44 and 48kHz, two channel DTS at 44, 48, 88, 96, 176 or 192kHz with six channel at 44, 48, 88 and 96kHz. MPEG-1/2 Layer II is at 44 or 48kHz running at 384kbps and MPEG-2 at 912kb/s. Six channel ATRAC-3 is provided at 44 and 48kHz sampling frequencies at a bitrate of 750kbps. Two channel MP3PRO working at 44 or 48kHz runs at up to 320kbps, and MPEG-2 AAC is provided in up to six channels working at 44, 48, 88 and 96kHz sampling rates and a bitrate of 1,500kbps. Playing times depend on the format, obviously, but PCM and PPCM should give up to eleven hours of recording time, whereas low rate compressed codecs could give up to eighty hours on a single disc. Watch this space!

HI-FI PC IS HERE

Motherboard manufacturer VIA Technologies' new Hi-Fi PC is first ever to feature a multimedia player application that resides in BIOS. A computer's Basic Input Output System is usually just used to configure hardware and boot the operating system, but the Hi-Fi PC's design means it works as a media player instantly upon switch on (just like hi-fi), without having to first load up software. The system is called, fittingly, PlayNow! and comes with a remote control and a small character-based LCD panel on the computer fascia to display playlists. Hi-Fi PC is said to work within five seconds of switch on, but if no button is pressed on the remote control then the computer boots up its standard Windows XP operating system.

The system is initially to be sold on an OEM basis to other manufacturers, who'll turn it into a fully featured, branded product. It's expected to cost around £799 for the complete system including monitor. The Hi-Fi has been previewed in a brushed aluminium casing, designed to make it look like audio equipment. Several hi-fi manufacturers are said to be interested, along with a number of PC brands. At its heart is VIA's EPIA-M motherboard, boasting a 933MHz C3 processor, a new Castle Rock graphics engine and an updated chipset called CLE266 which supports up to 1GB of 266MHz DDR memory. There's also a hardware MPEG decoder which makes it possible to play full-screen DVDs at 30 frames per second - hardware DVD encoding and 24bit audio support will be optional. More information can be found at www.via.com.tw/en/.



PRO LINK

If you're of the opinion that the only good soundcard is no soundcard, then you'll love this. David Price listens to Xitel's Pro Hi-Fi Link.

Six months ago, I tried out two curious creations by Xitel - the Analogue Link and the Digital Link. The Pro Hi-Fi Link you see before you is basically an amalgam of the two, with some added functionality, some great bundled software and enough cabling to wire up a large Scottish island.

If you missed the original review, the idea behind both was simple - the soundcards built into most PCs are awful enough to dispense with at the earliest possible moment, and that instead of having to pull your PC apart, there is an easier way! All Xitel Hi-Fi Links use the USB port, fitted to virtually every PC since 1998, as a way of piping out the pure, unsullied digital audio stream direct from your motherboard to the outside world, where you may do with it what you wish!

Actually, the Analogue Hi-Fi Link came complete with a digital-to-analogue converter, thus giving a line level analogue audio feed via RCA phono sockets. The Digital Hi-Fi Link - yes, you've guessed it - simply provided coaxial and optical digital outs. At £99.95 (or less) the Pro Hi-Fi Link offers the functionality of both (and then some), and costs less than the price of both of the former put together.

The box itself is a lightweight, but decently well made piece of silver painted plastic. Inside is a small 20-bit DAC chip and shielded analogue output op-amp. Digital output socketry is fitted, featuring clock matching and buffered synchronisation. One side of the case has the analogue and digital outputs, the other sports the USB digital input socket.

The cabling supplied with this unit is its major distinguishing feature. The retail carton weighs a tonne, mainly on account of the thirty feet of

'studio grade' TOSLINK fibre optical cable, thirty feet of shielded coaxial digital cable and thirty feet of analogue interconnect. Also inside is the USB connection cable and a CD-ROM, complete with Power DVD software - more of which later.

Installation with Windows XP was easy - simple plug in the Pro Hi-Fi Link and wait for the 'pling' as Windows tells you its found it! In the instruction manual, Xitel recommends doing a Restart for good measure, however. Then you can install the Power DVD XP 4.0 software (if required). This is a standalone application simply to let you watch DVDs on your PC (assuming it has a DVD-ROM built in) - and pipe a 5.1 channel Dolby AC3 or DTS audiostream out of the Xitel's digital outputs.

The Pro Hi-Fi Link does not contain a decoder for either, but lets you connect your PC to a 5.1 preamp, amplifier or receiver with a digital in, which can then do the decoding. Speaking as an avowed DTS fan, I can only applaud this - some of those 5.1 audio discs are quite special! Power DVD even has a Dolby Pro Logic II decoder, for virtual surround-sound, plus SRS TruSurroundXT and Dolby Digital Dynamic Range Control. There's even the option to mix Low Frequency Effect into headphones or two or four-speaker systems. Versatile stuff!

So how does it sound? Via digital it's excellent, giving an utterly convincing digital datastream into either 16/44 two channel hi-fi DACs (such as my reference Cambridge Audio DAC3), or a multichannel preamp/processor.

Its analogue output is impressive, but obviously not up to the standards of a decent hi-fi DAC (it is, after all, just a low price audio accessory). Much like the Analogue Link, it has a

smooth, even sound with a decently fulsome bass and sweet treble. Still, it's well up to the likes of Pure Digital's SonicXplosion, and miles better than your average PC soundcard. Indeed, it's a revelation with notebook computers, such are their low standards of multimedia equipment.

Overall then, a great package. I find these Xitel gizmos are particularly handy with notebooks, but the benefits the Pro Hi-Fi Link confers are no less apparent with desktops. Assuming you've got the requisite digital converter, it's a quick and easy way to get decent basic hi-fi sound from your MP3 files, internet radio, CDs and DVDs - and yet there's power enough to really go to town and listen to DTS or Dolby Digital if you like. Excellent value! Now, does anybody want to buy ninety feet of cheap audio interconnects?

Xitel Multimedia Pro
Hi-Fi Link £99.95

www.xitel.com



BOOM ■

After the SonicFury comes the SonicXplosion DVD, Pure's latest affront to the established sub-£100 soundcard order. David Price holds on to his hat.



Two years ago, VideoLogic (as was) unleashed the SonicFury upon us - a seventy pound soundcard with much of the functionality of Creative Labs' SoundBlaster Live, but none of the gimmicks. Now, recently renamed as Pure, we have the SonicXplosion, set to do the same to Creative's Audigy.

The SonicFury was notable as the first 'high-performance' six channel soundcard. The SonicXplosion continues this theme, presenting itself as the first soundcard product to support all major home theatre standards, including DTS, Pro Logic II and Dolby Headphone.

The gold-plated back-end of the card is packed with socketry, including three stereo minijacks giving a 5.1 channel line output, TosLINK digital inputs and outputs (offering Dolby AC-3 passthrough as well as pure PCM), a microphone input and a stereo line input - also configurable as a headphone output.

On the board itself, four edge connectors give two CD inputs, an Aux input and a digital input for the CD-ROM drive. There's also a Gameport connector - MIDI comes supplied in the form of a separate 15-pin port.

The brain of the card is Cirrus Logic's Crystal CS4630 audio DSP, with 96 stream DirectSound /

DirectSound3D acceleration and 64 voice hardware wavetable engine.

This handles all music decoding and playback duties, talking the load off the CPU whether it's DirectSound 3D for games, MP3s or WAV files for music or wavetable effects for MIDI.

This soundcard's programmable design means you can make firmware upgrades for future audio codecs. Its analogue section has a claimed 97dB signal-to-noise ratio, and an 18-bit A-D converter is provided for recording, accompanied by six 20-bit DACs for playback.

Fitting the SonicXplosion was totally straightforward. The card slotted straight into my PC's motherboard PCI socket, was

THERE IT WAS!

secured in place and then the system switched on. The supplied set-up CD-ROM took over, and the SonicXplosion was soon operational. If for any reason you experience installation problems, there's a technical support section on the website. The driver control panel offers individual level controls for each input, along with a presettable 10-band graphic equaliser (via hardware). The control panel also lets you set the card up for variously two, four or six speakers, each optimisable by the DSP engine for best sound. Indeed, there's a handy

speaker positioning and testing feature.

All well and good, but how does it sound? It's not bad with 16bit CD, with a smooth and slightly softened presentation that's a long way from the raucous distortion that emanates from many a cheap card. Compared to my reference Cambridge Audio DACMagic, it sounded much as I remember the SonicFury. Just a little lighter and faster in the bass, a tad faster and grippier and a touch more tonally forward. DTS was a different story of course, with sweet sonics from the small range of DTS

encoded audio discs available.

Without a doubt, SonicXplosion advances the art of cheap multichannel soundcards. But if it's two channel that floats your boat then you should remember that paying twice the price will buy you one of the new generation of 24/96 designs. A good, well presented product then, that's ideal if you want 5.1 on the cheap, but stereophiles might look elsewhere.

VideoLogic Sonic Xplosion £79.95
www.pure-digital.com



The non-DVD version of SonicXplosion is £30 cheaper, but you lose hundreds of pounds worth of bundled software, including WinDVD (full version, offers DTS, Dolby Digital and Dolby Pro Logic II playback), Storm 2.0 (virtual music studio) and Jet-Audio (full version, award winning media player)

MINIMUM SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:

Intel Pentium® III, AMD K6 III 500 or equivalent processor, 64 MB RAM, Windows 98SE/ME with DirectX 8.0 or higher or Windows 2000/XP, PCI 2.1 expansion slot, headphones or amplified speakers. 5.1 speaker system required for 5.1 audio output. 5.1-enabled software DVD decoder and DVD-ROM drive required for DVD video playback.

DRIVERS:

Microsoft Windows 98SE/ME/2000/XP, DirectSound, DirectSound3D, A3DTM 1.0/2.0, EAXTM 1.0/2.0, I3DL2, General MIDI, MPU-401, DLS 1.0, Sensaura MacroFXTM, MultiDriveTM, Sensaura 3DTM, Sensaura EnvironmentFXTM and SoundBlasterTM/SoundBlaster ProTM compatibility.

BUNDLED SOFTWARE:

Cool Edit 2000 (audio recording/editing package), FruityLoops (music editing), Cubasis Inwired (MIDI recording and production studio), Sonic Foundry ACID Xpress (recording/sequencing) and Pianito MicroStudio (piano synthesiser) and van Basco's Karaoke, Intervideo WinDVD 4 full version.

World Verdict £●●●●
 A fine product packed to the gunwhales with multichannel functionality, but two-channel addicts should look elsewhere

EASY DRIVER



MP3 is moving off computers and into cars, but how does it sound? David Price traces the transition and test drives JVC's KD-SH99RB MP3-CD tuner.



Isn't it amazing how the uses that people put to audio formats is often so different to those envisaged by their creators? Take the classic example of Philips, who in 1963 introduced a mobile dictation medium called the 'Compact Cassette'. Twenty five years later, in 1988, it was the world's best selling format for pre-recorded music, outselling both the previously all-conquering Long Playing vinyl record and the high tech Compact Disc which was already five years into its lifetime!

Although MP3 has only been around for five years, there are already some parallels to be drawn. Its originators had no grand designs for it - unlike so many other formats such as Elcaset, DCC and MiniDisc. Rather, it was a humble music carrier

for use on computers. A way of compressing music down to a manageable size (a four minute song would take 40MB in WAV format, but you could reduce it to 4MB in MP3) so that it could be conveniently electronically transferred, few other formats were as unprepossessing. The rest, as they say, is history.

Within two years of its birth, it was the subject of a major lawsuit in the US involving the entire recording industry, which saw it as the end of civilisation as they knew it. It shocked the music companies into changing their whole approach to music marketing. Music 'file-swapping' networks like Napster suddenly made it possible for anyone (online) anywhere to hear any music they could possibly imagine. Wave after wave of 'digital audio portables'

arrived, bringing untold freedom to those who listen to music on the move. And then, just when the heat seemed to be going out of the 'MP3 boom', so the format evolved further still.

From initially being a hard disk-based format and then one carried in the flash memory of portable players, MP3 duly moved onto Compact Disc - or data CD-R to be precise. A whole new wave of hi-fi hardware has duly come out sporting computer CD-ROM (as opposed to hi-fi CD) transports, offering a vast increase in playback possibilities. Now, with products like JVC's KD-SH99RB below, these have moved into the domain of the car, too.

So why have an MP3 car CD player? Well, instead of going to the trouble of physically installing a car CD changer unit in your boot, you can get similar amounts of music on one MP3 CD-R disc. Instead of having to fiddle around loading the changer 'magazines' with discs, you just slot your single MP3 CD into the dashboard mounted head unit. Then there's cost - CD changers can cost up to £250 to have installed, assuming your car's 'head unit' will actually accept one in the first place - whereas every modern PC comes with a CD burner that lets you make MP3 CDs for free. Until the advent of cheap hard disk-based car players, MP3 pretty much wins the day.

JVC KD-SH99RB

This beautifully made £350 CD-tuner-amplifier plays MP3s along with standard CDs, CD-Rs and CD-RWs, and will also control an external DVD player or Digital Radio module. It's expensive, but this is reflected in the svelte cast aluminium faceplate that slides out and clips off for security. The disc transport proved faultless - fast and decisive no matter whether it was a 'real' CD or cheap CD-R media, it didn't skip or jump during the test period once. This is hooked up to a 24bit DAC. The FM tuner section was very impressive too - giving a crisp and smooth sound with no reception difficulties. Shame there's no Radio Text, though.

The equaliser gives a vast number of adjustments (bass, mid and treble frequencies, gain, slope, etc.) that let you get a really convincing

sound regardless of your car's acoustic environment. Other clever features include a front panel 3.5mm auxiliary input jack - great for hooking up your MiniDisc portable or Apple iPod - and a rear line input. A subwoofer output completes the package.

Sound via standard CD is excellent - close to Nakamichi levels and a good way above rival Kenwoods and Sonys. MP3 sound depends on the quality of the original encoder of course, but 320kbps Fraunhofer files were impressive - sounding just a little looser and flatter than uncompressed PCM - more than good enough for a noisy car and mediocre door speakers. The four channel 50W RMS amplifier section packs a hefty punch, although really heavy music played at high levels for long periods had it saturating. Overall, it's a great argument for automotive MP3!

welcome to world favourites

Here's a list of products that are a good buy. We've tried to cater for a range of tastes, identifying strong products in every area. We're agnostic so you'll find a wide range of products, from valve pre-amps through to MiniDisc players. Products marked * are recently out of production but make a good second-hand buy.

Prices shown are those at the time of the review



Sonic Frontiers Transport Cutting edge design and technology.

COMPACT DISC

ARCAM FMJ CD23 £1100

This British-built player is extremely versatile. Controlled and detailed with a musical insight that few match. (Jul 2000)

CAMBRIDGE CD4SE* £200

A touch soft in the treble but outstanding in every other respect. (Feb 98)

KENWOOD DP-3080/II* £180

Has great clarity and presence for the price. Not as naturally expressive as the CD4SE though. (Feb 98)

LINN KARIK III* £1775

Under rated and overlooked, the final Karik was a gem. Superb transport gives a brilliantly tight, grippy dynamic sound, albeit tonally rather dry.

MARANTZ CD-17 KI-S £1100

The Marantz excels in all areas. Without doubt this is one of the most involving CD players on the planet. Build quality is also exemplary. (Sep 97)

MARANTZ CD-63 MKII KI-S* £400

Similar to the CD-63SE but more powerful bass and an all-round smoother sound. The famous KI tweaks pay off again. Whether or not it is still pre-eminent against the vastly improved competition is a matter of opinion.

MERIDIAN 506 20-BIT* £1100

Very detailed and revealing player. More cerebral than visceral sounding, however. (May 95)

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-RAY £800

Commonsense sturdy CD player of exceptional ability. Clear and detailed with high quality internal processing system. The X-Ray is inclined to show up poor recordings, but it's only doing its job! (Feb 99)

NAD S500 £1000

This dynamic top of the range Silverline spinner delights with any type of music. Exciting, sophisticated sounding and highly recommended. (Jun 2000)

ROKSAN CASPIAN £895

The Caspian has a smooth, slightly bright sound with some of the clearest treble in the business. Very engaging, dynamic character. (Aug 97)

ROTEL RCD 951 £300

HDCD capability at a midrange price. Plain Jane looks but solid construction. There is some higher than average measured distortion which may take the edge off this otherwise tempting product. (Aug 99)

COMPACT DISC TRANSPORTS

SONIC FRONTIERS TRANSPORT £6999

Cutting-edge design and technology combine to make this one very desirable product. The only problem is the fantasy hi-fi price. (Sep 98)

TEAC P-30 £2500

Cheap it isn't, but then it sounds like a million digital dollars. Nothing short of superb. (Jun 97)

TEAC VRDS-T1 £600

Excellent mid-price silver disc spinner with a powerful, expansive and warm sound. Easily beats most sub-£1000 designs. A good choice for the budget conscious who want the best. (Feb 95)

DACs

CAMBRIDGE AUDIO DACMAGIC 3* £99

Superb value for money with extensive facilities and solid, detailed sonics. Upgrades any sub-£300 player.

DCS ELGAR £8500

Future-proof converter which will handle 24/96 and 24/192. Extremely open and natural performer. (Nov 97)

DPA LITTLE BIT 3* £299

A taste of the high end on a budget. Rich, clean, punchy sound transforms budget CD players.

MIDIMAN FLYING COW £299

Excellent as a DAC and doubles as an ADC for archiving to CDR. (Jun 98) Great value, as is junior version Flying Calf at £109. (Feb 99)

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-DAC* £300

A bargain for normal CDs and even better with HDCDs. (Nov 97)

SONIC FRONTIERS PROCESSOR 3 £6999

Quality never comes cheap! This DAC oozes class and when matched with the Transport 3 is certainly up with the best. (Sep 98)

TURNTABLES

LINN SONDEK LP12 BASIK £1100

Off the pace these days in many respects but still an extremely sweet and engaging listen with a quintessentially analogue sound.

MICHELL GYRODEC SE £775

Exquisitely built, infinitely upgradeable deck that gives true high end sound at mid-fi prices.

MICHELL ORBE £2000

Fantastically capable all rounder with commanding, powerful, detailed sound that gets the best from almost any arm and cartridge. Supreme build, brilliant value. (Apr 95)

ORIGIN LIVE STANDARD (KIT) £145

Good in standard form with AC motor; frighteningly good with a DC motor and battery PSU.

PINK TRIANGLE TARANTELLA £680

Not only does the Tarantella have more style than a catwalk full of models, it also combines PT's usual clarity with real authority. (Oct 97)

PRO-JECT DEBUT £110

Straight out of the box and onto the shelf! Nothing short of a bargain. Vinyl's never had it so good, so cheaply!

REGA PLANAR 2 £214

Brilliant starter deck with extremely polished manner. Better built £274 Planar 3 is a great all-in-one package that eats mid-price CD players for breakfast.

ROKSAN XERXES X £1295

DSU or XPS 3.5 power supply £150/170 extra. Excellent pitch stability from a new Swiss motor and onboard power supply. Very tight bass, fine dynamics and revealing clarity. (Jan 97)

SYSTEMDEK IIX900*/RB250 £330

A fine all-rounder and easy to upgrade too. More depth and breadth than Rega Planar 3. (Sep 94)

VESTAX BDT-2000 £225

A stylish looking deck with infinitely variable speed 16-90 rpm, DC belt drive and built-in MM phono stage. Good value, with plenty of chassis room for alternative arms, if required. (Sep 99)

TO NEARMS

HADCOCK 242 SE £649

Latest of a long line of unipivot arms. Added mass makes the 242 suitable for both low compliance MCs and straw-in-the-wind high compliance types. Revised geometry and chromium plating completes a first-class job. (Jun 2000)

NAIM ARO* £975

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

REGA RB300 £180

Some may prefer the simpler RB250 at £130. Detailed, tight, rhythmic sound but tonally rather grey and cold-sounding. Still excellent value, though.

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Equivalent New Price Sale Price

A selection of our ever changing offers for sale (all fully guaranteed)

Equivalent New Price Sale Price

AMPLIFIERS

Lin LM-1 / LM-200 Pre / Power-Amp (2 x 80 Watts) MINT / Boxed	1200.00	549.95
Lin Karm Pre-Amp (Remote-Control) MINT / Boxed	1400.00	795.00
A.T.C. S-200 Pre-Amp (Remote-Control) MINT / Manuals	950.00	495.00
Real PW-2 / PS-1 Photo-Stereo MINT / Boxed / Manuals	1200.00	705.00
A.T.C. C-2 Power Pre / Volume Input (See Star Product) MINT / Like New / Box / Manuals	750.00	495.00
Musical Fidelity The Tri-Amp (M/A / M.C. Phono-Stage / Dr. Thomas Power-Amp) VGC	1800.00	399.95
Acorn Nite-92 / Nite-90-3 Pre / Power (M/A. Phono-Stage) MINT / Boxed / Manuals / Leads	950.00	599.95
Acorn Alpha X / 92 Pre / Power MINT / Manuals	800.00	499.95
Quad 405 I (2 x 100 Watts Power-Amp) VGC	400.00	199.95
Q.E.D. Vector Reference Remote Pre-Amplifier (Matching D.A.C. Also Available) MINT	400.00	199.95
NVA A-60 Power Amplifier MINT	550.00	229.95

PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

A.T.C. SCM-50 Remote Balanced Pre-Amplifier in MINT / As New Condition / Boxed / Manuals / Equivalent New Price £750.00 Affordable Audio Price SOLD

RECORDING EQUIPMENT

Real MD-865 (2-Head / NR-Pro) MINT / Boxed	2200.00	79.95
Sony TCR-470 (Vari-Bias / NR-Pro Etc) MINT / Manuals	1500.00	79.95
Technics RS-1031 (Dual Etc) VGC / Manuals	1000.00	69.95
Acorn AD-86 (1-Head / Vari-Bias / 3-Head / Vari-Bias Etc) VGC	4000.00	149.95
Acorn AD-810 (3-Head / NR-Pro Etc) VGC / Manuals	1500.00	129.95
Acorn R-450 (Auto-Reverse / Dolby C / Vari-Bias Etc) VGC	1500.00	59.95

DIGITAL

Magnasonic QMS-7E Remote-Pre / Boxed / Manuals	2000.00	895.00
A.V.L. S-2000 P.L.C. Remote-Pre MINT / Manuals	1100.00	499.95
Teac T-1 Transport / D.T.I. D.A.C. (2-Head Remote C.D. Player) MINT / Boxed / Manuals	1100.00	549.95
Real MD-86 (1-Head / Vari-Bias / 3-Head / Vari-Bias Etc) VGC / Manuals	500.00	329.95
Acorn AD-86 (1-Head / Vari-Bias / 3-Head / Vari-Bias Etc) VGC / Manuals	4000.00	149.95
Q.E.D. Vector Reference Remote Pre-Amplifier (Matching D.A.C. Also Available) MINT	400.00	199.95
Harmon D-1700 (2-Head / Remote / Direct-Path Etc) MINT	400.00	199.95
Cambridge CD-4 (Remote / Direct-Path Etc) VGC	300.00	149.95
Cambridge CD-4 (Remote / Direct-Path Etc) VGC / As New	250.00	89.95
Arcam CD-1 (Remote / Direct-Path Etc) MINT / Boxed / Manuals	300.00	139.95
Denon CD-435 Remote-Pre / As New / Boxed / Manuals (Deposit On)	220.00	119.95
Denon CD-435 Remote-Pre (Digital-Out Etc) MINT / Boxed / Manuals	240.00	119.95
Meridian CD-43 Remote-Pre / Digital-Out Etc VGC / Manuals	300.00	159.95
Technics SLP-3670A Remote-Pre / Optical-Disk MINT / As New / Boxed / Manuals	200.00	109.95
Philips CD-730 Remote-Pre MINT / Manuals	150.00	69.95

