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Editor's Notebook

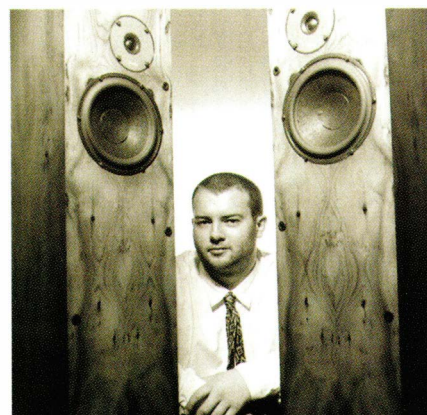


PHOTO BY SEAN BLOODWORTH

Stan Vincent laments the passing of the vibro-sprout challenge and recounts a visit to one of the industry's finest engineers.

I don't blame politicians for gnashing their teeth over the thorny business of European Union. Even the Utopian world of hi-fi is beginning to feel the force of the directives that issue forth from Brussels, seeking to regulate peoples of all lands — and their music systems.

As you'll read in Barry Fox's column on page 25, horrendous consequences could result for hi-fi if new legislation aimed at dishwashers, and other white goods, is enforced to the letter of the law. The problem is that, because individual governments are required to make their own legislation out of EU directives, there is a paucity of black-and-white guidelines that hi-fi manufacturers can use to ensure their products are legal. The resultant confusion can only make life harder (and more expensive) for hi-fi manufacturers and enthusiasts alike.

In a further twist to the tale, it seems possible that the Government may start cutting up rough on its obligation to make up loads of new laws, especially when those laws would impinge on the interests of its ardent supporters. On January 13, *The Times* reported that Brussels' ban on a drug that prevents wasting diseases of game birds would not be enforced, which sets a precedent for non-compliance with EU rulings. For my part, I only wish that ministers were as fond of hi-fi as they obviously are of huntin', shootin' and fishin'!

Redefining the Art of Listening

Early in January I had the pleasure of visiting one of Britain's oldest surviving independent hi-fi manufacturers: SME Ltd, of Steyning, West Sussex. It was an eye-opening reminder of the great precision-engineering tradition we have

in Britain; but one that, except in isolated outposts such as this, has all but disappeared. SME, whose initials stand for Scale Model Engineering, was founded in 1946 by Alistair Robertson-Aikman, still at the helm today with help from his son Cameron. Robertson-Aikman has been very shrewd in his business dealings. While he has had — and still enjoys — considerable success in the manufacture of phono pick-up arms (and more recently the battleship-built Model 20 and Model 30 turntables), he has displayed more marketsagacity than many in the hi-fi business. Now, while he is still able to supply the classic tonearms that have established the company, SME remains successful doing work for purveyors of radiotherapy machines, gas compressors; and the kind of wealthy Oriental potentate who prefers a Bentley's chrome to be black.

After lunch in a local pub, we retired to ARA's stupendous "music room", a custom-built enclosure of some 30 by 20 feet, in which are installed his two pairs of modified Quad electrostatic speakers, driven by behemoth Krell and Audio Research amps, with SME/Clear audio for vinyl replay and Wadia 16 for CD, all hooked up with van den Hul wire.

To listen in this sumptuous environment was a rare honour indeed, principally because of the way both system and room are imperceptible; you hear nothing but music. Long-term readers should refer back to issue 55 of *Hi-Fi Choice*, in which Paul Messenger describes the room in detail. And it is the room that is the key. While his system is impeccable in every detail except the ability to play very loudly, due to the Quads' limited headroom, it would not give of its best just plonked down

in any old parlour. ARA freely admits that his room makes all the difference; and even though he has been listening here since 1976, it was only a matter of weeks before my visit that he had effected a minor architectural modification resulting in the best sound yet.

And the moral of this story? Well, while ARA is fortunate enough to afford the very best that money can buy, all of us can improve the quality of our sound by paying attention to the way we site our systems, and the rooms in which we listen. Look forward to a special report on "rooms and hi-fi" in a future issue of this journal.

The Return of Aspirations

The February 1988 feature on ARA's music room, described above, was one of the first Aspirations features to appear in *Hi-Fi Choice*. For those who don't know, this is the hi-fi equivalent of TV's *Through The Keyhole*. Over the past year or so, that series has been taking a well-earned sabbatical while we've concentrated on reviews for a while. Now, however, in response to ardent requests from readers and a stiff memo from the Chairman, I've invited Aspirations to make its return this issue, on page 22. And it is pure coincidence that the tonearm of this £35,000 system is an SME Series V Gold Standard!

That's all for now. Enjoy your listening in February...

Stan Vincent

FREE TAPE ON THIS MONTH'S COVER!
Turn to page 12 for full details of this amazing offer

OUR AIMS AND VISION

- ▶ Hi-Fi Choice has been testing hi-fi since 1975.
- ▶ Collectively, our reviewers and columnists notch up over a century of listening to hi-fi.
- ▶ Our hi-fi group tests are the most thorough in the business.
- ▶ Our listening tests are conducted under strict blind conditions, using an experienced panel drawn from the hi-fi industry.
- ▶ No other hi-fi magazine in the world regularly performs blind listening tests.
- ▶ We assess every facet of a product's performance —

sound, build and measurement.

- ▶ We can predict how individual components will perform in a multitude of systems.
- ▶ Best Buy products are of significantly greater value than alternatives in the same price band.
- ▶ Recommended products offer a superb performance, if one not remarkable enough to earn a Best Buy.
- ▶ We look forward to a healthy future for high-quality audio, and the ultimate fusion of images and sound.



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Editor-in-Chief ATW 'Stan' Vincent • Consultant Editor Paul Messenger • Deputy Editor Jason TO'B Kennedy • Reviews Editor Alan GA 'Nobby' Sircom • Production Editor Kristin S Scharffscher • Art Editor Del PM Gentleman • Editorial Fax 0171-323 3547 • Editorial e-mail 100433.1130@compuserve.com • Contributors • Barry Fox • Alvin Gold • Jimmy Hughes • Photography Chris Richardson • Chris Foster • Editorial Ziggy Opoczynska • Group Advertisement Manager Rob Debenham • Senior Sales Executive Sean Gibson • Sales Executive Amy Cosslett • Advertising Fax 0171-636 1640 • Group Production Manager Simon Maggs • Advertisement Production Controller Jane Shepherd • Production Department Fax 0171-580 6430 • Circulation Director Sean Farmer • Circulation Manager James Burnay • Mail Order Manager Julia French • Co-operative Marketing Executive Edward Pizey • Circulation and Promotions Department Fax 0171-636 5668 • Associate Publisher Simon Davies • Ad Director Ian Westwood • Group Publisher Eric Fuller • Managing Director Alistair Ramsay • Chairman Felix Dennis

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CONTENTS

MARCH 1996

ISSUE 152



Paul Messenger lines up 14 unsuspecting speakers for thorough investigation.

52

THE FRONT END

7 Update

All the bonny, bouncing babies of the hi-fi industry are wheeled out for their first excursion. Ooh, look at their oochie-coochie-woochie little phono plugs.

14 Sessions

Hard man of the audio industry 'Mad' Malcolm Steward and his gang give some hi-fi a right going over. That'll learn 'em.

21 Statements

Alan Sircom loses his capital letters over the new conrad-johnson power amplifier and revised preamp.

22 Aspirations

KJ West One's £35,000 bespoke system has transformed the most humble of rooms into a Far Eastern delicacy.

28 Help!

Alvin Gold solves all your troublesome audio worries, while Jimmy Hughes tells you how to service your system.

43 Write on

Simply write about fear and loathing in hi-fi and you could win yourself a *Hi-Fi Choice* polo shirt that even Jean-Paul Gaultier would be proud of.

COLUMNS

3 Editor's Notebook

Stan Vincent takes a trip to Steyning to visit those grand-masters of all things engineering SME.

13 Ear Waxings

Jason goes digital in search of the ultimate digital lead, and gets all hot under the cathode about some serious valve books.

25 21st Century Fox

Barry Fox questions the validity of the new European regulations and wonders exactly what those standards are.

138 Personal Messages

Paul Messenger is a tall bloke with a bushy beard. Find out what he has to say about all things bass.



36

Alvin Gold guides you through the labyrinth of recording technology.

THE REVIEWS

52 Loudspeakers

14 key loudspeakers, all priced between £250 and £500, come under the watchful ears of Paul Messenger and his test panel.

FEATURES

36 The ultimate recorder

Alvin Gold evaluates the myriad options available to recording enthusiasts.

READER SERVICES

34 Subscriptions

Please Mr Postman, can you see-e-e. If there's a copy of *Choice* for me-e-e. Subscribe or another Carpenters song gets it.

71 BFA awards

It's your turn to change things! Vote for your favourite products in the British Hi-Fi Awards, and you could win one of 75 prizes.

77 Factsback

If you have a fax machine you've got access to *Choice* reviews from the last 18 months.

83 Readers' Classified

Hi-Fi Choice's 'Swap Shop'. Packed with meaty chunks of pre-owned hi-fi.

137 Next Month

Don't get in a stew about what's in next month's *Choice*. This page has the recipe.

SPECIAL OFFERS

73 Mail Order

Stop! Oh yeah, wait a minute Mr Postman... See, I warned you. Now buy some goodies by post before I start on *Calling Occupants of Interplanetary Craft*.

THE DIRECTORY

87 The Directory

The most comprehensive hi-fi product listing around. Includes each and every one of the products that we have reviewed.



14

Check out the latest groovy, curvy, and yes indeed classy new kit, in *Sessions*.

21

Conrad-Johnson's PV10A preamp now has a partner, the MV55 power amp, as reviewed in *Statements*.



£2,500 worth of superb Musical Fidelity amps and CDs must be won.

46

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Update

ONCE AGAIN, MALCOLM STEWARD COMES WITHIN INCHES OF CERTAIN DEATH TO BRING YOU THE HOTTEST STORIES



Straight from the X-files — Teac's A-BX7R.

Teac's X-factor

Following what the company describes as the 'huge success' of its A-BX10 integrated amplifier, Teac has introduced the £699.95 A-BX7R. Like the larger A-BX10, the new model uses simple, straightforward circuitry based on a small number of expensive, high specification components. The dual-mono design, which also features balanced inputs, aims to maintain signal purity and deliver sufficient power to retain the dynamic impact of modern digital recordings.

Available in black or gold finishes, the Danish designed A-BX7R comes with remote control volume and is rated at 50W into eight Ohms rising to 70W into four Ohms. The line-level amplifier has inputs for CD, tuner, aux and two tape decks with monitoring. All input switching is handled by relays placed close to the sockets on the rear panel to minimise circuit path length, while loud-speaker output is via heavy-duty binding posts. ☎ (01923) 819630.

An improved baby

MS05i — it's small, but it's improved.



The junior member of Mordaunt-Short's Music Series range has become the final model to gain Improved status. The updated MS05, the MS05i, sells for £100 and can be distinguished from its predecessor by its gold livery.

Like the rest of the Improved models, it has been tweaked below the surface, too. It now has a braced cabinet to improve its bass performance, and an optimised magnet system for enhanced dynamics, sensitivity (87dB) and control. Its 100mm mid/bass driver uses an MCS cone assembly with a phase plug to improve its midrange and enhance integration with the 10mm polyamide dome tweeter. ☎ (01705) 407722 or e-mail 100144.1407@compuserve.com.

Bandwagon ahoy

The Wharfedale *Valdus* name is making an appearance in the home theatre arena. Selling for £189.95, the *Valdus Home Cinema* loudspeaker package is an upgrade for existing hi-fi systems. It comprises a pair of *Valdus 100s* as surround speakers and the new, fully shielded *Valdus Centre*. Buyers also receive all the necessary cables and a copy of Wharfedale's *Guide To Home Theatre* book.

The *Valdus Centre* is also available by itself for £99. Intended for TV-top placement, its compact ported cabinet houses two 100mm fibre-cone woofers and a 28mm plastic dome tweeter. A crossover with conjugate impedance matching ensures the speaker is easy to drive — 89dB sensitivity and an eight Ohm impedance. An electronic protection circuit safeguards the tweeter from abuse. ☎ (0113) 2601222.



In brief

Bristol's ever-popular Sound & Vision show takes place once again at the Marriot Hotel and starts on Friday 23 February, continuing until Sunday 25th. Adult admission is £4 but smiling, happy, loving couples get in for £6.

London dealer Grahams Hi-Fi is now using the R.E.D. CD-ROM music catalogue, claimed to be the ultimate source of recorded music information. Customers can obtain a print-out to help them find a particular disc or buy a copy of the CD-ROM itself. ☎ (0171) 226 5500.

Component supplier Russ Andrews, (RATA), has installed a Freephone telephone number for orders and enquiries. Customers can also use the number to obtain the latest Audiophile Component Catalogue. ☎ (0800) 373467.

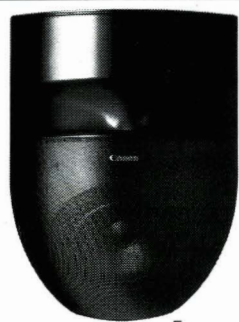
Switched On '96, the North of England's hi-fi, video and consumer electronics extravaganza, takes place on February 10 and 11 at Manchester's G-MEX centre. Adult tickets are £5 while family admission costs £12.50. ☎ (01829) 770884.

High End '96 promises an 'exhibition of superlatives' at the Hotel Gravenbruch Kempinski, near Frankfurt on May 4 and 5. Over 350 manufacturers — including a number from the UK — will be displaying their wares. ☎ (0049) 202 702022

Mission Electronics has been selected from 180 companies as the overall winner of *Commerce* magazine's Winning Business campaign. Judges admired the company's skill, commitment and aggressive drive to increase market share. ☎ (01480) 451777

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(Alvin Gold, Home Entertainment magazine)



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All that matters at AVI



AVI sets the reference with its new CD player.

AVI's *S2000MC Reference* CD player, the company tells us, is the product of its designer's fanatical devotion to achieving the perfect reproduction of music. It further notes that "Terms such as pace, rhythm and timing have no meaning at AVI – they're merely a way of presenting some aspects of an inherently imperfect system in a more positive light. All that matters is absolute accuracy..." Contentious stuff.

To achieve sonic superiority the *S2000MC Reference* uses "the best sledge transport system available", mounted on a mass damped platform. This is driven by AVI's proprietary electronics, including its own tracking servo, C-MOS controller, signal processor and a static display to avoid the interference associated with conventional multiplexed displays. D/A conversion comes courtesy of two Burr Brown 20-bit DACs, run from a 33MHz clock and partnered with a selected eight-times oversampling digital filter.

All the electronics are star-earthed on a fastidiously laid-out circuit board with sophisticated ground plane schemes and seven separate regulated power supplies. The player is electronically and aesthetically matched to the rest of AVI's range and can be controlled by an AVI system remote handset or from its fascia.

The price of treading AVI's path to perfection is £1,149. ☎ (01453) 765682.

Seven up

Grundig has a new range of Dolby Pro-Logic components that are designed to attract 'committed audiophiles'. The *V1000 DPL* amplifier, which sells for £359.99, comes with remote control and is equipped to drive seven loudspeakers. In stereo mode it delivers 2 x 100W into four-ohm speakers, while in Pro-Logic mode it sends 60W to each of the three front channels and 25W to each of the rears (all ratings RMS power into four-ohms). The AV amplifier has five audio inputs including phono, and three audio inputs for video sources.

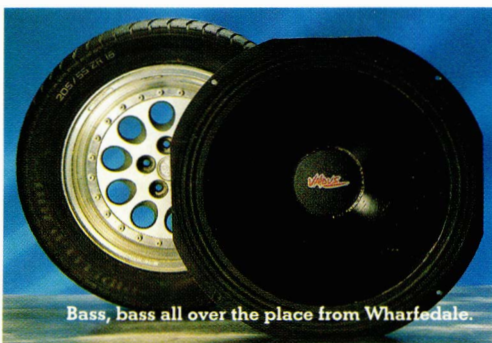
Grundig also offers two AV receivers, the *R1000 DPL* at £399.99 and the *R14 DPL* at £279.99. Both include tuner stages with fifty-nine station presets and full remote control. ☎ (01788) 577155.

Valdus on the road

Wharfedale has ventured beyond manufacturing hi-fi and professional speakers, and drive units for musical instruments and PA systems, with its expansion into the in-car market. This range of new products bears the *Valdus* name established with its rock-oriented hi-fi designs.

Clearly intent on becoming a major player in the car stereo league, Wharfedale is initially launching fifteen models and plans to increase the line-up further during this year. All requirements, it seems, are being catered for, with speakers ranging from a four-inch, full range co-axial unit to a twenty-four-inch subwoofer, the *VLD-BB24*, which will happily soak up a kiloWatt of power. The latter, the company believes, is the largest commercially available in-car loudspeaker in the world.

As you might have guessed, Wharfedale is targeting the younger driver with these speakers and will be demonstrating their prowess in Sound-Off competition winning vehicles. *Hi-Fi Choice*, naturally, suggests you youngsters take care of your hearing — and windscreens and bowels where the *VLD-BB24* is concerned — by listening solely to Barry Manilow records at sensible volume levels. Therapy? albums at ear-splitting levels the rest of us *Choice* types like, are right out. ☎ (0113) 2601222.



Bass, bass all over the place from Wharfedale.

Denon's dynamic discretion



Denon's AVC-1800 amp.

The *AVC-1800* home cinema amplifier is Denon's attempt to deliver the sound quality of its *AVC-2800* in a more affordable package. Like the *2800*, the new £549.99 model uses discrete decoder and amplifier technology to provide better performance than is attainable with ICs.

The Pro-Logic decoder uses Denon's Dynamic Discrete Surround Circuit, in which the front and centre channels are handled as analogue signals while the rear channels use a custom digital circuit with separate power supplies for the analogue and digital sections. Power output is 70W at the front and 20W at the rear.

The amplifier offers a variety of audio and video connections, including S-Video and automatic input balancing. Most settings are variable and can be stored in the system's memory. There are five surround sound modes as well as the usual Pro-Logic options, and on-screen displays simplify set-up and configuration. ☎ (01753) 888447.

In brief

Aanvil Audio has been appointed UK distributor for ART accessories, Meracus electronics and Yamamura-Churchill cables and accessories. ☎ (01359) 240867.

Tina Turner's 1996 European tour will be her first in six years and is being sponsored by TDK, which describes it as the company's most exciting venture yet. TDK has worked previously with big names such as The Rolling Stones and Paul McCartney, and has also sponsored many less high profiled music events. ☎ (01737) 773773.

Stefan Venetos, the inventor of V-Damp anti-vibration material, has joined Heybrook Hi-Fi to look after new product development. The company has now taken over UK distribution of Analysis magnetostatic ribbon loudspeakers and Parasound electronics. ☎ (01752) 731313.

Wharfedale's *Modus Micro* and *Modus Cube* speakers are now available in white finishes, while the *Modus Vivendi* range has been upgraded to Series 2 status. This sadly means no more glowing red tweeters: they've been replaced with silk dome units. ☎ (0113) 2601222.

The Puresonic 6220 is a new banana plug that promises a tight fit for the best information transfer. A four-pack costs £13.95 with rhodium plating and £19.95 with gold plating. ☎ (0181) 771 8388.

Sevenoaks Hi-Fi's Guildford and recently updated Croydon branches can now demonstrate the Meridian 500 Series to customers looking for high grade audio visual systems. ☎ (01732) 742299.

Philips has introduced its new £199.99 *DC349* in-car cassette tuner, which comes complete with a wired remote control mouse that attaches to the steering wheel. This handy little podule facilitates easy tuning preset changes and volume adjustments with no need to look away from the road. It also includes Audio Super Control (ASC), which allows different bass and treble settings to be stored on each radio band. ☎ (01869) 320333

MOST SALES LITERATURE ON SPEAKERS GETS RECYCLED. OURS JUST GETS REREAD.

As you may have noticed, the "high-end" audio world tends to congregate in small sects around many "gurus" who preach unbelievable creeds about wholly unbelievable technological breakthroughs. True to our tenet, following the teachings of our first official Danish Holyman, chief tester St.Erik "The Ear" Nielsen, we feel compelled to prevent further adoration of Golden Calves, comparable idols, and other profane fallacies.

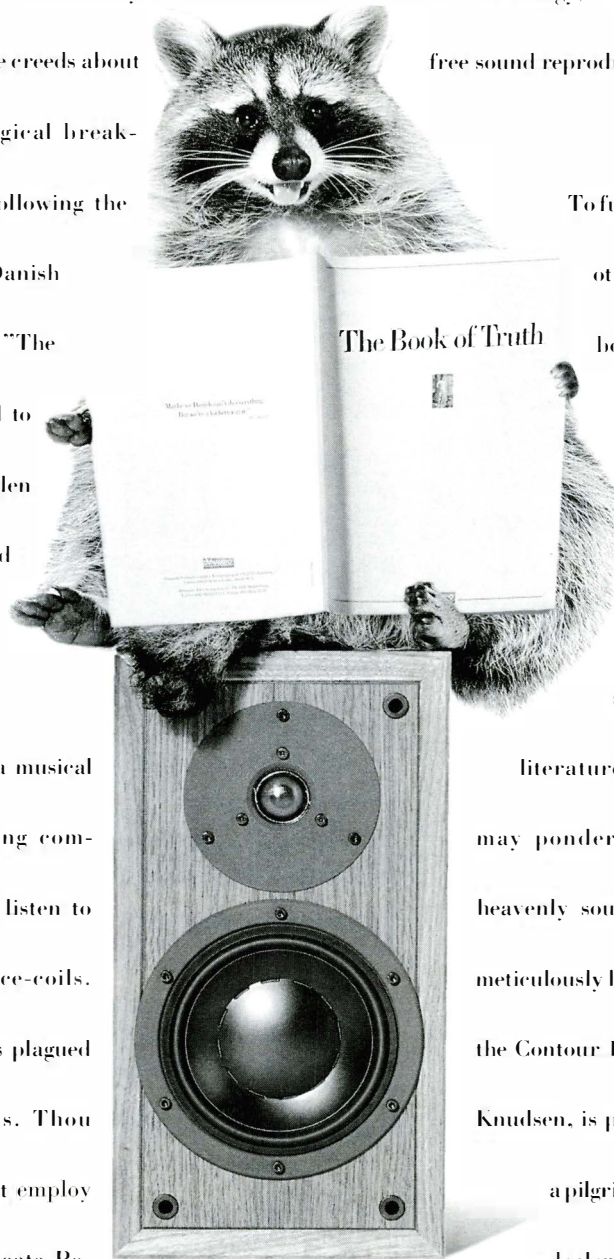
Hence, "The Book of Truth", a musical bible containing such towering commandments as: Thou shalt not listen to speakers with undersized voice-coils. Thou shalt not listen to speakers plagued with phase response problems. Thou shalt only listen to speakers that employ one-piece MSP (Magnesium Silicate Polymer) woofer cones. Thou shalt only listen to speakers

that utilize complete absorption of evil, backwards-radiated energy, and allow for virtuous, echo-free sound reproduction.

To further indulge in these and other truths from Skanderborg, Denmark, please call +49-40-858-066 or fax us at +49-40-859-035, to receive a missionary copy of our small masterpiece of true audiophile

literature. In the meantime, you may ponder seeking refuge in the heavenly sounds emanating from our meticulously handcrafted speakers (like the Contour 1.3 our company raccoon, Knudsen, is preaching from), whilst on a pilgrimage to one of our few true dealers. Consequently, you may

even consider recycling your former speakers as well.



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Sony celebrates the trannie

In brief

Denon has announced that its *DRM-540* cassette deck is to be replaced by the £159.99 *DRM-550*. Improvements have been made to metering, headphone monitoring and — by popular demand — there is a timer switch for automatic play or record when power is first switched on. ☎ (01753) 888447

Alphason has a new midi-sized stand to take away those inappropriate system siting blues. The *Strata 9202* — which retails for £39.95 — stands 40 cm high, and comes replete with an attractive graphite finish. Better still, it will store more than 70 CDs underneath, within its capacious shelves. If you're feeling really flush, splash out £59.95 on the matching *Strata 9205* speaker stand. ☎ (01942) 678000

LATE SPECIAL OFFER SHOCKER!

Those awfully nice guys and gals over at Sony's Weybridge nerve-centre are giving away five £40 *SRF-220* credit-card radios (see above left). To win one of these exclusive, limited-edition radios, simply tell us the model number of Sony's first transistor radio, back in 1955. Write the answer, along with your name, address and daytime telephone number on the back of a postcard or sealed down envelope. Send this to Sony Radio Giveaway Competition, *Hi-Fi Choice* (Editorial), 19 Bolsover St, London W1P 7HJ. But be quick, only the first five correct entries we receive will win. Closing date — first post on Friday 16th February 1996. The usual competition rules apply — see pages 46/47 for details.

The transistor radio has just celebrated its fortieth birthday. Sony is particularly keen to participate in the party because it was the first company to produce a trannie, the *TR-55*, way back in 1955. This was a risky move for the then nine-year-old business because the radio market was still dominated by sets using tried and tested valve technology: few people were happy about using these new fangled, American transistor devices, which had only been invented in 1948.

Two years later, Sony introduced the *TR-63*, the world's first pocket-sized radio and the rest, as they say, is history. While the transistor radio's popularity grew, the sets' dimensions diminished every year. Sony's current *ICF-SW100E* world receiver, for instance, has a four-band tuner, synchronous detection, a fifty-station memory and a clock that automatically adjusts to the local time of twenty-four major cities, all crammed into a box the size of a cassette tape.

To celebrate the trannie's 40th anniversary, Sony has produced a limited edition, credit card sized AM/FM radio. Called the *SRF-220*, its fascia has a graphical representation of the *TR-55* and the forty-year transition to the *ICF-SW100E*. It's priced, appropriately enough, at a penny under £40. ☎ (01932) 816000.

Home cinema economics

Business is booming in America. The Electronic Industries Association reports that the number of home theatre installations in the USA has increased by 150 per cent in one year. Around 10 million families now settle down for evenings of Pro-Logic fun. In the third quarter of 1995 sales of home theatre products topped \$2 billion.

Things are looking healthier for the audio sector, too, according to Kathy Gornik, Thiel's President, and 1995 Chairperson of the Consumer Electronics Manufacturers Association's Audio Division. She announced that, driven by compact disc (over 26 million players sold last year), sales of audio equipment climbed 11 per cent in the first quarter of 1995.

CEMA's figures show that the component market had its best first quarter since 1990 with sales of \$383 million, a gain of 7 per cent. Multi-play CD players and high-capacity CD players (10 or more discs) helped boost sales, while turntables, power amplifiers and equalisers also benefited from increased "consumer focus" on stereo separates brought about by interest in home theatre.

While the American marketplace is certainly very different to those in the UK and Europe, it's still encouraging to see hi-fi consumption coming out of the doldrums.



No less than 40 years of music on the move with Sony.

A spark on the horizon

There's heart-warming news for the hi-fi industry in The BusinessBook 1996 — The Electrical Retail Market in Great Britain, published by The Independent Electrical Retailer. Its analysis of key areas of the electrical retailing market shows that in 1995 audio separates sales had 'taken on a new lease of life following bad declines since 1992.'

Sales of audio separates had risen by five per cent, which the book's authors attribute to a revival in the music industry and growing interest in better sound quality. Systems sales had also risen dramatically, thanks to improved performance, good reviews and a fall in the computer games market that was sapping this area of the market. Portable audio, especially CD players, performed exceptionally with nearly eight million units sold.

The sales figures for separates items, for the year ending November 1995, look like this: 173,400 amplifiers — £56.9 million; 67,200 tuners — £12.4 million; 50,000 receivers — £14.4 million; 139,000 cassette decks — £26.7 million; 62,600 turntables — £9.6 million; and 338,000 CD players — £70.7 million.

Good news for hi-fi manufacturers meant disappointing news elsewhere: household penetration of dishwashers is still only one fifth despite rampant price cutting, and sales of three-in-one vacuum cleaners have plummeted by twenty-three per cent. This clearly proves that music lovers just aren't house proud! ☎ (01730) 894059.

True Dynaudio Dealers.

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

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

DYNAUDIO
 AUTHENTIC FIDELITY
 Danes don't lie.

FREE!

THAT'S RX-A C100 TAPE

On the front cover of this month's **Hi-Fi Choice** you'll find a sample of **That's RX-A** cassette tape for you to try – absolutely free! You can record your own favourite tracks on one of the best ferric tapes on the market, courtesy of **Hi-Fi Choice**.

Yes indeed, ladies and gents, *Hi-Fi Choice* is proud to increase your listening pleasure with **That's RX-A**, the tape gives you more in every sense of the word. First and foremost there's that amazing 100 minute length, which as Yes fans will now, is more than enough to record the whole of *Tales From Topographic Oceans*.

Then there's the fact that **RX-A's** Type I Ferric composition is suited to all manner of recording and playback situations — it's rugged enough to mix it with the most street-tough ghettoblaster, yet won't be disgraced on home hi-fi decks.

Finally, let's not forget that the **RX-A** was awarded a coveted Recommended swing-tag in *Hi-Fi Choice's* authoritative tape supplement in November 1995. Paul Miller was moved to say complimentary things about this month's complimentary cassette: "...**RX-A** is capable of delivering surprisingly detailed and delicate recordings free of that fuzzy-ferric coloration." So there you have it. Quality sounds to go!

Hi-Fi Choice regrets that the free tape is only available on UK copies of the magazine.

If you're impressed by the performance of RX-A, you might like to try other tapes in the That's range, such as...

- That's MG-X (Best Buy, Nov 1995)**
- That's CD-IIF (Rec'd, February 1995)**
- That's VX**
- That's CD-IVF**
- That's Suono**



That's tapes are available exclusively in Richer Sounds stores.

To obtain a free catalogue showing your nearest branch, call 0500 101112 (UK only).

Ear Waxings

Jason Kennedy drools over two new essential books for valve fans, and tries some digital interconnects.

Once upon a time, about 25 years ago to be imprecise, there was the *Audio Year Book*, an illustrated hi-fi tome. Since then publications of this ilk have become thin on the ground, with only occasional magazine articles remaining a source material for anachrophiles. Now, for the tube-amp enthusiast at least, there are two — count 'em — new publications to drool over. These are *Audio! Audio!* by Jonathan Hill (£10 plus £2.50 p&cp) and the hardbound *Tube Amplifiers* by Dagmar and Paul G Kavsek (£40). But price is not the only difference between these two coffee table tube tomes.

Audio! Audio! is an essential reference for the vintage tube-amp spotter, containing details of 850 different models from over 140 manufacturers. Most of the gear is British, with well-known brands like Leak and Lowther sitting cheek-by-jowl with names I've never encountered — Futuristic Aids Ltd, anyone?

In addition there is information on imported kit from the likes of Dynaco and Heath, even details of early Sony and JVC quadraphonic stuff. Predominantly, this consists of technical specifications, dates of manufacture, and prices in original pounds, shillings and pence. There's a decimal conversion chart at the front, but that doesn't really give you any perspective on real costs. It would have been useful to have had some yardstick statistics, like the average wage, for example. A Leak *Point One* (0.1 per cent harmonic distortion) *Stereo 20* cost £30.9s.0d when it was introduced in 1958, but how many pints of beer, gallons of petrol or EL34 output tubes does that represent?

However, *Audio! Audio!* is a collector's bible, and it has pictures (71 of them, in glorious black and white) of classic models, such as the Kerr Mcosh *DSI* from 1962, and the serious-looking *BTHA1A* control unit from 1960. The only criticism I have is that it's a tad dry for the casual reader; it's really only a reference book and has very little background on the various companies, let alone their founders.

If really luscious pictures are your heart's desire, you'll dig deep in your pocket for the stunning *Tube Amplifiers* published by Allegro Verlag of Vienna. Its 160 glossy pages, replete with positively moist images of current valve amps, take tube fetishism to the limit.

Whether it's the Art Audio *Maestro*, the Intonation *P1* or the Sound Perfect *Kronos pre/power*, this is photography and thermionicity for the gourmet.

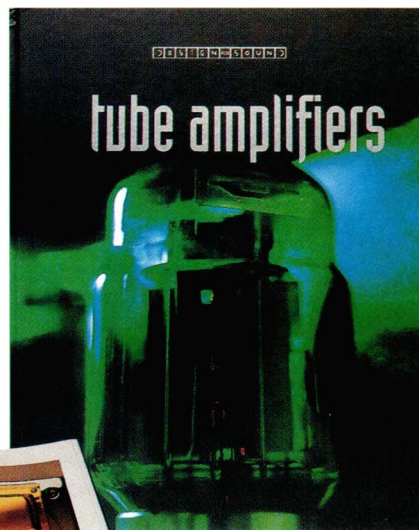
There's more to this tome than sheer visual indulgence, however. It contains information about how tubes and tube amps work (co-written by one of the UK's more knowledgeable aficionados, Graham Tricker) alongside rather scant details of each amp's origin and designer. There is an index of names and addresses for all the brands, which is handy because a fair proportion of them are pretty scarce on these shores — have you ever heard of an Audium or a Joule *Elektra*? Well, they're just two of the mostly German but occasionally Japanese rarities which sit alongside better-known beasts like the Audio Research *VT60* or Leak *TL12*. The latter is the only product to appear in both *Audio! Audio!* and *Tube Amplifiers*, looking a lot better in the more expensive one, but for technical detail *Audio! Audio!* is hard to beat, so you might need both volumes!

Audio! Audio! is printed by Sunrise Press ☎ (01938) 331532, and *Tube Amplifiers* is distributed by GT Audio ☎ (01895) 833099.

Bitstreams and bobs

A digital interconnect should not possess a discernible character. This solitary cable that connects the CD transport to the DAC should offer a 75-Ohm impedance, and nothing else. However, anyone who has read one of Paul Miller's reports on the subject will know that digital interconnects frequently don't offer a 75-Ohm impedance, and that they can imbue sound with as much character as an analogue interconnect. Kinda strange!

Two examples of the digital interconnect art have been loitering in or near my transport and DAC for a while now. To wit, Precious Metals' *Silver 300*, and a short length from Roksan, which arrived when I dallied with *Xerxes* the other month. Both cables



Live up your coffee table with some valve adulation tomes.



are terminated in BNC plugs, so I could compare them with a piece of Trichord *Pulsewire 75* (£39 per half metre) on level ground.

As for the Roksan, there's not much to report; it sounded al-

most exactly like the *Pulsewire*, reproducing wide bandwidth music with no detectable tonal or temporal character. In other words, a good result if you're after great timing, tonal characterlessness and solid imaging.

The Precious Metals cable, however, turned out to have rather more character, and introduced a degree of warmth by apparently rolling off the high frequencies. In my current system, this cable-induced effect wasn't very appealing, but loudspeakers that have gone before the Electrofluidics *Sonoliths* have responded well to the treatment.

So if your system is sounding a bit on the bright side, this might be the solution.

By way of an end-note, I'm told that Precious Metals' less expensive *Silver* series digital interconnects (models *100* and *200*) give a sharper sound. ▲

Choice sessions

CHEW THE HI-FI CUD WITH MALCOLM STEWARD – ALTOGETHER NOW, 'WE ARE LUCKY COWS'

Arcam Alpha 6, Myryad MI 120, Ruark Icon

This month's system is an all-British affair which offers subtlety and finesse for the midrange connoisseur.

£1,488.85

Brought together more by the grace of God than painstaking research, this trio of new products combined to form a charmer of a system with a particular flair for vocal material.

Ruark's *Icon* is a compact, two-way speaker that follows the company's tradition of using externally sourced but highly-specified drivers, bolted into exquisitely-fashioned cabinets. However, there's more than that to this new design, for the *Icon* has been sprinkled with innovations dust.

Its bass/midrange unit, jointly developed by Ruark and Vifa, is outwardly conventional in appearance but it incorporates a couple of radical

elements. The first is its chassis, which is damped—literally! It's made of moulded polymer composites that retain some of the water used in the manufacturing process. The idea is to provide a rigid skeleton for the bass driver while minimising any propensity for ringing. The second innovation is the pentagonal paper cone, which prevents the diaphragm 'going off' at one particular set of frequencies related to its radius. Because that dimension varies, the frequencies at which the cone wants to resonate are scattered rather than concentrated.

Other features include an inverted driver array, in a braced cabinet using a mix of MDF and particle board; a second-order crossover with bi-wire connections; magnetic shielding; reflex loading; and a tweeter with air loading, designed to be equivalent to that of the driver's dome. All of this aims to provide a level of musical accuracy and low coloration that the mak-

ers say is exceptional at the price, £359.

One thing is certain; the *Icons* didn't exhibit any undue brightness or aggression at the top end. (This is often apparent in compact speakers that deliver a similarly energetic presentation.) They didn't neuter songs such as Therapy?'s *Bad Mother*; its guitar grind emerged as brash and hard-edged as one could wish. Amidst this welter of energy you could easily follow all the instrumental lines and layers in the mix. I'm not talking about studio monitoring clarity, but you'd have no trouble appropriating the guitar chops.

Vocal recordings showed that the *Icon* didn't add or subtract anything significant in terms of coloration. Voices were naturally engaging and full of character, which helped the speaker integrate harmoniously with the communicative £530 Myryad *MI 120* amplifier to which they were connected.

The *MI 120* is the first design from the company founded last year by former NAD (and coincidentally Arcam) designer, Chris Evans. As you might expect, it had a delightfully easy-going character. Laid-back it was not, but it didn't proffer the sort of smelling-salts presentation that thrusts music under your nose and makes your eyes water. Its delivery was, well, let's just say carefully measured: it was cultured without being bland.

I was impressed with more than just its performance. For starters, this attractively-styled 60W integrated is also remote controlled—the handset operates input, volume and standby selection. Furthermore, it offers plenty of potential for expansion: the aux input can be converted for phono (vinyl disc) operation with an add-in module; it has a low-level output to which you can connect a 120 power

This involving, power-packed trio will appeal to a wide variety of listeners – and it's all British, too.



amplifier (£449) for bi-amping; and it has a My-Link connection that allows you to control other Myriad products, such as the tuner (currently being developed), through the 120's IR receiver. The rest of the spec includes six line inputs (including two full tape loops) and a headphone jack.

I didn't receive a phono module with the amplifier, so I did all my listening with compact disc, which, as I intimated earlier, was not a painful experience. The 120's pleasantly rounded sound didn't put you right up against the PA with rock music; you were positioned halfway between the band and the bar, which represents the best of both worlds. Dynamics were quite marked if not startling, while the tonal balance was smooth and even. Treble was crisp rather than incisive, while the low end was full and tight. Subjectively, the MI 120 didn't seem to suffer wobbly legs when it was asked to deliver current. Perhaps, however, the most appealing quality this amplifier demonstrated, especially through the Ruark *Icons*, was a midrange that was open enough to satisfy all but the most fussy of folk. Voices were nothing short of superb for a system at this price.

Sitting in the system's driving seat was Arcam's £599.90 *Alpha 6* CD player. Essentially, this new machine is an 'Alpha 5 Plus' into which Arcam has grafted a new output board using a 20-bit digital filter and advanced PWM DAC with differential outputs. The first analogue filter stages are also differential for improved noise rejection, and the audio circuitry is directly coupled from the DAC through to the output sockets. The result is a player that delivers the blend of brio and refinement that has long characterised Britain's best-selling chunk of serious CD machinery.

In keeping with this system's amplifier and speakers, the *Alpha 6* provided plenty of information without ever sounding forced or artificial. Its sound was devoid of the unnatural highlighting which can disturb the music's cogency and flow. Unusually for a relatively inexpensive player, the *Alpha 6* handled bass lines with authority. It showed a commendable grip on bountiful lines, which many players bloat, without diminishing their body or robbing them of leading-edge snap.

All round, this trio proved to be a remarkably palatable combination. It's musically sympathetic, easy to use and cleanly styled. Oh, and the MI 120's volume control, which combines cool looks with practicality, easily deserves to win the 'Knob of the Year' award.

Ruark Acoustics Ltd ☎ (01702) 601410

Myriad Systems Ltd ☎ (01705) 265508

A&R Cambridge Ltd ☎ (01223) 440964



M&K MX-300 subwoofer

A subwoofer from across the pond, which won't take no for an answer, takes on the demanding task of underpinning Malcolm's system.

£2,500

Audiophiles have historically peered down their noses at subwoofers, regarding them as the work of the devil and the sole preserve of home theatre enthusiasts. Recently, though, this much maligned species — subwoofers, that is — has started gaining credibility. Much of the credit for this goes to above-average active designs from Britain's REL and America's Miller & Kreisel.

The price-tag alone on M&K's new MX-300 tells you that it ought to deliver more than just a monotonous thud should you happen to squirt a terpsichorean signal into its line- or speaker-level inputs. Mind you, it's not lacking sheer brute force, either: it has abundant floor-board wrecking power, thanks to its 300W on-board amplifier and brace of twelve-inch drivers. Next time some élitist bore clutching *Jazz at the Pawnshop* asks to hear your system, watch his reaction when you crank these muthas.

To discover how well it played 'real' music I patched the MX-300 into the second output of an Acurus RL11 pre-amplifier and connected the first to the partnering A150 power amplifier (see last month's *Sessions*), driving a selection of high-quality miniature speakers. This arrangement allowed me to switch to listening to the sub in isolation, where it showed that it could generate a respectable facsimile of the

feisty bass lines on Therapy?'s *Troublegum*. The sub provided tunes and rhythm in surprisingly good measure. It also sounded unusually well controlled; notes stopped and started without overhang or sluggishness.

It proved equally effective playing within a system. Here was a sub that was most noticeable when it was turned off. It could be accurately adjusted so as not to intrude upon the main speakers' midrange or upper bass, which, along with its rare musicality, made it a welcome adjunct to a bandwidth-limited system.

However, I did have to spend rather a lot of time setting it up so that its contributions were seamlessly integrated. This rather spoils the notion of the subwoofer as a stick-it-anywhere item, not that I ever placed much credence in that — low bass might very well be 'directionless' but it still needs to be in temporal alignment with the upper bass if the performance is to gel. The M&K's phase control didn't exert much influence in my room, so I had to resort to humping this bulky object around the floor, searching for the sweet spot where everything came together.

Despite this unwelcome physical exertion, I still felt favourably disposed towards the MX-300. I particularly appreciated how it only drew attention to itself when turned off, and I found that the substance and weight it had added to a small speaker's presentation was very sorely missed.

Mafia Trading Company Ltd ☎ (0589) 325363

The MX-300 — it'll make a real man out of the mousiest of speakers.



DeVa's DAC
digital daredevil
is de business.

DeVa DAC

DACs rarely have a plethora of controls and lights on their front panels, but the DeVa takes minimalism to new heights.

£399

Morgan Audio's £399 DeVa DAC takes minimalism to the absolute extreme, striding boldly along the slippery edge of the precipice of feature paucity. Its front panel's only landmark is an illuminated logo—with just enough candlepower to be seen in a dimly lit room—totally you that it's alive. This digital daredevil doesn't even have an on/off switch. Such purist audiophile austerity comes as a bit of a surprise on a component that's likely to appeal to mainstream buyers. The DAC's circuit design is equally Spartan and elementary. DeVa simply uses a 16-bit Philips chip with fully-analogue filtering.

Unlike some of the beardless youths in the audio press, I tend to question the place of inexpensive DACs in the scheme of things. I certainly don't see them as a panacea for the cheap CD-player blues. I regard them more as a first step towards a dedicated two-box CD system, partnering a decent integrated player or stand-alone transport. That was how I assessed the DeVa; hanging it off the digital output of an aged but worthy Micromega *Leader*—a good player with scope for betterment.

However, switching between the DAC's output and that of the player driving it, I didn't detect any appreciable musical gains. The DAC's sound was cosmetically sharper, but the presentation of the player itself seemed better integrated. Instruments and voices had a more natural warmth and substance without the DAC, which appeared to highlight leading edges and some minor elements in mixes. This would doubtless be worthwhile in a mellow sounding system, but the *Leader* didn't really need this sort of assistance. To its credit, though, the DAC impressed me with its portrayal of timing and bass lines, both of which seemed sprightly and sympathetically handled.

The DeVa's destiny would seem to be in perking up reticent CD players or transports. The only caveat, other than trying it with whatever player you own, is to ensure you audition one that's fully warmed up: this DAC takes a considerable while to come on song. Morgan Audio ☎ (0151) 255 0946

Chord Company Siren

Dismissing cable banditry on the one hand and promoting violently hued wire on the other — is there an end to cable controversy?

£65

I'll apologise in case I offend anyone's audiophile sensibilities, but I'm not overly keen on expensive interconnects. Most I've tried have merely made cosmetic changes, rather than consequential improvements, to the performance of particular systems. There's a lot of snake oil and voodoo surrounding cables, and you'll never convince me that competent electronics truly need time-aligned titanium wires, lovingly crocheted by vegan virgins under a waxing moon. (*Surely a waxing moon*—*Dep Ed.*)

The Chord Company's cables reflect a pragmatism that I can respect; substituting hype and pseudo-science for a straightforward combination of quality materials and careful hand assembly. The violent violet-hued *Siren* looks a tad more glamorous than others in the range and uses silver-plated copper conductors, hand soldered to robust phono plugs. As it happens, I don't like phono connectors much but the Chord Company types certainly represent the best of a bad bunch.

Obligingly confirming my prejudices, *Siren* gave the more costly cables to which I compared it a

damn fine run for their money.

While some of the exotica improved upon *Siren*'s performance in some areas, none exhibited quite the same overall balance of virtues. And balance is the most desirable quality in any system or component.

Used with the sort of quality, mid-price system for which it's intended, *Siren* sounded coherent, full bodied and musically informative, although not as overtly detailed as some others I tried. But the cable's presentation was communicative without being hectoring. However, while it sounded polished with an *Alpha 6*, its openness proved less desirable with a cheap CD player; *Siren* doesn't disguise any top-end fierceness in a component.

Interconnects are always a suck-it-and-see proposition, but *Siren* definitely seems worth adding to your tasting list.

The Chord Company
☎ (01722) 331674

The Siren produces the sweetest of sounds — but only on the sweetest of systems.



System Audio 5010 Signature

Small speakers can kick ass too,
a fact well demonstrated by these
Kan-tankerous Danish devices.

£850

Before graduating to my current Naim SBLs I spent several years living with a pair of Linn's original *Kans*, which helped me develop a genuine admiration for high-performance miniature loudspeakers. It's easy to write off small boxes as being inherently too compromised to give fully satisfying performances — insufficient bass, limited loudness, restricted dynamics and so on — but when you cohabit with a decent example of the breed, tacked on the end of a well-sorted system, you soon dismiss those preconceptions.

The *Signatures* are roughly the same size as *Kans* when you look at them face-on, but their smartly finished cabinets are deeper and reflex ported. The ports and an eight-Ohm impedance help them deliver an impressively hearty account of bass instruments without demanding heaps of current. Nonetheless, I'd recommend that potential buyers don't scrimp when selecting an amplifier; the speakers have a candour and responsiveness that might well prove embarrassing for an amplifier that's not fully together in the control department. I used a Naim NAP250 and an Acurus A150, both of which were eminently suitable partners.

What I particularly appreciated with the *Signatures* was their speed — I love the way that small drivers stop and start, lending music a sense of genuine temporal precision. Mind you, that quality can prove wearing if the speaker doesn't play bass lines with a reasonable semblance of authority. The *Signatures* did. I thought that they'd at least come unstuck on Dread Zeppelin's *Un-Led-Ed*, but they sailed through it, ne'er once being tripped up by the dubward bass excursions. The low end demonstrated commendable grunt allied to superb articulation and intonation.

Given its size, this looks like an unduly expensive speaker, but its performance justifies its asking price.

If you have a small room and musically adept sources and amplification, the *Signatures* would doubtless complete your system most agreeably.

The Chord Company ☎ (01722) 331674

NAD 616

This double cassette deck appears
to have the right ingredients, but is
the recipe to Malcolm's liking?

£319.95

I've never understood why anyone would want a dubbing cassette deck, but I do know that most of them sound as inspiring as a party political broadcast. Still, if you feel a pressing need to make copies of material that's already on a third-rate format, I suppose you might as well try to find a good one.

Ask any sentient being to design such a beast and they'd slap a couple of decent transports in a box, then avoid weighing it down with the sort of features that most users will hardly ever need. This seems to be what NAD has done with the 616. The deck's facilities are restricted to those that are truly useful: Dolby noise reduction, auto-tape selection, auto-reverse, and NAD's proprietary Play Trim equalisation control.

Nonetheless, listening to the 616 proved disappointing; playing com-

mercial cassettes it sounded dynamically compressed, restrained at the frequency extremes and lacking vitality. Play Trim helped to imbue the music with an appreciable sense of substance or life, but not enough. Normal-speed dubs exhibited similar characteristics, while high-speed dubbing quality was dubious and, as suggested by the instruction manual, best reserved for low grade (speech) copies. Recording from other sources naturally gave improved results, but even so, the 616 didn't light my fire. Music sounded shut in and prosaic, as though its energy content had been ironed flat. Pushing the record meters well into the red on metal tapes gave the liveliest recordings, but music still sounded dynamically muted with reduced attack on the leading edges of notes.

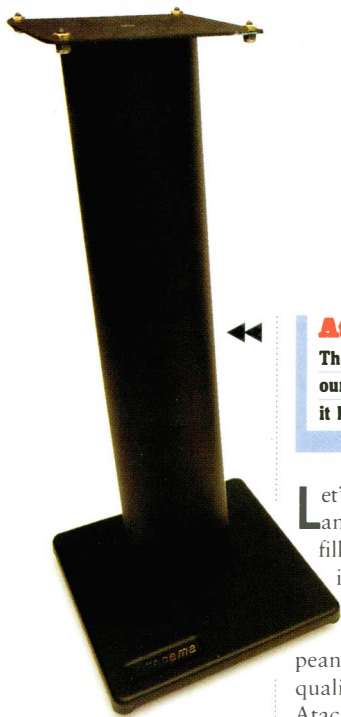
Over the years NAD has produced some truly memorable products, but I have to say that my experience with the 616 suggests it won't become one of that hallowed number.

NAD ☎ (0181) 343 3240

NAD has come up with some winners in its time — the 616 isn't one, alas.

The *Signatures* — proof that it's quality not quantity that counts.





Atacama BD21

The Atacama SE24 speaker starred in our last two stand reviews and now it has a cheaper sibling, the BD21.

£54.99

Let's suppose God gave you short arms and deep pockets, and then cruelly filled your purse with moths, screaming at you to buy some speaker stands. As a careful individual, naturally you would want to pay peanuts but you would still demand a quality product. Here's the answer: Atacama's *BD* range. No discount for cash, and don't complain about being charged the same price for the 17-inch *BD17* as the 21-inch *BD21* and 25-inch *BD25*. Just accept that life's full of heinous injustices. And don't fuss because a set of top-spikes adds £9.99 to the total. Pinch some bolts off your child's bike and file them to a point if you're that mean.

What you'll get for your £54.99 is a pair of no-frills, solidly constructed, single-pillar stands, which, when filled with sand or shot, root their spiked bases firmly into the floor and provide a reasonably secure foundation for any compact loudspeaker.

Cheap, self-assembly stands usually tend to sound like cheap, self-assembly stands. The mix of lightweight construction and questionable structural integrity generally lead to a presentation that's too vivid for comfort and musically short of coherence. That wasn't the case here, although the *BD*s aren't as rigid as the more expensive, fully-welded *SE* models. Like their big brothers, the *BD*s dished out warm, solid bass a plenty, which was tight enough to stay in time despite the flexure evident in the stands' columns. The midrange seemed free of any stand-induced coloration, while the top end was tidy and decently detailed.

Effectively the *BD*s can plead 'not guilty' to all the charges normally levelled at cheap stands. However, if you want the best performance you can buy at tight prices, I'd still suggest you find the extra tenner or so for the better-looking, wholly rigid *SE*s.

Sambell Engineering Ltd ☎ (01455) 283251

The Canon S-25s are too wide for Malcolm.

Canon S-25

The least expensive wide-imaging stereo speaker from Canon so far gets off to a good start with its styling, but there's more to good sound than that.

£149.95

This issue's first unconventional speaker is the Canon S-25, one of the company's wide dispersion systems, which aims to increase the area over which listeners can appreciate a stereo image. Other manufacturers, including KEF and JBL, have tried to achieve similar results using direct radiating drivers but no one, to my knowledge, has yet employed such radical styling involving cabinets that could pass for Gothic table lamps.

I admire Canon's sense of aesthetic adventure. The S-25s mounted on their matching stands are not unappealing to behold, if your tastes lean towards the modernistic. Such bravado, however, does set one up for a pounding if the speaker doesn't live up to its promise, or at least offer passable performance.

I suspected I'd done something horribly wrong when I couldn't get any sort of clearly delineated stereo image

from these speakers, but substituting the Blue Room Minipods (reviewed overleaf) showed that nothing was amiss with the rest of the system.

The image of a singer, for example, who appeared singer-sized and stage centre with the Blue Room speakers, simply spread itself between the S-25s. The voice wasn't clearly located centrally, nor off to one side — it was everywhere. Instruments panned left or right seemed better defined, but that singer's omnipresent voice followed me resolutely as I shuffled from one side of the sofa to the other.

I'm not the sort of listener who is fixated by stereo imagery, but even so, I didn't enjoy these speakers. I found their presentation uninvolved, mainly because of their lightweight tonal quality, which failed to convince me I was hearing real voices and instruments. I wasn't expecting ground-shaking bass but I would have appreciated a little more substance throughout the spectrum. The sound of Christy Moore's acoustic guitar, for instance, was all strings and little body resonance, while his voice had a similar not-all-there character.

When I realised that I wasn't croaking along with *Fairytale Of New York* I knew that the back-in-the-box moment had arrived. To paraphrase Ice-T, they were outta my room like they stole somethin'.

Canon UK ☎ (01256) 841300





These pods not only look très groovy, they work pretty well, too.

Blue Room Minipod

The dinkiest pod takes style to the bookshelf loudspeaker market and backs it up with some entertaining noises.

£399

The Blue Room *Minipod* from a branch of the well-known loudspeaker giant, B&W, is probably the oddest-looking confection to visit my lounge this year. It looks more like a miniature, limbless Michelin man than a loudspeaker, which is excusable because it's a product without any audiophile pretensions — it's a fun speaker. Happily, it's a fun speaker that makes a decent job of playing music. Even when it fluffed things, the *Minipod* still managed to make thoroughly entertaining noises.

This £399, high-tech, bookshelf trinket uses a ported Glass Reinforced Plastic enclosure into which are fitted an aluminium dome tweeter and a Kevlar midrange driver. The bulbous enclosure, apart from giving the speaker its singular appearance,

promises to rid it of many resonant and dispersion problems found in conventional, cuboid cabinets.

Like most capable small speakers, the *Minipods* fared well in the midband and high end. In fact, they seemed rather good here, with a disconcerting facility for pulling recordings apart and showing what the producer had been doing on the desk. Parked on stands clear of a wall they also delivered impressive stereo staging, with rock-solid images, which had a convincing depth to match their outstanding lateral precision.

Where they seemed inconsistent was in the low end, where their performance varied from disc to disc. They kept it all together manfully with Jah Wobble, which surprised me, but they fell arse-over-tip tracking the bass line in Shane MacGowan's *Donegal Express*. Obviously they were too involved in the spirit of the music — that spirit being vodka, of course. But, as I noted earlier, their up 'n' at 'em vivacity still managed to make me smile.

B&W Loudspeakers Ltd ☎ (01903) 524801 ▲

Snorky's CD Choice

I've noticed that the industry's favourite contemporary demonstration music always seems to come from lame bands. Industry folk will tell you they're simply responding to public taste in music; that it's the sort of music people are currently enjoying, but I disagree. I reckon it's because this festering schmaltz doesn't pose any threats to the mundane equipment upon which it's frequently played. So here are two albums that have been traumatising the cat of late: albums that deliver a two-fingered salute to hi-fi bits that would better serve as doorstops.

The first comes from **Therapy?**.

Infernal Love bolsters my conviction that the only worthwhile music around now is coming from Ireland. While the Brit rockers — the Pulp, the Blur and the Oases — simpler and pose, *Therapy?* play rock the way it was supposed to be played. The album seethes with highly respectable pop tunes laced with abandon, attitude and a healthy dose of malevolence. Not to mention the glorious distortion of over-driven guitar amps. Buy this record now. Play it loud until your head hurts. Remind yourself why

your parents hated rock and roll.

If you don't trash your stereo in disgust because it can't handle *Therapy?*, here's another album in a slightly less abrasive vein. Nonetheless, it still presents plenty of obstacles for a system to surmount. If it manages to unravel the mixes cogently

and grasp the effusive instrumental colour tightly, you'll discover deftly-played music with substance, humour and political awareness, offering probing insights into the male psyche and the Church of Rome. Birds and booze are the main themes of **Shane MacGowan's** gloriously hedonistic *The Snake*. If you caught his masterful set at the Fleadh this year, you've probably been listening to little else since. No arguments: yer man Shane's a genius and easily one of the finest songwriters of this decade. His porter-sodden voice might not have the mellifluous, cultured timbre of Pavarotti but I'd say that was a bonus. Take it to the next hi-fi show you visit, ask for a blast of *Donegal Express*, then watch the doors slam in your face.

Contact details

Ruark Acoustics Ltd, 59 Tailors Court, Temple Farm Ind. Est., Southend on Sea, Essex, SS2 5TH, ☎ (01702) 601410

Myryad Systems Ltd, 2 Pipers Wood, Waterberry Drive, Waterlooville, Hants, PO7 7XU, ☎ (01705) 265508

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

Mafia Trading Company Ltd, PO Box 946, Surrey, CR2 6JW, ☎ (0589) 325363

Morgan Audio, 141 Vauxhall Road, Liverpool L3 6BN, ☎ (0151) 255 0946

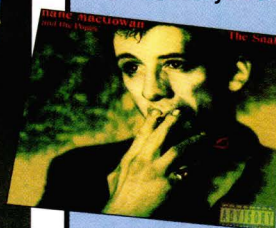
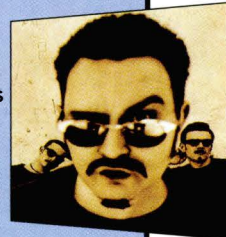
The Chord Company, 30a Sarum Business Park, Portway, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP4 6EA, ☎ (01722) 331674

NAD, 401-405 Nether Street, London N3 1QG, ☎ (0181) 343 3240

Atacama Audio, Sambell Engineering Ltd, Winston Avenue, Croft, Leicester, LE9 3GQ, ☎ (01455) 283251

Canon, Unit 6 Genesis Business Park, Albert Drive, Woking Surrey, GU21 5RW, ☎ (01483) 740005

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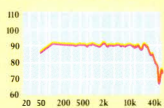
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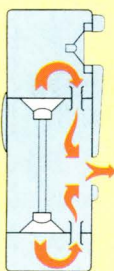
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We two are one

Thrill monger **Alan Sircom** finds solace in this immaculately-balanced thermionic pairing from c-j.

If there has been one constant star in the high end heaven throughout the '90s, it must be the conrad-johnson *PV10A* valve preamp. It has barely changed throughout the years, holding fast to the 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it' rule. It is the entry point into real high-quality music reproduction. It is the first rung on the c-j ladder. Now, if there were a matching power amplifier...

Say hello to conrad-johnson's new £1,995 *MV55* power amplifier. This is a 45 Watt stereo valve chassis, which can be modified to work in triode mode. This, it is suggested makes for greater purity of sound, but effectively halves the power output.

Each channel uses a 12AX7 triode input amplifier allied to a 6SN7 triode differential phase inverter. These then feed a pair of EL34 output tubes. These tubes can be biased using a red LED next to each of the output tubes.

There is little else to say about the *MV55*. As ever with c-j, it is beautifully made, and uses very good components throughout. It has a pair of RCA phono outputs, five-way binding posts on the back panel, and a big switch on the front. Plus there's the usual c-j gold front panel. But that's it — the *MV55* is about as fuss-free as tube amps get.

As the *PV10A* preamp costs £1,295, and the line-only *PV10AL* version cuts the cost back to £995, this makes for a valve pre/power combo that comes in under the 'difficult' £3,000 barrier. I'm not going to dwell too heavily on the performance of the valve preamp, even though it has undergone a face-lift recently. Despite losing a balance control, its

sound — through phono or line input — is as good as ever. In fact, some suggest that the removal of the balance pot from the circuit has improved the sound of the *PV10A*, all be it fractionally.

Unlike the c-j *PV10A* and more expensive power amplifiers, the *MV55* is not a feedback free design. Yet, c-j has been clever with the circuit design, making a no-frills amplifier that has the sort of sound quality associated with fussy, no-feedback, single-ended designs. However, as mentioned in other reviews, the preamp's phono stage inverts absolute phase, while the line stages and power amp are both non-inverting.

A balancing act

From a sonic standpoint, the first thing that hits you is the virtual absence of real nasties in the frequency response. Before you cry 'so what?', think how many amps you can really hang that upon. People define an amp by its tonal balance; in fact, it is more often the lack of tonal balance that truly defines an amplifier. Can you honestly call a bright (or dull) sounding amplifier 'balanced'? Such balance is rather disconcerting at the outset; it is akin to that first experience with electrostatic speakers. The reaction is a two stage affair: first it sounds bland and unconvincing. Many get no further than that, and remain happy with systems that are inherently coloured. Some cross over to the next stage, though. This is when you begin to stop calling it 'coloration' and call it 'distortion'. Such freedom from coloration does, however, have its price. It gives no quarter to poor recordings, showing up all their faults, especially when compared to a good recordings. Mid '80s pop recordings in particular sound too thin, bright and compressed.



The combo also has very fine dynamics — not in the 'Live Fast, Die Young' style of single-ended designs, or in a force-fed, solid-state manner, but in an ability to resolve the most minute detail. This lends the duo a very natural air.

I was surprised by the c-j's ability to keep time correctly. So often, one has to accept timing compromises with valve amps. Yet this duo stoically held on to the rhythmic structure of music — whether that music be on vinyl or CD, a simple Foo Fighters guitar riff or the sort of dense, polyrhythmic free jazz that would make Albert Ayer wince.

You'll notice that I have not mentioned a single track to highlight a specific aspect of the performance. This is deliberate, because the evenhandedness of the c-j is so all-pervasive that you can't draw attention to a single aspect without feeling that you are over-emphasising it.

If your tastes have matured beyond the quick-hit pleasures that lie in the valley of mid-fi, and you want something a little more sophisticated, a little more grown up, then the conrad-johnson *PV10A* has always been the first port of call. Now, in the shape of the *MV55*, the little preamp has a partner that is more than capable of keeping up. ▲

Messrs Bill Conrad and Lew Johnson present their entry level balancing act.

Audiofreaks, 15 Link Way, Ham, Surrey TW10 7QT. ☎ (0181) 948 4153.

Orient Excess

Stanley Fu spent £35,000 installing a state-of-the-art high-end hi-fi. Alan Sircom finds out why.



£35,000 worth of yummy hi-fi — look and weep!

It's amazing what you can find in a Chinese take-away. Mixed vegetable chow mein, you'd understand; the more exotic sweet and sour pork balls, you'd hope for; but an ultra high-end hi-fi kit! Still, whoever said there were rules to the take-away game.

Sitting above Stanley Fu's take-away restaurant is a rather small, nondescript and sparsely-furnished room. The strips of foam along the rear walls and packed into the corners look a little incongruous, but could be passed off as some strange form of insulation. Then you look down to the other end of the room...

All in a row, from speaker to speaker, lies one serious high-end system, the kind that is seldom seen outside of the Pacific Rim. This is Stanley's first hi-fi system since moving to England from Hong Kong, and was mostly supplied by Les Wong at KJ West One. He could have the

system installed in a larger room in his London house, but as he spends a lot of his time in the restaurant, it makes sense to have his sounds in-situ.

Every aspect of the system is dedicated to getting the best out of the music, in the sort of highly-dedicated, death-or-glory manner that makes most systems pale by comparison. The centrepiece of the system is a VPI HW19 Mk IV turntable. This has been extensively modified, taking the deck most of the way toward a TNT (VPI's flagship deck), with the latest bearing, platter and a four-kilo isolated motor. Stanley would have gone the whole TNT hog, too, if one were available in the country at the time. This deck sports a SME V Gold Standard tonearm, a Lyra Parnassus cartridge and a set of £800 XLO Signature phono cables. All this sits on a Bright Star Big Rock sand-filled isolation platform, a slab of marble and a Target isolation platform.



The £10,000 Accuphase C280-V preamp — need we say more.

What's more, when Stanley bought the deck, he didn't even have any records! Now, however, he has several boxes of the highest-quality recordings, from both East and West.

Stanley bought the turntable instead of upgrading the CD player. He currently uses a Marantz CD15 as a transport, and a Theta DS Pro Basic II D/A converter. The former rests on a Shun Mook 'chopping block' platform, while the latter sits on a Townshend *Seismic Sink*, once again with the mandatory marble slab and Targettable. And as if that wasn't enough, the transport and DAC are connected using some £1,050's worth of NBS *Master* digital cable, while balanced XLO cables connect DAC to preamp.

As you'd expect, the preamp is no shrinking violet, either. While in Hong Kong, Stanley heard a system with the Accuphase C280-V preamp at centre-stage. He was so impressed with it, that, despite the £10,500 pricetag, he immediately placed an order for the beauty. This model has recently been replaced by Accuphase in Japan, but the successor lacks a phono stage. And yet again, marble and Target tables provide support.

This is connected, via many thousands of pounds worth of NBS *Master* interconnects, to a pair of active ATC SCMS50 speakers. The said speakers sit on custom-made, Target Reference, speaker stands, the spikes of which rest on two-pence pieces to protect the marble slab beneath, naturally.

The system is completed by two Aural Symphonics mains distributors, with their green-glowing LEDs and ultra-expensive mains leads, which were shipped-in directly from the Far East. An £800 Italian Audio Carpet — which has four layers of material — absorbs and reflects different frequencies.

Listening to the system was fascinating. Like almost all systems costing in

excess of about £10,000, Stanley's system is *very* individual. It is not a 'me-too' clone of a reviewer's system, or taken from a single manufacturer's portfolio of products. Instead, like all good hi-fi should, it fits his tastes like a bespoke Savile Row suit.

The VPI turntable is a far darker-sounding machine than the fully-Mana'd Ninja LPI2 that I normally use. This is partly due to the amount of bass information that the VPI pulls from the LP, and partly due to its miraculous lack of vinyl roar. However, the VPI sounds slow by comparison.

Stanley has the best-sounding VPI that I've heard to date. It is more majestic than slow in this context, and produces some of the most controlled sounds I've heard from vinyl. It is also seriously detailed, especially in the upper registers. For example, few other vinyl-replay systems have been as adept at defining the differences between natural reverberation, spring reverb and digital-delay lines in recordings.

The treble was also finely extended, with ne'er so much as a triangle out of place. It was only when fed with seriously treble-oriented music that the system began to show a touch of brittleness, but I'd attribute that as much to the ATC speakers as the turntable.

One aspect of the turntable's sound was a very slight plumminess in the bass. Nevertheless, it extracts excellent dynamics, great sound-staging (especially considering the room), and coherence, whether the music be The Orb or Gilbert and Sullivan. Most of all, the VPI was more than able to determine differences between recordings. On the whole, the sound of the turntable was more controlled and more statuesque than I would choose for my music, but it nonetheless produced results that commands respect.

Moving over to the CD, I was struck by how different the two formats sounded. One is not intrinsically better than the other, but the CD player sounds far smoother than the LP. This

is the converse of common perception, which seems to be that CDs are crisp, clean and new, while LPs are woolly-sounding slabs of vinyl that should be in a museum.

I found the tonal balance of the CD to be closer to my own ideal, being slightly faster sounding than the

turntable. On the first track I played — *My Drug Buddy*, by Evan Dando and Juliana Hatfield — I heard a slight resonance in the upper bass that I'd not heard before, along with better sound-staging, simply loads of fine detail and about the smoothest mid-band and treble I've heard from a CD player.

With other tracks the detail and the smoothness remained, but the woodiness in the upper bass turned out to be an artefact of the aforementioned disc. Although some may suggest that the overall performance is too silky smooth, it had excellent tonality — especially across the midband — and good dynamics.

Taken in a general sense, the system copes admirably well with the small room it lives in. It has great detail, sumptuous smoothness and excellent dynamics. It is not the



sort of system that will get the best out of dense, ill-produced recordings or music with a tightly-defined beat. The strong beat of hip-hop and house music would be lost in the mix, as the system pulls every last detail off the disc. But hip-hop and house music are not part of Stanley's collection, anyway, which spans classical, rock and an extensive catalogue of modern Chinese music.

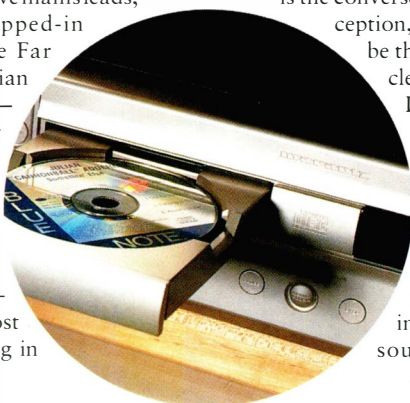
Stanley's not finished with his system, yet. The Accuphase has impressed him greatly, and he's looking to getting a pair of £15,000 monoblocks to match. As the ATCs are active designs only, this means that a new pair of speakers are on the cards, too. Avalon *Ascents*, Wilson *System V* and the new Wilson-Benesch speakers have all been mentioned, but Les Wong is slightly concerned about the amount of bass these designs can chuck out.

One day, he may even get round to upgrading the CD player, and I wouldn't be surprised if Accuphase rears its golden head once more. ▲

KJ West One, 26 New Cavendish St, London W1 ☎ (0171) 486 8262

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21st Century

Barry Fox brandishes bananas at hi-fi-phobic Brussels bureaucracy.

Fox

For years we have been prising off the little metal plates that cover the switched mains outlet sockets on the rear panels of our amplifiers. These sockets deliver power only when the amplifier is switched on, so they are ideal for connecting a radio tuner, CD player or tape deck. One switch does it all.

However, the sockets are designed for the two-pin plugs that are a standard in the US, and are thus deemed unsafe in Britain. Rather than produce two different chassis designs, the factories mass-produce everything in the same way, and spot-weld plates over units destined for the UK. They are easy to pop off with a screwdriver, so everyone is happy.

