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Perspective
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CANNED MUSIC

**Musical Fidelity's
X-A200
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VERSATILE DIGITAL

**Sony's DVP-S715
24/96 DVD player**



COMPETITION

**CRIMSON ELECTRIC 610C PRE-AMP
AND 630C MONOBLOCS WORTH
OVER £1400 TO BE WON**

CLASSIFIED ADS 6 PAGES OF BARGAIN HI-FI

ISSN 0961-7663



World Radio History

A SERIES COMPACT - SOMETIMES SMALL IS BETTER.



When it comes to speaker design, bigger isn't necessarily better. In fact, the reverse can be true.

Two minutes of a favourite track through Celestion's remarkable A Series Compact will convince you once and for all.

The Compact delivers the same pure, natural sound quality for which the A Series is renowned. The same unerring accuracy, even with the most demanding material.

It's hardly surprising. The Compact uses essentially the same advanced componentry as the acclaimed A1, partnering Celestion's famously sweet-sounding 25mm titanium dome tweeter with a potent 100mm long throw bass driver.

The use of neodymium for the HF magnet allows their acoustic centres to be aligned closer together on the distinctive die-cast aluminium chassis - a configuration which markedly improves definition and stereo imaging. And as well as looking good, the neat, curved edge baffle virtually eliminates diffraction effects.

You hear the difference straight away. The sound is noticeably sweeter, fresher, more open. The clarity, simply astonishing - and the looks speak for themselves.

As the saying goes, size isn't everything. It's how you use it that counts.

Model featured above in Cherrywood finish



Rosewood



Black Ash

FOR DETAILS ON CELESTION A SERIES PLEASE CONTACT: CELESTION CONSUMER DIVISION, DEPT HF25, FREEPOST MA 1332, ECCLESTON ROAD, TOVIL, MAIDSTONE, KENT ME15 6BR. TELEPHONE (01622) 687442. WEBSITE <http://www.celestion.com>

World Radio History

CELESTION

This month's Hi-Fi World, like the Roman god Janus with his two faces, looks both back to the past and forwards to the future. The "past" in this case is that most stalwart of formats, the LP, and the "future" DVD.

In spite of being old enough to receive a telegram from the queen, the LP looks in no immediate danger of popping its clogs in the audiophile world.

There are plenty of companies out there producing cartridges, arms and turntables, and new components can still be found. Project's Perspective ensemble is one prime example. Taking some of the confusion out of assembling a vinyl source, this Czech deck comes ready-fitted with an arm and a choice of cartridges to suit a variety of wallets.

But how can you listen to your black discs in these line-level days? Try Anthem's Pre 1P phono stage, with the oldest of electronics, the valve. This Moving-Magnet-only box of tricks benefits from its parent company's (Sonic Frontiers) love of esoteric componentry and



JON MARKS

offers an ideal match for a capable record deck and well-pressed record collection.

Software for the serious vinyl enthusiast isn't quite as thick on the ground as it used to be in the black disc's heyday of the Seventies, but it's surprising just how many modern releases make it onto LP. And the number of reissues seems to be healthy, with outfit Simply Vinyl (tel: 0171 495 2244) joining the fray. We took a look at their heavyweight Limited Edition pressings of artists like Joni Mitchell and Neil Young, although their catalogue boasts a range of other worthies like Santana, Led Zeppelin and Frank Zappa.

If you play the numbers game,

then Digital Versatile Disc could be the future of hi-fi. The Compact Disc, hailed as the saviour of recorded sound when it first arrived, is now looking decidedly outdated next to what could well be its successor, DVD Audio.

Compared to CD's 44.1kHz sampling rate and 16-bit resolution, DVD Audio's 96kHz and 24 bits look like a much more promising proposition. As yet, few discs which take advantage of this superior specification are available, but their ranks are sure to swell from those we review in this issue, which include the Jazz of Red Rodney (recorded in glorious analogue in 1957) and Rachmaninoff's Symphonic Dances.

Our recent experience with DVD players and 24/96 discs shows just how much CD misses out on - there's so much more realism and musicality captured in the pits and bumps of the new format. On top of that, the best DVD players handle CD better than many CD-only machines, so there's no need to worry about forking out for two separate players.

HOW WE TEST THE PRODUCTS

- *Hi-Fi World* has its own advanced test laboratory and acoustically treated listening room. No other hi-fi magazine has the benefit of such facilities.

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

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



WORLD VERDICT



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



GOOD - Has strong merit. Well worth an audition.



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



POOR - Seriously flawed. Not worth considering.

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Hi-Fi
WORLD

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ABC
Audiophile
CONSUMER PRESS

DON'T BUY IT JUST BECAUSE IT'S BEAUTIFUL



Titanium dome tweeter.



Extruded aluminium cabinet.



Die-cast aluminium top cap.



Gold plated bi-wire terminals.



Audiophile crossover components.

These may be the best looking speakers ever made - but our engineers hope you'll ignore their stunning appearance.

They admit that the extruded aluminium cabinets are undeniably elegant. But they want you to appreciate how their shape and rigidity reduces internal resonance.

And they can understand how you might be seduced by the gorgeous titanium dome tweeter. But they'll ask you to close your eyes and enjoy its remarkable clarity instead. After all, it's thanks to their pioneering work in Finite Element Analysis that the HF response is so uncannily accurate and smooth.

Of course, they acknowledge that people are impressed by the sight of dual sets of gold plated binding posts and massive bus bar connections between the terminals and the crossover. But they respectfully point out that uncompromised signal transfer is what really counts.

At Celestion, we've always been quietly proud of our loudspeaker technology. But sometimes, design genius is just impossible to hide.

AGI-TATING

A newly-formed 'umbrella company', Audio Group International, will now be overseeing the fortunes of JPW Loudspeakers, DC Cabinets, Quale Audio and Audiolink amongst others. Another member of the group, Heybrook Hi-Fi, will retain three of its own directors who will be assisted by more from AGI. The group claims "to allow the unhindered growth of all its subsidiaries". A new loudspeaker factory with

anticipated employment for 100 people is being erected in Plymouth.

Audio Group International
Language Science Park,
Plymouth,
Devon PL7 5HJ
Tel: 01752 607000

NEST OF VIPERS

Two new interconnects and a 'speaker cable have arrived fresh from True Colours Industries. The Viper comes in 0.6m, 1m and 1.5m lengths with a choice of phono, DIN and XLR terminals, all of which are high-quality gold or silver plated. Prices vary between £49.99 and £99.99 ready-made depending on spec. or £4.99/m unterminated.

Although only available with phono or XLR plugs, the Cobra interconnect is made from silver-plated copper alloy insulated with PTFE. Lengths are as for the Viper and



cost between £99.99 and £159.99, or £19.99/m plain.

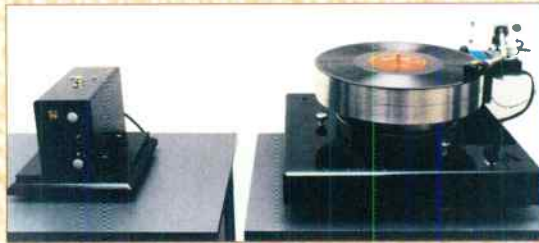
Rounding off the range is the Python 'speaker lead at £4.99/m. This also consists of silver-plated copper alloy and the manufacturers claim a resistance of 5.95ohms/km.

True Colours Industries
Unit A103,
Port View Trade Centre,
310 Road
Belfast BT4 1RX, Tel: 01232 739170

THE WORLD WILL STILL KEEP TURNING

The solid 16kg/35lb non-magnetic stainless-steel platter is one of the most striking features of the Platine Verdier turntable. This French-built design has been in production for the past 20 years but very few have landed in the UK in that time. This may all change now that GT Audio have secured the UK distribution rights from J.C. Verdier.

Aside from the obvious mass of the platter, the turntable has de-coupling of the spindle from the platter, a separate motor with the option of belt or thread drive, 33rpm and 45rpm



speeds and an unusual magnetic repulsion of the platter from the plinth which reduces the downward force acting on the main bearing and is claimed to lower both rumble and record surface-noise. For £3850 the Platine Verdier comes equipped with two arm-boards, one of which is pre-drilled for an SME tone-arm. GT Audio's own spec. 3012-R is available at £798 extra.

GT Audio,
5 Upper Road,
Higher Denham,
Bucks. UB9 5EJ
Tel: 01895 833099

MUSICAL TECHNOLOGY SEEK BROADER CAST

Having spent the past couple of years gaining a footing in the professional field, Musical Technology have decided to turn to their attention to domestic loudspeakers with two monitors and a subwoofer. PM15, the smaller of the two monitors, claims a response +/-2dB between 50Hz and 22kHz and has an 87dB sensitivity with 100watt power handling. PM30, for use in medium to large rooms, has 10Hz extra extension in the bass and, at 88dB, fractionally higher sensitivity.

The PMS70 matching subwoofer with its adjustable

crossover has an unusual elliptical 8in. by 12in. long-throw driver intended to extend frequency response to below 20Hz.

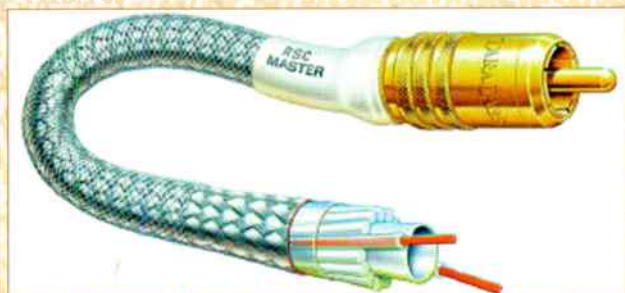
Musical Technology's new range is available in a choice of Cherry, Rosewood or Black Oak finishes. Prices are £450 for the PM15, £800 for the 150watt PM30 and £750 for the PMS70.

Musical Technology
Unit 1, Penllwyngwent Ind. Est.,
Saville Road,
Ogmore Vale,
Mid. Glamorgan CF32 7AX, Tel: 01656 842000

TARA FOR NOW

Sound Image UK Ltd have been appointed UK distributors for Tara Labs and their 'speaker leads and interconnects. Prices range from £1.50 per foot to £2500 for a 4ft. pair of cables known as 'The One'.

Sound Image, 52 Milton Road,
London SW14 8JR
Tel: 0181 255 6868



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acurus

The Acurus ACT 3 is a breakthrough in surround sound processing preamplifiers.

Engineered and made in the USA its sonic performance and useful features are superior to processors selling for over £10,000.

At under £1,800 the ACT 3 is another very good reason Acurus is internationally acclaimed as the world's finest value in audio.

Performance:

DTS®: MPEG®: Dolby Digital®:
Dolby Prologic®: DSP Music Modes:
Custom Algorithms: DC Coupled Outputs:
Discrete Class A Output Stage:
20 Bit D/A Converters for all Channels

Features: Too many to list for the space left!!

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OR YOUR NEAREST STOCKIST PLEASE CONTACT - AUDIO ILLUSION

campaign audio design



Getting a better, more involving sound often means spending a lot of hard earned money. It's such a waste, because every system can benefit from our cables and accessories, at a fraction of the cost of some new "black box". Here are some of the ways we can help.

We have Linear Crystal Oxygen Free Copper interconnects (£12.48) up to High Purity Silver cables (£89.00) and high definition loudspeaker cables in Silver Plated Copper or Pure Silver. Our mains cables add

weight, power and scale, and with non-inductive RF filtering (£10.00) and over-voltage protection (£3.00) enhance performance still further. Gold plated AV cables, both RF (£17.95) and OFC Scart (£19.21), help bring picture quality in line with NICAM sound resolution.

Valves, capacitors and transistors are all microphonic. They cannot perform optimally if vibrated. Our set of three brass isolation cones (£5.00) are worth their weight in gold - revealing low level resolution and dynamics hitherto hidden beneath electronic noise. We also have a cure for your noisy fridge or central heating motor (£3.50), enabling you to throw away your big mains noise suppressor, which has been giving you that "sat upon sound" for years. There's lots we can do to bring you closer to the emotion and energy of the performance. So confident are we, that we offer a 14 day money back guarantee.

Ring or write for details:-

CAMPAIGN AUDIO DESIGN
Llandudno Road (HW)
Cardiff CF3 8PG
Tel:- 01222 779401



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PHONES HOME AND AWAY

A new member of Sennheiser's stereo headphone line-up is the HD 470 Hypermax. Weighing in at 130gm/4.5oz. the HD 470 is suitable for both home and portable use. A claimed frequency response of 22Hz-20kHz \pm 3dB is provided by the stiff, well-damped, double-Mylar-film diaphragms of the long-throw drivers. The headphones are supplied complete



with 3m/10ft of OFC lead incorporating Kevlar strands for extra strength. In spite of Sennheiser's boast that these 'phones are "almost indestructible" they offer a two-year guarantee.

Sennheiser
3 Century Point,
Halifax Road,
High Wycombe,
Bucks. HP12 3SL
Tel: 01494 551551

FIGURING IT OUT

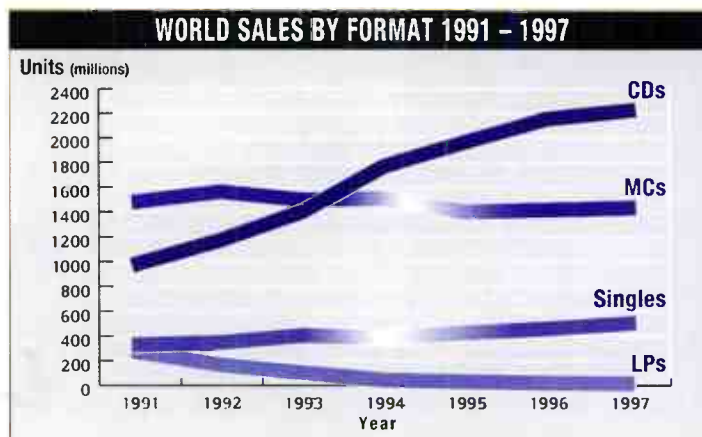
World recorded music sales rose 2% overall according to the IFPI figures recently released for 1997. While CD's market share levelled out after previous years of strong growth, there was no corresponding let-up in the sales descent of the LP. Vinyl is down to 0.5% of the total global market, although naturally there are some local exceptions. For example, LPs accounted for 8.3% of Japanese sales whereas in Canada the proportion of LP to CD is so

low as to be un-representable!

The story changes a little with singles, which make up 12.1% of the overall figures. CD took the lion's share with 80%

but vinyl hung on in with a small but still statistically significant 4%.

The United States remains the world's largest buyer, taking 31.3% of all music sold. Likewise, Japan maintains its second place with 16.5%, leaving Germany and the UK in third and fourth on 7.5% and 7.2% respectively.



ALL ABOARD THE NAUTILUS

Combining technology used in their flag-ship Nautilus 'speakers with their 800 series, loudspeaker manufacturers B&W have come up with the Nautilus 800 range.

The Nautilus 801, a three-way passive design, is expected to tip the scales at £8500 a pair. It features a 15in. bass driver with a paper-and-Kevlar cone, 6in. woven-Kevlar midrange with novel polymer-foam surround, and a 1in. dome tweeter with an edge-wound, copper-clad aluminium voice coil. This, B&W say, is 6dB more sensitive than the current Matrix type.

Of the other 800 'speakers, the



802, 803 and 804 are floor standers with various combinations of drivers. The £1700 805 is a two-way, magnetically-shielded bookshelf unit with a 6.5in. Kevlar mid/bass driver and 1in. aluminium dome tweeter giving an overall 88dB sensitivity. Dedicated centre 'speakers HTM1 (£1500) and HTM2 (£850) are aimed at home-theatre systems.

B&W
Marlborough Road,
Churchill Ind. Est.,
Lancing,
W. Sussex
BN15 8TR
Tel: 01903 750750

MONEY BACK IF NOT XTATIC

For those hesitating at the edge of the high-end, XTC have introduced a seven-day, money-back guarantee for purchasers, if they are unhappy with their new amplifiers or CD players. In

addition, customers can apply for the Gold Service card which entitles them to free-phone technical support and loan of a replacement unit while their own is being repaired. To find your nearest XTC stockist call 0800 195 0603.

CHESKY



Rebecca Pidgeon "Four Marys" (CD)

Acclaimed singer/actress Rebecca Pidgeon takes listeners on a musical journey back to her Scottish roots with traditional songs of love, infidelity, war and revenge. Her crystalline voice blends magically with Scottish music's top musicians. See Ms. Pidgeon in the new David Mamet film, "The Spanish Prisoner."

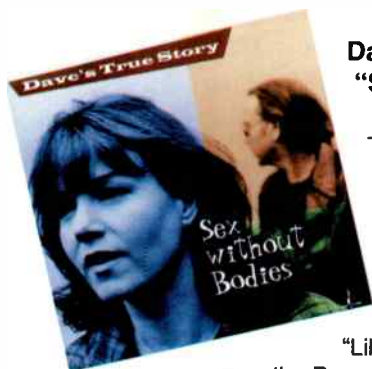
"... delivers delicate art songs and Celtic-derived folk, her arrangements achieving a cool jazz-meets-chamber - music elegance." -- Rolling Stone



Rebecca Pidgeon "Four Marys" (CD)

On this audiophile classic, Ms. Pidgeon's lovely voice rings with honest, unpretentious confidence and vivid tenderness. Features her legendary rendition of "Spanish Harlem" and "Grandmother."

"You want to listen to Pidgeon all night." -- Robb Report



Dave's True Story "Sex Without Bodies" (CD)

This hot jazz/ beatnik/ lounge group creates an arresting world of love, lust and venetian blinds with sultry vocals, ironic lyrics and jazzy chord progressions. Stir up those martinis!

"Like Cole Porter writing about phone sex, the Bay of Pigs and Jackie Collins" -- Time
 Out NY "Smoldering lounge grooves and cheeky Beatnik lyrics" -- Billboard.



"The Super Audio Collection & Professional Test Disc" (Super Audio DVD)

Experience the new audio benchmark with the first original 96kHz/24-bit Super Audio DVD. Features 96/24 recordings of Sara K., Rebecca Pidgeon, Babatunde Olatunji, Livingston

Taylor and more, as well as test tones for professional audio applications. Playable on DVD video machines that read NTSC and PAL DVDs.



Paquito D'Rivera' "Portraits of Cuba' (CD)

On this 1997 Grammy-Award winner for Best Latin Jazz Album, saxophonist and clarinetist Paquito D'Rivera and a top-notch jazz ensemble perform lush arrangements of classic, Cuban jazz songs. Very much in the spirit of Davis' and Evans' "Sketches of Spain," "Portraits" features "The 'I Love Lucy Theme'" and "The Peanut Vendor." "...achieves an immaculate and detailed audio presentation..." -- Gramophone



Babatunde Olatunji "Love Drum Talk" (CD)

The Father of World music returns on this superb-sounding 1998 Grammy-Award nominee for Best World Music Album. Irresistible dance rhythms and beautiful ensemble singing show why Olatunji's music and spirit have been moving the soul since his landmark debut "Drums Of Passion."

"...I stand in awe of the recent Chesky Records release 'Love Drum Talk'...The sound quality is as staggering as the music." -- Fi

For orders and inquiries, please contact:

VIVANTE

Unit 4, 60 High Street, Hampton Wick, Surrey KT1 4DB

Tel: 0181 977 6600 Fax: 0181 977 4445

World Radio History

MORE FROM THE NADDING CROWD

New from NAD is the Model 319 integrated amplifier. Six line inputs feature alongside the company's traditional Pre outputs/Power inputs for bi-amping. The 319's power supply is based on a large Holmgren toroidal transformer in the interests of low noise and the output stage has generously-rated components to keep distortion down.



This allows the 319 to deliver 125watts per channel into 8ohm 'speakers. Tone controls can be switched out for monitoring purposes, as can NAD's 'Soft Clipping', which prevents loudspeaker damage in the case of the amp being accidentally over-driven.

Audio Club
Unit 15,
Faraday Road Ind. Est.,
Aylesbury,
Bucks. HP19 3RY
Tel: 01296 82017

UP TO SCRATCH

Joining Scotch's list of audio accessories are an £11.99 CD Scratch Remover Kit and £7.99 CD Wipes Kit. The wipes, with their spray-on cleaner, are designed for light removal duty of children's fingerprints or dust and dirt, while the Scratch kit is a two-bottle fill-and-polish package. To remove



scratches, Scotch's five-step plan involves forming a mixture into a paste on the playing surface of the CD. When dry, this is buffed off using one of the wipes provided.

Herald Communications
Greencoat House
London SW1 1Dh
Tel: 0171 331 1300

NAKA'D

The Nakamichi service team, formerly resident at B&W, have moved up the road to independence as a separate company. Although Nakamichi no longer make cassette decks, repairs and service are still available for most of the range. However, the following older models are now virtually impossible to save because no major spare parts remain in stock: 250, 350, 500, 550, 580 (pre-serial No. 10101), 600/600II, 700/700II, 1000/1000II. Aside from these,

everything else is repairable, including the 1000ZXL and the 480 and 580 series.

Nakamichi Service
Becket Buildings,
Littlehampton Road,
Worthing,
W. Sussex BN13 1QA
Tel: 01903 695695

IN NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE

BOSTON CR6 LOUDSPEAKERS

At £150, the CR6s from Boston Acoustics sport a copolymer mid/bass and soft-dome tweeter. Could these US budget boxes be the ones to knock Tannoy's Mercury m2s off the top spot?

ORIGIN LIVE OASIS-S TURNTABLE

OL's new £2250 LP-spinner relies on a high-quality DC motor and battery

power supply to keep noise levels low. But can it better the more traditional mains-powered, AC-motor competition?

DENON DMD-1000 MINIDISC RECORDER

Denon keep the MiniDisc flag flying with their £300 DMD-1000. We find out what a 20-bit Analogue-to-Digital convertor and fifth-generation ATRAC

processing mean for the home recordist.

DIAPASON ADAMANTES 3 LOUDSPEAKERS

These Italian stand mounters use a minimalist crossover to produce a claimed 91dB sensitivity. At £2000 though, do they offer a real taste of the high-end for owners of low-power valve amps?

C A P T U R E T H E E S S E N C E

...the essence of a live performance, the passion... the emotion... the sensuality. You just can't beat it!

But you can come close, that's why you own a hi-fi system. That's also why you need to use the very best cables you can afford, because only then, can you be sure that your system is being allowed to work to it's full potential.

We at QED recognise that the only way to ensure the best results, is to **insist on an unparalleled level of signal accuracy**. To prove this, we undertook one of the most comprehensive studies ever undertaken, on how and why cables effect system performance*. Not that you need to worry about the technicalities, all you have to do is enjoy the results!

* A summary of this research "The Genesis Report" is available on request.

For a colour brochure on the full product range call us now on (01276) 451166

QED

QED Audio Products Ltd,
Ridgeway House, Ridgeway Close,
Lightwater, Surrey GU18 5XU

Fax: (01276) 452211

Email: panic@qed.co.uk

Internet: http://www.qed.co.uk

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MARCH 98
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★★★★★

"Qnect 2 was one of the best-liked cables in the test. Qnect 2 fully deserves a Best Buy."

"Great price, great cable, well made. Nifty name, neat plugs. Five stars. Next..."

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MAY 98
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DEMON DVDS

Jon Marks pits Sony's DVP-S715 DVD player against Denon's DVD-3000 in the search for the best of CD and 24/96 replay.



As a famous musician once said, the times, they are a changin'. What has set these changes in motion? One DVD, or Digital Versatile Disc, a storage medium with a large enough capacity to fit entire films onto CD-sized chunks of aluminium and polycarbonate. But video is not the sole beneficiary, as we discovered recently with Panasonic's DVD-A350 DVD player, reviewed in July 1998's issue. This £700 machine could embarrass some rather expensive CD-only replayers with its control, dynamics, rhythm and sheer listenability. And when the source

spinning away inside the transport happened to be a recording sampled at 96kHz with 24-bit resolution, we knew the writing was on the wall for CD sonically. There remained the question as to whether the DVD-A350 was one of many players ushering in a new age of sound quality or just a blip on the graph. To find the answer, we decided to line up a pair of £700 contenders, Sony's DVP-S715 and Denon's DVD-3000.

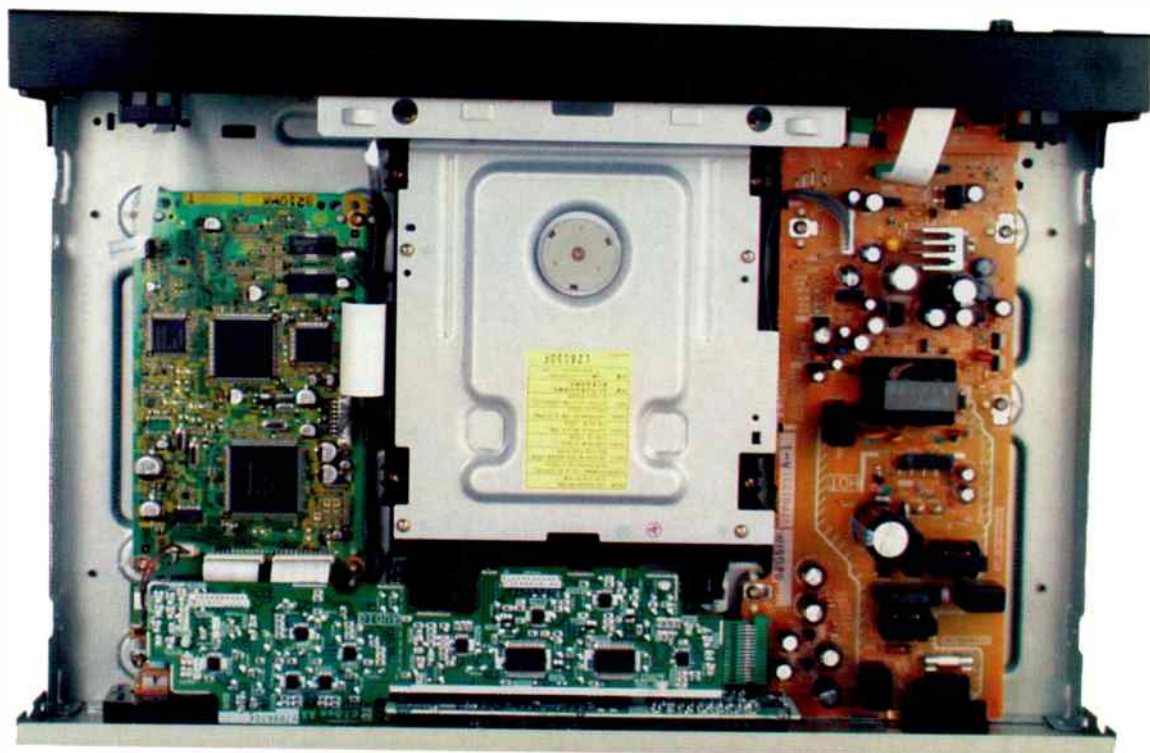
THE TECHNOLOGY

It was a case of déjà vu when we

lifted the lid on the Denon - it's based on the same electronics as the Panasonic 'A350. The two most noticeable alterations are the thick baseplate which Denon have added to stiffen the chassis and the redesigned front plate, that loses the Panasonic's ergonomically appealing Jog Shuffle wheel amongst other controls, which have been relegated to the remote control.

The Sony is obviously not a rebadged Panasonic. The general layout may be similar - the switched-mode power supply board occupies the far left-hand side of the case, the transport is centrally

Inside the Denon player are the huge ICs to the left and rear which decode audio and video signals.



mounted and the audio and video output boards are located next to the rear panel - but everything else is different. The double-sided PCB which handles the main signal processing is screwed to the top of the transport under a perforated metal cover, where the Panasonic's is placed to the right of the mechanism. Take the cover off and you'll see an array of surface-mount chips from manufacturers LSI, Oki and, unsurprisingly, Sony themselves. These are separated into System Control, Power, Audio, Video, Servo and Driver blocks.

Next to the socket-fests that are the back-panels of the 'A350 and DVD-3000, the Sony is more restrained. There are only four RCA outputs (Audio Left and Right, Composite Video and a co-axial digital for audio and video). Two Scarts, a Toslink and an S-Video complete the count.

AND IN THE BLACK CORNER. . .

The Denon put its best circular, plastic foot forward with Gene Ammons' Boss Tenor album on a JVC XRCD. It picked out this recording's smoky atmosphere with ease, the relaxed pace of 'Hittin' The Jug' meandering along where it can fail to flow in a lot of CD machinery. As we've come to expect from JVC's

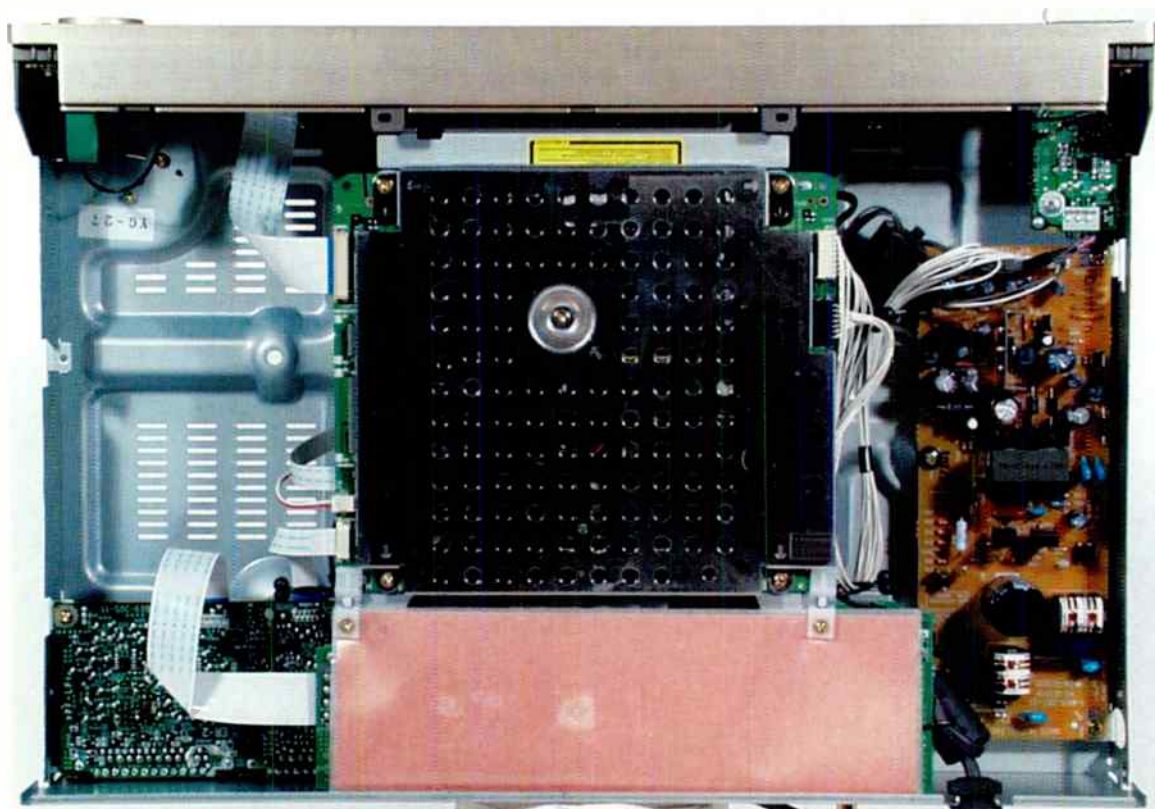
XR discs, treble was powerful and incisive but free from the tonal greyness and spit that so often characterise CD. Ammons' sax showed that the midrange was cast in the same mould, its smoothness and detail portraying all the expression in this performance. With the electronics the DVD-3000 has inherited from the Panasonic, there was bound to be more than just a family resemblance in the sound of the two players. The Denon builds on the strengths of the 'A350 but brings with it a marginally less metallic character in the upper registers and a generally more tightly-focused picture of events, most likely down to the DVD-3000's extra baseplate.

Take a modern audiophile recording like Joe Beard's Blues Union, captured by Audioquest in the summer of 1995, and you'll get an idea of the transparent sound staging and crisp imaging of which this player is capable. Beard's 60-a-day vocals were rooted dead-centre at the front of the broad sweep of sound, out ahead of the piano and drum kit which propel tunes like 'Please Don't Light The Flame' along with a relentless drive which has yet to fail in the feet-tapping department. Again, it's slower tracks where the DVD-3000 really marks out its superiority over

lesser players. When you listen to these numbers there's no room for doubt over trivialities ("Is the bass a tad slow," "The midrange isn't as open as it could be"). Hi-fi considerations make way for music, an achievement most components can but admire from a distance.

If your tastes lean more towards the synthetic than the acoustic, fear not, the DVD-3000 is egalitarian in its treatment of genres. The International DJ Syndicate Mix 2 CD, featuring DJ Cher, pinned me to the back wall with its high-energy beats and deep, taut bass. There was pretty much no tonal colour for the Denon to sink its pick-up into, so instead it impressed by not causing ears to bleed with its treble in spite of the fact that the high frequencies on this CD seem to have been provided by the people who put the sand into 'sand paper'. The Jamo Concert 8s didn't pack the massive punch of an array of 18in. drivers in horn enclosures the size of walk-in refrigerators, but the sense of scale and power was still there in the Denon's output. Nor did organ music trip it up - Martin Sowter at the keyboard of the 1830 Appleton organ in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York proved that much with his Sounds Of Splendor CD.

Having shown a clean pair of



The Sony's primary audio and video ICs are hidden beneath the transport's perforated metal cover.

Denon DVD-3000
£699.99
Sony DVP-S715
£699.90

heels to most sub-£2000 CD players, the DVD-3000 extended its lead with 24-bit 96kHz discs. Classic's version of Rachmaninoff's Symphonic Dances was almost frighteningly better than CD. The individual sections of the orchestra and the acoustic around them were fully fleshed-out, and the unrestrained dynamics meant crescendos lost none of their ability to startle. Brass and strings gained a large amount of the extra harmonic richness which is a vital part of the process of fooling the ear into believing it's listening to a live recital.

On CD, the Denon had been an involving music maker, but this changed with 24/96. Concentrating on review-writing became near-impossible as these high-definition discs refused to act as mere background noise - they demanded to be listened to.

IN THE CHAMPAGNE CORNER. . .

The DVP-S715 evidently enjoyed a spell with DJ Cher, as its beefy bottom end bopped along to the bass of Aquatherium's 'The Struggle (Part 2)'. It also stayed the right side of the treble line, not stepping over into the spit and grain which a lot of players resort to on this disc. The

Seraphim Odyssey's 'Future Shock' went down well too, its spaced-out synths producing the desired up-lifting effect.

The Sony chose the smooth approach for Joe Beard too. His vocals lost some of their innate huskiness and cymbals were softer and less incisive than they had been through the DVD-3000. Partnering this smoothness was a warm bass whose slight looseness artificially enhanced the kick drum in a pleasant manner, even if it slowed tempos.

The Sony fell short when it came to clarity though. Blues Union can boast a sound stage as deep as it is wide and a wealth of living, breathing subtle detail on the best equipment; on the 'S715, there was a veil cast across the music which obscured the acoustic and made for flattish front-to-back sound staging.

When the Sony's time came to spin some 24/96, it demonstrated once more that audio wasn't really the main string to its bow. The Symphonic Dances, for instance, lacked the tonal range and spaciousness which they had enjoyed through the Denon. Dynamics were more sluggish too - crescendos didn't have me starting. In a bright, anaemic system, this would work to the Sony's advantage

though, as its relaxed sound, warm string tone and bass would counteract the clinicality which besets quite a few set-ups to judge from many of the letters we receive. However, if you've got a revealing, well-balanced system, you'll find the Sony's sound staging is closed-in and tends to gravitate towards the 'speakers rather than opening out between them.

Red Rodney's Jazz 24/96 accentuated this aspect of the DVP-S715's presentation as the recording itself is split clearly into left and right channels, and never the twain shall meet in the middle. In its favour, the Sony maintained the bulk of the rhythm in these numbers, although it couldn't match the Denon's irresistible abilities in this area.

CONCLUSION

Aesthetically, the Sony wins out over the Denon. It's attractive champagne fascia stands out in a crowd next to the dowdy Denon. On the other hand, the Denon is stronger sonically with its crisp, clean and involving sound. If your system needs a dose of warmth, the DVP-S715 is still worth investigating, but as an all-rounder the Denon DVD-3000 is the one to go for ●

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

Sony
The Heights,
Brooklands,
Weybridge,
Surrey KT13 0XW
Tel: 01932 816000

WORLD VERDICT



DENON DVD-3000

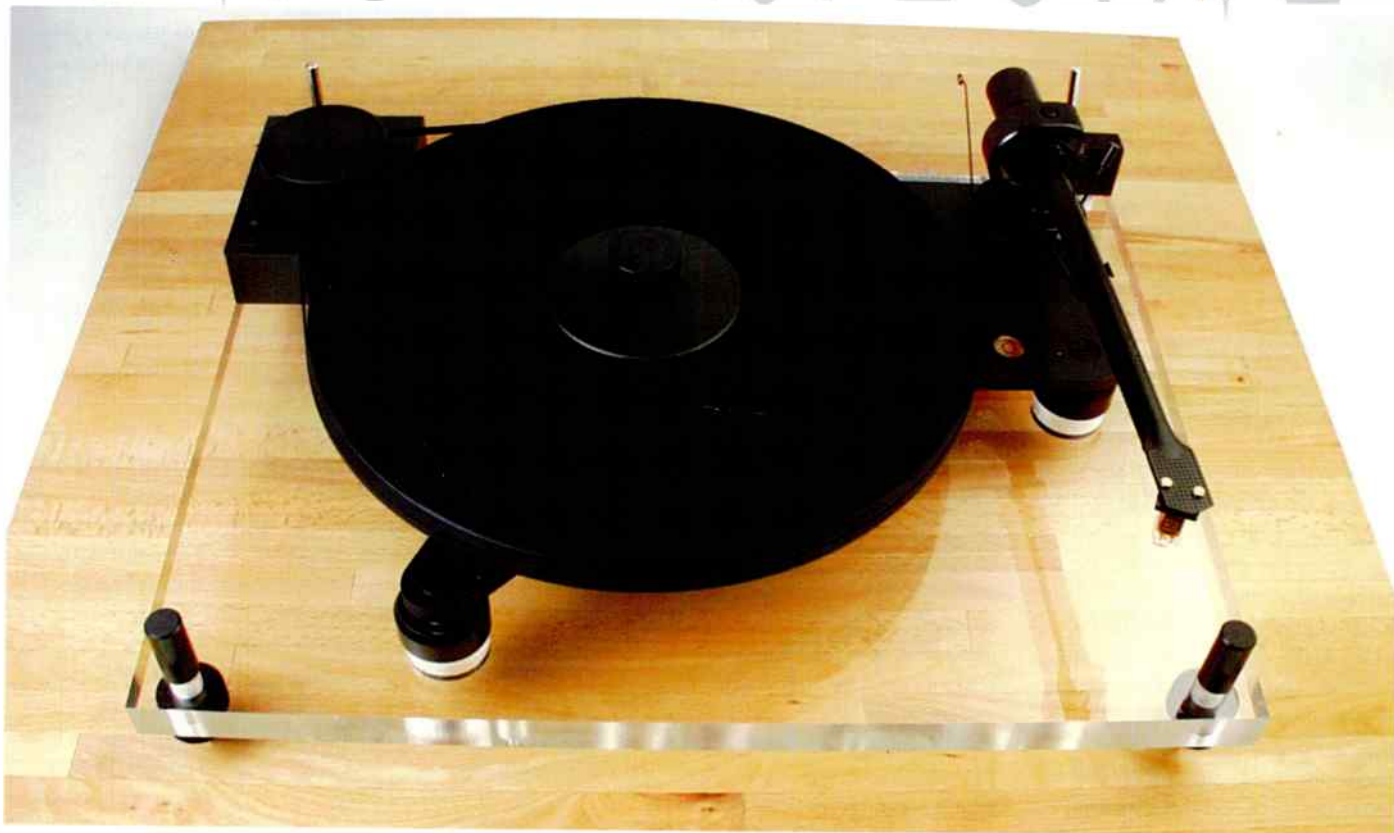
The Denon is a fine performer with CD and better still with 24/96.



SONY DVP-S715

The Sony is warm and smooth but lacks clarity and precision.

INTO PERSPECTIVE



Jon Marks turns to LP with Pro-ject's latest arm and turntable combo, the attractively acrylic Perspective.

Sometimes it's hard to believe that new turntables are still being built at a time when 96kHz 24-bit recordings can be bought from specialist music shops. But, thank vinyl, they are, and one of those companies sticking by the grandfather of formats is Pro-ject, whose wares have impressed us in previous issues (see September 1994, July 1995 and June 1997). Their new deck on the block is the Perspective.

THE TECHNOLOGY

The core of the Perspective is a 20mm-thick slab of polished acrylic. Not only does it look fine, but as other turntable manufacturers like Michell and Pink Triangle have

discovered, it sounds good too. Sitting atop this are the turntable's two main parts, the sub-chassis and the motor.

