

HI-FI CHOICE

www.hifichoice.co.uk | www.t3network.co.uk

PHILIPS SACD SENSATION!

First surround sound player on test



SOME LIKE IT HOT!

VALVES TAKE ON TRANSISTORS IN ULTIMATE HEAD-TO-HEAD AMP REVIEW



DVD PLAYERS FOR MUSIC?

Eight of the latest budget designs take the hi-fi challenge



NXT ICON EXCLUSIVE!

How Cyrus has redefined the flat panel loudspeaker



GORGEOUS GADGETS

Nine top CD, MD and solid state personals show their mettle

OVER 1000 MODELS RATED!

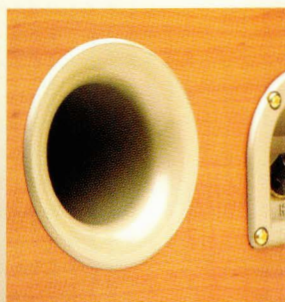
£3.50
07
JULY 2001
9 770955 111045



Wharfedale Diamond 8

The **Diamond 8** series offers a level of specification, performance and style never before seen in a speaker at this price. The woven KEVLAR bass/mid drive unit integrates seamlessly with a highly refined 25mm silk dome tweeter to produce an exceptionally enjoyable listening experience.

Gold plated bi-wire terminals, vented dual layer voice coils and a strong MDF cabinet are just some examples of the attention to detail which contribute to make this the finest sounding budget speaker on the market.



WHAT HI-FI?

Diamond 8.1, What Hi-Fi?
April 2001.



Wharfedale International Ltd.,
IAG House, Sovereign Court, Ermine Business Park,
Huntingdon PE29 6XU.
Tel: 0845 458 0011 +44(0) 1480 447700
Fax: +44(0) 1480 431767 www.wharfedale.co.uk

The Art of Sound

All models available in black or maple finish.

CONTRIBUTORS



Tim Bown likes dance and indie music and plays it on an Arcam FMJ CD player, TAG amps and PMC speakers.



Dan George likes rock music and plays it on a Naim CD player, Bryston amps and B&W Matrix 801 loudspeakers.



David Bailey is our Production Editor and the most dedicated user of personal stereo on the team. But he likes pop music!



Paul Messenger likes dance, folk, rock and classical music on vinyl and uses Linn, Naim and Rehdeko kit with gusto.



Paul Miller is the king of the technical world when it comes to hi-fi. He uses DPA amps and Audio Note speakers.



Alvin Gold prefers serious classical music and has a predilection toward Krell electronics and JMLab speakers.

HOW WE TEST THE PRODUCTS

Our reviewing process is the most rigorous in the business. We focus on transparency and resolution, mixing traditional hi-fi values with the latest technological developments via a blend of subjective views and scientific analysis.

■ **BENCH TESTS** Our main group test each month concentrates on a key area, with products from across the separates market. The testing consists of three stages: 'blind' listening, hands-on subjective testing and scientific measuring. The latter phase is conducted by our Technical Editor using the QC Suite Functional Testing Station.

■ **GROUP TESTS** Each issue features a number of additional tests aimed at narrowing the field in a specific product area. Here the testing involves just the reviewer concerned with no lab or panel testing, but plenty of comparisons.

■ **SOLO REVIEWS** As well as group tests we also review single components. In our First Impression section, you'll find brand new products that warrant early exposure, while High Performance concentrates on the latest aspirational, high tech components.

AWARD TAGS



BEST BUYS are considered to offer an excellent standard of performance at an attractive price.



RECOMMENDED products are first class components, losing out to Best Buys only because of a higher price or less competitive sound quality.



A third award, **EDITOR'S CHOICE**, is reserved for those products reviewed solo and awarded where the Editor is convinced that a product offers exceptional quality for the price.

"MAYBE IT'S TIME FOR NAD OR CAMBRIDGE TO BUILD AN INTEGRATED TUBE AMP FOR THE MASSES, THEN WE COULD ALL HEAR THE GLORY OF GLASS."



It's extremely gratifying to be spreading the word about valve amplifiers once more. One of the first hi-fi revelations that I encountered when I joined the mag, several millennia ago, was a valve-powered Audio Innovations system with Snell speakers and a Voyd turntable. A superb set-up that transformed my opinion of glass audio from ambivalence to awe. Since then, I've heard a fair few tube powered systems and rarely have they been disappointing. This month we have collected eight examples of contemporary valve and transistor design from the lower echelons of the high end and put them up against one another to see if either technology has got the upper hand. What's more, we've given the group to that well-known transistor advocate Paul Messenger, a Naim user no less. But if you read the reviews, you'll see that the valve-powered units have worked their magic and almost convinced him that remote control is not a necessity!

I recently loaned an old and distinctly low-powered valve amp to a trannie amp using friend, explaining in no uncertain terms that I didn't expect it to be able to drive his Castle Harlech speakers. So when I got a call from him raving about the power of valves I was quite surprised – so much so, in fact, that I went round there and checked it out. And sure enough, the sound had been transformed. Well, the midrange, at least – and because this is the most crucial part of the audio range, the communications skills of his system had seen a major upgrade. Now he wants a bigger, beefier valve amp so that bass will also be on the agenda.

The reason why the world and his wife doesn't use valve amps, despite their apparent qualities, is partly related to their low power and high price, but fundamentally I suspect it's to do with the fact that they rarely offer the degree of flexibility and ease of use that solid state owners take for granted. There's a hairshirt factor, that only dearer examples eschew, and which today's remote-oriented listener is less inclined to tolerate. Maybe it's time for NAD or Cambridge to build an integrated tube amp for the masses, then we could all hear the glory of glass.



64

COVER STORY

**GROUP TEST: AMPLIFIERS
VALVES VS. TRANSISTORS**
CAN THE DARLINGS OF THE OLD-
SCHOOL WOBBLE THE SOLID STATES?

Reviews

20

COVER STORY

PHILIPS SACD 1000
MULTICHANNEL SACD IS HERE, BUT IS
IT GOOD ENOUGH FOR THE
AMBASSADOR'S RECEPTIONS?

24

COVER STORY

CYRUS ICON
NXT PANELS FOR THE FIRST TIME IN
HIGH END AUDIO.

28

**BOW TECHNOLOGY
WARLOCK/WALRUS**
NEW WIZARDRY FROM DENMARK,
AND NOT AN EGGMAN IN SIGHT!

30

**AUDIO RESEARCH
LS25 MKII / VT100 MKIII**
OUR RESEARCH REVEALS ALL
ON THESE US HIGH END VALVES.

40

COVER STORY

BENCH TEST: DVD PLAYERS
EIGHT MULTI-TASKERS PROVE THEIR
VIDEO AND AUDIO ABILITY.

83

COVER STORY

GROUP TEST: PERSONALS
IT'S PERSONAL NOW! WE TEST ALL
THE ACRONYMS – CD, MD & MP3 –
TO FIND THE BEST IN MOBILE MUSIC.

HI-FI CHOICE

Future Publishing Ltd, 99 Baker Street,
London W1U 6PP

EDITORIAL

020 7317 2600 Fax 020 7317 1125
Regrettably we can't speak to readers or
answer queries on the phone. Please
send a letter, fax or e-mail instead.

Editor Jason Kennedy
jason.kennedy@futurenet.co.uk
020 7317 2496

Deputy Editor Tim Bownen
tim.bownen@futurenet.co.uk
020 7317 2495

Art Editor Del Gentleman
del.gentleman@futurenet.co.uk
020 7317 2494

Production Editor David Bailey
david.bailey@futurenet.co.uk
020 7317 2493

Staff Writer Dan George
dan.george@futurenet.co.uk
020 7317 2497

Online Editor Lucy Knowles

lucy.knowles@futurenet.co.uk

01225 442244

Consultant Editor Paul Messenger

Technical Editor Paul Miller

Contributors Alvin Gold, Jimmy

Hughes, Wes Phillips, David Vivian

Photography Peter Dazely, Chris Foster

ADVERTISING Fax 020 7486 5676

Group Ad Manager

Rob Debenham: 020 7317 0239

rob.debenham@futurenet.co.uk

Ad Manager

Emma Lewis: 020 7317 0202

emma.lewis@futurenet.co.uk

Senior Sales Executive

Gina Fontanarosa: 020 7317 2684

gina.fontanarosa@futurenet.co.uk

Sales Executive

Richard Dappiano: 020 7317 0278

richard.dappiano@futurenet.co.uk

Sales Executive

Mark Smith: 020 7317 2643

mark.smith@futurenet.co.uk

PRODUCTION

01225 442244

Production Coordinator

Faye Lloyd

MARKETING

01225 442244

Product Manager Racheal Beasley

Donna Holland

Group Marketing Manager

Jason Comber

jason.comber@futurenet.co.uk

01225 442244

Distributed by Seymour Distribution,

86 Newman St, London, W1P 3LD.

020 7907 6000

MANAGEMENT

Publisher Simon Davies

020 7317 2600

simon.davies@futurenet.co.uk

Creative Director Paul Kurzeja

Advertising Director Karen Needham

Group Publisher Andy Sutcliffe

Managing Director Mike Frey

BACK ISSUES – SEE PAGE 129 for details.

Selected back issues are available at £4.00 each (€6.95 overseas) inc.
p&p. Call (01458) 271147 to order – all major credit cards accepted.

SUBSCRIPTIONS – see page 94 FOR DETAILS

UK: £29.97 Europe: £43.00 North America: £49.99 Rest of
world: £56.99 Call (01458) 271147, 8am-8pm, Monday-Friday.

NEW PRODUCT INFORMATION

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 copy,
and does not accept responsibility for unsolicited copy.
Pre-Press Bureau Westside, London W1 Printing St Ives
(Plymouth) Ltd.



Hi-Fi Choice is the UK hi-fi magazine representative of the European Imaging & Sound Association (EISA).

Every year EISA honours the finest hi-fi and home cinema products throughout Europe.



Hi-Fi Choice is published 13 times a year by Future Publishing Ltd, 30 Monmouth
Street, Bath BA1 2BW

All material © Future 2001. All rights reserved.

This publication may not be reproduced or transmitted in any form in whole or in part
without the written permission of the publishers. While every care has been taken in the
preparation of this journal, the publishers cannot be held responsible for the accuracy of
the information contained herein, nor for any consequence arising.

Overseas licensing department

Hi-Fi Choices available for licensed publication overseas. For further details contact Chris
Power, on +44 (0)1225 442244, by fax +44 (0)1225 732384; or by e-mail at
chris.power@futurenet.co.uk



Media with passion

Future Publishing is part of The Future Network plc. The Future Network produces carefully targeted specialist magazines and websites for groups of people who share a passion. We aim to satisfy their passion by creating titles that offer superb value for money, trustworthy information, multiple ways to save time and money, and are a pleasure to read or view. Today we publish more than 90 magazines and over 30 magazine websites and networks from offices in five countries. The company also licenses 29 of its titles resulting in over 150 local editions in 30 other countries.

The Future Network plc is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FNET)

Chairman: Chris Anderson **Chief Executive:** Greg Ingham

Chief Operating Officer: Colin Morrison

Interim Finance Director: Michael Pennington

Tel: +44 1225 442244 **www.thefuturenetgroup.plc.uk**

Bath London Los Angeles Milan New York Paris San Francisco Woodlark



Cambridge Audio D500SE
- reviewed on page 11.

News

6 FIRST IMPRESSIONS

FOR STARTERS, WE EXPOSE OUR EARS TO THE LATEST LISTENABLE LOVELIES.

14 NEWS

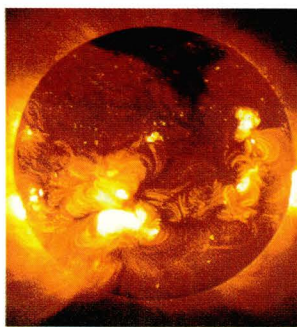
WANT TO KNOW WHAT'S IN THE HI-FI PIPELINE?

18 NEWS USA

WE ASK RETAILERS AND PRODUCERS HOW THE HIGH RESOLUTION FORMAT WAR IS TAKING SHAPE.



Multichannel Mike: going down well on page 18.



Forum

32 LETTERS

WHAT'S BOTHERING YOU? GET IT OFF YOUR CHEST RIGHT HERE.

35 WEBPAGE

HOT INTERNET CHAT, AND A LOOK AT A FEW SITES TO GET YOU STARTED.

36 HELP

YOU NEED SOMEBODY, NOT JUST ANYBODY... REPEAT TO FADE.

Opinion

03 EDITORS NOTEBOOK

JASON KENNEDY GETS NOSTALGIC ABOUT HI-FI THAT GLOWS.

39 JIMMY HUGHES

JIMMY REFLECTS UPON VALVES AND THEIR TRANSISTOR COMPETITORS.

130 PAUL MESSENGER

PAUL CONTEMPLATES THE VALVE REVIVAL, BUT CAN HE BE CONVINCED?



Can NXT panel speaker technology cut it at the high end? See page 24.

PRODUCTS IN THIS ISSUE

Audio Note M2Phono	66	Kenwood DPC-X517	85
Audio Note P2SE	66	Myryad MI 240	79
Audio Research LS25 MkII	30	Nakamichi DVD10S	45
Audio Research VT100 MkIII	30	Philips DV957	47
B&W DM303	06	Philips SACD 1000	20
Bow Technology Warlock	28	Philips Rush SA126	91
Bow Technology Walrus	28	Pioneer DV-636 D	49
Cambridge Audio D500SE	11	Rega Mira	09
Croft Vitali SC	66	Rio 800	91
Croft Vitali Series 5C	66	Rotel RDV-995	51
Cyrus aCA7.5/PSX-R	73	Rothwell Rubicon	69
Cyrus aPA7	73	Rothwell Indus	69
Cyrus Icon	24	Sanyo DVD1500	53
Denon DVD-1000	42	Sharp MD-MT877H	89
Densen Beat B-200	75	Sharp SD-NX10H	07
Densen Beat B-300	75	Sony D-EJ925	87
Electrocompaniet EC4.7	77	Sony DVP-435	55
Electrocompaniet AW-120DMB	77	Sony MZ-G750	89
Hitachi DVP-705	43	Unison Research S8	71
JVC XL-PG31	85	Videologic DRX-601ES	12
JVC XM-R700SL	87	Wharfedale Diamond 8.2	10



Services

102 HI-FI DIRECTORY

A complete listing of current hi-fi kit reviewed by us over the years, with ECs, BBs and Recs.

94 SUBSCRIPTIONS

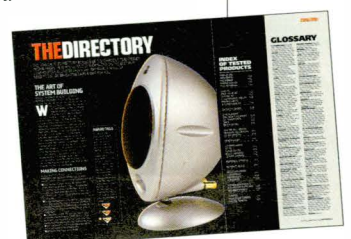
Save time and money when you subscribe to the finest hi-fi magazine in the world.

101 READER CLASSIFIED

Track down a hi-fi bargain by checking out our plethora of pre-owned classics.

129 BACK ISSUES

Looking for a past review? This page tells you how to obtain a back issue or order a review reprint.



FIRST IMPRESSIONS

TIM BOWERN, DAN GEORGE AND RICHARD BLACK TAKE THE LATEST HI-FI DEBUTANTES FOR A SPIN.



"DOES IT ACTUALLY SOUND ANY GOOD? YES, ACTUALLY, IT DOES."

B&W DM303 LOUDSPEAKER

★★★★★ £180.00

A year or so ago, B&W seemed content to focus its efforts on the more salubrious elements in its range. The high-end Nautilus 800 Series had gained worldwide respect and replacements for its mid-price CDM range were on the way. Ask the firm whether it was considering a new foray into entry-level territory and you'd get a shake of the head – its profile was being concentrated in more upmarket territories, away from the clamour and compromise of the budget scene.

But things change. B&W has launched a new entry-level stereo pair, its first for ages to weigh in several notes below £200. Some time ago, the firm began filtering down some of its carefully trademarked Nautilus 'technology' to lower price points – first the CDM NT range, then the design conscious CM Series and now the DM303.

Not that you'd recognise its Nautilus affiliations straight from the box. Outwardly it's a fairly average two-way; look closer and you'll notice its pock marked grey baffle, and that's where the Nautilus traits begin. Like its high-end brethren, the DM303's rear-mounted port employs a flared insert embedded with dimples like those of a golf ball. This is said to promote a smoother flow of

air, while the tweeter's Nautilus-derived tube loading is intended to improve clarity by absorbing unwanted rear sound radiation.

Whatever the technological claims, it all boils down to one question: does it actually sound any good? Yes, actually, it does. B&W's popular and still current DM601 S2 (now £230) makes an interesting comparison; the DM303 is substantially different and in many respects significantly better. It lacks a little of the DM601's expansive qualities with things like vocals but it's a tighter sort of sound, particularly in the bass. There's less impression of weight but more of clarity and speed, with an impressive absence of obvious box coloration's – difficult to achieve at this price point. Treble can be over-strident on occasions but its performance is far from lean, with punchy expressiveness in the upper bass/lower midband.

All-in-all, what you get is an ably balanced and communicative all-rounder. It proves well adapted to a spot of progressive house or the riffed-up blurtings of some 'nu-metal', yet seems equally at home with a little Prokofiev. In short, B&W's return to budget territory goes straight to the top of the class. **TB**

DATASTREAM

SIZE 20x33x24.2cm (WxHxD), weight 5kg, 160mm woven glass fibre mid/bass cone, 26mm metal dome tweeter, 88dB sensitivity, 8 Ohm nominal impedance
B&W ☎ 01903 750750

SHARP SD-NX10H STYLE SYSTEM

★★★★★ £1,000.00

1-bit digital amp technology is Sharp's greatest contribution to audio technologies in, ooh, ages. Most amps work in the analogue domain, but Sharp has devised a way to 'amplify' digitally and so maintain the output from a digital source in its natural form until the last possible moment.

This process employs a 1-bit datastream, like SACD's DSD system, though Sharp claims benefits over traditional amps with all digital sources – not just SACD. First, it takes up around one third of the space of equivalent analogue designs. Second, it uses around 20 per cent of the power and generates less heat. Third, it is said to result in clearer, quicker, more accurate sound.

Sharp isn't the only manufacturer working on digital amplification, but its 1-bit take is currently unique and it's the first to bring products to market in any quantity. Hot on the heels of two amplifier separates (HFCs 200 and 211) comes this, the first pre-packaged audio system to incorporate 1-bit amplification. Its main unit resembles a posh toaster – a rectangular box that sits on

its side with buttons at the top. This contains the source mechanics and electronics: vertical-loading CD and MD players and an AM/FM tuner. It also has an irrefutably funky LCD display, the colour of which is user selectable.

From this unit, an analogue signal from your selected source is transferred to a second, smaller shiny box. This is the 1-bit amp – it takes the input and subjects it to 'delta-sigma' digital processing before delivering the amplified signal to the speakers. Talking of which, the pair supplied is something of a disappointment. They're rather plasticky affairs, unbecoming a system of such techy prowess.

Sonically, it's an interesting beast. On the plus side, it sounds crisper and more dynamic than many pre-packaged 'style' systems. A large part of this is probably due to the digital amp technology, helping to produce a 'black', noise-free backdrop on which music may paint its magic. But there are definite downsides, some of which may also be partly attributable to the technology employed – it's rather two-dimensional and opaque, mechanical rather than free-breathing and pretty harsh with high frequencies. It's also better

with electronic musical styles than it is with acoustic instruments.

A stylish and technologically advanced beast, then. But not without its foibles. **TB**



"IT ALSO HAS AN IRREFUTABLY FUNKY LCD DISPLAY, THE COLOUR OF WHICH IS USER SELECTABLE."

DATASTREAM

1-BIT DIGITAL AMP, 25 Watts per channel; CD and MiniDisc with bitstream D/A conversion, MD features Long Play for extended recording time, AM/FM tuner with RDS and 40 presets, speakers feature 30mm tweeter and twin 100mm mid/bass drivers
SHARP ☎ 0161 205 2333



CYRUS

Advanced Audio and Video Systems

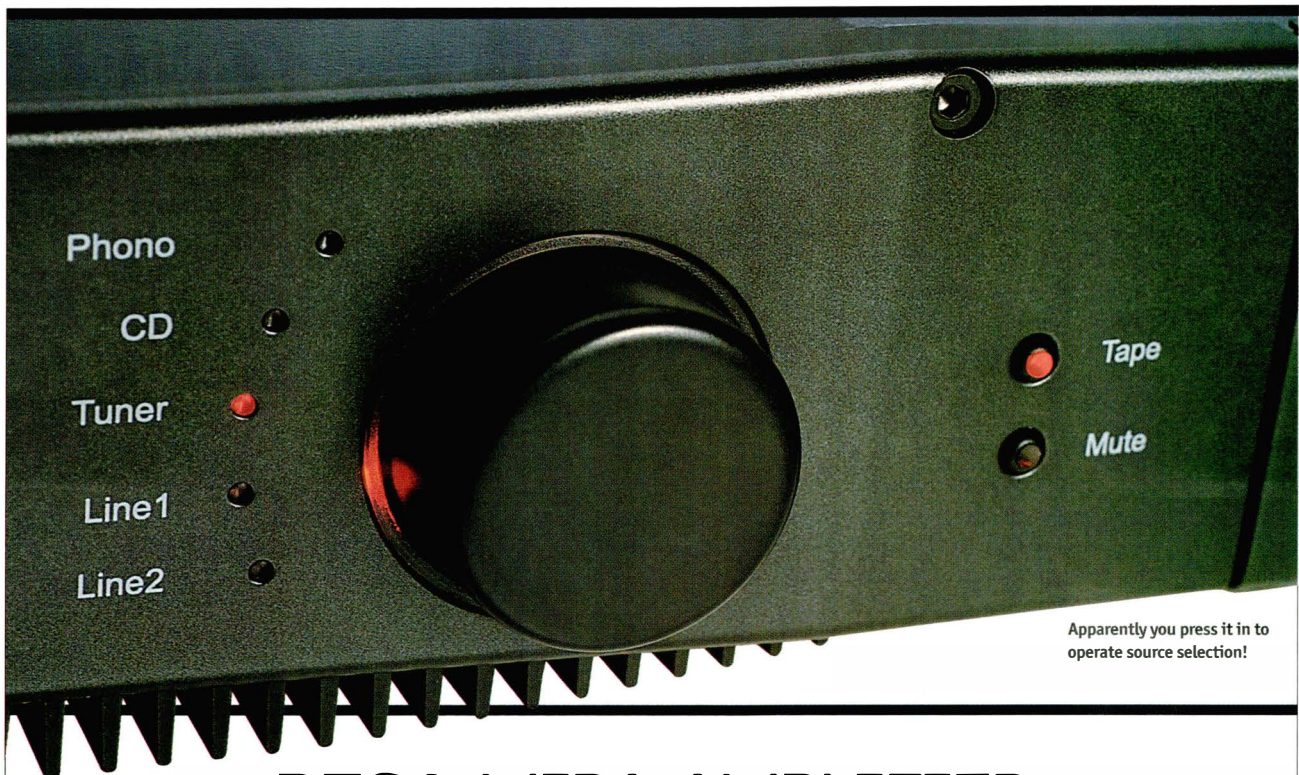
Cyrus is dedicated to the development of superb hi-fi systems. Our team is based near Cambridge, England from where we have been designing and manufacturing superior audio equipment for 20 years, for distribution across the world.

Our unique, understated aesthetic design and intelligent digital control systems combine with proven audio expertise to shape a range of components that encompasses everything from easy-to-operate systems through to advanced hi-fi, AV and multiroom installations.



Based on the latest NXT flat-panel technology, the revolutionary new Icon loudspeakers represent the state-of-the-art.

Contact us to find your nearest showroom, or to request our new range brochure.



Apparently you press it in to operate source selection!

REGA MIRA AMPLIFIER

★★★★★ £498.00

Hotfoot from the production line comes Rega's latest integrated amp – the Mira. It comes in as part of the Essex-based brand's revamped 2000 line up, replacing the original Mira with a new extruded aluminium case and variety of other improvements. At two quid shy of £500 it's the meatier brother of the £298 Brio, the brand's entry level amp, with a substantially larger chassis, significantly uprated power (60 Watts per channel) and a number of neat features to tempt buyers to part with the extra cash.

Chief among these is the Mira's combined volume and source selection control, which gives its front panel a beautifully clean look. It accesses the Rega Alpha-Encoder control system, a carefully selected volume control with a high-quality switch and relays. Rega says this offers remote control without any degradation to sound.

Rega products tend to have a characteristic sound and the Mira continues this tradition. It's fast and rhythmic, able to inject real pace and drama into whatever you play. It's not over bright

but it is certainly forward, inherently musical in a thoroughly toe-tapping kind of way. It's also something of a sonic detective: it seems to excel in uncovering detail and information, apparently leaving no stone unturned in the quest for musical involvement.

It's the kind of uncompromising amp that seems to tell no lies – with piano works, hammers tap strings with percussive precision, while the energy of raw rock is captured just as effectively. But though this has undoubted appeal, some will feel there's a lack of richness and depth in the way the Mira goes about its work, a degree of subtlety and control delivered by direct competitors like Primare's A10. It's certainly in keeping with Rega's system sound and anyone looking to build a rhythmically involving set-up could do a lot worse than consider a Rega system with the Mira at its heart. It's got an excellent phono stage too, so there's added appeal for turntable users. It's a real live wire; it won't be to everyone's taste but it does much to capture the spirit of the music. **DG**

"IT'S THE KIND OF UNCOMPROMISING AMP THAT SEEMS TO TELL NO LIES."

DATASTREAM

POWER OUTPUT rated at 60 Watts into 8 Ohms, remote control, four line-level inputs plus phono and tape loop, pre amp output, power amp input
REGA ☎ 01702 333071



WHARFEDALE DIAMOND 8.2 SPEAKER

★★★★☆ £149.99



If we were to compose a hall of fame for hi-fi, Wharfedale's original Diamond would be a dead cert for the budget section.

Huge numbers of hi-fi fans cut their teeth on that classic speaker, a design that was launched in 1982 and went on to sell an amazing five million pairs. Now in Chinese hands, Wharfedale speakers themselves are still British designed, and hot on the heels of last year's new Pacific range is the return of the Diamond in all-new 8 Series guise. Will this help to revive Wharfedale's reputation for quality and value?

The Diamond 8.2 is one up from entry-level in a four strong range. It features a 165mm mid/bass cone made from Kevlar, impressive at this price point, with a 25mm silk dome tweeter that's also employed in the dearer Pacific range. It's generally well put together, with a front-ported MDF cabinet and a moulded plastic baffle, tapered to improve dispersion, though it can't match the classy looks of the slightly more costly B&W DM303 reviewed elsewhere in this section.

Take some time experimenting with position – around a foot from the rear wall worked well in our room – and the Diamond 8.2 really impresses with the weight and quality of its bass. It's great with rock bass lines and entertainingly punchy with dance, but this is a speaker about more than sheer bravado. An open and coherent midband ensures music is conveyed with expansive substance and vocals gain both body and warmth.

There is perhaps, an element of force about the way it plays music – though it's a larger sort of sound, it lacks the control and all-round 'naturalness' of the aforementioned B&W pair. But ultimately, this is a very worthy entry into the ultra-competitive budget speaker sector and does much to return the Wharfedale Diamond name to its erstwhile prominence. **DG**



DATASTREAM

MEASURES 19x29x18cm (WxHxD), MDF cabinet, 165mm Kevlar mid/bass cone, 25mm silk dome tweeter, 86dB sensitivity, 6 Ohm impedance

WHARFEDALE ☎ 01480 447715



CAMBRIDGE D500 SE COMPACT DISC PLAYER

★★★★★ £229.95

Audio Partnership's Cambridge brand has long harboured a reputation for top-notch budget electronics. Sold exclusively through Richer Sounds stores, its CD players and amps have cropped up on many a first timer's shortlist. Here at *Choice*, we've been particularly impressed with some of the brand's disc spinners, like the excellent CD4SE and the more recent D500, both bench mark CD players at £200.

And so it was with some excitement that we received delivery of its latest player. The D500 SE comes in silver as well as black, as is today's wont, but even in its shiniest guise it is really no oil painting. Long slab-like buttons and a rudimentary green display are hardly the height of high-tech chic, but as with all Cambridge products it's what's under the skin that counts.

The D500 SE features the kind of internals you'd expect at higher price points. Proprietary jitter reduction circuitry in the form of a re-clocking device through which digital data is passed prior to analogue conversion. This is claimed to deliver lower jitter levels than many high-end players, which should result in less audible distortion and

a cleaner, more coherent sound.

To get a measured response to these claims we'll wait for a full Bench Test and Lab Report, but with ears alone our First Impressions are very positive. This is an exceptionally clean and cultured sounding player for the money, with decent bite but none of the brashness that can plague the breed. There are one or two competitors that have richer tone and several that stride forth with more visceral attack, but nothing at the price can better its poise, detail and general insight into the music.

In fact, this player is good enough to live with considerably more costly partnering components, but in a realistic budget setting it achieves class-leading status. Partner it with good quality components – things like B&W's excellent DM303 speakers featured elsewhere in this section – and it's hard to believe the quality so little money can buy. This CD player has the weight and welly to rock and the guile to convey more subtle cues. It may not be genuine high-end, but it offers a taste of the high life every time you open its drawer. And you don't need to bag the lottery to own one. **TB**

DATASTREAM

24-BIT DELTA SIGMA Crystal DAC, multiple regulated power supplies for both digital and analogue circuits, dual-mono topologies, proprietary jitter reduction circuitry; optical and BNC-type digital outputs; jog-style rotary track control
AUDIO PARTNERSHIP
 ☎ 020 7940 2222



VIDEOLOGIC DRX-601ES DIGITAL RADIO TUNER

★★★★★ £349.99

“VIDEOLOGIC HAS APPLIED A GENTLE TREBLE-CUT FILTER TO THE TUNER’S ANALOGUE OUTPUTS.”

In our last Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB) tuner group test, Videologic’s DRX-601 made a very good impression, principally on the basis that it sounded almost indistinguishable from the competition but cost substantially less. Hardly was the ink dry on that review when word reached us that a second, upgraded version was already in the lab. A swift visit to the HQ of Videologic’s parent company, Imagination Technologies, included a sneak preview of said beast. It’s based on much the same inners and outers, they said, but features new ‘Psycho-Acoustic Compensation’ (PAC) which does much to ameliorate the perceived ills of DAB – the hard nosed digital character that may deter audiophiles from this otherwise enticing audio broadcasting system.

So far so attractive. Attractive, too, is the new silver case – a matter of taste, of course, but the blue display is certainly rather classy. But would closer listening confirm our initial impressions, gained in the far-from-ideal surroundings of Videologic’s

labs, of a sound noticeably warmed up and revitalised?

Taken literally, yes. Well, most certainly warmed up, and hence by implication tending less to cold ‘digital brightness’. But the main audible problem of DAB is still there – a slight but persistent very-high-frequency twittering which rides on the back of most music and a lot of speech too. Videologic has simply applied a gentle treble-cut filter to the 601ES’s analogue outputs (a -3dB treble shelf above about 1.5kHz). No wonder the sound is warmer! In fact, if you’ve got an amp with subtle-acting tone controls you could get a roughly similar effect by tweaking the treble.

This is not by any means a bad DAB tuner, but such a simple tweak does not provide the substantial improvement promised. You may feel the £50 premium over the standard model is worthwhile on looks alone, and some might prefer its softer tone, but if you’re hoping for a brave new DAB dawn you’ll be disappointed. **RB**

DATASTREAM

DAB TUNER (Band III only), digital (coaxial and optical) outputs, optical Radio Data Interface (RDI) output, analogue input (‘bypass’), switchable Dynamic Range Control
VIDEOLOGIC
☎ 01923 277488

The CD Player that Records



Philips 3 CD Changer with built-in CD Recorder.

- Double speed recording (CD to CD)
- Make your own compilation CDs from built-in 3 CD Changer
- Perfect, digital quality recordings

Model featured: CDR785. For more information call 020 8665 6350 or visit www.ce.philips.co.uk



PHILIPS

Let's make things better.

NEWS

BROUGHT TO YOU BY TIM BOWERN AND DAN GEORGE

DVD-AUDIO: THE NEXT GENERATION

PANASONIC UNVEILS ITS NEW DVD-AV FLAGSHIP

In marked contrast to DVD-Audio's painfully sluggish birth, Panasonic is upping the ante with its second-generation player just months after the first wave hit town. The DVD-RA71 brings the new CD-beating music format down to £500 and adds a number of features to the specification of the now discontinued DVD-A7 and Technics-badged DVD-A10.

The new machine now supports playback of both CD-R and CD-RW types of recordable CD, as well as ordinary CDs, DVD-Video and DVD-Audio formats. There's a tank-full of digital audio processing power under the hood, including Dolby Digital/dts decoding and Panasonic's so-called Digital Re-Master mode, which is claimed to produce DVD-Audioesque quality from standard CDs. Thankfully, this three-mode feature is now switchable on the player's fascia, not just via the (revamped) on-screen menu system as with previous models.

On the video side, Panasonic says its newly designed digital-to-analogue converters and three-stage noise reduction provide excellent picture resolution. And if you want to optimise audio



Panasonic's DVD-RA71 – 'second generation' DVD-Audio technology.

performance all the video circuitry can be switched off. The player may have just about squeezed into the shops by the time you read this. See next month for an in-depth review.

Panasonic UK ☎ 08705 357357

LYRA LYRA (PANTS ON FYRA)

THOMSON'S NEW MP3 GEAR HITS THE STREETS



Thomson has introduced a new range of MP3-compatible gear under its Lyra moniker – one of the most prominent names in MP3. Two are based on solid state storage: the first is the PDP 2222, nicknamed the pocket Digital Player and priced at £160. It's a particularly compact design, with a 32MB built in memory, expandable to 64 or 96MB with the addition of a memory card. Then there's the PDP 2211, a larger

and more heavily specified player said to be particularly easy to use. It has a built-in FM radio, comes with a 64MB card as standard and is compatible with both PC and Mac platforms. It costs £230.

Two other new products cater for those who prefer to burn their MP3 tracks onto CD-R. The PDP 2080 is a £150 CD personal which plays MP3-CDs as well as the ordinary variety. And the Altima 5000 is an £400 MP3-CD compatible mini system featuring a five-disc CD autochanger and three-band tuner. Thomson ☎ 01732 520920



Primare's second DVD-Video player, the V10.

DVD'S PRIMARY EDUCATION

PRIMARE'S ENTRY LEVEL DVD PLAYER IS HERE

Swedish-based audio specialist Primare has followed its first DVD player, the V20, with a new and less costly model. The V10 weighs in at £700 and is promised to be that elusive thing: a DVD-Video player that's great with music CDs as well as with DVD movies.

An unusually musical performance is said to be down to purist design, with a Burr-Brown DAC and carefully selected audio components positioned on separate boards, well away from the transport and laser assembly to minimise interference. Custom-built power supply electronics are used, and the entire unit is solidly constructed with a minimalist air typical of the brand. It's also compatible with MP3-CDs and it's in the shops now – tune in next month to get our First Impressions.

CSE ☎ 01423 359054

Thomson's Altima 5000 (below) and PDP 2222 (above left).





Why take two speakers into the bathroom when you can have five?

AMERICAN BOOTY

JBL UNLEASHES SIX NEW SPEAKERS

US giant JBL has introduced a six-strong range of speakers called LX 2000. The line-up starts with a two-way standmount model at £150, followed by another standmount and three floorstanders. The largest of these is the LX 2005, a three-way model at £550. There's also a centre speaker for multichannel applications.

All six models feature brand new drive units, including a 25mm titanium dome tweeter and a laminated paper-coned mid/bass driver. The cabinets are extensively braced and have a low diffraction design to minimise reflections and improve stereo imaging.

Gamepath ☎
01908 317707



MINIDISC MEETS MP3

SONY'S NEW MD RANGE ADDS PC CONNECTIVITY

Sony's latest line-up of MiniDisc players features a new innovation for the format – PC connectivity. Two new separates decks and a range of micro systems and personals are set to sport the feature – any user wishing to make use of MiniDisc to store computer audio files simply needs to purchase a PC link kit (pictured).

Included in the kit is Sony's own M-Crew software, which allows users to transfer tracks from CD to a PC's hard disc and store them in digitally compressed ATRAC form. These audio files may be sorted according to the user's wishes and any may be copied across to MiniDisc for portability. Additionally, any MP3 files downloaded from the Internet can be converted to ATRAC and similarly transferred.

This development signifies a gradual shift in emphasis for

MiniDisc applications into multimedia territory, not to mention the gradual convergence of PC and home entertainment technologies. A higher capacity MiniDisc is reportedly on the way, giving as much storage space as a CD, which would allow the storage of compressed video data in addition to audio.

Sony ☎ 0990 111999



NON-TINNY CANS

PHILIPS LAUNCHES NEW HEADPHONES

Cans fans will be delighted to find Dutch giant Philips has two new pairs of headphones in the offering. Those who hate being constrained by wires should warm to the SBC HC8900 (pictured), an FM cordless model permitting complete freedom of movement within a 100 metre radius of the transmitter. The headphone itself features handy volume and mute controls as well as a surround sound effect mode.

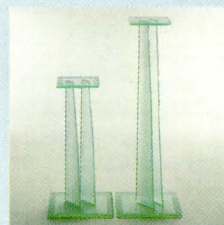
The other new model is the SBS HP890, a traditional corded design said to sport extra large Mylar diaphragms for a full-bodied sound. Philips claims a lot of work has gone into the comfort factor, with large size, double-hinged ear-shells and contoured velvet ear cushions contributing to a luxurious fit. A detachable, three metre long oxygen-free copper cable is supplied and the price is expected to be around £70.

Philips UK ☎ 020 8689 2166



Philips' HC8900 FM headphones.

IN BRIEF



GREENAPPLE makes a wide variety of glass furniture that includes AV racks and speaker stands (pictured), as well as some sixteen different CD racks. The range can be seen in Harrods and Selfridges as well as various independent retailers. ☎ 020 8455 4411

NAIM owners looking for support may be interested in the launch of the Naim Fraim, an equipment rack with height-adjustable decoupled shelves. The tripod design aims to eliminate rocking and the rack is available in three wood finishes with two leg finish options. Prices start at £500 for the base Fraim. ☎ 01722 332266

LINN owners can also buy a dedicated rack from bespoke furniture maker Simon Lit le. The Essex based outfit makes a solid timber tripod-style rack with glass shelves specifically made for Linn equipment. The design features a cable management system to the rear.

e-mail:
Simon@little21.fsnet.co.uk

EPOS' excellent M12 speaker was the proud recipient of a Best Buy award in last month's Bench Test. Unfortunately, the review page stated only that the speaker was 'Recommended'. It is in fact a clear Best Buy and we apologise for any confusion.

DVD-AUDIO'S VERANCE copy protection watermark has reportedly been cracked by a professor at Princeton University. His team took up the challenge posted by the Secure Digital Music Initiative and cracked four watermark technologies across various digital platforms, including MP3. The resulting paper will not be publicly presented, owing to

IN BRIEF CONTINUES ON P.16



YAMAHA TWO-STROKE NEW TWIN TRAY CD RECORDER LAUNCHED

Yamaha has joined the growing ranks of brands with a twin-tray CD recorder in its audio line-up. The new CDR-D651 should be ideal for those making compilations in a hurry – among its features is double speed CD-to-CD recording along with high-speed finalisation and erase. Price is £450 and it's available now.

Yamaha's CDR-D651:
CD-to-CD recording in one box.

Also new from Yamaha are two five-disc carousel CD autochangers – the CDC-585 at £180 and CDC-685 at £230. A second CD recorder is expected in a matter of months, combining CD-R/CD-RW recording with hard disc storage. Watch this space.

Yamaha ☎ 01923 233166

PANASONIC PROGRESS JAPANESE GIANT UNLEASHES DVD-RAM

The progress of several key technologies was revealed by Panasonic/Technics at its annual European Press Seminar, held in April on the Island of Rhodes. Top of the bill was DVD-RAM, the format Panasonic is backing as the future of high quality audio/visual recording.

The first DVD-RAM recorder is to be launched before the end of the year, priced at "less than DM4000" (£1,272). An enticing feature list includes 'time slip' (playback while recording), rapid random access and various editing functions. But with a data rate more than twice that of DVD-Video and an optional caddy to protect the disc, it is not strictly compatible

with DVD replay despite the option of a low data rate DVD-R compatibility mode.

Panasonic is also ramping up development of its SD solid state storage card format with the official UK launch of E-Wear – its MP3/AAC audio application. First up is the E-Wear SV SD75, a £300 player/recorder first announced last year, which can be worn like a watch or hung like a pendant. It should be in the shops by the time you read this – for our view, pick up next month's *HFC*.

Panasonic ☎ 08705 357357

IN BRIEF CONTINUED

music industry pressure, but is available on the Internet.

thanks to a collaboration between Imagination Technologies and digital radio network Digital One. The result is a new low-cost chip and receiver module suitable for integration into a range of consumer electronics devices. ☎ 01923 260511

WARNER MUSIC'S initial batch of DVD-Audio titles has finally received its UK launch. Titles from artists such as The Doors, Neil Young, Beethoven and The Corrs are in the shops now,

with REM's new album another imminent release. Prices should be sub £20. www.dvdaudiopreview.com

ONKYO'S new TX-DS595 5.1 channel receiver is the second product announced in the UK to support Dolby's music-oriented Pro Logic II processing, which derives 5.1-like surround from two-channel sources. Price is £449. ☎ 01788 556777

BULLET PLUG is a radical new RCA phono plug design from Australian company

Eichmann. It replaces the traditional collar connector with a single pin and has a minimum of metal in its construction. A pack of four plugs costs £32. www.eichmanncables.com

ECOSSE cables has launched a new speaker cable called the ES2.3, consisting of 770 strands of very fine oxygen free copper. The woven strands are clad in polypropylene and bonded in PVC. Expect to pay around £13.49 per metre. ☎ 0141 353 7444

SONICLINK has added two new speaker cables to its SG range. The jacket-free Rebel and Deliverance cables (above) cost £7.50 and £15 per metre respectively. ☎ 01332 361390

DIGITAL RADIO prices could fall below £150 this year

AMPS FROM THE OUTBACK

AUSTRALIAN BRAND
MAKES UK DEBUT

Redgum Audio says "G'day" to the UK with its wood-fronted range of electronics, made in Australia. Named after the indigenous Redgum wood which graces the fascia, the brand's amplifiers can be 'locked' with a key that also acts as the 'on' switch. They also feature a dual-mono volume control designed to minimise signal distortion.

Redgum was born after 30 years of hi-fi repair experience, and the current range consists of two CD players, two speakers and no fewer than 10 amplifiers. Prices start at £904 for the 35 Watt integrated amp. Redgum Audio UK ☎ 01603 433425



Redgum's amps sound neither wooden nor chewy.

PONDER A CHORD SERIOUS MUSCLE FOR SURROUND SOUND SYSTEMS

Chord's bulging portfolio of seriously powerful amplifiers has received a boost in the multichannel department. The SPM 3005 is a massively constructed five channel power amp, priced at £9,990 and is more powerful than any the firm has unleashed to date. It's claimed to deliver a whopping 350 Watts per channel, and comes complete with both balanced and single-ended inputs and solid, gold plated speaker terminals. Chord says it's the perfect match for any high performance five-channel application, whether music or film, and will be followed later this year by an apparently innovative AV processor.

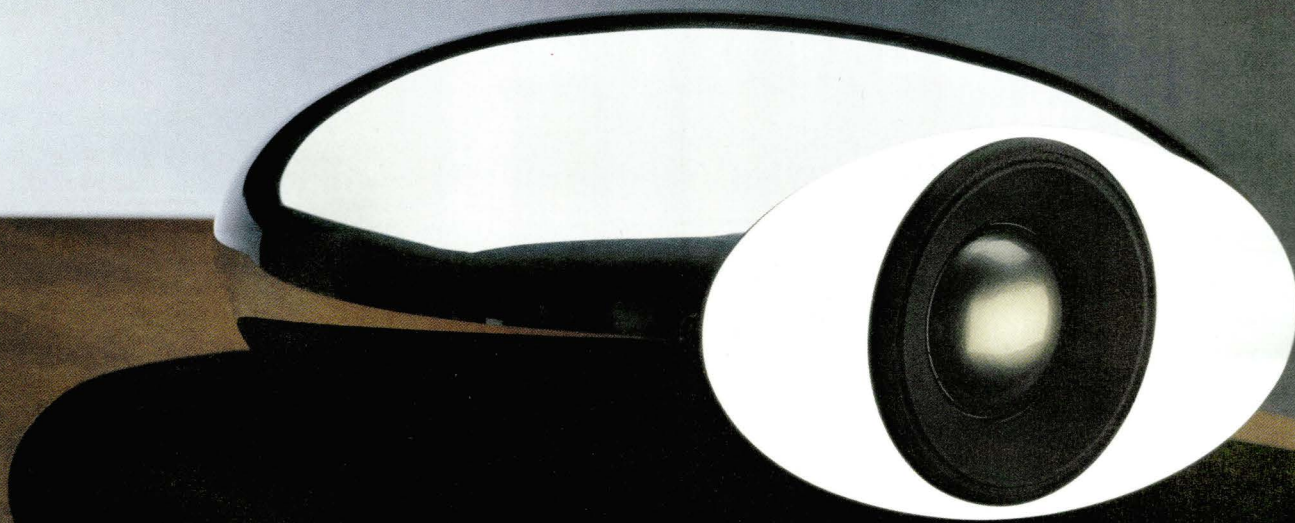
Chord
Electronics ☎
01622 721444



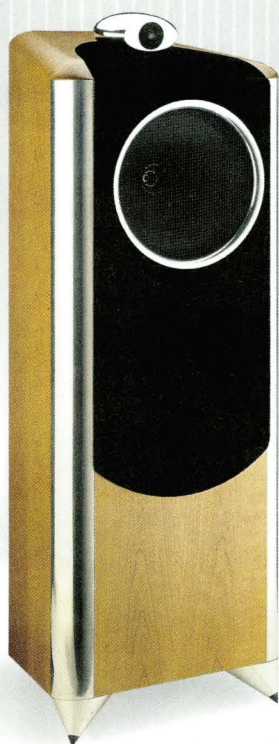
Chord's SPM 3005.

Dimension

S O U N D S C I E N C E



The Tannoy Dimension series incorporates the very latest wide bandwidth and Dual Concentric™ technology in an acoustically optimised cabinet. An innovative blend of beautiful styling and ground-breaking technical achievement. Sound and science in perfect harmony.



TANNOY
BREAKING SOUND BARRIERS

For free literature on the Dimension range from Tannoy, call 01753 680868. www.tannoy.com

WHAT FORMAT WAR?

WES PHILLIPS GOES IN SEARCH OF THE NEW HIGH RESOLUTION FORMATS IN THE MARKET PLACE, BUT IT LOOKS LIKE IT MAY STILL BE A LITTLE EARLY IN THE DAY.

It seemed like such a simple question. As my deadline drew nigh, Jason Kennedy e-mailed me: “How about the situation with the SACD/DVD-A debacle over there: is anyone buying the stuff and can you get software in a store yet?”

From where I sit – all the way out on the tip of Brooklyn – the only sound out of DVD-Audio has been the *whssshhh* of tumbleweeds rolling down the deserted aisles of hi-fi stores, occasionally bumping into discarded, tattered SACD casings. But I put on my reporter’s hat – a nice grey fedora with a ticket stamped PRESS tucked into the grosgrain ribbon – and made some phone calls.

My first was to Chad Kassem, who owns Acoustic Sounds, a mail-order audiophile software outlet that sells LPs, DVDs, SACDs, and DVD-A discs. “We sell about 10 SACDs for every DVD-A,” Chad said. “Speaking from an equipment perspective, Sony’s played this just about perfectly. They knew they’d have to win over the audiophile first, so they made the 777 ES – it really got audiophiles to buy into SACD.”

My next call was to Paul Hertzman, classical buyer for Virgin’s 42nd Street Megastore. “I’ve actually been surprised by the level of interest in DVD-A,” Hertzman said. “We haven’t done much at all with SACD. It seems overpriced and the titles just seem tired, whereas I sell at least a few of the Barenboim Beethoven boxes every week. After all, DVD-A is part of DVD, which is the biggest electronics story going, and I think that customers consider a player’s ability to handle DVD-A as well a plus.”

Thoroughly confused, I called Sound City, a large electronics store with a nation-wide mail-order arm. I asked Peter Green about interest in the hi-res formats. “Funny you should ask,” Green said. “I’ve just seen product line pre-

views for Pioneer’s and Panasonic’s spring lines, and they both have \$299 and \$399 DVD players that also read DVD-As. I also have a circular from Sony announcing that they won’t make the 777 and 555 SACD players anymore.”

So, were people calling him up and requesting one or the other? “Not really. People who bought the top-of-the line Sony SACD players were buying them as much for the fact that they were highly



Not enough to keep a multinational company interested – I can tell you that from experience.”

I called several more software companies and they were all betting on DVD-A – including at least one which had released several SACD titles. He wasn’t willing to go on the record, particularly when I asked if it was true that Sony was subsidizing the reported \$15,000 per disc SACD mastering bill. “No comment.”

“BLONDE ON BLONDE, KIND OF BLUE, GLENN GOULD’S GOLDBERG VARIATIONS, AND TAPESTRY? WASN’T THAT MY RECORD COLLECTION 20 YEARS AGO?”

regarded CD players, and I don’t think that perception has carried over to the cheaper units. People see DVD-A as a plus on a \$299 player, but most of them are buying DVD players for their video capabilities. I asked a Pioneer executive why these units weren’t truly universal and he said that they had intended them to be, but Sony had asked *waaay* too much for licensing SACD.”

I put in a call to Michael Hobson at Classic Records, which has released a substantial amount of its catalog on regular DVD, taking advantage of the two tracks of 96/24 specced in to the format. Hobson, like Kassem, thought Sony had done a superb job of selling its format to the audiophile community. “But let’s face it,” he said, “hardware is destiny when it comes to the mass market. If Joe Average can get DVD-A for free on his new video machine, he just might buy a disc or two to see how it sounds. How many people are going to go out of their way to get better two-channel sound?

Let’s just say that Sony is very interested in seeing SACD succeed.”

I even went to Amazon.com and compared the software releases for the two formats. I can’t for the life of me see why anybody is buying either one, based on the titles available. I bought about 20 SACDs just to have discs to review the players with, but Sony’s releases are pretty dog-eared. I mean, *Blonde on Blonde*, *Kind of Blue*, Glenn Gould’s *Goldberg Variations*, and *Tapestry*? Wasn’t that my record collection 20 years ago? Not that DVD-A has anything to be smug about – *Machine Head*, *Billion Dollar Babies*, and *L.A. Woman* are hardly fresher.

Sheesh! Perhaps the public’s massive yawn regarding the two hi-res formats is just a sudden outbreak of good taste. Nah, this is America – there’s got to be a better explanation than that.

But I’ll be darned if I can find it.

Wes Phillips is our US news correspondent, and he’s staying low-res until there’s some new material.

S Q A R T

DUAL SCREENED SILVER REFERENCE A/V INTERCONNECT

The first cable in the world to deliver
the performance and resolving power
of high-end discrete cables, with the
convenience & connectivity of scart.

WHAT HI-FI?



"This is an excellent cable,
with outstanding colour
definition and detail"

"... every group test needs
a winner: the QED SQART"



PURE DESIGN. PURE PERFORMANCE.

QED

QED Audio Products Ltd,
Ridgeway House, Ridgeway Close,
Lightwater, Surrey, England GU18 5XU
Tel: 01276 451166 Fax: 01276 452211
E-mail: panic@qed.co.uk
Web: www.qed.co.uk

a

REVIEW PAUL MILLER

Although Super Audio CD is a joint initiative between Sony and Philips (who also co-developed the original CD format), up until now it's been Sony that has made all the running, with one new hardware release after another. Philips, by contrast, has bided its corporate time and chosen to announce its player to coincide with the arrival

of true, multichannel SACD. To date, the SACD players from Sony, Sharp, Marantz and others have been strictly two-channel affairs, with no obvious upgrade path to accommodate the 4, 5 and 6-channel recordings of future multichannel software.

At just £1,300, Philips' SACD-1000 not only handles both two and up to 6-channel SACD software but also spins conventional CD, CD-R and CD-RW discs, with both Video-CD and DVD-Video formats thrown in for good measure. Frankly, the SACD-1000 is compatible with pretty much all small silver discs with the notable exception of SACD's sworn enemy - DVD-Audio. But then, as Philips might suggest, who needs DVD-A when you've a greater choice of SACD software?

The flexibility of the player is ensured, in part, by Philips' use of a dual-laser transport mechanism which is required for optimised replay of its hybrid SACD discs (see boxout). Otherwise, the SACD-1000 functions just like a two-channel player whose architecture is extended out to full, six-channel operation. In this instance, three two-channel crystal DACs are employed to serve front L/R, centre, rear L/R and subwoofer channels and though these are capable of running at 192kHz, in practice they'll never see action beyond 96kHz (the upper sample rate limit for multichannel DVDs). The analogue output stages also feature a series of Marantz's HDAM discrete op-amps, the same stages that are incorporated in the very high-end SA-1 (HFC 208).

While DVD movie discs are best driven via Philips' on-screen menu system, audio discs are

easily handled using its reassuringly chunky remote control or the basic track access facilities included on the player's silver fascia. The type of disc (CD, two-channel or multichannel SACD) is indicated on its display while a 'Sound Mode' key allows you to flip between all three software options if a hybrid SACD is loaded.

Hook-up is easy, though conventional two-channel systems should use the SACD-1000's front L/R outputs and *not* the so-called stereo connections as indicated in the manual. These are lower quality/band limited outputs for two channel downmixed versions of DVD movie. Do also bear in mind that Dolby Digital and dts-encoded movie DVDs are not decoded through the multichannel analogue outputs. In this case, you'll need to use the SACD-1000's bitstream digital output with an external AV decoder.

You'll also notice a '1/2/3' position filter switch on the back panel. Set to '1' this provides the greatest suppression of SACD's potentially very extended frequency response. Though the reproduction of ultrasonic frequencies is all part of the SACD/DVD-A remit, too much UHF can compromise the performance of amplifiers and speakers whose 'design vision' stopped short at 20kHz. Modern systems should benefit from the extended response of filter setting '3', the option chosen for our listening tests.

PERFORMANCE

The original 1974/5 surround remix of Mike Oldfield's classic *Tubular Bells* has been re-mastered for SACD and launched in the vanguard of multichannel software. With an original 16-track master comprising the now familiar brew of some 13-odd instruments, percussion and choral mixes, *Tubular Bells* is the stuff of multichannel dreams. Or at least should have been, if this 25-year-old, 4-channel mix (front L/R and rear L/R) had not sounded so lacking in dynamic

YOU'RE SURROUNDED

PHILIPS HAS LAUNCHED THE FIRST EVER MULTICHANNEL SACD PLAYER, IT LOOKS LIKE WE WILL ALL NEED MORE SPEAKERS NOW.

PHILIPS SACD-1000 HIGH PERFORMANCE



"USE THE SACD-1000'S FRONT L/R OUTPUTS AND *NOT* THE SO-CALLED STEREO CONNECTIONS AS INDICATED IN THE MANUAL."

HIGH PERFORMANCE PHILIPS SACD-1000

range, clarity and subtlety. The sound of bells and chimes are clipped, appearing harsh rather than sweetly metallic, though quieter strings, piano and bass do possess a greater semblance of detail and range. Arguably, this is an instance where the transparent technology of SACD is just too brutally revealing of latter-day recording techniques and equipment.

If transposing *Tubular Bells* onto SACD seemed like a good idea at the time, it's only when we move bang up to date with the likes of Jerry Goldsmith's *Movie Medleys* (recorded in 2000) that the strengths and potential of multichannel SACD begin to be realised. This is sensitively mixed, making the most of the surround channels with SF standards like *Star Trek* and *Voyager* while biasing the lighter balance of *The Waltons* and *Barnaby Jones* towards the front of the room. In the latter cases, the sound of strings or bells occasionally darting from the surrounds was appreciated for its subtlety.

Experienced engineers will resist the temptation to charge all six channels regardless of musical content, although the balance typically not only varies from disc to disc, but quite often from track to track. Achieving the ideal effect in-room is currently a task for the keen audiophile!

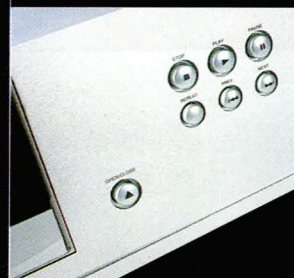
Nevertheless, quite the most impressive demonstration of SACD surround is Tom Jung's recording of *Gaudeamus (Sacred Feast)* in the Trinity College Chapel using three forward-facing microphones, two rear-facing and a sixth placed overhead. This overhead channel is full-range and replaces the '0.1' effects channel in a conventional 5.1 set-up.

Switching between 2- and 5-channel mixes reveals an extra dimension in the chapel's acoustic as the inflections of the choir ripple off its Gothic interior, leaving a palpable shudder hanging in the air as tenor and bass voices rise and fall with a powerful intent. The soundfield is demonstrably broader, deeper and, in this instance, *higher* than you'd expect from a quality two-channel recording. Moreover, the openness, transparency and easy-going liquidity that marks out good SACD is expanded, rather than compromised, by its multichannel variations.

In absolute terms, Philips SACD-1000 is not the brightest star in SACD's universe. Joe Beard's *For Real* retained its fluid, stress-free balance but the bass did lack the fullest punch just as both his voice and harmonica failed to soar with the freedom experienced with either the Marantz SA-1 or Sony's SCD-555ES. The SACD-1000 sounds similarly light but robustly detailed with plain vanilla CD, though its freedom from blurring or overhang through the bass will doubtless prove a



The reassuringly chunky remote control (above) handles all the important functions, or you could use the simple collection on the player itself (below).



virtue in many systems. Otherwise it continues to sound very composed, trading some spontaneity or virtuosity for a performance that's reliably 'in control' rather than ever confusing dynamics for muddle. And for a machine that wears a multitude of hats – and handles picture duties with DVD-V movies exceptionally well – such a compromise will typically prove the better part of valour.

CONCLUSION

Bearing in mind that Philips' SACD-1000 does not represent the pinnacle of two-channel SACD replay, the future of 5 and 6-channel media – so ably demonstrated here – looks and sounds especially exciting. And yet £1,300 remains a very realistic price for a product that's not only a very successful 'technology demonstrator' for multichannel SACD but that also includes a full suite of DVD-V hardware for good measure. It's a comprehensive package and one that can be heartily recommended to oversee the convergence of all top-notch audio and video systems.

£1,299.99 Philips ☎ 020 8689 2166

INSIDE SACD

Although the physical size and format of an SACD disc is almost identical to that of its DVD rival, its 'packing' on the disc and protection against unauthorised copying are all very different. SACD discs are also available in a variety of 'flavours'. A fully-loaded SACD disc is actually a hybrid of two layers, an inner layer containing conventional CD data and a surface layer (transparent to a CD laser pickup) that carries the higher-density SACD data.

This surface layer is also able to support both two-channel and up to 6-channel SACD audio along with supplementary video clips, graphics and text data. The fact that all this information can be delivered on one layer with no compromise in playing time is down to three factors.

First, the finer pit structure of the SACD layer will accommodate 4.7GB of data (six times that of an equivalent CD), and though SACD audio offers five times the bandwidth of CD with greater dynamic range, the effective increase in the data *rate* is only four times. Finally, the use of a proprietary 'Direct Stream Transfer' lossless compression helps squeeze the data – but not the content – down to around 50 per cent of its normal size. DVD-Audio packs its data in the same way using a competing but incompatible scheme called MLP or Meridian Lossless Packing.

"THE SOUNDFIELD IS DEMONSTRABLY BROADER, DEEPER AND HIGHER THAN YOU'D EXPECT FROM A TWO-CHANNEL RECORDING."

marantz®



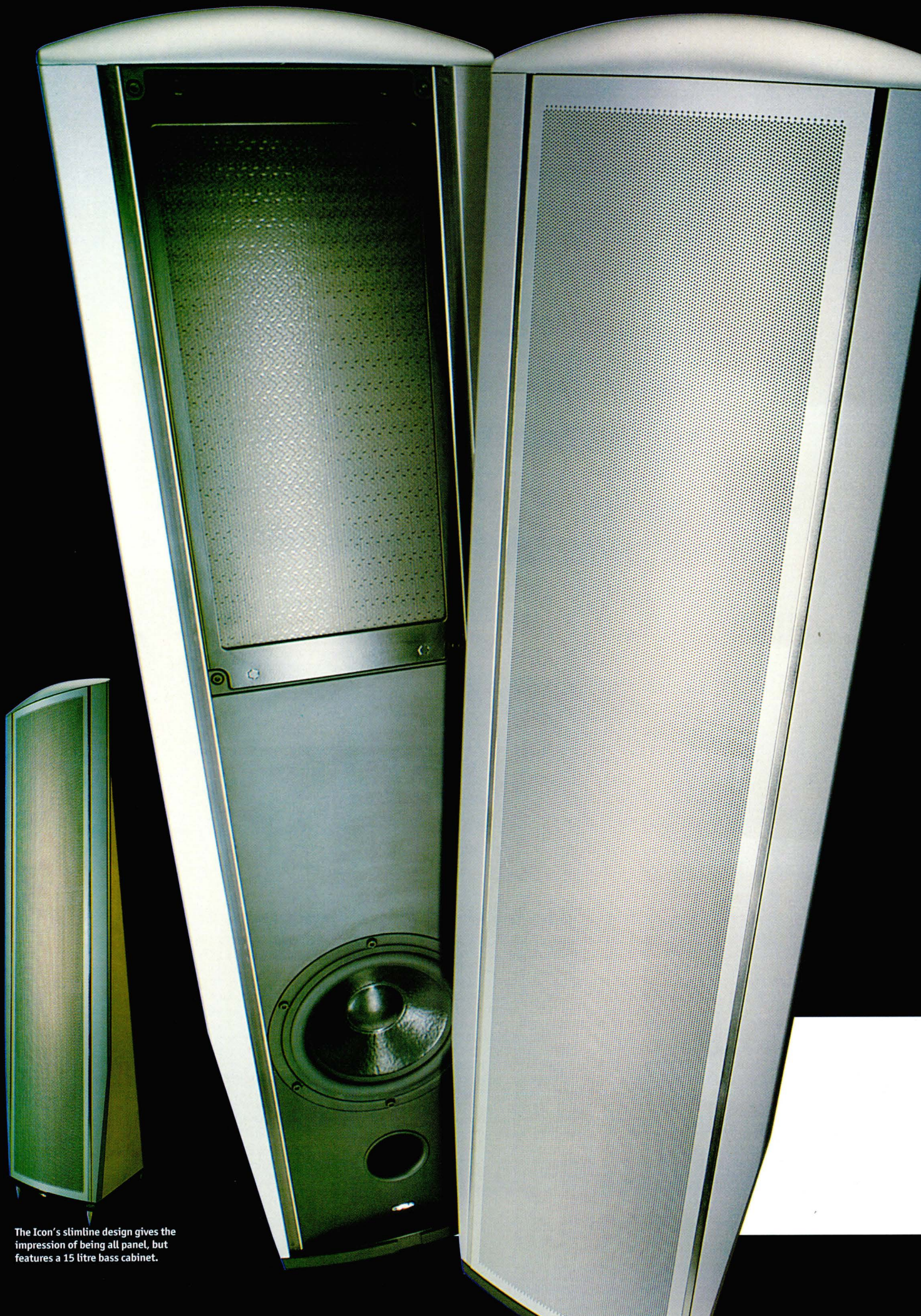
Marantz combines the CD-17 CD player, the ST-17 tuner and the PM-17 amplifier to create something really special. All products have a solid metal casing and use state-of-the-art technology. Hi-Fi sound with no compromises.

