

# HI-FI CHOICE

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**EDITORIAL**

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We welcome information on all new and upgraded products – please send all press releases to the Editor. The magazine is obliged neither to review nor return unsolicited products, and does not accept responsibility for unsolicited copy.

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Hi-Fi Choice is the UK hi-fi magazine representative of the European Imaging &amp; Sound Association (EISA). Every year EISA honours the finest hi-fi and home cinema products throughout Europe.

**EDITOR'S  
NOTEBOOK**

Jason Kennedy

*is reeling from the shock of our vicious reviewers. Let him explain...***M**

y contributors are trying to get me in trouble again! Paul Miller has discovered that some of the early DVD-A sampler discs are not what they say they are – the ultra-wide bandwidth recordings are made up of digital trickery.

Meanwhile, Richard Black has found that equipment supports are alarmingly noisy things. You can read about

Paul's discovery in *News* if you want the entrée, or in *Oasis* if you want the meat of the issue.**Ringing the changes**

Richard's stand review is somewhat more alarming, especially for manufacturers. In the past we have tested racks by putting kit on them and listening to the sound that the kit makes, but Richard has started by listening to the rack itself. This might seem strange but if you take the gear of your own stand and clap your hands near it, you may well hear the thing ringing for a second or so afterwards – which means that when the system is playing music, the stand is singing along! While the effect of this might occasionally be enjoyable, the long and short of it is that anything that adds noise to your hi-fi is distorting its sound. Distortion is what audio engineers spend their lives trying to eliminate. Richard does point out that resonance has long been a part of hi-fi systems and, in certain cases, seems to have considerable appeal, but the danger is that by following this approach we diverge from the true pursuit of high fidelity.

The most controversial result of this support test is the non-recommendation of the Mana, on the basis that it is the most characterful in the group. In the past we have been very enthusiastic about this brand, and consultant editor Paul Messenger is a user himself, which goes to prove that a little bit of well-tuned distortion is no barrier to musical enjoyment. But it's not what the term high fidelity is all about, and if the resolving power of hi-fi is to increase we have to get tough on distortion, even when it appeals to the ear. One solution would be to adopt speaker stand practice and make more racks able to take filler material and thus introduce some damping.

**Protection at a price**

Further to my comments about copy protection systems last month, it now seems that the Verance analogue watermarking system that was due to be adopted by the SDMI (Secure Digital Music Initiative) and offered to the music industry has suffered a setback. There had been some concern that none of the so-called 'golden-ears' who had supposedly approved the system had been identified, somewhat undermining its credibility. The latest news is that key figures from the record industry, having been demonstrated Verance's supposedly silent yet robust watermark, have given it a universal thumbs down because its effect can be heard. And, as a result, the SDMI has had to go back to the drawing board.

Meanwhile the future of free MP3 downloads is looking shaky, as the RIAA (Record Industry Association of America) has succeeded in getting a court order forcing Napster to close down its file swapping service. Napster knows when to give in and has taken to selling software.

**EDITOR'S CHOICE****KEF Q35.2**There is just one star product that didn't qualify for Best Buy or Recommended status this month, that is KEF's new Q.35.2 floorstanding speaker. Tim's full review can be found in *Heatseekers* on page 16 but for now suffice to say that KEF appears to have repeated the trick it pulled off with the original Q15 and Q35 by making a fantastic all round loudspeaker that looks great and is priced very competitively. Good work, lads.



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*Deutschland, Deutschland, über alles!*

*At some things, anyway.*

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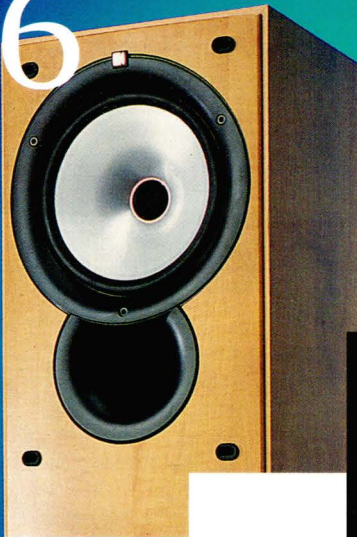
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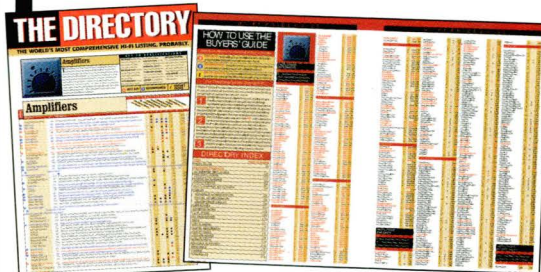


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# NEWS & VIEWS

Tim Bownern, Nick Gear, Jason Kennedy and Paul Miller report the latest hi-fi news.

## NEWS IN BRIEF



**GRUNDIG'S** GDV200 brushed aluminium DVD player sports a neat fold up front that hides essential controls. The £370 player uses a twin-laser system making it capable of reading both DVD and CD discs. Other attractions include Dolby Digital, DTS and digital terminals for six-channel output. Grundig ☎ (020) 8324 9495

**ACOUSTIC ENERGY'S** AE1 Reference mini monitor loudspeaker is to be produced in two special real wood finishes, natural cherry and rosemar. To celebrate 10,000 units sold since its debut in 1988, the new versions will be close to the original 80s price at around £800. Acoustic Energy ☎ (01285) 654432

**ARCAM** has reduced the price of its Alpha 75E CD player to below £300 and improved the performance with changes to the digital clock circuitry. The enhancements are claimed to reduce jitter and deliver a more "focused, three dimensional and dynamic sound". Prices of matching amplifiers and tuners have also been reduced. Arcam ☎ (01223) 203200

**ALR** has announced the first in a series of wood-finished speakers positioned between its Note and Entry series. The N2 Classic is a two-way stand mount design with a 13cm ceramic coated aluminium coned mid-bass unit coupled with a 2.5cm soft dome HF unit. The cabinet is an MDF construction in classic cherry, light beech or black. ALR ☎ (020) 8642 4436



**ONYKO'S** £250 R805X RDS FM/AM receiver (above) offers low impedance discrete output stages, a 20 Watts per channel into four Ohm drive. It boasts a three-step Acoustic Presence control, 30 presets and a four-mode timer. Other features include in/out jacks, banana plug terminals and a motor driven volume control. Onkyo ☎ (01788) 556777

**HI-FI SHOW 2000**, London's international audio event will take place at the Novotel London West hotel in Hammersmith. The show opens its doors to the public on the 23rd and 24th September. The key highlights will be the genuine launch of DVD-Audio in the UK and The British Audio Awards 2001.

**KEF'S** flagship Reference Series Four-Two floorstanding loudspeaker



## Sharp thinking for SACD

Sharp is poised to unleash its first SACD player and a new version of its revolutionary 1-bit digital amp. Together, these two new components will form the world's first Direct Bitstream Coupled system, in theory conveying SACD information from disc to speakers with the minimum of loss.

The SACD player is the DX-SX1, which has a projected price of around £2,700. It uses a "super-thin" dual-beam optical pickup, allowing the player to sport a slim profile, and has the first ever dedicated DSD bitstream digital output alongside standard optical and coaxial digital outs. Sharp also claims compatibility with any forthcoming multi-channel SACD software, though output will be taken from the front two channels only.

The amp is called the SM-SX1, priced in the region of £3,300. According to Sharp it is a compact version of

the £10,000 SM-SX100, the amp with which the company introduced its 1-bit technology late last year (see *HFC* 200). With a rated power output of 50 Watts for each of its two channels, it incorporates a 7th-order delta-sigma modulator chip to apply noise shaping and stabilise the effect of power supply fluctuations by correcting one-bit control signals in real time. Like the SACD player, its form is slim thanks to the nature of its technology, which does away with the need for bulky power supplies and the like. Three analogue inputs are provided, together with a dedicated bitstream input for direct link-up with the DX-SX1.

Direct Bitstream Coupling between these two components will allow SACD information to be amplified in its purest digital form. Both products should be available by September.

Sharp ☎ (0161) 205 2333

## Racey little speakers



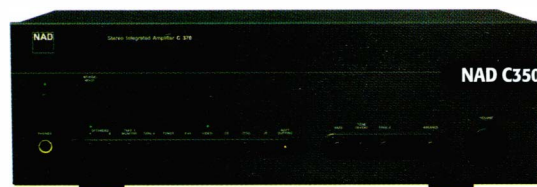
**TAG McLaren** has launched a new speaker, considerably more affordable than the awesome £15,000 F1 reviewed in *HFC* 202.

The Calliope, which will sell for a comparatively paltry £1,499 per pair, was originally conceived to partner the Aphrodite one-box designer system. However, it will now be sold separately and will be the first of the 'Aluminium Technology Loudspeaker' range.

The speaker's cabinet is formed from an aluminium extrusion, with a die-cast aluminium top and bottom. The construction is ribbed and tightly bolted together to produce an immensely rigid enclosure. The mid/bass driver is magnetically shielded and features a 150mm woven composite cone; there's also a 19mm textile tweeter and a hard-wired crossover.

The Calliope comes in a choice of four metallic colours. Five additional finishes are available at extra cost and there's an optional matching stand.

TAG McLaren ☎ (0800) 7838007



## NAD ups the volume




A new £300, remote control integrated amplifier is on the way from NAD. The C350 features a number of refinements over the *Hi-Fi Choice* Best Buy C340 it replaces. Power has been increased to 60 Watts per channel continuous into 8 Ohms and a toroidal transformer is used in place of the cheaper frame type. Input switching is by relay for sound quality purposes, and a short signal path is claimed from input to output.

Also new from NAD is the C370 integrated amplifier, boasting a whopping 120 Watts per channel. Claiming to offer "more power for less money", this £450 model replaces both the C317 and C319 amplifiers.

Features include tone controls and NAD's soft clipping circuit to give a smoother sound when the amplifier is having to work hard. The C370 also benefits from Impedance Sensing Circuit (ISC) topology, which automatically recognises the impedance characteristics of the loudspeaker and adjusts its power supply setting to best cope with the load. Sporting seven line inputs including two tape loops with dubbing facility, it also features two preamp outputs, of which one is variable. Lenbrook ☎ (0700) 00 28346

# Mark Levinson integrates

 The No.383 integrated amplifier, Mark Levinson's latest project, addresses installations where the size and complexity of a separate components amp/preamp system is undesirable, but performance and quality are essential.

Combining power and preamplifier functions into a single chassis, the No.383's preamp features five pairs of analogue inputs for use with balanced and single ended sources. Inputs are independently buffered and as with other Mark Levinson preamplifiers, un-selected inputs can also have their ground connections lifted. Rated at 100 Watts per channel, the integrated amplifier output stage uses the same devices as the 300 series and No.33H amplifiers.

The task of providing clean and stable DC power has been divided among three independent supplies. Metal oxide varistors are used for surge and spike protection on the AC line. Special attention has been made to grounding and the distribution of power to the various circuit elements. Wide circuit traces and ground planes are used, along with plated copper bars, brass stand-offs and swages to guarantee optimum connections.

Among the wealth of attractions on this £5,495 proposition include an RS-232 port on the rear panel and precise control of (balanced analogue) signal volume via solid state, stepped attenuators.

*Path Premier* ☎ (01494) 441736



# JBL launches XTi series

 JBL is to release a comprehensive range of loudspeakers christened the XTi Series.

Consisting of four new standmount models and a matching centre channel speaker produced in real wood veneers (including satin black, brown cherry and beech), the series adopts a tapered hexagonal profile cabinet designed to minimise internal standing waves. Other shared specifics include a 25mm titanium dome tweeter and 165mm laminated pulp cone midrange and bass drivers.


The complete range comprises the entry level, two-way XTi20 (£400) and XTi40 (£500); the three-way

XTi60 (£600) and XTi80 (£700) with fitted floor spikes plus the XTi10C (£200) centre channel speaker.

*Gamepath Ltd*  
☎ (01908)  
317707



# DVD-A takes five

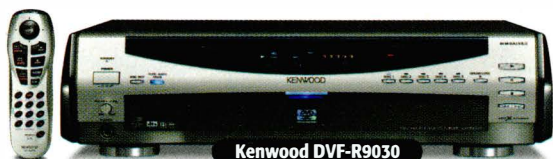
 Kenwood is breaking into DVD-A via the multi-player route. Two new players are about to be launched and both sport five disc carousel transports. The c£900 DVF-R9030 is described in full on page 56, but briefly it incorporates six channel, 24-bit DRIVE DACs, digital video adjustment and three discrete PSUs. It's sibling DVF-R7030 retails at £100 less and loses four of the 24-bit DRIVE technology channels, but incorporates the same joystick remote, SCART, digital coax and component video outputs. At present

Kenwood has no plans to produce an SACD player.

Beside the DPF-3030 (see *HFC* 204), there is only one new CD player joining the range – Kenwood instead concentrating on DVD players. There is however, a shower of multi-disc players from as little as £179 for the DPF-R6030 five-disc and £229 for the DPF-J3030 200-disc players, up to the £400 DPF-J9030 with IR keyboard and twin pick-ups. More interesting is the £299 DPF-J6030 200-disc which has an RS232 link for connection via PC to the cddb.com disc titling site. When appropriately hooked up you can download title info for a disc in four seconds.

In other news Kenwood plans in-car MP3 players, mini system based CD-R and domestic DAB tuners for next year.

*Kenwood UK* ☎ (01923) 816444



## NEWS IN BRIEF

incorporates the proprietary BCD (Boundary Compensation Device) for easy room placement and fourth generation Uni-Q driver array comprising a 16cm mineral filled polypropylene midrange unit with a 2.5cm fabric dome partnered by two 25cm bass units in a coupled cavity. Prices start at £3,650 per pair for black ash, cherry and rosenut, with rosetta burr and albina burr at £4,250. *KEF Audio UK* ☎ (01622) 67226



**DOLBY DIGITAL** and DTS compatible, Hitachi's £300 DV-P505E (above) and £240 DV-P305E DVD players feature a zoom option, a virtual sound system and compliance with all CD formats. The DV-P505E also boasts a twin laser, two-speed PC drive, a high-speed search facility and NTSC conversion. Sockets include analogue video out, coaxial digital out and Scart. *Hitachi* ☎ 0345 581455

**MONDIAL SON & IMAGE**, a new biennial consumer show, will be held from Friday 15th to Wednesday 20th September at the Porte de Versailles, Paris. Alternating with IFA, Berlin, the event will showcase the latest audio and visual innovations plus a six-day programme of conferences and activities. Visit [www.mondial-son-image.com](http://www.mondial-son-image.com) for further details.

**NAKAMICHI'S** Soundspace 10 and 11 systems are to hit the streets this month. Priced at £5,000, the Soundspace 10 features the company's MusicBank system for loading discs, DVD/CD compatibility and a five channel loudspeaker package. Supplied with the equally specified £6,000 Soundspace 11 are brushed aluminium pedestals to support the front and rear loudspeakers. *BBC* ☎ (020) 8863 9117

**IN LAST MONTH'S ISSUE** we reported that blank Minidiscs are available at 90 minute lengths. This is incorrect, as there are currently only 74 and 80-minute versions.

**JVC** has unveiled the MX-J950R and MX-J750R compact component systems. Named G-Max, the range integrates a second-generation triple tray changer with a powered rolling panel. With an emphasis on a bass response, the systems feature a four way bass-reflex speaker design centred around twin subwoofers with dedicated volume control. Both systems come with optical digital output and rotary encoder volume control. *JVC* ☎ (020) 8450 3282

**MASSOLUTION**, a newcomer to high-end audio support manufacturing, has released the T-series 5. This five tier rack incorporates an isolation dampening system via four integral springs within each support plane and high-grade steel for total rigidity. The T-series 5 stands one-metre high and is available with a variety of laminate finishes and costs £800. *MASSolution* ☎ (01274) 604099



## PREVIOUSLY UNHEARD

**Phil Strongman** digs out rare and classic tracks appearing on CD or virgin vinyl for the first time. May the groove be with you.



### THE WAVEROOM *love medicine*

This is a pretty fine debut from Waveroom frontman Hamish Mackintosh – occasionally aided by bass ace Jah Wobble, sitar star Paul Wright and Ghanaian toaster Manney Poku – with his intimate, yearning voice declaiming delirious lyrics of intelligence over hypnotic grooves from the ‘electroambitronic’ side of the street. Accessible without being lightweight, this is a well-recorded, at times magical, disc. Take three times a day, after meals. Bella Union CD

Music ★★★★★ Sound ★★★★★

### THE CLASH *Cut The Crap*

By 1985, proper hedonist Topper Headon had nearly topped himself with partying and Mick Jones had gone to BAD... leaving Joe Strummer and Paul Simonon stranded in the age of the Yuppie. And, despite the bright opening of *Dictator*, complete with random radio scans, it does indeed sound at half-throttle – the excitement comes in fits and starts, the slogans sometimes grate, the sound is too click-tracky. The last Clash studio album remains one for hardcore fans. Columbia CD

Music ★★★★★ Sound ★★★★★

### ANDREA TERRANO *Latin Soul*

55 minutes of pure music, delivered to your ears by a master session guitarist, here in Med ambient mode. By turns, evocative, sweet and poignant, this is about as lyrical as a gee-tar can possibly get. The opener, *Warmth Within*, is an undoubted masterpiece of timing and dexterity which even Pat Metheny would be proud of. I know it would break British radio’s no-music pledge but surely the world wouldn’t end if this kind of stuff got played during daylight hours? I only ask...

justmusic CD

Music ★★★★★ Sound ★★★★★

### ELVIS PRESLEY *That’s The Way It Is*

There’s over forty fresh – well, unreleased – cuts on this 30th anniversary special, marking the three decades since the film of the same name put the Pelvis back in the world’s cinemas. As with the movie, this is a curate’s egg of the good, the bad and the unexpected – Presley himself sounds fine throughout, though, ad-libbing in the right places and knowing just when to hold, or abandon, a note.

RCA CD

Music ★★★★★ Sound ★★★★★

### RICO *Man from Wareika*

The legendary Jamaican trombonist has his 1977 reggae gem reissued on wax, just to remind us how damn soulful that bloody huge brass thing can actually sound in the hands of a master. Keyboard wizard Ansel ‘Double Barrel’ Collins and rhythm kings Sly and Robbie are amongst the prime movers paying tune tribute to the Man from Wareika. Pleasant without ever being banal.

Simply Vinyl 180g LP

Music ★★★★★ Sound ★★★★★



## Denon larges it

Designed for aficionados of both stereo music and multi-channel movies, Denon’s AVC-A1SE multi-channel amplifier is the world’s first product to accommodate THX surround EX 7.1, DTS ES discrete 6.1 and DTS Neo 6 signal formats.

DVD-A and SACD ready, this monster sized amplifier is built to THX Ultra standards. It delivers 170 Watts RMS into seven channels and incorporates twin SHARC DSPs, and an amazing sixteen of the latest generation Analogue Devices 24/192 DACs (two per channel).

If desired, the amp can accommodate two-channel systems while using the amplifier’s full power capacity. It can also convert digital sources using two sets of eight DACs in dual differential mode. Two channel analogue inputs benefit from the ability to shut down the digital elements in the amp, so the amp is free from the electronic ‘noise’ that chipsets can produce.

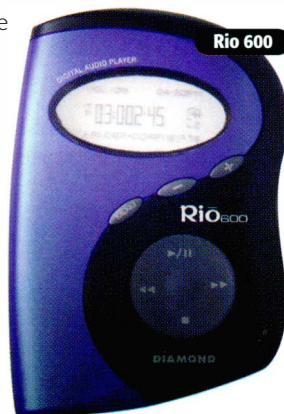
Priced at £2,500, the AVC-A1SE can run a three zone room-to-room system and comes with a touch screen LCD remote handset.

Hayden Labs ☎ (01753) 888447

## Rio’s next gen MP3

Rio has unveiled its latest line-up of solid state, MP3 playing personals and has promised to make the format a more straightforward proposition for punters.

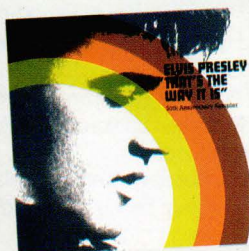
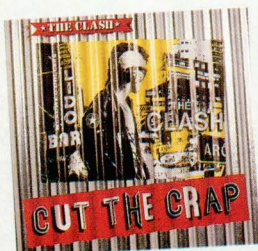
First up is the Rio 600, the £169 base model which boasts 32 MB of memory built in – enough to hold about an hour of music at medium quality. Then comes the Rio 800, expected to sell for around £229, with double the memory and a number of additional benefits, like voice recording and remote control. Both are expandable with a choice of 32, 54 and 340 MB back-packs.



Both these units allow consumers to record music on solid state memory via a computer, by converting tracks off CD or downloading from the Internet. They support MP3, currently the dominant ‘codec’ for such applications, and also Microsoft’s WMA – a fast-growing format supported by the likes of Sony and EMI. Rio was arguably the first brand to make a big splash with its original PMP300 MP3 portable and remains a leader in this particular sector of music playback technology.

Rio Digital Audio ☎ (01189) 444400

Website: [www.riohome.com](http://www.riohome.com)





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## DVD Pioneer takes flight


 Pioneer has announced details of its new DV-737. This DVD player replaces last year's DV-717, but weighs in with a notably more powerful specification in return for a higher price tag. It is expected to be in the region of £600-£700.

The DV-737 includes a number of advanced picture improvements, while the disc tray is damped and the chassis double layered to keep things stable and resonance free. A 24-bit/96kHz compatible twin DAC runs in the sonic department.

The player is expected in the shops around September and will sit directly below two DVD-Audio compatible 'universal' players. These are the DV-939A and flagship DV-AX10, due in the UK by late Autumn. Pioneer ☎ (01753) 789789



## Take it Ezo

 A new CD player has arrived from French brand Ezo. The rather attractive FOG is available in standard form at £575, and features a modular design with two upgrades available. The second of these is claimed to allow upsampling of standard CDs to 24-bit/192kHz resolution, equivalent to the maximum resolution allowed by the DVD-Audio standard.

Ezo was previously known as Cairn, but Linn stepped in and forced a name change. Amps also feature in the range, starting with the Aria at £449 and stretching up to the K5.5 multi-channel model at £1,495. All products are available in silver or black; a matching DVD player and multi-channel processor will be available soon. Audio Illusion ☎ (01753) 542761

## DVD-A software scam

By way of demonstration, and as a stop-gap measure until the music producers get up to speed, a number of DVD-A hardware manufacturers are also releasing DVD-A software featuring recordings ostensibly mastered at the full 192kHz. This is over four times higher than commercial CD software, for example, and promises that DVD-A will enjoy far greater bandwidth and resolution than the current standard.

Sadly, much of this demonstration software sounds dreadful. In a unique investigation, *Hi-Fi Choice* examined the output of two DVD-A units while playing this '192kHz' material. It turns out that much of this music software was originally mastered at just 48kHz and the data simply 'multiplied up' to look like 192kHz stock. The end result? No more detail than we had with CD, but a whole lot more distortion to muddy the musical picture. See this month's *Oasis* column on page 52 for more details.



## PAUL MESSENGER

Booze really *does* make things sound better.

**W**hile it's true that Germany hasn't been as successful as the US, the UK or Japan in selling 'high end' hi-fi around the globe, it nevertheless has a number of interesting companies whose products deserve exposure on the world stage.

One such is Clearaudio, which started out as a pickup cartridge specialist, but has more recently widened its product portfolio somewhat. I've been impressed by the cartridges in the past, awarding the Signature a Best Buy flag back in *HFC* 175. But Clearaudio remains a small player in international terms, with little control over how its cartridges will eventually end up sounding, a situation which boss man Peter Suchy finds frustrating.

Pause, for a paragraph of history. Back in the early 1970s, Linn and Naim were two small start-up companies, whose principals were like-minded in the pursuit of superior music reproduction. They got together to package and promote a complete system approach, which was so successful that the two companies had both outgrown the relationship by the mid-1980s, and each has moved on as an independent 'complete system' manufacturer.

That scenario came immediately to mind when I arrived at a recent press reception, to discover that Clearaudio was teaming up with two other like-minded German hi-fi companies to create a complete end-to-end system in which all the components had been optimised to work sympathetically and in harmony with each other to give true no-compromise 'high end' performance.

At the dem, Peter Suchy was accompanied by Alfred Rudolph of Acapela loudspeakers, while a third company, Symphonic Line, was responsible for most of the amplification. Dubbed the "La Musica" system, it actually consists of rather more than a vinyl source, an integrated amp and a pair of speakers. With stereotypically German attention to detail, Clearaudio has wired the (Rega-sourced) tonearm with its own Sixstream cables from cartridge to Symphono phono stage, and thence to the Symphonic Line amplifier. Clearline speaker cable is another element in the equation, as is the company's Magix magnetic air suspension system, and Acapela's custom lead/aluminium support furniture and speaker stands.

Even though the speakers are still being finalised, we could appreciate that this package has considerable potential, much of which is clearly down to the careful choice of elements to achieve maximum top end delicacy and transparency. It was a salutary reminder of the benefits of synergy.

One gets quite used to half-hour presentations – 20 minute dems and then it's time to demolish the canapes – but that wasn't at all what happened here. We actually listened to the system using a pair of small two-way speakers, which used an external tweeter mounted on a shaped sub-baffle sitting on top of the enclosure. Alfred then proceeded to conduct a number of interesting modifications.

He first took a metal weight about the size of his fist, and placed it on top of the speaker so that it pressed against the back of the tweeter, which gave an immediate improvement in the top end "naturalness". But that was just the first stage. He then moved the weight back an inch and inserted a small ceramic rod to make the mechanical coupling between tweeter and weight. Again the sound improved. Finally, he replaced the fist-size weight with a 25kg monster (again with the ceramic coupling), and yet again the sound seemed to become smoother and more coherent. For his intended "La Musica" speaker, Alfred plans to incorporate this technique inside the enclosure.

We were also treated to an extended demonstration of Alfred's theories on record cleaning, which was interesting if only because the vinyl that he'd brought over did sound uncommonly pure and clean. His contention is that the key to truly clean vinyl surfaces lies in removal of the mould release agent which is left in the grooves during the original pressing process, and that the only suitable solvent is ethanol with a purity greater than 96 per cent. Having carefully cleaned a disc, he then applied just a couple of drops of a lubricant mysteriously called "Squalan" oil, which spreads throughout the groove over the first few plays.

I'm not endorsing this vinyl care regime (especially the Squalan bit), but the case for using pure alcohol, and identifying the mould release agent as the villain of the piece, is a strong one, hampered in practice by the extreme difficulty of even obtaining, never mind marketing, such a volatile and inflammable chemical under British law.

I don't know whether I'll get around to treating my own (rather large) collection of discs, but I do know the memory of those pristine sounding German discs is going to linger. And I'm very much looking forward to hearing the complete 'La Musica' system later in the year, when show time comes around. These guys know a whole lot about how to get the very best results out of a serious hi-fi system.



# The NXT Wave

Paul Messenger checks out Mission's approach to an intriguing new technology

**I**n last month's News column, I covered the opening of the new NXT research facility in Huntingdon, and described some of the new directions in which this radical loudspeaker technology is heading. This month we're looking a little deeper into how this 'alternative' approach to sound reproduction works, and getting close up with Mission's new NXT-based 2/5-channel sub/sat speaker system, the cute little FS2.



The conventional moving-coil loudspeaker drive unit is easy enough to understand. The coil moves to-and-fro in the magnetic gap, according to the applied signal. The coil is attached to a diaphragm (i.e. a cone or dome) which operates like a piston in transferring the motion and energy to the adjacent air molecules, hopefully recreating the pressure waves of the original sound.

It's likely enough that an NXT panel speaker will also use a magnet/voice-coil arrangement of some kind as its 'actuator', but there the similarity ends. Instead of driving a diaphragm pistonically, it excites a stiff panel into highly complex bending modes, and this microscopic bending and flexing generates the sound. There's no need to construct the relatively complex mechanism that supports pistonic motion – no frame (basket), no suspension (spider), and no surround.

In practice the better quality NXT panels tend to use more than one actuator. The small 13x29cms panels used by the Mission FS2 use two actuators, while the much larger panels used in Elac's Cinemax 'talking video screen' use six actuators each (eighteen in total for the three front channels!). Even so, the basic simplicity of construction should benefit production costs.

This whole business of generating sound from microscopic bending waves may be rather counter-intuitive, but there's no denying the simple fact that these panels do generate sound. And since its fundamental *modus operandi* is totally different, it's hardly surprising that the sound reproduction from an NXT panel is qualitatively quite different from conventional pistonic transducers.

Indeed, in some practical senses the NXT panel is almost the opposite of the conventional driver. Rather than seeming to come from the voice coil, the sound comes evenly from the whole panel – a bit like the difference between a light bulb and a fluorescent tube. Because it's an 'area source', the panel projects sound very well into the far field, but doesn't provide the same pin-point focus as a normal driver.

And because the panel's movement is microscopic, it has to be very large indeed to generate worthwhile bass extension. For now (and it would seem the foreseeable future), NXT panels will effectively be restricted to reproducing midrange and treble frequencies, and will rely on conventional drive units to supply the bass. To put it in a nutshell, they may reproduce sound, but they don't pump air.

That's very much the case with Mission's new FS2 speaker system, which combines a powered stand-in-the-corner subwoofer (using a conventional port-loaded driver-in-a-box), plus mount-across-a-corner, sealed-back NXT satellite panels, measuring just 13x29cm. Basic packages may be purchased for stereo two-channel operation at £450, or for surround sound 5.1-channel operation at £800 – not unduly expensive, but not exactly bargain basement either. Upgrading by doubling up panels is also possible.

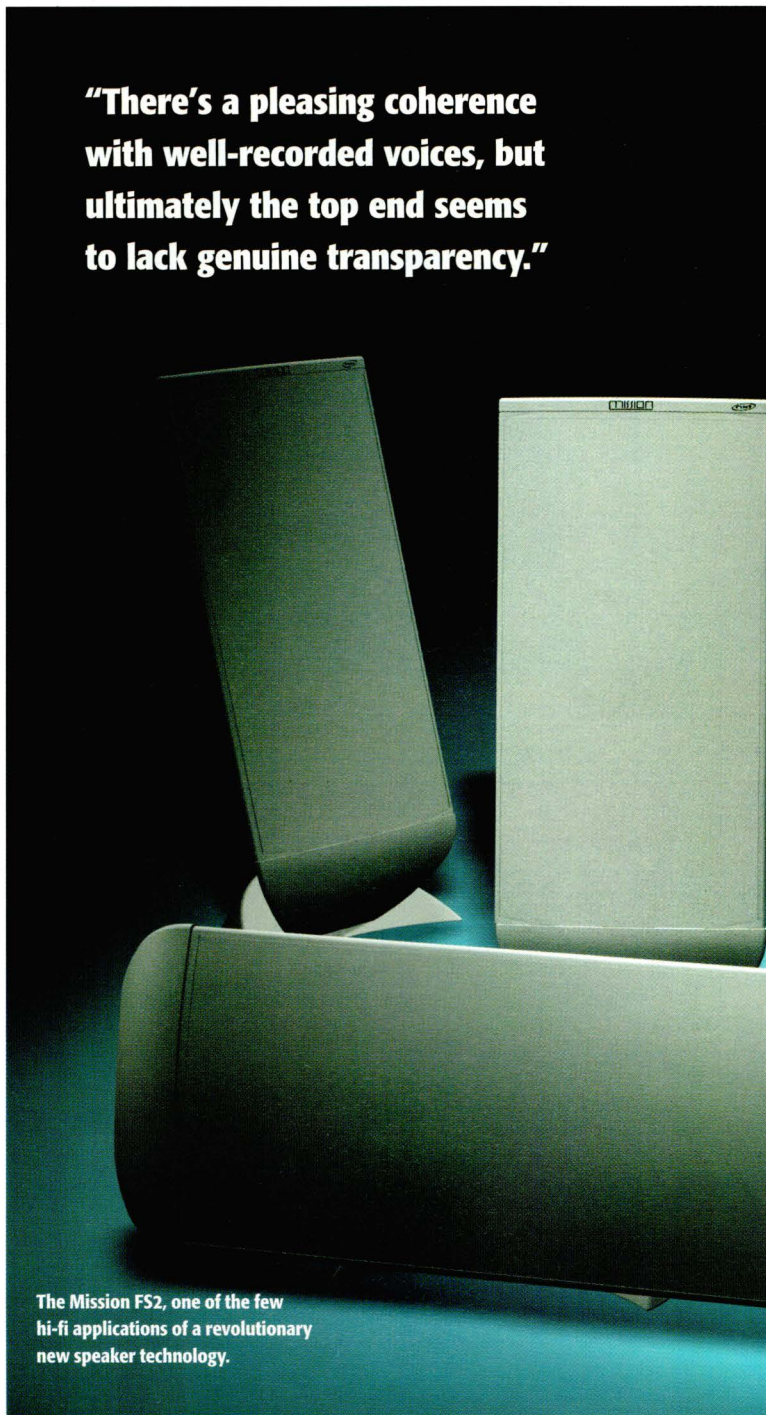
The prime design criterion has clearly been to make a speaker system that's easy to install, and exceptionally discreet once installed. Special flat, paint-over-able speaker cables are supplied, for example, while very flexible mounting brackets and decorative trim come as part of each satellite.

Although it is essentially a two-way design (albeit with all the bass and lower mid from however many channels consigned to a single box), this system differs substantially from most two-ways in making the crossover transition at around 400Hz, rather than up around 2.5kHz where regular two-way speakers make the change from

bass/mid drivers to tweeters. This is not unprecedented – the Bose Acoustimass speakers cross from subwoofer to satellites at around the same part of the spectrum – but it is unusual, and does have significant implications. Indeed there's at least one positive advantage in moving the crossover point down: the human ear is at its most sensitive around 1-3kHz, and from that point of view it's a daft region to put a crossover!

Mission sent down a representative to perform the installation, and I was happy enough to sit back and let him get on with it. In my room, there are removable wooden panels immediately behind where I normally place loudspeakers (useful for testing wall-mounts etc), and I fully expected to screw the satellite mounting brackets onto these. My Missionary had other ideas, however, making a beeline for the top corners of the room and fixing the front satellites

**"There's a pleasing coherence with well-recorded voices, but ultimately the top end seems to lack genuine transparency."**



The Mission FS2, one of the few hi-fi applications of a revolutionary new speaker technology.

(albeit temporarily) across the corners, just below the picture rail. A similar mounting geometry was used in the Mission dem room, where I originally heard the system.

A neat approach to wiring the system involves running a single fat (multicore) cable from amplifier to subwoofer, then using the 'super-flat' cabling to connect up from the subwoofer to each of the satellites.

I didn't have any 5.1-channel surround sound hardware around at the time the FS2 arrived, so I started off by operating the system in two-channel stereo mode. And a rather strange experience it was, to find most of the sonic information coming down from somewhere well above my head. I never did get to like this 'over the head' delivery, and felt altogether happier after I'd moved the satellites down to normal ear height.

I did some in-room measurements while moving the satellites around, and these tend to support the theory that Mission favours a corner location for the satellites because it helps reinforce output at the bottom end of these units' range. There's a definite lack of system net output at around 400Hz, though this is less obvious when the satellites are working into two (or three) room boundaries.

That slight problem apart, the overall frequency balance is pretty good, if not particularly smooth. The subwoofer delivers bass down to

around 40Hz, though a single-source subwoofer is never as smooth or even as multiple distributed sources. Sensitivity is a tad below today's average, at around 87dB/W - but the impedance represents an exceptionally easy (true 8 Ohm) amplifier load, which is fair compensation.

To be honest, I found the FS2 rather disappointing with stereo music sources. All 'three-box' systems show some limitations in bass delivery and drive, while the panel satellites used here seemed rather lacking in dynamic expression and contrast. There's a pleasing coherence with well-recorded voices, but ultimately the top end seems to lack genuine transparency, and applause sounded rather noisy and indistinct.

The FS2 seemed altogether happier operating with surround sound material, working well with both movie and music source material. By adding the full wraparound acoustic, which in turn seems to cancel out much of the listening room's own acoustic imprint, surround sound systems seem better able to cover their shortcomings - just as stereophony is more tolerant than single-speaker mono.

The bottom line of course is that the FS2 isn't primarily about sound quality. Its main purpose is to create an attractive package that can fill a room with surround sound while virtually disappearing in visual impact terms. And by those criteria, it's a rather impressive design.

Mission ☎ (01480) 451777

**"The prime design criterion has clearly been to make a speaker system that's easy to install, and exceptionally discreet."**



## DENON PMA-355UK £229.99

*Nick Gear* stoops low to tackle Denon's latest integrated amp.

**N**ow over three years old, Denon's double-headed mid-priced amplifier line-up consisting of the PMA-350SE and PMA-250SE has been superseded by two new models, of which the PMA-355UK is the higher specified entrant.

Although the original PMA-350SE was a *HFC* Recommendation in January 1997 and highly regarded musically, the intervening years have revealed areas in which it could be refined. Namely shorter signal paths for CD and phono inputs, full tape monitoring and a more robust chassis, the higher-specified PMA-655 providing the hardware in this respect.

Matching the launch price of its predecessor, this amplifier incorporates dual channel symmetrical power amp topology and an increased claimed output of 50 Watts per channel. It still retains the fundamental styling of the PMA-350SE, constructed in a robust, black case and, but unlike that model, is supplied with a user-friendly remote control that also operates other Denon components.

### SOUND QUALITY

Denon would seem to have addressed the shortcomings of this amp's predecessor; the balance has been refined with genuine clarity and muscular prowess. Providing strong midrange and bass, which are bright, energetic and forward.

Disappointingly, however, its treble is somewhat lightweight and short on presence. Paul McCartney's orchestral composition *After Heavy Light Years* was a bit short on refinement and delicacy.

But this is a minor qualm since the PMA-355UK regains any lost credibility with its coherent and focused performance in the bass. Its confident treatment of *Earth* from LTJ Bukem emphasised this amp's penchant for the lower end of things.

Considering its competitive price and all-round improvement over the PMA-350SE, this amp has been elevated in both stature and value. All in all, this is a dynamic and powerful amplifier with a strong sense of musical architecture, if lacking the last word in finesse.



Hayden Laboratories ☎ (01753) 888447



Q35.2: clean cut good looks.

## KEF Q35.2 £349.99

*Tim Bower* joins the Q with KEF's new floorstanding speaker.

**K**EF's Q Series has proved quite a success for this Kent-based company. The range is built around KEF's patented Uni-Q drive unit, a dual concentric design sporting a soft dome tweeter mounted in the centre of a polypropylene mid/bass cone. The entire line-up has recently been revamped to Q.2 status, each model sporting a new fourth generation Uni-Q driver and an enhanced set of finish options.

The Q35.2 has a lot to live up to, replacing the successful Q35 with which I was personally well acquainted. Hopes are pinned squarely on that new drive unit: an improved 19mm tweeter with a more powerful magnet married to a stiffer 125mm mid/bass cone and an uprated crossover.

The new speaker's sensitivity is rated at 91dB, which should contribute to its dynamic ability and reassure those with low powered amps, particularly when combined with a nominal eight Ohm impedance. The main driver is reflex loaded via a front firing port and there are standard binding posts to the rear, four apiece for bi-wiring should you require, and a recommended option here. The speaker features a neatly curved baffle, two additional finishes – dark apple and natural cherry – and a silver effect for the main driver's cone.

### SOUND QUALITY

It's not, perhaps, the most exhilarating performer at first listen, and rock or dance purists may want for more bite and dynamic zeal. But with a broad range of music across a lengthy listening period the Q35.2 sails through with flying colours. Soundstaging here is excellent. Big, broad and seemingly well beyond cabinet confines, it's able to fill the room with well spaced sounds and does so without demanding the listener sits in a precise spot – useful for most living rooms. Bass is fulsome, though a little thuddy, and the net effect is believable and cohesive.

Sure, there are other speakers at similar prices that do certain things better, in some cases considerably so. Treble could be cleaner and crisper, say, or the bass better defined and the cumulative sound more dynamic. But few competitors come close to such an appealing mix of all-round attributes: a neatly-proportioned floorstanding form, clean-cut good looks and a sound you can simply sink yourself into. As a Heat Seeker, it deserves its five stars.



KEF Audio ☎ (01622) 672261

PMA-355UK: a robust little power house.



## MORDAUNT-SHORT Declaration 904 £249.95

*It lives! Tim Bownen meets the first of a new range of speakers.*

**A**h... Mordaunt-Short. When this well-loved marque bit the dust back in 1998, we feared another British brand had been consigned to the pages of history, never to tickle our aural palates again. But not so, for the name Mordaunt-Short has risen phoenix-like from the ashes, resuscitated by Audio Partnership's rolling buy-out bandwagon.

Once the deal was secured, its new owner began beaver on an all-new line-up: the Declaration Series. The range is split into two – four stereo speakers and a centre channel with the prefix 9 (all of which are voiced for hi-fi or multi-purpose use), and a gaggle of home cinema speakers with the prefix 5.

The speaker we have here is the 904. It's the smallest floorstander, and like the rest of the range it sports drive units with aluminium diaphragms – a 25mm dome tweeter and 133mm mid/bass driver. The latter's cone is smooth and shallow, without the usual dust cap or phase plug in the centre.

The cabinet is fashioned from MDF and internally braced, with a port for the main driver at the back and a cavity for mass loading. Four spiked feet are supplied with each speaker for a firm floor fixing; solid gold-plated binding posts allow for single or bi-wiring and a choice of black ash or light cherry finishes complete an enticing visual package.

### SOUND QUALITY

Smart aesthetics don't always translate to smart sound, but we're pleased to say the 904 is more than just a pretty face. It conveys an unusual degree of poise for a budget floorstander, the initial impression being one of crisp detail and strong clarity. It doesn't quite achieve the exhilarating pace of past budget Mordaunt-Shorts, owing partly to bass that's a little more lumpy, yet the dynamic qualities of that diminutive metal coned driver add a fair degree of panache.

Soundstaging is a touch narrow but the image is well honed, aided by a well-detailed and impressively transparent midrange. But treble is rather exposed and gets aggressive with hard-driving rock or swathes of orchestral strings – both Feeder and Mahler sounded a little too strident on test. To hear it at its best play some smoother, quieter musical strains, something ambient perhaps or some cool, crisp female vocals. Do that and the 904 offers an enjoyably vivid listen for the money.



Audio Partnership ☎ (020) 7586 5977

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looked like  
this before.

## HEAT SEEKERS



## MARANTZ CD6000 KI £499.90

*Nick Gear checks out Ken Ishiwata's handywork on a mid price package.*

**H**ot on the heels of the Best Buy CD6000 OSE, reviewed in our May issue, comes the CD6000 KI Signature, the successor to the acclaimed CD63 MkII KI Signature and endorsed by Ken Ishiwata, in-house design guru with Marantz.

The player is essentially a fine-tuned incarnation of the next model down, the OSE, with the addition of a copper plated chassis and rear panel to reduce electro-magnetic eddy currents. The only indication of its status are a KI badge on the fascia and a certificate in the box.

The specification includes a full set of track search, play and programming features and a headphone socket. Connections include electrical and optical digital outputs, remote control terminals for other Marantz components, plus an internal and external switch to configure the remote control.

At its heart is a dual differential mode bitstream processor with a discrete HDAM (Hyper Dynamic Amplifier Module) low output impedance, high slew output buffer amplifier. The full floating VAM1201 transport can handle both CD-R and CD-RW discs.

As with the OSE, this is equipped to display CD Text (when available) on a high-quality dot matrix screen. The stylish and compact remote control is intelligently designed and boasts additional search and edit facilities.

### SOUND QUALITY

This player delivers an immediately recognisable Marantz sound that is smooth and elegant with a contained treble, warm and vivid bass and lively, refined midrange.

The Marantz sonic experience appears to enjoy a love/hate relationship and I can see why. Listening to heavier tracks such as Public Enemy's *Fight The Power*, the result is less effective than with acoustic affairs like Lou Reed's *Walk On The Wild Side* and Led Zep's *Since I've Been Loving You*. Marantz seems to have sacrificed dynamic punch and authority for transparency.

Costing £500, £200 more than the OSE, the CD-6000KI Signature is a player of high integrity and assurance. Solidly built, it is a smooth operator and easy to use. The only negative point is it may be too polite and restrained for some, but it's transparency bodes well for broad system compatibility and it may well go on to emulate its popular predecessor.



Marantz ☎ (01753) 680868



# DAVID VIVIAN

*Sometimes two heads are better than one – especially when you're listening to new hi-fi gear. But what happens when one head disappears with your wife?*

**Y**ou need help. I need help. We all need help. Help to answer this question: how do we know our hi-fi systems are any good?

Readers of this column with long memories may recall references to Steve, my erstwhile best friend, drinking partner and listening buddy. Everyone needs a Steve (actually, you don't, believe me... but run with the idea for a moment). Whenever I had a new piece of kit to review or group test, I'd invite him round and shove a notepad in his hand.

Unburdened with the weight of my preconceptions, obsessions and fixations, he would simply listen to the music and write down if it sounded pukka. Mostly we'd agree, sometimes we wouldn't. And just occasionally, when we disagreed, I'd change my mind. No harm in that; listening to a hi-fi isn't just about the equipment and the room, but the people in it. So as well as being a useful source of Stella Artois, Steve also provided a vital reality check in an evaluation process fraught with the potential for self-delusion. He helped me keep a sense of perspective.

Then my wife ran off with him. Reality, you could say, had checked out of the building. So I sold up, drove to IKEA with a smugly defiant expression on my face and made a fresh start. (Yes, the TV ad is based on me.) New pad, new listening room, new tables, new reference amplifiers (Chord) and a new attitude founded on the idea that I didn't need anyone to tell me I had a great-sounding system. It just was, all right?

In this forthright frame of mind, I had my say about the Chord pre-power combo a few issues ago: pricey as a family hatchback, almost as powerful and worth every damn penny. Finally, after half a lifetime of earnest budgeteering, the high-end had arrived with a reassuringly

expensive thud. Feeling slightly guilty about propounding the idea that cheap gear was good enough for all those years, this, I had to concede, was more like it.

At about the same time Stephanie came into my life. Steve? Steph? You couldn't make it up. Stephanie drank vodka, liked to fondle my left kneecap while I was driving and sometimes answered the door wearing a thong. Otherwise the deal was the same. We'd spend hours listening to jazz on the hi-fi. Mmmm... Smokin'.

First time she came over, the big, shiny boxes were back at Chord's East Farleigh factory so my previous fave amps – dumpy, black AVI pre-amp and monoblocks, about a third the price and half the power of the Chords – stood in for the night. Hooked up to a pair of O'heocha D2s (the sci-fi aluminium orbs I wrote about a few columns ago) and with Oscar Peterson in the CD player – also AVI – it all sounded mighty fine.

Already I began to sense that Steph was more impressed with the system's hardware than mine.

What would she make of the Chords? Maybe she'd faint with pleasure and come round to the idea that a man with a stereo that sounded this good just had to be a serious catch. So, with a pompous flourish

that would have embarrassed Frasier Crane, I arranged a special session to welcome the Chords back into my system. And, guess what? Steph didn't faint.

In fact, her body language thermometer cooled visibly. As Oscar's ivories tinkled prettily and, to my ears, seductively from the speakers, her eyes glazed over. Not with ecstasy, but with boredom. Then came the forced polite semi-smile. Then the unthinkable, if unwitting, put down: 'You know, David,' she said, 'don't get me wrong, this sounds very nice, but I think the old system sounded better. Don't you?' I was dumbstruck. Because she was right. With both of us in the room (and

remember this is the acid test), the AVI set-up had sounded better. It flew in low and hard at a musical level. I was getting off on the Chord system's greater sense of control and air, the tremendous resolving power, the highly polished hi-fi skills and sheer, wall-wobbling grunt. Steph, being a jazz junkie and not a hi-fi buff, was impervious to all that and connected with the AVI's more overtly muscular and colourful style, its snappier bass and better developed boogie factor.

Soon after that Steph phoned to say that she couldn't get an old boyfriend off her mind and perhaps we should call it a day. And soon after that Chord phoned to say it wanted its amps back – indefinitely. Life, eh?

I'm over it now. In many ways, Steph was as mad as a lorry, if a first rate listening buddy. I shall have to get another one. As for the AVI kit, it sounds better than ever. What with AVI's new Neutron III speakers on line (initial impressions, magic) and revised 'Red Spot' Biggatrons ready to roll, maybe it's time to get on AVI's case again. Watch out for the reviews.

**Maybe Steph would come round to the idea that a man with a stereo that sounded this good just had to be a serious catch**



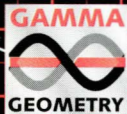
Hi-fi for the ladies, complete with flowers and Chardonnay and – doubtless – some Miles in the CD player.



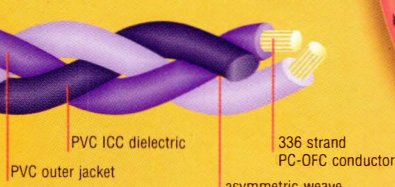
# IXOS™

## Gamma Geometry™

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# LETTERS

**Hi-Fi Choice's 'points of view' page, where hi-fi and music enthusiasts get to tell it like it is.**

## LETTER OF THE MONTH

### MISSING LINK

As a subscriber to your excellent magazine I am writing to say thank you for your help with regard to the CD player I have recently purchased, which had an amazing effect on my hi-fi separates system and CD collection.

After scrutinising copious back numbers of *Hi-Fi Choice*, buying good quality speaker stands, equipment supports and interconnects, I took the decision that I needed to upgrade my CD source. I made a shortlist of three models and auditioned these through my local hi-fi dealers. I felt the Rotel RCD-991 suited my musical tastes and provided the sound I wanted, but it wasn't until I took delivery and connected it to my home system that I became aware of the difference it can make.

The level of detail is stunning and the bass is controlled and far superior compared to my previous CD player. It seems as if the music has taken on an extra dimension and I haven't been able to stop playing my CDs since!

The RCD-991 has proved exceptional in reproducing different musical varieties. It has been a superb addition to my system and has provided me with the 'missing link' in sound reproduction that I have been looking for, for so long. I am pleased to report that upgrading really does work. Keep up the excellent publication.

*Ian Gilman, Corringham, Essex*



### MAINS CABLE DILEMMA

Having just read the letter of the month, concerning the polarity of the mains cable, this is the first I have ever heard of this problem.

My hi-fi days go back to the 60s, with Akai open reels followed by Transcriber (latterly Michell) turntables. My question is, how do you determine the correct polarity if you have a number of components? I understand you could connect an amp and CD player for example then add components

one by one but what sort of deterioration would be noted if the mains polarity were incorrect? You never seem to include any Kelly speakers in recent tests. Are these unpopular or just not up the job?

*P.T. Hawkins, Trinity In-Car Centre*

*Editor replies... There is at least one device available for determining polarity (sold by Russ Andrews Accessories) but if you have figure 8 plugs it's easy to audition the effect that the two alternatives have. Hard*

wired or IEC three-pin plugs are usually connected correctly in the first place. The Kelly loudspeakers are no longer in production.

### IN ENGLISH, PLEASE!

I have just bought a pair of JM Lab 915's and a Musical Fidelity A300 amp. I read your review on the former hoping to be enlightened. Alas, I suspect you are more adept at looking at instruments than listening to music! The reviews are rather esoteric, so beyond the comprehension of mere mortals with ears as to be almost worthless. What the hell does a tricky amp load mean for goodness sake? Please, do your readers a favour and return to earth.

*Nicholas Cohen, Sydney, Australia.*



*Editor replies... I must have been doing this for too long, tricky amp load means it's a harder than average loudspeaker to drive from the amplifier's perspective so you need a more than averagely powerful amp to drive it, like a Musical Fidelity A300 for instance. We'll try to make things clearer in future.*

### MY STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN

A few years ago after a period of gradual upgrading and having reached a rare state of hi-fi Nirvana, I found I was getting 100% pleasure from listening to music rather than continually searching for a better sound. My valve powered system consisted of Roksan TMS, Artemiz, Sumiko Sho front end, Conrad-Johnson PV12, Premier II amps with Gamma

Epoch Reference speakers and Cardas cables.

This combination produced the natural, live sound I wanted, until one of the channels of my Sumiko cartridge suddenly disappeared. I returned it to the UK importers, Path, which sent it to Sumiko in California. There, designer James

Alexander, confirmed that one channel was not working due to a lack of continuity in internal wiring and that it could not be repaired because the Sho is a sealed unit.

Furthermore, it could not be replaced with a new Sho since Sumiko's arrangement with Transfiguration, who manufacturer it, had broken down. I was devastated, as this was easily the best high-output cartridge I have heard. This happened 18 months ago and I have reached a stage where I need a solution. I would be grateful for any advice.

*David Scadding, Sodbury, Bristol.*

*Editor replies... High end, high output cartridges are extremely rare beasts I'm afraid, and you may have trouble finding an exact replacement. The options available are either to use a lower output cartridge, presumably your Artemiz could cope with this, or to look at a Dynavector XX-1. Although this was not rated as highly as its low output sibling at the time of review, I have subsequently used it and found the results to be very convincing.*

### WRITE TO US

Let it all flow and send us your points of view on all that is hi-fi. The author of the best missive wins a prize for their efforts. Get writing to: The Letters Page, *Hi-Fi Choice*, Future Publishing, 99 Baker Street, London W1U 6FP, or send your e-mail to: [jason.kennedy@futurenet.co.uk](mailto:jason.kennedy@futurenet.co.uk)

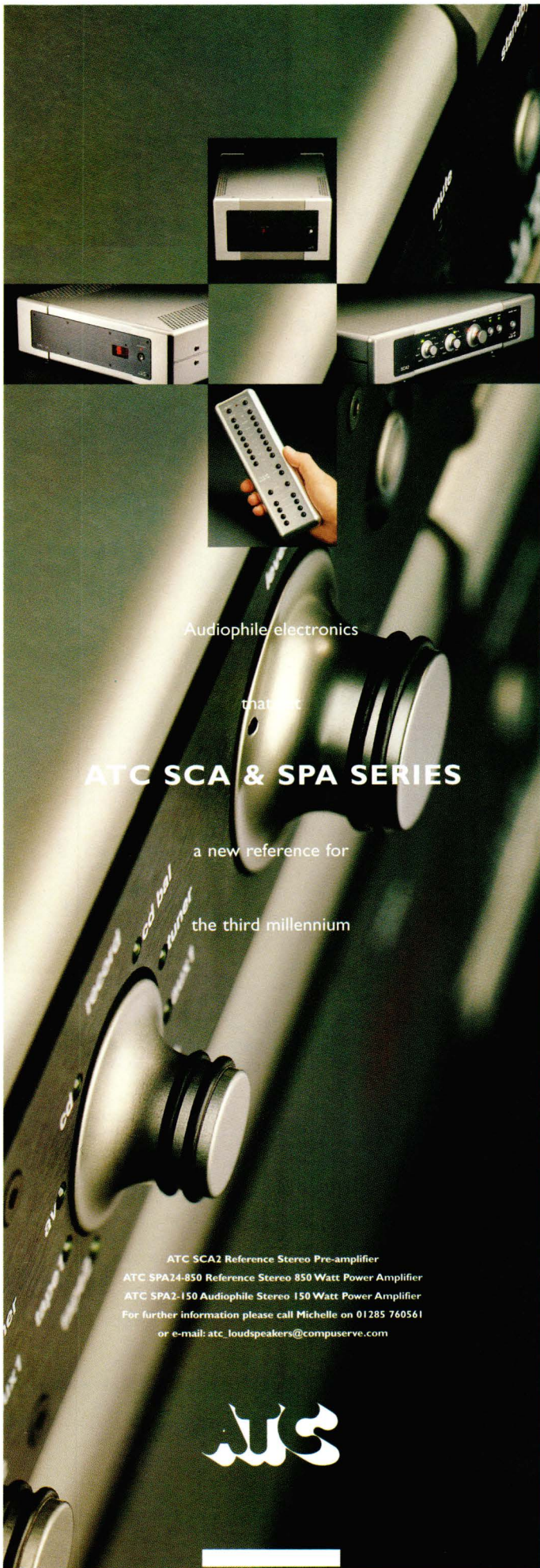


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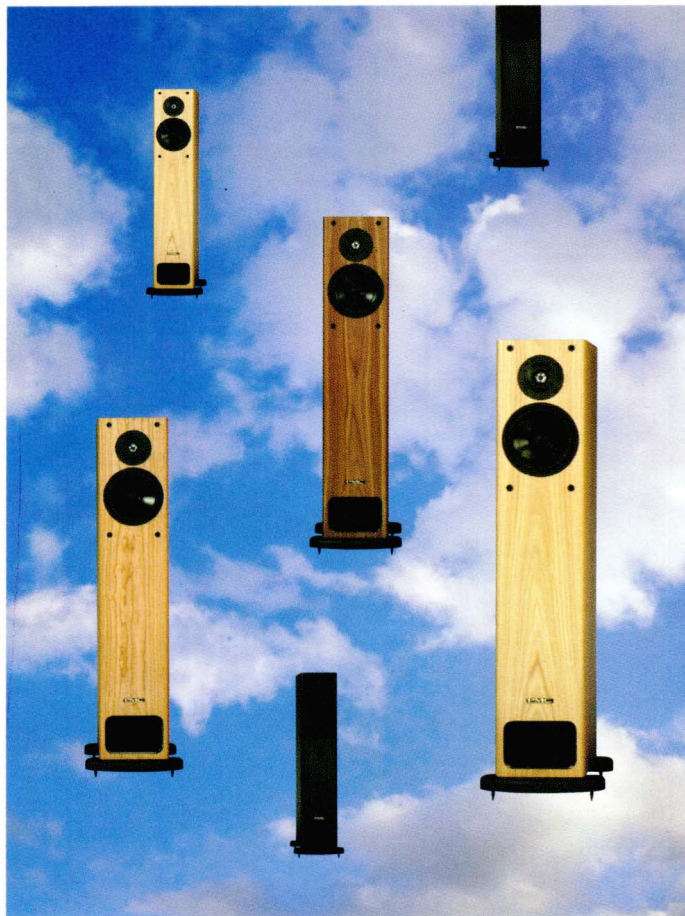
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# EUROPEAN HI-FI AWARDS

Before we plunge into the warm waters of the winners, Jason Kennedy gives a brief introduction to the EISA awards and a rundown of winners in the other categories.

**E**ISA has had a busier year than usual over the millennium, what with its first multi-brand press conference in Nice. It's clearly going from strength to strength. All of which doesn't make selecting winning products any easier – if anything it's more difficult when there are more brand new products to try out and choose from.

The voting took place in the civilised surroundings of the Swiss Alps... Well, you've got to have the right ambience if you're going to make big decisions. (That's our excuse, and we're sticking to it.) After a great deal of discussion we selected the following products as being worthy of the title Best in Europe. I'm glad to say that the majority received prior approval from our very own reviewers and their hard working listening panellists, which is most encouraging and suggests pretty universal appeal on the product's behalf. There is only one instance where EISA and HFC opinions diverge, but that goes to prove that, with hi-fi, it's horses for courses and that circumstances combined with taste can sometimes make the difference between a hit and a miss.

There hasn't been much change in categories this year. We've dropped the AV design award, and expanded CD player to audio player in order to encompass the new formats that have recently joined the game. Car audio meanwhile has joined the modern age and turned into car multimedia, allowing the inclusion of revolutionary new navigation systems.

As with any of our recommendations, it's important to consider products in the context of what they will be partnering. So, if any of these winners take your fancy, see how they sit in your system before taking the plunge.



Jason Kennedy, Editor

## EISA AUDIO & HOME THEATRE PANEL

Alta Fidelidad	Spain
Audio	Norway
Audio	Poland
Audio	Portugal
Audio Review	Italy
Digital Video Home Theatre	Italy
Heimkino	Germany
Hi-Fi Choice	UK
High Fidelity	Denmark
Home Entertainment	UK
ITM Praktiker MHCE	Austria
Liud & Bild	Sweden
Media Expert	Switzerland
Media Totaal	Netherlands
Prestige Audio Video	France
Sound & Hi-Fi	Greece
Stereo	Germany
Stereo Video	Czech Republic
Stereo Video Russ ia	Russia
Sztereo	Hungary

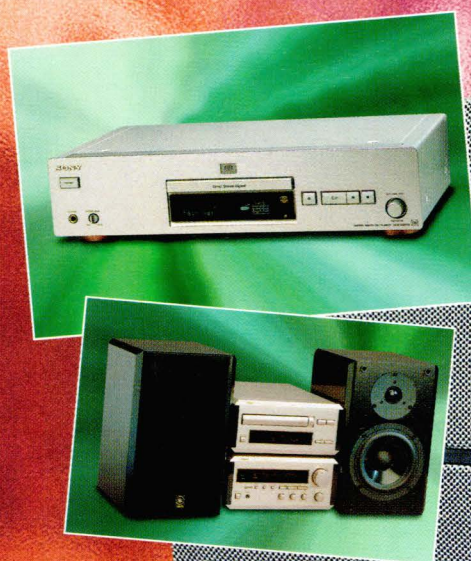
## EISA AWARDS IN OTHER CATEGORIES

### PHOTO AWARDS

Camera	Konica Hexar RF
Professional Camera	Canon EOS 1V
Compact Camera	Minolta Riva Zoom 150
APS Camera	Canon Ixus Z-50
Lens	Tamron 3, 8-5, 6/28-200 Super II
Colour Slide Film	Fujichrome Provia 100F
Colour Print Film	Kodak Professional Supra 800
Digital Camera	Olympus Camedia C-3030
Pro Digital Camera	Nikon D1
Photo Printer	Epson Stylus Photo 2000P
Digital Scanner	Minolta Dimâge Scan Elite

### VIDEO AWARDS

Television	Philips 32PW9616
Flat Television	Panasonic TH-42PW3E/B
Projection Television	Thomson 'Scenium' 44RW65ES
Camcorder	Sony DCR-PC5
High-End Camcorder	Canon XM1
Video Recorder	JVC HR-S9700
Video Editing Product	Canopus EZ EASY DV
Portable DVD Player	Panasonic DVD-LV75





## WHAT IS EISA?



**E**ISA (or the European Imaging and Sound Association) is an organisation based in Geneva that promotes excellence in photography, video, hi-fi and home cinema equipment throughout Europe. The EISA panel is made up of a number of specialist magazines dedicated to these fields.

The origins of EISA date back to 1982, when five European photography magazines came together to select a Camera of the Year. This award proved so popular with consumers and manufacturers alike that there were soon awards for many different categories of photographic equipment. In 1989, the organisation emerged in its current incarnation, swelling its roster of awards with new gongs for video, hi-fi and home cinema equipment.

There are now three European Awards panels: Photo, Video, and Hi-Fi and Home Theatre. *Hi-Fi Choice* and its sister title, *Home Entertainment*, are among 40 participating magazines from 18 European countries. We are the only UK magazines to be members of EISA: *Hi-Fi Choice* has been on board since 1993, *Home Entertainment* since 1997.

In addition to its role on the Hi-Fi and Home Theatre panel, *Home Entertainment* represents UK interests on EISA's Video Awards panel.

In the Awards citations that follow, please note that any product prices given are a guideline – for exact prices, consult a local dealer.

### HOW DO THE JUDGES DECIDE ON THE WINNERS?

In late Spring, each member magazine of the Hi-Fi and Home Theatre panel proposed its own favoured products to be shortlisted for an Award. In June, the Editors of those member magazines came together in Switzerland to debate the selections proposed. This was followed by a vote on the shortlist and, finally, the selection of one winner in each category.

### WHICH PRODUCTS ARE ELIGIBLE?

All candidates must have been in commercial production and available for evaluation to a majority of panel members before voting. They must have been available for sale to the general public in a majority of European countries by August 15 in the year of the Awards. Each Award is valid from June 15 one year until June 14 the next.

### HOW DO I USE THE EISA AWARDS TO BUY HI-FI?

Use these Awards, like our Best Buy and Recommended flags, as a starting point. Then rely on your local specialist hi-fi dealer for system matching. Don't assume that the winning CD player, amp and speakers will combine to form an award winning system: there's no guarantee that they will really gel. A good dealer will help you find the best partnering components for any winner. Find your nearest specialist hi-fi retailer in our Dealer Directory starting on page 136.

EUROPEAN AMPLIFIER 2000-2001



MARANTZ PM7000

£299.90 ☎ (01753) 680868

**W**ith total power over 100 Watts (RMS eight Ohms), the Marantz PM 7000 provides a dynamic sound of great musical merit. The solid construction is packed with high quality parts like hard-wearing relays for the in- and outputs. When you also take into account its range of features, the PM 7000 is a very affordable, extraordinary amplifier. It offers an attractive design combined with Marantz's legendary sound engineering and high reliability.



**A NEW REALISM**—Audio Research delivered true reference sound quality with its **Reference 1 preamp** and **Reference 600 monoblocs**. A number of customers looking for Reference 600 sound quality have asked for slightly lower output power and a smaller chassis. The new **Reference 300** is the smaller, quieter and cooler answer to these customer's needs. Good news too for existing Reference 600 customers who can opt for the **MkII factory update** while new-build **Reference 600MkIIs** are now available. The all-valve **Reference 2** stereo line preamp offers the same full microprocessor remote control of volume, balance, record and input selection with both balance and single ended inputs (eight plus full tape loop) and outputs (two main, one tape) as its illustrious predecessor. But all new audio and power supply circuits have advanced the state-of-the-art yet again.

**REAL VINYL** — LP record lovers will be delighted at the arrival of the **Reference Phono** all-valve phono stage. The Reference Phono features two sets of inputs one for low-output mc pickups and one for high-output mc and mm designs. Used with the Reference 2 or similar preamp there is enough gain for any cartridge. Flexible loading is offered.

**REAL PARTNERS** — **Audio Research** introduced the **LS8** in 1997 as an affordable reference-calibre valve preamp. The new MkII version is a pure Class A design with improved component quality, improved isolation feet and chassis damping. The LS8/II is a single-ended design. Perfect partner for the LS8 is the **100.2** solid-state power amp which we believe sets a new standard. Liquid and grain-free, it possesses a fine midrange transparency.

**REAL PRIORITY** — **Audio Research** has also announced the **125.5** Audiophile Standard Multichannel solid-state power amplifier for home theatre installations. Though coming late to the home theatre market, Audio Research believes priority had to be given to audiophile quality sound and delayed introducing a home theatre product until fully happy with the sound quality.

**REAL TRADITION** — the **PH3 phono preamplifier** is eagerly sought out by those enjoying the renaissance of interest in vinyl. A total of 109 part changes now see the PH3 in Special Edition guise as the **PH3SE**. An upgrade will be available for existing owners.

**REALITY CHECK** — the all-valve **LS25** brings down the cost of true **Audio Research** high-end performance. This line stage preamplifier can be perceived as a slightly small Reference 1. It is a pure Class A design with

# Winning the race

# REALISM

**Reference 2 all-valve line stage preamplifier**  
**Reference Phono all-valve phono stage**  
 — this is as real as it gets



smooth detailed sound, clean focus and plenty of bass impact. It has the flexibility to integrate with high quality audio and video components. **REAL PERFORMANCE** — the **LS16** preamplifier is for those looking to make a transition into real high-end yet wish to retain the convenience of full remote control of all front panel functions. It offers both singled ended and balanced inputs with microprocessor controlled relays for gain control and switching. Enthusiasts looking for the traditional qualities of an all-valve line preamplifier will find them carried over into the **LS8** which replaces the popular LS7 and LS9. **REAL POWER** — The 100 watt per channel **VT100 power amplifier** is a hard-driving amplifier with true bass slam

matched by a liquid mid and top. Its speed and control have to be heard.

Robert J Reina (Stereophile March 1999) concluded his VT100 review: "This extraordinary amplifier is beginning to make me wonder if current tube technology may once again be edging ahead of solid-state in the race for ultimate sonic realism".

The VT100 MkII build features doubled power supply energy storage, cooling fan and valve damping rings. MkII enhancements are available as a factory upgrade for existing owners.

The mid-power VT100 comes between the classic **VT50**, at around £3300, and the mighty **VT200**. Jonathan Valin writing in *Fi* magazine (October 1998) went so far as to rate the VT200 as: "The best high powered stereo amplifier I've heard — a genuine hi-fi masterwork".

**REAL PARTNERSHIP** — The **LS16/VT200** pre/power partnership puts excitement

back into your music with its detail resolution and dynamic slam.

**REAL INTEGRATION** — enthusiasts waited a long time for the **CA50** all-valve, remote control integrated amplifier. Conservatively rated at 50 watt per channel the CA50 is designed to be stunningly musical, handsome in appearance — its styling cues coming from the awesome Reference series — and completely convenient. Audition this important

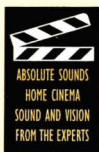
**Audio Research** first and find out why Ken Kessler (Hi-Fi News February 1997) said, "So much for the superiority of separates...".

**REAL QUALITY** — An entirely new full 20-bit **CD player**, the **CD2**, is styled to match the CA50. As a complete player **Audio Research** is convinced the CD2 can compete with any single or two-box player in the market with its astounding resolution of detail and dynamics.

Don't lose out in the race for sonic realism?—contact **Absolute Sounds** for full information and a list of dealers where you can experience **Audio Research**.



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EUROPEAN AUDIO PLAYER 2000-2001



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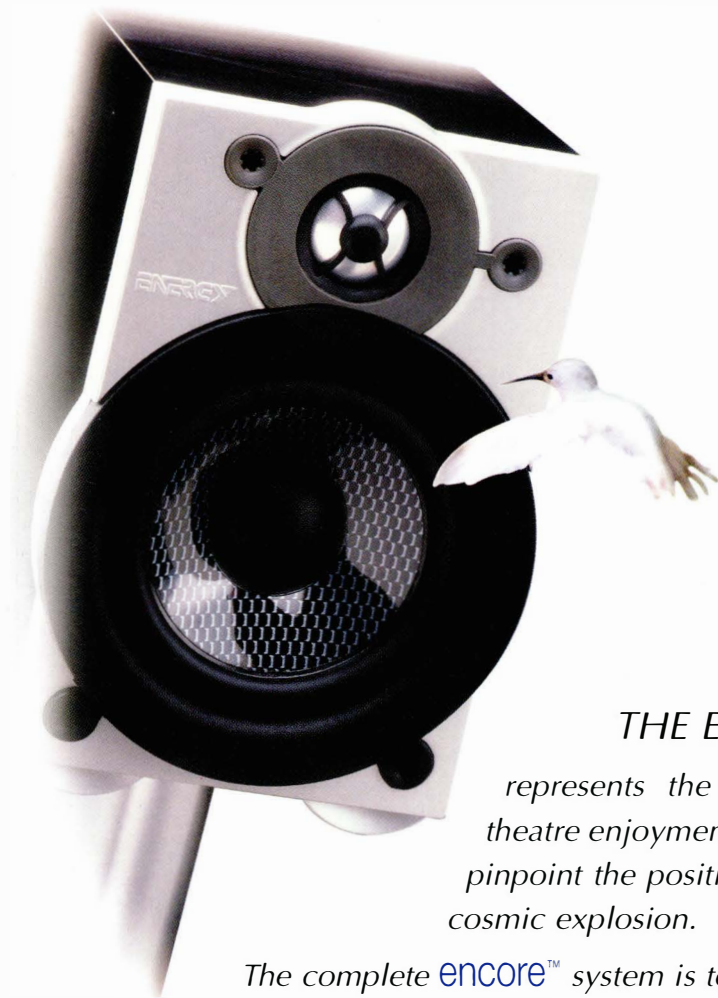
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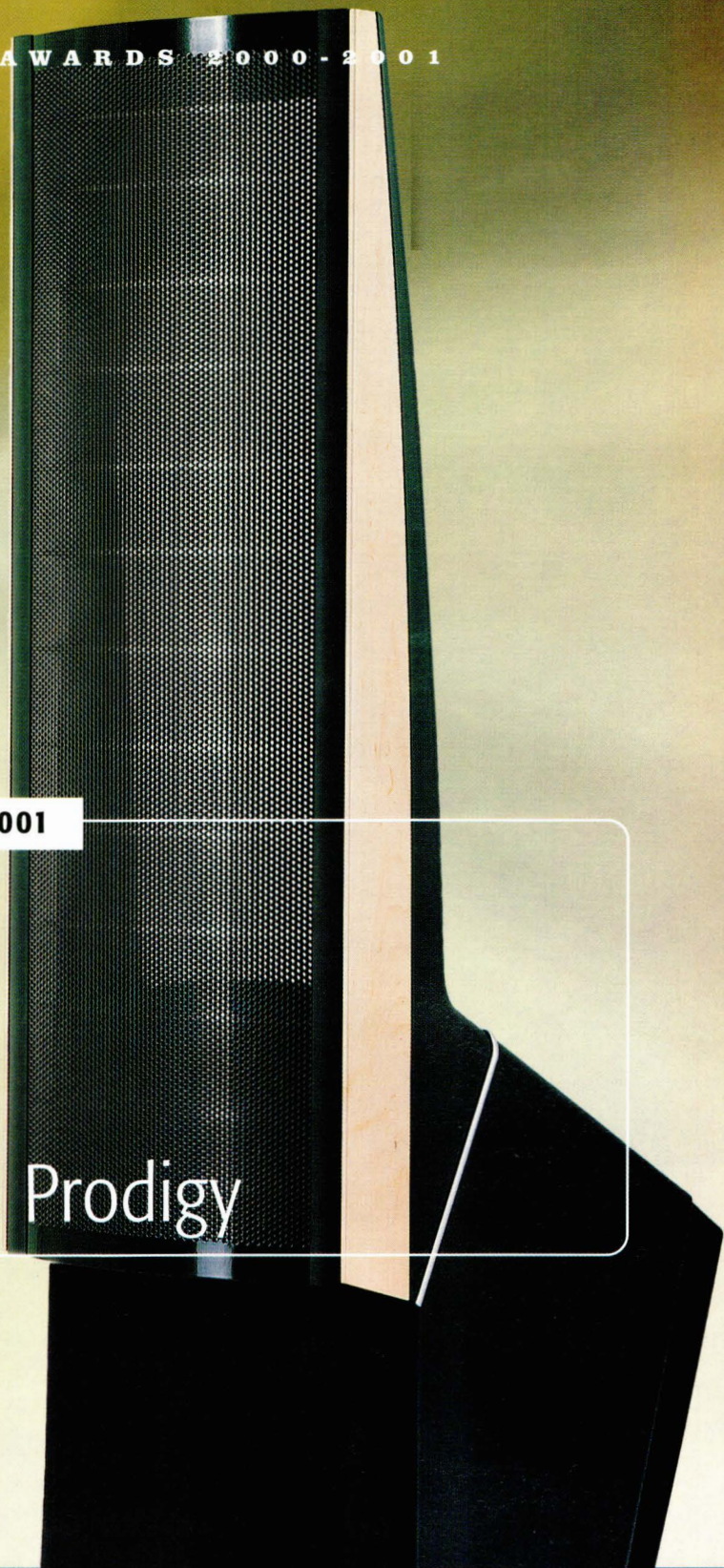
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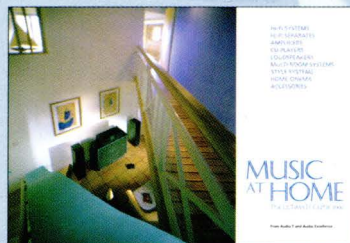
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EUROPEAN INTERNET AUDIO 2000-2001



## SAMSUNG Wingo S-P2450 MP3-Station

£399.00 ☎ (020) 8391 0168

**S**amsung's Wingo is the first system that combines CD with the current internet audio standard MP3, opening up this amazing technology to people without computers. Without using a PC, you can easily copy music from your CD collection onto a silicon chip. Plug this chip into the personal MP3 player, and you can take your favourite music out with you. Add the Wingo's main unit, and you have a complete compact system for radio, CD and MP3. You also have the option of downloading music files via computer from the internet – which looks likely to be a major distribution channel for audio software in the future.



NAD invites you to listen to its new  
5.1 channel home theatre components  
in plain boring old stereo.



**There is a rule in hi-fi that says 'AV is only for movies'.**

NAD is about to re-write that rule. In fact, over the years, NAD has pretty much thrown out the rule book altogether and made home theatre components that also form the heart of audiophile stereo systems. Now, using the same revolutionary Impedance Sensing Circuitry as the award-winning NAD C320 and C340, the new NAD T760 combines razor sharp Dolby Digital and DTS decoding with advanced stereo sound processing features. Add to this our new NAD T550 DVD player, which delivers startling picture clarity and the kind of sound previously only found on quality CD players.

You may never use more than two speakers again!