MOTIVATION

There are three or four different schools of thought when it comes to making your platter rotate. The commonest holds that an AC synchronous motor with a stepped pulley for 33rpm and 45rpm suffices. Then there are the outboard PSU followers who achieve speed change by varying the frequency of the supply voltage to said AC device. A smaller group, albeit one whose numbers are growing, is the DC lot. Here, simply raising or lowering a DC voltage alters

the speed. Finally, there's an off-shoot from the first band which, like Pro-ject, prefers to change the motor altogether when switching between albums and singles.

If you swap from 33rpm to 45rpm on a regular basis, you might find the Perspective a bit of a chore - getting under the plinth to the large thumbwheel which holds the motor block in place can be fiddly.

PLATTER MATTERS

Isolating the sub-chassis from external noise are the three springs it sits on. These are bolted to the sub-chassis along with the bearing and arm, which is Pro-ject's own. A spirit level is fitted too, but we found this

inaccurate; get a second opinion from a decent straight or circular level which DIY shops and Maplin sell.

If you're happily putting the Perspective together without having read the manual (I plead guilty, m'lud), you might come to the conclusion that the belt's too long - it refuses to wrap around the plastic sub-platter. No surprise really though, as the Perspective differs from Pro-ject's other decks in driving the main platter around its rim.

At this point, acrylic puts in another appearance - a sheet of it is bonded to the aluminium platter to damp its natural tendency to ring like a bell and it works rather effectively. Pro-ject supply a felt mat to finish off the package, although I have to say that we got much better results with records clamped directly to the bare acrylic without the intervention of the felt.

By the way, the clamp isn't the best in the business. Screw it down with little more than moderate pressure and the edges of your LPs will lift up. The remedy is simple. As VPI do with the Junior, drop a rubber washer (about 2mm thick and around 25mm in diameter) over the Pro-ject's threaded spindle, so discs are gently bent over it as you clamp them.

Taking the head-scratching out of the record-player buying process is the fact that the Perspective comes with its own arm bolted to the sub-chassis. A one-piece arm-tube with an integral headshell is claimed to offer superior sound quality to alternatives that are either screwed or glued on. But if you're expecting SME-style casting, you'll be disappointed - Pro-ject's arm is a plain tube with a headshell formed by squashing one end.

Another let-down were arm-height adjustment and cartridge alignment. Henley Designs, who are Pro-ject's UK distributors, are offering Ortofon's MC 25 FL, MC 30 Supreme and Rohmann cartridges with the deck at total prices of £1000, £1250 and £1500 respectively. (The Perspective and arm alone will go for £900). With the MC 30 Supreme in place, the arm had to be lowered as far as it would go to get the cartridge parallel to the record surface, thereby leaving no room for experimentation. And we couldn't get the alignment 100% spot-on because the mounting holes cut in the headshell weren't long enough. Still,

ours was the very first Perspective off the production line and Henley have said they'll look into these problems.

Once the Perspective had been readied for action with an MC 30 Supreme, its detachable (and upgradable) lead-outs

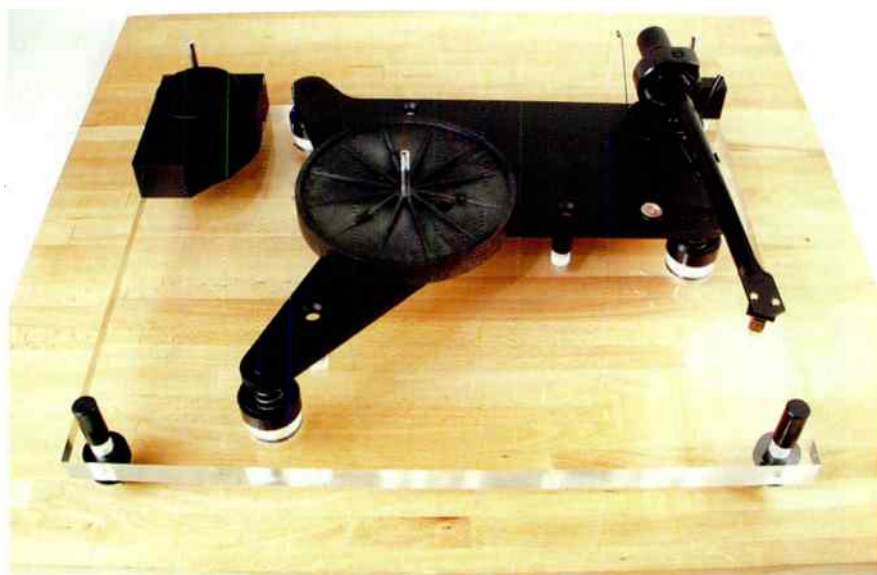
were hooked up to an Audio Analogue Puccini SE integrated as well as Sonic Frontiers' Phono 1 hybrid phono stage, Assemblage's L-1 kit pre-amp and the power stage of Musical Fidelity's A1001 amp. Loudspeakers came from Jamo (Concert 8) and ProAc (Tablette 50).

SOUND QUALITY

With a little light listening courtesy of Skunk Anansie, the Perspective swung into action, and "swung" is the right word here, as rhythms were this deck's forte. Whether the tempo was manic Metal or contemplative crooning didn't matter, the music's timing ingredients were never undercooked - the Pro-ject pulled off 'Yes It's F**king Political' just as well as it did 'She's My Heroine'.

Dodgy's Free Peace Sweet went the same way, 'In A Room' blasting out of the grooves with genuine funky drive. In other areas this arm/turntable combination was less convincing though. Take the frequency extremes, for example. Both bass and treble sounded as if they had been rolled off slightly, to give a presentation that favoured the midrange. A quick check on the Phono 1's cartridge loading (and the tracking and bias settings on the arm) showed the problems lay elsewhere.

Unclamping Dodgy I tried an original pressing of Kate Bush's Kick Inside album. Again, the involvement factor was high but the filtering effect on the bass and treble



The sub-chassis sits on three springs whose movements can be damped with a silicon bath to the right of the bearing.

diluted dynamic swings and sapped the slam and impact of drums. The midrange was at least crisp and incisive on vocals and did full justice to Bush's warblings on 'James And The Cold Gun'.

Still, the overall results given a purchase price of £1250 were disappointing. Cheaper vinyl front-ends, like VPI's aforementioned Junior, and especially Pink Triangle's Tarantella, will both outperform the Perspective when fitted with Rega's RB300, Origin Live modified or not. Place a slab of Classical onto the Pro-ject, put needle to groove and the sound stage fails to blossom between and around the loudspeakers as it can so beguilingly on capable turntables. Choral pieces also demonstrated that cartridges fixed to the end of that arm didn't track quite as securely as they do in the Pink and VPI, producing a slightly edgy feeling on louder passages. Experimentation with clamping pressure and the silicone bath which damps the sub-chassis' movements can yield rewards, but don't radically improve the sound.

The Perspective doesn't live up to the promise of the rest of Pro-ject's turntables, which make strong cases for themselves at very reasonable prices. Instead, it majors on involvement at the expense of transparency, bass weight and solidity. There wouldn't be a lot wrong with this recipe if it came with a smaller price tag, but against the Tarantella and Junior the Perspective looks expensive ●

Pro-ject Perspective
£900 (w/o cartridge)
£1250 (MC 30 Supreme)

Henley Designs
The Old Coach House,
The Street,
Crowmarsh Gifford,
Wallington,
Oxon. OX10 8EH
Tel: 01491 834700

WORLD VERDICT



Aesthetically, the Perspective is a winner, but better sound can be had from cheaper decks.

If you've spent the
winter (or the summer,
for that matter)
trying to warm
your digits, here's
analogue
for the fire



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World Radio History

PERENNIAL PRESSINGS

Jon Marks checks out the wares of new vinyl re-issue company, Simply Vinyl.

One of the areas where vinyl lives on, apart from Dance labels pressing up 12ins. for DJs, is re-issues. Names like Audiophile International, Mobile Fidelity, DCC Compact Classics and others might be familiar, but Simply Vinyl probably won't.

After a year and a half of dipping toe in water and investigating which countries were still buying LPs, this British outfit released their first discs back in November 1997. Almost 99% of their LPs go overseas (predominantly to the States and Japan), but plans are afoot to introduce their catalogue to 15 of the larger HMV shops as well as 200-300 of the small independent retailers who have stuck by the black stuff through thick and thin.

25 titles make up their catalogue at the moment, and five more were released last month. Like EMI with their Centenary Series, Simply Vinyl (tel: 0171 495 2244) make no claims to audiophile quality, but we thought we'd find out what their pressings offer vinylists.



NEIL YOUNG
AFTER THE GOLD RUSH
SVLP 0023

My copy of this album has had a rather hard life - it looks as if some one has tried to remove the dust and fluff from its grooves with a handful of sharp gravel. With a good stylus, though, you can still get at the real music below the damage and savour its warmth and spaciousness. Playing the Simply Vinyl copy, it was refreshing to hear 'Crippled Creek Ferry' and 'When You Dance I Can Really Live' without background accompaniment a la breakfast cereal. In fact, surface noise on this copy was very low indeed - the most obtrusive noise was the hiss of the master tape.

There were no pressing problems like swoosh, clicks or pops to mar the music on this LP. The overall sound was crisp, clear and open although it lacked some of the warmth and sweetness of the original - cymbals for instance lost a little of their golden shimmer. Add to this a well-printed gatefold sleeve and an asking price of £17 looks fair, even if it is more expensive than EMI's Centenary Series of re-issues.



JONI MITCHELL
BLUE
SVLP0018

Unfortunately this pressing suffered from occasional background noise, mainly the odd click and pop, and from that point of view was a touch disappointing compared to the other two discs here. Still, there was a hefty 180gms of very flat vinyl and nicely-spaced grooves which boded well for sound quality.

Played on a Garrard 401 turntable with an SME 309 tone-arm and Ortofon Rohmann cartridge going through a Sonic Frontiers Phono 1 phono stage, Assemblage L-1 pre-amp and the power amps of Musical Fidelity's A1001, classics like 'Blue' enjoyed a fresh, detailed and musical presentation, which was only let down by that surface noise.



SANTANA
ABRAXAS
SVLP 0019

There's no doubting this re-issue has captured much of the outrageous drive and funk of the old Abraxas. 'Black Magic Woman/Gypsy Queen' have bags of get-up-and-go, and 'Oye Como Va' is rhythmically unstoppable.

Simply Vinyl's version produced a broad, deep sound stage and crisp imaging. As with the Neil Young, surface noise was low and, once again, some of the warmth and atmosphere of the original have been lost in the translation. The end results are still very 'air-guitar' listenable though.

SOFTWARE SAMPLING

If silver discs rather than black light your fire,
but CD doesn't hit the mark, there's always 24/96.

The storm clouds of a format war are gathering on the horizon. The world of hi-fi has weathered a few of these in the past - the list includes Philips' Digital Compact Cassette vs MiniDisc, and the long-lived Compact Cassette vs Sony's superb but ill-fated Elcaset. This time around, Sony and Philips are on the same side in backing their Super Audio CD against the 24-bit 96kHz sampling beloved of the Acoustic Renaissance for Audio.

The battle lines are being drawn. In Sony and Philips' favour is their ownership of a large number of record labels, which gives them a certain clout - if they want to push a format, they don't have to worry about record business wrangles. Working against them is the fact that the current estimated time of arrival for SACD players and software is the end of this year.

The roles reverse for 24/96 - you can buy titles and replay machinery now, but there's somewhat less muscle behind this format. The main impetus for its adoption by the music industry is that it's a Pulse-Code Modulation system, and studios everywhere are geared to PCM operation. A switch to Sony's Direct Stream Digital as used on Super Audio Compact Disc would entail a change of machinery and lots of expense.

In the meantime, if you have a DVD player like those tested in this issue and the last, you may well be getting very impressive sound from your CDs, but what about putting those 24/96 DACs to good use? Building up a collection of 24/96 recordings at £25 a time is going to be a more expensive business than with CD, so here we take a look at what you can expect from new 24/96 releases.

The recordings (from Vivante, tel: 0181 977 6600) were auditioned on Denon's DVD-3000, Assemblage's L-1 pre-amp and MF's A1001 integrated amp's power section. An Audio Analogue Puccini SE was also used to drive Jamo's Concert 8 loudspeakers. They were compared to excerpts of the same music sampling down-converted from 24/96 to 16/44.1 on a standard CD.

RACHMANINOFF
SYMPHONIC DANCES/VOCALISE FOR ORCHESTRA
CLASSIC DAD 1004

You might not get a lot of minutes for your money (just over 40), but it's quality and not quantity with this disc. The recording was made in 1967 through four special ribbon microphones and onto a modified reel-to-reel tape machine running at 30ips, so the 24/96 has a lot to live up to.

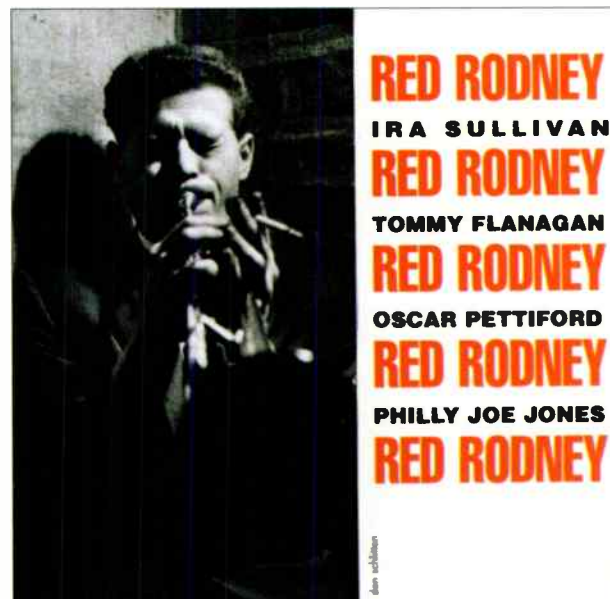
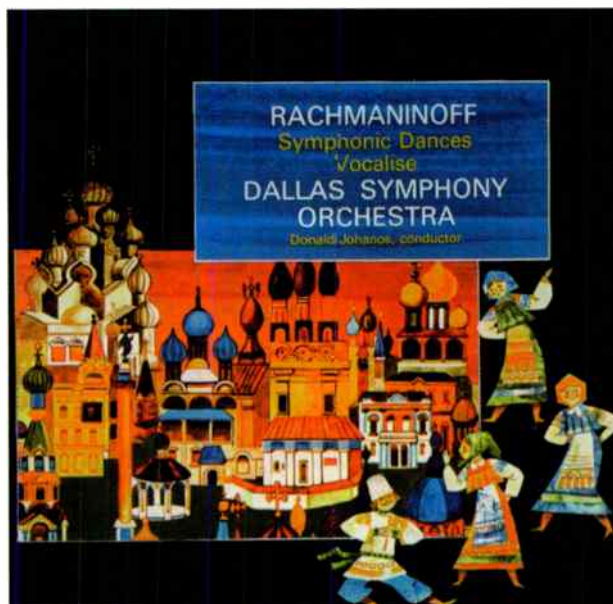
The Denon revealed just how rich a tonal range this disc has, with strings sounding much more natural and vibrant than on the CD version. Brass had bite and rasp

without going too far towards the sharpness which CD introduces. Sound staging was far more open too, with the orchestra clearly arrayed behind the Jamos.

Switch back to CD and you'll soon hear what you're missing. Images become blurred around their edges and the sound stage's depth foreshortened noticeably. The midrange and treble were harder and more tonally restricted too. Then there was a feeling that the music just didn't flow as naturally as it had on 24/96, as scale diminished and dynamic contrasts were squashed.

RED RODNEY
1957
CLASSIC DAD 1003

This is another 'mature' recording, dating as it does from 1957. Like the Rachmaninoff, in 24/96 form it has a clarity and natural ease to its sound which 16/44.1 lacks. Unfortunately, where the classical disc painted a broad sound stage, Red Rodney had a habit of sticking firmly to left and right without really filling in the centre. This is a trait of the CD copy too, so the root cause of this would seem to lie in the master tape. This disc pulls ahead with the other 24/96 bonuses though, particularly tonal colour on Red Rodney's trumpet and Ira Sullivan's tenor sax.



*The alphabet according to
Musical Fidelity.*



X10D Class A
Tube Line Stage



X CANS Class A
Tube Headphone Amplifier



X DAC New Technology
HDCCD DAC



XLP Low Noise
MC/MM Phone Stage



X PRE Class A
Tube Preamplifier



X PSU Add on Power Supply
for all X Series



X TONE
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World Radio History

In the first of a two-part feature, David Price looks at the very latest Japanese CD players, MiniDisc recorders and DAT decks.

ORIENT EXPRESS

MINIDISC

Four years after Nakamichi pulled out of cassette decks, Philips' old format is almost extinct in Japan. In fact, it's easier to buy a DAT recorder than a cassette deck now, such has been the format's demise. In its place is MiniDisc, which is now all-conquering. MD is everywhere - from cheap portables, Mini systems and car players to serious high-end recorders. Here are some of the latter:



JVC XM-V1-N

Curiously, JVC's high-end hi-fi range sells under the HMV brand in Japan, and this oddly-styled machine is one such example of the breed. Inside we find a braced and heavily copper-plated chassis and rear panel for improved shielding, a vibration-reducing, one-piece front panel and top plate and a fourth-generation ATRAC chip with 20-bit ADC and DAC. Cost is Y168,000 (£775) - a lot of money but it's undeniably well made.

DENON DMD-1800AL-N

The top of Denon's latest range features ATRAC 4, Alpha Processing and a 20-bit 8-times oversampling digital filter. Solid build is also in evidence, and selected audio-grade capacitors and resistors are used. Sound is good, but not quite as sweet and smooth as the higher-end Sony MDs. Still, you get a lot for your Y108,000 (£500), making it fine value.



ONKYO MD-125N

Value for money is the key to Onkyo's top MiniDisc separate. Just Y75,000 (£345) buys you a large, champagne-gold finished machine with ATRAC 4 and the usual wide variety of facilities. Because of its large size and lowish price, some cost cutting is evident. It doesn't sound half bad, with an up-front and engaging sound, but Sony and Kenwood decks are smoother.



KENWOOD DMF-7002SG

Possibly the finest sounding Mini MD player around at the moment, this little 270mm-wide design features most of the goodies of Kenwood's full-size machines, including the latest and greatest ATRAC 4.5 and the hi-bit D.R.I.V.E. DSP. There's also a sampling-rate convertor for recording from digital TV or DAT sources, and a natty set of sculpted wood side cheeks! Price is Y95,000 (£440).



SONY MDS-PC1

Sony haven't been slow to get their top ES MD separates

to Europe, but there are still some very interesting designs that have yet to venture outside Japan. The heavily TV-advertised MDS-PC1 features a special link which connects to a computer via an RS232 interface. You then load up the supplied 'MD Editor' software (bundled on a CD-ROM for both Windows 95 and Apple Macs), plug the link into the MDS-PC1's front-panel 'Control A1' socket and hey presto, you've got full software control of your MD player. Extensive editing and titling facilities are available (track label, divide, combine, erase, move, undo, etc) from your computer keyboard, making it a dream come true for music archivists.

What the link system doesn't do is give you access to the player's operating system. This would allow you to manipulate MD data on your computer's hard drive, making it immensely powerful and tweakable. Still, it's a fascinating development and not a bad sounding player either with its ATRAC 4 architecture. Price is Y54,000 (£250).

COMPACT DISC

The market for CD separates seems to be very slightly on the wane in Japan, doubtless because the spotlight has shifted to MiniDisc. But there are still loads of great players, with a high-end sector that British audiophiles could only dream about.

DENON DCD-AS10N-II



Denon's latest 'S10 one-box silver-disc spinner looks a tempting proposition, not least because it recently won 'Sound Pal' magazine's 'Sound of the Year' award. Although not stratospherically expensive at Y190,000 (£865) it enjoys the (14kg) battleship build of its pricier brethren, including separate power transformers for audio and digital circuits, extensive internal copper shielding, trick capacitors and special decoupling feet. There's also a 20-bit Alpha Processing DAC, an 'SVH Double Metal Guide Loader' (or metal disc tray to you and me) and 'SVH Suppress Vibration Hybrid' (rubber anti-vibration damping), so it's got all the acronyms you'll ever need! Sound is clean, clear and musical.



JVC XL-Z999

Top-loading CD players are all the rage in Japan right now, and JVC can justifiably lay claim to have started the trend with the Y550,000 (£2550) XL-Z999. An imposing device with a centrally-mounted transport complete with

its own dinky little disc clamp, it's a sweet sounding machine capable of superb sound staging. Maybe it's down to the dual 20-bit 'K2 Processing' DACs, which also accept digital signals from external sources switched from the front panel. Or maybe it's the special high-torque motor in the transport that looks like it's come out of a JCB. Either way, it's a nice machine.



PIONEER PD-T07HS LIMITED

Pioneer's sales brochure for the T07 resembles the car windscreens in Arthur Daley's used-car lot - it's festooned with little boxes listing special features. But rather than 'Rear Wash-Wipe' we get 'CD Turntable Mechanism' and 'Hi-bit Legato Link Conversion S'. The latest 24-bit Legato system certainly seems more consistent than earlier incarnations, with a more consistent treble quality. The new turntable mechanism built into the disc loading tray looks great - not unlike a miniature Michell Hydraulic Reference's platter - but whether it works better is anyone's guess. Sound is very good for the Y220,000 (£1010) asking price, but not quite the best.



PIONEER PD-UK3

In the PD-UK3's brochure is a signed photo of John Bamford, PR supremo for Pioneer UK. Beneath is a little piece of his talking about the philosophy behind the 'UK tuned' PD-UK3, in which he writes "simple is best". What then does that say about Pioneer's Japanese players which have every bell, whistle and signal processing trick in the book? Oops. Anyway, the Y39,000 (£180) UK3 isn't actually available in Britain, but at a guess it could be a rebadged PDS-505. Once again, this is proof that 'foreignness' sells products in Japan, even if said items are actually Japanese!



SONY CDP-R10/DAS-R10

How about a 55kg CD player? That's what you'll get if you hand over two million yen (£9200) to the man in the Sony shop and ask for a CDP-R10/DAS-R10. It's the



PIONEER D-07A

company's biggest and best ever two-box, following on from where the R1 and R3 series left off. Of course, both transport and DAC feature every exotic component known to man, making for an amazingly clean, clear, powerful sound - indeed it sounds more like an SME 30 turntable than a CD player. Still, if it's this good with olde worlde CD, what could it do with Sony and Philips' Super Audio CD? I'm sure Sony will provide us with an answer in the not too distant future!

Pioneer's DAT decks are highly regarded amongst home users, with an enviable reputation for reliability and consistency. Top of the range is the D-07A at Y160,000 (£730), heading up a three-strong range that includes the midprice D-HS5 and the mega-value D-05 at Y75,000. The '07A features a litany of goodies, including 96kHz double-speed recording (making for a bandwidth of over 40kHz - bats beware!) and 'Hi-bit Legato Link Conversion S'.

The transport is of fine quality - compatible with 180-minute DAT tapes, and the DAC is 20-bit, with an 18-bit ADC. If that wasn't enough, the Pioneer also writes date, time and text to the DAT's Table Of Contents. Sound is superb and tape handling smooth - a very desirable digital recorder.



SONY CDP-X5000

Something of a cult has sprung up around the dinky little 'X5000. UK audiophiles will already know the 'X3000 with its switchable digital filters. Well, the five costs twice as much (Y120,000 to the 'X3000's Y60,000) and improves on it in a number of ways. The power supply is beefed up, better passive components are used, a balanced digital output is fitted and disc clamping is improved. In fact, the 'X5000 carries with it a number of special options including the STB-A5000 disc stabiliser, STB-B5000 ceramic disc clamp and XLD-A5000 ceramic transport cover. All three are cheap but effective upgrades to an already good player, and seem to have caught the tweaky Japanese hi-fi press's imagination - this player is everywhere you look.



SONY DTC-2000ES

With a spec to make every DAT fan go weak at the knees, the flagship '2000ES is packed with clever features. At 12.5kg, build quality is excellent - there's extensive internal copper shielding to reduce noise, an unusually beefy power transformer, a high-quality one-bit DAC and Sony's Super Bit Mapping chip (claimed to improve S/N by over 10dB, and it seems to work). Sound is excellent - deep, powerful and musical with a sweet top - but is not quite a match for the Pioneer '07A running at double-speed. A dream machine nonetheless, despite its hefty Y200,000 (£930) price tag.

DAT

Judging by its presence in Europe, you'd be forgiven for thinking DAT was dead, but not so in Japan. In fact, there are plenty of models around from various manufacturers, and blank DATs are readily available and cheaper than ever. Here are three of the most recent appearances:



SONY WMD-TT1

Proof positive that DAT is still very much alive is Sony's DAT 'walkman', a playback-only device that weighs a mere 210g. Despite its diminutive dimensions you still get DAT's 16-bit 48kHz resolution, making for fine sound quality - even if the internal headphone amp isn't as powerful as it should be. Price is Y49,800 (£230) including an LCD remote and phones.

Next month, we take a look at Japanese turntables, amplifiers and loudspeakers●



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VALVE FEATHERWEIGHT?

The Power 35 with its matching Feather 1 pre-amp marks Unison Research's first foray into push-pull valve circuitry. Leo Lam goes tubular.



For years Unison Research have been producing valve amplifiers that are impeccably hand-crafted, curvaceously styled and, most importantly at the lower end of their range, offer a taste of the high-end without worrying bank managers. Strategically priced at £795 and £1525 respectively, the Feather One/Power 35 pre/power combination fill the gap lurking between the company's Simply 4 and Simply 845 integrateds.

Our reviewees were fetchingly finished with Bahia (a Cherryesque wood) front panels, the only differences being the width and the two protruding switches in the pre. The remainder of the chassis consists of Unison Research's customary brushed aluminium and dark grey steel.

This pair's overall design is more graceful and less macho than previous models but it still retains a sense of class in a world of drab boxes. Lending a hand here are the thin, smoked-perspex bars on the fascias. Gently lit by green LEDs at switch-on, these are bright enough to notice but soft enough not to be obtrusive during listening.

THE TECHNOLOGY

The Feather 1 is a Class A pre-amplifier powered from the '35 through an umbilical chord on its back panel (or by a dedicated £260 PSU if the Feather 1 is bought on its own). Unscrewing the pre's bottom plate revealed two separate and uncluttered circuit boards. One houses the power supply (with its solid-state

rectifiers, smoothing capacitors and 15V IC regulator) and the main audio circuitry. The source selector and volume potentiometer occupy the other.

Line-level signals enter through the gold-plated RCA sockets on the Feather's right side and are routed via a very short, silver-plated PCB track to the selector whose chunky knob is located on the top plate. The signal is then attenuated by a standard carbon potentiometer linked to the torpedo-shaped volume control on the fascia. Coupling capacitors are IDEC polypropylenes and the valves a pair of dual-triode 12AX7s.

While four line inputs and a tape loop are provided, vinyl users will have to add an external phono stage like UR's own Simply Phono (which can also be powered by the Power 35) at a cool £510 a piece. One point to note is that the output of the Feather is phase-inverted, so for recordings which were made in absolute phase, sources which have the facility (like my Assemblage DAC-2) should be switched from 0degrees to 180degrees phase.

Heading up the Power 35's valve roster are another two 12AX7 dual-triodes, each of which forms an input buffer and phase splitter. These then pass the signal to two pairs of matched, Unison Research re-badged, Russian EL34 pentodes running in push-pull, a configuration new to this company. The sheer weight of the Power 35 testifies to the quality of its most important components, the custom output transformers with their 4ohm and 8ohm taps.

As little as 15 minutes after they had been unboxed, the Feather 1 and Power 35 were sounding surprisingly listenable. However, I left them playing pink

noise for more than four days before in-depth listening began.

Fronting the Unison Researches were a Teac T-1 transport and Assemblage DAC-2 connected to the Italians with Kimber Silver Streak interconnects. The loudspeaker line-up included the Heybrook Heylettes, KEF Q30s (modified) and the now fine-tuned, low-efficiency and current-hungry Seas Mini Monitors working through a short run of Kimber 8TC cable. Pentacone Plain Copper interconnects were used between the pre and power.

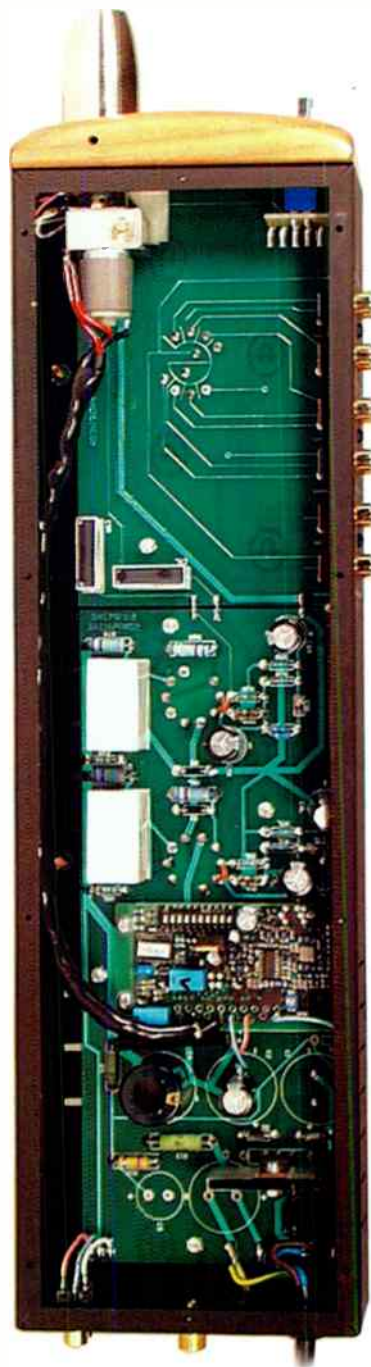
HO HUM

The first Feather One unfortunately suffered a significant amount of mains hum pickup and induced some very audible hiss at medium volume settings. A call to UKD found that this particular example was a prototype and had clocked up a few miles. The second, physically-flawless sample duly arrived, complete with remote control at a premium of £95 over the original. And since this was a radio remote, I was able to raise and lower volume levels from any point within a 30m radius.

SOUND QUALITY

With the new Feather 1 ensconced in my rack, listening finally commenced. Fed from the Creek OBH-12 passive pre as well as its UR stablemate, the Power 35 proved it could play music with poise and composure. The feeling of effortless control was excellent at low to normal listening levels, although the grip on music did loosen slightly when more current was called for by some Pop and Rock tracks. However, it should be stressed that this noticeable break-up was audible only after my sound pressure level meter registered an SPL of roughly 103dB, and I have yet to hear an amplifier with EL34s at this price point achieve such a clean and tidy presentation at this kind of volume.

One area where large output transformers show their worth is bass. The bottom end which the Power 35 drew from 'speakers, even the Mini Monitors and their tiny 4in. mid/bass units, was deep, punchy and full-bodied without a



The ICs towards the rear of the Feather 1's chassis are for the remote control.

hint of lumpiness. Transients were fast and well-defined, and decay delicate and prolonged. The all-important valve midrange transparency was present and correct, albeit it with a little of the customary thermionic warmth traded for extra detail. All of which meant Prokofiev's large-scale Violin Concerto performed by Vengerov, Slava and the LSO (Teldec 4509-92256-2) was nothing short of grand, involving and provocative.

Undoubtedly, the Power 35 is not the same kind of amp as UR's more staple fare, namely the low-powered SETs which have made their name world-wide.

Apparently, UR made a conscious decision to swap some of their characteristic immediacy and honeyed sweetness for a bolder presentation and more practical power output. What they've not lost in the process is that three-dimensional clarity which allows the loudspeakers to dissolve away and leave centre stage to the music.

PASSIVE OR ACTIVE?

To find out what the Feather One was made of, I put it alongside the Creek OBH-12 passive pre. To my surprise, the UR's clarity was excellent - there was very little coloration, the only problem being the volume pot's rather poor channel matching at low volume.

A tonal balance that erred to the warm side of neutral was a boon on harsher recordings like the otherwise excellent Schumann Piano Concerto, Op54 with Bernstein/Zimerman (DG 439 015-2) - this became much more listenable as I could concentrate on the music rather than on the rough edginess of the recording. Basslines were also mildly firmed up by the Feather 1, which certainly did nothing to hinder dynamic speed or clarity.

Where the pre did less well was the slightly laid-back lower midrange. This was especially obvious on vocal material. The effect was similar to sitting a few rows back from the front in a solo recital. While the Feather 1 wasn't as immediate or as direct as the Creek, it concentrated on fluency, rhythm and control, and put enjoyability at the top of its play list.

Unison Research's amps have steadily built up an enviable reputation and this new push-pull alternative is only going to strengthen their status. The Feather 1 and Power 35 offer an attractive mix of useful power output, low running costs (due to the widely-available valves) and a musically satisfying presentation. They may be a touch expensive, but the Feather and Power could be the reason you spend a whole night listening to your favourite albums, and you won't need uncommonly sensitive 'speakers either.

Unison Research
Feather One
£795/£890(w/remote)
Power 35 £1525

UKD
23 Richings Way,
Iver,
Bucks. SL0 9DA
Tel: 01753 652669

WORLD VERDICT



Feather One
Warm but still exciting, the Feather 1 is only let down by a slightly recessed midrange.



Power 35
A great compromise between delicacy, power and practicality. Very musically satisfying, too.

Measured Performance
see p111

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VINTAGE SERIES

DESIRABLE DANE

Andrew Harrison travels to the top of Audiovector's M series with the M1 Signature stand mounters.

The contrast between the Audiovector M1 Signature reviewed here and its tall M2 brother we heard in the June issue could not be more marked. That floor stander turned in a disappointing performance, although subsequent checking by both the UK importer and Audiovector themselves suggests that this may have been a rogue sample. Either way, the M2 had overenthusiastic bass and peaky treble that made for disappointing listening.

At £1479.95 the M1 Signatures are comparable in price to the M2s, but where most of the money in the M2s went into basic woodwork, the M1 Signatures can boast top-flight drivers and cabinets beefed up with extensive internal bracing. Fitted here and to the M3 Signature floor stander is Audiovector's 25mm soft-dome Evotech tweeter with its large magnet and face-plate. This is linked at 3kHz to the 180mm mid/bass unit and its polymer-coated paper cone reinforced with carbon fibres.

On the rear, mounted on a tough double-layer baffle, are three ports and a pair of gold-plated bi-wire posts. While the lower two small-bore ports provide reflex loading for the mid/bass, the upper large port forms part of Audiovector's Soundstage Enhancement System. SES feeds a small percentage of the tweeter's rear radiation to the outside world through this long port and is claimed to imbue music with a more spacious and 'live' character.

Injecting a little extra high-frequency energy into a room isn't a new idea - Castle tried a similar idea with upward-facing mid/bass units on their Howards, for example. Another trait shared with Castle is the Audiovector's standard of finish. There is a choice of three real wood veneers, our reviewees arriving

clothed in an immaculate Light Cherry.

Mounted on Elemental Audio's dreadnought 'speaker stands, the M1 Signatures painted a picture of a smooth, relaxed and civilised transducer with a generous, solid bottom end that belies the modest cabinet dimensions (35cms high by 20cms wide by 28cms deep).

From the introduction of Tori Amos' 'Crucify' there was insight writ large across the sound. The Audiovectors homed in on detail so that I could hear studio techniques, such as vocal double-tracking and reverberation effects, without them distracting me from the emotion of the performance. There, in all its simplicity, was Tori's singing, which moves forward in the mix as the delay is faded down, to leave her characteristic close-miked, intimate vocals.

Positioned well out into the room and toed-in slightly, the M1 Signatures managed a depth in the bass which could fool the ear into believing there were more drive units at work. What these Audiovectors provide is an assured, confident sound, much like the Jamo Concert 8s, although with very different voicing - you can hear that time and effort have obviously been spent smoothing out any rough edges.

The £1500 Concert 8s can be relied upon to show ruthlessly any deficiencies in the recording or partnering equipment, and for this reason they are not always the most relaxing 'speakers to listen to. Set against the Concert 8s, the M1 Signatures sounded mellower, easier-going and a little loose at the



bottom end. The top-end is soft, yes, but suave and refined with it, making these stand mounters safe partners for those with brighter transistor amplification and delicate treble sensibilities.

These Danes were less amenable in terms of sound staging - there was scant evidence of an acoustic outside of the limits of the cabinets. This is in contrast to a lot of expensive small 'speakers that can cast images well outside the boundaries of their boxes and disappear in the sound stage.

That mild bloom in the lower frequencies was evident on cellos, basses and Classical piano, where a 'thickening' of timbre denied the M1 Signatures the clarity and transparency of the Jamos. Still, the two transducers were more evenly matched rhythmically, the Audiovector's smooth and natural dynamics complementing most music except for more frenetic Dance and Metal compositions.

£1480 is a big dent in any wallet, but it can be money well spent when it's lavished on a stand mounter which makes the most of the advantages of a small two-way - integration, precisely-focused imaging and see-through sound staging. The Audiovector M1 Signatures don't score maximum points in these areas, but as a counterbalance to bright or hard ancillaries, their musical and relaxed presentation is worth consideration.

Audiovector M1 Signature £1479

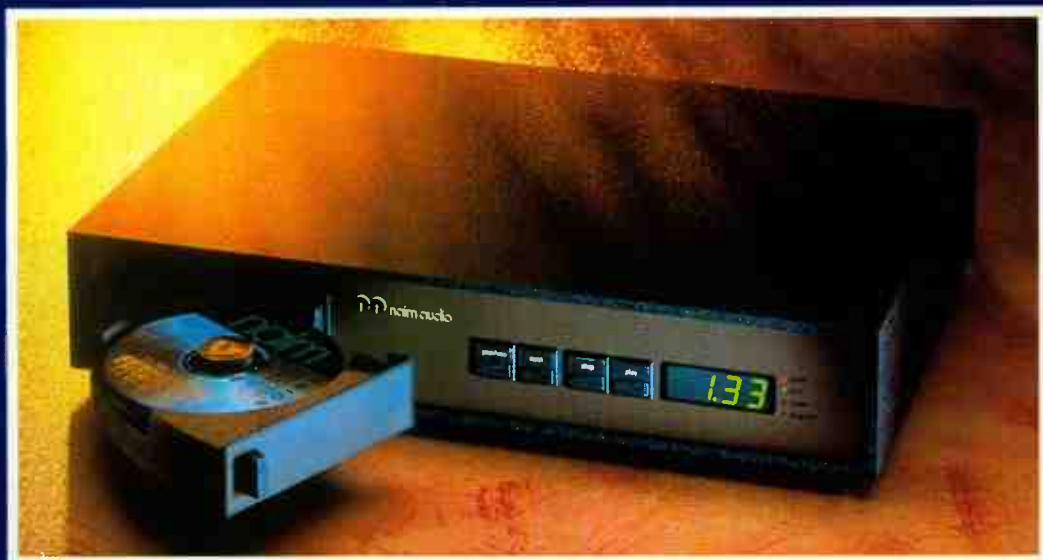
Glaive Unit 7, Wren Ind. Estate, Coldred Road, Maidstone, Kent ME15 9XN
Tel: 01622 664070

WORLD VERDICT



The M1 Sigs may be a little laid-back for some tastes, but have a pleasant and involving sound.

Measured Performance see p111



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STAGING AN ENTRY

Dominic Todd listens to Anthem's newest entrant to the phono stage marketplace, the Pre 1P.

Regular readers will by now be quite familiar with Anthem. The Canadian company's multi-disc CD player and integrated amplifier have been reviewed in these pages before. Although we rated the amplifier highly, one bugbear was that it didn't have a phono stage as standard. Well, to appease the many like myself who still take vinyl seriously, here it is! And far from being just a plug-in card, the Pre 1P is a valve beastie replete

with its own power supply and the mammoth casework that's fast becoming an Anthem trademark.

The Pre 1P uses two ECC81 and two E88CC tubes in a design that owes much to the company's more expensive Sonic Frontiers SFP-1. But it's the attention to detail which really impresses - the PCB is of excellent quality, Kimber cable is used extensively and designer-name capacitors and resistors feature strongly. Only MM cartridges can be accommodated, and switching between loading requires some extra components and competent soldering!

Despite the fact that the excellent Audio Innovations P2 and Kinshaw phono stages have now disappeared there's no shortage of competition. Mitchell's Iso/Hera combination provides stiff opposition for a good deal less money - £530 to be precise. Still, one thing it lacks is the seduction of valves.

After thorough running-in, I linked the Pre 1P to my Roksan Xerxes X turntable and Reson Recca moving-magnet cartridge. Kicking off with Finlay Quaye's 'Falling', I was struck by the bass, which had the signature of fine valve amplification (weight, warmth and depth) without sounding soft or wallowy. It may have lacked the Mitchell's precision but, unless partnered with particularly bassy cartridges or loudspeakers, it had fine



integration and balance. Vocals were given plenty of height within the sound stage, and their location impressed with solidity and depth. There was little to fault with the timbral reproduction of percussion either. Each instrument was placed within a broad sound stage that only went short-changed in the area of projection. Again, the Iso/Hera or Kinshaw of old would produce a more holographic image but I doubt either could sound as beguiling or lucid.

