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- SR 909 "...an articulate midband and the good price win through to make the SR909s a bargain"- *What Hi-Fi?, Dec '92*
- SR 1000 ifl "Able to open out the music and bring much-needed depth to listening...." *What Hi-Fi?, Nov. '95*
- SR 2000 ifl "The sound of the Vivanco's is beautifully crisp and clear with a fast and powerful bass..." - *What Hi-Fi?, Sept '95*



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Editor's Notebook

Stan Vincent welcomes you to the magazine that likes to say 'feng shui'.

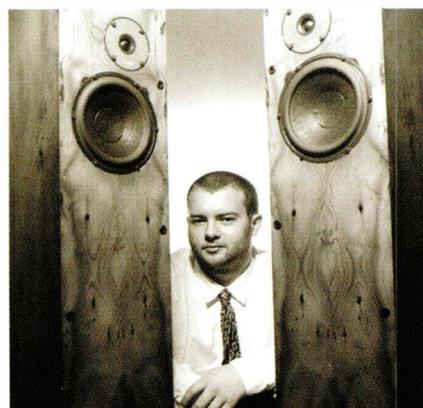


PHOTO BY SEAN BLOODWORTH

Now that Christmas is well out of the way, everyone can concentrate on the important things in life—like buying hi-fi. If you've managed to keep your wallet intact over the Festive Season, this issue contains numerous items that are actually worth spending money on. Whether it's a midprice CD player (page 56), an elegant table for your system (page 48) or Harman/Kardon's high-end solution for both music and movies (page 38), there's something for all tastes. I hope you enjoy our articles as much as we enjoyed putting them together!

Jack Russell syndrome

"Try your new microsystem, Stan!" barked the Philips PR man. "You'll love it!" Under this duress I had no option but to tarry awhile with the £369 Philips FW17, a small and frankly cheesy-looking device, gadget-laden as you might expect, and whose main claim to fame is a "genuine 45 Watts per channel RMS". The only slight catch is the ten per cent distortion which you can expect if you crank it to the max.

Messrs Sircom, Kennedy and I set it up in the office auditioning suite and had fun with *Stairway To The Stars*, a recording of Tom Hazelton playing the San Sylmar Wurlitzer Pipe Organ (Klavier KD 77006). And the truth of the matter is that we were quite surprised at how good the sound was — in the middle frequencies at least.

There was a genuine sense of stereo imagery and musical integrity in the midband, and a sweetertop than I've heard from many a micro. As for the low frequencies — well, you have to press the 'Bass Kick' button and pray that

the cones don't go into orbit. Could be worth investigating for the downstairs loo.

The I Ching on the cake

Audio practitioners Shun Mook Audio, Inc, operate in an extreme shoal of the hi-fi ocean, even for a Californian company. Invoking elements of the *I Ching* and drawing parallels with the finest musical instruments, hitherto the company has been known best for its exotic draughtspiece-shaped Mpingo Discs: stick 'em on your gear and — allegedly — listen to the way their exotic lignins smooth out your sound.

Dropping in on my good friend Branko Bozic (the man behind Audiofreaks, which imports this stuff), I was intrigued to hear a more conventional product from the Shun Mook stable: the *Bella Voce 'High A.R.T.S.'* loudspeaker. The key with this design (which will sell for around £4,000) is that resonances are controlled by most unorthodox methods. There is no cross-bracing within the speaker; instead, the thickness of the sides, top and bottom is varied in an asymmetric pattern by glued-on wood panels. As you'd expect, there are Mpingo discs inside, as well as Kable Jackets wrapped around internal wiring.

From the small, informal audition I was granted, the speaker sounded most impressive. Many authorities would scoff at the mysticism that seems to underpin this design; however, those sceptics would do well to ponder on the miraculous effects being ascribed around the world to *feng shui*, the art of furniture arrangement, which also looks to the *I Ching* as a spiritual source. I shall not take a side in this argument, other than to say I'm taking a lot more care where I put my sofa these days.

Adventures in concert sound

I went to see two great bands during November — The Beautiful South, at Wembley Arena; and Paul Weller, at the Brixton Academy. In each instance I left the gig bemoaning the fact that because sound engineers can get away with a poor-quality live mix, they mix poorly.

In the case of The Beautiful South, the sound was unspeakably bad: woolly bass, a horn section made to sound like a Bontempi organ, and a horrific tonal balance that put far too much weight on the bass drum. I'm a great fan of their music, but no matter how hard I tried, I couldn't enjoy the show.

Paul Weller fared much better — at least you could hear what he was singing, for some of the time — but sitting upstairs at this theatre-style venue, we missed out on the full assault of the main speaker rig, meaning that once again we were on the end of a ragged tonal balance that made a mush of the bass guitar.

There is only one solution to this problem: compulsory hi-fi education in schools. If the average sound engineer was regularly besieged by teenaged hordes complaining about upper mid-bass suckout, he'd soon have to change his tune.

Stan Vincent

FREE WITH THIS ISSUE

Don't miss your complimentary copy of the **Beginner's Guide to Home Cinema**, presented in association with **Mordaunt-Short**. It contains everything you need to know about setting up superb surround-sound!

OUR AIMS AND VISION

- ▶ Hi-Fi Choice has been testing hi-fi since 1975.
- ▶ Collectively, our reviewers and columnists notch up over a century of listening to hi-fi.
- ▶ Our hi-fi group tests are the most thorough in the business.
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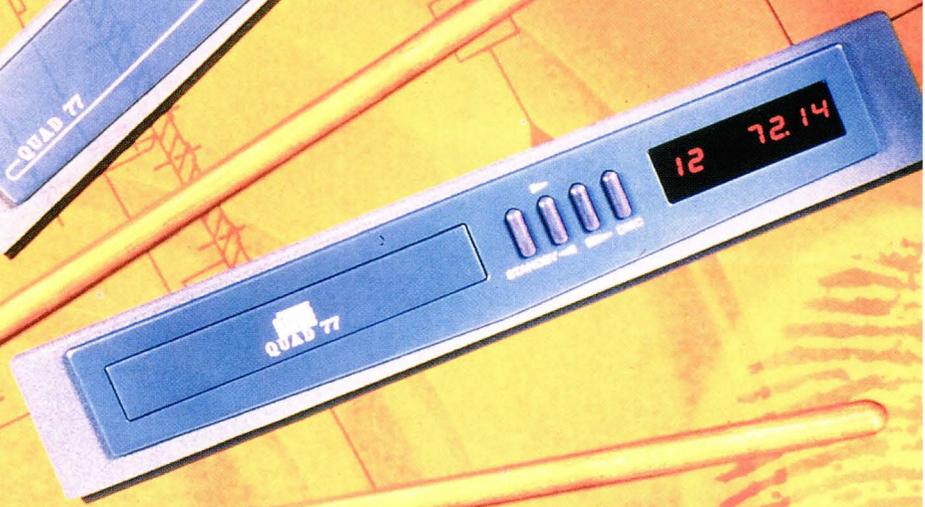
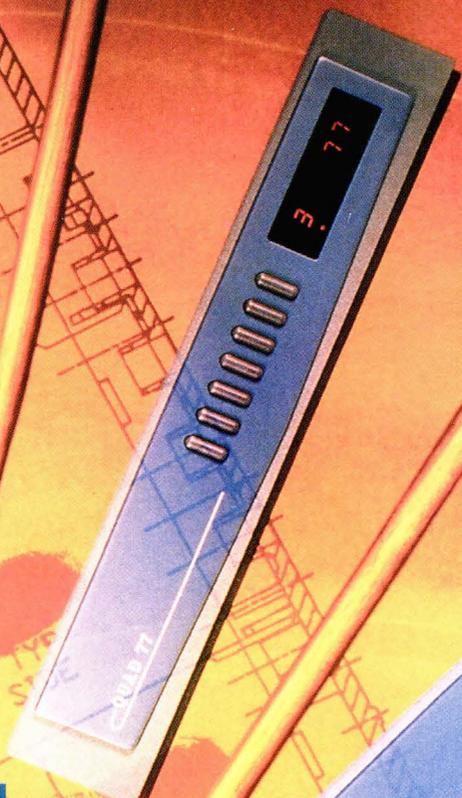
38 Check out the amazing harman/kardon Citation 7000 music and movies mega system!



WIN!WIN!WIN!

£3,000 worth of superb Wharfedale Valdus Loudspeakers must be won

44



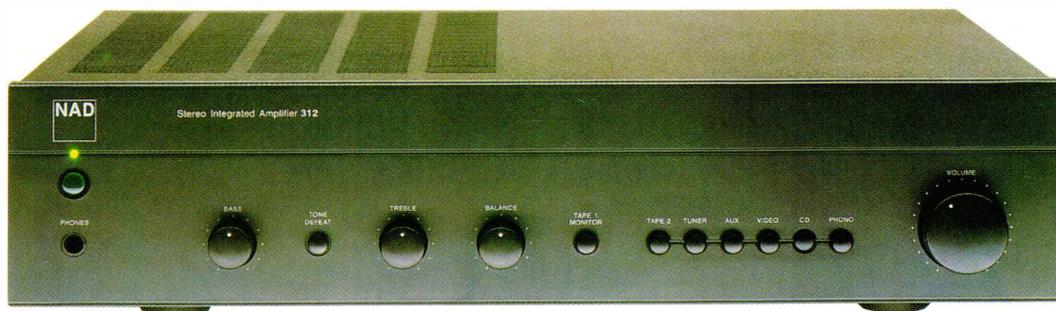
QUAD

Quad Electroacoustics Ltd, Huntingdon, PE18 7DB Tel: 01480 52561 Fax: 01480 413403

Update

IN HI-FI ALL THE NEWS IS GOOD NEWS, SO HERE'S MALCOLM STEWARD WITH THE STORIES THAT COUNT.

The latest in a long line of budget winners: NAD's new 312 integrated amplifier.



NAD plus ten

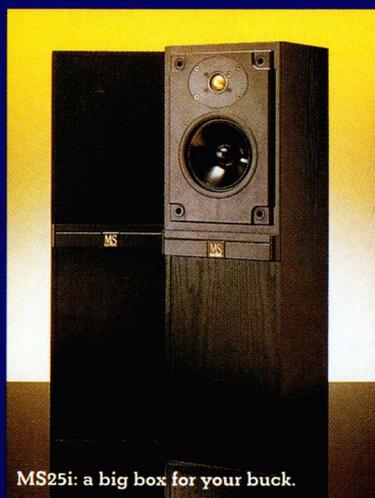
The new product train keeps rolling at NAD, with three "attractively priced" additions joining the company's range.

The first and most expensive, at £249.95, is the 512 CD player. This remote-controlled minimalist device has been developed from the 502 and uses a MASH D/A converter with a five-pole filter. The player sports a new calendar-type display and benefits from a buffered digital output for enhanced performance with outboard DACs and digital recorders.

The 412 tuner continues NAD's pure and simple design philosophy. Based on the 402, the new model comes with a redesigned chassis and improved display. Twenty-four stations — twelve FM and twelve AM — can be accommodated in its non-volatile preset memory. The price is £189.95.

Last in the line-up is the 312 amplifier, which offers 25 Watts per channel continuous power but will deliver 75W short-term into a two Ohm load. It has six line inputs, including two tape loops, and a moving magnet phono stage. Also included in this £199.95 integrated are a headphone jack, pre-out sockets, defeatable tone controls and NAD's Soft Clipping circuitry. ☎ (0181) 343 3240.

MS for £17.65/litre



MS25i: a big box for your buck.

Mordaunt-Short's recently revamped *Music Series* range has expanded further with the addition of a new model, the MS25i. This seventeen-litre floor-stander incorporates an anodised aluminium gold dome tweeter and a 6.5-inch MCS bass/midrange driver. A braced cabinet, computer-optimised magnet systems and a bi-wirable, hard-wired, minimalist crossover network complete the list of features.

Sensitivity is a healthy 89dB and the nominal impedance is eight Ohms. The MS25i sells for £299.99 in either black ash or rosewood veneer finish. Although it is supplied as standard with floor-spikes, a matching plinth is also available for an extra £39.99. ☎ (01705) 407722.

Neat tweek

Neat Acoustics has revised its small but musically *Petite* loudspeaker. The most obvious change to the *Petite II* is the Tonagen EMIT tweeter, which replaces the titanium coated plastic dome unit used in the original design. Naturally, the crossover had to be altered to marry the new tweeter to Neat's paper cone bass/midrange and the company exploited the opportunity to revamp it with high tolerance components. The result, says Neat, is lower colouration and improved all round-compatibility.

The *Petite II* comes in regulation black finish at £745 and in a new Cherry wood finish for £795. ☎ (01833) 631021.



Neat's radical revamp on the *Petite* tweet.

In brief

Bravura has upgraded its

Accelerando and *Brio* corner horn loudspeakers. Changes to the shape and volume of the compression chamber, along with the damping materials used, have elevated both performance and prices. The *Accelerandos* now sell for £6,600 while the *Brios* fetch £5,950. ☎ (01732) 851408.

Henry Azima, leader of the Mission Cyrus design team, has been appointed Managing Director of Mission. His brother Farad becomes the company's Chairman.

Richer Sounds has opened new stores in London Road, Leicester and Oxford Road, Reading, and relocated its Liverpool branch to Berry Street. All these emporia are bigger than the chain's customary premises. ☎ (0500) 10 11 12.

Beyerdynamic has moved to Unit 1, Albert Drive, Burgess Hill, RH15 9TN. ☎ (01444) 258258.

Chord Electronics has added Decca International to the impressive list of recording companies to whom it supplies amplification. ☎ (01622) 688480.

NVA has announced it will build power amplifiers fuelled by rechargeable lead-acid cells. Prices for a 60W mono amplifier — weighing around 80kg — will start at £2,000. ☎ (01763) 272707.

Phoenix Contact's *Maintrab* plug uses varistors and gas-filled surge resistors to protect sensitive electronics from harmful mains spikes. The price is £11.75 plus £2.50 p&p, with discounts available for bulk buyers. ☎ (01734) 442844. ➔

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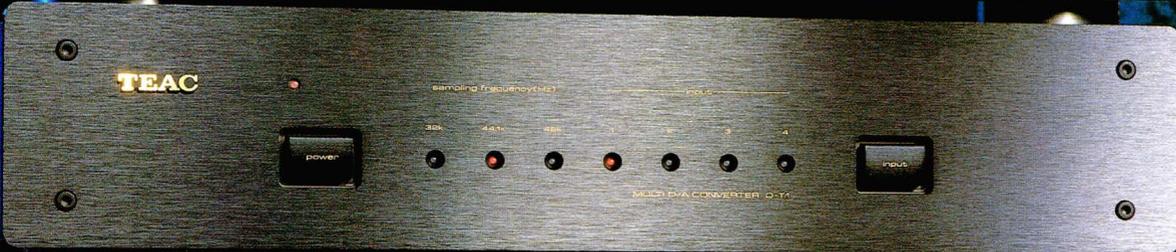
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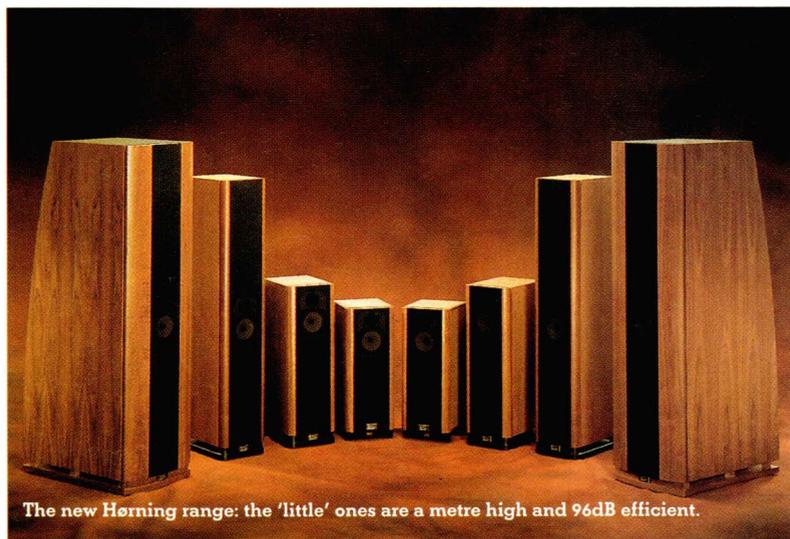
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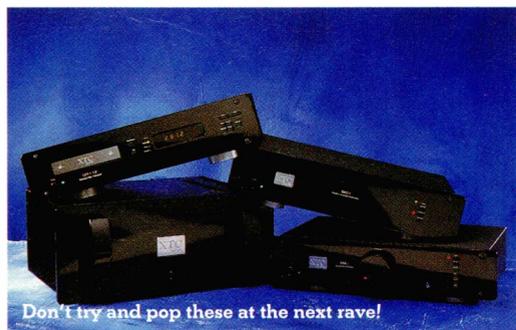
The new Høring range: the 'little' ones are a metre high and 96dB efficient.

A Statesman in the highlands

Definitive Audio's £27,000 Living Voice *Air Partner Statesman* speakers were used at the launch party for Runrig's tenth CD, *Mara*. The event was organised in conjunction with Edinburgh's Music Mill which has been appointed as Scotland's official agent for Living Voice and is currently demonstrating the £14,700 *Airscout*.

If those models sound a little too rich for your wallet, Definitive has announced the revised Høring range of hybrid horns. These three-ways have a sensitivity of 96dB and above, use Lowther full range drivers and employ acoustic techniques to avoid using passive crossover components. Clad in high quality Danish cabinets, the range starts at £2,500 for the bronze spec *Aristophane*. ☎ (0115) 9813562.

Making plans for Orelle



Don't try and pop these at the next rave!

Orelle has four new high-end products launched under the XTC brand. The range opens with the *CDT-1LE* CD transport, which uses a Philips swing arm pick-up and a unique Fast Rise Time Buffered clock. This is an XTC development that reduces jitter and decreases the interaction between digital integrated circuits. The transport comes with a remote control, BNC coaxial output and a solid silver digital interconnect cable included in its £1,250 price. The complementary *DAC-1* converter, which sells for £1,000, features an Analog Devices 12-volt, 18-bit DAC and independent power supplies for its analogue and digital sections. There are no capacitors in the signal path and, like the *CDT-1*, it uses a resonance-controlled aluminium chassis with isolating feet and cones. The three-input unit provides auto-switching between different sampling rates.

The £800, remote controlled, *PRE-1* preamplifier uses a class A MOSFET circuit that's claimed to give a valve-like sound. The partnering *POW-1* power amplifier comes in at £2,000 and offers a choice of two-, three- or four-channel operation. In two-channel mode it delivers 175 Watts per channel. Like the rest of the XTC range it features a resonance-controlled aluminium chassis and direct-coupled circuitry. ☎ (0181) 908 4126.

Scart trickery

Configuring an AV system can be hard work, even for those with considerable experience in setting up complex but comparatively straightforward hi-fi systems. The B-Tech *BT201* AutoScart control centre aims to simplify the process.

The *BT201* connects and switches any three Scart devices to a television monitor or other AV component's input. Whichever device is in Play mode is automatically routed to the *BT201*'s output. If more than one is working, a user-defined priority system decides which input takes precedence.

The control centre, which is powered by an external supply, incorporates a video amplifier to prevent signal loss. It also has a second phono output to route sound to a hi-fi system. A status switch allows Scart pin 8 to be switched, so overcoming the problem of equipment that won't switch automatically to AV mode. The *BT201* costs £29.95. ☎ (01689) 848535.

Hang 'em high: the 5 Series chills.



Comfort and style from Sennheiser

Sennheiser has updated most of its headphones this year and the latest range to enjoy styling and performance tweaks is the well established 5 series. The circumaural *HD535*, *545* and *565* have all been altered to make them more stylish and comfortable to wear. The 1996 models come in a new black finish and exert less pressure on the wearer's ears. Technical modifications have been introduced to reduce treble distortion and improve the neutrality of the voicing to suit all types of music. The entry-level *HD535* sells for £99.95, the *HD545* Reference for £119.95 and the *HD565* Ovation for £139.95. ☎ (01628) 850811.

In brief

Price cuts at JBL bring the cost of an *HT-1* THX speaker system down from £2,500 to £2,000. The company's *SoundEffects* packages both drop by £200: the *SFX Music/Movies 1* is now £499.99 while the *SFX Music/Movies 2* costs £899.99. ☎ (0181) 207 5050.

Bush has a new range of retro-styled portable radios including the £99.99 *Overdrive*, which is fashioned after a Corvette dashboard and includes a cassette player. £29.99 buys the *Jitterbug*, *Hip Hugger* and *Cruiser* models. ☎ (01923) 859777.

Danish loudspeaker manufacturer Eltax has set up a UK office in Milton Keynes to retail its broad range of hi-fi and home theatre systems. ☎ (01908) 226464.

Bib is selling a deluxe version of its SAV-A-DISC CD restorer polish kit. £19.98 buys a glass bottle with applicator and a polishing cloth, all housed in a laser-engraved Walnut box. ☎ (01442) 233233.

Goldstar's new £250 *F-191A* system, which includes a CD player, amplifier, tuner and cassette deck, is unusual in being designed for hanging on the wall. Traditionalists can place it on a shelf or table using a supplied stand. ☎ (01753) 500400.

Turntable manufacturer Wilson Benesch has won the Sheffield Newspapers and Chamber of Commerce award for being the most innovative company in Sheffield. The award includes £5,000 worth of research and development finance, and collaborative support from Sheffield Hallam University. ☎ (0114) 2852656.

B&O product designer David Whitfield Lewis has been elected to the Faculty of Royal Designers for Industry. Lewis already has work exhibited in the design collection of New York's Museum of Modern Art.

Dolby Labs has developed a two-speaker surround sound system, Dolby Surround Multimedia, specifically optimised for use with home computers. The system is based on the existing Pro-Logic decoding process. ☎ (01793) 842100. ▶▶

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

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

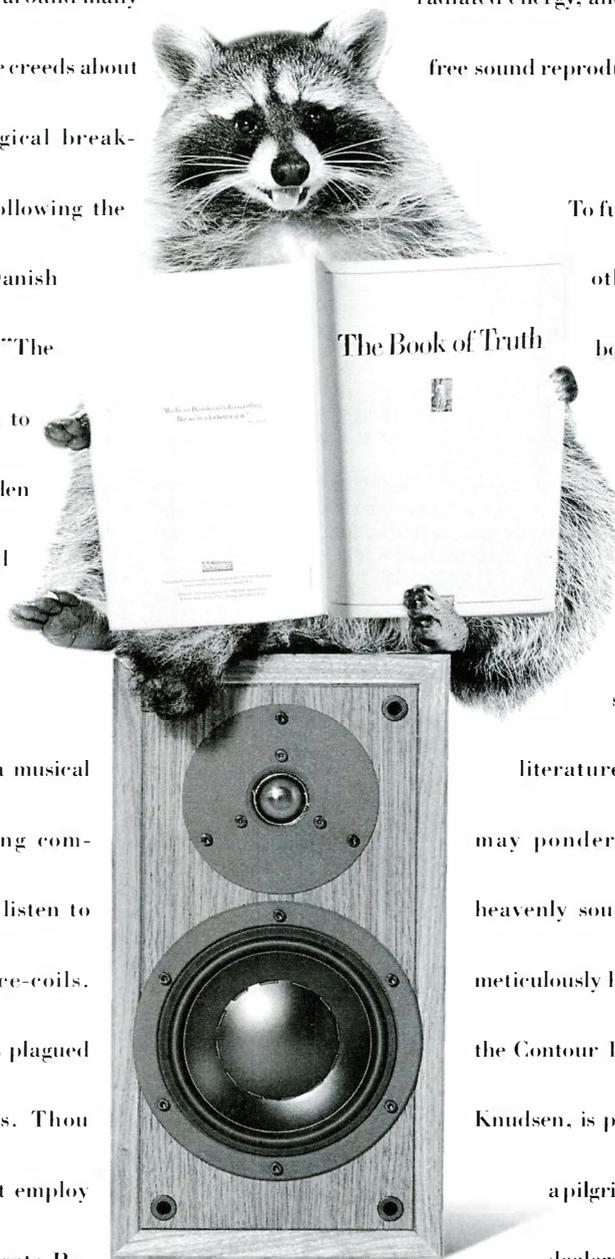
Hence, "The Book of Truth", a musical bible containing such towering commandments as: Thou shalt not listen to speakers with undersized voice-coils. Thou shalt not listen to speakers plagued with phase response problems. Thou shalt only listen to speakers that employ one-piece MSP (Magnesium Silicate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

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

To further indulge in these and other truths from Skanderborg, Denmark, please call +49-40-858-066 or fax us

at +49-40-859-035, to receive a missionary copy of our small masterpiece of true audiophile literature. In the meantime, you may ponder seeking refuge in the heavenly sounds emanating from our meticulously handcrafted speakers (like the Contour L3 our company raccoon, Knudsen, is preaching from), whilst on a pilgrimage to one of our few true dealers. Consequently, you may

even consider recycling your former speakers as well.



DYNAUDIO
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No honks from Harlech

With the Twin Bass Tuning system incorporated into Castle's new floor-stander, the *Harlech*, you can kiss goodbye to many of the low frequency difficulties that plague loudspeakers — according to the manufacturer. Twin Bass Tuning aims to improve the speaker's interaction with the room and so alleviate honk and boom problems.

The *Harlech* uses two 130mm bass/mid units (one firing upwards) and a forward-facing 25mm alloy dome tweeter. Bi-wiring terminals are provided and sensitivity is quoted as 88dB, eight ohms. The 930mm-tall speaker sells for £799 in standard finishes or £949 in deluxe Santos rosewood or yew veneers. ☎ (01756) 795333.

Gemstone cables

AudioQuest distributor, Arcam has two new interconnects from the Californian cable specialists. Audio Truth *Opal* x3 and Audio Truth *Emerald* x3 both feature AudioQuest's Triple Balanced Air-Hyperlitz construction and FPC-6 solid copper conductors. The two designs are differentiated by the dielectrics used as their primary insulation: *Opal* x3 uses air and polypropylene, while *Emerald* x3 employs an air and Teflon combination. Both cables have a PVC outer sheath and come terminated with Functionally Perfect Copper — FPC — plugs.

Opal costs £159 for a 0.5m pair and £189 for 1m, while *Emerald* is £189 for 0.5m and £249 for 1m. Recommended uses are connecting CD players to pre-amplifiers, and preamplifiers to power amplifiers. ☎ (01223) 861550.



Cable for the Flintstone set.

Behold the Vitalizer

Beyerdynamic has introduced the SPL *Vitalizer* audio enhancer (formerly found only in professional circles) to the hi-fi marketplace. This £499 gadget uses "an ingenious combination of dynamic equalisation, phase shift manipulation and harmonic filtering to unlock the real potential of the audio spectrum." Apparently this device will make old recordings sound the way the engineers would have wanted them to, had modern equipment been available then, and give video soundtracks top and bottom end that you never knew was there. ☎ (01273) 479411.



B&W's innovative budget baby.

Pyramid power

As well as putting speakers inside anechoic chambers, B&W is now putting anechoic chambers inside its speakers. The company's new *DM302* is the first to employ the newly-developed Prism system, which uses tapered pyramid shapes, like those used in anechoic chambers, to eliminate resonance inside the speaker's cabinet.

Other features designed to help the *DM302* provide big-speaker performance from a compact enclosure include a 120mm doped paper cone bass driver, mounted in a rigid steel chassis. A 26mm soft dome tweeter with a low diffraction faceplate takes care of high frequencies. Both drivers are internally clamped to the front baffle and six horizontal braces reinforce the reflex ported cabinet. Sensitivity is high at 91dB and the speaker's crossover uses quality components and high performance B&W cable. The price of this budget baby is £129.99. ☎ (01903) 750750.

In brief

There's been a slight reprieve for vinyl enthusiasts stunned by the announcement that Audio Technica was to cease production of all moving coil cartridges. It will continue producing one model, the ATOC9. However, the ATOC7, ATOC10 and ATOC30 will be no more. There's better news for moving magnet buyers because production of these cartridges will continue indefinitely. And a new range that was previously only available in the USA will be here soon. ☎ (0113) 2771441.

Academy Sound is coming to the rescue of Quad 33 owners who love their preamps but not the DIN connectors with which they're equipped. For £185 Academy will fit 33s with a new rear panel decked out in gold-plated phono sockets, and will supply a set of Ixos interconnects. The conversion includes replacing the old power out sockets with a shrouded mains connector and replacing the Radio 2 input with a CD auxiliary input. The final part of the conversion is to enclose the tape and pick-up selector boards, which involves fitting new replacement boards. ☎ (01872) 553317.

Postponed from November, the £130,000 Dynaudio *Arbiter* battery powered preamp and 800W monoblocks will be on the road in the last week of January. The *Arbiter* duo will be appearing in Birmingham and Glasgow. Further details are available from Phil Parker at Music Matters Solihull on ☎ (0121) 742 0254 or Stuart Bailey at WM Cooper Music Room Glasgow on ☎ (0141) 332 5012.

True Dynaudio Dealers.

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

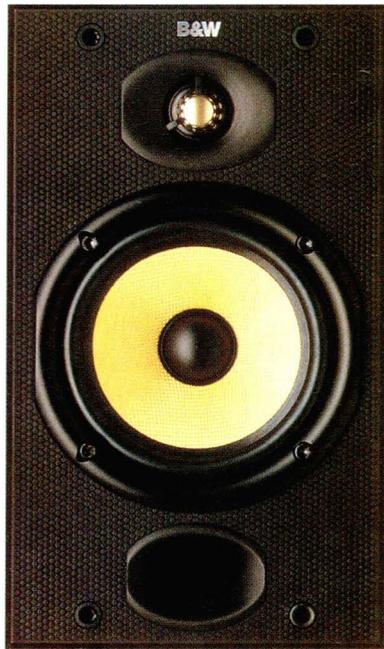
Holburn Hifi, 441 Holburn St, Aberdeen, 01224-585713
 W.M. Coupar, 8-12 Wellmeadow, Blairgowrie, 01250-872436
 W.M. Coupar, 33 Reform St, Dundee, 01382-229588
 W.M. Coupar, 9 Scott St, Perth, 01738-634809
 The Music Room, 98 Bath St, Glasgow, 0141-3325012
 Richer Sounds, 34 Wellington Quay, Dublin, 0103531-6719666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

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What Hi-Fi, November 1995



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Ear Waxings

Jason Kennedy suffers thermionic overload as he reports from Budapest and investigates a new tube amp.

On each of the last two occasions that I've visited Hungary for the Budapest High End show, I've returned saying "Never again". It's not the show but the 16-hour drive with Peter Qvortrup (the Danish demon behind Audio Note) that takes days to recover from. This time, what lured me East was a plane ticket. Now it was but a few instants before I kissed the tarmac of the overcast, sub-zero, two-stroke-infused conurbation that is Budapest in November.

Even though the average salary is only £200 a month, there must be some citizens with forints to spare, since the dozen or so distributors and manufacturers first seen at this show three years ago are still around today. And none of them sells budget equipment.

Even relatively real-world hi-fi is much dearer in Hungary than it is over here. Take a Micromega *Stage 1*, for example — £550 in the UK but 30 per cent more in Hungary at £725. Us Brits don't know how good we've got it! None of the home-grown Hungarian equipment comes any cheaper, mainly because it has high end pretensions, and indigenous manufacturers have to buy from the same parts suppliers as everyone else. However, this doesn't seem to stem the light but steady flow of amplifiers and loudspeakers that are displayed at the show each year.

Tubes have as much appeal to Hungarians as anyone else, so it came as no surprise to chance upon what appeared to be an Audio Note *Ongaku* copy made by Péter Dénes. Could this have something to do with the influence of Audio Note distributor (and show organiser) Merlin Audio? The 'Hungarongaku' was selling for £1,250, which seems quite reasonable for a single-ended amp equipped with 211 tubes — let alone one that looked decent and had Audio Note aspirations. Even if you bought a circuit diagram and made one yourself, it could easily cost that much in parts alone.

Since my Hungarian is limited to half a dozen words, I couldn't arrange a comparison between this and the real thing, which was sharing table space with a pair of mighty *Gakus* in Merlin's room of excess. Also anchored in this quiet water of audiophile overload I sighted a veritable fleet of Japanese-built Audio Note products floating on a sea of Sound Organisation tables, feeding a pair of Audio Note *AN-E* speakers wired with full-on, as-much-silver-as-



Feeling horny? — the amazing Avantgarde Acoustic speakers

horn speakers from Avantgarde Acoustic (Alan Sircom saw these also, at the Frankfurt High End show last year). Although Peter Qvortrup is notoriously fickle about horns, it looks as though he may find it within his heart to take them on board and release a tweaked version. Certainly, it'll be interesting to hear what Herb Riechert (of Audio Note New York) can do to tame the rather brash balance of this unusual design.

This is not the first time PQ has tried to source a horn speaker worthy of AN's electronics. I remember being bowled over by Tommy Høning's big four-ways in the late '80s, and more recently there was supposed to have been a design in the offing from Bruce Edgar (another luminary in tube and horn circles), but it never appeared. When PQ finds a horn he wants to back, it should be a killer. Watch this space!

you-can-pack-in-there cable. Very nice it sounded too, and the master himself, Kondosan, was on the scene to give his blessings.

More Hungarian Dances

Back on Planet Earth we stumbled over *L'Auditeur Pointe Hot*, a £700 integrated amp using 6L6 tubes in a cherry-wood-faced cabinet. (The transistorised *Pointe Cool* is available in the same classy finish.) More sober but nicely made were the Mellorn range of pre/power transistor amps, comprising the *Crescendo* passive pre, *Anachron* phono stage and *Temptation* monoblocs, heard driving the company's substantial *Access mkII* speakers to good effect.

The true wild men of the Hungarian scene, however, are the proprietors of Alisca Orange: bearded dudes belting out some dynamic sounds with their 200 Watt *Red Lion* power amp and Focal-driven *bangdobox* (loudspeakers). They also had a box of interesting second-hand records to sell, but their prices made yer average UK shop look generous.

Another interesting product, though not at the show, was a pair of the stylish German

Getting heated

I have come to understand why Paul Messenger wrote what he did in his column last month, on the subject of power supplies. In my case it's the eight or so tube power supplies that sometime *Choice* contributor Rob Dowse is using with his new 'integrated' amp — on the end of some speakers that started off as copies of the Living Voice *Air Partner* (this wardrobe-sized enclosure was pictured on page 14 of the December 1995 edition, furniture fans).

Subsequent to its inception, however, this amp has evolved into something else. It might look rather 'hair shirt', but its brass chassis and matching door-handle volume control lend it an air of esoteric style that quite takes my fancy. More significant are the bass power and dynamics he's getting out of its 3.75 Watts (developed by 6B4G triode valves).

I'm rather worried that he's breaking the laws of physics — how can this little amp produce more grunt than your average 100W transistor amp? I reckon that the wall of tube-regulated power supplies has a lot to do with it. Here's to fantasy hi-fi in the flesh! ▲

Choice sessions

JASON KENNEDY HAS THE KEY TO THE SECRETS OF THE HI-FI UNIVERSE – BUT DOES HE KNOW WHERE THE LOCK IS?

**The Powerplant system:
Micromega Stage 1,
Cyrus III, B&W CDM2**

As if to prove that not all good hi-fi costs an arm and a leg, The Powerplant in Brighton keeps the prices down.

£1,450

Xavier Wilcox is the founder of Brighton's Powerplant hi-fi store, and I went to school with him. His tastes in hi-fi have digressed from mine since the days when we sat around listening to Lloyd Cole's *Rattlesnakes* on a Linn LP12, so I knew the risks I was taking when I asked him to recommend a £1,500 system for me to review. However, it is nowhere near as hard to select stuff you think you'll like as it is to get your ears around something that might bite back. So I bit the bullet and called up a Micromega Stage 1 CD player (£550), Mission Cyrus III integrated amplifier (£500) and a pair of B&W's new CDM1 loudspeakers (£400)—not forgetting to dig out some Cable Talk for hooking up along the way.

The Powerplant's CD-based system lives up to the company's name.

Apart from its inherent sonic and ergonomic qualities, this system offers a number of upgrade options for the enthusiast who wants to improve quality as the budget becomes available. Apart from the usual cable, stand and support upgrades, the Cyrus can be aug-

mented by a PSX-R power supply and even a Cyrus power amp, while the Micromega can be taken up to Stage 2 and 3 if you want to get more out of your discs. So this is a flexible package that can be readily upgraded without huge expense.

What's more, there are various ergonomic permutations. The Micromega remote is designed to drive the matching Stage amp and tuner (and is thus a sea of buttons), but by grace of remote-control-code standards, it will adjust volume and operate the mute facility on the Cyrus, which saves another piece of plastic on the coffee table.

Of course, all of this would be as naught if you didn't want to listen to the system, and to begin with I did not. It was brash and edgy — just the sort of thing Xavier seems to like. However, being a persistent kind of chap I persevered, since most of the fundamental hi-fi parameters were present and correct. Musical timing was good, stereo imagery was convincing and there was a reassuring feeling of solidity. Quite honestly, it was just the presentation that I found distasteful, and con-

veniently a simple change of cables was sufficient to refine the balance into to something that I could enjoy.

For the record, Powerplant had recommended Cable Talk *Studio 2*, but alas this was languishing Chez Malcolm Steward, and I'd used *Monitor 2* interconnect instead. Swapping this for Trichord *Pulsewire*, and exchanging the *Talk 3* bi-wire for two runs of Hitachi *SSX-102K* LC-OFC speaker cable, did marvels for the tonal balance — even if it did raise the price a little.

The end result was a very fine system. It was little more sparse-sounding than the one I'd started out with, but a whole lot cleaner, and its on-the-button sense of timing (combined with an excellent sense of stereo depth and oodles of detail) put the instruments in space and let them groove.

The tape hiss on a recording of William Burroughs and his *Advice For Young People* (on Material's *Hallucination Engine* album) was clear and present, as was the backing vamp stolen from Billy Cobham's fusion-tip *Spectrum* album (also sampled by *Massive Attack* for their June 1991 *Safe From Harm* single — *Trivia* Ed).

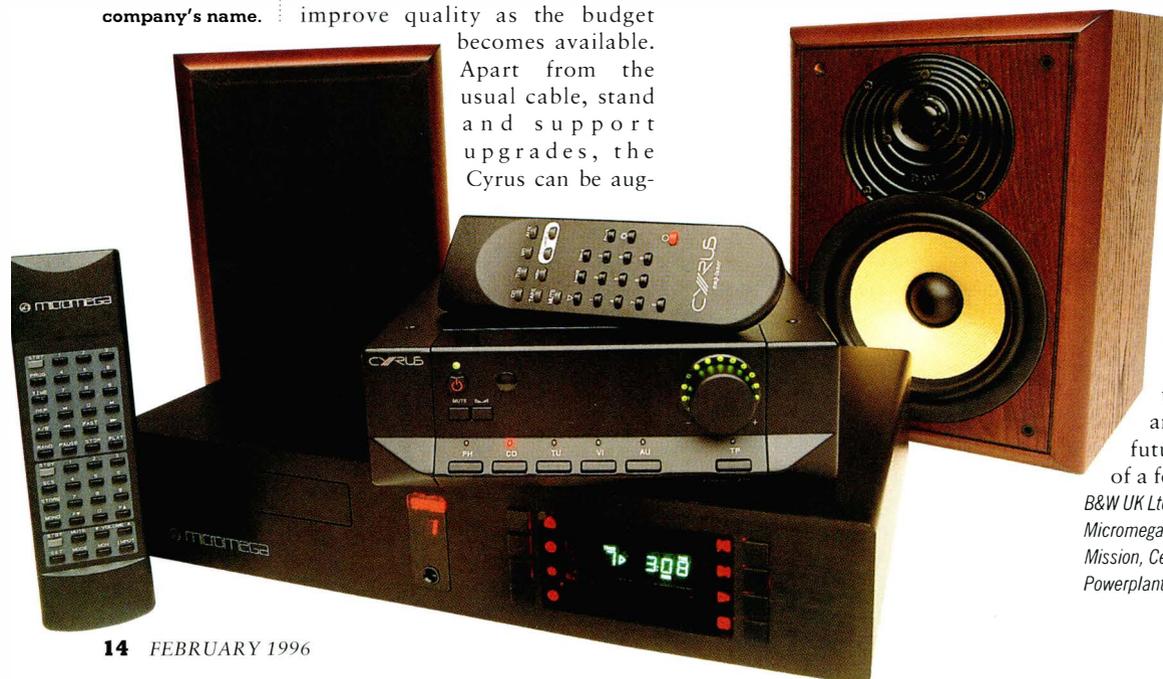
This system has plenty of energy and power. You can belt out The Stone Temple Pilots at truly entertaining levels, yet both amp and speakers remain in control. Alternatively you can get into a mellow groove at mellow levels, without the sound shrinking out of the room. This combination offers not only a taste of the high life, but also an open-ended invitation for future enhancements courtesy of a few waste-free upgrades.

B&W UK Ltd ☎ (01903) 750750

Micromega Digital Audio Ltd ☎ (0181) 502 1416

Mission, Centraforce Ltd ☎ (01480) 451777

Powerplant ☎ (01273) 775978



Acurus RL11/ A150 pre/power amplifier

The words 'US muscle amplifier' and 'budget' are rarely seen together — unless Richer Sounds is involved.

£1,399.95

This competitively-priced American pre/power combo is brought over by punter's favourite and independent retailer's Nemesis, Richer Sounds. This piece is made by a company called Mondial, which used to produce a distinctive looking amp called the Aragon. (You might remember the black box with a 'V'-shaped notch; it has recently returned in updated form). Now Mondial offers this tasteful if less-remarkable-looking combo, sporting remote control and 150 Watts per channel for rather less shekel than one has become accustomed to paying for American hardware.

The Acurus RL11 preamp is a line-only affair, with six inputs, two tape outputs and two pre outputs. The slimline remote doesn't cater for input or record selection, but covers volume, balance, mute and mains in straightforward fashion. The A150 power amp is your usual hefty lump, with serious fins (heat sinking) at the back, and a pair of five-way binding posts per side. Nice switch, too.

I christened this combo in place of the *Cyrus III* in this month's system, where it made a pretty dramatic impression. The

detail and bandwidth without losing a sense of rhythm.

The toughest test was with my *Sonolith* speakers. It handled this with aplomb, although the forward character became more apparent. So if you've got a pair of big speakers that won't do what they're told with the bass, this couch-friendly combo could be right up your alley.

Richer Sounds ☎ (0171) 403 4710

Celestion Impact 10, Mordaunt-Short MS10i, KEF Coda 7

The three big noises in the budget speaker market fight a pitched battle for supremacy in Jason's living room.

£129, £140, £129

The Mordaunt-Short *MS10i* and Celestion's *Impact 10* are two new contenders in the highly-competitive budget speaker arena, and their arrival prompted us to stage a Small Speaker Shoot-Out. The defending champion in this arena is currently KEF's very effective *Coda 7*, but it's not the only good speaker at the price. Don't forget JPW's £120 *Sonata*, which won a lot of admirers when we tested it back in issue 71.

The Mordaunt-Short *MS10i* is second up in the Music Series range, and retails for £140. It stands just over 30 centimetres tall, and is the heaviest and (apparently) the most technologically brash of the three contenders. Reasons for this obser-

treating the baffle to a sculptural effect that reminds one of a mollusc. Its driver complement is a little less exotic: a 90mm paper cone mid-bass unit joins an unusually-shaped 25mm plastic tweeter, which is protected by a sort of phase plug.

The £130 KEF *Coda 7*'s enclosure is the smallest of the bunch by a few millimetres, but it sports the largest mid-bass cone (95mm doped paper). Its 25mm fabric dome tweeter sits in the prettiest baffle for my money: sculpted, it integrates the drive units with the reflex port using a degree of finesse rarely seen in any hi-fi, let alone on budget kit.

Drawing comparisons between these three speakers was complicated by each one needing to be sited in a slightly different place. But with the help of some Atacama stands and a Mission *Cyrus III* amplifier, good music was enjoyed all round.

Every one of these speakers made a very good impression. I was surprised at their imaging abilities, and I was pleased to hear a distinct lack of boxiness, despite bass which had some weight and speed. The *MS10i* will be remembered for decent dynamics and openness: give it enough space (about 18 inches from the wall) and it'll produce pretty clean low frequencies as well. Any closer to the wall and the port can make itself obvious. This rosewood-look sample even managed to hang on when wicked up, although I wouldn't recommend it to the thrash-metal fraternity.

The Celestion makes use of its extra few cubic centimetres to produce well-extended bass, in the context of a relaxed presentation. This adds realism to drums and substance to bass guitar, but may also contribute to a slightly laid-back sense of timing.

Next to the KEF, the Celestion sounds a shade



The classic budget baby — M-S's MS10i.



The challenger — Celestion's Impact 10.



The market dominator — KEF's Coda 7.



US muscle, but with a British price tag from Acurus.

improvement can only be described as extra 'body', underpinning the music with deep, solid grunt and opening out the soundstage to bring the acoustic of the recording environment into play. This trick can be ascribed largely to the depth and solidity of bass coming through the speakers, but of equal significance is the fact that it sacrificed none of the *Cyrus*'s musical magic in the process. Further swapping of ancillaries proved the Acurus pairing to be peculiarly capable of reproducing

vation include a full-size, gold-anodised metal dome tweeter, and a 90mm plastic cone on the mid-bass driver.

Celestion's *Impact 10* is a little bigger at 31 centimetres tall, and costs £129. It's quite similar to the M-S by virtue of its injection-moulded front baffle, but Celestion has taken a leaf from KEF's book by



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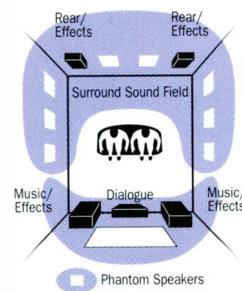
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THE FRONT END

blatant, but in the real world this might mean it is better suited to the sometimes-less-than-pristine output of budget amplifiers and CD players, with which the *Impact 10* is likely to be partnered.

The *Coda 7* has already undergone *Hi-Fi Choice's* formal review process (awarded a Best Buy in issue 145). It has the sort of qualities that bring out the life and character in music: it keeps time very nicely, the leading edges of notes are well defined without them sounding brash, and above all I heard clear differences between recordings. However, the *Coda 7* is still a budget speaker; you can hear it in the curtailed bass extension and the discouraging noises it makes when you turn it up too much.

For some tastes, the winner might well be the Mordaunt-Short or the Celestion, but for me the *Coda 7* still rules the roost. None of these speakers is a bad 'un, and all three serve to remind that the Budget Box is a remarkably good-value item which will often be bettered only through considerably greater expenditure. When selecting one of these small miracles, the most important thing is to stick with the amp and CD player you know, and choose the speaker that lets you forget hi-fi and enables you to hear all kinds of music from Shostakovich to Frank Zappa...

Celestion ☎ (01473) 322222

KEF ☎ (01622) 672261

Mordaunt-Short ☎ (01705) 407722

Trichord Research Black Box One

Grandmasters of the CD player,
Trichord, have even modified the
mains to get the best from digital audio.

£120

Mains filters don't have an impressive hi-fi reputation. Most of them compress and restrict dynamics in exchange for a smoother tonal balance. Now Trichord Research — purveyor of the *Clock 2* CD player modification tested last issue — reckons that it has made the ultimate 'original current cleaning device', in the shape of a solid cube that's been aptly dubbed *Black Box One*.

Trichord's Tom Evans designed a similar device for ECA (the *Pandora*), and this is a further step in the same direction. Made specifically for CD players, the *BB1* can cope with a maximum load of 50 Watts; try it on an amplifier, wait half an hour to reset its thermal fuse.

For the most part the *BB1* had a subtle but tangible effect, notably in the resolution of ambient and



acoustic detail, which aids the sense of three dimensionality in music, and hence tangibility. It's no surprise that the greatest effect occurred with the Trichord *Digital Turntable* CD transport (a modified Pioneer *PD-S703*, due for imminent launch), which resolved much more low-level information. Musical intelligibility seemed to improve as a result.

Taking the *BB1* out of the system caused a notable increase in subjective loudness. However, I believe that to be due to greater distortion rather than an absolute increase of volume, which would make the *BB1* perfect for high-resolution systems.

Trichord Research Ltd ☎ (01684) 573524

Audio Alchemy DAC-MAN

'Dinner, dinner, dinner, dinner —
DAC-MAN' is a bit of a cliché, but how
does the Caped Crusader of CD fare?

£149.95

The DAC-MAN is a cute little device from those digitally-oriented Californians at Audio Alchemy. Remember the *Digital Decoding Engine* and *DAC-In-The-Box*? Both made a good impression on these shores.

One key to AA's popularity is undoubtedly their parsimonious price list, which makes some US equipment seem rather overcooked. The *DAC-MAN* sets an even lower price benchmark than its siblings, at just below £150. When the QED *Digit* and Cambridge *DACmagic 1* turned up at this price they were considered remarkable; to survive an Atlantic crossing at this price is extraordinary.

For your money you get a dinky little extruded metal case with sexy fins: inside there's a Crystal converter chip that can be addressed both optically and electrically at one end, while its analogue output is taken right to your amplifier by a pair of chewy purple interconnects.

These captive cables are made by Tara Labs, no less, and offer the double whammy of

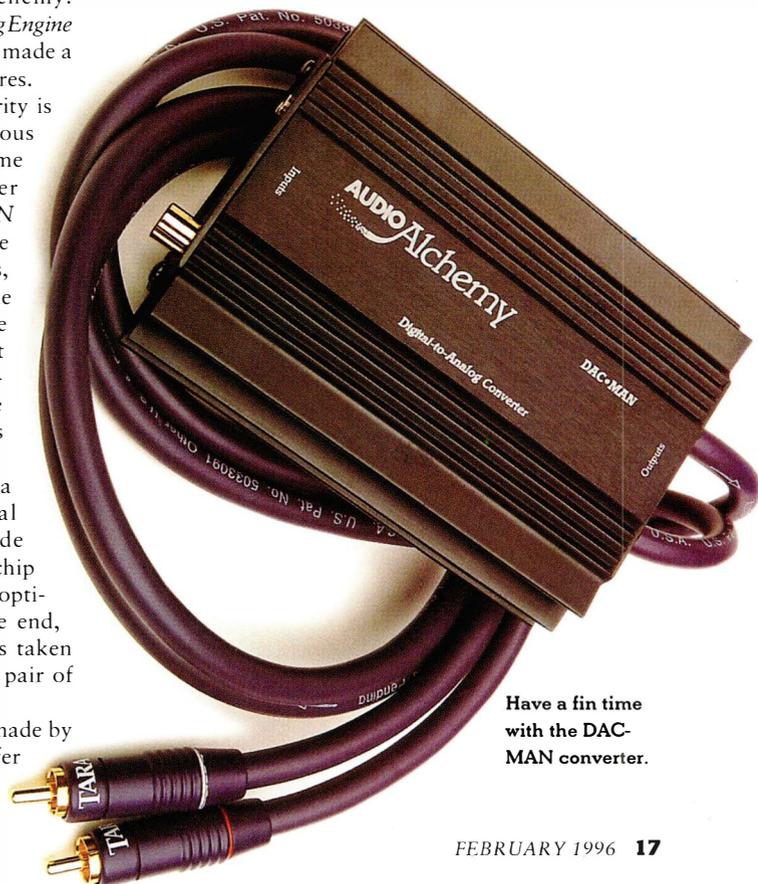
saving you bounce that would have gone on decent-quality interconnects, as well as offering one less mechanical joint.

Not only is this little package neat; it is upgradeable, too. The power supply is a basic plastic moulded affair that sits half-way between the mains plug and the DAC, and it can be replaced with one of Audio Alchemy's *Power Stations* (from £59.95), that should bring worthwhile improvements.

Like any DAC it relies on what it is fed by the transport, but it certainly improved on the Sony *CDP-361's* onboard DAC even using the normally-second-rate optical feed. The '361 became more lively and colourful, and responded to various discs with energy and vigour. Even Orelle's fine *CD-100* player lost some of its dryness, pumping up dynamics and weight.

The result with the Trichord *Digital Transport* was suitably impressive: *DAC-MAN* brought out a great deal of its spatial resolution, fine sense of timing and all round naturalness. Trichord's own *Pulsar One* DAC (a more exalted specimen) put in an appreciably finer performance, but it hardly wiped the floor with this Dark Knight of the audio world. It remains to be seen how well *DAC-MAN* compares with its peers, but I have a sneaky suspicion that we could have an audiophile bargain on our hands here.

Audio Alchemy ☎ (01494) 441736



Who knows the secret of the black magic (Trichord) box?



Have a fin time with the DAC-MAN converter.



The CDP-361 — good, but is it sorted for Es and wizz?

Sony CDP-361

Do Sony CD players get better as they get cheaper? If they do, then the new CDP-361 must be one of the best.

£149.99

In our last budget CD player test (issue 147) we auditioned — and applauded — the Sony CDP-761E. Then again, we worked up even more of a sweat over the still cheaper CDP-561E. Could it be that Sony CD players get better as they get less expensive? That might sound bizarre, but it proved to be the case with the company's penultimate range. (Remember the CDP-915E and 715E? Paul Miller's still using the latter). To research this theorem more fully, I resolved to review Sony's budget baby CDP-361.

(In case any nomenclature spotters out there are wondering, the missing suffix 'E' is not an auspicious omen. It indicates that this model has not had the audiophile treatment lavished on its more exalted siblings.)

Enough portending already. The CDP-361 is a fully-featured bantamweight machine, with novelties such as remote digital output-level control (traditionally not tops for sound quality) and an optical digital output for future DAC upgrades. As far as casework is concerned, the low price accounts for the cheesy feet (only the front ones look chunky) and the generally low mass. However, the lid does not rattle when tapped, unlike another more expensive machine in this feature.

When played in isolation on the front of an expensive system, this Sony puts on a good show. It has no obvious failings, and its sins are of omission not intrusion — it adds very little to the sound. Musical energy was extracted and reproduced with plenty of vitality. The frequency response droops in neither treble nor bass, so the former has air and sparkle, while the latter has weight. What's more, it can get mellow and

groovy when circumstances require. More expensive CD players would provide a more natural tone and a considerably fuller-bodied sound, plus extra detail, but the CDP-361 covers most of the bases without resorting to the abrasiveness of earlier budget machines.

The aspiring audiophile would be best advised to save another £50 for a CDP-561 (sorted with that all important 'E'), but those who want to fit and forget could do worse than this little charmer.

Sony ☎ (0181) 784 1144

Orelle CD-100

Orelle has a reputation for producing a sonic silk purse out of a technological sow's ear. Will the CD-100 follow suit?

£500

There are two ways of looking at the technology used in the Orelle CD100. One is to regard it as rather 'old hat' — after all, multi-bit digital converters and swing-arm transport mechanisms came in with the first CD players back in 1983.

Alternatively, even though swing-arm lasers are no longer manufactured, and the budget CD player market has gone over to bitstream DACs, that's no reason to presume that mature technology is no longer capable of putting in a decent performance.

The CD-100 is chunky and clunky. Its case is all aluminium, with an eight-millimetre-thick anodised slab of the stuff on the front. Controls are of the basic 'audiophile pretension' variety; the display is old-fashioned but easy to read; the remote is a mundane device off the shelf. It's the innards that count, and under the hood you'll find you'll find

a Philips S1 crown chipset, a 50VA toroidal transformer and six IC regulators. These parts have been arranged by Chris Bryant, sometime hi-fi reviewer and a bit of a digital whizz.

Designers such as he persevere with multibit because of its ability to reproduce leading edges, which are the key to timing. And the CD-100 does have a keen sense of timing, which lends a sense of coherence and believability to the CD reproduction that often eludes other players. Initially the sound is a little dry, with cymbals seeming more splashy than usual, but once you've become accustomed to the balance, it becomes apparent that the music is more engaging than usual.

It's not just timing, of course. This Orelle plucks plenty of information from the pits in your discs, and it is just as convincing with King Crimson as Paul Bowles. Next to more expensive alternatives it can sound a little 'hair-shirt', and high frequencies could be more natural, but for the money, and in an appropriately-oriented system (ie Orelle's own, Naim, Rega etc) it should prove a most able performer.

Orelle ☎ 0181-810 9388

Epos ES22

The famous Epos stable sires another loudspeaker. Is it a thoroughbred stallion, or a carthorse?

£1,185

The new ES22 floorstander has been launched to bridge the economic chasm between the ES25 range topper and the ES14 (now £675 — it seems like only yesterday that this speaker cost 2/6 etc). The elegant newcomer will set you back a not-entirely-unreasonable £1,185.

The ES22 is currently available in the tasty light-cherry veneer pictured here, but apparently walnut is on the way. The speaker's compact (yet sturdy) frame measures nearly a metre and weighs 17kg, and the base houses high-torque threaded inserts so that you can lock spikes firm (but will they survive Paul Messenger's cruel spanner?).



'Nothing new' is not an insult to the Orelle CD-100.

Viewed from the front, the ES22 is a picture of simplicity, but the rear aspect reveals two flared ports and a plethora of 4mm sockets. Epos supplies bridging plugs, but it's clear that for sonic purity, tri-wiring is the approach that they encourage. I started off with one run of *Sonolith Monolith 20/20* cable, but found that the addition of Cable Talk *Talk 3 Bi-wire* brought the ES22s to life.

The drive units consist of a 25mm alloy dome tweeter on a polyamide suspension, and a pair of injection-moulded 150mm cones. The lower of the two has a stiff dust cap at its centre, and provides bass; while the upper one handles the all-important midrange frequencies. This driver has a phase plug attached to the chassis to improve dispersion. Both of the large cones feature substantial 32mm voice coils for better power handling, so you can throw a party with them, yet they won't cramp up when you crank up.

Like the Mordaunt-Short *Performance 860* I reviewed in issue 146, the ES22 has a separate chamber for the midrange drive unit, which should prevent interference from the long-throw bass driver.

That bass driver has a lot to answer for, notably a claimed 38Hz low frequency roll-off point — in

plain language, it supplies grunt of significant substance. That claim is borne out on audition after you've found that special spot where bass extension is maximised and port audibility is minimised. Once you find that location you'll cement a musical foundation, and secure the essential musical underpinning necessary for your imagination to truly suspend disbelief. Of course, you must also be able to follow the tune (as certain Scotsmen have been known to utter), and the ES22s are adept at this kind of portrayal.

While bass gets your rib cage going, what gets your heart involved is the midrange, which in this instance is alluringly nimble and beguiling. Once the ES22s are fully tri-wired with something lively like Cable Talk 3, they have the energy and dynamics to match the requirements of your most spirited records, along with the subtlety and imaging qualities that bring out the atmosphere of more spiritual vibes.

Only one disc gave the ES22s any trouble, and that was a *Stereophile* piano recording called *Intermezzo*. I'm used to hearing this record through the mighty *Sonoliths*; through the Eposes it sounded a shade less like the excellent transcription I have become accustomed to.

Most of the listening was done with Michell amps, but I hooked up the *Cyrus III* as well, which elicited a more open, lively sound that helped the midrange but left the bass less defined and controlled. Not a bad result overall, and consistently very musical. Having heard all of the Epos speakers at one time or another, I'd say that the ES22 is well worthy of a reputation that's the envy of many in the trade. It possesses a fine sense of timing, offers high resolution across the frequency range, and has just enough character to be endearing without obscuring.

Epos ☎ (01705) 407722 ▲



HI-FI CHOICE

Tall tales from the Epos ES22.

Red Hot on Impulse GRP 11512

The Impulse label was started in 1960 by Creed Taylor, and it was under his direction that the label signed John Coltrane. Yep, we're talking 1960s jazz, when the form moved out of bebop into free jazz and split into myriad shards. This album was put together by the Red Hot organisation to spotlight the incredible talent present on Impulse, at the same time swelling the war-chest of Red Hot's fight against AIDS. It's a useful sampler for those of you tempted by Impulse's numerous recent reissues of CDs and LPs.