Now, thanks to well-intentioned European Directives from Brussels, we shall have to start prising plastic bungs out of the banana-plug sockets on amplifiers and loudspeakers. If you are confused by what you've just read, join the club. A few days before the new regulations were due to take effect, on January 1st '96, the British Federation of Audio was still describing the situation as "unclear". Large companies were playing safe, by paying whatever it costs to comply with the new laws; fees of up to £10,000 can be incurred redesigning hi-fi equipment to win approval from an official test house. This can put ten per cent on the street price of a specialist product, so small companies, which cannot afford the cost, are still hoping the whole problem would go away. Like VAT, it won't.

The Electromagnetic Compatibility Directive (89/336/EEC) obliged all European governments to make it a criminal offence to sell equipment after January 1st '96 that either causes "excessive interference" or is "unduly affected" by it. The CE (Certification Européenne) mark signifies approval by an authorised test laboratory. The related Low Voltage Directive (73/23/EEC) bans equipment with exposed parts that carry AC voltages of as low as 50V, and DC down to 75V. This takes effect from January '97. In the UK the penalty for 'playing ostrich' can be a fine of £5000, three months' jail, or both.

The EMC Directive is well intentioned; it should stop the heavy-duty transistor switches in a dishwasher from corrupting the mains and interfering with radio and TV reception. However, the blanket wording also covers hi-fi. The blunderbuss filters that



clean up a dishwasher's act will make a hi-fi amp sound like a telephone. Some manufacturers believe they've solved the sonic problem with new filter designs. Others will play the spot-weld game by fitting Draconian circuits that meet the regulations, but can be easily removed after purchase (magazine articles and word of mouth will tell people how).

Last year, German hi-fi trade body, The High End Society (HES), warned that loudspeakers must also comply with the EMC regulations. Their reasoning is that a cross-over can leak electromagnetic fields through its cabinet walls. Test laboratories, authorised to check equipment against the European Directive, are now advising manufacturers to play safe by getting their speakers tested and approval-marked.

At the end of the year, the British government's Department of Trade and Industry was advising that "speakers need to be marked, but because they work at low power and are difficult to test, there is no requirement to test." So what happens if a job's-worth trading standards officer wants to cause trouble?


Obviously, the HES sees this as a real risk in Germany; it has built a lousy loudspeaker, with massive magnets and clumsy cross-over in a flimsy cabinet, and has paid for it to be tested and approved. Now anyone can pay the Society a few hundred quid to have their own design compared with the reference junk. As long as the real speaker is better than the junk one, there's no problem.

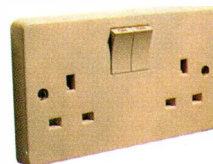
Have you heard the one about the banana plug, the mains socket and the Swedish person?

But the real killer is the Low Voltage Directive. A gutsy power amp will put out speaker signals that peak beyond the 50V safety limits, which means saying goodbye to bare-copper spade terminal connections. It also means *adieu* to banana plugs, unless they have spring-loaded sleeves to stop people from touching the pins.

Another problem with banana plugs is the ease with which they can be inserted into the live terminals of continental mains sockets. In the UK this is impossible, because our three-pin socket relies for its actuation on the insertion of a mains plug's earth pin. However, banana plugs are already being banned or phased out in continental Europe.

One of the stories to blame for this concerns a drunken Swede, who is said to have tried to fit up a hi-fi system and, quite literally, got his wires crossed. True or not, most manufacturers are now plugging their banana sockets with a plastic bung, which will have to be prised out with the same screwdriver used to remove that metal flap covering the switched mains socket.

Branko Glisovic, top dog of the German HES, reckons the next step may be a ban on screwdrivers — just in case someone pushes one into a mains socket... 



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IR 5700



IR 6500



IR 7600

Help!

DOCTOR ALVIN GOLD PULLS UP THE SHUTTERS IN HI-FI CHOICE'S AUDIO DAY HOSPITAL — QUICK NURSE, THE SCREENS!

Claro, quesí!

I want to buy a CD player, amp, loudspeakers and cables for about £500. Can you tell me the best option for listening to jazz, classical and pop — instrumental and vocal?

Jauma Moreno, I Roca, Barcelona, Spain

A: Ho hum — this is one of those 'how long is a piece of string' questions. Think in terms of NAD, Marantz, Arcam and Rotel amplifiers and CD players, and speakers such as the KEF Coda 7, Mission 731LE, Tannoy 631 and GLL Imagio. Most of these brands are particular about the quality of the dealers they appoint, so you should be able to hold out for a properly conducted demonstration.

Can't get no satisfaction

My current system consists of an Arcam Delta 70.3 bitstream CD player, Audiolab 8000A and a pair of Linn Helix speakers, but recently I have upgraded it with an Audiolab 8000DAC and Audiolab 8000P power amp. Actually, I am quite happy with my system for the time being, but I am think-

ing of getting more out of it. With £2,000 more to spend, what should I listen to? Maybe an Audiolab 8000CDM transport, and changing my speakers to Mission 753 instead. What do you reckon?

J Cheah, Loughborough, Leicestershire

A: Pausing only to remark that if I was quite happy with the sound of my system, I would put any spare money into more recordings, I would agree strongly with a change from the Linn Helix. The Mission

Query of the month

While I was listening to a new CD recently, I noticed an 'emphasis' light had illuminated on my CD player. I have well over a hundred CDs and this was the first time I have seen it. What does it mean? Does it affect the sound quality of the music?

Jeff Kowarchuk, Winnipeg, Canada

A: Part of the compact-disc standard allows for pre-emphasis — selective boosting of the high frequencies when a compact disc is mastered — to help mask the effects of bias noise, the heavily treble-biased, residual background hiss associated with digital coding. The quid quo pro is matching reduction in high-frequency headroom, and some loss of transparency due to the extra circuitry and signal switching required. As signal/noise is rarely a problem with CD, pre-emphasis is only occasionally used.

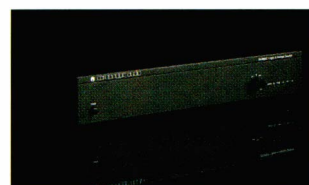
753 is a crisper, deeper and more refined instrument altogether, but I would also recommend some more Helix-size designs, such as the recently introduced Sendor SP3/1, which is about as refined and as uncoloured as they come, although it needs a lot of running in before it generates any meaningful bass. Expect incremental improvements in consistency, imagery and clarity from a change in the CD transport, but a second Audiolab 8000P to allow bridged operation will ratchet up dynamics and imagery more than somewhat.

DAC dilemma

I have recently auditioned at home the Pink Triangle Ordinal DAC, which, despite what I played, failed to impress me with any more detail than my Dacmagic. Does this mean that (a) the Dacmagic is an excellent piece of kit, or (b) my Trichord modified Pioneer PD-S801 fails to supply the Ordinal with enough detail?

Gary Wood, Ilford, Essex

A: You may have been expect-



Is the excellent PT Ordinal out-classed by that old Dacmagic?

ing too much. Differences between good D/A converters tend to be subtle in the short term, although sometimes quite far reaching with extended listening, and they are always demanding of the quality of the rest of the reproduction chain. But for the record, yes, the Dacmagic is a damn fine piece of kit and shares not a little of its lineage with the Pink.

Can't get enough

My system consists of a Yamaha CDX660 CD player, a Rotel RB/RC970BX II pre/power amp, a Yamaha KX260 tape deck and Mission 733 speakers. I do not know whether to spend my £500 or so on a new player or to spend £200 on a DAC, plus the £225 to add a second power amp for



A mixed-and-matched collection that'll make sweet music together.

bridged mono operation. My Yamaha CD player is pretty neutral sounding, and I am concerned not to add a player that makes the already forward- and powerful-sounding Rotel/Mission combination too over the top. The power rating of 160 Watts per channel of the bridged monoblok Rotel set-up seems to be far in excess of the 100 Watts per channel that Mission recommend for the 733. With a £500 budget, what do you suggest?

David Warne, Horsham, W Sussex

A: Easy — new speakers. The Mission 733 is a fine value big box, and works well with less demanding material at moderate volume levels but it will not stretch the capabilities of the rest of your system. The Rotel amplifier will be able to cope with any likely change without the need for bridging.

The comment about power output, however, cannot be allowed to pass. Broadly speaking, and at an only slight risk of oversimplification, amplifiers cannot be too powerful.

AV limitations

It was when I listened to some stereo music that I realised the shortcomings of my Pioneer AV Pro-Logic system. I have decided to upgrade to a separates system and would like your opinion on the following: NAD 310 amp, NAD 510 CD player and KEF Coda 7 or Mission 731 loudspeakers. I

Mission's 731 — a refined yet dynamic pair in a class of their own.



HI-FI CHOICE



I am also going to add a subwoofer in the shape of the Kenwood SW500.

I am working on a strict £500 budget, but can sell the Pioneer for £200, giving me £700 to spend.

Simon Chrispin via the Internet

A: The two NAD components are at or near the top of their class, and the same applies to the Mission and KEF speakers. Choose the KEF if you like your music brazen and up front, and don't mind a touch of coloration and inconsistency as the volume is racked up. The Mission's forte is refinement, low coloration, and greater consistency with level, which paradoxically makes it the more naturally dynamic of the two with many types of programme material. But don't go for the Kenwood subwoofer; if

there is one thing guaranteed to kill the sound stone dead, it is a simple, active AV subwoofer, like the Kenwood SW500, which is too slow and boxy to suit either speaker, and won't even do much to extend the bass of either the KEF or the Mission.

Trend mongering

My system comprises a Linn LP12 Valhalla with an Akito arm and an Audio Technica AT-OC5 cartridge, a home-made head amp (similar in performance to an Iso), a passive preamp, an old Hitachi HMA-8500 power amp, KEF C80 loudspeakers and Blue Heaven cables throughout.

I like the way the system sounds at present but feel the amplifier is the weakest link and would like to upgrade. What contenders do you think I should consider — Exposure, Naim, Moth?

Dave Clark via the Internet

A: You're quite right, a new power amp is called for. My personal preference would be for the Musical Fidelity E300 (£699), a smooth, refined yet muscular design, which is more unobtrusively musical sounding than you're used to, and than most of the alternatives. I also strongly endorse the Moth 100-Watt monobloks (£879 a pair). Although it is not perhaps an obvious or fashionable choice, in my view it is one of the nicest and most underrated middle-range amplifiers around, and a little crisper and lighter in balance than the E300.

Musical Fidelity E300: for those who like 'em smooth but strong.

Balancing fact

As the only magazine that seems able to tell us the real reasons for differences between CD transports, I would value your opinion as to whether the AES/EBU digital interface is any superior to the standard S/PDIF.

I Barnes via the Internet

A: S/PDIF is the signal format associated with the standard electrical, unbalanced, digital interface. The kind that uses phono plugs, AES/EBU, is the balanced interface often associated with more costly equipment, and which uses XLR (Cannon) connectors. The balanced connection cancels

Query of the month



Each month we're giving away a one-metre pair of Precious Metals interconnect cables to the writer of the most interesting letter. So if you've any system queries, send them to: *Hi-Fi Choice* (Help!) Dennis Publishing Ltd, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ.

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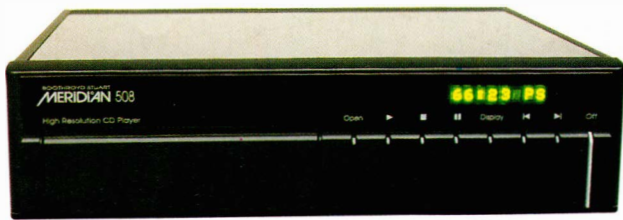
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In New Zealand: Avalon Audio, 587 Mount Eden Rd., Auckland. Tel: (649) 638 9000.

In South Africa: Hi-Fi Specialists, Durban Road 155, Bellville. 7535. Tel: (21) 946 1441.

In USA: AudioInflux Corporation, P.O. Box 381, Highland Lakes, NJ 07422. Tel: (201) 764 8958.



Meridian: one of the top sub-£1000 contenders for smooth-sounding CDs.

'common mode' noise and distortion, which makes them relatively impervious to the usual types of interference. The AES/EBU standard also lends itself to some excellent circuit topologies, but the potential advantages are not always translated into actual ones, and, of course, you need a balanced input on the amplifier at the other end of the wire.

CD without tears

I believe that serious audiophiles still consider a good turntable source superior to any CD. Would a Naim CD player be an exception to this rule? My exposure to CD systems, I admit is limited, however, they all sound harsh and tiring; within half an hour I find myself reaching for the 'off' button. Would I be wasting my money to couple a CD player with my NAC52?

Ian Banks, Newman, Western Australia

A: I am tempted to say that Naim amplifiers themselves can often sound harsh and tiring (although they have other, compensating virtues), and that it is the subtle lossiness of vinyl sound that renders them

listenable. Of course, CD players can, and frequently do, sound harsh and tiring too, but they don't need to, as you will know if you listen to the better Micromegas, the single-box AVIs and Meridians — just to name a few of the sub-£1,000 examples.

To bi or not to bi

I currently run a system consisting of Meridian 500/563 CD player, Naim 72/180 amplifier, and Epos ES14 speakers. The speaker cables are Naim NAC5, and my question concerns bi-wiring. My ES14s are of the single-wired type. I am told that Epos makes a bi-wire kit, but that it will provide only a negligible improvement.

Alan March, Downend, Bristol

A: We agree it's unlikely that bi-wiring your ES14s will have a dramatic effect. At this stage in your system's evolution you would do better with serious equipment and speaker supports from the likes of Mana, or by adding a Naim Hi-Cap power supply, or even by sticking a Meridian 518 re-clocking processor between your transport and DAC (see April Sessions).



"Do you want to be bi-wired?" "Well I will if you will."

DEALER DECISIONS

Three well-known hi-fi dealers dole out expert advice.

The Query

Thanks to a pay rise, a burglary and a new-for-old insurance policy, I am now in the position to replace my old Linn/Naim active system. In total, I have about £15,000 to spend.

If possible, I would like a LP- and CD-based system that has a performance similar to my old *Isobariks*, but nicer looking, with better stereo and less amplifiers. I listen to all kinds of music and do like to play music loud at times. My room is a 4m x 8m x 3.5m concrete box, as built in the 30s, and quite heavily furnished.

Phil Wiseman, via the Internet

Riverside Hi-Fi

While we would not make any definitive statements about a system without an audition, given your requirements, we would highly recommend the following system.

For the analogue front end, the Michell *Orbe* turntable, with a SME V tonearm, and a Koetsu *Red T* cartridge, all played through a Michell *Iso HR* phono stage.

For the digital front end, try the Theta *Data Basic II* CD transport allied to a Theta *Progeny D/A* converter.

We would also recommend an Audio Research *LS3* preamp and *D200* power amp combination. This we would ally to a pair of Monitor Audio *Studio 20SE* loudspeakers.

Sajjad Afzal, Riverside Hi-Fi, Twickenham.

Auditorium

To meet the requirements you have mentioned, we recommend you audition the following system.

Starting with CD players, listen to Micromega's *Duo 2.1/Duo Pro2* CD transport/DAC combination, along with the Naim Audio's perennial *CDS*. Regarding your vinyl requirements, we feel that the Well Tempered *Classic* turntable and Dynavector *DV17D MkII* cartridge will breathe life into your record collection.

To capture the spirit of your records and CDs, we regard Naim Audio's *NAC 82/Super-cap/NAP 250* combination as almost prerequisite, as it's one of the most musically coherent amps available.

The loudspeakers to use are the Shahinian *Obelisks*, which have an uncanny resemblance, sound wise, to the *Isobariks*, but are considerably smaller and are not beset with imaging problems.

Derek Jenkins, Auditorium, London E1

Oxford Audio Consultants

With £15,000 you have quite a lot of hi-fi to choose from.

On the vinyl side, the Michell *Orbe* is well worth a listen, as it copes well with all types of music. As for the arm and cartridge, I'd recommend an SME *IV* arm and Ortofon *MC2000 Mk II* cartridge.

As for the CD player, I would urge you to audition the Theta *Data Basic/Pro Prime* combination.

The choice of amplifier is very subjective, but I think a good place to start would be with the new Krell *KAV300i* 150W integrated amplifier. Your budget would also extend to the outstanding Audio Research *LS7/D130* combination. For a phono stage, you'll be hard-pushed to beat the Michell *Iso HR*, as Michell configure it to the exact cartridge that you have on your deck.

The choice of speakers is, yet again, very personal. Sonus Faber *Amator* speakers with stands may take you over your budget, but they look and sound exceptional. Ruark *Equinox* speakers are also a must, as some people find them good all-rounders. A revelation to us has been the Spondor *SP7*, which not only sounds good with most equipment but also rates highly in the value-for-money stakes.

This may not leave much money left for cables, but I cannot stress how important they are to a system of this quality. We find Transparent Music Wave Plus works very well in this context.

Jon Harker, Oxford Audio Consultants, Oxford

The Jimmy Hughes Experience

Jimmy 'Heresy' Hughes opines that the best sonic cures are often effected by the most improbable remedies!

Be they reviewer, designer, or someone who simply listens for the sheer pleasure of hearing music, everyone has opinions about good and bad sound. Being able to make a true, accurate assessment of sound quality is fundamental. Yet one of the most difficult things with equipment evaluation is being able to put a finger on exactly what's wrong — and why. It's easy to say that you don't like a particular sound; it's much harder to say precisely where the fault lies, and what the cure might be.

Leaving aside differences of taste, difficulties arise because matters often take a less logical course than one might expect. The cause of a problem may actually lie in areas that, on the face of it, are quite distinct from the symptoms being displayed. Of course, it could be my logic that's at fault here, but I find it really confusing when I get the wanted improvement after doing something totally unrelated to the problem in question.

Here's an example. Suppose you're a speaker designer, with a prototype that's suffering from a lack of tightness and control in the bass. Logically, the remedy would seem to lie in related areas, like the crossover used for the low-frequency driver, or cabinet damping. You might alter the loading on the drive unit, or change the cable connecting it to the crossover. If all else fails, a replacement bass driver might be tried. Ultimately none of these things may give the bass tightness that you seek, but each remedy holds out a promise of results if only because you're fishing in the right pond. Or are you?

This is my point. Just because you perceive a problem at low frequencies, it doesn't necessarily mean there's something wrong with the bass! It may be possible to achieve the desired result by making changes to the tweeter crossover. There might seem to be no connection here, yet ironically it may be the very thing that does the trick. Something that, apparently, has nothing to do with the problem turns out to provide the solution.

Actually, this isn't quite as strange as it seems. Often, when the treble response is dull, the perceived result is a thickening of the low frequencies. By increasing the speed and attack of the treble, you can alter the

apparent tightness and control of the bass. But it goes further than this.

Another example of this 'reversal' effect is produced by adding a good sub-woofer to a system. When I first tried the REL *Stentor*, what impressed me most was not the (expected) increase in bass weight and depth, but the unexpected way it seemed to make the midrange richer, and the treble more sharper. The sub appeared to give the treble a sweeter, more tactile and articulate quality, and created dynamic, three-dimensional, out-of-the-box stereo imagery. Yet when I listened solely to the sound produced by the *Stentor*, it was nigh impossible to equate its deep, rather sepulchral rumblings with the perceived effect on the midrange and treble. Switch the sub in and out as music plays, and most listeners wrongly think changes are being made to the midrange or treble. Few (if any) of the audience realise it's the deep bass that's being altered.

In a similar vein, I've been playing with a set of small, horn-loaded piezo tweeters, which supplement the tweeters in my Impulse *H-1* speakers. These piezos operate at very high frequencies only (above 12kHz) and are adjusted to produce very low output. Indeed, with the *H-1*s playing, the contribution of the piezo units is so tiny that, close-up, it can be difficult to tell whether or not they're actually working.

It is perhaps

significant (and this also applies to the REL sub) that you need to listen well back from the speakers, so the whole sound integrates, before any difference is audible. It's as if the sounds combine to yield a different flavour, which is not apparent at close quarters.

From my listening seat, the effect of these extra tweeters is far from subtle; they improve timing, imagery, transient attack, focus, and bass tightness. Yet once again, it's very difficult to relate these perceived improvements in overall performance to the sound being produced by the tweeters alone. It's also confusing that the tweeters seem to increase their influence on the overall sound as you reduce their output!

Obviously, if you turn them off completely the effect is lost, but until that point the perceived effect of the tweeter on the total sound is inversely proportional to its output. The same is true of the REL sub, to a point: set it too loud and you lose depth and transparency.

Things I'm writing about here are better heard than discussed, but if I'm right, it means the sound you seek may not always be found by pursuing what seems to be the logical course. Like Alice in *Through the Looking Glass*, you may have to head in the opposite direction to reach the desired destination. If I wanted a richer, warmer midrange and sharper, more luminous treble, the logical way of achieving that goal would not be the addition of a good subwoofer. Likewise, if I wanted to improve bass tightness and attack, I'd not believe that the answer could be a super tweeter working at the highest frequencies.

Another paradox: adding these piezo super tweeters actually helps reduce perceived treble harshness! Similarly, adding a good sub like REL's *Stentor* can actually reduce bass boom.

There's nowt so strange as hi-fi!

More subwoofer hi-jinks with Paul Messenger on page 130.



HINTS & TIPS: A 6000-MILE SERVICE FOR YOUR HI-FI

As most hi-fi enthusiasts know, good sound isn't just about choosing the right equipment. It's just as important that the installation of your hi-fi gear is done to the highest standards, and taking care of the small details helps to ensure that your system gives its very best.

Unfortunately, even with a perfect installation, deterioration will take place over time: electrical contacts oxidize and corrode; tight connections work loose. The slide is often subtle and gradual, but the cumulative result can be a loss of the pristine clarity and definition that was apparent when the system was first installed. Naturally, a great deal depends on the cleanliness of the environment in which the hi-fi is used, but for most systems a little routine cleaning and maintenance is worthwhile after about a year's use.

Make a start by unplugging all components from the mains, and opening each mains plug to check the tightness of the wires. This is not necessary if moulded plugs are fitted, but ensure that the mains fuse fits firmly, and that contact points look clean. In the '80s there was a bit of a vogue for cleaning the pins of mains plugs with Duraglit — that was probably a little extreme, but it remains a worthwhile exercise for the preservation of connections' shine and freedom from corrosion. While we're on the subject, check the wiring in any mains extension boards that you may use — once again, only after having unplugged them from the wall.

Just as one's mains power should be delivered via sparkling brass, it is vital to keep all of your signal interconnects in good shape, because audible losses will occur if poor connections are made. Low-level signals are particularly vulnerable, and dirty contacts can lead to rough, harsh treble. Most audio connections, speakers aside, are made via phono plugs, usually gold-plated. These are easily cleaned with isopropyl alcohol, available from a good chemist; alternatively, try proprietary switch cleaner, available by post from ElectroMail (01536 204555), Maplin (01702 554161), or any good electrical component shop.

With gold or nickel-plated plugs, it should be possible to achieve a clean, shiny surface, but plugs with a dull-grey appearance will benefit from initial treatment with metal polish to reduce tarnishing. Phono sockets are harder to clean, but a wetted pipe cleaner is effective, and can also be used to clean the insides of 4mm banana sockets. If necessary, cleaned audio plugs can be treated with a contact enhancer like DNM's *Licon* (01277 227355). This reduces any contact resistance between plug and socket, and results in a sharper, cleaner, more immediate sound.

The lowest-voltage connections are associated with moving-coil pickup cartridges, and firm, clean contacts are essential here. However, because cartridge lead-out wires and tags are so flimsy, it is probably not a good idea to disturb these unless you're confident about what you're doing. You might check the tightness of the cartridge fixing bolts, but again, take care as it is all too easy to put strain on tonearm bearings in the process. Turntables themselves present a considerable number of parameters that one might check, but there are too many to cover here — watch out for a 'turntable servicing' article in a future issue.

With many enthusiasts choosing to site their systems on specialised audio furniture, it's important to check spiked feet for correct set-up, especially where glass shelving is used. Unfortunately, many stands must be disassembled all but totally to allow dusting, and often the spikes need adjusting when reassembly takes place. With multi-tier stands — like those from Mana Acoustics, for example — it's very important that spikes are set for correct height to eliminate wobble. This is best done one stage at a time as the stand is assembled. Because of floor irregularities, I find that the act of moving a stand (equipment or speaker) and putting it back, seems to require adjustment of spikes again.

Moving onto speakers, it's worthwhile checking speaker-stand spikes for firmness and adjustment. Vibration from the music can

cause the spike to go out of adjustment unless it is firmly anchored with a lock nut. While you're about it, check the tightness of the bolts that fix the speaker drive-units to the enclosure baffles. These should be firmly done up, but don't over-tighten, as doing so may distort the drive unit chassis.

If your speakers are bi-wireable, but you're using them single-wired with linking bars or straps, it's useful to check that connections between the two sets of speaker terminals are solid. Opinions vary as to which of the two pairs of terminals should be used when connecting a set of bi-wireable speakers with a single set of leads, but I favour the upper (treble) set, on the grounds that the treble signal is delicate and easily contaminated, and thus benefits more from a direct connection.

Just as it's important to keep your stylus clean for proper replay of analogue LPs, so it is beneficial to ensure that your CD player's laser pickup is free from contamination. Sometimes the laser's cover glass has a slight glaze over it, which can impair its ability to focus, and may lead to an increase in errors. The most effective way to clean the laser pickup is to gently polish it with a wetted cotton bud, but this is often impractical with most CD players since the laser mechanism is only visible with the machine partly stripped. A safer alternative is to use a disc-based cleaning device, such as the Allsoft 5920 (01494 441736), which consists of a CD with small brushes that stroke the laser as the disc spins. These should remove dust and debris, but are probably too gentle for tougher deposits.

Cassette decks benefit greatly from cleaning, as even slight deposits on record/replay heads can badly impair sound quality and cause speed irregularities. It's vital to keep capstans clean, too, especially with dual-capstan designs where the tension of the tape on the heads will be affected if one or both capstans aren't kept clean. Head and capstan magnetisation can lead to increased background noise and poorer sound quality, so it is worthwhile demagnetising your deck, say, once a month. The most effective way of doing this is with a professional tape-head defluxer, such as that offered by Canford Audio (01914 150205). However, these tend to

be a tad on the pricey side, and a more cost-effective solution may be a combined-head cleaner/demagnetiser in cassette form, like TDK £17 HD-30 (01737 773773).

Optimise the bifurcation of your chrysanthemum diodes with one of these handy military-grade spatulas!



MS

Mordaunt-Short

Reach for the stars

In January 1996 WHAT HI-FI? reviewed the new Mordaunt-Short MS10i loudspeaker



"Plenty of pace, lucid and expressive, well extended bass."

"Small but punchy: rockers in small rooms will love their attack, jazz and classical fans their open, detailed sound."

"These are superbly balanced speakers capable of thrilling and enchanting in equal measure."

We think they liked them!

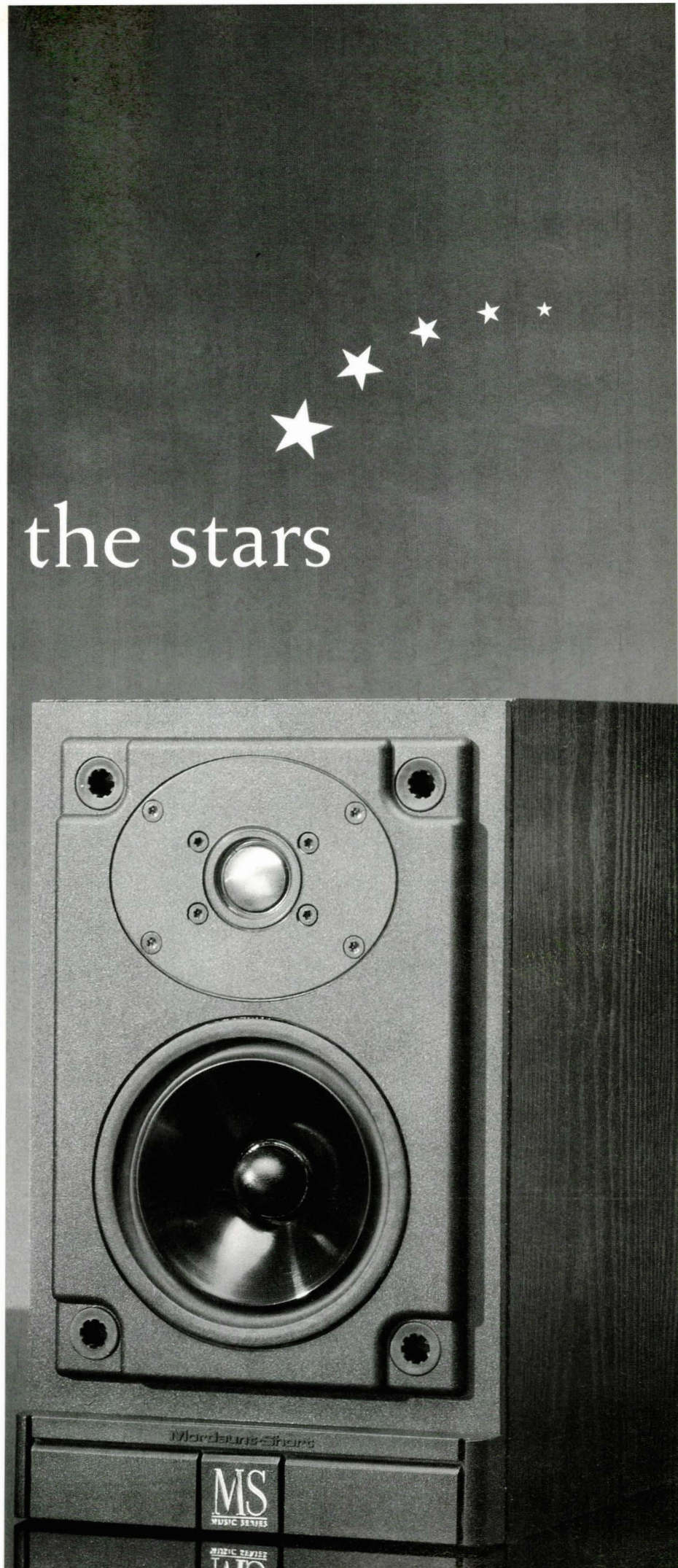
Maybe it was our new, anodised aluminium gold dome tweeter which raises the first break-up mode of the tweeter dome beyond audibility, resulting in a sweeter, more detailed, more open treble. Or it could have been the new MCS Technology cone and surround, precision profiled to improve transient attack and termination characteristics, resulting in better midband performance. Possibly they liked the new, braced cabinet construction which improves the bass.

Whatever it was you'll find similar attention to detail in all loudspeakers from Mordaunt-Short, where engineering with a purpose and a love of music still mean something.

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For those of you who are not aware, a five star rating is the highest awarded for a First Test in WHAT HI-FI? and means a "bogglingly brilliant bargain."



In Search of The Ultimate Audio Recorder

It's the ultimate battle between new digital formats and time-honoured analogue cassette, and **Alvin Gold** is the ringmaster. . .

Digital alternatives to the compact cassette have been around for roughly a decade, and the pace of development is quickening. At no time in audio history has so much development been occurring, yet much of it is hidden tantalisingly just out of sight. Therefore, it seems pertinent to pose the obvious question: which is the ultimate recording medium you can buy today? Which system yields the best results, and what can it do that the others can't? What alternatives lie just around the corner? Does the old clockwork-powered analogue compact cassette system still rule the roost?

Compact cassette still plays some powerful aces, of which the most important is its universality. It is also comparatively cheap, readily understood, and despite some limitations, it's capable of making fine recordings. Cassette is held back by its signal-to-noise ratio, the restricted dynamic range over which it operates, and its distortion, though these shortcomings are effectively papered over by the Dolby S noise-reduction system. Its ability to play constant tones without wavering remains well below digital standards, but may still be negligible in practice.

However, cassette is really let down by a real-

istic maximum uninterrupted recording time of 45 minutes; by the lack of any serious indexing facility or timecode; by inconsistencies between tape recording heads in different machines; and by the absence of a facility for a prerecorded tape to tell the replay deck what kind of noise reduction it has been encoded with.

This article is intended as a comprehensive overview of all of the digital contenders that have come to challenge cassette over the past ten years. There's a summary of each one, with examples of current products that exemplify the genre. In addition, there are exclusive reviews on the latest DAT and MiniDisc decks that would topple cassette's throne, and an overall conclusion in which I will detail the results of my search for the Ultimate Audio Recorder. Now read on!

PCM DIGITAL TAPE

Introduced in 1981

Having gained historical significance only recently, the first neo-domestic digital recording medium was implemented using domestic VHS video tape. At the time of its launch, it was the only cost-effective storage medium with the required storage density and bandwidth. The most famous example was the Sony *SLF-F1* portable Beta VCR and *PCM-F1* digital electronics package. The system was influential in its day, not simply because it actually worked very well, but because for the first time it promised CD master quality at a near-domestic price.

No products currently available



DAT comes in all shapes and sizes...



...from Sony personals...

DIGITAL AUDIO TAPE (DAT)

Domestic version introduced September 1990

DAT was the first true domestic digital recording medium, and it was widely thought that DAT would do for compact cassette what CD was already doing for vinyl LP record. The digital coding was identical to that of CD, though by using a 48kHz analogue-in sampling frequency it provided slightly superior performance. With a maximum recording time of two hours (four in LP mode), DAT delivered the freedom from noise, low distortion and dynamic range found in CD-style digital coding, with rapid track access to match.

In the end, DAT made a dent on the professional market, but flopped domestically. It proved impractical to bring costs down to mass-market levels since the system relied on inherently complex, close-tolerance, miniaturised VCR mechanisms. In addition, the high density tapes required costly coatings, and they tended to disintegrate under the kind of conditions found, for example, in cars.

- Current Products Available:
 Sony DTC-60ES £800
 Teac R-9 £1,200
 Nakamichi 10007 £POA

HIGH SAMPLING DAT

Introduced in Spring 1994

Pioneer has long proposed the view that subtleties of reproduced sound are spoiled by the lack of musical information above 20kHz available from digital recordings, and by the side-effects of the anti-aliasing filters required at this frequency. Using DAT as a starting point, the obvi-

ous solution is to double the sampling frequency to 96kHz (giving a near-48kHz audio bandwidth), thus halving record and play times to one hour with standard 120 minute tapes. This was the genesis of HS-DAT. So far available from Pioneer only, HS-DAT also retains the standard 32, 44.1 and 48kHz DAT sampling frequencies for completeness.

As a long-term solution to the sound quality issue, HS-DAT is half baked: a higher bit rate is needed as well as a higher sampling frequency. However, the beauty of HS-DAT is that it builds on the strengths of DAT without pandering to its weaknesses. The system is an important and useful step in the right direction, and as an audiophile medium, it is currently without peer.

- Current Products Available:
 Pioneer D-05 £899
 Pioneer D-07 £1,150
 Pioneer D-C88 £2,000

DIGITAL COMPACT CASSETTE (DCC)

Introduced in October 1992

DCC (Digital Compact Cassette) is the world's first domestic S-DAT (stationary head) digital audio system. It was developed by Philips as a direct replacement for audio cassette. The tape is standard video stock, and is run at the standard cassette speeds in an auto-reverse

mechanism that can also play standard analogue tapes. The musical information is processed by a data-reduction filter called PASC

FIRST TEST

Sony MDA-JA3ES

Sooner or later, it was inevitable that Sony would want to push the MiniDisc envelope. And as you would expect, this exercise in performance enhancement finds incarnation in Sony's prestige ES range; so let's have a big hand for the £799 MDA-JA3ES. The deck includes a real-time clock and calendar (which stamps recordings with date and time), and has switching for analogue, optical and digital input sources.

The discs could not be simpler to handle, as long as you remember to allow the table-of-contents track to be updated at the end of a recording. One particular benefit of the MDS-JA3ES is related to its six-second input buffer memory (a system that holds incoming signals in solid-state memory in case of disruption on-disc). This can be loaded onto disc when recording, so



Sony adds ES to MD.

that the start of broadcast programmes is not missed. Finally, there's the ability to record and display track titles.

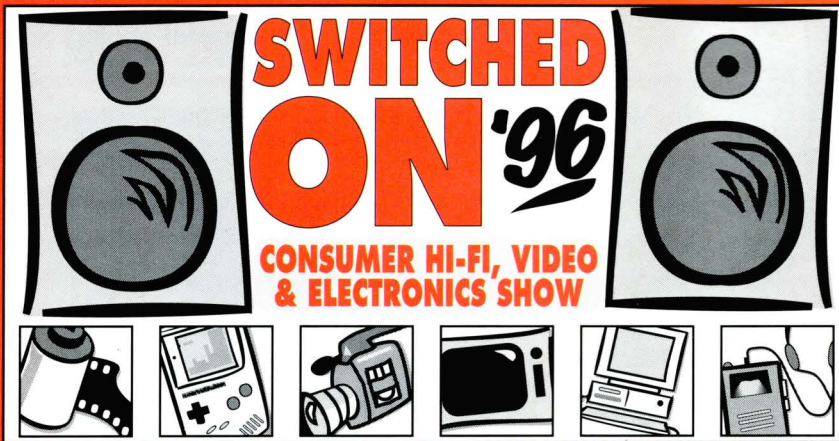
I have noticed a slow but steady improvement in the sound quality of MD as the system has matured, and as the proprietary data reduction process has been fine tuned. Also, the MDA-JA3ES has benefited from some thorough development in its power supply and in the audio signal chain. The result? Pre-recorded discs that I tried were uninspiring, although one would have expected this of the mainstream chart material that constituted the MiniDisc stocks of the record shops I tried.

As a recorder, however, the player was far more satisfactory. One observation I made with earlier models, and that startled me at the time, was a loss of left-right and front-back separation. This made the listening experience flat in both the literal and metaphorical sense.

The new ES model all but makes amends. I found that the sound was still slightly constrained, but less because of any intrinsic flattening of stereo perspectives than as a side effect of a rather messy, ill-separated treble, which in the end makes MiniDisc less than transparent on audition. With anything but the best source material, however, the Sony could pass as almost any of the competing digital technologies without any raised eyebrows.



...to lap-top Pioneer HS-DATs.



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◀ (short for Precision Adaptive Sub-band Coding), in order to remove musical information deemed inaudible.

Backwards compatibility with analogue cassette was the killer feature intended to oil the wheels for DCC. However, DCC's image was dented by the poor analogue replay performance of the thin film heads, by the absurdly-convoluted control logic of early players and by slow tape-wind speed. The real killer, however, was the high pricing of both early players and the prerecorded tapes, which sat uneasily with claims of assured low prices due to the simple stationary-head transport and compatibility with existing tape duplication plants.

Most of the system's initial problems have by now been addressed, but the damage has been done, and although Panasonic is still technically committed to DCC, the only manufacturer still active is the system's progenitor, Philips.

Current Products Available:
Philips DCC951 home deck £280
Philips DCC 730 home deck £250
Philips FW68 DCC mini system £500

MINIDISC (MD)

Introduced in November 1992

MiniDisc (MD) is Sony's answer to DCC. In part it was conceived through a conviction that consumers who considered tape old-fashioned would respond favourably to the robustness and random track access inherent to a disc system. The 74 minutes running time (Beethoven's 9th, approximately) of the tiny discs is identical to CD, and Sony claims MD sales are ahead of CD in the same period from launch. However, there is little of the buzz about MD that accompanied the launch of CD, and most of Sony's non-specialist target market don't really know what a MiniDisc can do. However, MD is achieving considerable success in the Far East, and has begun to attract support from the music industry.

From the outset, Sony promoted MD on the shirt-pocket convenience and robustness

Is MiniDisc the future of home recording?



of the discs rather than on sound quality. Indeed, I remember being struck by the sanguinity of Sony personnel at a pre-launch demonstration, when the audio performance was criticised. The gap has been narrowed recently, but MD remains an improbable audiophile choice.

Current Products Available:
Sony MDS302 £500
Sony MDA-JA3ES £800 (reviewed, p. 37)
JVC XM-D1BK £900

CD-RECORDABLE (CD-R)

Introduced in 1990 (standard set 1984)

There was a brief but intense flurry of interest in recordable compact disc several years ago, when it was realised that CD-R dubs from CD often sounded better than the originals. (See Paul Miller's feature on page 33 of issue 148 for more information.) The problem back then was the prohibitive costs of both recorders and discs, which persisted thanks to infighting between the music and hardware industries. It has taken until now for an 'affordable' CD-R to appear, in the shape of the £1,300 Pioneer PDR-05, with other manufacturers set to follow suit this year.

The idea of a player that will record CDs, on a medium that itself can be played on any CD player, appears attractive enough for the

music industry to see CD-R as a serious threat. If true, the fly in the ointment is the cost of the discs. CD-R hardware is knobbed to prevent it being used with the much cheaper Photo CD and professional optical media, which are otherwise technically compatible. Domestic

FIRST TEST

Pioneer D-05

The D-05 is a second-generation HS-DAT deck from Pioneer, featuring 96kHz sampling and retailing for £899 — about £100 less than Pioneer's own flagship cassette deck, the CT-95. It lacks the battleship exterior build of its predecessor, the D-07 (reviewed in issue 133), but its innards are of equal quality, and its feature complement is complete without being extravagant. Amazingly quick and accurate tape handling enables the listener to forget occasionally that this is a tape-based system, not a random access device like MiniDisc. However, any total belief in the technical supremacy of this late-20th-century digital masterpiece was challenged when it scattered one of the test tapes from its housing, bringing play to a halt, just like an old-fashioned cassette deck. To its credit, the mechanism stopped instantly to prevent the tape being mangled, and the tape was playable after manual rewinding.

The Pioneer seemed slightly inferior to some of the better high-end cassette decks when used at the standard 48kHz standard sampling rate. I listened to recordings made from analogue sources (a Roksan record deck and a Wadia CD player via its analogue output in this case), and also one of my few pre-recorded tapes — mostly test samples acquired in DAT's heyday. Overall, the deck had a slightly constrained feel, and it revealed a metallic edginess with some material.

I had no way of taking full advantage of the 96kHz sampling with digital-source material, for which I would have needed a second D-05. However, I was lent some 96kHz orchestral rehearsal tapes (and others) made by Tony Faulkner in Walthamstow Town Hall, and the realism of these was often quite startling. The music clearly lacked the slightly shut in and mechanical cues of the 48kHz recordings, being more transparent and looser limbed, with lower coloration levels. Certain sounds were particularly striking: the ambience of the Walthamstow venue, the sheer physical presence of a piano, and the expressiveness of some vocal passages.

No 96 tears for Pioneer's D-05.



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◀ CD-R discs are also limited to 62 minutes recording time, and the suspicion is that a deal has been struck behind the scenes to limit the attractiveness of the system to would-be pirates, as a means of protecting the music industry.

CD-R makes little sense as a general recording tool. Once a recording has been made, it cannot be erased or recorded over, though tracks can be locked out on replay. For archiving purposes, however, it is a natural, and there is a constituency for CD-R among those who would otherwise buy a high-end CD player. Current Products Available: Pioneer PDR-05 £1,300

SUPER DENSITY DISC (SD)

To be introduced in 1996 (perhaps)

The true significance of SD—the much vaunted next-generation carrier of both audio and video—is not in its technical capabilities but rather in its forthcoming launch. Quite a few buying decisions will probably be delayed until the exact form of SD becomes known.

It looks as though there will be a hierarchy of standards, which may include a linear PCM audio standard with 24-bit coding, 96kHz sampling and without data reduction. This would allow recordings of 139 minutes a side. There are no immediate proposals for a domestic recorder based on SD, but this could be the Holy Grail towards which the industry is groping.

CD-R — dead good or dead in the water?

So, what is the Ultimate Audio Recorder?

If the number of competing digital recording media was not confusing enough, there is still hi-fi VHS videotape (much-neglected by the audio world). This is capable of making eight-hour recordings, in L mode, to a standard roughly comparable with compact disc on a bad day; and tape costs work out to pence rather than pounds per hour. And then there's hi-band video...

Leaving these marginal players to one side, it is still difficult to predict where we'll be in two, three, or even five years' time. If we can learn anything from the lessons of the past, it is that technical ability per se is not the determining factor in the short-term success of any recording medium. However, there is some evidence of a longer-term cycle that is related to performance, which perhaps helps to explain the undercurrent of interest in the HS version of DAT, and in CD-R, despite their respective poor starts.

The future of digital recording in the home is inherently unpredictable. Perhaps it will be determined by the ad men rather than by the

Copy Protection

The outcome of the digital recording saga will largely be determined by the future deployment of the Serial Copying Management System (SCMS), which 'flags' digital copies to prevent them being used to make further digital copies. There is nothing to stop second-generation analogue copies being made, though; nor is there anything to prevent an unlimited number of digital copies being made sequentially.

SCMS can be bypassed with relatively simple black boxes, or avoided altogether by buying professional DAT recorders, as professional pirating operations will do. As a means of preventing domestic-scale piracy, SCMS is about as useful as an umbrella in a hurricane, but the industry continues with the fiction that it is actually doing some good.

The currently-emerging crop of CD-R recorders also feature a recorder identification code (RID) which is imprinted on all recordings, in principle making recordings traceable. Quite how this will save the music industry is hard to see.

engineers, in which case MiniDisc is the format most likely to romp home. Its record is unimpressive so far, but my gut feeling is that it has a brighter long-term future than HS-DAT. The latter seems more like a proving ground for a high-sampling-rate domestic recording system, rather than a significant product in its own right. This said, there is a place for HS-DAT as a mastering recorder.

CD-R is perhaps more of a runner, especially if Marantz (or one of its performance-led peers) comes up with hardware carrying the promised £499 price tag — and if the makers of blank discs can be made to play ball.

DCC has come a long way from its technically-uneven launch, and in many ways it offers the optimum compromise between convenience and technical ability. It also sports the added bonus of backwards compatibility with analogue cassette, and attractive pricing on some models.

On merit, DCC should succeed, but so far it has shown few signs of doing so, and many of the recognised authorities have already written it off. For me, this is a good reason to suggest that it could just provide the biggest surprise of all over the next five years.

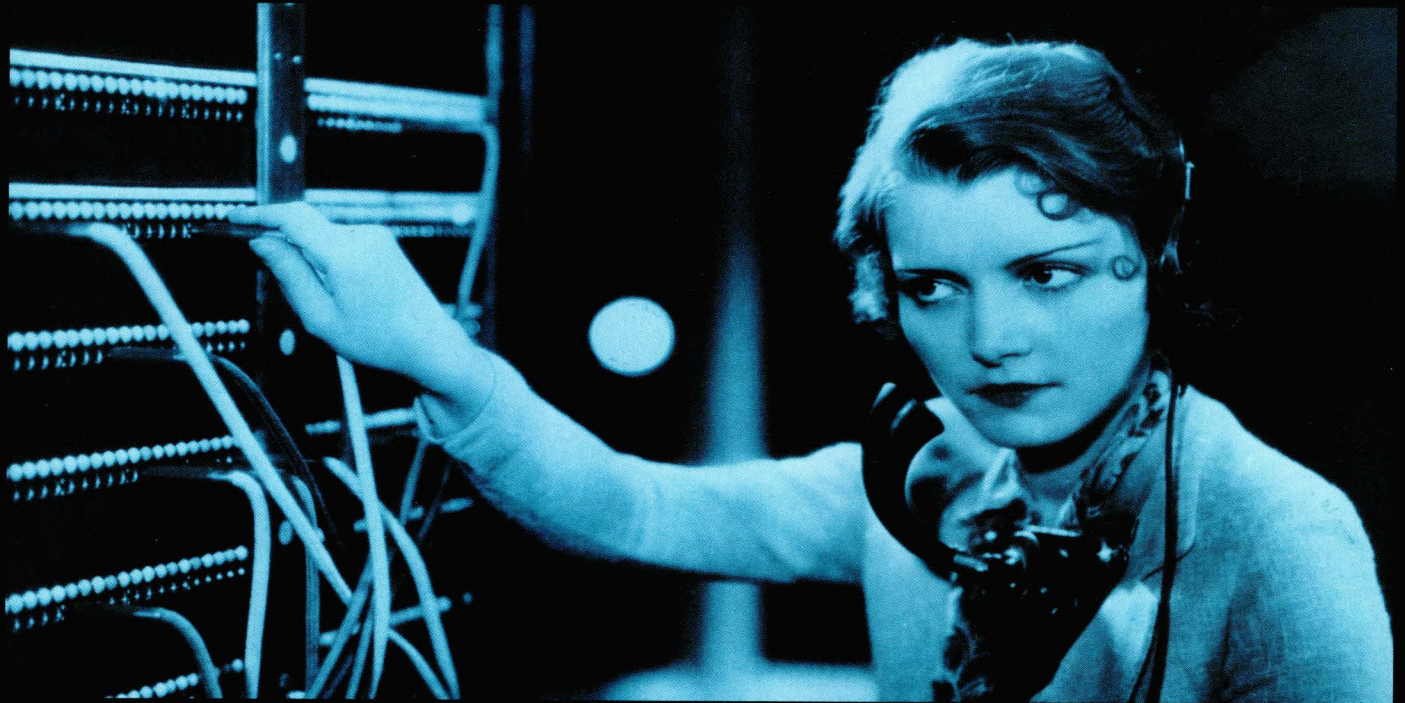
With all of this uncertainty, the future of compact cassette is left looking surprisingly buoyant. Despite being nearly 30 years old, compact cassette remains an open-ended standard, and in its ultimate form, with recorders like the Nakamichi *Dragon*, or the Pioneer CT-95 with Dolby S, is technically almost on a par with digital media.

Often cassette has the edge, musically. For the vast majority of people, when assessed over every facet of performance and not just out-and-out sound quality, the humble compact cassette still remains the Ultimate Audio Recorder. ▲



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LETTER OF THE MONTH

Childish Pranks Ahoy

I have just been reading page 153 of the 150th anniversary issue of *Hi-Fi Choice* and I cannot help wondering about the scholastic attainments and the mental ages (including maturity) of the individuals responsible for the page giving advance information concerning the contents of the next month's issue.

Recollections of the immature vocabulary used by 'William' (the character created by the author Richmal Crompton, I think) came flooding into my mind. This triggered memories of 'comic' mags published many years ago for the benefit of immature children who had barely reached an age where they could read.

It strikes me that many of your staff and contributors seem to be of similar immaturity. This impression is derived from the language and connotations to be drawn from it in your magazine.

T Jenkins, Peterlee

Your Richmal Crompton assumption is almost entirely correct — the concept was to concoct an amalgam of Just William and Billy Bunter characters as a humorous pastiche for the Next Month page. We are sorry if you find the tone of the magazine immature, but it does not exist in a vacuum.

The slightly irreverent style of Hi-Fi Choice is a reflection of the puerile nature of the media in general, since the demise of the esteemed organ Punch. Now, if you will excuse us, it's time for our feed — Cow & Gate apple puree and a couple of Farley's Rusks. Yum.



You're 'avin' a larf

I have just read your article concerning 'Cables — Best Buys' featured in your Jan '96 issue and must say that I haven't had such a good laugh in ages. I presume you write these articles tongue in cheek as I cannot believe that this is supposed to be a serious test. A lot of the cable descriptions appear to pertain to their mechanical rather than electrical characteristics, such as 'good extension, bounce and solidity'.

The article seems to infer that a cable in some way affects or colours the sound as a result of its design. In reality, the only cable parameter that affects the sonic performance of a speaker

cable is the DC resistance. The frequencies involved in the audio field ensure that the cable capacitance is irrelevant as is the purity of the copper, provided that the DC resistance is low enough for the job. Basically, the type of cable is unimportant. *M J Brown, Ferranti-Thomson Sonar Systems Ltd, Dorset.*

Even the most reactionary quarters of the august Audio Engineering Society now accept that the objective and subjective differences between cables are far greater than once believed. You'll be saying all amplifiers sound the same next!

Black Marks from UKD

I fear that your reviewer Richard Black has done a serious injustice to the Unison Research *Simply Two* in his group test of integrated valve amplifiers (issue 149). He claims that "some of the resistors are running awfully close to their maximum rating," and that "the output valve is flogged to well above the normal rating... which is likely to reduce valve life." He is wrong on both counts. In fact, all the resistors used have a maximum tolerance of more than double the values they are actually run at. The EL34 power valves in the *Simply Two* run at perfectly safe values that in no way endanger the life of the valves.

Turning to Black's comments on the sound quality, "confused" seems to have been the main criticism. But, in all other reviews the one feature of its performance that's been consistently praised is its clarity and portrayal of detail — the opposite of confusion! It even received a Golden Note award nomination for 'best tube amp 1995' from the American Society for the Advancement of Audio Engineering.

It may be that the loudspeakers used for Black's test were an unsuitable match for the *Simply Two*. The Spendor SP2/3 speakers, while not particularly insensitive, undoubtedly present a difficult load, which could account in part for the comments. And by the same token, the only amp in the test with a high-power transistor output stage, performed well. *Nick Green, UKD Iver, Bucks*

I maintain that a resistor rated at 0.6W (free air) and 250V

maximum, mounted under a hot circuit board and dissipating 0.4W, while withstanding 247V, is heading for an early demise. Modern film resistors do not like sustained high voltage, especially when they are dissipating anywhere near their nominal maximum.

As for the power valves, in the sample I had, they were running at an anode dissipation some six Watts above the EL34s specification. Even so, the amp struggled to achieve its nominal power rating, only reaching it with some six per cent distortion.

I checked the impedance graph of the SP2/3 speaker, and it's one of the friendliest I've seen. I suspect that part of the trouble is that the SP2/3's own distortion is too low to mask the amp's non-linearities, which leaves my subjective impressions. Richard Black

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◀ Portrait of the Artist as a Young Audio Maniac

I remember the story of a man who built a house around his 3,000-litre aquarium, and had to divorce before the construction works were finished. I also remember laughing very hard, but lost my sense of humour when I decided to replace my Mission Cyrus II/PSX amp combination with an Audiolab 8000C preamp and a Counterpoint NPS100E power amp. Only to find myself rebuilding our library/computer/hi-fi/record storage room around the new amplifier... How far can you go before you lose sight of the safe shores of family life?

So let me say a word or two in praise of my wife and other wives who understand that a husband at home, tangled in wires and drowned in vinyl and floppies, is better than a husband drowned in whiskey and lager in the smoke-filled darkness of some seedy bar. A bar where the music is loud and ugly, heavy with lust and harmonic distortion.

A well-known bumper sticker says 'Golfers never die, they just lose their balls'. Old systems don't die either, they just lose their knobs and migrate to other rooms. Bits and pieces of my old systems are to be found scattered across the whole family. Even the multimedia computer has inherited the good old Mordaunt-Short Pageant speakers, powered by the Cyrus combo.

Am I going nuts? I just bought a Sony DAT recorder and I'm taping some 78s... Technology can stand some idiosyncratic internal contradictions before blowing a fuse or two but how much more stress can we apply to the Wife Acceptance Factor before she blows her top? Topless, meanwhile, is the picture of a pinup next to my computer screen, there to remind me — as the Bible says and sung by Pete Seeger — "To everything there is a time..." No, I don't spend my nights staring at the screen

of a computer, but it is true that I don't hear the phone ringing when drowned in the sound of a good pair of headphones (Beyer DT990) and I'm not to be disturbed when checking the alignment of a Denon DL304 fitted on the end of a Rega RB300 tonearm sitting on top of a Michell Syncro turntable.

The Meridian 206 CD player can't really compete with the Michell spinning a vinyl, even at twice the cost, but the Sony DAT-60ES does close the gap. I'm slowly closing all the gaps that surround me on the heavily-constructed walls of our tech-room: hundreds of pocket-books on the shelves, an equal number of CDs and LPs. Add to that the stacked floppy containers and associated program manuals; the 40 drawers, each one with its own wealth of little containers filled with banana plugs, phono and DIN plugs, various cones, spiked feet, Sorbothane isolators, neatly untangled coils of connectors and extension cables. Old tape-splicing equipment, tiny mirrors to check on the cartridge alignment — Ali Baba's cave of 40 freaks' Nirvana. Could this bliss be disturbed by some form of anguish, known only to the eccentric audiophile lost in the meanders of his ever-silent musical mind?

Who will appreciate these countless hours spent for the benefit of all? First of all, nobody shares exactly the same musical taste and therefore son and daughters each have their own stack of carefully selected components. I hereby wish to denounce the use of a multi-room system as yet another form of musical conformity dictatorship. The children may sometimes cry out in anger at the playback volume coming out of the huge TDL transmission lines blowing the jazzy horns and thumping acoustic bass solos. They can still retreat to their own caves to seek consolation in the lyrics of REM or Alpha Blondy.

The only one not to have

that option is the lovely wife... another word of praise is due for her enduring courage and refined musical taste that makes her prefer to listen to some music than watching the silly TV. But once again the WAF is under heavy siege! Dolby Pro-Logic has invaded the empty space above the VCR... Sparks are flying all over the place, emotional debates about my pending purchase of a hearing aid and other sound-pressure-induced infirmities are the subjects of discourse at supper time. The anguish of fear of alienation is growing.

Have I reached the ultimate frontier? Have I boldly gone where no decent father should have gone? Have I crossed into the Twilight Zone of Sonic Futuroscope? Only time will tell as I patiently fight a battle of audio standards while trying to explain to my wife that a new carpet needs to be fitted as three extra pairs of speaker wires will have to be buried in the newly excavated channels of the wooden floor. The next purchase must be a decent sound level meter — unanimously approved by the rest of the family!

*Harold Jacobowitz
via the Internet*

Any more of you readers fancy yourselves as James Joyce? Ed

Beer goat getting shocker

Does one of your equipment reviewers have a drink problem? I would suspect so if his 'beer budget' amounts to £200. I am referring to the January issue, wherein the reviewer proclaims the Kenwood DP-3060 CD player to be a 'beer budget' machine. Is this his weekly beer budget, his monthly budget, or his life-time budget?

Such comments as this really get my goat as my 'beer budget' wouldn't even stretch to a metre of speaker cable.

*David Mawtus
Scarborough, N. Yorks*

*Actually, it's an hourly rate.
— Beer & Wine Editor*

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- The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.
- The Musical Fidelity competition is not open to employees of Dennis Publishing Ltd., Musical Fidelity Ltd., their suppliers, agents or associates.
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- No cash alternative will be offered.
- The act of entering the competitions will be taken as acceptance of the rules.
- You must notify us if you do not wish to be informed of any special offers or promotions. On postal entries, please indicate clearly on your entry if you do not wish to receive details of further special offers.
- We will assume you are over 18 years of age unless you state otherwise.
- For a list of winners of this competition, write enclosing a stamped, addressed envelope, to: *Hi-Fi Choice* Winners, Dept 152/1, 19 Bolsover Street, LONDON W1P 7HJ.

SEVEN OAKS HI FI

system 1a



▶ A GENUINE HI FI SEPARATES STARTER SYSTEM

PHILIPS CD710 CD PLAYER
Quality CD Player with top Philips performance
OPTION MARANTZ CD46 EXTRA £40

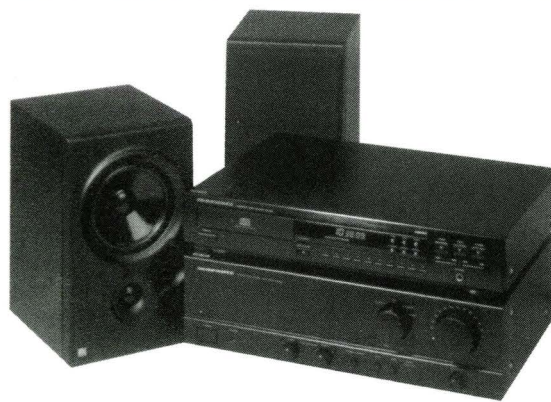
£249.⁰⁰

NAD 310 AMPLIFIER
This amplifier is an absolute steal
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JPW MINIM SPEAKERS
Fast, dry bass which never goes missing
WHAT HI FI? ★★★★★ November 1992

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system 2a



▶ A QUALITY HI FI SEPARATES SYSTEM

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Exceptional performance, excellent value
WHAT HI FI? ★★★★★ May 1995
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£349.⁰⁰

MARANTZ PM34 AMPLIFIER
Solid value; powerful; well built
WHAT HI FI? ★★★★★ August 1995

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These budget boxes are absolutely knockout
WHAT HI FI? ★★★★★ April 1995
OPTION MISSION 731 NO EXTRA CHARGE

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system 3a



▶ AN AUDIOPHILE HI FI SEPARATES SYSTEM

MARANTZ CD 63 CD PLAYER
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OPTION MARANTZ CD63MKII EXTRA £40

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KENWOOD KA3020SE AMPLIFIER
The best amplifier in the 1994 Awards
WHAT HI FI? ★★★★★ Awards 1994

KEF CODA 8 SPEAKERS
Their lively sound makes them spectacularly satisfying
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system 4a



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WHAT HI FI? ★★★★★ Awards 1994

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PIONEER A400X AMPLIFIER
Voted best amplifier in the Federation of British Audio Awards 1995

MISSION 733 SPEAKERS
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Marantz PM53	£ 249 £ 199.00
Marantz PM55SE	£ 249.95
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Meridian 555 Pwr	£ 624.95
Meridian 551	£ 694.95
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Musical Fidelity E200	£ 599.95
Musical Fidelity E300	£ 699.95
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Nad 302	£ 199 £ 149.00
Nad 304	£ 259 £ 199.00
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Denon D90 Ex Speakers	£ 699 £ 599.00
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Mission 733	£ 299.95
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Nad 514	£ 369.95
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Pioneer PDS504	£ 199 £ 169.00
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Quad 67	£ 874 £ 749.00
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Rotel RCD970BX	£ 349.95
Rotel RCD975	£ 449.95
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We always try to ensure that our prices are competitive. However, in the unlikely event an authorised competitor within 30 miles advertises an identical product as available from stock at a lower price, even in a sale, we will match that price!

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Our Sale continues into February. Throughout our branches you will find significant reductions on top name makes and models. All our seasonal specials are brand new in factory sealed boxes with full manufacturers guarantee. The quantities of some of these offers are limited, so please call your local branch before travelling.



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audiolab



8000S

The new **8000S** stereo amplifier offers the same flexibility and outstanding sound quality as every other Audiolab product. At the turn of a switch it will perform as either an integrated amplifier, delivering 60 watts per channel, or by connecting a second power amplifier it will act as the pre-amplifier in a quality pre/power combination, offering superb control with most loudspeaker's. As a stand alone pre-amplifier the **8000S** delivers many of the features found on the new **8000Q**, such as Zq technology and remote control operation. The **8000S** also caters for the addition of an Audio Visual Decoder and an active sub-bass system. This ensures that it is an ideal amplifier for future upgrades with the capability of adding the very latest in Home Cinema.

For details of the Audiolab range, including the new **8000S**, **8000A**, **8000P**, **8000C**, **8000T**, **8000CDM**, **8000DAC**, **8000PPA** and **8000Q**, contact your local Sevenoaks Hi Fi.

arcam

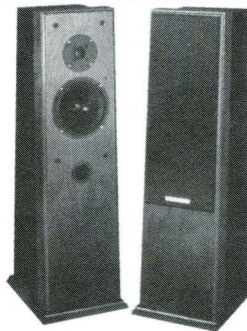


ALPHA 1 CD

The much acclaimed **ALPHA 1** CD Player is Arcam's most affordable CD Player to date. A multi-level Delta Sigma digital to analogue converter means the **ALPHA 1** provides musical reproduction of unparalleled quality. As with the renowned **ALPHA 5+** CD Player, the **ALPHA 1** offers a minimalist layout ensuring ease of operation and the traditional, uncluttered look of top quality British equipment.

The **ALPHA 1** is also an ideal aesthetic and sonic match for Arcam's own award winning **ALPHA 6+** amplifier. These two models combine to provide the convenience of a full remote control system, as well as outstanding sound quality. At Sevenoaks Hi Fi you will discover the Arcam **ALPHA** and **DELTA** series of products.

ruark

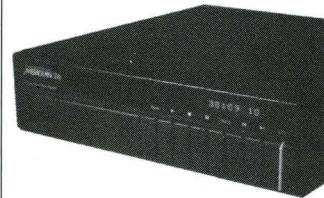


TALISMAN II

Refined musical presentation and style are the hallmarks of all Ruark loudspeaker's. With the knowledge gained from years of experience as a member of the Guild of Master Craftsmen, they refuse to except compromise. The **TALISMAN II**'s are a testament to these very high standards. Incorporating a bass reflex design, the Seas tweeter and bass/mid range driver combine to offer poise and coherence, ensuring that their performance is as elegant and polished as their fine real wood veneers.

To audition the Ruark range, including the new **ICON**, visit your local Sevenoaks branch.

meridian



506

All Meridian components, from the simplest to the most complex, are designed to be operated by the touch of a single button on their MSR remote control.

The **506** CD Player is no exception. It provides the very high levels of performance you expect from every model within the superb Meridian range. Utilising a high mass drawer mechanism and a steel chassis, means the CD transportation is exceptional. Then an 18 bit Delta Sigma conversion stage ensures that bass notes are delivered with real slam, while detail is natural. These are characteristics common to all Meridian CD Players, including their finest integrated model the **508** and the magnificent **500** and **563** CD transport and DAC. However, the real benefits of the **506** materialise when it is used with other Meridian components, like the **551**, **504** and **A500**'s. Thus, creating an advanced and flexible, full remote control system.

cyrus



III

our season of high quality

featuring **Audiolab**, **Monitor Audio** and

On Tuesday 20th February, at the Jarvis Rivenhall Hotel, Essex. Audiolab and Monitor Audio, two of the finest manufacturers in Britain bring their products to Essex. The doors will open at 7pm, a musical presentation will follow at 8pm and concludes at 9pm with a competition prize draw. For further details and a complimentary ticket telephone 01376 501733.

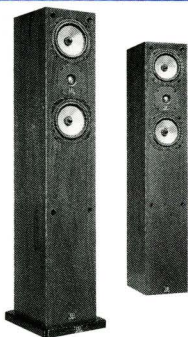
EXPRESSION

for hi fi connoisseurs and music lovers

The new **CYRUS III** integrated amplifier was designed to follow in the footsteps of the original range of Cyrus products, and to incorporate the very latest technology including remote control operation.

Inside the familiar shoe-box casing this award winning amplifier offers innovative features and upgradability enabling it to reproduce all types of music with great reality. By adding the **PSX-R** power supply, you can isolate the **CYRUS III** from the mains, thereby reducing the chances of extraneous noise and glitches. For more details on the Cyrus range, which includes the **DAD 7**, **DISCMASTER**, **DACMASTER**, **FM7** and the new **PRE-POWER** amplifiers, contact your local Sevenoaks-Cyrus branch.

monitor audio



STUDIO 12

The breathtaking **STUDIO12** loudspeakers from Monitor Audio, offer a no compromise approach to design and construction. This is obvious the first moment that you see them, whether they are finished in a standard satin veneer or a luscious grand piano lacquer. All of the models within the new **STUDIO** series offer a combination of a gold anodised tweeter and an aluminium alloy bass/mid range driver. When they are partnered with suitable amplification the **STUDIO 12**'s offer remarkable transparency and the necessary focus to reproduce complex passages of music with glorious accuracy.

rotel



RC&RB970BXII

Designed and developed in the UK, the amazing **RC** and **RB970BXMK2** pre and power amplifiers deliver audiophile sound quality and flexibility. By adding a second **RB970BXMK2** power amplifier, you can bridge the two in mono, providing incredible control with a wide range of quality loudspeakers. The **RC&RB970BXMK2** also offer the same slimline styling and characteristically solid build quality as all Rotel products. Even though Rotel adhere to a minimalist style a separate record and listening facility with split volume control means that you have finite adjustment, especially when recording. While the addition of the new **RQ970BX** phono equaliser ensures vinyl replay of the highest standard. For further information on the Rotel range, which includes the **RA970BX** integrated amplifier, **RCD970BX** CD Player and the new **RDD980** and **RDP980** CD transport and DAC, simply contact your local Sevenoaks Hi Fi branch.

marantz



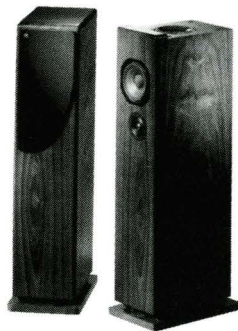
CD63SE

The **CD63SE** offers the kind of sparkling performance normally associated with audiophile CD Players.

Marantz are one of the few dedicated manufacturers that aim to make recorded sound as realistic and enjoyable as is possible. This development of hifidelity has led the Hi Fi press to bestow numerous Best Buys and Recommendations upon models within their range. At the heart of the **CD63SE** is a high mass drawer mechanism which provides precise CD transportation with accurate tracking and retrieval of the information stored upon the disc.

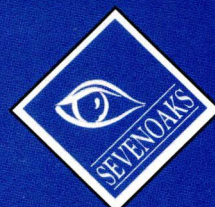
The **CD63SE** also offers a logical upgrade path via either its optical or coaxial digital outputs. With this pedigree it represents exceptional value for money.

castle



HOWARD II

Castle's mastery of quarterwave bass technology is evident in the **HOWARD II**'s. Beneath their handcrafted, real wood veneer cabinets are more closely specified components. A new crossover network combines with the off-set metal dome tweeter and fibre polymer bass/mid range driver to ensure that the **HOWARD II**'s are adept at handling all types of music well, especially classical. The **HOWARD II**'s encapsulate all of Castles style, offering nine real wood finishes including a sumptuous rosewood and yew. At Sevenoaks Hi Fi you will discover the Castle range, which includes the superb new **ISIS**.



WIDE RANGE ON DISPLAY



COMFORTABLE LISTENING ROOMS



PRICE PROMISE



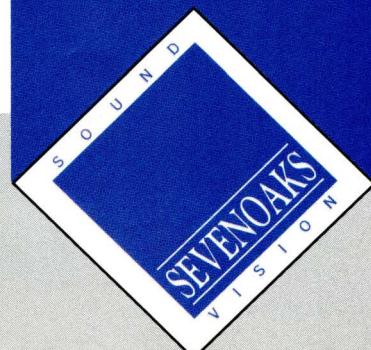
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musical evenings continues

the superb Meridian range of products

On Thursday 7th March, at the Hilton National Hotel, Watford.

Meridian will demonstrate their range including their new Audio Visual equipment. The doors will open at 7pm, a musical presentation will follow at 8pm and concludes at 9pm with a competition prize draw. For further details and a complimentary ticket telephone 01923 213533.

WHICH LOUDSPEAKERS?

Between \$250 and \$500, more expensive bookshelf speakers start to compete with inexpensive floorstanders, but which is best for the buyer on a budget? Paul Messenger tests both kinds side by side to bring you the answer.

Castle Severn



Celestion Impact 23



Heybrook Heylo



Monitor Audio
MA 700PMC



B&W DM602



Jamo Classic 8



Mission 734



Musical Technology Harrier



The greater the sum you can afford to spend on a pair of speakers, the broader your purchase options become. And from a reviewer's point of view, a medium-size budget makes for a much more interesting collection of test specimens that the sub-£300 gathering assessed in our last speaker test (issue 148). There's no denying that these more exalted models offer a substantial improvement in sound quality over the budget babies: even the cheapest is more capable of recreating the scale and dynamics of a musical performance than KEF's £130 Best Buy *Coda 7*.