A sparser background was provided by Joni Mitchell's 'All I Want'. This is an uncomplicated piece yet one that can grate as the vocals have a habit of hardening as volume rises. Needless to say, the Pre 1P shunned such aberrations, sailing through this test with an ease and fluidity that would shame many a more expensive design. And it came up trumps with its accuracy of vocal expression and tonal colour in contrast to the shades of grey portrayed by most transistor designs. The Anthem wasn't perfect though - the guitar could have been better defined, but at least it still sounded like a guitar, albeit a slightly distant one.

Christy Moore's live rendition of 'Welcome To The Cabaret' drew my attention to just how little background noise was emanating from the Pre 1P. You'd normally expect valve designs to be noisier than transistor counterparts but this

certainly wasn't the case here. This factor allowed me to concentrate on how well the live atmosphere of The Point was captured. As with Mitchell, the guitar did sound slightly veiled and the jeers and shrieks from the audience didn't jar as they can do, but these were small prices to pay for the Anthem's strengths.

I was pleased to see the Anthem didn't favour one particular genre of music either. Classical (Romeo and Juliet, Fantasy Overture by Tchaikovsky) the Pre 1P handled with ease, its scale and presence building the requisite tension into the listening session. A degree of midrange muddle which set in over the more complex string and brass parts was off-set by detailed percussion that could be followed through even the most difficult passages. Above all, the piece ebbed and flowed in a melodic fashion that many would find preferable to the extra speed and vivacity of rival designs.

No lover of valves and vinyl is going to be disappointed by the Anthem. Its high price is justified by faultless build and meticulous attention to detail, and there's much to recommend in terms of sound quality too. An unrestricted sound stage encapsulates smooth vocals and rich instrumental timbre. It may not be the most holographic or incisive of phono stages, but for long-term listening pleasure it's hard to beat.

Anthem Pre 1P £899

Picture The Sound
13 Weston Road,
Guildford,
Surrey GU2 6AU
Tel: 01483 454991

WORLD VERDICT



Despite a sizeable price tag the Anthem offers a smooth, lucid sound and superb build quality.

Measured Performance
see p111

WIN A CRIMSON ELECTRIC PRE AND MONOBLOC POWER AMPS WORTH OVER £1400

This month's prizes are the 610C pre-amp and 630C monoblocs from Crimson Electric.

Way back in April 1998 we met Crimson Electric components vying for position in our pre and power amp group test. The 610C pre and 620C stereo power amp acquitted themselves honourably in the performance stakes and were excellent value to boot. Well, now here is even better news. For this month's bumper competition, we have not just the pre-amp but two - count 'em, two - of the matching Crimson 630C monobloc power amps all brought to you with the manufacturer's recommended interconnects and mains cables.

For a monobloc design the Crimson system is commendably compact - each unit measures just 3.75in. (w) by 4.5in. (h) by 15in. (d), so they're easy to slot in pretty much anywhere as the whole set-up occupies less space than most integrated amplifiers.

The pros and cons of monobloc design have been re-evaluated in recent years and many benefits are known to accrue. Perhaps the most important is that each channel has its own power supply. The poor alternatives of either having to provide a whacking single supply for both channels or else allow lots of interference through the PSU are elegantly avoided. These Crimson 630Cs

steer the proper course, each being sufficiently well-powered to pump 100watts into an 8ohm 'speaker, so your system need never sound short of breath.

Power is of little use to the audiophile without low distortion and low noise. The 630Cs' noise floor is claimed to be a comfortable 100dB below the signal level, meaning you can hit high volume levels without the whole box of tricks sounding like a white-noise generator. With a peak output current of 17amps/channel to dissipate, heat-sinks form the back panel of each monobloc, making the cooling of the output devices both effective and discreet.

Keeping the two power amps in order is the Crimson 610C pre-amplifier which is powered by a wall-plug mains transformer. There are standard phono line inputs for CD, Tuner and Aux, all with 250mV sensitivity. The Phono input is via a five-pin DIN socket for which a phono adapter is provided. And removing the innards from their protective casing allows access to the selector switch for appropriate moving-coil (0.25mV/330ohms) or moving-magnet (5.5mV/50kohms) sensitivities.

Tape users are well catered for with the usual loop, plus the customary Tape/Source switching for those with



COMPETITION ENTRY QUESTIONS

- 1) The noise floor on the Crimson 630C is:

A. Joined to the noise walls	B. Better than -90dB
C. Better than next door's	D. Quarry-tiled
- 2) What is the 630C's power output?

A. 100watts	B. 100pardons
C. 60watts	D. 7watts
- 3) What is the 610C pre-amplifier's moving-magnet sensitivity?

A. 100mV	B. 2V	C. 5.5mV	D. 30V
----------	-------	----------	--------
- 4) Why are there two power amps in this month's competition?

A. Because they're monoblocs	B. Because we're generous
C. Because we lost the third one	D. Because two's a lucky number
- 5) What is the 610C's output level?

A. 3 horsepower	B. 775mV	C. Spirited	D. 7.5V
-----------------	----------	-------------	---------

TIE-BREAKER (obligatory)

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COMPETITION WINNERS

In June we were offering three prizes: Origin Live's Sovereign loudspeakers, Holfi's Audis integrated amp and Precious Metals' loudspeaker and interconnect cables. The winners are: Ian Downie (Glasgow), Conrad Lawrence (Newcastle) and J. Rose (Essex).

Congratulations!

three-head decks. Rounding out a full-ish specification is that handy gadget, the Balance Control, enabling differences in 'speaker sensitivity, freakish listening-room acoustics or lop-sided programme material to be endured, if not completely cured.

To be in with a chance of winning this month's ensemble, all you have to do is answer the following questions and complete the tie-breaking tribute to Tennyson in the most apt, original and preferably rhyming way. Send in your entry on a postcard or the back of a sealed envelope to reach us before August 4th to:

Crimson Competition
Hi-Fi World Magazine,
64 Castellain Road,
Maida Vale,
London
W9 1EX

Don't forget to include your name, address and telephone number so that we can contact the competition winner promptly.

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AURA AMERICANA

Leo Lam greets Aura's LSB-627M, the latest budget loudspeaker to make the journey from America to Britain.



Home cinema has blossomed in the US over the last few years, and with the customary trans-Atlantic delay, here in Britain too. Loudspeaker manufacturers are now busy bringing out packages to suit the home-cinema sound and a new contender has just arrived from a company previously unheard of in the UK. Now that Richer Sounds are importing their 'speakers though, Aura Systems, to which B&W recently sold its Aura brand name, looks set to become rather better known.

Carrying Aura's name into this country is the Line Source Series, one member of which is the LSB-627M stand mounter at £229.95. Although it's a two-way, reflex-loaded design it isn't just another budget box. Deviating from the norm, it uses a 'Line Source' monopole ribbon tweeter to handle the upper midrange and treble rather than the standard soft-dome. Below this sits a 6.5in. woofer from Danish manufacturer Peerless, who also make the smaller driver used in the Heybrook Heylettes. Round the back are the huge reflex port and binding tray. While the simple crossover has only a single pair of terminals, they're well built and will take thick cables without any problems.

The large MDF cabinets with their internal bracing are on a par in terms of size, if not finish, with Mission's 732s. On our samples, the edges were rather sharp to the touch and the drivers were mounted on the front baffle instead of flush with it. Inside too, only minimal foam padding can be found to damp reflections.

Aura make it clear in the opening pages of their brochure that the '627s were designed for home-cinema use. But that ribbon tweeter distinguishes them from most of the boom and tizz boxes designed to sit either side of a wide-screen television. I drove them with a modified Aura VA80 integrated amp and took the source from a Teac T-1 transport and Assemblage DAC-2. With the Auras on Atacama stands, I settled them at a position half a metre from the back wall with only a few degrees of toe-in after a weekend of continuous running.

The '627s turned out to be no ordinary 'speakers. At this price, what you tend to get is treble that's a bit hard and rough around the edges, but the Auras' ribbons worked superbly. There was as much upper-midrange and treble detail as you'd hear through 'speakers at twice the price, and an airy, atmospheric presentation of acoustics.

Playing the Dawn Upshaw Broadway compilation confirmed how refreshing the LSB-627s' treble is at the price. The tonal balance was fairly even and the sound stage, though not open enough to challenge more upmarket products like the ProAc Tablette 50s reviewed on page 65, packed in enough information that you could appreciate the layers in a mix.

Switching to Classical, I sampled Brahms' piano sonatas with Ax (Sony SK45933). Once again, detail was in plentiful supply and transients were crisper than a shirt with more starch in it than a field of potatoes. Compared to the slightly more costly Heylettes the Auras lacked some delicacy, tonal colour and general coherence, however. And a slight sharpness in the lower treble proved tiring over prolonged listening sessions.

The LSB-627s were more comfortable with modern, heavily-synthesised Dance - through the Aura even my lazy toes started tapping. Where they're not quite as accomplished is in brute bass depth - speed and slam are more the order of the day.

Aura's LSB-627s are amongst the better budget loudspeakers to arrive from the States. They combine detail and subtlety with plenty of drive and energy to make listening an exciting experience. The slight sharpness in the lower treble which emphasises sibilants can be wearing after a while, but with warm ancillaries and a musical diet that leans towards Dance, the results can be fun.

Aura Systems LSB-627M
£229.95

Audio Partnership
Gallery Court,
Hankey Place,
London SE1 4BB
Tel: 0500 333500

WORLD VERDICT



Energetic, bold and highly detailed, the Aura is one to consider for budget-conscious music lovers.

Measured Performance
see p111

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(Hi-Fi World August 98)

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X-TRA, X-TRA

The muscular X-A200 monoblocs are a big step forward for Musical Fidelity, reckons Leo Lam.

From the pictures I'd seen in Musical Fidelity's brochure, I'd thought the X-A200s to be just an elongated variation on the X-A50 reviewed in January 1998. In the flesh though, the X-A200 actually bears a closer resemblance to a beer barrel or an anti-tank bazooka with its 6in. diameter brushed aluminium faceplate.

Inside the idiosyncratic but eminently sturdy aluminium sleeve, the sizeable toroidal transformer is located at the rear close to the IEC inlet, its partnering rectifiers positioned further forward. A relatively small amount of capacitance smooths the raw DC but this does have the advantage of possessing a smaller time constant when a surge of transient current is called for.

Borrowing its basic topology from the A1001 amplifier, the heart of the power amplifier consists of three pairs of matched, bipolar power transistors, ensuring a healthy power output. Musical Fidelity claim 200W into 8ohms, 400W into 4ohms and 30Amps peak current from this configuration. Other high points are apparently excellent gain and phase margin (and thus high stability), an unclippable input buffer and a bandwidth that reaches way into the ultrasonic.

Following the MF family tradition, these monster monoblocs have the same input sensitivity as models like the X-A50 and E11 integrated, making bi-amping a straightforward proposition. One simple and effective combination might be the X-A50 driving the tweeters and the X-A200 feeding the mid/bass unit. Also provided is a 'daisy-chain' output for tri-amping.

I hooked the X-A200s up to a Creek OBH-12 passive pre-amp and begged, stole and borrowed six pairs of demanding loudspeakers to grill



the MFs, including the Apogee Ribbon Monitors which have a harsh impedance dip at high frequencies.

I had been expecting a louder and more controlled version of the X-A50, but the X-A200s provided much more than that. Some people across the pond might be surprised to hear the X-A200s had me thinking of the Mark Levinson No.331 at around three times the price in the US (and the price ratio worsens in Britain). The Levinson has more transparency and detail, but the X-A200 rewards with greater finesse and the unflagging midrange that many Musical Fidelity amps share.

These monoblocs show how much there is in a name as they put 'musical' before outright 'fidelity'. That's not to say that they weren't accurate. Their command over the flow of music was outstanding considering their cost. Grand operas snapped into focus, with artists performing across the spread of the stage and the orchestras blended seamlessly into the mix. Not even the tortuous finale of Act II in Turandot (Decca 414274-2) nor the

steaming Entrée of Act I in Tosca (DG 413815-2) could embarrass the X-A200s.

Those 200watts were certainly having an impact on dynamic swings and transients. Quiet passages were delicately and articulately rendered against dark, silent backgrounds, but when the music prompted, the MFs responded with great speed and slam while maintaining their finely-balanced tonality.

Without sweating into any load I could throw at them, the X-A200s were only mildly warm after more than eight hours of continuous playing. Throughout that time, these amps were unflaggingly enjoyable music makers. The effortless composure of the sound will have you thinking it's the monoblocs controlling the music, not vice versa.

The X-A200s' styling may not be to everyone's taste, but their way with music is highly persuasive. They're not the last word in high-end components, nor are they Musical Fidelity's flagship amplifiers, but at the price, the X-A200s are almost in a class of their own.

Musical Fidelity X-A200
£1000/pair

Musical Fidelity
15-17 Olympic Trading
Estate,
Fulton Road,
Wembley,
Middlesex HA9 0TF
Tel: 0181 900 2866

WORLD VERDICT



Hugely powerful and controlled, the X-A200s are still superbly musical.

Measured Performance
see p111

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The Power Amplifiers

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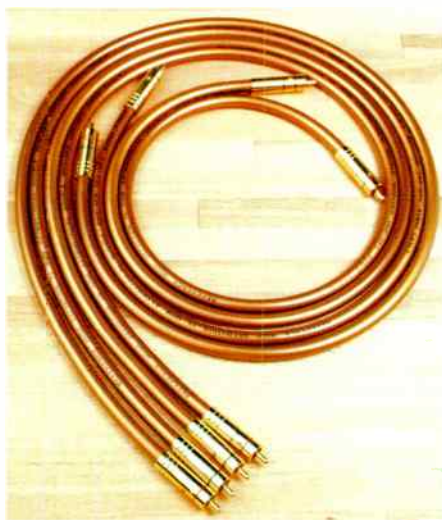
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MISSING LINK

Leo Lam samples three £65-£85 interconnects from Reference Cable, van den Hul and The Chord Company.



dynamics compared to more expensive interconnects. That's no sin though given this cable's very reasonable price.

**VAN DEN HUL
D102III HYBRID**
£80/1.2M

Now in MkIII guise (the D102 has been around for 13 years) this yellow, Hulliflex-clad budget vdH uses silver-coated OFC and their proprietary Linear Structured Carbon fibres as the centre conductor. With

after 13 years - it's a definite classic which offers great value for money.

**THE CHORD COMPANY
CHAMELEON 2** £85/m

The Chameleon is one of those rare hi-fi cables which is extremely flexible - you could easily tie a knot in it. The royal blue, soft PVC outer jacket houses two sets of very thin OFC twisted pairs in a pseudo-balanced configuration (which is also available with balanced XLR connectors). The shield is connected only at the destination end to avoid ground loops. The fit of the RCA plugs varied from component to component, but gave a firm, albeit occasionally over-tight grip on the right sockets - I wept in vain when it scratched my Creek OBH-12 passive pre-amp's outputs.

In contrast to its connectors, this cable's sound took an effortless, relaxed and comfortable approach to music. Transient edges were delicately rounded off and the music

**REFERENCE CABLE MASTER
CONDUIT ASYMMETRICAL**
£65/m

Reference Cable is a new company established by ex-Ariston man John Carrick. His gold-coloured Asymmetric, although the cheapest of the three interconnects here, is beautifully constructed and made a favourable visual impact right away. The phono plugs are of exceptionally high quality and provided a good fit on the sockets of all my equipment. From plug to plug runs stranded Ultra-High-Purity, Oxygen-Free Copper (UHP-OHC) in a screened co-axial configuration with polypropylene dielectrics.

The Reference may cost the least here but it didn't sound cheap. Bass had enough weight to form a solid foundation for music and instrumental separation was fine as the gold CD recording of *La Fille Mal Gardée* by Hérolde-Lanchbery (Decca 430 196-2) proved. Laid out on a quiet background, the sound stage was broad, if restricted in ultimate depth.

The most prominent trait of this cable has to be its ability to reproduce string instruments. Though a hint metallic, violin tone was sweet and beautifully-crafted, and the new *Bach Suites* recording featuring YoYo Ma (Sony S2K 63203) sounded smooth with a wide range of tonal colour.

The Master Conduit's only downside is its mild compression of



its double-helical shield, this cable can also be used in balanced applications when XLR plugs are fitted. The attractively-engineered plugs supplied in this case were vdH's own.

The D102III certainly possessed the best tonal balance of this group, demonstrating characteristics shared with the more costly *The First* and *The Second*. The midrange was clear, articulate and free from grain, while dynamics were crisp and unsullied.

An amazing amount of detail was set in the stable and well-defined sound stage which spread broad and deep. The various solo instruments in *La Fille Mal Gardée* were so widely and accurately spaced out that the image was nearly holographic. Again, the smooth, natural mid and treble made for unfatiguing long-term listening.

It's little wonder that this self-effacing cable is still in the market



floated smoothly along no matter what kind of material was played.

Although detail was as abundant as the vdH, imaging was more diffuse, and the sound stage, though large, was more vaguely defined. Colorations amounted to a subtle hardness in the high midrange and a little honkiness in the upper bass region. That said, the overall balance was still fine and the Chameleon has no major flaws ●

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Tel: 01563 524320

Van den Hul
Tel: 0181 810 9388

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Letter of the Month

The writer of the 'Letter of the Month' wins a free subscription to Hi-Fi World as well as a Top Prize every other month

FUTURE SHOCK

Much has been written in the hi-fi press lately about possible new formats and related areas, but I wonder who exactly will benefit from these. As I understand it, there is currently no agreement in any way, shape or form within the industry on any aspect of any proposal, be it format, sampling rate, number of bits, recordability or lack of, backwards or forwards compatibility, number of channels: you name it and there are at least two competing, if not mutually exclusive, standards proposed. All of which seems set to make the VHS/Betamax debacle look like a lovers' tiff.

15 years ago we had CD pretty much foisted upon us. The reason for this, or so it seems to us cynics, was to satisfy the industry's need for new markets in order to generate more sales, rather than because consumers were crying out for new toys. Even now the full potential of the 16-bit/44.1kHz medium has yet to be realised. One has only to read, for example, Paul Miller or Ben Duncan (in competing publications) to see that problems such as jitter are still not fully understood or addressed by the bulk of the industry, let alone the mass CD-buying market. (That placing cones under CD players or transports, even up-market ones, produces such noticeable improvements in sound quality speaks volumes for standards of construction!)

In fact, the mass CD-buying market hasn't yet got to grips with stereo! Look at how hi-fi equipment is set up in the non-audiophile home: there is no possibility of producing anything remotely approaching a stereo image. Indeed, are non-audiophile music-lovers even concerned about this? And should they be? Ask most people what "stereo" means and the answer will most likely be, "Well, it's two of things isn't it?"

I feel we should make the most of what we already have before charging off into industry-led, marketing-driven new formats, which force us into buying yet more new hardware and software of dubious sonic worth. Resistance is necessary for our sanity and our bank balance!

PS Before anyone accuses me of unnecessary luddism, I'm waiting for a decent quality sound to be downloadable from the Net, then I'll patch my PC into the hi-fi via a USB link.

David Dallard
Bristol.

As far as the hi-fi community is concerned, there are two formats to look out for: Philips and Sony's Super Audio CD (based on the Direct Stream Digital system) and 24-bit 96kHz as proposed by the Acoustic Renaissance for Audio (which uses the traditional Pulse-Code Modulation system).

Standards have been agreed for neither system, much to the confusion and annoyance of everyone who would like to exploit these technologies for high-grade audio use. Talking to a Philips representative we were told Sony and Philips see SACD becoming a de facto standard when the two start releasing SACD discs and machinery, hopefully late this year or early next. What is likely to make them attractive to both music shops and customers is their backwards compatibility - the disc's two layers (SACD and 44.1kHz) will play on normal CD players as well as SACD-ready machines.

Whereas SACDs won't be on sale for a while yet, 24/96

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recordings can already be bought. A format battle between 24/96 and SACD might be looming, but with the huge weight of Sony and Philips behind the latter, it could be distinctly one-sided.

As you say, the full potential of 16-bit 44.1kHz has yet to be realised, although purely from a sonic point of view, the cream of the new DVD player crop are definitely heading in the right direction. Mind you, CD has had 15 years to mature, and the fact that the majority of players are still underachieving in terms of sound is somewhat worrying. At the end of the day, 24/96 is far superior in its basic specifications and sound to CD, and from what we've heard, SACD is equally impressive.

Having learned of the lengths that Ken Ishiwata of Marantz goes to in order to control vibration in some of that company's products, the fact that tweaks like cones can alter a component's character isn't

automatically an indictment of construction standards. To be frank, there are quite a few biscuit boxes out there which would benefit from casework thicker than paper, but even bomb-proof transports like Teac's P-30, which is superbly built, can benefit from cones et al. Like jitter, the control and use of vibration to enhance a component's

and why should they be? As long as they're happy with the music coming from their equipment, why waste time on the messy mechanics of its reproduction when you can simply enjoy it?

The hardware question boils down to this. If you're looking to invest in a new CD player at present, and you have between £700 and £2000 to spend, you could do a lot worse than buying a DVD player. As well as replaying CDs, it will handle DVD Video discs and most machines will also read 24/96. And when SACD becomes widely available, its 16-bit 44.1kHz layer will also be playable on these same machines.

Otherwise, it's a question of waiting until SACD players and software hit the streets. But whatever format succeeds, audiophiles should rejoice, because the sonic worth of these new formats is in no doubt - they blow CD away. JM



24/96-compatible DVD players like Denon's DVD-3000 show just what superior digital formats are capable of.

sound is little understood by most of the hi-fi industry.

To get proper stereo and anything approaching sound staging takes careful setting-up. As you mention, the bulk of non-audiophile music-lovers don't seem to be unduly concerned about this,

DIGITAL ANALOGY

With the advent of read/write CDs it is now possible for the hi-fi and PC enthusiast to record from LPs onto CD. This I did with some interest because, although being among the first to purchase a CD player, I have always found LP to be more musically accessible provided it is played using a decent turntable, arm and cartridge. This I attributed to some shortcoming in the CD format.

My unease with digital hardware and software vanished, however, when I played back my first CD recording from LP. All the warmth, the sparkling treble, the rhythmic immediacy, the generous image width, height and depth I had come to expect only from vinyl were faithfully preserved. To my surprise it was not a

shortcoming in the CD format, but what must be the sonic contribution made by the arm/cartridge combination which made the difference. Perhaps in purist terms the sound so presented had less fidelity to the master tape, but it did enhance perceptivity and was emotionally

closer to the performance.

Few of us, at present, can experience the privilege of hearing front ends such as the Basis Ovation/Graham 1.5/Shinnon, the Oracle Alexander/SME V/Kiseki Blackheart, or even the Linn Lingo/Ekos/Troika. Perhaps we all could if Record/CD producers were kind enough to record onto CD some of their vinyl, played from any of the aforementioned front ends.

Leslie Miligan
Dundee.



CD-R machines like Philips' CDR 870 produce digital copies almost identical to the originals, but analogue recordings tend to lose some of their character.

As we've found in past encounters with PC-based CD recorders, the sound quality of home-burnt CD recordings can be surprisingly good. However, while digital-to-digital copies are pretty much

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indistinguishable from the originals, the same can't be said of analogue-to-digital transfers in our experience.

Perhaps the ADC on your sound card was a synergetic match for your turntable, giving the best of CD and vinyl worlds. When we've tried storing a vinyl signal on a

silver disc though, the results have tended to lack a lot of the spaciousness and subtlety characteristic of LPs. This is due to the ADCs fitted to many sound cards (which aren't aimed specifically at audiophile use anyway) more than CD recording itself.

As we discovered in last month's issue, one of the routes to better sound from CD is more careful mastering and production. JVC's XRCDs show what improvements this can yield. JM

Ringmat's Statmat can bring better sound to your CDs.

SUPERB GETS BETTER

I have recently purchased a Linn system based on a Wakonda, Mimik, two LK240 monoblocs and a pair of B&W CDM7 loudspeakers wired with Audioquest Quartz interconnects and Nordost Flatline Gold 'speaker cables.

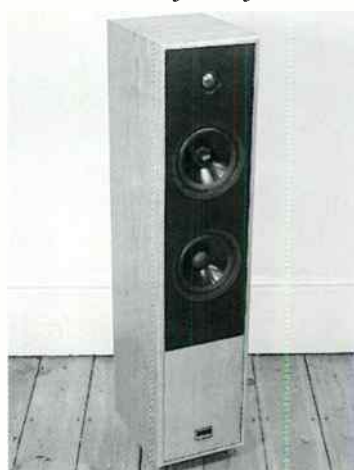
I have a budget of around £2000 and would be grateful if you could advise me on the most cost-effective path for improving on what is already a superb sounding system.

Paul Maine
Gwent.

First option, assuming you wish to keep the 'speakers and amps, is to look at your source and cabling. You don't specifically mention that you have bi-wired your loudspeakers. When the B&Ws were reviewed in February 1998's issue they were found to be particularly appreciative of a second cable run, which brings a more spacious acoustic and better low-end control. You may wish to try a different cable (like DNM's

Reson) to the tweeter section of the crossover to sweeten the sound of that metal dome.

I'd suggest you sell or part-exchange the Mimik for a Karik - you'll get the Mimik's speed and timing but with a finesse and smoothness that your system will



If your loudspeaker budget stretches to £1200, have a listen to Epos' ES22s.

benefit from. The Karik has a great transport that can be built on for any future upgrades too. The multi-

bit Numerik DAC could, for instance, be added to override the Karik's on-board delta-sigma convertor; careful listening will tell you if the performance gains justify the expenditure. And if you don't already have a stand or platform for your CD player, take a look at Perfect Pitch's £130 Sound Absorber.

Another option just within your budget (if you include monies gained from selling your present kit) is a new pair of 'speakers. A prime candidate would be the Epos ES22s reviewed last month. Their lean but smooth sound may not be to everyone's taste, but as you have the power amps to drive them I'd suggest seeking a demonstration. Since you already have sympathies with the Linn sound you may be pleasantly impressed with the tuneful way the Eposes play music. And at £1185 they are a bargain, surpassing many loudspeakers costing up to £1500. AH

Put a bottle of DNM's Licon contact enhancer to work on your system for greater clarity and detail.

RETURN TO PAST GLORIES

My system numbers amongst its ranks a Leak Stereofetic FM tuner, Leak Stereo 70 amplifier, Goldring Lenco GL75 turntable with a Shure M55E cartridge and a pair of Leak Sandwich 600 'speakers. The sound is excellent, but not as good as it could be. The cartridge is worn - what would be a suitable replacement? One of the bass units is also faulty in that it 'crackles' occasionally. I imagine a replacement is required. Do I need to replace both of the bass 'speakers, as the whole lot only cost £75?

Bryn Morgan
Wales.

You may have seen Haden Boardman's July 1997 article on the Leak Sandwich 'speakers in which

he says that replacement drivers are not available and that, in any case,



With no spares for Leak's Sandwich loudspeakers, it's a question of replacement rather than repair.

they are very tricky to remove from the cabinets. You'd be better off looking for another pair - they can be bought so cheaply that any heroics to save those you have would be unnecessary.

If you prefer to use the Lenco tone-arm, a new M55 is available from Broadway Electronics, 92 Mitcham Rd., London SW17. On the other hand, you could fit a Decca London arm to the turntable with minimal modification. This would open up the range of cartridges it would be worth using. Shure M75s and M95s aren't expensive and replacement styli are stocked by Musonic (tel: 01923 213344). RMW

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ON A MISSION MISSION

I have a Cyrus dAD3 CD player, Cyrus 3 amp and PSX-R power supply and Mission 751 loudspeakers. I would be interested to know what your views are on the benefits of buying either a Cyrus power amp or XPA and bi-amping the 'speakers. I'd probably move the PSX-R to the CD player if I did this. Or should I just spend my dough adding the Q-DAC to the dAD3? Basically I like the sound I have, but I get upgrade mania every so often.

Also, I intend to buy a pair of floor standers soon. What goes well with a Cyrus set-up (besides the 752 and 753 of course). Please note I am in Australia where choice and price are not as great as in the UK or States.

Mark
markim@one.net.au



Bi-amping
 Roksan's Ojans with your
 Mission equipment should give fine results.

You'd get a fairly major step forward in sound from your system if you plumped for the XPA or Power and bi-amping over the DAC. Bi-amping would bring much greater transparency and scale to the sound, especially with your CD player working in conjunction with the PSX-R.

One floor stander to investigate in addition to the Missions is The Roksan Ojan at £895, but its bass goes very low, which could cause boom problems in smallish rooms. Rhythmically the Ojans are very good, musical enjoyment counterbalancing a slight lack of transparency.
 JM

Wire your new amp into your system with a pair of The Chord Company's Siren interconnects.

BEEFING UP CD

My current CD-playing set-up is a Teac T-1 transport linked to an Audio Alchemy DAC-in-the-box. In turn this feeds my Copland CSA14 integrated amp. Speakers are Sonus Faber Concertinos on dedicated stands filled with Soundbytes, bi-wired using Nordost Flatline cable. Quality interconnects are also used.

I am considering upgrading the DAC (this is why I chose the two-box route). I really like the sound - plenty of detail and a lovely midband - but I think the DAC is the weak area and I'm sure more can be done in this area.

Should I go for, say, the Musical Fidelity X-DAC (which has HDCD) or move much further upmarket to say DPA/Audio Note/Trichord? Would a second-hand Pink Triangle Da Capo make sense? I could stretch to a £750 budget if there was a real sonic improvement. I have a wide listening taste (Classical, Jazz, Rock, etc).

Paul Howard
pchoward@globalnet.co.uk

The T-1 is a fine transport but bolting a DAC like a Pink Triangle Da Capo onto the end of it is possibly going a tad too far. The MF X-DAC is one to consider, as is Midiman's Flying Calf at £130. In the June issue, we



An accomplished
 digital moo-sician is
 Midiman's Flying Cow ADC and DAC.

is the same as the one fitted to the Flying Calf.

To be honest though, if you can afford up to £750, I'd go for either Panasonic's DVD-A350 or Denon's DVD-3000 DVD players at £700, even though this closes off future two-box opportunities. As CD players, either will happily outperform most standard CD

players at up to £2000. They would certainly better the T-1 and a Da Capo. Then there's the fact that they will play 24-bit 96kHz discs, like those which

Vivante (tel: 0181 977 6600) sell. With one of these whirring away inside them, these players leave CD for dead - the sense of spaciousness, involvement and scale you get from 24/96 recordings is just so much better than CD can manage.
 JM

Expand your CD collection with a Classical box-set from Nimbus Records.

reviewed the Flying Cow, a combination DAC/ADC at £300. The DAC part was excellent, and

If you do not want your e-mail address published, please let us know.

PRE-PARED

These are the components that I have: Cambridge Audio A3i amp, Denon DCD-635 CD player, Tannoy Mercury m2 loudspeakers, QED Qnect 2 interconnects and Cable Talk 3.1 'speaker cable. The stands are home-made from wood.

The sound is OK. Now I have another A3i and I was wondering if there is a pre-amplifier that I can connect to the Cambridges? A new pair of bi-wire 'speakers will follow shortly. I have a budget of around £200-£250 for the pre-amp.

Vitor Serpa
np06sb@mail.telepac.pt

WELCOME MAT

Following on from earlier correspondence with yourselves, I'm now the owner of a reasonably mature but still very good LP12. It has a Rega tone-arm (an RB250 I think) and a Goldring 1006 cartridge. The turntable has a felt mat on it which brings the level of the disc up above the lip on the aluminium platter. Removing this mat has a great effect on the sound being reproduced but I'm a little wary about using the deck with nothing between the vinyl and the aluminium. Do you have any thoughts on this?
Steve Reece
sreece@qred.quintiles.com

The "great effect on the sound" that you notice when removing the LP12's felt mat will be down to two reasons. First, the vertical tracking angle of the cartridge will have changed by no small extent as you have effectively increased the arm height by about 3mm. If your great effect is for the better, then this rather suggests that the arm pillar was set too low when playing records avec mat. Second, by removing the mat from the turntable you have effectively altered the mechanical impedance of the platter/vinyl system.

Depending on who you talk to in the turntable business, you will get wildly contrasting ideas on the importance of this mat. Touraj Moghaddam of Roksan has gone on record (no pun intended) as saying that felt is good because it is very stiff at high frequencies and very compliant at low frequencies, this being the ideal to aim for.

Linn Products just favour the felt

£200 would buy you Creek's superb OBH-12 passive pre-amp. This could feed the Cambridges via their Tape In sockets. Alternatively, as the Denon has an output of 1.9V and the A3i's input sensitivity is a high 200mV on



Creek's OBH-12 passive pre-amp has a transparency shared by active versions at £1000 and up.

mat, full stop; any talk of impedance matching is seen as a red herring.

Pink Triangle extol the virtues of acrylic as a platter material since it matches closely the impedance of the vinyl in the record. Their aim is to remove the discontinuities between platter and record so that vibrational energy in the record can be grounded as rapidly and cleanly as possible.

Sound quality differences aside, felt is in fact ideal for many belt-drive turntables such as the LP12 and Regas. Since they prefer not to be stopped and started every 20-odd



Removing a rubber or felt mat from a turntable's platter will affect the stylus's Vertical Tracking Angle.

minutes through a listening session, the felt makes it very easy to change records from a still-spinning platter.

Applying record directly to aluminium platter may be the worst option sonically, if only because discs of the more flexible persuasion may sag in the middle with their outers riding the platter lip. This will result in a playing surface that 'dishes' in the centre and will upset

Tuner, Aux and Tape, you could use these inputs and set the Cambridges' own volume controls to maximum, although going through the A3i's volume pots won't do the sound any favours.

As for bi-wireable and bi-ampable budget loudspeakers, Mission's 771s at £170 are one option. Then again, if you're handy with a soldering iron and screwdriver, you could modify the m2s to make them bi-wireable. This would give very impressive sonic results. JM

Link your Creek and Cambridges with a set of The Chord Company's Siren interconnects.

the geometry of the stylus/groove interface. So, at least to save the records from scratching, use some kind of mat and then make amends to the arm height to keep VTA spot on. If you feel like a change of mat, I can vouch for Pentacone's (tel: 01924 445039) at £12.95 - it definitely tidies up the sound and is worth a listen.

The biggest problem with using a Rega arm on the LP12 (or any turntable in fact) is the difficulty in setting the arm height accurately. The only way to do this used to be with the use of spacers, a pig of a job since the arm has to be entirely removed, a spacer inserted between arm base and armboard, and then the arm re-installed and the lead re-dressed. Then, after listening you may decide the arm needs to go a little bit higher. . .

There are two options. Number one is to go for one of the proprietary kits that allow for a Linn-like fixing on a Rega arm, where a sleeve encloses the thread and the pillar is then gripped by a hex-screw in a collar fixed to the armboard. This is a good idea, except that the collar may raise the lowest possible height by an appreciable bit more than you actually need. By far the simplest method is to use half-washers. Take your washer (time to experiment with different materials here!), and saw/cut it in half so that both sides of the washer can be inserted with the arm in situ. Have fun! AH

Whatever the mat, your LP12 will enjoy getting its stylus into an audiophile LP from Vivante.

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RACKED BY INDECISION

I have recently bought sorbothane as a simple support for my CD player and it has worked very well. I was pleasantly surprised to find such a simple and reasonably-priced product could bring big gains to the sound of my hi-fi. I am now interested in buying a proper hi-fi rack, but there's such a multitude to choose from. I have only about £150 to spend and I'm not sure I can get a good rack for the money. Maybe I should buy a platform instead.

Khairil Osman
ko196@ecs.soton.ac.uk

Rack-wise, you might investigate Sound Organisation's Z560, which weighs in at five shelves and £170. One

The Perfect Sound Absorber platform is one of the best supports around the £130 mark.



highly-efficient platform is Perfect Sound's Absorber, which will tip the scales at £130 and is available from Goldring. If your budget will stretch to more Sorbothane, this in combination with the Z560 would have the largest overall impact on sound quality. JM

The Chord Company's Siren cables will give your hi-fi's sound another boost.

SPEAKING OF COMPUTERS

I have a spare not-too-hi-fi stereo amp which I presume I can connect to the outputs for my plasticky, powered computer 'speakers at line level? I then propose to purchase a pair of mini-monitors, which must be small in order to reduce the assault on my ears the present arrangement produces. Your 'speaker suggestions would be much appreciated if my project is viable.

R.D. Steel
captain.aspirin@virgin.net



Mission's 73s are one of the few hi-fi loudspeakers that are small and shielded.

There aren't many small monitors around which have shielding and aren't centre-channel 'speakers. You could connect your amp to Mission 73s at £99.90 though (they measure 260mm by 155mm by 155mm). On the other hand, if you can put some space between your screen and 'speakers, have a listen to JPW's ML310s (£50), Gale's Mini Monitors (£60) and Tannoy's Mercury m1s (£120). JM

Lift the lid on hi-fi's secrets with a copy of John Linsley Hood's Audio Electronics.

PRICE SENSITIVE

Your May issue was the first hi-fi mag I've bought for over a decade. Some things seem to have changed, some don't. The latest stuff is still better than anything that preceded it, just like washing powder. But apparently CD was never any cop at all, which will come as no shock to anyone who owns a decent record deck.

The purpose of this letter is a suggestion. I'm writing it on a PC, listening to Radiohead on the CD drive (Tangent Monitor Fives driven by the onboard 4watt amp). Most of my listening is done via this extremely inadequate set-up. Why not test a few audio-related PC ancillaries, the differences must be huge. I'm sure some information along these lines would be more relevant to real lives than the latest £5000 8watt valve amp.

This brings me to my next question; why are these amps so expensive? The component count is tiny. Our old Philco wireless has eight valves. It must be worth a fortune! The only other costs are transformers (say £20 each) and capacitors. Given a bit of plated metalwork I reckon £250 should do the trick. Strangely, a Marshall guitar combo is about twice that, but it includes a 'speaker and 100watts.

As far as "the latest stuff is still better than anything that preceded it": I have to say it looks like you indeed haven't been reading the magazine long, otherwise you would have noticed that Olde Woride and Vintage Virtues contain hi-fi from yesteryear that outperforms a lot of modern components. Have a look at the letters pages too, where second-hand is recommended alongside new. As to PC audio, we are planning to have a look at that area, it's just a question of finding the time in a busy editorial schedule.

When it comes to modern valve amps, quite a few, especially single-



EL34 valves are cheap but don't have the legendary reputation which has put up the price of the famous 300B.

endeds, are overpriced. However, you might be surprised how much a good output transformer can cost - winding a tranny that will go beyond 20kHz and below 20Hz with low distortion is a specialised process.

Capacitors - yes, there are more margins here, although some caps, like paper-in-oils, can cost up to £10 each. And you're not paying for component cost alone, you're also paying for the designer's time in selecting the best components for the money and working out which caps are synergetic in a particular design. This is often by far the longest part of the design process.

Most valves are cheap, but 300Bs tend to be overpriced because they've built up a bit of a following for their excellent sound quality. EL34s can be had for a tenner or less though.

Like you say, there are some overpriced valve amps around - you just have to weed out the good from the bad through demos. Mind you, if you can put up with listening to your music through a guitar amp, spend your money on software! JM

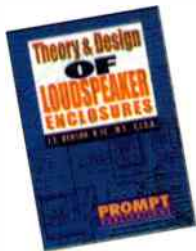
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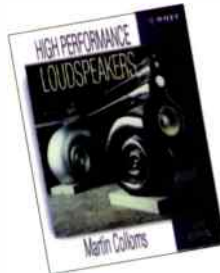
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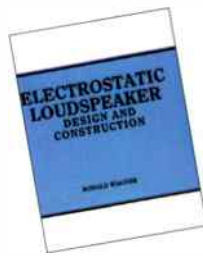
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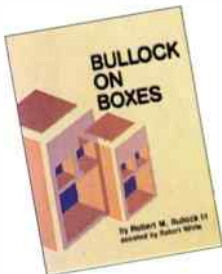


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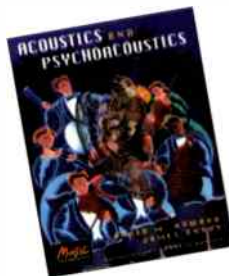


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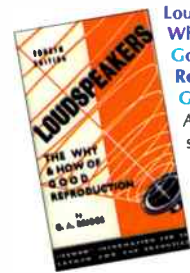
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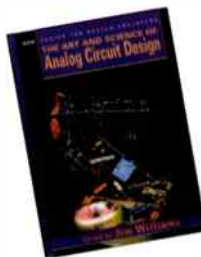


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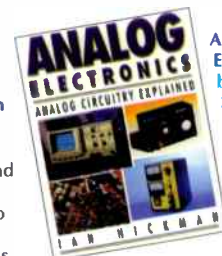
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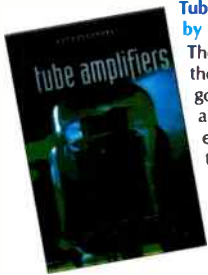
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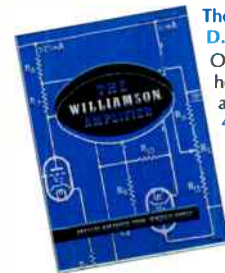
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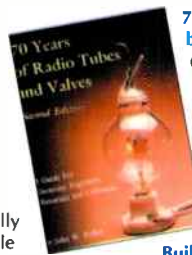
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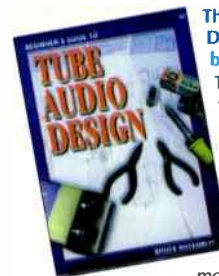
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THE LAST WORD?