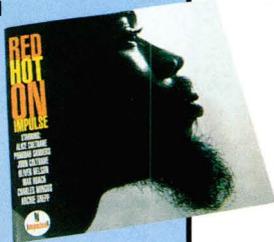
The compilation contains 11 tracks from artists both celebrated and relatively obscure, sporting names like John Coltrane, Charles Mingus and Archie Shepp. While this is elementary material for the jazz aficionado, it is also accessible to the uninitiated. We are spared the heavier moments of Pharoah Sanders or Archie Shepp; instead there is gentle induction into a world of spiritual vibes and extraordinary talent.

If the so-called Acid Jazz movement has caught your imagination, get acquainted with where it all began.

King Crimson - Lark's Tongues in Aspic EGCD 7

On a totally different tip to *Red Hot on Impulse*, here's the Virgin value rerelease of a classic Brit Rock album from 1973. This was Crimson's sixth album, and the first appearance of its classic power trio line-up: Robert Fripp on guitar and Frippertronics, John Wetton on bass, Bill Bruford on drums. That awesome parade of musicians is joined here by Jamie Muir on 'percussion and allsorts', with David Cross on violin and Mellotron.

The title track starts off barely audible with light drum and guitar, but becomes a raging torrent at the flick of a switch. There are subtle melodic tracks, but an ever-present menace lends an edge. The other stand-out track is *Easy Money* (nothing like the Ricki Lee Jones song), which features weighty, textural bass from Wetton as a counterpoint to the rhythmical extravagances of 'human metronome' Bruford. Imagine early '80s Rush and you've not even begun to conceive the majesty of Crimson. *Tom Sawyer* with attitude, anyone?



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353 The advantage

Small is beautiful

Space: the final frontier for hi-fi — but **David Vivian** hasn't got much of it. Here he explains why size isn't important for great sound quality.

Share a secret? I'd like a bigger room. Something with real depth and width and volume. Big enough to sit at one end and see perspective lines converge at the other. Big enough for clouds to form up near the light fittings. Big enough to party in for weeks at a time. But, most of all, big enough to accommodate a sod-off, gigawatt hi-fi.

I like big. I'd like my hi-fi to be more powerful than my car and my car to be a Ferrari *F40*. I like shock wave bass, high velocity transients and visceral volume.

Curious, then, that I live in a bijou semi-detached cottage with but a thin wall separating my living space from next door's. Stranger still that I listen to hi-fi in the smaller of the two living rooms, a pretty little thing barely 13 foot by ten foot. But then I have no choice. I bought the house because it has a mill pond outside and I like communing with the ducks. I reckon you'd have done the same.

And so the struggle continues — unachievable sonic aspirations versus the real world. I don't want to move house for the sake of the hi-fi. Neither, if you're a sane and well-adjusted human being, do you.

Now, at this point, I should hedge my bets. My instinct here is to qualify like crazy. I mean, it's hard enough to be didactic about system building anyway. But the dreaded small room syndrome? You can't win. People will tell you that it's well nigh impossible to extract a truly satisfying sound from a shoe box. They'll say it doesn't contain enough air for big speakers

to generate genuinely deep bass. Or to let the music "breathe". They'll point to the evils of near field listening; the in-yeer-face presentation; the unconvincing soundstaging; the skull-drilling treble.

And they'd be right. I've experienced all of this and more over the years. Dragging a decent sound from a confined space isn't easy. But neither is it all that hard. Reviewer Malcolm Steward previously had a living/listening room almost as small as mine, yet his active Linn/Naim set-up sounded disgustingly dynamic and natural. No twee system for a tiny room, this. The Naim *SBLs* were just a couple of paces from the sofa; each had its own *NAP250*. They went excitingly loud, but effortlessly.

A couple of years ago I compared the remarkable Nakamichi/Soundstream/KEF combo in Ken Chisholm's *VW Golf GTI* (probably the best in-car sound in the country) with the frighteningly expensive, exotic and gorgeous system in Loughborough dealer Derek Whittington's house. We parked Ken's car in the drive and shuffled between Derek's spacious lounge — in which the outrageous Shahinian Diapason loudspeakers looked about right — and the well packaged but decidedly intimate cabin of the compact German hatchback.

Guess what? Derek's system sounded more impressive. But Ken's was tighter, faster and more musical. And because it focused attention on the music, the fact that we were sitting in a sound booth with the front speakers less than four feet apart ceased to matter.

Interface explorations

If music matters, the size of the room shouldn't. It might be harder to achieve some of hi-fi's neater tricks in a small room. Invisible speakers, a stereo soundstage with convincing height and depth, subterranean bass and a realistic rendering of the scale and shape of the recording acoustic require space. But getting the music right — the pace, rhythm, tempo, cohesion and accurate resolution of timbre and harmonics — shouldn't be a problem. In fact, it's easier.

Indeed, the more you explore the small room/system interface, the better it looks. Given that the room probably has a bigger influence on the sound of a system than any single component in it, the effect tends to diminish with the size of the room. Because transmission and reflection paths are shorter, there's less opportunity for the room to "get hold" of the sound and manipulate it. You hear it straight and true, just as the producer intended.

The old room size/amp power equation still makes sense. You don't need as many Watts to fill a small room with sound, especially since efficient speakers have become so fashionable at the affordable end of the market. So you might as well make them good Watts. The smoothness and easy-going musicality of valves have obvious attractions here. Let's face it, with the 25 or so Watts a side of an Audio Innovations *Series 500* to play with, you aren't going to rock the Albert Hall. Small is where it's at.

The boppy Brit sound

I think things are even better than that. Okay, a cosy, glowing little valve-amped system will probably be as soothing as it is small-room friendly. And I bet any competent dealer could come round with a selection of ballsy British components from Linn or Naim or Arcam and knock up a taut, punchy, tuneful ensemble that will keep your feet tapping for months.

They're the easy options. But what if you don't want mellifluous? What if you find the boppy Brit sound a little short on finesse and transparency. What if you want it all? A small-room system that doesn't cost the earth but sounds like a million bucks. A system with space and pace, dynamite, dynamics and disarming delicacy. A system that will keep you enthralled not just into the early hours of the morning but for weeks, months, end even years.

I don't know what it is, either. But I've spent years trying to find out and picked up a few pointers on the way. Until I decided to experiment with small-room possibilities for this article, my system comprised a Meridian 602 transport, Meridian 603 DAC/pre-amp (used purely as a DAC), a Pioneer *A400 GTE* integrated amp (astweaked by the unfeasibly talented Tom Evans of Trichord and Michell fame) and — get this — a pair of KEF *Coda 7* loudspeakers. I've had speakers of all shapes and sizes in my room — from large, multi-drive-unit floorstanders to dainty miniatures. They've all worked to an extent. Because all the walls are different lengths standing waves have never been a problem — it's possible to pump quite a lot of bass energy without things becoming boomy or



3-D Illustration by Cyrus

con-
gested.

However, on the whole, the small speakers have given the best balance. Get the balance right in a small room and the battle's half won.

The good news is that speaker makers have decided to make small, inexpensive models with meaty bass. Mission's 760i SE hinted that this might be possible, the Coda 7 left no one in any doubt. But they need careful controlling. It's no good plonking the baby KEF on weedy stands and expecting miracles. Mine sit on 24-inch Slate Audio stands that cost three times as much as the Codas and damp down just enough of their tendency to become over exuberant at highish volumes. Thus tamed, they're a wonderful small room design: breezy, open and articulate with surprising low-end wallop and speed and treble quality that belongs to an altogether more expensive speaker.

X vs GTE

Good treble is vital in the near field. A harsh, gritty high end, whether it's the responsibility of the electronics or the tweeter, is a non-starter. The Evans GTE tweak adds some flesh and warmth to the original A400's hyper-clean treble, but substituting a current, off-the-shelf A400X ushers in even finer resolution and delicacy. Trouble is, the X doesn't hit as hard as the GTE. Upgrade from Coda 7s to Coda 8s and the short-fall disappears. The 8s have a bigger, more bass-solid sound than the 7s with the attendant benefit of being a little less obvious through the midrange. They also sound more relaxed and dynamic. Swapping them for a pair of Castle Severn's — slim, elegant £500 floorstanders — to see if I can keep the roll going, doesn't work. The Castles are a tad more cultured but sound a little sluggish and bass-heavy by comparison. Replacing the A400X with harman/kardon's leaner and more zesty £200610 integrated injects some life and bounce — a little too much with either pair of Codas — but, overall the Pioneer/KEF team gel to best effect.

Final question. How much of the overall sound is down to the once redoubtable Meridian 602/603 combo? Adding Pioneer's latest £400 Legato Link S machine, the PDS-904S, provides an intriguing answer. The Pioneer isn't quite as rich as the Meridians but even more detailed and atmospheric.

So, our sound has taken on a real 'larger-than-the-room' quality but lost none of its vibrancy or coherence in the process. Moreover, the system value has actually fallen by £2,700. Put back another £350 for REL's latest tuneable active subcube, the Q-Bass, and you can have still more solidity and depth in the lower registers.

More solidity than depth, to be honest. Perhaps that stomach-wobbling 'whoomph' you get with seriously deep bass really is the preserve of large rooms. Little else is, though. I had a good sound and found a better one. So don't assume that throwing time, effort (and, yes, even a little money) at a small-room system isn't productive. On the contrary, it's essential. And the results can be hugely satisfying. I still want a big room, though.



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A fair cop

Alan Sircom has his senses soothed by some seductive Scandinavian tube amps.

Three years ago, Scandinavian amplifier specialist Copland introduced the critically-acclaimed *CTA301/504*: a combination of pre and power amplifiers deploying valves. Today, Copland has radically upgraded the *CTA301* preamp to become *CTA 301 mkII* (now £1,349), while the redesigned *504* power amp has become the £2,099 *CTA 505*.

The *301* preamplifier still uses four power supplies: one each for the line amplifier stage (four inputs plus tape), phono stage and valve heaters. However, the *mkII* has a new circuit board, improved circuit layout and two separate earth lines for the signal and power supply paths. These tweaks notwithstanding, I would guess that the most obvious change has been the switch to Russian valves. Copland has swapped from E82CC double triodes in the line stage to Sovtek 6922s, while the E83CC valves in the phono stage have been replaced with military-specification 12AX7 triodes. The good news is that the *mkII* version — significantly better than the *mkI*, if memory serves — is retrofittable into the *mkI* chassis, at an as-yet-unconfirmed price. It is also worth noting that the preamplifier inverts phase at its outputs, so ideally the speaker connections should be inverted at the amplifier.

The *CTA 505* power amplifier is likewise modified. The new power amp has ceramic valve holders soldered directly to the circuit board, a switch-free signal path, custom-made transformers, higher specification filter capacitors and many other improvements. In the tube stakes, a complement of 12AX7 and 12AU7s make up the low-level section, with a brace of four 6550 tetrodes to do the real work. This allows the *CTA 505* to pump out 67 Watts per channel in triode mode, or 35W in switched triode mode.

A major point in Copland's favour is the superb build quality of its products. There is massive attention to detail, manifest in the shape of the deeply-

solid panelling; elegant, Cello-like alloy knobs; and circuit boards so thick that you could dig roads with them. The components stacked onto this board are pretty substantial, too, including specialist transformers made by Microtraf — Copland's in-house brand.

It would win the Eurovision Song Contest

One can't help but describe the sound of this amplifier combination as 'sweet' — especially when the power amp is in triode mode. However, it never gets bogged down in audio treacle, even when digging out the most syrupy soul ballads. It just has an admirably consistent polishing effect that brings out the best in every record played.

This sweetness is reinforced by an immense sense of control, especially remarkable for a valve amp driving real-world loudspeakers (Ruark Equinox) with below 100dB efficiency. There is little of the soggy bass associated with some tube designs; instead: clean, tight bass with crisp mid-range and treble. If anything, the Copland duo is rather too controlled, and sometimes errs towards the intellectual and mannered presentation. However, if — like me — you are more King Crimson than King Kurt, a little extra control and a touch of the cerebrals can be a good thing.

It can rock with the lads down the pub, if needed, but this Copland duo is far more relaxed with a refined night of jazz at the wine bar. However, it got behind the gutsy, crunching guitars from the Foo Fighters' eponymous first

album with as much aplomb when digging deep into Rachmaninov's Second Symphony. The latter highlighted another commendable trait: an impressive dynamic range. This equipment won't reproduce the sort of wild-stallion dynamics that you might hear from a no-feedback, single-ended triode design from Audio Note, for example. Instead, you get a more reserved version of events, with a strong sense of control.

Imagery is clearly focused, with a superb sense of space around instruments in the soundstage. More than this, though, I commend the solidity of the Copland's sound which, like other products from this company, only adds to an innate sense of rightness in the sound. That's rightness in a bolted-down and natural sense, not rightness in the airy-fairy manner of some of its valve peers.

Conclusion

As ever with Copland, this is a grown-up amplifier that makes music with a refined, yet never over-civilised, air. I can't wait for the new Copland HDCD CD player! ▲

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Levin on a player

The prestigious Mark Levinson brand has released its first 'budget' CD player — a snip at £8,000. Alan Sircom dreams of the day when he'll be able to afford one.

Only Madrigal could come up with an 'entry level' eight grand CD player. The £3,995 Mark Levinson No.37 transport and identically priced No.38 DAC converter would be flagships in any other company's range — but with its top transport and matching DAC weighing in at a cool £21,000, eight grand is a mere bagatelle.

The No.37 and No.38 arrive in huge boxes, but are average-sized components — a minor disappointment, for about a nanosecond. Then you feel the sheer heft of the casing, the quality of the black anodised finish, and the way that nothing flexes, even when you lean on it.

Curiously, the AC plug socket for the No.38 is in the middle of its (soft white) underbelly. This shortens the path between the inflowing mains current and the DAC's powersupply circuitry. (Most use lengths of wire, regardless of the digital damage that can ensue from consequent stray fields).

What's in the box?

Rather than adopting a conventional, off-the-shelf CD transport, Levinson has taken an 'ard-as-nails industrial CD-ROM drive and totally rebuilt it to make it even tougher. This takes an age to run in, but the results are worth it.

The DAC has also been given the overkill treatment, with six digital inputs, and both XLR (balanced) and gold-plated phono

(single-ended) outputs. Within this 20-bit device, there's a Pacific Microsonics HDCD processor, allied to Levinson's own 'intelligent FIFO' buffer. This buffers the digital signal from the transport, in what is claimed to be a far less jitter-infested manner.

The user-friendly buttons and big red LED display seem too large — but have you ever tried to read a regular-sized CD display across a large room? This value-added package includes comms ports for Levinson *Thirty-somethings* to talk to one another and the facility to program functions or store information (down to minutiae like absolute phase) for thousands of discs.

T'would make a statue weep

Despite its overt sophistication, this Levinson pair is judged finally on sound quality. Just how good does eight grand's worth of American kits sound?

Well, from the start it was clear that this was no normal CD player. In fact, it operates so far beyond the average performance envelope as to have little in common with less expensive siblings.

This impression is founded primarily on bass: the impact, depth and sheer resolution of it. No other player I have tested has the ability to grab so much bass detail from the silver disc. It seems to reach down to the very bow-

els of the loudspeakers to wring out a few more Hertz.

With HDCD, you get Dickensian levels of detail, and scale Tolkien would be proud of. Put away the HDCD discs and you get a similar overall sound, only with slightly less detail and subsequently less sheen to the performance. Neil Young's *Mirrorball* aside, you also manage to by-pass the turgid musicality of current HDCD discs.

CD after CD sounded fresh and new, resolving information that remained hidden until now. Even poor recordings displayed subtle nuances more easily than ever before. This mannered performance won't endear itself toward the most frantic music, but even at its worst, it will delve deep into the disc.

The big conclusion

If I had to sum up the No.36/No.37 in one word, I'd pick 'majestic'. Majestic in bass performance; majestic in producing a rock-solid soundstage. Most of all it is majestic in its control of music.

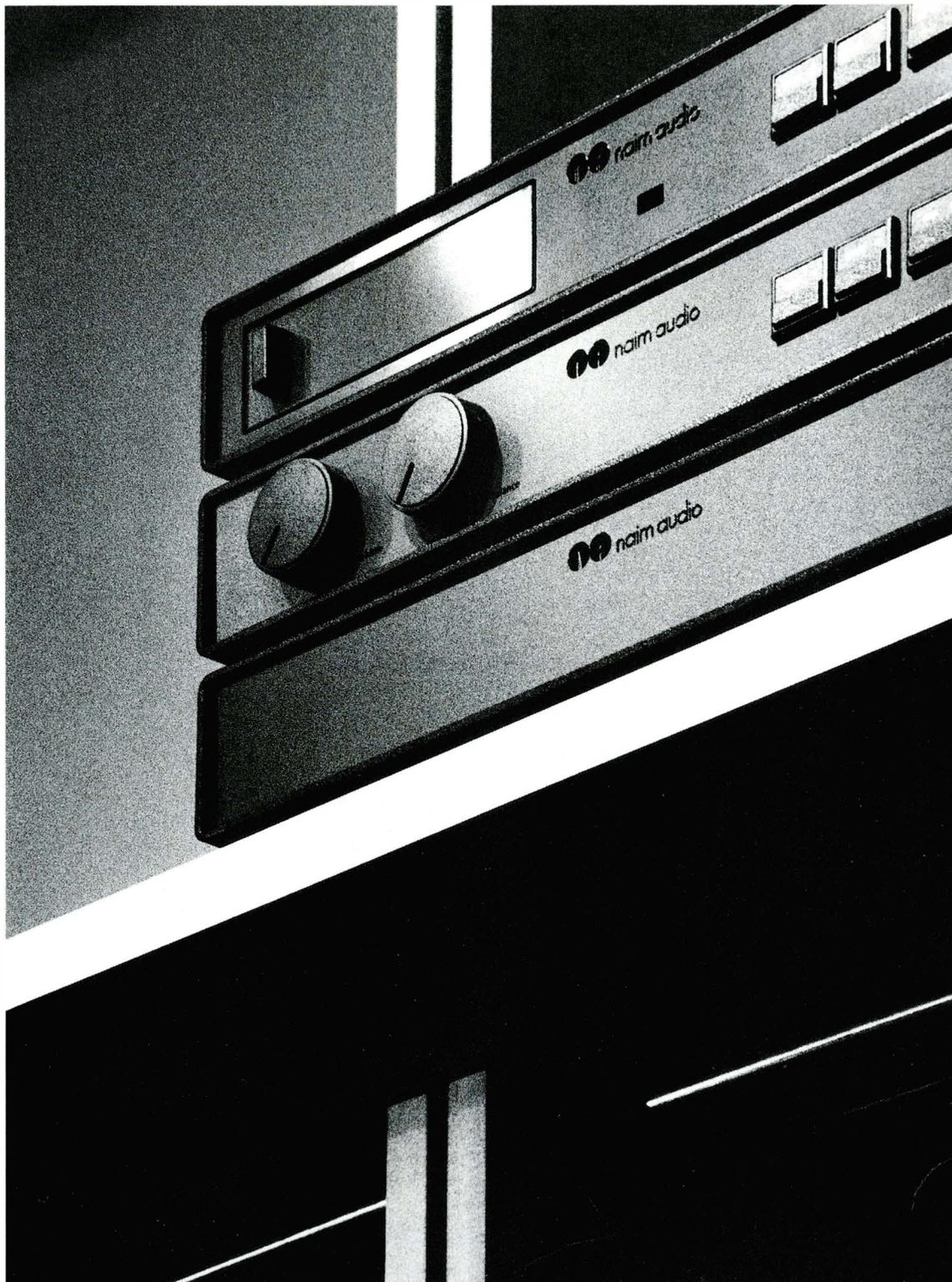
Think of this transport/DAC duo not as an expensive CD player, but instead a cheap alternative to a McLaren *F1* in the status ratings. Now, if only I could pick those six winning lottery numbers...

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21st Century

A new 'Super CD' draws tantalisingly close, but will it founder on the rocks of sensational journalism? **Barry Fox** reports the latest news.

Fox

In the mid 80s, when serious listeners were unhappy about the sound quality of CD, the price of discs and players was too high for the mass market. The Japanese electronics industry developed DAT, offering longer playing time and the bonus of home recording. Most people in the hi-fi business saw DAT as no more than an adjunct to CD, but the Japanese could not resist hyping their new format. The popular press dressed up DAT as a predator for CD, with the result that people who had just bought CD players felt tricked. Those ready to buy CD put the purchase on hold.

More recently, a similar fate has befallen Video CD, the system that puts 74 minutes of VHS-quality video onto a standard CD. Publicity for DVD (the high-density disc that will hold a full movie of broadcast quality) has seen to that. Even though the promise of a £500 DVD player is already looking sick, and likewise the projected launch date of autumn 1996, people 'know' something better is coming.

For all the right reasons, the UK's ARA (Acoustic Renaissance for Audio) has been trying to raise awareness of the high-density disc's potential for amazing hi-fi applications. However, that idea could run out of control. The ARA proposed a High Quality Audio Disc (HQAD) with higher sampling rates and more bits per word than standard CD. The ARA suggested 96 kHz, twice the 48 kHz DAT standard. Philips would prefer 88.2 kHz, which is twice the CD standard, and thus better suited to remasters of existing discs.

Pioneer has been planning a high-density, high-quality, three-inch stereo CD. Sony is way out on a limb, with a completely new idea for HD audio. Sony wants a 'bitstream' system, quite different from PCM. Instead of fixed word lengths of 16 bits or more, a single bit would switch very rapidly to steer signals up or down. This would make it easy to build a very cheap Discman portable, with the disadvantage of negating any digital signal processing, for instance filtering or shaping.

Professor Malcolm Hawksford (of the Centre for Audio Research and Engineering at the University of Essex) has already written a technical paper which compares PCM with a bitstream. In his opinion, "We believe the inherent advantages of a linear PCM system to be overwhelming" he writes.

"Actually, there is nothing very much wrong with the existing CD system," says the



ARA's Tony Griffiths, until recently the boss of Decca's recording centre, and one of the forces behind DCC's push to 18-bit resolution. "If there was anything wrong, studio engineers and producers would be jumping up and down at what the CD system does to their recordings. I think people really want more loudspeakers and more channels, to make the sound more realistic. Around 15 million people are using Dolby surround decoders, with up to five speakers round the room."

High density discs create the space for more channels, and higher quality for each channel if people want it. So the ARA has made up a one-hour demonstration programme on five-channel digital tape. It pulls together examples of stereo, Ambisonics and old quadraphonic recordings. One example has a singer on stage being heckled by the audience. Play it in surround and the hecklers are at the rear of the room; play it in stereo and they are on stage alongside the singer.

The Japan Audio Association saw what the ARA was doing, and in July formed its own Advanced Digital Audio (ADA) conference. Most Japanese audio manufacturers belong to ADA, and the group holds regular meetings to discuss future music recording and playback. The ADA will make a formal proposal on hi-fi high density CD by March 1996. Behind the scenes there is Japanese Government support, and like it or not, the ADA's decision will shape the future of hi-fi in the next century.

Representing the ARA, Meridian Audio's Bob Stuart gave two demonstrations to the ADA

Do we want higher resolution, or music all around the room? The debate begins here.

in Japan 20 October. At least half the ADA's hundred members turned up: it was the first time they had seen a presentation by a voluntary group, on a mission for the good of the industry, rather than a manufacturer trying to sell a new standard.

Stuart told the audience: "I am not here to explain the benefits of high sampling rates and high bit numbers. I am here to show what five-channel discrete 16-bit linear PCM sounds like, and ask you to imagine what it would sound like with five channels of 20-bit code".

The IFPI, world trade body for the record companies, is now having private talks with the RIAA and RIAJ, the record industry trade bodies in North America and Japan. The IFPI's Director General, Nicholas Garnett, says: "We did not want to be faced with a *fait accompli* assembled by the hardware industry. So we are getting everyone to agree a laundry list of what we want from the new system. Top of the list is copyright control."

No-one in music or hi-fi seriously expects the new hi-fi format, whatever form it takes, to be ready for several years. But as the debate widens, there is a real risk that a national newspaper will take these shards of information and inflate them into a shock horror story. Heaven help the hi-fi market if we have a new DAT-style scare which advises consumers to wait for the 'revolutionary' new Super Audio CD which is 'just around the corner'. ▲

Help!

IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHY THERE'S NO SUN UP IN THE HI-FI SKY, YOU NEED HELP FROM MALCOLM STEWARD

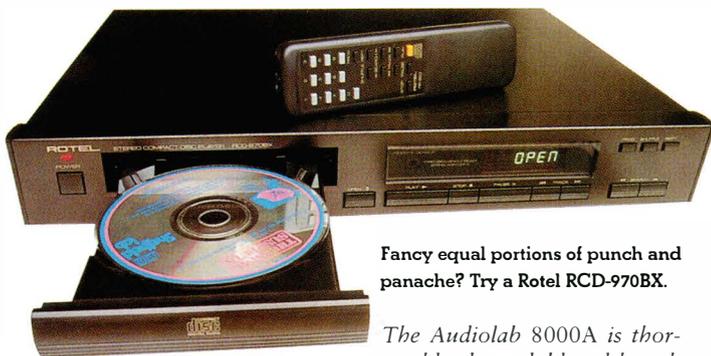
Sparkling neutrality

I have a Philips CD473 CD player, NAD 3225 amplifier and Leak Sandwich 600 speakers. The sound is very neutral, just as I prefer it, but I'd like to replace the CD473 with a player that has more sparkle in its treble and more oomph in the bass without compromising midrange neutrality. What do

you recommend?

Richard Clews, West Midlands

The Rotel RCD-970BX recently impressed me as a player that mixed punch and panache in equal portions. It delivers a well-balanced sound that's enthusiastic but also open and articulate in the frequency extremes. Try this



Fancy equal portions of punch and panache? Try a Rotel RCD-970BX.

Query of the month

After 14 years listening to a Sharp Optonica system, I now have a 'real' hi-fi which I bought second-hand. My Linn LP12 turntable, Ittok LVIII arm and K9 cartridge sit on a Mana Reference table, while my Micromega Stage 3 CD player, Naim NAC72 pre-amplifier and NAP140 power amplifier with FlatCap power supply sit on an Apollo equipment table. Interconnect is Chord Solid, and my Linn Keilidh speakers are connected with Naim NAC-A5 cable.

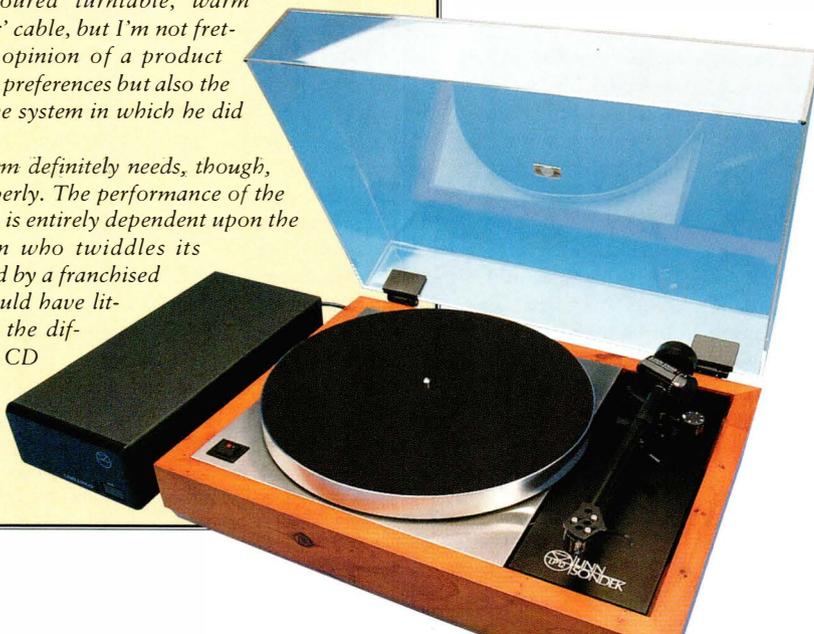
However, from what I've read and heard, my turntable is 'coloured', the cartridge is 'bright', the amps are 'warm', the cable is a 'dinosaur' and the speakers can sound 'shut-in'. Does this mean that my system works, or is it back to the drawing board? Also, listening to some albums on both CD and vinyl it's hard to tell the difference between the formats.

Jeff Wilding, Manchester

Welcome to the wonderful world of hi-fi paranoia. Don't worry about the remarks concerning your components: the vital element in system building is attaining a workable balance and yours is reasonably well sorted. My own system uses the same 'coloured' turntable, 'warm' amps and 'dinosaur' cable, but I'm not fretting: a reviewer's opinion of a product reflects not only his preferences but also the characteristics of the system in which he did the auditioning.

What your system definitely needs, though, is being set up properly. The performance of the LP12, in particular, is entirely dependent upon the skill of the person who twiddles its springs. Get it tuned by a franchised dealer and you should have little trouble hearing the difference between CD and LP.

Linn LP12 needs professional set-up for tip-top results.



updated version of our old favourite, the RCD965BX.

Compare it with other similarly priced players such as the Kenwood DP-7060, the Onkyo DX750, and the Sony CD-P561E. Don't forget to audition the Arcam Alpha One and, for a few dollars more, the stalwart Alpha 5 Plus.

Power partnering

Could you advise me on which sub-£500 amplifier best suits the Mission 752 speakers? I've been thinking about the Cyrus III and the Audiolab 8000A, both of which are available here in South Africa.

Justin Mueller, via the Internet

The Audiolab 8000A is thoroughly dependable, although you may find its sound errs towards caution and restraint. This probably won't suit you if you're looking for large doses of excitement. The Cyrus III, naturally, will work happily with the Mission 752s, but I find it more convincing when it's partnered with the PSX-R power supply (upping its price to around £800).

Options I'd recommend you audition are the Arcam Delta 290, Naim NAIT3 and the more expensive Exposure XV.

Standing a chance

I was lucky to buy a second-hand pair of Spendor SP100 loudspeakers. My problem is discovering which stands would fit them best.

Dirk Kallweit, Bremen, Germany

Spendor advises against using generic stands with the SP100 because its dimensions and cabinet construction demand a dedicated support. The company supplies four stands, the first of which is an MDF 'furniture' type. However, you'll achieve far better results with one of the three metal models, either one of the domestic designs — one is 350mm tall, the other 500mm — or the 450mm tall, box-section, open-frame stand aimed primarily at professional users. As Spendor rightly points out, there's no

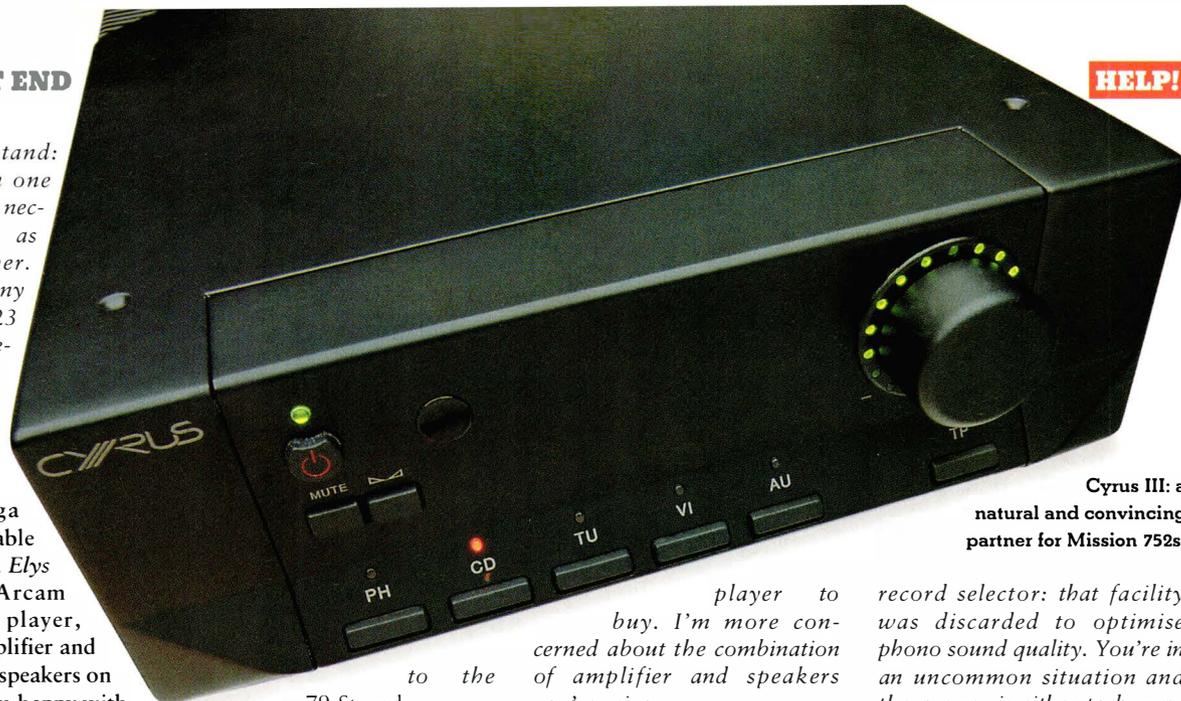
single ideal stand: what works in one situation won't necessarily work as well in another. Call the company on +44 (0) 1323 843474 for specific advice.

The upgrade connection

I have a Rega Planar 3 turntable fitted with Rega Elys cartridge, an Arcam Alpha 5 CD player, Creek 4140 amplifier and Heybrook HB1 speakers on HBS1 stands. I'm happy with these and don't want to change them. However, I want to improve the sound in subtle ways by upgrading my £20 interconnect and QED 79-Strand. The Creek has DIN sockets: is this a problem? I'm also considering changing my Target TT2 equipment table to a three-shelf unit or upgrading the Alpha 5 to Alpha 6. I have about £250 to spend in total. Colin Cheeseman, Oxon

The DINs on your Creek aren't a problem: Cable Talk, the Chord Company and SonicLink all manufacture suitable interconnects fitted with high quality DIN connectors.

Switching to better speaker cables alone will bring a dramatic improvement. Cable Talk's Talk 3 or Ixos Superstrand 603 make excellent and inexpensive upgrades



Cyrus III: a natural and convincing partner for Mission 752s.

to the 79-Strand. With regard to stands, I'd suggest that if you have the floor space you retain the two-tier table for your CD player and amplifier, and instead treat your Rega to its own separate support.

Connection consistency

What do you think would be the best speaker cable and interconnect for a Mission DAD7, Cyrus III and Mission 753 combination? Jaume Moreno Roca, Spain

There's much to be said for using speaker cable and interconnects from the same manufacturer: it's a fair bet that one was developed using the other, which should provide consistent performance. I would look at Cable Talk's range and also consider using Chord Company interconnects with Naim NAC A5 speaker cable.

Listen to your heart

I'm having trouble here in Singapore choosing a new CD player to partner my Cyrus III, PSX-R and Neat Petite speakers on MAF stands. I've tried the Quad CD67, Cyrus DAD7, Meridian 506 and Naim CD3. My mind goes for the Quad but my heart goes out to the Naim. I'm worried about system matching. Chin Yee Hock, via the Internet

If the Naim gives you a buzz then that's the

player to buy. I'm more concerned about the combination of amplifier and speakers you're using.

I've found that the Neat Petite only delivers its full potential being driven by muscular, tight-sounding power amplifiers such as the Naim NAP250 and Exposure IV. While the Cyrus III is a very capable amplifier it's probably better partnered with a less demanding speaker, such as the Neat Mystique or Mission 752.

Catch 78

My system consists of a Pioneer PD-5010 CD player, a Dual CS5000 turntable with an Ortofon OM20 cartridge for LPs and Shure M75ED for 78s, Pioneer A-400X amplifier, JVC TDW253 cassette deck, B&W DM220i speakers and a Technics SHGE70 equaliser.

I have two problems. The first concerns the equaliser I bought because I listen to, research and re-record 78s. The instructions for connecting it seem to assume that the amplifier has a tape monitor facility, and as the A-400X doesn't, I can't get full facility from the equaliser.

The bigger problem is a lack of sound quality. There's practically no bass — on any input — and the system sounds boxy and restricted in all but the high frequencies. Do I need new speakers or a subwoofer?

Stephen Sutton, Northumberland

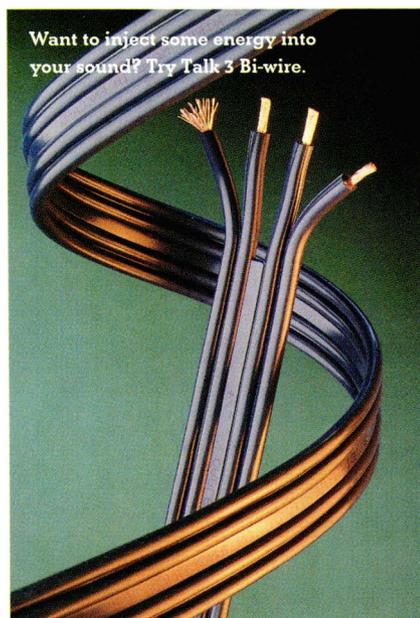
I am sorry to say that you shouldn't have bought an A-400X. The man from Pioneer says you can't get off-tape monitoring from that model's phono input because the phono stage isn't connected to the

record selector: that facility was discarded to optimise phono sound quality. You're in an uncommon situation and the answer is either to buy an amplifier with a more conventional tape loop configuration or to kludge an arrangement that will work. You could, for example, use a cheap second-hand preamp — or a separate phono amplifier — and take the line-level signal from this to, say, the tuner input on your A-400X. You could then connect your equaliser to the A-400X and your cassette deck to the equaliser's tape loop.

If you retain the Pioneer, you should investigate loudspeakers with a generous bass register rather than complicating already complicated matters with a subwoofer. Try models such as the TDL RTL2 or the Rega EL8.

No crutches needed

I have the following gear: Marantz CD-65II CD player,



Want to inject some energy into your sound? Try Talk 3 Bi-wire.

Query of the month

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

◀◀ Arcam *Alpha 6* amplifier, Mission *761i* speakers, Thorens *TD150II* with Rega *RB250* arm and Linn *K9* cartridge. The problem is the CD, which sounds 'thin', lacking bass and life compared to the turntable.

I could spend up to £500 improving it, which puts players such as the Arcam *Alpha 5* and Micromega *Stage 1* on the list. However, I could instead buy an external DAC such as the Arcam *Black Box 50* or the cheaper QED *Digit+*. What's the best course of action?

Peter Westwood, via the Internet

It's nice to hear that the venerable TD150 can still hack it in the digital nineties. To partner this rocker from the locker I would choose either the Arcam or Micromega rather than trying to tart up an old budget player. No disrespect to the CD-65II, but there's more to a decent sounding CD player than just the DAC. The Micromega Stage 1 also conveniently offers a particularly worthwhile and cost-effective upgrade path if you decide to progress further with CD.

I'm so excited — not!

My system consists of a NAD 304 amplifier, NAD 501 CD player, Aiwa AD-F450 cassette

deck and Mission 760SE speakers bi-wired with Cable Talk Talk 3 on Atacama SE24 stands. The speakers are sited 29 inches away from the rear wall.

I am happy with the cassette deck, but the CD doesn't always sound clear or tight enough. With £200 to spend, should I replace the CD or amp to get a more exciting sound?

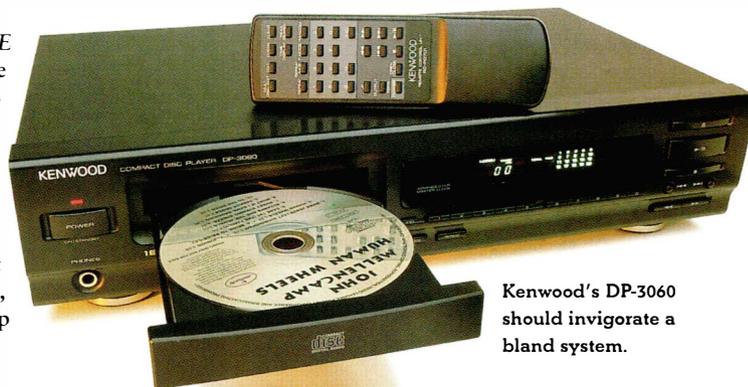
Maran Benadict, Essex

Before doing anything else, move your speakers much closer to the wall: the 760SEs require boundary reinforcement to deliver their intended response.

The NAD 501 is probably what's not delivering the excitement you crave, so a new CD player would be your best upgrade. Listen to the Sony CDP-561E, Denon's DCD-825, Kenwood's DP-3060 and the Marantz CD-53, all of which have a suitably spunky demeanour.

Permission to experiment

My system consists of a Rotel RB/RC970BX2 amplifier, Sony CDP-761E CD player, NAD 402 tuner, and TDL RTL2 speakers. I'd like to add a second Rotel power amp but wonder whether bi-amping or bridging the power amps would provide the most



Kenwood's DP-3060 should invigorate a bland system.

improvement. Also, would putting spikes under my CD player improve the sound a lot?

Jerome Chung, via the Internet

I'd always opt for bi-amping over bridging unless the speakers are inefficient and starved of horsepower, which is not the case with your RTL2s. Bi-amping will control the drivers better, improving detail resolution, musical coherence, dynamics and imagery.

I'm less convinced about spiking your CD player. Putting it on an equipment table or isolation platform will definitely be worthwhile. After that you're in suck-it-and-see territory. Some players respond to the oddest tweaks — Blu-Tack balls beneath their feet, telephone directories on top of their cases to damp them... There's plenty of scope for harmless experimentation.

Keeping up with inventions

My present system is a Pioneer PD9700 CD player, Audiolab 8000AII amplifier and Mission 781s on Target stands. I'm planning to change to an Audiolab CDM and DAC combination. I'd also like to add an Audiolab 8000P power amplifier and change the speakers for 733 floorstanders. Having discussed this with a number of dealers in Hong Kong, they all say I should wait for the new High Definition CD format before upgrading. Do you agree?

Ben Gilbey, via the Internet

For the current state-of-play regarding HDCD I'll refer you to Barry Fox's report in this issue (21st Century Fox, page 29). My opinion is that whatever happens, it wouldn't be sensible for record companies to adopt a format that wasn't in some way compatible with the installed base of CD players. Imagine having to buy a new CD player just so that you could hear the latest disc by your favourite artist. That doesn't sound like a business-like proposition to me. While hi-fi's techno-crazies might enjoy spending money on the week's latest invention, that doesn't apply to most ordinary record buyers.

Upgrade: step II

Having recently upgraded from a Rotel RCD965BX to a Naim CD3 I'm impressed by the energy and soundstage the Naim has given my system. I now want to upgrade my Arcam *Alpha 3* amplifier and Mission *760iSE* speakers, and I'm considering the Arcam *Delta 290* and Audiolab 8000A. I want to add more body to the sound without sacrificing detail. Are there any other amps I should listen to?



TDL RTL2s will really start to rock if you bi-amp them.

I've heard the Naim NAIT 3 but I found it sounds a bit too forward and it doesn't have a headphone jack.

G M Gridley, London

Both the amps you mention are eminently suitable contenders. Other models with which you could compare them include, obviously, the Cyrus III and the Musical Fidelity E100, which impressed our panel with its 'almost dramatic' presentation.

On the subject of headphones: many can actually be driven directly from the speaker outlets of an amplifier that doesn't provide a headphone socket (check with a dealer about your particular model). You just need to buy a simple adapter — try Tech-Link on (0181) 771 8388.

End-of-tonearm

I have a Roksan Xerxes turntable, Moth arm and Audio Technica AT95E car-



Roksan's Xerxes turntable

tridge, and my problem is end-of-side distortion. It's mainly noticeable as a sort of sibilance, and a hardening and slight edginess, particularly in the higher frequencies. I have had the cartridge realigned and the stylus replaced. Tracking weight and anti-skate settings are also fine.

It has been suggested that the cartridge is being overwhelmed by the turntable and that I should upgrade it. Would you agree? I have up to £150 available. I've also considered a much better tone-arm.

Nicholas Schofield, Lancashire

The AT95E is a fine, inexpensive cartridge but it's not the most sophisticated design in the world and it won't track as securely as more refined models. As a cost-effective upgrade I'd suggest a Roksan Tabriz tonearm fitted with a Denon DL110 high output MC.

If you want to go all-esoteric you'll find that uni-pivots from Naim and Wilson Benesch provide astounding tracking,

although I have to admit that I've used neither on a Xerxes. I'm hopelessly biased towards uni-pivots because I prefer the less mechanical sound they offer. These uni-pivots have also turned me on to cartridges that I didn't appreciate one jot with 'rigid' tone-arms.

Hoax or holy?

I've tried bi-wiring, which some magazines reckon is an absolute must in high-end systems, but without any success. At first it surprised me with a greater insight into the music, but then it got unnerving with too much treble and poorer bass. The imagery suffered as well. I've tried many different cables bi-wiring Magnapan 1.5SEs, Tannoy D700s and D500s, with Audio Research SP-11/D-200 and Yamaha CX-1/MX-1 amplifiers, but it never seemed to work properly. So, I'm now happily using single-wired speakers, worried that bi-wiring might be a big hoax.

Michael Heine, London

Bi-wiring can and does work for some loudspeakers and systems, but there are no guarantees. If your system happens to sound better with just a single run of cable, there's no need for concern.

Legal on the outside

I have a Teac P-700 CD transport and a Sony DTC-59ES DAT coupled through an Audio Alchemy DT1 to an EAD DSP-1000 outboard DAC. I'm very pleased with the CD copies I produce as it's almost impossible to notice any difference between the copy and the original. As I don't need the DAT's converters, I've started wondering about the possible benefits of a DAT transport. Is there such a thing?

José F Valgòde, Spain

Copying CDs isn't exactly legal here in the UK. I'd also suggest that it's rather pointless. Even DAT masters sound inferior through a revealing system. Double speed DAT, however, is another matter. If you're serious about performance I'd say do nothing until you've heard the 96kHz Pioneer D-07 or D-05. The only pure DAT transport I've come across is Nakamichi's 1000DAT.

DEALER DECISIONS

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

The Query

I am currently using a system comprising a Marantz CD50SE CD player, Cambridge Audio DACmagic 1 D/A converter, P70 amp and Castle Durham speakers. Also included is an Aiwa ADF400 cassette player. Interconnects are home-made from expensive microphone cable, speaker cable is QED 79 Strand.

The problem is that I've recently moved home and the sound of the system has become flat and undynamic as well as bass-light. I know that the front end is okay, because of tapes I have recorded on this system. When played back through my personal stereo, they sound better than the original source via the system! I suspect the speakers, which are ten years old. I have a budget of around £400.

W Riley, Merseyside

Paul Green Hi-Fi

From your letter, I presume the system was all right before you moved, so the change of room seems to be the problem. Throughout my 30 years in hi-fi, I've come across rooms that just never sound right — but these are rare.

I do agree that ten-year-old loudspeakers could give way to a new pair, and I would suggest trying the TDL RTL2, Mission 733, Tannoy 633, as well as the Systym 165 floorstanders.

My advice to you would always be to find a good, friendly dealer near you, who will allow you to take things home and try them in your system. Only this way will you achieve the sound you want.

Paul Green, Paul Green Hi-Fi, Bath

University Audio

Rooms can have a significant effect on the quality of the sound due to changes in volume, reflective surfaces, type and placement of furnishings, and placement of speakers. Since you were happy with the system in your previous room, we don't think your equipment has anything to do with apparent change in the sound quality. My first suggestion is therefore to experiment heavily with the position of your speakers.

If, at the end of the day, this has no real effect, it could be that your current speakers are not interacting with the room successfully and need to be changed. In that case, my advice would be to look at speakers which have slightly more midband presence than your current units.

My suggestion would be to look at what Mission, Ruark or Monitor Audio have to offer. When choosing your new speaker, short list one or two and then ask for a home demonstration, as this is the only real way of seeing whether or not they are what you want.

Colin Parr, University Audio, Cambridge

Zeus Audio

I agree with you in thinking that your loudspeakers are past their best. However, it is impossible to talk in absolutes without a proper demonstration. Additionally, in your case, I feel that a home demonstration would be almost mandatory. As an example that sticks closely to your budget, the new B&W DM610 speakers, with a pair of Kudos stands and some good cable from Cable Talk or The Chord Company, might well do the trick.

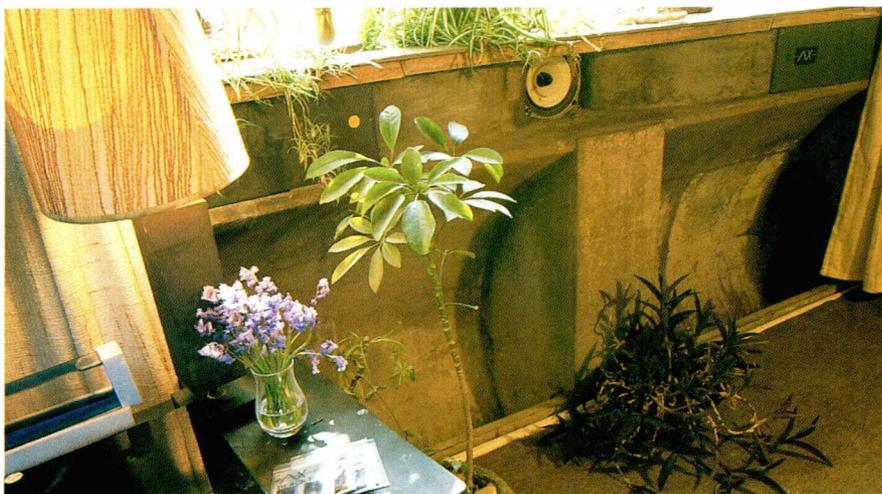
Eventually, when you are happy with a particular pair of speakers, it would be worth looking at an amp and CD player that would move your system further forward. Once again, without demonstration, most recommendations are specious, but the upgradable Micromega Stage range of CD players and amps might be worth a look. Good hunting!

Dennis Cope, Zeus Audio, Belfast

Note: In last issue's Dealer Decisions, the query submitted to the dealers was slightly different to the version printed. Apologies to Grahams Hi-Fi Ltd of London N1, whose answer — despite being in accord with the tone of the original letter — appeared rather over-enthusiastic in recommending modifications to the Rega turntable.

The Jimmy Hughes Experience

Hi-fi deviant **Jimmy Hughes** comes clean about the real path to sonic Nirvana, with one ear tied behind his back.



Realism is the aim of high-fidelity sound reproduction. The sound might be 'realistic' in hi-fi terms, but the experience of real people making music together is rarely conveyed by even the best hi-fi, despite all the right ingredients seeming to be present. Reluctantly, you conclude that even the best equipment is flawed — but then hear a relatively modest system that by happy chance seems to excite and stimulate the emotions despite sonic limitations.

As I make changes and improvements to my own system, frustratingly I find that sonic excellence/realism and musical involvement don't always go hand in hand. Indeed, I sometimes feel that as a system gets better in hi-fi terms, it actually punctures the illusion of 'reality' it tries to create, so you can't overlook it and just listen to the music.

The great actor plays a part so totally yet unobtrusively, you're convinced he is who he purports to be. It's art that conceals art. Likewise hi-fi needs this quality if it is to convince. In other words, we should hear the message rather than the medium.

To convincingly recreate the scale and range of a large orchestra calls for a system that can handle wide contrasts and extremes, and present information to the ear in a coherent, cohesive manner. Yet the more effectively you meet the challenge of reproducing these extremes, the greater the risk of the whole sound falling

apart. That's why a good but not too ambitious system, which does not try to exceed its limits, is often musically more satisfying than something 'better' that aims higher but misses the target.

The trend in audio design is towards simplicity, eliminating unnecessary components to maintain a short, clean signal path. There's merit in this Less Is More approach, but in my opinion it's sometimes necessary to lose a battle or two to win the war. Rather like Alice in *Alice Through the Looking Glass*, it's almost as if the goal we seek gets further away the more we go straight for it. Mikhail Gorbachev tried to save Communism by reforms, yet ended up destroying it. Had he actually set out to destroy communism, I doubt he'd have succeeded quite so quickly. Indeed, he might even have saved it!

Hi-fi never seems to improve in a linear, cumulative fashion; progress is invariably erratic and eccentric. Early, pre-stereo music reproduction systems often had remarkable musical integrity, despite sonic limitations. Today, despite making massive strides over the past thirty or forty years, many of the 'gains' have been in areas like the elimination of noise and distortion, allied to greater user convenience.

It's easy to assume that better sound is simply about eliminating certain readily identified problems — noise and distortion being obvious flaws with early sound reproduction. Yet while advances have unquestionably been made in these technical areas, it has often been

With a speaker like this who needs stereo? Get back to the life and soul of music with mono.

at the cost of musical integrity. It's akin to the way intensive farming creates cheaper and more readily available food of good appearance and excellent consistency, but at the expense of flavour and nutritional value.

Of course, older methods of recording and reproduction were flawed; yet often the losses seemed hardly to touch the music. You need only compare the best recordings made today to those produced thirty or forty years ago to hear how warmth, naturalness, and a certain ease have been replaced by a cold clinical 'perfection' that erodes human individuality from the performance.

In my darker moments I even think stereo, which ushered in a whole new era of sonic realism, often distracts from what is essential. Listening in mono concentrates the mind superbly! It's satisfying because you simply have to listen to the music; there's no stereo to tickle the ear. And while the loss of spread can initially disappoint, the improvement in coherence and timing is ample reward.

It's not dissimilar to the way black and white photography compels you to focus on essentials that colour dilutes. Mono sounds less glamorous than stereo, but once you tune in, everything is much more cohesive and integrated, and clarity is hardly impaired at all. You are not chained to one spot to hear all the music; just like real life, you can move around.

I deviate from the purist straight and narrow by having my speakers back to front and using a line matching transformer between CD player and amplifier. More recently I began experimenting with an output transformer between amp and speakers. Since the amp I listen to (an Orelle SA-100 integrated) is transistorised, there's no need for a transformer. Yet to my ears music sounds so much better with it in place I can't take it out.

You could argue that this approach is wrong, and that it only serves to hide faults better tackled head on. You could well be right. Yet I find it virtually impossible to get the kind of sound I want without such deviation. Even with unlimited cash I doubt that I could get the colour, vibrancy and subtlety I enjoy now, without breaking a few rules...

HINTS & TIPS: MAKING THE MOST OF MAINS

The quality of mains cabling and the mains supply itself are overlooked when one is faced with the myriad details one can attend to when setting up a hi-fi system. Yet the mains supply is the 'petrol' on which the hi-fi 'engine' runs; no power supply, no music! The quality and consistency of mains electricity is certainly capable of affecting sound quality, and many enthusiasts report that their systems often sound best at weekends and after midnight, when demands on the National Grid are less taxing.

Those serious about music will probably run their system from its own dedicated mains spur, thereby avoiding some of the distortion and noise dumped on the supply by devices like TV sets and computers. If you find certain hi-fi components suffer with audible buzzing from the power transformer, it's possible a cleaner mains supply may reduce or eliminate this noise. A dedicated spur will also reduce mains borne clicks produced by fridge-freezers, for example, though often this disturbance is only cured by suppression of the offending item itself.

Power conditioners are available to clean up a dirty mains supply, but whether or not the results are fully beneficial is controversial. Such devices often lead to a smoother cleaner sound, but can sometimes sap dynamics and punch from the sound, leading to a slight loss of focus and immediacy. However, if your system sounds rough and edgy it is likely such treatment will prove beneficial. It may have limited power handling, so don't plug in a big power amp until you've read the small print!

You can also use 'twin and earth' solid-core cable (obtainable in different thicknesses, quite cheaply, from any electrical hardware shop) to replace the cable fitted to mains distribution boards and gain a beneficial improvement in clarity and definition. Replacing captive mains cables is not recommended for the average enthusiast, and will void your warranty. But detachable mains cables using the popular IEC plug are fair game and can easily be fitted with a solid core replacement lead. Indeed, several companies market a range of ready-made solid-core replacement mains cables and distribution boards. The improvement wrought by special mains cables seems to vary, but at its best you can expect a big improvement in treble cleanness; a tighter, more powerful bass; and greater dynamics.

Some hi-fi components are supplied with a detachable, reversible, figure-of-eight plug-in mains lead — many Marantz and Philips CD players for example. Because mains polarity can influence sound quality, it's worth trying these cables both ways rather than just trusting to luck — sometimes the difference can be quite large.

Quite a lot of today's hi-fi equipment is supplied with a two-core mains lead, and it's not unusual to find systems without an earth wire. With equipment built to double-insulated standard, this isn't necessarily a safety hazard, but the lack of an earth can lead to variations in sound quality. CD players (especially older ones) tend to produce quite a lot of RF noise that is lessened considerably if the player (or the amp it's connected to) is earthed.

If your CD player is not earthed to the mains, try this simple test. Switch on the CD player and bring a small portable FM radio, tuned to an FM station, close by. You may find the signal is obliterated by the 'noise' being radiated by the CD player. Earth the unit (often it's best to earth the amp as the central component, and this should in turn earth all items connected to it), and usually the radiated noise will dramatically fall, sometimes to the point where the radio can sit on the CD player without interference.

While writing this, I checked the grounding of the Trichord-modified Marantz CD-12 I use, and found the interference quite bad — the noise itself was pretty vicious. The transport itself was grounded, but Trichord's digital output board is not connected to the chassis. So I tried grounding the body of the digital output plug and found a slight lessening of RF noise as picked up by the radio. More important, the sound seemed cleaner and more precisely focused, with less 'hash' around voices and instruments.

Because of RF noise from CD, it's a good idea to turn off unused CD players and DACs when listening to sources like turntables and (obviously) tuners. However, this must be offset by the length of time it takes to warm up the CD player. In the case of a machine like the Naim CDS, for example, which takes upwards of eight days to warm up, switching off the CD player is a bitter pill to swallow. It's also useful to consider where each component is placed in relation to its partners: you should avoid close proximity between 'noisy' items like CD players, and noise-susceptible components like amplifiers.

If you do decide to ground various components in your system, take care not to create an earth loop. This occurs when the system is grounded to the mains at two points, and may cause an audible hum through the speakers (especially when switched to turntable) that increases with volume. Some increase in residual hum may also occur. Usually just one item in the system (the amplifier preferably) needs to be earthed to ground the whole system. Some amps are designed to earth only the casework and keep the signal negative free from ground. In such cases the components connected to the amp will not be earthed.

I don't know anyone else who does this, but I ground the metal equipment support stands I use with a series of wires connected to croc clips. Whether this helps damp any tendency to pick up RF I don't know, but it does make a difference and leads to a cleaner, firmer sound. If you don't mind the bother of making up the cables, try it; it's a simple but effect tuning tip and it costs very little.

Finally no article on mains wiring is complete without a warning; don't delve into equipment or mains wiring (even component earthing) unless you know precisely what you're doing. Always switch off your equipment before attempting any work, and make sure you unplug any items to be modified.

Jimmy Hughes



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Mentioned in dispatches

When a great industrial power focuses its resources on a well defined goal, mountains can be moved. And the relaunch of harman/kardon's Citation brand is an exemplary lesson of this principle in action. The Citation 7000 is a high-end AV-and-music reproduction system that synthesises the talents of three key companies within the US-based Harman Audio umbrella. To wit, these are harman/kardon, Fosgate Audionics and Audioaccess. Many readers will know already that harman/kardon makes amplifiers and other high-fidelity electronics. Audioaccess, meanwhile, was acquired by Harman about two years ago, and is one of the most prestigious names in multi-room audio and AV systems. In this instance its contribution was to add a multi-room interface into the Citation processor, that can be fully exploited with appropriate add-ons.

The difference is Fosgate

However, the most distinctive contribution is probably in the area of sound quality, and here the honour falls to Fosgate. This brand's main claim to fame is in the area of multi-channel directional enhancement (see boxout, 'A Short History of Fosgate & Citation', page 41), notably through the use of proprietary 'discrete' circuits, rather than the usual integrated circuits. Fosgate claims better sound and spatial performance from their circuits made up of individual transistors and resistors, not because ICs are inferior *per se*, but because Fosgate has been able to pursue its own agenda, rather than that of IC designers.

Alvin Gold finds that Harman's new flagship system provides music and movie soundtracks beyond the call of duty!

Characteristically, Fosgate circuits have short, simple signal paths, and passive components chosen for sound quality. Home grown circuit parameters are engineered to stay within the limits dictated by Dolby Laboratories for official Pro-Logic surround sound performance, yet they are sufficiently quick and accurate to keep up with the demands of the latest digital film soundtrack systems such as Dolby's AC-3 six-channel system. From one point of view, the '6-Axis' process (main technical claim to fame within the Citation system) is a logical extension of Fosgate's basic ideas (see boxout, 'Directional Enhancement and the 6-Axis Mode').