TURNTABLES

Reflex Javelin / Reg 300 / PS-11 Audio Technica OC-9 M.C. MINT / Boxed	1200.00	695.00
Plan 30 RMA (M.U. / M.C. Phono-Stage) MINT	280.00	169.95

SYSTEMS

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Sony ST SE 3000ES Stereo MINT	120.00	69.95
Dynaco TU-24 (3-Band Pre-Set / Digital Display) MINT / Boxed	120.00	79.95
Technics ST-6100(Pre-Set / Digital Display) MINT / Manuals	120.00	59.95

LOUDSPEAKERS

A.T.C. SCM-31 (Plus-Moreover / Surrounding Solid Sounds) MINT	1100.00	599.95
Agipac Diverster (Flyback Transformer / Bi-Wire / Coil Bass) VGC / Spare Unstated Panel	3500.00	1395.00
Accusonic Sincera 1100 (Flyback Transformer / Bi-Wire / Coil Bass) VGC / Boxed / Manuals	1300.00	649.95
Harman 751 / 752 (Flyback Transformer / Bi-Wire / Coil Bass) VGC / Boxed / Manuals	280.00	595.00
Lightson Olympus (Flyback Transformer / Bi-Wire / Coil Bass) VGC / Boxed	1000.00	399.95
Hi-W CH-2 High Quality (Bi-Wire Etc) MINT / As New / Boxes	600.00	369.95
Aluminum 751 / 752 (Flyback Transformer / Bi-Wire / Coil Bass) VGC / Boxed / Manuals	430.00	269.95
Beak T-100 (Flyback Transformer / Bi-Wire / Coil Bass) VGC / Boxed / Manuals	540.00	329.95
Epos ES-11 / Covers / Foundation Stands VGC / Boxed / Manuals	525.00	259.95
Epos ES-11 / Covers (Bi-Wire) VGC	525.00	249.95
C.L.M. Reference Monitors (Anthem) (100 Watts Minis) Bi-Wire VGC	600.00	299.95
Clarite Type 1 MINT Floor-standers VGC	550.00	149.95
Hyperion Sector (Flyback Transformer / Bi-Wire / Piano-Walnut) MINT / Boxed / Manuals	1130.00	499.95
Hyperion Quarter / Stands (Bi-Wire / Piano-Walnut) MINT / Boxed	600.00	219.95
A.V.I. Phoenix II (Cherry) MINT / Boxed / Manuals	1000.00	375.00
Canton S-35 (Dual-Concave Pods) VGC / Boxed	250.00	109.95

MISCELLANEOUS

Audio 3-Tier Stand (Silver / Simulated Glass) MINT / Manuals	180.00	99.95
Monacor SPS-35 Spike (Gold or lacquered Wank Trench) Loudspeaker Spikes NEW		8.95 (Per 4)
Monacor SPS-45 Spike (Gold or lacquered Wank Trench) Loudspeaker Spikes NEW		7.95 (Per 4)
Monacor SPS-45 Spike (Large) Loudspeaker Spikes NEW		9.95 (Per 4)
Roar SS 2 (2-Way Speaker) NEW		18.95
Roar 4 main Basses (Only Type - Don't Ignore Soldering) NEW		8.95 (Per 4)
Roar 4 main Basses (Gold Plated) (Only Type - Don't Ignore Soldering) With Heavy-Gauge Cable (Screw-Type, Don't Ignore Soldering) NEW		10.50
Roar Optical Line Cables (C.D. / Phono / D.A.C. Etc) NEW		10.50
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A.S. Unstated from MINT	45.00	22.00
Monacor JS One-Digital Iconic NEW	N/A	8.95
Monacor Gold 5-Pin DIN to 4-Pin NEW N/A 9.95		
Monacor SPS-20 (Gold-Plated) Polished Low Equipment Supports NEW (Superb Spike System at a very good price) (Black Anodised Or Gold Finish)	19.95	Set of 4
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Prices shown are those at the time of the review



Project Phono Box. Provides an inexpensive introduction to all that vinyl has to offer.

SME 3009SII £309
Once state of the art, but no longer. Weak at frequency extremes and detail, but its legendary serviceability makes it a cult in Japan. Can be picked up for peanuts second-hand. (Jan 93)

SME 309 £689
A down-market version of the IV and V with aluminium armtube and detachable headshell. Tight, neutral sound with good tonality, but lacks the IV's pace and precision. Like the older SME 3009 series, this arm is also available in 10" and 12" versions. (Jan 93)

CARTRIDGES

AUDIO TECHNICA AT-110E £30
Great starter cartridge that's refined, detailed and musical beyond its price. Best value MM under £50

GOLDRING 1012GX £74
An accomplished MM with a solid bass, slightly forward midband and clean transients. Very reasonable price for such an able performer. (Jul 93)

DNM MICA £185
Beters Goldring's 1042 and costs only £135 on trade-in. An assured and transparent MM. (Feb 98)

DYNAVECTOR DV20X-H £299
The best modern budget MC combines deliciously sweet sound with fantastic get-up-and-go. High output version works a treat with valve phono stages too.

MUSIC MAKER £575
When mated with a good quality arm, this hand finished high-output pick-up gives an ear-boggling account of itself. Very high compliance ensures maximum information retrieval. An absolute (grain orientated) gem. (Feb 99)

ORTOFON MC 7500 £2000
Conclusive proof that there's hope for the world. It's a long time ago now but this high-priced favourite still earns its niche - CD lovers would die if they heard it. (May 94)

ORTOFON MC 15 SUPER II £140
Not quite as good as the dearer Supremes but the Super II is a splendid introduction to the joys of moving-coil cartridges.

GOLDRING 1042 £130
One of the best Moving Magnet cartridges going, with beautiful treble and muscular bass. New low price makes it a bargain.

ORTOFON ROHMANN £1000
In a way it's MC 2000 meets MC 7500 with great tonal strengths and a dynamo sound. (Apr 96)

INTEGRATED AMPLIFIERS

AUDIO ANALOGUE PUCCINI SE £595
This superbly-built Italian integrated has a lucidity and control which leaves others nowhere. Sound stage a wow. (Dec 97)

AUDIOLAB 8000a * £495
Well rounded integrated with smooth and detailed sound plus a huge feature count. Great build makes later versions a top used buy.

DENON PMA-250SE £160
It might not have bags of grunt but the Denon can sound exceedingly natural and open. (Feb 97)

McINTOSH MA6800* £3735
The MA6800 not so much plays music as takes control of it, with effortless bass drive. (Sep 95)

MISSION CYRUS 2 * £299
Classic eighties minimalism combines arresting styling with clean, open, lively sound. Further upgradable with PSX power supply.

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-CANS2 £160
Warm, sumptuous, sweet sound h/phone amp. gives startling results with a decent set of headphones.

NAIM NAIT 3 * £575
Superb rhythms and dynamics make for great music making, but tonally monochromatic. Super optional phono stage makes it ideal for vinyl junkies.

ROKSAN CASPIAN £695
Smooth, warm integrated with remote control that works happily into most 'speakers. (Dec 97)

SONNETEER ALABASTER £995
Builds on the strengths of the Campion with ample control, colour and drive. (Oct 97)

PHONO STAGES

CREEK OBH-8 SE £180
Punchy, rhythmic character with oodles of detail makes this a great budget audiophile product.

LFD MISTRAL PHONO STAGE * £300
The Mistral has a warmth and involvement that make many pricier stages sound overpriced.

MICHELL DELPHINI MONOBLOCS £1995
Analogue tour-de-force gives supremely clean, detailed and finely resolved sound with breathtaking dynamics. Great value, even at this price.

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-LP £125
One of the famous MF X series. Full marks throughout for clarity and detail. Switchable between MM and MC. Indestructible build! (May 99)

PROJECT PHONO BOX £39
Not the last word in many respects but a thoroughly honest piece of work. Inexpensive introduction to all that vinyl has to offer. MM and MC provision plus choice of two impedances.

ROKSAN ARTAXERXES X £950
With the Atessa PSU the Artaxerxes X MM/MC stage still shines. Great stage depth, neutrality and tonal colour. (Oct 97)



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A summer bargain not to be missed!

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Factory returns Boxed as new with full 2 year warranty

This is the chance to pick up a late summer bargain with these two popular Arcam products. Both the A85 Amplifier and DV88 DVD player are available in black or silver in very limited quantities, so don't delay - call now!



Arcam A85 Amplifier £625

- 2 year full in house warranty
- Free Delivery & Local Installation
- *0% Interest Free Credit available

Arcam A85 Amplifier normal Price £799.00
Arcam DV88 DVD Player normal price £999.00



Arcam DV88 DVD player £745

SONNETER SEDLEY £399
Combines transparency and fine dynamics with excellent rhythmic ability. (May 98)

PRE-AMPLIFIERS

AMC 1100 £150
Suffers from un-defeatable tone controls but an extremely good value piece of kit. Partners the similarly budget level AMC 2200 power amplifier, also at £150. Comfortable beginners' choice. (Mar 99)

AUDIO ANALOGUE BELLINI £475
Showcases AA's characteristic mix of clarity and musicality and blasts the competition. (Apr 98)

CHORD CPA1800 £1800
Clarity, insight and control are second to none - an addictive mixture. (Mar 98)

CROFT VITALE £350
A modestly priced valve pre-amp with exceptionally transparent performance. MM phono stage plus three line stages are standard. Volume controls are separate for each channel, thus giving balance adjustment. A remarkable item in all respects. (Feb 2000)

XTC PRE-1 * £1000
Almost valve-like in its smoothness, the line-level Pre-1 is warm and seductively clear. (Nov 96)

POWER AMPLIFIERS

ARCAM 9 * £400
With 70W on tap, the 9P will drive most loudspeakers with a spacious and detailed sound. Good bass welly too. (Dec 96)

CHORD SPM400 £1400
There's a sense of effortless power to the Chord that gives music real scale and presence. (Mar 98)

MARANTZ MODEL 9 * £8000
Authentic reproduction monoblocs still more than cut the sonic mustard. Highly expensive and highly sought after. (Mar 97)

MICHELL ALECTO £1989
Crisp, clean and beautifully controlled with gorgeous styling. Partnered with the £1650 Orca this is a superb winning combo. (Oct 98)

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-A200 £1000/pair
200W of high-end monobloc power in a grooved tube. (Aug 98)

NAIM NAPI80 £1060
Partnered with a NAC82, this has classic Naim control, and a superbly rhythmic presentation.

TUNERS

CAMBRIDGE T500 £180
An extremely engaging tuner with a performance at odds with its low price. Not exactly a Troughline, but you may not notice... (Feb 99)

CREEK T43 £399
Excellent detail, separation and dynamics. A great little tuner and unbeatable at this price. (May 98)

MARANTZ ST17 £600
A positive dreadnought of a tuner. Sweet and refined but with a heavy punch when needed. A tuner of this quality demands a decent aerial. (Jul 99)

MISSION CYRUS FM7* £300
Clear and lucid sound puts it up with the best. Superb build too. (Apr 94)

NAIM NAT03 £595
The NAT03's warm, atmospheric sound is further proof of Naim's proficiency with tuners. (Sep 93)

SONY ST-SA3ES* £250
Beguiling RDS tuner for the sonically discerning. Good ergonomics and sensitive too. (Apr 97)

CASSETTE DECKS

AIWA AD-S750* £200
Sonically a very decent machine at the price. Comes fitted with Dolby B, C and the dead handy Dolby S. (Apr 96)

AIWA AD-S950* £300
A stable transport, superb head and Dolby S make the AD-S950 an excellent all-rounder. (Feb 95)

KENWOOD KX-3080* £160
A simple deck, but excellent-quality head and transport give top quality sound. (Oct 96)

PIONEER CT-S740S £430
A great piece of engineering from Pioneer, with first-rate sound. (Jun 96)

YAMAHA KX-580SE* £250
The 'SE' tag is more than a marketing gimmick. Sound is solid and clear with Dolby S. (Sep 97)

LOUDSPEAKERS



Kef Cresta I loudspeakers
A very musical sound

CASTLE EDEN £469
Impressively vice-free 'speakers that offer great transparency and involvement. One of a select band that simply makes music regardless. (Mar 97)

EPOS ES12 * £495
Strong, punchy bass is allied to finely detailed, articulate midrange and sparkling treble. (Oct 96)

KEF CRESTA I £100
Delightfully sophisticated presentation for the price. Won't blow the roof off, but will deliver a very musical sound. (April 2000)

KLIPSCH HERESY II £1100
An outstanding high sensitivity loudspeaker with midrange and treble horns coupled with infinite baffle 12" bass driver. Effortless, fast and accurate. (May 99)

MISSION 752 * £495
Cracking mid-price mini towers combined HDA drive units and metal dome tweeters with surprisingly warm results. Benign load characteristics makes them great for valves.

MISSION 771 £170
Characteristically fast, punchy Mission sound from the Aerogel mid/bass and silk-dome tweeter. (Jul 98)

Billy Vee
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Would you like to upgrade your Naim

Call 020 8318 5755 or 8852 1321 now!

Each year we replace our Naim demonstration stock giving you an opportunity to make a substantial saving on our normal price! All products are boxed with full two year warranty. Only one of each available

- NAC 52 Preamp (£3850) **£2690**
- SuperCap Power Supply (£2450) **£1795**
- NAC 102 Preamp (£1210) **£859**
- NAP 180 Power Amplifier (£1220) **£859**
- NA CDX Player (£2470) **£1729**
- NAP 250 Power Amplifier (£1910) **£1339**
- NA CDS/2 Player (£4165) **£3099**
- NAP 500 Power Amplifier (£10995) **£8995**

Interest Free period of nine months available - please call for details.



Featured
NAC 82 Preamp
one only available

Was (2500) Offer price **£1795**

Job Opportunity

We have a vacancy for a young enthusiastic 18 - 20 year old sales and customer service person. Experience not necessary but must have good communication skills. Good income potential. Please write to Ian Anderson sending your C.V to the address above.

QUAD ESL 63 * £3450
A reference against which all other loudspeakers are judged, the '63s have superb imaging and genuine transparency.

TANNOY AMS8 * £2700
Bold sounding pro active monitor with solid bass, clear midrange and delicious treble. (Aug 96)

TANNOY MERCURY m2 * £140
A true audiophile bargain which embarrasses many more expensive boxes. Never mind the price, let your ears decide. (May 97)

MINIDISC PLAYERS

KENWOOD DM-9090 £500
One of the best MD players yet. ATRAC 4.5 gives clean and very musical recordings from this Kenwood. (Jan 98)

SONY MDS-JB930Q £250
Great mid-price machine that adds better build and facilities to the '530's already excellent sonics.

SONY MDS-JA50ES * £1300
This Sony can put the wind up Nakamichi cassette decks when used with better blank MDs. (Apr 98)

SONY MDS-JE555ES £520
MiniDisc recorder
The best sounding MD deck made so far, thanks to awesome build and heroic ATRAC-DSP Type R coding.

SONY MDS-JE510 £300
An impressive sound and unmatched convenience make this MiniDisc player an excellent buy.



Pioneer DVD-717. A well built and solid performer.

DIGITAL RECORDERS

ALESIS MASTERDISK £1400
A groundbreaking hard disc recorder with a built-in CD drive. An amazing bit of kit, and a glimpse of the future. (July 2000)

KENWOOD DMF-9020 £500
An excellent tool for home recording, combines convenience, superb sound and a fair price. (Aug 99)

MARANTZ DR-17 £1100
Probably the best sounding CD recoder on the market. Built like a brick out house with a true audiophile sound. HDCD compatible. (July 2000)

PHILIPS CDR-765 £360
One of the first twin deck recorders/players that boasts high speed dub facility. Playback could be warmer, but still a bargain. (Oct 99)

PIONEER PDR-555RW £480
Excellent mid-priced CD recoder that both plays and records with equal panache. (Oct 99)

SONY TCD-8 DATMAN * £599
Super clean and detailed sound makes this an amazing portable. Not as robust as it should be though.

DVD PLAYERS

DENON DVD-5000 £1600
Monster build, as you'd expect at this price. Facilities and gadgets galore and drop-dead high end looks. A very smooth and sophisticated sound, although not as good as similarly-priced CD players. (Mar 99)

PIONEER DV-717 £700
Well built and a solid performer, with a 'true' 24/96 digital output. Facilities in abundance and a controlled, exciting way with CD replay. Shame it lacks a Dolby Digital decoder! (Sep 99)

SONY DVP-S725 £490
One of the best buys in the DVD market. Available in a dodgy white case, but the facilities and performance more than make up for this. Excellent with both music and visuals, and a whole host of up to the minute facilities to keep you occupied. (Mar 2000)

HEADPHONES

JECKLIN FLOAT MODEL TWO £99
Wonderful panel-like and open sound from these esoteric-looking headclamps. Do not wear in public unless you like being made a fool of!

SENNHEISER HD-490 £50
Good value cans with an exciting and bassy sound. Everything one should look for in headphones at a sensible price.

INTERCONNECTS



Nordost Blue Heaven
A simple and effective upgrade

CHORD COMPANY CHAMELEON 2 £90/m
One of our favourite favourites, the Chameleons are musical performers with a smooth yet open sound.

DNM RESON £40/m
Neutral and transparent, and a steal at forty quid!

NORDOST BLUE HEAVEN £150/m
Some of the fastest and most transparent cable around. A simple and effective upgrade.

VAN DEN HUL ULTIMATE THE FIRST £260/0.6m
Carbon interconnects that help you forget the electronics and concentrate on the music. Miraculous transparency.

LOUDSPEAKER CABLE

CHORD COMPANY RUMOUR £9.95/m
The Rumour is our reference at the price. Tight and tuneful bass mixed with air and space results in a crackling cable for the money.

DNM RESON £6.95/m
This cable has a transparency of sound that's rarely heard at the price. Excellent value for money.

NORDOST BLUE HEAVEN £375/3m pair
This isn't cheap, but it sounds absolutely fab. An open and spacious sound that simply carries music.

Billy Vee
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0% APR is available on purchases of more than £660. Please call for details. Confirm stock before visit. E&OE

Arcam DV88 DVD Player (1Yr G/tee)	(999.00)	£699.00	Marantz DV7000 DVD Player (1Yr/Gtee) 50%	(599.00)	£266.00
Bluroom Minipod Speakers Var colours	(289.00)	£199.00	Naim CDX CD Player (2Yr G/tee)	(2470.00)	£1729.00
Linn Karik/2 CD PlayerS/H (1Yr G/tee) (new 1850.00)		£895.00	Naim 102 Preamplifier (2Yr/Gtee)	(1210.00)	£859.00
Linn 5105 Power Amps (2 Yr G/tee) 50%	(1200.00)	£549.00	Naim Hi-Cap Power Supply (2Yr G/tee)	(795.00)	£559.00
Linn Kan Speakers (2Yr G/tee)	(325.00)	£229.00	Naim NAP 180 Power Amp (2Yr G/tee)	(1220.00)	£879.00
Linn Keosa Speakers (2Yr G/tee)	(495.00)	£299.00	Naim NAP 250 Power Amp S/H (1Yr G/tee) (1805.00)		£995.00
Linn LK140 Power Amp (2Yr G/tee)	(750.00)	£549.00	Naim NAP 250 Power Amp (2Yr G/tee)	(1805.00)	£1339.00
Linn Klout Power Amp S/H (1Yr/Gtee)	(1600.00)	£999.00	Naim Intro Spkrs - Beech (1Yr G/tee)	(790.00)	£579.00
Linn Kairn Line Preamp (1Yr G/tee) 50%	(1400.00)	£799.00	Naim NAP500 Power Amp (2Yr G/tee)	(10995.00)	£7995.00
Linn LP12/Lingo/Akito S/H (1YR G/tee)	(2250.00)	£1250.00	ProAc Tablette 2000 Spkrs (2Yr G/tee)	(649.00)	£456.00
Linn Keilidh Blk S/H (1Yr G/tee) 50%	(775.00)	£387.00	Rotel RV 985 DVD Player (2Yr G/tee) 50%	(625.00)	£299.00
Linn Keltik Speakers Wal (2Yr G/tee)	(6000.00)	£3950.00	TAG DV32R DVD Player (2Yr/Gtee)	(3995.00)	£2995.00
Lexicon MC1 Processor (2Yr G/tee)	(5500.00)	£3995.00	Yamaha AX620 AV Amplifier (2Yr/Gtee)	(399.00)	£289.00

welcome to world favourites

CASSETTE

NAKAMICHI DR-2

A great machine with Nakamichi's legendary heads. The lowest cost 'true' Nakamichi at the time, retailing for £600.

NAKAMICHI CR-7

The last of the great ones, and definitely the best Nakamichi ever (yes, better than a Dragon)

YAMAHA TC-800G

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

Beautifully-built two-box with pre-amp stage. Very musical although not as refined as modern Bitstream gear. No digital output.

PIONEER PD-91

Built-to-last player with easy upgrade routes for modifiers. Not knockout as it stands but get one cheap and have a go!

CAMBRIDGE CDI

The first two box player with weighted mechanics and even an optional Dropout/error counter. Radical and effective at the time - a classic.

AMPLIFIERS

LEAK POINT ONE, TL12 & TL10

Ancestors of hi-fi, consequently expensive nowadays. As with all vintage valve stuff, overhauling is de rigeur before use, using original parts if possible.

LEAK PRE-AMPS

Line of 'good for their time' pre-amps. Use of EF86 pentode valve for high gain rules out ultra performance. Not the highest-fi.

LEAK STEREO 20

Excellent workaday classic valve amp. In good order the 20 will not disgrace itself. Various upgrades are available from specialist repairers.

LEAK TL12+

Plentiful monobloc equivalent of Stereo 20. Reasonably inexpensive and a tweakers' dream. Genuine valve hi-fi on a budget.

NAD 3020

You can't argue with success! NAD's budget transistor integrated gave thousands their first taste of hi-fi and remains great value.

QUAD 33/303 PRE/POWER

Great style and construction, also bullet proof. Warm and wooly sound, but easy going. A good introduction to early transistor audio classics.



Garrard 401
A legendary turntable.

QUAD 22/II PRE/POWER

One of the all-time classic valve amplifiers. Unusual circuit but it works beautifully. 22 pre-amp not up to today's standards.

SUGDEN A21

Seventies transistor integrated has an eminently likeable smoothness and musicality. Limited inputs via DIN sockets.

TECHNICS SE-A5 Mk2

Nice transformer and electronics, shame about the casework. With tweaking, this 150watter can sound sweet.

LOUDSPEAKERS

KLIPSCHORN

Not exactly plentiful or cheap but a splendid beast. For efficiency they have seldom been equalled. Space hungry!

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ACCESSORIES

CUSTOM BUILT:# Centre Speaker Stand – Ex.Demo/Mint £ 250 £ 90
Mass Filled (Black High Gloss)

MONDIAL:# MAGIC BOX Improves your Picture! **NEW/Sealed** £ 99 £ 49
Also provides protection in the event of a Lightning strike!!

