

HI-FI WORLD

JUNE 2014

UK £4.10

www.hi-fiworld.co.uk

FREE READER CLASSIFIED ADS IN THIS ISSUE!



EXCLUSIVE!
UDEZE LCD-XC/LCD-3
 lanar headphones



EXCLUSIVE!
THE BEATLES
 S. CD box set



EXCLUSIVE!
CHEU-ANALOG TIMBRE
 irrtable



ROHDE & SCHWARZ
MEASUREMENT

ICON AUDIO
STEREO
845 PP **EXCLUSIVE!**
 integrated amplifier



- YBA iA3 AMPLIFIER** **EXCLUSIVE**
- NAD D 3020 AMPLIFIER**
- JBL STUDIO 230 LOUDSPEAKERS** **EXCLUSIVE**
- FOSTEX HP-A8 HEADPHONE AMPLIFIER** **EXCLUSIVE**
- ACOUSTIC ENERGY 101S LOUDSPEAKERS** **EXCLUSIVE**

COMPETITION



WIN AN ANTELOPE AUDIO
ZODIAC GOLD DAC
WORTH £2,595!
(UK ONLY)

JUNE 2014



8 PAGES OF LETTERS - THE BEST WINS A PAIR OF KEF Q100 LOUDSPEAKERS! (UK ONLY)



Do I Love You (Indeed I do)

Chord Epic Reference

Get to know some old favourites in a new and revealing way. We hope it'll make you fall in love with your record collection all over again - and it's an upgrade that won't break the bank, unlike certain Northern Soul rarities.

Find your nearest retailer at www.chord.co.uk and arrange a listening session.

Hand built in England by music lovers.
Enjoyed by music lovers all over the world.

Now listen...



THE
CHORD[™]
COMPANY

welcome

EDITOR

Noel Keywood
e-mail: editorial@hi-fiworld.co.uk

DESIGN EDITOR

Faiza Chunara
tel: +44 (0) 20 8206 6018
mob: +44 (0) 7917 047 548
e-mail: adproduction@hi-fiworld.co.uk

PRODUCTION EDITOR

David Noble
tel: +44 (0) 20 8206 6019
e-mail: classifieds@hi-fiworld.co.uk

SALES MANAGER

Louise Palfrey
tel: +44 (0) 203 005 4927
mob: +44 (0) 7917 047 548
e-mail: louise@hi-fiworld.co.uk

ADVERTISING EXECUTIVE

Brad Francis
tel: +44 (0) 1923 677 256
mob: +44 (0) 771 542 1569
e-mail: advertising@hi-fiworld.co.uk

PUBLISHER

Noel Keywood
e-mail: publisher@hi-fiworld.co.uk

FREE READERS CLASSIFIEDS

tel: +44 (0) 20 8 206 6019
e-mail: classifieds@hi-fiworld.co.uk

SUBSCRIPTIONS

tel: +44 (0) 1442 820 580
fax: +44 (0) 1442 827 912
e-mail: hifworld@webscribe.co.uk

PHOTOGRAPHY

David Noble
tel: +44 (0) 20 8206 6019

WRITERS

Paul Rigby, Rafael Todes, Tony Bolton,
Jon Myles, Martin Pipe



First – an aside. Last month at the end on my editorial intro I mentioned the Advertising Standards Authority's (ASA) ruling in favour of Russ Andrews with regard to claims made for his mains cables. This was spotted immediately by an eagle-eyed reader and caused him to write in – see Letters. Quite right too! Cables are controversial and What Hi-Fi? now avoid reviewing them, I think I am right in saying, as it has brought so much wrath onto their heads, mainly from the ASA.

How, for example, do you prove that digital cables – of all things – affect sound quality? They do and we can demonstrate it with our Rohde&Schwarz UPV audio analyser, but others cannot. So they get hit. Until more work is done on testing cables some will be understandably sceptical about their affect upon sound quality. In the meantime it is best if everyone understands that cables are a hot topic, one in which definitive answers are hard to find.

Also a hot topic is the massive Icon Audio Stereo 845PP amplifier (see p10) we feature this month. Valve amps are just sexy, if you'll pardon me saying so, and a brace of massive 845s can't be beaten. Gorgeous!

Also gorgeous were Audeze's planar magnetic headphones I review on p44. Used with a high-resolution player, 'phones like this offer devastatingly good sound quality. Head for a demo if you can.

Although the headphone market has grown into a monster, dragged into the limelight by Dr Dre, loudspeakers have their place and Acoustic Energy's 101S loudspeakers were little crackers that perfectly suit modern audio. Small, inexpensive but technologically deft, you can read about them on p23.

And we also have an exclusive with our feature on the new U.S. Beatles CD box set. What America got was a lot different to the U.K. – different tapes, different mixes and running orders. Beatles collectors and completists will love Paul Rigby's first-hand interview about the U.S. material and next month he reviews the box set itself. Meanwhile the mono LPs are being cut at Abbey Road, near to our offices, and I'm off to have a chat about them soon too. I have much, much more to say about our involvement here, but it's all very hush, hush at the moment!

Noel Keywood, editor.



hi-fi world

Audio Web Publishing
Studio 204,
Bspace Studio,
Conlan Street,
London W10 5AP
www.hi-fiworld.co.uk

verdicts

●●●●● OUTSTANDING
●●●● EXCELLENT
●●● GOOD
●●● MEDITOCRE
●● POOR
£ VALUE

amongst the best
extremely capable
worth auditioning
unremarkable
flawed
keenly priced

testing (see www.hi-fiworld.co.uk for full explanations of all our tests)

To ensure the upmost accuracy in our product reviews, *Hi-Fi World* has extremely comprehensive in-house test facilities, and our test equipment - from big names like Rohde & Schwarz and Hewlett Packard - is amongst the most advanced in the world.

Loudspeakers are measured using a calibrated Bruel & Kjaer microphone feeding a Clio-based computer

analyser, using pulsed and gated sinewaves, in a large room to eliminate the room's influence. Pickup arm vibration is measured with a Bruel & Kjaer accelerometer.

No other UK hi-fi magazine has in-house testing, and none has access to such advanced tests across all types of equipment. That's why you can depend on *Hi-Fi World* reviews.



ELECTRONIC MAGAZINE

Go to our website www.hi-fiworld.co.uk to buy an electronic version of this magazine, individual issues, back issues or a subscription.

Distributed by Seymour Distribution Ltd 86 Newman Street London, W1T 3EX Tel: +44 (0) 20 7396 8000 Printed by Artisan Press Limited Tel: +44 (0) 116 235 5221
Our Agents in Malaysia Millennium Hi-Fi & AV Simon Chang Showroom & office, 500-1-3 First Floor Wisma Indah (Shen Court), Jalan Tun Razak 50400 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Tel: 603 9283 8171 Fax: 603 9281 3762 e-mail: info@millennium-audio.com

All unsolicited submissions and goods are at the owner's risk. We accept no responsibility for such submissions, nor do we undertake to return them.
No material may be reproduced from this magazine without the publisher's written permission. © Audio Web Publishing Ltd

contents



36

ANTELOPE AUDIO ZODIAC
PLATINUM DAC



56

JBL STUDIO 230 LOUDSPEAKERS



40

YBA iA3 AMPLIFIER



48

NAD D 3020 AMPLIFIER

LOUDSPEAKERS

ACOUSTIC ENERGY 101S LOUDSPEAKERS 23

A new budget standmount from Acoustic Energy impresses
Jon Myles

JBL STUDIO 230 LOUDSPEAKERS 56

Jon Myles has some fun with JBL's Studio 230 loudspeakers

FEATURES

DIGITAL BEATLES 50

Paul Rigby slots the latest Beatles CD remasters into his machine

ANNE BISSON 93

Jazz pianist and one-time dating show TV star, Paul Rigby meets
Anne Bisson

CABLES

TELLURIUM Q CABLES 35

Tony Bolton reviews the Tellurium Q range of cables

HEADPHONES

AUDEZE LCD-XC & LCD-03 HEADPHONES 44

Noel Keywood dons the latest headphones from Audeze

OLDE WORLDE

NAD 7020 RECEIVER 58

Martin Pipe looks back at the classic NAD 7020 receiver



10

ICON AUDIO STEREO 845 PP
INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER

JUNE 2014

VOLUME 24 : NO. 4

AMPLIFICATION

10 ICON AUDIO STEREO 845 PP INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER

Icon Audio's latest integrated features massive 845 valves. Jon Myles lights it up

15 FOSTEX HP-A8C DAC HEADPHONE AMPLIFIER

Martin Pipe discovers 32-bit audio with the Fostex HP-A8C DAC/headphone amplifier

40 YBA iA3 AMPLIFIER

Martin Pipe takes a fancy to French company YBS'a latest amplifier

DIGITAL

36 ANTELOPE AUDIO ZODIAC PLATINUM DAC

Antelope Audio brings DSD playback to its Zodiac Dac. Jon Myles takes a listen

48 NAD D 3020 /AMPLIFIER DAC

NAD updates the classic 3020 for the digital age. Jon Myles says it could be another classic in the making

VINYL

80 NEWS

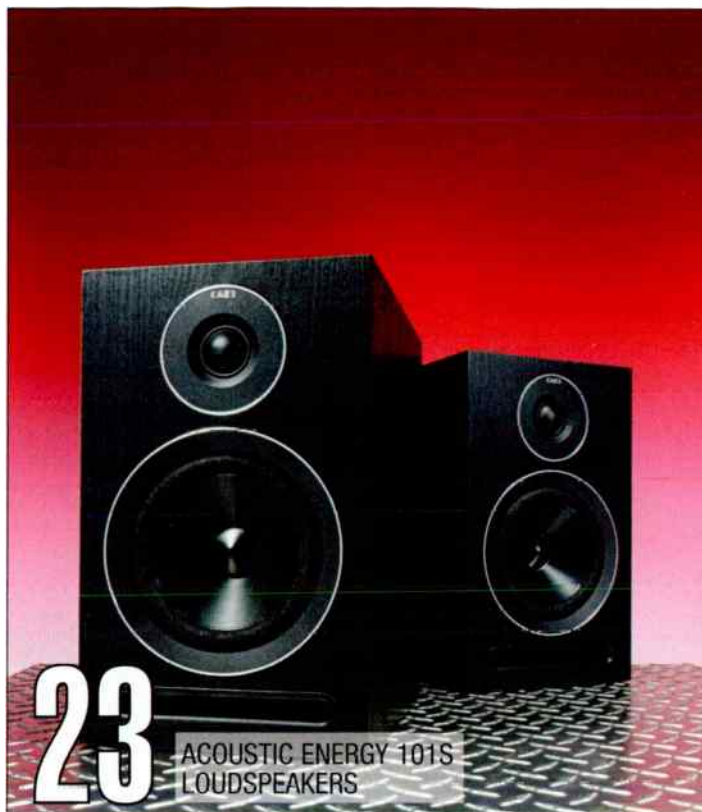
All the latest and greatest vinyl releases for you, from the pen of Paul Rigby.

83 GEARBOX AUDIOPHILE VINYL FEATURE

Paul Rigby visits a decidedly audiophile London record label

89 SCHEU TIMBRE TURNTABLE

Tony Bolton checks out a new turntable from Scheu



PORTABLE

66 HARMAN KARDON ONYX

Jon Myles tries out a new up-market portable Bluetooth speaker.

REGULARS

7 NEWS

All the latest from the world of hi-fi

27 MAIL

Eight pages of your views, wonderful as always...

21 COMPETITION

Your chance to win an Antelope Audio Zodiac Gold DAC worth £2,595

54 SUBSCRIPTIONS

Ensure your copy every month and save money too!

62 AUDIOPHILE CD

Paul Rigby rounds up the latest audiophile CD releases

69, 71, 73 OPINION

The team get to grips with matters music, hi-fi and life!

78 DIAL-A-DEALER

A comprehensive guide to UK hi-fi retailers

94 CLASSIFIEDS

Two pages of second-hand bargains

96 NEXT MONTH

What we hope to bring you in the next sizzling issue...

97 ADVERTISERS' INDEX

98 CLASSIC CUTS

Ann Peebles, I Can't Stand The Rain 1974, by Paul Rigby



QAT AUDIO TECHNOLOGY

2013 INNOVATIONS
INTERNATIONAL CES
RESEARCH & ANALYSIS
SHOWCASE
HONORARY



a worthy partner

email:news@hi-fiworld.co.uk

news

ONKYO AV

Onkyo has announced two network AV receivers, the 5.2-channel TX-NR535 and 7.2-channel TX-NR636. Both feature HDMI specified for 4K/60 Hz video, built-in Wi-Fi and Bluetooth and universal support for gapless hi-res network audio, while the TX-NR636 adds HDCP 2.2 compatibility to support the latest DRM copy-protection standard.

The TX-NR636 is the first A/V receiver to support HDCP 2.2. This latest DRM copy-protection standard will be adopted for future premium 4K studio releases, 4K streaming via internet service providers, as well as for UHD terrestrial and satellite broadcasts. This content will be unplayable (or converted to standard definition) when passed through non-HDCP 2.2-compliant A/V receivers.

The free Onkyo remote app for iOS and Android devices locates and streams network-attached hi-res tracks via DLNA. Both receivers feature gapless playback of almost any high-resolution file format including 5.6 MHz DSD, Dolby TrueHD, 24bit/192kHz FLAC and WAV and ALAC to 24bit/96kHz.



Music stored on smartphone and tablet can be streamed via remote app and Wi-Fi to the home theatre, while users can browse and stream on Spotify, Deezer, AUPEO! and Tuneln from within the app. Support for Spotify Connect will be added later this year via a firmware update.

Onboard Bluetooth is also included (no extra charge for an adapter). Price for the TX-NR636 is £500 with £400 for the TX-NR535.

Call 08712 001996 or click on www.onkyo.co.uk for more information.

PRO-JECT DAC, PRE BOX & DSD UPGRADE

DAC Box RS is a D/A converter featuring a linear solid state Class-A or selectable tube output stage. It serves as a USB audio interface for computer audio and features an I2S interface plus master clock output for use with the company's own CD Box RS. It also suits other digital sources with AES/EBU, optical and coaxial output. The box offers DSD capability (up to DSD128) over PCM. Price is €899

Also look out for the Pre Box RS digital, balanced double mono design, with switchable DAC chips: two PCM1792 or PCM5102, nine digital inputs, a headphone amp and a Blue ALPs volume control. Price is €1,199.

A final addendum, the £299-priced DAC Box DS, is now capable of handling pure DSD audio files over USB. A free upgrade is available to all existing DAC Box DS customers. Visit the support section of the following website for more information.

Click on www.henleydesigns.co.uk or call 01235 511166.



PURE CONTOUR D1

A DAB/FM, 20W radio dock with Bluetooth streaming that accommodates Apple models with both 30-pin and lightning connectors, the Contour D1 is priced at £150. Users of smart devices with Bluetooth can stream audio wirelessly to the radio.



The Contour D1 is a companion to the free Pure Connect app which enables access to over 20,000 global internet radio stations, in excess of 200,000 free on-demand programmes and podcasts as well as millions of streamable music tracks via Pure's subscription music service. All content from the Pure Connect app can be streamed wirelessly to Contour D1 via Bluetooth.

Click on www.pure.com or call 0845 1489001 for more information.

airDAC

Delayed since last year due to AirPlay component shortages, the airDAC has been relaunched with increased cross-platform functionality of UPnP streaming and a new free SongBook UPnP Control App. Designed to connect to any Hi-Fi or Home Cinema system, this high-resolution (up to 24bit/192kHz) network/internet UPnP streamer includes a pair of S/PDIF and optical digital inputs, analogue outputs plus an S/PDIF output that can be connected to a DAC. Price is £400.

Click on www.arcam.co.uk for more information.





AESTHETIX ATLAS SIGNATURE

The Aesthetix Atlas amplifier features a zero feedback, hybrid design incorporating a bipolar output stage, bipolar driver stage and vacuum tube input gain stage.

One 6SN7 tube per channel is used to provide all of the voltage gain for the entire amplifier. Its two transformers and three chokes are housed under a stainless steel cover to prevent magnetic fields from interfering with the audio circuitry. A 6dB/octave high-pass crossover can be set to sixteen different values between 40Hz and 200Hz, an unusual feature which is ideal for speakers featuring powered woofers or for audio and home cinema systems using outboard powered sub-woofers.

The Atlas Stereo Signature uses the same circuits as the standard Atlas Stereo but, while the standard Atlas uses Rel-Caps as inter-stage coupling capacitors, the Signature upgrades these to Peter Moncrief's StealthCaps. In addition, high current output stage power supply capacitance is doubled. Binding-post wiring is upgraded to an audiophile 14awg. A further critical refinement is the replacement of all emitter resistors with a specialised metal foil low-inductance type.

Three editions of the Atlas are now available: the standard Atlas Stereo (£8,000), the new Atlas Stereo Signature (£10,000) and the existing Atlas Mono Signature (only available in the Signature version, £16,000).

Click on www.aesthetix.net for more information

LIMITED EDITION AUDIO-TECHNICAS

The ATH-A900XLTD limited edition headphones boast a 'closed back' design with a Double Air Damping System and arrive with several enhancements over the original. A new voice coil complements the 53mm driver while a scarlet coloured surround includes a 3D WING Support headband, which reduces weight.

Weighing just 340g and offering a 3.5mm gold plated plug and 3m cable, a detachable 6.3mm adaptor is also included.

The ATH-A900XLTD are on sale now priced £389. Click on www.audiotechnicashop.com for more information.



SVS SUBS

Making their UK debut, the new, sealed, SB-2000 and ported PB-2000 designs are priced at £649 and £739 respectively and incorporate a new 500 Watt Sledge DSP amplifier driving a completely re-designed 12in SVS driver.

At the heart of each subwoofer is a newly engineered 12in 2000-series driver with dual high-grade ferrite magnets and FEA-optimised motor. A reinforced Nomex spider has been integrated for improved linearity and driver control. The driver also features a durable low-creep rubber long-throw surround and integrated tinsel leads to eliminate 'tinsel slap' and improve reliability.

Rated at 500W RMS continuous and 1100W peak dynamic, the Sledge STA-500D amplifier features a DSP, which includes an array of filters and volume, gain and phase controls for fine-tuning performance. A frequency-dependent limiter/compressor algorithm with adjustable attack/release and compression parameters are included.

Call 01423 358846 or click on www.karma-av.co.uk for more information.



CRANAGE HALL AUDIOSHOW

A new hi-fi show is about to launch on 15 June 2014. Located just two miles from the M6 motorway on the A50 between Holmes Chapel and Knutsford, Cranage Hall is in the heart of Cheshire's countryside. The hotel offers over thirty "good-sized" rooms suitable for demonstration of systems of many kinds.

Open from 10 am until 7pm, expect to see a range of products from: Acoustic Energy, AcoustiFeet, Audio Note UK, Audiophile Base, Belles, Brodman, Creativ, deciBelle, M2Tech, Oracle, PAB, Palmer, Puresound, Scherer, Sonneteer, Soundcare SuperSpikes, Supra Cables, TAD, Van Damme Cables, Wychwood Audionics, Clearaudio, Tune Audio and more.

Click on www.audioshow.co.uk or call 07561803670 for more information.



MARK LEVINSON'S REFERENCE NO.52

The Mark Levinson No.52 pre-amp is an all-analogue dual-monaural design arranged in a two-chassis system of discrete control and audio sections. Within the No.52's control section, mirror-imaged DC power supplies and AC regeneration circuits contribute power. Its audio section employs a mirrored left/right channel configuration, which includes isolated and independent circuit boards for the volume, main and auxiliary signal paths and extensive shielding for critical components.

Inputs include three balanced XLR, four unbalanced RCA line and a dedicated phono input, equipped with selectable Moving Coil (MC) or Moving Magnet (MM) operation. Twin sets of XLR and RCA stereo preamplifier outputs are

joined by auxiliary pairs of XLR and RCA outputs with fixed or variable output levels and independent source selection. So resourced they may function either as a third pre-amp out, a full-range subwoofer output or a record output. In addition, a unity gain SSP (Surround Sound Processor) output provides for the integration of audio sources connected to the No.52 with a home theatre system.

The No.52 offers control and system interface connectivity via ethernet, Mark Levinson's proprietary ML Net, 12V trigger and IR control ports. A USB port facilitates possible future software upgrades. Price is £28,000

Call 01423 358846 or click on www.karma-av.co.uk for more information.

JERRY HARVEY 'PHONES

Jerry Harvey's latest earphone design is the new Sirens Series Roxanne with a universal fit. It is equipped with Soundrive technology: Quad low, Quad Mid and Quad High balanced armature drivers per side with an integrated 3-way crossover plus a variable bass output, adjustable from the cable. Frequency ranges from flat bass response up to +15db (10Hz to 100Hz.) The design offers a triple bore, noise isolation system and a 4-pin cable connection with a twist lock mechanism. Price is \$1,599.

Click on www.oloaudio.com/roxanne for more information



POWERKORDS UPGRADES

Russ Andrews is upgrading its range of PowerKord mains cables with the new WattGate EVO Evolution range of IEC plugs. For a limited time, the PowerKords with WattGate EVO plugs will be available at no additional charge.

The new WattLock Terminals within the plug incorporate contact blades and teeth to provide a pressure contact on the wires, up to 8awg wire can be accommodated with an outer cable diameter of 19mm possible.

Three models of EVO plug have been created: the W320 EVO features brass terminals and is fitted as standard to the PowerKord-100 and PowerKord-300. The W350 AU EVO is a gold connector and is fitted as an option to the PowerKord-300 and as standard to the PowerKord-500. New to this series is a top of the range plug, the W350 RH EVO, which features Rhodium plated connectors. Both the 350 AU EVO and 350 RH EVO's terminals feature a multi-layer plating process, starting with oxygen-free copper; this is then plated with electroless nickel and finally a 24K gold plating. For the W350 RH EVO model a layer of pure Rhodium is applied on top of the 24K gold.

Price is PowerKord-100, £150, 1m; PowerKord-300, £230, 1m (£280 with W350 AU EVO and £295 with W350 RH EVO) and PowerKord-500, £440, (£455 with W350 RH EVO).

Call 01539 797300 or click on www.russandrews.com for more information.



BY 'ECK IT'S GRIMM

From the Dutch company, Grimm Audio's intriguing active speakers with integrated DSP technology have now been improved. All LSI1 (USB Interfaces) that will be shipping from now can play DSD 64fs, DSD 128fs and DXD. For existing LSI1 installations, Grimm is providing a simple software upgrade routine. Instructions can be found on the company website. The LSI1 USB Interface now also runs on Window 8 and Linux. Price for the speaker system is €10,000.

Click on www.grimmaudio.com for more information



THE DIGITAL MUSIC BOX

Digital Music Box has two new products on offer. Utilising a fully regulated linear power supply, the Kalliope USB cable ensures that your high-end DAC operates without connection to your computer's power supply. It features a USB cable with independent power supply.

Also look out for the Linus USB Cable, featuring a 99.99% pure silver data cable, helically wound with a silk thread and then encased in a PTFE tube, as well as gold-plated USB plugs, terminated using silver solder. Price is £995 for the Kalliope Power Supply & USB Cable and £495 for the Linus USB cable. Click on www.thedigitalmusicbox.com or call 01202 240 944 for more information.





Icon Audio's new Stereo 845 PP integrated amplifier is eye catching. Jon Myles dons his Ray Bans.

Light Fantastic

People often say there's nothing new in the world of hi-fi. Icon Audio's tube guru David Shaw is obviously out to prove those people wrong.

How else to explain his latest flagship integrated amplifier, with no fewer than four massive 845 tubes?

Over the years the Leicester-based company has established a well-deserved reputation for

producing well-engineered, hand-built valve amplifiers at real-world prices, using mainly tried-and-tested circuit designs. But their latest product is said to be a world's first – a pure triode stereo integrated amplifier using the mighty 845 tube.

These directly-heated triodes were originally designed by RCA in the 1930s and pressed into service in cinema amplifiers and AM transmitter modulators.

They're big, high-voltage and also operate at a high bulb temperature – which is why you don't find them in many domestic products. And certainly not integrateds.

The inspiration for the design came from the success of Icon Audio's MB 845s – a pair of monoblocks that, as the name suggests, similarly use the beefy 845 tube.

Icon Audio say they realised

many customers loved the sound of the 845 valves but didn't have the space for two large monoblocks and a pre-amp or, indeed, need the power on offer.

So whereas the mighty monoblocks push out some 110 Watts per channel, the valves in the Stereo 845 PP integrated operate in a more relaxed manner with a quoted power rating of 40 Watts. But as David Shaw points out, that should be enough to drive most

Additionally, a high/low input level switch on the back alters the amount of feedback and the amplifier's gain. Sensitivities of 1V (low gain setting) and 400mV (high gain setting) are offered which should cover most needs. Low gain is the setting that applies feedback and this is the default, Icon say, because technically at least the amplifier performs best with feedback, as do all amplifiers. With feedback off you get not only higher gain, but a tad more bass and

paired with an Audiolab M-DAC, the 845 PP showed it was capable of delivering an expansive soundstage with a wonderfully rich and realistic timbre.

Playing Berlioz's 'Symphonic Fantastique' there was a lovely sense of body and scale that belies the 40 Watts per channel output. The 845 are able to ascend from near silence to thundering instrumental crescendos with apparent ease and gave a lovely flow and feel to the music as well. There's no evidence of the flabby bass and blunted edges of some other integrated tube amplifiers – merely an inherent rightness and body to the instrumentation.

Turning to Joe Zawinul's classic 'Live At Birdland' and the sheer sensuous nature of the music is a joy to hear. The multifarious instruments were locked together in harmony, each occupying its correct place in the overall musical landscape and with just the right tonality. What's more you can hear the exuberance in the musicians' performances as well as the whoops and hollers of the audience as the performance grows in intensity.

Switching to something more contemporary with Nick Cave's 'The Lyre of Orpheus' and the big 845 tubes bring a palpable sense of realism to the vocals – Cave's deep sonorous tones portrayed with just the right amount of menace.

Although smooth, there's also a crispness about the presentation that means the Icon Audio never tips over into the realm of blandness.

That quality brings a rhythmic snap to more up-tempo music such as New Order's 'Bizarre Love Triangle'. Here Bernard Sumner's guitar had a clear edge to the leading notes while drums and bass pumped along with total conviction.

There might not be quite the bass authority or overall grunt of a big, powerful transistor amp but the 854 makes up for that with a rather more musical and less mechanical sound.

All this was achieved with the 'speakers connected via the 8 Ohm taps. Moving over to the amplifier's 4 Ohm connections and there seemed to be an ever-so-slight softening of the sound with the stereo image losing a little focus. It's not a night and day difference but enough to make individual experimentation advisable.

The same goes for the feedback



loudspeakers to decent levels – the difference between 100 Watts and 40 Watts is only 4dB in terms of power.

The amplifier is a push-pull design utilising four matched 845 valves, a pair of 6SN7 first-stage valves, two 6SL7 output drivers and a GZ34 driver-stage rectifier.

The valves all come packed separately but slide easily into the high-quality and well-labelled holders.

A meter on the front panel allows for easy biasing of the four 845s, as well monitoring power output. Internally the amplifier is all hand-wired point-to-point with silver plated, pure copper PTFE covered audio cable and it uses an ALPS volume pot.

Four line-level inputs are fitted, as well as Tape in/outs. A solidly built remote control alters volume and applies mute and a Plexiglas cover can be fitted to keep prying hands or errant pets away from those hot valves.

a slightly more open and airy sound.

Build quality and finish are exemplary in true Icon Audio fashion and, as you'd expect, once in situ there's an undeniable satisfaction in switching on and seeing those big 845 tubes spread their glow around the room. This is a big amplifier though, weighing a hefty 35kgs, and measuring 440mm wide, 400mm deep and 240mm high without the cover.

SOUND QUALITY

Icon Audio's David Shaw says the Stereo 845 PP provides a warm, luxurious valve sound allied to real bass power. It doesn't take long into the initial listening session to understand exactly what he means. Those eye-catching 845 tubes don't just look big – they sound big too.

Hooked up to our resident Quadral Aurum Wotan VIII loudspeakers and spinning CDs through a Cyrus CDBt transport

Audio products designed to combat phase distortion

Tellurium Q[®]

"In short, I can honestly say the Tellurium Q Black Diamond interconnects and speaker cable are the very best leads that I have ever had in my system."

Tony Bolton, Hi Fi World 2014



"I've talked a lot about Tellurium Q of late. I've also sung its praises constantly. To be honest, I wish I had something to grump about, it would make a change but when a company gets a series of products "this right" it is difficult to say anything negative."

Paul Rigby, HiFi World 2012

"A certain magic when it comes to absolute sound quality"

Jimmy Hughes, Hi Fi Choice 2012



The return of the Claymore!

Power amp Product of the Year 2012
Mains cable Product of the Year 2012

hi-fi+ Products of the Year 2010

Hi Fi World
Cable of the Year 2010

Hi Fi Choice 2012 ★★★★★

Jan 2011
Jan 2013



For more information or to audition one contact TQ directly
www.telluriumq.com +44 (0) 1458 251997



NOEL SAYS -
 The bright glow of big 845 valves is an arresting sight – and this amplifier has four of them. 845s glow brightly because they consume a lot of heater power – 30 Watts each. Run valve heaters like this from an ordinary transformer and it will overheat, so an independent heater transformer is needed. The Stereo 845 has two mains transformers: as result and the heater transformer has no fewer than six windings, four of them for the 845s because each one must have its own 10V@3A winding.
 The big 845 anodes run from a 750V line, rectified by diodes, and the preamp valves run from a 250V line rectified by a GZ34 valve. In all, both transformers feed no less than nine individual power lines. Big valve amplifiers like this one invoke power station engineering!
 Happily, the Stereo 845 doesn't just look good, it also sounds good. Big 845s are beasts to use in a design, but when driven properly they are a sonic delight, as well as rugged and inexpensive. **NK**

setting. Personally, I preferred the high setting – but yet again this will be very much a matter of personal taste and, in some cases, partnering equipment.

Speaking of which, the Icon Audio has more than enough resolving power to delineate between high-definition tracks and Red Book CD.

Feed it some source recordings of the highest quality and the 845 throws out a holographic soundstage that wouldn't fail to bring a smile to any music lover, I feel.

Playing a 24-bit/96kHz recording of organist Iver Kleive's 'Bridge Over Troubled Water' recorded in Bergen Cathedral was breathtaking. All the power and texture of the organ were captured vibrantly within a wonderful sense of the cathedral's acoustic space. Call it a cliché – but, yes, you could close your eyes and imagine yourself being there.

And that's the beauty of the 845 PP. It can transport you to an organ recital in a far-off cathedral or, if you prefer, recreate the ambience of a smoky jazz club with John Coltrane blowing away on stage or it can get down and dirty with the likes of Led Zeppelin.

So much so that at times I found myself abandoning critical listening and just enjoying the music. It's that kind of an amplifier.

CONCLUSION

Make no mistake, the Icon Audio 845 PP is a truly exceptional amplifier.

The big 845 tubes are not easy to implement or work with (see Noel Keywood's box-out) but they do have a seamless, fluid and eminently musical sound.

And that's exactly what you get with this new integrated. Whether you prefer jazz, rock or classical the Icon Audio will make it sound vivid, alive and thoroughly realistic.

Yes, it'll set you back a penny short of £6,000 – but if you are a true music lover you'll find it's money well spent.

Just turn off the lights, bask in the glow of those jumbo-sized tubes and then lose yourself in the music.



MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The Stereo 845 produced 40 Watts into 8 Ohms and 36 Watts into 4 Ohms, so it has been load matched for 8 Ohm speakers. It was fairly linear, producing around 0.1% distortion at a few Watts output into an 8 Ohm load. Into 4 Ohms distortion measured around 0.2% but since harmonics were mainly second and third order this is no big issue. Distortion

levels were at their lowest with feedback in, meaning Low Gain on the rear panel sensitivity switch (that alters feedback) and results were good all round.

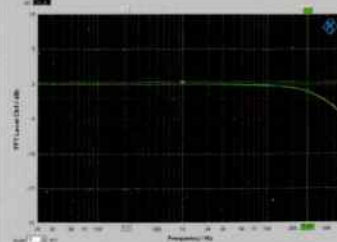
Frequency response extended to 34kHz (-1dB) with feedback on and altered little with feedback off, higher frequencies due to the wide open-loop response of the transformer.

With feedback on (Low) sensitivity measured 1V, a low value but adequate for silver disc players. With feedback off (Hi) sensitivity rose to 400mV for full output.

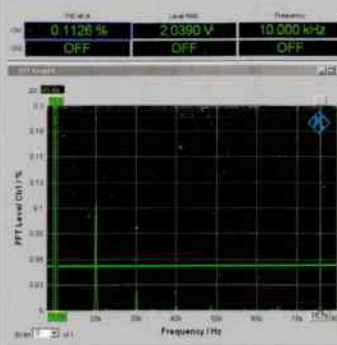
Feedback also affects output impedance and damping factor, and with feedback on (sensitivity at Hi) damping factor measured 5.6. With feedback off this fell to 2.

The Stereo 845 gave a neat set of figures under measurement. Building amplifiers like this is difficult and results were good against what is expected from 845s and against other valve amplifiers in general. **NK**

FREQUENCY RESPONSE



DISTORTION



Power	40 Watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	3Hz-30kHz
Separation	84dB
Noise	-105dB
Distortion	0.15%
Sensitivity	1 / 0.4V
Damping factor (Low/High)	5.6 / 2

**ICON AUDIO
 STEREO 845 PP
 £5,999**



OUTSTANDING - amongst the best

VERDICT
 Gorgeous, liquid valve sound with decent power and a holographic soundstage. Demands to be heard.

FDR
 - flowing musical sound
 - superb stereo imaging
 - easy biasing
 - looks superb

AGAINST
 - runs hot
 - large and heavy

Icon Audio
 +44 (0)116 2440593
 www.iconaudio.com

BBC
music
MAGAZINE
★★★★★
2013

WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION
★★★★★
2013



Unleash your music

Some portable speakers are small.
Others sound great. Then there's the Jongo S3...

- Fits the power of five speakers into the palm of your hand.
- Blasts out big, beautiful, bass-rich 360° sound.
- Keeps going wherever you go with a ten-hour battery life.
- Connect two speakers for perfect stereo sound, or add more for a great value multiroom system.
- Enjoy with a month's free trial of Pure Connect.

From £149.99

Available at John Lewis, Currys, Argos, Amazon
and at Pure.com

PURE

Resolution revolution

Martin Pipe discovers 32-bit audio with the Fostex HP-A8C DAC/headphone amplifier

For 20 years, 16-bit PCM digital audio was considered to be capable of satisfying all professional and domestic audio needs.

Over the past fifteen years or so, though, it has been eclipsed by hi-res formats like 24-bit PCM and DSD.

Now it appears that the once-mighty 24-bit resolution is no longer enough! 32-bit resolution audio files are supported by the beautifully-styled and substantially-built Fostex HP-A8C headphone DAC featured here. It's not just fancy upsampling, or internal processing of 16-bit or 24-bit audio at 32-bit resolution with DSP before conversion to analogue. The mid-sized HP-A8C can however do that too.

But first, some background. Professional audio software like Adobe Audition has carried out processing internally at 32-bit resolution for some time. Yes, until very recently all 'outside world' audio (anything that came via an analogue-to-digital converter, basically) started its digital life in 16-bit or 24-bit

form. The only material that could have been 32-bit to start off with was digitally-generated via virtual synthesizers and the like. However, doing all the processing – mixing, volume-changes, pitch-shifts, reverbs, phasing etc – at a higher resolution helps to keep at bay the cumulative errors that could impair sound quality as a song or other complex audio production takes shape. You can admittedly export the result to a 32-bit audio file with such software, but until now nothing (affordable, at any rate) has been capable of playing it...

The HP-A8C will actually accept these 32-bit audio files, via SDHC flash memory cards. They have to be in integer format, as opposed to floating-point or they won't play. Older pro audio editing software (such as Cool Edit Pro) only gave you the floating option when exporting audio; newer programs (including Adobe Creative Suite's Audition – derived from Cool Edit) have the necessary integer option in their save settings. I generated a 30-second 440Hz tone and saved

it in 32-bit/192kHz PCM form. The resulting 43.8MB file was copied to a SDHC card and fed into the HP-A8C's rear-panel slot. No joy; my 'Class 6' card – the only one I had to hand – just wasn't fast enough ('SD SPEED ERR'). I resampled to a more manageable 44.1kHz, yielding a 10MB file, and tried again. Lo, the HP-A8C subsequently played it, confirming the 32-bit resolution on its scrolling front panel display.

What improvements will we hear if we switch to 32-bit? You won't, sadly, find out in this review as I have absolutely no musical content in this form to try. That 440Hz tone did sound remarkably pure, though...

Until the HP-A8C (with latest 3.00 firmware) came my way, I only knew Fostex for multi-track analogue tape recorders like the Model 80. Interestingly the HP-A8C's 32-bit digital-to-analogue converter (DAC), the AK4399, comes from Asahi Kasei Microdevices Corporation of Japan. This chip natively supports 16/24-bit (although as previously mentioned the HP-A8C is equipped with upsampling and digital filtering



SUGDEN AUDIO

SAPPHIRE Series

An open window on musical performance



SUGDEN AUDIO launched the first 'Solid State Pure Class A' integrated amplifier to the Hi Fi market in 1967

Today The Heritage Continues with Dedication and Enthusiasm. High Quality Audio Products for the Discerning. Designed and Hand Built in England.

SUGDEN AUDIO

options, which work at 32-bit 'under the bonnet') as well as DSD.

You also get plenty of ways of getting audio into the unit. In addition to the card slot are a balanced AES-EBU input, two optical inputs and a coaxial input. Then there's a USB port for computer audio. Currently, this doesn't support DSD via USB although I have heard rumours of a software solution.

For now, PC users can go all the way to 192/24 with the Fostex 'sound card' driver. 32-bit USB playback may be possible but it is, for now at any rate, exclusive to Apple Macs. Furthermore, users of these computers don't even need to install a driver themselves!

All I have, though, is a PC running Windows Vista Ultimate. As with other systems of this type, the resolution and sampling rate are 'fixed' in Windows – although you can change them to match what you're playing. If you want to play DSD files stored on your computer, you could install Foobar with the DSD plug-in; the proviso is that DSD will be converted into PCM prior to streaming across USB to the HP-A8C. A better option is to copy them to a SD card, and play them (natively) from there. Note that only DSD files with a .dsf extension are supported.

Via SD the HP-A8C will also play PCM (WAV and AIF) files of all sample rates and resolutions up to 32/192. FLAC, ALAC and APE files, sadly, are ignored – as inevitably are lossily-compressed ones (MP3, AAC, etc.).

Selecting tracks to play from memory cards – which have to be organised into folders – isn't particularly easy, thanks to the small (2-line) front-panel screen.

But it's not impossible, and the HP-A8C will sequentially play all tracks in a folder. Don't be tempted to select an SD-card track to play with the tiny remote's central joystick button; doing so readies the card for ejection.

This means you have to ferret around the rear panel (why not the front, Fostex?), eject the card and then reinsert it.

To start playing the highlighted track the handset's 'play' button must be used instead. Choosing tracks for playback, input-selection, output amplifier gain, configuration, volume adjustment and switching between headphones and line output (you can't have both) are also permitted from the front panel controls.

On the handset lurks a 'REC' button. Given that the rear panel is equipped with analogue as well as digital inputs, does this mean that the HP-A8C can act as an analogue-to-digital converter (à la Furutech Esprit) or even a SD card recorder?



The busy but neat internal construction of the Fostex. Interestingly, some of the op-amp chips are socketed, meaning owners can experiment with other pin-compatible types.

Sadly not. The 'rec button', explains the HP-A8C's manual, has no effect here.

The line-level analogue inputs are provided solely so that the unit can be used as a switching centre/preamp with your headphones (up to two pairs, with a common listening level!) or any (power) amplifier you attach to its outputs.