The price span encompasses quite a wide variety of different approaches, and it's not too surprising to find that the comfortable majority (ten) follow the current fashion for compact floor-standing enclosures. Only three out of twelve (25 per cent) of the under-£300 group were floorstanding; moving up to the £250 to £500 price category finds no fewer than ten out of 14 (70-plus per cent) needing no additional means of support.

The bookshelf-versus-floorstander debate has become the central issue in popularly-priced hi-fi speakers today, so I make no apology in reiterating some of the key factors involved in this introduction.

From a naïve 'first sight' perspective the floorstander would seem obviously superior value for money. You get a much bigger speaker, and you don't have to shell out an extra £75 or more for a pair of specialist stands. It all looks perfectly logical.

But things aren't quite as straightforward as they seem on the surface. Looking back at the how and the why of the floorstander's development is quite revealing in itself.

I don't really need to explain that bookshelf speakers originally got their name because they were designed to be stuck up on a shelving unit. Here in Britain the speakers tended to be ten to 25 litres in volume, although Americans clearly had much sturdier bookshelves capable of supporting speakers of twice that size.

Stands first appeared in the early '70s, underneath compact, 40-litre, BBC-style monitors like the Spondor *BC1* and Rogers

LS5/5. The stands were supplied to get the speakers off the floor or shelf, and to encourage owners to pull them out into the room for listening. The rationale was entirely acoustic — to place the drivers (and port) up off the floor and away from the room boundaries, to avoid the muddying and coloration consequences of early reflections from walls and floors.

It wasn't until the '80s that anyone considered the role of the stand as a mechanical support for the speaker. It took the industry quite a while even to come to terms with the fact that the stand could have as big an impact on the sound as the speaker itself, and even now there's still quite a variety of different philosophies.

By performing its twin mechanical and acoustical roles, the stand has probably transformed the performance of the bookshelf speaker by as much as the efforts of the speaker designers themselves. In this context, the modern floorstander no longer appears such an obvious choice.

That's not to say that the floorstander isn't an entirely credible alternative to a good bookshelf-type model — the best certainly are — it's just that they aren't by any means *automatically* superior. However, I suspect that the reason the market is moving away from the bookshelf and towards the floor-standing format has much more to do with aesthetics, fashion and perceived value than anything directly related to performance.



THE CAST LIST

AUDIO INNOVATIONS ALTO	£300
B&W DM602	£280
CASTLE SEVERN	£500
CELESTION IMPACT 23	£299
DALI 104B	£370
HEYBROOK HEYLO	£389
JAMO CLASSIC 8	£400
MISSION 734	£450
MONITOR AUDIO MA 700PMC	£499
MORDAUNT-SHORT MS30i	£275
MUSICAL TECH HARRIER	£400
ORIGIN LIVE OL2A	£469
TANNOY 633/II	£300
TECHNICS SB-M500	£450

What the lab tests mean

Every speaker has a distinct frequency balance (or response), which says a lot about the way it will sound. This sonic 'fingerprint' shows which parts of the audio range are emphasised and which are short of relative output level.

To simulate relevant 'real world' conditions, the measurements are made of a stereo pair in the actual (largish) room in which the listening tests are undertaken, using a far-field technique averaged across seven microphone positions (after Colloms). The speakers are sited close against a rear wall and a metre out into the room; intermediate positions normally produce intermediate degrees of midbass reinforcement.

A perfectly flat, straight line is not expected — the main room modes create unavoidable ups and downs at the low-frequency end — but the trace should, ideally, be as flat and smooth as possible. Gentle variations are preferable to sharp discontinuities; prominences tend to be more irritating than dips; and a gentle, high-frequency roll-off usually sounds perfectly acceptable.

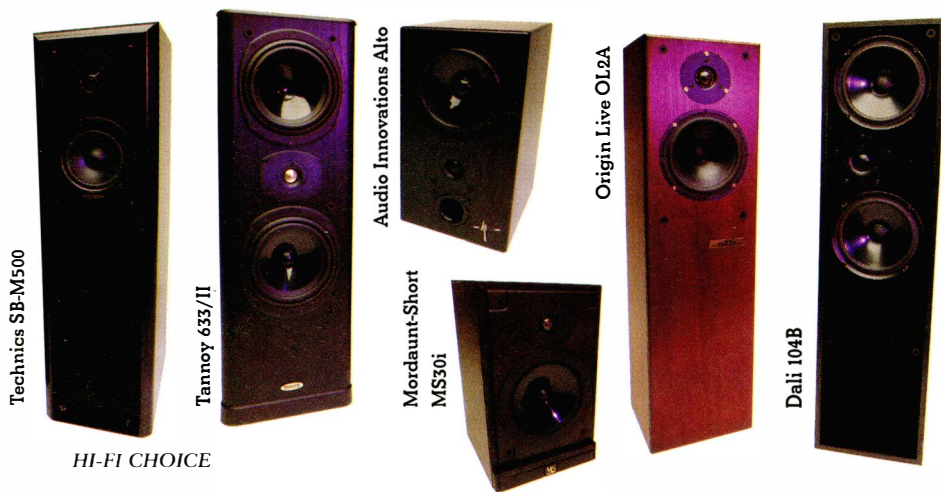
The sensitivity is a guide to how loud a speaker will sound for a given amplifier volume control setting. Our deliberately conservative figure is averaged across the broad midband. The snag is the impedance; for the same volume control setting, a four-Ohm loudspeaker will actually be drawing twice the current (and hence power) as an eight-Ohm design, so to estimate its relative sensitivity in real electrical-energy, conversion-efficiency terms, you need to subtract around 3dB.

The listening tests

With 14 speakers waiting in line, the listening tests were spread over two separate days. All should have gone smoothly had not the weather flung down an icy blanket and sealed Kent off from the rest of Britain. Fortunately, re-scheduling was accomplished without much difficulty, and thanks are due to Jason Kennedy and Alan Sircom for conducting operations.

The tests went well, and differences were clearly audible, while the general feeling was that the speakers were a pretty good batch, and superior to the smaller, cheaper models assembled four months earlier.

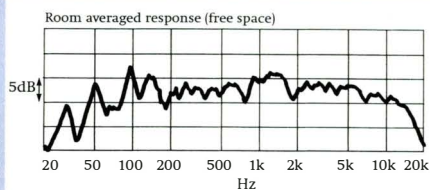
Speaker stands used with bookshelf models included Slate Audio, Heybrook and Atacama examples. Source and amplification equipment was the usual collection of Mana-supported Naim and Linn components. Thanks to panellists David Inman, Russell Kauffman (Morel), Robin Marshall (Spondor), Richard Dunn (NVA), Gary Maddell (Mordaunt-Short), Guy Sergeant (Audio Innovations) and Andy Whittle (Rogers).



HI-FI CHOICE

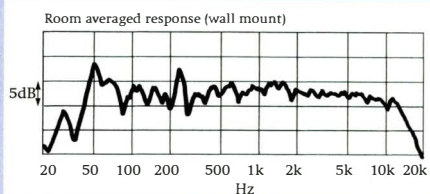
LAB REPORT

FREE SPACE



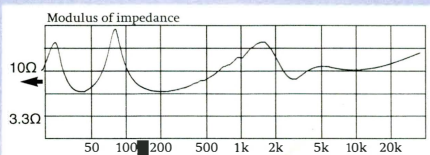
Balance is a little bass light and upper-mid forward when mounted well clear of walls

CLOSE TO WALL



Close-to-wall siting delivers a very flat overall balance, if a tad strong around 50Hz, and with a notably smooth transition through the cross-over region.

IMPEDANCE



An easy amplifier load as impedance modulus stays above six Ohms throughout. Port is tuned to 45Hz, well below the 80Hz driver/box resonance.

Considering its modest dimensions, the *Alto* delivers an impressive set of measurements with close-to-ideal compromises in balance and between sensitivity, amplifier demands and bass extension. The 87-88dB sensitivity rating is a shade above average while the impedance modulus never drops below six Ohms. A 45Hz-centred port tuning ensures at least some sub-50Hz bass extension, with our 20Hz datum registering -15dB in-room.

The overall frequency balance is very well ordered, especially if some wall reinforcement is called in to fill out the midbass — try siting the speakers one foot from the wall, expecting to move them in or out a little for best results. The upper bass and lower midband is just a trifle lean, while output becomes progressively slightly stronger moving towards the upper midband, which will ensure that detail is well projected.

The crossover transition, 1.5-2kHz, is handled with minimal disruption, with just a small $c \approx 2$ dB step down as the tweeter takes over, which should keep the mid-band sounding 'open'. The treble output is smooth and even, although the average relative level is a dB or two stronger than average, so ensure the driving amplifier has a sweet top end.

Audio Innovations

Alto

For a relatively young company on the UK hi-fi scene, Audio Innovations has certainly lived up to its name, not only by taking the lead in the valve amp revival, but also through styling that is both daring and convincingly contemporary. The latest example of the latter are the 'wing-shaped' amps and CD players being marketed primarily through the Richer Sounds chain, and to which this £300 loudspeaker provides a natural complement.

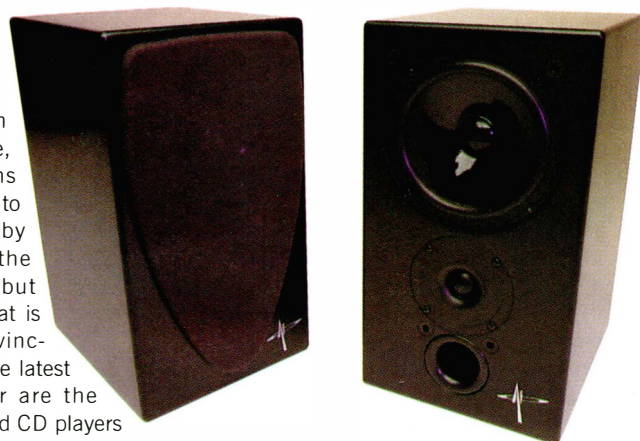
The *Alto* is certainly a Richer exclusive, and the first foray by AI into loudspeaker territory, too. It's a compact and conventional enough bookshelf-size two-way, but the styling succeeds in looking several years more up to date than most of its peers, through a combination of factors, including a silky-black surface finish, elegantly radiused edges all round, flush-fitted drivers, and a striking lozenge-shaped grille (which is, acoustically, quite favourable).

If the styling stands out from the herd, the actual content and configuration is rather more prosaic, although very well finished and put together. The enclosure is about 12 litres in capacity, is very lightly damped inside, and built up from tough 18mm MDF. The drivers are rebated so that they fit flush with the front, and fixed with tight but small-gauge fixing screws. The main driver here has a pressed steel frame and a 120mm doped paper cone, while the tweeter uses a 25mm doped fabric dome diaphragm. Round the back bi-wire terminals feed a very simple, hard-wired crossover network.

Sound Quality

The *Alto* turned in a respectable though not particularly distinguished performance in our listening tests. It's the smallest speaker in the test group, so it's hardly surprising that the bass was one source of criticism, primarily due to a relative lack of both weight and extension.

Elsewhere the balance was widely praised for its essential evenness and



neutrality, although the overall character is certainly a little on the thin and forward side, with just a touch of glare to boot. The net result is very open-mouthed, delivering excellent voice articulation, which helps make most types of music very accessible. However, it does tend to favour the acoustic guitar over the electric bass or synth, and is rather short on warmth and dynamic drama as well as weight and welly.

Although there wasn't the opportunity to try this, it does seem to me that the *Alto* should provide a good match for the company's amplifiers. The amps are particularly sweet where the speaker is a little forward, so the two ought to complement each other very nicely.

Conclusion

In strict price-versus-performance terms the *Alto* doesn't set any new records, but it makes a very respectable all-round fist of things when its modest size is taken into account. In my view, the superb styling sets it most obviously apart from the herd — the sleek, black, silky finish and soft edges making a design statement which leaves even the prettier woods, not to mention their altogether less convincing vinyl imitations, looking a little tired and sad.

I can't award Recommended flags on the basis of a personal aesthetic whim, and in other respects the *Alto* falls just a little short of the mark. But that's no reason to leave it off the shortlist, especially if you too are beginning to wonder whether the idea of planting a couple of small tree trunks in the middle of the lounge carpet isn't just a wee bit absurd.

VERDICT

SOUND ★★★★★
VALUE ★★★★★
PRICE £300

▲ Great styling makes much of the competition look old-fashioned. Also has fine balance and voice articulation.

▼ Lacks bass weight, power and authority; tends to sound a little thin and cold.

✉ Audio Components Ltd, Albany Court, Albany Road, Granby Ind Est, Weymouth, Dorset DT4 9TH.

☎ (01305) 761017

B&W

DM602

Despite cosmetics and technologies that are bang up to date, B&W's DM602 creates a certain nostalgic impression. The size and proportions will immediately remind any middle-aged enthusiasts of the company's classic DM10/110 models, which ruled the budget bookshelf speaker roost for much of the '80s. This only goes to show how much we've let our hi-fi aspirations slip these past 15 years. By today's miniaturised norm, B&W's 'full size' bookshelf model looks decidedly bulky, and costs a well-above-budget-level £280.

The 602 had already created a good first impression in our January '96 Sessions feature, but trial by full comparative review is an altogether sterner test for any loudspeaker. The shape may have retro tendencies, but the cosmetics are well up to date, with a lumpy, textured finish to the full baffle moulding, and a clever grille implementation.

Perceived value is good — it's as heavy as several of the floorstanders, while the price is one of the lowest in our group. However, there are two practical considerations to bear in mind. The first is the need to provide some sort of stand (say, an extra £70 minimum), while the second is that the speaker undoubtedly works best on a highish (ie 24inch) support, sited well away from walls — a combination which is very likely to become visually intrusive.

The enclosure and assembly is pretty typical of commercial practice, with the box built from 15mm chipboard, foam lined and stiffened by a vertical figure-8 brace. The front panel has the additional reinforcement of a plastic moulding fixed onto the wood sub-baffle, and it incorporates a flared port. Bi-wire terminals feed a simple PCB crossover with tag connections to the drivers.

The *pièce de résistance* is the main driver, which uses a big magnet on a proper cast frame to drive a stiffly suspended 140mm Kevlar cone (a gold-coloured, plastic-bonded woven material), similar to those hitherto found only on



B&W's upmarket monitors. A hefty metal ring forms part of the fixing arrangements, and gives it all a very professional appearance.

Sound Quality

The listening panel showed very mixed reactions, which indicates that the 602's distinctive sonic character appealed much more to some than others. As ever, all is compromise, and here the consequences of the largish main driver seemed to be invigorating midband dynamics and fine bass-to-mid coherence, but a distinctly shut-in and hooded effect in the presence region at the top of its working range.

With a slightly bright and quite obvious tweeter tending to exaggerate sibilants at the same time, this is not the smoothest or sweetest sound around. The bass is a bit lumpy and uneven too, but decent results were achieved after some experimenting with stands and positions. And the DM602 does have a punch, vigour and dynamic capability that many will consider a more than worthwhile recompense for its cosmetic deficiencies. There's a degree of confidence, authority and power here that miniature speakers never approach, and which brings a realistic measure of dynamic tension to the musical experience.

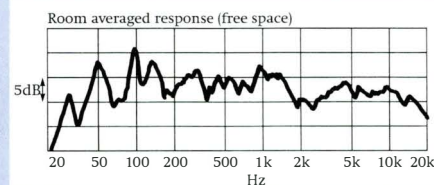
Conclusion

Proof positive that a 'classic' configuration such as this can still boogie with the best of them. The cosmetics of the sound are a bit shut-in and lippy, but the overall sonic integrity is high, with dynamics that are more than a match for the price competition, and which clearly deserve recognition by Recommendation.

VERDICT	
SOUND	★★★★☆
VALUE	★★★★☆
PRICE	£280
▲	Fine main driver gives impressive midband dynamics and good musical tension.
▼	Top end is a bit shut-in and lippy; needs high stands and plenty of space around it.
✉	B&W Loudspeakers, Marlborough Road, Chuchill Ind Est, Lancing, W. Sussex BN15 8TR
☎	(01903) 750750

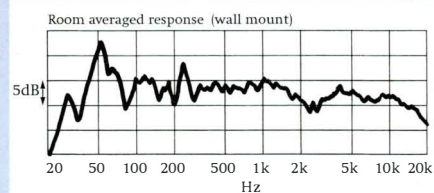
LAB REPORT

FREE SPACE



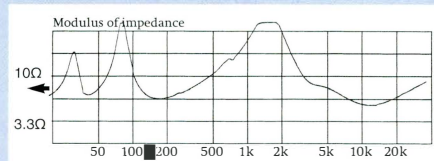
Well balanced overall, but not the smoothest trace around. The bass alignment is pretty well judged for free-space siting.

CLOSE TO WALL



Close-to-wall siting gives a smoother broad midband, but leaves the midbass a bit strong.

IMPEDANCE



The amplifier load is reasonably benign, dipping just below six Ohms in the lower midband and also above 7kHz.

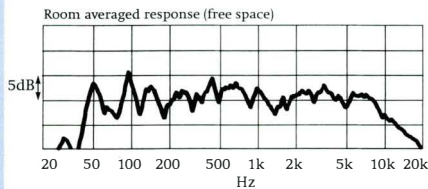
Sensitivity registers around 89dB, which is a good 'average plus' rating. However, the impedance modulus dips below six Ohms here and there, so the amplifier does have a bit of work to do. The dip at high frequencies (8-20kHz) is unlikely to prove significant, as power levels are modest here, but it may highlight differences in amplifier capabilities.

The wall-mount and free-space room response traces are a trifle perverse: the former gives the smoother midband, but a midbass output which is too hefty, while the latter gives the better overall balance, but shows a degree of unevenness which is less welcome. Careful attention to precise placement will probably pay dividends, and relatively high (eg 24inch) stands may give better results.

Although the overall balance appears to be well judged, the quite obvious and broad dip (on our far-field measurement) in the presence region (1.5-3kHz) is bound to have significant subjective consequences in the form of a restrained, laid back and slightly shut-in character. Bass extension is pretty typical for the box size, with the 45Hz-tuned port augmenting output well below the highish natural driver/box resonance (at around 85Hz), rather than helping to control cone excursion at resonance.

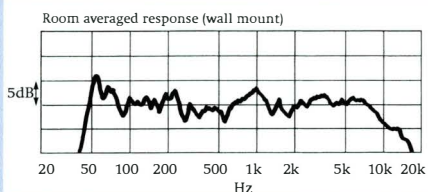
LAB REPORT

FREE SPACE



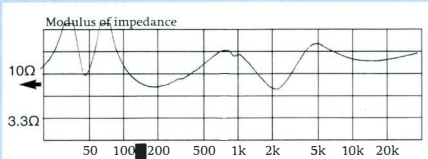
Limited bass extension and modest sensitivity, but balance that stays within pretty tight limits (5Hz-10kHz), albeit with some unevenness.

CLOSE TO WALL



A little wall reinforcement will help 'warm up' the *Severn's* balance, but leave a gap of about 1ft for best results.

IMPEDANCE



The very easy-to-drive impedance is one explanation for the limited sensitivity, while the port is tuned to a highish 50Hz.

The *Severn* differs markedly from the rank and file compact floorstanders included in this report. However, it does show striking similarities to the highly successful *Chester* upon which it is based, even though this down-scaled member of the family utilises regular reflex-port loading rather than *Chester's* more elaborate quarter-wave approach.

As with the *Chester*, the nub of the matter is that *Severn* behaves more like a bookshelf miniature than a floorstander, but that fact in turn is all part of the charm. Sensitivity is a modest 85dB or thereabouts, and the bass rolls off pretty rapidly below 50Hz. However, at least there's little risk of ending up with a boomy bottom end, even in smaller rooms, while the proximity of the 50Hz port resonance to the 70Hz natural driver/box resonance ought to help control excursion and improve midband linearity.

The frequency response rolls off quite determinedly above 8kHz in the treble, too. If there's not too much output in the lowest and highest octaves, the seven in between are pretty well balanced wherever the speaker is placed, although not without a fair amount of unevenness along the way. Note also that the relative treble level is brighter than most.

Castle
Severn

At first sight Castle's new £500 *Severn* looks suspiciously like a simple down-scaling exercise on the highly successful *Chester* theme (Best Buy issue 98), and the similarity in appearance and styling only serve to reinforce this impression. However, the *Severn* uses two brand-new drivers and, in place of the 'quarter wave' technique employed in Castle's larger loudspeakers, this least expensive floorstander uses a rather more conventional reflex-ported approach, and needs only the top two-thirds of the cabinet to do so.

The front-ported enclosure of some 17 litres is built into an exceptionally slim and elegant column, which features by far the prettiest real wood veneer in our test group. Carefully radiused edges give an altogether more up-to-date appearance than the sharp-edged *Chester*. The speakers are supplied with little wooden plinths, which provide the aesthetic finishing touch while also aiding mechanical stability. The enclosure's internal divide is mounted on a slant, which will help spread the vertical resonant modes in both the air space and the cabinet sides. The crossover is mounted beneath this panel, which, therefore, provides some useful screening against vibration.

Typically Castle fashion, the main driver has a relatively small, clear plastic cone, 100mm in diameter, and this is driven from a very meaty magnet mounted onto a cast metal frame and bolted quite tightly into rebated cut-outs, which keep the baffle flat. The tweeter is a new Castle design, featuring the ubiquitous 25mm soft fabric dome. The speakers are supplied in mirror-image pairs, with offset tweeters sited below the main driver, and with mirror-image grilles too, sliced off along a curve — all the better to display that veneer-work. The box proper is built from 15mm MDF, lightly filled with fibrous damping material.

Sound Quality

The panel's reactions to the *Severn* were rather mixed and not particularly consistent from one listener to the next, perhaps this reflects the way our various personal preferences reacted to its slightly unusual mixture.

Very much in the Castle



tradition, the midband is beautifully coherent and communicative, which ensures a high interest factor straight away. Where this new model differs most obviously, both from the *Chester* and the overall market average, is in its decidedly bright top end, which some listeners found open and inviting, and others merely irritating.

Subsequent hands-on listening showed that this factor was at least as source-dependent as it was person-dependent. Results could be decidedly edge-of-the-seat uncomfortable if driven from a fairly unruly CD player via a 'shiny' sounding amplifier. Conversely, with inherently 'duller' sources, such as vinyl disc or the increasingly important TV set, the sound has a welcome openness, which tends to be rather more convincing than the cautious and restrained top-end balance, which is the market norm.

One limiting factor is the bottom end, which lacks the sheer grunt and weight available elsewhere. Qualitatively speaking it's quite good, with at least the promise of delineating dynamic contrasts and shading, but there is a lack of scale which will not endear it to techno-fans, and a little less poise and more honk than the *Chester*, too.

VERDICT

SOUND ★★★★★
VALUE ★★★★★
PRICE £500

▲ Great looks with classy real wood veneer finish. Sound is notably open and communicative.

▼ Could do with a bit more bottom-end grunt, and balance might be a bit bright for some tastes and systems.

✉ Castle Acoustics Ltd, Park Mill, Shortbank Road, Skipton, N. Yorks BD23 2TT.

☎ (01756) 795333

Conclusion

The *Severn's* bright and open-mouthed balance won't suit every taste or system, but plenty will find its fine communication skills very seductive. The package has been engineered as thoroughly under the skin as its superb surface finish suggests. That is ample justification for the £500 price-tag and a warm Recommendation.

Celestion Impact 23

Celestion's slogan for its new Impact series is '101 Per Cent Sound' — the extra one per cent presumably referring to some distortion component or other. After experiencing the *Impact 23*, I reckon the company could have got away with an even higher figure without offending against the Trades Descriptions Act, but it wouldn't do to pre-empt the conclusions in the first paragraph.

Celestion's brochure lists no fewer than seven Impacts, starting with the *I-10* and going up by five-unit increments to the *I-40*. So how come this is an *Impact 23*? It missed the brochure and is found on a separate sheet, so it's clearly a later addition. As the smallest and least expensive floorstander in this range, the *Impact 23*'s £300 price-tag looks very reasonable considering the size and build of its enclosure.

Styling is very much a matter of taste, but the *I-23* clearly belongs to the mine-is-bigger-than-yours persuasion. It takes pains to flaunt anything remotely flauntable, with no concessions to discretion or good taste, as evidenced by the large gilt plastic logo. The message that comes through loud and clear is: big, bad and proud of it!

Like its slightly larger *I-25* sibling, this is a two-way design, with just a single main driver handling the bass and midrange, augmented at the bottom end by a very large and visible port down at floor level. For the aesthetically squeamish, a half-grille may be fitted to cover up the drivers, but plastic trim makes their appearance neat enough without it, despite surface mounting.

The main driver has a 128mm undamped paper cone, pressed frame and modest magnet, and was secured by tight but narrow, coarse-pitch woodscrews. The tweeter has a 25mm diaphragm driven from a small but powerful neodymium magnet, and mounted on a flared plastic faceplate.

The enclosure itself shows considerable promise — built from 19mm chip-board, the wrap stiffened by an internal figure-8 brace, and the inside pretty well stuffed with wadding. Spikes are supplied for floor coupling, with thumb-wheels in place of locknuts, which at least prevents over-tightening (although these wheels seemed



to have an annoying tendency to work themselves loose).

Sound Quality

I expected the good, basic measured bass-to-mid balance of the *I-23* to give it something of a head start in the listening tests, but that wasn't the case at all. Criticism close to condemnation was the rule rather than the exception, and it included a number of adjectives and metaphors unsuitable for printing.

The most obvious problem is the relative lack of treble: "Is the tweeter working?" one panelist enquired. And what treble there is sounds rather spitty, which perhaps explains why its level is so low. This lack of top end, in turn, tends to focus attention on the bass and midrange, where coloration is rife, and timing and dynamic range are poor.

Perhaps the panel was a little too severe on the *Impact 23*, but even the more relaxed and informal hands-on listening failed to raise any real enthusiasm. It does go loud, to be sure, and the midband shows some clarity and occasional glimpses of transparency to these ears. But there's no real agility, grip or authority, and the result ends up vague and diffuse.

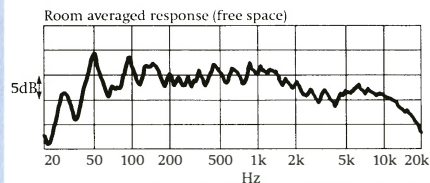
Conclusion

The obvious inference must be that a decent bass-to-mid balance and high sensitivity is no guarantee of good sound. Coloration and an indifferent tweeter conspire to make the end result quite disappointing.

VERDICT	
SOUND	☆☆☆☆☆
VALUE	☆☆☆☆☆
PRICE	☆☆☆☆☆
PRICE	£299
▲	Big, cheap and loud. A lot of speaker for the money. In-ye-face styling.
▼	Sounds coloured and old-fashioned; not enough top end; no subtlety or delicacy.
✉	Celestion International Ltd, Foxhall Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP3 8JP.
☎	(01473) 322222

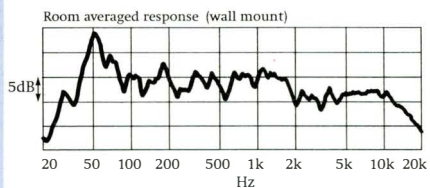
LAB REPORT

FREE SPACE



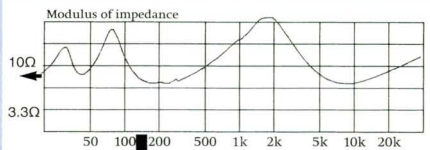
No great extension but a broad bass-to-mid balance which is unusually well ordered for a large, high-sensitivity model.

CLOSE TO WALL



Altogether too much midbass when wall-mounted, and less even balance too; note slight but broad presence depression.

IMPEDANCE



An easy-to-drive amplifier load in spite of the high sensitivity. Port is tuned to 45Hz — well below the 75Hz box/driver natural resonance.

The overall in-room balance is remarkably well-ordered for such a large, inexpensive and high-sensitivity design, which would normally reveal considerably greater unevenness than typical small bookshelf-size models.

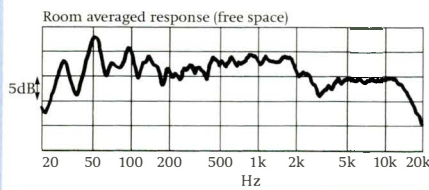
Those seeking the sort of bottom end extension is stereotypically associated with generous floorstanding enclosures that might be a little disappointed, since the absolute in-room extension is no greater than three of the bookshelf models assembled here.

Where the *Impact 23* scores over much of the general market is in a high sensitivity rating of 90dB. It's not quite the highest figure recorded in this test group, but it probably represents the highest of all in conversion-efficiency terms, since the amplifier load is very easily driven, staying comfortably above six Ohms throughout — suggesting that this could be one of the most effective ways of upping the loudness of an under-powered mini (or separates) system.

Close-to-wall siting is not recommended due to midbass excess, but the in-room balance is held within promising +/-5dB limits when sited clear of walls. It does not, however, offer the smoothest response around. A broad, shallow depression extends from 1.5kHz up to 5kHz, which will shut in the presence a little, while the relative treble level is a little below average.

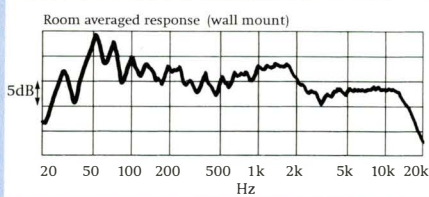
LAB REPORT

FREE SPACE



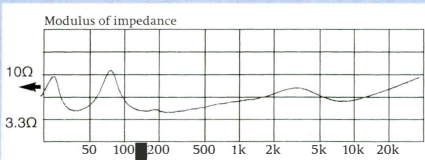
A generally positive overall balance, but slightly rich, and mid-forward yet rather shut in through the crossover region.

CLOSE TO WALL



Not a speaker for close-to-wall siting, due to the heavy emphasis of midbass frequencies as well as general unevenness elsewhere.

IMPEDANCE



A current-hungry impedance characteristic which stays close to four Ohms through the bass and midband.

The *104/2* recorded one of the highest sensitivity ratings I've encountered among conventional box loudspeakers, which will be something of a bonus for those who like their music loud — the more so perhaps for the impression of headroom high sensitivity normally brings.

However, the 92dB voltage sensitivity should be seen in the context of a load that spends most of its time down around four Ohms impedance. This in turns means that when the 2.83 Volt datum is applied, the speaker will be extracting nearly two Watts of power from the amplifier. Subtracting 2-3dB from the figure will give a more realistic estimate of the relative conversion efficiency.

Close-to-wall siting provides an uneven and mid-bass-heavy response, but things look altogether better when the speakers are moved out into the room. The balance is not entirely neutral — the bottom end is still a shade rich, and the rather abrupt 7dB drop between 2kHz and 3kHz is bound to leave the presence region a little restrained and shut-in. But absolute bass extension is encouraging and the main midband decade (200Hz-2kHz) looks very well ordered, with a slight forwardness that is likely to be subjectively benign.

Dali
104B

This speaker first came to my attention last summer, when a pair turned up with an audiophile system put together by Definitive Audio of Nottingham for the Sessions feature (issue 145). That pair had undergone some tweaking and had been fitted with a purpose-designed stand, created by the dealer concerned. I was sufficiently impressed by what I heard to make a mental note to include the standard production *104B* in a future full review context when the opportunity arose.

The 'D' in DALI stands for Danish, which seems to be nearly as synonymous with hi-fi as it is with bacon, and happily tends to taste better on the evidence reaching our shores. The 'ALI' bit is some sort of flummery about audiophile loudspeakers, the significant bit being that the DALI brand is part of a powerful Scandinavian retail-through-to-manufacturing group which calls itself The Audio Club, and which owns and/or markets a number of brands in the UK including NAD and Onkyo.

The *104B* is a pretty substantial floor-stander, standing 86cm high, turning the scales at around 14kg, and incorporating two main drivers, which makes the £370 asking price look pretty reasonable. There's too much black vinyl woodprint wrapping up a nondescript column shape to call this a 'pretty' loudspeaker, but with the twin main drivers above and below an offset tweeter, it does look reasonably purposeful, nonetheless. The only decoration is a black flock finish over the front panel, which is probably better on display in view of the thick-framed grille, although the surface-mounted drivers don't make the neatest baffle.

Engineering content is rather prosaic: the box is built up from 19mm particle board with no additional bracing. All twin main drivers sport 125mm paper cones, pressed frames and modest magnets, and are held in place by tight, chunky wood-screws, while the tweeter uses a 25mm soft dome. The inside is lightly lined in fibrous damping material, and a simple hardwired crossover uses well-spaced components. Spikes are not provided, so additional cones are needed for optimum results.



Sound Quality

Consistently high scores on both days of the listening tests leaves little doubt that the *104B* is one of the leading contenders in its class. This does not mean it's a universal panacea that does everything well, just that it performs most of its tasks better than average, and its strengths comfortably outweigh its weaknesses.

The dynamic performance must be very close to the top of its class, while the dynamic range is unusually well maintained, right down into the bass region. The result is lively, with a decent measure of authority, drive and genuine tension. The soundstage also has a generous scale, yet it conveys depth quite well, too.

The down side is a balance that is always on the rich side of neutral, and which can be rather over-the-top heavy on some material. This is emphasised by a measure of coloration in the midbass, and is made still more obvious by a determinedly dark and distinctly shut-in upper-mid/presence region. Consequently there is some lack of delicacy and transparency here, and the top end is a little over-restrained too, albeit pleasantly sweet.

VERDICT

SOUND ★★★★★☆
VALUE ★★★★★☆
PRICE £370

▲ A lively, rich-sounding speaker that communicates with enthusiasm; good material value.

▼ Bland styling and a rather dull balance; could be more delicate and transparent.

✉ Audio Club, NAD Building,
401-405 Nether Street,
London N3 1QG.
☎ (0181) 343 3240

Conclusion

The *104B* may be fundamentally utilitarian in construction and presentation, but sonically it turns out to be a real party animal, with great mid dynamics and coherence, a good sense of purpose and little congestion. The balance may not suit every taste, but the package as a whole offers fine value for money and is warmly Recommended.

Heybrook Heylo

Every once in a while, along comes a speaker that redefines the whole configuration of the package, and the current trend towards compact floorstanders has stimulated a number of interesting and original solutions. The former adjective certainly applies to Heybrook's £389 *Heylo*, but not the latter, as this Heybrook is a dead ringer for the Royd *Minstrel* (Best Buy issue 132). Also, it seems to owe some visual cues to the Rega *EL8* and Ruark *Templar*. All these models are much smaller than the floorstanding stereo-type for two very logical reasons. In the first place, discretion has always been the better part of loudspeaker design, as the public has confirmed by opting for smaller and smaller models over the years. Secondly, typical budget floorstanders tend to be too big for their own good, so quite a number of designs voluntarily seal off the lower sections of the enclosures.

In the latter context the *Heylo* makes a lot of sense, since it utilises all of the cabinet volume in what, by floorstander standards, is a remarkably compact and neat enclosure. It is particularly slim front-to-back, which looks attractive but leaves little room within the cabinet for the absorption of unwanted sonic radiation. More importantly, though, its footprint does little to consolidate fore-and-aft stability.

Heybrook tackles the latter problem by supplying a steel base-plate, which ensures good spike security and also incorporates a slight backward tilt to help compensate for the fact that the drivers are, out of necessity, quite close to the ground. The plate is effective in carrying out these tasks, but it's not the prettiest solution; it leaves a couple of sharp edges sticking out at spike-height round the back.

The box is a pretty little thing, finished in a real-wood veneer, with attractive radiusing around the edge of both baffle and back. The drivers are surface-mounted rather than inserted flush with the baffle, so the grille-off look is mildly compromised; however, the lack of inside-edge chamfering on the grille is not too serious.

The main driver has a moulded plastic frame; twin, smallish magnets



(cancel-ling stray fields for close-to-TV-set use); a 125mm doped-paper cone; and it is secured by six tight but coarse pitch woodscrews. The tweeter is a 25mm soft-fabric dome. The twin-ported box is built from tough 16mm MDF with some bituminous panel damping, as well as a cocktail of other acoustic damping materials.

Sound Quality

Sadly, the listening tests served only to unearth a problem with one of the speakers, which made rude noises in time with an electric bass, probably because a section of the baffle was coming away. A replacement pair was dispatched, but arrived too late for the blind panel tests.

Hands-on work showed that the *Heylo* leads with its voice band, which is very well projected but a little thin and forward and has a touch of pinched and nasal coloration. The sound provides plenty of up-front detail, but lacks warmth and richness. The bass seems nimble enough, but is a little detached. The overall impression is pleasantly clear, but not particularly free dynamically; it is informative but ultimately a bit small with it.

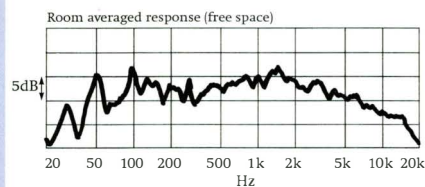
Conclusion

Allowing for the fact that our sample problem was an isolated case, the *Heylo* is still a bit of a mixed bag. It's a pretty, compact package which communicates plenty of detail, but the lack of any real bass drive or authority, and the 'cold' overall balance, do sit on the debit side of the equation, and the value for money rating comes out about average.

VERDICT	
SOUND	★★★★☆
VALUE	★★★★☆
PRICE	£389
▲	Good-looking and ultra-compact floorstander gives good voice reproduction.
▼	Sounds a bit thin. Bass is a bit of an afterthought, and base-plate has sharp edges.
✉	Heybrook Hi-Fi Ltd, Estover Ind Est, Plymouth PL6 7PL.
☎	(01752) 731313

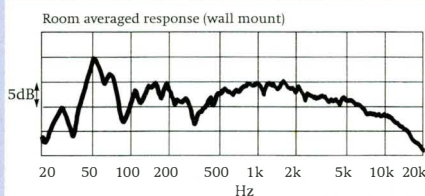
LAB REPORT

FREE SPACE



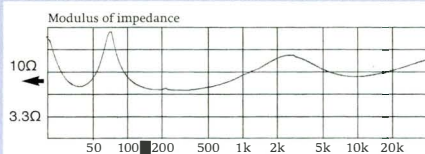
Balance is a little bass light and upper-mid forward in free space, peaking up somewhat at around 1.5kHz, but with a smooth crossover transition.

CLOSE TO WALL



Full close-to-wall siting leaves the midbass a little prominent and isolated, but fills in the net-bass balance pretty well.

IMPEDANCE



An easy-to-drive load which stays comfortably above six Ohms throughout; the porting is tuned to 40Hz.

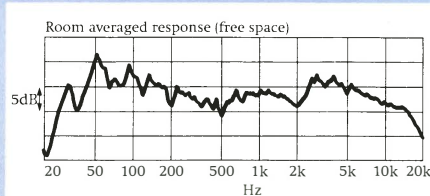
The balance is a little unusual in an overall market context, although typical enough of the Heybrook tradition, with a somewhat forward upper-midband, and a slightly isolated bass augmentation centred on the 40Hz-tuned ports, while the lower midband, 150-400Hz, is a little lacking. The crossover transition, electrically around 2.5kHz, is particularly smoothly handled, while the treble proper rolls off very gently indeed, starting at around 2kHz, but not dipping significantly until above 10kHz.

Predicting the likely optimum siting is not easy, and individual experimentation is advised. However, one foot out from walls looks likely to produce the flattest overall response, although some might prefer the extra midbass output from full wall reinforcement as a measure of compensation for the relative leanness elsewhere in the bass region, as well as the upper-range forwardness.

The port here is tuned to around 40Hz, whereas the basic driver/box resonance lies around 60Hz, so the former will provide some measure of control for the latter, while also giving a useful degree of real extension. The 20Hz in-room datum registers -14dB, which is pretty respectable considering the compact dimensions, easy amplifier load and average 87dB sensitivity.

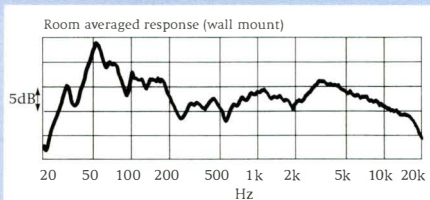
LAB REPORT

FREE SPACE



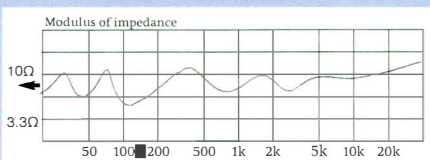
Even when clear of walls the balance is decidedly bass-rich (or midband-deficient), while the 4dB step up at 2.5kHz is very unusual.

CLOSE TO WALL



Very obvious broad bass emphasis suggests that the *Classic 8* should be kept well clear of walls at all costs.

IMPEDANCE



A quite complex characteristic, which stays at, or above, six Ohms across most of the range; peak port output is centred on 40-50Hz.

This Jamo has a most unusual frequency balance. It is heavy through the bass region (even without close-to-wall reinforcement) and distinctly strong in the treble. Also, the broad midband decade, 200Hz-2kHz, is quite clearly suppressed by 3-6dB. That in turn makes specifying the exact sensitivity next to impossible — the midband decade is around 85-87dB, while the bottom end averages around 90dB, so the quoted 88dB is very much an averaged broad-band estimate.

This balance anomaly — not unlike an amplifier 'loudness' compensator — will have substantial subjective consequences if making listening comparisons. Match the Jamo's voice level to another, flatter design and the Jamo will always sound louder and more impressive because of the extra bass (and treble) energy it's delivering.

I suspect that many music lovers might rather like the rich bass-to-mid balance, but the abrupt +5dB treble rise at 2.5kHz looks rather alarming, and is likely to be much less welcome sonically, too.

Despite the use of multiple drive units and a generously proportioned enclosure, absolute bass extension registers an adequate rather than exceptional -14dB at 20Hz in-room. The load seen by the amplifier is quite complex, but the modulus suggests it's reasonably easy to drive, while the bass resonances are unusually well damped.

Jamo

Classic 8

Widely rumoured to be the number one speaker manufacturer in Europe, the Danish brand Jamo has yet to match its continental success here in the UK, but its market share has been growing steadily nonetheless. The complete Jamo product line up is very extensive indeed; the company's marketing strategy is to organise its range into a large number of small groups, each targeting particular market niches.

Three of these groupings are aimed primarily at the hi-fi purchaser, and the relatively new *Classics* fill the gap that existed between the beer-budget, black-vinyl-and-proud-of-it *Cornets* and the luxury real-wood *Sevens*. However, don't take this to mean that the *Classic 8* is in any way expensive; perceived value is actually rather high in the context of our 14-strong group; the £400 asking price looks decidedly reasonable in the context of a four-driver 90cm tower that turns the scales at 17kg. Unfortunately, you still get the vinyl and, to these eyes, the chosen reddish woodgrain isn't one of the more convincing examples around, but you also get the services of Jamo's legendary design team, which once again turn in an impeccable job on the cosmetics.

It's an impressive looking speaker; the four-driver line-up actually operates as a three-way. Using twin 120mm cone bass units helps keep the cabinet fashionably slim, while supplying sufficient moving area to do the business. A large rear reflex port adds several pennyworth extra at the bottom end too, and an internal box isolated the 100mm midrange driver.

The enclosure construction is interesting. A simple, unbraced chipboard box, about 19mm thick, forms the base, top, sides and back; while the front panel is a *tour-de-force* in CNC-routed MDF, a substantial 20mm thick where the drivers are flush mounted. The deep post-formed picture frame edges form an elegant flare back to the cabinet proper, helping to minimise perceived bulk and providing a snug fit for the slim grille.

Sound Quality

The listening panel was unimpressed by the *Classic 8*, for reasons which corre-



late very closely with the measured frequency response aberrations (see Lab Report).

There was some praise for the sense of scale, and for bass that did stay reasonably well in time. But the speaker proved qualitatively disappointing here nonetheless, with a thickening coloration which one panelist likened to an oil drum. The exposed treble was another source of general criticism, for the wiry, wispy and lippy effect on voices, exaggerated sibilants and a tendency to spit. Trapped between these exaggerated extremes, the poor midband sounds very over-restrained, squashed, and lacking in realistic dynamic contrast and tension.

The hands-on work only served to confirm the blind test results, but also showed up one factor which will have its own appeal: at very low levels the boosted treble is a positive aid to intelligibility, and the extra warmth is a further bonus in conveying a quite impressive net effect. As the level is turned up the speaker becomes less comfortable, but at low volumes the 'loudness' contour is really rather effective.

Conclusion

A lot of very good-looking speaker for £400, the *Classic 8* has unusual frequency balance anomalies which were not appreciated by our panel of experienced listeners. The one saving grace is that it does maintain good intelligibility at very low listening levels, and is, therefore, a possible palliative to those who find hi-fi loudspeakers innately too 'loud', or don't want to risk waking the children.

VERDICT

SOUND ★★☆☆☆
VALUE ★★☆☆☆
PRICE £400

- ▲ Lots of speaker for your money, and a very pretty package, too; likes playing quietly.
- ▼ Boom'n'tizz character sounded crude to our panel, and gets more uncomfortable the louder you go.

✉ Jamo House, 5 Faraday Close, Drayton Fields, Daventry, Northants NN11 5RD.
 ☎ (01327) 301300

Mission

734

The 734 is the fourth model up in Mission's range of popularly-priced (read 'vinyl finished') models, and by a strange coincidence it's also the fourth member of that range to come under the scrutiny of this magazine's review process. It follows quite logically from the 733 (awarded a Best Buy in issue 139), with the main differences being a very slightly larger (deeper) enclosure, and an additional bass driver. The 734 costs £450, which, compared with the £300 asked for the 733, leaves the larger speaker looking less impressive in the perceived value stakes. However, it is often dangerous to apply quantity-surveying techniques to loudspeakers.

There is no shortage of vinyl woodprint on display here, but the 734 is much better looking than many rivals, with the rounded-off edges giving a softened effect. There are several interlocking and overlapping mouldings that constitute a complex plastic sub-baffle, and these act as clamps to hold the drivers in place. A large, integral, moulded front port features an internal paddle to minimise turbulence. The box itself provides an inherently stable footprint and keeps the drivers well off the floor; spiking arrangements are adequate (if fiddly), with large washers helping to prevent problems with the insert thread.

Mission makes some play of describing this as a 'true' three-way speaker, but their claim does not correlate with our findings, which suggest a considerable degree of overlap between the two main drivers. In practice this design is much closer to what is usually called a two-and-a-half-way, with one main driver covering bass and midrange, while the other handles bass alone. An interesting facet is that the lower driver operates from a large reflex-ported enclosure, while the upper one is loaded by a smaller sealed box. This arrangement should help to spread and damp the bass resonances.

The main drivers have 125mm-diameter clear plastic cones, pressed-steel frames and decent-sized magnets, while the tweeter (a 28mm composite, laminated, ring-dome, protected by a fixed mesh grille) is deliberately isolated mechanically.

Mission uses 16mm-



thickness panels for the box in order to minimise energy storage in the cabinet. Two lateral braces in conjunction with the internal divide help to ensure good stiffness. Light internal damping is provided by acoustic foam lining, and a simple hard-wired crossover is tag-connected to the drivers.

Sound Quality

"A good, balanced performer: it lacks a little excitement," is a phrase culled from the listening notes, which sums up the 734 rather well. It was well received with most of the panel, mainly because the sound was difficult to fault, or at any rate because its limitations are well disguised or controlled.

The balance was considered to be very close indeed to the ideal, which is a good starting point. There's a tendency towards thickening and heaviness in the midbass, but the bottom end does deliver some weight and analysis, while the midband is quite open and just a little forward, staying consistent and well under control, with fine focusing. The upper range is just a little veiled, and shows some congestion with dense textures (such as applause). However, the whole thing hangs together well, with decent timing and some dynamic integrity.

Conclusion

A very even-handed all-rounder, the 734 represents a worthwhile improvement over the 733 in sensitivity and bottom-end performance. However, the tweeter's limitations are less excusable at £450 than at £300, and do constrain the total sound quality, so the 734 will have to settle for a Recommended rating.

VERDICT

SOUND ★★★★★☆
VALUE ★★★★★☆
PRICE £450

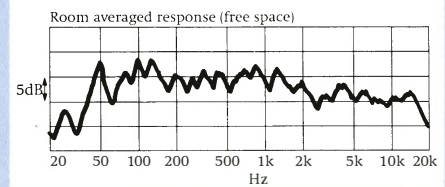
▲ A fine all-rounder and good material value for money; balance compromise is very well judged.

▼ Dynamically a bit lazy; tweeter quality is a definite limiting factor. Lacks excitement.

✉ Centralforce Ltd, Stonehill, Huntingdon, Cambs PE18 6ED.
 (01480) 451777

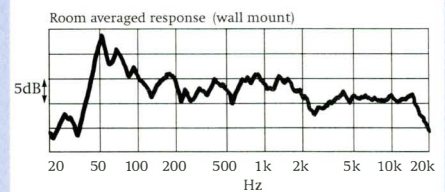
LAB REPORT

FREE SPACE



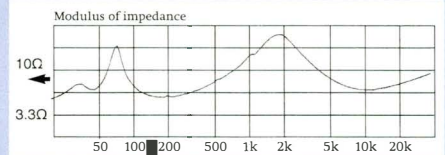
Good bass alignment and a fine overall balance, showing slight excess 100-150Hz, and a mild notch 2-4kHz.

CLOSE TO WALL



Close-to-wall siting leaves midbass looking much too strong, although the response is well balanced elsewhere.

IMPEDANCE



Reasonably easy to drive, but under six Ohms below 400Hz; no evidence of genuine three-way operation here.

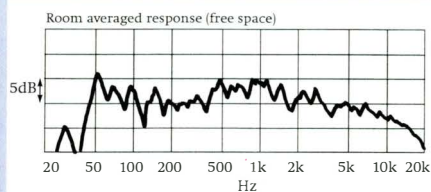
It's hardly surprising that the 734 shows many measured similarities to the 733. The crucial question is whether it offers sufficient advantages to justify its extra cost — and the answer looks like a qualified 'Yes'. The most obvious and significant bonus is probably the clear 2dB increase in sensitivity right across the band. The impedance is a little lower, so some of that advantage is lost through higher amplifier current demands, but only a modest amount in percentage terms.

The other bonus is in the bass delivery, which rolls off much less rapidly below 50Hz, and at least records a figure for the 20Hz in-room datum, albeit at an unspectacular -15dB, which is probably evidence of the sealed-box element in the complex bass-loading equation.

The frequency balance is good overall, if somewhat uneven en route (though no more so than the 733). However, I'm bound to say that Mission's suggestion of siting 10-20cm from a wall looks a little close. From our curves 40-80cm looks like being a better bet. The most notable features are a slight excess warmth in the upper bass, and a mild notch in the presence region (2-4kHz).

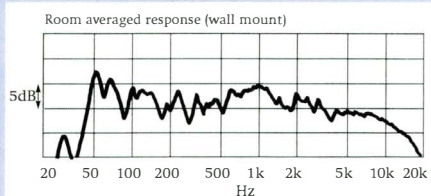
LAB REPORT

FREE SPACE



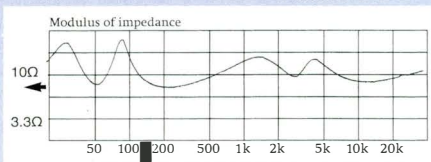
A pretty good in-room overall balance, although not much deep bass, and a rather forward broad midband (400Hz-3kHz).

CLOSE TO WALL



Close-to-wall siting is a viable option, although it results in a trace that is a trifle less well balanced than in free space.

IMPEDANCE



A very easy nominal load, if complex around the crossover point; port is tuned to a highish 55Hz.

There's not much deep bass to be had here, which is not too surprising given the modest box dimensions and reflex-port loading. Also, the port is tuned to a highish 55Hz, which may not be optimum from the point of view of sheer bass extension, but should provide some effective damping for the fundamental natural resonance of driver and box at around 75Hz.

Sensitivity is a solid average at 87dB, while the driving amplifier should have a pretty easy time of it as the load stays at or above eight Ohms throughout, even though behaviour in the actual crossover zone around 3kHz is relatively complex.

The frequency balance isn't entirely neutral, being 2-4dB short of output in the upper bass and lower midband (70-400Hz), and a little strong thereafter (400Hz-3kHz). This combination will tend to emphasise detail at the expense of warmth and richness. Although it's not particularly smooth here, the fact that the main driver carries on up to 3kHz is itself laudable. The tweeter, on the other hand, is impressively smooth, although its actual contribution in terms of relative level and ultimate bandwidth is decidedly modest. Its main contribution is some 5dB below the midband datum.

Monitor Audio MA700 PMC

Searching for a precedent to put this pretty but pricey bookshelf loudspeaker into context, I unearthed an *MA700 Gold* review from 1992 (issue 110). Comparing that model's specifications with those of the product on test, it appears that this *MA700 PMC* is an obvious successor. The £500 pricetag pertains to the lacquered MDF finish, the black oak veneered test sample cost an extra £100, while your Rosewood will set you back a serious £699.

The 'PMC' suffix had me a little worried at first, but I guess Pure Metal Cone is the likeliest translation, even if the chemistry pedant in me cavils at the use of the term 'pure' in the context of alloys and anodisation. But whatever the literal purity of its cones, Monitor Audio is now making metal-cone technology available at a much lower price than hitherto. The original *Studio* series carried such a heavy price premium that perceived value for money always seemed decidedly marginal, however good the quality. With metal diaphragms now becoming available from other manufacturers at much lower prices, the pressure must be on established premium brands like *MA* to stay competitive by bringing down their all-metal entry price.

Given that the *MA Gold* series introduced the 25mm gold-anodised metal tweeter, it would be logical if they updated the range by substituting the plastic-cone main driver with a metal-cone replacement several years down the road. There's maybe a touch of irony in the fact that the earlier driver used a hefty cast-metal frame, whereas this 115mm flared metal cone is held within a chunky moulded plastic frame, along the lines of those used in *MA*'s recent budget models.

Main driver aside, there is very little indeed to choose between the old and new *700*. The box is a little too sharp-edged to mix it with the latest fashions, while the real-wood veneer of the £599 sample is nicely done, if a little below the top grade. The rear-ported box is solidly built from 19mm MDF, with



added bit-

uminous damping pads and acoustic foam lining. Build quality is high, with both flush-mounted drivers bolted into place, and the baffle is veneered in such a way as to encourage you to leave off a relatively innocuous grille. Bi-wire terminals feed good-quality crossover components and wiring.

Sound Quality

A favourite with one panelist ("Such a relief after boomy floorstanders!"), the *700* was liked by all, and garnered acclaim across two separate presentations.

As with its predecessor there was little real enthusiasm for a slightly under-achieving bass, but the clear midband projection is a definite class act, with fine coherence, plenty of perceptible air and space around instruments, and a measure of genuine hear-through transparency. The balance is audibly a bit thin, and there's a slightly brittle edge to voices too, but timing is pretty good. There's a fair measure of dynamic contrast, even if dynamic peaks themselves are a little constrained. The top end is rather restrained and shut in, although quite sweet with it.

Conclusion

Pretty-but-pricey is an epithet which often seems to conclude Monitor Audio reviews, and likewise applies to the *700PMC*. However, this new metal-coned model represents a real and worthwhile improvement over its predecessor, and does possess one of the best midbands around at this price. So although the endorsement isn't without qualification, formal Recommendation certainly seems appropriate.

VERDICT

SOUND ★★★★★
VALUE ★★★★★
PRICE £500

▲ Good-looking luxury bookshelf model with all-metal diaphragms; has a lovely midrange balance.

▼ On the pricey side; sounds a bit thin and occasionally edgy with it; undistinguished bass.

✉ Monitor Audio Ltd, Unit 34, Clifton Road, Cambridge CB1 4ZU.
☎ (01223) 242898

Mordaunt-Short MS30i

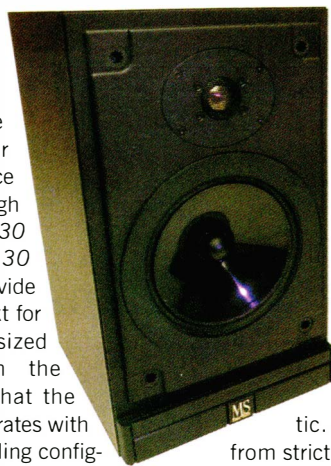
This model's immediate predecessor, the MS30, never made it into the Choice test programme, although earlier models, the 3.30 (issue 78) and 5.30 (issue 106), both provide some historical context for this large-bookshelf-sized model, albeit with the notable distinction that the new £275 MS30i operates with a sealed-box bass loading configuration, whereas all of its predecessors (to my recollection) were reflex-ported designs. This would seem a most sensible decision, since ported 20-litre boxes with decent-sized main drivers have an unfortunate tendency towards midbass heaviness (the 5.30 was a classic example), and the change to sealed-box loading should tighten up the bottom end substantially.

Looking back four years to the 5.30 reveals that surprisingly little has changed as far as the basic parameters are concerned. Indeed, the box dimensions, weight and main driver constituents are all very similar, although the price has increased by £75 (35 per cent), which is certainly somewhat ahead of inflation. Note also that bookshelf-sized speakers must be used with proper stands, in which case their performance is often superior to comparable floorstanders — but don't forget that the extra cost of the stands must be taken into account.

That said, classy cast-frame drivers like the one used here at £275 are very much the exception. The box is solid enough, being built from 15mm particle board and stiffened by two internal braces. However, the 'mahogany' vinyl finish might have been more convincing and discreet. In other respects the cosmetics are very well handled, thanks partly to the moulded plastic baffle. The main driver uses a quite large (145mm diameter) plastic cone, crossing over to a 25mm metal-dome tweeter with removable mesh protection.

Sound Quality

The 30i's projected upper midband is its most striking



subjective characteristic. This represents a departure from strict neutrality as well as a source of some coloration, but it is not without charm, especially for the way it helps to project detail and information from the mix, and compensates for the rather restrained and cautious top end.

The listening panel reacted positively, reckoning that on balance the good points more than outweighed the weaknesses, but as is usually the case, this cocktail is a mixture of both. The extended and well-controlled bass, plus the sheer height of the source (on 24-inch stands) gives an impressive sense of scale and space, although it is a little lacking in image depth. There is some grip and dynamic shading here, which makes a welcome change from the flatulent tendencies of some budget floorstanders. The sound stays reassuringly consistent when the speakers are driven hard, although a touch of overhang and blurring seemed to become apparent.

Elsewhere, the midband coloration (some nasal and 'cupped hands' effects) is more obvious because of the mid-forward balance, and this might become a bit wearing in the long haul. There was also some criticism of a shut-in quality accompanied by exaggerated sibilants.

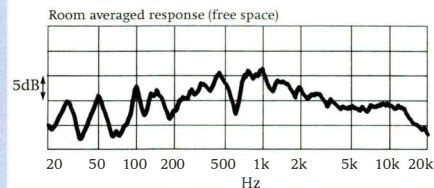
Conclusion

A very positive listening test from the least expensive model in the group set the MS30i off to a cracking start. But the measured test results add two notes of qualification: first in the mid-forward balance (which is apt to impress at first hearing), and secondly with the midband response 'glitch'. In the final reckoning it finds its natural level in the Recommended ranks.

VERDICT	
SOUND	★★★★☆
VALUE	★★★★☆
PRICE	£275
▲	Fine bass performance and impressively communicative delivery from a pleasingly engineered package.
▼	Forward midband tends to emphasise some coloration; presence a bit shut in.
✉	Mordaunt-Short Ltd, 3 Ridgway, Havant, Hants PO9 1JS
☎	(01705) 407722

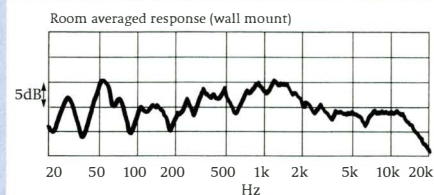
LAB REPORT

FREE SPACE



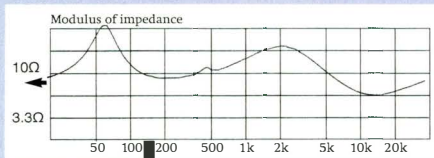
Free space siting results in a broad midband boost from 300Hz to 2kHz. The 550Hz 'glitch' is reflected in the impedance trace.

CLOSE TO WALL



Wall reinforcement gives best results, with good extension, but leanness in upper bass and upper-mid prominence.

IMPEDANCE



An easy amplifier load, but the 500Hz 'glitch' discontinuity is reflected in the response curves.

Comparing the measurements of free-space response with those obtained close to the wall, it is clear that the former is distinctly bass-light and mid-prominent, while the addition of wall reinforcement gives an altogether better overall balance. The use of sealed-box loading gives decent ultimate extension (-11dB at 20Hz in-room) without the midbass heaviness that is often encountered with similarly-sized ported speakers (such as the 5.30).

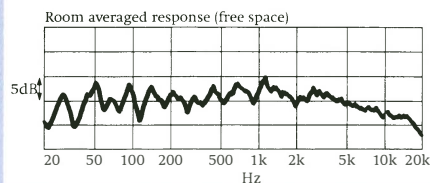
The 30i may look promising through the lower bass, but it does show some characteristic anomalies elsewhere. The upper bass and lower midband, 60-250Hz, is several dB shy of true neutrality, which will leave the sound lean and lacking in warmth, while the upper-mid, 700Hz-1.5kHz, is a little strong and will tend to over-emphasise detail.

The net result is likely to be immediately appealing, but might prove less satisfying over extended listening. I'm more worried about the obvious discontinuity just above 500Hz, that is reflected in the impedance trace and possibly represents a cone termination problem. Note also that the output drops around 6dB from 1.5-3kHz, smoothly enough it must be said, but this is a rather larger step than average.

Sensitivity is a respectable 87dB (although not through the upper bass), especially as the load is easy to drive and the bass extension is pretty good.

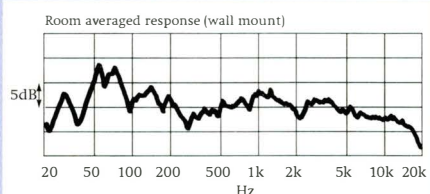
LAB REPORT

FREE SPACE



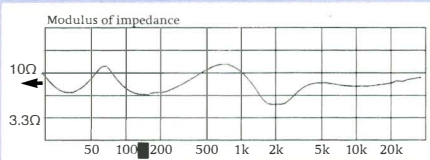
An impressive balance, with deep bass and tight overall limits, but some uneven forwardness in upper midband.

CLOSE TO WALL



Wall reinforcement spoils the overall balance, with reflection-related unevenness, especially in the midbass.

IMPEDANCE



Load stays above six Ohms through most of the band, but presence dip might prove a limiting factor with some amps.

Slim enclosures rarely work well when placed close to a wall, because their naturally good lateral dispersion tends to exaggerate reflection effects that interfere with the midband. Happily, the *Harrier's* bass alignment looks very well suited to free-space siting, whereupon it delivers an in-room balance that holds within remarkably modest limits across an unusually wide bandwidth.

The bass is particularly and most commendably even — quite an achievement given the need to integrate the main driver with floor-level rear port — although the upper midrange is rather less so, and is also a little exposed. The behaviour from 700Hz to 2.5kHz is likely to determine much of the sonic character.

Absolute bass extension registers an impressive -7dB at 20Hz in-room, thanks in part to a low and well-damped port output centred on 35Hz (some way below the 60Hz required for optimum driver excursion control). The load is quite complex, with a slightly worrying dip centred on the critical 2kHz region, though it is easy enough elsewhere.

Another reason for the good bass extension is that the sensitivity is a very modest 85-86dB or thereabouts, so this is not an obvious candidate for those whose tastes tend towards louder musical works.

Musical Technology Harrier

Although it is still a relative newcomer on the British speaker-manufacturing scene, Musical Technology came in with a bang a year ago, so it will be interesting to see which way it's heading with its latest model.

The *Harrier* is a sensibly-proportioned compact floorstander, most attractive in appearance, and it sells for a competitive £400. Luxury lacquer finish is available for an extra £100, while our samples were supplied with an optional £45 baseplate, which is a solid sheet of steel that adds mass, extends the spike footprint, improves stability, and provides foolproof spike fixing. On the debit side it does little aesthetically, and is a bit sharp-edged.

The box shape, basically pentagonal in plan, makes good acoustic sense, as from the outside it aids wide lateral dispersion to help off-axis listening and stereo imagery, while on the inside it avoids parallel-face standing waves and reflections.

The shape is equally impressive in its appearance, the more so because of the neat way the heavily chamfered top finishes everything off and emphasises the real-wood veneer. Flush-mounted drivers encourage listening without grilles, and my only ergonomic reservation is about the four 4mm bi-wire terminals, which stick out rather vulnerably at the back.

Build quality deserves commendation. The main driver has a cast frame and modest magnet, and is held in place securely by six tight bolts, while the diaphragm is a thin metal cone of 125mm diameter. The tweeter also has a metal moving element, predictably a 25mm dome, and connections are hard-wired with solid-core cable. The box is 15mm MDF, ported at the rear near the floor, and well damped with fibre-fill and egg-box foam lining.

Sound Quality

A mixed reaction from the panel shows once again that any speaker is a mixture of strengths and weaknesses. In the *Harrier's* case the sound is essentially neutral and even-handed, if a touch thin, with deep, extended bass



and a sweet top end. The sound doesn't clump around the boxes, but spreads out to form a generous soundstage between and behind the speakers, without any pushy, forward tendencies.

However, dynamics are a little limp, and the top-to-bottom timing could be a little tighter and sharper. The bass, in particular, lacks a little poise and tension. Voices, too, sound rather shut in and uneven, so that regional accents, for example, are not fully developed. There's a degree of audible time-smear, but this is evenly distributed across the full bandwidth, so does not intrude excessively.

The overall effect might be a little too cold and restrained for some tastes, but others will welcome the *Harrier's* relaxing and undemanding presentation.

Conclusion

The *Harrier* came as close as any to delivering a clean bill of health. Overall it represents exceptional value for money in an attractive and practical package, which delivered a fine measured performance in our tests. Only the less-than-inspiring listening-test results raise a note of caution, and suggest a Recommended rather than Best Buy rating is most appropriate.

VERDICT

SOUND ★★★★★
VALUE ★★★★★
PRICE £400

▲ Fine material value and a very pretty package; good measured performance and an even, neutral sound balance.

▼ Low sensitivity and a rather limp performer dynamically; slightly thin overall character.

✉ Musical Technology, Unit 10
 Howard Ind Est, Chilton Road,
 Chesham, Bucks HP5 2AU.
 ☎ (01494) 793137

Origin Live

OL2A

Origin Live is the brainchild of enthusiast and engineer Mark Baker. I got a strong feeling of *déjà vu* when opening the carton, and a quick check back through the records showed that we'd already reviewed an *OL2A* about three years previously. However, the original model was changed significantly not long after the printer's ink had dried on the page, which explains why the 2A has resurfaced for a repeat review.

The speaker as a whole looks almost identical to its predecessor, but the main drive-unit and measured performance are both quite different (see Lab Report), fully justifying this complete reappraisal. The price remains the same at £470, and the enclosure is fractionally larger but with similar proportions. It is a compact floor-stander in every sense of the word; the width and depth are no greater than that of a typical miniature, and consequently the footprint offers rather limited stability.

In truth, the lower third of the enclosure acts as a stand. The front and sides extend down to the floor, while output from a downward-facing port (fitted into the base of the enclosure) emerges into the listening room through a large cutout at the rear — a sensible arrangement that keeps any unwanted midband port output well out of harm's way.

Spikes provide floor coupling, and the instructions warn that the locknuts should be only finger-tight. This is a rather unsatisfactory solution to the difficult problem of fitting effectively-anchored screw-threads directly into a wooden enclosure.

The box is finished in a rather anonymous real-wood veneer, and it is a tad less substantial than before, using 15mm rather than 19mm MDF. Light internal damping is provided by a 'blanket' of dense, woolly material over the rear panel. I also found a small block of expanded polystyrene inside, but since I found a similar chunk in the original *OL2A*, I guess this must be a deliberate, if mysterious, ploy.

Bi-wire terminals feed a well-rated hardwired crossover with massive cables connecting to the drive units. The main driver has a cast chassis and decent-sized magnet, plus a 115mm doped paper cone; the tweeter uses a large 28mm soft dome. Both units are



rebated and held by gilt-machinehead bolts.

Sound Quality

Universally praised on the first listening day, the *OL2A* didn't fare quite as well second time around, but it was still well liked by all but one dissenter.

Cosmetic flaws include a presence which is obviously shut in and dark, but the bass has a firmness and conviction often lacking in sub-£500 speakers, timing is pretty good, and several panelists commented on how easy it was to get past the speaker and into the music.

The most important aspect of this speaker's performance is the fine focus and coherence through the broad mid-band, plus sufficient projection thereof to push the detail slightly forward. However, the *OL2A* is also more dynamically capable than most, with convincing contrasts and shading. A degree of 'cuppy' coloration slightly mars otherwise expressive voices, while the treble is rather over-restrained (handy for CD), but clean with it, and free from congestion. The net result can be very seductive, as long as you allow sufficient time to adjust to the balance anomalies of the presence region.

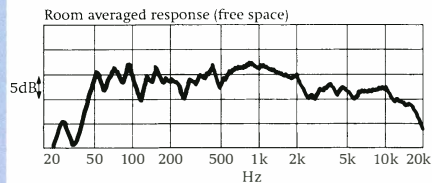
Conclusion

The current incarnation of the *OL2A* is clearly superior to the earlier version, thanks mainly to significant dynamic improvements. The well ordered midband and fine communication skills single it out for a confident Recommendation.

VERDICT	
SOUND	★★★★☆
VALUE	★★★★☆
PRICE	£469
▲	Fine integrity of dynamics and midband in a good-looking, well-engineered package at a decent price.
▼	Presence band is rather shut in, and treble is quite restrained. Tweaky heritage.
✉	Origin Live, 87 Chessell Crescent, Bitterne, Southampton SO19 4BT.
☎	(01703) 442183

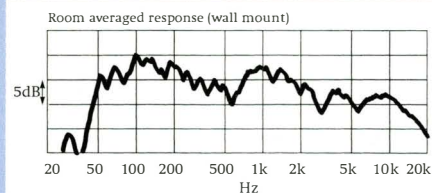
LAB REPORT

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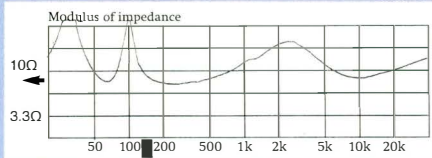
A notably even bass-to-mid balance, just slightly forward from 600Hz to 1.2kHz, and a little recessed from 2 to 4kHz.