The Premium Series by Marantz is available exclusively at the following premium dealers:

Aylesbury, Northwood Audio 01296 428790. Bath, Moss of Bath 01225 331441. Paul Green Hi Fi Ltd 01225 316197. Beckenham, Musical Images Ltd 020 86633777. Birmingham, Music Matters Ltd 0121 4292811. Bolton, Empire Electro (Cleartone) Centre Ltd 01204 531423. Sound & Vision 01204 861861. Bradford, Empire Electro (Cleartone) Centre Ltd 01274 575000. Brentwood, Audio T 01277 264730. Bloxwich, Sound Academy 01922 473499. Camberley, TruFi (Camberley) Ltd 01276 686414. Cambridge, Systems 01223 461518. The Audiofile (Cambridge) Ltd 01223 368305. Canterbury, Canterbury Hi Fi Centre 01227 765315. Cardiff, Sevenoaks Hi Fi Centre 029 20472899. Carlisle, Peter Tyson Hi Fi Centre 01228 46756. Coventry, Frank Harvey Hi Fi Excellence 024 76222622. Derby, Superfi 01332 360303. Edgeware, Musical Images Ltd 020 89525555. Edinburgh, Hi Fi Corner 0131 5567901. Enfield, Audio T Ltd 020 83673132. Gateshead, Lintone Audio 0191 4774167. Glasgow, Loud & Clear Ltd 0141 2210221. Grimsby, Manders Hi Fi Ltd 01472 351391. Harrow, Harrow Audio 020 88630938. Hounslow, Musical Images Ltd 020 85695802. Huddersfield, Huddersfield Hi Fi Centre 01484 544668. Ipswich, Sevenoaks Hi Fi Centre 01473 286977. Jersey, Sound Engineering 01534 21735. Kings Lynn, Martins Hi Fi 01553 761683. Leeds, Superfi 0113 2449075. Leicester, Leicester Hi Fi Ltd 0116 2539753. London Central, Musical Images Ltd 020 74971346. Sevenoaks Hi Fi Centre 020 78377540. Hi Fi Experience Plc 020 75803535. Spatial Audio & Video 020 76378702. London North, Superfi 020 73881300. Bartlets Hi Fi 020 76072296. London South, Nicholls Hi Fi 020 88525780. Hi Fi Confidential Ltd 020 72357225. Francis of Streatham 020 87690466. Manchester, Practical Hi Fi Ltd 0161 8398869. Superfi 0161 8351156. New Malden, Grandix Sound & Vision 020 83360012. Unilet Sound & Vision 020 894 29567. Newbury, B&B Hi Fi 01635 32474. Newcastle Upon Tyne, Global Hi Fi Centre Ltd 0191 2303600. JG Windows Limited 0191 232 1356. Norwich, Martins Hi Fi 01603 627010. Nottingham, Superfi 0115 9412137. Oxford, Oxford Audio Consultants Ltd 01865 790879. Parkstone, Movement Audio 01202 380018. Plymouth, Sevenoaks Hi Fi Centre 01752 226014. Portsmouth, Now That's Hi Fi 023 928 11230. Preston, Practical Hi Fi Ltd 01772 883958. Ramsey, Island Compact Disc Centre 01624 815521. Reading, B&B Hi Fi 01734 507134. Redhill, TruFi 01737 766128. Sevenoaks, Sevenoaks Hi Fi Centre 01732 459555. Sheffield, Moorgate Acoustics Ltd 0114 2756048. Shrewsbury, Shropshire Hi Fi 01743 232065. Slough, Frasers Hi Fi Video 01753 520244. St Leonards on Sea, Adams & Jarrett (Retail) Ltd 01424 437165. St Neots, Audio Vision 01480 471115. Stratford upon Avon, Stratford Hi Fi Ltd 01789 414533. Swansea, Audio Excellence 01792 474608. Tunbridge Wells, Sounds of Music Ltd 01892 539595. Home Media 01892 525666. Watford, Sevenoaks Hi Fi Centre 01923 212736. Witham, Sevenoaks Hi Fi 01376 501733. Woking, Bartlets Hi Fi 01483 771175. Worthing, Phase 3 Hi Fi 01903 245577. Wrexham, Clwyd, Aston Gate Audio 01978 364500. York, Vickers HiFi 01904 629659. Also at selected branches of John Lewis Plc.

The ultimate combination

Telephone: 01753 680868 Internet: www.marantz.com



The Icon's slimline design gives the impression of being all panel, but features a 15 litre bass cabinet.

S

REVIEW DAN GEORGE

omething is in the air at the Huntingdon-based Cyrus HQ. Since the company declared its independence from Mission, it would appear that electronics alone just aren't enough to satisfy its high fidelity cravings. And so we find Cyrus introducing what is not only a

unique product technologically, but something of a statement product for the company. After two years of development Cyrus has launched the world's first high-end application of NXT's flat panel speaker technology, the Icon loudspeaker. This is certainly a bold move for Cyrus. It has recently launched two of pairs of stand-mount speakers, the CLS 50 and CLS 70, both of which fall under the £800 mark. With the Icon priced at £2,500, the project certainly represents a big step in more ways than one.

Cyrus now joins the list of over 150 companies which are currently developing NXT technology for use in a wide range of applications. Flat, or even slightly curved panels, can now be found in cars, planes and mobile phones. NXT emerged as an official non-manufacturing operation from Verity/Mission Electronics, and was launched in 1996. Since then, it has facilitated the development of the technology for its licensees, which mainly consist of blue chip companies such as Philips and Daimler Chrysler.

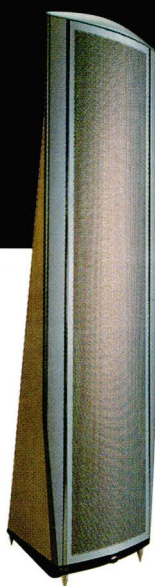
Cyrus has further developed NXT panels for the benefit of hi-fi enthusiasts, to produce what it calls SurfaceSound technology, and it is these panels which grace the Icon. The way the SurfaceSound panels work is quite different to a normal loudspeaker in many respects. The design actually exploits the resonances that are so undesirable in normal cone driver.

The Icons' thin flat panels consist of an aluminium honeycomb core, sandwiched between carbon fibre skins to produce a nine-element laminate. When the panel is driven, each tiny

segment of the honeycomb structure radiates differently to the next. In effect the whole surface of the panel ripples. When these differing signals combine as a whole, they provide a coherent output. The nature of this approach means that unlike piston cones there's no longer a relationship between directivity and diaphragm size, and in theory you have a speaker that is less room sensitive, because it's less directional.

What SurfaceSound panels actually produce is near random vibration, through a method known as Distributed Mode (DM) operation. SurfaceSound panels are driven – or, more correctly, energised – by twin exciters, essentially small moving coil motors. The driving surfaces of the exciters are precisely bonded to the carbon/aluminium laminate panel – exact positioning is crucial and comes down to some very clever maths. Both the Distributed Mode panel and the exciters sit in an (expensive) precision die-cast aluminium chassis, which has integral heat sinking. This chassis sits tight within the tapered MDF cabinet, finished with a good quality American maple and a satin silver trim.

The panel covers a range of frequencies from 400Hz to 22kHz, thus eliminating the need for crossovers in the sensitive presence region. Sub-400Hz bass is controlled by a 203mm paper cone driver, which has a cast magnesium basket and a reinforced dual layer front baffle. Bass is claimed to extend down to 18Hz and the woofer is situated in a separate reflex-loaded chamber, hence the double enclosures design. At the bottom of the Icon is an aluminium die cast base, which is drilled for the rather serious spikes, which, through adjustment, control the vertical angle – recommended at three degrees off vertical. Nearby, high quality WBT binding posts allow bi-wiring. At 1.25m tall, the Icons are fairly grand and have some visual similarities, to Martin-Logan electrostatic hybrids. An acousti- ▶



CYRUS ICONOCLASTS

WITH ITS NEW NXT-DRIVEN FLAT PANEL SPEAKERS, CYRUS IS HOPING TO RESHAPE OUR PERCEPTIONS OF HI-FI.

◁ cally transparent magnetic grille in a silver polymer graces the front of the enclosure. It's very easily removed but, aesthetically, I wouldn't recommend it. Were it not for the depth of the bass cone, you would have a true flat speaker, but the triangular base only extends 29cm at most, making a very svelte, and stylish loudspeaker.

SOUND QUALITY

The Icons' freedom from directivity is a characteristic of the technology that rewrites the stereo or 'sweet spot' book, giving the soundstage a huge window of operation. A normal listening position, with the Icons at 60cm from the rear wall gives a presentation that absolutely filled the room. There is a central image of sorts, but it isn't a particularly solid one, appearing wide and further behind the speakers. Off-axis listening cleverly gives the same kind of image, despite moving around the room into a variety of listening positions: the musical image remained strangely constant. It's a bit like a portrait, where the eyes seem to follow you around the room! This is great news for people with large or even dimensionally compromised rooms – or, of course, lots of listeners. It certainly felt as if I wasn't listening to two boxes, although there was an element of point sourcing, but with the exception of the bass, you couldn't really hear the cabinets, which is a refreshing experience. I found the Icons had a very laid back balance, in fact almost reserved, but they did remain pleasingly neutral. 84dB sensitivity, with a 6 Ohm impedance, made the Icons a bit tricky to drive. A minimum power of 60 Watts is recommended, but the volume knob on my 120 Watt Bryston BP-20/3B-ST pre/power combo nudged the 12 o'clock position quite frequently and the need for drive was most conspicuous on classical works. It takes a lot to get the Icons going but they don't seem to like high levels, and like other low sensitivity designs dynamics seem to be compromised.

Detail was conveyed well, however, and their ability to seamlessly integrate a wide range of frequencies, was very agreeable. Low end didn't extend as much as I would have liked, but it was fair considering the cabinet and driver size, and bass was pleasantly solid if a tiny bit slow. But only by comparison with the panel driven mid and treble.

What was missing, which you may attribute to the nature of distributed mode operation, was perceived depth. The soundstage remained very two-dimensional, guitars lacked presence, and the general presentation lacked the trans-



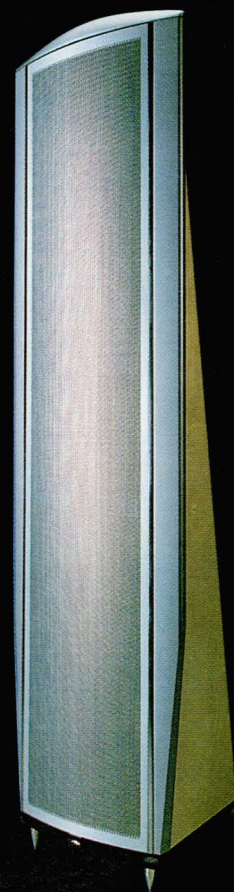
parency and realism I was hoping for – and had expected, considering the price tag. Transient response was good however, and timing was very convincing. This notable attribute was let down slightly by the lack of snap and slam in the portrayal of drums, where such a dynamic instrument was robbed of its authority and impact. Presumably due to the limited bass extension. Prior to using the Icons at home, I visited Cyrus and its brand new listening room where the Icons were in action. The designers there have discovered that the speaker is unusually impressive with Q-Sound recordings, where phase distortions are used to move the image around the soundstage (it was used extensively on Madonna's *Immaculate Collection*). The Cyrus guys had also found a stunning example on the original Deep Forest album, this took sounds around the side of the room and behind your head in extremely convincing manner. Surround sound from two speakers, no less.

CONCLUSION

If the Victoria Cross were awarded to hi-fi companies, it would undoubtedly go to Cyrus for its bravery in bringing NXT technology into the high-end arena. The Icons certainly do some things well, but the laid back balance and limited dynamics on tap make for a very different sound which takes some getting used to. However, given the 70-odd year development of cone-based loudspeakers, these are still clearly early days. And Rome most certainly wasn't built in a day.

£2,500.00 Cyrus ☎ 01480 435577

The Icon's NXT panel features the Cyrus brand name as decor, but this speaker was not designed to be used without the metal grille shown below.



“DETAIL WAS CONVEYED WELL, AND THEIR ABILITY TO SEAMLESSLY INTEGRATE A WIDE RANGE OF FREQUENCIES WAS VERY AGREEABLE.”

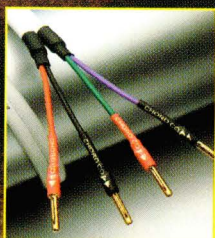
EXPERIENCE THE CHORD EFFECT!



The first time you hear your sound system with Chord interconnecting cables will be the first time you've **really heard** it. Be warned - the effect can be shattering. Your eyes and ears will be opened. Your music will never sound the same again. Specify Chord cables - Hear the light!



FOR SALES AND INFORMATION
CALL: 01722 331674
FAX: 01722 411388
E-MAIL: CHORD@CHORD.CO.UK
OR VISIT US AT
WWW.CHORD.CO.UK





BOW BELLES

THE WARLOCK AND WALRUS. ARGUABLY STUPID NAMES. DEFINITELY SEXY SOUND.

b

o Christensen clearly has a perverted sense of humour. First he calls his integrated amplifier Wazoo and now he's dubbed the Bow Technologies pre/power combo Warlock and Walrus. Some Danes are clearly more imaginative than your average hi-fi manufacturer, and this style conscious character more so than most. I

think I can see some logic behind the choices however: Warlock is a variation on the wizard theme – there's already a Wizard in the range, in the shape of a gorgeous CD player – and if you think of high quality music reproduction as being pretty magical, this approach makes

sense. Walrus took a bit longer, but I reckon that the large and powerful analogy about covers it. This attractive lump weighs (an uncomfortable) 33 kilos and kicks out 150 Watts, doubling that (say the specs) into 4 Ohms. Maybe heavy and powerful is more appropriate – it's not particularly large by the standards of its class.

The Warlock class A preamplifier is a pretty finely crafted box of tricks, the all-aluminium construction offset by gold plated indicators on volume and selector knobs. The latter sticks to a minimalist numbering for inputs and is not controlled by the gorgeous Wand remote, this being solely used to adjust volume unless you own a Wazoo CD player. It has five inputs, four of which are available in balanced and single ended forms, though I can't think of any tuners

"THERE'S NO LACK OF ATTACK OR ENERGY - THE PAIR RESPONDS TO MOST EVERY WHIM OF THE MUSIC'S INTRICACIES."

or domestic recorders with balanced connections so this seems a little excessive - but it makes for a serious looking back panel. There are two sets of preamp outputs for those who fancy bi-amping and a pair of single ended tape outs.

Both Warlock and Wizard are dual mono designs that eschew relays in the signal path and incorporate a variety of designer components. The surprising thing about the preamp is that it doesn't go in for the sort of features that are becoming popular in the market that likes balanced connections - North America. By which I mean adjustable input gain, phase inversion and more sophisticated multi-room facilities than twin pre-outputs. Though the Warlock may look as slick as a Jeff Rowland or Mark Levinson it is essentially a purist design in the European tradition.

The Walrus power amp is no more complicated than its partner, featuring twin speaker outputs in sumptuous WBT form and outputs next to input sockets in both balanced and single ended phono varieties. Inside it employs only two complimentary pairs of MOSFET output transistors with 'minimal current feedback' per channel, this to offset the difficulties of precisely matching multiple output devices. The unseemly mass of the unit is accounted for by no less than four toroidal transformers - no wonder it hurts! It also has a novelty, in the way the letters of the word 'Technologies' illuminate in turn when the amp is turned on - which is pretty tricky for a Walrus.

SOUND QUALITY

I kicked off my auditioning by replacing one Danish component, the modest NAD S100 pre-amp, with another, the Warlock at some five times the price. The difference was pretty immediate and very worthwhile, the newcomer refining the good timing of the reference and adding significantly when it came to image solidity, low-level resolution and dynamics. I kept coming across subtleties that don't usually make themselves heard, such as the pianist's Glenn Gould style murmuring on Art Davies' *A Time Remembered*. The energy level seemed to have increased as well, Nils Petter Molvaer sounding more alive and powerful than he had before on the *Solid Ether* remix 12inch.

Wrestling the Walrus in where another Danish heavyweight normally sits (the Gamut D200) seemed initially to enhance a slight loudness contour, but after it had settled in to its new

surroundings this aspect disappeared. It was replaced by great timing and real musical cohesion, the combo teasing out the key musical line in dense passages without effort, in particular the Cinematic Orchestra track *Durian* has a superb keyboard line towards the end that usually gets lost in the mix but really stood out on this occasion.

The balance turns out to be relaxed but not overly warm in the long term, the combination proving comfortable at higher levels, retaining its poise and timeliness without ever letting go of the finer details. And there's no lack of attack or energy when its required, the pairing responding to most every whim of the music's intricacies.

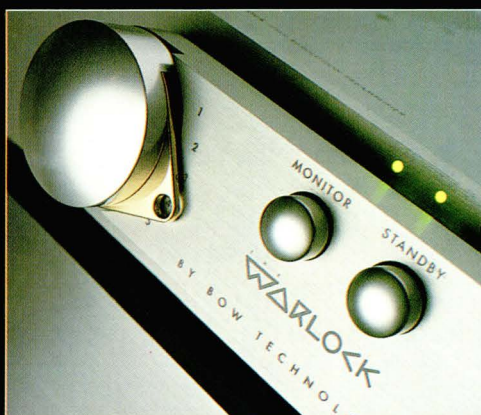
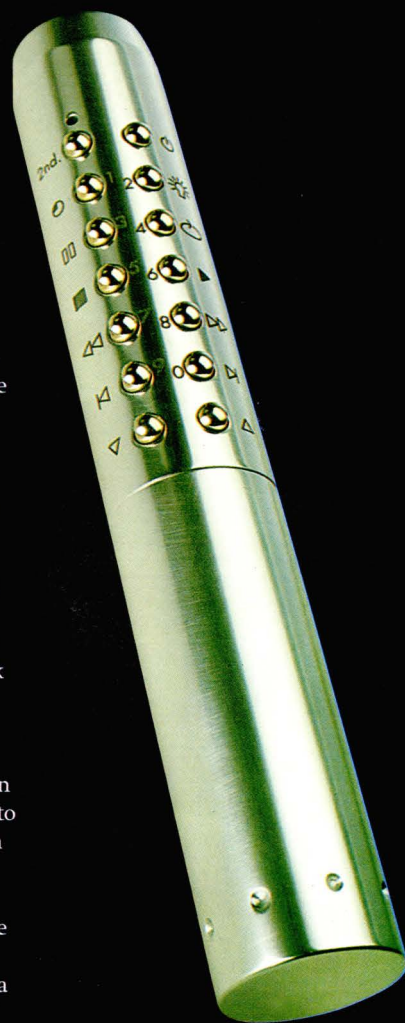
The power amp's only limitation seems to be in the area of phase sensitivity, it doesn't respond to studio manipulation as well as some. Discs such as Peace Orchestra have dramatic soundscape shifts and inversions which are not fully resolved. And while the Walrus has a great sense of timing other amps have a stronger sense of immediacy, but that is more of a trade-off than a failing because it is probably richer sounding than the alternatives as a result.

CONCLUSION

This nuttily named pairing is beautifully built (you'd be hard pressed to find more refined case-work) and highly capable. Sonically they will invest a system with power and grace, and no small amount of tonal richness. If you're in the market for purist amplification without the hair-shirt factor, these Danish beauties should be on your shortlist.

Path Premier ☎ 01844 219000

Warlock £2,995 / Walrus £3,495



Above, from top: Not a real magic Wand, sadly - it's actually the rather nifty remote control... That rather special logo-cum-lightshow in full... The Warlock's rather imposing raft of inputs - you certainly won't be left short!
Left: The Warlock's simple but stylish fascia.

a

REVIEW ALVIN GOLD

udio Research is, quite simply, the gold standard in American valve amplification. ARC has been around longer than almost anyone, its products are more consistent, and have better residuals than others, the valves and other parts are always readily available, and brand recognition is higher than for any other tube based

design. If this was my own hard-earned money I was spending, I would need a very good argument indeed to look seriously elsewhere. Unlike some other valve amplifier producers, Audio Research is not a flake.

The LS25 Mk II is the latest version of AR's senior mainstream (i.e. non-Reference series) preamplifier, and the VT100 Mk III power amp is also in its latest iteration, though there are few external signs to distinguish either from the models that have carried the torch for the last three years or so. For ARC watchers, the obvious differences are limited to an easier way of switching between the balanced and unbalanced power amplifier inputs that doesn't involve wire jumpers, and the addition of triggers to allow synchronised powering up or down of the two units (and others connected the same way) when the preamplifier is turned on and off. Internal changes to the LS25 Mk II include a newly acquired J-FET input amplifier on the VTM200, and a new cathode follower/output driver stage using two Russian military tubes, the 6H30s. The VT100 Mk III has had a similar transplant, this time using 6H30s in the driver/gain stage, capacitor coupled to a 6H30 follower, with an output stage consisting of two pairs of 6550C (also sourced from the Russian military) per channel. Higher currents and

enhanced stability and valve life (10,000 hours nominal for the output valves) are claimed, along with more generalised claims of enhanced sound quality. The two units can be connected together using single ended or balanced connections, and the six inputs are duplicated in both forms.

The preamplifier is unusual in that it includes a three-position input gain switch in addition to the volume control, which turns out to play an unexpectedly important role in the auditioning process (see below), as well as a number of other minor features – mute, processor loop, mono etc, and the ubiquitous remote control – a small, simple stick type. The hand-

EDITOR'S CHOICE

HI-FI CHOICE
magazine



IS IT OR ISN'T IT?

VALVES, THAT IS. AUDIO RESEARCH UNVEIL A VALVE AMPLIFIER FOR PEOPLE WHO DON'T LIKE VALVES.

set works well enough, but the preamplifier is operated by twist and release controls and the usual gaggle of ARC style toggle switches, which make for an unnecessarily messy and quite confusing interface.

The only complications compared to conventional solid state amplifiers are the need to choose a suitable tap on the output transformers – 4 or 8 Ohms – and to set an appropriate gain setting, of which there are three. The most suitable may change with input. The best approach seems to be to choose a setting that gives an average replay level with the volume marker at about 11-12 o'clock.

SOUND QUALITY

Using a Philips SACD-1000 SACD player in its CD and SACD settings, a pair of JMLab Mezzo Utopia speakers and Transparent Audio speaker cables and interconnects between pre and power amps, the system initially sounded rather jangly and raucous. Even though the pre and power amps were up to running temperature, but with music playing through the circuits (J-FET inputs are notorious for this), the sound quickly settled down. The Audio Research combination is by no means loudspeaker-fussy, however, and it was at home with the JMLab and with a pair of Sonus Faber Grand Piano Home speakers, which have the slightly diffuse low-frequency glow that

many associate with the sound of valves.

I am pleased to report that this is the kind of valve amplifier that I like: the kind that doesn't sound as though it is driven by valves. There's no false romanticism here, no clouds of supposedly benign low order harmonic distortion to smooth the sound around the ear's S-bends.

What you get is a clean, vibrant delivery that is palpable and highly detailed – especially by valve standards – and in which dynamic musical structures change progressively, rather than almost step-wise in the manner of some lesser amps (valve and transistor). The sense of harmonic and expressive integrity is a definite strength, and this is certainly associated with many fine valve amps, but the sense of being in command through the whole expressive and frequency range is a step or three up the greasy pole.

CONCLUSION

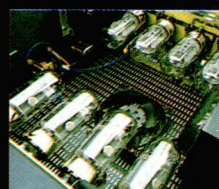
You know you're onto a good thing with an Audio Research amplifier, but this proves just how good the manufacturer can be. In a marketplace all but dominated by valve amplifiers that seek to inject passion and warmth into the source material, whether it is there or not, this is not so much a fine valve amp, as a fine amplifier, full stop.

LS25 Mk II £5,490.00

VT100 Mk III £5,999.00

Absolute Sounds ☎ 020 8971 3989

“THE SENSE OF BEING IN COMMAND THROUGH THE WHOLE EXPRESSIVE AND FREQUENCY RANGE IS A STEP OR THREE UP THE GREASY POLE.”



Above: Audio Research's trademark toggle switches, attractively illuminated volume pot and a bank of 6550C output tubes. Below: the rather prosaic remote control.



FORUM LETTERS

LETTER OF THE MONTH WINS A TDK GOODIE BAG

Send us your views of the magazine
and the world of hi-fi:

Forum: Letters
Hi-Fi Choice
99 Baker Street
London W1U 6FP
dan.george@futurenet.co.uk

**AFTER LETTING THE SYSTEM
BED DOWN, GO OUT AND BUY
STACKS OF CDS, RECORDS OR
WHATEVER TO ENJOY ON IT"**

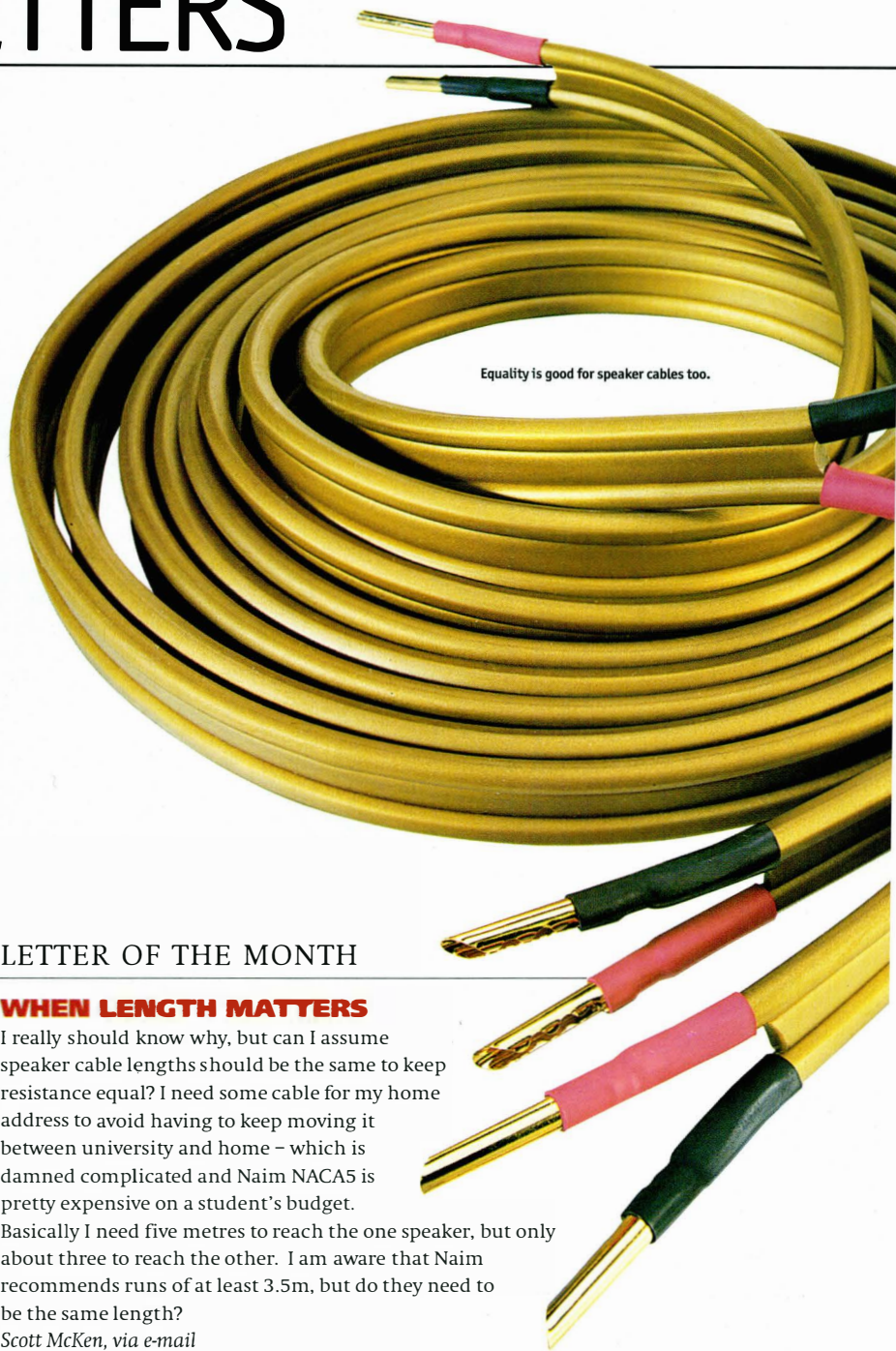
DAVID COTTON – LISTEN TO THE BAND

**"I REALLY SHOULD KNOW
WHY, BUT CAN I ASSUME
SPEAKER CABLE LENGTHS
SHOULD BE THE SAME."**

SCOTT MCKEN – WHEN LENGTH MATTERS

**"DO THE NEW NEXT GENERATION
DIGITAL FORMATS STAND ANY
CHANCE OF REPLACING CDS?"**

'VECTION' – A BRIGHT FUTURE



Equality is good for speaker cables too.

LETTER OF THE MONTH

WHEN LENGTH MATTERS

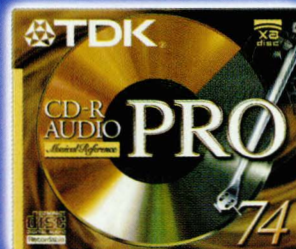
I really should know why, but can I assume speaker cable lengths should be the same to keep resistance equal? I need some cable for my home address to avoid having to keep moving it between university and home – which is damned complicated and Naim NACA5 is pretty expensive on a student's budget.

Basically I need five metres to reach the one speaker, but only about three to reach the other. I am aware that Naim recommends runs of at least 3.5m, but do they need to be the same length?

Scott McKen, via e-mail

The Editor replies... Your assumptions are right, Scott. To maintain phase, the timing of the signal's arrival at each speaker, you must use equal lengths of speaker cable. As a general rule shorter is better too, but as you note Naim amps specify a minimum length for stability.

Audio CD-R Range





A BRIGHT FUTURE?

Do the new next generation digital formats stand any chance of replacing CDs? I recently dragged a friend along to my local hi-fi dealer to listen to SACD and DVD-A. He told me that he could hear the difference but his initial reaction was 'so what!' The multichannel capabilities mildly impressed him, but he said that the tiny improvement in sound didn't justify the replacing of his music collection or changing his (mini) system. It then occurred to me that the general public are not going to take to these next generation formats in the way that they did to CDs, MDs or even DVD-Vs. So expensive kit and tech debate aside, aren't hi-fi enthusiasts pretty much fighting a losing battle here?

'Vection', from the www.hifichoice.co.uk Forum

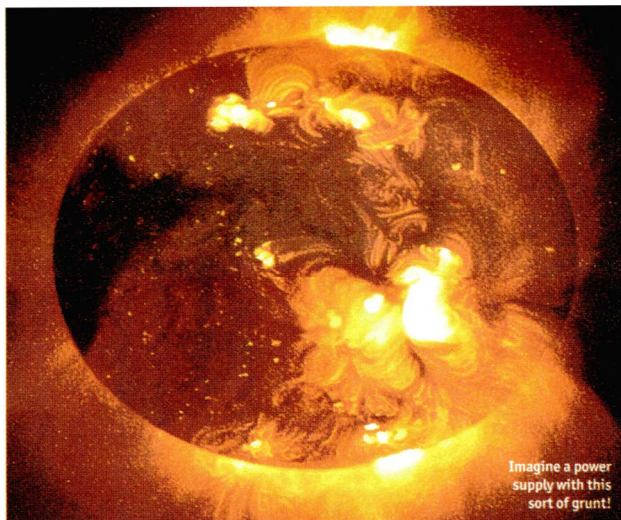
The Editor replies... *Ultimately the high resolution formats will probably only ever appeal to those of us that really want to listen to music. But CD didn't take off all that quickly, disc prices were considered too high and it was at least five years before the format was firmly established. When universal players appear they will replace high end CD and DVD players and form the basis of audiophile systems.*

LISTEN TO THE BAND

How many people out there have started out by buying a set up – let's say it's an amp, speaker, and CD player – and then instead of plugging it all in, and allowing it to warm up, they start playing music but end up listening to the kit instead? I must admit that, until recently, I was doing this before I realised what I was doing. I'm not against upgrading but surely after spending a considerable amount on a system would it not be wiser to sit back for at least six months, and listen to the music? After letting the system bed down, go out and buy stacks of CDs, records or whatever to enjoy on it and only upgrade after a certain time has passed. In essence, isn't it better to spend the money you were going to spend on equipment on music instead? After all, that's the point of hi-fi isn't it?

David Cotton, via e-mail

The Editor replies... *You are absolutely right David, and this is the way that most mortals go about the hi-fi business. The problem only starts when you start hearing differences between components, when you're in the reviewing game it's even harder to switch off. But progress does have its advantages...*



Imagine a power supply with this sort of grunt!

GLOBAL WARMING?

The other day I was wondering if leaving the amp and the CD player on would be good or not? I know that electronic equipment needs time to warm up to be at its best, but what will it do to its life span? I posted a query to Marantz (since I have a Marantz CD6000KI and PM6010KI amp) and it replied, and I quote, "Leaving your equipment on after use will shorten the life of your equipment".

I thought that leaving equipment on permanently was a good thing, since the power surge when turning the equipment on will do more harm. Well, that's what I've read in the past. And since all solid state amps are built roughly the same way in principle, does that mean we all should turn them off when not in use? Or is this just an opinion of one manufacturer that should only be applied to Marantz products?

Raymond Lin, via e-mail

The Editor replies... *We spoke to Neil Gill at Marantz who advised that Marantz CD players should be switched off, but he's happy for you to keep your amplifier on. We would certainly agree on the amp front, but CD players vary with manufacturer, so for a definitive answer we would suggest readers with the same query contact the company concerned.*

THE LUNGS OF THE SYSTEM?

I have a Sony 740 CD, 940 amplifier and a 930 MD. My speakers are B&W, and I'm using QED cables. I 'upgraded' my interconnects to Cambridge Audio Pacific, but I didn't notice any difference.

Recently I borrowed some van den Hul Hybrid cable, but when I plugged it in there was no difference at all. I did the test by playing the same MD and CD at the same time, and used the VDH cable on the CD. I then used the remote to flick between CD and MD. I expected to notice a slight improvement compared to MD anyway. Do cables actually make any difference?

Ross Curtis, via e-mail

The Editor replies... *I would suggest a slightly more straightforward comparison technique, stick to one source (preferably CD) and listen to several different tracks on one cable then switch cables and do the same with that. If there's still no difference then go for the cheaper product.*

Letters Page Sponsored by

 **TDK**[®]

at the heart of it

EXPERIENCE
an
unbelievable
pleasure



YOU MIGHT BE THINKING YOU'VE HEARD IT ALL BEFORE. PREPARE, THEN, TO HAVE YOUR MIND CHANGED. SHARP'S NEW 1-BIT AUDIO TECHNOLOGY IS SET TO REVOLUTIONISE THE WAY WE LISTEN. COMBINING THE BENEFITS OF DIGITAL AND ANALOGUE IN ONE UNIQUE FORMAT, 1-BIT AUDIO REPRODUCES MORE THAN JUST THE MUSIC, IT RECREATES THE PERFORMANCE SPACE ITSELF. ARE YOU LISTENING TO A RECORDING OR ARE YOU THERE? THIS IS THE FUTURE OF AUDIO, AS HEARD BY SHARP.

SHARP

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE FULL RANGE OF SHARP 1-BIT AUDIO, VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.SHARP.CO.UK OR FREEPHONE 0800 262958

COMPETITION TIME

To celebrate the launch of the new JMLab speaker ranges we're giving away a pair of Chorus 705 speakers to the lucky winner of our latest online competition. Simply go to www.hifichoice.co.uk and answer three questions correctly in our competition section. The first correctly answered entry drawn from the hat will win.

JMLAB

For over 20 years, JMLab has produced speakers for all depths of pocket. It currently boasts four ranges, all using Focal JMLab drivers. The Chorus 705 is a two-way bass reflex design, featuring the new inverted titanium dome tweeter. With an 8 Ohm impedance and 88.5 dB sensitivity, the 60 Watt standmounter normally costs a cool £169 and will soon grace the listening room of one lucky website user.



POLL NEWS

The recent vinyl resurgence prompted our most recent poll question, which asked: What's vinyl's finest attribute? Over 2,000 of you voted and opinions are divided on this one. 43% of you rated sound quality as the finest attribute, whereas a close 42% were glad to see the back of the format! Aesthetic lovers (6%) liked the sleeve artwork, 5% of you liked the rarity of it all, and only 4%, quite rightly, voted that it was vinyl's DJ-friendliness.

PEOPLE GET READY

CYBER CHAT FROM THE HI-FI WEB COMMUNITY

New music seems to be a popular theme this month. Forum users are posting their most recent purchases, and they go on to recommend a variety of titles. People certainly are keen to talk about the music they love. After all, as one Forum user has declared, "It's what hi-fi is all about." Wise words, mate.

One US user has complained that Forum types fail to fill out the details regarding their equipment when registering. He goes on to say, "It would be very useful to know what sort of components people have put together. Especially for the more high-end systems." Well, I'm sure he's in the know now as there has been a huge response!

Not content with merely telling the world what kit graces your listening area, you're trying to sell it too! Don't forget you can also use the form in the magazine – a mere £5 will get your ad seen by thousands of *Hi-Fi Choice* readers, many of whom don't have internet access.

Clearly a lot of you are suffering from upgraditis, a condition that affects us all from time to time. Forum users are looking for advice to help them decide upon which upgrade paths to follow, or help them resolve current system shortfalls. Good to see plenty of helpful *Hi-Fi Choice* readers out there, willing to lend a hand and offer some suggestions.

Hi-Fi Dealers in the UK Shellnet
The UK's Premier Business Internet Explorer Site sponsored by Shellnet
Click here for the advertising rate card.

Click on one of the links below to visit the hi-fi dealers nearest to you...
Please note: This site is for reference only. We do not provide services to hi-fi customers.

SEARCH THE HIFI DEALERS ONLINE BY REGION

London	Northampton	Worcestershire
Leeds	Nottingham	Wiltshire
Manchester	Northumberland	Worcestershire
Cardiff	North Yorkshire	Worcestershire
London	Nottingham	Worcestershire
Leeds	Nottingham	Worcestershire
Manchester	Nottingham	Worcestershire
Cardiff	Nottingham	Worcestershire
London	Nottingham	Worcestershire
Leeds	Nottingham	Worcestershire
Manchester	Nottingham	Worcestershire
Cardiff	Nottingham	Worcestershire

WEBSITE HI-FIVE

IF LAST MONTH'S VINYL-FEST GOT YOU GOING, CHECK THESE SITES OUT...

www.hifi-links.virtualave.net

Great site with over 2,000 links to hi-fi manufactures, e-zines and conventional magazines sites (*Hi-Fi Choice* is there, of course). A must for your hi-fi folder in favourites/bookmarks. You have got a hi-fi folder, haven't you?

www.hifi.dealers.co.uk

Now you've decided what you're after, find a dealer in your area with this useful (but extremely basic) site.

www.hiforsale.com

Now perhaps you need to make some room for your new stuff, so try selling it in the reader classifieds section of this great hi-fi-commerce site, which is full of kit and accessories for tweekers too!

www.hmv.co.uk

So, you've got the hardware, now you need some music. Possibly the biggest choice in the UK is available through HMV. An excellent classical section, and a generally very comprehensive site, with good artist/album searching facility.

www.hifheaven.com

Now you have everything you need, you can leave your kit to warm up and go into the other room to surf your way around this info-packed US site. A real enthusiasts delight, plenty of tips and links in both the analogue and digital arena. Including the ACL Marantz Model 8 valve amp copy (left) at audioclasic.com.

AUDIOPREMIERES

ACL

Marantz Model 8 Valve Amp

Let's test. Dealers and Customers agree: The Audio Classics, Ltd. Model 8C offers the finest performance to be had in a valve amplifier. The tube circuit characteristics and unconditional stability of the circuit result in exceptionally clear reproduction. A complete hi-fi test meter provides you with positive assurance of correct operation. The Audio Classics, Ltd. Model 8C has been designed and constructed to give you a long, trouble-free life of time.

PUTTING VINYL FIRST

5000 great album titles
one catalogue

firstvinyl.co.uk



classical jazz rock pop reggae soul dance folk world all on vinyl all brand new

FORUM HELP

IS IT ALL GETTING TOO MUCH FOR YOU? JOIN HI-FI PSYCHIATRIST TIM BOWERN ON HIS COUCH, AND LET HIM GUIDE YOU...

Write to us with your hi-fi queries:

Forum: Help

Hi-Fi Choice

99 Baker Street

London W1U 6FP

Or e-mail:

tim.bowern@futurenet.co.uk



LOUDSPEAKERS **FIVE BC**

I'm building a multichannel audio system and I'm trying to choose a speaker package to go with it. I have the opportunity to buy some from BC Acoustique: the Araxe (pictured) for the front pair, Tibre for the rears and an Axe for the centre. But I've not had a chance to audition the brand and I'd like to know what you think. I could go for a B&W DM600 Series 2 package instead.

Rolando Carrascosa, USA

BC Acoustique is an interesting brand, typically responsible for speakers with an up-front, exciting sound. We've tested the Araxe as a stereo pair and found them worthy of Recommendation – lively and involving if a little short of bass grunt. Your centre and rear choices are probably along the same lines, so if that's the sort of sound you're looking for then fine, particularly if it's going to be augmented by a good quality subwoofer. On the other hand, if you'd prefer a broader, more laid-back sonic style with more bass weight from the front pair, then the B&W set-up might suit you better.

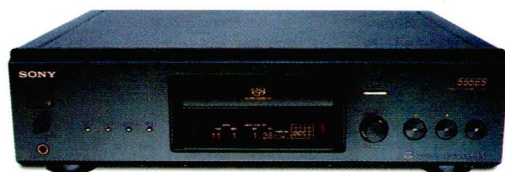
CD PLAYER

BALANCING ACT

I'm looking for a CD player to go with my Primare A30.1 amp and B&W Nautilus 804 speakers. I've heard good things about the Arcam FMJ CD23 (pictured) and Electrocompaniet EMC1, but the Arcam doesn't have balanced output terminals. Is this important?

Pedro Lloret, via e-mail

The Arcam is indeed an excellent player – it should certainly feature on your shortlist. The Electrocompaniet has yet to feature in these pages, though the manufacturer is responsible for some extremely worthy components. If it appeals, give it an audition. You should also consider the Sony SCD-555ES and perhaps one or two more costly options like the Acoustic Precision Eikos – the Editor swears by it. Balanced XLR outputs would be a useful provision, seeing as your amp has balanced ins, but not an essential one – overall sound quality is a much more important consideration.



CD PLAYER

KEEP IT WARM

My current system consists of a Linn LP12 turntable, Philips CD850 CD player, Copland CSA14 amplifier and Celef PE1 speakers. I listen to a wide range of music and like a 'warm' sound, hence my choice of amp. I'm thinking about changing the CD player and I'm considering the Sony SCD-555ES (pictured). Would this bring a quantum improvement over the Philips?

Peter Wicksteed, via e-mail

Sony's SCD-555ES is a superb CD player, one of the very best available around the £1,000 mark. It draws a supreme level of detail from CDs without pushing it 'in your face', a quality that would seem to suit your requirements. Of course, it also plays two-channel SACDs – a real bonus if you want access to the best sound digital audio currently has to offer, but aren't interested in stretching to multichannel.

As always, you should try to audition some alternatives. Try the Arcam FMJ CD23, Marantz CD-17 KI, Musical Fidelity A3 CD and NAD Silverline S500 for size. Any of these should show improvements over the Philips.



AMPLIFIER

I LOVE KANDY?

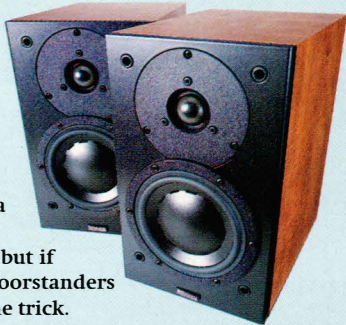
I recently bought a pair of Tannoy R2 speakers and I'd like to upgrade my amp to match. I've set a budget of £500 or £600 and I'm considering the Roksan Kandy, Primare A10 and Audio Analogue Puccini. My CD player is a Marantz CD-67SE. Jose Luis Tagarro, Spain

You've got three good amps on your shortlist, and we'd lean towards the Primare A10 (pictured). It's a peach of an amp at £500, rich and musically giving, though some might find it a little too laid-back, especially combined with relaxed-sounding speakers like your Tannoys. In that case, the dryer Roksan might be more to your liking. Alternatively, Musical Fidelity's lively X-A2 would make a worthy partner.

LOUDSPEAKERS

BANGING CHOONS

I'm into dance music (mainly house/trance) and I'm looking for a pair of speakers up to about £400. Can you suggest a pair, preferably floorstanders? James Gulland, via email



For a clean, punchy sound a pair of Dynaudio Audience 42s (pictured) work a treat, but if you're determined to get floorstanders Mission's m74 should do the trick.

LOUDSPEAKERS

GRAND SOUND

I want to upgrade my speakers with a budget of around £1,000. The rest of my gear is a Marantz CD63SE CD player, a Linn Kolektor preamp and an LK85 power amp. I'm planning to add another LK85 to bi-amp when funds permit. Would you recommend the PMC FB1 (pictured) speaker? M. F. Lee, London

Yes, if your room is of a reasonable size, the FB1 would make an excellent choice. It possesses exceptional midband qualities and plenty of bass weight, without being the least bit aggressive in its low-end delivery. You should also check out the beautifully expressive Castle Harlech SE, along with models from the likes of JMLab and perhaps Ruark's new Classic range if you like it laid-back.



UPGRADES

HI-FI IN A SUITCASE



I'm serving as an engineer on a gas tanker trading in the Far East, so most of my listening is done onboard ship. That means I have to carry my entire system in a couple of suitcases along with my other personal effects, without exceeding a 40kg limit. I use a Linn Classik CD/receiver (pictured) with Dynaudio Audience 40 speakers,

Nordost Solar Wind speaker cables, Campaign Audio Design mains cables and a set of Stands Unique isolating feet for the electronics. I have to improvise and use two coffee tables plus Blu-Tak as speaker stands. The sound is pretty good considering the problems I'm faced with but I think the bass is a little woolly. Any suggestions as to a remedy?

Paul Maine, Japan

Hmm... tricky. That's exactly the type of system I'd recommend you use in your circumstances and it's hard to make suggestions without adding considerably to your equipment's bulk. But it would be worth trying to decouple the speakers from the coffee tables, the best thing I can think of would be foam pads that can support the speakers without too much compression. It would also be beneficial to try a speaker cable such as Townshend Isolda which gives the amp a greater ability to control the speakers than most.

CD PLAYER

GET YOUR BITE BACK

My system consists of a Technics 770 CD player, Systemdeck turntable, Cyrus 7 amp and Celestion speakers. I realise the CD player is outclassed by the amp, but ever since I bought the Cyrus the sound has lacked some bite. Can you recommend a CD player that would make my music rock?

Mick, via e-mail

The obvious suggestion is a Cyrus CD7. It's a good all-rounder with a sprightly sort of sound, and finds good musical synergy with your 7 amp. A Cyrus PSX power supply on your amp would help to focus things too. You might also like to listen to a couple of CD candidates with a particular propensity for rhythmic, up-front sound – Naim's CD5 and Linn's Genki spring to mind.

SYSTEM

PEARLY KING

I bought a pair of Mordaunt-Short MS20i Pearls recently and I want a CD player and amp to go with them. Which brand would you recommend as a match?

Loke, via e-mail

The MS20i Pearl was a favourite of mine in its day and it still ranks up well against the best current £200 models. It's a fast, lively type of speaker and I always found it worked well with Arcam's lower priced electronics

– their more rounded style brings a little decorum to the party, along with good weight and scale. The result is an exciting listen, without going over the edge as the MS20i can with bright, brash components. Alternatively, try partnerships from Denon and Sony.





DVD32R

Europe's First THX® Ultra certified
DVD player for NTSC & PAL



The DVD32R is Europe's first DVD player which exceeds the high THX® Ultra standards and allows reference standard replay of CDs.

High-mass Transport for Low Jitter

The DVD32R uses a top loading transport, allowing its drive motor and servo electronics to be mounted to a heavy, mass loaded sub-chassis. The result is improved data integrity and reduced jitter.

Automatic, Adaptive Drawer Mechanism

The DVD32R aluminium diecast drawer door runs on a polished steel bar and a Teflon glider for smooth and reliable operation, driven by an adaptively controlled electric motor via a steel wire.

Precise Clock for best Sound and Video

The low phase noise single frequency master oscillator ensures that all video and audio clocks are synchronous, with clock signals being transferred using independently buffered and precisely terminated traces.

Field-leading MPEG Decoder

TAG McLaren worked closely with National Semiconductor's field-leading subsidiary Mediamatics, in finding the best MPEG decoder. After long evaluation Pantera-DVD™, the

first IC to integrate all back-end functions of a DVD player onto a single chip, was selected. This unrivalled level of integration includes host processing, a 32-bit RISC processor, 10-bit video DACs and the NTSC/PAL encoders.

Uncompromised Video quality

The video circuitry uses broadcast quality components, with video outputs being individually buffered and vertical and anti-flicker filtering to deliver high quality graphics.

Test-Pattern Generator

In-built test-patterns and electronics test circuitry assist in calibrating the tv for best picture quality.

Advanced Digital Waveform Control

Advanced circuitry optimises rise and fall times whilst preventing waveform discontinuities, reducing the demand on the digital interconnects.

TAGtronic Link T'L for Minimal Jitter

T2L allows the DVD32R to lock its data output to the low noise, ultra low jitter DAC reference clock in the AV32R.

Massive Power Reserves

The DVD32R uses a large toroidal transformer as this has the benefit of a very low stray magnetic field, reducing the possibility of interference with the audio data and video signals. A second, smaller

transformer is used to power the remote control circuitry, allowing very low electrical consumption when switched to standby.

Multiple Power Supplies

Separate power supplies reduce interference between the processing stages, right down to having separate windings on the transformer.

Multi-Layer Printed Circuit Boards

Multi-layer pcbs provide controlled impedances and minimise coupling. Performance is further enhanced using leaded components for perfect analog signals and SMD for fast digital transfer, with quality being optimised using inert-gas soldering.

Enhanced TAGtronic Bus

The TAGtronic Communication Bus allow products to work seamlessly together to form an effective, integrated system.

Upgrade Path

Building on TAG McLaren's class-leading commitment to upgradability, the DVD32R is scheduled to receive a hardware upgrade to DVD-Audio, Progressive Scan and Digital Video whilst functionality enhancements are distributed through TAG McLaren's website, allowing convenient software upgrades at home (using a PC).

TAG McLaren Audio, The Summit, Latham Road, Huntingdon, Cambs. PE29 6ZU

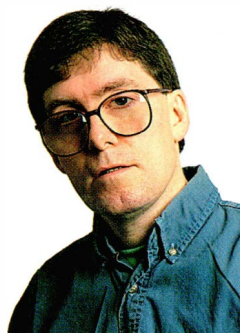
freephone: 0800 783 8007 tel: 01480 415600 fax: 01480 52159 e-mail: helpdesk@tag McLaren audio.com

To book an audition contact one of these authorised DVD32R stockists:

Audio Designs	East Grinstead, West Sussex	01342 314569	Listening Rooms	Chelsea, London	0207 244 7750	Sevenoaks Sound & Vision	Kingston, Surrey	0208 547 0717
Audio Excellence Ltd	Cardiff, Wales	0292 022 8565	Martin Kleiser Ltd	Chiswick, London	0208 400 5555	Sevenoaks Sound & Vision	Liverpool, Merseyside	0151 707 8417
Audio Excellence Ltd	Clifton, Bristol	0117 926 4975	Martin Kleiser Ltd	Uxbridge, London	01895 465444	Sevenoaks Sound & Vision	Nottingham, Nottinghamshire	0115 911 2121
Audio Excellence Ltd	Exeter, Devon	01392 491194	Martins HiFi	Norwich, Norfolk	01603 627010	Sevenoaks Sound & Vision	Plymouth, Devon	01752 226011
Audio T Ltd	Swansea, Wales	01792 474608	Moorgate Acoustics	Sheffield, Yorkshire	0114 225 6048	Sevenoaks Sound & Vision	Reading, Berkshire	01772 825777
Audio T Ltd	Basingstoke, Hampshire	01256 324311	Music Matters Ltd	Solihull, Birmingham	0121 742 0254	Sevenoaks Sound & Vision	Reading, Berkshire	0118 959 7768
Audio T Ltd	Brentwood, Essex	01277 264730	Nottingham HiFi Centre	Nottingham, Nottinghamshire	0115 978 6919	Sevenoaks Sound & Vision	Sevenoaks, Kent	01732 459555
Audio T Ltd	Camberley, Surrey	01276 685597	Oxford Audio Consultants	Oxford, Oxon	01865 790879	Sevenoaks Sound & Vision	Southgate, London	0208 886 2777
Audio T Ltd	Chandler's Ford, Hampshire	02380 252827	Peter Tyson HiFi	Carlisle, Cumbria	01228 546756	Sevenoaks Sound & Vision	Tunbridge Wells, Kent	01892 523548
Audio T Ltd	Cheltenham, Gloucestershire	01242 583960	PJ Hi-Fi	Guildford, Surrey	01483 504801	Sevenoaks Sound & Vision	Watford, Hertfordshire	01923 213533
Audio T Ltd	Headington, Oxford	01865 765961	Prestige Audio Ltd	Harrow, London	0208 868 3300	Sevenoaks Sound & Vision	Witham, Essex	01376 501733
Audio T Ltd	High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire	01494 558585	Rayleigh Hi-Fi	Lakeside, Essex	01708 680551	Sevenoaks Sound & Vision	Worcester, Worcestershire	01905 612929
Audio T Ltd	Reading, Berkshire	0118 958 5463	Rayleigh Hi-Fi	Rayleigh, Essex	01268 779762	Sevenoaks Sound & Vision	Glasgow, Scotland	0141 248 4079
Audio T Ltd	West Hampstead, London	0207 794 7848	Rayleigh Hi-Fi	Chelmsford, Essex	01245 262545	Sevenoaks Sound & Vision	Bournemouth, Dorset	01202 555512
Billy Vee	Lewisham, London	0208 318 5755	Sevenoaks Sound & Vision	Bedford, Bedfordshire	01234 272779	Sevenoaks Sound & Vision	Bishops Cleeve, Herefordshire	01279 506576
Harrods	Knightsbridge, London	0207 730 1234	Sevenoaks Sound & Vision	Clifton, Bristol	0117 974 3727	Sevenoaks Sound & Vision	Belfast, N. Ireland	02890 381296
Harrow Audio	Harrow, Middlesex	0208 930 9933	Sevenoaks Sound & Vision	Edinburgh, Scotland	0131 229 7267	Sevenoaks Sound & Vision	Barnes, London	0208 876 3355
HiFi Corner	Aston Quay, Dublin	00353 1671 4343	Sevenoaks Sound & Vision	Epsom, Surrey	01372 745883	Sevenoaks Sound & Vision	Brighton, Sussex	01273 775978
Linton Audio Ltd	Metro Centre, Gateshead	0191 460 0999	Sevenoaks Sound & Vision	Glasgow, Scotland	0141 332 9655	Sevenoaks Sound & Vision	New Malden, Surrey	0208 942 9567
			Sevenoaks Sound & Vision	Ipswich, Suffolk	01473 286777			

In a glass of its own

JIMMY'S NOT CONVINCED THEY GOT IT RIGHT WHEN THEY CHUCKED OUT THE VALVE AMPS...



“AS IS OFTEN THE CASE, NEW TECHNOLOGY SOLVES ONE SET OF ILLS AND INTRODUCES ANOTHER ONE.”

The valves versus transistors debate has raged for over 40 years now. It's amazing it's gone on as long as it has – by the late 60s it looked to be all over for bottles as key British manufacturers like Quad, Leak, Rogers, and Radford replaced their stalwart tube designs with transistorised units. Some listeners felt the new solid-state designs sounded worse. But what did that matter? Transistors represented progress. And nothing stands in the way of progress!

Harold Leak had laid the benchmark for high fidelity performance with a total harmonic distortion level of 0.1 per cent. Transistors could comfortably better that, therefore they had to be better. If the sound was worse, reviewers and experts explained it away by saying that the superior clarity and transparency of solid-state was highlighting faults elsewhere.

THE JOY OF TRANNIES

Of course transistors offered smaller size, cooler running, lower cost, and the promise of greater reliability – though the latter was a promise woefully unfulfilled by many early solid state designs! But above all, the major benefit was the elimination of the output transformer.

This resulted in substantial cost savings, as well as removing a component that (on paper at least) was guilty of all sorts of non-linearities and restrictions. Transformers are prone to saturation, distortion, and bandwidth restrictions. So the elimination of such a device seemed like good news.

Yes, direct coupling definitely gives you sharper, more articulate sound. But the result isn't always preferable musically. You can easily end up with a harsh brittle tonal balance that lacks warmth refinement and fluidity.

In this context, a well-designed transformer in the signal path seems to have a humanising effect on reproduction, bringing extremes into balance, and creating a more natural and realistic musical presentation. Pitch definition improves, and voices and instruments separate-out better.

Now we realise early transistor amplifiers had all sorts of technical problems that valves were largely free of. As is often the case, new technology solves one set of ills and introduces another one. Eliminating the output transformer allowed one to hear this all too clearly.

I've actually tried coupling transistor amplifiers to loudspeakers using a one-to-one transformer, and it's very interesting. Many of the qualities associated with classic valve amps – tonal smoothness, warmth, meliflousness, plus a sense of power and presence at low volume levels – are suddenly magically apparent!

TOTAL TRANSFORMATION

You can take a fairly basic budget transistor amplifier that sounds brittle and hard, put a transformer in the speaker line, and suddenly much of the crudeness is gone. Yet there seems to be no loss of brilliance or bite. It's as though you've upgraded the amp to something more sophisticated and refined. The effect, dare I say it, is a transformation.

Despite the shortcomings, a transformer has benefits; it helps block RF grunge, protects the amplifier from some of the back emf generated by the speaker, and acts as a benign bandwidth limiter at both ends of the frequency spectrum. The amplifier is also isolated from the vicissitudes of the speaker crossover; it only 'sees' the primary of the transformer.


Some valve amps offer a choice of output taps to suit different impedance loudspeakers. The aim is to match the impedance of the output transformer to the loudspeaker being used, so you usually select the tap that gives the most volume – the loudest sound occurring when the two impedances match perfectly.

However, I find you achieve a tighter more focused sound by choosing the lowest impedance tap available. Since most loudspeakers have a nominal impedance of 8 Ohms, it's likely the 8 Ohm tap will be the 'correct' choice. However, if there's a 4 Ohm tap, try that. You'll probably lose a little output by doing so, and will have to play with the volume control set slightly higher. But this will be offset by firmer bass and improved control.

Jimmy Hughes is the king of hi-fi tweaks, his quest for the absolute sound knows no bounds.

TV
STANDBY
PBC
DISC/LOCK
STANDBY
TV VOL
TV P
RESUME
FTS
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
DISC
MENU
SYSTEM
MENU
RETURN
OK
STOP
PLAY
SUBTITLE
ANGLE
TTL/CHAP
AUDIO
REPEAT
REPEAT
SHUFFLE
SCAN
SLOW
A.B
BIT
TIME
ZOOM
RATE
SEARCH





DVD PLAYERS

ALVIN GOLD TESTS THE SONIC SOUNDNESS OF A SELECTION OF DVD-V PLAYERS, WHILE PAUL MILLER CRUNCHES THE NUMBERS.

The number of new CD players being released is on a slow but steady decline. This probably has little to do with people listening less to CDs – far from it. A more likely explanation is that the market for CD players is now a mature one.

But there is another reason for the decline of the CD player, namely the explosive growth in the sale of DVD players.

Of course, we're talking about DVD-Video, the most rapidly established audio or video format to fill the shelves of retailers the length and breadth of the land ever. Tesco in particular realised – perhaps earlier than the majority of specialist dealers – that DVD players would be bought by people not just to play DVD movies, but also to play CDs through their stereo systems. In other words DVD would replace CD as the domestic standard, and the fact that it may not sound as good as many dedicated CD players was conveniently brushed under the carpet.

But not here. We realised early on that DVD players generally sounded worse than equivalent CD players, and often the margin was such that it was difficult to ignore, and we've been tracking the development of the technology since it was launched. In recent months we've seen some signs that the best DVD players can give specialist CD players a run for their money, but most of the best examples have been of quite costly designs. In some cases they've been DVD-Audio players, whose designers ought to know a thing or two about spinning audio discs anyway.

The question this test sets out to answer is whether the latest generation of affordable DVD-Video players can repeat the trick; that is are they worthwhile sources for pre-recorded music?

ON TEST

Denon DVD-1000 £299.99
Hitachi DVP-705 £380.00
Nakamichi DVD-10s £599.99
Philips DV957 £399.00
Pioneer DV-636D £400.00
Rotel RDV-995 £700.00
Sanyo DVD1500 £219.00
Sony DVP-5435 £349.99

OTHER EQUIPMENT USED

Arcam A85 integrated amp
JMLab Mezzo Utopia speakers

THE LISTENING PANEL

David Inman (Castle)
Steve Harris (TAG McLaren)
Rowena Pratt (harman/kardon)
Keith Haddock (Haddock Communications)

MUSIC USING DURING TESTS

Fisher/Bartok - *Danse des garçons* from Concerto for Orchestra (CD)
David Gray - *White Ladder* (CD)
Anthony Michaelson (clarinet)/Weber *Clarinet Quintet* (CD)
Sex Without Bodies -
Dave's True Story (DVD-V)



DENON DVD-1000

SOUND ★★★★★ VALUE ★★★★★ £299.99 CONTACT 01753 888447 www.denon.com GUARANTEE 2 year

Denon's new near-budget player (defining true budget players as the ones that change on a batch-by-batch basis, and/or are only sold through supermarkets or other non-specialist outlets) is a simple but attractive affair which is based on an OEM Panasonic kit of bits. It's difficult to know what to make of this, but Denon's literature points out that the DVD-1000 uses a mechanism that zips along at double speed when playing DVDs, and 4x speed with CDs. The data is then read through a

4MB memory, and metered out, the buffer plugging the gaps when the DVD shifts between layers, or when it needs to conceal drop-outs. This topology is also a good starting point for low jitter operation, but Denon makes no specific claims on this score; it does however claim superior on-screen quality from its sophisticated digital anti-aliasing filter which separates chroma from monochrome data, reducing the fringing on fine patterns that is normally described as cross-colour. The player also boasts component video as well as compos-

ite and S-Video, but despite the presence of a Scart socket, RGB, potentially the most useful video output of all, is conspicuous by its absence. Other useful features include CD-R compatibility, but there is no on-board surround processor. It also coped with some test CD-RWs, but not all.

SOUND QUALITY

Due to an obscure set-up foible which resulted in the analogue output being turned off deep in the player's menu structure, the player had to be aborted from the panel tests, although in the end it turned out to be an operator fault rather than a problem with the Denon. A shame, as I'm sure the panel would have gone for this player. It doesn't quite break the mould, but it is open and attractive sounding with DVD-Video 214/96 material and CDs alike.

The Denon was one of the few players in the test to make a decent

No onboard surround processing but excellent sound quality from CD.

fist of complex material like the Bartok, which can sound frantic when not handled properly, and the David Gray recording, which was punchy and light on its feet. The Weber clarinet recording was in many ways the most impressive of all the test recordings, the Denon managing to inject some real gravitas into the sound without losing the air and space around the instruments.

CONCLUSION

A thinking person's budget player, the Denon does just what you need, while omitting gimmicks – including the surround sound decoder you'll find in many of Denon's competitors. But surround sound decoding is better tackled by an outboard decoder anyway, and the quid pro quo – respectable CD and DVD sound quality – is well worth having.

“THE DENON WAS ONE OF THE FEW PLAYERS IN THE TEST TO MAKE A DECENT FIST OF COMPLEX MATERIAL.”



THE LAB REPORT

THE BASIC, PAPER SPECIFICATION for Denon's baby DVD-1000 player is very respectable largely thanks to its application of an AD1854 dual-channel DAC. This is capable of handling 24-bit data up to 96kHz (perfect for two-channel DVD music discs) and though the chip is only specified to a signal to noise ratio of 102dB, Denon is achieving 106dB/108dB on left and right channels, respectively. Distortion, too, is low at 0.002% at its peak 2.1V output (0dBfs), though this falls still further to

0.0008% at -10dBfs, indicating some additional 'stress' at the highest levels. Indeed, the figures alone do not reflect the increase in in-band and out-of-band noise and digital spurs caused by the player's handling of strong, high-frequency content.

Jitter is low enough at 330psec but the in-built digital filter is less effective with a rejection of digital 'images' of just -38dB. Costlier players, including Denon's own, will suppress these artefacts by 90dB or more.



HITACHI DVP-705

SOUND ★★☆☆☆ **VALUE** ★★★★★ **£380.00** **CONTACT** 0345 581455 www.hitachi.co.uk **GUARANTEE** 1 year

Another budget DVD player: such is the collapse of mainstream DVD prices that the DVP-705 sells for just £380, and is the flagship of a three-strong range. The model is fairly obviously aimed at the video buff on a budget, but certain features and its general engineering might endear it to a more enthusiast audience.

The player can even spring the odd surprise: it's equipped with twin lasers providing full compatibility with CD-R and CD-RW discs. The general standard of presentation is very clean and contemporary, and this player gives every indication of being well built. The fundamentals include an on-board Dolby Digital decoder, though dts is only available from the digital outputs, and a separate stereo output pair is available alongside the 5.1 channel output for two-channel down-mixes and native stereo recordings – from CD for example. The player is equipped with a Scart socket as

well as separate composite and S-Video connectors, the Scart providing RGB. There is no component video out, however. This might almost pass without comment except that Hitachi is one of the few UK sources of televisions with component video inputs, some of which even boast progressive scan.

Video related features include 2x and 4x zoom, various play speeds, and some powerful disc navigation tools, including one that shows a sequence of thumbnails for direct scene access.

SOUND QUALITY

This one split the panel. One listener described the DVP-705 as "boring, nasty and flat", and of sounding "as though it was the 100th time [he] had heard the music that day", while the next found it "not very vibrant, but uncoloured and eminently listenable". Other panellists' comments were closer to the second listener

than the first, and the vote in the hands-on testing went with the consensus.

It seems clear that this player was never designed to appeal to the audiophile fraternity. It is simply a decent quality, well-endowed mainstream video player, but it is well enough built for excuses for the sound to be unnecessary on the whole. At the same time, there is a curious anonymity about the sound. The bass lacks power and the treble is a tad sanitised and lazy, with a consequent reduction in analysis clearly audible in the test programme material, which is quite searching in this respect. The Bartok clearly didn't

Top of its range this Hitachi's strengths are in the video department.

yield its best, and the Weber seemed slightly defocused, but the two rock recordings sounded attractively full and propulsive.