On which subject, Fostex doesn't use the AK4399's 'digital

attenuator' to regulate volume (with all that implies for low-level listening). Instead, an audiophile JRC MUSES 72320 chip does the job in the analogue domain. The HP-A8C has optical and coaxial digital outputs, but they're fixed in level.

SOUND QUALITY

Even with 16-bit material, the HP-A8C gave a strong account of itself – whether through headphones or loudspeakers.

Among my 16-bit material (CD rips played with a Squeezebox Touch via coaxial digital feed) was the sheer energy of North Mississippi Allstars' uptempo 'World Boogie Is Coming'.

The presentation is smooth yet detailed, with taut basslines and all of the verve and attack that believable reproduction of such music demands. 'Goat Meat' features harmonica contributions from Robert Plant, which are delivered with the necessary musical insight and upper-register bite.

It also did justice to the Hambone Willie Newbern 'Rollin' n' Tumbin', here reworked into a dense and rhythmic track permeated by some distinctive stringwork and a deliciously analogue warmth.

Play this through the HP-A8C and it engages you from the outset. That's with my Acoustic Energy AE109s driven by a YBA Genesis IA3; the key qualities were retained after substituting the IA3 for a Linn LK280 power amplifier. Here, the HP-A8C was the sole adjuster of volume.

For headphones, I tried Sony MDR-1Rs and Onkyo ES-HF300s although I guess Fostex would rather you went for its own TH900s.

These have a price tag not dissimilar to that of the HP-A8C itself; I'd love to hear accurately-recorded 32-bit music through that coupling!

Both Sony and Onkyo phones sell for around the £200 mark and the HP-A8C drove them at good listening levels with no signs of strain.

The Sonys probably gave a fuller sonic picture here than the Onkyos





HEAR LIKE A PRO

'These are supremely musical mini-monitors with astounding bass punch and rhythmic ability allied to class-leading resolution.'

Hi-Fi World, July 2013




LS50

To celebrate 50 years of groundbreaking innovation, our LS50 mini monitor applies KEF's latest acoustic technologies from Blade and beyond to deliver the uncompromised sonic purity, accuracy and transparency we originally pioneered with the legendary LS3/5a professional studio monitor for the BBC. The good news is that you no longer have to be a sound engineer to enjoy the startling illusion of presence it creates.

www.kef.com/LS50



 @KEF Audio

 KEF Audio UK

KEF
INNOVATORS IN SOUND

thanks to their greater presence and warmth, although the latter yielded a more incisive and faster treble.

Soundstaging with live orchestral material (BBC Radio 3's evening concerts, experienced here as 320kbps AAC rips) could be eerily precise, each instrumental group and the soloist being positionable within the image.

I tried experimenting with the various digital options when playing material, mostly 16-bit but with a few 24-bit LP transfers thrown in for good measure.

You can switch upsampling from the default x1 to x2 or x4 (fewer options become available as your source ascends in resolution). I'll

"the presentation is smooth yet detailed with taut basslines and all the verve and attack that believable reproduction of such music demands"

admit to not hearing an awful lot of difference here, although another option – which engages a high-precision reclocking facility – did perceptibly improve imaging and timing, especially after I connected the HP-A8C's optical input to a budget Sony CD player and started playing a Colin Davis performance of Holst's 'Planets'.

A final digital 'tweak' is the filtering which can be changed between a conventional sharp roll-off and 'minimum delay' (said to eliminate 'pre-echo').

The latter setting did make a slight difference with the higher-frequency percussive sounds of internet radio stations and MP3 tracks played via USB from a PC. With hi-res music, though (notably 2.8MHz DSF files played via SD cards), we're into true audiophile territory.

Various tracks from the Blue Coast catalogue astounded with their detail, vivaciousness and ambience. On Keith Greeninger and Dayan Kai's 'Looking For A Home' every vocal nuance and string-scape could be picked out.

The original recording of this track was laid down on 2in. analogue tape. One hopes that if we ever get 32-bit audio, it will be as good as this!



The HP-A8 offers a broad range of connections. The SD card slot facilitates direct playback of compatible audio formats (notably PCM/WAV and DSD). Analogue inputs allow the unit to be used as a DAC/preamp. There are alas no balanced outputs for high-end and professional amplification (although you do get an AES/EBU digital input - in addition to asynchronous-mode computer USB and conventional optical/coaxial).

CONCLUSION

In both its roles (headphone amplifier and DAC) the HP-A8C succeeds admirably. Even with 16-bit audio, it's highly revealing while also remaining musically-adept and smooth.

It also happens to be well-connected – and most importantly well-prepared for future developments in high-resolution audio.

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

Maximum headphone output measured 2.6V for a 0dB full scale digital input (i.e. max volume) with Amp Gain set at 0dB. More output swing is available – up to 4.5V – and by dialling up a full 20dB Gain option this can be exploited but few headphones need more than 2V in real

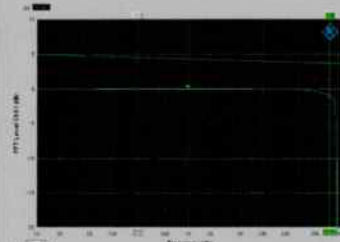
life, so this is unlikely to be used.

The S/PDIF digital input worked to 192kHz through both electrical (Coax) and optical (TOSLINK) inputs, as well as AES EBU of course. Bandwidth measured an impressive 77kHz (-1dB), although fast filtering isn't necessarily good for pre and post-filter ringing. The Minimum Phase filter had little influence on either frequency or time domain (ringing) behaviour under measurement and is unlikely to affect sound quality to any perceivable degree; this option looks cosmetic.

The DAC was linear, producing just 0.03% distortion at -60dB with a 24-bit signal. Around 0.16% is possible, from an ESS Sabre 32, but this is still a very good result and allowed an EIAJ Dynamic Range of 115dB to be achieved.

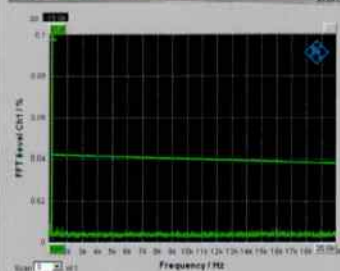
The Fostex HP-A8 headphone amplifier measured well all round. NK

FREQUENCY RESPONSE



DISTORTION

THD @ 0dB	0.0319 %	26.143 mV	997.00 Hz
Low Pass	OFF	OFF	OFF



Frequency response (-1dB)	192kHz sample rate	4Hz-77kHz
Distortion (24 bit)	0dB	0.0008
	-60dB	0.03
Separation (1kHz)		98dB
Noise (IEC A)		-114dB
Dynamic range		115dB
Output		4.5V

HP-A8C £1100



OUTSTANDING - amongst the best

VERDICT

Gets the best from all digital worlds, yet not unaffordable

FOR

- 32-bit ready
- well served with inputs and outputs
- smooth, intricately-etched and rhythmically-able sound

AGAINST

- can't have simultaneous headphone and line outputs active
- no conversion of analogue to digital
- SD playback only caters for PCM and DSD

Fostex
www.scvdistribution.co.uk
SCV London (UK distributor)
+44 (0)3301 222500

Connect.
With the Future...



K2 BT

- aptX Bluetooth streaming input
- Increased output for greater power and clarity
- Improved circuitry for greater efficiency
- Even better sound performance

ROKSAN

The award-winning Roksan K2 series has now been expanded to include a new integrated amplifier. The K2 BT improves on the original K2 Integrated with brand new circuitry and a higher output than ever before. The inclusion of aptX® technology also adds a whole new source input to the amplifier. Now you can stream your favourite music from a Bluetooth-enabled device in original 16-bit CD quality.*

Available Nationwide Now



Distributed by Henley Designs Ltd.

T: +44 (0)1235 511 166 | E: sales@henleydesigns.co.uk | W: www.henleydesigns.co.uk

World Radio History

* On compliant devices.



WIN

**ANTELOPE AUDIO
ZODIAC GOLD SUPERB
DAC WORTH £2,595 IN
THIS MONTH'S GREAT
GIVEAWAY!**

Here's your chance to win an Antelope Audio Zodiac Gold DAC. Read the review excerpt below and answer the questions.

"The Zodiac is a full 24-bit/384kHz capable DAC utilising Antelope's proprietary "Oven Control" clock. Which, to put it in layman's terms, means the clock is housed in a shielded container where the temperature is kept constant – Antelope believing this brings significant benefits to the detail, dynamics and stereo placement of the audio.

Jitter management is also handled by the company's proprietary Acoustically Focused Clocking technology (AFC) as implemented in all its professional master clocks.

As befits Antelope's pro-audio background the unit itself is sturdily built and reassuringly hefty despite its relatively compact 165mm/112mm/190mm (H/W/D) dimensions.

That compact size means almost every inch of the rear panel is taken up by the various connection options.

The six digital inputs consist of USB, one AES/EBU, two coaxial S/PDIF and two Toslink. In addition there are both balanced and RCA analogue inputs which by-pass the

digital circuitry to be fed directly to the preamp's volume control.

Output options consist of both balanced and unbalanced analogue as well as both AES and S/PDIF digital.

Inputs are selected by toggling through the options via the source button on the front – and intelligently the Antelope's circuitry auto-senses what connections are in use and ignores redundant inputs.

The fascia also features a pair of full-sized headphone outputs with their own dedicated volume control as well as power, mute, mono and standby buttons".

For a chance to win this great prize, just answer the four easy questions at right. Send your entries on a postcard only, by June 6th to:

**June 2014 Competition,
Hi-Fi World magazine,
Studio 204,
Buspace Studio,
Conlan Street,
Notting Hill,
London W10 5AP**

RULES AND CONDITIONS OF ENTRY

- ONLY ONE ENTRY PER HOUSEHOLD
- MULTIPLE ENTRIES WILL BE AUTOMATICALLY DISQUALIFIED
- PURCHASE OF THE MAGAZINE IS NOT A PRE-CONDITION OF ENTRY
- NO CORRESPONDENCE WILL BE ENTERED INTO
- THE EDITOR'S DECISION IS FINAL
- NO EMPLOYEES OF AUDIO PUBLISHING LIMITED, OR OF ANY COMPANIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE PRODUCTION OR DISTRIBUTION OF THE PRIZES, MAY ENTER

QUESTIONS

[1] What clock control is used?

- [a] Spring
- [b] Elastic band
- [c] Oven
- [d] Cuckoo

[2] Jitter is controlled by –

- [a] Aspirin
- [b] hot towel
- [c] lubricant
- [d] AFC

[3] How many digital inputs are there?

- [a] six
- [b] seven
- [c] none
- [d] one

[4] The Zodiac auto senses –

- [a] moisture
- [b] heat
- [c] connections
- [d] vibration

June 2014 Competition,
Hi-Fi World magazine,
Studio 204,
Buspace Studio,
Conlan Street,
Notting Hill,
London W10 5AP.

entries will be accepted on a postcard, UK ONLY

**MARCH 2014 WINNER: ONKYO TX-NR828 AV RECEIVER
Mr Mark Madeley of Western-Super-Mare**



Spring "B Grade" and Second hand CLEAR OUT! Big Savings on our normal prices!

MB845 II Super "They have no equal!"

"5 Globes" Extraordinary sound quality Hi Fi World...
Two pairs from review and exhibition stock, not quite pristine, with only a few hours on each pair. David Shaw signature with upgrades and Jensen capacitors. Same as the "m" but without the meters

Was £7,149 Now only £4,999



Stereo 40 GAS7 20 + 20 watts of pure triode

Pure triode sound with excellent dynamics and bottom end. Very economical on valves. Will drive almost any speakers. Lots of features. 1 used, 2 ex demo.

Was £1,399 Now only £1,099



Other Bargains:

Pair "Made For Valves" floor standing speakers damaged corner, Walnut, New
Was £999 Now only £699

Early ST300 300B push pull integrated 28+28w of pure triode ex demo
Was £1,500 Now only £999

Early ST60 KT88 push pull integrated 60+60w of UL, or 30w triode, used
Was £1,100 Now only £799

Pr MB25 300B 28+28w mono blocks 1 careful owner lovely condition
Was £1,995 Now only £999

2 ST40i 35+35w integrated amplifiers Lovely condition fully guaranteed
Was £999 Now only £499

ST40 II White 35+35w integrated amp 1 careful owner, now sought after
Was £899 Now only £549

ST50 White 50+50w integrated amp 1 careful owner, now sought after
Was £999 Now only £699

LA4 line pre amp, remote control Excellent condition, used
Was £799 Now only £499

Pair MB805 805 SET mono blocks Ex demo almost perfect, new
Was £5,999 Now only £3,999

2 Ex demo MC TX step up transformers
Was £349.95 Now only £275

STOP PRESS!

Just arrived sorry no prices at time of going to press. Email, phone or see our website for info.

- 2 EAR 845P phono pre, used VGC
- 2 Michelle Giro turntables used VGC
- Palmer "stone" belt drive turntable
- Musical Fidelity P270 amp serviced used
- Thorens TD150 turntable "classic" VGC
- Icon Audio LA3 line pre amp VGC
- Audio Lab 8000S integrated amp VGC
- Audio Innovations S 500 EL34 amp used
- Rega Mira int 60+60w amp VGC used
- Cyrus 6V S2 integrated amp used VGC
- Audio Lab 8000 PPA phono stage VGC
- Sugden Audition C integrated amp VGC
- Goldring GL75 turntable used VGC

KingSound Electrostatics

30%-50% off All Models

Model (pairs)	Was	Now
King System 1 used	£12,000	£6,000
King full range 1 used	£9,600	£6,720
King Tower omni directional 2 used	£2,400	£1,200
Prince II 3 used	£3,500	£1,990
Queen II (pic) 1 slight damage	£2,000	£1,400
Princess II 2 ex demo 2 used	£800	£560
Princess 1 ex demo	£800	£400
Hummingbird super tweeter 2 used	£500	£290

All available for audition in Leicester. Kings, Prince and Queen are only available for collection or local delivery.

Stereo 60 MK III 80+80 watts KT120 or KT150



all designed by David Shaw
Was £2,399 Now £1,899

All the features you could wish for with high power, remote control, UL/Triode operation, record loop, H/L sensitivity, low distortion, massive bass, point to point wiring. New KT120 or KT150 (+ £200). Same as the latest "m" model.

MB150 150+150w Mono Blocks

150+150w of pure UL valve power (or 100 + 100w of pure triode), Using 4 KT90, (KT120 & 150 option). Based on our award winning MB90s. Still with the Icon warmth and texture at low volume, with massive headroom and very low distortion. Ex demo Ex condition.

Was £3,299 Now £2,299



Stereo 40 MkIII integrated amp

Stereo 40 MK III our best ever valve amplifier. It has everything! 40+40 watts, Triode mode, Valve rectifier. Remote control. Tape loop. Standby switch. KT66/KT88 EL34/6550 compatible. Two rave reviews in HFW and HFN.

Was £1,699 Now £1,399

"...Bristling with musical energy, smooth & sweet..."
P Rigby Hi Fi World
Awarded 5 Globes



Phono Pre amp Bargains

2 Unique Pure Valve models that make heavenly music! PS2mm in silver, 4 new with minor scratches.

Was £599 Now only £499

PS3 Black with silver front. MM or MM+MC. Very advanced preamp, many features: All Valve power supply, David Shaw designed for rich vibrant music that only pure valve designs can give. 5 units in near perfect condition.

Was £1,999 Now only £1,499



Choosing new or upgrading your hi fi can be stressful! It's not just the money but the time wasted and that "oh not again!" feeling when things are not quite right. We can help. Since 1999 we have been designing and selling high quality amplification at affordable prices that is now popular worldwide. We make a huge range of pure valve amplifiers to suit many different needs. We have built our reputation on being honest and dispassionate so why not come for an audition in Leicester and find out how we can help you to get that magical holographic sound dancing in front of your ears.

Sincerely *David Shaw*

Limited Stock. All items are "ex demo", "B Grade" or second hand and will have some small blemish. Supplied 100% working and fully guaranteed by us for 12 months new (6 months second hand). If you have a particular query, please email or ring first for clarification. Ideally you will inspect and audition in our showroom. Home trial is only available to personal callers. See our website for more info.

Buy direct from us. Export no problem! (EU £30 per box) Want to know more? See www.iconaudio.com or ask for a leaflet.

.....Or ring us on +44 (0)116 2440593 email sales@iconaudio.com **icon Audio** 351 Aylestone Road Leicester LE2 8TA (U.K.)

*Whilst stocks last. Conditions apply ask for details Prices correct with 20% UK VAT at time of going to press but subject to change. E & O E UK Visa, MasterCard AMEX and debit cards accepted

New One 01

Acoustic Energy's new 101 loudspeaker is exciting, but refined too, Jon Myles finds.

The small standmount/bookshelf loudspeaker sector is the most fiercely-contested market in the hi-fi industry. The reasons are fairly obvious when you think about it; small 'speakers are inexpensive, domestically acceptable, and an ideal fit for often-cramped British living spaces.

Consequently there's no end of choice available to the consumer at various price-points - from both

long-established companies to relative newcomers.

Acoustic Energy belongs firmly to the former category. Indeed, its iconic concrete-lined AEs virtually redefined the higher end of the market on their launch in 1987.

So successful were they with both critics and consumers alike they are still on sale today in the shape of the AE Classic - although at £1,250 a pair they're not for everyone.

So for those with less deep

pockets Acoustic Energy has a range of lower-priced models - ones which it has spent a good deal of time and effort revising recently.

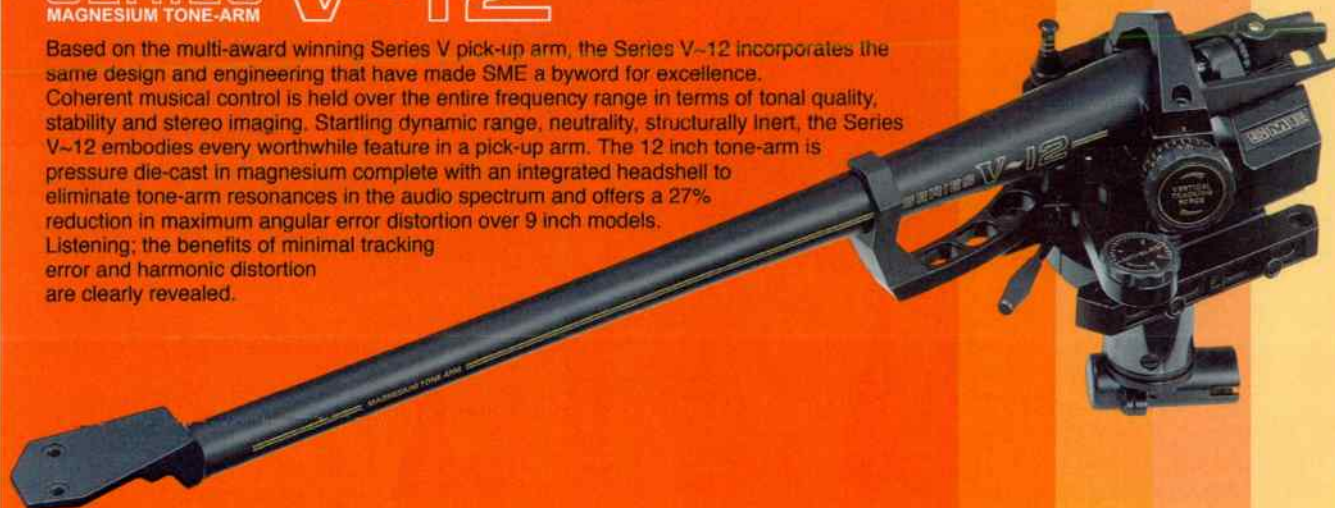
We were mightily impressed with the £425 AE 301s we reviewed in our November 2013 edition - noting their strong bass, refined mid-range and crisp, clean treble.

Now Acoustic Energy has introduced a new entry-level model in the AE 101 and selling at the wallet-friendly price of £275,



SERIES V-12 MAGNESIUM TONE-ARM

Based on the multi-award winning Series V pick-up arm, the Series V-12 incorporates the same design and engineering that have made SME a byword for excellence. Coherent musical control is held over the entire frequency range in terms of tonal quality, stability and stereo imaging. Startling dynamic range, neutrality, structurally inert, the Series V-12 embodies every worthwhile feature in a pick-up arm. The 12 inch tone-arm is pressure die-cast in magnesium complete with an integrated headshell to eliminate tone-arm resonances in the audio spectrum and offers a 27% reduction in maximum angular error distortion over 9 inch models. Listening; the benefits of minimal tracking error and harmonic distortion are clearly revealed.



SME

"The best pick-up arm in the world"

SME LIMITED • STEYNING • SUSSEX • BN44 3GY • ENGLAND • TEL +44 (0)1903 814321 • FAX +44 (0)1903 814269 • www.sme.ltd.uk • sales@sme.ltd.uk

Black Rhodium

Twist

Stereo Interconnect Cable

"Offering amazing value for money, every new hi-fi user should demo these interconnects"

HI-FI WORLD
February 2013



Why Choose the Black Rhodium Twist Stereo Interconnect?

- Based upon the multi-award winning Twist Speaker Cable
- Reduced "Transient Phase Distortion" to produce a more natural, open sound
- Improved RFI/EMI rejection from dual twisting of cable
- High quality gold plated RCA terminations
- Ultra low budget price, high class, 5 star performance



Scan this QR code on your smartphone or tablet to download the full Hi-Fi World review and find out more about "Transient Phase Distortion"



(visit www.blackrhodium.co.uk/twistfw on your PC)

www.blackrhodium.co.uk sales@blackrhodium.co.uk +44 (0)1332 342233

Not surprisingly, it borrows much from its bigger brother in terms of design and styling – just in a smaller package.

So what you get is a two-way reflex-loaded loudspeaker in a 300x185x250mm (H/W/D) cabinet. Mid/bass duties are handled by a 110mm anodised aluminium cone derived from the aforementioned AE1 coupled to a relatively large 28mm soft-dome tweeter of Acoustic Energy's own design.

Port duties are handled by a slim front-mounted slot beneath the mid/bass unit – potentially making them less fussy about positioning close to rear walls.

There's a single pair of gold-plated 'speaker binding posts at the rear so bi-wiring or bi-amping is out – although at this price it's unlikely that would be a serious consideration in any case.

The grilles fix magnetically to the fascia, helping maintain the 101s clean lines. Black ash, walnut or high-gloss white finishes are available.

Overall it's a tidy-looking loudspeaker and fit and finish are exemplary for the price.

SOUND QUALITY

They may be classed as a bookshelf/standmount – but like most loudspeakers of this kind they undeniably sound better on a good pair of sturdy stands.

Once done, the soundstage of the 101s belies their relatively compact dimensions. These 'speakers have all the attributes of the larger 301s, except slightly scaled down.

That means you get a clean, crisp performance with a good level of detail with no undue emphasis on any part of the sonic spectrum.

Ornette Coleman's live 'Sound Grammar' had air and atmosphere, the 101s handling the dynamic contrasts with ease.

Some small loudspeakers can make this concert performance sound slightly shut-in or struggle to keep up when the tempo increases. But the Acoustic Energys managed to capture the ambience admirably – as well as hanging on to the rhythm tenaciously when the pace moved up a pace.

Mid-range detail is also very good, the anodised metal driver staying clean and clear without adding any undue zing to the overall sound as some do. Add to that the smoothness of the soft-dome



tweeter and this is an impressive package.

Bass-wise they don't go quite as low as the 301s (which was a bit of a star in this area) but they're no slouches either considering their size.

New Order's 'Brotherhood' collection had a good dose of wallop and impact – Peter Hook's bass lines staying firm and tuneful throughout. There's no one-note thump or boom in evidence, just a rather impressively open presentation with good separation between the instruments.

The front-firing port also means close-to-wall placement will help augment bass for anyone looking for more thwack, without losing the 101s inherent cohesive sound.

OK, push them really hard and the AEs start to show their limitations with the drive units struggling with big orchestral crescendos. But ease off the volume and they settle back into their comfort zone.

The AEs compact size also means stereo imaging is superb. Female vocals float free and clear of the speakers with the overall sound having both width and depth.

CONCLUSION

Entry-level they may be, but the Acoustic Energy 101s are an admirably refined and beguiling speaker.

Unlike some rivals, they have a natural, even tonal balance with a detailed mid-range and decent levels of bass for their size.

Add to that a superb build quality and you have one very tempting package.

Anyone looking for a sub-£300 loudspeaker that both looks and sounds a lot more expensive really has to take these loudspeakers.

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

Frequency response of Acoustic Energy's 101 was impressively flat, our pink noise analysis shows. A more detailed stepped sine wave response confirmed this result, showing even output from the drive units, suggesting low coloration. There is a slight lift in the treble but this flattened off-axis. Pointed at listeners treble will be obvious but not

excessive; pointed down a room the 101 is supremely accurate in terms of tonal balance.

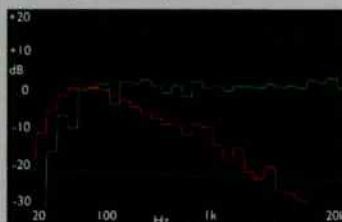
Bass output is smooth down to 60Hz, with no emphasis to make bass obvious. The slot port is tuned to 55Hz and it applies good acoustic damping to the bass unit, our broad red port trace shows. The impedance trace confirms this. The 101 can be used close to a wall, where strong port output down to 40Hz will strengthen bass down a room. This is not a boomy loudspeaker, but inevitably there is a little cabinet overhang around 100Hz. Otherwise, its 200mS decay spectrum was very clean, meaning there's little coloration.

The 101 uses a 5.2 Ohm D.C. resistance bass unit and this keeps impedance at or above 5 Ohms in the bass. Treble sinks to 4 Ohms, but is resistive. Sensitivity was fair at 86dB Sound Pressure Level from one nominal Watt (2.8V) of input, meaning amplifiers of 60 Watts or more will make the 101 go loud.

This is a neatly engineered loudspeaker. It measured well in all areas and will give fine results in use. **NK**

FREQUENCY RESPONSE

Green - driver output
Red - port output



IMPEDANCE



ACOUSTIC ENERGY 101S £275



OUTSTANDING - amongst the best

VALUE - keenly priced

VERDICT

The 101s have a smooth, engaging sound with detail and refinement rare at their price. Definitely recommended.

FOR

- price
- even tonal balance
- detail
- build quality

AGAINST

- nothing at the price

Acoustic Energy
+ 44 (0)1285 654432
www.acoustic-energy.co.uk



Voltaire

*The new name
in
audio excellence*

*Objects
of
desire*



*Lifetime
Warranty*



Robson Acoustics
Precision loudspeakers and audio products
Tel : 0845 6431 787
www.robsonacoustics.co.uk
e: sales@robsonacoustics.co.uk

mail



LETTER OF THE MONTH PRIZE



KEF Q100 LOUDSPEAKERS

Visit our website at www.hi-fiworld.co.uk or send your emails to letters@hi-fiworld.co.uk. Letter of the month wins a pair of KEF Q100 loudspeakers.

Answers by: **NK** - Noel Keywood; **PR** - Paul Rigby; **TB** - Tony Bolton; **MP** - Martin Pipe; **HB** - Haden Boardman; **RT** - Rafael Todes; **RA** - Rod Alexander; **JM** - Jon Myles.

For more advice see Letters from earlier issues at www.hi-fiworld.co.uk/letters

A pair of KEF Q100 loudspeakers are on their way to JON SPEIGHT, Letter of the Month winner in our May 2014 issue.

Letter of the Month

LAPTOP LOVE

There has been lots of correspondence lately about using a PC or a Laptop as a source of digital music and I get the feeling that many people are prepared, eager even, to try computerised or streamed music, but are afraid of the technicalities and give up.

Using a laptop computer to stream audio is just a little bit more complicated than using a TV, so why not try it? You have nothing to lose except some time learning about how to use computer audio and some experimentation. You can even use your existing equipment if you invest in an external DAC.

I use an Audiolab 8200CD which has the ESS Sabre DAC that Noel has recently reviewed. The sound quality from this is exceptionally good. My laptop is connected to it by a USB cable. The drivers are loaded from the DAC to the laptop automatically and it is literally plug and play. It will also play a CD as it has a built in transport.

I also have a miniature Cambridge USB DacMagic XS. This little marvel weighs 25 grams and is no bigger than a box of matches. It draws power from the laptop so there is no mains cable. It is also a headphone amplifier which means I can listen to hi-fi quality music on the road. It is plug and play and I can also connect it to a mini-system via a 3.5mm double ended stereo jack and cable. It cost me £99.95. Why not try it? The sound quality is almost as good



Audiolab's 8200CD CD player has an ESS Sabre32 DAC and "the sound quality from this is exceptionally good" says Trevor Morgan.

as the much more expensive ESS Sabre.

Here is what you can do with a laptop and an internet connection – Stream thousands of internet radio stations, with some of them in hi-fi quality: try BBC Radio 3 HD for classical; Radio LINN for classical, jazz and pop; Radio Cro-Dur for classical music, it is from the Czech Republic and even streams in lossless codecs which are of CD standard. Try <http://radio.cesnet.cz:8000/cro-d-dur.flac> on your browser.

You can listen to Spotify which has 15 million LP tracks of jazz, classic and popular music.

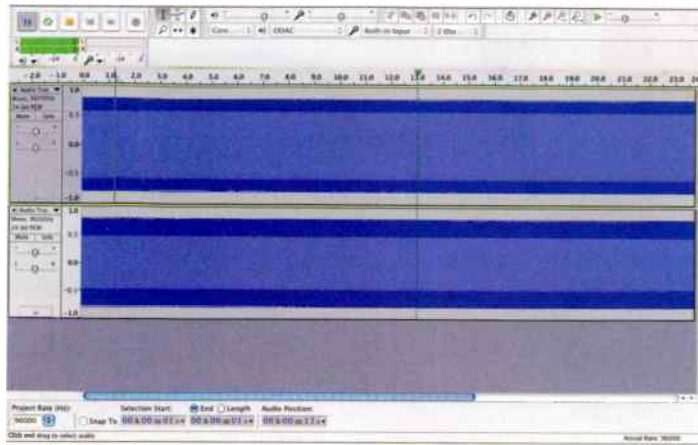
You can access www.archive.org which has a fabulous library of open source music.

You can rip all your digital

CDs using Windows Media Player, dBpoweramp, or XLD and convert them to lossless WAV and FLAC files or lossy MP3. It is easy to catalogue them so that the music can be found readily.

You can make playlists for the music that you want to play uninterrupted at a party. Do you remember the compilation cassette and how much time you spent? The digital equivalent is a doddle. You can playback your stereo albums in mono at the touch of the button.

You can also buy and download music from a number of sources: HD tracks, Amazon, Spotify and Linn to name but a few. This is not as difficult as it seems. The downloaded music can then be burnt to an audio CD if you must – including HIRES and MP3!



Audacity is a free music editor, for PC and Mac. "With Audacity, I converted a stereo album to mono whilst increasing the pitch of one of its tracks by a semi-tone to match the original mono LP" says Trevor Morgan.

You do not have to stream downloaded music to replay it.

Best of all, for me, you can edit the source using Audacity. Audacity is free software and it is wonderful. I have digitally archived about 40 precious LPs, singles and audio-cassettes whilst removing the snap, crackle and pop and tape hiss at the same time; and without a noticeable deterioration in sound quality. You can record digitally using Audacity directly from the line outputs of a phonostage or cassette deck by connecting the equipment to the line input on the back of a PC (this is usually a black/ blue coloured 3.5 mm mini-jack stereo socket). Alternatively, for a laptop, you can use a line to USB interface stage; these are cheap.

During my experiments with Audacity, I converted a stereo album to mono whilst increasing the pitch

of one of its tracks by a semi-tone to match the original mono LP. In the 1950s when I was a lad making my own crystal set and then in the 1960s listening to a Dansette, I would never have dreamt that this would be possible to do at home. To me this was something out of a science fiction laboratory.

Since those far off days the improvements in audio quality and the versatility of computers have led us into a new golden age of hi-fi and the enjoyment of music. With a little time and patience and not much money we can embrace all this. There is only one problem and that is the possibility that you could lose all your good work; so just make sure that anything you download or rip from CDs or archive from analogue sources is backed up twice. The pain and expense of doing it all again is too much to bear.

Yours sincerely,

Trevor Morgan

Thanks for your wise words of experience Trevor. These days, playing from a MacBook Pro (my choice!) running Mavericks, through an Audiolab Q-DAC (or M-DAC) via USB is very easy – no drivers, no faffing around and great quality. And of course the laptop downloads music, or free software such as you have mentioned. It has all become simple and slick.

You do not have to have a home network either, for those that fear it! Get BT to install an internet terminal, plug in – and you are off!

Audacity is a very powerful audio tool – extraordinary considering it is free, but then I use Open Office and it too is free(ware) and impressively powerful.

You do, however, need to spend time to learn Audacity's interface and way of doing things. It is worth persevering because then you can edit your CDs if you so wish, to change their tonal balance, or your LPs to remove noise, and so on, as you explain.

I use a Furutech Esprit preamplifier, with 24/96 ADC to digitise LPs, then process them through Audacity. This way I have whole LPs (1GB!), complete with groove noise, I can play on the move! I could split them into tracks, but why bother.

On a Mac there are no problems with all this. But Mac users need to be aware of the 'Audio/Midi' control panel in Utilities, as well as the 'Sound' control panel in System Preferences. **NK**

HI RES ON MY TIVOLI

Okay, you win. There is a difference between the sound of CD and "High Res" recordings. I have been loath to accept this idea, especially as I cannot afford to play around with the latest equipment and gizmos to avail myself of such recordings.

What has brought about this change of heart? Well, I have just 'caught' the end of Radio Four's "You and Yours" item about "High Res" on my little Tivoli Henry Koss Model One... I could clearly hear the difference between the different samples played. In fact I did better than those in the studio. I immediately picked out the high res version.

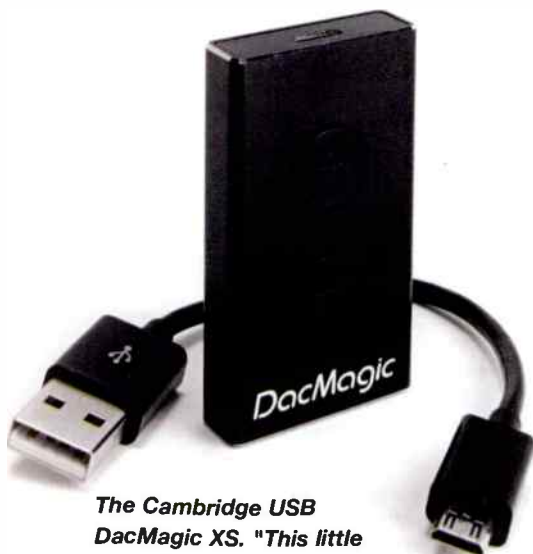
I often receive compliments on my Tivoli Model One from all sorts of visitors, including the TV installer the other week. This latest experience just highlights the quality of the design. The only flaw has been the slightly boomy bass that occurs where I am forced to site the Radio. Easily combated by using a film canister top to close the port on the base.

Best Regards,
David Mills

Hi David. The official way to seal a port is to use an old sock. This provides acoustic damping and prevents old socks occupying land fill, helping limit global methane levels. Hi-Fi World has always promoted re-cycling and re-use!

And now on to Radio Four's "You and Yours" broadcast, which I also heard, courtesy of Mike Bickley who sent me this short e-mail –

Hi Noel. You might be interested in



The Cambridge USB DacMagic XS. "This little marvel weighs 25 grams and is no bigger than a box of matches" says Trevor Morgan.



Tivoli Model One radio. "I immediately picked out the high res version" on this radio, says David Mills.

listening to this, it was an interesting result! Toggle through iPlayer until 40.46 minutes.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b03wq2sr/You_and_Yours_Furniture_complaints_and_highresolution_music/
Regards,
Mike Bickley

Go to the address Mike gives and you can still likely hear this interesting discussion and test. I listened intently and the blind listening test was fascinating. Differences were audible, although against all the odds. As they explained, the radio broadcast process degrades quality and – worse – they unfortunately used the one hi-res player that is arguably not hi-res, a "Sony hi-res Walkman costing £260" we were told, which means the Sony NWZ-F886. I reviewed this player in our April 2014 issue, p51. I presume they connected the headphone output into the mixing desk, but this output runs through a poor headphone amplifier that restricts dynamic range to a meagre 96dB, where CD offers 100dB and true hi-res 110-120dB. The Sony plays

hi-res files, but it doesn't give hi-res performance, having a headphone output amp suitable for MP3 and such like. What a pity! If they'd used a decent player like an Astell&Kern AK100 those differences would have been so much greater.

So if you can, David, try and get a better demo and give yourself a pleasant surprise. Sadly, at present there's very little appreciation of hi-res playback in the U.K. hi-fi market, even amongst manufacturers who are glued to CD I am finding. But you will get a demo of 24/96 or 24/192 at any dealer that stocks Astell&Kern portable players, I feel sure. Or just phone around your local dealers and see if they have a hi-res demo running that you can pop in to hear. For this they just need a £150 FiiO X3 (or similar) hi-res player plugged into a decent DAC. **NK**

FORMAT CONFUSION

The letter in your March edition from a fellow confused by digital formats certainly struck a chord with me also. I am simply seeking a one-box or transport+DAC source to replay CD and

SACD that will be the best sound quality for my money. This will be for a second system – my primary one uses FM radio and vinyl, with occasional use of my Cambridge Audio 840c. My intention is to feed the signal via either an Musical Fidelity or Townsend / Bent Audio passive preamp.

I have read the glowing reports of the Cambridge and Oppo universal players, but am confused about how their output is then fed to a conventional amplifier. If I were to make a cautious uninformed purchase I would simply buy an ex-demonstration Marantz Pearl, (my budget is about £1500), but would this be the best sound for the money in your view? I have no requirement for extra



A FiiO X3 high resolution portable player costs just £150 and can be used as a cheap hi-res transport feeding an external DAC.

facilities over the need to play the two disc formats. Your advice would be very much appreciated.

Regards,
Richard

The Cambridge and Oppo universal players output surround-sound primarily via HDMI and are purposed for use with AV receivers. They do, however, have analogue stereo outputs that give reasonable results and you can connect this up to your second system. A cheaper alternative is a Sony Blu-ray player like the BDP-S4100 that costs around £100 and plays SACD as well as CD. It too has analogue audio outputs. The Marantz will do the job better of course, if you don't mind the cost. Generally you cannot use a transport and DAC because SACD (DSD) cannot be transmitted over S/PDIF. **NK**



The BBC's iPlayer version of Radio Four's 'Your and Yours' programme, available on their website. discussing hi-res audio.

DEAD DUCK

I was astonished by Noel Keywood's comments in the March 2014 issue of Hi-Fi World to the effect that CDs are a dead duck and manufacturers have stopped production of CD players. I do reviews of CDs for the magazine Jazz Journal. The editor of that magazine sends the magazine's review panel, a monthly list of CDs that are available for review. Every list has well over 100 newly released CDs: that's hardly a sign of a dead duck. I also review for a second jazz magazine which send me what the editor thinks are within my sphere of expertise. I do not know how many CDs that magazine gets to review but each month it has a large number of reviews many of which are not duplicated by those in Jazz Journal.

**George Hulme
Hants**



Tower Records at Piccadilly Circus. The decline of CD forced it to close many years ago.

Hi George. CD sales are in steep decline and have been for many years now. Sales fell 11% in 2012 to 70 million according to the BPI and will now be around 60 million I estimate, down from a peak of 174 million in the UK at 2004, according to IFPI figures.

There's been a steep rise in downloads, mainly of single songs, from iTunes and – now – music streaming is gaining popularity, with Spotify leading the way and Deezer challenging it. This is the future of music delivery.