It's THX Jim, but not as we know it

Taken at face value, the Citation 7000 is simply another THX system, but its beauty is much more than skin-deep. The speaker system is the most familiar part, being based upon the original Fosgate home cinema system, albeit with extensive revamping. The main speakers for front left, centre and right (LCR for short) have the usual pair of tweeters flanked by bass/mid units, which are configured vertically (technically, a 'semi-line array') to give the required wide lateral and narrow vertical dispersion. The carcass of the speaker is much more solid and less resonant than the Fosgate original, however; the baffle, meanwhile, is felt-lined to kill secondary reflections, and stepped for time alignment purposes.

To partner the LCR speakers, the system comes with two passive subwoofers sporting 14-inch, pulp-coned drive units. The latter are mounted in simple but solid vented enclosures, yielding a claimed bass response extending down to 21Hz (at -3dB). The surround speaker is a large, dipolar design, each side of which contains two speakers fitted at an angle. Unusually, the two halves are wired independently. They are driven together in anti-phase (opposition) during Dolby Surround and THX surround sound modes, but they can be operated in phase when using the 6-Axis mode, for example.

All of the speakers are driven by three mas-



The basic building blocks of a Citation 7000: the white speaker handles surround duties.

sive Citation power amplifiers, each capable of supplying four lots of 150 Watts into an eight-Ohm load. (Peak current is quoted as a whopping 130 Amps.) Alternatively each amplifier can have its outputs bridged to give two lots of 450 Watts and even more Amps. In total, the system requires nine channels of amplification, which means that you can dedicate two bi-amplified channels to the subwoofers, and have a single channel left unused. I suggest you plug your doorbell into that one, because there's no way you're going to hear it otherwise.



Processed ease

Most of the clever stuff is incorporated into the processor. The Citation 7.0 is a large component, loosely based on Harman/Kardon's Fosgate-designed AVP1 processor, but with greatly improved spatial processing, increased flexibility and that elusive property that has become known as 'intelligence'. The basics include eight inputs (including two tape circuits) and a range of sound-processing algorithms, including Dolby Pro-Logic, 70mm mode, THX, various generic acoustic modes (rock, jazz, classical, four that are user-programmable), mono enhance and — of course — 6-Axis.

The unit is controlled by a precision-stepped attenuator (volume control) with 1dB increments. With the multi-channel circuits switched off, the 7.0 will function as a minimalist audiophile-grade preamplifier, but with the additional (switchable) ability to handle composite video or S-Video signals from video recorders or LaserDisc players.

Given the complexity of this system, its ease of use rates highly. The processor's video output carries a comprehensive set of on-screen displays with nested menus. These are also displayed on the unit's front panel in a display that can turn itself off automatically. Ultra-discreet 'Power On' indicators on the power amps mean there are no distractions when using the system in a darkened room, and the amps have a control wire to the processor so that they will switch on and off automatically.

Only very basic facilities are provided on the processor's front panel, but the remote control makes up for these omissions, and has illuminated key buttons like those on many mobile phones. System setup is basically similar to that of other AV systems: for best results a sound pressure level meter would be recommended, but alternatively there is an automatic routine using a microphone included with the system (we didn't have time to test it, alas.)

The Numbers of the Beast

It's an Herculean task to assess a system with so many variables — all the more so given that different people will ascribe different levels of importance to the multiple facilities provided. For example, anyone who cares nothing for AV material or multi-channel reproduc-

tion will have little interest in this system. On the other hand, the Citation 7000 is a much less specialised AV-only product than any previous THX system, with the arguable exception of the Meridian *Digital Theatre* (the two are compared head to head in the box-out, 'Citation 7000 vs. Meridian Digital Theatre', page 41).

Nevertheless, the Citation 7000 is first and foremost an AV system, and in this form it was tested with a Sony LaserDisc (LD) player and JVC S-VHS VCR — as one might predict, the LD player gave cleaner, better focussed sound, with much smoother midband and treble. I compared three replay modes: Dolby Surround Pro-Logic, 70mm (a proprietary Dolby derivative that pulls information from the left and right front channels to their respective surround speakers, giving a wider, potentially more involving sound) and 6-Axis.

Swanky modes

Each of the latter-mentioned configurations is capable of superb results. In any comparison, the Citation always goes higher, louder, smoother and better. The bass energy from many of the more dramatic soundtracks comes in tidal waves that threaten to engulf anyone who stands in the way, which is stirring stuff even by THX standards. However, the most impressive feature of the Citation, with Dolby Surround material, is its subtlety. THX systems can sound a little soft and defocused, in part because their re-equalisation and timbre matching (psychoacoustic processes to make the surround sound effect less noticeable) sit uneasily with ancillary electronics and speakers that lack the necessary resolving power.

In this case, the 6-Axis circuit (operative in all multi-channel modes, not just 6-Axis) 'steers' the soundtrack image from speaker to speaker with much greater accuracy than I have heard before. Sounds 'panning' across the soundstage did so in a smoother, more progressive, better focussed way, yet at the same time the larger ambient soundfield was presented in a much more coherent and distinctive form. Even tonal colours seemed more vital than usual.

Directional Enhancement and the 6-Axis Mode

Dolby Surround Pro-Logic works by interpreting combinations of in-phase and out-of-phase signals to 'steer' particular sounds to one of four speakers: front left, front centre, front right, or the rear. The 6-Axis process is different in two key areas. First, as the name suggests, it detects six directions rather than four. Pro-Logic's single surround signal is replaced by side and rear sensing point on each side of the system: the rear signals combine to form a phantom rear channel at the centre-back position. Of course, this means that the playback system requires separate side and rear speakers, which explains why the Citation 7.3 surround speaker has been designed as two systems in a single box. In 6-Axis mode these two systems are driven in phase but from separate amplifiers.

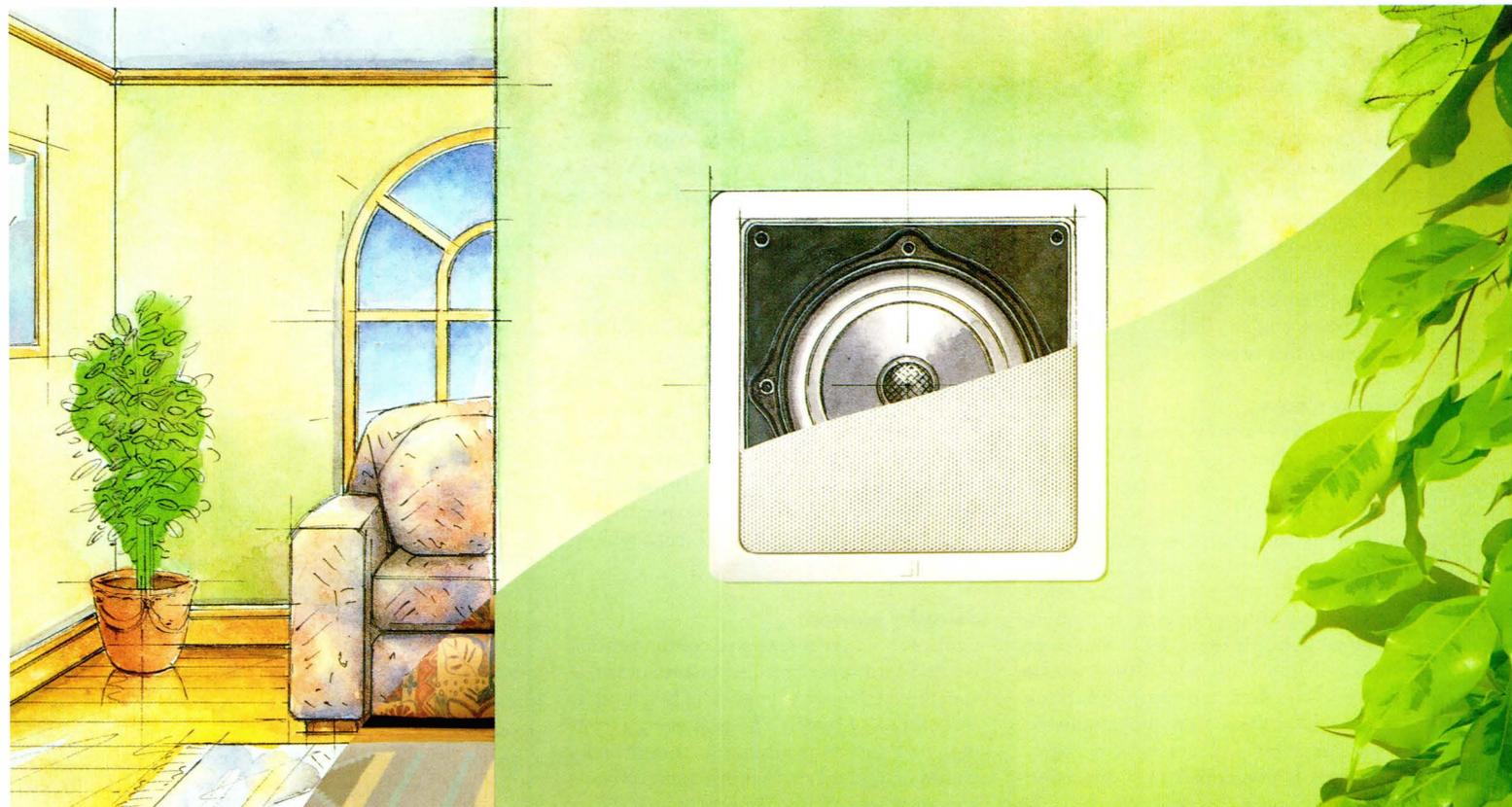
Some of you may be wondering how the system manages to derive 'stereo' rear channel information, given that a conventional surround soundtrack, on VHS or LaserDisc, only carries mono information for the rear. However, due to the way that the surround signal is actually encoded on your video software, you will find that some side channel information is present in the playback signal, which 6-Axis makes use of.

The other difference between 6-Axis and Dolby Surround Pro-Logic is the nature of the detection process itself. In standard Dolby-type detectors, the incoming signal is only averaged to determine whether it will be steered towards front speakers or rear. In the 6-Axis process, a circuit called the Dominant Peak Detector performs much faster arithmetic on the incoming waveforms, tracking the changing signal dynamics much more closely. The result is much greater steering accuracy and response speed. Note that the Dominant Peak Detector is not limited to the 6-Axis process; it is used for all the remaining sound processing, including Dolby and THX.

What's in Harman/Kardon's Citation 7000 system?

ITEM	COST AS TESTED
Citation 7.0 Processor/preamplifier	£3,500
Three Citation 7.1 Power Amplifiers	£7,500
Three Citation 7.2 Left, Centre, Right Speakers	£3,300
Two Citation 7.3 Surround Speakers	£1,700
Two Citation 7.4 Subwoofers	£2,000
Total price of units when purchased separately	£18,000
Total price when purchased as a complete system	£16,500
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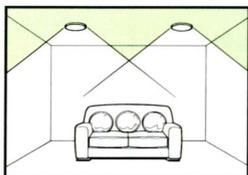


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◀◀ **6-Axis of the best**

The 6-Axis process has much to recommend it with Dolby Surround material. The rear image was weak, but there was a clear impression of a stereo effect at the sides of the listening area, albeit with much less spatial definition than that existing between the front speakers. Perhaps more to the point, switching from THX to 6-Axis made a massive change, from a stereo image rooted in the plane of the screen, with occasional excursions in the depth plane, to a fully-fledged three-dimensional soundfield, with no preferred axis. The effect was very like that of Dolby AC-3—which is only to be expected given the declared aims for the system.

Still, my preference remains with the 6-Axis-enhanced THX mode, for two reasons. First, the 6-Axis mode alone negates one of the key

advantages of THX, which is that it detaches the sound from the sidespeakers. With 6-Axis, they could often be identified clearly. Second, the 6-Axis system has the effect of unstitching the stereo image from the TV screen. In both cases, I suspect the problem is associated with the nature of Dolby Surround, and that it will disappear with discrete multi-channel recordings. On the other hand, the 6-Axis process, though more intrusive, is also keener and sharper than THX, and with dramatic special effects it can be more involving. Many will prefer it for this reason; 6-Axis is very easy to like.

How does it perform with music?

I felt more sympathetic to the aims of the 6-Axis process with conventional two-channel stereo material, where it was often very convincing indeed. A stereo recording of the Eagles's *Hotel California* was altogether more involving, rounded and three-dimensional with 6-Axis than with twin speaker stereo, and it was curiously lacking in image-placement anomalies. The same observation applied to an off-air recording of Mahler's *2nd* from the Birmingham Symphony Hall, with a gloriously large-scale, listener-immersing sound. In real life, however, the hall acoustic is said to be much more distant and less forthcoming.

With each of the stereo recordings I tried, which ranged from Ella Fitzgerald to *King of the Hill*, from Britten to the Beatles, 6-Axis processing produced a wider stereo image, superior stereo separation and—amazingly—very few

imaging nasties. When 6-Axis was used with Dolby Surround material there was an almost subliminal feeling that the sound was being mechanically manipulated behind the scenes, but this impression was largely absent when listening to plain old stereo. Now just imagine if there were recordings that had been mixed using a complementary 6-Axis matrix, purposefully for replay through this system. No one has even hinted that such recordings will ever be made, but their ability to suspend disbelief would be devastating.

Conclusion

At the end of a fortnight's intensive listening, I still had a lot left to learn about the Citation 7000. However, I have no doubt that this is a landmark product which, like the Meridian *Digital Theatre* before it, marks a kind of reconciliation between the multi-channel reproduction of movies soundtracks, and the stereo reproduction of music. It points the way towards a future of audiophile-quality multi-speaker systems, and in the light of its performance, superb construction quality and future-proof design, the £16,500 price tag is more than justified. ▲

A Short History of Fosgate & Citation

Jim Fosgate set up Fosgate Research and Fosgate Audionics to develop high-grade surround decoders. These had been his passion since the days of SQ, QS and CD-4 quadrasonic systems in the '70s. He was not alone in recognising these systems' deficiencies, but unlike most pundits he also recognised that directional enhancement would become important in the future. Fosgate firsts have included active steering logic and logic-derived centre channels, which Dolby Labs incorporated (nine years later) into their ubiquitous Pro-Logic system. Fosgate was acquired by Harman three years ago.

A Short History of Citation

The prestigious Citation brand was established around 1960 by Dr Sidney Harman, to produce the very best of Harman audio. Key Citation models of yesteryear have included the Citation 2 (a 60-Watt, wide-bandwidth valve amp) in 1963, and in 1972 the Citation 14 FM tuner, which was the first in the world to include a Phase-Locked Loop (PLL) multiplex decoder. In 1977 the Citation 19 pioneered low levels of negative feedback in a solid state amplifier, and in a joint venture in 1981, with legendary Finish designer Matti Ojala, the celebrated Citation XX power amplifier was the first to accommodate Ojala's model of how a loudspeaker's impedance changes when it is stressed with transient waveforms.

Subsequently the brand lost impetus, eventually becoming no more than a badge applied to Japanese-built electronics of no special distinction. Citation eventually ceased production in 1986. The current relaunch represents a return to the original ideals, and all products are designed and built by Harman in the USA. The Citation 7000 will be followed by more affordable models, systems and processors in the future, but no details are currently available.

The Absolute Beginner's Guide to Home Cinema

You'll find a complete glossary of Home Cinema terminology in the FREE booklet supplied with this issue.

CITATION 7000 VS. MERIDIAN DIGITAL THEATRE

The obvious foil for the Citation 7000 is Meridian's *Digital Theatre* system (reviewed in issue 140). Both systems have the uniquely high-falutin' aim of treating stereo source material with the same thoroughness that is brought to bear on film-based (Dolby Surround) material. However, beyond this basic common principle, there is surprisingly little similarity between the two.

■ The Citation is a THX system through and through. The Meridian is not because the speakers are not THX compliant.

■ The Meridian system is designed to reproduce a number of potentially important (though not widely used) matrix recording processes, such as Ambisonics and Trifield. The Citation system limits itself mainly to vanilla stereo and Dolby Surround sources.

■ The Meridian is an all-digital system, making extensive use of DSP, and using high-bit-rate internal arithmetic to produce the required audio resolution. The Citation system takes a quite different approach, using purist analogue circuits at the front of the soundstage, with discrete (non-IC

based) spatial circuits handling the surround feeds.

■ The Citation's 6-Axis technology is an audacious attempt to redesign spatial enhancement systems such as Dolby Pro-Logic. Meridian has left this area alone.

In practice, the Meridian system has the edge with non Dolby sources, thanks largely to a speaker system which sounds more balanced with stereo recordings. The Citation, which can sound unwieldy with stereo material, has the edge with Dolby Surround sources. In the Citation's favour, however, the 6-Axis system offers advantages over its Meridian counterpart through more accurate, smoother, more progressive steering, and superior image focus—which works in all multi-channel replay modes.



A different approach to multi-channel from Meridian's Digital Theatre system.



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One of the legendary names in hi-fi, Yorkshire's Wharfedale is one of the best-known speaker

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THE QUESTION

What make of PP9 battery did Jimi Hendrix use in his wah-wah pedal during the second Isle of Wight Festival?

- a) Duracell
- b) Mickey
- c) Mallory
- d) Ever-Ready

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Hi-Fi Choice Competition (CHFC602A)
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All postal entries must arrive by first post, Friday February 9, 1996.

COMPETITION RULES

- The Closing Date for this competition is February 9, 1996.
- Winners of the Wharfedale competition will be judged from all correct entries submitted by telephone and post, and drawn at random on the Closing Date.
- All winners will be notified by post.
- The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.
- The Wharfedale competition is not open to employees of Dennis Publishing Ltd., Wharfedale (UK) Ltd., nor their suppliers, agents or associates.
- We regret that this competition is open to UK residents only.
- No cash alternative will be offered.
- The act of entering the competitions will be taken as acceptance of the rules.
- You must notify us if you do not wish to be informed of any special offers or promotions. On postal entries, please indicate clearly on your entry if you do not wish to receive details of further special offers.
- We will assume you are over 18 years of age unless you state otherwise.
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Write on!

IF UPPER-MIDBASS SUCKOUT KEEPS YOU UP AT NIGHTS, HERE'S A VERBAL REMEDY TO EXPUNGE YOUR INSOMNIA

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Standing waves

After living with the same system for 20 years or so, I have recently returned to the world of hi-fi buying, and I have noticed three new ideas — bi-wiring, hugely expensive kit and spikes for loudspeakers.

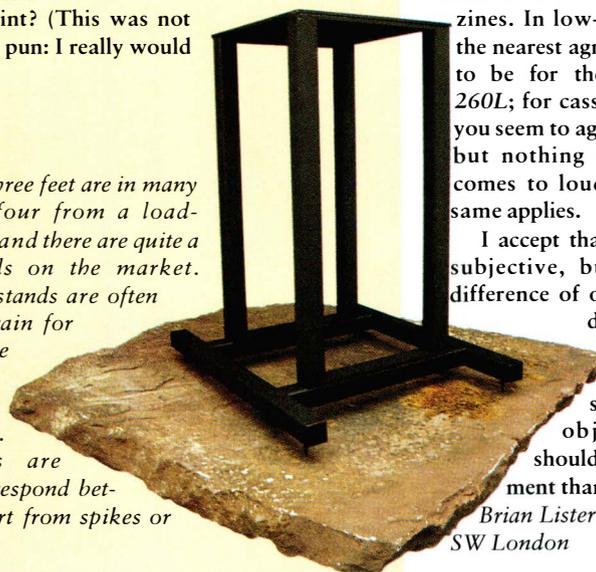
It's the spikes that provoked this letter. There always seem to be four per speaker. If it is really important that a speaker sits on the floor in a solid and stable way, why fit four spikes? Why not three? With four (or more) points of support, it is very difficult to get all of them in equal contact with the floor, even if the floor is not uneven.

This is known to anyone who has studied elementary geometry, and also to anyone who has wrestled with a wobbly table in a pub. There must be people in the hi-fi industry who fall into at least one of these categories.

Am I missing the point? (This was not just an opportunity for a pun: I really would like to know).

Allan Beattie
Dhahran, Saudi Arabia

You're quite right that three feet are in many respects better than four from a load-spreading point of view, and there are quite a few tri-pointed stands on the market. However, loudspeaker stands are often designed to act as a drain for energy coming from the speaker cabinet, so more points of contact mean better energy sinking. Also most speakers are rectilinear and tend to respond better to four point support from spikes or Blu-tack. — Ed



Music vs Hi-Fi

I bought issue 149 of HFC for its review of the Sony QBric which I have just bought.

I nearly fell out of my chair when I read the letter from your open-minded Australian correspondent (on p53). I buy music to hear through my hi-fi and had stupidly presumed most people do likewise. Terry Pullen obviously listens to the hi-fi not to the music. Either his taste in music has been questionable and is now maturing

nicely (as seems likely) or that his mind has been kept open for so long that his brains have fallen out.

Your job as professional reviewers is to hear the barely perceptible and justify to those who change their system, or their partners, that they have done the Right Thing. We poor amateurs should try to find what, admittedly, you recommend overall; a transparent system which allows us to listen to the music we choose.

I would suggest that Mr Pullen and others like him place a voluntary embargo on buying hi-fi magazines (*except Hi-Fi Choice of course — Ed*) and listen to their music instead.

David O'Keeffe
Galway, Ireland

Dare to be different

I recently bought the December issue of *Hi-Fi Choice* because I need a cassette recorder. I also have the November issue of *What Hi-Fi?*

What struck me was that there seemed to be little agreement between the two magazines. In low-priced tuners, the nearest agreement seemed to be for the Denon TU-260L; for cassette recorders, you seem to agree about Aiwa but nothing else. When it comes to loudspeakers, the same applies.

I accept that assessment is subjective, but I find this difference of opinions rather disquieting — whether the reviews are subjective or objective, there should be more agreement than this.

Brian Lister
SW London

On the evidence of your own eyes, you must decide which magazine has the greatest integrity and authority. Our reviewers have over 100 man-years of experience in auditioning and selecting hi-fi. Can What Hi-Fi match this?

Net gains

Your December 1995 article about the Internet didn't have the usual hype and errors, but you should know that *Hi-Fi On WWW* is not US-based. The last part of the domain

name indicates that the server is situated in Norway.

Meridian Audio and Grahams Hi-Fi are the only British companies that are making information available over the Net so far. There are others like Moorgate Acoustics who have pages where they just ask people to use more traditional means to contact them.

I would also like to comment on the digital amplifier under development by Harman, even if no such product has yet reached the market. I believe that there is an in-car amplifier using the same principle, and I also saw a prototype from Wadia back in '92. If I'm not too mistaken they were using several Class D amplifiers in order to get a 'multibit power-DAC' instead of a bit-stream scheme.

Robert Lundemo Aas
via the Internet

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SUPPORTING CAST

Malcolm Steward tests eight equipment tables, and quickly discovers that there's more to solid sound than a few bits of mild steel...

Every experienced audiophile acknowledges the importance of equipment supports. Indeed, it is a sadly misinformed person who doubts that stands are vital to exploiting the potential of a good hi-fi system. However, if you truly believe that your turntable or CD player sounds wonderful sitting on the carpet then please write and tell me. I want the name of the genius who has managed to produce equipment that's wholly impervious to the effects of air and structure-borne vibration!

Over the past few years I've realised that it is not just turntables and CD players whose performance can be profoundly influenced by parking them on a suitable support. In an ideal world, those of us who seek ultimate performance would possess rooms large enough for every hi-fi component to have its own, dedicated platform. Sadly that's rarely possible, so let's all give thanks for the multi-tier tables being tested here.

A few words on the practicalities and set-up of such supports are in order. First, I suggest strongly that you use a separate support for your favourite source component, rather than simply siting it atop a multi-tier stack. I realise that this isn't always possible, but it is worthwhile if you demand the best results.

Second, when you're contemplating buy-

EQUIPMENT TABLES

ing a multi-tier stand, I'd recommend that you look beyond your immediate needs. In other words, if your system currently requires four tiers, go for a five- or six-tier table, or a modular design. The reason is simple: as and when you expand your system, the new addition will work better on its own shelf than it will piggybacked on top of another component.

Finally, spend as much time as it takes to set up your multi-tier table just so. Levelling problems tend to be magnified in stands that are three or four feet tall, so if you don't set up the table accurately it'll be the top-most component—most likely your CD player or turntable if the stand's supporting a complete system—that comes off the worst.

It's near impossible to deliver concrete judgements upon stands simply because there are too many variables involved. Not only do you have to consider the interaction between individual components and the stand, but also how the stand interacts with the floor. And there is the small question of your floor's solidity—not to mention its construction, where the stand is sited relative to the loudspeakers, and how loud you play your music. All these factors influence the performance of any given support.

For this test the stands were used on a wooden floor and placed some twenty-five feet away from the speakers, which were playing at "realistic" volume levels. They were tested supporting various components, but the mainstay was my Naim CDS CD player, which has proved, over the years, to be very revealing about what keeps its feet off the floor. This test procedure can't give results that are guaranteed to be accurate for all possible domestic circumstances, but it does provide a reliable guide to comparative performance. A specimen that is criticised for sounding bright in this test won't necessarily peel wallpaper in your room, but will probably sound brighter than its peers.

WILL I REALLY HEAR A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TABLES?

You might regard the performance of an equipment stand as a fairly esoteric consideration; you might believe that specialist tables ought to remain the sole preserve of tweekers and anorak-wearers. However, we're not talking about subtle differences or nuances here — at least not all the time. Some of the differences between these tables were dramatic and totally 'real world'. This point was ably illustrated while I was playing discs to a friend who is a music fan but not especially interested in hi-fi equipment. I moved the CD player from one table to another between tracks and he immediately asked what on earth I'd done to make the disc sound so much better. He found it impossible to believe that a change from one platform to another — both "virtually the same" in his estimation — could change the music's pace, dynamics and the venue's perceived acoustic.

AUDIOPHILE FURNITURE BASE £480 as tested (modular)

And the prize for ease of set-up goes to ... Audiophile Furniture's *Base* system. If you hate inhaling carpet fibres, this is the stand for you. The three-legged design is a cinch to level up, and the process is further simplified by hand-adjustable support cones.

This design is modular and therefore easy to expand as your system grows. The table I tested consisted of a £70 *SPO1* starter pack, which includes a shelf, three adjustable floor-cones and screw caps. To bring it up to four-tiers I added three £50 *S120* shelf packs, each comprising a shelf and three support legs. (Different legs are available if you need more than 120mm between shelves.) Each shelf supported a £65 *Base O1* isolation platform. The final touch is the cable management system which enables you to route mains, line-level and speaker cables neatly and separately.



Sound Quality

The system managed to make music sound lively yet easy going at the same time. Its presentation hovered closer to restraint and neutrality than a 'heads-down, no-nonsense-boogie' approach; it was polite without being dull. I reckon that makes it appealing for rock fans who like their music loud, but don't appreciate it when high notes are portrayed too vividly. Sibilant vocals and splashy cymbals certainly weren't a problem here. Middle and lower frequencies seemed clear and open, while lower notes made themselves felt without being excessive.

If the tonal balance of this table was essentially ordered, so too was its portrayal of musical imperatives such as rhythm and pace, which were precise. Musical dynamics were a little muted compared with livelier tables, however. The *Base* is nonetheless a clear front-runner, with only a slightly restrained sound to detract from its undeniable utility and flexibility.

Audiophile Furniture Ltd, The Square, Forest Row, East Sussex RH18 5ES ☎ 01342 826262

FI-RAX R4 from £321



Fi-Rax manufactures a range of tables, and builds supports to order. Glass side panels and doors are an option on several of the company's designs. The *R4* reviewed here, however, is a standard "open" model. Mind you, calling it standard hardly seems appropriate given its dazzling appearance, but fear not: more subdued finishes are also available.

The *R4* is constructed from quadrant-shaped aluminium tubing, joined with contoured "knuckles" (the base joints have adjustable spikes). The six shelves sit on lockable studs, that can be moved within the uprights to provide appropriate spacing. Rubber 'O' rings isolate the tinted 6mm glass shelves.

Sound Quality

Despite not having the absolute rigidity of welded, braced structures, the *R4* sounded quite respectable. There was a lively, exuberant quality about its presentation but not to the extent that you'd call it bright or forward. Christy Moore's voice on *Live at The Point*, for instance, projected vigorously but stayed well short of being in-yer-face. Shane MacGowan's effusive *The Snake*, which readily provokes misbehaviour in a poor support, came across in a ship-shape manner although the *R4* didn't extract quite as much of the music's low frequency content as more uncompromising designs. This lent the presentation a tonal liveliness that might not complement bright or forward-sounding components.

The *R4* proved itself a likeable performer. Its balance wasn't completely neutral, but it didn't rob recordings of their vitality or expression, which is a far worse sin. Moreover, it conveyed timing and dynamics with the kind of energy that keeps you involved.

JEM Distribution, Springfield Mills, Spa Street, Osset, Wakefield WF5 0HW ☎ 01924 277626

MANA ACOUSTICS 5 TIER EQUIPMENT STAND £600



While this table is often referred to as the *Amplifier Stand*, it can also be used to support a whole system, including source components. Like all Mana supports it is upgradable, for example by replacing its top glass shelf with a laminated board and adding a glass-shelved *Flat Top*. You can also put one or more *Sound Stage* platforms beneath the whole caboodle, which improves the performance of every item on the stand.

Setting up this all-welded stand is a time-consuming process. On a basic five-tier stand there are twenty-four spikes that need twiddling and locking, and each of them requires precise adjustment to get the full nine yards' worth of performance. That effort, however, pays dividends. Other *Hi-Fi Choice* scribes and I have raved about the Mana effect before, but quite honestly even our loftiest superlatives don't do full justice to the transformation these stands can produce in a system with any vestige of potential.

Sound Quality

The Mana table enhanced all the hi-fi aspects of the system's performance. Bass went deeper, treble became cleaner, dynamics and detail seemed more pronounced, and tonal colour was more vividly rendered. That much you'd expect for the price. Harder to describe — yet infinitely more valuable — was the dramatically increased reality and presence of the sound. The broader harmonic compass, expanded dynamic contrast, sharper delineation of instruments, extended sound-stage and duck's-bottom tightness of the music's timing combined to make the sonic presentation more persuasive and thrilling. Mana tables are not cheap but they're essential if you want to unlock your system's full potential. Best Buy!

Mana Acoustics, 59 Jubilee Close, Pinner, Middlesex, HA5 3TB ☎ 0181 429 0118

QUADRASPIRE Q4

£200 as tested (modular)

I applaud manufacturers who take a modular approach to hi-fi. Why should the consumer have to junk perfectly serviceable components that could have been designed to allow simple additions or modifications? That situation is unlikely to occur with the *Quadraspire* table. The basic *Q4* (four-tier) stand costs £200, and may be expanded easily when extra shelves are required (£50 each). Alternatively, it can be altered to accommodate equipment of different heights. This elegantly simple unit consists of four cherry-veneered MDF shelves supported by solid aluminium rods, which thread together to clamp the shelves. The standard shelf height is 140mm, with 100mm and 180mm being 'standard' alternatives.

Sound Quality

The *Q4* provided a very neutral sound supporting the finicky Naim *CDS*. Unlike many supports, the *Q4* seemed to emphasise no part of the frequency spectrum unduly. Bass was full-blooded and articulate, the midrange clear and balanced, while treble



information was projected cleanly in an orderly fashion.

In spite of its neutral character, though, the table never made music appear restrained or over-damped. Briskly-struck acoustic guitar had its characteristic dynamic bite, while percussive bass lines started and stopped precisely. Perhaps most noticeable, however, was the absence of 'edge' or intrusive colouration on singers' voices. As a result, the table's sound, or lack thereof, provided a detailed, informative and easy-going insight into recordings.

While the Mana table, for example, is ultimately more revealing, the *Q4* is still a decided cut above average. Less tricky to set up and more forgiving, it won't expose shortcomings in your system quite so ruthlessly. This combination of attributes means that the *Q4* definitely merits a Best Buy tag. *Quadraspire Ltd*, 62 Riverside, Sir Thomas Longley Road, Rochester, Kent ME2 4BH ☎ 01634 296615

SOUND ORGANISATION Z038

£129.95

Like the original *Sound Organisation* turntable stand that started the whole equipment table ball rolling, the *Z038* five-tier is a back-to-basics, no nonsense design. It comes fully welded and ready to use once you've fitted its floor-spikes, inserted the four join-hiding plastic caps, and dropped the shelves into position on the fixed hangers. Level it up and you're in business.

Finished in a crackle black paint, it looks smarter than early *Sound Organisation* stands. It isn't exactly an oil-painting to behold, but its sober, form-following-function styling isn't without appeal. It's also amenable to mild tuning. Serious audiophiles might want to change the supplied lightweight shelves for 9mm MDF boards: this beer-money operation can make an appreciable difference to the performance of some sensitive components.

Sound Quality

The sound of this stand seemed to err on the lively side of neutral, imparting an animated, briskly-paced quality to music. I didn't spot any of the excessive high-frequency raggedness or poor bass definition that often goes hand in hand. It has to be said, however, that the Naim *CDS* didn't appear to resolve information at the frequency extremes as precisely on the *Z038* as it did on more neutral-sounding platforms. Substituting a *Meditate* board for the supplied shelf noticeably tightened the low and high ends, and brought an improved sense of order and instrumental separation to energetic music. Forceful vocals and strident sax became more dynamic, yet easier to listen into.

In its defence, though, the *Sound Organisation* table isn't what you'd call expensive, and it's hardly likely to be used by someone who has spent big bucks on sensitive components. As supplied it's a fundamentally solid design, well suited to middle market systems or supporting less critical components. At its budget price it deserves to retain its Recommended status. *Sound Organisation*, 8 Greyfriars Road, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP32 7DX ☎ 01284 701101



SOUND STYLE SELECT X6105

£279.95



SoundStyle reckons the X6105, part of its new Select range, is a cut above average. While beauty certainly resides in the eye of the beholder, it's hard to argue that this support is anything but a striking piece of audio furniture. It follows the usual SoundStyle pattern of using tubular legs — four rather than the three employed in its basic range — with rectangular-section cross members providing the support for its glass shelves. All the metalwork is finished with a lustrous paint job (you can choose from a selection of colours).

The toughened glass shelves sit on thermoplastic pads in the cross members. There's no ringing when you rap the shelves, although the stand's legs sound a little lively. Setting up the stand is easy and it's a weighty, stable structure once assembled.

Sound Quality

To complement its physical characteristics, the X6105 turns in an impressively weighty and colourful performance. The CDS's low end lost only a little of its slam and body compared to the Mana, while the treble extreme seemed satisfactorily sorted. The SoundStyle didn't have the precise resolution of the more costly reference, and there was a hint of added brightness evident but it would be churlish to complain unduly.

The X6105's performance proved generally well balanced and easy to enjoy. An instrumental factor here was the stand's healthy respect for timing: even with music that provoked a little added tonal liveliness in the presentation, rhythm sections stayed tightly locked to the rest of the musicians. I didn't detect the smearing or imprecision that often accompanies a vigorous presentation.

Given its highly respectable sonic showing, fine structural integrity and smart appearance, the X6105 thoroughly warrants a Recommended rating.

SoundStyle, 8 Greyfriars Road, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP32 7DX ☎ (01284) 701101

STANDS UNIQUE SOUND TOWER

£249

The *Sound Tower* is a self-assembly five-tier stand that uses glass shelving and wooden uprights. The top and bottom shelves are fixed, while the middle three sit on movable lugs that enable the stand to accommodate components of different heights. The review sample came with an additional isolation shelf (£44.64): a sheet of glass with adjustable spikes that locate into the top of the stand's uprights.

Over the past decade or so I have assembled a number of equipment supports, and alas the *Sound Tower* isn't among the easiest to build or adjust for perfect levelling and stability. Final set-up is complicated by the floor-spikes being structural components: as well as supporting the table they also clamp the lower shelf between the uprights and decorative feet.

Sound Quality

Under the support-critical Naim CDS, the *Sound Tower* seemed to disjoint music's timing, impair detail resolution and com-



press dynamics. Strangely, the isolation platform worsened its performance. On the table alone a rapid-fire flurry of guitar chords sounded merely imprecise, but with the platform it sounded as though the player was wire-brushing the strings.

The stand seemed to favour simpler, slower-paced music; busy recordings sounded far less of-a-piece. It also seemed to introduce a degree of coloration into some singers' voices. In general, vocals and instruments lacked substance and depth. Acoustic guitars, which emerged rich and full-bodied on the Mana, sounded harmonically diluted and less gutsy here. Audience noise and applause on some live recordings sounded off-puttingly effusive: the table seemed to be adding undue energy here.

Though not a hit from an audiophile perspective, as a piece of furniture the *Sound Tower* proved more successful.

Stands Unique, 18 Spencer Parade, Stanwick, Northants NN9 6QJ ☎ (01933) 461058

TARGET B5

from £175

Target's B5 uses welded tubular-section steel uprights and braces, with generously-spaced fixed shelves. As you'd expect it comes in the ubiquitous black finish for £175 with wood shelves, or £210 with glass. However, if you're after something more jazzy you can opt for the slightly dearer B5 deluxe. This comes in a range of finishes including the metallic black of the glass-shelved £224 review sample.

Setting up the B5 is plain sailing. It's sturdily built, and once I'd adjusted its floor spikes it rooted itself solidly to the floor. The glass shelves sit on rubber domes attached to the corners of the table's frame. The whole assembly is commendably rigid: also there's no chance of the shelves slipping because they sit within rather than upon the metal framework.

Sound Quality

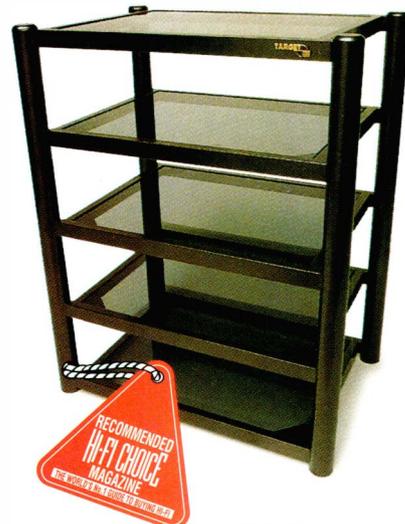
I'd be loath to use my Naim CDS on a "regular" support like the B5, but I have to say that the table acquitted itself admirably supporting this sensitive source component. And it did so with the sort of ambitiously-recorded CDs that usually seek out a support's weak points. The B5 demonstrated excellent grip at the frequency extremes. Bass lines had commendable weight and were surprisingly well articulated: both their timing and intonation sounded spot on.

High frequencies were as clean as a whistle, full of vitality yet free of smear and exaggerated sheen. Simpler acoustic recordings showed the B5 to be free from any overt colorations or musically disruptive artefacts. It also sounded realistically dynamic, discriminating clearly between small changes and providing the slam and speed required to cope with larger ones.

All round, I was sufficiently impressed by this design to reach into the drawer for a Recommended tag.

Target Audio Products plc, Suite 6A, Britannia House, Britannia Estate, Leagrave Road, Luton LU6 1RJ

☎ (01582) 401244



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The **ALPHA 6** offers slimline styling and a minimalist layout, ensuring ease of operation as well as making it an ideal aesthetic match for Arcam's own Alpha series of amplifiers, especially the new **ALPHA 6+**. These two models combine to provide the convenience of full remote control operation and outstanding sound quality.

However, the astounding sonic performance of the **ALPHA 6** means that it will also complement more expensive ancillary products like the superb Delta series from Arcam. At every Sevenoaks Hi Fi branch you will discover the Arcam Alpha and Delta series of products.

meridian

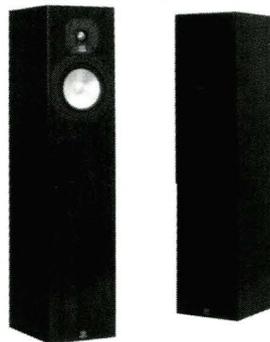


508

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monitor audio



STUDIO 20SE

The breathtaking Studio series of loudspeakers from Monitor Audio, offer a no compromise approach to design and construction. This is obvious the first moment that you see them. Whether they are finished in a standard satin veneer or a luscious grand piano lacquer, the **STUDIO 20SE** are stunning. All the models within the Studio series offer a combination of a gold anodised tweeter and an aluminium alloy bass/mid range driver. When they are partnered with suitable amplification the **STUDIO 20SE's** will offer remarkable transparency and the necessary focus to reproduce complex passages of music with glorious accuracy. To experience the Monitor Audio Studio series contact your local Sevenoaks Hi Fi branch.

audiolab



8000Q

With the introduction of the **8000Q** pre amplifier, Audiolab are able to offer an audiophile product, capable of working within any quality ancillary combination.

New Zq technology ensures ultra low noise and distortion, while a printed circuit layout realises the optimum signal path.

The **8000Q** is best described as a purist design. Six line and three tape inputs mean it is an ideal partner for Audiolab's own **8000P** or **8000M** power amplifiers. Yet, the convenience of remote control operation does not detract from the **8000Q's** outstanding performance.

Every Audiolab product offers a logical upgrade path, ensuring every model purchased today will perform for many years. For more information on the complete Audiolab range, including the **8000A**, **8000C**, **8000T**, **8000CDM**, **8000DAC**, **8000PPA** and the new **8000S**, then contact your local Sevenoaks Hi Fi branch.

quad



77 CD

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EXPRESSION

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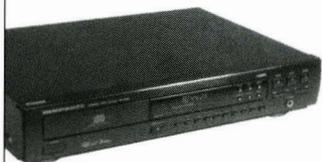
castle



SEVERN

Each model in the superb Castle range is engineered to look good and sound great. The new **SEVERN** are Castle Acoustic's two-way, reflex floorstanding loudspeakers. Their hand crafted enclosures incorporate newly developed drive units. A long throw bass/mid range driver and a soft dome ferro fluid tweeter, with off-set configuration, ensures outstanding stereo imagery, making them adept at handling all types of music, like the bigger Castle **HOWARD II**. Although the **SEVERN** has a slim profile and a very small 'footprint' it generates a surprising level of controlled bass. A matching veneered spiked plinth in one of Castle's extensive finishes provides extra stability and style.

marantz



CD63SE

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

Marantz are one of the few dedicated manufacturers that aim to make recorded sound as realistic and enjoyable as is possible. This development of hifidelity has led the Hi Fi press to bestow numerous Best Buys and Recommendations upon models within their range.

The most recent being the award of Best Buy status upon the **CD63SE** from What Hi Fi? At the heart of the **CD63SE** a high mass drawer mechanism provides precise transportation with accurate tracking and retrieval of the information stored upon the CD.

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

For a demonstration on the Marantz **SE** series, including the new **CD63II** Ken Ishiwata Signature, visit your local store.

rotel



RA970BX

Designed and developed in the UK, like all of their models, the **RA970BX** integrated amplifier offers the same solid build quality and delivers the type of performance you expect from this discerning manufacturer. Four line inputs, a tone defeat switch and a split volume knob provides finite adjustment. When partnered with suitable loudspeaker's the **RA970BX** delivers music with a close attention to detail. For further details on the Rotel range, including the superb **RCD970BX** CD Player and the **RC/RB970BXMKII** pre and power amplifiers, then visit your local Sevenoaks Hi Fi.

mission



753

Mission have been at the forefront of quality loudspeaker production for many years. However, until they launched the **753**'s the market for slim floorstanding loudspeaker's was very small indeed. The **753**'s changed that almost overnight. From the day of their launch they received critical acclaim from the Hi Fi press. The four identical bass/mid driver and tweeter array offers a fine balance and a lively open performance, which ensures that all music is delivered with stunning realism, especially when combined with quality amplification like the Cyrus range of electronics. At Sevenoaks Hi Fi you can audition the Mission **753**'s, **752**'s and **751**'s in all of our branches.



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ON TEST

05 01:38

HD7525 Compact Disc Player

CD PLAYERS



This month **Paul Miller** tests ten CD players in the all important £250-£500 price band. Which offer the best blend of facilities and sound?

More than in any other area of the hi-fi market, when it comes to CD players, the number sold is inversely proportional to the cost of the units. Some companies (Philips, in particular) have shifted their entire range below the £200 watershed. Others, including JVC and Denon, will not cross the £300 barrier, in this country at least. Meanwhile, players that would once have been

described as 'flagships' from the likes of Yamaha, Kenwood, Pioneer, Technics and Sony are now pitched below £500.

With attention polarised by classic £200-£250 players from Marantz, Pioneer and Sony (in particular), it's hardly surprising that life is becoming increasingly tough for all those £300+ players sitting on the top shelf. Competition, however, is bringing innovation to the fore. So what should you expect for



CD PLAYERS

your £300-£400? Features are usually provided by the truckload, enhancing the player's operation without compromising its sound quality. Full remote control, direct track access and various programming/repeat modes are typically joined by index search, intro scan, peak search, CD/tape editing options, fader, auto-cueing and random play operations.

The most comprehensively-equipped players will even offer a non-volatile custom program facility, enabling favourite selections of tracks to be stored and recognised the moment the CD is loaded. Digital outputs will facilitate future upgrades while the option of both fixed and variable analogue outputs allow the player to be connected directly to a power amplifier instead of an intermediate preamp or all-in-one integrated amplifier.

This cuts down on superfluous boxes and unnecessary circuitry that, in many instances, simply get in the way of the music. If a player is equipped with a digital volume control, however, do check it has not defaulted to maximum output before loading a CD! Enhanced build and component quality are further rewards for spending that little bit extra on your new player.

Plastic moulded chassis and facias are replaced by chunky alloy casework, just as the mechanical integrity of the transport mechanism should see a welcome boost.

In terms of internal technology, there is still a broad range of ideas being pursued by different manufacturers. This is especially true in the realm of Digital Signal Processing, where data manipulation, rather than straightforward oversampling and conversion, is fast becoming the order of the day. Naturally, some players still use conventional multi-bit converters to translate the CD's digital data into recognisable music. This relies on converting entire 16-bit 'words' of information at once, yielding a wide dynamic range at the expense of slightly increased distortion.

Other players rely on a new generation of bit-stream converters that reduce these unwieldy 16-bit digital words into

smaller packets of four bits or less. Smaller chunks of data are processed at an appropriately higher speed, avoiding the uneven steps and distortions of multi-bit

converters at the expense of extra noise, generated both in and out of the audio band. In an effort to gain the best of both worlds, some CD players employ part multi-bit and part bitstream (so-called hybrid) converters, although inevitably these suffer from their own, unique distortions.

There is, however, no need to worry about the relative compatibility of different CD players. Regardless of the technology, they must all conform to certain agreed standards. Every CD player will handle both 12cm and 5cm silver discs, offer the same basic track-skip, pause and stop facilities, and require a line input on your amplifier.

Unless you have a death wish, never connect a CD player to an input marked 'phono' or 'disc' on your amp, but use any line-level connection such as aux, tuner, tape or one marked specifically for CD. So CD compatibility is assured. But sound quality? Well, that's another matter...

Tricks of the Trade

I've broached this topic during all recent CD player tests, but the subject of output levels bears repeating. Only when all CD players adhere to a standard 2V output will direct A/B comparisons be conducted on a fair and level playing field. In this test, only JVC hit the 2V nail squarely on the head, while NAD, Marantz, Onkyo and H/K all managed to score within +1dB or so of the target.

Unfortunately, it only takes one manufacturer to squeeze 2.3V or 2.4V from its player in order to confer some advantage on audition and, quite naturally, the competition gets wise and ups the ante to 2.5V or more. Even within this digital dozen, our tests revealed a massive +3.5dB gulf

between the quietest (JVC XL-Z674) and loudest (Audio Innovations *Alto*) CD players. All other things being equal, this advantage in level will often be perceived as a bigger and bolder sound in-store.

Hi-Fi Choice is the only magazine to conduct blind listening tests where the outputs of all players are normalised to a fixed level. As a result, we can compare genuine rather than artificial differences between players — which ensures our tests are authoritative.

The Listening Days

Each CD player was auditioned over a period of two days under strict, blind conditions at a precisely matched listening level. This way, the 3V output of Audio Innovations' *Alto* could not secure it any advantage over the lower 2V of JVC's *XL-Z674*. Crucial though they are, level-matched listening tests remain unique to *Choice*.

Each player was left spinning on 'all repeat' for at least 48 hours to ensure every contender was well and truly 'cooked' prior to the listening tests. A broad repertoire of vocal, folk, pop and classical CDs were auditioned before the collective impression of the two panels was entered directly into a computer. Sound, value and swing tag ratings were all awarded before the identity of each CD player was revealed.

The system used for the test included *DPA-100S* pre and power amplifiers plus Audio Note *AN-E* (main) and REL *Stentor* (sub) loudspeakers. Sony's *CDP-715E* (issue 137) was used throughout as a reference CD player. My thanks to Roger Batchelor (Denon), Mark Hockey (Trio/Kenwood), Mike Martindell (Arcam), Guy Sargeant (Audio Innovations) and Alan Sircom (*Hi-Fi Choice*) — this month's blind but golden-eared panel.

THE CAST LIST

Arcam Alpha 5+	£480
Audio Innovations Alto (chrome)	£450
Harman/Kardon HD7525	£400
JVC XL-Z674	£300
Marantz CD-63mkII	£270
NAD 514	£370
Onkyo DX-7510	£350
Pioneer PD-S904	£400
Sony CDP-XA2ES	£350
Teac CD-5.....	£350



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Arcam Alpha 5 Plus

Although we never formally tested Arcam's *Alpha 5* CD player, this model incorporated the 16-bit innards of the original *Alpha*, within the slimline casework of Arcam's *Alpha One*. (Those two models were thoroughly reviewed in issues 112 and 137 respectively.) I mention this because the latest *Alpha 5 Plus* looks all but identical to the *Alpha 5*, which, in turn, looked just like the *Alpha One*.

Still with me? Good, because the 16-bit heart of this 'brand new' player is traditional to the core, despite being gilded with a few internal refinements and featuring a slightly more up-to-date CDM9 transport mechanism. And there is nothing wrong with a little traditionalism. At least you're assured of a player whose construction and reliability has already passed the test of time.

Features include a dimmer for the attractive yellow display, shuffle (random) and program play, plus a ten-second intro scan, repeat play, direct track access and standby operation — all courtesy of Arcam's remote control. Remote volume and display adjustment are inoperative, I might add. Incidentally, existing owners may have the audio board of their *Alpha 5* upgraded to the '5 Plus' specification for £100. Just see your local Arcam dealer.

Sound Quality

Judging by the furrowed brows and puzzled expressions of our blind panelists, I was prepared for something of a struggle in our description of this CD player's performance. The crux of our panel's criticism concerned the sheer unevenness of the way this player highlighted differing aspects of sound. At one point, there was an

emphatic sense of drive that exaggerated the club-like atmosphere of Leftfield's *Original*. "It is almost," it was suggested, "as if the player was designed for this sort of aggressive, synth-based music."

The *Alpha 5 Plus* still sounded decidedly big and butch with John McLaughlin, although the Hammond organ dominated the proceedings with a huge swell of mid-bass, creating a one-note effect that undermined the subtlety of the track as a whole. In similar fashion, the natural vibrancy of the raw and breathy character in Dusty Springfield's voice, throughout *Casino Royale*, had been replaced by an altogether flatter sound.

Here, and with the jazz selection, our panel likened the *Alpha's* performance to "a mainspring slowly winding down," its music sounding uneventful despite enjoying a superficial sense of dynamics.

Conclusion

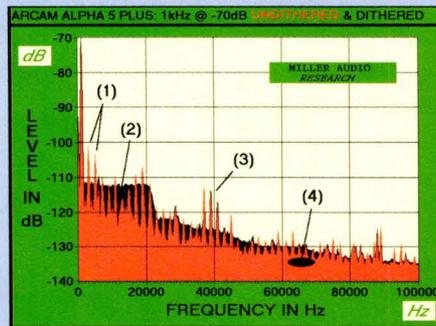
Although the technical heritage of Arcam's latest *Alpha 5 Plus* can clearly be traced back to the original 16-bit *Alpha* and *Alpha Plus* CD players, this particular sample demonstrated a sag in both the technical and musical performance of a respected lineage. Sure enough, the obvious first impressions are of a fairly up-beat and dynamic sound, but this disguises a genuine lack of transparency, of contrast and shading that impairs the natural colour and individuality of the different pieces of music.

Our blind listening tests involve a very wide selection of musical styles. Yet whether we were listening to pop, jazz, classical or 'urban rave', there was a 'sameness' about the tunes that rolled across the carpet. Nothing nasty, but so many years after the original *Alpha* was launched, neither is it terribly inspiring.

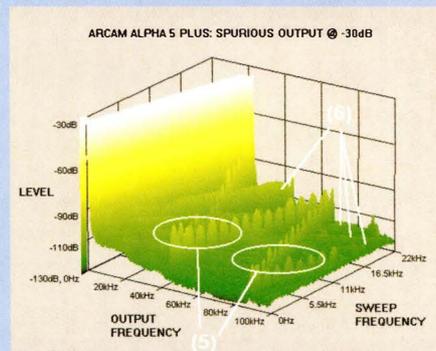
VERDICT	
SOUND	★★★★☆
VALUE	★★★★☆
PRICE	£480
▲	Good for dynamic, synth-dominated rock and pop.
▼	Not strong on subtlety or musical insight.
✉	Arcam, Pembroke Avenue, Denny Industrial Centre, Waterbeach, Cambridge CB5 9PB
☎	(01223) 440964

LAB REPORT

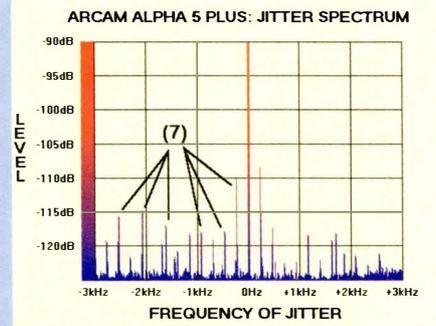
UN/DITHERED -70dB



SPURIOUS OUTPUT AT -30dB



TOTAL JITTER

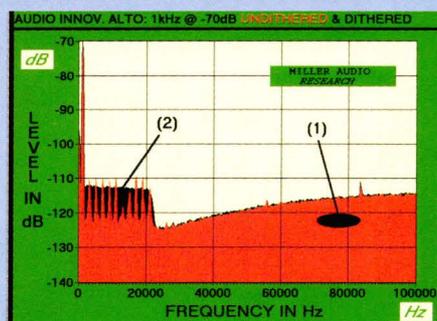


As ever, the characteristic 'fingerprint' of Philips's SAA7220 four-times oversampling filter and long-standing TDA1541A 16-bit DAC dominate this player's performance. Unlike more modern designs, this multi-bit converter is responsible for spikes of distortion (rather than the random noise of a bitstreamer) at all signal levels (1), which are not completely removed by dithering (2) and which, along with spurious sampling tones (3), extend far into the realm of ultrasonics (4).

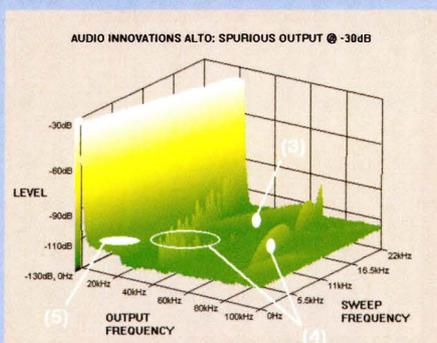
The filter still releases a familiar pattern of stopband images (5), although the extensive range of distortion harmonics (6) and crashing 0.3 per cent THD witnessed at maximum output has been seen in all previous *Alphas*. The pattern of data-induced jitter (7) is also linked to Arcam's implementation, even if the characteristic -6dB 'glitch' in low-level linearity is a little more severe than usual. The change from 26 Ohm to 44 Ohm output impedance also suggests the analogue stage has been altered.

LAB REPORT

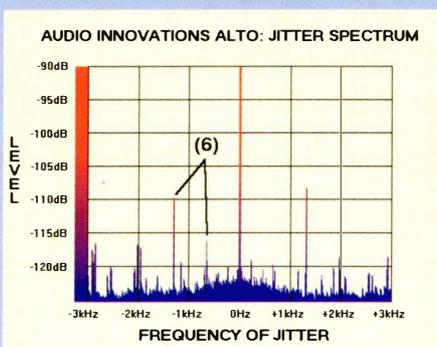
UN/DITHERED -70dB



SPURIOUS OUTPUT AT -30dB



TOTAL JITTER



Because Audio Innovation's *Alto* uses two of Philips's TDA1305 CC/Bit stream converters, it shares a common 'fingerprint' with Cambridge's *DACMagic-1* (issue 136). Similar analogue stages yield a -0.8dB dip in treble output, while the differential operation helps to suppress the levels of ultrasonic re-quantisation noise (1). Distortion is maintained to within 0.001-0.002 per cent (@ 0dB) while the player offers a textbook response to dithered signals (2).

At -30dB, distortion increases to just 0.004-0.03 per cent — revealed in a lone third harmonic (3) — below the level of the stopband images (4) released by its digital filter. The overall 111dB S/N looks pretty impressive (5) but remains tainted by the huge +16dB noise modulation. The 3V output level is also very high, but at least the <1 Ohm impedance means it'll drive long interconnects with ease. Jitter, meanwhile, is low and principally limited to data-induced patterns (6).



Audio Innovations Alto

From a company that successfully promotes the merits of sub-20-Watt valve amps, here's a product that smacks of modern-day realism. Yep, it's Audio Innovations' first CD player and, like its matching *Alto* integrated amplifier, there's not a glowing tube in sight.

The 'flying wing' aesthetics are elegant in the extreme, but make little provision for extraneous buttons and widgets. A simple display graces the right of the drawer, for example, while a solitary 'eject' key lurks inconspicuously beneath. Fortunately, a gaggle of features, including direct track access, intro scan, program, repeat and random play, are available on the matching remote, which happens to look suspiciously similar to that provided with Cambridge's *CD4* player (issue 147).

Then again, both Cambridge and Audio Innovations have their links via the vast Richer Sounds empire, so some cross-fertilisation might be expected. Anyway, although the *Alto* uses all-UK-designed DAC and analogue electronics, the transport assembly is an off-the-shelf linear-tracking affair sourced from the Far East. And if anything is going to let the side down it's this, especially bearing in mind the sluggish six-to-seven second track access time.

Sound Quality

"Hmm," muttered one panelist. "Not terribly impressed," rejoined another. Why? Well, the *Alto*'s music is rather 'sporadic'. Turning our beady ears to Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante* revealed what was described as "an unusual string tone" — a predisposition to the upper registers of the violin, which sounded snappier and more vibrant than

either its lower registers or the richer, more resonant timbre of the violas.

Woodwinds were also brought to the fore as the player emphasised more of the body and 'woodiness' of the clarinets. These encouraged, in turn, a rich, polite, perhaps over-polite balance. One panelist took issue with the word 'balance', because the player seemed, in his view, to lose one or more elements of a recording. The slurred intonation of Dusty Springfield's voice was cited by way of example, while the guitar and organ from McLaughlin's *Afro Blue* would also occasionally "blur into one".

The incisive thrumm of guitars from Shawn Colvin's *One Cool Remove* was picked out clearly but, as was often the case, the piece as a whole was just a little too introspective. So, just as individual elements from each performance were lost, others would be brought to the fore. The end result is far from unpalatable but, for our listeners at least, the distinction between contributing instruments was often too soft and polite.

Conclusion

Audio Innovation's refreshing piece of 'audio sculpture' is not just entertaining to the eye. Its easy and unforced sound is also very relaxing to the ear. Nevertheless, we were left with the sense that our

(admittedly early) sample lacked the dynamic subtlety and discrimination taken for granted with AI's various amplifier designs. Perhaps there is more to be teased from the current *Alto* concept but, while this player will not offend your granny and has much to its credit, its inconsistent behaviour must preclude a formal Recommendation. Watch this space for possible future updates.

VERDICT

SOUND ★★★★★
VALUE ★★★★★
PRICE £450 (CHROME)

▲ Civil-sounding player that reveals some aspects very well...

▼ ...while others are not given the attention they deserve.