CONCLUSION

The Hitachi is perhaps not as involving as the best, but it is a perfectly acceptable, low- to mid-price player with a long feature set and only mild limitations – the lack of dts decoding when Dolby Digital decoding is available is clearly an unwelcome inconsistency, but at least you get RGB, and some powerful disc navigation aids.

THE LAB REPORT

ALTHOUGH THE S/N RATIO of the Hitachi is lower than, say, the Denon at 98dB, the residual noise floor remains far 'cleaner' and freer of spurious digital artefacts. Stopband rejection is much improved at 71dB and though the 430psec of jitter is higher, it's largely low-rate stuff which has a reduced subjective impact. Distortion only raises its head with high treble signals at the peak 1.85V output where the low 0.001% recorded at 1kHz increases to 0.9% (20kHz) along with an

increase in noise. This is due to a premature overload and drops to just 0.02% at 20kHz/-6dBfs. In practice it's unlikely to be a problem. Decoded and down-mixed outputs are within 0.006% (re. Dolby 5.1 encode, -20dBfs), increasing to just 0.01% at 18kHz while the response is very flat (just -0.3dB down at 20kHz). A multi-DAC codec feeds the 5.1 channel outputs and includes a 96kHz capacity for DVD music discs. Note that these discs are downsampled to 48kHz unless the digital output is switched off.

"IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT THIS PLAYER WAS NEVER DESIGNED TO APPEAL TO THE AUDIOPHILE FRATERNITY."



"Beauty and A Beast"



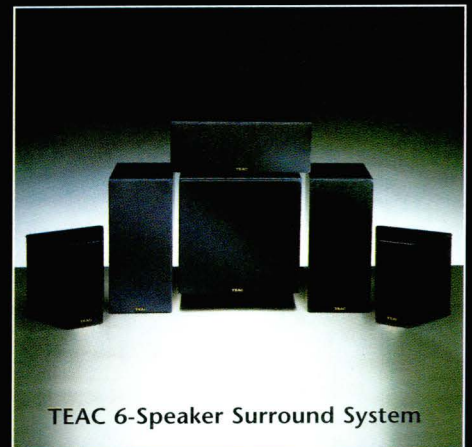
Home Theatre systems used to be big, cumbersome and ugly. And, their performance was pretty ordinary too.

But, all that has now changed. Because TEAC have just introduced a Home Theatre System with stunning looks and a performance way beyond its compact size. It is light years beyond your imagination. It comes complete with a 5 x 50W amplifier, Dolby Digital DVD Player and a 6 Speaker package that includes an active sub with variable crossover and gain,

matched voicing centre, left and right speakers, and bipolar rear speakers. It's all ready to plug in and play, all you need is a television. It will change the way you watch movies and other programmes at home for good. And best of all, the system costs less than £1100.

For once, a movie story with a happy ending.

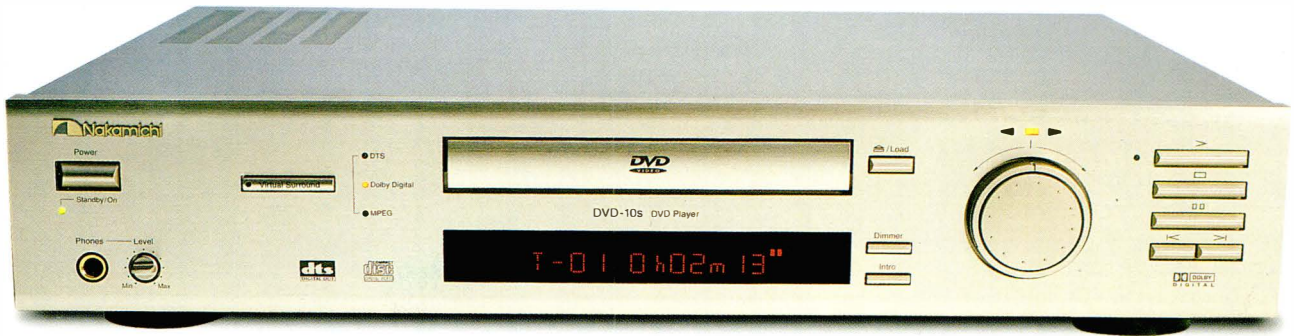
Visit your TEAC Stockist for a demonstration or call TEAC on 01923 819630 for information on this extraordinary system.



TEAC 6-Speaker Surround System

TEAC

The TEAC DVD Home Theatre System



NAKAMICHI DVD-10S

SOUND ★★☆☆☆ **VALUE** ★★☆☆☆ **£599.99** **CONTACT** 020 8863 9117 www.nakamichi.com **GUARANTEE** 2 year

An upgraded version of the Nakamichi DVD-10, the DVD-10S differs only in relatively minor details. For example, it now has a coaxial digital electrical output, where the DVD-10 had only an optical output.

In some ways the DVD-10S falls between two stools. It is priced as a specialist component player, and has a number of the attributes of such a machine, including the kind of build quality and under-the-skin engineering you would expect. But although well endowed on the whole, there are some irritating omissions. For example, although the instructions clearly make reference to a version of this player with a Scart socket, there is no such socket here, which means there is no RGB video output either. You're stuck with S-Video (not as good) or composite video (the dregs of the earth), or component video (excellent, but virtually unusable in the UK as it is not widely supported

except by a handful of high end display devices).

Another omission is an on-board dts decoder. Although it is always best to use an outboard processor if possible, the Nakamichi can decode Dolby Digital soundtracks, and including one and not the other undermines the usefulness of the Dolby decoder, while presumably saving very little money. Our guess is that Nakamichi has settled for using an old Dolby-only version of the surround sound processor, and the particular mix of features gives the impression that this player is not as up-to-date as some of its rivals.

SOUND QUALITY

The Nakamichi received mixed notices on test. There is no doubt that its "disciplined yet very detailed" sound quality put it in the top part of the group, but this was alongside some less expensive models which performed at least equally well. The

panel found this player on the thin, raw side of neutral, with a lack of real substance and weight to the sound, whether sourced from CD or DVD-Video (specifically DAD 24/96). Vocals sounded expressive and focussed, and the Sex Without Bodies disc was spacious and articulate, and probably a step up from CD, though it is difficult to be definitive about this.

Some aspects of the sound are less than pleasant, and there is a raw, almost metallic edge that the Nakamichi tended to underline. Orchestral material benefited from the Nakamichi's clarity and transparency, but again there was a defi-

Excellent build quality but the results don't quite match the price.

nite thinness of tone that was simply unappealing.

CONCLUSION

One final, very important change from the DVD-10 is the price, which is down from an uncompetitive £800 to £599.99. Given that others have come down in price too, this is still expensive, but it could be argued that this is justifiable on the grounds that Nakamichi is a premium brand, with suitably premium quality engineering to match.

"ORCHESTRAL MATERIAL BENEFITED FROM THE NAKAMICHI'S CLARITY AND TRANSPARENCY."



THE LAB REPORT

THIS 'S' VERSION OF THE original DVD-10 is a markedly more sophisticated player, able to read CD-R and DVD software and equipped with a Matsushita (Panasonic) Dolby decoder and multi-channel codec's to feed its 5.1-channel analogue outputs. The integrated DAC technology causes some compromise in the overall S/N ratio (just 97dB) and limits its low-level resolution, but the spectrum is clear of spurious digital distortions. The MASH-style noise-shapers do output higher-than-average levels

of ultrasonic noise, however, so expect some variation in subjective performance with different amplifiers (see HFC214). Distortion is very low at 0.0008% through the midrange, increasing slightly to 0.016% (20Hz) and 0.009% (20kHz) at the frequency extremes. This is true with CD and 5.1-encoded material. Jitter is low at 245psec, the response slightly rolled-off at -0.6dB (re. 20kHz) and the output level bang-on target at 2.0V. Nakamichi seems to have found the right technical formula.

New Blue Series

A Statement of
Style and Power



The first impression of a tiger is its powerful roar, intended to strike fear deep in the heart. But observe the tiger a little longer, and you begin to notice gentler qualities and subtler nuances. You discover that the tiger is more than the roar.

Loud and Proud?

When you listen to music and watch movies, something similar happens. At first, we may be bowled over by the roar of a loud and proud home entertainment system. In technical terms, the "roar" is wide dynamic range and high maximum sound pressure level. Both are key elements in recreating the live-ness of recorded music and the impact of movie surround sound. But in the long run, we

demand more than the roar for a fully satisfying listening and viewing experience.

Loud and Clear!

Fortunately, like the tiger, the DALI Blue Series has much more to offer. Not just loud and proud, but also loud and clear. As one independent audio journal recently described it:

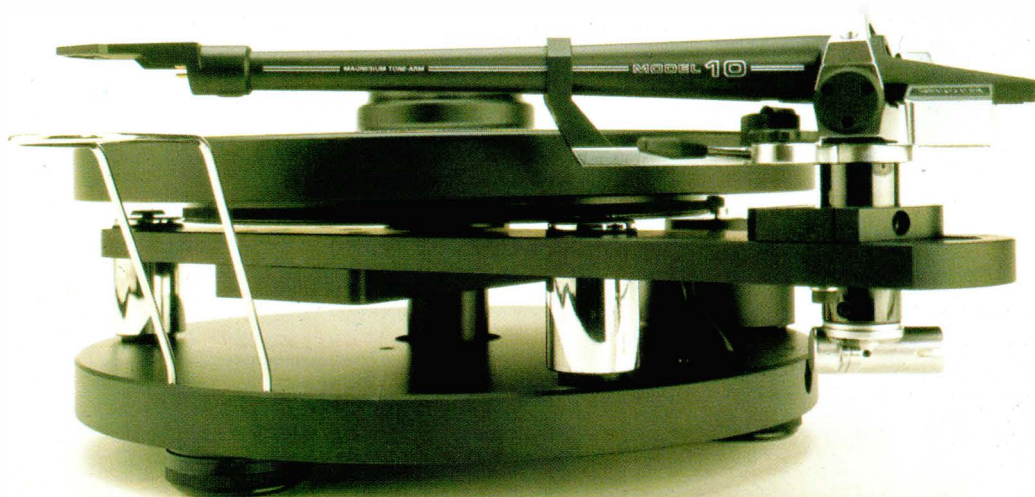
"DALI loudspeakers take your mind off technology and let you focus on the musical experience."



DALI DENMARK • WWW.DALI.DK

SME

MODEL 10



probably the world's most sought after turntable....

Details and reviews on request from:

SME LIMITED • STEYNING • SUSSEX • BN44 3GY • ENGLAND • ☎+44 (0)1903 814321 • ☎+44 (0)1903 814269
www.sme.ltd.uk • e-mail – sales@sme-ltd.demon.co.uk



PHILIPS DVD957

SOUND ★★★★★ **VALUE** ★★★★★ **£399.00** **CONTACT** 020 8689 4444 www.philips.co.uk **GUARANTEE** 1 year

One of the best-equipped players in this survey, this is a relatively inexpensive DVD player with an on-board processor for Dolby Digital and dts, a dual function remote control that can operate a Philips TV, and the ability to drive headphones via a front panel volume control. It even plays CD-Rs, though I could find nothing in the instructions to suggest that it was CD-R compatible. A front panel jog dial helps with disc navigation, but although this particular feature is missing from the remote control, it is easy to access the plethora of play and trick play modes via a clearly labelled bank of control buttons on the handset.

Interconnections are provided for composite, S-Video and the excellent (but almost unusable) component video standard, which is presumably included in deference to the requirements of the US market, where this standard is extensively supported. The

usual optical and electrical digital outputs are included – but as with so many of the test group, RGB video is not, which is a pity given its superiority over S-Video.

SOUND QUALITY

This player received split notices from the panel. They clearly felt uncomfortable about the way it performed at the start of the day, but having acclimatised later to the less than scintillating performance of these surrogate CD players, they were understandably more forgiving the second time around. Because we are interested in comparing like with like, the second set of results are more representative, and I agree with the panel's consensus view that the Philips sounded strikingly solid and dynamic, with good musical resolution. It is fair to point out, though, that the DVD957 also sounds a tad ill-disciplined, which was particularly obvious when comparing CD replay with a good CD

player – in this case the Cyrus dAD1.5.

Of the test tracks, the panel didn't altogether approve of Dave's True Story, but they did recognise its lively, ambience-rich quality, and although the disc is not as sophisticated or as smooth as one might like, the Philips was fairly true to the spirit of the recording. The Bartok was a little edgy, but the Weber sounded excellent, with rich and full tonal colouring and a realistically solid foundation to the soundstage. The panel praised the Philips tonal quality and was relaxed about coloration artefacts, though I feel they may have been a little too

The Philips is packed with home grown (i.e. Dutch) technology and a selection of virgins!

kind to it here. But everyone was agreed that it offered good resolving power and a generally clean, uncontrived performance from CD.

CONCLUSION

The Philips scores well for sound quality, with clean, detailed CD sound and a sparking performance from DVD recordings. It more than holds its own for video performance too on a like for like basis, but in the end picture quality is compromised by the lack of RGB.

“IT OFFERED GOOD RESOLVING POWER AND A GENERALLY CLEAN, UNCONTRIVED PERFORMANCE FROM CD.”



THE LAB REPORT

PACKED WITH HOME-GROWN technology, Philips' DVD-957 puts in a remarkable technical performance. The on-board decoder handles both DD and dts software while a 96kHz-compatible codec services its 5.1-channel analogue outputs. Distortion climbs to just 0.012% at 20kHz with linear PCM (CD) and Dolby Digital material but falls to an astonishing low of 0.0003% through the midrange. The 1.8V peak output is nearly 1dB below the 2V norm but the overall S/N ratio is impressively symmetrical at

105dB on both channels. Channel separation is also better than 100dB while errors in low-level linearity are just +0.0/-0.3dB over a full 100dB dynamic range. Clock accuracy is spot-on and though the 380psec of principally data-induced jitter is not especially high it is, perhaps, sufficient to bleach a little of the music's natural colour. Otherwise it seems churlish to criticise what is a solid set of results combined with fast and secure track access and across-the-board compatibility (see Pioneer, p49).

Question: Is this the best amplifier ever built?

Answer: oui, si, ya, nai,
ja, igen, yes,
haan, ken, evet,
chai khan, ano,
da, hai, ia.....

In any language the answer is the same



The Veritas P400 Digital Power Amplifier.

400 watts of pure power.

Made in England without compromise.

V E R I T A S

Veritas Horn Systems Ltd

Manor Farm Barns
Glandford, Holt
Norfolk NR25 7JP
Tel: 01263 741417 Fax: 01263 740937
e-mail: p400@veritashifi.co.uk
web: www.veritashifi.co.uk

*" the most musically complete
power amplifier I have used"*

Ivor Humphreys, HiFi News



PIONEER DV-636D

SOUND ★★★★★ **VALUE** ★★★★★ **£399.99** **CONTACT** 01753 789789 www.pioneer.co.uk **GUARANTEE** 1 year

The predecessor of the DV-636D was the DVD-626D (which received a Best Buy in *HFC* 198), the first Pioneer DVD player with a built-in surround sound decoder. Previous players, including all their more costly models, relied on the use of an outboard processor or an integrated home cinema amplifier, so the DV-626D was something of a catch-up exercise designed to appeal to the serious end of the entry-level market. The DV-636D has a mildly reworked version of the on-screen set-up routine that optionally provides a guided route through the thicket of settings. Some of the more esoteric video settings – sharpness, detail, black and white level adjust, and so on – have been stripped out. This is perhaps partly because they were out of keeping with the non-specialist nature of the beast, but it's also to trim costs – the retail price has dropped around £50. The output sockets are no longer

gold plated, but the twin Scart socketry allows RGB signals to be passed through even when the player is turned off, and the Pioneer now not only plays CD-Rs, but CD-RWs and even unfinished discs straight from your CD burner.

The speaker set-up is simplified to the point where any references to the size or distance of individual speakers has been excised. On the other hand, the DV-636D still resolutely insists on being able to digitally deliver 96kHz from appropriately recorded and enabled discs. Scart with RGB is available too, and the player will even memorise user settings for up to 15 discs.

SOUND QUALITY

On this occasion it was not possible to use an outboard 24-bit/96kHz compatible D/A convertor, though from prior experience with the Pioneer DV-626D this led to a substantial improvement over players

without a 24/96 output – albeit at a cost that suggests that more costly players in the range would be more realistic partners. Never mind. The Pioneer is clearly a very superior DVD player: it comes close to specialist (if budget) CD player standards. "Pretty good," said one, while another highlighted the Pioneer's "open, spatial" feel, commenting that the player grew on him during the course of the presentation. Although it didn't do anything startling with the source material for better or for worse, the Pioneer DV-636D was praised for its warmth and detail, and its palpably 'come hither', almost feisty sound quality.

All things to all men, or at least to those on a real world budget.

It was also extremely impressive as a video player, where it combined excellent fine detail with particularly good contrast and the kind of highlight and shadow detail more typical of bigger players with much higher price tags.

CONCLUSION

This is how it should be done: a near-budget player with wings, the Pioneer doesn't belittle the source material, but instead allows it full range and expression, providing the pictures to match.

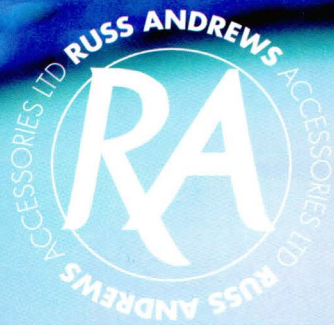
THE LAB REPORT

DESPITE EMPLOYING ITS own video processor and a Yamaha Dolby/dts decoder, the *audio* performance of Pioneer's DV-636D bears close comparison with the Philips DV-957 if only because both players share the same multi-channel DAC, the UDA1328. As with Philips' player, the DV-636D enjoys remarkably low distortion through the midrange frequencies (0.0005% at 0dBFs to 0.004% at -30dBFs) with a wide 105dB S/N ratio. Otherwise, the exceptionally low 158psec jitter spectrum is not

dissimilar to those obtained from Meridian's very high end CD players and DACs of a few years back! Other differences between the Philips and Pioneer models include a slightly more obvious treble roll-off in the latter, with slightly poorer channel separation and low-level linearity. But it's the unusual noise-shaping characteristic of the DAC's output and only modest ~55dB stopband rejection of its digital filter that lends the DV-636, as well as the DVD-957, a characteristic, technical fingerprint.

"THE DV-636D WAS PRAISED FOR ITS WARMTH AND DETAIL, AND ITS 'COME HITHER', ALMOST FEISTY SOUND."





Why settle for
 anything else
 when you can **OWN** something
 this good!



KIMBER 4TC Speaker Cable
 Terminated with KIMBER Bananas
 £174 per 2.5m pair

*"detail and neutrality are first class
 and treble is very well extended and
 open... some of the best depiction of
 depth I've heard, and instrumental
 placing is well defined."*

Richard Black, Hi-Fi Choice,
 Issue 203, June 2000.



"for the best cables, CDs and accessories"

Mail Order Direct on UK Freephone **0800 373467** quoting ref: AC51 and request a catalogue
 Cable Upgrade Scheme • Lifetime Guarantee • 30 Day Home Trial • Expert Advice



RUSS ANDREWS ACCESSORIES LTD., FREEPOST NWW881A, KENDAL, LA8 9ZA.
 Tel:+44 (0)1539 825500 Fax:+44 (0)1539 825540 E-mail: AC51@russandrews.com www.russandrews.com



Sole UK Distributor
 for KIMBER KABLE



ROTEL RDV-995

SOUND ★★★★★ **VALUE** ★★★★★ **£700.00** **CONTACT** 08705 357357 www.rotel.com **GUARANTEE** 2 year

This model brings with it the kind of thinking that you'd usually find in Rotel's component hi-fi range. It is unusually heavy for a mid-market DVD player, and although only quite modestly equipped, it makes no show of the few fancier features at its disposal, most of which are accessible only from the remote control – in some cases by pressing obscure two-key combinations.

Nevertheless, the list includes a 'digest' function and picture thumbnails for disc navigation, various picture condition controls and more. There is no Scart socket and hence no RGB output, but component, S-Video and composite video are all available, with electrical and digital outputs and a single pair of analogue outputs. There is no on-board Dolby Digital or dts decoder, though both are available for external processing using either of the digital outputs. The remote control can be persuaded to

operate the basic features of most televisions, and the player can be wire-linked with other Rotel components for unified remote control using rear panel sockets.

SOUND QUALITY

An interesting and distinctive player, the Rotel was generally liked by the panel, but it did not escape notice that there was apparently something missing in the midband (one listener claimed to hear a suck-out around 200Hz). Perhaps as a result of this the player had a more boisterous, dynamic and even aggressive balance than usual. "A bit of a hooligan" was how one panellist put it, while another concluded that the Rotel sounded "bigger and boomier" than the rest of the group, pointing also to some coloration and a degree of brightness to the sound.

The David Gray recording was affected disproportionately, and did sound a little rough around the

edges, but on the whole the other recordings sounded lively and involving, and the Rotel was one of the more satisfactory players on test, especially playing compact discs. It was strong medicine at times, and vocal recordings (including Sex Without Bodies) tended to sound rather aggressive, but the bass was meaty, dynamics were bold and the whole effect was less timid and more interesting than usual. Picture performance was quite good, but there was a little more video noise than usual via the composite video output, highlighting that the Rotel RDV-995

A substantial player that's modest about its extensive features.

is a player whose main appeal is to the user looking for a strong audio performance.

CONCLUSION

This generally attractive, if sometimes strident-sounding, player is bold and exciting, but occasionally unsubtle. It offers picture quality that is good, but slightly noisy. As with several of the other models, RGB has not been included in a model whose thrust is a little more US-centric than some.

THE LAB REPORT

ROTEL'S USE OF A LINEAR, as opposed to switch-mode, power supply adds bulk to the RDV-995 but reflects its desire to afford the best possible sound quality from what is essentially a *video* source. A dual-laser transport ensures compatibility with all disc types while the final analogue stage could have been culled from a high quality CD player.

Only the use of JVC's MN35503 DAC betrays the origins of the chassis, yielding a substantial 111dB S/N ratio, very low 0.0008% distortion

(from 0dBfs to -30dBfs) but relatively weak 38dB rejection of digital 'images'.

The response is as flat at the treble extremes (20kHz) as it is through the midrange, but there is the slightest boost (+0.1dB) through the mid treble. Jitter is a little high though, for while the profiled noise floor of the RDV-995 matches that of JVC's XV-523, the 266psec jitter increases to 895psec in the Rotel courtesy of two dominant sidebands at 1159Hz and its harmonic at 2318Hz.

"THIS IS A PLAYER WHOSE MAIN APPEAL IS TO THE USER LOOKING FOR A STRONG AUDIO PERFORMANCE."



If it's cutting edge.



It's here.

The Digital Superstore



SANYO DVD1500

SOUND ★★☆☆☆

VALUE ★★★★★

£219.00

CONTACT 01923 246363

www.sanyo.co.uk

GUARANTEE 1 year

The Sanyo's rear panel consists of acres of black metal, with sockets for analogue audio, composite and S-Video (Y/C) out, and an optical digital output. Well, you may say, at least there's a Scart socket with an RGB option – and there's also a switch for PAL/NTSC switching in the unlikely event that your TV objects to transcoded NTSC signals. The Sanyo is also one of only three players here with a headphone socket and level control, and the remote control looks quite comprehensive. Even better, the on-screen menu and the screen saver are more attractive and understandable than several of the others, though the list of adjustable features is short and sweet: multi-angle, a 2x zoom feature, some simple repeat modes and a picture mode switch with settings for standard, mild and black and white are more or less the lot.

Build quality is not an obvious strength of this utilitarian model, but the front panel display is adequate, the blue illuminated bar above the loading drawer (a styling device first seen in a slightly different form from Technics) is not unattractive, and the loader (Sanyo is a major manufacturer of disc mechanisms) is smooth and quiet.

SOUND QUALITY

The general feel and disc handling of the Sanyo may have given a slightly more positive impression than expected from the modest engineering involved, but sadly this didn't extend to the way it sounded, which was much more in tune with its cheap, cheerful appearance. The player sounded coloured and rather crude, with strict limits to its musical resolving power. Complex recordings like the Bartok sounded muddled and rushed, and the Weber lacked body, as well as sounding

oddly muted in its upper registers. Spatially the player sounded flat, almost irrespective of what was being played, and oddly distant too, as though it was all happening behind the plane of the loudspeakers. With the non-classical material, the Sanyo sounded slightly more at home, with a reasonable sense of timing driving the music along.

On screen, however, the Sanyo turns out to be one of the more likeable players. Picture resolving power isn't particularly high, and indeed maybe this is a necessary trade-off at the price, but video performance is clean and noise free, even composite video looking more

A great video player for the money but not a first choice for music.

natural and balanced than usual. The provision of RGB is an unusual strength at this price level, and it gave it a distinct edge in the group.

CONCLUSION

An unexpectedly good on-screen showing from this cheap and cheerful player doesn't make up for the dynamically soft and poorly organised sound. The DVD1500 is probably a better buy than some of the no-name players at this end of the market, but don't throw your CD player out just yet.

THE LAB REPORT

THE MOST AFFORDABLE DVD player in our survey is also the more technically primitive. Important issues such as compatibility with CD-R and DVD media are not compromised while track/title access times are comparable with far costlier players. Nevertheless, Sharp is not realising the full potential of the Burr-Brown PCM1723 DAC that feeds the two-channel audio outputs. The peak level is about 1.6dB lower than usual at 1.7V while the A-wtd S/N ratio remains below the 16-bit standard at 89dB. Jitter is

also the highest of the bunch at 1430psec while the spectrum itself is highly complex and not a little untidy with a sea of digitally-derived distortion spaced at intervals of just 20Hz across much of its audible bandwidth. Low-level linearity is wayward by some 2dB at -80dBfs and 5dB at -90dBfs while the response droops by 1dB at 20kHz. Conventional harmonic distortions are low enough at 0.005-0.05% (20Hz-20kHz) at 0dBfs, but digital artefacts persist at higher levels in and out of the audioband.

“THE WAY IT SOUNDED WAS MUCH MORE IN TUNE WITH ITS CHEAP, CHEERFUL APPEARANCE.”



definitive audio

Living Voice • Lowther • Vitavox • Electrofluidics • Art Audio • Border Patrol
 Canary • DNM • MF • Sugden • Wavac • Western Electric • Resolution Audio
 Wadia • Michell • Nott'm Analogue • SME • Ortofon • Van den Hul



...land of opportunity and adventure...

Definitive Audio carries a strict selection of the world's finest front end, amplifier and loudspeaker designs. These are used in an holistic, system oriented approach, with an emphasis on achieving musical insight and satisfaction rather than catering to technical dogma. The results have won acclaim from all corners of the world.

Jason Kennedy - *"Every time I visit Definitive Audio the systems sound better and better"..."The result is staggering."*

Paul Messenger - *"Definitive Audio has the crucial X factor that makes a good system great".*

Alan Sircom - *"...few dealers stock this combination of components...I have encountered few systems that sound as good as this one - at any price...In ten years time you'll still be grateful!"*

We serve the whole of the UK and international markets:
 4 minutes from Junction 25, M1
 15 minutes from East Midlands Airport
 1 hour, 45 minutes by rail from London, St. Pancras

For a unique and positive audio experience that is both reassuring and refreshing, call us on: **0115 9733 222**

Sale of part exchanged and ex-dem items	Sale	New
Michell Orbe turntable.	£1400	£2000
Ortofon Rohman cartridge. (6 months)	£500	£1000
Hadcock tonearm. New	£400	£600
SJS Electroacoustics Model1 pre-amp. Immaculate - rare.	£700	£1000
Audio Innovations P2 phono stage, with full Border Patrol conversion; inc. Hovland film & foil capacitors and choke power supply. Very rare and very special.	£1100	--
Audio Innovations Series 1000 monos. Serviced and re-valved.	£850	--
Art Audio VP-Special pre-amp with phono stage. Full conversion with Hovland film and foil caps and Panasonic potentiometer.	£850	£1450
Art Audio VP-S pre-amp. Standard.	£600	£1150
Art Audio Diavolo. Special chrome finish. Hovland film and foil caps throughout. Border Patrol MB psu (£1000). Great opportunity.	£3500	£5500
Art Audio Quintet monos. Chrome.	£1800	£2400
Living Voice Avatar. Rosewood - refurbished - French polish.	£2100	£2500
Living Voice Auditorium. Walnut - second.	£900	£1500
Helios Model 2 CD player.	£900	£1200
Gloucester Old Spot. 25 head - soiled - virus free.	each - £10	£673
B+W 620i loudspeakers	£200	£400
B+W CDM1 SE loudspeakers	£390	£600
Snell Type J loudspeakers. Oak	£390	--
Snell Type J loudspeakers. Walnut - French polished	£390	--
MAF stands and Pirate stands for above	£70/£150	--
Lowther Bicare 2000 speakers	£500	--
Nottingham Analogue 12" carbon fibre tonearm	£700	£1000

AMEX VISA MASTERCARD
 Tel 0115 973 3222 Fax 0115 973 3666
 internet: www.definitiveaudio.co.uk email: shout@definitiveaudio.co.uk

RED ROSE MUSIC



RED ROSE M5 / R3
 BABY REFERENCE SYSTEM

"People learned to love music by listening to records on simple, compact systems. Countless hours of pleasurable listening were about the music, not the equipment.

Today, many people have large, expensive systems but find they have somehow become disconnected from their love of music. This happened to me too.

Red Rose uses new technology to retrieve what was lost, a way to reconnect to our love of music, with better sound, lower cost and more compact packaging.

The Red Rose R3 Ribbon speakers and Model 5 Integrated amplifier offer fidelity beyond the most expensive high end monster systems for a fraction of the cost and space.

We also make an ultimate Reference System for those who require a no-holds-barred solution - still at much less than you'd expect to pay.

Instead of listening to the sound, please feel the music through the R3's. You will find a path to what you want most, a way to enhance your love of music."

Mark Levinson

RED ROSE MUSIC

Quality and Simplicity
 Get the point?

MDC
 Tel; 01992 573030
 E-mail; mdc.hifi@virgin.net
 Web; mdc-hifi.co.uk





SONY ART COUTURE DVP-S435

SOUND ★★☆☆☆ **VALUE** ★★☆☆☆ **£349.99** **CONTACT** 0990 111999 www.sony.co.uk **GUARANTEE** 1 year

Fashion and packaging are the absolute bane of modern life when they take precedence over content, but few would argue with this player's looks. In case you missed the point, it's helpfully labelled by Sony as part of its Art Couture range and, as DVD players go, this one is a real looker. The horizontal textured motif on the fascia is unique, and the player is physically smaller than any others in the group – or probably any others, full stop.

The feature set breaks little new ground. The player has S-Video and RGB video outputs, the latter via Scart, with a second Scart socket allowing loopthrough TV connections – this will be welcomed by those whose televisions are short of inputs. The set-up display is attractive and friendly, but it's jargon bound and could be the cause of some confusion. Overall though, the build quality and looks are excellent.

SOUND QUALITY

The output level from this player is considerably lower than the average for the group, so you may find you have to raise the volume level significantly to match other inputs in your system – but don't run away with the idea that this is enough to ensure a level playing field. It may look good enough to eat, but it had to work hard to maintain the interest of the panel, and at the end of the day it still failed. "A good buy if you want to save money," said one panellist, before wryly adding, "You'd never buy any more CDs." Another was scarcely less dismissive: "small scale and restrained," he concluded, though he did concede that the player sounded "tidy" and that the acoustic space in the Bartok test recording was "well realised". Another decided that the player sounded "grey [and] anally retentive" and that it sounded as though "on Valium".

My own listening was in keeping with the spirit of the panel. In reality there was little wrong with the Sony, there just wasn't much to get excited about. It all seemed rather flat, and expressively the Sony appeared to be threadbare. The complexities of the Bartok simply passed it by, the sound lacking energy and momentum.

CONCLUSION

Sadly this remained the story all round. It made little difference

You'll need the right amp to get sound that matches the Sony's looks

whether listening to the best of DVD-Video/DAD (24/96) or CD (16/44.1), there was some advantage in the former, but not much. The Sony only really redeemed itself with its on-screen performance, with something approaching a sparking performance, and the fact that it didn't actually sound actively unpleasant must count in its favour.

"IT MAY LOOK GOOD ENOUGH TO EAT, BUT IT HAD TO WORK HARD TO MAINTAIN THE INTEREST OF THE PANEL."



THE LAB REPORT

DESPITE APPEARANCES, THE DVP-S435 clearly owes more than a technological nod to Sony's costlier DVP-S735D (see *HFC* 207). Both players are unusual – by current standards – in *not* recognising CD-R media, although CD-RW, CD and DVD software is reliably detected. The player's output level is bang-on target at 2V and harmonic distortion low enough at 0.002% (re. 0dBfs), but the ultrasonic requantisation noise escaping from its DACs remains fairly substantial. This may well

lead to differences in sound quality with different amplifiers, depending on their susceptibility. Jitter has been reduced over the DVP-S725, but the 725psec that remains is still largely power supply-related and looks sufficiently pervasive to compromise the player's bass performance. Other factors, including the ruler-flat response, the exceptional 100dB+ channel separation and excellent crystal clock selection are more in keeping with the reputation of Sony's budget players.

CONCLUSIONS

Our test group consisted of eight models at prices ranging from £219 to £700, all of which are multi-role disc players. Each play DVD-Video discs, which offer multichannel sound from Dolby Digital or dts soundtracks (theoretically MPEG Audio too, but this European format disappeared almost before it was launched), and also Video CDs, which are big in the far east. They can also cope with so-called DAD discs, which is a stereo-only standard based on 24-bit 96kHz coding, which at one point looked as though it might pre-empt and perhaps even usurp DVD-Audio. Thank goodness this hasn't happened. Finally, of course, our players are surrogate CD players. Given the dynamics

DVD PLAYERS AT A GLANCE



MAKE MODEL	DENON DVD-1000	HITACHI DVP-705	NAKAMICHI DVD-105	PHILIPS DVD-957
PRICE	£299.99	£380.00	£599.99	£399.00
SOUND VALUE	★★★★★	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆
CONCLUSION	Good basic sound and picture quality with CDs and DVDs alike, though an RGB output would have been appreciated.	Twin laser support for CD-R/RW discs. On screen, RGB compatibility helps, whilst CD sound quality is strictly average.	Finely detailed, but raw, sometimes edgy sound from a well built player which has on board Dolby Digital, but no dts, no Scart and no RGB.	Sometimes too boisterous enthusiasm, with lifelike dynamics, fine detailing, and picture quality that is commensurate with the sound.
GUARANTEE	2 YEARS	1 YEAR	2 YEARS	1 YEAR
THE LAB REPORT				
LOW DISTORTION				
LOW JITTER				
WIDE DYNAMIC RANGE				
EFFECTIVE DIGITAL FILTER				
OVERALL RATING				
MEASUREMENTS				
CHANNEL SEPARATION @ 1KHZ	104DB	91DB	103DB	110DB
FREQUENCY RESPONSE @ 20HZ/20KHZ	0.0DB/-0.4DB	0.0DB/-0.3DB	-0.1DB/-0.6DB	0.0DB/-0.16DB
THD VS. LEVEL, 0DBFS @ 1KHZ	0.002%	0.001%	0.0008%	0.0003%
OUTPUT LEVEL, L/R	2.11V/2.12V	1.85V/1.86V	2.0V/2.05V	1.80V/1.80V
S/N RATION (A-WTD)	105.9DB/108.2DB	97.7DB/97.8DB	94.1DB/97.5DB	105.4DB/105.3DB
TOTAL CORRELATED JITTER	328PSEC	429PSEC	247PSEC	380PSEC




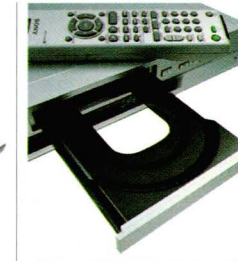
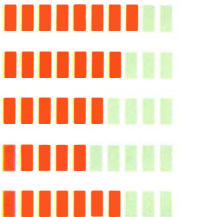


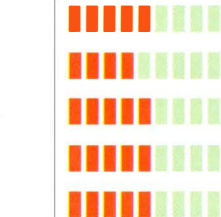
CAN A DVD PLAYER TAKE THE PLACE OF YOUR CD PLAYER? OR SHOULD THEY JUST STICK TO PICTURES? ALVIN GOLD DECIDES.

of the market for disc spinners, it was the latter role that we examined in greatest depth for this test. DAD was assessed, in part because it is a higher quality standard than CD, but the format is on its last legs.

The performance of these players using surround sound data-reduced codecs like Dolby Digital and dts is largely a matter of using a good external surround processor. Many modern DVD players have their own internal processors, but some omit dts, and others lack a full loudspeaker optimisation procedure or bass management facilities. Even if these things have been handled properly, it makes more sense to handle the digital processing as far downstream – as close to the power amplifiers – as possible.

Given that the remit of *Hi-Fi Choice* is primarily sound quality, this leaves CD compatibility as the issue of greatest interest here, and this is where our greatest efforts went. This is a subject that is not often given much consideration elsewhere, but our experience is that the difference in intrinsic sound quality between one DVD player and the next can be surprising, and sometimes shockingly large. Some DVD players sound raw, thin and lifeless, while others may come close to the standards of a good specialist CD player, albeit usually one at a significantly lower price. It is hard to avoid concluding that very few of the models tested here can be considered musically successful. Happily though, there are exceptions...

DVD PLAYERS AT A GLANCE

				
PIONEER DV-636D	ROTEL RDV-995	SANYO DVD1500	SONY ART COUTURE DVP-S435	MAKE MODEL
£749.99	£700.00	£219.00	£349.99	PRICE
★★★★★	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	SOUND VALUE
Startlingly well equipped in certain respects, which sounds, and looks on screen, just as impressive as ever.	Fundamentally well engineered model but mildly disappointing on test, and which sometimes seemed a tad rough around the edges.	Unimpressive physical build is reflected in threadbare sound, though picture quality holds up well, due in part to the RGB output.	The unusually compact DVD-S435 has strong features but was not among the leaders musically, though it acquitted itself well on screen.	CONCLUSION
1 YEAR	2 YEARS	1 YEAR	1 YEAR	GUARANTEE
				THE LAB REPORT
				LOW DISTORTION
				LOW JITTER
				WIDE DYNAMIC RANGE
				EFFECTIVE DIGITAL FILTER
				OVERALL RATING
				MEASUREMENTS
91DB	106DB	80DB	105DB	CHANNEL SEPARATION @ 1KHZ
0.0DB/-0.6DB	0.0DB/0.0DB	-1.2DB/-1.0DB	0.0DB/0.0DB	FREQUENCY RESPONSE @ 20HZ/20KHZ
0.0005%	0.0006%	0.006%	0.002%	THD VS. LEVEL, 0DBFS @ 1KHZ
1.94V/1.93V	2.2V/2.2V	1.66V/1.66V	2.07V/2.04V	OUTPUT LEVEL, L/R
105.0DB/105.3DB	110.7DB/111.1DB	89.3DB/89.4DB	101.4DB/101.5DB	S/N RATION (A-WTD)
160PSEC	895PSEC	1430PSEC	725PSEC	TOTAL CORRELATED JITTER

THE PARAVICINI EFFECT

DAVID VIVIAN MEETS TIM DE PARAVICINI, A LEGENDARY DESIGNER WHO HAS DEDICATED HIS CAREER TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE VALVE AMPLIFIER

Getting Tim de Paravicini to talk about valves isn't as easy as you might think. In fact, navigating a kayak through white water rapids is probably more straightforward. Tim, the man many believe to be responsible for the valve renaissance in Britain in the late 1970s and who would have made a much better Abraham Lincoln in *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure* than the actor chosen, is not your average interviewee.

You see, tangents are a speciality. As are high-G swerves. And point blank 90 degree turns. It seems to be a grey matter thing; Tim's is operating at a higher clock speed than yours and mine, and

probably has an extra processor thrown in for good measure. Formula One driver Michael Schumacher is said to benefit from similar enhanced data assimilation. In Mr deP's case, it manifests itself as a low boredom threshold and the ability to zap from one subject to another along an intricate network of connections that can seem numbingly obscure if you don't keep up. Cars are a favourite diversion (his V20 integrated amp even looks like a car engine) but he's just as likely to ricochet into economics, history or aviation culture. In short, Tim de Paravicini seems to have Hoovered up more knowledge than a library and has access to it that would shame the fastest supercomputer.

This makes him a slippery subject but, everyone agrees, an extraordinary audio

designer. "Clean sheet" and "bleeding edge" (cutting edge in extremis) are two clichés often lumped with his endeavours, which spread over 30 years and have been practised at all corners of the globe, including Japan and South Africa. And Huntingdon. On a rural industrial park near Kimbolton are the headquarters of his company, Esoteric Audio Research-Yoshino, with which he has taken valve amplification (both professional and domestic) to levels of performance few believed possible. That's why I'm here. To peer through the hole at the top of the wall like the bloke in the Guinness Dream Club advert. To discover the meaning of valves.

So that's where we start the interview proper - with that most revered of stereotypes, the valve amplifier: low





Tim's most affordable combo, the EAR 834L preamplifier and 534 power amp.

unmatched mid-band transparency and lucidity but a soft bass and treble. The hallowed valve sound. Does it have to be like that?

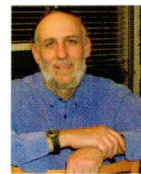
"No, it doesn't," responds Tim, thinking time already down to less than a second. "The problem is, most people use old valve amplifier circuitry and perpetuate the old mistakes. It's not the valves that have the sound, it's the collection of components that go with them - the transformers, and capacitors and so on. When I designed the EAR 509 power amps 20 years ago, I wanted to design a valve amplifier that sounded very close to a transistor amplifier. It had 100 watts per channel and a clear, transparent sound with a firm bass. But I've also made transistor

amplifiers that sound like valve amplifiers. It's all a matter of understanding mechanisms that bridge the gap.

"Designers brought up on transistors don't know the electronic fundamentals of valves. They get the analogies wrong because they fail to understand the equivalency of the operating principles. Consequently that's why transistor and valve designs sound different, rather than the valve *per se*.

"I made this Yoshino 30A, a 30 watt single-ended transistor amplifier with just two transistors instead of valves: one big output transistor and one little driver transistor. That was it, the rest was transformers. It was an expensive amplifier to make but the circuitry was utterly simple. It had a 'valve sound'. Blindfolded, no one would know the dif-

"IT SEEMS TO BE A GREY MATTER THING; TIM'S IS OPERATING AT A HIGHER CLOCK SPEED THAN YOURS AND MINE."



Tim de Paravicini, an amplifier designer who makes your average computer seem rather slow.

FB1



Stars



PMC

01707 393002
www.bryston.ca/pmc
sales@promonitor.co.uk

Ashford (Kent)	Soundcraft HiFi	01 233 624441
Aylesbury	Northwood Audio	01296 428790
Birmingham	Griffin Audio	0121 622 2230
Bournemouth	Suttons HiFi	01202 555512
Brighton	The Powerplant	01273 775978
Bristol	Radfords	0117 944 1010
Cheltenham	Audio T	01242 583960
Chelmsford	Rayleigh HiFi	01245 265245
Chester	Audio Excellence	01244 345576
Dunstable	Technosound	01582 663297
East Grinstead	Audio Designs	01342 314569
Edinburgh	Loud & Clear	0141 221 0221
Glasgow	Stereo Stereo	0141 248 4079
Enfield	Audio T	020 8367 3132
Epsom	Audio T	01372 748888
Guildford	PJ HiFi	01483 504801
Hitchin	David Orton	01462 452248
Hull	The Audio Room	01482 891375
High Wycombe	Audio T	01494 558585
Ipswich	Signals	01473 622866
Kingston	Infidelity	020 8943 3530
Lakeside	Rayleigh HiFi	01708 680551
Leeds	Image Audio	0113 278 9374
Leicester	Leicester HiFi	0116 253 9753
London (W1)	The Cornflake Shop	020 7631 0472
London (NW)	Audio T	020 7794 7848
London (SE)	Billy Vee	020 8318 5755
London (SW)	Auditorium	020 7384 3030
London (SW)	Oranges & Lemons	020 7924 2040
London (SW)	SMC	020 7819 1700
London (W)	Thomas Heinitz	020 7229 2077
Margate	LMD Audio	01843 220092
Newcastle Upon Tyne	Lintone Audio	0191 477 4167
Milton Keynes	Technosound	01908 604949
Nottingham	Nottingham HiFi	0115 924 8320
Norwich	Basically Sound	01508 570829
Oxford	Audio T	01865 765961
Rayleigh	Rayleigh HiFi	01268 779762
Sheffield	Moorgate Acoustics	0114 275 6048
Southampton	Audio T	023 8025 2827
Southend	Rayleigh HiFi	01702 435255
St Albans	Radlett Audio	01727 855577
Swansea	Audio Excellence	01792 474608
Taunton	Mike Manning	01823 326688
Tunbridge Wells	Audio T	01892 525666
Worthing	Phase 3	01903 245577
Worcester	Seven Oaks HiFi	01905 612929
Yeovil	Mike Manning	01935 479361

Agencies include:

ARCAM
LINN
NAIM
MERIDIAN
REGA
B&W NAUTILUS
PROCEED
M+K
NEAT
PMC
LOEWE
SONY PRO
FUJITSU
STAX
GRADO
ORTOFON
DYNAVECTOR
SHAHINIAN
XLO

EXCEED EXPECTATIONS

If choosing your new hi-fi or home cinema in a civilised and relaxed atmosphere from a well-chosen selection of genuine performance equipment appeals, then we are for you.

See and hear the very best with us.

Infidelity
INDECENTLY GOOD HI-FI

9 High Street, Hampton Wick,
Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT1 4DA

020 8943 3530

Full custom installation of home cinema, distributed audio/video and home automation products
Email: infidelity@compuserve.com
www.infidelity.co.uk
Open: Tues - Fri 10.30am - 7pm, Saturday 10am - 6pm

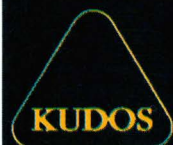


S100

"..the best all-round stand around, probably."
HI-FI CHOICE

S50

Award Winner WHAT HI-FI Best Buy HI-FI CHOICE



available from

neat acoustics

tel: 01833 631021 e: bob@neat.co.uk

“SINGLE-ENDED IS A FASHION THING,” FIRES TIM WITH THE ASSURANCE OF A KUNG FU MASTER DESPATCHING A NEW STUDENT.

ference between that and an equivalent valve amplifier.”

WHY VALVES?

With traditional thinking fast becoming a smudge in the rear view mirror, I try to haul Tim back to fundamentals. Why valves in the first place?

He’s on it before I’ve finished the sentence. “The point is – particularly with power amps – valves still have so many advantages that solid state has yet to catch up. It’s the ability to have good high frequency performance easily that makes valves so attractive. Most transmitters for television and radio are all valved because there aren’t any high-powered transistors that can operate at those elevated frequencies: FM’s 100MHz, TV is in the 500-800MHz band. And when you’re talking about tens of kilowatts, transistors are pathetic. Any boring power valve can operate out to 50MHz without trying. Transistors give up the ghost before they even get to 1MHz. Even MOSFETS don’t have the same abilities that valves have. And that’s why valves can still do a job well without having to use sledgehammer tactics to make them work well.”

I wonder how this translates into the enjoyment of music.

“With transistors, the majority run into what I call high feedback or high precision topologies. But the good measured specifications don’t correlate with what we hear. Our tolerance of classic distortion is quite good. We only hear 3

per cent second harmonic, 1 per cent third harmonic, 0.3 per cent fourth harmonic and so on. But we’re more sensitive to the higher orders of harmonics. A simple valve amplifier has negligible quantities of high orders, whereas the high-spec transistor amplifiers tend to have a lot, and that bothers us. This is the problem; they’re heading down the wrong avenue.”

PUSH-PULL OR SINGLE ENDED

What’s the right avenue for valve designs, push-pull or single-ended?

“Single-ended is a fashion thing,” fires Tim with the assurance of a Kung Fu master despatching a new student. “It has its merits, but it isn’t universally better. In the 1930s, valve manufacturers Mullards were telling us push-pull was superior. The nuts and bolts were that single-ended was inefficient and performed comparatively poorly. Push-pull offered higher efficiency and better performance because it reduced the even harmonic distortions.

“We build single-ended designs here at EAR-Yoshino, but I interpret them differently to other people. Because I design my own transformers, at least I have the one advantage of being able to make the output transformers do the job properly. Most single-ended amplifiers out there are fairly deficient.”

But that’s better than no valve amps at all, the ultimate scenario given that valves usually have to be binned after about 10,000 hours use and production

of new valves is drying up.

“I forecast perhaps another 10 years of reasonable availability of new valves,” says Tim. “But valves stored have an almost indefinite life expectancy, so long as the vacuum holds. I’ve got some valves that were made in 1928 that would still work.

“The Yugoslavs, Czechs and Russians will continue making valves until they get prosperous enough that the bean counters consider those premises to be uneconomic and they put a CD production plant in the same building and make more money per square foot.

“The problem is no one individual like me has enough capital to invest in a plant to make valves. It’s far too specialised. We’d also have to hire enough people with the skills to maintain the equipment. It’s why the valves manufactured today aren’t quite up to scratch. Philips and Mullard built the valve making machines you see in the Czech and Russian plants back in the 60s. Production has been kept going with string and Sellotape, and the skill factor has gone.”

Tim claims the fact that one day there will be no more valves doesn’t bother him. It probably doesn’t. But he will miss them. “If you get to know them well,” he says, “they can speak to you like an oscilloscope. If you study their internals while they’re functioning you can tell whether you’re overloading the amplifier and stuff like that.” Think he likes ‘em.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF VALVES

1904. While working for the Marconi Company, Sir John Ambrose Fleming patents a method of rectifying alternating currents. The patent describes the construction of the first valve, based on an Edison light bulb.

1906. Lee de Forest adds the third electrode (the grid) and creates the Audion valve.

1913. Meissner, Armstrong, de Forest, Langmuir and Round discover that valves can be used in radio telephony and broadcasting.

1920-25. Simple triodes are produced in greater quantities for use in receivers and amplifiers.

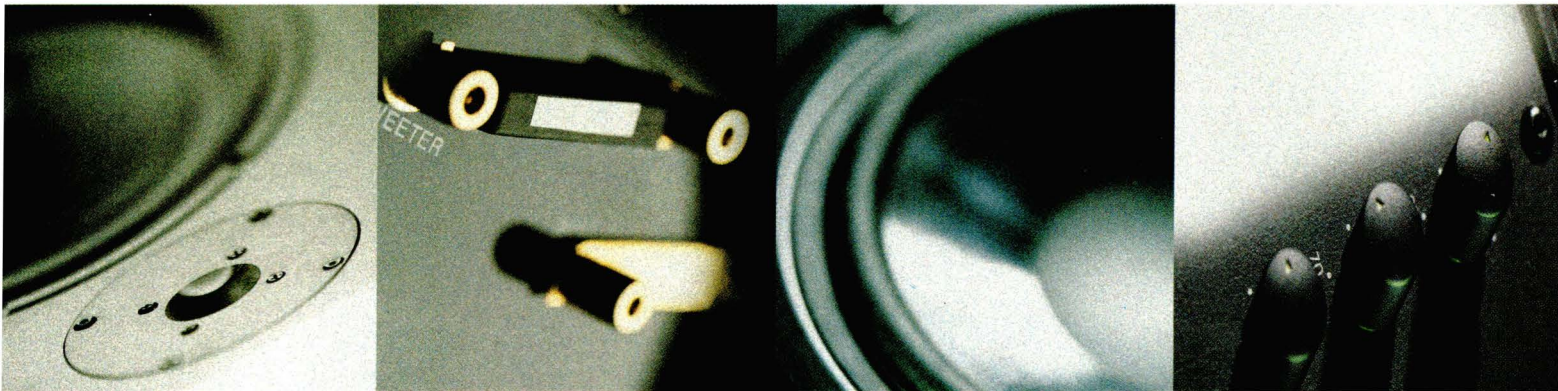
1924. The first tetrode (a triode with an extra grid) appears.

1928. Power valves follow the appearance of the loudspeaker. These are low impedance triodes with longer grid bases. The pentode emerges with an extra grid between the screen grid and anode.

1928-30. Indirectly heated all-mains valves are introduced.

1938. Pressed glass tubes supersede the “pinch” constructed types.

1959. RCA designs the Nu-Vista as a rugged miniature tube with a metal can. Instead of glass, it uses ceramic as the seal technology. Made originally for missiles and rockets, it is compact and can withstand 1000g.



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.

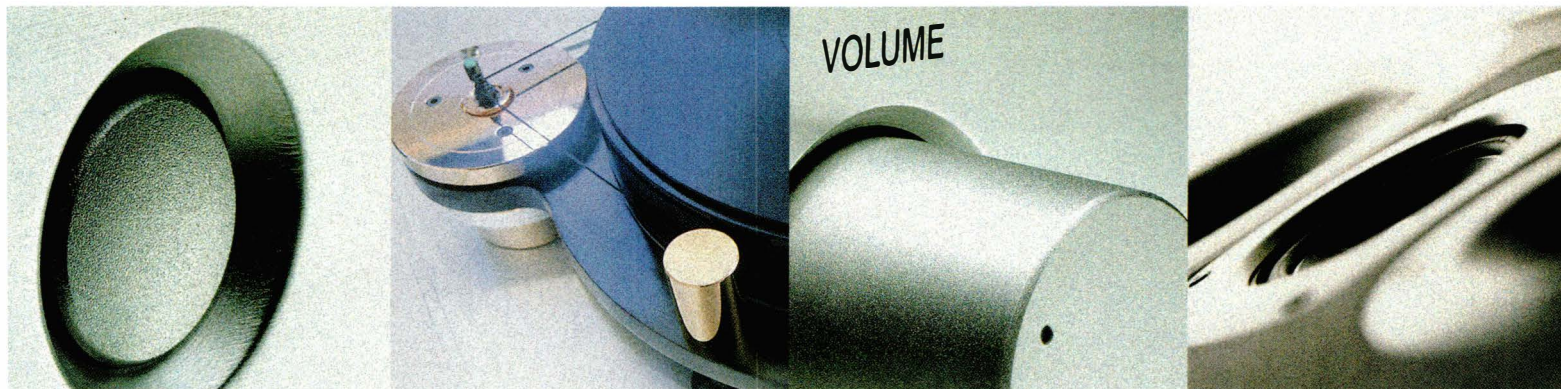
The Role of the Dealer

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
020 8943 3530

Lakeside Retail Park

RAYLEIGH HI-FI
Dansk International
Furniture World
01708 680551

Rayleigh, Essex
RAYLEIGH HI-FI
44a High St. 01268 779762

Ringwood, Hampshire
PHONOGRAPHY
Star Lane 01425 461230

Southend-on-Sea
RAYLEIGH HI-FI
132/4 London Road
01702 435255

Uxbridge
MARTIN-KLEISER
278 High Street
01895 465444

Worthing **PHASE 3 HI-FI**
213-217 Tarring Road
01903 245577

MIDLANDS

Banbury **OVERTURE**
3 Church Lane
01295 272158

Birmingham
SOUND ACADEMY
152a High Street, Bloxwich
01922 493499

Leicester **CYMBIOSIS**
6 Hotel St. 0116 262 3754

Northampton **LISTEN INN**
32 Gold St. 01604 637871

Shrewsbury
CREATIVE AUDIO
9 Dogpole 01743 241924

NORTH

Cheadle **AUDIO COUNSEL**
14 Stockport Road
0161 428 7887

Oldham **AUDIO COUNSEL**
12/14 Shaw Road
0161 633 2602

Sheffield
MOORGATE ACOUSTICS
184 Fitzwilliam St
0114 275 6048

York **SOUND ORGANISATION**
2 Gillygate 01904 627108

SCOTLAND

Edinburgh
RUSS ANDREWS HI-FI
34 Northumberland Street
0131 557 1672

Glasgow **STEREO STEREO**
260 St. Vincent Street
0141 248 4079

N. IRELAND

Belfast **LYRIC HI-FI**
161 Stranmillis Road
028 90 381296

AMPLIFIERS

VALVE AMP OR TRANSISTOR AMP, THAT IS THE QUESTION...
PAUL MESSENGER TAKES ARMS AGAINST A SEA OF TROUBLES
AS HE CHECKS OUT A GAGGLE OF HIGH-END AMPLIFIERS.

As you work your way up the price ladder, amplifiers become more and more diverse, as this group of eight clearly illustrates. It's split 50/50 between valve and transistor designs – between thermionic and solid state if you prefer – which makes for a fascinating contrast, not only in the type of sound these very different technologies create, but also in their whole culture of genesis and operation.

The valve amps are determinedly 20th Century in ergonomics as well as construction. Our four examples mustered just one handset between them – and even then, the Unison's permits remote control over the volume only. All four transistor devices have remote handsets that select between inputs as well as volume, and often do much more besides.

As you might expect from any collection of upmarket amps today, these are all essentially minimalist designs, with neither a tone control nor mono switch between them. Even the good old-fashioned balance control is often omitted, though the use of micro-processor control in a few of the preamps has added some extra sophistication. Vinyl inputs are another rarity on upmarket amps these days, found on just two of the valve models, and only handling highish output moving magnet cartridges.

All the amplifiers were used with my three regular sources (CD, vinyl delivered at line level, and FM radio), but choosing suitable speakers was a little harder. I felt I needed something with full bandwidth, wide dynamic range and, above all, accurate tonal neutrality. Decent sensitivity and a relatively easy load were also on the agenda, to avoid stressing the lower powered valve devices, and indestructibility is another obvious plus. I talked Tannoy into lending me the new Dimension TD12 which fulfils all these criteria very well indeed. True, its load does dip rather at very high frequencies where the supertweeter comes in, but in every other respect it's spot on.

One way of viewing this group is as four valve versus four transistor, but it's just as relevant that there's an equally dramatic split on price. Four of our amps (two valve, two transistor) cost between £1,448 and £2,000, the other four (again two valve and two transistor) fall between £2,950 and £3,250, a ratio which begs the question: is it worth doubling your money?

ON TEST

Valve amplifiers

Audio Note M2Phono/P2SE £3,198.00
Croft Vitali/Series 5C £2,000.00
Rothwell Rubicon/Indus £1,448.00
Unison Research S8 £2,950.00

Transistor amplifiers

Cyrus aCA7.5/PSX-R/2x aPA7 £2,950.00
Densen Beat 200/300 £1,850.00
Electrocompaniet EC4.7/Ampliwire
£3,250.00
Myryad MI 240 £1,500.00

OTHER EQUIPMENT USED

Linn LP12/Armageddon turntable
Naim AR0 tonearm
Dynavector XV-1/Linn Arkiv B cartridges
Naim Prefix phono stage
Naim CDS II CD player
Naim NATO1 tuner
Tannoy Dimension TD12 loudspeakers
Mana, Townshend and Sound
Organisation equipment racks
Naim NACA5 speaker cables
Tannoy prototype cable
Nordost SPM interconnects

MUSIC USED DURING TESTS

Basement Jaxx - *Remedy*
Mari Boine - *Eallin*
Wyclef Jean - *Carnival*
Tom Waits - *Rain Dogs*
Grateful Dead - *Terrapin Station*
Sibelius - *Symphony No. 5 (VPO/Maazel)*
Chemical Brothers - *Brothers Gonna Work it Out*
BBC Radios 3 and 4







AUDIO NOTE M2PHONO/P2SE

TYPE: VALVE AMPLIFIER

SOUND ★★★★★	VALUE ★★★★★	£3,198.00	CONTACT 01273 220511	www.audionote.co.uk	G'TEE 2 year
--------------------	--------------------	------------------	-----------------------------	--	---------------------

The largest and most ambitious of the British valve amp brands, Audio Note UK has a wide range of products covering CD players, DACs, turntables and loudspeakers as well as amplifiers, the latter invariably valve driven, and covering an extraordinarily wide span of price points. This pre-/power combo totals a substantial £3,198, which puts it close to the top of our review group, but there are alternative entry points for the less pecunious.

The £1,499 P2SE power amp comes with its own volume control, so if you only want to use a single source, you only need to buy the power amp. Audio Note's £1,699 M2Phono does, as the name suggests, include a vinyl stage, intended for MM cartridges. If you don't want the costly RIAA-equalised input, there's a straight M2 for less than £1,000.

Whatever the formula, there's no remote control of any kind here, and the 'hands-on' ergonomics will take a bit of practice as all the gold knobs look the same, and the gold-on-black legends are beneath the knobs and not easy to read. Discreetly imposing, the two matching units are just mid-width, but quite tall (to fit the valves inside), and deep too.



The P2SE amp uses pentode output valves in parallel single ended operation.

"IT SEEMS TO ENCOURAGE ONE TO TURN UP THE VOLUME AND JUST BECOME IMMERSSED IN THE BEAUTIFUL SOUND."

Besides the phono stage the preamp has four line inputs, one tape output with off-tape monitoring, plus balance and volume. On the rear, switches select between feedback and non-feedback modes of operation. The power amp is a single-ended design that is specced to deliver 18 Watts per channel.

SOUND QUALITY

A preamp valve worked slightly loose in transit, so initial listening was done with the power amp alone. Very impressive it was too, with great coherence through the broad midband, and a beautifully judged, warm and rich tonality that sounds superbly natural. Radio 3 was particularly engrossing, especially with choral material.

With the preamp installed, it was interesting to compare the effect of the feedback switch. Adding feedback did seem to reduce coloration a little and improve control at both the extreme top and bottom of the audio band, but the overall sound was obviously less natural and real; dynamics seemed more muted and flatter, and the time domain seemed to have become slightly smeared. Feedback was therefore not used.

One might accuse the Audio Note combo of sounding a little dark, and it certainly doesn't over-project or emphasise the presence and top end, but that is mostly a strength, for the way it keeps the broad midband harmonic relationships natural and in good order. The drawback is that it seems to encourage one to turn up the volume, turn it up still further, and just become immersed in the beautiful sound – only to discover that this amp's Achilles heel is its a rather limited loudness capability.

The vinyl input proved perfectly satisfactory, though it sounded just a little understated and lacking in sparkle compared to the line inputs.

CONCLUSIONS

A glorious dynamic and temporal coherence with a thoroughly natural and comfortable balance make for an exceptionally enjoyable and involving amplifier, albeit with the cautionary note that it might not suit those who like their music loud.

CROFT VITALI SC/SERIES 5C

SOUND ★★★★★

VALUE ★★★★★

£2,000.00
CONTACT 01223 203200

www.eminentaudio.co.uk
G'TEE 2 years

TYPE: VALVE AMPLIFIER

I first recall coming across Glenn Croft's amplifiers when I was editing this magazine some 15 years ago. Although a reclusive individual, he was one of the pioneers who helped reintroduce valve amps to the UK – yet the amplifiers themselves looked very 1950s, and were a lot more reasonably priced than most of the thermionic competition. Very little seems to have changed. The amps are still reasonably priced, still look like 1950s throw-backs, and Glenn still hides behind his answering machine, though now he's got someone a little more extrovert to help out on the UK distribution.

Why 1950s? Because their brown and gold hues remind me of those venerable Leaks and Rogers, before everything went silver and/or black from the late 1960s. Actually, I think they look quite fetching – the nice wooden fascias, and brown hammerite finish chassis and cover fit in rather better with typical soft furnishings than regulation black 'n' silver.

The Vitali SC preamp costs £750 and the Series 5C power amp is £1,250, or £2,000 in toto. The manual is full of a hi-fi philosophy that's both entertaining and contentious.

The preamp includes a vinyl disc input, of the moving magnet variety, but just three line level inputs, which is a bit limited for the modern world. There's no remote control, and just three knobs, one to select the inputs or 'mute', the other two separately adjusting the volume of each channel – tricky at first, though I guess you get used to them. The power amp is rated at 30 Watts/channel, and uses classy components like C-core output transformers and paper-in-oil capacitors.

SOUND QUALITY

I was quite shocked when I first put the Crofts into the system. After the Rothwell combo, the contrast in sonic presentation was quite dramatic. Whereas the latter has a somewhat laid back neutrality, this Croft duo seems to strip away veils and deliver an astonishingly tangible presence, with superb



voice reproduction, and exceptional stereo focus, transparency and dynamic drama.

The Tannoy TD12 speakers are also neutral with laid back tendencies, yet with this amplifier they sounded quite forward, punching the midband into the room with great gusto and enthusiasm. Christy Moore's chuckling asides on *Live at the Point* were eerily realistic, as if the guy was standing there on the stage in front of you, while Tom Waits' often mumbled delivery on *Rain Dogs* was much more lucid and easier to figure out than usual. And if the Croft combo does have some innate forwardness (relatively speaking and under our conditions), most loudspeakers tend to do the reverse, so the combination should be quite complementary.

The vinyl input also gave splendid results, again with that uncanny tangibility and quite superb stereo imaging. Indeed, by adding a little extra warmth and a little less presence, this medium seemed an altogether more comfortable match for the Crofts than CD.

CONCLUSIONS

The sheer vividness of the Croft combo's voice rendition brings a real slice of high end performance to the party. But optimising system performance might be tricky, and it does have its idiosyncracies, but is definitely worth close investigation if you can handle the ergonomics.

"THIS CROFT DUO SEEMS TO STRIP AWAY VEILS AND DELIVER AN ASTONISHINGLY TANGIBLE PRESENCE."

Retro styling and twin volume controls disguise a magical sound.