CLOSE TO WALL



Substantial unevenness suggests close-to-wall siting should be avoided at all costs; note high sensitivity.

IMPEDANCE



An easy amp load despite the high sensitivity; limited bass extension is inevitable with the port tuned to a highish 65Hz.

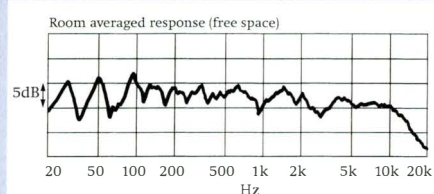
The differences between the old and new *OL2As* are so substantial that there's a very strong case for regarding it as a completely new loudspeaker, and I believe that it should carry a mkl suffix at least. The original unit compromised sensitivity somewhat in the interests of bass extension, whereas this current version goes entirely the other way.

Sensitivity is actually up by about 5dB, from well below to comfortably above average, while bass now rolls off fairly rapidly below 50Hz, partly because the port is now tuned to a highish 65Hz (compared with 40Hz before). Reduced bass extension might be one less desirable consequence, but there's a positive side too, in the way that the port resonance will help reduce cone excursion at the natural 80Hz driver/box resonance.

The room curves show that the *OL2A* is best kept well clear of walls, mainly because the balance is altogether smoother if early reflections are avoided. The response is particularly well ordered and smooth from 50Hz up to 2kHz, with slight forwardness at 600Hz-1.3kHz. There's a slight dip around the crossover point at approximately 2.5kHz, but the overall treble level looks very well judged, even though the ultimate roll-off does start a little early.

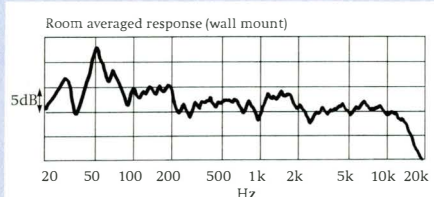
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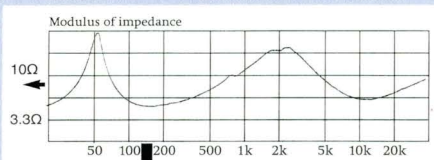
Balance holds within tight limits from deep bass up to 15kHz, albeit with some unevenness through the upper midband.

CLOSE TO WALL



Wall reinforcement tends to make the midbass too strong, and emphasises unevenness elsewhere.

IMPEDANCE



This load will make fairly heavy current demands; note that the blip at 850Hz corresponds to a significant response dip.

The similarity between the original and revised 633s was very marked, so much so that to identify the differences would be a process of splitting hairs, but close scrutiny of the before-and-after-the-change room curves does show a slight improvement in balance. The free space trace is both flatter and smoother than before through the two main midband octaves, 150-700Hz. However, the unevenness through the upper mid two octaves (700Hz-3kHz) remains as pronounced as before: the +/-3dB ups and downs, through a region which is vital to voice reproduction, remains the most obvious weak spot in an otherwise very impressive design.

The frequency response is still one of the flattest around, while sealed-box loading ensures genuinely deep bass reproduction (-5dB at 20Hz in-room), and an outstandingly even bass as well, provided that the speakers are kept clear of walls.

The price of the fine bass extension is a sensitivity rating which is only an average 87dB, combined with an amplifier load that is quite demanding in current delivery terms, albeit very simple from a resonance point of view. The twin bass drivers confer plenty of power handling, of course, so loudness capability is more likely to be determined by the amp than the speakers.

Tannoy
633/II

It's not often that a speaker arrives for review with a *Hi-Fi Choice* Best Buy swing-tag already hanging from its grille frame. Tannoy does at least have a reasonable excuse, as the original 633 did achieve such status a year or so back (issue 139), although a design change significant enough to require a re-test ought really to start again from scratch.

It's an interesting change, highlighting an error in the original review. The 633 uses two very similar cone drivers mounted above and below the tweeter, which operate together through the bass. One rolls off early in order that the other can carry the midband up to the tweeter crossover point. I assumed that the upper driver took care of the midband duties, which was not the case then, but is now. Therefore, raising the midband source further above the floor should improve smoothness.

A price cut from £320 to £300 should further improve the 633's competitiveness, as this model sits on the third rung of the 63-series ladder, and is the least expensive of four floorstanding models.

It is relatively unusual in employing sealed-box loading, as distinct from the almost ubiquitous reflex port. The box follows Tannoy's Profile approach, with plastic moulded base and top joined by the cabinet wrap, while a central vertical strut adds further stiffening. This shape confers several acoustical advantages.

The box is built from 15mm vinyl woodprint chipboard, and is pretty well stuffed with wadding. The two main drivers are fixed by six fairly tight but coarse woodscrews — their magnets are pressed up against an internal top-to-bottom strut

via a chunk of lossy gunk. Both have pressed frames, modest magnets and 118mm plastic cones, while the tweeter is Tannoy's own 24mm metal-dome device, with removable mesh cover.

The moulded base is a versatile affair, combining threaded inserts (which provide just adequate spike fixing) with bi-wire terminals. A compartment with a separate cover set into the base may be filled with lead



shot and/or sand to mass-load the bottom of the speaker and so improve stability. If desired, a moulded frame grille covers everything neatly.

Sound Quality

"Nice bass, shame about the midband," is a comment that pretty much sums up the reactions of both panels to this latest 633, which was rated a little below average overall, on two separate presentations. One possible factor emerged in the hands-on work: the sound seemed rather better when one was seated low down, close to the speakers, but it tended to lose focus and air when one moved back from 2m to the 3-4m distance used for the blind tests.

It's fundamentally neutral but not particularly sweet with it; there is some thickening and nasality in the midband, and a slightly obvious top end. The bass does possess authority, and goes loud very capably, but it's all a bit earthbound: firm, but neither nimble nor dynamically adept enough to generate real tension.

Conclusion

The simplest course would be to confirm the 633's Best Buy rating, surely justified by the price cut and further refinement. But the below-average listening test results seem to indicate that the competition has been busy catching up. Clearly the 633 still deserves a confident Recommendation for overall value for money, but it no longer stands out so obviously as before.

VERDICT

SOUND ★★☆☆☆
VALUE ★★★★★☆
PRICE £300

▲ Fine material value with impressive bass and overall balance from a very compact floorstander.

▼ Upper midband could be cleaner and clearer, and dynamic performance is also suspect.

✉ Tannoy Ltd, Rosehall Ind Est, Coatbridge, Strathclyde ML5 4TF
(01236) 420199

Technics

SB-M500

You may recall the recent and rather positive review of the first serious Technics speaker to come our way in some years (issue 148). The *SB-M20*, a lively-sounding miniature, had only two limiting factors: a highish price tag for a miniature (£200), and very limited bass extension. The £450 *SB-M500* reviewed here is obviously more expensive, but equally obviously it represents better material value for money, while the large enclosure and elaborate bass arrangements should be capable of handling any low-frequency assignments.

The floorstanding *M500* looks just like an *M20* with a built in subwoofer system. The mica-loaded-diaphragm drivers for midrange and treble frequencies look very similar to those of their smaller sibling: the midrange is loaded by its own sealed, rather shallow section of the enclosure. However, the deep and massive enclosure proper adopts a rather unorthodox approach to supplying bass. The box is internally partitioned into three sections by long vertical panels, which help to stiffen the whole caboodle. The larger middle section is a closed box containing two bass drivers: one faces forward, the other faces back. The slimmer front and rear sections consist of sealed air pockets that transmit the bass driver outputs to large passive radiator panels fitted to the outside of the enclosure, front and rear.

The net result is a coupled-cavity arrangement, combining the fundamental subsonic stability of a sealed-box system with the efficiency of a twin-ported reflex system. The midrange driver operates in its own section of the front sub-enclosure, so it has limited depth to absorb the rear radiation.

It's a good-looking box, finished in an attractive vinyl. This avoids drawing attention to itself, while heavy chamfering of the verticals serves to minimise the impact of a slim but deep box. It's also solid, with 22mm sides and 50mm baffle, but there's no spike provision;



accessory cones can fill the gap. Flock finish tidies up the front panel, hiding the front ABR, while the grille is aesthetically and acoustically optional.

Sound Quality

A below-average overall listening test rating only tells part of the story. The *M500* suffered criticism for the quantity and quality of its bass, but attracted compensatory praise for its clean, unfatiguing and well ordered mid and treble.

Voices are well balanced and smooth, with a sweetness rarely encountered at these sort of prices, but dynamics seem very muted. The weighty bottom end gives a good sense of scale in bandwidth terms, but this tends to draw attention to some lack of convincing dynamic scale. And the bottom end doesn't quite glue properly with the rest of the response. Pitch rendition is good, but listeners remarked on "mechanical" and "metronomic" qualities.

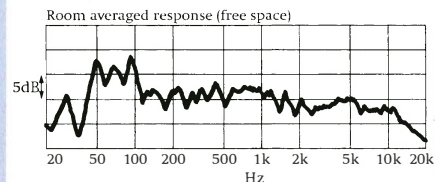
Conclusion

The *M500* is unquestionably fine material value for money, and beautifully presented. It has a great deal going for it in the mid and treble regions at least, but ultimately it is something of a victim of its own complexity, as its elaborate three-chamber bass section fails to deliver an even overall balance in a real listening room.

VERDICT	
SOUND	★★★★☆
VALUE	★★★★☆
PRICE	£450
▲	Good-looking, massively-built floorstander has a clean and open sound; very good material value for money.
▼	Elaborate bass system is too clever for its own good; low sensitivity and midbass-heavy balance.
✉	Panasonic House, Willoughby Road, Bracknell, Berks RG12 8FP (0990) 357357

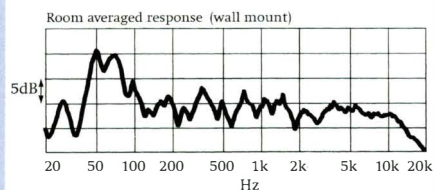
LAB REPORT

FREE SPACE



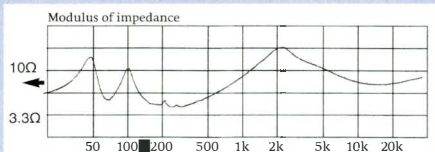
Mid and treble is smooth and well balanced, but low in sensitivity, while the midbass octave (50-100Hz) is 4-5dB too strong.

CLOSE TO WALL



Close-to-wall siting further exaggerates the midbass boom, while mid and treble is less smooth.

IMPEDANCE



A fairly demanding load through the bass/mid lap region; the coupled-cavity bass is broadly tuned to 75Hz.

The measured performance of this Technics speaker is perplexing, to say the least. It appears to use very similar mid and treble drivers to the *M20* miniature, and the balance here is quite similar too, even though the crossover network arrangements are clearly rather different. The peculiarity is that the sensitivity is some 2dB lower across most of the band, delivering a relatively low 85dB/W midband on our rating.

The last observation does not apply to the midbass: even when the speaker is sited well clear of walls, the midbass octave (50-100Hz) is 4-5dB too strong, presumably because the coupled-cavity arrangement is broadly tuned to a highish 75Hz (see the impedance trace above). Ultimate extension is a respectable -9dB for 20Hz in-room (thanks, presumably, to the ultimate sealed-box component in the bass loading), while the frequency response above 100Hz looks impressively well ordered, sensibly balanced, smoother than most and very creditable indeed.

However, that midbass boost is bound to be the dominant subjective feature. It gives the sort of overall balance often regarded as preferable for movie soundtrack replay (a debatable issue), but it is also far less appropriate to stereo music reproduction.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This fine group of speakers set a surprisingly high standard in the listening tests, for the most part. Having moaned about the under-achievement of the under-£300 group tested a few months previously, regular panellists were virtually unanimous in endorsing this £250 to £500 group as an impressive crop.

The lesson to be drawn from this, surely, is that a decent hi-fi system today is quite able to do justice to these 'mid-price' models. The 'budget babies' that dominate the sales charts might make sense if money is really tight or the room very small, but when compared with what can be obtained for an



B&W's DM602 — £280.

the past year, to the point where the 633 no longer stands out from the crowd as much as it did before.

To single out one or two models would either have meant going with my own personal prejudices, or making the list up to half a dozen or more, which would in turn threaten to undermine the BB rating.

The simple fact is that loudspeakers are compromises. Models which do well in one area tend to do less well in other respects. To have singled out the B&W, Dali and Origin Live designs on the grounds of their superior dynamics would have been to ignore the

extra one or two hundred pounds, they're more than likely to short-change the sound quality too, strangling the dynamics, and sacrificing grip, drama and scale.

Best Buys and Recommendeds

This turned out to be a very good group of speakers, but an awkward one, nonetheless. A high proportion (65 per cent, up from 50 per cent last time) turned in good enough performances for Recommendation, but none stood out sufficiently in all-round terms to deserve a full Best Buy rating.

Indeed, after considerable soul-searching I decided the Tannoy 633 would have to surrender the BB tag awarded in issue 139, despite its worthwhile price reduction and improvement in measured performance. I don't think the 633 has got worse, but rather that the overall standard in this price class has risen by a significant amount over



Mission's 734 — £430.



Castle's Severn — £500.

PARAMETERS	AUDIO INNOVATIONS ALTO	B&W DM602	CASTLE SEVERN	CELESTION IMPACT 23	DALI 104B	JAMO CLASSIC 8
Size (height x width x depth)	37.5x20.5x25cm	49x23.5x29cm	75x20x24cm	84x23.5x24cm	86x21.5x24cm	90x23x29cm
Weight	7kg	11kg	11kg	13kg	14kg	17kg
Recommended amplifier power	20-80W	15-100W	20-80W	20-120W	15-150W	20-150W
Recommended placement	1ft from wall	Well clear of walls	1ft from wall	Clear of walls	Well clear of walls	Clear of walls
In-room averaged response limits (50Hz-10kHz)	+/-4dB	+/-6dB	+/-4dB	+/-5dB	+/-7dB	+/-6dB
In-room/space LF rolloff (-6dB ref midband)	45Hz	30Hz	50Hz	30Hz	26Hz	28Hz
In-room/wall LF rolloff (-6dB ref midband)	45Hz	30Hz	50Hz	30Hz	28Hz	28Hz
In-room output at 20Hz (ref midband)	-15dB	-16dB	Well below -13dB	-15dB	-12dB	-14dB
Estimated midrange sensitivity (ref 2.83V, 1m)	88dB	89dB	85dB	90dB	92dB	88dB (approx)
Impedance characteristic (ease of drive)	good	A little demanding	Very good	Very good	Demanding	Not too bad
Typical price per pair (inc VAT)	£300	£280	£500	£300	£370	£400

LOUDSPEAKERS



MA's MA700PMC — from £500.

rather dulled presence that each possesses. Likewise, to have picked the Mordaunt-Short, Musical Technology or Tannoy for their superior bass would have necessitated overlooking limitations elsewhere.

Recommended Models

Following tradition by working up from the bottom of the price ladder, the £275 Mordaunt-Short MS30i and £280 B&W DM602 do at least have one obvious thing in common: both need to be used on stands, which, of course, somewhat undermines their 'lowest price' status. In other respects these designs couldn't be much more different: the B&W likes a lot of space around it; the M-S needs some wall reinforcement. The B&W has a dynamic and coherent bass-to-mid, but some presence dulling, whereas the M-S delivers very up-front detail at the expense of some midband colour.

Tannoy's £300 633 remains a very competitive floorstander indeed, the twin bass drivers giving plenty of drive and the Profile box shape looking good and working very well, although the upper-mid is somewhat shut in and coloured.

The £370 Dali 104B is equally impressive material value, extra size and weight justifying the extra price. Truly impressive dynamics put this high-sensitivity model ahead of the pack, although midband coloration lets it down a little.

The contrast represented by the Musical Technology Harrier (from £400) couldn't be much greater. This pretty and compact metal-diaphragmed floorstander

delivers a very smooth sound that's just on the thin side of neutral, and dynamically a little undernourished.

Dynamics aren't the forte of Mission's £430 734, and its top end isn't the sweetest around either, but the balance is superbly well judged, and fine styling makes a big box look more elegant than most rivals.

Origin Live's current OL2A (from £460) is quite a contrast to its predecessor of the same name, and an altogether more exciting and invigorating performer, even though bass is limited and the top end a little too retiring and cautious.

Top-quality real-wood veneer distinguishes the £499 Castle Severn, which comes complete with a useful matching plinth. Balance is open and bright (perhaps too much so for some conditions) and bass is limited, but the midband is very clear and communicative.

The Monitor Audio MA700PMC, available in real-wood veneer for £599, also has an excellent midband. MA's new metal cone main driver delivers genuine 'hear through' transparency and a sweet, if restrained top end. However, like the Severn again, the bass is less impressive.



Dali's 104B — £370.

BEST OF THE REST

LOUDSPEAKERS

A quick scan through our Directory reveals a large number of Best Buy and Recommended models in the £250 to £500 price band, which have accumulated over the past several years, even though some will be more widely available than others.

Best Buys

Four are floorstanders, the more competitive since stands are not needed. The £250 Musical Technology Kestrel and the sonically agile £259 Royd Minstrel are two very small, prettily finished and highly imaginative designs. A total contrast is the large, vinyl-wrapped but very well balanced £300 Mission 733.



KAR's Aria II — £445.

More than any other perhaps, Rega's £499 ELA set the style for the modern floor-standing trend. It still sounds very good in a light and lively way, and is now prettier, too.

Another very influential model is the bookshelf style Epos ES11 (£445), noted particularly for its excellent midband transparency, while the similar-sized KAR Aria II (£300) is a beautifully presented and lively newcomer to the lists.

Recommended

Recommended floorstanders include the ultra-compact Rega EL8 (£298), the much larger Celestion 15 (£389), TDL RTL3 (£400), and Monitor Audio MA202 (£450).

Among the bookshelf-sized models (ten to 25 litres) are the Castle Durham 900 (£300), Monitor Audio MA201 (£300), Pioneer S4-UK (£250), Heybrook Trio (£373), SD Acoustics SD3R (£399), Acoustic Energy Aegis 1 (£452), while the £499 Rogers Studio 3 is a luxury sub-miniature, based on the LS3/5A enclosure shape.



Royd's Minstrel — £259.

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68x23.5x18cm	84x20x34cm	35x21.5x25cm	42.5x25x28cm	80x1-25x23cm	80x21.5x21cm	72x14-24x23cm	79x22x35cm
9kg	14kg	8kg	9kg	11kg	11kg	10kg	19kg
20-70W	15-100W	20-80W	20-100W	20-80W	10-80W	15-120W	25-150W
About 1ft from wall	Well clear of walls	2ft from walls	Close to wall	1-3ft from walls	Around 2ft from wall	Well clear of walls	Well clear of walls
+/-5dB	+/-5dB	+/-5dB	+/-6dB	+/- 3dB	+/- 4dB	+/- 3dB	+/- 6dB
30Hz	43Hz	45Hz	28Hz	25Hz	45Hz	20Hz	25Hz
30Hz	40Hz	45Hz	28Hz	25Hz	45Hz	20Hz	25Hz
-14dB	-15dB	Below -15dB	-11dB	-7dB	Below -17dB	-5dB	-9dB
87dB	89dB	87dB	87dB	86dB	89dB	87dB	85dB
Very good	Quite demanding	Very good	Very good	Rather tricky	Very good	Quite demanding	Quite demanding
£389	£500	from £500	£275	from £400 (baseplate £45 extra)	£469	£300	£450

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 - Denon DCD 825, CD Player, £239.99 2
 - Pioneer PD-S703, CD Player, £249.95 3
- CD PLAYERS Above £250** (6)
- Arcam Alpha 6, CD player, £599.90 1
 - Naim Audio CD3, CD player, £949.40 2
 - Meridian Audio 508 20-Bit, CD Player, £1,685.00 3
- TUNERS Up to £250** (7)
- Denon TU 215RD, FM/AM tuner, £149.99 1
 - Rotel RT935AX, FM/AM tuner, £159.95 2
 - Arcam Alpha 5 Plus, FM/AM tuner, £219.90 3
- TUNERS Above £250** (8)
- Arcam Delta 280, FM tuner, £399.90 1
 - Cyrus FM7, FM tuner, £399.90 2
 - Audiolab 8000T, FM/AM tuner, £749.90 3
- CASSETTE DECKS Up to £250** (9)
- JVC TD-W218BK, twin cassette deck, £169.99 1
 - Denon DRS 640, single cassette deck, £209.99 2
 - Philips DCC730, Digital Compact Cassette deck, £249.99 3

- CASSETTE DECKS Above £250** (10)
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 - Pioneer CT-S830S, single cass. deck, £499.95 2
 - Pioneer D-05, Digital Audio Tape deck, £899.95 3
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 - Musical Fidelity E10, int. amp., £299.00 2
 - Pioneer A-400X, integrated amplifier, £299.95 3
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- Technics SU-A900Mk2, int. amp., £449.95 1
 - Cyrus III, integrated amplifier, £499.90 2
 - Naim NAIT 3, integrated amplifier, £549.90 3
- PRE-POWER AMPLIFIERS** (13)
- Rotel RC970BX2/RB970BX2, pre/power amplifier, £399.95 1
 - Audiolab 8000Q/8000M, pre/power amplifier, £2,499.70 2
 - Musical Fidelity F15/F22, pre/power amplifier, £2,898.00 3
- AUDIO VISUAL AMPLIFIERS Up to £350** (14)
- JVC AX-V6BK, Pro-Logic AV amplifier, £229.99 1
 - harman kardon AV1100, Pro-Logic amplifier, 299.99 2
 - Denon AVR-900, Pro-Logic receiver, £349.99 3
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 - Meridian Audio 541, Pro-Logic AV processor, £995.00 2
 - Arcam Xeta One, Pro-Logic AV amplifier, £999.90 3
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- Canon SKT1/SKT2 Movie Kit, £249.95 1
 - GLL Arena System (incl. subwoofer), £395.00 2
 - Celestion Style (incl. powered sub.) £698.00 3

- HOME CINEMA SPEAKER SYSTEMS Above £750** (17)
- KEF 60S, 80C, 30B, £1,026.00 1
 - Polk Audio RT8 System, AV speakers, £1,078.80 2
 - JAMO THX System, £2,499.99 3
- SUBWOOFERS** (18)
- KEF 30B, subwoofer, £499.00 1
 - B&W ASA 6, subwoofer, £499.95 2
 - REL Storm, subwoofer, £695.00 3
- HI-FI LOUSPEAKERS Up to £200** (19)
- KEF Coda 7, bookshelf loudspeaker, £129.00 1
 - Tannoy 631, bookshelf loudspeaker, £129.90 2
 - Mordaunt-Short MS10i, bookshelf, £139.99 3
- HI-FI LOUSPEAKERS £201 to £500** (20)
- Mission 733, floorstanding loudspeaker, £299.90 1
 - TDL RTL3, floorstanding loudspeaker, £399.95 2
 - Castle Severn, floorstanding speaker, £499.90 3
- HI-FI LOUSPEAKERS Above £500** (21)
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 - Epos ES22, floorstanding loudspeaker, £1,185.00 2
 - ProAc Response Two Point Five, floorstanding loudspeaker, £2,700.00 3
- COMPLETE HI-FI SYSTEMS Up to £1,000** (22)
- JVC Adagio C330, multi-CD midi system, £399.99 1
 - Akai TX 700, Pro-Logic mini system, £499.99 2
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- Denon D-F10/S, mini separates system, £1,149.99 1
 - Quad 77 amp, 77 CD player & 7710-L loudspeakers £1,944.00 2
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HI-FI ACCESSORIES (24)

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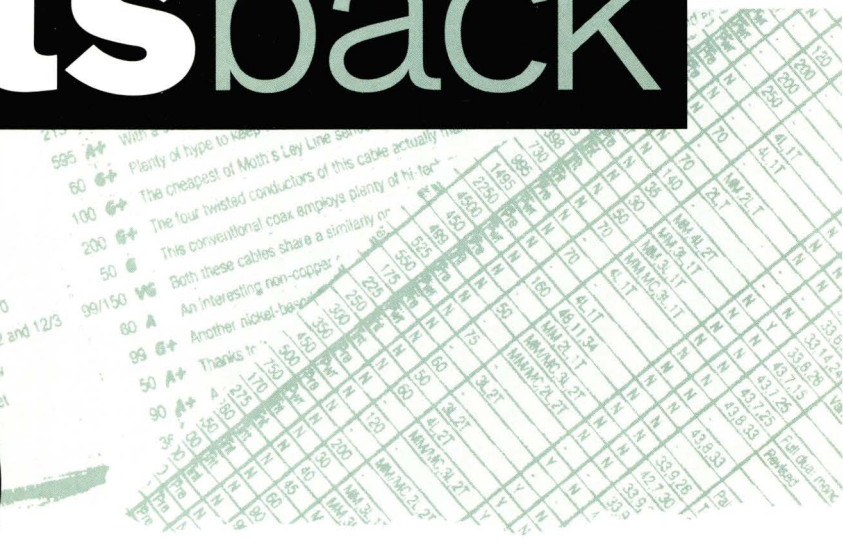
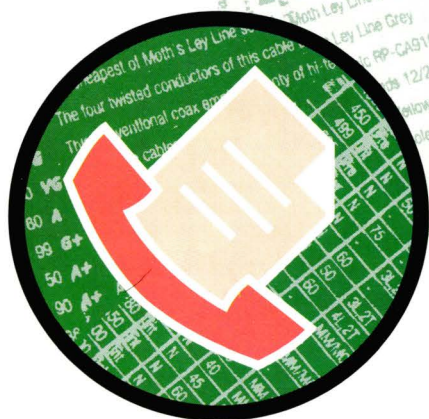
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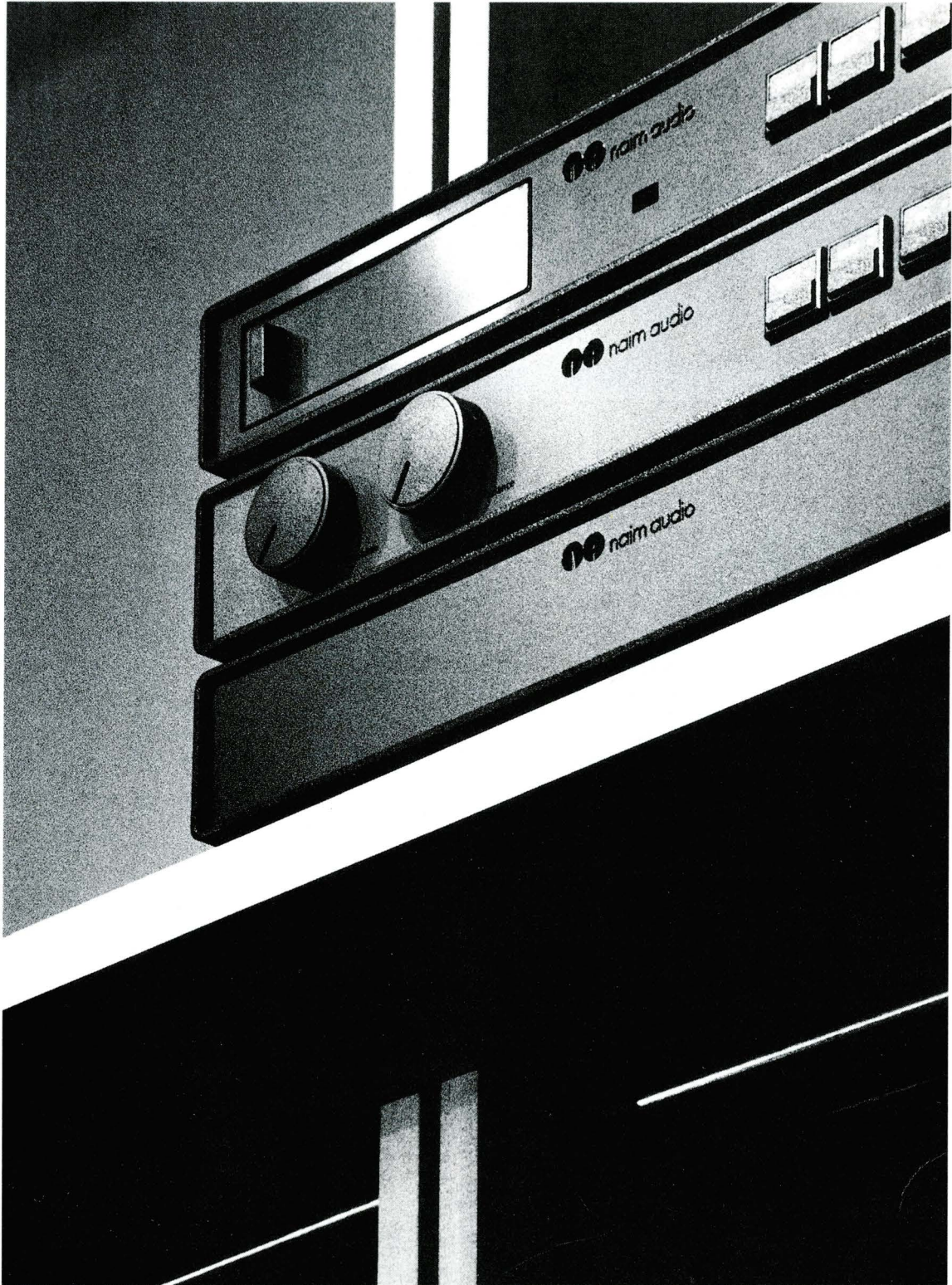


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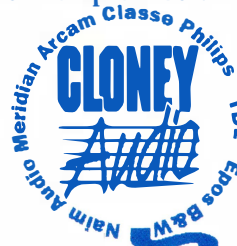
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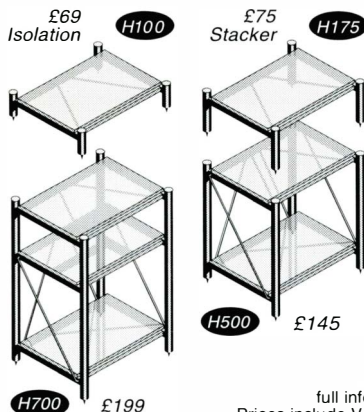
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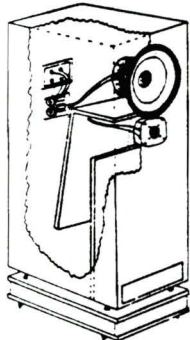
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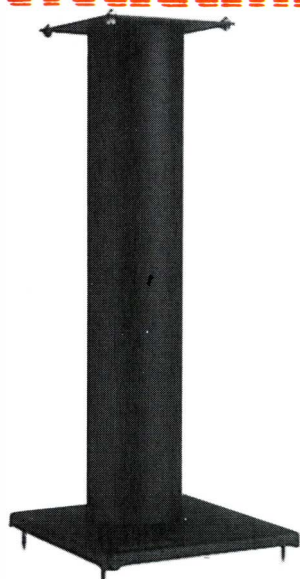
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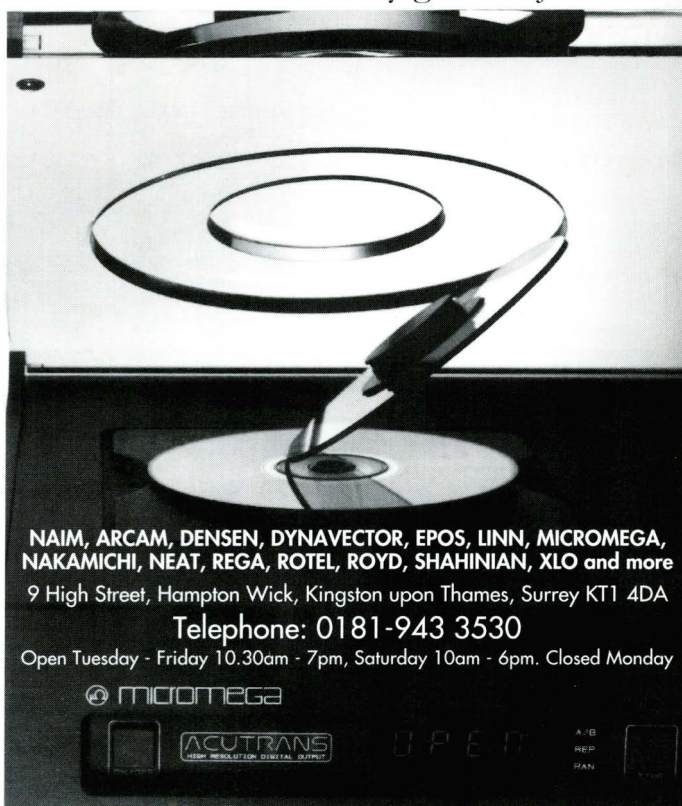
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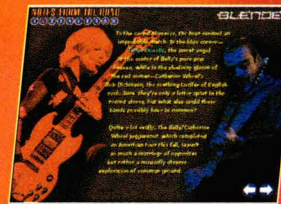
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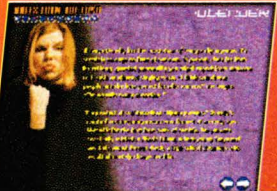
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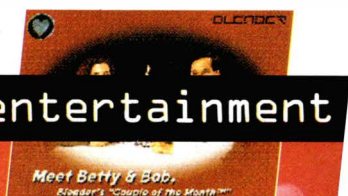


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Macintosh System 7
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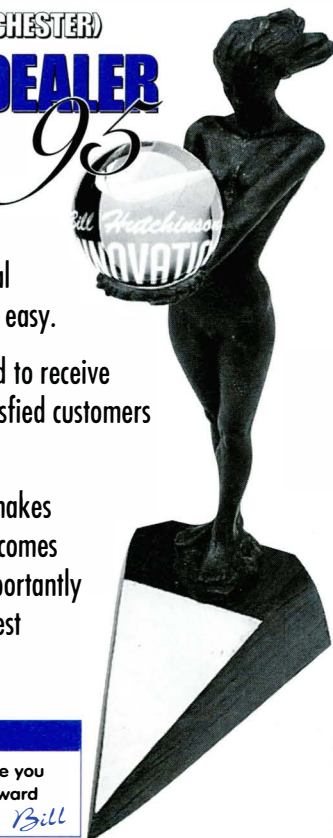
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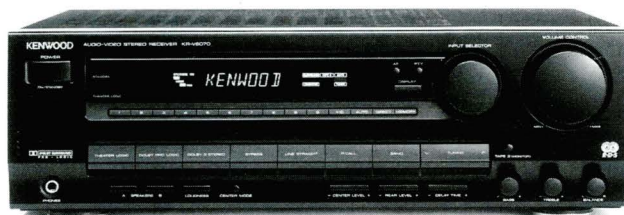
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- BOSE - LYFE STYLE SYSTEM - INNOVATION WINNER '95
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- PIONEER PDS703 - CD PLAYER - INNOVATION WINNER '94
- MISSION 731 - SPEAKERS - INNOVATION WINNER '94
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Best Buys & Recommendations

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

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

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

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

better than an inexpensive Best Buy.

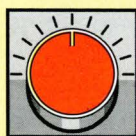
An ideal situation would be to choose suitably priced **B'BUY** or **REC** products from relevant categories and create a Best Buy system. However, due to the varieties in tonal balance that exist in many audio products, and differences in taste, system building is unfortunately not that simple. These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

BUYING HI-FI EQUIPMENT

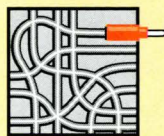
The key to putting together a great hi-fi system is finding a dealer with whom you can communicate, and who is sympathetic to your requirements. So the first stage in your quest is to look up your local dealers in our Dealer Directory, at the end of the product Directory, and go to see the people behind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

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

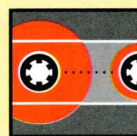
PRODUCT CATEGORY INDEX



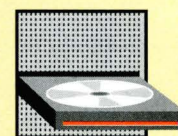
Amplifiers 89



Cables 97



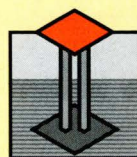
Cassette Decks 98



CD Players, Transports & DACs 101



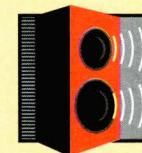
Digital Recorders 105



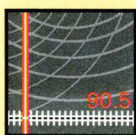
Stands & Supports 105



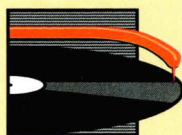
Headphones 108



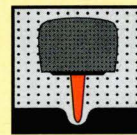
Loudspeakers 110



Tuners & Receivers 120



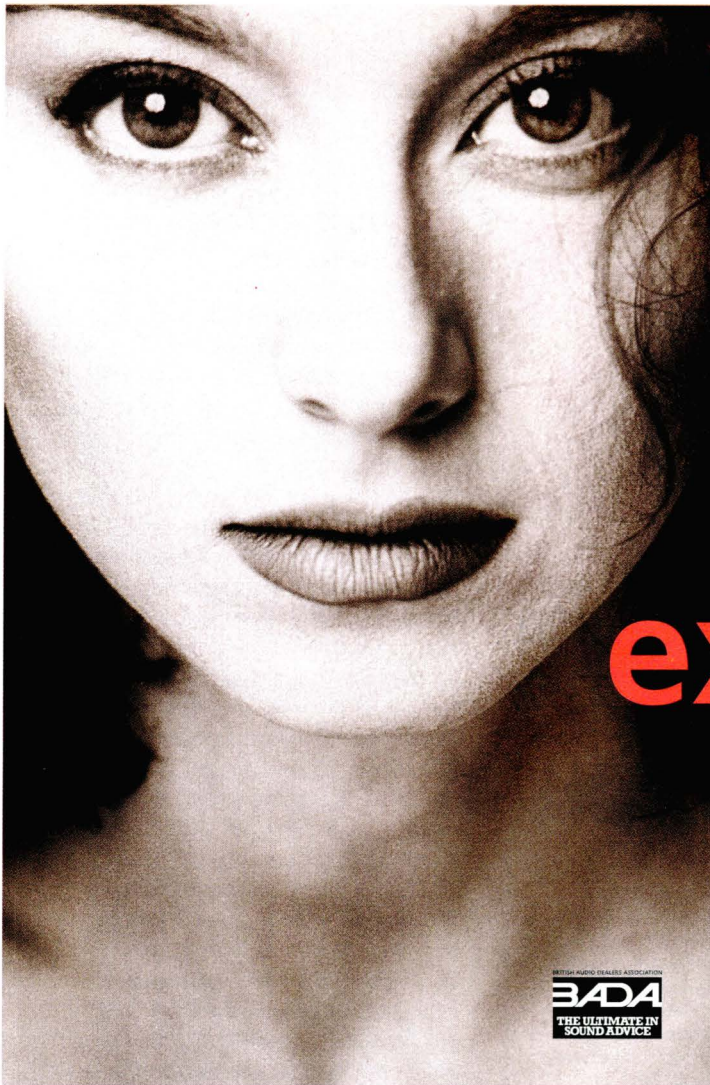
Turntables & Arms 121



Cartridges 124



Manufacturer & Distributor Contact List 127



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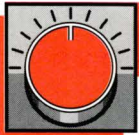


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Amplifiers

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

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

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

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

A/V amps

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

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

Key

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

PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

AMP		PRICE	ISSUE	SPECIFICATIONS	COMMENTS	STATUS
Analogue Saturn	75			preamp • MM		
Analogue Saturn MC	75			preamp • MC		
Creek OBM-8	99			preamp • MM • 10,6,11cm • Phono stepup		
Sherwood AI 1110	100			integrated • 55W • MM,4L,1T • hdph		
Creek OBM-9	110			preamp • MC • 10,6,11cm • Phono stepup		
Grundig V210	130			integrated • 50W • MM,5L,1T • hdph • rem • 36,12,30cm • Pre-main split		
Pioneer A-103	130			integrated • 30W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 42,11,31cm		
Aiwa XA-003	140			integrated • 40W • MM,2L,1T • hdph • 2 speaker circuits		
Kenwood KA-1060	140			integrated • 140W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 44,13,25cm • 'Logical Flow' construction		
Moth 30 Passive	149	109		preamp • 4L,1T • 5,10,35cm • Modular system gives cracking results. Passive pre/power amp warrant Best Buy (tested with 30/Stereo 60).		B'BUY
Grundig Fine Arts V1	150			integrated • 50W • MM,5L,1T • hdph • rem • 43,14,30cm • Tone defeat		
Marantz PM-34	150			integrated • 40W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 42,14,28cm • Source direct		
Pioneer A-203	150			integrated • 45W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 42,11,31cm		
Sony TAF211B	150			integrated • 30W • MM/2L • hdph • 43,14,31cm • Source direct		
Denon PMA-250 III	160	121		integrated • 30W • MM,3L,1T • hdph • 44,10,28cm • High resolution amp, can loses its grip but is engaging and enjoyable.		REC'D
Grundig V310	170			integrated • 70W • MM,5L,1T • hdph • rem • 36,12,30cm • Pre-main split		
Kenwood KA-2060R	170			integrated • 65W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,13,30cm • System control		
Sherwood AI 5010	170			integrated • 70W • MM,3L,2T • hdph		
Technics SU-V300	170			integrated • 25W • MM,2L,1T • hdph • 43,13,32cm • A/B speaker select		
Rotel RC970BX MkII	175	144		preamp • 3L,2T • hdph • 44,8,29cm • Confident, consistent sound. reviewed (in Sessions) with RB970BXMkII power amps		REC'D
NAD 302	189	116		integrated • 25W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • A spritely and uplifting performance. Sounds loud, but never intrusive or fatiguing.		B'BUY
Moth 30 RIAA	199			preamp • MM/MC, • 5,10,35cm • Stand alone phono stage		
QED Vector One	199			preamp • 4L,1T		
Grundig Fine Arts V2	200			integrated • 80W • MM,5L,1T • hdph • rem • 43,14,30cm • Tone defeat		
JVC AX-R5BK	200	149		integrated • 45W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,15,31cm • Versatile, and lots of even-handed, articulate detail; but let down by superficiality		
Kenwood KA-3020SE	200	134		integrated • 50W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 44,14,35cm • UK Special Edition		REC'D
Luxman A-312	200			integrated • 40W • MM,4L,2T • hdph • 13,44,36cm • CD direct, A/B speakers		
Marantz PM-44 MkIIse	200	134		integrated • 40W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 42,14,28cm • Two generations on from the PM-40SE, this new model gives a disappointingly grey view of music		
Marantz PM-43	200			integrated • 55W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 42,14,30cm • Twin speaker sockets		
NAD 312	200			integrated • 25W • 6L,2T • hdph • 44,10,29cm • Soft clipping		
Nakamichi IA4s	200			integrated • 30W • 3L,1T • 43,7,32 cm • 'Harmonic Time Alignment'		
Onkyo A-801	200			integrated • 40W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 46,12,33cm		
Philips FA930	200			integrated • 65W • MM,2L,3T • hdph • rem • 44,14,30cm		
Pioneer A-303R	200	134		integrated • 45W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 42,13,36cm • Fresh and uncomplicated sound bests much of the audiophile competition.		REC'D
Sony TAF244B	200			integrated • 40W • MM/2L • hdph • 43,14,31cm • MOSFET power stage		
Teac AR300	200			integrated • 45W • MM/MC,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,13,36cm • Mic input		
Technics SU-V500	200			integrated • 30W • MC/MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 43,13,31cm • New Class A		
Rotel RB970BX MkII	225	144		power amp • 60W • 44,8,29cm • Tested with RC970BX MkII in Sessions (see above)		
NAD Monitor 1000	229			preamp • MM/MC,3L,2T • hdph		
Rega Brio	229			integrated • 30W • MM,3L,1T • 43,7,15cm		
Denon PMA-350 II	230	134		integrated • 50W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 44,12,28cm • Mods give this amp a powerful up-front and compelling performance.		REC'D
Denon PMA-480R	230			integrated • 50W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,12,29cm		
JVC AX-V6BK	230			integrated • A/V • 50W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,13,46cm • Dolby Pro Logic		
Kenwood KA-3060R	230	142		integrated • 45W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,13,30cm • Classy engineering, but sound is over-dry, often frustratingly restrained and rather unsophisticated.		
Pioneer A-300X	230	116		integrated • 40W • MM,3L,2T • 42,13,36cm • This revamped version of the A300 sounds more confident via CD than MM, yet our panel was unmoved.		
Technics SU-V620	230			integrated • 70W • MM,MC,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 43,13,32cm • R-Core transformer. THCB		
Technics SU-A600 Mk2	230	149		integrated • 37W • MC/MM,3L,2T • hdph • 43,13,32cm • An amplifier that's great fun to be with, but a little untidy from time to time		
Moth 30 Series Power	239			power amp • 30W • 5,10,35cm		
Yamaha AX-490	239	149		integrated • 85W • MM,MC,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,15,39cm • Widgets aplenty, but unemotional sound evoked an uncertain response from panel		
Arcam Alpha 5 Plus	240	149		integrated • 40W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 43,8,30cm • Detailed improvement on predecessor, but lacks 'air'		
Magnum IA120	249			integrated • 50W • MM,5L,2T • hdph		
Moth 30 Active	249			preamp • 4L,1T • 5,10,35cm		
NAD 304	249	121		integrated • 35W • MM,4L,2T • hdph • Good with CD and vinyl, this is a successful and entertaining amplifier for your shortlist.		B'BUY
Grundig Fine Arts V3	250			integrated • 120W • MM,5L,1T • hdph • rem • 43,14,30cm • Pre-main split		
JVC AX-A472BK	250	142		integrated • 65W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 44,15,36cm • Unpredictable performer that is initially impressive but often ends up sounding starchy and tiring.		
Luxman A-331	250			integrated • 40W • MM,4L,2T • hdph • 13,44,36cm • Inc CD direct		
Marantz MA-500	250			power amp • 125W • 9,15,45cm • D-bus, monoblocks, bridgable		
Marantz PM-53	250			integrated • 65W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 42,14,30cm • Remote control		
Rotel RA935BX MkII	250			integrated • 50W • 3L,2T • hdph • 44,10,35cm • Separate listen/rec selectors		
Sony TAF444E	250	142		integrated • 50W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 43,15,38cm • Sheds all frippery for an audiophile approach, but till sounds grubby and stilted.		
Teac AR500	250			integrated • 90W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,13,36cm • Mic input		
Leeson 380X	255			integrated • 35W • MM/MC,6L • 44,6,27cm		
Pro-ject Model 7	259	142		integrated • 40W • MM,3L,2T • A minimalist amplifier brimming with good intent, but too quirky for its own good. Either MM or MC.		
Onkyo A803	260	142		integrated • 60W • MM/MC,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 46,12,33cm • This amp sounds lifeless, vague and disinterested in the music at hand.		
Creek P42	279			preamp • 4L,2T • hdph • 42,6,20cm • Plug-in modules available		
Creek A42	279			power amp • 50W • 42,6,20cm • 150 watts in mono		
Creek 4240	279	134		integrated • 40W • 3L,1T • hdph • 42,6,20cm • Bearing no relation to earlier Creek designs, this radical rethink is more successful via MM than CD.		
Denon PMA-450SE	280	142		integrated • 60W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 44,14,36cm • Based on the original '450 and offers a fast, furious and entertaining sound.		REC'D

PRODUCT

£ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

Kenwood KA-4060R	280	integrated • 70W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,14,35cm • System control	
Technics SU-A700 MkII	280	integrated • 45W • MC/MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 43,13,32cm	
AMC AV81 Control	289	preamp • A/V • 8L,2T • rem	
Lescon Stereo 383X	295	integrated • 60W • MM/MC,6L • hdph • 44,6,27cm	
AMC 2445	299	power amp • 45W • 4 channels	
Moth 30 RIAA 100VA	299	preamp • MM/MC • 5,10,35cm • Standalone phono stage	
QED Vector Reference	299	preamp • 4L,1T	
Yamaha AX-590	299	integrated • 100W • MM,MC,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,15,39cm • UK specified, system remote	
Denon PMA-715	300	integrated • 60W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,16,40cm	
Kenwood KA-V3700	300	integrated • A/V • MM,4L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,14,30cm • Dolby Pro Logic	
Marantz PM-63	300	integrated • 70W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 42,14,30cm • Remote control	
Mission PSX-R	300	22,8,36cm • Outboard PSU	
Musical Fidelity E10	300	144 integrated • 40W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 44,10,34cm • Minimalist features	REC'D
NVA P-50	300	preamp • 3L,1T	
Onix OA30	300	integrated • 40W • 5L,1T • hdph • 43,77,33cm	
Pioneer A-400X	300	138 integrated • 50W • MM/MC,4,2 • hdph • 42,13,36cm • On second audition, this amp was tonally unchanged but less compelling	REC'D
Pioneer A-503R	300	138 integrated • 70W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 42,13,36cm • Best via MM disc, the dull and claustrophobic sound is otherwise deeply uninspiring	
Rotel RA970BX	300	138 integrated • 60W • 4L,2T • hdph • 44,7,35cm • Lively, fresh and perky with plenty of power, but not so clever with complex recordings.	REC'D
Sony TAF542E	300	integrated • 90W • MM/MC,3L,2T • hdph • 43,15,38cm • UK optimised sound	
Naim Flat-Cap	317	43,56,30cm • Power supply	
Moth 30 Integrated	320	integrated • 30W • 8L,1 • 8,18,35cm	
Lumley Reference PP70	325	preamp • 6L,1T • 36,46,6cm • Passive, bolts to ST70	
Lumley Reference PP40	325	preamp • 6L,1T • 29,40,6cm • Bolts to ST40	
Lumley Reference PP1	325	preamp • 6L,1T • 29,44,6cm • Passive, stand alone	
Audio Innovations Alto	329	138 integrated • 35W • 4L,2T • 43,8,30cm • Despite a lack of bass, it still sounds open, natural and relaxed.	B'BUY
Magnum Quartet	329	121 integrated • 36W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • An integrated model that incorporates four monoblocks optimised for bi-wiring, but sound is sandy in the treble.	
Analogue Jupiter	330	integrated • 30W • MM,4L,1T	
Aura VA100 II	330	138 integrated • 70W • MM,4L,1T • hdph • 43,6,31cm • Big, smooth yet slightly disjointed sound was equally familiar.	
JVC AX-A662BK	330	integrated • 90W • MM/MC,3L,2T • hdph • 44,13,31cm • Compu-link system	
EMF Audio Sequel	349	109 integrated • 50W • MM,4L,1T • hdph • 43,65,28cm • Relaxed and restrained design from Mike Creek.	
Harman-Kardon PA2100	349	power amp • 45W • 45,11,37cm	
Moth 30 Active 100VA	349	preamp • 4L,1T • 5,10,35cm	
NAD Monitor 1000S	349	124 preamp • MM/MC,3L,2T • hdph • Sounds a little restrained.	
NAD 306	349	integrated • 50W • MM,4L,2T • hdph	
Arcam Alpha 6 Plus	350	129 integrated • 50W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 43,8,30cm • A new MOSFET design with a subtle and melodic sound.	REC'D
Audiolink Sterling II	350	integrated • 60W • MM/MC • 43,7,270cm • Available in chrome	
Creek 4240SE	350	integrated • 50W • 3L,1T • hdph • 42,6,20cm • Optional MM/MC	
Inca Tech Oberon Pre	350	preamp • MM/MC,6L,2T • 43,8,22cm • CD direct & two outputs	
Kenwood KA-5050R	350	129 integrated • 95W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,15,40cm • A listenable but neither particularly communicative nor captivating amplifier.	
Luxman A-353R	350	integrated • 60W • MM/MC,4L,2T • hdph • rem • 13,44,37cm • Motorised volume control	
Onkyo A-911	350	integrated • 70W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 28,12,33cm • Mini component, 4ohm rating	
Pioneer A-602	350	integrated • 80W • MM/MC,3L,3T • hdph • 42,17,44cm	
Rotel RC980BX	350	109 preamp • MM/MC,3L,2T • hdph • 44,7,33cm • Powerful, expansive but lacks poise, control and detail - disappointing (tested with RB980BX).	
Technics SU-C1000	350	preamp • MM/MC,3L,2T • rem • 43,70,31cm • Partner with SE-A1000	
Technics SU-A800 Mk2	350	134 integrated • 55W • MC/MM,3L,2T • rem • 43,14,37cm • Long term listening shows this model is a little bit bluff.	
Quad 306	364	power amp • 50W • 33,7,21cm • Stereo power amp	
Audio Innovations P1	369	preamp • MM • 25,10,30cm • Phono stepup	
Audio Innovations L1	369	145 preamp • 3L,1T • 25,10,30cm	
NVA AP-30CD	370	integrated • 50W • MM/MC,3L,1T	
Onkyo A850	370	integrated • 60W • MM/MC,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 46,15,35cm	
AMC 1030	379	preamp • MM	
Alchemist Kraken/Pre	380	124 power amp • 60W • 32,9,25cm • Quirky Class A design with an equally warm and colourful sound.	REC'D
Alchemist Kraken/mono	380	power amp • 60W • 32,9,25cm • Mono version of Kraken power amp	
Credo PMP003	385	preamp • 22,6,24cm • Phono amp MM/MC, & PSU	
Credo HMP003	388	preamp • hdph • Class A headphone amp	
Alchemist Kraken	395	116 preamp • 5L,1T • 25,9,25cm • Class-A objet d'art that's far too sensitive to RF interference. Can sound cold and fierce as a result.	
Rega Elex	398	116 integrated • 50W • MM,3L,1T • 43,7,25cm • Minimalist amplifier tsounds forward, hard and unforgiving.	
Alchemist Kraken/Pwr	399	124 integrated • 60W • 3L,2T • 32,9,25cm • Hardly accurate, but entertaining nevertheless.	REC'D
EAR 834P	399	preamp • MM/MC • 40,40,15cm • Valve phono stepup	
Harman-Kardon HK1400	399	129 integrated • 40W • MM/MC,3L,2T • 45,11,37cm • Relaxed, confident sound is only troubled by the most dense of recordings.	REC'D
Arcam Delta 290P	400	141 power amp • 75W • hdph • 43,9,30cm • Crisp dynamics and detail - tested in Sessions	B'BUY
Inca Tech Oberon Pwr	400	power amp • 70W • hdph • 43,8,22cm • Two inputs	
Luxman A-373	400	integrated • A/V • 80W • MM/MC,4L,2T • hdph • rem • 13,44,37cm • Also has AV inputs	
NVA P-90	400	preamp • 5L	
Onix OA24	400	preamp • MM/MC,2L,2T • 75,23,37cm • Internally switchable MM/MC	
Onix OA401	400	power amp • 50W • 75,23,37cm • With internal supply for OA24	
Sony TAF-A3ES	400	integrated • 70W • MM/MC, 3L,2T • hdph • 43,14,38cm • Toroidal transformer, MOSFET	
Sony TA-AV570B	400	integrated • A/V • 70W • MM,4L,5T • hdph • 43,15,36cm • Dolby Pro Logic	
Technics SU-A800D	400	integrated • 55W • MM/MC,3L,2T • hdph • 43,84,35cm • Two box pre/power combination	
Technics SE-A1000	400	power amp • 70W • hdph • 43,14,35cm • Moving coil meters. Partner with SU-G1000	
Michell Iso	412	preamp • MM or MC • smallcm • Phono stage	
Quad 34	414	44 preamp • MM,2L,T • 33,7,21cm • Good filtering and above average tone controls, but lacks detail and dynamics	
Naim NAP90/3	416	power amp • 30W • 43,56,30cm • Latest style. Suits 92	
Lescon Quattra	420	integrated • 30W • MM/MC + N/A • 44,6,27cm • Pre out/main in	
Audio Innovations T2	425	preamp • MC • 12,16,8cm • MC stepup transformer	
Onix OA21S	430	97 integrated • 50W • MM/MC,3L,1T • 75,23,37cm • CD input sounds dead, but via MM disc, this amplifier has a fresh, vibrant sound.	
Naim NAC92	435	preamp • 5 (L or T) • 43,56,30cm • Latest style. Suits 90/3	
Credo MMP002	439	preamp • Mic amp, phantom power	
NVA AP-30	440	integrated • 80W • 3L,1T	
AMC 2030	449	power amp • 30W	
EAR 834L	449	preamp • 5L,1T • Valve, line-only	
Orelle SA-100	449	140 integrated • 50W • 6L,1T • 44,7,23cm • Tested in Sessions - clean, natural and articulate sound	
Crimson CS610C	450	preamp • MM/MC,3L,1T • 9,10,35cm	
Crimson CS620C	450	power amp • 40W • 9,10,35cm	
Inca Tech Oberon	450	integrated • MM/MC,6L,2T • hdph • 43,8,22cm • Preout, biwire	
Marantz PM-700AV	450	125 integrated • A/V • 45W • MM,5L,2T • hdph • rem • 42,16,34cm • Sounds just great through front and centre channels but surround sound is very weak.	
Rose RV-23	450	77 preamp • MM,2L,1T • 33,9,26cm • You can pay more to get a more transparent sound, but it's hard to criticise at the price.	REC'D
Rotel RB980BX	450	109 power amp • 120W • 44,12,33cm • Sound is expansive but lacks poise, control and fine detail - disappointing (tested with RC980BX).	
Technics SU-A900 Mk2	450	138 integrated • 90W • MC/MM,3L,2T • rem • 43,14,37cm • Jeckyl and Hyde amplifier with a dismal-sounding phono stage but transparent CD input.	REC'D
Moth 30 Mono/40	459	power amp • 40W • 5,10,35cm • 2x monoblocks	
Audiolink P400	467	preamp • 4L • 43,7,270cm • Available in chrome	
NVA Control Tube CD	470	preamp • 5L,1T	
NVA A70	470	power amp • 70W • Mono	
AMC S84	479	preamp • A/V • 8L • rem • Multiroom, bal/unbal inputs	
Denon AVC-1530	480	integrated • A/V • 70W • MM,2L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,14,34cm	

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE	SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
Onix OA31	480	140	integrated • 60W • MM/MC,4L,1T • hdph • 43,77,33cm	
Grant CD10	482		preamp • 4L	
NVA A60	490		power amp • 60W	
Arion Adonis (kit)	495		integrated • 20W • 4L,1T • Pre Class A integrated kit	
DPA DSP200S	495	124	preamp • 5L,1T • 22,30,8cm • <i>Dramatic but detailed and transparent sound belies modest power rating (tested with DPA-200S).</i>	REC'D
Unison Res Simply Phono	495		preamp • MM/MC • For Simply series	
Alchemist Kraken Anniv	499		integrated • 60W • MM,3L,2T • 25,9,25cm • Stainless steel/gold finish	
Alchemist Kraken/Pwr A	499		power amp • 60W • 32,9,25cm • Stainless steel/gold finish	
AMC AV81 H.T. Control	499		preamp • A/V • 8L,2T • As AV81 plus Dolby Pro Logic	
Art Audio Minuet	499		preamp • 5L,1T	
CR Developments Kalypso	499		integrated • 15W • 5L	
Creo IMP702	499		integrated • 70W • 6L • 44,6,31cm	
Harman-Kardon AP2500	499		preamp • MM/MC,6L,2T • 45,11,35cm	
LFD Integrated Zero	499	140	integrated • 50W • 5L,1T • 30,6,37cm • <i>Lively and brisk, but at the same time cold and unsympathetic.</i>	
LFD Linestage LSO	499		preamp • 5L,1T • 30,6,37cm • Zero feedback	
LFD Powerstage PAO	499		power amp • 50W • 30,6,37cm • Stereo MOSFET	
Arcam Delta 290	500	116	integrated • 75W • 4L,2T • hdph • rem • 43,9,32cm • <i>Combines dry restraint with detail, dynamics and musical colour.</i>	REC'D
Audiolab 8000A	500	140	integrated • 60W • MM/MC,2L,3T • hdph • 45,8,36cm • <i>The 8000A remains a highly disciplined and mature sounding amp.</i>	REC'D
Mission Cyrus III	500	140	integrated • 50W • MM,5L,1T • hdph • 22,8,36cm • <i>The classic Cyrus II sounds convincing, masterful and musical.</i>	B'BUY
Pioneer VSA-701S	500		integrated • A/V • 55W • MM,2L,2T,5V • hdph • rem • 42,17,42cm • Dolby Pro Logic	
Rotel RC990BX	500		preamp • MM/MC,2L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,7,33cm	
Sentec PP9 RIAA MM	500		preamp • MM • 5,12,23cm • Phono step-up - MM	
Technics SU-A900D	500		integrated • 70W • MM/MC,3L,2T • hdph • 43,84,35cm • Pre/power, Master Series caps	
Thorens TTP2000	500	139	preamp • MM/MC,4L • <i>Minimalist shoebox preamp, rhythmic, warm balance. Tested in Sessions with TTA2000</i>	
Magnum MF125	515		power amp • 140W • Monoblocks	
Audiolab 8000C	520	97	preamp • MM/MC,2L,3T • hdph • 45,8,36cm • <i>Distinctive, stark neutrality that will not appeal to all. Good value engineering.</i>	
NVA AP-50CD	520		integrated • 60W • 5L,1T	
Linn Majik-1 (Line)	524		integrated • 33W • 4L,2T • hdph • 32,8,33cm • <i>Works as preamp or integrated; multiroom capability</i>	
Rose RV-23S	525		preamp • MM/MC,2L,2T • 33,9,26cm • Tube, separate PSU	
AMC CVT3030	529	116	integrated • 30W • 6L,1T • hdph • <i>Attempt to mix transistors with valves only shines with simple musical styles.</i>	
Myryad MI120	530		integrated • 60W • 4L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,10,31cm • Optional MM or MC modules	
Creo IMP703	538		integrated • 70W • MM/MC, 6L • rem • 44,6,31cm • As above, with remote	
Rose Scion	545		integrated • 50W • MM/MC,3L,2T • 42,7,30cm • 2-box, purist design	
Linn LK100	549		power amp • 50W • 32,8,33cm • Stereo	
Moth 30 Stereo/60	549	109	power amp • 60W • 5,15,35cm • <i>Tested with 30 Passive - see comments earlier on page 113</i>	
Naim NAIT	549		integrated • 30W • 3L,1T • 43,56,30cm	
Stemfoort Audio SF60	549		integrated • 60W • 4L,1T • 43,8,35cm • Passive line amplifier	
KAL Magician	550		preamp • 3L,1T • hdph • Tube	
Rose RP-190 (Dual Mode)	550		power amp • 75W • 33,9,30cm • Low feedback monoblock mode	
Thorens TTA2000	550	139	power amp • 35W • <i>Tested with TTP2000 (see above) in Sessions</i>	REC'D
Heybrook Integra	555		integrated • 75W • MM/MC • hdph • 77,44,30cm	
Adyton PSU	569		PSU for Chorus, Temper, Modus	
Tube Tech Seer Line	575		preamp • 5L,1T • 35,8,25cm • Entry level, 10 yr guarantee	
Harman-Kardon PA2200	579		power amp • 70W • 45,14,38cm	
Naim NAC92R	579		preamp • 5(L or T) • rem • 43,56,30cm	
Electrocompaniet ECP-1	580		preamp • MM/MC • 24,7,16cm • Self-adjusts to cartridge	
Audiolink PR401	583		power amp • 100W • 43,10,37cm • Available in chrome	
NVA AP-50	590		integrated • 60W • MM/MC,5L,1T	
Linn Majik-1 (Phono)	593	129	integrated • 33W • MM,MC,3L,2T • hdph • 32,8,33cm • <i>The cornerstone of Linn's modular hi-fi system is innovative, but sounds vague and confused.</i>	
DPA Renaissance	595	140	integrated • 40W • MM,4L,1T • hdph • 40,28,8cm • <i>DPA's first integrated amp is typically innovative, but a little too 'crisp 'n dry' for our tastes.</i>	
Magnum MF300	595		power amp • 180W • Monoblocks	
Monrio ADN	595		preamp • MM/MC • 14,8,36cm • Phono preamp, ext PSU	
AVI S2000MA	599		power amp • 90W	
Fullers Pre 1	599		preamp • MM/5L,2T • 48,9,30cm • Optional MC stage	
Magnum Class A	599	116	integrated • 60W • MM/MC,3L,1T • <i>Lasings of rich and compelling music, but the Class A trades lushness for accuracy.</i>	REC'D
Musical Fidelity E200	599	145	preamp • 5L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,12,35cm • <i>Weighty, luxuriant but hardly scintillating. Tested with MF E300</i>	
Musical Fidelity E100	599	140	integrated • 70W • MM,4L,1T • hdph • rem • 44,12,35cm • <i>Beautifully crafted with a vibrantly colourful, almost dramatic sound.</i>	REC'D
Art Audio Headline	600		preamp • hdph • Single ended triode Class A	
Kenwood KA-V7700	600		integrated • A/V • MM,11L,1T • hdph • rem • 44,13,30cm • Pro Logic, learning remote	
Nakamichi IA2	600		integrated • 50W • MM/MC,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 43,12,36cm • 'Harmonic Time Alignment'	
Pioneer VSA-D802S	600	125	integrated • A/V • 55W • MM,2L,2T,5V • hdph • rem • 42,17,42cm • <i>The grey sound lacks attack and confidence, undermining tension</i>	
Sentec PP9 RIAA MC	600		preamp • MC • 5,12,23cm • Phono step-up - MC	
Shearne Phase 3	619		power amp • 50W • Can biamp with Phase 2	
NVA Power Tube	620		power amp • 60W	
NVA The Tube	620		integrated • 60W • 5L,1T	
Meridian 501	625	145	preamp • MM,4L,T • hdph • 33,9,34cm • <i>Tight, positive sound, but dispassionate; intense at high levels. Tested with 555</i>	
Meridian 555	625	145	power amp • 60W • 33,9,32cm • <i>Tested with the 01 - see comments above</i>	
Bryston 4	641		preamp • A/V • 4L,1T • 48,5,25cm	
Fullers Pre 1+	649		preamp • 6L,2T • 48,9,30cm • No phono option - hard wired	
Heybrook SIG CA	649		preamp • MM/MC5L,2T	
Naim Hi-Cap	649		21,76,30cm • Power supply	
Shearne Phase 2	649		integrated • 50W • 5L • MM/MC phono i/p £87 extra	
Tube Tech Seer Phono	649		preamp • MM,4L,1T • 35,8,25cm • Tube phono stage	
Audiolab 8000S	650		integrated • 60W • 3L,3T • hdph • rem • 45,8,36cm • Mode switch, biwire terminals	
Quad 77	650	139	integrated • 50W • 2L,T • 33,6,30cm • <i>Stylish remote driven amp, bright and lively. Tested in Sessions</i>	
Triangle TE60SE	650		integrated • 70W • MM/MC,3L,1T • hdph	
Lecson Quattrra Plus	655		integrated • 50W • MM/MC + N/A • 44,6,27cm • Separate PSU	
Naim NAC72	670		preamp • 2MM/MC, L,2T • 21,76,30cm • Upgradable with PSU, MC I/P	
NVA Control Tube	670		preamp • MM/MC,4L,1T	
Bryston BP1	673		preamp • A/V • MM or MC • 48,5,25cm • <i>Phono stepup, balanced and unbalanced operation</i>	
LFD Int. Zero (Ph)	679		integrated • 50W • MM/MC,5L,1T • 30,6,37cm • Phono version of Int. Zero	
Lynwood Opal	685		integrated • 80W • 7L,1T	
Meridian 562	685		preamp • MM,8L,T,6D • 33,9,34cm • Digital main out. MC option	
Meridian 551	695		integrated • 55W • MM,4L,T • hdph • rem • 33,9,34cm • MC option	
Monrio MJ	695		integrated • 50W • 5L,1T	
Heybrook SIG MNEK	698		power amp • 140W • Mono, uses ext SIG/DCPS PSU	
Exposure XX Super	699		integrated • 55W • 4L,2T • 43,85,35cm • Upgraded model	
Gamma Gemini	699	148	integrated • 12W • 3L • 33,23,8cm • <i>Genuine single-ended triode design, but low power, mundane sound and poor build</i>	
Marantz AV-500	699		preamp • A/V • MM,7L,2T • rem • 42,10,34cm • Dolby Pro Logic	
Musical Fidelity E300	699	145	power amp • 100W • 44,12,35cm • <i>Tested with E200 - see comments above</i>	
Naim NAP140	699		power amp • 45W • 21,76,30cm	
Onix OA601	699		power amp • 70W • 75,46,36cm • Regulated PSU	
Thule PR200	699		preamp • 5L,2T • hdph • rem • Balanced in and outputs	
Audiolab 8000P	700		power amp • 100W • 45,8,36cm • Bi-wire speaker terminals	
Aura CA200	700		preamp • MM,7L,2T • hdph • rem • 43,6,34cm • Chrome finish, add £50	