CD is still around and your Jazz CDs are unlikely to stop arriving anytime soon, but CD is probably the last physical delivery format we will ever use. This decline in popularity



A Sony Blu-ray player like the BDP-S4100 that costs around £100 plays SACD as well as CD – plus Blu-rays of course.

has resulted in Tower Records, Virgin and HMV all shutting up shop, although HMV has been reprieved. CDs may arrive through your letterbox, but they are disappearing from the High Street.

The decline of CD has affected hardware manufacturers too. The demand for new players just isn't there any more. The CD player market has now split into standardised budget designs, and super high-end one box players that

really changed at all and that the very visible earphone attired individual may in fact be a red herring.

When I was at school, hardly anyone claimed to have an interest in music. Football, yes, music, not so much. The people interested in music now are approximately the same in number as they were thirty or forty years ago and still listen to it and get rewarded by it in mostly traditional-ish ways. The young man or woman in the street, with the latest earphones or headphones, are not really fans of music at all, but instead are fans of technology.

Let us look at Strictly Come Dancing from the BBC. Nice enough show I guess, but it is not really about dancing. It is about all of the histrionics from the judges, all of the chit and the chat from anyone with an opinion and oh yes a little bit of dancing thrown in for good measure.

Let us look at Top Gear from the BBC. A fine enough piece of entertainment, but in what universe is it about motor cars? It is about having a massive lark about, and while there is nothing wrong with that, you won't learn how to change your spark plugs.

Let us consider Dancing on Ice, from ITV. A bit of a laugh, but not about ice skating in any technical or real sense. Add to that some cookery shows that purport to be about cooking only to really be about judges and voting, the winner and the tears and the trophy.

These shows make it easy for people who have no interest in dancing or cars or skating to have some cursory involvement in something that passes the time until a more interesting diversion comes along. Modern technology like Apple's iPod in its many guises, similar offerings from Sony et al, and of course mobile phone technology, allow people who would never in a million years buy a turntable or an amplifier or a CD player or a pair of floor standing speakers to dabble in the world of music without really ever needing to genuinely be interested in it.

There will be folk out there on a pavement near you, ear phoned up, who have a genuine love of music, but they will be in a strict minority compared

handle SACD as well as CD and have a USB input too. The world of digital moves on. **NK**

DISJOINTED LISTENING

Music is now only being listened to in a disjointed fashion. A lead track may be the only song a person knows from an album, and then moves on to another hit song from another download – and so it goes on. The suggestion is that music fans no longer want or have any interest in the full length LP, and that a sporadic and mobile listening experience is preferred at the same time as crossing busy roads, answering phone calls, ordering a coffee and generally doing a hundred things at once.

Well, has anyone ever considered that the majority of music fans have not



At the Sound & Vision Show, Bristol, this year Astell&Kern were next door to Hi-Fi World and were demo'ing Audeze planar magnetic headphones.

to the millions for whom it is a passing phase that will stop at getting married and/or having children or some other responsibility/distraction.

Yours Faithfully,
Neil Porter

Hi Neil. I've seen commuters on my local tube line transition fairly quickly from iPod ear-buds to full size headphones, in the pursuit of quality, so quality is still an issue, but then so is price as always. Since high quality 'phones start at around £200 – think Dr Dre's Beats – and an iPod around £100, that's just £300 for good sounds. It makes sense all round, providing you like using headphones – not everyone does. Headphone listening is it's own world, literally. But as you say young listeners on 'phones are just as likely to appreciate what quality brings to musical enjoyment as users of 'old skool' hi-fi.

At this year's Bristol Show our stand was next to Astell&Kern's, so I got to hear their new AK240 portable digital player, being urged by Stephan of Computers Unlimited to listen through a pair of Audeze LCD-X Planar Magnetic headphones. Wow! It made me better understand comments I've seen on the 'net about headphones giving better sound than traditional hi-fi, for less money. I was listening to high resolution digital of course, through an immediately impressive set of 'phones (think: very dark and smooth), but what a great sound. This is where portable audio has got to, if at an elevated price of £1400 for the AK240 and £1700 for the LCD-X 'phones – £3100 in all. Headphone listening has its benefits – and anyway what were people doing long ago when they bought Walkmans and used phones? Not

so much has changed, except Apple managed to link the iPod to music purchase by download. **NK**

MAINS CABLES

The editorial introduction on page 3 of your May 2014 issue states that the ASA told Russ Andrews not to imply that RFI from mains electricity was a perceptible problem or that their products could reduce mains-borne RFI unless they held robust substantiation to show that was the case.

If the persistent complainant was actually an engineer of the fundamentalist sort, I doubt if he / she would have asked those questions or at least, not in the way that the ASA worded the challenge. RFI has been known about for a very long time, as has reducing it with ferrite beads, cores and chokes. It would be very easy for Russ Andrews, by the use of a scope, to irrevocably demonstrate that his cables do reduce RFI or any other high frequency noise on the mains.

Demonstrating the impact of that reduced RFI at the mains input to the overall sound quality of audio equipment would be a very different matter. I would be prepared to accept that supplying mains power to a cheap table top radio via an RFI suppressed mains cable could provide an improvement in sound quality over a standard mains cable (our little Pure kitchen radio has what looks very much like a ferrite bead in the cable from the plug type power supply to the radio).

The readers of this magazine however would not be using cheap table top radios (except maybe in the kitchen) but will have spent hundreds if not thousands of pounds on individual pieces of quality audio equipment. Such equipment should be expected to include a good quality power supply

capable of delivering a clean DC output irrespective of what noise is present on the mains input side.

Many years ago I bought a Trichord NC power supply unit for my recently acquired Delphini Mk 2 phono stage. I was very pleased with them both at the time and certainly still am, but shortly after buying the units, a friend asked me to try one of his super-duper mains leads to compare it with my standard one. I did and guess what, it didn't make a scrap of difference to what I or anyone else could hear coming out of the speakers. If the lead had made any perceivable difference to the sound, I'd have checked the DC output from the power supply with a scope, comparing both mains leads. If I could have measured any difference, the PSU would have gone back to Trichord with a demand for a full refund on the grounds that the product didn't perform in accordance with the manufacturers claims.

So, whilst I agree that mains cables can be constructed to reduce RFI, the more impact this has on end sound quality, the more questions it raises over the design and quality of the equipment's power supply. Any thoughts? Regards,
Chas Underhay

Hi Chas. What the complainant said is not known; those were the ASA's words.

You cannot assume hi-fi products will be internally protected against mains noise or voltage variations. Designers hold a wide range of views on mains and power supplies



Russ Andrews mains cable. "The ASA told Russ Andrews not to imply that RFI from mains electricity was a perceptible problem or that their products could reduce mains-borne RFI unless they held robust substantiation to show that was the case". Russ Andrews provided substantiation and the complaint against him was withdrawn.

and some choose not to put filter inductors in series with the mains supply to suppress noise, because they degrade regulation.

Like you, I would have thought capacitor smoothing (and voltage regulators) of most linear supplies would eliminate mains borne noise, but perhaps this is simplistic; noise could be entering the system through other paths.

Whether you can hear the effects that noise shielded mains cables combat, depends upon your system and your auditory acuity. Concert violinist and Hi-Fi World reviewer Rafael Todes (Allegrì String Quartet) won't listen to any system in our office without first ensuring all products are connected through a decent RF suppressed mains cable. He runs a very sophisticated system at home and is adamant that a good mains cable is a primary requirement. I can hear the removal of a sense of a slight fuzzy haze when he changes cables; it's as if the camera lens has been cleaned.

The mechanism by which RF noise can affect sound quality isn't obvious – especially to sceptical engineers, and this includes me! On this here are a few observations.

First, the mechanism by which frame buzz infected hi-fi systems close to London's powerful Crystal Palace TV transmitter wasn't obvious either. Loudspeaker leads acted as aerials, RF was fed to the input of an amplifier through the feedback loop, and it was rectified at the first transistor junction (that was overloaded and acted as a diode). The resultant audio then made its way back out to the speakers, causing a buzz. How's that for a roundabout and obscure mechanism?

A similarly obscure mechanism may well channel RF noise into a hi-fi; try measuring the current going to mains ground from an amplifier and you will see how high it is off ground, allowing mains RF to have influence.

Big power supply electrolytic capacitors are inductive; they should be bypassed by a low value ceramic to ground RF, but are they?

So in all, this is a complex and difficult subject, where conditions cannot be fixed; every amplifier and every setup is different. So are external conditions, meaning the RF environment as well as circuit conditions.

And that's not to mention Rafael and his acute hearing (which others may well enjoy).



Big transmitters, like this one at Alexandra Palace, North London, throw out a lot of RF (radio frequencies) and long cable runs, including those for mains electricity, pick it up. Do shielded and RF filtered mains cables make a difference? Russ Andrews proved they do.

In all then, I think is best to rein in scepticism, keep an open mind and listen to what others say, from their experiences. I believe shielded mains cables do make a difference, but for reasons not-quite-known! **NK**

Russ Andrews say -

I think it's important to be clear about the subject of the ASA complaint referred to in the Editorial from May 2014. The statement "the ASA told Russ Andrews not to imply that RFI from mains electricity was a perceptible problem or that their products could reduce mains-borne RFI unless they held robust substantiation to show that was the case" referred to a previous ASA complaint from 2011, in which the ASA's expert at the time did not believe the in-house measurements we had submitted showing RF rejection of our mains cables.

We were subject to a new complaint last year from an individual who took exception to more recent measurements we made and subsequently published following the development of our range of our SuperKord mains cables. The article subject to the complaint was published in our literature and on our website here: <http://www.russandrews.com/downloads/SKtest.pdf>.

The complaint was that the complainant didn't believe that our published research could support the noise reduction claims we made when we compared our PowerKords and SuperKords against a standard IEC lead.

Previously, the ASA's expert had recommended that we use measurements from an accredited EMC test house as robust evidence for the RF-rejecting capabilities of our mains cables, which is precisely what we did on this occasion. Interestingly, the results from the EMC test house supported the previous measurements we'd made! The ASA did not uphold this recent complaint, stating the evidence we supplied was "sufficient to



"The reincarnation of a 1970s Technics amplifier, as interpreted by Mark Manwaring-White of MingDa UK" (there's a valve amp inside!) struck a chord with Brian Sandall.

support the claims in the ad" regarding RF rejection.

With regard to the impact on sound quality, we offer a 60 Day Home Trial which allows any of our customers the chance to audition our cables in their own system at home and return them for a full refund if they are not happy with a cable's performance. It gives our customers the chance to listen to what they experience, and make their purchasing decision based on how a cable performs in their own system; this is important because each person's set-up, as you have acknowledged, is unique.

John Armer, Managing Director.

though pure economics dictate the need plus, of course, items for which essential spares are no longer available. In the case of my Technics 1 amplifier, it was donated by a lady saying she "could not keep up with its appetite for speakers". The originals had blown "and now the new Missions"!

Powered up on my bench, I found that a blown output amplifier was feeding some 35v to the speaker terminals. To check that this wasn't just leakage offset, I shorted the terminals and promptly blew the internal fuses. This was where the mental dilemma began. It was a simple enough job to disconnect the faulty output stages and

feeding the original preamp.

Overall, a pretty box and chassis which may have ended in the trash bin now has a new lease of life, providing a delightful 8 Watts per channel. Oh yes, and the original internal phono stage is as quiet and distortion free as some stand-alone models costing £300+.

I made this conversion in 2009 and only had it for a few months before a friend wheedled it out of me, but making it was fun and – yes, I'd probably do something similar again. At least, using spare components off the bench, never two models the same!

Most months I seem to find something in your Opinions, Olde-Worlde, Letters etc. to jog the grey matter. Just a few unconnected comments...

Re: Martin Pipe and his PRO12 tape deck.

Open reel tape was my staple diet from 1953. One of my amateur radio friends was a school metalwork master and set his 5th form making tape decks. I built the record/playback amplifiers for them, keeping to minimal costs by using ex-TV valves and parts.

I then decided to make a deck myself and when I mentioned this to a local radio dealer, he said he could help. Those were the days before fully built tape recorders were affordable and fishing under his counter he struggled out with a Wearite IIIA tape deck – just the deck, no case or electronics. He said a customer had given up on building a recorder and returned the deck – "I could have it!" That made me one elated Saturday shopping trip. Not only did I build the amplifiers and a cabinet, but I scaled the mechanism and built a copy deck in the school's workshops.

The Wearite deck had a neoprene capstan and brass pinch wheel, i.e. opposite to modern practice, claimed to have better grip but the capstan did wear and wow was a problem. I didn't see any easy way of restoring a smooth capstan so made mine with non-magnetic stainless steel capstan and neoprene pinch wheel.

My own creation stayed until 1967 when the Revox A77 appeared in Nottingham and shortly after buying one I noticed ads for the PRO12 described by Martin. As he says, it was expensive and around 1972/3 I thought I was on to a bargain when one appeared in Exchange & Mart. At around 4 or 5 years old, I thought it should be well kept. At least petrol wasn't expensive in those days so I drove out into the Welsh mountains about 100 miles to see it.

A memorable day! There was



"The Welsh farmer led me into the cow-sheds to demo the PRO-12!" says Brian Sandall.

SHOW STOPPER

I was scanning through the Bristol Show feature in the May issue of Hi-Fi World when on page 55 I saw something which more than "struck a chord!" It was the reincarnation of a 1970s Technics amplifier, as interpreted by Mark Manwaring White of MingDa UK. At first glance the cabinet and front panel looks identical to one I treated in not too dissimilar a manner and I thought other readers may be interested in the logic behind my creation. To explain: in retirement I spend a fair bit of time servicing vintage hi-fi separates and receivers for local charity shops and this has given me the opportunity to evaluate many of the quality brands from the 1970s onwards, often without the need to own the items on the workbench. During ten years of this voluntary work I also decided to collect my own little museum of one particular brand and I chose Technics, from the early 1970s to the demise of the brand around 2005/6. Being stubborn, I hate having to discard any clean and tidy items which have simply "died", even

replace the blown fuses and I then not only had a perfectly good preamplifier, but also a very attractive front panel and real wood veneered cabinet. All the switches and controls were of top quality and I do like the "bling" of a silver front and machine turned controls!

A few further measurements showed that in the preamp form, only minimal demands were made on the internal d.c. power supply. I wasn't needing a preamp, especially with such a large cabinet, so I removed the mains transformer and decided to shoehorn a valve amplifier into place. Staying with circuits I had known since the 1950s, I opted for push-pull ultra-linear with scaled down Mullard circuits from their 5-10 design using 6AQ5 miniature B7G valves and a couple of original Parmeko Leicester output transformers.

I do admit having to extend the rear panel with a little bulge for a decent mains transformer and h.t smoothing components and with a stroke of luck this transformer also provided a few milliamps from a 50v winding, to rectify and regulate for

blue sky and hot sun as I met the Welsh farmer and he led me into the cow-sheds to demo the PRO-12! I was staggered by its weight, also by the noisy mechanism and a strong hum emanating from his connected amplifier. Having by that time fully realised that the deck only took 7" reels, I looked no further and said goodbye! As I said, that was only 4 years from new, so Martin's has done well to survive (or is it the same deck? Was that farmer a radio amateur too? I am, G3LKG, and noted Martin's mention of our Radio Mobile Rallies. I used to run a stand at some of them).

My Revox A77 only satisfied me for a few years before the heads wore very noticeably but I bought a TEACA-7030 ex-studio mastering stereo deck. This is the 2 track 7.5 and 15 "Isec. version with ferrite heads. I ran through the full calibration and then found that I could use just single track for recording FM stereo. At 15 "Isec it went flat to about 34kHz and at 7.5 there was still enough pilot tone to fire my valve stereo decoder (a-la Leak Troughline II).

Oh yes! Finally, I do agree that black degenerated belt rubber goo is good for attaching to carpets, upholstery not to mention finger nails - and the other side of whatever you think you're cleaning it off!!!

Yours faithfully,

Brian M Sandall

Much of the Japanese gear from this era (Technics included) was beautifully-built and finished; manufacturers drew on some fantastic engineering talent. Front-panel controls were designed for long-term reliability, and unless maltreated can be revived with a squirt of Servisol into their innards and a few swipes forwards and backwards. That usually kills the crackles and 'random' intermittency. Their mainstream modern equivalents are nowhere near as resilient, although high-quality components (ALPS, etc.) are still available for the best gear.

It's also amazing how kind time has been to Japanese electrolytic capacitors. However, a sizeable proportion of these '70s gems has vanished; 40 years or so has passed, after all. Three decades ago, it was all very different. Receivers, amplifiers, tape equipment and turntables from the early- to mid-70s frequently came my way thanks to ads in Exchange and Mart or local papers, second-hand shops and jumble/boot sales.

As an impecunious '80s teenager, I managed to assemble a reasonable-

sounding system from '70s separates (and a pair of Wharfedale Linton 2 speakers acquired for £2 from the local market!).

It is interesting that second-hand hi-fi was so common back then, as in real terms it would have been very expensive originally (build quality had its price). I guess that those wooden side-panels, large knobs, chunky heavy-touch buttons, top-loading cassette compartments, manual radio tuning and so on just weren't fashionable during that consumerism-driven and credit-fuelled go-gettin' decade.

Cast aside the cosmetics, though, and you would find that it was made so much better than new gear!

The point is that you seldom come across equipment of this era any more, unless you take time to attend an Audiojumble-type event (like the ones in Tonbridge). It is sad to think how much 1970s gear has ended up in landfill or whatever, either working or condemned by faults that could have been repairable. Its scarcity now means this decade collectable. Original spare parts are a problem, but with a bit of ingenuity (and the original service manual - often freely available on the Internet, courtesy of excellent enthusiast websites like hifiengine and vinylengine) you can often work wonders.

Access to such information also invites modification; I like your idea of replacing solid-state power amps with low-power valve ones. It's just as well you had a large case to play with - the mains transformer needed to provide HT and heater current to the valves had to be accommodated, and on top of that are the output transformers needed for each channel.

More internal space helps air circulation - helping to address the issue

of what to do with all that heat!

As you suggest, the preamps of such integrateds usually incorporate decent-quality phono stages, as vinyl was the primary 'quality' listening medium back then.

In this issue's Olde Worlde, I find that the phono stage of the NAD 7020 (the receiver version of the famous 3020) is pretty good even by today's standards. OK, that was late '70s/early '80s - but you get my point.

You were very lucky to have obtained that Wearite deck (the basis of the aforementioned Ferrograph recorder) for nothing. It would have cost its original purchaser several month's wages! By the mid-sixties, tape recording had become more affordable and entered the mainstream - most reasonably-affluent homes bought a machine (usually supplied with a cheap microphone, stowed away in a cabinet compartment) to capture family events, speeches, dictation, musical recitals and so on. These were often mono machines with a quarter-track configuration to maximise the storage potential of tape that was expensive, albeit at the expense of a worse signal-to-noise ratio and a greater susceptibility to 'drop-out'. They were far from hi-fi, owing more than anything to awful internal speakers. **MP**

Philips Pro12 open reel recorder.

Most tape recorders have at least one good feature. And they're sold with the emphasis on that one, to take your mind off the things they haven't got, or the things they'd rather not talk about.

Philips PRO 12 is different. It combines in one tape recorder all the features you can usually only find separately in others. And they're all up to the sort of standard that makes them leading selling points.

To start with, there's the frequency response. It betters IEC standard 4661, which gives the requirements for professional studio recorders. Even at its lowest tape speed of 3 1/2 ips, the PRO 12 is at least the equal of many large studio recorders currently in use at 15 ips. The sound quality of the PRO 12 is so good it could be used for

immediate broadcast purposes.

The rest of the specifications are as you'd expect in a tape recorder of this quality: low harmonic distortion, good signal-to-noise ratio, minimum wow and flutter, excellent speed stability with the classic three-motor design.

In its standard version, the PRO 12 allows for triple-track stereo, twin-track mono and dual-track mono on 1 inch tape; an alternative version allows for quarter-track stereo or mono.

It also has separate heads and separate amplifiers for both recording and playback at either of its speeds, 3 1/2 or 7 1/2 ips, and provides before and after tape (A-B) monitoring either visually or aurally.

A stroboscope for checking tape speeds is built in, and there are

individual correction filters at both speeds plus microphone, diode and line inputs for each channel.

Among the other things you can do with the PRO 12 are transcribe from one track to the other, fade in, fade out, pause, cue, dub, and get echo effects.

In fact the performance specification is so varied yet so exact that every machine is tested individually as it is assembled, and then certified by the engineer whose signature is on the test report that accompanies every PRO 12.

If you'd like the full information on the features of the PRO 12, plus a full set of performance figures, write for our brochure. The matter what you compare it with, you won't find anything like the PRO 12 at anything like the price.

**Compare the range of features.
Then compare the price.**



PHILIPS

Philips Electrical Ltd., Dept. 332, Century House, Shaftesbury Avenue, London, W.C.2

349

Black and Blue

Tony Bolton finds that computer-based music need not be a bruising experience when he listens to two USB cables from Tellurium Q.

Although I use vinyl as my main music source I also have a reasonably large collection of music stored on my computer. Normally I play this via a USB lead connected to the Teddy Pardo Teddy DAC (see Hi-Fi World Sept and Oct 2011) which upsamples S/PDIF signals to 24/192kHz but runs at 48kHz sampling rate for USB input signals.

I have already discovered that different USB leads, even budget ones, offer different tonal takes on the sound. So I was curious to try two leads from Tellurium Q from the opposite price points of their range of cables.

I am unable to tell you much about the materials used or the construction of the cables since Tellurium Q are very tight-lipped about such things, not wishing to make their understanding of the technology public.

So all I can say is that the cheaper lead is covered in a blue dielectric while the stiffer Black Diamond cable has a woven material covering it. There are differences between the plugs, the latter feeling a bit more substantial.

One thing that I do know about Tellurium Q leads is that they take a very, very long time to run in. At the time of writing this, each lead has over 150 hours usage and I am still noticing subtle improvements in the detailing and shape of sounds, although most of the major changes took place within

the first 50 hours of use.

Comparing the Blue lead with the best cables that I have in the house was an eye-opener. I found that I was getting a smoother and more detailed treble response, a

“the speed of the attack of notes at all points of the frequency range was superb”

very fast delivery of the bass and an open soundstage that displayed a certain amount of depth that I am not used to hearing from a USB connected source.

The smoothness of the treble was tested when playing some of the less well presented recordings available on youtube.com. Music that had been nearly reduced to a raucous noise with ordinary USB leads, became somewhat disentangled and listenable to.

Playing the same pieces through the Black Diamond lead produced a sound that surprised me. There was really deep bass, a mid band with enough projection to display singers somewhat forward of the mass of instruments, with a treble sound that was grain free and that seemed to reach stratospherically high.

The speed of the attack of notes at all points of the frequency range was superb. Drums in particular had a solidity to the sound that was quite impactful, and which travelled through the granite slabs that my speakers sit on, and then through the floorboards towards me. This is something that I have never experienced from laptop sourced music before.

Neither of these cables are cheap, but

they do offer performance that is commensurate with their pricing.

The Blue offers particularly good sound-per-pound, but if you want the ultimate in performance then it is worth spending the extra cash for the Black Diamond.

It is simply the best USB cable that I have ever heard.



BLUE USB £186.00

OUTSTANDING - amongst the best

VALUE - keenly priced

VERDICT

A detailed and nicely timed sound that opens up computer audio.

FOR

- detailed soundstage
- smooth treble
- fast bass

AGAINST

- nothing at the price

BLACK DIAMOND USB £660

OUTSTANDING - amongst the best

VERDICT

An expensive lead that offers a full-bodied sound with a snap to the beat, excellent mid-band projection and a deliciously smooth top end.

FOR

- wide perceived bandwidth
- fast attack to notes
- open soundstage
- mid-band definition

AGAINST

- price

Tellurium Q
+44 (0) 1458 251997
www.telluriumq.com

DSD delight

Antelope Audio has added DSD playback to its well-regarded range of DACs. Jon Myles says it makes for a compelling product.

Antelope Audio's Zodiac Gold DAC came as a pleasant surprise earlier this year. Not every company with a formidable reputation in pro-audio equipment manages to translate that into successful consumer hi-fi products.

But the Gold DAC/preamp/headphone amp and associated Voltikus power supply unit garnered a five-globe review in our February Issue.

Indeed, our measured performance tests rated it among the best designs currently available – as did extended listening sessions with both CD and hi-res files. So much so that I've been using it as a bit of a reference point ever since.

Obviously, Antelope is not content to rest on its laurels. So now we have the Zodiac Platinum – promising even better performance than its counterpart. Obvious differences include the name, the colour (platinum instead of gold)

and, er, the price – £4,250 for the Platinum/Voltikus combination compared to £3,095 for its counterpart.

The not-so-obvious differences go a bit deeper and are more interesting but undeniably rather more complicated.

Chief among them is that Antelope has added support for the Direct Stream Digital (DSD) file format (both 64 and 128) together with the ability to up-sample to DSD 256.



Now, DSD files are rather thin on the ground at the moment. After all, you won't be buying them on Amazon or iTunes any time soon.

But there is a growing catalogue of material from labels such as Blue Coast Records – and the format does have an air, separation and grace which is a world away from CD.

With the Zodiac Platinum Antelope utilises two Texas Instrument DAC chips but has its own Field Programmable Gate Array system to handle the up-sampling duties.

The Voltikus power supply unit has also been upgraded and the attached umbilical cord which connects it to the main DAC is of a new design which is said to enhance sound quality.

Apart from those improvements the Platinum replicates the Gold's specifications – with full 24bit/384kHz file capability utilising Antelope's proprietary "Oven Control" technology which houses the clock in a shielded container

where the temperature is kept constant.

Jitter management is also handled by the company's proprietary Acoustically Focused Clocking

"Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony's DSD file of Mahler's 'Symphony No 1' comes across with a flow that only the best analogue can match"

technology.

The main unit is relatively compact at 165mm/112mm/190mm (H/W/D) dimensions and its six digital inputs consist of USB, one AES/EBU, two coaxial S/PDIF and two Toslink. In addition there are both balanced and RCA analogue inputs

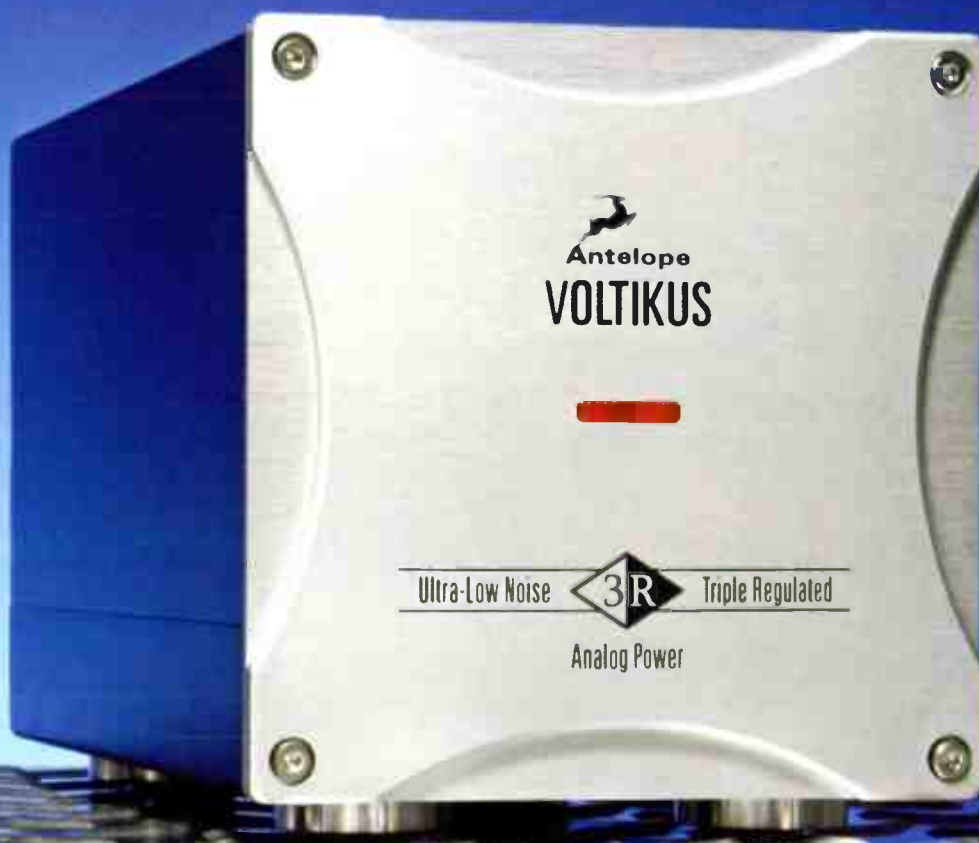
which by-pass the digital circuitry to be fed directly to the preamp's volume control.

Output options consist of both balanced and unbalanced analogue as

well as both AES and S/PDIF digital.

Inputs are selected by toggling through the options via the source button on the front – and intelligently the Antelope's circuitry auto-senses what connections are in use and ignores redundant inputs.

The fascia also features full-sized



MWA-RC Magnetic Wave Absorbers



"Dynamics in the music seem to be more refined with the Magnetic Wave Absorbers fitted and the music flows more smoothly. This is an excellent value accessory for your hi-fi system"

HI-FI Choice, October 2013



These simple yet effective products from Oyaide in Japan have been designed to add further improvements to the equipment and cabling in your system.

MWA-RC caps are manufactured from high quality polypropylene which act reduce the vibrations found on unused RCA contacts on your system.

The inclusion of a 1mm thick piece Oyaide's very own Magnetic Wave Absorption material also acts as a barrier from the noise generated from the unused RCA contacts on your equipment.

Additionally the caps act as a barrier to dust build up in your equipment, which combined with the above can taint the quality of the music you have come to love and enjoy!

TRY THEM FOR YOURSELF.... WE GUARANTEE YOU WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED

Tel: 01332 342233

sales@blackrhodium.co.uk

www.blackrhodium.co.uk/oyaide


FROM MAINS TO MUSIC

SLIC INNOVATIONS ECLIPSE C INTERCONNECT



COMING SOON

GET IN TOUCH WITH US
WWW.MCRU.CO.UK
DAVID@MCRU.CO.UK

07908 056978
f /mcrultd
t @mcrultd

headphone outputs (i.e. 1/4in) with a dedicated volume control, as well as power, mute, mono and standby buttons.

Also supplied is a sturdy remote control – and Antelope supplies a Mac/Windows/Linux driver on its website to handle DSD playback.

Luckily, there's also control panel software available for download, which is useful because the basic unit's front panel controls are far from intuitive. Suffice to say a thorough read-through of the instruction manual is a must to fully understand all of the Zodiac Platinum's

features. But, then again, this is a sophisticated DAC from a pro-audio manufacturer so it's only to be expected.

SOUND QUALITY

Suffice to say, the Zodiac Platinum follows on from the Gold in having a thoroughly refined, smooth and authoritative sound.

Its detail retrieval, soundstaging and overall musicality are among the best we have heard from any DAC.

Play a 24/96 file of, say Diana Krall, and the detail the Platinum brings is as good as the Zodiac Gold.

But its real

trick is the DSD upsampling. Play Art Lande's 'Kiss In A Shadow' with the unit set to up-sample and the piano has a body, tonality and depth that is simply magical.

Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony's DSD file of Mahler's 'Symphony No 1' also comes across with a flow that only the best analogue can match.

Here instruments are placed precisely, all elements of the orchestra being placed in the correct space.

Compare the same recording via CD and the music takes a slight step back with a noticeably harder edge and less atmosphere. It's not unpleasant – but enough for you to know that DSD through the Zodiac Platinum is a step forward.

As such, it's obvious Antelope Audio have pushed the boundaries again with this latest DAC.

The only caveat is the fact that DSD files are still relatively few and far between – and unless they become more common then the excellent Zodiac Gold is still a stellar performer.

CONCLUSION

The Antelope Zodiac Platinum is one of the best DACs available at any price. The addition of DSD playback and up-sampling means it is virtually future-proof.



USB, plus AES/EBU, optical and and electrical S/PDIF inputs, plus analogue inputs and outputs in balanced (XLR) and unbalanced form. There's clock input too.

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The XLR output gives a massive 7.8V output swing from a full level digital input (0dB) and best dynamic range as a result, by keeping signal above the noise floor of the output amps. The EIAJ Dynamic Range value was an impressive 123dB with a 24bit resolution signal, just as before. This fell to 121dB from the unbalanced analogue outputs – still a high value.

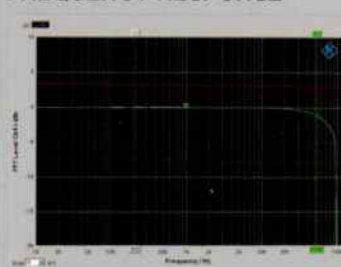
The electrical S/PDIF input worked to 192kHz and so did the optical, unlike the Gold. Frequency response reached 50.5kHz with 192kHz sample rate, before rolling off smoothly to 96kHz our analysis shows, so the Zodiac Platinum exploits high sample rate well.

Distortion was again the lowest we have measured to date, just 0.016% at -60dB with a 24bit resolution signal, and this held at all sample rates. With 16bit (CD) the figure was a low 0.2%.

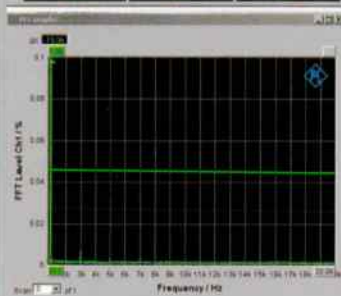
There is no gain from analogue phono input to phono output and the output overload ceiling is 2.6V. There is x4 gain from the analogue phono input to the balanced XLR output however, and a 10V maximum output swing. So the XLR output can be used as a preamp with gain, but the phono outputs have no gain; the volume control affects both.

The Zodiac Platinum measures very well in all areas, being up amongst the best designs currently available, so sound quality is again likely to be of a high standard. NK

FREQUENCY RESPONSE



DISTORTION



Frequency response (-1dB)	
CD	4Hz - 50.5kHz
Distortion (%)	0.0005
0dB	0.016
-60dB	0.016
Separation (1kHz)	115dB
Noise (IEC A)	-121dB
Dynamic range	123dB
Output	10V XLR, 2.6V Phono

ANTELOPE AUDIO ZODIAC PLATINUM £4,250



OUTSTANDING - amongst the best

VERDICT

A superb DAC that offers pre-amp/headphone capability with superb sound.

FOR

- Sound quality
- DSD playback
- pre-amp

AGAINST

- price
- confusing controls

Antelope Audio
www.antelopeaudio.com



Martin Pipe is quite taken with YBA's Bluetooth-enabled integrated amplifier

Objet d'art

Born in France, YBA likes to do things rather differently. Its name is derived from the initials of its founder and designer Yves-Bernard André, who retains an interest (its majority shareholder is now Shenzhen-based Shanling, one of China's pioneering hi-fi manufacturers).

Fresh out of the factory is the IA3, the integrated amplifier of YBA's mid-point 'Genesis' range. According to the blurb, Genesis was built specifically to exploit the potential of Bluetooth audio – compression, smartphones and all. People have large music collections on their phones; this amplifier can play them.

Superbly-built, the IS3 oozes quality. It's large and at 12kg it's heavy. In addition to Bluetooth (which requires a supplied aerial to be screwed into the rear panel socket) are provision for USB PC playback and a coaxial digital S/PDIF input. There's also a corresponding digital output for DACs and recording devices.

There are two line-level analogue

phono inputs marked 'CD' and 'Video' – no integrated phono stage here, sadly – are they are joined by balanced-line XLRs. I was pleased with the latter, which allowed me to hook up my professional Preco reel-to-reel tape deck. A preamp output, downstream of the volume control, is provided for external amplification or active speakers.

Speaker terminals are also solid, and won't give you any trouble with decent cables.

Inside, build quality is praiseworthy. YBA has opted for a conventional U-I mains transformer in its power supply instead of a toroid. This enormous component is rated at 300VA, as well it might be with the magnitudes of power output claimed of the IA3 – well over 100 Watts per channel, into eight ohms. Next to it is a smaller transformer for the 'standby' supply; this amp is microprocessor-controlled.

The Bluetooth radio module is constructed around British-designed (CSR) silicon. Either this, the USB interface (a CMedia chip) or the digital input goes into a Burr-Brown

sample-rate converter.

This in turn then feeds a Cirrus CS4398 DAC, a 24-bit/192kHz-capable delta-sigma device that you'll find in a number of other audio products.

Analogue audio signals, including the DAC's output, are switched via relays and passed to an electronic volume-control; YBA hasn't used a motorised pot here. The power amplifier is a push-pull Class AB design, built around pairs of meaty bipolar output transistors. Little pieces of wood have been glued to matched small-signal transistor pairs and the volume-control chip, presumably to damp unwanted vibrations. Good solid stuff, then, although the IA3 does get rather warm in use. Ensuring adequate ventilation should therefore be a priority.

The IA3 is easy to use – you even get a solidly-built remote. On its understated front-panel are two pairs of front panel switches. The left pair sequentially-select inputs, while those on the right raise or lower volume. Displays above provide visual

confirmation. I cannot see why two switches are necessary for volume, as the types specified can be pushed up or down. In my view the firmware should be revised, if at all possible, so that the two volume controls provide independent adjustment of the left or right channels. It won't affect sound quality, and can be a useful feature for balancing imperfect recordings or compensating for less-than-ideal speaker placement.

Bluetooth is a cinch. Select the relevant input on the IA3, search for Bluetooth devices to 'pair' with on your 'phone, iPad etc, confirm and you're in business. You can then start streaming your music collection, or even radio stations if a suitable 'app' has been installed on your device (Wi-fi is useful here).

The USB connection was also trouble-free with my Vista Ultimate PC. It was recognised, and the 'virtual soundcard' driver supplied on CD-ROM installed without a glitch. The connection supports linear PCM, at sample rates of up to 192kHz and resolutions of up to 24-bit.

Although the exact setting can be changed through a Windows control-panel, it is 'fixed' and won't automatically-change to match the source being played. In other words, the PC might be upsampling CD-sourced material – or even downsampling hi-res music, if you're not careful!

Macs will work with the IA3 and don't need a driver. Interestingly, PC or Bluetooth audio is available on the digital output; useful if you want to record to Minidisc or something similar. The IA3 won't convert analogue sources to digital, though.

Our measurements showed frequency response has been tailored with a +1dB lift below 1kHz; this is not a 'flat' amplifier – see YBA's explanation at the end of my review.

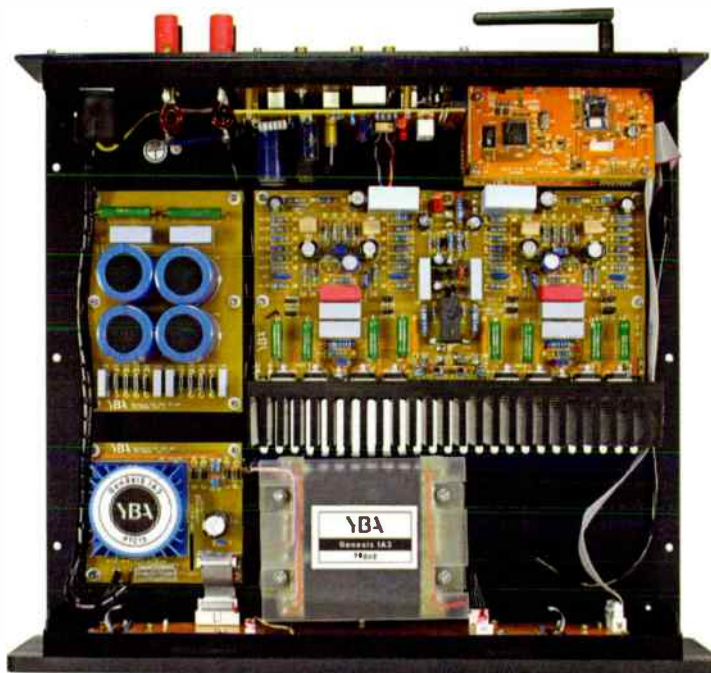
SOUND QUALITY

As YBA is so keen to promote Bluetooth as a music source, let's start with that. Remember that when you're listening to an MP3 or AAC file, it's being decoded into PCM by the playback app, passed through the phone's processing schemes (volume control, equalisation etc.) and thence to the Bluetooth transmitter. It's then recompressed using a codec chosen for compatibility with both ends of the chain (typically apt-X nowadays). All of this stuff can potentially impact sound quality.