WHERE TO FIND US

BASINGSTOKE 01256 324311
2 Feathers Lane

BRENTWOOD 01277 264730
30 Crown Street

BRISTOL 0117 926 4975
65 Park Street

CARDIFF 029 2022 8565
134/136 Crwys Road

CAMBERLEY 01276 685597
173-175 London Road

CHELTENHAM 01242 583960
38 Winchcombe Street

CHESTER 01244 345576
88/90 Boughton

ENFIELD 020 8367 3132
159a Chase Side

EPSOM 01372 748888
15 Upper High Street

EXETER 01392 491194
156 Sidwell Street

GLOUCESTER 01452 300046
58 Bristol Road

HIGH WYCOMBE
01494 558585
30-32 Castle Street

LONDON: W. HAMPSTEAD
020 7794 7848
190 West End Lane

OXFORD 01865 765961
19 Old High Street, Headington

READING 0118 958 5463
4 Queens Walk
Broad Street Mall

SOUTHAMPTON 023 8025 2827
10-12 Hursley Road
Chandlers Ford

SWANSEA 01792 474608
9 High Street

SWINDON 01793 538222
60 Fleet Street

TUNBRIDGE WELLS
01892 525666
6 High Street

WORCESTER 01905 619059
Independence House
The Trinity

All shops are closed on Mondays



For the very latest information
please check our web sites:

www.audio-t.co.uk

www.audio-excellence.co.uk

[www.audio-t.co.uk]
[www.audio-excellence.co.uk]

audioX

E X C E L L E N C E

audioT

THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

Audio Excellence and Audio T have joined forces to bring you the benefits and security of buying from a larger dealer, yet each of our stores is run as an individual specialist shop. Our staff are enthusiastic and friendly, with the knowledge and experience to satisfy your expectations. Plus, we haven't forgotten that buying hi-fi should be as much fun as listening to it!

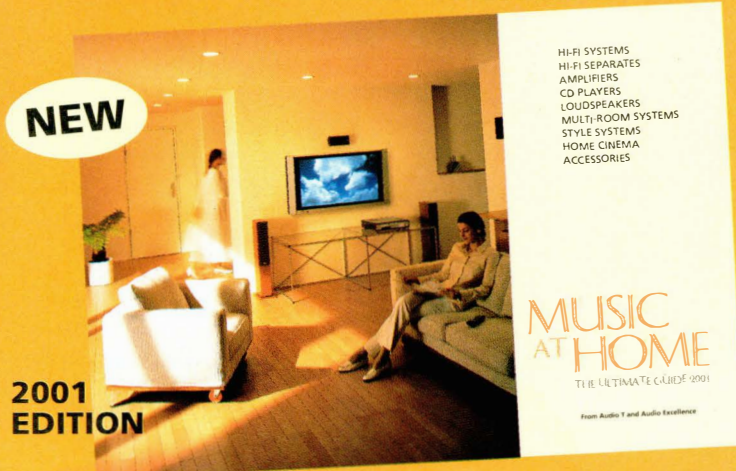
CUSTOM INSTALLATION

If you want your Hi-Fi equipment neatly and attractively integrated into your home we can plan out the system to be installed, the choice of the equipment to be used, where it will be installed in your home and how it will be connected. Call us for advice on how you can enjoy music all round your home.

- 55 YEARS JOINT EXPERIENCE
- 3 YEAR GUARANTEE ON HI-FI SEPARATES
- FULL DEMONSTRATION FACILITIES
- PRICE PROMISE
- 10 DAY EXCHANGES
- 30 DAY NO COST PENALTY UPGRADES
- PART EXCHANGES
- INTEREST FREE OPTION ON SALES OVER £250*
- HOME LOANS AND HOME DEMONSTRATIONS
- EVENING DEMONSTRATIONS BY APPOINTMENT

For your FREE copy of **MUSIC AT HOME**,
The Ultimate Guide 2001
FREEPHONE 0500 101501 (quote ref HFC3)

or visit our web site at www.music-at-home.co.uk



Products we sell
include:

ACOUSTIC
ENERGY
ALR/JORDAN
ARCAM
AVI
B&W
BOW
BRYSTON
CASTLE
CELESTION
CHORD
ELECTRONICS
CURA
CYRUS
DAVIS
DENON
DENSEN
DYNAUDIO
DYNAVECTOR
ELAC
KEF
LINN
LOEWE
MARANTZ
MERIDIAN
METZ
MICHELL
MILLER
& KREISELL
MISSION
NAD
NAIM
NAKAMICHI
ONKYO
PANASONIC
PIONEER
PMC
PRIMARE
PROAC
PRO-JECT
QUAD
REGA
REL
ROKSAN
ROTEL
RUARK
SENNHEISER
SHAHINIAN
SONANCE
SONY
SYSTEMLINE
TAG McLaren
TALK
ELECTRONICS
TANNOY
TEAC
WILSON
BENESCH
YAMAHA

Not all products
are stocked by
every shop so
please check with
your local branch
before travelling

*Subject to status.
Written details on
request



ROTHWELL RUBICON/INDUS

SOUND ★★★★★ **VALUE** ★★★★★ **£1,448.00** **CONTACT** 01204 654614 www.rothwell.omnia.co.uk **G'TEE** Life

A new name to this reviewer, Andrew Rothwell has apparently been building his valve amplifiers up in Bolton for around a decade now, quietly getting on with the business of building hi-fi in the classic British 'cottage industry' tradition. Although this amp combo is valve powered, that's not a Rothwell dogma. A visit to the website shows that MOSFET power amplifiers are on the company's roster of products, as are River interconnect cables.

Andrew obviously has a thing about rivers, as all the Rothwell products are named after one or another, and at least he's had the good taste to avoid the most obvious examples. Here we have a £499 Indus preamp teamed up with a £949 Rubicon power amp, to create a modest package that's quite attractive in its largely understated way.

Construction is sheet steel throughout, painted in a high gloss black with gilded knobs on the preamp. The only real concession to styling here comes on the power amp, where nearly half the front consists of a window, through which you can watch the eight little EL84 valves beavering away reproducing your music. Power output here is a rather modest 10 Watts per channel, but there's also a bridging option so that you can convert the Rubicon into a higher power mono power amp, and add a second one for the other channel.

The Indus is an altogether plainer affair. Indeed it has neither indicator light nor mains input, never mind any form of remote control, because this is a passive preamp. Which means it's simply a collection of switches to route up to six line level signal sources to the power amp or to a tape recorder, plus a means of adjusting the level (volume) of the selected input. Interestingly, discrete resistors are used instead of potentiometers for the latter task. Two rotary switches are connected in series, one providing coarse and the other fine steps, with simplicity and accuracy without the possibility of sonic degradation endemic in variable resistors.

SOUND QUALITY

My first reaction was that this amplifier was maybe a little too

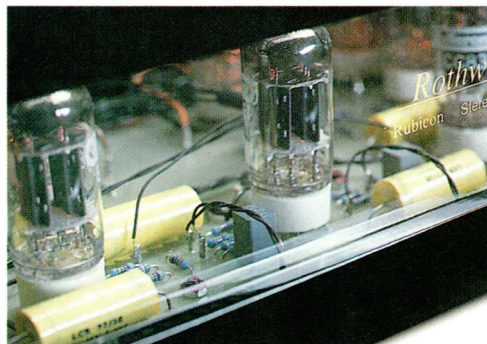
laid back for its own good, but the more time I spent listening to it, the more I found myself coming to the conclusion that it's actually exceedingly accurate and has an impressive neutrality throughout a wide dynamic range.

Where so many amps seem to over-emphasise some part of the audio spectrum in a way that might be immediately impressive, but ultimately becomes rather wearing, the Rothwell combo just tells it like it is, with fine transparency, accurate tonality and stereo perspectives, and impressive fine detailing.

"Undemonstrably gorgeous," it says in my notes, and that does seem to sum up this delicate little amplifier, which probably imposes less of its own character on the music than anything else in the test group. While the modest power output won't suit all tastes or low sensitivity loudspeakers, this amplifier's ability to perform at very low levels without sonic degradation is particularly welcome.

CONCLUSIONS

A quirky design with limited power output, the Indus preamp's passive operation might not suit every available source, but fine sonic neutrality throughout a wide dynamic range puts this understated combo well ahead of the pack and in line for a deserved Best Buy rating.



TYPE: VALVE AMPLIFIER

"THE ROTHWELL COMBO TELLS IT LIKE IT IS, WITH FINE TRANSPARENCY, ACCURATE TONALITY AND STEREO PERSPECTIVES."

The dinky EL84 pentode power tubes are always on display in the Indus power amp.

AUDIO ILLUSION

23 Langley Broom
 Langley Berkshire SL3 8NB
 Tel: (01753) 542761 : Fax: (01753) 772532
 Mon - Sat 10.00am - 8.00pm (By Appt.)
www.audioillusion.co.uk



CHORD ELECTRONICS now available at AUDIO ILLUSION - Please call for further information

1 MONTH
home trial exchange
scheme

Sounds of Music

hi-fi+
PRODUCT
of the
YEAR

hi-fi+
EDITOR'S
CHOICE

Hovland HP 100

KNOWLEDGEABLE
helpful staff

FREE
delivery &
installation

MOST
credit cards
accepted

GENEROUS
part exchange



New
show rooms
now open

DEDICATED
A-V show room

One of the worlds finest pre-amplifiers

Call: **01892 547003** or fax: **01892 547004**
 or check out our website www.sounds-of-music.co.uk
 for reviews and more information

10 - 12 Chapel Place, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN1 1YQ



UNISON RESEARCH S8

SOUND ★★★★★ **VALUE** ★★★★★ **£2,950.00** **CONTACT** 01753 652669 www.unisonresearch.com **G'TEE** 2 years

Unison Research, also known as ARIA (Advanced Research In Audio) is an Italian operation and, like a number of the speakers that hail from that most design conscious country, pays due homage to the craftsmanship of furniture makers and wood carvers. Take a deep breath, keep the back straight and bend at the knees. That's the only way of getting this 30kg monster safely out of its box.

At heart the S8 is a valve amp with massive steel-encased transformers, and a conventional enough chassis which leaves the major valves exposed. Large chunks of curvaceous carved cherry hardwood are attached around the periphery, which certainly softens the brutality of the basic lines, and is claimed to damp the metalwork underneath. But it's hardly form-follows-function stuff – my better half thought these embellishments looked rather silly, but then she's a practical type, well accustomed to hi-fi hardware littering the place. Whether you like the look or not, it's certainly distinctive, and provides a suitably elegant backdrop to two of the largest and brightest output valves you've ever clapped eyes on.

They're 845 triodes, and share the same glass envelopes as the 211s that still linger in my memory from a few memorable weeks spent with an Audio Note Ongaku some years ago. And like those 211s, the 845s chuck out a significant amount of heat – at least as much as a 100 Watts lightbulb – which is nice in the winter, less so in the summer. These valves operate in single-ended mode, and use 12dB of feedback to deliver around 24 Watts per channel.

Unusual amongst valve amps, the S8 comes with a remote handset, a little billet of wood that fits snugly into the hand with just two gilt buttons, one to raise, the other to lower the volume. The front panel has four attractively shaped knobs,

the largest for volume, and smaller ones for on/off, input selection and tape output selection, the labelling somewhat obscured by the woodwork. There are five line inputs plus one tape out, and there are terminals for 4 Ohm or 8 Ohm speaker connection.

SOUND QUALITY

Melodramatic has got to be the best word to sum up the S8's sound quality, which seems to exaggerate the midband somewhat at the expense of the frequency extremes. The result is, in its way, immensely appealing, though it also implies the paradox that if this is right, then the rest must be wrong. It's also impossible to say to what extent the exceptional midband is due to the S8's tendency to emphasise this at the expense of the bandwidth extremes.

Immensely articulate, said midband is seriously impressive and expressive, giving Tom Waits' voice an exceptionally earthy growl on *Rain Dogs*, and putting lots of energy into his squeezebox too. However, on wideband material, especially heavy rock and dance material, things are rather less convincing.

Orchestral strings don't quite shimmer as they should, and the Chemical Brothers' block rockin' beats are a little thumpy and leaden, with what sounds like audible harmonic distortion when it's working hard.

CONCLUSIONS

The S8 is a love-it-or-loathe-it aesthetic and sonic experience. Too wacky for formal Recommendation, I wouldn't want to dissuade anyone who falls in love with the package on either grounds. Whether it's really in the spirit of true high fidelity is a moot point, but if singing voices are your prime concern, check it out.



TYPE: VALVE AMPLIFIER

“IMMENSELY APPEALING, THOUGH IT ALSO IMPLIES THE PARADOX THAT IF THIS IS RIGHT, THEN THE REST MUST BE WRONG.”

If size matters this heavyweight hardwood encased Italian charmer could be for you.

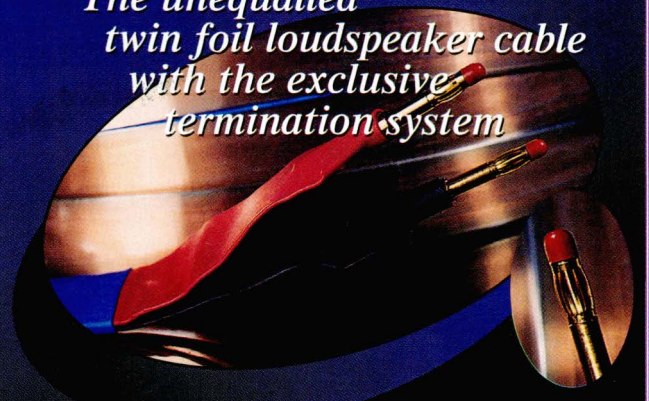
020.7229.2077
info@thomasheinitz.com

The best connections...

The original

Monolith 20/20

*The unequalled
 twin foil loudspeaker cable
 with the exclusive
 termination system*



"Cable you can't hear"

*from selected dealers
 for information 01206 823136*

ELECTROFLUIDICS
 THE SOUND FOUNDATION

Star Wars
 By Grahams

Remember the first time you saw Star Wars at the cinema? Like the rest of us you probably wanted to be Luke Skywalker and travel the Universe fighting evil with your heroic friend Hans Solo.

Thanks to Grahams and huge advances in technology you can recreate that cinema sensation in your own home – and introduce your own little Skywalkers to the wonders of film.

Grahams Hi-Fi Canonbury Yard,
 190a New North Road London N1 7BS
Tel: 020 7226 5500 Fax: 020 7359 7620
 E-mail: enq@grahams.co.uk
 www.grahams.co.uk



*"One of the five best
 hi-fi shops in the world"*

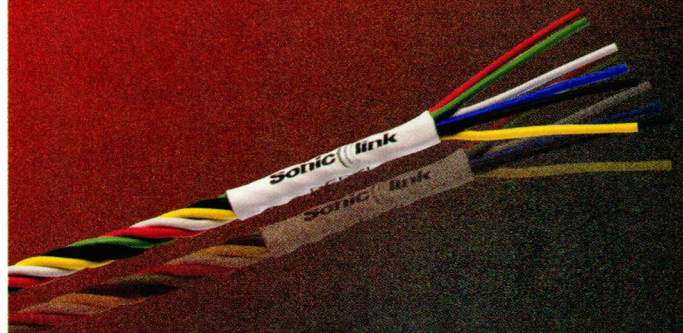
Sonic link REBEL
THE NON CONFORMIST

You choose a single connection,
 BiWire or TriWire

With 6 individual cores,
 you can make your own choice

Allows you to make your own decision

Rebel delivers all you want - and more



32 Derwent Business Centre, Clarke Street, Derby DE1 2BU
 soniclink@audiocables.co.uk www.audiocables.co.uk
 Tel: 01332 361390 Fax: 01332 200698



CYRUS aCA7.5/PSX-R/aPA7

SOUND ★★★★★ **VALUE** ★★★★★ **£2,950** **CONTACT** 01480 435577 www.cyrus.co.uk **GUARANTEE** 2 years

Originally spawned as an electronics offshoot of speaker specialist Mission, Cyrus now operates as an independent entity, and makes just about the most gorgeous looking hi-fi electronics on the planet. Every component is housed in little 'half-width' cast alloy modules which are much more than simple cuboid boxes, incorporating cooling fins at the rear and an attractive '3-D' shaped front panel.

This modular approach is very flexible. In our March issue (HFC 212) we looked at this same aCA7.5 preamplifier driving the 60 Watts per channel Smart Power stereo power amp, the pair retailing for £1,250. This time around we're looking at the top end of the Cyrus lineup, a four-box combo totalling £2,950 and comprising two aPA7 high power monoblock power amplifiers and an external PSX-R power supply to boost the performance of the preamp.

While the individual modules are themselves exceptionally stylish, *en masse* the effect is even more impressive, and there's also the flexibility to stack them however you want – two pairs side-by-side or all four in a single stack are the obvious layouts, but adding the matching tuner, CD player and phono stage bring even more possibilities. Cyrus has a clever freestanding rack (the Hark) that looks the business, and also helps tidy up the cabling.

From the front the preamp is particularly well laid out, with a row of seven LED-tagged line input selector switches, and a single knob surrounded by a ring of green LEDs to set and indicate volume. A couple of extra little switches activate a headphone socket (on the back) and mute the output. The small back panel looks very crowded, with 12 pairs of phono sockets and a couple of balanced XLRs squeezed into the small area available. Plugging and unplugging is not easy for large fingers! Rated power output is very generous, at 150 Watts into 8 Ohms, rising to 240 Watts into 4 Ohms.

A simple, well-designed handset does all the control duties, providing an additional balance control and also operating other Cyrus system components.

SOUND QUALITY

Auditioned initially with unbalanced pre-to-powers interconnection, this Cyrus combo sounds clean but rather shiny – almost 'chromium plated' – with a noticeably strong presence. Despite there being a touch of nasality, the voice projection is initially rather impressive, but also tends to distract the attention from what's happening through the lower registers.

Balanced interconnection gave a more neutral – indeed very neutral – sound, with a noticeably more delicate and detailed top end, perhaps a little at the expense of dynamic expression. The overall sound is very tidy, consistent and well controlled, but just a little lacking in 'airiness' and true transparency. Low frequencies seem weighty and well extended, but a bit shy of drive and energy.

Substantially acoustic material, such as Christy Moore or Mari Boine, works particularly well, as the Cyrus package always sounds sweet and detailed, but doesn't develop quite enough grip and musical dynamic tension to do full justice to heavy dance breaks, such as Basement Jaxx or the Chemical Brothers.

CONCLUSIONS

Gorgeous styling, massive power and considerable flexibility are all major plus points here, but the price is quite high for the sound quality on offer here.



TYPE: TRANSISTOR AMPLIFIER

“ACOUSTIC MATERIAL, SUCH AS CHRISTY MOORE OR MARI BOINE, WORKS PARTICULARLY WELL.”

The compact cast alloy cases mark Cyrus electronics out from the crowd.



Ultimate Sonics

DISTRIBUTORS OF AFFORDABLE HIGH END HI-FI

301-303 Channel Sea House, Canning Road,
London, SE15 3ND
Email: info@ultimate-sonics.com
Web: www.ultimate-sonics.com
Tel: 020 8534 0134
Fax: 020 8534 0234

Check out our pre-owned pages on the web for special bargains: www.ultimate-sonics.com

The Best Mains Solution For Audiophiles

Why bandage the problem with power conditioners when you could be generating clean power? The Power Plant takes the AC from your wall socket, converts it to DC then back to AC. The result is pure mains power, and a major upgrade to your sound.



For more details please check our website:

www.ultimate-sonics.com

P300 with 4 outlets – £1650

P600 with 8 outlets, with Multiwave factory installed – £2700

The Award Winning Morel Stereo & Home Theatre Loudspeakers

"Born out of a coupling of the love of music with technology"

Morel designed and built drivers are at the heart of many award-winning loudspeakers. Ask your dealer for the full Morel range including active & passive sub-woofers. Price range: £340 - £1200

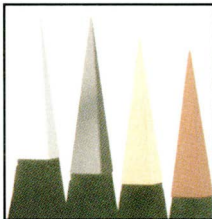
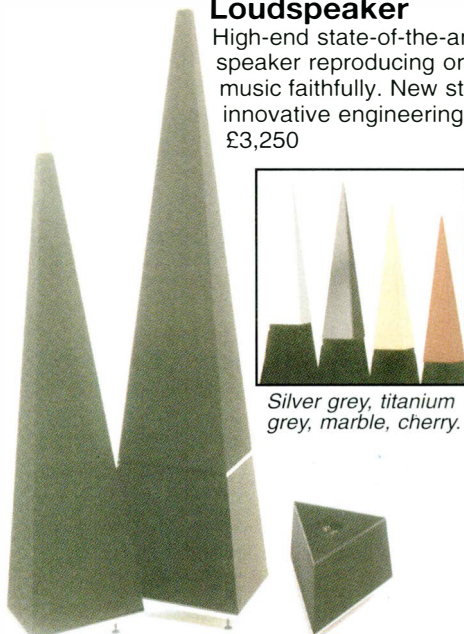


CEC DX71 24/96k

Superb DAC with Built-in Upsampler & Preamp.

Reality 3D Loudspeaker

High-end state-of-the-art reference speaker reproducing original music faithfully. New standards & innovative engineering. £3,250



Silver grey, titanium grey, marble, cherry.



HMS Cables

This range of cables are a revelation.



The Lab Cable from PS Audio

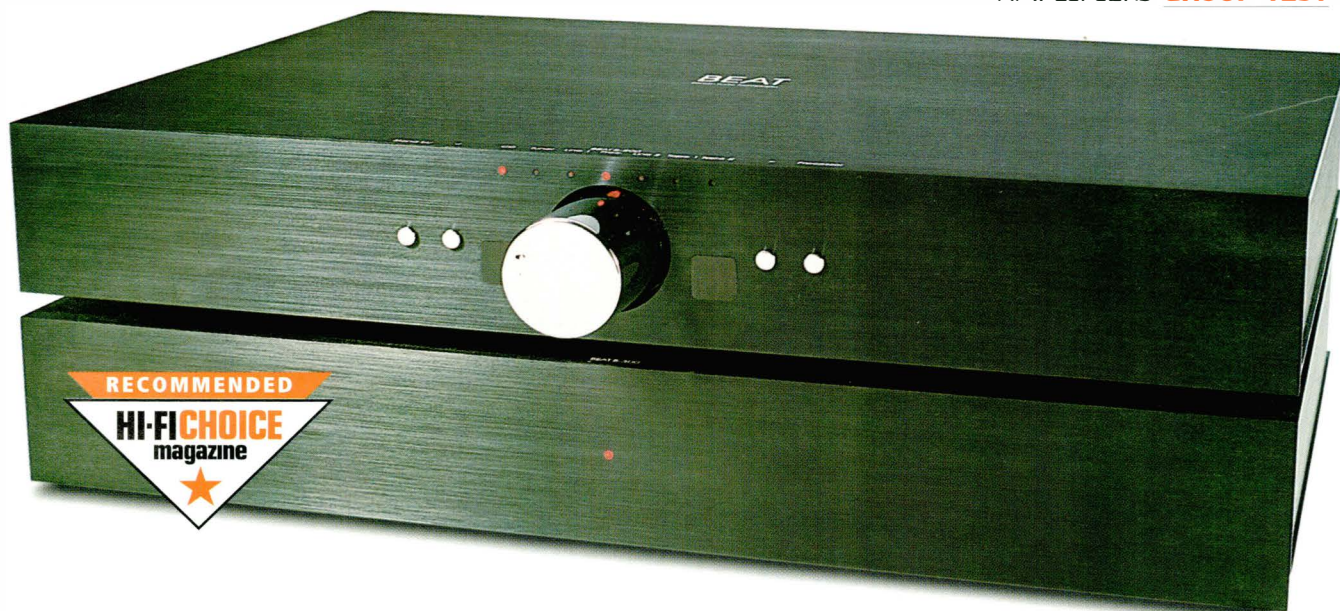
Your system sounds its best with this state-of-the-art power cord and speaker cable. 5ft: £320.00



Solid Tech Support Racks

Vibrations & resonances are minimized by the extremely well-dampened and rigid multi-layered shelf design consisting of Corian visco-elastic glue and MDF. The effect is a cleaner, crisper music reproduction with greater resolution and separation.

Other brands: Forsell, Synergistic Research, Alon Loudspeakers, CEC, Jolida Valve Equipment, Silverline Audio Loudspeakers, Z Systems.



DENZEN BEAT B-200/B-300

SOUND ★★★★★ **VALUE** ★★★★★ **£1,850.00** **CONTACT** 0045 75181214 www.denzen.com **G'TEE** 5 years

Given the name, it's no surprise that Denzen comes from Denmark, but it's also one of precious few European hi-fi electronics brands to have made an impact here on the British specialist marketplace, initially with the distinctive Beat B-100 integrated amplifier, and more recently with CD players and more upmarket pre-/power amp combinations, all of which share a very distinctive 'house style'.

The latest arrival on the scene is this Beat B-200/B-300 solid state pre-/power amp combination, with a basic price of £1,000 for the preamp and £850 for the power amp. However, this doesn't include the remote handset, a very classy looking affair called Gizmo that costs an extra £300. There's also a moving magnet phono stage option for £150.

Matt jet black alloy casework immediately distinguishes the Denzen kit. It looks very much classier than the ventilated bent steel used by much of the competition, but because it's made up from flat sheets, those edges and corners are decidedly sharp. The power amp is entirely featureless from the front, the on/off switch being located next to the IEC mains input socket on the rear.

The preamp doesn't have a lot of decoration either, but its front panel is dominated by a large and protuberant gilded knob, placed dead centre, with a couple of buttons on each side, a couple of windows to receive the remote commands, and a handful of LEDs to assist navigation across the six line level inputs.

Gizmo is a delightful handset, quite long and slim, with very small buttons that stand proud of the surface so they're very easy to feel and actuate. The button count is quite heavy because it also incorporates all those required to operate a Denzen CD player, which might be something of an incentive to purchase the complete system, or a source of mild irritation if you have to pay £300 just to drive a preamp. However, it packs plenty of infra-red power, and will work the system from anywhere in the room, pointed in any direction.

The 200 has four sets of line outputs to facilitate multi-amping and active drive (Denzen is working on a universal active filter right now), and these are also expressly designed

to drive long leads for multi-room installations. The Beat 300 delivers generous power ratings of 100Watts/8 Ohms and 200Watts/4 Ohms.

SOUND QUALITY

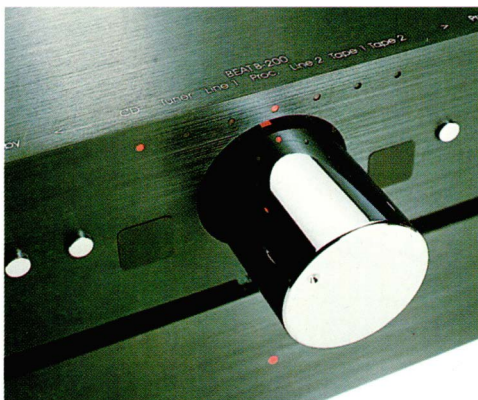
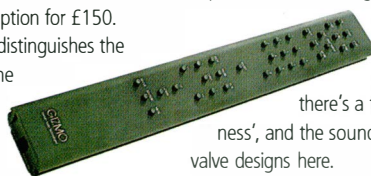
The Denzen is a very decent sounding amplifier, especially through the bass and midrange, which show fine coherence and dynamic integrity. The top end is a little soft and lacking in air and sparkle, so that Christy Moore's guitar, behind his voice, lacks some incisiveness.

Speech, from Radio 4, sounds just a little shut in, with a hint of nasality, though voices sound impressively solid with good expression. Music has good warmth and weight, nice neutral

midband perspectives and good bass-through-mid coherence, with appropriate voice-band projection, though there's a touch of transistor congestion or 'dirtiness', and the sound lacks the sweetness and openness of valve designs here.

CONCLUSIONS

This Beat combo demonstrates fine musical integrity and coherence at a realistic price. Although it lacks some of the delicacy and transparency of the valve-powered competition, it supplies plenty of power with good future flexibility.



TYPE: TRANSISTOR AMPLIFIER

“MUSIC HAS GOOD WARMTH AND WEIGHT, NICE NEUTRAL MIDBAND PERSPECTIVES AND GOOD BASS THROUGH MID COHERENCE.”

While not as sweet as the valve competition the Denzen combo has the cutest remote on test.

PREMIUM HI-FI FOR
THE MIDLANDS

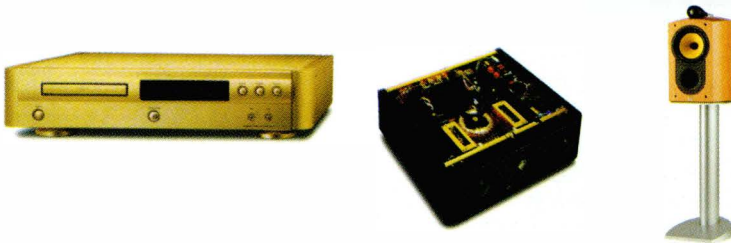
A real treat
in store
at



Chord 2200
& 1200C



The finest names in audio and Home Cinema
Electronics, including Projection Equipment,
Home Cinema and Multi room installations.



Marantz Premier cd7



*For more information on the world of hi fi and home
cinema, to fit everyones requirements
contact us at.*



20 years experience in the art of audio

WALSALL 01922 493499

Sharing ASDA Car Park off High Street, Bloxwich
Email:sales@soundacademy.co.uk

or
call **David**
at



SUTTON COLDFIELD 0121 321 2445

The Parade, Sutton Coldfield
Email:sales@soundacademy.co.uk



Nautilus 800

Naim - Meridian - Chord Electronics - B&W - Marantz Premier - Arcam - Monitor Audio - O'heocha Design
Crestron - Living Control - System Line - TAG McLaren.....just to name a few.



ELECTROCOMPANIET EC 4.7/AW-120DMB

SOUND ★★★★★ **VALUE** ★★★★★ **£3,250.00** **CONTACT** 01756 795333 www.electrocompaniet.com **G'EE** 2 year

Norwegian brand that first surfaced back in the 1970s, UK distribution has been a bit haphazard down the years, but speaker specialist Castle Acoustics has recently taken on the brand. This pre-/power combination consists of the curiously named EC4.7 preamp (£1,000) and 120DMB power amp (£2,250), the combined price placing it right at the top of our group. Both units are decidedly wide and deep, and although both fascias share the same width, they differ in both height and depth, which looks a little strange.

Both have thick Perspex fascias, which appear a tad old-fashioned to these eyes, but at least confer an element of individuality. The handful of buttons (there are no knobs) are gilded, and feedback is provided by blue illuminated legends hidden behind the fascia. I particularly like the volume indicator, a blue LED mounted on the edge of a rotating disc attached to the motorised potentiometer; I rather dislike the input labels, which cannot be changed and seem an odd selection. 'Tuner' and 'CD' I'll go for, but instead of 'vinyl' or 'TV' you get 'tape', 'DVD' and 'VCR'. There's neither a mono button nor an earthing point here, while the CD input is balanced XLR, with adaptors supplied for unbalanced phono connection.

Although you can operate this amplifier from the preamp front panel using up/down buttons for volume and input selection (or vice versa – I guess you get used to it!), you're more likely to use the very neat little remote handset. This sits comfortably in the hand and handles only the key tasks of volume, mute and input selection with clarity and without fuss, unencumbered by 'system' control buttons.

The preamp handles just line level signals, with a choice of six input pairs. Like the CD input, the pre-/power link is also

via balanced XLRs, but this is no headache when using the pair together. The power amp, described as a double-mono balanced FTT design, has plenty of muscle, its output rated at 120 Watts per channel into 8 Ohms, 200 Watts into 4 Ohms, and 350 Watts into 2 Ohms.

SOUND QUALITY

Having found some of the solid state amps a trifle disappointing compared to their thermionic competition, the Electrocompaniet did much to restore my faith in transistors, or at least demonstrate pretty clearly that the implementation is at least as important as the technology.

This is a quite delightful sounding amplifier, and while it does possess something of the solid state 'character', that's maybe because it doesn't have the sort of euphonic quality that valve amps seem to have as a matter of course.

There's just a hint of texture thickening through the mid-band, but it's hardly distracting, and the first and lasting impression is of a beautifully neutral and delicate sounding amplifier which doesn't emphasise any particular part of the audio band, and which shows fine consistency and time-coherence across a wide bandwidth and dynamic range. Dynamics themselves might have more vigour and expression, and the bass could perhaps be a little more assertive, but in truth these are mere nits rather than real criticisms.

CONCLUSIONS

My only quibbles with this amplifier are over the bulk of the units and the slightly perverse input labelling icons on the preamp. Sound quality is outstanding by any standards, so a Best Buy rating seems mandatory, even at this high price.

TYPE: TRANSISTOR AMPLIFIER

"THESE AMPLIFIERS DID MUCH TO RESTORE MY FAITH IN TRANSISTORS"

The Electrocompaniet has one of the simplest, and most stylish, remotes in the test.





★★★★★ **WHAT HI-FI?** NAD C350 October 2000



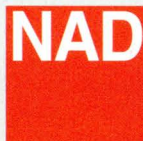
Amplifiers
NAD C370



★★★★★ **WHAT HI-FI?** NAD C370 Supertest winner September 2000

Modesty prevents us from quoting the rest of these reviews, but you get the idea!

When the time came to update the heavyweight members of our amplifier range, we knew it would be no easy task - just the kind of challenge our engineers relish and the breathtaking results have just scooped the coveted What Hi-Fi? Amplifier of the Year for an amazing **third** year in succession! Listen to NAD for yourself - you'll soon swear by us!



New Acoustic Dimension

Exclusive UK distributors for



MONSTER CABLE

psb
SPEAKERS



Russound
AV DISTRIBUTION & CONTROL SYSTEMS



Lenbrook UK Limited Unit 2, Old Wolverton Road, Old Wolverton, Milton Keynes MK12 5NP tel: 01908 319360 web: www.lenbrook.co.uk



MYRYAD MI 240

SOUND ★★★★★ **VALUE** ★★★★★ **£1,500.00** **CONTACT** 01494 551551 www.myriad.co.uk **GTEE** 3 years

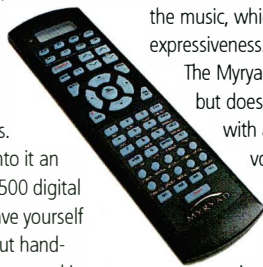
A specialist British hi-fi electronics brand, Myriad was born about a decade ago, and now has a range of models, all solid state, covering the stereo hi-fi, home cinema and 'lifestyle' sectors of the market.

One of just two integrated amps in this group test, the MI 240 is one of the most affordable models on test, yet appears to give little away to the more expensive units, on paper at least. Its starting point was the MA 240 power amp, which logically enough is rated at a generous 120 Watts per channel – but this is with an 8 Ohm load, and that power rating goes up to an even heftier 180 Watts into the 4 Ohm loads that are increasingly common amongst today's speakers.

Take one massive stereo power amp and build into it an all new preamplifier (drawing from both the MDP 500 digital processor and MI 120 integrated amp) and you have yourself one very large integrated amp. It's a bulky beast, but handsomely designed in the Myriad house style. The front panel is machined from a thick and brushed alloy, while the rest of the casework is the usual regulation sheet steel, two-tray approach, ventilated in the top and base.

The fascia is dominated by Myriad's trademark volume control, a large black domed knob with fingertip indent recessed into the fascia, with a gentle detent action. The button count is minimal, with two to scroll through the inputs, one to select tape monitoring, and another to select 'line direct', offering superior quality on one specific input. There's also a headphone socket, plus a fluorescent display panel that shows the selected input and volume level. The rear panel has eight line input pairs, three line-outs and a control bus pair; one input pair can be fitted with vinyl replay circuitry (phono stage) for less than £100.

In practice, most day to day operations will use the large, exceptionally flexible but consequently complex 'universal' remote handset. It has some fifty buttons, only a handful of which are needed to drive the amplifier, and can also be used to operate half a dozen other components of any make. The microprocessor allows input sensitivities to be individually adjusted, and the display for each input to be renamed.



SOUND QUALITY

The first thing I noticed about the MI 240 was its exceptional sweetness, delicacy and fine detail at the top end of the audio band, though as the listening session progressed I began to realise that the top end had tended to stand out because the bass and midrange were a little too understated. It's not a tonal balance thing – this amplifier sounds impressively neutral – but more to do with the dynamics of the music, which sound 'softened' and somehow lacking in expressiveness.

The Myriad brings plenty of weight to the proceedings, but doesn't seem to manage to drive the bass lines with any great conviction and purpose, or project voices with the sort of emotional intensity experienced elsewhere in this test. The sound is smooth and detailed, but it could do more to break down the barriers between the musicians and the listener. The solitary 'line direct' input does sound a little crisper and cleaner than the rest, and this should definitely be used for your best or favourite source, in order to get the most from the amp.

CONCLUSIONS

The MI 240 is well appointed, powerful and packs plenty of power. The sound is comfortable and relaxingly neutral, if not quite as taut and time coherent as some.



TYPE: TRANSISTOR AMPLIFIER

"I BEGAN TO REALISE THAT THE TOP END HAD TENDED TO STAND OUT BECAUSE THE BASS AND MIDRANGE WERE A LITTLE UNDERSTATED."

The Myriad's fine build quality is matched by great flexibility.

New Blue Series

Blue

A Statement of
Style and Power



The first impression of a tiger is its powerful roar, intended to strike fear deep in the heart. But observe the tiger a little longer, and you begin to notice gentler qualities and subtler nuances. You discover that the tiger is more than the roar.

Loud and Proud?

When you listen to music and watch movies, something similar happens. At first, we may be bowled over by the roar of a loud and proud home entertainment system. In technical terms, the "roar" is wide dynamic range and high maximum sound pressure level. Both are key elements in recreating the live-ness of recorded music and the

impact of movie surround sound. But in the long run, we demand more than the roar for a fully satisfying listening and viewing experience.

Loud and Clear!

Fortunately, like the tiger, the DALI Blue Series has much more to offer. Not just loud and proud, but also loud and clear. As one independent audio journal recently described it.

"DALI loudspeakers take your mind off technology and let you focus on the musical experience."



CONCLUSIONS

PAUL MESSENGER CONSIDERS THE ALLURE OF GLASS.

This group test proved a fascinating experience, with the valve designs comfortably winning on sound quality points. But there's no clear knockout decision here. There are pluses and minuses on both sides of this technological divide, and a group test's role is to highlight those contrasts, to help the reader make an informed choice.

Through most of the audio band, the valve designs simply sound more natural and 'open', with superior time coherence and dynamic expression, though the bass and the extreme treble is usually better reproduced by the solid state amplifiers. The latter have a 'fit-and-forget' practicality, and much improved usability through remote control convenience.

The valve amps certainly vindicate the old adage: the first Watt is the really

important one, yet the power differential between them and the transistor designs is both real and substantial. As part of the test I used a particular track to drive each amp to the point where distortion sounded audibly nasty. The four solid state amps were within a dB of each other, some 8dB louder than the most powerful of the valve designs (Croft), and some 18dB louder than the least (Audio Note).

But then how often will you want to operate your amplifier anywhere near its power limit? It'll depend on your room size, taste in music, and the sensitivity of the speakers you're using.








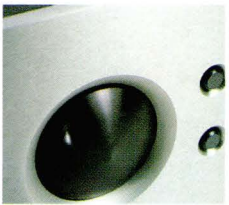
All the models here were high quality amplifiers, capable of sufficiently good

sound quality to merit attention by any audiophile. But based primarily on sound quality at low and normal listening levels (largely disregarding the power and feature counts) both the Rothwell and Croft valve amps sound delightful enough to deserve Best Buy status, but their characters are so different that one man's meat might well be another's poison. The other Best Buy comes from the transistor camp, the Electrocompaniet proving a real aristocrat amongst the solid staters.

The Audio Note and Densen also pick up Recommended flags, but diversity is the rule here, and if the Unison, Cyrus or Myryad better suit your style aspirations, you're unlikely to be disappointed.

"VALVE AMPS CERTAINLY VINDICATE THE OLD ADAGE: THE FIRST WATT IS THE REALLY IMPORTANT ONE."

AMPLIFIERS AT A GLANCE

VALVES					
MAKE MODEL	AUDIO NOTE M2PHONO/P2SE	CROFT VITALI SC/SERIES 5C	ROTHWELL INDUS/RUBICON	UNISON RESEARCH S8	
PRICE	£3,198.00	£2,000.00	£1,448.00	£2,950.00	
SOUND VALUE	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	
CONCLUSION	Wonderfully natural and inviting sound with warmth and drama; limited loudness capability.	Retro style and ergonomics but magical voice coherence and projection, great transparency.	Quirky combo with passive preamp; lovely neutrality and consistency across a wide dynamic range.	Outrageous styling and melodramatic sound; splendid voice projection and tension.	
GUARANTEE	2 YEARS	2 YEARS	LIFE	2 YEARS	
TRANSISTORS					
MAKE MODEL	CYRUS ACA7.5/PSX-RIAPA7	DENSEN BEAT B-200/B-300	ELECTROCOMPANIET EC4.7/AMPLIWIRE 120DMB	MYRYAD MI 240	
PRICE	£2,950.00	£1,850.00	£3,250.00	£1,500.00	
SOUND VALUE	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	
CONCLUSION	Very stylish four-box modular system delivers oodles of clarity and detail.	Jet black boxes pack plenty of punch with good total musical coherence.	Bulky Norwegian combo has wonderful broad-band transparency, and fine musical tension.	Big and powerful integrated amp sounds clean and neutral if a bit short on musical tension.	
GUARANTEE	2 YEARS	5 YEARS	2 YEARS	3 YEARS	



PERSONAL STEREO

DAVID BAILEY TAKES THE TRAIN AND CHECKS OUT SOME OF THE LATEST OPTIONS FOR MUSIC ON THE MOVE.

It's interesting to note which personal stereos we're reviewing in this test, compared to the group test we ran this time last year – or, more precisely, which formats we're reviewing. Gone is the humble cassette, as CD remains strong,

MiniDisc's portion of the market increases and MP3-related solid state technology gains a deeper foothold with models from established audio brands. Cassette personals still sell, but it's the various digital formats that increasingly catch the eye (and ear).

You haven't been able to open a newspaper over the last 12 months without stumbling across something to do with MP3 – Napster, anyone? This data reduced digital format became the music industry's Public Enemy No. 1, as people freely swapped copyrighted music across the Internet. That aside, however, solid state music storage technology offers a great way of taking your music on the move. There are no tapes or discs to carry around, you just plug your player into your home computer and copy over the tracks you want. Of course, it's no use if you haven't got a computer and, though capacities are rising all the time, memory size and card prices remain restrictive.

MiniDisc continues to grow in popularity, aided by its incredible ease of use and flexibility, not to mention a sound quality which is more than good enough to accompany you around the streets of the city. It really is an able successor to tape, offering wipe-clean media ripe for creating your own compilations. Although players aren't as slim-line as those in the solid state arena, MD still has size on its side.

And then there's old faithful itself – compact disc. The problems with early CD personals (you couldn't breathe on the player without the laser skittering all over the disc) have been well and truly ironed out – every player here offers extremely effective anti-shock protection. As far as ease-of-use goes, CD offers the best – just grab your favourite disc and pop it in. The rise of CD recording has also helped its cause, but unlike the other formats here, there isn't a personal CD recorder. Yet...

ON TEST

CD players

JVC XL-PG31 £59.99

Kenwood DPC-X517 £99.99

Sony D-EJ925 £149.99

MD Players

JVC XM-R700SL £249.99

Sharp MD-MT877H £229.99

Sony MZ-G750 £199.99

Solid State

Philips Rush SA126 £249.99

Rio 800 £300.00

Sony NW-MS9 £300.00

OTHER EQUIPMENT USED

Sony w.ear headphones

MUSIC USED DURING TEST

Blossom Dearie - *Give Him The Ooh-La-La*

Garbage - *Garbage*

Ladytron - *604*

Madonna - *Music*

Dusty Springfield - *Dusty in Memphis*

Stravinsky/Dorati/Detroit Symphony

Orchestra - *L'Oiseau de Feu*



SOME OF THESE OFFERS ARE EXCLUSIVE TO HI-FI CHOICE READERS. PLEASE QUOTE THIS AD WHEN CALLING.
AVAILABLE UNTIL 18TH JUNE 2001 (WHILE STOCKS LAST). HUNDREDS MORE BARGAINS IN-STORE.

WE'LL BEAT ANY PRICE 'TIL IT HURTS...AND GIVE YOU UP TO £50!

Cyber Home ADM512 DVD PLAYER



£50 OFF
TSP

Featuring a built in Dolby Digital decoder "This fine machine has got what it takes for the consumer looking for an entry level, do-all player", DVD Buyer. **TSP £169.95**

£119.95
BRAND NEW BOXED
INCLUDING FREE REMOTE CONTROL

MISSION 700 SPEAKERS



£70 OFF
TSP

"Mission 700s are outstanding value for money", cried WHAT HI-FI? when they reviewed these budget classics at £130. These are, "great speakers that deliver a sparkling performance". **WERE £129.95**
Also available in beech **£69.95 per pair.**

£59.95
BRAND NEW BOXED
PER PAIR

KENWOOD KAF3030S AMPLIFIER



SAVE £150

Hi-Fi Choice cherish the '3030S: "This amp is really rather lovely.. In every sense of the word, performance is very fine indeed". **WERE £249.95**

£99.95
BRAND NEW BOXED
INCLUDING FREE REMOTE CONTROL

SHARP MDSR75 MINIDISC RECORDER



Pick up one of these Sharp beauties whilst you can. Featuring a remote control and rechargeable battery, and a full £80 off from TSP. **TSP £199.95 WERE £169.95**

£80 OFF
TSP

£119.95
BRAND NEW BOXED

KENWOOD KRFV5040 DOLBY DIGITAL RECEIVER



£80 OFF
TSP

Featuring two coaxial inputs, one optical input and a six channel digital input this Dolby Digital/DTS dynamo will match all outputs on any DVD player. **TSP £229.95**

£149.95
BRAND NEW BOXED
INCLUDING FREE REMOTE CONTROL

MARANTZ CD6000 OSE CD PLAYER



SAVE £150

"This is a knockout player for the money", sighed WHAT HI-FI?, barely able to contain their excitement. **WERE £299.95**

£149.95
BRAND NEW BOXED
INCLUDING FREE REMOTE CONTROL

PIONEER PDR609 CD RECORDER



£80 OFF
TSP

"The PDR609 deserves to be first on your list," enthused WHAT HI-FI? of this mean machine. "It makes great recordings with little fuss." **WERE £279.95 TSP £249.95**

£199.95
BRAND NEW BOXED
INCLUDING FREE REMOTE CONTROL

SONY DVPS735 DVD PLAYER



£150 OFF
TSP

"Everything it does is classy", said WHAT HI-FI? of Sony's latest DVD challenger. "Pictures look sensational with a depth of field that's thoroughly cinematic". **TSP £449.95 WERE £349.95**

£299.95
BRAND NEW BOXED
INCLUDING FREE REMOTE CONTROL

SONY STRDB940 DIGITAL RECEIVER



£150 OFF
TSP

"Flexible and fun to use, the Sony ensures that every soundtrack comes to life". - WHAT HI-FI? **TSP £499.95 WERE £419.95**

£349.95
BRAND NEW BOXED
INCLUDING FREE REMOTE CONTROL

NATIONAL CALL CENTRE 0870 900 1000 (NATIONAL RATE)

LONDON BRANCHES	BELFAST	028 9032 1332	LIVERPOOL	0151 708 7484
BROMLEY 020 8466 6565	BIRMINGHAM	0121 643 1516	MILTON KEYNES	01908 608 908
CHELSEA 020 7352 8496	NEW BOURNEMOUTH	01202 720 380	NEWCASTLE	0191 230 1392
CITY 020 7626 8006	BRIGHTON	01273 673 333	NORWICH	01603 620 860
CROYDON 020 8667 1100	BRISTOL	0117 973 4397	NOTTINGHAM	0115 924 1551
NEW DEALING 020 8524 4232	CAMBRIDGE	01223 304 848	OXFORD	01865 243 444
KINGSTON 020 8549 9999	CARDIFF	029 2039 9988	PLYMOUTH	01752 232 256
LONDON BRIDGE 020 7403 1201	CHEL TENHAM	01242 572 572	READING	0118 959 1111
SWISS COTTAGE 020 7722 3159	DUBLIN	01 450 4044	ROMFORD	01708 747 727
WEST END 020 7831 2888	EDINBURGH	0131 226 3544	SHEFFIELD	01732 456 573
MANCHESTER BRANCHES	GLASGOW	0141 226 5551	SOUTHAMPTON	073 8023 1311
PRESTWICH 0161 773 0333	GUILDFORD	01483 449 222	STOKE-ON-TRENT	01782 289 009
STOCKPORT 0161 480 1700	NEW LULL	01482 329 289	SWINDON	01753 618 251
	LEEDS	0113 245 5717	WALFORD	01923 218 888
	LEICESTER	0116 255 4656	MAIL ORDER (MAY RATE)	08700 112345

OPENING TIMES - OUR STORES HAVE INDIVIDUALLY DIFFERENT OPENING HOURS. PLEASE PHONE YOUR LOCAL BRANCH FOR DETAILS.

FREE MINIDISC, CDR OR TAPE FOR EVERYONE

POP INTO OUR STORE WITH THIS AD AND COLLECT EITHER A TDK MD74 MINIDISC WORTH £2.99, A BLANK CDR74 OR A TDK SA90 CHROME TAPE WORTH £2.49 WITH OUR COMPLIMENTS.

NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. ONE PER CUSTOMER. HI-FI CHOICE MAGAZINE. VALID UNTIL 18TH JUNE 2001.

PHONE: 0845 1 300 200 FOR A BARGAIN-PACKED CATALOGUE/STORE LIST



JVC XL-PG31 CD PERSONAL

CONTACT: 020 8450 3282 www.jvc-europe.com **GUARANTEE:** 1 YEAR

SOUND ★★★★★ **VALUE** ★★★★★ £59.95

See the JVC, and your first thought will be "Nike trainer". Pick it up, and you'll think, "That weighs a ton". It's not a physically appealing beast, although some distant and style-starved nephew might warm to it. That said, it looks like it would take a fairly big tumble to hurt it in any way. Like the Kenwood, its controls seem designed to confuse, being more or less indistinguishable when hidden in a bag or pocket. It also lacks an in-line remote control, which makes operation tricky when you're on the move. The anti-shock protection works like a dream, and really can handle the promised 40 seconds of vigorous jiggling before the player gives up the ghost. The in-ear headphones provided with the player are really quite dreadful, and do the JVC no favours at all. Ditch them as soon as possible, and replace them with a better pair.

The JVC followed the Kenwood in the test, and immediately presented itself as the sonic opposite: where the Kenwood was all springy bass and motion, the JVC lives at the lighter end of things, shimmering its way through the treble. Altogether it makes for a pretty breezy sound, but one that's a little weak and fails to really grab your attention. All-round, not the best player on offer here.

"IT HAS A PRETTY BREEZY SOUND, BUT ONE THAT'S A LITTLE WEAK AND FAILS TO GRAB YOUR ATTENTION."



KENWOOD DPC-X517 CD PERSONAL

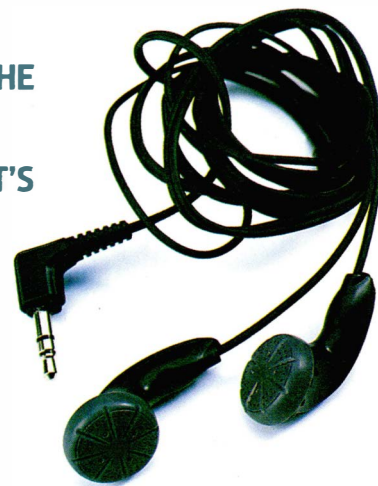
CONTACT: 01923 816444 www.kenwood-electronics.co.uk **G'TEE:** 1 YEAR

SOUND ★★★★★ **VALUE** ★★★★★ £99.99

Initially startlingly clunky – put it next to the Sony, and you'd be hard pushed to imagine they are the same type of machine – the Kenwood player soon works its blue translucent charm on you. The display, though, is tiny and quite difficult to read, there's no in-line remote, and the controls are scattered about the main unit's casing and are about as unintuitive as it's possible to be. There are two anti-shock settings: one for a full 40 seconds and one for a shorter period designed to conserve battery power. You can also switch the anti-shock protection off, if you're not planning on going anywhere.

Par for the course, the in-ear headphones provided are sub-standard: swap them for a better pair to make the most of the player's sound. The Kenwood throbs with a very crisp and limber bass, which brings a lot of life to music: Garbage and Madonna's *Music* pulsed along, just the way they should, while Dusty's *Breakfast in Bed* surfed along on a soulful wave of funkiness. And if there's one thing the Kenwood brings to the party, it's funkiness: if that's your thing, and you can stomach its playful looks, then check it out.

"IF THERE'S ONE THING THE KENWOOD BRINGS TO THE PARTY, IT'S FUNKINESS."



Welcome to hiforsale.com's

Audiophile Candy, high quality audiophile accessories



...a fresh idea for finding high fidelity accessories, as well as being able to read detailed information about each one quickly and easily. Every product is backed up by our 30 day money back guarantee.

...a new way for you to advertise your old hi-fi components on-line completely FREE of charge!



A selection of class leading accessories & recommended audio discs

Densen DeMagic CD

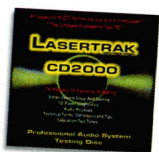
Demagnetise your system with Densen DeMagic. "...before and after comparisons reveal a more lively, exciting and transparent presentation, with strings and voices, in particular, sounding much clearer." - What Hi-Fi January 2001.

DEM £9.95 ★ S TAS

LaserTrak CD2000

System set up, calibration and test disc, used worldwide by audio professionals the Lasertrak CD2000 takes the guesswork out of system set up, over 74 minutes of essential audio tests and diagnostics to achieve 'sonic certainty'.

CD2000 £15.95 ★



The Statmat

Control static with the Statmat. "... the music itself seems to change, becoming rhythmically more cohesive, and altogether more purposeful and coherent. Statmat increases the sense of depth and space around voices and instruments, expanding dynamic range to give more light and shade ..." - Jimmy Hughes Hi-Fi Choice

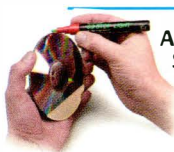
RING001 £19.95 ★



XLO Reference Burn-In CD

Test & Burn-in CD guide you step-by-step through setting up and fine-tuning your audio system, as well as burning it in too! Essential to fine tuning reference systems. Recommended.

RX-1000 £24.95 ★ S



AudioPrism CD Stoptight

A green water-based acrylic paint for coating the edges of CDs. Stereophile comments, "it increases soundstage, definition, improves the solidity of bass reproduction, and usefully lowers the level of treble grain so typical of CD sound." This easy to use pen will treat over 100 CDs.

AP001 £19.95 ★ S TAS

Ross CD & DVD Lens Cleaner

This recommended component is a must for all digital playback systems. Utilising a unique wet/dry cleaning process, the rotating cleaning brush whisks away the dirt, dust and other contaminants. The 'on disc' talking voice guides you through the cleaning process.

CM011 £9.95



Analogue Productions Direct to Disc Recordings

It hasn't been done for over two decades! The Direct-to-Disc LP. Recording 'D-to-D' is the purest and best sound possible, the signal from the microphone is transmitted directly to the lathe, thus eliminating tape hiss and other forms of inherent noise distortions, improving dynamic range, and giving recordings an inky black background. Call for Data Sheet.



Ross CD Travel Cases

Manufactured from double stitched nylon with 'UltraStiff' Foamex inner lining these travel cases represent the best in soft storage. Each pocket is also lined with 'SureSafe' preventing discs from slipping or scratching. Ideal for transporting discs to equipment auditions.

SA013 (12) £4.95
SA014 (24) £6.95



The OrbitracTM 2

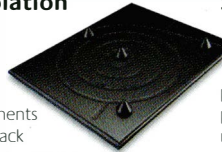
"...the Orbitrac system, used in conjunction with the vacuum-cleaning process, yields cleaning results beyond the abilities of either system individually. Buy an Orbitrac, clean your records, and listen to them with the confidence that you're hearing them at their best." - John Upton Soundstage

ORBTM2 £39.95 ★ S

RDC SPP Isolation Platform

"The platform drops the noise floor to a point where the instruments hang in an inky black space, further adding to the attack and dynamic improvements generated by the cones." - Roy Gregory Hi-Fi+ Magazine

010848 £99.95 ★



Shure Stylus Force Gauge

Although the Shure SFG-2 tracking force gauge works on the simple see-saw principle, it does it with such precision that we feel you'll be hard pushed to find a better gauge for this modest amount of money. Adjustments may be set in 0.05g increments, the Shure also offers a handy mirror for optimal checking.

SFG-2 £23.95



Milty Zerostat

The Zerostat in essence is a gun that when fired approximately 30cms from the surface of your LPs, CDs or DVDs destroys all static build up. This is a highly regarded Stereophile recommend component.

MILTZ £29.95



Cantate Domino

Cantate Domino has been a standard demonstration disc in audio circles for more than twenty years. It is a stunningly beautiful choral and organ recording for all seasons. Available as standard CD or a limited 'Super Analogue Disc'.

PRCD (CD) 7762 £14.95
PROP (180gLP) 7762 £24.95



RDC 2 Cones

"...soundstage became more focused and stable, guitars had more power depth and texture. But it was the voice that really did it. Far more real, the breathing a totally natural part of the performance." - Roy Gregory Hi-Fi+ Magazine

010844 £24.95 ★



Three of the best from Eric Bibb

Spirit And The Blues, Good Stuff and Just Like Love are three good reasons why you should get into Eric Bibb, king of the Mississippi delta blues.

CD / HDCD £14.95
180g x2 LP (45rpm) £24.95
SACD £21.95 (JLL only)

RDC Aspekt Rack

"The effect is to free the bass notes from the speaker cabinets, allowing them to float in space, supporting the sound stage, allowing the music to breathe." Roy Gregory Hi-Fi+ Magazine

02000(Black) £495.95
020000(Cherry) £549.95 ★



3 of our best top selling products



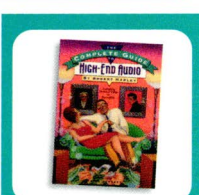
For your FREE 'Audiophile Candy' catalogue and flyers give us a call, or visit 'www.hiforsale.com'. You can also drop us a line, or email, 'theteam@hiforsale.com'



• hiforsale.com • P.O.Box 7274 • Tadley • RG26 5FR • United Kingdom •



VPI Record Cleaner
VPI17 £895.00



The Complete Guide...
BK001 £24.95



Kontak Contact Cleaner
KOECC1 £14.95



Recommended star buy



Stereophile recommended component



Recommended by the Absolute Sound



SONY D-EJ925 CD PERSONAL

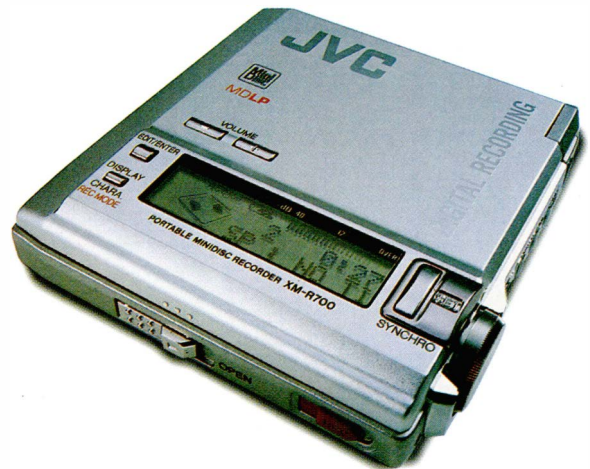
CONTACT: 01932 816000 www.sony.co.uk GUARANTEE: 1 YEAR

SOUND ★★★★★ VALUE ★★★★★ £149.99

If you don't *instantly* find this Sony CD Walkman sexy in the extreme, then I'm sorry to say you have no taste (steady on - Ed). Its cool brushed-metal case and super-slim size (barely bigger than a CD) scream "Buy me!" It's the only player here with an in-line remote control, and a very well-designed one too: play and track-skipping functions are handled by twisting a section of its cylindrical body – pull that section up, and the same switch becomes the volume control. The Sony proudly claims to be 'Jog Proof' – and, as a lot of determined shaking will attest, it is. It also has a terrific battery life, giving you music to cover a week's worth of hard commuting time, at the very least.

Thankfully, the Sony's sound lives up to its classy casing. Its charm is its sonic simplicity, particularly when used with a better set of headphones than the ones provided. It's obviously not up to the standard of the manufacturer's high-end CD players, but compared to its personal competition, this little player has the greatest claim to neutrality and transparency. It lets the music do all the work. It handles Dusty's delicate vocals with aplomb, while lending Garbage enough thump to keep you awake on even the sleepest journeys into work. Its combination of utterly irresistible styling with delightfully accomplished sound quality make this player a clear Best Buy.

"THE SONY'S SOUND LIVES UP TO THE PROMISE OF ITS CLASSY CASING."



JVC XM-R700SL MINIDISC PLAYER/RECORDER

CONTACT: 020 8450 3282 www.jvc-europe.com GUARANTEE: 1 YEAR

SOUND ★★★★★ VALUE ★★★★★ £249.99

Of the three MD player/recorders tested, the JVC is without doubt the biggest and clumsiest. Its pocket-troubling size and bold looks mirror its unashamedly brash sound. There's an awful lot going on with the JVC: bass and treble fight for your attention, and sometimes the midrange gets lost in the mix. The end result can sound a bit overbearing, with the message of the music lost amid the bravado, particularly with busy music mixes. It does a lovely job with Dusty Springfield's delicate vocals, but feed it Garbage and it spits back... well, garbage. These qualities are exaggerated further by its own recordings, which really do begin to lose grip in the midrange. However, recordings undertaken in long-play mode are easily the best in the group – at least, there's very little significant difference between the three modes, with the maximum compression LP4 mode exhibiting only a little hiss and spit in the treble and a slight weakening of the bass. If the economy of these recording modes appeals, then it's certainly worth trying out.

In the end, the JVC gives the Sharp a run for its money in the up-front sound stakes, but the Sharp is that little bit more bearable when listened to at length. Unless you like it raw and edgy, the JVC's aggressive sound is likely to tire you out long before an album reaches its end.

"RECORDINGS UNDERTAKEN IN LONG-PLAY MODE ARE EASILY THE BEST IN THE GROUP."



Home Entertainment

ESSENTIAL BUYER'S GUIDE FOR DVD AND MORE



FREE! DIGITAL TV MAG!

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT iDTV
PLUS! COMPLETE DVD SYSTEMS RATED

AND LOADS MORE...
DVD PLAYERS RATED FOR MUSIC
DIGITAL MUSIC FEATURE
HELPDESK & BUYER'S GUIDE

DON'T MISS THIS SPECIAL ISSUE, ON SALE 22.05.01

www.home-entertainment.co.uk



SHARP MD-MT877H MINIDISC PLAYER/RECORDER

CONTACT: 0161 204 2644 www.sharp.co.uk GUARANTEE: 1 YEAR

SOUND ★★★★★ VALUE ★★★★★ £229.99

This tiny, shiny Sharp just oozes high-tech appeal. It's got the most features of all the MD players, being kitted out with a number of trick play modes, including 'Intro play', which enables you to listen to just the first five seconds of each track.

Quite why you'd want to, though, we're not sure...

The Sharp is one for those of us who enjoy a defiant, up-front sound. Its love of treble can get a bit wearing when using the in-ear headphones provided, but switch them for a decent pair of 'phones and all the elements of the music are revealed. The midband is well handled and while bass is certainly not lacking, don't be too afraid to use the Sharp's bass adjustment to pump it up a notch or two. The Sharp's own recordings are impressively full of detail, with lashings of impact. The two long-play recording modes are less impressive, especially LP4 which simply sucks all the life out of the bass and treble – but perhaps that's got more to do with the quality of standard mode sound than anything else.

OK, so it's pricier than the Sony MD player in this test, but the Sharp's cool looks, compact size and fresh, exciting sound mark it out as a winner. If you like your music to have verve and vigour, then look no further. Recommended.

"THE SHARP'S COOL LOOKS, COMPACT SIZE AND FRESH, EXCITING SOUND MARK IT OUT AS A WINNER."



SONY MZ-G750 MINIDISC PLAYER/RECORDER

CONTACT: 01932 816000 www.sony.co.uk GUARANTEE: 1 YEAR

SOUND ★★★★★ VALUE ★★★★★ £199.99

Finally! An MD player with an AM/FM tuner – there's a radio squished into its bulky in-line remote. Sony has been listening to its consumers and, as sales of its MD Walkmen overtake the CD variety, it has obviously put a lot of thought into its latest models. Another innovation is a separately available PC connection kit, enabling you to wire your MD to your computer for storage of computer audio files.