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Micromega Tempo 1	700		integrated • 50W • 6L,1T • hdph • 43,9,28cm • Optional MM/MC	
Teac A-BX72	700		integrated • 60W • MM,3L,2T • rem • 44,10,38cm	
Technics SU-C2000	700		preamp • rem • 45,13,35cm • Rotary resistor attenuator	
Woodside SC27 Line	705		preamp • 2L,1T	
Michell Argo	715		preamp • 3L,1T • 33,7,19cm • 2 pairs of outputs	
Quad 606	718	124	power amp • 140W • 33,14,24cm • <i>Amplifier with classic lineage but compromised by an equally dated, soft and undynamic sound (tested with 66).</i>	
Naim NAIT R	724		integrated • 30W • 3L,1T • 43,56,30cm	
Sonic Link DM30	725		integrated • 25W • MM/MC,3L,1T • 23,8,43cm	
NVA A80	730		power amp • 70W • Mono	
Rega Elicit	730		integrated • 70W • MM,MC,3L,1T • 43,7,25cm • Full dual mono	
Art Audio VPL	741		preamp • 6L,2T	
Audio Innovations L2	749		preamp • 4L,1T • 50,12,30cm	
Audio Innovations P2MM	749		preamp • MM • 50,12,30cm • Phono stage	
Arcam Delta 110	750		preamp • MM/MC,2L,2T • hdph • rem • 43,7,30cm • On-board DAC, 2 inputs	
Art Audio Conductor Phono	750		preamp • MM/MC • Separate PSU, upgradable	
Audiolab 8000M	750	145	power amp • 125W • 45,8,36cm • <i>Strong, controlled sound; confident bass, but colourless. Tested with 8000Q</i>	
Bryston 2B-LP	750		power amp • A/V • 75W • 48,5,25cm • Bridgable	
DPA 200S	750	124	power amp • 60W • 22,30,8cm • <i>Dramatic but crisp, open sound belies power rating (tested with DSP-200S).</i>	REC'D
KAL Harlequin	750		preamp • MM/MC,2L,1T • hdph • Tube	
Rotel RB990BX	750		power amp • 200W • 44,12,38cm	
ECA Vista S	760	145	preamp • 4L,1T • 39,10,39cm • <i>Wind up the volume and blow a breath of fresh music into your system (tested with Lectern).</i>	B'BUY
Grant G100P	764		preamp • MM,2L,1T	
Meridian 501V	785		preamp • A/V • MM,4L,T • hdph • 33,9,34cm • As 501, plus video switching	
Michi RHC-10	795		preamp • 5L • 47,8,34cm • Passive	
Monrio Primus II	795		preamp • 6L,1T • 43,8,36cm • Line only preamp	
AVI S2000M	799		integrated • 100W • 4L, 1T • rem • 31,25,9cm • Includes S2000RC handset	
AVI S2000MP	799		preamp • 5L,1T • 31,25,9cm • includes S2000RC handset	
Credo CMP004	799		preamp • 6L • 44,6,31cm • 3 outputs	
Exposure XIX	799		preamp • 5L • 43,85,35cm • Line only version of XVII	
Exposure XV Super	799		integrated • 55W • MM,MC,3L,2T • 43,85,35cm	
LFD Int. Zero LE	799		integrated • 60W • 5L,1T • 43,7,33cm	
PS Audio 6.1	799		preamp • 4L,1T • 43,6,19cm • Outboard PSU	
Chimera X-150C	800		preamp • 4L,1T • Balanced CD in, balanced out	
Chimera X-80	800	138	integrated • 80W • 4L,1T • <i>Stinking looks, powerful, but ultimately lacking in dynamics. Tested in Sessions</i>	
Crimson CS630C	800		power amp • 90W • 9,10,35cm	
Sentec SC9	800		preamp • 4L,2T • hdph • 34,7,15cm	
Sherwood AM/AVP8500	800		A/V • 230W • hdph • rem • A/V Pre/power amp	
XTC PRE-1	800		preamp • 5L,1T • hdph • rem • Single ended MOSFET preamp	
Bryston BP4	802		preamp • A/V • 4L,1T • 48,5,25cm • Balanced out	
Heybrook SIG CAP	829		preamp • 6L,2T • Line only	
Exposure XVII	849	142	preamp • MM,MC,3L,2T • 43,85,35cm • <i>Superbly rhythmical; maybe a tad overpowering in the midband. Tested in Sessions with XVIII Super</i>	REC'D
Exposure XVIII Super	849	142	power amp • 70W • 43,85,35cm • <i>Upgraded model</i>	REC'D
Onix OA801	849		power amp • 190W • 75,46,36cm • 2x monoblocks, massive PSU	
Stemfoot Audio SF100	849		integrated • 100W • 4L,1T • 43,8,40cm • Passive line amplifier	
Audiolab 8000PPA	850		preamp • MM/MC • 45,8,36cm • Phono preamplifier	
Michell Iso HR	879		preamp • MM or MC • smallcm • Phono stage	
Moth 30 Mono/100	879		power amp • 100W • 5,15,35cm • 2x mono, separate PSU	
Shearpe Phase 5 Mono	879		power amp • 100W • Monoblocks - bal/unbalanced	
ECA Vista HD	880		preamp • 4L,1T • 39,10,39cm • High definition version	
ECA Lectern S	880	145	power amp • 50W • 39,10,30cm • <i>Tested with £60 Vista S - see above for comments.</i>	B'BUY
ECA Prisma	880		preamp • MM,MC • 39,10,23cm • Phono stepup	
Woodside SC27 MM	881		preamp • MM,2L,1T	
Bryston BP5	889		preamp • A/V • MM/MC,3L,1T • 48,5,25cm • MM or MC, balanced out	
Dawn Audio Cmd 2 by 200	890		power amp • 200W • 38,11,26cm • Single monoblock	
Meridian 562V	895	140	preamp • A/V • MM,8L,T6D • 33,9,34cm • <i>As 562, plus video switching</i>	REC'D
Monrio MC-200S	895		integrated • 60W • 6L,1T • 43,10,37cm • Simplified version of MC-205	
Monrio MC-25	895		power amp • 80W • 43,10,36cm • Dual mono construction	
Shearpe Phase 6 Pre	895		preamp • MM,6L • Bal/unbal, can use battery	
Quad 66	897	124	preamp • MM,4L,2T • rem • 33,8,26cm • <i>Amplifier with classic lineage but compromised by an equally dated, soft and undynamic sound (tested with 606).</i>	
Alchemist Forseti	899		integrated • 100W • 4L,2T • 47,10,39cm	
Harman-Kardon PA2400	899		power amp • 120W • 45,16,41cm	
PS Audio 6.2	899		preamp • MM/MC,3L,2T • 43,6,19cm • Outboard PSU	
PS Audio Phono Link	899		preamp • MM/MC • 43,6,19cm • Outboard PSU	
Woodside ISA230 Disc	899	116	integrated • 30W • MM,2L,1T • <i>Smooth and inoffensive valve amplifier, though it lacks the sparkle and euphony required for a truly entertaining sound.</i>	
Woodside ISA230 Line	899		integrated • 30W • 4L,2T	
Concordant Exhilarant	900		preamp • 5L • 6 tube pre, wood case option	
Marantz SC-22	900		preamp • 4L,1T • 25,9,22cm • Audiophile micro component	
Micromega Tempo 2	900		integrated • 75W • 6L,1T • hdph • 43,9,28cm • Optional MM/MC	
Minstrel Ultra Linear	900		integrated • 26W • 3L,1T • 38,310,16cm • Low feedback hybrid	
Heybrook SIG /SPX	922		power amp • 140W • Stereo power amp	
Audio Innovations P2MC	949		preamp • MM/MC • 50,12,30cm • Phono stage	
LFD MC1 Phono stage	949		preamp • MC • 30,7,36cm • Discrete circuit	
Thule IA100	949		integrated • 100W • 5L,2T • rem • Fully balanced operation	
Woodside ISA 240	949		power amp • 40W	
DNM 3 Start	950		preamp • MM/MC,2L,1T • 27,13,16cm • Solid core, slit foil caps	
Dawn Audio Prelude + 50	951		preamp • MM/MC,2L,2T • 38,9,26cm • Pre out line driver	
Art Audio VP1	952		preamp • MM,5L,2T	
Lynwood Ruby	985		power amp • 120W	
Naim NAP180	987		power amp • 60W • 43,76,30cm	
Electrocompaniet EC1-2	990		integrated • 50W • 3L,1T • 46,11,38cm • New entry level integrated	
Conrad-Johnson PV10AL	995		preamp • 5L • Line version of PV-10A	
Counterpoint Solid 1EM	995		power amp • 100W • 25,6,27cm • Mono	
Michi RHB-05	995		power amp • 100W • 47,8,36cm	
Michi RHQ-10	995		preamp • MM,MC • 47,8,34cm • Phono equaliser	
Michi RHA-10	995		preamp • 5L • rem • 47,8,34cm • Active	
Roksan ROK-L2.5	995		preamp • 4L,1T • 43,8,33cm • Revised	
CR Developments Romulus998	998		integrated • 35W • 5L	
Linn Kairn Pro	998		preamp • 4L, 2T • 32,8,33cm • Multi-room compatible	
Arcam Xeta One	999		integrated • A/V • 50W • MM,5L,2T • hdph • 43,13,32cm • Video switching, 5ch Dolby	
Audio Innovations Ser 800	999	148	power amp • 25W • 41,15,34cm	
AVI S2000MP+P	999		preamp • MM,4L,1T • rem • 31,25,9cm • includes S2000RC handset	
Copland CSA-14	999	148	integrated • 60W • MM,3L,1T • 43,13,38cm • <i>Great sound and looks, but watch out for high capacitance cables</i>	REC'D
Gamma Era Std	999		preamp • MM,3L,1T • 44,17,30cm • Triode, fully regulated	
LFD LSI Linstage	999		preamp • 4L,1T • 48,7,33cm • Zero feedback	
LFD PA1 Powerstage	999		power amp • 60W • 48,7,33cm • MOSFETs, custom parts	

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE	SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
LFD PPS	999		preamp • 2L,1T • 13,6,27cm • Switched attenuator, passive	
Musical Fidelity F22	999		preamp • 5L,1T • rem • 49,12,33cm • Optional phono/digital boards	
NAD Monitor 208	999	124	power amp • 250W • <i>Truly a beely amplifier</i>	
Teac A-BX10	999		integrated • 100W • MM/MC,3L,2T • 44,10,38cm • Balanced input	
Woodside SC27 MC	999		preamp • MC,2L,1T	
YBA Integre Line	999		integrated • 45W • 4L,1T • 43,9,33cm	
Audiolab 8000Q	1,000	145	preamp • 3L,3T • hdph • rem • 45,8,36cm • <i>Tested with £750 8000M monoblocks - see comments</i>	
Electrocom't ECP-1 SF	1,000		preamp • MM/MC • 24,7,16cm • auto-adjusts, black stone facia	
Lumley Reference LV1	1,000		preamp • 6L,1T • 29,44,6cm • Active valve circuit	
Marantz PH-22	1,000		preamp • MC,MM • 25,9,22cm • Phono stepup	
NVA TSS (Pre)	1,000		preamp • 5L,1T	
Sentec PA9	1,000		power amp • 60W • 20,8,30cm • Monoblocks	
Alchemist Freya	1,020		preamp • 6L,1T • 31,7,30cm	
Alchemist Odin	1,020		power amp • 80W • 31,14,30cm • Stereo	
Sonic Frontiers SFP-1	1,095		preamp • MM/MC • 45,12,28cm • Tube/J-FET phono stage	
Audio Innova Classic 25	1,099		integrated • 25W • 4L,1T • 46,15,34cm • Enclosed valves	
AVI S2000MM	1,099		power amp • 150W • 2x monoblocks	
LFD Integrated 1	1,099		integrated • 65W • MM/MC,4L,1T • 48,7,37cm • <i>A more powerful Integrated 1</i>	
Musical Fidelity FX	1,099		power amp • 90W • 49,12,38cm • Bal/unbalanced in	
Tube Tech Unisis Pwr Amp	1,099		power amp • 30W • 35,17,27cm • Stereo power amp	
Art Audio Conductor	1,100		preamp • 6L,2T • hdph • Upgradable	
Technics SE-A2000	1,100		power amp • 100W • rem • 45,19,44cm • Meters, R-Core, MOS AA	
Creedo CMP005	1,119		preamp • 6L • rem • Remote controlled preamp	
Bryston BP20	1,126		preamp • A/V • 8L,1T • 48,5,25cm • Balanced in/out	
Grant G50A	1,128		power amp • 60W • Monoblocks	
Unison Res Simply Two	1,148		integrated • 12W • 4L,1T • 25,16,40cm • <i>Looks fantastic, but sound is confused</i>	
Arion Eros Line Mk II	1,150		preamp • 4L,1T • Dual mono construction	
Copland CSA-303	1,150		preamp • MM,3L,1T • 43,13,38cm • Hybrid, Sovtek 6922 tubes	
Michell Alecto Stereo	1,150		power amp • 50W • 32,20,36cm	
Bryston 3B-NRB	1,159		power amp • A/V • 150W • 48,13,23cm • <i>Balanced and unbalanced operation</i>	
Counterpoint SA-1000E	1,195		preamp • MM/MC,3L,1T • 49,12,32cm	
Counterpoint Solid 8E	1,195		preamp • 3L,1T • 49,6,27cm	
Dynavector L200	1,195		preamp • 3L,1T • 44,6,24cm • Line preamp	
Audio Innovations S500	1,199		integrated • 25W • MM,3L,2T • 41,15,34cm	
Audio Innovations S700	1,199	116	integrated • 25W • 4L,1T • 41,15,34cm • <i>Turns the roughest of digital sounds into understated and graceful music.</i>	REC'D
Tube Tech Prophet	1,199		preamp • 4L,1T • 35,8,25cm • Two box pre, separate PSU	
YBA 3 Power	1,199	72	power amp • 45W • 43,9,33cm • <i>Tested with £1250 3 Pre - see below for comments.</i>	
YBA Integre	1,199	121	integrated • 45W • MM,4L,1T • 43,9,33cm • <i>Audiophile spec French integrated with good resolution and nice phono stage.</i>	
Aura PA200	1,200		power amp • 110W • 43,10,34cm • Balanced & unbalanced in	
Chimera X-150P	1,200		power amp • 150W • MOSFET, balance, bridgable	
Chimera X-100	1,200		integrated • 100W • 4L,1T • Outboard PSU, s/steel & chrome	
Fullers A10	1,200		power amp • 10W • 48,13,30cm • Single ended Class A	
Woodside MA50 Class A	1,224		power amp • 50W • 1 channel monoblock	
Conrad-Johnson PV-10A	1,250	139	preamp • MC,4L • <i>Beautiful imaging, superb detail, plenty of gain on the phono input; classy build too. Tested in Sessions</i>	REC'D
Lumley Reference ST40	1,250		power amp • 40W • 30,40,17 • Pentode	
Micromega Amp	1,250		power amp • 100W • 43,9,28cm	
Micromega Tempo P	1,250		preamp • 7L,1T • hdph • 43,9,28cm • Optional MM/MC	
YBA 3 Pre	1,250	72	preamp • MM,3L,1T • 43,9,33cm • <i>See-through, ethereal stereo images, but more convincing towards centre of soundstage (tested with £1199 3 Pwr).</i>	
McIntosh MC7100	1,259		power amp • 100W • 45,9,54cm • System controller	
Bryston THX3B	1,262		power amp • A/V • 150W • 48,13,23cm • 2 channels, THX approved	
Adyton CHORUS	1,295		preamp • MC • 44,3,25cm • RIAA phono stage	
Magnum MA500	1,295		power amp • 280W • Monoblocks	
Arion EOS Export Mk II	1,299		power amp • 18W • With volume control	
NVA TIS	1,300		integrated • 60W • 5L,1T	
Classe Audio Audio 3D	1,320		preamp • MM/MC,4L,1T • 48,7,28cm	
Woodside STA35	1,323	100	power amp • 35W • <i>Synergistic with SC26, with a cool, controlled sound, good focus and transparency. More poise than grunt (tested with SC26).</i>	
Michell Argo HR	1,339		preamp • 3L,1T • 36,8,22cm • 2 pairs outputs	
Copland CTA-301MkII	1,349		preamp • MM,3L,1T • 43,13,38cm • Upgraded, tube, soft start	
Arion Eros Phono Mk II	1,350		preamp • 3L,1T • Dual mono construction	
Art Audio Quintet	1,393	109	power amp • 15W • <i>Switchable triode, ultralinear output stage. In triode mode, these are 15 of the sweetest Watts around. Surprisingly gutsy.</i>	REC'D
Sonic Frontiers SFL-1	1,395		preamp • 4L,2T • 45,12,28cm • Tube/FET hybrid line stage	
Linn Kairn Preamp	1,398		preamp • MM, MC 3L,2T • 32,8,32cm • Multi-room compatible	
Arion Triton Mk II	1,399		power amp • 10W • Triode, volume control	
Arion Elektra Export Mk	1,399		integrated • 18W • 4L,1T • Class A valve amp	
Classe Audio Audio 70	1,399		power amp • 75W • 48,12,30cm • Single ended, balanced	
Musical Fidelity A1000	1,399		integrated • 50W • MM/MC,3L,1T • 49,13,36cm • Separate PSU	
Shearne Phase 1 Pre Ref	1,399		preamp • MM/MC,5L,2T • <i>Owners of old non-ref model can have their amps upgraded</i>	
Tube Tech Unisis S'Line	1,399		integrated • 30W • 4L,1T • 35,17,27cm • Line level version of Unisis	
Tube Tech Unisis	1,399		integrated • 30W • MM,3L,1T • 35,17,27cm • One tube phono stage	
Exposure XIV	1,400		preamp • MM,MC,3L,2T • 48,8,30cm • Needs 9 power supply	
Copland CTA-501	1,420		power amp • 30W • 2L • 43,18,38cm • Tube, has vol control	
Electrocom't EC-4 Line	1,420		preamp • 5L,2T • 48,9,23cm • inc XLR balanced in/out	
Woodside SC25 Line	1,420		preamp • 2L,2T	
Papworth TVA50	1,425		power amp • 50W • 43,19,33cm • Tube stereo	
Electrocom't EC1-2SF	1,440		integrated • 50W • 3L,1T • 46,38,11cm • As EC1-2 + Black Stone facia	
Arion Talos Line Mk II	1,450		integrated • 10W • 4L,1T • Triode Class A valve amp	
McIntosh C712	1,479		preamp • 6L,2T • hdph • rem • 45,9,45cm • System controller	
ECA Lectern HD	1,480		power amp • 50W • 39,10,23cm • High definition version	
Copland CTA-401	1,495		integrated • 30W • MM,3L,1T • 43,18,38cm • Tube push/pull ultra-linear	
Counterpoint SA100E	1,495		power amp • 100W • Hybrid	
Counterpoint Solid 1E	1,495		power amp • 100W • Mono	
Dynavector P100	1,495		preamp • MM,MC • 44,6,22cm • Phono stepup	
Roksan ROK-S1.5	1,495		power amp • 70W	
Sonic Frontiers SFP-1 Sig	1,495		preamp • MM/MC • 45,12,28cm • Tube/J-FET phono stepup	
Unison Res Simply Four P	1,495		integrated • 24W • 4L,1T • 35,16,40cm • Single ended Pentode	
Art Audio Integra	1,499		integrated • 30W • 5L,2T • Class A Pentode	
LFD Phonostage MC2	1,499		preamp • MC • 30,7,36cm • Hand tuned MC1	
Minstrel Partridge	1,499		integrated • 26W • 3L,1T • 38,31,16cm • Zero feedback hybrid	
PS Audio 100 Delta	1,499		power amp • 120W • 42,15,35cm	
Audio Note Oto SE	1,500	126	integrated • 24W • MM/MC,4L,1T • <i>Transparent, dynamic, clear and subtle, but limited power.</i>	REC'D
DNM 3A Start	1,500		preamp • MM/MC,2L,1T • 27,13,16cm	
Lumley Reference PV1	1,500		preamp • MM,5L,1T • Phono version of LV1	
Monrio MC-205	1,500		integrated • 80W • 6L,1T • 43,10,36cm • Inc pre-out sockets	
Tesseract TAADA	1,500		preamp • MM/MC	
Tesseract TALA	1,500		preamp • 5L,1T	

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE	SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS
Thorens TRP3000	1,500		preamp • MM,3L,1T • hdph • Inc Class A headphone amp
Thorens TRP3000	1,500		preamp • MM/MC • Phono stepup, valve
Alchemist Genesis	1,525		power amp • 110W • 25,14,30cm • Pair monoblocks
Grant G100AMS	1,528		power amp • 100W
Naim NAP135	1,529		power amp • 70W • 43,76,30cm
Naim NAP250	1,529		power amp • 70W • 43,76,30cm
Unison Res Simply Four T	1,545		integrated • 11W • 4L, 1T • 35,16,40cm • Single ended triode Class A
Triangle Nemo Allion 02	1,550		integrated • 80W • 5L,2T
EAR 859	1,595		integrated • 13W • 6L • 40,40,15cm • Single ended valve
EAR 834	1,599		integrated • 50W • 6L • 40,40,15cm • Valve
Exposure XVIII (pr)	1,599		power amp • 65W • 43,85,35cm • Upgraded 2x monoblocks
LFD Linestage LS2	1,599		preamp • 4L,1T • 48,7,37cm • Hand tuned LS1
LFD Powerstage PA2	1,599		power amp • 75W • 48,7,33cm • Hand tuned PA1
Marantz MA-22	1,600		power amp • 50W • 23,9,22cm • Audiophile monoblock x2
Arion Talos Phono Mk II	1,650		integrated • 10W • MM,3L,1T • Triode Class A phono amp
Michi RHB-10	1,650		power amp • 200W • 47,19,37cm
Art Audio Concerto	1,669		power amp • 50W • 2x mono triode/pentode
Audio Research PH-1	1,690		preamp • MM/MC • 48,14,26cm • Phono preamp
Audio Research LS-3	1,695		preamp • 5L,1T • 48,14,26cm • 1 direct input
Counterpoint SA-2000E	1,695		preamp • 4L,2T • 49,12,33cm
Monrio Cento HP	1,695		power amp • 135W • 43,10,36cm • Dual mono, high current
Sonic Frontiers SFS-40	1,695		power amp • 40W • 40,18,32cm • Stereo tube power amp
Classe Audio Audio 4L	1,697		preamp • 5L,1T • 48,9,34cm • Remote option
Credo PMP154	1,699		power amp • 150W • 44,16,31cm
Credo PMP303	1,699		power amp • 30W • Class A power amp
YBA 2 Pre	1,699	56	preamp • MM,3L,1T • 43,9,33cm • Superbly finished, good space and transparency. Needs transformer for MC cartridges (tested with £2150 2 Pwr). REC'D
Classe Audio Audio 4	1,735		preamp • MM/MC,4L,1T • 48,9,34cm • Remote option
Audio Innova First Audio	1,749		power amp • 7.5W • 41,15,34cm
ATC SCA2	1,750		preamp • 6L,2T • rem • 44,36,10cm • Balanced & unbalanced in/out
Copland CTA-504	1,750		power amp • 50W • 43,18,38cm • Switchable tetrode/triode
DNM PA1	1,750		power amp • 45W • 27,13,18cm • Triwire output
LFD Linestage LS2P	1,750		preamp • MM/MC,4L,1T • 48,7,37cm • As LS2 with phono stage
Unison Res Mystery One	1,750		preamp • 4L,1T • For Smart 845
Bryston 4B-NRB	1,756		power amp • A/V • 300W • 48,13,39cm • Bridgable, bal & unbalanced
Electrocom't EC-4 SF Line	1,790		preamp • 5L,2T • 48,9,23cm • XLR in/out, black stone facia
Adyton TEMPER	1,795		preamp • MC,2L • 44,3,25cm • Phono & line source preamp
Sonic Frontiers SFC-1	1,795	126	integrated • 50W • 4L,2T • 45,19,43cm • Smooth, sophisticated Canadian valve amp with a decent direct input and more features than average.
Sonic Frontiers SFL-1 Sig	1,795		preamp • 4L,2T • 45,12,28cm • Tube/FET hybrid line stage
Thule PA200	1,798		power amp • 200W • High power balanced design
Audio Innova Ser 1000	1,799		power amp • 50W • 41,15,34cm • Monoblocks
Tesserac TAHA	1,800		preamp • MC, • hdph
Bryston 7B-NRB	1,815		power amp • A/V • 500W • 48,13,39cm • Single monoblock
Arion Tycho Pwr Mk II	1,850		power amp • 50W • Pure Class A
Bryston THX4B	1,858		power amp • A/V • 300W • 48,13,39cm • 2 channels, THX approved
Linn Klout	1,895		power amp • 80W • 32,8,33cm • Stereo, tri-wire connectors
Musical Fidelity F15	1,899		power amp • 100W • 49,19,38cm • Bal/unbalanced in/hybrid
Naim Super-Cap	1,909		43,76,30cm • Power supply
Bryston THX7B	1,917		power amp • A/V • 500W • 48,13,39cm • 1 channel, THX approved
Woodside SC26 Phono	1,931	100	preamp • MM/MC,3L,2T • Synergistic with STA35, with a cool, controlled sound, good focus and transparency (tested with STA35).
Concordant Exquisite	1,950		preamp • 5L • 10 tubes, 2 line out, ext PSU
Lumley Reference S170	1,950		power amp • 70W • 36,46,18cm • Switchable triode/pentode
Electrocom't EC-3MC	1,953		preamp • MC,4L,2T • 48,9,23cm • XLR in/out, adj MC input
Michell Alecto Mono	1,989		power amp • 100W • 32,20,36cm
Counterpoint NPS-100E	1,995		power amp • 100W
Dynavector L100	1,995		preamp • 3L,2T • 44,6,24cm • Line preamp
Unison Res Phono One	1,995		preamp • MM,MC • For Mystery/Perf/Absolute
Naim NAC82	1,997		preamp • 6 (L or T) • rem • 43,76,30cm
Arion Tycho Int Mk II	1,999		integrated • 50W • 4L,1T • Pure Class A integrated
LFD Linestage LSB	1,999		preamp • 4L,1T • 48,7,37cm • Balanced LS2
LFD Powerstage PA2M	1,999		power amp • 90W • 30,7,37cm • Mono PA2
Art Audio Conductor Export	2,000		preamp • 6L,2T • hdph • rem • Separate PSU, mono
Thorens TRA3000	2,000		power amp • 90W • 8x EL34 tubes
Thorens TRA3000	2,000		power amp • 90W • Valve
XTC POW-1	2,000		power amp • A/V • 175W • 4 channel multi-purpose amp
Electrocom't AW100DMB	2,080		power amp • 100W • 48,13,36cm • High current (80A)
Adyton MODUS	2,095		preamp • 4L,2T • 44,5,25cm • Line control amp
McIntosh C38	2,095		preamp • MM,5L,3T • hdph • rem • Multi-room, balanced out
Copland CTA-505	2,099		power amp • 67W • 43,18,38cm • Switchable tetrode/triode
McIntosh C22	2,099		preamp • 8L • hdph • rem • Retro style valve pre
YBA 2 Power	2,150	56	power amp • 70W • 43,9,33cm • Superbly finished, but with slightly softened bass (tested with £1699 2 Pre). REC'D
Credo PMP102	2,181		power amp • 100W • 44,21,31cm • Class A power amp
Electrocom't EC1-1	2,188		integrated • 100W • 5L,2T • 45,13,36cm • High current (80A)
Bryston 8B-NRB	2,195		power amp • A/V • 150W • 48,13,39cm • 4 channels, bridgeable
Counterpoint SA-3000E	2,195		preamp • MM/MC,4L,2T • 49,12,33cm • Separate PSU
Dynavector HK75	2,195		power amp • 75W • 22,13,37cm • High current design
Exposure IV	2,199		power amp • 80W • 48,13,35cm • Fully regulated
Shearne Phase 1 Pwr Ref	2,199		power amp • 100W • Owners of old non-ref model can have their amps upgraded
McIntosh MC7108	2,249		power amp • A/V • 40W • 45,16,51cm • 8 channel (5-way) 8x45 watts
Audio Research LS-3b	2,250		preamp • 5L,1T • 48,14,26cm • 1 direct input
Conrad-Johnson PV-12L	2,250		preamp • 5L • Line version of PV-12
Roksan ROK-L1.5	2,250		preamp • 4L,1T • 43,8,33cm
Electrocom't EC-3MC SF	2,270		preamp • MC,4L,2T • 48,9,23cm • XLR in/out, black stone facia
PS Audio 200 Delta	2,279		power amp • 200W • 42,15,45cm
Electrocom't AW100DMB	2,280		power amp • 100W • 48,13,36cm • High current, blk stone facia
McIntosh MC7150	2,295		power amp • 150W
Classe Audio Audio 10	2,299		power amp • 125W • 48,17,42cm • Single ended, bal bridgable
Matisse Fantasy	2,300		preamp • A/V • 6L,2T • Line stage
NVA TCS	2,300		integrated • 70W • 5L,1T
Adyton OPERA	2,395		integrated • 50W • MM/MC,3L,2T • 21,33,13cm • Optional phono
Classe Audio Audio 5L II	2,395		preamp • 5L,1T • 48,15,43cm • Remote option
Bryston THX8B	2,400		power amp • A/V • 150W • 48,13,39cm • 4 channels, THX approved
Marantz MA-24	2,400		power amp • 30W • 21,17,36cm • Class-A monoblock x2
Audio Research VT60	2,430		power amp • 35W • Single ended tube mono
Electrocom't EC1-1 SF	2,460		integrated • 100W • 5L,2T • 45,13,36cm • High current, blk stone facia
PS Audio 200b Delta	2,490		power amp • 200W • 42,15,45cm

PRODUCT

£ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

Counterpoint Solid 2E	2,495	power amp • 200W • 49,17,49cm • Hybrid	
Art Audio Tempo	2,499	power amp • 30W • 2x mono Class A triode	
Audio Innova Ser 1000SE	2,499	power amp • 50W • 41,15,34cm • Silver circuit board	
Gamma Rhythm	2,499	integrated • 22W • MM,3L • 38,30,21cm • Single ended phono integrated	
Crede PMP252	2,509	power amp • 250W • 44,21,31cm	
EAR 802MC	2,599	63 preamp • MM/MC,2L,2T • Tested with £3499 509 Mk II - see comments	REC'D
Tube Tech Genesis	2,599	power amp • 100W • 35,15,27cm • 2x monoblocks	
Papworth M100	2,645	power amp • 100W • 25,17,38cm • Tube monoblock	
Chord SPM1000B	2,650	power amp • 200W • XLR/unbalanced • 42,36,14cm • Two pairs loudspeaker out	
Classe Audio Audio 5 II	2,657	preamp • MM/MC,4L,1T • 48,15,43cm • Remote option	
McIntosh MC7104	2,729	power amp • A/V • 100W • 45,16,51cm • 4 channels	
Conrad-Johnson PV-12	2,750	preamp • MC,4L • Tube	
Meridian 601	2,750	preamp • MM,4L,T • hdph • rem • DSP tone control, MC option	
Audio Research D-200	2,800	power amp • 110W • 48,14,31cm • Single ended, balanced	
Audio Research SP9 II	2,850	preamp • MM/MC,4L,2T • 48,14,26cm • Hybrid	
McIntosh MC150	2,855	power amp • 150W • 45,14,45cm • Blue meters	
Audio Research PH-2	2,895	preamp • MM/MC • 48,14,26cm • Balanced	
Sonic Frontiers SFS-80	2,895	power amp • 80W • 45,22,35cm • Stereo tube power amp	
PS Audio 250 Delta	2,980	power amp • 250W • 42,15,45cm • Monoblocks	
Counterpoint NPS-200E	2,995	power amp • 200W • Rated at 4 Ohms, hybrid	
Unison Res Smart 845	2,995	power amp • 24W • Single ended triode monoblocks	
Audio Research LS-2 II	2,997	preamp • 5L,1T • 48,14,26cm • 1 direct input/hybrid	
DNM 3B Twin E	3,050	preamp • MM/MC,4L,1T • 27,13,16cm	
McIntosh C39	3,129	preamp • A/V • MM, 10L (6 Vid) • hdph • rem • 45,17,45cm • Two zone, THX compatible	
McIntosh MC7300	3,195	power amp • 300W	
Lumley Reference M120	3,200	power amp • 120W • 29,44,18cm • 2xmono, triode/pentode	
NVA TDS	3,200	power amp • 70W • Mono	
McIntosh C40	3,239	preamp • MM, 6L, 3T • hdph • 45,14,45cm • Balanced in/out	
Audio Innova Second Audio3	3,299	power amp • 15W • 41,15,34cm • Monoblocks	
Krell KSL-2	3,331	preamp • 4L,1T • 48,7,36cm • Opt. MM/MC stage	
Audio Research V35	3,355	power amp • 30W • 48,18,37cm • Balanced in, hybrid	
Audio Research LS-2b II	3,398	preamp • 5L,1T • 48,14,26cm • 1 balanced direct input/hybrid	
Ayton CORDIS 1.6	3,399	power amp • 120W • 45,9,35cm • Stereo power amp	
Classe Audio Audio 15	3,399	power amp • 175W • 48,19,42cm • Single ended, bal bridgable	
McIntosh MC7106	3,425	power amp • A/V • 100W • 45,16,51cm • Six x 100w THX amp	
Mark Levinson 29	3,450	power amp • 50W	
Grant G350A	3,455	power amp • 350W	
Classe Audio Audio 6L II	3,469	preamp • 5L,1T • 48,15,43cm • Remote option, sep PSU	
EAR 509 Mk II	3,499	63 power amp • 100W • 36,20,25cm • Combining sonic strengths of transistors and valves, this amp warrants attention (tested with £2599 802).	REC'D
Conrad-Johnson Prem 11A3	3,500	power amp • 70W • Baby Premier 8	
Matisse Reference	3,500	preamp • A/V • MM/MC,5L,2T	
Art Audio Maestro	3,524	power amp • 100W • 2x mono triode/pentode	
Counterpoint SA4	3,575	power amp • 140W • Hybrid	
McIntosh MC275	3,595	power amp • 75W • Classic valve amp	
DNM 3B Primus E	3,630	preamp • MM/MC,4L,1T • 27,13,16cm	
KAL Empress	3,660	preamp • MM/MC,2L,1T • hdph • Tube	
Krell KSA-50s	3,690	141 power amp • 50W • 48,22,40cm • Sustained Plateau Bias	
NVA TSS (Power)	3,700	power amp • 70W	
McIntosh MA6800	3,735	integrated • 150W • hdph • rem • 45,18,51cm • Blue meters	
YBA 1 Pre	3,750	62 preamp • MC,4L,1T • 43,9,33cm • Tested with £4250 1 Pwr - see below for comments.	REC'D
Grant G200AMS	3,760	power amp • 200W • Monoblocks	
McIntosh MC300	3,765	power amp • 300W • 45,16,46cm • Bridgable to 600W, blue meters	
Jadis DEFY-P60	3,774	preamp • MM/MC,4L,1T • 43,17,30cm • Tube	
Sonic Frontiers SFL-2	3,795	preamp • 4L,2T • 45,12,33cm • Tube, dual mono, balanced	
Classe Audio Audio 6 II	3,817	preamp • MM/MC,4L,1T • 48,15,43cm • Remote option, separate PSU	
Papworth M200	3,825	power amp • 200W • 46,20,31cm • Tube monoblock	
Chord SPM1200B	3,840	power amp • 250W • Balanced/unbal • 42,36,14cm • Two pairs loudspeaker out	
Conrad-Johnson Prem 10	3,900	preamp • 5L • Line version of Premier 7B	
Electrocom't AW250DMB	3,983	power amp • 250W • 48,22,45cm • High current (100A)	
Counterpoint SA-5000E	3,995	preamp • MM/MC,4L,2T • 49,12,27cm • Separate PSU	
Counterpoint SA-9	3,995	preamp • MM/MC • 49,12,37cm • Phono stepup	
Dynavector HX1.2	3,995	power amp • 130W • 44,13,37cm • High current capability	
Mark Levinson 38	3,995	preamp • 6L,2T • rem • Fully remote, balanced	
Gamma Space Ref	3,999	power amp • 18W • 3L • 43,22,31cm • Line integrated	
Gamma Era Ref	3,999	preamp • MM,3L • 44,17,30cm • Single ended Triode	
Musical Fidelity F18	3,999	power amp • 220W • 49,19,67cm • Bal/unbalanced in/hybrid	
Tube Tech Synergy 1	3,999	integrated • 150W • 5L,1T, • rem • 47,18,47cm • Bias monitor, soft-start	
Exposure XVI	4,000	power amp • 125W • 48,13,35cm • Pair of regulated monoblocks	
Counterpoint Nat Progress	4,125	power amp • 150W • Mono, hybrid	
Krell KRC-2s	4,190	141 preamp • 6L,1T • rem • 48,7,36cm • Opt MM/MC stage	
Electrocom't AW250DMB	4,195	power amp • 250W • 48,45,22cm • High current stereo, blk stone	
DNM PA2BE	4,250	power amp • 90W • 27,13,18cm • Triwire output	
YBA 1 Power	4,250	62 power amp • 85W • 43,14,33cm • Well finished pre/power amp with front rank imaging and transparency (tested with £3750 1 Pre).	REC'D
KAL Emperor	4,375	power amp • 9W • Single ended tube Class A	
Counterpoint NPS-400E	4,395	power amp • 400W • Rated at 4 Ohms, hybrid	
Audio Research V70	4,480	power amp • 60W • 48,18,40cm • Balanced in, hybrid	
Mark Levinson 331	4,495	power amp • 100W • High current	
LFD Disc Preamp	4,499	preamp • MC • 30,5,36cm • Battery powered	
Roksan ROK-M1.5	4,500	power amp • 160W • 48,11,34 • Pair of monoblocks	
Unison Res Performance 1	4,500	integrated • 25W • 4L,1T • Single-ended triode	
Classe Audio Audio 25	4,639	power amp • 250W • 48,20,53cm • Single ended, balance bridg	
Electrocom't AW180MB	4,673	power amp • 180W • 28,29,48cm • High current, price per pair	
EAR 519	4,699	power amp • 100W • 43,14,20cm • Valve monoblock x1	
Chord SPM1600	4,700	power amp • 250W • Balanced/unbal • 42,36,14cm • Two pairs loudspeaker out	
Jadis JPL	4,720	preamp • 5L,1T • 43,17,30cm • Tube	
Jadis JPP-200	4,778	preamp • 4L,1T	
DNM 3B Six E	4,780	preamp • MM/MC,4L,1T • 27,13,16cm	
Audio Research D-300	4,800	power amp • 160W • 48,18,33cm • Single ended, balanced	
Chord SPM2000	4,890	power amp • A/V • 200W • 6L • 42,36,14cm • Three channel, 6 speaker amp	
Electrocom't AW180MB	4,900	power amp • 180W • 28,29,48cm • Black stone, price per pair	
Naim NAC52	5,006	preamp • 6 (see note) • rem • 43,76,30cm • Optional phono board	
DNM PA2BS	5,250	power amp • 90W • 27,13,18cm • Triwire output	
Audio Research LS-5 II	5,290	preamp • 5L,1T • 48,14,30cm • Full balanced in/out	
Jadis DEFY-7	5,290	power amp • 100W • 49,23,63cm • Tube	
Tesserac TAP-A	5,300	preamp • MM,3L,2T	

PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

McIntosh MC2600	5,395	power amp • 600W	
Mark Levinson 27.5	5,399	power amp • 100W	
Jadis JP-30MC	5,444	60 preamp • MM/MC, 4L, 1T • French tubes, JP-30MC has beautiful build, nostalgic styling and delightful midrange. (tested with JA30).	REC'D
Sonic Frontiers SFS-160	5,495	power amp • 160W • 45,22,35cm • Twin tube monoblocks	
CAT SL1 Sig line	5,500	preamp • 3L, 1T • 31,48,14cm • 2 outputs, valve	
Audio Research VT130	5,600	power amp • 65W • Stereo tube, balanced	
DNM PA2BS-1	5,650	power amp • 90W • 27,13,18cm • Triwire output	
Jadis JA-30	5,760	60 power amp • 30W • 21,21,46cm • French tubes, JP-30MC has beautiful build, nostalgic styling and delightful midrange (tested with £5978 JP30).	REC'D
Krelli KSA-100s	5,843	power amp • 100W • 48,22,50cm • Sustained Plateau Bia	
CAT SL1 Sig phono	6,000	preamp • MM, 2L • 31,48,14cm • 2 outputs, valve	
Audio Research D-400II	6,200	power amp • 200W • 48,23,33cm • Single ended, balanced	
McIntosh MC500	6,265	power amp • 500W • 45,27,51cm • Blue meters	
Mark Levinson 332	6,495	power amp • 200W • High current	
Mark Levinson 38S	6,495	preamp • 6L, 2T • rem • Special Edition, balanced	



Cables

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

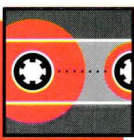
are used. Coaxial means that there is a central 'hot' conductor and a shield that carries the negative signal. Stranded cables have multiple strands and solid core uses individually insulated strand(s). ■ Digital interconnects connect CD transports to DACs, and are traditionally coaxial with a 75 Ohm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

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

PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

CABLE			
QED 42 Strand	1	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • med • low • copper • PVC outer, figure-of-8	
Cable Talk Flat One	2	speaker cable • stranded • copper • low intrusion budget cable	
Cable Talk Theatre 2	2	speaker cable • stranded • copper • entry level for AV purposes	
Ixos 603	2	133 Loudspeaker cable • stranded • copper	B'BUY
QED FI-4	2	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • med • low • copper • Flat construction, poly outer	
QED 79 Strand	2	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • low • low • copper • PVC outer, fig-of-8	
QED Qudos	2	145 Loudspeaker cable • stranded • low • low • OFHC copper • Polyethylene cover	B'BUY
Cable Talk Talk 3	3	133 speaker cable • stranded • copper • lively budget hi-fi cable	B'BUY
Ixos 601	3	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • OFC • 6 core	
QED RI-4	3	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • med • low • copper • 4-core, round construction	
Cable Talk Overture 2	4	speaker cable • stranded • copper	
Heybrook Heywire	4	109 Loudspeaker cable • solid core • copper • This well-meaning facsimile of earlier ribbon cables ends up sounding lumpy and uneven.	
Cable Talk Talk 3 Biwire	5	speaker cable • copper • 4 conductors, 6N	
Cable Talk Talk 4	5	speaker cable • stranded • copper	
Ixos 604	5	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • copper • Bi-wire	
Ixos 602	5	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • OFC • 12 core	
Nordost 2-Flat	5	Loudspeaker cable • solid core • copper • Flat construction	
QED Qudos Profile 8	5	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • OFHC • Flat 8-core OFHC poly	
Cable Talk Concert 2	6	133 speaker cable • stranded • copper • Signal Return Flow System	REC'D
Cable Talk Talk 4 Biwire	9	speaker cable • stranded • copper • 4 conductors, 6N	
Mission Quartet	9	133 Loudspeaker cable • solid core • copper • 4-conductor OFC solid core	
Nordost Flatline Gold	9	Loudspeaker cable • solid core • copper • flat construction	
Sonic Link First Mains	10	Mains cable • stranded • 12A • silver plated copper • PTFE insulated	
Arion LS0.5	12	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • silver • Priced per meter	
Cable Talk Concert 4	12	speaker cable • stranded • copper • 4 conductor version of Concert	
Nordost Super Flat Biwire	17	Loudspeaker cable • solid core • copper • flat twin construction	
QED Digiflex	19	108 Digital, electrical • coaxial • stranded • copper • A top performance, low-loss 75ohm coax with a very open, almost liquid quality.	B'BUY
DPA Opti-link	20	108 Digital, optical • plastic • Very similar to Bandridge AL560; sound is lacklustre	
Ixos 104	20	131 Interconnect • coaxial • stranded • OFC • 24 karat plugs	B'BUY
Ixos 603/10	20	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • copper • Unterminated	
Mission Stranded	20	109 Loudspeaker cable • stranded • copper • This Swedish made cable proved a real fit with our listeners - a slick performer and Best Buy upgrade.	B'BUY
Sonic Link Pure Mains	20	Mains cable • stranded • 3A • HPMC • PTFE insulated	
QED P2 Gold	22	Interconnect • Symmetrical • stranded • OFHC copper	
QED Incon P1 Gold	23	Interconnect • Symmetrical • stranded • OFHC copper	
Cable Talk Improved 2/CD	25	Interconnect • Symmetrical • coaxial • solid core • copper • Entry level CD etc phono-phono	
DNM ML125UK	25	Mains cable • solid core • 13A • High purity copper	
Ixos 105	25	131 Digital, electrical • 75 Ohms • copper • OFC screen	REC'D
QED Optiflex	25	Digital, optical • plastic fibre	
QED Incon P2 Seold	25	Interconnect • coaxial • stranded • OFHC copper	
QED Incon P1 Seold	26	Interconnect • Symmetrical • coaxial • stranded • OFHC copper	
DPA Digi-link	28	108 Digital, electrical • coaxial • stranded • 75ohms • copper • Can seem slightly impassive but there's no avoiding its exceptionally detailed sound.	B'BUY
Arion LS1	30	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • silver • Priced per meter	
Chord Chrysalis	30	Interconnect • stranded • copper	
Nordost Magic 1	30	Interconnect • Symmetrical • stranded • low • copper	
Sonic Link Super Mains	30	Mains cable • stranded • 30A • silver plated copper • PTFE insulated	
Sonic Link Light Brown	30	108 Digital, electrical • coaxial • 75ohms • PTFE • Deviates from the 75 ohm standard and provides an unbalanced sound.	
vH MV Videolink 75	30	108 Digital, electrical • coaxial • 75ohms • copper • An AV-cum-digital cable that nearly beats QED's Digiflex, but emphasises sibilants.	REC'D
Chord Codac	32	108 Digital, electrical • coaxial • stranded • 75ohms • copper • A connection with a stranded inner core and a sound that lacks integration.	
QED Qudos Terminated	33	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • low • low • OFHC copper • Various lengths, terminated	
DNM TC75	34	131 Analogue • solid core • medium • low • high purity copper • Non-coaxial	B'BUY
Cable Talk Advanced 2	35	Interconnect • Symmetrical • coaxial • solid core • 6N copper • phono-phono, for CD etc	
Sonic Link Pink	35	Interconnect • coaxial • stranded • silver plated copper	
Kimber Cable PSB D'link	37	108 Digital, electrical • copper • An analogue interconnect inappropriately pressed into digital service. A visible deterioration in the digital signal results.	
Chord Cobra	39	Interconnect • stranded • copper	
Ixos 103	40	131 Interconnect • coaxial • stranded • OFC • Double shielded, locking plugs	REC'D
Sonic Link AST150	40	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • low • copper	
Naim NAC05	44	109 Loudspeaker cable • stranded • copper • Described as a 'dinosaur of a cable', this stiff wire rod doesn't belong outside Naim systems.	
Audioquest F-14	45	109 Loudspeaker cable • solid core • copper • Ideal for laying under c.arpets, F-14 encourages a slightly warm and vibrant sound	REC'D

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE	SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
Monster Interlink LS100	45	108	Digital, optical • plastic • <i>Well constructed stepped-index fibre with polished ends and connectors. Lean, fuzzy, engaging performance.</i>	REC'D
Monster Datalink 100	45	108	Digital, electrical • coaxial • 75ohms • copper • <i>A colourful coaxial interconnect with an equally colourful and up-beat sound. Very compatible.</i>	REC'D
Sonic Link Red	45		Interconnect • coaxial • stranded • HPMC	
DPA Slink	47		Interconnect • coaxial • stranded • low • silver • phono terminated	
Chord Prodac	49	131	Digital, electrical • 75ohms	REC'D
Chord Cobra-mono	49		Interconnect • stranded • copper	
Kronos Konnekt 3	49		Interconnect • coaxial • stranded • copper	
Arion LS-2	50		Loudspeaker cable • stranded • silver • Biwire, priced per meter	
Audioquest Video Z	50	108	Digital, electrical • coaxial • stranded • 75ohms • copper • <i>The very best available, with an expressive sound, but generously priced.</i>	B'BUY
Cable Talk Monitor 2	50		Interconnect • copper • Signal Return Flow System	
Cable Talk Improved 2/T1	50		Interconnect • Symmetrical • coaxial • solid core • copper • Entry level phono-phono	
Nordost Black Knight	50		Interconnect • Symmetrical • stranded • copper	
Sonic Link Green	50	131	Digital, electrical • coaxial • 75ohms • PTFE	REC'D
Sonic Link Derwent	50		Interconnect • stranded • silver plated copper	
vdH The Clearwater	50	109	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • silver/copper • <i>Despite its evocative title, the Clearwater turns out to be a disappointingly murky sounding cable.</i>	
Kimber Cable KC-1 D'link	52	108	Digital, electrical • copper • <i>This cable adopts a woven construction with the addition of a conductive screen. Music lacks detail and spirit.</i>	
Nordost Blue Heaven	58		Loudspeaker cable • stranded • low • silver/copper	
Kimber Cable Opti-link	59	108	Digital, optical • plastic • <i>Hardly cheap for what appears to be a bog-standard PMNA fibre, yet it sounds a little brighter and livelier than most.</i>	REC'D
Ixos 102	60		Interconnect • coaxial • stranded • OFC • Double shielded, locking plugs	
Trichord Pulsewire 75/D	64		digital interconnect • Symmetrical • coaxial • solid core • 75 ohms • silver plated copper • mono	
Cable Talk Studio 2	65		Interconnect • Symmetrical • coaxial • solid core • copper • Enhanced version of Monitor 2	
Chord Siren	65		Interconnect • coaxial • stranded • Silver plated copper	
Chord Chameleon	68		Interconnect • stranded • copper	
Arion SA0.5	75		Interconnect • Symmetrical • stranded • silver	
Audioquest Type 4	75	109	Loudspeaker cable • copper • <i>Four 18-gauge OFHC copper conductors wound in a Litz-type fashion increases capacitance but restrains the cable's 'bite'.</i>	
Audioquest Digital PRO	90	108	Digital, electrical • coaxial • stranded • 75ohms • silver • <i>A silver cable with all the drive of Video Z but lacking its clear cut transparency.</i>	
Sonic Link Grey	90	109	Loudspeaker cable • solid core • silver plated copper • <i>A spaghetti-thin silver plated cable lacks bass impact and treble 'air'</i>	
Kimber Cable KC-AG D'link 95	95	108	Digital, electrical • silver • <i>An asymmetric cable using silver conductors that deviates from the 75ohm standard. Not ideal for digital applications.</i>	
Arion DAC1	99		Digital, electrical • coaxial • stranded • 75ohms • silver	
Kronos Konnekt 2	99		Interconnect • coaxial • solid core • copper	
Nordost Red Dawn	99		Loudspeaker cable • stranded • low • low • silver	
Audio Note AN-D	100	109	Loudspeaker cable • solid core • copper • <i>Supplied in linear, non-polarised lengths that should be twisted into stereo pairs. Sounds rather grippy and forward.</i>	
Audioquest Optlink Z	100	108	Digital, optical • glass • <i>Good level of midband detail but frequency extremes lack depth and extension.</i>	
Ixos 101	100		Interconnect • coaxial • stranded • silver plated OFC • Double shielded, locking plugs	
Chord Solid	130	131	Interconnect • coaxial • solid core • copper/silver	REC'D
Nordost Moonglo Digital	135		Digital interconnect • coaxial	
Cable Talk Reference	140		interconnect • Symmetrical • coaxial • solid core • copper • Phonos, anti-microphonic	
Moth Leyline Datalink	140	108	Digital, electrical • coaxial • 750 Ohms • copper • <i>A thin, coaxial version of Leyline Black with a rather hard and unforgiving character. Too expensive.</i>	
Sonic Link Care Music	150	133	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • low • silver plated copper	
Trichord Pulsewire 75	150		interconnect • Symmetrical • coaxial • solid core • 75 ohms • silver plated copper • stereo	
Audio Note AN-B	165	109	Loudspeaker cable • solid core • copper • <i>High capacitance Litz-type cable may act as a taming influence in many systems.</i>	REC'D
Sonic Link Black	165	131	Interconnect • stranded • silver plated copper	
DNM LBC500	170	109	Loudspeaker cable • solid core • copper • <i>High impedance can influence the treble response, but this was a winner on sound per pound.</i>	B'BUY
Arion DAC2	199		Digital, electrical • coaxial • stranded • 75 Ohms • silver	
Arion SA2	199		Interconnect • Symmetrical • stranded • silver	
Kronos Konnekt 1	199		Interconnect • coaxial • stranded • copper	
Sonic Link Blue	200	131	Loudspeaker cable • solid core • high • HPMC • Biwire	
Sonic Link Derwent/spkr	200		Loudspeaker cable • low • silver plated copper • Biwire	
Nordost Red Dawn	250		Interconnect • Symmetrical • stranded • low • silver	
Audioquest Midn't Hyperlitz	260	109	Loudspeaker cable • solid core • copper • <i>Similar to Type 4, but with a delicate smoothness.</i>	
vdH The Magnum	265	109	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • copper/silver • <i>Touted as vdH's most prestigious twinlead cable, Magnum sounds soft and old fashioned.</i>	
DPA IS19	275	109	Loudspeaker cable • solid core • silver/copper • <i>Clear, neutral and transparent sound of the older 8S without the clarity of Gortex Black 16.</i>	
vdH The Wind	330	109	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • silver/copper • <i>The Wind' kicks up a storm with its lush midrange and bone-crunching bass!</i>	REC'D
Kimber Cable D-60	513		Digital electrical • coaxial • 75ohm • Silver • Teflon jacket	
Kimber Illuminati DV50	552		Interconnect • coaxial • stranded • solid core • 110 ohm XLR balanced • Woven shield + drain wire	
Kimber Cable Orchid	1,183		Interconnect • coaxial • 55ohms • silver • AES/EBU, Teflon dielectric	
Audio Note AN-S	1,270	133	Loudspeaker cable • silver • <i>Some 15 individually insulated silver strands make up this a civilised and exceptionally detailed sounding cable.</i>	REC'D



Cassette Decks

The compact cassette is still the world's most versatile and ubiquitous music storage medium. Buffs may wrinkle their noses, but they're happy to use cassette decks to make up tapes for the car.

■ There should be no problems in connecting a cassette deck to any normal amplifier, but some care needs to be taken in choosing the best tapes for a specific machine.

(Trial and error is one effective technique, but many decks have manual bias adjustment and some match up to the tape automatically.) Lab performance and sound quality often go hand in hand, and are frequently somewhat dependent upon factory alignment. The mechanical integrity of the mechanism is another crucial factor.

■ Twin decks offer the option to dub tapes and play two cassettes sequentially. Autoreverse is a useful feature, but

usually with some mechanical compromise.

Key	
single, twin	.....type of cassette deck
Dolby B, C, HX-Pro	.....noise reduction and other circuitry
2 head	.....number of heads

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE	SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
CASSETTE DECKS				
Sherwood DS1150	80		single • Dolby B, C • 2 head	
Goodmans Delta 700W	100	123	twin • Dolby B • 2 head • 36,13,28cm • <i>Compact and ultra-basic twin deck which is rough and bass shy, with a less than stable tape path.</i>	
Sherwood DS1010C	100		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • Mic input	
Sherwood DD1030C	100		twin • Dolby B • 2 head	
Sony TC-FX211B	100		single • Dolby B, C • 2 head • 43,12,29cm	
Teac V395CHX	100		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,21cm • Dual capstan, remote control	
Aiwa AD-F450	120	136	single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • <i>Basic but well designed budget deck, astonishing value; only the poor metering gives the game away.</i>	B'BUY
JVC TD-W106BK	120		twin • Dolby B • 2 head • 44,13,24cm • Twin, one recording deck	
Sherwood DS3010C	120	117	single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • <i>Good range of facilities, let down by poor transport and iffy electronics.</i>	
Goodmans GSW650	130		twin • Dolby B • 2 head • 43,12,27cm • Both auto-reverse	
Sony TC-K215B	130		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 43,12,31cm • Tape calibration	
Sony TC-K311B	130		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 43,12,31cm • Auto calibration	
Teac V-610	130		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,14,28cm • Logic control, FL display	
Grundig CCF210	150		twin • auto reverse • Dolby B • 2 head • 36,12,30cm • AMS, CD copy, hi speed dub	
Sony TC-W445B	150		twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 43,12,31cm • Full logic control	
Denon DRM-540	160	146	single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,28cm • <i>Exceptionally stable and well focussed sound quality and a bargain price.</i>	B'BUY
Yamaha IX-380	169		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,29cm • Play Trim, manual bias	
Aiwa AD-WX727	170	146	twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • <i>High class twin for those who want bells, whistles - and music.</i>	B'BUY

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE	SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
Grundig Fine Arts CCF2	170		twin • Dolby B • 2 head • 44,13,30cm • AMS, remote, display off	
JVC TD-W218BK	170		twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,33cm • "Compu" auto tape calibration	
JVC TD-X372BK	170		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,33cm • Entry level single deck	
Kenwood KX-W4070	170		twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,14,27cm • Auto bias function	
Kenwood KX-3060	170	139	single • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,12,37cm • Based on CD-53 DAC/filter, but with a more transparent, sober and insightful sound.	B'BUY
Pioneer CT-S330	170		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 42,13,28cm • Audio tape setup, FLEX	
Sony TC-K461S	180	146	single • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 2 head • 43,13,31cm • Transport is good, and sound quality is fine, though undynamic. Marginal with metals.	REC'D
Sony TC-K415B	180	136	single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • 43,12,31cm • Mainly UK designed with audiophile intent, but spoiled by erratic output, at worst with metal tape.	
Teac R-560	180		Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,14,28cm • Logic control, FL display	
Teac W-760R	180		twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,14,29cm • R/C logic & FL display	
Grundig CCF310	190		twin • auto reverse • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 36,12,30cm • Elapsed time, CD copy, AMS	
NAD 602	199	127	single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • Minimalist deck for the audiophile market. Unfortunately engineering is minimalist too	
Yamaha KX-W282	199		twin • Dolby B, C • 2 head • 44,13,28cm • Twin auto-reverse, one records	
Yamaha KX-480	199		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,28cm • Auto-tape tuning, Play Trim	
Denon DRW-580	200		twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • Music search, hi speed dub	
Dual CC8000 RS	200		twin • Dolby B, C • 2 head • 44,13,25cm • Remote via 9000RS	
Grundig Fine Arts CCF3	200	146	twin • auto reverse • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,30cm • Unstable sounding twin thanks to a primitive transport mechanism.	
JVC TD-R472BK	200		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,33cm	
JVC TD-W318BK	200		twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,14,34cm • 'Silent' mechanism	
Kenwood KX-W6070	200		twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,14,27cm • Auto-bias function	
Luxman K-322	200	146	single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 13,44,18cm • Gives best value results with lower bias tapes, helped by a successful Dolby C installation.	
Marantz SD-53	200	146	single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 43,14,30cm • Modestly equipped player is short-changed by a rough transport, and dull prerecorded quality.	
Pioneer CT-W503R	200		twin • auto reverse • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 42,13,25cm • Auto NR, FLEX	
Pioneer CT-S430S	200	136	single • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 2 head • 42,13,28cm • Against the odds - a 2-head Dolby S deck that works. Well set up and fully equipped.	B'BUY
Sony TC-WR545B	200		twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 43,12,29cm • Auto calibration	
Technics RS-TR373	200		twin • auto reverse • Dolby B, C • 2 head • 43,14,29cm • Play transport unidirectional	
Technics RS-BX501	200		Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 43,13,30cm • Centre tray, ATC	
Denon DRS-640	210	140	single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,31cm • Drawer loading deck, with simple facilities and smooth, well adjusted sound.	B'BUY
JVC TD-V562BK	220	123	single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • 44,13,33cm • Ultra-sophisticated transport at a silly price; sound quality is stable but slightly opaque.	REC'D
Technics RS-TR474	220		twin • auto reverse • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 43,14,29cm • High speed FF/REW	
Aiwa AD-F850	230		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • Super DX head, twin capstan	
NAD 613	230		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,29cm • Block repeat, R/C links	
Pioneer CT-W603RS	230		twin • auto reverse • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 2 head • 42,13,25cm • Auto tape setup, FLEX, Dolby S	
Kenwood KX-5060S	235	140	single • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,12,30cm • Well engineered transport and Dolby S star in this refined and detailed design.	REC'D
Yamaha KX-W482	249		twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,28cm • Twin recording auto-reverse	
Yamaha KX-580	249	146	single • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,28cm • Stable and clean, if bright. Play Trim helps wake up recalcitrant recordings.	B'BUY
Grundig Fine Arts CF4	250		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • 44,13,30cm • Manual bias, AMS, monitor	
JVC TD-W178BK	250		twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,14,34cm • Tape calibration, stabiliser	
Marantz SD-535	250		twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 43,14,32cm • Synchro record	
Onkyo TA-RW313	250		twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 46,12,31cm	
Sony TC-WR645S	250		twin • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 2 head • 43,12,31cm • UK optimised sound	
Sony TC-K511S	250		single • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 3 head • 43,12,31cm • UK optimised sound	
Teac V-1030	250	105	single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • 44,15,29cm • Optional remote control	REC'D
Technics RS-BX601	250	146	Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • 43,13,29cm • Remarkably fast cassette wind means it will suit those with large collections. Good all-round sound.	REC'D
Denon DRW-760	260		twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,28cm	
Denon DRM-740	270	136	single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • 44,13,28cm • Breathed-on DRM-710, with good external treatment offers good, if somewhat detached sonics.	
JVC TD-V662BK	270	146	single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • 44,13,33cm • Assured, clean and agile sounding recorder, if not quite the most refined in its class.	B'BUY
Marantz SD-63	270		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • 43,14,30cm • D-bus	
NAD 614	270		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,32cm • Play Trim, CAR compression	
Kenwood KX-W8070S	280		twin • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,14,27cm • Auto bias function, power load	
Technics RS-TR575	280		twin • auto reverse • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 43,14,29cm • Optical quick reverse	
Aiwa AD-S950	300	140	single • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 3 head • High-value, high-spec package is both well set up and musically well sorted.	B'BUY
Pioneer CT-W803RS	300		twin • auto reverse • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 2 head • 42,13,25cm • Twin record, mic/vp	
Pioneer CT-S630S	300	140	single • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 3 head • 42,13,38cm • 3 heads and Dolby S feature in an excellent deck that is underbiased with Type IV-tapes.	REC'D
Sony TC-K611S	300	127	single • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 3 head • 43,12,30cm • Good Dolby S deck - slightly let down by lack of attention to detail.	REC'D
Technics RS-BX701	300	136	Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • 43,13,30cm • Costly, but well built, this decks is a pleasure to operate and listen to.	REC'D
Denon DRS-810	310	127	single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • 44,13,32cm • Drawer loading deck, carefully designed yet lacking in subtlety on audition.	
NAD 616	320		twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,29cm • Twin auto-reverse, R/C link	
Kenwood KX-7060S	329	146	single • HX Pro • 3 head • 44,13,30cm • Although slightly dull sounding with prerecorded tapes, this is a well equipped and fine sounding deck.	REC'D
Onkyo KR-609	350		Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 28,12,31cm • Mini component	
Onkyo TA250	350		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • 46,12,31cm	
Technics RS-BX747	350		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • 43,13,30cm • Fine bias adj, THC lo-red base	
Onkyo K-W606	370		twin • auto reverse • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 28,12,32cm • Mini component	
Pioneer CT-M601R	380		Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 42,14,38cm • Six tape record/play, r/cntrl	
Luxman K-373	400		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • 13,44,35cm • System bus, mic inputs	
Marantz CP-230	400		single • Dolby B • 2 head • DC portable, semi-pro	



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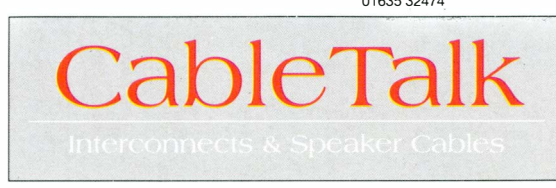
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PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

Marantz SD-635	400	twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 43,9,32cm • Drawer loading	
Technics RS-TR979	400	twin • auto reverse • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 43,13,28cm • Both decks record, quick rev	
Onkyo K-611	430	146 Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • 28,12,32cm • Cute drawer loading mini-size component with 3-heads and dual capstan transport.	REC'D
Marantz DC-1010	450	single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 42,8,31cm • Inc CD player module	
Nakamichi DR3	450	123 single • Dolby B, C • 2 head • 43,10,32cm • Refined, exquisitely detailed and solid sounding 'budget' Nakamichi 2-header.	REC'D
Teac W-6000R	450	twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,15,33cm • Pitch control, remote	
Marantz CP-430	500	single • Dolby B • 3 head • Portable, dbx NR, anti-roll	
Pioneer CT-S830S	500	146 single • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 3 head • 42,14,38cm • High class mechanism, if lacking in battleship externals, and superb sound.	REC'D
Yamaha KX-W952	599	twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,16,37cm • Twin record, opt remote	
Teac V-8030S	650	single • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 3 head • 43,15,35cm • Quartz locked, dual capstan	
Nakamichi DR2	700	127 single • Dolby B, C • 3 head • 43,10,32cm • Accomplished design with simple features (manual tape select!) but superb sound and serviceability.	B'BUY
Nakamichi DR1	850	117 single • Dolby B, C • 3 head • 43,10,32cm • Typically oddball Nakamichi with everything. Good azimuth adjustment and dynamic sound.	REC'D
Arcam Delta 100	899	111 single • Dolby B, C, S • 3 head • 43,12,34cm • Superb transport and a ripe, spacious sound. Dolby S is more successful than some.	REC'D
Pioneer CT-95	1,000	single • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 3 head • 44,15,38cm • Copper plated chassis	
Nakamichi Dragon	2,350	Dolby B, C • 3 head • 45,14,30cm • Auto azimuth correct	



CD Players, Transports & DACs

Now established as the prime audio source, the CD player continues to evolve. Manufacturers have accepted that 'Perfect Sound Forever' (an early Philips slogan) was a trifle optimistic. Now the medium is being slowly transformed into something worthy of the audiophile's enthusiasm.

■ All CD players offer a basic selection of facilities, and some can keep you entertained for hours as you programme in disc names and track orders. All but the excessively inexpensive feature remote control. Most CD

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

Transports & DACs

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

box, expensive players are usually two-box affairs.

■ The first thing listed for a DAC is the type of convertor chip employed. However, in much the same way that an amp's output is not indicative of its sound quality, the DAC chip is only one factor in a CD player's sound.