✉ Audio Innovations, Audio Components Ltd, Albany Court, Albany Road, Granby Ind Est, Weymouth, Dorset DT4 9TH (01305) 761017



Harman-Kardon HD7525

Realtime Linear Smoothing (RLS) finally comes alive in Harman Kardon's *HD7525*, the third player we've tested using this proprietary technology. There's nothing exciting about the sluggish track access or the basic features on its black plastic fascia, but the remote adds direct track access, index skipping and intro search to the standard repeat and program play facilities.

The crucial action all takes place under the sheets, however, where HK uses two 18-bit DACs per channel. One provides a reference for both the direction and rate of change of samples emerging from the second, this being delayed by a period equal to the four-times oversampling rate. After conversion, a comparator circuit interpolates (joins the dots) between successive samples, encouraging a smoother waveform that requires less aggressive analogue filtering. Nice idea in theory, but in practice RLS may simply represent a different set of compromises.

Sound Quality

"Bloody good," exalted one listener. "Spot on," concluded another. What they were referring to, of course, was the "instantly more open, balanced and instinctively if indefinably 'right' sound" of this refreshing player. Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante* enjoyed a fresh, dynamic freedom that allowed the various strings and horns to soar from an inky-black acoustic, rather than the 'dirty greyness' which had formed the musical undercoat of so many other players.

Whatever style of music we chose, its portrayal never came across as intrusive. Leftfield's *Original* was "kicking without bruising," as the potent bass line retained a strong and pow-

erful sense of rhythm without sounding relentless. Similarly, the complex percussion that accompanies McLaughlin's *Afro Blue* was now laid bare for our enjoyment. Rather than the drum and tom-toms sounding like a 'hollow thud', the resonance of the drum shell was accurately depicted alongside the unique character of the Hammond organ and the dextrous brushwork of percussion.

"This live studio recording truly comes alive," suggested one panelist. Revealing plenty of busy detail, the *HD7525* delivered with a remarkable but never restrictive composure. Any criticisms? "Just a tad too enthusiastic at times, but not sufficient to mark the player down," was the overall consensus.

Conclusion

This is a glorious-sounding player that apparently succeeds in capturing oodles of information without sacrificing the unique essence of different styles of music. Our panel's immediate instinct was to award the *HD7525* a Best Buy on the basis of this breathtaking performance.

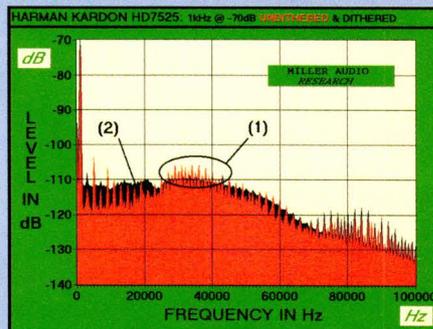
Nevertheless, with both subjective and comprehensive lab reports to hand, I feel compelled to utter a mild word of caution. It is not unreasonable to suggest that the success of this particular *HD7525* is linked to the precise nature of the mismatching between its twinned RLS converters. There was a gentle but profound alteration in its treble response — a fortuitous anomaly that could not be guaranteed to occur, in precisely the same fashion, with every *HD7525* out there in the shops.

With this in mind, a strong Recommendation seems most appropriate. And the advice of the panel? "Don't pass by a hi-fi shop without buying one!"

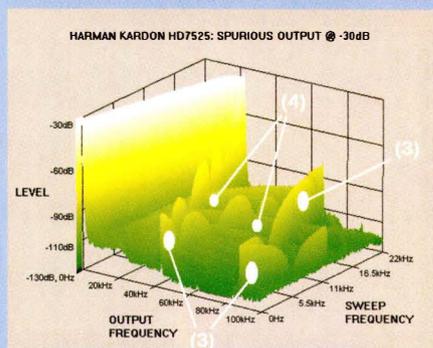
VERDICT	
SOUND	★★★★★
VALUE	★★★★☆
PRICE	£400
▲	A tippy-top player with everything going its way...
▼	...except, perhaps, the most sophisticated of widgets and the promise of consistency.
✉	Harman Audio UK Ltd, Unit 2, Borehamwood Industrial Park, Rowley Lane, Borehamwood, Hertfordshire WD6 5PZ (0181) 207 5050

LAB REPORT

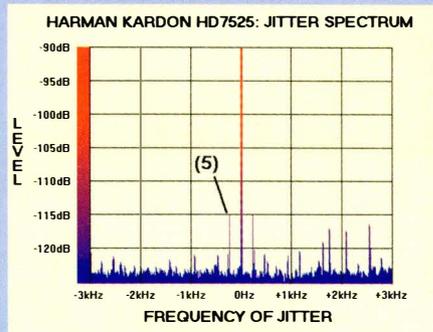
UN/DITHERED -70dB



SPURIOUS OUTPUT AT -30dB



TOTAL JITTER



At first sight, you'd expect the *HD7525* to sound like a dog's dinner. After all, the player suffers from an array of ghastly high frequency and sampling distortions (1) that are only partially ameliorated by dithering (2). Moreover, the meagre 15dB suppression offered by its 'digital filter' (1 use the term loosely) releases vast stopband images (3) into the spectrum. The weird frequency dependency of conventional harmonics (4) also adds to the unique colour of the player.

However, it's this colour that apparently brings subjective success, tailored by mismatches between the 'reference' and 'delayed' RLS DACs. These mismatches cause errors in low-level linearity (-5dB at -80dB and -10dB at -90dB) which, in turn, provide a treble roll-off that progressively 'sweetens' with reducing level. Simply put, where the nastiest distortions occur, RLS (by complete coincidence) helps suppress their subjective impact. This, plus the minute level of data-induced jitter (5), all contributes to the *HD7525*'s clout.



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- Monarchy
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- Yamaha
- and many more

JVC XL-Z674

Reflecting the tumbling costs of advanced digital technology, the majority of JVC's CD player range hovers at or below the £200 mark. So at £300, this XL-Z674 represents the very apex of JVC's digital tree. This position was held until recently by the now discontinued XL-Z1050 costing £500 (issue 119).

The general appearance of the XL-Z674 is clearly based upon cheaper models like the XL-V284 (issue 147), with its centralised mechanism flanked by direct track access, display-off and digital output selection facilities. The matching remote control adds useful extras like index cueing, repeat and program play modes. The player is even fitted with a separate set of variable output sockets linked to an internal motorised volume control.

The approximate output level is displayed over a 48dB range on the display. Despite appearances, this superior (and costlier) technique should not be confused with the more common digital volume control found on competing players.

Moreover, the XL-Z674's internal technology represents a marriage between the 'K2 Interface' of the XL-Z1050 and the latest PEM (Pulse Edge Modulation) bit-stream DAC used in the XL-V284. K2 is a proprietary jitter-busting chip developed by JVC for all manner of digital products. It works by using an internal optical interface to 'break' and then reform the chain of digital data before sending the cleaned up digits to the D/A converter. This is really hi-tech stuff made available to the hi-fi-buying public at a surprisingly modest price.

Sound Quality

Although the XL-Z674 proved difficult to pigeon-hole, it was universally

appreciated by the listening panel. In particular, what the player lacks in depth, scale and emotive content it more than redresses with its very even-handed temperament. Track by track, almost every description of this player was prefaced with the adjective 'smooth'. This included Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante*, which sounded "brisk and very pretty but still slightly diffuse".

In similar vein, Shawn Colvin's *One Cool Remove* was apparently rubbed with 'wet and dry', ensuring a very smooth (there's that word again) and wholesome sound, even if the clubby atmosphere was diluted in the process. So, in an effort to render a very agreeable sound from every disc, some of the uniqueness, delicacy and intimacy of the recording is lost.

When on form, Dusty Springfield should sound as if she were whispering in your ear. On this occasion, and throughout *Casino Royale*, she sounded a little disinterested — a little impassive. And yet our panel was at pains to point out that despite its slightly restricted palette of tonal colours, the unassuming and pleasantly lively quality of the XL-Z674 should win it many friends.

Conclusion

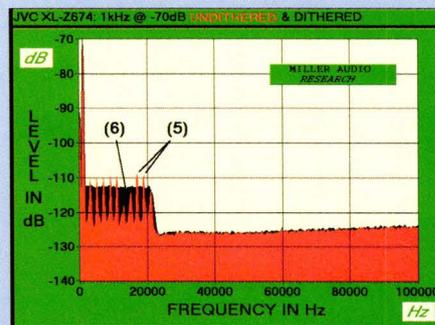
JVC's XL-Z674 is neither the most insightful nor transparent-sounding CD player. But it paints with a broad brush and succeeds in communicating the essence of the musical picture without labouring over subtle detail. "Not unlike a canvas from Rolf Harris," it was suggested. Nevertheless, as one of the cheaper entries in this month's tussle, the XL-Z674 does represent something of a technical tour-de-force, that's strong on both value and compatibility. A Recommendation then, by the skin of its chips.

VERDICT

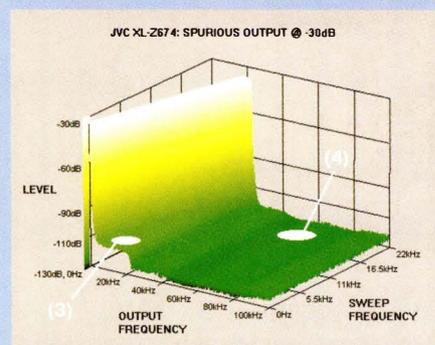
SOUND	★★★★☆
VALUE	★★★★☆
PRICE	£300
▲	Even-handed, coherent and frisky-sounding player.
▼	Glosses over the most intimate moments.
✉	JVC UK Ltd, JVC House, JVC Business Park, Priestley Way, London NW2 7BA
☎	(0181) 450 3282

LAB REPORT

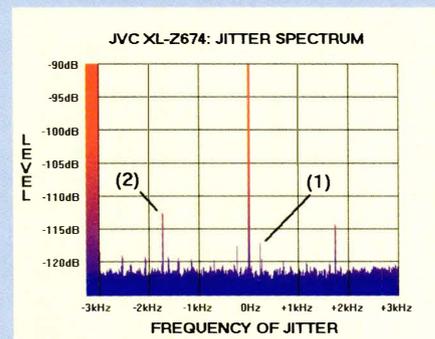
UN/DITHERED -70dB



SPURIOUS OUTPUT AT -30dB



TOTAL JITTER



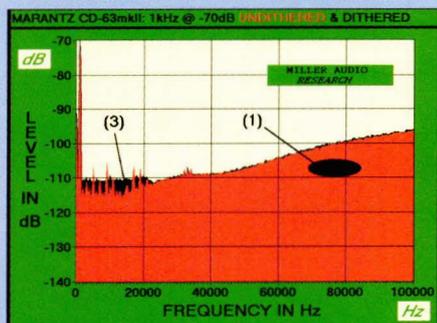
JVC may have succumbed to the 'dodgy S/N ratio' ruse, disabling the DAC during a typical S/N measurement, which leads to a fabulous but highly suspect figure like 114dB. This keeps (European) spec-happy reviewers content, even though the similarly unrealistic +13.7dB noise modulation suggests a 'real life' S/N closer to 106-107dB. More than good enough, I would suggest, to stand its ground without digital artifice.

All else is similarly state-of-the-art, with JVC's K2 interface eliminating any power-supply-induced jitter while reducing data (1) and frame-induced (2) jitter to just 173psec. Conventional distortion is also suppressed to remarkably low levels: typically 0.0004-0.0025 per cent at peak output and just 0.0013-0.004 per cent at -30dB — below the level of background noise (3).

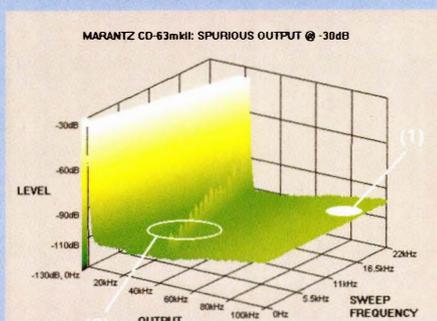
The player's lack of digital 'images' and ultrasonic noise (4) also sets the standard for other players to follow. At lower levels still, all fixed quantisation errors (5) are successfully converted to harmless noise (6). A fabulous result.

LAB REPORT

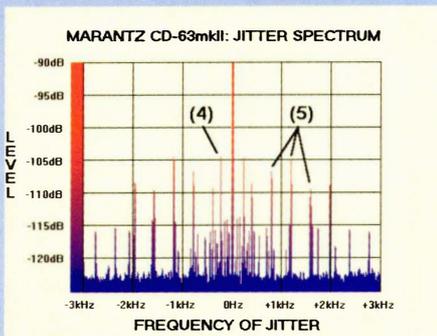
UN/DITHERED -70dB



SPURIOUS OUTPUT AT -30dB



TOTAL JITTER



As expected, the *CD-63mkII* bears more than a passing technical resemblance to both the *CD-63* (issue 137) and *CD-63SE* (issue 141). All three players use NPC's combined eight-time oversampling filter and DAC; the SM5872, revealed in the characteristic splurge of requantisation noise (1) and rippled but mild stopband images (2). Distortion remains low at 0.0006-0.02 per cent at maximum output, but increases to around 0.25 per cent at low (-70dB) signal levels where, even with digital dithering (black trace), some harmonics (3) poke clear of the background noise.

Talking of noise; the *CD-63mkII*'s 101dB S/N ratio is 1-2dB short of its predecessors even though other specs, including the -1.2dB glitch in linearity at -90dB and astonishing >130dB channel separation, remain unchanged. This is the first '63 to be treated to my jitter test, however, which reveals relatively high levels of data-induced (4) and spurious (5) jitter components. If the latter can be improved we'll have an even better buy on our hands.



Marantz CD-63mkII

First there was the *CD-63* (issue 137), followed by the *CD-63SE* (issue 141). Now, superseding them both, comes the *CD-63mkII*. The latter seems to be a very slightly trimmed-down version of the £350 *CD-63SE*: it features exactly the same case-work and facilities as both older models, but its price is now pitched at a highly competitive £270.

As ever, Marantz is offering full remote control with variable output, program and repeat play, peak search, display dimmer and tape edit facilities. Unusually, both coaxial and optical digital outputs are provided to service future upgrades, while a hard-wired BUS connection enables the *CD-63mkII* to be fully integrated into a complete Marantz system.

Under the bonnet, the *CD-63mkII* adopts the reinforcing brace, perforated rear panel and OFC-wired (Oxygen-Free Copper) mains transformer originally used in the *CD-63SE*. Similarly, the combination of Philips linear-tracking transport and NPC's bitstream DAC with Marantz's proprietary HDAM output buffer, is retained from the first *CD-63*. The move away from Philips's own conversion technology (remember that Marantz is part of the Philips empire) also explains why the *CD-63mkII* lacks the familiar Philips Bit Stream logo seen on numerous earlier players.

Sound Quality

Given a firm thumbs-up by the panel, Marantz's latest offering was judged to lie "midway between the Pioneer and HK" — players known only as 'numbers two and three' in our blind running order. Moreover, the *CD-63mkII* has, it was suggested, "the added advantage of being the sort

of player you'd appreciate in the long rather than short term".

There is certainly a rich and occasionally tranquil quality about the *CD-63mkII*, although this does not soften the Pioneer's impact in the fashion of the Pioneer, for example. So Dusty Springfield sounded suitably sultry, her voice and accompanying sax oozing the sort of languid mellowness guaranteed to seduce our listening panel.

Dragged out into the winter fog to cool down, our panel continued by applauding the player's ability to retrieve very subtle detail, such as the marimba from *Casino Royale*, even though this finesse was slightly compromised as the track got busier. The same effect was noted with Leftfield's *Original*, where we glimpsed the faint echo of the lead voice before it was quickly submerged beneath a ripple of synthesisers. Not unlike Nessie, really.

The player's warm but lively quality was equally evident from the gutsy sound of Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante*, without the player really imposing a colour of its own. "Always making sense of the musical chaos," our panel concluded, "this player is partying but not raving."

Conclusion

If Harman's *HD7525* had not made such an impact on both sets of listening panels, Marantz's *CD-63mkII* would "undoubtedly have been voted Top Banana".

Nevertheless, this remains a very smooth-sounding and highly satisfying player that successfully combines the best aspects of both the *CD-63* and *CD-63SE* without financial penalty. Moreover, this product is likely to offer a more consistent performance than the costlier HK. Our verdict? Yet another Marantz player to buy in haste and savour at your leisure.

VERDICT

SOUND ★★★★★☆
VALUE ★★★★★★
PRICE £270

▲ As rich, crisp and light as a fruity Riesling.

▼ Perhaps a little too sweet and 'valve-like'.

✉ Marantz Hi-Fi UK Ltd,
Kingsbridge House, Padbury
Oaks, 575-583 Bath Road,
Longford, Middlesex UB7 0EH
(01753) 680868



NAD 514

Promoted in NAD's literature as a 'no-compromise CD player', the £370 514 is, to all intents and purposes, a more refined and flexible version of the £220 502 (issue 119). The latter was itself a revision of the acclaimed 5425 (issue 95), and as a result, the 514 has an unmistakable lineage stretching back at least four and a half years. Otherwise, the distinctive but rather dated-looking grey fascia of the 514 adheres to a theme maintained by NAD for longer than most of us care to remember. At least the faceplate is struck from alloy and not plastic on this occasion!

The standard battery of track access, program and repeat play, music scan and display options are shared between the player and its remote control, along with a NAD-specific widget called CDR. CDR stands for Controlled Dynamic Range, a facility that boosts the level of quiet sounds so that they are not lost during late-night listening or drowned-out when recorded on tape for playback in a car. It's all achieved with mirrors (a digital compressor from Yamaha called the YM3412), and while CDR has its uses, it must never — and I mean never — be selected if you're listening under critical conditions.

Sound Quality

Holding craggy thumbs aloft, our panel proclaimed their enthusiasm for the open, lively and earnest sound of NAD's 514. This is the sort of player that makes every style of music accessible while still having fun with its content. Another listener suggested that it "teases out the three-dimensional elements of a recording to develop a believable acoustic". The strings from Mozart's *Sinfonia*

Concertante were certainly heard within a recognisable sense of space, while the horns maintained a more distant yet appropriate perspective.

The very deep but not especially wide soundstaging was obvious from the 'geography' of John McLaughlin's *Afro Blue*, where the drummer and guitarist sounded physically closer without appearing cluttered or confused. Similarly, Dusty Springfield's spot in *Casino Royale* was specifically mentioned for the spread of sound achieved by the piano, marimba and guitar — a combination that succeeded in enhancing the sensuality of her voice as well as the atmosphere of the piece as a whole.

However, the light-hearted ardour of the player can get a little out of hand with busier and more intense pieces of music. The chorus from Shawn Colvin's *One Cool Remove* succeeded in pushing the 514 over the edge, whereupon the voices sounded a little too brusque and relentless. Kept within its limits, however, this player is a spirited and thoroughly entertaining performer.

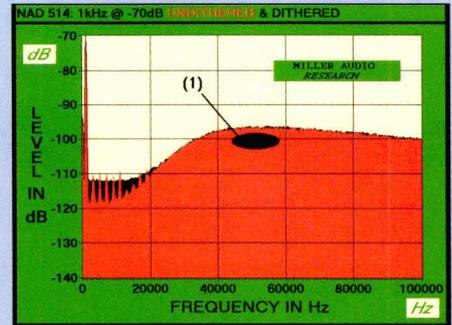
Conclusion

Despite being the product of several years' continuous development, the NAD 514 is still something of a boisterous and idealistic teenager, lacking the perceived maturity of players employing 'younger technology'. Nevertheless, there's no denying the attraction of the 514's spacious and invigorating presentation — recompense for the modest array of widgets and workmanlike rather than hi-tech internal construction. It's one of those cleverly-judged players that deserves to succeed almost in spite of self-imposed odds. Judge the 514 with ears — not eyes — and you could be in for a treat.

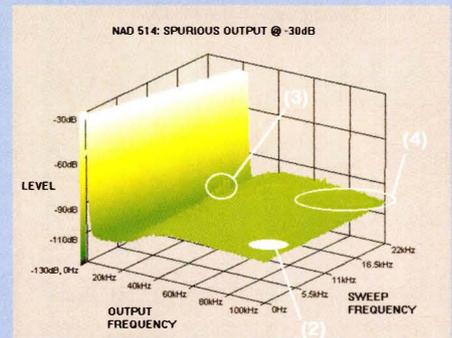
VERDICT	
SOUND	★★★★☆
VALUE	★★★★☆
PRICE	£370
▲	Deep, dynamic and lively-sounding player that puts the fun back into its music.
▼	Could sound sibilant and harsh with more complex mixes.
✉	NAD Marketing Ltd, NAD Building, 401-405 Nether Street, Finchley, London N3 1QG
☎	(0181) 3433240

LAB REPORT

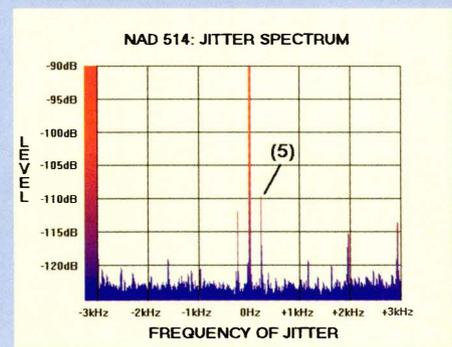
UN/DITHERED -70dB



SPURIOUS OUTPUT AT -30dB



TOTAL JITTER

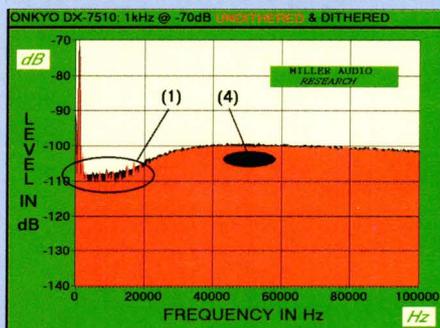


Both the NAD 502 (issue 119) and the 514 are supposedly equipped with 'five-pole active filters' which, in the past, have successfully attenuated any requantisation noise above 35kHz. The continuous splurge of noise (1) emerging from the 514, however, is far closer in appearance to players like Technics's *SL-PS620A* (issue 112), which have used the same MN6474 DAC with gentler, lower-order analogue filters. This one feature is probably the prime reason for any sonic differences between the 502 and 514.

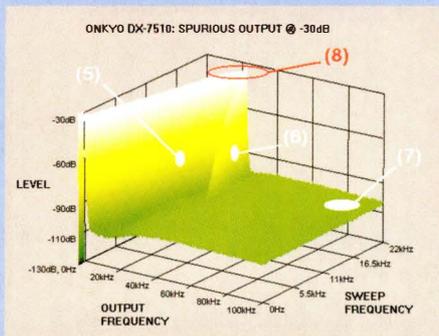
The requantisation noise, tailored by the DAC's noise-shapers, is just as visible on the 3D plot (2), where it all but conceals a ripple of stopband noise (3 — leaking from the digital filter) and spray of high-order harmonic distortions (4). NAD also matches the standards of earlier Technics players with its excellent low-level linearity and useful 103dB S/N ratio — besting its own 502 in the process. Jitter is also suppressed, with fundamental data-induced distortions (5) accounting for the bulk of its 225psec total.

LAB REPORT

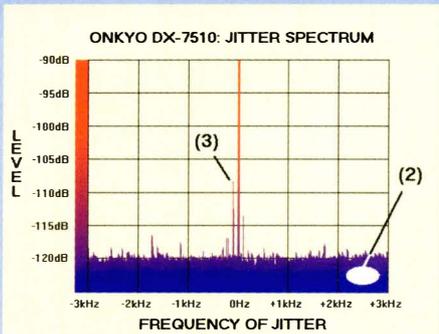
UN/DITHERED -70dB



SPURIOUS OUTPUT AT -30dB



TOTAL JITTER



Evidently based upon the *DX-750* (issue 141), the *DX-7510* employs the same combination of NPC's unusual SM5843 eight-times oversampling filter and SM5861 bit-stream DAC. Onkyo's implementation still results in a just-about-16 bit S/N of 96dB with a similar penalty in its dynamic range (1). This is also evident from the increase in background noise (2) visible on the jitter spectrum which, otherwise, is populated with mild spikes (3) from power supply ripple.

Otherwise, and judging by the fairly substantial output of requantisation noise (4), the 2.2V output level and 370 Ohm output impedance, there's no appreciable change in Onkyo's analogue filtering. However, the component types could well have been altered.

Eventually, it's the 3D plot that reveals the effect of Onkyo's FPCS technology, simulating an extended far-treble response by gently merging 'real' audio data (5) with its 'reflection' (6). This rises up out of the noise (7) to merge at 22.05kHz (8).



Onkyo DX-7510

Less than a year ago, Onkyo's *DX-750* (issue 141) wowed our blind listening panel with its eccentric but sensational sound. Now comes the *DX-7510*, which looks similar (okay, exactly the same), and even employs the same armoury of highly stylised digital ingredients. Has Onkyo become a little too confident in its cookery?

Superficially, nothing has changed, and so the player still offers a generous spread of widgets including direct track access, a 36-track program, shuffle and various repeat play options, a motorised volume control and Music File facility that automatically recognises your favourite tracks from up to 204 different CDs. The remote control looks slightly different from its predecessor, but the same facilities are on offer — albeit with a new presentation.

Under the bonnet, Onkyo's Fine Pulse Conversion System (FPCS) still takes pride of place, acting rather like a mild version of Pioneer's Legato Link, reducing the ringing associated with impulses and transient detail at the expense of extra stop-band noise (see lab report). Just another twist in the digital tale that sets this large, feature-packed machine apart from its conventional competition.

Sound Quality

Returning to our panel's recurring 'metal-working theme': if the Pioneer *PD-S904* was described as a 'planishing hammer' and the JVC *XL-Z674* as incorporating some 'wet and dry', then the *DX-7510*, by comparison, was likened to a "ruddy great metal press". There is an inevitability and finality about the *DX-7510*'s presentation that tends to regiment its music with a cast iron discipline.

The player seemed most comfortable with our Mozart selection, which was described variously as "vibrant, open and richly detailed," responding slickly to changes in dynamics and tempo.

Moving onto *Casino Royale*, the *DX-7510* maintained the "big and sexy voice" but applied a generally 'big and sexy' coloration to almost every other element within the performance — including, as our panel noted, the tiny little marimba which now sounded as if someone were running a crowbar across a metal radiator.

An equally unusual accent was applied to John McLaughlin's guitar, which now sounded "vast and bloomy". The duet between Shawn Colvin and Mary Chapin-Carpenter seemed, once again, too big and blowsy — huge voices, welded together. "Meaty, beaty, big and bouncy," the panel suggested, "more like Meat Loaf colliding with Jennifer Warnes". Similarly, we never really got a chance to appreciate the cleverness of Leftfield's *Leftism* mix, recoiling, instead, from great dollops of music, ladled too generously onto our auditory plate.

Conclusion

This regimental sergeant-major of a player knows where it's going and woe betide any disc that thinks otherwise. There's certainly more than a hint of the *DX-750*'s unique charm here, but the brew is now somewhat over-cooked. Plenty of fine detail, then, rising from an equally quiet, hash-free acoustic, but with an unwelcome 'wham' or machismo that can sound brutish or heavy-handed.

Even though our panel thought a formal recommendation too dicey, we all grew to appreciate its assertive quality. The six million dollar question must be: can you live with a CD player with attitude?

VERDICT

SOUND ★★★★★
VALUE ★★★★★
PRICE £350

▲ A firm-sounding and revealing machine with truckloads of confidence.

▼ A medallion-wearing, chest-wig of a CD player.

✉ Onkyo UK, 401-405 Nether Street, Finchley, London N3 1QG
☎ (0181) 343 2082



Pioneer PD-S904

Over the last three years, Pioneer has been blazing a very distinct trail with its Legato Link Conversion (LLC) system: an unusual filter technology that behaves like the expensive DigiMaster kit from US brand, Wadia. Instead of axing the audioband directly above 20kHz, the LLC filter applies a more gentle roll-off. This allows spurious digital reflections (normally removed in other CD players) to provide a sense of the 'musical energy' which might have existed if CD had a wider frequency response.

It's a neat idea, but one that is fatally flawed, because this post-20kHz energy bears absolutely no harmonic relationship with the audio itself. (Or so I pointed out from issue 112 onwards.) Legato Link Conversion-S (LLC-S), however, is a very different proposition because here digital trickery is used to synthesise real harmonics of real musical signals. Does this turn out to be just as daft? Read the Lab Report for a few clues.

Back to the PD-S904 itself, the very first model to feature LLC-S in anger. In terms of features, we find little departure from Pioneer's established themes. So the player incorporates a familiar 'Stable Platter Mechanism', requiring you to load all CDs upside down. Peak search, random and repeat play modes on the player join direct track access, program play and other useful widgets on the remote control. In every respect, the PD-S904 is an acquired taste.

Sound Quality

"Mostly harmless," began the panel, "for although this player started out encouragingly, we soon began to lose our concentration." There's no doubt

that this is a firm and articulate-sounding player, yet it's just as easy to notice the lack of 'magic' and musical flair that is ably demonstrated by the likes of Harman-Kardon's HD7525.

Without being aware of the technology incorporated into the PD-S904, our listeners specifically criticised its inability to correctly resolve transient or percussive detail. Instead of delivering a clear attack, sustain and release, the strongest musical 'pulses' were blunted in impact. The separation between performers was very good, and John McLaughlin's instrumental mix on *Afro Blue* was a pleasure to follow. Also present, however, was an unusual, almost diaphanous quality that smeared the clarity of tonal colour, if not the focus of the stereo images themselves.

In similar fashion, Dusty Springfield's voice was solidly pin-pointed throughout *Casino Royale*, despite lacking its familiar colour and intonation. Our panel also pointed out a "flattening of the end of each word — and sibilants in particular."

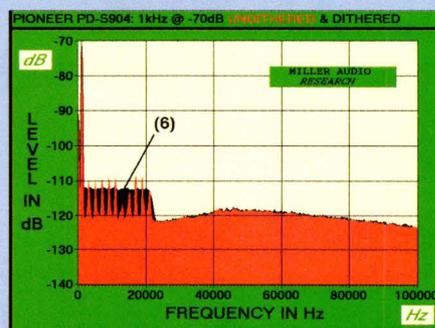
Conclusion

Pioneer certainly has some interesting ideas up its corporate sleeve and, by refusing to conform, succeeds in offering a unique product. The power of existing technology, however, remains inadequate when it comes to 'recreating lost musical detail'. A more flexible technological approach is required for the purpose. As it stands, the archetypal and slightly harder sound of Yazoo or Scritti Politti might fall snugly into the lap of the PD-S904 with its "comfortable and curly sound". But for many other recordings made outside the commercial studios of the early '80s, this player brings a little too much Legato — in the literal sense — to its music.

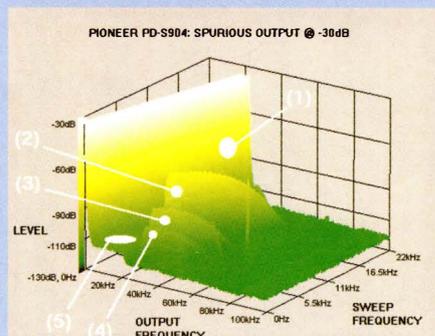
VERDICT	
SOUND	★★★★☆
VALUE	★★★★☆
PRICE	£400
▲	A smooth and comfortable-sounding player with great stereo solidity.
▼	Not particularly vivid or colourful-sounding. A musical planishing hammer.
✉	Pioneer Hi-Fidelity (GB) Ltd, Pioneer House, Hollybush Hill, Stoke Poges, Slough, Berkshire SL2 4QP
☎	(01753) 789789

LAB REPORT

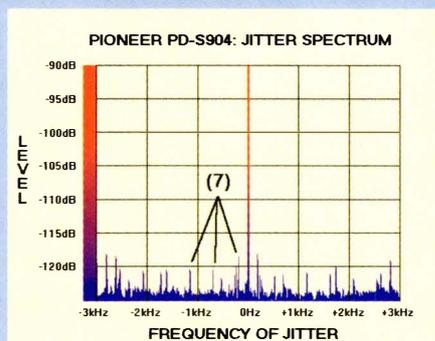
UN/DITHERED -70dB



SPURIOUS OUTPUT AT -30dB



TOTAL JITTER



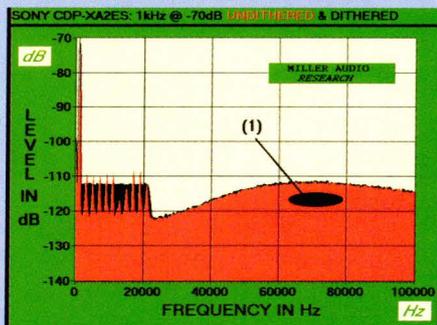
The practical limitations of Legato Link Conversion-S are laid bare by the 3D plot which uses an audio frequency sweep (1) running across the entire audioband at the musically important level of -30dB. Here, the bold harmonics produced by Pioneer's internal DSP are clearly visible.

LLC-S is, however, only capable of producing odd (i.e. third [2], fifth [3] and seventh [4]) harmonics rather than both the odd and even harmonics produced in 'real life'. Furthermore, these harmonics suddenly 'appear' immediately outside of the audio range (5), which otherwise enjoys very low levels (0.0014-0.01 per cent) of distortion. Sadly, this approach seems too inflexible to even begin to approach the reality of, er... 'real music'.

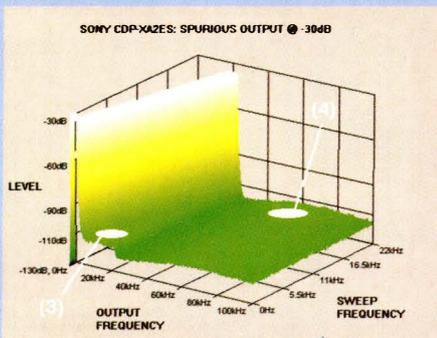
LLC-S aside, the PD-S904 is a joy, offering a flat response (unlike the older LLC), excellent low-level resolution and distortion (6), a wide 107dB S/N ratio, very low digital jitter (7) and a freedom from the PSU-induced ripple suffered by earlier players.

LAB REPORT

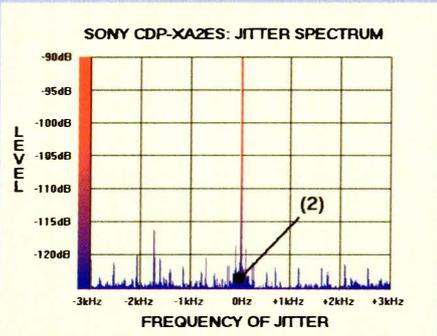
UN/DITHERED -70dB



SPURIOUS OUTPUT AT -30dB



TOTAL JITTER



Because the heart of Sony's CDP-XA2ES beats to the rhythm of the older CXD-2562 DAC (used here to generate the bitstream of pulses) instead of the newer CXD-8505, its technical 'fingerprint' bears closer comparison with the CDP-715 (issue 137) and CDP-915 (issue 141) from Sony's previous range. Just compare the action of its noise-shapers (1) captured in the -70dB plot.

In this instance, the wide 106-107dB S/N ratio and modest +5.6dB noise modulation are both representative of 'real life'. Low-level linearity is great, and the 141psec jitter — although not quite as low as that achieved by the CDP-715 — is still the lowest in this test. Note the 'skirt' of random, low-rate jitter (2).

Distortion is fabulously low at between 0.0016-0.006 per cent at -30dB — well below the level of noise (3) and utterly free of any incoming sampling images from the ultrasonic region (4). Near peak output, however, the new CXA-8042 bit-converter is taxed, pushing distortion up to 0.06 per cent. Whoops!

Sony

CDP-XA2ES



As the sibling of superb CD players like the CDP-715, CDP-915, CDP-561 and CDP-761 (issues 137, 141 and 147 respectively), the new CDP-XA2ES represents an elaboration of existing technology. It sports a blend of old and new chips, wrapped in a crisp newspaper to tease audiophiles with a radical musical aroma.

Features are suitably excessive, and include a motorised volume control, edit/time fader, peak search, program, repeat and shuffle play modes. Conspicuous by their absence, however, are advanced widgets like Sony's Custom File programming and Edit Navigation guide. By way of recompense, Sony has employed the CDP-XA2ES as a vehicle to launch a revised two-part D/A conversion technology.

In similar fashion to Yamaha's I-PDM and Philips' DAC7 Bit-Converters, Sony's latest 'Current Pulse' system reverts to a slightly older Pulse DAC (last seen in the CDP-715) to provide the 'bitstream' for a new and entirely independent analogue conversion IC; the CXA8042. This, plus differential filter stages and top-notch passive components — including Marantz's favourite Silmic capacitors — adds up to plenty of 'hidden engineering' at a relatively modest cost, even if its carcass lacks the sheer mass of heavy-weight CD players like the Teac CD-5.

Sound Quality

The technical presentation of this player is all but faultless: from the tremendous extension of its bass to the highest treble; from its resolution of subtle musical details to its confident handling of the most daunting dynamics. Yet, through all

this technical excellence, neutrality and solid imagery, there remains a lack of what our listening panel described as "musical romance".

Sony's CDP-XA2ES raced through Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante*, bringing its mix of "earth and fire" to the fore with a performance that was seemingly played in double quick time — without ever losing its grip.

In similar fashion, the background conversation that opens Shawn Colvin's *One Cool Remove* proved especially lucid, while her duet with Mary Chapin-Carpenter brimmed with detail. The brew was strengthened by the added meat of its bass, although the word 'bass' hardly does Sony's CDP-XA2ES justice...

This was the one player that successfully retrieved the low bass pedals from John McLaughlin's Hammond organ on *Afro Blue*, while the bass synths from Leftfield's *Original* seemed to extend down an extra octave or two, prompting cries of "whoa" from the 'Beavis and Butthead' corner of the listening panel.

Conclusion

Clearly taken aback by the brutal charm of this player's performance, the members of our panel suggested it has something along the lines of "don't mess" stamped across its fascia. Describing it as a "night-club bouncer of a player," they hinted that its disarming confidence would keep most listeners from reaching for the eject key before the player was good and finished with the disc.

In every respect a heavy-weight performer, Sony's CDP-XA2ES is hi-fi's answer to Frank Bruno. Recommended for its knockout punch — know what I mean, Harry?

VERDICT

SOUND ★★★★★☆
VALUE ★★★★★☆
PRICE £350

- ▲ One helluva player with features to match.
- ▼ Not for the faint-hearted; will give any subwoofer a serious workout.
- ✉ Sony UK Ltd, The Heights, Brooklands, Weybridge, Surrey KT3 0XW
- ☎ (0181) 784 1144



TEAC CD-5

Trust Teac to dream up a CD player that's a little out of the ordinary. Such is the *CD-5*; a heavyweight player that takes its basic styling from the cheaper *CD-3*, with the addition of conical supports standing proud from each corner. The inverted cones are terminated in individual, adjustable, gold-plated points to support the player on tip-toes. And if you're worried about damaging your furniture, Teac has thoughtfully supplied four protective cups to prevent its stilettoed feet from drilling holes in your precious woodwork.

Mounted on a proprietary hi-fi equipment table, however, Teac's pointy feet certainly provide a more secure foundation than the rubberised blobs that lurk beneath almost every other player. And if this wasn't enough, Teac can also supply a gold-coloured version of the *CD-5*.

Whether black or gold, the *CD-5* houses the same Philips-based Bit Stream technology applied in earlier players, like the *CD-P4500* (issue 107). Teac has also used its centralised mechanism to subdivide the digital and analogue 'halves' of this player. On the outside, the *CD-5* is only equipped with basic track skip facilities, leaving its matching remote control to light up the fluorescent display with extra repeat and program play options, direct track and index searching, fast search (with cue lock) and tape edit facilities.

In common with earlier Teac players, the *CD-5* is even equipped with a pitch control, which adjusts the musical tempo over a +/-12 per cent range. Aerobics instructors, please take note.

Sound Quality

After an initial burst of enthusiasm following the

healthy pace, vim and vigour displayed by Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante*, the impression left by the *CD-5* on our hard-bitten panel took a slight downturn. Its performance was likened to a "brilliant façade": a glittering portrayal that was high on style but just a little short on substance. "Full of sound and fury, but signifying nothing," muttered one of our more literary-minded panelists.

Specifically, the *CD-5*'s balance is not tonally restricted, but there is a tendency for it to sound a little too shrill or unsympathetic. The percussive accompaniment from John McLaughlin's *Afro Blue* and Shawn Colvin's *One Cool Remove* were criticised for "shimmering incessantly", and both gave us the impression that the *CD-5* would "mince through the music rather than drive purposefully along".

There's no doubt that the generally light, bright and fresh sound of the *CD-5* CD player will prove attractive in some systems. Yet, by lacking the meatiness and musical substance of its more sophisticated peers, it often falls into the trap of sounding too mechanical, as if "going through the motions".

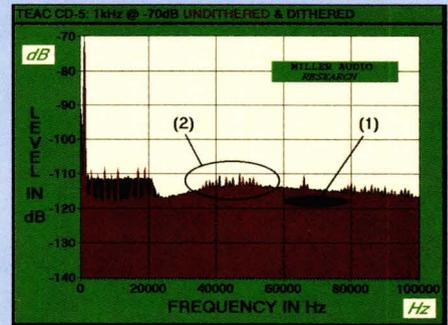
Conclusion

Although this player looks and feels like a million dollars in gold bars, the sound of Teac's *CD-5* is arguably closer to silver plate. Nevertheless, it doesn't come across as a cynical attempt to dress digital muton as lamb for, beyond that Art Deco panelling, the *CD-5* also incorporates a deal of modern bitstream technology. A gallant attempt then, albeit one that has not significantly evolved from its closest in-house relative, the *CD-P4500*, originally Recommended over three and a half years ago.

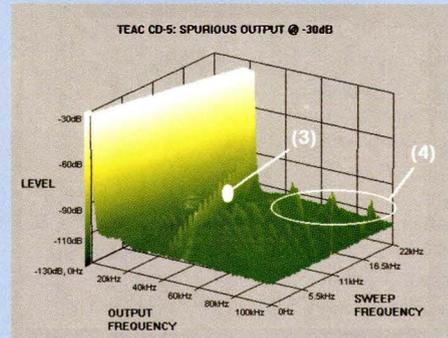
VERDICT	
SOUND	★★★★☆
VALUE	★★★★☆
PRICE	£350
▲	Bright, breezy and up-beat sound.
▼	Plenty of mouth but a little short in the trouser department.
✉	Teac UK Ltd, 5 Marlin House, The Croxley Centre, Watford, Hertfordshire WD1 8YA
☎	(01923) 819630

LAB REPORT

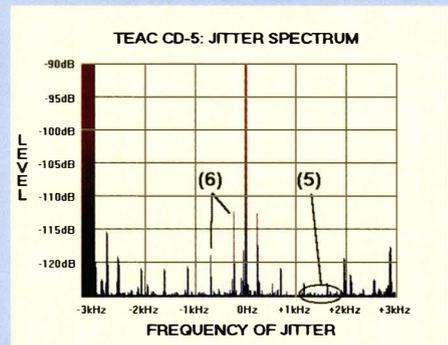
UN/DITHERED -70dB



SPURIOUS OUTPUT AT -30dB



TOTAL JITTER



This player employs the same combination of NPC's SM5840 eight-times oversampling filter and Philips's SAA7350 DAC as Teac's older *CD-P4500* (issue 107). Hence the characteristic suppression of ultrasonic noise (1) with small clusters of stopband images (2) — all indicative of the SAA7350 running with a 16.9MHz clock. Philips would use a lower 11.3MHz clock in players using the same DAC, dramatically changing the 'finger-print' of the machine.

Conventional distortion is low at just 0.009-0.015 per cent (ref. -30dB), although sampling images (3) are still released by the digital filter. More importantly, gritty-sounding sampling patterns (4) radiate back into the audioband courtesy, once again, of the SAA7350. This is a great pity because other causes of audible displeasure — such as random jitter (5) — are mightily suppressed, leaving a hint of data-induced jitter (6) to bring the total to a low 198psec. And do take account of its high 2.7V output during any A/B dems!

CONCLUSIONS

Best Buys and Recommendations

While the hot commercial action remains concentrated on players below £250, all the models featured here suggest that variety, rather than consensus, is the key attraction for those with a little extra to spend. And variety (in appearance, feature content, technology and the actual sound) is cultivated within this month's test group. Rather than there being a communal goal of 'ideal sound quality', it seems instead that the more you spend, the more outlandish becomes your choice of musical interpretation!

Even the players that slipped through the net of formal Recommendation possess a certain spark of innovation. Pioneer's PD-S904 and Onkyo's DX-7510 sport unique digital signal processing, while the Teac CD-5 and Audio Innovations Alto are examples of stunning aesthetics. As ever, if you are prepared to stump up a little extra cash, there will always be a player to satisfy the demand for flair and individuality.

Nevertheless, neither reputation nor aesthetic genius cuts any ice with the educated ears of our hard-bitten, blind listening panel. As a consequence, Arcam's latest Alpha 5 Plus was undermined by its superficially dynamic but unsophisticated sound, just as the pyrotechnic antics of Onkyo's DX-7510 proved a little too emphatic for our panel's musical constitution.



Pioneer's PD-S904 was even likened to a "cheese sandwich in the *haute cuisine* of audio, one that's filling enough (though the edges are curling) but still lacks sufficient colour to tickle the palette".

In similar fashion, the artistic *Alto* from Audio Innovations was heard to adopt a piecemeal approach to its music — an uneven quality that aggravated what was otherwise a very polite and graceful performance. A certain smugness was also identified in the lazy tone of vocals from Teac's CD-5, a player whose visual 'gravitas' mirrors a cavalier over-confidence that often leads it to bite off more than it can comfortably chew.

JVC's XL-Z674 gains a swingtag by virtue of its well-upholstered bass, smooth overall

sound, generous features and, by the standards of the group, relatively low price. It's an undemanding all-rounder, albeit one that lacks the gut-wrenching dynamics of Sony's CDP-XA2ES — a player that walks the tightrope of detail and sophistication while harbouring an astonishing 'kick' to its bass.

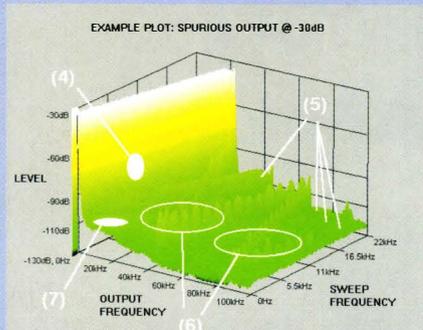
If you are looking for a player that errs on the 'romantic' side of neutrality, the spacious and invigorating sound of NAD's 514 is likely to fit the bill. But I'd hesitate to partner it with an amp or loudspeaker that already sparkled with boisterous enthusiasm. Ditto for Harman's HD7525, which is equally upbeat but altogether more enticing with its bold sense of the dramatic, its see-through transparency and ability to reveal the subtlest of contrasts from the widest possible selection of musical styles.

All of which leaves us with Marantz's CD-63mkII which, because of its £270 price tag, could easily have been overwhelmed by its costlier competition. In the event, the CD-63mkII put up a courageous struggle that not only belies the player's modest ticket but also promises long-term listening satisfaction. So if Harman's RLS player is out of reach at £400, then save yourself a few CDs and opt, instead, for the latest in a long line of bitstream thoroughbreds.

PARAMETERS	ARCAM ALPHA 5 PLUS	AUDIO INNOVATIONS ALTO	HARMAN KARDON HD7525	JVC XL-Z674
CHANNEL BALANCE	20Hz 1kHz 20kHz	20Hz 1kHz 20kHz	20Hz 1kHz 20kHz	20Hz 1kHz 20kHz
CHANNEL SEPARATION	0.1dB 0.1dB 0.3dB	0.0dB 0.0dB 0.0dB	0.0dB 0.0dB 0.0dB	0.0dB 0.0dB 0.0dB
FREQUENCY RESPONSE	98dB 104dB 101dB	139dB 129dB 132dB	118dB 111dB 89dB	113dB 114dB 102dB
THD VS LEVEL	-0.2dB 0.0dB -0.3dB	0.0dB 0.0dB -0.8dB	0.0dB 0.0dB -1.1dB	0.0dB 0.0dB -0.3dB
	@ 0dB	-99dB -99dB -93dB	-89dB -86dB -72dB	-109dB -109dB -92dB
	@ -30dB	-88dB -82dB -71dB	-74dB -71dB -62dB	-98dB -93dB -88dB
	@ -60dB	-63dB -58dB -57dB	-44dB -46dB -29dB	-64dB -61dB -67dB
	@ -80dB	-31dB -40dB -41dB	-13dB -23dB -1dB	-30dB -37dB -48dB
	@ -90dB	-15dB -30dB -28dB	-6dB -17dB +12dB	-20dB -25dB -38dB
	@ -100dB	-12dB -25dB -13dB	-10dB	-22dB
DITHERED,	+1dB	0.0dB 0.0dB	No Signal	-15dB
DITHERED,	0.0dB +0.2dB	0.0dB 0.0dB	0.0dB -0.5dB	0.0dB 0.0dB
DITHERED,	0.4dB -0.1dB	0.0dB 0.0dB	-0.3dB -5.4dB	-0.1dB -0.1dB
RESOLUTION	6.1dB*	-0.4dB -0.1dB	+0.3dB -10.1dB	-0.3dB -0.4dB
	@ -100dB	-0.5dB -0.6dB	+8.4dB +7.1dB	-0.1dB -0.2dB
PEAK OUTPUT LEVEL	2.336V	3.034V	2.218V	1.994V
	2.315V	3.044V	2.225V	2.002V
	+1.3dB	+3.6dB	+0.9dB	+0.0dB
OUTPUT IMPEDANCE	44 Ohm	<1 Ohm	151 Ohm	179 Ohm
CCIR IMD, 0dB	-77dB	-100dB	-93dB	-105dB
SUPPRESSION OF STOP-BAND IMAGES	40.9dB	62.2dB	15.0dB	>103dB
1Hz NOISE MODULATION	+22.5dB	+16.2dB	+10.1dB	+13.7dB
S/N RATIO (A-WTD), WITH EMP, 0LSB	116.1dB	111.2dB	110.8dB	114.2dB
W/O EMP, 0LSB	115.3dB	111.1dB	107.0dB	114.2dB
W/O EMP, 1LSB	115.3dB	111.0dB	106.8dB	114.2dB
TOTAL CORRELATED JITTER	268psec	243psec	160psec	173psec
DIGITAL OUTPUT(S)	Coaxial	Coaxial	Coaxial	Optical
CRYSTAL CLOCK ACCURACY	+76ppm	+13ppm	-72ppm	+29ppm
TRACK ACCESS TIME (99)	4secs	6.5secs	7secs	2.5secs
SERIAL NUMBER	ACD050350	0134	S231-06065	11900129
TYPICAL RETAIL PRICE	£480	£450 (chrome)	£400	£300
* -5.5dB ON R CHANNEL	* -5.5dB ON R channel			

HOW TO GET THE MOST from the new, full-colour plots

SPURIOUS OUTPUT AT -30dB



Distortion and sampling images are graphically illustrated on this 3D plot, which opens a new window on our search to explain and confirm the sound of different CD players.

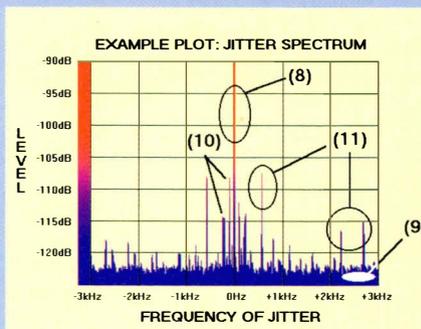
Rather than at just one frequency, an audio frequency sweep from 0Hz to 22.05kHz (4), at -30dB (in the thick of the music), reveals continuous changes in performance. Distortion harmonics (5) may be seen radiating out to the right of this sweep, and the lower the distortion, the less obvious such harmonics will appear.

In addition, sampling (or stopband) images are represented as whole or partial V-shaped patterns (6) centred on multiples of the 44.1kHz sample rate. These are especially obvious on our example plot, which also reveals the rippling pattern caused by the player's digital filter. Ideally, such images will be removed altogether, allowing the noise floor to descend, undisturbed, into the darker green region of the graph.

This plot covers a full 100dB dynamic

range, running from -30dB to an incredibly low -130dB. So, by looking at the 'colour' of the noise in the audioband (7), we can get a direct indication of the dynamic range of one combination versus another.

JITTER PLOT

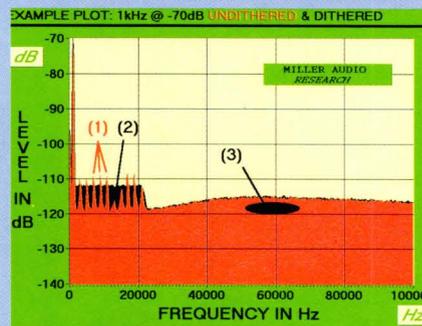


This latest test probes fluctuations in the timing of digital signals during D/A conversion — variations caused by interference from the player's own power supply, interference from adjacent clocks and even from the ones and zeros that form the data itself.

Ideally, the plot would show a sharp, central peak (8) rising from as little background noise (9) as possible. In practice, we find jitter (see feature, issue 147) represented as sidebands alongside this central peak. Jitter caused by power supply noise (10), such as ripple and diode switching, is usually seen close to the main peak. This, together with very low-rate jitter, causes the peak to broaden, influencing the stability and focus of stereo images.

Jitter caused by interaction with the data itself, or from other repetitive processes within the player, is represented on this plot by the more widely-spaced sidebands (11). This type of jitter is often directly audible and is linked to muddling or harshness, particularly where the music contains sustained treble detail.

1 kHz -70 dB PLOT

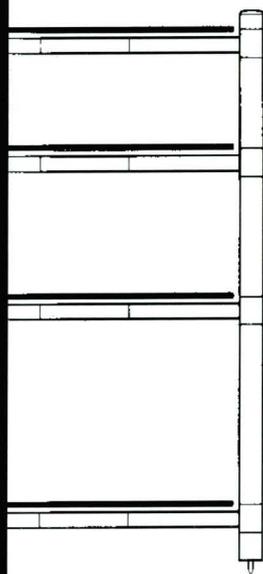


Dither is a special type of low-level noise used to randomise the predictable quantisation errors that cause unwanted harmonic distortion. Ideally, these harmonics (1) are then traded for a slight increase in inaudible hiss (2), although some DACs are clearly more proficient at this than others.

Look out for a build-up of ultrasonic noise (3) beyond the audioband (>20,000Hz). This is a by-product of some bitstream DACs. Traditional multi-bit DACs produce less of this noise and, as a result, may perform more consistently when partnered with different amplifiers.