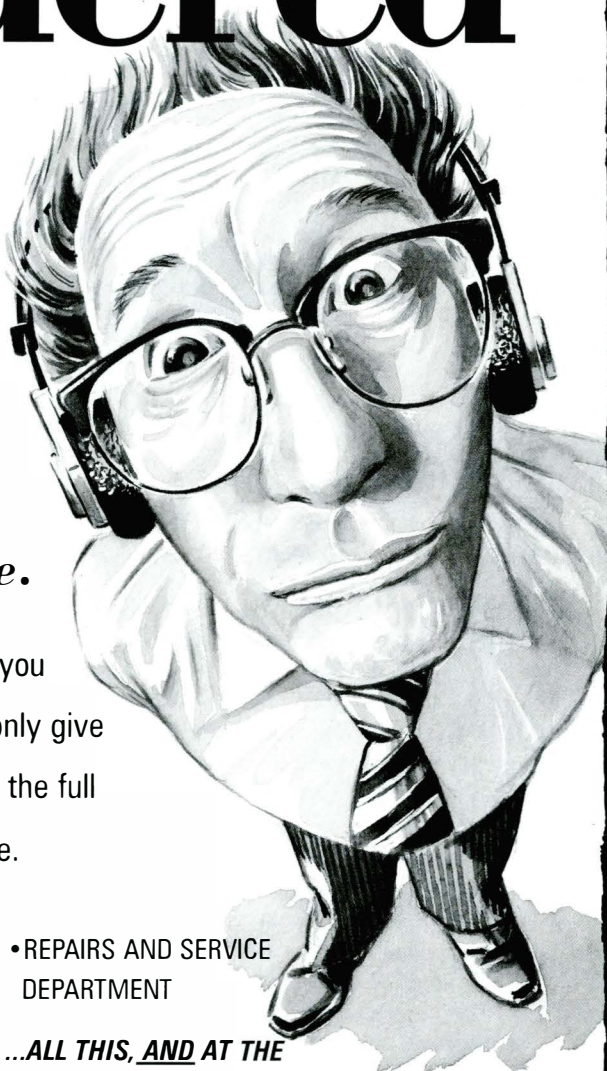
To get anything like the best sound out of this player, step one is to lose forever the tinny in-ear headphones provided. That done, the Sony presents you with a quietly persuasive sound. It's nowhere near as up-front as the Sharp: listened to straight afterwards, it came across as a little tame, but given time it woos you with the beautiful midband which is its strongest suit – great with the soft jazz piano of Blossom Dearie. That's not to say it's without grunt: it made quick work of the thumping bass of Madonna's *Music* and Garbage's clatterings. Its own recordings are blisteringly clear and full of life. Even the long-play modes are acceptable – LP2 is the better of the two, only really suffering from over-bright treble.

In all, the Sony is the clear Best Buy here. It's got cracking build quality – it's light as a feather, but pleasingly sturdy – and its sophisticated sound is great for most musical types.

"THE SONY'S SOPHISTICATED SOUND IS GREAT FOR MOST TYPES OF MUSIC."



Bewildered by all the Options?



*Our knowledgeable staff
can help with unbiased advice.*

Is your existing home entertainment retailer giving you sufficient guidance and advice? Some stores will only give you part of the story; at Practical Hi-Fi we give you the full picture and the benefit of our considerable expertise.

• EXCELLENT RANGE OF
EQUIPMENT

• DEMONSTRATION
ROOMS IN ALL SHOPS

• REPAIRS AND SERVICE
DEPARTMENT

• SPECIALISTS IN HOME
CINEMA

• DELIVERY AND
INSTALLATION SERVICE

...***ALL THIS, AND AT THE
RIGHT PRICE!***

Practical Hi-Fi

PART EXCHANGE WELCOME

0% FINANCE

Subject to status - on selected items.
Written quotation available on request.

UP TO 3 YEARS WARRANTY

(SEPARATES ONLY)

- **MANCHESTER:** 65 Bridge Street / 0161 839 8869
- **PRESTON:** 43 Friargate / 01772 883958
- **WARRINGTON:** 88 Bridge Street / 01925 632179
- **CARLISLE:** 106 English Street / 01228 544792

- Sunday Opening - 12noon to 4.00pm
- **BLACKPOOL:** 81 Whitegate Drive / 01253 300599
- **LANCASTER:** 84 Penny Street / 01524 39657
- **BOLTON:** 33 Knowsley Street / 01204 395789

<http://www.practicalhi-fi.co.uk>

Pioneer ((AE)) N.A.D ROTEL marantz Technics DYNAUDIO YAMAHA TEAC



DENON

SONY

B&W

TANNOY

MISSION

ARCAM

BOSE





PHILIPS RUSH SA126 SOLID STATE PERSONAL

CONTACT: 020 8689 2166 www.philips.co.uk GUARANTEE: 1 YEAR

SOUND ★★☆☆ VALUE ★★☆☆ £249.99

It seems it's very much hip to be square. The Philips SA126 is a lightweight silver brick, small enough to sit in the palm of your hand. Very tasty, except that there's no in-line remote and you've no hope of telling the difference between the play and stop buttons when the unit's hidden snugly in your pocket. The player comes bundled with RealPlayer software for a PC, making light work of handling music from the Net or 'ripping' tracks from CD. Copying them over onto the unit – via USB or the parallel port of your computer – is a cinch, too. The SA126 comes complete with a 64Mb SmartMedia card for storage, which is enough for about an hour's worth of music without going overboard on the compression.

Like most personals, the in-ear headphones provided with the SA126 are nothing to write home about, and you'll get the best results by shelling out on a better pair. Even then, music on the Rush comes across as a bit vague, almost reluctant to show itself. The sound is not in any way unpleasant or offensive – it's simply a bit dull, in contrast to the player's flashy looks.

"MUSIC ON THE RUSH COMES ACROSS AS A BIT VAGUE, ALMOST RELUCTANT."



RIO 800 SOLID STATE PERSONAL

CONTACT: 01189 444400 www.riohome.com GUARANTEE: 1 YEAR

SOUND ★★☆☆ VALUE ★★☆☆ £299.99

Rio's new 800 MP3 player is the next step up from the entry-level 600 player (reviewed in *HFC* 208); this new player offers rechargability, greater storage and a voice record function above the basics handled by its baby brother.

Although large by the standards of the group here, it's lightweight, stylish, and offers an in-line remote. The display is detailed, packing in a host of useful information, and its design is 'codec agnostic' so it can be upgraded to support future file formats in addition to MP3 and WMA included as standard.

The Rio 800 uses the now widely-adopted 'plug and play' USB PC connection and is the only player here also compatible with Apple Macintosh computers. It took only a matter of minutes to get it up and running, and copying files onto its memory card is a breeze. The basic unit comes supplied with 64Mb of memory, but the 'backpack' can be removed and replaced with a 128Mb version, or even (apparently) a whopping 384Mb one.

At the highest level of recording quality, the Rio has an impressive level of detail, surprisingly insightful for a compressed digital format. This could be a side-effect of its sound, which is basically very up-front, with crisp and snappy bass. All in all, the ease of use and good sound of the Rio earn it a comfortable Recommendation for computer-reliant music on the move.

"THE RIO'S SOUND IS SURPRISINGLY INSIGHTFUL FOR A COMPRESSED DIGITAL FORMAT."



REALLY SLAYING SOMETHING



THIS LIFE EXCLUSIVE
FREE DISC

Plus £5 off the series on DVD

Exclusive Sarah Michelle Gellar interview
PLUS Buffy Season Two: full review and episode guide

50 best twist endings ■ DVD's biggest psychos
PLUS Charlie's Angels ■ Shaft ■ Rocky Special Edition ■ The A-Team
■ The latest news and previews of future releases and more...

WHAT DVD ISSUE 26 ■ ON SALE NOW





SONY NW-MS9 SOLID STATE PERSONAL

CONTACT: 01932 816000 www.sony.co.uk **GUARANTEE:** 1 YEAR

SOUND ★★★★★ **VALUE** ★★★★★ **£299.99**

This is the latest in Sony's MP3-style Network Walkman line, which use Sony's Memory Stick IC card for storage, and ATRAC for file compression. Using USB to connect to your PC, it's a simple matter to use Sony's own OpenMG Jukebox software to whisk music files over onto the player, either downloaded MP3/WAV files or your own CD tracks converted to ATRAC. The smallest and sleekest in the test by miles, it's undeniably the winner in the must-have-shiny-thing stakes. It lacks an in-line remote, but the controls on the unit itself are simple and reasonably easy to use when its secreted in a pocket.

The provided in-ear headphones are tinny and brash, and as is often the case the Sony's sound is given a lift if you switch to a better pair. The sound is warm, but a little boomy and cluttered. There's none of the relaxed persuasiveness to be found in the Sony CD and MD players in this test; the NW-MS9 is much more interested in grabbing your attention with in-your-face sound. This may appeal at first, but it becomes wearing with extended listening.

This is arguably the most beautifully designed solid state personal yet, but its performance doesn't match its hefty price.

**"THERE IS NONE OF THE
RELAXED SOUND FOUND IN THE
SONY CD AND MD PLAYERS."**



CONCLUSION

DAVID BAILEY POKETS THE BEST IN TEST...

This test didn't really throw up any surprises, each format has its strengths and weaknesses and which is best for you will depend on what you value most highly, portability or sound quality. CD personals offer the best sound quality and, thanks to effective anti-shock technology, better portability than of old. Size is an issue with most of this species, but the Sony disproves the rule—and it sounds as enticing as it looks. If you're in the mood for something a little different, then the Kenwood offers a funkier option.

MDs still offer the best flexibility-to-sound quality ratio: while the sound may not be as crisp as CD, MD's compact, robust nature and track editing options make it a natural successor to cassette and eminently portable. In this test, the Sony had the best sound and lowest weight. But the Sharp is a serious consideration, if you like an up-front sound.

Solid state personals represent the cutting edge of portable technology, if not sound quality. If you've a penchant for downloaded music, or you're simply a curious early adopter, check out the Rio: it's the best-sounding solid state model here and also the easiest to use. It must be said, though, that the compression technologies used don't do music many favours. Memory capacities and card prices are still a limitation, and the future of sharing music over the web is still very much up in the air.

PERSONALS ROUND-UP



JVC XL-PG31 £59.99

'Challenging' looks and an uninspiring sound, but the JVC has price in its favour.



KENWOOD DPC-X517 £99.99

Clean, funky bass makes for an exciting sound; an attractive proposition, if you can stomach the design.



SONY D-EJ925 £149.99

Beautiful design matched with an unusually beguiling sound for a personal – a clear Best Buy.



JVC XM-R700SL £249.99

The most expensive player here, but its in-yer-face sound and slab-like, heavy design make its value questionable.



SHARP MD-MT877H £229.99

Pleasantly up-front sounding player in a sexy little package, well worth your attention if you like that kind of thing.



SONY MZ-G750 £199.99

Light and simple to use, with a relaxed and enjoyable sound, and with a tuner too! An easy Best Buy.



PHILIPS RUSH SA126 £249.99

Smart design but sound is a little thin, and the fiddly controls and lack of remote make it difficult to use.



RIO 800 £249.99

If you're interested in solid state, this player's great sound and ease of use make it one of the better ones.



SONY NW-MS9 £300.00

It's got size and simplicity on its side, but its sound and facilities don't match the price tag.



I would like to subscribe to **HI FI CHOICE** for 13 issues

YOUR DETAILS

Title _____ Initials _____

Surname _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ Country _____

Tel no. (inc. code) _____

E-mail address _____



PLEASE CHOOSE YOUR METHOD OF PAYMENT: 1 OR 2

1. DIRECT DEBIT

UK only £7.49 every 3 months – save £12.29 Complete form below.

I understand that I will receive 13 issues during the next 12 months.

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay Direct Debits.

Originator's Identification Number
7 6 8 1 9 5

Please send this form to address shown

Future Publishing Ltd.
Cary Court, Somerton,
Somerset, TA11 6BR

I. Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society branch

To: The Manager _____ Bank/Building Society

Address _____

Postcode _____

2. Name(s) of account holder(s) _____

3. Branch sort code (from the top right hand corner of your cheque) _____

4. Bank or Building Society account number _____

5. Instruction to your Bank or Building Society

Please pay Future Publishing Direct Debits from the account detailed on this Instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Future Publishing and if so, details will be passed electronically to my bank or building society.

Signature(s) _____ Date _____

Ref No (Office use only) _____

Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit Instructions for some types of account.

You may photocopy this blank form and then complete it.
You cannot fax or e-mail Direct Debit forms.

2. CHEQUE/CREDIT CARD

UK £29.97 – save £12.28 Europe (including Eire) £43.00

North America £49.99 Rest of the world £62.00

Cheque (€'s sterling drawn on a UK bank account payable to Hi Fi Choice)

Mastercard Visa Switch Issue no./valid date _____

Card no. _____

Expiry date ____/____/____ Tick if you don't wish to receive mail from other companies

Signature _____ Date _____

SEND TO: HI FI CHOICE Subscriptions ,

UK: Future Publishing, FREEPOST BS4900, Somerton, Somerset, TA11 6BR.

Overseas: Future Publishing, Cary Court, Somerton, Somerset, TA11 6TB, UK.

Order code: **P216**

Offer ends: 22.06.01



Why subscribe?

- ✓ YOU get every issue delivered to your door FREE. (UK only)
- ✓ YOU save money - over 25% on the cover price.
- ✓ YOU will never miss an issue of your favourite magazine.

How to subscribe

- ✎ Complete and return the form on this page.
- ☎ Call our credit card hotline on: **0870 444 8475**
overseas readers call: +44 870 444 8475
- @ **Subscribe online:**
www.futurenet.com/promotions/pg216/89



website:
www.futurenet.com/promotion/pg216/89

HI-FI CHOICE

SUBSCRIPTION OFFER

SAVE OVER £12

When you subscribe for 13 issues

EDITOR'S CHOICE

HI-FI CHOICE
magazine



"It might seem like a statement of the obvious but sometimes things have to be done formally, so I'd like to take this opportunity to award the Hi-Fi choice subscription package an Editor's Choice. Its combination of thorough test work with the most advanced measurements in the business leaves the competition in the shade."

Kennedy

HOTLINE NUMBER:

+44 (0)870 444 8475

Dealer Guide

BIRMINGHAM

Naim...Meridian...Arcam... Tag McLaren...
Teac...Mission...Stands Unique...
and much, much more.

152a High Street, (Sharing ASDA Car Park) Bloxwich, Walsall

01922 493499

0121 321 2445

3 Hi-Fi Studios Home Trials Home Cinema Theatre
In House Service Department Mail order available

and NOW AT 111 The Parade, Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham

Interest Free Credit available
(On Selected Items, subject to 20% deposit. Written details on request)

MUSIC MATTERS

THE AUDIO SPECIALISTS

Our extensive range of products includes the very finest hi-fi and home cinema from Arcam, Audioquest, Audio Research, B&W, Castle, Celestion, Chord, Cyrus, Denon, DPA, Dynaudio, Jamo, KEF, Kenwood, Krell, Marantz, Martin Logan, Meridian, Michell, Mission, Monitor Audio, Musical Fidelity, Panasonic, Pioneer, Polk, Pro-Ac, Project, Quad, REL, Rogers, Rotel, Ruark, Sennheiser, SME, Sonus Faber, Tag McLaren, Tannoy, TEAC, Technics, Theta, Thorens and Yamaha.

A wide range of classical CD's is available at our Birmingham branch.

Open Tuesday to Saturday 10.00 - 5.30. late night (not Stourbridge) Thursday till 7.00

<p>INTEREST FREE CREDIT ON SELECTED ITEMS APR 0%. Written details on request. Licensed Credit Broker.</p> <p>VISA • MASTERCARD • SWITCH • AMEX • DINERS</p>	<p>363 HAGLEY ROAD, EDGBASTON, BIRMINGHAM B17 8DL.</p> <p>TEL: 0121-429 2811 FAX: 0121-434 3298</p>	<p>93-95 HOBS MOAT ROAD, SOLIHULL, WEST MIDLANDS B92 8JL</p> <p>TEL: 0121-742 0254 FAX: 0121-742 0248</p>	<p>9 Market Street, Stourbridge, West Midlands DY8 1AB</p> <p>Tel: 01384 444184 Fax: 01384 444968</p>	<p>BRANCH NOW OPEN 10 Boldmere Road, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B73 5TD</p> <p>Tel: 0121 354 2311 Fax: 0121 354 1933</p>
---	---	---	---	---

BERKSHIRE

-Frasers-

Independent Audio Visual Specialists for over 16 years
Demo Room Available

Brands include:

- ARCAM • ATACAMA • B & W • CASTLE • DENON • (DENON GOLD) • KEF • LOEWE • MARANTZ • MISSION • MUSICAL FIDELITY • NAD • NAKAMICHI • PIONEER • REL • ROTEL • SONY • TALK ELECTRONICS • TANNOY • TEAC • YAMAHA

Unit 35, Observatory Centre, High Street, Slough, Berkshire SL1 1LE
Tel: (01753) 531785

BRISTOL

V'audio

Hi-Fi Consultants

Home demonstrations and honest advice a speciality, using specially selected equipment from AVI, ATV, AUDIO ANALOGUE, ALR JORDAN, ALON, ELECTROCOMPANET, HEYBROOK, RUARK, SHEARNE, OPERA, ORACLE, MICHELL, MARK LEVINSON etc.

Home cinema on demonstration using: NAKAMICHI, HARMAN-KARDON, SONY, DAVIS, SELECO, STEWART SCREENS, JAMO, TRIANGLE etc

Please ring for an appointment

36 Druid Hill, Stoke Bishop, Bristol BS9 1EJ.
Tel: 0117 968 6005
www.vaudio.co.uk

SUFFOLK

signals

hi-fi for grown-ups

atc
audio physic
bow
densen
harbeth
lyra
michell
primare
stax
sme + many more

tel ipswich 01473 655171 fax 01473 655172
www.signals.uk.com

SCOTLAND

Loud & Clear

HI-FI & HOME CINEMA

freedom of choice

520 ST. VINCENT STREET FINNIESTON GLASGOW 0141 221 0221
26 HAMILTON PLACE STOCKBRIDGE EDINBURGH 0131 226 6500
www.loud-clear.co.uk

Hearing is Believing

CLONEY Audio

30 years of Excellence

55 Main Street, Blackrock, Dublin.
Tel: (01) 2889449/2888477
www.cloneyaudio.com
Email: info@cloneyaudio.com

Open: Tues - Sat 10 am to 6 pm. Thur - Fri 10 am to 9 pm.

a simple way to advertise for free your hifi on the internet

www.hififorsale.com

an easy way to find hifi, buy accessories and find answers

HI-FI CHOICE

INTERNET

SOUTHWEST ANALOGUE

SME including MODEL 10 Turntable
Exciting NEW TUBE TECHNOLOGY FUSION RANGE
MICHELL ENG. - NOTTINGHAM ANALOGUE
LORICRAFT/GARRARD - PROJECT - ORTOFON
CASTLE - VOODOO ISOLATION SYSTEMS

Record Cleaning Service - Secondhand equipment

01643 851351
graham@southwestanalogue.fsnet.co.uk

BEYERDYNAMIC HEADPHONES SPARES AND ACCESSORIES

They are all in our on-line catalogue of quality headphones, audio leads, video leads, speakers, valves, service aids, Sennheiser headphone spares, parts, and much more - visit us today at

www.strachan.ndirect.co.uk

STRACHAN ELECTRONICS

9 CROALL PLACE, EDINBURGH, EH7 4LT
Tel: 0131 556 9549
E-mail: strachan@ndirect.co.uk

HI-FI CHOICE

THE FINEST HI-FI MAGAZINE IN THE WORLD

Classified

Dealer Guide

EAST SUSSEX

ADAMS & JARRETT

0800 146569

REL • KEF • RUARK

MERIDIAN • YAMAHA

CABLETALK • ROTEL

NORMAN ROAD, ST LEONARDS-ON-SEA, EAST SUSSEX

MARANTZ • TACT

NAD • TANNOY

Tel: 01424 437165 Fax: 01424 444148

TALK ELECTRONICS

www.audio-shed.co.uk

DYNAUDIO

WEST SUSSEX

WORTHING AUDIO

20 Teville Gate, W. Sussex BN11 1UA
Tel: (01903) 212133

The friendly shop with the best sound systems in the South.

Friendly advice • 3 yr guarantees • easy parking
Open Mon-Sat 10am-6pm Late night Wed 7:30pm

Agencies include: Dynaudio, Exposure, Marantz, Orelle, Origin Live, Restek, Ruark, Audio Technica, Talk Electronics, Target, TDL, Tripod, Sphinx Laboratories and many more.

IRELAND

Hearing is Believing

CLONEY Audio

30 years of Excellence

55 Main Street, Blackrock, Dublin.

Tel: (01) 2889449/2888477

www.cloneyaudio.com

Email: info@cloneyaudio.com

Open: Tues - Sat 10 am to 6 pm. Thur - Fri 10 am to 9 pm.

LONDON

CHOICE HI-FI

STOCKISTS OF:

Acoustic Energy, Advantage, Alon, ATC, Audible Illusions, Audio Physics, Boulder, Bryston, C.A.T., Cary, Chord, Clear Audio, Denon, DNM, Dynavector, Eggston Works, Graham, Helios, Meracus, Michel, Musical Fidelity, Nordost, Oracel analogue and digital, P.M.C., Plinius, Quadraspire, Rockport, Shahinian, SME, Tara Labs, Target, Teac, Totem, Transfiguration, Trichord, Trilogy, Van den Hul, VPI, Wilson Benesch, Zingali. Players now available from Sony, Panasonic, Pioneer and many more.

- Best prices paid for top quality equipment
- Generous part exchange
- Show room/demo room
- Long term trade-in policy, to allow continual upgrading
- All credit cards inc. Amex
- Mail order
- Export service
- Finance arranged subject to status
- Widest range available
- In-depth experience on high-end used equipment
- Unbiased advice
- Unique 'Hi-Fi Exchange' - a computerised database of sales and wants - will put you in touch

tel 020 8392 1959 & 020 8392 1963
tel 020 8392 1964 www.choice-hifi.com open from 10am Mon by appointment
 All previously cherished items in mint, second hand or as new condition - guaranteed

HERTS

the audio file

COME AND EXPERIENCE HI FI AND HOME CINEMA AT ITS BEST

THE AUDIO FILE,
27 HOCKERILL STREET,
BISHOP'S STORTFORD,
HERTFORDSHIRE CM23 2DH
TEL: 01279 506576
FAX: 01279 506638
WEBSITE: www.audiofile.co.uk

ABSOLUTE SOUNDS
 NAUTILUS ■ B&W ■ ONKYO ■ BOSE ■ MILLER & KREISEL
 BOSTON ■ ARCAM
 DENON ■ SONY
 CYRUS ■ REGA
 LINN ■ NAIM
 TAG McLAREN
 SONY ■ PIONEER
 LOEWE ■ TEAC
 YAMAHA
 KEF ■ CASTLE
 MARANTZ
 PROAC ■ QED
 SYSTEMLINE
 INTEGRA RESEARCH
 IMERGE

Radlett Audio

EST. 1978

THE HIGH-END SPECIALIST SINCE 1978

• ATC, Audio Analogue, Avantgarde, Bow, Bryston Copland, EAR, Lyra, Mark Levinson, Naim Audio, Notts Analogue, PMC, ProAc, Proceed, Rega, Roksan, Ruark, Sonus Faber, Stax, Sumiko, TAG, Teac, Wadia and lots more.

9 Holywell Hill, St. Albans, Herts. AL1 1EU
Tel: 01727 855577 • Fax: 01727 858727

SYSTEMS

SPECIALISTS IN SOUND

Please refer to dealer directory for further details

28/30 Burleigh Street Cambridge CB1 1DG
Phone: 01223 461518 Fax: 01223 576743

AUDIO CONCEPT

27 BOND STREET, EALING W5 ☎ 020 8567 8703

AAVIX, APOLLO, ASH DESIGN, AUDIO ANALOGUE, BANG & OLUFSEN, BOSE, BOSTON, B&W, CABLE TALK, CHORD COMPANY, COSMIC, DENON, ELAC, EPOS, HARMON KARDON, JBL, KEF, MARANTZ, MISSION, MUSICAL FIDELITY, NAKAMICHI, NORDOST, ONKYO, OPERA, ORELLE, PRIMARE, QUAD, REL, ROKSAN, ROTEL, RUARK, SONICLINK, SOUND STYLE, STANDS UNIQUE, STRAIGHTWIRE, SUPRA, TAG McLAREN, TALK ELECTRONICS, TARGET, TEAC, THORENS, VAN DEN HUL

Two demonstration rooms.
Repairs & Service. Closed Wednesday

SURREY

OTHER BRANDS INCLUDE ARCAM, CABLE TALK, DENON, DUAL, JAMO, KENWOOD, MARANTZ, NAD, PIONEER, QED, QUAD, SENNHEISER, SONY, TANNOY, TARGET, TECHNICS, THORENS, YAMAHA.

COSMIC

A world of difference

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK

MISSION

FULL RANGE ON DEMONSTRATION

HOME CINEMA
WIDESCREEN
PLASMA & DVD

244-256 STATION ROAD, ADDLESTONE, SURREY
TEL: 01932 854522 FAX: 01932 832432

HAMPSHIRE



KESTREL FURNITURE

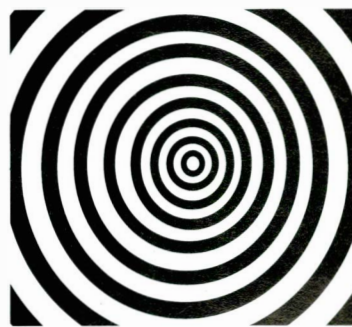
Specialist CD/DVD/Video/Cassette storage chests and hi-fi cabinets with our new sound enhancing acoustic shelves, in choice of finish. Standard designs or made to your own specification. Acoustic shelves available separately.



Kestrel Furniture, 2-4 Elms Road, Aldershot, Hants, GU11 1LJ.

Tel: 01252 343959 Fax: 01252 342686
www.kestreljoinery.co.uk

LONDON



think audio think...

Auditorium

020 7384 3030

THE HI-FI SHOP 112 NEW KINGS ROAD LONDON SW6

O'Brien Hi-Fi

ARCAM • ANTHEM • AUDIOGRAM • AUDIO RESEARCH • AUDIO TECHNICA • BEYER • CABLETALK • CHORD • CREEK • DENON • JADIS • JEKLIN • MICHELL • MUSICAL FIDELITY • NAD • NAIM • ONKYO • OPERA • PROJECT • QED • REGA • SENNHEISER • SME • SONNETER • SONUS FABER • SUGDEN • TEAC • THORENS • TRANSPARENT CABLES • UNISON RESEARCH • VIENNA • WILSON



Clearance / Second Hand / Ex Dem Equipment • Details on request

0% Instant Finance Available

• Demonstration Room • Free car parking • Major Credit Cards

Personal Export • Mail Order • Installation Service • Repair facilities

5 mins walk Raynes Park BR • 20 mins Waterloo

5 mins from A3 (Raynes Park B282exit) • 25 mins M25 Junc 10

60 Durham Rd, West Wimbledon, London SW20 0TW

Tel: (020) 8946 1528 Fax: (020) 8946 0331

Email: obrienhi-fi@iname.com

Classified

Dealer Guide

WHAT'S WHAT ON THE WEB!

www.audioatmosphere.com



www.electric-warehouse.co.uk



www.hififorsale.com



www.hifijunkies.co.uk



www.platform7.net



www.empiredirect.co.uk



KENT



£600

Mr. Andrew Everard in Gramophone Magazine "delivers a sound that's both smooth and refined ... allied to a good degree of clarity and finesse" Hi-Fi Choice "it's a 'classic valve sound'... warm and cuddly...vocals are generally lifelike and involving" FREE colour literature. **£600 with free delivery** Phone 01634 373410 anytime. **1 month home trial** www.affordablevalvecompany.com **40 watts**

EVE FOR TOTAL HI FI & AV SHOPPING

MARANTZ • TANNOY • TECHNICS • PANASONIC • PIONEER • SONY • JVC JAMO • TOSHIBA • HITACHI • CASTLE

109 BROADWAY, BEXLEYHEATH, KENT DA6 7JH
020 8298 7880

Mail Order: 01474 353000 (not available on Marantz)

SALES & SERV

LONDON

York a great place for...

- Widest choice in the area
- Independent advice
- Qualified staff
- Comfortable dem rooms
- Superb showrooms
- Main road location
- Major car parks nearby
- Insurance estimates
- Over 30yrs experience
- Service Dept.
- Delivery & installation
- Part Exchange
- Open 10-30-5 30-6 days

Up to 3 yrs. Interest Free Credit
deposit only 20% of £500+ for 12 months £1500+ for 24 months £3000+ for 36 months subject to status

Best place in town for Hi-Fi and Home Cinema

PS if you're making a special trip... it's best to book weekdays

Vickers Hi-Fi

24 Gillygate, York
Tel. 01904 629659
High Fidelity Specialists est.1967
More info at... WWW.Vickers-HiFi.co.uk

HI-FI CHOICE

SCOTLAND

Sounds Perfect
at J D Brown
Where Music Matters

Hi-fi at its best
Sales, Service and Installation
Open Mon - Thurs 10-7
Fri 10-6 Sat 9-5
26 St Andrews Street, Dundee
Tel: 01382 226591
Fax: 01382 229994

CHESHIRE

BADA BRITISH AUDIO DEALERS ASSOCIATION the symbol of security

Doug Brady Hi-Fi
Family business est. 1960. Home trials.
Systems £500-£60,000:
CD/DVD/VINYL/AV
Kingsway North, Warrington
Tel: 01925 828009 Fax: 825773
2.3miles J21-M6. Private Parking
Map FAXED & on website
www.dougbradyhifi.com
Email: doug.brady@dougbradyhifi.com

Dealer Guide

SALES & SERVICES

LINCONSHIRE

Heatherdale Audio Ltd

202 Findon Road, Worthing BN14 0EJ

Pre-owned Equipment Available with Guarantee
Export Facilities Available.
Visit our Web Page: www.hifi-stereo.com
Main Dealer for Mark Levinson Reference Products.

Save One Thousand Pounds
BOW WIZARD CD PLAYER WITH WAND
(normal price £3495) OUR PRICE to include
FREE 24/96 UPGRADE worth £600

MERIDIAN AV SYSTEM
MERIDIAN 562 V MULTI MEDIA CONTROLLER
MERIDIAN 565 DIGITAL SURROUND PROCESSOR
MERIDIAN 557 POWER AMPLIFIER
£1995

SPEAKERS

Living Voice Auditorium Speakers.....£850
Meridian A500 Speakers.....£595
Linn Isobariks With Stands.....£595
Hyebrook Prima Speakers.....£125
KLH Speakers.....£195
Kef 101/2 Speakers.....£475
Mission 782 Loud Speakers (Stand mount model)
£250
Selection of Thiel ex. Demo. Speakers. All with 10 year guarantee.....£3phone
Main Dealers for Orchid Speakers.

PRE-AMPS

Musical Fidelity MVT Pre-Amplifier with
Phonostage and PSU.....£495
Lumley Passive Pre-Amplifier.....£275
Burmester 785 Pre-Amp with Phono-Stage.....£895
Audio Research Phono 1 Phono-Stage MM & MC.....£795
Exposure 21 Pre-Amp NEW with remote.....£890
Perreaux 5M6P Pre-Amp 350P Power Amplifier
£3695
Naim Nac 42.5 Pre-Amp.....£150

AMPLIFIERS

Meridian 605 Mono-blocks.....£995
Rogers E40a Integrated Amplifier with phono-
stage (NEW).....£995
Cello Performance 11 Mono Amplifiers.....£9995
Audionote P4 Mono-blocks.....£3395
Exposure 11/12/Super 8.....£995
Mark Levinson ML23 Power Amplifier.....£2495
Perreaux 5M6P Pre-Amp 350P Power Amplifier ..
£3695

CD PLAYERS & TRANSPORTS

Pioneer PD-S505 Precision CD Player.....£195
Teac X1 Balanced Cd Player.....£1095
Classe CDP.5 HDCD Balanced CD Player.....£995
Mark Levinson ML37 CD Transport.....£2695
Denon DCD660 CD Player.....£95
CEC TL Zero MK2 CD Transport (Cost New
£12300) 2 Mths Old.....£5500
(Stereoophile Class A1 Recommended)
Micromega Leader CD Player.....£150

DACS

Mark Levinson ML360S DAC.....£4495
PS Audio Ultra-link Digital Processor.....£995
Cello Reference DAC.....£2995
LFD DAC 3.....£1595

MISCELLANEOUS

Quad FM4 Tuner.....£249
Teac A-33405 Tape Recorder.....£595
Selection of MIT Cables available at discounted prices

TURNTABLES CARTRIDGES & TONEARMS

Thorens TD125 Turntable.....£295
Helius Silver Wired Tonearm.....£995
VPI TNT Mk3 Turntable.....£2695
Luxman PD 282 Turntable.....£75
Koetsu Urishi Cartridge (unused).....£4495
Koetsu Itoigawa Diamond Cartridge (unused)£1995

We now offer 0% finance* (*subject to status)
Please phone to arrange an audition
Main Dealers for:

Mark Levinson, Thiel & Absolute Sounds
Tel: 01903 872288

Evenings: 07860 660001 Fax: 01903 872234

We accept:

Email address: heatherdale@hifi-stereo.com

MAX Midland Audio X-change

Ex-demo & Secondhand equipment

CD Players & DAC'S

	Was	Now
Accuphase DG28 Digital Equaliser S/H	5690	3750
Audio Analogue Paganini CD Player S/H	750	549
Audio Note CD2/Border Patrol PSU Ex-Demo	1634	1199
Densen Beat 400 CD player HDCD S/H	1280	899
Einstein Valve CD Player Ex-Demo	2899	1899
Mark Levinson 31.5 Transport S/H	9500	5999
Monrio Asty CD Player Ex-demo	695	549
Naim Audio CDS/CDPS S/H	5300	2295
Roksan DA2 DAC S/H	539	299
Roksan DP2T Transport S/H	1295	599
Teac T1 Transport S/H	599	349
Theta David II CD/DVD Transport (4 Months old) S/H	5698	4500
Theta Digital Pro Prime II DAC S/H	1699	599

Turntables Tonearms & Cartridges

Basis 1400/RB250 (New & Boxed)	1200	899
Basis 2000/RB300 (New & Boxed)	2000	1599
Garrard 401/Aphelion/RB300 Ex-Demo	N/A	599
Linn Sondtek LP12/Black/Rega	N/A	349
RB200/Goldring1020 S/H	N/A	470
Roksan Radius 3 Turntable (98) Ex-Demo	470	250
Roksan Xerxes Piano Lacquer XPS 1 (SME Cut) S/H	1295	399

Preamplifiers

Alchemist Forsetti Signature Preamplifier S/H	1500	749
Audio Research LS22 VT Line Preamplifier with Remote S/H	3999	2250
Conrad Johnson PV 10 A Ex-demo	1399	899
Conrad Johnson PV 12 A Ex-demo	2300	1799
Densen DM20 Preamplifier Ex-Demo	1380	899
Einstein Valve Preamplifier Ex-Demo	6000	2999
Graaf WFB2 Preamplifier (Hybrid with Phono) S/H	1350	995
Naim Audio NAC S2/NAPS S/H	5600	2395
Michell Argohr/Hera Preamplifier S/H	N/A	479

Amplifiers

Alchemist Forsetti Signature Power Amplifier S/H	2000	1395
Arcam Alpha 10 Integrated Phono/Remote S/H	850	499
Audio Analogue Puccini SE Integrated S/H	635	449
Bow Technologies Wazoo XL Integrated S/H	2499	1895
Chord SP1M400B 400W Mono Blocks (Silver) S/H	11200	5999
DNM PAPS Stereo Power Amplifier 6 months old S/H	2999	2495
Naim Audio NAP135 (Old style) S/H	3200	1599
Graaf 50/50 Push Pull Power amplifier (New&Boxed)	2100	1695
Graaf GM100 Power Amplifier (New&Boxed)	4450	3299
Jadis Dely 7 100W Stereo Power Amplifier (Re-Valved) S/H	4790	2499
Krell KAV 3001 Integrated S/H	2790	1799
Pass Labs Aleph 4 100W Class A Stereo S/H	5100	2750
Primare A30.1 Integrated Ex-Demo	1500	1099
Rega Maia Power Amplifier Ex-Demo	475	349
Sugden SP30 Class A Stereo Power Amplifier S/H	950	599

Loudspeakers

Audio Note AN-K/SP Light Ash Loudspeakers Ex-Demo	1070	629
Audio Note AN-Z Two Floor standers (Black) Ex-Demo	549	395
Boston Acoustics VR 10 Centre Channel (New&Boxed)	250	175
Diapason Kans Walnut 2 Way Monitor (New&Boxed)	1250	899
Infinity Outrigger Jr Outdoor Speakers (New&Boxed)	199	129
JM Lab Colbat 807 Cherry Monitors Ex-Demo	595	425
JM Lab Colbat 815 Dark Cherry Floor standers Ex-Demo	950	749
Martin Logan SL3 Hybrid Electrostatics S/H	3400	2299
Royd Souccorot Walnut Bookshelf S/H	650	379
Sonus Faber Concerto Walnut Ex-Demo	899	699
Totem Mani 2Reference Monitors S/H	3300	1999
VelodyneTX810MK2 Subwoofer S/H	695	379

Cables & Accessories

Audio Sculpture 2m RCA Interconnect Ex-Demo	380	149
Bow Technologies Wand Remote S/H	349	199
Deskade! 1M Interconnects WBTRCA S/H	300	150
Einstein Octopus 6 Way Mains Block (Ex-Demo)	199	149
G-Flex Isolators (New & Boxed)	199	75
MIT MH330 MkII RCA-RCA 1M Interconnects S/H	300	150
MIT MH 770 MkIII Bi-Wire 10 Ft Pair S/H	3750	1499
Madrigal HPC 2m Balanced Interconnect Ex-Demo	310	149
Naim Audio NAC 45 2X2m S/H	N/A	50
Shakti On Lines (New&Boxed)	85	45
Rega 6 Tier Modular Stand Ex Demo	375	175
Shakti Stones (New&Boxed)	195	120
Sound Org Record Racks Double with CD Inserts S/H	199	75
Tara Labs 2x2m Bi-Wired Nexa Terminated	150	75
Target 5 Tier Silver Stand MDF Shelves Ex-Demo	249	145
Target HM 50 Stands (New&Boxed)	99	69
Tripod 4 Tier Table S/H	N/A	59
Vdh Skytrack 2X4M Bi-wire Speaker Cable S/H	75	39

Tuners & Tape Decks

Cymbal C DAB Digital Tuner (Ex-Demo)	1000	599
Revox PR99 MKIII 2 Track Vari Speed S/H	3600	899
Roksan Caspian Tuner AM/FM (Ex-Demo)	699	359

Clearance Items Under £100

Creek 4040 Amplifier	199	75
Denon DCT-670R CD/RDS ICE S/H	269	79
Heybrook HB1 Walnut Speakers	289	75
Heybrook TT2 Belt Drive Turntable S/H	N/A	99
Naim Audio 32 MM/MC Preamplifier S/H	N/A	75
Sony Playstation With 2 controllers S/H	N/A	59
Trio K500 SME Cut S/H	N/A	99

Midland Audio X-change is looking for good used
British & American Hi-fi

www.midlandaudiox-change.co.uk

call John Roberts Tel / Fax 01562 822236

181 Franche Rd • Kidderminster • Worcs • DY11 5AD

e-mail sales@midlandaudiox-change.co.uk

Mobile 07721 605966

MAX Midland Audio X-change

Lend us your ears and we'll blow your mind . . .

Arcam, ATC, B & W, Celestion, Denon, Kenwood, Kef, Marantz, Meridian, Michell, Mission, NAD, Pioneer, Panasonic, Quad, Rotel, Ruark, Sony, Tag McLaren, Tannoy, Teac, Technics, Yamaha and more.

Audition the very best at Lincolnshire's premier Hi-Fi dealer . . .

MANDERS HI-FI LTD.

AUDIO • TV • VIDEO & SATELLITE SALES

2-4 EDWARD STREET (Off Pasture St.)
GRIMSBY. TEL: (01472) 351391

ACCESSORIES

Does your rack sing along? Create a quiet space with cd-str5



"I do like the cd-str5 feet. Bass stays firm and nimble while the midband gains warmth and fluidity."
Jimmy Hughes writing in Hi-Fi Choice, issue 210, January 2001.

Damping resonance for better sound.
www.hi-fi-accessories.com

cd-str5, liked by Jimmy Hughes & highly rated by Stereo and Audio, Germany's leading HiFi magazines. £59 set of four isolating feet. No-risk money-back guarantee.

Information and orders:
cd-str5, 1 Mortimer Cottages, Leominster, Hlds. HR6 9TG
Tel: 01 568 708 739 cd-str5@talk21.com

SUSSEX

BADA
BRITISH AUDIO DEALERS ASSOCIATION
the symbol of security

PHASE 3 HIFI

LEADING HI-FI & 'HOME CINEMA' SPECIALISTS

FOUR LISTENING AND VIEWING STUDIOS

*EXPERIENCED AND FRIENDLY SALES STAFF

*INSTALLATION SERVICE *CREDIT FACILITIES

*HOME DEMONSTRATIONS *PART EXCHANGE

ARCAM • B&W • NAUTILUS 800 • CASTLE

CHORD ELECTRONICS • DENON • KEF

LINN • LOEWE • MARANTZ • MERIDIAN

NAIM • PIONEER • ROTEL • YAMAHA

213-215 TARRING ROAD, WORTHING,

WEST SUSSEX BN11 4HW
TEL: (01903) 245577 FAX: (01903) 505824

SPECIALIST

Front End Problems?
contact:

The Cartridge Man

It doesn't have to cost an arm and a leg to get the best - listen to my Koetsu - and - Decca - eater.

Also agents for Croft, Moth, Hadcock & Michell & E.A.R.

Valve equipment re-build service available, also Cartridge Man Electronic stylus gauge.

- Plus cartridge re-tipping service

020 8688 6565

Website: www.thecartridgeman.com

HI-FI CHOICE

Classified

Dealer Guide

SALES AND SERVICES

www.HiFiBitZ.co.uk



ALL your HiFi needs

TRACK 12 MIN 75
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12


Power

Play

Stop/Clear

Pause

Search

The best buys are just a  away

CUMBRIA

KIMBER 8VS Speaker Cable

£159 per 2.5m pair

"A sharp, lively and full-sounding design with an unusual solidity and depth of image, the 8VS is perfectly suitable for high performance mid-range to high-end, high-resolution home cinema systems, as well as quality Hi-Fi set-up."



Home Entertainment, Issue 79, July 2000.



"for the best cables, CDs and accessories"

Mail Order Direct on UK Freephone **0800 373 467**

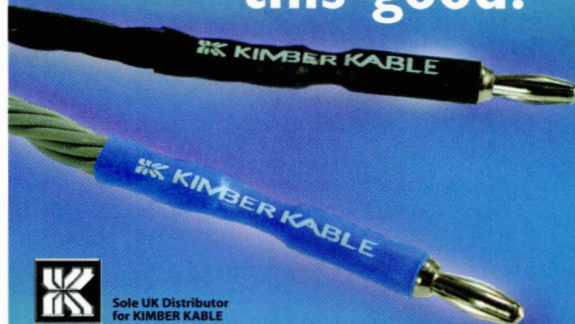
quoting ref: AC71 and request a catalogue

Cable Upgrade Scheme
Lifetime Guarantee
30 Day Home Trial
Expert Advice

Russ Andrews Accessories Ltd., FREEPOST NWW881A, KENDAL, LA8 9ZA.

Tel: +44 (0)1539 825500
Fax: +44 (0)1539 825540
E-mail: AC71@russandrews.com
www.russandrews.com

Why settle for anything else when you can OWN something this good!



Sole UK Distributor for KIMBER KABLE

LONDON



THE INNOVATIVE AUDIO/VISUAL HIFI RETAILER
SERVING LONDON FROM BATTERSEA

ORANGES & LEMONS

020 7924 2040

61/63 WEBBS ROAD, SW11

Our sixth succulent year

0% Credit Finance available

ARCAM. B&W. CABLETALK. CASTLE. CHORD CO. DENON. EPOS. JAMO. KEF. MARANTZ. LINN. NAD. NAIM. NEAT. PMC. REGA. ROTEL. RUARK. SOUNDSTYLE. STANDS UNIQUE. YAMAHA. Visit www.orangesandlemonshifi.com

ESSEX



Akai • Alphason • Arcam • B&W • Bang & Olufsen • Cable Talk • Dual • Loewe • Marantz • Nakamichi • NAD • Pioneer • Pro-ject • Roberts Radio • Sennheiser • Sony • Tannoy • Target • Yamaha

148 HIGH STREET • EPPING • TEL: (01992) 574242
26 KING STREET • SAFFRON WALDEN • ESSEX • TEL: (01799) 523728

CHESHIRE

• TECHNICS • PIONEER • MARANTZ • TANNOY • SENNHEISER •

AUDIO-VISUAL CENTRES

WIDESCREEN
DVD, VIDEO
AC-3 SOUND



WARRINGTON STORE 01925 636215
CHESTER STORE 01244 320414
OPEN SUNDAYS 12am-3pm

Email: wav@freenetname.co.uk

HI-FI SEPARATES
MINI-DISC SYSTEMS
DOLBY PRO-LOGIC

• AKG • HARMAN-KARDON • PANASONIC • ROTEL • TEAC • JAMO •

Classified

KEF
•
IXOS

JBL
•
GEMINI

READER CLASSIFIED

ADVERTISE IN HI-FI CHOICE FOR £5*. To advertise on this page, write your advert in block capitals and send it to: **Reader Classifieds, Hi-Fi Choice, 99 Baker St, London W1U 6FP.** Include a cheque for £5* made payable to Future Publishing Ltd. The advert will appear in one issue only, must be no more than 20 words (or five lines) long, and must include your phone number. Please ensure your ad is clear and legible (if possible, typed) and give your name, address (if these aren't included in your advert) and daytime phone number in case we need to check anything. Reader

Classifieds are for the use of private individuals only. All Reader Classified adverts will be printed on a first-come, first-served basis, subject to available space, and Future Publishing Ltd accepts no liability for the accuracy of the information contained therein, nor any consequence arising from it, nor for any typographical errors. We reserve the right to amend or refuse adverts at the Editor's discretion and cannot guarantee that an advert will appear in any specific issue.

*This service is FREE to subscribers, provided that their subscriber number is enclosed.

FOR SALE

SONY CDP-X3000ES CD player, £295.

Sony TA-F3000ES amp, £295. Both as new and *Choice Best Buys*. Call 01706 345418.

NAKAMICHI 670ZX discrete head cassette deck, auto azimuth alignment, £350. Call 01752 703601.

KENWOOD DP-X9010 transport/Cambridge Audio DACmagic 2 mkII.

Superb build and sound, both recommended by press. VGC, £700 new. Sell for £300 o.n.o. Call 07957 344541.

VINTAGE QUAD ELS speakers, 33/303 amp, FM2 tuner (valve), and a Garrard 401 + SME tonearm. Offers 01736 763454.

SNELL ACOUSTICS Type J Series 2 speakers, £350. Also Snell Type C speakers, £950. Jamo front speaker, £99. Call 01252 614055.

LUMLEY VTP1000, two LRM120w monoblocs. Amongst world's best valves, superb, (£8,950 new) £1,950. Many other items. Call 01933 275323.

MERIDIAN 506.20 CD player, (£1,200 new) £600. Call Terry 020 8482 0363. (Enfield)



Castle Harlechs – a steal at only £450

CASTLE HARLECH speakers deluxe finish, mint, boxed, 15 months old, under warranty, cost £1,000. Accept £450. Call 01904 708382 or 07790 840951.

DENSEN BEAT 100 MKII integrated amp. Lovingly looked after, pristine condition, £380 o.n.o. Call 01225 480938 after 5.30pm, or leave message.

KEF RDM1 SPEAKERS, red side cheeks, perfect condition, boxed with manual, £250. Monitor Audio stands, £50. Call Dan 07796 698682. (Bournemouth)

MISSION 753 floorstanding speakers in black ash, mint, boxed, £425. Nakamichi DR3 cassette deck, mint, £300. Call 01326 572099 evenings.

MICHELL ORBE/SME V/LYRA Clavis DC turntable, three years old, £2,000. Call 01432 266240.

SOUNDSTYLE 5 shelf, Red Tripod, hi-fi rack, £80. Audioquest Ruby balanced pair 0.5m cables, £25. Audioquest Ruby interconnect 1m pair, £20. Call Ken 01733 706175 or 0775 4654981.

QUAD 77 FM TUNER, £170 o.n.o. Rega Planar 3 turntable, £120 o.n.o. Alphason five shelf rack, £70 o.n.o. Call 01727 826120. (St. Albans)

ROKSAN CASPIAN integrated amp. Perfect order, mint condition, boxed with instructions, £375. Call 01225 675115. (Essex)

LUXMAN CO2 PRE AMP, MO2 power amp, 150WPC, £600. Only owner. Monitor Audio 852MD speakers with stands, £250. Call 01708 457691.

MERIDIAN 20-BIT CD player, £1,200. AVI S2000MP pre amp, £750. ATC SCM50 active speakers, £3,500. Townshend Rock turntable, with Excalibur arm/Merlin power supply, £575. Michell ISO HR phono stage, £550. All mint condition, boxed with manual. Call Russell 020 8598 2195 or 07958 552671.

ROTEL MICHI ACTIVE PREAMP, £400. Genesis Digital Lens de-jitter with

AES/EBU and AT&T, boxed, £350.

Celestion SL600 with digital correction engine, boxed, £400 (can separate).

Rogers AB1 subwoofer, black, £170. All excellent condition. Call 020 7226 2690 or email FMak@postmaster.co.uk

TECHNICS SUA 900 MKII amp (cost £400), £150. QED MB45 double headphone amplifier with PSU (cost £85), £35. All mint, boxed, possibly post. Call 01278 782622.

SUGDEN CD21, black (new), £695, not used. Quad 34/306, Quad serviced, £395, mint, boxed. Marantz CD63 MkII (new), hardly used, £90. Harman/Kardon CD £70. Private sale, call 01482 842740.

NAIM NAC 92 pre amp and NAP 90 power amp. Boxed, excellent condition, £500. Call 07973 416385, anytime.

DECCA LONDON GOLD cartridge, £70. Linn K18II cartridge, £45. Roksan Xerxes turntable, needs attention, £80. Call 01992 581576.

CASTLE CHESTER speakers, rosewood finish with dedicated Castle stands. *HFC Best Buy*, £290. Pair of Apollo hi-fi table, 50x42x50cm (WxDxH), black, two shelves, £40 each. 1m Audioquest Video Z, £25. Call 0121 501 2474.

SONY 30ES AMP R/C, 3A3ES tuner, £375 both. Pioneer 509 CD recorder, £145. Ruark Sceptres, £300. Call 0121 246 0486.

WANTED

CASTLE SPEAKERS in yew. Howard, Sub, Keep, Richmond. Must be in excellent condition. Call Mark 0191 385 4430.

LOWTHER ACOUSTA Twin speakers wanted, made 1960s. Also wanted, working drawings of Lowther Twin. Call Jeff 020 8220 0380.

AUDAX HM170 CO carbon fibre drive units or similar HDA units. Rega RB250/300 arm. Large quantity of Discovery or Geo. Cardas internal tonearm wire. Valhalla P/S board, moving coil step-up transformers. Call 01642 594645.

SONY MINIDISC MDS-J3000ES, MD separate, gold. Must be unmarked and working perfectly. Call 01341 422111. (Gwynedd)

ACCUPHASE E-202 dual mono amp, 1970s model, classic collector's piece, perfect working order, £500. Buyer collects. Call Gordon 07941 463474.

NAIM CDS2/XPS CD player (£6,080.00 new) £4,500. Naim NAC52 pre amp (£3,685 new) £2,800. Naim SUPERCAP power supply (£2,315 new) £1,800. Naim NAP135 mono power amp, pair (£3,710 new) £2,750. Naim SBL cherry (passive) loudspeaker (£2,540 new) £1,700. All products are one year old, boxed. Call 0118 9461132 (eve), 0118 9585463 (day).

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!

THE DIRECTORY

THE *HI-FI CHOICE* DIRECTORY ROUNDS UP 1,000 PRODUCTS REVIEWED IN OUR PAGES. HERE YOU'LL FIND OUR OPINIONS ON THE BEST HI-FI COMPONENTS, ALONG WITH ALL THE INFORMATION YOU'LL NEED TO DECIDE WHICH ONES ARE RIGHT FOR YOU.

THE ART OF SYSTEM BUILDING

HOW DO YOU GO ABOUT BRINGING TOGETHER AN IMPRESSIVE HI-FI SYSTEM? IT GOES A LITTLE LIKE THIS...

When it comes to getting together a great separates system, identifying decent individual components is fundamental, but it isn't the whole story. There is the business of system synergy to consider, which simply means how well your components gel as a whole. The degree to which this can affect the end result tends to increase with price, thus budget components are relatively immune (a competitively priced Best Buy disc player, amp and loudspeaker pairing of almost any hue will combine to make a good system). When considering a purchase it's always good practice to listen to alternatives. It's the only way you can learn what different components sound like and find out which ones appeal to you.

So once you have shortlisted some components, the next step is to track down a knowledgeable dealer to take you through the options available. As well as getting the basic hardware right there is the question of which cables to use; should you stick with what comes in the box or pay extra for interconnects and speakers leads? Once you've established that the latter is the way, listen to a dealer's recommendations as to the right cable for your system.

And don't skimp on supports. The temptation is to use any old shelf or sideboard for system and speakers, but it's worth the outlay for speaker stands and proper system support.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

WIRING UP A SYSTEM IS REALLY QUITE STRAIGHT-FORWARD IF YOU FOLLOW A FEW BASIC GUIDELINES.

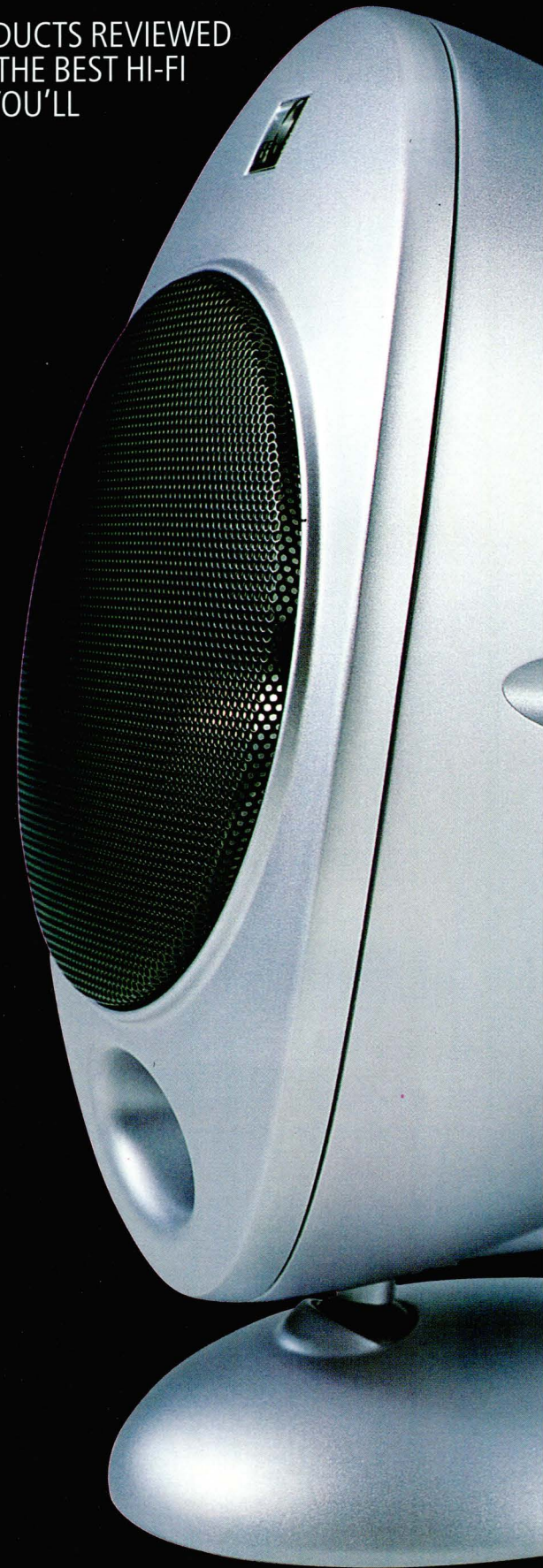
- When bi-wiring with speaker cable you will sometimes need to connect two plugs to one socket on the amp. If the amp has a binding post connection you can usually put one plug through the hole that goes across the post and one in the end. If this is not possible you may need to get both pairs of cables soldered into single plugs at the amp end.
- If a cable has an indication of directionality, i.e. if there are arrows on the casing, use these with regard to the way the signal travels. If there are no arrows you can try it both ways and see if you hear a difference or just route the signal in the direction of the writing on the cable jacket.
- In multichannel AV systems you may have the option of routing video signals via the amp, or bypassing it. The former option gives easiest functionality if you use several sources, but by bypassing you are removing a switch and connection which should improve quality.
- Try to avoid lying mains cables across or beside signal cables as the field they produce can have a negative effect.
- Try to keep all cable runs as short as possible.

AWARD TAGS

Whenever HFC reviews a group of like components we have the opportunity to give the best products a Best Buy or Recommended award. Best Buys are considered to offer an excellent standard of performance at an attractive price.

Recommended products are first class components losing out to Best Buy status only because of a higher price or less competitive overall sound quality.

A third award, the Editor's Choice, is reserved for those products reviewed solo, such as you see in the First Impressions or High Performance sections. An EC is awarded where the Editor is convinced that a product offers exceptional quality for the price.



GLOSSARY

S.1 CHANNEL AUDIO: Six discrete channels, typically front left and right, centre, surround left and right, and LFE (Low Frequency Effects) for a subwoofer.

BALANCE: Most loudspeakers have a characteristic frequency balance resulting from emphasising parts of the audio range and/or de-emphasising others.

BASS: The lowest three octaves of the audio band – hence 'low bass' refers to the bottom octave (20-40Hz); 'mid-bass' the middle octave (40-80Hz); and 'upper bass' the 80-160Hz octave.

BI-AMP: (sometimes tri-amp): Loudspeakers equipped with separate access terminals to each drive unit can be driven by separate (matching) power amplifiers for each driver.

BI-WIRE: (sometimes tri-wire): Loudspeakers with separate access terminals to each driver can be driven by separate cable runs between the amp and each driver.

CD-R: Recordable CD that cannot be erased, though discs that have not been completely filled can have more tracks added later until the disc is finalised.

CD-RW: Recordable/erasable and re-recordable CD, discs must be unfinalised before they can be re-recorded.

CLASS A: Operation of an amplifying stage or device in which current always flows, as opposed to Class B, where some of the devices are effectively turned off some of the time. Class A tends to give lower distortion.

CLASS AB: Most practical amps operate in Class A for the first fraction of a watt and Class B thereafter.

CLIPPING: An amplifier's output waveform is 'clipped' if the volume is advanced too far and no more 'volts' are available to sustain ever increasing power levels. Distortion increases dramatically at this point.

CLOCK: Any electronic oscillator that is used to generate a timing reference signal.

CROSSOVER: A simple electrical network which divides the full bandwidth signal received from the power amplifier, apportioning appropriate parts of the spectrum to the various drive units.

DAC OR DIGITAL-TO-ANALOGUE CONVERTER: The stage at which incoming 16-24 bit digital data is used to reconstruct a recognisable analogue (music) waveform.

DOLBY DIGITAL DD (AC3): A compressed (10:1) digital audio format that typically contains five or more entirely discrete channels, eg 7.1 EX where discrete side channels are used.

DOLBY PRO-LOGIC DPL: Forerunner to DD that 'steers' information to the front L/R, centre and mono surround channels via an analogue matrix.

DRIVE UNIT/DRIVER: A transducer which converts electrical energy into acoustic energy, eg main driver, tweeter.

DSP OR DIGITAL SIGNAL

PROCESSOR: Integrated circuit that handles the decoding of digital audio streams. In 5.1 processors it separates the left from right and front from rear while managing the various bass options.

DTS OR DIGITAL THEATRE SOUND: Competitor to Dolby Digital with a reduced 4:1 compression ratio that, ostensibly, promises higher quality.

ELECTRICAL DIGITAL: Any digital connection that uses an electrical cable rather than optical. Includes the balanced (AES/EBU) interface.

FILTERS: Intrinsic to digital audio is the extensive use of filters, both analogue and digital. These are often very sophisticated in design, and in total they probably have rather more to do with the 'personality' of CD player sound than most other factors.

FINALISE (CD-R): The process of copying the Table of Contents from its temporary area on CD-R and RW where it is ignored by CD players, to the final position where it is recognised by CD players.

FREQUENCY RESPONSE: The range of frequencies, from low to high, which a loudspeaker will reproduce.

IMPEDANCE: With speakers, the complex electrical load that a loudspeaker presents to the amplifier which is driving it.

JITTER: An insidious distortion specific to digital audio whereby the clock, used to regulate the conversion of data into analogue audio, carries a degree of uncertainty.

LINE-LEVEL: Practically every modern source component (except phono cartridges) give an output in the region of 1-2V, commonly referred to as 'line level'. It follows that all inputs labelled 'CD', 'tuner', 'aux' or 'tape' are usually interchangeable.

LOSSLESS COMPRESSION: A method of reducing the number of data bits (density) without corrupting the original description of the musical signal.

LOSSY COMPRESSION: Reduction in data density by recourse to a psycho-acoustical model that predicts what is, and what is not, 'audible' within a sequence of music.

MASKING EFFECT: The audibility of distortion and/or quieter instruments in a mix depends upon the intensity of the music as whole.

MIDRANGE: The middle three or so octaves of the audio band, where the ear is most sensitive, covering the approximate frequency span from 160Hz up to 3kHz.

NETWORK: see Crossover.

OUTPUT IMPEDANCE: A measure of resistance to alternating current, a low output impedance (say, below 100 ohms or so) helps ensure compatibility with most amplifiers, even when using long or unusual designs of interconnect cables.

A high impedance, especially in conjunction with an amplifier with a low input impedance (some are as low as eight kOhms, although the standard is 47 kOhms) can result in audible treble losses.

PLL OR PHASE-LOCKED LOOP: A technique by which a clock of defined characteristics is used to generate a new clock at a different frequency from the original.

PRESENCE: Critical section of the audio band at the point where midrange and treble meet.

QUANTISATION NOISE: A form of distortion or noise resulting from errors in the description of the musical signal by the digital code.

SAMPLE RATE: The rate at which the musical waveform is sliced up into discrete chunks. For CD this is 44.1kHz or once every 0.023msec. DVD will also support 48kHz and 96kHz.

SENSITIVITY: The relative loudness that a speaker generates for a specific voltage input. Expressed in decibels per watt (dB/W).

THX: Standards system for home cinema set-ups which includes amplifier power and speaker dispersion characteristics. THX Ultra being more stringent than Select.

TOSLINK: The proprietary name given by Toshiba to the optical fibre signal transmission system it invented for consumer applications. The system includes dedicated connectors, transmitters and receivers.

TRANSISTOR/MOSFET: the two main types of power semiconductor used in amplifier output stages. Differences are subtle and much argued over!

TREBLE: High frequencies, the top end of the audio band, eg above 3kHz.

TWEETER: Treble driver.

WATTS (PER CHANNEL): the Watt is the unit of electrical power and the WPC rating is the maximum average undistorted power that an amp can deliver to a typical speaker. However, speaker sensitivity variations can make more difference than amplifier output in many cases.

WOOFER: Bass driver.