Are Ruark's Epilogues the ultimate statement in stand-mount 'speakers? Dominic Todd hears them out.

Ruark is one of those rare companies that believes every one of its loudspeakers should look as good as it sounds - I suppose that's what comes from having a trained cabinet maker for a founder. True to form, the new £240 Epilogues look as luxurious as Ruark's other offerings, thanks to plentiful attention to construction detail. Bi-wiring and decent drive units you'd expect from a compact 'speaker of this price, but a Medite cabinet veneered externally and internally and gold-plated bolts (rather than wood screws) are unusual; in terms of build, Ruark have hit the nail on the head. Still, there are some talented competitors out there - Mission's 750LE is the most formidable opponent, though neither should the Castle Isis, Eltax LR4.5 or Monitor Audio One Gold be underestimated.

With the Epilogues mounted on Apollo Olympus 6 stands, I began with Ian Shaw's 'Have You Met Miss Jones?' Instrumentally this piece is sparse yet dynamic enough to catch out more sluggish transducers, and it suited the Ruarks well. Piano was a little light in timbre, but still passable for a 'speaker of this price. Vocals were centrally placed and projected well into the room, with only a slight hardening at higher levels spoiling things. The percussion was incisive and detailed, although a degree of splash and tizz meant it wasn't quite up to 750LE standards.

Space's 'Avenging Angels' had the baby Ruarks more vexed. Bass was well balanced and integrated but didn't have a great deal of weight. As the track became more complex I could detect that definite hardening of the mid-band which had been hinted at before. At least the timing was good, and a tight, punchy bass also ensured a fair amount of involvement. Still, I couldn't help but think that a 750LE would have done it even better, with superior control and resolution.



As Ruarks have a good reputation for reproducing Classical music, I was interested to see how the Epilogues would fare with Vaughan Williams' Symphony No5. String timbre was good in the midrange, yet it lost out at frequency extremes. Cellos and basses lacked weight in the lower registers, nor was the treble the smoothest around. Again, as things got more complicated, the baby Ruarks lost their way. During louder, denser sections the orchestra became muddled, spoiling what had been a decent sound stage. Bar the lack of real bass weight, dynamic contrasts were well resolved and the overall rendition was fair - but far from engrossing.

Tracy Chapman's 'Mountain Of Things' and 'She Got Her Ticket' better showcased the Ruarks' talents. Percussion was bright, airy and well defined, allowing the decay of a solitary triangle to be clearly heard. Best of all though was the admirable reproduction and staging of the vocals, which were hard to fault for the money. Still, even considering the Epilogues' small size, bass was lightweight - others manage to

squeeze more out of a small box without upsetting the overall balance, so why can't Ruark? Likewise, the drum intro at the beginning of 'She's Got Her Ticket' lacked the impact and depth needed for it to be truly convincing.

Therein lies the rub - for all their fine qualities the Epilogues aren't sufficiently capable all-rounders. Yes, they're one of the prettiest and best finished loudspeakers for the money. They are also fairly easy to drive (not always a Ruark characteristic) and have some real sonic strengths. With simple, sparse tracks, especially those with a strong vocalist, they really do perform. But as soon as they're given anything complex, whatever type of music it may be, those rough edges are all too readily exposed. The midband hardens, the treble loses control and things generally become confused.

The harsh reality is that there are 'speakers out there that sound just as good for half the price. And for the same money most better the Ruarks sonically, even if they do lack that sumptuous finish. Unless the latter is of paramount importance to you, then look toward the likes of Mission, Castle and Eltax to see how a baby monitor can really shine●

Ruark Epilogue £239

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WORLD VERDICT



Fine finish for the money but sound is below par, lacking refinement, grip and weight.

Measured Performance see p111

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Noel Keywood

Britain's small but not unnoticed hi-fi industry is going through a number of changes. A press release dropped onto my desk that made me look and then look again. The more I read it, the more unusual it seemed. It said a new loudspeaker cabinet plant costing £3m is being built in Plymouth and the company making this large investment also had, under its wing, JPW Loudspeakers, Quale Audio, Audiolink Cables, Heybrook Hi-Fi and DC Cabinets. Groups this size don't form every day, especially not down in the wilds of the West Country. And then there's the name: Audio Group International, or AGI. Is there any connection with the recently formed IAG, or International Audio Group, I wondered? Is Chinese investment behind the new group, as it is with IAG? And what about TAG?

TAG is short for Technologie Avante Garde, who are part of the emergent landscape, even if they are entering from a different angle. That's because it isn't the French and Germans that are at the centre of this tale: it is the Chinese. Wherever you look Chinese money is pouring into Hi-Fi UK, changing the way it operates and injecting new, not always successful life. But TAG are going to shake things up a little, that's for sure.

I'd like to make this an industrial fairy tale where the Chinese and British move ahead to a new industrial Nirvana, but it isn't quite like that. In truth there's a lot of fannyng around going on at present as the frantic Chinese try to sort out what they've bought. I should point out, by the way, that current wisdom has it the

Chinese are after Western brand names that they can market in the Far East. That is true, but it isn't the whole story nor the end of it.

When Hong Kongers look to the outside world, pre-eminent in their vision is the USA, but Britain figures too. Bear in mind that Hong Kong was commercially successful under British colonial rule and you can begin to see that Britain isn't going to be the foreign mystery it will perhaps be to, say, the Japanese.

So where is Chinese money going? Some went into the Verity Group, owners

*"Wherever
you look
Chinese money
is pouring
into
Hi-Fi UK"*

of Mission, years ago. Mission like to say as little as possible about this: there's vague talk about shareholders if I raise the matter, before the subject is changed. The Chinese stake in Mission is around 30% or so I believe.

After Mission, and far more visibly, comes Gold Peak. This huge battery manufacturer is based in Hong Kong but supplies the Far East region, including China. They bought KEF and Celestion in quick succession some years ago. The jury is out on whether the purchase has been a success. Gold Peak created the Ditton brand recently, complete with Union Jacks - vital for the China market I am told - but Ditton is designed and manufactured in the Far East and has yet to appear in Britain! Worse, Ditton loudspeakers are designed and built in Denmark, when Gold Peak owns two British loudspeaker companies.

Which brings me to IAG and AGI. The connection between these sound-alikes is that there isn't one! But Audio Group International insist that their investment comes from Britain, comprising local grants from English Heritage and other bodies keen to see jobs in electronics being brought to the West Country, where unemployment is high. This development appears to revolve around local hero Peter Wanstall, who started JPW Loudspeakers, a West Country company, and also has an interest in DC Cabinets, based in Wiltshire. I think I would be right in characterising AGI as a Cabinet Manufacturer moving into hi-fi.

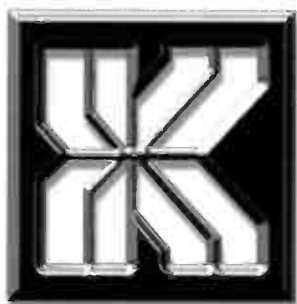
So what about IAG? International Audio Group split from the Verity Group, of which Mission is the main part. IAG is a grouping of Quad, Wharfedale, Leak and Airedale Cabinets. The official line from IAG is that it is funded by an international consortium of its dealers, but what the percentages are isn't discussed. It's no secret that IAG is setting up a loudspeaker assembly plant in China and rumour now has it Quad will be built in China! I'm reliably informed by my own Chinese contacts that behind IAG lies a company called Sencore, run by two Harvard-educated Chinese businessmen.

And TAG? This is a peculiar company, but potentially a very influential one. Technologie Avante Garde is a European electronics company built, I was told, on the vision of an Arab so rich that the sort of sums needed for industrial investment are of little consequence. TAG, I learnt in slightly sceptical awe, is a company built to pursue perfection. It makes its money supplying electronics to Europe's top car makers and is best known for its association with McLaren F1 cars, which is the British side of things. "We have the world's best-known brand name" they told me, "but nothing to sell to people except watches". So they bought Audiolab, now known as TAG Electronics and are already building a new factory near Cambridge.

Why is all this happening now? I have not one little clue. Why did the Berlin Wall collapse when it did? And why have Volkswagen bought Rolls-Royce and Bentley? The British are not so good at making things. They're good salesmen though!

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MAGNETIC ATTRACTION

Richard White compares Lowther's tried-and-trusted PM6A full-range driver with the new DX2.

The Lowther company have been manufacturing high-efficiency, full-range loudspeaker drivers for over 40 years now. New additions have occasionally joined the line-up, and the present ceramic-magnet series is now more closely tailored to today's lower loudspeaker impedances, but there has been little in the way of radical re-thinks. Although oddities have cropped up from time to time (for example the LIB of the early Seventies, which housed a full-range unit in the Lowther Ideal Baffle with its ABR) Lowther have been, for the most part, synonymous with horns.

When we heard about the rare-earth-magnet DX series, we decided to put them to the test in a well-known Lowther design, what you might call 'the people's horn' - the Acousta. Vintage Virtues columnist Haden Boardman covered these in January 1998 so I shan't wallow in the details too much except to say that the Acousta is a folded-horn which relies on direct forward transmission of the treble, horn-loading of the bass down to about 60Hz and cabinet resonance and crossed fingers for the rest! Having gripped thus, those Acoustas which I have heard have sounded much, much better than the compromise-ridden design would suggest. This is largely attributable to the excellence of the PM6A driver, a full-range, dual-cone design. The magnet's flux density is around 17000Gauss, which acts across a 1mm gap to drive a double-wound 1.5in voice-coil attached to the cone, itself a low-mass parchment assembly with a highly compliant surround. And now enter the DX2. . .

Neodymium, one of the 'rare-earth' metals, has a peculiarly high remanence which, mass-for-mass, is ten times that of conventional ferrite and Alnico magnet formulations. The advantages of such a substance for loudspeaker magnets are manifold, but can be boiled down to this: a smaller and lighter magnet assembly is required for a given total flux.

This has always been the magnet-maker's goal - high-fidelity loudspeakers owe much to the development of the Alnico-type alloys which, with their high flux density mass-for-mass, made highly sensitive 'speakers practical. Before their arrival, Voigt's early driver designs all used an energised field-coil. Experimenters, notably Prof. Mishima, had managed to make high-remance materials but the results could not be reproduced reliably.

It was in 1934 that Horsburgh and Tetley's experiments at Swift, Levick And Sons bore fruit, and Alnico (Aluminium/Nickel/Copper) was patented. Almost at a stroke the need for huge magnets supported by girder-like chassis was eliminated.

Neodymium would appear to be a development of similar magnitude. As a rough guide, the new DX2 drive unit tips the scales at 4.5lb and has a performance directly comparable with the PM6A which weighs 8lb 13oz! Since the other components of the driver are



identical with the PM6A, this whacking 4.5lb difference rests solely with the magnet assembly.

In addition to being much lighter, the DX magnet is more compact, which gives important sonic advantages. A large, planar surface, be it cabinet-baffle or a part of the driver, can give rise to awkward reflections if placed too near to the rear of the cone. Unruly cancellation effects, sonic 'shadows', not to mention mayhem with inaccurate phasing - all may be attributable to the magnet or even to an over-generous chassis. As readers will be aware, some designers are now 'streamlining' their drivers' rear assemblies to counteract these effects. A smaller magnet is a big step in the right direction.

Thanks to a handy continuity of design, the spacing of the PM6A and DX2 fixing holes remains the same, so I bolted one of the units in place by tightening the bolts in a diagonal sequence. A word of warning here may prevent a phase test being necessary later. The smart, colour-coded cable fixing nuts will come off when you unscrew them and the screws underneath are not colour-coded. . . Need I elaborate? A quarter-inch of thread is also not particularly helpful if you have thickish connectors or wish to fit a washer as well. A slight gripe

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this, but security of connections is important.

Why install only one unit at first? It seemed appropriate to try a little A-B testing with an older driver, this being a 'curved square-face' PM6A, in order to assess the nature of any improvement in performance.

The instructions which accompany the DX2 state that the unit should be run-in gently for about 30 hours. Although I was only using 10watts, I set up Radio 3 at a lowish wick until the Lowther's expected preliminary harshness had abated somewhat. The old PM6A had been re-coned and in use for about six months and so was 'comfortable' with itself.

As regards sensitivity, the DX2 walked away with all prizes. Although the two drivers were nominally interchangeable, I found the old-model PM6A was 3dB down. Admittedly, high sensitivity is not everything, but it does give the amplifier a relatively easy time of it (my TL10s have not needed to step outside class A operation since the DX2s were connected up). Naturally, the well used PM6As sounded smoother at the start, but differences here soon ironed themselves out as the DX2s loosened up.

The treble and midrange are customary Lowther strong points and the DX2s were no exception: treble was breathtakingly musical and clear, which unfortunately allowed stylus mis-tracking on worn records to be all too readily distinguished! As the units settled down after a few days of use, the initial fresh-from-the-box harshness gradually diminished.

The DX2s coped especially well with the renowned Philips recording of J.S. Bach's solo violin sonatas. Gidon Kremer's expressive and dynamic performances can sound a little forced through unsympathetic 'speakers and playing them through anything with a 'toppy' tweeter can leave you wondering why the recording was ever issued. The DX2/Acousta combination gave a good demonstration of the advantages of full-range, crossover-free design. It was a pleasure to listen to Bach and Mr. Kremer, in that order, rather than having the hi-fi and the tweeter mixed in and spoiling it.

Pichas Zukerman's beautiful interpretation of the Elgar Concerto floated out with just the right balance of sweetness and vigour. Some of the first movement's climaxes were apparently just what the 'speakers had been waiting for to show off their punch; the 'cello section and trombones blasted away nicely.

A driver as transparent as the DX2 ought to give an excellent account of itself on vocal music, so I gave the all-but-divine Christa Ludwig a spin on the Archiv Christmas Oratorio. Fans of Miss Ludwig are Hanging Judges when it comes to the accurate reproduction of her voice - mercifully, the Lowthers didn't let my ears down, otherwise my opinion of them would rapidly have become somewhat jaundiced.

In order to test the Lowthers with some true bass, Fernando Germani's pedal-work on the Widor organ Toccata was brought into play. Organ music has distinct advantages when it comes to judging loudspeaker performance because there's no dodging the outcome - the sound's either there or it isn't. To find programme material with a guaranteed content down to 30Hz or so generated 'naturally' by exciting a column of air over thirty feet long is not that easy to do outside the pipe-organ catalogue, which is possibly why there was such a



boom in organ-music records when high-fidelity was in its infancy.

The DX2 driver has a claimed response -3dB to 30Hz, but the Acousta horn will only properly load it down to 60Hz, leaving a whole octave to be coped with by the driver alone, working in a rather dubious acoustic-suspension mode. To its credit, the DX2 did its damndest, reproducing undistorted sub-bass which, although inadequately coupled to the load and therefore several dB too 'light', was nonetheless open and musical. I was able, with an Audio Frequency oscillator, to coax a response of sorts down to 20Hz, but at this level, frequency doubling was beginning to rear its ugly head.

At the outset of this review, I did not particularly expect to be distinctly hearing the DX2. As the days went by though, it became obvious that a lot of lower-midrange muddle had disappeared compared with a PM6A. Could this have been one of the benefits of the much-reduced magnet size? I suspect that further benefits, like slightly weightier bass, might accrue as the surround runs in, a process which is almost unbelievably lengthy with Lowther units. Whatever the changes, the DX2 is a worthy addition to Lowther's range.

The DX2s cost £235 each including VAT. Alternatively, you can part-exchange an older model. Assuming you are swapping a C series, PM6A or PM7A, the new unit will cost £152.75 including VAT.

The PM6 driver has a very open chassis which produces far fewer reflections than many modern variants.



Be sure to note the terminals' polarity before unscrewing them, as there is no other indication of which way round cables go.

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David Price

Having mixed with, worked with and drunk with audio engineers, I know only too well their favourite topic of conversation. Being the red-blooded breed that they are, hot cars, big bikes and members of the opposite sex (or any combination thereof) figure prominently in a night out down at The Old Chain and Sprocket. Yet even more popular than these worthy pursuits is recounting their near-death-experiences while working with the high voltages inside hi-fi.

For some strange reason, many of them have a custom of not wearing protective safety clothing when working with lethal mains.

Apparently, should their friends catch them wearing life-saving rubber gloves, their masculinity may be questioned and the polite suggestion made that they take up another more suitable profession like hairdressing.

For a soft, Southern shandy-drinker like myself, the risk of touching lethal HT rails inside valve amps would induce me to wear pretty much anything - even a wet suit, snorkel and flippers. But to a chain-smokin', beer-drinkin' ZZ Top kinda guy, finger-frazzling voltages are a mere trifle compared to the risk of being seen wearing a pair of pink Marigolds.

Basically, I harbour no secret desire to lay down my life for the noble cause of High Fidelity. I am quite sure about this, having already once nearly gone to that Great Dem Room in the sky whilst in pursuit of ever better sound quality. How so? Well, unlike the glamorous end that a

wallop from a big tube amplifier would doubtless bring, my number nearly came up from nothing more exotic than installing a radio aerial on the roof. . .

You see, I'm an airwave addict. Granted, switching on a tuner and pressing a preset is hardly as cool as setting up your SME V by ear or re-clocking your CD transport, but I have to admit that there are a great many times when I'd rather just listen to wireless.

It all started back in the early Eighties when I heard a friend's NAD 7020 receiver. And very nice it sounded too, with a beautifully rich, sweet and spacious acoustic through which the likes of Capital Radio, LBC and GLR sparkled.

I was hooked, and soon bought my first tuner, a cheap and cheerful Sony. The wonder of its natty little

by way of music either. So gobsmacked was I about the Hitachi's abilities to pull in virtually anything doing the rounds of the ether that I forgot to listen to how it sounded. A big mistake, as despite its rave reviews, its treble did a passable imitation of dustbin lids being hit together, while the midband on FM was worse than my old Sony on AM. So much for synthesiser tuners.

Later I bought one of the first Creek manual tuners (the precursor of the new T43 that impressed Ketan back in May). Now this was real radio, with warmth, depth, clarity, tunefulness - the lot. Only the ten-fold increase in stations at the beginning of the Nineties forced me to change back to presets, in the shape of a Sony ST-S770ES. Despite being festooned with every feature under the sun, this high-end

*"For a soft,
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green backlit dial soon faded though when it tuned into its first FM stereo transmission. Despite the signal strength meter telling me otherwise, my 'wet piece of string' antenna was pulling in more mush than music, and I knew a proper outdoor twig was in order. The inevitable wobbly-ladder scenario duly followed, and yours truly was left wondering if departing this mortal coil was worth it for improved reception of Radio Oxford.

Fortunately, a couple of years later the Japanese came up with an answer. Why not, instead of risking life and limb atop some dodgy step ladder, I reasoned, stick with my wet string and buy one of the new-fangled, super-sensitive, ultra-low-noise digital synthesiser jobbies? A Hitachi FT-5500 was duly purchased, plugged into the string, and hey presto - no hiss!

Unfortunately there wasn't much

synthesiser design could easily mix it with NAD's superb little 414 - it was that good. Since then I've been deeply impressed by Noel's old dog-eared Leak Troughline, which is another awesome performer - deliciously sweet and musical with imaging to die for. Other than Yamaha's classic CT-7000, plus Fischer's FM200B and Marantz's 10B tube designs, it's the best I've heard.

What saddens me though is that tuners are such a neglected part of the audiophile. I guess they're just not as sexy as exotic vinyl or high-end CD. The upshot of this is that most new models on the market these days use the same cheap parts-bin ICs and sound dreadful. Rather than pulling people in to Radioland, most are a big turn off. No, I definitely wouldn't risk going up a ladder for most of today's cheap synthesiser designs - I couldn't face another near-deaf experience. ●

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KEEP TAKING THE TABLETTES

Leo Lam wonders if ProAc's long-running Tablette 50s are still the small loudspeakers to beat.

Miniature stand mounters are a favourite means of listening to music in Britain's space-challenged domestic environment. In fact, only rabbits are more prolific than small 'speaker manufacturers when it comes to new models. One of the few that has enjoyed prosperity and a long life is the £600 Tablette 50 from ProAc.

The Tablette 50 is a classic two-way, reflex-loaded design. Both the silk-dome tweeter and 4in. long-throw mid/bass unit are built to ProAc's spec by Seas and are recessed into a rigid cabinet made of 15mm MDF. The two ports are mounted on the rear panel along with the chunky, Michell bi-wire terminals.

Visually the Tablettes are conservative yet modern thanks to the carefully-crafted cabinet finished in matched real-wood veneer. They are supplied in mirror-image pairs and should be set up with the tweeter towards the inner edge. To avoid any positional hiccoughs, ProAc even go as far as to provide a concise and useful manual with instructions on placement in a room, suitable cables and matching amplifiers.

From past experience, I knew the Tablettes would breathe easiest about 1.5meters away from the back wall and corners, slightly toed-in so that I could barely see the inner side of the cabinets. After the mandatory few days of continuous running-in, the Tablettes were exposed to a range of amplifier front-ends: Creek OBH-12 passive pre with the Unison Research Power 35 and Musical Fidelity X-A50 pre/power amplifiers. Cables included Kimber's 8TC and The Chord Company's Rumour.

A quick audition with the Aura VA80 proved that the ProAc's aren't a happy match with low-powered or inexpensive amplification. As they're true to the source, the Tablettes don't take kindly to lesser amps or sources, and will expose any weaknesses.

The Tablettes' most obvious trait was their ability to dig out musical detail. Apart from the flowing melody, there are ambience and atmosphere in abundance to draw you right into the spirit of the performance.

Incontrovertible proof of this was Dawn Upshaw's Broadway success 'I Wish It So' (Elektra Nonesuch 7559-79345-2), whose effortless delivery made it hard to concentrate on writing this review. Upshaw's voice was tightly focused, rich in texture and free from excessive sibilance, leaving the rest of the mix to extend well back behind the plane of the 'speakers. Some cabinet resonance was audible in the lower treble on this CD, but it wasn't bad enough to distract me from the balanced overall presentation. With male vocal,

however, this boxiness was more significant. One of my favourite baritones, Dmitri Hvorostovsky in his Russian compilation *Song And Dances Of Death* (Philips 438 872-2), picked up a chesty coloration which was especially obvious during long, sustained passages. That said, his voice had lots of presence and the Kirov Orchestra was appropriately set back in the sound stage.

The small mid/bass unit might not be able to reach deep down, but upper bass was utterly satisfying. Composed and controlled even at very high levels, the ProAc's almost asked to be driven hard.

Unassumingly musical, the ProAc is one to add to your auditions list, although the coloration in the lower midrange is an occasional drawback. As far as real competitors are concerned, Sonus Faber's Concertinos and the LS3/5as spring to mind. Feed the Tablette 50s with some decent current from a capable amp and they'll keep your LPs on the platter instead of in their sleeves.



ProAc Tablette 50 £600

DNA Marketing
Solar House,
New Street,
Petworth,
W. Sussex GU28 0AS
Tel: 01798 343414

WORLD VERDICT



Though fussy over amplification and slightly boxy in the lower treble, the baby ProAc is seductively mus.cal.

Measured Performance see p111

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VINTAGE VIRTUES

by Haden Boardman

Launched in 1967, the Quad 33/303 transistor pre and power amplifiers were the company's first forays into domestic transistor equipment. Acoustical (Quad's original name) had earlier launched the 50E, a professional 50watt monobloc that used transformer-coupled inputs and outputs which is more than a bit collectable these days. The 50E is, however, totally different in terms of architecture from the stereo 303 power amplifier; in



fact, from a circuit topology point of view, you could almost view the 50E as valve! Unfortunately, there never was a professional pre-amplifier to go along with the 50E.

Quad were not quick to jump on the Solid-State band wagon, and avoided the germanium transistors of the early 1960s. They preferred to wait until the time and the technology were right before embarking on the 33/303.

The 303's case is no larger than a single Quad II valve monobloc at 12cms by 16cms by 32cms, yet the amp boasts 45 watts per channel, with 0.03% total harmonic distortion. The circuit itself is very simple, with its shunt regulator and capacitor-coupled output. The damping factor is actually worse than some valve amplifiers, thanks to a 0.3ohms source impedance. Compare this with the 0.03 ohms of the later 405! Still, the 303 remains load tolerant and is perfectly happy driving a pair of Quad electrostatics.

The matching 33 pre-amp is a very natural progression from the 22, and much better organised. Internally powered, the unit is built on small 'plug-in' modules, some of which allow direct user access from the rear of the case

to facilitate the setting of phono sensitivity and tape input/output levels. The other boards are for Quad's servicing only, and make an engineer's job much easier than was the case with the earlier valve 22.

Inputs number one for phono, two for tuners and a tape monitor circuit. Phono sensitivity is 0.5mV (with a maximum output of 500mV), tuner 100mV and the tape's is adjustable from 100mV through to 1V. Try connecting a CD player to the spare radio input and you'll overload it - an attenuator must be fitted, or else distortion will occur.

The 33 also has switched outputs to turn its partnering 303 on and off, as well as any of the tuners/electrostatic loudspeakers connected to the system. This is accomplished through American two-pin plugs, with mains input via a three-pin miniature Bulgin connector. The lead between 33 and 303 uses a special four-pin plug which is only available from Quad these days.

The biggest pain with these amplifiers is their German DIN connectors. These limit cable choice and, due to their confusing permutations, can cause endless wiring trouble. As a 'fit and forget' connector, they are not to

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bad though - minimum 'spaghetti' hanging around the back makes for a low 'Spouse Annoyance Factor'!

While the 33/303 were originally sold with the matching FMIISD valve tuner, this was replaced in the early 1970s by the FM3. This was the same physical size as the 33 where the FMIISD had been a tad larger and ran hotter than the 303! But the real rarity in this series is the AM3, an all-valve, self-powered AM tuner. Rare? Indeed yes. The only other weapon in the 303 arsenal is a wooden sleeve in which both the 33 and FM3 could be neatly located.

Reliability-wise, the only real worry with the 303 is the four large electrolytic capacitors. Two work in the power supply, the others the output stage. These die with age and tend to leak. When replacing them, the approved modification is to fit the caps 'upside down', with the terminals pointing upwards.

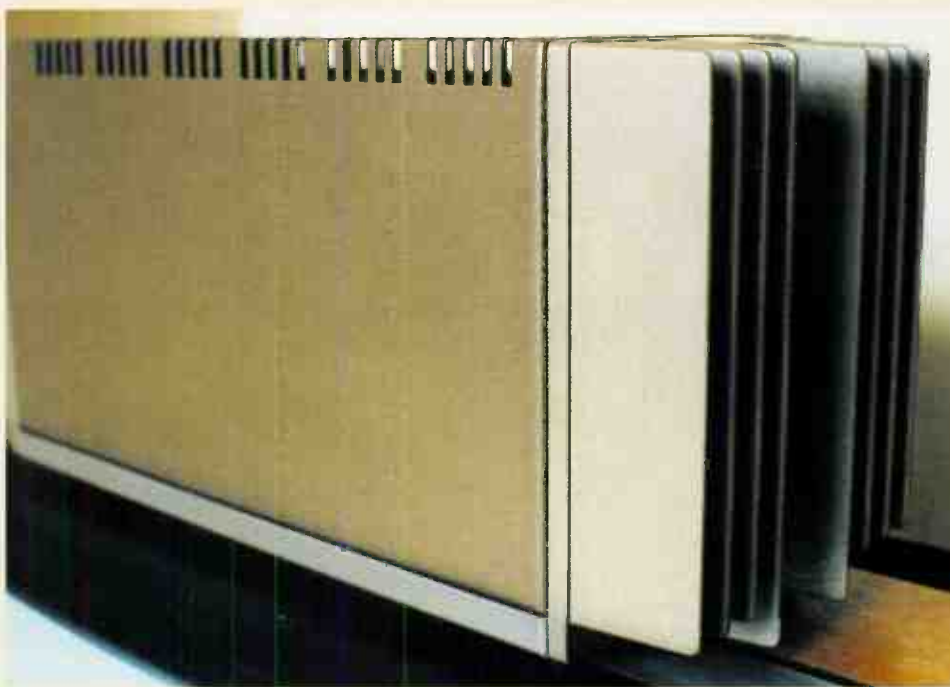
The 33 can suffer all kinds of strange, intermittent faults which are usually caused by a loose module inside the unit. It's worthwhile cleaning all the edge connectors (use a proprietary, non-abrasive switch-cleaner like the Philips service spray) and push-button switches. Other than that, there's not many things that go wrong.

The early FMIISD valve tuner is basically the same as the unit that matched the 22/II, but complete with its own power supply and transistorised stereo decoder. When on song, these tuners are sweeter sounding than the later FM3, but not very reliable. They were great when only three or four stations existed on the FM band, but with today's crowded VHF, the tuner drifts too much and is not really sufficiently sensitive. Neither the FM tuner, nor the AM3 for that matter, pose any real problems in service. Just get them aligned and they should give sterling service for years.

Sound-wise, well, it has to be said as a combination the 33/303 is a trifle dated. Although the sound is lively enough, compared to a 22/II set it is very 'shut in'. A famous Quad advertisement from the early 1970s shows a whole row of 303 power amplifiers connected together in a daisy-chain fashion, the caption stating that whatever was applied to the input of the first power amplifier would be exactly the same as what came out of the end of the last one. I have my doubts!

The pre-amp is a little noisy, mostly a touch of hiss, but the defeatable tone controls are handy and the pre-amp is far better than most people make out. In comparison with contemporary competition the Quad combo doesn't do too badly, although the Sugden C51/P51 beats it in most respects. The fit and finish of the Quad leave the slightly more expensive Sugden set wanting somewhat, and if the internal build is not quite as good as the Sugdens, it is a lot neater.

But it is the style that sells the 33/303. The biggest market for used sets is Italy, where the units tend to be immaculate, pampered and revered as an 'objet d'art' rather than cutting-edge pieces of audio. I personally feel the styling is superb - the proportions are just right and perfectly logical. The grey/brown/orange colour scheme



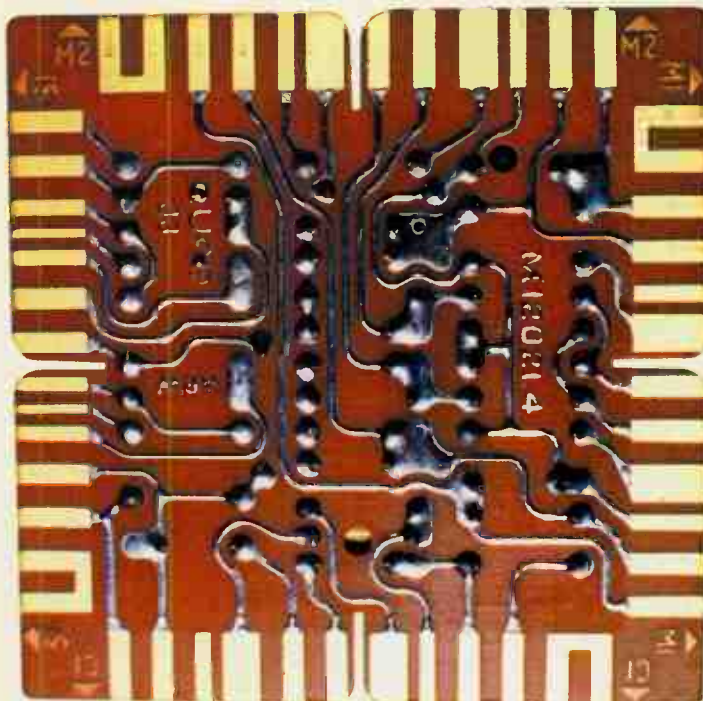
The shoebox 303 power amp and its cast heatsinks.

is very tasteful considering it appeared in the era that brought us bell-bottoms and large, floppy shirt collars. Seventies style does seem to be making a bit of a comeback in the design shops at the moment, and while the Quads were designed in the Sixties, they were ahead of their time.

If you are looking for a second-room system, then give the ultra-reliable FM3/33/303 a listen. Avoid sets in poor condition - these components are far too common to bother with tatty examples as nobody wants them. Buying from a dealer you will pay around £200 for a pre/power pair and £120 for an FM3. Purchasing privately?

Then the Quads can come much cheaper, as prized 'car-boot' souvenirs! With their cast fascias and superb detailing, though, I find it very hard to be cruel to the 303 family. In no way do they offer the best

sound per pound, but taking all things into account - the reliability, ease of service and that style - it's hard to say that every home should not have one! ●



One of the 33 pre-amp's slot-in cards.

There's no such thing as the perfect sounding hi-fi system.

The reason is that everyone has different preferences and differing opinions as to what constitutes the best sound. One listener's "bright and vivid" is another's "grainy and harsh". Even when we go to a live concert, we will not just hear differently from other people, but we will also pick up on different aspects of the music, like the rhythm from a drummer or the performance of the string section in an orchestra.

Exactly the same is true of hi-fi separates. Hi-fi companies produce equipment that is as sonically distinctive as an individual face in a crowd. It doesn't matter what the cost is either. Take any point on the price scale and you will find systems that produce music in a characteristic, distinctive way.

Now there's two ways hi-fi manufacturers can approach this situation. They can ignore it altogether and simply produce products that represent the best blend of technology, sound quality and value at the same time. This is normally the way larger manufacturers go about it - there is, for example, no such thing as a 'Pioneer sound'. But then, for a company that produces so many diverse products and changes its entire range each year, a 'family' sound is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. Much is the same with Technics, Sony and many other, usually Japanese, multi-nationals.

The other way to deal with the idea of a 'family' sound is to embrace it, either through similar circuitry and engineering or by deliberate fine tuning, as do many of the smaller names in hi-fi. This is an excellent way of promoting brand awareness and customer loyalty. Look at some of the more successful British brands and you'll see many with a reputation built upon a particular presentation. We may not like the way a Naim, Mission or Audiolab sounds, but many do, and these are three companies I know of which have some of the most loyal customers.

British outfits don't have a monopoly on the 'family' sound - Rotel products can be easily

identified, as can (or these days, could) Nakamichi cassette decks. And it's a fact established, smaller companies ignore at their peril.

Take NAD for instance. They used to produce the best selling amp year after year. The 3020 was a huge success, not only because it represented a true classic design in its own right, but because it also epitomised a particular sound quality that ran through the entire NAD range - punchy and detailed, yet also a good deal more refined than many of the Japanese competition.

As time went by though, the competition became that bit sharper in the treble and a tad tauter in the bass, and it was clear that NAD needed to do something in order to stay one step ahead. Hence an entirely new range was launched, with the 302 as the direct replacement for the 3020. It proved to be a flop, not just according to my own experience in retailing but to many private sources within NAD. Why? It simply didn't sound like a NAD. NAD had gone all out in



Dominic Todd

product that differs from the company's norm but an entire new model range though. Having listened to a number of Arcam's new components recently, I've realised that's exactly what has happened in this case. Arcam products used to be the epitome of a warm, laid-back and rich presentation. These days they are far more up-front, with a previously unknown vivacity accompanied by less refinement than

"British outfits don't have a monopoly on the 'family' sound - Rotel products can be easily identified, as can (or these days, could) Nakamichi cassette decks."

producing an amp that matched rival designs. Hence it sounded like just another Japanese amp rather than one descended from the 3020.

To be fair to NAD they reacted pretty swiftly and came out with two solutions. The first was an entirely new model, the 310, which was far closer sonically to the 3020 than the 302 had ever been. The second was a replacement, the 312. The 312 was based upon the 302's big brother, the 304, and was all the better for it. Gone was the harsh, anaemic sound of the 302, replaced by the warmth and soul typical of the marque.

What if it's not just a single

before. Fortunately for Arcam, the range has, on the whole, been well received and is selling fairly well - perhaps Arcam's gamble has paid off.

In the meantime, any hi-fi companies out there reading this and thinking of a fundamental change should consider the possible outcome long and hard. If the changes are carefully considered rather than reactive, that's fine. If not, they could risk upsetting a lot of loyal customers. And, as many of us in retailing have constantly had drilled into us, the customer is always right!●

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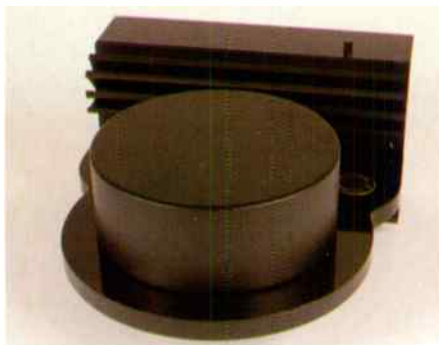
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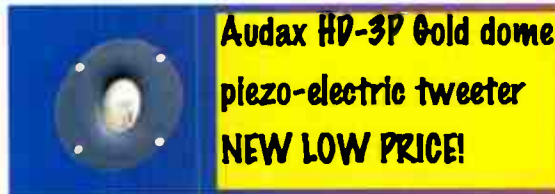
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LORD OF THE LINK

Jon Marks spoke to Andrew Lord of QED to shed some light on the black art of cable design.

While many DIY enthusiasts and hi-fi designers are aware of how individual resistors and capacitors can influence the way a piece of hi-fi equipment sounds, cables are less predictable. The majority of the letters we receive from readers concern cable upgrades, and what actually makes a good cable. So, to bypass the marketing hype that surrounds so much cabling, we decided to speak to Andrew Lord, QED's cable man.

Jon Marks What are your views on the skin effect, which some manufacturers cite as the main reason for their use of solid-core cable?

Andrew Lord I could say a lot of things about the skin effect! Skin effect describes an increase in cable resistance at high frequencies. For digital audio and video cables, this is something which it's vital to take into consideration as the signal frequencies involved are so much higher (up to 4.5MHz for video) than those you'll find in a hi-fi system. Silver plating copper is one way round the problem as it increases the conductivity on the conductor's surface where the greatest current density is at high frequencies.

There has been a great deal of discussion concerning the skin effect as it might relate to analogue audio cables. Smaller diameter cables suffer less from the skin effect, hence one reason for choosing solid-core wiring. However, smaller diameter cables have an innately higher resistance than larger ones, so this is far from being an ideal solution.

In order to reduce both the skin effect and resistance, some companies employ expensive Litz-like cable geometry. However, I have done some calculations concerning Qudos (our low-resistance cable, which has not been

specifically designed to eliminate the skin effect).

Would you expect to hear a difference between two lengths of Qudos, one of 5m and one of 6m? Although resistance, capacitance and inductance will all have increased by 20%, I would challenge anyone under blind listening conditions to hear this difference. At 15kHz, it can be calculated using standard equations that for Qudos, the pure loop resistance seen by the AC signal increases from 68.2mOhm to 81.5mOhm. The inductance and capacitance do not change with frequency so are still at their DC values. Now, if a 1m difference in cable length cannot be heard, then how could anyone hear a frequency-dependent increase in resistance alone due to the skin effect?

Lower resistance cables suffer more from the skin effect than higher resistance ones but always perform better as the resistance will be lower at high frequencies even taking into account the skin effect.

JM Which parameters (capacitance, resistance, inductance) do you think it's most important to optimise, or is it a question of the best overall compromise?

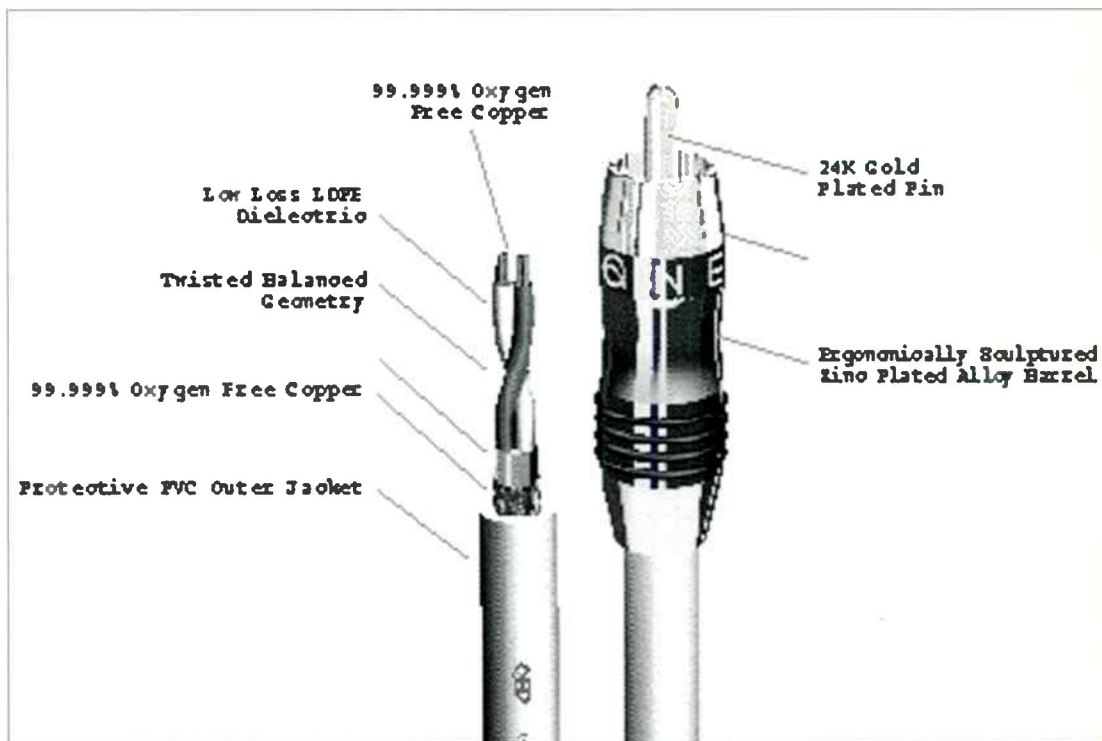
AL There are three main areas where cable is used in a hi-fi context: loudspeakers, interconnects, and co-axial connections. The three main electrical parameters (capacitance, resistance and inductance) all need to be optimised for loudspeaker cables. Co-ax cables and interconnects have different requirements though.