MARANTZ CD-63MKII	NAD 514	ONKYO DX-7510	PIONEER PD-S904	SONY CDP-XA2ES	TEAC CD-5
20Hz 1kHz 20kHz	20Hz 1kHz 20kHz	20Hz 1kHz 20kHz	20Hz 1kHz 20kHz	20Hz 1kHz 20kHz	20Hz 1kHz 20kHz
0.0dB 0.0dB 0.0dB	0.0dB 0.0dB 0.0dB	0.0dB 0.0dB 0.2dB	0.4dB 0.4dB 0.4dB	0.0dB 0.0dB 0.0dB	0.0dB 0.0dB 0.0dB
155dB 134dB 143dB	117dB 121dB 116dB	85dB 102dB 67dB	151dB 137dB 126dB	124dB 108dB 83dB	110dB 109dB 93dB
0.0dB 0.0dB -0.2dB	0.0dB 0.0dB -0.2dB	-0.1dB 0.0dB -0.9dB	0.0dB 0.0dB -0.1dB	0.0dB 0.0dB 0.0dB	0.0dB 0.0dB -0.3dB
-104dB -102dB -74dB	-98dB -99dB -73dB	-97dB -95dB -86dB	-105dB -100dB -93dB	-91dB -88dB -64dB	-102dB -104dB -92dB
-97dB -92dB -69dB	-94dB -82dB -63dB	-75dB -71dB -70dB	-97dB -91dB -80dB	-96dB -93dB -85dB	-81dB -79dB -77dB
-51dB -47dB -37dB	-61dB -54dB -40dB	-46dB -40dB -37dB	-62dB -57dB -64dB	-59dB -56dB -55dB	-49dB -45dB -55dB
-20dB -24dB -13dB	-28dB -31dB -20dB	-27dB -21dB -17dB	-28dB -39dB -41dB	-29dB -31dB -34dB	-26dB -26dB -38dB
-8dB -14dB -4dB	-20dB -22dB -6dB	-15dB -7dB -10dB	-18dB -24dB -32dB	-19dB -23dB -26dB	-16dB -17dB -26dB
-11dB	-16dB	-5dB	-18dB	-19dB	-15dB
-7dB	-8dB	-1dB	-8dB	-8dB	-3dB
0.0dB 0.0dB	0.0dB 0.0dB	-0.1dB 0.0dB	0.0dB 0.0dB	0.0dB 0.0dB	0.0dB 0.0dB
-0.1dB -0.2dB	+0.1dB 0.0dB	+0.3dB +0.6dB	-0.1dB -0.1dB	-0.1dB -0.1dB	-0.2dB +0.7dB
+0.1dB -1.2dB	-0.1dB +0.3dB	-0.1dB +2.5dB	-0.3dB -0.4dB	-0.5dB -0.4dB	-1.2dB +2.0dB
+0.2dB +0.4dB	+0.2dB -0.6dB	-0.4dB +5.7dB	-0.2dB +0.1dB	-0.3dB -0.3dB	-1.0dB +5.3dB
2.276V	2.223V	2.209V	2.427V	2.501V	2.673V
2.288V	2.227V	2.217V	2.535V	2.505V	2.661V
+1.1dB	+0.9dB	+0.9dB	+1.9dB	+1.9dB	+2.5dB
210 Ohm	111 Ohm	367 Ohm	181 Ohm	673 Ohm	1.1 kOhm
-102dB	-104dB	-100dB	-96dB	-95dB	-102dB
53.9dB	81.5dB	7.5dB	82dB	>105dB	61.0dB
+6.5dB	+6.8dB	+3.9dB	+7.2dB	+5.6dB	+4.7dB
123.7dB	108.5dB	110.6dB	119.7dB	107.3dB	104.1dB
123.7dB	106.7dB	110.7dB	117.3dB	107.3dB	104.7dB
100.9dB	102.7dB	96.0dB	107.2dB	106.8dB	103.5dB
650psec	225psec	216psec	146psec	141psec	198psec
Coaxial & Optical	Coaxial	Optical	Coaxial & Optical	Optical	Optical
+22ppm	+47ppm	+66ppm	+6ppm	+5ppm	+130ppm
2.5secs	4secs	3.5secs	3.5secs	2secs	2.5secs
SV029532002419	E514N06151	3505026084	PD8503171N	75022	018010
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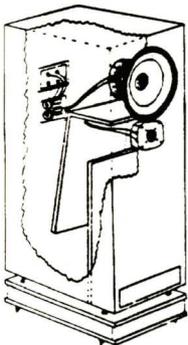


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CHORD SPM 800 pwr amp, as new (£2155) £1195 ono. AE1 II £425 ono. Offers or p/x considered. Bath (01225) 480990

CONCORDANT Exquisite valve preamp, £1050 (RRP £1950). Surrey (01372) 468266

CYRUS 2 PSX desperately wanted. May take amp if both unseparable. Glasgow (0141) 945 4041

CYRUS 780 spkrs (black ash), vgc, boxed, £95. Partington PP4 single leg spkr stands, £25. SE Essex (01702) 556116

E.A.D. T7000/DSP7000 Mk3 HDCD, latest spec, £2500 (£5000). Audio Research LS7, black, mint, £1250. Herts (01442) 877853

EXPOSURE XV integrated amp. 3 yrs, mint condition, boxed, £280. London (0181) 523 1134

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KEF Reference 104/2 speakers, excellent condition, £750 (new £1700). Sussex (01903) 716275

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LINN Keilidh, black ash, ceramic plinths as new £495 or swap for Meridian 206 CDP. Reading (01734) 412987

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LINN LP12, Valhalla, Trampolin Cirkus Ekos Mk2. New K18, £1400. N. Hants (01933) 626170

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Cumbria (01697) 473528

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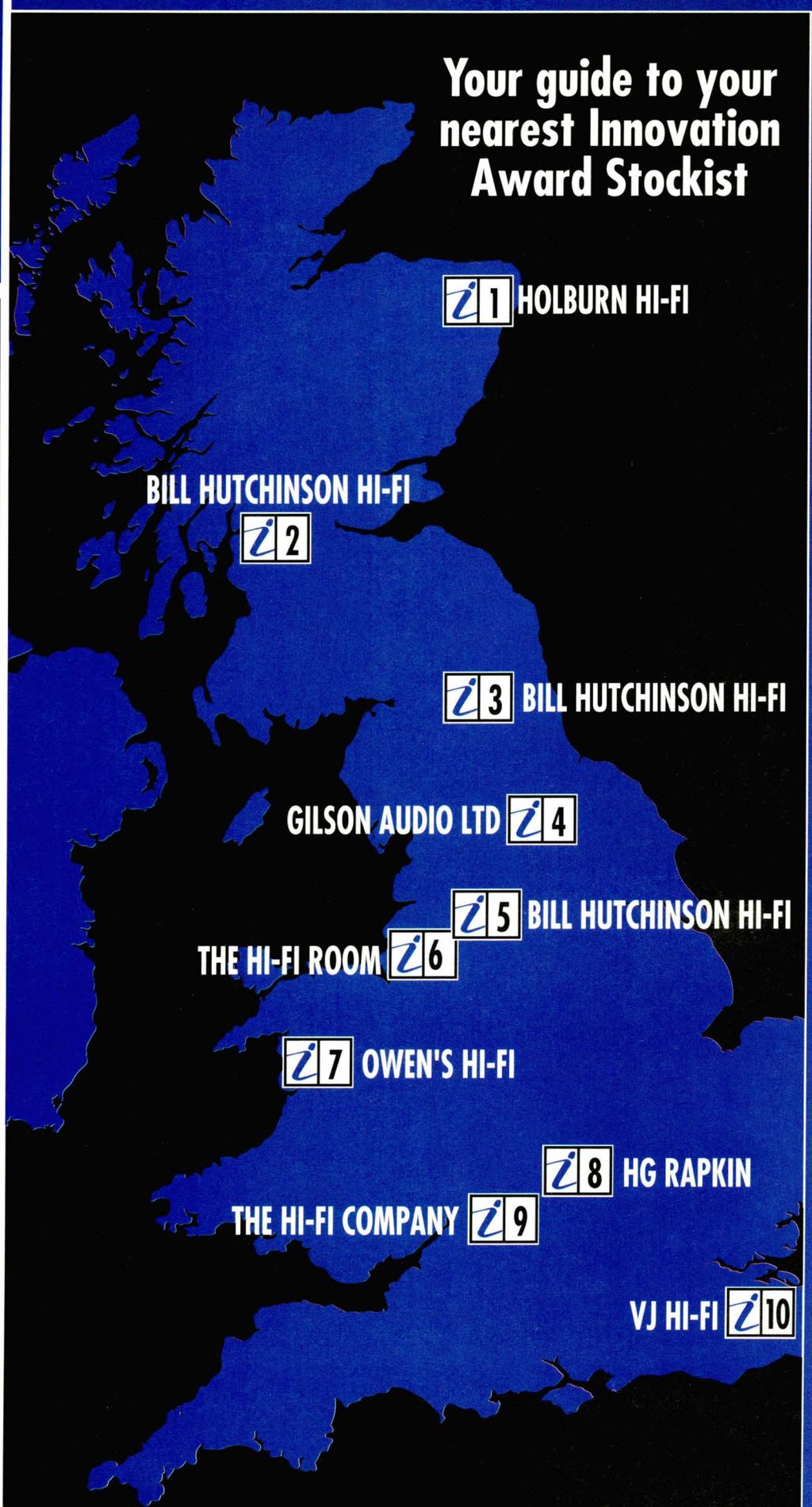
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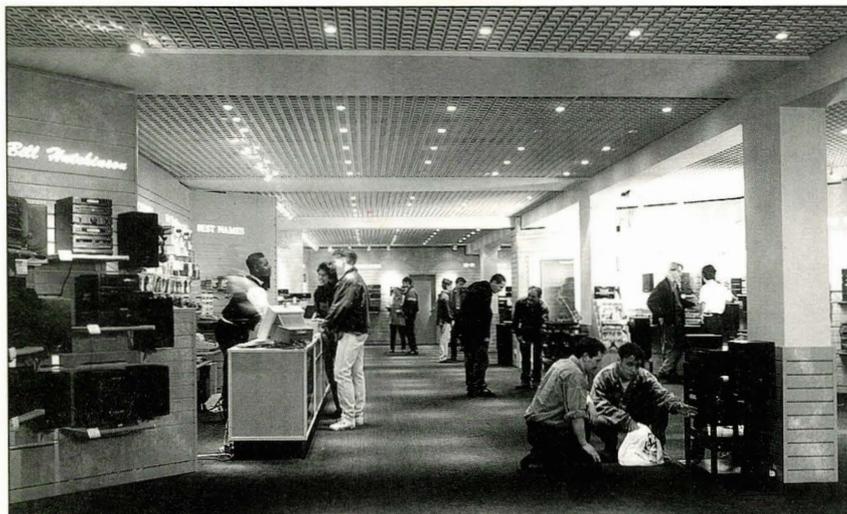
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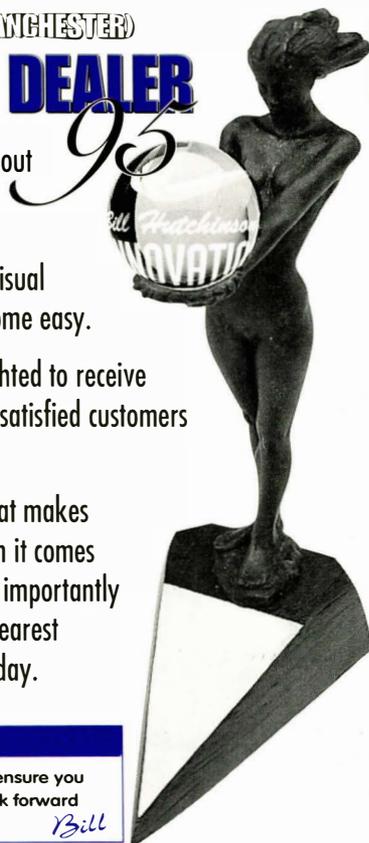
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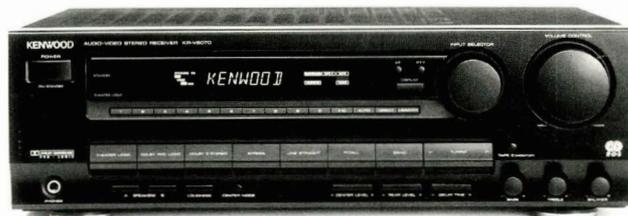
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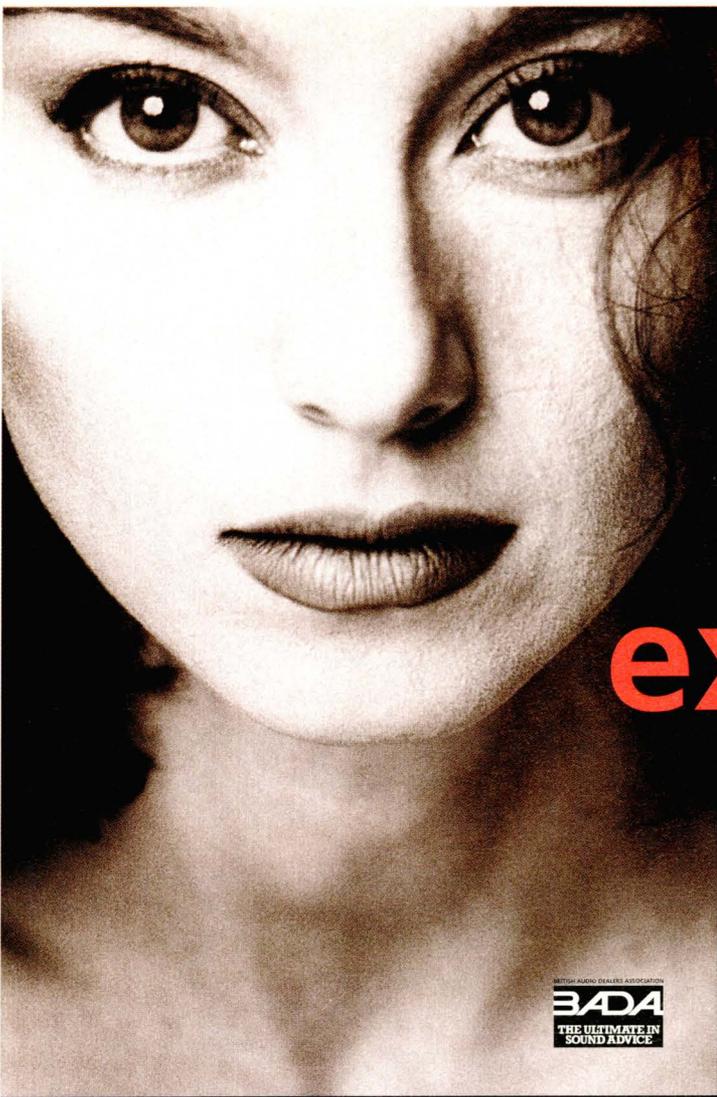
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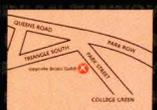
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THE ALL NEW HI-FI CHOICE — DIRECTORY —



Best Buys & Recommendations

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

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

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

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

better than an inexpensive Best Buy.

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

BUYING HI-FI EQUIPMENT

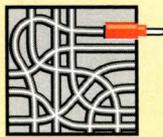
The key to putting together a great hi-fi system is finding a dealer with whom you can communicate, and who is sympathetic to your requirements. So the first stage in your quest is to look up your local dealers in our Dealer Directory, at the end of the product Directory, and go to see the people behind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

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

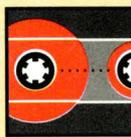
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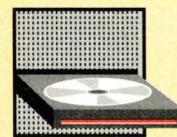
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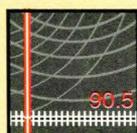
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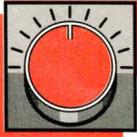
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Amplifiers

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

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

■ As general rule, the more widgets an amplifier has (ie

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

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

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

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

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

PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

AMPLIFIERS	
Analogue Saturn	75 preamp • MM
Analogue Saturn MC	75 preamp • MC
Creek OBM-8	99 preamp • MM • 10,6,11cm • Phono stepup
Sherwood AI 1110	100 integrated • 55W • MM,4L,1T • hdph
Creek OBM-9	110 preamp • MC • 10,6,11cm • Phono stepup
Grundig V210	130 integrated • 50W • MM,5L,1T • hdph • rem • 36,12,30cm • Pre-main split
Pioneer A-103	130 integrated • 30W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 42,11,31cm
Aiwa XA-003	140 integrated • 40W • MM,2L,1T • hdph • 2 speaker circuits
Kenwood KA-1060	140 integrated • 140W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 44,13,25cm • 'Logical Flow' construction
Moth 30 Passive	149 109 preamp • 4L,1T • 5,10,35cm • Modular system gives cracking results. Passive pre/power amp warrant Best Buy (tested with 30/Stereo 60).
Grundig Fine Arts V1	150 integrated • 50W • MM,5L,1T • hdph • rem • 43,14,30cm • Tone defeat
Marantz PM-34	150 integrated • 40W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 42,14,28cm • Source direct
Pioneer A-203	150 integrated • 45W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 42,11,31cm
Sony TAF211B	150 integrated • 30W • MM/2L • hdph • 43,14,31cm • Source direct
Denon PMA-250 III	160 121 integrated • 30W • MM,3L,1T • hdph • 44,10,28cm • High resolution amp, can loses its grip but is engaging and enjoyable.
Grundig V310	170 integrated • 70W • MM,5L,1T • hdph • rem • 36,12,30cm • Pre-main split
Kenwood KA-2060R	170 integrated • 65W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,13,30cm • System control
Sherwood AI 5010	170 integrated • 70W • MM,3L,2T • hdph
Technics SU-V300	170 integrated • 25W • MM,2L,1T • hdph • 43,13,32cm • A/B speaker select
Rotel RC970BX MkII	175 144 preamp • 3L,2T • hdph • 44,8,29cm • Confident, consistent sound. Reviewed (in Sessions) with RB970BXMkII power amps
NAD 302	189 116 integrated • 25W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • A spritely and uplifting performance. Sounds loud, but never intrusive or fatiguing.
Moth 30 RIAA	199 preamp • MM/MC, • 5,10,35cm • Stand alone phono stage
QED Vector One	199 preamp • 4L,1T
Grundig Fine Arts V2	200 integrated • 80W • MM,5L,1T • hdph • rem • 43,14,30cm • Tone defeat
JVC AX-R5BK	200 149 integrated • 45W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,15,31cm • <i>Versatile, and lots of even-handed, articulate detail; but let down by superficiality</i>
Kenwood KA-3020SE	200 134 integrated • 50W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 44,14,35cm • UK Special Edition
Luxman A-312	200 integrated • 40W • MM,4L,2T • hdph • 13,44,36cm • CD direct, A/B speakers
Marantz PM-44 MkIIse	200 134 integrated • 40W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 42,14,28cm • <i>Two generations on from the PM-40SE, this new model gives a disappointingly grey view of music</i>
Marantz PM-43	200 integrated • 55W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 42,14,30cm • Twin speaker sockets
Nakamichi IA4s	200 integrated • 30W • 3L,1T • 43,7,32 cm • 'Harmonic Time Alignment'
Onkyo A-801	200 integrated • 40W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 46,12,33cm
Philips FA930	200 integrated • 65W • MM,2L,3T • hdph • rem • 44,14,30cm
Pioneer A-303R	200 134 integrated • 45W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 42,13,36cm • Fresh and uncomplicated sound bests much of the audiophile competition.
Sony TAF244B	200 integrated • 40W • MM/2L • hdph • 43,14,31cm • MOSFET power stage
Teac AR300	200 integrated • 45W • MM/MC,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,13,36cm • Mic input
Technics SU-V500	200 integrated • 30W • MC/MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 43,13,31cm • New Class A
Rotel RB970BX MkII	225 144 power amp • 60W • 44,8,29cm • <i>Tested with RC970BX MkII in Sessions (see above)</i>
NAD Monitor 1000	229 preamp • MM/MC,3L,2T • hdph
Rega Brio	229 integrated • 30W • MM,3L,1T • 43,7,15cm
Denon PMA-350 II	230 134 integrated • 50W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 44,12,28cm • Mods give this amp a powerful up-front and compelling performance.
Denon PMA-480R	230 integrated • 50W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,12,29cm
JVC AX-V6BK	230 integrated • A/V • 50W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,13,46cm • Dolby Pro Logic
Kenwood KA-3060R	230 142 integrated • 45W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,13,30cm • <i>Classy engineering, but sound is over-dry, often frustratingly restrained and rather unsophisticated.</i>
Pioneer A-300X	230 116 integrated • 40W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 42,13,36cm • <i>This revamped version of the A300 sounds more confident in a CD than MM, yet our panel was unmoved.</i>
Technics SU-V620	230 integrated • 70W • MM,MC,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 43,13,32cm • R-Core transformer, THCB
Technics SU-A600 Mk2	230 149 integrated • 37W • MC/MM,3L,2T • hdph • 43,13,32cm • <i>An amplifier that's great fun to be with, but a lit le untidy from time to time</i>
Moth 30 Series Power	239 power amp • 30W • 5,10,35cm
Yamaha AX-490	239 149 integrated • 85W • MM,MC,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,15,39cm • <i>Widgets aplenty, but unemotional sound evoked an uncertain response from panel</i>
Arcam Alpha 5 Plus	240 149 integrated • 40W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 43,8,30cm • <i>Detailed improvement on predecessor, but lacks 'air'</i>
Magnum IA120	249 integrated • 50W • MM,5L,2T • hdph
Moth 30 Active	249 preamp • 4L,1T • 5,10,35cm
NAD 304	249 121 integrated • 35W • MM,4L,2T • hdph • Good with CD and vinyl, this is a successful and entertaining amplifier for your shortlist.
Grundig Fine Arts V3	250 integrated • 120W • MM,5L,1T • hdph • rem • 43,14,30cm • Pre-main split
JVC AX-A472BK	250 142 integrated • 65W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 44,15,36cm • <i>Unpredictable performer that is initially impressive but often ends up sounding starchy and tiring.</i>
Luxman A-331	250 integrated • 60W • MM,4L,2T • hdph • 13,44,36cm • Inc CD direct
Marantz MA-500	250 power amp • 125W • 9,15,45cm • D-bus, monoblocks, bridgable
Marantz PM-53	250 integrated • 65W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 42,14,30cm • Remote control
Rotel RA935BX MkII	250 integrated • 50W • 3L,2T • hdph • 44,10,35cm • Separate listen/rec selectors
Sony TAF444E	250 142 integrated • 50W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 43,15,38cm • <i>Sheds all frillery for an audiophile approach, but still sounds grubby and stilted.</i>
Teac AR500	250 integrated • 90W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,13,36cm • Mic input
Lecson 380X	255 integrated • 35W • MM/MC,6L • 44,6,27cm
Pro-ject Model 7	259 142 integrated • 40W • MM,3L,2T • <i>A minimalist amplifier brimming with good intent, but too quirky for its own good. Either MM or MC.</i>
Onkyo A803	260 142 integrated • 60W • MM/MC,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 46,12,33cm • <i>This amp sounds lifeless, vague and disinterested in the music at hand.</i>
Creek P42	279 preamp • 4L,2T • hdph • 42,6,20cm • Plug-in modules available
Creek A42	279 power amp • 50W • 42,6,20cm • 150 watts in mono
Creek 4240	279 134 integrated • 40W • 3L,1T • hdph • 42,6,20cm • <i>Bearing no relation to earlier Creek designs, this radical rethink is more successful via MM than CD.</i>
Denon PMA-450SE	280 142 integrated • 60W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 44,14,36cm • Based on the original '450, and offers a fast, furious and entertaining sound.
Kenwood KA-4060R	280 integrated • 70W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,14,35cm • System control

PRODUCT

£ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

Technics SU-A700 MkII	280	integrated • 45W • MC/MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 43,13,32cm	
AMC AV81 Control	289	preamp • A/V • 8L,2T • rem	
Lescon Stereo 383X	295	integrated • 60W • MM/MC,6L • hdph • 44,6,27cm	
AMC 2445	299	power amp • 45W • 4 channels	
Moth 30 RIAA 100VA	299	preamp • MM/MC • 5,10,35cm • Standalone phono stage	
QED Vector Reference	299	preamp • 4L,1T	
Yamaha AX-590	299	integrated • 100W • MM,MC,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,15,39cm • UK specified, system remote	
Denon PMA-715	300	integrated • 60W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,16,40cm	
Kenwood KA-V3700	300	integrated • A/V • MM,4L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,14,30cm • Dolby Pro Logic	
Marantz PM-63	300	integrated • 70W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 42,14,30cm • Remote control	
Mission PSX-R	300	22,8,36cm • Outboard PSU	
Musical Fidelity E10	300	144 integrated • 40W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • 44,10,34cm • Minimalist features	REC'D
NVA P-50	300	preamp • 3L,1T	
Onix OA30	300	integrated • 40W • 5L,1T • hdph • 43,77,33cm	
Pioneer A-400X	300	138 integrated • 50W • MM/MC4,2 • hdph • 42,13,36cm • On second audition, this amp was tonally unchanged but less compelling	REC'D
Pioneer A-503R	300	138 integrated • 70W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 42,13,36cm • Best via MM disc, the dull and claustrophobic sound is otherwise deeply uninspiring.	
Rotel RA970BX	300	138 integrated • 60W • 4L,2T • hdph • 44,7,35cm • Lively, fresh and perky with plenty of power, but not so clever with complex recordings.	REC'D
Sony TAF542E	300	integrated • 90W • MM/MC,3L,2T • hdph • 43,15,38cm • UK optimised sound	
Naim Flat-Cap	317	43,56,30cm • Power supply	
Moth 30 Integrated	320	integrated • 30W • 8L,T • 8,18,35cm	
Lumley Reference PP70	325	preamp • 6L,1T • 36,46,6cm • Passive, bolts to ST70	
Lumley Reference PP40	325	preamp • 6L,1T • 29,40,6cm • Bolts to ST40	
Lumley Reference PP1	325	preamp • 6L,1T • 29,44,6cm • Passive, stand alone	
Audio Innovations Alto	329	138 integrated • 35W • 4L,2T • 43,8,30cm • Despite a lack of bass, it still sounds open, natural and relaxed.	B'BUY
Magnum Quartet	329	121 integrated • 36W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • An integrated model that incorporates four monoblocks optimised for bi-wiring, but sound is sandy in the treble.	
Analogue Jupiter	330	integrated • 30W • MM,4L,1T	
Aura VA100 II	330	138 integrated • 70W • MM,4L,1T • hdph • 43,6,31cm • Big, smooth yet slightly disjointed sound was equally familiar.	
JVC AX-A662BK	330	integrated • 90W • MM/MC,3L,2T • hdph • 44,13,31cm • Compu-link system	
EMF Audio Sequel	349	109 integrated • 50W • MM,4L,1T • hdph • 43,65,28cm • Relaxed and restrained design from Mike Creek.	
Harman-Kardon PA2100	349	power amp • 45W • 45,11,37cm	
Moth 30 Active 100VA	349	preamp • 4L,1T • 5,10,35cm	
NAD Monitor 1000S	349	124 preamp • MM/MC,3L,2T • hdph • Sounds a little restrained.	
NAD 306	349	integrated • 50W • MM,4L,2T • hdph	
Arcam Alpha 6 Plus	350	129 integrated • 50W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 43,8,30cm • A new MOSFET design with a subtle and melodic sound.	REC'D
Audiolink Sterling II	350	integrated • 60W • MM/MC • 43,7,270cm • Available in chrome	
Creek 4240SE	350	integrated • 50W • 3L,1T • hdph • 42,6,20cm • Optional MM/MC	
Inca Tech Oberon Pre	350	preamp • MM/MC,6L,2T • 43,8,22cm • CD direct & Two outputs	
Kenwood KA-5050R	350	129 integrated • 95W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,15,40cm • A listenable but neither particularly communicative nor captivating amplifier.	
Luxman A-353R	350	integrated • 60W • MM/MC,4L,2T • hdph • rem • 13,44,37cm • Motorised volume control	
Onkyo A-911	350	integrated • 70W • MM,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 28,12,33cm • Mini component, 4ohm rating	
Pioneer A-602	350	integrated • 80W • MM/MC,3L,3T • hdph • 42,17,44cm	
Rotel RC980BX	350	109 preamp • MM/MC,3L,2T • hdph • 44,7,33cm • Powerful, expansive but lacks poise, control and detail - disappointing (tested with RB980BX).	
Technics SU-C1000	350	preamp • MM/MC,3L,2T • rem • 43,70,31cm • Partner with SE-A1000	
Technics SU-A800 Mk2	350	134 integrated • 55W • MC/MM,3L,2T • rem • 43,14,37cm • Long term listening shows this model is a little bit bluff.	
Quad 306	364	power amp • 50W • 33,7,21cm • Stereo power amp	
Audio Innovations P1	369	preamp • MM • 25,10,30cm • Phono stepup	
Audio Innovations L1	369	145 preamp • 3L,1T • 25,10,30cm	
NVA AP-30CD	370	integrated • 50W • MM/MC,3L,1T	
Onkyo A850	370	integrated • 60W • MM/MC,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 46,15,35cm	
AMC 1030	379	preamp • MM	
Alchemist Kraken/Pre	380	124 power amp • 60W • 32,9,25cm • Quirky Class A design with an equally warm and colourful sound.	REC'D
Alchemist Kraken/mono	380	power amp • 60W • 32,9,25cm • Mono version of Kraken power amp	
Credo PMP003	385	preamp • 22,6,24cm • Phono amp MM/MC, & PSU	
Credo HMP003	388	preamp • hdph • Class A headphone amp	
Alchemist Kraken	395	116 preamp • 5L,1T • 25,9,25cm • Class-A objet d'art that's far too sensitive to RF interference. Can sound cold and fierce as a result.	
Rega Elex	398	116 integrated • 50W • MM,3L,1T • 43,7,25cm • Minimalist amplifier sounds forward, hard and unforgiving.	
Alchemist Kraken/Pwr	399	124 integrated • 60W • 3L,2T • 32,9,25cm • Hardly accurate, but entertaining nevertheless.	REC'D
EAR 834P	399	preamp • MM/MC • 40,40,15cm • Valve phono stepup	
Harman-Kardon HK1400	399	129 integrated • 40W • MM/MC,3L,2T • 45,11,37cm • Relaxed, confident sound is only troubled by the most dense of recordings.	REC'D
Arcam Delta 290P	400	141 power amp • 75W • hdph • 43,9,30cm • Crisp dynamics and detail - tested in Sessions	B'BUY
Inca Tech Oberon Pwr	400	power amp • 70W • hdph • 43,8,22cm • Two inputs	
Luxman A-373	400	integrated • A/V • 80W • MM/MC,4L,2T • hdph • rem • 13,44,37cm • Also has AV inputs	
NVA P-90	400	preamp • 5L	
Onix OA24	400	preamp • MM/MC,2L,2T • 75,23,37cm • Internally switchable MM/MC	
Onix OA401	400	power amp • 50W • 75,23,37cm • With internal supply for OA24	
Sony TAF-A3ES	400	integrated • 70W • MM/MC, 3L,2T • hdph • 43,14,38cm • Toroidal transformer, MOSFET	
Sony TA-AV570B	400	integrated • A/V • 70W • MM,4L,5T • hdph • 43,15,36cm • Dolby Pro Logic	
Technics SU-A800D	400	integrated • 55W • MM/MC,3L,2T • hdph • 43,84,35cm • Two box pre/power combination	
Technics SE-A1000	400	power amp • 70W • hdph • 43,14,35cm • Moving coil meters. Partner with SU-C1000	
Michell Iso	412	preamp • MM or MC • smallcm • Phono stage	
Quad 34	414	44 preamp • MM,2L,T • 33,7,21cm • Good filtering and above average tone controls, but lacks detail and dynamics	
Naim NAP90/3	416	power amp • 30W • 43,56,30cm • Latest style. Suits 92	
Lescon Quattr	420	integrated • 30W • MM/MC + N/A • 44,6,27cm • Pre out/main in	
Audio Innovations T2	425	preamp • MC • 12,16,8cm • MC stepup transformer	
Onix OA21S	430	97 integrated • 50W • MM/MC,3L,1T • 75,23,37cm • CD input sounds dead, but via MM disc, this amplifier has a fresh, vibrant sound.	
Naim NAC92	435	preamp • 5 (L or T) • 43,56,30cm • Latest style. Suits 90/3	
Credo MMP002	439	preamp • Mic amp, phantom power	
NVA AP-30	440	integrated • 80W • 3L,1T	
AMC 2030	449	power amp • 30W	
EAR 834L	449	preamp • 5L,1T • Valve, line-only	
Orelle SA-100	449	140 integrated • 50W • 6L,1T • 44,7,23cm • Tested in Sessions - clean, natural and articulate sound	
Crimson CS610C	450	preamp • MM/MC,3L,1T • 9,10,35cm	
Crimson CS620C	450	power amp • 40W • 9,10,35cm	
Inca Tech Oberon	450	integrated • MM/MC,6L,2T • hdph • 43,8,22cm • Preout, biwire	
Marantz PM-700AV	450	125 integrated • A/V • 45W • MM,5L,2T • hdph • rem • 42,16,34cm • Sounds just great through front and centre channels but surround sound is very weak.	
Rose RV-23	450	77 preamp • MM,2L,T • 33,9,26cm • You can pay more to get a more transparent sound, but it's hard to criticise at the price.	REC'D
Rotel RB980BX	450	109 power amp • 120W • 44,12,33cm • Sound is expansive but lacks poise, control and fine detail - disappointing (tested with RC980BX).	
Technics SU-A900 Mk2	450	138 integrated • 90W • MC/MM,3L,2T • rem • 43,14,37cm • Jekyll and Hyde amplifier with a dismal-sounding phono stage but transparent CD input.	REC'D
Moth 30 Mono/40	459	power amp • 40W • 5,10,35cm • 2x monoblocks	
Audiolink P400	467	preamp • 4L • 43,7,270cm • Available in chrome	
NVA Control Tube CD	470	preamp • 5L,1T	
NVA A70	470	power amp • 70W • Mono	
AMC S84	479	preamp • A/V • 8L • rem • Multiroom, bal/unbal inputs	
Denon AVC-1530	480	integrated • A/V • 70W • MM,2L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,14,34cm	
Onix OA31	480	140 integrated • 60W • MM/MC,4L,1T • hdph • 43,77,33cm	

PRODUCT

£ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

Grant CD10	482	preamp • 4L	
NVA A60	490	power amp • 60W	
Arion Adonis (kit)	495	integrated • 20W • 4L,1T • Pre Class A integrated kit	
DPA DSP200S	495 124	preamp • 5L,1T • 22,30,8cm • Dramatic but detailed and transparent sound belies modest power rating (tested with DPA-200S).	REC'D
Unison Res Simply Phono	495	preamp • MM/MC • For Simply series	
Alchemist Kraken Anniv	499	integrated • 60W • MM,3L,2T • 25,9,25cm • Stainless steel/gold finish	
Alchemist Kraken/Pwr A	499	power amp • 60W • 32,9,25cm • Stainless steel/gold finish	
AMC AV81 H.T. Control	499	preamp • A/V • 8L,2T • As AV81 plus Dolby Pro Logic	
Art Audio Minuet	499	preamp • 5L,1T	
CR Developments Kalypso	499	integrated • 15W • 5L	
Creo IMP702	499	integrated • 70W • 6L • 44,6,31cm	
Harman-Kardon AP2500	499	preamp • MM/MC,6L,2T • 45,11,35cm	
LFD Integrated Zero	499 140	integrated • 50W • 5L,1T • 30,6,37cm • <i>Lively and brisk, but at the same time cold and unsympathetic</i>	
LFD Linestage LSO	499	preamp • 5L,1T • 30,6,37cm • Zero feedback	
LFD Powerstage PAO	499	power amp • 50W • 30,6,37cm • Stereo MOSFET	
Arcam Delta 290	500 116	integrated • 75W • 4L,2T • hdph • rem • 43,9,32cm • Combines dry restraint with detail, dynamics and musical colour.	REC'D
Audiolab 8000A	500 140	integrated • 60W • MM/MC,2L,3T • hdph • 45,8,36cm • The 8000A remains a highly disciplined and mature sounding amp.	REC'D
Mission Cyrus III	500 140	integrated • 50W • MM,5L,1T • hdph • 22,8,36cm • The classic Cyrus II sounds convincing, masterful and musical.	B'BUY
Pioneer VSA-701S	500	integrated • A/V • 55W • MM,2L,2T,5V • hdph • rem • 42,17,42cm • Dolby Pro Logic	
Rotel RC990BX	500	preamp • MM/MC,2L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,7,33cm	
Sentec PP9 RIAA MM	500	preamp • MM • 5,12,23cm • Phono step-up - MM	
Technics SU-A900D	500	integrated • 70W • MM/MC,3L,2T • hdph • 43,84,35cm • Pre/power, Master Series caps	
Thorens TTP2000	500 139	preamp • MM/MC,4L • <i>Minimalist shoebox preamp, rhythmical, warm balance. Tested in Sessions with TTA2000</i>	
Magnum MF125	515	power amp • 140W • Monoblocks	
Audiolab 8000C	520 97	preamp • MM/MC,2L,3T • hdph • 45,8,36cm • <i>Distinctive, stark neutrality that will not appeal to all. Good value engineering.</i>	
NVA AP-50CD	520	integrated • 60W • 5L,1T	
Linn Majik-1 (Line)	524	integrated • 33W • 4L,2T • hdph • 32,8,33cm • <i>Works as preamp or integrated; multiroom capability</i>	
Rose RV-23S	525	preamp • MM/MC,2L,2T • 33,9,26cm • Tube, separate PSU	
AMC CVT3030	529 116	integrated • 30W • 6L,1T • hdph • <i>Attempt to mix transistors with valves only shines with simple musical styles.</i>	
Myrrad M1120	530	integrated • 60W • 4L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,10,31cm • Optional MM or MC modules	
Electrocompaniet ECP-1	535	preamp • MM/MC • 24,7,16cm • Adjusts to match cartridge	
Creo IMP703	538	integrated • 70W • MM/MC, 6L • rem • 44,6,31cm • As above, with remote	
Rose Scion	545	integrated • 50W • MM/MC,3L,2T • 42,7,30cm • 2-box, purist design	
Linn LK100	549	power amp • 50W • 32,8,33cm • Stereo	
Moth 30 Stereo/60	549 109	power amp • 60W • 5,15,35cm • <i>Tested with 30 Passive - see comments earlier on page 89</i>	
Naim NAIT	549	integrated • 30W • 3L,1T • 43,56,30cm	
Stemfoort Audio SF60	549	integrated • 60W • 4L,1T • 43,8,35cm • Passive line amplifier	
KAL Magician	550	preamp • 3L,1T • hdph • Tube	
Rose RP-190 (Dual Mode)	550	power amp • 75W • 33,9,30cm • Low feedback monoblock mode	
Thorens TTA2000	550 139	power amp • 35W • Tested with TTP2000 (see above) in Sessions	
Heybrook Integra	555	integrated • 75W • MM/MC • hdph • 77,44,30cm	
Adyton PSU	569	PSU for Chorus, Temper, Modus	
Tube Tech Seer Line	575	preamp • 5L,1T • 35,8,25cm • Entry level, 10 yr guarantee	
Harman-Kardon PA2200	579	power amp • 70W • 45,14,38cm	
Naim NAC92R	579	preamp • 5(L or T) • rem • 43,56,30cm	
Audiolink PR401	583	power amp • 100W • 43,10,37cm • Available in chrome	
NVA AP-50	590	integrated • 60W • MM/MC,5L,1T	
Linn Majik-1 (Phono)	593 129	integrated • 33W • MM,MC,3L,2T • hdph • 32,8,33cm • <i>The cornerstone of Linn's modular hi-fi system is innovative, but sounds vague and confused.</i>	
DPA Renaissance	595 140	integrated • 40W • MM,4L,1T • hdph • 40,28,8cm • <i>DPA's first integrated amp is typically innovative, but a little too 'crisp 'n dry' for our tastes.</i>	
Magnum MF300	595	power amp • 180W • Monoblocks	
Monrio ADN	595	preamp • MM/MC • 14,8,36cm • Phono preamp, ext PSU	
AVI S2000MA	599	power amp • 90W	
Fullers Pre 1	599	preamp • MM/5L,2T • 48,9,30cm • Optional MC stage	
Magnum Class A	599 116	integrated • 60W • MM/MC,3L,1T • <i>Lashings of rich and compelling music, but the Class A trades lushness for accuracy.</i>	REC'D
Musical Fidelity E200	599 145	preamp • 5L,2T • hdph • rem • 44,12,35cm • <i>Weighty, luxuriant but hardly scintillating. Tested with MF E300</i>	
Musical Fidelity E100	599 140	integrated • 70W • MM,4L,1T • hdph • rem • 44,12,35cm • <i>Beautifully crafted with a vibrantly colourful, almost dramatic sound.</i>	REC'D
Art Audio Headline	600	preamp • hdph • Single ended triode Class A	
Kenwood KA-V7700	600	integrated • A/V • MM,11L,1T • hdph • rem • 44,13,30cm • Pro Logic, learning remote	
Nakamichi IA2	600	integrated • 50W • MM/MC,3L,2T • hdph • rem • 43,12,36cm • 'Harmonic Time Alignment'	
Pioneer VSA-D802S	600 125	integrated • A/V • 55W • MM,2L,2T,5V • hdph • rem • 42,17,42cm • <i>The grey sound lacks attack and confidence, undermining tension</i>	
Sentec PP9 RIAA MC	600	preamp • MC • 5,12,23cm • Phono step-up - MC	
Shearne Phase 3	619	power amp • 50W • Can biamp with Phase 2	
NVA Power Tube	620	power amp • 60W	
NVA The Tube	620	integrated • 60W • 5L,1T	
Meridian 501	625 145	preamp • MM,4L,T • hdph • 33,9,34cm • <i>Tight, positive sound, but dispassionate; intense at high levels. Tested with 555</i>	
Meridian 555	625 145	power amp • 60W • 33,9,32cm • <i>Tested with the 01 - see comments above</i>	
Bryston 4	641	preamp • A/V • 4L,1T • 48,5,25cm	
Fullers Pre 1+	649	preamp • 6L,2T • 48,9,30cm • No phono option - hard wired	
Heybrook SIG CA	649	preamp • MM/MC,5L,2T	
Naim Hi-Cap	649	21,76,30cm • Power supply	
Shearne Phase 2	649	integrated • 50W • 5L • MM/MC phono i/p £87 extra	
Tube Tech Seer Phono	649	preamp • MM,4L,1T • 35,8,25cm • Tube phono stage	
Audiolab 8000S	650	integrated • 60W • 3L,3T • hdph • rem • 45,8,36cm • Mode switch, biwire terminals	
Quad 77	650 139	integrated • 50W • 2L,T • 33,6,30cm • <i>Stylish remote driven amp, bright and lively. Tested in Sessions</i>	
Triangle TE60SE	650	integrated • 70W • MM/MC,3L,1T • hdph	
Lecson Quattra Plus	655	integrated • 50W • MM/MC + N/A • 44,6,27cm • Separate PSU	
Naim NAC72	670	preamp • 2MM/MC, L,2T • 21,76,30cm • Upgradable with PSU, MC I/P	
NVA Control Tube	670	preamp • MM/MC,4L,1T	
Bryston BP1	673	preamp • A/V • MM or MC • 48,5,25cm • <i>Phonostepup, balanced and unbalanced operation</i>	
LFD Int. Zero (Ph)	679	integrated • 50W • MM/MC,5L,1T • 30,6,37cm • Phono version of Int. Zero	
Lynwood0 pal	685	integrated • 80W • 7L,1T	
Meridian 562	685	preamp • MM,8L,T,6D • 33,9,34cm • Digital main out. MC option	
Meridian 551	695	integrated • 55W • MM,4L,T • hdph • rem • 33,9,34cm • MC option	
Monrio MJ	695	integrated • 50W • 5L,1T	
Heybrook SIG MNEK	698	power amp • 140W • Mono, uses ext SIG/DCPS PSU	
Electrocompn't ECP-1 SF	699	preamp • MM/MC • 24,7,16cm • Blue stone facia	
Exposure XX Super	699	integrated • 55W • 4L,2T • 43,85,35cm • Upgraded model	
Gamma Acoustics Gemini	699 148	integrated • 12W • 3L • 33,23,8cm • <i>Genuine single-ended triode design, but low power, mundane sound and poor build</i>	
Marantz AV-500	699	preamp • A/V • MM,7L,2T • rem • 42,10,34cm • Dolby Pro Logic	
Musical Fidelity E300	699 145	power amp • 100W • 44,12,35cm • <i>Tested with E200 - see comments above</i>	
Naim NAP140	699	power amp • 45W • 21,76,30cm	
Onix OA601	699	power amp • 70W • 75,46,36cm • Regulated PSU	
Thule PR200	699	preamp • 5L,2T • hdph • rem • Balanced in and outputs	
Audiolab 8000P	700	power amp • 100W • 45,8,36cm • Bi-wire speaker terminals	
Aura CA200	700	preamp • MM,7L,2T • hdph • rem • 43,6,34cm • Chrome finish, add £50	

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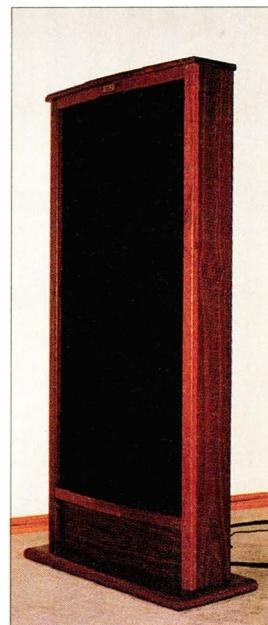
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PRODUCT	£	ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
Micromega Tempo 1	700	integrated • 50W • 6L,1T • hdph • 43,9,28cm • Optional MM/MC	
Teac A-BX72	700	integrated • 60W • MM,3L,2T • rem • 44,10,38cm	
Technics SU-C2000	700	preamp • rem • 45,13,35cm • Rotary resistor attenuator	
Woodside SC27 Line	705	preamp • 2L,1T	
Michell Argo	715	preamp • 3L,1T • 33,7,19cm • 2 pairs of outputs	
Quad 606	718	124 power amp • 140W • 33,14,24cm • <i>Amplifier with classic lineage but compromised by an equally dated, soft and undynamic sound (tested with 66).</i>	
Naim NAIT R	724	integrated • 30W • 3L,1T • 43,56,30cm	
Sonic Link DM30	725	integrated • 25W • MM/MC,3L,1T • 23,8,43cm	
NVA A80	730	power amp • 70W • Mono	
Rega Elicit	730	integrated • 70W • MM,MC,3L,1T • 43,7,25cm • Full dual mono	
Art Audio VPL	741	preamp • 6L,2T	
Audio Innovations L2	749	preamp • 4L,1T • 50,12,30cm	
Audio Innovations P2MM	749	preamp • MM • 50,12,30cm • Phono stage	
Arcam Delta 110	750	preamp • MM/MC,2L,2T • hdph • rem • 43,7,30cm • On-board DAC, 2 inputs	
Art Audio Conductor Phono	750	preamp • MM/MC • Separate PSU, upgradable	
Audiolab 8000M	750	145 power amp • 125W • 45,8,36cm • <i>Strong, controlled sound; confident bass, but colourless. Tested with 8000Q</i>	
Bryston 2B-LP	750	power amp • A/V • 75W • 48,5,25cm • Bridgable	
DPA 200S	750	124 power amp • 60W • 22,30,8cm • <i>Dramatic but crisp, open sound belies power rating (tested with DSP-200S).</i>	REC'D
KAL Harlequin	750	preamp • MM/MC,2L,1T • hdph • Tube	
Rotel RB990BX	750	power amp • 200W • 44,12,38cm	
ECA Vista S	760	145 preamp • 4L,1T • 39,10,39cm • <i>Wind up the volume and blow a breath of fresh music into your system (tested with Lectern).</i>	B'BUY
Grant G100P	764	preamp • MM,2L,1T	
Meridian 501V	785	preamp • A/V • MM,4L,T • hdph • 33,9,34cm • As 501, plus video switching	
Michi RHC-10	795	preamp • 5L • 47,8,34cm • Passive	
Monrio Primus II	795	preamp • 6L,1T • 43,8,36cm • Line only preamp	
AVI S2000M	799	integrated • 100W • 4L, 1T • rem • 31,25,9cm • Includes S2000RC handset	
AVI S2000MP	799	preamp • 5L,1T • 31,25,9cm • includes S2000RC handset	
Credo CMP004	799	preamp • 6L • 44,6,31cm • 3 outputs	
Exposure XiX	799	preamp • 5L • 43,85,35cm • Line only version of XVII	
Exposure XV Super	799	integrated • 55W • MM,MC,3L,2T • 43,85,35cm	
LFD Int. Zero LE	799	integrated • 60W • 5L,1T • 43,7,33cm	
PS Audio 6.1	799	preamp • 4L,1T • 43,6,19cm • Outboard PSU	
Chimera X-150C	800	preamp • 4L,1T • Balanced CD in, balanced out	
Chimera X-80	800	138 integrated • 80W • 4L,1T • <i>Stinking looks, powerful, but ultimately lacking in dynamics. Tested in Sessions</i>	
Crimson CS630C	800	power amp • 90W • 9,10,35cm	
Sentec SC9	800	preamp • 4L,2T • hdph • 34,7,15cm	
Sherwood AM/AVP8500	800	A/V • 230W • hdph • rem • A/V Pre/power amp	
XTC PRE-1	800	preamp • 5L,1T • hdph • rem • Single ended MOSFET preamp	
Bryston BP4	802	preamp • A/V • 4L,1T • 48,5,25cm • Balanced out	
Heybrook SIG CAP	829	preamp • 6L,2T • Line only	
Exposure XVII	849	142 preamp • MM,MC,3L,2T • 43,85,35cm • <i>Superbly rhythmic; maybe a tad overpowering in the midband. Tested in Sessions with XVIII Super</i>	
Exposure XVIII Super	849	142 power amp • 70W • 43,85,35cm • Upgraded model	
Onix OA801	849	power amp • 190W • 75,46,36cm • 2x monoblocks, massive PSU	
Stemfoot Audio SF100	849	integrated • 100W • 4L,1T • 43,8,40cm • Passive line amplifier	
Audiolab 8000PPA	850	preamp • MM/MC • 45,8,36cm • Phono preamplifier	
Michell Iso HR	879	preamp • MM or MC • smallcm • Phono stage	
Moth 30 Mono/100	879	power amp • 100W • 5,15,35cm • 2x mono, separate PSU	
Shearne Phase 5 Mono	879	power amp • 100W • Monoblocks - bal/unbalanced	
ECA Vista HD	880	preamp • 4L,1T • 39,10,39cm • High definition version	
ECA Lectern S	880	145 power amp • 50W • 39,10,30cm • <i>Tested with £760 Vista S - see above for comments.</i>	B'BUY
ECA Prisma	880	preamp • MM,MC • 39,10,23cm • Phono stepup	
Woodside SC27 MM	881	preamp • MM,2L,1T	
Bryston BPS	889	preamp • A/V • MM/MC,3L,1T • 48,5,25cm • MM or MC, balanced out	
Dawn Audio Cmd 2 by 200	890	power amp • 200W • 38,11,26cm • Single monoblock	
Meridian 562V	895	140 preamp • A/V • MM, 8L,T,6D • 33,9,34cm • As 562, plus video switching	REC'D
Monrio MC-200S	895	integrated • 60W • 6L,1T • 43,10,37cm • Simplified version of MC-205	
Monrio MC-25	895	power amp • 80W • 43,10,36cm • Dual mono construction	
Shearne Phase 6 Pre	895	preamp • MM,6L • Bal/unbal, can use battery	
Quad 66	897	124 preamp • MM,4L,2T • rem • 33,8,26cm • <i>Amplifier with classic lineage but compromised by an equally dated, soft and undynamic sound (tested with 606).</i>	
Alchemist Forseti	899	integrated • 100W • 4L,2T • 47,10,39cm	
Harman-Kardon PA2400	899	power amp • 120W • 45,16,41cm	
PS Audio 6.2	899	preamp • MM/MC,3L,2T • 43,6,19cm • Outboard PSU	
PS Audio Phono Link	899	preamp • MM/MC • 43,6,19cm • Outboard PSU	
Woodside ISA230 Disc	899	116 integrated • 30W • MM,2L,1T • <i>Smooth and inoffensive valve amplifier, though it lacks the sparkle and euphony required for a truly entertaining sound.</i>	
Woodside ISA230 Line	899	integrated • 30W • 4L,2T	
Concordant Exhilarant	900	preamp • 5L • 6 tube pre, wood case option	
Marantz SC-22	900	preamp • 4L,1T • 25,9,22cm • Audiophile micro component	
Micromega Tempo 2	900	integrated • 75W • 6L,1T • hdph • 43,9,28cm • Optional MM/MC	
Minstrel Ultra Linear	900	integrated • 26W • 3L,1T • 38,310,16cm • Low feedback hybrid	
Heybrook SIG/SPX	922	power amp • 140W • Stereo power amp	
Audio Innovations P2MC	949	preamp • MM/MC • 50,12,30cm • Phono stage	
LFD MC1 Phonostage	949	preamp • MC • 30,7,36cm • Discrete circuit	
Thule IA100	949	integrated • 100W • 5L,2T • rem • Fully balanced operation	
Woodside ISA 240	949	power amp • 40W	
DNM 3 Start	950	preamp • MM/MC,2L,1T • 27,13,16cm • Solid core, slit foil caps	
Dawn Audio Prelude +50	951	preamp • MM/MC,2L,2T • 38,9,26cm • Pre out line driver	
Art Audio VP1	952	preamp • MM,5L,2T	
Lynwood Ruby	985	power amp • 120W	
Naim NAPI80	987	power amp • 60W • 43,76,30cm	
Electrocompaniet EC1-2	990	integrated • 50W • 3L,1T • 46,11,38cm	
Conrad-Johnson PV10AL	995	preamp • 5L • Line version of PV-10A	
Counterpoint Solid 1EM	995	power amp • 100W • 25,6,27cm • Mono	
Michi RHB-05	995	power amp • 100W • 47,8,36cm	
Michi RHQ-10	995	preamp • MM,MC • 47,8,34cm • Phono equaliser	
Michi RHA-10	995	preamp • 5L • rem • 47,8,34cm • Active	
Roksan ROK-L2.5	995	preamp • 4L,1T • 43,8,33cm • Revised	
CR Developments Romulus	998	integrated • 35W • 5L	
Linn Kairn Pro	998	preamp • 4L, 2T • 32,8,33cm • Multi-room compatible	
Arcam Keta One	999	integrated • A/V • 50W • MM,5L,2T • hdph • 43,13,32cm • Video switching, 5ch Dolby	
Audio Innovations Ser 800	999	148 power amp • 25W • 41,15,34cm	
AVI S2000MP + P	999	preamp • MM,4L,1T • rem • 31,25,9cm • includes S2000RC handset	
Copland CSA-14	999	148 integrated • 60W • MM,3L,1T • 43,13,38cm • <i>Great sound and looks, but watch out for high capacitance cables</i>	REC'D
Gamma Acoustics Era Std	999	preamp • MM,3L,1T • 44,17,30cm • Triode, fully regulated	
LFD LSI Linestage	999	preamp • 4L,1T • 48,7,33cm • Zero feedback	
LFD PA1 Powerstage	999	power amp • 60W • 48,7,33cm • MOSFETs, custom parts	

AMPLIFIERS £999 - £1,500: THE DIRECTORY

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE	SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
LFD PPS	999		preamp • 2L,1T • 13,6,27cm • Switched attenuator, passive	
Musical Fidelity F22	999		preamp • 5L,1T • rem • 49,12,33cm • Optional phono/digital boards	
NAD Monitor 208	999	124	power amp • 250W • <i>Truly a beefy amplifier</i>	
Teac A-BX10	999		integrated • 100W • MM/MC,3L,2T • 44,10,38cm • Balanced input	
Woodside SC27 MC	999		preamp • MC,2L,1T	
YBA Integre Line	999		integrated • 45W • 4L,1T • 43,9,33cm	
Audiolab 8000Q	1,000	145	preamp • 3L,3T • hdph • rem • 45,8,36cm • <i>Tested with £750 8000M monoblocks - see comments</i>	
Lumley Reference LV1	1,000		preamp • 6L,1T • 29,44,6cm • Active valve circuit	
Marantz PH-22	1,000		preamp • MC,MM • 25,9,22cm • Phono stepup	
NVA TSS (Pre)	1,000		preamp • 5L,1T	
Sentec PA9	1,000		power amp • 60W • 20,8,30cm • Monoblocks	
Alchemist Freya	1,020		preamp • 6L,1T • 31,7,30cm	
Alchemist Odin	1,020		power amp • 80W • 31,14,30cm • Stereo	
Electrocompanion EC1-2SF1	1,095		integrated • 50W • 3L,1T • 46,38,11cm • As EC1-2 + Blue Stone facia	
Sonic Frontiers SFP-1	1,095		preamp • MM/MC • 45,12,28cm • Tube/J-FET phono stage	
Audio InnovaClassic 25	1,099		integrated • 25W • 4L,1T • 46,15,34cm • Enclosed valves	
AVI S2000MM	1,099		power amp • 150W • 2x monoblocks	
LFD Integrated 1	1,099		integrated • 65W • MM/MC,4L,1T • 48,7,37cm • <i>A more powerful Integrated 1</i>	
Musical Fidelity FX	1,099		power amp • 90W • 49,12,38cm • Bal/unbalanced in	
Tube Tech Unisis Pwr Amp	1,099		power amp • 30W • 35,17,27cm • Stereo power amp	
Art Audio Conductor	1,100		preamp • 6L,2T • hdph • Upgradable	
Technics SE-A2000	1,100		power amp • 100W • rem • 45,19,44cm • Meters, R-Core, MOS AA	
Credo CMP005	1,119		preamp • 6L • rem • Remote controlled preamp	
Bryston BP20	1,126		preamp • A/V • 8L,1T • 48,5,25cm • Balanced in/out	
Grant G50A	1,128		power amp • 60W • Monoblocks	
Unison Res Simply Two	1,148	148	integrated • 12W • 4L,1T • 25,16,40cm • <i>Looks fantastic, but sound is confused</i>	
Arion Eros Line Mk II	1,150		preamp • 4L,1T • Dual mono construction	
Michell Alecto Stereo	1,150		power amp • 50W • 32,20,36cm	
Bryston 3B-NRB	1,159		power amp • A/V • 150W • 48,13,23cm • <i>Balanced and unbalanced operation</i>	
Counterpoint SA-1000E	1,195		preamp • MM/MC,3L,1T • 49,12,32cm	
Counterpoint Solid 8E	1,195		preamp • 3L,1T • 49,6,27cm	
Audio Innovations S500	1,199		integrated • 25W • MM,3L,2T • 41,15,34cm	
Audio Innovations S700	1,199	116	integrated • 25W • 4L,1T • 41,15,34cm • <i>Turns the roughest of digital sounds into understated and graceful music.</i>	REC'D
Tube Tech Prophet	1,199		preamp • 4L,1T • 35,8,25cm • Two box pre, separate PSU	
YBA 3 Power	1,199	72	power amp • 45W • 43,9,33cm • <i>Tested with £1250 3 Pre - see below for comments.</i>	
YBA Integre	1,199	121	integrated • 45W • MM,4L,1T • 43,9,33cm • <i>Audiophile spec French integrated with good resolution and nice phono stage.</i>	
Aura PA200	1,200		power amp • 110W • 43,10,34cm • Balanced & unbalanced in	
Chimera X-150P	1,200		power amp • 150W • MOSFET, balance, bridgable	
Chimera X-100	1,200		integrated • 100W • 4L,1T • Outboard PSU, s/steel & chrome	
Fullers A10	1,200		power amp • 10W • 48,13,30cm • Single ended Class A	
Woodside MA50 Class A	1,224		power amp • 50W • 1 channel monoblock	
Conrad-Johnson PV-10A	1,250	139	preamp • MC,4L • <i>Beautiful imaging, superb detail, plenty of gain on the phono input; classy build too. Tested in Statements.</i>	
Copland CTA-301	1,250		preamp • MM,3L,1T • 43,13,38cm • Tube, soft sta t	
Lumley Reference ST40	1,250		power amp • 40W • 30,40,17 • Pentode	
Micromega Amp	1,250		power amp • 100W • 43,9,28cm	
Micromega Tempo P	1,250		preamp • 7L,1T • hdph • 43,9,28cm • Optional MM/MC	
YBA 3 Pre	1,250	72	preamp • MM,3L,1T • 43,9,33cm • <i>See-through, ethereal stereo images, but more convincing towards centre of soundstage (tested with £1199 3 Pwr).</i>	
McIntosh MC7100	1,259		power amp • 100W • 45,9,54cm • System controller	
Bryston THX3B	1,262		power amp • A/V • 150W • 48,13,23cm • 2 channels, THX approved	
Adyton CHORUS	1,295		preamp • MC • 44,3,25cm • RIAA phono stage	
Magnum MA500	1,295		power amp • 280W • Monoblocks	
Arion EOS Export Mk II	1,299		power amp • 18W • With volume control	
NVA TIS	1,300		integrated • 60W • 5L,1T	
Electrocompn't EC-4 Line	1,315		preamp • 5L,2T • 48,9,23cm • inc XLR balanced in/out	
Classe Audio Audio 3D	1,320		preamp • MM/MC,4L,1T • 48,7,28cm	
Woodside STA35	1,323	100	power amp • 35W • <i>Synergistic with SC26, with a cool, controlled sound, good focus and transparency. More poise than grunt (tested with SC26).</i>	
Michell Argo HR	1,339		preamp • 3L,1T • 36,8,22cm • 2 pairs outputs	
Arion Eros Phono Mk II	1,350		preamp • 3L,1T • Dual mono construction	
Art Audio Quintet	1,393	109	power amp • 15W • <i>Switchable triode, ultralinear output stage. In triode mode, these are 15 of the sweetest Watts around. Surprisingly gutsy.</i>	REC'D
Sonic Frontiers SFL-1	1,395		preamp • 4L,2T • 45,12,28cm • Tube/FET hybrid line stage	
Linn Kairn Preamp	1,398		preamp • MM, MC 3L,2T • 32,8,32cm • Multi-room compatible	
Arion Triton Mk II	1,399		power amp • 10W • Triode, volume control	
Arion Elektra Export Mk	1,399		integrated • 18W • 4L,1T • Class A valve amp	
Classe Audio Audio 70	1,399		power amp • 75W • 48,12,30cm • Single ended, balanced	
Musical Fidelity A1000	1,399		integrated • 50W • MM/MC,3L,1T • 49,13,36cm • Separate PSU	
Shearne Phase 1 Pre Ref	1,399		preamp • MM/MC,5L,2T • <i>Owners of old non-ref model can have their amps upgraded</i>	
Tube Tech Unisis S'Line	1,399		integrated • 30W • 4L,1T • 35,17,27cm • Line level version of Unisis	
Tube Tech Unisis	1,399		integrated • 30W • MM,3L,1T • 35,17,27cm • One tube phono stage	
Exposure XIV	1,400		preamp • MM,MC,3L,2T • 48,8,30cm • Needs 9 power supply	
Copland CTA-501	1,420		power amp • 30W • 2L • 43,18,38cm • Tube, has vol control	
Woodside SC25 Line	1,420		preamp • 2L,2T	
Papworth TVA50	1,425		power amp • 50W • 43,19,33cm • Tube stereo	
Arion Talos Line Mk II	1,450		integrated • 10W • 4L,1T • Triode Class A valve amp	
Audio InnovaS800 Anniv	1,475		power amp • 25W • 43,16,35cm • Limited edition, silver pcb	
McIntosh C712	1,479		preamp • 6L, 2T • hdph • rem • 45,9,45cm • System controller	
ECA Lectern HD	1,480		power amp • 50W • 39,10,23cm • High definition version	
Electrocompanion EC-3MM1	1,485		preamp • MM,4L,2T • 48,9,23cm • Balanced XLR in/out	
Copland CTA-401	1,495		integrated • 30W • MM,3L,1T • 43,18,38cm • Tube push/pull ultra-linear	
Counterpoint SA100E	1,495		power amp • 100W • Hybrid	
Counterpoint Solid 1E	1,495		power amp • 100W • Mono	
Dynavector P100	1,495		preamp • MM,MC • 44,6,22cm • Phono stepup	
Roksan ROK-S1.5	1,495		power amp • 70W	
Sonic Frontiers SFP-1 Sig	1,495		preamp • MM/MC • 45,12,28cm • Tube/J-FET phono stepup	
Unison Res Simply Four P	1,495		integrated • 24W • 4L,1T • 35,16,40cm • Single ended Pentode	
Art Audio Integra	1,499		integrated • 30W • 5L,2T • Class A Pentode	
LFD Phonostage MC2	1,499		preamp • MC • 30,7,36cm • Hand tuned MC1	
Minstrel Partridge	1,499		integrated • 26W • 3L,1T • 38,31,16cm • Zero feedback hybrid	
PS Audio 100 Delta	1,499		power amp • 120W • 42,15,35cm	
Audio Note Oto SE	1,500	126	integrated • 24W • MM/MC,4L,1T • <i>Transparent, dynamic, clear and subtle, but limited power.</i>	REC'D
DNM 3A Start	1,500		preamp • MM/MC,2L,1T • 27,13,16cm	
Lumley Reference PV1	1,500		preamp • MM,5L,1T • Phono version of LV1	
Monrio MC-205	1,500		integrated • 80W • 6L,1T • 43,10,36cm • Inc pre-out sockets	
Tesseract TAADA	1,500		preamp • MM/MC	
Tesseract TALA	1,500		preamp • 5L,1T	
Thorens TRP3000	1,500		preamp • MM/MC • Phono stepup, valve	

PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

Alchemist Genesis	1,525	power amp • 110W • 25,14,30cm • Pair monoblocks	
Grant G100AMS	1,528	power amp • 100W	
Naim NAP135	1,529	power amp • 70W • 43,76,30cm	
Naim NAP250	1,529	power amp • 70W • 43,76,30cm	
Unison Res Simply Four T	1,545	integrated • 11W • 4L,1T • 35,16,40cm • Single ended triode Class A	
Triangle Nemo Allion 02	1,550	integrated • 80W • 5L,2T	
Electrocmpt'n't EC-4 SF L	1,565	preamp • 5L,2T • 48,9,23cm • XLR in/out, blue stone facia	
EAR 859	1,595	integrated • 13W • 6L • 40,40,15cm • Single ended valve	
EAR 834	1,599	integrated • 50W • 6L • 40,40,15cm • Valve	
Exposure XVIII (pr)	1,599	power amp • 65W • 43,85,35cm • Upgraded 2x monoblocks	
LFD Linestage LS2	1,599	preamp • 4L,1T • 48,7,37cm • Hand tuned LS1	
LFD Powerstage PA2	1,599	power amp • 75W • 48,7,33cm • Hand tuned PA1	
Marantz MA-22	1,600	power amp • 50W • 23,9,22cm • Audiophile monoblock x2	
Arion Talos Phono Mk II	1,650	integrated • 10W • MM,3L,1T • Triode Class A phono amp	
Michi RHB-10	1,650	power amp • 200W • 47,19,37cm	
Art Audio Concerto	1,669	power amp • 50W • 2x mono triode/pentode	
Audio Research PH-1	1,690	preamp • MM/MC • 48,14,26cm • Phono preamp	
Audio Research LS-3	1,695	preamp • 5L,1T • 48,14,26cm • 1 direct input	
Counterpoint SA-2000E	1,695	preamp • 4L,2T • 49,12,33cm	
Monrio Cento HP	1,695	power amp • 135W • 43,10,36cm • Dual mono, high current	
Sonic Frontiers SFS-40	1,695	power amp • 40W • 40,18,32cm • Stereo tube power amp	
Classe Audio Audio 4L	1,697	preamp • 5L,1T • 48,9,34cm • Remote option	
Creo PMP154	1,699	power amp • 150W • 44,16,31cm	
Creo PMP303	1,699	power amp • 30W • Class A power amp	
YBA 2 Pre	1,699	56 preamp • MM,3L,1T • 43,9,33cm • <i>Superbly finished, good space and transparency. Needs transformer for MC cartridges (tested with £2150 2 Pwr).</i> REC'D	
Classe Audio Audio 4	1,735	preamp • MM/MC,4L,1T • 48,9,34cm • Remote option	
Audio Innovs First Audio	1,749	power amp • 7.5W • 41,15,34cm	
ATC SCA2	1,750	preamp • 6L,2T • rem • 44,36,10cm • Balanced & unbalanced in/out	
Copland CTA-504	1,750	power amp • 50W • 43,18,38cm • Switchable tetrode/triode	
DNM PA1	1,750	power amp • 45W • 27,13,18cm • Triwire output	
LFD Linestage LS2P	1,750	preamp • MM/MC,4L,1T • 48,7,37cm • As LS2 with phono stage	
Unison Res Mystery One	1,750	preamp • 4L,1T • For Smart 845	
Bryston 4B-NRB	1,756	power amp • A/V • 300W • 48,13,39cm • Bridgable, bal & unbalanced	
Adyton TEMPER	1,795	preamp • MC,2L • 44,3,25cm • Phono & line source preamp	
Sonic Frontiers SFC-1	1,795	126 integrated • 50W • 4L,2T • 45,19,43cm • <i>Smooth, sophisticated Canadian valve amp with a decent direct input and more features than average.</i>	
Sonic Frontiers SFL-1 Sig	1,795	preamp • 4L,2T • 45,12,28cm • Tube/FET hybrid line stage	
Thule PA200	1,798	power amp • 200W • High power balanced design	
Audio Innovs Ser 1000	1,799	power amp • 50W • 41,15,34cm • Monoblocks	
Tesseract TAHA	1,800	preamp • MC, • hdph	
Electrocompaniet EC-3MC	1,810	preamp • MC,4L,2T • 48,9,23cm • XLR in/out, adj MC input	
Bryston 7B-NRB	1,815	power amp • A/V • 500W • 48,13,39cm • Single monoblock	
Arion Tycho Pwr Mk II	1,850	power amp • 50W • Pure Class A	
Bryston THX4B	1,858	power amp • A/V • 300W • 48,13,39cm • 2 channels, THX approved	
Linn Klout	1,895	power amp • 80W • 32,8,33cm • Stereo, tri-wire connectors	
Musical Fidelity F15	1,899	power amp • 100W • 49,19,38cm • Bal/unbalanced in/hybrid	
Naim Super-Cap	1,909	43,76,30cm • Power supply	
Bryston THX7B	1,917	power amp • A/V • 500W • 48,13,39cm • 1 channel, THX approved	
Woodside SC26 Phono	1,931	100 preamp • MM/MC,3L,2T • <i>Synergistic with STA35, with a cool, controlled sound, good focus and transparency (tested with STA35).</i>	
Concordant Exquisite	1,950	preamp • 5L • 10 tubes, 2 line out, ext PSU	
Lumley Reference ST70	1,950	power amp • 70W • 36,46,18cm • Switchable triode/pentode	
Michell Alecto Mono	1,989	power amp • 100W • 32,20,36cm	
Counterpoint NPS-100E	1,995	power amp • 100W	
Dynavector L100	1,995	preamp • 3L,2T • 44,6,24cm • Line preamp	
Electrocmpt'n't EC-3MM SF	1,995	preamp • MM,4L,2T • 48,9,23cm • XLR in/out, blue stone facia	
Unison Res Phono One	1,935	preamp • MM,MC • For Mystery/Perf/Absolute	
Naim NAC82	1,997	preamp • 6 (L or T) • rem • 43,76,30cm	
Arion Tycho Int Mk II	1,999	integrated • 50W • 4L,1T • Pure Class A integrated	
LFD Linestage LSB	1,999	preamp • 4L,1T • 48,7,37cm • Balanced LS2	
LFD Powerstage PA2M	1,999	power amp • 90W • 30,7,37cm • Mono PA2	
Art Audio Conductor Export	2,000	preamp • 6L,2T • hdph • rem • Separate PSU, mono	
Thorens TRA3000	2,000	power amp • 90W • Valve	
XTC POW-1	2,000	power amp • A/V • 175W • 4 channel multi-purpose amp	
Electrocmpt'n't AW100DMB	2,030	power amp • 100W • 48,13,36cm • High current (80A)	
Electrocmpt'n't EC-3MC SF	2,075	preamp • MC,4L,2T • 48,9,23cm • XLR in/out, blue stone facia	
Adyton MODUS	2,095	preamp • 4L,2T • 44,5,25cm • Line control amp	
McIntosh C38	2,095	preamp • MM,5L,3T • hdph • rem • Multi-room, balanced out	
McIntosh C22	2,099	preamp • 8L • hdph • rem • Retro style valve pre	
Electrocompaniet EC1-1	2,100	integrated • 100W • 5L,2T • 45,13,36cm • High current (80A)	
YBA 2 Power	2,150	56 power amp • 70W • 43,9,33cm • <i>Superbly finished, but with slightly softened bass (tested with £1699 2 Pre).</i> REC'D	
Electrocmpt'n't AW100DMB	2,175	power amp • 100W • 48,13,36cm • High current, blue stone facia	
Creo PMP102	2,181	power amp • 100W • 44,21,31cm • Class A power amp	
Bryston 8B-NRB	2,195	power amp • A/V • 150W • 48,13,39cm • 4 channels, bridgeable	
Counterpoint SA-3000E	2,195	preamp • MM/MC,4L,2T • 49,12,33cm • Separate PSU	
Exposure IV	2,199	power amp • 80W • 48,13,35cm • Fully regulated	
Shearpe Phase 1 Pwr Ref	2,199	power amp • 100W • <i>Owners of old non-ref model can have their amps upgraded</i>	
McIntosh MC7108	2,249	power amp • A/V • 40W • 45,16,51cm • 8 channel (5-way) 8x45 watts	
Audio Research LS-3b	2,250	preamp • 5L,1T • 48,14,26cm • 1 direct input	
Conrad-Johnson PV-12L	2,250	preamp • 5L • Line version of PV-12	
Roksan ROK-L1.5	2,250	preamp • 4L,1T • 43,8,33cm	
PS Audio 200 Delta	2,279	power amp • 200W • 42,15,45cm	
McIntosh MC7150	2,295	power amp • 150W	
Classe Audio Audio 10	2,299	power amp • 125W • 48,17,42cm • Single ended, bal bridgable	
Matisse Fantasy	2,300	preamp • A/V • 6L,2T • Line stage	
NVA TCS	2,300	integrated • 70W • 5L,1T	
Electrocmpt'n't EC1-1 SF	2,350	integrated • 100W • 5L,2T • 45,13,36cm • High current, blue stone facia	
Adyton OPERA	2,395	integrated • 50W • MM/MC,3L,2T • 21,33,13cm • Optional phono	
Classe Audio Audio 5L II	2,395	preamp • 5L,1T • 48,15,43cm • Remote option	
Bryston THX8B	2,400	power amp • A/V • 150W • 48,13,39cm • 4 channels, THX approved	
Marantz MA-24	2,400	power amp • 30W • 21,17,36cm • Class-A monoblock x2	
Audio Research VT60	2,430	power amp • 35W • Single ende tube mono	
PS Audio 200b Delta	2,490	power amp • 200W • 42,15,45cm	
Counterpoint Solid 2E	2,495	power amp • 200W • 49,17,49cm • Hybrid	
Art Audio Tempo	2,499	power amp • 30W • 2x mono Class A triode	
Audio Innovs Ser 1000SE	2,499	power amp • 50W • 41,15,34cm • Silver circuit board	
Gamma Acoustics Rhythm2,499		integrated • 22W • MM,3L • 38,30,21cm • Single ended phono integrated	

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE	SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
Credo PMP252	2,509		power amp • 250W • 44,21,31cm	
EAR 802MC	2,599	63	preamp • MM/MC,2L,2T • Tested with £3499 509 Mk II - see comments	REC'D
Tube Tech Genesis	2,599		power amp • 100W • 35,15,27cm • 2x monoblocks	
Papworth M100	2,645		power amp • 100W • 25,17,38cm • Tube monoblock	
Chord SPM1000B	2,650		power amp • 200W • XLR/unbalanced • 42,36,14cm • Two pairs loudspeaker out	
Classe Audio Audio 5 II	2,657		preamp • MM/MC,4L,1T • 48,15,43cm • Remote option	
McIntosh MC7104	2,729		power amp • A/V • 100W • 45,16,51cm • 4 channels	
Conrad-Johnson PV-12	2,750		preamp • MC,4L • Tube	
Meridian 601	2,750		preamp • MM,4L,T • hdph • rem • DSP tone control, MC option	
Audio Research D-200	2,800		power amp • 110W • 48,14,31cm • Single ended, balanced	
Audio Research SP9 II	2,850		preamp • MM/MC,4L,2T • 48,14,26cm • Hybrid	
McIntosh MC150	2,855		power amp • 150W • 45,14,45cm • Blue meters	
Audio Research PH-2	2,895		preamp • MM/MC • 48,14,26cm • Balanced	
Sonic Frontiers SFS-80	2,895		power amp • 80W • 45,22,35cm • Stereo tube power amp	
PS Audio 250 Delta	2,980		power amp • 250W • 42,15,45cm • Monoblocks	
Counterpoint NPS-200E	2,995		power amp • 200W • Rated at 4 Ohms, hybrid	
Unison Res Smart 845	2,995		power amp • 24W • Single ended triode monoblocks	
Audio Research LS-2 II	2,997		preamp • 5L,1T • 48,14,26cm • 1 direct input/hybrid	
DNM 3B Twin E	3,050		preamp • MM/MC,4L,1T • 27,13,16cm	
McIntosh C39	3,129		preamp • A/V • MM, 10L (6 Vid) • hdph • rem • 45,17,45cm • Two zone, THX compatible	
McIntosh MC7300	3,195		power amp • 300W	
Lumley Reference M120	3,200		power amp • 120W • 29,44,18cm • 2xmono, triode/pentode	
NVA TDS	3,200		power amp • 70W • Mono	
McIntosh C40	3,239		preamp • MM, 6L, 3T • hdph • 45,14,45cm • Balanced in/out	
Audio Innovs Second Audio3	3,299		power amp • 15W • 41,15,34cm • Monoblocks	
Krell KSL-2	3,331		preamp • 4L,1T • 48,7,36cm • Opt. MM/MC stage	
Audio Research V35	3,355		power amp • 30W • 48,18,37cm • Balanced in, hybrid	
Audio Research LS-2b II	3,398		preamp • 5L,1T • 48,14,26cm • 1 balanced direct input/hybrid	
Adyton CORDIS 1.6	3,399		power amp • 120W • 45,9,35cm • Stereo power amp	
Classe Audio Audio 15	3,399		power amp • 175W • 48,19,42cm • Single ended, bal bridgable	
McIntosh MC7106	3,425		power amp • A/V • 100W • 45,16,51cm • Six x 100W THX amp	
Mark Levinson 29	3,450		power amp • 50W	
Grant G350A	3,455		power amp • 350W	
Classe Audio Audio 6L II	3,469		preamp • 5L,1T • 48,15,43cm • Remote option, sep PSU	
EAR 509 Mk II	3,499	63	power amp • 100W • 36,20,25cm • Combining sonic strengths of transistors and valves, this amp warrants attention (tested with £2599 802).	REC'D
Conrad-Johnson Prem 11A3	3,500		power amp • 70W • Baby Premier 8	
Matisse Reference	3,500		preamp • A/V • MM/MC,5L,2T	
Art Audio Maestro	3,524		power amp • 100W • 2x mono triode/pentode	
Counterpoint SA4	3,575		power amp • 140W • Hybrid	
McIntosh MC275	3,595		power amp • 75W • Classic valve amp	
Electrocmpn't AW2500MB	3,620		power amp • 250W • 48,22,45cm • High current (100A)	
DNM 3B Primus E	3,630		preamp • MM/MC,4L,1T • 27,13,16cm	
KAL Empress	3,660		preamp • MM/MC,2L,1T • hdph • Tube	
Krell KSA-50s	3,690	141	power amp • 50W • 48,22,40cm • Sustained Plateau Bias	B'BUY
NVA TSS (Power)	3,700		power amp • 70W	
McIntosh MA6800	3,735		integrated • 150W • hdph • rem • 45,18,51cm • Blue meters	
YBA 1 Pre	3,750	62	preamp • MC,4L,1T • 43,9,33cm • Tested with £4250 1 Pwr - see below for comments.	REC'D
Grant G200AMS	3,760		power amp • 200W • Monoblocks	
McIntosh MC300	3,765		power amp • 300W • 45,16,46cm • Bridgable to 600W, blue meters	
Jadis DEFY-P60	3,774		preamp • MM/MC,4L,1T • 43,17,30cm • Tube	
Sonic Frontiers SFL-2	3,795		preamp • 4L,2T • 45,12,33cm • Tube, dual mono, balanced	
Classe Audio Audio 6 II	3,817		preamp • MM/MC,4L,1T • 48,15,43cm • Remote option, separate PSU	
Papworth M200	3,825		power amp • 200W • 46,20,31cm • Tube monoblock	
Chord SPM1200B	3,840		power amp • 250W • Balanced/unbal • 42,36,14cm • Two pairs loudspeaker out	
Conrad-Johnson Prem 10	3,900		preamp • 5L • Line version of Premier 7B	
Electrocmpn't AW2500MB	3,980		power amp • 250W • 48,45,22cm • High current stereo	
Counterpoint SA-5000E	3,995		preamp • MM/MC,4L,2T • 49,12,27cm • Separate PSU	
Counterpoint SA-9	3,995		preamp • MM/MC • 49,12,37cm • Phono stepup	
Dynavector HX1.2	3,995		power amp • 130W • 44,13,37cm • High current capability	
Mark Levinson No 38	3,995		preamp • 6L,2T • rem • Fully remote, balanced	
Gamma Acoustics Space R3	3,999		power amp • 18W • 3L • 43,22,31cm • Line integrated	
Gamma Acoustics Era Ref	3,999		preamp • MM,3L • 44,17,30cm • Single ended Triode	
Musical Fidelity F18	3,999		power amp • 220W • 49,19,67cm • Bal/unbalanced in/hybrid	
Tube Tech Synergy 1	3,999		integrated • 150W • 5L,1T, • rem • 47,18,47cm • Bias monitor, soft-start	
Exposure XVI	4,000		power amp • 125W • 48,13,35cm • Pair of regulated monoblocks	
Counterpoint Nat Progress	4,125		power amp • 150W • Mono, hybrid	
Krell KRC-2s	4,190	141	preamp • 6L,1T • rem • 48,7,36cm • Opt MM/MC stage	B'BUY
Electrocmpn't AW180MB	4,200		power amp • 180W • 28,29,48cm • High current, price per pair	
DNM PA2BE	4,250		power amp • 90W • 27,13,18cm • Triwire output	
YBA 1 Power	4,250	62	power amp • 85W • 43,14,33cm • Well finished pre/power amp with front rank imaging and transparency (tested with £3750 1 Pre).	REC'D
KAL Emperor	4,375		power amp • 9W • Single ended tube Class A	
Counterpoint NPS-400E	4,395		power amp • 400W • Rated at 4 Ohms, hybrid	
Electrocmpn't AW180MB	4,430		power amp • 180W • 28,29,48cm • High current, price per pair	
Audio Research V70	4,480		power amp • 60W • 48,18,40cm • Balanced in, hybrid	
LFD Disc Preamp	4,499		preamp • MC • 30,5,36cm • Battery powered	
Roksan ROK-M1.5	4,500		power amp • 160W • 48,11,34 • Pair of monoblocks	
Unison Res Performance 1	4,500		integrated • 25W • 4L,1T • Single-ended triode	
Classe Audio Audio 25	4,639		power amp • 250W • 48,20,53cm • Single ended, balance bridga	
EAR 519	4,699		power amp • 100W • 43,14,20cm • Valve monoblock x1	
Chord SPM1600	4,700		power amp • 250W • Balanced/unbal • 42,36,14cm • Two pairs loudspeaker out	
Jadis JPL	4,720		preamp • 5L,1T • 43,17,30cm • Tube	
Jadis JPP-200	4,778		preamp • 4L,1T	
DNM 3B Six E	4,780		preamp • MM/MC,4L,1T • 27,13,16cm	
Audio Research D-300	4,800		power amp • 160W • 48,18,33cm • Single ended, balanced	
Chord SPM2000	4,890		power amp • A/V • 200W • 6L • 42,36,14cm • Three channel, 6 speaker amp	
Naim NAC52	5,006		preamp • 6 (see note) • rem • 43,76,30cm • Optional phono board	
DNM PA2BS	5,250		power amp • 90W • 27,13,18cm • Triwire output	
Audio Research LS-5 II	5,290		preamp • 5L,1T • 48,14,30cm • Full balanced in/out	
Jadis DEFY-7	5,290		power amp • 100W • 49,23,63cm • Tube	
Tesseract TAP-A	5,300		preamp • MM,3L,2T	
McIntosh MC2600	5,395		power amp • 600W	
Mark Levinson 27.5	5,399		power amp • 100W	
Jadis JP-30MC	5,444	60	preamp • MM/MC,4L,1T • French tubes, JP-30MC has beautiful build, nostalgic styling and delightful midrange. (tested with JA30).	REC'D
Sonic Frontiers SFS-160	5,495		power amp • 160W • 45,22,35cm • Twin tube monoblocks	
CAT S11 Sig line	5,500		preamp • 3L,1T • 31,48,14cm • 2 outputs, valve	

PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

Audio Research VT130	5,600	power amp • 65W • Stereo tube, balanced
DNM PA2BS-1	5,650	power amp • 90W • 27.13,18cm • Triwire output
Jadis JA-30	5,760	60 power amp • 30W • 21,21,46cm • French tubes, JP-30MC has beautiful build, nostalgic styling and delightful midrange (tested with £5978 JP30).
Krell KSA-100s	5,843	power amp • 100W • 48,22,50cm • Sustained Plateau Bias
CAT SL1 Sig phono	6,000	preamp • MM,2L • 31,48,14cm • 2 outputs, valve
Audio Research D-400II	6,200	power amp • 200W • 48,23,33cm • Single ended, balanced
McIntosh MC500	6,265	power amp • 500W • 45,27,51cm • Blue meters
Mark Levinson No 38S	6,495	preamp • 6L,2T • rem • Special Edition, balanced
Conrad-Johnson Evol 20	6,700	preamp • MC,4L • Poor man's Premier 7B
Krell KRCs	6,949	preamp • 6L,1T • rem • 48,7,36cm • Opt MM/MC stage
EAR 549	6,999	power amp • 200W • 43,27,22cm • Valve monoblock x1
EAR G88	6,999	preamp • MM/MC,3L,2T • Valve
Conrad-Johnson Prem 12	7,000	power amp • 140W • Monoblock pair
Tesseract TAMP-60	7,350	power amp • 60W • 2x Monoblocks



Cables

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

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

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

PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

CABLES		
QED 42 Strand	1	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • med • low • copper • PVC outer, figure-of-8
Cable Talk Flat One	2	speaker cable • stranded • copper • low intrusion budget cable
Cable Talk Theatre 2	2	speaker cable • stranded • copper • entry level for AV purposes
Ixos 603	2	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • copper
QED FI-4	2	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • med • low • copper • Flat construction, poly outer
QED 79 Strand	2	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • low • low • copper • PVC outer, fig-of-8
QED Qudos	2	145 Loudspeaker cable • stranded • low • low • OFHC copper • Polyethylene cover
Cable Talk Talk 3	3	speaker cable • stranded • copper • budget hi-fi cable
Ixos 601	3	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • OFC • 6 core
QED RI-4	3	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • med • low • copper • 4-core, round construction
Cable Talk Overture 2	4	speaker cable • stranded • copper
Heybrook Heywire	4	109 Loudspeaker cable • solid core • copper • This well-meaning facsimile of earlier ribbon cables ends up sounding lumpy and uneven.
Cable Talk Talk 3 Biwire	5	speaker cable • copper • 4 conductors, 6N
Cable Talk Talk 4	5	speaker cable • stranded • copper
Ixos 604	5	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • copper • Bi-wire
Ixos 602	5	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • OFC • 12 core
QED Qudos Profile 8	5	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • OFHC • Flat 8-core OFHC poly
Cable Talk Concert 2	6	speaker cable • stranded • copper • Signal Return Flow System
Cable Talk Talk 4 Biwire	9	speaker cable • stranded • copper • 4 conductors, 6N
Chord Flatline Gold	9	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • solid core • low • copper
Mission Quartet	9	Loudspeaker cable • solid core • copper • 4-conductor OFC solid core
Sonic Link First Mains	10	Mains cable • stranded • 12A • silver plated copper • PTFE insulated
Arion LSO.5	12	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • silver • Priced per meter
Cable Talk Concert 4	12	speaker cable • stranded • copper • 4 conductor version of Concert
Chord Flatline Twin	16	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • solid core • low • copper
QED Digiflex	19	108 Digital, electrical • coaxial • stranded • copper • A top performance, low-loss 75 ohm coax with a very open, almost liquid quality.
DPA Opti-link	20	108 Digital, optical • plastic • Very similar to Bantbridge AL560; sound is lacklustre
Ixos 104	20	Interconnect • coaxial • stranded • OFC • 24 karat plugs
Ixos 603/10	20	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • copper • Unterminated
Mission Stranded	20	109 Loudspeaker cable • stranded • copper • This Swedish made cable proved a real fit with our listeners - a slick performer and Best Buy upgrade.
Sonic Link Pure Mains	20	Mains cable • stranded • 3A • HPMC • PTFE insulated
QED P2 Gold	22	Interconnect • Symmetrical • stranded • OFHC copper
QED Incon P1 Gold	23	Interconnect • Symmetrical • stranded • OFHC copper
Cable Talk Improved 2/CD	25	Interconnect • Symmetrical • coaxial • solid core • copper • Entry level CD etc phono-phono
DNM ML125UK	25	Mains cable • solid core • 13A • High purity copper
Ixos 105	25	Digital, electrical • 75 Ohms • copper • OFC screen
QED Optiflex	25	Digital, optical • plastic fibre
QED Incon P2 Seold	25	Interconnect • coaxial • stranded • OFHC copper
QED Incon P1 Seold	26	Interconnect • Symmetrical • coaxial • stranded • OFHC copper
DPA Digi-link	28	108 Digital, electrical • coaxial • stranded • 75ohms • copper • Can seem slightly impasse but there's no avoiding its exceptionally detailed sound.
Arion LS1	30	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • silver • Priced per meter
Chord Chrysalis	30	Interconnect • stranded • copper
Sonic Link Super Mains	30	Mains cable • stranded • 30A • silver plated copper • PTFE insulated
Sonic Link Light Brown	30	108 Digital, electrical • coaxial • 75ohms • PTFE • Deviates from the 75 ohm standard and provides an unbalanced sound.
vdHMV Videolink 75	30	108 Digital, electrical • coaxial • 75ohms • copper • An AV-cum-digital cable that nearly beats QED's Digiflex, but emphasises sibilants.
Chord Codac	32	108 Digital, electrical • coaxial • stranded • 75ohms • copper • A connection with a stranded inner core and a sound that lacks integration.
QED Qudos Terminated	33	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • low • low • OFHC copper • Various lengths, terminated
DNM TCC75	34	Analogue • solid core • medium • low • high purity copper • Non-coaxial
Cable Talk Advanced 2	35	Interconnect • Symmetrical • coaxial • solid core • 6N copper • phono-phono, for CD etc
Sonic Link Pink	35	Interconnect • coaxial • stranded • silver plated copper
Kimber Cable PSB D'link	37	108 Digital, electrical • copper • An analogue interconnect inappropriately pressed into digital service. A visible deterioration in the digital signal results.
Chord Cobra	39	Interconnect • stranded • copper
Ixos 103	40	Interconnect • coaxial • stranded • OFC • Double shielded, locking plugs
Sonic Link AST150	40	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • low • copper
Naim NAC05	44	109 Loudspeaker cable • stranded • copper • Described as a 'dinosaur of a cable', this stiff wire rod doesn't belong outside Naim systems.
Audioquest F-14	45	109 Loudspeaker cable • solid core • copper • Ideal for laying under carpets, F-14 encourages a slightly warm and vibrant sound
Monster Interlink LS100	45	108 Digital, optical • plastic • Well constructed stepped-index fibre with polished ends and connectors. Lean, fuzzy, engaging performance.
Monster DataLink 100	45	108 Digital, electrical • coaxial • 75ohms • copper • A colourful coaxial interconnect with an equally colourful and up-beat sound. Very compatible.

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
Sonic Link Red	45	Interconnect • coaxial • stranded • HPMC	
DPA Slink	47	Interconnect • coaxial • stranded • low • silver • phono terminated	
Chord Prodac	49	Digital, electrical • 75ohms	REC'D
Chord Cobra-mono	49	Interconnect • stranded • copper	
Kronos Konnekt 3	49	Interconnect • coaxial • stranded • copper	
Arion LS-2	50	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • silver • Biwire, priced per meter	
Audioquest Video Z	50	108 Digital, electrical • coaxial • stranded • 75ohms • copper • <i>The very best available, with an expressive sound, but generously priced.</i>	B'BUY
Cable Talk Monitor 2	50	Interconnect • copper • Signal Return Flow System	
Cable Talk Improved 2/T1	50	Interconnect • Symmetrical • coaxial • solid core • copper • Entry level phono-phono	
Sonic Link Green	50	Digital, electrical • coaxial • 75ohms • PTFE	
Sonic Link Derwent	50	Interconnect • stranded • silver plated copper	
vdH The Clearwater	50	109 Loudspeaker cable • stranded • silver/copper • <i>Despite its evocative title, the Clearwater turns out to be a disappointingly murky sounding cable.</i>	
Kimber Cable KC-1 D'link	52	108 Digital, electrical • copper • <i>This cable adopts a woven construction with the addition of a conductive screen. Music lacks detail and spirit.</i>	
Kimber Cable Opti-link	59	108 Digital, optical • plastic • <i>Hardly cheap for what appears to be a bog-standard PMMA fibre, yet it sounds a little brighter and livelier than most.</i>	REC'D
Ixos 102	60	Interconnect • coaxial • stranded • OFC • Double shielded, locking plugs	
Trichord Pulsewire 75/D	64	digital interconnect • Symmetrical • coaxial • solid core • 75 ohms • silver plated copper • mono	
Cable Talk Studio 2	65	Interconnect • Symmetrical • coaxial • solid core • copper • Enhanced version of Monitor 2	
Chord Siren	65	Interconnect • coaxial • stranded • Silver plated copper	
Chord Chameleon	68	Interconnect • stranded • copper	
Arion SA0.5	75	Interconnect • Symmetrical • stranded • silver	
Audioquest Type 4	75	109 Loudspeaker cable • copper • <i>Four 18-gauge OFHC copper conductors wound in a Litz-type fashion increases capacitance but restrains the cable's 'bite'.</i>	
DPA White Slink	75	interconnect • coaxial • stranded • silver plated OFC • polyethylene/PTFE dielectric	
Sonic Link AST150X2	80	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • low • copper • Biwire	
Cable Talk Professional 2	85	interconnect • Symmetrical • coaxial • solid core • copper • MGT Multi Ground construction	
Sonic Link Violet	85	Interconnect • Symmetrical • stranded • HPMC	
Audioquest Digital PRO	90	108 Digital, electrical • coaxial • stranded • 75ohms • silver • <i>A silver cable with all the drive of Video Z but lacking its clear cut transparency.</i>	
Sonic Link Grey	90	109 Loudspeaker cable • solid core • silver plated copper • <i>A spaghetti-thin silver plated cable lacks bass impact and treble 'air'</i>	
Kimber Cable KC-AG D'link	95	108 Digital, electrical • silver • <i>An asymmetric cable using silver conductors that deviates from the 75ohm standard. Not ideal for digital applications.</i>	
Arion DAC1	99	Digital, electrical • coaxial • stranded • 75ohms • silver	
Kronos Konnekt 2	99	Interconnect • coaxial • solid core • copper	
Audio Note AN-D	100	109 Loudspeaker cable • solid core • copper • <i>Supplied in linear, non-polarised lengths that should be twisted into stereo pairs. Sounds rather grippy and forward.</i>	
Audioquest Optlink Z	100	108 Digital, optical • glass • <i>Good level of midband detail but frequency extremes lack depth and extension.</i>	
Electrocompaniet EC-K3.2	100	Mains cable • stranded • 13A • copper • Terminated, woven conductors	
Ixos 101	100	Interconnect • coaxial • stranded • silver plated OFC • Double shielded, locking plugs	
Sonic Link AST75X2	100	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • copper • Biwire	
Sonic Link Blue	115	Interconnect • solid core • HPMC	
Arion SA1	125	Interconnect • Symmetrical • stranded • silver	
Chord Solid	130	Interconnect • coaxial • solid core • copper/silver	REC'D
Cable Talk Reference	140	interconnect • Symmetrical • coaxial • solid core • copper • Phonos, anti-microphonic	
Moth Leyline Datalink	140	108 Digital, electrical • coaxial • 750 Ohms • copper • <i>A thin, coaxial version of Leyline Black with a rather hard and unforgiving character. Too expensive.</i>	
Sonic Link Care Music	150	Loudspeaker cable • stranded • low • silver plated copper	
Trichord Pulsewire 75	150	interconnect • Symmetrical • coaxial • solid core • 75 ohms • silver plated copper • stereo	
Audio Note AN-B	165	109 Loudspeaker cable • solid core • copper • <i>High capacitance Litz-type cable may act as a taming influence in many systems.</i>	REC'D
Sonic Link Black	165	Interconnect • stranded • silver plated copper	
DNM LBCB500	170	109 Loudspeaker cable • solid core • copper • <i>High impedance can influence the treble response, but this was a winner on sound per pound.</i>	B'BUY
Arion DAC2	199	Digital, electrical • coaxial • stranded • 75 Ohms • silver	
Arion SA2	199	Interconnect • Symmetrical • stranded • silver	
Kronos Konnekt 1	199	Interconnect • coaxial • stranded • copper	
Sonic Link Blue	200	Loudspeaker cable • solid core • high • HPMC • Biwire	
Sonic Link Derwent/spkr	200	Loudspeaker cable • low • silver plated copper • Biwire	
Acdioquest Midnight Hyplitz 260	109	Loudspeaker cable • solid core • copper • <i>Similar to Type 4, but with a delicate smoothness.</i>	
vdH The Magnum	265	109 Loudspeaker cable • stranded • copper/silver • <i>Touted as vdH's most prestigious twinlead cable, Magnum sounds soft and old fashioned.</i>	
DPA IS19	275	109 Loudspeaker cable • solid core • silver/copper • <i>Clear, neutral and transparent sound of the older 8S without the clarity of Gore-Tex Black 16.</i>	
vdH The Wind	330	109 Loudspeaker cable • stranded • silver/copper • <i>'The Wind' kicks up a storm with its lush midrange and bone-crunching bass!</i>	REC'D
Kimber Cable D-60	513	Digital electrical • coaxial • 75ohm • Silver • Teflon jacket	
Kimber Illuminati DV50	552	Interconnect • coaxial • stranded • solid core • 110 ohm XLR balanced • Woven shield + drain wire	
Kimber Cable Orchid	1,183	Interconnect • coaxial • 55ohms • silver • AES/EBU, Teflon dielectric	
Audio Note AN-SP	1,270	Loudspeaker cable • silver • <i>Some 15 individually insulated silver strands make up this a civilised and exceptionally detailed sounding cable.</i>	REC'D



Cassette Decks

The compact cassette is still the world's most versatile and ubiquitous music storage medium. Buffs may wrinkle their noses, but they're happy to use cassette decks to make up tapes for the car. ■ There should be no problems in connecting a cassette deck to any normal amplifier, but some care needs to be taken in choosing the best tapes for a specific machine.

(Trial and error is one effective technique, but many decks have manual bias adjustment and some match up to the tape automatically.) Lab performance and sound quality often go hand in hand, and are frequently somewhat dependent upon factory alignment. The mechanical integrity of the mechanism is another crucial factor. ■ Twin decks offer the option to dub tapes and play two cassettes sequentially. Autoreverse is a useful feature, but

usually with some mechanical compromise.

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

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

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE	SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS
Grundig Fine Arts CCF2	170		twin • Dolby B • 2 head • 44,13,30cm • AMS, remote, display off
JVC TD-W218BK	170		twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,33cm • 'Compu' auto tape calibration
JVC TD-X372BK	170		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,33cm • Entry level single deck
Kenwood KX-W4070	170		twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,14,27cm • Auto bias function
Kenwood KX-3060	170	139	single • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,12,37cm • Based on CD-53 DAC/filter, but with a more transparent, sober and insightful sound.
Pioneer CT-S330	170		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 42,13,28cm • Audio tape setup, FLEX
Sony TC-K461S	180	146	single • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 2 head • 43,13,31cm • Transport is good, and sound quality is fine, though undynamic. Marginal with metals.
Sony TC-K415B	180	136	single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • 43,12,31cm • Mainly UK designed with audiophile intent, but spoiled by erratic output, at worst with metal tape.
Teac R-560	180		Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,14,28cm • Logic control, FL display
Teac W-760R	180		twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,14,29cm • R/C logic & FL display
Grundig CCF310	190		twin • auto reverse • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 36,12,30cm • Elapsed time, CD copy, AMS
NAD 602	199	127	single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • Minimalist deck for the audiophile market. Unfortunately engineering is minimalist too.
Yamaha KX-W282	199		twin • Dolby B, C • 2 head • 44,13,28cm • Twin auto-reverse, one records
Yamaha KX-480	199		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,28cm • Auto-tape tuning, Play Trim
Denon DRW-580	200		twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • Music search, hi speed dub
Dual CC8000 RS	200		twin • Dolby B, C • 2 head • 44,13,25cm • Remote via 9000RS
Grundig Fine Arts CCF3	200	146	twin • auto reverse • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,30cm • Unstable sounding twin thanks to a primitive transport mechanism.
JVC TD-R472BK	200		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,33cm
JVC TD-W318BK	200		twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,14,34cm • 'Silent' mechanism
Kenwood KX-W6070	200		twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,14,27cm • Auto-bias function
Luxman K-322	200	146	single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 13,44,18cm • Gives best value results with lower bias tapes, helped by a successful Dolby C installation.
Marantz SD-53	200	146	single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 43,14,30cm • Modestly equipped player is short-changed by a rough transport, and dull prerecorded quality.
Pioneer CT-W503R	200		twin • auto reverse • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 42,13,25cm • Auto NR, FLEX
Pioneer CT-S430S	200	136	single • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 2 head • 42,13,28cm • Against the odds - a 2-head Dolby S deck that works. Well set up and fully equipped.
Sony TC-WR545B	200		twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 43,12,29cm • Auto calibration
Technics RS-TR373	200		twin • auto reverse • Dolby B, C • 2 head • 43,14,29cm • Play transport unidirectional
Technics RS-BX501	200		Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 43,13,30cm • Centre tray, ATC
Denon DRS-640	210	140	single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,31cm • Drawer loading deck, with simple facilities and smooth, well adjusted sound.
JVC TD-V562BK	220	123	single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • 44,13,33cm • Ultra-sophisticated transport at a silly price; sound quality is stable but slightly opaque.
Technics RS-TR474	220		twin • auto reverse • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 43,14,29cm • High speed FF/REW
Aiwa AD-F850	230		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • Super DX head, twin capstan
NAD 613	230		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,29cm • Block repeat, R/C links
Pioneer CT-W603RS	230		twin • auto reverse • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 2 head • 42,13,25cm • Auto tape setup, FLEX, Dolby S
Kenwood KX-5060S	235	140	single • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,12,30cm • Well engineered transport and Dolby S star in this refined and detailed design.
Yamaha KX-W482	249		twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,28cm • Twin recording auto-reverse
Yamaha KX-580	249	146	single • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,28cm • Stable and clean, if bright. Play Trim helps wake up recalcitrant recordings.
Grundig Fine Arts CF4	250		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • 44,13,30cm • Manual bias, AMS, monitor
JVC TD-W718BK	250		twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,14,34cm • Tape calibration, stabiliser
Marantz SD-535	250		twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 43,14,32cm • Synchro record
Onkyo TA-RW313	250		twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 46,12,31cm
Sony TC-WR645S	250		twin • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 2 head • 43,12,31cm • UK optimised sound
Sony TC-K511S	250		single • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 3 head • 43,12,31cm • UK optimised sound
Teac V-1030	250	105	single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • 44,15,29cm • Optional remote control
Technics RS-BX601	250	146	Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • 43,13,29cm • Remarkably fast cassette wind means it will suit those with large collections. Good all-round sound.
Denon DRW-760	260		twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,28cm
Denon DRM-740	270	136	single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • 44,13,28cm • Breathed-on DRM-710, with good external treatment offers good, if somewhat detached sonics.
JVC TD-V662BK	270	146	single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • 44,13,33cm • Assured, clean and agile sounding recorder, if not quite the most refined in its class.
Marantz SD-63	270		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • 43,14,30cm • D-bus
NAD 614	270		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,32cm • Play Trim, CAR compression
Kenwood KX-W8070S	280		twin • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,14,27cm • Auto bias function, power load
Technics RS-TR575	280		twin • auto reverse • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 43,14,29cm • Optical quick reverse
Aiwa AD-S950	300	140	single • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 3 head • High-value, high-spec package is both well set up and musically well sorted.
Pioneer CT-W803RS	300		twin • auto reverse • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 2 head • 42,13,25cm • Twin record, mic i/p
Pioneer CT-S630S	300	140	single • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 3 head • 42,13,38cm • 3 heads and Dolby S feature in an excellent deck that is underbiased with Type IV tapes.
Sony TC-K611S	300	1	27single • Dolby B, C, S • HX Pro • 3 head • 43,12,30cm • Good Dolby S deck - slightly let down by lack of attention to detail.
Technics RS-BX701	300	136	Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • 43,13,30cm • Costly, but well built, this decks is a pleasure to operate and listen to.
Denon DRS-810	310	127	single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • 44,13,32cm • Drawer loading deck, carefully designed yet lacking in subtlety on audition.
NAD 616	320		twin • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 44,13,29cm • Twin auto-reverse, R/C link
Kenwood KX-7060S	329	146	single • HX Pro • 3 head • 44,13,30cm • Although slightly dull sounding with prerecorded tapes, this is a well equipped and fine sounding deck.
Onkyo KR-609	350		Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 28,12,31cm • Mini component
Onkyo TA250	350		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • 46,12,31cm
Technics RS-BX747	350		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • 43,13,30cm • Fine bias adj, THC lo-red base
Onkyo K-W606	370		twin • auto reverse • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 28,12,32cm • Mini component
Pioneer CT-M601R	380		Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 2 head • 42,14,38cm • Six tape record/play, r/ctrl
Luxman K-373	400		single • Dolby B, C • HX Pro • 3 head • 13,44,35cm • System bus, mic inputs
Marantz CP-230	400		single • Dolby B • 2 head • DC portable, semi-pro



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 Naim CD3 (F/L) £949.00
Naim CD Players - Full range? YES!
 Pioneer PD -S703 £219.00
 Quad 67 CD (F/L) £825.00
 Rotel RCD 930AX £199.00
 Rotel RCD 970BX (F/L) £345.00

TURNTABLES

- Dual CS504 inc AT95e £199.00

- Rega Planar 2 Inc RB250* £198.00
 Rega Planar 3 Inc RB300* £260.00
 Linn LP12 Turntable £449.00
 Linn LP12 Basik or Lingo* YES!

*Free local installation for the above

- NAD 5120 inc Cart £119.00

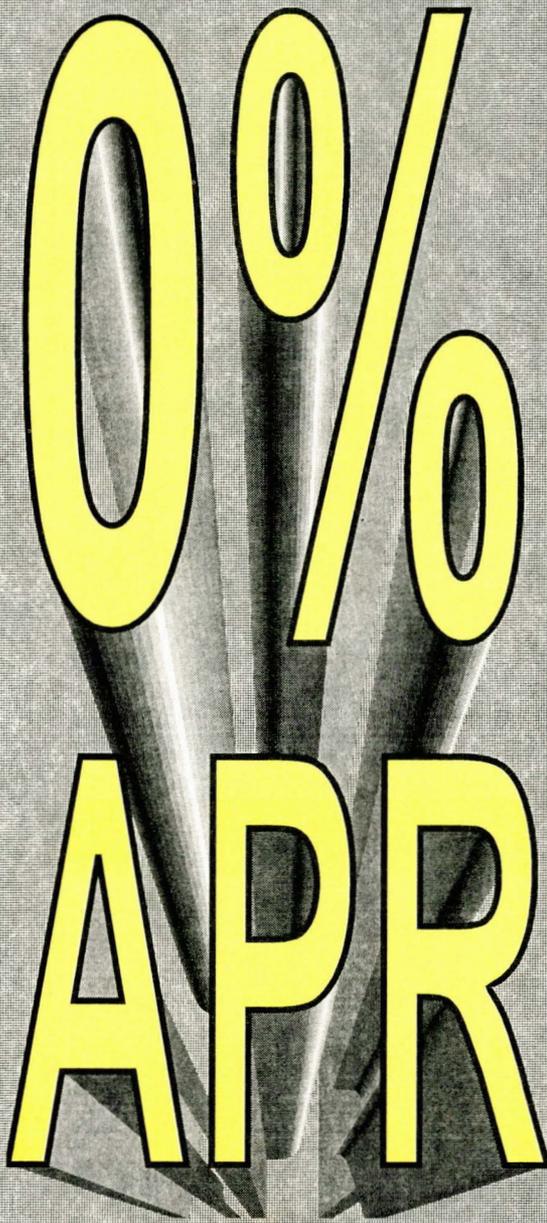
AMPLIFIERS

- Arcam Alpha 5 Plus £239.00
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 Quad 606 Power Amp £689.00
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 Rotel RA 930AX/2 (New) £149.00
 Rotel RA 930BX £199.00

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TUNERS

- Arcam Alpha 5 Tuner Plus £219.00
 Arcam Delta 280 Tuner (F/L) £399.00
 Denon Tu 260L Tuner £119.00
 Linn Kudos (New) £595.00
 NAD 402 Tuner £179.00
Marantz ST55 Tuner £129.00
 Naim NAT 03 Tuner (F/L) £549.00
Pioneer F203 RDS Tuner £129.00
 Quad FM4 Tuner (F/L) £429.00
 Quad 66FM Tuner(F/L) £529.00
 Rega Radio AM/FM Tuner (F/L) £229.00
 Rotel RT 940AX (Remote) £199.00
Rotel RT 950BX (F/L) £249.00

CASSETTE

- Arcam Delta 100 £899.00
 Denon DRM 540 (F/T) £159.00
 Denon DRS 640 (F/T) £199.00
 Denon DRW 750 (F/T) £249.00
 NAD 613 (New) £229.00
 Nakamichi DR3 (Was 399) £349.00
 Nakamichi DR2 (F/L x 2) £549.00
 Nakamichi DR1 (F/T) £799.00
 Nakamichi Dragon (E/D) £1890.00
 Yamaha KX380 (F/T) £169.00
 Yamaha KX480(F/L) £199.00
 Yamaha KX-W482 £249.00

LOUDSPEAKERS

- (FREE C.T.3) = FREE CABLETALK 3.**
 Castle Durham 900(Free C.T.3) £279.00
 Heybrook HB1 (Free C.T.3) £279.00
KEF Coda 7 £129.00
KEF Q10 (Free C.T.3) £199.00
Linn Full range stocked & on Dem? YES!
 Mission 731 £129.00
Mission 751 (Free C.T.3) £299.00
Mission 752 (Free C.T.3) £499.00
Mission 753 (Free C.T.3 Blwire) £699.00
 Musical Technology - Kestral ... £249.00
ProAc Response One £999.00
Quad ELS63 on Demonstration? YES!
 Rega Kyte (Blk or Wal) £198.00
 Rega Ela (Black) £498.00
 Revolver Purdey £199.00
Rogers LS2a/2 (Free C.T.3) ... £249.00
 Ruark Swordsman 2 £299.00
 Ruark Talisman (Free C.T.3) .. £699.00
 Tannoy 631 Speakers £149.00
Tannoy 632 (Free C.T.3) £189.00
Tannoy 633 (Free P1lnth) £319.00

AUDIO VISUAL

- A/V AMPLIFIERS**
 Arcam Xeta One £999.00
 Denon AVC1530 £479.00
 Yamaha DSP970 £799.00
LASER DISC PLAYERS
 Pioneer CLD-900 £399.00
 Pioneer CLD-950 £499.00
Pioneer CLD-2950 £699.00
SURROUND - SPEAKER SYSTEMS
 KEF Q30/90/70s System £899.00
 KEF 90 (Centre) £249.00
 Mission 73S (Surround) £99.00
 Polk RM5000/2 System £899.00
 Pioneer V201 Sat/Sub System £249.00

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PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

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



CD Players, Transports & DACs

Now established as the prime audio source, the CD player continues to evolve. Manufacturers have accepted that 'Perfect Sound Forever' (an early Philips slogan) was a trifle optimistic. Now the medium is being slowly transformed into something worthy of the audiophile's enthusiasm.

■ All CD players offer a basic selection of facilities, and some can keep you entertained for hours as you programme in disc names and track orders. All but the excessively inexpensive feature remote control. Most CD

players can be upgraded by adding an outboard DAC (see below). To do this the player needs a digital output of either electrical or optical persuasion; sonically the former is preferable.

Transports & DACs

A CD player can be split into two basic components: the disc drive or transport, and a device which turns the digital bitstream coming off the disc into an analogue audio signal. This is called a digital to analogue convertor, or DAC. Although most players are contained in a single

box, expensive players are usually two-box affairs.

■ The first thing listed for a DAC is the type of convertor chip employed. However, in much the same way that an amp's output is not indicative of its sound quality, the DAC chip is only one factor in a CD player's sound.

Key

multibit, 1-bit	.....DAC type
electrical/optical out	.....digital output(s)
rem	.....remote control

PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

CD PLAYERS			
Eclipse CD101a	80	144 multibit • rem • 36,8,29cm	
Eclipse CD420	100	multibit • rem • 42,8,29cm	
Philips CD163	100	multibit • 36,29,8cm • Midi size	
Philips CD711	100	multibit • 44,26,9cm • With Bitcheck	
Pioneer PD-77	100	1 bit • electrical out • optical out • rem • 44,13,33cm • Satin gold finish	
Goodmans Delta 700	110	128 multibit • rem • <i>A 16-bit alternative to the CD650II that furnishes a colourful and animated sound.</i>	REC'D
Goodmans GCD360R	120	multibit • rem	
Grundig CD210	120	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 36,8,30cm • 30 mem, random repeat	
JVC XL-V184BK	120	1 bit • 44,11,28cm	
Philips CD721	130	multibit • rem • 44,30,11cm • With Bitstream D/A conversion	
Sherwood CD3020R	130	119 bitstream • <i>Although this budget wonder has little respect for musical convention, what emerges is still remarkably entertaining.</i>	B'BUY
Sony CDP-M302	130	1 bit • rem • 36,10,33cm • Midi-size, full remote control	
Technics SL-PG370	130	mash • 43,92,24cm • Remote control ready	
Dual CD1135RC	140	multibit • electrical out • rem • 42,8,28cm • Variable headphone output	
Grundig Fine Arts CD1	140	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 44,9,30cm • 30 track memory, auto-space	
JVC XL-V284BK	140	147 1 bit • rem • 44,11,28cm • <i>Featuring a new set of bitstream innards, this flexible player also boasts a refined, if occasionally unpredictable sound.</i>	REC'D
Pioneer PD-103	140	1 bit • 42,11,28cm • Display off	
Teac CD-P1100	140	multibit • rem • 44,9,28cm • Headphone jack	
Aiwa XC-300	150	1 bit • optical out • rem	
Cambridge Audio CD4	150	147 electrical out • rem • 43,9,29cm • <i>Basic appearance and sluggish track access/track search belies its up and at 'em sound quality.</i>	REC'D
Denon DCD-315	150	bitstream • rem • 44,11,28cm	
Dual CD1150RC	150	multibit • electrical out • rem • Variable headphone output	
Sony CDP-312	150	139 1 bit • rem • 43,10,29cm • <i>Something of a rough diamond, offering a raft of features and good build but a decidedly Technicolor sound</i>	
Teac CD-P3200	150	147 multibit • rem • 44,12,28cm • <i>A primitive looking CD player, housing primitive 16-bit electronics which deliver an equally primitive and uninspiring sound.</i>	
Technics SL-PG470AK	150	mash • optical out • rem • 43,96,24cm • CD edit	
Kenwood DP-2060	160	147 1 bit • rem • 44,10,26cm • <i>A player that bears absolutely no relation to the DP-3060, despite appearances. Sounds vague and thoroughly uninteresting.</i>	
Pioneer PD-203	160	1 bit • rem • 42,11,28cm • As 103, variable H/P output	
Yamaha CDX-480	169	147 bitstream • rem • 44,10,28cm • <i>A dispassionately calm sounding player that delivers the musical goods with little or no apparent enthusiasm.</i>	
Dual CD1000RS	170	bitstream • electrical out • Remote control via CR9000RS	
Philips CD740	170	139 multibit • electrical out • rem • <i>One of several Philips players using hybrid DAC technologies. Still sounds insufferably boring, however.</i>	
Technics SL-PG570AK	170	mash • rem • 43,103,29cm • Digital servo, THCB base	
Dual CD1180RC	180	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 44,9,29cm • Variable headphone output	
JVC XL-F116BK	180	1 bit • 44,13,40cm • 5-disc carousel	
Teac CD-P3450	180	1 bit • optical out • rem • 44,10,25cm • 8x o/sampling tape record edit	
NAD 501	189	139 bitstream • <i>A thoroughly typical frills-free player with a slightly too cautious, even restrained musical outlook.</i>	
Grundig Fine Arts CD2	190	128 bitstream • electrical out • rem • 44,9,30cm • <i>A stylish looking player, with a disappointingly vague approach to music making.</i>	
Yamaha CDC-555	199	multibit • rem • 44,11,39cm • Entry level	
Denon DCD-825	200	137 multibit • electrical out • rem • <i>Despite extensive revisions, this latest player still sounds like a typical 18-bit Denon, which is no bad thing!</i>	REC'D
Denon DCD-625	200	147 multibit • electrical out • rem • 44,11,29cm • <i>DCD-615 replacement is generously equipped but lacks sophisticated sound of its forebear.</i>	
JVC XL-F216BK	200	1 bit • rem • 44,13,40cm • 5-disc carousel	
Kenwood DP-R4070	200	1 bit • rem • 44,12,34cm • 5-disc tray loading	
Kenwood DP-3060	200	139 1 bit • rem • 44,10,26cm • <i>Based on the same filter/DAC as Marantz's CD-53, but with a more transparent, sober and highly insightful sound.</i>	B'BUY
Luxman D-322	200	147 bitstream • rem • 44,10,28cm • <i>Well bred player sounds smooth and cultured without appearing grey or boring.</i>	
Marantz CD-53	200	139 bitstream • electrical out • rem • 43,9,30cm • <i>Looks identical to CD-63, but internal costs are cut, exposing a slightly ragged performer.</i>	REC'D
Onkyo DX710	200	1 bit • optical out • rem • 46,11,31cm	
Pioneer PD-S504	200	147 bitstream • electrical out • rem • 42,11,29cm • <i>More consistent than the old PD-S503 and capable strong atmosphere and 'occasion'.</i>	B'BUY
Rotel RCD-930AX	200	1 bit • rem • 44,9,29cm	
Sanyo CPM2403	200	bitstream • rem • 24 disc 'intelligent' changer	
Sherwood CDC5030R	200	132 1 bit • rem • 44,10,38cm • <i>This replacement for the 5-disc CDC5010R sounds messy, disjointed and generally unpleasant. A disappointment.</i>	
Sony CDP-561E	200	147 bitstream • optical out • rem • 43,11,30cm • <i>Combines plenty of features with an open, transparent and sparkling sound.</i>	B'BUY
Technics SL-PS670AK	200	mash • optical out • rem • 45,12,29cm • Virtual Battery operation	
Yamaha CDX-580	229	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 44,10,28cm • UK specified o/p stage	
Harman-Kardon HD7225	230	bitstream • rem • 45,10,33cm	
Sony CDP-C325M	230	1 bit • rem • 36,10,39cm • Midi size, 5-disc player	
Sony CDP-C345	230	132 1 bit • rem • 43,13,39cm • <i>Sony's Hybrid Pulse DAC sounds great in the CDP-311 but in this 5 disc carousel it provides a mere skeleton of a performance.</i>	
NAD 502	239	119 mash • electrical out • rem • <i>Updated 5425 trades spontaneity for precise, but mechanical style.</i>	REC'D