TARGET STANDS

Modular AV Stand:# 4 Shelf + 2 Shelf Tower (Black) Ex.Demo/Mint £ 350 £ 99
Model 5: Bookshelf Monitors-Pair (Maple) Ex.Demo/Mint £ 190 £ 40

ACURUS

A250:# 250W Stereo Amplifier (Black) Ex.Demo/Mint £1400 £ 850

A200X3:# 3-Channel (3x200w) Power Amp. (Black) Ex.Demo/Mint £1600 £ 975

AERIAL ACOUSTICS (see pictures below for some of the models)

Model 5: Bookshelf Monitors-Pair (Maple) Ex.Demo/Mint £2900 £1495

Model 7B: Floorstanding Speakers-Pair (Cherry) Ex.Demo/Mint £5000 £2500

Plus Special Plinths

Model 10T: Reference Loudspeakers-Pair Ex.Demo/Mint £8700 £4350

(Santos Rosewood) including Special Plinths (**Stereophile Reference listed**)

CC3B: Centre Speaker (Natural Cherry) Ex.Demo/Mint £1800 £ 900

SW12: 400W Active Remote Control Subwoofer Ex.Demo/Mint £4800 £2400

with Parametric Equalizer (Rose Walnut)

RETAIL SALE AVM

V2:# Remote PreAmplifier (Black) Ex.Demo/Mint £1175 £ 595

M2:# Mono Power Amplifiers – Pair (Black) Ex.Demo/Mint £1975 £995pr

CAIRN / EZO

NANDA Face Nord:# Preampifier, 2 Analog Chan. Ex.Demo/Mint £1000 £ 499

Dual Mono. 3 Transformers. Bal In/Outputs (Silver)

ARIA:# Integrated Amplifier – Remote (Silver) Ex.Demo/Mint £ 450 £ 225

CHORD (see picture below)

DAC64: D to A Converter (Silver/Gold Badge) Ex.Demo/Mint £1900 £ 1350

ENLIGHTENED AUDIO DESIGNS

RF DEMODULATOR:# (Black) Ex.Demo/Mint £ 600 £ 199

PIEGA (P Series - see picture above)

S3: Satellites with Wall Brackets, Pair (Aluminium) Ex.Demo/Mint £ 499 £ 250

S4: Floorstanding Speakers –Pair (Aluminium) Ex.Demo/Mint £1095 £ 550

S4C: Centre Speaker (Aluminium) Ex.Demo/Mint £ 440 £ 220

P4L:** Floorstanding Speakers –Pair (Aluminium) Ex.Demo/Mint £1695 £ 850

P4C:** Centre Speaker (Aluminium) Ex.Demo/Mint £ 840 £ 430

P4XL:** Floorstanding Speakers-Pair (Aluminium) Ex.Demo/Mint £2210 £ 1105



**** AWARD WINNERS / 5 STAR BEST BUYS !!!!!!!**
Email for picture of unit

LEAK SANDWICH

Rather warm sounding big infinite baffle but cheap with it. With a reasonably powerful amp can sound quite satisfying.

LOWTHER PM6A

High quality full-range driver; still manufactured. High sensitivity, as fitted to many classic horn designs.

MAGNEPLANAR SMGa

Touch dry in the bass but a technological loudspeaker with genuinely musical abilities.

MISSION 770

Father of the 77 range which continues to this day. Well mannered with a warm sound and a kind load to amplifiers.

QUAD ESL57

Unrivalled. Properly serviced there is nothing like them. Their natural presentation may make them caviar to the general.

YAMAHA NS1000M

Hi-tech favourites of the Japanese and Americans. Viewed more warily in the UK but can give excellent results.

TANNOY GRF & AUTOGRAPH

Folded horn monsters which certainly sound good if you have the space. For Tannoy vintage see HFW November 1998.

WHARFEDALE SUPER 8 RS DD

Ideal experimenters' driver. High sensitivity -14,000 Gauss magnet and extended frequency range. Inexpensive too!

TANNOY YORK, LANCASTER

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 LUSTRE

Very honest piece of kit, well made and easily adjusted. Vinyl beginners could do very much worse.

ALPHASON HRI00S

First class arm, up to present-day standards. Buy carefully, though, as there's no service available now.

ARISTON RD11

A one-time king of turntables very similar to the Linn LP12. Now deposed but worth a look at the right price.

LINN AXIS

Uncomplicated, lower-price version of the famous Sondek. Less expensive than some of its stablemates.

GARRARD 301 & 401

Legendary turntables, once fairly plentiful. Excellent back-up available; many different custom plinths available. High quality.

GOLDRING Lenco 88 & 99

Great deck for the kitchen table enthusiast. Garrard fans won't look at 'em but cheap and capable. Servicing available.

HADCOCK 228

Recently out-classed by Hadcock's updated 228 Special Edition but a proper hi-fi arm for all that. Makers still service.

MICHELL FOCUS ONE

20 years and still going strong. Early runner in the 'modern' turntable cycle with a first class arm. Factory servicing available.

SHURE M75

Recent line-contact improvements have left the M75 behind but the wide range of needles make it a handy tool.

SME 3009 IIS

Everlasting classic tone-arm. Spares permanently available from SME. No longer the last word but peanuts second-hand.

THORENS TD124

Best classic deck ever? Judging by the prices they fetch it's possible - 78rpm too!

THORENS TD150

Mid-price deck with a keen following. No real difficulty with servicing - novices may find the suspension system unnerving.

TRIO L-07D

Knockout heavyweight from 1980 with stainless bearing and 1 lb platter! Not a give-away and beware! - spares scarce.

LEAK TROUGHLINE (ORIGINAL)

Interesting ornament but no longer hi-fi. Limited coverage of 88MHz to 100MHz only.

LEAK TROUGHLINE II & III MONO

Arguably the best-sounding tuners ever. Adaptation for stereo easy via phono multiplex socket.

LEAK TROUGHLINE III STEREO

Excellent tuner with indifferent stereo decoding circuit. Best when adapted to use modern outboard decoder.

MARANTZ ST-8

Possibly the ultimate Tardis console, including an oscilloscope for checking the strength of signal. Expensive even now.



Leak Troughline II Mono
Arguably the best sounding tuner ever

beyer dynamic



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CARTRIDGE SELECTION	STYLUS	REPLACEMENT STYLI																																																																																														
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EX - Exchange price for MC from above companies

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WORLD WINNERS 2002

Here's our round up the best products of the year.

A/V AMPLIFIERS

CYRUS AV8

£1,100.00



The AV8 is essentially the AV5 with the bugs ironed out. Visually almost identical, it's housed in the same inverted half-width (73x215x360mm) alloy case with large backlit green LC display. Inside, its predecessor's 40VA toroidal PSU is retained but the circuitry is tweaked for an improved signal to noise ratio, with better clocking for lower jitter. The former's Spartan feature set is bolstered by Dolby Pro Logic II (which brings separate full bandwidth surround channel decoding, configurable for either movies or music). This is worth having, but it's hardly earth-shattering stuff. Audiophiles know that DTS is where it's happening right now, the omission of DTS-ES Extended Surround is a shame. Still, better sub bass bandwidth, improved MC-BUS software, an enhanced bass management system and new DTS mixdown options are added. Best of all for us two-channel migrants is the new provision of a 'stereo and sub' mode, which lets you run multichannel sources into ye olde two-channel hi-fi speaker pairs.

In 5.1 channel line-level mode, the extra resolution from a DVD-A pressing of America's 'Homecoming' really got the Cyrus singing. Whereas your average £2,000 Japanese AV amp sounds edgy and forward with high resolution digital, the AV8 positively shone, giving a beautifully full and open performance. Treble was sweet and atmospheric, with plenty of air and space. Midband was vast, with a walkaround soundstage, and bass full and powerful. A great performance, and head and shoulders above its non-specialist competition. DTS sound was great - rich and sweet and rhythmically very involving. I'd always recommend searching out movies encoded in DTS over Dolby.

This product is a great bridge for two-channel users wishing to go multi-channel. Unless you're running a high-end specialist

preamp (of Michell Orca quality, or thereabouts), you'll lose little if any quality by switching to the AV8, and it will improve on the preamp stages of most integrations. The bonus is, of course, that you'll also have full 5.1 channel capability (for movies or music) and DTS decoding (which is a boon for music-only multichannel devotees) which betters practically any foreign competition in sonic, ergonomic and aesthetic terms. Short of spending £2,500 on Naim's superb AV2 (which is £1,400 more than the Cyrus), I can think of few multichannel preamps than even come close. A true audiophile bargain.

Cyrus Electronics Ltd.
Tel: +44 (0) 1480 435577
www.cyrus.audio.com

MARANTZ PS17

£2000.00

Indeed, you get some of the best of both worlds. With its large volume control twisted a fair way clockwise, the PS17 showed no signs of strain pushing my hard-to-drive Yamaha monitors to very high levels. To be fair, the VSA-AX10 goes considerably louder still, albeit with less finesse. The Eagles 'Hotel California' on DVD-A showed its bass to be much tighter and faster than my reference World Audio K5881, although it still kept a degree of its fluidity. The result is a punchy and powerful sound that's more beguiling and fluid than many of its two-channel rivals.

Further up the frequency spectrum, the PS17 isn't quite as detailed as I remember the Pioneer being, proving just a little 'oversmooth'. However, like a good valve amp, it's very adept at separating out the different textures of instruments. In other respects it's a little behind its Japanese rival - image placement isn't as exactly accurate, low level detail isn't as forensically excavated, and there's less sense of a sense of the recorded acoustic falling back to the horizon.

Despite this, the PS17 is still far more musically convincing. Once again it comes back to the natural, cohesive, unforced, (dare I say it) 'organic' way it lets the music flow past you. Treble quality was pure 'PM17' - silky, even when it's not supposed to be! Nice though it is, the phrase 'airbrushed' did cross my mind.

Hooked up to a pair of SM17s, the PS17

makes a cracking multichannel amplifier. The onboard processor is excellent, offering fine sound from DTS and Dolby Digital. A DTS 5.1 disc of 'Wings' 'Band on the Run' was a joy, brilliantly musically engaging with bags of power, grip, punch and poise.

Done properly in this way, multichannel is very hard to argue with. Once again, that midband really made the Marantz combo a joy - smooth but with loads of textural detailing, it really lets the music's flavour flood out. Paul McCartney's voice was brilliantly full, and rich, and raw.

I am deeply, deeply impressed with this product. It bridges the gap between two-channel and five-point-one brilliantly. It has more features than I've room to go into here, beautiful build and finish, and most importantly superb sound. It gives only a little away to the likes of, say, a Cyrus 7/PSX-R in stereo mode but can be easily upgraded to a serious surround set-up. In a sense, it's what many dyed-in-the-grain audiophiles will have been waiting for - a painless path to multichannel.

Marantz UK Ltd
Tel: +44 (0) 1753 6880868
www.marantz.co.uk

CARTRIDGES

LINN ADIKT

£195.00



The Adikt sounds superb. It's an altogether more sophisticated performer than the K9 of yore, with a very smooth and even character that still - in true Linn style - cuts straight to the rhythmic chase. Cue up Be Bop Deluxe's 'Modern Music' and you get an impressively expansive soundstage inside which there's a vast amount of detail vying to get out. Bass is dry alright, but considerably warmer and more willing than the K9.

Moving up to the midband, and there's no hint of its predecessor's glare or hardness. Okay, so it's not the softest and mellowest around, but this is still a very even performer

with a particularly grippy nature. Rarely have I heard the rhythm guitars in Corduroy's 'Don't Wait for Monday' so enthusiastically carried. It's as if this cartridge goes straight for the song's jugular, and throws bags of light on it instead of trying to strangle it. Factor its incredible ability go loud then quiet 'at the drop of a hat' and you've got an extremely agile and willing performer.

Treble performance is good, but doesn't match the Dynavector DV10x4, which is altogether more spacious and airy, and also blessed with a delightfully warm nature. By contrast the Adikt is dry and analytical, but such is the massive amount of midband detailing that it doesn't sound out of place.

Downsides? Very few. Indeed, I'd say the Adikt is neck-to-neck with the class of the sub-£200 field (the Dynavector) and in some ways better. Ultimately, it lacks the latter's tonal palette, but makes up for it with an incredibly big hearted, musical sound with bags and detail and decent refinement too. This makes an extremely persuasive case for you to upgrade your old Linn MM, or simply to get a great new cartridge that plays your records with passion. This is a piece of quality hi-fi that, like Ortofon's Kontrapunkt MC models, also has a great element of fun to it. It gets up and boogies but doesn't get on your nerves; your only wish is to join it. It's a cartridge I could get used to.

Linn Products Ltd
Tel: +44 (0)141 307 7777
www.linn.co.uk

CD PLAYERS

ARCAM FMJ CD23 £1149



Feed the FMJ natural acoustic recordings, such as Lee Morgan's 'The Rajah' - using little more than a pair of crossed mics and a tape whirring away at 15ips - and you begin to suspect that this player sprinkles magic dust on everything it touches. It goes right for the musical jugular and lets the sun shine in. Put against the Naim CD5, and you begin to see what it's doing wrong. Bass is a touch too warm and possesses a little bit too much overhang, the treble is just a little too good (i.e. sweet) to be true and there's a subtle flattening of dynamics.

The new Arcam FMJ CD23 is not dramatically better than its forbear, but the mods have still injected some welcome bite and punch into what was already an extremely fulfilling listen. This player knows the

difference between 'thoroughly recreating' the music and deconstructing it, whereas some of its more superficially detailed and punchy rivals do not. Better than ever, if you want a jack of all trades and master of many for under £1200, I can think of no other machine which comes close.

A&R Cambridge Ltd.
Tel: +44 (0)1223 203203
www.arcam.co.uk

AUDIO ANALOGUE MAESTRO £1500.00



A great, smooth player with digital input capability as a bonus. Using an external transport in the shape of Meridian's 506.24 and a NAD T500 DVD player the Maestro showed what a fine DAC section it has, exploring every avenue of detail and bringing real presence and life into the NAD especially, and agility to the Meridian.

Recommended then? Definitely. There's strong competition at the price from Arcam's FMJCD23T (good coherence) and Meridian's 506.24 (plenty of insight). Whilst it doesn't have the insight of the latter it also doesn't suffer from the sluggish bass than can occur with some recordings. It has all the coherence of the Arcam, though, with a little more lyricism to my ear, too. Although it looks like a monster it doesn't sound like one and is surprisingly smooth and subtle at times. At £1,500 it stands as a fine buy, with a pleasing, all round sound that takes the 'everyday player' appeal one step further. It's not quite up there with the awesome 3D Nu-vista when it comes to overall detail but at half its price it's by no means out of the running and competes easily on the build front.

UKD
Tel: +44 (0)1753 652669
www.ukd.co.uk

NAD 5411 £329.95

Moving up the range, the midband is beautifully clean. I was impressed with the lack of distortion - there's little sense of any 'mush' or 'haze'. Instead, you get a clear, open and expressive midband that lets the music flood out. By the standards of its price class, it's superb - I don't think I've heard anything come close. Maybe the Rega Planet 2000 (£200 more expensive) betters it, but not by much. Images are big and strong and wide and tall - this CD player is a confident, 'out there' performer. Again, by £1000 standards, you notice a slight lack of grip and imaging

precision, and a subtle curtailing of depth perspective.

Air's 'All I Need' showcased the NAD's superb treble. Just as you'd expect from the marque, it's silky sweet (perhaps too much so) and extremely pleasant to listen to. Ultimately you could say it lacks air and space, but again it's nine tenths as good as you'll get from a high end player. Its lack of splash is also particularly impressive for a player at this price - ride cymbals are a joy to behold. Factor in strong dynamics, plenty of speed, lots of grip, fine detailing and the ability to recreate a soundstage convincingly and this player does a lot for the money. The HDCD facility is icing on the cake - it sounded quite superb playing the remastered re-release of Talking Heads' 'Stop Making Sense'.

'Hi-Fi' details aside, the best part of the NAD's performance is the way it knits every element in the mix into an extremely cohesive and musically convincing whole. This player isn't obsessed with detail retrieval like rival Japanese designs, and has a good deal more zest and refinement than its rather bland sounding British price rivals. The result is great music for a relatively modest outlay.

Lenbrook UK,
Tel: +44 (0)1908 319360
www.nadelectronics.com

REGA JUPITER 2000 £998



True, compared to the likes of Naim's CD5 it's just a tad polite, but the overall effect blends well with the Jupiter's sweet, clean and enveloping mid-band. Indeed, female voices are a joy - there's no hint of shrillness and this player gets surprisingly close to their grains and textures.

Very 'analogue', the Jupiter goes deep to the heart and soul of the music, leaving very little to criticise behind. The treble is possibly a little over-sweet, and the bass is a tad overblown and detached - but the mid-band is a joy to behold.

The biggest problem I have with the new Jupiter 2000 is its Planet 2000 little brother. Although the former has a noticeably more generous bass and a more organic mid-band, the latter is just so ridiculously good at the price that it almost makes you want to pocket the cash and go for the cheapie. On its own terms though it's superb - one of the very best at the price.

Rega Research Ltd,
Tel: +44 (0)1702 333071
www.rega.co.uk

ROTEL RCD 1070

£525.00



It was quite surprising to find just how upfront Nelly Furtado's 'Turn Off The Light' sounded. Such was the presence given by the Rotel to her vocals that, at times they could sound just a little too forward. Yet, thanks again to that expansive sound stage, the vocals never managed to sound out of proportion. The deep chested bass response pushed the track along with plenty of gusto although, somewhat curiously, this didn't prevent the impression of slightly turgid timing. There didn't seem to be anything fundamentally wrong here. Just a slight lack of pizzazz compared with a few rivals.

There were no such problems with Vaughan Williams's Intermezzo (My Bonny Boy). The '1070 seemed made for just such mellifluous Classical music. Despite a slight gloss to the strings, the music ebbed and flowed from the Rotel in an effortless manner. It proved delicate and articulate when needed, yet with plenty in reserve for the more dynamic moments. Furthermore, there was a seamlessness throughout the frequency response that led greatly towards a sense of realism.

In conclusion, the Rotel is one of the finest CD players that I've heard for sometime. Indeed I would go so far to say that, at this price, it is the finest no question. When one considers the not unimpressive competition from Marantz, Arcam and others this is no mean achievement. Yet none of these rivals can quite match the Rotel's combination of knock out punch, control and sublime refinement. Best of all, it doesn't seem to matter what the music genre is, the Rotel will always give of its best, remaining captivating even after a prolonged listening session. My only real gripes concern an occasional lack of 'bounce' that can sometimes slow the timing down. Also, there was the odd occasion when the balance was perhaps just a little too smooth. Otherwise, though, this is a superb sounding machine that's solidly built and great value for money.

B & W Ltd.

Tel: +44 (0)1903 221500

www.bwspeakers.com

CD RECORDERS

LACIE FUSION

£151.75

The Lacie Fusion is an external CD writer for PCs that possesses the new USB 2.0 interface. It has a 24x12x40x mech, which

means it can record a full CD in less than 4 minutes, meaning data backup can be performed at 12x and the drive reads CDs at 40x. It weighs 570g, and measures a highly portable 35x130x173 mm.

USB 2.0, lest we forget, means it's hot-pluggable (so it connects to any USB-equipped computer and can easily be shared between users, and is easily installed in a few seconds without rebooting) and also a lot faster than the original USB 1.1 generation of devices. USB 2.0 is expected to gradually come as standard on new PCs. Forty times faster than USB 1.1, the new interface delivers transfer rates of up to 480 Mbits/sec while retaining backward compatibility with USB 1.1 controllers. When plugged into a USB 1.1 port, the LaCie Fusion downshifts to 4x4x6x speeds.

The package comes complete with an international power supply, USB 2 cable, and user manuals on CD. It's also bundled with Easy CD Creator for Windows 98SE/2000/ME/XP, and a two-year warranty. It's easy to use - just switch on and plug in, and your Windows OS says it's detected new software and is searching for the drivers. Point it in the direction of the supplied set-up CD, and you're off - simple as that. Then it's just a case of loading the supplied EzCD 5 CD authoring software. This, as regular readers will know, is a fine piece of code, but it's tailored for ease of use, rather than 'power users'. To wit, if you want to know where every sector of the data you're writing is going, you'll have to get Nero instead.

The LaCie works brilliantly. It feels great to use and burns fine sounding CDs, but as always if it's audio CDs you're burning it's safest to keep the speeds down. Sound is excellent - clean and smooth with just the merest scintilla of blurring and softening of the soundstage. If FireWire and BURN-Proof functionality aren't at the top of your list, then this is the one. Beautiful!

www.lacie.co.uk

NAD C660

£349



Ironically, the NAD's copying abilities far exceed its replay capability. At 1x speed the NAD makes incredibly close copies - with just the merest scintilla of coloration. The stereo image recedes back towards the plane of the speakers a tad, bass is just a touch looser and treble loses a touch of atmosphere. Crank the old girl up to 4x and things barely change - there's just a fraction

more clouding and lack of bite. Ironically though, through the C660 none of these differences are audible - it's only when you fire up something of the calibre of, say, a Cyrus CD7/PSX-R that you notice anything. Even through the CD12 with the volume at top whack it was hard to tell the difference.

Another piece of budget esoterica from NAD, then. My thinking goes thus: If you want to get into the CD recording game, then why not buy a double decker? If you're going to buy a double decker, then this is the one to have. Use it by itself and it makes perfectly nice noises, or plug it into a decent DAC and make it sing like a thousand quid CD player. If you've already got a respectable silver disc spinner, then you can just use the NAD for copying duties, which it will perform four times faster than any single deck CD recorder. Now, before I dissolve in a puff of logic, I shall retire to spin off three copies of the new 4hero album - all for my own use, officer.

Lenbrook UK Ltd. Unit 2,

www.lenbrook.co.uk

DVD RECORDER

PANASONIC DMR-E30 £999



Audio sound quality was very good, from CDs and from recordings. Bass drive was reasonably firm and there was quite a good sense of clarity and time domain resolution. I really couldn't seriously fault the machine in this area, even though audio is not its primary function. It is a very respectable audio recorder all the same, far better than cassette and little different from a normal CD recorder, excepting good ones costing £350 or more. Most people will not want to record a few megabytes of audio permanently to a £25 4.7GB cartridge I'm sure. However, it has the flexibility to provide audio-only recording, whilst also acting as a good quality CD player, as well as being a video player and recorder. That's a lot of ability and it's all handled very slickly.

This is a well honed, quality DVD recorder at a competitive price. Whether buyers will accept DVD-RAM cartridge prices, which remain stubbornly high, is the big question hanging over this DVD recording format.

Panasonic UK Ltd.

Tel: +44 (0)1344 86244

www.panasonic.co.uk

DIGITAL AUDIO RECORDER

TERRATEC CAR4000

£700



The Terratec Car4000 is a hard disk drive based digital audio recorder (that records up to 540 hours of 128kbps mp3), a CD player of no small ability and a digital jukebox for thousands of compressed music tracks (its 40GB capacity is so large that space isn't really a consideration). It boasts onboard analogue to digital converters, meaning you can record direct onto its hard disk via the stereo RCA phono inputs, to record radio for example, or capture speech from a microphone to quarter inch (i.e. 6.3mm) jack sockets. Alternatively, you can take a direct digital line in, bypassing the onboard converters completely, to record from an external DAT or MiniDisc player.

In playback mode, the CAR4000 sounds quite nice. It's obviously curtailed at frequency extremes (particularly the treble), resulting in a very smooth (overly, perhaps) character. Bass is rich and fulsome, albeit lacking in grip and articulation. It is, however, very tuneful - making Fun Lovin' Criminal's eponymous album track riotously good fun. In a sense, it reminded me of the old, first generation of CD players, such was its warm, bouncy and musical character. Listen hard for midband detail and you may be disappointed. It's a little fuzzier and less transparent than, say, a NAD C521, but the big, wide, expansive stereo image sort of makes up for it. Hook the unit up to an external DAC or decoder however, and you can bypass its warm and woolly nature and get a very fine sound out, using it as a transport only.

Its uncompressed recording was no less satisfying. Frankly, the internal DACs weren't really able to discern the difference between the original and the recording, but via a high quality outboard Sony unit, just the slightest thinning of the soundstage and lightening of the bass was evident. Still, this is so subtle that it's hard to complain, especially considering the price.