For cooking up a good loudspeaker cable the recipe is simple - keep all of the parameters as low in value as possible.

JM Now that silver is considered an industrial metal, why do you think silver cabling is generally still so expensive?

AL Silver may well be considered an industrial metal, but its price is nowhere near as cheap as copper's! On the Internet today, prices in dollars per pound are 0.78 for copper and 5.08 for silver. Of course, you could always opt for gold as that's only \$300 per pound!

Silver-plated and pure silver cables are still expensive for a number of other reasons too. The main one is the difference in overall sales volumes between silver and copper wire. For example, we sell standard Qudos and a silver-plated version at twice the price. A large part of the extra expense is due to the more complicated



manufacturing process for the plated cable.

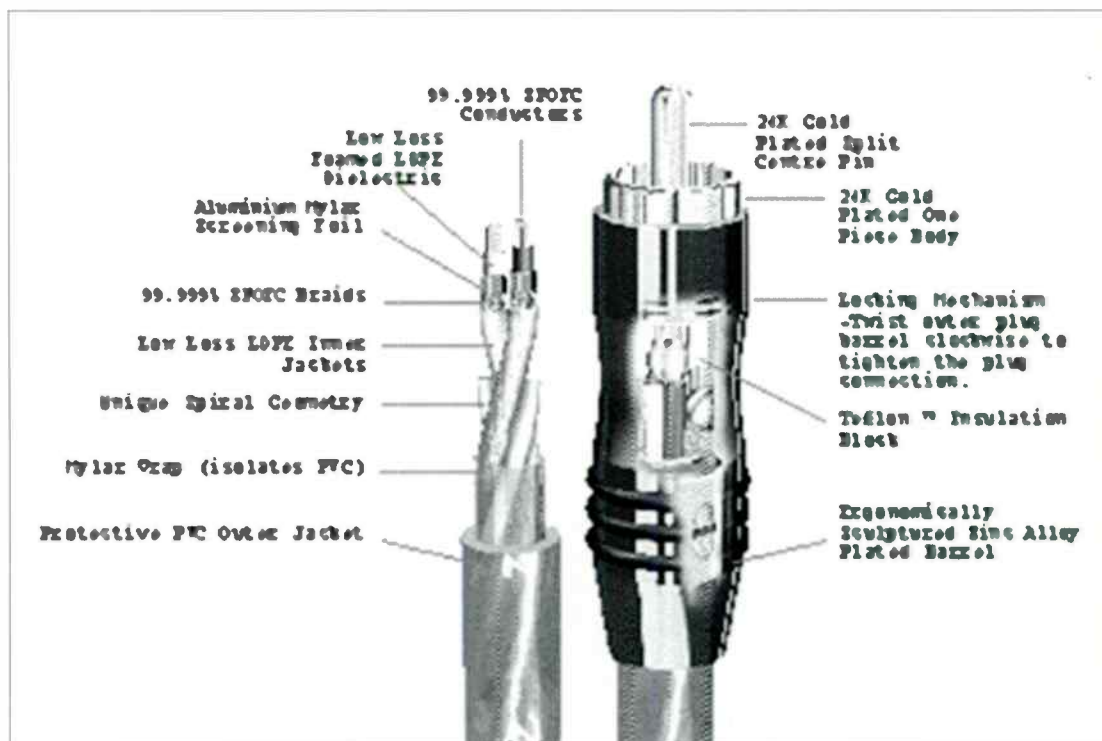
QED's Qnect 2.

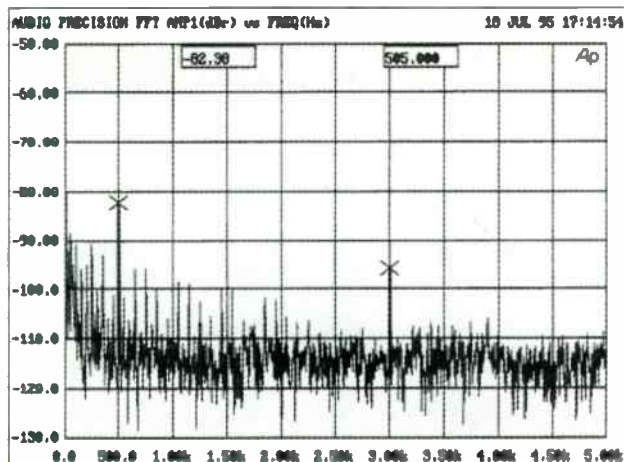
JM Do you think non-metallic conductors, such as the carbon fibres van den Hul use, have any advantages over more traditional materials?

AL Well it's nice too see new technologies on the scene, but I have to wonder if it's really worthwhile. The advantage claimed for carbon is that it does not contain the impurities and crystal boundaries of copper or silver. It does have a rather blatant disadvantage though. Compare carbon's resistivity figure with those for silver and copper:

copper	1.692E-8
silver	1.506E-8
carbon	3500E-8

QED's Silver Spiral.





The graphs above and below show the effect of cable resistance on driver damping when the unit is stimulated by the sound from another loudspeaker. This graph shows the results for high-resistance cable.

Surely copper as a conductor is better value for money than carbon. And it isn't a particularly good idea to use carbon fibre for loudspeaker cables because, to keep the resistance low (which is essential for a flat frequency response) a huge amount of carbon would be needed. It wouldn't be my first choice as an interconnect either - due to the higher resistance of the braid/screen, hum pick-up is almost a certainty. Carbon fibre also happens to be more expensive than Oxygen-Free Copper.

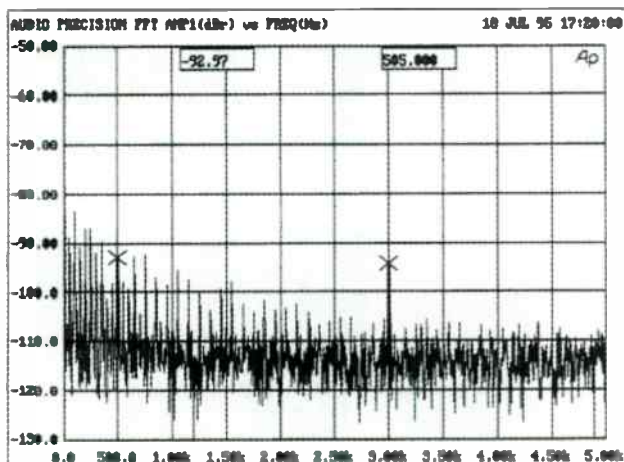
JM Do you have any cheap, simple, DIY cable tweaks that our readers could try out?

AL Before you even think about upgrading your loudspeaker cables, optimise the position of the loudspeakers within the room and try to eliminate as many reflections off of walls, ceiling and floor as possible.

It might be stating the obvious, but you really should keep cable lengths as short as possible too. Decent connectors are a must as well. Over time copper oxidises and increases contact resistance, which is exactly what you don't want.

For digital and video connections use proper 75ohm BNC connectors wherever possible. Phono sockets and plugs are not specified as having a 75ohm characteristic impedance, thus reflections due to incorrect termination can cause problems. And be careful not to extend digital or video connections using non-75ohm connectors.

This graph shows the results for low-resistance cable.



JM Some of our readers have reported good results using co-axial cable between amp and loudspeakers. Do you think this is a direction manufacturers might head in?

AL The advantage of co-axial cable is that it can be reasonably easy to lower both inductance and capacitance by varying the diameter of the dielectric. However, it is difficult to get them both low when the resistance needs to be low as well.

2.5mm square is generally thought to be a good figure for loudspeaker cable cross-sectional area (79-strand and Qudos are two examples which we produce). To make a co-axial cable with this core and the same capacitance as Qudos (35pF/m) would require a dielectric around 65mm in diameter (using standard Low-Density Polyethylene, as we do). 100pF/m would still require a dielectric 6.3mm in diameter. For the 35pF/m version, inductance would still be about 0.7uH compared to the 0.58uH for Qudos.

To get inductance and capacitance as well as resistance low, the best answer is to lay separate cores out flat as we do on the Profile cables.

JM In the Genesis report which summarises QED's cable research, it is stated that, "Our findings suggest that it is more likely to be the insulation and geometry of many solid-core cables which are responsible for their generally higher performance than stranded conductors." Given the last part of this quote, do you have any plans to produce solid-core cables at some point?

AL The sentence quoted actually implies that insulation and geometry are more important than core type. We have no plans to design solid-core loudspeaker cables or interconnects because higher resistance and less flexibility don't seem an appealing combination of virtues to us!

JM How important is it to keep a uniform spacing in the dielectric between the cable's core and screen, especially with reference to digital cables.

AL For co-axial cables, characteristic impedance depends completely on core diameter, dielectric diameter and dielectric constant. Signal degradation is caused by any deviation from the correct values. Therefore, uniform spacing is absolutely essential.

JM Do you think that 'monocrystal' copper like PC-OCC (Pure Copper - Ohno Continuous Casting) has advantages over more mundane types?

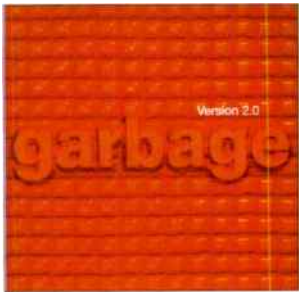
AL It has been said that crystal boundaries in copper act as diodes. The solution has been to use special copper where the grains are enlarged. However, due to smaller amounts of impurities in Oxygen-Free Copper, grain sizes are already enlarged, which results in fewer boundaries.

The conductivity of Oxygen-Free Copper is slightly better than for plain copper. Silver-plating further improves the situation. Mind you, even silver plating will only make the resistance very slightly lower, and at a price.

If I was asked to list cable features in order of priority, the metallurgy of the copper used would be very low on the list. Much more important is the amount used ●

ROCK & POP

by Jon Clarke & Stuart Lenz



GARBAGE
VERSION 2.0
MUSH 29 CD

Garbage, like their post-Grunge peers Radiohead, have diverged from the sort of self-sabotage and extremism previously required by alternative acts to embrace the future in its technological glory. Where Radiohead have turned to Progressive Rock and declared computers OK, Garbage have upped the stakes by ensuring Version 2.0 is state-of-the-art software formatted to CD-ROM specification. And while the music tries to imbue 21st-century paranoia, it couldn't in fact be more radio-friendly.

As the public have so far down-loaded four million copies of their debut eponymous album, taking risks did not seem sensible. And singer Shirley Manson, Butch Vig, Dobbin and the wonderfully-named R2D2 take none to come up with an album which is more mainstream than ever.

Always one to play at being a Rock bitch, on Version 2.0 Shirley Manson is a polyglot version of the many icons who inspired her; she's Chrissie Hynde on 'Special', a song infused with The Pretenders' 'Talk Of The Town'; she's Patti Smith on 'Hammering In My

Head', and the rest of the time she's plain, ole Debbie Harry, a woman who also famously combined glamour and Pop suss.

Garbage's music sometimes even evokes the work of Blondie here as it prizes Disco-fixated melodies alongside those of Punk Rock. There may still be the odd traces of Techno Grunge so typical on their debut ('Dumb' or 'Hammering' are much like the earlier 'Vow' or 'Queer'), but on the whole Version 2.0 contains distinctly more tunes you can whistle to.

'Temptation Waits', 'Sleep Together' and the single 'Push It' show the refined Garbage at their best - insistently melodic, far less bleak, and hidden in a crush of loops and beats, over which Shirley's sultry vocals swoon.

On the whole, Version 2.0 is a neat package of intelligent Pop, one to be enjoyed and savoured, but then Shirley always was more the Supervixen than the Stupid Girl. Oh, and by the way, the CD-ROM is a nice touch.



PAGE AND PLANT
WALKING INTO
CLARKSDALE
MERCURY 558 025-2

Surely this album was more of a last train to Clarksville than

a leisurely stroll into Clarksdale for these old Rockers? Clarksdale is the site of the famous cross-roads where Robert Johnston sold his soul to the Devil and appropriately these once-devil-fixated denizens of Rock have (Saint) nicked it for the name of their new album.

Dinosaur Rock acts seem to persist these days like the most troublesome of boils - irritating, and guaranteed to return until a swift lance can provide salvation. Unlike the tiresome and predictable Stones or Neil Young, the worst offenders of the so-called 'come-back' record, Walking Into Clarksdale is a surprising release.

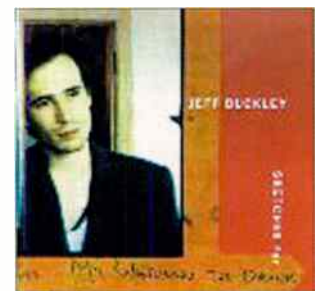
First, aside from MTV's Unledded album, Page and Plant have rarely collaborated and their respective outputs have been limited recently to dodgy solo work and various Rock spin-offs: Plant's Coverdale project and Page's suspect collaboration with Free in The Firm. Second is the choice of producer - Steve 'Nevermind' Albini, formerly of Big Black, which puts them very much in the 1990s.

Being joined at the hip is how people will remember the boys, and this album clearly shows what a pair they always made. At its height, Clarksdale is strangely reminiscent of later Led Zeppelin in its acoustic and melodic meandering. 'Shining In The Light' and 'When The World Was Young' could easily have been recorded at the same time as the 'Houses Of The Holy' sessions. They, and songs like 'When I Was A

Child', come replete with all those atonal chord changes and rhythmic breaks so beloved of Page.

However, when they start to Rock it's effortless - the louder stuff also has all the Albini hallmarks. Hence we have 'Upon A Golden Horse' and the incredulous sounding 'Most High', which is nothing if not the musical offspring of mystical 'Kashmir', updated in an urgent, thrashy Nineties style. Then there are the title track and 'Burning Up' which sadly sound like cut-and-paste jobs of various Blues numbers crossed with Soundgarden Grunge.

Page and Plant haven't exactly sold their soul to Lucifer but neither have they sold themselves short. Walking... is an occasionally predictable album, but it's good to see them once more fired up with the enthusiasm of old.



JEFF BUCKLEY
SKETCHES (FOR MY
SWEETHEART, THE
DRUNK)
COLUMBIA 488 661 6

No one knew exactly where Buckley was going musically following his universally-acclaimed 1994 debut, Grace. And no one will ever know,

ROCK & POP

because prior to completing the follow-up, provisionally titled *My Sweetheart, The Drunk*, the American singer took a dive from a marina off the shores of a Tennessee mud island and drowned.

So closed the very brief chapter of perhaps one of this decade's most prodigious singer-songwriter talents. That he died so soon, by accident, makes it all the more tragic. What we are left with are some of the assorted sketches which could have made up the album.

The songs fall into two camps on two CDs - the New York recordings with Television's Tom Verlaine, which he is understood to have wanted buried, and the others, which are the later, experimental four-track efforts.

Jeff Buckley always had the rare spiritual power which sets apart the great from the run-of-the-mill. Listening again to songs like 'Mojo Pin' or 'Dream Brother', the passion that coursed through Grace was terrifying and even affected the cover versions, such as the haunted 'Hallelujah'; the Leonard Cohen original was clearly only half the song once Buckley had finished with it. This same vision and style can be sensed on the Verlaine recordings.

'The Sky Is A Landfill' is death-defying with its crashing guitars and Buckley's voice perfectly pitched. Then there are the tender falsetto moments like the soulful Prince-soundalike 'Everybody Here Wants You', or 'Opened Once', which spring from the

same romantic well as 'Lover, You Should've Come Over'.

On the surface, it is difficult to fault any of these songs, which makes Jeff's apparent unhappiness with them so perplexing. There is no doubt, however, that songs like the edgy 'Vancouver', 'New Year's Prayer' and the ethereal 'You And I' would somehow have been retained in some form. The latter comes very close to capturing some of the otherworldly 'Song To The Siren/Starsailor' moments of his equally famous father, Tim. A voice with angel wings to be sure.

The only real departure is his Glam-trash track 'Yard Of Blond Girls', where the screaming Electronica feedback transcends the voice and melody. It's very much in the vein of Smashing Pumpkins but not quite the spiritual snake charmer that the other songs most certainly are.

In many ways it's the songs on the second CD that really let him down. The confusing and disturbed 'Murder Suicide Meteor City' is a Grunge hotch-potch incorporating a mutilated Star Spangled Banner anthem of the kind that Jimi Hendrix would play before he took up the guitar. 'Your Flesh Is So Nice' and 'Demon John' suffer badly too.

But why are we complaining so? Because in reality, these were merely demo versions, and not the final cuts after all. And there's a strong possibility he may not have included his great, hypnotic Genesis cover, 'Back In New York City' either, but we would have been poorer

without it.

Jeff was blessed, like his pa, with an amazing set of vocal chords. He could also write songs that would leave you utterly speechless. On the last track he sings, "One thing for certain, when it comes my time, I leave this old world with a satisfied mind." Poignant indeed, but truly we'll never know.



PUBLIC ENEMY
HE GOT GAME
DEFJAM 314 558 130-2

In the film *Houseparty*, the kids party on down to some Hip-Hop until rudely interrupted by a disgruntled neighbour who tells them to turn the 'Public Enemy' down. Ironically, the latest PE offering serves as an enema to the current dirge and filth-stained world of Rap.

Since the wondrous *It Takes A Nation Of Millions To Hold Us Back*, Public Enemy's seminal 1988 album, America's black population have organised and executed the impressive Million Man March, and even (with Spike Lee at the helm) made a movie about it. Surely PE have played their part in the battle for respect?

Much has changed since then, and while Flavor Flav has spent time inside for GBH,

Chuck D became a TV news reporter, concentrating on human rights. Always one with something to say, he has clearly still got a lot to talk about as *He Got Game* demonstrates. But hey, the world is still ruled by tyrants and riddled with corporate devils and the US is hardly devoid of racism.

He Got Game serves as the soundtrack to Spike Lee's latest film, about basketball and in particular the buying and selling of NBA contracts, which in Lee's belief is the new slave trade.

Those who pick up *He Got Game* looking for the intensity and madness of the old albums (sirens, horns, etc) will be disappointed. *He Got Game* is where Hip-Hop meets psychedelia, and PE have clearly sat down and spent a lot of time listening to the Wu-Tang Clan; tellingly, Clan stalwart Mista Killah guests on opener 'Resurrection'.

Besides this they have intriguingly absorbed something too from the spheres of Trip-Hop and Heavy Metal. The result is a new sound which swings from the sublime groove of the opening track to the acid-grunge of 'Is Your God A Dog' and the very Wu-flavored Funk of 'Unstoppable', featuring an on-form KRS 1. There is also a hint of Prodigy here too.

Many tracks seem a lot slower paced than hitherto but that is not necessarily a bad thing. The James Bond film-themed 'Game Face', and the Jazzy 'Politics Of The Sneaker Pimps' in particular show that a slower burning lyrical anger

ROCK & POP

RECORD OF THE MONTH

MASSIVE ATTACK
MEZZANINE

CIRCA 7243 8 45199 2 2

From the very first bars of Mezzanine you know you're in for something special. And the nasty, threatening bassline of 'Angel', the opening track, leaves behind it a very sinister feel indeed. Slowly creeping up on you, its passing has the feel of a spacecraft landing (not of Star Wars) in its tumbling effect and an impact that is pretty much unique in the way it pines you (beware, good bass-weathering speakers are essential here).

This, however, is only the start of an album which is, in every way, as breathtaking as the band's brilliant (1991) debut Blue Lines, and might easily be ranked as this year's CD Computer. It is therefore fitting that this highly secretive Bristol threesome - 3D (Robert Del Naja), Mushroom (Andrew Vowles) and Daddy G (Gerard Marshall) - should check Prog Rock supergods Radiohead on the sleeve's thank you notes (they also give praise to Mercury Prize winner Noz Suzuki and Björk, among others).

It has been four years since their last offering, Protection, but the Bristol collective have obviously been hard at work, although how much of it has been together is under debate. For it seems the trio are so wearied of each other's



company that much of Mezzanine was recorded by the members on their own and then posted together. And to highlight this idiosyncrasy, throughout a recent bout of media interviews, each demanded to be interviewed separately. Let's hope they don't end up the same way as the Clash (who they also, intriguingly name on the sleeve notes, who were so allegic to each other by the end of their brilliant career that they recorded their final album Combat Rock in separate studios. Mezzanine obviously look to be going the same way).

For this reason they have once again remained faithful to the raucy vocal style of Reggae stalwart Horace Andy

while, in my opinion sensibly, ditching the irritating Nicolette and dowdy Tricky. Then for the vocal brilliance of Liz Frasier (not the seminal Corrina Twins and the guest vocals of Sara Jiv). The only other vocalist sadly missed is the Tricky Kid, aka Tricky, who has gone a long way from his Knowle West roots - but sadly not back to good here.

In general the album has a kind of post-think, vutty 1980s feel to it with its pulsating bass, hard-cutting guitar and menacing, spooky vocals - kind of similar to the early work of John Lydon's brilliant but highly underrated Public Image Ltd. They have also taken from the Slits and the Pop Group, who they grew up

listening to, alongside Studio One Reggae.

Beginning with 'Angel', which dips and swoons with incredible intent, the album gets off to a blazing start. Next up is the trippy, mechanical 'Rising Son' with its familiar Massive sound. Then it's the fittingly titled 'Trondrop', which sees Liz Frasier's almost folkie debut 'Inertia Creeps', one of the album's high points, comes in with a jangling of bells and some, in hypnosis, tribal drumming eventually leading to an almost killing joke crescendo of throaty guitar and angry vocals.

Things move along very nicely, particularly with 'Dissolved Girl', 'Black Milk' and the sunny Horns film-influenced 'Mezzanine' itself.

While Blue Lines is undoubtedly one of the decade's Top Ten Albums, Mezzanine would certainly make the Top Fifty, confirming Massive Attack as possibly Britain's most influential band of the Nineties. It's the street-smart sentimentality and classic mixture of Jamaican Reggae, Trip-Hop and Punk with soaring and often thrashy guitar that make (and have made) Massive so alluring to the ear. They had to shorten their name to Massive due to connotations with the Goff Wa... but on the strength of Mezzanine, no one would dare make them do that again.

from a maturer PE really can work.

The Public Enema are definitely back. The material may no longer be a complete

revolutionary statement and there may be no song to threaten classics like 'Fight The Power' or 'Night Of The Living Bassheads',

but He Got Game gets darn close and is still as angry as a powder-kegged vinaloo. Bring the Noise! ■

DANCE & AMBIENT

by Sara Davis & Leon Palmer



VARIOUS ARTISTS
**COFFEE TABLE
 MUSIC**
 COT CD 018

As a lesser-known Dance act, Grantby's compilation of coffee-table music depends on merit rather than reputation to impress. Despite having released under various guises in recent months ('Red' and 'Albert Hall' are the favourites) and even having roused violent support from music tabloid *Melody Maker*, Grantby's is still an underground name with a point to prove. Luckily, it's not looking like too hard a task for Creation's new wonderboy, (whose first production 'The Timebooth EP' was hailed by some as the "best piece of experimental Hip-Hop ever made") because, as luck would have it, he's encapsulated the same innovative vibe on this compilation.

Cup Of Tea records is equally underground, but as one of the trendy Bristol production centres, its credibility and influence take on a powerful role. The selection here reflects a blend of both elements - Grantby's mellow Hip-Hop vibe with the orchestral, Avon Jazziness that Portishead did so well.

Brown Susan's 'How We Used To Live' introduces a chilled mood, with deep, mellow chords brushed over by the hi-hat half of a

Drum 'n' Bass beat. A couple of tracks in and the Jazzy Bristol undertone rises to the surface in the shape of Brothers Grimm's 'Chase Scene #3', a hollow, twangy soundtrack that Uma Thurman might have danced to in 'Pulp Fiction'.

Grantby's own contribution, 'Timebooth', follows. It too has a soundtrack feel to it, only this time it's a Sixties crime serial with breakdowns and groovy Trip Hop. However, 'Large Block Of Flats' by Jobclub Music Workshop stands out alongside Kirk Lake's 'Dementia Pugilistica'. The first takes the Jazzy vibe to a land of fairy tales with a magical music-box melody while the second slams hypnotic poetry on top of the legendary Ambient sound of the region.

This is subtly-paced experimental accompaniment for quiet contemplation or intimate entertaining, coffee-table music to be saved for the mellower hours.



VARIOUS ARTISTS
TURBULENCE
 FLYING RHINO CD 11

All nine of the Flying Rhino Trance gurus featured on *Turbulence* will be released on 12in. over the next few months, so this is a great preview sample for vinyl freaks and Trance DJs alike. As for everyone else, well,

enjoyment will depend on your weirdness level because *Turbulence* (as the title suggests) is a truly freaky, quirky slice of Trance.

All the album's acts uphold Flying Rhino's tradition of juicy, twangy 303 noises and that ever-present melody that's always so hard to place. The attraction can't be put down to any one of the many musical elements - distorted samples, driving metallic off-beats, reverberating echoes and an uncompromising, pounding rhythm. Strangely, the tunefulness rises out of the blend of sounds. But *Turbulence* takes the style one stage further, remixing old tracks like Slinky Wizard's (aka Dominic Lamb) 'Fistful Of Mutants' to jarring, distorted effect.

The opener, Bumbling Loon's 'Rumbling Toon' is equally progressive, but with a squidgy comical edge that's infectiously funny. 'Byte 1' stands out for its pure, full-on flavour. The binary team consists of cult producer/DJ Xavier Morel and T.I.P.'s Graham Wood, which explains the harder cut.

Also contributing to *Turbulence* are Toby Smith of Jamiroquai (although the Funk influence gets lost) and workaholics Darshan, with a heavy bpm/909 number, 'The Beast'. But Sharas' 'Granulated Rock' is the best feature, with its old-fashioned but beautifully-deceptive Trance edge. At first it sounds like a bland dip back into guitar-fuelled Trance/Techno, but watch out for the gentle breakdown and storming second half. This track rocks like only ageing Thrash Metal-heads know how.



HOUSE MUSIC MOVEMENT
**REMIXED BY ROGER
 SANCHEZ**
 MASTER DANCE TONES
 HMMCD8094

'The House Music Movement' is gradually winding itself up. Roger Sanchez fronts Master Dance Tones' latest playlist of House Dance tunes from an area under threat from all angles in the fight for dancefloor supremacy.

A major force in the Dance music scene, Sanchez's talent is evident in the hundreds of productions and remixes he has done. From Incognito to Daft Punk, Diana Ross to Michael Jackson, the S-Man has worked with more stars than Patrick Moore. Apart from releasing tracks on his own label, Narcotics, there have also been numerous compilations featuring his own work and his incredible mixing.

His latest outing gives us the privilege of his handiness behind the decks tying together a string of stomping US/British House tracks. There's a strong showing from some cracking old tunes remixed in impeccable Nu Skool House fashion. The Disco fave 'Last Night A DJ Saved My Life' is given the treatment by SYLK 130 courtesy of the S-Man himself and 'U Can't Hide From Your Bud' by DJ Sneak revives a storming Funk gem from the Seventies.

DANCE & AMBIENT

RECORD OF THE MONTH

MUKI
CABIN FEVER
 MNT CD1007

For mellow Trip-Hop and Jazzy, atmospheric soundscapes, Luke Mullen and Jules Evans are the men to turn to. Not unlike Grantby, the duo have been producing Electronica of their own kind for a year now, building on impressive credentials and collaborations with the likes of Sabres Of Paradise and Slip And Slide. After long hours spent producing and engineering by day and DJing/Jazz clubbing by night, the pair are now hanging out with the hipper personalities in the business such as DeeJay Punk-Roc, Jeff Mills, Colin Faver and so on. Obviously, Muki will very soon be the name to drop.

It's easy to see how their influences have worked. The Muki sound takes in

Luke's House DJing experience, the quality of ambience and production



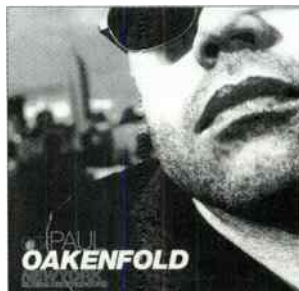
on Sabres numbers and the Jazziness of Luke's early band days. The product is minimal, sophisticated soundscapes - lazy, broody basslines and waves of hi-hat.

The spaced-out Electronica vibe that Laurent Garnier likes so much ripens gradually throughout the album and in each track too; most are long, rolling epics that flow through Drum 'n' Bass to Trip-Hop.

But the Jazzy groove is never far away. 'Ki Juice', for example, uses a Funky, flutey flavour that's really popular right now. 'Jahbar' and 'Runner' are the quirkiest tracks, the former opening with what sounds like a Bontempi organ (now we're talking retro, and Eighties style to boot!) the latter filling its plinks and plonks with rapid-fire off-beats that would go down a storm in a modern Jazz troupe. But most importantly of all, throughout the 60+ minutes of synth-swathed ambience, there are gorgeous, heart-wrenching breakdowns which are as powerful as KLF's Chill-Out vibe - and not many Ambient acts can lay claim to that.

Tracks like 'Feel The Sun' from DJ Dove stand out for their blend of stomping vintage basslines, nostalgic melodies, fresh vocals and banging '98 rhythms. The 'big' names aren't in abundance here but that doesn't always produce a poor standard. Tracks chosen by Roger Sanchez from the likes of The Funk Junkees, Joey Negro and Oscar G give it that classic Disco/House appeal.

Little moments such as the Mike Tyson-inspired Drum/Rap in the middle of Kevin Aviance's aptly-entitled 'Din DaDa' may frighten, but they do help bring the album to life. Inevitably the S-Man gets the best tune award for the deeply mesmeric 'Back' to name but one. Still, if you were the man who's remixed as many underground classics as Roger S has, wouldn't you do the same?



GLOBAL UNDERGROUND
NEW YORK, MIXED BY PAUL OAKENFOLD
 BOXED GU007

Continuing the popular international flavour, Boxed give Paul Oakenfold another chance to light up the Global Underground dancefloor generation with a second set of treasures - this time from New York. The highly-acclaimed resident of Liverpool's Cream club has come full circle, as it was in the Big Apple that Oakenfold learned his trade after initially turning his back

on the club scene in England.

This much-travelled DJ, who was almost single-handedly responsible for the introduction of Balearic to these shores in the heady days of the late Eighties, also gave U2 added credibility in the Dance field and remixed the Happy Monday's memorable Pills, Thrills And Bellyaches. He's even flirted with Goan Trance. So, can the much-hyped 'Oakey' still cause a storm? Well, he's got two CDs and 23 tunes to keep you entertained and reveal his insight into the tastes of the masses, and he just about pulls it off.

CD1 eases through its steps gently with Jamie Myerson's 'Rescue Me' and 'Summersault' from Taste Experience, both sweet House gems smoother than your average Boddingtons. Then he calls upon all his skills to raise the temperature of the album before you've even noticed the froth. By the time

the last track, Greece 2000's 'Drives On Vinyl' hits you, it's clear this isn't an album for the faint-hearted.

By contrast, CD2 flips quickly into some dreamy, creamy Jungle courtesy of Ambrosia's 'Inside Your Arms'. And the mood change gets stronger as Talisman and Hudson move us through the Breakbeat Trance groove of 'Leave Planet Earth'.

Much mood-building follows with some engaging atmospheric affairs, including Albion's 'Air', until 'Baila Con Ritmo', a high-energy Italian Trance track by Cyclone Tracy finally signals the summit has been reached. From there on in it's surely downhill all the way, only with Oakenfold there is no let-up as he descends to the end in a blaze of burning vinyl. One of the most successful Dance DJs knows how to keep his audience begging for more! ●

JAZZ

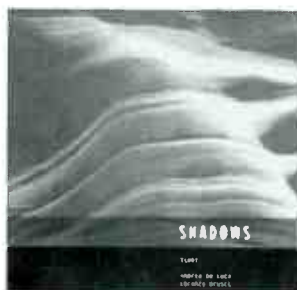
melody barely glimpsed through a cloud of crackling radio interference, it's very clear that we're into deep listening territory, and sure enough, over the course of an hour, Bass Communion works its way through mood-scapes which encompass a wide range of textures from pure sound design through to richly-detailed, drifting ambience. Look out for some very nice loops constructed from guitar pieces recorded for No-Man by Robert Fripp back in 1993



16/17
HUMAN DISTORTION
 DIGITAL HARDCORE
 RECORDINGS

This white-label CD EP (also available on 12in.) represents the first appearance on wax for some time of 16/17, the Thrash-Jazz collective led by Swiss bass clarinetist and composer Alex Buess. The group's ranks include bassist Damien Bennett and drummer Michael Wertmueller. As with the group's last album, *Gyatso*, *Human Distortion* has been

produced by Techno Animal's Kevin Martin. Working under the pseudonym "The Bug", Martin has taken the band's frenzied improvisations, sliced 'n' diced 'em, and produced the kind of Jazz/Drum 'n' Bass mutant that sits comfortably on Alec Empire's DHR. File between Albert Ayler and Atari Teenage Riot. Killer stuff.



ANDREA DE LUCA/
 LORENZO BRUSCI
SHADOWS - TIMET
 I DICHI FORMA 04CD

I'd love to be able to tell you more about this CD, but I can't. It arrived in the post unheralded and unaccompanied by any information. And, needless to say, as a culturally-isolated Englishman, I don't speak a word of Italian.

Whatever, *Shadows - Timet* certainly deserves high praise. As far as I can tell, Brusci fits into that neat catch-all "sampling composer". Andrea De Luca, meanwhile, is a vocalist. Brusci constructs vast

collages out of tiny fragments of sampled sound. These are ceaselessly shifting, restless and furtive, with oddly spastic rhythms bursting momentarily out of clouds of high-frequency glitching and uncomfortable ambience.

Comparisons are inevitable: New York's David Shea, London's John Wall, Christian Marclay and even, in a strictly non-sampling way, and for the music's highly-episodic nature, John Zorn. Like John Wall, Brusci uses his CD sleeves to document the musician he's sampled. Any CD which samples, among many, many others Hendrix, Morton Subotnick, Ground Zero, Amon Duul, Ralph Towner and Henry Cow is made for me, let's face it. Happy hunting!



DON CABALLERO 3
WHAT BURNS NEVER RETURNS
 TOUCH AND GO TG185CD

More Rock music which belongs here for its deftness and imagination. Don Caballero are bassist Patterns Morris, guitarists Ian Williams

and Mike Bandfield, and drummer Damon Che. They return for their third long-playing outing on *Touch And Go*.

DC specialise in what's become known as "Math Rock", a clinical, virtuosic Rock which relies heavily on extraordinary and clipped rhythm work. Among the inhabitants of the post-Rock pantheon, DC are genuinely unique, eschewing many of their contemporaries' hang-ups. You won't find any lo-fi fetishism here, nor love letters to Krautrock and whimsical Psychedelia, nor even the vaguest attempt to embrace mixilllogical practices. Oh, and no analogue synths, either.

What DC are is an instrumental Rock band, pure and simple. And yet, that barely begins to describe the music they create: tightly-interlocked, highly complex bass-and-drum grooves and rhythmically-weird guitar figures are thrashed out with a blistering intensity which belies their cleverness.

Yes, DC have a heritage handed to them by the Minutemen and by Slint, but there's something else in there. I would hesitate to use the word Prog, of course, but I'd equally be lying if I didn't say that DC reminded me as much of the '80s-period *Crimson* as they do their Punk ancestors. And, for what it's worth, Damon Che is one mutha of a drummer. Energy music●

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CLASSICAL

by Peter Herring

V is for. . . vindication for Schumann's symphonies; a visionary performance of Bruckner's Fifth; some vivacious Vivaldi; and Visitations and a violin concerto from a very fine Finn.



LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN
Overtures: Egmont, Op84/The Creatures Of Prometheus, Op43/Leonore No1, Op 138/Leonore No2, Op72a et al
Atlanta Symphony Orchestra; conductor, Yoel Levi
TELARC CD 80358 (DDD/62.51)

This selection of overtures includes the four attempts Beethoven had at composing a suitable curtain-raiser for his solitary opera, *Fidelio*, a title which was forced upon him by his publisher. Beethoven preferred *Leonore* - the true name of the opera's heroine who disguises herself as a man (*Fidelio*) in order to free her husband, a political prisoner. Unfortunately, two other operas titled *Leonora/Leonore* were already in existence and Beethoven reluctantly accepted his publisher's eminently pragmatic rechristening. However, that

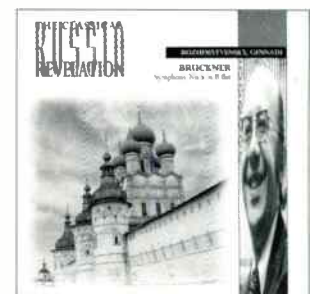
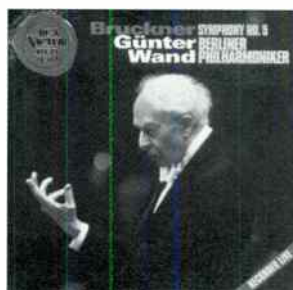
did not dissuade him from acknowledging *Leonore* in the three discarded overtures he composed for the work, hence the existence of *Leonores* Nos1 to 3.

The term "discarded" ought to be qualified: these works are emphatically not sub-standard Beethoven. The only reason two were rejected was that they were simply too long as overtures. Indeed, the musicologist, Basil Deane, has described *Leonore* No3 as "the first and perhaps the greatest tone poem". Greatness and grandeur are certainly characteristics of Yoel Levi's reading, its monumental, scrupulously-detailed presentation redolent of Klemperer's Beethoven.

Three other popular overtures complete the programme - Goethe's *Egmont* (another example of political courage in the face of injustice); *Coriolan*, not to accompany Shakespeare's play on the subject of the Roman general Gnaeus Marcus Coriolanus, but the rather lesser known effort by Henrich Joseph Von Collin; and the overture to the ballet, *The Creatures Of Prometheus*. Here, too, the themes of liberation and enlightenment which Beethoven held so dear are strong.

In some quarters this

recording would now be defined as antediluvian Beethoven with its large orchestra and expansive sound, but for all the scale and weight with which Telarc's orchestral recordings have always been identified, there is also great refinement here. Even in such familiar music, many details emerged fresh and bright to entice the ear - superb woodwind passages, for example. Yet there were times I wish the bass frequencies hadn't been applied with quite such a broad brush; period instrument performances have made us accustomed to a much more clearly-delineated sound from cellos, basses and timpani. And for me the jury is still out on the "spatializer" three-dimensional surround-sound technique employed in the recording. Not so the performances. These are still considered and unmannered, if a little sober at times, and played with true panache by the Atlanta Orchestra.



ANTON BRUCKNER
Symphony No5 in B flat Major
Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra; conductor, Gunter Wand
RCA VICTOR RED SEAL 09026 68503 2 (DDD/77.14)

State Symphony Orchestra of the Ministry of Culture; conductor, Gennady Rozhdestvensky
RUSSIA REVELATION RV10053 (ADD/73.10)

Both these recordings of Bruckner's Fifth are taken from concert performances, but there the similarity ends. It isn't just that the venerable Brucknerian, Gunter Wand, has the finer orchestra - the brass section of the Russian ensemble doesn't bear comparison with its Berlin counterpart - but more that Rozhdestvensky fails to convey the full, visionary majesty of this most cerebrally-hewn of the Bruckner symphonies. In fairness, Rozhdestvensky's

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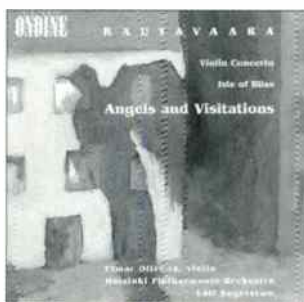
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performance was taped, warts-and-all, at a single concert in February 1984 (we are not told where it took place), whereas RCA's post-production team was able to draw from tapes made at three performances given by Wand and the Berlin Philharmonic in Berlin's Philharmonie during January 1996. However, even allowing for the numerous rough patches in the playing, Rozhdestvensky's remains a matter-of-fact, often brusquely-hurried interpretation (a telling comparison is supplied by the entry of the lyrical second subject of the Adagio) and one that remains resolutely earthbound - a fatal flaw in any Bruckner performance.