Key

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

PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

CD PLAYERS			
Eclipse CD101a	80	144 multibit • rem • 36,8,29cm	
Eclipse CD420	100	multibit • rem • 42,8,29cm	
Philips CD163	100	multibit • 36,29,8cm • Midi size	
Philips CD711	100	multibit • 44,26,9cm • With Bitcheck	
Pioneer PD-77	100	1 bit • electrical out • optical out • rem • 44,13,33cm • Satin gold finish	
Goodmans Delta 700	110	128 multibit • rem • A 16-bit alternative to the CD650II that furnishes a colourful and animated sound.	REC'D
Goodmans GCD360R	120	multibit • rem	
Grundig CD210	120	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 36,8,30cm • 30 mem, random repeat	
JVC XL-V184BK	120	1 bit • 44,11,28cm	
Philips CD721	130	multibit • rem • 44,30,11cm • With Bitstream D/A conversion	
Sherwood CD3020R	130	119 bitstream • Although this budget wonder has little respect for musical convention, what emerges is still remarkably entertaining.	B'BUY
Sony CDP-M302	130	1 bit • rem • 36,10,33cm • Midi-size, full remote control	
Technics SL-PG370	130	mash • 43,92,24cm • Remote control ready	
Dual CD1135RC	140	multibit • electrical out • rem • 42,8,28cm • Variable headphone output	
Grundig Fine Arts CD1	140	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 44,9,30cm • 30 track memory, auto-space	
JVC XL-V284BK	140	147 1 bit • rem • 44,11,28cm • Featuring a new set of bitstream innards, this flexible player also boasts a refined, if occasionally unpredictable sound.	REC'D
Pioneer PD-103	140	1 bit • 42,11,28cm • Display off	
Teac CD-P1100	140	multibit • rem • 44,9,28cm • Headphone jack	
Aiwa XC-300	150	1 bit • optical out • rem	
Cambridge Audio CD4	150	147 electrical out • rem • 43,9,29cm • Basic appearance and sluggish track access/track search belies its up and at 'em sound quality.	REC'D
Denon DCD-315	150	bitstream • rem • 44,11,28cm	
Dual CD1150RC	150	multibit • electrical out • rem • Variable headphone output	
Sony CDP-312	150	139 1 bit • rem • 43,10,29cm • Something of a rough diamond, offering a raft of features and good build but a decidedly Technicolor sound	
Teac CD-P3200	150	147 multibit • rem • 44,12,28cm • A primitive looking CD player, housing primitive 16-bit electronics which deliver an equally primitive and uninspiring sound.	
Technics SL-PG470AK	150	mash • optical out • rem • 43,96,24cm • CD edit	
Kenwood DP-2060	160	147 1 bit • rem • 44,10,26cm • A player that bears absolutely no relation to the DP-3060, despite appearances. Sounds vague and thoroughly uninteresting.	
Pioneer PD-203	160	1 bit • rem • 42,11,28cm • As 103, variable H/P output	
Yamaha CDX-480	169	147 bitstream • rem • 44,10,28cm • A dispassionately calm sounding player that delivers the musical goods with little or no apparent enthusiasm.	
Dual CD1000RS	170	bitstream • electrical out • Remote control via CR9000RS	
Philips CD740	170	139 multibit • electrical out • rem • One of several Philips players using hybrid DAC technologies. Still sounds insufferably boring, however.	
Technics SL-PG570AK	170	mash • rem • 43103,29cm • Digital servo, THCB base	
Teac CD-P3450	179	1 bit • optical out • rem • 44,10,25cm • 8x o/sampling tape record edit	
Dual CD1180RC	180	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 44,9,29cm • Variable headphone output	
JVC XL-F116BK	180	1 bit • 44,13,40cm • 5-disc carousel	
NAD 501	189	139 bitstream • A thoroughly typical frills-free player with a slightly too cautious, even restrained musical outlook.	
Grundig Fine Arts CD2	190	128 bitstream • electrical out • rem • 44,9,30cm • A stylish looking player, with a disappointingly vague approach to music making.	
Yamaha CDC-555	199	multibit • rem • 44,11,39cm • Entry level	
Denon DCD-825	200	137 multibit • electrical out • rem • Despite extensive revisions, this latest player still sounds like a typical 18-bit Denon, which is no bad thing!	REC'D
Denon DCD-625	200	147 multibit • electrical out • rem • 44,11,29cm • DCD-615 replacement is generously equipped but lacks sophisticated sound of its forebear.	
JVC XL-F216BK	200	1 bit • rem • 44,13,40cm • 5-disc carousel	
Kenwood DP-R4070	200	1 bit • rem • 44,12,34cm • 5-disc tray loading	
Kenwood DP-3060	200	139 1 bit • rem • 44,10,26cm • Based on the same filter/DAC as Marantz's CD-53, but with a more transparent, sober and highly insightful sound.	B'BUY
Luxman D-322	200	147 bitstream • rem • 44,10,28cm • Well bred player sounds smooth and cultured without appearing grey or boring.	
Marantz CD-53	200	139 bitstream • electrical out • rem • 43,9,30cm • Looks identical to CD-63, but internal costs are cut, exposing a slightly ragged performer.	REC'D
Onkyo DX-710	200	1 bit • optical out • rem • 46,11,31cm	
Pioneer PD-S504	200	147 bitstream • electrical out • rem • 42,11,29cm • More consistent than the old PD-S503 and capable strong atmosphere and 'occasion'.	B'BUY
Rotel RCD-930AX	200	1 bit • rem • 44,9,29cm	
Sanyo CPM2403	200	bitstream • rem • 24 disc 'intelligent' changer	
Sherwood CDC5030R	200	132 1 bit • rem • 44,10,38cm • This replacement for the 5-disc CDC5010R sounds messy, disjointed and generally unpleasant. A disappointment.	
Sony CDP-561E	200	147 bitstream • optical out • rem • 43,11,30cm • Combines plenty of features with an open, transparent and sparkling sound.	B'BUY
Technics SL-PS670AK	200	mash • optical out • rem • 45,12,29cm • Virtual Battery operation	
Yamaha CDX-580	229	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 44,10,28cm • UK specified o/p stage	
Harman-Kardon HD7225	230	bitstream • rem • 45,10,33cm	
Sony CDP-C325M	230	1 bit • rem • 36,10,39cm • Midi size, 5-disc player	
Sony CDP-C345	230	132 1 bit • rem • 43,13,39cm • Sony's Hybrid Pulse DAC sounds great in the CDP-311 but in this 5 disc carousel it provides a mere skeleton of a performance.	
NAD 502	239	119 mash • electrical out • rem • 44,108,40cm • Updated 5425 trades spontaneity for precise, but mechanical style.	REC'D

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 Arcam Alpha 6 (F/L) £599.00
 Arcam Delta 270 (F/L) £799.00
 Arcam Delta 250 Transport £799.00
 Arcam Black Box 50 £479.00
 Arcam Black Box 500 £745.00
 Denon DCD 825 £239.00

(F/L) = FREE CHORD COMPANY INTERCONNECT WORTH £25.00

- Linn Mimik CD Player £875.00
 Linn CD Players - Full range? **YES!**
 Marantz CD46(New) £179.00
 Marantz CD63/2 £269.00
 Marantz CD63se £349.00
 NAD 501 £199.00
 NAD 512 (F/L) £249.00
 Naim CD3 (F/L) £949.00
 Naim CD Players - Full range? **YES!**
 Pioneer PD-S904 £399.00
 Quad 77 (Mains) £850.00
 Rotel RCD 930AX £199.00
 Rotel RCD 970BX (F/L) £349.00

TURNTABLES

- Dual CS504 inc AT95e £199.00

- Rega Planar 2 Inc RB250* £198.00
 Rega Planar 3 Inc RB300* £260.00
 Linn LP12 Basik* £1050.00
 Linn LP12 Lingo* **YES!**
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- NAD 5120 inc Cart £139.00

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 Arcam Alpha 6 Plus £349.00
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 Arcam Delta 290P £399.00
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 Linn Majik (line) £650.00
 Linn Wakonda (line) £725.00

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 NAD 312 Amplifier £199.00
 NAIM Nait 3 Integrated £549.00

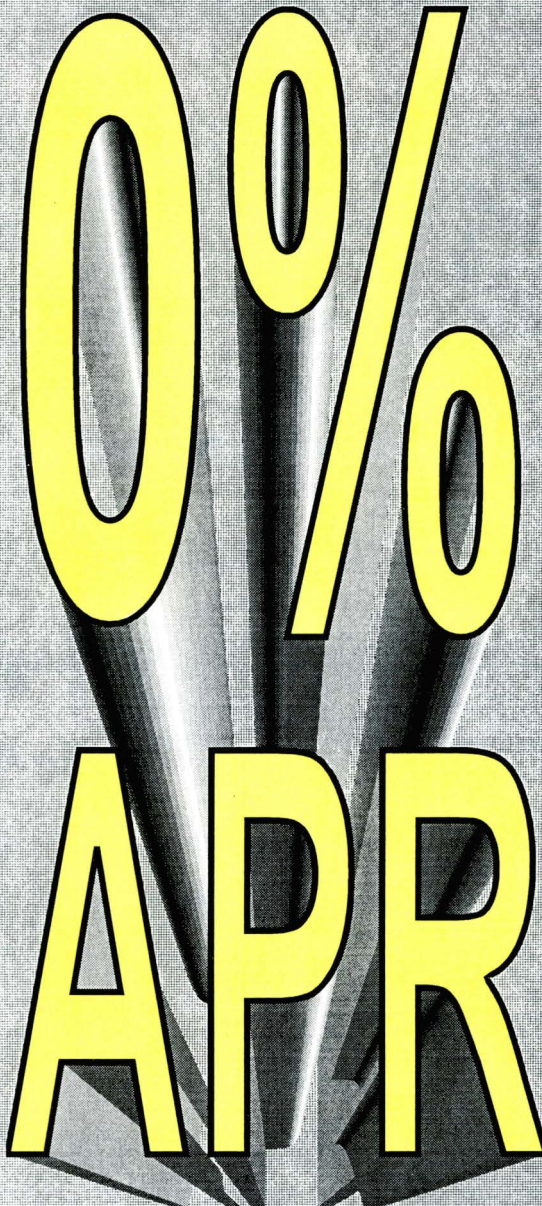
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TUNERS

- Arcam Alpha 5 Tuner Plus £219.00
Arcam Delta 280 Tuner (F/L) £399.00
 Denon Tu 260L Tuner £119.00
 Linn Kudos £775.00
NAD 402 Tuner £149.00
 NAD 414 RDS £249.00
Marantz ST55 Tuner £129.00
 Naim NAT 03 Tuner (F/L) £549.00
 Quad FM4 Tuner (F/L) £429.00
 Quad 66FM Tuner(F/L) £529.00
 Rega Radio AM/FM Tuner (F/L) £229.00
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 Rotel RT 940AX (F/L) £199.00

CASSETTE

- Denon DRM550 £159.00
 Denon DRS640 £209.00
Denon DRW 580 (New) £199.00
NAD 613 (New) £229.00
Nakamichi DR3 (Was 399) ... £449.00
Nakamichi DR2 (F/L x 2) £699.00
Nakamichi DR1 (F/T) £799.00
Nakamichi Dragon (F/Lx2) .. £2350.00
 Yamaha KX380 £169.00
 Yamaha KX480 £199.00
 Yamaha KX-W482 £249.00
Yamaha KX580 (F/L) £249.00

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Heybrook HB1 £229.00
 KEF Coda 7 £129.00
KEF Coda 8 (Free C.T.3) £189.00
 Linn Full range stocked & on Dem? **YES!**
MISSION 751 (Free C.T.3) £299.00
MISSION 752 (Free C.T.3) £499.00
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ProAc Response One £999.00
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 Rega Ela (Black) £498.00
Rogers LS33 (Free C.T.3) £249.00
 Tannoy 631 Speakers £129.00
Tannoy 632 (Free C.T.3) £199.00
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 Polk RM3000/2 System £699.00
 Pioneer V201 Sat/Sub System £249.00

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PRODUCT	£	ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
Denon DCD-825	240	multibit • electrical out • rem • 44,11,28cm • UK design	
Grundig Fine Arts CD3	240	bitstream • rem • 44,9,30cm	
Grundig CD3	240	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 44,9,30cm • FTS, display off, fade, DAC7	
Onkyo DX-703	240	1 bit • optical out • rem • 46,11,31cm	
Yamaha CDC-655	249	bitstream • optical out • rem • 44,11,39cm • Tray load multi-player	
JVC XL-V574BK	250	139 1 bit • optical out • rem • 44,11,28cm	
Kenwood DP-M5570	250	1 bit • rem • 44,13,37cm • 6+1 disc changer	
Kenwood DP-5060	250	1 bit • optical out • rem • 44,12,31cm • D.R.I.V.E.	
Marantz CC-45	250	bitstream • optical out • rem • 44,12,40cm • 5 disc carousel	
NAD 512	250	electrical out • rem • 44,9,26cm • Low output impedance	
Pioneer PD-M603	250	1 bit • rem • 42,11,30cm • Six disc	
Rotel RCD-940BX	250	137 multibit • rem • 44,10,32cm • <i>A sea change in transport and DAC technology lies behind this untidy-sounding and irritating player.</i>	
Sony CDP-761E	250	147 bitstream • optical out • rem • 43,11,40cm • Tarded up CDP-561E with less widgets and a slightly overcooked performance.	REC'D
Teac CD-3	250	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 45,13,28cm • Central mechanism	
Teac PD-D2200	250	multibit • rem • 44,11,38cm • 5-disc carousel	
Technics SL-PS770A	250	147 mash • optical out • rem • 43,13,29cm • <i>AA mellow sounding player that never quite rouses from its slumber to really tackle the music at hand.</i>	
Onkyo DX-7210	260	147 bitstream • rem • Well-bred CD player features an unusual digital filter is smooth and cultured without appearing grey or boring.	REC'D
Marantz CD-63MkII	270	151 bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 42,9,30cm • Smooth sounding and highly satisfying player	B'BUY
Teac CD-P4500	280	107 bitstream • electrical out • rem • 44,12,29cm • Teac's first genuine 1-bit player its sound has a certain 'organic warmth'.	REC'D
Onkyo C-711	290	1 bit • optical out • rem • 28,8,30cm • Mini component	
Harman-Kardon HD7325	299	bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 45,10,33cm	
Arcam Alpha One	300	137 delta sigma • electrical out • rem • 43,8,29cm • <i>The first UK-built player under £300 is hampered by a tidy but rather grey and uninspiring sound.</i>	
Denon DCD-1015	300	141 multibit • electrical out • optical out • rem • 44,11,28cm • Excellent, middle range player - fast, fluid and lean	REC'D
JVC XL-2674BK	300	151 1 bit • rem • 44,11,28cm • Even handed, but glosses over the most intimate moments	REC'D
JVC XL-M408BK	300	1 bit • rem • 44,13,32cm • Six disc	
Marantz CD-1010	300	1 bit • optical out • rem • 42,8,31cm • Slim Series component	
Musical Fidelity E60	300	bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 44,10,34cm	
Nakamichi MB4s	300	132 multibit • rem • 43,9,27cm • Entry level Music-Bank player has plenty of dynamics and detail but little stereo depth.	REC'D
Pioneer PD-S703	300	137 1 bit • optical out • rem • 42,13,27cm • Legato Link and bitstream player sounds as manipulative and intriguing as ever.	REC'D
Pioneer PD-M703	300	1 bit • rem • 42,13,30cm • Six disc, DSP soundfield cntrl	
Rotel RCD-965BX	300	100 bitstream • electrical out • rem • 44,10,32cm • Exceptionally refined: transparent, exquisitely detailed and powerfully emotive. A landmark.	B'BUY
Marantz CD-1020	334	1 bit • optical out • rem • 42,8,31cm • Slim Series, motorised cover	
Yamaha CDX-880	339	141 bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 44,10,29cm • UK specified components	
AMC CD6	349	124 bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • Based on Rotel's RCD-965BX, but has a raunchier, beefier but less transparent sound.	REC'D
Harman-Kardon HD7425	349	141 multibit • electrical out • rem • 45,10,33cm	
Onkyo DX-7510	350	151 bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 46,11,31cm • <i>Strongly flavoured, assertive sound</i>	
Onkyo DX-750	350	141 bitstream • optical out • rem • 46,11,31cm	B'BUY
Teac CD-5	350	151 bitstream • rem • 48,12,29cm • <i>Bright, breezy and up-beat - but short in the trowser department</i>	
NAD 514	370	151 bitstream • optical out • rem • 44,108,40cm • Boistrous sound, but undeniably attractive	REC'D
Rotel RCD-970BX	375	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 44,8,30cm	
Rotel RCD-965BX D	375	141 bitstream • electrical out • rem • 44,10,32cm • Discrete output	
Kenwood DP-7060	380	141 1 bit • optical out • rem • 44,12,31cm • D.R.I.V.E	REC'D
Audio Innovations Alto	399	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 43,8,30cm • Dual diff DAC	
Aura CD100	400	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 43,6,28cm • Chrome finish, £50 extra	
NAD 517	400	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 44,108,40cm • 5-disc carousel player	
Pioneer PD-S904	400	151 1 bit • electrical out • optical out • rem • 42,14,29cm • <i>Too much legato - literally - in sound</i>	
Sony CDP-XA2ES	400	151 optical out • rem • 43,13,35cm • Strong-willed, heavyweight sound; not for the feint-hearted	REC'D
Rotel RCD-965BX LED	425	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 44,10,32cm • Discrete & slit foil caps	
Audio Innovations Alto Chr	449	151 bitstream • electrical out • rem • 43,8,30cm • <i>Lacks dynamic subtlety and discrimination of Alto amps</i>	
Harman-Kardon HD7525	449	151 multibit • electrical out • rem • 45,10,33cm • Glorious sounding player, if slightly inconsistent	REC'D
Pioneer PD-DM802	450	1 bit • rem • 42,14,31cm • Dual magazine 12-disc	
Technics SL-PS840	450	mash • optical out • rem • 43,13,34cm • Advanced MASH converter	
Arcam Alpha 5 Plus	470	151 multibit • electrical out • rem • 43,8,27cm • <i>Upbeat, dynamic sound disguises lack of transparency</i>	
Pioneer PD-S901	499	1 bit • electrical out • optical out • rem • 42,13,33cm • SPM, Legato Link, Twin DAC	
Aiwa DX-C100M	500	1 bit • optical out • rem • 100+1 disc autochanger	
Creek CD42	500	electrical out • rem • 42,8,30cm	
Nakamichi MB3s	500	multibit • rem • 43,9,38cm • 6+1 Music Bank, 18 x 8 o/s	
Orelle CD-100	500	multibit • electrical out • rem • 44,10,28cm • DC coupled	
Pioneer PD-TM3	500	1 bit • rem • 42,18,35cm • Triple magazine, 18-disc	
Harman-Kardon HD7625	549	multibit • electrical out • rem • 45,10,33cm	
Luxman D-373	550	multibit • optical out • rem • 44,11,35cm • System bus remote	
Micromega Stage 1	550	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 43,28,88cm • Upgradable	
Musical Fidelity E600	599	bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 44,12,35cm • Balanced XLR output	
Teac VRDS-7	599	bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 45,15,34cm • Twin BS, VRDS mech	
Arcam Alpha 6	600	electrical out • rem • 43,8,27cm • Upgradable from 5/5 Plus	
Kenwood DP-J2070	600	1 bit • rem • 44,19,38cm • 100 disc autochanger	
Marantz CD-72 Mk II	600	bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 42,13,30cm • DAC7	
Pioneer PD-F100	600	1 bit • rem • 42,19,40cm • 100 disc, Legato Link	
Micromega Stage 2	700	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 43,28,88cm • Upgradable	
Nakamichi MB2s	700	multibit • electrical out • rem • 43,9,38cm • 6+1 Music Bank, 18 x 8 o/s	
Teac VRDS-10	770	119 bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 45,15,34cm • <i>A basic analogue stage compromises performance. Lacks bass energy.</i>	
Linn Mimik	798	delta sigma • electrical out • rem • 32,8,33cm • BNC digital	
AVI S2000MCII	799	119 multibit • rem • 31,25,9cm • <i>A stylish, midi-width player with an exceptionally refined and comfortable sound. Lacks passion.</i>	
Harman-Kardon HD7725	799	124 multibit • electrical out • optical out • rem • 45,10,33cm • This flagship implementation of RLS sounds impressively bold and dynamic.	REC'D
Arcam Delta 270	800	124 hybrid • 2 electrical out • rem • 43,9,28cm • <i>Dry, tightly-focussed sound will either beguile or aggravate, depending on taste!</i>	
JVC XL-MC100	800	1 bit • rem • 36,37,38cm • 100 disc player	
Sony CDP-CX100	800	1 bit • optical out • 43,13,38cm • 100 disc autochanger	
Thule CD100	849	bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • Balanced out, Crystal chipset	
Teac VRDS-10SE	850	bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 45,15,34cm • Imp. mechanism & chassis	
Meridian 506	875	delta sigma • electrical out • optical out • rem • 33,9,34cm • Recently improved sound	
Quad 67	875	124 delta sigma • electrical out • rem • 33,8,26cm • Powerful, fluid and captivating sound reminiscent of Meridian's 206.	B'BUY
DPA Renaissance	895	bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 40,28,8cm • DPA DP16 DAC	
Micromega Stage 3	900	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 43,28,88cm • Upgradable	
Mission DAD7	900	145 multibit • electrical out • rem • 22,8,36cm	
Nakamichi MB1s	900	multibit • electrical out • rem • 43,9,27cm • 6+1 Music Bank, 20 x 8 o/s	
Thorens TCD2000	900	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 21,9,34cm • Top loader	
Naim CD3	949	multibit • rem • 43,56,30cm • 1 box	
Onix CD33	999	bitstream • 43,8,33cm • DAC7	
Technics SL-P2000	1,000	mash • optical out • rem • 45,13,33cm • THCB base, R-Core transformer	
Sentec Diana	1,100	multibit • electrical out • optical out • 12,5,23cm • 20 bit	
AVI S2000MC Ref	1,149	multibit • electrical out • rem • 31,25,9cm • 18bit 4x oversampling	
Marantz CD-10	1,200	bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 46,14,36cm • Twin DAC-7, heavy build	
Audiomeca Kreatura	1,299	multibit • electrical out • optical out • rem • 25,14,39cm	
Teac VRDS-20	1,299	bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 50,15,34cm • Twin DAC7, balanced output	
Meridian 606	1,350	1 bit	

PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

Marantz CD-16	1,400	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 25,29,13cm • Twin DAC-7	
Audiomeca Kreatura SE	1,450	141 multibit • electrical out • rem • 25,14,39cm • Trichord clocked	
Meridian 508	1,475	140 delta sigma • electrical out • optical out • rem • 33,9,34cm	REC'D
Roksan ATT-DP3P	1,495	delta sigma • electrical out • rem • 46,12,35cm • Player, four level isolation	
Linn Karik	1,497	144 delta sigma • electrical out • optical out • rem • 32,8,33cm • Based on early Linn transport, the Karik is dry but very positive, detailed and engrossing.	
Musical Fidelity FCD	1,499	bitstream • 2 electrical out • optical out • rem • 49,12,33cm • XLR balanced out, tube o/p	
Mission Disc/Dacmaster	1,900	multibit • electrical out • rem • 22,8,36cm • Two box, inc Dacmaster DAC	
Naim CD2	1,997	multibit • rem • 43,56,30cm • One box	
NVA T.E.S.	2,000	bitstream • electrical out • rem	
McIntosh MCD7008	2,195	multibit • electrical out • rem • 45,14,45cm • Seven disc multiplayer	
Pioneer PD-95	2,500	1 bit • electrical out • optical out • rem • 44,16,34cm • Balanced output, Legato, SPM	
McIntosh MCD7009	2,635	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 45,14,38cm • VRDS CD player	
YBA 2	2,999	multibit • electrical out • optical out • rem • 43,10,33cm • Outboard power supply	
Marantz CD-15	3,000	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 46,14,36cm • Twin Star Mark DAC-7	
NVA T.T.S	3,200	bitstream • electrical out • rem	
Naim CD5	3,642	multibit • rem • 43,56,30cm • Two box	
Micro-Seiki CD-M2DC	3,695	multibit • electrical out • rem	
Marantz CD-23	4,000	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 25,29,13cm • CDM-9/DAC-7 DAC	
Luxman D500S	4,500	multibit • optical out • rem • 44,12,39cm • Top loading	
Micro-Seiki CDM2000X	4,689	multibit • electrical out • rem	
Krell CD-DSP Mk II	5,000	rem • 42,13,28cm • Digital inputs facility	
Krell CD DSPII 5000	5,000	multibit • 2 electrical out • rem • 42,13,28cm • Has digital in, balanced out	
Micromega Trio	6,450	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 34,48,31cm • AES/Toslink digital output	
Wadia 16	7,395	multibit • Glass, plastic, BNC & AES/EBU	
Jadis JS-1	8,068	multibit	
Krell KSP20i	9,950	electrical out • rem • Balanced out, top loader	
Krell KPS20i	9,990	bitstream • electrical out • rem • Balanced output	

CD TRANSPORTS			
Teac VRDS-T1	550	144 transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 44,15,33cm • Superb quality engineering is mated to tidy and composed sound (tested with D-T1).	REC'D
DPA Enlightenment	635	transport • rem • 40,28,8cm • Clock locks to DPA DACs	
Audio Alchemy DDS III	700	transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • Designed primarily as transport, has analogue output	
Micromega Drive 1	700	transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 43,28,88cm • Upgradable, AES/EBU out	
Arcam Delta 250	750	130 transport • rem • 43,9,28cm • Arcam's best effort yet is a new design based on Philips CDM9 transport. Specification includes Sync Lock facility.	REC'D
Pink Triangle Cardinal	795	144 transport • 46,8,36cm • Soud quality is warm and communicative, but over-polished compared to PT Ordinal (tested with DaCapo and DC PSU).	
Meridian 200	895	96 transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 32,32,10cm • Light, fresh and very bubbly sound that is natural, engaging and unfatiguing.	REC'D
Teac P-700	900	120 transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 23,14,40cm • Tested with D-700, low resolution sound is warm, bubbly and entertaining.	B'BUY
Audiomeca Damnation	950	transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 29,10,32cm	
Roksan ATT-DP3	995	transport • electrical out • rem • 46,12,35cm • AT&T optical, AES/EBU optional	
Micromega Drive 2	1,000	transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 43,28,88cm • Upgradable, AES/EBU out	
Meridian 500	1,095	133 transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 32,33,9cm • Used with the 563 DAC, the combination is thin, brash and uncomfortable.	
Audiomeca Damnation SE	1,100	transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 29,10,32cm • Trichord clocked	
Audiomeca Kreatura	1,199	transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 25,14,39cm • Heavily modified CDM	
Micromega T-Drive	1,200	transport • electrical out • rem • 22,28,88cm • Tray loading, AES/EBU out	
Audiomeca Kreatura SE	1,250	transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 25,14,39cm • Trichord clocked	
XTC CD Transport	1,250	transport • electrical out • rem • Philips laser, FRTB clock	
Audiolab 8000CDM	1,300	transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 45,8,36cm • Precision master clock	
Micromega Duo CD3.1	1,500	transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 34,9,31cm • Top loading, AES/EBU out	
Meridian 602	1,750	120 transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 32,33,10cm • With matching 606 DAC, Meridian's top player sounds distinctive and elegant.	REC'D
Counterpoint DA-11.5E	1,895	130 transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • This model elivers a remarkably vivid and natural sound.	REC'D
Theta Data Basic	1,997	130 transport • electrical out • rem • 42,8,34cm • Includes a budget version of Teac's VRDS mechanism in a fancy case: overpriced.	
Audiomeca Mephisto	2,100	144 transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 43,15,33cm • Tested with Trichord Pulsar, the duo provides a highly composed and tactile sound.	REC'D
PS Audio Lambda tr	2,250	133 transport • electrical out • rem • 38,8,34cm • With Ultralink Two, sound positively sparkles with colour and resonant detail.	REC'D
Micromega Duo CD2.1	2,750	transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 34,9,31cm • Top loading, AES/EBU out	
Wadia 8	3,195	130 transport • rem • 35,16,41cm • Includes a budget version of Teac's VRDS mechanism in a fancy case; just too expensive for the performance on offer.	
Theta Data II NTSC	3,290	transport • electrical out • rem • 42,12,40cm • AT&T, AES/EBU option	
Theta Data II PAL	3,490	transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 42,12,40cm • AT&T, AES/EBU balanced in	
ATD Drive 1	3,499	transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 44,9,34cm • Top load, 2-box acrylic	
Teac P-2S	4,000	130 transport • rem • 23,14,49cm • The latest version of Teac's luxury P-2 transport sounds as over-engineered as it looks.	
Wadia 20	4,370	transport • Glass, plastic, BNC, AES/EBU	
Krell MD-20	4,999	transport • rem • 42,13,28cm • Top load, AT&T optical out	
Krell MD-10	7,990	transport • 2 electrical out • optical out • rem • 42,13,28cm	
Jadis JCDT	8,000	transport • rem • Top load	
Krell KPS 20T	8,490	transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • AT&T, AES/EBU balanced in	
Krell DT-10	9,090	transport • 2 electrical out • optical out • rem • 42,13,28cm • Front loader	
Wadia 7	9,995	transport • rem • 35,16,46cm	

DACs			
QED Positron	89	Upgrade PSU for Digit	
QED Digit Plus	139	113 bitstream • electrical out • Bearing in mind its expensive but very forgiving performance, the Digit is almost embarrassingly cheap.	B'BUY
Cambridge A DACMagic 1	150	136 hybrid • Ridiculously under-priced, this DAC is best suited to high end transports.	REC'D
Audio AIC DAC-in-the-Box	230	127 multibit • electrical out • This giveaway DAC may still rescue the oldest of players from obsolescence.	REC'D
Counterpoint AD20	255	multibit • DACCard for DA-10E	
QED Digit Reference	299	136 bitstream • No great advance on the basic QED Digit yet its enthusiastic sound is more than competitive at the price.	REC'D
NVA Dacon	320	bitstream • electrical out	
Micromega Microdac	349	113 bitstream • electrical out • optical out • 22,5,15cm • Modest but entertaining performer, the Microdac is brilliant with Arcam's D170.3 transport.	
Counterpoint CS18	395	multibit • DACCard for DA-10E	
Audio Alchemy DDEV.1.1	399	bitstream • electrical out • optical out • Upgradable external PSU	
Orelle DA-188	449	multibit • 22,7,23cm • DC coupled, optical & coax in	
Arcam Black Box 50	480	127 hybrid • electrical out • optical out • 43,7,28cm • Measured and sophisticated sound from a DAC that leaves plenty in reserve for future upgrades.	B'BUY
Teac D-T1	500	144 bitstream • electrical out • optical out • 44,10,33cm • Teamed with VRDS-T1 for test, this superb quality unit is tidy and composed.	
Woodside DAC2	509	101 multibit • electrical out • optical out • Sharp, dynamic sound is captivating for its lack of grain and 'tizz'.	REC'D
AVI S2000MD	549	136 bitstream • 31,25,9cm • Despite using a very different chipset, the S2000MD sounds as civilised and refined as AVI's other digital separates.	
Roksan ATT-DA2	549	delta sigma • 22,10,33cm • DAC 4 inputs, optional AT&T	
DPA Renaissance	550	bitstream • 20,28,8cm • Unique DPA DX16 DAC	
Audio Note DAC1	600	127 multibit • electrical out • optical out • rem • Oddball DAC with manual deemphasis switch. Needs a high preamp input impedance or bass will suffer.	
Teac D-700	600	120 multibit • electrical out • optical out • 23,14,40cm • With P-700, the D-700 may lack the resolution, but is bubbly and entertaining.	B'BUY
Micromega Duo BS2	650	101 bitstream • 8,28,9cm • Has a tendency to sound light, airy and 'fast' but it can also become a little hard or fatiguing with some digital outputs.	
Counterpoint BB69	655	multibit • DACCard for DA-10E	
PS Audio DigiLink II	688	multibit • 38,8,16cm	
Perception DAC	695	multibit	
Audio Alchemy DDEV3.0	699	multibit • Upgradable external PSU	
Sonic Frontiers Transdac	699	multibit • 24,5,17cm	
Sonic F'tiers U Jitter Bug	699	multibit • 24,5,17cm • Jitter reduction interface	
Micromega DAC	700	bitstream • 43,28,88cm • AES/EBU input	
Thorens TDA2000	700	bitstream • electrical out • 21,9,34cm • 3 digital inputs	

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS
Audiomeca Elixir	745	141 bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 25,39,9cm
Arcam Black Box 500	750	136 bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 43,9,28cm • <i>Sophisticated unit with Sync Lock and discrete DAC. Early samples sounded grubby and restrained.</i>
Meridian 563	750	127 delta sigma • 3 electrical out • optical out • 33,9,34cm • Warmer but no less detailed than 200-series, the 563 flies with a top rate transports REC'D
DPA Enlightenment	795	multibit • 20,28,8cm • Unique DPA DX32 DAC
Audiolab 8000DAC	800	127 bitstream • 45,8,36cm • <i>Just as smooth and refined as its predecessor yet, sadly, still manages to obscure the passion or fire of music.</i>
Micromega T/DAC	800	bitstream • 22,28,88cm • Four inputs
Pink Triangle Ordinal	837	136 bitstream • electrical out • optical out • 23,8,35cm • The cheapest dual-differential DAC7 converter available offers top-flight sound quality. B'BUY
Monrio 18B	850	multibit • electrical out • optical out • 43,8,36cm • 18x4 bit, inc outboard PSU
Woodside DAC1	909	87 multibit • electrical out • optical out • <i>Fine but slightly dated and costly package in performance terms - but flexible, musical and well built.</i>
Sentec Diana	993	multibit • electrical out • optical out
XTC DAC-1	1,000	multibit • electrical out • optical out • 32 - 48kHz, Vishay resistors
Linn Numerik	1,075	144 multibit • 32,8,33cm • <i>A new 20 bit DAC and revised Karik transport have cleaned up; but sounds a tad dry and humourless.</i>
PS Audio SuperLink 2	1,230	multibit • 38,8,16cm
Counterpoint UA20	1,295	multibit • DACCard for DA-10E
Trichord Pulsar Ser One	1,395	144 hybrid • electrical out • optical out • Richly detailed and honest sound
Counterpoint DA-11E	1,495	144 electrical out • optical out • rem • 49,6,27cm • <i>(Tested with DA-11E). Harsh and fatiguing sound.</i>
Micromega Duo Pro 2	1,500	bitstream • 34,48,31cm • AES input
Wadia 12	1,530	multibit • electrical out • optical out • Balanced and AT&T input
Pink Triangle DaCapo	1,536	144 bitstream • electrical out • optical out • 46,8,35cm • <i>With Cardinal and DC PSU, the DaCapo is best with its 22bit option. It is warm but over-polished.</i>
Pink Triangle DC Supply	1,590	144 46,8,35cm • Massive battery PSU for DaCapo
Audio Note DAC3	1,650	multibit • rem
Theta Pro Prime II	1,800	bitstream • electrical out • 42,5,23cm
Counterpoint DA-10E	1,895	144 electrical out • optical out • rem • Interchangeable DACs, optional
Sonic Frontiers SFD-1/2	2,495	multibit • 48,10,33cm • HDCD compatible, tune output
PS Audio UltraLink 2	2,650	133 multibit • 38,6,20cm • With Lambda transport, the sound positively sparkles with colour and resonant detail. REC'D
LFD DAC3	2,699	multibit • 48,7,37cm • Optional balanced output
Theta Pro Basic III	2,990	multibit • 42,5,29cm
DPA PDM256	2,995	133 bitstream • electrical out • optical out • 20,28,8cm • <i>Highly advanced, with adjustable dither. but the different settings only leads to compromise.</i>
Krell Studio 2	3,198	multibit • 42,13,27cm • AT&T in
Wadia 15	3,790	multibit • electrical out • optical out • rem • 35,9,41cm • Software upgradable
Audio Research DAC2	3,940	multibit • 48,14,26cm • 20bit, 8x o/s
Mark Levinson 36	3,995	multibit • electrical out • 20 bit, FIFO input buffer
Theta Pro Gen V SE	4,200	multibit • 42,8,34cm • AT&T input option
Krell Studio	4,450	multibit • 42,6,32cm • AT&T in
PS Audio Ref Link	4,550	multibit • 38,8,36cm • AT&T input



Digital Recorders

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

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

Key

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

PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

DIGITAL RECORDERS

Philips DCC134	150	Digital Compact Cassette • bitstream • 11,10,4cm • Portable: Dolby B, charger
Philips DCC730	250	Digital Compact Cassette • electrical in • bitstream • 44,30,9cm
Philips DCC170	250	Digital Compact Cassette • electrical in • bitstream • 11,10,9cm • Portable, wired remote
Philips DCC951	280	Digital Compact Cassette • electrical in • optical in • electrical out • multibit • Turbodrve mech, 18 bit
Sharp MD-M11E	450	MiniDisc • 8,3,11cm • Recorder, title generator
Pioneer D-05	800	Digital Audio Cassette • 96kHz sampling
Sony MBS501	800	MiniDisc • electrical in • optical in • electrical out • bitstream • 43,9,35cm • Sample rate converter
Sony DTC80ES	800	Digital Audio Cassette • electrical in • optical in • electrical out • optical out • bitstream • 43,11,55cm • SBM
JVC XM-D1BK	900	MiniDisc • electrical in • optical in • electrical out • optical out • bitstream • 18,5,13cm • Minidisc record and player
Pioneer D-07	1,150	Digital Audio Cassette • electrical in • optical in • electrical out • optical out • 44,14,38cm • 96kHz record, Legato Link
Teac R-9	1,200	Digital Audio Cassette • electrical in • optical in • electrical out • optical out • bitstream • 45,16,36cm • Based on TASCAM technology
Meridian CDR	4,500	CD-R • electrical in • optical in • electrical out



Stands & Supports

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

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

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

Speakers stands come in a variety of sizes and styles to suit different models. Use dealer or manufacturer recommendations to narrow down the choice of types, but as a general rule the you want the tweeter at ear height.

Key to stands & supports

shelf pitch	.....gap between shelves
60, 39, 48cm	.....size width, depth, height in cm
MDF	.....medium density fibreboard
pillar/frame	.....multi leg stand
column	.....single leg stand

PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

EQUIPMENT SUPPORTS

Ixos 800	35	Equipment support • single shelf • Mini/midi pedestal
Deadrock 701	40	Equipment support • Single module
Ixos 701	40	Equipment support • single module
JPW Add-on	50	Equipment support • Add-on shelves (x2)
Ixos 711	60	Equipment support • 1 shelf • Toughened glass shelf
Sound Organisation Z022	60	Equipment support • Wall mountable • 50w,47dcm • Removable shelf
Ixos 802	70	Equipment support • 2 shelf • Mini component, 215mm spacing
Sound Organisation Z230	70	Equipment support • 3 shelf • 50,40,43cm • Satin finish, self assembly

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Alan Sircom
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Malcolm Steward, Hi-Fi Choice February 1996

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PRODUCT	£	ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
QLN Signature	75	Speaker stand • Pedestal • 13 inchcm • Available up to 24 inch	
Sound Organisation Z021	75	Equipment support • 2 shelf • 50,40,36cm	
JPW 3 tier	80	Equipment support • 3 shelf rack	
Ixos 803	90	Equipment support • 3 shelf • Mini component, 125mm spacing	
Sound Organisation Z030	95	Equipment support • 3 shelf • 50,40,43cm	
Alphason R24/24	100	Equipment support • 3 shelf, MDF • 60,39,48cm	
Alphason R17/17	100	Equipment support • 3 shelf, MDF • 60,39,34cm	
Alphason R12/12	100	Equipment support • 3 shelf, MDF • 60,39,24cm	
Ixos 802P	100	Equipment support • 2 shelf • mini - with pedestal/CD store	
Ixos 703	100	Equipment support • 3-shelf	
JPW 5 tier	100	Equipment support • 5 shelf rack	
Ixos 803P	110	Equipment support • 3 shelf • mini - with pedestal/CD store	
Ixos 804	110	Equipment support • 4 shelf • Mini component, 125mm spacing	
Sound Organisation Z060	115	Equipment support • 4 shelf • 50,40,62cm	
Alphason TV24/17	120	TV base module • 3 shelves, MDF • 67,39,41cm	
DNM DOMOWS	125	Turntable wall stand • Lightweight • 37 deepcm	
DNM DOMOPS	125	Turntable support • Lightweight • 37,50,46cm	
Mana Sound Frame	125	Equipment supports • 1 shelf • <i>Used singly (glass) for equipment, or in pairs for speakers</i>	REC'D
Projekt A3	125	Equipment support • MDF modular • 2 shelves, 2 dividers	
QLN Modulus	125	Equipment support • MDF shelves • Extends up aad along	
Sound Organisation Z550	125	Equipment support • 5 shelf • 50,40,77cm • Satin finish, self assembly	
Alphason GR24/24	130	Equipment support • 3 glass shelves • 60,39,48cm	
Alphason GR17/17	130	Equipment support • 3 glass shelves • 60,39,34cm	
Alphason GR12/12	130	Equipment support • 3 glass shelves • 60,39,24cm	
Ixos 713	130	Equipment support • 3 shelf • Toughened glass shelf	
Sound Organisation Z038	130	151 Equipment support • 5 shelf • 50,40,84cm • <i>Too lively and lacking order - but cheap</i>	REC'D
Ixos 804P	140	Equipment support • 4 shelf • mini - with pedestal/CD store	
Ixos 704	140	Equipment support	
Alphason TV24/175	150	TV base module • 3 shelves, MDF • 67,39,34cm • Swivel top	
Mana Acoustics Mini Table	150	Equipment support • Glass shelf	
Alphason VR24/24	160	Equipment support • 3 shelves, rosewood • 60,39,48cm	
Alphason VR17/17	160	Equipment support • 3 shelves, rosewood • 60,39,34cm	
Alphason VR12/12	160	Equipment support • 3 shelves, rosewood • 60,39,34cm	
Projekt A4	165	Equipment support • MDF, modular • 4 shelves	
Ixos 705	170	Equipment support • 5 shelf	
SoundStyle X300	170	Equipment support • 4 legs • 59,38,51cm • Glass shelves	
Target B5	175	151 Equipment support • 5 wood shelves • <i>Free of colourations, fine grip and good value</i>	REC'D
Ixos 714	190	Equipment support • 4 shelf • Toughened glass shelves	
Alphason AV24/17	200	AV base module • 5 shelves, MDF • 127,39,94cm • 'L' shaped	
Mana Sound Stage	200	Upgrade unit • <i>Upgrades amp stand or Reference table</i>	
Quadraspire Q4	200	151 Equipment support • MDF shelves • <i>Easy to live with, and tonally neutral</i>	B'BUY
SoundStyle X305	200	Equipment support • 3 shelf • 77,44,51cm • Glass shelves	
SoundStyle X053	200	Equipment support • 4 shelf • 64cmcm • 3 pillar, 16.9cm shelf pitch	
SoundStyle X050	200	Equipment support • 4 shelf • 64cm highcm • 3 pillar, 12.8cm shelf ptch	
Projekt A5	205	Equipment support • MDF, modular • 5 shelves	
SoundStyle X100	210	Equipment support • 4 glass shelves • 58,49,64cm • 16.9cm shelf pitch	
Alphason AV24/17S	230	AV base module • 6 shelf, MDF • 127,39,94cm • Swivel base for TV	
Ixos 715	230	Equipment support • 5 shelf • Toughened glass shelves	
SoundStyle X058	230	Equipment support • 5 shelf • 78cmcm • 3 pillar, 15.3cm shelf pitch.	
Mana Sound Table	235	Equipment support	
SoundStyle X310	240	Equipment support • 3 shelves • 103,44,51cm • Glass shelves	
SoundStyle X120	240	Equipment support • 6 glass shelves • 59,49,109cm • 16.9cm shelf pitch	
SoundStyle X105	240	Equipment support • 5 glass shelves • 59,49,84cm • 16.9cm shelf pitch	
Projekt A6	245	Equipment support • MDF, modular • 6 shelves	
Stands Uniq Sound Tower	249	151 Equipment support • 5 Glass shhelves • <i>Adds colouration, and lacks weight</i>	
SoundStyle Select 6105	280	151 Equipment support • glass shelves • <i>Respectable sonics, structurally solid and smart</i>	REC'D
Fi-Rax R4	321	151 Equipment support • glass shelves • <i>Lively, exuberant sound, slightly weak bass</i>	
Mana 2 Tier Amp stand	325	Equipment supports • 2 shelves • <i>Infinitely upgradable</i>	
Mana Reference Table	350	123 Equipment support • single shelf • <i>Welded angle iron spikes and glass make up the finest source support on the market</i>	B'BUY
Mana 3 Tier Amp Stand	450	Equipment supports • 3 shelves • <i>Infinitely upgradable</i>	
Audiophile Furniture Base	480	151 Equipment support • 4 shelves • <i>Easy to set up, well ordered sound</i>	REC'D
Mana 4 Tier Amp Stand	500	Equipment supports • 4 shelves • <i>Infinitely upgradable</i>	
Mana 5 Tier Amp Stand	600	151 Equipment supports • 5 shelves • <i>Infinitely upgradable. Persuasive and thrilling</i>	B'BUY
Mana 6 Tier Amp Stand	700	Equipment supports • 6 shelves • <i>Infinitely upgradable. King among equipment stands</i>	

SPEAKER STANDS

JPW WB	30	Wall brackets	
Alphason NC1-60	40	Pillar type • 23w,60hcm • Double column, steel	
Alphason NC1-50	40	Pillar type • 23w,50hcm • steel	
Alphason NC1-40	40	Pillar type • 23w,40hcm • steel	
Apollo 1/4, 1/5, 1/6	40	Single column • • 40.5, 51, 61cm • low mass	
Sound Organisation Z023	42	Speaker wall bracket	
Apollo 1/7, 1/9	45	Single column • 71, 91.5cm high • low mass	
JPW MS2	45	3 leg • 39,29,45cm • for Sonata	
Target SP	47	Frame type • 40 - 60hcm • low mass	
Apollo 2/4, 2/5, 2/6	50	Two column • 40.5, 51, 61cm • low mass	
Ixos 903	50	Single column • 60cm high	
Ixos 902	50	Single column • 47cm high	
Ixos 901	50	Single column • 39cm high	
Sound Organisation Z026	50	High - tripod base • 60cm	
Sound Organisation Z027	50	Mid - tripod base • 45cm tall	
Sound Organisation Z037	50	Low - tripod base • 30cm tall	
Target XL	50	Single column • 30 - 60hcm • fillable	
JPW MS3	55	3 leg • 37,30,61cm • For Minim	
Target T20/30/40	58	Frame type • 20 - 40hcm • low mass	
Apollo AFP 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	60	Frame type • low mass	
Target T50/60/70	60	Frame type • 50 - 70hcm • low mass	
Target TR	65	Multi-pillar • 30 - 70hcm • low mass	
Alphason NC11-60	70	Pillar type • 23w,60hcm • Double column, steel	
Alphason NC11-50	70	Pillar type • 23w,50hcm • Double column, steel	
Alphason NC11-40	70	Pillar type • 23w,40hcm • Double column, steel	
Apollo Olympus 4, 5, 6	70	Single 10cm dia column • 40.5, 51, 61cm	
Apollo 3/4, 3/5, 3/6	70	Three column • 40.5, 51, 61cm • low mass	
Apollo CKD 3, 4, 5, 6	70	Twin column • 36, 46, 53.5, 61cm high • high mass	
Apollo CKD 7	80	Twin column • high mass	

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS
Sound Organisation Z040	70	Frame type • 45cm tall • Fixed top spikes
Sound Organisation Z055	72	Frame type • 60cm tall • Fixed top spikes
Target HS 8/12/16	75	Frame type • 20 - 40hcm • medium mass • fillable
Sound Organisation Z010	76	Pillar type • 25cm tall
Target HS20/24/28	77	Column type • 50 - 70hcm • bolt together
Sound Organisation Z018	78	Pillar type • 46cm tall
Apollo 4/4, 4/5, 4/6	70	Four column • 40.5, 51, 61cm • low mass
JPW MS1	80	4-leg • 39.32,46cm • For AP2, AP3, P1
Sound Organisation Z024	80	Pillar type • 61cm tall
Target ST	98	Column type • 20 - 70hcm • medium mass
Alphason Titan S-50	100	Pillar type • 29w,50hcm • cast iron
Alphason Titan S-40	100	Pillar type • 29w,40hcm • cast iron
Apollo AZ 3, 4, 6	100	Single 10cm square column • 36, 46, 61cm high • welded, filled
Soundstyle X024	100	61cm
Soundstyle X020	100	48cm tall
Soundstyle X016	100	41cm tall



Headphones

There are a variety of different approaches to headphone design. Among the more expensive models, electrostatic drivers are used in open-backed phones. The more down-to-earth models feature dynamic (moving coil) drivers in circular, open or closed-back designs. The advantage of open backs seems to be a

correspondingly open sound, but one can also hear external noise, of course. Closed-back designs are useful in situations where it is necessary to block out noise.

■ There are three styles of headphone: circumaural models enclose the ear; supra-aural designs feature a flat pad which presses on the outer ear; and intra-aurals (in-ear) rest inside the ear itself, à la personal stereos.

Key

open back, sealed, in-ear	.....	headphone type
275g	.....	weight in grams
16 Ohm	.....	impedance

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS
HEADPHONES		
Audio Technica ATH-S22	11	open back • 5g • 16 Ohm • Inner ear
Sony MDR-W07L	11	in-ear model • 13g • 1m mini plug
Ross RH-460CD	12	in-ear model • 16g • 16 Ohm • Vertical inner ear, volume pot
Sony MDR-A009	12	open back • in-ear
Sony MDR-E515V	12	in-ear model • 5g • 1m lead, mini plug
Aiwa HP-X201	13	sealed • 230g • Dual plug
Aiwa HP-A360	13	open back • 65g • 40 Ohm • Banded, bass resonator ducts
Maxell HP-500	13	45g • 32 Ohm • 2.7m lead, 6.3/3.5mm fit
Ross RDH-200CD	13	sealed • 150g • 8 Ohm • Closed back
Sennheiser HD36	13	open back • 62g • 32 Ohm • Mini, 1.2m lead, dual plug
Sony MDR-V50	13	sealed • -
Audio Technica ATH-P3	15	open back • 90g • 22 Ohm • 'Omniphones'
Beyer DT111 Alpha	15	open back • 30g • 32 Ohm • Miniature
Kenwood KH-535	15	in-ear model • 32 Ohm • 3.5mm plug, in-ear model
Maxell HP-1000	15	open back • 95g • 32 Ohm • 2.7m lead, digital ready
Ross RDH-100CD	15	sealed • 144g • 8 Ohm • CD headphone
Sennheiser HD56	15	open back • 72g • 32 Ohm • Mini, 1.2m lead, dual plug
Sony MDR-E525	15	in-ear model • 5g • 1m lead, mini plug
Sony MDR-24	15	open back • 7m, 3.5/6.3mm plug
Vivanco SR120	15	sealed • 32g • 32 Ohm • Large earcups
Audio Technica ATH-S44	16	open back • 5g • 16 Ohm • Inner ear
Pioneer SE-5	16	open back • 60g • 30 Ohm • 2m OFC cable
Sony MDR-25	16	open back
Sony MDR-W12L	16	in-ear model • 1.2m mini plug
Ross RDH-300CD	17	133 sealed • 155g • 8 Ohm • <i>In-lead controls are the highlights of this shoddy, sometimes aggressive sounding design.</i>
Sony MDR-008TV	17	open back • 5m, 3.5/6.3mm plug
JVC HA-CD88	18	open back • 38g • 32 Ohm
Sony MDR-E535	18	in-ear model • 5g • 1.2m lead, mini plug
Sony MDR-44	18	open back • 7m, 3.5/6.3mm plug
Sony MDR-009TV	19	open back • 5m, 3.5/6.3mm plug
Vivanco SR250	19	sealed • Xtra bass feature
Aiwa HP-X301	20	sealed • 230g • 3m lead, dual plug
Audio Technica ATH-P1/TV	20	open back • 55g • 25 Ohm • 'Omniphones', vol control
Audio Technica ATH-P5	20	open back • 70g • 40 Ohm • 'Omniphones'
Beyer DT111 Beta	20	open back • 30g • 16 Ohm • Neodymium magnet
JVC HA-D525	20	sealed
JVC HA-F65	20	in-ear model • 32 Ohm • In-ear
Kenwood KH-757	20	in-ear model • 32 Ohm • 3.5mm plug, in-ear model
Kenwood KH-1000	20	121 open back • 30g • 32 Ohm • <i>First step up from a true mini: a near miniature which is cheap, comfortable and inoffensive</i>
Maxell HP-2000	20	open back • 140g • 32 Ohm • Volume control digital ready
Pioneer SE-15	20	open back • 65g • 30 Ohm • 2m OFC cable
Sony MDR-35	20	open back
Sony MDR-CD30	20	sealed • 2m, 3.5/6.3mm plug
Sony MDR-E747MP	20	in-ear model • 6g • 1.2m lead, mini plug
Sony MDR-CD50	20	sealed • 180g • 24 Ohm • 2m, 3.5/6.3mm plug
Sony MDR-5747	20	in-ear model • 6g • 1.2m lead, mini plug
Vivanco SR150	20	sealed • 32g • 32 Ohm • In-line volume control
Ross RDH-400CD	22	sealed • 186g • 8 Ohm • Digital headphone
Sony MDR-P1TV	22	sealed • 5m, 3.5/6.3mm plug
Sony MDR-A22L	22	in-ear model • 1.2m mini plug
AKG K2	23	open back • 70g • 200 Ohm • Mini
Pioneer SE-32	23	open back • 94g • 40 Ohm • 2.5metre OFC cable
Aiwa HP-VX303	25	sealed • 230g • In-line controls, dual plugs
AKG K33	25	open back • 90g • 50 Ohm
Beyer DT111 Gamma	25	open back • 32g • 16 Ohm • With volume control
JVC HA-D626	25	sealed
JVC HA-D610	25	sealed • 120g • 32 Ohm • 3m, 6.3/3.5mmjacks
Kenwood KH-959	25	in-ear model • 32 Ohm • 3.5mm plug, in-ear model
Pioneer SE-52	25	open back • 104g • 40 Ohm • 2.5metre OFC cable
Vivanco SR200	25	sealed • 32g • 32 Ohm • Titanium finish

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
Audio Technica ATH-M2A	28	sealed • 115g • 22 Ohm • Mid size	
Sennheiser Vegas	28	open back • 118g • 32 Ohm • 3m lead, 3.5/6.3mm	
Sennheiser Manhattan	28	open back • 118g • 32 Ohm • 3m lead, 3.5/6.3mm	
Sony MDR-CD250EX	28	sealed • 3m, 3.5/6.3mm lead	
Maxell HP-3000	30	133 120g • 32 Ohm • <i>Solid, smooth sounding supra-aural headphone, but congested and undynamic. Includes in-lead controls.</i>	
Pioneer SE-15V	30	open back • 65g • 30 Ohm • 5m OFC cable	
Technics RP-HT77	30	sealed • 160g • 32 Ohm • 3m lead, OFC wire	
Vivanco SR300	30	sealed • 32g • 32 Ohm • Single cable design	
Beyer DT211	33	open back • 120g • 40 Ohm • Supra-aural	
Pioneer SE-330D	35	sealed • 165g • 35 Ohm • 3m cable, bass boost duct	
Pioneer SE-400D	37	133 sealed • 185g • 35 Ohm • <i>Acceptable, if unexciting all-rounder, this supra-aural phone has good long-term comfort levels.</i>	REC'D
Sennheiser HD60TV	38	open back • 118g • 32 Ohm • 6.8m lead (inc vol control)	
Aiwa HP-X705	40	sealed • 130g • Dual plug, 2m ext cable	
Kenwood KH-2020	40	sealed • 210g • 32 Ohm • 2.5m OFC lead, closed model	
Sennheiser HD445 II	40	121 open back • 125g • 52 Ohm • <i>Still the one by which others at the price are measured, though now slightly leaden sounding, with a cold treble</i>	B'BUY
Technics RP-HT300	40	sealed • Single sided cord	
Vivanco SR606	40	133 open back • 225g • 32 Ohm • <i>Although slightly overblown at times, this model is easy on the ears and essentially enjoyable</i>	REC'D
AKG K44	42	99 open back • 90g • 50 Ohm • <i>Good quality personal oriented phone, could have a better sense of space but is musically quite communicative.</i>	
Audio Technica ATH-M4A	42	sealed • 139g • 28 Ohm • Mid size	
JVC HA-D727	43	sealed	
Sony MDR-CD450	45	133 sealed • 260g • 24 Ohm • <i>Fair acoustic isolation and comfortable construction, moderate sound.</i>	REC'D
AKG K135	46	63 open back • 160g • 150 Ohm • <i>The K135s doesn't live up to the usual AKG standards, though it does have the ability to convey rhythm well.</i>	
Pioneer SE-500D	48	sealed • 175g • 35 Ohm • 3m cable, dual bass horn	
Beyer DT311	49	133 open back • 124g • 40 Ohm • <i>Uncharacteristically tight, unrefined sound quality from this otherwise well engineered 'phone.</i>	
Sennheiser HD414 Class	50	open back • 80g • 52 Ohm • <i>The original lives on!</i>	
Sennheiser HD455	50	open back • 3m lead, 3.5/6.3mm	
Sony MDR-IF210	50	infra-red cordless • 170g • Extra h/phone w/o transmitter	
Technics RP-HT400	50	sealed • Single sided cord	
Vivanco IR5700	50	Infra-red cordless	
Vivanco IR5000	50	Mono, infra red cordless	
Vivanco SR850	50	open back • Double bow design for comfort	
JVC HA-D710	55	sealed • 210g • 32 Ohm • 3m, 6.3/3.5m jacks	
Beyer DT331	59	open back • 210g • 40 Ohm • Circum-aural	
Pioneer SE-700D	60	sealed • 180g • 35 Ohm • 3m cable, dual bass horn	
Sony MDR-CD550	60	99 sealed • 270g • 45 Ohm • <i>Competent headphone creates remarkable space from a closed back design and sounds natural to boot.</i>	B'BUY
Technics RP-HT600	60	sealed • 3m lead, double headband	
JVC HA-D910	65	121 sealed • 220g • 32 Ohm • <i>Broadly acceptable if unexciting design with low level losses and some colourations.</i>	
Sennheiser HD465	65	open back • 3m lead, 3.5/6.3mm	
Beyer DT411	69	111 open back • 120g • 250 Ohm • <i>A reasonable but not very thrilling headphone that doesn't really offer enough at the price.</i>	
Kenwood KH-5000	70	sealed • 280g • 32 Ohm • 2.5m OFC lead	
Nakamichi SP7	70	open back • 150g • 45 Ohm	
Sennheiser 15.360/UK	70	sealed • 240g • Budget infra-red model	
Sony MDR-D33	70	sealed • 120g • 45 Ohm • 1.5m, 3.5/6.3mm plug	
Technics RP-HT700	70	sealed • 5m lead, double headband	
Vivanco IR6000	70	Stereo infra-red cordless	
Vivanco SR909	70	open back • 285g • 600 Ohm • Remote control lead, all plugs	
AKG K141	74	open back • 225g • 600 Ohm	
Jacklin Float Model 1	75	55 open back • 400g • 200 Ohm • <i>Whilst very unusual in appearance, the Floats give remarkable sound quality and openness at a reasonable price.</i>	B'BUY
Sennheiser HD475	75	open back • Selected drivers/diaphragm	
Audio Technica ATH-M7A	78	sealed • 210g • 40 Ohm • Mid size	
Sony MDR-IF210K	80	infra-red cordless • 170g • Seven metre range infra red	
AKG K240 Monitor	82	63 open back • 240g • 600 Ohm • <i>Something of a classic, these AKGs are very user-friendly in all respects; sonically on the warm side of normal.</i>	REC'D
Sennheiser HD25 SP	85	sealed • 115g • 85 Ohm • Monitoring headphone	
Beyer DT431	89	open back • 210g • 40 Ohm • Circum-aural	
Audio Technica ATH911	90	open back • 280g • 600 Ohm • Dynamic, full size	
A Technica ATH910PRO	90	55 sealed • 280g • 40 Ohm • <i>The closed back 910s are an improvement on the 909s, with a nice rhythmic quality rarely found with headphones.</i>	REC'D
Sony MDR-D55	90	sealed • 120g • 45 Ohm • 1.5m, 3.5/6.3mm plug	
Sony MDR-CD750	90	111 sealed • 290g • 45 Ohm • <i>Reasonably comfortable and eminently listenable, these Sonys have characteristically good bass power and relaxed HF</i>	REC'D
Vivanco IR6500	90	Stereo infra-red with charger	
Beyer DT511	99	open back • 200g • 250 Ohm • Circum-aural	
Jacklin Float Model 2	99	63 open back • 400g • 200 Ohm • <i>Helmet shaped, but open sounding and comfortable in long term, despite lack of adjustment.</i>	REC'D
Sennheiser HD535	100	open back • 255g • 150 Ohm • 3m lead, 3.5/6.3mm	
Technics RP-F10	100	121 sealed • 300g • 32 Ohm • <i>Another very comfortable sealed circum-aural model, has modest sound isolation and uneven, sound favouring bass.</i>	
Vivanco SR1000IFL	110	open back • 265g • 100 Ohm • In-front localisation	
AKG K270	112	sealed • 250g • 75 Ohm	
AKG K280 Parabolic	117	63 open back • 250g • 75 Ohm • <i>Revealing twin-driver design uses the same design principles as a satellite dish to beam sound into ear.</i>	REC'D
AKG K400	118	121 open back • 250g • 120 Ohm • <i>Comfortable over long sessions. Sound is exquisitely detailed, dynamic and uncoloured.</i>	REC'D
Sennheiser HD545 Ref	120	open back • 255g • 150 Ohm • 3m lead, 3.5/6.3mm	
Sony MDR-D77	120	sealed • 140g • 45 Ohm • 1.5m, 3.5/6.3mm plug	
Vivanco IR7100	120	Stereo infra-red cordless	
AKG K270 Studio	121	sealed • 250g • 75 Ohm	
Beyer DT531	129	144 open back • 245g • 250 Ohm • Circum-aural	REC'D
Beyer IRS790	129	open back • 270g • Cordless infra-red	
AKG K500	138	111 open back • 250g • 120 Ohm • <i>K500 offers impressive definition. Balance is on the light side but transparency is high.</i>	REC'D
Beyer DT770 Pro	139	sealed • 250g • 600 Ohm • Circum-aural	
Beyer DT100	139	sealed • 350g • 600 Ohm • Choice of impedances	
Sennheiser HD565 Ovat'n	140	open back • 255g • 150 Ohm • 3m lead, 3.5/6.3mm	
Sennheiser HD265 Linear	140	sealed • 260g • 150 Ohm • Closed back	
Vivanco IR7600	140	Stereo infra-red cordless	
Vivanco SR200IFL	140	open back • In-front localisation	
Sennheiser IS450	150	160g • Infra-red cordless - hi-fi	
Beyer DT801	159	sealed • 250g • 250 Ohm • Circum-aural	
Sennheiser HD25	160	sealed • 140g • 70 Ohm • Professional, closed back	
Beyer DT990 Pro	163	open back • 230g • 600 Ohm • Circum-aural	
Stax SR34	169	open back • 170g • Electrostatic	
Beyer DT811	179	open back • 245g • 250 Ohm • Circum-aural	
Sennheiser IS550	180	170g • Infra-red cordless	
Technics RP-F30	180	sealed • 340g • 32 Ohm • 3m lead, XBS double drive	
Sony MDR-610k	190	infra-red cordless • 470g • Seven meter range infra-red	
AKG K340	191	75 open back • 380g • 400 Ohm • <i>Heavyweight cans in most respects, the K340 with its electrostatic tweeter is a very revealing headphone.</i>	REC'D
Beyer IRS890	199	open back • 270g • Cordless infra-red	
Beyer DT901	199	sealed • 280g • 250 Ohm • Circum-aural	
Sennheiser HD 580 P	200	open back • 260g • 300 Ohm • Flagship model	
Sony MDR-CD1000	200	111 sealed • 330g • 45 Ohm • <i>A fine sounding and comfortable headphone that's likely to work well with most sources.</i>	REC'D

Beyer DT911	219	111	open back • 275g • 250 Ohm • <i>Probably too revealing for many headphone amps, these are very subtle and fine, if expensive cans.</i>	REC'D
Stax SR Gamma	239	55	open back • 300g • <i>One down from the Lambda, the Gamma is an excellent headphone with little to criticise bar the price.</i>	REC'D
JVC HA-D1000	250		sealed • 340g • 32 Ohm • 5m, 6.3/3.5m jacks	
Stax SR84	259		open back • 160g • Electrostatic	
Audio Technica ATH9000	273	111	open back • 240g • 32 Ohm • <i>Electrets which connect to the amp's speaker outputs, They sound a little too smooth, but would suit aggressive amps.</i>	
Stax SR Lambda	349		open back • 325g • Electrostatic	
Jacklin Float ELS	399	55	open back • 600g • 8 Ohm • <i>These electrostatics have an openness of sound that is rarely found in the breed, with good dynamic range to boot.</i>	REC'D
Stax Gamma Pro	399	63	open back • 300g • <i>With SRD-X Pro, the Gamma Pro is like a stethoscope for your hi-fi, revealing subtleties that many loudspeakers fail to resolve.</i>	REC'D
Stax Lambda Pro	449	55	open back • 325g • <i>Tested with SRD-7B PSU, this is an industry reference, and is frighteningly revealing.</i>	REC'D
Stax Lambda Sig	549	72	open back • 325g • <i>With SRM-T1, the Signature must be the most transparent headphone available.</i>	REC'D
AKG K1000	646	99	open back • 270g • 120 Ohm • <i>One of the best dynamics on the market, hooks directly into speaker outputs.</i>	REC'D
JVC HA-F25	699		in-ear model • 32 Ohm • In ear	
Sennheiser IS850	860		330g • Digital audiophile infra-red	
Sennheiser HE60/HEV70	998		open back • 260g • Electrostatic with energiser	
Stax Omega	1,695		open back • 400g • Electrostatic	



Loudspeakers

As the last item in the hi-fi chain, the loudspeaker is merely the slave of what has gone before; it is capable only of reproducing a signal as good as it is fed. Nevertheless, the distortions (colorations and stereo effects) introduced by loudspeakers (and rooms) tend to be greater than those anywhere else in the hi-fi chain, so careful selection of models is very important.

■ The average loudspeaker consists of an enclosure (much of which may have begun life as part of a tree) plus a couple of drive units hidden behind a removable grille. Inside the box lurks a simple electrical circuit known as a crossover, which divides the incoming (full range) signal into the right bits for the drivers to handle. The designer's primary task is to balance the 'sensitivity' of the loudspeaker (how loud it goes for a given electrical input) against the bass extension

(how low it goes), for the given box size. After that, such subtleties as coloration (or lack of it) and dispersion come into the equation.

■ Careful placement of the loudspeakers within the room is as important as the initial choice of model. For good stereo the enclosures need to be more or less the same distance from nearby walls. Speakers with a rear port need to be a foot or two from the rear wall to avoid bass boom.

■ There are two subsections within the overall heading of loudspeakers: these are satellites and subwoofers, and active subwoofers. The former is a combination of small mid/treble units and a single subwoofer which provides the bass. They are primarily designed for situations where the sight of loudspeakers would harm domestic harmony. Active subwoofers have built in power amplifiers and offer 'real' bass extension.