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New Acoustic Dimension



EUROPEAN CAR MULTI MEDIA SYSTEM 2000-2001



# VDO DAYTON MS 4100

£1,399.99 ☎ (0121) 344 5400

**T**he VDO Dayton MS 4100 is the first complete navigation and audio system designed to fit within a normal car stereo slot. It incorporates not only an advanced computer with dynamic navigation (TMC), but also a top quality RDS tuner, controls for an additional CD-changer, hi-power four channel amplification and built-in DSP. Also included are a telephone muting facility (with an input to listen to incoming calls via the in-car loudspeaker system) and a handy trip computer. And last but not least, the VDO Dayton MS 4100 is very easy to use.



# Wooden't it be lovely

...if all your hifi looked this good

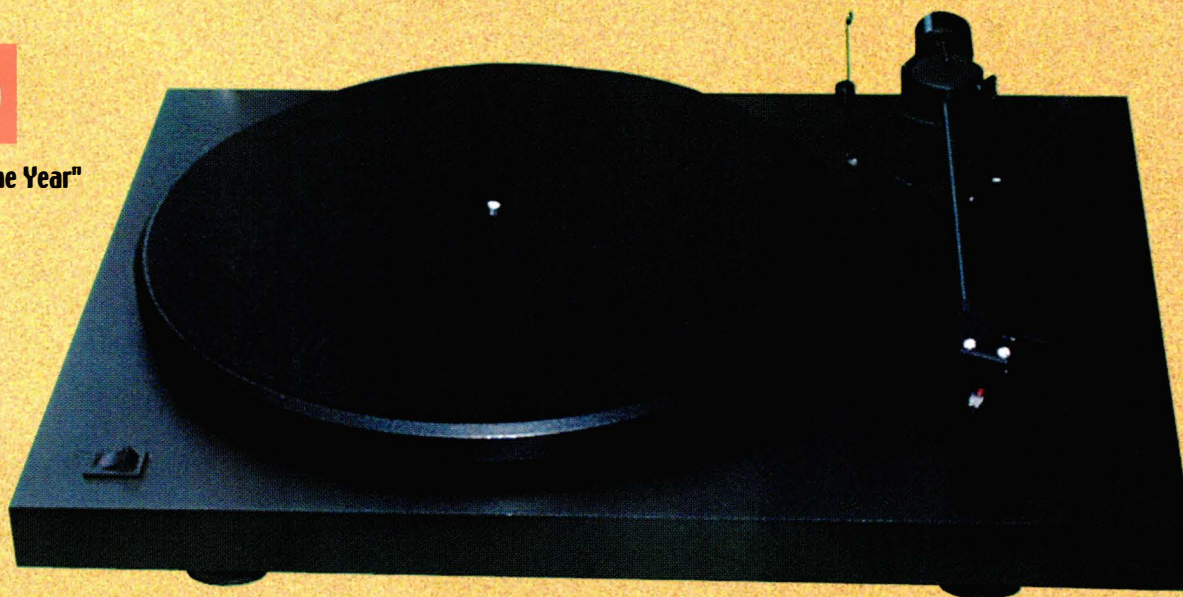


**Pro-ject Classic Cherry**  
From around £450

## ...or was such great value



"Product of the Year"



**Pro-ject Debut**  
From around £110

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EUROPEAN COMPACT SYSTEM 2000-2001



**YAMAHA** PianoCraft

£399.99 ☎ (01923) 233166

**T**his elegant, lifestyle system has a classic feel, thanks to the matt silver finish and, in particular, the luxury piano-black lacquer loudspeakers. The PianoCraft system consists of two remote controlled units, an RDS tuner with a 60 Watt built in amplifier and a CD player. An optional MiniDisc deck incorporates the highly advanced ATRAC 5 compression algorithm. For extended bass, an active subwoofer can be connected to the receiver's dedicated output. Thanks, in part, to the powerful two-way speakers with 130mm mid/bass drivers and 25mm dome tweeters, the PianoCraft system has dynamic and detailed sound that belies its size.



# LIVING VOICE



## Auditorium

Hi-Fi Choice Best Buy

*"This is an exceptionally subtle loudspeaker, maintaining fundamentally correct acoustic perspectives and tonality alongside a lively expressiveness and considerable delicacy and transparency"*

*The £1500 Living Voice Auditorium has clearly been designed by someone who puts a passion for music ahead of marketing hype."*

*Paul Messenger*



## Auditorium Avatar OBX-R

Hi-Fi Choice Editor's Choice

*"The attention to detail that has gone into the Avatar OBX-R is what makes it stand out from the crowd."*

*The music you love, whatever it may be, gets that bit more engrossing when you hear it through these speakers.*

*If you really want to hear what's going on in your music collection, if you want to hear the precise level of individual notes, the exact timbre of specific instruments and the location of live recordings, get a great valve amp, a superb source and a pair of these loudspeakers. ...they'll turn you into the raving music nut that got you started on hi-fi in the first place."*

*Jason Kennedy*

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We are regularly featured in specialist journals, underground fanzines, high circulation glossies and even the odd radio programme. The interest is flattering.

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Alan Sircom said our £3.5k system "...breaks almost all the rules ...I have encountered few systems that sound as good as this one - at any price".

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Nottingham Analogue Space Deck Ex Dem	£550	£750
Wilson Benesch Full Circle TT - 0.5 arm	£1500	£2000
Wilson Benesch Act2 tonearm	£600	£1200
Audio Innovations Series 500 Integrated	£490	£1200
Audio Innovations 2 <sup>nd</sup> Audio monos. 2A3 Triodes	£950	£3000
Art Audio Diavolo SE (chrome/gold)	£3500	£4500
Art Audio Quintet monos	£1900	£2900
Art Audio Symphony 300B SE - NEW (shop soiled)	£2000	£2500
Cary 300B SE1	£1800	£4000
Cary 805c 845 30watt SE monos	£5000	£8500
Jadis JA80 monos - 6550 PP 60w 2yrs old, new valves	£6000	£10000
SJS Arcadia 2A3 PSE - Nearly new	£4500	£5500
Waivac EC 300B	£14000	£16000
Audio Note ANSP silver speaker cable 2x 3m sets	£900	£2100
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EUROPEAN AUDIO RECORDER 2000-2001



**PIONEER** PDR-W739

£400.00 ☎ (01753) 789500

The Pioneer PDR-W739 includes a CD recorder and CD multi-disc changer in a single unit. It allows you to choose your favourite songs from three CDs and make your own compilation on a CD-R or CD-RW blank. Program tracks from three CDs, and then, with the press of a button, the PDR-W739 records them at normal or double speed. It features a digital recording level control, an informative and intuitive display and a remote control. Extremely easy to operate, the Pioneer ensures that those who have never used a CD-R recorder can make light work of it.



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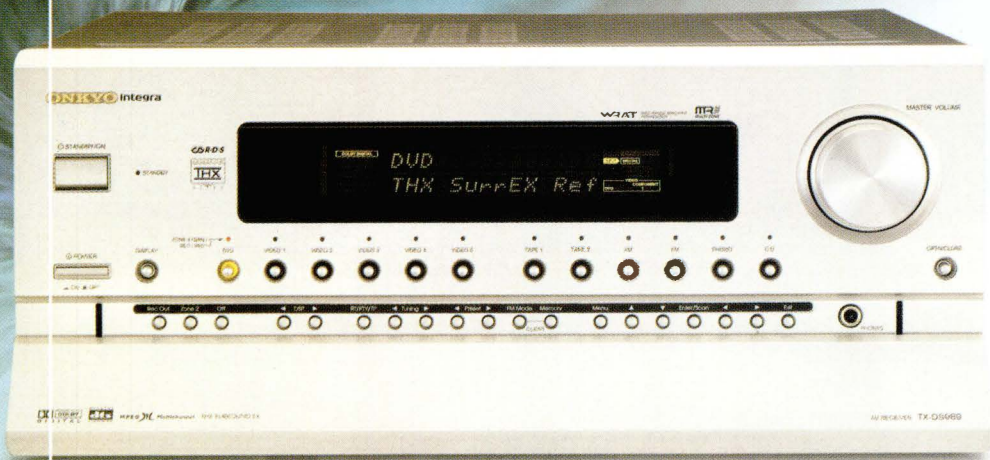
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EUROPEAN HOME THEATRE AMPLIFIER 2000-2001



**ONKYO TX-DS989**

£2,499.95 ☎ (01296) 482017

The latest flagship in Onkyo's range of home theatre receivers is a new generation wonder, equipped with the best analogue and digital technology. It is the first integrated HT unit that includes not only THX Surround EX processing but also all seven full power amplifiers required for this advanced 7.1 channel format. The DS-TX989 is ready for all the latest audio and home theatre standards, its 24-bit/192kHz converters being fully compatible with DVD-Audio. Expensive but advanced and extremely powerful, this Onkyo receiver cannot be faulted.



EUROPEAN HOME THEATRE LOUDSPEAKER 2000-2001



**ENERGY Encore System**

£1,299.90 ☎ (01473) 240205

The Energy Encore System is made up of a group of extraordinary speakers: four small satellites (Encore 1s), one central loudspeaker (Encore 2) and one subwoofer (Encore 8). These high quality components complement each other exceptionally well, creating high-end home cinema sound with many sorts of equipment – including less expensive products. It is fair to say that the Encore System is a lot more than the sum of its parts.



EUROPEAN HOME THEATRE SYSTEM 2000-2001



JVC TH-A10R

£1,000.00 ☎ (020) 8208 7654

This is an attractive, all-in-one DVD-Video and CD system, consisting of a very stylishly designed centre unit (complete with an RDS tuner, Dolby Digital, DTS and MPEG multi-channel surround sound decoder), five extremely compact satellite speakers, and a powerful subwoofer. The basic user-friendliness of the system is emphasised by the inclusion of two remote controls: one featuring only the functions needed for daily use, and another fully-fledged 'Swiss Army Knife' universal remote.



EUROPEAN DVD PLAYER 2000-2001

Panasonic has strengthened its position at the centre of DVD technology with the new DVD-RV60. Excellent picture and audio quality, combined with ease of use, are the main benefits of this incredible player. The over-sampling technology of the video decoder delivers brilliant pictures with sharp detail, while a high definition DA converter gives amazing sound quality. A built-in Dolby Digital and DTS decoder recreates true movie sound when the player is combined with an appropriate amplification system, and it doubles as a CD player too. Additional features such as picture adjustment (optimising the picture for any type of screen), Virtual Surround, and dialog enhancement complete a generous package.



PANASONIC DVD-RV60

£449.99 ☎ (08705) 357357





EUROPEAN VIDEO PROJECTOR 2000-2001

SONY VPL-VW10HT

£5,800.00 ☎ (0990) 11 1999

The VPL-VW10HT, is a dream for every home cinema enthusiast who wants genuine 16:9 images improved by DRC picture processing and High Definition TV technology. Three TFT-LCD panels (1366x768 pixels) and a very bright 200 Watt UHP lamp create huge, high resolution images from only a short distance away. This lamp is switchable between 750 ANSI lumen for home cinema projection and the brighter 1000 ANSI lumen for multimedia use. The VPL-VW10HT can convert any living room into a cinema, and reproduce all the action and atmosphere of the original movie.



EUROPEAN MULTIMEDIA OF THE YEAR 2000-2001

APPLE iMac DV 'Special Edition'

The popular Apple iMac DV Special Edition is the number one multimedia product on the market today. For video-buffs it offers a one-stop editing suite for DV-movies: simply connect a digital video camcorder to the iMac, and you're off! For audio fans, there's the impressive Harman Kardon Odyssey technology. And photo-lovers can connect their digital cameras quite easily via the incorporated double USB connections. A genuinely user-friendly solution.

£1,199.00 ☎ (0800) 783 4846



**Sony Super Audio CD. You want to hear every single detail?**



**SUPER AUDIO CD**

## OK, here goes.

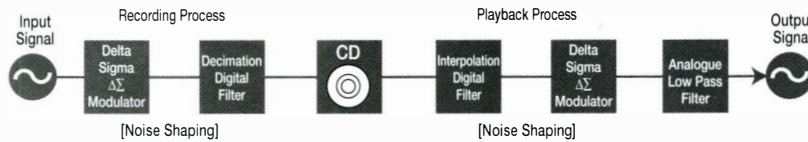
The beginning.

As good a place to start as any. In the beginning, there was CD.

Co-developed by Sony in the early 1980's, it revolutionised the way we listen to music.

CD used, and still uses, a multi-bit Pulse Code Modulation or PCM recording format that was the most advanced technology available at the time.

PCM: CONVENTIONAL CD



Notice the tense.

It *was* the most technologically advanced format available.

Skip forwards almost 20 years however and it's a different matter.

For just as music has progressed since the early 1980's, so has the technology for reproducing it.

## NEW TECHNOLOGY

This continuous progress in digital technology has allowed the original team responsible for developing the CD to create a new format.

Super Audio CD.

A format that is fully compatible with conventional CDs.

But one that acknowledges the fact that too much sound quality is lost during the recording of a CD.

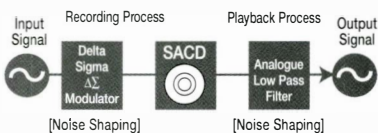
One that acknowledges that we've reached the end of CDs quality development cycle, so any innovations in PCM technology may no longer lead to dramatic improvements in quality.

One that ditched PCM technology in favour of the very latest in Direct Stream Digital technology.

One that leaves you searching for adequate superlatives.

DSD technology is a one-bit system and is fundamentally different to PCM.

DSD: SUPER AUDIO CD



Firstly, it simplifies the recording process, sampling the audio signal at a much higher rate than PCM. 2.8224 MHz as opposed to a mere 44.1 kHz.

This creates a dynamic range of over

120dB across the entire audible frequency range at an unprecedented bandwidth of over 100kHz. It allows the direct recording of a Super Audio CD.

No quantisation or decimation process. And don't worry fellow music lovers, we'll come on to what all this means for you in a moment.

But while we're on the subject of what this new DSD format doesn't do, we should talk about digital filtering. Because it doesn't need to do any of that either.

While CD technology relies on PCM's complex digital filtering process (decimation and interpolation causing distortion and limiting the frequency response to around 20KHz and dynamic range to below 98dB), Super Audio CD data retains all its freshness and purity.

Just high fidelity pure audio.

The closest possible representation of the artist's work.

And that means the atmosphere. The mood. Even the ambience of the room.

And unfortunately for any recording artists who happen to be reading, it also means every wrong note.

If it happens in the studio, your audience is going to hear it.

There really is so much more that we can tell you about Super Audio CD.

So we will.

As touched upon earlier, all Super Audio CD players also make great conventional CD players.

There is no need for any of that infuriating rebuilding of music collections. (Remember how long it took to replace all those old LPs?)

Your only reason for throwing away your existing music library will be shame.

Let's face it, some things will never come back into fashion and that probably includes some of your earlier tastes in CDs.

## COMPATIBILITY

This compatibility means a special kind of disc is available.

The 'hybrid'.

It's compatible with CD players *and* Super Audio CD players, as it features both a CD layer and a Super Audio CD high-density layer of information.

But while a Super Audio CD disc is exactly the same size as a current CD disc, its data capacity is in a different

league altogether. Even the basic single layer disc can store 4.7 GBytes rather than the 780 MBytes we've become used to with conventional CDs.

There is a third disc type as well.

The dual-layer disc. This is essentially two Super Audio CDs combined in one, with a maximum capacity of some 8.5 GBytes. Which means that as well as being able to hear more of everything, you can now hear *more* of everything.

All this capacity for information. But we haven't finished yet.

On each Super Audio CD disc, space is reserved for surround-sound recordings, conventional stereo recordings and for extra, non-audio data.

Perfect for text, such as song lyrics, as well as video or still images.

This system of allocating disc space should ensure that Super Audio CD is ready to handle all future applications.

See, when we say you'll never miss a thing, we mean you will never, *ever* miss a thing.

When you've gone to this much trouble producing something this detailed, obviously you want to protect it.

That's why Super Audio CD incorporates copyright protection technology not only on the hardware side, but on the disc itself.

Anti-piracy measures in the form of digital Watermarking are also present. Pit Signal Processing, to give it its full name, protects both you and artists alike against illegal copying.

No Watermark. No playback.

## PURE SOUND

So, let's have a brief resumé. (Obviously you took all this in the first time, but this is great news and as you know, great pieces of anything will always bear some repetition.)

Music recorded like never before.

Far richer playback quality.

Every nuance.

Every acoustic detail.

And a much greater capacity for recording. Super Audio CD really is the quantum leap forward in musical reproduction that you would expect from Sony.

You want more? Sorry, but this really isn't the right venue.

For no amount of words can describe just how good Super Audio CD sounds.

You'll have to hear it for yourself.

For a demonstration, visit your local Sony hi-fi specialist showroom.

Just one last detail you may wish to hear. Go with someone proficient in mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

You're going to have your breath taken away.

Which speaker stand would you recommend for a pair of Tannoy mX2s? I don't want to spend too much!

Mark Bonnet, Sussex

At the value end of the scale, you

won't do much better than the Atacama

Nexus 6 at £50

per pair

(plus filler).

Sick of your hi-fi? Need a prescription for a better system? Well, you've come to the right surgery, and Dr Tim Bower is in.

## Muddled midrange



I'm currently using a TEAC VRDS-25 CD player with a Jeff Roland Synergy II preamp and Model 6 monoblocks, driving ProAc Response 3.8 speakers. I want to move up to the next sonic level – at the moment the midrange is somewhat muddled and the bass a bit loose – and I know my CD player is not up to the same standard as the rest of the system.

A local dealer came round to my house recently and repositioned the speakers, which made a great difference. He also brought along a Wadia 850, which I liked very much but, although the bass problem was totally solved, there still seemed to be some missing midrange. Could this be a cable problem? I'm hesitant about spending £5,000 on a CD player like the Wadia since SACD and DVD-Audio are just around the corner, though the lack of SACD titles concerns me. Should I buy a new CD player, and if so which one?

Dave Wood, via email

*Don't worry too much about SACD and DVD-Audio. Though we're excited by their potential, there's precious little software around right now and both formats have yet to prove themselves as long-term prospects. CD is likely to prove the most prolific format for new music for years to come, and the chances are you already have a sizeable collection in your possession. That means top quality CD replay will remain of primary importance for a music fan like you, and it's unlikely any combination format player will rival a top dedicated CD machine like the Wadia for the foreseeable future. In short, buy a high quality CD player now and consider a separate machine for these new formats later.*

*In addition to Wadia, you might like to try the Acoustic Precision Eikos, a player capable of some pretty impressive*

## Alternative amplifier



I'm using a Marantz CD-63SE CD player with Acoustic Energy AE109 speakers, QED Qudos speaker cables and Cable Talk 2.1 interconnects. My musical taste takes in American alternative music and British indie, with some alternative country and soul music. I want to buy an amplifier to go with them.

Mladen, Croatia

*The speakers you're using offer plenty of rich sonic clout, which should cater well for your music tastes, but they perform at their best when partnered with a clean, lively sounding amp. Taking £500 as a budget ceiling, start with Musical Fidelity's X-A2 (£499) and work down to something like Rotel's RA-971 MkII (£225). Denon's powerful PMA-1500R (£500) would be an interesting option; you could also try the Cyrus 5 (£500), while Marantz's new PM6010 KI Signature (£400) may also be worth seeking out.*



*things at £1,850. Also excellent is the Marantz CD-7 (£3,500) and Advantage CD 1S (£3,995), with the latter particularly noted for its midrange. It may also be worth giving Sony's two high-end SACD players a shot – the SCD-777ES (£1,700) and SCD-1 (£2,500), both of which manage to perform well with CDs, quite apart from their SACD abilities. On the cable front, try the likes of Supra EFF-ISL and Kimber Hero interconnect, with Goertz, Electrofluidics and Townshend Audio speaker cable.*

## Doctor, Doctor!



I own a Harman/Kardon HK650 amp and HK730 CD player, and I am looking for a pair of speakers to match. I usually listen to pop, rock and classical music, and I like a warm, yet detailed and involving sound. I am presently considering these speakers: B&W DM602 S2 or DM603 S2, Dali 606, Tannoy Revolution R3 (though I found it somewhat laid back in a first audition), Mission 773 or 774 and Yamaha NS100. Which would you 'prescribe'?

Randolph Happe, Holland

*You list a pretty good set of speakers, Randolph, several of which we rate highly. The only way to judge for sure which is right for your system, your room and your ears is to audition them all. Having done precisely that, it seems you're already pretty close to writing off the Tannoys, and we wouldn't disagree – they are rather laid back for some tastes. We'd be very tempted by the B&W option for a big, dynamic sound, or Mission for a tighter, more direct approach. Try also the Dynaudio Audience 50 (£577) for a standmounter, and the Acoustic Energy Aegis 3 (£350) on the floorstanding side.*





Sony STR-DB930

## Sounds and pictures

I am currently using B&W DM602 S2 speakers with a Rega Planar 3 turntable and an old Technics SU-8080 stereo amp. I use this system to listen to classical and jazz music, but lately I've developed a liking for home cinema and would like to build a system for this purpose. However, this system would still have to sound as good with music as it does with films.

I'm thinking of buying a pair of B&W DM601 S2s as rear speakers and a CC6 S2 for the centre, but I'm not sure about the subwoofer. Would a REL Strata III blend seamlessly with this system? Which amplifier should I choose? Would a Sony STR-DB930 be good for both home cinema and music? My room is 7x4m and my budget is about £1,200.

*Hassan Lauthan, Mauritius*

*Ah, the old music and movies conundrum. You're on the right track with the speakers, Hassan – your B&Ws have enough clout for home cinema and do the business with music too, and it's*

## Soulful speakers

My current set up consists of a Thorens TD166 IV turntable with a Rega arm and a Goldring 1006 cartridge, Musical Fidelity X-A1 amp and X-LP phono stage with Gale 315 speaker cable. I can't remember the make of the interconnects, but they were about £30. My current speakers were given to me and are an old pair of B&W DM220 floorstanders. Over the years I have had to

replace the tweeters and they are now fitted with Audax ones. The speakers sit on concrete paving slabs on top of bicycle inner tubes, my own version of a Seismic Sink. This rather Heath Robinson arrangement has served me well, but I would like to get the most out of my equipment and feel that it is time for some new speakers. I only listen to 60s and 70s soul music on vinyl in a room measuring 3x4m. What can you suggest?  
*David Nossiter, via email*

*On the floorstander front, consider Mission's 782 (£699) – a beautifully slim speaker with plenty of bite and scale, aided and abetted by a side-firing bass unit. If that's a touch pricey, Tannoys more laid-back Revolution R2 (£350) matches up well with the X-A1. And if you're willing to look at standmounters, the Dynaudio Audience 50 (£577) will make an invigorating partner. Oh, and don't throw out your proprietary isolation platforms just yet – you may find them just as effective with your new speakers!*



Mission 782

*sensible to match them with a pair of 601 S2s (£200) and a CC6 S2 centre speaker (£200). That way you should get a good tonal match across all five channels, one that will provide a firm basis for forthcoming multi-channel music software as well as for movies. On the subwoofer side, the REL Strata III (£600) is one of the very best at the price for music/movie use and should blend well if set-up correctly, but B&W's own ASW1000 (£500) may prove the optimum match.*

*As for the amp, it's still difficult to find integrated multi-channel amps that do a good job with straight stereo music sources, particularly at lower price points. Most are concerned with bangs, crashes, bells and whistles, though music does now seem to be climbing on the AV agenda. If £500 is your limit, you shouldn't expect too much musically – the £500 Sony you mention, the £400 Pioneer VSX-808 or the £400 NAD T750 are about as good as it gets. However, if you can spend a little more it's worth considering the two-box route – find a stereo amp you like with music then add an offboard processor. For the latter part, Yamaha is probably your best bet at this level.*

## Heavenly angle

My current front-end consists of a Nottingham Analogue Spacedeck, Rega RB-300 arm and a Goldring 1042 cartridge. Goldring recommends a tracking force between 1.5g and 2.5g, but I would like to know the exact weight to hear the 1042 at its best. Alos, do you know what is the correct tracking angle for that cartridge?

*Fernando Blas, Spain*

*As with nearly all cartridges, tracking angle and downforce have to be set by ear for best results. Variations in suspension compliance due to temperature, humidity and arm type mean that there is no single figure that will work in all situations, so you need to experiment and listen. Use the upper and lower limits of the manufacturer's recommendations as a guide and go from there.*



Goldring 1042

## HELP

Which low-cost turntable do you recommend most highly?

*Chris Brady, Peterborough*

Pro-ject makes some great value turntables, including the Debut (£109 with cartridge) and Pro-ject 0.5 (£160), but it is still hard to beat the evergreen Rega Planar 2 at £219, or indeed the Rega-built NAD 533 (£220 with cartridge).

**I want an amp to match with a Rotel RCD-971 CD player and JMLab 702LE speakers. My budget is £600-£1,000.**


*Pari, via email*

**Start off by auditioning the Primare's A10 (£500), then work up to the Roksan Caspian (£795) and Arcam FMJ A22 (£1,000).**



Townshend Isolda

## Kimber's pride


 My current system consists of a Linn LP12 with Akito arm and Dynavector DV10 cartridge, a Meridian 506 CD player, Audiolab 8000Q preamp, PPA phono stage, two 8000M monoblocks and Epos ES14 speakers. Interconnects are Cable Talk Broadcast 2 and Naim NAC A5 speaker cable. The LP12 and Meridian are both on Mana supports and the amps sit on a Target stand with the Q and PPA supported by Nordost PP4 cones. I am pleased with the sound but cannot help but feel I could get more out of the system. Would changing the speaker cable to something like the Kimber 8TC make a marked difference? Are there any other areas that I should be looking at?

*John Jolly, via email*



KEF Cresta 2

## Gold and Silver

 I bought a pair of Gale Gold Monitors about three days ago. The quality is excellent but they are not quite loud enough for me. I was thinking of purchasing the Eltax Silverstone speakers, but I'm not sure how they will sound. I know that they are not bi-wireable but that isn't a problem, as I have no need for it. Will they be loud? Do you know what the quality will be like? Will I need a powerful amplifier to drive them? My last question is, do you think the Eltax Monitor 3s are a better choice? Will they be as loud?

*Stuart, via email*

*So, you like it loud then, Stuart? Thing is, how loud a pair of speakers will go depends on many factors, like drive unit type and size, the speakers' sensitivity and the power of the amplifier you're using to drive them. If you're looking at buying some small budget speakers, look for a pair with a high sensitivity rating – they will tend to sound louder and more dynamic when driven with a given amount of power, particularly important if you're using a low powered amp. However, remember that high volume isn't everything if you want to get the most from your system in the long term.*

*We haven't heard the Eltax Silverstone, but the Monitor III seems to be a pretty good budget buy. However, KEF's Cresta 2 (£150) may be a better bet if you want sensitivity and sonic scale from a small budget box.*

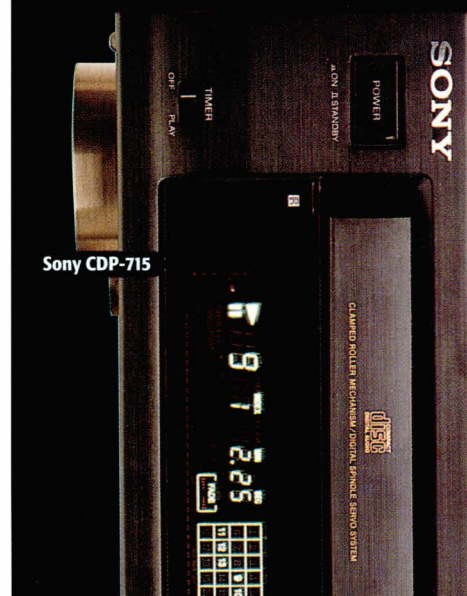
*In short, yes. The NAC 5 cable you're using works pretty well in Naim systems, but you should be able to draw more from your own set-up with a change in that department. Kimber 8TC (£348 for a 5m terminated pair) would be a good choice, or try something like Electrofluidics Monolith 2020 (£45/m) or Townshend Isolda (£50/m). It would be worth looking at your interconnects too. Beyond that, try experimenting with some different combinations on the amp/speaker front. The Audiolab 8000Q and PPA are extremely worthy pieces of kit, but the 8000M monoblock wasn't exactly renowned as the most musical component in the old Audiolab line-up. Have a listen to some alternative power amps, such as the Michell Alecto, Densen B-300 and Musical Fidelity XA-50 and don't forget the importance of good quality mains if you want to get the most out of a high-end system like this – see our review of mains cables elsewhere in this issue.*

## Cheap tricks



I'd like to replace my old Marantz CD-50SE CD player but funds are tight. I've got the chance to buy a Sony CDP-715E CD player for £100; I've seen many people rave about its almost liquid and analogue qualities. Should I go for it? *Paul Wood, via email*

*We're not sure about 'liquid' and 'analogue', but there's no doubt the CDP-715E caused quite a stir in its day. A UK-tweaked player, it was a definite Best Buy at £300 and brought forward Sony's reputation for affordable hi-fi by leaps and bounds. However, we are talking a good half-decade ago and there are now several players at that price point which beat it hands down – the Arcam Alpha 7SE, for example, which has just dropped to £300, and Sony's own CDP-XB930E. Then again, you're not likely to find anything to beat it at £100, so if that's your limit and you're not prepared to scrimp and save it should prove a reasonably effective upgrade.*



Sony CDP-715

## From bad to worse



I have a Linn Genki CD player, Kolektor preamp and LK85 power amp, with a pair of Lentek S5 speakers, connected with Kimber cables and Russ Andrews mains cables. The sound is generally very good, especially with well recorded CDs – fast, detailed, tight and accurate. However, it is also very lively and there is a tendency for thinness and a nasal quality with some vocals and percussion. Things can get a little hard on the ears, particularly with badly recorded discs.

The Lentek speakers are quite old now, and probably outclassed by the electronics. I've auditioned the Proac Studio 125, PCM FB1 and Shahinian Arc with varying degrees of success, but none are quite right for my system.

I want a pair of speakers that have a detailed and open quality, but with a natural sound and no hint of hardness, brightness or thinness in the treble. I would prefer a larger speaker – I'm used to the scale and deep base of the Lenteks. What would you suggest I listen to? My budget is preferably around £1,000, up to £1,500 if necessary.

*David Chetwyn, Stoke-on-Trent*



*The 'does hi-fi make bad recordings sound worse' debate is a relevant one for many people. One theory is that detailed hi-fi gear will show up a poorly produced disc for what it is, and that's something we just have to put up with. Another suggests good hi-fi need not make rough recordings sound unpleasant as long as the system is genuinely neutral – the problem is one of an over-bright sound, rather than too much detail.*

*You're obviously keen to keep the Linn electronics and there should be no problem with your cables, so let's focus on your speakers. The Celestion A2 (£1,500) is definitely one to audition given your needs, and it's also worth listening to the Mission 783 (£1,000), BC Acoustique Araxe (£1,140) and Dali Evidence 870 (£1,300). Also check out two new speakers from Castle and B&W – the Howard S3 and CDM7NT respectively – and consider investing in some of Townshend's Seismic Sink support technology.*

## To cut a long cable short



My system consists of a Marantz CD-67SE CD player, Marantz PM-66SE amp and KEF Q35 speakers. The interconnects are QED Qunex 2 and speakers cable is QED Silver Anniversary. Due to furniture constrains my CD player and amp are separated from the speakers by about nine metres. Is this length of cable a problem? If not, can I add a further eight metres per channel to tidy up my installation and do a better job of hiding the wires behind the furniture?

*Jose L. Tagarro, Spain*

*In an ideal world, all things being equal, we would all keep our cable runs as short as possible. The shorter the cable the lower the degradation, and that applies to both interconnects and speaker cables. In fact, there are those who advocate that cable length is actually more critical with speaker wire than it is with interconnects, despite the fact that speaker cable is commonly used in much longer runs.*

*The general rule is to keep cables as short as is practically possible – most people don't have the space or funds to create an ideal listening room, and have to incorporate their systems along with the rest of the living room furniture. Nine metres is rather long, but it should be quite easy to tell if your amp is really struggling. If there's no way of changing your room layout, then you'll have to stick with it, but try to avoid using even longer cable if you can.*



## That'll teach you



I thought I knew what to do, but now I'm confused! *Hi-Fi Choice* said the Rotel RCD-951 CD player is a "disappointing, chopped-down RCD-971 – buy the original!" Conversely, a competing magazine said it is a "superb machine with impressive dynamics" and "sounds at home with all types of music". I want to buy this CD player but now... what can I do?

*Anderson Villas Boas, Brazil*

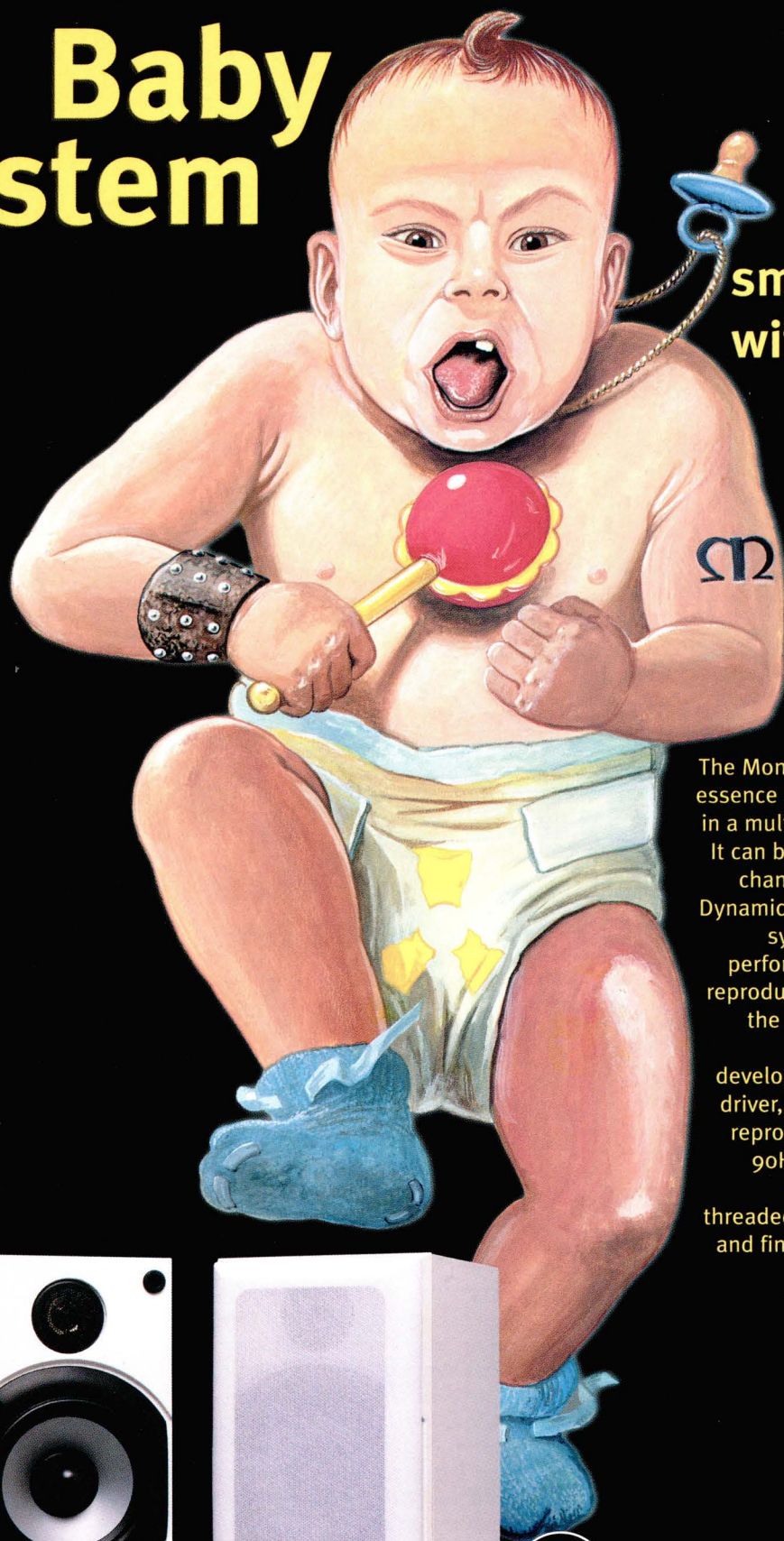
*We can't speak for the views of other magazines, except to say that both hi-fi and music are both subjective things and choices are made according to taste. For our part, we can safely say that our group test process is the most thorough and reliable in the business, mixing subjective and objective tests with a healthy dollop of blind listening before we come to a conclusion.*

*Regarding those CD players, the RCD-971 was reviewed first and received a thoroughly deserved Best Buy. In contrast, the £300 Rotel RCD-951 is a more grainy performer, lacking the impressive polish of its more costly brother. The main differences are in the DAC set-up and power supply, both of which are lower grade. If you can afford the RCD-971 we would certainly recommend it, but if not we would consider the Arcam Alpha 7SE (now £300) and Sony CDP-XB930E (£300) to be better buys than the RCD-951.*

**I'm looking for a CD player up to £1,000 to partner an Exposure Super XV amp and Epos ES15 speakers. Any suggestions?**

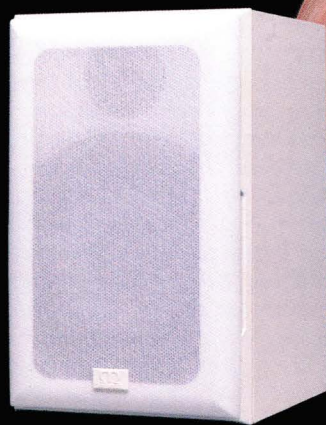
**Try the Rotel RCD-991 (£750), Roksan Caspian (£895), Cyrus dAD3 Q24 (£900) and, if you can stretch to the extra, Arcam's FMJ CD23 (£1,100).**

# the new Monitor Audio Baby System



**small speakers...  
with attitude**

The Monitor Audio Baby System is the very essence of flexibility and can be configured in a multitude of ways to meet your needs. It can be purchased as a two channel, five channel or even seven channel system. Dynamics are an important attribute of any system and rely heavily on mid bass performance. Most micro speakers only reproduce bass down to 100-150Hz, losing the original dynamics intended for the audience. With the use of a newly developed Metal Matrix Polymer (MMP™) driver, the baby satellite and baby centre reproduce mid bass all the way down to 90Hz producing remarkable dynamics with ease. They are equipped with threaded inserts for ease of wall mounting and finished in black oak, white or cherry vinyl for any room in your home.



**MONITOR AUDIO**

*As close as it gets*

34 Clifton Road, Cambridge CB1 7EB England.  
tel: 01223 242898 fax: 01223 214532  
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Web: [www.monitoraudio.co.uk](http://www.monitoraudio.co.uk)



## BUYING GUIDE TO LOUDSPEAKERS



Choosing the right speakers is crucial to the cumulative sound of your system.

They have a more fundamental influence on the eventual sound than any other part of the chain, and buyers need to consider how a prospective candidate will interact both with the system in question and the room in which it will be sited. Here's some guidance...

### Does size matter?

It used to be that tall floorstanding speakers were only an option at higher price points, but the low-cost breed has become something of a modern phenomenon. It's not hard to see the attraction over smaller stand-mounting or 'bookshelf' designs – a tall cabinet is generally much more aesthetically pleasing than a small box perched on a piece of ironmongery. On sonic grounds, however, standmounting speakers often beat their larger counterparts, particularly in the average sized British living room. While the greater cabinet volume of a floorstander makes it easier to achieve deep bass, it brings with it another set of problems as designers attempt to control the effect of the box. Small speakers are a better shape acoustically and mechanically, and often have the advantage in terms of pace, timing and the like. As a general rule, stick to smaller speakers for more diminutive rooms, while larger, more efficient models are better able to fill big spaces.

### Figuratively speaking

A speaker doesn't generate any power itself, of course, but manufacturers often provide a power handling range for guidance. This is of some use when determining a speaker's suitability for your amp, though remember you're more likely to damage a speaker by driving a feeble amp too hard than by having huge reserves of power.

Arguably the two most useful figures of measurement when choosing a speaker are sensitivity and impedance. A model with high sensitivity will provide greater volume with a given amount of power than one that is not so sensitive, and will also tend to sound more dynamic. High sensitivity – say, 89dB or more – is particularly useful if you're using a low or medium powered amp. Impedance, meanwhile, relates to how much resistance the speaker presents to an amplifier. As impedance decreases, demand on the amplifier increases – choosing a speaker with an 'easy' impedance of 8 Ohms or so should help ensure electrical compatibility with weaker amps.

### Positioning is crucial!

When it comes to positioning your speakers, experimentation is the key. If you need speakers to place close to a wall make sure the ones you choose are suitable, and bare in mind very few work well stuck in the corner. Ideally, the distance between the speakers should be equal to or less than the distance from the plane of the speakers to where you sit, otherwise stereo imaging will be compromised. It's also worth experimenting with toeing or angling your speakers in towards the listening position – that can help to improve imaging with some speakers, and can also help to tame bright-sounding systems, but may have an adverse effect on image depth.

Most floorstanding speakers come with spikes to provide a rigid coupling with the floor. Use them, and make sure they're properly tightened.

Site smaller speakers on purpose-made hi-fi stands to ensure they're operating on stable, predictable support. These are usually spiked at the bottom and often at the top. If not, use some sticky pads or Blu-Tack to place the speakers on, and make sure the tweeter is roughly at ear height when you're sitting down.

Even room furnishings can effect the way a speaker sounds. In simple terms, lots of soft furnishings tend to soak up the treble and midrange, so you get a softer balance. Similarly, a sparse room may over-emphasize the same frequencies and lead to a 'hard' sound.

### Cable conundrums

Remember that a cable is the only means for the music signal to get from the amp to a speaker, and a good one ensures more of that signal remains intact. Use the best cable you can afford (see the Directory for our favourites, page 121) and keep the runs as short as possible. The majority of modern speakers allow for bi-wiring (connecting treble and mid/bass sections independently); if the option is there it's probably worth doing for optimum performance, though the effect varies from speaker to speaker.

### It's down to auditioning

Use our objective and scientific testing as a guideline to make your shortlist, but the ultimate decision is up to you, your system, your music and your ears. If you're thinking of buying, take a favorite selection from your music collection and audition a few at a specialist dealer, using your partnering equipment or a very close match. And listen at a normal volume level, not many speakers sound the same loud as they do quiet.

## EIGHT OF THE BEST

### ACOUSTIC ENERGY

**Aegis Three** £350  
Great value floorstander with deep, even bass and a smooth midrange. Suited to medium-large rooms.

**B&W Nautilus 802** £6,000  
High-tech speakers able to deliver a fantastically deep and detailed sound. A true benchmark product.



**CELESTION A1** £899 (above)  
Good-sized standmounters with a sumptuously involving sound.

**DYNAUDIO Audience 40** £400  
A compact speaker conveying real weight and dynamic tension. Superb in smaller rooms.

**MISSION 782** £699  
This year's EISA Award winner is a beautifully slim floorstander offering deep bass and a superb midrange. Needs care when siting.

**PMC FB1** £1,275  
Truly deep bass and impressive coherence pour forth from this laid-back yet exceptionally vivid-sounding floorstander.



**TANNOY mX1** £120 (above)  
This budget model is a capable all-rounder, with a smooth a cohesive sound that works well with a variety of music and partnering components. Suited to small rooms.

**TRIANGLE Zephyr II** £599  
A fast-sounding speaker with dynamics to die for – if you crave sonic excitement this efficient floorstander is great for the money.

# OASIS OF SANITY

With SACD also currently vying for our attention, Paul Miller puts

DVD-A through his gruelling electronic obstacle course, and finds the software, at least, lacking.

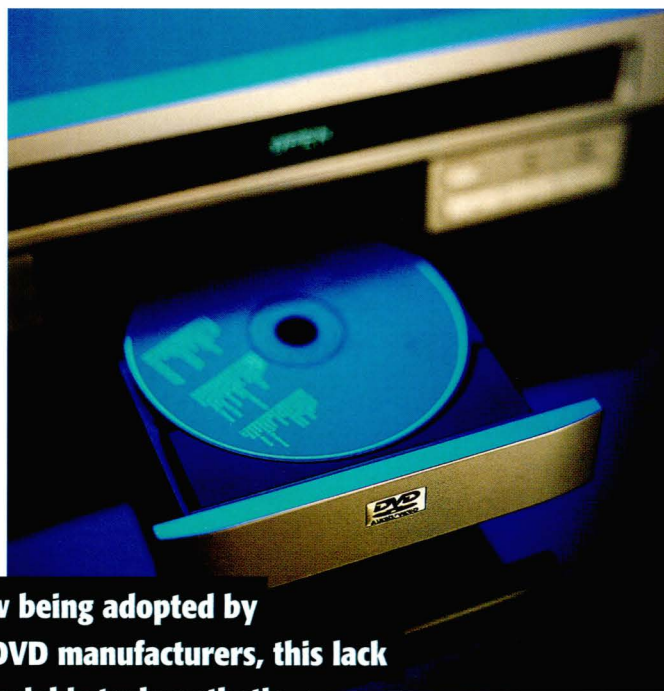
**I**n the race to establish a new, higher standard for music reproduction, it was the Sony/Philips collaboration of SACD (Super Audio CD) that pipped DVD-Audio to the post with early machines like the SCD-1. My *Oasis* column included the world's first independent measurements of SACD performance (*HFC* 193), now, a full year later, we are able to pitch this against the potential of DVD-A, courtesy of JVC's XV-D723 (*HFC* 205).

SACD, according to its Scarlet Book definition, describes the audio (music) information in a form called DSD or Direct Stream Digital – a high speed digital bitstream where the density of the data pulses represents the amplitude of the analogue waveform. All that's needed to recover the original music waveform is a gentle, analogue low pass filter. No digital filtering, of the type necessitated by CD's linear PCM code, is required by SACD.

By contrast, DVD-A sticks with CD's familiar linear PCM format (see *Oasis*, *HFC* 187), but uses its vastly increased data storage capacity to accommodate an extended 96kHz (or 192kHz) sample rate and 24-bit coding accuracy. Do remember, when the 44.1kHz/16-bit CD standard was embodied some 19 years ago in the Red Book, this represented the practical limit of the technology of the day? DVD-A extends these limits of both sample rate and resolution to take advantage of modern digital recording hardware.

## FILTER TIPS

The increased sample rate used by both SACD and DVD-A means that higher frequency detail is captured, while the increased resolution promises lower distortion and a greater dynamic range. Figure 1 shows a 20kHz tone (labelled as Fundamental) emerging from JVC's XV-D723 (black trace) and from Sony's SCD-XB940 (red trace, see *HFC* 204). The 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th harmonic distortions amount to 0.0135% from JVC's player but are buried beneath the 'shaped' requantisation noise of SACD (0.009%). This level of distortion is certainly much higher than you'd expect with 24-bits of resolution to play with, but is a function of JVC's analogue filter stages and not the underlying digital technology. Furthermore, because DVD-A still uses



**For a new format now being adopted by more and more DVD manufacturers, this lack of pukka 192kHz material is truly pathetic.**

digital filter technology (unlike SACD), we can see a digital 'image' of the 20kHz tone reflected back from the 96kHz sample rate (96-20=76kHz).

## MATCH-MAKING

Figure 2 compares two ultrasonic signals, a 44kHz tone from DVD-A at 96kHz/24-bits (black trace) and a 40kHz tone from SACD (red trace). For the purposes of comparison, this is the closest match I could 'engineer', but the differences are still obvious. 2nd harmonic distortion is evidently higher via the DVD-A player (0.044%) than the SACD player (0.0094%) but then the latter has its ultrasonic dynamic range compromised by a wave of noise that's encoded onto the disc. Meanwhile, paralleling the familiar foibles of CD (see *HFC* 188 and 189), the DVD-A player also shows a leaky sample tone (at 96kHz rather than CD's

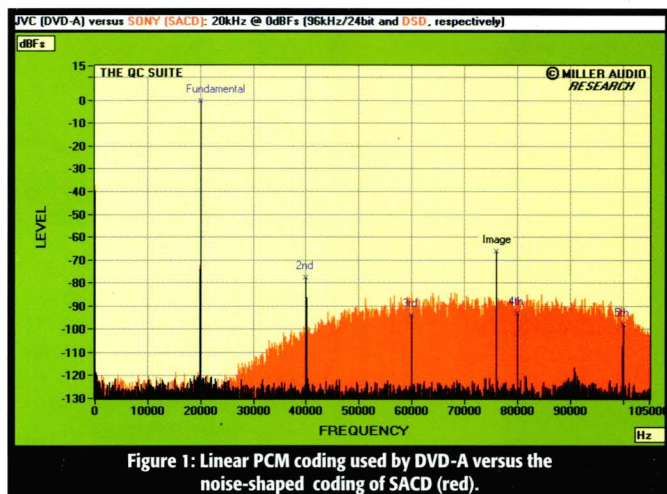


Figure 1: Linear PCM coding used by DVD-A versus the noise-shaped coding of SACD (red).

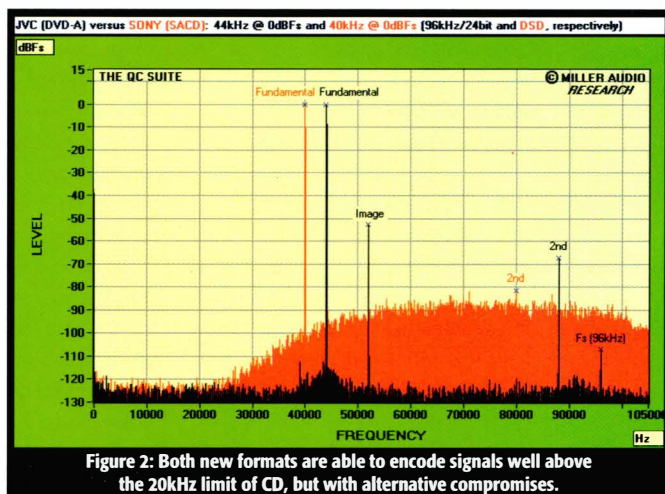


Figure 2: Both new formats are able to encode signals well above the 20kHz limit of CD, but with alternative compromises.



44.1kHz) with a very obvious digital 'image' at 52kHz (96-44=52kHz). The inherently high sample rate of SACD does away with the need for digital filtering (oversampling) and so it's free of these images which will still occur even with DVD-A's maximum 192kHz sampled software. In the future, it's likely that differences in sound quality between SACD and DVD-A may, in part, boil down to the former avoiding the subjective side-effects of conventional digital filters (see HFC 203).

**WHEN IS 192K NOT 192K?**

As a format, DVD-A has been subject to a number of false starts while the 'birth' of partnering software, particularly the wide bandwidth 192kHz/24-bit music samples, is proving painfully slow. Consequently, all the reviews of DVD-A players published in HFC, and other hi-fi titles, are necessarily conducted using the same, very limited repertoire of DVD-A discs. A number of these are available for sale in Japan while others have been pressed for internal or demonstration use only. Either way, I have been surprised at just how *bad* some of this supposedly high-resolution 192kHz stuff sounds: its thick, congested and airless quality typically coming a poor second to budget 44kHz CD.

**SAMPLE & HOLD**

I was prompted to check out precisely what this 192kHz/24-bit material really consisted of in the lab, with surprising results. Figure 3 shows a snapshot from Peabo Bryson's *I Wish I Could* (Pioneer Supersound Vol. 1, HE-723) and Vertu North Africa (Panasonic/Technics, Westport Jazz Festival). The latter (red trace) includes a footnote suggesting that "...the audiophile quality of 192kHz/24-bit stereo can be enjoyed for the first time...". Instead, what we see is a clear repetition of music signals within the audio range up to 24kHz, reflected either side of 48kHz and 96kHz. I obtained this same result with JVC's XV-D723 and Kenwood's DVF-

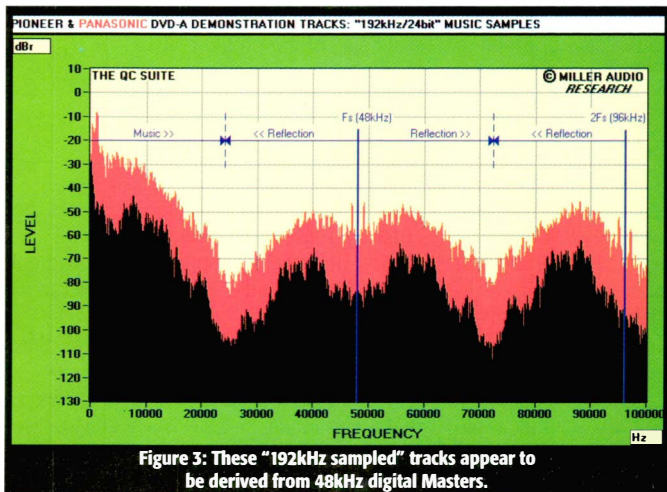


Figure 3: These "192kHz sampled" tracks appear to be derived from 48kHz digital Masters.

R9030 DVD-A players which both showed their '192kHz' beacons by way of confirmation. However, the most likely explanation for the strangely symmetrical spectrum obtained from these DVD-A discs is, in fact, that they are *not* recorded at a 192kHz but are sampled at the more regular 48kHz before the data is 'repeated' 4x over using a technique called sample-and-hold.

With four 'cloned' 48kHz samples now occupying the same period, the effective sample rate becomes 192kHz even though the extended bandwidth (potentially up to 96kHz) contains no fresh audio information. Instead, the region beyond 24kHz (the first dotted line on Fig. 3) is occupied by digital 'images' of the audio band, a gross distortion that would not see the light of day in any self-respecting CD player, for example. It's rather like using a 4x oversampling filter with little or no filtering action (known as a sync function) and is at least one explanation for their poor sound quality. If manufacturers are keen to produce facsimile 192kHz music discs, if only to demonstrate that DVD-A 'works' at these data rates, then they should use 4x upsampling instead of the inferior sample-and-hold method.

**GENUINE BANDWIDTH**

Of all the DVD-A discs to come into my possession, most include 96kHz/24-bit recordings in 5-channel mode which, necessarily, use MLP compression technology while the *only* discs to include genuine 2-channel 192kHz samples are the 'home-grown' DVD-AR from JVC (see review, last issue) and the 'Internal Use Only' compilation from Panasonic/Technics. Figure 4 shows a spectral 'clip' from the latter, its extended but natural decay of ultrasonic treble energy revealing the sort of ambient detail lost to 48kHz or 44.1kHz (CD) digital recordings. Fortunately, these 192kHz tracks sound more open, livelier and transparent than those from the, er, less plausible DVD-A compilations.

I'm wonder what all the industry's self-styled 'golden ears' have been up to while this has been going on! Quite frankly, for a new format now being adopted by more and more DVD manufacturers, this lack of pukka 192kHz material is truly pathetic. The promotion of make-believe 192kHz software, meanwhile, is little short of scandalous.

*Do you have a subject matter for the Oasis? Please contact Paul Miller via E-mail on MILLER\_AUDIO\_RESEARCH@compuserve.com*

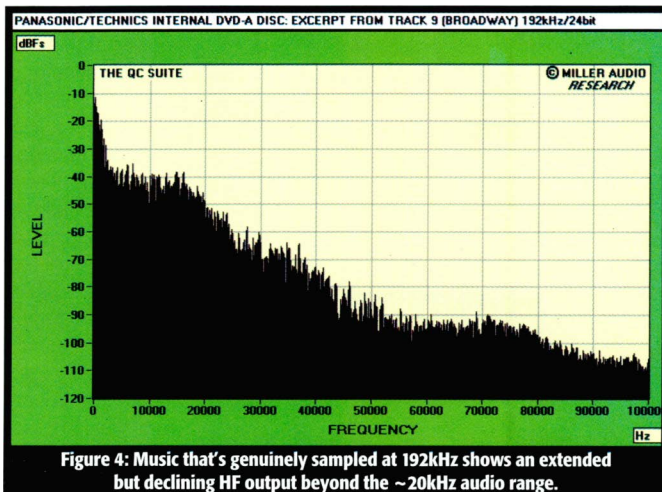


Figure 4: Music that's genuinely sampled at 192kHz shows an extended but declining HF output beyond the ~20kHz audio range.

**GLOSSARY**

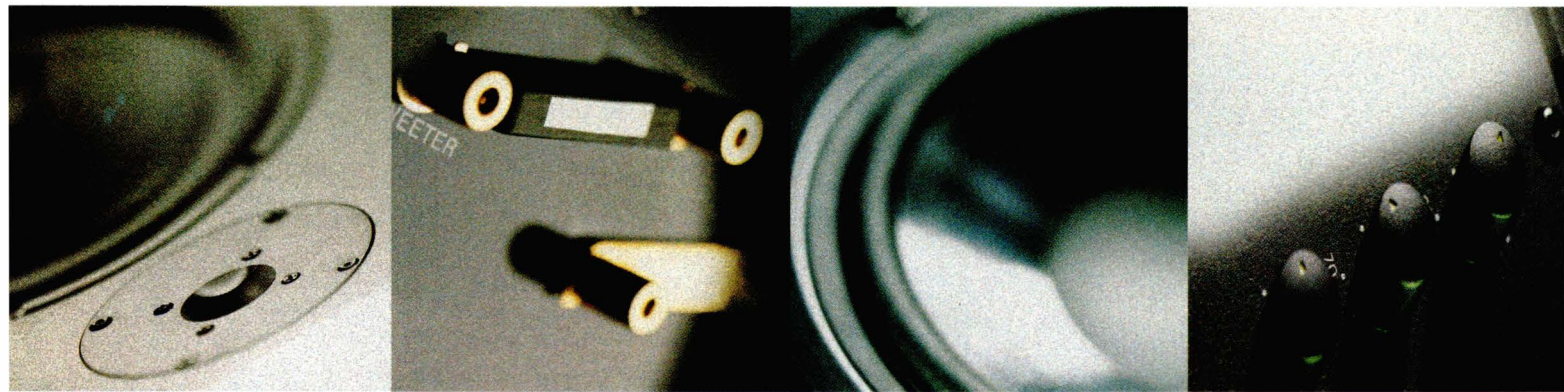
**DSD OR DIRECT STREAM DIGITAL:** The code composed of a high-speed, single-bit bitstream used by SACD in place of linear PCM.

**NOISE-SHAPING:** A type of 'digital feedback' used to move digital errors that occur as noise out to higher, inaudible, frequencies.

**PCM OR PULSE CODE MODULATION:** The code used by CD and DVD-A whereby the music signal is described using discrete steps at uniform intervals called samples.

**QUANTISATION:** The association of a binary word or number with the voltage (level) of an analogue waveform during the interval of one sample.

**SAMPLE RATE:** The rate at which the musical waveform is sliced-up into discrete chunks. For DVD-A this is 48kHz, 96kHz or 192kHz or once every 0.021msec, 0.01msec and 0.0052msec respectively.



# Five Stars For Value

**Paul Messenger explains why you should visit an independent specialist dealer if you are searching for real hi-fi satisfaction**

Why use a specialist hi-fi dealer? The short answer is because he knows one hell of a lot more about hi-fi than you do. And if you've gone to the trouble of picking up a specialist magazine on the subject, you're obviously interested in something rather more than a mini system from the nearest electrical superstore.

You've probably bought this magazine for one of two reasons. You're looking for advice (presumably unbiased and good) on choosing and using your hi-fi system, and/or you're checking out the ads to decide where to go and buy it.

The independent specialist dealer doesn't know everything, and he doesn't know much about you, but if music's an important part of your life, he's the only guy around who's able (and hopefully willing) to help you choose the equipment which will give you the best long term satisfaction.

### Power of the Press

Dealers sometimes moan to me about the power of the press, and the disproportionate influence of its 'Best Buy' and multi-star ratings. Well, I've been in the press for twentysomething years, and still feel more ignorant than powerful.

The more I mess around with hi-fi gear, the more I become aware of our lack of real understanding of the subtleties involved, and the more I appreciate the importance of the dealer's skills and experience, in bringing together components so that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

We hacks get paid to write words, often about components in isolation, because individual product reviews are still the staple diet of the press. They can sometimes provide a useful guide to the way a product performs, but only under the particular

circumstances in which the review was conducted.

The hi-fi reviewer attempts, with varying degrees of success, to evaluate a particular component, and find something interesting (and hopefully positive) to say about it. That's about the end of it, and it's on to the next product.

The magazine prints the review, and that very process magically confers a measure of authority. Experienced hi-fi enthusiasts, who read reviews over a period of years and try out various products themselves, soon start to realise the limitations of that approach. Some reviews are better than others, but none can get to grips with the real heart of the problem - whether a given product will improve your musical satisfaction, in your system and your room.

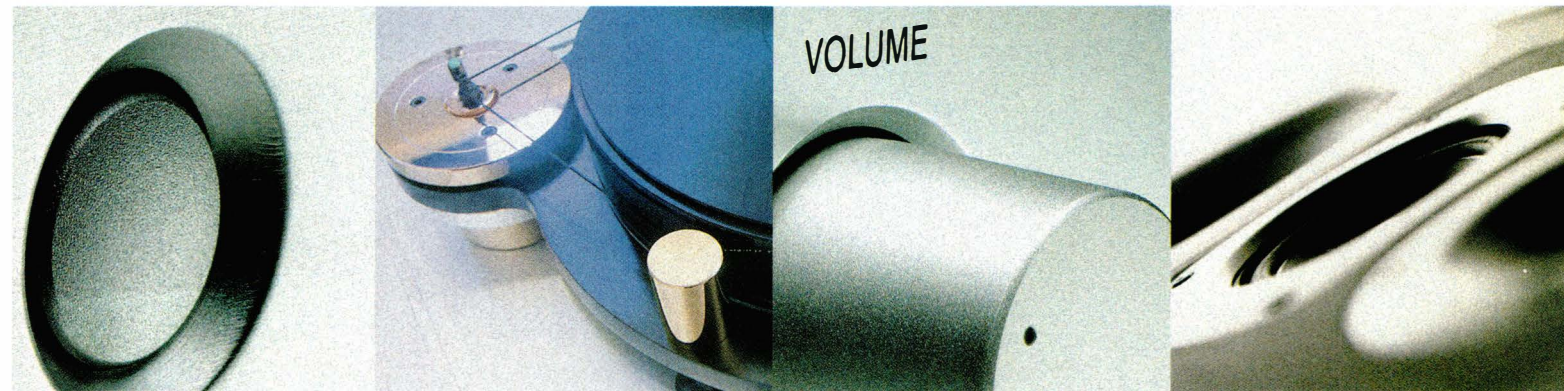
### The Role of the Dealer

The dealer's role is very different, and potentially much more valuable. He has the chance to talk one-on-one. If he's good at his job, he'll use that opportunity to find out what you as an individual are looking (or listening) for.

His motivation is very different too. Sure he wants to make a sale. That's the lifeblood of any shop. But he also knows that if something he sells really does deliver long term satisfaction, there's a very good chance you'll come back again to see if he can repeat the trick some time in the future.

### STAR QUALITIES

- value for money ★★★★★
- service ★★★★★
- facilities ★★★★★
- verdict ★★★★★



If you go into a shop and demand a particular CD player, on the basis that it got seven stars (out of five) in last month's magazines, the shop will probably simply take the line of least resistance and sell it to you. (Or switch-sell you to a similar price alternative, if he's fresh out of stock of that particular flavour-of-the-month.)

If you go in and say you're looking for a CD player, and want his advice on what to choose, things are liable to become more interesting. The onus is now on the dealer to show what he can do. His first task is to ask the right questions to try and get some idea of what you might be after.

Asking the questions is the easy bit. The real skill comes in using the information to come up with a shortlist of likely contenders, and then conducting a demonstration so that you have a real chance to play a central role in the decision making process.

Putting together a successful hi-fi system might not be as difficult as it was twenty or thirty years ago, but it's just as easy to make a mess of things. Put the 'wrong' combination of components together and it'll still sound a lot better than any cute little mini system package. It might even rate a five star review. But it won't match the potential of a carefully balanced and properly installed system, and it

certainly won't cater for your own particular preferences and personality.

We British are notoriously indiscriminating consumers, at a mass market level at least. The majority of the population don't even bother to drive a car they're thinking of buying, never mind take the trouble to listen to hi-fi equipment.

The majority will therefore end up with hyperstore mediocrity, and hi-fi that's about as tasty as supermarket bread. But if music is an essential ingredient in your daily diet, you owe it to yourself to become a member of the discriminating minority.

You know full well that your music collection is as individual as your wardrobe, and just as precious too, so it's worth taking the time and trouble to search out the dealer and equipment that will make that collection come alive, and give you a new buzz every time you play your favourite discs.

The independent specialist may not beat the chain store on price, but he continues to thrive in a hostile environment because real hi-fi is so much more than a matter of price. The people who work in these shops are themselves enthusiasts, often with many years of experience in meeting customer's needs, and the very necessary expertise to ensure that the whole thing is properly set up to deliver the best results.

The better the hi-fi, the more important it is to get the fine details right at the installation end of things, but even the least expensive equipment can be made to sound a whole lot better if good care is taken over the fine details - the support furniture, the cabling, the positioning of speakers and so on.

Without expert assistance even high class hi-fi can give mediocre results. With it you'll stand a very good chance of ending up with something rather more than a consumer durable - something which will be a source of considerable pleasure and genuine emotional satisfaction for decades to come.

I agreed to write this signed piece, irrespective of the specific sponsors, because I believe the independent specialist dealer plays a vital role in giving customers long term hi-fi satisfaction. The views and opinions expressed here are my own and not necessarily those of Hi-fi Choice.

Paul Messenger

[The specialist Dealers listed here are professional and enthusiastic. Give your nearest a ring for a demonstration.](#)

## TOP 20 UK SPECIALIST HI-FI DEALERS

### LONDON

**N1 GRAHAMS HI-FI**  
190a New North Road  
020 7226 5500

### SW11

**ORANGES & LEMONS**  
61/63 Webbs Road, Battersea  
020 7924 2040

**W4 MARTIN-KLEISER**  
109 Chiswick High Road  
020 8400 5555

### SOUTH

**Ashford, Kent**  
**SOUNDCRAFT HI-FI**  
40 High St. 01233 624441

**Chelmsford**  
**RAYLEIGH HI-FI**  
216 Moulsham Street  
01245 265245

**East Grinstead**  
**AUDIO DESIGNS**  
26 High St. 01342 314569

### Kingston-upon-Thames

**INFIDELITY**  
9 High Street Hampton Wick  
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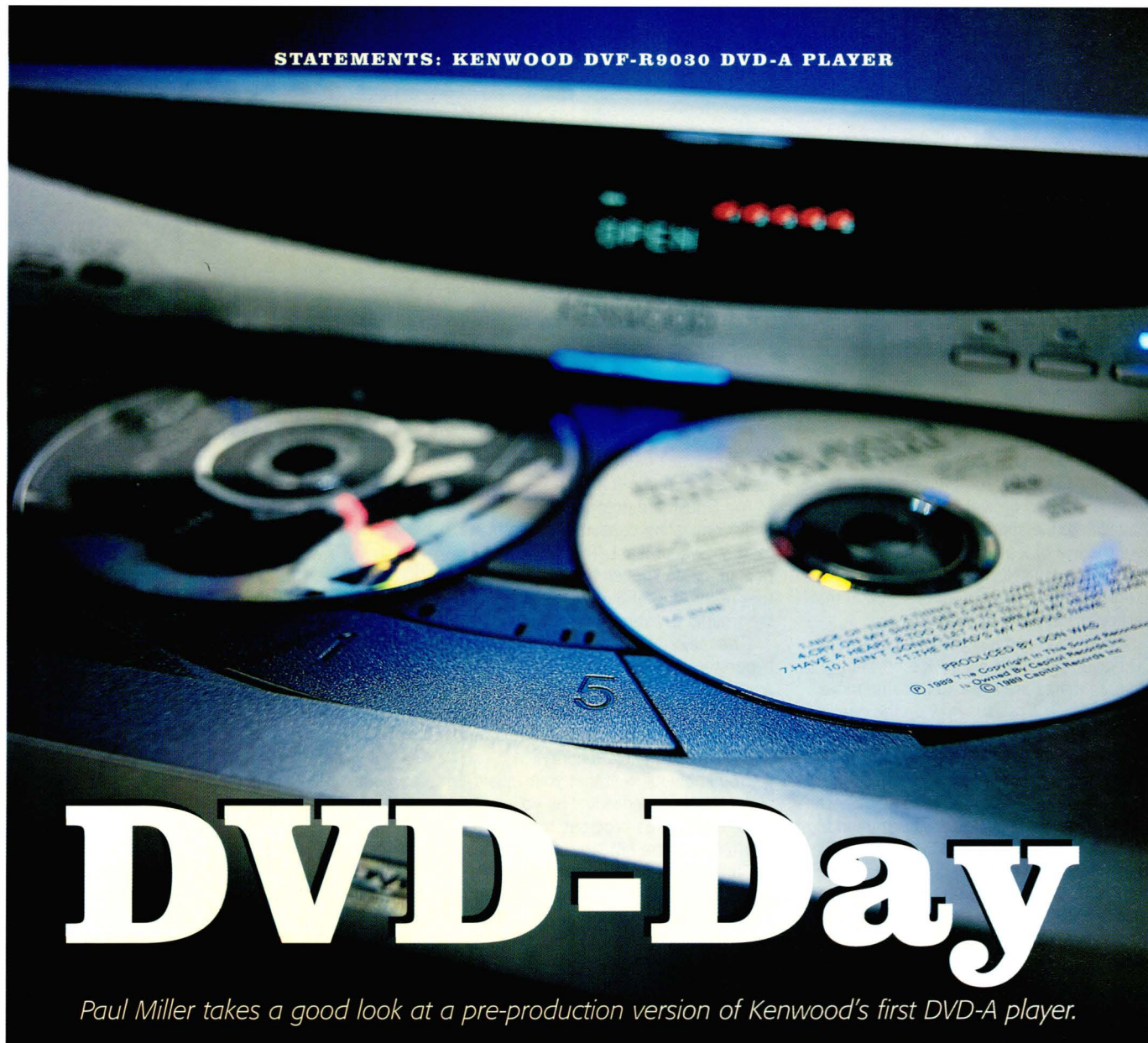
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*Paul Miller takes a good look at a pre-production version of Kenwood's first DVD-A player.*

**F**ollowing hard on the heels of JVC's single-disc DVD-A player reviewed last month, *Hi-Fi Choice* has exclusive access to a pre-production carousel-loading model from Kenwood. This is the DVF-R9030, projected to retail at around £800-£900 and the first to offer a 'pure DVD-A mode' where all video circuitry may be switched off in favour of a clean electrical environment for the audio circuitry.

As an all-inclusive product, the DVF-R9030 is compatible with DVD video region II, DVD-Audio and CD formats (but not CD-R or CD-RW). Composite, S-Type and component (RGB) video outputs are provided complete with an on-screen display to help you navigate its various features. The DVD video section includes Dolby Digital, dts and MPEG decoding courtesy of a Panasonic MN677521HB processor and three new bitstream DACs from AKM. Two of these handle the surrounds, centre and subwoofer channels at up to 96kHz sampling while a higher-specification 192kHz DAC is fitted for the front L/R channels.

As a point of interest, this player is also equipped with another pair of L/R outputs derived from a down-mix of multi-channel software. If, however, you are listening to two-channel CD or even 192kHz/24-bit DVD-A, remember to hook-up via the main L/R sockets instead of the down-mixed outputs, as the latter suffer both higher distortion and noise. And if the manual says otherwise, as they often do, then kindly ignore it.

Neither does this product feature the MLP logo, although the incorporation of Meridian's Lossless Packing technology is mandatory as part of the DVD license. All 96kHz/24-bit 5.1 channel music software will use MLP to manage the data rate at or below 9.6Mbps, so I'd expect

to see this revised on production versions of the player. Kenwood is pushing its own technology very hard this season, and this includes its proprietary DRIVE system, seen in earlier incarnations across its CD and MD player range.

DRIVE stands for 'Dynamic Resolution Intensive Vector Enhancement' – twaddle-speak for an algorithm that attempts to smooth-out the bumps, glitches and distortions that afflict very low-level digital signals. With only 16-bits to play with, for example, very quiet sounds are poorly or at least inaccurately, described. DRIVE attempts a 'best fit' of the original, low-level musical waveform. In which case, I'm bound to wonder that with a full 24-bit resolution available to future DVD-A recordings, this technology is arguably better suited to low-resolution formats like MD and MP3, for example.

Genuine, user-convenient features like the five-disc carousel loader should not be discounted however. After all, this is just the mechanism by which the disc in play is delivered to the actual CD/DVD transport, so there's no reason to suspect a multi-disc loader is in any way inferior to a traditional, single-disc machine. Of course, the polished wood sidecheeks are an aesthetic nicety that elevates the DVF-R9030 from its £700-£800 stablemate, the DVF-R7030. The novel remote control, complete with miniature joystick, has also clearly had plenty of thought put into it.

#### Sound Quality

We assessed this pre-production player using the same blind panel that has sat through tests of all previous SACD and DVD-A players conducted in my listening room. Slowly but surely, we are building up experience of what both media are capable of, and it looks as if SACD has the lead at this stage. Kenwood's DVD-A player certainly has a lack



of very deep bass and exhibits a mild compression of dynamics, suggesting that it's probably been set up for the home (Japanese) market. In Japan, the typically small room sizes and musical tastes place very different demands on audio equipment.

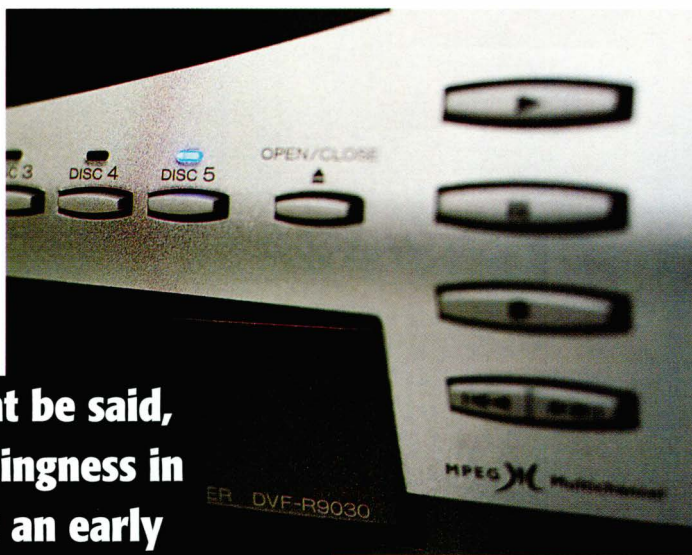
Either way, its polite and inoffensive outlook was evident with all CDs, which sounded a little matter-of-fact, lacking the rawness and atmosphere we expected with familiar recordings ranging from Christy Moore to Rebecca Pidgeon. The splash of percussion from Sinead O'Connor's *Faith and Courage* sounded a little brighter but also crisper with Kenwood's Pure Audio facility engaged (defeating all internal video circuitry). Pure Audio encourages a darker background at high frequencies, letting through a cleaner, crisper sound that's detailed without sounding bright or fatiguing.

Sibilants are very well controlled – a feature of Sinead's discs past and present – and though key elements of the music, voice, guitar, low whistle and drums were isolated and detailed, there was still a lack of integration, of 'wholeness', drive and integrity. "Like it's been disassembled then stuck back together with insufficient musical glue," suggested one listener.

Switching to our 96kHz/24-bit DVD disc brought about some improvement in stereo depth. But although the music sounded slightly 'bigger', more open and spacious there was also a sense that its natural verve and passion was damped in favour of something altogether more contrived. High on mechanical detail but lacking musical spirit, the elegant *Isn't She Lovely* by Livingston Taylor sounded superficially clean, detailed and impressive. But listen more closely, and shouldn't the tom toms sound as if they are being slapped rather than caressed? And should those guitar strings sound quite so polished, so immaculate when, in reality, we should have heard his fingers sliding across the nylon? Clean, then, does not always mean realistic.

Back in the lab, it transpires these 96kHz recordings are being downsampled to 48kHz within the player, thereby losing any advantage they might offer. This appears to be a 'feature' of the DVD engine linked to the fact that, in the early days, 96kHz audio was not strictly part of the DVD-A format but DVD-V instead. JVC has obviously updated its internal software, so I would suggest all other manufacturers, including Kenwood, do likewise...

Ironically, genuine 192kHz sampled music data is replayed intact.



**Whatever else might be said,  
Kenwood's willingness in  
letting us pull apart an early  
DVD-A player deserves respect**

The one 192kHz recording we can rely upon (see *Oasis*, page 52).

Tchaikovsky's *Serenade for Strings*, sounded far stronger than it had with the JVC DVD-A player, the music now filling the room more convincingly with the vivid and atmospheric thrill of strings. Naturally, this is a demo disc designed to deliver an impressive performance, but the fact remains that this was still the best rendition we had heard to date. The ambient undercurrent was especially welcome, bearing in mind all previous CD and 96kHz recordings had sounded relatively flat.