In spite of this, in terms of

sonics, the IA3 is the most satisfying Bluetooth audio solution I've yet to try. Take the dense garage-rock soundscape of The Black Keys' *Go-Getter*, recorded in the world-famous Muscle Shoals studios in Alabama. I

The Magnificent Seven, from The Clash's *Sandinista* 1980 triple-album (rip from remastered CD). All of the energy and sheer excitement of this innovative reggae-infused funk-rock track, complete with rap stylings, was



The neat, workmanlike layout of the IA3. Note the use of a conventional mains transformer, and the large heatsink associated with the power amplifier. The sensitive digital-audio circuitry can be seen to the top-right of the picture, just beneath the Bluetooth aerial.

felt as well as heard the kick drum through my Acoustic Energy AE109 speakers; so warm is the bass that you could swear a tube or two was hidden away somewhere. The fuzz-drenched electric guitar is here given the necessary bite, yet it doesn't dominate over its acoustic counterpart or the ethereal keyboard lines that bubble away in the background. Not bad, considering that it was sourced from a 320kbps MP3 CD-rip (albeit a careful one).

Music encoded at lower bitrates (e.g. 128kbps) does suffer when heard through a revealing audio system like this; a kind of 'phasiness' is evident, in addition to a masking of musical detail. If you want to take Bluetooth seriously, it's worth switching to FLAC and eliminating a quality-sapping lossy-compression stage – even if your storage takes a hit. That's how I heard

faithfully relayed despite the audio compression added by the Bluetooth link. That killer bassline emerges intact, as do the brighter elements of the percussion (these can sound brash with lesser hardware). This amp loves to boogie!

The analogue inputs work well, although they do need some drive. I enjoyed listening to some old vintage BBC avant-garde jazz recordings dating back to the early 1970s courtesy of my XLR-interfaced tape deck. Anyone for a live performance of Don Banks' Meeting Place Suite for chamber ensemble, jazz group and synthesiser? The varied instrumentation demonstrated the IA3's ability to cope with a myriad of tonal colours; a believable sketch of the atmosphere was conveyed too.

Radio 4, sourced from a vintage Revox A76 tuner (the subject of a previous *Olde Worlde*) revealed that speech is given depth and presence. This





(((AE)))

ACOUSTIC ENERGY

1SERIES

Acoustic Energy have always been associated with audio excellence. Since the original AE-1 monitor speaker was launched in 1988, their products have represented the best audio performance and product reliability available for the price. These principles continue with the new **1-Series**. Consisting of a floor-standing speaker with angled front, compact book-shelf speakers, a centre speaker and a powered subwoofer. The **1-Series** from Acoustic Energy offers unrivalled performance at a price you would not believe.

Stunning Hi-Fi speakers from £199.00



Distributed by Henley Designs Ltd.

T: +44 (0)1235 511 166 | E: sales@henleydesigns.co.uk | W: www.henleydesigns.co.uk

World Radio History



In addition to Bluetooth (which requires the attached aerial) you get PC-USB and coaxial (but not optical) S/PDIF digital inputs. Also welcome are the balanced (XLR) inputs.

broadcaster isn't known for its musical output, although some crops up on strands as varied as Woman's Hour, Front Row and of course Desert Island Discs. Sir Andre Geim's choices included the 1989 remix of Pascal Danel's French hit The Snows of Kilimanjaro. This track's distinctive keyboards, drums and vocals represented a marked contrast to my other musical selections and showed the IA3's ability to deal with a wide range of music.

And so to the other digital inputs. The driving FM rock of Gerry Rafferty's Get It Right Next Time (from the Night Owl CD, ripped to PCM and played on a coaxially-interfaced Squeezebox Touch) showed the IA3 and its DAC to be rhythmically-sympathetic. Such ability also came in handy when playing The Disposable Heroes of Hiphoprisy's 1992 reworking of The Dead Kennedys' California Uber Alles. Its angry rap rides above the crisp electronic percussion, industrial-strength sampling and funky guitars. It never struggles in intelligibility terms here. A 1984 performance of Sibelius' Finlandia (von Karajan/Berlin Philharmonic, CD rip) was marked by decent imaging and resolution of detail; however, this recording's tape hiss was ruthlessly exposed.

Next, a careful 24/96 LP rip of Rush's La Villa Strangiato (from Hemispheres), played with VLC on my PC; the USB output was manually-set to 24/96. The delicate nylon-string classical guitar that opens this complex track is immaculately-detailed. As the song progresses, it becomes more complex – precision drumming, bass synth-lines, exquisite guitar work and much more. It's a good workout, and a challenge the IA3 took on and won.

Finally, another careful 24/96 LP rip, this time of Jethro Tull's Pythonesque concept-album Thick as a Brick (Chrysalis pressing). I was impressed with the warmth on offer here. The Hammond organ and Anderson's flute-playing really leap out at you...

CONCLUSION

What we have here is an amplifier that has a character of its own – thankfully a very musical one – instead of steering towards neutrality. Although our measurements show it is reponse-shaped "to give more fluidity to the sound", subjectively this did no harm at all I feel; it's capable of a taut and well-controlled bass performance.

The IA3 is also careful with its delivery; I found it produced high listening levels with no hint of fatigue. The Bluetooth feature is exceptionally worthwhile, offering a musically-viable

Can YBA explain why there is a +1dB frequency response lift in the IA3, below 1kHz?

"The purpose of this frequency response design is to give more fluidity to the sound quality. My thinking is to correct the phase shift of the original recording and then to give a more three-dimensional sound. When we implement this modification, we listen and hear quite easily the difference. Everything seems more flat".

Yves-Bernard André

yet hassle-free source alternative.

Well made and finished, with quality parts inside, the IA3 is a good all-rounder with a fine - albeit distinctive - sound.

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The Genesis IA3 has plenty of power on tap, output measuring 120 Watts into 8 Ohms and 196 Watts into 4 Ohms. It becomes quite hot after a while idling, so it appears to be biased well into Class A.

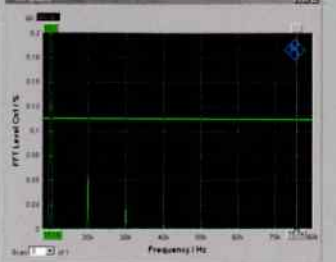
Distortion was low at low levels, primarily second and third harmonics. As level rises past 10V higher order harmonics appear but the IA3 still returns less than 0.1%. Distortion via S/PDIF was low too, measuring 0.07% at -60dB with a 24 bit signal.

A peculiarity of the IA3 is a

FREQUENCY RESPONSE



DISTORTION



deliberately non-flat frequency response that the factory told us combats phase problems in recordings – see our box out. Our analysis shows frequencies below 1kHz are raised above those higher in the audio band; there's no way of cancelling this effect. The IA3 will sound fuller bodied and different to all other amplifiers as a result. This response tailoring is non-standard and unique to YBA.

Input sensitivity was very low, CD needing 1.1V for full output when 0.4V or less is common, whilst XLR needs no less than 2.1V input for full volume.

The IA3 has a good digital section and turns in a tidy set of results as an amplifier, except for very low input sensitivity and a non-flat tailored frequency response. It will sound different as a result. **NK**

Power	120watts
Frequency response	2Hz-30kHz
Separation	88dB
Noise	-98dB
Distortion	0.04%
Sensitivity	1.1V

S/PDIF	
Frequency response (-1dB)	192k sample rate 4Hz-30kHz
Distortion (-60dB, 24 bit)	0dB 0.05%
	-60dB 0.07%
Separation (1kHz)	87dB
Noise (IEC A)	108dB
Dynamic range (EIAJ)	109dB

iA3 INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER £2500



OUTSTANDING - amongst the best

VERDICT

The iA3 is a good all-rounder with a great sound.

FOR

- superb Bluetooth performance
- hi-res digital via USB and coaxial
- spirited musical performer

AGAINST

- front-panel controls could be more flexible
- no optical digital input or phono stage
- no headphone socket

YBA
www.zephraudio.co.uk
+44 (0)845 519 8823

Magnetic Attraction

Audeze's latest headphones employ planar magnetic drivers for a distinctive, original sound. Noel Keywood is suitably impressed.

At Audio T's 'Sound & Vision Show' this year (Bristol, Feb 14) Astell&Kern had a stand next to Hi-Fi World's. Being a fan, I spent time listening to their new AK240 high-resolution digital portable player through the Audeze headphones they were using. I had heard about the Audezes but not actually heard them – but immediately I put them on my head I was impressed.

They sounded natural, uncoloured and very cohesive; there was no top end spit and treble wasn't tinselly as it so often can be with headphones. At the same time there was a nice sense of sound stage depth, a richness to the lower midband and weighty bass too. We had to get them for review!

The Audezes are different: they are magnetic planar headphones, meaning they use magnetic planar drivers (see our box out), unlike most other headphones currently available.

Mention 'magnetic planar' to me and I'm a moth to the flame! I once owned Leak 3090 loudspeakers with Isodynamic (i.e. magnetic planar) tweeters and their treble was smooth as silk – gorgeous. Wharfedale's ID1 Isodynamic headphones, introduced 1972, used the same drive unit, I believe, and they were the first planar dynamic headphones produced.

But enough of the background, onto 'our' Audezes. We were sent an open backed LCD-3, price £1700, and a closed back LCD-XC, price £1600

These sit at the top of Audeze's range (Audeze is pronounced like Odyssey, by the way). So they are truly high-end designs, since

good 'phones top out at around £1000 unless you are talking Stax Electrostatics.

The LCD-3s are an open-backed design weighing a substantial 548gms and the LCD-XCs are closed-back and a tad heavier at 650gms, so both models are for domestic listening, being too heavy and bulky for travelling – unless your first name is Arnold and your second Schwarzenegger.

Both headphones were very well presented, and beautifully finished. Our LCD-3s came in a large (334x258x160mm) black lacquered case that is an optional extra whilst our closed-back LCD-XCs came in a tough plastic carrying case (272x250x180mm); neither were small enough to be called portable but they are transportable.

The LCD-3s were supplied

"Tom Petty's 'Refugee' (24/96) showed me how better damped and just cleaner these 'phones are than anything else I have heard"

with a 2.5m (8.2ft) long coiled lead terminated at the headphone end with 4-pin mini-XLR plugs (sockets), rather than the usual 3.5mm mini jack plug, and at the other with a 1/4in jack plug. This is all heavy-duty stuff, adding to weight; the leads alone weighed 109gms.

But they make for a bullet-proof assembly that feels solid and

purposeful.

The mini-XLRs are uncommon and one is used on each earpiece, so the lead splits into a Y.

The flat flexible cable uses four separate high-quality conductors. Also supplied is a 25mm long 1/4in-to-3.5mm jack adaptor lead. For the soft lambskin ear pads Audeze also package a small leather treatment kit comprising a plastic bottle containing a mixture of beeswax, carnuba wax and orange oil, plus an application cloth.

For reasons unknown to me the less expensive closed back LCD-XCs additionally have a 2.5m headphone lead terminated in a 4-pin XLR socket; I suspect this is for connection to an amplifier purposed to feed its low 22 Ohm load (the LCD-3 is a normal 40 Ohm load).

Both headphones are sturdily

built and well finished, the Zebrano wood of the LCD-3s and the Bubinga wood cups of the LCD-XCs giving them a visually appealing organic look enhanced by deep lacquering to give a finish more lustrous than the usual black/silver livery of other 'phones.

Audeze have fluently crafted the ear pads so they are soft, don't make your ears hot yet provide a good

sound seal at the same time in order to support deep bass whilst keeping external sound out.

And this brings me to the differences between these headphones. Initially, I assumed they used the same magnetic planar drive unit – but they don't.

The less expensive of the two, the closed-back LCD-XC, is a development of the LCD-3 using what Audeze term Fazor technology.

These internal elements help "guide and manage the flow of sound in the headphone" for "improved phase response, greater frequency extension, smoother frequency response and remarkable 3D holographic imaging".

At this point you might wonder: why buy the open-backed LCD-3? Open-backed 'phones usually give the most spacious and colour-free sound because what is termed the 'back wave' in headphone parlance is allowed to escape unhindered so there are no delayed reflections back through the drive unit to the ear to add coloration.

Nor are there internal chamber resonances. Result: a clearer sound. Trouble is, the open back also lets in outside sound as well as radiating it, so this 'phone is for quiet environments where there's no one to annoy! Most outdoor headphones are closed-back to shut out external noise and avoid annoying others.

Now to the lovely planar magnetic drive units and a few observations. Just as Audeze say, the micron-thick conductor on a Mylar film both drives it evenly and controls it too, making for great sound quality.

A major problem, however, is that powerful magnets in the stator must sit on both sides of the film and these obstruct sound flow, especially high frequencies. Hence the use of Fazor technology in the LCD-XC drivers to improve sound flow – and indeed our measurements showed the XCs do have more treble than the 3s, as Audeze claim.

However, generally – due to their construction – magnetic planars do not have prominent treble and can be expected to have a warm balance. But there's more to it than just basic tonal balance of course.

So we have two quite different phones here – the XCs not being just a closed version of the 3s but with a brighter sound too.

Another point to note is that headphones are usually either a flat 40 Ohm load, or they are much above this, around 300 Ohms. Whilst the LCD-3s are 40 Ohms, the XCs sink to a low 20 Ohms, so they demand twice as much current and this may influence the behaviour of battery driven headphone amps in particular. Lower impedance and higher current draw does however lift quoted sensitivity from 91dB/mW for the LCD-3s to 95dB/mW for the XCs.

SOUND QUALITY

I drove these phones direct from my battery-powered Astell&Kern AK I20 portable player, and from a mains-powered Audiolab M-DAC fed digitally by the AK I20 to see if

the low impedance of the XCs in particular raised any issues.

As I said in the introduction, Audeze's magnetic planars are superbly smooth and cohesive and both the 3 and the XC were all of this.

They both have a silky, dark quality to their sound, free from spiky treble and also free from apparent coloration. It's a simple



The closed back Audeze LCD-XC headphones



and immediate quality that is aurally attractive.

The LCD-3 in particular has a wide, open soundstage that spread Otis Redding and the Muscle Shoals horns (24/192) wide across my head and outward. With Otis singing straight into an analogue mic. (this is

*The open back
Audeze LCD-3
headphones*



a 1967 recording) the LCD-3s captured both the strength and expressiveness of his delivery whilst the horns rasped fruitily around him, sounding strong yet tonally rich.

When Beethoven's 'Moonlight Sonata' (16/44.1kHz) gently slid past me I appreciated the strength and scale of the piano, as well as the way each note was laconically conveyed

to me: here the LCD-3s were luscious, helped not only by their deep insight but also by their strong low-frequency performance. Unlike the Philips Fidelio X1s I commonly use they do not have emphasised bass — just a firm and expressive low end. Deep organ notes supported Mozart's 'Ave Verum' (24/192) with impressive authority and had me more than impressed.

Moving onto a faster pace, Tom Petty's 'Refugee' (24/96) showed me how better damped and just cleaner these 'phones are than anything else I have heard.

rather than the recording (I listen to these tracks on Martin Logan Electromotion electrostatic loudspeakers as a reference). 'Refugee' sounded fast, punchy and clean: it was an exciting listen and perfect for hard rock.

With Herbie Hancock's 'The Eye of the Hurricane' (24/192) the LCD-XCs were clearly brighter and more forward than the LCD-3s, if less laconic and relaxing. The image was slightly more curtailed in its width too, extending to left and right earpieces but no further.

But with Otis and Carla singing 'Tramp' (24/192), the LCD-XCs were faster and more dynamic than the 3s, the bass line in particular coming over with supple strength that defies ordinary headphones and was a step up on the 3s too.

But although they conveyed more detail and had greater insight they also made analogue tape hiss horribly obvious as the track ended! But whilst kick drum in Roberta Flack's 'Killing Me Softly' had more impact through the LCD-XCs, it was a tad better described by the LCD-3s. I liked the concise delivery of the LCD-XCs, but the wide soundstaging of the LCD-3s.

With both phones the AK120's volume control was set high, between 60 -70 where 75 is maximum, meaning portables using ordinary headphone chips that deliver 0.3V won't go loud. I tried a Samsung Galaxy III 'phone (0.3V) and an Apple iPad Mini (1V) and they worked OK but the Samsung was on full volume with the LCD-3s; the iPad coped more easily. The extra insight of the LCD-XCs did not flatter the Samsung phone; the LCD-3s had a civilising affect.

PERFORMANCE WITH M-DAC

Running both 'phones from the Audiolab M-DAC enormously improved clarity and insight, and also strengthened dynamic contrasts, but then the M-DAC is an ESS Sabre32 properly implemented and with a good (i.e. linear!) mains power supply, so it can be expected to be a big step up on even the best portable; I used the Optimal Transient XD filter.

With its extra force and clarity the M-DAC did change things: the LCD-3s became more forceful,

This track sounds a tad bright and fizzy on most 'phones but the LCD-3s showed this is the headphones



ceasing to be laconic. The LCD-XCs had all their strengths amplified, bass becoming even stronger whilst their mid-range insight – aided by some peaking – was even greater.

At the same time, even with the strings of the Allegri String Quartet they did not shriek although a violinist might say there was a tad too much emphasis here.

With classic rock, though, like the Eagles 'Somebody' (a CD rip) Glen Frey's vocals were a tad on the soft side, reminding me of a loudspeaker with a crossover dip between its bass/mid-range unit and tweeter: nice but not quite right.

The LCD-XCs were a lot brighter and more illuminating on this track, cymbals rang out and Mr Frey was right there — right in my head! — shouting into the mic; the XCs rocked. But with Diana Krall's 'Narrow Daylight' (24/96) I preferred the greater insight and revelation of the LCD-3s.

Crudely speaking, the LCD-XCs suit rock and the expectations of its fans whilst the LCD-3s paint an altogether more subtly rendered picture that suits classical especially.

But this isn't a hard distinction; either can do the other!

CONCLUSION

Both the LCD-3 and LCD-XC sound utterly superb, having a quality significantly ahead of ordinary dynamic headphones. I found them smooth, deeply informative and subtle in the way they revealed what lay in a track.

They are at the same time technically impressive and emotionally expressive; tracks I thought I knew like Diana Krall's 'Narrow Daylight' were transformed by both models, lifted way above what I have heard before. These are monitor quality headphones and a beautiful musical experience that shade all else.

Which to choose? The LCD-3s are laconic but deeply satisfying. The LCD-XCs are faster and have a grip on pace that you'll not find anywhere else.

The XCs are fast and dynamic, the 3s are more laid back and have broader soundstaging. Perhaps the LCD-X I heard at the Bristol Show is the one for me: it has the updated driver of the LCD-XC, but the open back of the LCD-3 – sounds just right!

Whatever, if you want to hear extraordinary sound quality that makes music of all types sound

simply exciting and enjoyable, without artifice, listen to a pair of magnetic planar Audezes.

Hi-fi wise I found them not only a great experience, but also an education about sound quality.

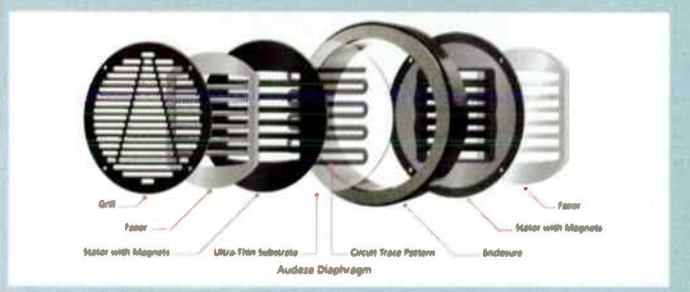
MAGNETIC PLANAR

Magnetic planar drive units use a thin, ultra-light Mylar diaphragm to move air, much like an electrostatic loudspeaker. The film has a thin ribbon conductor etched onto its surface through which the audio signal is passed, generating a varying magnetic field. This interacts with the static field from magnets either side of the film, driving it backwards and forwards.

The film has a low moving mass, so it reacts quickly and stores little energy, making for a fast, clean sound. Drive is applied across the film's surface, and this helps control both radiating behaviour and damping.

The load is resistive but it can also be low. Sensitivity is low too; ordinary portable players will not drive them loud. Audeze use powerful Neodymium magnets to counter this, as well as low resistance to draw current. The presence of large magnets in front of the film obstructs the sound and this is a significant design problem with all planar magnetic drivers.

The magnetic structure must be acoustically transparent across the audio band – not easy to achieve at high frequencies where wavelengths are short. Audeze use a 'Fazor' stator assembly in an attempt to counteract this.



MEASURED PERFORMANCE

Frequency response of the LCD-3 shows falling treble even in this raw (no HRTF correction) response, measured on a baffle with our Clio system. Most headphones have considerably more treble so the LCD-3s will have a less bright balance than usual and may sound a tad warm or soft.

The LCD-XCs address this issue, having +5dB more treble above 4kHz – a substantial lift. The LCD-3s put more emphasis on lower frequencies in general, but both 'phones lack the strong treble of their conventional rivals.

Impedance of the LCD-3s measured 42 Ohms resistive and sensitivity is quoted as 91dB/mW. The LCD-XC is a development with lower impedance of 22 Ohms resistive, and a commensurately higher quoted sensitivity of 95dB/mW. Headphone amps are expected to feed 40-300 Ohms, so 22 Ohms is very low.

The LCD-03 will have an 'easy' balance, whilst the LCD-XC will be altogether more mid-band forward, and with stronger treble. The LCD-XC will also sound louder than the LCD-3 at any one volume setting. **NK**

LCD-3 FREQUENCY RESPONSE



IMPEDANCE



LCD-XC FREQUENCY RESPONSE



IMPEDANCE



LCD-3 £1725
LCD-XC £1600



OUTSTANDING - amongst the best

VERDICT

Fabulous sound quality, a world ahead of most other headphones. But expensive.

FOR

- sound quality
- appearance and finish
- build quality

AGAINST

- heavy
- insensitive
- expensive

Decent Audio
+44 (0)1252 702705
www.decentaudio.co.uk

New Age NAD

NAD has reinvented its iconic 3020 amplifier for the digital age with Class D amplification and an in-built DAC. Jon Myles declares it a hit.



For hi-fi aficionados of a certain age the name NAD 3020 resonates. It was an amplifier that seemed to come out of nowhere, was reasonably priced and yet had a sound that could easily mix it with rivals costing much, much more. So successful was it that more than 1 million were sold – with many still in use today.

It would be a bit unfair to say the success of NAD is all down to the legendary 3020 amplifier. After all, the now Canada-based company has produced no end of other

reasonably-priced and great-sounding products in the 35 years since then.

But there's no doubt NAD is hoping to capture the same spirit of the original groundbreaking design with its new D 3020.

Except in this case times have moved on – and so the new NAD is purposed seriously towards computer audio/USB sources.

The addition of the D in the title stands for either digital (because it incorporates a DAC) or the amplification mode (which is class D).

Or, maybe, design. Because the D 3020 looks very different from most other amplifiers.

As our pictures show, it's a slim, almost shoebox size unit with a rounded fascia featuring just one

rotary volume control. It's a little getting used to – with multiple finger stabbing the knob at first. But once mastered they worked flawlessly.

Inside the amplifier utilises a switch-mode power supply (hence the small cabinet) and two Hypex Class D modules to give some 66 Watts output into 8 Ohms – rising to 100 Watts into 4 Ohms.

It's fair to say both Class D and switch-mode power supplies are still a subject of some debate in hi-fi circles – but done well there's no doubt they can produce good results.

The NAD's built-in DAC is also decently specified – able to accept data streams of up to 24-bit/96kHz through its asynchronous USB, and 192kHz via coaxial and twin optical inputs.

Any Apple MacBook Pro will work straight into the USB inputs without issue while driver software is available on the NAD website for other operating systems.

The back panel features a trio of digital inputs which include USB, S/PDIF and Tos-Link plus a subwoofer output and a single analogue input. In addition there's a bass-equalisation toggle and a multi-purpose auxiliary input that can be used either as a headphone jack or as an extra optical input. A neat remote control makes armchair operation fairly simple.

"Small in size but rather big in sound may be the best way to describe the NAD D 3020"

rotary volume control.

The shaping means the D 3020 can be used either standing up in a desktop system or laid flat on a hi-fi rack.

Discrete touch-sensitive buttons on the top operate on/off and source selection. In practice these take a

Added to all that you also get the option of aptX Bluetooth music streaming – something very few other standalone amplifiers can offer.

So it's obvious that where the original 3020 was a product of its time the new D 3020 is aimed squarely at today's digital age.

SOUND QUALITY

Small in size but rather big in sound may be the best way to describe the NAD D 3020.

In true NAD fashion it is rich in the mid-range with plenty of detail without sounding unduly shrill or flabby.

Plugged into a MacBook Pro via USB and playing a 24/96 file of Public Image Ltd's 'Annalisa' it showed a fine balance and presence.

Bass is remarkably strong and firm while there's a palpable sense of realism to the sound.

Part of this comes from the fact that the D 3020 throws out a wide soundstage.

Coupled with a pair of Acoustic Energy's £275 101 bookshelf speakers (see reviews this issue) there was an obvious synergy.

Neither products over-exaggerate either end of the frequency spectrum but the NAD brings a presence to music.

Listening to Charles Mingus's 'Mingus Ah Um' there's a solid grip to the mid-bass with a lively presentation that suits the music well. Switch to something a little bit more

hard-charging like Metallica and there's a slight softening of the sound – a sense that the NAD isn't quite at home here.

But it is nothing that other sub-£400 hybrid amplifiers don't exhibit.

And where the NAD D 3020 wins out is with its DAC stage and a smooth top end. Of all Class D amplifiers,

Hypex modules have a very good reputation for sound quality and the D 3020 enjoyed this advantage, very little "digitalness" being obvious.

Using a Cyrus CD transport via the optical input and Keith Jarrett's legendary 'Koln Concert' had a speed and transparent openness that was truly enthralling.

Indeed the NAD managed to resolve elements of the acoustics that stand-alone DACs costing the same price sometimes leave a trifle veiled.

Utilising the NAD's aptX Bluetooth capability via an Android mobile phone the overall tonal quality remained the same – smooth,

rich and punchy.

No, it's not quite as detailed as a wired connection but the convenience is an undeniable bonus – and one I can imagine many people taking advantage of.

CONCLUSION

The original NAD 3020 amplifier was a truly ground-breaking product – and its D-prefixed successor may just have the ability to match it.

As a £400 amplifier alone, it

would merit a strong recommendation. But when you add in the strong DAC stage and Bluetooth connectivity it becomes a veritable bargain.

For anyone looking to mix traditional CD playback with a mix of computer-based files and Bluetooth streaming the new NAD D 3020 could be just what they are looking for.



MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The NAD D 3020 produces 66 Watts into 8 Ohms and 100 Watts into 4 Ohms, so it will go loud with most loudspeakers, if not shatteringly loud with less sensitive, high impedance types. Damping factor was 19, lower than usual likely because of a Class D output network, but this puts it on par with Naims and it may well have obvious bass as a result.

Class D amplifiers are usually load sensitive, bandwidth falling into low loads, but the Hypex modules of the D 3020 barely changed response at all between 8 Ohm and 4 Ohm loads, reaching 24kHz into the latter from the analogue Aux 1 input through to loudspeaker output.

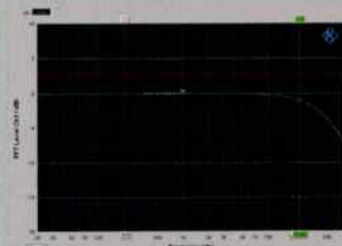
Class D is usually blighted by distortion but again Hypex modules

avoid this problem spectacularly well. Distortion was very low, even at high frequencies, measuring a very low 0.01% at 10kHz, into a low 4 Ohm load, a situation where Class D often reaches 0.5% or so. The very worst case figure from this amplifier, full output at 10kHz into a 4 Ohm load – a severe test – resulted in just 0.1% distortion. Better still, the distortion residual has no high order components in it, such as those produced by crossover, so the sound should be very smooth.

The S/PDIF input works up to 192kHz sample rate through both electrical and optical inputs, and bandwidth measured 30kHz (-1dB), with a smooth roll off above this frequency to the 96kHz upper limit. With distortion a low 0.035% at -60dB and the EIAJ Dynamic Range value measuring a high 116dB the digital side of the D 3020 measured very well.

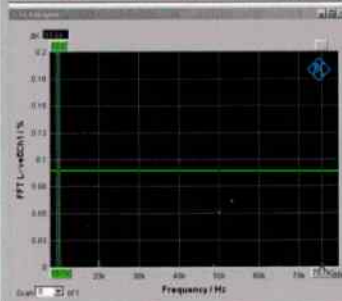
The D 3020 measured very well in all areas. It runs quite warm, unusual for Class D, but in some areas like distortion it measured better than almost all else. NK

FREQUENCY RESPONSE



DISTORTION

THD @ 0	Level (dB)	Frequency
0.0080 %	2.0969 V	10.000 kHz
OFF	OFF	OFF



Power	66watts
Frequency response	4Hz-24kHz
Separation	92dB
Noise	-96dB
Distortion	0.01%
Sensitivity	500mV

S/PDIF	
Frequency response (-1dB)	(192k sample rate)
Distortion (-60dB, 24 bit)	4Hz-30kHz
0dB	0.005%
-60dB	0.035%
Separation (1kHz)	89dB
Noise (IEC A)	-115dB
Dynamic range (EIAJ)	116dB



NAD D 3020 £399

£

OUTSTANDING - amongst the best

VALUE - keenly priced

VERDICT

A NAD 3020 for the digital age. Superb sound and excellent connectivity make the D 3020 a tempting proposition.

FOR

- price
- smooth, rich sound
- connectivity options
- bluetooth capability

AGAINST

- nothing at the price

NAD
nadelectronics.com

The Beatles: US Albums Pt.1

Following the release of The Beatles' 'US albums' box set, Paul Rigby talks to the mastering engineers and Universal UK.



The story of The Beatle's musical output, in the USA, is long and complex but it comes down to this: when Capitol finally decided to import The Beatles to the USA it found itself a couple of albums and several singles behind the UK market.

Catching up meant creating new albums that looked completely different to the UK originals. Running orders were changed, track listings were different and, in some cases, the American market would receive unique mixes of familiar tracks.

Whatever your view of the final album array, this body of work has great significance, not just to Beatles fanatics but to American Beatles' fans. This was their Fab Four education, after all.

It is this body of work – with a few tweaks here and there – that can now be bought as a single box set. Entitled 'The U.S. Albums', you receive: 'Meet the Beatles!

(1964), 'The Beatles' Second Album' (1964); 'A Hard Day's Night' (1964), 'Something New' (1964), 'The Beatles' Story' (1964; a non-musical, documentary piece), 'Beatles '65' (1964), 'The Early Beatles' (1965), 'Beatles VI' (1965), 'Help!' (1965), 'Rubber Soul' (1965; first time on CD), 'Yesterday And Today' (1966; first time on CD), 'Revolver' (1966; first time on CD) and 'Hey Jude' (1970).

What you don't get, because they were identical to the UK editions, are 'Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band', 'Magical Mystery Tour', 'The Beatles' (the 'White Album'), 'Yellow Submarine', 'Abbey Road' and 'Let It Be'.

'The U.S. Albums' mini-LP CDs feature both mono and stereo versions of each album on the same CD, apart from 'The Beatles' Story' and 'Hey Jude' which are in stereo only.

Each CD pack is beautifully presented, arriving with replica artwork including inner sleeves; they are of a standard and finish only matched by the 'Beatles In Mono' UK box set. 'The U.S. Albums' box set also features a 64-page booklet, including a new essay by Bill Flanagan that is, I would imagine to many US readers, strangely negative about the American oeuvre in general.

That's the broad overview of 'The U.S. Albums' box set but, as ever, we in Hi-Fi World are never satisfied unless we deliver the full story. And it is quite a story, which is why I was eager to talk to three important individuals who were critical in the creation of this box set: Universal UK's Project Manager for the release Guy Haden and the US mastering outfit responsible for the final box set sound, Sterling Sound's mastering engineer Greg Calbi and co-ordinator and audio supervisor Steve Berkowitz.



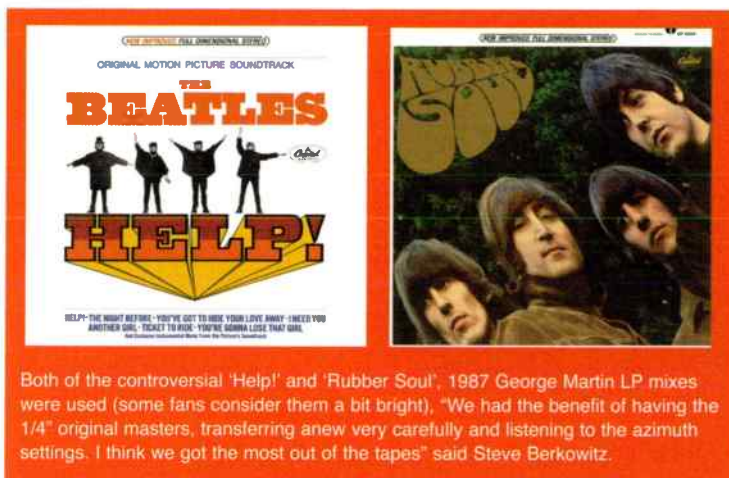
A centre for experience, craft and hard listening.

So why does this box set exist at all? After all, we have most of these albums already via the 'Capitol Albums Vol.1' (2004) and 'Vol.2' (2006) CD box sets.

Guy Haden says: "The two Capitol box sets were incomplete

songs heard here are based upon the Abbey Road-created, 2009 mixes that formed the basis for the UK-releases: 'The Beatles In Stereo' and 'The Beatles In Mono'.

So what about those fans who just wanted a cleaned up Capitol Box



Both of the controversial 'Help!' and 'Rubber Soul', 1987 George Martin LP mixes were used (some fans consider them a bit bright), "We had the benefit of having the 1/4" original masters, transferring anew very carefully and listening to the azimuth settings. I think we got the most out of the tapes" said Steve Berkowitz.

and not the best grade that they could have been. They weren't perfunctory but not the best representation. It was also timely because it was the 50th anniversary of The Beatles in the USA. We felt that, if we were ever going to do the US packages, then this is the time when they would be most culturally relevant".

Some fans have issues with the new box set, though. They don't necessarily relate to the box set's removal of excessive reverb, fake stereo and fake mono tracks from the original recordings (although some fans have complained about this too), but that the majority of the music is not exclusively derived from the original Capitol master tapes.

Except for 23 tracks, which represent the exclusive and unique US mixes and are present in this set, the majority of the stereo and mono

Set reissue?

"The goal was to replicate what the artist intention was in the confines of the shape of the US albums" said Berkowitz. "Not to go back to use the wrong masters or the other masters that had been used for some purpose or other when the records had been compiled in the sixties in America. Furthermore Apple, the controlling entity, said that they wanted the best audio and they have deemed the 2009 masters the best audio. It's not the current producers and engineers decision. My opinion and your opinion don't matter that much. The Beatles opinion and George Martin's actions control everything here".

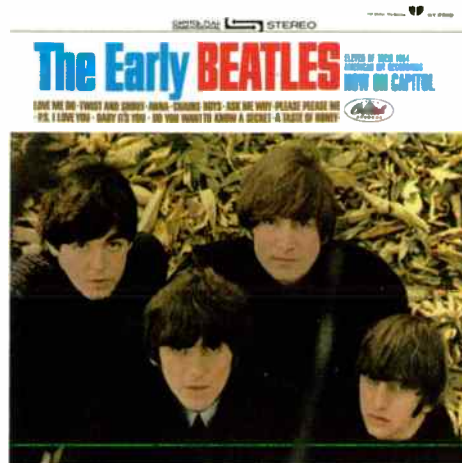
In order to achieve the best sound quality while still trying to obtain the 'feel' of the original Capitol issues, the team visited Capitol and obtained the finest possible 1A album pressings, tracked them with a good cartridge and pre-amp onto a high resolution file and then into Pro Tools. Directly above that, in parallel, they then tracked the tapes that allegedly made those records into another file.

In addition to the versions now to hand, they added the 2009 mixes. They utilised this A-B-C-D-E process, going back and forth to hear each of the versions. What did they sound like on the American record? What did the original tape that made it sound like? Then the team tried to figure out what the original engineers did to each track.

"We also listened to the 2004 CDs, to see what they did with them" said Berkowitz.

"We had five or six examples of every single song as they appeared on the US albums and then put them together from what we thought were the right sources and the approved sources according to Universal and Apple. When we had all of the sources in play, in consideration of the US record, then an EQ would be created to produce a new version. You're talking about a whole bunch of different sources, trying to end up in some cohesive way that is not going to be the same as the original because we weren't replicating the original other than the sequence and the idea of the record".

The Sterling team were meticulous about the sources that they utilised. For example, there were eight songs that were received



"It was purely a remastering process, cleaning up, filtering and making as clear a window into the master tape that we possibly could" - Guy Haden.



High End – Made in Germany



Master Innovation

The Clearaudio catalogue of high quality pressings inc. Deutsche Grammophon re-issues available now



For orders and information contact;
+44 (0)1276 501 392 info@soundfoundations.co.uk

World Radio History

sound foundations
www.soundfoundations.co.uk

from Capitol and rejected. "Nothing against any of the engineers" said Berkowitz, "they archived them in a high-resolution process and set the machines in an optimal fashion but upon reflecting on the records we requested an adjustment of the azimuth to match the feel of the originals. We also had to work out how to take a different tape and make it go through machines that are different from the originals to make it sound what you think the producers and the artists intended. That's where a lot of experience, craft and hard listening comes in".

Then came a casual comment that made me sit bolt upright. I reviewed the original Beatles In Stereo CD box set, released in 2009, and remembered Abbey Road mastering engineer Steve Rooke saying that he used a Junger D01 limiter/compressor to increase the general levels by 3-4dB. Despite the team applying level correction after the Junger was employed, I have always felt that



The chance of hearing the stereo masters, without any limiting applied, would be worth the price of the box set alone.

the stereo set sounds rather cold with an essential splash of emotion removed, as a result.

So, imagine my surprise when Greg Calbi declared that, although they received the 2009 UK masters for use in the U.S. Albums box set, they were received in an uncompressed state with no limiting applied.

And then this. "My feeling about the 2009 Beatles In Stereo box set CDs? In relation to my memory of the records, they sounded just a little bit towards the sterile side" said Calbi. "Clean and precise but just a hair sterile. Knowing that the

The quality of 'The Beatles Story', in its original format, is not a thing of great beauty", said audio supervisor Steve Berkowitz. "The edits are clunky and noisy and levels go up and down. It took many hours to improve. It was a humbling endeavour to go about this process and an honour to be asked. Our only intention was for The Beatles music to live as envisioned".



Audio supervisor Steve Berkowitz (left) with mastering engineer Greg Calbi together in the studio.

American albums were just the opposite – they were dirty because of the late generation tapes – we elected to make the thing sound a little bit smoother. It's a slight difference, though".

Both eyebrows began to rise. They continued as Calbi further described how he handled the 2009 masters for the 'U.S. Albums' box set.

"I added a neutral gain structure to the stereo files. I wouldn't even call it compression but the result is a hair louder than the original non-compressed files. I didn't push the files through any multi-band compression or maximiser".