In sharp contrast, Gunter Wand, as ever without the slightest whiff of self-indulgence or mannerism, displays his complete grasp of this vast but cogently inter-related structure, and allows each movement to unfold at its own pace. Everything builds inexorably to the monumental conclusion, with its glorious double-fugue, arguably the finest of all Bruckner's symphonic finales.

Comparison with Wand's 1989 version, recorded with the Norddeutscher Rundfunk Sinfonieorchester (also for RCA) shows little divergence in interpretation: no surprise there - Wand's conception of the

Bruckner symphonies was forged many years ago. But it's worth noting that the newer recording takes a little over three minutes longer. The cumulative experience, though, remains unchanged: visionary and life-affirming. Wand's clear-eyed understanding and authority in Bruckner are evident throughout, not least in the superb concluding paragraphs where the Berlin players, and RCA's fine recorded sound, come into their own.



EINOJUHANI RAUTAVAARA
Violin Concerto/Isle Of Bliss/Angels And Visitations
Elmar Oliveira, violin;
Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra; conductor,
Leif Segerstam
ONDINE ODE 881-2 (DDD/55.05)

Now in his seventieth year, international recognition has been a while coming for the Finnish composer Einojuhani

Rautavaara, but the Helsinki-based Ondine label has lately been championing his cause to good effect. Rautavaara's work owes little to current musical fashion; his is a strikingly individual voice, characterised by an energy and intensity, and a prolific flow of ideas, which drives his music relentlessly forward. Restless currents, once unleashed, at times seem just barely under control. The effect can be chillingly compelling, mysterious and even disturbing.

This is the second Ondine release to feature one of Rautavaara's 'Angel' compositions (the first was the acclaimed *Angel Of Light*) but those expecting something akin to the plump cherubs which decorate tacky Christmas cards will be dismayed by these angelic apparitions. Indeed, Rautavaara's angels are not necessarily religious incarnations at all but manifestations of what he describes as "alien realities", nightmarish visions drawn from the darkest, least charted regions of the human psyche. The composer offers no 'programme' for *Angels And Visitations*; although rooted in experience, it is, he declares, "absolute music". It is nevertheless extraordinarily 'visual', using the full

orchestral palette.

More conventional in its scoring but no less evocative is *Isle Of Bliss*, a tone poem whose dramatic Nordic atmosphere is not only redolent, inevitably, of Rautavaara's compatriot Sibelius, but also oddly akin to Arnold Bax at his wild, windswept Celtic best. This haunting piece was inspired by Lintukoto (*Home Of The Birds*) by the Finnish poet Aleksis Kivi, and is thematically linked to Rautavaara's latest opera, concerned with Kivi's life.

The longest work in this excellent introduction to Rautavaara's output is the *Violin Concerto*, an engrossing and memorable composition whose urgency, dynamism and virtuosity are more the product of the composer's reminiscences of looking down on the bustling streets of New York than gazing upon any Arctic wilderness. The soloist, Elmar Oliveira, is dazzlingly responsive to the considerable demands of the score and, as in the other works here, the Helsinki orchestra is in terrific form. Leif Segerstam directs with unobtrusive authority and the recording, made in the lively acoustic of Helsinki's Finlandia Hall, is both full and clear. ●

CLASSICAL

RECORD OF THE MONTH



Symphony No 1 in B flat Major, Op 38 'Spring'/Symphony No 2 in C Major, Op 61/Symphony No 3 in E flat Major, Op 97 'Rhenish' et al Roger Montgomery, Gavin Edwards, Susan Dent, Robert Maskell, horns; Orchestre Revolutionnaire et Romantique; conductor, John Eliot Gardiner

DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON ARCHIV 457 591-2 (3-CD SET) (DDD/202.23)

In these interpretations of the Schumann symphonies, John Eliot Gardiner and his colleagues supply the most convincing and effective rebuttal to those who still question the usefulness of "authenticity" in the 19th-century Romantic repertoire. What can period instruments and performing practice contribute in this area, runs the argument, that isn't achievable with the modern symphony orchestra? The answer – emphatically demonstrated here – is the ability to present nothing less than an opportunity for wholesale and radical re-

evaluation, a chance to listen afresh and unencumbered by the "baggage" of opinion that invariably accompanies so much great music.

Among the many deserving candidates for such reappraisal, the symphonies of Robert Schumann stand out. Schumann, rums the received wisdom, was a wonderful composer of songs, piano and chamber music but never mastered the techniques of symphonic composition, trying, and ultimately failing, to combine the breezy fancifulness of Schubert with the structural depth of Brahms.

The challenge to disprove this assessment was first taken up by another British conductor, Roger Norrington, and his London Classical Players. Their explorations – revelatory, if not always sure-footed – cleared a path for others to follow, including John Eliot Gardiner, whose memorable series of Schumann concerts at London's Barbican last year provided the basis for these equally exciting and entertaining recordings.

From the bright, forthright opening of the First Symphony, the transparency of the texture gives the lie to the prevalent notion of Schumann as an unimaginative, heavy-handed orchestrator. With everything crisply articulated, and the instrumental colouring vividly projected, the "muddiness" and opacity that supposedly

characterises the orchestral writing is exposed as a myth.

Similar surprises are in store right through this survey which, along with the four numbered symphonies, includes the early Symphony in G minor (known as the 'Zwickau Symphony' after the composer's home town), the Overture, Scherzo and Finale, and the Konzertstück for Four Horns, more on which later. Intriguingly, Gardiner also offers the Fourth Symphony in its original 1841 version, for whose survival we have to thank the composer's most loyal supporter, Johannes Brahms, who always championed the earlier score over its 1851 revision with, for example, its dubious thickening of the woodwind lines. This electrifying performance deserves to ensure that the original receives many more hearings in the future.

This is but one instance of the intelligent and thoughtful way this set has been compiled. Schumann's development as a symphonist – and whatever his detractors may say, he did develop – can be followed, starting with the 'Zwickau Symphony', composed in 1832-33 when Schumann was in his early 20s (the shadow of Beethoven looms large over its two completed movements) and continuing with the Overture, Scherzo and Finale of 1841, where he experiments with compressing the symphonic form. The extraordinary

Konzertstück for Four Horns of 1848, modestly described as a "concerto movement" but in fact a self-standing three-movement work, emerges here in all its glory. The playing of the soloists from the horn section of the Orchestre Revolutionnaire et Romantique (all usual period horns, each with three rotary valves crooked in F Major) is quite breathtaking.

In the symphonies, Gardiner on the whole opts for brisk tempos, pointing up the physical and dramatic sides of the music while relishing the lyricism of, say, the Adagio of No 2, with its beguiling oboe melody, and the solemn grandeur of the fourth movement of No 1, music said to be inspired by the insignificance of Cologne Cathedral. Perhaps some of the incisiveness and vigour of the string playing is attributable to the fact that, during takes, the violins and violas played standing up: as was the practice in the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra during Schumann's day.

Overall, the recording from Warford Colosseum is vividly detailed (nuptial the throb of the timpani and rasp of the brass) and enjoys wholly convincing, wholly persuasive perspectives. As Gardiner observes in his accompanying notes, during Schumann's lifetime the more perceptive critics judged his symphonies to be "the most significant additions to the repertoire since Beethoven". These performances resoundingly validate that claim.

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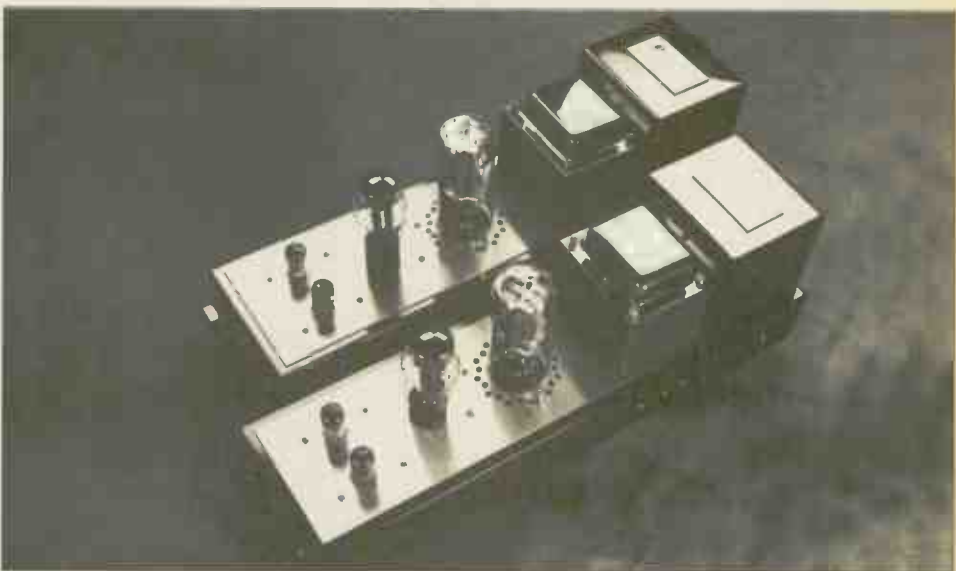
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Ex Demonstrations items available this month

Gamma Acoustics Epoch V Reference Speakers £1295.00 (2995.00 new)

Now demonstrating the Cary Audio Design
CAD 300SE Utilising Western Electric 300B's

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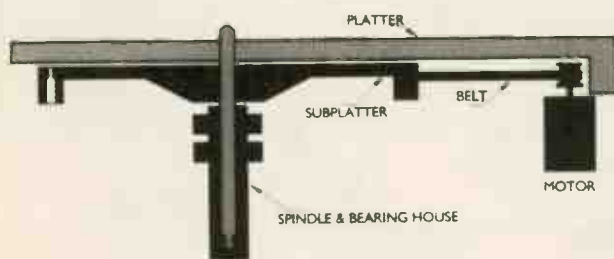
Ashcroft Bishopstone Lane Herne Bay Kent CT6 6RP

ORIGIN LIVE TURNTABLE KITS Standard & Ultra

Now you can save money and build your own high performance deck. The standard kit version is offered at £145, and the ultra version at £279. Both decks come with a full set of drawings and guidance instructions. The kit allows for your creativity or there are optional parts that will enable you to assemble a tried and tested design within 1-4 hours. This is probably the easiest kit you will ever make.

"this Vinyl font end had my jaw heading towards the floor with the solidity and transparency of the music it was making"...
"the standard came up with crystal clear images set in a broad sound stage"... *"With all these goodies in place, the standard would give turntables at the £1200-£1400 mark a hard time."*
HI-FI WORLD SUPPLEMENT NOV 97

"is exceptionally easy to build and professional in both sound quality and appearance"
HI FI NEWS SUPPLEMENT NOV 97



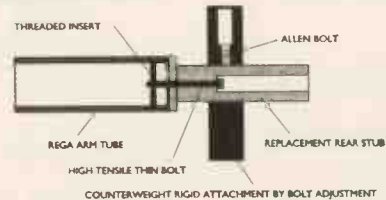
ORIGIN LIVE MODIFICATION FOR THE REGA RB250 & RB300 ARM

If you are the proud owner of one of these two arms why not turbocharge it into the league of super arms with the Origin live structural modification:- £75 inc post & packing. Those investing in this upgrade report that the transformation is simply night and day. Rewiring with silver litz cable is also offered at an additional £70.

"I have to say the Rega modifications turn this humble arm into a real Giant killer. Gone is the rather grey, sterile sound of the cooking Rega. Instead, tonal colour is fresh, dynamics have great speed and impact, and the sound stage is huge." HI FI WORLD SUPPLEMENT NOV 97 (structural modification only to a RB250)

For arm modifications we normally return your arm in 2-3 days

CROSS SECTION OF ARM END



For further information contact:-
Origin Live, 87 Chessel Crescent, Bitterne,
Southampton, SO19 4BT
Tel: 01703 578877 / 442183 Fax: 01703 398905
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web site: <http://www.originlive.com/index.htm>

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Stax Lambda Pro Headphone + SRDX Energiser	£300
Micromega Stage 4	£325
Audiolab 8000 DAC (Late 1997)	£525
Roksan Xerxes + RB300 + Audio Technica OC3	£475

Amps

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Audiolab 8000 A	£325
Densen Beat 100	£395
Linn LK100	£395
Yamaha 3090 AC3 Amp	£900
Linn Wakonda	£595
Sony 540 E Int	£100
Pioneer DSP 200 R/C	£100
Naim 72 Pre	£375
Naim 62 Pre	£195
Naim Flatcap	£240
Naim 90.3	£350
Naim 92	£350

Speakers

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Rogers LS2/2A	£100
Neat Petite Blk	£300
Mission 73c Centre	£70
Royd Minstrels	£115
Naim SBL Blk	£1100
TDL RT 2 rose/w	£150
Monitor Audio Gold 2	£150
Rogers LSI	£75
Epos 14 Black	£300
Epos 14 Walnut	£325
Mission 753 Black	£450
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Dr Jehn	Anutha zone - 2LP	£14.90
Ether	Strange6/7	£TBC
Godz	Contact High With The Godz	£9.90
Godz	Godz 2/Third Testament each	£9.90
Groundhogs	Live At Leeds Univ 1971	£TBC
Maxwell	Embrya	£13.90
Neil Finn	Try Whistling This - Import	£TBC
Rancid	Live Wont Wait - 2LP	£9.90
Red Snapper	Making Bones 13/7	£11.90
Rocket From The Crypt	RFTC 6/7	£9.90
Smashing Pumpkins	Adore	£TBC
Waterboys	Live Adventures Of - 3LP	£15.90

Audiophile Releases

Jim Croce (DCC)	His Greatest Recordings	£21.90
Louis Armstrong	Under The Stars	£21.90
Louis Armstrong	I've Got The World on a String	£21.90
Miles Davis	Lift To The Scaffold-Filmscore	£19.90
Moody Blues	Days Of Future Passed	£19.90

Current And Recent Releases

Aretha Franklin	30 Greatest Hits - 2LP	£9.90
Canned Heat	Live At Topanga coral 180gm	£15.90
Canned Heat	Vintage	£15.90
Charlie Hunter	Return Of The Candyman	£12.50
Dee Jay Punk Roc	Chicken Eye	£10.90
Delgados	Peleton	£9.90
Embrace	Good Will Out - 2LP	£15.90
Girls Against Boys	Freak On ICA	£11.90
Gomez	Bring It On	£14.50
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Jimi Hendrix	BBC Sessions - 3LP	£19.90
Jurassic 5	Jurassic 5	£9.50
Lo Fidelity All Stars	How To Operate With A	£11.90
Marc Bolan/T.Rex	I Danced Myself Out Of The	£14.90
Paul Giovanni	The Wicker Man-Filmscore	£7.90
Simply Red	Blue	£11.90
Sonic Youth	A Thousand Leaves - 2LP	£12.90
Sunhouse	Crazy On The Weekend	£11.90
Tori Amos	From the Choirgirl Hotel	£11.90
Tricky	Angles With Dirty Faces	£10.90
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MISCELLANEOUS - EX.DEMO - MINT

RCF 3001 CRT Projector (£4000)	£2995
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CA-200: 200w/500w Balanced Stereo/Mono Switchable Power Amplifier (Black) (£3000)	£2495
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Pink Triangle Da Capo DAC with 1307 Chip including Battery Power Supply - Mint (£3000)	£1695
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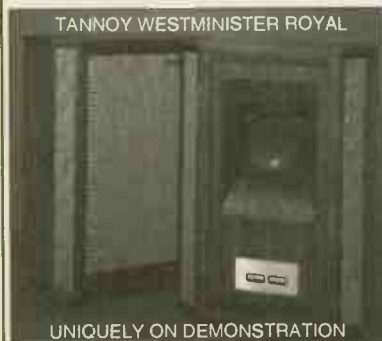
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EPOS ES30	£ 2385	£1995
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Musical Fidelity X Pre Q XA50 x2	£ 750	£ 635
Nakamichi CR4E S/H	£ 795	£ 465
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AT 110 E	£25 £13	AN2, AN 70 £11
AT OC 9	£280 £210 EX	Dual DN 145 E, DN 165 E £13.50
Denon		Goldring G800 Super E £13.50
DL 110	£70 £55 EX	JVC DT 55, DT 60 £9
DL 304	£190 £160 EX	National EPS 24 CS, P 30 D, P 33 D £9
Goldring		Ortofon FF 15 E II, VMS 20 E II, DM 20 510 £13.50
1012 GX	£74 £48	Pioneer PN 210, PN 220, PN 240 £9
1022 GX	£90 £60	Shure N 75 C, SC 35 C, £9
1042	£110 £74	N 75 ED T2, N 75 EJ T2 £11
Eroica (LX or H)	£102 £78 EX	N 95 ED, N 95 EJ, N 75 3 (78) £13.50
Elite	£200 £153 EX	VN 35 E £16.50
Excel VX	£446 £342 EX	N 95 HE, N 97 HE, VN 35 HE £22
Grado		Sony ND 142 G, ND 150 G, ND 155 G £9
Prestige Black	£44 £24	CN234 £11
Prestige Gold	£134 £74	*** OVER 500 STYLI TYPES STOCKED ***
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510	£34 £22	ORTOFON DJ PACKS (CARTRIDGE + 2 STYLI)
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Rohmann	£725 £645 EX	GRADO Prestige Series
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V 15 V XMR	£265 £178	SR-60 £75
SC 35 X	£29 £20	SR-80 £90
		SR-125 £135
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Musical Fidelity X pre valve Pre-Amp (new)	200.00
Musical Fidelity XA50 monobloc Power amps x2(new)	500.00
Myriad M1120 remote int amp/phone stage/upgrade (mint as new)	700.00 499.95
Papworth Audio M100 valve monobloc Power Amps	
2x100 watts 852 (mint as new)	s/h 380.00 225.00
Chameleon Ruby Power Amp (2x200 watts 852) (vgc)	s/h 1260.00 499.95
Quad 44 Pre-Amp (brown) (g.c)	s/h 700.00 249.95
Quad 66 Pre-Amp/remote control station (vgc)	s/h 879.00 449.95
Quad 306 Power Amp (mint as new)	s/h 400.00 249.95
Quad 33/303 Pre/Power Amp (several in stock)(g.c)	s/h - P.O.A
Quad 44 Pre-Amp (grey) (vgc)	s/h 700.00 249.95
Quad 405 12x100 watts power amp (vgc)	s/h - 199.95
Yamaha AX 390 remote int 2x45 watts (g.c)	s/h 180.00 119.95
Kinshaw Overture int 2x45 watts (mint as new)	s/h 435.00 269.95
Aura Evolution VA100 int (vgc)	s/h 300.00 169.95
Mission Cyrus I (original) int (g.c.)	s/h - 109.95
Mission Cyrus II/psx (late black steel model)(g.c)	s/h 550.00 329.95
Mission Cyrus 3 remote int. amp (mint/as new)	s/h 500.00 299.95
NAD 1130 preamp (mint)	s/h 200.00 99.95
NAD 304 int (g.c)	s/h 230.00 149.95
Naim Nat 3 int. (vgc)	s/h 575.00 399.95
Technics SU Y9000 remote pre/power (mint/as new)	s/h 500.00 399.95
Pioneer A400X int. (mint/as new)	s/h 280.00 179.95
QED A270 CD int (vgc)	s/h 370.00 179.95
QED A240 CD int (vgc)	s/h 170.00 109.95
Denon PMA250 III (mint/as new)	s/h 160.00 119.95
Creek CAS 4040 int. (g.c.)	s/h 180.00 109.95
Sugden CS1 preamp (vgc)	s/h - 89.95
TURNTABLES	
Micell Focus one/SME 3009 S/2 arm/LINN K.5 (vgc)	s/h - 249.95
Micell Syncro/Rege RB250/ADC MAG cartridge (vgc)	s/h 525.00 349.95
Micell/Transcriptors hydraulic reference/SME 3009 S/2 arm/new Goldring Elna cart/silver wired Mission 774 arm	
Rege Bias cart (vgc)	s/h loads 595.00
Gerrard 401 in "foyd" piano black plinth/Rege RB 300	
Rege Bias cartridge (I can't believe no one's bought this!) (mint)	s/h loads 495.00
Dunlop Systemdeck IIX IIA/AFrosoma) LINN Basik LV arm/Arcam C77 cartridge (vgc)	
Alphason Sonata (rosewood/Atlas psu/Xenon MCS	
van den Hul wired) arm/Empire 900 II Microridge cart	
(If you're looking for a superb turntable this is it!) (mint/as new)	s/h 1700.00 795.00
Rege Planar II/RB 250/ Super bias cart (mint/as new)	s/h 266.00 179.95
Dual CS 504 c/w Ortolon VMS 20EH cart (f.c.)	s/h 260.00 59.95
Dual CS 505 II/c/w Ortolon VMS 20E II cart (lid bit no hinges) hence	
Sony PS 6750 c/w AT mag cart (huge Jap direct drive with pitch/strobe) surprisingly musical/dynamic (mint)	s/h loads 129.95
Musical Fidelity XLP (the one to buy at this price) mm/mc (new)	- 130.00 89.95
Rotel RQ970 BX phono stage/MM/MC (vgc)	s/h 130.00 89.95

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Mayware Formula Four unipivot arm (boxed) complete (vgc)	s/h - 60.95
Decca Gold cart (London) (vgc)	s/h 239.00 60.00
Good Turntables/Arms/Cartridges/Phono Stages Always Wanted	
PRODUCT OF THE MONTH	
Audio Alchemy Digital Drive System III Full Remote Control CD Transport/Player (Can be used as integrated CD player but really comes into its own if used as a transport only with high quality add-on DAC. Mint condition, boxed)	
R R P £700.00	AA PRICE 449.95
(Musical Fidelity X.DAC at £300.00 makes excellent partner)	
CASSIETTES	
Acoustic Energy AE 120 floorstanders (black) (vgc)	s/h 500.00 349.95
Bose Acoustimas 5 II (complete system) (few months old)(mint)	s/h 700.00 525.00
Rege Kyles (black) (mint/as new)	s/h 200.00 139.95
Mission 707/stands (black) (fair cond)	s/h - 109.95
Mission 764i floor standers (black) (g.c)	s/h 480.00 229.95
Mission 731 leading edge (black) mint as new	s/h 150.00 109.95
Mission 73 shielded centre speaker (black) (mint)	s/h 160.00 99.95
TDL Near field monitors (small) rosewood (vgc)	s/h 95.00 75.00
Wharfedale Diamond 7.2 (black) (new)	140.00 119.95
Celestion SL65 (black) (F.C)	s/h 400.00 229.95
Tannoy 636 floorstanders (black)(vgc)	s/h 470.00 249.95
Tannoy 625 ALF 100 watts active sub	
'better than Strata' (mint)	s/h 600.00 379.95
Ikark Talliman II (rosewood) (mint)	s/h 750.00 499.99
Ikark Temporal II (lightoak) (mint)	s/h 600.00 399.95
System 935 systemdek (mint as new) (to clear)	s/h 400.00 249.95
Farman Kardon LS 0500 (Kevlar drivers) (black) (mint) (to clear)	s/h 450.00 269.95
Amley Reference 3 (light oak) (mint)	s/h 900.00 499.95
Chaim Credo (ebony) floorstanders (g.c)	s/h 1060.00 695.00
Castle ISS (yew) (mint as new virtually unused)	s/h 270.00 199.95
Linn S110 surround speakers (mint)	s/h 295.00 169.95
Heybrook H81 (walnut) inc Point Five Stands (g.c)	s/h 280.00 149.95
Griffin Omega 25 Plus(walnut) (vgc)	s/h - 129.95
B&W DM 1800 (black) (good cond but no grills) Hence	s/h 380.00 129.95
Siliscan 4A (black) (new/ex-dem)	s/h 170.00 129.95
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Technics RS8605 HX Pro/DBX etc (g.c)	s/h - 119.95
NAD 6340 Playern vari bias etc (vgc)	s/h 200.00 99.99
Nakamichi BK.125 (g.c)	s/h 400.00+ 229.99
NAD 4130 digital tuner (g.c)	s/h 200.00+ 99.99
Musical Fidelity Electra E50 digital tuner (mint)	s/h 300.00 179.95
Quad FM 4 Tuner (brown) (mint)	s/h 424.00 249.95
Teac F900X3 head/DBX/Everything (g.c)	s/h loads 119.95
Alwa 3800 3 head/electronic bias etc (vgc)	s/h loads 129.95
Sony M2 E3 portable mini-disc player (vgc)	s/h 250.00 124.95
Arcam Delta 80 3 band digital tuner (vgc)	s/h 280.00 129.00

A selection of our ever changing offers for sale (all fully guaranteed)

Equivalent New Price Sale Price

Yamaha KX230 HX Pro/varbi bias etc (vgc)	s/h 150.00 89.95
Leak Troughline II FM tuner (no decoder, but mint cosmetics)	s/h - 60.00
COMPACT DISC PLAYERS	
Rotel RCD 965 BX remote (Trichord Clock 2 Mod) (g.c.)	s/h 450.00 229.95
Marantz CD 72 SE (mint)	s/h 600.00 329.95
Marantz CD 75 remote/digital out etc (mint)	s/h 300.00 129.95
Marantz CD 67 remote (mint/as new)	s/h 270.00 189.95
Marantz CD 52 II SE remote (vgc)	s/h 300.00 179.95
Pioneer PDS 901 (stable platter) remote (vgc)	s/h 500.00 269.95
Pioneer PD 106 (mint)	s/h 130.00+ 99.95
Myriad MC 100 remote (mint/as new)	s/h 700.00 499.95
Philips CDD 210 (Interactive CD Player) remote (mint)	s/h 400.00 159.95
Technics SL-PG 380A (vgc)	s/h 180.00+ 99.95
Technics SL PS 770A remote (mint/as new)	s/h 250.00 189.95
Audio Alchemy D05III remote player/transport (mint)	s/h 700.00 449.95
Arcam Alpha Plus remote (g.c.)	s/h 500.00 229.95
DPA Little Bit One DAC (vgc)	s/h 300.00 119.95
Musical Fidelity X Act DAC (new)	- 130.00
Musical Fidelity X Act DAC (ex-dem) (mint)	- 130.00 109.95
Musical Fidelity X-DAC (HDCD) (mint/as new)	s/h 300.00 219.95
Musical Fidelity X PSD Missing Link/Line Buffer (new)	- 120.00
Musical Fidelity X PSU (powers up/improves up to 4X Series units (new)	- 130.00
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Built-in centre/rear amps (mint)	s/h 400.00 169.95
Beyer DT 801 headphones (mint)	s/h 150.00 99.95
Vivanco IR 7500 infra red headphones (mint)	s/h 120.00 89.95
Vivanco SR 850 headphones (new)	59.95 49.95
Jamo Centre 50 (shielded centre speaker) (mint)	s/h 120.00 59.95
Sound Organisation LS wall stands (unused)	s/h 50.00+ 24.99
Musical Fidelity X Cite (stand for X Series) (New)	- 30.00
Sony MDX 61 MiniDisc x6 car auto changer (unused) (mint)	s/h 500.00 269.95
Target VR W Silver/glass 5 shelf equipment stand (second)	220.00 189.95
Target B SA black/glass 5 shelf equipment stands (second)	224.00 189.95
Target BS Black/Glass 5 Shelf equipment Stand (Second)	224.00 189.95
Target TT 1 turntable wall mount unit (vgc)	s/h - 39.95
Loads of interconnects/loudspeaker cables (various types new and pre-owned in stock)	- P.O.A
A few NAB alloy reels of tape left (most only used once!)	- P.O.A

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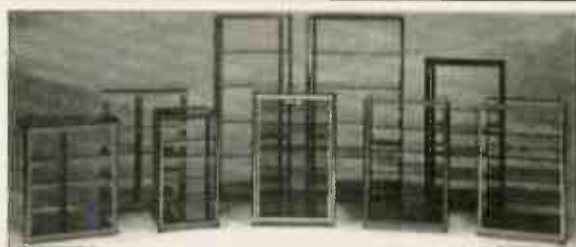
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AudioAlchem	DDEV1.1	Digital Decoding Engine V 1.1	X	1	£400.00	£250.00
Audiolab	8000 S	Amplifier	X	1	£700.00	£450.00
Audiolab	8000 CD	Cd Player - Ex Dem but unused!	X	1	£1,000.00	£650.00
B & O	AV 5	Television, Cd and Radio - Green	X	1	£4,650.00	£3,850.00
Castle	Severn II	Loudspeaker of the year 1997 - Cherry	N	1	£580.00	£520.00
Castle	Severn II	Loudspeaker of the year 1997 - Mahogany	N	1	£580.00	£520.00
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Celestion	A 1	Loudspeakers with Stands Black	X	1	£1,100.00	£700.00
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Celestion	A 3	Floor Standing Loudspeakers	X	1	£2,400.00	£2,000.00
Celestion	30i	Floor Standing Loudspeakers	N	1	£449.90	£349.00
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Kef	Coda 10	Floorstanding Loudspeakers	N	1	£400.00	£350.00
Meridian	551	Amplifier	X	1	£795.00	£550.00
Meridian	566	Digital to Analogue converter	X	1	£1,095.00	£695.00
Meridian	565	Dolby Digital, DTS, THX Processor	X	1	£2,850.00	£2,000.00
Meridian	562 V	Digital Controller	X	1	£995.00	£700.00
Meridian	DSP 5000	Digital Active Loudspeakers Black	X	1	£3,295.00	£2,250.00
Mission	750 SE	Loudspeakers Special Edition	X	1	£250.00	£190.00
Mission	73C	Centre Speaker	X	1	£150.00	£100.00
Nad	910	Surround Sound Processor	S	1	£400.00	£125.00
Pioneer	A 400	Amplifier	S	1		£100.00
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Yamaha	DSPA 990	Prologic Amplifier	N	2	£900.00	£375.00
Yamaha	DSPA 590	1996 Pro-logic Amplifier of the year	X	1	£350.00	£175.00
Yamaha	DSPA 592	Pro-logic-Dolby Digital Upgradable	X	2	£330.00	£290.00
Yamaha	DSPA 492	Pro-logic Amplifier	X	2	£250.00	£190.00
Yamaha	DSPE 492	Pro-logic Processor	X	2	£250.00	£190.00
Yamaha	KX 580 SE	Dolby B,C & S Cassette Deck	X	3	£250.00	£190.00
Yamaha	KX 690	Dolby B,C, S & 3 Head Cassette Deck X	2	£400.00	£250.00	

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Naim Audio NAP 110 (Old Style)	N/A	195
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Roksan Caspian Poweramplifier	599	475
Roksan DS1.5 Power Supply	695	549
Roksan L2.5 Pre-Amp	1295	750
Roksan S1.5 Power Amplifier	1495	995
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The Orca Preamplifier	POA

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No: 331 Power amplifier	£4499.00

Mark Levinson

Roksan

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Radius 3/Tabriz/Corus Black	£1090.00

CD players

Atessa DP3 Transport/Atessa DA2 MK2/Atessa DS5	£2439.00
Atessa DP3 CD player	£1595.00
Caspian CD player	£895.00

Amplifiers

ROK L1.5 preamplifier	£2250.00
ROK L2.5 preamplifier	£1295.00
ROK S1.5 poweramplifier	£1495.00
ROK M1.5 mono poweramplifier	£2250.00
Caspian Integrated	£ 695.00
Caspian Poweramplifier	£ 595.00
Caspian Tuner	£ 599.00

Loudspeakers

Ojan 3X Loudspeaker	£1195.00
Ojan 3 Loudspeaker	£795.00
ROK-One Loudspeaker	£549.00

Other products available

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Any aspect or format concerning Roksan - please call John Roberts for an informative but informal chat.

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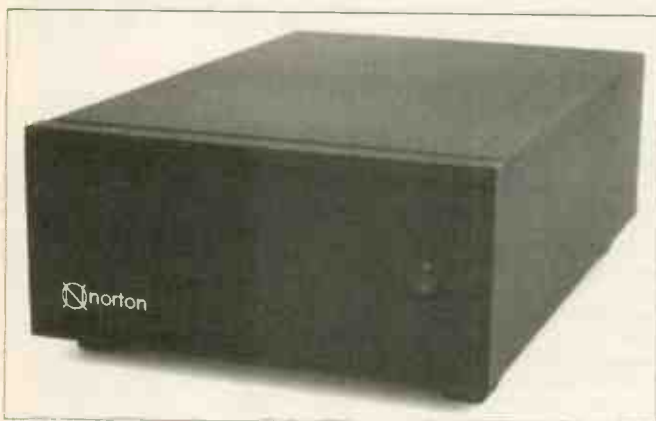
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MEASURED PERFORMANCE

PHONO STAGE

ANTHEM PRE 1P PHONO STAGE

This is a well-built unit that turns in a text-book performance. It has no warp filter, so low frequency response reaches right down to 4Hz - this is how the Americans and Japanese like it. There is oodles of low-frequency gain, which will cause cone-flap when warped records are played. I prefer to see a switchable filter on a dedicated phono stage, even though it might call for an extra gain stage. Otherwise, frequency response was flat and wide.

Noise was low, as it usually is with valves, and gain high at x340. This is enough for all moving-magnet cartridges and many high-ish output moving coils as well, including Ortofons, although Sonic Frontiers don't say so. There was no hum.

Input and output overload figures were enormous, again as is common with valves due to the voltage they can swing. Those with active input-stage amplifiers should beware however - the Anthem can swing 60V on its output, enough to blow an unprotected input transistor. Input loading

conditions can be adjusted, but gain cannot be increased.

This stage was well engineered and measured impressively. I would expect excellent sound quality, since valve phono stages are magically better than solid-state designs. NK

Disc - MM only

Frequency response	4Hz-50kHz
Separation	87dB
Noise (EIN)	0.4uV
Distortion (1V/1k)	0.003%
Gain	x340
Overload (in/out)	170mV/60V

DVD PLAYERS

DENON DVD-3000 DVD PLAYER

The Denon DVD-3000 possesses a flat frequency response characteristic with a slight roll-off at high frequencies. It is likely to give a smooth, well-integrated sound with no treble sharpness as a result.

Distortion was relatively low at all signal levels, but like the earlier Panasonic DVD-A350 player this one would not play a Philips test disc. Whether it will refuse to play some CDs I do not know, but the Sony DVP-S715 had no such problem. Since Philips and Sony derived CD standards this is worrying. I'd expect a Philips test disc to perfectly accord with CD standards.

Otherwise the Denon measured well in all respects. NK

Frequency response 4Hz-21kHz

Distortion (%)

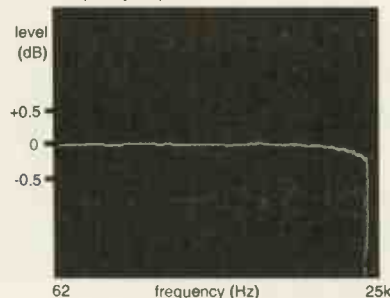
-6dB	0.004	0.004
-30dB	0.017	0.018
-60dB	0.4	0.4
-90dB	28	29

Separation (dB)	left	right
1kHz	108	109
20kHz	103	101

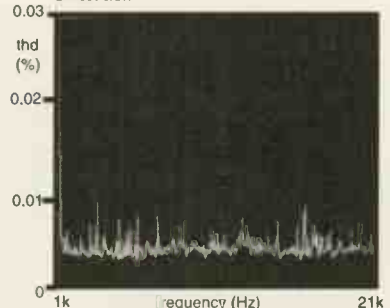
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Dynamic range 110dB
Output 2.14V

Frequency response



Distortion



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EXPOSURE 17/18 Pre/Power Amplifier	£1700	£1395
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Marantz CD17KI	1099	899
Teac VRDS T1 Transport	549	399
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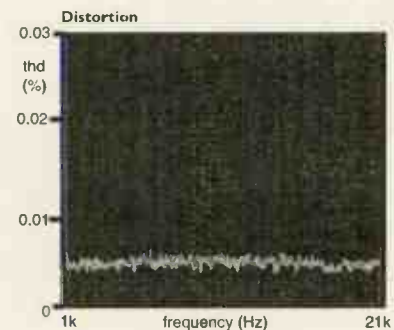
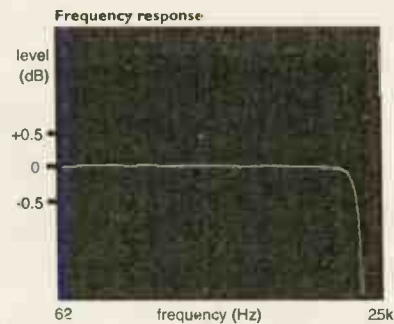
SONY DVP-S715 DVD PLAYER

The Sony sprung a surprise by displaying slightly restricted audio bandwidth. Frequency response reached up to 17kHz, instead of the usual 21kHz. Only Pioneer Legato Link players have behaved like this in the past, and they sounded obviously warm in tonal balance. I'd expect a similar presentation from this player.

There was minimal distortion as far as 16-bit digital goes - the Sony put up a good result here. Channel separation was wide, output normal at 2.3V and dynamic range very high.

This player measured well but will probably sound warmer than most. NK

Frequency response	4Hz-17kHz	
Distortion (dB)		
-6dB	0.003	0.003
-30dB	0.017	0.017
-60dB	0.4	0.4
-90dB	29	30
Separation (dB)	left	right
1kHz	109	108
20kHz	106	105
Noise	-126dB	
with emphasis	-126dB	
Dynamic range	110dB	
Output	2.3V	



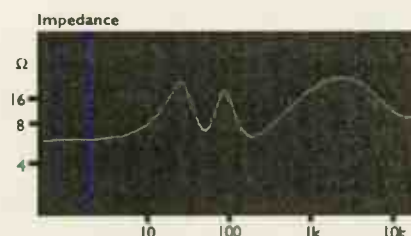
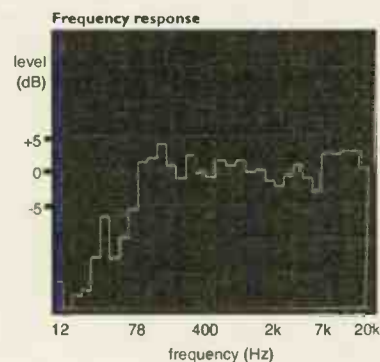
LOUDSPEAKERS

AUDIOVECTOR M1 SIGNATURE

This loudspeaker has a very uneven frequency response curve, which suggests it will sound coloured. The tweeter has strong output and will certainly be prominent, meaning there will be obvious brightness. A lift toward the bass end suggests there will be reasonably strong bass too. I would expect a somewhat distinctive sound from the Audiovector.

Overall impedance was high at 10ohms which limited sensitivity to 85dB for a nominal watt of input. The Audiovector will need at least 50watts or so to go loud. Although respectably

engineered, this is a loudspeaker with its own strong characteristics and should be judged carefully. NK





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AURA LSB-627M

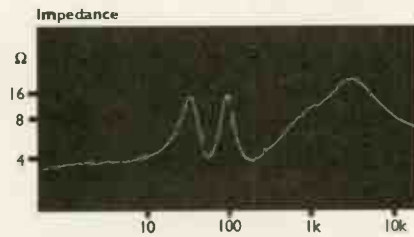
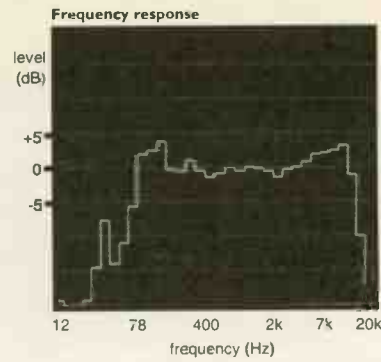
The ribbon tweeter of the Aura LSB-627M gives plenty of output. The frequency response analysis shows smoothly rising treble, enough to ensure a bright sound and one that may at times exhibit bite when a lot of high-treble energy is present in a recording.

A flat midband and absence of crossover suckout around 3kHz will ensure detail is reproduced vividly, and a bass lift down around 120Hz suggests underdamped and lively bass output. The port is tuned to 55Hz and is placed accurately at the woofer's resonance, but tight bass is unlikely. This 'speaker has been engineered to possess some boom

and ting.

Impedance was lowish at 6ohms, due primarily to the use of a low-impedance 4ohm woofer. This does help, however, toward a reasonable sensitivity of 88dB for one nominal watt (2.8V) of input. Impedance across the midband was high, so the tweeter looks to be a good, sensitive design.

Fulsome bass and strong but clean treble are likely to characterise this 'speaker. Detailing is likely to be good. NK

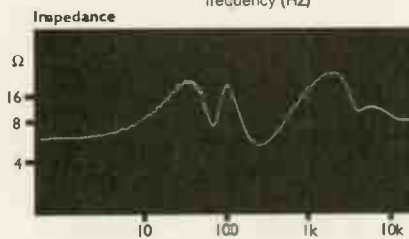
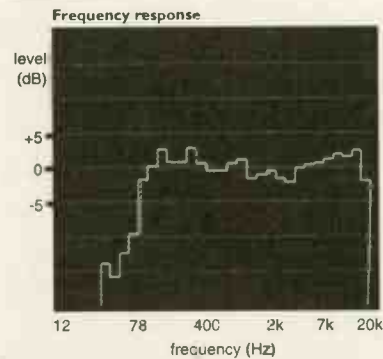


PROAC TABLETTE 50

The ProAc has emphasised treble and will sound at least crisp, possibly bright.