Key to loudspeakers

horn, ported, sealed etc cabinet type
 2 driver number of drive units
 108dB sensitivity @ 1 metre for 2.83 volts
 8 Ohms nominal impedance
 100W manufacturer's power rating

Key to satellites & subwoofers

89dB sensitivity @ 1 metre for 2.83 volts
 70 W power rating in Watts

Key to active subwoofers

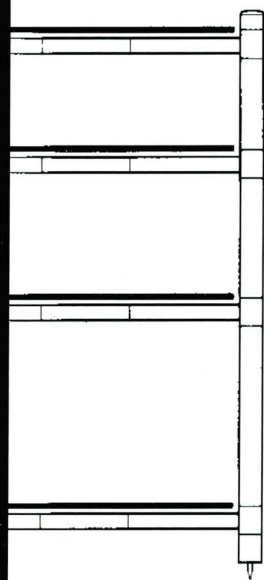
stereo subwoofer type
 50W amplifier power
 THX THX-approved (where appropriate)

PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

LOUDSPEAKERS				
JPW Minim	80	82	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 70W • 19,28,20cm • <i>Civilised but undynamically, the Minim is great in small rooms and at limited volume.</i>	REC'D
JVC SP-V50	80		ported • 2 driver • 23,41,21cm • Magnetically shielded	
Sony SS-E500	80		sealed • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 35,47,20cm • Magnetically shielded	
Teac LS-X8	80		ported • 2 driver • 8 Ohms • 30W • 11,18,11cm • In black or white	
Technics SB-CS55	80		ported • 2 driver • 8 Ohms • 60W • 25,43,25cm • Shelf/stand, shielded	
GLL Arena	89		87dB • 6 Ohms • 70W • 26,23,14cm	
JPW Minim Pair Solid	89		ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 70W • 19,28,20cm • Shielded	
Wharfedale Valdus 100	89		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 180W • 27,17,18cm • 2-way bookshelf	
Jamo Cornet 20.4	90		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 21,16,13cm • Black/mahogany	
Advent Mini	99		2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 16,28,14cm • Bookshelf/stand mount	
Celestion Little 1	99		sealed • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 9,20,15cm	
Celestion 1	99	114	ported • 2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 16,27,21cm • <i>It sounds a bit scrappy and untidy, but its heart is in the right place.</i>	B'BUY
Wharfedale Diamond 6R	99		ported • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 16,27,22cm • Stand/bookshelf mount	
Yamaha NS-C80	99		2 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 80W • 14,45,17cm	
Allison AL100	100	94	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 33,24,19cm • <i>Loud and lively budget wall-mount is big and beefy, but lacks sparkle and refinement</i>	B'BUY
Gale Ref Monitors	100		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • Bookshelf, black finish	
Goodmans HT100	100		2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 25,53,20cm	
Interaudio XL1000	100		2 driver • 8 Ohms • 50W • 19,29,17cm	
Jamo Studio 110	100		ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 50W • 42,24,22cm • Black finish	
JPW Sonata Vinyl	100		ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 23,32,22cm	
JVC SP-X220TBK	100		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 24,66,24cm	
Mission 73S	100		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 15,26,15cm • Stand mount, shelf, w/brackets	
Realistic Minimus Pro-77	100		ported • 2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 55W • 14,22,11cm • Revised design	
Revolver Beretta	100		ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 80W • 30,19,22cm • Bookshelf/stand mount	
Sony SS-J90AV	100		2 driver • 167 Ohms • 19,12,15cm • Shielded centre speaker	
Sony SS85E	100		sealed • 2 driver • 85dB • 4 Ohms • 70W • 9,32,24cm • UK optimised sound	
TDL NFM2-S	100		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 18,45,17cm • Priced for single speaker	
TDL NFM	100	130	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 18,30,17cm • <i>A disappointing underperformer in our tests, at a low price</i>	
Technics SB-CS75	100		ported • 3 driver • 8 Ohms • 60W • 27,49,25cm • Composite mica cone mid	
Wharfedale Valdus 200	109		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 180W • 38,21,22cm • Stand/bookshelf	
Wharfedale Modus Micro	109		ported • 2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 14,23,12cm • Shielded	
Canon SV-15	110		ported • 2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 24,17cm • Utility - wide dispersion	
Jamo Sat 160	110		sealed • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 14,20,88cm	
Jamo D115	110		2 driver • 91dB • 75W • 42,24,22cm	
Jamo Cornet 30.4	110		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 55W • 32,20,23cm • Black ash or Mahogany	
Mordaunt-Short MS05i	110	141	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 26,17,18cm • <i>Tiny and hence bass light, but fine voicing. (redesignated 'i' but unchanged).</i>	REC'D
Bose XL1000	115		ported • 2 driver • 8 Ohms • 50W • 29,19,17cm	
JBL Control One	115	90	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 24,156,14cm • <i>Sub-miniature with forward midrange and real bass; price justified by build</i>	
Mordaunt-Short CSI S	115		ported • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 16,23,13cm • Shielded, Positac protected	
GLL Maxim	119	122	86dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 10,26,17cm • <i>Budget miniature offers well balanced strengths and few weaknesses at a bargain price; a bit feeble.</i>	REC'D
Wharfedale Modus Centre	119		ported • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 46,14,12cm • Shielded centre speaker	
AMC WM50	120		2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 19,28,7cm • Ceiling mount	
Jamo Artina	120		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 25,29,8cm • Small, flat wall speaker	
JPW Sonata	120	71	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 23,32,22cm • <i>Fine sound if limited bass and dynamic range, wood veneered at a silly price.</i>	B'BUY
Pioneer CS-3030	120		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 27,54,24cm • Bookshelf	
Sony SS125E	120		sealed • 2 driver • 86dB • 4 Ohms • 90W • 22,38,38cm • UK optimised sound	
Yamaha NS-E80	120		2 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 50W • 27,20,7cm	
B&W Solid HCM15	125		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 17,24,17cm • White & black finishes	
Celestion Impact 10	129		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 75W • 31,19,21cm • Inverted drivers	
Celestion CSC	129		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 75W • 33,13,15cm • Centre channel	
KEF Coda 7	129	145	ported • 2 driver • 91dB • 6 Ohms • 70W • 18,30,24cm • 2-way stand/shelf	REC'D

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE	SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
B&W DM302	130		ported • 2 driver • 32,19,21cm	
B&W Solid HCM2	130		ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 14,20,14cm • White or black finishes	
Canon S-C10	130		ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 95W • 34,15,15cm • Dolby P-L centre speaker	
Jamo Sat 200 II	130		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 15,22,88cm • Stereo passive sub for SW200II	
JPW Subwoofer	130		ported • 1 driver • 95dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 26,51,27cm	
JVC SP-X50BK	130		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 24,66,24cm	
Mission 731	130	141	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 31,17,20cm • <i>Good looking and cleverly conceived high-tech miniature could have more brio.</i>	
Visonik David 5001	132		50W • 10,17,10cm	
Boston Acoustics HD5	139	110	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 25,16,18cm • <i>Pretty miniature lacks boxiness, but is short of drama and dynamic drive.</i>	
Boston Acoustics 325	139		2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 50W • 17,17,5cm • Wall/ceiling white flush mount	
Celestion CS135	139	128	subwoofer • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 90W • 52,19,34cm • <i>Compact hideaway passive sub lacks deep bass: for high sensitivity speakers</i>	
Celestion 3 MKII	139	130	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 21,31,18cm • <i>Smooth and polished by budget speaker standards, if a bit laid back for some tastes.</i>	B'BUY REC'D
Heybrook Prima	139	110	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 60W • 20,29,18cm • <i>Fine pace and timing, but balance is forward and bass is tight.</i>	
Revolver Colt	139		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 30,19,22cm • Bookshelf/stand mount	
Wharfedale Modus Mini	139		ABR • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 14,39,12cm • Shielded two-way	
Genexa GX650	140		90dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 23,76,26cm	
Interaudio XL2000	140		2 driver • 8 Ohms • 70W • 23,36,18cm	
Jamo Studio 140	140		ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 50W • 50,22,26cm	
Jamo Sat 300 II	140		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 15,21,8cm • Use with SW500 & SW300	
Jamo Cornet 40.4	140	130	ported • 20 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 32,20,22cm • <i>Pretty presentation and a strong box, but poor driver fixing. Decent if bright sound.</i>	
Mordaunt-Short MS10i	140	130	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 19,31,22cm • <i>Fine bass/mid but top is less appealing (redesignated 'i' but unchanged).</i>	REC'D
Advent Baby 2	149		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 26,39,15cm • Bookshelf/stand mount	
Boston Acoustics CR6	149		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 26,15,20cm • Magnetically shielded	
Celestion MP1	149	140	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 22,30,15cm	REC'D
Celestion CS2	149		ported • 2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 16,29,22cm	
Harman-Kardon LS0200	149	130	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 21,35,30cm • <i>Laid back to a fault but entertaining nevertheless, and a big box for the price.</i>	REC'D
NAD 800	149		ported • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 60W • 20,32,24cm • 10 litre enclosure	
Rogers LS1	149	143	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 20,20,30cm • <i>High grade miniature</i>	REC'D
Tannoy 631	149	141	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 70W • 19,34,15cm • <i>Balanced, open, unboxy and quite lively, but lacks muscle.</i>	B'BUY
Wharfedale Valdue 300	149		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 47,25,23cm • Stand/bookshelf	
Yamaha NS-C110	149		2 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 120W • 15,47,18cm	
B&W CWM5	150		2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 16,22,7cm • In wall	
Canon S-25	150		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 33,21,22cm • Magnetically shielded	
Gale Model 2	150		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • Bookshelf, black finish	
Goodmans HT170	150		2 driver • 92dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 25,70,22cm	
Infinity SM65	150		ported • 94dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 34,20,19cm • Auto reset protection circuit	
Infinity Reference Ii	150		sealed • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 50W • 34,20,20cm • Pedestal	
JPW P1 Vinyl	150	102	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 26,44,25cm • <i>Competent loudspeaker for the price, with a safe sound that won't disappoint.</i>	B'BUY
Mission 73C	150		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 16,20,43cm • TV top, shielded	
Mordaunt-Short CS-1 Dec	150		sealed • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 23,16,13cm • 2 compact paintable speakers	
Mordaunt-Short HT30	150		ported • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 25,43,29cm • Shielded, Positec protected	
Mordaunt-Short SW1	150	128	subwoofer • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 24,58,26cm • <i>Prettily finished and inexpensive passive subwoofer is only really useful with sub-miniature speakers</i>	
Technics SB-CS95	150		ported • 3 driver • 8 Ohms • 100W • 29,54,25cm • Composite mica cone mid	
Visonik Sub 4	154		100W • 36,49,31cm	
Wharfedale Modus One	159		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 22,41,29cm • Stand/bookshelf mount	
AMC WM75	160		2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 22,30,9cm • Ceiling mount	
Bose XL2000	160		ported • 2 driver • 8 Ohms • 70W • 36,23,18cm	
Denon SC-E313	160		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 23,36,23cm • Shielded, red mahogany veneer	
Denon SC-E313	160		ported • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 22,75,23cm • UK designed & built	
Grundig BX1	160		ported • 2 driver • 4 Ohms • 60W • 23,40,30cm • 16 litre	
Interaudio XL3000	160		2 driver • 8 Ohms • 70W • 29,46,23cm	
Jamo D135	160		2 driver • 94dB • 90W • 52,28,25cm	
Visonik David 6001	163	74	2 driver • 87dB • 60W • 13,20,12cm • <i>Sharp styling, but the complex grillwork worsens a sound which starts off with too much top and not enough bottom.</i>	
Boston Acs Runabout	169		2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 22,15,16cm • White indoor/outdoor system	
Celestion CS4	169		ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 18,33,23cm	
GLL Mezzo	169	141	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 21,36,25cm • <i>Splendid midband but a dull treble. Could suit budget systems well.</i>	REC'D
Allison AL105	170	78	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 24,37,21cm • <i>Pretty enough in appearance; sonically the AL105 doesn't really make the grade at the price.</i>	
GLL Imagio IC100	170		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 35,23,24cm • ICT coaxial driver	
Jamo Studio 180	170		ported • 3 driver • 92dB • 80W • 22,50,26cm	
Jamo Sat 500	170		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 16,21,14cm • Satellites for SW500	
JPW P1	170	141	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 26,44,25cm • <i>Longstanding design is remarkable material value (real wood etc) and sounds pretty too.</i>	B'BUY
Pioneer CS-5030	170		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 140W • 31,53,25cm • Bookshelf	
Boston Acoustics 350	179		2 driver • 4 Ohms • 50W • 24,17,6cm • Wall/ceiling white flush mount	
Boston Acoustics 335	179		2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 18,9cm • Wall mount, white flush	
Boston Acoustics Satellites 179	179		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • Also A/V spkrs, black/white	
Wharfedale Modus Sub	179		ported • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 57,23,38cm • Two channel double tuned sub-w	
Bose XL3000	180		ported • 2 driver • 8 Ohms • 90W • 47,29,23cm	
Canon S-30	180	114	ported • 1 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 75W • 23,27,24cm • <i>Moulded design has lively coherence, with 'wide imaging stereo'.</i>	REC'D
Jamo Converta	180		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 235,235cm • Lamp-like appearance	
TDL NFM2	180		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 18,45,17cm	
Celestion Centre 2	189		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 17,16,42cm • Centre channel	
Celestion 5 MkII	189		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 90W • 25,35,21cm • Larger version of Celestion 3	
KEF Coda 8	189		ported • 2 driver • 91dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 20,32,29cm • Developed from Coda 7	
Tannoy 632	189	135	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 90W • 51,43,27cm • <i>Clever cabinet avoids boxiness and promotes focus imaging and bass</i>	B'BUY
B&W DM600i	190	135	sealed • 2 driver • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 100W • 21,36,25cm • <i>Smart cosmetics and an even balance, but bland; and currents hungry</i>	REC'D
Bose 101 M'ble Monitor	190		1 driver • 4 Ohms • 60W • 13,23,15cm • Black finish	
Polk RT3	190		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 19,32,22cm • Shielded stand/shelf	
Rega Kyte	198	114	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 19,31,19cm • <i>Has splendid timing and coherence, sounds very explicit and informative.</i>	B'BUY
Royd The Herald	198		ported • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 31,20,18cm • Stand mount	
B&W DM601	199		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 26,21,25cm • Kevlar bass, metal dome	
Boston Acoustics CR7	199		2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 30,22,24cm • Magnetically shielded	
Celestion Impact 15	199		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 90W • 39,24,25cm • Inverted drivers	
GLL Magnum	199		86dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 25,42,29cm	
Harman-Kardon LS0300	199		88dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 21,38,80cm	
Heybrook Solo	199	90	sealed • 2 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 75W • 23,36,23cm • <i>Untidy bass and treble, but handles complex rhythmic material well.</i>	REC'D
KEF 60S	199		ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 60W • 15,25,17cm • Uni-Q, shielded, AV & hi-fi	
Revolver Purdey Mk II	199		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 120W • 75,19,22cm • Floor stand, spiked base	
Wharfedale Modus Three	199		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 22,57,29cm • Stand/bookshelf mount	
Wharfedale Valdue 400	199		ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 80,25,26cm • Floor standing	
ZYP AI	199	110	sealed • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 14,22,12cm • <i>Cute metal cased micro-miniature is quite coloured but great fun.</i>	REC'D
Acoustic Energy AE100	200		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 75W • 30,18,25cm • Internally braced MDF box	
B&W Solid Monitor	200		ported • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 17,24,15cm • Various colours	
Boston S-B20	200		subwoofer • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 48,39,37cm • Free standing, passive	
Cerwin Vega HED165	200		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 4 Ohms • 120W • 22,84,22cm	
Gale Model 4	200		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • Bookshelf, black finish	

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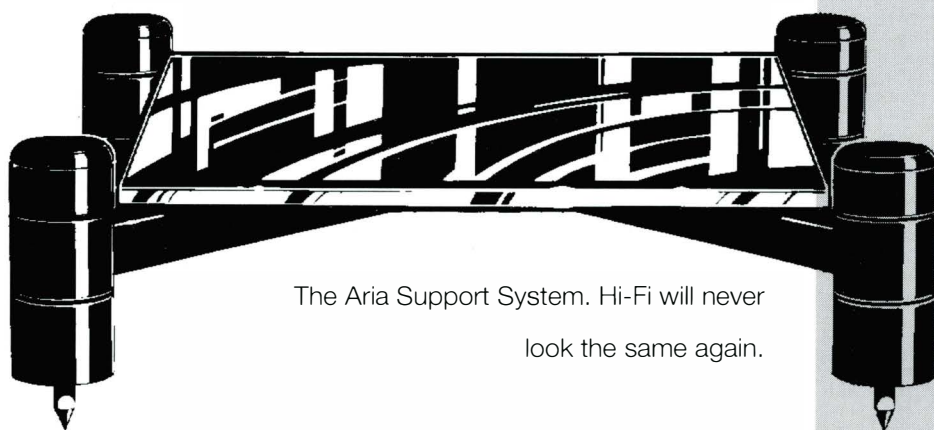
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PRODUCT	£	ISSUE	SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
Infinity Reference 11i	200		sealed • 6 Ohms • 75W • 39,22,34cm • Pedestal	
Interaudio XL4000	200		2 driver • 8 Ohms • 75W • 32,56,29cm	
Jamo Converta Light	200		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 235cm • Utility speaker, inc light	
Jamo D165	200		2 driver • 94dB • 100W • 60,31,27cm	
Jamo Cornet 60.4	200		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 42,23,22cm • Black ash - Mahogany	
JPW AP2	200	106	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 26,44,25cm • Real wood finish, and performance is cleaner but similar to P1 Vinyl overall.	REC'D
Kenwood LS-200G	200		ported • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 60W • 21,35,30cm • European design	
Mission 732	200	141	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 41,21,31cm • <i>Attractive presentation but a rather dull and thick sounding speaker, and a tad pricey too.</i>	
Monitor Audio MA301	200		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 27,17,20cm • Gold dome tweeter	
Monitor Audio Monitor 1 G	200		sealed • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 16,24,16cm • Miniature stand/shelf mount	
Mordaunt-Short CS-1 Trip	200		ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 16,23,13cm • Shielded, Positec protected	
Mordaunt-Short MS20i	200	135	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 22,37,22cm • Alloy tweeter, MCS woofer	B'BUY
Philips Legend FB720II	200	122	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 75W • 21,37,31cm • Liveliness, coherence and fine information retrieval justifies the odd looking baffle.	B'BUY
QLN QuBic111	200		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 33,21,25cm	
Technics SB-M20	200		ported • 2 driver • 60W • 20,32,23cm	
Boston Acoustics 360 SH	209		2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 22,15,7cm • Wall/ceiling, flush mount	
AMC WM100	210		2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 26,36,10cm • Ceiling mount	
Canon V-100	210		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 75W • 25,33,17cm • Corner mount, wide dispersion	
Advent Graduate	219		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 210W • 28,44,17cm • Bookshelf/stand mount	
ZYP A1T	219		sealed • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 14,22,12cm • Magnetically shielded	
Allison MS200	220		2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 75W • 13,25,14cm • Boundary, stand mount	
Allison AL110	220	102	2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 24,40,23cm • Compact bookshelf model is a little dry and mid-forward, but bass is extended and solid.	REC'D
Bose XL4000	220		ported • 2 driver • 8 Ohms • 100W • 57,32,30cm	
Polk M3 II	220		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 17,29,21cm • Multi-app, incl wall bracket	
Visonik David 8001	228		80W • 16,25,17cm	
Castle ISIS	229		ported • 2 driver • 8 Ohms • 80W • 17,35,20cm • Available in 9 finishes	
KEF Q10	229		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 19,32,26cm • Uni Q, shielded	
Grundig BX2	230		ported • 3 driver • 4 Ohms • 80W • 24,49,33cm • 22 litre	
JPW AP3	230	46	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 26,52,29cm • Good stereo and well balanced overall; character is well suited to vinyl replay.	REC'D
JVC SP-X990BK	230		ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 31,86,27cm	
Pioneer CS-7030	230		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 190W • 35,70,28cm • Bookshelf	
Boston Acoustics CR8	239		ABR • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 39,22,27cm • Magnetically shielded	
Celestion 7 MkII	239		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 31,45,24cm	
B&W CWM6i	240		2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 23,32,8cm • In wall	
Monitor Audio Mon 7 GH	245		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 17,35,17cm • Stand/shelf mount	
B&W Solid HCM1	249		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 17,24,17cm • White or black finishes	
Boston Acoustics 380	249		2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 31,24,8cm • Wall/ceiling white flush mount	
Chord Sys Audio 905	249		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 27,15,19cm • Black Ash + Kumarka (brown)	
NAD 802	249		ported • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 80W • 20,40,26cm • 11.5 litre enclosure	
Rogers LS33	249		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 36,24,21cm • Biwire terminals	
B&W DM610i	250	141	sealed • 2 driver • 89dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 24,49,31cm • <i>Fine bass extension and a smooth, well-balanced but slightly heavy and laid back sound.</i>	
Bose VS100	250		2 driver • 8 Ohms • 23,15,15cm	
Canon S-35	250		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 75W • 23,27,24cm • Wide Imaging Stereo	
Cerwin Vega VS8	250		ported • 2 driver • 94dB • 4 Ohms • 100W • High sensitivity	
Cerwin Vega VS8	250		ported • 2 driver • 94dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 28,51,29cm • Bookshelf	
Infinity SM85	250		ported • 98dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 46,29,27cm • Auto reset protection circuit	
Jamo Classic 4	250		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 100W • 47,20,25cm	
Jamo Art	250		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 35,40,9cm • Shape and size of shallow 20i	
Pioneer S-4UK	250	139	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 80W • 21,37,28cm • Latest version now balances pretty well, with a coherent lightweight bass.	REC'D
Polk RT5	250		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 22,39,25cm • Shielded stand/shelf	
QLN QuBic 121	250		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 41,21,26cm	
System Audio 905	250	142	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 15,27,21cm	
Yamaha NS10M	250		2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 21,38,20cm	
Royd Minstrel	259	135	ported • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 69,18,12cm • Not much wellie or loudness but fine coherence and timing a bit bright.	B'BUY
Wharfedale Modus Five	259		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 22,65,29cm • Stand/bookshelf mount	
Dali 102B	260		88dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 21,32,26cm	
Celestion 9	269	102	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 21,50,25cm • Nicely presented and fair material value, with impressively flat mid to bass balance.	
Heybrook HB1	269		sealed • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 29,47,23cm • Boundary, shielded option	
Bose 151 Environmental	270		2 driver • 6 Ohms • 60W • 24,14,16cm • Waterproof	
Pioneer S-60	270		ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 80W • 22,47,28cm • Bookshelf	
Bose 161 Freestyle	275		2 driver • 6 Ohms • 60W • 25,14,16cm	
Mordaunt-Short MS30i	275		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 25,43,28cm • Alloy tweeter, MCS woofer	
Mordaunt-Short HT50	275		ported • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 25,87,33cm • Positec, integrated subwoofer	
ZYP A2S	275		sealed • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 22,14,12cm • Studio nearfield monitor	
Boston Acoustics CR9	279		ABR • 2 driver • 91dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 50,25,29cm • Stand/shelf, shielded	
Celestion Impact 20	279		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 47,28,29cm • Twin vented, shielded	
Allison AL115	280		2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 28,51,26cm • Boundary, stand mount	
B&W DM602	280		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 49,24,31cm • Gold anodised dome	
Monitor Audio MA100G	280		sealed • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 16,24,16cm • Shielded for AV use	
Pioneer CS-9030	280		ported • 3 driver • 92dB • 8 Ohms • 220W • 39,75,29cm • Bookshelf	
Origin Live OL-IB	289	135	2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 20,30,19cm • <i>Pretty miniature has a punchy, dynamic midband, but costs a lot for the engineering on offer.</i>	
Bose 201 Ser III	290		3 driver • 8 Ohms • 60W • 38,20,25cm • Direct/reflecting technology	
ZYP A25T	295		sealed • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 22,14,12cm • Magnetically shielded	
Linn Sekrit On Passive	298		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 60W • 26,13,48cm • Bi-wire or bi-amp ready	
Linn Sekrit In Passive	298		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 30W • 20,28,90cm • IB or bass reflex	
Rega EL8	298	122	ported • 2 driver • 8 Ohms • 17,72,20cm • Kyle drivers in compact floorstander gives more bass but less coherence.	REC'D
Royd Merlin	298		ported • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 31,20,18cm • Veneered	
Advent Prodigy	299		2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 300W • 24,68,20cm • Floor standing, free space	
Boston Acoustics Voyager	299		2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 26,16,17cm • White indoor/outdoor, metal	
Celestion 11	299		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 31,57,24cm	
KEF Coda 9	299		coupled cavity • 2 driver • 91dB • 4 Ohms • 120W • 20,84,30cm	
KEF 70S	299		sealed • 2 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 17,25,12cm • Uni-Q, shielded, AV surround	
Wharfedale Valdsu 500	299		ported • 4 driver • 91dB • 4 Ohms • 350W • 108,25,29cm • Floor standing	
Allison CD6	300		2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 29,29,29cm • Cuboid, wall mount	
B&O Beovox CX50	300		sealed • 2 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 12,21,21cm	
B&W Solid Powerbass	300		subwoofer • 75W • 33,39,34cm • Active sub to match Solids	
B&W CWM8i	300		2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 100W • 28,38,9cm • In wall	
Bose C'puter RoomMate	300		active • 2 driver • 60W • 24,14,16cm • Self powered AC/shielded	
Bose Video RoomMate	300		active • 2 driver • 60W • 24,14,16cm • Self powered AC/shielded	REC'D
Bose Roomate II	300		active • 2 driver • 60W • 24,14,16cm • Self powered AC/12V DC	
Castle Durham 900	300	135	ported • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 85W • 22,40,23cm • Lovely veneer and lots of engineering create a very upfront, coherent and exciting sound.	REC'D
Cerwin Vega HED265	300		ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 4 Ohms • 140W • 22,88,26cm	
Cerwin Vega SAT-6	300		subwoofer • 95dB • 4 Ohms • 125W • 22,25,32cm • 3 box satellite/subwoofer	
GLL Imagio IC110	300		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 73,23,29cm • ICT coaxial driver, shielded	
Infinity Inv Inf Sat	300		sealed • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 80W • 16,24,18cm • Wall mount, shielded	

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE	SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
Jamo D2650	300		ported • 3 driver • 95dB • 150W • 64,39,28cm	
Jamo 307A	300		ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 70W • 31,18,26cm • Stand mount	
JVC SX-SW10	300		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 29,39,45cm • Satellite subwoofer system	
Kenwood LS-300G	300		ported • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 21,35,30cm • European design	
Mission 733	300	139	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 84,21,31cm • <i>Stylish and a lot of speaker for the money, and sounds pretty good too.</i>	B'BUY
Mission 751	300	125	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 75W • 19,32,27cm • <i>Great sonic potential, but our review samples have been marred by sample variations.</i>	
Monitor Audio Sub 200/92	300		8 Ohms • 100W • 48,25,36cm	
Monitor Audio MA201	300	135	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 22,41,40cm • <i>Lively and coherent with good power handling, but also a bit shut in and coloured.</i>	REC'D
Mordaunt-Short MS25i	300		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 73,21,21cm • 2xMCS bass drivers, biwireable	
Polk RT7	300		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 24,48,29cm • Shielded stand/shelf	
Polk M5	300		ported • 2 driver • 91dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 21,33,23cm • Multi-app, inc brackets	
TDL RTL2	300		ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 20,73,22cm • Reflex transmission line	
Tannoy 633	319	139	sealed • 3 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 29,75,28cm • <i>Real extension and coherence without booming, though midband is dubious.</i>	B'BUY
Triangle Titus TZe	325		2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 20,25,32cm • New tweeter, lifetime warranty	
Audio Innovations Alto	329		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 38,20,26cm • Biwire	
Keswick Audio Aria II	329	148	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 21,42,24cm • Bookshelf	
Ruark Swordsman Plus II	329		sealed • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 20,38,27cm • Near wall/stand mount	
Jamo Classic 6	330		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 100W • 84,20,29cm • Inc spiked feet	
Wharfedale Modus Seven	339		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 22,81,20cm • Floor standing	
Faraday SG	345		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 4 Ohms • 75W • 27,26,25cm • Matt black or granite effect	
Advent Legacy 2	349		2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 500W • 38,67,22cm • Floor standing, free space	
Origin Live OL-2B	349		2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 19,80,19cm • Floor standing	
Royd The Squire	349		ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 80,18,10cm • Sand filled, shielded	
Cerwin Vega VS10	350		ported • 3 driver • 95dB • 6 Ohms • 125W • 33,70,29cm • Floor standing	
Grundig BX3 II	350		ported • 2 driver • 4 Ohms • 120W • 24,107,34cm • 53 litre, 3 drivers, 2 way	
Infinity SM105	350		ported • 100dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 53,30,30cm • Auto reset protection circuit	
Jamo BX100A	350		ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 54,31,27cm • Floor or stand mount	
Jamo 407A	350		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 4 Ohms • 80W • 40,22,26cm • Stand mount	
Monitor Audio Mon 9 GII	350		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 20,37,21cm • Stand/shelf mount	
Sony SA-W90	350		2 driver • 70W • 22,49,51cm • Active subwoofer	
Technics SB-M300	350		ported • 4 driver • 85dB • 70W • 22,37,34cm • 3-way, 4-driver	
Ruark Icon	359		ported • 2 driver • 6dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 35,19,26cm • Inverted drivers, handed L/R	
Castle York	370	110	ported • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 26,43,22cm • <i>Real wood compact has an engaging transparency: fine balance and timing, but could use some authority.</i>	
Dali 104B	370		93dB • 4 Ohms • 120W • 86,22,27cm	
Pioneer S-80	370		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 4 Ohms • 80W • 23,56,28cm • Bookshelf	
Heybrook Trio	373	118	sealed • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 24,47,25cm • <i>HBS1 drivers in real wood enclosure give a sweeter and more forgiving sound.</i>	REC'D
Lumley Reference LM4	375	126	ported • 2 driver • 86dB • 6 Ohms • 120W • 18,36,22cm • <i>Metal diaphragm and wood veneer; balance uneven upper and has suspect timing.</i>	
QLN QuBic 222	375		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 85,21,30cm	
KEF Q30	379	126	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 125W • 19,73,30cm • <i>Fine focus from Uni-Q driver, but lacks drive and time coherence.</i>	
Allison CD7	380		3 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 24,70,24cm • Floor standing, free space	
Bose 301 VM	380		3 driver • 8 Ohms • 75W • 24,43,27cm • Direct/reflecting technology	
Jamo Graphic	380		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 44,39,90cm • Decor model, switch panels	
Polk RT8	380		ported • 2 driver • 80dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 19,80,26cm • Shielded floorstander	
Celestion 15	389	114	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 21,100,25cm • <i>Big box and but short on subtlety and control though long on both enthusiasm</i>	REC'D
Heybrook Heylo	389		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 73,23,19cm • compact floorstander	
Clements 300Si	395		89dB • 90W • 24,36,36cm • Compression line	
KAL Mini-Ref MKII	395		2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 23,27,17cm	
Celestion Impact 25	399		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 82,28,29cm • Magnetically shielded	
Fullers Sultan	399		ported • 2 driver • 91dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 24,51,30cm • 3 finishes	
Origin Live OL-1AS	399		2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 199W • 20,30,190cm • Floor standing	
Origin Live OL-1A	399		2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 20,30,19cm	
SD Acoustics SD3R	399	106	ported • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 20,38,30cm • <i>New SD3 has the agility and charm of a quality miniature, good bass and low sensitivity.</i>	REC'D
Tannoy Subsat3	399		ported • 3 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 11,16,9cm • Subsat system with ICT tech	
B&O Beovox CX100	400		sealed • 2 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 200W • 12,32,21cm	
B&W CDM2	400		ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 32,22,25cm • Kevlar bass, metal dome treble	
B&W Solid Verticale	400		subwoofer • 88dB • 4 Ohms • 100W • Lifestyle, 3 boxes	
Infinity Inf Micro II	400		ported • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 21,x 127dcm • Two satellites and passive sub	
Jamo Classic 8	400		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 90,22,29cm • Inc spiked feet	
Jamo D365D	400		3 driver • 96dB • 200W • 78,46,35cm	
Monitor Audio MA302	400		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 200W • 50,17,20cm • 2 bass units, front port	
TDL RTL3	400	126	ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 20,90,37cm • <i>Bargain price floorstander has rich, heavy and bright sound with a good scale.</i>	REC'D
Tannoy 636	419		sealed • 3 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 120W • 29,75,28cm	
Allison AL120	420	98	2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 200W • 28,61,29cm • <i>Pretty well balanced if slightly mid-forward, but sound quality is disappointing at the price.</i>	
GLL Imagio IC120	420		ported • 3 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 130W • 91,23,29cm • ICT coaxial, shielded	
Jordan Watts JHFLG	420		Flagon pottery colour	
Celestion Impact 30	429		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 82,24,25cm • Magnetically shielded	
Celestion SL6Si	429	94	sealed • 2 driver • 84dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 20,38,27cm • <i>This stereotype luxury compact can sound a bit dull and congested; favours CD.</i>	
Rogers LSS5	429		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 125W • 88,24,22cm • Black - biwire extra	
B&W DM620i	430	126	ABR • 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 24,75,31cm • <i>Good value compact floorstander has well voiced midband, but iffy bass</i>	REC'D
Bose 305	430	78	ported • 3 driver • 8 Ohms • 100W • 23,45,28cm • <i>Fine dynamic liveliness and a good room match counter strange imaging and treble.</i>	REC'D
Mission 734	430		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 84,21,33cm • Floor standing, boundary	
Fullers Sultan H.E.	439		ported • 2 driver • 98dB • 8 Ohms • 90W • 24,51,30cm • High sensitivity, 3 finishes	
Wharfedale Modus 1-3	439		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 22,109,29cm • Floor standing	
Polk RT10	440		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 22,86,26cm • Shielded floorstander	
Epos ES11	445	94	ported • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 20,38,25cm • <i>Integral baffle/driver gives remarkable colouration, transparency and speed.</i>	B'BUY
Faraday Siren	445	94	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 80W • 27,25,46cm • <i>High mass concrete cabinet is let down by imbalance of ageing driver combination.</i>	
Boston Acoustics SW10	449	128	subwoofer • 2 driver • 100W • 34,17,42cm • <i>Clever powered subwoofer system integrates well and improves system loudness and power handling.</i>	REC'D
Boston Acoustics SubSat	6449		subwoofer • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • Passive subs and two satellite	
Celestion CS6i	449		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 19,85,31cm	
Linn Tukan	449		sealed • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 30W • 19,30,18cm • Multipurpose	
Polk LS f/x Surround	449		ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 22,28,16cm • A/V surround & utility speaker	
Royd Doublet	449		ported • 89dB • 4 Ohms • 120W • 91,18,17cm • Double ported	
Ruark Sabre II	449		sealed • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 23,37,27cm • Wall/free, on stands	
B&O Beovox RL6000	450		ported • 3 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 41,54,18cm • Simplified RL7000	
Infinity SM115	450		ported • 3 driver • 100dB • 8 Ohms • 175W • 76,34,32cm • Auto reset protection circuit	
Jamo Silhouette	450		3 driver • 90dB • 5 Ohms • 80W • 122,25,17cm • Elegant design	
Jamo Atmosphere	450		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 37,26,16cm • Gives light, sound & movement	
Jamo BX150A	450		ported • 3 driver • 92dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 63,37,30cm • Floor mount	
Manticore Minaret	450		sealed • 94dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 23,15,11cm • Nearfield monitor	
Monitor Audio MA202	450	139	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 22,89,27cm • <i>Uneven, informative and easy-listening floorstander delivers decent scale.</i>	REC'D
Mordaunt-Short MS40i	450		ribbon • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 23,82,28cm • Alloy tweeter, MCS woofer	
Sony SSA1L	450		sealed • 2 driver • 85dB • 4 Ohms • 120W • 19,30,32cm • Bio-cellulose tweeters	
UKD-Opera Prima	450		ported • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 20,33,25cm • Solid oak, stand mount	
Acoustic Energy Aegis 1	452	118	ported • 2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 21,39,26cm • <i>Rich and slightly heavy balance doesn't mask fine mid/treble and transparency.</i>	REC'D
Origin Live OL-2AS	469	122	2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 19,80,19cm • <i>Compact floorstander sounds open, transparent and evenly balanced; needs a big amp.</i>	REC'D

PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

Origin Live OL-2A	469		2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 19,80,19cm • Floor standing	
Pentachord A	469	139	sealed • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 21,28,20cm • Direct coupled	REC'D
B&O Beovox 4500	475		ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 90W • 45,38,8cm	
Triangle Comete TZe	475		2 driver • 91dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 22,28,40cm • High sensitivity	
Prof Monitor Co TB1	481		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 20,40,25cm • Shielded version available	
Dawn Audio Chorus BS	482		sealed • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 26,38,21cm • Bookshelf	
Roksan Roksan I	495		ported • 2 driver • 21,44,33cm • Rosewood £50 extra	
Rega ELA Mk II	498	139	ported • 2 driver • 8 Ohms • 30,80,20cm • Floor stand	B'BUY
Advent Laureate	499		3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 500W • 21,80,29cm • Floor standing, free space	
Audio Note AN-KB	499		2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 28,46,23cm • Free space, stand mount	
Celestion CS8i	499		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 19,100,31cm	
Heybrook Heystak	499	141	ABR • 3 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 98,22,28cm • Inc stands	
Lumley Reference LM5	499		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 25,46,21cm • Stand mount	
Origin Live OL-1	499	106	2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 20,30,19cm • <i>Luxury miniature has very good overall balance, sacrificing sensitivity for bass.</i>	
Rogers AB1	499	143	ABR • 1 driver • 82dB • 8 Ohms • 35W • 57,19,16cm • <i>Designed as partner for LS3/5a or similar miniatures</i>	REC'D
Rogers Studio 3	499	118	ported • 2 driver • 85dB • 8 Ohms • 505W • 19,30,16cm • <i>Pricey LS3/5A derived miniature, excitingly coherent if lightweight, can't go loud.</i>	REC'D
Ruark Templar	499	122	sealed • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 19,70,27cm • <i>Striking baffle gives decent bass/mid but dull treble; could tame over-bright system.</i>	
Tannoy 637	499		sealed • 3 driver • 91dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 33,86,32cm	
TDL Studio 0.5	499	94	ported • 2 driver • 85dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 20,62,30cm • <i>Tiny floorstanding transmission line lacks coherence or the balane of Studio 1.</i>	
B&W AS6	500		subwoofer • 1 driver • 100W • 51,45,46cm • Active, self powered	
B&W DM603	500		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 85,24,31cm • 2-way, ABR, port foam plugs	
B&W Signature 7	500		2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 28,37,10cm • In-wall monitor, Kevlar cone	
Bose A mass AM3 II	500		2 driver • 50W • 36,20,20cm • Acoustimass technology	
Bose 401	500	110	3 driver • 4 Ohms • 100W • 30,30,76cm • <i>Cheaply built but distinctively styled, the 401 suffers from heavy midband.</i>	
Castle Severn	500		ported • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 110W • 23,77,20cm • Free standing; nine finishes	
Infinity SSW-10 Sub	500		active • 34,34,33cm	
Jamo BX200A	500		ported • 3 driver • 93dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 72,43,32cm • Floor mount	
Jamo 477A	500	138	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 4 Ohms • 100W • 77,19,28cm • <i>Very prettily styled, but build and sound quality are disappointing at the price.</i>	
JPW Ruby 1	500	139	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 120W • 32,19,21cm • <i>Very pretty but pricey luxury metal-cone miniature has good, if slightly edgy balance.</i>	
Kenwood LS-500G	500	118	ported • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 100W • 22,44,28cm • <i>Japanese designed and built luxury compact delivers an invigorating ad exciting sound.</i>	REC'D
Mission 752	500	138	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 20,84,26cm • <i>Brilliant style, engineering and sound</i>	REC'D
Monitor Audio MA303	500		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 200W • 92,17,20cm	
Monitor Audio Mon 14 GII	500		ported • 3 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 20,76,24cm • Floor/shelf standing	
Jordan Watts JH200	510		sealed • 1 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 19,33,17cm • Bookshelf or stand mount	
Pentachord B	519	139	sealed • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 52,35,52cm • Active crossover	REC'D
Celestion Impact 35	529		ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 4 Ohms • 200W • 90,28,29cm • Magnetically shielded	
KEF Q50	529	139	ported • 3 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 19,83,30cm • <i>Compact twin-driver floorstander with Uni-Q treble and a rather midbass, heavy overall balance.</i>	
GLL Imagio IC300	530		ported • 4 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 111,23,29cm • ICT coaxial, shielded	
Celestion 100	539		sealed • 2 driver • 84dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 21,42,26cm	
Boston Acoustics SubSat 7549	549		3 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • Passive sub & 2 satellites	
Allison CD8	550		3 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 200W • 27,73,27cm • Floor standing, free space	
Cerwin Vega VS12	550		ported • 3 driver • 97dB • 4 Ohms • 250W • 42,81,38cm • Floor standing	
Cerwin Vega DC10	550		ported • 3 driver • 96dB • 4 Ohms • 200W • 29,94,35cm • Floor standing	
Infinity SM125	550		ported • 3 driver • 100dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 89,37,32cm • Auto reset protection circuit	
Mordaunt-Short MS50i	550	138	ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 25,87,33cm • <i>Big value big box with fine engineering content and a big, laid back sound; lacks charisma.</i>	
UKD-Opera Seconda	550		ported • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 23,35,34cm • Solid oak, stand mount	
Heybrook Quartet	575	122	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 24,41,22cm • <i>Solidly large bookshelf model with good sensitivity and a lively, forward sound.</i>	REC'D
Advent Heritage	579		3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 600W • 25,89,31cm • Floor standing, free space	
Polk RT12	580		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 19,93,32cm • Shielded floorstander	
Clements 600si	595		88dB • 100W • 24,81,36cm • Compression line	
Neat Petite	595	102	ribbon • 2 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 20,30,18cm • <i>Among the most entertaining and enjoyable, despite colourations</i>	REC'D
Royd The Sorcerer	595	139	ported • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 31,20,18cm • Front port, near field monitor	REC'D
Tannoy 625	595		active • 90W • 58,49,45cm • Servo, current drive subwoofer	
Proac Tablette 50	599		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 28,17,23cm • special finishes £60 EXTRA	
Tannoy 638	599	138	ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 6 Ohms • 175W • 33,96,32cm • <i>Big value vinyl big box has good balance and lots of loudness, but needs a good amp.</i>	
B&W CDM1	600		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 37,22,28cm • Angled tweeter sub-baffle	
B&W P4	600		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 20,81,24cm • 3 real wood veneers	
Keswick Audio Volante	600		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 85W • 21,85,27cm • High sensitivity	
Mission 735	600		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 106,21,33cm • Floor stand, boundary	
Monitor Audio Studio 2	600		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 27,17,20cm • Shielded for AV use	
Pioneer S-200	600		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 4 Ohms • 120W • 26,90,34cm • Biwire, floor standing	
QLN 313	600		ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 4 Ohms • 250W • 103,21,30cm	
KAL Mini-Tower	619		2 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 17,90,22cm	
Celestion Impact 40	629		ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 4 Ohms • 225W • 100,33,29cm • Magnetically shielded	
Spendor LS3/5A	630		ported • 2 driver • 82dB • 8 Ohms • 40W • 19,30,16cm • BBC inspired location monitor	
Fullers Pharos I	649		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 20,30,20cm • Curved sides, various finishes	
KEF LS3/5a	649		sealed • 2 driver • 82dB • 11 Ohms • 30W • 19,30,16cm • Raymond Cooke Special Edition	
Lineaum LFX Wood	649		hybrid • 90dB • 16,22,18cm • Modified ribbon/dynamic	
Linn Kelidh Passive	649	114	sealed • 2 driver • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 60W • 20,83,28cm • <i>Stunning timing and coherence, and awesome bass drive.</i>	REC'D
Origin Live OL-2	649		2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 19,80,19cm • Floor standing	
Tannoy D100	649		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 25,36,22cm • 6.5 inch Dual Concentric	
Allison AL125	650		2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 200W • 28,78,29cm • Open space, free standing	
Cerwin Vega DC12	650		ported • 3 driver • 98dB • 4 Ohms • 300W • 36,98,35cm • Floor standing	
Infinity SM155	650		ported • 4 driver • 102dB • 8 Ohms • 300W • 102,45,32cm • Auto reset protection circuit	
KAL Compact Ref	650		2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 140W • 23,36,27cm	
Lumley Reference LM6	650		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 25,81,21cm • Floor standing	
JVC SX-911WD	660		ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 38,63,35cm • Walnut finish	
UKD-Opera Operetta	660		ported • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 22,30,26cm • Solid walnut, stand mount	
Royd Abbot	665	118	ported • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 81,20,30cm • <i>Dynamic and fine transient qualities are hampered by a rather coloured mid-forward balance.</i>	
Epos ES14	675	98	ported • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 23,49,29cm • <i>Substantial stand mount delivers delightful midrange focus and delicacy with good bass control.</i>	REC'D
Polk RT16	680		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 22,102,39cm • Shielded floorstander	
Polk RT16	680		ported • 3 driver • 8dB • 90 Ohms • 250W • 22,102,39cm • Shielded floorstander	
Meridian A500	695		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 100W • 83,20,28cm • Shelf/stand, shielded	
Dawn Audio Chorus FS	698	11	sealed • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 26,88,21cm • <i>Compact floorstander with superb coherence but rather forward midband. Would suit smaller rooms best.</i>	
Audio Note AN-K/SP	699		2 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 28,46,23cm • Free space, stand mount	
Harbeth BBC LS3/5A	699	66	sealed • 2 driver • 82dB • 10 Ohms • 30W • 30,19,18cm • <i>Still a classic miniature, though not to every taste, and none the better for the recent update.</i>	
Naim S-NAXO 3-6	699		21,76,30cm • Active crossover	
Naim S-NAXO 2-4	699		21,76,30cm • Active crossover	
Orelle Orator II	699		ported • 2 driver • 91dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 27,40,30cm • Time aligned, biwire	
Proac Studio 100	699		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 41,20,25cm • Stand mount	
Rogers LS3/5A	699	143	sealed • 2 driver • 82dB • 12 Ohms • 35W • 19,31,17cm • <i>Clever AB1 stand/subwoofer helps the classic 3/5A monitor give its best shot.</i>	REC'D
Rogers Studio 5	699	138	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 25,25,48cm • <i>Luxury finish bookshelf size model has genuine monitoring capabilities.</i>	REC'D
TDL Studio 1	699	78	ported • 2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 23,77,33cm • <i>Genuinely extended bass from a compact enclosure, very detailed but a shade clinical.</i>	REC'D
Castle Chester	700	98	horn • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 23,91,25cm • <i>A brilliant throwback, using a horn type approach to provide startling dynamics and coherence.</i>	B'BUY
Cerwin Vega VS15	700		ported • 3 driver • 102dB • 4 Ohms • 400W • 46,90,47cm • Floor standing	

PRODUCT

£ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

Jamo 507A	700	ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 22,36,91cm • spiked feet	
JPW Ruby 2	700	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 43,22,25cm • Alloy cones	
JVC SX-500	700	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 180W • 27,45,28cm • Super Digifine	
Mission 753	700 114	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 21,88,32cm • <i>Georgous presentation and potential for open transparency.</i>	
QLN 929	700	ported • 4 driver • 92dB • 4 Ohms • 250W • 113,24,32cm	
KEF Q70	729	ported • 4 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 175W • 19,105,30cm • Uni-Q, shielded, floor stand	
Pentachord Pentode	729	sealed • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 80W • 20,74,20cm • Active crossover	
Ruark Talisman II	749 118	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 23,84,32cm • <i>Less ideologically committed than some, strength lies in fine all-round coherence.</i>	REC'D
Manticore Minaret F1	750	sealed • 94dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 23,15,11cm • Nearfield monitor	
Bose SE-5 Ser II System	760	2 driver • 100W • 90,100,18cm	
Bose A'mass AM511	760	2 driver • 200W • 49,35,19cm • Acoustimass direct/reflecting	
Spendor S20	760 102	ported • 2 driver • 84dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 22,38,26cm • <i>Maintains Spendor's tradition for peerles mid-to-treble coherence and perspectives..</i>	REC'D
Naim IBL Active	776	65W • 25,80,28cm • Boundary, floor standing	
Shahinian Super Elf	790	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 21,26,37cm • Finnish birch cabinet	
Roksan Ojan Sub	793	subwoofer • 1 driver • 28,54,55cm • Passive/pr. Rosewood + £200	
Faraday FS10	795	ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 4 Ohms • 100W • 27,25,93cm • Matt black or granite effect	
KAL Tunejal	795	2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 23,100,27cm	
Roksan Ojan 3 Black	795 132	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 28,76,46cm • <i>Squat, stylish and black, great bass extension and somewhat uneven balance.</i>	REC'D
Spendor SP3/1	795	ported • 2 driver • 85dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 40,22,28cm • Stand mount, free space	
Acoustic Energy Aegis 2	799	ported • 2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 33,106,26cm • Floor, reflex, metal cone	
Audio Note AN-J/B	799 110	2 driver • 93dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 38,58,25cm • <i>Light damping and local unevenness adds some colouration, but doesn't spoil the very speaker.</i>	REC'D
Castle Harlech	799	horn • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 20,94,32cm • available in 9 finishes	
Harbeth HL-P3ES	799 118	sealed • 2 driver • 83dB • 6 Ohms • 45W • 31,19,18cm • Shielded, biwire/biampable	
Allison AL130	800	2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 200W • 32,95,34cm • Open space, free standing	
B&W P5	800 144	ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 20,90,28cm • 3 real wood veneers	
Monitor Audio MAG901	800	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 27,17,20cm • Metal bass cone, wood veneer	
Polk LS50	800 138	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 27,83,29cm • <i>No enthusiast tweaks here, but powerful and beautiful balance</i>	REC'D
QLN Classic One	800	ported • 2 driver • 86dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 35,25,27cm • Trapezoidal enclosure	
Celestion SL600si	820 68	sealed • 2 driver • 82 dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 20,37,24cm • <i>Some will find this speaker irresistible, but it needs careful system and room matching.</i>	
Jordan Watts JH400	820 106	sealed • 1 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 28,32,17cm • <i>Piano finish hexagon has controversial sound, with uneven balance but delightful mid.</i>	REC'D
Bose A'mass AM7	830	2 driver • 100W • 35,49,19cm • Acoustimass direct/reflecting	
Fullers Sphinx	839	ported • 3 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 25,91,30cm • various finishes	
Audiovector 2X	850	2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 17,90,22cm • Black ash	
Cerwin Vega DC15	850	ported • 3 driver • 100dB • 4 Ohms • 500W • 44,103,46cm • Floor standing	
Chord SysAudio Sij	850	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 27,15,25cm • Cherry, rosewood, black ash	
Meridian DSP6000	850 133,28,43cm	Digital active DSP based	REC'D
Acoustic Energy AE1	870 102	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 26,30,18cm • <i>Exceptional mid focus and coherence, but it is pricey and could be more agile.</i>	
UKD-Opera Super Pavarotti875	875	ported • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 23,55,23cm • Solid mahogany, stand mount	
Bose 601 MKIII	880	3 driver • 8 Ohms • 200W • 32,31,76cm • Direct/reflecting technology	
Lumley Reference LM3	895 106	ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 27,87,28cm • <i>Despite indifferent bass alignment, LM3 is fast, coherent, solid and informative</i>	REC'D
UKD-Opera Callas II	895	ported • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 34,22,32cm • Solid mahogany/ash, Focal	
Pink Triangle Ventral	896 142	hybrid • 86dB • 11 Ohms • 100W • 15,80,32cm • Ribbon hybrid	
Sonus-Faber Minuetto	898	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 23,35,28cm • Compact, stand mount	
Canon S-75	899	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 25,78,25cm • Wide imaging stereo	
Keswick Figaro Evolution	899	ported • 1 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 19,28,27cm • Piano lacquer finishes	
Rogers Studio 7	899 122	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 30,63,30cm • <i>Latest variation on classic BBC-monitor theme has beautifully voiced, laid back sound.</i>	REC'D
Ruark Broadworld II	899	sealed • 2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 29,43,38cm • Free space, stand mount	
TDL Studio 1m	899 118	ported • 2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 23,77,34cm • <i>Transmission line helps bring the best from metal cone driver.</i>	REC'D
Jamo 707A	900 132	ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 200W • 26,38,104cm • <i>Superb styling and cosmetics and decent balance apart from detached bass.</i>	
Monitor Audio Studio 6	900 118	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 22,35,25cm • <i>Metal diaphragm compact has transparent midband but lacks vigour and drive.</i>	REC'D
Naim IBL Passive	905 94	86dB • 6 Ohms • 65W • 25,80,28cm • <i>Outstanding dynamics, speed and detail marred by pronounced upper mid forwardness.</i>	REC'D
Spendor SP2/3	930	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 28,55,33cm • On stands, free space	
Pioneer S-400	950	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 4 Ohms • 160W • 27,96,38cm • Biwire, floor stand, shielded	
Jordan Watts JH400M	970	ported • 1 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 82,28,21cm	
Origin Live OL-3	975	ported • 3 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 19,83,23cm • Floor standing	
Triangle Antal	975	2 driver • 92dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 22,102,30cm	
Royd The Prior	978	ported • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 96,37,26cm • Floor standing, free space	
Magnepan SMG-C SE	990	electrostatic • 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 43,122,-cm • 2x Quasi-ribbon	
Linaeum LSII	991	hybrid • 90dB • 30,150,38cm • Modified ribbon/dynamic	
ATC SCM10	995	sealed • 2 driver • 80dB • 8 Ohms • 300W • 18,38,26cm • Mnimum 100wpc, wall/free use	
B&W Matrix 805 V	995 98	ported • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 33,33,21cm • <i>Stylish, remarkable imaging, good balance and low colouration.</i>	REC'D
Clements Reference 1	995	86dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 20,43,29cm • Ribbon tweeter	
Infinity Kappa 6.1i	995 132	ported • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 31,95,25cm • <i>Good extension, but bass is fat and slow, and dynamics are unconvincing.</i>	
Roksan Ojan 3 Rosewood	995	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 28,74,46cm	
Totem Model One	995 122	ported • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 120W • 17,31,23cm • <i>Utterly delightful but exasperatingly expensive luxury miniature sets the benchmark for its size.</i>	REC'D
UKD-Opera Callas Gold	995	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • Solid mahogany, ScanSpeak	
Prof Monitor Co LB1	998 110	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 4 Ohms • 300W • 18,53,25cm • <i>Delightful smoothness and transparency, though bass and treble are both limited.</i>	REC'D
Audio Note AN-J/SP	999	2 driver • 93dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 38,58,25cm • Free space, stand mount	
Proac Response 1S	999	ported • 2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 30,18,23cm	
B&W DM604	1,000	ported • 4 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 100,24,41cm • 3-way, twin bass drivers	
B&W P6	1,000	ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 20,100,30cm • Time aligned tweeter	
JPW Ruby 3	1,000	ported • 3 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 75,19,22cm • Alloy cones	
Monitor Audio MAG902	1,000	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 50,17,20cm • Dual metal cone, wood veneer	
Monitor Audio Studio 12	1,000 143	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 92,17,20cm • <i>A real looker, but sound and content are a bit on the small side for the price.</i>	
Morel 704/2	1,000 143	sealed • 4 driver • 88dB • 150W • 80,23,21cm	
QLN Signature	1,000	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 37,27,36cm • Trapezoidal enclosure	
Rega XEL	1,040 132	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 40W • 20,82,30cm • <i>Looks and sounds great: balance bright but even, with delightful coherence and timing.</i>	B'BUY
Impulse Kora	1,095	horn • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 1,86,31cm • Floor standing	
Celestion 300	1,099 118	2 driver • 84dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 21,97,33cm • <i>Splendid bass extension and fine panel-like openness, but dynamics and timing are suspect.</i>	
KEF Model One	1,099	coupled cavity • 3 driver • 89dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 23,86,30cm • Uni-Q, floor stand, shielded	
Ruark Paladin	1,099	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 88,29,38cm • Floor standing	
Castle Howard S2	1,100 132	horn • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 26,104,41cm • <i>Ably fills the gap between Chester and Winchester; has a rich, laid back balance.</i>	REC'D
Heybrook Sextet	1,129 102	ported • 3 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 27,90,20cm • <i>Coherent and highly analytical, partly due to distinct upper-mid forwardness.</i>	REC'D
Linn Keilidh Aktiv	1,144	sealed • 2 driver • 20,83,28cm • Floor standing, boundary	
Acoustic Energy AE2	1,175	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 200W • 24,40,32cm • Twin bass, metal cone	
Epos ES22	1,185	ported • 3 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 175W • 88,21,25cm • Light cherrywood veneer	
Infinity Kappa 7.1i	1,195	ported • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 225W • 36,108,26cm • Floor standing	
Roksan Ojan 3X Black	1,195	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 300W • 28,76,48cm • As Ojan 3, improved drivers	
B&O Beolab 4500	1,200	active • 45W • 45,38,8cm • Attaches to wall, display	
Fullers Pharaoh 2	1,200	ported • 3 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 39,100,31cm • Pharaoh 1 with added bass	
Kenwood LS-700G	1,200	ported • 83dB • 4 Ohms • 120W • 30,90,30cm • European design	
Polk LS70	1,200 132	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 31,94,37cm • <i>High sensitivity, but balance has too much midbass boom; mid-top is laid back.</i>	
SD Acoustics SD5	1,235 132	ported • 3 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 20,110,30cm • <i>Bass suspect but forward midband is delightfully smooth. Has ribbon tweeter.</i>	REC'D
Harbeth BBC LSS/12A	1,259	ported • 2 driver • 81dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 30,18,23cm • BBC broadcast mini, biwire	
Electrocom't The Qube	1,265	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 16,40,28cm • D'Apollito nearfield monitor	

PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

Audio Note AN-E/B	1,299	106	2 driver • 94dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 36,84,28cm • <i>Coherent dynamic and transparent, with extended bass and high sensitivity - but ugly!</i>	REC'D
Audio Physic STEP	1,299		ported • 2 driver • 84dB • 4 Ohms • 60W • 14,33,23cm • Time aligned, with frame stand	
Keswick Audio Alto	1,299		subwoofer • 1 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 19,70,27cm • Subwoofer to match Figaro	
Cerwin Vega 1515	1,300		ported • 6 driver • 103dB • 4 Ohms • 600W • 44,135,46cm	
JBL L90	1,300	143	sealed • 3 driver • 91dB • 200W • 94,24,35cm	B'BUY
JPW Ruby 4	1,300		ported • 3 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 200W • 90,22,26cm • Alloy cones	
Manticore Matisse	1,300		sealed • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 100,28,22cm • Fibrelam honeycomb cabinets	
Monitor Audio MAG903	1,300		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 92,17,20cm • Dual metal cone, wood veneer	
Philips DSS930S	1,300		active • 2 driver • 75W • 58,33,22cm • Active digital loudspeaker	
Harbeth HL Compact 7	1,329		ported • 2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 52,27,32cm • Free-space, shielded, biwire	
Spendor SP1/2	1,330		ported • 3 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 90W • 30,63,30cm • Stand mount, free space	
Apogee Centaur Minor	1,345		hybrid • 88dB • 4 Ohms • 100W • 30,88,20cm • Ribbon/dynamic	
Keswick Audio Amber	1,349		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 21,100,30cm • Features magnesium cones	
Magnepan MG-0.6 SE	1,370		electrostatic • 2 driver • 85dB • 4 Ohms • 250W • 48,127,-cm • 2x quasi ribbon	
Thiel SCS	1,379	114	active • 2 driver • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 2,23,41cm • <i>Class leading coherence and communication, but can sound shut-in and dark</i>	REC'D
Linn Kåber Passive	1,389	118	sealed • 3 driver • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 60W • 20,90,28cm • <i>Dry, bright balance emphasises dynamics and transients, but can sound unforgiving.</i>	REC'D
UKD-Opera Divina	1,390		ported • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 24,39,40cm • Solid ash, stand mount	
Roksan Ojan 3X Rosewood	1,395		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 300W • 28,74,46cm • As Ojan 3, improved drivers	
Vandersteen 2Ce	1,395	86	ported • 4 driver • 88dB • 7 Ohms • 160W • 41,101,27cm • <i>Elegant staggered baffle contributes to a refreshing freedom from boxiness.</i>	
Lineaum LFX Corian	1,399		hybrid • 90dB • 16,22,18cm • Modified ribbon/dynamic	
Proac Studio 150	1,399		ported • 3 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 98,19,25cm • Spacial finishes £140 extra	
Triangle Zays	1,399		3 driver • 92dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 99,22,28cm	
Yamaha NS-1000	1,399		2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 38,68,36cm	
Celestion 700SE	1,435		sealed • 2 driver • 82dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 20,37,24cm • Aerolam lightweight enclosure	
B&O Beolab 6000	1,450		active • 80W • 20,110,21cm • Column, two amps, shielded	
Lowther Fidelio	1,465		horn • 96dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 29,100,43cm	
Tannoy D500	1,470	143	ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 6 Ohms • 175W • 31,93,34cm • <i>Plenty of muscle and stereo, but short of poise and delicacy. Hard work for amps.</i>	
Sonus-Faber M Amator	1,498		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 20,34,31cm • Compact, stand mount	
KEF Model Two	1,499		coupled cavity • 4 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 200W • 23,101,30cm • Uni-Q, floor stand, shielded	
Thiel 2	1,499		active • 2 driver • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 22,28,63cm • 15 wood veneers + black	
Thiel CS-5	1,499		active • 2 driver • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 20,28,80cm • 15 wood veneers + black	
Audiovector 3X	1,500	143	ported • 3 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 19,32,98cm • <i>Superior time coherence, a wide dynamic range and exception bass/mid balance.</i>	REC'D
B&W Solid 800ASW	1,500		subwoofer • 200W • 43,50,58cm • Active, Matrix enclosure	
JBL Ti 1000	1,500	118	sealed • 2 driver • 89dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 20,30,13cm • <i>Performance compromised by over enthusiastic midbass output from port.</i>	
KAL Trans-double	1,500		2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 23,112,36cm	
QLN Prestige	1,500		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 300W • 99,23,30cm	
QLN Sig Splitfield	1,500		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 37,27,36cm • As Signature, ext crossover	
ATC SCM20	1,505	86	sealed • 2 driver • 83dB • 8 Ohms • 300W • 24,44,31cm • <i>Massively built, invariably informative but the rather forward presentation can be uncomfortable.</i>	
Rogers LS5/9	1,531		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 28,46,27cm • BBC monitor	
Rogers Studio 9	1,549		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 22,91,25cm • free space	
Rehdeko RK115	1,550		ported • 104dB • 8 Ohms • 34,42,28cm	
Harbeth HL-5ES	1,559		ported • 3 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 64,32,31cm • Free space, biwire/biampable	
Genelec 1019A	1,572		active • 28W • 23,31,25cm	
Chord BBC LS5/12A	1,593		ported • 2 driver • 81dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 30,19,22cm • Choice of 11 wood veneers	
B&W Matrix 804	1,595		ported • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 26,92,26cm • Matrix enclosure	
Impulse Lali	1,595		horn • 91dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 25,99,36cm • Floor standing	
Prof Monitor Co AB1	1,598	114	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 400W • 26,79,43cm • <i>Lovely panel-like transparency, slightly shut-in balance, needs a big room.</i>	
Audio Note AN-E/SP	1,599		3 driver • 94dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 26,84,28cm • Free space, stand mount	
Audio Physic SPARK	1,599		ported • 2 driver • 86dB • 4 Ohms • 70W • 17,40,25cm • Time align, space-frame stand	
Ruark Crusader II	1,599		ported • 3 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 24,92,32cm • Free space, floor standing	
KAL Warlock	1,600		2 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 250W • 25,113,36cm	
Origin Live Conqueror	1,600		ported • 3 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 23,87,23cm • Floor standing	
Pentachord P'column	1,649		sealed • 2 driver • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 80W • 21,108,20cm • Including active crossovers	
Bose 901 VI	1,650		9 driver • 8 Ohms • 33,53,32cm • Direct/reflecting technology	
Castle Winchester	1,650	90	ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 42,108,23cm • <i>Large for its bass extension but engagingly agile, open and airy.</i>	REC'D
Magnepan MG-10 SE	1,650		electrostatic • 2 driver • 85dB • 4 Ohms • 250W • 26,173,-cm • 2x quasi-ribbon	
Epos ES25	1,655	143	ported • 3 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 200W • 90,24,35cm • <i>Handsome floorstander with a rather uneven and bass heavy balance.</i>	
Shahinian Arc	1,675	110	sealed • 3 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 35,69,25cm • <i>Occasionally wonderful small floorstanding omni; bright but coherent and revealing.</i>	
Naim SBL Active	1,692		75W • 27,89,27cm • Boundary, floor standing	
Mordaunt-Short P860	1,695		90dB • 6 Ohms • 225W • 86,26,35cm • Time-aligned, ResinRock box	
Kenwood LS-1000G	1,700		ported • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 160W • 34,110,38cm • European design	
Polk LS90	1,700		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 31,94,37cm • Floorstanding, biampable	
Jordan Watts JH1 + 1 A	1,730		ported • 2 driver • 85dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 92,40,22cm	
Apogee Ribbon Wall	1,750		hybrid • 89dB • 27,120,7cm • Ribbon/dynamic	
Tannoy Sterling TW	1,750		ported • 2 driver • 93dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 48,70,31cm	
Magnepan MG-1.5 SE	1,780		electrostatic • 2 driver • 85dB • 4 Ohms • 250W • 48,163,-cm • 2x quasi-ribbon	
Sonus-Faber Electa	1,790		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 38,27,24cm • Compact, stand mount	
KEF 104/2 REC	1,799	60	coupled cavity • 5 driver • 92dB • 4 Ohms • 200W • 28,90,41cm • <i>A reference point for dynamics, best without KUBE, suited to many rooms.</i>	REC'D
Lowther Academy	1,805		horn • 98dB • 4 Ohms • 100W • 29,100,43cm • 16 Ohm option	
Naim SBL Passive	1,821	143	88dB • 6 Ohms • 75W • 27,89,27cm • <i>Lively and punchy - smoother but more upfront than before.</i>	REC'D
Ruark Equinox	1,849	140	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 25,88,34cm • <i>Free space, stands included</i>	REC'D
Proac Studio 200	1,850		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 117,23,28cm • Floor standing	
Triangle Aitinis	1,950		3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 300W • 104,22,22cm	
Spendor SP100	1,965		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 37,70,43cm • Classic monitor, free space	
Spendor SP7/1	1,990		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 85,30,35cm • Floor standing	
Acoustic Energy AE1 Sig	1,995		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 26,30,18cm • Special Edition version of AE1	
B&W Matrix 803s2	1,995		ported • 4 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 26,101,34cm • Matrix enclosure	
Clements Reference 7	1,995		88dB • 4.5 Ohms • 200W • 25,114, 4cm • Ribbon tweeter	
Dawn Audio Symphony	1,995		sealed • 3 driver • 91dB • 8 Ohms • 34,113,32cm • Floor standing	
ATC SCM20 Tower	1,999		sealed • 2 driver • 83dB • 8 Ohms • 300W • 24,103,34cm • Floor standing SCM20	
Audio Physic TEMPO	1,999	143	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 22,107,47cm • <i>Tall and unusually styled floorstander has stunning stereo but suspect bass tuning.</i>	
B&O Beolab 8000	1,999		active • 100W • 15,132,15cm • Shielded column, int amps	
Gamma Epoch Five	1,999		2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 28,26,90cm • Time aligned, piano black	
KEF Model Three	1,999		coupled cavity • 5 driver • 91dB • 4 Ohms • 300W • 27,114,34cm • Uni-Q, magnetically shielded	
Boston Acs Lynfield 300L	2,000		2 driver • 83dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 23,34,28cm • Inc stands, black	
JBL Ti 2000	2,000		sealed • 3 driver • 89dB • 4 Ohms • 200W • 33,82,30cm • Asymmetric, double wall	
Proac Response 2S	2,000		ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 175W • 46,23,28cm • special finishes £200 extra	
QLN Reference	2,000		ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 4 Ohms • 300W • 114,24,34cm	
Lowther Bel Canto	2,035		horn • 97dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 28,132,44cm • Including adjustable stand	
Genelec Blamp 1031A	2,068		active • 104W • 25,39,29cm	
Tannoy D700	2,100		ported • 3 driver • 93dB • 6 Ohms • 200W • 37,99,36cm • Ten inch Dual Concentric	
Chord CEL201	2,130		ported • 3 driver • 85dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 46,28,33cm • Biwireable, 6 wood veneers	
Linn Kåber Aktiv	2,135		sealed • 3 driver • 20,90,28cm • Integral stands	
Monitor Audio Studio 20SE 2.1	2,135		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 20,92,26cm • Floor stand, metal cone bass	
Posselt Albatros	2,200		ported • 93dB • 6 Ohms • 200W • 31,186,32cm • Ultra sensitive	

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PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

UKD-Opera Caruso II	2,250	ported • 3 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 22,97,28cm • Solid walnut, floor standing	
Martin-Logan Aeries	2,286	hybrid • 89dB • 23,122,30cm • Two-way	
Apogee Centaur	2,300	hybrid • 88dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 33,102,25cm • Ribbon/dynamic	
Jordan Watts JH1 + 1 A K	2,310	ported • 2 driver • 85dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 92,40,22cm	
Helius Syrius II	2,395	ported • 95dB • 4 Ohms • 300W • 36,107,16cm	
Apogee Centarus Slant 6	2,400	hybrid • 88dB • Ribbon tweeter, dynamic bass	
TDL Studio Monitor M	2,449	ported • 3 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 27,112,43cm • TLS, metal drivers, int stands	
ECA SERVO A.2	2,450	ported • 2 driver • 80dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 22,102,30cm • True ribbon tweeter	
Shahinian Obelisk	2,490	ported • 3 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 200W • 37,74,32cm • Omni-directional	
Fullers Pharaoh 3	2,499	ported • 4 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 46,118,45cm • Pharaoh + bass & subbass encls	
JBL Ti 3000	2,499	sealed • 3 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 200W • 46,105,35cm • Asymmetric, double wall	
Allison I.C. 10	2,500	3 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 200W • 48,102,27cm • Floor standing, free space	
Audiovector 5	2,500	4 driver • 91dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 24,110,34cm • Black ash + cube	
B&O Beolab Penta 3	2,500	active • 150W • 22,165,34cm • Line array column, display	
Celestion Kingston	2,500	sealed • 2 driver • 84dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 99,21,35cm • Polymer box, inc stand	
Lumley Reference LM2	2,500	ported • 4 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 33,110,29cm • Open baffle, floor standing	
QLN Ref HDII	2,500	ported • 3 driver • 92dB • 4 Ohms • 350W • 114,24,34cm	
Lowther Delphic	2,525	horn • 98dB • 4 Ohms • 100W • 28,137,44cm • With adjustable stand, 16ohm o	
Magnepan MG-2.7 SE	2,650	electrostatic • 2 driver • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 250W • 56,180,-cm • 3x quasi-ribbon	
Impulse Ta'us	2,695	horn • 94dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 31,121,49cm • Floor standing	
SD Acoustics SD1E	2,695 80	ported • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 30,125,30cm • Large scale, airy and unusually detailed, with excellent dynamics.	REC'D
Ruark Accolade	2,699	ported • 3 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 29,100,38cm • Free space, floor standing	
Proac Response 2.5	2,700	ported • 3 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 107,22,25cm	
Tannoy Edinburgh TW	2,700	ported • 2 driver • 95dB • 8 Ohms • 180W • 66,102,42cm	
Jordan Watts Asp JH1 + 1	2,745	sealed • 2 driver • 85dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 40,93,23cm • Matt - other finishes extra	
Thiel CS2.2	2,749	active • 3 driver • 86dB • 4 Ohms • 250W • 30,33,106cm • 15 wood veneers + black	
Rehdeko RK125	2,750	ported • 102dB • 8 Ohms • 34,61,28cm	
B&W Matrix 802s3	2,795	ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 500W • 30,104,37cm • Matrix enclosure	
Chord CEL301	2,841	ported • 3 driver • 85dB • 4 Ohms • 120W • 92,19,21cm • Biwireable, 6 wood veneers	
Helius Syrius I	2,850	ported • 93dB • 4 Ohms • 500W • 36,107,16cm • Floor standing, biwire	
Triangle Altair	2,850	3 driver • 92dB • 4 Ohms • 300W • 35,120,30cm • Proprietary tweeter	
Quad ESL-63	2,860 60	electrostatic • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 66,93,27cm • Classic electrostatic lacks punch, but has strengths some can't live without.	REC'D
Sonus-Faber Amator	2,992	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 37,22,35cm • Compact, stand mount	
Martin-Logan Stylos	2,993	hybrid • 2xdB • 88 Ohms • 23,35,28cm • In wall	
Acoustic Energy AE2 Sig	2,995	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 200W • 24,40,32cm • Special edition version of AE2	
Meridian DSP5000	2,995 140	225W • 90,21,30cm • Digital active DSP floor stand	REC'D
Gamma Epoch Ref Five	2,999	2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 95,26,26cm • Time aligned, floor stand	
KEF Model Four	2,999	coupled cavity • 3 driver • 92dB • 4 Ohms • 350W • 30,127,48cm • Uni-Q, shielded	
Genelec Triamp S30	3,055	active • 108W • 32,50,32cm	
Martin-Logan Sequel II	3,277	hybrid • 89dB • 31,160,29cm • Dynamic bass/electrostatic	
Spendor SP9/1	3,300	ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 106,37,44cm • Floor standing monitor	
Audio Physic VIRGO	3,399	ported • 4 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 16,100,42cm • Floor stand, decoupled tweeter	
ATC SCM50	3,480	ported • 3 driver • 85dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 31,72,43cm • Passive/to special order only	
Apogee CDD Subwoofer	3,490	hybrid • 87dB • 63,38,55cm • Active moving coil sub	
Audio Physic TERRA	3,499	subwoofer • Active sub, adjustable	
JBL Ti 5000	3,499	sealed • 3 driver • 91dB • 6 Ohms • 300W • 48,114,38cm • Asymmetric, double wall	
Tannoy GRFM TW	3,500	ported • 2 driver • 95dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 80,100,48cm	
Horning Agathon	3,570	horn • 2 driver • 96dB • 8 Ohms • 38,48,115cm • Lowther drivers	
Definitive BP2000	3,600	hybrid • 6 driver • 92dB • 4 Ohms • 500W • 13,43,23cm • Active bass, passive mid/top	
MAG Audio Audio A90	3,600	ribbon • 80dB • 3.7 Ohms • 300W • 52,150,8cm • Two-way full range ribbon	
Apogee Stage Sub	3,645	moving coil • 86dB • 58,25,42cm • Active moving coil sub	
Apogee Centarus Slant 8	3,700	hybrid • 88dB • Ribbon treble, dynamic mass	
Electrocrom t Ellipse	3,760	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 43,120,23cm • D Apollito monitor	
Sound-Lab Dynastat	3,790	hybrid • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 350W • 44,183,41cm • Oak or walnut finish £3990	
B&W Matrix 801s3	3,795 81	ported • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 600W • 44,100,56cm • Lacks transparency and the drama of the best dynamics, but acoustically a tour de force.	REC'D
Magnepan MG-3.5 SE	3,800	electrostatic • 2 driver • 85dB • 4 Ohms • 250W • 61,180,-cm • 3x planar, ribbon tweeter	
Thiel CS3.6	3,899	active • 3 driver • 86dB • 4 Ohms • 400W • 32,43,123cm • 15 wood veneers + black	
Triangle Octant Txé	3,950	3 driver • 94dB • 4 Ohms • 300W • 42,150,19cm • Ultra high sensitivity	
Apogee Caliper Sig	3,998 81	ribbon • 87dB • 58,127cm • Remarkable transparency and delicacy; loudness and 'grunt' are a bit lacking.	REC'D
KEF 107/2 REC	3,999	coupled cavity • 4 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 300W • 33,116,45cm • Raymond Cooke Special Edition	
Monitor Audio Studio 50	4,000	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 300W • 20,104,30cm • Floor stand, metal bass & mid	
ATC SCM100	4,033	ported • 3 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 40,84,53cm • Passive/to special order only	
Apogee Stage 1 GS	4,100	ribbon • 86dB • 55,82,5cm • Two way	
Jordan Watts Class JH2KM	4,250	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 47,82,34cm • Line tweeter array	
Proac Response 3.5	4,250	ported • 3 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 127,28,32cm	
Rehdeko RK145	4,250	ported • 102dB • 8 Ohms • 39,66,29cm	
Martin-Logan CLS IIz	4,333	electrostatic • 86dB • 62,127,32cm • Full range panel	
Linn Keltik Aktiv	4,400	sealed • 3 driver • 26,104,37cm • Integral stands, Isobarik bass	
Boston Acs Lynfield 500L	4,449	3 driver • 85dB • 5 Ohms • 350W • 122,23,47cm • Free stand, separate bass/top	
QLN Artec 1600	4,500	93dB • 4 Ohms • 500W • 165,31,32cm • Line source design	
Audiovector 6	4,600	ported • 3 driver • 92dB • 6 Ohms • 250W • 38,115,42cm • Black piano lacquer	
Prof Monitor Co MBIP	4,681	ported • 2 driver • 91dB • 8 Ohms • 500W • 38,87,53cm • Transmission line	
Bravura Brio	4,750	horn • 1 driver • 101dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 129,39,81cm • Coaxial Lowther driver	
ATC SCM50A	4,864	active • 8 Ohms • 350W • 31,72,48cm • With int x'over and amps	
Jordan Watts Classic JH5K	4,875	sealed • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 47,126,40cm • Floor stand, line array	
Shahinian Hawk	4,950	ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 250W • 43,95,32cm • Modular, omni-directional	
Apogee Centaur Major	4,980	hybrid • 88dB • 4 Ohms • 200W • 40,141,27cm • Ribbon/dynamic	
Genelec Triamp 1037A	4,982	active • 191W • 40,68,30cm	
Martin-Logan Quest Z	4,998	hybrid • 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 42,160,29cm • Dynamic bass/electrostatic top	
TDL Ref Standard-M	4,999	ported • 7 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 800W • 56,121,50cm • Dual TLS, metal drivers	
B&W Silver Signature	5,000	ported • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 25,45,24cm • External crossover	
Allison I.C. 20	5,500	2 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 400W • 53,122,31cm • Floor standing, free space	
Bravura Accelerando	5,500	horn • 1 driver • 103dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 129,39,81cm • Coaxial Lowther driver	
Sonus-Faber Guarneri	5,500	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 19,38,38cm • Compact, limited edition	
Tannoy Canterbury 12 ^	5,500	ported • 2 driver • 94dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 58,90,43cm	
Audio Physic AVANTI	5,599	ported • 4 driver • 86dB • 4 Ohms • 200W • 19,107,40cm • Decoupled mid/tweeter	
Wilson WAP Puppy II	5,600	subwoofer • 91dB • 25,53,35cm • Passive subwoofer for WATT	
ATC SCM100A	5,660	active • 8 Ohms • 350W • 40,84,59cm • With int x'over and amps	
Jordan Watts Class JH5KM	5,860	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 47,125,40cm • Line driver array	
Sonus-Faber Extrema	5,991	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 55,27,46cm • 'Reference Standard'	
Tannoy Westminster TW	6,000 Col	ported • 2 driver • 99dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • These awesome horn loaded speakers are remarkably controlled and impressive.	REC'D
Jamo Ornel	6,500	ported • 3 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 300W • 178,40,30cm • Coupled cavity, flagship model	
Prof Monitor Co BB5P	6,754	ported • 2 driver • 91dB • 4 Ohms • 600W • 43,104,79cm • Transmission line	
Sound-Lab Pristine II	6,990	electrostatic • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 300W • 72,153,69cm • Steel frame, curved panel	
Naim DEL Active	6,991	200W • 65,120,40cm • Boundary, floor standing	
Tannoy Canterbury 15	7,000	ported • 2 driver • 96dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 68,110,48cm	

PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

Wilson WAP Puppy 5	7,375	subwoofer • 91dB • Passive sub for WATs
Rehdeko RK175	7,750	ported • 106dB • 8 Ohms • 50,96,37cm
Shahinian Diapason	8,350	ported • 5 driver • 91dB • 6 Ohms • 300W • 58,100,38cm • Omni-directional
Lumley Reference LM1	8,500	ported • 5 driver • 89dB • 4 Ohms • 500W • 71,122,40cm • 2 box, floor standing
Martin-Logan Monolith H1P	8,730	hybrid • 89dB • 59,163,28cm • ESL/dynamic, two-way
Wilson WATT 5	8,800	ported • 2 driver • 91dB • 27,31,36cm
Jordan Watts Class JH10K	9,340	sealed • 2 driver • 92dB • 8 Ohms • 500W • 47,156,40cm • Floor stand, line array
Martin-Logan Mono HIX	9,354	hybrid • 89dB • 59,163,26cm • ESL/dynamic, active crossover
Infinity ARS Epsilon	9,995	sealed • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 500W • 152,47,41cm • Includes own servo control amp
Audio Physic CALDERA	9,999	5 driver • 91dB • 4 Ohms • 250W • 25,111,50cm • Pneumatic baffle, 3 cabinet
Magnepan MG-20 SE P	10,300	electrostatic • 2 driver • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 250W • 74,201,-cm • 3x planar, ribbon tweeter
Thiel CS7	10,476	active • 4 driver • 88dB • 4 Ohms • 500W • 35,48,140cm • 15 wood veneers + black
Jordan Watts JH10KM	10,495	sealed • 2 driver • 92dB • 8 Ohms • 500W • 47,156,40cm • Line driver array
Magnepan MG-20SE A	11,000	electrostatic • 2 driver • 88dB • 4 Ohms • 74,201,-cm • Active MG-20SE Passive
ATC SCM200A	11,207	active • 91dB • 8 Ohms • 850W • 83,73,440cm • With ext x'over and amps
Living Voice Air Partner S	27,200138	horn • 108dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 64,160,90cm • Outstanding transparency, dynamics, ideosyncrasies are compensated by vitality.