**Conclusion**

Whatever else might be said, Kenwood's willingness in letting us pull apart an early DVD-A player deserves respect. Few manufacturers are brave enough to let less-than-complete products in through these doors, for fear of what might be revealed. And this is undoubtedly a prototype player, clearly 'tuned' for its home market. Nevertheless, even as a concept player, the DVF-R9030 shows as much promise as any other DVD-A machine to cross our desks, even if it's still difficult to escape the feeling that, as a breed, they lack that special something heard with Sony's SACD players.

★★★★★☆☆☆☆

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# The Leak shall inherit the earth

*Is there room for valve tuners in this increasingly digital age? Jason Kennedy thinks so...*

If the turntable seems like an anachronism in the digital age, the valve radio tuner must seem pretty bizarre to those unfamiliar with the hi-fi world. But many of these devices are in use, notably Quad IIs and Leak Trough Lines, such as the Mk3 stereo version here. The Trough Line FM tuner was put into production in late 1956, the work of S.W. Amos and C.G. Johnstone, under the guiding hand of Harold Leak. Since that time it has seen at least four incarnations and, judging by the number of second hand units on the market, very healthy sales.

So what, you might ask, is this antique doing in the pages of a magazine that strives to find the highest fidelity and the finest technology? As those who have enjoyed the qualities of valve amplification will testify, the humble thermionic tube still has a lot to offer the music lover. And, as there are no new valve tuners on the market, a number of people have taken to seeing what can be done to bring models like the Trough Line up to a modern standard. One such individual is Graham Tricker of GT Audio who has been incorporating new stereo decoders into valve tuners for quite some time.

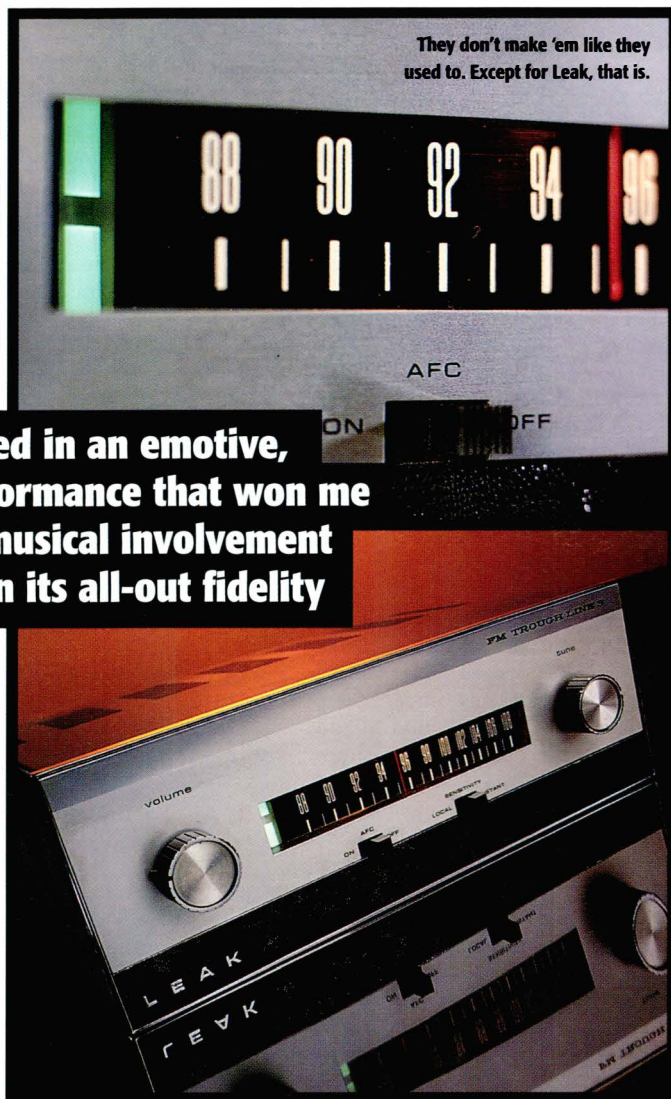
GT Audio offers a comprehensive service for Trough Lines, and if you have one already, can give it a complete restoration including re-spraying the chassis. The company doesn't recommend paying more than £60 for an original example and charges between £200 and £400 to restore it to full working order, work that comes with a one-year warranty. On top of this, you have a variety of stereo decoder options to choose from if you want realistic stereo separation – the original tuner offered only 12dB of separation, the decoder more than doubles this. Decoder options start with the standard unit fitted internally for £235; alternatively, this version is available as an external unit for £300 or as a kit for £205. If you crave higher fidelity, the Audiophile decoder starts at £352 (fitted internally).

I was loaned a restored Trough Line 3 with the standard decoder, which can be purchased complete for £585. It's a solid little brick of a radio with all metal casework and a chromed front panel, which, unlike modern tuners, has very few buttons or switches, just on/off and tuning knobs combined with switches for AFC (automatic frequency control) to stop drifting, and a local/distant reception switch. Around the back things are equally straightforward: chassis-mounted phono sockets, in place of the original flying leads, and a 75 Ohm aerial socket attached by a short strip of aerial cable to the original screw terminals. As the Trough Line was originally designed so that it could be set into the fascia of a radiogram, there is still the option to install it thus, which would look rather good if a matching preamp could be found.

This dearth of controls means that you have to resort to old skool knob and dial tuning rather than modern seek or preset station locating. This was a quite satisfactory method, especially given the nice weighting of the tuning 'wheel', and one that is usually faster than getting a modern radio to seek through the band, a station at a time. Last, but most appealing, is the tuning indicator pattern or 'eye' as they're known: this operates when AFC is off and helps with fine-tuning.

## Sound quality

All this anachrophilia would be of little relevance if the Trough Line didn't perform the duty for which it was designed, and at a good standard. You can get some pretty nice brand new tuners for this sort of money, let alone possibly nicer second hand ones. The value factor depends on how much you appreciate the quality of valves, and whether you cherish midrange timbre above such hi-fi issues as soundstage width and background noise. While this Trough Line turned out to be vanishingly quiet compared to an unmodified unit I have, it's still not in the same league as an Audiolab 8000T for instance – although the difference is not significant with most material. Compared to the Audiolab, the Leak turned in a more emotive, gutsy performance that



**The Leak turned in an emotive, gutsy performance that won me over with its musical involvement rather than its all-out fidelity**

won me over with its musical involvement rather than its all-out fidelity. By which I mean that the bass isn't rock solid and there's a definite constraint in terms of soundstage width and depth. Presence is excellent, however, and instrumental and voice timbre extremely engaging. I caught a broadcast of Shostakovich's *2nd Violin Concerto* that proved significantly more engrossing on the Leak than the Audiolab, even though the latter was undoubtedly telling me more of the story in terms of detail. It also sounds pretty good with more contemporary radio (Kiss, Virgin, Radio 1, etc), the valves helping to ameliorate some of the compression that these stations use so crudely, and presenting pop music in an engaging and dynamic fashion.

## Conclusion

To be advocating the use of a valve wireless in the DAB age might seem odd, but there is plenty of life in FM today and in this instance it delivers broadcasts with a degree of charm that's rarely encountered in products at this price. Against this you should consider that other fabulous tuners, such as the Naim NAT01, can probably be had for a similar price second hand, and probably a Revox or two, too. But this is a warranted product with a style that's all its own, and sometimes that's what it takes for a medium like FM to compete for your attention in today's media frenzy.

★★★★★☆☆☆☆

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# Omni Duo

*Jason Kennedy listens to his room courtesy of some unusual Canadian loudspeakers.*

**A**t EISA's Nice seminar earlier this year, one of the nine companies presenting its latest kit to us was Canadian speaker specialist API, an organisation that produces several brands including Energy and Mirage. While a lot of the presentations we received were rather dry, Mirage main man Ian Paisley stood out from the crowd by drawing his own diagrams and generating some enthusiasm for his subject. It had the right effect: I ordered up a pair of his finest speakers shortly after getting back.

When the OM-5s arrived they seemed a bit bigger than they had in that hotel suite, and significantly heavier when I helped Colin Hinkins (API UK) carry them up the stairs. Still this is a 132.4cm high loudspeaker with built in bass amplification. I should have known.

What has marked Mirage loudspeakers out from the crowd, since the introduction of the mighty M-1 back in 1987, is the use of a bi-polar radiation pattern wherein drive units not only fire forward in the conventional sense but also from the rear of the speaker, the two being in-phase so as not to cause low frequency cancellation. The M-1 was held in high esteem in some quarters but fared less well in others, this partly due to its uncompromisingly low sensitivity and partly to its monolithic appearance. Since then Mirage has scaled down its designs, brought German designer Andrew Welker onboard, and created the much more domestically acceptable OM-5 and its sibling OM-7.

These incorporate a development of the bi-polar theme that Mirage calls Omnipolar, the assertion being that driver dispersion is so good that there is as much energy ninety degrees off axis as there is directly in front of the speaker. The idea is that, much like an acoustic instrument, sound radiates in all directions simultaneously.

To help it achieve this end, the OM-5 utilises a mid and treble driver on both sides of its slim upper cabinet, these being a pair of 25mm titanium tweeters and an equal amount of four and a half inch polypropylene midrange units. Bass is catered for with a pair of eight inch polypropylene drivers driven by 250 Watts of amplification – the latter firing forward only from a larger enclosure. Efficiency is described as '90dB in-room' with a load of six Ohms nominal, four Ohms minimum. With an amplifier power recommendation of 100-300 Watts you can tell that serious welly is clearly on the agenda.

Connections are of the gold plated bi-wire variety, the active bass section running off your amp's speaker outputs just like the mid and treble on this three way. The bass enclosure is a lot deeper than the rest of the speaker and features a pair of air flowed ports at the rear, and steel grille protected drive units in front – there's no sign of heatsinking for the internal amps, but the IEC mains socket gives the game away. Footwear consists of large brass pucks that screw onto M6 spikes; apparently, a more floor-friendly variation of this will shortly be available.

## Sound quality

Hooking up these £3,000 beasts, in place of the relatively diminutive Living Voice Avatars, one is immediately struck by the Mirage's distinctive tonal balance, and shortly afterwards, the phenomenal bass power on tap. It's the latter that seems to shape this speaker's character, rather than the apparent dip in midrange that is initially perceived. With some material the bass energy proved too much for my less than cavernous room, and I had to turn the amplification off on one channel (even with the level adjusters set to minimum). Doing this seemed to allow the midrange through and resulted in a more familiar balance.

Playing old favourites through the OM-5s was quite strange; some of it sounded excellent, albeit not quite as detailed as it could be, while other tracks didn't fare so well. Aphex Twin's *Windowlicker* was a winner with its depth-plumbing bass and all round sonic gymnastics, but Led Zeppelin's *When The Levee Breaks* was a little too different for comfort. Whether the unusual balance is due to the Omnipolar radiation is hard to say. I was more aware of the unusual height of the mid and treble drive units (above seated head height) than of any dramatic difference in imagery or spaciousness.

Another unusual aspect of this speaker was the sound outside of the room, which had a considerably more live feel than usual, at least with rock music. This is probably due to the bass grunt as much as the SPLs on offer, but is interesting nonetheless.

Usually, you can get used to pure tonal variations in speakers, but the occasional sense of some part of the performance receding into the sound stage could not be ignored. But on many occasions the speaker's sheer exuberance and low frequency power swept aside such foibles and fully engaged the musical senses. With The Prodigy's *Out of Space* and John McLaughlin's *Trio* performance at the RFH the sense of space and presence was palpable, the bass depth and control adding physical air pressure that one rarely encounters.

While the OM-5 is quite a fast speaker, it's not really a foot tapper in the traditional Linn/Naim sense – there's a slight softening of leading edges that hints at the speaker's lineage.

Ian Paisley mentioned that one reason for differences between American and European speakers is that we have hard reflective walls where they have relatively soft absorptive ones. This would

explain the amount of bass power on offer but not the restrained midrange. It could relate to the OM-5's ulterior purpose: home cinema. What the home market demands the export markets learn to love, and with this much grunt on hand I can't see movie fans complaining.

Reaching back to that hotel room in Nice, I recall the OM-5 sounding very soft and warm – presumably the size of the room and the nature of its surfaces had much to do with this. I would certainly never have expected the potential for high energy entertainment that the speaker delivered at home. Presumably by increasing a speaker's breadth of dispersion to what is effectively a sphere, you are enhancing any effects that the room might have. Another factor might be the results of an NRC (National Research Council, Canada) survey of listening preferences with which Mirage was involved. Among other things, this suggested that a broad spectrum of music enthusiasts had much the same tastes when it came to speaker sound: low distortion, flat on axis response, wide bandwidth and wide and uniform dispersion. Whether this indicates Omnipolar dispersion is not disclosed in the literature, but it's interesting to know that folks with differing musical tastes can agree on one thing. And it also suggests that the room is a major source of differences in the choices that we make.

## Conclusion

It's interesting to note that Mirage also produces a forward radiating high end loudspeaker, the MRM-1, at about the same price as this design, suggesting as I believe was hinted in Nice, that there are opposing views in the camp. A healthy state of affairs.

If you are after a loudspeaker that goes loud without distortion, digs deep with aplomb, and creates plenty of depth of image this could be for you. If you have a large room and an enthusiasm for blockbusters, it's certainly a good bet. But it's definitely a case of try at home before you buy.



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# Tweet Petite

Paul Messenger goes ultrasonic for Tannoy's new high-frequency tweeter.

**T**annoy has recently introduced a brand new species of loud-speaker component. The SuperTweeter's purpose is to reproduce just the very highest frequencies, close to (and indeed beyond) the upper limit of human hearing. Is there any point in spending £1,200 on something that reproduces frequencies reckoned by many to be audible only to the family pets? Tannoy reckons so, and chief engineer Dr Paul Mills has produced a White Paper on "The Need for Extended High Frequency Bandwidth - Or Why You Need a SuperTweeter", which discusses various aspects of ultrasonics and their reproduction. Many customers agree with Dr Mills: the SuperTweeter has been so successful in the Far East that Tannoy is encountering a shortage of solid walnut, which is used to make the enclosure. So perhaps everyone is right, especially given the imminent arrival of formats like SACD and DVD-Audio with potential bandwidths of 100kHz or more.

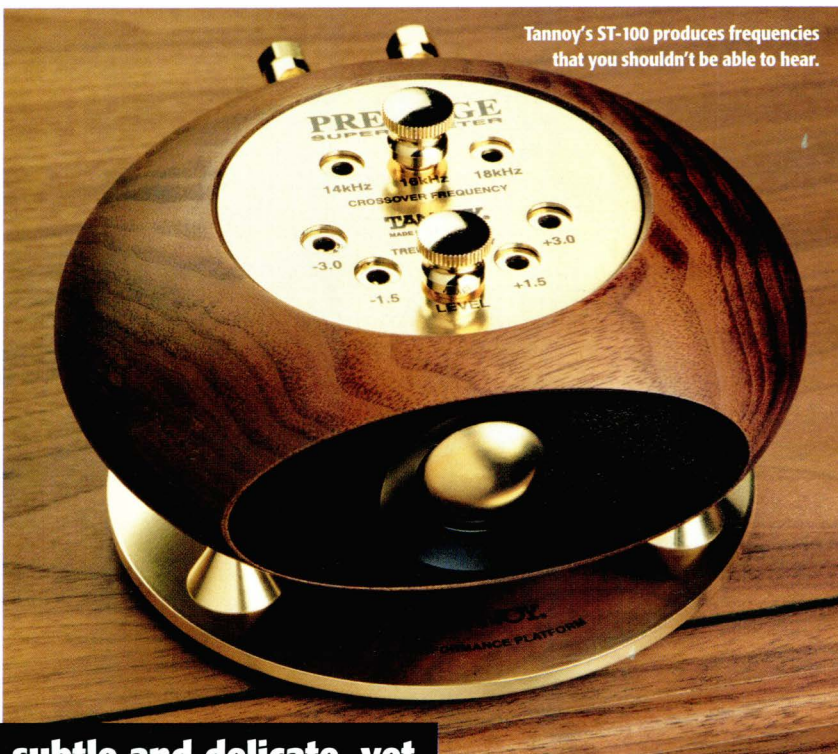
The SuperTweeter concept isn't entirely new - nor is it unique to Tannoy, for that matter. Indeed, *Choice* columnist Jimmy Hughes described his own experiments in the ultrasonic zone a year or so back (in *HFC* 196). And Tannoy first used a SuperTweeter in its very large Kingdom flagship model, introduced in 1998. Since mid-1999, the ST has been produced as a standalone 'bandwidth extender' for the company's retro-style Prestige models, and now this ST-100 'universal' model has just been released, with greater crossover flexibility. The idea is to sit them on top of existing speakers, and carefully position them to achieve optimum time alignment. They come with adjustable tripod supports, and classy silver cables to connect them in parallel with the main speakers.

Elaborately packaged in a flight case, the standard of finish on all components is top class. It looks very good too, whether you regard it as some sort of baby cyclopean flying saucer or an over-size ice hockey puck. The diaphragm is an edge-driven 1-inch titanium dome, 25 microns thick and with a vapour deposited gold finish. A 38kHz dome resonance is compensated by a tuned 'suck' circuit in the network, and the upper limit is specified at 54kHz -6dB.

Each SuperTweeter has a built-in 3rd order high pass filter, with a choice of nominal 18, 20 and 22kHz turnover frequencies, plus five 2dB level/sensitivity steps from 87dB to 95dB. Somewhat alarmingly, the measured impedance dipped to a sub-2 Ohm minimum on the highest sensitivity setting (nominally 95dB), which (in tandem with the main speakers) might irritate some amplifiers, though the lower output settings become correspondingly easier to drive.

## SOUND QUALITY

A £1,200 SuperTweeter deserves to be auditioned alongside pretty serious loudspeakers. A succession of these came and went, but none were suitable, despite the ST-100's 'universal' claims. There were the Lowther-driven Beauhorns (much too sensitive), my own Rehdekos (ditto), the ATC SCM70s (no access to power amps, curved top surface), and the Shahinian Hawks (pyramid top with drive units firing every which way). Those popular B&W Nautilus 800s with their curved tops and external tweeters aren't going to be SuperTweeter friendly either, while my venerable Spondor BC1s excluded themselves simply because that design was first fitted with a 'supertweeter' way back in 1970!



Tannoy's ST-100 produces frequencies that you shouldn't be able to hear.

**The effect is subtle and delicate, yet quite persuasive and possibly addictive**

Finally, I found a suitable candidate in the shape of PMC's large and very impressive MB1 - a big, three-way transmission-

line monitor. PMC designer Peter Thomas might be sceptical about the value of supertweeters, and most of the visitors who dropped in shared the same attitude. I too was sceptical at first but, rather to my surprise, they've gradually won me over to a slightly grudging acceptance that: a) they do make a difference, and b) that difference is mostly positive.

Stick your ear up close and you can hear that the ST is making some contribution. Go back to your chair and you'll probably agree that it seems to open up the soundstage, adding more air and space to the proceedings. All of which is very pleasant, though not quite what PMC intended for the MB1. This is a monitoring loudspeaker, delivering pin-sharp focus, as a good monitor should. Put the SuperTweeter on top and the result might be more engaging and entertaining, but it does slightly dilute the focus. Interestingly, I found I preferred using the ST on its minimum settings (87dB, 22kHz), and would have liked to have turned it down another notch or two had that been possible.

## CONCLUSIONS

The SuperTweeter effect probably has rather more to do with altering time-alignment and aiding the dispersion of the very highest audible frequencies than in reproducing the ultrasonic region. But the effect is real nonetheless: subtle and delicate, yet quite persuasive and possibly addictive too (I'll let you know!). One bottom line is that I'm still using the SuperTweeters, and will probably continue to do so at least until the next 'unsuitable' speaker comes along. But another bottom line is that I haven't had to pay £1,200 for the privilege (and Jimmy Hughes' home built supertweeter arrangement is very inexpensive). The price of Tannoy's solution might be off-putting, but it certainly looks the business, and there are plenty of audiophiles prepared to pay similar sums for connecting cables. Despite an element of marketing hype, this is a fascinating device, and great fun for those of a tweaky disposition.

★★★★★☆☆☆☆

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# Format Wars

Does the arrival of new digital formats DVD-A and SACD spell the end for poor old CD? *Alvin Gold* tests their mettle.

**T**wenty years ago, the laser existed, but there was little it could be used for outside the laboratory. There was laser disc, but compact disc was the killer application: a 12cm silver disc, read by laser, CD was memorably billed as offering 'perfect sound forever'. After a slow start, CD went on to conquer the world, and today is by far the most widely used recorded sound carrier of them all, eclipsing even compact cassette. But even before its launch there was a body of opinion that compact disc was not enough, that it was based on a simplistic model of the hearing process, and that its final parameters were determined by what was possible rather than what was required.

Finally, things are changing. In fact they have been doing so for some time. DVD-Video has now been on sale for around three years, and has had considerable success as a film carrier – even making inroads into the rental market, which doesn't take chances with formats that are not firmly established. So when Pioneer in Japan started to demonstrate the benefits of doubled-up sampling rates on specially modified DAT recorders, it wasn't long before the move was on to produce a high resolution alternative to CD, which eventually surfaced in two mutually incompatible forms, namely DVD-Audio, based closely on DVD-Video's PCM technology, and Super Audio CD, which is based on Direct Stream Digital, an elegant digital coding system which is a very direct analogue of the original audio waveform. SACD has been on sale for about a year in a low key way, pending the arrival of an affordable model like the one from Sony reviewed here, and DVD-Audio is scheduled to launch at about the same time as this review appears.

In this test we have CD players, a DVD-Video player from a company best known for its audio products, a DVD-Audio player from a company best known for its video products, and an SACD player. What links these products? Not their headline capabilities obviously, but there is one key common factor. They all play compact disc, underlying the status of the parent format as the common denominator of all 12cm silver discs, the one that is guaranteed to work in any player in which it will physically fit.

This puts CD in a very special position, and rest assured, there is absolutely no possibility that CD will disappear, or that SACD and DVD-A will be more than niche players for a good while yet. What we now have, in short, is a family of disc formats, each with its particular capabilities and limitations.

This test is concerned with a group of six including CD players and representatives from the other playback formats, namely DVD-Video, DVD-Audio and SACD. We look at how they compare as CD players, and then how much further they can be stretched thanks to the added functionality of those that are not just compact disc players.

## How the tests were done

The players were run in and auditioned in a top class system, consisting of a Krell KPS25sc, which is a preamplifier and CD player, a McCormack DNA125 power amp and JM Lab Mezzo Utopia speakers, with Nordost cables throughout. The Krell's CD player section was used as a reference for the test as a whole, but we also had an early sample

of a DVD-A player from a manufacturer not represented in this group which was used as a point of reference in particular for the JVC DVD-Audio player. We had a modest selection of discs in all formats, but only with dual layer SACDs did we have the same music available in SACD and CD formats, so comparing the different carriers presented problems.

## THE CAST LIST

CD	
Arcam FMJ CD23	£1099.90
Marantz CD-17 Mk II	£799.90
Tube Technology Fusion 2	£1,350.00
DVD-Video	
Primare V20	£999.90
DVD-Audio/Video	
JVC XV-D723GD	£500.00
SACD	
Sony SCD-XB940	£549.99

## GLOSSARY

**CD (COMPACT DISC)** 16-bit/44.1kHz stereo sound carrier.

**DVD-VIDEO or DVD (DIGITAL VERSATILE DISC)** 24-bit/96kHz Video and multimedia carrier compatible with data reduced codecs such as Dolby Digital and dts in two or 5.1 channel form or (with Dolby EX or DTS ES) 6.1 or 7.1 channel layout. DVD-Video discs also normally carry stereo compatible Dolby Pro-Logic.

**DVD-AUDIO** Similar to DVD-Video but not mutually compatible, though most players will be. Most of the available bandwidth is allocated to the sound, which is linear PCM up to 24-bit/96kHz in 5.1 channel format, or 24-bit/192kHz in 2-channel format.

**MLP (MERIDIAN LOSSLESS PACKING)** A data compression system that preserves all the musical information, therefore truly lossless, unlike Dolby Digital or dts. MLP enables DVD-Audio to deliver useful playing times from a single disc, and to allow replay of wide bandwidth material within the limitations of the format.

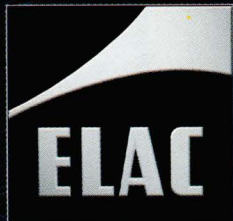
**SACD (SUPER AUDIO CD)** 100kHz bandwidth, alternative high-resolution audio carrier to DVD-Audio, with a similar (not identical) performance, but no degradation when used in full 5.1 channel mode, and with a much more powerful anti-piracy protection.

**DSD (DIRECT STREAM DIGITAL)** Core signal format for SACD, the data can be replayed directly through little more than a simple low pass filter.

## HINTS & TIPS

The new high resolution carriers have discs whose packing density is several times greater than CD, and it is even more important to protect the disc surfaces to avoid a degraded output. The other main point to take care of is to give the players a firm, flat surface to work on (see this month's rack reviews, page 79).

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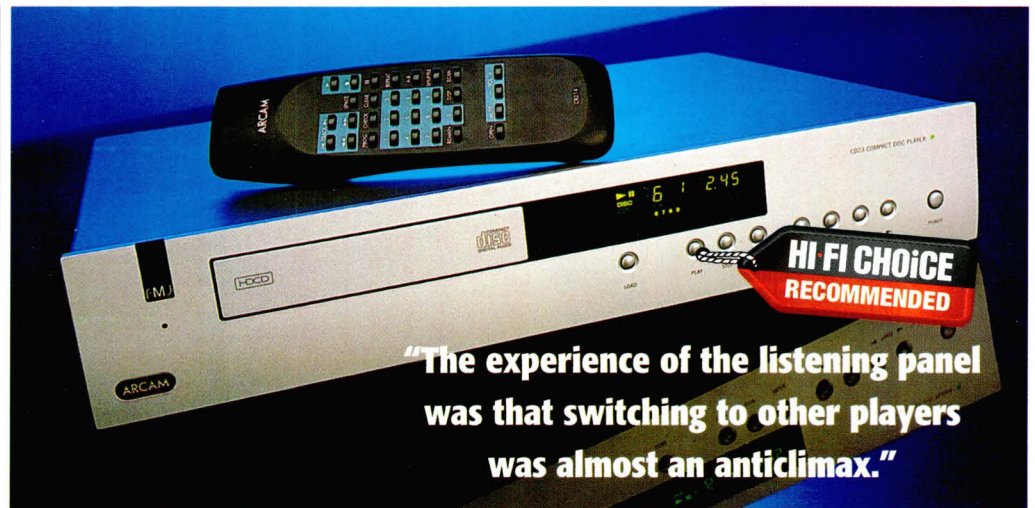


# ARCAM FMJ CD23

There was a time when being British was a byword for a lack of style and kitchen workshop engineering values, but this kind of endearing traditionalism doesn't play as well as it once did. FMJ was originally a response to a requirement from Arcam's German and US distributors, and it was touch and go whether it would go on sale in the UK at all. In the event it has been a significant success here too, especially (according to Arcam) in the case of the FMJ CD23, whose internal design differs more than any of the other FMJs from the Alpha series component on which it is based.

That product is the Alpha 9 CD player, the one that launched the dCS Ring DAC in a domestic product for the first time. Ring DAC is a novel converter topology which is said to offer the best of both worlds by combining the low level linearity of Bitstream with the reduced ultrasonic output of multibit conversion. The FMJ model sports a 'Trilaminar' chassis – a three-layer composite made from two layers of steel damped by a rubberised polymer core. The 8mm thick machined aluminium extruded fascia is bead blasted and then baked to give a very distinctive and hard wearing finish. Other changes for the FMJ include a re-laid motherboard and an enhanced power supply, which features a second toroidal transformer to feed the Ring DAC daughterboard. A Pacific Microsonics HDCD filter is included.

The CD23 lacks a headphone socket, and has a conventional feature count with most of the twiddly bits relegated to the remote control, though the basic player has a comprehensive display, and



enough buttons to perform everyday actions and more unaided. Socketry includes an electrical digital output and two sets of analogue outputs. The Sony mechanism is smooth and (by reputation) reliable.

### SOUND QUALITY

This is a beautifully balanced player on audition. The bass is slightly lightweight, but of fine quality, which admittedly is not usually a problem for compact disc. The treble has a smoothness and lack of grain that is extremely unusual with CD, and indeed hints at the kind of treble that can be produced by DVD-A and SACD. Resolution of fine detail is also very strong, but in this respect the Arcam plays firmly in CD territory, though towards the top end. Finally, stereo imagery is explicit in the depth plane as well as laterally, which implies accurate handling of subtle ambient information, the hallmark of a fine player. The only real sin committed by the Arcam was a

certain lack of electricity at times, but the ability to hear the inner structure of recordings allowed the music to tell its own story, and our experience was that switching to other players was almost always an anticlimax.

One question remains, inevitably at the moment: with new high resolution media now at the starting gate, how does a good CD player like the CD23 stack up against them? Or to put it more bluntly, isn't compact disc now past its sell-by date? These issues are discussed further elsewhere in this project, but it is worth noting that the Arcam is a better sounding player than at least one DVD-Audio player (not reviewed in this project and therefore not nameable, but it was used as a reference). Although the JVC does indeed sound better in DVD-Audio mode, this is on the basis of an alarmingly narrow range of music, and the numbers are going to favour CD for a very long time to come.

### CONCLUSIONS

To an extent the FMJ story is one of new bottles for old wine, but to leave it at that would do the CD23 an injustice. The old wine in question is an impressive player in its own right, and it has been significantly modified and enhanced before being decanted into its smart new home.

### VERDICT

<b>SOUND</b>	★★★★☆
<b>BUILD</b>	★★★★★
<b>VALUE</b>	★★★★☆
<b>PRICE</b>	<b>£1,099.90</b>

World-class presentation is allied with innovative technology and painstaking re-engineering from the base Alpha 9 to deliver a subtle and engaging standard of music making.

#### TWO YEAR GUARANTEE

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## THE LAB REPORT

At the heart of this player beats the innovative RingDAC technology first experienced in Arcam's Alpha 9 CD player (see HFC 180, 185 and 188). The FMJ or CD23 builds on this chassis with revisions to the motherboard, a new power supply feeding the DAC section and a heavyweight enclosure for improved isolation. This RingDAC converter remains something of a technical hallmark, however, combining the low 260psec jitter and excellent resolution (+0.4dB/-0.3dB over a 100dB dynamic range) expected of a bitstream-style technology with the low ultrasonic noise typically associated with multi-bit or hybrid DACs.

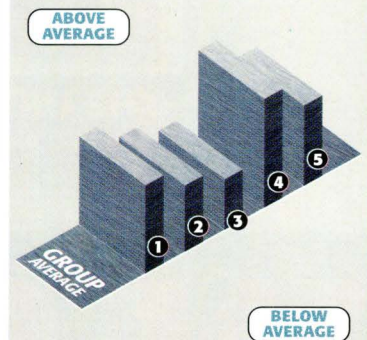


As a result, high frequency distortion remains as low as 0.004 per cent at 20kHz with no appreciable re-quantisation noise or digital 'images' above this frequency to place added stress on the partnering amplifier. It's just one very important reason why both the Alpha 9 and CD23 sound so creamy smooth. Despite crunching its digital numbers with a 24-bit accuracy, the practical S/N ratio of the RingDAC, in this implementation, is far closer to a 16-bit value of 96dB instead of a 24-bit range of >140dB. As CD is based on a 16-bit code, this is all you'll ever need, but if Arcam intends using a RingDAC in a DVD-A player, then changes will need to be made. **PMI**

## HOW IT COMPARES

Low distortion, jitter and ultrasonic spuriae all contribute to a smooth and refined sound. A class act.

1 SUPPRESSION OF DIGITAL IMAGES	65%
2 JITTER	5%
3 PRACTICAL DYNAMIC RANGE	-10%
4 HARMONIC DISTORTION VS LEVEL	15%
5 LINEARITY	30%



## SPECIFICATIONS

PARAMETER	MANUFACTURER'S SPEC.	ACTUAL SPEC.
Distortion @ 1kHz/0dBfs	<0.005%	0.0013%
Maximum output level	2.3V	2.33V
A-wtd S/N ratio	>100dB	96.7dB

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# JVC XV-D723GD

The JVC XV-D723GD is one of the first players to be compatible with DVD-Audio, but this is only one capability of a design that also boasts full DVD-Video (with JVC's latest 10-bit 54MHz video processor). And, of course, it will also play compact discs in its current status as the disc that keeps on giving. It even plays CD-RW.

Also part of the standard equipment list is an on-board Dolby Digital, dts and MPEG decoder, with six analogue outputs in addition to stereo analogue and digital outputs. The decoder provides a convenient way of delivering multi-channel sound from DVD-Video, but it is not the best way (how would you add EX/ES for example?), and may seem at odds with the inclusion of DVD-A. The resolution comes from the press information, which describes this model as a DVD-Video player that also plays DVD-Audio discs rather than the other way around. In other words, the XV-D723GD is above all an all-purpose player, a one-stop-shop for disc replay (SACD apart), and its surround sound decoding is consistent with this end. The other point of course is that the analogue outputs will also deliver multi-channel DVD-Audio sound.

Given its complexity, the JVC is not hard to drive. The front panel is almost as bereft of controls as the Primare DVD-Video player. Displays show the current channel disposition, bit rate and sampling frequency with DVD-Audio. The remote control is a horrible, cheap looking light-grey affair but, although it is rather cramped, it is ergonomically sound, and if the player is a little slow in response to control input, it is well equipped with



**"This is the first DVD-Audio player we've heard that begins to justify the hype."**

on-screen picture quality set-up options. It can deliver composite, S-Video and RGB from its Scart socket, and composite and S/Video from the usual round holes on the back.

### SOUND QUALITY

As a CD player, the JVC barely passes muster. It is lightweight and neutral, but dynamically and rhythmically challenged when using heavy-duty source material. The standard was barely that of a cheap ultra-budget player, though if you're just bopping around with the Spice Girls, you may not spot the difference. As a DVD-Video player, we were also a tad disappointed by unexceptional on-screen picture quality. Sound quality from the integral dts and DD decoders was in the same ballpark area.

And so to DVD-Audio. For comparison purposes, we borrowed another DVD-Audio player from a major multinational, which because it was received on a non-disclosure

basis we will proceed to describe as Dark Horse. What we can say is that most of the DVD-Audio source material we received was pretty grim, and in one or two instances – a female vocal jazz track in one case – the mile deep metallic reverberation was simply comical. But there were exceptions, including a two-track JVC classical sampler which was of a different order. While the music concerned certainly didn't stretch the dynamic or frequency envelope, the sound was simply glorious: fresh, unrestrained and extremely fine grain. A whole wealth of string detail became apparent that went a long way to closing the gap with live music making. Best of all this was achieved in the context of a sound that was sweeter, less bright and palpably less mechanical than usual. Dark House by contrast was much more CD-like: slightly coarse, with a cold edge, and lacking in the JVC's almost endless resolving ability.

### CONCLUSIONS

The JVC XV-D723GD falls between several stools. Its audiophile appeal as a DVD-Audio player must be set against a poor performance playing compact discs, and a DVD-Video section whose performance, suggests it is aimed at the 'fit and forget' market. But this is the first DVD-Audio player we've heard that begins to justify the hype. And at this price, it's an attractive prospect.

**VERDICT**

<b>SOUND</b>	★★★★☆
<b>BUILD</b>	★★★★☆
<b>VALUE</b>	★★★★☆
<b>PRICE</b>	<b>£500.00</b>

At the time of writing, this is the most convincing DVD-A capable player doing the rounds, but next week, who's to say?

■ ONE YEAR GUARANTEE

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

☎ 020 8450 3282

## THE LAB REPORT

Viewed as a conventional CD player, JVC's XV-D723 puts in a mixed performance. Distortion is very low at 0.0006 per cent (0dBfs), increasing to just 0.005 per cent at -30dBfs while the A-wtd S/N ratio clocks in at a respectable 103.6dB – a shade behind Marantz's CD-17mkII. Clock deviation is a low +7ppm and the response, in true JVC style, is flat as the proverbial pancake (just +0.0/-0.07dB over 20kHz). And yet a poor digital filter offers just 38dB suppression of out-of-band digital images. Meanwhile, discrete (correlated) jitter amounts to 309psec which is perfectly manageable, although all high frequency peaks are accompanied by a



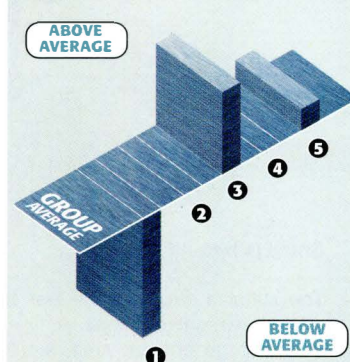
'skirt' of noise, rather like a random form of jitter (see Oasis on p52 for more details). An incorrectly controlled or poorly filtered PLL that serves as the master clock can cause this random jitter effect. Perhaps, by way of saving costs, JVC has chosen to derive the audio clock from the video clock? In DVD-A mode, distortion varies from 0.0005% at 20Hz, 0.0009% at 1kHz, 0.009% at 10kHz, 0.0155% at 22kHz and 0.05% at 44kHz while the response (with offers just 38dB suppression of out-of-band digital images. Meanwhile, discrete (correlated) jitter amounts to 309psec which is perfectly manageable, although all high frequency peaks are accompanied by a

PMI

## HOW IT COMPARES

Low distortion and noise with good low-level resolution and a very flat and extended response (in DVD-A mode), but random jitter effects may yet spoil the digital party.

- 1 SUPPRESSION OF DIGITAL IMAGES -80%
- 2 JITTER 0%
- 3 PRACTICAL DYNAMIC RANGE 55%
- 4 HARMONIC DISTORTION VS LEVEL 0%
- 5 LINEARITY 15%



## SPECIFICATIONS

PARAMETER	MANUFACTUR'S SPEC.	ACTUAL SPEC.
■ Distortion @ 1kHz/0dBfs	0.0018%	0.0006%
■ Maximum output level	2.0V	2.0V
■ A-wtd S/N ratio	>100dB	103.6dB

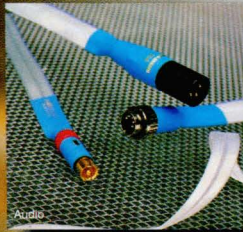
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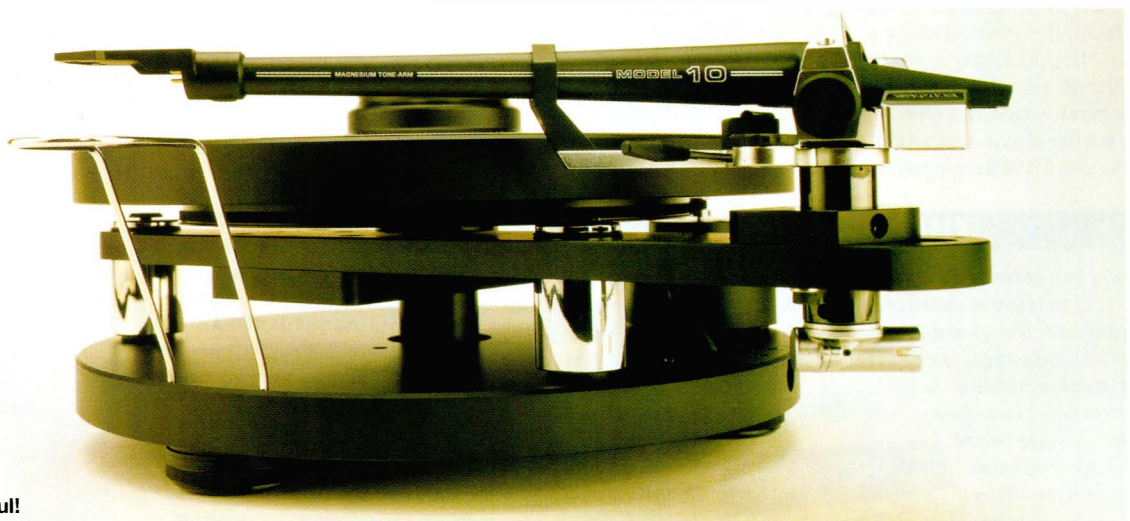
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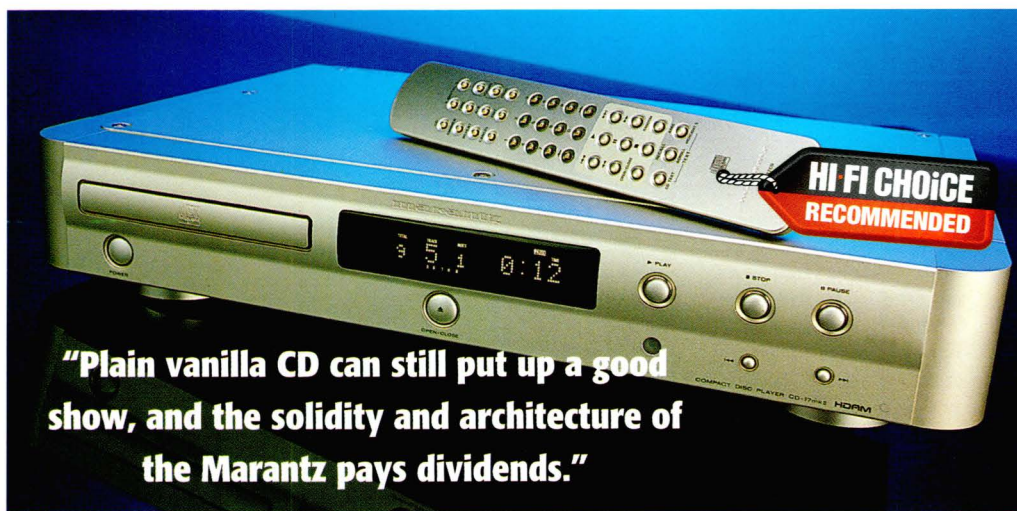
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# MARANTZ CD-17 Mk II

**T**he CD-17 is one of the more elegant examples of its breed. A low slung visual delight, finished in a pale matt gold, and featuring a sculpted front panel with just a minimum of controls, the CD-17 reeks of class. But it is already a familiar sight. We have already reviewed the original version of this player (in *HFC 155*) – and also the KI Signature, an enhanced version of that player with the Ken Ishiwata personal imprimatur (*HFC 176*).

This is the Mk II, which replaces the basic version of the CD-17, and which costs £800, the same as its predecessor at launch – or less, allowing for inflation. As before, this is an audiophile CD player without too many baubles and toys. It continues to use much of the same digital clockwork as before – namely a dual differential version of the DAC7, which means a total of four D/A converters in total, and Marantz's discrete HDAM output op-amp – but the digital filter is new, using DSP to compensate for the characteristics of the analogue output filter.

There are a number of other new features: a new power transformer for example, and a new mechanism which allows CD-RW discs to be read, a welcome improvement given the burgeoning popularity of recordable CD and the plummeting prices of CD-RW media. The Marantz will now respond to CD Text where available, which comes up loud and clear on a very attractive, though not particularly fine pitch, dot matrix display, and an optical digital output has now been added to the electrical digital input. Last but not least (or last and least, depending on your point of view), the Marantz now



**"Plain vanilla CD can still put up a good show, and the solidity and architecture of the Marantz pays dividends."**

comes with a bright, shiny new stick-type remote control in a finish that is similar to the player.

### SOUND QUALITY

The short verdict is that the CD-17 II is a much better player than many, the Sony SCD-XB940 SACD player in CD compatibility mode, for example. On balance its timing seemed slightly loose, but it sounded more solid and physical than the Sony, and it clearly has stronger dynamics. Compared to Big Brother (the Krell KPS-25sc), the Marantz sounds slightly slurred, and lacking in precision, but it still lopes along at an impressive lick, with a well-anchored soundstage, and it is very tidy tonally. Using the track *See See Rider* from Joe Beard's *For Real* (an excellent SACD hybrid) in CD mode, it sounded rather emaciated and lightweight, and the Marantz bought a feeling of structure and forcefulness to the presentation. Switch to the SACD layer, though, and all bets

were off – the Sony sounds immediately more together and tighter as a performance, and more three dimensional into the bargain.

The most attractive musical feature of this player is its distinctively full tonality, which makes it sound bolder and more dynamic than we remember of its predecessor. It stacks up well against the direct competition, though its timing can seem a tad off the boil by the highest standards, but a quick glance at the respective prices of the Marantz and the reference player will put this particular limitation into context. It was intriguing, however, that although the best of the new high resolution media (which at the time of writing means SACD, though this is partly a reflection of the software position – this is discussed elsewhere) sounds sharper, more focussed and more expressive, plain vanilla compact disc can still put up a good show, and the solidity and architecture of the Marantz pays dividends.

### CONCLUSIONS

No direct comparison with the original version of this player was possible, but it seemed generally improved. Of course, it also benefits from the added functionality, especially the CD-RW compatibility, which is likely to become more of an issue. The fact that this has been achieved while retaining the original price makes for a very attractive player.

**VERDICT**

<b>SOUND</b>	★★★★☆
<b>BUILD</b>	★★★★★
<b>VALUE</b>	★★★★☆
<b>PRICE</b>	<b>£799.90</b>

i **Sophisticated player, with a short but attractive feature set, and a new-found bounce in its step.**  
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## THE LAB REPORT

**T**he original CD-17 set very high standards when we reviewed it back in *HFC 155*, and the trend very definitely continues with this updated model. Both versions use Philips' DAC7 Bit Converters but where the mkI used a combination of an SM5841 oversampling filter and SAA7350 noise-shaper, the mkII features a single TDA1307 dual-purpose chip. Jitter is reduced to an all-time low for Marantz of 170psec while distortion remains extremely low at just 0.0016-0.0065 per cent across the audioband at -30dBFs. At the player's peak 2.1V output, THD falls to just 0.0006 per cent which is on a par with Sony's best efforts.

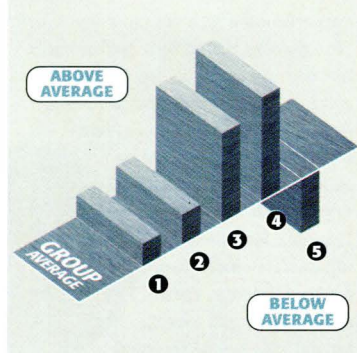


Low-level resolution does deviate slightly by up to -0.8dB at 1kHz (re -100dBFs) but just -0.3dB at 20kHz compared to the +/-0.3dB of the original CD-17, but then the overall S/N ratio has dropped from the latter's 110dB to 103.8dB. Either way, this new figure is more than appropriate for a 16-bit CD player and, in practice, more than a match for the first practical implementations of SACD and DVD-A with their potential for 24-bit performance. Superior digital filtering, meanwhile, has improved stopband rejection from 54dB to a full 95dB, though levels of ultrasonic noise are higher than with Arcam's CD23, for example. **PMi**

## HOW IT COMPARES

**A** welcome update of a previous *Choice* favourite combines low jitter, distortion, excellent rejection of digital images and a ruler-flat response.

- 1 SUPPRESSION OF DIGITAL IMAGES 15%
- 2 JITTER 20%
- 3 PRACTICAL DYNAMIC RANGE 60%
- 4 HARMONIC DISTORTION VS LEVEL 70%
- 5 LINEARITY -35%



## SPECIFICATIONS

PARAMETER	MANUFACTUR'S SPEC.	ACTUAL SPEC.
■ Distortion @ 1kHz/0dBFs	0.0015%	0.0006%
■ Maximum output level	2.2V	2.1V
■ A-wtd S/N ratio	>103dB	103.8dB

# PRIMARE V20

At first sight, the V20 looks a tad out of place alongside the DVD-A and SACD players, and in a way it is. Its audio capabilities are limited to dts CD and DVD, Dolby Digital and Dolby Pro Logic DVD, and linear PCM from CD. Video CD and CD-RWs can also be accommodated. But this is a very superficial reading of a video player which was designed by audiophiles, and pays more than the usual lip service to matters musical. Surprisingly, however, the Primare won't output 96kHz from its digital output, which will affect the few who have 24-bit 96kHz DVD-Video format discs and want to use an outboard converter.

This player has recently been improved with a new Sony/Hitachi mechanism replacing an Alps part, a new processing board and video DAC and a premium Analogue Devices D/A, plus fixes for certain issues, notably intermittent output glitches. At first sight, the V20 looks like any of Primare's CD players, with the standard Primare fascia and control system consisting of a bank of six buttons, including standby and enough others to facilitate track selection and play. A rather cramped green display – not the V20's most attractive feature – completes the front panel fixtures, and the mains on/off switch is concealed as usual just below the left hand fascia.

This player is not specifically aimed at the UK market. There is no SCart socket, for example, but there is a set of component video outputs of the kind used in the States – and, in a small way, in the UK on up-market displays and projectors. Otherwise, the Primare is limited to composite and S-Video outputs on



the video side, and for the audio, optical and electrical digital outputs, which can transfer raw dts data to an external converter. The Philips video section is interfaced by a Primare designed buffer, and all D/A converters and audio electronics are kept well away from the transport and laser assembly.

The Primare is shipped with a plastic and not very well laid out remote control, but the player was particularly quick responding to the main play commands, making the JVC XV-D723GD, for example, look sluggish.

## SOUND QUALITY

DVD-Video players don't generally make very good compact disc players, but given their purist audio leanings we expected something more from Primare, and we were not disappointed. It's not a great CD player but, unlike most DVDs, it's far from being a poor one. Using the Arcam or the Krell as references, the Primare made the percussion section in one record-

ing sound rather thin and distant, and there are clear, if mild, losses of musical structure, especially when judged against the extraordinary (and extraordinarily expensive) Krell reference player. It should be noted, though, that the slightly soft-focus presentation is in tune with the voicing of other Primare components, and the V20 is smooth, easy and articulate.

The surprise for a player from an audio specialist was to discover how good the Primare is as a video player. Although players like the JVC may have greater video bandwidth and more extensive picture customisation, the V20 gave a particularly clean, vivid picture. The levels of motion artefacts were a little higher than some, but the V20 was sharp and detailed, with excellent black levels, and anyone who can use the component video option should find this player has even more to give. We couldn't test this on the panel, but the Primare is an excellent Dolby Digital and dts source.

## CONCLUSIONS

Early versions of the V20 had acknowledged problems, but we were surprised and pleased that the revamped player put in a strong performance. It still faces an uphill task, however, as it must compete with lower cost counterparts with DVD-Audio compatibility (the JVC XV-D623GD, for example) and high flying DVD-Video players like top of the line Pioneer and Sony machines.

## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £999.90

Elegant and well built, the (recently updated) Primare V20 is a decent CD player, and has particularly strong picture quality.

■ TWO YEAR GUARANTEE

✉ CSE, Unit 9, Centre Park Holdings, The Airfield, Tockwith, Yorks YO5 8QF

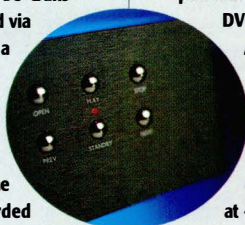
☎ (01423) 359054

## THE LAB REPORT

The Primare V20 contains a mix of technologies. The DVD mechanism is first rate and one of the few that will reliably handle CD and CD-R discs. On the other hand, audio data seems to be 'transmitted' to the output board via an internal S/PDIF link to a Crystal CS8414 receiver. This prompts a full 650psec of pure, data-related jitter, a type of distortion known to cast a grey pall over the natural vibrancy of recorded music. On the other hand, there's no low-rate jitter to compromise bass resolution or blur stereo imagery.

Furthermore, though Burr-Brown's PCM1728 DAC will process 96kHz audio data at a 24-bit resolution, Primare is down-

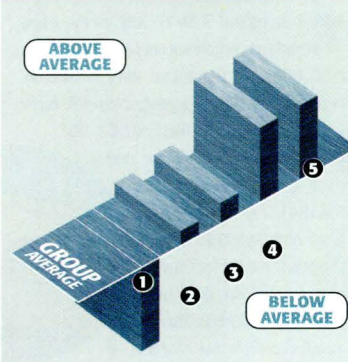
sampling all data to 48kHz, thereby limiting any advantage offered by 96kHz/24bit 2-channel music recordings available on DVD. In this respect, the V20 mirrors the performance of Micromega's early DVD players. Naturally, DVD-Audio is not supported. Distortion follows an unusual trend by actually decreasing from 0.006 per cent at 0dBFS (<0.01 at 20kHz and 20kHz) to 0.003 per cent at -10dBFS to 0.0015 per cent at -30dBFS. Noise, too, is difficult to measure because the DAC responds erratically to the digital zero test signal used for the purpose. Pre-emphasised CD material is not supported, so such discs will sound very bright indeed (+8.5dB at 20kHz). **PMI**



## HOW IT COMPARES

As it stands, it's the video rather than audio performance of the V20 that remains its strongest suit. Nevertheless, those foibles that remain are not beyond repair.

- 1 SUPPRESSION OF DIGITAL IMAGES -15%
- 2 JITTER -40%
- 3 PRACTICAL DYNAMIC RANGE -40%
- 4 HARMONIC DISTORTION VS LEVEL -40%
- 5 LINEARITY 30%



## SPECIFICATIONS

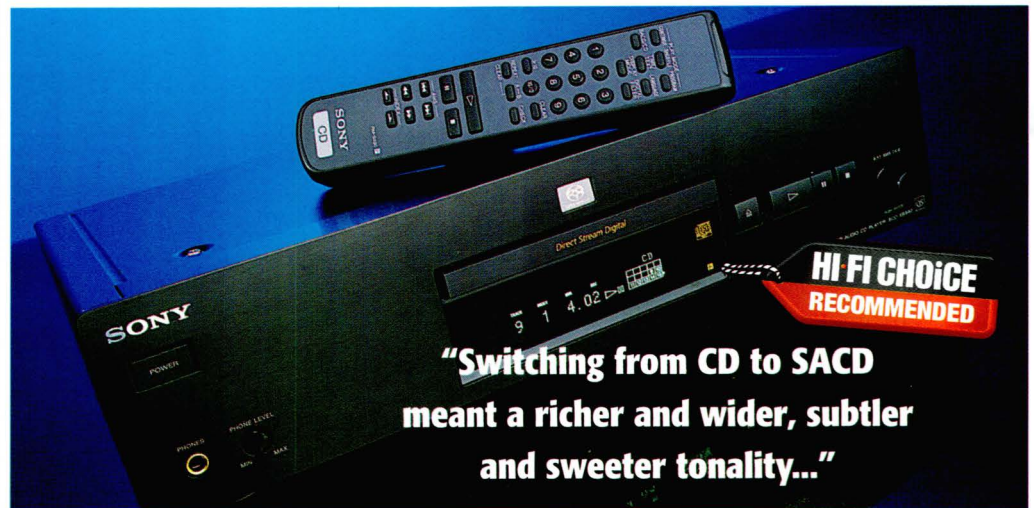
SPECIFICATION	CLAIMED	MEASURED
■ Distortion @ 1kHz/0dBFS	<0.05%	0.006%
■ Maximum output level	1.9V	2.0V
■ A-wtd S/N ratio	96dB	~93dB

# SONY SCD-XB940

**T**alk about hiding your light under a bushel. The SCD-XB940 SACD player is one of the first players in the world capable of playing this revolutionary new kind of disc, but it looks just like any CD player, except simpler, and with fewer controls. The only distinguishing features are the discreet SACD and DSD badges, and a display read-out which lights up when the player recognises an SACD. There is a switch to select between SACD and CD but only on the remote control. You won't even know what it is by the less than endearing trait of earlier Sony SACD players which took an age to start playing. This one starts to play – SACD or CD – as quickly as most CD players.

As a CD player, it is quintessentially Sony. CDs have the benefit of CD Text (a similar ability is a standard part of the SACD specification) and are replayed with a variable coefficient digital filter with five settings, a fast roll-off brick wall filter and four gentler filters, roughly corresponding to variations on the Pioneer Legato Link theme. Treat them as tone controls, but you may find that the brick wall filter is the most satisfactory for most of the time. There are no such options for SACD which, at its most basic, may involve nothing more than low pass filtering of the 2.8224mhz DSD datastream. CD data can be extracted from the optical or electrical sockets on the back of the player, but this is another option closed to SACD users at present as no digital interface has yet been defined for DSD.

Physical build has been stripped down to a bare minimum, and the loading drawer in particular is inter-



estingly bendy, but the finish is good, and the remote control is a typically excellent stick type.

### SOUND QUALITY

There are two sets of listening results for this player, corresponding to the two types of discs it plays, but they share more than a little in common. In both cases the Sony is characteristically refined and detailed, with an agile and tuneful, but not particularly heavyweight, bass. The Sony could also be described as lacking drive and pace, and using the non-brick wall filters does nothing to help. SACD performance was assessed using hybrid discs by comparing the sound of the CD layer to the SACD layer. Differences between the two must be taken on trust, but they were consistent from disc to disc, irrespective of record label, and the CD layers were consistent in quality with similar ordinary compact discs.

In short, the CD/SACD comparison was deemed to be meaningful,

and the differences were certainly worthwhile. In every case, switching from CD to SACD meant a richer and wider, subtler and sweeter tonality, a more three dimensional quality and – significantly – enhanced timing. The whole effect was more propulsive. Switching deliberately back to CD was discouraged by the flat and inorganic sound, which is almost a caricature of what SACD can achieve, and it's a full vindication of the complaints that have been levelled against CD since its introduction.

But the SCD-XB940 doesn't have all the answers, and although the Sony always sounded more organic and three dimensional, the reference Krell player sounded more physical, offers better timing and depth and sounded more... well, more like music. SACD has greater resolution and control, but at this price level at least, it cannot aspire to the special qualities that Krell (and equivalents) can bring to the party.

### CONCLUSIONS

The worst thing about this player is that it's not a fully fledged multi-channel player, for which we will have to wait at least until the end of the year. You can't record SACD digitally, even at low Red Book resolution. But it is a good CD player, and demonstrates that even at this price level, SACD is much better than CD. Recommended, of course.

### VERDICT

<b>SOUND</b>	★★★★☆
<b>BUILD</b>	★★★★☆
<b>VALUE</b>	★★★★☆
<b>PRICE</b>	<b>£549.99</b>

**The first mainstream SACD player shows that the format really has legs, easily outstripping an already rather good CD player on every important count.**

#### ■ ONE YEAR GUARANTEE

☒ Sony UK Ltd., The Heights, Brooklands, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 0XW.  
☎ (0990) 111999

## THE LAB REPORT

**W**ithin the audioband, the difference in performance between CD and SACD material is not significant because the associated analogue circuitry largely defines the limits of distortion and noise, for example. Through midband frequencies, distortion as low as 0.0006 per cent is recorded while, slightly higher, at 5kHz a figure of 0.0015 per cent with CD is only fractionally lower at 0.0012 per cent with SACD. Neither is there any difference in the 2.095V peak output level or, in practice, with the 101.4dB A-wtd S/N ratio or, indeed, low-level resolution which holds true to within +0.0/-0.4dB over a full 100dB range. Jitter, too, remains exceptionally well controlled at just

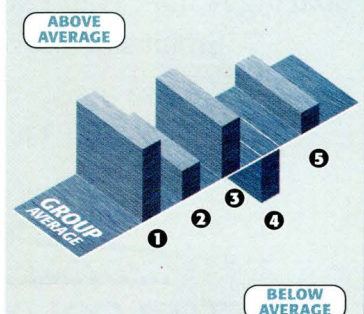
170psec, assisting the very 'clean' performance of this player, regardless of format. Naturally, where CD stops its tracks just beyond 20kHz, SACD continues to offer a useable output that drops to just -1.1dB at 40kHz, -8dB at 60kHz, -18dB at 80kHz and -27dB at 100kHz, albeit with a steadily decreasing available dynamic range (see *Oasis*, p52). Otherwise, the other key benefit of the SACD mode is its freedom from any sort of oversampling filter, which, likely as not, will prove pivotal in establishing the very open and spacious sound enjoyed by the format. An 8x filter is used in CD mode, however, offering a generous 105dB rejection of digital images. **PMi**



## HOW IT COMPARES

**A** very clean technical performance but the potential dynamic range and vanishing distortion offered by SACD is currently limited by the practicalities of its implementation.

- 1 SUPPRESSION OF DIGITAL IMAGES 50%
- 2 JITTER 20%
- 3 PRACTICAL DYNAMIC RANGE 35%
- 4 HARMONIC DISTORTION VS LEVEL -30%
- 5 LINEARITY 15%



## SPECIFICATIONS

PARAMETER	MANUFACTUR'S SPEC.	ACTUAL SPEC.
■ Distortion @ 1kHz/0dBfs	>0.002%	0.0006%
■ Maximum output level	2.0V	2.1V
■ A-wtd S/N ratio	>99dB	101.4dB

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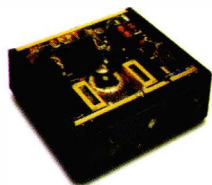
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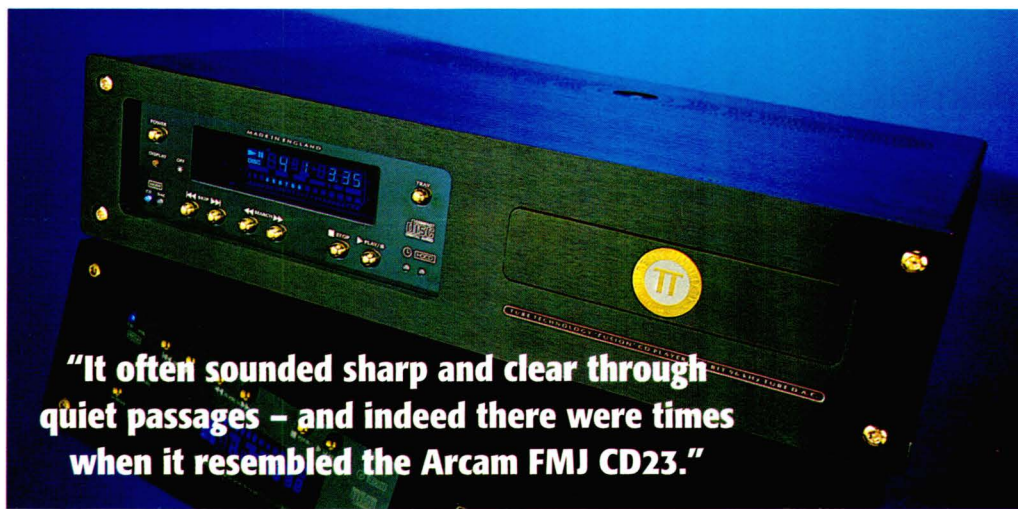


# TUBE TECHNOLOGY Fusion MkII

Originally reviewed in *HFC* 195, the Fusion is a CD player with a difference: it can be used as a transport and as a D/A processor using external signals up to 24-bit 96kHz. It also includes an optical clock input which can interface with higher spec out-board DACs – Tube Technology's own standalone DAC is mentioned. Most of all, however, the Fusion II uses a sexy new D/A converter technology known as the Pulse Array DAC.

Rather than a hard-wired D/A converter, the Pulse Array DAC uses an FPGA (Field Programmable Gate Array), a custom masked piece of general purpose silicon which is programmed to work as a discrete DAC and which processes the data as 24 parallel streams, each one "slightly different... [and including] information such as ambience and low level detail... usually lost in standard DACs". With oversampling said to be mathematically equivalent to 4,608x, the data is claimed to have much reduced sensitivity to clock jitter than Bitstream or even multibit. The output is fed to an inherently simple valve hybrid output stage, which includes miniature 6922 double triodes. An HDCD filter has been included.

When we first saw this model, it looked somewhat different, and was clearly in need of development. The output impedance was wrong by a factor of 100, which may have contributed to the squashed and flattened sound. In this version, a new master clock oscillator has been specified, a Sony mechanism with improved servo control replaces the Philips original, and the circuit layout has been revised to keep clock signals well apart from power supply



lines, which is helped by the larger and more conventionally designed case. Finally a new vacuum fluorescent display replaces the electrically noisier original, and the handset has also been re-engineered. Build quality of the player has improved somewhat. The materials look good, and the aesthetic treatment is individual, but it lacks the spit and polish that has gone into some of its rivals, and the panel work is quite thin.

The Fusion II has good quality socketry: it features BNC for the electrical digital in and outputs, a better connection than phono, but adaptors are available. CD-RWs played satisfactorily, but didn't always initialise first time, so compatibility may not be 100 per cent.

### SOUND QUALITY

It was not always easy to get a consistent picture of the music from this player. It often sounded sharp and clear through quiet passages – and indeed there were times when it

resembled the Arcam FMJ CD23, with a clear sense of analysis. In some of the test discs, piano and percussion cut through the music well. The sloth and compression of the earlier version has gone, but there is a sense that some of the rough edges are being concealed in the quieter passages and, by contrast, the player often became unruly when driven hard. Listening results lacked a clear thread which would have told how the player was behaving, but the lack of consistency, and selective losses of clarity and occasional impressions of raised distortion tell their own story.

Despite this, however, the Fusion is clearly a better player than original version. Much has been done to tackle the problems identified at that time, but there is still work to do.

### CONCLUSIONS

Any reader who detects an echo of the Arcam Ring DAC in the Fusion story is right. Not because the Pulse Array DAC is similar, but because it

has broadly similar aims, and is being sponsored by a single manufacturer. The Fusion Mk II (our numbering) is significantly improved over the original, and often sounds very enjoyable. The troughs in the performance of the original have been largely filled in, but it remains an uneven player which doesn't quite hit the spot.

### VERDICT

SOUND	★★★★☆
BUILD	★★★★☆
VALUE	★★★★☆
PRICE	£1,350.00

CD player, D/A converter and transport is much improved over original Fusion, but we remain ambivalent about a player that though occasionally excellent is too inconsistent for its own good.

#### ■ TWO YEAR GUARANTEE

Tube Technology, Technology House, 214 Station Road, Addlestone, Surrey KT15 2PH.  
 (01932) 821111

## THE LAB REPORT

Our first review of the Fusion in *HFC* 195 helped establish the basic technology of the player but also revealed that its implementation was far from complete. One year on, the Fusion still features the innovative Pulse Array DAC technology and the facility to be employed as an out-board converter via its 96kHz-compatible digital input receiver. But whether used as a CD player or out-board DAC, the technical 'fingerprint' of the Pulse Array converter and triode-based analogue stage that follows fairly overwhelms its performance.

Since its initial outing, the Fusion has clearly been refined with digital jitter reduced from 1150psec to a very respectable

200psec. Changes to the valve output board have wrought the biggest changes, not least by increasing the 1.95V output level to some 2.55V. This is +2.1dB over the notional 2V standard and will skew any unmatched A/B listening tests – beware! The high output also helps improve the overall S/N ratio from 85.8dB to 89.5dB, but this is still '1-bit' short of true '16-bit'.

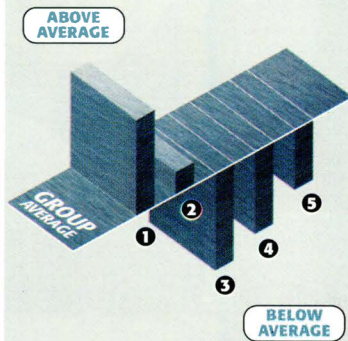
Distortion has actually increased slightly from 0.0008-0.014 per cent (20Hz-20kHz, 0dBfs) to 0.0015-0.035 per cent in this latest model while errors in low-level resolution now stretch to nearly 1dB over a 100dB range. The response, meanwhile, is now slightly 'flatter'. **PMI**



## HOW IT COMPARES

The Fusion is on the right track, reducing jitter, noise and improving both response and balance. Nevertheless, the road to perfection is still only half-travelled.

- 1 SUPPRESSION OF DIGITAL IMAGES 65%
- 2 JITTER 15%
- 3 PRACTICAL DYNAMIC RANGE -65%
- 4 HARMONIC DISTORTION VS LEVEL -55%
- 5 LINEARITY -40%



## SPECIFICATIONS

PARAMETER	MANUFACTURER'S SPEC.	ACTUAL SPEC.
■ Distortion @ 1kHz/0dBfs	0.006%	0.0025%
■ Maximum output level	2.0V	2.55V
■ A-wtd S/N ratio	98dB	89.5dB

- AAVIK RACKS
- ACOUSTIC ENERGY
- ACOUSTIC PRECISION
- AIWA
- AKAI
- ALCHEMIST
- ALPHASON
- APOLLO
- ARCAM
- ATACAMA
- ATC
- AUDIOLAB
- AUDIOQUEST
- AVI
- AVM
- B & W
- BARCO
- PROJECTORS
- BOSE
- BOSTON
- CABLETALK
- CASTLE
- CELESTION
- CERWIN VEGA
- CITATION
- CHORD CABLES
- CRESTRON
- CHORD
- ELECTRONICS
- CYRUS
- DALI
- DEFINITE
- DENON
- DPA
- DRAPER SCREENS
- EXPOSURE
- FAROUDJA
- FUTRONIX
- GOLDRING
- GRUNDIG
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- HEYBROOK
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- SONY
- SONY PROJECTORS
- SOUNDSTYLE
- STANDS UNIQUE
- STAX
- STEWART SCREENS
- STRAIGHT WIRE
- SUMO
- SYSTEMDEK
- SYSTEMLINE
- TANNOY PRESTIGE
- TARGET
- TDL
- TEAC
- TECHNICS
- THORENS
- TOSHIBA
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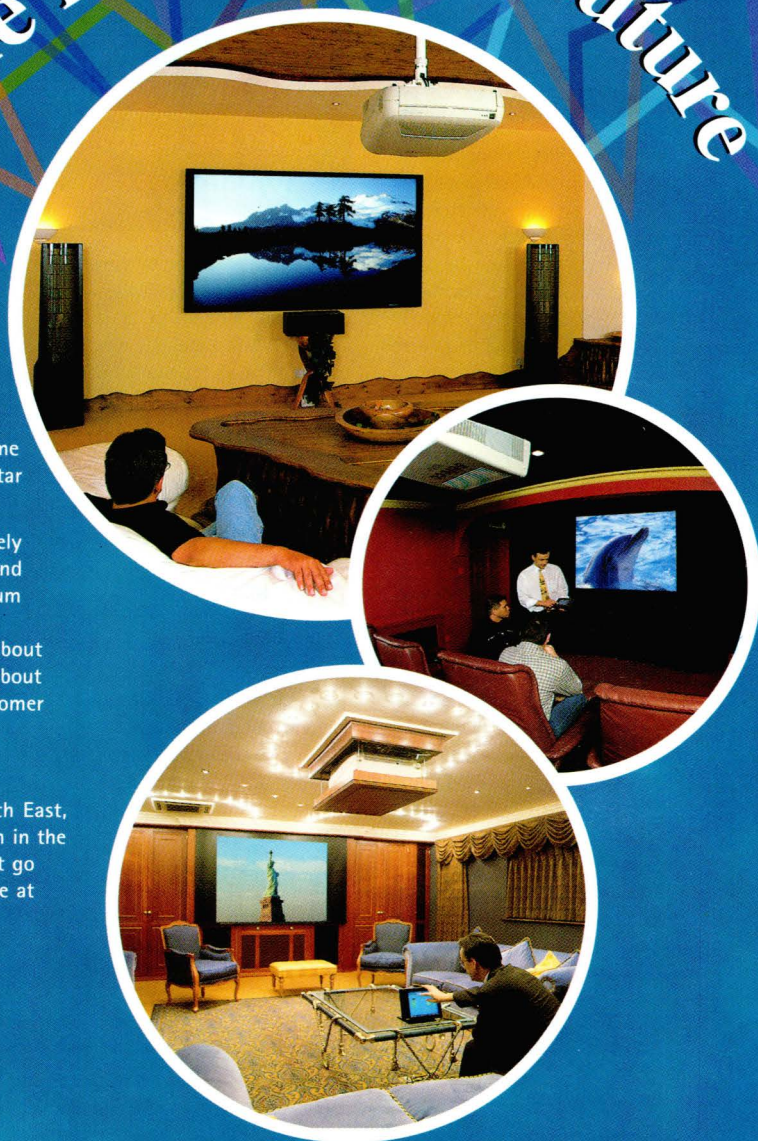
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# CONCLUSIONS

# FORMAT WARS

With the introduction of superior alternatives, what now for compact disc? Where does DVD-Video stand in the new order? And do the new formats really leave the old ones for dust?

It is too early for definitive answers, save to say that the new formats are in no fit state to take over from the old. On the basis of a single – not very challenging – disc, the JVC DVD-Audio player has something special to give, though the reference Krell beats any of the others into a cocked hat for general presence, dynamics and the feeling of being there. There is no contest here, and it will need an SACD or DVD-Audio made to Krell (or similar) standards before we know the full potential of the new formats.

Sony's SACD player is also special, and the SACD layer of dual layer discs sounded significantly better than any of the same recordings on the CD format. But

ask yourselves: if you were producing a revolutionary new player to showcase the benefits of your new technology, wouldn't you want to maximise the perceived benefits of your new brainchild? Certainly as a CD player the Sony was relatively underwhelming, and the same is even truer of the JVC, which showed only intermittent flashes of brilliance. Ironically, the DVD-Video player from Primare was the clear top runner among combination players for CD sound quality, and this model also turns out to be a rather impressive video player.

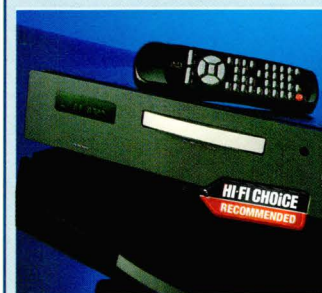
But if you want a CD player and can't stump up the £25,000 for the Krell, the dedicated models still absolutely rule the roost. There were some problems with the Tube Technology unit (which is much better than the earliest versions), but the Marantz and Arcam are the business.



**ARCAM FMJ CD23 CD player**  
Elegant, articulate and expressive CD player is the clear best of type in test, and sounds almost as good as the (early) high resolution players in this group.



**MARANTZ CD-17 MkII CD player**  
A definite improvement on the original CD-17, with a wider feature set and added CD-RW compatibility. It sounds rather tasty and is beautifully built.



**PRIMARE V20 DVD player**  
An excellent all-round choice for those who want a good DVD-Video player and don't want to unduly compromise CD playback.

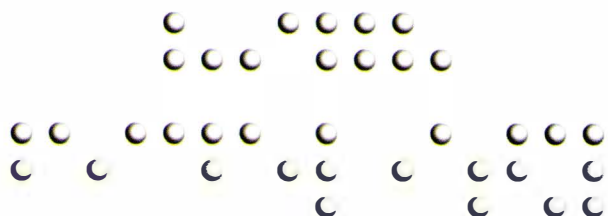


**SONY SCD-XB940 CD player**  
This accolade is made by default, and with some trepidation: it is after all the only SACD player at mainstream prices. As a CD player it is pretty good, but it's the SACD performance that sets it apart from this crowd.

## HEADPHONES COMPARISON TABLE

MAKE	ARCAM	JVC	MARANTZ	PRIMARE	SONY	TUBE TECHNOLOGY
MODEL	FMJ CD23	XV-D723GD	CD-17 MK II	V20	SCD-XB940	FUSION II
PRICE	£1099.90	£500.00	£799.90	£999.90	£549.99	£1,350.00
SOUND	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
BUILD	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
VALUE	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
GUARANTEE	2yrs	1yr	2yrs	2yrs	1yr	2yrs
DISTORTION @ 1KHZ/0DBFS	0.0013%	0.0006%	0.0006%	0.006%	0.0006%	0.0025%
MAXIMUM OUTPUT LEVEL	2.33V	2.0V	2.1V	2.0V	2.1V	2.55V
A-WTD S/N RATIO	96.7dB	103.6dB	103.8dB	~93dB	101.4dB	89.5dB
COMPATIBLE WITH	CD, CD-R	DVD-A, DVD-V, CD, CD-R/RW, Video CD	CD, CD-R/RW	DVD-V, CD, Video CD	SACD, CD, CD-R	CD, CD-RW
DIGITAL OUTPUT	16-bit 44.1kHz	16-bit 44.1kHz (DVD-A), 48kHz (DVD-V)	16-bit 44.1kHz	up to 24-bit 48kHz	N/A	16-bit 44.1kHz

*Confused ?*



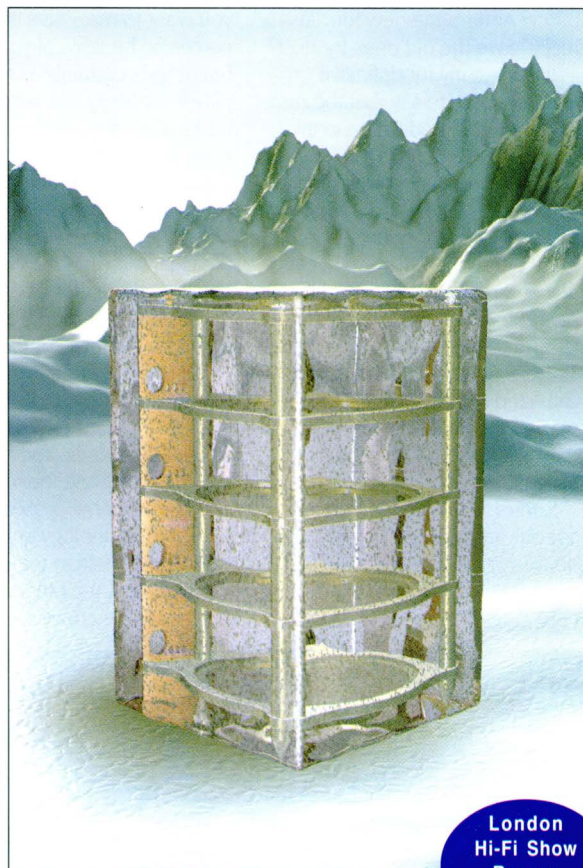
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# Equipment Supports

*Richard Black* thinks hi-fi stands should be seen and not heard.