MP3 recording was excellent too. It's unclear as to whether the Fraunhofer codec has been used (it certainly sounds like it, though), but it still does a very good job at bitrates of 192kbps and higher.

Overall, Terratec's CAR4000 is a fine machine. Compared to its deadliest rival, Onkyo's Music Bank, it has a less fussy user interface, a better display, warmer and smoother sound and greater recording

flexibility. The only place it fails is finish, which is a bit 'agricultural'.

Website: www.terratec.com

DIGITAL AUDIO PLAYERS

APPLE IPOD

£329



Apple's iPod is an important product for two reasons. First, it's a brilliant bit of kit in its own right that raises the digital walkie game still higher. Second - and more importantly - it's further confirmation, as if we needed it, of which way the wind is blowing for both the recording and IT industries. Here we see one of the computer business's most influential players (with a tremendous canon of innovative design behind it) going out on a limb to bring digital music to the masses. And when it's Apple, you just know it's gonna be tasty!

The iPod plays music in MP3 and MP3 VBR (variable bit rate) formats at up to 320kbps, as well as AIF and WAV formats. Shame there's no support for AAC though, although this should only be a matter of time. Certainly, there's upgradeable firmware for precisely this reason. Interestingly, Apple has paid attention to the non-headline matters of the analogue output stage - iPod is equipped with a (relatively) beefy 60mW amplifier and even the bundled headphones have half-decent neodymium magnets for better sound. The package also includes the aforementioned iTunes 2 CD, FireWire cable and FireWire-based power adapter.

Apple Store 0800 039 1010.
www.apple.com/ukstore

FRONTIER LABS NEX II

£110

The new NEX sounds much like the old one, which is no bad thing. Essentially it has a warm and sumptuous sound - not a million miles from Philips' Rush SA126 in fact - which makes MP3s of all qualities and bitrates perfectly listenable. Crank up your ripper to 320kbps and use a Fraunhofer codec, and Bob's your Chinese Uncle - the sound becomes sweet, clean and very powerful with fine imaging and a good, musical character. There are far more expensive players which impress less. A fine design then, and incredibly cheap if you buy it online (via secure server) from -

www.frontierlabs.com.

ONKYO MB-S1

£1200.00



For the price, the Music Bank sounds absolutely superb. Ultimately it is not equipped with the world's best digital converters, so don't expect Linn CD12 levels of performance unless you pipe the audiostream out to an external DAC. However, even via its internal hardware you get a very smooth, sophisticated and sweet musical performance that's almost worthy of being mentioned in the same breath as, say, Arcam's FMJ CD23. This means a decently tight but enjoyably warm bassline, a very smooth and open midband and sweet, silky highs. It's 'hi-fi' in the nicest sense - refined and texturally sophisticated.

As a recorder it is superb - via the digital line in from a Sony TC-D8 DAT source, the MB-S1 shows excellent fidelity to the original. In the top uncompressed PCM mode, there's just a tiny softening and flattening of the stereo perspective, but don't let that put you off - I've yet to hear any digital recorder that doesn't do this. More importantly though, the Onkyo retains the rhythms, dynamics, detail and scale of the recording brilliantly. Likewise, recording uncompressed via the internal CD drive, the results are superb - virtually indistinguishable from the original with just a slight lightening of the bass.

No less impressive is the Music Bank's compressed audio performance - at 192kbps it introduces only a slight 'fuzzing' and clouding of the original. Tonally it's fractionally brighter with bass losing a smidgen of its energy and articulation. Images lose some definition and the soundstage doesn't fall back so convincingly. Old 'tape heads' will best understand the effect as being like using a Ferric tape instead of a full-price Metal on their Nakamichis! Frankly though, I've heard uncompressed PCM sound far worse through cheap CD players.

Aside from the slightly fiddly control layout, cluttered and poorly legible display, there's little to criticise in the MB-S1. It was obviously designed by serious computer audio users and MP3 fans to boot - the 'care and attention' speaks volumes. It's a brilliant product then, with massive potential - it does the job of a CD player, CD multichanger, MiniDisc recorder and DAT deck all in one. This, plus a cheap separate hi-fi CD recorder (or indeed computer CD burner) would be a dynamite combination.

Jamo UK Ltd,
Tel: +44 (0)1788 556777
www.onkyo.net

SOFTWARE

STEINBERG CLEAN 3.0 PLUS £69.99



It was back in 1999 that Computer Audio World reviewed the first incarnation of Steinberg Clean! Since then it has lost its exclamation mark and gained two revisions, the latest of which - version 3.0 - is tested here.

For those unfamiliar with the original, Clean is an 'audio restoration' tool that lets you record your distressed LPs onto your computer's hard drive, process them and then burn them to CD-R using your CD-writer. The package isn't designed just for vinyl though - because Clean also works its magic on old cassette and open reel tapes, and even iffy-sounding MP3 music files downloaded from the internet.

Clean 3.0 works superbly - if used sparingly. Simply cranking all the effects up to maximum will make any music sound like it was recorded in a bathroom through a rack of old rock guitar effects pedals. If you go easy and take some time to get it right, however, you'll be amazed at the music's new found clarity and lustre. Settings suitably attuned, as you go through processing each track, the program builds up a playlist for you automatically. When you're done, you can click on the CD-R/CREATE CD-R menu and watch Clean even burn the CD for you.

A brilliant package then, but there's a caveat - the more effects you run, the more your PC will struggle. If you exceed your machine's processing ability, it will start skipping like a scratched record. I found my 750MHz Pentium III with 128MB RAM could just about handle it, but anything less simply isn't enough - for heavy duty work you need a beefy PC.

Steinberg Media Technologies AG
Tel: +44(0)1256 70 77 67
www.steinberg.net

STEINBERG CUBASIS VST 3.0 £59.95

It's true that Cubasis can be used without recourse to the instruction manual, but if you're doing anything seriously then a bit of bedtime reading is definitely in order. Once you've added all your tracks, sounds and MIDI music parts, you save it as a song, arrangement or part, which can then be

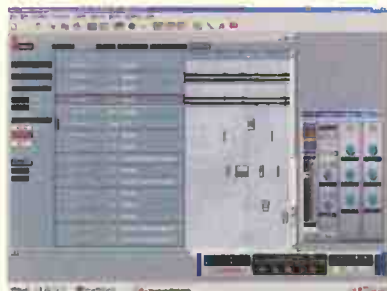
burned onto CD using the supplied Master Unit software. With up to 48 audio channels and 64 MIDI tracks, you do need some practice to get to give its best.

Essentially then, Cool Edit 2000 and Cubasis VST 3.0 are designed for subtly different users. DV jockeys already using serious video editing applications - and who want the audio equivalent - will love Cool Edit.

Steinberg's Cubasis VST does far more - it's all you need for quite intricate soundtracks for your video masterpiece. It combines audio recordings with MIDI and music pretty seamlessly, then lets you burn it to CD. It will even make straight digital copies of music and import MP3 files. That it isn't too far behind CE 2000 in the pure audio stakes is a tribute to the depth and breadth of this package

www.steinberg.de

STEINBERG MYMP3PRO £34.99



MP3 Pro uses MP3's coding algorithm to take care of the lower frequencies, along with SBR for the highs. Since this latter 'bolt on' bit needs only a few kbps, it affords backwards compatibility with existing MP3 codecs which simply ignore the SBR part. The problem is that conventional MP3 codecs playing MP3 Pro files won't be able to handle the SBR aspect, and as a result could sound muffled. The thinking goes that 'reasonable compatibility' with the world's most popular compressed audio format is better than nothing at all - which is precisely what its rival AAC affords! New players supporting MP3Pro technology will of course utilise both parts of the new format to take full advantage of the 'Pro' enhancement, since this is still an important part of the new format.

There's a freely downloadable demo of MP3 Pro available from Thomson's website. The company reports that the general consensus of opinion is that the quality of 64 kbps MP3 Pro is similar to 96-128 kbps MP3. This then means that you can get nearly twice the amount of music on a portable or MP3 CD player with MP3 Pro. Thomson says that the forthcoming MP3 Pro CD players will be able to cram over 300 songs on a single compressed CD-R. Its creators claim that at lower bit rates the new format is ideal for

web casting and Internet radio, while at higher bit rates it's perfect for high quality audio transmission and storage. The first MP3 Pro products will offer 24, 32, 40 and 48 kbps mono bitrates, along with 32, 40, 48, 56, 64, 80, 96 kbps. For more information, click on: www.mp3prozone.com/

SYSTEMS

DENON UD-M30 £300 DENON SC-M50 £70



We were mightily impressed with this little package. Any hi-fi fanatic wishing to set up a system in the bedroom/kitchen/study etc. will be pleasantly surprised by the UD-M30 and SC-M50 'speakers. The combination gives a clean and detailed performance, to which the 'speakers contribute much. In this respect Denon's little system is the best option around £300 by far, showing that one-box CD receivers are not the also-rans they were in the past.

Hayden Labs
Tel: +44 (0) 1753 888447

LINN CLASSIK MOVIE SYSTEM £1995.00

Retailing for £1,995 the CMS is a lot more expensive than the original Classik, but it does a lot more too. Its 80x320x325mm dimensions and 5kg weight are pretty similar, but inside you'll find a fully featured DVD player (which plays CDs too, obviously) and a 5.1 channel preamp with a host of facilities (which can also work in standard 2-channel stereo). There's also full Dolby Digital, Dolby Pro-Logic and DTS decoding, a high quality stereo radio tuner with 80 definable presets and a 5 channel power amp offering 40W (into 8ohms) per speaker output.

Running through the CMS's own pre and power amps, things were no less impressive. Being a multi-channel amp in a small box, you wouldn't expect thunderous levels of power, but you do get a very taut, grippy and fast sound that retains the refinement of the source. There's a good deal of depth and space to the recorded acoustic, with strongly articulated stereo images and a fine sense of proportion. Dynamics are great - given benign speaker loads this little box goes surprisingly loud with little sign of stress.

Like its audio-only little brother, the new Classik sounds far better than any budget hi-fi

amplifier - you'd have to get into £500 plus territory to really improve on it. In absolute terms, it's a little dry and lacking in tonal colour, and the addition of a separate power amp wouldn't hurt with less sensitive speakers, but - considering what it does for the money - it's almost churlish to criticise. As you'd expect, FM and AM sound was excellent - streets ahead of the rubbish you get from your average one-boxers.

Without doubt, this is a genuinely important and special product - it will probably do more to bring audiophiles into the DVD fold than any other to date.

Linn Products Ltd.
Tel: +44 (0)141 307 7777
www.linn.co.uk

RED ROSE SPIRIT SYSTEM £2000.00

Whatever you choose, the Red Rose Spirit system has practically all the sonic benefits of more exotic kit at the sort of price tag normally populated by me-too humble stuff. In fact, it gets to within a hair's whisker of The Rosette/Rosebud kit reviewed in these pages at the start of the year, but shaving almost four grand off the asking price! Oh, the joys of mass-production.

It's a fabulously open, holographic sound with a touch of warmth and a lot of beauty. If you want to experience three-dimensional sound without resort to electrostatics and OTL amps, this gets you closer than it has hitherto been possible at the price. You get a decently wide, extremely deep soundstage with even some semblance of image height. Stick on something well-recorded with a fine soundstage - Ruben Gonzalez for example - and the Spirit has Tardis-like expansion qualities to the living room. This fine soundstaging is partnered with a highly listenable, lovely sound. It is warm for solid state gear, but not so warm that it masks information dramatically. It is clear and slightly rich sounding too. All of which adds up to a sound that is extremely natural and pleasing. So you can play disc after disc without the merest hint of fatigue.

Better still, in the average British living room, this is all the speaker you will need unless you live for organ music or dub reggae. It goes surprisingly deep for a small, free space box.

So, why buy anything more expensive? The Spirit system is not the most detailed kit on the planet: rich and warm yes, clean, definitely, but absolutely detailed, no. You never get that feeling on knowing what gauge of strings the guitarist is using or what colour socks the conductor likes to wear that real high-end detail freaks crave. This is where it ultimately differs from the far more expensive Rosette/Rosebud pairing.

Nor is this the system for those so tied to the rhythmic qualities of a piece of music they try to tap their foot to a dial tone. And, as you move higher up the Red Rose price list, so you get more of what proves so attractive in the Spirit system in the first place; warmth, beauty and holographic imaging.

For £2,000, the Spirit system is a steal. Put simply, you need to spend double to get a similar level of high-endity, at least in purely sonic virtues.

The Musical Design Company
Tel: +44 (0)1992 573030
www.redrosemusic.com

DVD PLAYERS

DENON DVD-A1 £2499.00



This behemoth build DVD-Audio player is a highly impressive performer with the new high-res format. It has the extension of space, the air and the majesty that is possible. DVD-A discs sound impressively realistic.

What then of its 16/44 performance? This was another impressive area, to say the least. Let's get this straight - it's not the best CD player around, but it has a damn good go at playing these nasty little eighties throwback frisbees. I'd put it into the territory of Arcam's CD23 - possibly just below - which is no mean feat. Once again, that bass impresses. The Clash's 'London Calling' proved that a bit of that DVD-A magic is still there when it's asked to reproduce more primitive formats. It's deep and strong alright, although there's a slight softening and slowing too.

The midband is again smooth and sweet with oodles of detail, and a very conscientious effort is made to recreate the recorded acoustic.

The DVD-A1 is by far the best DVD-Audio player I've heard so far. I reckon the now discontinued Marantz SA-1 SACD spinner might teach it a thing or two about subtlety, delicacy and musicality, but what the Denon lacks in this area it makes up in authority, poise, power, grip, control and punch. But then, the Marantz cost twice as much - and didn't play movies, either. That's the strength of this player. If you were going to buy a decent DVD video player anyway, then spending a bit extra for superb sonics seems eminently sensible. You'll certainly find yourself buying loads of new discs - a week with the Denon has got me rummaging

around Vivante's website - which is the classic sign of a great machine.

Hayden Laboratories Ltd.
Tel: +44 (0)1753 888447

DENON DVD 1600 £499.00

No doubt about it - this is brilliant value. After all, why buy a standard DVD video player when you can get one that does the movie bit and gives dramatically better sonics from DVD-A discs? I get the feeling that DVD Audio will be on every DVD player within a year or two, and more and more we'll be able to hear the difference between all the respective machines. I got far better sound from the DVD-1600 simply by sticking a few lumps of sorbothane under its feet, and a flat square of the stuff on top of that very flimsy, resonant casing. As manufacturers struggle to slash build costs, I can foresee a whole new tweaking fad start around these machines!

Thoroughly recommended then, if you're sure that DVD-A is where you want to be - but don't expect it, or any other machines like it, to sound perfect out of the box. Digital audio has now come a long way - far enough for us to see clearly what a long, long way it still has to go!

Hayden Laboratories Ltd
Tel: 01753 888447

NAD T531 £330.00



Tonally, the T531 is NAD through and through - which means warm and sugary, even if the original recording isn't. It's a great characteristic to have for a budget CD spinner, because the ancillaries are likely to be rough - but through higher-end kit it can often sound a bit samey and predictable. Nevertheless, Lonnie Smith's 'Think!' - a nicely judged late sixties Blue Note recording - sounded fantastic. Frequency extremes and image location could have been better, but the song's emotional force and delicate rhythms were carried surprisingly well. As a video player it's tops too, with a clear and lucid picture, as a DVD of New Order revealed. Colours were natural and functions such as pause and fast forward operated well.

It's a top little deck, the T531. NAD is right to claim its status as a legitimate piece of hi-fi - it sounds better than many budget

CD-only Sonys, Pioneers and Marantz's at (almost) the same price - and of course plays DVD movies beautifully.

UK Ltd.
Tel: +44 (0)1908 319360
www.lenbrook.co.uk

MERIDIAN 800V3

£10,295



Very little equipment that enters the HFW portals is greeted with a stunned silence as it emerges from the box but the 800/861 combination almost demands it. The look, never mind the theory, behind the 800/861 combination is awesome. It's only when you start to even comprehend a mere fraction of what's going on inside that you realise just how awesome it is. Here is one very, very serious example of both high fidelity and digital engineering - the 800 DVD-Audio/Video player is quite possibly the most technically advanced optical disc player in existence.

Another important feature in the 800 is its upsampling capability where a complex digital filter doubles the rate of samples from the source so that the system that follows can produce the sound more accurately. So CD information, for example, starts at 44.1kHz/16-bit and the Meridian proprietary DSP upsamples this to 88.2kHz and 24-bit. DVDs with 48kHz sampling are upsampled to 96kHz and 24-bit. It can handle sampling frequencies of up to 192kHz and the output analogue cards use a very high quality, studio grade digital-to-analogue conversion system.

The 800 is, of course, a very high quality DVD video player which has an optional progressive output card for improved picture quality with less shimmer, and it also has a translation feature for PAL or NTSC for those displays that don't support one of the formats. It will decode Dolby Digital and DTS DVD video discs and provide both multichannel and two channel outputs.

It's both very easy to sum this up, yet very difficult! Obviously, it's frighteningly expensive, but then again, lest we forget, so are many cars that you get shot of in three years and will have depreciated by an equivalent amount.

This isn't a transitory gadget - it's more an investment for the soul! Soundwise, it's

perhaps not ultimately as ultra-detailed and intricate as the very top, similarly priced super high-end hi-fi I've heard, but to me it's more musical. What's important is that you never lose sight of the fact that this is for edification and enjoyment, as opposed to hi-fi for hi-fi's sake - techno-religion where the 'listener' kneels at the shrine of the blessed rack and pays more attention to the manual than the music.

Overall, the 800 is perhaps the finest overall CD player I've ever laid ears on. When you consider that there are some CD-only players round that demand this outlay, the price tag doesn't seem all that eye-watering. In the past I've been lucky enough to be in close proximity to top class orchestras banging out the best music, and at times this combination with DVD-Audio discs honestly brought me the closest to the experience than any other hi-fi system I've encountered. And that is no mean feat.

With the enjoyment I've experienced from using this system, I'd buy it tomorrow if I was in the position to. However, like many others, I can't. Unless I become President of the World Bank overnight, sell my family into slavery or poison any wealthy relatives!

Meridian Audio Ltd.
Tel: +44 (0)14880 445678
www.meridian-audio.com

PHILIPS DVD 962SA

£399

It was with some Chesky 24/96 DVD Video demonstration discs that the potential advantages of higher resolution recording became most clear, showing what the Philips could do. Clarity and dynamics take a whole step up. Playing tracks like Rebecca Pidgeon's MacDougall's Men (24/96 stereo) this player gave the sort of conspicuous dynamics you would hope to hear from a medium that claims to be better than CD. Unfortunately, it is early days for high resolution recordings; there are few that can show what is possible and they are on demo discs - not usually the most entertaining performances. And that was the difficulty I had with judging the 962SA as a stereo SACD player. If you want SACD for surround-sound then its benefits will be obvious enough, but at present the SACDs I have show no clear benefit over 24/96, largely due to the quality of the masters used it appears. Until they do I can't make a judgement on SACD quality other than to say at present it sounds clean and nice, but isn't a match for 24/96 from DVD Video. But the 962SA plays both, as well as CD, so it has a broad span of ability.

What the Philips does not play is DVD Audio discs - which is not to say it won't play them! DVD is nothing but confusing. Some of these discs have extra DVD Video tracks, in

Dolby stereo or PCM, just so they will play on any DVD Video machine. Playing a DTS demo disc of Larisa Stow, the 962SA showed Dolby D2 (i.e. Digital 2ch.) on its display and replayed what is compressed (i.e. data reduced) stereo. It sounded clean, enormously detailed and dynamic. Transferring this disc to a Denon DVD1600 to play the 24/96 version did show, however, just how much more detailed this coding can be.

As a video player the machine worked well. Connected up by Scart it gave fine picture quality and has a whole host of trick functions.

This is a great player. It provides superb sound quality from CD, DVD Video tracks and SACD. Not only does it resolve CD well, but it also clearly delivers the enhanced dynamics, richer detailing and more open sound of enhanced coding schemes. Up to now, too many players have been unable to do this, their circuits tending to compress and fudge over differences. If you are in the market for a DVD video player or a CD player - get this machine! It's dramatic.

Philips Consumer Electronics UK
Tel: +44(0)20 8665 6350
www.ce.philips.co.uk

PIONEER DV-747A

£700



The downside of the Pioneer's DVD-A performance is that it still sounds 'digital' - it's a long way from the beautifully beguiling, natural and organic performance you get from vinyl.

Switching to SACD somewhat alleviates this sense - although it doesn't go as far as it could. My favourite DSD SACD disc right now is Marvin Gaye's 'Midnight Love'. This is not because it's a seminal hi-fi recording - it isn't - but thanks to the great music which shines through with top players like Marantz's SA-1. The DV-747 proved surprisingly adept at carrying 'Sexual Healing'; the contrast between the gritty early drum machine and Marvin's velveteen voice was striking. Here the Pioneer really 'emoted', and I found myself locked into the music rather than the whizz-bang hi-fi quality of DVD-A. Tonally, the 747 is smoother and duller with SACD than DVD-A, with a richer, fuller bass and wider, less precise soundstage - this seems to reflect the relative differences between the two formats in general.

This machine is neither the world's best DVD-A player or SACD spinner, but it sounds way better than CD all the same. Its

impressive fidelity with either format, plus its raft of other abilities, makes it superb value for money. It's very hard to find a reason not to buy Pioneer's new DV-747A.

Pioneer UK Ltd.
Tel: 01753 789789
www.pioneer.co.uk

INTEGRATED AMPLIFIERS

ARCAM FMJ A32 £1099.00



You don't expect valve levels of tonal accuracy from a product like this, but I still feel it rather steamrollered through the proceedings at the expense of a good deal of subtlety. Nor did it prove the most delicate reproducer of acoustic cymbals - things sounded just a touch too genetically modified for my liking.

This is the key to the A32. It's not the most transparent or self-effacing performer at the price, preferring to play music with great gusto and a fine sense of fun, regardless of what's actually on the disc. At this price, you can't have your cake and eat it - it's either power or poise - and the Arcam nails its colours to the wall just like a Harley Davidson or Chevrolet Corvette would. You could say it's more early Bruce Springsteen than late Nick Drake! So if you're looking for a go anywhere, do everything amplifier, then this should be at the top of your shortlist. In my experience, products with this kind of flexibility and feature count rarely ever sound this fun.

A&R Cambridge Ltd.
Tel: +44 (0)1223 203200
www.arcam.co.uk

CAMBRIDGE AUDIO A5 £150

So you want a sonic miracle, a super-budget amplifier that sounds like high-end audio? Well, the A5 gets closer than most. It has the silky smooth tonality, the bandwidth and the dynamic punch of an amplifier costing far, far more.

What the A5 gives you is a sense of scale that comes from a fundamental neutrality. This neutrality makes the A5 (with a pair of well-balanced speakers) sound more like a near-field monitoring rig. It does not offer a holographic insight into the studio, compared to more up-market models, but it gives a

profound sense of what the recording artists put on disc. Its presentation could seem laid back, were it not for a hefty slice of bottom end grunt; the gut-churning dub bass of the Spacemonkeys vs Gorillaz track 19/2000 kicked out and gave my woofers a thorough workout.

There is also a sense of balance that is hard to come by at this price point. This amplifier sounds consistently good with all kinds of CDs, from the most structurally dense opera to the smallest jazz combo - and everything in between.

Soundstaging was wide and deep. And it is more powerful than most, allowing the amplifier to partner more exotic speakers than usual. This doesn't make it necessarily louder than the others, but it does control the speakers.