Frankly, I could have hugged the guy. The chance of hearing the stereo masters, without any limiting applied, would be worth the price of the box set alone. "They've been put through a subtle analogue-to-

consideration. But anyone who listens to the 2009 masters and this set will hear a subtle difference. I wanted to make this box set a more musical listen without putting a mark on it in any way or change the balances or the relationship between the instruments".

Calbi's challenge was to take the UK 2009 masters and move them into the direction of the original American albums while retaining top-quality sound.

A tough job as the original Capitol tapes were two, three and even four generations removed from the original tapes back in England, not to mention played back on different machines, which were all aligned differently.

So what sort of job has Sterling done? Have they achieved their goal of combining top quality sound with that desired American tone? How do

"I wanted to make this box set a more musical listen without putting a mark on it in any way"

digital re-write back to the same sampling rate in order to move into a direction of, I would say, smoother and a little bit more bass clarity, but both are very subtle" said Calbi.

"To keep the spirit of the 2009 masters, two things had to be done. Firstly, taking the songs that were not on the same record and putting them into a new record so the consistency of the listen had to be taken into

the uncompressed 2009 tracks sound and how do they compare with the UK originals?

What about the George Martin 1987 mixes and those unique American masters? Do they all come up to scratch?

Tune in to next month's issue of Hi-Fi World and find out as we undergo a thorough 'U.S. Albums' sound test.

PUT A SPRING IN YOUR STEP

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.hi-fiworld.co.uk

UK SUBSCRIPTION SAVE UP TO

16.5%

SAVE UP TO 16.5% off the cover price when you subscribe to Hi-Fi World. That's an amazing £3.42 per issue, including postage.

FOR BACK ISSUES ENQUIRIES PLEASE CALL

01442 820580

OVERSEAS SUBSCRIPTIONS IF YOU LIVE OUTSIDE THE UK,
PLEASE CALL FOR OUR LATEST PRICES

+44 (0) 1442 820580

**SO WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? CALL NOW!!!
SUBSCRIPTION HOTLINE 01442 820 580**

Lines open Mon-Fri 9.00-5.00 or (weekend answering service available)

FOR OUR
ON-LINE MAGAZINE
GO TO WWW.HI-FIWORLD.CO.UK

email:
hifiworld@webscribe.co.uk
World Radio History

Fax No:
01442 817167

WITH THIS GREAT OFFER

WHY SUBSCRIBE TO HI-FI WORLD?

- 12 issues a year delivered straight to your door.
- Be first to grab a bargain in our "Free Reader Classified Ads" section.
- Run by dedicated hi-fi engineers and enthusiasts.
- Subscribers receive a minimum 10% Discount annually.
- Hi-Fi World has become famous for its informative reviews and radical kit designs.
- PLUS!** Subscribe by Direct Debit and receive a 16.5% discount on a yearly subscription (UK only).

I would like a years subscription to Hi-Fi World and receive a discount off the cover price (I have read and accept the terms and conditions).

I would like to pay for my 12 issues by:

6 monthly Direct Debit: Pay £20.91 every 6 months saving 15% off the yearly subscription rate of £49.20

Annual Direct Debit: Pay £41.08 every 12 months saving 16.5% off the yearly subscription rate of £49.20

Annual cheque/credit card: Pay £42.31 saving 14% off the yearly subscription rate of £49.20

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit



Please fill in this form and send to:
Hi-Fi World, Subscriptions Department Unit 8, The Old Silk Mill, Brook Street, Tring, Hertfordshire, HP23 5EF

Originator's Identification Number

4	2	7	0	4	9
---	---	---	---	---	---

Name and full Postal Address of your Bank/Building Society

To: The Manager	Bank/Building Society
Address	
Postcode	

Name(s) of Account Holder(s)

--

Branch Sort Code

--	--	--

Bank/Building Society Account Number

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Reference

HF

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society

Please pay Webscribe Ltd Direct Debits from the account in this Instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Webscribe Ltd and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Signature(s)

--

Date

--

Bank and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debits Instructions for some types of accounts
The guarantee should be detached and retained by the Payer

The Direct Debit Guarantee



- This Guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay Direct Debits
- If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit Webscribe Ltd will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If you request Webscribe Ltd to collect a payment, confirmation of the amount and date will be given to you at the time of the request
- If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit by Webscribe Ltd or your bank or building society you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society
- If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when Webscribe Ltd asks you to
- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us.

Cheques made payable to Audio Web Publishing Ltd.

Your Details

Title _____ Forename _____

Surname _____

Address _____

Post Code _____

Daytime Tel: _____

Email: _____

Please debit my VISA MASTER MAESTRO AMEX (SWITCH)

Security No: (last three digits printed on the signature strip)

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Valid from Date: _____ / _____ / _____ Expiry Date: _____ / _____ / _____

Switch card issue No:

Cardholder Signature: _____

Outside UK:-

EUROPE Airmail **£50.00**

OVERSEAS Airmail **£70.00**



Send this form to:

Hi-Fi World, Subscriptions Department Unit 8, The Old Silk Mill, Brook Street, Tring, Hertfordshire, HP23 5EF



Studio sounds

America's JBL takes on the UK market with its latest standmount. Jon Myles welcomes its arrival.

Any company that has been making loudspeakers for almost 70 years must have a pretty good idea of what it's doing. JBL's history stretches back to 1946 – and it has been at the forefront of some impressive innovations in the audio market. Yet, for some reason, this US company has never quite 'cracked' the UK market.

Perhaps it's the fact that the brand is seen as quintessentially American – with a big, bold sound designed to fill relatively large US rooms as opposed to the slightly more reserved sonics of traditional British loudspeaker makers.

Or maybe it comes down to the perception of their products as suiting

rock music above all other genres – much in the way Naim once had a reputation for being the amplifiers for up-tempo tracks as opposed to jazz or classical.

Despite all that, the brand does have a loyal following in the UK – one it is looking to expand with its latest Studio 2 line.

It's a range that's nothing if not extensive, with a total of 10 different loudspeakers including three floorstanding models, two powered subwoofers, centre channels for A/V use and a pair of standmounters. The largest of the latter is the Studio 230 featured here – costing a relatively modest £299.

It's a traditional two-way standmounter featuring a 6.5 inch

mid/bass PolyPlass driver in a rear-ported cabinet.

Allied to this is a one-inch dome tweeter housed in a proprietary horn enclosure which JBL says optimises high-frequency detail, sound imaging, and overall balance.

A pair of decent gold-plated speaker terminals at the rear complete the package while the top plate has a lacquer finish which adds an air of quality to the whole package.

Overall fit and finish is good for the price with rounded edges to the cabinet adding to the purposeful look.

SOUND QUALITY

At the risk of reinforcing the JBL reputation of loudspeakers for rock lovers, let me say that anyone who

does enjoy up-tempo tracks will have a big, fat grin on their face the first time they fire up the Studio 230s.

Slotting Led Zeppelin's 'Mothership' remastered collection into our Cyrus CD player and selecting 'Trampled Underfoot' immediately revealed a big, bold and eminently enjoyable sound.

Jimmy Page's repeating guitar riff had edge and *verve* while the backing drums and bass pounded along.

The JBLs also had an uncanny ability to fill the listening room with sound.

They have a wide soundstage which brings an expansive sense to the listening experience. Massive Attack's 'Unfinished Sympathy' was high, wide and compelling – the speakers locking on to the rhythm with a tigerish ferocity.

There's not a lot of low-end bass on offer – but nor is there any sense of the port chuffing or the speaker trying to achieve something its physical size makes impossible. Instead it's taut, tight and musical.

There's a bounce to the bass and an overall *joie de vivre* that really does seem want to bring you into the musical experience. But neither is the sound all attack at the expense of subtlety, though.

Scale back a bit with the likes of Arvo Part's 'Spiegel Im Spiegel' and the JBLs show a refinement that enables the air and atmosphere of the piece to shine through.

Here the tweeter sounds remarkably clean and clear – indeed, it has an imaging and clarity that is rare at this price point.

If anything, it's slightly forward – but this does give tracks with female vocals a rather haunting quality.

Listening to Sinead O'Connor's 'Sean-Nos Nua' through the JBLs showed they have a smoothness and clarity which manages to project without sounding too harsh.

The only caveat would be careful amplifier matching – as they do need some power to produce decent volume levels.

Put on the end of a NAD D3020 (see review this issue) the JBLs seemed to thrive – and were capable of some serious volume.

Switching to Sugden's Masterclass FPA-4 – a much more expensive amplifier yet with lower Class A output – they weren't so happy.

Having said that, Icon Audio's valve-powered 845 helped bring out



living, enlivening musical experience. OK, they are not the most accurate loudspeaker in the world – but they are immense fun and impart a real sense of enthusiasm and liveliness to whatever music you play through them.

They also manage a stereo image that few loudspeakers at this price can come close to matching.

Give them some suitable power and I defy anyone not to enjoy listening to the Studio 230s.

CONCLUSION

The Studio 230 is a well-designed budget 'speaker from JBL. It has a liveliness and sense of *verve* that

"they have a wide soundstage which brings an expansive sense to the listening experience"

the expansive soundstage to a rather remarkable degree.

But, in the final analysis, that might be being rather fussy for what after all is a £299 loudspeaker.

Mainly because, in the final analysis, what the JBLs do they do extremely well – which is project a

will delight rock fans – but it also has sufficient sophistication and innate smoothness to handle other genres.

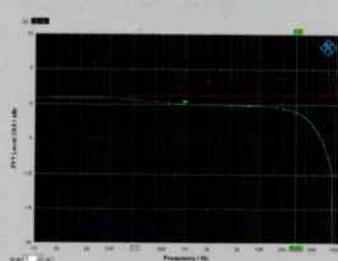
Pair it with the right amplifier and it will reward you with a supremely satisfying, room-filling and totally musical performance. What more could you ask for £299?

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

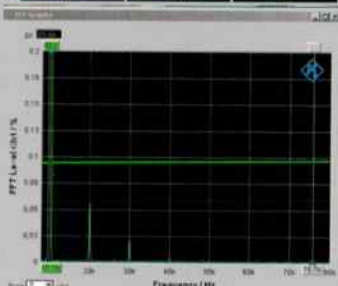
Frequency response of the JBL Studio 230 was smooth, our pink noise analysis shows, but tweeter output is raised above that of the bass mid-range unit

above 2kHz by around 2dB. Plateau lift of this amount will give the 230 an obviously bright balance, but the tweeter is smooth in its output.

FREQUENCY RESPONSE



Green - driver output
Red - port output



The bass/midrange unit reaches down to 60Hz, below which the port takes over, peaking around 50Hz. The port is narrow tuned so doesn't impose too much acoustic damping, port output being quite high at +8dB above the bass midrange unit at 80Hz. So the port does quite a lot of work in the Studio 230 and will likely give it lively bass, although it doesn't do subsonics. Our port trace (red) shows some overhang at 40Hz and 100Hz, plus a bit of smearing around 200Hz. Otherwise, the Studio 230 is quite clean and coloration free.

With an impedance curve that hits 5 Ohms minimum and rises above this value often, the 230 had a high measured overall impedance value of no less than 9 Ohms. This contributed toward a lowish sensitivity of 87dB from one nominal Watt (2.8V) of input; amplifiers of 60 Watts or more are needed to go loud.

The Studio 230 is a fairly conventional two-way under measurement, that will have a bright balance, but also a clean sound with lively bass. **NK**

JBL STUDIO 230
£299



OUTSTANDING - amongst the best

VALUE - keenly priced

VERDICT

A superb loudspeaker at a realistic price that is inherently musical yet clean and clear. A stand-out performer at the price.

FOR

- big sound
- open treble
- price

AGAINST

- limited low bass
- a tad bright

Harman Kardon
www.harmankardon.co.uk

In tune with the times

Combine NAD's groundbreaking 3020 integrated amplifier with a tuner and you get the 7020 - as revisited by Martin Pipe.



Well over thirty years ago, then-British hi-fi brand New Acoustic Dimension (NAD) dropped a bomb under the budget amplifier market by launching the iconic 3020 – a modest £80 unit that was audibly-superior to some amps selling for several times the price.

A practical design, it offered a sensible range of inputs and features, including a five-LED power-meter above the volume control.

The 3020 became the biggest-selling amplifier in hi-fi history, well over a million finding their way into the homes of music lovers worldwide. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the NAD 3020 was a phenomenon.

It is estimated that over 500,000 3020s were sold in the UK alone – not bad for an amplifier with such modest goals; Björn Erik Edvardsen, NAD's engineer, set out merely to create an inexpensive amplifier that was "capable of driving the very best

loudspeakers".

Cynics claimed that the NAD 3020's success was undeserved, and could be laid at the door of gullible hi-fi journalists.

They cited that the 3020 was unreliable. This wasn't so; when large quantities are sold then of course failures will be more common.

They claimed its sound severely lacked weight, said the build was cheap and that sockets would break off the rear panel/circuit board and buttons fly across the room. Well, maybe the cynics had a point here; cost savings had to be made somewhere. But if the 3020 was treated properly, it lasted well.

Also taking their place in the NAD canon were source products styled to match the range. Among these was the 4020 tuner with no digital frequency displays, signal strength meters or other refinements – just a trio of LEDs to provide an effective 'centre' tuning system and a further LED that flagged-up stereo broadcasts. This traditional 'scale and

pointer' tuner only catered for VHF/FM and MW/AM; in particular, cricket enthusiasts mourned the lack of a long-wave facility for Radio 4. But like the amp, it sounded good and did justice to off-air transmissions.

Inevitably, NAD made the decision to combine the 3020 and 4020 into a single box circa 1980 – and the result was the £160 (in 1981) NAD 7020 'receiver' featured here. With the exception of the power-meter, all amp and tuner features made it into NAD's 'single-box solution'. You even got the muting switch (here labelled 'low-level') which attenuated the audio with immediate effect and a 'mono' button that summed the left and right channels. The latter is particularly useful when playing mono vinyl records and listening to weak stereo FM broadcasts.

All of the connectivity the average listener could ask for was included, sources being selected via a rotary knob. The front-panel real-estate occupied by the radio's tuning

Inside the 7020. Compared to modern computer-designed gear, the layout is a bit of a rat's nest. Just think - all that wiring had to be soldered in place with human hands! It also makes servicing more difficult and so it's just as well that the 7020 is fairly reliable.



dial and controls, not to mention the task of squeezing in the extra circuitry and connectivity into a box not much bigger, must have presented challenges to the 7020's design team. They succeeded, though.

The input sockets were mounted directly on the chassis metalwork so they were more resistant to abuse than the 3020's.

At this time, vinyl was the primary listening medium and so NAD paid attention to getting the phono pre-amp right. The 7020 has exactly the same electronics here as the amplifier from which it was derived. To this day some budget enthusiasts and occasional vinyl listeners use the 3020 as a phono pre-amp, feeding their systems from the tape 'record' output. The 7020 also has the 3020's ability to electronically separate the tuner-pre-amp from the power-amp.

Thanks to this piece of NAD foresight, you can easily connect active speakers or more substantial power amplifiers – or drive the unit's power amp from other gear (such as a CD player with adjustable output level). On which subject, the 7020 went one better than the 3020 insofar as it made provision for two sets of speakers – a common feature of the era's receivers.

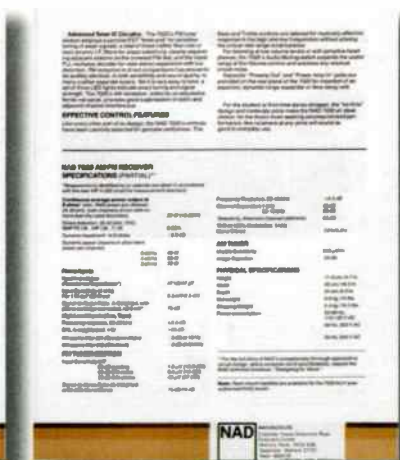
A front-panel knob enables you to select either or both; it provided a useful 'multi-room' facility. Naturally, if both sets were active (during parties, for example) the amplifier's comparatively-limited power was divided between them. Speakers (and for that matter radio aerials) were connected via spring-clip terminals, which were difficult to mate with high-quality cables (even the QED 79-strand that was popular then).

At least you got a female Belling- Lee socket alternative for the FM aerial and a switch that adjusted the de-emphasis characteristic of the FM tuner. This should be set to 50µs in the UK but the other two positions were useful for taming 'bright' or 'dull' broadcasts or even attempting to compensate for the slight reduction in treble experienced when taping radio programmes!

Also making the transition to the 7020 were some of the 3020's 'oddities'. The first was a 'lab' input that bypassed the power amp's input-filtering enabling a wide frequency-response to be attained.

panel switch, front-panel confirmation is provided in the form of a front-panel LED. Today, 3020 owners tend to remove the handful of components that make up the soft-clipping feature as some are still in circuit even when it's turned off. They claim that such modification actually improves the sound; oh, how fashions change! But even at the time, the 3020 was a tweeker's paradise...

The amplifier controls have a good, positive feel – as does the fly wheeled tuning knob. There's a fair-sized mains transformer and comparing the circuit diagrams of the 3020 and 7020 demonstrate



At the 7020's launch hi-fi was hi-tech — so sales brochures gave a break-down of the features, internal circuitry and specifications. No dumbing down here!

Then there was 'soft clipping', a simple limiter built into the pre-amp that reduced harshness at higher listening levels. So successful was this feature for NAD that practically every amplifier it sold for years afterward included it.

If this is enabled with the rear-

that, tuner apart, they're pretty much identical. Not a single integrated circuit can be found in the amplifier and all key components are fairly standard and still available to day. The output stage is a standard Class A/B design, making use of the classic 2N3055/2N2955 complementary

ortofon

accuracy in sound



Q uintet

Since 1948 Ortofon have introduced nearly 100 different moving coil pick-up cartridges to the hi-fi market. Their latest models in this long and proud heritage are the Quintet Series.

All Quintet cartridges use the same ABS thermoplastic bodies and neodymium magnets, but each model in the range has its own sonic expression that reflects its status. From the well-rounded **Quintet Red**, through the smooth **Quintet Blue** and spacious yet dynamic **Quintet Bronze** up to the pure audio excellence of the **Quintet Black**, this series offers something for every discerning listener at a very attractive price.

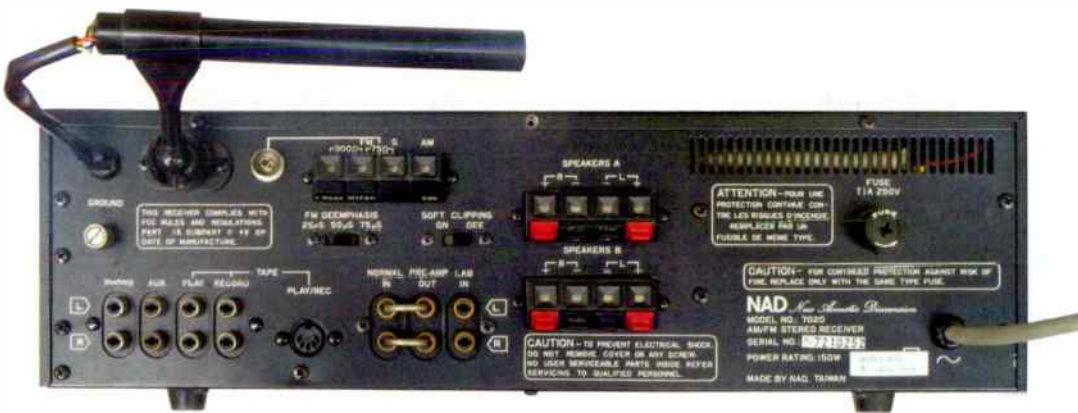
The Quintet Series also includes a true-mono cartridge, for accurate reproduction of older mono recordings.



Distributed by Henley Designs Ltd.

T: +44 (0)1235 511 166 | E: sales@henleydesigns.co.uk | W: www.henleydesigns.co.uk

World Radio History



For a budget receiver, the 7020 gives you plenty of connections. Among them are two independently-selectable pairs of speakers terminals, a pre-power link, a single tape-loop, a 'lab' direct input and a phono stage that can hold its own even today.

transistor pair. These large TO-3 encased power transistors date back to the 1960s and the NPN variant (the 2N3055) was a common sight in hi-fi gear.

Similar comments apply to the FM/AM tuner, the design of which is based around a set of Japanese chips (IF amplifier, FM demodulator, AM section and stereo decoder) that were found in many tuners of the period. In short, if a 3020 or 7020 goes wrong then there's a good chance it can be revived. If yours has a 'duff' tuner, that's not such a great loss as analogue broadcasting's future is uncertain. Remember that what you're left with is essentially a 3020.

I paid £7 for my 7020 (which was fully-operational, and in fair condition) at a local boot sale. On eBay, I have seen them going for as little £10. A 3020, in contrast, can sell for £50 or more.

As with the 3020, the 7020 is reliable – if it has been looked after. If you plan to use a 7020 or 3020 regularly, if only as part of a second system, it's worth replacing the electrolytic capacitors. These components have limited shelf-life, and I'm amazed that my own 32 year old 7020 works so well. The four big power supply ones are rated 2200uF/35V – inexpensive and commonly-available. I would also recommend replacing electrolytics in the signal path. Panasonic FC types are inexpensive and audibly-superior to the now-tired ones fitted to vintage budget audio gear. Noisy pots, meanwhile, can be treated with Servisol spray.

When compared to the 3020, the 7020 receiver is rare – but examples surface regularly. This model was replaced in the mid-80s by the 7020e, a slimline unit that retained the 3020-type amplifier but replaced the scale-and-pointer tuner with a digital

one.

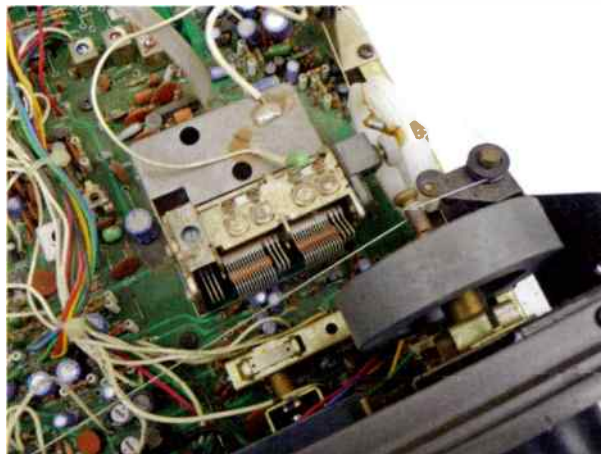
So how does it sound? Surprisingly good, even by today's standards. There's a tendency towards warmth but that's mostly because treble impact is somewhat restricted. Whether listening to the onboard tuner or vinyl (using an unmodified Technics SL1200 MkIII with Philips GP401 cartridge) I found the 'tingles' of triangles in orchestral music or the electronic hi-hats of dance music to be rather subdued. This system is in my bedroom, where the 7020 drives a 1978-vintage pair of B+W DM7 floorstanders. To restore an even tonal balance, then, the receiver's treble control had to be advanced slightly. Bass delivery is firm, and hints towards the sheer scale that a good modern design can offer.

Musical detail can easily be picked out, as I discovered through playing a wide variety of vinyl, from the art-rock of 10cc's 'Deceptive Bends', through Arlo Guthrie's 'Running Down The Road' to a recording of von Karajan conducting the Berlin Philharmonic from a performance of 'Chopin's Les Sylphides'.

Switching to modern electronic dance music reveals that the 7020 tends more towards smoothness than speed.

As with the 3020 that forms its basis, the 7020 could produce remarkably high listening-levels (symphonic crescendos, for example) before descending into hardness.

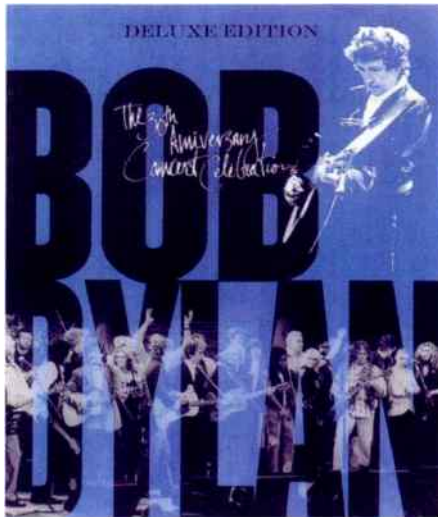
The analogue tuner is also a goody. It's reasonably sensitive, discriminated well between closely-spaced broadcasts and proved to be free from drift. A believable stereo spread from Radio 3 concert



Now almost extinct is analogue tuning. A tough nylon cord and a series of pulleys couple together a heavy flywheel behind the tuning knob, the pointer that indicates frequency on a calibrated front-panel scale and a large multi-ganged variable capacitor.

material was created between my two speakers. Although not hi-fi by any means, the AM section is sonically superior to what you'll get from many more modern synthesised tuners. With appropriate adjustment of the ferrite 'stick' aerial that is ball-and-socketed to the rear panel, it actually rendered medium-wave stations listenable.

If you come across a NAD 7020 receiver for next to nothing, grab it before somebody else does! This competent little receiver can sound very good with a decent set of speakers.



BOB DYLAN

The 30th Anniversary Concert Celebration Deluxe Edition
Columbia

In 1992 Columbia, Bob Dylan's record label, decided to throw him an almighty 30th anniversary bash. A stellar array of artists was invited to perform on 16 October at New York's Madison Square Garden featuring Neil Young, George Harrison (his final public performance), Johnny Cash, Lou Reed, The Band, Eric Clapton, Stevie Wonder, Pearl Jam, Willie Nelson, Roger McGuinn and many more.

A fascinating document, it's intriguing to see how they tackle the Dylan oeuvre that can be a tough call at the best of times.

It's easy to fail when tackling Dylan numbers. Even Dylan has stumbled once or twice, so asking Stevie Wonder to sing 'Blowin' In The Wind' is just cruel, while The O'Jays version of 'Emotionally Yours' fairly drips with syrup and sugar that had me booking a check-up with the dentist.

Kris Kristofferson, meanwhile, obviously just surfaced from his bed

to sing 'I'll Be Your Baby Tonight', such was the lack of emotion, guile and competence in his presentation. There's plenty of top draw performances, though.

The Band's 'When I Paint My Masterpiece' and Tom Petty's 'License To Kill' are right on the money, while Neil Young brings his usual quality to both 'All Along The Watchtower' and 'Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues'.

Dylan himself appears on three tracks: 'Girl From The North Country', 'My Back Pages' and 'It's Alright Me (I'm Only Bleeding)'. And the Deluxe Edition aspect of this 1993 reissue? Two bonus tracks, both from the rehearsals from Eric Clapton and Sinead O'Connor.

Speaking of O'Connor, look out for the two-disc DVD version of this concert that features a feisty and emotional O'Connor. Two weeks previous to the 'Bobfest', she had torn up a picture of the pope on USTV's 'Saturday Night Live'. Oh, the mayhem.



DETROIT SPECIAL – MOTOR CITY ROOTS

The Original Various Artist LPS + 36 Bonus Tracks
Jasmine

Collectors will love this twin CD pack. It features 'Tamla Special' (actually, 'Tamla Special No.1'), Motown's first collection of different artists. It's a brief album, that's true, but it remains a record that Motown fans have always desired because of three scarce recordings: Singin' Sammy Ward and Sherri Taylor's only published single as a pair, 'Oh Lover'/'That's Why I Love You So Much'. This was the only release from Taylor while Ward saw a few published pieces but no hits. The B-side of Barrett Strong's 'Money', seen here, is 'Oh I Apologize'. This is a real rarity from the coarse tenor. 'Apologize' is a ballad but in a blues fashion that was written by Smokey Robinson and Berry Gordy that suited Strong's rough tenor.

'Motown Special' (again, actually 'Motown Special No.1') repeats the A- and B-sides from featured artists. Again, there are

desirable tracks on this for the collector such as Eddie Holland's 'Jamie' and 'Take A Chance On Me' plus The Valladians' 'Greetings (This Is Uncle Sam)' and 'Take A Chance'.

The rest of the album is packed with 36 additional tracks and chart hits from the likes of Marvin Gaye, The Supremes, The Temptations, Martha & The Vandellas plus The Contours and The Marvelettes.

Other CDs issued by the label include one that relates to this Detroit issue. The Supremes & The Evolution Of The Girl Group Sound includes The Supremes' album, 'Meet The Supremes' plus eleven tracks from The Shirelles along with ditties from The Crystals and Goffin & King's, Little Eva & The Cookies.

Also look out for the Four Seasons' '1962 the Incredible First Year' and 'The Female Elvis', Janis Martin's 'My Boy Elvis', a rock'n'roll and rockabilly gem.

Cast your mind back to 1958. It was a weird time in the USA and pop in general because Elvis Presley had been drafted into the Army and wouldn't be out for another two years: even then, he was a changed man.

Yet, Elvis had imprinted his soul onto music, spawning a host of Elvis-a-like singers who wanted to be 'just like him'. Trouble is, the industry didn't want another Elvis (witness the 1957 Elvis TV appearance in which he was filmed from the waist up to prevent the morally pure audience having to witness Elvis' 'spawn of the devil' hip wiggles).

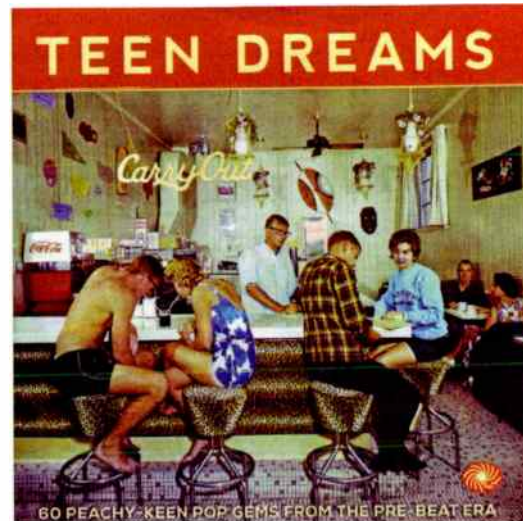
So what you were given, in 1958, were Elvis clones acceptable to the Eisenhower-lead, commie-bashing, bible-quoting masses. People like the suitably coiffured Bobby Vee singing 'Rubber Ball', Johnny Burnette's 'You're Sixteen', Frankie Avalon and 'Ask Your Heart' and Bobby Rydell and

'Swingin' School'.

It was a weird, Twilight Zone, era which was epitomised by Fabian who was plucked from obscurity by the music industry because of his good looks, shoved in front of a camera, spent half the time lip-syncing to his own hits and other half having his voice electronically doctored to improve its quality (sound familiar?), while all the time succumbing to the evils of drink and dreaming of becoming an actor (which he did, eventually).

All of these artists are featured on this two-disc compilation (including Fabian's 'About This Thing Called Love' and 'You Know You Belong To Someone Else') along with early material from future stars such as Gene Pitney, part of the duo, Jamie & Jane, singing a song called 'Snuggle Up Baby' that remained unreleased until London Records issued it in 1978.

A compilation full of gems.



TEEN DREAMS

60 Peachy-Keen Pop Gems From The Pre-Beat Era
Fantastic Voyage

AUDIOPHILE CD

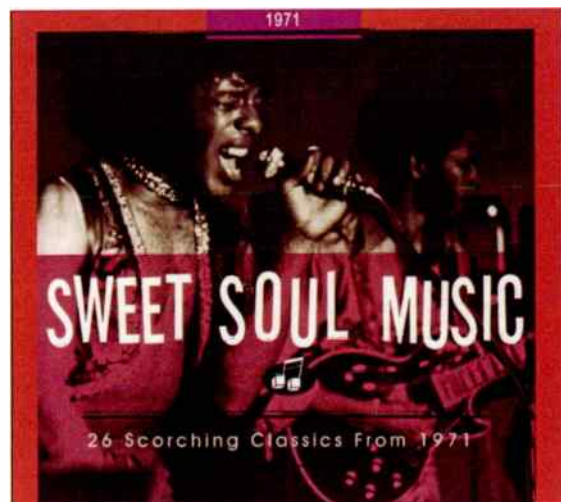
The final batch of single CD compilations from the German-based audiophile outfit, covers the years 1971 to 1975. Each CD arrives in a multi-gatefold digipack format with a 76-page booklet.

This suite of CDs is a real multi-media experience. It harks back to the time when listening to music was interrupted only by sleeve-note reading. In this case, via the magnificent booklet that is included within each pack that offers a track-by-track analysis, providing many insights. For example, Remember Gladys Knight & the Pips? This compilation features the track, 'I've Got To Use My Imagination' but such is the breadth of information that it provides intriguing nuggets such as this little story about the group's hit, 'The Best Thing That Ever Happened To Me'. Apparently, the group were appearing at the Sands hotel in Las Vegas whereupon

Gladys ran into comedian, Danny Thomas, who said, "Gladys, I've got a song for you that I want you to record that I love. I sing it to my wife all the time." Interesting how such tenuous meetings can spawn such success.

There is a wide variation in music here, with the tone of soul changing into funk as time progresses. Hence, you see soul from the Detroit Emeralds' 'Do Me Right' and Ike & Tina Turner's 'Proud Mary' in 1971 while 1974 sees funk from James Brown's 'The Payback, Part 1'. By the end of 1975, disco is already encroaching The final track of the entire series, The Sylvers' 'Boogie Fever' marks an important boundary.

If you have been following and buying this series from the first volume then you will now have an array of volumes that tell the story of R&B-Soul-Funk from 1945-1975, year-by-year, song-by-song. A magnificent collection of music.



SWEET SOUL MUSIC

1971-1975
Bear Family

THE BEST SEAT IN THE HOUSE

Meticulously crafted since 1949, McIntosh Laboratory creates some of the world's most prestigious audio equipment. Fusing cutting edge audio technology with exquisite build quality and reliability, McIntosh is the No.1 luxury brand for the discerning music and film lover.



McIntosh MHA100

2-Channel Headphone Amplifier (new)

3 headphone impedance ranges
Small, compact size

McIntosh MXA70

2-Channel Integrated Audio System (new)

50 Watts x 2 channel
6 inputs including 4 digital

McIntosh MT5

2-Channel Precision Turntable (new)

High output moving coil
Includes dust cover

0% Finance* available on most McIntosh products. Please call or see the Jordan Acoustics web site for details.



Bournemouth Showroom. Telephone: 01202 911 886

e-mail: bournemouth@jordanacoustics.co.uk | web: www.jordanacoustics.co.uk

World Radio History



McIntosh®

LEGENDARY PERFORMANCE™

McIntosh...because ordinary isn't for everyone.



McIntosh MCD550

2-Channel SACD/CD Player (new)

8 Channel, 32 bit, 192kHz DAC
USB input for digital audio playback



McIntosh MA8000

2-Channel Integrated Amplifier (new)

300 Watts x 2 channel
Discrete eight band tone control



McIntosh MA5200

2-Channel Integrated Amplifier (new)

100 Watts x 2 channel
9 total inputs

0% Finance* available on most McIntosh products. Please call or see the Jordan Acoustics web site for details.

Glenrothes Showroom. Telephone: 01592 744 779

e-mail: glenrothes@jordanacoustics.co.uk | web: www.jordanacoustics.co.uk





Round sound

A portable loudspeaker offering Bluetooth, luxury finish and great sound? That'll be the new Onyx says Jon Myles

Wireless speakers are all the rage at the moment – and it's not hard to see why. With millions of people using mobile devices to play music on their daily journeys there's a compelling attraction in being able to walk through the door at home and stream those self-same files to a loudspeaker.

Of course, in the real world theory and practice don't always go together – which is why some wireless speakers have been bedeviled by poor connectivity issues and rather tinny sound.

The Harman Kardon organisation say they are aiming to avoid those issues with their new Onyx portable speaker.

It's certainly an impressive-looking device with a style and specification which does justice to the £429.95 asking price.

The main round housing features two three-inch mid/bass drivers with a pair of three-quarter inch tweeters.

That's surrounded by a stainless steel handle which makes moving the unit from room to room simple.

Inside, the electronics allow for Bluetooth, Apple AirPlay and DLNA connectivity. In addition, a USB port at the rear allows for the charging of mobile devices, while there's also a set of 3.5mm stereo inputs.

And on the subject of the back of the unit, it has a lavish leather finish that adds an air of quality to the unit.

An optional Harman Kardon remote app allows control over the audio settings, while the built-in rechargeable battery gives a claimed six hours of music playback.

SOUND QUALITY

For its size the Onyx produces an impressive soundstage. It also has some fine definition.

Mid-band and highs on New Order's 'Bizarre Love Triangle' were kept under good control while the bass was sufficiently deep and tuneful.

The Onyx also does not suffer the cabinet rattle that can mar some rivals when you push the volume up. Indeed, it seems to thrive on an extra dose of power, becoming more expansive with a better leading edge to guitars and more thump to bass notes and kettle drums.

What's more, it has enough sonic separation to delineate between different file formats. If your mobile device is stuffed full of low bit-rate files the Onyx will soon let you know about it.

Feed it some Apple lossless files, however, and it thrives. Placed in my kitchen and streaming 'The Rite Of Spring' from an iPhone the sound was full and rich.

It also had punch and power enough to render the rapid beats of the techno classic 'No UFO' with depth and vibrancy. The Onyx is startlingly good for its size.

Move it into the garden and this little 'speaker has enough volume to easily take over music duties for the likes of summer barbecues or enjoying the sunshine on the patio.

It seems to be one of those rare products where you end up wondering how the designers managed to squeeze so much from its relatively small size.

Added to that its connectivity also remained rock-solid throughout – whether on Bluetooth, Apple AirPlay or via DLNA – and that's not something that always happens.

CONCLUSION

The Harman Kardon isn't the cheapest portable wireless speaker



Behind its removable grille the Onyx features a pair of three-inch mid/bass units together with two three-quarter inch tweeters and passive radiators to boost low-end response. The combination provides a big, wide soundstage - while the sturdy steel grab handle makes for easy portability.

on the market – but it is easily one of the most impressive.

Superbly finished, it produces a big, rich, satisfying sound and works seamlessly with all devices.

This one is definitely worth seeking out if you're in the market for a portable, battery powered loudspeaker with wireless connectivity.



The leather-covered rear features a USB connection for charging and set-up of mobile devices, together with a 3.5mm stereo input. Additionally, users can stream music wirelessly via DLNA, Apple AirPlay and Bluetooth. The unit also supports the AptX protocol for better sound quality.

HARMAN KARDON ONYX £430



OUTSTANDING - amongst the best

VERDICT

One of the best Bluetooth portable speakers on the market. Not cheap - but worth the money.

FOR

- room-filling sound
- portability
- comprehensive connectivity
- superb build

AGAINST

- not cheap

Harman Kardon
www.harmankardon.co.uk



Inspire Hi-Fi

Now part of Hi Fi World Magazine - World Standards

MONARCH
DIRECT DRIVE TURNTABLE

'A startlingly musical performer with blistering speed and dynamics allied with smoothness, sophistication and purity of tone'
Hi Fi World



WINNER!
HI-FI WORLD AWARDS
2012
Best Turntable



WINNER!
HI-FI NEWS
Ultimate Hi Fi Finest
Product Award 2012



The Monarch turntable takes both 9 and 12 inch arms. Available with SME, Audio Origami, Origin Live and other tonearms. Pictured Monarch shows an SME 12 Inch tonearm

UK MANUFACTURE AND DIRECT SALES OF AWARD WINNING TURNTABLES & UPGRADES
BELT DRIVE . DIRECT DRIVE . IDLER DRIVE

www.inspirehifi.co.uk

Units 2 & 3 / Prospect House / Colliery Close
Staveley / Chesterfield S43 3QE
T: 01246 472222 M: 07932 367555
E: robert@inspirehifi.co.uk

**SUPERB PART
EXCHANGE DEALS
AVAILABLE**

SEE & HEAR ALL OUR AWARD
WINNING TURNTABLES IN OUR
SUPERB DEMONSTRATION
FACILITY

Great things happen on Thursdays

Graham Slee Road Show, Holiday Inn, Aylesbury: Thursday 29th May 2014



We'll be demonstrating our phono preamps, headphone amps, DACs, power amp and cables. To avoid disappointment, book your place online now at www.gspaudio.co.uk/roadshow

Graham Slee Projects Limited,
6 Buttercross Drive, Little Houghton,
Barnsley, S72 0HS
Tel: 01909-568739



Superior Performance Hi-Fi Products

"there was more to Elvis Presley's celluloid output than bubblegum trash"



Paul Rigby

Musical artists fascinate me, principally because of their life narrative. Especially those with long careers whose working life changes and evolves, moving from roller coaster-like peak to trough. There are several icons of this type: Paul McCartney, Frank Sinatra and The Rolling Stones are just three examples. I'm currently reading the biography of Frank Zappa who is another. I've also just received a box set called 'Elvis: The Movie Soundtracks' (Sony Music). Presley is an additional candidate to the list and his movie work is certainly an intriguing, not to mention contentious, aspect of his legend's oeuvre.