**I**t's now many years since people started noticing that some hi-fi equipment could be significantly influenced by the surface on which it sits. In fact, right back to the 50s at least, people were aware that turntables could pick up a degree of feedback depending on siting, an observation used to advantage by many radiogram manufacturers. But in the modern sense, the cult of the equipment support dates from the mid-70s.

In the case of turntables it's not the slightest bit surprising. The smallest detectable movement of the stylus is on the scale of a few dozen atoms. So it's hardly surprising to discover, as I did in preparing this review, that in a fairly typical deck (I used a Pink Triangle 'Little Pink Thing' for most measurements, a semi-suspended type) acoustic feedback can be as little as 50dB below the real signal level. It's definitely worth doing something about that.

But what about other equipment? Valves are notoriously microphonic (external vibration affects performance) and I once had an all-valve MC phono stage that would actually howl round if it was placed too close to the speakers. But when I tested a valve power amp less than a metre from a loudspeaker, its microphony was over 100dB below the signal level needed to drive the speaker, which is pretty low – and solid-state amps are considerably less microphonic than that. Likewise CD players: I've not seen much data on microphony of modern units, but my own experiments have failed to find any effect at all. Some older FM tuners are a bit sensitive, but like valve equipment they tend to pick up feedback at higher frequencies, most of which come through the air rather than the floor.

In other words, most hi-fi equipment isn't significantly microphonic. So why do equipment supports work? Well, the fact is that they don't. Not as advertised, anyway. Generally, the claim among manufacturers is that their stands somehow route vibrations into the floor, away from the equipment. To this end, most stands attempt to be rigid, although most also have (or claim to have) some degree of decoupling somewhere. But there is an inevitable side effect of rigidity, when there's not much damping around, and that is that things ring.



Try it. Tap various surfaces of almost any purpose-made hi-fi support and you'll hear various distinct ringing tones. Now try clapping your hands smartly, just once, near the stand and listen carefully to the decay. Most often you'll hear some of the same tones, singing gently away.

The implication is obvious. Play music 'at' an equipment stand and all its own resonances will be excited and start singing along – and in the nature of such things, they don't necessarily stop when the music does but may carry on, decaying slowly, for over a second. In effect, the stand is acting as a tuned echo plate. Accurate? Frankly, no, though the result may be (and often is) likeable. And of course you've got to put the equipment on something...

## How the tests were done

Listening tests were performed both with the equipment on each stand and with the stand 'bare', which makes its character more obvious. Hardware included: Pink Triangle turntables; Rotel CD player (RCD-971); amps from Harman/Kardon (HK6500) and EAR (802, 519). Speakers; ATC SCM20s. In addition, I did some measurements on each stand, using special test tones and methods. To test turntable isolation I blasted test tones at an LPT on the top of each rack and recorded the output (stylus resting on a stationary record). For audio-band ringing measurements I used a microphone to pick up the 'sound' of each stand after intermittently exciting it with high-level tones.

## THE CAST LIST

Aavik C4	£199.00
Apollo Symphony	£245.00
Custom Design Aspect 650	£269.99
Mana Amp Stand/Soundbase	£700.00
Quadraspire Q4	£280.00
Sonus Systems Elite	£330.00
Soundstyle XS100	£270.00
Townshend Seismic Sink AV Stand	£599.25

## HINTS & TIPS

**SPIKES:** Most manufacturers provide them as standard, instead of feet. Although much of what's claimed for them is somewhat fanciful, they do provide good stability on carpeted floors, by piercing the fabric and sitting firmly on the boards beneath.

**VENTILATION:** Remember all power amps (especially Class A and/or valve models) need some air, so don't squeeze them into a tight spot – allow at least three or four inches above, and the same or more all round.

**SAFETY:** Glass is always a bit of a worry with kids around. However, all the supports here use good quality toughened glass, and that stuff really is tough. It's also worth noting that glass on rubber supports is pretty hard to dislodge by accident, while Mana and Custom Design have both designed their spike-supported shelves so that they cannot easily be dislodged.

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## AAVIK C4

Despite this stand's particularly large footprint, the maximum equipment width that can be accommodated by it is about average at 47cm. But the depth is rather enormous, so make sure you have room for it! I can't actually think of much equipment that is anything like 50cm deep, apart from a few power amps of the kind that would not appreciate being boxed in by a stand anyway (ventilation!), but I must admit I find the dimensions quite pleasing aesthetically.

The height above each shelf is quite generous at 21cm, and if that sounds too much you may care to investigate the 'low profile' version which has two-thirds the height. But if you're a dab hand with a hacksaw, it is very easy to customise the height to suit. Each corner pillar is based on a length of threaded rod, screwed at the top into those rather attractive cone thingies and at the bottom into the feet. Pull those out and the grey aluminium spacers can be removed and trimmed.

The shelves themselves are made of nicely veneered MDF ("Extreme density MDF." Excuse me, but 'MDF' is Medium Density Fibreboard – extremely medium?); other woods



are available, or plain black for £19 less. Aavik supplies miniature aluminium coasters instead of spikes.

### SOUND QUALITY

MDF has funny acoustical properties: tap these shelves and you get a fairly well damped, tenor-register 'bong', but clap hands close to them

and there's a very clear ringing note around 920Hz (soprano top B flat). It's that kind of sympathetic resonance that determines the sound of a stand, and in this case it leads to a degree of coloration on solo instruments, especially bright ones like trumpet, and some bass lightness. Complex textures at moderate levels

stay quite clean, but at high levels there's some roughness. As a turntable support this stand, like most solid construction types, offers no real isolation and in fact was slightly worse than no stand at all.

### CONCLUSION

The size has its pros and cons, while the sound is reasonably harmless but can be slightly distracting.

### VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★☆☆☆

**BUILD** ★★☆☆☆

**VALUE** ★★☆☆☆

**PRICE** £199.00

Attractive wood-finish stand with a very large footprint: sound is a little coloured and can become rough at high levels.

#### TWO YEAR GUARANTEE

CSE, Unit 9, Centre Park Holdings, The Airfield, Tockwith, York, YO5 8QF

(01423) 359054

### SPECIFICATIONS

Overall height (inc. feet)	77cm
Usable shelf height	21cm
Usable shelf width	47cm
Shelf material	Wood veneered MDF

## APOLLO Symphony

Steel and glass is a popular recipe for stands – just look at the five such in this group. The Symphony is a pretty basic application of the formula but the crossover supports are attractive and make it look rather less like a laboratory rack. Said supports are butted up to the pillars rather than inserted into slots, which removes the risk of chattering, and welding is neat and sturdy.



The Symphony came with 12mm toughened glass shelves, but as a £30-cheaper option the stand is available with 6mm glass. Other options include replacing the screw-in spikes with adjustable feet or castors, and the use of M6 spikes on any of the shelves – rubber supports are fitted as standard.

### SOUND QUALITY

Steel tube and plate glass are very prone to ringing, and they certainly do so in this stand. In fact it was interesting to compare the different sounds of the three 12mm shelves with the one which (for whatever reason) was supplied as 10mm: the latter had a significantly lower

resonant frequency and was more readily damped by the placing of equipment on it. Presumably the 6mm shelves are likely to sound different again.

Anyway, the hand-clap test reveals a complex spectrum of resonances, from the midband way up high. Not surprisingly, the 'sound' of the stand in the presence of music is not too great on the detail front, with a distinct loss of clarity and also of stereo imaging precision. There is also a loss of precision in the bass, which becomes rather thick and woolly, with bass transients (plucked double bass, etc) rather dry in tone. Big climaxes are exciting, and simple textures can sound open and airy, but as more instruments join in it becomes harder to follow individual lines.

Despite that, this stand was slightly more successful than most as a turntable support, with a small degree of isolation in the important 60-120Hz region.

### CONCLUSION

Smart looks and good build, but the sound is a bit too characterful.

### VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★☆☆☆

**BUILD** ★★☆☆☆

**VALUE** ★★☆☆☆

**PRICE** £245.00

Simple steel and glass stand which majors in excitement factor but lacks precision and detail.

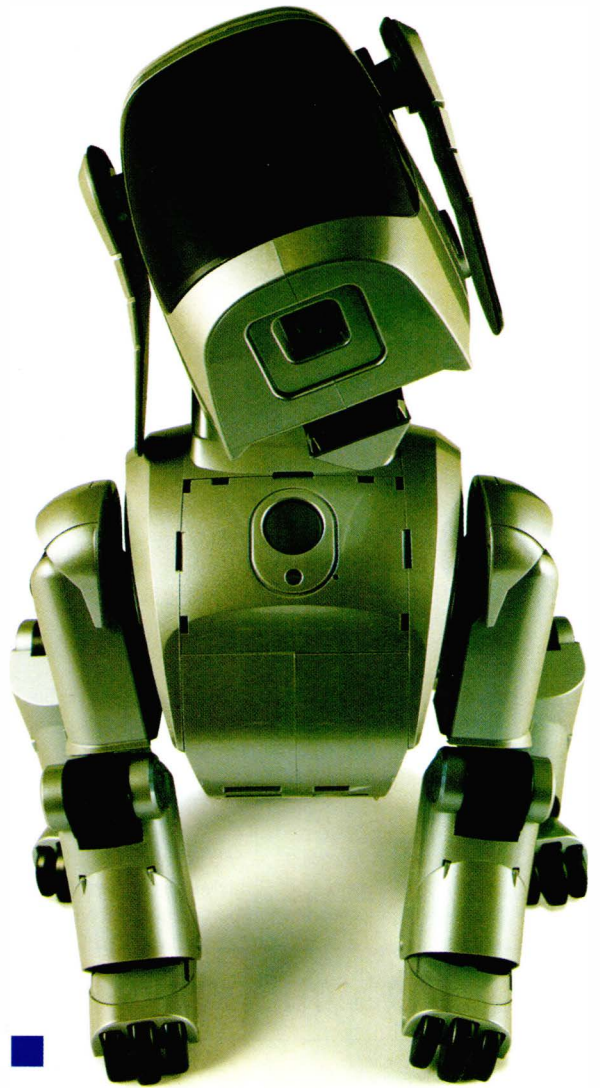
#### THREE YEAR GUARANTEE

Apollo Hi-Fi Furniture, Zenith Crown Ltd, Tipton Road, Dudley, West Midlands, DY1 4SQ  
(0121) 520 5070

### SPECIFICATIONS

Overall height (inc. floor spikes)	73cm
Usable shelf height	15cm
Usable shelf width	46.5cm
Shelf material	Toughened glass

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## CUSTOM DESIGN Aspect 650

**A**nother steel and glass design, but this one is supplied flat-packed and is also adjustable. Assembly takes a few minutes using the tools supplied: once that's done, the shelves can be positioned as required, with mounting points fitted at 1-inch increments.

The mounting brackets are simple and tough and have a small, soft support for the 6mm glass shelves. The top shelf, however, sits on four adjustable metal spikes which do little to isolate the shelf from the rest of the stand (the isolating properties of spikes are just another of those hi-fi myths) but do make it prone to sliding around, something Custom has countered by profiling it to fit neatly between the pillars.

Construction is very good with a particularly nice paint job in semi-gloss champagne: if that's not to your taste you can also have black, blue, red or green. Additional shelves are available as an option, and adjustable feet can be ordered instead of the normal spikes.

### SOUND QUALITY

Once again, the highly resonant materials used in the construction of this stand give it a distinct sound,



with ringing clearly audible across most of the midband and treble. The thin (6mm) shelves make it relatively easy to damp this but typical hi-fi components, with quite hard feet mounted at the corners, are only moderately successful in doing so. As a result, the stand's character is generally quite pronounced.

The main subjective effect of this

stand is in the bass, which is quite definitely thick in texture, even more so than with the Apollo stand. This slightly takes the edge away from instruments like electric bass guitar or piano, and makes orchestral double basses quite indistinct. Higher sounds are less affected, though detail is ultimately a little limited and climaxes can sound

harsh and bass-light. Imaging loses a little front-to-back definition. Turntable isolation is again pretty much non-existent, with the highest level (by a small margin) of feed-back boosting in the 50Hz region.

### CONCLUSION

Keep it well out of line of the speakers and your ears, and this stand will perform well. Recommended for its looks and practicality.

### VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £269.99

Very smart looks, and very practical thanks to adjustable shelves. Sound is fair, with some loss of detail.

#### ONE YEAR GUARANTEE

Custom Design (Newcastle), Unit 11, Bath Street Industrial Estate, Walker, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 4PH

### SPECIFICATIONS

Overall height (inc. floor spikes)	66cm
Usable shelf height	Adjustable
Usable shelf width	46cm
Shelf material	Toughened glass

## MANA 4-tier Amplifier Stand/Soundbase

**M**ore steel 'n' glass – but Mana sets great store by angle-section steel rather than everyone else's box-section. The name must be familiar to everyone by now, though I for one didn't realise how long Mana stands have been around – since the late 80s. The firm pioneered the use of spikes under glass shelves, for a start, an idea that seems to be older than the hills.

### VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £500.00/£200.00

The ultimate statement in steel and glass: adds resonance in a way you'll love or hate.

#### LIFETIME GUARANTEE

Mana Acoustics, 59 Jubilee Close, Pinner, Middlesex, HA5 3TB  
(020) 8429 0118

### SPECIFICATIONS

Overall height (inc. floor spikes)	87cm
Usable shelf height	19cm
Usable shelf width	45cm
Shelf material	Toughened glass



The Mana design was arrived at empirically, originally in the context of Ariston and Thorens (and later Linn) turntables and Naim amplifiers, but has won praise with all kinds of equipment since, much of it digital rather than analogue. Lots of variants on the basic angle iron/glass or wood/spikes theme are available

and devotees swear you can't have too many Soundbases under a system. The review set-up was a basic four-shelf stand on a Soundbase, the latter being a metal frame bearing upward and downward facing spikes, with a simple MDF shelf on it. Options? Any colour you like as long as it's black...

### SOUND QUALITY

There's no doubting the difference a Mana rack can make. So what's up? Basically the stand is a highly resonant structure – tap it, clap hands near it, shout at it, and you'll hear the ringing for a good second afterwards. Similarly, play music at it and it'll sing along. It doesn't matter in the least if the equipment on it is microphonic: it doesn't even matter much whether the equipment is actually sitting on it. It's a sympathetic resonator.

So it's no surprise at all that a Mana rack can make a hi-fi sound more lively, vigorous, airy (at times), even bassy. But it's all coloration and, even though detail may initially seem improved, it's hard to hear right into a recording. However, there is a degree of low-frequency turntable isolation.

### CONCLUSION

A bit of added resonance can do odd things, but the fact is a lot of people like it, witness the Linn LP12, the most successful high-end turntable of all time. What it can't do is give you all the detail. Accuracy or excitement? You choose.

# QUADRASPIRE Q4

Back again to the MDF and metal pillars theme here. Actually it might have been glass shelves instead of MDF, since Q4 is not so much a model as a range. There is a choice of several veneers or glass for the shelves (I suppose you could even mix them) and various height options for the pillars, from 10cm to 32cm. Assembly is easy: each pillar section has a male thread at one end which pokes through a pre-drilled hole in a shelf, and a female thread at the other which attaches to the pillar above or the top cap. At the bottom, some meaty-looking adjustable spikes meet the floor.

Of course, the modular construction means that it is easy to add extra shelves. Maximum equipment width is a generous 49cm but, despite that, the unit looks quite slimline, aided by the nice touch of the subtle concave curve of the sides. Quadraspire refrains from wild claims regarding sonics in its literature, but does seem to think that the aluminium pillars will have some electromagnetic shielding effect. Er, no, not in general...

## SOUND QUALITY

Again, there's the odd mixture of low



frequency and midband resonances, depending on whether the stand is excited by direct contact or airborne vibration. But most of them are fairly well damped and hence not too distracting. Indeed, this diminutive support had one of the least pronounced effects on the bass in terms of coloration and loss of detail of the group as a whole. Plucked

double bass retained most of its tunefulness and body, and solo male vocals were also notably full-bodied. At climaxes there was still some hint of harshness and loss of solidity to the sound, but on the whole tonality was good.

Detail was also good in a wide variety of music, with little impairment in clarity of textures. As a

turntable support, this stand has little or no isolating effect.

## CONCLUSION

If you like the subtle ringing that glass shelves can contribute – with quite pleasant effect – to simpler musical textures, you may find this unit a bit lacklustre, in which case try the version with glass shelves. As it stands (groan), it's attractively designed and versatile and as such may be Recommended.

## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £280.00

Simple but modestly effective, and very attractive. Also available in glass.

### ONE YEAR GUARANTEE

Quadraspire Ltd, 305 Kelston Road, Bath, BA1 9AB

(01225) 333360

## SPECIFICATIONS

Overall height (inc. floor spikes) 52cm

Usable shelf height 14cm

Usable shelf width 49cm

Shelf material MDF

# SONUS SYSTEMS Elite 4-Tier

Rather than trying to fight the inevitable, Sonus has made a positive virtue of the mean industrial look with this stand, the pillars looking as if they're expecting to support a car rather than just some hi-fi. As with all welded construction, it's clearly not adjustable, but a five-tier version is also available as standard and the company is happy to take



orders for units with even more shelves. Other options include different colours (black, gold, silver, red, green or blue), and feet or castors.

Doubtless to enhance strength, Sonus has arranged things so that the horizontal members are inserted into holes in the pillars before being

welded, but this seems to be responsible for a small degree of rattling that is audible on tapping any of the metal parts. The welding is not the tidiest ever, but is certainly robust. The pillars are hollow and can be filled with fine gravel or shot to reduce ringing. I tried some

dense plastic chips that I had to hand, which did reduce ringing in the pillars but had next to no effect on the horizontals or shelves.

## SOUND QUALITY

Following something of a pattern among the tubular steel and glass stands, bass was full but somewhat on the muddy side, especially when there was plenty going on in that department. By contrast more subtle bass tended to thin out a bit, and full broadband climaxes also lost some bass weight.

Further up, there was a persistent mild loss of detail and also occasional hardness to the sound, both of which contributed to a lessening of listener involvement. Tonally the sound can be quite exciting at times, but it's quite hard to hear through, and this has a slight condensing effect on stereo images. As with all solid stands, there's next to no isolation at low frequencies.

## CONCLUSION

Nothing wildly good or bad here, but there's little to differentiate this stand from others of broadly similar construction which cost less.

## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £330.00

Rather ugly, and seems to offer little over and above cheaper steel and glass stands. At best, a quite exciting sound.

### LIFETIME GUARANTEE

Sonus Systems Ltd, Unit 3a Cossal Industrial Estate, Coronation Road, Ilkeston, Derby, DE7 5UA

(01223) 203203

## SPECIFICATIONS

Overall height (inc. floor spikes) 68cm

Usable shelf height 14cm/20cm

Usable shelf width 50cm

Shelf material Toughened glass

## SOUNDSTYLE XS100

Now, I like that coloured glass a lot – a very distinctive touch. It's also available in green, silver, black or graphite: the frame, however, is silver or black only. The basic design is just that, basic, with cylindrical pillars and rectangular box-section horizontals, but there's a nice touch in the positioning of the rubber feet that support the glass: on one edge they are placed near corners while on the other they're near the centre. That alone makes the resonant behaviour of the whole stand markedly different from the others of similar construction in this group.

Another nice feature, aesthetic this time, is the conical feet which taper right down to spikes. They're arguably a bit blunt to actually pierce most carpets but then that might be preferable for many people. Castors are also available. Construction is good and there's no sign of rattling when the frame is struck. Shelf heights are 21.5cm (bottom) and 15.5cm (others).

### SOUND QUALITY

Although this stand is quite well damped overall, it still has a noticeable sonic character with a mix of



midband and higher-frequency resonances. Even so, better mutual damping of the shelves and supports doesn't seem entirely to have removed the tendency among stands of this type to add some woolliness to the bass, a slight thickening of texture that causes some precision to be lost. This effect is not always unpleasant, however,

and it can to an extent compensate for bass-lightness in some systems.

Otherwise, the dominant theme seems to be a forward, slightly bright and quite dynamic sound, with a little confusion at climaxes and some hardening of vocals. It's not an unpleasant recipe, though it lacks both true transparency and the added excitement of the more

extreme metal-and-glass stands.

On turntable duty, as usual, there's little or no isolation at low frequencies. At high frequencies, meanwhile, results depend greatly on the turntable and are just as much due to airborne feedback.

### CONCLUSION

An attractive stand at a fair price that doesn't do anything remarkable sonically, but will never offend.

### VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £270.00

☛ Slightly less character than other similar stands, but sound is still somewhat short on transparency.

#### NO FORMAL GUARANTEE

☒ Goldring Products Ltd, 8 Greyfriars Road, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP32 7DX

☎ (01284) 701101

### SPECIFICATIONS

■ Overall height (inc. floor spikes)	72.5
■ Usable shelf height	15.5cm/21.5cm
■ Usable shelf width	49.5cm
■ Shelf material	Toughened glass

## TOWNSHEND Seismic Sink Stand AV1-4

The AV range is a slightly simpler subset of Townshend's comprehensive line-up, all the products sharing one feature – air suspension. In this case, the lower three shelves are effectively hung from the top one, which is supported by an air bladder. To set up the stand one simply inflates the bladder via the protruding car-tyre valve, so that the suspended assembly floats clear of

### VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £599.25

☛ Gives significant and worthwhile isolation for turntables, and seems to add little character otherwise.

#### FIVE YEAR GUARANTEE

☒ Townshend Audio, 7 Bridge Road, Hampton Court, Surrey, KT8 9EU

☎ (020) 8979 2155

### SPECIFICATIONS

■ Overall height (inc. feet)	74.5
■ Usable shelf height	15cm/20cm
■ Usable shelf width	45cm
■ Shelf material	MDF



the base. To ensure that the assembly hangs straight even with unevenly balanced equipment, a steel brick is supplied which can be shuffled around on the slim bottom shelf to balance things up. Which is not as fiddly as it sounds.

The point of all this is to provide isolation from structure-borne vibra-

tion, down to sub-audio frequencies. In the case of turntables this certainly provides worthwhile attenuation of feedback: with other kit the argument is less obvious.

### SOUND QUALITY

The benefits of this stand to a turntable (even the Pink Triangle,

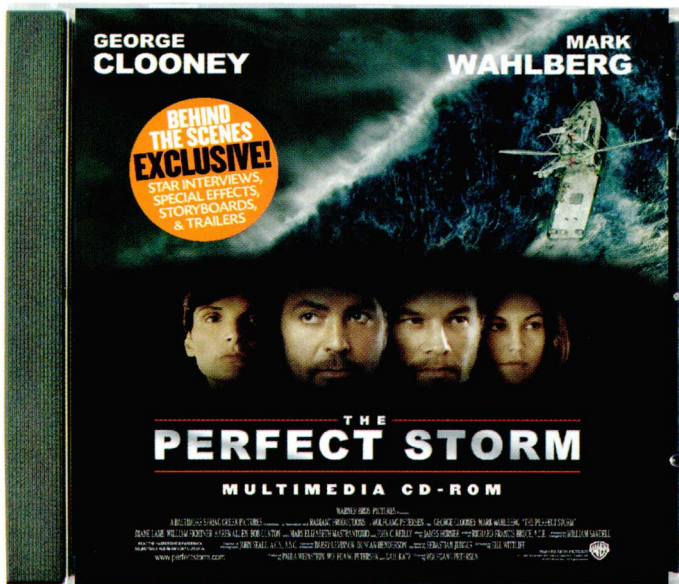
which has highly effective suspension) are not hard to hear or measure. There is an increase in clarity when compared with a solid stand, and bass definition is improved too, while detail and imaging move up a notch or two.

With other equipment there is still a change in sound, though considerably smaller and not so unambiguously positive. Compared with no stand, there is some slight added roundness to the sound but also some loss of detail, and front-to-back imaging is a little compressed. It's also interesting to deflate the air bladder, which reduces the roundness but doesn't seem to make much difference to overall detail levels. The hand-clap test suggests that this stand has lower levels of resonance than most of the others here, but it is not perfect, and air pressure variations will course affect its resonant behaviour.

### CONCLUSION

It's quite expensive, but this stand gives notable benefits to turntable owners and seems to perform as well as any in other contexts.

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# CONCLUSIONS

## EQUIPMENT SUPPORTS

Looked at in the light of my introduction, only one of the supports here makes a significant contribution to reducing feedback, the Townshend Seismic Sink Stand. Although some of the others may have a small net effect at low frequencies, there are in all cases some frequencies in the bass where the feedback is actually boosted, due to resonance between the springiness of the stand and the weight of the stand plus turntable, excited by vibrations in the floor (I did all measurements in a room with a fairly typical suspended wooden floor).

At higher frequencies, the situation is no better. Above something like 150Hz, airborne feedback becomes dominant over structure-borne so the question of isolation from the floor doesn't really arise. The usual handwaving arguments about 'grounding' vibration are clearly

untenable too (or why do the stands all ring so effectively?); all that happens is that each stand sits there and resonates in sympathy with what's going on around it. The level of this varies between models, of course, but in many cases it appears to be only around 50 or 60dB below the level of the music, which is miles higher in level than the microphonic pickup of most audio electronics. In many cases it's very pleasant, even euphonic, but it's hardly desirable.

The real irony of this is that putting equipment on a rack usually has a significant effect on the sound of that rack, because the equipment damps the resonances in the rack! Again it's easy to demonstrate – just try the 'hand-clap test' near an unloaded rack, then pile it up with some equipment and try the test again.

Actually it is in a sense true that equipment can colour the sound by a kind of microphony: just like the equipment rack, it can resonate mechanically. It's just about possible to believe that this might be slightly ameliorated by good rack design, but at the frequencies involved there will be little coupling between the case of an amplifier (for instance) and the equipment rack itself. Of course, any other item in the listening room can have the same effect, radiators being the worst offenders in most domestic rooms, though even walls can all contribute.

That said, it becomes inevitable that anything on which one might place hi-fi equipment can and will contribute to the overall sound. So, despite some rather significant reservations about the design philosophies almost universally employed, I still find myself able to recommend a

couple of 'conventional' racks which seem to add relatively little of their own character and are both attractive and practical. The stands from Custom Design and Quadraspire are well thought-out and what's more, their price is perfectly in keeping with 'ordinary' furniture.

It's clear that the whole support business should be treated on a 'strictly to taste' basis. There are also stand types not represented here that you may care to investigate, notably the Torlyte range offered by Russ Andrews Accessories. It's a pity that, for various reasons, many of the leading stands are not easily found in shops (Mana, Russ Andrews and Townshend, to name but three), which makes comparative auditions difficult, but contact the manufacturers to discuss mail order options and audition possibilities.

### BEST BUYS & RECOMMENDED



#### CUSTOM DESIGN Aspect 650

A straightforward design, easy to assemble, very flexible, and good-looking: full marks for practicality. Sound is fairly typical of metal and glass stands generally – a little bright, not stunningly detailed, but good fun.



#### QUADRASPIRE Q4

Another particularly good-looking stand, available with many options of finish, height and number of shelves, with relatively little sound of its own. Also available with glass shelves.



#### TOWNSHEND Seismic Sink Stand

Although expensive (and it's one of the company's budget range!), it wins its laurels for offering genuine isolation from structure-borne feedback. Air-bladder suspension sounds tweaky but works well and is no trouble to use.

### HEADPHONES COMPARISON TABLE

MAKE	AAVIK	APOLLO	CUSTOM DESIGN	MANA ACOUSTICS	QUADRASPIRE	SONUS SYSTEMS	SOUNDSTYLE	TOWNSHEND
MODEL	C4	SYMPHONY	ASPECT 650	AMP STAND/SOUNDBASE	Q4	ELITE	XS100	SEISMIC SINK STAND
PRICE	£199.00	£245.00	£269.99	£700.00	£280.00	£330.00	£270.00	£599.25
SOUND	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆
BUILD	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆
VALUE	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆
GUARANTEE	2 years	3 years	1 year	lifetime	1 year	lifetime	no guarantee	5 years
TOTAL HEIGHT (INC. SPIKES/FEET)	77cm	73cm	66cm	87cm	52cm	68cm	72.5cm	74.5cm
USABLE SHELF HEIGHT	21cm	15cm	adjustable	19cm	14cm	14cm x 2, 20cm x 1	14.4cm x 2, 21.5cm x 1	15cm x 2, 20cm x 1
SHELF MATERIAL	veneered MDF	toughened glass	toughened glass	toughened glass	veneered MDF	toughened glass	toughened glass	painted MDF
STATUS			HI-FI CHOICE RECOMMENDED		HI-FI CHOICE RECOMMENDED			HI-FI CHOICE RECOMMENDED



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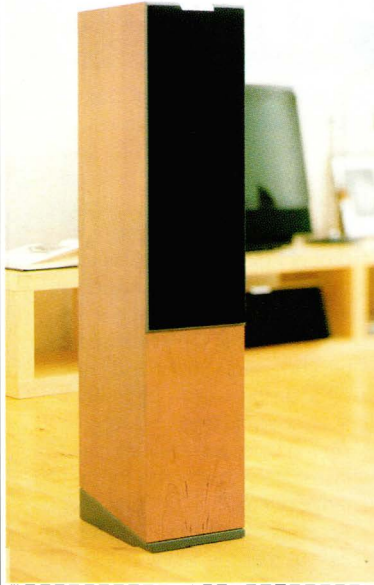
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M2 (as "Recommended" by

Hi-Fi Choice) £999.95/pr

M3 (tri-wire/tri-amp) £1,199.95/pr

M3 Super £1,699.95/pr



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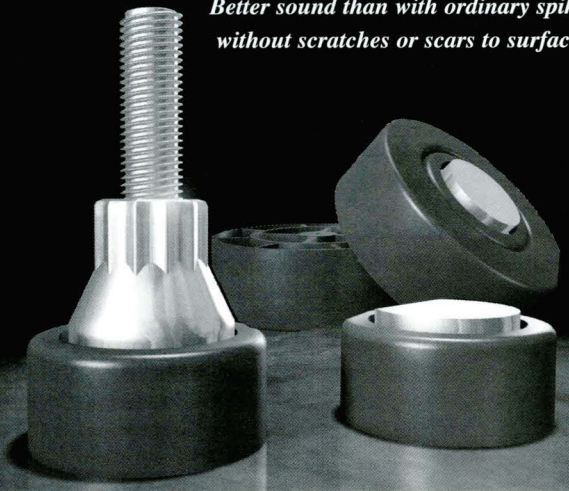
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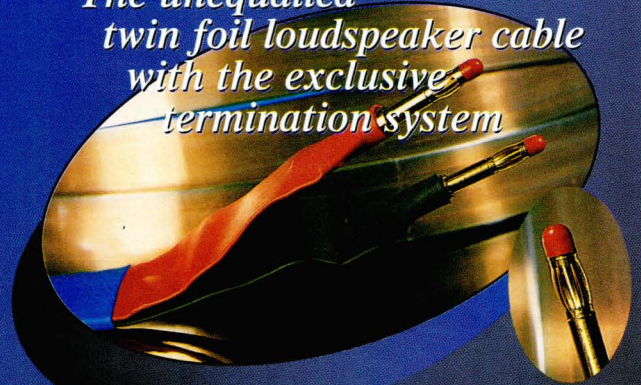
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# Project Pacific

**S**o what have the guys at Wharfedale been up to recently? Well, you would have to be living on another planet not to have noticed the runaway success of their debut DVD player – the Wharfedale DVD-750 – not to mention a market leading widescreen TV set also. These recent products have left no one in any doubt that Wharfedale still very much has what it takes to capture the imagination of the buying customer – just as they did throughout the 80s and 90s with the Wharfedale Diamonds.

But Wharfedale hasn't changed its spots completely. After all, they have been designing some of the finest loudspeakers since 1932 – so what pending treats have audiophiles got to get excited about? The first all new speaker range since the Verity days, Wharfedale claims the Pacific series is going to set new standards in both performance and value. The company's roots have always been in the design and manufacture of



high performance loudspeakers and, after three years intensive development work, the new range is finally ready for launch. And Wharfedale are hoping that the top secret Pacific project will see a return to form for one of Britain's most famous loudspeaker brands – and that it will match the success of their DVD player and widescreen TV.

So what makes the Pacific series so special? Starting off with driver technology, it is plain to see that no corners have been cut. All of the bass/mid units are woven from ultra strong bi-directional Kevlar. Constructed using a unique production process, these exceptionally low mass cones make each and every Pacific loudspeaker powerful yet controlled, robust yet sensitive. The musical information that flows from this design is a revelation, exposing hidden nuances in the sound while conveying all the drama one could desire. The tweeters have had similar attention to detail devoted to them, and each is housed in a separate enclosure on top of the loudspeaker. The purpose of this is to protect the

more delicate movements of the tweeter from the strong vibrations generated by the bass units. The silk dome with its neodymium magnet can deliver a refined, sweet high frequency sound that does full justice to the performance of the partnering Kevlar bass/mid units.

With all this emphasis on state-of-the-art drive units, how much does this leave in the budget for high quality cabinets? Quite a lot actually... Every cabinet is hand built for Wharfedale in a dedicated furniture factory. All models in the range are finished in real wood veneer and look simply marvellous. Take your choice between Light Beech and Rosewood. Typically for Wharfedale, though, the beauty is more than just skin deep. Thick top, bottom, and side walls ensure the cabinet suffers from minimal 'boom' – and the higher models even have double bracing.

The range comprises three floorstanders, a bookshelf model, and a fully matching centre channel loudspeaker. To download a brochure, visit Wharfedale's web-site at [www.wharfedale.co.uk](http://www.wharfedale.co.uk)



**Above: The Pi-10 standmount and, right, the substantial Pi-30.**

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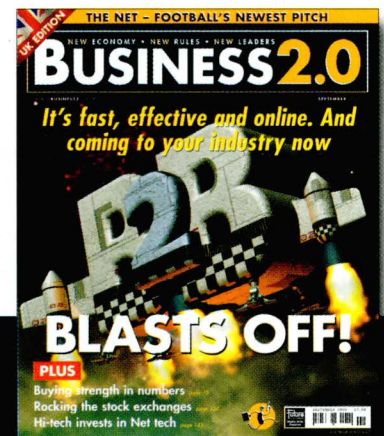
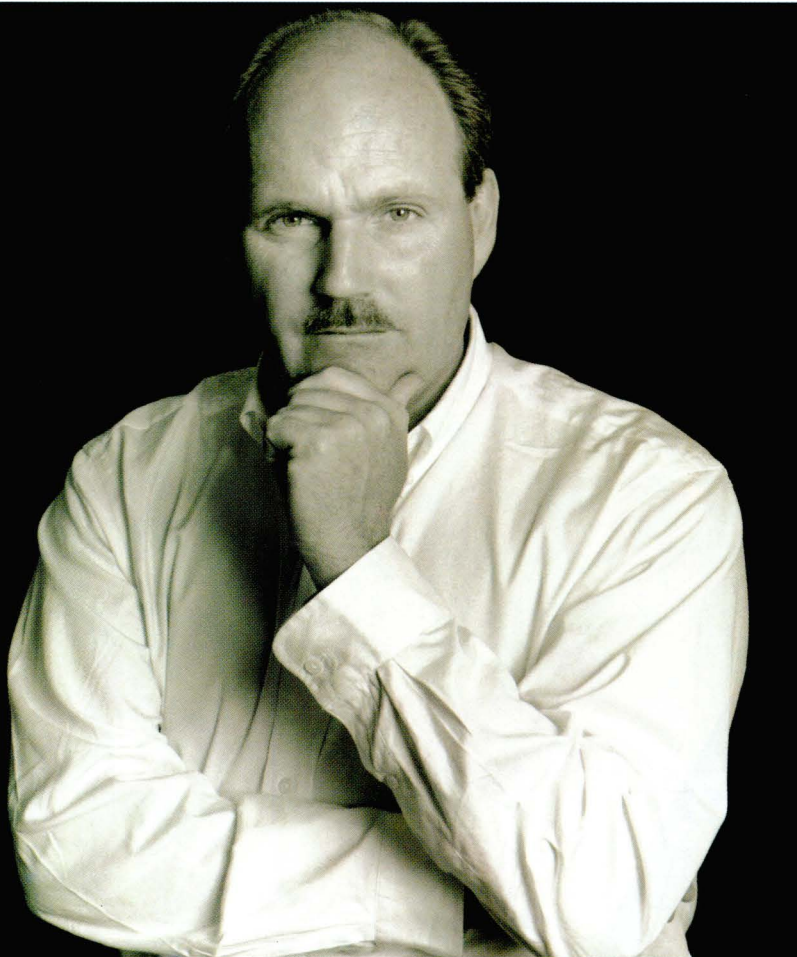
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# Mains Cables & Conditioners

Jimmy Hughes plugs some important gaps in his hi-fi...

**M**ains electricity is the fuel that powers your hi-fi system. Without it, you'd have no music – simple as that. So, the quality of the mains supply is vitally important. Just as a highly tuned racing car needs the finest fuel to deliver peak performance, so a hi-fi system similarly depends on mains quality. If the mains supply is dirty or contaminated you won't get the best from your system.

Unfortunately, the mains supply is typically far from pristine. And it's getting worse rather than better. The increased use of TV sets, computers, mobile phones, and large household appliances like washing machines and freezers (not to mention noise from industry) creates a cocktail of superimposed noise and distortion.

Putting in a separate mains spur for your hi-fi can help combat the adverse effects of noise and power drain generated by other household items. But a separate spur can't offer total isolation – ultimately, everything in your house is connected together at the distribution box. Even electrical noise made by neighbours gets through to your mains supply.

Given the pervasive nature of the problem, what's the best way to tackle it? The products tested here offer various ways to regulate and condition the mains. But there's no single 'catch all' solution. A product that deals effectively with residual disturbances on the supply won't necessarily eradicate air-borne interference or self-generated noise. The only answer is a combination of several different things.

The ideal AC mains supply would be a pure 230V 50Hz sine wave with no distortion, no superimposed noise, and no sudden surges of voltage. Voltage fluctuations would be non-existent, while reserves of current (to cater for peak demands) would be almost limitless. But even if the mains were perfect, there'd still be the problem of self-generated noise from the equipment itself and other household appliances. CD players in particular can be very noisy, and it's worth trying to isolate digital and analogue components from one another.

When adding a mains conditioner, most enthusiasts will be hoping to hear an immediate improvement in sound quality. But the degree of benefit depends on how contaminated the mains is at that particular moment. Since mains quality varies throughout the day, you may not notice much change if comparisons are made when the supply is relatively free of contamination. Yet make that same comparison a few hours later and the difference could be huge. A major benefit of cleaner mains is increased day-to-day consistency, but it may take a week or so to appreciate this.

Try to avoid snap judgements. Spend a few days listening before making comparisons. If your system is plagued by inconsistency, sounding impressive at certain times and disappointing at others, notice if the swings between good and bad reduce after mains treatment. Finally, understand that eliminating dirty mains can sometimes lead to disappointment! Noise on the mains supply generally makes the sound brighter and harsher, giving the music a congested aggressive 'busy' quality. Take this away and you're left with the plain unadorned sound of your system – for better or worse.

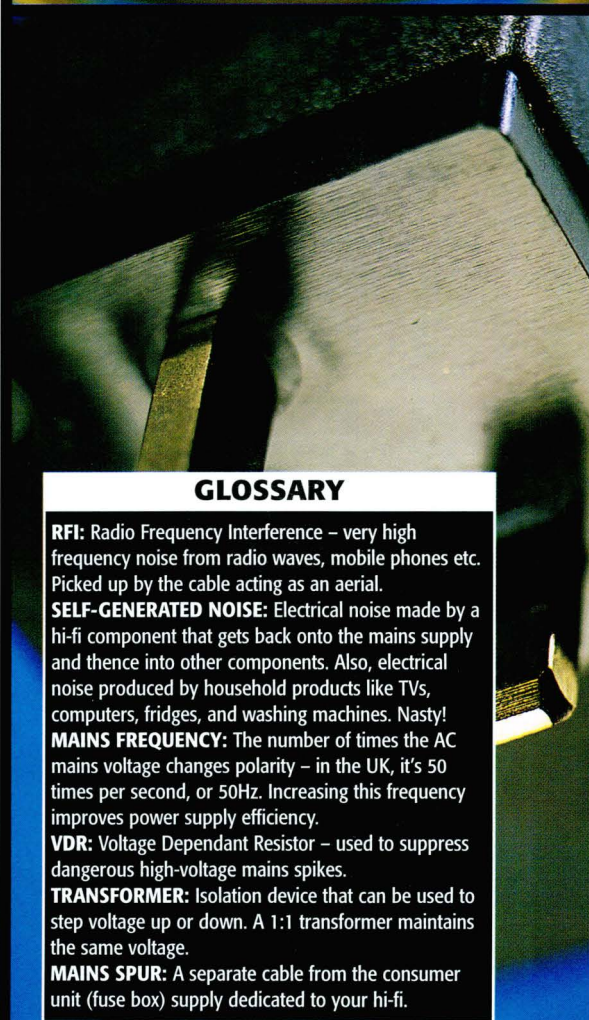
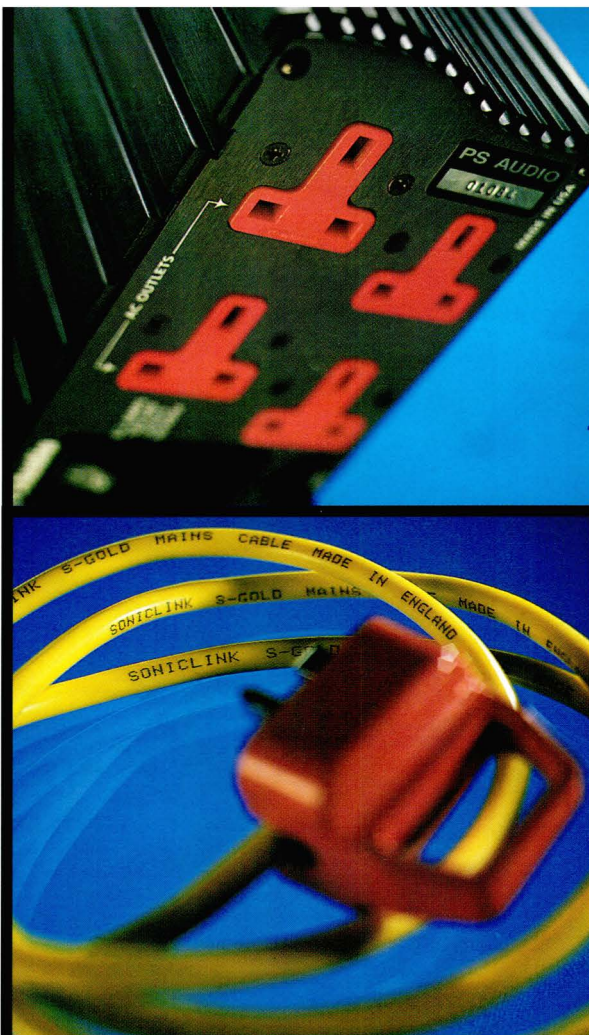
If what you seek is a wholly natural and unexaggerated sound, clean mains will bring you closer to your ideal. That said, be on your guard; some mains conditions can rob the sound of life, leaving the music bereft of brilliance and impact. So, one step at a time. Listen for pure natural sound that's fresh and uncoloured. Human voice is the acid test: if using a mains conditioner makes voices sound true and natural, chances are it's doing the right thing.

## How the tests were done

Our test system comprised an Arcam FMJ CD player, EAR 859 integrated valve amplifier, and Impulse H-1 horn loudspeakers. Peripherals included two REL Q Bass sub-woofers and a couple of valve line stages from Musical Fidelity and ASE. A Kuzma Stabi turntable with AC synchronous motor was used to test the Clearaudio APG. The products were auditioned for effects on sound quality, and noise levels assessed using an AudioPrism Noise Sniffer – available on loan from Russ Andrews for one week at a cost of £10. Products were used individually and combined with others to evaluate compatibility and effectiveness.

## THE CAST LIST

Clearaudio APG	£1,090.00
Lynwood Electronics Mega Power Supply	£295.00
PS Audio Power Plant	£1,200.00
PHY-HP mains cable	£130.00
PHY-HP distribution block	£299.00
Russ Andrews Power Block + Kimber cable	£350.00
Russ Andrews The Purifier	£250.00
Russ Andrews The Silencer	£39.95
SonicLink S-Gold	£225.00
Trichord Research Powerblock 500	£299.00



## GLOSSARY

**RFI:** Radio Frequency Interference – very high frequency noise from radio waves, mobile phones etc. Picked up by the cable acting as an aerial.

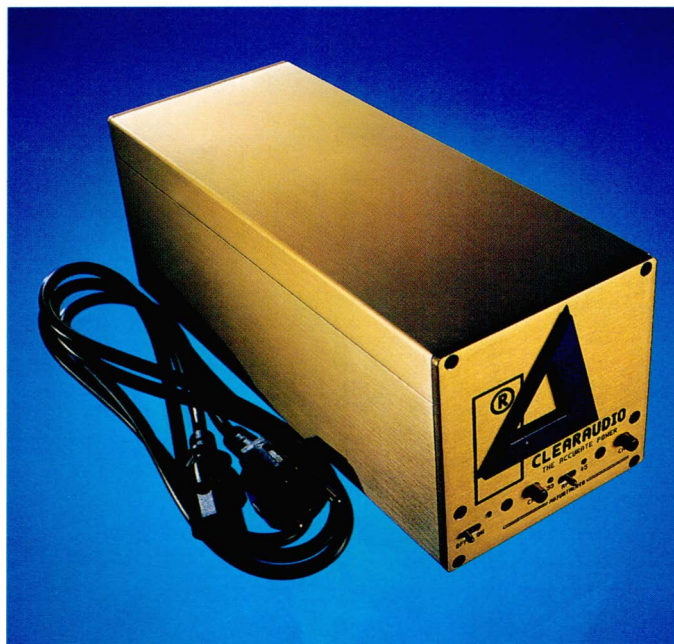
**SELF-GENERATED NOISE:** Electrical noise made by a hi-fi component that gets back onto the mains supply and thence into other components. Also, electrical noise produced by household products like TVs, computers, fridges, and washing machines. Nasty!

**MAINS FREQUENCY:** The number of times the AC mains voltage changes polarity – in the UK, it's 50 times per second, or 50Hz. Increasing this frequency improves power supply efficiency.

**VDR:** Voltage Dependant Resistor – used to suppress dangerous high-voltage mains spikes.

**TRANSFORMER:** Isolation device that can be used to step voltage up or down. A 1:1 transformer maintains the same voltage.

**MAINS SPUR:** A separate cable from the consumer unit (fuse box) supply dedicated to your hi-fi.



**CLEARAUDIO Accurate Power Generator £1,090.00**

This compact, beautifully finished little unit started life as a high quality power supply for Clearaudio's three-motor Master Reference turntable – hence its three outputs, one for each motor. But it can also be used to drive other low-level components such as preamps and CD players so long as the total power drawn doesn't exceed 60W. The APG eliminates mains distortion and noise by regenerating the AC signal, acting as a power reservoir and maintaining constant voltage. Line frequency can be varied from 44Hz up to 140Hz, giving ample opportunity for users to experiment and see which frequency gives best results. If the APG is used with a turntable having an AC synchronous motor, the frequencies have to be set so that precise speeds of 33 1/3 and 45rpm are achieved. The instructions give the erroneous impression that the three outputs on the APG are independent; they're actually wired in parallel. So there's no isolation between different components plugged into an APG. I tried mine with a CD player and turntable, finding increases in fine detail and transparency with it in place. The wide choice of mains frequencies gives plenty of scope to the user to experiment, although (unlike the PS Audio Power Plant) there's no visual readout of the frequency set. The APG is expensive, but it offers very positive sonic benefits that help justify the high asking price.



★★★★★ Audio Reference ☎ (01483) 575344

**LYNWOOD ELECTRONICS**

**Mega Power Supply £295.00**

Power conditioners can be expensive, but Lynwood's Mega Power Supply is quite reasonably priced. It's designed to act as a power reservoir, in effect beefing-up the power supplies in your equipment. It isolates your equipment from mains distortion and noise, and other irregularities such as DC, which can cause transformer buzz. With extended use there's a mild rise in case temperature, but nothing severe, and the unit can safely be left on all the time. With an output rated at 1kW continuous power, the Lynwood Mega Power Supply can be used with all but the very biggest power amps. The company also makes a lower wattage unit intended for use with source components and preamps, and they recommend using separate power conditioners to isolate digital components from analogue. Use of the AudioPrism Noise Sniffer revealed the complete elimination of the slight mains buzz noticeable when the Sniffer was plugged direct into the wall socket. So objectively there's a definite quietening of mains noise. Sonically, the Mega Power Supply made the music sound sweeter and more realistic, with improved focus and a tighter cleaner bass. Playing tracks from k.d. lang's CD *Shadowland*, the voice lost much of its electronic glare (caused in part by too much added reverb), sounding truer and more natural.

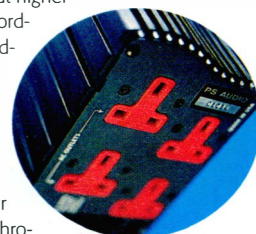


★★★★★ Lynwood Electronics ☎ (01709) 873667

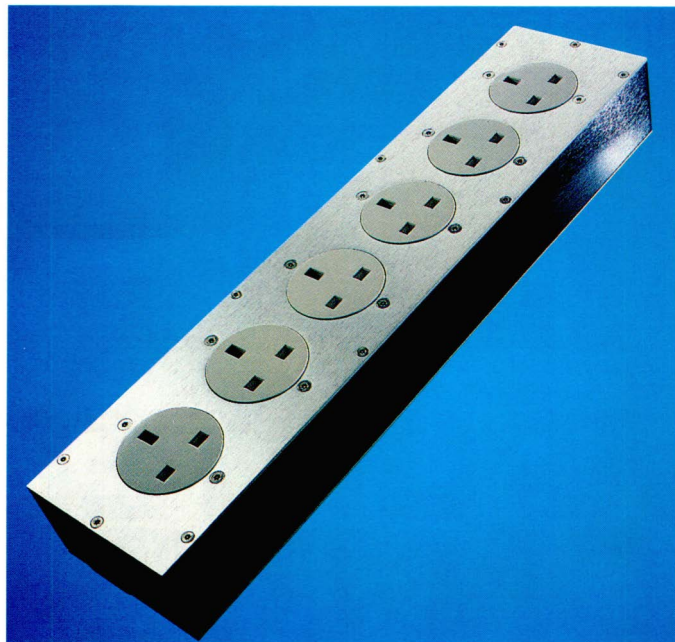


**PS AUDIO Power Plant £1,200.00**

The most ambitious of the units tested is also the biggest and most expensive, providing clean, low-distortion, low-impedance regenerated AC power. This is not a filter or conditioner, but rather takes AC mains, converts it to DC, then converts it back to balanced noise free AC. Additionally, it allows you to alter the frequency of the regenerated mains. You can run equipment anywhere between 50Hz and 120Hz in 5Hz increments. The theory proposed by PS being that transformer efficiency is related to the rate of change, and that higher mains frequencies improve performance. However, according to a transformer manufacturer we contacted it shouldn't actually make a difference. Nonetheless I found transparency improved as the frequency increased. If the sound is too lean at 120Hz, 90Hz is a nice optimum. The buzzy mains transformer of my old EAR 859 amp quietened miraculously from 55Hz upwards! Most '50Hz' (UK) equipment will run perfectly well at 60Hz or higher, the only exception being turntables with AC synchronous motors but no electronic speed regulation. Sonically, Power Plant greatly improved the cleanness and separation of individual voices and instruments, giving the music an impressive three-dimensional quality. The only caveat (aside from size and price) is heat; surface temperatures exceed 110F (41C) after the unit's been on for several hours. A fan cooled version can be had for £55 extra. Note It's impossible to use all four mains sockets without special plugs.

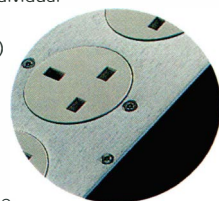


★★★★★ Ultimate Sonics ☎ (020) 8699 2446



**PHY-HP Mains cable (£130.00) and GTA distribution board (£299.00)**

**P**HY-HP is a French company committed to the use of natural materials for its range of mains cables and interconnects. To this end it eschews plastics and synthetic rubber for the insulation, preferring cotton. This, it believes, gives the most natural, uncoloured reproduction of music. I wrote at length about the cables in *HFC 204*, and was very impressed. The screened mains cable is available in 1m (£130) and 2m (£175) lengths, fitted with an IEC plug, and it produces a sound of increased openness and texture, with strong clean high frequency overtones and an extremely natural tonal balance. Interestingly, the interconnect subjectively gave much the same result, removing a layer of coloration. The PHY-HP mains cable can be used with individual hi-fi components having an IEC mains socket, or with a special mains board (wired internally with PHY-HP cable) produced by the cable's importers GT Audio. Now, most mains distribution boards look somewhat utilitarian, but GT Audio's six-way version using high-class Crabtree 13a sockets oozes quality and style. The basic version is wired with copper cable, but I tested the one with thick silver-plated 2.5mm copper cable costing £299. For those seeking the ultimate, a pure silver-wired version is available for £495. Expensive, but the result is an extremely natural and truthful sound – an interesting Gallic alternative to more traditional mains cables and boards.



★★★★☆ GT Audio ☎ (01895) 833099

**RUSS ANDREWS Power Block Distribution board and Kimber mains cable £350.00**

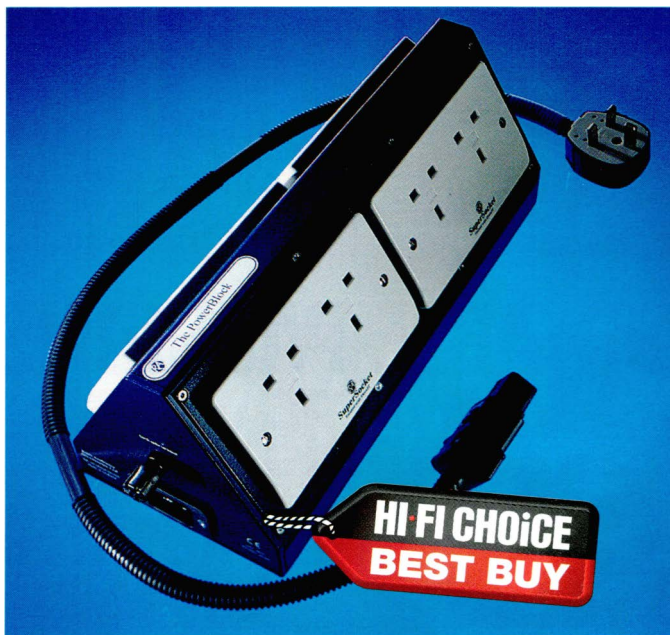
**K**imber cable has miraculous mains conditioning properties, cancelling high frequency noise by virtue of its special inter-woven construction. Not only is it efficient at lowering residual mains noise, it also deals with airborne interference such as RFI. To achieve maximum effectiveness you should have Kimber



mains cables on each individual component in the system, as well as the special eight-way mains distribution board. This has recently been improved: those with the earlier Russ Andrews metal in-line distribution board should enquire about the company's generous part-exchange prices.

Looked at coolly, £350 is a lot to pay for a mains distribution board with a 3 ft (0.9m) Kimber mains cable. But the effect on sound quality is well worth the outlay. You'll find the music sounds cleaner and more three-dimensional, with greatly improved stereo imagery – though interestingly any measurable 'before and after' difference using the Noise Sniffer seemed minimal. The more Kimber mains cables you use, the better it gets – and it's not just Russ' bank manager that says so! The improvement in vividness, clarity, and separation is quite remarkable. However, some listeners misinterpret the reduction of 'hash' as a lack of treble sparkle and top-end detail. There's no pleasing everybody – even with something as good as this...

★★★★☆ Russ Andrews ☎ 0800 373467

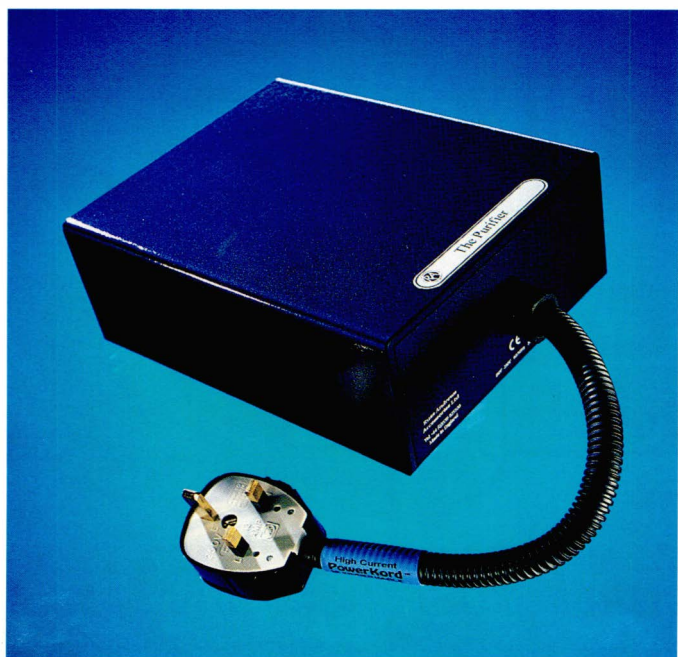


**RUSS ANDREWS The Purifier £250.00**

**T**his is basically a more ambitious version of the Silencer – bigger, more effective, and costlier. Using the Noise Sniffer to test its efficiency, I found that while the Silencer would clean up perhaps 95% of mains noise, leaving just a faint residue, the Purifier would finish the job, lowering noise almost to the point of complete extinction. Electrically, the Purifier takes more 'driving' than the Silencer. Indeed, when I tried the Purifier with the PS Power Plant, the latter shut down after about two seconds – could there be a grounding arrangement that the Power Plant's balanced AC output doesn't like? The makers claim an 80dB reduction in mains noise with the Purifier, compared to about 70dB with the Silencer, and subjectively (using the Noise Sniffer) this comparative ratio seems about right. For those wanting still more noise reduction, there's a Super Purifier (£350) with even greater filtering capacity. Subjectively, the Purifier gives the music a cleaner, 'quieter' background, allowing you to hear low level detail more clearly. The net effect is an increase in separation and clarity, with less high frequency 'hash' and treble glare. To use, you just plug the Purifier into a spare mains socket – preferably close to the item(s) you wish to treat. Like the Silencer, this is very much a fit-and-forget product, but it's highly effective nonetheless and will greatly reduce mains disturbances.

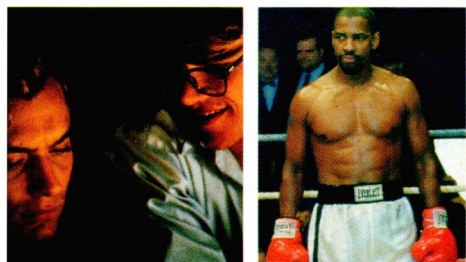


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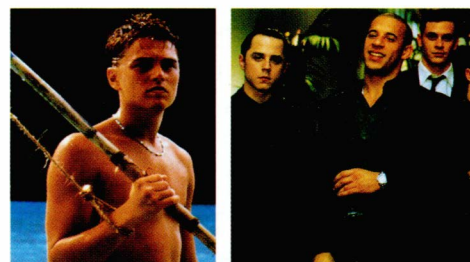


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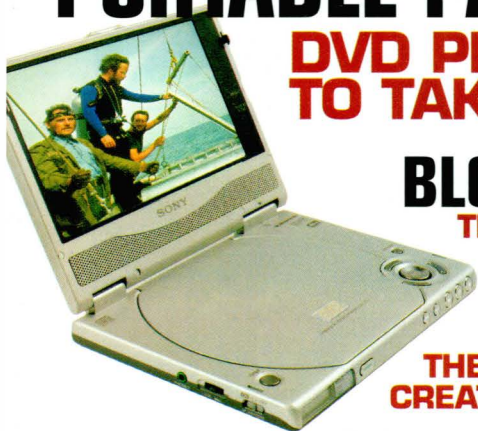
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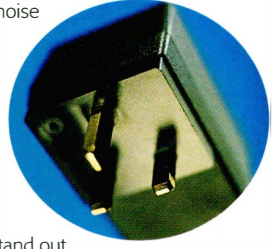


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**RUSS ANDREWS Silencer £39.95**

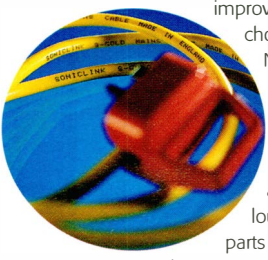
It's one thing to achieve a clean noise-free mains supply; maintaining cleanliness is something else again. There's the omnipresent problem of self-generated noise and interference – noise produced by the equipment itself and other household electrical items plugged in and switched on. One solution is to unplug unwanted items from the mains when listening. A more practical way of dealing with the problem is to use a Russ Andrews Silencer. The Silencer is a small affordable black box that plugs into spare mains sockets in the house. Use it remotely to reduce the noise produced by fridges, freezers, computers, or electric drills. Alternatively, plug it into an adjacent socket on your hi-fi's mains distribution board to reduce self-generated noise from the equipment itself. Nor are you limited to using just one Silencer; adding more allows self-generated noise emanating from different parts of the house to be controlled close to the source. The Silencer uses passive filtration components to reduce mains 'hash' without losing brilliance and immediacy. Plugged into a spare socket on my hi-fi system's mains distribution board, I felt it made silences 'blacker', helping voices and instruments stand out in sharp relief from a clean quiet background. This enhances depth and clarity, giving a deeper broader soundstage with increased dynamic range.



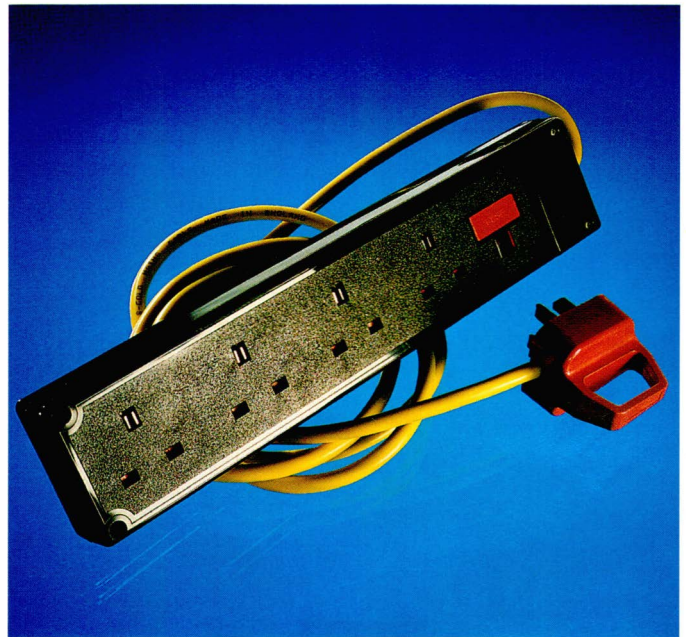
★★★★★ Russ Andrews ☎ 0800 373467

**SONICLINK S-Gold four-way mains distribution board £225.00**

The philosophy behind SonicLink products is simple: high quality results obtained by using the finest grade materials. To this end, designer Graham Nalty has concentrated on properly colour-coded mains cables, made from high-grade silver-plated copper. Silver plating was specified because the makers feel it improves responsiveness at high frequencies. Also vital is the choice of Silicone rubber insulation rather than PVC or PTFE. Nalty feels the avoidance of plastics in the cable's insulation gives the sound greater naturalness plus increased fine detail. It's interesting to note that the differences in the sound produced by using silver-plated copper wire and that produced by silicone rubber insulation are as audible on a mains cable as they are on interconnects or loudspeaker wires. To ensure good connections, all metal parts are rhodium-plated, and mechanically the interface between mains plugs and sockets feels solid and tight. In use the SonicLink distribution board gave a clean incisive sound with excellent detail and clarity. If I were using this product, I'd be tempted to open it up (having disconnected it from the mains, of course) and snip out the little neon indicator light (a requirement legally, if not sonically) as this can act as a source of noise. However, using the Noise Sniffer, there was no discernible increase in noise attributable to the neon.

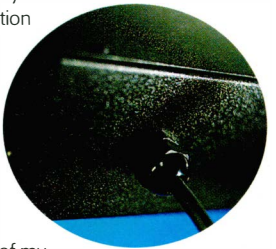


★★★★★ SonicLink ☎ (01332) 361390



**TRICHORD RESEARCH Powerblock 500 £299.00**

Another essentially simple device: a one-to-one isolation transformer rated at either 500W or 1000W, depending on the version you choose. The Powerblock 500 retails for £299, while the Powerblock 1000 goes for £450. High frequency bandwidth is limited to about 200kHz, so any noise above this is filtered out naturally. At the same time, Common Mode distortion (disturbances present on both positive and negative lines) is greatly reduced – very important, as this is a form of distortion that's difficult for many equipment power supplies to deal with. Being an isolation transformer, the Powerblock blocks DC voltage that can cause equipment transformers to buzz mechanically – but, sad to say, it did nothing for my slightly noisy EAR 859! Tested with the Noise Sniffer, my mains had a slight buzz, which the Powerblock 500 eliminated, leaving it completely quiet. Having used the Powerblock 500 for almost a year as a regular part of my system, I'd grown slightly complacent about its positive effects. It's very much a fit-and-forget device that can be left on all the time – case temperature only rises marginally. Sonically, it improves clarity, openness, and gives increased refinement making the music sound purer and more natural. It's the sort of product you easily underestimate and only fully appreciate when suddenly it's not there any more.



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# CONCLUSIONS

## MAINS CABLES & CONDITIONERS

There can be no doubt that mains pollution seems to be the 'in' bête noire at the moment. Why? Perhaps it's the realisation that you can spend thousands of pounds on the best components and *still* have your sound ruined by poor mains quality. Many enthusiasts find the perceived sound quality of their hi-fi varies according to the time of day, and differing levels of mains pollution would seem to be the number one suspect. Moreover, mains pollution is set to get worse, not better – there's even talk of putting the Internet on the mains!

So, being able to clean up the mains means getting better, more consistent sound. Looking at the various products covered in this test, I'd say you'd be pretty safe buying any one of them, and that it would almost certainly produce a worthwhile improvement. So all could carry a Recommended tag. But if I was asked to stick my hand in my pocket, here's how I would spend my cash.

First I'd invest in the Russ Andrews Powerblock with Kimber mains cable, subsequently adding as many separate Kimber mains cables for the other components in my system as I could afford. Then I'd go for Russ Andrews' Silencer or Purifier. The Silencer is very affordable at £39.95, and gets pretty close to the £250



Purifier in terms of performance. If the Purifier appeals, you can order a special version of the Powerblock with built-in Purifier for £500 – saving £100 over buying the two items separately. A few extra Silencers used to quieten noisy household items would also be worthwhile.

Next, I'd look at a mains purification box. The PS Audio Power Plant is fabulously good, but very expensive and runs hot, while the little Clearaudio is almost as expensive with limited power – although it is useful for turntables. So, with an eye to value, I'd look at either the Lynwood Mega Power Supply or the Trichord Power Block – both a shade under £300 – with Trichord's Power Block just getting the vote. However, those with very dirty and/or inconsistent mains should

definitely check out the PS Power Plant; it's in a class of its own for purity and versatility.

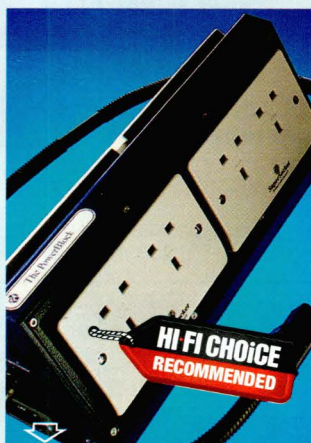
When mixing and matching various types of mains purification devices, hiring out Russ Andrews' AudioPrism Noise Sniffer is essential – just so you know that everything's pulling in the same direction. I elaborate on what can go wrong in my regular comment page; Jimmy Hughes – p146.

The degree of improvement these products make will depend on how dirty your mains is, how well the equipment you have copes with dirty mains, and how power-hungry it is. The better designed the power supply in your CD player or amplifier, the less difference you'll get between clean and dirty mains. In this respect I'd describe my home situation – equipment used and

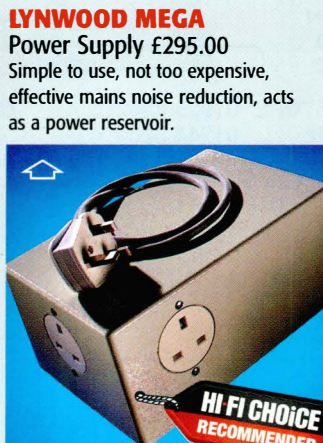
environment – as less demanding than some. The mains *Chez Moi* seems pretty consistent and reasonably (though not completely) noise-free, while using a low-powered valve amplifier with comparatively modest power consumption means that peak current demands are not excessive. A high-power, current-hungry transistor power amp would prove far more sensitive to changes in mains quality. The fact that differences occurred even with my set-up highlights the seriousness of the problem and indicates that no system is immune.

Adding a mains conditioner, or one of the special mains cables or distribution boards, should make a big improvement to your hi-fi or home theatre system – and that's immediately audible. But the adverse effects of mains pollution are subtle and elusive; for most people, it's akin to taking a cure for a disease they didn't know they had. Before and after differences can appear small – until you stop the treatment. Then you wonder how you ever lived without the cure. Several manufacturers warn that there's a running-in period with their products, and that improvements build over time. Things can only get better...

### BEST BUYS & RECOMMENDED



**RUSS ANDREWS Kimber Mains and PowerBlock** £350.00  
Not cheap, but capable of making a fabulous difference to clarity and stereo imagery that needs to be heard to be appreciated. Brings out the best in your system; makes a difference that can't easily be obtained by other means.



**LYNWOOD MEGA Power Supply** £295.00  
Simple to use, not too expensive, effective mains noise reduction, acts as a power reservoir.



**RUSS ANDREWS Silencer** £39.95  
Inexpensive, easy to use, very effective.  
**TRICHORD Powerblock** £299.00  
Simple to install, not too expensive, effective mains noise reduction, eliminates DC and common mode noise.



**PS AUDIO Power Plant** £1,200.00  
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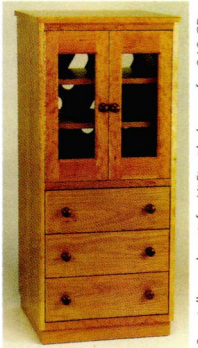
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**B BEST BUYS:** Awarded to group-tested products which display an unbeatable blend of performance and value for money.

**R RECOMMENDED:** Top performers in group tests: perhaps not the cheapest but possibly more sophisticated than Best Buys.

**E EDITOR'S CHOICE:** Components which have outstanding sound quality but do not qualify for BB or R because of non group testing.

### Our Three Step Guide to Buying Hi-Fi

The *Hi-Fi Choice Price Guide and Directory* are extremely simple to use, but contain all the information you need to select and buy the perfect hi-fi system. Here's how it works.

**STEP 1 DISCOVER** which products fall within your budget by using our Price Guide, which starts on this page. The product listing is updated using manufacturers' data every other month, and aims to include every hi-fi component currently available in the UK. (But please fax us on (020) 7317 2686 with any omissions!) It is an alphabetical listing divided into different types of hi-fi component, and also into price bands.

**STEP 2 PRODUCTS** whose names are printed in **RED** are those we have reviewed, which you can read about in the Directory (starts after the Price Guide). Here you will learn which items have been singled out for our famous Best Buy, Recommended or Editor's Choice awards, denoting products of exceptional quality and value. The Directory is sorted by product type and listed alphabetically, and the beginning of each section provides essential information about each kind of hi-fi component.

**STEP 3 FIND** your nearest hi-fi store in our Dealer Directory (at the end of the Directory) to book a demonstration of the hi-fi equipment you want to hear. Remember to take your own software!

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### AMPLIFIERS INTEGRATED

#### KEY

Ⓔ – Number of line-level inputs.  
 '20W' – Rated RMS output power per channel into a nominal 8 Ohm load.