One loudspeaker had more of a crossover dip than the other (the good one is shown), so pair matching was poor.

Bass output looks to be well damped, meaning the loudspeaker is likely to work best when close to a rear wall. Small loudspeakers are commonly designed like this. Overall impedance was high, measuring 10ohms, and this contributed to a low sensitivity of 84.5dB NK



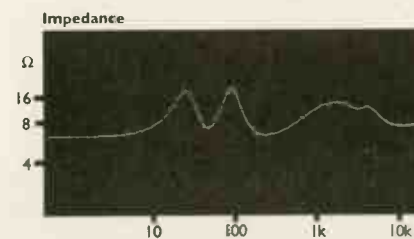
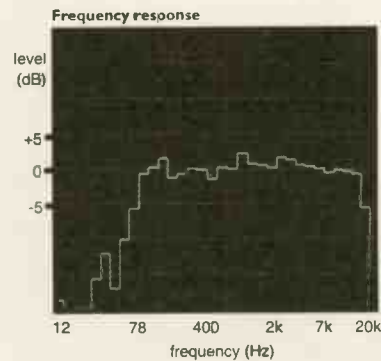
RUARK EPILOGUE

The Ruark Epilogues have a very smooth frequency response, with no sign of a crossover dip. I would expect them to sound smooth, detailed and well balanced with excellent treble integration.

The bass response of these 'speakers also measures flat, which means bass will sound slightly damped and reticent. The Epilogues are best in near-wall placement with a response like this. It is unlikely they will appear to have as much bass as less well-damped designs which go lower in measured terms and subjectively sound more lively.

Highly-damped loudspeakers can come alive with a bit of power and

this the Epilogues need, possessing a low sensitivity of 84.5dB. At least 50watts will be needed to make them go loud and more may be useful. As always with small-cone loudspeakers though, limited power handling will restrict maximum achievable volume. NK



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POWER AMPLIFIERS

	Choice Price	Original Retail Price
Naim Nap 250	£1295	£1700
Chord SPM 1200 B	£1895	£3840
Musical Fidelity XA50	£350	£500
Musical Fidelity A1000	£895	£1600
EAR 549 balanced / SE	£3500	£7000
Audiolab 8000 P/C	£895	£1600
Exposure XV	£495	£795

PRE AMPLIFIERS

Naim Nac 72	£550	£750
Audio Research LS7	£995	£1599
Audio Research SP11 mk II	£1695	£3500
Audio Research LS2 mk II	£1595	£3400
Balanced Audio Technology VK3i	£1495	£3000
Krell KRC 2	£2250	£3690
Chord 3200 pre	£2250	£3800

SPEAKERS

Quad ESL 63	£1595	£3200
Acoustic Energy AE2 + Stands	£1095	£1700
Muse 18 sub woofer	£1995	£4000
Gale 401	£250	£ -
Apogee Duetta Sig	£1495	£3500
Magneplanar 2.5	£995	£2000
Monitor Audio Studio 50	£2950	£5500

C.D PLAYERS & DACS

EAD DSP 1000	£695	£1495
Kenwood 9010	£250	£500
Audio Synthesis Dax (AT&T/AES,EBU)		
Ultra Analogue/re-clocked	£1095	£2500
Theta Data Basic 2	£1695	£2500
Theta Pro Gen III Balanced	£1995	£4500
Theta Pro Basic 3A	£1995	£3000
DPA DX512	£5995	£8000

Pink Triangle Da Capo 1307 HDCD £995 £1600

Audiomeca elixer £495 £800

TURNTABLES/ANALOGUE/VARIOUS

VPI TNT/ETII	£2000	£5000
Linn LP12/Avondale/Akito	£895	£2000
Linn LP12/Valhala/Basic +	£400	£1000
Oxford Crystal Ref + Stand	£1295	£2500
Oxford Crystal Ref + Stand/SME		
IV Dynavector 17D2	£1995	£3500
Michel ISO	£250	£350
Alphason Sonata	£395	£800

Pre Amplifiers

Audio Research Reference 1 mk II	£6500	£9000
Musical Fidelity F25	£1095	£1500
Musical Fidelity X-Tone + X-psu	£225	£320
Conrad Johnson PV12 (mm/mc)	£1995	£2590
Krell KRC	£3795	£6700
AVI 2000 pre/ remote	£575	£900
CAT SL1 mkII Black/ Silver	£4500	£6500
Audio Research SP14	£1395	£3000
Tesseract Tala	£795	£1495
Conrad Johnson Prem 7B	£5995	£11000
McCormack Micro Line Drive	£395	£595
Jadis JP 80 mm	£4995	£8000
Audio Research LS3	£1195	£1900
Audio Research SP15 Rev A	£2495	£6000
Audio Research LS5 mk II	£3000	£5700
Magnum P200	£995	£1895

Power Amplifiers

Jadis JA500	£7995	£21000
EAR 509 mk II	£1395	£2500
Audio Research Classic 60	£1495	£3600
Musical Fidelity F16	£2095	£2500
Boulder 102 AE	£2650	£3400

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Pioneer A400	£195	£300
Krell KSA 150	£2295	£4000
Conrad Johnson MF 2300	£1895	£2990
Audio Research M300 monoblocks	£4995	£10000
Boulder 500 AE	£3795	£5000
LFD PA1/LS1	£895	£1998
Musical Fidelity P180 & CRPS x 2	£795	£1600
Meridian 505 Monoblocks	£1195	£1590
Unison Research Smart 845	£2300	£3000
Audio Note P1 SE	£595	£950
Jadis JA 80 Monoblocks	£4995	£10000
Meridian 551 Integrated	£650	£900
Audion Golden Knights	£2495	£4000
LFD PA2/LS1/MC1	£1495	£3000
Audion Silver Knights (Gold)	£1495	£2250
Musical Fidelity P140	£225	£550
Jadis Defy 7 mk III	£3750	£4790

Quality Speakers

B & W 802 mk III (Black/ Walnut)	£1895	£2800
Martin Logan Aerius I	£1595	£2299
Acoustic Energy AE1	£595	£795
Acoustic Energy AE120	£365	£500

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Acoustic Energy AE109	£260	£350
Ensemble PA1	£995	£2000
Klipsch La Scala	£1695	£2400
ATC SCM 10 Black	£795	£1150
Alon IV mk II	£2000	£3500
Monitor Audio 700 PMC	£450	£600
Proac Response 4	£7995	£12500
Royd Priors	£495	£950
Alon V mk II Blk	£2500	£5000
Wilson System 5.1	£10995	£17000
Wilson 3/2	£5995	£15000
Alon Lotus SE	£3000	£ -
Sonus Faber Extrema + Stands	£4250	£7000
Linn Kan	£250	£500
Linn Keilhids	£395	£700
ATC SCM 50 A Rosewood	£3995	£5500
Sonus Faber Sub woofer + X-over + power amp	£1495	£3200

CD Players & DACS

Theta Data basic 2	£1695	£2397
Linn Karik 3 (Brilliant)	£1250	£1895
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C.A.L Tercet mk III	£895	£1700
Teac D10 dac	£495	£800
DPA Renaissance + the power	£795	£1100
Teac P10 transport	£850	£1600
Audio Alchemy DDE V1.0 + psu 1	£195	£300
P.S. Audio Ultralink	£795	£2390
EAD 9000 Series III HDCD	£3250	£6000
Wadia 16	£4750	£7395
Krell SBP 64X	£3500	£9900
M C Cormack DAC-1	£695	£995
Wadia 22/26	P.O.A.	
Acuphase DP70	£2250	£4500
Acuphase DP90/91	£9950	£20000
Forsell Air Ref Transport mk II		
Forsell Air Ref dac	£8995	£13800
Audio Alchemy Transport DDS 2	£495	£900
Mark Levinson 30.5/31	£11500	£24000
Teac T1	£395	£600
Meracus Transport	£1995	£3995

Turntables & Analogue

Stax Lambda Sig + SRMT	£895	£1400
Piere Lurne J1/SL5	£1750	£4500
Basis Ovation	£3495	£4950
Piere Lurne JU/Sowther mk III	£1800	£4500
VPI TNT Wheaton III	£1995	£5000
Forsell Air Force One	£11995	£25000
Kinshaw Overture Phono	£250	£395
Kiseki Purpleheart Sapphire	£495	£1200
Systemdek II XE 900/RB 250	£395	£650
Sequera Tuner (Original)	£4500	£ -
LP12/ Ittok	£695	£1500
Quad FM3 Tuner	£225	£ -

Clearance Bargains

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Audio Research D240 mk II	£1495	£3500
Beard P35	£495	£1395
Chameleon Ruby Power Amp (200W)	£495	£1200
Alchemist Kraken x 2 Stereo & Pre-amp	£695	£1400
NVA A80 Monoblocks & P50 Pre-amp	£895	£1760
Audio Innovations S500 Integrated	£450	£999
Exposure IX professional power supply	£495	£1595
Exposure V Active x over	£295	£995
EAD 7000 Transport	£995	£2495

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AMPLIFIERS

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-A200

The Musical Fidelity X-A200 monoblocs are massively powerful, delivering 250watts into 8ohms and no less than 400watts into 4ohms. They can drive the most insensitive loudspeakers loud, in a large room, but of course, at this level the loudspeakers must be able to handle such power.

Frequency response was very wide, running from a low 5Hz right up to 80kHz. I'd expect an open and clear sound, with little sign of warmth.

Distortion was well suppressed, measuring a maximum of 0.03%, when delivering full output at 10kHz, a rigorous test. The X-A200s will sound clean, the trace of third harmonic that's left suggesting a brightish presentation.

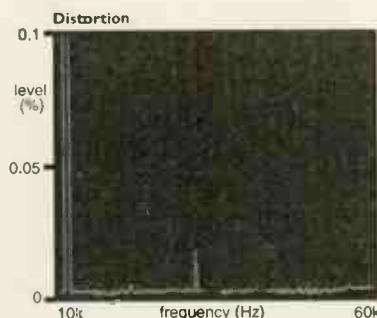
Sensitivity was low at 1.5V for

full output, so a pre-amplifier with gain is needed.

The X-A200 monoblocs measured very well in all respects.

NK

Power	250watts
Frequency response	5Hz-80kHz
Separation	NA
Noise	-119dB
Distortion	0.03%
Sensitivity	1.5V



UNISON RESEARCH POWER 35

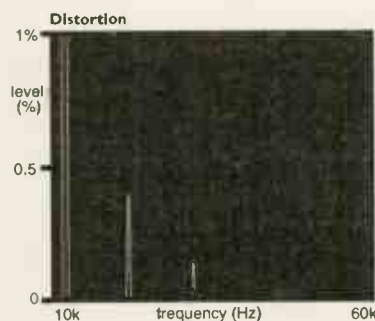
I was surprised at the suggestion in this amplifier's name that it can produce 35watts. Each channel was just into clip (overload) at 28watts and a rating of 26watts per channel wouldn't be conservative.

I would feel more generous toward the Unison if it had other strengths, but it did not. Quite the reverse in fact. The output transformer has excessive reactance (distributed capacitance or leakage inductance), causing the output valves to start slewing at 10kHz, before full output was reached. It just isn't a clever transformer. High-frequency output rose to a 1.5dB peak at around 50kHz before falling off. This peaking gave an apparently very extended treble performance but since it is attributable to the reactance that caused slewing, in

truth it is symptomatic of underlying weakness. A high treble distortion figure of 4% underlines this point.

Valve amplifiers like this in my experience have chrome-plated treble and some listeners are seduced. I am not one of them. NK

Power	28watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	7Hz-125kHz
Separation	56dB
Noise	-90dB
Distortion	0.4%
Sensitivity	60mV
DC offset	none



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ALCHEMIST KRAKEN ANNIVERSARY MK11	579	POA
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World favourites guide

COMPACT DISC PLAYERS

QUAD 67 second-hand

One of Quad's best products for a long time, the 67 is warmer and smoother than most, yet is highly musical and revealing.

KENWOOD DP-3080/II £180

Has great clarity and presence for the price. Not quite as naturally expressive as the CD4SE though.

CAMBRIDGE CD4SE £200

A touch soft in the treble but outstanding in every other aspect.

ARCAM ALPHA 7 £320

This British built player is extremely good value. Upfront, punchy nature suits Techno and Rock.

MARANTZ CD-63MKII KI-S £400

Similar to the CD-63SE but more powerful bass and an all-round smoother sound.

PHILIPS CDR 870 RECORDER £500

Replay quality is on a par with £250 machines but analogue and digital recordings on CD-R and CD-RW are outstanding.

ROKSAN CASPIAN £895

The Caspian has a smooth, even sound with some of the clearest treble in the business. Very engaging, dynamic character.

MERIDIAN 506 20-BIT £1100

Very detailed and revealing player. More cerebral than visceral though.

DENON DCD-S10 £1300

A warm, atmospheric and smooth performer that never fails to involve.

MARANTZ CD-17 KI-S £1300

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

PINK TRIANGLE LITAUROAL £2100

Possesses the same lush tonal colour as the Da Capo but is superior in every other way.

MCINTOSH CDM7009 £2635

A thoroughly inspiring machine. One of the most musical CD players around; sweet, open and detailed.

COMPACT DISC TRANSPORTS

TEAC VDRS-T1 £550

Not as substantially built as its chunky looks suggest, the T1 is nevertheless a good entry-level transport with a warm, expansive sound.

AUDIOLAB 8000CDM £1300

Beautifully built and finished, the CDM is packed with sensible features and performs reliably, day-in day-out.

TEAC P-30 £2500

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

CD CONVERTORS

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-DAC £300

A bargain for normal CDs and even better with HDCDs.

ASSEMBLAGE DAC-2 £400 (KIT)

Takes little building to produce a clean, clear sound. HDCD filter included.

MARSTON SILHOUETTE £795

With Crystal Semiconductors' 18-bit DAC the Marston produces clean-cut images and a transparent sound stage. Very rhythmic too.

PINK TRIANGLE DA CAPO £1450+

Offers a choice of filter modules, all up there with the best. The Da Capo is impressive in many respects, but is long in the tooth now.

DPA 1024 £6000

Proof positive that today's CDs needn't sound CD-like! Uses an in-house discrete convertor, and DPA haven't skimped on the build either!

TURNTABLES

GARRARD 401 second-hand

In a decent plinth with an arm of SME 309 calibre, the 401 has a highly authoritative overall sound with the most solid, expressive bass in the business. Very musical, but treble isn't up to modern standards.

THORENS TD124 second-hand

One of Thorens' best-ever turntables. Needs a modern plinth to give of its best. Duly installed, it's good enough to face off the Garrard 401, swapping some of its bass power for a more delicate, incisive treble.

ORIGIN LIVE STANDARD £145 (KIT)

Fine in standard form with AC motor, frighteningly good with a DC motor and battery PSU.

SYSTEMDEK IIX900/RB250 £330

A fine all rounder and easy to upgrade too. Has more depth and breadth than Rega Planar 3.

PINK TRIANGLE TARANTELLA £575

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

VPI HW 19 JUNIOR/RB300 £599

With its control and grip on music the Junior never fails to engage. Set-up is a piece of cake and there's a whole range of upgrades on offer too.

MICHELL GYRODEC £800

Stunning looks, build and fine sound. Standard PSU has detailed, architectural, if undynamic sound. With QC PSU, scale and insight kill the competition.

PRO-JECT 6.1SA £999

The Pro-ject places the listener in the best seat in the control room. Outrageous dynamics and a punchy, seriously deep bass. Comes with Sumiko arm and Ortofon MC30 Supreme.

ROKSAN XERXES X £1295

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

MICHELL ORBE £1950

The Darth Vader of analogue, the Orbe builds on the strengths of the Gyrodec. An ultra-tuneful, expansive sound.

SME MODEL 20 £2495

Including the excellent SME V tonearm, the Model 20 is possibly the last great turntable, unless you've got £11,000 for the Model 30, that is.

TONE-ARMS

LINN ITTOK S/H

This early heavyweight arm benefits from fine engineering. Good dynamics and grip.

REGA RB300 £130

Supremely capable at the price, but not quite humankind's salvation as has been suggested. Detailed, tight, rhythmic sound but tonally rather grey and cold-sounding.

SME 3009SII £375

This Paleolithic device doesn't bother with frequency extremes or detail, but its legendary serviceability makes it a cult in Japan. Oh death, where is thy sting?

SME309 £570

A down-market version of the IV and V with aluminium armtube and detachable headshell. Tight, neutral sound with good tonality, but lacks the IV's pace and precision.

SME V £1235

A masterpiece of precision engineering with a cohesive, ultra-transparent sound.

CARTRIDGES

ORTOFON VMS-2E £10

Warm, full-bodied, punchy and fast. Not to be sniffed at for a tenner. Can be upgraded with a better stylus at a later date.

GOLDRING 1012GX £60

An accomplished MM with a solid bass, slightly forward midband and clean transients. £20 buys the faster, more dynamic 1022GX.

World favourites guide

DNM MICA £185

Bettors Goldring's 1042 and costs only £135 on trade-in. An assured, detailed and transparent MM.

ORTOFON SUPREMES £225-£450

The MC10, MC20 and MC30 Supremes all offer superb sound and value for money, with a rich, smooth and musical performance.

ORTOFON MC2000 £650

We came across this one in an SME IV on a Garrard 401; it duly gave one of the best results we've ever heard.

ORTOFON ROHMANN £1000

In a way it's MC2000 meets MC7500 with the tonal strengths and dynamo sound Ortofon put into their moving-coil cartridges.

LYRA LYDIAN £649

A truly musical, sophisticated device that makes most other MCs sound frigid.

VAN DEN HUL MC-10 £840

Fluid bass, finely etched treble and highly tuneful in between. The MC-10 is honey, pure and simple.

ORTOFON MC7500 £2000

Conclusive proof that there's hope for humankind. CD lovers would die if they heard it.

INTEGRATED AMPLIFIERS

MISSION CYRUS I/II S/H

Both versions give a detailed, articulate and dynamic sound but can sound lean.

DENON PMA-250SE £160

It might not have bags of grunt but the Denon can sound very natural and open.

ROTEL RA-970BX £250

With its smooth and powerful sound, the Rotel sings a seductive song with all types of music.

PIONEER A-300R PRECISION £299

This is the cooking A-300 tweaked with special components and it shows. Rhythm and detail are first-class and the phono stage isn't far behind.

AUDIO ANALOGUE PUCCINI SE £595

This superbly made Italian integrated has a lucidity and control which leave the competition at up to £1000 standing. Sound stage depth is unequalled.

SUGDEN A21a £640

Class A transistor amp. Rich, crisp, deep, tight sound and it images well too. Wonderful.

ROKSAN CASPIAN £695

Smooth, warm integrated with remote control that works happily into most 'speakers.

SONETEER ALABASTER £995

Builds on the strengths of the Campion with ample control, colour and drive.

UNISON SIMPLY 2 £995

This single-ended valve amplifier is smooth, sweet and open. An extremely musical performer.

UNISON SIMPLY 4 £1495

Sonically similar to the Simply 2, but with more power and control.

McINTOSH MA6800 £3735

The MA6800 not so much plays music as takes control of it, with effortless bass drive and a three-dimensional sound stage.

PHONO STAGES

QED DISCSAVER £35

A true bargain that offers a cohesive, musical sound but avoid using it in thin sounding systems.

ROTEL RQ-970BX £130

Superb value entry-level phono stage with audiophile quality components and clear sound.

LFD MISTRAL PHONO STAGE £300

The Mistral has a warmth and involvement that make many more expensive phono stages sound overpriced.

MICHELL ISO/HERA £530

Open, spacious and 3-D sound. Not for fans of warmth though.

AUDIO INNOVATIONS P2 £749

Fantastic bass and super insight make this one of the best phono stages around. One for vinyl lovers.

ROKSAN ARTAXERXES X £950

With the Attesa PSU the Artaxerxes X MM/MC stage still shines. Its fortes are great stage depth, neutrality and tonal colour. Musical too.

PRE-AMPLIFIERS

AUDIOLAB 8000C £520

Versatile with superb phono input. Can sound sterile, but latest version is much improved.

AUDIOLAB 8000Q £995

Excellent line-level only pre-amp, greatly improves on 8000C with a more fluid, musical sound and greater grip. Remote control.

XTC PRE-1 £1000

Almost valve-like in its smoothness, the line-level Pre-1 is a warm and seductively clear.

CHORD CPA1800 £1800

Clarity, insight and control are second to none - an addictive mixture.

MARANTZ MODEL 7 PRE-AMP £3500

A '60s reissue, the Marantz pre-amp still sounds superb. Has a great phono stage.

POWER AMPLIFIERS

QUAD II second-hand

Classic valve monoblock with many thousands still in use. Archetypal warm, smooth valve sound, although not the last word in detail or dynamics.

LEAK STEREO 20 second-hand

The Stereo 20 can sound impressively up-to-date, although power and detail are ultimately limited.

ARCAM ALPHA 9 £400

With 70watts on tap, the 9P will drive most loudspeakers with a spacious and detailed sound. Good bass drive too.

MISSION CYRUS POWER £450

This power amplifier is a real honey. Rich and smooth, but with a firm grip; a fine blend of properties.

SUGDEN AU41P £530

Extremely competitive at the price with 100W of unusually smooth, full-bodied sound.

NAIM NAPI80 £900

Partnered with a NAC82, this has classic Naim control, making for a superbly rhythmic presentation. A touch lean for some tastes.

MICHELL ALECTO STEREO £1300

A refined transistor amplifier with valve-like transparency and a full, warm, easy-going sound. The £1800 Alecto monoblocks have rare lucidity and three dimensional realism.

CHORD SPM 400 £1400

There's a sense of effortless power to the Chord that gives music scale and presence.

XTC POW-1 £2000

Like the SPM 400 but loads more power on tap. Will drive just about anything.

CHORD SPM 1200 £2995

As smooth and composed as the Pre-1, the POW-1 has bags of power and refinement.

MARANTZ MODEL 9 £8000

Authentic reproduction monoblocks still more than cut the sonic mustard. The sound combines grunt with great tonal colour and expressiveness.

World favourites guide

TUNERS

LEAK TROUGHLINE second-hand

Our favourite way of listening to the wireless. A deliciously mellifluous sound will have you junking your transistor radio in seconds.

NAD 412 £190

The 412 is remarkably musical and natural sounding. Rich sound and full bass are a rarity.

SONY ST-SA3ES £250

Beguiling RDS tuner for sonically discerning button lovers. Good ergonomics and sensitive too.

MISSION CYRUS FM7 £300

Clear and lucid sound puts it up with the best regardless of price. Superb build too.

ROTEL RT990BX £500

High quality Michi-based tuner with a sophisticated, forward sound with great imaging and soundstage. Sensible facilities and remote control.

NAIM NAT03 £500

The NAT03's warm, atmospheric sound is further proof of Naim's proficiency with tuners.

FANFARE FT-1 £1350

In its native US the FT-1 is no mere tuner but a 'broadcast monitor' no less, a task at which it acquires itself well, with a clear and powerful sound.

NAIM NAT01 £1380

This is the best solid-state tuner available bar none. For better radio, go and live in the studio.

CASSETTE DECKS

AIWA AD-S750 £150

Sonically a very decent machine. For the price there's nothing better. Comes fitted with Dolby B, C and S.

KENWOOD KX-3080 £160

A simple deck, but high quality head and transport give an unusually high level of performance at this price. Not to be missed.

YAMAHA KX-580SE £250

The 'Special Edition' tag is more than a marketing gimmick. Sound is solid and clear with Dolby S.

AIWA AD-S950 £300

A stable transport, superb head and Dolby S make the AD-S950 an excellent all rounder.

PIONEER CT-S740S £430

A great piece of engineering from Pioneer, with first rate sound on playback and recording.

NAKAMICHI DR2 £600

Where serious cassette decks start. The DR2 pushes recordings to the limit, remaining unflustered at all times.

NAKAMICHI DR1 £850

Better still than the DR2, with manual head azimuth adjustment to boot.

NAKAMICHI CR7 £1500

Kills every other cassette deck and stamps on their graves.

LOUDSPEAKERS

TANNOY MERCURY m2 £140

A true audiophile bargain which embarrasses many more expensive boxes.

KEF Q15 £199

These stand mounters offer impressive bass and excellent clarity but need a powerful amplifier to perform at their considerable best.

MISSION 732 £200

Characteristically fast, punchy Mission sound. Very well balanced tonally.

B&W DM 602 £300

Deep and strong bass, pure, projected and uncoloured midrange. Treble quality a little metallic, but imaging precise. A lively, enjoyable sound.

REL Q-BASS £350

Few subwoofers match the Q-Bass at the price. The tuning controls can be a bit of a fiddle, but once set up the rest is pleasure.

CASTLE EDEN £450

Impressively vice-free 'speakers that offer great transparency and involvement. Unbeatable at the price.

EPOS ES12 £495

Strong, punchy bass is allied to detailed and articulate midrange and treble. Above all, these 'speakers are thoroughly musical.

REL STRATA £500

The Strata subwoofer is not a toy. It offers superb, true hi-fi bass depth and power, and opens up sound stage depth in particular.

HARBETH HL-P3ES £799

A fine example of good loudspeaker engineering. The top of the mini-monitor league.

HARBETH HL-K6 £975

Clean, musical and class - Harbeth have done themselves proud again.

KEF REFERENCE SERIES ONE £995

The KEFs combine pin-point imagery and detail with a smooth and polite balance. Good, agile bass too.

JAMO CONCERT 8 £1500

With their inch-thick cabinets and fabulous drive units, the Concert 8s are the most transparent stand mounters around. They don't suffer poor sources gladly though.

EPOS ES25 £1505

Epos' best. Combines near-uncoloured tonality with characteristic fireworks in the rhythm department. Superb by any other name.

SPENDOR SP7/1 £1970

This big Spendor floorstander is very appealing thanks to its open, lucid sound and valve-friendly load.

TANNOY AMS8 £2700

Bold sounding professional active monitor with solid bass, clearly focused midrange and delicious treble. Built-in amplification.

QUAD ESL 63 £2860

A reference against which all other loudspeakers are judged, the '63s have superb imaging qualities and genuine transparency. Earlier ESL model is a fine second-hand buy.

KEF REFERENCE SERIES FOUR £3099

Superb bass and near-electrostatic sound staging make these involving loudspeakers a reference to others. Need a strong amplifier though.

JBL S2600 £3500

Smooth, detailed and spacious with great dynamics and fine imaging. Capable of producing a superb performance when used in a big room.

TANNOY WESTMINSTER ROYAL £10,000

An incredibly dynamic, detailed full-range horn design with a rich sound. Its high sensitivity predisposes it to valve amplification.

MINI DISCS

SONY MDS-JE500 £300

An impressive overall sound quality and unmatched convenience and editing facilities make this budget MiniDisc player an excellent buy.

KENWOOD DM-7090 £500

Both replay and recording quality are superb through this Kenwood. Nakamichi owners should start getting worried - at last there's competition.

WANTED
TOP QUALITY HI-FI
Classic or Modern - all types urgently required

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TURNTABLES / ARMS / PHONO

AR Legend with Linn LVX	£295
Audiolab PPA Phono stage	£900 £628
Basils Gold Vacuum	
+ Air Tangent 2B	£12,990 £7998
Grado tonearm	£498
JVC QL-70 Direct Drive/Rega RB300	£150
Koetsu Urushi	£1990 £998
Linn LP12 Valhalla Zeta	
Koetsu Black	£2500 £998
Linn LP12 (Afr) Zeta	£795
Linn LP12 LV2 Ittok OC9	£1990 £798
Linn LP12 (Blk) Ekos/Lingo (no cartridge)	£3500 £1798
Linn Akito (Boxed - as new)	£350
Linn K18 Cartridge (New)	£150
Linn LP12 Basik/LVX/A&R	£1400 £595
Linn LP12 Basik Plus	£1400 £595
Linn Arkiv 1 Cartridge	£900 £408
Lyra Parnasus	£POA
Mana Reference T/T support system	£188
Manticore Mantra / Magician	
+ MBP6 pwr sup / Ort MC3000	£998
Mantra + Magician, AT OC5 & PSU	£748
Michell Gyro + SME 309 Denon 304 and Gyropower supply	£1995 £1298
Michell ISO phono stage + PSU	£420 £298
Oracle Delphi + Dynavector DVXX1 + Koetsu	£1498
Revolver / Helius Scorpion / P77	£249
Roksan Xerxes/RB250/Rega Cart	£1000 £495
Technics SL150 + SME Series II	£195
Technics SL1210/Stanton AL500	£265
Thorens TD160 Super/SME 3009	£175
Thorens TD124 + SME Series II	£245

AMPLIFIERS - SOLID STATE

Albarr AP3 (Pre)	£100
Alchemist Maxim Intgrtd	£319 £195
Arcam Delta 110/120 (Pre/Pow)	£550
Arcam Alpha 5	£260 £175
Audiolab 8000A	£500 £365
Audiolab 8000Q	£1100 £625
Audio Research D200	
200 wpc (Ex Dem)	£3250 £1997
Aura Evolution	£195
Aura SE-X (Integrated)	£250 £178
AVI S2000 MP Pre	£799 £498
Bryston 2B Power amp	£630 £358
Chameleon 900S 2 x 300w pwr	£1000 £495
Chord SPM1000B	
Balanced Power (Ex Dem)	£2785 £1797
Chord SPM1000B (S/H)	£1295 £1295
Counterpoint Solid 1 Pwr	£1495 £845
Cyrus 2 + PSX	£415
Cyrus 3	£500 £365
Cyrus Power amp	£500 £295
Cyrus PSX PSU	£328 £195
Deva 250 Pre + PA Pwr	£495
DPA 50S Power	£1500 £695
DPA DSP200 Line Pre (Ex Dem)	£499 £397
DNM Pre Series 2	£900 £528

DNM PA1 Power	£1800	£1168
Dynaco ST120 (Classic circa '76)		£328
ElectroCompaniet Anniversary Pwr	£4000	£1198
Exposure 15 (Intgrtd)	£799	£535
Finestra EC (Inc mains filter)		£795
Heybrook C3-P3 Pre/Pwr	£1425	£795
Heybrook Integra (Integrated!)	£555	£250
Jeff Rowland Consumeate Pre	£5500	£1498
Harmon Kardon HK1400 Line amp		£175
Harmon Kardon AVP1a		
Sound Processor	£2000	£695
Kenwood THX-ICMX1000 Amp	£375	£228
Krell KAV300i (Intgrtd) Mint	£2550	£1998
Krell KSA100S (Ex Dem)	£5843	£3497
Krell KSA200B	£5500	£2758
Krell KSA100 Mk2	£4000	£2498
Krell KSA250	£5500	£3298
Krell Ref KR5BP(6 comp balanced pre)		£3995
Krell KPE Phono stage		£698
Lescon AC1/AP1 (Circa 1975)		£295
LFD LSB + PA2 (Pre/Pwr)	£3800	£1798
LFD LS2/PA1 (Pre/Pwr)	£2600	£1198
Mark Levinson No.28 Pre		
+ PLS 228 PSU + No.29 Pwr	£6500	£4098
Meridian 603 Pre/DAC	£1750	£794

FOCUS ON MUSICAL FIDELITY

Hugely and deservedly popular, especially for their exceptional value, these items of Musical Fidelity hi-fi equipment are now a 'sonic steal' - be quick!

Musical Fidelity P270/1 Power	£1395	£648
Musical Fidelity P270/2 Power	£1500	£878
Musical Fidelity P173/P270	£2200	£1098
Musical Fidelity MA50 Monoblocks	£875	£498
Musical Fidelity 3a Pre	£379	£248
Musical Fidelity 2a Pre	£299	£178
Musical Fidelity Synthesis (Int)		£198
Musical Fidelity X-Cans	£130	£85
Musical Fidelity Digilog DAC		£140
Musical Fidelity MC2 Speakers		£150

Meridian 555 Power amp	£750	£498
Michell Argo + Hera (Pre)	£900	£595
Naim NAC42		£195
Naim NAP250 (Old style)	£1655	£795
Naim NAP250 (Late)	£1655	£1148
Naim NAP135s (Old style) pair	£3420	£1698
Nakamichi 600 Pwr		£290
Obelisk 2 Integrated		£95
OCM 500 Power amp	£2750	£1098
Orelle SA100 (Intgrtd)	£550	£375

QUAD

Quad 33/303 Pre/Power	Phone
Quad 66 Pre-amp	£498
Quad 44 Pre-amps. A choice from	£265
Quad 405 Power-amps. A choice from	£195
Quad items constantly changing and always sought for cash - please call	

Pioneer A300R	£400	£278
PS Audio TwoC power amps		£325
QED Systemline Kit + Mods (Ex D)	£3000	£1897
Rega Elicit	£740	£498
Roksan L1 Pre + PSU	£1100	£758
Sonographe SC1 Pre	£1250	£450
Sugden A48 (Integrated)		£135
Sugden Optima 140 (2X70w) pwr	£770	£448
Threshold S300	£4500	£1500
Thorens TTP2000 Mk1 Pre (Ex Dem)	£499	£397
Thorens TTA2000 Pwr (Ex Dem)	£599	£497
YBA 2 Pre-amp	£1700	£878

VALVE AMPLIFIERS

Art Audio Quintet (Monos)	£2000	£878
Audio Alchemy		
Vac-In-The-Box Phono/Pre	£249	£197

AUDIO INNOVATIONS SALE

Destined for the realms of classic British collectables these beautiful sounding products now offer exceptional value

Series 1000 Mk1 Monoblocks		£598
Series 1000 Mk11 Monoblocks		
Plus Border Patrol PSU	£2600	£1498
Series 500 Integrated 25w		£495
Series 300 Integrated Amp		£278
Series 200 Power Amp		£250
L1 Pre-amp	£369	£269

Audion Silver Knight		
Anniversary Monoblocks	£3400	£2697
Audion Silver Knight		
Integrated 300B	£1125	£897
Audio Note P3 (300B Power)		£1298
Audio Research BLI Cnvtr (Ex Dem)	£888	£587
Audio Research V70 Pwr (Ex Dem)	£4480	£2487
Audio Research LS5/1 Line Pre (Ex Dem)	£5295	£2997
Audio Research LS7 Pre	£1600	£1198
Audio Research SP10	£2500	£1098
Audion Sterling Integrated	£595	£428
Avantic SPA II Vintage valves		£188
Beard P100/P505 Pre/Pwr	£2200	£838
Concordant Exquisite (Pre)	£2000	£995
Counterpoint SA20 Pwr	£3000	£998
Croft Series 5 (Power)		POA
Golden Tube Audio 5150	£1000	£695
Gordon Welford (Pre-amp)		
Hand made, Hard Wired		£448
Graaf 5050 Power (Ex Dem)	£2150	£1657
Graaf WFB 2 Pre (Ex Dem)	£1195	£897
Grant G100 MC / Pre / Pwr	£2200	£998

PART-EXCHANGE

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 MONITOR AUDIO ♦ MUSICAL FIDELITY ♦ NAIM
 PINK TRIANGLE ♦ PIONEER ♦ QUAD ♦ SME
 SONUS FABER ♦ TEAC ♦ TECHNICS ♦ UNISON
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VALVE AMPLIFIERS (Contd)

Papworth Audio M100 Monos	£3600	£2600
PM Components MPL1 Pre plus		
2 x Mp211 Power amps (Ex Dem)	£5000	£2507
Tube Technology Prophet & Genesis (Pre/Pwr)	£4800	£2898
Tube Technology Unisis	£1550	£985
Unison Mystery One		£POA
Unison 845 Monoblocks		£POA

CD PLAYERS / DACS

Arcam Alpha 5 CD Player	£420	£240
Audio Alchemy Drive System 3		
4 Box CD Player	£1950	£898
Audio Alchemy Drive 3	£695	£498
Audio Alchemy DACMAN(Ex Dem)	£149	£117
Audio Alchemy DAC-IN-BOX(Ex D)	£229	£177
Audio Alchemy ACD2 Plyr(Ex D)	£490	£397
Audio Alchemy V1 DAC		£168
Audiolab 8000CDM Tms (Ex Dem)	£1399	£1097
Audiolab 8000DAC	£1000	£528
AVI 2000MC Reference CD	£1300	£898
Cambridge Audio DAC Magic		£POA
Kinshaw Overture DAC		£195
Krell SBP64X DAC	£9900	£1798
Marantz CD17 KI Signature	£1300	£778
Marantz CD63SE Trichord	£570	£368

MERIDIAN

Meridian 602/606Trans/DAC	£3350	£1498
Meridian 602	£1750	£618
Meridian 207 CD/Pre	£1400	£548
Meridian 500 Transport	£1245	£878
Meridian 566 DAC	£765	£468
Meridian 506 16 bit CD		£548
Meridian 200 Transport	£818	£445
Meridian 203 DAC	£560	£295

We've been Meridian dealers since they began in business. We also stock their full range of hi-fi and audio-visual components.

Micromega Duo (2 box)	£2299	£998
Micromega Stage 4 CD (Ex Dem)	£600	£397
Micromega Stage 5 CD (Ex Dem)	£750	£597
Micromega Stage 6 CD (Ex Dem)	£950	£747
Monarchy DIP Jitterbuster(Ex Dem)	£245	£197
Musical Fidelity Digilog DAC		£140
Parasound DAC-1000	£795	£528
Pioneer PDM900 (Multi)	£600	£228
Pioneer PD77 CD Player	£1100	£495
Pioneer PD91 CD		£398
Pioneer PDS-505 Precision CD	£450	£298
QED Digit Reference	£450	£284
Revox B266 CD Player	£1300	£678
Rega Planet CD Player	£423	£318
Rotel RCD970BX	£300	£198
Theta TLC Jitter Buster (Ex Dem)	£229	£177
Trichord Pulsar 1 (Ex Dem)	£1195	£847
Wadia 2000 (Trans/DAC)	£15,000	£5598

TAPE DECKS / TUNERS

Avantix BM611 Valve Tuner		
Circa 1960 (no decoder)		£148
DPA Little Bit 2 (DAC)	£250	£148
Marantz SD55 3 hd / 2 mtr	£400	£195
Marantz SD1010	£250	£165
Nakamichi 1000ZXL		£1698
Nakamichi BX-1	£350	£158
Nakamichi BX300E 3 Head	£700	£328
Nakamichi BX-2	£400	£198
Nakamichi RX202 ('flip' reverse)		£395
Nakamichi 630 Tuner/Pre-amp	£500	£295
Rega Tuner	£230	£160

SERIOUS TAPE RECORDERS

Amateur use tape machines of the highest quality are always required for discerning semi-pro and professional customers

Revox B77 MK2	£2200	£798
Revox B77 MK2 (Mint)	£2500	£998
Revox A77 1/2 track		£POA
Revox B226 'BBC' CD Player	£1300	£650

Sequerra Reference	£5973	£3498
Sony TCK 611S	£330	£218
Theta Lynx Tuner	£500	£324

LOUDSPEAKERS

Acoustic Energy AE2 + Stands	£1800	£898
Alon 5 Mk2	£5000	£2898
Apogee Caliper Signature	£4000	£748
Apogee Diva Grigio/Perla	£12,980	£6998
ATC SCM10 Black (Mint)	£1000	£698
Castle Harlech (Ex-dem/Yew)	£995	£879
B&W THX System (Ex Dem)	£4975	£2977
B&W DM601 (As new)	£200	£138
Castle Howard Mk2 (Ex Dem)	£1200	£947

DCM Time Windows

Well reviewed, floor standers like this are hard to find at the price. Big, dynamic sound quality ... and very elegant too!

Epos ES14 Black	£900	£575
Equation Zero (Blk)		£298
Harbeth HL3 Teak	£1000	£298
Harbeth HL4 + Stands	£1000	£398
Harbeth HL Compact 7 (Ex Dem)	£1499	£1197
Harbeth HL K6 (Ex Dem)	£1049	£847
Harbeth HL5 Teak		£798
Heybrook HB3 Oak		£168
Horning Agathon Sig Bronze	£3500	£1795
KEF Ref Model 1 Bk (Ex Dem)	£1199	£997
Klipsch Heresy 11 (Black)		£754
Klipsch SW15 Mk2 Sub (2 avail)	£1800	£1148

Linaeum LFX	£649	£445
Linn Isobarik Passive (Teak)		£750
Linn Kaber (Marked)	£2000	£898
Linn Sara + Stands		£295
Linn Nexus	£450	£265
Magna Planar SMGA (Blk & Chrome)		£450
Martin Logan Aeriis (Oak)	£2400	£1498
Mission 754F (Ex Dem)	£1498	£997
Monitor Audio R352 (Teak)	£395	£248
Musical Fidelity MC2		£150
Musical Technology	£500	£325
Note Perfect Virtuoso (Ex Dem)	£2750	£1497
Note Perfect Concert (Ex Dem)	£2450	£1297
Opera Duetto (Mint)	£399	£329
Pink Triangle Vertical (Ex Dem)	£896	£597
ProAc Response 3.5 (Ex dem)	£4250	£3494
Quad ESL63	£3500	£1595
Rega Kites	£200	£128
Rega XL	£1040	£758
Rega EC (Rosewood)	£450	£198
Rogers Studio 3	£600	£388
Royd Minstrel (Teak)	£240	£168
Shahinian Obelisk	£3000	£1898
Sonus Faber		
Electa Amator Mk1 (Ex Dem)	£3293	£2497
Spendor BC1		£238
Spendor BCIII (Teak)		£395
Spendor SP2/3	£1195	£775
Tangent RS2 + Stands	£400	£225
Tannoy Devon (12" drivers)	£795	£298
Tannoy Oxford (10" drivers)		£195
TDL Studio 1 (Teak or Black)	£800	£395

SADLY THE ISOBARIK IS NO MORE - LONG LIVE THE WILSON WITT

Wilson Witt Mk1 (Ex dem) £8888 £6887
Wilson Witt Mk1 (Sept '97 Mint) £8888 £5998

Several fans of the 'Isobarik' sound have upgraded to these effortless transducers.