Here's the Los Angeles Times considering Presley's movie career, in 2010: "Any consideration of Elvis' movies must acknowledge that there are a lot of duds, light-hearted but workmanlike romps with such titles as 'Tickle Me,' 'Easy Come, Easy Go' and 'Kissin' Cousins' that Presley mugged his way through half-heartedly. All the danger, sex appeal and implicit rebellion of his early career was neutered or, at best, put into neutral by these shameless products, among the earliest instances of multi-platform branding and synergy whereby movies and records simultaneously promoted each other".

Many observers would wholeheartedly agree with the above. Some may go further, in fact. Yet, there was more to Elvis' celluloid output than bubblegum trash, because Presley had buckets of unrealised potential as an acting talent. "Amid the flotsam are films with talented directors and actors in which Presley showed glimpses of startling sincerity and emotion, a true actor in the making", the Los Angeles Times went on to explain.

So which films were worthy of your attention? 'Girl Happy' (1965), in which Elvis turns up as a band leader who chaperones a mobster's daughter, is worth a second look. The soundtrack for this piece offers a few musical highlights such as 'Spring Fever', the humorous 'The Meanest Girl In Town' and the competent 'Puppet On A String'. 'Do the Clam' is embarrassing as a song. In the film, though, it works, which is a testament to the on-screen chemistry of all concerned. A film that should be pathetic...but isn't.

In 'Viva Las Vegas' (1964), the film benefited from the appearance of Ann Margaret. One of the very few of Elvis' leading ladies who could compete with Elvis in terms of raw sex appeal and dance moves. Elvis Presley is Lucky Jackson, an aspiring auto racer with a dream of winning the Grand Prix. Ann-Margaret is Rusty Martin, the swimming instructor who falls for him against her will, hating the idea of her man risking his life in a race car.

In musical terms? The title track is helplessly, irritatingly, unfulfilling catchy. Presley's cover of Ray Charles' 'What'd I Say' sizzles while 'I Need Somebody To Lean On' is an incredibly vulnerable piece that is a film stand-out.

Then there's the Western, 'Flaming Star' (1960), directed by Don Siegel, of all people (he directed the likes of Clint Eastwood's 'Dirty Harry', the iconic 'Invasion of the Bodysnatchers' and John Wayne's final move, 'The Shootist'). Elvis plays the part of a cowboy who is part Native American Indian. In this strong performance, Elvis has but two songs to sing but the relatively powerful dramatic backdrop enhances their impact.

Let us not forget 'Jailhouse Rock' (1957), a genuinely gritty tale of an ex-con who is short on temper

but big on musical talent. Elvis is dangerous in this movie, which is also packed with musical gems such as the title track, 'Baby I Don't Care', 'Shake Rattle And Roll', 'Treat Me Nice' and 'I Want To Be Free' – all creations of the legendary song writing team of Leiber & Stoller. This is one soundtrack that oozes quality.

The best? Arguably it's 'King Creole' (1958) which sees both vice and corruption in New Orleans. Elvis is a night-club singer trying to dodge a local crime boss. It's directed by the very wonderful Michael Curtiz (Humphrey Bogart's 'Casablanca'? Jimmy Cagney's 'Yankee Doodle Dandy'? Joan Crawford's 'Mildred Pierce'? This was one serious directing cookie).

Presley acts alongside another great, the surprisingly scary Walter Matthau. It features Presley's edgiest performance and, coincidentally, his best soundtrack to run alongside. They are raw and they rock and just pre-date his army call-up. Songs like the title track, featuring Scotty Moore and Tiny Timbrell's guitar highlights, Leiber and Stoller's 'Trouble' and Claude Demetrius' 'Hard Headed Woman'. Even 'Dixieland Rock', if it can't quite compete with the best of the soundtrack bunch, features good playing and a strong vocal performance.

The moral of the story is: never believe in black and white. Life is full of many shades of grey, so whenever you hear of anyone deriding Elvis Presley's film career, take it with a pinch of salt. That is also why the Sony box set, featuring 20 original soundtrack albums in mini-LP sleeves and arriving in very a sturdy shell, is a whole heap of fun and frolics. Yes, there are peaks and troughs in this box set but, like any artistic great, this is to be expected. As the old truism says, what are ups without the downs? ●

Sometimes you just can't see the wood for the trees when you're buying hi-fi.

Clarity is here to help.

with support from

anthermav
solutions

ARCAM



audio-technica

Bowers & Wilkins

BRISTON

CLASSE

heed

forget hi-fi, remember music



Buying a hi-fi system is all about you and the emotional connections with the music. What you buy depends upon what you need and what you want from your music.

And you can only find the answer at your local expert retailer. You can't audition hi-fi or make comparisons online or by mail order.

- ✓ Free geek time **impartial and honest advice**
- ✓ Transferrable warranty **the freedom to move**
- ✓ Listen **great demo facilities**
- ✓ Knowledgeable staff **a refreshing change**
- ✓ Awful coffee **but we'll always make a cuppa**

Members of **The Clarity Alliance** are the only independent retailers who are trained to industry agreed standards to give you unparalleled levels of product advice and service. Take your time and relax in dedicated listening rooms, try a variety of equipment and music, audition and study each item, get to know it and see how it makes you feel.

www.clarityalliance.co.uk

Let our expert retailers guide you through the myriad of choices and show you some clarity

<p>EAST Basically Sound Norwich www.basicallysound.co.uk 01362 820800</p> <p>Martins Hi-Fi Norwich www.martinslifi.co.uk 01603 627010</p> <p>LONDON Adair Acoustic Design Clerkenwell www.adairacousticdesign.co.uk 0207 253 2326</p> <p>Bartletts Hi Fi Islington www.bartlettslifi.com 020 7607 2148</p> <p>Billy Vee Sound Systems Lewisham www.billyvee.co.uk 020 8318 5755</p>	<p>Grahams Hi-Fi City of London www.grahams.co.uk 020 7226 5500</p> <p>Oranges & Lemons Clapham www.oandlhifi.co.uk 020 7924 2040</p> <p>Unilet Sound & Vision New Malden www.unilet.net 020 8942 9567</p> <p>MIDLANDS Nottingham Hi Fi Centre Nottingham www.nottinghamhificentre.co.uk 0115 9786919</p> <p>NORTH EAST Sound Organisation York www.soundorg.co.uk 01904 627108</p>	<p>NORTH WEST Acoustica Chester www.acoustica.co.uk 01244 344227</p> <p>Chris Brooks Audio Warrington www.chrisbrooksaudio.com 01925 261212</p> <p>SOUTH EAST Home Media Maidstone www.thehomeofhifi.com 01622 676703</p> <p>Infidelity Kingston-on-Thames www.infidelity.co.uk 020 8943 3530</p> <p>P J Hi-Fi Guildford www.pjhifi.co.uk 01483 504801</p>	<p>Soundcraft Hi-Fi Ashford www.soundcraftthifi.com 01233 624441</p> <p>SCOTLAND Glasgow Audio Glasgow www.glasgowaudio.com 0141 332 4707</p> <p>Holburn Hi-Fi Aberdeen www.holburnhifi.co.uk 01224 585713</p> <p>SOUTH CENTRAL Overture Banbury www.overture.co.uk 01295 272158</p> <p>Oxford Audio Consultants Oxford www.oxfordaudio.co.uk 01865 790879</p>	<p>Phase 3 Worthing www.phase3.co 01903 245577</p> <p>The Sound Gallery High Wycombe www.soundgallery.co.uk 01494 531682</p> <p>SOUTH WEST Gulliford Audio Exeter www.gullifordhifi.co.uk 01392 491194</p>
--	---	--	---	---

hi-fi+

JVC

KEF

ONKYO

ortofon

Pioneer
sound.vision.soul

PLINIUS
THE HEART OF MUSIC

PMC

Pro-ject

ROTEL

Roth

SENNHEISER

SIM2
Multimedia

TEAC

THE CHORD
COMPANY

WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION

[/ClarityAlliance](https://www.facebook.com/ClarityAlliance)

[@clarityalliance](https://twitter.com/clarityalliance)

www.clarityalliance.co.uk

clarity

clear advice

World Radio History

AN
AP
AT
AU
CH
CL
DY
EA
FO
BU
MO
GR
GR
SO
KO
KU
WA
LY
NA
MI
MO
Ro
Reg
EAR
Fun
Trid
Ar
Clec
Clec
Clec
Clec
Con
EAR
Gar
Had
Hod
Kuz
Linn
Linn
Lynn
Lynn
Mor
Mich
Miss
Proj
QED
Rega
Rega
Rev
Rok
Rok
SME
SME
SME
Thor
Thor
Tom
Wils
Re
Arco
Arco
Audi
Cyr
Cyr
Cyr
Hosi
Hosi
Duo
Regc

"for a headphone to measure flat, it must not measure flat!"



Noel Keywood

My most memorable experiences in high fidelity have often been delivered by wacky technologies, the slightly left-field stuff everyone says has promise, but "needs just a little development"! Their manufacturers list an impressive array of benefits, whilst failing to mention the drawbacks.

Perhaps the most radical was the ion plasma tweeter: benefit – it had no moving mass; drawback – it could kill you. Best not to mention the latter then! You'd at least die happy, but not many people might see it that way.

Always memorable are panel loudspeakers, of all types. Perhaps most memorable were huge Podium panels I heard at a Taiwan audio show some years back now. Wandering down a wide corridor in Chiang Kai-shek's old palace – now the Grand Hotel used for audio shows – I was drawn to a fabulous sound in an open foyer area, listened to by a rapt audience. The big Podiums were flat panels supported by a vestigial frame, with almost no sign of how they worked. Around at the rear was – a flat panel! No drive units, power supplies or any other sign of a mechanical device that could be powering them – weird! Small groups of enthusiasts stood behind discussing how this could be.

The Podiums used a very clever panel drive system (a form of NXT), but their magic came not from the drive mechanism, but from the purities of sound that a panel can deliver. Sure there are big difficulties, but there are also big benefits and sound quality comes top of the list.

And that's the thought that struck me about Audeze's planar magnetic headphones I review this month. They too are a panel transducer, and also a fabulous

listening experience, an education on what good sound quality has to offer in terms of enjoyment. They're not 'academically enjoyable' like top electrostatic loudspeakers that are so ruthlessly revealing they almost hurt. The Audezes are revealing, whilst at the same time remaining smooth, deeply textured in their sound and with strong and supple bass – always a big plus point. Some of their smoothness is due to suppressed high-frequency output that, on headphones, subjectively has a subtly different impact to that of loudspeakers.

This brings me to the curious issue of headphone measured performance versus sound quality. For a headphone to measure flat, it must not measure flat! It must have raised treble, then an equalisation curve is applied to derive a net-flat response. The curve is known as the Head Related Transfer Function, or HRTF, and it raises some awkward issues. It varies between individuals and I find 'phones like the Fidelio X1s I use, that measure flat when equalised by the HRTF, a tad bright.

But which HRTF? There are at least three of them that apply to dummy heads. Looks like I'll be using a generalised curve that is independent of direction, known as an ID curve, in conjunction with our Rohde&Schwarz UPV audio analyser, although at present we do not have a dummy head, just a measuring microphone on a flat baffle.

Trying to measure headphone frequency response is an imperfect and somewhat approximate science, because we all respond differently to 'phones, according to our physiology – namely shoulders and ear dimensions/shape. Clamping headphones over our ears eliminates these response shaping factors that serve to accentuate treble. So what we hear from 'phones will never

be right for us unless the sound is tailored to account for our body shape. What a weird problem this is!

It makes headphone tonal balance a bit hit-or-miss and this is one reason why phones often sound wrong to us – and never quite right either! I have never settled on a pair of headphones as 'right', they just have varying tonal imbalances.

But the Audezes raise more issues than just tonal balance. The company provide options in the LCD-3 and LCD-XC generators, in acknowledgement of the problem. Also important was that when moving the phones around on my ears they were very even in their output, where other phones vary a lot with position because they beam at the ear from a dome radiator rather than a flat panel.

And then there's the fact that the Audezes are, for me, something of a history blast. I well remember Wharfedale's planar magnetic ID1 headphones released in 1972. They were something of an oddity even back then but had a good sound. Where the ID1s had very high impedance and needed lots of drive volts, Audeze have tailored their motor system to have exactly the same impedance – 40 Ohms – as other headphones (40-300 Ohms), in order to suit portable players, phones, tablets and what have you.

The LCD-3s still need a lot of drive volts, however, and although they go reasonably loud with the average mobile phone and portable player (that deliver 0.3V) they really need much more – up to 2V. But then these are not really for outdoor portable use and you'd probably get mugged for them in some places.

I thought the Audezes were startlingly good all the same, and an entrant into my list of 'memorable listens'. ●

Xpression Carbon

Xpress your sound,
Xpress your look...



March 2014



February 2014



**NEW UKX VERSION
AVAILABLE NOW!**

Includes free acrylic
platter with Bordeaux
and Midnight Blue
finishes.

A Classic Made New...

The Xpression Carbon is the latest version of Pro-Ject Audio Systems' original turntable, the Pro-Ject 1. This new model employs a brand new carbon fibre tonearm with an Evolution-inspired support structure. The superior motor, with isolation blobs designed by Ortofon, drives a high-quality platter that can be fitted with either a Cork or Felt mat. The plinth is available in three stunning finishes*, and the arm is rounded off with an Ortofon 2M Silver cartridge to create a comprehensive package that would suit any system.

Available in the UK through Henley Designs Ltd.

T: 01235 511 166

E: sales@henleydesigns.co.uk

W: www.henleydesigns.co.uk

 /HenleyDesignsLtd
 /HenleyDesigns1



Pro-Ject
AUDIO SYSTEMS

World Radio History

* Bordeaux finish shown

BLUESOUND

A sound experience like no other. Because it's engineered like no other.

NEW



BLUESOUND IS STREAMING, WIRELESS, MULTI-ROOM, 24-BIT TRUE HIGH-DEFINITION SOUND.

FOR THE LATEST PRICES AND OFFERS VISIT WWW.SSAV.COM OR CONTACT YOUR LOCAL STORE



NEW

£209
OR LESS

PRO-JECT • ESSENTIAL II • TURNTABLE

Entry-level "plug 'n play" two speed turntable with single piece aluminium tonearm and pre-fitted Ortofon OM5e cartridge.

£299
OR LESS



NAIM • C 556 • TURNTABLE

Time to enjoy vinyl collections with extraordinary quality! With a minimalist design, the C 556 turntable offers accurate reproduction by using performance-focused parts and components that put music first.

NEW

£575
OR LESS



PRO-JECT • 1 XPRESSION CARBON • TURNTABLE

With its Carbon armtube and supplied Ortofon 2m Silver cartridge, the 1 Xpression Carbon sets new standards in its price range.

NEW

£799
OR LESS



NAIM • D 7050 • NETWORK AMPLIFIER / DAC

Combines NAD's most advanced digital platform, Direct Digital technology with Apple AirPlay Wi-Fi streaming to create the ultimate plug 'n play solution for wireless music.

£2895



NAIM • UNITI 2 ALL-IN-ONE NETWORK SYSTEM

Combines an integrated amplifier, CD player, DAB/FM tuner, internet radio, iPod dock, digital-to-analogue converter and high-resolution 24bit/192kHz capable network stream player.

£1195



NAIM • UNITIQUTE 2 ALL-IN-ONE STREAMING SYSTEM

All-in-one system featuring a 30W amplifier, FM/DAB/Internet radio and wired and wireless connections to play network digital audio. UnitiQute 2 can play USB-stored music files of up to 32bit/192kHz resolution.

SSAV.COM



PIONEER • N-50 • MUSIC STREAMER

Award-winning audiophile Network player supporting AirPlay and DLNA wireless technologies, allowing you to stream music wirelessly from your iTunes libraries or iOS devices. When connected to your home network, you can also enjoy a wide variety of online music services remotely.

NEW

£399
OR LESS



ARCAM • airDAC • AIRPLAY ENABLED DAC

The Arcam airDAC allows you to network any audio system to an Apple AirPlay enabled music source and is the only audiophile quality AirPlay enabled device available. It also features a secondary digital audio input and a SPDIF digital output.

NEW

£799
OR LESS



SONY • HAP-S1 HI-RES AUDIO PLAYER SYSTEM

Take your music enjoyment to new heights with Sony's new HAP-S1 500GB HDD audio system with 2x40W analogue amplifier, easy music file transfer and smartphone browsing.

PLEASE NOTE: SOME BRANDS/PRODUCTS ARE NOT AVAILABLE AT ALL STORES. SPECIAL/ADDED VALUE OFFERS ARE NOT IN CONJUNCTION WITH ANY OTHER OFFER (NICWAOO). ADVERT VALID UNTIL 04/06/2014. E&OE

www.SSAV.com

World Radio History

SEVENoaks
SOUND & VISION



£649 OR LESS

£649 OR LESS

ARCAM • FMJ CD17 / A19 • CD / AMPLIFIER

Arcam's A19 integrated amplifier delivers 50W per channel and includes 7 analogue inputs, a MM phono input and is the perfect partner for the CD17 CD player.



£799 OR LESS

£749 OR LESS

AUDIOLAB • 8200CD / 8200A • CD / AMPLIFIER

The award-winning 8200CD features a wealth of digital inputs that will keep it playing all your music regardless of how it may be stored.



£399 OR LESS

ARCAM • irDAC • DAC

Designed to be the heart of a digital system. Includes asynchronous USB and a direct iPod input to optimise sound quality. All inputs can be controlled through an IR remote that will also control iPods, iPhones, PC and Mac computers.



NEW

£975 OR LESS

£1499 OR LESS

CYRUS • CD i / 8 DAC • CD PLAYER / AMPLIFIER / DAC

With its 2 x 70 w power output and extended range of digital inputs, the 8 DAC amplifier is a great partner for the new CD i CD player.



NEW

ESSAV.COM

NEW

ESSAV.COM

MARANTZ • CD6005 / PM6005 • CD / AMPLIFIER

Replacing the 6004 models, the 6005 amp gains digital inputs using the same 24-bit/192kHz DAC as the CD player which now features enhanced USB playback and improved performance.



£599 OR LESS

AUDIOLAB • M-DAC • DAC / PREAMP

Award-winning DAC featuring a USB input with asynchronous data processing along with two coaxial and optical digital inputs. High-res 24-bit/192kHz music files can be played via its coaxial input.



NEW

Bluetooth

£399 OR LESS

NAD • D 3020 AMPLIFIER / DAC

Features digital and analogue inputs plus the convenience of wireless streaming with its Bluetooth capability.



£499 OR LESS

£699 OR LESS

NAD • C 546BEE / C 356BEE DAC • CD / AMP / DAC

Enjoy music from your computer without musical compromise via the DAC or listen to music from CD with the MP3 / WMA compatible CD player.



AUDIOQUEST • DRAGONFLY v1.2 DAC / HEADPHONE AMP

An affordable and easy-to-use device that delivers far superior sound by bypassing the poor quality sound card that is built into your computer. DragonFly is a sleek, flash drive sized Digital-Audio Converter that connects to a USB jack on a Mac or Windows PC, turning any computer into a true high-fidelity music source.



£399 OR LESS

NEW £129 OR LESS

NAD • D 1050 DAC / HEADPHONE AMP

The best way to add Computer Audio and HD Digital to your hi-fi system. In fact, all digital sources will get a boost when the D 1050 takes over for the inferior digital circuitry found in everything from Blu-ray, DVD and CD players, to music streamers and set-top boxes.



£1899 OR LESS

£1899 OR LESS

ROKSAN • CASPIAN M2 • CD / AMPLIFIER

The M2 amp boasts 85wpc and five line inputs while the matching CD features a 24-bit DAC plus dedicated power supplies for the outputs.



£599 OR LESS

£499 OR LESS

ROTEL • RA-12 / RCD-12 • AMPLIFIER / DAC / CD

Amplifier with DAC that supports iPod USB and Bluetooth audio streaming. Includes four analogue line-level inputs and a phono input. The RCD-12 CD player is an ideal partner.



£1499 OR LESS

WITH Bluetooth FINISH

NAD • M51 • DAC

This award-winning DAC / pre-amp features optical, coaxial, USB and HDMI inputs, all of which can handle files up to 24-bit/192kHz. The M51 will truly transform any system.



ESSAV.COM

DENON • D-M39DAB • CD / DAB SYSTEM

This micro component system gives you clean dramatic sound, and more life to iPod and iPhone music libraries via its digital USB input. Includes DAB/DAB+/FM tuner.



NEW

£449 OR LESS



MARANTZ • M-CR610 • CD / DAB / NETWORK SYSTEM

Enjoy great sounding music from diverse sources, including Internet radio, music-streaming services, mobile devices, TV and other digital audio sources.



NEW

£399 OR LESS



YAMAHA • CRX-N560D • CD / DAB / NETWORK SYSTEM

This Hi-Fi system, with a CD player, DAB/DAB+ tuner for digital broadcasts and Network compatibility with AirPlay, combines elegant design with high quality sound.

Real Stores

Sevenoaks Sound & Vision have 26 stores nationwide with plans to open more during 2014. Each carries the best in home cinema and Hi-Fi equipment on display, ready for you to watch, listen to and compare in our dedicated demonstration rooms.

Real Products

A wide selection of products from the world's leading manufacturers is in stock and available for you to take home. We also offer a delivery and installation service as well as a convenient on-line click and reserve option for many of our products.

Real People

Our staff are friendly, knowledgeable and passionate about music and film and the equipment needed to get the most out of your collection. They will be delighted to assist you in making the right selection to ensure you enjoy your system for years to come.

Real Value

Fantastic value for money is our aim. Although we remain independent, you will be pleasantly surprised just how competitive we can be - with the added benefit of seeing, hearing and touching the product before you buy, and someone to help if things go wrong.

FOR THE LATEST PRICES AND OFFERS VISIT WWW.SSAV.COM OR CONTACT YOUR LOCAL STORE



BOWERS & WILKINS • CM10
Introducing the CM10, a new flagship for the CM series that combines technologies from the Reference ranges with innovative new construction techniques. The result is simply spectacular.

NEW £2999 OR LESS



TANNOY • REVOLUTION DC6T SE
Award-winning compact, floorstanding speakers featuring Tannoy's unique Dual Concentric™ drive unit along with trapezoidal cabinets. Exclusively finished in luxury Espresso colour real wood veneer.

NEW £999 OR LESS



Q ACOUSTICS • CONCEPT 40
The Q Acoustic Concept 40 floorstanding speakers are the latest addition to the award-winning Concept range and deliver unparalleled sonic performance at its price.

NEW £999 OR LESS

BOWERS & WILKINS • 685 S2

At home on a stand, wall or bookshelf, the versatile 685 S2 is ideal for stereo and home theatre uses in most rooms. And performance is enhanced with the addition of a Decoupled Double Dome tweeter.

NEW £499 OR LESS

PRICE EXCLUDES STANDS



MONITOR AUDIO SILVER 6

2.5 way speaker system combining excellent dynamics with a naturally rhythmic sonic character and tight, controlled bass. The Silver 6 is an outstanding comminicator of music and film audio.

NEW £999 OR LESS



KEF • R500

The smallest of the floorstanders in the R Series. Uses the latest generation Uni-Q driver array and two 5.25-inch aluminum bass drivers. Its slim proportions and sleek contemporary looks make it perfectly suited for any interior.

NEW £1499 OR LESS



PMC TWENTY 22

An astonishingly natural balance and high dynamic capability are the hallmarks of this speaker. It creates a precise sound stage and profound bass performance from its compact cabinet.

NEW £1970 OR LESS



PSB IMAGINE MINI

Meet the newest and smallest member of the ultra-sleek Imagine Series. The deceptively small Imagine Mini makes a big impact on an already impressive range of award-winning speakers.

NEW £599 OR LESS



KEF • LS50

An innovative concept derived from the legendary LS3/5a. Rarely the case in such a compact design, the LS50 monitor delivers a rich, multi-dimensional 'soundscape experience' that is out of all proportion to its size.

NEW £799 OR LESS

SONOS THE WIRELESS Hi-Fi SYSTEM

The Sonos Wireless HiFi System delivers all the music on earth, in every room, with deep, richly textured sound. Sonos is the only system that combines Hi-Fi sound with high-performance wireless. Plus it's simple to set-up, control and expand so you can easily fill your home with music.

ESSAV .COM



BOWERS & WILKINS P7 HEADPHONES

With P7, everything is designed to allow you to lose yourself in music. Bass is tight, vocals are precisely defined, and there's a wonderful sense of space, balance and clarity across the whole frequency range. P7's cable comes with a remote/microphone attachment, so it works seamlessly with your iPhone.

NEW

£329 OR LESS



RUARK AUDIO R7 WIRELESS SPEAKER SYSTEM

Retro design combining DAB and FM tuners, CD-quality aptX Bluetooth, DLNA network streaming, internet radio, CD playback, auxiliary analogue and digital inputs and a 2.1 speaker configuration in one beautifully crafted unit. The R7 is manufactured to an uncompromisingly high standard with a furniture-grade walnut cabinet and is supplied with spindle legs for free standing use and puck feet for placing on a cabinet.

aptX Bluetooth DLNA

NEW £1999 OR LESS



Supplied with spindle legs for free standing use or puck feet for mounting R7 on an existing sideboard or cabinet.



NAD VISO HP50 HEADPHONES

Designed for long-wearing comfort and listening with ultra-soft noise-isolating earpads. The convenient three button Apple remote offers full control of all Apple music and call functionality right at your fingertips, plus voice control with Siri compatible devices.

NEW

£249 OR LESS



Best Independent Retailer (Large) Consumer Electronics
Award Winner 2014

Stores Nationwide

We have a national network of stores and a hard-won reputation for outstanding customer service.

Website

Visit our website for a streamlined on-line experience with an outstanding product selection plus the latest product news and store information.

- Aberdeen • 01224 252797
- Bishop's Stortford • 01279 506576
- Bristol • 0117 974 3727
- Bromley 020 8290 1988
- Cambridge • 01223 304770
- Chelsea • 020 7352 9466
- Cheltenham • 01242 241171
- Chorleywood • 0845 5046364
- Epsom • 01372 720720
- Exeter • 01392 218895

- Guildford 01483 536666
- Holborn • 020 7837 7540
- Kingston • 020 8547 0717
- Leeds (Wetherby) 01937 586886
- Loughton • 020 8532 0770
- Maidstone 01622 686366
- Norwich • 01603 767605
- Oxford 01865 241773
- Reading • 0118 959 7760
- Sevenoaks 01732 459555

- Sheffield • 0114 255 5861
- Southampton • 023 8033 7770
- Tunbridge Wells 01892 531543
- Weybridge 01932 840859
- Witham (Essex) 01376 501733
- Yeovil • 01935 700078

* THESE STORES ARE FRANCHISED AND OPERATE UNDER A LICENCE AGREEMENT TO SEVENOAKS SOUND & VISION

ADVERT VALID UNTIL 04/06/2014. E&OE.

Please Note: Some brands/products are not available at all stores. Special/added value offers are not in conjunction with any other offer (NICWAOO).

World Radio History

SEVENOAKS
SOUND & VISION

This is a comprehensive directory of Hi-Fi Dealers throughout the UK and Ireland.

BERKSHIRE

LORICRAFT AUDIO

Loricraft Audio is now open for visitors but please call to arrange for a visit. You can buy all our products directly from us or through your local dealer. Our internet shop site can take direct orders for our turntables and accessories! Loricraft Audio, The Piggery, Mile End Farm, Wantage Road Lambourn, Berkshire, RG17 8UE Office Phone/Fax : +44 (0)1488-72267
Email: terry@garrard501.com
website: <http://garrard501.com>

STUDIOAV LTD

44 High Street, Eton, Berkshire SL4 6BL
Tel: 01753 631000
Email: sales@studioav.co.uk
www.studioav.co.uk
We are Berkshire's premier Linn dealer (complete range) and LP12 specialists. Naim, Focal, Totem, The Chord Company, Lyra, Dynavector, Benz Micro, with more to follow.

BRISTOL & BATH

THE RIGHT NOTE

Tel: 01225 874728
www.rightnote.co.uk
Happy with your system? Wonder why there's so much for sale secondhand? Avoid the frustration and expense of "upgrade-itis", never quite "there". With infinite patience we'll help you plan longer-term. Brands selection: Accoustic Arts, Audio Physic, Aesthetix, Bel Canto, CAT, Clearaudio, dCS, Focal, Gamut, Graham, Halcro, Kawero, Magnum Dynalab, VertexAQ, VTL, Wadia.

V-AUDIO HI FI CONSULTANTS

36 Druid Hill, Stoke Bishop, Bristol. BS9 1EJ.
Tel: 0117 968 6005.
Website: www.v-audio.co.uk
Email: icvhifi@yahoo.co.uk
ATC, AVI, Nola, ALR Jordan, Audio Analogue, Avid, Black Rhodium,

Electrocompaniet, Edge amps/cd, Harman Kardon, Infinity, Jamo, Lyra, Origin Live, Opera, Ortofon, PS Audio, Michelle, REL, SME, Sugden, Townshend. Specialist in Video Projects by SIM2, Infocus, Sanyo, Power Plan. Screens by Stewart, smx and da-lite. Demos by appointment only. Home trial facilities.

CHESHIRE

ACOUSTICA

17 Hoole Rd, Chester CH2 3NH.
www.acoustica.co.uk
Tel: 01244 344227.
B&W 800 Diamond series dealer Naim Audio specialist & 500 Series stockist. Other brands carried include Arcam, Audiovector, Audio Analogue, B&W, Classe, Piega, Rega & Spondor. Full demonstration facilities.
Open Tuesday to Saturday 10.00 to 5.30

ACTON GATE AUDIO

www.acton-gate-audio.co.uk
4 Ruabon Road, Wrexham, LL13 7PB,
Tel: (01978) 364500
Arcam, Atlas, Audiolab, Denon, Grado, Michell, Monitor Audio, Dali, Leema, Loewe, Musical Fidelity, Ortofon, Onkyo, Pro-ject, Sonos, QED, Quad, Rel, Roksan, van-den-Hul, Wharfedale, Yamaha.
Tuesday - Saturday 9.00 - 17.00
email: info@acton-gate.com

DOUG BRADY HI FI KINGSWAY

Studios, Kingsway North, Warrington, WA1 3NU
Tel: 01925 828009 Fax: 01925 825773.
Visa Mastercard, Specialist High-End Turntable, Loudspeaker, Streaming and Amplifier retailer. Extensive range online to buy and will ship worldwide Luxurious demonstration facilities. Dedicated work shop for service and repairs. Custom cables made Installations and home delivery available. Car park directly outside Lowest price guaranteed.

CORNWALL

BIGEARS AUDIO

To find a system that will allow you to hear the music instead of the equipment phone Bigears Audio, here you will find an interesting array of new and good quality used equipment! my intention is to have satisfied customers whatever their audio preferences. Naim dealer for the South West.
Email: chrisbirchley@btinternet.com.
Tel: 01736-740421

ESSEX

ROCOCO SYSTEMS & DESIGN

Essex/London Linn Specialist
Tel: 01371 856 407 – 0207 454 1234
www.rococosystems.com
We have over 30 years in entertainment solutions, We can give you expert advice on your Linn Hi-Fi, Multi-room AV and Home Cinema systems. P/EX, ex-demo and used Linn available, Demos by appointment . Home Demos welcome. Authorised dealers for Arcam, Artcoustic, Chord, Denon, Linn, Lutron, Kaleidescape, Marantz, Opus, Runko, Systemline, Sonos, Sim2. Linn Service & Repairs

RADLETT AUDIO

Saffron Walden, NW Essex
Tel: 01799 599080
E-mail: radlettaudio@hotmail.co.uk
Website: www.radlettaudio.co.uk
Selling sensible Hi-Fi systems since 1973 Albarry, ATC, Chord Co, Croft, Devialet, EAR, Funk, Harbeth, Icon Audio, Kudos, LFD, London/Decca, Lyra, Michell, Naim, Neat, Nottingham Analogue, Ortofon, Puresound, PMC, Quad, Rega, SME, Something Solid, Sumiko, Sonneteer, Spondor, Tellurium Q. Turntable specialist - repair and set up.

LANCASHIRE

HOUSE OF LINN MANCHESTER

Telephone: 0161 766 4837
Email: Info@houseoffinn.com
www.houseoffinn.com
The Linn specialists. Independently

Dial A Dealer

owned by former Linn staff.

Straightforward, professional expertise with demonstration, sales, installation and support for the Linn range of components and systems. The listening experience is so good that demonstrations can last for hours. Discover how we make music sound real in your home! Appointments only.

LONDON

THE CARTRIDGE MAN LTD

88 Southbridge road, Croydon
CR0 1AF Telephone: 020 8688 6565
www.thecartridgeman.com
Email: thecartridgeman@talktalk.net.

UK Distributor: Hiaudio Distribution
Makers of the prize-winning range of MusicMaker cartridges and other desirable audio accessories. We also have a cartridge refurbishing service and rebuild classic valve equipment to the highest standards. "It doesn't have to cost an arm and a leg - but there is no such thing a free lunch, either."

MY AUDIO DESIGN

35 Whitehall, London, SW1A 2BX
Tel: 020 7839 8880 / 07782 137 868
E-mail: sales@madengland.com
Website: www.madengland.com
E-Shop: www.shop.madengland.com
We offer MAD, Benchmark Media, SONOS, WBT, Trichord Research, ATC, FatmanTube, Project, Lehmann, Ortofon, Vandenhul, QED, NAD, Goldring, Grado, Focal, Musical Fidelity, Ex-demo & second hand gears. Custom Installation, Servicing, Custom Design. Appointment Only. Short walk from Embankment, Charing-X & Westminster Tube.

KJ WEST ONE

26 New Cavendish Street, London
W1G 8TY
Tel 020 7486 8262
www.kjwestone.co.uk
The world's finest audio on demonstration in Central London: Audio Research-Devialet-Focal-Harbeth-Jadis- Krell-Linn-Magico-Martin Logan-Naim-Quad-SME-Sonus Faber-Wilson Audio.

MANCHESTER

AUDIO COUNSEL

Audio Counsel, 29 Sam Road, Diggle,
Manchester, OL3 5PU
01457 875555
www.audiocounsel.co.uk
dave@audiocounsel.co.uk

Hi Fi from, B&W Densen, Dynavector Cartridges, Dynavector Amplifiers, Isoblu, Naim, Neat Acoustics, Piega, Quadraspire, Rega, Revolver, Shahinian, Totem, Well Tempered Turntables, Zu Loudspeakers. Quality Hi Fi is not plug and play. We deliver and install all systems. Tuesday to Saturday 10.00am to 5.30pm Thursday till 8pm

MIDLANDS (WEST)

SOUND CINERGY

37 high street, Aldridge, WS9 8NL
Tel: 01922 457926
www.soundcinergy.co.uk
clive@soundcinergy.co.uk
Quality hifi and home cinema from black rhodium, chord co, exposure, focal, linn, marantz, michell, monitor audio, mordaunt short, nad, okki nokki, ortofon, project, rel, roksan, themescene, trichord, vdh. Check our website for ex dem and secondhand bargains. free car parking.
tues - sat 10 - 5.30

SUSSEX

15 AUDIO

Churchward Court, 15 Western Road
Lewes, BN7 1RL
Tel: 08448 22 11 15
Email:sales@15audio.co.uk
www.15audio.co.uk
Formerly Sounds of Music, new ownership - demonstration facilities in centre of Lewes. Friendly staff. Free parking. Ayon, Bladelius, Boulder, Coda, Hansen, LSA, SoundLab, SME, WBT and more. Quad centre - 'Digital Clinic' - service centre. Home demo's, delivery and installation. Mon - Frid 10:00am - 6:00pm. Sat 10:00 - 2:00pm. Closed Wednesday.

YORKSHIRE

THE AUDIO ROOM

Savile Street, Hull, HU1 3EF
01482 891375
www.theaudiroom.co.uk
Authorised agents for Audiolab, Bowers

and Wilkins including 800 series, Classe, Denon, Dynavector, Focal, Linn, Naim, ProAc, Quad, Rega, Rotel, Tellurium Q and more. Large open plan showroom with 2 dedicated demonstration rooms, part exchange welcome, friendly & knowledgeable staff. Yorkshire's streaming specialist.

AUDIO REPUBLIC

78 Otley Road, Leeds
Tel: 0113 2177294
www.audio-republic.co.uk
For the best in quality hifi in West Yorkshire, representing Naim Audio, Rega, Sugden, Audio Research, VPI, Krell, Copland, Sonus Faber, Arcam, Nottingham Analogue, Roksan, Hutter, Martin Logan, Proac, PMC, M&K, Finite Elements, SME, Cardas, Kudos Loudspeakers and others. Open Tuesday-Saturday 9.30am to 5.30pm

FANTHORPES HI-FI, TV & CUSTOM INSTALLATION SPECIALISTS

HEPWORTH ARCADE, SILVER STREET,
HULL, HU1 1JU
Established over 60 years
Tel: 01482 223096
Web: www.fanthorpes.co.uk
Email: shop@fanthorpes.co.uk
Part exchange welcome. High-end Second Hand Equipment. Multi-room installations. Demonstration by appointment. Home trials welcome. Interest free credit available. Experienced staff. We stock Arcam, Cyrus, Dali, Denon, Dynaudio, Exposure, Kef, Loewe, Onkyo, Primare, Roksan, Spondor, Sugden and much more.

IRELAND

ARDHOWN HIFI

10 Menapien Way
Enniskillen, Fermanagh, BT74 4GS
Abbingdon Music Research, Acoustic Masterpiece, Airtight, Benz Micro, Croft, Acoustics, Custom Design, Dellec Precision Audio, Firestone Audio, Graham Slee, Hanns Acoustics, Harmonix, Luxman, My Audio Design, Opera Audio/Consonance, Origin Live, Project, Reference 3A, Reiyimo, Sugden Audio, True Colours Industries, Trafomatic, Usher, Verity Audio, WLM
www.Ardhownhifi.com
07581 119913 Tom

vinyl section

contents

JUNE 2014

www.hi-fiworld.co.uk

GEARBOX RECORDS 83
Paul Rigby visits a decidedly audiophile London record label

SHEU ANALOG TIMBRE TURNTABLE 89
Tony Bolton spins up a new turntable from Sheu

ANNE BISSON 93
Paul Rigby talks to Anne Bisson about music and how she became an audiophile

news

THIRTY TIGERS

Ex-Drive By Truckers' singer, Jason Isbell's best album to date, 'Southeastern' (2013; www.thirtytigers.com) is a revealing portrait of a man who wants to confess his addictive sins. A cracker of an album.

Garland Jeffreys, compatriot to Lou Reed and John Cale, contemplated life struggles in 2013's 'Truth Serum' via edgy rock with reggae and blues adornments. A wholly worthwhile piece.