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PRODUCT	£	ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
Denon DCD-825	240	multibit • electrical out • rem • 44,11,28cm • UK design	
Grundig Fine Arts CD3	240	bitstream • rem • 44,9,30cm	
Grundig CD3	240	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 44,9,30cm • FTS, display off, fade, DAC7	
Onkyo DX703	240	1 bit • optical out • rem • 46,11,31cm	
Yamaha CDC-655	249	bitstream • optical out • rem • 44,11,39cm • Tray load multi-player	
JVC XL-V574BK	250	139 1 bit • optical out • rem • 44,11,28cm	
Kenwood DP-M5570	250	1 bit • rem • 44,13,37cm • 6+1 disc changer	
Kenwood DP-5060	250	1 bit • optical out • rem • 44,12,31cm • D.R.I.V.E.	
Marantz CC-45	250	bitstream • optical out • rem • 44,12,40cm • 5 disc carousel	
Marantz CD-63	250	137 bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 42,9,30cm • <i>New technology has enabled Marantz to steal a march on CD-52 series.</i>	REC'D
Pioneer PD-M603	250	1 bit • rem • 42,11,30cm • Six disc	
Rotel RCD-940BX	250	137 multibit • rem • 44,10,32cm • <i>A sea change in transport and DAC technology lies behind this untidy-sounding and irritating player.</i>	
Sony CDP-761E	250	147 bitstream • optical out • rem • 43,11,40cm • <i>Tarted up CDP-561E with less widgets and a slightly overcooked performance.</i>	REC'D
Teac CD-3	250	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 45,13,28cm • Central mechanism	
Teac PD-D2200	250	multibit • rem • 44,11,38cm • 5-disc carousel	
Technics SL-PS770A	250	147 mash • optical out • rem • 43,13,29cm • <i>AA mellow sounding player that never quite rouses from its slumber to really tackle the music at hand.</i>	
Onkyo DX-7210	260	147 bitstream • rem • <i>Well-bred CD player features an unusual digital filter is smooth and cultured without appearing grey or boring.</i>	REC'D
Teac CD-P4500	280	107 bitstream • electrical out • rem • 44,12,29cm • <i>Teac's first genuine 1-bit player its sound has a certain organic warmth.</i>	REC'D
Onkyo C-711	290	1 bit • optical out • rem • 28,8,30cm • Mini component	
Harman-Kardon HD7325	299	bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 45,10,33cm	
Arcam Alpha One	300	137 delta sigma • electrical out • rem • 43,8,29cm • <i>The first UK-built player under £300 is hampered by a tidy but rather grey and uninspiring sound.</i>	
Denon DCD-1015	300	141 multibit • electrical out • optical out • rem • 44,11,28cm • <i>Excellent, middle range player - fast, fluid and lean</i>	REC'D
JVC XL-2674BK	300	1 bit • rem • 44,11,28cm	
JVC XL-M408BK	300	1 bit • rem • 44,13,32cm • Six disc	
Marantz CD-1010	300	1 bit • optical out • rem • 42,8,31cm • Slim Series component	
Musical Fidelity E60	300	bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 44,10,34cm	
Nakamichi MB4s	300	132 multibit • rem • 43,9,27cm • <i>Entry level Music-Bank player has plenty of dynamics and detail but little stereo depth.</i>	REC'D
Pioneer PD-S703	300	137 1 bit • optical out • rem • 42,13,27cm • <i>Legato Link and bitstream player sounds as manipulative and intriguing as ever.</i>	REC'D
Pioneer PD-M703	300	1 bit • rem • 42,13,30cm • Six disc, DSP soundfield cntrl	
Rotel RCD-965BX	300	100 bitstream • electrical out • rem • 44,10,32cm • <i>Exceptionally refined: transparent, exquisitely detailed and powerfully emotive. A landmark.</i>	B'BUY
Marantz CD-1020	334	1 bit • optical out • rem • 42,8,31cm • Slim Series, motorised cover	
Yamaha CDX-880	339	141 bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 44,10,29cm • UK specified components	
AMC CD6	349	124 bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • <i>Based on Rotel's RCD-965BX, but has a raunchier, beefier but less transparent sound.</i>	REC'D
Harman-Kardon HD7425	349	141 multibit • electrical out • rem • 45,10,33cm	
Onkyo DX750	350	141 1 bit • optical out • rem • 46,11,31cm	B'BUY
Teac CD-5	350	bitstream • rem • 48,12,29cm • Unique chassis design	
Rotel RCD-970BX	375	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 44,8,30cm	
Rotel RCD-965BX D	375	141 bitstream • electrical out • rem • 44,10,32cm • Discrete output	
Kenwood DP-7060	380	141 1 bit • optical out • rem • 44,12,31cm • D.R.I.V.E	REC'D
Audio Innovations Alto	399	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 43,8,30cm • Dual diff DAC	
Aura CD100	400	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 43,6,28cm • Chrome finish, £50 extra	
NAD 517	400	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 44,108,40cm • 5-disc carousel player	
Pioneer PD-S904	400	1 bit • electrical out • optical out • rem • 42,14,29cm • S-Advanced Legato Link	
Sony CDP-XA2ES	400	optical out • rem • 43,13,35cm • Motorised volume	
Rotel RCD-965BX LED	425	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 44,10,32cm • Discrete & slit foil caps	
Audio Innovations Alto Chr	449	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 43,8,30cm • Dual diff DAC	
Harman-Kardon HD7525	449	multibit • electrical out • rem • 45,10,33cm	
Pioneer PD-DM802	450	1 bit • rem • 42,14,31cm • Dual magazine 12-disc	
Technics SL-PS840	450	mash • optical out • rem • 43,13,34cm • Advanced MASH converter	
Arcam Alpha 5 Plus	470	139 multibit • electrical out • rem • 43,8,27cm • Upgradable DAC, display off	
Pioneer PD-S901	499	1 bit • electrical out • optical out • rem • 42,13,33cm • SPM, Legato Link, Twin DAC	
Aiwa DX-C100M	500	1 bit • optical out • rem • 100+1 disc autochanger	
Creek CD42	500	electrical out • rem • 42,8,30cm	
Nakamichi MB3s	500	multibit • rem • 43,9,38cm • 6+1 Music Bank, 1 x 8 o/s	
Orelle CD-100	500	multibit • electrical out • rem • 44,10,28cm • DC coupled	
Pioneer PD-TM3	500	1 bit • rem • 42,18,35cm • Triple magazine, 18-disc	
Harman-Kardon HD7625	549	multibit • electrical out • rem • 45,10,33cm	
Luxman D-373	550	multibit • optical out • rem • 44,11,35cm • System bus remote	
Micromega Stage 1	550	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 43,28,88cm • Upgradable	
Musical Fidelity E600	599	bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 44,12,35cm • Balanced XLR output	
Teac VRDS-7	599	bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 45,15,34cm • Twin BS, VRDS mech	
Arcam Alpha 6	600	electrical out • rem • 43,8,27cm • Upgradable from 5/5 Plus	
Kenwood DP-J2070	600	1 bit • rem • 44,19,38cm • 100 disc autochanger	
Marantz CD-72 Mk II	600	bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 42,13,30cm • DAC7	
Pioneer PD-F100	600	1 bit • rem • 42,19,40cm • 100 disc, Legato Link	
Micromega Stage 2	700	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 43,28,88cm • Upgradable	
Nakamichi MB2s	700	multibit • electrical out • rem • 43,9,38cm • 6+1 Music Bank, 18 x 8 o/s	
Teac VRDS-10	770	119 bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 45,15,34cm • <i>A basic analogue stage compromises performance. Lacks bass energy.</i>	
Linn Mimik	798	delta sigma • electrical out • rem • 32,8,33cm • BNC digital	
AVI S2000MCH	799	119 multibit • rem • 31,25,9cm • <i>A stylish, mid-width player with an exceptionally refined and comfortable sound. Lacks passion.</i>	
Harman-Kardon HD7725	799	124 multibit • electrical out • optical out • rem • 45,10,33cm • <i>This flagship implementation of RLS sounds impressively bold and dynamic.</i>	REC'D
Arcam Delta 270	800	124 hybrid • 2 electrical out • rem • 43,9,28cm • <i>Dry, tightly-focussed sound will either beguile or aggravate, depending on taste!</i>	
JVC XL-MC100	800	1 bit • rem • 36,37,38cm • 100 disc player	
Sony CDP-CX100	800	1 bit • optical out • 43,13,38cm • 100 disc autochanger	
Thule CD100	849	bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • Balanced out, Crystal chipset	
Teac VRDS-10SE	850	bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 45,15,34cm • Imp. mechanism & chassis	
Meridian 506	875	delta sigma • electrical out • optical out • rem • 33,9,34cm • Recently improved sound	
Quad 67	875	124 delta sigma • electrical out • rem • 33,8,26cm • <i>Powerful, fluid and captivating sound reminiscent of Meridian's 206.</i>	B'BUY
DPA Renaissance	895	bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 40,28,8cm • DPA DP16 DAC	
Micromega Stage 3	900	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 43,28,88cm • Upgradable	
Mission DAD7	900	145 multibit • electrical out • rem • 22,8,36cm	
Nakamichi MB1s	900	multibit • electrical out • rem • 43,9,27cm • 6+1 Music Bank, 20 x 8 o/s	
Naim CD3	949	multibit • rem • 43,56,30cm • 1 box	
Onix CD33	999	bitstream • 43,8,33cm • DAC7	
Technics SL-P2000	1,000	mash • optical out • rem • 45,13,33cm • THCB base, R-Core transformer	
Sentec Diana	1,100	multibit • electrical out • optical out • rem • 12,5,23cm • 20 bit	
AVI S2000MC	1,149	multibit • electrical out • rem • 31,25,9cm • 18bit 4x oversampling	
Marantz CD-10	1,200	bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 46,14,36cm • Twin DAC-7, heavy build	
Audiomeca Kreatura	1,299	multibit • electrical out • optical out • rem • 25,14,39cm	
Teac VRDS-20	1,299	bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 50,15,34cm • Twin DAC7, balanced output	
Meridian 606	1,350	1 bit	
Marantz CD-16	1,400	bitstream • electrical out • rem • 25,29,13cm • Twin DAC-7	
Audiomeca Kreatura SE	1,450	141 multibit • electrical out • rem • 25,14,39cm • Trichord clocked	
Meridian 508	1,475	140 delta sigma • electrical out • optical out • rem • 33,9,34cm	REC'D
Roksan ATT-DP3P	1,495	delta sigma • electrical out • rem • 46,12,35cm • Player, four level isolation	

PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

Linn Karik	1,497	144	delta sigma • electrical out • optical out • rem • 32,8,33cm • <i>Based on early Linn transport, the Karik is dry but very positive, detailed and engrossing.</i>	
Musical Fidelity FCD	1,499		bitstream • 2 electrical out • optical out • rem • 49,12,33cm • XLR balanced out, tube o/p	
Mission Disc/Dacmaster	1,900		multibit • electrical out • rem • 22,8,36cm • Two box, inc Dacmaster DAC	
Naim CD2	1,997		multibit • rem • 43,56,30cm • One box	
NVA T.E.S.	2,000		bitstream • electrical out • rem	
McIntosh MCD7008	2,195		multibit • electrical out • rem • 45,14,45cm • Seven disc multiplayer	
Pioneer PD-95	2,500		1 bit • electrical out • optical out • rem • 44,16,34cm • Balanced output, Legato, SPM	
McIntosh MCD7009	2,635		bitstream • electrical out • rem • 45,14,38cm • VRDS CD player	
YBA 2	2,999		multibit • electrical out • optical out • rem • 43,10,33cm • Outboard power supply	
Marantz CD-15	3,000		bitstream • electrical out • rem • 46,14,36cm • Twin Star Mark DAC-7	
NVA T.T.S.	3,200		bitstream • electrical out • rem	
Naim CD5	3,642		multibit • rem • 43,56,30cm • Two box	
Micro-Seiki CD-M2DC	3,695		multibit • electrical out • rem	
Marantz CD-23	4,000		bitstream • electrical out • rem • 25,29,13cm • CDM-9/DAC-7 DAC	
Luxman D500XS	4,500		multibit • optical out • rem • 44,12,39cm • Top loading	
Micro-Seiki CDM2000X	4,689		multibit • electrical out • rem	
Krell CD-DSP Mk II	5,000		rem • 42,13,28cm • Digital inputs facility	
Krelli CD DSPII 5000	5,000		multibit • 2 electrical out • rem • 42,13,28cm • Has digital in, balanced out	
Micromega Trio	6,450		bitstream • electrical out • rem • 34,48,31cm • AES/Toslink digital output	
Wadia 16	7,395		multibit • Glass, plastic, BNC & AES/EBU	
Jadis JS-1	8,068		multibit	
Krelli KSP20i	9,950		electrical out • rem • Balanced out, top loader	
Krelli KPS20i	9,990		bitstream • electrical out • rem • Balanced output	

CD TRANSPORTS				
Teac VRDS-T1	550	144	transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 44,15,33cm • <i>Superb quality engineering is mated to tidy and composed sound (tested with D-T1).</i>	REC'D
DPA Enlightenment	635		transport • rem • 40,28,8cm • Clock locks to DPA DACs	
Audio Alchemy DDS III	700		transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • <i>Designed primarily as transport, has analogue output</i>	
Micromega Drive 1	700		transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 43,28,88cm • Upgradable, AES/EBU out	
Arcam Delta 250	750	130	transport • rem • 43,9,28cm • <i>Arcam's best effort yet is a new design based on Philips CDM9 transport. Specification includes Sync Lock facility.</i>	REC'D
Pink Triangle Cardinal	795	144	transport • 46,8,36cm • <i>Soud quality is warm and communicative, but over-polished compared to PT Ordinal (tested with DaCapo and DC PSU).</i>	
Meridian 200	895	96	transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 32,32,10cm • <i>Light, fresh and very bubbly sound that is natural, engaging and unfatiguing.</i>	REC'D
Teac P-700	900	120	transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 23,14,40cm • <i>Tested with D-700, low resolution sound is warm, bubbly and entertaining.</i>	B'BUY
Audiomeca Damnation	950		transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 29,10,32cm	
Roksan ATT-DP3	995		transport • electrical out • rem • 46,12,35cm • AT&T optical, AES/EBU optional	
Micromega Drive 2	1,000		transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 43,28,88cm • Upgradable, AES/EBU out	
Meridian 500	1,095	133	transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 32,33,9cm • <i>Used with the 563 DAC, the combination is thin, brash and uncomfortable.</i>	
Audiomeca Damnation SE	1,100		transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 29,10,32cm • Trichord clocked	
Audiomeca Kreatura	1,199		transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 25,14,39cm • Heavily modified CDM	
Micromega T-Drive	1,200		transport • electrical out • rem • 22,28,88cm • Tray loading, AES/EBU out	
Audiomeca Kreatura SE	1,250		transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 25,14,39cm • Trichord clocked	
XTC CD Transport	1,250		transport • electrical out • rem • Philips laser, FRFB clock	
Audiolab 8000CDM	1,300		transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 45,8,36cm • Precision master clock	
Micromega Duo CD3.1	1,500		transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 34,9,31cm • Top loading, AES/EBU out	
Meridian 602	1,750	120	transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 32,33,10cm • <i>With matching 606 DAC, Meridian's top player sounds distinctive and elegant.</i>	REC'D
Counterpoint DA-11.5E	1,895	130	transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • <i>This model elivers a remarkably vivid and natural sound.</i>	REC'D
Theta Data Basic	1,997	130	transport • electrical out • rem • 42,8,34cm • <i>Includes a budget version of Teac's VRDS mechanism in a fancy case; overpriced.</i>	
Audiomeca Mephisto	2,100	144	transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 43,15,33cm • <i>Tested with Trichord Pulsar, the duo provides a highly composed and tactile sound.</i>	REC'D
PS Audio Lambda tr	2,250	133	transport • electrical out • rem • 38,8,34cm • <i>With Ultralink Two, sound positively sparkles with colour and resonant detail.</i>	REC'D
Micromega Duo CD2.1	2,750		transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 34,9,31cm • Top loading, AES/EBU out	
Wadia 8	3,195	130	transport • rem • 35,16,41cm • <i>Includes a budget version of Teac's VRDS mechanism in a fancy case; just too expensive for the performance on offer.</i>	
Theta Data II NTSC	3,290		transport • electrical out • rem • 42,12,40cm • AT&T, AES/EBU option	
Theta Data II PAL	3,490		transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 42,12,40cm • AT&T, AES/EBU balanced in	
ATD Drive 1	3,499		transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • 44,9,34cm • Top load, 2-box acrylic	
Teac P-2S	4,000	130	transport • rem • 23,14,49cm • <i>The latest version of Teac's luxury P-2 transport sounds as over-engineered as it looks.</i>	
Wadia 20	4,370		transport • Glass, plastic, BNC, AES/EBU	
Krell MD-20	4,999		transport • rem • 42,13,28cm • Top load, AT&T optical out	
Krell MD-10	7,990		transport • 2 electrical out • optical out • rem • 42,13,28cm	
Jadis JCOT	8,000		transport • rem • Top load	
Krelli KPS 20T	8,490		transport • electrical out • optical out • rem • AT&T, AES/EBU balanced in	
Krelli DT-10	9,090		transport • 2 electrical out • optical out • rem • 42,13,28cm • Front loader	
Wadia 7	9,995		transport • rem • 35,16,46cm	

DACs				
QED Positron	89		Upgrade PSU for Digit	
QED Digit Plus	139	113	bitstream • electrical out • <i>Bearing in mind its expensive but very forgiving performance, the Digit is almost embarrassingly cheap.</i>	B'BUY
Cambridge DACMagic 1	150	136	hybrid • <i>Ridiculously under-priced, this DAC is best suited to high end transports.</i>	REC'D
Audio A DAC-in-the-Box	230	127	multibit • electrical out • <i>This giveaway DAC may still rescue the oldest of players from obsolescence.</i>	REC'D
Counterpoint AD20	255		multibit • DACCard for DA-10E	
QED Digit Reference	299	136	bitstream • <i>No great advance on the basic QED Digit yet its enthusiastic sound is more than competitive at the price.</i>	REC'D
NVA Dacon	320		bitstream • electrical out	
Micromega Microdac	349	113	bitstream • electrical out • optical out • 22,5,15cm • <i>Modest but entertaining performer, the Microdac is brilliant with Arcam's D170.3 transport.</i>	
Counterpoint CS18	395		multibit • DACCard for DA-10E	
Audio Alchemy DDEv1.1	399		bitstream • electrical out • optical out • Upgradable external PSU	
Orelle DA-188	449		multibit • 22,7,23cm • DC coupled, optical & coax in	
Arcam Black Box 50	480	127	hybrid • electrical out • optical out • 43,7,28cm • <i>Measured and sophisticated sound from a DAC that leaves plenty in reserve for future upgrades.</i>	B'BUY
Teac D-T1	500	144	bitstream • electrical out • optical out • 44,10,33cm • <i>Teamed with VRDS-T1 for test, this superb quality unit is tidy and composed.</i>	REC'D
Woodside DAC2	509	101	multibit • electrical out • optical out • <i>Sharp, dynamic sound is captivating for its lack of grain and 'tizz'.</i>	REC'D
AVI S2000MD	549	136	multibit • 31,25,9cm • <i>Despite using a very different chipset, the S2000MD sounds as civilised and refined as AVI's other digital separates.</i>	
Roksan ATT-DA2	549		delta sigma • 22,10,33cm • DAC 4 inputs, optional AT&T	
DPA Renaissance	550		bitstream • 20,28,8cm • Unique DPA DX16 DAC	
Audio Note DAC1	600	127	multibit • electrical out • optical out • rem • <i>Oddball DAC with manual deemphasis switch. Needs a high preamp input impedance or bass will suffer.</i>	
Teac D-700	600	120	multibit • electrical out • optical out • 23,14,40cm • <i>With P-700, the D-700 may lack the resolution, but is bubbly and entertaining.</i>	B'BUY
Micromega Duo BS2	650	101	bitstream • 8,28,9cm • <i>Has a tendency to sound light, airy and 'fast' but it can also become a little hard or fatiguing with some digital outputs.</i>	
Counterpoint BB69	655		multibit • DACCard for DA-10E	
PS Audio DigiLink II	688		multibit • 38,8,16cm	
Perception DAC	695		multibit	
Audio Alchemy DDEv3.0	699		multibit • Upgradable external PSU	
Sonic Frontiers Transdac	699		multibit • 24,5,17cm	
Sonic Frontiers U.J.Bug	699		multibit • 24,5,17cm • Jitter reduction interface	
Micromega DAC	700		bitstream • 43,28,88cm • AES/EBU input	
Audiomeca Elixir	745	141	bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 25,39,9cm	
Arcam Black Box 500	750	136	bitstream • electrical out • optical out • rem • 43,9,28cm • <i>Sophisticated unit with Sync Lock and discrete DAC. Early samples sounded grubby and restrained.</i>	
Meridian 563	750	127	delta sigma • 3 electrical out • optical out • 33,9,34cm • <i>Warmer but no less detailed than 200-series, the 563 flies with a top rate transport</i>	REC'D
DPA Enlightenment	795		multibit • 20,28,8cm • Unique DPA DX32 DAC	
Audiolab 8000DAC	800	127	bitstream • 45,8,36cm • <i>Just as smooth and refined as its predecessor yet, sadly, still manages to obscure the passion or fire of music.</i>	

PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

Micromega T/DAC	800	bitstream • 22,28,88cm • Four inputs	
Pink Triangle Ordinal	837	136 bitstream • electrical out • optical out • 23,8,35cm • <i>The cheapest dual-differential DAC7 converter available offers top-flight sound quality.</i>	B'BUY
Monrio 18B	850	multibit • electrical out • optical out • 43,8,36cm • 18x4 bit, inc onboard PSU	
Woodside DAC1	909	87 multibit • electrical out • optical out • <i>Fine but slightly dated and costly package in performance terms - but flexible, musical and well built.</i>	
Sentec Diana	993	multibit • electrical out • optical out	
XTC DAC-1	1,000	multibit • electrical out • optical out • 32 - 48kHz, Vishay resistors	
Linn Numerik	1,075	144 multibit • 32,8,33cm • <i>A new 20 bit DAC and revised Karik transport have cleaned up; but sounds a tad dry and humourless.</i>	
PS Audio SuperLink 2	1,230	multibit • 38,8,16cm	
Counterpoint UA20	1,295	multibit • DACCard for DA-10E	
Counterpoint DA-11E	1,495	144 electrical out • optical out • rem • 49,6,27cm • <i>(Tested with DA-11E). Harsh and fatiguing sound.</i>	
Micromega Duo Pro 2	1,500	bitstream • 34,48,31cm • AES input	
Wadia 12	1,530	multibit • electrical out • optical out • Balanced and AT&T input	
Pink Triangle DaCapo	1,536	144 bitstream • electrical out • optical out • 46,8,35cm • <i>With Cardinal and DC PSU, the DaCapo is best with its 22bit option. It is warm but over-polished.</i>	
Pink Triangle DC Supply	1,590	144 46,8,35cm • Massive battery PSU for DaCapo	
Audio Note DAC3	1,650	multibit • rem	
Theta Pro-Prime II	1,800	bitstream • electrical out • 42,5,23cm	
Counterpoint DA-10E	1,895	144 electrical out • optical out • rem • Interchangeable DACs, optional	
Theta Probasic II	2,299	multibit • 42,5,29cm	
Sonic Frontiers SFD-1/2	2,495	multibit • 48,10,33cm • HDCD compatible, tune output	
PS Audio UltraLink 2	2,650	133 multibit • 38,6,20cm • <i>With Lambda transport, the sound positively sparkles with colour and resonant detail.</i>	REC'D
LFDA DAC3	2,699	multibit • 48,7,37cm • Optional balanced output	
DPA PDM256	2,995	133 bitstream • electrical out • optical out • 20,28,8cm • <i>Highly advanced, with adjustable dither. but the different settings only leads to compromise.</i>	
Krell Studio 2	3,198	multibit • 42,13,27cm • AT&T in	
Wadia 15	3,790	multibit • electrical out • optical out • rem • 35,9,41cm • Software upgradable	
Audio Research DAC2	3,940	multibit • 48,14,26cm • 20bit, 8x o/s	
Mark Levinson No 36	3,995	multibit • electrical out • 20 bit, FIFO input buffer	
Krell Studio	4,450	multibit • 42,6,32cm • AT&T in	
PS Audio Ref Link	4,550	multibit • 38,8,36cm • AT&T input	
Wadia 64.4	4,750	multibit • electrical out • optical out • 35,8,28cm • Balanced output	
Sonic Frontiers SFD-2/2	5,295	multibit • 48,10,33cm • HDCD compatible, tune output	
Theta Pro Gen III	5,690	multibit • 42,8,34cm • AT&T input option	
DPA PDM10924	5,995	bitstream • electrical out • optical out • 40,30,8cm • Unique DPA DX128 DAC	
Theta Pro Gen V	8,500	multibit • electrical out • 42,8,34cm	
Wadia 9	12,790	multibit • electrical out • optical out • rem • 44,9,36cm • Digital volume, separate PSU	
Krell Reference 64	14,900	multibit • 42,13,39cm • AT&T in	



Digital Recorders

Digital recorders come in a variety of different guises, but have yet to make much of an impact on the domestic market. At present there are four types to choose from: DAT (digital audio tape), MD (Mini Disc), and DCC (digital compact cassette) and CD-R (CD Recordable). DCC is backwards compatible inasmuch as the machines can play regular audio tapes. MD's claim to fame is its optical disc

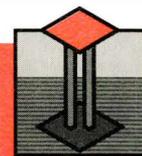
format, which offers instant track access and can't be worn out like a tape. DAT has been on the market for quite some time now, but has never really 'made it' as a consumer medium. In the last year or so it has begun to carve itself a niche at the top end of the market, replacing reel to reel tape recorders as the audiophile's tape-based medium. CD-R is just coming into its own with the release of Pioneer's PD-R05.

Key

MiniDisc, Digital Audio Tape,	
Digital Compact Cassette	.....type of recording medium
electrical, optical in	.....digital input(s)
electrical, optical out	.....digital output(s)
bitstream, multibit etc	.....DAC type

PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

DIGITAL RECORDERS			
Philips DCC134	150	Digital Compact Cassette • bitstream • 11,10,4cm • Portable: Dolby B, charger	
Philips DCC730	250	Digital Compact Cassette • electrical in • bitstream • 44,30,9cm	
Philips DCC170	250	Digital Compact Cassette • electrical in • bitstream • 11,10,9cm • Portable, wired remote	
Philips DCC951	280	Digital Compact Cassette • electrical in • optical in • electrical out • multibit • Turbodriven mech, 18 bit	
Sharp MD-M11E	450	MiniDisc • 8,3,11cm • Recorder, title generator	
Pioneer D-05	800	Digital Audio Cassette • 96kHz sampling	
Sony MBS501	800	MiniDisc • electrical in • optical in • electrical out • optical out • bitstream • 43,9,35cm • Sample rate converter	
Sony DTC80ES	800	Digital Audio Cassette • electrical in • optical in • electrical out • optical out • bitstream • 43,11,55cm • SBM	
JVC XM-D1BK	900	MiniDisc • electrical in • optical in • electrical out • optical out • bitstream • 18,5,13cm • Minidisc record and player	
Pioneer D-07	1,150	Digital Audio Cassette • electrical in • optical in • electrical out • optical out • 44,14,38cm • 96kHz record, Legato Link	
Teac R-9	1,200	Digital Audio Cassette • electrical in • optical in • electrical out • optical out • bitstream • 45,16,36cm • Based on TASCAM technology	
Meridian CDR	4,500	CD-R • electrical in • optical in • electrical out	



Stands & Supports

Hi-fi furniture is more important than you might imagine; the effect it can have on the sound of your system is far from subtle. Hi-fi furniture can be split up into two categories — equipment supports and loudspeaker stands.

■ It is not entirely clear what makes a great equipment support, but some are definitely more equal than others.

There's a variety of approaches and materials used include particle board, hardwood, glass and all manner of steel tube and section. The majority are built for sound quality first, aesthetics second, but there are attractive examples.

■ Speakers stands come in a variety of sizes and styles to suit different models. Use dealer or manufacturer recommendations to narrow down the choice of types, but as a general rule the you want the tweeter at ear height.

Key to stands & supports

shelf pitch	.....gap between shelves
60, 39, 48cm	.....size width, depth, height in cm
MDF	.....medium density fibreboard
pillar/frame	.....multi leg stand
column	.....single leg stand

PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

EQUIPMENT SUPPORTS			
Ixos 800	35	Equipment support • single shelf • Mini/midi pedestal	
Deadrock 701	40	Equipment support • Single module	
Ixos 701	40	Equipment support • single module	
JPW Add-on	50	Equipment support • Add-on shelves (x2)	
Ixos 711	60	Equipment support • 1 shelf • Toughened glass shelf	
Sound Organisation Z022	60	Equipment support • Wall mountable • 50w,47dcm • Removable shelf	
Ixos 802	70	Equipment support • 2 shelf • Mini component, 215mm spacing	
Sound Organisation Z230	70	Equipment support • 3 shelf • 50,40,43cm • Satin finish, self assembly	

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

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
Sound Organisation Z021	75	Equipment support • 2 shelf • 50,40,36cm	
JPW 3 tier	80	Equipment support • 3 shelf rack	
Ixos 803	90	Equipment support • 3 shelf • Mini component, 125mm spacing	
Sound Organisation Z030	95	Equipment support • 3 shelf • 50,40,43cm	
Alphason R24/24	100	Equipment support • 3 shelf, MDF • 60,39,48cm	
Alphason R17/17	100	Equipment support • 3 shelf, MDF • 60,39,34cm	
Alphason R12/12	100	Equipment support • 3 shelf, MDF • 60,39,24cm	
Ixos 802P	100	Equipment support • 2 shelf • mini - with pedestal/CD store	
Ixos 703	100	Equipment support • 3-shelf	
JPW 5 tier	100	Equipment support • 5 shelf rack	
Ixos 803P	110	Equipment support • 3 shelf • mini - with pedestal/CD store	
Ixos 804	110	Equipment support • 4 shelf • Mini component, 125mm spacing	
Sound Organisation Z060	115	Equipment support • 4 shelf • 50,40,62cm	
Alphason TV24/17	120	TV base module • 3 shelves, MDF • 67,39,41cm	
DNM DOMOWS	125	Turntable wall stand • Lightweight • 37 deepcm	
DNM DOMOPS	125	Turntable support • Lightweight • 37,50,46cm	
Mana Sound Frame	125	Equipment supports • 1 shelf • <i>Used singly (glass) for equipment, or in pairs for speakers</i>	REC'D
Sound Organisation Z550	125	Equipment support • 5 shelf • 50,40,77cm • Satin finish, self assembly	
Alphason GR24/24	130	Equipment support • 3 glass shelves • 60,39,48cm	
Alphason GR17/17	130	Equipment support • 3 glass shelves • 60,39,34cm	
Alphason GR12/12	130	Equipment support • 3 glass shelves • 60,39,24cm	
Ixos 713	130	Equipment support • 3 shelf • Toughened glass shelf	
Sound Organisation Z038	130	Equipment support • 5 shelf • 50,40,84cm	
Ixos 804P	140	Equipment support • 4 shelf • mini - with pedestal/CD store	
Ixos 704	140	Equipment support	
Alphason TV24/175	150	TV base module • 3 shelves, MDF • 67,39,34cm • Swivel top	
Mana Mini Table	150	Equipment support • Glass shelf	
Alphason VR24/24	160	Equipment support • 3 shelves, rosewood • 60,39,48cm	
Alphason VR17/17	160	Equipment support • 3 shelves, rosewood • 60,39,34cm	
Alphason VR12/12	160	Equipment support • 3 shelves, rosewood • 60,39,34cm	
Ixos 705	170	Equipment support • 5 shelf	
Soundstyle X300	170	Equipment support • 4 legs • 59,38,51cm • Glass shelves	
Ixos 714	190	Equipment support • 4 shelf • Toughened glass shelves	
Alphason AV24/17	200	AV base module • 5 shelves, MDF • 127,39,94cm • 'L' shaped	
Mana Sound Stage	200	Upgrade unit • <i>Upgrades amp stand or Reference table</i>	
Soundstyle X305	200	Equipment support • 3 shelf • 77,44,51cm • Glass shelves	
Soundstyle X053	200	Equipment support • 4 shelf • 64cm • 3 pillar, 16.9cm shelf pitch	
Soundstyle X050	200	Equipment support • 4 shelf • 64cm highcm • 3 pillar, 12.8cm shelf pitch	
Soundstyle X100	210	Equipment support • 4 glass shelves • 58,49,64cm • 16.9cm shelf pitch	
Alphason AV24/17S	230	AV base module • 6 shelf, MDF • 127,39,94cm • Swivel base for TV	
Ixos 715	230	Equipment support • 5 shelf • Toughened glass shelves	
Soundstyle X058	230	Equipment support • 5 shelf • 78cm • 3 pillar, 15.3cm shelf pitch.	
Mana Sound Table	235	Equipment support	
Soundstyle X310	240	Equipment support • 3 shelves • 103,44,51cm • Glass shelves	
Soundstyle X120	240	Equipment support • 6 glass shelves • 59,49,109cm • 16.9cm shelf pitch	
Soundstyle X105	240	Equipment support • 5 glass shelves • 59,49,84cm • 16.9cm shelf pitch	
Mana 2 Tier Amp stand	325	Equipment supports • 2 shelves • <i>Infinitely upgradable</i>	
Mana Reference Table	350	Equipment support • 1 shelf • <i>Infinitely upgradable single-tier stand for source components.</i>	B'BUY
Mana 3 Tier Amp Stand	450	Equipment supports • 3 shelves • <i>Infinitely upgradable</i>	
Mana 4 Tier AmpS tand	500	Equipment supports • 4 shelves • <i>Infinitely upgradable</i>	
Mana 5 Tier Amp Stand	600	151 Equipment supports • 5 shelves • <i>Infinitely upgradable. Gets the whole system organised</i>	B'BUY
Mana 6 Tier Amp Stand	700	Equipment supports • 6 shelves • <i>Infinitely upgradable. King among equipment stands</i>	

SPEAKER STANDS

JPW WB	30	Wall brackets	
Alphason NC1-60	40	Pillar type • 23w,60hcm • Double column, steel	
Alphason NC1-50	40	Pillar type • 23w,50hcm • steel	
Alphason NC1-40	40	Pillarty pe • 23w,40hcm • steel	
Apollo 1/4, 1/5, 1/6	40	Single column • 40.5, 51, 61cm • low mass	
Sound Organisation Z023	42	Speaker wall bracket	
Apollo 1/7, 1/9	45	Single column • 71, 91.5cm high • low mass	
JPW MS2	45	3 leg • 39,29,45cm • for Sonata	
Target SP	47	Frame type • 40 - 60hcm • low mass	
Apollo 2/4, 2/5, 2/6	50	Two column • 40.5, 51, 61cm • low mass	
Ixos 903	50	Single column • 60cm high	
Ixos 902	50	Single column • 47cm high	
Ixos 901	50	Single column • 39cm high	
Sound Organisation Z026	50	High - tripod base • 60cm	
Sound Organisation Z027	50	Mid - tripod base • 45cm tall	
Sound Organisation Z037	50	Low - tripod base • 30cm tall	
Target XL	50	Single column • 30 - 60hcm • fillable	
JPW MS3	55	3 leg • 37,30,61cm • For Minim	
Target T20/30/40	58	Frame type • 20 - 40hcm • low mass	
Apollo AFP 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	60	Frame type • low mass	
Target T50/60/70	60	Frame type • 50 - 70hcm • low mass	
Target TR	65	Multi-pillar • 30 - 70hcm • low mass	
Alphason NC11-60	70	Pillar type • 23w,60hcm • Double column, steel	
Alphason NC11-50	70	Pillar type • 23w,50hcm • Double column, steel	
Alphason NC11-40	70	Pillar type • 23w,40hcm • Double column, steel	
Apollo Olympus 4, 5, 6	70	Single 10cm dia column • 40.5, 51, 61cm	
Apollo 3/4, 3/5, 3/6	70	Three column • 40.5, 51, 61cm • low mass	
Apollo CKD 3, 4, 5, 6	70	Twin column • 36, 46, 53.5, 61cm high • high mass	
Apollo CKD 7	80	Twin column • high mass	
Sound Organisation Z040	70	Frame type • 45cm tall • Fixed top spikes	
Sound Organisation Z055	72	Frame type • 60cm tall • Fixed top spikes	
Target HS 8/12/16	75	Frame type • 20 - 40hcm • medium mass • fillable	
Sound Organisation Z010	76	Pillar type • 25cm tall	
Target HS20/24/28	77	Column type • 50 - 70hcm • bolt together	
Sound Organisation Z018	78	Pillar type • 46cm tall	
Apollo 4/4, 4/5, 4/6	70	Four column • 40.5, 51, 61cm • low mass	
JPW MS1	80	4-leg • 39,32,46cm • For AP2, AP3, P1	
Sound Organisation Z024	80	Pillar type • 61cm tall	
Target ST	98	Column type • 20 - 70hcm • medium mass	
Alphason Titan S-50	100	Pillar type • 29w,50hcm • cast iron	
Alphason Titan S-40	100	Pillar type • 29w,40hcm • cast iron	
Apollo A2 3, 4, 6	100	Single 10cm square column • 36, 46, 61cm high • welded, filled	

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS
Soundstyle X024	100	61cm
Soundstyle X020	100	48cm tall
Soundstyle X016	100	41cm tall
Soundstyle X012	100	31cm tall
Sound Organisation Z128	108	Column type • 45cm tall • Adjustable top/bottom spikes
Sound Organisation Z129	110	Pillar type • 61cm tall • Adjustable top/bottom stands
Alphason Tital L-60	130	Pillar type • 29w.60hcm • cast iron
Alphason Tital L-50	130	Pillar type • 29w.50hcm • cast iron
Alphason Titan L-40	130	Pillar type • 27w.40hcm • cast iron
Alphason Titan S-60	130	Pillar type • 29w.60hcm • cast iron
JPW HS2	130	For Ruby 2 • 26.29.45cm
JPW HS1	130	For Ruby 1 • 23.25.58cm
Target HJ	130	Multipillar • 25 - 61cm high • fully welded, filler provided
Target R3	255	Column type • 60cm high • high mass
Target R1	275	Column type • 53cm • high mass



Headphones

There are a variety of different approaches to headphone design. Among the more expensive models, electrostatic drivers are used in open-backed phones. The more down-to-earth models feature dynamic (moving coil) drivers in circular, open or closed-back designs. The advantage of open backs seems to be a

correspondingly open sound, but one can also hear external noise, of course. Closed-back designs are useful in situations where it is necessary to block out noise. ■ There are three styles of headphone: circumaural models enclose the ear; supra-aural designs feature a flat pad which presses on the outer ear; and intra-aurals (in-ear) rest inside the ear itself, à la personal stereos.

Key	
open back, sealed, in-ear	.....headphone type
275g	.....weight in grams
16 Ohm	.....impedance

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS
HEADPHONES		
Vivanco SR60	3	open back • Mini, fits outer ear
Vivanco SR12	3	open back • In ear, with spare plug
Maxell EB-125	4	in-ear model • 15g • 32 Ohm • Stereo ear buds
Maxell HP-100	4	in-ear model • 3g • 32 Ohm • Replacable pads, 1m lead
Maxell HP-200	5	open back • 30g • 32 Ohm • Replacable pads, 1m lead
Ross RE-233	5	open back • 25g • 8 Ohm • Micro
Vivanco SR52	5	open back • Mini headphones 3.5mm plug
JVC HA-22	6	in-ear model • 38g • 32 Ohm
Ross RH-150	6	in-ear model • 5g • 16 Ohm • Inner ear headphone
Ross RE-235	6	open back • 5g • 16 Ohm • Personal stereo
Ross RE-234	6	open back • 5g • 16 Ohm • Personal stereo
Ross RE-229	6	open back • 35g • 8 Ohm • Folding
Ross RE-2030	6	open back • 5g • 8 Ohm • Personal stereo
Ross RMH-300	7	open back • 51g • 8 Ohm • Lightweight
Ross RE-280	7	in-ear model • 10g • 16 Ohm • Vertical inner ear
Ross RE-246	7	open back • 5g • 16 Ohm • Micro stereo phones
Ross RE-223	7	sealed • 155g • 8 Ohm • Stereo/mono
Vivanco SR54	7	open back • Mini, volume control, 3.5mm
Vivanco SR14	7	open back • In ear, micro
Maxell EB-225	8	in-ear model • 44g • 21 Ohm • Stereo ear buds, winder case
Maxell HBS-150	8	in-ear model • 25g • 32 Ohm • Water resistant head buds
Maxell HP-400	8	in-ear model • 4g • 32 Ohm • With pouch, 6.3/3.5mm fit
Sony MDR-E505	8	in-ear model • Supplied soft case
Sony MDR-E515EX	8	in-ear model • 5g • 1m lead, mini plug
Sony MDR-007 Mk II	8	open back • 36g • 2m, 3.5/6.3mm plug
Vivanco SR16	8	open back • Micro, volume control 3.5mm
Maxell EBS-325	9	in-ear model • 13g • 32 Ohm • Water resistant earbuds
Ross RMH-500CD	9	open back • 48g • 16 Ohm • Lightweight
Ross RH-360CD	9	in-ear model • 16g • 16 Ohm • Vertical inner ear
Ross RE-2060CD	9	open back • 5g • 16 Ohm • Inner ear headphone
Audio Technica ATH-P1	10	open back • 88g • 24 Ohm • 'Omniphones'
Maxell EB-425	10	in-ear model • 13g • 32 Ohm • Stereo ear buds, winder case
Maxell HP-700	10	open back • 56g • 22 Ohm • Adjustable locking headband
Ross RMH-310TV	10	open back • 51g • 8 Ohm • For video and TV
Ross RH-550	10	in-ear model • 5g • 16 Ohm • Inner ear, with volume control
Sennheiser HD26	10	open back • 45g • 32 Ohm • Mini, 1.2m lead, dual plug
Sony MDR-009	10	open back • 40g • 2m, 3.5/6.3mm plug
Audio Technica ATH-S22	11	open back • 5g • 16 Ohm • Inner ear
Sony MDR-W07L	11	in-ear model • 13g • 1m mini plug
Ross RH-460CD	12	in-ear model • 16g • 16 Ohm • Vertical inner ear, volume pot
Sony MDR-A009	12	open back • in-ear
Sony MDR-E515V	12	in-ear model • 5g • 1m lead, mini plug
Aiwa HP-X201	13	sealed • 230g • Dual plug
Aiwa HP-A360	13	open back • 65g • 40 Ohm • Banded, bass resonator ducts
Maxell HP-500	13	45g • 32 Ohm • 2.7m lead, 6.3/3.5mm fit
Ross RDH-200CD	13	sealed • 150g • 8 Ohm • Closed back
Sennheiser HD36	13	open back • 62g • 32 Ohm • Mini, 1.2m lead, dual plug
Sony MDR-V50	13	sealed • -
Audio Technica ATH-P3	15	open back • 90g • 22 Ohm • 'Omniphones'
Beyer DT111 Alpha	15	open back • 30g • 32 Ohm • Miniature
Kenwood KH-535	15	in-ear model • 32 Ohm • 3.5mm plug, in-ear model
Maxell HP-1000	15	open back • 95g • 32 Ohm • 2.7m lead, digital ready
Ross RDH-100CD	15	sealed • 144g • 8 Ohm • CD headphone
Sennheiser HD56	15	open back • 72g • 32 Ohm • Mini, 1.2m lead, dual plug
Sony MDR-E525	15	in-ear model • 5g • 1m lead, mini plug
Sony MDR-24	15	open back • 7m, 3.5/6.3mm plug
Vivanco SR120	15	sealed • 32g • 32 Ohm • Large earcups
Audio Technica ATH-S44	16	open back • 5g • 16 Ohm • Inner ear
Pioneer SE-5	16	open back • 60g • 30 Ohm • 2m OFC cable

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE	SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
Sony MDR-25	16		open back	
Sony MDR-W12L	16		in-ear model • 1.2m mini plug	
Ross RDH-300CD	17	133	sealed • 155g • 8 Ohm • <i>In-lead controls are the highlights of this shoddy, sometimes aggressive sounding design.</i>	
Sony MDR-008TV	17		open back • 5m, 3.5/6.3mm plug	
JVC HA-CD88	18		open back • 38g • 32 Ohm	
Sony MDR-E535	18		in-ear model • 5g • 1.2m lead, mini plug	
Sony MDR-44	18		open back • 7m, 3.5/6.3mm plug	
Sony MDR-009TV	19		open back • 5m, 3.5/6.3mm plug	
Vivanco SR250	19		sealed • Xtra bass feature	
Aiwa HP-X301	20		sealed • 230g • 3m lead, dual plug	
Audio Technica ATH-P1/TV	20		open back • 55g • 25 Ohm • 'Omniphones', vol control	
Audio Technica ATH-P5	20		open back • 70g • 40 Ohm • 'Omniphones'	
Beyer DT111 Beta	20		open back • 30g • 16 Ohm • Neodymium magnet	
JVC HA-D525	20		sealed	
JVC HA-F65	20		in-ear model • 32 Ohm • In-ear	
Kenwood KH-757	20		in-ear model • 32 Ohm • 3.5mm plug, in-ear model	
Kenwood KH-1000	20	121	open back • 30g • 32 Ohm • <i>First step up from a true mini: a near miniature which is cheap, comfortable and inoffensive</i>	
Maxell HP-2000	20		open back • 140g • 32 Ohm • Volume control digital ready	
Pioneer SE-15	20		open back • 65g • 30 Ohm • 2m OFC cable	
Sony MDR-35	20		open back	
Sony MDR-CD30	20		sealed • 2m, 3.5/6.3mm plug	
Sony MDR-E747MP	20		in-ear model • 6g • 1.2m lead, mini plug	
Sony MDR-CD50	20		sealed • 180g • 24 Ohm • 2m, 3.5/6.3mm plug	
Sony MDR-5747	20		in-ear model • 6g • 1.2m lead, mini plug	
Vivanco SR150	20		sealed • 32g • 32 Ohm • In-line volume control	
Ross RDH-400CD	22		sealed • 186g • 8 Ohm • Digital headphone	
Sony MDR-P1TV	22		sealed • 5m, 3.5/6.3mm plug	
Sony MDR-A22L	22		in-ear model • 1.2m mini plug	
AKG K2	23		open back • 70g • 200 Ohm • Mini	
Pioneer SE-32	23		open back • 94g • 40 Ohm • 2.5metre OFC cable	
Aiwa HP-VX303	25		sealed • 230g • In-line controls, dual plugs	
AKG K33	25		open back • 90g • 50 Ohm	
Beyer DT111 Gamma	25		open back • 32g • 16 Ohm • With volume control	
JVC HA-D626	25		sealed	
JVC HA-D610	25		sealed • 120g • 32 Ohm • 3m, 6.3/3.5m jacks	
Kenwood KH-959	25		in-ear model • 32 Ohm • 3.5mm plug, in-ear model	
Pioneer SE-52	25		open back • 104g • 40 Ohm • 2.5metre OFC cable	
Vivanco SR200	25		sealed • 32g • 32 Ohm • Titanium finish	
Audio Technica ATH-M2A	28		sealed • 115g • 22 Ohm • Mid size	
Sennheiser Vegas	28		open back • 118g • 32 Ohm • 3m lead, 3.5/6.3mm	
Sennheiser Manhattan	28		open back • 118g • 32 Ohm • 3m lead, 3.5/6.3mm	
Sony MDR-CD250EX	28		sealed • 3m, 3.5/6.3mm lead	
Maxell HP-3000	30	133	120g • 32 Ohm • <i>Solid, smooth sounding supra-aural headphone, but congested and undynamic. Includes in-lead controls.</i>	
Pioneer SE-15V	30		open back • 65g • 30 Ohm • 5m OFC cable	
Technics RP-HT77	30		sealed • 160g • 32 Ohm • 3m lead, OFC wire	
Vivanco SR300	30		sealed • 32g • 32 Ohm • Single cable design	
Beyer DT211	33		open back • 120g • 40 Ohm • Supra-aural	
Pioneer SE-330D	35		sealed • 165g • 35 Ohm • 3m cable, bass boost duct	
Pioneer SE-400D	37	133	sealed • 185g • 35 Ohm • <i>Acceptable, if unexciting all-rounder, this supra-aural phone has good long-term comfort levels.</i>	REC'D
Sennheiser HD60TV	38		open back • 118g • 32 Ohm • 6.8m lead (inc vol control)	
Aiwa HP-X705	40		sealed • 130g • Dual plug, 2 m ext cable	
Kenwood KH-2020	40		sealed • 210g • 32 Ohm • 2.5m OFC lead, closed model	
Sennheiser HD445 II	40	121	open back • 125g • 52 Ohm • <i>Still the one by which others at the price are measured, though now slightly leaden sounding, with a cold treble</i>	B'BUY
Technics RP-HT300	40		sealed • Single sided cord	
Vivanco SR606	40	133	open back • 225g • 32 Ohm • <i>Although slightly overblown at times, this model is easy on the ears and essentially enjoyable</i>	REC'D
AKG K44	42	99	open back • 90g • 50 Ohm • <i>Good quality personal oriented phone, could have a better sense of space but is musically quite communicative.</i>	
Audio Technica ATH-M4A	42		sealed • 139g • 28 Ohm • Mid size	
JVC HA-D727	43		sealed	
Sony MDR-CD450	45	133	sealed • 260g • 24 Ohm • <i>Fair acoustic isolation and comfortable construction, moderate sound.</i>	REC'D
AKG K135	46	63	open back • 160g • 150 Ohm • <i>The K135s doesn't live up to the usual AKG standards, though it does have the ability to convey rhythm well.</i>	
Pioneer SE-500D	48		sealed • 175g • 35 Ohm • 3m cable, dual bass horn	
Beyer DT311	49	133	open back • 124g • 40 Ohm • <i>Uncharacteristically tight, unrefined sound quality from this otherwise well engineered 'phone.</i>	
Sennheiser HD414 Class	50		open back • 80g • 52 Ohm • The original lives on!	
Sennheiser HD455	50		open back • 3m lead, 3.5/6.3mm	
Sony MDR-IF210	50		infra-red cordless • 170g • Extra h/phone w/o transmitter	
Technics RP-HT400	50		sealed • Single sided cord	
Vivanco IR5700	50		Infra-red cordless	
Vivanco IR5000	50		Mono, infra red cordless	
Vivanco SR850	50		open back • Double bow design for comfort	
JVC HA-D710	55		sealed • 210g • 32 Ohm • 3m, 6.3/3.5m jacks	
Beyer DT331	59		open back • 210g • 40 Ohm • Circum-aural	
Pioneer SE-700D	60		sealed • 180g • 35 Ohm • 3m cable, dual bass horn	
Sony MDR-CD550	60	99	sealed • 270g • 45 Ohm • <i>Competent headphone creates remarkable space from a closed back design and sounds natural to boot.</i>	B'BUY
Technics RP-HT600	60		sealed • 3m lead, double headband	
JVC HA-D910	65	121	sealed • 220g • 32 Ohm • <i>Broadly acceptable if unexciting design with low level losses and some colourations.</i>	
Sennheiser HD465	65		open back • 3m lead, 3.5/6.3mm	
Beyer DT411	69	111	open back • 120g • 250 Ohm • <i>A reasonable but not very thrilling headphone that doesn't really offer enough at the price.</i>	
Kenwood KH-5000	70		sealed • 280g • 32 Ohm • 2.5m OFC lead	
Nakamichi SP7	70		open back • 150g • 45 Ohm	
Sennheiser 15.360/UK	70		sealed • 240g • Budget infra-red model	
Sony MDR-D33	70		sealed • 120g • 45 Ohm • 1.5m, 3.5/6.3mm plug	
Technics RP-HT700	70		sealed • 5m lead, double headband	
Vivanco IR6000	70		Stereo infra-red cordless	
Vivanco SR909	70		open back • 285g • 600 Ohm • Remote control lead, all plugs	
AKG K141	74		open back • 225g • 600 Ohm	
Jacklin Float Model 1	75	55	open back • 400g • 200 Ohm • <i>Whilst very unusual in appearance, the Floats give remarkable sound quality and openness at a reasonable price.</i>	B'BUY
Sennheiser HD475	75		open back • Selected drivers/diaphragm	
Audio Technica ATH-M7A	78		sealed • 210g • 40 Ohm • Mid size	
Sony MDR-IF210K	80		infra-red cordless • 170g • Seven metre range infra red	
AKG K240 Monitor	82	63	open back • 240g • 600 Ohm • <i>Something of a classic, these AKGs are very user-friendly in all respects; sonically on the warm side of normal.</i>	REC'D
Sennheiser HD25 SP	85		sealed • 115g • 85 Ohm • Monitoring headphone	
Beyer DT431	89		open back • 210g • 40 Ohm • Circum-aural	
Audio Technica ATH911	90		open back • 280g • 600 Ohm • Dynamic, full size	
A Technica ATH910PRO	90	55	sealed • 280g • 40 Ohm • <i>The closed back 910s are an improvement on the 909s, with a nice rhythmic quality rarely found with headphones.</i>	REC'D

Sony MDR-D55	90	sealed • 120g • 45 Ohm • 1.5m, 3.5/6.3mm plug	
Sony MDR-CD750	90	111 sealed • 290g • 45 Ohm • Reasonably comfortable and eminently listenable, these Sonys have characteristically good bass power and relaxed HF.	REC'D
Vivanco IR6500	90	Stereo infra-red with charger	
Beyer DT511	99	open back • 200g • 250 Ohm • Circum-aural	
Jecklin Float Model 2	99	63 open back • 400g • 200 Ohm • Helmet shaped, but open sounding and comfortable in long term, despite lack of adjustment.	REC'D
Sennheiser HD535	100	open back • 255g • 150 Ohm • 3m lead, 3.5/6.3mm	
Technics RP-F10	100	121 sealed • 300g • 32 Ohm • Another very comfortable sealed circum-aural model, has modest sound isolation and uneven, sound favouring bass.	
Vivanco SR10001FL	110	open back • 265g • 100 Ohm • In-front localisation	
AKG K270	112	sealed • 250g • 75 Ohm	
AKG K280 Parabolic	117	63 open back • 250g • 75 Ohm • Revealing twin-driver design uses the same design principles as a satellite dish to beam sound into ear.	REC'D
AKG K400	118	121 open back • 250g • 120 Ohm • Comfortable over long sessions. Sound is exquisitely detailed, dynamic and uncoloured.	REC'D
Sennheiser HD545 Ref	120	open back • 255g • 150 Ohm • 3m lead, 3.5/6.3mm	
Sony MDR-D77	120	sealed • 140g • 45 Ohm • 1.5m, 3.5/6.3mm plug	
Vivanco IR7100	120	Stereo infra-red cordless	
AKG K270 Studio	121	sealed • 250g • 75 Ohm	
Beyer DT531	129	144 open back • 245g • 250 Ohm • Circum-aural	REC'D
Beyer IRS790	129	open back • 270g • Cordless infra-red	
AKG K500	138	111 open back • 250g • 120 Ohm • K500 offers impressive definition. Balance is on the light side but transparency is high.	REC'D
Beyer DT770 Pro	139	sealed • 250g • 600 Ohm • Circum-aural	
Beyer DT100	139	sealed • 350g • 600 Ohm • Choice of impedances	
Sennheiser HD565 Ovat'n	140	open back • 255g • 150 Ohm • 3m lead, 3.5/6.3mm	
Sennheiser HD265 Linear	140	sealed • 260g • 150 Ohm • Closed back	
Vivanco IR7600	140	Stereo infra-red cordless	
Vivanco SR200IFL	140	open back • In-front localisation	
Sennheiser IS450	150	160g • Infra-red cordless - hi-fi	
Beyer DT801	159	sealed • 250g • 250 Ohm • Circum-aural	
Sennheiser HD25	160	sealed • 140g • 70 Ohm • Professional, closed back	
Beyer DT990 Pro	163	open back • 230g • 600 Ohm • Circum-aural	
Stax SR34	169	open back • 170g • Electrostatic	
Beyer DT811	179	open back • 245g • 250 Ohm • Circum-aural	
Sennheiser IS550	180	170g • Infra-red cordless	
Technics RP-F30	180	sealed • 340g • 32 Ohm • 3m lead, XBS double drive	
Sony MDR-610k	190	infra-red cordless • 470g • Seven meter range infra-red	
AKG K340	191	75 open back • 380g • 400 Ohm • Heavyweight cans in most respects, the K340 with its electrostatic tweeter is a very revealing headphone.	REC'D
Beyer IRS890	199	open back • 270g • Cordless infra-red	
Beyer DT901	199	sealed • 280g • 250 Ohm • Circum-aural	
Sennheiser HD 580 P	200	open back • 260g • 300 Ohm • Flagship model	
Sony MDR-CD1000	200	111 sealed • 330g • 45 Ohm • A fine sounding and comfortable headphone that's likely to work well with most sources.	REC'D
Beyer DT911	219	111 open back • 275g • 250 Ohm • Probably too revealing for many headphone amps, these are very subtle and fine, if expensive cans.	REC'D
Stax SR Gamma	239	55 open back • 300g • One down from the Lambda, the Gamma is an excellent headphone with little to criticise bar the price.	REC'D
JVC HA-D1000	250	sealed • 340g • 32 Ohm • 5m, 6.3/3.5m jacks	
Stax SR84	259	open back • 160g • Electrostatic	
Audio Technica ATH9000	273	111 open back • 240g • 32 Ohm • Electrets which connect to the amp's speaker outputs, they sound a little too smooth, but would suit aggressive amps.	
Stax SR Lambda	349	open back • 325g • Electrostatic	
Jecklin Float ELS	399	55 open back • 600g • 8 Ohm • These electrostatics have an openness of sound that is rarely found in the breed, with good dynamic range to boot.	REC'D
Stax Gamma Pro	399	63 open back • 300g • With SRD-X Pro, the Gamma Pro is like a stethoscope for your hi-fi, revealing subtleties that many loudspeakers fail to resolve.	REC'D
Stax Lambda Pro	449	55 open back • 325g • Tested with SRD-7B PSU, this is an industry reference, and is frighteningly revealing.	REC'D
Stax Lambda Sig	549	72 open back • 325g • With SRM-T1, the Signature must be the most transparent headphone available.	REC'D
AKG K1000	646	99 open back • 270g • 120 Ohm • One of the best dynamics on the market, hooks directly into speaker outputs.	REC'D
JVC HA-F25	699	in-ear model • 32 Ohm • In ear	
Sennheiser IS850	860	330g • Digital audiophile infra-red	
Sennheiser HE60/HEV70	998	open back • 260g • Electrostatic with energiser	
Stax Omega	1,695	open back • 400g • Electrostatic	
Sennheiser Orpheus	9,652	open back • 365g • Electrostatic, valve energiser	



Loudspeakers

As the last item in the hi-fi chain, the loudspeaker is merely the slave of what has gone before; it is capable only of reproducing a signal as good as it is fed. Nevertheless, the distortions (colorations and stereo effects) introduced by loudspeakers (and rooms) tend to be greater than those anywhere else in the hi-fi chain, so careful selection of models is very important.

The average loudspeaker consists of an enclosure (much of which may have begun life as part of a tree) plus a couple of drive units hidden behind a removable grille. Inside the box lurks a simple electrical circuit known as a crossover, which divides the incoming (full range) signal into the right bits for the drivers to handle. The designer's primary task is to balance the 'sensitivity' of the loudspeaker (how loud it goes for a given electrical input) against the bass extension

(how low it goes), for the given box size. After that, such subtleties as coloration (or lack of it) and dispersion come into the equation.

Careful placement of the loudspeakers within the room is as important as the initial choice of model. For good stereo the enclosures need to be more or less the same distance from nearby walls.

There are two subsections within the overall heading of loudspeakers: these are satellites and subwoofers, and active subwoofers. The former is a combination of small mid/treble units and a single subwoofer which provides the bass. They are primarily designed for situations where the sight of loudspeakers would harm domestic harmony. Active subwoofers have built in power amplifiers and offer 'real' bass extension.