#### UP TO £250

Arcam Alpha One	Ⓔ	35W	230
Ariston AX910	Ⓔ	30W	60
Cambridge A1 Mk III	Ⓔ	30W	100
Cambridge A1 Mk3 SE	Ⓔ	30W	120
Cambridge A100	Ⓔ	40W	140
Cambridge A300	Ⓔ	40W	150
Cambridge A3i	Ⓔ	60W	200
Cambridge A500RC	Ⓔ	50W	200
Denon PMA-250SE	Ⓔ	30W	140
Denon PMA-350SE	Ⓔ	50W	180
Denon PMA-535R	Ⓔ	50W	230
Denon PMA-100M	Ⓔ	80W	240
H/K HK630	Ⓔ	40W	200
H/K HK3270	Ⓔ	65W	250
JVC AX-A372BK	Ⓔ	40W	200
JVC AX-R5BK	Ⓔ	45W	200
Kenwood KA-1080	Ⓔ	60W	140
Kenwood KA-3080R	Ⓔ	70W	170
Kenwood KAF-3010R	Ⓔ	70W	180
Kenwood KAF-3030R	Ⓔ	50W	200
Marantz PM-48	Ⓔ	50W	150
Marantz PM-57	Ⓔ	50W	200
Marantz SR-47	Ⓔ	40W	200
Marantz PM6010 OSE	Ⓔ	50W	230
Marantz PM-66SE	Ⓔ	50W	230
Musical Fidelity E1	Ⓔ	30W	199
NAD 310	Ⓔ	20W	100
NAD C300	Ⓔ	25W	146
NAD C320	Ⓔ	40W	200
NAD 312	Ⓔ	25W	200
Pioneer A-109	Ⓔ	40W	120
Pioneer A-209R	Ⓔ	45W	150
Pioneer A-307R	Ⓔ	55W	170
Pioneer A-509R	Ⓔ	60W	250
Rotel RA921	Ⓔ	25W	125
Rotel RA931	Ⓔ	35W	175
Rotel RA971 Mk II	Ⓔ	60W	250
Sansui AUX-410R	Ⓔ	50W	150
Sansui AUX-510R	Ⓔ	70W	230
Sherwood AX 4050R	Ⓔ	50W	150
Sherwood AX-7030R	Ⓔ	95W	230
Sony TA-FE230	Ⓔ	40W	100
Sony TA-FE330R	Ⓔ	60W	130
Sony TA-FB740R	Ⓔ	50W	200
Teac A-E2000	Ⓔ	50W	180
Teac A-R600	Ⓔ	90W	200
Technics SU-V300	Ⓔ	25W	130
Technics SU-V500	Ⓔ	30W	160
Technics SU-A600 Mk3	Ⓔ	37W	200
Technics SU-V620	Ⓔ	70W	230
Technics SU-A707	Ⓔ	70W	250
Technics SU-A700 Mk3	Ⓔ	45W	250
Yamaha AX-396	Ⓔ	60W	170
Yamaha AX-496	Ⓔ	85W	230

#### £251 TO £500

Arcam Alpha 7R	Ⓔ	45W	300
Arcam Alpha 8R	Ⓔ	50W	380
Arcam Alpha 9	Ⓔ	70W	500
Audio Analogue Puccini	Ⓔ	40W	475
Audioagram MB1	Ⓔ	40W	493
Creek 4330	Ⓔ	40W	279
Creek 4330R	Ⓔ	40W	355
Creek 5250	Ⓔ	50W	450
Cymbal CA1	Ⓔ	40W	499
Cyrus 5	Ⓔ	40W	500
Denon PMA-735R	Ⓔ	65W	300
Denon PMA-1500R	Ⓔ	70W	500
Edmund Audio ES110	Ⓔ	85W	400
EMF Audio Sequel	Ⓔ	50W	450
H/K HK650	Ⓔ	60W	330
Kenwood KA-5090R	Ⓔ	65W	300
Magnum IA120	Ⓔ	65W	265
Magnum IA170	Ⓔ	96W	330
Magnum IA170SE	Ⓔ	90W	430
Marantz PM7000	Ⓔ	95W	500
Marantz PM-68	Ⓔ	90W	300
Marantz PM-66 KJ Sig.	Ⓔ	50W	400
Marantz SR5000	Ⓔ	105W	500
Monnio Asty	Ⓔ	55W	400

Musical Fidelity E11	Ⓔ	60W	300
Musical Fidelity X-A1	Ⓔ	50W	480
Musical Fidelity A2	Ⓔ	25W	500
Myryad T-40	Ⓔ	50W	400
NAD 314	Ⓔ	35W	260
NAD C340	Ⓔ	50W	270
NAD 317	Ⓔ	80W	400
Onkyo A9210	Ⓔ	40W	260
Onkyo A921	Ⓔ	50W	350
Onkyo A922	Ⓔ	70W	400
Pioneer A-607R	Ⓔ	60W	300
R-20 A10	Ⓔ	50W	500
Rega Big Brio	Ⓔ	35W	298
Rega Luna	Ⓔ	40W	375
Rega Mira	Ⓔ	60W	475
Roksan Kandy KA-1	Ⓔ	110W	475
Rotel RA-972	Ⓔ	60W	450
Shearpe 2.5	Ⓔ	35W	499
Sony TA-FB940R	Ⓔ	60W	300
Sony TA-FA30ES	Ⓔ	70W	450
Sony TA-F3000ES	Ⓔ	40W	500
TAG McLaren 60i	Ⓔ	60W	500
Talk Electronics Storm 1	Ⓔ	50W	500
Teac AH-500	Ⓔ	50W	280
Technics SU-A808	Ⓔ	55W	300
Technics SU-A909	Ⓔ	100W	400
Token K50	Ⓔ	55W	350

#### £501 TO £700

Alchemist Kraken APD6A	Ⓔ	55W	600
Alchemist Nemesis	Ⓔ	80W	700
Audio Analogue Puccini Remote	Ⓔ	50W	575
Audio Note Kanji Line SE	Ⓔ	9W	699
Audio Note First integrated	Ⓔ	40W	699
Audio Refinement Complete	Ⓔ	50W	699
Audioagram MB2	Ⓔ	60W	599
AVC EL 34	Ⓔ	40W	650
CR Dev CR324se	Ⓔ	150W	569
CR Dev Kalypso	Ⓔ	15W	599
CR Dev CR325	Ⓔ	175W	699
Creek 5250SE	Ⓔ	60W	665
Cyrus 7	Ⓔ	60W	700
Densen Beat B-100 MkII	Ⓔ	60W	700
Gamma Gemini	Ⓔ	12W	699
H/K HK690	Ⓔ	60W	530
Hi Q Sound MCI	Ⓔ	30W	565
LFD Integrated 0	Ⓔ	50W	549
Linn Majik (Line)	Ⓔ	33W	650
Lynwood Opal	Ⓔ	80W	685
Magnum IA200	Ⓔ	100W	599
Magnum Class A	Ⓔ	85W	690
Musical Fidelity A220	Ⓔ	50W	700
Myryad Cameo	Ⓔ	50W	530
Myryad M1 120	Ⓔ	60W	700
Naim Nait 3	Ⓔ	30W	590
R-20 A20 Mk II	Ⓔ	70W	600
Rose Scion	Ⓔ	65W	615
Shearpe Phase 2	Ⓔ	50W	689
Sugden Audition T	Ⓔ	65W	549
Talk Electronics Cyclone 1	Ⓔ	60W	550
Talk Electronics Storm 2	Ⓔ	50W	650
Teac AB-X7R	Ⓔ	50W	700
YBA Complete Integre	Ⓔ	50W	699

#### £701 TO £1000

Alchemist Nexus	Ⓔ		799
Alchemist Forseti Integrated	Ⓔ	100W	1,000
Arcam Alpha 10	Ⓔ	100W	800
Arcam FMJ A22	Ⓔ	100W	1,000
Aria S2	Ⓔ	12W	1,000
Audio Analogue Puccini SE Remote	Ⓔ	60W	795
Audio Note Oto Line PP	Ⓔ	12W	950
AVI S2000MI	Ⓔ	100W	999
Copland CSA8	Ⓔ	60W	899
Credo IMP702	Ⓔ	70W	850
Credo IMP703	Ⓔ	70W	1,000
Denon AVR-3300	Ⓔ	75W	800
Exposure XX Super	Ⓔ	60W	800
Exposure XV Super	Ⓔ	60W	900
Exposure RCOOV	Ⓔ	60W	1,000
LFD 0 LE Integrated	Ⓔ	60W	799
Linn Majik (Phono)	Ⓔ	33W	800
Magnum Class A SE	Ⓔ	80W	795
Marantz PM-17	Ⓔ	60W	900
Meridian 551	Ⓔ	55W	795
Musical Fidelity A3	Ⓔ	85W	849
Musical Fidelity X-A100R	Ⓔ	75W	999
MVL A2	Ⓔ	100W	970
NAD T770	Ⓔ	90W	1,000
Naim Nait 3 R	Ⓔ	30W	780
Nakamichi AV-10	Ⓔ	140W	1,000
Pathos Classic One	Ⓔ	55W	995
Plinius 2100i	Ⓔ		995
Roksan Caspian	Ⓔ	70W	795
Shearpe Phase 2 Reference	Ⓔ	50W	799
Sonneteer Alabaster	Ⓔ	50W	900
Sugden A2 Ia Int	Ⓔ	25W	799
Sugden Audition C	Ⓔ	60W	799
TAG McLaren 60iRV	Ⓔ	60W	999

#### £1001 TO £2000

Aria SR-1	Ⓔ	80W	1,250
Aria S6	Ⓔ	35W	1,600
ATC SIA2-150	Ⓔ	150W	1,984



# HI-FI PRICE GUIDE

Audio Analogue Maestro	6	150W	1,995
Audio Note Soro Line PP	6	20W	1,200
Audio Note Oto Line SE	4	12W	1,200
Audio Note Oto Phono SE	6	12W	1,500
Audio Note Soro Line SE	6	18W	1,699
Audio Valve Assistant-S 20	1	20W	1,250
Beam-Echo SA-50	6	50W	1,950
Beard 30-60 Mk II	6	30W	1,495
Bow Technologies Wazoo	6	50W	1,795
Bryston B-60	6	60W	1,281
Canary Audio CA-608	6	24W	1,495
Copland CSA14	6	60W	1,199
Copland CSA28	6	60W	1,249
Copland CTA402	6	35W	1,698
CR Dev Romulus V5	6	35W	1,198
CR Dev Athena	4	38W	1,499
CR Dev Remus V3	6	60W	1,989
Crede LIM 702	6		1,191
Crede LIM 703	6		1,249
Densen DM-10	6	75W	1,450
EAR 859	6	13W	1,999
EAR 834	6	40W	1,999
Golden Tube Audio SI-50 MkII	6	50W	1,100
Graaf Venticinque	6	25W	1,790
Jadis Orchestra	6	40W	1,345
LFD Integrated 1	6	65W	1,099
Lundahl Mag Amp	6	23W	1,735
Marantz PM-17K1 Sig	6	60W	1,300
Meracur Intrare	6	60W	1,095
NAD S300	6	100W	1,900
Papworth MH-200	6	200W	1,200
Papworth MVH-200	6	200W	1,200
Plinius 8150	6		1,895
Praecsa Sonoro	6	100W	1,800
R-20 A30.1	6	100W	1,500
Restek Fantasy 2	6	100W	1,499
Roksan Caspian DSP	4		1,295
Sonic Frontiers Anthem Integrated	6	25W	1,299
Sony TA-VA777ES	6	100W	1,500
T+A R1200R	6	90W	1,750
Woodside ISA230 Line	6	30W	1,099
Woodside ISA230 Disc	6	30W	1,249
YBA a Integre Line	6	50W	1,095
YBA a Integre DT Line	6	50W	1,395

### OVER £2000

Adyton Opera	4	50W	2,595
AMP Flux System 2	6	50W	5,000
Arcam Alpha 10 DAVE	7	100W	2,500
Arcam FMJ A22 DAVE	7	100W	2,850
Aria S8	6	24W	2,950
Art Audio Integra	6	25W	2,400
Audio Note Meishu Line	6	9W	2,750
Audio Note Ongaku	6	26W	56,000
Audio Research CA50	6	45W	3,399
Belcanto SET40	6	40W	4,450
Belcanto Orfeo 30SI	6	35W	5,450
Cary CAD-300SEI	4	15W	3,395
Conrad-Johnson CAV-50	6	50W	2,495
EAR V20	6	24W	2,495
Gamma Rhythm	6	18W	2,499
Gamma Rhythm Ref	6	20W	3,499
Gamma Moment	6	40W	19,999
Jadis DA30	6	30W	2,690
Jadis DA60	6	60W	4,483
Krell KAV300	6	150W	2,495
Krell KAV300R	4	150W	3,333
Krell KAV500	6	250W	5,000
McIntosh MA6400E	6	100W	9,999
McIntosh MA6800E	6	150W	9,999
Meracur Onesta	4	75W	2,595
Musical Fidelity A1001	6	200W	2,500
Pathos Twin Towers	6	35W	3,250
Rotel RSP-985/RPB-985	6	130W	2,225
Rowland Concentra	6	100W	5,500
Sonus Faber Musica	6	50W	2,295
T+A R1500R	6	135W	2,015
Tube Tech Unsis Sig. Int.	6	30W	2,300
Tube Tech Synergy PPS	6	150W	6,900
Wavac MD811	6	15W	2,995
Wavac MD300B-ST	6	10W	5,575
Wavac MD300B WE	6	10W	6,750

### AMPLIFIERS PREAMPS

**KEY**  
 6 (etc) - Number of line-level inputs.  
 Ph - Phono input fitted as standard  
 (may be an option on some other models).

### UP TO £500

Arcam Alpha 9C	6		400
Aria Simply Phono		Ph	500
Audio Analogue Bellini	6	Ph	495
Audio Note M Zero	6		299
Beam-Echo PP-21		Ph	499
Bryston BP1	6	Ph	438
CR Dev Themis		Ph	349
Creek OBH-9			160
Creek P43/R	6		350
Creek P52	6		499
Crimson CS610D		Ph	475
Cyrus aEQ7	6	Ph	498
Densen DP-Drive/DP-02			500

DPA Enl'ment phono		Ph	275
EAR 834P		Ph	349
EAR 834L	6		449
EAR 834P/MC		Ph	499
Henley HMC50			150
Henley HMC100			350
Hi Q Sound LCP2			149
LFD Mistral Linestage			449
LFD L50 Linestage	6		499
Lumley PP70	6		345
Lumley PP1	6		345
Magnum MP120	6		330
Magnum MP660	6		500
Magnum MP330	6		500
Monnio Asty L	6		500
Moth 30 Passive	6		149
Moth 30 Phono	6	Ph	249
Moth 30 Line stage	6		349
Musical Fidelity X10-D	6		120
Musical Fidelity X-LP	6	Ph	130
Musical Fidelity X-PRE	6		200
Musical Fidelity E20	6	Ph	400
NAD PP-1	6	Ph	40
NAD 114	6	Ph	270
NAD 116	6	Ph	430
Naim Prefix	6		360
Naim NAC92	6		485
Parasound P/HP-100	6	Ph	130
Parasound P/HP-850	6	Ph	400
Plinius Jarrah	6	Ph	450
Pro-Ject Phono Box	6	Ph	40
QED Discsaver DS-1	6	Ph	35
R-20 R-20	6	Ph	450
Rega EOS	6	Ph	398
Rega Cursa	6	Ph	475
Roksan Artaxerxes 10	6	Ph	445
Rose RV-23	6	Ph	450
Rotel RQ970BX	6	Ph	150
Rotel RC971	6	Ph	155
Rotel RC972	6		250
Rothwell Indus	6		499
Sunfire Phono	6	Ph	430
Talk Electronics Hurricane 1	6	Ph	500
Technics SU-C1010	6	Ph	300
Tom Evans Microgroove	6		399
Trilogy 905	6		375
Trilogy 904	6		375
Trilogy 900	6	Ph	499

### £501 TO £2000

Adyton Chorus	6		1,995
Alchemist Kraken Pre	6		549
Alchemist Forseti Pre	6		999
Alchemist Signature Pre	6		1,499
Aria Feather One	6		795
Aria Mystery Two	6		1,750
Aria Mystery One	6		1,750
Art Audio Vinyl One MM	6	Ph	916
Art Audio VPS Line	6		963
Art Audio Vinyl One MM/MC	6	Ph	1,307
Art Audio VPS Phono	6	Ph	1,460
Art Audio Conductor Phono MC	6	Ph	2,000
Audio Note M1 Line	6		550
Audio Note M1 RIAA	6	Ph	550
Audio Note M2 Line	6		999
Audio Note Discovery	6		999
Audio Note M2RIAA	6	Ph	1,099
Audio Prism Mantissa	6		1,995
Audio Research LS8 MkII	6		1,449
Audio Research PH3	6	Ph	1,490
Audio Synthesis Pro Passion	6		595
Audio Synthesis ADQ Disc Stage	6	Ph	995
Audio Synthesis Passion Ultimate	6		995
Audio Valve Eclipse	6		1,650
AVI S2000MP	6		949
AVI S2000MP+P	6	Ph	1,199
Beam-Echo SP-21	6	Ph	1,116
Bryston BP20	6		1,126
Bryston BP-25	6		1,326
Bryston BP-25P	6	Ph	1,592
Canary Audio CA-606	6		1,295
Canary Audio CA-601	6		1,595
Cary SLP-50 Mk II	6		1,195
Cary PH-301	6	Ph	1,695
Chord Phono	6	Ph	1,898
Clearaudio Symphono	6	Ph	740
Concordant Exhilarant	6		900
Concordant Exquisite	6		1,950
Conrad-Johnson PV-10AL	6		995
Conrad-Johnson PV-10A	6	Ph	1,295
Conrad-Johnson PV-12AL	6		1,990
Conrad-Johnson EF-1	6	Ph	1,990
Conrad-Johnson PF-2	6	Ph	1,990
Copland CSA303	6	Ph	1,099
Copland CTA301 MkII	6	Ph	1,249
CR Dev Carmenta	6		659
CR Dev Argento	6	Ph	699
Crede CMP004	6		1,246
Crede CMP005	6		1,876
Cyrus aCA7	6		800
Cyrus aEQ7/PSX-R	6	Ph	826
Densen Beat B-200	6	Ph	1,000
Densen DM-20	6		1,380
DNM 3 Start	6	Ph	1,000
DNM 3A Start	6	Ph	1,300
DPA Enlightenment pre.	6		795

Dynavector L200	6		995
Dynavector P100	6	Ph	1,495
Dynavector L1000	6		1,995
Exposure XIII	6		800
Exposure XIX	6		800
Exposure XVII	6	Ph	850
Exposure RC XXI	6		1,000
Gate PR101P	6		1,195
Golden Tube Audio SEP-2	6		990
Golden Tube Audio SEP-3	6		1,995
Graaf WFB Two	6	Ph	1,390
Graaf WFB One	6	Ph	1,750
Henley HMC200	6		600
Hi Q Sound MCB2	6	Ph	545
Hi Q Sound MCL2	6		645
Jadis DPL2	6		1,590
Krell KAV250p	6		1,999
LFD MC1 Phonostage	6	Ph	949
LFD LS1 Linestage	6		999
LFD MC2 Phonostage	6	Ph	1,499
LFD LS2 Linestage	6		1,599
LFD LSB Linestage	6		1,999
Linn Wakonda	6		750
Linn Linto	6		850
Linn Kairn	6		1,400
Lumley LV1.5	6		895
Lumley LV1	6		1,150
Lumley PV1.5	6	Ph	1,700
Lumley PV1	6	Ph	1,700
McIntosh C712	6	Ph	1,999
Meracur Ingredi	6		925
Meridian 501	6		695
Meridian 562	6		765
Meridian 562V	6		995
Meridian 502	6		1,295
Michell Delphini	6	Ph	895
Michell Orca	6		1,650
Muse Model 3	6		1,990
Musical Fidelity X-LP2/X-PSU	6	Ph	628
Musical Fidelity X-P100	6	Ph	800
Musical Fidelity F25	6	Ph	1,500
Myriad MP100	6		600
NAD S100	6		600
NAD 118	6		1,000
Naim NAC92R	6		650
Naim NAC72	6		745
Naim NAC102	6		1,000
Quad 99 Pre	6	Ph	750
Rega Hal	6	Ph	998
Roksan ROK-L2.5	6		1,250
Rose RV-23S	6	Ph	525
Rotel RC995	6	Ph	525
Shearman Phase 6 Pre	6		999
Shearman Phase 1 Pre Ref	6		1,499
Siemel MC20	6	Ph	650
Siemel MM20	6	Ph	650
Siemel TU10	6		1,599
Siemel TR20	6		1,599
Sonic Frontiers Anthem Pre 1P	6	Ph	899
Sonic Frontiers Phono 1	6	Ph	1,999
Sonographe SC26	6		995
Sugden Audition Pre	6		549
Sugden Masterclass Pre	6		1,995
Sumo Athena IIB/II LS	6		987
Sumo Athena III	6		987
Sumo Artemis uP	6		1,595
Sunfire The Classic	6		1,630
T+A P1200R	6		965
TAG McLaren PA10	6	Ph	849
TAG McLaren PPA20	6	Ph	1,499
TAG McLaren PA20R	6	Ph	1,499
TAG McLaren DPA32R	6	Ph	1,695
Talk Electronics Hurricane 2	6		650
Talk Electronics Hurricane 3	6		900
Talk Electronics Hurricane 4	6		1,550
Talk Electronics Hurricane 5	6		1,900
Thorens TTP-2000F	6	Ph	699
Tom Evans The Groove	6		1,500
Trilogy 901	6		750
Trilogy 906	6	Ph	995
Trilogy 902	6		1,595
Tube Tech Seer Line	6		935
Tube Tech Mac Phono	6	Ph	1,150
Tube Tech Prophet	6		1,970
van den Hul Pre-amp	6		1,800
Woodside SC27 Line	6		949
Woodside SC26 Line	6		1,557
XTC PRE-1	6		1,350
YBA 3a Line	6		995
YBA 2a Line	6		1,450

### OVER £2000

Adyton Temper	6		2,495
Adyton Modus	6		2,695
Art Audio VPS Dual Mono Line	6		2,350
ATC SCA2	6		2,999
Atma-Sphere MP-3	6	Ph	3,795
Atma-Sphere MP-1	6	Ph	7,600
Audio Note M3Line	6		2,650
Audio Prism Avanti	6		7,995
Audio Research LS25	6		4,999
Audio Research REF 1	6		8,495
Audio Valve Fanfare	6		4,995
Audiolabor 511	6		6,775
Balanced VK-50	6		3,995
Boulder L3AE	6		2,100
Boulder L5AE	6		3,400

Boulder L5M	6		3,800
Boulder 2010	6		22,000
Canary Audio CA-801	6		3,750
Cary SLP-98L	6		2,395
Chord CPA 1800	6		2,220
Chord CPA 2200	6		2,740
Chord CPA 3200E	6		4,041
Chord CPA 4000E	6		6,675
Conrad-Johnson PF-R	6		2,490
Conrad-Johnson PV-12A	6	Ph	2,590
Conrad-Johnson Premier 15	6	Ph	3,995
Conrad-Johnson Premier 14	6		4,495
Conrad-Johnson Premier 16LS	6		7,995
Conrad-Johnson Art	6		14,995
CAT SL1 Ultimate			

Myryad T-60	50W	300
Myryad MA 120	60W	500
NAD 912	30W	200
NAD 214	80 W	370
NAD 216THX	125W	470
Naim NAP90/3	30W	460
Parasound/HCA-750A	75W	450
Rega Maia	85W	475
Rotel RB971 Mk II	70W	225
Rotel RB981	130W	355
Shearpe 3.5	35W	489
Talk Electronics Tornado 1	50W	450
Technics SE-A1010	100W	350

## ES01 TO E2000

Alchemist Kraken Pwr	55W	549
Alchemist Forseti Pwr	150W	1,399
Alchemist Signature Power	100W	1,999
Arcam Alpha 10P	100W	600
Aria Power 35	35W	1,500
Art Audio Quartet	15W	1,753
Art Audio Concerto	25W	1,960
Audio Analogue Donizetti	60W	595
Audio Note The P	40W	550
Audio Note P Zero	8W	599
Audio Note P1	12W	750
Audio Note P1SE	12W	999
Audio Note P2	20W	1,000
Audio Note P2SE	18W	1,499
Audio Note Conqueror	8W	1,599
Audio Prism Antares	35W	1,695
Audio Research D130	130W	1,890
Audio Research VT60	35W	1,999
Audio Valve RKV	0.1W	595
Audio Valve PPP25	25W	1,095
Audio Valve PPP45	45W	1,395
AVI S2000MM	150W	1,399
Beaumont Obligato	7W	1,695
Bryston 2B-LP	75W	750
Bryston 3B-ST PRO	150W	1,160
Bryston 3B-ST	150W	1,160
Bryston THX3B	150W	1,262
Bryston 4B-ST PRO	300W	1,756
Bryston 7B-ST	500W	1,815
Bryston 7B-ST PRO	500W	1,815
Bryston THX4B	300W	1,850
Bryston THX7B	300W	1,886
Canary Audio CA-706	40W	1,695
Canary Audio CA-708	50W	1,950
Chord SPM 400	100W	1,565
Conrad-Johnson MV-55	50W	1,995
Copland CSA515	150W	1,299
Copland CTA505	67W	1,899
CR Dev Amphion	12W	1,949
Credo PMP 804		1,876
Creek AS2SE	100W	599
Crimson CS630D	100W	850
Crimson CS640D	200W	1,300
Cyrus aPA7	150W	1,900
Densen B-30	100W	800
Densen DM-30	100W	1,380
DNM PA Start	45W	1,000
DNM PA1 Start	45W	1,300
DNM PA3	50W	1,900
DPA Enlightenment pwr	100W	995
Dynavector HK75	75W	1,995
Exposure XVIII Super	75W	900
Exposure XVIII Mono	60W	1,800
Golden Tube Audio SE-40	40W	1,100
Golden Tube Audio SE-300B MkII	8W	1,790
Graaf Venticouque P	25W	1,395
Graaf 505	90W	1,995
Hi Q Sound MCM	70W	715
Jadis DA5	40W	1,749
Krell KAV150a	150W	1,990
Lexicon 212	120W	1,850
LFD PA1 Powerstage	90W	999
LFD PA2 Powerstage	75W	1,599
LFD PA2M Powerstage	90W	1,999
Linn LK100	50W	650
Linn LK240	120W	750
Linn AV5105	100W	1,200
Lynwood Ruby	120W	985
Magnum MF330	150W	685
Magnum MF660	125W	825
Magnum A500SE	200W	1,485
Magnum A505E	200W	1,595
McIntosh MC7100	100W	1,999
Meracur Ciere	60W	1,095
Meridian 555	60W	750
Meridian 556	100W	895
Meridian 557	200W	1,400
Meridian 505	160W	1,590
Michell Alecto Stereo	50W	1,150
Michell Alecto Mono	100W	1,950
Monrio Asty P	100W	950
Moth Stereo 60	60W	999
Moth 30 Mono/100	100W	879
Muse Model 100	100W	1,490
Musical Fidelity X-A200	200W	1,000
Myryad MA240	120W	1,000
NAD 218THX	200W	850
NAD S200	200W	1,400
Naim NAP140	45W	770
Naim NAP180	60W	1,112
Naim NAP135	75W	1,705

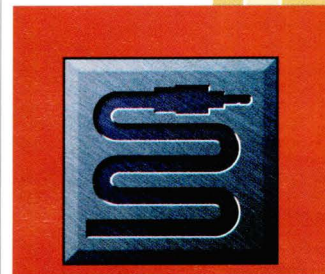
Naim NAP250	70W	1,705
Papworth TVA50	50W	1,425
Parasound HCA-1000A	125W	600
Parasound HCA-1500A	205W	1,000
Quad 99 Stereo Power	85W	550
Quad 909	140W	900
Quad 99 Monoblock	150W	1,300
Rega Exon	125W	598
Roksan Caspian Power	70W	595
Roksan ROK-S1.5	70W	1,495
Rose RP-190 (Dual Mode)	75W	550
Rotel RB991	200W	600
Rotel RB-1090	380W	1,575
Rothwell Rubicon	10W	949
Shearpe Phase 3	50W	639
Shearpe Phase 3 Reference	50W	749
Shearpe Phase 5 Mono	100W	1,598
Sonic Frontiers Anthem Amp 1	40W	1,299
Sonographe SA250	125W	1,195
Sonographe SA400	220W	1,695
Sugden Audition Power		549
Sugden A21a Power	25W	649
T+A A1210	90W	875
T+A PA1220R	100W	1,445
T+A A1500	140W	1,535
T+A PA1500R	135W	1,665
TAG McLaren 60P	60W	849
TAG McLaren 100P	100W	1,099
Talk Electronics Tornado 2	65W	600
Talk Electronics Tornado 3	100W	750
Talk Electronics Tornado 4	110W	1,100
Thorens TTA-2000	30W	599
Trilogy 948	50W	1,895
Trilogy 948T	22W	1,895
Tube Tech Unisis Sig. Pwr	30W	1,900
Woodside SA240	40W	1,199
Woodside MA100	100W	1,733
Woodside STA50	50W	1,880
XTC POW-2	150W	1,600
YBA 3a DT Stereo	45W	1,455

## OVER £2000

Adyton Cordis 1.6	120W	3,495
Adyton Cordis 3B	280W	12,995
Aria Smart 845	24W	3,500
Aria Smart 300B	24W	4,250
Art Audio Symphony	7W	2,500
Art Audio Tempo	30W	2,714
Art Audio Maestro	60W	3,884
Art Audio Diavolo	13W	4,000
Art Audio Jota	18W	6,000
Art Audio Ellesse	100W	8,500
Art Audio Chiara	25W	10,000
ATC SPA2-200PRO	200W	2,056
ATC SPA2-150	200W	2,699
Atma-Sphere S-30 Mk II	30W	2,450
Atma-Sphere M-60 Mk II	60W	4,195
Atma-Sphere MA-1 Mk II	150W	7,995
Audio Note P3	9W	2,150
Audio Note Quest	9W	2,750
Audio Note Yubi	18W	3,850
Audio Note Conquest	18W	4,450
Audio Note Tomei	30W	8,500
Audio Note Neiro	7W	11,360
Audio Note Ankoru	14,500	14,500
Audio Prism Debut Mk II	35W	2,495
Audio Prism Mana	100W	12,995
Audio Research VT50	50W	2,950
Audio Research 100.2	100W	3,395
Audio Research VT100 MkII	100W	4,950
Audio Research VT200	200W	8,790
Audio Synthesis Desire Decade	200W	2,495
Audio Valve Avalon	60W	2,195
Audio Valve Challenger 115	115W	2,995
Audio Valve Challenger 140	140W	3,495
Audio Valve Challenger 300	300W	7,995
Audio Valve Baldur 200 Plus	40W	8,995
Audiolabor 500	230W	5,998
Beam-Echo DL7-35	30W	3,525
Belcanto SET40	30W	3,450
Belcanto Orfeo 30S	45W	4,750
Belcanto SET80	80W	6,750
Border Patrol 300B SE	9W	3,995
Border Patrol 300B SE (WE)	9W	4,495
Boulder 102AE	100W	2,800
Boulder 102M	300W	3,100
Boulder 500AE	150W	4,995
Boulder 500M	150W	5,500
Boulder 2060	600W	25,000
Boulder 2050	999W	43,500
Bryston THX8B	150W	2,385
Canary Audio CA-304	40W	2,695
Canary Audio CA-301	22W	2,995
Canary Audio CA-303	24W	5,495
Cary CAD-572SE	20W	2,250
Cary CAD-2A3.5E	5W	3,150
Cary CAD-300SE	20W	4,495
Cary CAD-805C	50W	7,995
Chord SPM 600	150W	2,040
Chord SPM 1000B	200W	2,920
Chord SPM 1200B	250W	3,790
Chord SPM 1200C	330W	4,210
Chord SPM 1400E mono	500W	5,650
Chord SPM 5000	580W	14,500
Conrad-Johnson MF2250	130W	2,295
Conrad-Johnson MF-2500	250W	3,495

Conrad-Johnson Premier 11A	70W	3,500
Conrad-Johnson Premier 12	140W	6,900
Conrad-Johnson Premier 8XS	150W	17,000
Conrad-Johnson Premier 8A	275W	17,000
CAT J1.1	100W	17,550
CR Dev Artemis	4,995	4,995
Credo LPO 804	2,456	2,456
Credo PMP 155	2,676	2,676
Credo LPO 455	4,975	4,975
Credo LPO 155	6,983	6,983
DNM PA3S	2,900	2,900
Dynavector HX1.2	130W	3,995
EAR 861	32W	3,599
EAR 509 Mk II	100W	3,999
EAR 519	100W	4,699
EAR 549	200W	6,499
Exposure IV	90W	2,199
Exposure XVI	125W	4,000
Gamma Aeon	20W	4,999
Gamma Space Ref	18W	7,999
Gamma Aeon Ref	70W	49,999
Gate TR201A	22W	3,335
Golden Tube Audio SE-100	100W	2,495
Graaf GM20	60W	2,950
Graaf GM100	100W	4,450
Jadis DA8	80W	2,990
Jadis DA7	100W	4,790
Jadis JA30	30W	5,180
Jadis SE500B	10W	7,980
Jadis JA80	60W	9,580
Jadis JA100	100W	10,298
Jadis JA200	160W	13,980
Jadis JA500	400W	19,990
Jadis KAV250a	250W	3,145
Krell KAV500/2	100W	3,195
Krell FPB200	200W	5,998
Krell FPB250m	250W	8,994
Krell FPB300	300W	9,500
Krell FPB600	350W	15,994
Krell FPB650m	650W	23,800
Lexicon 225	250W	2,500
Lexicon 501	500W	5,000
Linn Klout	80W	2,400
Linn Klimax 500	500W	11,200
Lumley M125	120W	3,750
Lumley M250	250W	7,500
Magnum Class A mono	180W	2,450
Magnum A200SE	275W	3,750
Mana Stealth	300W	4,800
Levinson 334	125W	5,495
Levinson 335	250W	7,495
Levinson 336	350W	8,995
Levinson 33H	150W	19,395
McIntosh MC150	150W	3,499
McIntosh MC300	300W	3,999
McIntosh MC500	500W	8,999
McIntosh MC1000	999W	14,999
Meracur Tentare	75W	2,245
Meracur Cantare	1W	8,995
Muse Model 160 Ser. II	160W	2,290
Muse Model 150	125W	2,690
Muse Model 175 Ser. II	175W	3,490
Muse Model 300 Ser. II	300W	3,990
Musical Fidelity F16	200W	2,500
Musical Fidelity NuVista 300	350W	3,300
Musical Fidelity F19	300W	4,000
Papworth M100	100W	2,645
Papworth M200	200W	3,825
Plinius SA50/3	2,750	2,750
Plinius SA100/3	3,450	3,450
Plinius SA250/3	5,850	5,850
Roksan ROK-M1.5	2,250	2,250
Rowland Model 2	75W	4,999
Rowland Model 6	150W	10,999
Rowland Model 8T	250W	12,499
Rowland Model 9T	350W	27,999
Sharp SM-SX1000	165W	10,000
Shearpe Phase 1 Pwr Ref	100W	2,399
Siemel TA20	50W	2,350
Sonic Frontiers Power 1	55W	2,499
Sonic Frontiers Power 2	110W	4,999
Sonic Frontiers Power 3	220W	8,599
Sony TA-N1	200W	4,500
Sugden Masterclass Power	75W	2,995
Sunfire Load Invariant	300W	2,280
Sunfire Signature	600W	2,600
T+A A3000	190W	2,850
TACT Millennium II	150W	7,000
TAG McLaren 125M	125W	2,399
Talk Electronics Tornado 5	200W	2,100
Trilogy 958T	45W	3,395
Trilogy 958	100W	3,395
Tron Type PK25	5W	6,150
Tron Type WE300B	8W	6,550
Tron Type PK25 Mono	5W	12,300
Tron Type WE300B Mono	15W	13,100
Tube Tech Genesis Sig.	100W	4,700
Tube Tech Synergy DMA	150W	6,400
van den Hul Power amp	65W	2,500
Wavac MD572	50W	6,250
Wavac EC300B	10W	16,500
Wavac EC838	35W	21,750
Wavac HE 4304	15W	24,750
Wavac HE 833	100W	27,500
Wavac HE 805	45W	27,500
XTC POW-1	200W	2,500

YBA 2a HC Stereo	70W	2,350
YBA 3a Mono	45W	2,425
YBA 2a HCDT Stereo	70W	3,050
YBA 1a HC Stereo	85W	4,400
YBA 2a HCDT Mono	70W	5,000
YBA 1a HC Mono	85W	6,650
YBA Sig. Stereo	100W	6,995
YBA Passion Mono	250W	8,775
YBA Sig. Mono	100W	9,995
YBA Sig. HC Mono	100W	16,650



## CABLES Analogue Interconnects

### KEY


- ☉ - Stranded construction.
- - Solid-core construction.

Prices of interconnects are for a one-metre terminated pair.

Acoustic Precision Eikos	☉	89.00
Argento Copper I/C	☉	120.00
Argento Silver I/C	☉	255.00
Argento VDM Silver	☉	865.00
Art Yam Church 5000	☉	515.00
Audio Note AN-A	☉	18.00
Audio Note AN-C	☉	35.00
Audio Note AN-5	☉	99.00
Audio Note AN-V	☉	179.00
Audio Note AN-Vx	☉	450.00
Audioquest Jade	●	370.00
Audioquest Turquoise	●	60.00
Audioquest Topaz	●	

# H I - F I P R I C E G U I D E

Harmonix HS-102	195.00	Shinpy Quasar 2	850.00	XLO Signature 1.1	625.00	Tara ISM The One Dig.	995.00
Harmonix HS-101	265.00	Shinpy Big Bang 2	1,995.00	XLO Sig 2.1	675.00	Theta AT&T	550.00
Henley HSP10	20.00	Siltech MC2-12	308.00	XLO Sig 3.1	750.00	Transparent Cable PDL	199.00
Henley HSP50	35.00	Siltech MC4-24S	400.00	XLO Limited Ed'n	2,200.00	Trichord Pulsewire 75D	75.00
Henley HSP100	65.00	Siltech FTM-3S	730.00			Vampire Wire D/1	150.00
Henley HSP200	95.00	Silver Sounds SS2	99.00			van den Hul Source HB	35.00
Henley HSP250	150.00	Silver Sounds SS1	199.00			van den Hul Videolink	70.00
Heybrook Black Flash	39.00	Silver Tone Ex-Static	35.00			van den Hul AES-EBU 110	75.00
Insert Focus 1.2	21.50	Silver Tone Sci-Fi	95.00			van den Hul First	140.00
Insert IC100 Mk II	46.95	SME S2LB-4	46.18			van den Hul Second	150.00
Insert Image 5.1	84.95	SME S3LB-4	52.06			van den Hul First Ultimate	180.00
Insert Status 3.4	159.95	SME 4900A	76.83			XLO Pro 104	60.00
lxos 104	20.00	SME 5900A	102.57			XLO Ultra 4	89.00
lxos 1003	30.00	SonicLink Red	25.00			XLO Ref 2	180.00
lxos Gamma 1002	39.95	SonicLink Silver pink	35.00			XLO Sig 4.1	325.00
lxos 103	45.00	SonicLink Black	50.00			XLO Limited Ed'n	1,100.00
lxos 102	60.00	SonicLink Lilac	65.00				
lxos 1000	89.95	SonicLink Violet	85.00				
lxos 101	100.00	SonicLink Maroon	125.00				
lxos 100.XO3	150.00	SonicLink Blue Nickel	150.00				
Kimber PBJ/Ultralate	68.00	SonicLink Blue Nickel	195.00				
Kimber KC1	96.00	SonicLink Vermilion	300.00				
Kimber Hero	110.00	SonicLink Red earth	450.00				
Kimber Silver Streak	180.00	SonicLink Black earth	695.00				
Kimber KCAG	390.00	SonicLink Blue earth	995.00				
Kimber KCTG	720.00	SonicLink Black Rhodium	40.00				
LAT International IC-50	3700	Straight Wire Chorus	80.00				
LAT International IC-80 MkII	58.00	Straight Wire Sonata	99.95				
LAT International IC-100 MkII	95.00	Straight Wire Encore II	59.95				
LAT International IC-200 Mk II	151.00	Supra DAC-X	69.95				
Lieder Chanson	340.00	Supra EFF-IX	79.95				
Lieder Lek	420.00	Supra EFF-ISL	89.95				
Lieder Het Lied	420.00	Supra EFF-XLR	21.95				
Lieder Song	580.00	Tara Prism 5	137.00				
Lieder Maas	620.00	Tara RSC Axiom	170.00				
Lieder Rijn	1,000.00	Tara RSC-Prime Gen/2	195.00				
Lieder Waal	1,400.00	Tara Prism 5S1	224.50				
Lumley Silver 12/2	115.00	Tara RSC-Ref Gen. 2	336.00				
Lumley Silver 14/4	175.00	Tara RSC Air 3	560.00				
MonsterInterlink 100	11.00	Tara RSC Air 2	790.00				
Monster Interlink 200	23.00	Tara RSC Air 1	894.00				
Monster Interlink 300 MkII	40.00	Tara ISM The Three	1,144.00				
Monster Interlink 400 MkII	50.00	Tara ISM The 2	2,175.00				
Moth Leyline Black	100.00	Tara ISM The One	54.99				
Moth Leyline Grey	200.00	TCI Viper	48.00				
Nordost Magic	35.00	Transparent Cable Musichord	92.00				
Nordost Black Knight	60.00	Transparent Cable The Link	119.00				
Nordost Solar Wind	84.95	Transparent Cable Music Link	169.00				
Nordost Blue Angel	98.00	Trichord Pulsewire 75	24.00				
Nordost Blue Heaven I/C	150.00	Vampire Wire CC	58.00				
Nordost Red Dawn	300.00	Vampire Wire CCC/II	98.00				
Nordost SPM	825.00	Vampire Wire SC/II	144.00				
Nordost Quattrofil	1,250.00	Vampire Wire SC/IV	259.00				
Ortofon 7N interconnect	250.00	Vampire Wire AI/2	412.00				
PHY-HP Intercon. unscrnd	120.00	Vampire Wire SL	29.99				
PHY-HP Intercon. scrnd	165.00	van den Hul Storm II	50.00				
Precious Metals S550	50.00	van den Hul PB5 HB	65.00				
Precious Metals S555	50.00	van den Hul Source HB	79.95				
Precious Metals S552	70.00	van den Hul D102 III	145.00				
Precious Metals S553	90.00	van den Hul Thunderline HB	240.00				
Precious Metals SS100	100.00	van den Hul First Classic	275.00				
Precious Metals SS102	130.00	van den Hul Second	320.00				
Precious Metals SS103	160.00	van den Hul First Ultimate	550.00				
Precious Metals SS104	190.00	van den Hul MC Gold	1,400.00				
Precious Metals SS200	220.00	van den Hul MC Silver IT	1,750.00				
Precious Metals SS202	290.00	van den Hul MC Silver IT Bal	30.00				
Precious Metals SS203	360.00	Wireworld Orbit	40.00				
Precious Metals SS204	430.00	Wireworld Solstice II	30.00				
Prowire Silver	60.00	XLO Type ER-6	30.00				
PAD Elementa	145.00	XLO Type ER-2	30.00				
QED Qunex 2	30.00	XLO Pro 125	40.00				
QED Qunex 4S	60.00	XLO Type ER-1	40.00				
QED Qunex Sil'r Spiral	90.00	XLO Type ER-5	50.00				
Roksan HDC-02A	60.00	XLO Pro 150	70.00				
Rothwell River	55.00	XLO Type ER-4	99.00				
Rothwell Torrent	119.00	XLO Pro 100	119.00				
Shinpy Red Star 2	120.00	XLO Pro 102	129.00				
Shinpy Black Star 2	240.00	XLO Ultra 1	169.00				
Shinpy Pulsar 2	495.00	XLO Ultra 2	199.00				
		XLO Ref 2	330.00				




**CABLES**  
**Digital Interconnects**

**KEY**  
 ● - Stranded construction.  
 ○ - Solid-core construction.

**Prices of interconnects are for a one metre terminated pair.**

Art Yam Church 5000	275.00
Audioquest Digital/video 1	35.00
Audioquest Digital/video 2	75.00
AudioSource Petros Blue Plus 5	35.00
AudioSource Stratos Ser. 2	59.00
Cable Talk Digital 3	50.00
Cardas Audio Lightning	190.00
ChordCo Codac	38.00
ChordCo Optichord	40.00
ChordCo Prodac	50.00
DNM-Reson DIG100	26.00
DPA Opti-link	20.00
DPA Dig-link	275.00
Ecosse Ref MD2	71.50
Harmonix HS-101 DIG	240.00
Insert Dataline 500	24.95
Insert Optic 2.1	29.95
Insert Dataline 700	39.95
Insert Image 5.1	44.95
lxos 105	25.00
lxos 106	30.00
Kimber Opti-link	50.00
Kimber Illuminati DV-30	70.00
Kimber Illuminati D-60	325.00
Kimber Illuminati DX-50	350.00
Kimber Illuminati Orchid	750.00
LAT International DI-20-D	79.00
Monster Datalink 100	47.00
Monster Lightspeed 100	47.00
Moth Leyline Datalink	140.00
Nordost Moonglo	155.00
Nordost Silver Shadow	335.00
Precious Metals SD35	20.00
Precious Metals SD100	50.00
Precious Metals SD200	110.00
Precious Metals SD202	145.00
QED Qunex OT	30.00
Roksan HDC-01D	45.00
Shinpy Digital	265.00
Siltech HF-6	145.00
SonicLink Green	60.00
Supra ZAC	44.95
Supra EFF-ID	45.00
Supra DAC-XLR	45.00
Tara Prism D-2	59.99
Tara Prism D-1	119.99
Tara RSC Air Dig. 75	345.00
Tara RSC Air Dig. 110	450.00

Tara ISM The One Dig.	995.00
Theta AT&T	550.00
Transparent Cable PDL	199.00
Trichord Pulsewire 75D	75.00
Vampire Wire D/1	150.00
van den Hul Source HB	35.00
van den Hul Videolink	70.00
van den Hul AES-EBU 110	75.00
van den Hul First	140.00
van den Hul Second	150.00
van den Hul First Ultimate	180.00
XLO Pro 104	60.00
XLO Ultra 4	89.00
XLO Ref 2	180.00
XLO Sig 4.1	325.00
XLO Limited Ed'n	1,100.00



**SPEAKER CABLES**

**KEY**  
 ● - Stranded construction.  
 ○ - Solid-core construction.

**Price per mono metre, unterminated.**

ALR/Jordan QMM	5.00
Argento Copper	35.00
Argento Copper Ref	65.00
Argento Silver	125.00
Argento Silver Ref	380.00
Art Yam Church M2000	470.00
Art Yam Church 5000	795.00
Audio Note AN-D	4.50
Audio Note AN-B	16.50
Audio Note AN-L	29.50
Audio Note AN-SP	150.00
Audio Note AN-SPx	450.00
Audioquest Type 2	3.00
Audioquest Slate	15.00
Audioquest Bedrock	30.00
Audioquest Granite	45.00
Audioquest Gibraltar	65.00
Audioquest Caldera	120.00
Cable Talk Theatre 2.1	1.75
Cable Talk Flat 1	2.00
Cable Talk Talk 3.1	2.50
Cable Talk Flat 1 Biwire	4.00
Cable Talk Talk 4.1	4.50
Cable Talk Talk 3.1 Biwire	5.00
Cable Talk Flat 2	5.00
Cable Talk Concert 2.1	8.00
Cable Talk Talk 4.1 Biwire	9.00
Cable Talk Flat 2 Biwire	10.00
Cable Talk Symphony 3	14.00
Cable Talk Concert 2.1 Biwire	16.00
Cardas Audio 300B-Microtwin SC	35.00
Cardas Audio Quadlink-Five SC	59.00
Cardas Audio Cross SC	99.00
Cardas Audio Hexlink-Five SC	109.00
Cardas Audio Hexlink Golden5 SC	175.00
Cardas Audio Golden Cross SC	789.00
ChordCo Carnival	3.00
ChordCo Myth	6.00
ChordCo Legend	15.00
ChordCo Odyssey	17.00

*Connections*



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

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

**CONNECTIONS**

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

Tel: 0208 348 5676 (2.00-7.00 pm)

Fax: 0208 341 9368

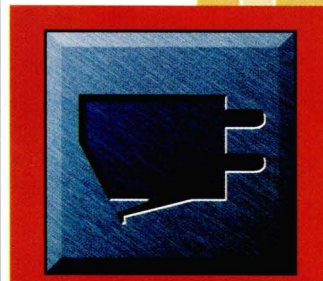
**Esoteric High Fidelity CABLES**

Contact us by phone, fax, or letter and we'll do our best to help you achieve your goal.

(Auditions may be subject to a handling charge)

DNM-Reson LSC	●	6.95
DNM-Reson LSCB	●	13.95
Ecosse Ref FS2.16	⊗	1.75
Ecosse Ref CS2.2	⊗	2.50
Ecosse Ref CS2.3	⊗	3.75
Ecosse Ref CS2.15	●	5.75
Ecosse Ref MS2.2	⊗	15.00
Ecosse Ref MS2.3	⊗	20.00
Ecosse Ref MS2.15	⊗	30.00
Ecosse Ref US2	●	450.00
Electrofluidics Monolith 2020	●	45.00
Gale XL105	⊗	1.00
Gale XL189	⊗	1.00
Gale XL315	⊗	2.00
Gale XL160-2	⊗	2.50
Gale XL315-2	⊗	3.99
Gamma Wonder Line	⊗	99.00
Goertz M1	●	16.00
Goertz M2	●	32.00
Goertz Big Boy	●	64.00
Harmonix Harmonic-Strings	⊗	30.00
Harmonix HS-101T-1	⊗	56.00
Harmonix HS-101SC	⊗	88.00
Ixos 607	⊗	2.00
Ixos 6004	⊗	3.00
Ixos Gamma 6003	⊗	3.00
Ixos 605	⊗	3.00
Ixos Gamma 6006	⊗	5.00
Kimber 4PR	⊗	5.00
Kimber 4VS	⊗	9.00
Kimber 4TC	⊗	19.60
Kimber 8TC	⊗	32.70
Kimber 4AG	⊗	394.00
Kimber 8AG	⊗	656.00
LAT International SS 800	⊗	16.00
LAT International BIWIRE	⊗	23.00
LAT International SS 1000	⊗	36.00
Lieder Pad	⊗	133.00
Lieder Bel Canto	⊗	188.00
Lieder Spoor	⊗	253.00
Lieder Straat	⊗	463.00
Lieder Weg	⊗	663.00
Linn K20	⊗	4.00
Linn K400	⊗	10.00
Linn K600	⊗	15.00
Lumley Silver 12/2	⊗	35.00
Lumley Silver 14/4	⊗	40.00
Monster XP Clear	⊗	2.20
Monster XP Navajo	⊗	2.40
Monster Superflat Mini	⊗	2.75
Monster XP HP	⊗	3.70
Monster Original	⊗	4.40
Monster New Monster	⊗	5.50
Naim NAC A5	⊗	5.70
Nordost Octava	●	3.00
Nordost 4-Flat	●	9.95
Nordost Solar Wind Bi-wire	⊗	27.95
Nordost Blue Heaven Spkr	⊗	58.95
Nordost Red Dawn	⊗	110.00
Nordost SPM	⊗	325.00
Ortofon SPK100	⊗	3.00
Ortofon SPK200	⊗	5.00
Ortofon SPK300	⊗	8.00
PHY-HP Speaker	●	40.00
Precious Metals SL32	⊗	7.50
Precious Metals SL102	⊗	10.00
Precious Metals SL34	⊗	15.00
Precious Metals SL104	⊗	20.00
Precious Metals SL106	⊗	30.00
Precious Metals SL108	⊗	40.00
Profigold Silverflex LC8258	⊗	4.00
Prowire Out of Sight	●	1.99
QED QED Micro	⊗	1.50
QED QED Micro Bi-wire	⊗	3.00
QED QED Mk II Bi-wire	⊗	4.85
QED QED Silver Annv	⊗	5.00
QED Profile 4x4	⊗	9.00
QED Profile Silver 12	⊗	15.00
QED Genesis S'r Spiral	⊗	30.00
QED G's S'r Spiral B/W	⊗	60.00
Rega Speaker	⊗	1.58
Rega SC42	⊗	19.98
Roksan HDC-01S	⊗	6.00
Shiny Red Star 2	⊗	235.00
Shiny Black Star 2	⊗	375.00
Shiny Pulsar 2	⊗	625.00
Shiny Quasar 2	⊗	1,245.00
Shiny Big Bang 2	⊗	4,250.00
Siltech LS2-45	⊗	109.00
Siltech FT-12 MkI	⊗	240.00
Siltech LS4-120	⊗	549.00
Silver Sounds 12 Gauge	⊗	15.00
Silver Sounds 10 Gauge	⊗	35.00
Silver Sounds 8 Gauge	⊗	75.00
Silver Tone Silver-Sonic	⊗	10.00
Silver Tone Silver-Sonic HC	⊗	15.00
Silver Tone Silver-Voice	⊗	55.00
Silver Tone Silver-Voice Ultra	⊗	85.00
SonicLink AS160	⊗	2.50
SonicLink AS175	⊗	2.95
SonicLink AS1200	⊗	5.95
SonicLink AS1200x2	⊗	9.95
SonicLink S300	⊗	18.00
SonicLink S130x2	⊗	20.00
SonicLink S300x2	⊗	40.00
SonicLink S900	⊗	60.00
SonicLink S600x2	⊗	80.00

SonicLink Black Rhodium 4	●	1,000.00
Straight Wire Duo	⊗	3.00
Straight Wire Rhythm	⊗	5.00
Straight Wire Quartet	⊗	8.00
Supra Classic 2.5	⊗	2.49
Supra Linc 2.5 Flex	⊗	3.49
Supra Classic 4.0	⊗	3.95
Supra Rondo 4x2.5	⊗	4.95
Supra Classic 6	⊗	4.95
Supra Ply 2.0	⊗	4.95
Supra Linc 4.0 Flex	⊗	4.95
Supra Ply 3.4	⊗	6.95
Supra Ply 3.4/5	⊗	7.95
Supra Quattro 4x4	⊗	8.95
Tapewire 418	●	7.00
Tapewire 212	●	16.00
Tara Klara	⊗	2.95
Tara Prism 2+2	⊗	7.95
Tara Prism Nexa	⊗	9.95
Tara Prism Bi-Wire	⊗	18.00
Tara RSC Prime 500	●	36.00
Tara RSC Prime 1000	●	73.00
Tara RSC Ref Gen/2	●	118.00
Tara RSC Prime 1800	●	150.00
Tara RSC Digital 75	●	230.00
Tara RSC Air 2	●	291.00
Tara RSC Air 1	●	466.00
Tara ISM The Two	●	708.00
Tara ISM The One	●	941.00
TCI Python	⊗	7.99
Townshend Isolda	⊗	50.00
Transparent Cable Musicbord	⊗	11.00
Transparent Cable The Wave	⊗	23.00
Transparent Cable Music Wave	⊗	25.00
Vampire Wire SC-384	⊗	11.00
Vampire Wire SC-554	⊗	15.00
Vampire Wire ST-I	●	30.00
Vampire Wire SC-1108	⊗	30.00
Vampire Wire ST-II	●	48.00
Vampire Wire ST-III	●	73.00
van den Hul Skyline HB	⊗	3.99
van den Hul Snowline	⊗	5.49
van den Hul Skytrack HB	⊗	5.99
van den Hul Clearwater	⊗	7.99
van den Hul Snowtrack	⊗	10.99
van den Hul Royal Jade	⊗	10.99
van den Hul CS122 HB	⊗	13.49
van den Hul Cleartrack	⊗	14.99
van den Hul D352 HB	⊗	21.00
van den Hul Teatrac HB	⊗	23.99
van den Hul SCS12	⊗	36.00
van den Hul Magnum HB	⊗	40.00
van den Hul The Wind HB	⊗	44.00
van den Hul Revolution HB	⊗	80.00
van den Hul Revelation HB	⊗	120.00
van den Hul The Third	⊗	1,000.00
XLO CDA 16/2	⊗	4.45
XLO CDA ER-14 THX	⊗	5.81
XLO CDA 16/4	⊗	8.60
XLO CDA ER-11 THX	⊗	11.62
XLO Pro 600	⊗	16.60
XLO CDA ER-12 THX	⊗	23.24
XLO Pro 1200	⊗	33.20
XLO Ultra 6	⊗	41.50
XLO Ultra 12	⊗	83.00
XLO Ref 2	⊗	216.00
XLO Sig 5.1	⊗	398.00
XLO Limited Ed'n	⊗	1,660.00



## CARTRIDGES

**KEY**  
**MM** - Moving-magnet type.  
**MC** - Moving-coil type.

<b>UP TO £100</b>		
Audio Note IO1	MM	99
Audio Technica AT-91	MM	15
Audio Technica AT-95E	MM	20
Audio Technica AT-110E	MM	28
Audio Technica AT450E	MM	70
Audio Technica AT440ML	MM	90
Benz-Micro MC20EII	MC	70
Denon DL110	MC	70
Denon DL160	MC	90
Denon DL103	MC	100
Goldring Elan	MM	20
Goldring Elektra	MM	30
Goldring 1006	MM	65
Goldring 1012GX	MM	85

Grado Prestige Black	MM	49
Grado Prestige Green	MM	59
Grado Prestige Blue	MM	69
Grado Prestige Red	MM	99
N'ham Tracer I	MM	98
N'ham Tracer II	MM	16
Ortofon OM 3E	MM	20
Ortofon OM 5E	MM	20
Ortofon OM 10	MM	30
Ortofon 510	MM	40
Ortofon OM DJ	MM	50
Ortofon OM 20	MM	70
Ortofon 520	MM	70
Ortofon MC1 Turbo	MC	75
Ortofon Concorde DJ	MM	80
Ortofon OM 30	MM	90
Ortofon 530	MM	100
Pickering TE-15	MM	20
Pickering VE-15	MM	25
Pickering T-E	MM	25
Pickering V15-DJ	MM	28
Pickering TL-E	MM	35
Pickering TL-2E	MM	45
Pickering XV15-625E	MM	50
Pickering XV15-150-DJ	MM	50
Pickering TL-2-S	MM	55
Pickering XV15-7575	MM	60
Pickering XV15-625DJ	MM	60
Pickering XV15-1800S	MM	70
Pickering TL35	MM	80
Pickering XEV-3001E	MM	95
Pickering XLZ-3500	MM	100
Pickering TL-4-S	MM	100
Rega Bias	MM	42
Rega RB78	MM	42
Rega Super Bias	MM	64
Rega Elys	MM	89
Shure SC35C	MM	36
Shure M44G Pro	MM	45
Shure M447 Pro	MM	53
Stanton 500AL II	MM	35
Stanton 500EL	MM	44
Stanton 680AL/X	MM	59
Stanton 680EL/X	MM	74
Sumiko Oyster	MM	30
Sumiko Black Pearl	MM	50
Sumiko Pearl	MM	70
Sumiko Blue Point	MM	100

## OVER £100

Allaerts MC1 Eco	MC	850
Allaerts MC1 B	MC	1,295
Allaerts MC1 B MkII	MC	1,995
Allaerts MC2 Finish	MC	2,995
Audio Note IO2	MM	139
Audio Note Soara	MC	795
Audio Note IO1V	MC	1,095
Audio Note IOL1D	MC	4,500
Audio Technica AT-OC9ML	MC	330
Audio Technica AT-33PTG	MC	489
Benz-Micro The Glider	MC	600
Benz-Micro Reference	MC	1,100
Benz-Micro Reference Ruby	MC	1,500
Benz-Micro Ruby Open Air	MC	1,600
Clearaudio Alpha Mk 2	MM	135
Clearaudio Beta Mk 2	MM	190
Clearaudio Beta-S Mk 2	MM	250
Clearaudio Virtuoso	MM	295
Clearaudio Sigma	MC	590
Clearaudio Gamma-S	MC	810
Clearaudio Victory	MC	960
Clearaudio Signature	MC	1,540
Clearaudio Accurate	MC	2,515
Clearaudio Insider	MC	5,165
Clearaudio Insider Ref.	MC	6,810
Denon DL304	MC	200
Dynavector 10X4II	MC	189
Dynavector DV20XH	MC	299
Dynavector DV-20XL	MC	299
Dynavector DV20XL	MC	299
Dynavector 17D2	MC	450
Dynavector XX-1L	MC	998
Dynavector XX-1	MC	998
Dynavector Te-Kaitora	MC	1,698
Goldring 1022GX	MM	105
Goldring Eroica LX	MC	120
Goldring Eroica	MC	120
Goldring 1042	MM	130
Goldring Elite	MC	235
Grado Prestige Silver	MM	119
Grado Prestige Gold	MM	149
Koetsu Red T	MC	1,359
Koetsu Red K Sig	MC	1,899
Koetsu Urushi	MC	1,999
Koetsu Signature	MC	2,999
Koetsu Gold PR	MC	5,498
Linn K9	MM	125
Linn Klyde	MC	500
Linn Arkiv	MC	1,000
London Decca Maroon	MM	299
London Decca Gold	MM	359
London Decca Maroon Dp	MM	379
London Decca S Gold	MM	439
London Decca Gold Dp	MM	439
London Decca S Gold Dp	MM	519
London Decca Jubilee	MM	999
Lyra Lydian Beta	MC	599

Lyra Clavis Da Capo	MC	995
Lyra Parnassus DC1	MC	1,895
N'ham Tracer I	MM	310
N'ham Tracer II	MM	410
N'ham Tracer IV	MM	660
Ortofon MC15 Super II	MC	140
Ortofon 540	MM	140
Ortofon MCS Turbo	MC	150
Ortofon MC25E	MC	200
Ortofon MC25FL	MC	250
Ortofon MC10 Supreme	MC	300
Ortofon MC20 Supreme	MC	450
Ortofon MC30 Supreme	MC	550
Ortofon MC200II	MC	800
Ortofon MC Rohnmann	MC	1,000
Ortofon MC300 II	MC	1,200
Ortofon MC Jubilee	MC	1,250
Ortofon MC7500	MC	2,000
Pickering TL-3003	MM	145
Pickering XLZ-4500	MM	150
Pickering TL-4004	MM	175
Pickering XSV-5000U	MM	200
Pickering XLZ-7500	MM	200
Pickering TLZ-7500-S	MM	200
Rega Super Elys	MM	150
Rega Exact	MM	275
Reson Mica	MM	195
Reson Recla	MM	270
Reson Aciore	MC	330
Reson Etile	MC	485
Reson Lexa	MC	1,300
Roksan Core Black	MM	145
Roksan Shiraz	MC	995
Shure V15XMR	MM	295
Stanton 890AL/X	MM	120
Sumiko Blue Point Special	MC	250
Transfiguration Esprit	MC	950
Transfiguration Spirit	MC	950
Transfiguration Temper Supreme	MC	2,250
van den Hul DDT-II	MC	600
van den Hul MC-10	MC	750
van den Hul MC-One	MC	900
van den Hul MC-ONE Super	MC	1,050
van den Hul MC-Two	MC	1,200
van den Hul The Frog Low o/p	MC	1,500
van den Hul The Frog HO	MC	1,700
van den Hul Grasshopper IISLN	MC	2,000
van den Hul Grasshopper IIISLA	MC	2,000
van den Hul White Beauty S-X	MC	2,500
van den Hul White Beauty HO	MC	2,500
van den Hul Grasshopper IIIGLN	MC	2,800
van den Hul Grasshopper IIICMN	MC	2,800
van den Hul Grasshopper IIICHN	MC	2,900
van den Hul Grasshopper IVGLA	MC	3,000
van den Hul Black Beauty	MC	3,000
Wilson Benesch Matrix	MC	786
Wilson Benesch Analog	MC	1,572
Wilson Benesch Carbon	MC	1,573



## CASSETTE DECKS

**KEY**  
 ⇄ - Autoreverse - no need to remove and turn around the tape.  
 3-H - 3 heads, i.e. separate record and replay heads.

<b>UP TO £200</b>		
Ariston WX-510		70
Denon DRM-555		150
Denon DRW-585		200
H/K DC520		200
JVC TD-X372BK		170
JVC TD-R472BK		200
Kenwood KX-W4080		160
Kenwood KX-3080		160
Kenwood KX-W6080		200
Kenwood KX-5080S		200
Marantz SD-455		170
Marantz SD-57		199
Onkyo K 185		200
Pioneer CT-W208R		130
Pioneer CT-S250		150</

Sony TC-KB820S	180
Sony TC-WE855	200
Teac W-416	100
Teac V-615	130
Teac RH-300	160
Teac W-790R	170
Teac V-1050	180
Teac RH-500	200
Technics RS-8X501	170
Technics RS-TR373	180
Technics RS-TR474	200
Technics RS-A26	200
Yamaha KX-393	130
Yamaha KX-W321	170
Yamaha KX-493	180

### OVER £200

Denon DRM-740	270
H/K TD420	250
JVC TD-V662BK	270
JVC TD-W718BK	300
NAD 613	230
NAD 614	270
NAD 616	300
Nakamichi DR-10	800
Onkyo TA 6210	230
Onkyo TARW 211	270
Onkyo TARW 311	320
Onkyo TA 6310	330
Onkyo KR 609	350
Onkyo KW 606	370
Onkyo TARW 411	370
Onkyo K 611	460
Pioneer CT-W806DR	300
Rotel RC960BX	250
Sony TC-KA6E5	650
T+A CC1200R	1,180
Teac W-860R	230
Teac W-6000R	450
Teac V-6030S	550
Teac V-8030S	650
Technics RS-AZ7	270
Technics RS-TR575	280
Yamaha KX-580SE	250



### CD PLAYERS

#### KEY

➡ - Multiplayer: can be loaded with more than one disc.  
 [10] - Electrical (coaxial) digital output.  
 Many players also include an optical (Toslink) output.

#### UP TO £250

Ariston CDX700	50
Ariston CDX710	70
Ariston CDX720	80
Cambridge CD5	100
Cambridge D100	120
Cambridge CD4	150
Cambridge CD4SE	200
Cambridge D500	200
Denon DCD-435	130
Denon DCD-655	180
Denon DCD-735	230
Eclipse CD101a	40
H/K FL8350	200
H/K HD720	230
JVC XL-V120BK	110
JVC XL-V130BK	120
JVC XL-V230BK	140
JVC XL-F116BK	180
JVC XL-F216BK	200
JVC XL-Z574BK	250
Kenwood DP-1080	110
Kenwood DP-2080	130
Kenwood DP-R3090	140
Kenwood DP-R4090	160
Kenwood DPF-3030	170
Kenwood DP-3080	170
Kenwood DPF-3010	180
Kenwood DPF-R6030	180
Kenwood DP-RG090	200
Kenwood DP-4090	250
Marantz CD-38	130
Marantz CD5000	150

Marantz CC3000	150
Marantz CC-38	200
Marantz CD-48	200
Marantz CD-57	230
Marantz CD-67II	250
NAD C520	170
NAD 522	170
NAD 510	200
NAD 524	250
NAD 525	250
NAD 512	250
Onkyo DX-7222	170
Pioneer PD-107	100
Pioneer PD-207	120
Pioneer PD-F607	200
Pioneer PD-M603	200
Pioneer PD-F1009	250
Pioneer PD-F958	250
Pioneer PD-F706	250
Sansui CD220	120
Sherwood CD-4030R	180
Sherwood CDC680	180
Sherwood CDC6050R	100
Sony CDP-XE220	110
Sony CDP-XE330	120
Sony CDP-M305	140
Sony CDP-XE530	180
Sony CDP-CE435	200
Sony VDP-CE740E	220
Sony CDP-CX235	120
Synergy CD11210	100
Teac CDP-1120	130
Teac CD-P1820	200
Teac CD-P1440	200
Teac CD-P3450SE	200
Teac PD-D2400	240
Teac PD-H500i	90
Technics SL-PG390A	100
Technics SL-PG490A	120
Technics SL-PG590A	140
Technics SL-PD6	160
Technics SL-PD8	200
Technics SL-PS670D	250
Technics SL-PS770D	130
Yamaha CDX-396	180
Yamaha CDC-575	180
Yamaha CDX-496	230
Yamaha CDC-675	230
Yamaha CDX-596	230

### £251 TO £500

Arcam Alpha MCD	330
Arcam Alpha 7 SE	350
Arcam Alpha 8SE	500
Cambridge CD6	300
Cyrus dAD1.5	400
Denon DCD-835	280
Denon DCM-260	300
Denon DCD-1550AR	350
H/K HD740	300
H/K FL8550	300
H/K HD760	500
JVC XL-Z674BK	300
Kenwood DP-R7080	300
Kenwood DP-9090	300
Kenwood DP-5090	400
Kenwood DP-7090	400
Marantz CD-675E MkII	300
Marantz CD6000 OSE	400
Marantz CC-870	400
Marantz CD-631KI	400
Musical Fidelity E60	300
Musical Fidelity A2 CD	500
Musical Fidelity E624	500
Myryad T-10	400
NAD 513	290
NAD C540	329
NAD 515	350
NAD 514	370
NAD 517	400
Nakamichi MB10	400
Onkyo DX 7210	260
Onkyo C721	290
Onkyo DXC 320	380
Onkyo DX 7510	400
Onkyo CM 716	450
Parasound C/DP-1000	499
Philips DVD750	490
Pioneer PD-F1007	300
Rega Planet	475
Roksan Kandy	475
Rotel RCD-951	350
Rotel RCD-971	450
Rotel RCC-955	500
Sony CDP-XB930E	300
Sony CDP-CX450	400
Sony CDP-X3000ES	500
Synergy CDJ2010	300
Technics SL-MC7	300

### £501 TO £1000

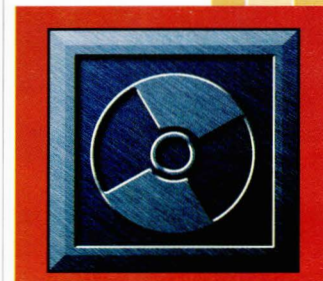
Acurus AC11	899
Alchemist Nexus	600
Arcam Alpha 9	800
Audio Analogue Paganini	750

Audio Note CD1	599
Audio Note AN-CD2	999
Audiomeca Obsession	999
AVI S2000MC 24 Ref	999
Creek CD43	599
Cyrus dAD3	600
Cyrus dAD3 Q24	900
Denon DCD-1650AR	700
DPA Renaissance int CD	950
Helios Model 3	700
Helios Model 2	950
Linn Mimik	875
Linn Genki	995
Magnum CD2020	595
Marantz CD-17	800
Musical Fidelity X-RAY	799
Musical Fidelity A3 CD	800
Myryad Cameo	580
Myryad T-20	600
Myryad MC100	800
Quad 99	650
R-20 D20	700
Roksan Caspian	895
Rotel RCD-991	750
Sony CDP-XA555E5	1,000
Sugden Audition	649
Talk Electronics Thunder 1	1,000
Talk Electronics Thunder 2	700
Talk Electronics Thunder 3	1,000
Teac VRDS-8	600
Teac VRDS-9	700
Teac VRDS-25X	1,000
Trichord Genesis	569
Trichord Digital Jukebox 25	619
Trichord Digital Jukebox 50	669
Trichord Digital J'box 100	719
Trichord Revelation	819
YBA Complete	649
YBA Special	695

### OVER £1000

Acoustic Precision Eikos	1,850
Advantage CD15	3,995
Alchemist Kraken CD	1,249
Alchemist Forseti Int.	1,249
Alchemist Forseti	1,995
Arcam FMJ CD23	1,100
Audio Analogue Maestro	1,100
Audio Research CD2	3,399
Audiomeca Keeps	1,500
Audiomeca Talisman	2,150
Audiomeca Talisman SE	2,300
Balanced VK-D5	3,995
Cary CD-301	2,350
Classe CDP-3	1,395
Conrad-Johnson DF-2	1,695
Conrad-Johnson DV-2b	2,495
Copland CDA-266	1,199
Copland CDA277	1,649
Copland CDA289	1,898
Copland CDA288	1,999
Cymbal CPD12	1,299
Densen B-400	1,280
Exposure CD Player	1,050
Helios Model 1	1,250
Helios Stargate	2,250
Jadis Orchestra	1,345
Krell KAV250cd	2,490
Krell KAV300cd	3,599
Krell KP525s	19,995
Linn Ikemi	1,950
Linn Sondek CD12	12,000
Marantz CD-17KIS	1,100
Marantz CD-7	1,300
Levinson 39	4,995
McIntosh MCD7009	3,699
Meracus Tanto	1,395
Meracus Imago Player	4,495
Meridian 506	1,100
Meridian 508	1,995
Myryad MCD500	1,300
NAD S500	1,100
Naim CD3.5	1,050
Naim CDX	2,200
Naim NACDSII/XPS	5,625
Oracle CD Player	9,499
Pink Triangle Numeral	1,049
Pink Triangle Litaural	2,200
Proceed CDP	3,395
R-20 D302	1,500
Resolution CD50	2,995
Roksan Attessa-DP3P	1,495
Shearman Phase 7	1,499
Sherwood CD1	1,100
Sonic Frontiers Anthem CD1	1,699
Sonic Frontiers SFCD-1	3,799
T+A CD1210R	1,185
T+A CD1220R	1,540
TAG McLaren CD20R	1,250
Theta Miles SE	2,390
Tube Tech Fusion	1,350
Tube Tech Fulcrum	1,850
Wadia 860x	7,495
XTC CDP-1	1,350
YBA Integre a	1,095
YBA CD3a	1,850

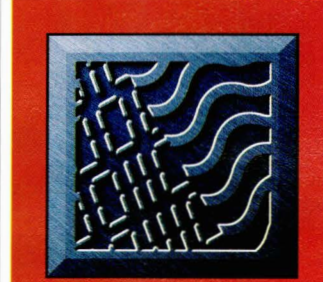
YBA CD2a	2,950
YBA CD1a	3,895
YBA CD1a a2 spec.	5,025



### CD TRANSPORTS

KEY  
 [10] - Electrical (coaxial) digital output.  
 Many players also include an optical (Toslink) output.

Alchemist Forseti Drive	1,100
Alis CDT III	4,995
Audio Note CDT Zero	399
Audio Synthesis Transcend Decade	3,995
Audiomeca Damination	999
Audiomeca Damination SE	1,100
Audiomeca Talisman	1,850
Audiomeca Talisman SE	1,999
Audiomeca Talisman DOB	2,250
Conrad-Johnson DR-1	1,795
DPA Enlightenment Drv	775
Jadis JD3	1,999
Jadis JD1	9,190
Linn Kank	1,850
Levinson 37	3,995
Levinson 31.5	9,295
Meracus Imago	3,995
Muse Model 5	1,800
Muse Model 8	3,500
Oracle CD Drive	7,399
Pink Triangle Cardinal II	909
Rega Jupiter	598
Resolution VT960	3,500
Roksan Attessa-DP3	1,295
Sonic Frontiers Transport 3	5,999
T+A CM1200R	875
TAG McLaren CDT20R-T2L	1,499
Teac VRDS-T1	550
Teac P-30	2,500
Theta Pearl	1,349
Theta Jade	2,650
Thorens TCD-2000	999
Trichord Digital Turntable	719



### DIGITAL TO ANALOGUE CONVERTERS (DACs)

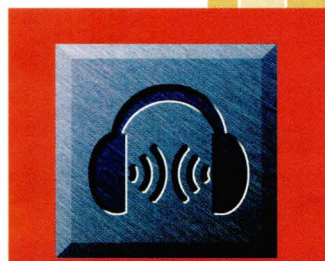
KEY  
 4 - Number of digital inputs.

Alchemist TS-D-1	300
Alchemist Forseti DAC	1,100
Alis Reference	4,995
Audio Note DAC Zero	369
Audio Note DAC1	675
Audio Note DAC2	1,099
Audio Note DAC3	1,750
Audio Research DAC5	2,335
Audio Research DAC3 MkII	3,999
Audio Synthesis DAX Decade	2,995
Audiolabor 531	7,550
Audiomeca Elair	799
Audiomeca Ambrosia	1,850
Boulder 2020	21,000
Cary CD-303	2,695
Chord DSC900E	2,040
Chord DSC1100E	2,815
Chord DSC1500E	4,895
Conrad-Johnson D/A-3	1,195
Conrad-Johnson D/A-2b	1,990



dCS Elgar	3	8,500
DPA Little Bit 3	3	325
DPA Renaissance DAC		595
DPA Enlightenment DAC		850
DPA SX128		2,000
DPA SX256		4,000
DPA SX512		8,000
Harmonix Reimyo DAP-77		2,790
Jadis JS2		2,499
Jadis JS1	3	6,990
LFD DAC2		1,950
LFD DAC3		3,000
Linn Numenk		1,500
Levinson 360	6	4,395
Levinson 360S	6	6,895
Levinson 30.6		16,495
Meracus Auriga		1,295
Meracus Fragrate		2,495
Meridian 566		1,095
Muse Model 2		2,190
Muse Model 2 Plus	3	2,500
Muse Model 2/96	3	3,000
Musical Fidelity X-ACT		200
Musical Fidelity X-24K		300
Musical Fidelity X-DAC		300
Onkyo DX 7310		330
Rega Io		475
Resolution D92	7	1,500
Roksan Atessa-DA2	4	595
Sonic Frontiers Processor 3	5	5,999
Sumo Theorem IIB		1,155
Teac D-T1	3	500
Theta Chroma 396 Std		799
Theta Pro Geny		1,099
Theta Pro Prime IIa		1,699
Theta Pro Basic IIIa		2,990
Theta Casablanca LS		6,158
Thorens TDA-2000	3	700
Trinchord Pulsar Ser One		1,395
Tube Tech Fulcrum Xport		950
Woodside DVAC-18		1,499

Sony MZ-R90	MD	1
Sony MDS-S41	MD	1
Sony MZ-R70	MD	180
Sony MDS-JE530	MD	300
Sony MDS-JB930	MD	300
Sony MDS-JA555E5	MD	550
Teac MDH300	MD	300
Teac RW-800	MD	350
Teac MD-H500i	MD	350
Teac MD-8	MD	600
Teac MD-5	MD	600
Teac MD-10	MD	900
Traxdata Traxaudio 900	MD	399
Yamaha MDX-995	MD	230
Yamaha CDR-S1000	MD	400



## HEADPHONES

### KEY

'D' - Dynamic type, compatible with virtually all normal headphone outputs.

'E' - Electrostatic type; generally includes a separate power supply.

Open-back construction.

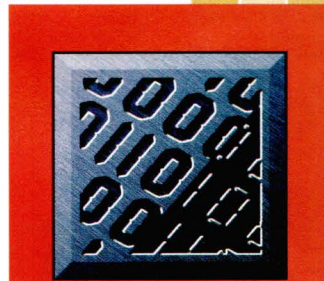
Closed-back construction.

### UP TO £40

AKG Rox	D	30
AKG K100	D	36
Aural Envelope DX200	D	20
Aural Envelope DX220	D	30
Beyer DT131	D	29
Beyer DT131TV	D	32
Beyer DT75	D	34
Beyer DT231	D	40
Hama SL273	D	20
Hama SL275	D	25
JVC HA-CD88	D	18
JVC HA-D525	D	20
JVC HA-F65	D	20
JVC HA-D626	D	25
Kenwood KPM-310	D	18
Kenwood KPM-410	D	25
Maxell HP-2000	D	20
Pioneer SE-A40	D	20
Pioneer SE-A20V	D	23
Pioneer SE-M250	D	25
Pioneer SE-M350	D	30
Sennheiser HD56	D	18
Sennheiser HD433	D	20
Sennheiser HD400	D	25
Sennheiser HD470	D	35
Sennheiser HD60TV	D	40
Sony MDR-250V	D	18
Sony MDR-A34L	D	18
Sony MDR-ED228LP	D	18
Sony MDR-G52LP	D	20
Sony MDR-E848LP/MP	D	20
Sony MDR-ED238ML	D	22
Sony MDR-G56V	D	25
Sony MDR-G62LP	D	25



Let our experts help with your hi-fi problems. Send your query to 'Help' at the usual address.