If ever there was a product that fights above its weight it is the Cambridge Audio A5. It won't make audiophiles chuck out their Naims, nor their valve amps, but for the cost of a good night out, this is a fantastic bargain that sounds far more expensive than you might expect.

Hi-Fi Direct
Tel: +44(0)20 7827 9001

CROFT CAMELEON £875

The preamp section of the Cameleon, consisting of the two channel potentiometers and input selector, is passive and the power amplifier section is exactly the same as that found in the company's Vista power amp. This is a circuit discarding as many unnecessary components as the company sees fit - one's that Croft feel inhibit the performance. Croft feels that without this electronic 'dead wood' the amp is free to "express a kaleidoscope of sound".

Another bonus of this, of course, is that a low cost can be maintained. Taking off the lid reveals very little, as there's very little in there! It does, however, reveal four smallish ECL805 triode output pentode valves, not a valve I'm too familiar with, but it does have a warm and sweet characteristics.

There is a noticeable absence of circuit boards in the design, making for very simple circuitry that includes seventeen resistors and four coupling capacitors. The output transformers are designed in-house and the Cameleon works in fixed bias operation. The lack of PCBs means that everything inside is point to point hard wired and the power output is quoted at a modest but adequate 15W.

The overall sound of the Cameleon came as no real surprise as we've encountered the Croft sound previously in their simple yet highly effective Vitale preamp, which excelled when it came to transparency and purity -

doing everything a hi-end preamp does but at a fraction of the price.

What you can't take away from this amp is its ability to perform with most of the traits of high-end valve amps, but at a lower price point and for that Croft can be congratulated. It would make a good starter valve amp for many that want to take the tube but balk at the fares!

Eminent Audio
Tel: 01746 769156
www.eminentaudio.co.uk

NAD C320BEE £219.95



With acoustic jazz and classical discs the C320BEE gave a good account of itself in a field where budget amps traditionally suffer. The sense of space and breadth that this amplifier has helped to emphasise the airiness of Japanese jazz pianist Mikio Masuda's 'Blue Dumplings' CD on a superb JVC K2 20-bit recording. This well recorded jazz trio set had a clear and focussed sound with good depth of bass in the left hand of the piano and an overall sweetness that is usually the trade of £600-plus amps. Likewise, the piano trios of Fauré and Ravel on a Hyperion SACD had good detail and presence that belied the BEE's humble price. There was an almost life-like sense of focus, with the sinuous bowing of the cellist being a highlight.

NAD have got it right yet again. Very few hi-fi companies at this end of the market can deliver the goods when it comes to sheer quality of sound, with the exception perhaps of Cambridge Audio (even lower priced still). Japanese rivals may have a little more pizzazz when it comes to looks, overall features and flashing lights but that's not what NAD are about. Very very few come anywhere near the C320BEE in terms of sound quality.

There's no doubt that whilst the budget end of the hi-fi market was once the shining light of audio, those days are past. It's different with speakers of course, which can fulfill a multitude of tasks, but two-channel audio electronics at the lower end of the market is a virtually extinct sector, with the exception of NAD, who undoubtedly do it best.

The C320BEE is not going to change the world of hi-fi like the 3020 did but it could well be the last great budget stereo amp.

Lenbrook UK Ltd.
Tel: +44 (0)19088 319360
www.lenbrook.co.uk

UNISON RESEARCH UNICO

£750



Rhythmically, the Unico is impressive. It's definitely 'up for it' when it comes to pushing a tune along, and really tries its best to impart the twists and turns of Grace Jones. It doesn't have the grip of a Naim - it's fast alright, but the bass is just a little looser and it tends to sit on transients just a touch more, too. Still, that bass drum showed slam that can only come from an amp packing some serious firepower. A Naim simply doesn't have the grunt to pin you back in your seat like the Unico, when it could be persuaded.

Overall then, the Unico is a brilliant alternative to the Naim/Cyrus/Arcam (etc) treadmill. If you want something a little different, yet no less competent, this is a brilliant bet. It's very rare to find sound and especially build quality at this price and it offers a superb option in the midprice integrated market. Bellissimo!

UKD

Tel: +44 (0)1753 652 669

www.ukd.co.uk

INTEGRATED VALVE AMPLIFIERS

AUDIO NOTE OTO SE

£1200



The OTO SE is extremely impressive throughout. It takes you a step back from the microphone and gives a more panoramic, widescreen view of things. Treble is sweet and open, with yet more atmosphere and a wonderful (albeit not strictly accurate) silkiness that's hard to live without after a while.

Prefab Sprout's 'Electric Guitars' showed the OTO SE to be a consummately musical performer - it set up a decently large acoustic, served up some beautifully bouncy bass, plenty of midband detailing and a decently defined

stereo image. It's obvious that this amp is far from neutral - tonally it does the old valve trick of investing everything with a deliciously sugary texture.

The great thing about the OTO SE though is its combination of brilliant rhythmic ability and the aforementioned sepiatinted tonal colouring. This thing doesn't rock so much as 'slink' - it lacks any real large scale dynamics but makes up for it with incredibly liquid, visceral 'microdynamics', letting the music's accents and phrasing shine through. In this respect it's a textbook example of single-ended tubes, and it's so hypnotic that you begin to wonder why you ever liked your Naim six pack. It gets into the groove like no other equivalently priced amp of any type can - even at low volumes it's an utterly addictive listen - well worth the title of 'budget esoterica'.

Audionote (UK) Ltd

Tel: +44 (0)1273 220511

www.audionote.co.uk

LOUDSPEAKERS

AAD E48

£599



Some of the intimacy of John Coltrane's 'A Love Supreme' was lost, but overall there was a nice frequency spread in the sound and cymbals remained sweet and detailed. There was also a nice tone to Coltrane's tenor sax, albeit not quite as smooth as I've heard.

These are well engineered speakers that produce as good a bass sound as you'll get at the

price, from the dimensions. If space is a domestic concern then the 48s will easily fit the bill. They're not perfect and suffer a bit from a synthetic sound with acoustic material but rock recordings are often a revelation, with that remarkable imaging ability being a real bonus. Those who favour quality bass won't be disappointed either as whilst it's not earth rumbly low, coloration is minimal and it's very fast, too. I'm looking forward to getting my ears around some more AAD products.

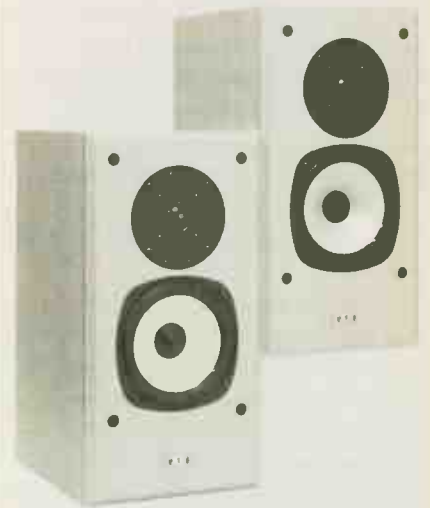
AAD UK Ltd.

Tel: +44 (0)1327 706560

www.aadsound.com

ACOUSTIC ENERGY EVO1

£180.00



It seems that Acoustic Energy have a real winner on their hands here. Apart from occasionally ponderous bass, the EVO 1s sound remarkably good for their price. Given enough space from a rear wall and carefully matched ancillaries, even this becomes less of a concern. It's hard not to be impressed by their sense of articulation, solid sound-staging, natural timbre and foot tapping timing.

The last point is key here, as even when I found the EVOs at their most heavy handed in terms of bass, they still provided an enjoyable listen. Factor in their excellent build quality and the picture looks good all-round. Anyone looking for a 'speaker they can enjoy listening to a variety of music on, at around £200, the AEs are a must-listen. Just make sure they have plenty of space away from the rear wall.

Acoustic Energy Ltd

Tel: +44 (0)12885 654432

www.acoustic-energy.co.uk

ELAC 510**£1000**

The midband of the 510 integrates nicely with the treble - it too is quite 'out there' for all to hear. Certainly not recessed, these speakers image forward and really kick out dynamic accents. These ELACs are incredibly transparent - if the music's hard then so are they, if not then they aren't either. Impressive.

We really rate these speakers - they're a genuinely mature and well rounded product, designed for people who appreciate strength in depth rather than just a quick fix of 'boom and tizz'. Fast, punchy, musical, rhythmically engaging, dynamic, transparent, detailed - they get all the essentials so right you almost wonder why it's worth buying anything bigger. The answer is, of course, bass extension. Suitably set up with a decent sub, I imagine these ELACs would be absolute dynamite.

Sennheiser UK Ltd
Tel: +44 (0)1494 551551

KEF Q1**£250.00**

The Q1 had fine tonal resolution; it was far from a 'grey sounding' loudspeaker. Plenty of colour and texture was given to both vocals and instruments alike.

KEF's perseverance with their coaxial Uni-Q drive technology seems to have paid off. In general the Q1s are a likeable 'speaker that show few unpleasant traits and work well with a wide variety of music. They do lack a little scale, and won't attempt to reach the sort of bass frequencies that some floorstanders of this price would have little trouble with. That metal dome tweeter could also just occasionally betray its construction by sounding a little harsh at times.

Other than these small gripes though, the KEFs impress with their expansive sound staging, excellent detail retrieval and generally cohesive nature. They're the sort of 'speaker that one could live happily for many years with, knowing that their sonic characteristics won't become tiring after time. Furthermore, such is their transparency, they could withstand several upgrades from amplifier and source before they became out of their depth. Highly recommended.

KEFAudio Ltd
Tel: +44 (0)1622 672261
www.kef.com

QUAD 11L**£380**

The 11Ls can be easily summarised - they're a bargain! Detail, speed and presence is up there with the best bookshelf designs of at least twice the price. The competition's good at this price point but the 11Ls are in a different ball park. Nothing I can think of comes near to them when it comes to sheer quality of build - in this respect you could say they are underpriced.

The likes of Mission's 780 have a similar neutrality and speed but the Quads have that extra touch of monitor-like finesse that brings them out of the midprice bracket and into the upper echelons of audiophilia, just as the Wharfedale Diamonds belie their humble price tag. I'd go one step further and say that

the 11Ls beat the Diamonds in terms of value for money.

As for downsides, it's difficult to find any. When fed with duff rock recordings, the midrange could become a tad shouty, especially when pushed, but this is about all. They are also fairly hungry when it comes to power, needing a good 60W per channel or thereabouts. Such comments are a bit churlish, though. Put the 11Ls in front of any experienced listener, with a good recording (or a bad one for that matter), and ask them to put a price to both the sound and the finish and I would guarantee even the most parsimonious would guess at least £300 over top.

Quad Electroacoustics Ltd.
Tel: +44 (0)845 458 0011
www.quad-hifi.co.uk

TDK TREMOR S80**£89.90**

Place the satellites a couple of metres apart and the sub just off the floor (it has a tendency to boom a touch too much), and connect up to your source with a high quality interconnect, and you'll be gobsmacked by the S80s. The sound is smooth and airy, with oodles of detail, tremendous speed, excellent attack transients and an incredible lack of boxiness. It simply floats in mid-air with complete ease, giving a massively impressive 'wall of sound' you can't get enough of. The amazing thing is when you go back to conventional box loudspeakers - they sound slow, leaden, wheezy, imprecise, shut in and boxy by comparison. Electrostatic users will know what I mean!

Unlike the FS-mm1s and the X-Space before them, these NXT designs have a deliciously subtle and sweet treble - at the price it's staggering. The whole plot sounds beautifully sophisticated yet lightning fast and musically involving. Of course, it doesn't go particularly loud, but whether it's a high end turntable and valve preamp or a humble MP3 portable you plug in, you'll still be amazed.

TDK UK Ltd.
Tel: +44 (0)1737 773773

**WHARFEDALE
DIAMOND 8.3**

£199.00



In summary, the Wharfedale 803s encapsulate the best features of both budget stand mounts - speed, transparency and fine imaging - with those of budget floorstanders - bass weight and dynamic contrast.

In terms of vocal reproduction and delicate instrumental timbre, the 8.3s match or exceed the best at this price, regardless of size. They also have just enough grunt not to sound emaciated with large scale and bass rich music. Their imaging is fine also.

Taking everything into account then, the Wharfedale 8.3s have some pretty impressive qualities, and are well worth adding to the auditioning list. What they lose to rivals in some areas they more than make up for in others.

Wharfedale International Ltd.
Tel: +44 (0)1480 431767
www.wharfedale.co.uk

MAINS CABLES

**KEMP ELECTRONICS KE LO-POWER
CABLE**



£36.00 PER METRE

This company specialise solely in mains supply and filtering. Two versions of the KE Power Cables are available, again, one for power amplifiers and the other, reviewed here, for any other application. The technology used here is quite advanced for the humble price tag.

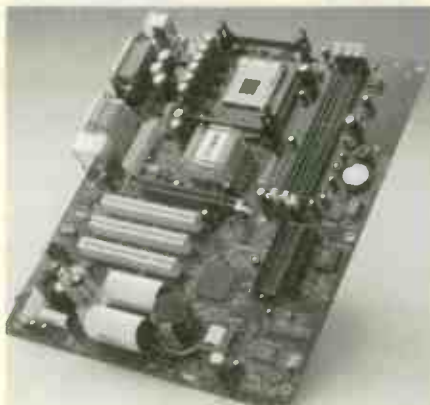
Sound wise, the Kemp is a good buy. It offers a good level of lucidity and overall tightening of sound. Some things such as brass and strings were slightly bright, but not the extent of harshness or any grate in the sound. There was an impressive amount of detail, highlighted well with unaccompanied choral music, and silences were truly silent - adding realism to the overall presentation. When the price is considered the Kemp power cable is an effective upgrade and a bit of a bargain.

UKD
01753 652669
www.ukd.co.uk

MOTHERBOARD

**AOPEN AX4B-533 TUBE
MOTHERBOARD**

£149.00



Producing a motherboard running valves is one thing, but making it reliable for many years of use is another. With ever-higher clock speeds, things are getting hotter and hotter under your computer's 'hood'. To wit Aopen has used every trick in the book to get things right. For the valve circuitry (which requires voltages of up to 300V), a switched mode power supply and a Maxim 668 DC-DC voltage converter is used. The transformer has a high quality E1 ferrite core with 0.3mm AWG hyper copper wire, which can withstand operating temperatures of 130 degrees centigrade. A Nichicon electrolytic power capacitor is used for voltage output, its fine conductive particles of high purity graphite reducing the distortion inherent in standard electrolytic capacitors. 1% toleranced Vishays are used as power resistors.

It makes a very nice noise, one that's quite different to your average standalone soundcard. There's a real refinement, smoothness and depth here, of the sort you'd only expect in high-end hi-fi. Much of this is down to the aforementioned tube audio output section - running a line into the 'monitor loop' of an amplifier and comparing the signal against the original shows it to be quite superb. The Aopen board adds very little to the picture, and what it contributes is either benign or 'euphonic', depending on your point of view. Treble smoothes out just a touch, the soundstage widens slightly, and bass acquires an extra pound or two of added heft. Thanks to its deliciously couthy midband, female voices are a particularly pleasant listen.

www.aopen.nl/

POWER AMPLIFIERS

**UNISON RESEARCH
UNICO DM**

£1250.00



Stick on practically any recording – from Bill Hicks stand-up comedy routines to practically-atonal Schoenberg, with everything from free jazz to easy listening in between – and the sound is full of insight and image depth. It is detailed, too, although the top end is laid-back, especially for those seeking an easy route into valve technology. Even something solidly made on valve equipment, like classic rock from AC/DC or Led Zep, manages to combine valve spaciousness with solid-state graunch though this amplifier.

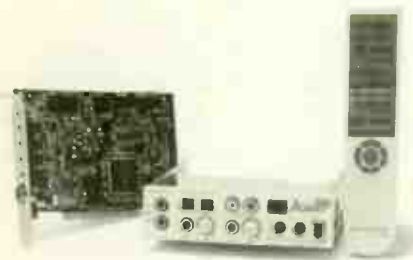
The amp's dynamic range is excellent, with enough bottom end energy to cope with even the might of Mahler at full rant. Thanks to the MOSFET output stage, it can control even valve-hating bass drivers and relatively insensitive speakers in practical use. The only slight down-side is vocal articulation, which although good, is not as wonderful as a good valve amplifier; a quick blast of The Hitch-hiker's Guide to the Galaxy made a sound that was rolled off, even by 1970s BBC Radio 4 standards.

Generally, the hybrid power amplifier – that uses both valves and solid state components – falls into the latter camp. The Unico DM is the exception: it's as good as the preamplifier you partner it with. It makes a sound that is extremely likeable and well-balanced. You may want a more pacey sound, or a warmer sound, but to do so – especially at this price – may make a power amplifier that is less of an all-rounder. Heartily recommended.

UK Distribution.
Tel: +44 (0)1753 652669
www.ukd.co.uk

SOUNDCARDS

**CREATIVE LABS SOUNDBLASTER
AUDIGY PLATINUM** £153.00



This card is not a specialist hi-fi 'audiocard', and if you expect it to be you'll end up disappointed. But if you want to dip a toe into the world of computer audio - including playing back WAV, MP3 and AAC files, recording or copying analogue or digital hi-fi sources or doing basic audio restoration - it's absolutely brilliant. The sound isn't bad, but the LiveDrive, complete with FireWire connectivity, turns your PC into a powerful, versatile multimedia tool that you can easily hook up to your hi-fi equipment. Considering the welter of bundled bits, it's a bargain at its (often discounted) £153 selling price. The best starter soundcard ever made.

**CREATIVE LABS
CREATIVE LABS EXTIGY** £149.99



I found the Extigy a pleasant player of compressed audio - sweet and smooth with few artefacts. Shame there's no AAC on offer, though. My only real criticism was that - through my steam age PC - there was an occasional jumping, as my computer struggled to squirt its audiostream out of its USB port and run a Windows application at the same time. (In fact, the Extigy's latency is 40ms, compared to the Audigy's 2ms or less).

Value is the name of the game here - plus a bucketload of flexibility. It's a brilliant companion to those forced to use their notebooks for audio duties. I can't honestly say the bundled software is the best of its type, and frankly there's too much of it (and it clogs up your hard drive), but ignoring this, it's still great value for money. Factor in the likelihood of discounting, and it's practically impossible to say no!

www.soundblaster.com

EDIROL UA-3

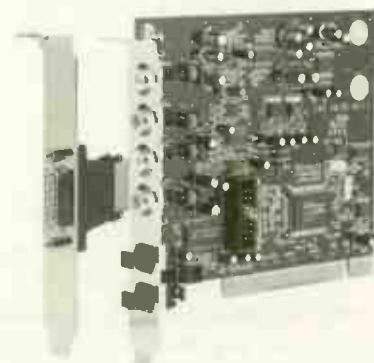


The Edirol works brilliantly. It feeds 44.1kHz, 16bit digits into your computer, with native operating system driver compatibility (either Windows MME or Mac Sound Manager) for a noiseless, glitch free feed of sound. There's even a 'Direct Hardware Monitoring' function which allows for zero-latency performance while recording, too. The result is that whatever soundcard you're running, you get a very high quality sound-stream into your computer which you can then process, edit (or whatever) to your heart's desire, and then burn to CD-R (using, if necessary, an external USB CD writer).

Brilliant, then. And the £149 retail price makes it all the more convincing. It's a great gadget. Along with a decent external USB CD burner (such as Plextor's S88TU), I can now turn my notebook PC into a fully specified, mobile music studio! Highly recommended - just what I always wanted!

www.edirol.it/europe

TERRATEC EWX 24/96 £149



First, the digital ins and outs. I compared the TerraTec's prowess at shuffling the digits against my reference Zefiro ZA2 digital

interface card, which gives extremely stable, low jitter direct digital ins and outs. Feeding a Cambridge Audio DACMagic 3, there was no detectable difference in sound between WAV files playing through CEP via the TerraTec or Zefiro. I then fed a low jitter signal from a Trichord Clock 3 modded Sony CDP-X303ES CD player into both the ZA2 and EWX 24/96 - and again there was no discernible difference in sound. This alone is a great result - because the Zefiro is a serious bit of digital kit.

Thumbs firmly aloft then for this product. Not only does it offer fine 'real hi-fi' sound quality at bog standard 16/44 resolution, but it goes all the way to 24/96, where it sounds superb through its built in analogue-to-digital, and digital-to-analogue converters. The bundled software isn't prodigious, but does its job brilliantly. The card is totally stable, and suffered not one glitch over the review period. If you want a real high resolution soundcard, right now I can't think of anything better.

www.terratec.net/ttuk/default.htm

TURNTABLES

ORIGIN LIVE TURNTABLE KIT £539



Running the gamut of my jazz LPs, the Ultra proved extremely adept at imparting both the groove and the textuality of the sound - it swings and it sings. You hear a bunch of musicians playing together, but you can also stop to enjoy the deliciously raspy brass sounds, the deep, resonant pianos and the full bodied bass. The latter is perhaps the most impressive - there's no overhang and bags of articulation. Treble is sweet and open - although not quite as neutral as a

Michell. The fact that it can be mentioned in the same breath as a Gyro SE is a remarkable feat for a £500 box of bits though - only a slight lack of clarity and grip differentiates the two.

Overall a deeply impressive deck then. It runs designs at nearly twice the price extremely close in many respects. Building it will take you an evening, but it's fun to get your hands dirty once in a while and you've got massive room for experimentation and tweaking. The 'engineering depth' of this kit is remarkable - building it gives you the impression the Origin Live have specified every last nut and bolt with sound in mind - something that auditioning only confirms. Brilliant value for money.

Origin Live,
Tel: +44 (0)2380 442183
www.originlive.com

PROJECT RPM6 £500.00



With the RPM 6 you get the feeling of a solid acoustic space and the separate tones and dynamic ranges of the instruments. Voices, especially female voices had striking diction and excellent tonality.

Because there's no suspension, you have to be a little careful about siting the RPM 6, but the same can be said about every turntable really, suspended or not. In fact, it even copes with the potential ultra-fine tracking potential of a cartridge like the MC 25 FL with ease.

Fitting a good MC cartridge that costs 60% the price of the turntable shows just how much confidence Henley has in the RPM 6 deck. And that's not just arrogance - this really is a deck with plenty of potential and it's worth partnering it with something decent. It gets you surprisingly close to some of the high-end, legendary turntables for a fraction of the cash... but it

looks expensive too. Except for the ultra-solid bass, think of this as a baby Verdier, in looks as well as sound.

Henley Designs
Tel: +44 (0)1235 511166
www.henleydesigns.co.uk

REGA P9 £2,248.00



The P9 went straight for the central bass guitar and drum interplay, giving the song an extremely strong and propulsive feel as a result. It retrieved massive amounts of detail - more than a basic Sondek is capable of - and conjured a wide and tight stereo image, if a little flattened in terms of depth perspective compared to the Orbe.

Treble is another delight - it's very sweet and extended. There's a great sense of atmosphere - it really gives an exhaustively detailed recreation of the recorded acoustic. Lee Morgan's 'The Sidewinder' showed a very finely etched and intricate HF performance, more atmospheric than the LP12 and more 'alive' than the Orbe.

Weaknesses? It lacks the crushing power and attack of the Orbe, or the sinuous rhythmic charms of the LP12. Instead, it treads a third way which gets you very close to the recording yet draws absolutely no attention to itself in so doing. Its depth perspective, bass extension and stereo imaging aren't the very best you'll hear, but its beautifully stable, lively yet refined, smooth and even sound is ample compensation. Unlike either the Linn or Michell, there's a sense that you can completely forget that you're listening to a turntable at all, and simply turn the music up! A brilliant product, and a welcome addition to the 'affordable high end' turntable market.