INDEX OF TESTED PRODUCTS

AMPLIFIERS	
INTEGRATED	104
PRE/POWER	105
PHONO STAGES	106
MULTICHANNEL	106

CABLES	
ANALOGUE INT.	106
DIGITAL INT.	107
LOUDSPEAKER CABLES	108
MAINS CABLES & CONDITIONERS	108

CASSETTE DECKS	109
----------------	-----

DISC PLAYERS	
ONE-BOX CD PLAYERS	109
CD TRANSPORTS	111
DACS	111
DVD PLAYERS	111

DIGITAL RECORDERS	
MINIDISC RECORDERS	112
CD RECORDERS	112

HEADPHONES	112
------------	-----

LOUDSPEAKERS	
STEREO	113
SUBWOOFERS	116
MULTICHANNEL	116
CENTRE CHANNEL	116

PERSONAL STEREOS	117
------------------	-----

INTERNET AUDIO	117
----------------	-----

RECORD PLAYERS	
TURNTABLES	117
CARTRIDGES	118
TONEARMS	119

STANDS & SUPPORTS	
EQUIPMENT SUPPORTS	119
SPEAKER STANDS	119

TUNERS	
ANALOGUE TUNERS	121
DIGITAL TUNERS	121

AMPLIFIERS



SPECIFICATIONS

STEREO AMPLIFIERS – INTEGRATED

STATUS	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	LINE INPUTS	MM PHONO INPUTS	MC PHONO INPUTS	REMOTE CONTROL	HEADPHONE SOCKET	POWER OUTPUT (W)	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
	Arcam Alpha 7R	300	Decent, if slightly system fussy amplifier that no longer pulls all the right strings	5	•		•	•	45	196
	Arcam Alpha 8R	350	Workmanlike amplifier is well thought through, but is now beginning to show its age.	5	•		•	•	50	208
R	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
BB	Arcam Diva A85	700	Much enhanced design topology give a more hard hitting, engaging sound than previous Arcams	7			•	•	85	214
R	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
BB	Arcam FMJ A22	1,000	Powerful, articulate, and expandable into a home cinema or multiroom amp/controller	7			•	•	100	201
EC	ATC SIA2-150	1,984	An impressive sounding integrated amp with a dynamic, open and detailed sound	4			•		150	192
	Aria S2	1,000	Glamorously packaged valve amp produces a real eyes closed, feet up kind of sound	4					12	190
BB	Audio Analogue Puccini	450	Superbly finished, the entry-level Audio Analogue produces 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
R	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
R	Cambridge Audio AS00RC	200	Solid value, decent build and a surfeit of watts make this an attractive proposition, but it can sound slightly loose	6			•		50	196
R	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
	Chord CPM 3300	5,495	Very powerful yet compact amp with rather complex ergonomics and transparent sound. Oh, and a lovely blue glow	5			•		220	214
R	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
R	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
	Cymbal CA1	499	Lacklustre amplifier tends to underperform with complex material. Best with straightforward compact loudspeakers	6					40	178
R	Creek 4330	279	Diminutive but class amp will drive anything, and can be specified in various configurations	4	•				40	192
	Creek 4330SE	499	Somewhat perplexing, though always interesting, miniature audiophile amplifier, needs careful system matching	5			•		50	208
	Creek 5350SE	799	Smooth, open and articulate sound and quality build, but bass is a tad heavy handed	6			•	•	85	214
R	Cyrus 5	500	A enjoyable amp that is assured and unflappable, although detail is unremarkable	7			•	•	45	205
R	Cyrus 7	700	Welcome return to form for the Cyrus stable: this is the best sounding audio brick around	6			•	•	60	196
BB	Denon PMA-255UK	140	Great beer-budget buy, with everything necessary for basic but decent high fidelity operation	5				•	30	208
R	Denon PMA-1500R	500	Recommended for its outrageous power, especially with problem speakers	5	•	•	•	•	70	181
R	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
	Exposure 2010	599	Neatly turned out amplifier, with mainstream appeal but bland with it	6			•		50	214
	Electrocompaniet EC1-3	1,000	Basically good, but too many rough edges to warrant recommendation	6			•		75	201
	Ezo Aria HE	449	Quick, detailed but aggressive and sometimes coarse sounding amp. Beautifully turned out, though	5				•	40	208
	Graaf Venticinque	1,790	Smart and practical, but it just never seems to shine sonically	6					25	202
	Hofli 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
	Kenwood KAF-3010R	180	Plenty of twiddly bits yet weak on inputs, and basically good, but somewhat uneven sound quality	4	•		•	•	70	186
BB	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, unsubtle 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
	Linn Majik	845	Slightly rough and ready power amp modules, but capable preamp that can be expanded into a multiroom system	5	•		•	•	33	214
	Lundahl Mag Amp	1,735	Unusual valve/magnetic amp hybrid with relaxed balance and good timbre	5					23	196
	Marantz PM-6010 OSE	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
	Marantz PM6010 OSE KI Sig	400	Well-made, but somewhat ill-balanced amplifier that doesn't slot into most systems comfortably	6	•		•	•	50	208
	Marantz PM-17 Mk II	999	Big, bold, but over-fruity balance – the 'fat uncontroller' as one put it	6	•	•	•	•	60	214
	Marantz PM-17 KI-Signature	1,300	Full feature audiophile amp where the end results don't quite justify the fantastic ingredients	6	•	•	•	•	60	189
	Mark Levinson No383	5,500	Extremely versatile design that thinks and acts like a serious pre/power. Sounds superb	5			•		100	212
	Monrio Asty	400	Engaging, but ill-disciplined, even OTT amplifier with unpredictable system compatibility	5					55	178
R	Musical Fidelity X-A2	500	A chip off the old block; sounds very similar to the X-A1 and XA-100R	6					75	208
	Musical Fidelity A3	849	Similar to the XA-100R internally, and a little too relaxed for some	5	•		•	•	85	196
	MVL A2	970	Curiously designed, and curious sounding amplifier with Sound Sentinel circuits to address perceived weaknesses	9	•			•	100	201
	Myrrad T-40	400	The T-40 is a well built and sensible, but needs more dynamics and finesse	6	•		•	•	50	192
R	Myrrad MI120	600	Well styled, well built: a good, even tempered amplifier, although it can sound rather brittle	6			•	•	60	175
BB	NAD C320	200	Excellent budget amp from the maker of the seminal 3020 offers better clarity and neutrality and good build	6			•	•	40	186
R	NAD C340	270	A classic NAD amplifier copes with any speaker, delivers plenty of power, and does so with calm decorum	6	•		•	•	50	192
BB	NAD C350	300	A typical NAD: refined, warm tonality, adequate detail, and a strong power yield	7			•	•	60	208
R	NAD 317	400	Build quality aside, the current improved version is a real powerhouse, but smooth and detailed too	6			•	•	80	196
	NAD S300	1,900	Substantial integrated with loads of power and no shortage of finesse, slightly bass-strong	5			•		100	189
	Naim Nait 5	799	As always with the Nait, less is more, and the Nait 5's 30 watts seem to go a lot further with some sources	5					30	214
	OperaAida	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
R	Pioneer A-407R	230	Clean, consistent, finely detailed sound, good finish and (mainly) good build	5	•		•	•	45	186
R	Pioneer A-607R	300	Lively, articulate amp with plenty of drive and a hint of brightness	5	•		•	•	60	192
	Pioneer A07	999	Curious blend of high-end attributes and inconsistent, though undeniably detailed sound	5	•		•	•	80	175
	Plinius 8100	1,450	Slightly rough and ready, but plenty of balls from this stripped down antipodean.	6			•		100	214
R	Præcisa Acustica Sonoro	1,800	It is not often that transistor amplifiers are made to sound so palpably valve-like	5			•		100	189
R	Primare A10	500	Beautifully made, smooth and easy sounding, and though not overtly detailed or dynamic, is well organised musically	6			•		50	208
R	Primare A20 MkII	799	Everything except packaging has changed in Mk II version: but ballsier model has lost none of its refinement	5			•		70	181
BB	Primare A30.1	1,500	Smooth, detailed singing quality, elegant appearance, and healthy power yield	6			•		100	214
BB	Primare A30.1	1,499	Superb build and aesthetics, and undemonstrably musical down to its smallest screw	6			•		100	189
	Restek Fantasy II	1499	Muscular, but ultimately rather strident amplifier which needs careful system matching	6			•		100	189
R	Roksan Kandy KA-1	475	Power with control, barely compromised by a small degree of dryness	6	•		•	•	120	205
R	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
BB	Rotel RA-931 Mk II	189	Simple, non-remote amp majors on clarity and transparency, without sounding over-analytical	4	•			•	35	208

STEREO AMPLIFIERS – INTEGRATED (CONTINUED)

STATUS	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	LINE INPUTS	MM PHONO INPUTS	MC PHONO INPUTS	REMOTE CONTROL	HEADPHONE SOCKET	POWER OUTPUT (W)	ISSUE NUMBER
	Rotel RA-971 MkII	275	Improved RA971 is a chip off the old block: bags of power, but with added precision and clarity	6				●	60	196
	Rotel RA-972	400	Better in the treble than the bass, which is a little too rounded and woolly	6			●	●	90	205
	Sharp SM-SX1	3,300	Jewel like 1-bit digital amplifier with limited power reserves but offering glimpses of sonic magic	5					50	211
	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-FB940R	300	Technically innovative amplifier fails to cut the mustard with complex material	5	●	●		●	70	208
	T+A PA-1220R	1,445	Unique presentation and feature set, but sometimes rather relentless sound quality	7				●	100	189
	Tact Millennium MkII	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	500	Clean, slightly antiseptic sound from this beautifully turned out entry level Audiolab 8000LX replacement	6				●	60	189
	TAG McLaren 60iRv	1,000	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	5					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	6	●			●	37	186
	Technics SU-A808	300	Intriguing amplifier, with abundant detail but dynamically rather flat	6	●			●	55	196
	Thule IA60B	700	Dry, edgy and glassy sounding amplifier, though the balanced input may appeal to some.	6				●	60	214
	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-496	240	Lacklustre, if well equipped and powerful, amplifier shows some improvements over previous amps, but not enough	6				●	85	208
	YBA Intégré	1,550	Careful system matching is essential, but this is definitely one of the good guys	6				●	50	214

STEREO AMPLIFIERS – PRE/POWER AMPLIFIERS

STATUS	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	LINE INPUTS	MM PHONO INPUTS	MC PHONO INPUTS	REMOTE CONTROL	HEADPHONE SOCKET	POWER OUTPUT (W)	ISSUE NUMBER
	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/8A II	1,098	Unusual looks and unusual sound too, rather rough and lacking detail	6				●	55	187
	Arcam Alpha 9C/10P	1,000	Well specified and flexible preamp with sound only just lacking in greatness	6				●	100	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
	Audio Note M Zero/P Zero	998	Neat shoe box-size components. Able to impart music with real life and soul when partnered with P Zero power amps	5					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
	Bryston BP20/3B-ST	2,850	Recommended for pretty much any demanding application	8				●	120	212
	Cary CAD 2A3SE	1,575	Monoblock valve power amp. Low power but gives delightful speed, coherence and transparency	1					5	196
	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
	Copland CTA-301MkII/505	2,498	Sweet sounding, but never gets bogged down in audio treacle. Refined yet never over civilised	4	●				67	151
	Creek P43R/A52SE	949	Excellent sound, remote control operation and upgrade options from fine value preamp.	6				●	100	187
	Creek P43R/A43	1,148	Great value and a podium performance earning a best buy	6				●	140	212
	Crimson 620C	875	Not entirely satisfactory power amp which has dynamic strengths, but underachieves when the volume is raised	1					50	181
	Crimson CS610/CS630	1,250	Good, clear sound, including a decent phono stage, but flexibility is limited. Slimline monoblocks with grunt and finesse	3	●	●			100	187
	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 aCA7.5/Smart Power	1,250	Great for classical, jazz, and existing Cyrus owners, recommended	7				●	60	212
	Cyrus aCA7/aPA7	2,694	Low feedback power amp design that's a positive departure from the transistor norm, preamp is functional but not as impressive	5				●	150	190
	Densen Beat B-200	1,000	A versatile preamp with a high 'air-guitar' factor and Densen's characteristic styling	6	●	●			191	
	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 380/334	9,490	Preampifier combines precision and warmth with unusual configurability, power has refinement, authority and transparency to spare	6				●	125	195
	LFD Mistral Linestage/Power	898	Strong ergonomics, generally decent sound, but a little lacking in detail	6					60	165
	Linn Kolektor/LK85	990	Beautifully tuned out machine, yet slightly bland, aimed at an all Linn system	9	●	●			62	212
	Michell Orca/Alecto mono	3,600	Line-level design with a gorgeous remote and focused, spacious sound	6				●	100	187
	Moth 30 Series Monoblocks	879	Tested with Active Preamp. Demonstrated solid balance and proved adept at delivering vital musical qualities	1					100	155
	Moth 30 Active LS/60 Stereo	948	Excellent-sounding ultra-simple miniature preamp, power amp lacks finesse and control, however	4					60	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-P100	800	Good long-term listening prospects; detailed and a little fruitiness (tested with X-A200 power amp)	6	●			●	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
	Myryad MA120	450	Based on MI120 integrated – see latter for comments, but sounds significantly better when bi-amped with MI120	1					60	165
	Myryad MP100/MA240	1,600	Smart finish and impeccable manners, smooth, clean performance	6				●	120	212
	NAD 114	270	Beer-budget preamp which sounds focused, detailed and consistent	6	●	●		●	165	
	NAD Silverline S100/S200	2,000	Beautifully built kit that sounds as good as it looks with heaps of power	7				●	200	200
	Naim NAC112/NAP150	1,375	Clean, clever simplicity, plus a very well balanced sound that's much sweeter than earlier Naims	6				●	50	213
	Naim NAC112/NAP150/FLATCAP 2	1,800	Adding a FLATCAP 2 brings a very worthwhile sonic upgrade to the basic NAC112/NAP150 combo	6				●	50	213
	Naim NAC102/NAP180	2,122	More of a 'character act' than a neutral reproduction system, majors on excitement at the expense of subtlety	6				●	60	200
	Naim NAP500	10,000	Wonderful neutrality, bandwidth and dynamic range, plus Naim's traditional leading edge definition	1					140	208
	Quad QC-twenty four + 2 x II – forty	4,000	A classic valve amplifier in circuitry and sound, but with modern ingredients and gorgeous retro styling	7					40	213
	Rega Hal/Exon	2,194	Passive line stage dedicated to Exon monoblock power amps, bold outgoing, in-command sound	6	●	●		●	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 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	
	Samuel Johnson pca100	1,800	Stylish wood and metal fascia - precise, clean sound with an emphasis on leading edges	6				●	201	
	TAG McLaren PA20R/125M	1,500	Clean, detailed sound but limited thrill power	6				●	145	184
	Talk Hurricane 2L/Tornado 2	1,249	Design of integrity which gets to the heart, if not the soul, of the music	6					65	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	
	Thule Spirit PA100	600	More successful than matching preamp: sound is gutsy and lively, and generally clean	1					100	187
	Thule Spirit PR150B/PA150B	1,600	The limitations in the sonic performance mean that the competition has more to offer	6					150	212

PHONO STAGES

STATUS	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	LINE INPUTS	MM PHONO INPUTS	MC PHONO INPUTS	REMOTE CONTROL	HEADPHONE SOCKET	POWER OUTPUT (W)	ISSUE NUMBER
	Clearaudio Symphono	740	Slightly inconsistent balance mars the performance of this lively performer	0		●				201
R	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
R	Electrocompaniet ECP-1	495	An excellent phono amp that combines well-rounded balance with detail and low noise	0	●	●				189
BB	Moth 30 Series Phono	249	Fine sound all round, in any kind of music, from this bargain phono stage	0	●	●				189
	NAD PP-1	40	A basic phono stage that does its job rather coarsely: a bit bass-shy too	0	●					189
R	Pass Labs XOno	2,995	Not absolutely neutral, but the overall result is so beguiling it's hard to resist	0	●	●				201
R	Primare R-20	500	Fights a little shy of densely scored music, but generally an enjoyable and neutral performer	0	●	●				201
R	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
R	QED Discasser DS-1	35	It's cheap, it's cheerful, it's OK – 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	1,500	One of the best-equipped phono stages available. Resolution is excellent, but timing is marginally behind the best	0	●	●				187
R	Tom Evans The Groove	1,800	Plenty of detail, excellent imaging and almost flawlessly neutral: a good choice for information retrieval off any LP	0		●				201

AMPLIFIERS

MULTICHANNEL AMPLIFIERS

STATUS	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	LINE INPUTS	MM PHONO INPUTS	MC PHONO INPUTS	REMOTE CONTROL	HEADPHONE SOCKET	POWER OUTPUT (W)	ISSUE NUMBER
R	Arcam AVR100	800	A solid sounding and well-engineered A/V amp with an affordable price tag. Good with music and well suited to smaller rooms	6			●	●	70	215
R	Arcam Alpha 10 DAVE/10P	2,500	Packed with a diversity of electronics that against engineering odds sounds extremely good	5			●	●	110	198
BB	Arcam FMJ A22 DAVE/P25	2,850	Powerful, authoritative, great stereo, excellent home cinema - what more can you want?	7			●	●	100	210
	Cyrus AV5	1,000	Few processors are as adept with music. An effective multi-channel solution for music fans	4			●		N/A	201
	Cyrus AV5/SmartPower	2,650	Refined, detailed and attractive, but ultimately lacking in balls.	3			●		60	210
BB	Denon AVC-A150E	1,200	State of the art sound quality, a strong feature set and reasonable pricing. What more could you want?	11	●		●	●	125	210
R	Denon AVR-3300	800	Not as powerful as Denon claims, but nonetheless capable of impressive high-fidelity multi-channel sound	4			●	●	75	198
BB	Denon AVC-A1SE	2,500	A powerful, articulate 7.1-channel integrated amp, loaded with features and equally at home with music and film soundtracks	12	●		●	●	170	215
	Kenwood KRF-V7773D	800	Bold, detailed presentation, but there are some technical limitations and a slightly mannered quality, especially with music.	10	●		●	●	120	210
	Kenwood KRF-V9993D	1,300	Complex amp that rocks with home cinema but loses out with music	7			●	●	110	215
BB	Marantz SR5000	500	Something of a rough diamond, but a powerful and entertaining package	5			●	●	105	198
BB	Marantz SR7000	700	Excellent at the price, and almost equally effective with 2-channel music and multichannel AV.	9			●	●	100	210
	Marantz SR-14EX Mk2	3,250	A weighty beast, with 7.1 processing but only five channels of amplification as standard. Highly capable with both music and movies, but rather costly all-in-all	8			●	●	140	215
	Musical Fidelity HTP/HT600	3,998	A very well matched pairing with considerable musical talents	8			●	●	100	207
R	Myryad MDP500/MA240/MA360	3,800	Superb three-box, five-channel A/V amplifier. Great with movies and beats most multichannel amps hands down with music	9			●	●	120	215
BB	NAD T760	650	More than adequate home cinema receiver that unusually doesn't muck up the music	7			●	●	60	210
	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
R	Onkyo TX-DS989	2,500	Authority personified, excellent AV signal processing, but sound quality a tad unsubtle.	9	●		●	●	160	210
	Pioneer VSA-E08	1,300	THX circuitry gives home cinema material a boost, but this is not an obvious first choice for music.	10	●		●	●	100	210
	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
	Primare P30/A30.5	3,700	No 5.1 channel input for DVD-A/SACD but capable of almost uncomfortable realism with real solidity and drive	8			●	●	120	210
R	Roksan DSP/5 ch amp/VSU	2,440	Clean, powerful stereo expanded seamlessly, if without distinction, to 5.1 channels.	4			●	●	80	210
	Rotel RSP976/RMB1075	1,700	Works well with music and has no shortage of power but lacks THX processing	8			●	●	120	213
	Rotel RSP976/RMB1075	1,700	Works well with music and has no shortage of power but lacks THX processing	8			●	●	120	214
R	Rotel RSP-976/RMB-1075	1,700	A potent and enjoyable two-box beast that gets to the heart of both music and movie sound	8			●	●	120	215
R	Rotel RSP-985/RPB-985 MkII	2,400	The hugely versatile processor is the weaker subjective link in this otherwise impressive combo	3			●	●	130	198
	Sony TA-E9000ES/N9000ES	2,300	Big, gold, powerful and remarkably versatile but fails to cut the sonic mustard	5			●	●	110	198
R	Sony VA777ES	1,500	Smart circuitry gives this model unusual precision and transparency, and it is a fine all rounder 9	9			●	●	100	210
EC	TAG McLaren AV32R EX	2,749	A flexible A/V processor, unusually good with music. Would form the heart of a top-class multichannel system in standard or 7-channel 'EX' form	6			●	●		215
	Technics SA-DA10	500	Lower mid-market AV amp has all the right ingredients, but fails to stir the soul	5	●		●	●	80	210
	Technics SE-A1010/SU-C1010 x3	1,350	A preamp plus three stereo amps provide a six-channel A/V solution without complex processing. Visually stunning but low on grunt and detail	6			●	●	70	215
	Yamaha DSP-AX1	2,000	An anorak's delight, and one of the most flexible and effective soundfield creators ever conceived	11	●		●	●	110	210

CABLES

ANALOGUE INTERCONNECTS (PRICES PER TERMINATED METRE PAIR)

STATUS	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SYMMETRICAL	COAXIAL	STRANDED	SOLID CORE	COPPER	SILVER	DIG CABLE TYPE	ISSUE NUMBER
	Acoustic Precision Eikos	89	Not entirely neutral: probably best suited to upbeat music. Very stiff construction			●	●	●	●		188
	Audioquest Sidewinder	40	Suppresses the sound. At this price it's a disappointment			●		●			211
R	Audioquest Coral	99	Slightly forward imaging hardly detracts from its excellent tonal qualities and detail			●	●	●	●		200
R	Cable Talk Advanced 3	35	Good sound and great detail, but a slight brashness in the treble			●	●	●	●		211
R	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
R	Cambridge Audio Studio Ref	40	Dynamic cable with strong soundstaging and only a slight lack of detail			●	●	●	●		160

ANALOGUE INTERCONNECTS (CONTINUED)

STATUS	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SYMMETRICAL	COAXIAL	STRAINED	SOLID CORE	COPPER	SILVER	DIGI CABLE TYPE	ISSUE NUMBER
	Cambridge Silver Spirit 60	100	Good bass but a lack of detail and differentiation of instruments	●				●			188
R	Chord Calypso	30	Informative, clear sound at a decent price					●			211
	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
R	Connections Midas HD	39	Canary yellow cable with excellent plugs and an open sound. Slight treble glare	●				●			160
R	DNM Reson	40	Seemed a little harsh in the test system, but can work well and should be tried	●				●			200
SB	Ecosse The Composer	29	A high degree of realism and delicacy, and a fantastic price		●			●			211
	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
R	Insert Audio Image 5.1	85	Very good detail and imaging: perhaps a touch bass-light		●			●			200
SB	Ixos Gamma Audition II	30	Detailed and neutral, with just a hint of pleasant mellowness	●				●			211
	Ixos Gamma 1002	39	Lumpy bass, grainy treble, and poor integration. Nice colour, though	●				●			176
	Ixos 1000	90	Nothing badly wrong, just a little bit bland and outshone by others at the price	●				●			200
SB	Kimber PBJ	68	Assured sound, solid and natural bass and clear treble — excellent performance all round					●			188
R	Kimber Hero	110	Slight roughness detracts from some music; seems well suited to rock and jazz. Lively and detailed	●				●			176
R	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
R	Nordost Solar Wind	85	Good tone and dynamics, with just occasionally a touch of bass-lightness in busy music	●				●			188
R	Nordost Blue Heaven	145	Very good bass and only slightly grainy treble add up to a well integrated, natural-sounding cable	●				●			176
	Precious Metals 5535	50	Extended bass, but dry character suits electronic music better than acoustic					●			188
	Profigold PGA301 MkII	40	Mellow and well rounded, but can seem a little heavy					●			211
R	Prowire VHQ	10	This crisp cable lacks a little refinement, but it's great for the price					●			211
R	Prowire Silver	60	A good cable in every way, with just the occasional hint of coloration and coarseness					●	●		176
R	QED Qunex 1	20	Well balanced, and easily rivals more expensive cables					●			211
SB	QED Qnect 2	30	Very well balanced, refined and detailed, this is everything a good cable should be, and excellent value					●			176
R	QED Qnect 4S	70	Some coloration and roughness in the midrange and treble, but bass is gratifyingly solid	●				●			188
R	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
SB	SonicLink Silver Pink	35	Dynamically sensitive and muddle-free. We're unsure about the flesh-coloured finish, though...	●				●	●		160
R	SonicLink Black	49	Nickel-plated copper with a slight dryness in the bass and a hint of treble roll-off don't compromise integration	●				●			176
	SonicLink Lilac	65	Some dryness can affect transient sounds, though tone is generally good, especially in the bass	●				●			188
	SonicLink Violet	85	Better bass than treble — a little dry in the upper octaves	●				●			200
R	Straight Wire Chorus	40	A very confident cable with good bass, though perhaps a shade of treble loss					●			176
R	Straight Wire Sonata	80	Tonal balance favours lower frequencies but despite this it's a very listenable cable					●			188
	Straight Wire Encore II	100	Slightly variable bass performance is a weakness in this otherwise capable cable	●				●			200
SB	Supra EFF-ISL	80	Excellent sound in all areas — nothing to criticise					●			188
R	Tara Labs Prism 22	64	Mild tendency to plumminess offsets some hardness in complex music with mixed results					●			188
	Tara Labs Prism 55-i	195	Good with laid-back music, but seems lazy with more exciting material					●			200
SB	TCI Viper	55	Fine performance in all areas: just the smallest hint of sibilance. Very good value	●				●			200
SB	van den Hul PB5	50	A highly neutral cable with fine dynamic and rhythmic performance too — excellent					●			188
R	van den Hul Source HB	65	Price for 0.8m. Hybrid carbon-fibre/copper cable that is a paragon of naturalness					●			160
R	van den Hul D102 MkIII HB	80	A fine cable, but the competition has crept up and it no longer leads the pack	●				●			200

DIGITAL INTERCONNECTS (PRICES PER TERMINATED METRE PAIR)

STATUS	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SYMMETRICAL	COAXIAL	STRAINED	SOLID CORE	COPPER	SILVER	DIGI CABLE TYPE	ISSUE NUMBER
R	Audioquest Digital One	35	A neutral and capable cable that adds little or no character to the sound					●			E 207
	Chord Optilink	40	Beautifully made, but performance is practically indistinguishable from other, cheaper, Toslink leads					●			O 207
R	Chord Prodac	50	Price for 0.6m length. Lively detailed treble, drives music along confidently with no hint of fizz					●			E 131
	Ixos 1051-100	39.95	Plenty of bass, and detail seems good, but there's a loss of involvement					●			E 207

WINNER: BEST CABLE OF THE YEAR
WHAT HI-FI? Awards 2000/01

7 BEST BUY AWARDS
WHAT HI-FI? HI-FI CHOICE Home Entertainment

ECOSSE REFERENCE CABLES

"Sonically they amaze, high end owners take note"
The Maestro MA2 WHAT HI-FI? October '99

"Ecosse is fast becoming synonymous with everything that's quality about cable..."
Conductor CA1 WHAT HI-FI? Awards 2000/01

"Outstanding..."
MS2.15 HIFI NEWS Sept. '98

"Astounds..."
MS2.3 WHAT HI-FI? Awards '99

"Uncannily clear..."
The Composer HIFI CHOICE Feb. 2001

"It's a steal at the price..."
CS2.5 WHAT HI-FI? Oct. '99

CHOICE ESTABLISHMENT

★ **THE COMPOSER** BEST BUY INTERCONNECT
 ★ **THE MAESTRO MA2** BEST BUY INTERCONNECT £20+
 ★ **THE CONDUCTOR CA1** INTERCONNECT OF THE YEAR
 ★ **THE MAESTRO MA2** BEST BUY INTERCONNECT £80+
 ★ **THE PRODUCER** BEST BUY COAX DIGITAL

DIGITAL INTERCONNECTS (PRICES PER TERMINATED METRE PAIR)

STATUS	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SYMMETRICAL	COAXIAL	STRAINED	SOLID CORE	COPPER	SILVER	DIG. CABLE TYPE	ISSUE NUMBER
	Moth Leyline Datalink	120	A thin, coaxial version of Leyline Black with a rather hard and unforgiving character. Too expensive		●	●	●	●		E	108
BB	QED Qunex P75	25	A superbly capable interconnect that's highly detailed and well balanced		●		●	●		E	207
R	Ross OP004	19.99	Sounds much like most other Toslink leads: slightly lacking detail, but good value							O	207
	SonicLink Digital Optical	30	Possibly slightly more detailed than other opticals, but still no match for a decent electrical digital link							O	207
R	SonicLink Green	60	Spacious, positive and engaging if a bit over-crisp at times — very compelling, however		●		●	●	●	E	131
	Straight Wire Info-Link	300	A good cable, but bass seems a little light and detail suffers a little at climaxes		●		●		●	E	207
R	van den Hul Optocoupler	49.95	Noticeably has the edge over other optical leads, but still second best to electrical types							O	207
BB	van den Hul The First	140	Exceptionally natural albeit slightly cautious compared to some. Plenty of subtle information and integration		●	●				E	131

LOUDSPEAKER CABLES (PRICES PER METRE LENGTH)

STATUS	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SYMMETRICAL	COAXIAL	STRAINED	SOLID CORE	COPPER	SILVER	DIG. CABLE TYPE	ISSUE NUMBER
	ALR Jordan QMM	5	Generally neutral, if sometimes bass-shy, but not very communicative	●		●			●		183
R	Audio Note AN-B	16.50	Well suited to valve systems, elastic bass, methodical but unintrusive and musical					●			133
R	Audio Note AN-L	29.50	Fruity bass and expressive vocal rendition was appreciated by the panel, which was happy to accept its foibles	●			●		●		133
R	Audio Note AN-SP	150	A calm and civilised presentation, very quiet in the way it reveals subtle low level detail. Great poise and clarity	●			●		●		109
R	Audioquest Slate	15	Capable across the board, with just the smallest degree of dryness, but very listenable	●			●	●			203
R	Bandridge LC7409	4	Detailed and up-beat cable. A bit too steely for classical strings	●		●					157
R	Cable Talk Talk 3.1	2.25	Quite well-balanced but tends to lose bass lines in complex music	●		●					168
	Cable Talk Talk 4.1	4.25	Smooth and cultured sound that lacks fine detail and is a bit too restrained	●							157
	Cable Talk Flat 2	5	Rather unexciting sound, with variable bass and dry voices	●		●					203
	Cable Talk Concert 2.1	8	Can make stereo images recede, and favours the upper bass	●		●					192
	DNM LSC350	6.95	Majors on midband and lower treble lucidity at the expense of bass and extreme treble extension	●			●	●			168
R	Chord Company Odyssey	17	Relatively vice-free cable with good detail throughout the range and generally neutral bass	●		●					192
	Chord Company Rumour 2	10	Performance is listenable enough but fails to excel in any area	●				●			203
BB	DNM LSC8500	12	High impedance can influence the treble response, but this was a winner on sound per pound. Bi-wire	●			●	●			133
	Ecosse Reference CS-2.15	12	Stereo and rhythm are good, but persistent dryness detracts significantly	●			●				215
R	Electrofluidics Monolith 2020	45	Excellent bass extension and very fine performance elsewhere - one of the best cables available all round	●			●	●			203
	Gale XL189	1	Slightly bright and not too subtle, but a perfectly acceptable cable for any starter system	●		●					168
BB	Gale XL315	2	A little lacking in detail but plenty of life and excellent value	●		●					157
R	Gale XL160-2	2.50	Rhythmic and bouncy-sounding bi-wire cable. Can be slightly manipulative	●			●				157
R	Goertz M2	32	Remarkably detailed, smooth, neutral and with excellent bass; check amplifier compatibility	●			●	●			168
R	Hitachi LC-0FC	7	Very crisp, very clear and very confident. In the right system would be very expensive to better	●			●	●			109
BB	Ixos Gamma 6003	2.99	A little midrange dryness, but bass is among the best at this price, strong and consistent	●			●	●			203
R	Ixos Gamma 6006	5	Bass is better than treble, which can become spitty and sibilant - though only slightly	●			●	●			192
BB	Kimber 4PR	4.90	Considering the price, this cable's very slight dryness is forgivable when everything else is so right	●	●		●				192
R	Kimber 4VS	8.50	A good mix of virtues including particularly fine bass	●		●		●			183
R	Kimber 4TC	18.80	A well-balanced cable with good performance in all areas	●			●	●			168
BB	Kimber 8TC	348	Very capable in all areas, particularly good at imaging and with firm bass. Price for 5m terminated pair	●			●	●			203
	Linn K20	4	Seems to work best with lively, unsubtle music - can be dry and edgy	●			●				183
	Monster Cable Z1	12.50	Slightly bass-rich balance, and could do with a bit more detail	●		●					215
	Naim NAC A5	5.5	A 'dinosaur of a cable', this stiff wire rod doesn't belong outside Naim systems, where it works a treat	●			●	●			109
	Nordost Octava	3	Fair bass but confused treble and some coloration	●			●	●			168
	Nordost Flatline Gold II	9.50	Exciting sound but a bit too 'in-yr-face', and bass is not always even	●			●	●			92
	Ortofon SPK100	3	Grey-sounding - strips instruments of their natural richness and resonance. A bit bass-shy, too	●			●	●			133
R	Ortofon SPK200	4.99	Good strong bass and fair detail, only slightly marred by a little dryness	●			●	●			183
R	Ortofon SPK300	8	Tremendously open and atmospheric, with robust, full-blooded bass - if slightly bright at times	●			●	●			133
	Precious Metals SL102	10	Unusual construction gives rather strained sound, only really cheering up with simple musical textures	●			●	●			183
	Profigold Silverflex LC8258	4	A pretty-looking cable that does little to offend but is let down by some congestion	●			●	●			203
	Prowire Out of Sight	1.99	Special-purpose cable for laying under carpets etc. Fair sound across the board	●			●	●			203
	Puresonic 7845	1.95	Big, weighty sound - but too messy and bloated for its own good	●			●	●			183
	Puresonic 7891	2.85	Chunky cable design; shame about the sound quality	●			●	●			157
	QED Qudos	2.25	Despite high-tech design and excellent Air-Loc plugs, its music-making failed to gel	●			●	●			57
BB	QED Qudos Silver	5	A few minor flaws but overall performance is very assured for this price	●			●	●			192
	QED Profile 4x4	9	Good midrange and treble balance, but bass is rather slack and detail not outstanding	●			●	●			168
R	QED Profile Silver 12	15	Very slightly laid-back, but good tone and detail - wears its achievements lightly	●			●	●			215
	QED Genesis Silver Spiral	30	Commendable bass, with a little dryness and mildly compromised imaging: good, but not the best at its price	●			●	●			203
	SonicLink S300	18	Happiest with simple music; tends to smudge detail in complex pieces	●			●	●			168
R	SonicLink AST50	1.95	It may look like bell-wire, but AST50 sounds detailed, ordered and balanced	●			●	●			157
R	SonicLink AST75	2.95	Unusual materials and rather unusual performance too, strong on excitement and with plenty of bass	●			●	●			203
R	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
BB	SonicLink Rebel	7.50	Plenty of bass, but without sacrificing upper frequency clarity or dynamics	●			●	●			215
	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
BB	Straight Wire Quartet	8	A good all-rounder with full tone, clear detail and natural ambience	●			●	●			183
	Supra Classic 6.0	4.95	It's all there, but a persistent lack of detail seriously mars the view	●			●	●			215
R	Supra Ply 3.4	6.95	Clean sound which stays together well at high levels, with full bass - perhaps a touch of treble restriction	●			●	●			183
R	Supra Ply 3.4/5	7.95	Good in all areas with rich bass and just a touch of treble roughness	●			●	●			203
R	Tara Labs Klara	2.95	A good budget cable with an even spread of virtues - and very minor vices - across the board	●			●	●			183
R	Tara Labs Prism Nexa	9.95	Slight tonal softness affects both bass and treble, but the overall sound is very listenable	●			●	●			215
	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
R	Townshend Isolda	50	Superb sound all round, and amplifier compatibility enhanced by included stabilising inductor	●			●	●			203
R	van den Hul The Snowline	5.49	A hint of high-end civilisation with a few rough edges and a slightly warm balance	●			●	●			215
	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
	XLO Pro 600	16.50	Decent bass and good treble, but sounds confused with densely-scored music	●			●	●			215

MAINS CABLES AND CONDITIONERS

STATUS	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SYMMETRICAL	COAXIAL	STRANDED	SOLID CORE	COPPER	SILVER	DIG CABLE TYPE	ISSUE NUMBER
											206
	Clearaudio Accurate Power Gen	1,090	Compact and beautifully finished unit that offers positive sonic benefits that justify the price								206
R	Lynwood Electronics Mega Power	295	Reasonable price model that improves focus while producing a sweet, tight and clean bass								206
R	PS Audio Power Plant	1,200	Power Plant improves the cleanness and separation of individual voices and instruments, giving an impressive 3-D quality								206
	GTA PHY-HP board	299	Oozing style and quality, the board generates an extremely natural and truthful sound								206
BB	Russ Andrews Kimber/Power Block	350	Improved version that elevates music to a cleaner and more three-dimensional experience with greater stereo imagery								206
	Russ Andrews The Purifier	250	More ambitious version of the Silencer that gives a cleaner, quieter background, allowing more low level detail								206
BB	Russ Andrews Silencer	40	A cost effect solution to noise-free mains supply that reduces 'hash' without losing brilliance and immediacy								206
	SonicLink S-Gold mains	225	Delivers a clean incisive sound with excellent detail, clarity and with no increase in noise								206
R	Trichord Research Powerblock500	300	Isolation transformer that bolsters clarity, openness and gives an increased refinement making for a purer and natural sound								206

CASSETTE DECKS



SPECIFICATIONS

STATUS	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	DOLBY C	DOLBY S	DOLBY BX PRO	3-HEAD	TWIN DECK	AUTO REVERSE	AUTO CALIBRATION	ADJUSTABLE BIAS	ISSUE NUMBER
												140
	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
BB	JVC TD-R472	200	Excellent auto-reverse deck which doesn't suffer the usual disadvantages and is very sharply priced									158
BB	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
R	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
R	Onkyo K-611	460	Cute drawer-loading mini-size component with 3 heads and dual capstan transport									146
R	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
	Teac V-1050	180	One of the cheapest 3-head machines around, but it shows in very 'thick' sound									184
BB	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
BB	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
R	Yamaha KX-580SE	250	Subtle, engaging and transparent deck, with a lightweight tonality, but stability and strong detail									171

CD PLAYERS



SPECIFICATIONS

ONE-BOX CD PLAYERS

STATUS	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	ELEC DIG OUTPUT	AES/EBU ELEC DIG OUT	OPT DIG OUTPUT	ST OPT DIG OUT	BAL ANALOGUE OUT	HEADPHONE SOCKET	VARIABLE OUTPUT	MULTI-DISC	SACD COMPATIBILITY	ISSUE NUMBER
													166
BB	Acurus ACD11	899	First-rate if costly player, which combines a delightful transparency with an uncontrived naturalness										166
	Acoustic Precision Eikos	1,850	Seriously customised Pioneer with extraordinary resolution and world beating imaging and bass										165
	Advantage CD15	3,995	A CD player of some stature – what it lacks in dynamics it makes up for in subtlety and flow										193
	Alchemist Kraken	1,249	Distinctive looking player likely to suit a Alchemist system, but will result in variable results elsewhere										190
R	Alchemist Nexus APD32A	597	Refined treble, constrained yet capable bass and attractive all-round presentation										169
	AMC CD8A	150	Has balanced output, but is otherwise rather grey and unremarkable										172
BB	AMC CD9/DAC8	200	Beer-budget two-box system (player plus DAC) is smooth, attractive and easy on the ear										179
	Anthem CD1	1,595	Unusual combination of high-end player, complete with HDCD, and changer. Good, but noisy										178
BB	Arcam Alpha 7SE	300	Sharper, clearer Alpha 7 SE, and more affordable than before										207
	Arcam CD72	400	Easy going, slightly soft-centred reworking of Alpha 7 in new, svelte DIVA clothing										212
R	Arcam Alpha MCD	450	Excellent bass and natural midband, but just a touch of treble dryness, from this very listenable changer										178
BB	Arcam Alpha 8SE	600	Excellent (and very reasonably priced) HDCD-compatible player is a strong all-rounder										176
R	Arcam Alpha 9	800	Refined, articulate player which employs new DAC technology to great effect										188
R	Arcam CD92	850	High resolution player needs a touch of spit and polish to be completely convincing										212
R	Arcam FMJ CD23	1,100	World class presentation allied with innovative technology to deliver an engaging standard of music making										206
	Audio Analogue Paganini	750	Basically good, but sometimes heavy-handed player										191
	Audio Note AN-CD1	600	Easy on the ear, and for a valve player, easy on the pocket, but a bit Radio 2-flavoured										188
	Audio Note AN-CD2	999	High output impedance makes performance unduly system fussy										195
	AVI S2000MC2	899	A chip off the old block. his model's in-yr-face balance obstructs an otherwise finely detailed sound										176
R	AVI S2000MC Reference	1,399	Lean, dry, high resolution player, built to outlast most of us. A fine performer in a sympathetic system										169
	Balanced Audio Tech VK-DS	3,995	A valve-infused player with a big and engaging sound. Lacks a little subtlety										194
	Cambridge Audio D100	120	Hard, clanky and coloured sounding, and with suspect control logic										200
BB	Cambridge Audio D500	200	Clean and highly articulate player wears well in extended use										202
R	Copland CDA 266	1,199	Simple yet elegant design is unexpectedly sophisticated under the skin, and effective in execution										176
	Copland CDA 289	1,898	Beautifully built and musically enjoyable. Lacks some precision, but still among the best below £2,000										194
R	Cymbol CDP12	1,299	Clean, detailed and airy HDCD-equipped player with minimalist trappings										176
R	Cyrus dAD1.5	395	Improved dAD1 variant has improved digital filter for a more natural, easy on the ear quality										191

ONE-BOX CD PLAYERS (CONTINUED)

STATUS	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	ELEC DIG OUTPUT	AS/EBU ELEC DIG OUT	OPT DIG OUT	ST OPT DIG OUT	BAL ANALOGUE OUT	HEADPHONE SOCKET	VARIABLE OUTPUT	MULTI-DISC	SACD COMPATIBILITY	ISSUE NUMBER
R	Cyrus CD7	800	New Cyrus player has strong all-round attributes to match its good looks	●									212
R	Cyrus dAD3 Q24	900	Bold, lean and lively player demands sympathetic system matching			●							200
R	Denon DCD-435	130	Good low cost player, and a step up from the DCD-425, its predecessor			●							191
R	Denon DCD-655	180	Fine, slightly soft-edged budget player, and a good ameliorative for aggressive, edgy systems			●			●	●			200
R	Denon DCD-1550AR	350	Disappointing bland and ploddy sound from an immaculately constructed, high-tech player	●		●			●	●			179
R	Densen B-400	1,280	Bold, purposeful sound, but lacks subtlety, and has some ergonomic flaws	●									212
R	EZO Fog Stage 3	1,170	Curious player is difficult to drive, and has sound quality that both enchants and sometimes confounds	●				●					212
R	JVC XV-D723GD	500	Convincing DVD-Audio player that is ultimately let down by poor CD performance	●		●	●	●					206
R	Kenwood DVF-3030	180	Solid CD player with straightforward features			●			●	●			207
BB	Kenwood DP-4090	250	Focuses a clear, wide aperture lens on the music — and has CD Text too	●		●			●	●			172
R	Kenwood DP-5090	300	Disappointing senior brother to the excellent DP-4090, but surface interface is good	●		●			●	●			179
R	Kenwood DVF-R9030	800	Kenwood's first DVD-A player suffers from a mild compression of dynamics resulting in a polite yet matter of fact sound	●		●	●	●	●		●		206
R	Linn Genki	995	Explicit, rather bright sounding player with strong multi-room appeal								●		212
R	Marantz CD5000	150	Well equipped budget player sounds thin and rough at times	●					●	●			202
R	Marantz CC3000	150	Ragged sounding multidisc player, but it is cheap and well equipped	●							●	●	204
BB	Marantz CD6000	250	Great package with all mod cons, and eminently listenable too	●		●			●	●			207
BB	Marantz CD6000 OSE	300	Superbly constructed, slightly emasculated sounding, but smooth and articulate	●		●			●	●			200
BB	Marantz CD6000 KI Signature	500	Excellent all rounder, a well appointed good value package	●		●			●	●			212
R	Marantz CD-17 MkII	800	Sophisticated player with a short but attractive feature set, and a new found bounce in its step	●		●	●	●	●				206
R	Marantz CD-17KI Sig	1,100	Minor QC problems aside, this is a superbly turned-out machine, but ultimately a little bland	●		●					●		176
R	Marantz CD-7	3,500	A superbly designed CD player, both inside and out. Precise and dramatic in equal measure	●		●			●	●			194
EC	Marantz SA-1	5,000	The brand's first SACD player is a stunning machine that's equally as strong with conventional CD	●		●			●			●	208
R	Mercus Tanto	1,395	Believable tonal colours and textures, refinement takes preference over dynamics – but it's not cheap	●									169
BB	Meridian 506	1,100	Revised 506 includes MSR remote and a new D/A chip, which makes it livelier and more detailed	●									176
R	Monrio Asty	695	Well built player has solid, propulsive sound quality that deteriorates towards HF	●									200
R	Monrio Privilege	995	Costly and well-engineered, but ultimately rather heavy-handed and dull, if refined player	●									166
R	Musical Fidelity X-RAY	799	Brilliantly packaged and clean but slightly antiseptic sounding player	●		●							184
BB	Musical Fidelity A3 CD	800	Excellent player has few faults apart from a slight loss of HF detail	●		●							200
R	Myryad T-10	400	Rather ordinary player fails to shine with good music recordings	●									184
R	Myryad T-20	600	Matter of fact styling and sound quality, a tad bright for some systems	●									195
R	Myryad MCD500	1,300	Well-built, attractive player, showing much promise, but can be a little heavy-going on audition	●									176
R	NAD C520	170	Significantly improved entry level NAD is smooth and dynamic, if slightly dull	●									202
R	NAD 524	250	Clean, clear and essentially musical player in the NAD mould	●									191
R	NAD 523	250	Lacklustre musical presentation was disappointing on test; so was the absence of a digital output	●								●	204
R	NAD C540	330	Not cheap, and disc handling is pedestrian at best, but the C540 is smooth & elegant with just a hint of aggression	●									200
R	NAD Silverline S500	1,100	It sounds as good as it looks, which is notably refined and easy on the ear	●	●	●		●					195
R	Naim Audio CD5	1,120	Recommended subject to audition, a dynamic machine, yet some physical minuses										212
R	Naim Audio CD2	2,000	Provides bags of detail with a solid stereo focus but not all the romanticism we know to be possible										163
R	Nakamichi MB-10	400	Jewel of a multi-disc player, with crisp sound and superb fuss-free compact packaging	●		●			●		●		204
EC	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	●									188
R	Onkyo DX-7222	150	Competitive following recent price cut, and on the whole a strong performer musically	●		●			●				200
R	Onkyo DX-7511	300	Earthbound mid-price CD player fails to excite	●					●	●			207
R	Parasound C/DP-1000	499	Comes on like a high end player, but ultimately sounds a bit weak and soft-centred	●									184
R	Philips CD751	150	Inconsistent and occasionally opaque and scrawny sounding cheapie	●					●				172
R	Pioneer PD-5507	200	Low cost Legato Link implementation sounds gentle but slightly muddled	●		●			●				191
R	Primare D20	799	Well presented player doesn't quite cut the mustard, though it performs promisingly	●									188
R	Revox Exception E426	2,250	Very stylish with a light, agile sound that extends superbly and has fine timing	●					●				182
R	Roksan Kandy	475	Slightly old-fashioned sound quality player available in various colour schemes	●		●							200
R	Roksan Caspian	895	Improved Caspian (retested for 2001) is still bold, dynamic player, but rather more subtle and expressive	●									212
R	Rotel RCD-951	300	Disappointing chopped-down RCD-971 – buy the original	●									191
BB	Rotel RCD-971	450	Odd disc handling logic, but bold, detailed and refined sound make this a must	●									184
R	Rotel RCD-991	825	Strong midrange player with switchable dither levels to provide some system tweaking ability	●	●								212
R	Sherwood CD1	1,100	A very neutral, even handed sounding player with a rather flat, lifeless sound. Beautiful construction	●		●							163
R	Sharp DX-SX1	2,700	Stylish player with a slightly forward but extremely nimble sound. Connects to matching digital amp via dedicated umbilical	●					●	●	●		211
R	Sony CDP-XE330	100	Unrefined, but lively, detailed and highly affordable	●		●					●		202
R	Sony CDP-XE530	140	Well equipped, but raw, scrappy sounding player lacks depth and weight	●		●			●	●			200
BB	Sony CDP-XB930E	300	Yet another first rate UK optimised player with all the bells and whistles	●		●			●	●			195
R	Sony SCD-XB940	550	First mainstream SACD player that easily outstrips comparable CD players at this price	●		●	●	●	●			●	206
BB	Sony SCD-555ES	1,200	Fabulously built with superb sound using both CD and Super Audio software, you'll be hard pressed to find a better CD player at the price	●		●	●	●	●			●	213
EC	Sony SCD-777ES	1,700	Beautifully built SACD player that looks like a bit of a CD player bargain	●		●			●			●	198
EC	Sony SCD-1	2,500	The first SACD player sounds fabulous but there's not much competition and limited software as yet	●		●			●			●	194
R	T+A CD1210R	1,185	Intriguing player with rather pushy basic sound, but has switchable digital filters	●		●							188
R	Talk Electronics Thunder 1	550	Entry level upgradeable Talk Electronics player sounds slightly muted	●									200
R	Talk Electronics Thunder 2	699	Fine player, slightly lacking in dynamics, but readily, if expensively upgradable in various ways	●									191
R	Talk Electronics Thunder 3	1,000	Clean, fast, and availability of a complete upgrade path make this a good long term proposition	●									195
R	TAG McLaren CD20R	1,249	Dry and unatmospheric, but plenty of presence – recommended with caution	●									188
R	Teac WRDS-9	700	Well-presented. This Teac is crisp, yet shallow, and inconsistent in sound quality and partnering skills	●		●					●		176
R	Teac WRDS-25x	1,000	Excellent, individualistic player with bold, colourful sound, but test sample had iffy CD-R compatibility	●		●			●				195
R	Technics SL-PG390	90	It's very cheap. Very, very cheap	●		●							202
R	Technics SL-P57	200	Strong, but ultimately rather opaque and hard-sounding, high tech CD player	●		●			●				207
R	Technics SL-MC7	300	Maximum storage capacity for a minimum price, and presentable sound too (multidisc)	●		●			●		●		204
R	Thule Spirit CD100	600	Definitely a try before you buy machine, but the bass and mid are excellent	●									188
R	Trichord Genesis	549	Breathed-on Pioneer is warm and mellifluous, but ultimately lacks drive and authority	●					●	●			169
R	Trichord Revelation	799	Well-ordered and clean sound that may be a little too refined for some, images well	●					●				166
R	Tube Technology Fusion MkII	1,350	Improvements over the original model but still remains too inconsistent for its own good	●		●	●	●					206

ONE-BOX CD PLAYERS (CONTINUED)

STATUS	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	ELEC DIG OUTPUT	AS/ES/BU ELEC DIG OUT	OPT DIG OUTPUT	ST OPT DIG OUT	BAL ANALOGUE OUT	HEADPHONE SOCKET	VARIABLE OUTPUT	MULTI-DISC	SACD COMPATIBILITY	ISSUE NUMBER
	Tube Technology Fulcrum	2,800	An imaginative two-box player with a smooth sound that lacks some lustre	●	●	●							194
	Yamaha CDX-596	230	Well-priced and attractive-sounding, this player can read CD-RW	●					●	●			207
	Yamaha CD-X993	400	A bit of a lush, though the sound is singularly free of grain, and equipment levels are strong	●		●			●	●			184
	YBA Spécial	695	There is nothing here to justify the pricing or the high-end parentage. Avoid	●									195

CD TRANSPORTS

STATUS	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	ELEC DIG OUTPUT	AS/ES/BU ELEC DIG OUT	OPT DIG OUTPUT	ST OPT DIG OUT	BAL ANALOGUE OUT	HEADPHONE SOCKET	VARIABLE OUTPUT	MULTI-DISC	SACD COMPATIBILITY	ISSUE NUMBER
R	Audio Note CDT Zero	550	Although ominously esoteric on paper, it's smooth, open and easy on the ear in practice (Tested with DAC1)	●	●								212
	Linn Karik	1,850	Based on early Linn transport, the Karik is dry but very positive, detailed and engrossing	●			●						144
	Roksan Attessa AT-DP3	1,295	Not the most detailed or refined but capable of sounding exciting with the right material	●		●							162
	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
R	Trichord Digital Turntable	699	Very detailed, precise, controlled yet involving; a first-rank performer	●		●							162

DACS

STATUS	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	ELEC DIG OUTPUT	AS/ES/BU ELEC DIG OUT	OPT DIG OUTPUT	ST OPT DIG OUT	BAL ANALOGUE OUT	HEADPHONE SOCKET	VARIABLE OUTPUT	MULTI-DISC	SACD COMPATIBILITY	ISSUE NUMBER
	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										187
	Audio Note DAC Zero	369	Neat valve-equipped DAC sounds smooth and fluid in the right system. (Tested with CDT Zero transport)										191
R	Audio Note DAC Zero 1x	750	Although ominously esoteric on paper, it's smooth, open and easy on the ear in practice (Tested with CDT Zero)										212
	Audiophile DAC 5	18,500	Astonishingly natural and realistic in the right system, the only problem being the extravagant price										203
EC	dCS Delius	5,000	State-of-the-art resolution with considerably greater flexibility than anything else, hard to beat	●	●		●	●		●		●	207
	dCS Purcell	3,500	The first upsampler on the market adds significant depth and increased bass resolve with a suitable DAC	●	●		●					●	207

DVD PLAYERS



SPECIFICATIONS

STATUS	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	ELEC DIG OUTPUT	AS/ES/BU ELEC DIG OUT	OPT DIG OUTPUT	ST OPT DIG OUT	BAL ANALOGUE OUT	HEADPHONE SOCKET	VARIABLE OUTPUT	MULTI-DISC	DVD-A COMPATIBILITY	ISSUE NUMBER
R	Alba DVD103	150	Good value for money but not much of a CD player, crude and serviceable but remarkably inexpensive	●		●			●				207
R	Arcam DiVA DV88	899	A DVD-Video player built with non-obsolence in mind, but picture quality exceeds musical quality as a CD player	●		●							213
R	Denon DVD-1500	400	Colourful and engaging (if lightweight) sound, with excellent picture quality	●		●			●				207
R	Denon DVD-3300	999	Sometimes slightly inconsistent and strident sounding in all modes of use, but it pulls a little more off disc too.	●		●			●			●	213
R	Denon DVM-3700	1,000	One of the first multi-DVD players, and a fine all rounder, with average to good pictures, and better sound	●		●			●		●		204
EC	Denon DVD-5000	1,600	The first DVD-V player that ain't bad as a CD player. A fine musical device	●		●			●				187
R	Encore DV-450	200	Superb value for money, though mainly of interest to the videophile on a shoestring	●		●			●				207
	Hitachi DVP-505	300	DVD player has rather dark, unexpansive sound, but good picture quality	●		●							207
	JVC XV-D701	500	Good video player, but rather undeveloped musically – CD Text is neat, though	●		●			●				198
	JVC XV-523	280	Looking impressive on screen, but lacks resolution and consistency when pushed hard	●		●							207
	JVC XV-515GD	300	Musically soft as a baby's bottom, and as surprising as yesterday's news	●		●							202
	JVC XV-D723	500	The first DVD-A player is more of a DVD-V with A added rather than the next generation of hi-fi	●		●							205
	Kenwood DVF-R9030	899	The first multi-disc DVD-Audio player is physically large and ergonomically obstructive, but it is a smooth, slick operator	●		●			●		●	●	213
R	Kenwood DVF-9010	1,000	DVD player with brilliant picture and clean, lively sound	●		●			●				190
	NAD T-550	500	Soft-centred but likeable player in the classic NAD mould	●		●							202
	Nakamichi DVD-10	800	Not the most compelling model in the resurrected Nakamichi line-up	●		●			●				198
	Panasonic DVD-RV40	350	Modestly equipped, gives good pictures, but is musically unengaging	●		●							207
	Panasonic DVD-A360E	580	Powerful equipment, and unthrottled digital output notwithstanding, sound quality is modest at best	●		●			●				198
	Panasonic DVD-A7EB	699	Chopped down Technics DVD-A10 retains most of the flagship's headline features with well balanced, but less refined and less articulate sound	●		●			●			●	213
BB	Philips DVD750	400	Clever DVD with CD-R/CD-RW compatibility and surprisingly keen sound	●		●			●				198
BB	Pioneer DV-525	399	Lean, clean and lively sound quality. CD-R and 24/96 compatible, too	●		●							202
BB	Pioneer DV-626D	450	Superbly equipped, and more than respectable sound quality	●		●			●				198
	Philips DVD960	530	DVD-V player has strong sound quality and good, though slightly washed out, pictures	●		●							207
BB	Pioneer DV-717	550	Superb DVD player with good picture quality and which really knows how to play 24/96 discs	●		●							190
R	Pioneer DV-939A	1,200	Fine player with near state of the art video performance and attractive, easy on the ear music making, from CD and DVD-Audio alike.	●		●			●			●	213
R	Primare V20	1,000	Elegant and well built DVD performer that possess a strong picture quality and decent CD player	●		●							206
	Samsung DVD-907	500	DVD player with below average picture, and lacklustre sound quality	●		●							190
	Sony DVP-CX850D	600	Lacklustre sound quality is a disappointment, but the price is appealing for a 200-disc DVD player	●		●						●	204
R	Sony DVP-57700	950	Powerfully endowed player offers articulate and believable sound	●		●			●				198
	Sony DVD-59000ES	1,200	First DVD machine to play SACD has a 'Lexus' sound style that never really gets its hands dirty	●		●							210
	Sharp DV-760	500	Reasonable picture, but sonically brings new meaning to the term rough and ready.	●		●			●				202
	TAG McLaren DVD32R	3,995	A tour-de-force of engineering, albeit with matching price tag. But picture quality is second to none	●		●							212
	T+A DVD 1210R	1,699	Ergonomically a mess, but detailed, dynamic and emphatic, though there is no guarantee of a DVD-audio upgrade path	●		●			●				213
	Technics DVD-A10	899	Well built, early generation DVD-A player with full in-board DVD-Video decoding and a more than workmanlike sound.	●		●			●			●	213
	Theta DaVD	4,650	A top-notch CD transport, that also plays DVD-Video discs well. Pricy for a DVD transport, but worth it	●	●	●	●						191

DVD PLAYERS (CONTINUED)

STATUS	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	ELEC DIG OUTPUT	AES/EBU ELEC DIG OUT	OPT DIG OUTPUT	ST OPT DIG OUT	BAL ANALOGUE OUT	HEADPHONE SOCKET	VARIABLE OUTPUT	MULTI-DISC	DVD-A COMPATIBILITY	ISSUE NUMBER
	Toshiba SD-100E	250	Mainstream player offers so-so features, performance and pricing	●		●							207
	Toshiba SD-3109	380	Defocused and soft-edged, this is more attractive for its picture than its sound quality.	●		●							202
	Toshiba SD500E	599	OK DVD-Video player, but lacklustre with music, especially when reproducing high resolution DVD-Audio material.	●		●					●	●	213
	Toshiba SD9000	800	Costly, high tech player with stunning pictures and crisp, slightly lightweight sound	●		●			●				198
BB	Toshiba SD900E	1,299	Top class DVD-Audio player and also a superb DVD-Video player; in this context pricing is competitive.	●		●						●	213
	T+A DVD-1210R	1,699	Ergonomically a mess, but detailed, dynamic and emphatic, though there is no guarantee of a DVD-Audio upgrade path	●		●							213

DIGITAL RECORDERS



SPECIFICATIONS

MINIDISCS

STATUS	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	FORMAT	PORTABLE	OPTICAL IN/OUTPUTS	ELEC IN/OUTPUTS	ISSUE NUMBER
	JVC XM-448	220	An hidden keyboard is a great idea, but musically it sounds rather cool and strident	MD			●	205
	Kenwood DMF-5020	250	it may be high-tech but nothing conceals the caricatured sound	MD			●	205
R	Kenwood DMF-9020	500	One of the best MD decks yet for sound quality, and the first to make titling a practical proposition	MD			●	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			●	191
	Onkyo MD-121	450	Midi-sized deck that sounds slightly coloured at times, though immediate and lively	MD			●	177
R	Pioneer MJ-D508	200	Well equipped but musically sleep inducing player that deserves its recommendation due to price	MD			●	205
R	Pioneer MJ-D707	250	A handy set of features for the price, though sound is not outstanding	MD			●	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			●	184
R	Sony MDS-JA555ES	650	Powerful demonstration of Sony's proficiency, it delivers the best MD can offer	MD			●	205

CD RECORDERS

STATUS	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	CD-R(W)	CD-R(W)	CD-R	CD-R(W)	CD-R(W)	CD-R(W)	CD-R(W)	CD-R	ISSUE NUMBER
	JVC XL-R5000	450	Flexible, ratty build, and attractive sound, but it's a little expensive compared to other rivals	●								205
	LG ADR-620	350	A powerfully equipped machine with useful multi-room capabilities, but sound quality is rough and ready	●								205
	Marantz DR700	600	Dearer than Philips and Traxdata equivalents, with apparently only a smarter front panel to show for it	●								191
R	Marantz DR-17	1,500	Highly recommended, but with a jitter problem that, resolved, would improve sound quality	●								205
BB	Philips CDR951	380	An improvement on previous models, it delivers the musical goods in some style	●								205
R	Pioneer PDR-509	300	Straightforward design and excellent recording properties that are slightly dulled by the replay chain	●								205
R	Pioneer PDR-W739	400	Flexible multi-disc that has everything including respectable sound and pricing	●								205
	TEAC RW-800	350	Capable recording tool, but a little rough and ready as a player	●								205
R	Traxdata Traxaudio 900	399	Identical to Philips and Marantz models: it makes bit-perfect copies of CDs and has perfectly acceptable replay	●								191

HEADPHONES



SPECIFICATIONS

HEADPHONES

STATUS	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	ELECTROSTATIC	SUPRA-AURAL	CIRCUM-AURAL	OPEN BACK	CLOSED BACK	IMPEDANCE (Ω)	3.5mm JACK ADAPTOR	ISSUE NUMBER	
R	AKG K100	36	Leather clad groover with bags of power and clarity, for a respectable asking price	●					190	100	●	205
	AKG 301	70	Big 'phones with even and detailed sound but lacks sufficient bass weight				●		230	100	●	194
	AKG K 240 DF	100	Inoffensive 'phones that are very laid back, if lacking in grunt				●		240	600	●	186
R	AKG K1000	700	One of the best dynamics on the market, hooks directly into speaker outputs				●		270	120	●	99
R	Audio Technica ATH910PRO	80	The closed back 910s are an improvement on the 909s, with a nice rhythmic quality rarely found	●				●	280	40	●	55
R	Audio Technica ATH-D40fs	100	Detailed and involving sound with a professional 'studio' quality appeal				●		250	66	●	194
R	Audio Technica ATH-M40	120	Incredible detail and honesty from these classically designed studio 'phone				●		250	60	●	186
	Beyer DT311	50	Uncharacteristically tight, unrefined sound quality from this otherwise well engineered 'phone	●					124	40	●	133
	Beyer DT411	63	A reasonable but not very thrilling headphone that doesn't really offer enough at the price	●					120	250	●	111
	Beyer DT331	65	Clear and extremely detailed sound with rather thin bass				●		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				●		210	40	●	186
	Beyer DT531	105	Average performer from an established player. Lacks punch and bite				●		245	250	●	205
R	Beyer DT511	106	Superb midband clarity and speed slightly at odds with soft bass. Even so, high tingle factor				●		200	250	●	172
BB	Beyer DT831	140	These provide silky, smooth textures in abundance and we're not just talking about the velvet ear pads				●	1/2	295	250	●	186
	Beyer DT100	160	Rugged, modular professional design, but bass is woolly and treble lacks detail				●		350	600	●	157
	Grado SR-40	45	Cheap and nasty appearance largely redeemed by cheerful, up-beat sound. Very comfortable	●					120	32	●	172
BB	Grado SR-60	79	For sheer musical enjoyment these are hard to beat. Retro styling may not be to everyone's taste	●					200	32	●	194
	Grado SR-80	100	Open and dynamic with pedantically open mid-band. Crude physical design, rough frequency extremes	●					60	8	●	157
R	Grado SR-125	150	What these 'phones lack in style they make up for ten-fold in musical quality	●					200	32	●	186
R	Grado SR-225	200	Warm, darkly-coloured tonally and ultimately lacking in clarity, but true to the spirit of the music	●					200	32	●	163
	Grado SR-325	300	Elegant sound across the frequency spectrum; let down by old fashioned ear-piece design	●					200	32	●	205
BB	Jecklin Float Model 1	79	While very unusual in appearance, the Floats give remarkable sound quality and openness				●		400	200	●	55

STATUS	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	ELECTROSTATIC	SUPRA-AURAL	CIRCUMAURAL	OPEN BACK	CLOSED BACK	MASS (g)	IMPEDANCE (Ω)	3.5mm JACK ADAPTOR	ISSUE NUMBER
												172
	JVC HA-W60	49	Remarkable lack of interference and hiss ameliorates adequate sound of this cordless design		●				165	I/R	●	172
R	JVC HA-W200RF	75	Distinct lack of hiss from these FM cordless 'phones ensures that detail and depth are easily heard			●		●	280	20,000	●	186
R	JVC HA-DX3	200	Great headphone with a rich bass, careful mid-range and high comfort factor					●	340	90	●	205
	Koss TD/80	50	Oodles of bass but with a recessed midband; tiresome on the head with prolonged wearing					●	250	60	●	194
	Koss R/100	100	Rather cheap looking 'phones that supply good detail but are severely lacking in midrange excitement					●	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				●		380	100	●	163
	Philips HP910	80	Ergonomically good but suffers from a muffled mid-range and over excited bass				●		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		●			●	192	I/R	●	172
R	Sennheiser HD 570 Symph	90	Comfortable, light-weight 'phones with a detailed and open sound but lacks bass depth on weightier music			●	●		210	64	●	194
R	Sennheiser HD 545	125	Fine all-rounder that takes all styles of music in its stride. Ear-clamping headband				●	●	255	150	●	172
BB	Sennheiser HD 565 Ovation	150	Wide bandwidth design which is refined, expressive and extremely comfortable				●	●	255	150	●	157
	Sennheiser HD590	160	Assured and confident player with very low colouration and great comfort				●	●	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	●		●	●		260	N/A	●	163
	Sony MDR-V700DJ	100	Great looking fold-away 'phones with exceptional build quality. Kickin' bass		●			●	300	24	●	194
	Sony MDR-CD 2000	200	Large pads make for sweaty listening. Pure mid-tones, but weightless bass				●	●	300	32	●	205
BB	Technics RP-F800	50	Comfortable budget model that sounds sublime with great dynamics		●			●	160	40	●	205
	Technics RP-DJ1200	130	Functional design with head-pulping bass and muggy tonal balance. Good job they're sweat-proof		●			●	230	32	●	172
R	Stax System II	400	Luxury option at its price, but the sound delivery is five star quality all the way	●					295	50	●	205
BB	Stax Lambda Nova Basic	395	Refined, articulate, yet with real presence – and a notable bargain by electrostatic standards	●					347	N/A	●	163
	Vivanco SR322	30	Weak design and uncomfortable, but redeems itself with substantial sound quality		●		●		248	32	●	205
	Vivanco Cyberwave FMH3000	40	The only cordless 'phone to offer genuine walkabout freedom, but sounds like a cheap FM tuner		●			●	210	FM	●	172
	Vivanco IR5800	50	Consistently musical infra-red design. Doesn't reach for sonic heights so hiss can be forgiven				1/2		226	I/R	●	172
R	Vivanco SR650	50	Unusually comfortable 'phone with excellent detail resolution but aggressive						175		●	157
BB	Vivanco SR750	60	Cossetting physical design, attractive sound, though suffers overhang and lacks ultimate dynamics		●		●		188		●	157
R	Vivanco SR 950	80	Cuddly feel and sound make these an enjoyable pair of 'phones						252	32	●	194
	Vivanco FM7980	80	A fair amount of whine and crackle detracts from 'phones which are otherwise very listenable		●			●	280	9,000	●	186
	Vivanco FM8180	99	Well thought-out features and a better than average sound are, at times, marred by intrusive hiss			●		●	240	9,000	●	186