## DIGITAL RECORDERS

### KEY

MD - MiniDisc

DAT - Digital Audio Tape

Portable

Denon DMD-1000	MD	300
Denon DMD-1600AL	MD	600
JVC XM-448	MD	200
JVC XL-R5000	MD	450
Kenwood DMF-5020	MD	250
Kenwood DMF-9020	MD	499
Kenwood DM-7090	MD	500
Kenwood DM-9090	MD	550
LG ADR-620	MD	350
Marantz CM635	MD	500
Marantz DR700	MD	600
Marantz DR-17	MD	1,500
Onkyo MD-121	MD	450
Onkyo MD 122	MD	700
Philips CDR770	MD	1
Philips CDR775	MD	1
Philips CDR570	MD	1
Philips CDR951	MD	380
Pioneer MJ-D508	MD	200
Pioneer PDR-509	MD	300
Pioneer PDR-W739	MD	400
Pioneer D-05	DAT	900
Pioneer D-C88	DAT	2,000
Sharp MD-R1 MKII	MD	180
Sharp MD-R3H	MD	300
Sharp MD-R2	MD	300
Sharp MD-MS200H	MD	350
Sharp MDXV300H	MD	1,000

Sony MDR-G59G	D	30
Sony MDR-G72LP	D	30
Sony MDR-V300	D	30
Sony MDR-IF130K	D	30
Sony MDR-EX70LP	D	35
Sony MDR-ED268LP	D	35
Stanton ST Pro	D	25
Technics RP-F200	D	25
Technics RP-F400	D	30
Technics RP-F500	D	40
Vivanco SR250	D	20
Vivanco FMH 3000	D	30
Vivanco IR5800	D	30
Vivanco SR222	D	30

### OVER £41

AKG K301	D	70
AKG K240DF	D	100
AKG K222IR	D	100
AKG K401	D	120
AKG K501	D	150
AKG K333IR	D	150
AKG K444IR	D	180
AKG K2905	D	250
AKG K1000	D	700
Audio Technica ATH910PRO	D	80
Audio Technica ATHD40FS	D	100
Audio Technica ATH-M40	D	120
Audio Technica ATH911	D	120
Beyer DT331	D	70
Beyer DT431	D	80
Beyer DT433/863	D	100
Beyer DT531	D	105
Beyer DT831	D	135
Beyer DT100	D	160
Beyer DT931	D	180
Denon AH-D210	D	45
Denon AH-D650	D	95
Denon AH-D750	D	130
Grado SR60	D	79
Grado SR80	D	100
Grado SR125	D	150
Grado SR225	D	200
Grado SR325	D	300
Grado RS2	D	495
Grado RS1	D	695
Hama SL276	D	50
Hama IR Cordless	D	60
Jecklin Float Model 1	D	79
Jecklin Float Model 2	D	99
Jecklin Float ELS	E	399
JVC HA-D727	D	43
JVC HA-D50	D	45
JVC HA-W60	D	49
JVC HA-D910	D	65
JVC HA-W200RF	D	75
JVC HA-DX3	D	200
JVC HA-DX1	D	200
JVC HA-D1000	D	250
JVC HA-F25	D	699
Koss TD/80	D	50
Koss R/100	D	100
Philips HD910	D	80
Pioneer SE-M550	D	50
Pioneer SE-M750	D	60
Precede Ergo Model 1	D	120
Precede Ergo Model 2	D	140
Sennheiser HD200	D	50
Sennheiser IS 380	D	50
Sennheiser HD490	D	50
Sennheiser HD495	D	60
Sennheiser HD500	D	70
Sennheiser RS30	D	70
Sennheiser RS40	D	80
Sennheiser HD270	D	80
Sennheiser HD25 SP	D	90
Sennheiser HD570 Symphony	D	90
Sennheiser RS60	D	120
Sennheiser HD265 Linear	D	125
Sennheiser HDC 451-1	D	130
Sennheiser HD250II	D	150
Sennheiser HD25-13	D	160
Sennheiser HD590	D	160
Sennheiser RS80	D	160
Sennheiser HD25	D	160
Sennheiser HD 580 P'cision	D	200
Sennheiser HD600	D	250
Sennheiser HE60/HEV70	E	998
Sennheiser Orpheus	E	9,652
Sony MDR-V500DJ	D	50
Sony MDR-RF830RK	D	60
Sony MDR-V700DJ	D	100
Sony MDR-D77	D	130
Sony CD2000	D	200
Sony MDR-D55100	D	400
Stanton DJ Pro 101/HB	D	65
Stanton DJ Pro 1000	D	95
Stanton DJ Pro 1001	D	150
Stax SR-0001	E	280
Stax SR-Lambda Nova C	E	370
Stax System II	E	400
Stax Lambda Nova Basic	E	449
Stax SR-Lambda Nova S	E	450
Stax Omega	E	1,896
Technics RP-F800	D	50
Technics RP-HC100	D	55

Vivanco SR650	D	45
Vivanco SR750	D	50
Vivanco SR850	D	50
Vivanco FMH7980	D	60
Vivanco SR950	D	80




## EQUIPMENT SUPPORTS Hi-Fi Tables

### KEY

4 - Number of shelves.

Avik Furniture A4	4	350
Alphason SM17	1	49
Alphason VSM17	1	85
Alphason GSM17	1	85
Alphason GMV1P	1	110
Alphason R17/17	3	120
Alphason GMH1P	1	150
Alphason VR17/17	3	190
Alphason GR17/17-AS	4	275
Apollo Soprano	4	275
Arcici Air Head 1	1	275
Arcici Air Head 2	1	425
Arcici Air Head TNT	1	725
Arcici Suspende 4	4	1,695
Arcici Suspende 5	5	1,895
Atacama Europa	4	240
Audiophile Base 01	1	79
Audiophile S4T120	4	280
Audiophile S4T120P	4	560
Audiophile Furniture Base	4	615
Avd Isoschell	5	1,100
BCD Model 1006/8	1	795
BCD Model 1000	3	1,250
Custom Design Aspect 650	4	250
Custom Design Aspect 850	5	280
Custom Design e'lite E5	5	280
Custom Design Aspect 500AV	5	290
Custom Design e'lite XE5	5	300
Custom Design e'lite AVE	8	350
Deadrock 701	1	60
Deadrock 802	2	90
Deadrock 703	3	130
Deadrock 705	5	230
Deadrock 704	4	250
Elemental Isotube X1	1	169
Elemental Isotube BS	1	199
Elemental Isotube TS	1	209
Elemental Isotube IS	1	209
Elemental Reference B1	1	329
Elemental Isotube X2	2	379
Elemental Isotube X3	3	489
Elemental Reference BS	1	499
Elemental Reference X1	1	499
Elemental Reference TS	1	549
Elemental Reference IS	1	549
Elemental Reference X2	2	799
Elemental Isotube X4	4	849
Elemental Isotube X4/Ref	4	1,199
Elemental Reference X3	3	1,199
Elemental Isotube X4Rse	4	1,349
Elemental Reference X4	4	1,599
Fi-Rax R4	6	399
Finite Elemente A03 pagode	4	479
Finite Elemente E03 pagode	4	649
Finite Elemente HD03	4	1,995
Frameworks H175	1	139
Frameworks FS1	1	150
Frameworks H500	3	265
Frameworks FT2	2	285
Frameworks FT3	3	350
Frameworks H700	3	355
Frameworks H900	3	389
Impulse Iso-plate	5	190
JPW 3 Tier	3	80
JPW 5 Tier	3	100
Linn K3000	5	85
Mana Sound Frame	1	125
Mana Mini Table	1	150
Mana Power supply table	1	150
Mana Reference flat top	1	150
Mana Sound Shelf	1	175
Mana Sound Stage	1	200
Mana Sound Table	1	235
Mana Ref Shelf	1	325
Mana Reference Table	1	350
Mana 2 Tier Stand	1	375
Mana 3 Tier Stand	1	450
Mana 4 Tier Stand	1	500
Mana 5 Tier Stand	1	600

Mana 6 Tier Stand	7	700
Mana 7 Tier Stand	8	800
Mana 8 Tier Stand	8	900
Mission Stance	4	100
Optimum OPT 3406	3	149
Optimum G5	5	180
Optimum OPT 4906	4	199
Optimum G5P	6	200
Optimum OPT 3000	3	200
Optimum OPT 6606	5	249
Optimum OPT 340	3	249
Optimum AV200	2	270
Optimum OPT 5000	5	280
Optimum OPT 490	4	299
Optimum AV30	3	299
Optimum OPT 440	4	299
Optimum OPT 10206	6	299
Optimum OPT 660	4	349
Optimum AV 300	3	349
Optimum OPT 7000	7	359
Optimum OPT 1020	6	399
Optimum OPT 8000	8	400
Optimum OPT 1190	7	450
Optimum AV400	4	450
Projekt A3	3	145
Projekt A4	4	215
Projekt A5	5	235
Projekt B3	6	255
Projekt A6	6	280
Projekt B3i	6	300
Projekt B4	8	340
Projekt B Multi	8	345
Projekt B3ii	7	345
Projekt C3	9	375
Projekt D3	12	420
Projekt C3i	8	420
Projekt B5	10	425
Projekt C3ii	11	465
Projekt C3ii	10	465
Projekt D3i	12	500
Projekt C4	12	500
Projekt C3iv	10	510
Projekt D3ii	14	545
Projekt C Multi	9	555
Projekt D4	16	560
Quadraspire Q45 mini shelf	1	65
Quadraspire Q45 shelf	1	65
Quadraspire QKS Cabinet shelf	1	80
Quadraspire QAV shelf	1	130
Quadraspire Q4M mini table	4	250
Quadraspire Q4 table	4	250
Quadraspire Q4SP Table	4	320
Quadraspire QAV Table	3	350
Quadraspire QAVSP Table	3	400
Quadraspire QK Cabinet	4	450
Reson DOMOPS	1	195
Reson DOMOWS	1	195
Roksan Glass stand	4	495
Solid Steel Model B	1	141
Solid Steel Model A	1	152
Solid Steel Series 3	4	220
Solid Steel Series 5	4	310
Solid Steel H.3	5	372
Solid Steel H.5	5	517
Sound Org Z540	4	140
Sound Org Z560	5	160
Sound Org Z545	4	160
Sound Org Z530	3	170
Soundstyle Radius SR210	2	200
Soundstyle X053	4	230
Soundstyle X100	4	240
Soundstyle Finewoods W100	4	245
Soundstyle X058	5	250
Soundstyle Radius SR310	3	250
Soundstyle Radius SR100	4	250
Soundstyle X310	3	260
Soundstyle X6053	4	260
Soundstyle X105	5	265
Soundstyle X6100	4	275
Soundstyle Radius SR105	5	280
Soundstyle X6058	5	290
Soundstyle Finewoods W105	5	295
Soundstyle X6105	5	300
Soundstyle X6310	3	300
Soundstyle Finewoods W310	3	360
Standalone Design 4	4	190
Stands Unique Isolation Platform	1	55
Stands Unique Sound Support	4	260
Stands Unique Sound Tower	5	299
Stands Unique Compact Sound Support	4	329
Stands Unique Sound Support 10	4	329
Stands Unique Sound Twr Cabinet	5	389
Stands Unique Ref Wall Support	1	560
Stands Unique Ultimate Tower	10	720
Stands Unique Ref Floor Support	6	840
Target B5	5	175
Townshend Seismic Sink 1-CD	1	110
Townshend Seismic Sink 1-3D	1	400
Townshend S/Sink Stand 1-4	4	999
Townshend Seismic Sink Stand	4	1,245
Vibraplane Passive	1	1,895
Vibraplane Active	1	3,600
Wilson Benesch Standard Shelf	1	130
Wilson Benesch Mono Block	1	265
Wilson Benesch Asside Basic	4	590
Wilson Benesch Asside	4	720
Wilson Benesch Triptych	1	990

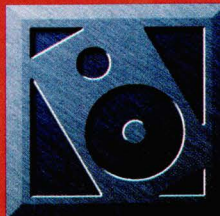


**EQUIPMENT SUPPORTS**  
**Speaker Stands**

**KEY**  
60 – Height of stand in cm.

Acoustic Solutions Platform Eight	49	220
Aliante Base	49	425
Aliante Vela	49	750
Alphason NCI	60	47
Alphason Akros I	60	49
Alphason RS1	120	49
Alphason Akros II	60	65
Alphason NCLI	60	84
Alphason HDS	60	85
Alphason Titan 5	60	125
Apollo Olympus	60	75
Apollo AZ6	66	80
Apollo A4/6	51	82
Atacama Nexus 6	60	50
Atacama BD21	56	55
Atacama BD17	55	55
Atacama BD25	60	60
Atacama SE16	65	65
Atacama SE12	65	65
Atacama SX500	67	67
Atacama F2	70	70
Atacama F1	70	70
Atacama SX600	70	70
Atacama SL200	70	70
Atacama SE24	61	70
Atacama SE20	70	70
Atacama SX700	73	73
Atacama SL300	73	73
Atacama TP600	75	75
Atacama TP500	75	75
Atacama SE615	75	75
Atacama SE515	75	75
Atacama SE415	75	75
Atacama SL400	76	76
Atacama SE1000S	80	80
Atacama R724	60	150
AVF P6171BP	100	30
AVF Tower P6144BP	60	35
BCD Model 1010	60	595
Black Box Speaker Stand	100	797
Credo STD 001	284	284
Custom Design M Range	56	85
Custom Design R/S 300 Mk II	61	100
Custom Design Ref. stands	60	200
Deadrock 903	60	60
Deadrock 902	47	60
Deadrock 901	39	60
Elemental Reference SB1	8	399
Elemental Isotube SZ	49	499
Elemental Isotube SZse	61	599
Elemental Isotube SCZ	49	699
Elemental Isotube SCZse	49	799
Elemental Reference SZ	99	999
Elemental Reference SZ	52	1,499
Elemental Reference SCZ	52	1,499
Heybrook Stand-S6	63	69
JPW M52	45	45
JPW M53	61	55
JPW M51	46	80
JPW HS1	45	120
JPW HS2	61	120
Mana Sound Base	8	175
Opera WS1/E	60	235
Opera S1	60	295
Opera S2	60	345
Opera S2	60	119
Partington A-4	60	299
Partington Dreadnought Ultima	63	299
Pioneer CP-7	80	80
Pioneer CP-8	80	80
Projekt Signature	55	80
Royd Royd	55	99
Russ Andrews Torlyte	61	599
Silverado Silverado 1 Stand	60	350
Solid Steel SL	63	186
Solid Steel SS	63	333
Solid Steel SS801	25	366
Sonus Faber Ironwood	475	475
Sonus Faber Stonewood	497	497
Sonus Systems Excel	65	99
Sound Org Z522	59	99
Soundstyle Finewoods W122	57	85
Soundstyle X122	57	95
Soundstyle Select	59	95
Soundstyle Radius S122	57	110
Stands Unique Speaker support	59	165
Stands Unique Tuned Spkr Support	59	230

Stands Unique Tuned Carbon Fibre	59	299
Stands Unique Vivas CF Spkr Supp	60	349
Target TR60	60	68
Target HM60	65	106
Target R1	53	280
Townshend Seismic Sink L/S	4	499



**LOUDSPEAKERS**

**KEY**

- ⌵ – Floorstander; larger models requiring no separate stand.
- ⌵ – Stand mount; smaller models designed to be raised above the floor.
- ⌵ – Wall mount; designed to be sited on or near the wall.
- ⌵ – Box type, including infinite baffle, reflex and transmission line types.
- ⌵ – Horn type; mostly large and very efficient.
- ⌵ – Panel type, including electrostatic and planar magnetic types.

<b>UP TO £130</b>		
Acoustic Energy Aegis Compact	⌵	55
Allison Micro Monitors	⌵	95
Allison Mini References	⌵	120
AR Status S10	⌵	130
Ariston MSX 05	⌵	30
Ariston MSX 05	⌵	50
Celestion 12i	⌵	119
Denon SC-M2	⌵	80
Denon SC-E3135E	⌵	130
Eltax Liberty 1+	⌵	99
Eltax Monitor III Mk II	⌵	129
Gale Mini Monitors	⌵	70
Gale Gold Monitors	⌵	90
Gale 2i	⌵	130
Genexa GX300	⌵	80
Genexa GX330	⌵	80
GLL Arena	⌵	90
GLL Imagio IC208	⌵	100
Interaudio XL1000	⌵	130
Jamo Artina	⌵	120
Jamo 28	⌵	125
Jamo Cornet 145	⌵	130
JBL CM40	⌵	90
JBL MX300	⌵	90
JBL Control 1X	⌵	100
JBL CM42	⌵	130
JPW ML110i	⌵	90
JPW ML210i	⌵	100
JPW ML310i	⌵	120
JPW ML410i	⌵	130
JVC SX-SC1VBK	⌵	60
JVC SP-V50	⌵	80
JVC SP-X220TBK	⌵	100
JVC SP-X550BK	⌵	130
KEF Coda 7	⌵	129
Kenwood LS-90UK	⌵	130
Mission 700	⌵	159
Monitor Audio Bronze 1	⌵	130
NAD 801	⌵	100
Paradigm Micro v2	⌵	100
Paradigm Atom v2	⌵	120
Pioneer CS-3070	⌵	100
Polk AB410	⌵	100
Realistic Minimus 26	⌵	56
Realistic Minimus Pro-77	⌵	100
Sony SS-86E	⌵	100
Tangent Monitor 3	⌵	60
Tangent Monitor 5	⌵	80
Tannoy Mercury M1	⌵	120
Tannoy mX1	⌵	120
TDL Nucleus 1	⌵	75
TDL Nucleus 2	⌵	130
Teac LS-X8 Mk II	⌵	80
Technics SB-CS65	⌵	100
Wdale Valdus 100	⌵	80
Wdale Diamond 7.1	⌵	100
Wdale Valdus 200	⌵	110
Wdale Modus Micro	⌵	110
<b>£131 TO £200</b>		
Acoustic Energy Aegis Centre	⌵	149
Acoustic Energy Aegis One	⌵	150

Allison Model 4A	⌵	170
B&W DM302 Ser II	⌵	150
B&W DM601 Ser II	⌵	199
Bose 201 IV	⌵	200
Boston CR6	⌵	149
Boston 325	⌵	149
Boston Micro 80 Sat	⌵	169
Boston Runabout	⌵	169
Boston 335	⌵	179
Boston 351	⌵	189
Boston CR7	⌵	199
Boston Runabout II	⌵	200
Celestion 15i	⌵	199
Cerwin-Vega CT-165	⌵	200
Eltax Liberty 3+	⌵	149
Eltax Liberty 5+	⌵	199
Genexa GX650	⌵	140
Genexa Pro	⌵	160
GLL Imagio IC218	⌵	140
GLL Imagio IC318	⌵	200
Heybrook HB1/2000	⌵	150
Heybrook Heylette	⌵	199
Interaudio CL2000	⌵	200
Jamo Cornet 165	⌵	150
Jamo 38	⌵	150
Jamo 525	⌵	150
Jamo 560	⌵	150
Jamo 660	⌵	170
Jamo D165	⌵	200
Jamo 68	⌵	200
Jamo 892	⌵	200
JBL CM52	⌵	150
JBL MX1000	⌵	170
JBL LX20	⌵	200
JBL MX1500	⌵	200
JM Lab Tantal 505	⌵	199
JPW ML510i	⌵	150
JPW ML610i	⌵	180
KEF Cresta 2	⌵	149
KEF Coda 8	⌵	189
KEF Model 60S	⌵	199
KEF Q15.2	⌵	200
Kenwood LS-200G	⌵	200
Magnat Vector 22	⌵	179
Mission 701	⌵	160
Mission 77C	⌵	199
Mission 77DS	⌵	199
Mission 771e	⌵	200
Mission 702e	⌵	200
Monitor Audio Bronze 2	⌵	180
Monitor Audio Monitor 1	⌵	200
Mordaunt-Short MS206	⌵	200
Paradigm Mini Monitor	⌵	200
Pioneer CS-5070	⌵	150
Pioneer CS-7070	⌵	200
Polk M2	⌵	180
Polk RT3	⌵	200
Polk AB610	⌵	200
Royd A7X	⌵	155
Sequence 200	⌵	199
Sony SS-126EB	⌵	150
Sony SS-176E	⌵	200
Tangent Monitor 9	⌵	150
Tangent Monitor 11	⌵	180
Tannoy Mercury M2	⌵	140
Tannoy Satum S6C	⌵	200
Tannoy Revolution R1	⌵	200
TDL Nucleus 3	⌵	200
Technics SB-CS95	⌵	150
Technics SB-M20	⌵	200
TLC Maestro 70S	⌵	159
Wdale Diamond 7.2 Ann'y	⌵	150
Wdale Valdus 300	⌵	150
Wdale Modus Music Two	⌵	200
Wdale Valdus 400	⌵	200
Yamaha NS-90	⌵	180
Yamaha NS-45E	⌵	200
Yamaha NS-100	⌵	200

<b>£201 TO £300</b>		
Acoustic Energy AE100i SE	⌵	230
Acoustic Energy Aegis Two	⌵	249
ALR/Jordan Entry 2	⌵	249
AR 15	⌵	275
Arcadyis Baby 1	⌵	299
Audio Gem Opal	⌵	230
B&W DM602 Ser II	⌵	300
B&W 602 S2	⌵	300
Blueroom Minipod	⌵	250
Bose 151	⌵	220
Bose 301 IV	⌵	300
Boston 361	⌵	219
Boston CR8	⌵	239
Boston 381	⌵	259
Boston CR9	⌵	279
Boston Voyager	⌵	299
Castle Richmond	⌵	249
Castle Keep	⌵	250
Celestion C1	⌵	299
Celestion 23i	⌵	299
Cerwin-Vega VS-8	⌵	250
Cerwin-Vega CT-330	⌵	300
Charjo Syntar 100	⌵	249
Charjo Ref 100	⌵	299
Charjo Hiper 1000	⌵	300
Dali 102B	⌵	260

Dali 150	300
Eltax Linear Resp. 4.5	249
Eltax Liberty 7+	249
GLL Imagio IC238TL	250
Heybrook HB2/2000	240
Heybrook Heylios	269
Heybrook HB3/2000	300
Interaudio XL3000	230
Interaudio XL4000	260
Jamo Cornet 175	230
Jamo Classic 4	250
Jamo EB50	300
Jamo Art	300
Jamo D265	300
JBL CM62	250
JM Lab Tantal 507	299
JPW ML710i	250
JPW ML810i	300
JVC SX-SW10	300
KEF Coda 9	299
KEF Model 70S	299
Linn Kan	295
Mission 750	248
Mission 772	250
Mission 780	299
Mission 703	300
Monitor Audio Monitor 2	250
Monitor Audio Bronze 3	270
Monitor Audio Silver 5i	300
NAD 802	280
Paradigm Monitor 5	250
Paradigm Monitor 7	300
Pioneer CS-9070	250
Polk AB505	220
Polk M5 II	220
Polk RT5	250
Polk RT7	300
Polk M5	300
Promenade SP1	299
Rega Ara	255
Royd The Envoy	249
Royd Minstrel	275
Ruark Epilogue	239
Sequence 300	249
Sony SS-176EB	250
Tannoy mX3	229
Tannoy Mercury M3	230
TDL Nucleus 4	300
TLC Maestro 130S	289
TLC Voyager 350	289
Wdale Modus Music Four	230
Wdale Valdis 500	300
Yamaha NS-120	250
Yamaha NS-200	300
ZYP A1	229
ZYP A2S	299

### £301 TO £500

Acoustic Energy AE10SE	350
Acoustic Energy Aegis Three	350
Acoustic Energy AE109 SE	450
Acoustic Energy Energy AE 120SE	500
Allison Model 2A	420
Arcaydis Baby 2	399
Arcaydis ASC	399
Audiovector C1	350
AVI Neutron	499
AVI NuNeutron	500
B&O Beovox CX50	325
B&O Beovox CX100	425
B&W LCR6	349
B&W DM305	350
B&W CDM2SE	400
Bandor Pictures	352
Boston Micro 90 Sat	369
Boston Micro 80 Sys	369
Boston VR20	380
Castle Inversion 15	425
Castle Pembroke	499
Celestion 25i	399
Celestion 30i	449
Celestion 35i	499
Cerwin-Vega VS-10	350
Chario Syntar 100T	399
Chario Ref 1000	499
Dali 104B	370
Dali Royal Menuet MkII	400
Dali 606	400
Dali Royal	500
Def Tech Celsius	395
Dynaudio Audience 40	399
Dynaudio LR/C120	439
ELAC CL82 MkII	399
Eltax Linear Resp. 6.5	349
Eltax Chroma Front	349
Eltax Linear Resp. 8.5	449
Energy eXL25	399
Epos ES12	499
GLL Imagio IC248TL	350
GLL Imagio IC258TL	450
GLL Imagio IC348TL	500
Heybrook Heylo	359
Heybrook HB4/2000	500
Indigo One	330
Indigo Three	500
Jamo Classic 6	330

Jamo Cornet 195	350
Jamo 98	350
Jamo D365	400
Jamo Classic 8	400
Jamo Graphic	400
Jamo 128	450
Jamo Atmosphere	500
JBL LX60	350
JBL Ti 200	400
JM Lab Tantal 515	499
Jordan Watts JHFLG	380
Jordan Watts JH200	420
JPW ML910i	350
JPW ML1010i	450
KEF Q35.2	350
KEF RDM One	499
KEF Q35.2	500
Linn Sekrit	395
Magnat Vector 55	349
Magnat Vintage 320	350
Magnat Vector 77	449
Mission 751f	548
Mission 735	399
Mission 773e	400
Mission 704	450
Mission 774	500
Mission 705	500
Monitor Audio Monitor 3	350
Monitor Audio Silver 5i	450
Monitor Audio Studio 2SE	500
Mordaunt-Short MS207	400
Mordaunt-Short MS208	500
Mordaunt-Short MS817	500
Mus Tec Kestrel Evolution	315
Mus Tec Harrier	400
Mus Tec PM15	475
NAD 804	400
Neat Critique	445
Opera Mini	325
Opera Duetto	395
Opera Prima	495
Origin Live OL-1AS	499
Origin Live Monarch	499
Paradigm Studio/20	350
Paradigm Monitor 9	400
PMC TB15	470
Polk AB705	330
Polk RT8	400
Polk RT10	500
Polk AB805	500
Promenade SP2	399
Promenade SP3	499
Rega Alya	365
Rega Jura	475
Rega ELA	498
Roksan ROKone 1	400
Royd The Squire	350
Royd Minstrel SE	399
Royd Doublet	485
Ruark Icon	399
Sequence 400	329
Sony SS-X7	400
S Coast Odette	325
Spendor S3/5	499
System 1130	500
Tannoy Revolution R2	350
Tannoy Saturn S6LCR	400
Tannoy Saturn S6	500
TDL G20	380
TDL Chiltern CF100	450
TDL G30	500
Technics SB-M300	350
Promenade SP4	450
Technics SB-M500	450
TLC Altus 300	366
Triangle Cometes	359
Wdale Modus Music Six	330
Wdale Modus Music Eight	430
Wdale Modus Music 1/6	500
Yamaha NS-300	400

### £501 TO £800

Acoustic Precision Eikos FR1	800
Aliante Stile	580
Aliante Voce	600
Allison Model 3A	525
Arcaydis AK3	599
Arcaydis AS2	699
Arcaydis AK4	699
Audio Gem Emerald	540
Audio Note AN-K/D	620
Audio Note AN-J/B	799
Audiovector M1 Improved	650
Audiovector C2	700
AVI Biggatron	599
B&O Beolab 2500	750
B&W 603 S2	550
B&W CDM1 SE	600
Bose 501	600
Bose A'mass AM3	650
Boston VR30	600
Castle Severn 2SE	700
Celestion A Compact	599
Celestion 45i	599
Celestion C2	699
Cerwin-Vega VS-12	550
Cerwin-Vega VS-15	700

Chario Constellation Lynx	549
Chario Ref 100T	599
Chario Hiper 1000T	699
Cura CA-10	699
Dali 107	600
Dali 350	600
Dali 450	700
Dali 109	800
Def Tech BP2X	595
Def Tech CLR2002	595
Def Tech BP6B	750
Diapason Micra II	750
Dynaudio Audience 50	577
Dynaudio Audience 60	729
ELAC CL102 MkII	599
ELAC CL310i JET	800
Eltax Linear Resp. 10.5	549
Energy eXL26	600
Epos ES14	675
Harbeth BBC LS3/5A	699
Harbeth HL-P3ES	799
Heybrook Duet	799
Indigo Four	750
Infinity Kappa 60	595
Infinity Kappa 70	795
Jamo Classic 10	600
Jamo X3M8	600
Jamo X3M10	750
JBL LX80	550
JBL Ti 400	550
JBL SVA1500	650
JBL Ti 600	650
JM Lab Cobalt 807	599
JM Lab Tantal 520	599
JM Lab Cobalt 810	799
Jordan Watts JH400	515
KEF LS3/5a	649
KEF RDM Two	699
KEF Q65.2	700
Kelly KT2	700
Linn Tukan Passive	550
Linn Keilidh Passive	750
Magnat Vintage 710	799
Meridian A500	750
M&K S-85	700
Mirage FRX-7	550
Mission 752f	578
Mission 782	699
Mission 753f	798
Mission 775e	800
Monitor Audio Silver 7i	600
Mus Tec Falcon	680
Naim Intro	680
Neat Mystique 2	575
Neat Petite II	745
NHT Super Two	550
Opera Seconda	595
Opera Pavarotti	695
Opera Platea	795
Opera Operetta	795
Origin Live Resolution	732
Paradigm Studio/60	650
Paradigm Studio/80	750
PMC TB15M	517
PMC TB1	529
PMC TB1M	576
PMC XB1	640
Polk RT12	600
Polk RT16	799
Polk LS50	800
ProAc Tablette 2000	649
ProAc Studio 100	749
Promenade SP4	650
Roksan Ojan 3	795
Royd The Sorcerer	595
Royd Abbot	695
Ruark Templar II	559
Ruark Sceptre	599
Ruark Talisman II	799
Shippy Polarys	595
Silverado Raider	695
Snell K5	795
Soliloquy 5.0	795
Sonus Faber Concertino	599
S Coast Lancelot	575
S Coast Hades	695
S Coast Merlin Monitor	795
Spendor S1	549
System 1150	750
T+A TB 100	700
Tannoy Revolution R3	550
Tannoy Definition D100	689
TDL Cotswold CF200	650
Titan Orbital	598
Titan Logic T/2B	600
Titan Logic T/2	699
TLC Classic 2	535
TLC Classic 1	800
Totem Mite	599
Totem Rokk	765
Triangle Zephyr II	599

### £801 TO £1500

Acoustic Energy AE1	845
Acoustic Energy AE2-II	1,245
Acoustic Solutions Eight	1,375

Aliante Moda	1,200
Arcaydis AK5	1,399
ATC SCM10	1,000
Audio Note AN-I/D	930
Audio Note AN-K/SPx	1,060
Audio Note AN-E/B	1,299
Audio Note AN-I/SPx	1,415
Audio Physic Step	1,299
Audiovector M1 Super Impr.	880
Audiovector M1 Sig Improved	1,180
Audiovector M1	1,200
AVI Positron	899
B&O Beolab 4000	1,100
B&W DM604 Ser II	849
B&W CDM7SE	1,000
B&W Nautilus 805	1,500
Bandor Trident	846
BC Acoustique Araxe	1,140
BKS Audio Hybrid 107	1,500
Bose A'mass AM5	900
Bose 701	1,000
Boston VR40	1,500
Carlsson OA-52.2	1,000
Castle Inversion 50	875
Castle Harlech	899
Celestion A1	899
Celestion C3	999
Celestion A2	1,499
Cerwin-Vega AL-1000	1,100
Cerwin-Vega 1515	1,300
Chario Ref 1000T	999
Chario Academy 1	1,299
Cura CA-20	1,199
Dali 850	1,100
Dali Evidence 870	1,300
Def Tech BP8B	1,000
Def Tech BP10B	1,500
Diapason Prelude II	875
Diapason Karis	995
Diapason Nux	1,395
Dynaudio Contour 1.1	879
Dynaudio Audience 70	1,100
Dynaudio Contour 1.3	1,198
Dynaudio Audience 80	1,460
Epos ES15	890
Epos ES22	1,185
Final 0.3	1,495
Harbeth HL-K6	899
Harbeth HL-Compact 7	1,299
Harbeth BBC LS5/12A	1,499
Impulse Kora	1,250
Infinity Overture 1	900
Infinity Kappa 80	995
Infinity Kappa 90	1,295
Infinity Overture 2	1,500
Jadis Orchestra	999
Jamo Concert 8	1,365
JBL SVA 1600	850
JBL 4312 MkII-WX	1,000
JBL SVA 1800	1,000
JBL SVA 2100	1,250
JM Lab Cobalt 815	999
JM Lab Electra 905	1,199
JM Lab Cobalt 820	1,199
Jordan Watts JH1+1	1,150
KEF Ref. Model One	1,199
KEF RDM Three	1,500
Kelly KT3	1,200
Linn Tukan Aktiv	1,050
Linn Keilidh Aktiv	1,250
L Voice Auditorium	1,500
Lumley L/M3.5	1,050
Magnat Vintage 720	1,199
Magneplanar SMG-C SE	990
Magneplanar MG-Q6 SE	1,370
Meridian Argent 1	995
M&K S-125	1,150
Mission 705a	900
Mission 783	1,000
Mission 754f	1,298
Monitor Audio Silver 9i	1,000
Mus Tec Condor	1,000
Mus Tec Hawk	1,250
Mus Tec Eagle	1,500
Naim Credo	1,090
Neat Elite	1,195
Opera Terza	995
Opera Super Pavarotti	995
Opera Callas Gold	1,095
Opera Divina II	1,495
Orelle Swing	1,200
Origin Live Sovereign	1,130
Paradigm Studio/100	950
PMC LB1	999
PMC FB1	1,275
Polk CS1000	999
Polk LS70	1,200
Polk RTE1000	1,300
Polk RT20p	1,500
ProAc Tablette 2000 Sig	899
ProAc Studio 125	999
ProAc Response 1 SC	1,199
Rega Naos	998
Rehdeko RK115	1,500
RMS Revelation S 1	1,299
Roksan Ojan 3X	995
Royd The Albion	985



Ruark Prologue One R	949
Ruark Solus	1,200
Shahinian Super Elf	875
Shahinian Starter	1,195
Shahinian Compass	1,495
Shinpy Micraphonica	1,099
Silverado Ryder	1,395
Soliloquy SM 2A3	1,095
Sonus Faber Concerto	945
Sonus Faber Concerto GP	999
Sonus Faber Signum	1,200
S Coast Classic	1,175
Spendor SP3/1P	825
Spendor FL6	1,099
Spendor SP2/3	1,187
Spendor FL8	1,355
T+A TAS 1200E	1,050
T+A TB 120	1,060
TAG McLaren Calliope	1,495
Tannoy Definition D300	999
TDL Chevot CF300	850
Technics SB-M1000	1,500
Titan Enigma T/3	825
Titan Logic T2B3	900
Titan Sovereign T/4	1,175
Totem The Arro	959
Totem The Staaf	1,249
Totem Model One	1,249
Veritas 7	1,000
Veritas 15	1,300
Veritas 20	1,400
Vienna Acoustics Mozart	1,500
Zingali Colosseum	975

## £1501 TO £3000

Acoustic Energy AE1 Sig	1,995
Acoustic Energy AE2 Sig	2,995
Aliante Zeta	1,850
Aliante Linea	2,060
Aliante One	2,700
Alon I Mk II	1,795
Alon II Mk II	2,495
ALR/Jordan Note 7	2,500
ATC SCM20SL	1,750
ATC SCM20 Tower SL	2,400
Audio Note AN-ED	1,520
Audio Note AN-ESpX	2,250
Audio Physic Spark 2	1,749
Audio Physic Tempo	1,999
Audio Wk-p Cyclone 34	2,000
Audiostatic DCI	2,495
Audiovector M3 Super	1,700
Audiovector M3 Sig	2,200
B&O Beolab 6000	1,550
B&O Beolab 8000	2,100
B&O Beolab Penta 3	2,650
B&W Nautilus 804	2,500
Bandor Bandoline	2,350
Bandor Bandora/Mora	2,549
BKS Audio Hybrid 128	1,650
Bose 901 VI	2,000
Boston Lynfield 300L	2,000
Castle Inversion 100	1,975
Celestion A3	2,399
Celestion Kingston	2,500
Chario Academy 2	1,649
Chario Academy Mill'm 2	2,100
Credo SPB 003	1,820
Credo SPB 009	2,453
Cura CA-30	1,799
Dali Grand Coupe	2,500
Def Tech BP2004	1,700
Def Tech BP2002	2,400
Diapason Adamantes III	1,995
Dynaudio Contour 1.8	1,894
Dynaudio Crafft	2,150
Dynaudio Jentour 3.0	2,930
ELAC CL330 JET	2,499
ELS Res'ch Vision	2,800
Epos ES50	2,250
Eurostatic Model 1	2,385
Final 0.4	2,950
Gamma Epoch Ref Five	2,999
Harbeth HL-58	1,999
Helius Syrius II	2,395
Helius Syrius I	2,850
Heybrook Octet	1,799
Hi Q Sound SM108	2,000
Impulse Lali	1,850
Infinity Overture 3	1,750
Infinity Kappa 100	1,895
Inner Sound Isis	2,375
Jamo Concert 11	2,250
JM Lab Electra 915.1	1,899
JM Lab Electra 920.1	2,399
Jordan Watts JH2K	2,400
Jordan Watts JH5K	3,000
KEF Ref. Model Two	1,599
KEF Ref. Model Three	1,999
Linn Kaber Passive	2,000
Linn Kaber Aktiv	2,640
L Voice Aud'm Avatar	2,400
Lowther Accolade 2	1,950
Lumley L/M2 Mk3	2,995
Magnat Vintage 760	1,999
Magneplanar MG-10 SE	1,650

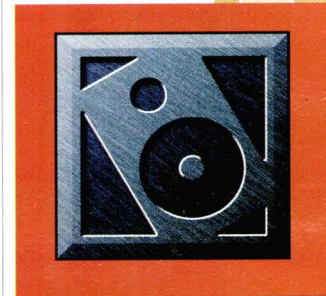
Magneplanar MG-1,5 SE	1,780
Magneplanar MG-2,7 SE	2,650
Martin-Logan Aeries i	2,199
Meridian M60	2,150
Monitor Audio Studio 20SEC	1,900
Naim SBL Active	1,885
Naim SBL Passive	2,030
Neolith NEO 1	2,999
O'hocha D1-f	1,760
Opera Caruso II	2,495
Origin Live Conqueror	1,750
PMC AB1	1,758
PMC IB1S	2,697
Polk LS90	1,700
ProAc Response 1.5	1,790
ProAc Response 2.5	2,700
Rehdeko RK125	2,650
Ruark Crusader II	1,649
Ruark Equinox	2,000
Shahinian Arc	1,995
Shahinian Obelisk	2,850
Shinpy Eurlitma	1,995
Shinpy Altair	2,895
Silverado Silverado 1	1,995
Snell XA-60	2,500
Soliloquy 5.3	1,750
Sonus Faber Electa Amator 2	2,849
Sound-Lab Quantum	2,150
S Coast Excalibur	2,150
Spendor SP1/2	1,674
Spendor FL9	2,220
Spendor SP100	2,234
T+A TB 140	1,760
Tannoy Definition D500	1,999
Tannoy Stirling TW	2,200
Tannoy Definition D700	2,500
TDL Studio Monitor-m	2,750
Totem Tabu	2,299
Totem The Forest	2,675
Veritas 25	1,750
Veritas H1	2,995
Wilson Benesch Orator	2,900
Zingali Overture 2S	1,975

## OVER £3000

Acoustic Energy AE5	7,995
Alon Lotus SE	3,500
Alon V Mk II	5,495
Alon Adriana	8,500
Alon Circe	12,000
Alon Phalanx	19,000
ATC SCM20A PRO	3,140
ATC SCM20TASL	3,995
ATC SCM50PSL	4,377
ATC SCM100PSL	5,098
ATC SCM50ASL	5,948
ATC SCM100ASL	6,669
ATC SCM70PSL	8,842
ATC SCM70ASL	10,500
ATC SCM200ASL	16,843
ATC SCM300ASL	19,150
Audio Note AN-JSE Silver	7,900
Audio Note AN-ESE Silver	9,600
Audio Physic Virgo 2	3,399
Audio Physic Avanti 2	6,699
Audio Physic Caldera	10,599
Audio Physic Medea	24,999
Audiostatic DCI Plus	3,750
Audiovector 5X	3,999
Audiovector 6X	4,800
Avalon Avatar	5,995
Avalon Arcus	6,995
Avalon Eclipse Classic	8,995
Avalon Radian HC	13,995
Avalon Eidolon	20,495
Avalon Sentinel	79,995
Avantgarde Uno	5,300
Avantgarde Duo	7,500
Avantgarde Trio Compact	16,500
Avantgarde Trio Classic	17,300
AWI Gravtron	4,250
B&W Nautilus 803	4,000
B&W Silver Signature	5,500
B&W Nautilus 802	6,000
B&W Nautilus 801	8,500
B&W Nautilus	35,000
Beauhorn Virtuoso Bronze	4,065
Beauhorn Virtuoso Gold	4,185
Beauhorn Virtuoso Ref. DX3	4,420
Beauhorn Virtuoso Ref. DX4	4,945
Beauhorn Accelerando	6,600
BKS Audio Hybrid 175	3,995
Boston Lynfield 500L	4,449
Carfrae Little Big Horn	6,795
Carfrae Carfraehorn	18,000
Chario Academy 3j	5,999
Credo SPB 012	3,147
Credo SDL 001	5,677
Dali Grand	4,000
Def Tech BP2000	3,600
Diapason Adamantes Ltd	3,995
Dynaudio Contour 3.3	4,815
Dynaudio Confidence 3	4,846
Dynaudio Confidence 5	5,924
Dynaudio Consequence	14,566
Dynaudio Evidence	50,909

Eggleston Rosa	8,500
Electrofluidics Sonolith 2.2xi	8,999
ELS Res'ch Vista	3,900
ELS Res'ch Illusion MkII	9,000
Eurostatic Model 2	3,650
Impulse Ta'us	3,100
Inner Sound Eros	3,995
Jadis 2	5,900
Jadis 1	18,900
Jamo Oriel	9,000
JM Lab Mini Utopia	4,500
JM Lab Mezzo Utopia	7,500
JM Lab Utopia	18,300
JM Lab Grande Utopia	35,000
Jordan Watts JH10K	7,570
KEF Ref. Model Four	3,299
Kochel K-300S	10,000
Linn Keltik Aktiv	6,000
L Voice Avatar OBX	4,000
L Voice Air Scout	19,500
L Voice Air Partner S	37,200
Lowther Fidelio	3,100
Lowther Academy	3,550
Lowther Bel Canto	3,750
Lowther Delphic	4,300
Lumley L/M 2 Sig. Mk3	4,500
Magnat Vintage 770	3,500
Magneplanar MG-3.5SE	3,800
Magneplanar MG-20 SE P	10,300
Magneplanar MG-20 SE A	11,000
Martin-Logan SL3	3,399
Martin-Logan CLS IIz	4,555
Martin-Logan Re-Quest Z	5,875
Martin-Logan Statement S2	8,967
Meridian DSP5000	3,295
Meridian DSP5000	5,950
Meridian DSP6000	9,400
Monitor Audio Studio 50	3,300
Monitor Audio Studio 60	5,000
Naim NBL	6,648
Naim DBL Active	8,050
Neolith NEO 2	3,499
Neolith NEO 3	4,999
Ocellia Tilia	3,400
Ocellia Olea	3,400
Ocellia Kedros	5,500
PMC MB1P	5,135
PMC BB5-P	8,841
PMC MB1-A	14,805
PMC BB5 A	19,799
PMC MB1/XBD-A	22,266
PMC BB5/XBD-A	32,606
ProAc Response 3.8	3,990
ProAc Future 1	5,875
ProAc Response 5	9,000
ProAc Future 2	10,575
ProAc Response 4	12,000
Rehdeko RK145	4,000
Revel Gem	5,295
Rockport Merak	13,995
Rockport Syzygy	15,000
Rockport Procyon	32,500
Ruark Solstice	4,000
Ruark Excalibur	7,000
Shahinian Hawk	5,495
Shahinian Diapason	9,495
Shinpy Enigma	3,995
Shinpy Euphonia	5,995
Shinpy Magnifica Suprema	14,500
Shun Mook Bella Voce	6,000
Snell XA-75ps	4,500
Sonus Faber Guameri Homage	5,795
Sonus Faber Amati Homage	11,450
Sony SS-M9ED	10,000
Sound-Lab Dynastat	3,790
Sound-Lab Aura	6,490
Sound-Lab Pristine III+	7,990
Sound-Lab A-3	11,990
Sound-Lab Ultimate II	13,950
Sound-Lab A-1	13,990
Sound-Lab Ultimate III	18,950
Sound-Lab Ultimate I	23,950
S Coast Excalibur Ref.	9,599
Spendor FL10	3,475
T+A A4D	3,850
T+A A3D	4,550
T+A A2D	8,400
Tannoy Edinburgh TW	3,250
Tannoy Definition D900	3,999
Tannoy GRF Memory TW	4,000
Tannoy Westminster TW	6,600
Tannoy Canterbury 15 TW	7,720
Tannoy Westminster Royal	14,920
TDL Ref Standard-m	6,000
Titan Coliath T/4	4,112
Totem Mani-2	3,100
Totem Shaman	9,999
Veritas 45	3,750
Veritas H2	4,495
Ventus H3	5,995
Wilson Audio Cub	5,495
Wilson Audio WATT 5	8,390
Wilson Audio WITT II	10,995
Wilson Audio Maxx	34,995
Wilson Benesch Actr	3,900
Wilson Benesch ACT1 spkr	6,900
Wilson Benesch Act 2	8,900

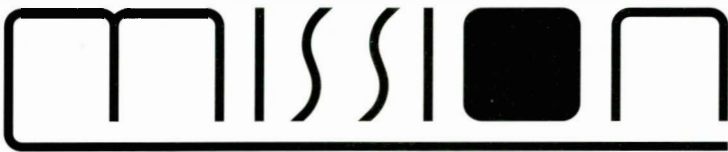
Wilson Benesch The Bishop 20,000



## SUBWOOFERS

**KEY**  
**Ⓐ** - Active; includes a dedicated power amplifier.  
**THX** - THX-approved by LucasFilm for use in Home THX installations.

Acoustic Energy Aegis Sub	300
Allison Mini Ref Sub	210
Alon Poseidon	12,000
ATC SCM 0.1/15	3,810
Audio Physic Terra	3,499
Audiovector M Sub	699
Audiovector M Sub Sig.	849
B&W ASW1000	500
B&W ASW2000	800
B&W ASW3000	1,000
Boston CR400	300
Boston VR500	450
Boston VR2000	800
Celestion CS135	139
Celestion CSW MkII	329
Celestion S11	349
Celestion A6s	800
Cerwin-Vega HT-10D	200
Cerwin-Vega HT-12D	250
Chario Syntar Bass	299
Chario Hiper Bass	499
Credo SDC 001	3,054
Eltax Atomic A-8	129
Eltax Atomic A-10	179
Eltax Atomic A-15	299
GLL Le Bass	350
Infinity HPS-250	550
Jamo SW1008	250
Jamo SW410e	300
Jamo SW708	300
Jamo SW-2010	400
Jamo Sub One	400
JBL Control Sub 6	200
JBL Control Sub 10	300
JM Lab Tantal SW20	349
JM Lab Cobalt SW27A	599
JM Lab Electra SW33A	899
JM Lab Sub Utopia	2,200
JPW Subwoofer	130
JPW SW40	240
JPW SW60	350
JPW SW-120	500
KEF Model 20B	349
KEF Model 30B	499
KEF Model AV1	2,499
Kenwood SW500	250
Kenwood SW501	349
Linn AV5150	2,850
L Voice RW24	11,500
Magnat Vector Sub 30P	149
Magnat Vector Sub 30A	299
Magnat Omega 300	429
Meridian M2500	1,595
M&K VX-7MKII	450
M&K V-75 MKII	650
M&K VX-100	750
M&K V-125	800
M&K V-125 (THX)	800
M&K MX-70	900
M&K MX-700	1,495
M&K MX-150 (THX)	1,500
M&K MX-200	1,800
M&K MX-350THX	1,995
M&K MX-5000 (THX)	2,900
Mission 75as	548
Monitor Audio ASW1 00	300
Monitor Audio ASW1 10	500
Monitor Audio ASW210	700
Mus Tec PMS 45	500
Mus Tec Terzel	700
Muse Model 2c2	1,890
Muse Model 18	3,790
Neat Gravitas	1,095
Paradigm PDR10	250
Paradigm Servo 15A	800
Polk PSW50	350
Polk PSW150	500
Polk PSW300	750
REL Q50	375
REL Q-100E	495



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## HI-FI HELP

Let our experts help with your hi-fi problems. Send your query to 'Help' at the usual address.

REL Strata III	A	600
REL Q200E	A	600
REL Q201E	A	700
REL Storm III	A	800
REL Q400E	A	1,000
REL Stadium III	A	1,500
REL Stentor II	A	1,800
REL Studio II	A	4,000
Revel Sub-15	A	2,195
Roksan Ojan 3S	A	795
Ruark Log-Rhythm	A	750
Sequence FW120	A	249
Soliloquy S10	A	1,050
Sony SA-W305	A	130
Spendor Sub3	A	695
Sunfire Sub Junior	A	1,099
Sunfire True Sub	A	1,499
Sunfire Trus Sub Sig.	A	1,699
Tannoy mSUB 10	A	250
TDL Nucleus SBR	A	200
Titan Mercury	A	350
Titan Mars	A	450
Titan Jupiter	A	799
Tsunami TS300	A	300
Tsunami TS210	A	350
W'dale Topaz SW-12	A	400
Wilson Audio Puppy 5.1	A	8,450
Wilson Audio Whow III	A	10,999
Wilson Audio XS	A	17,000
Yamaha YST-SW45	A	140
Yamaha YST-SW90	A	180
Yamaha YST-SW160	A	280
Yamaha YST-SW300	A	350




## TONEARMS

KEY  
⊙ - Pivoted.  
# - Parallel tracking.

Air Tangent IC	#	4,600
Air Tangent 10B	#	8,600
Air Tangent Reference	#	14,000
Audio Note AN-ARM 1	#	169
Audio Note AN-0s	⊙	795
Audio Note AN-1s	⊙	995
Audiomeca SL5	#	2,500
Clearaudio Souther TQ-1	#	1,670
Clearaudio Master TQ-1	#	3,620
Dynavector 507	⊙	1,995
Graham Mk 2.0 Basic	⊙	1,810
Graham Mk 2.0 Deluxe	⊙	2,650
Helius Orion 4 Copper	⊙	549
Helius Cyalene 2	⊙	1,495
Kuzma Stogi S	⊙	399
Kuzma Stogi	⊙	750
Kuzma Stogi Ref	⊙	1,250
Linn Akito	⊙	500
Linn Ekos	⊙	1,500
Moth Mk I	⊙	109
Moth MKIII Stainless	⊙	146
Moth Mk III Tungsten	⊙	174
Moth Moth 900	⊙	598
Naim ARO	⊙	1,070
N'ham Interspace Arm	⊙	370
N'ham Space	⊙	450
N'ham Mentor	⊙	800
N'ham Foot	⊙	1,100
N'ham Anna Log Arm	⊙	1,500
Pro-Ject 9	⊙	350
Rega RB250	⊙	124
Rega RB300	⊙	188
Rega RB600	⊙	358

Rega RB900	⊙	648
Rockport Series 7000	#	6,000
Roksan Tabriz	⊙	345
Roksan Tabriz Zi	⊙	445
Roksan Artemiz	⊙	895
SME 3009 Ser II Imp	⊙	309
SME 3009 S2 Ser II Imp	⊙	338
SME Series II 3009-R	⊙	514
SME Series II 3010-R	⊙	526
SME Series II 3012-R	⊙	565
SME 309	⊙	689
SME 310	⊙	705
SME 312	⊙	802
SME Series IV	⊙	983
SME Series V	⊙	1,461
Triplanar V1A	⊙	3,500
Triplanar V1B	⊙	3,750
Wilson Benesch Act 0.5	⊙	795
Wilson Benesch ACT2	⊙	1,350
Zeta AS	⊙	469
Zeta VDH	⊙	549



## TUNERS

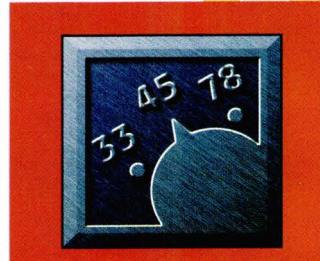
KEY  
# - Number of presets.  
RDS - Radio Data System; receives text information on station, programme type etc.

Arcam Alpha 7	P24	230
Arcam Alpha 8	P24	280
Arcam FMJ T21	P24	400
Arcam Alpha 10 DRT	P07	800
Arcam FMJ DT26	P07	1,000
Ariston TX-510	P20	50
AVI S2000MT2	P99	899
Cambridge T500	P64	180
Creek T45	P64	399
Cymbol C-DAB1	P08	999
Cyrus FM7.5	P29	400
Davidson-Roth FM Ref Classic	P40	5,590
Denon TU-260L MkII	RDS	130
Denon TU-425RD	RDS	200
Denon TU-1500RD	RDS	250
Fanfare FT1	P08	1,395
H/K TU930	P30	150
H/K TU950	P30	200
Kenwood KT-2080	P20	130
Kenwood KT-3080	P30	180
Linn Kudos	P50	775
Linn Kremlin	P80	2,600
Magnum Dynalab FT11	RDS	499
Magnum Dynalab FT-101A	RDS	795
Magnum Dynalab Etude	RDS	1,250
Magnum Dynalab MD108	RDS	4,990
Marantz ST-48	P60	120
Marantz ST-17	RDS	600
McIntosh MR7084	P50	2,499
McIntosh MX118	P50	4,999
McIntosh MX130	P50	6,999
Meridian 504	P30	695
Musical Fidelity E50	P20	300
Myryad T-30	RDS	400
Myryad Cameo	P29	490
Myryad MT100	P29	600
NAD 412	P24	190
NAD C440	RDS	200
NAD 414RDS	RDS	250
NAD 710	P30	270
NAD 712	P24	330
Naim NAT05	P24	615
Naim NATO2	P24	1,130
Naim NATO1	P24	1,780
Onkyo T 421ORDS	P30	180
Onkyo T 409	RDS	230
Onkyo T 411RDS	RDS	260
Pioneer F-208RDS	P30	140
Quad 99	P25	700
Rega Radio R	P24	350
Roksan Kandy	P50	375
Roksan Caspian	RDS	695
Rotel RT940AX	P20	225
Rotel RT-955	RDS	350
Sony ST-SE200	P30	100
Sony ST-SE300	RDS	120
Sony ST-SE520	RDS	130
Sony ST-SB920	RDS	180
Sony ST-S3000	RDS	250
Sony ST-SA3ES	RDS	280



Sony ST-D777ES	P99	RDS	550
T+A T1200R	P60	RDS	790
TAG McLaren T32R	P99		1,400
TAG McLaren T32R DAB	P99		2,295
Teac T-R400	P40		100
Teac T-R460	P40		120
Teac T-H500	P30	RDS	170
Technics ST-GT350L	P30	RDS	130
Technics ST-GT550L	P39	RDS	180
Technics ST-GT650L	P39	RDS	230
Technics ST-GT1000	P97	RDS	500
Thorens TRT-2000	P59	RDS	499
Yamaha TX-396L	P40		100
Yamaha TX-492RDS	P40	RDS	130
Yamaha TX-59 2RDS	P40	RDS	180
Yamaha RX-396RDS	P40	RDS	250
YBA Complete	P14		490

Audio Note AN-TT 3	⊙	1,995
Audiomeca Romance	⊙	1,895
Audiomeca J1	⊙	3,500
Avid Volvere	⊙	1,399
Avid Acutus	⊙	3,995
Basis 2000	⊙	1,995
Basis 2001	⊙	2,995
Basis Ovation II	⊙	5,400
Basis 2500	⊙	5,495
Basis 2800	⊙	7,495
Basis Debut Gold Std III	⊙	8,200
Basis Debut Gold Vacuum	⊙	10,300
Chantry QT Level 2	⊙	705
Clearaudio Solution	⊙	925
Clearaudio Evolution	⊙	1,095
Clearaudio Revolution	⊙	2,500
Clearaudio Reference	⊙	3,835
Clearaudio Master Ref.	⊙	8,510
DNM-Reson Rota 1	⊙	3,100
DNM-Reson Rota 2	⊙	4,100
Garrard 501	⊙	5,278
Impulse Moskito	⊙	695
Kuzma Stabi S	⊙	695
Kuzma Stabi	⊙	1,950
Kuzma Stabi Reference	⊙	3,750
Linn LP12 Basic	⊙	1,100
Linn LP12 Lingo	⊙	1,750
Michell Gyro Spider Ed'n	⊙	775
Michell Gyrodek	⊙	875
Michell Orbe SE	⊙	1,725
Michell Orbe	⊙	1,995
N'ham Spacedeck	⊙	750
N'ham HyperSpacedeck	⊙	1,700
N'ham Mentor	⊙	2,600
N'ham Anna Log	⊙	5,500
Oracle Delphi	⊙	3,370
Oracle Delphi 15th Anniv	⊙	3,800
Pink Triangle Taranella II	⊙	850
Pro-Ject Perspective	⊙	750
Rega P25	⊙	619
Rega Planar 9	⊙	1,698
Reson RS1M	⊙	695
Reson Rota 1	⊙	3,100
Rockport Capella II	⊙	7,500
Rockport Sirius III	⊙	90,000
Roksan Xerxes 10	⊙	1,295
Roksan TMS	⊙	2,745
SME Model 10A	⊙	3,333
SME Model 20/2	⊙	3,403
SME Model 20/2A	⊙	4,863
SME Model 30/2	⊙	10,675
SME Model 30/2A	⊙	12,135
SOTA Comet	⊙	995
SOTA Millenia	⊙	5,750
Stratosphere ST1	⊙	6,500
Technics SL-1200LTD	⊙	700
Thorens TD-146 VI TP50	⊙	550
Thorens TD-2001 TP90	⊙	700
Thorens TD-520 SME	⊙	1,050
Verdier Nouvelle Platine	⊙	1,995
Verdier Platine Verdier	⊙	3,995
VPI HW19 Junior	⊙	650
Well Tempered Record Player	⊙	1,995
Well Tempered Classic V	⊙	3,500
Well Tempered Reference	⊙	5,500
Wilson Benesch Circle	⊙	795
Wilson Benesch Full Circle	⊙	1,995



## TURNTABLES

KEY  
⊙ - Arm included.  
⊙ - Cartridge included.

UP TO £500

Audio Note AN-TT 1	⊙	349
Dual CS435-1	⊙	140
Dual CS 455-1	⊙	220
Dual 505-4 UK	⊙	220
Dual CS-750-1	⊙	330
Genexa Lab-710	⊙	60
Genexa Lab-810	⊙	70
Kenwood KD-492F	⊙	100
Michell Mycro	⊙	455
Moth Alamo	⊙	199
Moth Kanoot MK1 Arm	⊙	279
Moth Kanoot MK3 Arm	⊙	329
NAD 533	⊙	220
N'ham Interspace	⊙	500
Pioneer PL-J2500-C	⊙	80
Pioneer PL-990	⊙	150
Pro-Ject 0.5/OM10	⊙	170
Pro-Ject 1/510	⊙	200
Pro-Ject 2/510	⊙	250
Pro-Ject Classic/510	⊙	360
Pro-Ject 6/510	⊙	400
Pro-Ject Classic Cherry	⊙	450
Pro-Ject 6.9	⊙	500
Rega Planar 78	⊙	224
Rega Planar 2	⊙	224
Rega P3	⊙	298
Sherwood PM8550	⊙	160
Sony PS-LX250H	⊙	90
Sony PS-LX300H	⊙	150
Technics SL-J110D	⊙	120
Technics SL-BD20	⊙	160
Technics SL-BD22	⊙	180
Technics SL-1210MkII	⊙	400
Technics SL-1200MkII	⊙	400
Thorens TD-180 AT91	⊙	210
Thorens TD-280 IV/UK	⊙	230
Thorens TD166 VI AT95E	⊙	370
Thorens TD-166 W/UK/RB	⊙	400

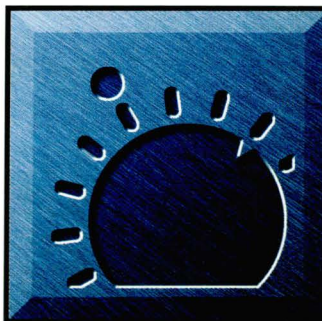
Audio Note AN-TT 2	⊙	995
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## Amplifiers

The amplifier is at the heart of any hi-fi system, accepting the outputs from various music sources, increasing the amplitude of their signal and then driving the loudspeakers to produce sound. One-box 'integrated' amps rule the roost at low-to-middle price points, but if you pay more, the low-level and high-level signal processes are separated into preamp and power amp boxes, and even separate 'outboard' power supplies come into play. Another luxury is a separate amp for each stereo channel: such devices are known as monoblocks. Finally, output power and sound quality are not necessarily related. Some of the finest amplifiers outputs only 12 Watts, but will yield loudness aplenty when partnered with high-efficiency loudspeakers.

### KEY TO SPECIFICATIONS

**LINE INPUTS:** Number of input sockets for line-level (non-vinyl) sources such as CD players, tuners and cassette decks.  
**MC PHONO INPUT:** An input specially designed for moving magnet (high output) phono pickup cartridges.  
**MM PHONO INPUT:** An input specially designed for moving magnet (high output) phono pickup cartridges.  
**MC PHONO INPUT:** An input for moving coil (low output) phono pickup cartridges.  
**REMOTE CONTROL:** An infra-red handset to adjust volume etc.  
**HEADPHONE SOCKET:** An integral output for headphones.  
**POWER OUTPUT (Watts):** Our measurement of an amp's RMS power output into 8 Ohms.  
**RECEIVER:** An amplifier with built-in radio receiver (tuner).  
**ISSUE NUMBER:** The issue of *Hi-Fi Choice* in which an original review appeared.

**B**

**BEST BUY**

**R**

**RECOMMENDED**

**E**

**EDITOR'S CHOICE**

## Amplifiers

### SPECIFICATIONS

LINE INPUTS  
 MC PHONO INPUTS  
 MM PHONO INPUTS  
 REMOTE CONTROL  
 HEADPHONE SOCKET  
 POWER OUTPUT (W)  
 RECEIVER  
 ISSUE NUMBER

STATUS

PRODUCT	(E)	COMMENTS	LINE INPUTS	MC PHONO INPUTS	MM PHONO INPUTS	REMOTE CONTROL	HEADPHONE SOCKET	POWER OUTPUT (W)	RECEIVER	ISSUE NUMBER
Affordable Valve Co. EL34	650	A real bargain on the face of it, but the sound is oh so soft, warm and old-valve. Too much of a good thing	4					40		202
Alchemist Kraken APD6A	599	Compact, with Darth Vader styling, yet sound quality is meek and mild, despite strong midband dynamics	5	●				55		175
<b>R</b> AMC 3025a	140	Surprisingly potent and easy on the ear, if not especially analytical – classic bargain-basement material, in fact	4	●	●	●	●	30		171
<b>R</b> AMC 3050a	170	Tremendous value for money, and a full, big, if rather uninformative sound	4	●	●	●	●	45		167
<b>R</b> Arcam Alpha One	230	Rather like an Alpha 7 but without the remote control and what appears to be better sound quality still	6					35		186
Arcam Alpha 7R	300	Decent, if slightly system fussy amplifier that no longer pulls all the right strings	5	●		●	●	45		196
<b>R</b> Arcam Alpha 8R	380	The Alpha 8R sets a high level of resolution and stability, and has some useful features for home cinema users	5	●		●	●	50		192
<b>R</b> Arcam Alpha 9	500	Not quite a match for the Alpha 9/9P combo, the solo integrated is nevertheless colourful and explicitly detailed	7				●	70		168
<b>R</b> Arcam Alpha 10	800	Although not the best sounding in its class, the Alpha 10's modular nature demands it be taken seriously	5				●	100		181
<b>R</b> Arcam FMJ A22	1,000	Powerful, articulate, and expandable into a home cinema or multiroom amp/controller	7				●	100		201
<b>E</b> ATC SIA2-150	1,984	An impressive sounding integrated amp with a dynamic, open and detailed sound	4				●	150		192
Aria S2	1,000	Clamorously packaged valve amp produces a real eyes closed, feet up kind of sound	4					12		190
<b>R</b> Audio Analogue Puccini	450	Superbly finished, the entry-level Audio Analogue performs way out of its class	5	●	●			40		175
Audio Analogue Puccini SE	595	Upgraded, more powerful Puccini is disappointingly sluggish and curiously lacking in musical vitality	5	●	●			40		181
<b>R</b> AVI S2000MI	999	Fine, detailed amplifier with excellent timing and strong control of a wide range of loudspeaker loads	5				●	100		175
Bryston B60R	1,249	Great build, but the lazy bass and opaque treble bracket an articulate midband. Comes with 20 year guarantee	5				●	60		175
<b>R</b> Cambridge Audio A500RC	200	Solid value, decent build and a surfeit of watts make this an attractive proposition, but it can sound slightly loose	6				●	50		196
<b>R</b> Canary Audio CA-608	1,495	If you value the grand scheme of things and appreciate a bit of dynamic vigour this could be the amp for you	4					24		202
<b>R</b> Copland CSA8	945	Sophisticated yet transparent, this is one of those amplifiers that sounds good even when the gloss has worn off	5					60		168
<b>R</b> Copland CSA 28	1,249	Elegant Scandinavian cool, abundantly detailed if somewhat system dependent	5	●				60		189
Copland CTA 402	1,698	A unusually flexible valve amp with an attractive and textured sound	5	●			●	35		193
CR Developments CR324	569	Solid and capable on paper, this is a bit of a blunt instrument when let loose on the music	5					150		181
<b>R</b> Cymbal CA1	499	Lacklustre amplifier tends to underperform with complex material. Best with straightforward compact loudspeakers	6					40		178
<b>R</b> Creek 4330	279	Diminutive but classy amp will drive anything, and can be specified in various configurations	4	●				40		192
<b>R</b> Cyrus 5	500	A enjoyable amp that is assured and unflappable, although detail is unremarkable	7				●	45		205
<b>R</b> Cyrus 7	700	Welcome return to form for the Cyrus stable: this is the best sounding audio brick around	6				●	60		196
<b>R</b> Denon PMA-250SE	140	This amp can sound rough when extended, but within its limits it is open, detailed and likeable	5					30		171
<b>R</b> Denon PMA-350SE	180	Reinvented in the minimalist tradition, this SE model is a control freak, but can sound wonderful	5					50		162
Denon PMA-535R	230	The kind of amp they made in the 70s, dressed to the nines, and nowhere to go	5	●			●	50		192
Denon PMA-725R:	350	Warm, bold, up-front presentation, but musically unexciting	5	●	●	●		97		157
<b>R</b> Denon PMA-1500R	500	Recommended for its outrageous power, especially with problem speakers	5	●	●	●	●	70		181
<b>R</b> Densen Beat B-100 MkII	650	High 'air guitar' factor, and can punch above its weight, but check it will complement your system	5					60		175
Densen DM-10	1,375	Big, bold and expressive amplifier, but sometimes rough around the edges, and not as powerful as it appears	6					75		189
Edmund Audio ESI10	400	Honest but unexciting straight line amp from REL associate company	6					85		192
Electrocompaniet EC1-3	1,000	Basically good, but too many rough edges to warrant recommendation	6				●	75		201
Graaf Venticinque	1,790	Smart and practical, but it just never seems to shine sonically	6					25		202
<b>R</b> Harman/Kardon HK630	200	Sharp, clean but sometimes slightly raw-sounding budget amp	4	●			●	40		192
Harman/Kardon HK690	530	Bold, dynamic amplifier with plenty of balls, but not the most sophisticated sound on earth	6	●			●	100		196
Holfi Audis Signature	750	A 'no-feedback' circuit giving outstanding resolution, but significant load dependency	4	●				65		181
JoLida 202	695	Well-built and technically accomplished, affordable valve integrated with subtle refined, if not quite gripping sound	4					40		168
JVC AX-R5	200	Versatile, and lots of even-handed, articulate detail; but let down by superficiality	5	●			●	45		149
Kenwood KAF-3010R	180	Plenty of twiddly bits yet weak on inputs, and basically good, but somewhat uneven sound quality	4	●			●	70		186
<b>R</b> Kenwood KAF-3030R	250	Highly capable amp with good treble, bass and fine detail	5	●			●	65		205
Kenwood KA-5090R	300	Large, well equipped and high tech integrated, but TRAITR output still gives a harsh, unobtrusive performance	5	●	●	●	●	65		171
Krell KAV-500i	5,000	More at home in background listening/home cinema applications than out-and-out audio maniac set-ups	5				●	250		192
Lundahl Mag Amp	1,735	Unusual valve/magnetic amp hybrid with relaxed balance and good timbre	5					23		196
<b>R</b> Magnum IA120	265	Mirror finish amplifier with bold, colourful delivery, but needs careful system matching to avoid loss of clarity	6				●	65		171
<b>R</b> Magnum IA170	330	Gives a realistic sense of instruments playing within a very believable acoustic; preserves colour and dynamics	6				●	96		142
<b>R</b> Magnum IA200	599	Sweet, valve-flavoured solid state amplifier which flatters where it doesn't cast light	7					160		162
Magnum Class A SE	795	A MOSFET amplifier drawing inspiration from the world of valves, this is an erratically refined, detailed amplifier	5	●				80		175
Marantz PM-6010SE	229	Good starter amplifier, with characteristic smooth, low key delivery	5	●			●	50		196
Marantz PM7000	300	Lots of power for the price, but detail and subtlety seem to have been sacrificed	6	●			●	115		205
<b>R</b> Marantz PM66 KI-Signature	400	It knows how to rock and roll with holographic detail and stereo, but prefers small/medium scale acoustic material	5	●			●	50		168
Marantz PM-17	900	Probably worth it for the WBT terminals and other build features alone, but this model doesn't sing as it should	6	●	●	●	●	60		181
Marantz PM-17 KI-Signature	1,300	Full feature audiophile amp where the end result don't quite justify the fantastic ingredients	6	●	●	●	●	60		189

CONTINUED

# Amplifiers

STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS

MM PHONO INPUTS  
MC PHONO INPUTS  
REMOTE CONTROL  
HEADPHONE SOCKET  
POWER OUTPUT (W)  
RECEIVER  
ISSUE NUMBER

PRODUCT (€) COMMENTS

PRODUCT	(€)	COMMENTS	MM PHONO INPUTS	MC PHONO INPUTS	REMOTE CONTROL	HEADPHONE SOCKET	POWER OUTPUT (W)	RECEIVER	ISSUE NUMBER
Monrio Asty	400	Engaging, but ill-disciplined, even OTT amplifier with unpredictable system compatibility	5				55		178
Musical Fidelity E1	199	Richly flavoured tone and realistically-scaled imagery distinguish this entry-level Richer Sounds special	6				30		171
Musical Fidelity E1 I	299	Well built minimalist amp with a five year guarantee, but can sound congested when extended	6				60		178
Musical Fidelity X-A1	479	Idiosyncratic visuals just another plus for an amp that is powerful, well built, and serves the music superbly	6				50		181
Musical Fidelity A3	849	Similar to the XA-100R internally, and a little too relaxed for some	5	●	●	●	85		196
Musical Fidelity X-A100R	999	Sings like a thoroughbred, but better with Mozart than Mötörhead	6			●	75		189
MVL A2	970	Curiously designed, and curious sounding amplifier with Sound Sentinel circuits to address perceived weaknesses	9	●	●	●	100		201
Myriad T-40	400	The T-40 is a well built and sensible, but needs more dynamics and finesse	6	●	●	●	50		192
Myriad MI120	600	Well styled, well built: a good, even tempered amplifier, although it can sound rather brittle	6			●	60		175
NAD 310	100	Fleet and sure of foot, it seems likely to set all appendages tapping with its blend of enthusiasm and artfulness	5				20		149
NAD C320	200	Excellent budget amp from the maker of the seminal 3020 offers better clarity and neutrality and good build	6			●	40		186
NAD C340	270	A classic NAD amplifier copes with any speaker, delivers plenty of power, and does so with calm decorum	6	●	●	●	50		192
NAD 317	470	Build quality aside, the current improved version is a real powerhouse, but smooth and detailed too	6			●	80		196
NAD 5300	1,900	Substantial integrated with loads of power and no shortage of finesse, slightly bass-strong	5			●	100		189
Naim Nait 3	575	Distinctive and highly musical sounding integrated amp. Perhaps too distinctive for some tastes	5				30		154
Naim Nait 3R	780	Remote control variant of the basic Nait has a similarly dynamic credible sound but ultimately lacks power	5			●	30		189
Opera Aida	795	Low power (in practice) minimalist integrated amp, but the mahogany wings don't help it to fly	5	●	●		60		201
Pathos Classic One	995	Unusual looks and even more unusual electronic design, but compromised musical potential	5			●	55		202
Pioneer A-300R	200	Its bright and breezy sound is a natural tonic to those of us worn down by the ongoing stress of life	5	●	●	●	50		1149
Pioneer A-407R	230	Clean, consistent, finely detailed sound, good finish and (mainly) good build	5	●	●	●	45		186
Pioneer A-607R	300	Lively, articulate amp with plenty of drive and a hint of brightness	5	●	●	●	60		192
Pioneer A-300R Precision	400	Sophisticated variant of the A-300R. Not an obvious winner, but it slowly plys you with its subtle charms	5	●	●	●	35		162
Pioneer A07	999	Curious blend of high-end attributes and inconsistent, though undeniably detailed sound	5	●	●	●	80		175
Præcisa Acustica Sonoro	1,800	It is not often that transistor amplifiers are made to sound so palpably valve-like	5			●	100		189
Primare A10	500	Sharp, clean and agile sound quality, class leading build and an excellent control system – what more can you ask?	6				50		201
Primare A20 MkII	799	Everything except packaging has changed in Mk II version: but balsier model has lost none of its refinement	5			●	70		181
Primare A30.1	1,499	Superb build and aesthetics, and undemonstrably musical down to its smallest screw	6			●	100		189
Rega Elex	398	Minimalist amplifier, derived from Elicit, is a little uninspiring, although at least it is well behaved	4	●			50		162
Restek Fantasy II	1499	Muscular, but ultimately rather strident amplifier which needs careful system matching	6			●	100		189
Roksan Kandy KA-1	475	Power with control, barely compromised by a small degree of dryness	6	●	●	●	120		205
Roksan Caspian	795	Mainstream Roksan line level amp works well under most circumstances	6			●	70		201
Rose Scion	615	Unique two-box integrated gives real subtlety and low level resolution, but the sound lacks scale and weight	5	●	●		65		168
Rotel RA-931	150	Rather dry and unforgiving sound from this internally well specified and attractively priced amplifier	4	●		●	35		171
Rotel RA-971 MKII	225	Improved AR971 is a chip off the old block: bags of power, but with added precision and clarity	6			●	60		196
Rotel RA-972	450	Better in the treble than the bass, which is a little too rounded and woolly	6			●	90		205
Sharp SM-SX100	10,000	The world's first stable, 1-bit digital amplifier is a technological milestone that should go from strength to strength	n/a				110		200
Sony TA-FB740R	200	Very open and clear sound, comfortable with a wide range of musical styles	5	●	●	●	60		205
Sony TA-F448BE	250	Minimalist interface is matched to carefully considered circuit with satisfactory effect – but keep the volume in check	5	●	●	●	55		171
Sony TA-F3000ES	500	Champagne 'shoebbox amp' may lack power reserves, but is quick and articulate. In every sense a knockout	5	●	●	●	35		178
T+A PA-1220R	1,445	Unique presentation and feature set, but sometimes rather relentless sound quality	7			●	100		189
Tact Millennium Mk II	7,000	This digital class D amplifier represents a bold declaration on the future expansion of digital audio in the home	n/a			●	150		194
TAG McLaren 60i	800	Clean, slightly antiseptic sound from this beautifully turned out entry level Audiolab 8000LX replacement	6			●	60		189
TAG McLaren 60iRv	999	Looks, feels and sounds better than the Audiolab it supersedes. Smooth, open, refined but lacks body and drive	6			●	60		184
Talk Electronics Storm 1	500	Good soundstaging and strong detail are provided by this unassuming and not especially powerful model	6			●	50		162
Talk Electronics Cyclone 1	550	Much improved build quality and silver finish, but the sound lacks physicality and can sound strained	6			●	65		196
Talk Electronics Storm 2	650	Crisp, clean, well defined sound, arguably lacking warmth, but a good midrange purchase overall	6			●	50		175
Teac A-E2000	180	Has the potential to cause significant damage in the budget amp sector once the wrinkles are ironed out	6			●	50		195
Technics SU-A660 Mk 3	200	Plenty of wellie for the price, but the sound can be a tad coarse and lacking in fine detail	5	●		●	37		186
Technics SU-A808	300	Intriguing amplifier, with abundant detail but dynamically rather flat	6			●	55		196
Technics SU-A800D Mk 2	300	Two-box amplifier looks great, has plenty of gadgets, and makes good, if slightly overexuberant, music	5	●	●	●	55		178
Technics SU-A900D Mk 2	400	Looks like a pre/power amplifier, but in effect it's an integrated, with a rather soft-centred sound to match	5	●		●	70		175
Token Audio K50	350	Stainless steel finish, others available. Sound is warm and attractive, though a little undynamic	5				50		186
Tube Technology Unisis Sig	2,400	A very attractive product which combines many classic valve attributes to good effect	5	●			30		202
Yamaha AX-392	170	Standard budget fare, and it's easy to pick holes, but in undemanding surroundings it works creditably	6	●		●	60		192
Yamaha AX-492	220	Powerful, well equipped amplifier at an attractive price, offers powerful and engaging music-making	5	●	●	●	85		178
Yamaha AX-592	280	Fine, middle ranking amplifier, with a detailed midband but performance declines at frequency extremes	5	●	●	●	100		171
<b>PREAMPLIFIERS</b>									
Amp Flux System 2	3,000	Three-box affair with a clean, spacious sound and plenty of slam. A touch steely, but undeniably potent	5			●	50		187
Alchemist Kraken APD7A MKII	549	Unusual looks and unusual sound too, rather rough and lacking detail	6						187
Arcam Alpha 9C	400	Well specified and flexible preamp with sound only just lacking in greatness	6			●			187