JASON ISBELL
SOUTHEASTERN



GARLAND JEFFREYS
TRUTH SERUM

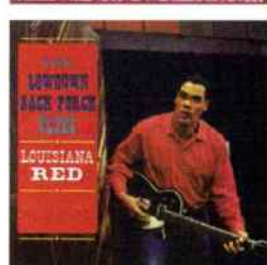
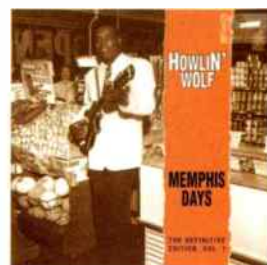
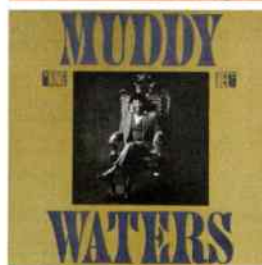


WAH-WAH!

Spanish-based Wah Wah (www.wah-wahsupersonic.com) offers 1968 exploitation LP 'Electronic Music To Blow Your Mind By!!!', from session musician no-names Love Machine. An odd combination of early synth effects, straight-ahead guitar rhythms and Hammond organ noodlings.

Released on the Pirate label in 1970, Mad Curry was a progressive jazz outfit from Belgium with a blues-like female lead vocal. Arriving with a bonus 7" and six-panel, fold-out sleeve, this Curved Air/Soft Machine-like outfit offers complex time signatures and innovative song structures.

Also look out for Seesselberg's 'Sythetik I', modular synth experiments from 1970, the first time ever on vinyl.



GOT THE BLUES?

New from Music On Vinyl (www.musiconvinyl.com) is Robert Johnson's 'King Of The Blues' from the original 1961, Columbia issue, the record that started the entire blues resurgence. It brings his music alive.

Muddy Waters' 'King Bee' was a Johnny Winter-produced LP from 1981. Not an entry point to Waters' work but great for fans.

Licensed from Bear Family, MOV has issued both volumes of Howlin' Wolf's 'Memphis Days: The Definitive Edition', featuring rare, primitive, Sun-era and Chess tracks. A marvellous collection of Wolf's early 78s.

Finally, from Pure Pleasure (www.purepleasurerecords.com), is Louisiana Red's 'Lowdown Back Porch Blues', his debut and his best with a bare production and compelling guitar presentation.

FROHMADER

Via Vinyl On Demand (www.vinyl-on-demand.com), Peter Frohmader's 'Nekropolis I-IV' is a four-tape compilation on vinyl, an advanced suite of dark, apocalyptic and highly complex electronica that takes a freeform, almost jazz improv, style. An angry sea of electronic noise that threatens your central nervous system.

FROHMADER



LET THEM EAT VINYL

Three brilliant cuts (www.letthemeatvinyl.com) include Bob Dylan's 'Finjan Club: Montreal Canada, July 2nd 1962'. Dylan was already in the midst of recording 'Freewheelin' Bob Dylan'. 'Blowin' In The Wind', sung here, would be recorded just a week later while Robert Johnson's 'Ramblin' On My Mind' is, we think, his first public performance.

Dr John's 'At the Ultrasonic Studios: the Lost Broadcast New York 1973' is a rare glimpse of his working band from this period.

Steely Dan's 'Going Mobile: Classic 1974 Live Radio Broadcast' is a period rarity due to Donald Fagen's initial lack of confidence as a 'live' singer, including songs from the first three albums plus rarities.



FEMALE FREQUENCIES

Lyn Stanley (www.lynstanley.com) offers 'Romance', a new selection of classic jazz standards from my Sinatra favourite, 'One For My Baby' to the highly accomplished 'My Foolish Heart'. Available on vinyl but also 24bit/96kHz, 24bit/192kHz and DSD! Go on...treat your Astell&Kern to some classy standards.

From Music On Vinyl is Ilse DeLange's 'World Of Hurt' (1998), a country-pop outing that topped the Dutch charts while Alanis Morissette's 'MTV Unplugged' (1999; coloured, numbered vinyl) concentrates on the rather elusive songs from 'Supposed Former Infatuation Junkie'.

From Sundazed (www.sundazed.com), Wendy & Bonnie's self-titled debut infused jazz and folk into light rock, from 1969. Impressive, considering their young (seventeen and thirteen) ages.

Finally, 'Glory Days' from Sarah Gillespie (Those Old Records; www.thoseoldrecords.ca.uk) features stylistic touches of Joni Mitchell and Bob Dylan from this instinctive song-writer.



MUSIC ON VINYL

New from this busy label is Stone Temple Pilots 'Tiny Music...Songs From The Vatican Gift Shop' (1998), adding multi-textural guitar to the mix plus cross-genre touches to keep things fresh.

Hole's 'Celebrity Skin' (1998) didn't quite have the punch of 'Live Through This' (1998) but this Billy Corgan produced and partly written LP offers many highlights: issued on numbered, coloured vinyl.

Next is Jimi Hendrix's 'Miami Pop Festival', complete with an eight-page booklet. This 18 May, 1968 performance took place right after his breakthrough Monterey Festival performance. This outing is highly professional but lacks an edge.

Also look out for Prong's 'Beg To Differ' (1990) providing dense harmonies with a thrash metal beat.



...AND FINALLY

Oberman Knocks' 12" single, 'Dliankex' (Aperture; www.aperturerecords.com) is a powerful, layered slice of electronica. It's backed by Autechre's 'remix'... which isn't. Unless you call Frankenstein a 'man' remix. The latter is a frenetic, paranoid, neurotic cut, crying out for Prozac.

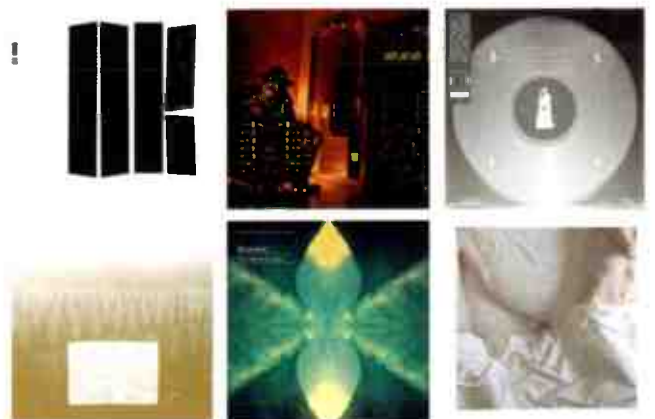
Hallock Hill's 'Kosloff Mansion' (Hundred Acre Recordings; www.hundredacrecordings.com) drops sparse piano, gentle synth bombs and ambient washes in a meditative haze.

Merchandise's 'Begging For Your Life/In The City Light' is a clear, numbered, 12" from 4AD (www.4ad.com). A hedonistic, all too knowing yet tired vocal, this is a swaying, off balanced rock outing dragging you to the next party.

Mode Moderne's 'Occult Delight' (Light Organ; lightorganrecords.com) has a sparse, Joy Division/Smiths, post punk feel. Delight indeed.

New from Ninja Tune (www.ninjatune.net), Bonobo's 'The North Borders' offers uplifting, up-tempo, circulatory rhythms balanced by sparse, emotional vocal fare. Meaty stuff.

Finally, check out Nathaniel Rateliff's 'Falling Faster Than You Can Run' (www.nathanielrateliff.com). A powerful, folk-ish sing-songwriter, this new album offers a troubadour's take on the personal.





Heatherdale

audio limited

Tel. 01903 261213 or (after hours) 07860 660001
 e-mail: heatherdale@hifi-stereo.com Web: www.hifi-stereo.com

Main dealer for Wavac amplification

SPEAKERS

Tannoy Glenair 15's, superb/boxed £2495
 Revel Ultima Studio Mk1 speakers (£10,000) offered for £3995
 Tannoy Prestige range please call

PRE-AMPS

Mark Levinson ML 32 Reference pre amp, immaculate/boxed £5750
 Audio Note Zero R (NOS) pre amp £350
 Gamma ERA Reference pre amp, mint cond' £395
 Toft pre amp, balanced and s/e on every input/output £295

AMPLIFIERS

Mark Levinson ML336, superb/boxed £2995
 Mark Levinson 33H reference monoblocs superb/boxed £8995
 Mark Levinson ML 27.5 power amp, a true classic, boxed with book £1995

CD PLAYERS & TRANSPORTS

Arcam BDP 100 Blue Ray player, MINT/BOXED £350
 Rega Apollo R CD player MINT/BOXED £325
 Rega DAC with USB input, MINT/BOXED £325
 Musical Fidelity M6 CD player MINT/BOXED £995
 Mark Levinson 31.5/30.6 Reference CD transport and DAC, superb/boxed (cost new £27,490.00)

Offered for £8995
 CEC TL-0X CD transport (£15k) ex demo £7995

TURNTABLES, CARTRIDGES & TONEARMS

Rega Elys 2 Cartridge, MINT £65
 TRIPLANAR Mk7 arm, brand new. (5k) offered for £3250

MISCELLANEOUS

1 Metre Madrigal CZ Gel balanced interconnect £295
 Music Tools 2 tier equipment stand with laminated shelves (rrp £1100) £495.
 Studer A-807 pro' stereo tape recorder £2495
 Yamaha TX-761 DAB/FM Tuner £195
 Okutsu Denko 1.5 metre mains cable (US plugs) £1195

ALL USED CARTRIDGES ARE CHECKED UNDER A MICROSCOPE BEFORE BEING OFFERED FOR SALE. WE TAKE PART EXCHANGE ON NEW & USED STOCK and buy in for cash VISA SWITCH MASTER CARD AMEX DINERS CLUB WELCOME

Billy Vee

SOUND SYSTEMS

London Linn & naim Specialist

CALL SALES: (020) 8318 5755 or 8852 1321 - 248 Lee High Road, London, SE13 5PL
 Web: - www.billyvee.co.uk email: sales@billyvee.co.uk. Full delivery and installation services.



Full Naim Uniti & Classic series available



Full Linn DS range on demonstration

Trade in your CD Player & claim up to £1000 against a new digital Streaming player - offering you easier access to your music and better sound quality
 Please call in or visit billyvee.co.uk for full details of this and other great new performance enhancing promotions

All About the Music

BASICALLY
SOUND

Digital & Analogue Audio Specialists

01362 820800

enquiries@basicallysound.co.uk
 www.basicallysound.co.uk

Epiphany Acoustics

Headphone Amplifiers . DACs . Interconnects



Atratus RCA Interconnects



"Great realism... Tight and punchy bass...
 Amazing value for money."

- Hi-Fi Choice

Find out what all the fuss is about at our online shop and use discount code **MAG10** for your exclusive 10% discount.

Prices start at under £40/pair

www.epiphany-acoustics.co.uk



Gearbox's custom-designed studio.

Gearbox

Based in London, Paul Rigby talks to Darrel Sheinman of Gearbox, a distinctly audiophile record label.

A former commodities options trader and founder of a maritime tracking and security company, Gearbox Records owner Darrel Sheinman, sees 'live recording' as the poor relation of studio work, in audiophile terms.

His wish to provide quality live recordings lead to the creation of Gearbox Records, sporting its own mastering and recording studio in Kings Cross, London.

Recording live bands proved to be a problem due to the interminable web of legal clearances, so instead Sheinman decided to investigate radio station archives, in particular the BBC. Initial research was done at the British Library, which retains a lot of the BBC's session references.

"There is no secret in attaining clearances" said Sheinman. "It was difficult. It took lots of persistence and hard work. I eventually found the

guy in charge of licensing at the BBC Worldwide".

"Eventually, we developed a trust and he offered me a price to license the masters".

Sheinman has found that the initial hard work has paid off because, now that he is known and trusted, musicians come to him, often with clearances primed and master tapes ready to roll.

"Regarding sources, at the beginning I was vicious in their vetting. If it wasn't good enough, then I wasn't going to release it.

There might be lots of dropouts or the musicians weren't playing very well on the recording. It also had to be something that grabbed me.

That changed later. So, for example, we did a 'Jazz



Owner, Darrel Sheinman.

RETRO

REPRODUCTION
QUALITY HIGH FIDELITY & VINTAGE

WE CAN NOW PROVIDE IN HOUSE REPAIR SERVICE
FOR ALL VINTAGE AND CLASSIC HI-FI EQUIPMENT
CALL FOR MORE DETAILS

AMPLIFIERS		maple plinth	£1495
Ayre V-5XE power amp 18 mths old boxed immaculate	£2750	Linn LP12 with Ittok with lingo PSU all boxed superb condition	£1495
Audiolab 8000A integrated amp mint condition	£345	Linn LP12 black finish with Ongin Live motor & PSU	£595
Audio Innovations classic 25 integrated amp just serviced	£795	Linn LP12 affromosia finish (lingo PSU missing)	£395
Arcam A32 integrated amp	£495	Michell Focus 1	£295
Audio Research remote valve pre amp with phono stage SP16	£1795	Michell Gyrodec SE boxed mint	£995
Bel Canto SEP 2 upgraded to 1 valve remote control	£795	Michell Gyro SE special order black finish brand new in a box, sealed box	EPOA
Cyrus original PSX great condition	£175	Optonica RM7100 direct drive top of the range turntable	£245
Cyrus 2	£225	Pioneer Tangential tracking PL L800	£295
EAR 834L	£695	Project Xpression 2 boxed mint	£175
EAR V20 valve amplifier	£2495	SME 10 with tonearm with V	£3295
EAR 802 classic valve with pre amp phono stage (just serviced)	£1195	SME series 3 tonearms various	EPOA
Eastern Electric M size 20 integrated amp with remote	£895	SME 309 boxed	£695
Hamon Kardon HK990 top of the line heavy weight integrated amp 12mths old	£595	SME 3009 series II rebuilt & rewired by Audio	£325
Hamon Kardon 930 twin powered receiver	£195	Ongami detachable headshell	£345
Hamon Kardon HK770 power amp	£195	Sony PS6750 turntable	£345
Mark Levinson 335 power amplifier	£2995	Synnx LE1 tonearm recently wired with cardas cable fitted and checked by Audio Ongami	£275
Meridian 518 digital audio processor	£445	Synnx PU2 tonearm	£295
Meridian 201 MKIII pre amp remote	£195	Thorens TD125 MKII in plinth	£275
Meridian 201 MKIII pre amp remote	£195	Thorens TD160	£195
Mentmore M200 valve mono bloc 200wpc designed by Tim de Paravianni awesome driving power	EPOA	CD PLAYERS, DACs	
Mission 776/777 pre and power amplifier 100w cast case work a real classic	£795	Arcam CD73 24bit cd player black finish	£225
Naim 112 remote control pre with box	£395	B&O 9000 cd player with floorstand and active speakers new £5000	£1795
Naim NAP120	£225	Cambridge Azur DAC Magic boxed	£145
Naim NAC12S	£150	Linn Akurate DS Streamer as new with warranty	EPOA
Naim 50 power amp boxed	£225	Linn Klimax DS as new with warranty	EPOA
Naim Flatcap 2 boxed	£325	Marantz CD52 MKII special edition	£145
Naim Flatcap boxed	£225	Marantz CD50 multibit dac	£95
Pioneer A9 integrated amp top of the range	£395	Marantz CD7 one of the world's finest player, new belt fitted	EPOA
Phase Linear 700 power amp	£495	Marantz CD17 MKII	£395
Quad II Valve amp re-built and re-valved	£995	Meridian 506 20 bit CD player	£395
Quad 34 pre amp phono version	£225	Meridian 518 digital audio processor	£345
Quad 306 power amp with phono input	£245	Meridian 207 disc player 2 boxed pre amp & transport	£375
Quad 405	£195	Musical Fidelity A308 24bit up sampling boxed	£695
Quad Forty monoblocs	£1995	Nakamichi CD player 2	£175
Red Rose 5 integrated valve amp Mark Levinson design new £7000	£2995	Nakamichi MB10 5 disc music bank cd player	£175
Roksan Kandy MKIII integrated amp	£395	Naim CDS3 with Teddy Pardo PSU	£2645
Rotel PB971 power amp	£195	Naim CDS with PSU (with brand new laser)	£1995
Rotel RC972 remote pre amp	£125	Phillips CD610 16bit cd player	£95
Rotel RA840BX integrated amp	£125	Pioneer PDR509 legato link	£145
Rotel RA350 70s vintage amp	£95	Pioneer PD9700 stable platter	£225
Sansui AU517 heavy weight integrated amp	£395	Pinnacle 30.2 of player boxed	£495
Sony FS40E heavyweight integrated	£245	Rotel RA965 BX classic old school cd player boxed mint condition	£195
Tanberg TR20 receiver	£145	Sony CDP X-B920E	£125
Wadia 151 DAC and amplifier	£495	Sony XE680 SACD player	£195
SPEAKERS		TUNER	
Bekohm Virtuoso reference Lowther hom loaded speakers with brand new DX4 drive units	£2995	Audiolab 8000T tuner boxed	£395
Boston VRM 50s Lynnfield series monitor speakers	£345	Cyrus AM/FM tuner (original version)	£95
Cabinet for 12" Tannoy with amplification built in model MS08	£195	Pioneer F91 top of the range tuner	£245
Goodmans Axion 201 12" full range 15ohm speaker 1 pair	£295	Quad FM4	£175
Goodmans Magnum K's	£125	Rotel RT1082 DAB tuner	£225
Impulse H6 valve friendly floorstanding speakers	£595	Troughline tuner	from £95
KEF RDM Two monitor speakers	£245	Sony ST5100 FM/AM classic 70's tuner	£125
Linn Index	£125	Sony 700ES tuner	£75
Linn Sara active speakers	£125	Sony ST8900 QS DAB tuner	£145
Lockwood Minor cabinet for Tannoy 10"	£195	Technics STG90L top of the range tuner	£95
Lowther PM6 in Horn loaded cabinet	£595	MISCELLANEOUS	
Mendian M30 active speakers	£495	Akai GX77 open reel with various tapes mint condition recently been serviced	£495
Mission 752 black finish	£295	Awa XIK S9000 top of the range cassette deck	£395
Mission 773 beech finish	£245	Cardas golden ref. 8 5mtr balanced interconnect	£395
Mono Pulse 32A 8 months old ex dem	£495	Cardas reference tonearm cable	£375
Mono Pulse 32S ex dem.	£645	Denon DRW585 a top of the range cassette deck	£125
Monitor Audio 2 bookshelf speaker with rosenut finish	£245	Ferroglyph logic 7 open reel 10"	£495
Monitor Audio reference 700	£395	Nakamichi receiver 2	£195
Quad ESL-989 Electrostatics black finish boxed	£1995	Nakamichi LX3 cassette deck	£195
Red Rose R3 Ribbon bookshelf speaker new £3000	£995	Nordost Blue Heaven speaker cable 5mtr	£295
Roksan K2 rosewood finish	£595	RECORDS	
Sentonan early 60s corner speaker pair	£295	(downsizing my collection excellent as new condition)	
Snell K classic valve friendly speaker	£495	Pink Floyd Pulse Box Set	£295
Sonus Faber Chromona Auditor with stands	£1495	Led Zeppelin BBC Session 200g	£295
Sirring Broadcast L335A monitor xdem	EPOA	Jim Hendrix Experience Box Set	£195
TDL RTL3 black finish boxed	£275	Blue Note Freddie Hubbard - Hub Toners 180g	£15
TURNTABLES/TONEARMS		Blue Note Horace Parlan Moving & Grooving Toshiba EMI	£20
Clearaudio Master Reference with parallel tracking tonearm	£4500	Blue Note Amazing Bud Powell Time Weight Toshiba EMI	£20
EAR 834F mm with volume	£745	Blue Note Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers	
Enstein phono stage beautifully made german crafted new price £3300		At the Jazz corner of the world Toshiba EMI	
Garrard 401	£1995	Various others:	
Garrard 301 with SME 3009 arm and beautiful	£695	Annette Coleman, Don Cherry, Lou Donaldson,	
		Joe Henderson, Bobby Hutcherson	
		Various other artists available please phone	

Music First Audio

"I've not heard a better preamp..."

- Sam Tellig, Stereophile - Oct '12



IAN HARRISON HI-FI TEL: 01283 702875

HIFI AT DISCOUNT PRICES. FREE NATIONWIDE DELIVERY

SALE! UP TO 40% OFF!
Email: ian.harrison@mercian.myzen.co.uk

SPEND £2000 OR MORE ON ANY TURNTABLE, TONEARM OR TURNTABLE AND ARM AND GET A £500 CARTRIDGE FREE!

TONEARMS CARTRIDGE MAN MICHELL REGA SME* GRAHAM MOTH ORTOFON PRO-JECT ROKSAN HELIOUS REED AMG MOERCH	CARTRIDGES ORTOFON AIR TIGHT DECCA LONDON DENON TRANSFIGURATION KOETSU GRADO GOLDRING BENZ MICRO ROKSAN ZYX CARTRIDGE MAN	PHONOSTAGES WHEST AUDIO ANATEK TRICHORD TOM EVANS GRAHAM SLEE LEHMANN QUAD ICON AUDIO PURE SOUND PRO-JECT EAR YOSHINO ROTHWELL	TURNTABLES MICHELL AMAZON AUDIO PRO-JECT THORENS SRM TECH EAR AUDIO TECHNICA DENON INSPIRE MUSIC HALL
HEADPHONES SENNHEISER BEYER DENON AUDIO TECHNICA GRADO ERGO GOLDRING	AMPLIFIERS CREEK SUGDEN ICON AUDIO EAR/YOSHINO DENON QUAD TOM EVANS	CABLES KUBALA-SOSNA PRO-JECT BLACK RHODIUM QED TRANSPARENT WIREWORLD IXOS SUPRA	HIFI FURNITURE ALPHASON QUADRASPHIRE SOUNDSTYLE CUSTOM DESIGN ATACAMA TRACK AUDIO APOLLO
SPEAKERS HARBETH OPERA QUAD EPOS Q. ACOUSTICS AUROUSAL	HEADPHONE AMPS LEHMANN PRO-JECT GRAHAM SLEE CREEK FIDELITY AUDIO SUGDEN	CD PLAYERS CREEK EAR/YOSHINO QUAD DENON MARANTZ	TUNERS CREEK DENON QUAD

ACCESSORIES
DIGITAL STYLUS GAUGES, RECORD CLEANING MACHINES, CLEANERS, AUDIO CASSETTES

* PHONE FOR TERMS PLEASE PHONE TO CONFIRM PRICE & AVAILABILITY PRIOR TO ORDERING ALL GOODS ARE BRAND NEW & BOXED WITH FULL U.K. GUARANTEES. NO EX. DEM OR EX DISPLAY GOODS. NO GREY IMPORTS. GOODS ARE NOT SUPPLIED ON APPROVAL. SORRY, NO GENERAL CATALOGUES. PLEASE PHONE OR WRITE FOR SPECIFIC REVIEWS, BROCHURES OR PRICES. SUPPLIER OF HIFI PRODUCTS & ACCESSORIES SINCE 1986 MAIL ORDER ONLY FROM: IAN HARRISON, 7 MILL HILL, REPTON, DERBY, DE65 6GQ. TEL: 01283 702875. 9am - 9pm INCLUDING SUNDAYS.



An original (1959) RCA KU3A ribbon microphone. It's rarity falls into the hen's teeth category.

Couriers in Morecambe' release where the quality wasn't that great but the recording was historically significant because there is so few live Jazz Couriers material out there and you can really feel the room, the atmosphere is excellent".

Building his studio, Sheinman quickly decided that it would be vinyl-only and purist at that.

"Why full analogue? The sound quality is better and I enjoy the ritual of putting vinyl on a turntable. With



Philips' only 'Pro' reel-to-reel: the EL-3501.

"Why analogue? Sound quality is better and I enjoy the ritual of putting vinyl on a turntable. With vinyl I found myself listening to the music. With CD, the music is merely background"

vinyl I found myself listening to the music.

With CD, the music is merely background, so I rediscovered a lot of my music. That's how people will

listen to this live music, I thought. Put it out there properly, with good sound and in a way that makes people listen, then that'll work".

The purist mission started with the Scully lathe, discovered in the basement of Audio Note boss Peter Qvortrup, which, unlike most common lathes, does not have a digital preview built-in.

The latter tells the cutter what sort of signal to expect, preparing it to cut a groove to suit. Problem is, pass an analogue signal through a digital preview and it turns it into a digital signal.

Sheinman's pure analogue lathe demands a more manual, yet purist, approach that means that his is one of just a handful of studios in the world offering pure analogue mastering alongside the likes of Abbey Road and Air.

"For my tape sources, I have a Studer C-37. I bought it from Andreas Kuhn, from Switzerland, the world authority on Studer. It was also apparent that the C-37 was the Holy Grail of Studer machines.

Either that or the J-37 which is the bigger machine but it is 4-track and I don't need that. The best 2-track is the C-37. And it's valve



The Audio Note monitoring equipment.

"Audio Note boss Peter Qvortrup loaned me various Audio Note gear for me to use in mastering and monitoring in return for allowing him to send either his distributors or customers to us for demo playback" said Sheinman. "I find it also provides a more 'real world' monitoring experience. In fact, I told the acoustic engineer, who built our studio, to keep a bit of life in the back of the studio so it wasn't as dead as most monitoring studios".

"The Truth, nothing more, nothing less..."

AVID
SIN 70007
INGENIUM

TONE Audio
Magazine
2012
Publisher's Choice
Award

"This level of performance,
convenience and style makes for
an award winning product."

Jeff Dorgay, Tone Audio Magazine, January 2013

HI-FI WORLD
2013

"Oozes quality in both
construction and sound"

Paul Rigby, Hi Fi World, March 2013

Ingenium offers the same obsessive design philosophy of our more expensive designs, a ground-up construction engineered for pure audiophile performance.

The unique skeletal design offers unparalleled versatility with a huge choice of single or double arm options. Our prized sapphire bearing and platter system has been retained from the DIVA II, as has the option of using our unique clamping system, which efficiently channels unwanted vibrations away from both the record and platter.

Call today to arrange your private audition.

Analogue Seduction, 6 Manor View, Whittlesey,
Peterborough Tel: 01733 350 878

Fanthorpes, Hepworth Arcade, SilverSt, Hull, East
Riding of Yorkshire HU1 1JU Tel: 01482 223096

O'Brien Hi-fi, 60 Durham Road, West Wimbledon,
London Tel: 020 8946 1528

The Audioworks, 14 Stockport Road, Cheadle,
Cheshire, SK8 2AA Tel: 0161 428 7887

www.avidhifi.co.uk

AVID HIFI LIMITED, Bicton Industrial Park, Kimbolton, Huntingdon, Cambs, PE28 0LW



Purchased via the recent BBC, Bush House, auction, an EMT 948 turntable.
 "We also have another turntable, the EMT 948, that's the one with the plug-in circuit boards under the platter, which we got from the Bush House auctions. It was in top condition and even came with a trolley. EMTs were totally over-engineered, the best turntable ever made. They are hard to get, stable and quiet with XLR outs so, if we ever have to master direct from a transcription disc or vinyl because that's the only source, then we use the EMT, our reference deck."

CHORD CONNECTIONS

The only commercial cable used in the Gearbox studio is provided via Chord. Sarum connects the Studer.

"We did tests and put the cables at various points in the chain but they are best near the source. We also use the Chameleon cable for patching into the compressor and mastering desk and the smaller A67 into the desk.

We can also patch from Mark Ronson's room next door. He wanted to master straight to vinyl so our rooms are tied together with Chord. He can use his space for a direct-to-vinyl cut, which he did for Emily Barker".

based! Even better".

Gearbox also has a back-up reel-to-reel machine, the only Pro machine Philips ever produced, the EL-3501. It is an ex-Decca model from 1965, and almost as good as the C-37, but it's not valve-driven.

"It's based on relatively gentle, germanium transistors. A third machine, a Studer A67, was the professional incarnation of the domestic Revox A77.

We grabbed this because it has a kinder tape transport if we ever get the old fragile cine-reels, those little domestic reels.

A lot of our sources come in from that. Broadcast houses used to use them as duplicate or archive tapes".

But is this devotion to analogue worth it?

"Yes" Sheinman attests. "Vinyl,



A Scully lathe with Westrex cutting heads and amps – truly analogue.

actually, is getting so popular that all the pressing plants are in a state of over-capacity.

They are all creaking at the seams, which is a slight sorry. If vinyl keeps growing like this, we will have to see new plants, new lathes and more. The vinyl industry has been increasing from 15%-18% per annum since 2008. You can't depend on existing capacity".

Growth is also happening at the other end too. Turntable sales have shot through the roof.

"We sell the Rega RPI Performance Pack with the mini phono stage, just to get people on the road" said Sheinman.

"But Rega's order book is full. As a wholesaler, even we have to wait three to four months for stock.

That's how popular turntables have become. Other manufacturers are saying the same thing".



The legendary Studer C-37 reel-to-reel.



SIMPLY THE BEST HI-FI SHOP IN THE WORLD



For the past four decades

KJ West One has built up an enviable reputation as the leading purveyor of high-end audio products. You are invited to visit our newly refurbished Central London showroom to enjoy the world's finest sound and visual reproduction systems, represented by major international brands.

- Audeze
- Audio Research
- Chord Co.
- Constellation Audio
- Copland
- Dan D'Agostino
- Devialet
- Focal
- Harbeth
- Jadis
- Krell
- Linn
- Magico
- Magnepan
- Martin Logan
- Metronome Technologie
- Naim Audio
- Pathos
- Quad
- SME
- Sonus Faber
- Transparent Audio
- Unison Research
- Wilson Audio and more...





This German vinyl spinner, with an unusual design of arm, wins Tony Bolton's approval.

Solid slate technology

Scheu Analog (pronounced shoy) are a German turntable manufacturer based in Berlin. The company has been producing decks for twenty years and have a range that is divided into five sections. The Timbre, under review here, is the top model in the Cello Classic Line.

The deck retails for £1995 minus the arm. It is normally partnered with the Scheu Cantus 9-inch arm – £795. A twelve-inch version of this arm was reviewed by Adam Smith in the September 2008 edition of *Hi-Fi World*.

Scheu also offer their own-brand cartridges, are made for them by Benz Micro of Switzerland. The Scheu MC (£695) is wound with silver coils

inside but is otherwise very similar to my Benz Micro Ace so I used my own well run-in Ace L cartridge for this review.

On taking the deck out of the box I was immediately impressed with the looks and quality of finish to the plinth. The slate top plate had an almost wood-grain like surface which sat very neatly above the veneered cabinetry. This is supported by three pointed metal coned feet. No spike shoes were supplied so I used Blue Horizon Spike Shoes to stop the very sharp points marking my equipment support.

Assembly is fairly straightforward. The arm mounting fits into an acrylic mounting board that has a slot cut in it similar to the design of SME mountings. A usefully large

hole is underneath the arm mounting to allow a hand to fit inside the mounting to lock it into position.

The arm is an unusual acrylic gantry design that is mounted on a fine spike that forms the unipivot bearing. The counterweight (sporting a dull metal finish in contrast to the polished chrome of all other metal fittings) fits underneath the back of the arm. The mounting is offset and needs to be rotated to get the arm laterally balanced.

Since the arm and the Ace cartridge are both quite lightweight only very small movements were needed to affect quite a large change in tracking force or for arm leveling. The

The inverted ceramic platter bearing sits in a bronze housing.



Enjoy the Music.com®

Audiophile Equipment & Music Reviews
Your resource for high-end audio news & information!

Over 5,700 Web Pages
The most extensive high-end audio knowledge and news online!

Over 150 Audiophile Show Reports
No one has more worldwide show coverage on the Internet!

The Best Contests
Over \$150,000 in prizes offered to our readers!

Internet Partners With Leading Magazines

hi-fi+ the absolute sound HIFICRITIC HI-FI WORLD hifimedia

Media Partners With Major American Shows

AXPONA
AUDIO FESTO NORTH AMERICA



TAVES



www.EnjoyTheMusic.com



...if I'd wanted one of "those",
I'd have asked for one of "those"

I want a Funk!

...innovation...not imitation

www.thefunkfirm.co.uk 07846 798367 / 01273 585042



TO ADVERTISE HERE
PLEASE CALL BRAD FRANCIS ON
+44 (0) 1923 677 256
+44 (0) 771 542 1569
OR EMAIL:
advertising@hi-fiworld.co.uk



The arm is balanced on the spike in the centre of this image.

design is unusual in having no anti-skate mechanism. The manufacturers claim that the design obviates the need for it. There is also no arm rest, which I did not like.

The frosted acrylic platter sits on an inverted ceramic bearing and is driven via a nylon thread by the free-standing DC motor. This, along with its electronic power supply, is housed in a metal casing that is topped by a power and speed selector switch and two chrome knobs to fine tune the 33 and 45 rpm speeds that this deck is capable of.

The motor can be placed either to the left of the deck or behind it. In either situation a fair amount of room is required on the equipment rack since the motor unit is quite big (the base measures 146mm in diameter) while the deck, measuring 450 wide by 350mm deep, will comfortably fill most hi-fi shelving. There also needs to be a bit of space between the two to tension the drive thread.

Having got it all set up I settled down to listen to Oscar Peterson and Milt Jackson swinging a version of the traditional song 'John Brown's Body'. I have spent a lot of time listening to unipivot arms so was



The DC motor and electronic power supply are housed in a metal casework.

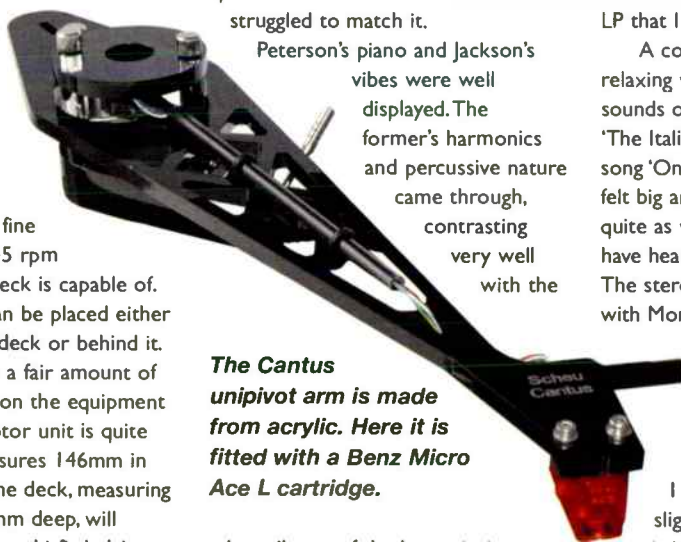
expecting the quite airy and spacious

sound that greeted my ears. The wide and deep soundstage was

no surprise at all but the amount of weight behind the quite snappily presented bass sound was not what I expected. Unipivots usually provide a very tuneful bass sound but often it lacks sheer mass. The Cantus seemed to deliver bass that not only moved fast and freely but also had some real weight behind it.

It was not in the SME class, but I have heard several conventionally-pivoted arms that would have struggled to match it.

Peterson's piano and Jackson's vibes were well displayed. The former's harmonics and percussive nature came through, contrasting very well with the



The Cantus unipivot arm is made from acrylic. Here it is fitted with a Benz Micro Ace L cartridge.

slow vibrato of the latter: Jackson tended to set the vibraphone oscillator to a speed of 3.3rpm.

I then kept the tempo fairly upbeat by putting on Banco De Gaia's 'Heliopolis'. EP. The opening track (Eedupolis Dog Mix) starts with an arpeggiated synthesizer sound that is joined by a deep bass drum thud to set the basic rhythm. A snare and bass line are then introduced before a melodic synth line takes centre stage. I found myself analysing these building blocks of the track as each appeared on a different point of the soundstage in front of me.

As the music settled into a banging trance beat of about 140bpm other sounds joined in creating a large and well-populated tonal spectrum in front of me.

It had a good sense of energy and urgency behind the rhythm that suited this type of dance music although it didn't quite have the euphonic bounce to the beat that I encountered with the considerably cheaper VPI Traveler in last month's

issue.

Unlike the Traveler, though, this deck proved very adept with classical sounds. Stravinsky recorded 'The Firebird' in its full 1910 ballet score to mark his 80th birthday in 1962 with the Columbia Symphony Orchestra. The opening growling bass strings set the tone and the speed of the attack of the violins had an urgency to them that made the music sound very exciting.

This is a mono pressing in near mint condition and, on this deck, sounded almost like a showcase for the capabilities of mono records. The sound filled the space between the speakers with a depth that extended well beyond the house walls and halfway up my driveway. It was one of the most capable renditions of this LP that I have heard.

A couple of days later I was relaxing with the smooth lounge-cool sounds of Matt Monro easing me into 'The Italian Job' soundtrack with the song 'On Days Like These'. The sound felt big and encompassing, but wasn't quite as warm in presentation as I have heard it through other decks. The stereo placement was excellent with Monro's vocals appearing just in front of the instruments and exactly in the centre of the area of carpet in front of me.

Throughout my listening I felt that there was a very slight tendency to a little brightness in the upper mid-band which would account for the excellent presentation of vocalists and solo instruments. I didn't find it intrusive and I felt that the overall tonal balance of the sound was correct. I liked the zesty presentation of rhythms and the fact that this deck seemed to deal with every genre of music that I played through it in an even-handed manner.

I would not describe it as having a warm sound, but neither was it cold or sterile. However owners of unemotional sounding systems who wish to richen up the sound of their hi-fis might find this deck less suited to their needs than other models. I would call it a cool-headed presentation of music that was respectful of thoughtful sounds and had an ability to transmit the energy behind rhythms accurately.

In a way it sounds rather like it looks; striking but slightly understated, as a lot of good quality designs are. Definitely one for the audition list.

MUSIC USED

Stravinsky. 'Stravinsky Conducts Stravinsky/ The Firebird'. Columbia Symphony Orchestra. Columbia Masterworks. ML 5728. 1962

The Oscar Peterson Trio with Milt Jackson. 'Very Tall.' Verve Records. VLP 9002. 1961.

Quincy Jones/ Various Artists. 'The Italian Job Soundtrack.' Paramount Records. SPFL 256. 1969.

Banco de Gaia. 'Heliopolis. The City Of The Sun Remixes.' Planet Dog Records. BARK004T. 1994.

SYSTEM USED

Benz Micro Ace L cartridge. Leema Acoustics Agena phonostage and Tucana II amplifier. Chario Ursa Major loudspeakers

SCHEU ANALOG TIMBRE TURNTABLE AND CANTUS ARM £2790



EXCELLENT - extremely capable

VERDICT

Solidly built, well finished and with good looks, offering a slightly cool headed presentation of music.