LOUDSPEAKERS

STEREO SPEAKERS

SPECIFICATIONS

STATUS	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SIZE (WxHxD) (cm)	SENSITIVITY (db/W)	FLOORSTANDER	IMPEDANCE (Ω)	BASS FREQ. (Hz)	FREE SPACE	CLOSE TO WALL	ISSUE NUMBER
											187
R	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
R	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	Clean and capable 2.5-way budget floorstander with fine dynamic range but some mid-bass excess. Mass-loaded	19,5,93,25	90	5	25	●			215
	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
R	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 Entry 2	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 3	1,000	Very substantial, with tuneable ABR for better room matching. Sounds good but could be more neutral	24,5,37,32	89	5	30	●			211
	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
R	AR S20	180	Classic stand-mount might not have the most dynamic sound around, but it's an honest and effective musical communicator	20,37,28	90	4	28	●			215
	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
R	Arcaydis Concept 2	1,200	Solid oak floorstander is a little lazy sounding, but is well balanced and smooth with modest coloration	19,90,26	86	7	25	●			211
	ATC SCM10	1,000	A compact speaker with good transparency but lightweight bass	18,38,25.5	80	8	65	●		●	192
	ATC T16	1,750	Compact active 'home studio monitor' in colourful cast box, with considerable loudness potential	27,45,33	A	A	45	●			214
	ATC SCM70ASL	10,500	Stylish aluminium casework disguises dynamic grip, tracking and precision that equals the very best	127,40,46	●	A	20	●			205
R	Audio Gem Emerald	540	Pretty, compact floorstander with lively if lightweight sound	18,94,21	87	6	40	●			164
R	Audio Note AZ1	449	A fine partner for low power valve amps, it delivers music with great gusto and enthusiasm, but also more than its fair share of coloration	23,83,29	92	6	30	●			215
R	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
R	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
R	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
R	AVI Biggatron Red Spot	600	Good bass coherence and timing, but the lean and decidedly forward balance won't be to every taste	19,5,37,30	88	7	30	●			211
	AVI Positron	899	This 'mini-floorstander' is capable of great precision and delicacy, but in a rather small-scale way	17,5,74,24.5	85	6	40	●			174
R	B&W 601 S2	200	A smooth and sophisticated stand-mount combines good drive with fine neutrality	20,5,36,23	89	4	30	●			207
BB	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
R	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 CDM-1NT	750	An uncommonly stylish and sonically self-effacing stand-mount that should be very easy to live with	22,40,29	89	7	30	●			208
	B&W CDM-7NT	1,250	A very classy floorstander, in sound as well as looks, with fine bass drive, authority and overall neutrality	22,95,29	90	6	20	●			208
R	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 803	3,500	Classy looking three-way with impressively deep bass, wide dynamic range and a laid-back balance	29,108,42	89	3	20	●			210
	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
EC	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
R	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
	Bluroom 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
R	BC Acoustique Araxe	1,300	Neat compact floorstander is a very lively communicator, if a little short of deep bass grunt	21,92,30	94	3	40	●			204
R	Cabasse Farella 400	950	Exciting but very upfront-and-in-yer-face sound. High sensitivity, fine build and good dynamic drive	26,92,32	92	5	28	●			180
	Carlsson OA52.2	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
R	Castle Richmond	250	Tiny real-wood miniature has a lightweight but very coherent sound, a bit in-yer-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	22,42,25	91	4	30	●			193
R	Castle Severn 25E	700	Pretty little floorstander is lively and communicative, if a little coloured in the voice band	21,84,24	88	6	28	●			204

STEREO SPEAKERS (CONTINUED)

STATUS	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SIZE (WxHxD) (cm)	FLOORSTANDER	SENSITIVITY (dB/W)	IMPEDANCE (Ω)	BASS FROM (HZ)	FREE SPACE	CLOSE TO WALL	ISSUE NUMBER
BB	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
R	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
BB	Celestion A1	899	Rich, warm and laid-back, but a true quality sound; lovely build	24,41,35		88	6	25	●		164
R	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
R	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
EC	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
	Cyrus CLS70	800	Wonderfully striking styling, but presence is very laid back; likes playing loud	22,33,32		87	8	40	●		211
BB	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 Menuet 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
R	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
BB	Dynaudio Audience 42	400	Expensive for a vinyl-covered miniature, but an aristocrat amongst the breed. Is there a better small speaker around for the price?	17,28,5,24		87	4	40	●		215
	Dynaudio Audience 72	1,100	Very competent in most respects, but doesn't quite grab the attention; could be more communicative	20,97,26	●	89	3	20	●		211
R	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
	Eltax Chroma Front	300	Gorgeous shiny styling package at an ultra-competitive price, suffers from an excess of rather floppy bass	19,98,28	●	87	4	25	●		201
R	Energy e:XL 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
R	Excel 202A	1,795	Very Pro-styling, a compact active monitor in BBC tradition - neutral, unboxy and laid-back	15,21,5,36		A	A	25	●		214
BB	Epos M12	429	Retains the beguiling midband coherence that made the ES12 such a favourite. A genuine class act, sonically and aesthetically	20,38,26		86	7	40	●		215
	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
	Genelec HT206	1,400	Baby active monitor goes very loud for its size. Very neutral but a tad boxy	20,31,24		A	A	40	●	●	214
R	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 HB1	180	Good value but an uneven performer, the HB1 provides plenty of fun with the volume turned well up	21,38,25		88	3	50	●		207
BB	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
BB	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
BB	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
R	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
R	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
BB	Infimo Alpha 30	299	Some sharpness and nasality, but fine musical literacy plus a good measure of dynamic expression adds up to a great value floorstander	22,86,29	●	89	4	30	●	●	215
	Jamo E800	200	Nicely voiced, open midband but bottom end is a bit strong and amorphous	17,5,33,29		87	3	30	●		207
	Jamo D830	1,400	Dynamically exciting and communicative, but lacks both smoothness and neutrality. Pricey too	24,5,38,32		88	5	30	●		211
BB	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
R	JBL L20	700	Pricey, 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
R	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
R	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
R	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
BB	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
BB	JBL Xt40	500	Real wood and a cute shape, with a punchy driving bass, and a restrained overall balance	23,82,31	●	88	6	40	●		210
R	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 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
R	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
BB	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
R	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
	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
R	KEF Q15.2	200	A vigorous and entertaining compact speaker that remains particularly well aligned for close-to-wall siting	20,5,31,27		89	3	30		●	207
	KEF Q35.2	350	A very decent and good looking compact floorstander, but a pair of stand-mounted Q15.2s is likely to have the performance edge	21,78,5,27	●	90	2.5	25	●		215
	KEF Q55.2	500	Beefy vinyl-finished UniQ delivers loads of bass, but might have more control	21,87,29	●	90	4	25	●		210
R	KEF Reference One-Two	1,350	Limited low bass but bags of headroom. Coherent and lively sound, but could be more transparent	22,5,87,35	●	89	3	40	●		211
	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
BB	Keswick Audio Aria II	379	Confident and dynamic sound, if a little crude and shut in	21,42,24		89	8	20	●		148
R	Keswick Audio Torino	999	Good value, lively contender with distinctive styling. Goes loud and deep but could be smoother	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
R	Linn Katan Aktiv/LK140	2,325	Too small to have much grunt or loudness, but bright top is very sweet, clean and detailed	17,34,23		A	A	40		●	214
BB	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
EC	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 710	800	Very competent but didn't particularly stand out; distinctive styling and slightly shiny sound	20,27,42,32		90	5	25	●		211
R	Magnat Vintage 720	1,200	Slightly crude in some respects but lots of head, 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
BB	Meridian M33	1,495	Compact active wall-mount packs remarkable dynamic vigour into a very discreet package	15,38,22		A	A	45	●		214
	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
	Mirage OM-5	3,000	A meaty model that goes loud without distortion, digs deep with aplomb and creates plenty of depth of image	133,30,42	●	90	6	22	●		206
	Mirage OM-10-1	2,000	Tall black omni-bi-pole has plenty of bounce and dynamic vigour, but is more room sensitive than most	23,118,30	●	88	4	20	●		210
R	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
R	Mission 771e	200	Beautifully styled miniature has a delightfully voiced midband, and real wood finish too	17,31,22		86	6	45		●	207

STEREO SPEAKERS (CONTINUED)

STATUS	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SIZE (WxHxD) (cm)	FLOORSTANDER	SENSITIVITY (db/W)	IMPEDANCE (Ω)	BASS FROM (Hz)	FREE SPACE	CLOSE TO WALL	ISSUE NUMBER
BB	Mission m73	200	Sharply priced and good looking floorstander. Dynamics are a little limp, but it has a good overall balance. Excellent value for money	20,87,5,31	●	88	3	25	●	●	215
	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
R	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
R	Mission 774	500	Gorgeous floorstander is an entertaining communicator, despite some balance oddities (bright treble)	18,95,31	●	90	4	40	●	●	183
R	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	●	●	199
R	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
	Mission 783	1,000	Plenty of bass weight, and a clean, articulate midrange, but the two don't quite seem to gel	20,5,97,33	●	87	5	20	●	●	211
SC	Monitor Audio Bronze 2	180	A real corker, which combines solid material value for money with a fine all-round sonic performance	18,5,35,27	●	89	3	30	●	●	207
R	Monitor Audio Bronze 3	270	Very similar to the Bronze 2, though not necessarily better. Good value with better dynamic expression than most of its ilk	18,5,87,24	●	90	3	30	●	●	215
	Monitor Audio Silver 5i	450	Great looking, sharply priced real wood floorstander, but bottom end lacks drive and tension	20,81,21	●	87	5	30	●	●	210
	Monitor Audio GR20	1,500	Solid and confident design with all metal drivers and neutral if slightly uninspiring sound	20,92,5,30	●	89	6	30	●	●	212
	Mordant-Short MS902	200	Gorgeous metal-finished budget stand-mount has a shiny sound to match its looks	18,31,25	●	87	4	45	●	●	207
BB	MusicalTech Kestrel Evolution	315	Cutely styled, cleverly compact and a smooth, subtle and coherent performer, best suited to smaller rooms	20,85,19	●	86	4	40	●	●	201
R	Musical Technology Harrier	400	Very pretty package, good measured performance and even sound. Sensitivity is low, and dynamics limp	25,80,23	●	86	8	25	●	●	152
BB	Musical Technology PM15	450	A subtle, understated but very involving example of the 'classic' luxury-finish compact standmount	20,41,27	●	88	5	38	●	●	183
BB	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
R	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
BB	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
	Naim SBL Passive	1,970	Lively and punchy – smoother but more upfront than before	27,89,27	●	88	6	25	●	●	143
EC	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
R	Neat Critique 2	445	Contemporary standmount has a clean, crisp sound with lovely natural midband voicing	22,32,24	●	86	6	50	●	●	183
BB	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 Neat Petite III	795	The treble is peaky, but this is still one of the most coherent and communicative miniatures around	20,30,5,20	●	86	5	30	●	●	211
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
	NHT Super Zero	200	If tiny size is top priority, the Super Zero is worth considering. It looks nice and sounds articulate, but it definitely needs a subwoofer	14,23,14	●	84	8	100	●	●	215
BB	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
BB	NHT 1.5	400	This compact standmount sounds much bigger than it has any right to. Good timing and communication skills	18,42,26	●	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
	Opera Prima	495	Good-looking hardwood enclosure, plus fine mid and treble, but less satisfactory bass	19,34,31	●	90	4	40	●	●	190
	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
BB	PMC TB2	600	A worthy and prettier successor to the TB1, which sets a high standard in its size/type class for neutrality and transparency	20,40,5,31	●	88	8	30	●	●	211
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
BB	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	PMC AML1	3,525	Sparkling active Pro monitor with serious attitude: 'in yer face' balance, with great dynamics	20,40,32	●	A	A	25	●	●	214
	Polk RT16	799	Bass rich, lively and powerful, but suspect top end; big and not very pretty	22,105,39	●	91	4	22	●	●	160
	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
	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
	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
	QLN Signature	1,000	Attractive pyramidal standmount with heavy, laid-back balance but remarkably unboxy sound	27,37,36	●	83	4	25	●	●	167
	Quad ESL-989	4,600	A very 'different' speaker experience, with magnificent midband transparency and imaging, but limited loudness capability	67,134,32	●	83	3	38	●	●	213
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	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
	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
	Roksan ROKone	595	Large standmount is musically very communicative, if a little coloured	21,45,33	●	89	6	30	●	●	160
BB	Roksan OJ3X Black	995	Innovative low-line, two-way floorstander with decoupled tweeter; great bass and fine dynamic range	28,94,46	●	84	8	20	●	●	167
R	Royd Doublet	485	Great value compact floorstander: lively and very informative, if a little uneven	18,93,19	●	90	4	28	●	●	160
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
	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
	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 Excalibur	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
	Silverado Raider	695	Beautifully built audiophile compact: neutral if bright, tough work for amps	20,40,25	●	83	3	30	●	●	164
	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
BB	Snell E.5 Mk2	1520	Large floorstander has serious deep bass extension, and also a delicate midband with low coloration	22,109,30	●	89	4	20	●	●	211
	Snell XA75ps	4,500	Active bass floorstander with marvellous mid coherence, slightly suspect bass integration.	28,117,50	●	91	6	25	●	●	194
	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
	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
	Sonus Faber Grand Piano Home	1,589	Classy walnut n'leather floorstander with fine engineering and lovely midband voicing	23,5,29,108	●	90	3	25	●	●	214
	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
EC	TAG McLaren F1	15,000	Oddball aesthetics with accurate, unflappable, controlled and consistent sonic neutrality	40,127,48	●	87	8	25	●	●	202
BB	Tannoy mX2	150	Surprisingly refined considering its very modest price: very communicative with outstanding midband delicacy	18,5,33,25	●	89	4	45	●	●	207
	Tannoy Revolution 1	200	Pretty little mini-monitor is smooth, well mannered and polite to a fault, lacks dynamic expression	17,30,22	●	86	4	30	●	●	187
BB	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
	Tannoy mX4	350	Pretty 2.5-way has a clean and unboxy sound with respectable transparency, but lacks the dynamic grip and drive to make music really involving	18,5,96,26	●	89	3	20	●	●	215
R	Tannoy mX4	350	Lacks dynamic grip and authority, but delivers great bass extension and a classy overall balance at a sharp price	18,5,96,26	●	88	4	20	●	●	210
BB	Tannoy Revolution R2	350	Bargain price real wood floorstander is beautifully voiced and very even-handed, if a tad laid back	17,4,24	●	90	4	20	●	●	193
	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	24,85,23	●	87	6	26	●	●	167
	Tannoy ST-100	1,200	This supertweeter adds a subtle and delicate effect while also broadening the soundstage at a price	15,10,5,6	●	95	8	N/A	●	●	206
EC	Tannoy TD10	5,000	Extremely competent and rhythmic speaker, a future-proof supertweeter and detail to die for	35,101,37	●	91	6	38	●	●	215
	Tannoy Kingdom 12	6,000	Something of a throwback, but great fun, with fine dynamics and authority, but a tricky amp load	54,106,46	●	92	3	28	●	●	213
	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
	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
BB	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
EC	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

STEREO SPEAKERS (CONTINUED)

STATUS	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SIZE (WxHxD) (cm)	FLOORSTANDER	SENSITIVITY (db/m)	IMPEDANCE (Ω)	BASS FROM (HZ)	FREE SPACE	CLOSE TO WALL	ISSUE NUMBER
R	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
EC	Wilson benesch Discovery	5,500	Innovative three way with built-in stand, combines great subtlety with weight and headroom	23,47,38	●	88	6	45	●	●	212
EC	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	520	●	●	189
	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
	Wdale Diamond 72Anniversary	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
	Wharfedale Pacific P140	500	A lot of speaker for the money, but bass is unruly, even in a large-sized room. The smaller P130 might give a better bottom-end balance	22,113,36	●	89	3	25	●	●	215
R	Zingali Overture 25	1,975	Gorgeous, pricey, imposing standmount has a horn tweeter of great delicacy. Impressively weighty	30,57,38	●	90	8	25	●	●	195

SUBWOOFERS

STATUS	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SIZE (WxHxD) (cm)	FLOORSTANDER	SENSITIVITY (db/m)	IMPEDANCE (Ω)	BASS FROM (HZ)	FREE SPACE	CLOSE TO WALL	ISSUE NUMBER
	Acoustic Energy AE108S	299	Lots of loud subwoofer for your money, though ultimately more film than music oriented	50,42,43	●	A		20	●	●	179
R	B&W ASW1000	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
	Jamo D8SUB	950	Pretty but pricey, the D8SUB packs plenty of punch (for movie fans), but doesn't delve deep enough for music replay	45,5,41,45.5	●	A		30	●	●	210
R	JPW SW60	349	A real heavyweight, sounds clean and transparent, if perhaps a little understated. Usefully flexible	55,47,39	●	A		20	●	●	179
	M&K MX70	795	Cutely compact and entertaining too, but lacks the ultimate extension to justify its high price	37,32,30	●	A		25	●	●	210
	Mission 7AS2	399	Ugly if very effective at supplying very low bass, but filter could do with more flexibility higher up	56,30,31	●	A		<20	●	●	198
R	Paradigm PDR-10	150	Not much grip, drive or authority, but it doesn't get in the way and it is very cheap	34,5,36,42	●	A		25	●	●	210
	Polk PSW430	400	A lot of subwoofer for your money, but lacks deep grunt and is more movie than music oriented	38,5,45,46	●	A		25	●	●	210
R	REL Q50	375	This good looking if bulky sub does the business with impressive flexibility and sonic self-effacement	42,53,31	●	A		20	●	●	210
R	Ruark Log-Rhythm	775	Adds weight and scale with commendable discretion, making a positive contribution to the whole musical exposition	43,43,43	●	A		<20	●	●	210
	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

LOUDSPEAKERS

MULTICHANNEL SPEAKERS & PACKAGES

SPECIFICATIONS

STATUS	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SIZE (WxHxD) (cm)	FLOORSTANDER	SENSITIVITY (db/m)	IMPEDANCE (Ω)	BASS FROM (HZ)	FREE SPACE	CLOSE TO WALL	ISSUE NUMBER
BB	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
R	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 Nautilus package	6,500	This classy, laid-back package is arguably too good for current programming. Very bulky centre speaker	var	var	n/a	3	20	●	●	210
	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 L/R/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
	Jamo Concert package	2,500	Lovely main speakers sonically overshadow the centre, while surrounds are a bit obvious too	var	var	n/a	5	30	●	●	210
BB	JBL Xti-series package	1,100	Hexagonal boxes all round, this package has decent authority and all round tension	var	var	n/a	5	40	●	●	210
	KEF Q-series package	880	Cleverly designed, vinyl-finished UniQ package packs a goodly thump but centre and surrounds stand out	var	var	n/a	3	25	●	●	210
	Mirage OM-series package	2,000	Big black and bouncy package with omni fronts has plenty of vigour but some coloration var	var	var	n/a	4	20	●	●	210
R	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 Cinema 8 package	1,400	Beautifully styled and cleverly designed package, but could have more grunt and drive for the price	var	var	n/a	4	30	●	●	210
	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
	Monitor Audio Silver series	1,000	Great looking conventionally styled package lacks something in dynamic drive and tension	var	var	n/a	4	30	●	●	210
R	Mordaunt-Short Declaration 500	1,600	Good value vinyl THX Select package with Power Towers. Good authority but must be 5.1-connected var	var	var	n/a	3	25	●	●	210
	PMC FB1/FB2 package	2,200	Classy if bulky and pricey package has good transparency, coherence and weight	var	var	n/a	6	20	●	●	210
R	Rega Jura/Ara/Senta	920	Classy real wood package does a good all round job, but sounds bright and might have more surround weight	var	var	n/a	4	25	●	●	210
BB	Tannoy mXAV4 package	500	Lacks grunt, grip and authority, but smooth and refined with seamless surround coherence	var	var	n/a	4	20	●	●	210
BB	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
BB	Tannoy Saturn S6	500	Fine value vinyl floorstander offers plenty of genuine grunt and real dynamic tension	21,89,29	●	91	4	20	●	●	198

CENTRE CHANNEL SPEAKERS

STATUS	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SIZE (WxHxD) (cm)	FLOORSTANDER	SENSITIVITY (db/m)	IMPEDANCE (Ω)	BASS FROM (HZ)	FREE SPACE	CLOSE TO WALL	ISSUE NUMBER
R	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
	B&W Nautilus HTM1	1,500	Very bulky for a centre speaker, though very capable too - a little less laid back than its siblings	76,37,30	●	89	4	30	●	●	210
	Castle Keep	250	Substantial centre-front speaker based on Harlech drivers but with rather brighter voicing	48,17,29	●	88	8	45	●	●	198
R	Definitive Technology CLR2002	595	Pricey, but undoubtedly one of the better centre-front speakers around, with fine timing and open voicing	55,5,17,5,31	●	90	4	40	●	●	198
	Jamo Concert Center	550	A decent balance match but lacks the class and grip of the Concert 8s, and is bulky and pricey too	55,22,30	●	87	5	100	●	●	210
BB	JBL Xti10C	200	An elegant, cleverly designed centre and a good match for the 40s. Better value than most too	51,19,5,27	●	88	5	50	●	●	210
	KEF Q95C	200	This artfully designed UniQ centre looks much better than most on top of the TV set	40,17,17	●	89	3	120	●	●	210
	Mirage OM-C2	600	Large but discreet omni-bi-pole matches OM-10-1 well but lacks tight focus, and seems expensive	64,18,5,31	●	88	4	50	●	●	210
R	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 78C	350	Makes a good visual and sonic match for the 782, but quite pricey by comparison, given the ingredients	45,17,19	●	86	3	100	●	●	210
	Monitor Audio Silver Centre 10i	300	Neat and good looking partner to the Silver 5is, but a little more forward, and quite expensive too	50,17,21	●	87	4	100	●	●	210
R	Mordaunt-Short MS 504	200	Smart yet discreet and a good match for the 502. Sounds clean and expressive, and is well priced	50,19,20	●	88	3	120	●	●	210
R	PMC TB2M/C	325	This bulky centre speaker is quite pricey, but it combines good transparency with some authority	40,20,31	●	87	6	50	●	●	210
	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	Rega Senta	185	The very compact Senta is sensibly priced, a bit bright maybe, but articulate and expressive	32,16,21	●	89	4	120	●	●	210
BB	Tannoy mXC	100	Could be more exciting, but a very impressive centre speaker at an unusually reasonable price	42,16,21	●	88	4	120	●	●	210
BB	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

PERSONAL / INTERNET

PERSONAL STEREO

SPECIFICATIONS		ISSUE NUMBER
STORAGE FORMAT	IN-LINE REMOTE RECORDING	PC CONNECTION
CODEC	STANDARD CAPACITY	

STATUS	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	STORAGE FORMAT	IN-LINE REMOTE RECORDING	PC CONNECTION	STANDARD CAPACITY	ISSUE NUMBER
	Aiwa HS-PX307	30	So-so sound but an impressive features roster. Decent value overall	Cassette				204
R	Aiwa AM-HX50	180	Neat play-back only personal with an impressively full-bodied sound, though short on detail	MiniDisc				204
	JVC XL-PG7	100	Undistinguished CD model, with tacky build and below-par sound	CD				204
R	Panasonic RQ-SX71	70	A sleek aluminium body, decent sound and superb features	Cassette				204
	Panasonic RQ-SX91	80	A super-slick personal for well-heeled cassette users. Sound is rather bright	Cassette				204
	Panasonic SJ-MR100	250	Well built and nicely appointed, though performance is unremarkable at the price	MiniDisc				204
R	Philips ACT7582	115	A splash-proof body and an entertaining sound – the perfect CD personal for holiday japes	CD				204
BB	Sharp MD-MT831H	250	Smart design, sprightly sound and a well featured package	MiniDisc				204
	Sony WM-EX404	35	Super-stylish but sonically flawed, with particularly uncomfortable earphones	Cassette				204
R	Sony D-EJ815	140	High-tech build and features, including super-effective shock protection. Sound is soft but substantial	CD				204
BB	Sony D-EJ915	150	A beauty to behold – the most portable CD player yet and a good performer to boot	CD				204
BB	Sony MZ-R91	250	A petite and sexy beast with good sound and excellent facilities	MiniDisc				204

INTERNET AUDIO

STATUS	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	STORAGE FORMAT	IN-LINE REMOTE RECORDING	PC CONNECTION	STANDARD CAPACITY	ISSUE NUMBER
	Aiwa MM-VX100	130	Aiwa's expertise in the personal stereo field is visible, but performance is only average	Solid State		MP3	PRL 32MB	204
	Audio ReQuest ARQ1	568	Full size separate containing CD player, hard drive and PC connection. Sign of things to come?	CD/H/D		MP3/WMA	APR/USB 17GB	208
BB	Creative Labs Digital Jukebox	349	Smartly designed high-capacity portable with storage for over 1,000 tracks	Hard Drive		Agnostic	USB 5.7GB	208
R	DigMedia Music Store	350	Innovative CD/hard drive combo with optional solid state portable. MP3 with or without a computer	CD/H/D		MP3	USB 5.4GB	208
	JazPiper MV32P	125	First wave player that looks good but sounds bright. Includes voice recording and phone book features	Solid State		MP3	PRL 32MB	195
	LG MF-PD360	130	Good looking and temptingly affordable, but features and performance are nothing special	Solid State		MP3	USB 32MB	208
	LG AHA-FD770	200	Cassette and solid state personal in one – novel idea, poor execution	SS/Cass		MP3	PRL 32MB	204
	Logix Evzone	219	Novell MP3 player that uses Iomega Click! discs for storage. Chunky but quite effective, and discs are much cheaper than memory cards	Click! Discs		MP3/WMA	USB 40MB	213
R	Neo-25	420	Sparsely equipped but efficient hard drive portable with an exceptionally high potential capacity. Average in the sound department	Hard Drive		MP3	USB 10GB	213
R	Philips eXpanium EXP103	190	The best MP3-CD personal, at least at the time of writing... An effective solution for MP3 on the move	CD		MP3		213
R	Pine D'Music	120	Cute but pricey and a voice recording mode make this a good first-time buy	Solid State		MP3	PRL 32MB	195
	Pontis SP504	158	Not the best aesthetically, but exceptionally good MP3 sound	Solid State		MP3	USB 32MB	204
R	Rio 500	190	Well featured and a strong performer, though new generation Rios have now arrived	Solid State		MP3	USB 64MB	195
R	Rio 600	169	Neat design, strong future-proofing, good features and sound. Only its memory lets it down	Solid State		Agnostic	USB 32MB	208
	Sanyo SSP-PD7	250	Cute but pricey with limited supplied memory, but sound is good and it's one of the first to employ AAC coding	Solid State		MP3/AAC	USB 32MB	213
	Schneider MPMan F20	99	The world's first MP3 personal. Basic but still good value	Solid State		MP3	PRL 32MB	195
	Smart Portable MP3 Disc Player	119	CD personal that also plays MP3 tracks burnt onto CD-R discs	CD		MP3		208
	Sony N -MS7	249	A gorgeous little personal using Sony's Memory Stick storage. Good but pricey	Solid State		MP3/AATRAC-3	USB 64MB	208
R	Sony MDC-PC3	350	A MiniDisc deck which hooks to a PC. Introduces cheap and flexible MD media to the world of MP3	MiniDisc		MP3/AATRAC	USB	213

RECORD PLAYERS

TURNTABLES

SPECIFICATIONS		ISSUE NUMBER
MANUAL	SEMI-AUTO	SPEEDS
AUTO	SUSP SUBCHASSIS	EXTERNAL PSU
SUPPLIED WITH ARM	SUPPLIED WITH CART	

STATUS	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	MANUAL	SEMI-AUTO	SPEEDS	SUSP SUBCHASSIS	EXTERNAL PSU	SUPPLIED WITH ARM	SUPPLIED WITH CART	ISSUE NUMBER
BB	Audio Note TT1/ARM1	594	Simple and unpretentious, it delivers a real taste of true high end performance at an affordable price			33/45					203
	Avid Acutus	4,995	Extremely capable design with no apparent shortcomings, don't sell your vinyl 'til you've heard it on this!			33/45					194
	Clearaudio Reference	3,990	Opulent beast tested with Souther TQ-1 arm. Tends to gloss over detail, but can sound bold			33/45					144
R	DNM Rota 2	5,600	Tonally slightly bleached, but extracts detail like few others. Works well on its own table			33/45					144
	Dual CS 455.1	220	Neat record player with automatic convenience (and 78rpm), but doesn't match simpler manual rivals sonically			33/45/78					203
R	Dual 505-4 UK	250	Consistent sounding and well isolated turntable. It is slightly lacking in oomph			33/45					103
R	Kuzma StabiPS	1,950	(Tested with Stogi Reference) Solid oak plinth; sound is very clear, detailed and extended			33/45					91
	Linn LP12 Basic	1,100	Trails the full LP12 significantly, but pace, rhythm, timing etc. still top rank			33					103
R	Linn LP12 Lingo	1,750	The classic reference is improved by the Lingo, but charming character remains			33/45					91
R	Michell Gyrodec	875	Sweet and natural-sounding player, well matched to Rega RB300 arm			33/45					55
EC	Michell Gyro SE	775	A stunningly desirable combination of looks, solidity and sound make this a tempting turntable			33/45					190
	Michell Orbe SE	1,725	A Superb turntable, able to mix it with the best at virtually any price			33/45					192
BB	NAD 533	220	Sonically a little crude, but musically satisfying results at a very modest price			33/45					203
BB	Notts Analogue Spacedeck/Arm	750	No frills, just a first-rate, outstandingly natural-sounding deck that will last forever			33/45					159
BB	Pro-ject 2	300	Remarkably effective at the price, with decent timing and a generally well defined sound			33/45					164
	Pro-ject Classic Cherry	450	A great looking turntable with a generous and dynamic sound, but lacks something in overall coherence			33/45					203
	Pro-ject Perspective	750	Flexible facilities and competitive package, but performance of turntable alone is behind the best			33/45					192
R	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			33/45					138

STATUS	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	ISSUE NUMBER							
				MANUAL	AUTO	SEMI-AUTO	SPEEDS	SUSP SUBCHASSIS	EXTERNAL PSU	SUPPLIED WITH ARM	SUPPLIED WITH CART
BB	Rega Planar 2	214	A remarkable product at the price, surprisingly articulate and confident	●			33/45				48
R	Rega Planar 3	274	Sounds musical in a balanced manner, needs decent isolation and suffers a little pitch instability	●			33/45				164
BB	Rega Planar 25	619	Great looking turntable has a silky smooth sound with exceptional midband coherence	●			33/45				203
BB	Reson RS1	600	Supplied set-up and ready-tuned, this unconventional deck is packed with mid-band detail	●			33/45				159
R	Roksan Radius 3/Fabriz zi	890	Elegant-looking turntable with a tidy, ordered sound. Bright and breezy if a shade lightweight	●			33/45	●	●		159
EC	SME Model 10A	3,333	Elegant and extremely capable design with Series V/309 hybrid arm, superbly built	●			33/45	●	●		195
EC	SME Model 20.2A	4,863	Beautifully built, extremely neutral damped and suspended deck with superb sound, Inc V arm	●			33/45/78	●	●		186
BB	Thorens TD166 VI/UKRB	400	Refined, solid sound with well-focused imagery; suitable for use with good MM/MC budget cartridges	●			33/45	●	●		103
	Thorens TD146 VI	550	Tonearm not quite up to turntable's potential; this semi-auto is much pricier than manual TD166	●			33/45	●	●		203
	Thorens TD2001	700	Balances convenience and sound well, but deck lacks detail and bass could be better controlled	●			33/45	●	●		159
R	VPI HW19 Junior	650	A notably large and handsome turntable with good sound quality and considerable upgrade potential	●			33/45	●	●		203
R	Well Tempered Record Player	850	Intriguing and challenging. Musically not ideal, but its limpid quality and lack of artificiality set standards	●			33/45	●	●		136
EC	Well Tempered Reference	5,500	Superb mechanical stability and unflappability result in a clean reproduction	●			33/45	●	●		205
BB	Wilson benesch The Circle	795	A beautiful turntable with a sumptuous sound, all at a very reasonable price – a clear Best Buy	●			33/45	●			192

STATUS	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	ISSUE NUMBER					
				MM	MC	REPLACABLE STYLUS	OUTPUT (mV)	MASS (g)	
EC	Allaerts MC1B	1,295	Highly capable and entertaining Belgian cartridge that warrants the finest turntable and phono stage you can afford		●		0.5		203
BB	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
BB	Clearaudio Signature	1,495	A great all-round performer with fine dynamic vitality and a seductive midband intimacy		●		0.55	11.5	175
BB	Denon DL110	70	A fine all-rounder, this high output MC model is likely to perform well		●		1.0	6	48
	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
BB	Denon DL304	200	Uncoloured, detailed, tracks superbly. Top notch altogether, and a bargain at the price		●				103
R	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
R	Dynavector XX-1L	998	Very clear, very detailed; a response lift around 20kHz seems to do no harm		●		0.25	12	84
R	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
EC	Dynavector DRT XV-1	2,500	Capable of conjuring one of the most tactile, three dimensional sound stages on the vinyl planet. Extremely entertaining		●		0.3	13	208
	Goldring Elan	19	A lightweight and frisky-sounding MM apparently based on Nagaoka MM4 body	●		●	5.0	7	67
R	Goldring 1012GX	79	Slightly harsh but plenty of life and detail. Some high frequency coloration apparent	●			6.5	7	85
R	Goldring 1022GX	99	As with 1012, a touch harsh; detail and transient purity improved	●			6.5	7	85
R	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
BB	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
BB	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
	Lyra Lydian Beta	599	A thoroughly enjoyable cartridge – smooth, agile and dynamic in character		●		0.5	8	192
R	Lyra Lydian	649	Superbly capable all-round musical performer that improves markedly when its body cover is removed		●		0.3	7	158
BB	Lyra Clavis Da Capo	995	A stable tracker, and one of the finest cartridges we've heard		●		0.1	7	143
EC	Lyra Helikon	1095	Highly capable and highly neutral, this is a cartridge for all seasons		Y		0.5	8	215
	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
BB	Ortofon S10/P	38	For the price, a good blend of virtues – weight, clarity and neutrality	●		●	3.0	5	85
	Ortofon S20/P	65	Sensitive to load capacitance, but the S20/P has a lively, effervescent sound	●		●	3.0	5	67
R	Ortofon MC3 Turbo	130	The 3 Turbo is bright, cheerful and bouncy, but subtle – take it as it comes		●		3.3	4	103
BB	Ortofon MC15 Super II	130	A good all-rounder, with outstanding resolution, if slightly bright and close up		●		0.35	7	103
	Ortofon MC25E	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
BB	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
BB	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
R	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
R	Rega Elys	85	Clearly superior to the Bias, the Elys is more detailed, accurate and convincing	●		●	5.0	5	67
R	Reson Recca	250	If you're after a high quality moving magnet cartridge, they don't get much better than this	●			6.5	6.3	192
R	Roksan Corus Black	130	Recognisably related to the Corus Blue, but smoother and more civilised	●		●	6.5	5	91
BB	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
R	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
R	van den Hul MC-10	750	A neutral, balanced performer, gives fine depth and focus and a firm, extended bass		●		0.4	6	60
	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
R	van den Hul MC-Two	1,200	MC-Two rewards with a highly detailed yet fluid and musically convincing portrayal		●		0.4	6	72
R	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
R	van den Hul G' hopper IIGLA	2,800	Undoubtedly one of the finest cartridges available. It has tremendous bandwidth, energy and finesse		●		0.4	6	122
R	Wilson benesch Matrix	786	Extraordinarily well balanced cartridge: neutral and detailed yet lively and rhythmically assertive		●		0.58	6	158
R	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

TONEARMS

STATUS	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	EFFECTIVE MASS	PARALLEL TRACKING	PIVOTED	UNI-PIVOT	EFFECTIVE LENGTH (cm)	ISSUE NUMBER
R	Kuzma Stogj Ref	1,250	Large, solid and well made arm, gives exceptionally clear sound with just a hint of brightness	High		●			79
R	Linn Ekos	1,500	Superb, state-of-the-art design which builds significantly on predecessor's strengths	Med		●		229	67
BB	Rega RB250	109	The ultimate budget arm? Refined, sweet, detailed and natural	Low		●		237	60
BB	Rega RB300	174	Despite its modest price it sets exceptional standards and could be used on many high-end turntables	Low		●		237	60
R	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
R	SME Series IV	983	Superb engineering and finish with a finely balanced sound, impressive stereo focus and low coloration	Low		●		233	60
R	SME Series V	1,461	Excellent in all respects, this arm arguably sets the standards for pivoted arms, regardless of price	Low		●		233	60

STANDS & SUPPORTS

EQUIPMENT SUPPORTS

SPECIFICATIONS

STATUS	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	HEIGHT	TOP PLATE SIZE (cm)	FILLABLE	WELDED	NUMBER OF SHELVES	SHELF TYPE	ISSUE NUMBER
	Aavik C4	200	Attractive wood finish stand with a very large footprint but sound is a little coloured	77	47			4	MDF	206
R	Aavik 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 Symphony	245	Simple steel and glass stand which majors in excitement factor but lacks precision	73	46.5		●	4	Glass	206
	Apollo Soprano	275	Uninspiring looks and sonic performance that can be beaten at this price	68.5	45.5			4	Glass	193
R	Atacama Europa	240	Stylish, expandable modular design with agreeable full-bodied sound – great value	67	48.6			4	Wood	193
BB	Audiophile Furniture Base	615	Price is justified by its earth-shattering sonic abilities – a worthy upgrade	82	43			4	MDF	193
R	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
R	Custom Design Aspect650	270	Smart looks and practical thanks to adjustable shelves. Sound is fair with some loss of detail	66	46		●	4	Glass	206
R	Elemental Isotube x 4/Ref	1,199	Blockbusting size and build. Super sound quality	92	45,49		●	4	Marb	181
R	Elemental Audio Isotube X4	849	A hefty stand that demonstrates just how much difference a good support can make	90	49		●	4	Glass	193
BB	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
	Mana 4-tier	500	The ultimate statement in steel and glass; adds resonance in a way you'll love or hate	87	45		●	4	Glass	206
R	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
R	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
R	Quadraspire Q4	280	Simple but modestly effective and very attractive	52	49			4	MDF	206
	Sonus System Elite	330	Rather ugly and seems to offer little over and above cheaper steel and glass stands	68	50		●	4	Glass	206
BB	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
R	Soundstyle X100	230	Looks lovely, sounds lively but slightly bright	64	49,28		●	4	Glass	181
	Soundstyle X5100	270	Less character than other similar stands, but sound is somewhat short on transparency	72.5	49.5		●	4	Glass	206
	Soundstyle Radius SR100	280	Stylish looks and a smooth sound	63.5	49.5		●	4	Glass	193
	Soundstyle Finewoods W105	320	Veneered shelves clamped between tubular uprights. Delivers with classical material	82	48,27			4	Wood	166
BB	Standesign Design 4	190	An all-in-one support at a budget price with good sonic performance	88.5	50.8		●	4	Glass	193
R	Townshend Seismic Sink AV1-4	600	Gives significant isolation for turntables and seems to add little character otherwise	74.5	45			4	MDF	206
BB	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
BB	Wilson benesch Asside	590	Sounds even better than it looks. And it looks wonderful	72	37,50			4	Wood	181

SPEAKER STANDS

STATUS	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	HEIGHT	TOP PLATE SIZE (cm)	FILLABLE	WELDED	NUMBER OF SHELVES	SHELF TYPE	ISSUE NUMBER
	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 HD5	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 A4/6	82	A pretty and robust design that sonically fails to stand out from the crowd	51,40,51	18		●			202
BB	Atacama Nexus 6	50	An excellent all round performer and a genuine hi-fi bargain	60,50	14.5,18		●			202
R	Atacama R724	150	Atacama uses its market strength to deliver a superbly appointed product at a very reasonable price	60	15,17		●			189
R	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
R	Elemental Isotube S2se	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
R	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
R	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
BB	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
R	Partington Dreadnought Ult.	299	Super heavyweight stand that is an open window to the speaker placed on it	63	20.5,23.5		●			202
	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
BB	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
	Target HM60	106	A solid and well-built stand laid-back to the point of coma	40-70	16.5,19		●			202
R	Townshend Seismic Sink	499	Unique inflatable plinth that works well with decent floorstanders as well as standmounted speakers	4	38,48					202

MISSION

Award – Winning Speakers available from:



MUSICAL IMAGES

Covent Gardens Branch - 18 Monmouth Street 0207 497 1346
Edgware Branch - 173 Station Road 0208 952 5535
Hounslow Branch - 45 High Street 0208 569 5802



6-8 Bancroft
Hitchin, Herts
SG5 1JQ

David Orton Audio Visual ALL REGION DVD Players Available

Multiroom Installations,

Demonstration Rooms & Interest Free Credit available



TEL: 01462 452248
FAX: 01462 458424
Email: davidov@aol.com

FULL  RANGE ON DEMONSTRATION	OTHER BRANDS INCLUDE ARCAM, CABLE TALK, DENON, DUAL, JAMO, KENWOOD, MARANTZ, NAD, PIONEER, QED, QUAD, SENNHEISER, SONY, TANNOY, TARGET, TECHNICS, THORENS, YAMAHA.
HOME CINEMA WIDESCREEN PLASMA & DVD	OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK  A world of difference
244-256 STATION ROAD, ADDLESTONE, SURREY TEL: 01932 854522 FAX: 01932 832432	

Practical Hi-Fi

0% Finance available on
selected items

- ▶ MANCHESTER: 65 Bridge Street - 0161 839-8869
- ▶ PRESTON: 43 Friargate - 01772 883958
- ▶ WARRINGTON: 88 Bridge Street - 01925 632179
- ▶ BOLTON: 33 Knowsley Street - 01204 395789
- ▶ CARLISLE: 106 English Street - 01228 44792
- ▶ BLACKPOOL: 81 Whitegate Drive - 01253 300599
- ▶ LANCASTER: 84 Penny Street - 01524 39657

English Audio

Stockist of

MISSION

**37 Whitecross Road, Hereford,
HR4 0DE
01432 355 081**



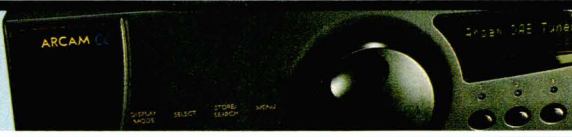
Hi-fi at its best

26 St Andrews Street
Dundee
Tel 01382 226591
Fax 01382 229994

Sales, Service and Installation
Open Mon-Thur 10-7
Fri 10-6
Sat 9-5

TUNERS

ANALOGUE TUNERS



SPECIFICATIONS

STATUS	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	WAVEBANDS	PRESETS	RDS	REMOTE CONTROL	SIG. STRENGTH METER	ROT. TUNING KNOB	ISSUE NUMBER
R	Cambridge T500	180	Very capable tuner suited to good and less good reception conditions	FM,M,L	64			●	●	193
R	Creek T43	399	Quality UK-made tuner offering classy sound in all areas at a very fair price	FM,M,L	64		●	●	●	193
R	Cyrus FM7.5	400	Beautifully made and presented, with sound that's a small but worthwhile advance over budget models	FM	7				●	211
BB	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
R	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
BB	Harman/Kardon TU950	200	Bulky but effective, delivering fine RF performance and good sound for the price	M,M,L	30	●			●	166
	Leak Trough Line - GTA	300	A renovated classic with a style all of its own coupled with an emotive and gutsy performance	FM	0			●	●	206
	Linn Pekin	545	Smart and high-tech tuner which integrates well with Linn systems but offers less appealing performance out of that context	FM, M	80		●	●		211
R	Linn Kremlin	2,600	Controversially good sound at a very high price	FM	80		●	●		142
BB	Marantz ST-48	120	A classic budget model which manages a performance only just behind much more expensive models	FM,M	60	●				184
	Marantz ST6000	150	Another budget killer from Marantz, with sound well above its class and useful features	FM, M, L	90	●		●		211
R	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
	Pioneer F-504RDS	250	Cable-friendly with advanced RDS and excellent RF performance; slightly disappointing sound	FM,M	40	●		●	●	166
	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
	Roksan Kandy KT-1	375	Well made but sound is a bit lacklustre and lags behind some budget models	FM, M, L		●				211
	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
R	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
	Thorens TRT2000	499	Not exactly neutral sounding, but nonetheless makes listening fun	FM,M	59	●	●	●	●	157

DIGITAL TUNERS

STATUS	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	WAVEBANDS	PRESETS	RDS	REMOTE CONTROL	SIG. STRENGTH METER	ROT. TUNING KNOB	ISSUE NUMBER
R	Arcam Alpha 10 DRT	800	The first DAB tuner and arguably still the best, but the system's still not perfect	DAB	7		●	●	●	199
	Arcam FMJ DT26	1,000	Metal-cased version of the Alpha 10 DAB, not so competitive now DAB prices are dropping	DAB	7		●	●	●	211
	Cymbol C-DAB 1	1,000	The first 'high-end' DAB tuner, although format is the ultimate limitation. Gorgeous finish	DAB	8		●	●		199
	Pson Wavefinder	299	Bizarre-looking DAB tuner that requires a powerful PC to operate - great gadget, sound variable	DAB			●	●		211
	Sony ST-D777ES	550	Smart and useful with DAB and FM in one box, but neither band really shines	DAB, FM, M, L	99	●	●	●	●	211
R	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
	VideoLogic DRX-601E	299	Cheapest DAB tuner to date, and concedes little if anything to dearer models	DAB	10	●		●	●	211

SUBSCRIBE TO HI-FI CHOICE NOW!

AND SAVE OVER 25% ON THE COVER PRICE!

HOTLINE NUMBER
+44 (0) 1458 271147



UNISON RESEARCH

for a lifetime of musical enjoyment



SR1

- Integrated amplifier
- The perfect combination
- The grace of triode valves
- The power and control of solid state
- 80 watts dynamic Class-A
- Radiowave remote control

Model shown: SR1. £1,250

for more information on the range of Unison Research products please contact:



23 Richings Way, Iver, Bucks SL0 9DA England
Tel: 01753 652669 / 07000 853443 Fax: 01753 654531
www.ukd.co.uk e-mail: nick@ukd.co.uk

Choosing a good hi-fi dealer is the most vital step in acquiring the system that is right for you. This unique directory gives full information on dealers able to help in your area.

DEALER Directory

Members of the British Audio Dealers Association are able to offer:



- Two year guarantee, transferable to another BADA dealer should the purchaser move more than 30 miles from his/her original address
- low cost five year guarantee option
- proper demonstration facilities
- seven day exchange or refund scheme if the dealer's advice is taken on product selection
- fully guaranteed service work
- customer complaints procedure in the event of problems

For more information contact BADA on ☎ 020 7226 4044

BATH/BRISTOL

THE RIGHT NOTE, tel: 01225 874728. Give your ears a new reference point for the best sounds at any price. Forget reviews and trying to put together a system like a patchwork quilt with the 'best' bits around. It's our job to do the assessing, you judge the results. Come here, or we'll come to you, and plan a system for the future, even if you spread the purchases. Leave "upgrade-itis" behind, save money and enjoy music. Just listen, and you'll know. CD: Accuphase, Advantage, Audio Synthesis, Balanced Audio Technology, dCS (Elgar etc), Meracus, Pass, Sugden, Wadia. Vinyl: Audio Synthesis, Basis, Clearaudio, DNM, Graham, (The) Groove, Lehmann (Black Cube), Michell, Sumiko, Transfiguration. Amps: Accuphase, Advantage, Balanced Audio Technology, CAT, DNM, Gamut, Lumley, Meracus, Michell, Nagra, Pass, Sonneteer, Spectral, Sugden. Speakers: Audio Physic, BKS, Ethos, Harbeth, Lumley, Magneplanar, NEAT, Totem, Verity Audio. Tuners: Accuphase, Magnum Dynalab. Cables: Argento, Chord Co, DNM, Howland, Nordost, SonicLink, Siltech, Yamamura Churchill. Mains: Accuphase.

V' AUDIO, 36 Druid Hill, Stoke Bishop, Bristol BS9 1EJ. Website: www.vaudio.co.uk. Tel: 0117 968 6005. Alon, ATC, Audiomeca, AVI, Cable Talk, Cadence Valve, Chord Amps, Electrocompaniet, Goldring, Harman Kardon, Heybrook, Inner Sound, Jamo, Leider, LFD, Lyra, Mark Levinson, Michell, Nakamichi, Opera, Oracle, Ortofon, Parasound, Pink Triangle, Primare, Project, REL, Ruark, Shearpe Audio, SME, Sonic Link, Stax, Townshend, Triangle, Trichord, Unison Research. Home Cinema including video projectors by Davis, Seleco, Sony, plus screens by Owl, Da-Lite and Stewart. Demos by appointment only. Home trial facilities, free installation, service facilities. Mastercard, Visa.

BEDFORDSHIRE

RICHARDS AUDIO VISUAL, 4 Greyfriars, Bedford MK40 1HP. Tel: 01234 365165. Email: richavbed@aol.com. FRIENDLY PERSONAL SERVICE. MULTI-ROOM HOME INSTALL SPECIALISTS. FREE HOME SURVEYS. Stockists of Arcam FMJ, Audioquest, B&W, Bose, Cabeltalk, Cyrus, Denon, Marantz, Mission, Moth, Optimum, Ortofon, Pioneer, Pro-Ject, QED, REL, Rotel, Ruark, Sennheiser, Soundstyle, Stands Unique, Talk Electronics, Tannoy, Target, Teac, Van den Hul, Yamaha and more. LISTENING ROOM. 0% FINANCE. Open 6 days 9.30-5.30. CAR PARK AT REAR OF SHOP.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

NORTHWOOD AUDIO, 98 Cambridge St, Aylesbury, Bucks HP20 1BA. Tel: 01296 428790 (A/P), fax: 01296 421282. Selected sounds from Acoustic Energy, Alchemist, Audiomeca, Audio Note, Boston, B&W, Cabeltalk, Castle, Chord, Chord Company, CR Development, Davis, Denon, DNM, D.P.A., Epos, Exposure, Harman Kardon, Heart, KEF, Klipsch, Linn, Magnat, Marantz, Michell, Micromega, Monitor Audio, Musical Technology, NAD, Pioneer, PMC, ProAc, Quadraspire, Rega, REL, Rose, Rotel, Ruark, Sony, Stax, System Audio, Talk Electronics, Tannoy, Target, Teac, UKD. Nobody ever regretted purchasing the best. Export orders welcome. 2 demo rooms. Credit facilities available.

HAZLEMERE AUDIO. Music Lovers - the chance to increase your enjoyment of music. Objective advice, comfortable listening rooms, home demonstrations, free installations, exceptional customer service, and some of the world's finest equipment: Accuphase, ATC, Audio Analogue, BKS, Clearaudio, Creek, Crimson, DNM, Epos, Gamut, Nagra, Passlabs, Opera, Ortofon, Rehdeko, Resolution, Reson, Rockport, Sugden, Totem, Triangle, Trilogy, Unison Research. For an appointment (day or evening) call High Wycombe (01494) 865829

TECHNOSOUND and AUDIO INSIGHT, 7-8 Granville Square, Willen, MILTON KEYNES, Bucks MK15 9JL. Tel: 01908 604949, fax: 01908 672760. Open Mon-Thurs & Sat 10am-6pm, Fri 10am-7.30pm. 79 West Street, DUNSTABLE. Tel: 01582 663297, fax: 01582 471078. Open Mon-Sat 9.30am-5.30pm. www.technosound.co.uk, E-mail: hifi@technosound.co.uk. Hi-Fi, home cinema, custom installation & multi-room specialists. Main lines include Meridian (500 & 800 series), Arcam, Musical Fidelity, B&W, Ruark, Mission, Bang & Olufsen, Pioneer & Yamaha. Dedicated demo rooms (4 at Milton Keynes, 3 at Dunstable).

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

SYSTEMS - Specialists in Sound. 28-30 Burleigh Street, Cambridge CB1 1DG. Tel: 01223 461518. Open Mon-Sat 9am-5.30pm. Stockists of Arcam, REL, Denon, Mission, Yamaha, NAD, Marantz, Technics, Rotel, Sony, Project, Musical Fidelity, Ruark, Castle, Acoustic Energy, Wharfedale, Myryad, Audioquest, Soundstyle and much more. Demonstration room available.

THE AUDIO FILE, 41 Victoria Road, Cambridge CB4 3BW. Tel: 01223 368305, fax: 01223 354975. Open Mon-Sat 9-5.30pm. Sstreater@aol.com. Interest free credit. Absolute Sounds, Acoustic Energy, Arcam, Bose, B&W Nautilus, Cyrus, Denon, KEF,

Linn, Loewe, Marantz, Mission, M & K, Onkyo, Pioneer, ProAc, QED, Rega, Sony, Tag McLaren, Yamaha. **BADA**

CHESHIRE

ACOUSTICA, 17 Hoole Rd, Chester CH2 3NH. www.acoustica.co.uk. Tel: 01244 344227. All that's best in Hi-Fi and Home Cinema from quality manufacturers including Naim, Rega, Arcam, Musical Fidelity, Rotel, Seleco Projectors, Kef, Ruark, Densen, Primare, Teac, JM Lab, Nakamichi, Quadraspire, Celestion and Crimson. We offer friendly, helpful advice, interest-free credit and trade-in facilities, and deliver and install systems throughout Cheshire, Merseyside and North Wales. Open Tues. - Sat. 10-5.30, evenings by arrangement.

ACTON GATE AUDIO, 4 Ruabon Rd, Wrexham. Tel: 01978 364500. Audio Visual specialists. Arcam, Bose, Boston, B&W, Celestion, Castle, Denon, GLL, Harman-Kardon, Jamo, JBL, Marantz, Michell, Mission, Mordaunt-Short, Musical Fidelity, Myryad, NAD, Micromega, Quad, Rotel, Rogers, Roksan, Ruark, Tannoy, Teac, TDL, UKD, Yamaha DSP member. Demonstration room, installation service. Easy parking and motorway access. Mastercard, Visa etc.

AUDIO COUNSEL, 14 Stockport Rd, Cheadle, Cheshire. Tel: 0161 428 7887. Please see entry under Greater Manchester.

CHRIS BROOKS AUDIO, 29 Gaskell St, Stockton Heath, Cheshire. Tel: 01925 261212, fax: 01925 264001. E-mail: chris.brooks@audiou-net.com. Tues-Fri 9.30-5.30, Sat 9-5. 3 demo rooms. Credit facilities. All credit cards. Hi-Fi, A/V, multi-room. Total absence of bull****.

GEDIA BADA

DOUG BRADY HI-FI, Kingsway Studios, Kingsway North, Warrington WA1 3NU. Tel: 01925 828009, fax: 01925 825773. For the widest range of high quality hi-fi in the Northwest. Family business est. 35 years. 3 demo rooms, inc. home cinema, home trials; deliveries throughout NW; Mastercard, Visa, credit facilities. Open 10-6; Send for free map and/or 5 page sale list

BADA

INPUT AUDIO, Dukinfield, Cheshire. Tel: 0161 304 7494 (Mobile) 077147 58109. We have the time, we have the patience, we have the desire and we have the products to help you reach your goals. Featuring ART, Audiogram, Audio Analogue Puccini, Audiomeca, Audio Physic, Audio Vector, Base, Chord Cables, Clearaudio, Diapason, Graaf, Helios, Insert, Immedia, LFD, Meracus, Michell, Monrio, Neat, Pink Triangle, Stands Unique, System Audio, Triangle, UKD Opera, Unison Research, VPI, Yamamura Churchill, YBA. Specialising in home demonstration. Please phone for more

information or friendly chat. Credit card facilities. Input for the pleasure of music.

PRACTICAL HIFI, 88 Bridge Street, Warrington. Tel: 01925 632179. The audio video specialist, expert advice, instant demonstrations, best prices, interest-free credit, part-exchange welcome. Extended warranty. Stockists of Yamaha, Kenwood, Denon, Sony, Technics, Onkyo, Marantz, Pioneer, Mission, KEF, Jamo, Celestion, B&W. Also stockists of LaserDiscs.

THX

THE HI-FI SHOWROOMS, 12A West Str, off West St Car Park, Congleton, Cheshire. Tel: 01260 280017. E-mail: mail@hifishowrooms.co.uk. Web site: hifishowrooms.co.uk. Naim Audio, Audiolab, Rega, REL, Arcam, Technics, KEF, NAD, Harman-Kardon, Yamaha, Rotel, Lexicon, RCF, Millennium, NHT, JBL, Onkyo, Sony, Marantz, Toshiba, Panasonic, Ruark, Jamo, Celestion, Qed, Teac, Castle. Front and rear projection systems, 3 demonstration rooms, 1 A/V with 8ft screen, customer car park. The North West's Premier Audio Visual Specialist. Mastercard, Visa, Amex, JCB. 9.15-5.30, Closed Sun/Mon.

CORNWALL

SOUNDS PERFECTION, Nightree House, Mawgan, Helston, Cornwall, TR12 6AX. Tel/fax: 01326 221372. Email: nigel@soundsprecision.co.uk. www.soundsprecision.co.uk. Alchemist, Audio-note, Audio Spectrum, Avid Audio Design (The Groove), Border Patrol, Boston Acoustics, Cable Talk, Henley Designs, Lexicon, Michell, Nordost, Parasound, Monitor Audio, Musical Fidelity, Primare, ProjectTurntables, REL, Roksan, SME, Sonic Frontiers, Stands Unique, Philosophy, Audioquest, Tannoy, Target, Teac, Thorens, V-Damp Isolation, Unison Research, Audio Analogue, J.M. Labs, Electrocompaniet, Triangle, Trichord, Sugden, Tara-Labs. Open 6 days a week Mon-Thurs 10-7, Fri 10-6, Sat 9-5.

CUMBRIA

PRACTICAL HIFI, 106 English Street, Carlisle. Tel: 01228 44792. The audio video specialist, expert advice, instant demonstrations, best prices, interest-free credit, part-exchange welcome. Extended warranty. Stockists of Yamaha, Kenwood, Denon, Sony, Technics, Onkyo, Marantz, Pioneer, Mission, KEF, Jamo, Celestion, B&W. Also stockists of LaserDiscs.

DORSET

DAWSONS, 74 Poole Road, Westbourne,



INDICATES MEMBERSHIP OF THE BRITISH AUDIO DEALERS ASSOCIATION

DEALER Directory

Bournemouth, Dorset. Tel: 01202 764965. Bang & Olufsen, JBL, Lexicon, Myrad, Sony, Technics. Suppliers and installers of complete home cinema systems. Cedia member. Various credit facilities available, open 9-5.30 Monday to Saturday.

MOVEMENT AUDIO, 588 Ashley Road, Parkstone, Poole. Tel: 01202 730865/380018. Arcam, Audio Vector, B&W, Castle, Cyrus, Denon, Marantz, Mission (inc. FS series), NAD, Pioneer, Roksan, REL, Rotel, Shearner, Tannoy, Yamaha. 3 demo rooms, Home Cinema and Hi-Fi specialists, easy parking on site, high quality used equipment, massive range of audio and video leads and connectors etc. Credit facilities. Visit us on www.movement-audio.co.uk. Open Tues-Sat 10-5.30. **BADA**

MOVEMENT AUDIO, 926 Wimborne Road, Moordown, Bournemouth, Dorset. Tel: 01202 529988/ 520066. Arcam; B&W, Celestion, Denon, Marantz, Musical Fidelity, NAD, Opera, Pioneer, Project, REL, Rotel, Tannoy, Teac, Yamaha. Home cinema and Hi-Fi specialists, full demo facilities, friendly expert advice, home demo and installation, easy parking, credit facilities, Visa/Mastercard. Open Tues-Sat 9.30-5.30. **BADA**

SUTTONS HI-FI, 18 Westover Road, Bournemouth. Tel: 01202 555512. Acoustic Energy, Arcam, Atacama, Celestion, Cable Talk, Denon, Definitive Audio, KEF, Linn, Meridian, Mission, M+K, QED, Rotel, Sennheiser, Teac, Sony, Talk Electronics, Tag McLaren, Wharfedale, Yamaha, DTS & Dolby Digital, DVD. 2 single speaker listening rooms, home demonstrations, free installations. Open Mon-Sat 9-5.30. Call for details. **BADA**

WEYMOUTH HI-FI, 33-35 Maiden Street, Weymouth. Tel: 01305 785729/766345. Arcam, B&W, Castle, Celestion, Denon, KEF, Musical Fidelity, Panasonic, Pioneer, Project, Quad, Rotel, Technics, Yamaha plus large range of P.A. and DJ audio and lighting, multi room and commercial installation specialists, Home Cinema and DVD, Projection TV and plasma, 2 demo rooms, credit facilities, Visa/Mastercard. Open Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 **BADA**

CO. DURHAM DARLINGTON

HI-FI EXPERIENCE, 17 Coniscliffe Road, Darlington DL3 7EE. Tel: 01325 481418, fax: 01325 382982. Agencies include: Arcam, Bang & Olufsen, Teac, Cyrus, Denon, Dynaudio, KEF, Marantz, Mission, Musical Fidelity, Meridian, NAD, Quad, Rotel, Audio Shearner, TDL, Teac, Yamaha. 3 listening rooms. 3 years guarantee. Free delivery and simple installation North Yorks/South Durham. Opening hours Mon-Sat 9-5.30pm Closed Tues. Home cinema specialist. **BADA**

ESSEX

CHEW AND OSBORNE, 148 High Street, Epping, Essex CM16 4AG. Tel: 01992 574242, 26 King Street, Saffron Walden, Essex CB10 1ES. Tel: 01799 523728. Specialists in home entertainment equipment for over 30 years. Demo facilities in all branches with extensive range of Hi-Fi & A/V products including Yamaha, Pioneer, Sony,

Arcam, Bang and Olufsen, B&W, Marantz, Tannoy, Cable Talk, Pro-Ject, Nakamichi, NAD, Sennheiser, Loewe. Full installation service available. Interest free credit facilities. Service department.