Rega Research Ltd.
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www.rega.co.uk

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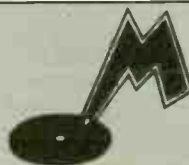
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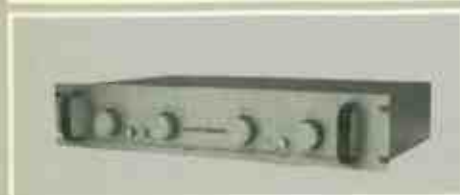
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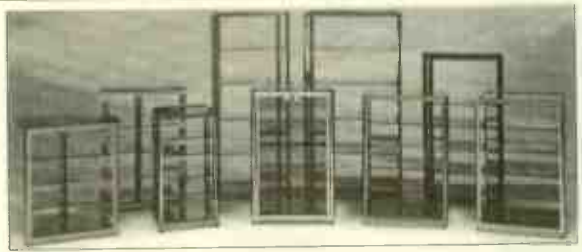
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Jamo Concert Twelve loudspeakers in cherry veneer. s/h boxed, excellent. (€2200) £1250

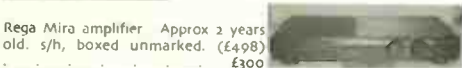
Jamo Concert centre loudspeaker in maple (€500) s/h, no box. £225

Quad 34 preamplifier. s/h phono sockets (grey), good condition. £150

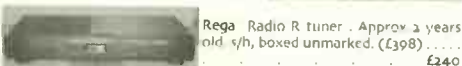
Quad 405 power amplifier. Beige, quite an early specimen with DIN input. s/h, good condition. £135



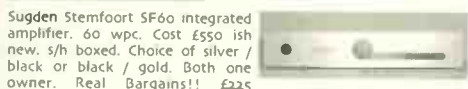
Rega Jura loudspeakers in cherry veneer. Approx 2 years old. s/h, boxed, unmarked. (€498) £300



Rega Mira amplifier. Approx 2 years old. s/h, boxed unmarked. (€498) £300

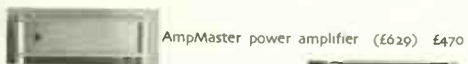


Rega Radio R tuner. Approx 2 years old. s/h, boxed unmarked. (€398) £240



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There are two types available for Loudspeakers:

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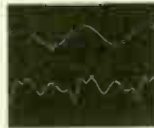
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BEFORE >>>
(top) 125 Hz sine signal to the speaker, (lower) floor movement, using spikes



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- Arcam A75 Power Amplifier(XD) - £150
- Linn Kremlin FM Tuner(SH) - £800
- Linn LK100 Power Amplifier(SH) - £350
- Linn Kairn Pro Preamplifier(SH) - £600
- Linn Sizmik (Maple/XD) - £650
- Linn Classik Movie System(XD) - £1600
- Castle Conway Speakers(XD) - £750
- Castle Pembroke Speakers(XD) - £250
- Castle Warwick Speakers(XD) - £350
- Castle Harlech Speakers(XD) - £650
- Monitor Audio Silver 8 Speakers(XD) - £500
- Meridian 568 Processor(XD) - £2500
- Meridian DSP33 Speakers(XD) - £1900
- Meridian D2500 Subwoofer(XD) - £1700
- Meridian Pre 6(SH) - £450
- Infinity Kappa 400 Speakers(Cherry/XD) - £650
- Infinity Kappa 200 Speakers(Maple/XD) - £350
- Kef Reference 104/2 Speakers(SH) - £450
- Monitor Audio FB110 Sub-Woofer(XD) - £350
- Musical Fidelity A308CR CD/Pre(XD) - £1600
- Musical Fidelity - The Preamp (SH) - £250
- Musical Fidelity Typhoon Pwr Amp(SH) - £250
- Musical Fidelity A3 Integrated Amp(SH) - £500
- Sanyo PLV30 Projector (XD) - £1300
- Tannoy Eyriss 3 (Sycamore/XD) - £800
- Creek CAS 3140 Tuner(SH) - £80

Agencies Include : Linn, Musical Fidelity, S.M.E., Origin Live, Monitor Audio, Castle, Quad, Wharfedale, Harman Kardon, Creek, Meridian, Tannoy, Infinity, Loewe, Sanyo, Ortofon, VDH, JBL, Pro-ject, Roksan, QED, Cable Talk, Michell, Arcam, Trichord, PMC,



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AMPLIFIERS / RECEIVERS	CD PLAYERS	SPEAKERS
Yamaha DSPE390 pro logic processor .£45	TRANSPORTS & DACS	Bose 301 series 4 .£240
Linn LK100 Power Amp .£295	Marantz CD60 .£185	Acoustical Alliance Ispace .£395
Audio Research D70 Valve Monster .£1175	Coyland ST822 As new .£1645	Monitor Audio Studio 2 .£145
Arcam Alpha 8R .£1195	Marantz CD 17 X1 signature .£645	Linn Sara .£295
Alchemist Kraken APD8mk2Power .£425	Sony CDPXB930E as new .£145	Linn Kans .£245
Naim NAPI40/MAC62 Pre/power .£525	Linn Mimik/Numerik CD/DAC .£1145	Acoustic Energy AE109 .£275
Kenwood KA5090R .£150	Technics SLPG520 silver .£75	Linn Minka .£545
Kenwood K9000 THX Power Amp .£250	Midiman Flying Cow DAC .£145	Musical Technology Warners .£220
Musical Fidelity B200X .£145	D P A The Little Bit DAC .£145	Linn Kelidh(passive) .£495
Musical Fidelity KA1 .£325	Arcam Delta Black Box3 DAC .£80	Kef Q65 .£325
Myryad 140 Integrated .£245	Marantz CD63 K1 Signature .£195	Kef RDM3 Cherry .£895
Myryad P60 Power amp .£215	Musical Fidelity CDT .£145	Audio Physics The Step .£475
Nakamichi receiver 3 .£160	Audio Innovations Alto .£150	Final Acoustics O3 hybrids .£875
Quad 306 Power amp .£195	Audiobab 8000 DAC .£495	R & W DM3000 hammers! .£595
Rotel RC972/R8981 Pre Power .£325	Pioneer PD5904 .£195	
Vincent SP996 Mono blocks .£295		
Arcam Delta 290 Integrated .£175		
Linn Kairn Preamp .£895		
Heatkit valve amp .£245		
Heatkit chdlet 3 valve .£145		
Naim NAI 3 .£395		
Audiobab Kraken Integrated .£325		
Audiobab 8000s with remote .£445		
Arcam Alpha 10 integrated as new .£395		
Arcam Alpha 9 power amp as new .£265		
Haller Iris pre amp .£125		
Denon AVC A105E .£645		
Pioneer A400 Integrated .£120		
	TUNERS	CASSETTES
	Marantz ST72L .£95	Yamaha RXS83 .£95
	Arcam Alpha 7 .£135	Nakamichi ZX9 .£745
	Quad FMA .£245	Yamaha RXS805E .£85
	Luxman TD375 champagne .£140	Nakamichi CR1 .£95
	Aura AU180 chrome finish .£120	Nakamichi DR3 .£175
	NAD C440 as new .£130	
	Rotel RT1024 Silver chaser .£245	
	Linn Pekin Tuner .£375	
		EQS
		ADC Soundshaper2 .£175
		Technics SH8046 touch sens .£75
	TURNABLES	SYSTEMS
	Technics SL1510 .£145	Denon UDH30 .£225
	Tno KD2055 White finish .£125	Technics SCRH0350 .£240
	Thorens TD160/SME3009 .£195	Bang & Olufsen Century .£675
	Michell Gyrodec bronze/smoked .£725	Sony MHCX99 .£145

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Meridian 205 100W mono power amps X 2 Ex con. £475	Marantz PM66SE K1 signature integrated amplifier .£199	
Musical Fidelity B1 integrated amplifier. Good cond. £250	Richard Allen pure class A integrated amplifier. .£175	
Meridian Modular pre amplifier. Ex condition. £249	Quad 306 power amplifier. Ex condition. .£195	
Noise Eossee (electroacoustic) class A amp. Rare. EPOA	Audiobab 8000PC pre-amplifier. Boved/instructions. .£299	
Sugden A21 pure class A int. Wood case. 5 pin din. .£175	Naim Nait 3R integrated amp & remote. Mint. Boved. .£495	
Nad C350 int amp. 2 months old. Cost £330. Boved. £200	Musical Fidelity E20 pre-amplifier. Boved/instr. .£199	
Musical Fidelity E30 power amplifier. 100W. Boved. £275	Kenwood KA66D integrated amplifier. Black. .£60	
Quad 34 pre amplifier. Ex cond. All phono. Boved. £295	Audio Innovations S300 int class A valve amplifier .£299	
Linn LK1 pre-amp and remote. Good condition. £249	Linn LK2 power amplifier. Good condition. .£299	
Copland CTAS01 power amplifier. Valve. £1800	Naim Nap 180 power amplifier. Mint. Boved. .£790	
Quad 11s in various condition and prices. EPOA	Noise Eossee (electroacoustic) pre amplifier. EPOA .£299	
Leak Stereo 20 valve power amplifiers from... £ POA	Harman Kardon integrated valve amp. 110V V rare .£299	
Single Leak TL10 and pre-amplifier. Super cond. £ POA	Leak TL12+ valve amps. Rebuilt by us. As new .£500	
Quad 303 power amplifiers from... £125	Creek 4040 integrated amplifier. 5 pin din version. .£79	
Nakamichi CA5 pre-amplifier. Ex cond. Cost £250	£375	Nakamichi PA5 100WCH power amp. Cost £1200 .£650
NVA A80 mono power amplifiers X 2. Good cond. £799	NVA A60 stereo power amplifier. Good condition. .£295	
AV1 S2000 MI int amp & remote. Cost £999	Mint. £549	Linn LK100 power amplifier. Excellent condition. .£395
Musical Fidelity Pre-8 pre-amplifier. Mint. Boved. £150	Arcam Alpha 3 amplifier. Mint. Boved/Instructions .£100	
Musical Fidelity The Pre-amplifier, with MM/IC .£199	Technics SHG170 Graphic Equaliser 12 presets .£80	
Arcam Zeta 1 Pro logic Cinema amp. Cost £999. £1450	Quad 33 pre amplifiers. From .£75	
Arcam Alpha 2 amplifier. Mint. Boved/instr. £95	Commission/Sugden stereo valve prepower amp. mint .£249	

TURNABLES

Linn Sondex with Valhalla and Bastik + tone-arm. £499	Linn Sondex LP12/mirvana/cirkus/valhalla/tek .£795
Michell Hydraulic reference turntables. In various condition. As seen on Clockwork Orange. Ring for prices. EPOA	
Dual CS105-2 turntable. Mint condition. Boved. £89	Thorens TD166 MK2 with thorens arm. .£89
Garrard 301/401 chassis in various condition from £125	Thorens TD125 Chassis only .£58
Dual 5054 record deck. Good condition/instr. £100	Tno KD550. Direct drive turntable. .£95

SPEAKERS

Mordant short MS 3.10 in black. Ex condition. £40	Celestion 6000 subwoofers (pair) with active cover. .£900
Jamo Concert 8 speakers ex cond with Jamo stands. £799	Rogers LS55 speakers. Rosewood. Boved. Ex cond .£199
Klipsch KG 52 Oak oil finish. Ex condition. £499	Quad ESL57s. Black pair. Ex working order. .£500
Rega EL8 floating speakers. black ash. Boved. £149	Prate 3 loudspeakers. Ex cond. Rosewood. Boved. .£450
Tannoy Chatsworth with 12 inch monitor golds. £ POA	B&W DM320 slight cabinet marks. Boved. .£85
Kendal speakers. Good condition. £69	B&W DM4 speakers. Black finish .£75
Quad ESL57 speakers. All fully serviced with full 3 months warranty. Hear what ESL57s should sound like. From £290 pr	Pair Quad ESL57 spkrs. Fully rebuilt. 1e 4 Recon bass & 2 recon treble units. All new electronics. 12m warranty. £1199
Missoua 773 floor standers. Mint/boxed. Half price. £299	Castle Pembroke. Good condition. Super sound. .£90
Kef C20 Bookshelf monitor speakers in black. £60	Magneplanner MG 1.4. Boved with £400 oak stands. .£999
Heybrook Heyliss. Black. Boved. Ex condition. £199	Roksan Ojan 3. Black. Excellent condition. .£300
Mordant Short MS201 pearl. Brand new. Black. £169	Richard alan monitor spkrs. 3 way. High efficiency. .£125
Pair Linn Kelidh in black with Kusune stands. Absolutely mint. 6 months old 4 yrs warranty left. £800 Bsd .£495	

OTHER ITEMS

Tjebbe 99 valve Cd player. Mint/bvd. £275	Hart/Lindsay Head MM/IC Phono pre amp .£150
Sugden R21 tuner. Wood case. Beautiful. £95	Cogan 11 tall loudspeaker cable. 1.5 metre pair. .£190
Musical Fidelity E60 Cd player/remote. Boved. £150	Meridian MC Pro cd player. 1983 model. Mint. .£199
Michell Iso Phono pre amp and PSU. Ex condition. £249	Phillips 101 top loading cd player. Collectable. .£125
Audio Alchemy Dac in the box with separate psu. £99	Marantz CD50 Cd player. Ex condition. .£79
NVA phono 2 MC pre-amp + 2 X PSU. Awesome. £499	Nakamichi CDP 2E CD player. Ex condition. .£250
Meridian 203 DAC. Good condition. £125	Rotel 950 CD player. Ex cond. Boved. .£100
Audio note CDT Zeta/ DAC 1 Valve combo CD. £750	Naim 425 pre amp. MM boards fitted. .£125
Marantz SD275 twin cassette deck. Dolby B/C. £49	Technics SL-FG40A Mash CD player/remote. .£75
Atwa ADX-5750 Dolby B-C-S-HX pro cassette deck. £75	Technics SL-PS620A CD player/remote. .£75
Rotel 965 BX CD player. Excellent condition. £150	SME 3009 tonearms from... .£125
Leak Troughline 3 stereo valve tuner. Fully serviced. £195	Teac TR450 tuner. AM/FM synthesized/RDS. Boved. .£69
Linn Tuner. Mint. Boved. Very unusual. Cost £549. £249	Quad FM3 tuner in excellent condition. .£90
Arcam Alpha 5 cd player. Mint. Boved/remote. £195	Marantz CD63 top loader cd player. Collectable. .£125
Avantic Beam Echo valve tuner. BM611. AM/FM. £139	Tno KT8881. Mint. Ex cond. AM/FM. Black. .£75

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"Classique Sounds servicing restores the Quads to a position where they can hold their head high", Jon Marks. *HIFI WORLD*. April 1999. Full servicing facilities available.

Trougline tuner service & realignment £95.00. (excludes valves. Rarely needed).
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CD & DACD & DACS

	COST	PRICE			
ALCHEMY DAC IN THE BOX, boxed		80	New Dynaudio motor tweeters, with some cables	1500	4000
ARCAM ALPHA of play, cheap and cheerful		100	DAU GRAND COUPE, rosewood, great speaker with dynaudio drive units	2500	1000
ARCAM DELTA 70.3/BLACK BORN (M)	1200	300	DYNAUDIO AUDIENCE 5 black, boxed, to audience 40s, cheap boxes good drivers	400	2000
ARCAM DELTA 70 cd player		100	HALES CONCEPT 5 boxed, cherry 3 way sealed box 100kg each, these have low bass	4000	2500
ALCHEMY DAC IN THE BOX, boxed		100	HARBETH LSS/SA led edition 50 watt finished in ebony, light dense on rear to corners,		
ARCAM ALPHA 9 CD	900	450	with matching ebony AB1 subwoofer stands latest version all boxed		
ARCAM CD72 TEXT, boxed		250	HEYBROOK SIXTETS mk1 upgraded with mk2 spec bass unit, ribbon tweeters boxed	1250	500
ARCAM DELTA 70.3/BLACK BORN (M) this used to be state of the art if you can remember that far back	1200	300	IMPULSE 177 kite horn loaded floor standers REDUCED		
ARCAM DELTA 70 cd player, even older but still going strong		100	REF Q75.2 BOXED PHNT	1500	750
AUDIO NOTE DAC 2	1200	750	KEF 105 the daleks, nice and efficient great with rave amps		
AUDIO NOTE DAC3 SIGNATURE excellent dynamic dac,boxed	2500	1150	LINK S08ARMS walnut late pair, similar to link tweeters, passive, boxed		
AUDIOHOME MCMHSTO mk1 transport	2500	850	LINK KEOSA cherry boxed		
AUDIO RESEARCH DAC 1 upgraded to 20 bit- stereo/phase class A recommended component	3500	1000	LUMLEY 3.5 floozesters, nice and efficient, used to be recommended by crait, boxed		
AUDIO VALVE CD PLAYER - new laser fitted, w/ wild valve tube	4000	1600	MAGNEPLANAR I.A. board		
AM 20 bit dac, boxed	1000	375	MERIDIAN M3 active speaker set		
CEC TLI BELT DRIVE CD TRANSPORT/black	3000	2000	MISSION 707 good student boom boxes		
COUNTERPOINT CD 10 transport,boxed	5000	2000	MISSION 754 freedoms, boxed premium prima vera(only) finish, last version boxed	1900	700
DENSEN CD PLAYER best 400 with genio system remote	1500	900	MINT NTRDS boxed usual opt stand from main, would probably sound quite good with a pair of Quad II	740	425
HIFI SOUND of transport- chinese made, no info good sound		400	MPK stand mounters, mine a new	700	500
IRELL B&T transport	8000	3000	PROAC RESPONSE 2, black, fiv had some good sounds out of these	1650	750
IRELL REFERENCE 64 DAC,two box the best ever	14000	4000	QUAD ES 57 bronze pair BEING SERVICED at present will be	400	600
MARANTZ CD94 mk1 very good		350	QUAD ES 57 black pair BEING SERVICED at present will be	700	700
MARANTZ CD400SE black,boxed	300	150	ROGERS AB1 ebony subwoofers latest type	850	400
MERIDIAN 200 transport		380	ROGERS DB101 boxes, yes the plastic wonders	150	200
MERIDIAN 207 CD PLAYER/TUNE PRE		400	ROGERS L31/6 no grille cloths, early bbc monitor forerunner of the bel		
MERIDIAN 203 DAC,boxed		150	ROYD SOMERHOL small lead lined mini monitor, musical (stands available 40)	550	275
MERIDIAN 508 20 BIT WITH REMOTE	2000	1000	RUAR CR/SADERS walnut based, work nicely in room corners	1500	700
MERIDIAN 208 209 boxed, cd player/pre	1500	500	TANNOI T225 with glass tops, dual concentric with abr		
MICROMEGA DAVE TWO transport		350	TANNOI GAU cabrio repro pair in walnut with matched pair 15" reds 5000 or golds	4000	2000
MISSION PCM 7000 ancient of player	700	100	TOWNSEND GLASTONBURY mk1 serious speaker, metal core bass	850	425
MUSICAL FIDELITY E624 24 BIT, BOXED 650 350			UK CALLAS GOLD	500	250
NARAKIMCHI DRAGON CD AND DAC,boxed another awesome set	8500	3333	YAMAHA NS1000M average condition	1200	700
PINK TRIANGLE ORDINAL DAC		100	YEMMA ACOUSTICS BACH, very smart small floorstanders finished in beech boxed a new		
PINK TRIANGLE 1307 offer		100			

TUNERS, CASSETTE DECKS, REEL-TO-REEL

AN AIRIGHT ATM2 80 watt power amp, mint boxed, new valves	700	3500	AAA G52 cassette deck 2 available	300	100
ART AUDIO QUINTEZ of 34s switchable triode or pentode stereo power amp 15 or 25 watts, chrome chassis	1400	600	AN PH TUNER	300	300
ART AUDIO CONCERTO in 1000		750	DEHON TU 240 mk2 boxed	125	70
AUDIBLE ILLUSIONS MODULUS 3 with john carl gold mc boards	2500	1200	KEF KUBE	102	40
AUDIO RESEARCH LS 22 boxed	4000	2000	LEAK THROUGHLINE III STEREO legendary tuner checked over by ourselves	1400	350
AUDIO RESEARCH Y1 50 boxed	300	1750	LEAK THROUGHLINE 3 with whitney valve decoder, superb	250	120
AUDIO RESEARCH Y1 140 monoblocks boxed	900	3750	LEAK THEIA fm tuner	700	250
AUDIO RESEARCH CLASSIC 60,boxed,	4000	1750	LUDMAN 1 889	150	280
AUDIO RESEARCH SP9 pre with mc phono stage, very good		1500	MARANTZ SMD40 cassette deck	400	150
AUDIO RESEARCH SP11 pre excellent with phono 2 box		2200	MARANTZ spectrum analyser/graphic	200	50
AUDIO RESEARCH SP 15 two box WITH switchable mm/mc VALVE PHONO,boxed	5995	2500	MAD 6400 cassette deck	150	50
AUDIO RESEARCH LS2 line level pre	3000	1000	MAD 6325 cassette deck with play mtr	40	50
AUDIO RESEARCH D115 power amp very good		900	MAD 4155 tuner	175	100
AUDIO SILVER NIGHTS one of the best pairs made with new valve art carbon audio 300ds	2250	1400	MARANTZ BR125e	100	1250
AUDION STYLING phono stage	700	350	MARANTZ BIC		
AUDION SILVER NIGHTS early pair		900	MARANTZ 580 dual capstan 3 head nice machine	250	150
AUDION APOLLOS, single ended top of the range led edition jobs	8000	3000	MARANTZ 480 dual capstan	200	100
BEARD BB400 line integrated, just serviced, 50 watts per channel good buy	1500	500	MARANTZ TRITRACER 1000 serious bracee serviced with service manual	500	250
BEARD P35 power amp, smooth valve sound	450	2500	MARANTZ 1000ZUL LIMITED, GOLD PLATED- THE ULTIMATE TOY	2500	600
BONDER PATROL 300B amp,	250	1400	MARANTZ BACQUE, dual capstan 3 head, nice machine reliable recommended	2000	50-120
CARY 300B SE SIGNATURE MONOBLOCKS,boxed	5000	2500	PANASONIC ST 2700L silver analogue tuner h/w/m/m	15	100
CONCORDANT EXCELHENT pre with phono and valve pu	1500	600	PIONEER F-44SL black rts tuner	100	150
CONRAD JOHNSON PFB preamp. With phono board	2000	600	PIONEER F301 RDS tuner	160	20
CONRAD JOHNSON PREMIER 2 pre amp with phono, very wide rich sound	3000	1100	PIONEER DYNAMIC PROCESSOR (expander) NEP	60	20
CONRAD JOHNSON PREMIER 10 line pre,hot stuff, this weighs as much as most power amps, very tight bass	3900	1500	QUAD PMS EXCELLENT boxed with manual	110	300
CONRAD JOHNSON PREMIER 11a power amp 85 watts,18 months superb boxed	350	2000	REVOX G36 2 track high speed	300	100
CONRAD JOHNSON PREMIER 7B with phono, 2 box	8500	3500	SONY EL CASSETTE 5 with 10 tapes	200	100
CR DEVELOPMENTS CALYPSO, great little valve integrated 12 watts per channel, ex demo boxed		350	STUDIO 12 DECODERS AVAILABLE FOR YOUR THROUGHLINE TUNER	400	150
CROFT MICRO black preamp with phono stage	275	200	TEAC Y5000 cassette deck, 3 head, dual capstan	400	150
CROFT SUPERMICRO old bridge colour, excellent line and phono valve preamp	275	200	TECHNICS EL CASSETTE 7500 rare collectors item with 10 cassettes	250	300
CROFT SERIES 3 OTL power amp beautiful midrange with new set of output valves, prefers high impedance speakers		1000	TECHNICS RS/S45 cassette deck, good budget, good driver, good recovered	200	80
CROFT EPOCH DELUXE preamp with phono stage and paper in oil coupling caps,boxed	1000	550	TECHNICS STE7 tuner black dials but high in their range	100	100
CROFT EPOCH DELUXE analogue gold finish	1000	550	TECHNICS ST SIL silver analogue tuner LW/MW/FM	20	175
CROFT APPARITION OTL power amp,amp,phono line, boxed	1200	725	TECHNICS ST V5 silver analogue tuner LW/MW/FM		
EAR 8349 mm/mc phono stage		325	WHITELEY valve stereo decoder for your throughline II but in stereo and compact enough to fit in your throughline 200 fitted or DIT (skilled)	175	800
EAR 859 integrated single ended amp, sweet sound		850			
ERKSON HFA 12 power amp, 12 watts per channel 84dB, great life amp	200	300			
LEAK STEREO 20, great vintage low powered amp, if you cant afford a lot but want to try valves start here	2000	650			
LUMLEY IY1 valve pre-amp line level chrome, very hot black SOUND	3000	700			
LUMLEY S770 stereo amp	2000	700			
LUMLEY T200 monoblocks, big black and beautiful 120 watts each new sweek 6550		1600			
MELOS 333 two box pre line great dynamic,boxed	3000	1300			
PARTNURDG 8771 c-core single ended output transformers, upgrade that se 300B amp, satisfaction guaranteed 320 pair as well as a lot of those Hong Kong, I'll tell you now postage to HK a 65 GBP		700			
QUAD II excellent respayed set with better VALVES	6000	3500			
RUSSIAN VALVE AMP, stereo with transmitting triodes, c-core transformers, stepped attenuator w/ control amazing value		500			
TRILOGY 901 preamp with phono	995	400			
UNISON RESEARCH SIMPLY FOUR, great midrange/italian style with wooden bits boxed	1895	900			
UNISON RESEARCH FEATHER ONE/POWER 35 pre/processor, (yes wood on these too) boxed	1300	1000			
WELBONE LABS APOLLO 2 20 watt single ended w/52b output valves beautiful musical instruments, ask to see phono factory upgraded with black gates, etc 20 watts single ended with 3 sets of different output valves	8000 ++	3500			