FOR

- zesty rhythms
- very big soundstage
- excellent imaging

AGAINST

- no arm rest
- fiddly set up

Coolgales
+44 (0)800 043 6710
+44 (0) 1225 478400
www.coolgales.com

Emporiumhifi

www.emporiumhifi.com

we now have 3 branches
 Head Office based on Suffolk/Norfolk border 01508 518542 01508 518468
 Kent and south East 01304 239419 - Wales and West 01554 750262
 emporiumhifi@yahoo.co.uk

LATEST USED EQUIPMENT

AMPLIFIERS, DACs, PHONO STAGES

AFFORDABLE VALVE COMPANY KTT88 HIGH END INTEGRATED VALVE AMP	Suffolk	£700
ALMARRO 5012A VALVE INTEGRATED AMP	Suffolk	£1,500
ANATEK CM0.5 PASSIVE PREAMP WITH REMOTE CONTROL	Suffolk	£450
ARCAM A85 INTEGRATED AMP	Suffolk	£350
ARIAND PRO845 MK 1V SINGLE-ENDED INTEGRATED VALVE AMPLIFIER	Kent	£999
AUDIO INOVATIONS 200 VALVE PREAMP WITH MM PHONO STAGE	Suffolk	£325
AUDIO INNOVATIONS 500 INTEGRATED VALVE AMPLIFIER WITH BUILT IN PHONOSTAGE	Suffolk	£600
AUDIO INNOVATIONS L2 VALVE PRE AMP, BORDER PATROL UPGRADE	Suffolk	£575
AUDIO RESEARCH CLASSIC 80 VALVE POWER AMPLIFIER	Suffolk	£1,500
AUDIO SYNTHESIS DESIRE DECADE POWER AMPLIFIER	Suffolk	£1,150
BURSON AUDIO TIME KEEPER POWER AMP	Suffolk	£850
CEC AMP3300 INTEGRATED SINGLE-ENDED AMPLIFIER	Kent	£350
COUNTERPOINT SA20 HYBRID 220 WATT MOSFET VALVE POWER AMP - UPGRADED	Suffolk	£1,000
CYRUS PSX-R POWER SUPPLY, IN QUARTZ	Suffolk	£300
EAR 834 L LINE VALVE PREAMPLIFIER	Kent	£575
EAR 856 VALVE SINGLE ENDED INTEGRATED VALVE AMP	Suffolk	£1,250
EASTERN ELECTRIC PREAMPLIFIER -WITH BORDER PATROL POWER SUPPLY	Suffolk	£700
GAMMA ERA REFERENCE VALVE PREAMP	Suffolk	£850
GAMMA SPACE REFERENCE VALVE AMP 300B	Suffolk	£1,400
GRAAF GM 13.5B MK1 - LINE VALVE PREAMPLIFIER	Wales	£1,400
HEART BEAT 300B SINGLE ENDED VALVE MONOBLOCKS	Suffolk	£950
HEART LINSTAGE VALVE PREAMP	Suffolk	£400
PAIR OF LEAK TL12+ POWER AMPLIFIERS, SERVICED AND WORKING	Suffolk	£1,000
LEAK STEREO 20 VALVE AMPLIFIER WITH MAJOR UPGRADES	Suffolk	£800
LEAK TL12 1 MONOBLOCKS, SERVICED	Suffolk	£5,000
MERIDIAN 565 POWER AMP	Suffolk	£400
MUSICAL FIDELITY A1 FINAL EDITION INTEGRATED AMP BOXED, WITH BUILT IN MM/MC	Suffolk	£700
MUSICAL FIDELITY M6i INTEGRATED AMP	Suffolk	£1,750
MUSICAL FIDELITY X-A2 AMPLIFIER WITH PSU	Suffolk	£350
NAIM NAC 62 PRE AMPLIFIER	Suffolk	£300
NVO SPA ONE PHONOSTAGE	Suffolk	£2,222
PARASOUND MC275 POWER AMP	Suffolk	£375
PERRAUX SM3 PREAMP WITH BUILT-IN PHONOSTAGE	Suffolk	£900
QUAD 89 MONOBLOCK AMPS (PAIR)	Wales	£700
ROGUE MAGNUM CROWN K1120 VALVE AMPLIFIER	Suffolk	£1,150
ROKSAN KANDY KMA 2/3 MKII POWER AMPLIFIER	Kent	£450
SHUGUANG 300B-Z 'TREASURE' VALVES (PAIR)	Kent	£285
TECHNICS SU-C800UM2 PRE AMP & SE-A900SM2 POWER AMPLIFIER	Suffolk	£500
TRAFOMATIC EXPERIENCE ELEGANCE 6550 VALVE AMP	Suffolk	£2,300
TRAFOMATIC EXPERIENCE LINE ONE VALVE PRE-AMP	Suffolk	£1,400
TRI TRV-84HD HEADPHONE AMPLIFIER	Suffolk	£750
TRILOGY 900 VALVE PREAMP WITH BUILT-IN MM PHONO STAGE	Suffolk	£350
TRILOGY 948 POWER AMP - VALVE AMPLIFIER	Suffolk	£750
TUBE TECHNOLOGY UNISIS INTEGRATED VALVE AMPLIFIER	Kent	£900
VERITAS P400 240WATT POWER AMP	Suffolk	£700
YAQUIN MS 300B SINGLE ENDED INTEGRATED VALVE AMP	Suffolk	£500

CD PLAYERS

ARCAM FMJ CD37 CD PLAYER	Suffolk	£700
AUDIO NOTE CD ZERO VALVE CD PLAYER	Suffolk	£900
AUDIOLAB 8000CDM CD TRANSPORT	Suffolk	£350
AUDIONOTE DAC 1 SIGNATURE	Suffolk	£550
CALYX AUDIO 24/192 DAC	Wales	£1,200
COPLAND CDA822 CDPLAYER	Suffolk	£800
COPLAND CDA823 CDPLAYER	Suffolk	£1,000
EASTERN ELECTRIC MINIMAX VALVE CD PLAYER	Suffolk	£600
EXPOSURE 2010S CD PLAYER	Suffolk	£300
FURUTECH ADL GT40 USB DAC/HEADPHONE AMPLIFIER	Suffolk	£250
JUNGSON HEDO CD PLAYER	Suffolk	£550
LECTOR CDPO-6T VALVE CD PLAYER	Kent	£850
LECTOR DIGITUBE 24/96 VALVE DAC	Suffolk	£795
MERIDIAN 207 CD/PIRE	Suffolk	£325
MICRO SEIKI CD PLAYER	Suffolk	£700
NEODIO NR22 HD CD PLAYER - LATEST SPEC- USB SOCKET	Suffolk	£5,500
PINK TRIANGLE ORDINAL DAC	Suffolk	£340
ROKSAN ROK-DP1 CD TRANSPORT	Suffolk	£450
SHANLING CDT-80 VALVE CD PLAYER	Suffolk	£350
SIM MOON EQUINOX CD PLAYER	Suffolk	£700
STELLO DA220 DAC NEW OLD STOCK- 1 YEAR GUARANTEE	Suffolk	£1,000
THETA DS PRO PRIME DAC	Suffolk	£350
VINCENT CD-S6 VALVE CD PLAYER	Suffolk	£750
WADIA DIGIMASTER X32 DAC	Suffolk	£400

SPEAKERS

ACAPELLA CAMPANILE SPEAKERS	Suffolk	£15,000
ACAPELLA FIDELIO LOUDSPEAKERS	Suffolk	£1,200
ACOUSTIC ENERGY AE1 REFERENCE MK 3 PIANO BLACK, BOXED	Suffolk	£1,350
ART EXPRESSION V6 FLOORSTANDING SPEAKERS	Suffolk	£950
ATC C4 ACTIVE SUBWOOFER PIANO BLACK	Suffolk	£1,750
ATC SCM10-2 LOUDSPEAKER STUDIO MONITORS - EXCELLENT, BOXED, PAIR	Suffolk	£800
CHARIO CONSTELLATION DELPHINUS SPEAKERS, BOXED, WITH STANDS	Suffolk	£1,000
EPOS M5i IN CHERRY - EX DEMO, BOXED	Suffolk	£300
EPOS M12i AVAILABLE IN CHERRY, RED CHERRY AND BLACK OAK	Suffolk	£390
KAPPA INFINITY 9 SPEAKERS	Suffolk	£1,000
IMF PROFESSIONAL MONITORS MK1's TRANSMISSION LINE LOUDSPEAKERS	Suffolk	£550
IMF TLS80 MKII LOUDSPEAKERS	Suffolk	£595
JIM ROGERS JR149 LOUDSPEAKERS- BOXED	Suffolk	£375
KLIPSCH HERESY II LOUDSPEAKERS	Suffolk	£550
LAKE AUDIO MODEL 2POINT 2, WITH RIBBON TWEETERS	Suffolk	£375
LSA AUDIO GROUP LSA 2 LOUDSPEAKERS (USA) BLACK ASH	Kent	£1,100
LOVINGTON HORN SPEAKERS WITH FOSTEX DRIVERS	Suffolk	£595
MERIDIAN M20 SPEAKERS, PAIR	Suffolk	£400
NIGHTINGALE CONCENTUS CTR II LOUDSPEAKERS	Suffolk	£3500
QUAD 12L2 AVAILBLE IN CHERRY, MAPLE OR BLACK	Suffolk	£320
QUAD 22L2 LOUDSPEAKERS	Suffolk	£920
QUAD 9L ACTIVE SPEAKERS IN PURPLE, NEW, UNUSED	Suffolk	£300
QUAD ESL 83 ELECTROSTATIC LOUDSPEAKERS - SERVICED	Suffolk	£1,000
QUAD ESL 969 ELECTROSTATIC SPEAKERS	Suffolk	£1950
REL STENTOR III SUB	Suffolk	£1,250
ROKSAN OJAN 3X SPEAKERS & 3S SUB	Suffolk	£800
SPENDOR SA1 SPEAKERS WITH STANDS	Suffolk	£1,000
SUNFIRE CRM-2 LOUDSPEAKERS CHERRY	Suffolk	£700
WLM DUO 15 PASSIVE SUBWOOFER	Suffolk	£1,200

TURNTABLES, TONEARMS, CARTRIDGES

CARTRIDGE MAN MUSIC MAKER II CARTRIDGE	Kent	£400
CLEARAUDIO UNIFY 12" CARBON TONEARM	Suffolk	£899
CODA 06X FET MM/MC PHONOSTAGE- BOXED	Kent	£1,250
DECCA LONDON GOLD - GARROTT BROTHERS RE-TIPPED CARTRIDGE	Kent	£400
DECCA LONDON - GARROTT BROTHER MICROSCANNER CARTRIDGE	Kent	£400
FUNK FXR-II (SME SILVER WIRED) TONEARM	Kent	£1,150
FUNK FIRM VECTOR III TURNTABLE	Kent	£850
GARRARD 301 OIL BEARING GOOD WORKING ORDER	Suffolk	£900
GARRARD 401 - GOOD WORKING ORDER	Suffolk	£500
INSPIRE APOLLO TURNTABLE WITH CUSTOM MADE LID AND UPGRADE EXTERNAL PSU	Suffolk	£875
INSPIRE HIFI LINN LP12 VIVID UPGRADE	Wales	£899
KSEKI PURPLEHEART MC CARTRIDGE (REBUILT)	Kent	£1,100
KOETSU BLACK GOLDLINE MOVING COIL CARTRIDGE, NEW, UNUSED	Suffolk	£1,500
KUZMA STOGI S 12 12" TONERAM, MINT, BOXED	Suffolk	£800
LINN LP12 SONDEK/CIRKUS/HEED ORBIT	Wales	£1,000
LUMLEY HELIOSPHERE TURNTABLE	Kent	£1500
ORACLE DELPHI IV WITH TURBO PSU	Suffolk	£1,500
ORIGIN LIVE ILLUSTRIOUS MK1 TONEARM	Kent	£900
ORTOFON INFLUENCED RMJ 309 12" TONEARM- GOLDPLATED VERSION	Suffolk	£800
QT IOTA SIGNATURE REFERENCE, BALANCED PHONOSTAGE MM/MC	Suffolk	£500
ROKSAN TMS 3 TURNTABLE WITH REFERENCE PSU	Suffolk	£4,250
SME 3012 TONEARM	Suffolk	£760
SME V TONEARM- BOXED	Suffolk	£1,495
SUGDEN MASTERCLASS PHONOSTAGE MM/MC	Suffolk	£700
SUPEX 900 MK IV MOVING COIL CARTRIDGE	Suffolk	£350
TRAFOMATIC EXPERIENCE PHONO ONE VALVE MC PHONOSTAGE	Suffolk	£1,400
TRANSCRIPTOR SPYDER TURNTABLE	Kent	£750
TRANSFIGURATION AXIA MOVING COIL CARTRIDGE, NEW, UNUSED	Suffolk	£800
VPI HW27 TYPHOON RECORDED CLEANING MACHINE, BOXED	Suffolk	£995
WELL TEMPERED SIMPLEX TURNTABLE	Wales	£1,250

MISCELLANEOUS

ACCU PHASE 106 TUNER, EXCELLENT	Suffolk	£425
AKAI GX95 CASSETTE DECK, BOXED	Suffolk	£300
MERIDIAN 565 DIGITAL SURROUND PROCESSOR (K	Kent	£375
NAGRA IV-S STEREO REEL TO REEL	Suffolk	£1,400
REVOX A700 4 TRACK REEL TO REEL	Suffolk	£1,000
REVOX B77 2 TRACK REEL TO REEL - SERVICED	Suffolk	£500
FANFARE FT1 TUNER WITH REMOTE CONTROL	Suffolk	£300
KRELL HTS HOME THEATRE STANDARD	Suffolk	£900
QSONIX Q100 MUSIC SERVER UPGRADED TO Q110	Suffolk	£700
TRY TRV 84HD VALVE HEADPHONE AMP	Suffolk	£750

WE WANT TO BUY YOUR OLD HIFI

We pay cash and can pick up from anywhere in the UK.
 We can even send you packing materials,

WE WANT TO BUY YOUR RECORD COLLECTION

CALL NOW FOR A QUOTE

Jazz Colours

Coming from classical roots with added jazz and pop flavourings, Paul Rigby talks to Anne Bisson about music and how she became an audiophile.

How many classically trained pianists and singers have hosted a top TV dating game? Tough one, isn't it? You'll have to go as far as Canada to find one. Montreal-based Anne Bisson's childhood was soaked in classical music. Mozart, Bach, Beethoven and various shades of opera were the daily diet until a boarding school regime saw Bisson take to the piano.

"I discovered jazz around seventeen or eighteen when I entered Montreal University" said Bisson, talking from her home in Montreal. "I

tell stories through my lyrics. I love communication so that was a perfect combination".

But the demanding practice routines of classical proved too much for Bisson.

"I got lost a little bit, musically speaking" she said "because I was chosen to be a TV host for a huge TV show here in Montreal, in French. It was a sort of dating game show. I became a big star. It pulled me from my musical priorities. I was twenty-five or twenty-six. Then I moved onto a children's show but I was allowed to write the music for it, which was great. Yet, it wasn't enough. I wanted to make a record.. Music is my first love".

In 2001, Bisson returned to University to take a course in classical singing. "I wanted my voice to be as strong as it could be. It might not be very powerful but it's precise. It also provided confidence for me. After all, it had been twenty years since I was heavily involved in music."

In 2005, Bisson began a busy period of songwriting that led her to track down the right producer for her upcoming LP 'Blue Mind'. A chap named Guy St-Onge, who had previously produced David Bowie, Celine Dion and Michael LeGrand, encouraged Bisson to bring her songs to the studio where she would meet both bass player (Normand Guilbeault) and drummer (Paul Brochu, noted as one of the ten best drummers in the world). There and then, they would record. No previous meetings. No rehearsals.

"I panicked!" declared Bisson. "I said that I needed to rehearse with these people but Guy refused and we recorded 'Blue Mind' in just two days".

This album reinforced Bisson's evolving, eclectic style that was moving towards a combination of jazz, pop and folk.

A three year project, 'Blue Mind' was initially released on Fidelio, a small audiophile company, in 2008, although the 'audiophile' term meant nothing to Bisson. Until, that is, the label invited

Bisson to a hi-fi show in Montreal during that same year. The experience was a good one, encouraging her to attend the following year when she began talking to turntable outfit Oracle.

"They offered to take me to the Toronto show and encouraged me to bring some records. Oracle started to play my albums on their turntables, which prompted queries from their

"I realised what type of piano that I wanted to play as soon as I heard Bill Evans, Keith Jarrett and Chick Corea. Bill Evans is my mentor. Those chords and combinations! There's no Major seventh in classical music. Harmonically speaking, it's very different ... sometimes you can find these colours in Debussy's music and some improvisations in Chopin. These represented freedom of movement".



audience. I subsequently sold quite a few records on that weekend. Since then, I have visited many hi-fi shows plus CES. Now, I have been invited to the Munich show, which I hope to attend.

I like to appear at the shows. I'm not doing this to be famous – I've already been that – but to meet the people. I've been lucky to receive support for my albums from the industry too. Sim Audio were major sponsors for both of my albums, 'Portraits & Perfumes' and 'Blue Mind'. Without Moon, I wouldn't be there. Sennheiser also provided equipment for the album production".

The album itself has a beautifully quiet backdrop, while Bisson's considered and emotional delivery will have fans of Diana Krall rushing to their wallets.

FREE GIVEAWAY! (UK ONLY)

We have five autographed CDs and five autographed vinyl LPs (180g audiophile pressing) of Blue Mind to give away.

Winners chosen by a blind draw from first batch of cards received. One disc per winner. Multiple entries disqualified. Terms and Conditions as per our Competition, see page 21.

For a chance to win one of these prizes, send your name, address, e-mail, and preference – LP or CD – on a post-card only, by June 6th, to:

Anne Bisson Giveaway,
Hi-Fi World magazine,
Studio 204,
Buspace Studio,
Conlan Street,
Notting Hill,
London W10 5AP



"Since 'Blue Mind', I have released another 'Portraits & Perfumes'. This features a host of cover versions including The Beatles' 'With a Little Help From My Friends' and Pink Floyd's 'Us And Them' but people tend to prefer 'Blue Mind' because it is a much more personal album and less eclectic. I was going through a tough period in my life with my family. 'Blue Mind' reflects this. It's not a dark album but it's emotional"

was playing Debussy, Ravel, Prokofiev and so on, but jazz was so different. I hardly finished my degree in classical piano because I already had one foot in jazz".

Writing songs with a jazz twist, Bisson hit success after winning a talent contest at the age of twenty-two, run by the national TV broadcasting station CBC.

"I then had a chance to sing my songs on national television. That was the kick. I said to myself that I wanted to write music. I wanted to



USB CREDIT CARD

Bisson sells her music on LP and CD via external distributors, and as downloads via iTunes. She also offers hi-res versions of her work via her own website on the relatively little known credit card-shaped USB flash drives. They are ideal for Bisson because they can hold attractive artwork, something a USB stick cannot provide. She currently uses 2GB flash cards. "Fidelio had some and that's how I began to use them. Their cards aren't as nice as mine, though! I use my own graphic designer to decorate the cards. They are available for all of my albums. 'Blue Mind' is available as 24bit/96kHz, 'Portraits & Perfumes' as 24bit/88kHz and my forthcoming, new album, 'Tales From The Treetops' will be 24bit/192kHz.

free reader Classifieds

TERMS AND CONDITIONS: Only one advert per reader. No Trade adverts. This section is strictly for readers selling secondhand hi-fi equipment only. Maximum length per advert is 30 words, Adverts over 30 words will not be accepted. Telephone numbers and E-mail addresses are treated as one word. Model numbers are treated as one word i.e. Quad 303 = two words. Email your advert to; classifieds@hi-fiworld.co.uk or fill in the form on page 97 and post it to Hi-Fi World Free Readers Ads, Studio 204, Buspace Studio, Conlan Street, Notting Hill, London W10 5AP. Sorry, we cannot accept adverts over the telephone. The Publisher reserves the right to judge submissions.

BRACKNELL 2014 Hi-Fi sales event. Now its fifth year held here. Bracknell Leisure Center, Bracknell, Bucks, RG12 9SE. On Sunday 1st of June 2014. A good mix of vintage, and modern hi-fi. £2.00 admission between 10 am - 2.30 pm. For more details phone 07846-002164.

DENON DVD 2500BT BCDE Blu-ray transport for sale. Excellent condition. Silver, original packaging. £200. Tel: 07538 774946 (Northants)

WANTED: VINTAGE Armstrong 621 amp, 623/624 tuner or receiver 625/626. What have you. Tel: Gareth 01938 553 559 (Welshpool)

A PAIR of Tannoy 125T Oxford speakers for sale. Good condition. Any sensible offers considered. Tel: 01784 470 038

YAMAHA YP51 I DD turntable £80. Wharfedale Diamond Mk1 speakers £45. Philips CD850Mk2 CD, remote, £70. Aiwa Excellia 009 cassette deck £175. Armstrong 625 receiver £45. Pioneer PL12D £50. Tel: 01708 457 691

HI-FI ENTHUSIAST is looking to buy both vintage and modern audio equipment. Unfinished projects welcome. Will travel, cash waiting. 0117 946 7188 slkw@btinternet.com

CHORD COBRA interconnects £50 ono. Russ Andrews Silencer block with Mega clamp, classic Powercord. £280 ono. Six-way Isotek Solus, six outlets, £350 ono. Tel: Graham, 6pm, 01482 641 261

AUDION SILVER Night 300B single ended. Five line input (1997). Fitted with TJ Mesh Plate 300B tube and Border Patrol P/S. Excellent. £1200 ono. Tel: 020 7263 5700 after 7pm

AUDIOLAB 8200 CDQ, as new, latest OLED model, only removed from box to test. Offers. Meridian 557 power amp, 200 watts, mint, £800. Tel: Phil 07973 426 291

YAMAHA DSP AX 863SE A/V amplifier. Good working order. Hardly used. Best offer over £250. 39 Laser Discs. Ring 01270 619 387 for details. Sell as one pack = £5 each.

ONE PAIR Aerial Acoustics 10T loudspeakers in rosewood. Price new £8000. Good condition. £2200. Tel: 01252 614 055 or Email: pamelasines@hotmail.com

AUDIO TECHNICA AT32EII MC cartridge. Very good condition, light use, £90. Nakamichi BX1 cassette, recent full service, £70. Quad 405 upgraded, £160. Will demonstrate each item. Tel: 01277 219 639 (Brentwood, Essex)

LINN LP12, Lingo PSU, Trampolin Ekos arm, complete with Clearaudio cartridge and head amp. Offers £900. 1,000 LPs, limited editions, direct cut, jazz, classical, pop. Tel: Frank 0113 229 7524 (Leeds)

STAX SR-007 Omega Reference System. i.e. SR-007 electrostatic ear speaker with matching SRM-00711 direct coupled dual triode vacuum tube energiser. Original owner, absolutely new. £2200 ono. Tel: 01505 346 791 (Renfrewshire)

ROGERS LS3/5A speakers, black ash, boxed, booklet. £950. Tel: 07846 401 566

REGA BRIO amplifier, two years old, moderate usage, £300. Monitor Audio BX5 floorstanders, perfect condition, two years old, £250. Tel: Steve 07908 945 608 (Battersea, London)

WANTED: SPENDOR SP2Mk1 200mm polypropylene bass/mid unit and Wvand arm for Audio Technica AT1100 arm. Dynavector Karat 17D3, less than 100 hours use. Offers. Tel: Toni 07971 953 628

TRICHORD DINO Phono Stage/Power Supply +. Little used, in excellent condition. All original packaging and instructions. £325.00 ono. Phone: 01323 832043 or Email: john.harris61@btopenworld.com

KIMBER SELECT 9033 jumper set with super burn-in, £250. Kimber Orchid digital XLR 1/2m, £130. Kimber HD19 HDMI cable, 0.75m, £50. Isotek Sigmus G11, £950. Tel: 01772 314 151

ATC SIA2 150 in perfect condition. Superb sound, very powerful. Cost £2500 new. Selling for £1250. Tel: 01225 706 783 ask for Lee

SONUS FABER Concertino speakers with Sonus Faber Piano Black fluted stands in excellent condition, with original boxes, £695.00 Musical Fidelity X-Dac v3 £250. Pr 3mtr bespoke Silver High Breed Quintessence speaker cabled, banana termination, £95 Tel: Coventry 02476 679165 or 07968 769595

IPL S4 TRANSMISSION line speakers in mahogany veneer. Fitted with latest drive units (check IPL website for details) £200. Tel: 020 8670 9634 (South London)

QUAD 405 power amp. In good working condition. £150 cash. Pick up from South London. Call Rick: 07931 526 106.

SUGDEN CD2ISE high end CD player excellent condition £750 4m pair Nordost Blue Heaven Revision 2 speaker cables excellent condition £300. As new Cambridge Audio 640C CD Player. £125 07809 408774

REGA P7 Turntable with Rega RB700 arm Rega power supply and Reson Mica cartridge. Original packaging £675.00 . Telephone Mark 01392 420316 (Exeter)

3 RUSS ANDREWS
Signature Powerkords, 1m length, Wattgate 350i plugs. Mint condition, RRP £400. £285 each or £845 for all 3, cheaper if collected. Tel: 01902 884694 Email: jukey39@yahoo.co.uk

CABLES CHORD Indigo Plus Digital 2M RCA too RCA £300 and 3M of same £350 excellent condition can demo. Upgraded to tuned array. Tel 02380470107. Email lesliestubbs@tiscali.co.uk

MUSICAL FIDELITY A308CR CD Player £695: Attractive all silver appearance. These were £2000 when new. Owned by me from new, less than 100 hours use, still pristine, unmarked (kept covered by a dust sheet) as new, with original box, remote and instructions. Protected in an audio rack in my smoke and pet free home. Very happy to demonstrate. Mike (Cheshire) 07500 804700 michael.yates7@ntlworld.com

POWER SUPPLY for Class A amplifiers, self contained, suits John Linsley Hood's or any low power Class A amplifier, £279. Pair of used SEAS 10 inch drivers, £99. Tel:- 0207 499 8729.

CLASSICAL LP's FOR SALE - private collection. Over 2000. Many highly rated performances. All in really excellent condition. £2 each; reduction for quantities. View Maidenhead. Please contact Colin 07804782950 Email: hope.colin@yahoo.co.uk

PROAC Studio 140 Mk1 floor stand speakers in Maple. Due to weight, buyer collects. Unmarked A1 condition. £750 Tel: 07597 499299 Hampshire

WANTED: GOOD quality speaker cable (~2x4m) to upgrade from my QED Silver anniversary. Anything considered but nothing too expensive. Will pay reasonable costs, postage etc. Please email grant.cameron3@gmail.com

ARCAM A38 integrated amplifier £775; Arcam CD37 CD player £775; Arcam T32 FM/DAB tuner £399. All units are in a black finish and in excellent unmarked condition and perfect working order. Each unit has it's own remote control, manual and original box. Also Roksan Kandy K2 integrated amplifier £550 and K2 CD player £550. Both units as new and with latest remote control RMX-111 (these cost £131 each), manuals and original boxes. Please tel. 023 8073 8935 or Email golf3385@hotmail.co.uk

REGA BRIO 3 stereo amplifier in silver. Boxed. Very good condition and working order. £150. Email: pspendley.ps@gmail.com

EXPOSURE DR 4 newer logo serviced 2 years ago 2.9m loudspeaker cable £850 Tannoy 12 silver monitors c/w tone controls black rectangular cabinets smaller than Lancasters £2,500. Email: brance.williams@virgin.net

ORTOFON KONTRAPUNKT 'b' with broken cantilever. Still has £200.00 trade in value or possibly, repairable £100.00 ono. Have acquired a NOS 'b' so not needed. Tel: 07813 141455 Email: chas@crunderhay.co.uk.

TANNOY ARDEN Monitor Gold, 15" speakers purchased 1976. Good condition for age . Selling due to downsizing home. Sensible offers please and buyer collects. location Lincolnshire. Tel 01652679041.

CHAMPAGNE MARANTZ PM 7200 KI Amplifier in Mint fully working order. C/W KI certificate, remote, manual & packing carton. £300. Tel 07505920373 Warrington area.

TANNOY REVOLUTION RV3 floor standing speakers in Cherry finish these are in excellent condition. £140.00 Boxed. Upgrade forces sale Pick up preferred All reasonable offers will be considered. Contact details Tel: 07917221033. Email: nigelsach42@tiscali.co.uk

TOM EVANS
MicroGroove + Phonostage with Lithos PS Mint as new £450.00 o.n.o. LFD PA2M Power amp £900.00 o.n.o Excellent condition Can demonstrate, call for full details (Bedfordshire) T: 07870 912 963. Email: stuartdarshan67@googlemail.com

MUSICAL FIDELITY A308CR Pre-amplifier £695: Extremely well reviewed. Attractive all silver appearance and was excellent value even when new at £1500. Owned by me from new, less than 100 hours use, still pristine, unmarked (kept covered by a dust sheet) as new, with original box, remote and instructions. Protected in an audio rack in my smoke and pet free home. Very happy to demonstrate. Mike (Cheshire) 07500 804700 michael.yates7@ntlworld.com

PMC GB1 compact floorstanding loudspeakers, immaculate cherry veneer, in original boxes, £450. Tel: 01403 255153 Email: richermail@aol.com (West Sussex)

WANTED FAULTY or non working Quad 34 and 44 preamps. Denon mc transformers AU310 or AU320. Contact Mike 01758 613790.

AMERICAN CLASSICS McIntosh 5100 amplifier. McIntosh MR77 tuner Dahlquist DQ10 speakers. Sota Star Sapphire vacuum turntable. Fidelity Research 64X arm. Briar cartridge. Infinity Reference Standard 4.5 speakers. London John 01923 824501 herrning@aol.com

RAY SAMUELS F117 Nighthawk battery powered phonostage £300 no offers North London (07930878582) after 6pm

CUSTOM DESIGN wall mounted turntable support black steel frame toughened glass shelf complete with all fixings in as new condition offers please 01293 524587 West Sussex

MUSICAL FIDELITY A3.2 RDS Tuner £295: Attractive all silver appearance. Owned by me from new, less than 100 hours use, still pristine, unmarked (kept covered by a dust sheet) as new, with original box, remote and instructions. Protected in an audio rack in my smoke and pet free home. Very happy to demonstrate. Mike (Cheshire) 07500 804700 michael.yates7@ntlworld.com

HI-FI ENTHUSIAST is looking to buy both vintage and modern audio equipment. Unfinished projects welcome. Will travel, cash waiting. 0117 946 7188 slkw@btinternet.com

BRACKNELL 2014 Hi-Fi sales event. Now its fifth year held here. Bracknell Leisure Center, Bracknell, Bucks, RG12 9SE. On Sunday 1st of June 2014. A good mix of vintage, and modern hi-fi. £2.00 admission between 10 am - 2.30 pm. For more details phone 07846-002164.

ROGERS LS3/5A speakers, black ash, boxed, booklet. £950. Tel: 07846 401 566

NEXT MONTH
JULY 2014 ISSUE



MCINTOSH MA8000 AMPLIFIER.

This mighty American amplifier – a two-man lift – aims to drive loudspeakers with the brute force of a Mac truck. It looks the part and we are finding it sounds the part as we audition it at Hi-Fi World towers. Not only is the MA8000 a transistor amplifier with massive muscle, it is also has digital inputs – and output transformers. Yikes! Read all about it in our next issue.

Also, we hope to bring you –

ASTELL&KERN AK240 HI RES DIGITAL PORTABLE PLAYER

OPPO PM-1 PLANAR MAGNETIC HEADPHONES

SONY HAP-Z1ES HIGH RES DIGITAL PLAYER

MAGNAPLANAR 1.7 LOUDSPEAKERS

CAMBRIDGE AUDIO XS USB/DAC

ROTH OLI RA2 LOUDSPEAKERS

EAT E-GLO PHONOSTAGE

ARCAM IRDAC

BEATLES FEATURE - 2ND PART

REEL-TO-REEL TAPE FEATURE

...and much more.

This is a selection of what we hope to bring you, not a complete list. We regret that due to a wide range of issues, such as failure under review, we cannot guarantee that all products listed above will appear.



**PICK UP THE JULY 2014 ISSUE OF HI-FI WORLD ON SALE MAY 30TH 2014,
OR SUBSCRIBE AND GET IT DELIVERED TO YOUR DOOR! SEE PAGE 54**

FREE READER CLASSIFIED ADS ORDER FORM

STOP PRESS

ADVERTISERS INDEX

2nd Hand HiFi	70
Absolute Sound	OBC
Avid HiFi	86
Basically Sound	82
Billy Vee	82
Black Rhodium	24, 38
Chord Company	IFC
Clarity	72
Emporium	92
Enjoy The Music.Com	90
Epiphany Acoustics	82
Graham Slee	68
Heathdale Audio	82
Henley Designs	20,42,60,74
HiFi Sound	70
Ian Harrison	84
Icon Audio	22
Inspire Hi-Fi	68
Jordan Acoustics	64,65
KEF	18
KJ West One	88
Mains Cables R Us	38
Music First	84
Pure	14
Q.A.T	6
Retro Reproduction	84
Robson Acoustics	26
Sevenoaks	75,76,77
SME	24
Sounds Fowndations	52
Sugden	16
Tellurium Q	12
The Funk Firm	90
Turntable World	70
Usher	IBC

TERMS AND CONDITIONS: Only one advert per reader. Maximum length per advert is 30 words, Adverts over 30 words will not be accepted. No Trade Adverts. This section is strictly for readers selling secondhand hi-fi equipment only. Telephone numbers and E-mail addresses are treated as one word. Model numbers are treated as one word i.e. Quad 303 = two words. Sorry, we cannot accept adverts over the telephone. The Publisher reserves the right to judge submissions.

You can email your advert to us at: classifieds@hi-fiworld.co.uk or write or type your advertisement copy in block capitals with one word per box and post it to us at:

Hi-Fi World Free Readers Ads,
Studio 204,
Buspace Studio,
Conlan Street,
London W10 5AP

We cannot accept adverts over the telephone

1	2
3	4
5	6
7	8
9	10
11	12
13	14
15	16
17	18
19	20
21	22
23	24
25	26
27	28
29	30

Name: _____

Address: _____

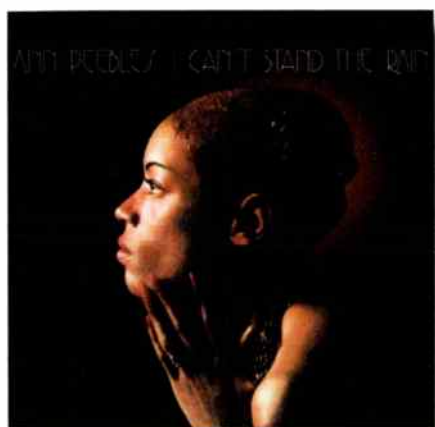
Post Code: _____

Daytime Tel: _____

FREE READER CLASSIFIED ADVERTS COPY DEADLINES
 JULY 2014 ISSUE - 6TH MAY
 AUGUST 2014 ISSUE - 4TH JUNE

ANN PEEBLES

I CAN'T STAND THE RAIN 1974



"She was the epitome of girl power - although this was more Aretha Franklin than the Spice Girls"

Ann Peebles continues to make an impact on the music scene: due both to her strong soul musical legacy and her attitude. She was the epitome of girl power. Although this 'girl power' was more Aretha Franklin than Spice Girls.

The best female singer on the Hi Records label, she came from a gospel background. With her father a minister and her mother a singer, Ann Peebles sang, at a young age, in her father's church choir and on the gospel circuit with her father's group the Peebles Choir.

Ann Peebles will always be associated firstly with this album and the title track from the same by music fans...and professionals. For example, former Free, Bad Company and now Queen frontman, Paul Rodgers covers the song on his new album, 'The Royal Sessions'. "The reason we recorded that song was because I saw the master in the studio and I asked about it. Charles Hodges [Peebles' organist] said "Oh, yeah. She recorded that song right here in this studio and we were the band.". I said, "Oh my gosh, can we try that one?" and he said "Absolutely". So, we did our own version and it made it onto the album".

John Lennon famously quoted the song as one of his favourites. In fact, he was in the audience for an Ann Peebles gig, in the early seventies, with Harry Nilsson at the Troubadour Club, during his infamous Lost Weekend of drink and drug jaunts. The pair were witnessed singing the song in barbershop quartet harmony fashion.

Released in 1974 on the Memphis-based Hi Records label, much of the album was co-written by Peebles, mostly with her husband, Don Bryant.

In fact, seven of the ten tracks on this album have Ann Peebles' name down as a song credit.

The music itself was based upon a sparse, laid-back funk with the characteristic high rhythm section that integrated both the brass and string sections to their best effect. Peebles' own vocal combined bubbling emotion, suppressed to a steaming potential. After all, this is a song and an album that examines the dark side of love.

'I Can't Stand The Rain' may have been the stand-out song and most popular single from the album but three more singles were taken from the LP. Joe Simon's '(You Keep Me) Hangin' On' which was the only cover on the entire LP, had been a hit for Joe Simon in 1968. It was followed by 'Do I Need You', which went to No 57 in the R&B charts.

The third single release was a ballad supported by a string section. 'Until You Came Into My Life' didn't chart and was written by Ann and Don Bryant.

The rest of the album was just as effusive and as effective and was recorded at the Hi studios, an old converted cinema filled with basic studio equipment.

Until 1973, that was, when a new gadget arrived in town that set minds wondering, "That was an electric timbale", said Peebles.

This would be the machine that would create those raindrop effects on the title track. "We were the first people to use it, at least in that order. When we were recording something, we usually played the tape back and maybe we'd take something off, like the first bars, and listen to it. Then we'd take the bass off and listen to it and so on. Sometimes we'd take off everything and just listen to the voice to see if we had every note that we wanted. At first, we had the timbales all the way through the song but as we played the tape, Willie Mitchell (producer and engineer) said "What about if the timbales were in front before anything else comes in?" So we did that and when we listened back I said "I love it, let's do that".

The result is a classic soul album full of dark, vivacious yet gorgeous soul.

For those looking to grab a well mastered and pressed digital edition then look no further than the US-based Fat Possum record label. Known for their hardcore blues recordings and reissues, Fat Possum has released five Ann Peebles albums, previously on the Hi record label. 'I Can't Stand The Rain' is joined by: 'Part Time Love' (1971); 'Tellin It' (1976); 'If This Is Heaven' (1978), 'The Handwriting Is On The Wall' (1979). All CDs are released with their original artwork and track listings.

PR

USHER

The USHER Dancer Diamond Series features the world's first amorphous DLC (diamond-like carbon) diaphragm tweeter. This is a tweeter which is second to none in the current market. To find out more, visit www.usheraudio.com or your nearest USHER dealer...



"2012 Editor's Choice" Awards --- AUDIO ART

Mini-X Diamond

2-way system: 1.25" Diamond DMD dome tweeter, 7" midrange

Sensitivity: 87 dB @ 1 watt / 1m

Nominal impedance: 8 ohms

Frequency response (-3 dB): 41 Hz ~ 40 kHz

Power handling: 100 watts

Crossover frequencies: 2.3 kHz

Weight: 15.5 kgs/34.2 lbs. per piece

Dimensions (w x d x h): 26 cm x 37 cm x 43.5 cm;



Behind the scenes

Dr. Joseph D'Appolito a world renowned authority in audio and acoustics designs the crossover and performs prototype testing/final fine tuning for Usher Audio. Consulting to a couple of famous audio companies, Joe always finds the tremendous value Usher Audio products represent a delightful surprise in today's high end audio world

Rueyma Electric Technology Co., Ltd.

No.29-2 Jhonghua Rd., Taipei City 100, Taiwan
Tel: 886 2 2314 3868, Fax: 886 2 2371 7253

Distributed in the UK by Decent Audio

T: 0560 2054669
W: www.decentaudio.co.uk E: info@decentaudio.co.uk

PRIMALUNA.

'NOTHING SHORT OF AMAZING'
HI-FI WORLD

PERFORMANCE THAT LIFTS THEM
ABOVE THE COMPETITION'
HI-FI NEWS

'INVITING AND BEGUILING,
SMOOTH AND REFINED'
HI-FI+

'A SIGNIFICANT BREAKTHROUGH
IN HIGH-PERFORMANCE AUDIO'
THE ABSOLUTE SOUND

'ILLUMINATES MUSIC LIKE VERY
FEW OTHERS'
HI-FI WORLD

'NO EQUALS AT ITS RETAIL PRICE'
HI-FI NEWS

'BOY OH BOY, CAN I EVER
RECOMMEND THIS AMP!'
STEREOPHILE

The living heart of your sound system.

When Herman van de Dungen founded PrimaLuna, his mission was to create affordable valve amplifiers and CD players that not only harnessed the sheer, sensual musicality of valve technology, but also defied the issues of reliability that sometimes accompany it.

PrimaLuna's Prologue and Dialogue ranges continue to expand, featuring ground-breaking advances such as the unique Adaptive AutoBias™ circuit that allows easy switching between valve types and the jitter-reducing SuperTubeClock™, exclusively incorporated into PrimaLuna's CD players. These innovations help create a benchmark-setting suite of products that builds on the marque's past triumphs, combining excellent sonic definition with a beautifully balanced tonality.

Aesthetically stunning to look at, with a hand-polished black or silver faceplate, PrimaLuna consistently fulfils Herman's original promise of creating the best you can get for the least you can pay.

 PrimaLuna®

 pistol

Pistol Music - a division of Absolute Sounds Ltd.