RAYLEIGH HI-FI, 44a High Street, Rayleigh, Essex. Tel: 01268 779762. Arcam, Atacama, Bose, Chord, Copland, Cyrus, Denon, KEF, Krell, Lexicon, Linn, Loewe TVs, Marantz, Micromega, Mission, Miller & Kreisel, Naim, Ortofon, Parasound, Pioneer, Proceed, Quad, QED, Rega, Roksan, Rotel, Ruark, Revox, Seleco, Sennheiser, Stands Unique, Stax, Sugden, Tag McLaren, Target, Van Den Hul, Wilson Benesch XLO Yamaha. www.rayleighhifi.com **BADA**

RAYLEIGH HI-FI, 216 Moulsham St, On-the-Parkway, Chelmsford. Tel: 01245 265245. **BADA**

RAYLEIGH HI-FI, 132-134 London Road, Southend-on-Sea. Tel: 01702 435255. **BADA**

RAYLEIGH HI-FI, at Dansk International Furniture World, Lakeside Retail Park, West Thurrock. Tel: 01708 680551 Open on Sundays. **BADA**

EMINENT AUDIO SOUTH. Are you as happy as C.Mead? (Croft Vitale & Series V) "The transparency, speed, timing, clarity and sheer enjoyment is stunning. I have heard American equipment at over £5000 that does not sound a patch on it" If not, ring us on 01708 751100 or visit the Croft web-site at www.eminentaudio.co.uk

HAMPSHIRE PORTSMOUTH

JEFFRIES HI-FI, 29 London Road, Portsmouth PO2 0BH. Tel: 023 9256 3604. Email: sales@jeffries.co.uk. Hi-Fi, home cinema and custom install specialists. Range includes Acoustic Energy, AKG, Apollo, Arcam, Audio Technica, Audiophile, Beyer, Chord, Cura, Denon, Goldring, Grado, Ixos, Jamo, JBL, KEF, Linn, Linn Nekt, Loewe, Miller & Kreisel, MusiQ, Musicworks, Naim, Nordost, Ortofon, Panasonic, Partington, Projekt, QED, Quadraspire, Rega, Rotel, Ruark, Sennheiser, Sonance, Soundstyle, Sound Organisation, Systemline, Teac, Top Tape, Traxdata, Yamaha. 2 demo rooms. Open Tues-Sat. Free parking, bus route, credit facilities. Winner Sony/Hi-Fi News Best Southern Dealer. Est 1935. www.jeffries.co.uk **BADA**

HEREFORDSHIRE

ENGLISH AUDIO, 37 Whitecross Road, Hereford HR4 0DE. Tel: 01432 355081. Arcam, ATC, B&W, Castle, Cura, Cyrus, Denon, KEF, JM Labs, Marantz, Mission, Musical Fidelity, Naim, Pink Triangle, Pioneer, Project, REL, Rotel, Ruark, Stax, System Audio, Tag McLaren, Teac, Vienna Acoustics, Wadia, Yamaha and others. Single speaker demo room. Home trial. Free install. Service dept. Mastercard, Visa, Credit arranged. Open Mon-Sat 9.30am-5.30pm. **BADA**

HERTFORDSHIRE

THE AUDIO FILE, 27 Hockerill St, Bishops

Stortford, Herts CM23 2DH. Tel: 01279 506576. 9-5.30 open 6 days, 9-8pm Thursdays. Absolute Sounds, Acoustic Energy, Arcam, Bose, B & W Nautilus, Cyrus, Denon, KEF, Linn, Loewe, Marantz, Mission, Miller & Kreisel, Naim, Onkyo, Pioneer, ProAc, QED, Rega, Sony, Tag McLaren, Yamaha. 0% credit. Web site: www.audiophile.co.uk **BADA**

RICHARDS AUDIO VISUAL, 85 St Peter's Street, St. Albans AL1 3EG. Tel: 01727 868700. Email: richavst@aol.com. FRIENDLY PERSONAL SERVICE. MULTI-ROOM HOME INSTALL SPECIALISTS. FREE HOME SURVEYS. Stockists of Arcam FMJ, Audioquest, B&W, Bose, Chord Company, Cyrus, Denon, Marantz, Mission, Moth, Optimum, Ortofon, Pioneer, Pro-Ject, QED, REL, Rotel, Ruark, Sennheiser, Soundstyle, Stands Unique, Tannoy, Target, Teac, Van den Hul, Yamaha and more. LISTENING ROOM. 0% FINANCE. Open 7 days Monday to Saturday 10.00-6.00, Sundays 11.00-5.00. MULTI-STOREY CAR PARK NEARBY. **BADA**

ACOUSTIC ARTS, four demo rooms, 2 home cinema, impartial advice on system building, multiroom design and installation, free parking, home trials on cables, home demos, custom install and after sales service, credit, mail order, 5 minutes from M25 and M1, est over 20 years. No nonsense, just good advice. Call Tony, Kingsley or Fraser on 01923 245250/233011, fax: 01923 230798 E-mail: Acoustic-Arts@FreeNet.co.uk. 101 St Albans Rd, Watford, Herts WD1 1RD. Apollo, Audio Research, Audio Analogue, Audioquest, B&W (inc. Naut 800), Beyer, Bose, Boston, Castle, Celestion, Copland, Denon, Densen, DPA, Grado, Jadis, KEF, Koetsu, Krell, Marantz, Martin Logan, Michell, Micromega, Nordost, Ortofon, Projekt, Quadraspire, QED, REL, Rotel, Ruark, Sennheiser, Sonus Faber, Sound Style, Sumiko, Target, Theta, Transparent Audio, Vidikron, Wilson. Open Tuesday to Saturday 10-5.30 Thursday until 8 by appointment. **BADA**

DARBY'S OF ST. ALBANS, 6 Market Place, St. Albans, Herts. Tel: 01727 851596. Hert's premier Hi-Fi/AV specialists, est. 1946. Full home cinema demonstration suite. Whether your needs are large or small, we stock it all: Arcam, Yamaha, Quad, Denon, Sony, B&O, Pioneer, REL, JVC, KEF Reference, Mission-Cyrus, Ruark, Celestion, Polk, and many more. Free delivery and installation. Open 9-6 Mon-Sat. **BADA**

DAVID ORTON AUDIO VISUAL, 6-8 Bancroft, Hitchin, Herts SG5 1JQ. Tel: 01462 452248, fax: 01462 458424. Stockists of Apollo, Arcam, B&W, Cyrus, Denon, Marantz, Mission, Pioneer, Quad, Rotel, Ruark, Soundstyle, Teac, and many others. Hi-Fi listening room and A/V demo room. Workshop off premises. Mastercard, Amex, Visa, Diners. Interest free and instant credit. Open 9.30-5.30 Mon-Sat. E-mail: davidortonaudiovisual@compuserve.com

KENT

ASHFORD SOUNDSCRAFT HI-FI, 40 High Street, Ashford. Seeking music lovers, male or female any age, to share common interest in musical Pro-aktiv Hi-Fi systems, multiroom or home cinema. Attractive unusual equipment in unusual setting, your place or ours, we guarantee lasting pleasure. Open Mon-Sat, appointment service. Just pop in. Tel:

01233 624441.

BADA

HOME MEDIA, 24-26 Union Street, Maidstone ME14 1ED. Tel: 01622 676703. Open Mon-Sat 9.30 to 5.30. Fed up of not being listened to? Visit a store with a different approach. Expert staff and extensive demonstration facilities mean that the best in Hi-Fi, home cinema and multi-room can be demonstrated for you to make an informed choice. Credit facilities. Major credit cards accepted. Delivery and installation service available. **BADA**

BADA

HOME MEDIA, 6 High Street, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 1UX. Tel: 01892 525666, fax: 01892 527666. Open Mon-Sat 10am-6pm. Knowledgeable, trained and enthusiastic staff who listen and will assist in finding the proper solution for you. Hi-Fi, Home Cinema and Multi Room expertly catered for. Demonstration facilities on three floors! Credit facilities. Major credit cards accepted. Delivery and installation service available. **BADA**

BADA

MUSICAL IMAGES LTD, Beckenham Branch, 126 High St, Beckenham, Kent BR3 1ED. Tel: 020 8663 3777, fax: 020 8663 3555. Musical Images is a main authorised dealer for over 100 leading Audio Visual manufacturers. For multi-room, home automation and audiophile installations plus unsurpassed service, our award-winning stores are recognised centres of excellence. Over the past 15 years Musical Images has established a unique reputation for customer care and we ensure all the latest Hi-Fi technology is on permanent demonstration in luxurious surroundings. Open seven days a week and with 0% finance available (subject to status), to experience the best team in the business, make sure you visit Musical Images. Opening times: Mon-Sat 10am-6pm, Sun 10am-4.30pm. **ITX**

SOUNDS OF MUSIC, 10/12 Chapel Place, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 1YQ. Tel: 01892 547003, fax: 01892 547004. Highend department on 01892 616383. Wisdom, Advantage, Zingali, Primare, Jamo, Quad, Marantz, Tannoy, REL, Magnum, Ruark, Musical Technology, Micromega, Acoustic Energy, Anthem, Audio Note, Pink Triangle, AVI, Electrocompaniet, Teac, Audion, KEF, Pro-Ac, Michell, Copland, Trichord, Thorens, Pass, Lumley, Woodside, BAT, CAT, Osborn, Wadia, Krell, Audio Research and many more. We offer the very best service and advice along with some very special deals. 1 month's trial exchange, good prices and free delivery, the widest range of equipment, systems from £300-£100K, valve + vinyl specialist. All major credit cards accepted. www.sounds-of-music.co.uk

JOHN MARLEY HI-FI CENTRES LTD, DOVER HI-FI, 43 High Street, Dover. Tel: 01304 207562. Acoustic Energy, Arcam, Denon, JBL, KEF, Musical Fidelity, NAD, Pioneer, Panasonic, Rotel, Ruark, Tannoy, TDL, Technics, Yamaha. A/V demo room. Full service department. Mon-Sat 9-5.30. Free installation. Credit to £1000. Mastercard, Visa, Switch, Electron. Established 29 years. Expert advice. Friendly service.

LANCASHIRE

PRACTICAL HI-FI, 43 Friargate, Preston. Tel: 01772 883958. The audio specialist, expert advice, instant demonstrations, best prices,

BADA
BRITISH AUDIO DEALERS ASSOCIATION
the symbol of security

INDICATES MEMBERSHIP
OF THE BRITISH AUDIO
DEALERS ASSOCIATION

DEALER Directory

interest-free credit, part-exchange welcome. Extended warranty. Stockist of Yamaha, Kenwood, Denon, Sony, Technics, Onkyo, Marantz, Pioneer, Mission, KEF, Jamo, Celestion, B&W. Also stockists of LaserDiscs.

TRX

PRACTICAL HI-FI, (also in) 81 Whitegate Drive, Blackpool. Tel: 01253 300599.

33 Knowsley Street, Bolton. Tel: 01204 395789.

84 Penny Street, Lancaster. Tel: 01524 39657.

LEICESTERSHIRE

CYMBIOSIS, 6 Hotel Street, Leicester LE1 5AW. Tel: 0116 262 3754, E-mail: shop@cymbiosis.com. Acoustic Energy, Arcam, Castle, Chord Company, Cure, Denon, Linn Hi-Fi, Linn Knekt, Loewe Televisions, Lutron Lighting, Musical Technology, Naim, Nordost, Rage, Revox, Rotel, System Audio, Tag McLaren. Multiroom Design and Installation Service. 4 Listening Lounges. Finance available. Open 6 days 10am-5.30pm.

LEICESTER HI-FI CO., 6 Silver Walk, St Martins Square, Leicester LE1 5EW. Tel: 0116 253 9753, fax: 0116 262 6097. Website: www.leicesterhifi.co.uk. Email: info@leicesterhifi.co.uk. Arcam, B&W, Bryston, Chord Electronics, Copland, Cyrus, Denon, Greig IK Loudspeakers, KEF, Marantz, Michell, Miller & Kreisel, Mission, Musical Fidelity, NAD, Nakamichi, Nautilus, Pioneer, PMC, Project, Quad, Rotel, Roksan, Sony, Talk Electronics, Tannoy, Teac, Technics, Yamaha, etc. 4 listening areas/rooms over 3 floors, we can demonstrate, deliver and install. Hi/AV and multiroom. Credit facilities. All cards taken, open Mon - Sat 9.30-5.30

BADA

LINCOLNSHIRE

STAMFORD HI-FI, 9 Red Lion Square, Stamford, Lincs PE9 2AJ. Tel: 01780 762128. Aiwa, Denon, KEF, Kenwood, Marantz, Mission, NAD, Pioneer, Quad, Technics, Yamaha, plus all major speaker manufacturers. Expert advice, comparator demonstrations on two floors, part exchange, Hi-Fi purchased for cash. No appointments necessary, home trial facilities, free installation, service department. Mastercard, Visa & credit charge, finance available. Mon-Sat 9-5.30pm, closed Thursdays.

LONDON

AUDIOJOY Co., Now on demonstration as a complete system: new Michell Delphini phono stage, Alectos and Orca amplifiers, P3P7 Harbeth speakers, Clearaudio turntables, Graham tonearm, Transfiguration cartridge, Trichord research transport/Dac, Nordost, Argento and VDH cables. For an audition tel. 020 8363 4963. Enfield, North London.

CHOICE HI-FI, London SW14. Tel: 020 8392 1959/1963, fax: 020 8392 1994, E-mail: info@choice-hifi.com. The most comprehensive range of new and second hand equipment anywhere in the country. Unique knowledge and experience in mid- to high-end systems and equipment matching. Part

exchange welcome, upgrade service and interest free credit available. Home installation and multiroom specialists. Brands include, but not limited to: Michell, Lavardin, Trichord, Krell, Audio Research, Wadia, Musical Fidelity, Audible Illusions, Boulder, SME, Alon, Tara Labs, ATC, XLO, Van den Hul, Bryston, Target, Naim, Quad, Sonus Faber, Wilson Audio, Martin Logan, Meridian. If it's high-end and it's good, we've got it. Others may sell you hi-fi, at Choice we sell solutions.

BILLY VEE SOUND SYSTEMS, 248 Lee High Road, Lewisham, London SE13 5PL. Tel: 020 8318 5755/ 020 8852 1321. Arcam, AVI, Denon, Linn, Marantz, Mission, Naim, Rega, Rotel, Sugden, etc. Two domestic style listening lounges. Appts required, service dept, home trial facilities, interest free credit, instant credit. Mastercard, Visa. Open Mon-Sat 10-6.30, Closed Thurs.

BADA

CORNFLAKE, 37 Windmill Street, London W1T 2JU. Tel: 020 7631 0472, fax: 020 7436 7165. E-mail: help@cornflake.co.uk. Open Tues-Sat 10-6, Thurs 10-7. The specialists in high quality sound, be it for one room or many more. They offer friendly advice, and a full delivery and installation service is available. Two listening rooms with full AV facilities demonstrating Arcam, ATC, AVI, Barco, Bryston, Dynaudio, Mark Levinson, Naim, Origin Live, Proceed, PMC, Rega, Royd, Yamaha and more. Service department. Amex, Mastercard, Switch, Visa and worldwide mail order service. Still the coolest Hi-Fi shop in London. www.cornflake.co.uk.

GRAHAMS HI-FI, Canonbury Yard, 190a New North Rd, London N1. Tel: 020 7226 5500. Winner Sony/HFN Greater London Dealer Award 1986/89/90. "One of the 5 best hi-fi shops in the world". Arcam, Linn, Meridian, Naim, Rega, etc. Systems from £500. Free parking, 4 demo rooms, service dept, open Tues-Sat. Ring for appointment.

BADA

HI-FI & COMPONENTS, 84 Battersea Rise, London SW11 1FH. Tel: 020 7223 1110. Established 33 years. Beyer, Celestion, Cerwin Vega, Denon, Eminence, Goodmans, Harman Kardon, KAM, Jamo, Kenwood, NAD, Ortofon, QED, Sennheiser, Shure, Stanton, Tannoy, Project, Marantz, Vivanco. Wide range of accessories & styles. Appts nec, service dept. Mastercard, Switch, Visa, Diners, Amex, Open 10-6. Closed Wed.

HI-FI WAY HI-FI LTD, 318-324 Edgware Road, London W2 1DY. Tel: 020 7723 5251, fax: 020 7258 1682. Email: Sales@hiwaygroup.co.uk. Also at 242 Tottenham Court Road, London W1 9AD. All major brands stocked, established since 1978, price match policy, extended guarantees, mail order service, home cinema equipment, hi-fi separates, midi, mini & micro systems, portable audio video recorders for home & export, televisions for home & export, full range of video accessories, digital camcorders, VHS 8mm camcorders, video editing equipment, digital still cameras, 35mm & APS photo cameras.

HI-FI EXPERIENCE, 227 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 0HX. Tel: 0171-580 3535, fax: 0171-436 4733. Agencies include: Acoustic Energy, Arcam, Audio Alchemy, Bang & Olufsen, Castle, Celestion, Chord, Cyrus, Denon, KEF, M&K, Marantz, Mission, Musical Fidelity, Meridian, NAD, Naim, Quad, REL, Rotel, Ruark, Tag McLaren, Tannoy, TDL, Teac, Wharfedale, Yamaha. 8 listening

rooms, 3 years guarantee. Free delivery and simple installation (M25 periphery), opening hours Mon-Fri 10am-7pm, Sat 9am-6pm. Home cinema specialist

BADA

MUSICAL IMAGES LTD, Covent Garden Branch, 18 Monmouth Street, Covent Garden, London WC2H 9HB. Tel: 020 7497 1346, fax: 020 7497 9205. Musical Images is a main authorised dealer for over 100 leading Audio Visual manufacturers. For multi-room, home automation and audiophile installations plus unsurpassed service, our award-winning stores are recognised centres of excellence. Over the past 15 years Musical Images has established a unique reputation for customer care and Musical Images Covent Garden has the distinction of being the first Sony ES Centre of Excellence in the world. Open seven days a week and with 0% finance available (subject to status), to experience the best team in the business make sure you visit Musical Images. Opening times: Mon-Sat 10am-6pm, Sun 10am-4.30pm.

TRX

MUSICAL IMAGES LTD, 173 Station Road, Edgware HA8 7JX. Tel: 020 8952 5535, fax: 020 8951 5864. E-mail: sales@musical-images.co.uk. See main entry above.

TRX

ORANGES & LEMONS, 61-63 Webbs Road, Battersea SW11. Tel: 020 7924 2040. Juicy fruit from London's newest, freshest hi-fi/home cinema retailer. Telephone for demonstrations or just pop in. All the usual, ie friendly and efficient service, free home installation, credit cards, 0% finance available, plus all the very best from: Arcam, Cable Talk, Chord Co, Demion, Denon Lifestyle, Epos, NAD, Naim, Neat, QED Multiroom, Quad, Rega, Roksan, Rotel, Royd, Ruark, Soundstyle, Stands Unique, Wilson Benesch, Yamaha with more to come. The innovative AudioVisual retailer.

BADA

THOMAS HEINITZ, 35 Moscow Road, Bayswater, London W2 4AH. Tel: 020 7229 2077, fax: 020 7727 9348. Tube Stations Queensway & Bayswater. Parking meters available. Demonstration room by appointment. Stockists of Acoustic Energy, Bryston, Cura, Linn, Loewe, Naim, Neat Acoustics, Pioneer, PMC, Proac, Rega, Teac, Cyrus, Denon. Payment via Mastercard, Visa, cheques, cash and interest free credit facilities (details on request). Open 10.30am-6pm, Tuesday-Saturday.

EMINENT AUDIO SOUTH. Are you as happy as C.Mead? (Croft Vitale & Series V) "The transparency, speed, timing, clarity and sheer enjoyment is stunning. I have heard American equipment at over £5000 that does not sound a patch on it!" If not, ring us on 01708 755100 or visit the Croft web-site at www.eminentaudio.co.uk

GREATER MANCHESTER

AUDIO COUNSEL, 14 Shaw Road, Oldham OL1 3LQ. Tel: 0161 633 2602, fax: 0161 633 2502. Arcam, Audiolab, Rega, Naim, Rotel, Royd, Marantz, Sonus Faber, Ruark, Epos, Denon, Yamaha, Bang & Olufsen. Free installation. Major credit cards and credit facilities. Open Tuesday-Saturday 10-5.30, 8pm on Thurs.

PRACTICAL HI-FI, 65 Bridge Street, Manchester. Tel: 0161 839 8869. See main listing under Lancashire for details.

MERSEYSIDE

ACOUSTICA, 17 Hoole Rd, Chester CH2 3NH. Tel: 01244 344227. See our main entry under Cheshire.

MIDDLESEX

MUSICAL IMAGES LTD, Edgware Branch, 173 Station Rd, Edgware, Middlesex HA8 7JX. Tel: 020 8952 5535, fax 020 8951 5864. Opening times: Mon-Sat 10am-6pm Sun 10am-4.30pm. See main entry under London.

TRX

MUSICAL IMAGES LTD, Hounslow Branch, 45 High Street, Hounslow, Middlesex TW3 1RH. Tel: 020 8569 5802, fax: 020 8569 6353. Opening times: Mon-Sat 10am-6pm Sun 10am-4.30pm. See main entry under London.

TRX

WEST MIDLANDS

SOUND CINERGY, 37 High Street, Aldridge WS9 8NL. Tel: 01922 457926. Specialists in Home Entertainment. Quality Hi-Fi / Audio Visual / Multi-Room solutions and accessories from Apollo, Arcam, Atacama, Boston, Linn, Linn Knekt, Loewe TV, Marantz, NAD, Ortofon, Project, QED, REL, Royd, Sennheiser, Stands Unique, Systemline, Tannoy. Finance facilities. Free car parking. Tues. - Sat. 10 - 5.30. Web site: www.soundcinergy.co.uk

MUSIC MATTERS, 93-95 Hobs Moat Road, Solihull, W. Midlands B92 8JL. Tel: 0121 742 0254. Arcam, Audioquest, Audio Research, B & W, Castle, Celestion, Chord, Cyrus, Denon, Dynaudio, Jamo, KEF, Kenwood, Krell, Marantz, Martin Logan, Meridan, Michel, Mission, Monitor Audio, Musical Fidelity, Panasonic, Pioneer, Pok, ProAc, Project, Quad, REL, Rogers, Rotel, Ruark, Sennheiser, SME, Sonus Faber, Tag McLaren, Tannoy, TEAC, Technics, Theta, Thorens, Yamaha. Excellent demonstration and home trial facilities. Free installation. Customised multi-room systems. All major credit cards accepted. Full credit facilities available. Tues - Sat 10-5.30, Thurs 10-7.

BADA

ACOUSTICA, 114 Wolverhampton Road, Stafford ST17 4AH. Tel: 01785 258216. See our main entry under Staffordshire.

NORFOLK

BASICALLY SOUND, The Old School, School Rd, Bracon Ash, Norwich NR14 8HG. Tel: 01508 570829. Arcam, Audio Analogue, Bayer, Bryston, Cabletalk, Chord Co., Opera Speakers, Denon, Dynavector, Epos, Grado, Heybrook, Naim, Opera, ProAc, PMC, Sound Organisation, Rega, Royd, Soundstyle, Teac, etc. 2 comprehensive demo rooms. Home trial. Free installation. Visa, Mastercard, HP facilities. 0% Finance. Tues-Fri 9.30-1, 2-5.30. All day Sat.

BADA

RIVER CROSSING AUDIO, The Old Barn, Glandford, Holt, Norfolk NR25 7JP. Tel: 01263 741230. Open Tues-Sat 9am-6pm. Other times by appointment. Leave the noise of the city behind! Our showroom is a converted barn, situated in a picturesque north Norfolk village with ample off-road parking. We are

BADA
BRITISH AUDIO DEALERS ASSOCIATION
the symbol of security

INDICATES MEMBERSHIP
OF THE BRITISH AUDIO
DEALERS ASSOCIATION

DEALER Directory

pleased to demonstrate systems including Canary, Chord, CR Developments, Densen, Fi-Rax, Michell, MVL, Myryad, Rothwell, Veritas Loudspeakers (including the award-winning H3) and many others.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

LISTEN INN, 32 Gold Street, Northampton NN1 1RS. Tel: 01604 637871. The world's finest hi-fi equipment: Arcam, Audio Analogue, Castle, Chario, Copland, Denon, KEF, Krell, Linn, Marantz, Martin Logan, Mission, Musical Fidelity, NAD, Naim, Rega, Rotel, Sennheiser, Shahinian, Sonus Faber, Yamaha. 2 listening rooms. Appointments recommended. Part exchange welcome. Finance available, subject to status, written quotations available on request. Open 10am-5.30pm Mon-Sat (Closed Thursday). **BADA**

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

DEFINITIVE AUDIO serves the first time buyer and the seasoned audiophile with the same high level of care and interest. Our aim is long term customer satisfaction. We achieve this with impartial advice, quality back-up service and a genuine interest in your needs. We have an established reputation for delivering sound quality benchmarks with innovation. Our range of carefully selected brands includes Art Audio, Border Patrol, Living Voice, Musical Fidelity, Wadia and many more. We have extensive part-exchanged stock. Open Mon-Fri 9.30-6.30, Sat 10.00-1.30. Visa/Mastercard /Switch/Amex. For more information call 0115 973 3222 or fax 0115 973 3666.

NOTTINGHAM HI-FI CENTRE, 120-122 Alfreton Road, Nottingham. Tel: 0115 978 6919. The area's oldest established specialist (Est. 1969). Two superb demonstration rooms, easy free parking. Home cinema and multiroom. Stockists of: Arcam, Audiolab, Celestion, Denon, KEF, Linn, Loewe T.V., Marantz, Micromega, Michell, Mission-Cyrus, Rotel, Sennheiser, Yamaha. Mon-Sat 9-5.30. **BADA**

OXFORDSHIRE

ASTLEY AUDIO LTD, 3 Marketplace, Wallingford OX10 0EG. Tel: 01491 839305, fax: 01491 825024. Founded 1975. Great deals on Aura, B&W, Denon, Dual, KEF, Kenwood, Marantz, Mission, Mordaunt Short, Panasonic, Pioneer, Sony, Tannoy, Technics, Yamaha. Home trial, installation and delivery service. Service dept on site. 2 yr guarantee on most products. Interest free credit on selected items. 1 home cinema room, 2 listening rooms. Mastercard, Visa, Amex, Diners. Instant credit. Tues-Fri 9-5.30, Sat 9-5. Tapes & C.Ds stocked.

OVERTURE HI-FI, 3 Church Lane, Banbury OX16 8LR. Tel: 01295 272158. Arcam, Bose, Cura, Denon, Linn Products, Mission, Naim Audio, Quad, Yamaha. For sensible unbiased advice, call Oxfordshire's audio experts. Superb demo facilities. Home cinema, multi-room & commercial installations. No appts nec, service dept, free install, home trial. Mastercard, Visa, instant credit. Mon-Fri 10-6, Sat 9.30-5.30. **BADA**

OXFORD AUDIO CONSULTANTS, Cantay Hse, Park End Street, Oxford OX1 1JE. Tel:

01865 790879, fax: 01865 791665. E-mail: oxford.audio@btinternet.com. Quad, Denon, B&W, Pink Triangle, Krell, Sonus Faber, NAD, Rotel, Musical Fidelity, Pioneer, Marantz, Copland, Teac, Audio Analogue, Castle, Yamaha, Proac, REL. Demo room. Home trial and free installation. Instant credit, Mastercard, Amex, Visa. 10-6 Mon-Sat. **BADA**

SHROPSHIRE

CREATIVE AUDIO, 9 Dogpole, Shrewsbury SY1 1EN. Tel: 01743 236055. Email sales@creative-audio.co.uk, www.creative-audio.co.uk. One of the largest ranges of quality HiFi/Audio Visual equipment outside of London. Arcam, Ash, Atacama, Cabletalk, Celestion, Chord, Cura, Cyrus, Denon, Dual, Heybrook, KEF, Mission, Onkyo, Optimum, NAD, Naim, QED, Quad, Rega, Soundstyle, Stands Unique, Teac, Wharfedale. Large selection of bargain special purchases available on most makes. Comfortable listening room, expert installation (including multiroom and DVD home cinema), free 2 & 5 year warranties, selected used equipment, part-exchange welcome, specialist workshop facilities. Mastercard/Visa/Switch/Amex and low cost finance from £250 up to £15,000.

SOMERSET

MIKE MANNING AUDIO, 110 Middle Street, Yeovil, Somerset BA20 1NE. Tel: 01935 479361. 54 Bridge Street, Taunton. Tel: 01823 326688. www.mikemanningaudio.co.uk. The HiFi and A/V specialists. The best in HiFi from: Arcam, B&W, Castle, Denon, Densen, Heybrook, JM Lab, KEF, Loewe TV & Video, Marantz, Naim Audio, NAD, Pioneer, PMC, Rega, Rotel, Royd, Shahinian, TDL, Teac. Dedicated listening lounge for relaxed and unpressured demonstrations. Home installations on most systems. Full service department. Mastercard, Visa, Instant Credit Closed Mondays.

STAFFORDSHIRE

ACOUSTICA, 114 Wolverhampton Road, Stafford ST17 4AH. www.acoustica.co.uk. Tel: 01795 258216. All that's best in Hi-Fi and Home Cinema from quality manufacturers including Naim, B & W, Arcam, Musical Fidelity, Rotel, Seleco Projectors, Kef, Ruark, Densen, Primare, Teac, JM Lab, Nakamichi, Quadraspire, Celestion and Crimson. We offer friendly, helpful advice, interest-free credit and trade-in facilities, and deliver and install systems throughout Staffordshire and the Midlands. Opening hours Tues. - Sat. 10.30-6.00, evenings by arrangement.

SUFFOLK

ANGLIA AUDIO, The Street, Hessett, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP30 9AZ. Tel: 01359 270212. Hi-Fi and speaker centre dedicated to quality hi-fi since 1971. Open 10-6. Closed Wednesdays and Sundays. Evening and Sunday demos by appointment.

AUDIO IMAGES, 128 London Road North, Lowestoft NR32 1HB. Tel: 01502 582853. The shop for real Hi-Fi separates and home cinema. Refreshingly different range as well as established manufacturers. Hi-Fi from budget

to high-end, transistor & valve. A/V from £100 to a £100,000 custom install. Projection systems, DVD players and movies. Separate demo room, range of credit facilities, free fitting & the best and friendliest service available. **BADA**

EASTERN AUDIO, 41 Bramford Rd, Ipswich IP1 2LU. Tel: 01473 217217. Email: HiFi@eastern-audio.com. Giving sound advice for over 25 years. Parking. Demo room. Lots of free advice. Arcam, Meridian, Denon, Quad, NAD, B&W, Celestion, Project, KEF, Castle, Technics, Top Tape, plus all the usual and unusual leads, cables, stands, racks, headphones, cartridges & styli etc. **BADA**

STOWSOUNDS, Stone Farm, Borough Lane, Gt Finborough, Suffolk IP14 3AS. Tel: 01449 675060 Specialist Hi-Fi dealer with great products from Acoustic Solutions, Alchemist, Atacama, Audioquest, Beyer, Cable Talk, DPA, Electrocompaniet, Exposure, Grado, JM Labs, Kimber, Magnat, Neat, Nordost, QED, SonicLink, Sonneteer, Sound Organisation, Soundstyle, Stands Unique, Van den Hul, other makes and used equipment available, call us for more details. **BADA**

SURREY

COSMIC HI-FI SUPERSTORE, Est 1962, 244-256 Station Road, Addlestone, Weybridge, Surrey KT15 2PS. Tel: 01932 854522/ 832400/851753, fax 01932 832432. Open 7 Days a week, Mon-Sat 9-6pm, Fri till 8pm, Sun 10-4pm. Large free car park, fully equipped service depart, massive showroom. Arcam, Audio Quest, B&W, Cable Talk, Denon, Dual, Jamo, Kenwood, Marantz, Mission, NAD, Pioneer, Quad, Rogers, Sennheiser, Sony, Tannoy, Target, TDL, Technics, Thorens, Yamaha home cinema, widescreen TV, projection TV, Laserdisc. Int. free credit. All major credit cards.

INFIDELITY, 9 High Street, Hampton Wick, Kingston Upon Thames, Surrey. Tel: 020 8943 3530. Arcam, Densen, B&W Nautilus, Musical Technology, Meridian, Linn, Naim Audio, Neat Acoustics, Royd, Rega Research, Rotel, Shahinian, Proceed & more. Single speaker listening room. Appts pref, free installation, service dept. Major credit cards. Closed Mon, Tues-Fri 10.30-7. Sat 10-6. **BADA**

PJ HI-FI, 3 Bridge Street, Guildford GU1 4RY. Tel: 01483 504801/ 304756. Mon-Sat 9am-6pm. Arcam, B&W, Denon, Linn, Meridian, Mission/Cyrus, Kef, Marantz, NAD, Pioneer, Primare, Proac, Quad, REL, Rega, Rotel, Tag McLaren, Yamaha. Demo rooms for Hi-Fi/home cinema, parking, delivery & installation. Service department on premises. Call now. **BADA**

ROGERS HI-FI, (Established 1940), The Old House, 18 & 20 Church Street, Godalming, Surrey GU7 1EW. Tel: 01483 425252. Email: DaveRogers@rogershi-fi.co.uk. Castle, Denon, Heybrook, Marantz, Musical Fidelity, Myryad, NAD, Rotel, Ruark, Sennheiser, Tannoy, Teac, Thorens and more. Demonstration room with inglenook fireplace, coffee on demand, and not an attitude problem in sight! Service department, delivery and installation. Mastercard/Visa/Switch/Solo. Open Monday-Saturday 9.30am-5.30pm, later by appointment.

SPALDINGS HI-FI, (Established 30 years), 352-4 Lower Addiscombe Rd, Croydon, Surrey CR0 7AF. Tel: 020 8654 1231/2040. Linn, Naim, Quad, Meridian, Mission, Marantz, Denon, Ruark, Tag McLaren, Tannoy, Arcam, KEF, Castle, Musical Fidelity. 3 demo rooms including A/V room. Service dept, free install, home trial facilities, appointments advisable. Mastercard, Visa, Amex, interest free credit, instant credit. Mon-Sat 9-5.45. Tues-8. Service dept. **BADA**

UNILET SOUND & VISION LTD, The Hidden Hi-Fi Store, 35 High Street (Opposite Waitrose), New Malden, Surrey KT3 4BY. Tel 020 8942 9567. Open Mon-Sat 9am-6pm. We well appointed Hi-Fi and A/V demonstration rooms. Agencies covering all the best brands available worldwide. Knowledgeable friendly enthusiastic staff. Fully equipped service department. In-store custom cable service outlet supplying tailor made cables to your specific requirements. Stockist of hundreds of specialist cables, accessories, headphones and terminations. Free parking. Interest free finance. All major credit cards accepted. Worldwide mail order service. Part exchange welcome. Legendary Blue List special offers. Full equipment and cable price lists available on request. With over 30 years experience in demonstrating, retailing and servicing high quality Audio Visual equipment, from budget mini-systems to high-end exotica, is there really any need to go elsewhere? **BADA**

SUSSEX (EAST)

ADAMS & JARRETT, 6-18 Norman Road, St. Leonard's-on-Sea, East Sussex TN37 6NH. Tel: 01424 437165/432398. Stockists of B&W, Cabletalk, KEF, Marantz, Meridian, Micromega, NAD, REL, Rotel, Ruark, Sennheiser, Tannoy, Target, Yamaha, Talk Electronics, Stands Unique, Dynaudio, Musical Fidelity, Denon, Dali, Myryad, Onkyo, Aura. Two demo rooms, home trial, A/V specialists. Instant and interest-free credit available. Open Mon-Sat 9-5.30.

JEFFRIES HI-FI, 69 London Road, Brighton BN1 4JE. Tel: 01273 609431. E-mail sales@jeffries.co.uk Hi-Fi, home cinema and custom install specialists. Range includes Acoustic Energy, Arcam, Atacama, Audio Technica, Beyer, Chord, Cura, Denon, Dynavector, Goldring, Grado, Ixos, Jamo, JBL, KEF, Linn, Linn Knekt, Loewe, Miller & Kreisel, MusiQ, Musicworks, Naim, Nakamichi, Ortofon, Panasonic, Partington, Projekt, QED, Quadraspire, Rega, REL, Rotel, Sennheiser, Shahinian, Sonance, Soundstyle, Sound Organisation, Systemline, Teac, Top Tape, Traxdata, Yamaha. 2 demo rooms. Open Tues-Sat. Free parking, bus route, credit facilities. Winner Sony/Hi-Fi News Best Southern Dealer. Est 1935. www.jeffries.co.uk **BADA**

JEFFRIES HI-FI, 4 Albert Parade, Green Street, Eastbourne BN21 1SD. Tel: 01323 731336, fax: 01323 416005. E-mail sales@jeffries.co.uk Hi-Fi, home cinema and custom install specialists. Range includes Acoustic Energy, AKG, Apollo, Arcam, Atacama, Audio Technica, Beyer, Chord, Denon, Goldring, Grado, Ixos, Jamo, JBL, KEF, Linn, Linn Knekt, Loewe, Miller & Kreisel, MusiQ, Musicworks, Naim, Nakamichi, Ortofon, Panasonic, Partington, Projekt, QED, Quadraspire, Rega, REL, Rotel, Ruark, Seleco, Sennheiser, Sonance, Soundstyle, Sound Organisation, Systemline,



**INDICATES MEMBERSHIP
OF THE BRITISH AUDIO
DEALERS ASSOCIATION**

DEALER Directory

Teac, Top Tape, Traxdata, Yamaha. 2 demo rooms. Open Tues-Sat. Free parking, bus route, credit facilities Winner Sony/Hi-Fi News Best Southern Dealer. Est 1935. www.jefries.co.uk

BADA

THE POWERPLANT, 66/67 Upper North Street, Brighton BN1 3FL. Tel: 01273 775978, fax: 01273 748419 E-mail: email@powerplant.co.uk Whatever your budget we can help you choose from our carefully selected range of today's finest Hi-Fi and home cinema equipment. Recommended agencies include Arcam, ATC, B&W, B&O, Cyrus, DEF Tech, Imerge, Linn, Marantz, Mark Levinson, M & K, PMC, ProAc, Rega, Revel, Ruark, QED, Systemline, Tag McLaren Audio, Yamaha. Excellent demonstration facilities, knowledgeable and friendly staff. Multiroom specialist, CEDIA member. Open Tues-Sat 10am-6pm. Late evenings by appointment. All major credit cards. Full credit facilities.

BADA

SUSSEX (WEST)

AUDIO DESIGNS, 26 High Street, East Grinstead, West Sussex RH19 3AS. Tel/fax: 01342 314569. www.audiodesigns.co.uk. Hi-Fi, home cinema & multiroom specialists. Authorised stockists of: Arcam, Audiolab, Cabletalk, Castle, Cyrus, Epos, KEF (inc. Reference), Linn (inc. AV51), Loewe, Marantz, Mission, Naim, Pioneer, Quad, Rel, Rotel, Sennheiser, Sony, Soundstyle, Stands Unique, Tag McLaren, Target, Thorens, Yamaha & more. 3 dedicated demonstration rooms - Hi-Fi & home cinema. Service dept. 0% finance available. 9.30-6 Mon-Sat.

BADA

BOWERS & WILKINS LTD, (Est 1945), Littlehampton Road, Worthing, (near Thomas a Becket). Tel: 01903 264141. E-mail: sales@bowersandwilkins.co.uk. Web site: www.bowersandwilkins.co.uk. 1 minute from A24 & A27. Free local parking. Acoustic Energy, B&W, Denon, JBL, Marantz, NAD, Optimum, Philips, Tannoy, Teac, Technics, and many more in 4 demo rooms. Systems, Hi-Fi and home cinema, DVD and projection TV. Service dept, installations. Open 6 days a week. Mastercard, Visa, instant credit to £1,000 subject to status.

TYNE AND WEAR

GLOBAL HI-FI CENTRE, 87 CLAYTON STREET, NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE NE1 5PY. TEL 0191 230 3600 FAX: 0191 222 0286. Email: info@globalhificentre.com www.globalhificentre.com. FOR THE ULTIMATE SOLUTION IN HI-FI, CUSTOM DESIGN, INSTALLATION OF HOME CINEMA & MULTI-ROOM SYSTEMS, IT'S GOT TO BE GLOBAL HI-FI CENTRE. COMPLIMENTARY CONSULTANCY SERVICE OFFERING QUALIFIED ADVICE FROM CONCEPT TO DESIGN. THREE STATE-OF-THE-ART SHOWROOMS, INCLUDING A SUPERB MULTI-ROOM FACILITY. AUTHORISED DEALER FOR MAJOR MANUFACTURERS INCLUDING ALL THE LATEST GREATEST DOLBY DIGITAL, D.T.S., THX AND EX SURROUND SOUND SYSTEMS. BRING THE BIG SCREEN HOME WITH PLASMA SCREENS, REAR PROJECTION, WIDESCREEN TV'S, AND LCD/DLP/CRT/ PROJECTION SYSTEMS. ACOUSTIC ENERGY, AUDIO ANALOGUE,

BOSE, BOSTON ACOUSTICS, CURA, CREEK, CHORD ELECTRONICS, DAVIS PROJECTORS, DENON, ELAC, FUJITSU PLASMA, HEYBROOK, JBL, JVC, KEF, (INC. THX & KEF REFERENCE), LINN, MARANTZ, MYRIAD, NAKAMICHI, NAD, NHT, OPTIMUM, PANASONIC, PARASOUND, PIONEER, PROJECT AUDIO, REL, ROKSAN, ROTEL, SELECO PROJECTORS, SONY, TALK ELECTRONICS, TANNOY, TEAC, TECHNICS, VESTAX, VIENNA ACOUSTICS, YAMAHA. FOR THE ULTIMATE HI-FI & HOME CINEMA SOLUTION, GO GLOBAL. WE'RE WITH YOU ALL THE WAY, FROM STARTER KITS TO STATE-OF-THE-ART SYSTEMS.

CEDIA

WILTSHIRE

SALISBURY HI-FI, 15 Catherine Street, Salisbury. Tel: 01722 322169/330841. Arcam, Audio Analogue, B&W, Celestion, Chord Company, Denon, KEF, Marantz, Meridian (inc. Digital theatre), Mission, Michell, Musical Fidelity, NAD, Naim, Nordost, Opera, Project, QED, Rotel, REL, Teac, Yamaha. Home Cinema and Hi Fi specialists, multi room and commercial installation specialists, service dept. on site, high quality used equipment, projection TV and plasma. 2 demo rooms, credit facilities, Visa/Mastercard. Open Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30

BADA

YORKSHIRE (EAST)

THE AUDIO ROOM, 2 George Street, Hedon, Hull HU12 8JN. Tel: 01482 891375 or visit www.audiroom.karoo.net. Superior quality Hi-Fi, home cinema and multi-room. Authorised agents for Linn Hi-Fi, Linn AV51, Loewe TV, Cyrus, Musical Fidelity, Copland, Marantz (inc. Premium), Denon, Nakamichi, B & W, Sonus Faber, PMC, Tannoy, AVI, QED, Sonic Link, Ecosse, Quadraspire, Stands Unique, Soundstyle, Atacama, Dual, Project. Open Mon-Sat 9am-7pm (later if required). Credit facilities & home demonstrations available. Free car parking and a warm welcome with impartial advice guaranteed. East Yorkshire's friendliest Hi-Fi dealer.

ZEN AUDIO, 35 George St, Hull HU1 3BA. Tel: 01482 587397. Hull's best Hi-Fi store! From entry-level systems to high-end exotica. Friendly service, impartial advice, home demonstrations, free installations, car parking, and the best range of quality products including...Audio Analogue, Acoustic Energy, Audio Note, Audion, Densen, Denon, Dynaudio, EAR, Graff, NAD, Naim Audio, Musical Fidelity, Musical Technology, Michell, Pioneer, Pro-Ac, Rega, REL, Ruark, Sugden, Teac, Unison Research, Yamaha and many others. Open Mon-Sat. Instant credit facilities available. Feel free to call for more details.

YORKSHIRE (SOUTH)

DONCASTER

THE HI-FI STUDIOS, The Long Barn, Wakefield Road, Hampole, Doncaster DN6 7EU. Tel: 01302 727274/ 725550, fax: 01302 727274. Email: info@thehifistudios.freemove.co.uk. Hi-Fi, home cinema and multi-room experts. Musical Fidelity, Tag McLaren, Electrocompaniet, ProAc, Ruark, Castle, Teac, Unison Research, John Shearpe, Impulse Horns, Monitor Audio,

Harbeth, Alchemist, NAD, Michell Turntables, Nottingham Analogue Studios, Audio Analogue, Living Voice, Exposure, Densen, Lynwood Electronics, Celestion (A Series only), Opera, Trichord Research, Nordost, Stands Unique, Stax Electrostatics, Ortofon, Project, Goldring, REL Subwoofers, Yamaha A/V, Proceed Digital Cinema, Tag McLaren & Denon Home Cinema products, plus others. Viewing and demonstration by appointment. Home trials and free installation on hi-fi equipment. Mastercard, Credit card and finance facilities. Phone for more information. 10am-6.30pm Tues-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat. Closed Sunday & Monday.

THE BADA

NORTHERN IRELAND

ANTRIM

AUDIO AUDIO, Audio Hi-Fi Specialists. Tel: 028 9082 2128, fax: 028 9082 2128. Arcam, Rega, Denon, Sugden, Alchemist, Totem, Acoustic Energy, Tangent, Ortofon, Audioquest, QED, Ixos, Chord Co., Apollo, Soundstyle. Demonstrations by appointment. Evening demos our speciality. Ask for our free customer care package. We can also be contacted in the evening at the above telephone number.

BELFAST

LYRIC HI-FI, 161/3 Stranmills Road, Belfast. Tel: 028 9038 1296. Demonstration and installation of the finest Hi-Fi, home cinema and multiroom systems, including Arcam, Cyrus, Denon, Linn, Loewe, Mission, Naim, Yamaha and many more. Our experience will help you to choose the right system for your needs. Open Mon-Sat 10-6, Late night Thurs, closed all day Wednesday.

THE HI-FI SHOP, Bruce House, Bruce Street, Belfast BT2 7JD. Tel: 028 9032 7604. Product lines include Arcam, Audiolab, B&O, B&W, Castle, Chario, Keswick Audio, Micromega and Rotel. Demo room and Earl Gray available. Service dept, free installation, home trial facilities. Mastercard and Visa, instant and interest free credit. Open Tues-Sat 10am-6pm.

CO. TYRONE

KRONOS HI-FI, 8/9 Scotch Centre, Dungannon BT70 1AR. Tel: 028 8775 3606, fax: 753006 and 19F high St., Omagh BT78 1BA. E-mail: David@KronosHi-Fi.co.uk, website: www.KronosHi-Fi.co.uk. We have one of the largest and best ranges of Hi-Fi and Home Cinema equipment in Ireland. Our agencies include Absolute Sounds, Acoustic Energy, Arcam, Arion, Audion, Audio Analogue, Audiomeca, Audio Physic, AVID, Cadence, Copland, Cyrus, Denon, Densen, Eltax, Helios, Jamo, JBL, Krell, Klipsch, Living Voice, Lyra, Marantz, Meracus, Michell, Mission, Musical Fidelity, Nottingham Analogue, Opera, Oracle, Quadral, Rega, Rotel, Roksan, Ruark, SME, Sonus Faber, Triangle, Teac, Tannoy, THX, Unison, UKD, Yamaha, YBA. TVs and Projectors: Akai, Davis, Loewe, Revox, Runco, Panasonic, Philips, Seleco, Sony. Demo rooms for Hi-Fi and Home Cinema. Free installation, home demos and home trials. Mastercard and Visa. Credit including instant and interest free. Multiroom and custom installation specialists.

Open Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30. Closed Wed. Sat 9.30-5.30. Open any evening by appointment.

SCOTLAND

LOUD & CLEAR, now in Glasgow and Edinburgh, find out more at www.loudclear.co.uk. Scotland's finest and friendliest Hi-Fi stores, combining knowledgeable advice with specially selected products and exceptional customer service. Comfortable hi-fi and home cinema demonstration rooms, dedicated multi-room and home cinema installation team, full service and repair facilities. Naim Audio, DNM, Crimson, Primare, Musical Fidelity, Tag McLaren, Rega, NAD, Marantz, Denon, ProAc, Kef Reference, Living Voice, Ruark, Dali, Monitor Audio, Tannoy, JM Labs, VDH, Nordost, Chord Co, Ash Design, Optimum, Quadraspire, etc, etc. Open Tues-Sat 10am-6pm. Thurs till 7pm. 520 St Vincent St, Finnieston, Glasgow. Tel: 0141 221 0221 and 26 Hamilton Place, Stockbridge, Edinburgh. Tel: 0131 226 6500.

EDINBURGH

MUSIC MILL, 72 Newhaven Rd., Edinburgh EH6 5QG. Tel: 0131 555 3963, fax 0131 555 3964. Audio Research, Copland, Krell, Marantz, AVI, Rotel, Grado, Transparent Audio, Theta Digital, Wilson Benesch, Quadraspire, Stands Unique, Sequence, Target, Ortofon, Ringmat, Michell, Project, Jecklin Float, Crimson, Sonus Faber, Wilson Audio, ProAc, Alchemist, Teac, Martin Logan, Revox, Goldring, Koetsu, Stax, Bon Horns, JBL, Loewe. Listening rooms, free parking, workshop, delivery and installation. Open Tuesday to Saturday 10am-6pm. Call Mark, Stuart, Raoul or Mike for information or directions.

DUNDEE

SOUNDS PERFECT. Hi-Fi at it's best. 26 St. Andrews Street, Dundee. Tel: 01382 266592, fax: 01382 229994, E-mail: sales@soundsperfect.co.uk. Exceptional quality and professional service at Dundee's premier Hi-Fi store. Open 6 days a week. 10 - 7 Mon - Thurs, 10 - 6 Fri & Sat. Demonstrations are available outside of these hours by appointment. Main dealers for Arcam, Rotel, Marantz, Technics, Roksan, Sony, Musical Fidelity, Tannoy, Mission & B&W.

WALES

NORTH WALES

ACOUSTICA, 17 Hoole Rd, Chester CH2 3NH. Tel: 01244 344227. See our main entry under Cheshire.

ACTON GATE AUDIO, 4 Ruabon Rd, Wrexham. Tel: 01978 364500. Demonstration room, installation service. Easy parking and motorway access. Mastercard, Visa etc. See main entry under Cheshire.

BADA
BRITISH AUDIO DEALERS ASSOCIATION
the symbol of security

INDICATES MEMBERSHIP
OF THE BRITISH AUDIO
DEALERS ASSOCIATION

MISSION

Award – Winning Speakers available from:

the audio file

COME AND
EXPERIENCE
HI FI AND
HOME CINEMA
AT ITS BEST

MISSION

THE AUDIO FILE,
27 HOCKERILL STREET,
BISHOP'S STORTFORD,
HERTFORDSHIRE CM23 2DH
TEL: 01279 506576
FAX: 01279 506638
WEBSITE: www.audiofile.co.uk

ABSOLUTE SOUNDS

NAUTILUS ■ B&W ■

ONKYO ■

BOSE ■ MILLER &

KREISEL

BOSTON ■ ARCAM

DENON ■ SONY

CYRUS ■ REGA

LINN ■ NAIM

TAG McLAREN

SONY ■ PIONEER

LOEWE ■ TEAC

YAMAHA

KEF ■ CASTLE

MARANTZ

PROAC ■ QED

SYSTEMLINE

INTEGRA RESEARCH

IMERGE

INFORMED, INDEPENDENT, EXPERIENCE & ESTABLISHED FOR OVER 17 YEARS

Audio Visual Specialists...2 Demo Rooms

SEE & HEAR THE BEST TODAY

• DVD • THX/AC-3 PROJECTION • WIDESCREEN •

• ARCAM • CASTLE • DENON • MARANTZ •
YAMAHA • PIONEER • SONY • CASTLE • KEF •
REL • PRO-JECT • NAD • TANNOY • NAKAMICHI
and lots more

0% FINANCE

AVAILABLE ON SELECTED ITEMS

Unit 35, Observatory Centre, High Street,
Slough, Berkshire SL1 1LE
Tel: (01753) 531785

AUTHORISED DEALER FOR:

MISSION

Fraser's

HI-FI VIDEO



It costs the same to get it right as it does to get it wrong

At the Listening Rooms, we pride ourselves on matching your needs with exactly the right equipment, whatever your budget, and because we only stock the best, that's what you'll get.

What you'll also get is sound professional advice and a chance to relax and listen to some of the world's finest Hi-Fi equipment.

35 years combined experience.
Two Fully equipped listening rooms.
Home installation service.
Multi-room design and installation.
2 years Parts and Labour guarantee.
Home cinema surround-sound
Export and Credit facilities.

0% FINANCE SUBJECT TO STATUS

• ACOUSTIC ENERGY • ARCAM • AUDIO RESEARCH
• AUDIOLAB • AURA • BOSE • CELESTION • COPLAND
• CYRUS • DENON • EPOS • HARMAN KARDON
• JBL • KEF • KRELL • LINN • MARANTZ
• MARTIN LOGAN • MERIDIAN • MICHELL • MICROMEGA
• MISSION • MONITOR AUDIO • MUSIC FIDELITY X SERIES
• NEAT PETTIE • PINK TRIANGLE • PIONEER • PROAC
• QUAD • REL • ROGERS • SME • SONUS FABER
• STAX • THETA • WILSON AUDIO • YAMAHA •

THE listening rooms

www.listeningrooms.com

161 Old Brompton Rd. London SW5 0LJ.

Tel: 0171-244 7750/59. Fax: 0171-370 0192

Monday - Saturday 10am - 6pm.

Nearest Tube: South Kensington or Gloucester Road

Lend us your ears and we'll blow your mind . . .

Arcam, ATC, B & W, Celestion, Denon,
Kenwood, Kef, Marantz, Meridian, Michell, Mission, NAD,
Pioneer, Panasonic, Quad, Rotel, Ruark, Sony, Tag McLaren,
Tannoy, Teac, Technics, Yamaha and more.

Audition the very best at Lincolnshire's
premier Hi-Fi dealer . . .

MANDERS HI-FI LTD.

2-4 EDWARD STREET (Off Pasture St.)
GRIMSBY. TEL: (01472) 351391

Richard's Audio Visual

Stockists of all Mission ranges

0% finance subject to status

"Expert, friendly service" - Listening Rooms

4 Greyfriars, Bedford Tel: 01234 365165

Mon - Sat 9.30 - 5.30

85 St Peters Street, St Albans Tel: 01727 868700

Mon - Sat 10.00 - 6.00, Sun 11.00 - 5.00

Do you want to choose your hifi in a comfortable and relaxing environment . . . ?

Do you want friendly and helpful advice (and a cup of tea) . . . ?

Do you want to buy your system based on what you hear (and not what somebody tells you) . . . ?

Do you live in GUILDFORD . . . ?

. . . or Addlestone, Aldershot, Ashford (Middx), Ashstead, Bagshot, Basingstoke, Bracknell, Camberley, Chertsey, Crowthorne, Cranleigh, Dorking, Epsom, Esher, Farnborough, Farnham, Fleet, Frimley, Godalming, Hartley Wintney, Haslemere, Hook, Horsham, Kingston, Liphook, Leatherhead, Molesey (East & West), New Malden, Odiham, Petersfield, Reading, Reigate, Redhill, Richmond, Shepperton, Virginia Water, Walton-on-Thames, West Byfleet, Weybridge, Windsor, Woking, Wokingham, Yateley?

Nobody else in these areas stocks all the following major brands: Acoustic Energy, Arcam, B&W, Castle, Cyrus, Denon, Epos, Harman Kardon, Infinity, KEF (Reference), Linn Products (including records), Marantz, Meridian, Mission, NAD, Nakamichi, Pioneer, Primare, PROAC, QED (Systemline), Quad, Rega, Revox, Rotel, Tag McLaren, Target, T.D.L., Yamaha (including Home Cinema Systems) & Top Tape.

Visit us first and you won't need to go anywhere else, we have superb demonstration rooms where you can decide in comfort, and we will deliver and install free of charge (and part exchange is possible).

Complete service – We are the only outlet in the area to offer the complete service. As well as stocking selected items from the above manufacturers we are able to service and/or repair on the premises all the above brands (and others also).

PJ HIFI

Guildford's only REAL Hi-Fi shop

“Complete range of TAG McLaren Audio available for demonstration”

NEW LINN
CD PLAYERS
CD12 and IKEMI
on Permanent demonstration

LINN
AV51 SYSTEM
MERIDIAN
DIGITAL THEATRE
&
Arcam/Yamaha/
Denon AV
all on permanent demonstration

We are at
3 BRIDGE STREET, GUILDFORD
(by the traffic lights - adjacent to Yates Wine Lodge)
01483 504801 • 01483 304756

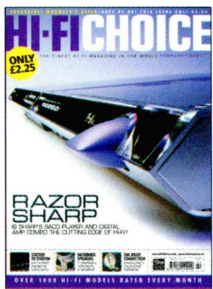
Access • Visa • Switch • American Express • Diners Club • Open Monday – Saturday 9am-6pm (later by appointment)

BACK ISSUES



JAN 2001/ISSUE 210

- Surround sound amps Bench Test
- Multichannel speaker packages
- Subwoofers on test
- Technics DVD-A10: best DVD-A yet?



FEB 2001/ISSUE 211

- Surround sound amps Bench Test
- Multichannel speaker packages
- Subwoofers on test
- Technics DVD-A10: best DVD-A yet?



MAR 2001/ISSUE 212

- CD players £400-£2,440 Bench Test
- Pre/power amp combos tested
- Digital satellite radio for free!
- Sony SCD-555ES: Superb SACD



APR 2001/ISSUE 213

- SACD/DVD-A/DVD-V Bench Test
- Blank Digital Media tested
- MP3 player group test
- Quad valve amps/ELS 989 speakers



MAY 2001/ISSUE 214

- Integrated Amps £500-£1,500 tested
- Budget turntables and cartridges
- Active speakers tested
- The key to system synergy



JUNE 2001/ISSUE 215

- Loudspeakers £160-£500 tested
- High end Multichannel amplifiers
- Check out the best speaker cables
- Tannoy's superb TD10 loudspeakers

TO ORDER YOUR BACK ISSUES

YOUR DETAILS

Name _____
 Address _____

 Postcode _____
 E-mail address _____
 Card Number _____
 Expiry Date _____
 Signed _____

UK READERS

Future Publishing Ltd,
 freepost B54 900, Somerton,
 Somerset TA11 6BR

OVERSEAS READERS

Future Publishing Ltd,
 freepost B54 900, Somerton,
 Somerset TA11 6TB, UK

WHICH ISSUE(S) DO YOU REQUIRE?

MONTH & YEAR	ISSUE NUMBER	AMOUNT

HOW WILL YOU BE PAYING?

Make cheques/POs payable to Future Publishing Ltd.
 (PLEASE TICK RELEVANT BOX)

- CHEQUE
 MASTERCARD
 SWITCH
 VISA
 POSTAL ORDER

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

UK £4 (per issue), Overseas £6.95 (per issue)

Back issues from 1999 onwards are available by mail order. They cost £4.00 (UK) or £6.95 (overseas). Both prices include p&p. Order by phone on (01458) 271147 or e-mail: entertainment.subs@futurenet.co.uk.

We accept Mastercard and Visa credit, or Switch debit cards. Or send a cheque or PO made out to Future Publishing using the form on the right.

If you are interested in a *HFC* review of an older component and the back issue has sold out, we can usually send photocopies of old reviews to any UK address for a flat fee (inc. p&p) of £5.00 per review. You must know in which issue the original review appeared; we are unable to search back issues for old reviews. Send a written request, enclosing a cheque for £5 made payable to Future Publishing Ltd, to: Hi-Fi Choice Reprint Service, Future Publishing Ltd, 99 Baker Street, LONDON W1M 1FB.

PLEASE NOTE: THIS SERVICE IS ONLY FOR OTHERWISE UNOBTAINABLE REPRINTS.

NEXT MONTH...

AMPS - STEREO VERSUS SURROUND

With multichannel music now firmly on the agenda, more and more music fans are wondering whether to ditch good old stereo and go for a surround sound amp instead – one compatible with both music and film soundtracks, whether produced in stereo or full-on surround. But are they any good with ordinary CDs? And what about your vinyl? Next month's Bench Test pits a group of affordable amps against each other, some of them multichannel, others stereo only. Can the multichannel models, complete with extra channels of amplification and complex processing, match the best of what traditional stereo can offer?

CD PLAYERS - MORE MUSIC FOR YOUR MONEY

Continuing our theme of old versus new, does anyone really still want a CD player with all those shiny new DVD spinners oozing loveliness from shop shelves? Well yes, actually, particularly if you care about your music. Dedicated CD players tend to sound better with their specific format than DVD players – our Group Test examines the best of the current crop below £300.

SUPPORTS - YOUR HI-FI STANDS CORRECTED

A dedicated equipment support can do two things for your system. First, it can make a stack of gear look far more attractive. Second, it can help you get a better sound from your system. But which ones give the best results? Tune in next month to find out.

PLUS...

Sony's first multichannel SACD player ... Oheocha Design has landed! We check out their new speaker (pictured) ... All the latest kit reviewed and rated.

HFC 217 • ON SALE 18th JUNE



The heat is on

OLD TECHNOLOGIES DON'T DIE, THEY JUST DON'T HAVE SO MANY GIZMOS.

It's twentysomething years since I last carried out an amplifier group test for *Hi-Fi Choice*, and the experience has been fascinating. For starters, it's one heck of a lot easier to hear amplifier differences today than it was back in the late 1970s. This is presumably because sources, speakers and accessories have steadily improved over the years.

The main reason I got involved in amplifier reviewing way back then was because the consensus in Britain at the time was that amplifier differences were effectively non-existent. It was a view I didn't share, and the marketplace itself has subsequently supported that stance.

Today the amplifier has rightfully taken its place at the core of the hi-fi system, and probably has the greatest sonic influence of all the components, but the late 1960s and early 1970s must have been the nadir of its career. Valve amps had virtually disappeared (I think only Lowther was still making them), and the early generations of transistor amps simply weren't terribly good. They sold well because they were compact, ran cool and didn't need routine maintenance such as valve changing, but not because they sounded better – because, of course, 'amplifier sound' didn't exist!

REVIVAL

I owned Leak Stereo 30 and Quad 33/303 transistor amps during this period, but when I got hold of a Radford SC22/STA25 valve combo around the mid-1970s, I was astonished at how good it sounded. I eventually settled on Naim transistor amps a year or two later, but there's no denying that compromise was involved. The Naims might have resolved a wider bandwidth, especially in the bass end, but the valve amp was very much the king of the midrange.

As this month's group test clearly shows, that same scenario still applies today, though now the differences are a lot more obvious, and there's also many more valve amps out there to compete with the solid state stuff.

The first stirrings of a British 'valve revival' started in the late-1970s. One of the first examples was something called a TVA-1, from Michaelson & Austin. (TVA, incidentally, stands for thermionic valve amplifier, and that's the same Antony Michaelson who subsequently founded and continues to run Musical Fidelity.) Around the same time Tim de Paravicini was starting up EAR, which has probably done more to advance the valve cause than any other single UK company, though US imports like Audio Research and Conrad-Johnson were probably the most important influences in that initial revival of interest in valves.

Things seemed to quieten down a bit in the first half of the 1980s, and then start to accelerate again during the latter half of that decade. Much of the credit for that surge must go to Peter Qvortrup and Audio Innovations, markedly bringing down the entry price for valve amps, and also introducing the single-ended triode variations on the valve theme.

PEAKS AND TROUGHS

Taking the long view, the valve revival does seem to take place in waves followed by lulls, but the significant thing is that it continues to grow, slowly but inexorably, and despite what sometimes seems to be the best efforts of many of its protagonists to keep things cosy and small.

The findings of this month's valve-versus-transistor group test make it quite clear that the valve designs have a definite advantage on overall sound quality grounds. Sure, there are qualitative differences, and the transistorised stuff goes louder and holds the bass together better, but it's the valves that sound more natural, open and musical through the vital midband.

But as long as solid state offers better functionality, combining long term consistent reliability with full remote control convenience, I reckon that valve amps will remain a minority interest. I for one have long been tempted to 'go thermionic', but refuse to abandon a ten-year relationship with the remote handset. Until the valve amp makers make this giant leap into the 21st Century, hi-fi as a whole will be the loser.

Paul Messenger likes his amps like he likes his women: hot, glowing, and with exceptional midrange quality.



“TRANSISTOR AMPS SOLD WELL BECAUSE THEY WERE COMPACT, RAN COOL AND DIDN'T NEED MAINTENANCE, BUT NOT BECAUSE THEY SOUNDED BETTER.”

SONUS FABER

look to the past to hear the future



AMATI HOMAGE



CONCERT HOME SERIES
L - R: CONCERTINO, GRAVIS, SOLO

Sonus faber.

Franco Serblin is too much the artist to settle into a routine, too passionate a designer to sit still. After 20 years, he remains driven to discover better methods for reproducing sound. And just as his views change the way we look at loudspeakers, so has his medium - Sonus Faber - evolved alongside his need to further the loudspeaker art.

His loudspeakers have developed into three distinct ranges - all the better to address the needs of an increasingly sophisticated marketplace. After all, with maturity comes a clarity of vision and intent. At the time of Sonus Faber's birth, there was no home theatre to address, and digital audio was in its infancy. In 2001, the world of home entertainment encompasses discrete 5.1 channel surround sound, purist 2-channel analogue audio, emerging digital technologies such as SACD and DVD-A, and more.



Sonus Faber welcomes the future, yet it shows respect for the past, the most vivid example being the Homage series. This luxurious range consists of the stand-mounted two-way Guarneri and the three-way floor-standing Amati, both embodying artisan skills of centuries past: the beauty and warmth of hand-fashioned cabinetry, wrapped around components which deliver sound worthy of the names of the greatest stringed instruments of all time. For more modest installations, the Signum and the Electa Amator II forge a direct link with the speakers which established the Sonus Faber name. And to serve a multitude of channels, the dazzling, ultra-modern Concerto Home series contains everything from satellite speakers and slim floor-standing models, to a centre channel, to the new Gravis subwoofer.



Whatever Sonus Faber speaker you acquire, whether you are reacting to the looks and finish or the sound it produces, there is only one response: "Che bello!"


HOME CINEMA CHOICE
AWARD WINNER 2001
BEST SPEAKER PACKAGE £1000+



absolutesounds Ltd.
58 Durham Road, London SW20 0TW T: +44 (0)20 89 71 39 09
F: +44 (0)20 88 79 79 62 W: www.absolutesounds.com

bwspeakers.com

Explore the Nautilus™ 800 Series



Alfred Brendel is a pianist with an important international reputation who is renowned for his performances of Beethoven's Sonatas and Concertos, as well as of the piano works by Haydn, Mozart, Schubert and Liszt. For his home listening pleasure, he chose Nautilus 804s because of their superior sound balance.

Call: +44 (0) 1903 750750 for details.

B&W

LISTEN AND YOU'LL SEE