VALVE AMPS

ALCHEMIST GENIUS monoblocks	2000	800	ALCHEMIST GENIUS serious stereo power amp, co designed by Tim de Paravacini silver and black 250w per channel	4000	2000
ALCHEMIST EXCELHENT pre with phono and valve pu	1500	600	ARCAM ALPHA 10 integrated amp, remote, boxed		
CONRAD JOHNSON PFB preamp. With phono board	2000	600	ARCAM ALPHA 9 preamp		
CONRAD JOHNSON PREMIER 2 pre amp with phono, very wide rich sound	3000	1100	AUDIO ANALOGUE BELLUNO/DONIZETTI pre amp, NOT REMOTE, boxed		
CONRAD JOHNSON PREMIER 10 line pre,hot stuff, this weighs as much as most power amps, very tight bass	3900	1500	AUDIODAR 8000P old grey version average condition		
CONRAD JOHNSON PREMIER 11a power amp 85 watts,18 months superb boxed	350	2000	AUDION phonoam hybrid, valve input stage, modest output, remote controlled integrated amp 1500		
CONRAD JOHNSON PREMIER 7B with phono, 2 box	8500	3500	AUDIO SYNTHESIS PASSION all vishay resistor passive pre A inputs not remote		
CR DEVELOPMENTS CALYPSO, great little valve integrated 12 watts per channel, ex demo boxed		350	AUDIO SYNTHESIS DESIRE DECADE pre		
CROFT MICRO black preamp with phono stage	275	200	AUNA EVOLUTION integrated with phono black front all preamp		
CROFT SUPERMICRO old bridge colour, excellent line and phono valve preamp	275	200	BARTOLOMEO si440 Italian power amp, very clean and punchy recommended		
CROFT SERIES 3 OTL power amp beautiful midrange with new set of output valves, prefers high impedance speakers		1000	BOW 202 pre amp and mc stage 100		
CROFT EPOCH DELUXE preamp with phono stage and paper in oil coupling caps,boxed	1000	550	BOW TECHNOLOGY, Wazoo XL stylish integrated amp, later 75 watt version,boxed	2500	1500
CROFT EPOCH DELUXE analogue gold finish	1000	550	BYSTON 0.5 preamp, about halfway through the usual 20 year guarantee		
CROFT APPARITION OTL power amp,amp,phono line, boxed	1200	725	CAMBRIDGE AUDIO A1 MK3 se	70	20
EAR 8349 mm/mc phono stage		325	CHONAD SPM 1000 black boxed	2785	150
EAR 859 integrated single ended amp, sweet sound		850	CONRAD JOHNSON MF1300A 220 watt power amp, very full sound with loads of bass	1990	1300
ERKSON HFA 12 power amp, 12 watts per channel 84dB, great life amp	200	300	CONRAD JOHNSON 630 stereo power amp		
LEAK STEREO 20, great vintage low powered amp, if you cant afford a lot but want to try valves start here	2000	650	CRUS ONE usually boxed	200	70
LUMLEY IY1 valve pre-amp line level chrome, very hot black SOUND	3000	700	CRUS STRAIGHTLINE integrated amp		
LUMLEY S770 stereo amp	2000	700	DMP preamp, metal cased but with series 3 boards minus pu		
LUMLEY T200 monoblocks, big black and beautiful 120 watts each new sweek 6550		1600	DPA DSP2005 pre amp, neat little detailed sounding line pre		
MELOS 333 two box pre line great dynamic,boxed	3000	1300	EC AUDIO FINESTRA preamp, TOM EVANS designed excellent sound	1300	500
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TRILOGY 901 preamp with phono	995	400	EXPOSURE XPM pre with phono, later larger knobs	1000	500
UNISON RESEARCH SIMPLY FOUR, great midrange/italian style with wooden bits boxed	1895	900	HARMON HARMON CITATION 11 pre 12 DELUXE power amp, with wooden sleeves, from the bary days	350	350
UNISON RESEARCH FEATHER ONE/POWER 35 pre/processor, (yes wood on these too) boxed	1300	1000	KEVIN LABS 2 on pre with phono	700	250/350
WELBONE LABS APOLLO 2 20 watt single ended w/52b output valves beautiful musical instruments, ask to see phono factory upgraded with black gates, etc 20 watts single ended with 3 sets of different output valves	8000 ++	3500	KEENWOOD MKT 200watt power amp (with volume control)	300	80

LOUDSPEAKERS

AOL SOUTICE, piano black with custom iso stands, open baffle design, easy drive superb	3000	750	KEVIN LABS 2 on pre with phono	700	250/350
ARKADYS speakers rosewood boxed, neat little floorstanders, well finished!		1800	KEENWOOD MKT 1030 integrated amp	1000	300
AUDIO NOTE ANELI speakers in stock for demo,boxed, very efficient to hear		3000	KEWELL KREHR	7000	3500
AUDIO PHYSICS TEMPO original version/black, with Essex digital correction unit that fits between transport and dac, and gives impressive bass	2500	700	KEWELL KPB 250MC mint monoblocks	4000	8000
AUDIOVECTOR type 5 rosewood floorstanders, good with rave amps	2600	1250	KEWELL KSP7B preamp with phono stage and onboard supply	3000	1000
AVANTAR mk1 in maple speakers, some damage to top	650	2500	KEWELL KAS 2 KEWELL AUDIO STANDARD,ex boxed	20000	1000
CELESTION All rosewood, chunky standmounters, very well finished and full toned	1000	500	LEO L51 line preamp	1000	400
CELESTION DITTON 25 old merrys vandelated grilles, use organ music all around	75	75	LEO PA2	1800	800
CELLO SERAPHIMS active speakers, piano black pair just fitted with 700 pounds worth of brand			LINK LK100 boxed		
			LINK WAKONDA phono board		
			LUDMAN MEGA 75 watts per channel power amp 2 available	500	200
			LUDMAN INTER, boxed		
			LUDMAN L 88-9 integrated amp and L 88-4 TUNER	300	300
			LUDMAN L100- 110watts per channel cost over 500 pounds in 1979, tasty	250	250
			LUDMAN L120 power amp silver finished 120 watts per channel	100	100
			LUDMAN CL350 pre boxed		
			LUDMAN 308 integrated amp nice with wooden casework		
			MARANTZ MA24 monoblocks, boxed		
			MERIDIAN 201/605 monoblocks		
			METHEX MUSKETER STR-55 class A 50 wattter (Laradan/like maple syrup, recommended	200	1200
			METAXOS PREAMP 1500 600		1500
			MICHEL ONCA remote line pre latest spec, boxed	1800	850
			MICHEL ANGO MR line pre	1350	500
			MUSICAL FIDELITY A101 amp	300	300
			MUSICAL FIDELITY pre3a/P140-x power amp 75 watts,boxed	1500	125
			MUSICAL FIDELITY A100 class a integrated with phono great amp	275	300
			MUSICAL FIDELITY P173 pre, decent phono stage and tone control	300	300
			MUSICAL FIDELITY THE PREMIER DR THOMAS	350	350
			NAMM 62/90 new style boxed	450	450
			NAMM MAC 32, with phono,	650	650
			NAMM MAP90 3 slim style	225	225
			NAMM 32/110	400	400
			NAMP 42 pre with mc phono stage	700	700
			NAMM MA62X/MAP 140 mint boxed old style	900	900
			NAMM phono boards 323 mc available 20 pounds/pair		
			NAMP 140 new style	425	425
			N.E.W. A201 power amp 20 watts class A Nelson Pass design	500	500
			ONELLE P1400 prototype monoblocks 200 watts per channel	700	700
			PASS LABS O monoblocks class A single ended 75 watts, valve like midrange and top allied with some bass		
			grunt,with crates	8000	3750
			PHILIPS 270 black outip pre amp	50	50
			PINK TRIANGLE PIP pre amp boxed	275	275
			PINK TRIANGLE PIP TWD preamp, mm and mc		



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 AUDIO SYNTHESIS DAX-2 HDCC COMPATABLE COAX/AES-EBU/AT&T/TOSLINK AS NEW/BOXED £1150
 PROCEED PDT-3/POP-3 TRANSPORT & DAC.(AT&T/AES/EBU,COAX,OPTICAL IN) MINT/BOXED £1750
 BALANCED & PHONO OUTPUTS MINT/BOXED £1150
 ROKSAN ATESSA DP2 MK.11 TRANSPORT DA2 DAC & DS5 PSU MINT BOXED £450
 MICROMEGA STAGE-6 NEW/BOXED £145
 AMC CDBA(BALANCED&PHONO OUTPUTS) EXCLT/BOXED TBA
 THETA DSPre GEN111 EXCLT/BOXED TBA
 TRICHORD PULSEMASTER DE-JITTER DEVICE MINT £195
 MUSICAL FIDELITY X-24 DAC MINT TBA

VINYL

ROKSAN XERXES/REGA RB300/LINN K-9 MINT £595
 PINK TRIANGLE PT-T00 BOXED £375
 UNISON RESEARCH SIMPLY PHONO (VALVE) MINT/BOXED £275
 AUDIO ALCHEMY VAC IN THE BDX MM/MC PHONO STAGE MINT/BOXED £195

LOUDSPEAKERS

WILSON SYSTEM 5.1 PIANO BLACK MINT/CRATEO £7500
 KLIPSCHORNS FAMOUS CORNER HORN (104 DB SENSITIVE) MAPLE VENEER MINT TBA
 UKO OPERA CALLAS GOLD MINT/BOXED £750
 CELESTION A-3 FABULOUS FLOORESTANDERS SUPERB VALUE BRAND NEW/BOXED £1695
 CELESTION A-2 HUGELY CAPABLE (ROSEWOOD VENEER) BRAND NEW/BOXED £1250
 QUAD 11L PIANO BLACK (FANTASTIC REVIEWS) AS NEW/BOXED £295

WHARFDALE DIAMOND 8.1 MINT £75
 ACOUSTIC PRECISION FR-1 LOUDSPEAKERS TBA
 B.K.S. 107 MK.2 RIBBON HYBRID FLOORSTANDERS (HIGHLY REVIEWED) MINT/BOXED £1250
 AUDIONOTE ANK/SPX MINT/BOXED £675
 MONITOR AUDIO STUDIO 10 (ROSEWOOD) EXCLT £475
 TANNOY ARUNDEL 15"3839 HIGH POWER DRIVERS 95 DB SENSITIVE VERY RARE MINT £1500
 SD OBS FLOORSTANDERS(OPEN Baffle) SMALLER BROTHER TO SD1 BOXED £675
 MISSION 753 BLACK ASH MINT £475
 PROAC-3 STUDIO MONITORS (ATC DRIVERS) WALNUT MINT £795
 PROAC RESPONSE -2 (WERE £1700 NEW) MINT £695
 PROAC-2 (VOLT DRIVERS) MINT £350
 B&W 801 MATRIX S/2 AMERICAN SOUND ANCHOR STANDS/GOLDMUND POLYMER FILLED CONES
 /LISTEN UP BASS EQ X OVER BOXES HOODS BOXES ETC (WERE £7500 NEW) RARE OPPORTUNITY £2750
 WHARFDALE OPTION 1 HUGE ACTIVE ONLY 4 PAIRS MADE (WERE £8000NEW) £1750
 WILMSLOW AUDIO VORTEX VOLT DRIVERS PIANO BLACK EXT. X OVER £475
 IMFTLS 80 S CLASSIC TRANSMISSION LINE MINT £395
 ROYD EDEN HIGH CLASS MINI MONITOR (VERY HEAVY) VGC £200

TUNERS /TAPE

ONIX BWD-1 AUDIOPHILE TUNER & SEP.PSU. MINT RES
 SONY TCD-D3 PORTABLE DAT RECORDER/WALKMAN MINT/BOXED £275
 SONY DTC 1000 DAT RECORDER MINT £550
 STAX HEAD PHONES £145

RACKS/STANDS

SOUNDSTYLE XS 105 NEW STYLE (CURVED GLASS) 5 SHELF BLACK OR SILVER EX DIS. (£320 RETAIL) £195
 SOUNDSTYLE XS 310 A/V TABLE (£320 RETAIL) EX.DIS £195
 SOUND ORG Z540 NEW BLACK FINISH MIDI SIZE EX.DIS. £90
 KUDOS S507 18 INCH SPEAKER STANDS SAND FILLED GC £50
 ATTAQAMA R724/ATTABITE (FEW WEEKS OLD WAS £250) MINT £175
 TARGET R4 MINT £175
 TARGET R-1 MINT/BOXED £200

SPECIAL OFFER

SOUNDSTYLE SPEAKER STANDS SOLID PILLAR ATTEGAMA STYLE 18/24" 1/2 PRICE LAST FEW £50.00

CABLES

LOUDSPEAKER CABLE
 NORDOST RED DAWN 3 METRE PAIR (TERMINATED) £425
 CARDAS HEXLINK 2 METRE PAIR (FACTORY TERMINATED) £275
 EINSTEIN/VIVACO GREENLINE 3 METRE PAIR (TERMINATED) £250
 AUDIONOTE AN-L 5 METRE PAIR £225
 AUDIONOTE AN-L 2 METRE BI-WIRE PAIR £175
OTHER AUDIONOTE CABLE COMING PLEASE PHONE
 VAN DEN HUL 'THE TEATRACK' HYBRID BI-WIRE 5 METRE PAIR £150
 VANDEN HUL MC CS 122 2 X 3 METRE PAIR (EACH) £90

INTERCONNECT

LINDSAY AUDIOPHILE SATIN GRAY 2 METRE (AMERICAN NEW/PACKED WERE £480) £200
 LINDSAY AUDIOPHILE GRAY 2 METRE (NEW) £175
 AUDIONOTE AN-V SILVER INTERCONNECT 6.2 METRE PAIR £650
 AUDIOQUEST TURQUOISE 2 X 2 METRE PAIRS (MINT) £35 EACH
 AUDIOQUEST JADE 2 X 2 METRE PAIRS (MINT) £25 EACH
 AUDIOQUEST RUBY 2 X 1 METRE PAIRS (MINT) £65 EACH
 AUDIOQUEST RUBY 2 X 0.5 METRE PAIRS (MINT) £50 EACH
 AUDIOQUEST EMERALD 0.8 METRE PAIR (MINT) £150
 AUDIOQUEST LAPIS 1 METRE PAIR (MINT) £225
 AUDIOQUEST DIAMOND 2 X 2 METRE PAIRS (MINT) £495 EACH
 OED QUNEX SILVER SPIRAL 0.5 METRE PAIR NEW/PACKAGED £65
 OED QUNEX SILVER SPIRAL 0.5 METRE PAIR EX DEM £60
 MIT 3X TERMINATOR 4 1X TERMINATOR 5 £200 THE LOT

DIGITAL

CHDRD CO.PRODAC SILVER PLUS (BNC) £60
 REGA DIGITAL INTERCONNECT 1 METRE (NEUTRIK PHONO'S) £30
 VAN DEN HUL AES/EBU £40
 AUDIOQUEST VSD-4 SOLID PSS SILVER (WAS £265) £150
 AUDIOQUEST OPTILINK X TOSLINK £50

MOST EQUIPMENT STOCKED IS ONE OWNER MINT/BOXED, SIMILAR QUALITY VINTAGE AND MODERN EQUIPMENT REQUIRED FOR IMMEDIATE CASH PURCHASE. THIS IS A SELECTION OF STOCK FOR A FULL CURRENT LIST PLEASE PHONE/E-MAIL GEORGE. MAIL ORDER A SPECIALITY

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Buy What Hi Fi's Award winners at the cheapest prices!

GALE SPEAKERS black with chrome ends complete with chrome stands excellent condition £275. Audiolab 8000C pre amp grey front model nice condition £225. Tel: 020 8977 6656 (Jan I)

RUARK TALISMAN II speakers rosewood good condition boxed £275. Tel: 01903 208927 or (mobile) 07831 549720 (Worthing) (Jan I)

WANTED: STAX SR-Lambda professional headphones (year 1982) must be in excellent/mint condition (unmarked and not damaged). Will pay £400 for mint condition headphones. Tel: 01865 378578 (evenings) or Email: fiskalan@hotmail.com (Mar I)

CARDAS CROSS one metre interconnects £175. Cardas Quadlink 5C one metre interconnects £90. Flatline bi-wire 2.5 metre speaker cables £40 all mint. Tel: 01886 821577 or Email: roger.garness@btinternet.com (Jan I)

MERIDIAN M2 active speakers Cambridge C200 Nakamichi LX3 NVA Cube 2, Yamaha Classic 2010 amp, 1010 tuner, 1000 tape, Helios Syrus 2 speakers, Naim 90-92 and more, offers, clear out, exchanges? Tel: 01626 852497 evenings (Jan I)

QUAD 63 speakers, serviced by Quad cables £995. Sony Esprit Tan 900 monoblocks (3), 200 WPC, rosewood cases, £1200. Quad 44 preamp, phonos, MM/MC disc inputs £225. Tel: 01993 883523 (Jan I)

LOWTHER LOWTHER

Acousta twin cabinets wanted. Also PM7A, PM2A, drive units, any condition. Working drawings. Twin feet. Drive unit mounting screws. Tel: Jeff 020 8220 0380 (Jan)

MICHELL ISO/HERA phono-stage and P.S.U. £290. XLO Reference interconnect. Type iA (cost £330) accept £150. Tel: 01623 752036 work, 0115 964 1033 home (Jan I)

DENON GOLD SD10 II battle-ship high end CD player, smooth and dynamic, mint condition, boxed, 12 months guarantee £375 (£1300). New. Tel: 01308 868 044 (Feb I)

QUAD ESL63 electrostatic loudspeakers + stands (£1100). Quad 606 power amplifier (£400). Meridian 207CDPro player + phono pre-amp option +209 remote (£430). Also Quad ESL57 electrostatics (£350). Tel: 07855 254158 or Email: IPS@PATENWorks.com (Feb I)

RUARK PRELUDE R floor-standing loudspeakers cherry finish 18 months old. Vgc reason for sale cost £700 asking £400 ono. Tel: 01582 872204 (Herts) (Jan I)

QED GENESIS 2.5 metre pair terminated 4.0mm banana plugs £100 (£200). Precious Metals Silver Sig 202 I/C £170 (£340). Ixos 10050 Artemis I/C £150 (£300). Ixos 1001 Gamma I/C £40 (£70). Tel: 02380 872620 (Jan I)

ROSE RPI90 70 watt amp: can become a mono block, mint, boxed & manual £290. Tel: 01903 247779 Sussex. Clearaudio Basik MM/MC phono amp: mint £135. Tel: 01903 247779 Sussex (Jan I)

GAMMA ACOUSTICS AEON MkIII 211/20 watt silver s.ended monoblocks magical sound stunning looks, as new re-valved dedicated stands no time-wasters/offers please (£5500 + £900) £1500 only. Epoch Reference V MkIII loudspeakers (£3999) mint £1200. Arcam CD72 as new £800. Nakamichi RX202E autoreverse tape deck £180 Tel: 07980 676071 (Jan I)

COPLAND CSA28 integrated amp (valve hybrid) mint, boxed £1100. Earmax pro headphone amp £325 w/psu also mint boxed MF Nu-Vista interconnects 2.5m (silver) £100 offers considered on all items. Tel: Chris 020 8543 5531 (evenings) (Jan I)

AUDIOLAB Q 8000 preamp £500 Audiolab 8000 MX's x4 £450 each. All 5 for £2100 mint; Audio Alchemy V3 DAC (HDCD) Station Four £270; Meridian 203 DAC £180; Wanted: Audio Research pre-amp balanced match for V70. Tel: Alan 01395 275698 (Devon) (Jan I)

KRELL KAV 1300i integrated £1300. Thiel 1.5 floor-standers excellent £1200. Baby forces reluctant sale. Tel: 07765 230771 (Jan I)

QED VECTOR Reference passive preamp wanted. Arcam 290 power also wanted. Tel: 01275 858156 or Email: mikebird@soundspro.com (Jan I)

MANA REFERENCE table excellent condition £295. Linn Sara 9 black boxed Linn stands, mint condition £350. Tel: 0121 422 4371 after 6pm or 0121 429 7691 daytime (Jan I)

NAIM 250 Hi Cap 32.5 MM/MC £750. Nakamichi Reference power amp PA7 200w (Krell like) £495. LK280 Spark boxed £395. Audioquest Diamond II interconnect solid silver (£675) £185 Tel: 00 3531 295 4076 (Jan I)

REGA JUPITER CD 2000 - 5 months old, mint condition with remote £750 or possible trade for Naim player. For vinyl fans on CD. Tel: 01278 793703 after 6pm (Jan I)

WANTED: DENON 6600 or 6600A monoblocks and Linn Isobariks passive active late model speakers, mint condition preferable Tel: 0116 223 6320 (Jan)

WANTED: QUAD 77 preamplifier plus Quad 77 power amp both in carbon finish mint boxed only. Tel: 0121 313 2241 evenings or Email: anthony.green@btinternet.com (Jan I)

FOR SALE Audio Analogue Puccini SE integrated silver fronted non remote £300 ono. Baby forces sale. Tel: Dave 01483 487647 (Surrey) (Feb I)

ROKSAN KANDY amplifier Mk2, 6 months old £350. B&W 603 S3 £350, 4 months old, both boxed, mint. Ear 384P MM/MC phono-stage with volume vgc £325 Tel: 0116 223 6320 (Jan)

MYRYAD MI240 integrated amplifier, 1 year old mint condition boxed as new (£1500) £925. Arcam CD72, 6 months old, boxed as new (£450) £275. Tel: 07786 630762 (Jan I)

PRO-AC TABLETTE 50 walnut loudspeakers vgc upgrading £280 ovno. Tel: 020 8694 9350 (Greenwich) (Jan I)

WANTED: PAIR 405-2 modules to convert standard 405 amp. Also Quad moving coil disc input module for Quad 44 pre-amp. Quad FM3 tuner and Denon DL103 cartridges Tel: Mike 01758 613790 (Jan I)

LEAK STEREO 20 (history) rebuilt by Glen Croft £400. Epos ES14/Linn Kustone stands £380. Leak Varislope stereo pre, offers. Radiomobile 'valve' car radio vgc needs valves, offers. Tel: 02476 469363 (Jan I)

LINN NINKA speakers. Cherrywood finish with optional polymer base stands 10 months old. As new £730. Linn Karik 3 CD player immaculate £750. Tel: 01256 461 453 (Basingstoke) (Jan I)

ORIGIN LIVE DC turntable motor upgraded regulator board and large transformer, superb! Cost over £460 sell for £260. Tel: evenings and weekends 01296 623573 (Jan I)

NAIM NAIT 2 amp £200. Epos ES11 speakers £200. Krell KPS20i CD player £4500. Sansui T-80 tuner £75. Target H4 stands only £175. Tel: 01636 830944 or 07979 536753 (Jan I)

SONY TCD-D3 portable DAT manual, interconnect, tapes £345. Quad ESL 57's serviced, hardwood stands £395. Mullard GZ 32's £50 each. Wanted: Armstrong 523/623 tuner, Nakamichi DM10 head demagnetizer. Tel: 01242 231766 (Cheltenham) (Jan I)

BOW TECHNOLOGIES Wazoo integrated amplifier. Beautiful valve like sound, 50wpc, balanced and phono inputs. Built to the highest standards. Cost £2300 new. A high end bargain at £1050. Tel: 020 8948 0899 (Jan I)

CONRAD-JOHNSON DF2 CD player, 2y/o, boxed, £725 (£1700). Naim Hi-Cap, new style, boxed, £400 (£800). Stands Unique rack/accessories: midi-width sound tower, boxed, £130 (£335). Arcam Alpha 6, Meridian 203 DAC £300 (£1400). Tel: 0131 661 0126 or Email: david@relax.uk.com (Jan I)

Upgrade Your Turntable



"It's value is nothing short of tremendous"
Listener Magazine

"The single most important upgrade you can ever make to any record deck concerns the motor drive....Nothing can compare you for the shock of going DC, in a word, Gobsmacking"
Common Ground Magazine

"...if you are thinking of upgrading your system.....the Origin Live DC-motor kit should be high on your list for consideration" TNT Audio

Whatever your current turntable, the results in upgrading to the Origin Live DC motor and power supply are simply astounding. Designed as a drop in replacement for almost all turntables, the Origin Live upgrade kit offers vast improvements to all versions of Linn turntables, as well as Ariston, Rega, Systemdeck, Roksan, Rock, Oracle, Thorens, Well Tempered etc. With only a 12 Volt power supply and a full set of illustrated instructions our upgrade is both easy and safe to install. The upgrade is also offered with a full money back guarantee if you are not satisfied. The kit consisting of a high grade dc motor, soldered regulator board and power supply is only £262. This provides an extremely cost effective route to truly high end audio and is significantly superior in performance to other power supply upgrades costing 4 times the price. A larger purpose built transformer is also available as an optional extra at £175.