REC'D

SATELLITES & SUBWOOFERS

JPW AV2	300	sub & 5 sats • 8ohms • 87dB • 51,26,27cm • Minim/Subwoofer
JPW AV1	300	sub & 5 sats • 8ohms • 85dB • 51,26,27cm • Satellites/Subwoofer
B&W Solid Verticale	400	Sub, 2 x sat • 89 • 19,34,45cm
JPW AV4	400	2 sub & 5 sats • 8ohms • 87dB • 51,26,27cm • Minim/Subwoofer
JPW AV3	400	2 sub & 5 sats • 8ohms • 85dB • 51,26,27cm • Satellite/Subwoofer
Polk M Solution	999	sub, 4 sats • 8ohms • 89dB • 28,50,36cm
Polk RM7000	999	8ohms • 89dB • 28,50,36cm • su, 2 x sat, 1 x centre

ACTIVE SUBWOOFERS

Aiwa TS-W5	150	Stereo • 50W
Aiwa TS-W7	200	stereo • 100W
Kenwood SW-500	250	stereo • 50W • 29,50,48cm • Active crossover
Kenwood SW-900	260	Stereo • 70W • 21,40,56cm • remote control
B&W Solid Powerbass	300	stereo • 75W • 33,34,39cm
Polk PSW100	499	1-box sterep • 65 W • 28,50,36cm
Triangle SAT III	650	stereo • 140W
B&W 800ASW	1,500	stereo • 200W • THX • 43,58,50cm



Tuners & Receivers

The radio medium operates at a lower profile than TV, but in areas outside pop music the BBC service is the envy of the world. Live Prom concerts rival all other sources from a hi-fi perspective. ■ Only the FM (VHF) bands give stereo hi-fi sound, though AM (MW & LW) are useful for certain transmissions in the UK. ■ Something of a hi-fi afterthought, tuners are often selected merely to match the cosmetics of a chosen amplifier. However, the task they discharge is far from simple, since it requires the skills of RF (reception) and audio (signal processing) engineering. The importance of

the former will depend on local reception conditions, but money invested in a high-quality outside aerial system is well spent. ■ Tuners come in two basic types. Analogue models tune gradually (and usually manually) across the bands, and can have analogue or digital displays; they are often preferred for sound quality, and are certainly best for AM bands. Digital tuners offer convenient automatic tune facilities and pre-set memories. ■ RDS (radio data system) is a feature t originally designed for in-car applications. Basically RDS tuners can identify and display the name of the radio station being received, but

they offer a variety of other features as well. ■ Receivers are amplifiers with tuners built in. They are often equipped with surround-sound processing.

Key	
FM, M	.....wavebands received
A/V	.....surround sound capability
75W	.....power output/channel in Watts RMS
30 presets	.....number of presets offered
MM,3L,3T	.....number of inputs offered (see Amplifier category)
RDS	.....has Radio Data System compatibility

PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

TUNERS

Goodmans GST650	90	FM,M,L • 36 presets
Sherwood TD1120	90	FM,M • 24 presets
Goodmans Delta 700	100	FM,M,L • 36 presets • 36,11,30cm
Sherwood TX1010C	100	FM,M • 30 presets
Denon TU-260L	120	93 FM,M,L • 20 presets • 44,8,24cm • Careful minimalist design promises a surprisingly open and vivacious sound.
Grundig T210	120	FM,M,L • 59 presets • Manual station name
Kenwood KT-1060L	120	FM,M,L • 30 presets • 44,8,26cm • Preset scan
Sherwood TX3010C	120	120 FM,M • 30 presets • Lots of features and fine FM discrimination for price. Sound is communicative but inconsistently tacky.
Teac T-R400	120	FM,M • 20 presets • 44,9,30cm
Grundig Fine Arts T1	130	FM,M,L • 59 presets • 44,9,30cm • User station name, gain switch
JVC FX362BX	130	129 FM,M,L • 40 presets • 44,8,30cm • Disappointing all-round performance - watch out for aerial overload in strong signal areas. Tuning knob unspecial
Pioneer F-203RDS	130	FM,M,L • 30 presets • RDS • 42,8,29cm • RDS at very budget price
Sony STS211LB	130	FM,M,L • 30 presets • 43,9,30cm • Station naming
Yamaha TX-480L	139	FM,M,L • 40 presets • 44,9,30cm
Grundig T310	140	FM,M,L • 59 presets • RDS • 36,8,30cm • RDS (PS, CT, RT, PTY)
Kenwood KT-2060L	140	FM,M,L • 30 presets • 44,8,26cm • Built-in timer, RDS
Teac T-R450	140	FM,M • 20 presets • RDS • 44,9,30cm
Denon TU-215RD	150	FM,M • 20 presets • RDS • 44,8,24cm • RDS Radiotext
Marantz ST-55	150	FM,M,L • 59 presets • 42,10,34cm • D-bus
Technics ST-GT350L	150	142 FM,M,L • 30 presets • 43,7,30cm • Remote control capable
Onkyo T-401	160	FM,MW • 40 presets • 46,8,31cm
Philips FT930	160	FM,M,L • 40 presets • RDS • 44,11,30cm
Grundig Fine Arts T2	170	FM,M,L • 59 presets • RDS • 44,9,30cm • RDS (PS, RT)
Kenwood KT-3050L	170	120 FM,M,L • 39 presets • RDS • 44,10,28cm • Excellent RF performance and plenty of features including RDS, but ordinary sound.
Pioneer F-303RDS	180	FM,M • 40 presets • RDS • 42,8,29cm • RDS with FON
Onkyo T-430RDS	190	142 FM/MW • 30 presets • RDS • 46,9,30cm
Yamaha TX-580RDS	199	FM,M • 40 presets • RDS • 44,9,30cm
Denon TU-380RD	200	FM,M • 40 presets • RDS • 44,8,24cm • RDS Radiotext/EON
Luxman T-353	200	FM,M • 30 presets • 9,44,36cm • System bus remote control
Sony STS311LB	200	FM,M,L • 30 presets • RDS • 43,9,30cm • RDS EON, 'Autobetical' select
Technics ST-GT550L	200	FM,M,L • 39 presets • RDS • 43,7,31cm • Remote control capable, RDS
Grundig Fine Arts T4	210	FM,M • 59 presets • RDS • 44,9,30cm • RDS (PS, CT, RT, PTY)
Arcam Alpha 5 Plus	220	142 FM,M,L • 24 presets • 43,8,27cm • Signal strength meter
Rotel RT-950BX	220	142 FM,M,L • 20 presets • 44,8,24cm
Onkyo T-409	230	FM,MW • 30 presets • 28,8,30cm • Mini component
Pioneer F-502RDS	250	FM,M • 40 presets • RDS • 42,9,34cm • 2 ariel inputs
Sony STS505ES	250	FM,M,L • 30 presets • RDS • 43,9,35cm • UK optimised sound
Technics ST-GT650L	250	FM,M,L • 39 presets • RDS • 43,10,31cm • Class AA, remote control ready

B'BUY

PRODUCT

£ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

Onkyo T-450RDS	260	FM,MW • 30 presets • RDS • 46,9,31cm	
Onkyo T-411RDS	280	FM,MW • 30 presets • RDS • 28,8,30cm • Mini component	
Harman-Kardon TU9400	299	142 FM,M • 24 presets • 45,8,33cm • <i>This striking tuner exceeded our expectations. On stereo FM, it's HK's best yet</i>	REC'D
Kenwood KT-6050	300	FM,M • 39 presets • RDS • 44,10,33cm • IF switch, two antennae, RDS	
Marantz ST-72	300	FM,M,L • 59 presets • RDS • 42,10,34cm • D-bus, IF switch, local switch	
Musical Fidelity E50	300	FM • 20 presets • 44,10,34cm	
Aura TU80	350	FM,M,L • 30 presets • 43,6,27cm • Chrome finish add £50	
Nakamichi ST3s	350	FM • 30 presets • 43,7,32cm	
Arcam Delta 280	399	120 FM • 20 presets • 43,7,28cm • <i>Fine sound quality marred by mild synthesiser whine; RF performance only average. remote £60 extra</i>	
Mission Cyrus FM7	400	142 FM • 29 presets • 22,8,36cm • Remote control bus	
Onix BWD1	420	FM • 75,23,37cm • In-house front end	
Onkyo R-811RDS	420	FM,MW • 30 presets • RDS • 28,12,33cm • Mini component, incl timer	
Harman-Kardon TU9600	499	109 FM,M • 24 presets • 45,8,33cm • <i>Good bass, detail - and slightly enhanced dynamics</i>	
Musical Fidelity E500	499	FM • 20 presets • 44,12,35cm • AGC/IF switch, remote control	
Rotel RT-990BX	500	FM • 16 presets • 44,8,29cm • Remote control	
Naim NATO3	549	FM • 43,56,30cm	
Magnum Dynalab FT11	550	FM • Analogue, black finish	
Quad FM66	554	142 FM • 19 presets • 33,8,26cm • <i>Very pretty and compact but technically unadventurous. Sound is smooth, but only makes sense in Quad system context.</i>	
AVI S2000MT	599	FM • 16 presets • 31,25,9cm • R/C via system handset	
Meridian 504	625	FM • 30 presets • 33,9,34cm • System handset	
Audiolab 8000T	750	142 FM,M,L • 39 presets • 45,8,36cm • <i>Unusually combination of fine sound quality and RF performance (inc AM), and superb ergonomics</i>	B'BUY
Magnum Dynalab FT101	825	72 FM • <i>Although fairly expensive given its minimum set of facilities, its excellent sound provided ample compensation.</i>	REC'D
Michi RHT-10	895	FM • 16 presets • 47,8,34cm • Remote control	
Musical Fidelity FT	899	FM • 20 presets • 49,12,33cm • Remote control, AGC/IF switch	
Naim NATO2	998	FM • 43,56,30cm	
Magnum FT101 Etude	1,250	FM • Analogue, black finish	
Meridian 604	1,350	120 FM • 30 presets • <i>Unique digital converter makes most sense in Meridian system context: smooth, sweet sound with fine front end.</i>	REC'D
McIntosh MR7084	1,550	FM,M • 50 presets • 45,14,45cm • Links to McIntosh r/control	
Naim NATO1	1,599	142 FM • 43,56,30cm • <i>There may be better sounding tuners in the world, but we have yet to hear one.</i>	REC'D
Linn Kremlin	1,995	142 FM • 80 presets • 32,8,33cm • <i>Controversially good sound at a very high price. The reviewer's saving up but you should check it out for yourself.</i>	REC'D

RECEIVERS

Sherwood RX1010	120	FM,M • 30W • MM,2L,1T	
Grundig R210	150	FM,M,L • 50W • 59 presets • MM,5L • rem • 36,12,30cm • Gain switch, remote	
Denon DRA-265R	200	FM,M • 35W • 40 presets • MM,2L,1T • rem • 44,12,31cm	
Dual CR9000RS	200	FM,M,L • 55W • 30 presets • MM,4L,2T • rem • 44,14,30cm • System component	
JVC RX-212BK	200	FM,M,L • 50W • 40 presets • MM,3L,1T • rem • 44,13,34cm • 4ch surround	
Pioneer SX-203RDS	200	FM,M • 35W • 30 presets • MM,2L,2T • rem • 42,14,29cm • RDS tuner	
Technics SA-GX190L	200	FM,M,L • 60W • 30 presets • MM,2L,2 • rem • 43,13,31cm	
Kenwood KR-AA4070	230	FM,M • 60W • 20 presets • MM,3L,2T • rem • 44,13,33cm • RDS	
Sony STRD311	230	FM,M,L • A/V • 60W • 30 presets • MM,2L,2T • rem • 43,14,30cm • System remote	
Denon DRA-365RD	250	FM,M • 45W • 40 presets • MM,3L,1T • rem • 44,12,32cm • System remote	
Grundig Fine Arts R2	250	FM,M,L • 50W • 59 presets • MM,5L • rem • 44,14,30cm • RDS, Radio text, remote	
Pioneer SX-303RDS	250	FM,M • 50W • 30 presets • MM,2L,2T • rem • 42,14,34cm • RDS tuner	
Teac AG-V4200	250	FM,M • A/V • 60W • 30 presets • MM,4L,3T • rem • 44,13,32cm • Dolby Pro Logic	
Yamaha RX-385RDS	269	FM,M • 40W • 40 presets • MM,3L,1T • rem • 44,13,30cm • System remote	
JVC RX-416VBK	270	FM,M,L • A/V • 50W • 40 presets • MM,1L,3T • rem • 44,13,35cm • Dolby Pro Logic	
NAD 701	279	FM,M • 25W • 24 presets • MM,2L,1T • rem	
Sony STRD511	280	FM,M,L • A/V • 50W • 30 presets • MM,3L,2T • rem • 43,14,30cm • Dolby Pro Logic	
Yamaha RX-V390RDS	299	FM • A/V • 60W • 40 presets • MM,3L,2T,2V • rem • 44,14,30cm • AV amp, 'stereo' surround	
Kenwood KR-V5570	300	FM,M • A/V • 50W • 20 presets • MM,L,2T • rem • 44,14,34cm • Dolby Pro Logic, RDS	
Technics SA-GX390L	300	FM,M,L • A/V • 50W • 30 presets • MM,2L,2T • rem • 43,13,36cm • Dolby Pro Logic	
Denon DRA-565RD	320	FM,M • 55W • 40 presets • MM,3L,2T • rem • 44,12,32cm • RDS	
Sherwood RV5030R	330	FM,M,L • A/V • 80W • MM,4L,4T • rem • Dolby Pro Logic	
Sony STRD611	330	FM,M,L • A/V • 60W • 30 presets • MM,3L,2T • rem • 43,14,30cm • Dolby Pro Logic	
NAD 705	349	FM,M • 40W • 39 presets • MM,2L,2T • rem	
JVC RX-616RBK	350	FM,M,L • A/V • 50W • 40 presets • MM,1L,3T • rem • 44,16,41cm • Dolby Pro Logic, RDS tuner	
JVC RX-508VBK	350	FM,M,L • A/V • 50W • 40 presets • MM,1L,3T • rem • 44,13,34cm • 5ch Dolby Pro Logic	
Kenwood KR-V6070	350	FM,M • A/V • 70W • 20 presets • MM,4L,2T • rem • 44,17,34cm • RDS, Dolby Pro Logic	
Technics SA-GX470L	350	FM,M,L • A/V • 80W • 30 presets • MM,4L,1T • rem • 43,14,36cm • Dolby Pro Logic	
Kenwood KR-V7070	400	FM,M • A/V • 100W • 20 presets • MM,3L,2T • rem • 44,15,40cm • Dolby Pro Logic, RDS	
Pioneer VSX-452	400	FM,M • A/V • 50W • 30 presets • MM,2L,2T,2V • rem • 42,14,35cm • Dolby Pro-Logic	
Sherwood RV6030R	400	FM,M,L • A/V • 100W • MM,4L,4T • rem	
Teac AG-V6200	400	FM,M • A/V • 90W • 30 presets • MM,4L,4T • rem • 44,15,40cm • Dolby Pro Logic	
Yamaha RX-V590RDS	449	FM • A/V • 70W • 40 presets • MM,3L,3T,4V • rem • 44,15,39cm • True DSP	
Philips FR940	450	FM,M,L • A/V • 100W • 30 presets • MM,4L,4T • rem • 44,14,30cm • Dolby Pro Logic	
Technics SA-GX690L	450	FM,M,L • A/V • 100W • 30 presets • MM,4L,1T • rem • 43,16,36cm • Dolby Pro-Logic, help function	
JVC RX-808VBK	500	FM,M,L • A/V • 70W • 40 presets • MM,1L,3T • rem • 44,16,40cm • 5ch Dolby Pro Logic	
Denon AV-1000	530	FM,M • A/V • 70W • 16 presets • MM,2L,2T • rem • 44,15,33cm • Auto input balance	
Marantz SR-73	599	FM,M • A/V • 75W • 30 presets • MM,3L,3T • rem • 43,15,38cm • Dolby Pro Logic	
Marantz SR-82	899	FM,M • A/V • 75W • 30 presets • MM,3L,2T • rem • 43,17,43cm • Dolby Pro Logic, multi-room	
B&O Beomaster 7000	920	FM,M,L • 100W • 20 presets • MM,2L,2T • rem • 42,8,33cm	
Harman-Kardon AVR-30	999	FM,M • A/V • 50W • 16 presets • MM,3L,3T,6V • rem • 45,13,35cm • Dolby Pro Logic	
Kenwood KR-X1000	1,300	FM,M • A/V • 110W • 20 presets • MM,8L,2T • rem • 44,17,40cm • THX, Dolby PL, RDS	
McIntosh MX118	3,075	FM,M • A/V • 12 presets • 5L • rem • 45,14,45cm • AV tuner control centre	

Turntables & Arms

Specialist turntables are what high fidelity sound is all about. CD players may offer silent backgrounds and flat frequency responses, but they can't match the dynamics and superlative timing that serious turntable users take for granted. Turntables at the

cheaper end of the market tend to be supplied with a matching tonearm, and often include a 'starter' cartridge. Still better quality is found at higher prices among the separate motor units and tonearms. Careful partnering and set-up is essential for these components, but many so-called 'sympathetic' combinations exist.

Key to turntables

manual, automatictype of operation
33/45 rpm speeds offered

Key to tonearms

SME fittype of cut-out into which arm mounts
233mmeffective length of arm

PRODUCT

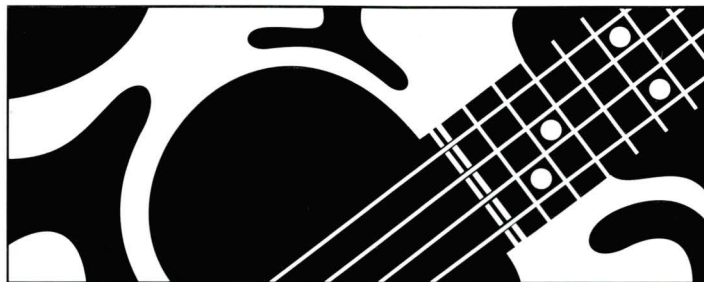
£ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

TURNTABLES

Goodmans Delta 700	55	semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • 36,90,37cm • Part of Delta system	
Genexxa Lab-710	60	manual • 33/45rpm • Includes MM cartridge	
Genexxa Lab-810	70	semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • Includes MM cartridge	

Creative Audio

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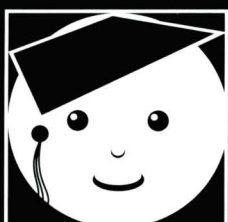
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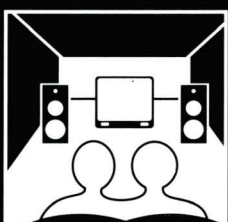
- Large Range of World Acclaimed HI-FI Separates



- Friendly Experienced Staff



- Free Home Delivery and Installation



- Comfortable Listening Room



- Part Exchange Welcome



- Free 2 & 5 Year Warranties



- Selected Used Equipment always available



- Home Cinema Specialists



- Interest Free Credit (written details on request)

AUTHORISED RETAILER FOR

ARCAM • AUDIOLAB • CELESTION • CYRUS • DENON • EPOS • KEF • MERIDIAN • MISSION
NAD • NAIM • QUAD • REGA • ROKSAN • ROTEL • SOUNDSTYLE • TRIPODS

Sherwood PS1870	70	semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • Budget turntable with arm	
Dual CS3700/3701	85	semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • 36,10,36cm • Midi-sized turntable	
Sony PSX150H	90	semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • 43,10,36cm • Player, with MM cartridge	
Kenwood KD-492F	100	auto • 33/45rpm • 44,10,39cm • Includes cartridge	
Pioneer PL-225	120	semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • 42,10,36cm • Belt drive, fitted cartridge	
NAD 5120	129	semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • Includes arm	
Dual CS435	130	33/45rpm • 44,12,36cm • Turntable includes cartridge	
Systemdek I/920	136	manual • 33/45rpm • Semi-suspended deck	
Pro-ject 0.5	145	semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • 42, 11, 3cm • With Ortofon OM5 cartridge	
Pioneer PL-335	150	auto • 33/45rpm • 42,10,36cm • Belt drive, fitted cartridge	
Sony PSLX431B	150	auto • 33/45rpm • 43,11,36cm • Player, auto rec size select	
Ariston Pro-1200	160	manual • 33/45rpm • Semi-pro disco deck	
Technics SL-BD20	160	semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • 43,10,38cm • Belt drive, includes T4P cartr	
Dual CS503-2	170	91 semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • 44,13,37cm • Coarse and woolly sound - not inoffensive, but bettered by the CS-505-3.	REC'D
Moth Alamo	175	manual • 33/45rpm • Comes with RB250 arm	
Akai AP 950	179	manual • 33/45rpm • 44,12,35cm • Inc cartridge	
Grundig TT1	180	auto • 33/45rpm • Black finish	
Technics SL-BD22	180	semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • 43,10,38cm • Belt drive, includes T4P cartridge.	
Thorens TD180/AT91	180	semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • Belt drive	
Pro-ject 1	185	manual • 33/45rpm • 42, 11, 3cm • With Ortofon 510 cartridge	
Rega Planar 78	198	manual • 78rpm • 45,13,37cm • As Rega Planar 2, 78 only	
Rega Planar 2	198	48 manual • 33/45rpm • 45,13,37cm • A remarkable product at the price, surprisingly articulate and confident.	B'BUY
Moth Turntable	199	manual • 33/45rpm • Split-plinth design	
Dual 505-4 UK	200	103 semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • 44,15,37cm • Consistent sounding and well isolated turntable. It is slightly lacking in oomph.	REC'D
Thorens TD180/S500	200	33/45/78rpm • Belt drive, plays 78s	
Thorens TD280 IV/UK	200	semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • Electronic belt drive, AT95E	
Thorens TD166 VI/UK/BC	200	manual • 33/45rpm • Blank armboard, cut to shape.	
Pro-ject 1 (E)	209	semi arm lift • 33,45rpm • 42,11,32cm • Semi-auto version of Pro-ject	
Systemdek IIX/900	230	103 manual • 33/45rpm • A high performance budget turntable that is particularly strong at fine detail resolution and imagery.	B'BUY
Systemdek I/920/Moth	235	115 manual • 33/45rpm • The motor is derivative of the Rega Planar 2 with a Moth arm. Uptempo, even bright at times but never lacks enthusiasm.	REC'D
Moth Kanoot Mk I Arm	249	manual • 33/45rpm • Inc Rega RB250 arm	
Pro-ject 2	249	manual • 33/45rpm • 46, 12, 3cm • Metal/glass platter, clamp	
Rega Planar 3	260	48 manual • 33/45rpm • 45,13,37cm • The 3 (with RB300 arm) sounded musical in a balanced and coherent manner	B'BUY
Thorens TD166 VI/UK/AT	270	manual • 33/45rpm • Inc TP50 manual arm, AT95E	
Pro-ject 2/Ortofon	275	manual • 33/45rpm • 46, 12, 3cm • With Ortofon MC1 cartridge	
Moth Kanoot Mk III Arm	299	manual • 33/45rpm • Inc Rega RB300 arm	
Thorens TD166 VI/UK/RB	300	103 manual • 33/45rpm • Refined and solid sound with well focussed imagery; suitable for use with good MM and budget MC cartridges.	B'BUY
Linn Basik	349	103 manual • 33/45rpm • 45,14,36cm • Strong midband analysis and imagery; clean if sharp treble is matched to a good if occasionally wooden bass.	REC'D
Dual CS750-1	350	semi arm lift • 33/45/78rpm • 44,14,38cm • Turntable includes cartridge	
Pro-ject 6	379	manual • 33/45rpm • 46, 17, 3cm • Suspended turntable	
Systemdek IIXE/900AP	388	103 manual • 33/45rpm • The acrylic platter IIXE is one of the most capable budget decks on the market: good resolution, dynamics and timing.	REC'D
Michell Mycro	397	manual • 33/45rpm • 46,14,34cm	
Pro-ject 6/Ortofon	435	manual • 33/45rpm • 46, 17, 3cm • As above, with Ortofon MC15	
Dual Golden II	500	semi arm lift • 33/45/78rpm • 44,14,38cm • Piano finish CS750-1	
Technics SL-1210MkII	500	manual • 33/45rpm • 46,17,36cm • Quartz DD, no cartridge	
Technics SL-1200MkII	500	manual • 33/45rpm • 43,10,38cm • Quartz DD, includes T4P cartri	
Michell Mycro/arm	539	manual • 33/45rpm • 46,14,34cm • Includes Rega RB300 arm	
Manticore Madrigal	570	manual • 33/45rpm • 46,36,12cm • Turntable, lifetime guarantee	
Roksan Radius	595	manual • 33/45rpm • 45,12,35cm • Motor unit	
Notts Analogue Spacedeck	600	manual • 33,45rpm	
Notts Analogue Illusion	600	manual • 33/45rpm	
Thorens TD3001BC	630	manual • 33/45rpm • <i>No arm, but various armboards are available</i>	
Pro-ject 6/Sumiko	699	138 manual • 33/45rpm • 46,17,3cm • With Sumiko arm	REC'D
Thorens TD2001	700	91 semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • <i>Similar to TD320 but much dearer - why? Sound is comfortable but not very detailed.</i>	
Linn LP12 Basik	745	103 manual • 33rpm • 45,14,36cm • Trails the full LP12 significantly, but pace, rhythm, timing etc still top rank	REC'D
Michell Gyrodek	765	55 manual • 33/45rpm • 53,19,41cm • Sweet and natural sounding player, well matched with the Rega RB300	REC'D
Thorens TD3001/UK	770	103 manual • 33/45rpm • Excellent middle ranking esoterica, with strong all-round abilities rather than excellence in particular areas.	REC'D
Roksan Radius/Tabriz	795	manual • 33/45rpm • 45,12,36cm • As above, with Roksan arm	
Townshend MkIII Rock	799	manual • 33/45rpm • Headshell end arm damping	
Alphason Sonata	835	manual • 33rpm • Good sound in all areas - bass, clarity and neutrality all in top class (tested with HR100S MCS).	REC'D
Manticore Mantra	890	manual • 33/45rpm • 46,36,12cm • Turntable, lifetime guarantee	
Linn LP12 Valhalla	894	manual • 33/45rpm • 45,14,36cm • Electronic PSU, upgradable	
Roksan Radius/Tabriz zi	895	103 manual • 33/45rpm • 45,12,35cm • Musically it offers exceptional performance with a minimum of fuss.	REC'D
Origin Live Oasis-S	899	manual • 33rpm • Suspended turntable	
Thorens TD520	900	semi arm lift • 33/45/78rpm • Pitch control, no arm	
Michell Gyrodek/arm	907	manual • 33/45rpm • 53,19,41cm • Includes Rega RB300 arm	
Pink Triangle Export	948	91 manual • 33/45rpm • 46,15,37cm • The PT100 with built-in PS. Transparent and neutral, but review sample had high motor noise.	REC'D
Kuzma Stabi/PS	1,200	91 manual • 33/45rpm • 51, 18, 4cm • (Tested with Stogi Reference) Solid oak plinth; sound is very clear, detailed and extended.	REC'D
Notts Analogue H.Space	1,200	manual • 33/45rpm	
Notts Analogue Graphic	1,200	manual • 33/45rpm	
Alphason Sonata/Atlas	1,235	manual • 33/45rpm • Motor unit inc PSU	
Linn LP12 Lingo	1,345	91 manual • 33/45rpm • 45,14,36cm • The classic reference is improved by the Lingo, but charming character remains.	REC'D
Roksan Xerxes 10	1,495	manual • 33/45rpm • 45,12,35cm • Black/rosewood veneers	
Wilson Benesch	1,550	manual • 33/45rpm • High-tech turntable	
Rivelin Audio Eclipse	1,595	144 manual • 33/45rpm • 45,13,38cm • Motor unit	
Audiomeca Romance	1,675	manual • 33/45rpm • With Romeo unipivot arm	
Pink Triangle Anniversary	1,797	91 manual • 33/45rpm • 45,15,37cm • Possibly the most detailed, clear and neutral sounding deck around. Likeness to master tape is uncanny.	REC'D
Well Tempered Rec Player 1	1,800	67 manual • 33/45rpm • 45,18,36cm • Intriguing and challenging design. Has a limpid quality and a lack of artificiality that sets standards.	REC'D
Alphason Symphony	1,860	manual • 33/45rpm • Motor unit & PSU	
Michell Orbe	1,950	manual • 33/45rpm • 55,29,71cm • Inc OC power supply	
Pink Triangle Anni/DC PSU 2	1,173	manual • 33/45rpm • 45,15,37cm • Battery PSU version of above	
Notts Analogue Mentor	2,200	manual • 33/45rpm • 75lb alloy or graphite platter	
Audiomeca J1	2,500	manual • 33/45rpm • 50, 40, 2cm • Top of the range model	
Roksan TMS	2,750	manual • 33/45rpm • 45,12,35cm • Black lacquer	
Well Tempered Classic	2,800	manual • 33/45rpm • 48,19,39cm • The original Well Tempered	
Kuzma Stabi Ref/PS	3,000	manual • 33/45rpm • Two motor, belt driven	
SME Model 20	3,240	manual • 33/45/78rpm • 42,16,32cm • Precision turntable	
DNM Reson Rota 1	3,500	manual • 33/45rpm • 59,14,37cm • Inc arm & cartridge	
Well Tempered Super	3,500	manual • 33/45rpm • 49,19,39cm • Classic with carbon arm	
Manticore Magister	3,800	manual • 33/45rpm • 57,46,18cm • Special order only	
Voyd 0.5	3,940	144 manual • 33/45rpm • 51,16,42cm • Cross between standard and Reference Voyds. Superb finish, colourful and dynamic.	REC'D
Audiomeca J1/SL5	4,250	manual • 33/45rpm • 50, 40, 2cm • With parallel tracking arm	
SME Model 20A	4,535	118 manual • 33/45/78rpm • 42,15,32cm • Supplied with Series V arm. Engineered to last a lifetime, giving excellent stereo and detail retrieval.	
BASE Ovation II	4,800	manual • 33/45rpm • 58,42,14cm • Lead/brass, record clamped	
DNM Rota 2	4,800	144 manual • 33/45rpm • 59,14,37cm • Includes arm and cartridge	REC'D

PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

Notts Analogue Mentor Ref	4,800	manual • 33/45rpm • 150lb platter, graphite top	
Well Tempered Reference	5,000	manual • 33/45rpm • 49.19,39cm • 'Fountainhead' base/carbon arm	
Voyd Reference	6,500 91	manual • 33/45rpm • 51.16,48cm • <i>Voyd's flagship, equipped with three substantial motors, is a strong contender for world's best.</i>	REC'D
Basis Debut Gold Std III	7,200	manual • 33/45rpm • 58.42,19cm • Belt drive, high mass	
Basis Debut Gold Vacuum	9,250	manual • 33/45rpm • 58.42,19cm • Includes suction platter	
SME Model 30	10,166	manual • /78rpm • 45.22,35cm • Flagship turntable	
SME Model 30A	11,460	manual • 33/45/78rpm • 45.22,35cm • As above, with Series V arm	
TONEARMS			
Decca LI Arm	49	changeable armtube • proprietary fit • 212mm • Damped	
Moth Arm	95 60	fixed armtube • <i>The ultimate budget arm? Refined, sweet, detailed and natural.</i>	B'BUY
Rega RB250	95	fixed armtube • 237mm • Scaled down RB300	
Decca LIR Arm	99	changeable armtube • proprietary fit • 212mm • Rewired version of LI	
Rega RB300	139 60	fixed armtube • 237mm • <i>Despite its modest price it sets exceptional standards and could be used on many high end turntables.</i>	B'BUY
Moth Mk III	146	fixed armtube • Rebadged Rega RB300	
Linn Akito	209	fixed armtube • Linn/Alphason fit • 229mm • Statically balanced	
SME Series IIS	242	changeable armtube • SME fit • 233mm • Economy version of Series III	
SME 3009 Ser II Imp	268	fixed armtube • SME fit • 231mm • Fixed headshell, low mass	
Roksan Tabriz Basic	275 91	fixed armtube • proprietary fit • 240mm • <i>Targetted at the Xerxes, this is a good alternative to the Rega arm in many cases - a touch bright though.</i>	REC'D
Alphason Xenon	286	fixed armtube • Linn/Alphason fit • 229mm • 1-piece titanium armtube	
SME 3009 S2 Ser II Imp	292	removable headshell • SME fit • 231mm • Detach headshell, medium mass	
SME Series III	335	changeable armtube • SME fit • 233mm • V-low mass for hi-compliance	
Notts Analogue Space	350	changeable armtube • proprietary fit • Opt silver wiring, unipivot	
Alphason Xenon MCS	370	fixed armtube • Linn/Alphason fit • 229mm • vdH silver wiring	
Manticore Musician	395	fixed armtube • Linn/Alphason fit • 230mm • Handmade, lifetime guarantee	
Roksan Tabriz Zi	395	fixed armtube • proprietary fit • 240mm • 'Intelligent' counterweight	
SME Series II 3009-R	445	removable headshell • SME fit • 233mm • Heavier version of Ser II S2 I	
SME Series II 3010-R	455	removable headshell • SME fit • 239mm • Detachable headshell, 10 inch	
Zeta as	469	Pivoted	
SME Series II 3012-R	489	removable headshell • SME fit • 308mm • Detachable headshell, 12 inch	
Alphason HR100S	490 86	fixed armtube • Linn/Alphason fit • 229mm • <i>S-shaped arm sounds smooth, but nevertheless reproduces transients with fine attack.</i>	REC'D
Helius Orion 4 Copper	549	fixed armtube • proprietary fit • 254mm	
Alphason HR100S MCS	550	fixed armtube • Linn/Alphason fit • 229mm • vdH silver, top bearings	
SME Series 300-309	597 79	removable headshell • SME fit • 232mm • <i>Beautifully made and finished: fully adjustable and a highly neutral performer.</i>	REC'D
Kuzma Stogi	600	fixed armtube • proprietary fit • Effective mass 13gm	
SME Series 300-310	611	removable headshell • SME fit • 238mm • 10 inch (nom) version of 300-3	
SME Series 300-312	694	removable headshell • SME fit • 308mm • 12 inch (nom) version of 300-3	
Manticore Magician1	695	fixed armtube • Linn/Alphason fit • 230mm • Polished armtube finish	
Helius Orion 4 Silver	725	fixed armtube • proprietary fit • 254mm	
Notts Analogue Mentor	750	changeable armtube • proprietary fit • Silver wiring, unipivot	
Manticore Magician2	795	fixed armtube • Linn/Alphason fit • 305mm • Polished armtube finish	
Townshend Excalibur	799	fixed armtube • proprietary fit • 220mm • Outrigger headshell damping	
SME Series IV	869 60	fixed armtube • SME fit • 233mm • <i>Superb engineering and finish with a finely balanced sound, impressive stereo focus and low colouration.</i>	REC'D
Roksan Artemiz	895	fixed armtube • proprietary fit • 240mm • Flagship arm, new style	
Naim ARO	963	changeable armtube • proprietary fit • Unipivot	
Wilson Benesch ACT1	975	fixed armtube • proprietary fit • Carbon-fibre armtube, unipivot	
Kuzma Stogi Ref	1,000 79	fixed armtube • proprietary fit • <i>Large, solid and well made arm, gives exceptionally clear sound with just a hint of brightness.</i>	REC'D
Notts Analogue Alien	1,200	changeable armtube • proprietary fit • Graphite tube, unipivot	
SME Series V	1,294 60	fixed armtube • SME fit • 233mm • <i>Excellent in all respects, this arm arguably sets the standards for pivoted arms, regardless of price.</i>	REC'D
Linn Ekos	1,297 67	fixed armtube • Linn/Alphason fit • 229mm • <i>Superb, state of the art design which builds significantly on predecessor's strengths.</i>	REC'D
Dynavecort 507	1,400	fixed armtube • proprietary fit • Biaxial design	
Helius Cyalene 2	1,495	fixed armtube • proprietary fit • 254mm • Silver wired, pivoted	
Audiomeca SL5	1,999	fixed armtube • proprietary fit • Parallel tracking	
Graham 1.5T	2,550	changeable armtube • SME fit • SME base, unipivot	
Wheaton Tri-Planar 4	2,750	fixed armtube • proprietary fit • With terminal box	
Wheaton Tri-Planar 4C	3,000	fixed armtube • proprietary fit • As 4 with Cardas cable	
Air Tangent Tangent 10B	6,900	changeable armtube • proprietary fit • Air-bearing	



Cartridges

Cartridges fall into two groups: high output MM (moving magnet) models, capable of working directly into most phono inputs; and generally more expensive low and very low output MC (moving coil) models. MC cartridges usually have better mechanical integrity, tighter tolerances and give better performance. Many amplifiers are no longer

equipped with the necessary phono input for a cartridge, and a separate phono stage is necessary. Phono input equipped valve designs need a transformer to cope with MC cartridges.

Cartridge/amplifier interfacing can be very subtle, but even basic high output MM designs benefit in overall balance from optimised amplifier capacitance loading. Cantilever compliance (how springy it is) needs to be

considered in the light of the effective mass of the tonearm. High compliance (ie soft suspension) cartridges are best used with low mass tonearms and vice versa.

Key

fixed stylus, moving coil, moving magnetcartridge type
1.4 mVcartridge output in millivolts

PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

CARTRIDGES			
Goldring Elan	17 67	moving magnet • 5.0mV mV • removable stylus • <i>A lightweight and frisky-sounding MM apparently based on Nagaoka MM4 body</i>	REC'D
Ortofon OMP-5E	17	moving coil • 4 mV • removable stylus • 5.0g	
Shure ME70B	18	moving magnet • 6mV mV • removable stylus • Conical stylus	
Audio Technica AT-95E	19 48	moving magnet • 2.8 mV • removable stylus • 5.7g • <i>Clear and dynamic, though richly balanced.</i>	B'BUY
Pickering TE-15	20	moving magnet • removable stylus • Tracks 1.5gm	
Ortofon OM Pro S	21	moving magnet • 5 mV • removable stylus • 5.0g • Budget disco cartridge	
Shure M92E	22	moving magnet • 5mV mV • removable stylus • Dual T4P & normal fit	
Audio Technica AT-110E	24	moving magnet • 3.8 mV • removable stylus • 7.2g	
Goldring Elektra	25	moving magnet • 5.0mV mV • removable stylus • Elliptical stylus	
Ortofon OM10 Super	25	moving magnet • 4 mV • removable stylus • 5.0g • Elliptical stylus	
Pickering VE-15	25	moving magnet • removable stylus • Tracks 1 - 3gms	
Pickering T-E	25	moving magnet • removable stylus • Elliptical	
Grado ZTE + I	27	moving magnet • removable stylus • Moving flux, high output	
Pickering V15-DJ	28	moving magnet • removable stylus • Disco model	
Shure SC35C	28	moving magnet • 5mV mV • removable stylus • For broadcast use	
Arcam C77	30 48	moving magnet • 4mV mV • removable stylus • 6g • <i>A sensible moving magnet package with good bounce at a competitive price.</i>	B'BUY
Sumiko Oyster	30	moving magnet • removable stylus	
Ortofon OM Night Club S	32	moving magnet • 6 mV • removable stylus • 5.0g • Spherical stylus	
Ortofon 510/P	32 85	moving magnet • 3 mV • removable stylus • 5.0g • <i>For the price, a good blend of virtues - weight, clarity and neutrality.</i>	B'BUY

PRODUCT

£ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

Shure M44C	33	moving magnet • 9mV mV • removable stylus • Professional, spherical stylus	
Rega Bias	34	67 moving magnet • removable stylus • 4.1g • <i>Difficult to mount in some arms due to its shallow build, the Bias offers a gentle, refined sound.</i>	
Rega RB78	34	moving magnet • 4.0g • for 78rpm records	
Stanton 500EL	34	moving magnet • removable stylus • Elliptical stylus	
Stanton 500AL II	34	moving magnet • removable stylus • Spherical stylus	
Pickering TL-1	34	moving magnet • removable stylus	
Grado ZCE+1	37	moving magnet • removable stylus • Moving flux	
Ortofon OM Night Club E	37	moving magnet • 6 mV • removable stylus • 5.0g • Elliptical stylus	
Shure ME95ED	38	moving magnet • 5mV mV • removable stylus • Elliptical stylus	
Arcam C77MG	40	67 moving magnet • 4mV mV • removable stylus • 6g • <i>Punchy, with plenty of energy to liven things up. The solid body is well worth the extra £10.</i>	B'BUY
Ortofon Concord Pro S	40	moving magnet • 5 mV • removable stylus • 19g • Pro use, inc headshell	
Pickering XV15-350C	40	moving magnet • removable stylus • Conical stylus	
Shure M55E	42	moving magnet • 6mV mV • removable stylus • Professional, spherical stylus	
Shure M104E	44	moving magnet • 5mV mV • removable stylus • DualT4P & normal fit	
Pickering TL-2E	45	moving magnet • removable stylus	
Grado Z3E+1	47	moving magnet • removable stylus • Moving flux	
Arcam E77	50	moving magnet • 4mV mV • removable stylus • 6g • Elliptical stylus	
Goldring 1006	50	moving magnet • 6.5mV mV • removable stylus • Elliptical stylus	
Pickering XV15-625E	50	moving magnet • removable stylus	
Pickering XV15-150-DJ	50	moving magnet • removable stylus • Professional cartridge	
Stanton 680AL/X	50	moving magnet • removable stylus • Spherical stylus	
Sumiko Black Pearl	50	moving magnet • removable stylus	
Rega Super Bias	52	moving magnet • 4.1g	
Linn K5	54	67 moving magnet • 4.5mm mV • removable stylus • 6g • <i>Not as crisply focussed as the other Linn magnetics, but the K5 is smoother.</i>	REC'D
Ortofon Concord NC S	55	moving magnet • 6 mV • removable stylus • 19g • Pro use, inc headshell	
Ortofon 520/P	55	67 moving magnet • 3 mV • removable stylus • 5.0g • <i>Sensitive to load capacitance, the 520/P has a lively, effervescent sound.</i>	REC'D
Pickering TL-2-S	55	moving magnet • removable stylus • Line contact stylus	
Stanton 680EL/X	56	moving magnet • removable stylus • Elliptical stylus	
Arcam E77MG	60	48 moving magnet • 4mV mV • removable stylus • <i>Our sample had a disappointing stylus, but gave a coherent, rich and laid back sound.</i>	REC'D
Ortofon OM20 Super	60	moving magnet • 4 mV • removable stylus • 5.0g	
Ortofon MC1 Turbo	60	moving coil • 3.3 mV • removable stylus • 4.1g	
Ortofon Concord NC E	60	moving magnet • 6 mV • removable stylus • 19g • Spherical version of Concord	
Pickering XV15-757S	60	moving magnet • removable stylus • Line contact stylus	
Pickering XV15-625DJ	60	moving magnet • removable stylus • Broadcast cartridge	
Shure ME97HE	60	48 moving magnet • 4mV mV • removable stylus • 7g • <i>It won't turn a sow's ear into a silk purse, but it will produce an acceptable result.</i>	REC'D
Arcam P77	63	moving magnet • 4mV mV • removable stylus • 6g • 'Profiled' stylus	
Goldring 1012GX	65	85 moving magnet • 6.5mV mV • removable stylus • <i>Slightly harsh but plenty of life and detail. Some high frequency colouration apparent.</i>	REC'D
Denon DL110	70	48 moving coil • fixed stylus • <i>A fine all-rounder, this high output MC model is likely to perform well</i>	B'BUY
Pickering XV15-1800S	70	moving magnet • removable stylus • Line contact stylus	
Sumiko Pearl	70	moving magnet • removable stylus	
Arcam P77MG	73	48 moving magnet • 4mV mV • removable stylus • 6g • <i>Preferred to its cheaper partner thanks to a better tip. Channel balance poor</i>	REC'D
Rega Elys	74	67 moving magnet • removable stylus • 4.7g • <i>Clearly superior to the Bias, the Elys is both more detailed, accurate and convincing.</i>	REC'D
Shure M110HE	74	moving magnet • 4mV mV • removable stylus • 7g • Dual T4P & normal fit	
Ortofon OM30 Super	80	moving magnet • 4 mV • removable stylus • 5.0g • Fine line stylus	
Pickering TL3S	80	moving magnet • removable stylus	
Grado ZF1+	82	moving magnet • removable stylus • Moving flux	
Stanton 890AL/X	82	moving magnet • removable stylus • Professional cartridge	
Goldring 1022GX	85	85 moving magnet • 6.5mV mV • removable stylus • <i>As with 1012, a touch harsh; detail and transient purity improved</i>	REC'D
Ortofon MC10 Super	85	48 moving coil • 0.3 mV • fixed stylus • 7.0g • <i>'What a delightfully sweet-sounding cartridge this is....' we said.</i>	B'BUY
Ortofon 530/P	85	moving magnet • 3 mV • removable stylus • 6.0g • T4P fit	
Denon DL160	90	43 moving coil • fixed stylus • 6g • <i>Although listeners just preferred the 110, its brother here survived lab tests and is still 'thoroughly competent'.</i>	
Pickering XEV-3001E	95	moving magnet • removable stylus • Elliptical stylus	
Notts Analogue Tracer I	98	moving magnet	
Denon DL103	100	103 moving coil • fixed stylus • 9g • <i>Good performance in bass and good 'life' is seriously let down by its spherical stylus which kills subtle detail.</i>	
Goldring Eroica LX	100	84 moving coil • 0.5mV mV • fixed stylus • <i>Not the most subtle cartridge in the world: can sound edgy at times, but lively and informative.</i>	REC'D
Goldring Eroica	100	moving coil • 2.5 mV • fixed stylus • Gyger II stylus	
Pickering XLZ-3500	100	moving magnet • removable stylus	
Pickering TL-4-S	100	moving magnet • removable stylus	
Sumiko Blue Point	100	moving coil • fixed stylus • High output MC	
Goldring 1042	105	91 moving magnet • 6.5mV mV • removable stylus • <i>Not terribly subtle, and not such good value alongside 1012 and 1022. Quite lively though.</i>	
Linn K9	109	Col moving magnet • 4.5mm mV • removable stylus • 7g • <i>Linn improved this model by beefing up the Bak's bodywork and adding a super stylus.</i>	B'BUY
Ortofon MC3 Turbo	110	103 moving coil • 3.3 mV • fixed stylus • 4.1g • <i>The 3 Turbo is bright, cheerful and bouncy, but unsubtle - take it as it comes.</i>	REC'D
Ortofon MC15 Super II	110	103 moving coil • 0.35 mV • fixed stylus • 7.0g • <i>A good all-rounder, with outstanding resolution, if slightly bright and close up.</i>	B'BUY
Ortofon 540/P	110	moving magnet • 3 mV • removable stylus • 5.0g	
Roksan Corus Black	130	91 moving magnet • 6.5mV mV • removable stylus • <i>Recognisably related to the Corus Blue, but more civilised and smoother.</i>	REC'D
Pickering TL-3003	145	moving magnet • removable stylus	
Audio Technica AT-OC5	146	103 moving coil • 0.4 mV • fixed stylus • 8.0g • <i>Effortless and detailed, but rather relentless and tiring eventually.</i>	REC'D
Grado Signature Junior	149	moving magnet • removable stylus • Moving flux	
DNM Reson Mica	150	moving magnet • removable stylus	
Pickering XLZ-4500	150	moving magnet • removable stylus • Line contact	
Dynavector 50X	159	moving coil • 2 mV • removable stylus • 4.5g • High output, exchange scheme	
Ortofon MC25E	160	139 moving coil • 0.5 mV • fixed stylus • 10.5g • High output, elliptical stylus	
Notts Analogue Tracer II	175	moving magnet	
Pickering TL-4004	175	moving magnet • removable stylus	
Dynavector 10X	189	moving coil • 2 mV • fixed stylus • 4.6g • High output, exchange scheme	
Linn K18/II	197	moving magnet • 4.5mV mV • removable stylus • 8g • Metal body	
DNM Reson Aciore	199	moving coil • fixed stylus	
London Decca Maroon	199	67 moving magnet • 5.0mV mV • fixed stylus • <i>Now manufactured under the London brand name, this Decca cartridge is as iconoclastic as ever.</i>	
Denon DL304	200	moving coil • fixed stylus • Elliptical stylus	
Goldring Elite	200	103 moving coil • 0.5mV mV • fixed stylus • <i>The basics are right, and it will cheerfully tackle any source material, but its sound has a certain dirtiness.</i>	
Pickering XSV-5000U	200	moving magnet • removable stylus • High output	
Pickering XLZ-7500	200	moving magnet • removable stylus • Hybrid, low impedance	
Pickering TLZ-7500-S	200	moving magnet • removable stylus	
Ortofon MC25FL	210	139 moving coil • 0.5 mV • fixed stylus • 10.5g • High output, Fine Line stylus	
DNM Reson Recca	225	moving magnet • removable stylus	
London Decca Gold	239	moving magnet • 5.0mV mV • fixed stylus • Elliptical stylus	
Audio Technica AT-OC9	245	moving coil • 0.38 mV • fixed stylus • 8.8g	
Audioquest MC5	250	moving coil • 1.4mV mV • fixed stylus • High output MC, line contact	
Grado Signature 8MZ	250	moving magnet • removable stylus • Moving flux	
Ortofon MC10 Supreme	250	moving coil • 0.5 mV • fixed stylus • 10.7g • High output MC	
Sumiko BPS	250	moving coil • fixed stylus • Nude stylus	
vdH MM-1	250	103 moving magnet • 3.5mV mV • removable stylus • <i>If woody midrange could be tamed, imaging and security would pull it through</i>	REC'D
London Decca Maroon Dp	259	moving magnet • 5.0mV mV • fixed stylus • Deccapod mounting	
Shure V15W-MR	265	38 moving magnet • 3mV mV • removable stylus • 6.6g • <i>Extended familiarity gave the feeling of a lack of energy and a 'shut in' sound.</i>	
DNM Reson Etile	299	moving coil • fixed stylus	

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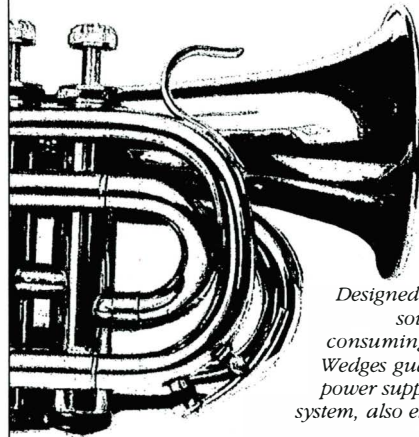
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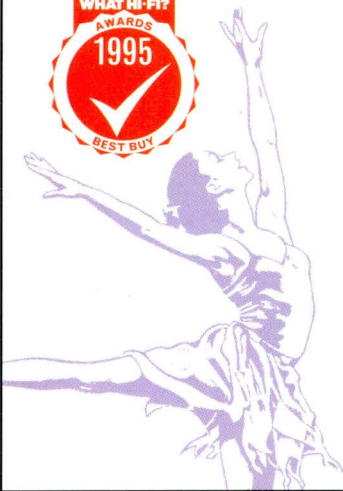
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THIS MONTHS PRODUCT FEATURE 3

DEFLEX Acoustic Panels

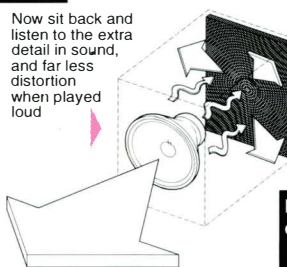


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Audio Video - December 1994
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PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

London Decca Gold Dpd	299		moving magnet • 5.0mV mV • fixed stylus • Elliptical stylus, Deccapod	
Milltek Aurora	299		moving coil • 2.0mV mV • fixed stylus • <i>An overall feeling of relaxed ease characterised this clear and atmospheric Kiseki-built cartridge.</i>	REC'D
vdH MM-2	299		moving magnet • 5.5mV mV • removable stylus	
London Decca S Gold	339	84	moving magnet • 5.0mV mV • fixed stylus • <i>Immediate and detailed, but coloured, nonlinear with a questionable effect on records.</i>	
Notts Analogue Tracer III	350		moving magnet	
Ortofon MC20 Supreme	350		moving coil • 0.5 mV • fixed stylus • 10.7g • High-output elliptical MC	
Dynavector 23RS	375		moving coil • 0.15 mV • fixed stylus • 5.3g • Jewel cantilever, exchange	
Grado Signature MCZ	375		moving magnet • removable stylus • Moving flux	
London Decca S Gold Dp	399		moving magnet • 5.0mV mV • fixed stylus • Deccapod mounting	
Milltek Olympia	399		moving coil • 2.0mV mV • fixed stylus • As Aurora, sapphire cantilever	
Linn Klyde	449		moving coil • 150uV mV • fixed stylus • 8g • Alloy body	
Dynavector 17D2	450	91	moving coil • 0.15 mV • fixed stylus • 5.3g • <i>Clear, detailed, neutral and generally informative - excellent.</i>	REC'D
Ortofon MC30 Supreme	450		moving coil • 0.5 mV • fixed stylus • 10.7g • High output	
Kiseki Blue GS	499		moving coil • 0.4mV mV • fixed stylus	
Notts Analogue Tracer IV	550		moving magnet •	
Audioquest 404L	599	84	moving coil • 0.5mV mV • fixed stylus • <i>Slight harshness detracted from the performance of this otherwise clear-sounding and detailed cartridge.</i>	
Benz-Micro The Glider	600		moving coil • 1mV mV • fixed stylus • Semi-nude design	
Audio Technica AT-OC30	619		moving coil • 0.4 mV • fixed stylus • 7.8g • Nude micro linear stylus	
Grado Signature TLZ	650		moving magnet • removable stylus • Moving flux	
Ortofon MC2000II	650		moving coil • 0.12 mV • fixed stylus • 9.6g	
Lyra Lydian	699		moving coil • removable stylus	
vdH DDT-II	699		moving coil • 0.4mV mV • fixed stylus • Silver coils	
Benz-Micro H200	700		moving coil • 2mV mV • fixed stylus	
Benz-Micro M090	700		moving coil • 0.9mV mV • fixed stylus	
Benz-Micro L040	700		moving coil • 0.4mV mV • fixed stylus	
vdH MC-10	799	60	moving coil • 0.4mV mV • fixed stylus • <i>A neutral, balanced performer gives, fine depth and focus and a firm, extended bass</i>	REC'D
Audioquest 404iMH	899		moving coil • 1.4 mV • fixed stylus • Boron cantilever	
DNM Reson Lexe	899	144	moving coil • fixed stylus	REC'D
Kiseki PHS	899		moving coil • 0.4mV mV • fixed stylus	
Audio Technica ART-1	944	72	moving coil • 0.4 mV • fixed stylus • 8.8g • <i>This is a delicate and very fluid-sounding MC that tracks well.</i>	REC'D
Ortofon MC3000II	950	84	moving coil • 0.12 mV • fixed stylus • 9.5g • <i>A real eye-opener. Nothing to criticise anywhere, one of the very best.</i>	REC'D
Grado Signature XTZ	975		moving magnet • removable stylus • Moving flux	
Roksan Shiraz	975		moving coil • 0.2mV mV • fixed stylus • 3-pt generator mount, no glues	
Dynavector XX-1L	998	84	moving coil • 0.25 mV • fixed stylus • 12g • <i>Very clear, very detailed; a response lift around 20kHz seems to do no harm.</i>	REC'D
Dynavector XX-1	998	84	moving coil • 2 mV • fixed stylus • 12g • <i>Good, but not immensely competitive at the price and not helped by comparison with the low output version.</i>	
Linn Arkiv	998		moving coil • 150uV mV • fixed stylus • 7g • Three point mt, machined body	
London Decca Jubilee	999		moving magnet • 5.0mV mV • fixed stylus • Line contact, 0.5 inch mount	
vdH MC-One	999	60	moving coil • fixed stylus • <i>This extended all the positive qualities of the '10, but added greater authority and scale - worth all the extra money.</i>	REC'D
Lyra Clavis Da Capo	1,069	143	moving coil • fixed stylus	B'BUY
Benz-Micro Wood Ref	1,100		moving coil • 0.3mV mV • fixed stylus • Bruyere housing, boron	
vdH MC-One/Hi	1,149	84	moving coil • fixed stylus • <i>Slight softening on transients was the only real flaw, but it didn't quite seem to have that special touch one expects.</i>	
vdH MC-Two	1,349	72	moving coil • fixed stylus • <i>MC-Two rewards with a highly dealed yet fluid and musically convincing portrayal.</i>	
Audio Note Io IIV	1,395	100	moving coil • fixed stylus • <i>One of the best, giving an extraordinarily relaxing midrange clarity. Needs a transformer.</i>	REC'D
Benz-Micro Ruby Ref	1,400		moving coil • 0.3mV mV • fixed stylus • Bruyere housing boron	
Audioquest 7000NSX	1,495	91	moving coil • 0.4 mV • fixed stylus • <i>Stunning stereo imaging and detail spoiled by poor tracking and high sensitivity to arms.</i>	
Ortofon MC5000	1,500	91	moving coil • 0.12 mV • fixed stylus • 9.5g • <i>Limited tracking ability, bright and forward sound, but good stereo</i>	
Koetsu Red T	1,550		moving coil • fixed stylus • High-output MC	
Transfiguration AF-1 Mk II	1,595		moving coil • 230uV mV • fixed stylus • 7g • MC, transformer & preamp	
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Ortofon MC7500	2,000		moving coil • 0.13 mV • fixed stylus • 11g • 75th Anniversary model	
vdH Grasshopper IIISLN	2,200		moving coil • fixed stylus • Silver coils, Neodymium magnet	

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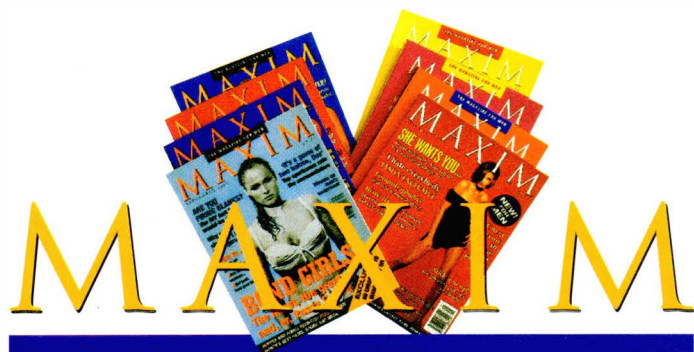
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AUDIO IMAGES, 7 All Saints Road, Pakefield, Lowestoft, NR33 0JL. Tel/Fax 01502 582 853. Please see main entry under SUFFOLK.

BASICALLY SOUND, The Old School, School Rd, Bracon Ash, Norwich NR14 8HE. (01508) 570829. Audio Alchemy, Arcam, Audiolab, Cabletalk, Denon, Epos, Heybrook, Micromega, Naim, Nakamichi, Sound Organisation, Rotel, Royd, Spendor, TDL, etc. 2 comprehensive dem rooms. Home trial. Free installation. Visa, Access, HP facilities. Tues-Sat 9.30-1, 2-5.30. **BADA**

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AUDIBLE DIFFERENCE, Near Diss, Norfolk - see main entry under Norfolk.

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SURBITON PARK RADIO, 48 Surbiton Rd, Kingston-Upon-Thames, Surrey. (0181) 546 5549. Quad, Castle, Dual, Denon, Kenwood, Mordaunt-Short, Rotel, Pioneer, QED, B&W, Tannoy. Demo facilities. Access, Visa. 9.30-5.00 Mon-Sat. Service dept.

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HI-FI CHOICE



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Take one fresh Micromega *Minium* system, and separate over a low flame until you have distinct amplifier, CD player and tuner. In another bowl, mix a 72-step digital preamplifier with a jitter buster and digital signal enhancer until you get a Meridian 518. Sprinkle both with a new speaker from B&W (right) and season with AVI amplifiers. Bake in a moderate oven until Jimmy Hughes is light and fluffy. Serves six.



AV BANQUET

For a rich, late Winter feast, first lightly grease a bowl with the best in American Audio-Video from Absolute Sounds. Mix in only the finest morsels from Audio Research, Krell, Angstrom, Martin-Logan and CAL. Stir-fry until the leaves turn a dark, red colour. Next, place a new Naim AVI processor and Naim-modified Sanyo LCD projector in a bain-marie with a host of Naim amps and speakers and roast in the oven for two hours at Gas Mark six, turning once. Finally lightly brown a Path Premier system, garnished with a Runco projector, Proceed amps and Avalon speakers, under the grill. Serve on a bed of Mission *M-Time*, speakers, and mixed TVs.

RECEIVER ROAST

The perfect complement to the high-end AV banquet. Pick half a dozen of the sweetest AV amplifiers around, place in a flan case and sprinkle with a liberal coating of Paul Miller. Chill in the refrigerator for at least 24 hours and serve with a generous dollop of double cream and a glass of sweet white dessert wine.



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How to flambé small dead things in the alcohol of your choice ■ Win B&W speakers and sun-dried tomatoes with mascarpone cheese ■ Learn how to make Gumbo of Amplifier using only finely diced components and a stock from a well-matured article by Dave Berriman. Simply simmer in a heavy saucepan until soft and easy to understand ■ Free vol-au-vent with every issue* ■ Plus load, loads more.

MORE FUN THAN TRYING TO HAND-INFLATE A FALLEN SOUFFLE WITH A BICYCLE PUMP

The April issue will arrive fully cooked on Friday, March 1st, 1996. In the meantime, here's one I prepared earlier...

*Canapé give-away subject to non-availability. We reserve the right to offer **FREE DUST CAPS** instead.

Personal

Paul Messenger plumbs new depths
— of bass extension, that is . . .

Messages

The quest for Perfect Bass is a bit like the search for the Philosopher's Stone or Holy Grail, except that in this case, the searchers stay warm and dry. The Perfect Bass probably doesn't exist anyway, but you're likely to have a whole lot of fun along the way — much more so than in the daft pursuit of an equally unlikely National Lottery Jackpot.

Over the past decade I've had a few opportunities to try the available options (with the notable exception of full-range architectural horns). I wouldn't go so far as to say I've cracked the myriad problems that stand in the way of effective low-frequency response, but a couple of recent experiences seem to have moved me several steps closer to my goal.

In my opinion, the fundamental problem with bass is that the quantity of it is usually inversely proportional to its quality. Conversely, I find that the speakers with the driest bass are often the most communicative. And I'm not just referring to the Rehdeko 175s I've been using for the past year. Tannoy's *Westminster Royal* horns, Naim's *DBL* (especially in active drive form) and even the original Quad *Electrostatic* are all good examples of less turning out to be more. Quantitatively they are challenged, but qualitatively they are among the best around.

One explanation for this perception may be that each of the abovementioned speakers tends not to use bass resonance to boost low-frequency output, in the manner of more conventional speakers. Philosophically, a hi-fi speaker should be as free as possible from innate resonances, since its task is to reproduce the multiple resonances created by musical instruments and human voices.

Since my Rehdekos are an extreme example, I've been trying various different methods of boosting the bottom end without losing speed and coherence. Predictably, the most effective so far have come about by accident, but I'm learning all the time . . .

The first chance discovery came with the arrival of the biggest and most expensive subwoofer yet to hit these floorboards: Miller & Kreisel's £3,000, Home-THX-certified *MX-5000*. So big and heavy is this awesome beast, that we left it right where it fell out of the carton, and simply connected it up. This happened to put its massive drivers less than a metre or so from the listening zone, which sounds a bit hazardous, but actually proved rather effective.

Its extra grunt helped to make a most enjoyable evening's listening run last well into the following morning. The fact that we were so close to the sub seemed irrelevant, as its contribution seemed virtually inaudible until it was switched off.

When I did a proper installation a couple of days later, moving the sub out of the way behind the main speakers, as well as fitting its spikes, I was disconcerted to find that the bottom end no longer integrated as well as it had done before. It reminded me of a similar but less pronounced incident with a passive GLL subwoofer some six months earlier.

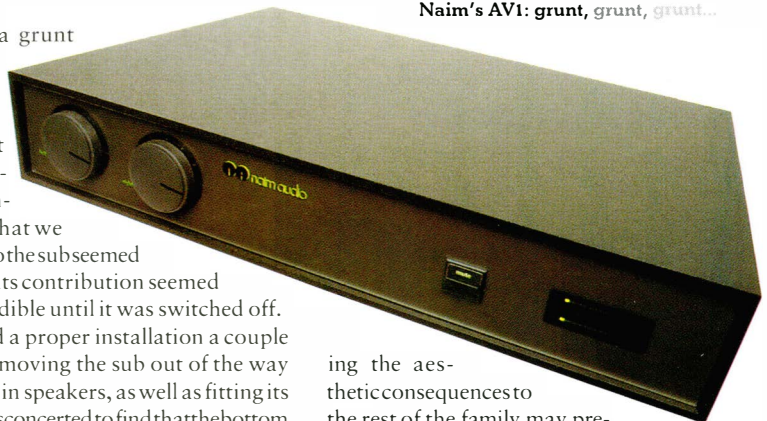
Integrating subwoofers with main systems can prove to be a frustrating business, but I'm beginning to suspect that we're making things much more difficult by attempting to hide our Low Frequency Lovelies as far away as possible. Lifestyle practicalities get in the way of course, and I'm currently in the throes of rehousing a very large record collection in order to try out the *MX-5000* up close over a sensible period of time.

A more detailed report on this definitive device (it actually defines room modes with great precision!) will be provided in due course, but any readers who are struggling to get good results from a subwoofer should try bringing it close to the listening zone. This might just do the trick, though I daresay that explain-



Miller & Kreisel's *MX-5000*: grunt!

Naim's *AV1*: grunt, grunt, grunt...



ing the aesthetic consequences to the rest of the family may present a problem.

Subwoofers are all well and good, but more interesting still is the effect of adding extra bass via a time-delayed surround sound channel. I've been experimenting with Naim's *AV1* surround processor for the last couple of months, and I find it impressively 'transparent'. It makes a worthwhile contribution with most sources, not just movies (provided the rear channel tweeters are pointed away from the listening area). The *AV1* does not follow Dolby Surround protocols, but uses Philips digital processing to synthesise two full-bandwidth surround channels that incorporate a fixed 15ms delay.

The main effect of adding the surround channels is the clever way they seem to remove the acoustics of the host room and create the impression of listening in a much larger space. I suspect that the simulated surround environment is actually drowning out and overriding a great deal of the existing room reverberation.

More interesting still, from my perspective, is the way that one can add quite a lot of extra low bass without significantly altering the main stereo signals, presumably because the rear delay keeps a respectful distance from the front speakers. By their very nature, low bass signals consist largely of reverberant information (few acoustic instruments go much below 60Hz), so adding extra bass boost through a simulated reverberant field is not an unlikely proposition. Also, it might be the case that the listening room is 'driven' more evenly and with greater extension by this doubling up and better distribution of bass sources.

Whatever the explanation, adding bass through a delayed surround channel does seem to create some interesting results, and has opened up a whole new range of options for me to explore. It's got to be better than the Lottery! ▲

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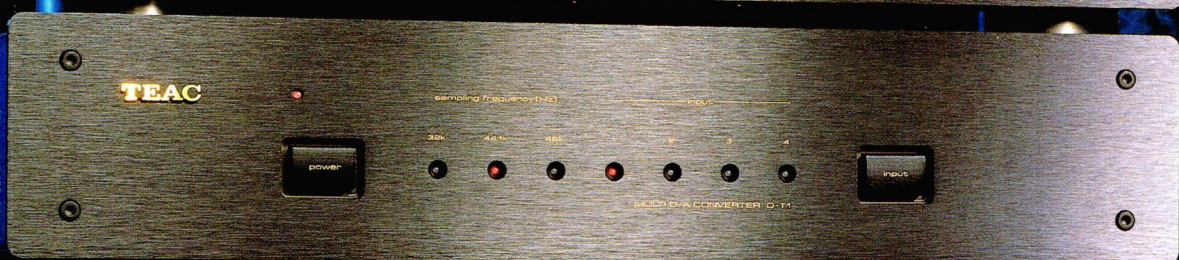
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MISSION

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**What else can
we say....?**