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CONTINUED

# Amplifiers

SPECIFICATIONS

MM PHONO INPUTS MC PHONO INPUTS REMOTE CONTROL HEADPHONE INPUTS POWER OUTPUT (W) RECEIVER ISSUE NUMBER

STATUS

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	MM PHONO INPUTS	MC PHONO INPUTS	REMOTE CONTROL	HEADPHONE INPUTS	POWER OUTPUT (W)	RECEIVER	ISSUE NUMBER
Audio Note M Zero	299	Neat shoe box-size preamp. Able to impart music with real life and soul when partnered with P Zero power amps	5						191
Copland CTA-301MkII	1,249	Sweet sounding, but never gets bogged down in audio treacle	4	●					151
Creek P43R	350	Excellent sound, remote control operation and upgrade options from this fine value preamp	6				●	●	187
Crimson CS610	450	Good, clear sound, including a decent phono stage, but flexibility is limited	3	●	●				187
Cyrus aCA7	798	A decent enough unit at the price but not as good as the Cyrus aPA7 power amp it was tested with	5				●	●	190
Densen Beat B-200	1,000	A versatile preamp with a high 'air-guitar' factor and Densen's characteristic styling	6	●	●				191
Levinson 380	3,995	True high end preamplifier combines precision and warmth with unusual configurability	6				●		195
LFD Mistral Linestage	449	Strong ergonomics, generally decent sound, but a little lacking in detail	6						165
Meridian 501	695	Tight, positive sound, but dispassionate; intense at high levels. (Tested with 555 power amp)	5	●			●		145
Meridian 502	1,295	Extremely sophisticated analogue controller with tremendous flexibility and a fast and tidy presentation	7				●		162
Michell Orca	1,650	Line-level design with a gorgeous remote and focused, spacious sound. (Tested with Alecto power amps)	6				●		187
Moth 30 Active Line Stage	349	Excellent-sounding ultra-simple miniature preamp	4						165
Muse Model Three	1,990	Natural sounding tranny preamp with useful audiophile features. Works beautifully with 160 power amp	5				●		166
Musical Fidelity X-PRE	200	Cleverly configured preamp with many upgrade options, and open, lively and engaging sound	4						175
Musical Fidelity X-P100	800	Good long-term listening prospects; detailed and a little fruitiness (tested with X-A200 power amp)	6	●		●			200
NAD 114	270	Beer-budget preamp which sounds focused, detailed and consistent	6	●	●		●		165
NAD Silverline S100	600	Beautifully built kit that sounds as good as it looks (tested with S200 power amp)	7				●		200
Naim NAC92R	630	Upgradeable preamp uses proprietary socketry. (Tested with NAP90 power amp)	5				●		165
Naim NAC102	1,000	More of a 'character act' than a neutral reproduction system, majors on excitement at the expense of subtlety	6				●		200
Rega Hal	998	Passive line stages dedicated to Exon power amps	6	●	●	●			165
Rotel RC-971	150	Low price is offset by rather coarse sound quality with certain types of music. (Tested with RB-971 power amp)	5				●		178
Rotel RC-995	525	Highly capable, though less astonishing value than matching RB-991 power amp (tested as pair)	6	●	●	●			200
Samuel Johnson pca100	1,800	Stylish wood and metal fascia - precise, clean sound with an emphasis on leading edges	6				●	●	201
TAG McLaren PA20R	1,500	Refinement of Audiolab original with clean, detailed sound but limited thrill power. (T/w 125M monoblocks)	6				●	●	184
Talk Hurricane 2L	649	Design of integrity which gets to the heart, if not the soul, of the music	6						165
Technics SU-C3000	2,997	Price includes SE-A3000. Supremely clean and even sounding combo, though it could be more musically involving	5	●					188
Technics SU-C1010	300	Although the sound's basically all there, it's arguable that a good integrated offers more, for less	6				●		200
<b>POWER AMPLIFIERS</b>									
Alch. Kraken APDBA Mk II	549	Unusual looks and unusual sound too, rather rough and lacking detail	1					55	187
Arcam Alpha 9P	400	Clear, colourful and well-disciplined, the Arcam is a strong all-rounder that can compete with conviction	1					60	165
Arcam Alpha 10P	600	Well made and flexible: upgradeable to 3 channels. Good sound lacking the last degree of detail	1					100	187
Audio Note P Zero	599	Neat shoe box size valve monoblocks, priced per pair. Impart music with life and soul. (Tested with P Zero preamp)	1					8	191
Border Patrol 300B SE	3,995	Single ended valve power amp with passion, grace and fire, and plenty of grunt to boot	1					8.5	186
Cary CAD 2A3SE	1,575	Monoblock valve power amp. Low power but gives delightful speed, coherence and transparency	1					5	196
Copland CTA-505	2,099	Grown-up amplifier with a refined, yet never over-civilised air	1					67	151
Chord SPM-4000	8,500	Sound is as stylish as its appearance is bold. Probably one of the best amps you are likely to hear	1					410	202
Creek A52SE	599	Well designed and built amplifier with plenty of power, detail and refinement	6					100	187
Crimson CS630	800	Space-saving slimline monoblocks with both grunt and finesse	1					100	187
Crimson 620C	875	Not entirely satisfactory power amp which has dynamic strengths, but underachieves when the volume is raised	1					50	181
Cyrus Power	498	Detail and midband clarity and stand-out qualities. Smooth and refined with most types of music but bass-soft	1					50	183
Cyrus aPA7	1,896	Low feedback design that's a positive departure from the transistorised norm. (Tested with Cyrus aCA7 pre)	1					150	190
Densen B-300	800	Expensive but highly musical. Colourful and warm sound with strong timing and listener involvement	1					100	183
Gamut D200	2,995	Single MOSFET pair per side gives tremendous resolution and timing (balanced only). Formerly Sirius	1					200	183
Levinson 334	5,495	A mailed fist in a velvet glove; refined, authoritative and transparent	1					125	195
LFD Mistral Power	449	Infectious upper band vitality, but LF dynamics lacking - likewise 'grip' and transparency	1					60	165
Mana Stealth MA-1	4,800	A monoblock with an uncanny ability to drag you into the music, and spend half the night sitting up listening	2					200	199
Michell Alecto Monoblocks	1,950	Hefty beasts offering real power and striking imaging. Not the last word in timing. (Tested with Orca preamp)	1					100	187
Moth 60 Watt Stereo	599	Miniature power amp lacks control and finesse - not comfortable with difficult speaker loads	1					60	165
Moth 30 Series Monoblocks	879	Tested with Active Preamp. Demonstrated solid balance and proved adept at delivering vital musical qualities	1					100	155
Musical Fidelity X-A50	500	Cleverly configured and attractively packaged, open, lively and engaging sound. Reviewed with X-PRE	1					50	175
Musical Fidelity X-A200	1,000	Good long-term listening prospects; detailed and a little fruity (tested with X-P100 preamp)	1					200	200
Musical Fidelity NuVista 300	3,300	Powerful smooth sound with tremendous bass extension. Capacity to fulfil the demands of the most dynamic material	1					350	199
Myyrad MA120	450	Based on M1120 integrated - see later for comments, but sounds significantly better when bi-amped with M1120	1					60	165
NAD 214	370	A little lightweight, but detailed, consistent sound quality, and excellent value for money	1					80	165
NAD Silverline S200	1,400	Beautifully built kit that sounds as good as it looks with heaps of power (tested with S100 preamp)	1					200	200
Naim NAP90	450	Power amp from a Nait integrated with some improvements	1					30	165
Naim NAP180	1,122	More of a 'character act' than a truly neutral reproduction system, majors on excitement at the expense of subtlety	1					60	200
Samuel Johnson ppa100	2,200	Stylish wood and metal fascia - nimble, high resolution and highly coherent sound	1					50	201
Technics SE-A1010	350	Although the sound's basically all there, it's arguable that a good integrated offers more, for less						90	200
Technics SE-A3000	2,997	Price includes SU-C3000. Supremely clean and even sounding combo, though it could be more musically involving	1					100	188
Thule Spirit PA100	600	More successful than matching preamp: sound is gutsy and lively, and generally clean	1					100	187
Rega Exon	1,196	Monoblock, priced each, dedicated for Hal preamp. Bold, outgoing, in-command kind of sound	1					125	165
Roksan Caspian Power	595	Excels musically and in conventional hi-fi terms. A power amp for people with long-term satisfaction in mind	1					70	183
Rotel RB-971	200	Somewhat better than the accompanying preamp - clean, mean and bridgeable. (Tested with RC-971)	1					70	178
Rotel RB-991	600	Top stuff and stunning value: rather outshone the matching RC-995 preamp (tested as pair)	1					200	200
Rotel RB-980BX	450	Tames enthusiastically recorded material with a laid-back and occasionally smeared sound	1					120	155
TAG McLaren 125M	2,400	Refined Audiolab replacement monoblocks with clean sound but limited thrill power. (T/w PA20R preamp)	1					145	184
Talk Tornado 2	600	Good, but slightly retiring sound which lacks the authority to stand out in a crowd	1					65	165
<b>PHONO STAGES</b>									
Clearaudio Symphono	740	Slightly inconsistent balance mars the performance of this lively performer	0			●			201
Creek OBH-9	160	A neat little unit with an essentially neutral and listenable character	0			●			189
Cyrus aEQ7/PSX-R	826	Very hi-tech product which tends too much towards smoothness except at climaxes, which can be rough	0	●					189
Densen DP-Drive/DP-02	350	Quite unusual design in many ways: sound is mostly good but never quite shakes off a 'synthetic' quality	0			●			189
Electrocompaniet ECP-1	495	An excellent phono amp that combines well-rounded balance with detail and low noise	0	●					189
Moth 30 Series Phono	249	Fine sound all round, in any kind of music, from this bargain phono stage	0	●	●				189
Musical Fidelity X-LP2/X-PSU	628	An enjoyable listening experience in its way, but a bit short on inner details	0	●	●				201
NAD PP-1	40	A basic phono stage that does its job rather coarsely: a bit bass-shy too	0	●					189
Pass Labs XOno	2,995	Not absolutely neutral, but the overall result is so beguiling it's hard to resist	0			●			201
Primare R-20	500	Fights a little shy of densely scored music, but generally an enjoyable and neutral performer	0	●	●				201
Pro-Ject Phono Box	40	Moving-coil compatibility is a dubious extra in a way, but MM performance is acceptable at this giveaway price	0			●			201
QED Discsaver DS-1	35	It's cheap, it's cheerful, it's OK - a perfectly adequate for use with a phono-less integrated, though not very refined	0	●	●				189
Roksan Artaxerxes X/DS1.5	1,150	Delicate and well balanced, slightly congested at climaxes. Power supply expensive, but runs two Roksan components	0	●	●				189
TAG McLaren PPA20	1,549	One of the best-equipped phono stages available. Resolution is excellent, but timing is marginally behind the best	0	●	●				187

CONTINUED

# Amplifiers

## SPECIFICATIONS

MM PHONO INPUTS  
MC PHONO INPUTS  
REMOTE CONTROL  
HEADPHONE SOCKET  
POWER OUTPUT (W)  
RECEIVER  
ISSUE NUMBER

STATUS

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	MM PHONO INPUTS	MC PHONO INPUTS	REMOTE CONTROL	HEADPHONE SOCKET	POWER OUTPUT (W)	RECEIVER	ISSUE NUMBER
<b>F</b> Tom Evans The Groove	1,500	Plenty of detail, excellent imaging and almost flawlessly neutral: a good choice for information retrieval off any LP	0						201
<b>MULTI-CHANNEL AMPLIFIERS</b>									
<b>R</b> Arcam Alpha 10 DAVE/10P	2,500	Packed with a diversity of electronics that against engineering odds sounds extremely good	5					110	198
Cyrus AV5	1,000	Few processors are as adept with music. An effective multi-channel solution for music fans	4					N/A	201
<b>F</b> Denon AVR-3300	800	Not as powerful as Denon claims, but nonetheless capable of impressive high-fidelity multi-channel sound	4					75	198
<b>B</b> Marantz SR5000	500	Something of a rough diamond, but a powerful and entertaining package	5					105	198
NAD T770	1,000	Lacks both transparency and subtlety while the omission of dts will be a drawback for some at this price	5					90	198
Nakamichi AV-10	1,000	A very powerful AV receiver that's easy to install and set-up with a civilised and subtle performance	4					140	198
Pioneer VSX-908RDS	1,000	A flexible heavyweight AV receiver whose sound is just a little too stodgy and lacking in crispness	4					80	198
<b>F</b> Roksan Caspian DSP	2,290	A potent combination offering the bare essentials of DD and dts decoding	4					130	198
<b>R</b> Rotel RSP-985/RPB-985 MKII	2,225	The hugely versatile processor is the weaker subjective link in this otherwise impressive combo	3					130	198
Sony TA-VA777ES	1,500	Dual purpose model with enthralling midrange and presence, that does music and movies with equal aplomb	6					100	205
Sony TA-E9000ES/N9000ES	2,300	Big, gold, powerful and remarkably versatile but fails to cut the sonic mustard	5					110	198



# Cables

Cables are an integral part of a hi-fi system, required to connect source components to amplifiers, and the latter to speakers.

- **Analogue Interconnects** connect source components and amplifiers, and run between pre and power amps. They are priced for one-metre terminated pairs.
- **Digital interconnects** connect CD transports to DACs or digital recorders. 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 and soldering) costs vary.

## KEY TO SPECIFICATIONS

- **SYMMETRICAL:** A twisted pair of conductors.
  - **COAXIAL:** A central 'hot' conductor and a shield that carries the negative signal.
  - **STRANDED:** Multiple strands with no intervening insulation.
  - **SOLID CORE:** Single or multiple, individually insulated strands.
  - **COPPER:** Material used for conductor.
  - **SILVER:** Material used for conductor.
  - **DIG CABLE TYPE:** O - optical digital; E - electrical digital for CD Players, DACS and digital recorders.
- ISSUE NUMBER:** The issue of *Hi-Fi Choice* in which an original review appeared.

**B** BEST BUY   **R** RECOMMENDED   **E** EDITOR'S CHOICE

STATUS

# Cables

## SPECIFICATIONS

SYMMETRICAL  
COAXIAL  
STRANDED  
SOLID CORE  
COPPER  
SILVER  
DIG CABLE TYPE  
ISSUE NUMBER

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	SYMMETRICAL	COAXIAL	STRANDED	SOLID CORE	COPPER	SILVER	DIG CABLE TYPE	ISSUE NUMBER
<b>ANALOGUE INTERCONNECTS (PRICES PER TERMINATED METRE PAIR)</b>										
Acoustic Precision Eikos	89	Not entirely neutral: probably best suited to upbeat music. Very stiff construction								188
Audio Note AN-A	18	Not especially impressive: warm but well-rounded balance that restricts 'air' but is quite clear								108
Audio Note AN-C	35	Neutral but lacking in subtle texture and unable to distinguish fine detail								131
<b>F</b> Audio Note AN-S	99	Up-beat and enthusiastic sound with satisfyingly deep and grumbly bass								131
Audio Note AN-V	179	15 individually insulated silver strands make up this very clean and dynamically unchallenged cable								131
Audioquest Topaz X2	60	Well made but let down by a pervading sense of muddle and congestion in the sound								188
<b>R</b> Audioquest Coral	99	Slightly forward imaging hardly detracts from its excellent tonal qualities and detail								200
<b>F</b> CableTalk Advanced 2	35	Slight roughness in loud music barely detracts from a well-balanced performance with good imaging								176
<b>F</b> Cable Talk Studio 2	65	A first-class performer from tonal, dynamic and rhythmic standpoints								160
Cambridge Pacific	30	Lacks subtlety and bass impact but is otherwise quite serviceable for the price								176
<b>F</b> Cambridge Audio Studio Ref	40	Dynamic cable with strong soundstaging and only a slight lack of detail								160
Cambridge Silver Spirit 60	100	Good bass but a lack of detail and differentiation of instruments								188
Chord Cobra 2	50	Good, strong sound with full-bodied music, less happy with smaller forces								176
Chord Chameleon 2	90	Deep bass is fine but despite that the sound can be a bit hard and lacking body and resonance								188
<b>F</b> Connections Midas HD	39	Canary yellow cable with excellent plugs and an open sound. Slight treble glare								160
<b>R</b> DNM Reson	40	Seemed a little harsh in the test system, but can work well and should be tried								200
Goertz M1 Interconnect	145	Soft sound lacking in bite, with excessive and plummy bass (NB sample used in review was only 0.5m)								176
Insert Audio IC100 MKII	47	Mostly good sound is let down by pervasive dryness								176
<b>F</b> Insert Audio Image 5.1	85	Very good detail and imaging: perhaps a touch bass-light								200
<b>B</b> Ixos 104	20	Open and detailed presentation, full bass and silky if overly smooth treble								131
Ixos Gamma 1002	39	Lumpy bass, grainy treble, and poor integration. Nice colour, though								176
<b>F</b> Ixos 103	45	Even-handed and generous sound, bass has a well-rounded, bouncy quality								131
Ixos 102	60	A bit bright and undynamic, this cable is nevertheless a good all-rounder, whose faults are largely subtractive								160
Ixos 1000	90	Nothing badly wrong, just a little bit bland and outshone by others at the price								200
Ixos 101	100	A cable with personality: its veiled and shut in quality bring an earthiness to vocals and rhythm guitar alike								131
<b>B</b> Kimber PBJ	68	Assured sound, solid and natural bass and clear treble — excellent performance all round								188
<b>F</b> Kimber Hero	110	Slight roughness detracts from some music; seems well suited to rock and jazz. Lively and detailed								176
<b>R</b> Moth Ley Line Black	100	Offers a full sound, neutral yet very solid and confident in delivery. Expansive imaging retains music's energy								108
Moth Ley Line Grey	200	Detailed, but there's a sense of distance between music and listener: vocals are coarse rather than liquid								108
Nordost Black Knight	60	Flat black cable that is distinctive but slightly coloured — but not in a wholly negative manner								160
<b>F</b> Nordost Solar Wind	85	Good tone and dynamics, with just occasionally a touch of bass-lightness in busy music								188
<b>R</b> Nordost Blue Heaven	145	Very good bass and only slightly grainy treble add up to a well integrated, natural-sounding cable								176
Precious Metals SS35	50	Extended bass, but dry character suits electronic music better than acoustic								188
<b>F</b> Prowire Silver	60	A good cable in every way, with just the occasional hint of coloration and coarseness								176
<b>B</b> QED Qnect 2	30	Very well balanced, refined and detailed, this is everything a good cable should be, and excellent value								176
<b>F</b> QED Qnect 45	70	Some coloration and roughness in the midrange and treble, but bass is gratifyingly solid								188
<b>R</b> QED Qnex Silver Spiral	90	A great cable for lovers of big sounds								200
Reference CS1	75	A moderate performer, with a little coloration and a tendency to lose bass at climaxes								188
Silvertone Ex-Static	35	Pleasantly unfatiguing and competitively priced cable that lacks detail and insight								160
<b>B</b> SonicLink Silver Pink	35	Dynamically sensitive and muddle-free. We're unsure about the flesh-coloured finish, though...								160





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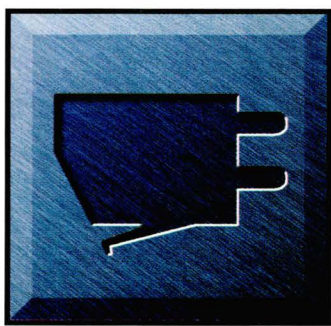
# Cables

STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS

SYMMETRICAL COAXIAL STRANDED SOLID CORE COPPER SILVER DIG CABLE TYPE ISSUE NUMBER

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	SYMMETRICAL	COAXIAL	STRANDED	SOLID CORE	COPPER	SILVER	DIG CABLE TYPE	ISSUE NUMBER
SonicLink S300	18	Happiest with simple music; tends to smudge detail in complex pieces	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	168
<b>F</b> SonicLink AST50	1.95	It may look like bell-wire, but AST50 sounds detailed, ordered and balanced	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	157
<b>B</b> SonicLink AST75	2.95	Unusual materials and rather unusual performance too, strong on excitement and with plenty of bass	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	203
<b>F</b> SonicLink AST150	3.95	Slightly plummy bass and a useful way of holding musical strands together	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	157
SonicLink AST200x2	5.95	At its best with exciting music, this cable seems shy of subtler details	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	192
Straight Wire Duo	3	Not so subtle and lacking some detail, but sound is consistent with level and musical style	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	203
Straight Wire Rhythm	6	Its major flaw seems to be woolly and indistinct bass, which pervades most types of music	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	192
<b>F</b> Straight Wire Quartet	8	A good all-rounder with full tone, clear detail and natural ambience	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	183
<b>F</b> Supra Ply 3.4/5	6.95	Clean sound which stays together well at high levels, with full bass – perhaps a touch of treble restriction	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	183
<b>B</b> Tara Labs Klara	2.95	A good budget cable with an even spread of virtues – and very minor vices – across the board	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	183
Tara Labs RSC Prime 500	36	More suited to melodious music than anything with bite and drive, with only moderate detail	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	203
TCI Python	7.99	No single major sin, but detail is not outstanding and rhythm isn't always completely solid	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	203
<b>B</b> Townshend Isolda	50	Superb sound all round, and amplifier compatibility enhanced by included stabilising inductor	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	203
van den Hul The Clearwater	7.99	Despite its evocative title, the Clearwater turns out to be a disappointingly murky-sounding cable	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	109
van den Hul Royal Jade	10.99	Lots of technology, but sound suffers from dryness and woolly bass	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	203
van den Hul CS122 HB	13.99	Good dynamics can make for exciting sound, but fine detail suffers and the treble is often dry	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	192
van den Hul The Magnum	40	Touted as vdH's most prestigious twin-lead cable, The Magnum sounds soft and old-fashioned	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	109
<b>F</b> van den Hul The Wind	44	'The Wind' kicks up a storm with its lush midrange and bone-crunching bass	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	109
van den Hul Revolution	80	Silver-plated OFC combined with carbon fibre prompts a sombre character with an easy and relaxed treble	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	133



# 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 amps need a transformer to cope with MC cartridges. ■ Even basic high-output MM cartridge designs will benefit from a customised amplifier input load. Consult your dealer for further details on this topic.

KEY TO SPECIFICATIONS

- **MM:** Moving-magnet cartridge with a normal output, suitable for all amplifier phono inputs.
- **MC:** Moving-coil cartridge with a low output, only suitable for high-sensitivity MC amplifier phono inputs.
- **REPLACEABLE STYLUS:** Most MM cartridges have a stylus (needle) that can be removed and replaced when worn out.
- **OUTPUT (mV):** Cartridge output in millivolts.
- **MASS (g):** The mass of your chosen cartridge affects the choice of partnering tonearm. Consult dealers or manufacturers to establish which arms and pickups work well together.
- **ISSUE NUMBER:** The issue of *Hi-Fi Choice* in which an original review appeared.

**B** BEST BUY **R** RECOMMENDED **E** EDITOR'S CHOICE

# Cartridges

STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS

REPLACEABLE STYLUS MM MC OUTPUT (mV) MASS (g) ISSUE NUMBER

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	REPLACEABLE STYLUS	MM	MC	OUTPUT (mV)	MASS (g)	ISSUE NUMBER
<b>F</b> Allaerts MC1B	1,295	Highly capable and entertaining Belgian cartridge that warrants the finest turntable and phono stage you can afford	●	●	●	0.5	203	
<b>B</b> Audio Technica AT-95E	20	Clear and dynamic, though richly balanced	●	●	●	2.8	48	
Audio Technica AT-OC9ML	330	A well-finished cartridge with a sound that's smoothly detailed, but also rather unexciting	●	●	●	0.4	8 192	
<b>B</b> Clearaudio Signature	1,495	A great all-round performer with fine dynamic vitality and a seductive midband intimacy	●	●	●	0.55	11.5 175	
<b>B</b> Denon DL110	70	A fine all-rounder, this high output MC model is likely to perform well	●	●	●	1.0	6 48	
Denon DL160	90	Although listeners just preferred the 110, its brother here survived lab tests and is still 'thoroughly competent'	●	●	●	0.1	6 43	
Denon DL103	100	Good performance in bass and good 'life'. Is seriously let down by its spherical stylus which kills subtle detail	●	●	●	0.1	6 103	
<b>B</b> Denon DL304	200	Uncoloured, detailed, tracks superbly. Top notch altogether, and a bargain at the price	●	●	●	0.1	6 103	
<b>B</b> Dynavector DV-20X L	299	Articulate-sounding, with impressive treble resolve, though lightweight at times. Needs a high quality turntable and arm	●	●	●	0.25	8.6 192	
Dynavector Karat 17D2 mk2	450	Clean and controlled sound with taut, tuneful bass. Detailed and musically cogent	●	●	●	0.15	5.3 158	
<b>F</b> Dynavector Te-Kaitora	1,698	A real smoothie, but pricey. Worth checking out for its delicate laid-back transparency and low needle-talk	●	●	●	0.25	8.5 175	
<b>F</b> Dynavector XX-1L	998	Very clear, very detailed; a response lift around 20kHz seems to do no harm	●	●	●	0.25	12 84	
<b>F</b> Dynavector XX-1	998	Good, but not immensely competitive at the price, and not helped by comparison with the low output version	●	●	●	2.0	12 84	
<b>B</b> Goldring Elan	19	A lightweight and frisky-sounding MM apparently based on Nagaoka MM4 body	●	●	●	5.0	7 67	
<b>F</b> Goldring 1012GX	79	Slightly harsh but plenty of life and detail. Some high frequency coloration apparent	●	●	●	6.5	7 85	
<b>F</b> Goldring 1022GX	99	As with 1012, a touch harsh; detail and transient purity improved	●	●	●	6.5	7 85	
<b>F</b> Goldring Eroica LX	110	Not the most subtle cartridge in the world: can sound edgy at times, but lively and informative	●	●	●	0.5	8 84	
Goldring 1042	120	Not terribly subtle, and not such good value alongside 1012 and 1022. Quite lively, though	●	●	●	6.5	6 91	
Goldring Elite	220	The basics are right, and it will cheerfully tackle any source material, but its sound is not the cleanest	●	●	●	0.5	8 103	
Goldring Excel VX	525	Good bass drive but dull and imprecise higher up. An old-fashioned sound that falls short of the true high end	●	●	●	0.45	8 175	
<b>B</b> Grado Prestige Gold	149	Rich sounding with an unusually refined top-end for a moving magnet-type cartridge	●	●	●	4	6 158	
Grado Reference	995	Loads of tracking headroom but treble is limited. A prospect for mid-oriented valve amp users	●	●	●	1.7	6.5 175	
<b>B</b> Linn K9	125	Linn improved this model by beefing up the Basik's bodywork and adding a super stylus	●	●	●	4.5	5 Col	
London Decca Maroon	259	Now manufactured under the London brand name, this Decca cartridge is as iconoclastic as ever	●	●	●	5.0	6 67	
London Decca S Gold	399	Immediate and detailed, but coloured and nonlinear, with a questionable effect on records	●	●	●	5.0	6 84	
<b>F</b> Lyra Lydian Beta	599	A thoroughly enjoyable cartridge – smooth, agile and dynamic in character	●	●	●	0.5	8 192	
<b>F</b> Lyra Lydian	649	Superbly capable all-round musical performer that improves markedly when its body cover is removed	●	●	●	0.3	7 158	
<b>B</b> Lyra Clavis Da Capo	995	A stable tracker, and one of the finest cartridges we've heard	●	●	●	0.1	7 143	
Lyra Parnassus D.C.t	1,895	A real little jewel of a cartridge, with many good qualities, but handicapped by a rather too obvious treble peak	●	●	●	0.22	10.5 175	
<b>B</b> Ortofon 510/P	38	For the price, a good blend of virtues – weight, clarity and neutrality	●	●	●	3.0	5 85	
<b>B</b> Ortofon 520/P	65	Sensitive to load capacitance, but the 520/P has a lively, effervescent sound	●	●	●	3.0	5 67	

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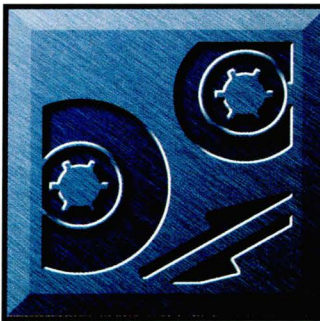
# Cartridges

STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS

REPLACEABLE STYLUS  
MM MC  
OUTPUT (mV)  
MASS (g)  
ISSUE NUMBER

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	REPLACEABLE STYLUS	OUTPUT (mV)	MASS (g)	ISSUE NUMBER
<b>R</b> Ortofon MC3 Turbo	130	The 3 Turbo is bright, cheerful and bouncy, but unsubtle – take it as it comes	●	3.3	4	103
<b>B</b> Ortofon MC15 Super II	130	A good all-rounder, with outstanding resolution, if slightly bright and close up	●	0.35	7	103
Ortofon MC2SE	180	An excellent upgrade for a mid-price turntable	●	0.5	11	139
Ortofon MC25FL	250	A bit too stark and honest, but faithful to what's on the LP	●	0.5	11	139
<b>B</b> Ortofon MC 10 Supreme	300	A full and cultured-sounding cartridge, with collective attributes far outweighing its shortcomings	●	0.5	10.7	192
Ortofon MC30 Supreme	525	Highly detailed and even-sounding cartridge that has a special affinity with female vocal recordings	●	0.5	10.7	158
<b>B</b> Ortofon Rohmann	1,000	A class act in nearly every respect, with fine groove security and a very smooth and even-handed sound	●	0.25	8.5	175
<b>R</b> Ortofon MC3000II	1,100	A real ear-opener. Nothing to criticise anywhere – one of the very best	●	0.12	10	84
Ortofon MC5000	1,500	Limited tracking ability, bright and forward sound, but good stereo	●	0.12	10	91
Rega Bias	39	Difficult to mount in some arms due to its shallow body, but the Bias offers a gentle, refined sound	●	5	4	67
<b>R</b> Rega Elys	85	Clearly superior to the Bias, the Elys is more detailed, accurate and convincing	●	5.0	5	67
<b>R</b> Reson Reqa	250	If you're after a high quality moving magnet cartridge, they don't get much better than this	●	6.5	6.3	192
<b>R</b> Roksan Corus Black	130	Recognisably related to the Corus Blue, but smoother and more civilised	●	6.5	5	91
<b>B</b> Sumiko Blue Point Special	250	A no-nonsense performer with engaging musical properties – one of the best around for less than £300	●	2.5	9	192
<b>R</b> van den Hul MM-1	250	If woody midrange could be tamed, imaging and security would pull it through	●	5.5	6	103
van den Hul DDT-II	600	Outstanding stereo imaging and neutral balance are appealing, but rhythmically the DDT-II is a bit lazy	●	0.35	7.6	158
<b>R</b> van den Hul MC-10	750	A neutral, balanced performer, gives fine depth and focus and a firm, extended bass	●	0.4	6	60
<b>R</b> van den Hul MC-One	900	This extends all the positive qualities of the 10, but adds greater authority and scale – worth all the extra money	●	0.4	6	60
<b>R</b> van den Hul MC-Two	1,200	MC-Two rewards with a highly detailed yet fluid and musically convincing portrayal	●	0.4	6	72
van den Hul Frog	1,500	Seems to control/suppress surface noise better than its rivals. This delicate and subtle performer has great charm	●	0.65	7	175
<b>R</b> van den Hul G' hopper III/IIA	2,800	Undoubtedly one of the finest cartridges available. It has tremendous bandwidth, energy and finesse	●	0.4	6	122
<b>R</b> Wilson benesch Matrix	786	Extraordinarily well balanced cartridge: neutral and detailed yet lively and rhythmically assertive	●	0.58	6	158
<b>R</b> Wilson benesch Carbon	1,573	Carbon fibre body contributes to a delightfully clean and open midrange, and a quick, lively and coherent sound	●	0.45	7	175



## Cassette Decks

The compact cassette is still the world's most versatile and ubiquitous music storage medium. Cassette decks hook up to the 'tape loop' inputs and outputs offered by most modern amplifiers. It's worth taking care to choose the best tapes for a specific machine. For example, expensive metal tapes will be a wasted investment for a cheap deck. Many better-specified decks have manual or automatic bias adjustment to get the best from specific samples of tape. Twin decks offer the possibility of copying from tape to tape, playing two cassettes sequentially or recording onto two tapes at once. Autoreverse is a useful feature, but uni-directional mechanisms promise better sound. Dolby S is the ultimate noise reduction system, and three-head decks permit record monitoring off-tape.

KEY TO SPECIFICATIONS

- **DOLBY B/C:** The first and second Dolby hiss-killers.
- **DOLBY S:** A desirable derivative of Dolby SR professional noise-reduction.
- **DOLBY HX-PRO:** Extends headroom for cassette recording.
- **3-HEAD:** Permits monitoring off-tape while you're recording.
- **TWIN DECK:** Contains two decks for dubbing and continuous play.
- **AUTOREVERSE:** Automatically plays both sides of the cassette.
- **AUTO CALIBRATION:** The deck will automatically set up bias and EQ for any tape.
- **ADJUSTABLE BIAS:** Permits manual optimisation of tape.

**ISSUE NUMBER:** The issue of *Hi-Fi Choice* in which an original review appeared.

**B** BEST BUY   **R** RECOMMENDED   **E** EDITOR'S CHOICE

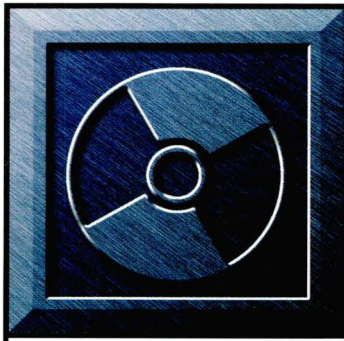
STATUS

# Cassette Decks

SPECIFICATIONS

DOLBY C  
DOLBY S  
DOLBY HX PRO  
3-HEAD  
TWIN DECK  
AUTO REVERSE  
AUTO CALIBRATION  
ADJUSTABLE BIAS  
ISSUE NUMBER

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	DOLBY C	DOLBY S	DOLBY HX PRO	3-HEAD	TWIN DECK	AUTO REVERSE	AUTO CALIBRATION	ADJUSTABLE BIAS	ISSUE NUMBER
<b>B</b> Aiwa AD-F450	120	Basic but well-designed deck. Astonishing value; only the poor metering gives the game away	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	136
<b>B</b> Aiwa AD-WX727	170	High-class twin for those who want bells, whistles – and music	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	146
<b>B</b> Denon DRM-550	160	There are some technical limitations, but this remains a fine-sounding deck, and excellent value	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	158
Denon DRW-580	200	Twin deck: OK for casual use, but will quickly pall with more quality critical applications	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	171
<b>B</b> Denon DRS-640	200	Draw-loading deck, with simple facilities and smooth, well-adjusted sound	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	140
<b>R</b> Denon DRM-650S	230	An improvement on predecessors, it offers a wide-ranging, sound. Dolby S is not the best feature	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	164
Denon DRM-740	270	Breathed-on DRM-710, with good external treatment, offers good, if somewhat detached sonics	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	136
Denon DRS-810	310	Draw-loading deck, carefully designed yet lacking in subtlety on audition	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	127
Harman/Kardon TD420	250	Minor inconsistencies detract from a well-conceived, minimum features design	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	140
Harman/Kardon TD450	350	Draw loader with poor tape navigation features; good midband but shallow bass	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	164
<b>B</b> JVC TD-R472	200	Excellent auto-reverse deck which doesn't suffer the usual disadvantages and is very sharply priced	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	158
<b>B</b> JVC TD-V662BK	270	Assured, clean and agile-sounding recorder, if not quite the most refined in its class	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	146
JVC TD-W718	300	Twin deck. Good for creative live recording, but no timer standby. Respectable performance	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	171
<b>R</b> Kenwood KX-W6080	200	Modestly decent-sounding twin deck, with some transport instability and ragged bass	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	171
Marantz SD455	170	Works well as a single deck, especially on replay, but dubbing at high/low speed compromises sound	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	184
NAD 613	230	Rough and ready, but enjoyable sound, though marred by mechanical motor noise	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	158
NAD 616	300	Twin deck with basic features. No Dolby setting memory, transport is too unstable for audiophile use	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	171
Nakamichi DR-10	800	An ergonomic oddity, but one of the last of the great cassette decks. Worth considering against MD	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	195
<b>R</b> Onkyo K-611	460	Cute drawer-loading mini-size component with 3 heads and dual capstan transport	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	146
<b>R</b> Pioneer CT-S550S	250	Great features, good with cheap low bias tapes, but slightly synthetic sound quality	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	164
Pioneer CT-W806DR	300	Had it not been for the iffy transport quality, this sophisticated twin would have been Recommended	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	171
<b>R</b> Pioneer CT-S830S	500	High-class mechanism, if lacking in battleship externals, and superb sound	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	146
<b>R</b> Sony TC-KE600S	300	Mild setting-up problems notwithstanding, this UK-tweaked design has a smooth, open sound	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	158
Teac V-1050	180	One of the cheapest 3-head machines around, but it shows in very 'thick' sound	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	184
<b>B</b> Technics RS-AZ6	200	For those who can't afford the RS-AZ7; clarity over the widest bandwidth thanks to AZ thin-film head	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	164
<b>B</b> Technics RS-AZ7	270	Thin-film head gives a solid, almost CD-like bass and midrange. A clear advance in state-of-the-art	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	158
<b>R</b> Yamaha KX-490	200	Electrifyingly transparent and capable deck whose only flaw is a trace of audible wow and flutter	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	158
<b>R</b> Yamaha KX-580SE	250	Subtle, engaging and transparent deck, with a lightweight tonality, but stability and strong detail	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	171



## CD/DVD Players

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 p129). To do this the player needs a digital output of either electrical or optical type. The former is preferable for the ultimate sound. A CD player can be split into two basic components: the disc drive or transport, and a device which converts the disc's digital bitstream into an analogue audio signal. This is called a digital to analogue convertor, or DAC. Although most players are contained within a single box, expensive players are usually two-box affairs. The first new DVD players have not excelled with CD software.

**B** BEST BUY

**R** RECOMMENDED

**E** EDITOR'S CHOICE

### KEY TO SPECIFICATIONS

- **ELECTRICAL DIGITAL OUTPUT:** For electrical connection to an outboard DAC.
- **AES/EBU ELEC DIG OUTPUT:** Balanced digital output to be used with similarly equipped DACs.
- **OPTICAL DIGITAL OUTPUT:** For optical connection to an outboard DAC.
- **ST OPT DIG OUTPUT:** High-speed optical output to be used with similarly equipped DACs.
- **BAL ANALOGUE OUTPUT:** Balanced analogue output for amplifiers equipped with balanced inputs.
- **HEADPHONE SOCKET:** For 'can' users.
- **VARIABLE OUTPUT:** Remotely adjustable output level (usually non-audiophile).
- **MULTI-DISC:** Equipped with a carousel or multi-tray system for continuous play of multiple discs.
- **DAC TYPE:** BS – Philips Bitstream; MB – multi-bit; Hyb – hybrid of multi-bit and bitstream technologies; 1bit – single bit types eg MASH, bitstream, PWM, etc; CC – constant calibration.
- **ISSUE NUMBER:** The issue of *Hi-Fi Choice* in which an original review appeared. Factsback information page.

# CD/DVD Players

### SPECIFICATIONS

STATUS

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	AES/EBU ELEC DIG OUT	OPTICAL DIG OUT	ST OPT DIG OUT	BAL ANALOGUE OUT	HEADPHONE SOCKET	VARIABLE OUTPUT	MULTI-DISC	DAC TYPE	ISSUE NUMBER
<b>B</b> Acurus ACD11	899	First-rate if costly player, which combines a delightful transparency with an uncontrived naturalness	●								1bit 166
Acoustic Precision Eikos	1,850	Seriously customised Pioneer with extraordinary resolution and world beating imaging and bass	●								1bit 165
Advantage CD15	3,995	A CD player of some stature – what it lacks in dynamics it makes up for in subtlety and flow	●	●		●					20bit 193
Alchemist Kraken	1,249	Distinctive looking player likely to suit a Alchemist system, but will result in variable results elsewhere			●						24/96 190
<b>R</b> Alchemist Nexus APD32A	597	Refined treble, constrained yet capable bass and attractive all-round presentation	●								Hyb 169
AMC CD8A	150	Has balanced output, but is otherwise rather grey and unremarkable				●					BS 172
<b>B</b> AMC CD9/DAC8	200	Beer-budget two-box system (player plus DAC) is smooth, attractive and easy on the ear	●								CC 179
Anthem CD1	1,595	Unusual combination of high-end player, complete with HDCD, and changer. Good, but noisy	●	●							MB 178
<b>B</b> Arcam Alpha 7SE	350	Revamped starter model is a clear improvement on very likeable predecessor	●			●					MB 195
<b>R</b> Arcam Alpha MCD	450	Excellent bass and natural midband, but just a touch of treble dryness, from this very listenable changer	●								MB 178
<b>R</b> Arcam Alpha 8	520	Refined, intricately detailed but a little cautious. Should be broadly compatible with a variety of amps	●								BS 163
<b>B</b> Arcam Alpha 8SE	600	Excellent (and very reasonably priced) HDCD-compatible player is a strong all-rounder	●			●					1bit 176
<b>R</b> Arcam Alpha 9	800	Refined, articulate player which employs new DAC technology to great effect	●								Ring 188
Audio Analogue Paganini	750	Basically good, but sometimes heavy-handed player	●								24bit 191
Audio Research CD1	3,290	Suspends disbelief with a real yet obviously coloured sound. A rare proposition among CD players	●	●		●					BS 163
Audio Note AN-CD1	600	Easy on the ear, and for a valve player, easy on the pocket, but a bit Radio 2-flavoured	●								Hyb 188
Audio Note AN-CD2	999	High output impedance makes performance unduly system fussy	●								MB 195
AVI S2000MC2	899	A chip off the old block. This model's in-er-face balance obstructs an otherwise finely detailed sound	●								MB 176
<b>R</b> AVI S2000MC Reference	1,399	Lean, dry, high resolution player, built to outlast most of us. A fine performer in a sympathetic system	●								MB 169
Balanced Audio Tech VK-D5	3,995	A valve-infused player with a big and engaging sound. Lacks a little subtlety	●								18bit 194
Cambridge Audio D100	120	Hard, clanging and coloured sounding, and with suspect control logic				●					DS 200
<b>B</b> Cambridge Audio D500	200	Clean and highly articulate player wears well in extended use	●			●					DS 202
<b>B</b> Cambridge Audio CD6	250	A sharp, articulate player, a real thoroughbred in fact, perhaps too sharp and lively for some systems	●				●				BS 159
<b>R</b> Copland CDA-266	1,199	Simple yet elegant design is unexpectedly sophisticated under the skin, and effective in execution	●								MB 176
Copland CDA 289	1,898	Beautifully built and musically enjoyable. Lacks some precision, but still among the best below £2,000	●								20bit 194
Copland CDA-288	2,199	A gentle giant of a player that errs in favour of pastel shades rather than bold daubs of colour	●			●					MB 163
<b>R</b> Cymbol CDP12	1,299	Clean, detailed and airy HDCD-equipped player with minimalist trappings	●								Hyb 176
<b>R</b> Cyrus dAD1.5	395	Improved dAD1 variant has improved digital filter for a more natural, easy on the ear quality	●								Hyb 191
<b>R</b> Cyrus dAD3	598	A relaxed style of delivery that convinces with guile and subtlety rather than orchestral ordnance	●								BS 163
<b>R</b> Cyrus dAD3 Q24	900	Bold, lean and lively player demands sympathetic system matching	●								DS 200
<b>R</b> Denon DCD-435	130	Good low cost player, and a step up from the DCD-425, its predecessor	●								DS 191
<b>R</b> Denon DCD-655	180	Fine, slightly soft-edged budget player, and a good ameliorative for aggressive, edgy systems	●								MB 200
<b>R</b> Denon DCD-835	280	Refined version of Denon's multi-bit technology is a bit of a star	●								MB 184
Denon DCD-1550AR	350	Disappointing bland and ploddy sound from an immaculately constructed, high-tech player	●								MB 179
Denon DCD-1650AR	700	Powerful, authoritative, and well equipped too, but this player sometimes lacks subtlety	●								MB 195
Harman/Kardon HK720	230	Sometimes aggressive and ill-disciplined player, but at least it's well built	●								1-bit 202
<b>R</b> Harman/Kardon HD740	300	Powerful but subtle and involving player: welcome back, Harman/Kardon	●								DS 191
<b>R</b> Harman/Kardon FL8300	300	Generally capable changer with relaxed sound and firm bass. Just a hint of roughness on occasion	●								MB 178
Harman/Kardon HD760	500	Sophisticated internally, but mildly disappointing when treading the boards in anger	●								MB 195
JVC XL-Z574	250	Strong resolving power, good midband and dynamics, but slightly raw and thin	●								1bit 159
<b>B</b> Kenwood DP-3080	170	Bold, dynamic and outgoing sound, although somewhat aggressive. Poor build quality and finish	●								1bit 159
Kenwood DPF-3010	180	Grey, somewhat mechanical sounding player	●								Hyb 191
<b>R</b> Kenwood DPF-R6030	180	Inexpensive and adequately specified, with decent mid/treble and slightly anaemic bass	●								1 bit 204
<b>B</b> Kenwood DP-4090	250	Focuses a clear, wide aperture lens on the music – and has CD Text too	●								1bit 172
Kenwood DP-5090	300	Disappointing senior brother to the excellent DP-4090, but surface interface is good	●								1bit 179
<b>B</b> Kenwood DP-7090	400	A lively and compelling performer with an even-handed and coherent disposition	●								MB 163
Linn Mimik	875	Useful multi-room features matched to strong bass, but poor imagery and transparency	●								Hyb 155
Marantz CD5000	150	Well equipped budget player sounds thin and rough at times	●								1 bit 202
Marantz CC3000	150	Ragged sounding player, but it is cheap and well equipped	●								CC 204
<b>B</b> Marantz CD6000 OSE	300	Superbly constructed, slightly emasculated sounding, but smooth and articulate	●								1bit 200
<b>R</b> Marantz CD-63 MkII KI Sig	400	It's the quintessential sound of Marantz – warm, open, and smooth almost to a fault	●								Hyb 169
<b>R</b> Marantz CD-17	800	Fabulous packaging and an excellent all round performer: smooth, detailed and consistent	●								BS 155
<b>R</b> Marantz CD-17KI Sig	1,100	Minor QC problems aside, this is a superbly turned-out machine, but ultimately a little bland	●								BS 176
<b>R</b> Marantz CD-7	3,500	A superbly designed CD player, both inside and out. Precise and dramatic in equal measure	●								16bit 194
<b>R</b> Meracus Tanto	1,395	Believable tonal colours and textures, refinement takes preference over dynamics – but it's not cheap	●								DS 169
<b>B</b> Meridian 506	1,100	Revised 506 includes MSR remote and a new D/A chip, which makes it livelier and more detailed	●								1bit 176
Monrio Asty	695	Well built player has solid, propulsive sound quality that deteriorates towards HF	●								DS 200
Monrio Privilege	995	Costly and well-engineered, but ultimately rather heavy-handed and dull, if refined player	●								MB 166
Musical Fidelity X-RAY	799	Brilliantly packaged and clean but slightly antiseptic sounding player	●								MB 184
<b>B</b> Musical Fidelity A3 CD	800	Excellent player has few faults apart from a slight loss of EHF detail	●								DS 200

CONTINUED

# CD/DVD Players

STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS

AES/EBU ELEC DIG OUT  
OPTICAL DIG OUT  
ST OPT DIG OUT  
BAL ANALOGUE OUT  
HEADPHONE OUT  
VARIABLE OUTPUT  
MULTI-DISC  
DAC TYPE  
ISSUE NUMBER

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	AES/EBU ELEC DIG OUT	OPTICAL DIG OUT	ST OPT DIG OUT	BAL ANALOGUE OUT	HEADPHONE OUT	VARIABLE OUTPUT	MULTI-DISC	DAC TYPE	ISSUE NUMBER	
Myryad T-10	400	Rather ordinary player fails to shine with good music recordings	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	DS	184	
Myryad T-20	600	Matter of fact styling and sound quality, a tad bright for some systems	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	DS	195	
Myryad MC100	700	A little extra get-up-and-go wouldn't go amiss, but its sheer maturity and composure ensure listenability	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	BS	163	
Myryad MCD500	1,300	Well-built, attractive player, showing much promise, but can be a little heavy-going on audition	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	1bit	176	
NAD C520	170	Significantly improved entry level NAD is smooth and dynamic, if slightly dull	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	DS	202	
NAD 524	250	Clean, clear and essentially musical player in the NAD mould	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	MB	191	
NAD 523	250	Lacklustre musical presentation was disappointing on test; so was the absence of a digital output	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	DS	204
NAD C540	330	Not cheap, and disc handling is pedestrian at best, but the C540 is smooth & elegant with just a hint of aggression	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	DS	200	
NAD Silverline S500	1,100	It sounds as good as it looks, which is notably refined and easy on the ear	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	MB	195	
Naim Audio CD3.5	1,000	Forward and explicit sound needs careful system matching	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Hyb	188	
Naim Audio CD2	2,000	Provides bags of detail with a solid stereo focus but not all the romanticism we know to be possible	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	MB	163	
Nakamichi MB-10	400	Jewel of a multi-disc player, with crisp sound and superb fuss-free compact packaging	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	DS	204	
Naim NACDSII/XPS	5,625	Brings you the Naim sound, but for once doesn't have to rely on Naim ancillaries to get the results	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	MB	188	
Onkyo DX-7222	150	Competitive following recent price cut, and on the whole a strong performer musically	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	BS	200	
Parasound C/DP-1000	499	Comes on like a high end player, but ultimately sounds a bit weak and soft-centred	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Hyb	184	
Philips CD-721	130	Surprisingly well-sorted, articulate if slightly glossy and attractively presented sound. Captive signal lead	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	1bit	159	
Philips CD751	150	Inconsistent and occasionally opaque and scrawny sounding cheapie	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	1bit	172	
Pioneer PD-S507	200	Low cost Legato Link implementation sounds gentle but slightly muddled	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	DS	191	
Pioneer PD-S707	300	Idiosyncratic Legato Link dominated sound, but always subtle and interesting	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	MB	184	
Pioneer PD-F906	350	Interesting appearance and concept, but this changer's sound is lacklustre and ergonomics frustrating	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	1bit	178	
Pioneer PDS-06	550	Technologically sophisticated. Pioneer's first multi-bit player for years is polished and capable	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	MB	176	
Pioneer PD-S505 Precision	460	Assured, fluid-sounding player, with great spatial coherence	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	1bit	166	
Primare D20	799	Well presented player doesn't quite cut the mustard, though it performs promisingly	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	BS	188	
Revox Exception E426	2,250	Very stylish with a light, agile sound that extends superbly and has fine timing	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	BS	182	
Roksan Kandy	475	Slightly old-fashioned sound quality player available in various colour schemes	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	DS	200	
Roksan DP3P	1,495	Dramatic and compelling. Classical listeners should be ready to 'air conduct' when auditioning	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	BS	163	
Roksan Caspian	895	Solid, articulate, and fundamentally well-engineered player, but with some subtle low-level limitations	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Hyb	169	
Rotel RCD-951	300	Disappointing chopped-down RCD-971 – buy the original	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	MB	191	
Rotel RCD-971	450	Odd disc handling logic, but bold, detailed and refined sound make this a must	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	MB	184	
Rotel RCD-991	750	Confirms Rotel's status as must watch brand: great stuff	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	MB	195	
Sherwood CD-4030R	180	Easy on the ear, smooth-sounding player, with limits set by the slightly soft, compressed quality	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	BS	159	
Sherwood CD1	1,100	A very neutral, even handed sounding player with a rather flat, lifeless sound. Beautiful construction	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	BS	163	
Sony CDP-XE330	100	Unrefined, but lively, detailed and highly affordable	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Pulse	202	
Sony CDP-XE530	140	Well equipped, but raw, scrappy sounding player lacks depth and weight	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Pulse	200	
Sony CDP-XE510	180	Souped up CDP-XE500 which tells a rather bland and unengaging story	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	1bit	172	
Sony CDP-XB720E	200	Good basic performance and a number of filter settings make this an interesting player for tweaks	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Low bit	184	
Sony CDP-XB930E	300	Yet another first rate UK optimised player with all the bells and whistles	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Pulse	195	
Sony CDP-XA20ES	450	High-tech, with a long list of gadgets, oddly configured player that ultimately sounds less than compelling	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	1bit	176	
Sony CDP-X3000ES	500	Shoebbox format player, looks to die for, switchable digital filters to tweak the already excellent sound	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	BS	169	
Sony SCD-777ES	1,700	Beautifully built SACD player that looks like a bit of a CD player bargain	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	BS	198	
Sony SCD-1	2,500	The first SACD player sounds fabulous but there's not much competition and limited software as yet	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	BS	194	
T+A CD1210R	1,185	Intriguing player with rather pushy basic sound, but has switchable digital filters	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	DS	188	
Talk Electronics Thunder 1	550	Entry level upgradeable Talk Electronics player sounds slightly muted	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	DS	200	
Talk Electronics Thunder 2	699	Fine player, slightly lacking in dynamics, but readily, if expensively upgradable in various ways	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	1-bit	191	
Talk Electronics Thunder 3	1,000	Clean, fast, and availability of a complete upgrade path make this a good long term proposition	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	DS	195	
TAG McLaren CD20R	1,249	Dry and unatmospheric, but plenty of presence – recommended with caution	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	BS	188	
Teac CDP-3450SE	200	For once a budget player where gadgets take second place to respectable, budget amp-friendly sonics	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	1bit	166	
Teac VRDS-8	600	Superb build quality is matched to good, but not exceptional sound quality	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	MB	184	
Teac VRDS-9	700	Well-presented. This Teac is crisp, yet shallow, and inconsistent in sound quality and partnering skills	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	1bit	176	
Teac VRDS-25x	1,000	Excellent, individualistic player with bold, colourful sound, but test sample had iffy CD-R compatibility	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	MB	195	
Technics SL-PG390	90	It's very cheap. Very, very cheap	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	MASH	202	
Technics SL-PG480A	130	Full driving sound, but somewhat uneven in balance with a unsubtle, slightly harsh top end	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	1bit	159	
Technics SL-PS670D	200	Fine, middle ranking player which sounds solid, sometimes even a little stolid	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	1bit	179	
Technics SL-PS770D	250	High tech and well built technology battleship which smooths the rough edges off the music	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	BS	172	
Technics SL-MC410	250	If you fancy a CD player that holds 111 discs, this one's cheap, pretty capable, and easy to use	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Hyb	178	
Technics SL-MC7	300	Maximum storage capacity for a minimum price, and presentable sound too	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	MASH	204	
Thule Sprint CD100	600	Definitely a try before you buy machine, but the bass and mid are excellent	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	DS	188	
Trichord Genesis	549	Breathed-on Pioneer is warm and mellifluous, but ultimately lacks drive and authority	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Hyb	169	
Trichord Revelation	799	Well-ordered and clean sound that may be a little too refined for some, images well	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	1bit	166	
Tube Technology Fusion	1,100	Our early test sample was primitive and flawed, but showed signs of greatness	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	PA	195	
Tube Technology Fulcrum	2,800	An imaginative two-box player with a smooth sound that lacks some lustre	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	24bit	194	
Wadia 830	3,000	Envelope busting dynamics, power and imaging in a rather unexciting box (digital volume control)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	MB	183	
Wadia 860x	7,450	If you want to discover what CDs are really capable of, this has few peers	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	MB	199	
Yamaha CDX-493	180	Open and lively, but this player is also messy and lacking resolving power	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Hyb	191	
Yamaha CD-X993	400	A bit of a lush, though the sound is singularly free of grain, and equipment levels are strong	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	BS	184	
YBA Spécial	695	There is nothing here to justify the pricing or the high-end parentage. Avoid	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	MB	195	
YBA CD1α	3,895	A remarkably fluid and graceful sound – one of the best we've heard below £5,000	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	18bit	194	
<b>TRANSPORTS</b>												
Audio Note CDT Zero	399	Neat shoe box size transport sounds smooth and fluid in the right system. (Tested with DAC Zero)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		191	
Linn Karik	1,850	Based on early Linn transport, the Karik is dry but very positive, detailed and engrossing	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		144	
Roksan Attessa ATT-DP3	1,295	Not the most detailed or refined but capable of sounding exciting with the right material	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	1bit	162	
Teac VRDS-T1	550	Superb quality engineering is mated to tidy and composed sound. (Tested with D-T1)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		144	
Theta Carmen	3,299	A well equipped and extremely upgradable CD/DVD transport. Right now, the finest of its type	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		203	
Theta Data Basic II	2,397	Uses a Philips CDM9 Pro mechanism and works a treat with more lively DACs	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		130	
Thorens TCD2000	999	Lively presentation not helped by rather loose bass and splashy treble. (Tested with TDA 2000 DAC)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		162	
Trichord Digital Turntable	699	Very detailed, precise, controlled yet involving; a first-rank performer	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		162	

CONTINUED

# CD/DVD Players

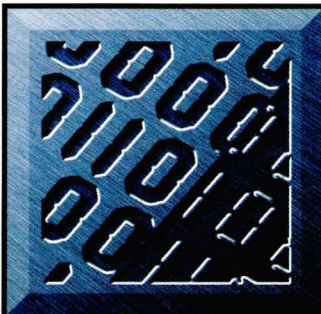
SPECIFICATIONS

- ISSUE NUMBER
- DAC TYPE
- MULTI-DISC
- VARIABLE OUTPUT
- HEADPHONE SOCKET
- BAL OPT DIG OUT
- ST OPT DIG OUT
- OPTICAL DIG OUT
- AES/EBU ELEC DIG OUT
- ELEC DIGITAL OUTPUT

STATUS

PRODUCT (E) COMMENTS

PRODUCT	(E)	COMMENTS	AES/EBU ELEC DIG OUT	OPTICAL DIG OUT	ST OPT DIG OUT	BAL OPT DIG OUT	HEADPHONE SOCKET	VARIABLE OUTPUT	MULTI-DISC	DAC TYPE	ISSUE NUMBER
<b>DACS</b>											
Alchemist TS-D-1	300	24/96-equipped DAC sounds tidy but a little shut-in with both 16-bit CDs and 24-bit/96kHz DVDs									BS 187
Audio Note DAC Zero	369	Neat valve-equipped DAC sounds smooth and fluid in the right system. (Tested with CDT Zero transport)									Hyb 191
Audionote DAC 5	18,500	Astonishingly natural and realistic in the right system, the only problem being the extravagant price									Hyb 203
Linn Numerik	1,500	A new 20-bit DAC and revised Karik transport have cleaned up; but sounds a bit dry and humourless									MB 144
<b>E</b> Musical Fidelity X-24K	300	24/96 ready with a warm, natural sound and good soundstaging (tested with Pioneer DV-717)									MB 187
Roksan Attessa ATT-DAC2/DS5	1,145	Not the most detailed or refined but capable of good excitement with the right material									1bit 162
Teac D-T1	500	Teamed with VRDS-T1 for test, this superb quality unit is tidy and composed									BS 144
Thorens TDA2000	700	Lively and up-front presentation not helped by rather loose bass and splashy treble									BS 162
<b>R</b> Trichord Pulsar Series One	1,395	Very detailed, precise, controlled yet involving; a first-rank performer. Switchable phase, dither etc.									Hyb 162
<b>DVD PLAYERS</b>											
Denon DVD-2500	500	Good picture, but nondescript sound, except when using the digital output at full 24/96 throttle	●								DS 198
<b>R</b> Denon DVM-3700	1000	One of the first multi-DVD players, and a fine all rounder, with average to good pictures, and better sound	●								DS 204
<b>E</b> Denon DVD-5000	1,600	The first DVD-V player that ain't bad as a CD player. A fine musical device	●								BS 187
JVC XV-D701	500	Good video player, but rather undeveloped musically - CD Text is neat, though	●								DS 198
JVC XV-515GD	300	Musically soft as a baby's bottom, and as surprising as yesterday's news	●								202
<b>R</b> Kenwood DVF-9010	1000	DVD player with brilliant picture and clean, lively sound	●								24/96 190
NAD T-550	500	Soft-centred but likeable player in the classic NAD mould	●								DS 202
Nakamichi DVD-10	800	Not the most compelling model in the resurrected Nakamichi line-up	●								DS 198
Panasonic DVD-A150	400	Simple, mid-market DVD player is vice-free but limited for the audiophile	●								24/96 190
Panasonic DVD-A360E	580	Powerful equipment, and unthrottled digital output notwithstanding, sound quality is modest at best	●								DS 198
<b>B</b> Philips DVD750	400	Clever DVD with CD-R/CD-RW compatibility and surprisingly keen sound	●								DS 198
<b>B</b> Pioneer DV-525	399	Lean, clean and lively sound quality. CD-R and 24/96 compatible, too	●								MB 202
<b>B</b> Pioneer DV-626D	450	Superbly equipped, and more than respectable sound quality	●								DS 198
<b>B</b> Pioneer DV-717	550	Superb DVD player with good picture quality and which really knows how to play 24/96 discs	●								MB 190
Samsung DVD-907	500	DVD player with below average picture, and lacklustre sound quality	●								24/96 190
Sony DVP-CX850D	600	Lacklustre sound quality is a disappointment, but the price is appealing for a 200-disc DVD player	●								DS 204
<b>R</b> Sony DVP-S7700	950	Powerfully endowed player offers articulate and believable sound	●								DS 198
<b>R</b> Sony DVP-S325	330	Bare bones DVD with workmanlike sound, although it can sound 'loud'	●								202
Sharp DV-760	500	Reasonable picture, but sonically brings new meaning to the term rough and ready.	●								DS 202
Teac DV-1000	400	Blowsy, and occasionally astringent sounding, but otherwise straightforward and reasonably priced	●								DS 198
Theta DaVID	4,650	A top-notch CD transport, that also plays DVD-Video discs well. Pricy for a DVD transport, but worth it	●	●			●				24/96 191
Thomson DTH2000	380	This DVD player's main attributes are reasonable pricing and fair to good all round performance	●								24/96 190
Toshiba SD-3109	380	Defocused and soft-edged, this is more attractive for its picture than its sound quality.	●								N/A 202
Toshiba SD9000	800	Costly, high tech player with stunning pictures and crisp, slightly lightweight sound	●								DS 198
Yamaha DVD-S795	529	Fare price, and an unconstrained digital output, but otherwise unexciting	●								DS 198



## Digital Recorders

Domestic digital recording has been possible since the launch of digital audio tape (DAT) in the '80s. Since then DAT has remained expensive and largely esoteric, favoured only by well-heeled or professional users. Digital Compact Cassette and MiniDisc (MD) were launched in the early '90s but only MD has stayed the course. A little later came domestic CD-Recorders using CD-R discs, while the latest twist is the arrival of re-recordable CDs known as CD-RW discs. The recording quality hierarchy is as follows: DAT, CD-R/CD-RW, MD. MD is probably the most convenient to use, and offers sophisticated editing facilities, while CD-R is ideal for making digital 'clones' of prerecorded CDs. DAT is the medium of choice for high-quality location recording.

### KEY TO SPECIFICATIONS

- **FORMAT:** Type of recorder - see left for descriptions.
- **DAC TYPE:** Digital to analogue converter: BS - Philips Bitstream; MB - multibit; Hyb - hybrid of multibit and bitstream; 1bit - single bit types such as MASH, bitstream, PWM etc
- **ADC TYPE:** The analogue to digital converter (ADC) converts sound into digits during live recording. Types of ADC are as per DACs (qv).
- **PORTABLE:** Battery operable, but not necessarily personal-stereo-sized.
- **OPTICAL IN/OUTPUTS:** Digital socketry for optical cable.
- **ELEC IN/OUTPUTS:** Digital socketry for electrical cable.
- **ISSUE NUMBER:** The issue of *Hi-Fi Choice* in which an original review appeared.

- B** BEST BUY
- R** RECOMMENDED
- E** EDITOR'S CHOICE

STATUS

# Digital Recorders

SPECIFICATIONS

- ISSUE NUMBER
- ELEC IN/OUTPUTS
- OPTICAL IN/OUTPUTS
- PORTABLE
- ADC TYPE
- DAC TYPE
- FORMAT

PRODUCT (E) COMMENTS

PRODUCT	(E)	COMMENTS	FORMAT	DAC TYPE	ADC TYPE	PORTABLE	OPTICAL IN/OUTPUTS	ELEC IN/OUTPUTS	ISSUE NUMBER
<b>MINIDISCS</b>									
Denon DMD-1000	300	A good machine, but it still doesn't manage to shake off the MiniDisc plague of losing the listener's interest	MD	MB	BS		●	●	184
JVC XM-448	220	An hidden keyboard is a great idea, but musically it sounds rather cool and strident	MD	BS	BS		●	●	205
Kenwood DMF-5020	250	it may be high-tech but nothing conceals the caricatured sound	MD	BS	BS		●	●	205
<b>R</b> Kenwood DMF-9020	500	One of the best MD decks yet for sound quality, and the first to make titling a practical proposition	MD	BS	BS		●	●	191
Marantz CM635	500	CD player and MD recorder in one box: a practical idea but sound and features don't really match the asking price	MD	BS	BS		●	●	191
Onkyo MD-121	450	Mid-sized deck that sounds slightly coloured at times, though immediate and lively	MD	BS	BS		●	●	177
<b>R</b> Pioneer MJ-D508	200	Well equipped but musically sleep inducing player that deserves its recommendation due to price	MD	BS	BS		●	●	205
<b>R</b> Pioneer MJ-D707	250	A handy set of features for the price, though sound is not outstanding	MD	BS	BS		●	●	191
Sharp MDR3H	300	Nifty machine combining a 3-disc CD changer with a MD recorder. Sound on both is rather below par, though	MD	BS	BS		●	●	184
<b>R</b> Sony MDS-JB920	300	One of the better MD decks, its sound is neutral and dynamic. European Audio Recorder of the Year '98-'99	MD	BS	BS		●	●	184
<b>B</b> Sony MDS-JA20ES	500	Sound quality about as good as it gets with MD to date, and a very comprehensive features set too	MD	BS	BS		●	●	191
<b>R</b> Sony MDS-JA55ES	650	Powerful demonstration of Sony's proficiency, it delivers the best MD can offer	MD	BS	BS		●	●	205
Teac MD-8	600	Womanlike choice, but sound-wise it is middle ranking, despite the price	MD	BS	BS		●	●	205
Yamaha MDX-793	300	Nice machine to use and has some useful features, but sound quality a little wanting	MD	BS	BS		●	●	191
<b>CD RECORDERS</b>									
JVC XL-R5000	450	Flexible, rattly build, and attractive sound, but it's a little expensive compared to other rivals	CD-R(W)	BS	BS		●	●	205
LG ADR-620	350	A powerfully equipped machine with useful multi-room capabilities, but sound quality is rough and ready	CD-R(W)	BS	BS		●	●	205
Marantz DR700	600	Dearer than Philips and Traxdata equivalents, with apparently only a smarter front panel to show for it	CD-R	BS	BS		●	●	191
<b>R</b> Marantz DR-17	1,500	Highly recommended, but with a jitter problem that, resolved, would improve sound quality	CD-R(W)	BS	BS		●	●	205
<b>B</b> Philips CDR951	380	An improvement on previous models, it delivers the musical goods in some style	CD-R(W)	BS	BS		●	●	205
<b>R</b> Pioneer PDR-509	300	Straightforward design and excellent recording properties that are slightly dulled by the replay chain	CD-R(W)	BS	BS		●	●	205
<b>R</b> Pioneer PDR-W739	400	Flexible multi-disc that has everything including respectable sound and pricing	CD-R(W)	BS	BS		●	●	205
<b>R</b> Pioneer PDR-555RW	480	Competitor to Philips' CDR-880; can't make perfect copies but has the edge in replay and analogue record sound	CD-R(W)	BS	BS		●	●	184
Pioneer PDR-04	700	Scaled down version of the PDR-05 with auto level setting but all the socketry and features you need to make CDs	CD-R	BS	BS		●	●	171
Pioneer PDR-05	1,000	The first domestic CD-R deck - excellent sound quality	CD-R	BS	BS		●	●	152
TEAC RW-800	350	Capable recording tool, but a little rough and ready as a player	CD-R(W)	BS	BS		●	●	205
<b>R</b> Traxdata Traxaudio 900	499	Identical to Philips and Marantz models: it makes bit-perfect copies of CDs and has perfectly acceptable replay	CD-R	BS	BS		●	●	191



# Headphones

There are several different ways of making a headphone. The most expensive models employ electrostatically-driven diaphragms within an open-backed earcup. Most mid-price designs feature dynamic, moving-coil-driven diaphragms in open, semi-open or closed-back designs. An open-backed headphone can sound remarkably transparent, but also permits the ingress of external noise. Closed-back designs keep out unwanted sound, but may be less comfortable to wear and more coloured. The latest development is the cordless headphone using either infrared light or, more recently, radio waves. Quality is improving, but has yet to match the best corded designs.

## KEY TO SPECIFICATIONS

- **TYPE:** Operating principle: D - dynamic; E - electrostatic.
- **SUPRA-AURAL:** Where a flat pad presses on the outer ear.
- **CIRCUMAURAL:** Where the earcup encloses the ear.
- **OPEN BACK:** Offers an open sound but lets in noise.
- **CLOSED BACK:** Keeps out external noise.
- **MASS (g):** Mass in grams offered to the headphone amplifier. Many headphones offer a significantly higher value than loudspeakers, for example, but this does not mean they will be incompatible with the majority of amplifiers.
- **IMPEDANCE (Ω):** Load offered to the headphone amplifier.
- **3.5MM JACK ADAPTOR:** Compatible with mini-jacked components, eg personal stereos.
- **ISSUE NUMBER:** The issue of *Hi-Fi Choice* in which an original review appeared.

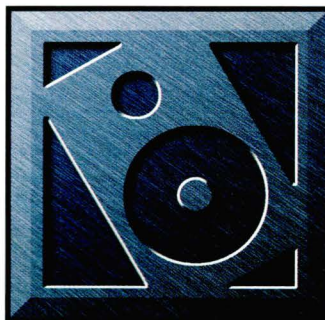
**B BEST BUY**     **R RECOMMENDED**     **E EDITOR'S CHOICE**

# Headphones

## SPECIFICATIONS

STATUS

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	TYPE	SUPRA-AURAL	CIRCUMAURAL	OPEN BACK	CLOSED BACK	MASS (g)	IMPEDANCE (Ω)	3.5mm JACK ADAPTOR	ISSUE NUMBER
<b>R</b> AKG K100	36	Leather clad groover with bags of power and clarity, for a respectable asking price	D	●			●	190	100	●	205
AKG 301	70	Big 'phones with even and detailed sound but lacks sufficient bass weight	D			●	●	230	100	●	194
AKG K 240 DF	100	Inoffensive 'phones that are very laid back, if lacking in grunt	D			●	●	240	600	●	186
<b>R</b> AKG K1000	700	One of the best dynamics on the market, hooks directly into speaker outputs	D			●	●	270	120		99
<b>R</b> Audio Technica ATH910PRO	80	The closed back 910s are an improvement on the 909s, with a nice rhythmic quality rarely found	D	●				280	40		55
<b>R</b> Audio Technica ATH-D40fs	100	Detailed and involving sound with a professional 'studio' quality appeal	D			●		250	66		194
<b>R</b> Audio Technica ATH-M40	120	Incredible detail and honesty from these classically designed studio 'phone	D			●	●	250	60		186
Beyer DT311	50	Uncharacteristically tight, unrefined sound quality from this otherwise well engineered 'phone	D	●			●	124	40	●	133
Beyer DT411	63	A reasonable but not very thrilling headphone that doesn't really offer enough at the price	D	●			●	120	250		111
Beyer DT331	65	Clear and extremely detailed sound with rather thin bass	D			●	●	210	40	●	194
Beyer DT431	81	Nice looking 'phones that may not be the best players on the field, but will always give 100 per cent	D			●	●	210	40	●	186
Beyer DT531	105	Average performer from an established player. Lacks punch and bite	D			●	●	245	250	●	205
<b>R</b> Beyer DT511	106	Superb midband clarity and speed slightly at odds with soft bass. Even so, high tingle factor	D			●	●	200	250		172
<b>R</b> Beyer DT831	140	These provide silky, smooth textures in abundance and we're not just talking about the velvet ear pads	D			●	1/2	295	250	●	186
Beyer DT100	160	Rugged, modular professional design, but bass is woolly and treble lacks detail	D			●	●	350	600		157
Denon AH-D550	80	A competent 'phone with integrity, but little panache or charisma. Hard headband causes brain strain	D			●	●	200	35	●	157
Denon AH-D750	130	Loud and gutsy, meaty bass, good with rock and dance. Can sound thick and clumsy	D			●	●	250	30	●	172
Grado SR-40	45	Cheap and nasty appearance largely redeemed by cheerful, up-beat sound. Very comfortable	D	●			●	120	32	●	172
<b>R</b> Grado SR-60	79	For sheer musical enjoyment these are hard to beat. Retro styling may not be to everyone's taste	D	●			●	200	32	●	194
Grado SR-80	100	Open and dynamic with pedantically open mid-band. Crude physical design, rough frequency extremes	D	●			●	60	8	●	157
<b>R</b> Grado SR-125	150	What these 'phones lack in style they make up for ten-fold in musical quality	D			●	●	200	32		186
<b>R</b> Grado SR-225	200	Warm, darkly-coloured tonally and ultimately lacking in clarity, but true to the spirit of the music	D	●			●	200	32		163
Grado SR-325	300	Elegant sound across the frequency spectrum; let down by old fashioned ear-piece design	D	●			●	200	32	●	205
<b>R</b> Jecklin Float Model 1	79	While very unusual in appearance, the Floats give remarkable sound quality and openness	D			●	●	400	200		55
JVC HA-W60	49	Remarkable lack of interference and hiss ameliorates adequate sound of this cordless design	D	●			●	165	I/R	●	172
<b>R</b> JVC HA-W200RF	75	Distinct lack of hiss from these FM cordless 'phones ensures that detail and depth are easily heard	D			●	●	280	20,000	●	186
<b>R</b> JVC HA-DX3	200	Great headphone with a rich bass, careful mid-range and high comfort factor	D			●	●	340	90	●	205
Koss TD/80	50	Oodles of bass but with a recessed midband; tiresome on the head with prolonged wearing	D	●			●	250	60	●	194
Koss R/100	100	Rather cheap looking 'phones that supply good detail but are severely lacking in midrange excitement	D			●	●	215	60	●	186
Precide Ergo Model 2	140	Still has much of the spaciousness of the Float from which it is derived, but coarse mid/top	D			●	●	380	100		163
Philips HP910	80	Ergonomically good but suffers from a muffled mid-range and over excited bass	D			●	●	247	32	●	205
Sennheiser IS 380	55	As close as you'll get to real hi-fi with infra-red phones at this price. Inevitable hiss spoils the illusion	D	●			●	192	I/R	●	172
<b>R</b> Sennheiser HD 570 Symph	90	Comfortable, light-weight 'phones with a detailed and open sound but lacks bass depth on weightier music	D			●	●	210	64	●	194
<b>R</b> Sennheiser HD 545	125	Fine all-rounder that takes all styles of music in its stride. Ear-clamping headband	D			●	●	255	150	●	172
<b>R</b> Sennheiser HD 565 Ovation	150	Wide bandwidth design which is refined, expressive and extremely comfortable	D			●	●	255	150	●	157
Sennheiser HD590	160	Assured and confident player with very low colouration and great comfort	D			●	●	270	120	●	205
Sennheiser HE 60/HEV70/UK	998	Very nearly a superb electrostatic, with a pure midband, but top end is sibilant and edgy	E			●	●	260	N/A		163
Sony MDR-605LP	50	Funky looking headphones that have a very bold, but tiring sound, with coloured bass	D			●	●	145	40	●	186
Sony MDR-V700DJ	100	Great looking fold-away 'phones with exceptional build quality. Kickin' bass	D	●			●	300	24	●	194
<b>R</b> Sony MDR-CD1700	200	Astonishingly detailed, uncoloured and free of the usual artefacts from a sealed back headphone	D			●	●	325	32	●	163
Sony MDR-CD	2000	200 Large pads make for sweaty listening. Pure mid-tones, but weightless bass	D			●	●	300	32	●	205
Sony MDR-F1	100	Natural, easy-going sound teamed with great looks and comfort. Shame about the lightweight bass	D			●	●	300	12	●	172
<b>R</b> Technics RP-F800	50	Comfortable budget model that sounds sublime with great dynamics	D	●			●	160	40	●	205
Technics RP-DJ1200	130	Functional design with head-pulping bass and muggy tonal balance. Good job they're sweat-proof	D	●			●	230	32	●	172
<b>R</b> Stax System II	400	Luxury option at its price, but the sound delivery is five star quality all the way	E			●	●	295	50	●	205
<b>R</b> Stax Lambda Nova Basic	395	Refined, articulate, yet with real presence – and a notable bargain by electrostatic standards	E			●	●	347	N/A	●	163
Vivanco SR322	30	Weak design and uncomfortable, but redeems itself with substantial sound quality	D	●			●	248	32	●	205
Vivanco Cyberwave FMH3000	40	The only cordless 'phone to offer genuine walkabout freedom, but sounds like a cheap FM tuner	D			●	●	210	FM	●	172
Vivanco IR5800	50	Consistently musical infra-red design. Doesn't reach for sonic heights so hiss can be forgiven	D	●			1/2	226	I/R	●	172
<b>R</b> Vivanco SR650	50	Unusually comfortable 'phone with excellent detail resolution but aggressive	D	●			●	175		●	157
<b>R</b> Vivanco SR750	60	Cossetting physical design, attractive sound, though suffers overhang and lacks ultimate dynamics	D	●			●	188		●	157
<b>R</b> Vivanco SR 950	80	Cuddly feel and sound make these an enjoyable pair of 'phones	D					252	32		194
Vivanco FM7980	80	A fair amount of whine and crackle detracts from 'phones which are otherwise very listenable	D			●	●	280	9,000	●	186
Vivanco FM8180	99	Well thought-out features and a better than average sound are, at times, marred by intrusive hiss	D			●	●	240	9,000	●	186



# Loudspeakers

As the last link in the hi-fi chain, loudspeakers are at the mercy of incoming signals. Nevertheless, distortions introduced by loudspeakers tend to be the most obvious. Inside the average loudspeaker is a simple electrical circuit (the crossover) which splits the incoming, full-frequency-range signal for the specific drive units to handle: highs to the 'tweeter', lows to the 'woofer'. For any speaker, designers must balance the 'sensitivity' of the loudspeaker (how loud it goes for a given electrical input) against bass extension (how low it goes). Subwoofers augment bass and are either passive (unamplified) or, preferably, active (self-amplified). Our 'bass from' figures are based on measurements in a particular room therefore results will vary in different environments.