Turbocharging your Rega arm

"Nothing less than total dynamite" Hi-Fi World



If you are the proud owner of any Rega tonearm, you are now in the enviable position to transform it's performance into the league of super arms with modifications offered by Origin Live - the Origin live structural modification at £75 will enable your Rega to perform at a level exceeding that of arms costing over £1200. High performance rewiring with high grade litz cable is also offered at an additional £70 and external rewiring is £70 this further increases the performance.

"I have to say the Rega modifications turn this humble arm into a real Giant killer. Gone is the rather grey, sterile sound of the cooking Rega. Instead, tonal colour is fresh, dynamics have great speed and impact, and the sound stage is huge."
Hi-Fi World, Nov 97 (structural modification on RB250)

What Hi-Fi? gave this modification 5/5

Structural Modification - £75
Internal Rewiring - £70
External Rewiring - £70

For arm modifications we normally return your arm in 2 - 3 days.

Origin Live Ultra Turntables Build & setup in an hour



Modern



Classic

"...this Vinyl front end had my jaw heading towards the floor with the solidity and transparency of the music it was making....with all these goodies in place the Standard would give turntables at the £1200 -1400 mark a hard time..."

"...Overall a deeply impressive deck.....brilliant value for money ...component quality is superb and the build process is a doddle."
Hi-Fi World

"the best sounding deck here (group comparison test of 8 leading turntables)...sounds fantastic."
What Hi-Fi?

"One of the most enjoyable and musically involving turntables I have ever heard ...Regardless of make or reputation"
Audiophile

Now you can own a professionally built, high performance turntable at a fraction of the normal cost. Origin Live turntable kits are supplied in 3 different specifications:

1. A standard kit of parts to enable you to build your own plinth at **£282**
2. The complete standard kit offered with a non-suspended pre-drilled & finished plinth at **£349**
3. The complete ultra kit comes in two options. The Ultra Kit Classic offering a truly high end suspended sub-chassis turntable with beautifully finished solid wood plinth. The Ultra Kit modern offers the performance of the Ultra Kit Classic combined with the modern day skeletal styling of our sensational resolution turntable. Both options available at **£538.00**

All kits are supplied with well illustrated instructions and are easier to assemble than many of today's pre-built turntables.

FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE WEBSITE OR CONTACT
Origin Live, Unit 5, 362b Spring Road, Sholing, Southampton, SO19 2PB, U.K.
Tel: 023 80578877 / 80363249 Fax: 02380 578877 e-mail: originlive@originlive.com

<http://www.originlive.com>

World Radio History

CYRUS CD7Q PSX power supply Arcam, A22 int/amp, Arcam P25 power amp, B&W CDM7NT speakers all six weeks old, 2 pairs Kimber 8TC speaker cable, 4 Russ Andrews hi-current mains leads, 1 pair Chord Chorus interconnect, 1 pair Audioquest Viper interconnects. £3000 ono. Tel: Tony 07812 342602 (Herts) (Jan/I)

NORDOST INTERCONNECTS: SPM 0.5m Eichmann RCA £360 (£825). Red Dawn, 1m RCA £165 (£330). Blue Heaven, 1m Eichmann RCA - DIN £125 (£225). Wanted: DNM amps, mains cables. Tel: 07811 335 060 or 0131 661 0126 or Email: zebshaw@hotmail.com (Jan/I)

KENWOOD MIDI system amplifier graphic equalizer tuner double cassette deck multi CD player turntable speakers new cost £1299 will accept £495. Tel: 01634 681735 (Jan/I)

ELECTROCOMPANIET ECi-1 dual mono Class A integrated amplifier boxed with manuals £500. Target R1 speaker stands £100. Tel: 01628 626085 (Jan/I)

6 BLACK DIAMOND Racing Cones Mk4 Cones £80 (New £120), Nottingham Analogue Tracer 2 MM Cartridge, Excellent condition and sound, £60. Tel: 01794 511 407 evenings. (Jan/I)

UNISON RESEARCH SR1 valve/solid state amplifier, 80wpc, 10 months old £825 ono. Musical Fidelity A3, 94/192, 24bit upsampling DAC, brand new, full guarantee £525 ono. Tel: 01600 713 755 (Monmouth) (Jan/I)

TOM EVAN'S modified Pioneer Precision CD £295 and Pioneer A300 amp £295. Both mint and boxed. Copland CD A288, mint and boxed £995. Thorens 124 with Thorens arm, excellent condition £165. Tel: 01923 224 404 (Jan I)

MERIDIAN 208 CD Player, excellent condition, new £1500, selling £350 together with Quad 520 power amplifier £130. Tel: 01484 316 048 (Huddersfield) (Jan/I)

LOWTHER BICOR/PM2 slim-line horn speakers £400. Hi-Fi News 66-67, 85-97, HiFi For Pleasure 74-84, Hi-Fi Answers/Audiophile 77-94. 400+ magazine - offers. Regal tabletop brass gramophone £100. Tel: Richard 020 8991 0762

ARAGON 404 £695. Musical Fidelity PR6 Amp3 £150. Krell DSP £1650. Audio Note MO Pre £250. Audio Note MO/remote £295. Exposure IV £595. Levinson 39 £2795. Attesa DAC £295. Linxx monobloc Pre £650. Talismans II £335. Ojans 3X (rosewood) £675. Unison Simply 4 £795. Pathos Classic One (new) £695. DNM 2 box (reg) £595. DNM 3 box pre £795. Technics SUC2000 pre/pwr (£2200) £795. Tel: 07966 267 404 or Email: coom@btinternet.com (Jan/I)

LINN LP12, Gyrodek or similar wanted by cash buyer. Cyrus II, fantastic condition £150. PSX £150. Rotel RCD 991, mint, 8 months old £380. NAD C541 CD £195. Postage possible. Tel: 01782 267 233 or 07799 415 123 (Jan/I)

SONUS FABER Concertino speakers, superb condition with matching stands, boxed £500. Audio Analogue Puccini SE Silver £250. Can dem. Tel: 01732 461 561 (Sevenoaks) (Jan/I)

TWO CROFT Series V power amps. 2x 50w or 4x 25w. All Mullard valves, mint condition, cages, plinths, £800. Revox A77 2 track, like new, unused condition £295. Tel: 07973 304 527 or Email: bluejag@cd2.com (Jan/I)

WANTED! BEARD CA506 pre-amplifier. Must be in good condition with no faults c/w Phono stage. Please ring Steve on 01429 268218 or Email stephen.petch@ntlworld.com (Teesside) (Jan/I)

QUAD 63 electrostatic speakers with stands, in full working condition. Fully serviced by One Thing Audio, £850 ono. Also available, Quad 34 pre-amp £100. Tel: Tony 02476 460 729 or 07788 642 632 (Jan/I)

MARK LEVINSON 336 Poweramp £3750. Musical Fidelity A3cr pre + A300cr Power (display only) £1750. Rega Planet + remote £185. B&W CDM7NT (new) £750. Musical Fidelity A3cr CD (new) £550. Tel: 01952 502 097 (Jan/I)

GOERTZ M12 (Copper) speaker cable, 3.2m pair, £65 (£130 new). Tel: 07710 368611 (mob), 01273 887863 (evenings) (Jan/I)

REL Q100E Subwoofer wanted. Tel: Mark 01604 889 027 (Jan/I)

AUDIO ANALOGUE Bellini pre amp and Donizetti dual mono power amp. Finished in brushed aluminium, as new condition with manuals. £550 ono. Tel: 0191 285 0621 (office) or 07711 855 599 (mobile) or Email: jimtosg@hotmail.com (Jan/I)

XLO DIGITAL Interconnect Reference Type 4, 0.5 metre £35. XLO Digital Interconnect Signature Type 4.1, 0.5 metre £75. Tel: 01249 821 288 (Jan/I)

WANTED. LEAK Stereo 20 power amplifier in fully rebuilt and mint condition. Email: martin_rimmer@btinternet.com (Jan/I)

MUSICAL FIDELITY F18 200 watt valve solid hybrid massive powerhouse much preferred to previous Krell KSA200. When new £5,000, offered at £1250. Tel: 01270 759 143 evening/weekends (Jan/I)

B&W MATRIX 802 Series 3 wanted. Must be in excellent condition. Late Series 2 also considered. Cash waiting. Tel: Alan 020 8422 1195 (Jan/I)

VALVE INTEGRATED Amplifier, Woodside, 25 watts per channel, same size as a CD player. Totally as new. Powerful, smooth and detailed sound. Can demo. £495. Possible P/X, W.H.Y.? Tel: 01253 345 449 or Email: broderick1@btopenworld.com (Blackpool) (Jan/I)

WANTED: PAIR of IMF professional studio monitor speakers or similar. Tel: Phil 01482 654 311 (Jan/I)

GUIDELINES FOR BUYING AND SELLING SECOND-HAND EQUIPMENT

FOR THE BUYER

1. Not everyone is honest - Buyer Beware!
2. **Don't send cash!**
3. Accept no verbal guarantees.
4. Have you heard the item or something similar? If not, why do you want it?
5. Don't pretend to have knowledge - it's your fingers that will get burnt!
6. Is it working? If not, why not?
7. Has it been modified and, if so, have notes been kept?
8. Was it any good in the first place?
9. **Don't send cash!**
10. If you are in the slightest doubt, arrange an audition (see point 5). If it's too far, wait for another time.
11. Either buy it or don't: vendors are excusably impatient with 'consultation' exercises.
12. **Don't send cash!**

FOR THE SELLER

1. Not everyone is honest - Seller Beware!
2. Make no verbal guarantees.
3. Even 'nearly new' is still second-hand. If the manufacturer's guarantee is no longer in force, your price should reflect this.
4. There is very little intrinsic value in second-hand hi-fi; it's only worth what someone will pay for it.
5. The best guide to pricing is last month's Classifieds: that a 'classic' was worth £xxx a year or two ago is no guide. Values fall as well as rise.
6. Amateur second-hand dealing is not a big money game: you win some, you lose some.
7. Be prompt with despatch. If in doubt about buyer's bonafides, either wash out the deal or send C.O.D.
8. There will always be time-wasters; be tolerant within reason!

AUDUSA

AUDUSA - OOM Silverlink Mono Crystal balanced speaker cable - conductor of 3mm diameter (approx 8 gauge), stranded silver on OFHC, plus three strands of Mono Crystal Copper for improved bass performance. Mylar infill and with designed in protection against RF and EMI. Cable OD 14.72 mm Priced at £12.95 per meter



AUDUSA EUPEN CSA 2.5 MAINS CABLE - HI FI CHOICE SEPT 2001 BEST BUY

GNLM 05/04 and GNLM 05/2.5 (CSA 2.5) Cable with FERRITE TECHNOLOGY - A polymer material mixed with a considerable quantity of homogeneously fine high quality ferrite powder is extruded around the copper conductors. As a ferromagnetic material, it will go through hysteresis loops whenever it is under influence of an alternating magnetic field. Consecutively magnetizing and demagnetizing the material will cause considerable losses of high frequency energy. This energy is absorbed in the ferrite grains and converted into heat. This effect is more or less proportional to the field frequency; high frequencies will be strongly attenuated, because their energy will be absorbed by the ferrite powder. The GNLM cables which in addition to the above described ferrite technology is further protected with a foil shield and a drain wire and specifically manufactured for High End audio use. **Said by some to be the most neutral sounding mains cable on the market**



ever it is under influence of an alternating magnetic field. Consecutively magnetizing and demagnetizing the material will cause considerable losses of high frequency energy. This energy is absorbed in the ferrite grains and converted into heat. This effect is more or less proportional to the field frequency; high frequencies will be strongly attenuated, because their energy will be absorbed by the ferrite powder. The GNLM cables which in addition to the above described ferrite technology is further protected with a foil shield and a drain wire and specifically manufactured for High End audio use. **Said by some to be the most neutral sounding mains cable on the market**



AUDUSA - Eupen GNLM 05/2.5 (CSA 2.5) shown with Maringo IEC 320

Fitted with IEC (Martin Kayser) and MK Tough Cable can be supplied fitted to our all steel 4, 6 and 8 way distribution blocks. We can rewire the distribution blocks with Eupen cable as an extra cost option. Refer to our web site for details.



AUDUSA EUPEN GNLM 05/04

GNLM 05/2.5 (CSA2.5) £48 for 1.0m, £58 for 1.5m, £68 for 2.0m, Off the reel £30 for 1st meter, £20 per m thereafter. GNLM 05/04 £58 for 1m, £68 for 1.5m, £78 for 2.0m Also off the reel.

Both GNLM cables available for export

AUDUSA - Eupen and LAT AC-2 mains cable available with 16 amp IEC (for certain models of amp: by Krell, MF, Levinson etc), Maringo 320 IEC, Figure of eight, Bulgin, USA Hubble, European Schuko, Australian, Swiss, Danish, and Neutrik plugs.

SILVER SILVER SILVER - Upgrade the cable with silver plated contacts on IEC and and MK plug for an extra £6. IEC's and MK plugs with silver plated contacts available seperately at £6, £8 and £9
Why Silver plated contacts? Simple, silver is THE BEST conductor of electricity.

LAT AC-2 HI-FI CHOICE - SEPT 2001 - RECOMMENDED MAINS CABLE

We have developed a cabling (weaving) pattern along with an unusual shielding/filtering system that gets rid of the garbage that contaminates your components. The difference you hear with our cord is astounding. Our power cord takes advantage of silver in its design through use of our proprietary Silverfuse conductors. The conductors are 10 gauge and with PTFE; the best insulation available. Fitted as standard with IEC / MK Toughplug. . 60cm £62, 90cm £75, 1.2m £88, 1.5m £101, 1.8m £112 etc Other lengths available and off the reel. **4,6 and 8 way all steel mains distribution blocks fitted with UK, Schuko or USA sockets.** CE tested & approved mains distribution units manufactured of heavy gauge steel, finished in black and fitted with high quality 13amp sockets. It has no filters, circuit breakers, surge protection, transformers, resistors, capacitors, LED's, on/off switches, chokes, regulators, just fitted with 1m of AC-2 mains cable. From £166 for 4 way, £198 for 6 way, £229 for 8 way.



AC-2 Power cable compare with products costing ten times as much, then decide



SILVERFUSE is a near alloy of silver and copper. IT IS NOT SILVER PLATED OR SILVER CLAD. Plating (or clad, which is the same thing as plating) causes a dioding effect when signal is passed through resulting in brightness and distortion. The Silverfuse process starts with seven nines OFHC copper wire with a diameter that is slightly larger than the required size. It is then pulled through a trough of molten silver. The wire with a silver deposit, is then forced through a compacting die where it is subject to tremendous pressure. The silver and the high purity copper are fused together into a near alloy. The compacting fusion also reduces the wire diameter to the desired size. No dioding subsequently occurs with this process. The result provides for the benefits of silver; which are excellent definition and clarity, with the high purity copper benefits of warmth and mellowness.

LAT INTERNATIONAL - Analogue, Digital and Video interconnects and Speaker cable- better than most others if double the price Refer to www.audusa.com for further details or ask for reviews

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Special Internet offer see page 130 for details

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Website: www.vintagewirelesslondon.co.uk
Buy-Sell-Exchange. Vintage wireless and classical audio. Repairs, spares, restoration, modification to all valve equipment. Quad II, Leaks etc, shipped worldwide, best prices, call us at 17 Bell Street, London, NW1 5BY. Tel: 020 7258 3448 Fax 020 7258 3449 Email: vwirelesslondon@aol.com (Oct/I)

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NAM NAC 32.5 pre. with phono stage, mint condition £275. UKD Opera Duetto's, original box, immaculate, £230. Rotel RT 830 AL tuner, analogue £60. Telephone Jules on 01792 280061, Email: info@sounddrjuleshifi.co.uk Web: www.sounddrjuleshifi.co.uk (Jan/I)

DEADROCK IXOS 4 Tier HiFi rack, smoked glass shelves £100. Castle Harlech, rosewood, boxed, 1 year old, boxed and in mint condition £750 Quad ESL 63's, Mint condition, black, one elderly owner, Syrs old £1600. Telephone Jules on 01792 280061, Email: info@sounddrjuleshifi.co.uk Web: www.sounddrjuleshifi.co.uk (Jan/I)

KIMBER SELECT Digital KS 2020 high performance 0.75 metre interconnect (£546.00) £390. Proac Response One SC speakers in cherry wood, 14 mths old, mint condition, on a four pillar Target R4 speaker stands, £875 Telephone Jules 01792 28006, Email: info@sounddrjuleshifi.co.uk Web: www.sounddrjuleshifi.co.uk (Jan/I)

AUDIO RESEARCH Classic 150 Mono Blocks, black, excellent condition, new valves, boxed, (£12000) £3700 Manticore Turntable, Manticore Mantraless arm, mahogany plinth, Manticore Magician arm, AT-OC9, Mana Reference table, PSU MB6i External upgaded P/S, etc (£3,585) £1600. Audio Technica OC9 cartridge brand new £270. Telephone Jules on 01792 28006, Email: info@sounddrjuleshifi.co.uk Web: www.sounddrjuleshifi.co.uk (Jan/I)

KRELL KRC-2 pre-amp, as new £1750. Meridian 500 transport, immaculate, 2 years old, boxed, manual, everything as new, (£1400) £750. Infinity Renaissance 80 floorstander's, oak, £550. Telephone Jules on 01792 28006, Email: sales@sounddrjuleshifi.co.uk Web: www.sounddrjuleshifi.co.uk (Jan/I)

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KORA VALVE Amplifiers on permanent dem. Also 4N-Pure flat silver foil air interconnects with Buccchino phono plugs. Tel: Worthing Audio 01903 212 133 or 07900 918 882 (Jan/I)

AMAZING CABLES! Unlock your system's full potential. Handbuilt silver interconnects from £85, solid silver speaker cables from £220, £5 p & p. Fantastic performance, money back guarantee. Details: 0115 982 5772 after 7pm or Email: bob@skydivers.co.uk (Mar/I)

REPAIR, RESTORATION, modification, custom design and construction of audio equipment. Theo Argiriadis BSc Hons. Phone 020 8881 1623 Mon-Fri 9.30am to 5.30am. Website: www.tube-electronics.com (Feb/I)

AUDIO COMPUTER valve output or Midiman Audiophile soundcard, rack sized, black, silver, looks like Hi-Fi also PC. Replay/Record, CD, LP, MP3, Wav., Radio. P4, AMDxp from £999. Tel: 01460 65988 or Email: info@silentaudio.co.uk (Jan/I)

EMT 948 £580, 950 £975, Revox PR99 £750, Mk2 £950, Mk3 £1200, Studer B62 £500, A62 £600, B67 VU £950, A80 VU £1200, A807 VU £1400, A810 £750, A710 £450, B760 £650, A77 £300, Nagra E £350, Uher 560 Royal £250, Technics SLP1200 £300, SP10 IIP £300, Sony DCD3000 Pro CD £1200. Revox E36 £200. Tel: 01246 275 479 or Email: j.i.tipping@amserve.net (Jan/I)

HI-END SPECIALISTS Buy and sell top condition Naim, Mark Levinson, Krell, Wilson Audio Etc. And Esoteric Cables. Cash Waiting. All products sold are tested and can be demonstrated. Full money back guarantee. Telephone: 07971 202742 any time (Jan/I)

AUDIOPUBLIC, 78 Otley Road, Headingley, Leeds, 0113 217 7294. Yorkshire's newest Hi-Fi retailer representing Naim, Rega, Creek, Totem, Quadraspire, Dynavector, Roksan, Teac and more. Used LP12's, Lingo's, Linto's stocked. Call for advice. Tel: 0113 217 7294 (Jan/I)

FARADAY CONCRETE Cabinet loudspeakers, 'a sonic revelation', What Hi-Fi? Our unique low density formulation and design really does produce the ultimate in audio transparency. DIY options available. Tel: 01603 762967 www.faradaysound.co.uk (Feb/I)

EX DEMONSTRATION Klipsch speaker systems, KSB 2.1 £200, KG 3.5 £350, KG 4.5 £450, KG 5.5 £550. Heresy £650, all tested. Tel: Midland Radio Supplies on 0121 430 7817 or Email: guyholdsworth@onetel.net.uk (Mar/I)

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