So nice - we play them for ourselves!
This is our Ex-Dem pair, well run in and, at nearly £4,000 less than a new pair of Mark 2's, we think the law of diminishing returns works

in your favour for a pleasant change.
And remember, INTEREST FREE CREDIT and PART EXCHANGE makes it so easy!

MISCELLANEOUS

Pirate speaker stands (Black gloss)	£118
Stax SRD75B Headphones	£268
Siltech 560 Balanced cables 1mtr pr	£1600
£898	
Van den Hull The Second Balanced	
1mtr cables (pair)	£240
£155	
XL10 Power chord	£190
£128	

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NEW ACOUSTIC DIMENSION

David Price recounts the tale of the world's first budget audiophile amplifier, the NAD 3020.

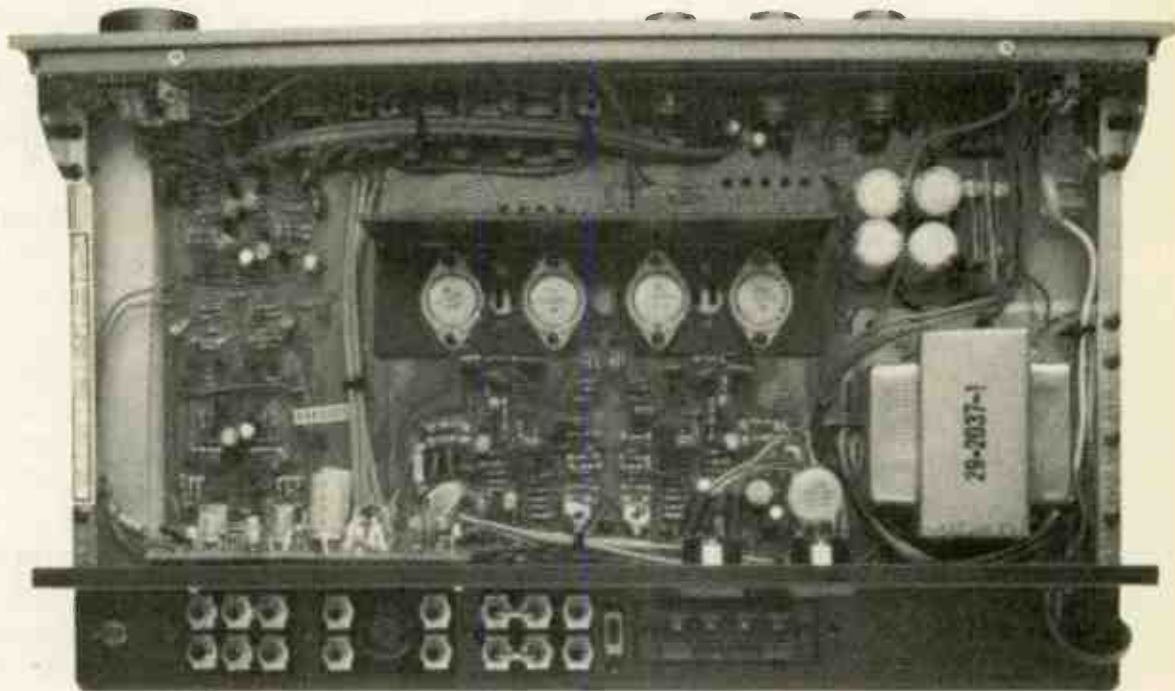
Buying a decent budget amp back in the late Seventies wasn't easy. The market was swamped with brushed-aluminium Japanese designs plastered with tone controls and power meters. As so little of the purchase price went towards the audio circuitry, the sound these things made was at best bland and inoffensive, and at worst downright painful.

Sensing the need for something different, a young British company stepped in with the NAD 3020. An

unfashionably compact design, it put out a modest 20watts per side and had none of the bells and whistles of its Oriental rivals. Worse still, its plasticky front panel was finished in dour dark grey - hardly the height of fashion at the time. Just as well then that on its launch in summer 1979 it sold for a mere £59.95.

So unprepossessing was it that the 3020 could easily have disappeared never to be seen again. But to those who heard it, it was obviously special. Inside was a cracking circuit design with an extremely generous power supply. Round the back was a rear panel of novel horizontal construction, complete with phono socketry for Pre Out, Normal In and Lab In, which bypassed the Normal input's subsonic and ultrasonic filtering. There was also a switch marked Soft Clipping, a NAD innovation which let the amp run at full power without endangering the loudspeakers.

On audition the 3020 was quite unlike anything else near the price. One of those epochal products that comes along from nowhere and shakes down the market, it sounded like a high-power, high-quality, high-price integrated - no mean feat for any amplifier, but for less than 60 quid it was high on unbelievable.



Although undeniably coloured - with a fat, sumptuous bass, a warm bloom across the midband and an artificially silky treble - it was surprisingly dynamic and punchy. This meant that given a cheap turntable and middling budget 'speakers to work with its musicality and warmth could shine through, yet it seemed to hide the front end's limitations. Used with a capable source it did the opposite, and made the most of a turntable's power and detail.

The NAD's big-hearted sound was thanks in part to its excellent real-world 'speaker-driving ability, which totally belied its modest 20watt (into 8ohms) rated power. Its beefy power supply could really pump current when needed - a fact borne out by measurements which showed it quadrupling its output power into 2ohms. Tales of it out-punching various Japanese 100watt super-amps abounded, and some reviewers even tried it with nightmare loads like Linn Isobariks with some success!

For several years it swept the board, stealing sales from all over the place and picking up every award in the business. Despite several price rises and the arrival of some talented competitors, the punters stayed keen. Then came the 'A'

version featuring a switchable MM/MC stage. Although done on the cheap, the NAD's phono stage was such that it sounded surprisingly good even with high-end Moving Coils.

Finally the 3020B arrived in 1985 with a 'speaker impedance selector and improved binding posts. Also introduced was the cheaper 3120, a 3020B minus tone controls and power meter. Curiously for a 'minimalist' amplifier, it retained the loudness button - reputedly an oversight at the factory!

After the arrival of the bigger 3130 in 1985 - billed as the 3020's true successor - things were never the same. The subsequent 3020i was a cheaper and shoddier affair that lacked the warmth and punch of previous models. Of all 3020 derivatives, the very earliest ones are reputed to sound best, but whether this is just hi-fi folklore is anyone's guess.

Why buy a NAD 3020 now? As well as being amazingly cheap second-hand and still relatively common, they're also highly versatile. The split pre/power facility is a god-send for tweekers and bi-ampers, and even means you can use the amp purely as a phono stage. For audiophiles with only £50 to spend, there's no better used buy●

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MICROMEGA DUO 3 i transport	1500	850	PIONEER CT979 3 head dual capstan	425	200
MICROMEGA T DRIVE 3 cd player	2150	1000	REVOX A77 4 track boxed	200	250
MICROMEGA STAGE 3 cd player	900	450	REVOX A77 2 track	250	250
MICROMEGA LEADER mk II cd player	500+	100	SUGDEN R21 tuner in teak case	100	100
PIONEER PL1200 CD/laserdisc player	1550	600	SUGDEN R51 black & silver front	250	250
TEAC VDRS T1 transport	550	325	YAMAHA CR1000 tuner amp	150	150
TEAC P-500/D500 transport & dac	1000	600			
AUDIONOTE CD2	1000	600	SOLID STATE AMPS		
NAIM CD3	1000	650	MARC LEVINSON No 26 pre with mc boards	5450	2000
AUDIONOTE DAC 1 signature	600	250	one of the best ones made still under guarantee		
TEAC X1 beautiful Japanese lightweight of player	2250	1000	HERNLEY MC 200 MC phonostage	800	400
MISSION DAC7	300	100	MICHEL 150	429	250

VALVE AMPS

LEAK TL12 II monoblocks with original gec kt66	1200		MUSICAL FIDELITY MX pre with mc/mr	1400	550
LEAK STEREO 20 very nice x-sample	250		MUSICAL FIDELITY PRE Export version pre 3	150	150
ROCKERS CADET II integrated valve amp START HERE	100		MUSICAL FIDELITY A1000 two box integrated fore		
QUAD II monoblocks	400-500		runner to A1001	950	950
AMC 30 watt power amp	450	200	MUSICAL FIDELITY SYNTHESIS integrated	150	150
CROFT SERIES V power amp	450	200	NVA AP30 integrated	350	150
TRILogy 958 100 WATT monoblocks	2500	1350	QUAD 44/PM405 1.1 with cd input but old colour	1000	600
ROGERS E40s integrated with mm phono	2000	700	QUAD 306 power amp	200	200
ART AUDIO TEPHO monoblocks	2400	1100	QUAD 34 old colour but with cd input	150	150
AUDIO INNOVATIONS 400 integrated amp	650	300	QUAD 44	300	300
AUDIO INNOVATIONS CLASSIC 25 integrated	1000	400	QUAD 405 MK1	160	160
GAMMA GEMINI line level integrated	650	300	NAIM 82 pre old style with mm or mc boards	200	200
AUDIO INNOVATIONS 200 power	400	200	NAIM 140 power old style	350	350
GAMMA AEON monoblocks orig version and £1000	2250		NAIM HI CAP old style	350	350
BEARD P35 mkII power amp	5000+	500	NAIM 250 old style	150	150
BEARD 100 MKIII line level integrated	1500	700	NAIM 42.5 old style with mm or mc	300	300
MORE FIDELITY 3008 single ended stereo	2000	900	NAIM 90 new flat style	1400	1400
VELLEMAN kit monoblocks	200		NAIM 82 pre new style remote control	250	250
KTSI monoblocks 20 watt design	300		PS AUDIO TWO power amp 50 watter	150	150
CHANGE pre mm/line very smooth sound	300		PS AUDIO PLUS C power amps pair bridgble for 150	600	600
AUDIO RESEARCH SP14	3298	1350	PS AUDIO 55 pre amp Sounds fantastic. My advice is buy it	450	450
MELOS SNA GOLD remote control line only preamp	2500	1100	YAMAHA C2402 pre power control 10watts now reduced	par 500	par 500
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AUDIO NOTE P2 power amp	600		LINN LP200 with superb power supply smooth & powerful	1350	400
AUDIO NOTE MEISHU	3500	£1600	AUDICLAB 800DC pre	300	300

LOUDSPEAKERS

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LOWTHER PH6A pair	4800		ROKSAN XERXES walnut with xps2 power supply and		
LOWTHER TP corner horn with pm3a	single	£800	rs300 arm	£550	
ROGERS STUDIO I	£300		LINN LP12 CIRKUS/LINGO/EKOS mk2	£1500	
ROGERS STUDIO IA	£350		LINN EKOS mk1	£2000	
LINN KELTIC active with tune box and cards	6000	2500	LINN LP12 valhalla /AKITO	£400	
LINN KABERS passive	2000	700	SIMON YORKE ZARATHUSTRA 55.SLATE.GLASS AND		
IR 149	200		STEEL turntable	£150	
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straight from ITALY	1500		deck cut out for rega arm		
SONUS FABER ELECTA AMATOR mint and boxed	2700		QUARRAD 301 AND SME 3009 II in damped black	£325	
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CELESTION SL600	280		THORENS TD124 II in plinth excellent	250	
CELESTION SL65	150		SYSTEMDECK III with AKITO	450	
ACOUSTIC ENERGY AE I mk1 without stands	400		AUDIO NOTE TT1 black boxed	225	
AUDIONOTE late pair with active crossover	800		ARISTON RD11S/SYRINX PU2	250	
LINN ISOBARIKS late pair with active crossover	400		KOETSU ARM	300	
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Dealers must not advertise in the Private Classified section. Monthly consecutive insertions will be considered Trade advertising. The Publisher reserves the right to judge submissions.

SPECIAL INTERNET OFFER SEE PAGE 138 FOR DETAILS

KRELL KAV300i Integrated amplifier, mint condition, boxed. Reason for sale - upgrading. £1850. Tel: 01823 444 044 (Taunton) (Aug/I)

QUAD ESL63s, black, latest specification £1450. Quad speaker cable, 12 metres £50. Pioneer 400-X amplifier £150. Monostem hi-fi rack and CD stem, wall mounted, silver finish with 4 black slate shelves £180. All mint, boxed, instructions. Tel: 01480 422 337 or 01480 458 617 (Aug/I)

NAIM 72 Preamp £400. Old style HiCap £300. Bundy cable for S. Cap - Snaxo £100. Russ Andrews 8 way multiplug Kimber cable £85. Target turntable wall support £25. Tel: 0121 553 1121 (West Bromwich) (Aug/I)

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CHORD CPA 2200 Preamp latest spec, cost new £2200, asking £1450 Acoustic precision FRI loudspeakers (racing green) cost new £800 asking £450 Tel: 01296 437 314 (eves) (Aylesbury Bucks) (Aug/I)

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WANTED AKG cartridges P8 or P7 range also Pye PF91 or HF11 or Leak TL12.1 valve amplifier Tel: 0181 647 6217 (anytime) (Aug/I)

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KEF REFERENCE FOURS. Rosetta Burr immaculate condition, one year old £2200 ono. Ccan deliver. Sugden Symetra Class A monoblocks, hardly used, mint condition. £990. Tel: 01482 445090 (evenings) or 0961 386 721 (mobile) (Aug/I)

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ACOUSTIC PRECISION "Eikos" CD player, Anniversary specification cost new £2200, asking £1400 MIT 330 Pro 1m balanced interconnect cost new £500 asking £270 Tel: 01296 437 314 (eves) (Aylesbury Bucks) (Aug/I)

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DETAILS

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YAMAHA DSP-A3090 dolby pro-logic and AC3 5/7 channel amplifier, June 97 boxed. Pair black Tannoy profile 632 speakers, December 94, on Profile stands Mission 75C centre speaker, black, September 97, boxed. Could make an excellent starter system by adding another pair of speakers. £950 may split. Roksan Chorus black MM cartridge £30 Tel: 01462 813 573 (Aug/1)

PINK TRIANGLE PTI, Scorpio, K9 £400. Quad 34/606 £475. Yamaha E1000 processor £325 B&W CC6 centre £130. Monitor Audio CC200 centre £100. Yamaha ES-E80 surrounds £50 Magnaplanar MG1a need new tweeters £300. Tel: 01787 476 969 (eves) (Aug/1)

PROAC SPEAKERS model Response 3.5 in rosewood. Probably the finest in original packing immaculate very little use sale £3350 ono. Wanted Audio Research LS2 MkII, must be in mint condition Tel: 01276 858 481. (Surrey) (Aug/1)

SONUS FABER Concertos, 1 month £800 Sonus Faber Musica amp, £1950- together £2500 stunning combination. Infinity Reference mini monitors, dedicated stands, piano black £500 Cary 300b single ended, border reference PSU (£1000), paper in oils, fully serviced, 3 pairs spare. New 300b's £1500, Audio Innovations L1 modified, £250. Together £1600. Technics ST3500 Tuner £75 Tel: 0468 301 670 or 01332 663 339 (Aug/1)

LEAK 'STEREO 20' classic valve power amp, restored with care and sensitivity, excellent condition, with full set of new (NOS) Mullard valves £300. QED disc saver phono stage, £21. Tel: 01978 750 151. (Aug/1)

TDL REFERENCE SPEAKERS mint condition awesome £2500 ono Hafler DH200 £245 ono Enigma poweramp, Variation 3 £250 ono Luxman CD valve output stage, mint boxed £395 ono Tel: 01273 703 279 (Brighton) (Aug/1)

ART AUDIO TEMPOS class A triode monoblocks 30 watts £999 (£2600 new). Valves 8x KT 90's El Yugoslavia unused £20 each. 2x 300B Golden Dragon 50 hours use £30 each. 8x 6L6 WGC Sovtek 50 hours use. £5 each. Canare speaker cable two 5 metre Tri-Wire lengths £50 pair Tel: (Christos) 0181 993 2006 (Aug/1)

KEF Q15 one year old, black, mint Sound Organisation 24" sand filled stands £200 Musical Fidelity synthesis amp 70wpc £100 SAE FM tuner USA rack size black £100 Tel: 01268 745 416 (before 9 pm) Aug/1)

AUDIO ANALOGUE Puccini SE, 1 month old receipt guarantee boxed immaculate condition, special black finish. £490 (was £600) Tel: Cedric 0181 691 0098 (Greenwich) (Aug/1)

QUAD ESL 63 loudspeakers, mint condition with MAF stands £1250 ono Tel: (Dave) 0171 209 1468 (Sept/1)

CAMBRIDGE R40 loudspeakers, black, slate tops, spiked, silver-wired KEF drivers £195. B&W Solids, white, boxed £95. Hart Battery phono £45. Armstrong 127 mono valve receiver (immaculate) £30 Tel: 01480 353 649 (Cams) (Aug/1)

BRYSTON 2B-LP poweramp £450. Bryston BP4 preamp £450. Both nearly new and more neutral than Switzerland. 10 years parts and labour warranty. Nordost Black Knight interconnect £30 Tel: 0121 733 1961 (Aug/1)

MARANTZ CD12 Transport/DAC, boxed as new, little use immaculate, stunning sound £1550. Naim Hi-Cap old style £350. 32.5 Pre £170. 42.5 £130. 110 poweramp £140. Tel: 003531 295 4076 (Dublin) (Aug/1)

ROGERS STUDIO 7 walnut speakers for sale. One top corner slightly rubbed, hence only £520. (buyer collects) Tel: 01546 603 592 (Aug/1)

SUGDEN AUS1 equipment
Preamp (MkII) £550 (£995)
Transport (Philips CDM9 pro mechanism) DAC (16 bit) £1250 (£2700) Tel: 01702 588 216 (Southend on Sea, Essex) (Aug/1)

NAD 3020 AMPLIFIER £75. Offers for: Trio KHA-50. M/C head amp, pair of Sony HA-T10 phono plug in M/C transformers, Mission 77A Tone-Arm. 2 Ortofon M/M cartridges. Dynavector 10x/2 high output M/C cartridge, QED switchable cartridge equaliser, mains extension lead to 6 IEC sockets Tel & Fax: 0181 981 7156 (East London) and 01726 890 639 (Cornwall) (Aug/1)

ALPHASON HI-FI table. 3 tiers (shelves). silver sand damped, and spiked £45 Tel: 01933 678 251 (Wellingborough) (Aug/1)

NAIM NAP 140, old style silver trim, boxed with leads, £300. Rega ELA speakers, black four years old £200. Tel: 01207 520 028 (Durham) (Aug/1)

MERIDIAN 566 DAC mint £600. Audio Technica ATH 9000 Electret headphones, new £160. Tripletone stereo valve amp £150. Garrard SP25/II, accessories £25. 1960's Wharfedale units, offers. Van den Hul D102 interconnects £20 Tel: 01793 526 796 (Aug/1)

SONNETEER CAMPION 8 months old mint condition £360 ono. WANTED: Kimber 8TC 3m pair bi-wire terminated. Tel: 0181 788 1470 (Aug/1)

NAIM 140 POWER, 72 pre, MM, Hi-Cap, all new style immaculate £1200 ono. Garrard 401 with instruction manual, Acos Lustre arm, Thorpe Grenville Plinthe £175 ono Tel: (Pete) 01202 398 497 (Aug/1)

ATC MODEL 505L active speakers current spec £4400, Quad 77/707 pre power, with remote control £1100, Kef LS3/5A limited edition speakers in piano black £850. Rega ELA speakers £175 Tel: 01977 643 629 (Aug/1)

NAIM NAC 32, MM and CD boards £140. WANTED: 1 Rotel RB850 poweramp or 2 similar poweramps Tel: 01623 644 474 (Sept/1)

TRIPLETONE 3 watt valve monoblocks (s/ended) £30. Garrard 401 £60. AudioLab 8000A £250. Custom built 8 watt single ended valve amp £100. Logic DM101 turntable £75. Thorens 150 (no-arm) £20 Leak Stereo 70 £30 Leak Delta 70 £30. Tel: 0114 221 5271 (Aug/1)

ROKSAN XERXES XPS III rosewood finish, DS4 psu, Artemiz arm, Denon DL 304 MC, Roksan table £700. Audio Innovations P1 phono amplifier. Re-valved £150 All items in mint condition boxed. Tel: 0141 339 7387 (eves) (Glasgow) (Aug/1)

LINN LPI2 Vashalla. Syrinx P.U Denon DL160 MC £325 Tel: 01444 458 587 (Aug/1)

MERIDIAN 501 (phono): £425, incl. All silver I/C, new £70. Beat the dealers! boxed etc. Tel: Trevor 0181 429 1788. (Aug/1)

LINN KAN MK2 speakers with stands. Black, bi-wire model Boxed vgc approx 6 years old £225 ono Tel: 01296 436 024 (Aylesbury) (Aug/1)

AUDIOLAB 8000DAC immaculate condition, original box, full manuals. purchased March 1994 £400 Tel/Fax: Geoff 01926 492 469 (Aug/1)

FAROUDJA LD1000 absolute state of the art laserdisc player with separate CD audio performance to match. Unused/boxed/as new. £2750 (List £5500). Pioneer CLD 2950 with AC-3/digital audio output/tray illumination £350. Audio Alchemy DAC-in-box £100. Tel: 01945 436 077 (Aug/1)

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DA100/CVI219 G.E.C two matched pairs, PX4 Mazda Globe Type one matched pair 211/VT4C four matched pairs. All new boxed and fully tested. Pair Vortexion 807 amps Tel: 0171 836 6815 (Aug/1)

KRELL KRG 2 pre amp £2000. Krell KSA 150S power amp £3000. Martin Logan Aeries £1300. Yamaha DSP E580 surround processor £300. KEF 100 centre speaker £150. Celestion "Little Ones" rears £50. Tel: 0121 628 9247 (Aug/1)

X-PRE, VALVE preamp, 6 weeks use, very smooth all-round performance, £120. Aura VA 100, £120. Two Sovtek 300B valves, very good 300B, 40 hours use, £120. All vgc, boxed. Tel: 0131 668 3389 Email: Fungd@div.ed.ac.uk (Aug/1)

PIONEER PD91 Reference CD player cost £800 accept £295. Rega Planer 3 £175. Acoustic Energy AEI1's £395. All items in excellent condition, boxed. WANTED: Roksan Radius with or without arm. Tel: Rob 01600 772 020 (daytime) (Aug/1)

PIONEER A400 GTE £160. Cambridge Audio DAC Magic II £95. Both in excellent condition, boxed and manuals Tel: 01934 813 666 (After 6pm) (Aug/1)

QUAD 67 CD £500. One pair of BW 70 electrostatic units for spares, offers. WANTED: Quad speakers any condition. Tel: Tony Ryan 01203 460729 (home) 01203 216 650 (work) (Aug/1)

LINN ACTIVE system Karik CD player £795. Numerik DAC £695. Kairn preamp £750 2x LK100 amps £375 each. Keilidh speakers inc granite stands £425. Active cards £375. All boxed warranty remaining and no marks. Sound style stand inc turntable support £150. K400 2x7 metres £75 Tel: 01702 545 622 (Aug/1)

SILTECH FT12 PURE Silver ribbon speaker cable incredible sound, which will transform your speakers. 4 lengths at 142cm. plus 4 lengths at 114cm. Sensible offers please. Target 3 tier rack "special" 8mm smoked glass weight around 150lbs! £400. Ring for more details, Tel: Ian 0171 584 5784/ 0171 589 4840 (Aug/1)

HIS MASTERS Voice (HMV) Radiogram model 2308, Garrard deck type AT6 auto change, 33, 45, 78, speeds. purchased new 1963 very little use. Moved house, no room. offers. Tel: 01902 897 338 (Aug/1)

ARCAM BLACK BOX 50, £195. Kenwood DPX9010 CD Transport, Clock 2 modified, new laser, £195. NAD 412 tuner, new, £120. QED Vector Reference pre-amp, £195. All boxed & excellent condition. Tel: 01978 780 580 (Aug/1)

MERIDIAN 506 20 bit CD player. Nine months old, as new. Boxed, £750. Tel: 01258 458 674 (Dorset) (Aug/1)

KIMBER KCAG DIGITAL cable 0.5 metre, £45. Kimber PBJ interconnect cable, ultraplato phono connections, 3 metre, £50. Campaign Audio Design mains cable. IEC to MK, one at 1 metre, one at 2 metre £20 & £30. Tel: 01772 315 723 (Aug/1)

SONY MDR CD 1000 reference Headphones, £50. QED headphone amp £40. 6 Mullard valves ECC/82/3, £20. Fifty assorted Hi-Fi World, Hi-Fi News magazines. Offers, Tel: 01772 315 723 (Aug/1)

LUMLEY REFERENCE LM250 Valve monoblock 250 watt amplifier. Pentode/Triode switchable. Finished in black and chrome. New £7500. Less than half price at £3500. Lumley Reference PS2 matching solid state preamp with stepped attenuator and on-board phono stage. Chrome finish. New £3500. Another bargain at £1650. Stunning performance as well as looks. Tel: 01332 864 169 (Derby) (Aug/1)

AUDIOLAB 8000 DAC £650 or swap for 8000 PPA or Audiolab 8000 tuner or SME/ Orb turntable & cash. Unused Monarchy 18B DAC/ pre-amp £450. Unused Monarchy Super-Drive DIP £200. 2x Monarchy SE100 monoblocks £750 each. NAD 5020 turntable £70. Audiolab 8000C pre-amp £350. All in mint condition. swap? Tel: 0141 884 3831 (Aug/1)

MARANTZ CD52 II CD player £70 Tel: 01793 850 995 (Swindon) (Aug/1)

DAIS TURNTABLE £250, Inca Tech Oberon Classic £250 Nakamichi LX3, £150, Micromega Logic £150. Black Ruark Sabre's with stands £150. Assorted vinyl records and CD's, send SAE for list. Tel/ Fax: 01383 821 655 (Aug/1)

CYRUS DAD 7 CD player boxed, £495 Cyrus PSX-R power supply boxed £195. Soundstyle Hi-Fi table 3 legs 4 shelf, (light blue), £95. Tel: 01932 225 783 (Aug/1)

SHEARNE PHASE 2 int amp 55w, M/C input pre-amp output sockets blue marble colour, £400. Tel: 01782 633 088. (Stoke) (Aug/1)

CROFT CHARISMA Elite pre-amp, £750. Notts Analog, Tracer 4 cartridge £250 Cartridge Man's Grado unused £200. Matched pair Leak TL12.1 BBC version power amps, £1250, Tel: 01423 536 692 (Harrrogate) (Sept/1)

PROAC SUPERTOWER MK II speakers, black ash, £1200 new, immaculate, boxed, accept, £545. Meridian 200 transport/203 DAC & remote 6 years old, immaculate, boxed, £1500 new accept £595 Tel: 01727 766 601 (Aug/1)

AUDIO RESEARCH LS2 MkII preamplifier, balanced and unbalanced outputs £1950. Pair EAR 549 200 watt valve monoblocks £3500. Audio Synthesis DAX Coax, Toslink and AT&T (ST) inputs £850. All mint, boxed, manuals. Tel: 01483 282 364 (Aug/1)

SPENDOR SP2 loudspeakers in teak with Celestion stands, £150 ono. Musical Fidelity A100 50watt Class A intergrated amplifier superb sound quality £125 ono. Sony tuner ST-S 311(RDS), £50 ono Tel: 01782 511 712 (Aug/1)

EPOS ESII + speakers including stands. mahogany, superb condition, £250 ono Tel: 01235 200 209 (Aug/1)

MISSION CYRUS 752 Floorstanding speakers black. Hi-Fi World favourite, light use, 1.5 years old, £500 new. £300. Tel: 0171 240 3121 (London) (Aug/1)

VALVES VT4C (G.E) £165. 845 (Westinghouse) £375. 211 (Chinese) £25. All unused, original boxes. Silver speaker cable. ANSPX 2.4m stereo £475. ANSP 1.9m stereo £150. Must sell, best offer secures. Tel: 01273 672 796 (Aug)

AUDIOLAB 800CDM transport, mint, boxed £990. Audiolab 8000DAC, boxed £450. Systemdek turntable, Fidelity Research arm, Linn K8 £200. Rotel RHC10 passive preamp, boxed £450. Teac AT100 tuner £40. Luxman 509QX stereo amp, 100 watt £90. A&R C200 preamp £90. Tel: 01179 466 123 (Bristol) (Aug)

AUDION 300B Silver Night single ended stereo amplifier, perfect condition £650 ono. Tel: 0161 494 0517 or 0161 494 2978 (Stockport) (Aug)

LINN ACTIVE System. LP12, Lingo, Ekos MkII, Cirkus, Trampolin, latest spec £1350. Linn Karik III, brilliant £1100. Linn Numerik, brilliant £850. Linn Kairn phono £750 LK100 x 3 £350 each. Linn Kaber inc active cards, latest spec, granite stands. All boxed and mint. Tel: 01702 545 622 (Essex) (Aug/1)

QUAD ESL 63's, 6 years old, one owner. Teak and brown finish. Perfect condition, boxed. Move forces sale. £1450 ono. Tel: 0171 439 1365 (Aug/1)

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PS Audio Delta 250 Mono's	S/H	1850
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Audio Research LS5 III	Ex Dem	2995
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Krell MAA300 Mono's	S/H	3995
Krell KRC3	S/H	2200
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LINN SARA 9s, black, mint condition £395, plus stands. Tel: 0121 788 1213 (Birmingham) (Aug/1)

LINN WAKONDA Phono pre £400 (now £900). Linn LK100 pwr £300 (now £650). Both boxed and in excellent condition. Tel: 01455 213 406 (Nuneaton) (Aug/1)

AUDIO RESEARCH CL120 Poweramps £3000. Martin Logan CLSII speakers £2000. Croft Mega 2 box preamp £900. Monitor Audio MA1800/gold speakers £750. TDL Studio 4 transmission speakers £700. Yamaha DSP A2070 amp £550. Tel: 01527 549 274 (Aug)

LINN LPI2, Aro, Troika, PSU £1200. Naim: NAPI60 £300 (old) HiCap £400 (new) NAC72 (new) £385. Meridian 105 monoblocks £300. Sony CPI01 8CDPI02 £100 each. Target wallshelf £35. Tel: 01243 262 235 ((Aug/1)

R.A.T.A. REFERENCE CLD
1950 CD/Laserdisc player. Boxed, mint. Can be heard. (£1800 new) £550. Tel: 01522 694 871 (Lincoln) (Aug/1)

MARANTZ 63 KI Sig., as new £225. Arcam 9 + 9P bi-amp combo £600. (3 mths use). Tel: Andy 0181 845 2126 or 0956 542 314 (Aug)

ARCAM ALPHA 8 CD eight months old, boxed, mint £290 ono (£450). Cyrus Pre amp two years old, boxed, mint £290 ono. Cyrus remote commander £50 ono (£150). AudioQuest Quartz interconnect, boxed £50 (£130). Manuals included. Tel: Bill (day) 01865 792 020 (eves) 01993 851 508 (Oxford) (Aug/1)

MICHAELSON AUDIO (Musical Fidelity) Odysseus integrated valve amplifier, re-valved and serviced £650. Musical Fidelity CDT, Mullard valves £350. Rega ELA speakers, black ash £300. All boxed. Tel: 0151 343 0009 (day) 0151 645 4803 (eves) (Aug/1)

LINN KAN II Speakers in walnut with stands, mint condition £300. Marantz CD94 boxed, mint condition £500. Nakamichi BX-2 cassette deck, boxed £125. Ariston Q-Deck turntable, excellent condition £100. Tel: 01703 584 678 (Aug/1)

THORENS TD124 II, SME 3012, SME plinth, mint condition, interesting history £600. Tel: 0117 973 0819 (Aug)

AUDIO SYNTHESIS Transcend transport (£1395) £350. Parasound 1100HDCD DAC (£950) £250. F&S KT66 single ended monoblock power amps £250. Speakers:- Celestion 7000, stunning midrange/treble ribbon unit £300. Helius Syrius II, 95dB sensitivity (£2395) £600. Gamma Epoch, Focal drive units (£1500) £350. Tel: 0181 672 4319 (Aug/1)

COUNTERPOINT SA7 valve preamp, seriously upgraded by GT Audio £375. Counterpoint SA6 valve MC step-up £175. Pink Triangle Pip preamp £450. Burmester 838 - top 80s phono stage (£1500!) £250. Riverside P2 valve phono stage, unbelievable bargain £100. Meridian 203 DAC £100. Tel: 0181 672 4319 (Aug/1)

NATURAL, LUCID Vinyl-like sounding combination from innovative French CD specialist: Micromega Drive 2+ Micromega DAC + XLO Ref Type 4 interconnect, boxed £750 (£1650 new) Tel: 01608 811 667 (Oxon) (Aug/1)

PRO-AC STUDIO Two loudspeakers, black ash, Target stands, fabulous sound, vgc £350. Tel: 0171 715 8374 weekdays (Aug/1)

AUDIO RESEARCH LS7 pre-amp, mint condition, boxed, plus manual. Sale due to upgrading £1050. Tel: 01752 787 459 (Aug/1)

LINN LINGO £375. Immaculate condition, boxed with manual. Tel: 01545 571 262 evenings (Aug/1)

LINN KABERS, black, mint £500. Naim NAC5 speaker cable, 2x6 metres, tri-wire £90. AVI S2000 MP preamp £350. AVI 2000MM monoblocks £425. Tel: 0181 689 6855 evenings (Croydon, Surrey) (Aug/1)

AUDIO RESEARCH LS7/MT60 £1950. Quad 77 system (pre, power, tuner, CD, remote) new £1750. Naim 32.5 £200. Naim 180 (latest) £500. Naim SBLs (latest) £1200. Linn, Ittok LV3, Cirkus, Lingo, EMT TU2 cartridge (new) £1500. Will spilt. Teac VRDS TI/DTI £700. Tel: 01952 502 097 (Telford) (Aug/1)

CONRAD-JOHNSON Premier 2 valve preamp. MM phono, 5 lines, dual outputs, 4 AC outlets, excellent condition, re-valved & serviced £425. Tel: 01978 350 744 (Wrexham) (Aug)

JOHN SHEARNE Phase 2 integrated line level amplifier £320 ovno. Heybrook HBSI loudspeaker stands £40 ono. Tel: 01452 728 362 (Gloucester) (Aug/1)

LEAK STEREO 20 £225.
Troughline £50. Stereofetic £40. Point One stereo preamp £50. Quad 34 £150. 405 MkII £125. FM2 £20. Valve preamp £50. Garrard 301 £75. Thorens 321 £90. Classical records, ASD, SLX, SAX. DG. Tel: 01539 728 327 (Aug/1)

SENNHEISER HD580 Jubilee £125. Meridian 207 CD preamp £235. Meridian 551 int. amp 209 r/c £475. Linn Kan II stands, Linn bi/w 2x5m £275. Qudos silver 2x5m £45. Tel: 01493 851 296 (Aug)

SME20A and VDHMC1 £1750. Audio Note M1 phono £400 and Kit3 300B chromed £1500. Naim NAT01 £700. CD17K1 Sig £900. Mana tables half price. All mint. Tel: Nick 01373 471 642 (Sep/1)

CASTLE HARLECH Loudspeakers, Yew veneer, excellent condition, complete with original boxes. £650. Tel: 01924 252 309 (Wakefield) (Aug/1)

WANTED: JVC Digital Acoustics Process system receiver RX-1010VTN. Must be boxed, as new, in mint condition, cash waiting. Tel: 01865 711 602 (Aug/1)

LINN SYSTEM. Kairn £1000. Aktiv + Dirac crossover £300. Isobariks + stands £700. 3x (LK280 + Sparks) £1100. + all cables etc. Tel: 01260 281 351 (Cheshire) (Aug/1)

ORACLE DELPHI Turntable, no arm, custom power supply £375. Rotel BX 965 CD player £120. Tel: 01827 261 082 (Tamworth) (Aug/1)

SD3R SD-ACOUSTICS Loudspeakers, piano black gloss, ribbon tweeter design, used in mainly 'classical' system, effortless sound, home cinema setup forces sale, cost £649, giveaway at £249. Tel: 0181 340 2852 (Aug)

LEAK TL12 Point One pair £1000. Leak TL10 Point One pair £400. Leak Stereo 20 + pre £225. Leak TL12 + Gold £125. Quad 33/303/FM3 £175. Rogers Cadet 3 poweramp £80. Rogers MG88 Mk1 £100. Phone for more details. Tel: 01752 837 338 (Aug/1)

QUAD 33/303/FM3 in unbelievable condition, as new, original boxes, manuals, bargain at £250. Trichord Genesis CD player, mint £250. Leak Troughline III with Studio 12 decoder £75. Tel: 01780 764 149 (Aug/1)

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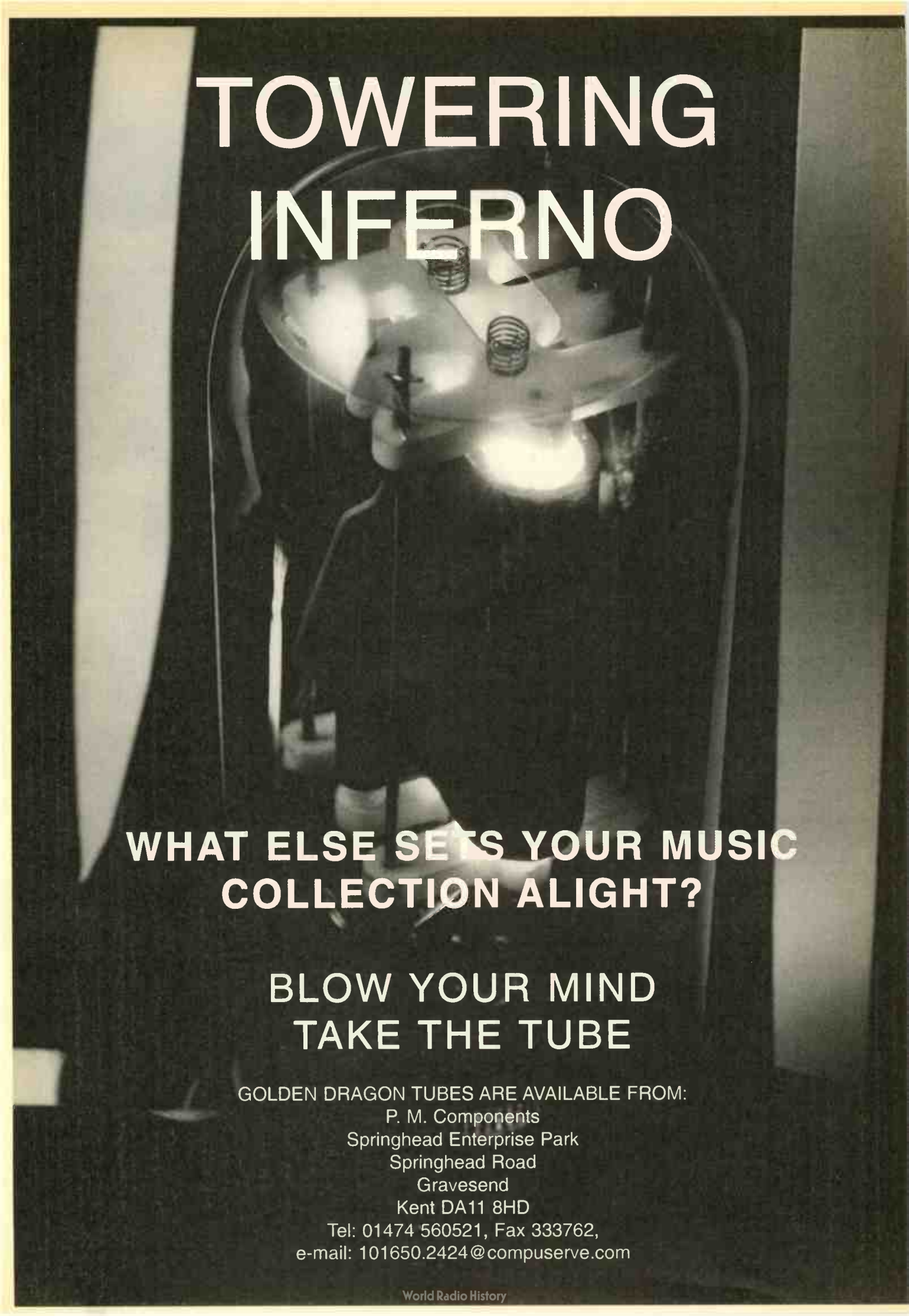
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