### KEY TO SPECIFICATIONS

- SIZE WxHxD (cm):** Width by height by depth in centimetres.
- FLOORSTANDER:** Requires no stand support.
- SENSITIVITY (dB/W):** How much sound results for a given electrical input – the higher the figure, the louder the speaker. An 'A' indicates active operation.
- IMPEDANCE (Ω):** Impedance, measured in Ohms, indicates how much resistance the speaker presents to an amplifier. As impedance decreases, demands on an amplifier increase.
- BASS FROM (Hz):** The lowest frequency that a speaker can reproduce effectively.
- FREE SPACE:** Speakers which should not sit close to walls.
- CLOSE TO WALL:** Speakers which should sit between 3 and 12cm from the rear wall.
- ISSUE NUMBER:** The issue of *Hi-Fi Choice* in which an original review appeared.

**B BEST BUY** **R RECOMMENDED** **E EDITOR'S CHOICE**

STATUS

# Loudspeakers

### SPECIFICATIONS

SIZE WxHxD (CM)    SENSITIVITY (dB/W)    IMPEDANCE (Ω)    BASS FROM (HZ)    CLOSE TO WALL    FREE SPACE    ISSUE NUMBER

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	PRICE	SENSITIVITY (dB/W)	IMPEDANCE (Ω)	BASS FROM (HZ)	CLOSE TO WALL	FREE SPACE	ISSUE NUMBER	
Acoustic Energy Aegis Centre	140	Good value centre-front speaker but a tad shut in and with a slightly obvious top end (price per speaker)	46,17,20			89 5	50	●	198	
Acoustic Energy Aegis One	150	At a new low price, this has a very natural and transparent midband, erring a little on the dull side	19,36,5,24			87 6	40	●	187	
Acoustic Energy Aegis Two	250	Floorstanding variation on the Aegis One theme, with a neutral, even and detailed if slightly shiny sound	19,87,24	●		89 8	40	●	201	
Acoustic Energy Aegis Three	350	High value floorstander has deep and even bass and a smooth neutrality thereafter	19,90,25	●		90 5	22	●	198	
Acoustic Energy AE120SE	500	Attractive styling and good sonic headroom, but a heavy, uneven overall balance, and a difficult amp load	18,97,28	●		89.5	10	25	●	199
Acoustic Energy AE520	1,000	Could be more neutral, but high-class build is reflected in a high-class sound. Very elegant too	21,98,30	●		91 3	25	●	190	
ALR Jordan Note 7	250	Metal cone stand-mount has a generous performance envelope, but sound quality was controversial	20,33,29			90 4	22	●	201	
ALR Jordan Note 7	2,500	A beguiling Anglo-German collaboration delivers metal-cone precision with fine dynamic range	25,107,32	●		92 4	25	●	196	
AR 15	275	Neat and chunky wall/stand-mount certainly knows how to rock and roll, less convincing on the delicate stuff	22,37,22			90 4	45	●	201	
ATC SCM10	1,000	A compact speaker with good transparency but lightweight bass	18,38,25,5			80 8	65	●	192	
ATC SCM70ASL	10,500	Stylish aluminium casework disguises dynamic grip, tracking and precision that equals the very best	127,40,46	●	A	A	20	●	205	
Audio Gem Emerald	540	Pretty, compact floorstander with lively if lightweight sound	18,94,21	●		87 6	40	●	164	
Audio Note AN-E/D	1,520	This classic large stand-mount might have throwback aesthetics, but it delivers an exceptional allround sound	36,79,28			92 4	20	●	204	
Audio Physic Tempo	1,999	Tall and unusually-styled floorstander has stunning stereo but suspect bass tuning	22,107,47	●		88 8	28	●	143	
Audiovector C2	799	Elegant two-and-a-half-way has a big, full bandwidth sound, but midband seemed a little underdeveloped	19,106,27	●		90 4	20	●	190	
Audiovector M2	1,399	High-class, smooth and slightly laid-back performer has driving bass. It's upgradable, too	20,102,30	●		89 4	22	●	180	
AVI NuNeutron	500	A smooth and subtle though pricey sub-miniature, albeit with the inevitable limitations of the breed	14,27,23			86 4	50	●	190	
AVI Positron	899	This 'mini-floorstander' is capable of great precision and delicacy, but in a rather small-scale way	175,74,24,5	●		85 6	40	●	174	
B&W DM302	150	Highly competent and neutral all rounder; clever Prism enclosure	19,32,22	●		88 4	45	●	156	
B&W 602 S2	300	Large stand-mount has fine dynamic literacy and good communication skills at a very competitive price	23,5,49,29			90 5	28	●	201	
B&W DM305	350	Ridged paper cone gives lively sound, clever box, but a little uneven	22,87,31	●		89 4	40	●	164	
B&W LCR6	349	Large, gutsy standmount intended for all-round AV use delivers fine performance as a stereo pair too	20,5,55,32			90 5	20	●	198	
B&W CDM2SE	400	Beautifully styled and finished, respectable midband. Lacks definition towards frequency extremes	22,32,25			87 6	40	●	183	
B&W 603 S2	550	Capable of being driven seriously loud, but the cautious balance seems less happy playing at low levels	23,5,87,29	●		91 4	22	●	193	
B&W CDM1SE	600	A great looking standmount with one of the best midbands around, and a subtle blend of other qualities	22,37,29			88 5	40	●	177	
B&W Nautilus 805	1,400	A small-sounding loudspeaker dynamically, but very stylish, clean and 'unboxy', delivering loads of detail	24,42,31			89 12	28	●	199	
B&W Nautilus 804	2,500	The prettiest Nautilus has tremendous clarity and imaging but lacks the welly of bigger models	24,101,5,24,5	●		89 8	38	●	200	
B&W Nautilus 802	6,000	Outstanding example of the high-tech speaker builder's art, needs real power but gives real sound	39,111,55	●		91 8	34	●	183	
B&W Nautilus 801	8,500	The 801 is a magnificent loudspeaker in nearly every respect, but it is one that likes to play loud	52,111,69	●		91 8	34	●	186	
Blueroom Minipod	249	The Minipod can show its competitors a thing or two about freedom from boxiness and looks fab	18,34,17			91 4	50	●	193	
BC Acoustique Araxe	1,300	Neat compact floorstander is a very lively communicator, if a little short of deep bass grunt	21,92,21-30	●		94 3	40	●	204	
Cabasse Farella 400	950	Exciting but very upfront-and-in-her-face sound. High sensitivity, fine build and good dynamic drive	26,92,32	●		92 5	28	●	180	
Carlsson OAS2.2	1,500	Ultra-discreet design integrates cleverly with the listening room. Impressively unboxy, but sounds a bit thin	41,54,37	●		90 8	20	●	195	
Castle Keep	250	Substantial centre-front speaker based on Harlech drivers but with rather brighter voicing	48,17,27-29			88 8	45	●	198	
Castle Richmond	250	Tiny real-wood miniature has a lightweight but very coherent sound, a bit in-her-face but plenty of fun	17,33,20			90 5	50	●	201	
Castle Inversion 15	425	This striking looking standmount is a good all-rounder, commendably free from boxiness	19-22,42,25			91 4	30	●	193	
Castle Kendal	500	A beautifully finished compact floorstander with a decidedly forward but communicative sound	17,76,20	●		86 6	45	●	177	
Castle Severn 2SE	700	Pretty little floorstander is lively and communicative, if a little coloured in the voice band	21,84,24	●		88 6	28	●	204	
Castle Harlech	880	Handsome big-sounding floorstander, great value and dynamic midrange	20,96,33	●		88 8	28	●	160	
Castle Inversion 100	1,975	Large semi-omni design with gorgeous Art Deco styling, sounds open but bass alignment is ill-tuned	26,5,111,45	●		91 8	20	●	195	
Celestion 12i	119	Not without virtue, but the relentless enthusiasm and mid-band colorations can become wearing	19,31,21			88 6	45	●	179	
Celestion 23i	300	Cosmetically flawed, but the bottom end has fine get-up-and-go, and works well with dance tracks	24,86,27	●		89 6	30	●	177	
Celestion A Compact	600	Provided the room isn't too large and your tastes not too heavy, this is a charming little number	17,24,21			90 3	45	●	193	
Celestion A1	899	Rich, warm and laid-back, but a true quality sound; lovely build	24,41,35	●		88 6	25	●	164	
Celestion A2	1,500	Full-scale, big sound from ultra-elegant floorstander. Smooth and slightly laid back presentation	24,93,39	●		89 6	22	●	180	
Chario Syntar 100	249	Pretty with a pleasantly easygoing balance, but not the most communicative or exciting sound around	18,32,27			87 6	45	●	170	
Chario Hiper 1000	300	Classy looking standmount has a sweet, easygoing sound with fine midband voicing	18,35,28			87 4	45	●	187	
Chario Constellation Lynx	550	Beautiful near-miniature is let down by a midband too laid back for its own good	20,36,26			87 3	40	●	190	
Chario Academy Millennium 2	2,100	Price includes stands. A showy speaker that lives up to its own hype	22,53,35			90 4	55	●	190	
Dali 606	400	A big bruiser at a tempting price. Sounds refined and polite, but also packs some punch	22,97,32	●		91 4	25	●	174	
Dali Royal Meneuet MkII	400	Classy sub-miniature with a beautiful box and fine ingredients, but a little lacking in subtlety and excitement	16,26,18			87 3	50	●	190	
Dali Evidence 870	1,300	A real heavyweight, sonically and physically, and good for movies as well as music	24,5,106,36	●		93 2.5	20	●	204	
Definitive Technology CLR2002	595	Pricey, but undoubtedly one of the better centre-front speakers around, with fine timing and open voicing	55,5,175,31			90 4	40	●	198	
Definitive Technology BP2X	595	Pricey but effective bi-polar surround speaker, with unusually high sensitivity	23,37,15			94 4	120	●	198	
Definitive Technology BP2004	1,700	Pricey bi-polar floorstander has a fine midband, let down by its built-in powered subwoofer	19,104,31	●		91 5	28	●	198	
Dynaudio Audience 5	400	Follows the Dynaudio tradition for fine midband transparency, but the overall timbre is a bit thin	20,31,26			85 4	40	●	177	
Dynaudio Audience 40	400	Classy engineering content creates a winning combination of neutrality, dynamic range and involvement	17,28,25			87 4	40	●	190	
Dynaudio LR/C 120	439	Slim centre and front standmount, has an evenhanded but rather laid back balance but lacks drive	16,5,57,31			89 5	25	●	198	
Dynaudio Audience 50	577	Understated in looks and finish, this compact stand-mount can mix it with floorstanders at more than twice the price	20,33,25	●		88 4	30	●	204	
Dynaudio Audience 70	1,100	A highly competent and neutral speaker, but pricey for vinyl finish, and doesn't quite drag you into the music	20,5,93,25	●		88 6	20	●	199	
Dynaudio Contour 1.8 MkII	1,842	Wonderful voice-band delicacy and loads of deep bass from a very elegant and compact box	21,95,29	●		85 4	20	●	167	
Elac CL102 II	599	Chunky floorstander with classy drivers has a neutral, slightly 'shiny' character, and could have more punch	20,95,28	●		88 9	23	●	199	
Elac CL 310i Jet	800	It's pricey, and you can buy better performance for the money. Small speaker, good sound	12,3,20,8,28,2			86 4	42	●	191	
Eltax Liberty 3+	150	Bright, bassy, laid back and attractively evenhanded, but dynamically challenged. Big box for your dosh	20,5,38,34			86 4	25	●	187	
Eltax Linear Response	249	A curiously dumpy shape, but smooth, laid-back performer is easy on the ears, with fine tonal accuracy	25,35,32			85 4	40	●	177	

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# Loudspeakers

SPECIFICATIONS

SIZE WxHxD (CM)    SENSITIVITY (db/W)    IMPEDANCE (Ω)    BASS FROM (HZ)    FREE SPACE    CLOSE TO WALL    ISSUE NUMBER

STATUS

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS							
Eltax Chroma Front	300	Gorgeous shiny styling package at an ultra-competitive price, suffers from an excess of rather flabby bass	19,98,28	●	87	4	25	●	201
Energy eXL 25	400	Neat slimline design delivers a fine all round performance for the price, but could sound smoother	15,87,31	●	90	4	25	●	201
Epos ES12	499	High quality luxury standmount has great midband and stereo imaging	20,38,25		85	8	45	●	160
Epos ES25	1,655	Handsome floorstander with a rather uneven and bass heavy balance	24,90,35	●	88	6	22	●	143
Gale 2i	140	Unspectacular sound and appearance fail to help this solid little miniature stand out from the crowd	22,40,27		88	7	40		170
Heybrook Prima 2	159	Great openness, speed and timing. Sounds fresh and vital, though sometimes lacks scale and weight	20,29,18		87	6	50		179
Heybrook Heylette	200	Attractive traditional-style near-miniature with classy main driver now has fine overall balance to match	19,5,30,22		88	4	45	●	187
Heybrook Optima	259	A dumpy ugly duckling with a heart of gold. Deserves a better tweeter, but communicates well	22,88,29	●	94	4	30	●	193
Heybrook Heylios	269	Classically styled stand-mount has a fine balance of smoothness and dynamics, plus real wood veneer	23,5,36,27		89	6	25	●	201
Heybrook Ultima	649	Has the bass wallop to justify its dual hi-fi/home cinema roles, but doesn't excite	22,97,29	●	89	6	45	●	174
Heybrook Duet	750	Looks slightly old-fashioned, sounds a bit coloured but its fine timing and liveliness serve music well	23,43,30		88	11	27	●	199
Heybrook Octet	1,800	Good-looking but pricey floorstander with novel drivers and a fine ceramic-enclosure midband	24,97,31	●	90	6	25	●	180
Indigo Three	500	Cute 'n' chunky standmount is an entertaining communicator. Great fun, despite some sonic weirdness	23,30,5,32		86	17	24		199
Infinity Delta 60	700	Striking and massive floorstander, lots of speaker for the price, but seems a victim of its own complexity	16-29,115,41	●	90	4	25	●	183
Infinity Kappa 70	795	Fine material value. Sonically big, smooth and even, but lacking in coherence and dynamics	16-26,96,27	●	87	4	25	●	204
Jamo BX100A	350	Offering a cracking output for their size, these rock boxes can be a bit bright but have decent bass	31,5,54,28		91	8	40	●	155
Jamo Classic 8	400	A lot of speaker for the money, good when playing quietly, but boom'n'tizz character sounded crude	22,90,29	●	90	4	28	●	152
Jamo Cornet 195	350	Loads of bass, should have plenty of yooof-appeal – it looks the business, and is priced attractively	20,5,91,31	●	90	3	26	●	183
Jamo 477A	500	Very prettily styled, but build and sound quality are disappointing at the price	19,77,28	●	88	4	40	●	138
Jamo 507A	700	Imaginative styling keeps the front view super slim yet still it packs a punch. Glass top is a nice touch	22,94,37	●	88	3	40	●	174
JBL LX2	250	Invigorating, if a touch crude, this good-hearted speaker reproduces music with enthusiasm	22,40,27		87	8	40	●	170
JBL Ti200	400	Very substantial standmount knows how to rock and roll, but can sound uncouth on more delicate material	21,41,30		92	5	40	●	193
JBL L20	700	Pricy, heavy and a bit laid-back, but this is a fine rock'n'roller which is dynamic and communicative	26,42,28		86	8	30	●	138
JBL SVA1500	700	A distinctive Pro-style bi-radial horn tweeter, with a fun sound, enlivened by a juicy bass thump	17,5,51,31		86	8	40	●	174
JBL L40	1,000	Classic, large, three-way standmount is full of vim and vigour, with a superb sense of balance	30,65,31		88	4	23	●	167
JBL 4312 II	1,000	Crude but startlingly effective dynamics. The original party animal knows just how to rock'n'roll	36,60,30		94	4	25	●	190
JBL SVA 2100	1,250	Monstrously large and brutish styling, goes very loud as well as deep. Fine focus but some boxiness	37,114,52	●	91	8	<20	●	180
JBL L90	1,500	A classic monitor which communicates with gusto and enthusiasm, though it can sound a bit crude	24,94,35	●	91	6	23	●	143
JBL LX70	550	Bassmeister supreme, shame the rest doesn't match up. Fine sensitivity but an itchy, scratchy treble	26,5,94,30	●	91	4	33	●	183
JMLab Tantal 507	295	Competent all-rounder, this compact standmount has a good heart and sweet treble, but sounds a bit small	21,38,27		93	4	40	●	193
JMLab Tantal 515	495	Lively and open if bright. Sound is entertaining and informative, but presentation is nondescript	20,94,26	●	92	5	32	●	183
JMLab Cobalt 815	999	Hefty real-wood floorstander has a slight 'boom'n'tizz' character but delivers big speaker grip and dynamics	22,100,31	●	90.5	9.5	22	●	199
JMLab Electra 905	1,200	Compact but massively engineered, delivers a very classy sound with exceptional dynamic range	23,5,47,28		90	4	40	●	204
JMLab Spectral 909.1	1,375	Multi-driver array in a large and very substantial enclosure. Good scale but lacks delicacy and sweetness	27,107,35	●	90	4	20	●	180
JMLab Electra 915	1,795	Fine headroom and bass, and classy engineering too, but also a tricky amp load which lacks delicacy	26,5,106,36	●	92	4	20	●	195
JMLab Mezzo Utopia	7,250	Looks good and sounds even better. A genuinely big speaker with fantastic coherence	35,115,47	●	92	4	30	●	186
JPW Mini Monitor	60	Ultra-cheap miniature works well in a limited way	18,27,175		86	8	50	●	156
JPW Gold Monitor	80	More informative than Mini Monitor – but fiercer, too	18,27,175		86	8	50	●	156
JPW ML510	130	Lots of good quality speaker for the price, but not an ideal match for cheap budget components	20,34,22		88	5	50	●	169
JPW ML910	330	Loads of speaker for the money, plenty of headroom and loudness capability, but sounds dull	23,104,30	●	91	4	43	●	183
JPW ML1010	400	A seriously substantial speaker for the price, and an obvious choice for those who like their music loud	22,5,115,40	●	91	6	25	●	170
JPW Ruby 1	400	Very pretty but pricey luxury metal-cone miniature has good if slightly edgy balance	19,32,21		87	6	55	●	139
JPW Ruby 4	1,000	Twin metal-cone main drivers improve the dynamic performance and bass extension, with little sacrifice	22,94,26	●	88	8	25	●	174
KEF Coda 7	129	Lovely open voice reproduction, but bass could be more taut and build tougher	18,30,23		88	6	50	●	156
KEF Cresta 2	149	A good looking/value package but sonically disappointing, and no match for the Q15	20,5,37,24		91	4	40	●	195
KEF Coda 8	189	Outstandingly well-balanced, bass is deep but a little vague	20,32,5,29		86	6	28	●	156
KEF Q15	200	Beautifully balanced and voiced standmount, but a potentially tricky amplifier load at high frequencies	20,5,31,27		90	2.5	30	●	187
KEF Coda 9	299	Uneven budget three-way floorstander with poor bass definition	20,86,28	●	89	6	30	●	156
KEF RDM One	499	Cute and tiny, nice midband but lack of bass warmth and weight	23,30,24		88	6	70	●	164
KEF Q65	799	Dumpy-looking three-way has loads of bass and a laid-back midband; goes loud but lacks poise and impact	23,95,31	●	92	2.5	25	●	190
KEF RDM Three	1,500	Definitely a speaker aimed at long-term satisfaction rather than immediate impressiveness. Nice	24,100,27	●	90	4	40	●	189
KEF Reference Model 2	1,599	Classy, large floorstander that has massive headroom and clean mid-to-treble, but limited deep bass	23,103,34	●	89	4	30	●	167
Keswick Audio Aria II	379	Confident and dynamic sound, if a little crude and shut in	21,42,24		89	8	20	●	148
Keswick Audio Torino	999	Good value, lively contender with distinctive styling. Goes loud and deep but could be smoother	18-26, 93,28	●	90	4	20	●	167
Linn Kan	295	Great bass discrimination from size, ensuring a very informative, if slightly shut-in experience	19,31,19		86	4	45	●	187
Linn Keilidh Passive	750	Stunning timing and coherence, awesome bass drive	20,83,28	●	87	4	22	●	138
Living Voice Auditorium	1,500	Pretty, compact floorstander has wonderful coherence, high sensitivity and fine dynamic integrity	21,5,98,29	●	91	4	25	●	180
Living Voice Avatar OBX-R	4,000	Discreet but extremely fine design with external crossover and an affinity with valves	21,5,104,27	●	89	8	45	●	196
Magnat Vintage 320	350	Loads of speaker for your money, but the sound is thick, heavy and lacking in presence and authority	25,102,30	●	90	4	20	●	201
Magnat Vector 77	450	Tall, dark and a lot of speaker for the money. Beautiful balance, but lacking in subtlety and transparency	22,115,29	●	89	5	30	●	183
Magnat Vintage 720	1,200	Slightly crude in some respects but lots of heart, fine scale, decent dynamic coherence and integrity	29,113,32	●	88	4	20	●	180
Martin-Logan Prodigy	8,967	Combines the finesse of an electrostatic with the grunt of cleverly engineered cone bass to good effect	42,179,71	●	91	4	28	●	204
Mirage FRX7	550	Neat slim floorstander has a heavy, laid back balance, probably better suited to movie than music reproduction	17,5,95,32	●	90	4	25	●	204
Mission 700	130	A lot of speaker for the money. Good bass weight and extension and goes loud with ease	18,34,26		87	8	40	●	179
Mission 771	170	Beautiful standmount miniature has a delightfully well balanced and voiced sound, and real wood finish	17,31,22		86	7	45	●	187
Mission 77C	199	A good centre-front match for 77-series, the triple tweeter might be a curiosity, but voicing is very good	42,17,21		91	4	100	●	198
Mission 77DS	199	Neat flush-mount surround speaker has no bass but a smooth midband and nicely restrained treble	34,26,12		92	4	120	●	198
Mission 780	299	Gorgeous miniature has a fine midband and clean, bright treble, slightly odd bottom end	16,5,28,27		86	6	40	●	201
Mission 773e	400	Beautifully designed slim floorstander could be more neutral but still delivers an all-round entertaining sound	17,5,88,26	●	92	4	30	●	193
Mission 774	500	Gorgeous floorstander is an entertaining communicator, despite some balance oddities (bright treble)	18,95,31	●	90	4	40	●	183
Mission 782	699	Ultra-compact floorstander has a glorious midband and slightly odd bass. Good communication skills	16,5,82,28	●	86	9.5	25	85	●
Mission 775e	800	Lots of speaker for the money, and musically involving too, if a little short of serious weight and authority	23,115,30	●	93	3	25	●	204
Monitor Audio 702PMC	700	A good all-round standmount with intimate midband focus	20,40,25		87	8	30	●	174
Monitor Audio MA703PMC	800	Lovely but pricey floorstander has upfront, coherent, 'shiny' sound	20,89,27	●	88	8	50	●	160
Musical Tech Kestrel Evolution	315	Cute styled, cleverly compact and a smooth, subtle and coherent performer, best suited to smaller rooms	20,85,19	●	86	4	40	●	201
Musical Technology Hamer	400	Very pretty package, good measured performance and even sound. Sensitivity is low, and dynamics limp	25,80,23	●	86	8	25	●	182
Musical Technology PM15	450	A subtle, understated but very involving example of the 'classic' luxury-finish compact standmount	20,41,27		88	5	38	●	153
Musical Technology Falcon	680	Big speaker has a big but also surprisingly smooth and civilised sound. Fine material value too	33,117,30	●	89	4	22	●	190
Musical Technology Condor	1,000	Lots of clever ideas in a floorstander, which places transparency and smoothness ahead of dynamic drama	25,91,23		85	4	28	●	174



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# Loudspeakers

SPECIFICATIONS

SIZE WxHxD (CM) FLOORSTANDER SENSITIVITY (dB/W) IMPEDANCE (Ω) BASS FROM (HZ) FREE SPACE CLOSE TO WALL ISSUE NUMBER

STATUS

STATUS	PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	SIZE WxHxD (CM)	FLOORSTANDER	SENSITIVITY (dB/W)	IMPEDANCE (Ω)	BASS FROM (HZ)	FREE SPACE	CLOSE TO WALL	ISSUE NUMBER
B	Naim Intro	660	Great dynamic range and info retrieval, but thin, lacks warmth	24,89,27	●	89	6	30	●	●	164
R	Naim Credo	1,060	Involving sound, but rather forward and cold. Good clarity, but some coloration and a lack of richness	24,89,30	●	88	8	28	●	●	180
R	Naim SBL Passive	1,970	Lively and punchy – smoother but more upfront than before	27,89,27	●	88	6	25	●	●	143
F	Naim NBL	6,648	Elegant, large floorstander is exceptionally informative with an awesome dynamic range and dry, forward balance	29,116,47	●	89	4	20	●	●	200
F	Neat Critique 2	445	Contemporary standmount has a clean, crisp sound with lovely natural midband voicing	22,32,24	●	86	6	50	●	●	183
B	Neat Mystique Mk2	575	This elegant package delivers a fine overall sound quality; some might find the top end too insistent	20,86,18	●	85	6	23	●	●	177
R	Neat Elite	1,195	A highly entertaining all-rounder, has a planar tweeter that sounds sweet, if not particularly smooth	20,88,18	●	88.5	6	25	●	●	195
R	Neat Petite II/Gravitas	2,000	Beautifully presented miniature/subwoofer combo with ribbon tweeter gives smooth, laid-back sound	23,105,40	●	85	6	25	●	●	167
B	NHT Super One	250	A fine compromise between size and performance, sensitivity and hence loudness capability is modest	18,5,29,5,23	●	85	8	30	●	●	170
B	NHT 1.5	400	This compact standmount sounds much bigger than it has any right to. Good timing and communication skills	18,42,19,26	●	85	6	40	●	●	177
R	NHT Super Two	550	Black and shiny compact three-way floorstander has marvellously even balance and good coherence	18,5,100,26	●	87	8.5	25	●	●	199
R	Opera Prima	495	Good-looking hardwood enclosure, plus fine mid and treble, but less satisfactory bass	19,34,31	●	90	4	40	●	●	190
R	Origin Live Conqueror	1,650	Chunky floorstanding three-way has lovely cabinetwork and lively sound, but limited deep bass	24,94,27	●	88	8	30	●	●	167
R	Orelle Swing	1,200	A superb example of what an essentially small loudspeaker can do, with bags of brio and enthusiasm	18,101,28	●	87	8	45	●	●	195
B	PMC TB1S	430	Pro-audio version of TB1, cheaper because of black paint finish	20,41,30	●	87	6	40	●	●	177
B	PMC TB1	482	A classy, laid-back performer that likes going loud and loves the bass guitar	20,40,31	●	87	8	45	●	●	160
R	PMC LB1	999	Still fully competitive eight years after our original review, this genuine compact monitor is now a modern classic	17,5,53,26	●	87	6.5	40	●	●	199
B	PMC FB1	1,275	Handsome floorstander has the lively coherence of a simple two-way alongside impressive bass weight and extension	20,105,31	●	88	6	20	●	●	204
R	Polk LS50	800	No enthusiast tweaks here, but powerful and beautiful balance	27,83,29	●	89	8	25	●	●	138
R	Polk RT16	799	Bass rich, lively and powerful, but suspect top end; big and not very pretty	22,105,39	●	91	4	22	●	●	160
R	Polk CS 1000p	999	Monstrously large and heavy centre-front speaker, presumably for those with monstrous intentions	87,22,35	●	92	4	25	●	●	198
R	Polk RTE 1000p	1,300	Tall elegant tower with built-in powered bass 'subwoofer' that needs using with discretion. Bright but engaging	20,110,35	●	91	4	25	●	●	198
R	ProAc Response 2.5	2,700	For aspirant high-enders looking for seriously good boxes, this speaker should be first port of call	22,107,25	●	86	8	30	●	●	149
R	ProAc Tablette 2000 Sig.	899	Beautifully veneered compact stand-mount is classically balanced, if a little on the bright side of neutral	19,36,26	●	87	6	30	●	●	204
R	ProAc Studio 125	1,000	Pretty if pricey compact floorstander with a beautifully natural and neutral midband, and some bass thump	20,94,28	●	87	8	28	●	●	192
R	QLN Signature	1,000	Attractive pyramid standmount with heavy, laid-back balance but remarkably unboxy sound	27,37,36	●	83	4	25	●	●	167
R	Rega Jura	450	Beefy sounding, chunky floorstander sounds very 'direct coupled' to the music, if a touch 'boom'n'tizz'	22,5,92,5,26	●	90	5	25	●	●	193
R	Rega ELA Mk II	498	Pretty and smooth, the latest incarnation has a superb midband and excellent communicative skills	30,80,20	●	87	8	40	●	●	139
R	Rega XEL	1,040	Looks and sounds great: balance bright but even, with delightful coherence and timing	20,82,30	●	89	6	40	●	●	132
R	Rehdeko RK 115a	1,700	Single-driver system has limited bandwidth and obvious coloration, but wondrous dynamic coherence	34,42,27	●	95	8	55	●	●	167
R	RMS Revelation Series 1	1,299	Innovative metal-box compact with integral port/stand – clean with good timing but very laid-back balance	20,99,24	●	81	8	22	●	●	167
R	Roksan ROKone	595	Large standmount is musically very communicative, if a little coloured	21,45,33	●	89	6	30	●	●	160
R	Roksan Ojan 3 Black	795	Squat, stylish and black, great bass extension and somewhat uneven balance	28,76,46	●	88	8	20	●	●	132
R	Roksan OJ3X Black	995	Innovative low-line, two-way floorstander with decoupled tweeter; great bass and fine dynamic range	28,79,46	●	84	8	20	●	●	167
B	Royd Minstrel	275	Not much welly or loudness, but fine coherence and timing; a bit bright	18,69,12	●	86	8	30	●	●	135
B	Royd Doublet	485	Great value compact floorstander: lively and very informative, if a little uneven	18,93,19	●	90	4	28	●	●	160
R	Royd The Sorcerer	595	Extremely musical and communicative speaker that's fun to listen to. Aesthetics could be better, though	20,31,18	●	86	8	35	●	●	139
R	Ruark Epilogue	269	Beautifully finished miniature with a lively balance and plenty of charm; best suited to smaller rooms	17,29,23	●	87	8	47	●	●	183
R	Ruark Sceptre	599	'Traditional' cabinetwork with classy veneer and shiny gilt fixings, hampered by rather wayward sound balance	21,38,31	●	87	8	40	●	●	174
R	Ruark Prologue One R	949	Strikingly contemporary compact floorstander is well voiced but a little lean in overall balance	17,5,93,28	●	88	5	25	●	●	204
R	Ruark Crusader	1,599	Elegant luxury three-way with wonderfully even-handed, if rather laid-back balance	24,94,31	●	85	6	22	●	●	167
R	Ruark Equinox	1,849	The primary strength of this speaker is its ability to vanish behind the music	25,88,34	●	88	6	45	●	●	140
R	Ruark Excaltur	7,000	A big, handsome speaker with a big, laid-back but open sound, rocking bass and loads of headroom	30,125,53	●	90	4	30	●	●	186
R	Sequence 400	329	Clever hang-on-wall panel is well voiced, though bass isn't too great	25,100,7	●	86	8	45	●	●	164
R	Silverado Raider	695	Beautifully built audiophile compact: neutral if bright, tough work for amps	20,40,25	●	83	3	30	●	●	164
R	Snell K.5	795	Classy AV-ready stand mount is very solidly engineered. Sound is neutral but lacks excitement	22,46,30	●	87	6	25	●	●	190
R	Snell XA75ps	4,500	Active bass floorstander with marvellous mid coherence, slightly suspect bass integration.	28,117,50	●	91	6	25	●	●	194
R	Soliloquy SM 2A3	1,095	Fine match in balance, coherence, transparency and speed. Intended for use with Cary CAD 2A3SE	35,5,19,30	●	91	8	45	●	●	196
R	Sonus Faber Concertino	599	A beautifully neutral loudspeaker in a beautiful Italian suit of clothes. Classy, if quite pricey	21,32,29	●	87	5	30	●	●	193
R	South Coast Speakers Lancelot	895	Pretty compact standmount has nice ribbon tweeter but sounds a bit soft and lacks dynamic vigour	19,36,26	●	84	8	45	●	●	199
R	Spendor 2030	599	Discreet slimline floorstander with delicately coherent, laid-back sound	18,89,27	●	87	8	30	●	●	160
R	System Audio 1130	499	Super-slim, super-smooth, involving experience, but not ideal if you like your bass deep and loud	3,100,21	●	89	4	43	●	●	183
R	System Audio 1150	749	Pricey but persuasive, sonic subtleties sneak up to confound a dodgy first impression. Super-slim	16,105,26	●	90	4	30	●	●	190
B	TAG McLaren F1	15,000	Oddball aesthetics with accurate, unflappable, controlled and a consistent sonic neutrality	40,127,48	●	87.5	8	25	●	●	202
B	Tannoy Mercury M1	120	Sounds much bigger and expensive than it is. Solid, tuneful bass, wide open soundstage, excellent imaging	17,30,20	●	87	8	50	●	●	179
B	Tannoy Mercury M2	140	A fine all-rounder with big box and deep bass for the price; could be sweeter and tighter	20,5,38,28	●	87	8	25	●	●	169
R	Tannoy R1	200	Pretty little mini-monitor is smooth, well mannered and polite to a fault, lacks dynamic expression	17,30,22	●	86	4	30	●	●	187
B	Tannoy Saturn S6C	200	A punchy compact standmount based on a serious cast-frame, pro-style dual-concentric driver	38,21,29	●	89	6	25	●	●	198
B	Tannoy Mercury M3	230	Good-looking floorstander; very neutral and even-handed, with fine midband but weak dynamics and drive	20,5,87,28	●	87	7	20	●	●	170
B	Tannoy mX3	300	A great all-round compromise at a very modest price, combining good looks with fine midband voicing	18,5,87,26	●	90	5	40	●	●	201
B	Tannoy Revolution R2	350	Bargain price real wood floorstander is beautifully voiced and very even-handed, if a tad laid back	17,94,24	●	90	4	20	●	●	193
B	Tannoy Saturn S6LCR	400	A punchy compact standmount based on a serious cast-frame, pro-style dual-concentric driver	21,38,29	●	89	6	25	●	●	198
B	Tannoy Saturn S6	500	Fine value vinyl floorstander offers plenty of genuine grunt and real dynamic tension	21,89,29	●	91	4	20	●	●	198
R	Tannoy Revolution R3	550	Handsome real-wood floorstander does a decent job, but lacks the evenness of its smaller R2 brother	18,5,103,28	●	89	8.5	28	●	●	199
R	Tannoy D300	999	Gorgeous-looking compact floorstander. And a fine all-round performer, too	16-24,85,23	●	87	6	26	●	●	167
R	Tannoy D500	1,999	Plenty of muscle and stereo, but short of poise and delicacy. Hard work for amps	31,93,34	●	91	6	20	●	●	143
R	Tannoy Westminster TW	6,600	These awesome horn-loaded speakers are remarkably controlled and impressive	large	●	99	8	38	●	●	C93
R	Technics SB-M20	200	Well-balanced with natural perspectives and fine midband coherence, but bass is a bit boxy and uneven	20,32,23	●	70	8	50	●	●	148
R	Technics SB-M500	450	This model offers a clean, open sound, offset by midbass, heavy balance and low sensitivity	25,78,37	●	85	8	25	●	●	152
R	Triangle Cometes	359	Communicative standmount has great midband dynamics, but the very bright top end might be intrusive	22,40,29	●	91	4	42	●	●	193
B	Triangle Zephyr II	599	Loads of fun. Dramatic dynamics and righteous timing will give any hi-fi system a wake-up call	22,94,29	●	91	4	25	●	●	190
R	Totem Model One	1,195	Utterly delightful but exasperatingly expensive luxury miniature sets the benchmark for its size	17,31,23	●	87	4	28	●	●	122
F	Veritas H3	6,000	Loads of fun with wonderful dynamic and temporal integrity from horn-loaded Lowther drivers	30,110,47	●	104	4	50	●	●	191
F	Vienna Acoustics Mozart	1,500	Gorgeous slimline floorstander sounds very laid-back but very charming, and musically literate	17,97,30	●	88	7.5	25	●	●	199
F	Wilson benesch Bishop	20,000	Deep and even bass sets new standards for cleanliness and clarity; lovely open midband too	23,161,561	●	89	4	S20	●	●	189
R	Wharfedale Diamond 7.2	140	A good-hearted, lively and up-front performer that's a little lacking in subtlety and smoothness	19,29,5,23	●	88	4	45	●	●	169
R	Wdale Diamond 7.2 Anniversary	200	Lively and exuberant, but a tad untidy with it; can sound a bit cold and hard	19,29,5,24	●	88	4	40	●	●	187
R	Wharfedale Valdus 400	200	Very loud with a minimum of amplification, but the sound is thick and uneven, with a heavy upper bass	25,80,26	●	91	8	30	●	●	148
B	Wharfedale Valdus 500	300	These rock boxes can move plenty of air, albeit not as subtly as alternatives	25,108,26,5	●	91	4	40	●	●	155

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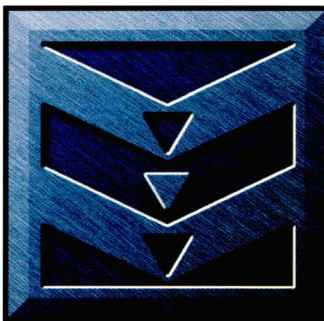
# Loudspeakers

SPECIFICATIONS

SIZE WxHxD (CM) FLOORSTANDER SENSITIVITY (db/W) IMPEDANCE (Ω) BASS FROM (HZ) FREE SPACE CLOSE TO WALL ISSUE NUMBER

STATUS

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	SIZE WxHxD (CM)	FLOORSTANDER	SENSITIVITY (db/W)	IMPEDANCE (Ω)	BASS FROM (HZ)	FREE SPACE	CLOSE TO WALL	ISSUE NUMBER	
<b>R</b> Zingali Overture 2S	1,975	Gorgeous, pricey, imposing standmount has a horn tweeter of great delicacy. Impressively weighty	30,57,38				90	8	25	●	195
<b>SUBWOOFERS</b>											
Acoustic Energy AE108S	299	Lots of loud subwoofer for your money, though ultimately more film than music oriented	50,42,43						20	●	179
B&W ASW1000	499	(Active) Very competently engineered all round, and goes (unnecessarily) very loud	54,47,48			A			20	●	179
<b>R</b> JB&W SW1000	499	Bulky heavyweight is a high quality item, able to generate more bass output than music is likely to need	54,47,50	●	A		A20	●			198
<b>R</b> JPW SW60	349	A real heavyweight, sounds clean and transparent, if perhaps a little understated. Usefully flexible	55,47,39						20	●	179
KEF Model 30B	499	(Active) Commendably discreet with good sense of timing but limited extension	38,5,37,43	●	A				45		154
<b>R</b> M&K MX70	900	(Active) Justifies cost and belies its diminutive size, with an agility that makes sense of the toughest material	25,5,46,35			A			25	●	179
Mission 7AS2	399	Ugly if very effective at supplying very low bass, but filter could do with more flexibility higher up	56,30,31	●					<20	●	198
<b>R</b> REL Q50	375	(Active) Genuinely deep, clean bass from an attractively compact and cost-effective package	40,41,42			A			20	●	179
Soliloquy S10	1,050	(Active) Pretty subwoofer, cosmetically matching SM 2A3 speakers, pricey and mid-bass a bit strong	51,30,5,46	●	A				25	●	196



## Stands & Supports

Hi-fi supports are more important than you might imagine — they can have very subtle effects on the sound of your system! There are two kinds of support: those for equipment and those (stands) for loudspeakers. Equipment supports keep vibrations and resonances from affecting electronic components, while speaker stands hold enclosures stock-still and ensure they are at the correct height for your ears. Equipment supports may be rigid affairs fabricated from steel or more exotic materials; or they may have a form of suspension. Speaker stands come in a variety of sizes and styles to suit different models, and vary between open-frame and solid-pillar types. Always check with speaker and electronics manufacturers to see which supports they recommend.

KEY TO SPECIFICATIONS

- **HEIGHT (cm):** How tall is your support?
- **TOP PLATE SIZE (cm):** Dimensions of top surface on stand or equipment support.
- **FILLABLE:** Some speaker stands can be mass-loaded with sand or lead-shot to improve sound.
- **WELDED:** The better stands and supports are welded together rather than just bolted.
- **NUMBER OF SHELVES:** The number of tiers on an equipment rack or support.
- **SHELF TYPE:** The material from which shelves are made. Wood generally means Medium Density Fibreboard (MDF).
- **ISSUE NUMBER:** The issue of Hi-Fi Choice in which an original review appeared.

**B** BEST BUY **R** RECOMMENDED **E** EDITOR'S CHOICE

STATUS

# Stands & Supports

SPECIFICATIONS

HEIGHT TOP PLATE SIZE (cm) FILLABLE WELDED NUMBER OF SHELVES SHELF TYPE ISSUE NUMBER

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	HEIGHT	TOP PLATE SIZE (cm)	FILLABLE	WELDED	NUMBER OF SHELVES	SHELF TYPE	ISSUE NUMBER	
<b>EQUIPMENT SUPPORTS</b>										
<b>R</b> Avik Furniture A4	350	Good sound and stylish Scandinavian looks at an affordable price	80.5	47			4	Wood	193	
Alphason GR 17/17-AS	275	Great looks but sound can be bettered for the money	36	60,39			4	Glass	181	
Apollo Soprano	275	Uninspiring looks and sonic performance that can be beaten at this price	68.5	45.5			4	Glass	193	
<b>R</b> Atacama Europa	240	Stylish, expandable modular design with agreeable full-bodied sound – great value	67	48.6			4	Wood	193	
<b>R</b> Audiophile Furniture Base	615	Price is justified by its earth-shattering sonic abilities – a worthy upgrade	82	43			4	MDF	193	
<b>R</b> Avid Isoschelf	1,100	An enthusiasts equipment support stand free from coloration if a little fiddly to set up	87.5	48			5	MDF	193	
<b>R</b> Elemental Isotube x 4/Ref	1,199	Blockbusting size and build. Super sound quality	92	45,49			4	Marb	181	
<b>R</b> Elemental Audio Isotube X4	849	A hefty stand that demonstrates just how much difference a good support can make	90	49			4	Glass	193	
Fi-Rax R4	399	Lively, exuberant sound, slightly weak bass					5	Glass	151	
<b>R</b> Frameworks H500/H175	404	Two-shelf stand and isolation platform combo in tubular steel – made a spectacular impression on audition	70	52,34			3	Glass	166	
Ixos Deadrock 704	250	Looks unassuming but sound is full and inviting		46,39			4	Resin	181	
<b>R</b> Mana Acoustics Ref. Table	350	King of its type: angle iron, chipboard and glass combine to make a significant difference to sound quality	56	49,39			1	Glass	147	
<b>R</b> Optimum Int 2000 OPT490	299	25kg stand with shelves between variable-height tubular uprights. Sounds smooth and relaxed with sturdy bass	50	60,40			4	Glass	166	
<b>R</b> Optimum Int 2000 OPT660	349	Glitzy style isn't reflected in sound, which is wholesome	82	60,52			5	Glass	181	
Projekt Furniture A4	215	An elegant support stand that blends in to any home environment with a laid-back sound	56	48			4	Wood	193	
<b>R</b> Quadraspire Q4	250	Easy to live with, tonally neutral	54	40,49			4	MDF	151	
<b>R</b> Sound Organisation Z560	160	Welded and bolted members give structural integrity. While performance is not up with the best, it's great value	90	46,36			5	Wood	166	
Sound Organisation Z545	160	Budget price and great looks make this a great value stand	73	46			4	Glass	193	
<b>R</b> Soundstyle X100	230	Looks lovely, sounds lively but slightly bright	64	49,28			4	Glass	181	
Soundstyle Radius SR100	280	Stylish looks and a smooth sound	63.5	49.5			4	Glass	193	
<b>R</b> Soundstyle Select 6105	290	Respectable sonics: structurally solid and smart	78	43,36			5	Glass	151	
Soundstyle Finewoods W105	320	Veneered shelves clamped between tubular uprights. Delivers with classical material	82	48,27			4	Wood	166	
Stands Unique Sound Tower	289	Wooden uprights combine with glass shelves to provide a fresh, forward sound, but bass could be quicker	81	72,42			5	Glass	151	
<b>R</b> Standesign Design 4	190	An all-in-one support at a budget price with good sonic performance	88.5	50.8			4	Glass	193	
<b>R</b> Target B5	175	Free of colorations, fine grip and good value	81	49,36			5	Wood	151	
<b>R</b> Townshend Seismic Stand	1,245	It's big, it wobbles and it's pricey. But this is the ultimate equipment support	72	58,45			3	Wood	181	
<b>R</b> Wilson benesch Asside	590	Sounds even better than it looks. And it looks wonderful	72	37,50			4	Wood	181	
<b>SPEAKER STANDS</b>										
Alphason Akros II	65	A well-specified budget stand but the sound is as subtle as a house party	60,45	16.5						202
Alphason HDS	85	A reasonable stand with a smooth but rather bland sound balance. Good finish options	45-60	15.5,15.5						189
Apollo Olympus	75	A popular stand and a decent performer, but unremarkable by today's standards	40-60	15,12.5						189
Apollo A26	80	Fine engineering value, but sound is unexceptional and top-plate small	66	15,13						159
Apollo A4/6	82	A pretty and robust design that sonically fails to stand out from the crowd	51,40,51	18						202
<b>R</b> Atacama Nexus 6	50	An excellent all round performer and a genuine hi-fi bargain	60,50	14.5,18						202
<b>R</b> Atacama BD21	55	Good looking and good value, but doesn't match the SE24's sound quality	56	15,17						159
<b>R</b> Atacama R724	150	Atacama uses its market strength to deliver a superbly appointed product at a very reasonable price	60	15,17						189
<b>R</b> Atacama SE24	70	Stands out from the budget crowd because of the consistency and overall quality of its performance	61	19,17						146
<b>R</b> Custom Design R/S300 MkII	100	A solid stand improving on the original with better focus and detail	61,56,51	16.5,18						202
<b>R</b> Elemental Isotube SZse	599	Stands of distinction, able to free the speaker's sound from its box in a way budget stands simply can't	61	23,27						189
<b>R</b> JPW HS1	120	A purposeful stand, a touch dry-sounding but particularly strong with bass. Great for rock and dance music	61	19,21						189
<b>R</b> Mana Sound Base	175	The Sound Base plinth simply improves the sound of every speaker placed on it	8	29,32						202
Mission Stance	100	Detailed and open but needs a firm foundation to give its best	60	19,15						202
<b>R</b> Partington A-4	119	An oddball stand with a sound that's sheer class. More open and focused than almost anything below £150	50-100	19,22						189
<b>R</b> Partington Dreadnought Ult.	299	Super heavyweight stand that is an open window to the speaker placed on it	63	20.5,23.5						202
<b>R</b> RMS/Stands Unique Vivus	349	Precise carbon fibres give ultra-clean sound with exceptional voices	50	N/A						159
Russ Andrews Torlyte	599	Subtle and musical-sounding stands, though a touch more 'pizzazz' is need for Recommendation at this price	61	33.5,24						189
Sonus Systems Excel	110	Strong performance when filled with sand but design flaws let it down	65,45	20,22.5						202
Sound Organisation Z524	69	A coherent-sounding stand with particular strengths in the midband, though quality drops at the frequency extremes	61	16,17						189
<b>R</b> Sound Organisation Z522	89	Easy going and likeable performer straight out of the box	59	16,17						202
Sound Style Select	95	OK but not as good as its cheaper brother the Z522	59	16,17						202

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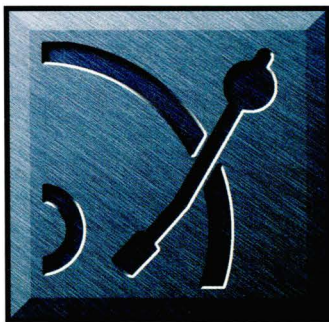
# Stands & Supports

STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS



PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	TOP PLATE SIZE (cm)	HEIGHT	FILLABLE	WELDED	NUMBER OF SHELVES	SHELF TYPE	ISSUE NUMBER
Stands Unique HP	220	Real wood disguises high-performance tuned technology	59	22,23					159
Target HM60	106	A solid and well-built stand laid-back to the point of coma	40-70	16,5,19	●				202
Target R1	280	Truly high-mass four-pillar design with superb weight and speed, giving music delicious attack	53	15,21	●	●			146
Target TR60	68	Lively, dynamic midrange and detailed treble from a less-than-audiophile-oriented, twin-column design	60	15,15	●				146
Townshend Seismic Sink	499	Unique inflatable plinth that works well with decent floorstanders as well as standmounted speakers	4	38,48					202



## Tonearms

Less expensive turntables are usually supplied with a matching tonearm (and often a 'starter' cartridge, too). However, hard-core vinyl fans should invest in a more expensive separate motor unit with specialist tone-arm – the only way to make the most of vinyl LPs. It is essential to achieve operational synergy between such components, so this is one area of hi-fi where the skills of a knowledgeable dealer are invaluable. The quality of a tonearm's construction and design affect sound quality significantly. There are three basic arm designs listed in the key, and each has strengths, but pivoted designs are the most popular, being usually the most practical and affordable.

KEY TO SPECIFICATIONS

- **EFFECTIVE MASS:** This relates to cartridge compliance. Generally high mass arms are suitable for low compliance cartridges and vice versa.
- **PARALLEL TRACKING:** An arm which allows the cartridge to track the disc in a linear fashion.
- **PIVOTED:** Arms which allow the cartridge to describe an arc as they traverse the record.
- **UNI-PIVOT:** Pivoted arms with a bearing that allows movement in two planes.
- **EFFECTIVE LENGTH (CM):** Length of the arm from bearing to cartridge mounting.
- **ADJUSTABLE HEIGHT:** Important for accurate cartridge set-up.
- **ISSUE NUMBER:** The issue of *Hi-Fi Choice* in which an original review appeared.

**B** BEST BUY    **R** RECOMMENDED    **E** EDITOR'S CHOICE

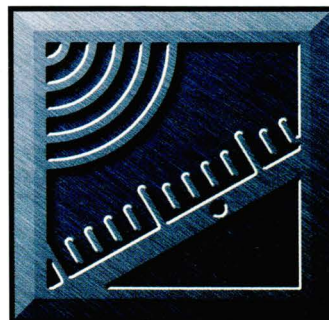
# Tonearms

STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS



PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	PARALLEL TRACKING	EFFECTIVE MASS	PIVOTED	UNI-PIVOT	EFFECTIVE LENGTH (cm)	ADJUSTABLE LENGTH	ISSUE NUMBER
Kuzma Stogi Ref	1,250	Large, solid and well made arm, gives exceptionally clear sound with just a hint of brightness		High	●				79
Linn Ekos	1,500	Superb, state-of-the-art design which builds significantly on predecessor's strengths		Medium			229	●	67
Moth/RB250	109	The ultimate budget arm? Refined, sweet, detailed and natural		Low	●		237		60
Rega RB300	174	Despite its modest price it sets exceptional standards and could be used on many high-end turntables		Low	●		237		60
Roksan Tabriz Basic	350	Targeted at the Xerxes, this is a good alternative to the Rega arm in many cases – a touch bright though		Low	●		240	●	91
SME Series IV	983	Superb engineering and finish with a finely balanced sound, impressive stereo focus and low coloration		Low	●		233	●	60
SME Series V	1,461	Excellent in all respects, this arm arguably sets the standards for pivoted arms, regardless of price		Low	●		233	●	60



## Tuners

TV has stolen radio's status as the foremost broadcast entertainment medium, but with its Radio Four plays and Radio Three music, the BBC still makes a potent case for audiophile reception equipment. For how much longer, under the cost-conscious Birtist régime, remains to be seen. Another new imponderable is the arrival of digital radio broadcasting, though reception apparatus is currently non-existent outside of the in-car market. These days tuners play second fiddle to hi-fi sources like CD, but in many ways they are a greater engineering challenge than digital equipment, and thus higher price-tags clearly equate to superior performance. High-quality, roof-mounted antennae are essential for audiophile listening, so factor them into your budget.

KEY TO SPECIFICATIONS

- **WAVEBANDS:** FM – (VHF), M – MW, L – LW, traffic news and other information about broadcasts.
- **PRESETS:** Number of station frequencies that can be stored.
- **RDS:** (Radio Data System) was originally designed for in-car applications. RDS tuners can identify and display the name of the radio station being received.
- **ROTARY TUNING KNOB:** Experience has shown that this analogue throwback is ergonomically far superior to the button-based approach.
- **ISSUE NUMBER:** The issue of *Hi-Fi Choice* in which an original review appeared.

**B** BEST BUY    **R** RECOMMENDED    **E** EDITOR'S CHOICE

# Tuners

STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS



PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	WAVEBANDS	PRESETS	RDS	REMOTE CONTROL	SIG. STRENGTH METER	ROT. TUNING KNOB	ISSUE NUMBER
AMC T7	130	Performance adequate but price is sharp, especially with remote control. Some hum	FM, M	30		●			166
Arcam Alpha 7	230	Indifferent RF performance but a touch of audiophile sound quality with clean, strong signals	FM,M,L	24					166
Arcam Alpha 10 DRT	800	The first DAB tuner and arguably still the best, but the system's still not perfect	DAB	7	●	●	●	●	199
Cambridge T500	180	Very capable tuner suited to good and less good reception conditions	FM,M,L	64					193
Creek T43	399	Quality UK-made tuner offering classy sound in all areas at a very fair price	FM,M,L	64					193
Cymbol C-DAB 1	1,000	The first 'high-end' DAB tuner, although format is the ultimate limitation. Gorgeous finish	DAB	8	●	●	●		199
Denon TU-260L II	130	The return of the all-time favourite, now enhanced with RDS and sounding as fine as ever	FM,M,L	40	●			●	193
Denon TU-425RD	200	A fine all-rounder with advanced RDS, good RF performance and decent sound. Remote extra	FM, M	40	●			●	166
Denon TU-1500RD	250	A well balanced and clean sound with good bass and treble extension	FM,M	40	●			●	184
Magnum Dynalab FT11	499	All-analogue tuner: receives weak or tightly packed stations but loses out on noise and sonic neutrality	FM	3				●	184
Harman/Kardon TU950	200	Bulky but effective, delivering fine RF performance and good sound for the price	FM,M,L	30	●			●	166
Linn Kremlin	2,600	Controversially good sound at a very high price	FM	80		●	●		142
Marantz ST-48	120	A classic budget model which manages a performance only just behind much more expensive models	FM,M	60	●				184
Myryad T-30	400	Attractive product that produces attractive sounds too: capable of very musical performance with a good aerial	FM	29		●	●		193
Myryad T-10	530	A very smart unit which works well and offers good rhythmic drive and vitality, albeit at a price	FM	20				●	184
NAD C440	200	Rather polite sound, a little vague at times, that seldom offends but never excites	FM,M	30	●				193
Naim NAT01	1,730	There may be better sounding tuners in the world, but we have yet to hear one	FM						142
Pioneer F-504RDS	250	Cable-friendly with advanced RDS and excellent RF performance; slightly disappointing sound	FM,M	40	●			●	166
Pioneer F-504RDS Precision	300	Lots of features, plus a sound that's low on noise and high on communication, adds up to a good value package	FM,M	40	●			●	184
Roksan Caspian	595	Neat facia with great ergonomics, but sound is not really any better than models at half the price	FM	50				●	184
Sony ST-SE500	140	A lot of features for the money, but sound lacks detail and has some coloration	FM,M,L	30	●				193
Rotel RT-935AX	160	Good ergonomics and sound quality at a realistic price, but limited features and RF selectivity	FM,M	20					166
Sony ST-SA3ES	250	Clean, lean presentation but needs a quality aerial to perform at its best	FM,M,L	30	●			●	157



DENON

SONY



TANNOY



ARCAM



Pioneer



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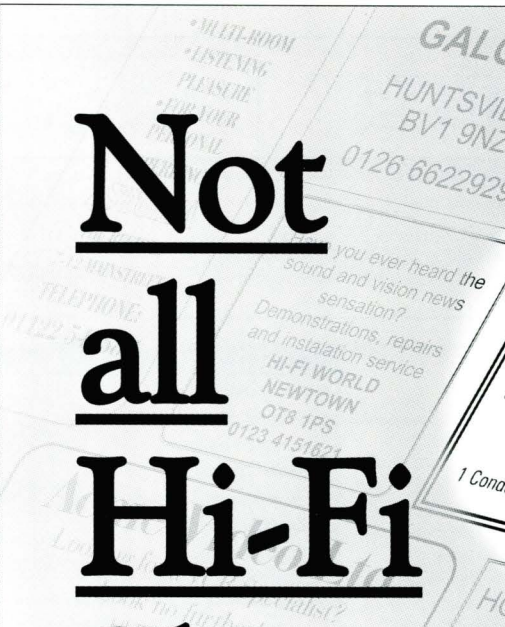
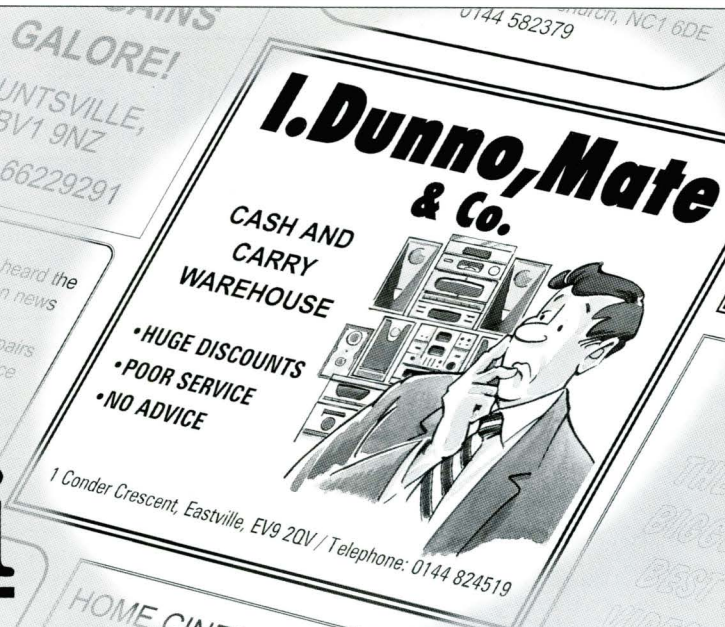
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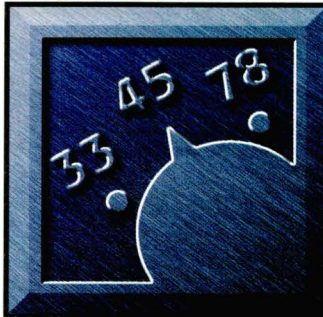
# Tuners

STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS

WAVEBANDS PRESETS REMOTE CONTROL SIG. STRENGTH METER ROT. TUNING KNOB ISSUE NUMBER

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	FM,M,L	30				184
Sony STS-B920S	180	A little hiss and image compression don't detract from the clean performance of this feature-packed tuner	FM,M,L	30	●	●	●	184
Technics ST-GT1000	500	Handy tuner that combines DAB, FM and AM in one unit and substantially lowers the price bar for DAB entry	DAB,FM,M	97	●	●	●	199
Thorens TRT2000	499	Not exactly neutral sounding, but nonetheless makes listening fun	FM,M	59	●	●	●	157



## Turntables

Specialist turntables are at the heart of high-fidelity sound. CD players may offer ultra-low noise and a flat frequency response, but they can't match the dynamics and superlative rhythmical timing taken for granted by serious turntable users. Less expensive turntables are usually supplied with a matching tonearm (and often a 'starter' cartridge, too). Still better quality is found at higher prices among the separate motor units and tonearms. Because turntables are mechanical devices, designed to retrieve micron-small modulations engraved into vinyl, engineering quality is of paramount importance. This is also the reason why turntables cost as much as they do, and require the finest equipment support systems.

KEY TO SPECIFICATIONS

- **MANUAL:** You do all the work.
- **AUTO:** The record player does all the work.
- **SEMI-AUTO:** You put the needle on, the turntable lifts it off at the end of the record.
- **SPEEDS:** In RPM to correspond with long-playing records or seven/12-inch singles.
- **SUSPENDED SUBCHASSIS:** Sprung suspension to minimise structural interference.
- **EXTERNAL PSU:** Outboard power supply, generally indicative of higher-quality performance.
- **SUPPLIED WITH ARM:** Many turntables do not come with a tonearm fitted, but if this category is checked, the deck is already thus equipped.
- **SUPPLIED WITH CARTRIDGE:** If a turntable comes complete with arm and cartridge.
- **ISSUE NUMBER:** The issue of *Hi-Fi Choice* in which an original review appeared.

**B** BEST BUY **R** RECOMMENDED **E** EDITOR'S CHOICE

# Turntables

STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS

MANUAL AUTO SEMI-AUTO SPEEDS SUSP. SUBCHASSIS EXTERNAL PSU SUPPLIED WITH ARM SUPPLIED WITH CART. ISSUE NO.

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	MANUAL	AUTO	SEMI-AUTO	SPEEDS	SUSP. SUBCHASSIS	EXTERNAL PSU	SUPPLIED WITH ARM	SUPPLIED WITH CART.	ISSUE NO.
Audio Note TT1/ARM1	594	Simple and unpretentious, it delivers a real taste of true high end performance at an affordable price	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	203
Avid Acutus	4,995	Extremely capable design with no apparent shortcomings, don't sell your vinyl 'til you've heard it on this!	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	194
Clearaudio Reference	3,990	Opulent beast tested with Souther TQ-1 arm. Tends to gloss over detail, but can sound bold	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	144
DNM Rota 2	5,600	Tonally slightly bleached, but extracts detail like few others. Works well on its own table	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	144
Dual CS 455.1	220	Neat record player with automatic convenience (and 78rpm), but doesn't match simpler manual rivals sonically	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	203
Dual 505-4 UK	250	Consistent sounding and well isolated turntable. It is slightly lacking in oomph	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	103
Kuzma Stabi/PS	1,950	(Tested with Stogi Reference) Solid oak plinth; sound is very clear, detailed and extended	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	91
Linn LP12 Basik	1,100	Trails the full LP12 significantly, but pace, rhythm, timing etc. still top rank	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	103
Linn LP12 Lingo	1,750	The classic reference is improved by the Lingo, but charming character remains	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	91
Michell Gyrodec	875	Sweet and natural-sounding player, well matched to Rega RB300 arm	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	55
Michell Gyro SE	775	A stunningly desirable combination of looks, solidity and sound make this a tempting turntable	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	190
Michell Orbe 'SE'	1,725	A Superb turntable, able to mix it with the best at virtually any price	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	192
Moth Kanoot	329	Rather coarse-sounding deck that requires decent isolation and comes with a Rega RB300 arm	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	164
NAD 533	220	Sonically a little crude, but musically satisfying results at a very modest price	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	203
Notts Analogue Spacedeck/Arm	750	No frills, just a first-rate, outstandingly natural-sounding deck that will last forever	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	159
Pink Triangle Tarantella II	850	A turntable that looks unlike any other, with rare ability too. Quirky, but sound is immensely likeable	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	192
Pro-ject 2	300	Remarkably effective at the price, with decent timing and a generally well defined sound	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	164
Pro-ject Classic Chery	450	A great looking turntable with a generous and dynamic sound, but lacks something in overall coherence	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	203
Pro-ject Perspective	750	Flexible facilities and competitive package, but performance of turntable alone is behind the best	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	192
Pro-ject 6/Sumiko	850	Don't think of this as a deck with a good arm, but as a scaled-down Oracle Delphi - it's that good	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	138
Rega Planar 2	214	A remarkable product at the price, surprisingly articulate and confident	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	48
Rega Planar 3	274	Sounds musical in a balanced manner, needs decent isolation and suffers a little pitch instability	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	164
Rega Planar 25	619	Great looking turntable has a silky smooth sound with exceptional midband coherence	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	203
Reson RS1	600	Supplied set-up and ready-tuned, this unconventional deck is packed with mid-band detail	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	159
Roksan Radius 3/Tabriz zi	890	Elegant-looking turntable with a tidy, ordered sound. Bright and breezy if a shade lightweight	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	159
SME Model 10A	3,333	Elegant and extremely capable design with Series V/309 hybrid arm, superbly built	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	195
SME Model 20.2A	4,863	Beautifully built, extremely neutral damped and suspended deck with superb sound. Inc V arm	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	186
Thorens TD166 V/UK/RB	400	Refined, solid sound with well-focused imagery; suitable for use with good MM/MC budget cartridges	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	103
Thorens TD146 VI	550	Tonearm not quite up to turntable's potential; this semi-auto is much pricier than manual TD166	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	203
Thorens TD2001	700	Balances convenience and sound well, but deck lacks detail and bass could be better controlled	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	159
VPI HW19 Junior	650	A notably large and handsome turntable with good sound quality and considerable upgrade potential	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	203
Well Tempered Record Player	850	Intriguing and challenging. Musically not ideal, but its limpid quality and lack of artificiality set standards	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	136
Well Tempered Reference	5,500	Superb mechanical stability and unflappability result in a clean reproduction	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	205
Wilson benesch The Circle	795	A beautiful turntable with a sumptuous sound, all at a very reasonable price - a clear Best Buy	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	192

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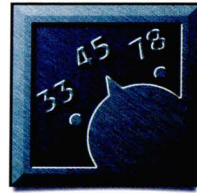
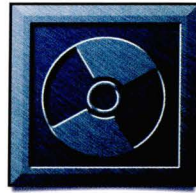
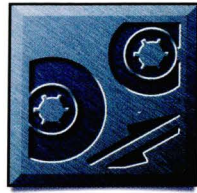
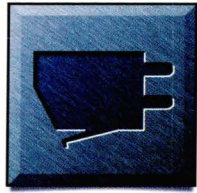
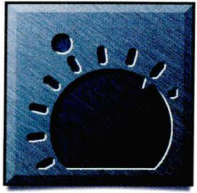
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### BUYING TIPS

Buying secondhand can be a great way to pick up a bargain. A formerly-expensive second-hand component might well prove a better long-term bet than a brand-new product engineered down to a price. Do some research on which brands and products have a good service back-up, so if something does go wrong, you can get it fixed. Unless you purchase from a second-hand hi-fi dealer, you're unlikely to get any warranty. So it's up to you to ensure the fitness of any gear that you buy. Products such as speakers should be less prone to breakdown than amplifiers, and amps should be more reliable than CD players. But any abused component could be troublesome – have a proper dem, and judge the seller as well as the goods!



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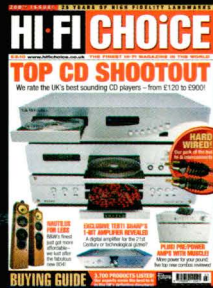
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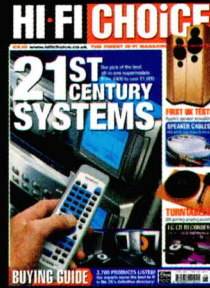
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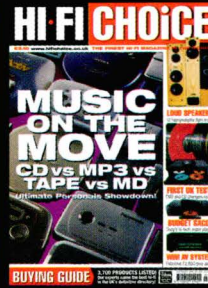
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1991	90-101	May, June, July	Very limited
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1994	126-137	Jan, Feb, Mar, April, May, Jul, Oct	Very limited
1995	138-149	All sold out	None
1996	150-161	Jan, April, BBG	Very limited
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# JIMMY HUGHES

*You wouldn't think mains electricity had an odour, would you? Join Jimmy as he sniffs out the truth, with the aid of his clever little electronic nose...*

**T**he test on mains conditioners elsewhere in this issue proved interesting but confusing. After all, you're attempting to gauge the effect one component has on another without really knowing if it's having any effect at all! Why? Because it's difficult to know how dirty the mains is at any given time. And the sonic effects of mains pollution are unpredictable.

A mains conditioner/purifier can only do its job if the mains is dirty. And since mains quality seems to vary at different times of day, you might get very different results depending on precisely when the test is carried out. To help with the tests, Russ Andrews kindly sent me his AudioPrism Mains Sniffer – a box that plugs into the mains and reproduces mains noise and interference through a small loudspeaker. Using this, I was able to test my mains for noise, and verify the efficacy of the various mains purification devices sent for test.

There were one or two surprises in store. The first was that none of the low-level components in my system seemed to put noise onto the mains – even the Arcam FMJ CD player was silent. I tried my regular Pioneer CD transport and separate DAC and these too were silent. I was using the Lynwood Mega Power Supply for these tests, and the output was whisper-quiet with the Sniffer.

However, when I tried adding the Russ Andrews Purifier and Silencer, I found these actually increased mains noise slightly! Used without the Lynwood, both definitely lowered mains noise, especially the Purifier. But with the Lynwood in line, mains noise increased slightly with either plugged in. But there was more to come...

Because I'd been plugging and unplugging things from the mains, I'd deliberately not switched on my EAR 859 integrated valve amp, not wishing to stress it unnecessarily. When I did, the increase in mains noise was considerable. I couldn't believe how noisy the 859 was!

The EAR's mains transformer buzzes quite noticeably – always has done – but I believe more recent examples than mine are quiet. When used with the PS Audio Power Plant with its variable mains frequency, the buzz dropped noticeably when the mains frequency was changed from 50Hz to 55Hz. By 60Hz, most of the noise had gone. Whether or not this mechanical buzz at 50Hz was somehow finding its way back to the mains supply I'm not sure. But the 859 sure proved noisy.

Interestingly, putting the Purifier and Silencer in spare mains sockets eliminated the noise made by the 859 – but, with the 859 switched off, doing this had actually increased mains noise slightly! Which only goes to show, you can't be too careful. Plugging the Purifier into the PS Audio Power Plant actually caused it to shut down – probably because the Purifier treats the negative line as zero volts when it's actually -115V.

And the moral of this tale? Only that combining two or three different mains purification devices may lead to strange unpredictable happenings. Having the Sniffer proved a godsend, enabling me to check out combinations and make sure they really were doing what they were supposed to. Agreed, the Sniffer isn't the ultimate arbiter; you've got to evaluate the differences in terms of how your system sounds. But at least the Sniffer warns you of potential hiccups.

It was intriguing to find that the mains noise from the kitchen supply seemed much lower than the noise from the sockets in my living room – the kitchen has its own separate spur. At least this is how it was when I first tested it. A few hours later I tried again, and this time the mains noise in the kitchen seemed much the same as the mains noise from the living room. I switched the fridge off, but it made no

difference. Which leaves me wondering where the noise came from.

Later still, I tried the same test again. Now the mains in the kitchen and living room seemed equally low; just a tiny buzz could be heard with the Sniffer set at full volume. The kitchen is lit by fluorescent lights, said to be noise generators. However, switching on the lights actually lowered the buzz from the Sniffer. At least it did initially...

My kitchen fluorescents are transformer-powered, and after the lights have been on for half an hour or so the transformers heat up and start to buzz. I left the Sniffer switched on and returned about thirty minutes later, only to find that mains noise had increased noticeably. Switching the fluorescents off had the desired effect – virtual silence!

Like I said, the Sniffer isn't the ultimate arbiter of mains quality. Trying a Kimber mains cable through it, for example, seemed to make little or no difference. But there's a big difference subjectively when you use Kimber mains cable on your hi-fi system. Nevertheless, the Sniffer is useful, and it's well worth hiring from Russ Andrews for a week. It'll teach you much about the state of your mains supply. The question is, do you want to know?



**Combining two or three different mains purification devices may lead to strange unpredictable happenings**

## HIGHLIGHTS OF NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE ...

### SHINY-DISC SHOWCASE

15 budget to mid-price CD and DVD players come under Alvin's inscrutable ears next month, when we find out which are really worth hooking up to your system. Check out some prime CD players from Arcam, Kenwood and Marantz, along with a slew of great new DVDs from Sony, Denon, JVC and Hitachi, among many others.

We speak as we find in next month's test of budget loudspeakers.



### SPEAK EASY

Do you need a new pair of speakers, but don't want something that costs the earth? Check out our review of sub-£200 models, including Jamo, B&W and KEF.

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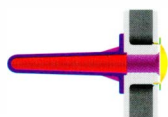


## The tip.



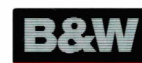
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