Key to loudspeakers

horn, po, ted, sealed etc cabinet type
 2 driver number of drive units
 108dB sensitivity @ 1metre for 2.83 volts
 8 Ohms nominal impedance
 100W manufacturer's power rating

Key to satellites & subwoofers

89dB sensitivity @ 1metre for 2.83 volts
 70 W power rating in Watts

Key to active subwoofers

stereo subwoofer type
 50W amplifier power
 THX THX-approved (where appropriate)

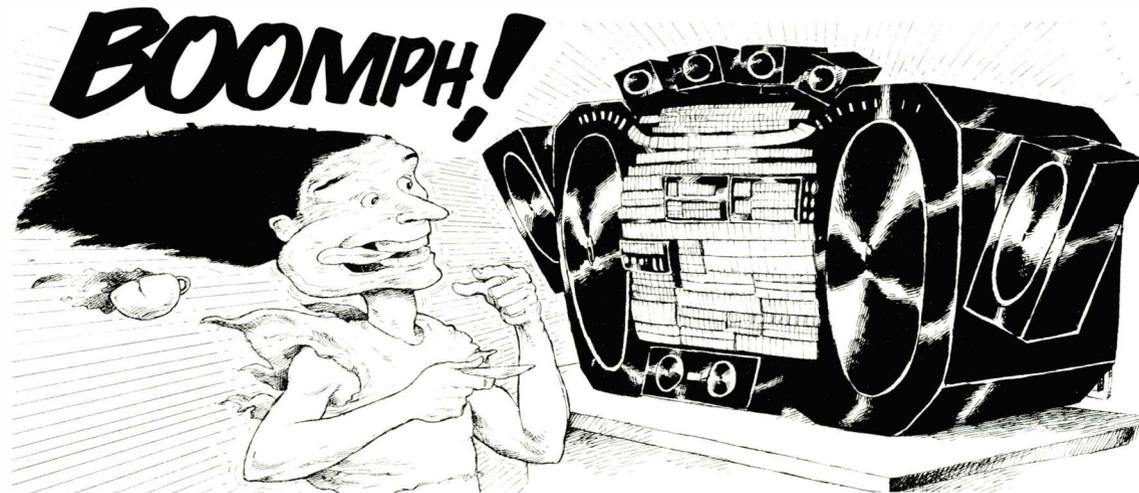
PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

LOUDSPEAKERS			
JPW Minim	80	82 ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 70W • 19,28,20cm • Civilised but undynamically, the Minim is great in small rooms and at limited volume.	REC'D
JVC SP-V50	80	ported • 2 driver • 23,41,21cm • Magnetically shielded	
Sony SS-E500	80	sealed • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 35,47,20cm • Magnetically shielded	
Teac LS-X8	80	ported • 2 driver • 8 Ohms • 30W • 11,18,11cm • In black or white	
Technics SB-CS55	80	ported • 2 driver • 8 Ohms • 60W • 25,43,25cm • Shelf/stand, shielded	
GLL Arena	89	87dB • 6 Ohms • 70W • 26,23,14cm	
JPW Minim Pair Solid	89	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 70W • 19,28,20cm • Shielded	
Wharfedale Valdius 100	89	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 180W • 27,17,18cm • 2-way bookshelf	
Jamo Cornet 20.4	90	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 21,16,13cm • Black/mahogany	
Advent Mini	99	2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 16,28,14cm • Bookshelf/stand mount	
Celestion Little 1	99	sealed • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 9,20,15cm	
Celestion 1	99	114 ported • 2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 16,27,21cm • It sounds a bit scrappy and untidy, but its heart is in the right place.	B'BUY

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE	SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
Wharfedale Diamond 6R	99		ported • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 16,27,22cm • Stand/bookshelf mount	
Yamaha NS-C80	99		2 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 80W • 14,45,17cm	
Allison AL100	100	94	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 33,24,19cm • Loud and lively budget wall-mount is big and beefy, but lacks sparkle and refinement	B'BUY
Gale Ref Monitors	100		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • Bookshelf, black finish	
Goodmans HT100	100		2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 25,53,20cm	
Interaudio XL1000	100		2 driver • 8 Ohms • 50W • 19,29,17cm	
Jamo Studio 110	100		ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 50W • 42,24,22cm • Black finish	
JPW Sonata Vinyl	100		ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 23,32,22cm	
JVC SP-X220TBK	100		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 24,66,24cm	
Mission 73S	100		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 15,26,15cm • Stand mount, shelf, w/brackets	
Realistic Minimus Pro-77	100		ported • 2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 55W • 14,22,11cm • Revised design	
Revolver Beretta	100		ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 80W • 30,19,22cm • Bookshelf/stand mount	
Sony SS-J90AV	100		2 driver • 167 Ohms • 19,12,15cm • Shielded centre speaker	
Sony SS85E	100		sealed • 2 driver • 85dB • 4 Ohms • 70W • 9,32,24cm • UK optimised sound	
TDL NFM2-S	100		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 18,45,17cm • Priced for single speaker	
TDL NFM	100	130	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 18,30,17cm • A disappointing underperformer in our tests, at a low price	
Technics SB-CS75	100		ported • 3 driver • 8 Ohms • 60W • 27,49,25cm • Composite mica cone mid	
Wharfedale Valdis 200	109		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 180W • 38,21,22cm • Stand/bookshelf	
Wharfedale Modus Micro	109		ported • 2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 14,23,12cm • Shielded	
Canon SV-15	110		ported • 2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 24,17cm • Utility - wide dispersion	
Jamo Sat 160	110		sealed • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 14,20,88cm	
Jamo D115	110		2 driver • 91dB • 75W • 42,24,22cm	
Jamo Cornet 30.4	110		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 55W • 32,20,23cm • Black ash or Mahogany	
Mordaunt-Short MS05i	110	141	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 26,17,18cm • Tiny and hence bass light, but fine voicing. (redesignated 'i' but unchanged).	REC'D
Bose XL1000	115		ported • 2 driver • 8 Ohms • 50W • 29,19,17cm	
JBL Control One	115	90	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 24,156,14cm • Sub-miniature with forward midrange and real bass; price justified by build	
Mordaunt-Short CS1 S	115		ported • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 16,23,13cm • Shielded, Posittec protected	
GLL Maxim	119	122	86dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 10,26,17cm • Budget miniature offers well balanced strengths and few weaknesses at a bargain price; a bit feeble.	REC'D
Wharfedale Modus Centre	119		ported • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 46,14,12cm • Shielded centre speaker	
AMC WM50	120		2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 19,28,7cm • Ceiling mount	
Jamo Artina	120		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 25,29,8cm • Small, flat wall speaker	
JPW Sonata	120	71	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 23,32,22cm • Fine sound if limited bass and dynamic range, wood veneered at a silly price.	B'BUY
Pioneer CS-3030	120		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 27,54,24cm • Bookshelf	
Sony SS125E	120		sealed • 2 driver • 86dB • 4 Ohms • 90W • 22,38,38cm • UK optimised sound	
Yamaha NS-E80	120		2 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 50W • 27,20,7cm	
B&W Solid HCM15	125		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 17,24,17cm • White & black finishes	
Celestion Impact 10	129		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 75W • 31,19,21cm • Inverted drivers	
Celestion CSC	129		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 75W • 33,13,15cm • Centre channel	
KEF Coda 7	129	145	ported • 2 driver • 91dB • 6 Ohms • 70W • 18,30,24cm • 2-way stand/shelf	REC'D
B&W Solid HCM2	130		ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 14,20,14cm • White or black finishes	
Canon S-C10	130		ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 95W • 34,15,15cm • Dolby P-L centre speaker	
Jamo Sat 200 II	130		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 15,22,88cm • Stereo passive sub for SW200II	
JPW Subwoofer	130		ported • 1 driver • 95dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 26,51,27cm	
JVC SP-X550BK	130		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 24,66,24cm	
Mission 731	130	141	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 31,17,20cm • Good looking and cleverly conceived high-tech miniature could have more brio.	
Visonik David 5001	132		50W • 10,17,10cm	
Boston Acoustics HD5	139	110	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 25,16,18cm • Pretty miniature lacks boxiness, but is short of drama and dynamic drive.	
Boston Acoustics 325	139		2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 50W • 17,17,5cm • Wall/ceiling white flush mount	
Celestion CS135	139	128	subwoofer • 2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 90W • 52,19,34cm • Compact hideaway passive sub lacks deep bass; for high sensitivity speakers	
Heybrook Prima	139	110	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 60W • 20,29,18cm • Fine pace and timing, but balance is forward and bass is tight.	REC'D
Revolver Colt	139		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 30,19,22cm • Bookshelf/stand mount	
Wharfedale Modus Mini	139		ABR • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 14,39,12cm • Shielded two-way	
Genexxa GX650	140		90dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 23,76,26cm	
Interaudio XL2000	140		2 driver • 8 Ohms • 70W • 23,36,18cm	
Jamo Studio 140	140		ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 50W • 50,22,26cm	
Jamo Sat 300 II	140		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 15,21,8cm • Use with SW500 & SW300	
Jamo Cornet 40.4	140	130	ported • 20 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 32,20,22cm • Pretty presentation and a strong box, but poor driver fixing. Decent if bright sound.	
Mordaunt-Short MS10i	140		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 19,31,22cm	
Advent Baby 2	149		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 26,39,15cm • Bookshelf/stand mount	
Boston Acoustics CR6	149		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 26,15,20cm • Magnetically shielded	
Celestion MP1	149	140	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 22,30,15cm	REC'D
Celestion CS2	149		ported • 2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 16,29,22cm	
Harman-Kardon LS0200	149	130	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 21,35,30cm • Laid back to a fault but entertaining nevertheless, and a big box for the price.	REC'D
NAD 800	149		ported • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 60W • 20,32,24cm • 10 litre enclosure	
Rogers LS1	149	143	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 20,20,30cm • A well-balanced mid-band can't mask the shut-in performance of this near-recommended mini.	
Tannoy 631	149	141	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 70W • 19,34,15cm • Balanced, open, unboxy and quite lively, but lacks muscle.	B'BUY
Wharfedale Valdis 100	150		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 180W • 47,25,23cm • Stand/bookshelf	
Yamaha NS-C110	149		2 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 120W • 15,47,18cm	
B&W CWM5	150		2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 16,22,7cm • In wall	
Canon S-25	150		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 33,21,22cm • Magnetically shielded	
Gale Model 2	150		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • Bookshelf, black finish	
Goodmans HT170	150		2 driver • 92dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 25,70,22cm	
Infinity SM65	150		ported • 94dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 34,20,19cm • Auto reset protection circuit	
Infinity Reference 1i	150		sealed • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 50W • 34,20,20cm • Pedestal	
JPW P1 Vinyl	150	102	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 26,44,25cm • Competent loudspeaker for the price, with a safe sound that won't disappoint.	B'BUY
Mission 73C	150		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 16,20,43cm • TV top, shielded	
Mordaunt-Short CS-1 DM	150		sealed • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 23,16,13cm • 2 compact paintable speakers	
Mordaunt-Short HT30	150		ported • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 25,43,29cm • Shielded, Posittec protected	
Mordaunt-Short SW1	150	128	subwoofer • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 24,58,26cm • Pretty finished and inexpensive passive subwoofer is only really useful with sub-miniature speakers	
Technics SB-CS95	150		ported • 3 driver • 8 Ohms • 100W • 29,54,25cm • Composite mica cone mid	
Visonik Sub 4	154		100W • 36,49,31cm	
Wharfedale Modus One	159		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 22,41,29cm • Stand/bookshelf mount	
AMC WM75	160		2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 22,30,9cm • Ceiling mount	
Bose XL2000	160		ported • 2 driver • 8 Ohms • 70W • 36,23,18cm	
Denon SC-E313	160		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 23,36,23cm • Shielded, red mahogany veneer	
Denon SC-E313	160		ported • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 22,75,23cm • UK designed & built	
Grundig BX1	160		ported • 2 driver • 4 Ohms • 60W • 23,40,30cm • 16 litre	
Interaudio XL3000	160		2 driver • 8 Ohms • 70W • 29,46,23cm	
Jamo D135	160		2 driver • 94dB • 90W • 52,28,25cm	
Visonik David 6001	163	74	2 driver • 87dB • 60W • 13,20,12cm • Sharp styling, but the complex grillwork worsens a sound which starts off with too much top and not enough bottom.	
Boston Acoustics Runabt	169		2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 22,15,16cm • White indoor/outdoor system	
Celestion CS4	169		ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 18,33,23cm	
GLL Mezzo	169	141	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 21,36,25cm • Splendid midband but a dull treble. Could suit budget systems well.	REC'D
Allison AL105	170	78	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 24,37,21cm • Pretty enough in appearance; sonically the AL105 doesn't really make the grade at the price.	
GLL Imagio IC100	170		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 35,23,24cm • ICT coaxial driver	

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PRODUCT	£	ISSUE	SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
Jamo Studio 180	170		ported • 3 driver • 92dB • 80W • 22,50,26cm	
Jamo Sat 500	170		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 16,21,14cm • Satellites for SW500	
JPW P1	170	141	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 26,44,25cm • <i>Longstanding design is remarkable material value (real wood etc) and sounds pretty too.</i>	B'BUY
Pioneer CS-5030	170		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 140W • 31,53,25cm • Bookshelf	
Boston Acoustics 350	179		2 driver • 4 Ohms • 50W • 24,17,6cm • Wall/ceiling white flush mount	
Boston Acoustics 335	179		2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 18,9cm • Wall mount, white flush	
Boston Acoustics Satellites179	179		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • Also A/V spkrs, black/white	
Wharfedale Modus Sub	179		ported • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 57,23,38cm • Two channel double tuned sub-w	
Bose XL3000	180		ported • 2 driver • 8 Ohms • 90W • 47,29,23cm	
Canon S-30	180	114	ported • 1 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 75W • 23,27,24cm • <i>Moulded design has lively coherence, with 'wide imaging stereo'.</i>	REC'D
Jamo Converta	180		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 23,5,235cm • Lamp-like appearance	
TDL NFM2	180		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 18,45,17cm	
Celestion Centre 2	189		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 17,16,42cm • Centre channel	
Celestion 5 MkII	189		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 90W • 25,35,21cm • Larger version of Celestion 3	
KEF Coda 8	189		ported • 2 driver • 91dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 20,32,29cm • Developed from Coda 7	
Tannoy G32	189	135	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 90W • 51,43,27cm • <i>Clever cabinet avoids boxiness and promotes focus imaging and bass</i>	B'BUY
B&W DM600i	190	135	sealed • 2 driver • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 100W • 21,36,25cm • <i>Smart cosmetics and a even balance, but bland; and currents hungry</i>	REC'D
Bose 101 M'ble Monitor	190		1 driver • 4 Ohms • 60W • 13,23,15cm • Black finish	
Polk RT3	190		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 19,32,22cm • Shielded stand/shelf	
Rega Kyte	198	114	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 19,31,19cm • <i>Has splendid timing and coherence, sounds very explicit and informative.</i>	B'BUY
Royd The Herald	198		ported • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 31,20,18cm • Stand mount	
B&W DM601	199		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 26,21,25cm • Kevlar bass, metal dome	
Boston Acoustics CR7	199		2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 30,22,24cm • Magnetically shielded	
Celestion Impact 15	199		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 90W • 39,24,25cm • Inverted drivers	
GLL Magnum	199		86dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 25,42,29cm	
Harman-Kardon LS0300	199		88dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 21,38,80cm	
Heybrook Solo	1999	0	sealed • 2 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 75W • 23,36,23cm • <i>Untidy bass and treble, but handles complex rhythmic material well.</i>	REC'D
KEF 60S	199		ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 60W • 15,25,17cm • Uni-Q, shielded, AV & hi-fi	
Revolver Purdey Mk II	199		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 120W • 75,19,22cm • Floor stand, spiked base	
Wharfedale Modus Three	199		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 22,57,29cm • Stand/bookshelf mount	
Wharfedale Valdis 400	199		ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 80,25,26cm • Floor standing	
ZYP AI	199	110	sealed • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 14,22,12cm • <i>Cute metal cased micro-miniature is quite coloured but great fun.</i>	REC'D
Acoustic Energy AE100	200		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 75W • 30,18,25cm • Internally braced MDF box	
B&W Solid Monitor	200		ported • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 17,24,15cm • Various colours	
Canon S-B20	200		subwoofer • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 48,39,37cm • Free standing, passive	
Cerwin Vega HED165	200		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 4 Ohms • 120W • 22,84,22cm	
Gale Model 4	200		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • Bookshelf, black finish	
Infinity Reference 11i	200		sealed • 6 Ohms • 75W • 39,22,34cm • Pedestal	
Interaudio XL4000	200		2 driver • 8 Ohms • 75W • 32,56,29cm	
Jamo Converta Light	200		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 235cm • Utility speaker, inc light	
Jamo D165	200		2 driver • 94dB • 100W • 60,31,27cm	
Jamo Cornet 60.4	200		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 42,23,22cm • Black ash - Mahogany	
JPW AP2	200	106	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 26,44,25cm • <i>Real wood finish, and performance is cleaner but similar to P1 Vinyl overall.</i>	REC'D
Kenwood LS-200G	200		ported • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 60W • 21,35,30cm • European design	
Mission 732	200	141	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 41,21,31cm • <i>Attractive presentation but a rather dull and thick sounding speaker, and a tad pricey too.</i>	
Monitor Audio MA301	200		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 27,17,20cm • Gold dome tweeter	
Monitor Audio Monitor 1 G	200		sealed • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 16,24,16cm • Miniature stand/shelf mount	
Mordaunt-Short CS-1 T	200		ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 16,23,13cm • Shielded, Positex protected	
Mordaunt-Short MS20i	200	135	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 22,37,22cm • <i>Alloy tweeter, MCS woofer</i>	B'BUY
Philips Legend FB720II	200	122	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 75W • 21,37,31cm • <i>Liveliness, coherence and fine information retrieval justifies the odd looking baffles.</i>	B'BUY
Technics SB-M20	200		ported • 2 driver • 60W • 20,32,23cm	
Boston Acoustics 360 SII	209		2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 22,15,7cm • Wall/ceiling, flush mount	
AMC WM100	210		2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 26,36,10cm • Ceiling mount	
Canon V-100	210		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 75W • 25,33,17cm • Corner mount, wide dispersion	
Advent Graduate	219		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 210W • 28,44,17cm • Bookshelf/stand mount	
ZYP AI T	219		sealed • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 14,22,12cm • Magnetically shielded	
Allison MS200	220		2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 75W • 13,25,14cm • Boundary, stand mount	
Allison AL110	220	102	2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 24,40,23cm • <i>Compact bookshelf model is a little dry and mid-forward, but bass is extended and solid.</i>	REC'D
Bose XL4000	220		ported • 2 driver • 8 Ohms • 100W • 57,32,30cm	
Polk M3 II	220		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 17,29,21cm • Multi-app, incl wall bracket	
Visonik David 8001	228		80W • 16,25,17cm	
Castle 1515	229		ported • 2 driver • 8 Ohms • 80W • 17,35,20cm • Available in 9 finishes	
KEF Q10	229		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 19,32,26cm • Uni Q, shielded	
Grundig BX2	230		ported • 3 driver • 4 Ohms • 80W • 24,49,33cm • 22 litre	
JPW AP3	230	46	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 26,52,29cm • <i>Good stereo and well balanced overall; character is well suited to vinyl replay.</i>	REC'D
JVC SP-X990BK	230		ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 31,86,27cm	
Pioneer CS-7030	230		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 190W • 35,70,28cm • Bookshelf	
Boston Acoustics CR8	239		ABR • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 39,22,27cm • Magnetically shielded	
Celestion 7 MkII	239		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 31,45,24cm	
B&W CWM6i	240		2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 23,32,8cm • In wall	
Monitor Audio Mon 7 GII	245		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 17,35,17cm • Stand/shelf mount	
B&W Solid HCM1	249		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 17,24,17cm • White or black finishes	
Boston Acoustics 380	249		2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 31,24,8cm • Wall/ceiling white flush mount	
Chord Sys Audio 905	249		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 27,15,19cm • Black Ash + Kumarka (brown)	
NAD 802	249		ported • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 80W • 20,40,26cm • 11.5 litre enclosure	
Rogers LS33	249		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 36,24,21cm • Biwire terminals	
B&W DM610i	250	141	sealed • 2 driver • 89dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 24,49,31cm • <i>Fine bass extension and a smooth, well-balanced but slightly heavy and laid back sound.</i>	
Bose VS100	250		2 driver • 8 Ohms • 23,15,15cm	
Canon S-35	250		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 75W • 23,27,24cm • Wide Imaging Stereo	
Cerwin Vega VS8	250		ported • 2 driver • 94dB • 4 Ohms • 100W • High sensitivity	
Cerwin Vega VS8	250		ported • 2 driver • 94dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 28,51,29cm • Bookshelf	
Infinity SM85	250		ported • 98dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 46,29,27cm • Auto reset protection circuit	
Jamo Classic 4	250		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 100W • 47,20,25cm	
Jamo Art	250		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 35,40,9cm • Shape and size of shallow 20i	
Pioneer S-4UK	250	139	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 80W • 21,37,28cm • <i>Latest version now balances pretty well, with a coherent lightweight bass.</i>	REC'D
Polk RT5	250		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 22,39,25cm • Shielded stand/shelf	
System Audio 905	250	142	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 15,27,21cm	
Yamaha NS10M	250		2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 21,38,20cm	
Royd Minstrel	259	135	ported • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 69,18,12cm • <i>Not much wellie or loudness but fine coherence and timing a bit bright.</i>	B'BUY
Wharfedale Modus Five	259		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 22,65,29cm • Stand/bookshelf mount	
Dali 102B	260		88dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 21,32,26cm	
Celestion 9	269	102	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 21,50,25cm • <i>Nicely presented and fair material value, with impressively flat mid to bass balance.</i>	
Heybrook HB1	269		sealed • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 29,47,23cm • Boundary, shielded option	
Bose 151 Environmental	270		2 driver • 6 Ohms • 60W • 24,14,16cm • Waterproof	
Pioneer S-60	270		ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 80W • 22,47,28cm • Bookshelf	

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
Bose 161 Freestyle	275	2 driver • 6 Ohms • 60W • 25,14,16cm	
Mordaunt-Short MS30i	275	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 25,43,28cm • Alloy tweeter, MCS woofer	
Mordaunt-Short HT50	275	ported • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 25,87,33cm • Positec, integrated subwoofer	
ZYP A2S	275	sealed • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 22,14,12cm • Studio nearfield monitor	
Boston Acoustics CR9	279	ABR • 2 driver • 91dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 50,25,29cm • Stand/shelf, shielded	
Celestion Impact 20	279	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 47,28,29cm • Twin vented, shielded	
Allison AL115	280	2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 28,51,26cm • Boundary, stand mount	
B&W DM602	280	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 49,24,31cm • Gold anodised dome	
Monitor Audio MA100G	280	sealed • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 16,24,16cm • Shielded for AV use	
Pioneer CS-9030	280	ported • 3 driver • 92dB • 8 Ohms • 220W • 39,75,29cm • Bookshelf	
Origin Live OL-IB	289	135 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 20,30,19cm • <i>Pretty miniature has a punchy, dynamic midband, but costs a lot for the engineering on offer.</i>	
Bose 201 Ser III	290	3 driver • 8 Ohms • 60W • 38,20,25cm • Direct/reflecting technology	
ZYP A25T	295	sealed • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 22,14,12cm • Magnetically shielded	
Linn Sekrit On Passive	298	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 60W • 26,13,48cm • Bi-wire or bi-amp ready	
Linn Sekrit In Passive	298	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 30W • 20,28,90cm • IB or bass reflex	
Rega EL8	298	122 ported • 2 driver • 8 Ohms • 17,72,20cm • <i>Kyle drivers in compact floorstander gives more bass but less coherence.</i>	REC'D
Royd Merlin	298	ported • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 31,20,18cm • Veneered	
Advent Prodigy	299	2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 300W • 24,68,20cm • Floor standing, free space	
Boston Acoustics Voyager	299	2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 26,16,17cm • White indoor/outdoor, metal	
Celestion 11	299	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 31,57,24cm	
KEF Coda 9	299	coupled cavity • 2 driver • 91dB • 4 Ohms • 120W • 20,84,30cm	
KEF 70S	299	sealed • 2 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 17,25,12cm • Uni-Q, shielded, AV surround	
Wharfedale Valduis 500	299	ported • 4 driver • 91dB • 4 Ohms • 350W • 108,25,29cm • Floor standing	
Allison CD6	300	2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 29,29,29cm • Cuboid, wall mount	
B&O Beovox CX50	300	sealed • 2 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 12,21,21cm	
B&W Solid Powerbass	300	subwoofer • 75W • 33,39,34cm • Active sub to match Solids	
B&W CWM8i	300	2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 100W • 28,38,9cm • In wall	
Bose C'puter RoomMate	300	active • 2 driver • 60W • 24,14,16cm • Self powered AC/shielded	
Bose Video RoomMate	300	active • 2 driver • 60W • 24,14,16cm • Self powered AC/shielded	REC'D
Bose Roomate II	300	active • 2 driver • 60W • 24,14,16cm • Self powered AC/12V DC	
Castle Durham 900	300	135 ported • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 85W • 22,40,23cm • <i>Lovely veneer and lots of engineering create a very upfront, coherent and exciting sound.</i>	REC'D
Cerwin Vega HED265	300	ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 4 Ohms • 140W • 22,88,26cm	
Cerwin Vega SAT-6	300	subwoofer • 95dB • 4 Ohms • 125W • 22,25,32cm • 3 box satellite/subwoofer	
GLL Imagio IC110	300	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 73,23,29cm • ICT coaxial driver, shielded	
Infinity Inf IV Sat	300	sealed • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 80W • 16,24,18cm • Wall mount, shielded	
Jamo D265D	300	ported • 3 driver • 95dB • 150W • 64,39,28cm	
Jamo 307A	300	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 70W • 31,18,26cm • Stand mount	
JVC SX-SW10	300	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 29,39,45cm • Satellite subwoofer system	
Kenwood LS-300G	300	ported • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 21,35,30cm • European design	
Mission 733	300	139 ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 84,21,31cm • <i>Stylish and a lot of speaker for the money, and sounds pretty good too.</i>	B'BUY
Mission 751	300	125 ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 75W • 19,32,27cm • <i>Great sonic potential, but our review samples have been marred by sample variations.</i>	
Monitor Audio Sub 200/92	300	8 Ohms • 100W • 48,25,36cm	
Monitor Audio MA201	300	135 ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 22,41,40cm • <i>Lively and coherent with good power handling, but also a bit shut in and coloured.</i>	REC'D
Mordaunt-Short MS25i	300	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 73,21,21cm • 2xMCS bass drivers, biwireable	
Polk R17	300	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 24,48,29cm • Shielded stand/shelf	
Polk M5	300	ported • 2 driver • 91dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 21,33,23cm • Multi-app, inc brackets	
TDL RTL2	300	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 20,73,22cm • Reflex transmission line	
Tannoy 633	319	139 sealed • 3 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 29,75,28cm • <i>Real extension and coherence without booming, though midband is dubious.</i>	B'BUY
Triangle Titus TZe	325	2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 20,25,32cm • New tweeter, lifetime warranty	
Audio Innovations Alto	329	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 38,20,26cm • Biwire	
Keswick Audio Aria II	329	148 ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 21,42,24cm • Bookshelf	
Ruark Swordsman Plus II	329	sealed • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 20,38,27cm • Near wall/stand mount	
Jamo Classic 6	330	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 100W • 84,20,29cm • Inc spiked feet	
Wharfedale Modus Seven	339	ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 22,81,20cm • Floor standing	
Faraday SG	345	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 4 Ohms • 75W • 27,26,25cm • Matt black or granite effect	
Advent Legacy 2	349	2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 500W • 38,67,22cm • Floor standing, free space	
Origin Live OL-2B	349	2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 19,80,19cm • Floor standing	
Royd The Squire	349	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 80,18,10cm • Sand filled, shielded	
Cerwin Vega VS10	350	ported • 3 driver • 95dB • 6 Ohms • 125W • 33,70,29cm • Floor standing	
Grundig BX3 II	350	ported • 2 driver • 4 Ohms • 120W • 24,107,34cm • 53 litre, 3 drivers, 2 way	
Infinity SM105	350	ported • 100dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 53,30,30cm • Auto reset protection circuit	
Jamo BX100A	350	ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 54,31,27cm • Floor or stand mount	
Jamo 407A	350	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 4 Ohms • 80W • 40,22,26cm • Stand mount	
Monitor Audio Mon 9 GII	350	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 20,37,21cm • Stand/shelf mount	
Sony SA-W90	350	2 driver • 70W • 22,49,51cm • Active subwoofer	
Technics SB-M300	350	ported • 4 driver • 85dB • 70W • 22,37,34cm • 3-way, 4-driver	
Ruark Icon	359	ported • 2 driver • 6dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 35,19,26cm • Inverted drivers, handed L/R	
Castle York	370	110 ported • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 26,43,22cm • <i>Real wood compact has an engaging transparency: fine balance and timing, but could use some authority.</i>	
Dali 104B	370	93dB • 4 Ohms • 120W • 86,22,27cm	
Pioneer S-80	370	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 4 Ohms • 80W • 23,56,28cm • Bookshelf	
Heybrook Trio	373	118 sealed • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 24,47,25cm • <i>HBS1 drivers in real wood enclosure give a sweeter and more forgiving sound.</i>	REC'D
Lumley Reference LM4	375	126 ported • 2 driver • 86dB • 6 Ohms • 120W • 18,36,22cm • <i>Metal diaphragm and wood veneer; balance uneven upper and has suspect timing.</i>	
KEF Q30	379	126 ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 125W • 19,73,30cm • <i>Fine focus from Uni-Q driver, but lacks drive and time coherence.</i>	
Allison CD7	380	3 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 24,70,24cm • Floor standing, free space	
Bose 301 VM	380	3 driver • 8 Ohms • 75W • 24,43,27cm • Direct/reflecting technology	
Jamo Graphic	380	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 44,39,90cm • Decor model, switch panels	
Polk RT8	380	ported • 2 driver • 80dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 19,80,26cm • Shielded floorstander	
Celestion 15	389	114 ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 21,100,25cm • <i>Big box and but short on subtlety and control though long on both enthusiasm</i>	REC'D
Heybrook Heylo	389	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 73,23,19cm • compact floorstander	
Clements 300si	395	89dB • 90W • 24,36,36cm • Compression line	
KAL Mini-Ref MKII	395	2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 23,27,17cm	
Celestion Impact 25	399	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 82,28,29cm • Magnetically shielded	
Fullers Sultan	399	ported • 2 driver • 91dB • 8 Ohms • 50W • 24,51,30cm • 3 finishes	
Origin Live OL-IAS	399	2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 199W • 20,30,190cm • Floor standing	
Origin Live OL-IA	399	2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 20,30,19cm	
SD Acoustics SD3R	399	106 ported • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 20,38,30cm • <i>New SD3 has the agility and charm of a quality miniature, good bass and low sensitivity.</i>	REC'D
Tannoy Subsat3	399	ported • 3 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 11,16,9cm • Subsat system with ICT tech	
B&O Beovox CX100	400	sealed • 2 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 200W • 12,32,21cm	
B&W CDM2	400	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 32,22,25cm • Kevlar bass, metal dome treble	
B&W Solid Verticale	400	subwoofer • 88dB • 4 Ohms • 100W • Lifestyle, 3 boxes	
Infinity Inf Micro II	400	ported • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 21,x 127dcm • Two satellites and passive sub	
Jamo Classic 8	400	ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 90,22,29cm • Inc spiked feet	
Jamo D365D	400	3 driver • 96dB • 200W • 78,46,35cm	
Monitor Audio MA302	400	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 200W • 50,17,20cm • 2 bass units, front port	
TDL RTL3	400	126 ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 20,90,37cm • <i>Bargain price floorstander has rich, heavy and bright sound with a good scale.</i>	REC'D

PRODUCT

£ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

Tannoy 636	419	sealed • 3 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 120W • 29,75,28cm	
Allison AL120	420	98 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 200W • 28,61,29cm • <i>Pretty well balanced if slightly mid-forward, but sound quality is disappointing at the price.</i>	
GLL Imagio IC120	420	ported • 3 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 130W • 91,23,29cm • ICT coaxial, shielded	
Jordan Watts JHFLG	420	Flagon pottery colour	
Celestion Impact 30	429	ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 82,24,25cm • Magnetically shielded	
Celestion SL6Si	429	94 sealed • 2 driver • 84dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 20,38,27cm • <i>This stereotype luxury compact can sound a bit dull and congested; favours CD.</i>	
Rogers LS55	429	ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 125W • 88,24,22cm • Black - biwire extra	
B&W DM620i	430	126 ABR • 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 24,75,31cm • <i>Good value compact floorstander has well voiced midband, but iffy bass</i>	REC'D
Bose 305	430	78 ported • 3 driver • 8 Ohms • 100W • 23,45,28cm • <i>Fine dynamic liveliness and a good room match counter strange imaging and treble.</i>	REC'D
Mission 734	430	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 84,21,33cm • Floor standing, boundary	
Fullers Sultan H.E.	439	ported • 2 driver • 98dB • 8 Ohms • 90W • 24,51,30cm • High sensitivity, 3 finishes	
Wharfedale Modus 1-3	439	ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 22,109,29cm • Floor standing	
Polk RT10	440	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 22,86,26cm • Shielded floorstander	
Epos ES11	445	94 ported • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 20,38,25cm • <i>Integral baffle/driver gives remarkable colouration, transparency and speed.</i>	B'BUY
Faraday Siren	445	94 ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 80W • 27,25,46cm • <i>High mass concrete cabinet is let down by imbalance of ageing driver combination.</i>	
Boston Acoustics SW10	449	128 subwoofer • 2 driver • 100W • 34,17,42cm • <i>Clever powered subwoofer system integrates well and improves system loudness and power handling.</i>	REC'D
Boston Acoustics SubSat	6449	subwoofer • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • Passive subs and two satellite	
Celestion CS6i	449	ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 19,85,31cm	
Linn Tukan	449	sealed • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 30W • 19,30,18cm • Multipurpose	
Polk LS f/x Surround	449	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 22,28,16cm • A/V surround & utility speaker	
Royd Doublet	449	ported • 89dB • 4 Ohms • 120W • 91,18,17cm • Double ported	
Ruark Sabre II	449	sealed • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 23,37,27cm • Wall/free, on stands	
B&O Beovox RL6000	450	ported • 3 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 41,54,18cm • Simplified RL7000	
Infinity SM115	450	ported • 3 driver • 100dB • 8 Ohms • 175W • 76,34,32cm • Auto reset protection circuit	
Jamo Silhouette	450	3 driver • 90dB • 5 Ohms • 80W • 122,25,17cm • Elegant design	
Jamo Atmosphere	450	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 37,26,16cm • Gives light, sound & movement	
Jamo BX150A	450	ported • 3 driver • 92dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 63,37,30cm • Floor mount	
Manticore Minaret	450	sealed • 94dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 23,15,11cm • Nearfield monitor	
Monitor Audio MA202	450	139 ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 22,89,27cm • <i>Uneven, informative and easy-listening floorstander delivers decent scale.</i>	REC'D
Mordaunt-Short MS40i	450	ribbon • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 23,82,28cm • Alloy tweeter, MCS woofer	
Sony SSA1L	450	sealed • 2 driver • 85dB • 4 Ohms • 120W • 19,30,32cm • Bio-cellulose tweeters	
UKD-Opera Prima	450	ported • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 20,33,25cm • Solid oak, stand mount	
Acoustic Energy Aegis 1	452	118 ported • 2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 21,39,26cm • <i>Rich and slightly heavy balance doesn't mask fine mid/treble and transparency.</i>	REC'D
Origin Live OL-2AS	469	122 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 19,80,19cm • <i>Compact floorstander sounds open, transparent and evenly balanced; needs a big amp.</i>	REC'D
Origin Live OL-2A	469	2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 19,80,19cm • Floor standing	
Pentachord A	469	139 sealed • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 21,28,20cm • <i>Direct coupled</i>	REC'D
B&O Beovox 4500	475	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 90W • 45,38,8cm	
Triangle Comete TZe	475	2 driver • 91dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 22,28,40cm • High sensitivity	
Prof Monitor Co TB1	481	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 20,40,25cm • Shielded version available	
Dawn Audio Chorus BS	482	sealed • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 26,38,21cm • Bookshelf	
Roksan Roksan 1	495	ported • 2 driver • 21,44,33cm • Rosewood £50 extra	
Rega ELA MK II	498	139 ported • 2 driver • 8 Ohms • 30,80,20cm • <i>Floor stand</i>	B'BUY
Advent Laureate	499	3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 500W • 21,80,29cm • Floor standing, free space	
Audio Note AN-KB	499	2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 28,46,23cm • Free space, stand mount	
Celestion CS8i	499	ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 19,100,31cm	
Heybrook Heystak	499	141 ABR • 3 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 98,22,28cm • Inc stands	
Lumley Reference LMS	499	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 25,46,21cm • Stand mount	
Origin Live OL-1	499	106 2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 20,30,19cm • <i>Luxury miniature has very good overall balance, sacrificing sensitivity for bass.</i>	
Rogers AB1	499	143 ABR • 1 driver • 82dB • 8 Ohms • 35W • 57,19,16cm • <i>Designed as partner for LS3/5a or similar miniatures</i>	REC'D
Rogers Studio 3	499	118 ported • 2 driver • 85dB • 8 Ohms • 505W • 19,30,16cm • <i>Pricey LS3/5a derived miniature, excitingly coherent if lightweight, can't go loud.</i>	REC'D
Ruark Templar	499	122 sealed • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 19,70,27cm • <i>Striking baffle gives decent bass/mid but dull treble; could tame over-bright system.</i>	
Tannoy 637	499	sealed • 3 driver • 91dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 33,86,32cm	
TDL Studio 0.5	499	94 ported • 2 driver • 85dB • 8 Ohms • 75W • 20,62,30cm • <i>Tiny floorstanding transmission line lacks coherence or the balane of Studio 1.</i>	
B&W AS6	500	subwoofer • 1 driver • 100W • 51,45,46cm • Active, self powered	
B&W DM603	500	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 85,24,31cm • 2-way, ABR, port foam plugs	
B&W Signature 7	500	2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 28,37,10cm • In-wall monitor, Kevlar cone	
Bose A mass AM3 II	500	2 driver • 50W • 36,20,20cm • Acoustimass technology	
Bose 401	500	110 3 driver • 4 Ohms • 100W • 30,30,76cm • <i>Cheaply built but distinctively styled, the 401 suffers from heavy midband.</i>	
Castle Severn	500	ported • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 110W • 23,77,20cm • Free standing; nine finishes	
Infinity SSW-10 Sub	500	active • 34,34,33cm	
Jamo BX200A	500	ported • 3 driver • 93dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 72,43,32cm • Floor mount	
Jamo 477A	500	138 ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 4 Ohms • 100W • 77,19,28cm • <i>Very prettily styled, but build and sound quality are disappointing at the price.</i>	
JPW Ruby 1	500	139 ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 120W • 32,19,21cm • <i>Very pretty but pricey luxury metal-cone miniature has good, if slightly edgy balance.</i>	
Kenwood LS-500G	500	118 ported • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 100W • 22,44,28cm • <i>Japanese designed and built luxury compact delivers an invigorating and exciting sound.</i>	REC'D
Mission 752	500	138 ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 20,84,26cm • <i>Brilliant style, engineering and sound</i>	REC'D
Monitor Audio MA303	500	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 200W • 92,17,20cm	
Monitor Audio Mon 14 GH	500	ported • 3 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 20,76,24cm • Floor/shelf standing	
Jordan Watts JH200	510	sealed • 1 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 19,33,17cm • Bookshelf or stand mount	
Pentachord B	519	139 sealed • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 52,35,52cm • <i>Active crossover</i>	REC'D
Celestion Impact 35	529	ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 4 Ohms • 200W • 90,28,29cm • Magnetically shielded	
KEF Q50	529	139 ported • 3 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 19,83,30cm • <i>Compact twin-driver floorstander with Uni-Q treble and a rather midbass, heavy overall balance.</i>	
GLL Imagio IC300	530	ported • 4 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 111,23,29cm • ICT coaxial, shielded	
Celestion 100	539	sealed • 2 driver • 84dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 21,42, 26cm	
Boston Acoustics SubSat	7549	3 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • Passive sub & 2 satellites	
Allison CD8	550	3 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 200W • 27,73,27cm • Floor standing, free space	
Cerwin Vega VS12	550	ported • 3 driver • 97dB • 4 Ohms • 250W • 42,81,38cm • Floor standing	
Cerwin Vega DC10	550	ported • 3 driver • 96dB • 4 Ohms • 200W • 29,94,35cm • Floor standing	
Infinity SM125	550	ported • 3 driver • 100dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 89,37,32cm • Auto reset protection circuit	
Mordaunt-Short MS50i	550	138 ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 25,87,33cm • <i>Big value big box with fine engineering content and a big, laid back sound; lacks charisma.</i>	
UKD-Opera Seconda	550	ported • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 23,35,34cm • Solid oak, stand mount	
Heybrook Quartet	575	122 ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 24,41,22cm • <i>Solidly large bookshelf model with good sensitivity and a lively, forward sound.</i>	REC'D
Advent Heritage	579	3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 600W • 25,89,31cm • Floor standing, free space	
Polk RT12	580	ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 19,93,32cm • Shielded floorstander	
Clements 600si	595	88dB • 100W • 24,81,36cm • Compression line	
Neat Petite	595	102 ribbon • 2 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 20,30,18cm • <i>Among the most entertaining and enjoyable, despite colourations</i>	REC'D
Royd The Sorcerer	595	139 ported • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 31,20,18cm • <i>Front port, near field monitor</i>	REC'D
Tannoy 625	595	active • 90W • 58,49,45cm • Servo, current drive subwoofer	
Proac Tablette 50	599	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 28,17,23cm • special finishes £60 EXTRA	
Tannoy 638	599	138 ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 6 Ohms • 175W • 33,96,32cm • <i>Big value vinyl big box has good balance and lots of loudness, but needs a good amp.</i>	
B&W CDM1	600	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 37,22,28cm • Angled tweeter sub-baffle	
B&W P4	600	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 20,81,24cm • 3 real wood veneers	
Keswick Audio Volante	600	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 85W • 21,85,27cm • High sensitivity	
Mission 735	600	ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 106,21,33cm • Floor stand, boundary	
Monitor Audio Studio 2	600	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 27,17,20cm • Shielded for AV use	
Pioneer S-200	600	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 4 Ohms • 120W • 26,90,34cm • Biwire, floor standing	

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
KAL Mini-Tower	619	2 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 17,90,22cm	
Celestion Impact 40	629	ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 4 Ohms • 225W • 100,33,29cm • Magnetically shielded	
Spendor LS3/5A	630	ported • 2 driver • 82dB • 8 Ohms • 40W • 19,30,16cm • BBC inspired location monitor	
Fullers Pharaoh 1	649	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 60W • 20,30,20cm • Curved sides, various finishes	
KEF LS3/5a	649	sealed • 2 driver • 82dB • 11 Ohms • 30W • 19,30,16cm • Raymond Cooke Special Edition	
Linnaeum LFX Wood	649	hybrid • 90dB • 16,22,18cm • Modified ribbon/dynamic	
Linn Kelidh Passive	649	114 sealed • 2 driver • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 60W • 20,83,28cm • Stunning timing and coherence, and awesome bass drive.	REC'D
Origin Live OL-2	649	2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 19,80,19cm • Floor standing	
Tannoy D100	649	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 25,36,22cm • 6.5 inch Dual Concentric	
Allison AL125	650	2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 200W • 28,78,29cm • Open space, free standing	
Cerwin Vega DC12	650	ported • 3 driver • 98dB • 4 Ohms • 300W • 36,98,35cm • Floor standing	
Infinity SM155	650	ported • 4 driver • 102dB • 8 Ohms • 300W • 102,45,32cm • Auto reset protection circuit	
KAL Compact Ref	650	2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 140W • 23,36,27cm	
Lumley Reference LM6	650	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 25,81,21cm • Floor standing	
JVC SX-911WD	660	ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 38,63,35cm • Walnut finish	
UKD-Opera Operetta	660	ported • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 22,30,26cm • Solid walnut, stand mount	
Royd Abbot	665	118 ported • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 81,20,30cm • <i>Dynamic and fine transient qualities are hampered by a rather coloured mid-forward balance.</i>	
Epos ES14	675	98 ported • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 23,49,29cm • <i>Substantial stand mount delivers delightful midrange focus and delicacy with good bass control.</i>	REC'D
Polk RT16	680	ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 22,102,39cm • Shielded floorstander	
Polk RT16	680	ported • 3 driver • 8dB • 90 Ohms • 250W • 22,102,39cm • Shielded floorstander	
Meridian A500	695	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 100W • 83,20,28cm • Shelf/stand, shielded	
Dawn Audio Chorus FS	698	11 sealed • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 26,88,21cm • <i>Compact floorstander with superb coherence but rather forward midband. Would suit smaller rooms best.</i>	
Audio Note AN-K/SP	699	2 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 28,46,23cm • Free space, stand mount	
Harbeth BBC LS3/5A	699	66 sealed • 2 driver • 82dB • 10 Ohms • 30W • 30,19,18cm • <i>Still a classic miniature, though not to every taste, and none the better for the recent update.</i>	
Naim S-NAXO 3-6	699	21,76,30cm • Active crossover	
Naim S-NAXO 2-4	699	21,76,30cm • Active crossover	
Orelle Orator II	699	ported • 2 driver • 91dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 27,40,30cm • Time aligned, biwire	
Proac Studio 100	699	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 41,20,25cm • Stand mount	
Rogers LS3/5A	699	143 sealed • 2 driver • 82dB • 12 Ohms • 35W • 19,31,17cm • <i>Clever AB1 stand/subwoofer helps the classic 3/5A monitor give its best shot.</i>	REC'D
Rogers Studio 5	699	138 ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 25,25,48cm • <i>Luxury finish bookshelf size model has genuine monitoring capabilities.</i>	REC'D
TDL Studio 1	699	78 ported • 2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 23,77,33cm • <i>Genuinely extended bass from a compact enclosure, very detailed but a shade clinical.</i>	REC'D
Castle Chester	700	98 horn • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 23,91,25cm • <i>A brilliant throwback, using a horn type approach to provide startling dynamics and coherence.</i>	B'BUY
Cerwin Vega VS15	700	ported • 3 driver • 102dB • 4 Ohms • 400W • 46,90,47cm • Floor standing	
Jamo 507A	700	ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 22,36,91cm • spiked feet	
JPW Ruby 2	700	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 43,22,25cm • Alloy cones	
JVC SX-500	700	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 180W • 27,45,28cm • Super Digifine	
Mission 753	700	114 ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 21,88,32cm • <i>Georgious presentation and potential for open transparency.</i>	
KEF Q70	729	ported • 4 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 175W • 19,105,30cm • Uni-Q, shielded, floor stand	
Pentachord Pentode	729	sealed • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 80W • 20,74,20cm • Active crossover	
Ruark Talisman II	749	118 ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 23,84,32cm • <i>Less ideologically committed than some, strength lies in fine all-round coherence.</i>	REC'D
Manticore Minaret F1	750	sealed • 94dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 23,15,11cm • Nearfield monitor	
Bose SE-5 Ser II System	760	2 driver • 100W • 90,100,18cm	
Bose A/mass AM511	760	2 driver • 200W • 49,35,19cm • Acoustimass direct/reflecting	
Spendor S20	760	102 ported • 2 driver • 84dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 22,38,26cm • <i>Maintains Spendor's tradition for peerless mid-to-treble coherence and perspectives..</i>	REC'D
Naim IBL Active	776	65W • 25,80,28cm • Boundary, floor standing	
Shahinian Super Elf	790	ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 100W • 21,26,37cm • Finnish birch cabinet	
Roksan Ojan Sub	793	subwoofer • 1 driver • 28,54,55cm • Passive/pr. Rosewood + £200	
Faraday FS10	795	ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 4 Ohms • 100W • 27,25,93cm • Matt black or granite effect	
KAL Tunesal	795	2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 23,100,27cm	
Roksan Ojan 3 Black	795	132 ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 28,76,46cm • <i>Squat, stylish and black, great bass extension and somewhat uneven balance.</i>	REC'D
Spendor SP3/1	795	ported • 2 driver • 85dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 40,22,28cm • Stand mount, free space	
Acoustic Energy Aegis 2	799	ported • 2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 33,106,26cm • Floor, reflex, metal cone	
Audio Note AN-J/B	799	110 2 driver • 93dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 38,58,25cm • <i>Light damping and local unevenness adds some colouration, but doesn't spoil a great speaker.</i>	REC'D
Castle Harlech	799	horn • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 20,94,32cm • available in 9 finishes	
Harbeth HL-P3ES	799	118 sealed • 2 driver • 83dB • 6 Ohms • 45W • 31,19,18cm • Shielded, biwire/biampable	
Allison AL130	800	2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 200W • 32,95,34cm • Open space, free standing	
B&W P5	800	144 ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 20,90,28cm • 3 real wood veneers	
Monitor Audio MAG901	800	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 27,17,20cm • Metal bass cone, wood veneer	
Polk LS50	800	138 ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 27,83,29cm • <i>No enthusiast tweaks here, but powerful and beautiful balance</i>	REC'D
Celestion SL600si	820	68 sealed • 2 driver • 82 dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 20,37,24cm • <i>Some will find this speaker irresistible, but it needs careful system and room matching.</i>	
Jordan Watts JH400	820	106 sealed • 1 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 28,32,17cm • <i>Piano finish hexagon has controversial sound, with uneven balance but delightful mid.</i>	REC'D
Bose A/mass AM7	830	2 driver • 100W • 35,49,19cm • Acoustimass direct/reflecting	
Fullers Sphinx	839	ported • 3 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 25,91,30cm • various finishes	
Audiovector 2X	850	2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 17,90,22cm • Black ash	
Cerwin Vega DC15	850	ported • 3 driver • 100dB • 4 Ohms • 500W • 44,103,46cm • Floor standing	
Chord SysAudio Sig	850	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 27,15,25cm • Cherry, rosewood, black ash	
Meridian DSP6000	850	140 133,28,43cm • Digital active DSP based	REC'D
Acoustic Energy AE1	870	102 ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 26,30,18cm • <i>Exceptional mid focus and coherence, but it is pricey and could be more agile.</i>	
UKD-Opera Super Pavarotti	875	ported • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 23,55,23cm • Solid mahogany, stand mount	
Bose 601 MKIII	880	3 driver • 8 Ohms • 200W • 32,31,76cm • Direct/reflecting technology	
Lumley Reference LM3	895	106 ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 27,87,28cm • <i>Despite indifferent bass alignment, LM3 is fast, coherent, solid and informative</i>	REC'D
UKD-Opera Callas II	895	ported • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 34,22,32cm • Solid mahogany/ash, Focal	
Pink Triangle Ventral	896	142 hybrid • 86dB • 11 Ohms • 100W • 15,80,32cm • Ribbon hybrid	
Sonus-Faber Minuetto	898	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 23,35,28cm • Compact, stand mount	
Canon S-75	899	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 25,78,25cm • Wide imaging stereo	
Keswick Audio Figaro Evol	899	ported • 1 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 19,28,27cm • Piano lacquer finishes	
Rogers Studio 7	899	122 ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 30,63,30cm • <i>Latest variation on classic BBC-monitor theme has beautifully voiced, laid back sound.</i>	REC'D
Ruark Broadsword II	899	sealed • 2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 29,43,38cm • Free space, stand mount	
TDL Studio 1m	899	118 ported • 2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 23,77,34cm • <i>Transmission line helps bring the best from metal cone driver.</i>	REC'D
Jamo 707A	900	132 ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 200W • 26,38,104cm • <i>Superb styling and cosmetics and decent balance apart from detached bass.</i>	
Monitor Audio Studio 6	900	118 ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 22,35,25cm • <i>Metal diaphragm compact has transparent midband but lacks vigour and drive.</i>	REC'D
Naim IBL Passive	905	94 86dB • 6 Ohms • 65W • 25,80,28cm • <i>Outstanding dynamics, speed and detail marred by pronounced upper mid forwardness.</i>	REC'D
Spendor SP2/3	930	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 28,55,33cm • On stands, free space	
Pioneer S-400	950	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 4 Ohms • 160W • 27,96,38cm • Biwire, floor stand, shielded	
Jordan Watts JH400M	970	ported • 1 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 82,28,21cm	
Origin Live OL-3	975	ported • 3 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 19,83,23cm • Floor standing	
Triangle Antal	975	2 driver • 92dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 22,102,30cm	
Royd The Prior	978	ported • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 96,37,26cm • Floor standing, free space	
Magnepan SMG-C SE	990	electrostatic • 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 43,122,-cm • 2x Quasi-ribbon	
Linnaeum LSIH	991	hybrid • 90dB • 30,150,38cm • Modified ribbon/dynamic	
ATC SCM10	995	sealed • 2 driver • 80dB • 8 Ohms • 300W • 18,38,26cm • Mnimum 100wpc, wall/free use	
B&W Matrix 805 V	995	98 ported • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 33,33,21cm • <i>Stylish, remarkable imaging, good balance and low colouration.</i>	REC'D
Clements Reference 1	995	86dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 20,43,29cm • Ribbon tweeter	
Infinity Kappa 6.1i	995	132 ported • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 31,95,25cm • <i>Good extension, but bass is fat and slow, and dynamics are unconvincing.</i>	
Roksan Ojan 3 Rosewood	995	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 28,74,46cm	

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE	SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
Totem Model One	995	122	ported • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 120W • 17,31,23cm • <i>Utterly delightful but exasperatingly expensive luxury miniature sets the benchmark for its size.</i>	REC'D
UKD-Opera Callias Gold	995		ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • Solid mahogany, ScanSpeak	
Prof Monitor Co LB1	998	110	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 4 Ohms • 300W • 18,53,25cm • <i>Delightful smoothness and transparency, though bass and treble are both limited.</i>	REC'D
Audio Note AN-J/SP	999		2 driver • 93dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 38,58,25cm • Free space, stand mount	
Proac Response 1S	999		ported • 2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 30,18,23cm	
B&W DM604	1,000		ported • 4 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 100,24,41cm • 3-way, twin bass drivers	
B&W P6	1,000		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 20,100,30cm • Time aligned tweeter	
JPW Ruby 3	1,000		ported • 3 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 75,19,22cm • Alloy cones	
Monitor Audio MAG902	1,000		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 50,17,20cm • Dual metal cone, wood veneer	
Monitor Audio Studio 12	1,000	143	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 92,17,20cm • <i>A real looker, but sound and content are a bit on the small side for the price.</i>	
Morel 704/2	1,000	143	sealed • 4 driver • 88dB • 150W • 80,23,21cm	
Rega XEL	1,040	132	ported • 2 driver • 89dBdB • 6 Ohms • 40W • 20,82,30cm • <i>Looks and sounds great: balance bright but even, with delightful coherence and timing.</i>	B'BUY
Impulse Kara	1,095		horn • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 70W • 1,86,31cm • Floor standing	
Celestion 300	1,099	118	2 driver • 84dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 21,97,33cm • <i>Splendid bass extension and fine panel-like openness, but dynamics and timing are suspect.</i>	
KEF Model One	1,099		coupled cavity • 3 driver • 89dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 23,86,30cm • Uni-Q, floor stand, shielded	
Ruark Paladin	1,099		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 88,29,38cm • Floor standing	
Castle Howard S2	1,100	132	horn • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 26,104,41cm • <i>Absolutely fills the gap between Chester and Winchester; has a rich, laid back balance.</i>	REC'D
Heybrook Sextet	1,129	102	ported • 3 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 27,90,20cm • <i>Coherent and highly analytical, partly due to distinct upper-mid forwardness.</i>	REC'D
Linn Keildh Aktiv	1,144		sealed • 2 driver • 20,83,28cm • Floor standing, boundary	
Acoustic Energy AE2	1,175		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 200W • 24,40,32cm • Twin bass, metal cone	
Epos ES22	1,185		ported • 3 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 175W • 88,21,25cm • Light cherrywood veneer	
Infinity Kappa 7.1i	1,195		ported • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 225W • 36,108,26cm • Floor standing	
Roksan Ojan 3X Black	1,195		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 300W • 28,76,48cm • As Ojan 3, improved drivers	
B&O Beolab 4500	1,200		active • 45W • 45,38,8cm • Attaches to wall, display	
Fullers Pharaoh 2	1,200		ported • 3 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 80W • 39,100,31cm • Pharaoh 1 with added bass	
Kenwood LS-700G	1,200		ported • 83dB • 4 Ohms • 120W • 30,90,30cm • European design	
Polk LS70	1,200	132	ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 31,94,37cm • <i>High sensitivity, but balance has too much midbass boom; mid-top is laid back.</i>	
SD Acoustics SD5	1,235	132	ported • 3 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 20,110,30cm • <i>Bass suspect but forward midband is delightfully smooth. Has ribbon tweeter.</i>	REC'D
Harbeth BBC LS5/12A	1,259		ported • 2 driver • 81dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 30,18,23cm • BBC broadcast mini, biwire	
Electrocomponiet Qube	1,265		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 16,40,28cm • D'Appolito nearfield monitor	
Audio Note AN-E/B	1,299	106	2 driver • 94dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 36,84,28cm • <i>Coherent dynamic and transparent, with extended bass and high sensitivity - but ugly!</i>	REC'D
Audio Physic STEP	1,299		ported • 2 driver • 84dB • 4 Ohms • 60W • 14,33,23cm • Time aligned, with frame stand	
Keswick Audio Alto	1,299		subwoofer • 1 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 19,70,27cm • Subwoofer to match Figaro	
Cerwin Vega 1515	1,300		ported • 6 driver • 103dB • 4 Ohms • 600W • 44,135,46cm	
JBL L90	1,300	143	sealed • 3 driver • 91dB • 200W • 94,24,35cm	B'BUY
JPW Ruby 4	1,300		ported • 3 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 200W • 90,22,26cm • Alloy cones	
Manticore Matisse	1,300		sealed • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 100,28,22cm • Fibrelam honeycomb cabinets	
Monitor Audio MAG903	1,300		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 92,17,20cm • Dual metal cone, wood veneer	
Philips DSS930S	1,300		active • 2 driver • 75W • 58,33,22cm • Active digital loudspeaker	
Harbeth HL Compact 7	1,329		ported • 2 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 52,27,32cm • Free-space, shielded, biwire	
Spendor SP1/2	1,330		ported • 3 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 90W • 30,63,30cm • Stand mount, free space	
Apogee Centaur Minor	1,345		hybrid • 88dB • 4 Ohms • 100W • 30,88,20cm • Ribbon/dynamic	
Keswick Audio Amber	1,349		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 21,100,30cm • Features magnesium cones	
Magnepan MG-0.6 SE	1,370		electrostatic • 2 driver • 85dB • 4 Ohms • 250W • 48,127,-cm • 2x quasi ribbon	
Thiel SCS	1,379	114	active • 2 driver • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 2,23,41cm • <i>Class leading coherence and communication, but can sound shut-in and dark</i>	REC'D
Linn Kabe Passive	1,389	118	sealed • 3 driver • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 60W • 20,90,28cm • <i>Dry, bright balance emphasises dynamics and transients, but can sound unforgiving.</i>	REC'D
UKD-Opera Divina	1,390		ported • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 24,39,40cm • Solid ash, stand mount	
Roksan Ojan 3X Rosewood	1,395		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 300W • 28,74,46cm • As Ojan 3, improved drivers	
Vandersteen 2Ce	1,395	86	ported • 4 driver • 88dB • 7 Ohms • 160W • 41,101,27cm • <i>Elegant staggered baffle contributes to a refreshing freedom from boxiness.</i>	
Linæum LFX Corian	1,399		hybrid • 90dB • 16,22,18cm • Modified ribbon/dynamic	
Proac Studio 150	1,399		ported • 3 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 98,19,25cm • Spacial finishes £140 extra	
Triangle Zays	1,399		3 driver • 92dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 99,22,28cm	
Yamaha NS-1000	1,399		2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 38,68,36cm	
Celestion 700SE	1,435		sealed • 2 driver • 82dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 20,37,24cm • Aerolam lightweight enclosure	
B&O Beolab 6000	1,450		active • 80W • 20,110,21cm • Column, two amps, shielded	
Lowther Fidelio	1,465		horn • 96dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 29,100,43cm	
Tannoy D500	1,470	143	ported • 3 driver • 91dB • 6 Ohms • 175W • 31,93,34cm • <i>Plenty of muscle and stereo, but short of poise and delicacy. Hard work for amps.</i>	
B&W 800ASW	1,495		subwoofer • 1 driver • 43,50,58cm • Active, self-powered subwoofer	
Sonus-Faber M Amator	1,498		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 20,34,31cm • Compact, stand mount	
KEF Model Two	1,499		coupled cavity • 4 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 200W • 23,101,30cm • Uni-Q, floor stand, shielded	
Thiel 2	1,499		active • 2 driver • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 22,28,63cm • 15 wood veneers + black	
Thiel CS-5	1,499		active • 2 driver • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 20,28,80cm • 15 wood veneers + black	
Audiovector 3X	1,500	143	ported • 3 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 19,32,98cm • <i>Superior time coherence, a wide dynamic range and exception bass/mid balance.</i>	REC'D
B&W Solid 800ASW	1,500		subwoofer • 200W • 43,50,58cm • Active, Matrix enclosure	
JBL Ti 1000	1,500	118	sealed • 2 driver • 89dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 20,30,13cm • <i>Performance compromised by over enthusiastic midbass output from port.</i>	
KAL Trans-double	1,500		2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 23,112,36cm	
ATC SCM20	1,505	86	sealed • 2 driver • 83dB • 8 Ohms • 300W • 24,44,31cm • <i>Massively built, invariably informative but the rather forward presentation can be uncomfortable.</i>	
Rogers LS5/9	1,531		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 28,46,27cm • BBC monitor	
Rogers Studio 9	1,549		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 22,91,25cm • free space	
Rehdeko RK115	1,550		ported • 104dB • 8 Ohms • 34,42,28cm	
Harbeth HL-5ES	1,559		ported • 3 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 64,32,31cm • Free space, biwire/biampable	
Genelec 1019A	1,572		active • 28W • 23,31,25cm	
Chord BBC LS5/12A	1,593		ported • 2 driver • 81dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 30,19,22cm • Choice of 11 wood veneers	
B&W Matrix 804	1,595		ported • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 26,92,26cm • Matrix enclosure	
Impulse Lali	1,595		horn • 91dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 25,99,36cm • Floor standing	
Prof Monitor Co AB1	1,598	114	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 400W • 26,79,43cm • <i>Lovely panel-like transparency, slightly shut-in balance, needs a big room.</i>	
Audio Note AN-E/SP	1,599		3 driver • 94dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 26,84,28cm • Free space, stand mount	
Audio Physic SPARK	1,599		ported • 2 driver • 86dB • 4 Ohms • 70W • 17,40,25cm • Time align, space-frame stand	
Ruark Crusader II	1,599		ported • 3 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 24,92,32cm • Free space, floor standing	
KAL Warlock	1,600		2 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 250W • 25,113,36cm	
Origin Live Conqueror	1,600		ported • 3 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 23,87,23cm • Floor standing	
Pentachord P'column	1,649		sealed • 2 driver • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 80W • 21,108,20cm • Including active crossovers	
Bose 901 V1	1,650		9 driver • 8 Ohms • 33,53,32cm • Direct/reflecting technology	
Castle Winchester	1,650	90	ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 42,108,23cm • <i>Large for its bass extension but engagingly agile, open and airy.</i>	REC'D
Magnepan MG-10 SE	1,650		electrostatic • 2 driver • 85dB • 4 Ohms • 250W • 26,173,-cm • 2x quasi-ribbon	
Epos ES25	1,655	143	ported • 3 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 200W • 90,24,35cm • <i>Handsome floorstander with a rather uneven and bass heavy balance.</i>	
Shahinian Arc	1,675	110	sealed • 3 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 35,69,25cm • <i>Occasionally wonderful small floorstanding omni; bright but coherent and revealing.</i>	
Naim SBL Active	1,692		75W • 27,89,27cm • Boundary, floor standing	
Mordaunt-Short P 860	1,695		90dB • 6 Ohms • 225W • 86,26,35cm • Time-aligned, ResinRock box	
Kenwood LS-1000G	1,700		ported • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 160W • 34,110,38cm • European design	
Polk LS90	1,700		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 31,94,37cm • Floorstanding, biampable	
Jordan Watts JH1 + 1 Asp	1,730		ported • 2 driver • 85dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 92,40,22cm	
Apogee Ribbon Wall	1,750		hybrid • 89dB • 27,120,7cm • Ribbon/dynamic	
Tannoy Sterling TW	1,750		ported • 2 driver • 93dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 48,70,31cm	
Magnepan MG-1.5 SE	1,780		electrostatic • 2 driver • 85dB • 4 Ohms • 250W • 48,163,-cm • 2x quasi-ribbon	

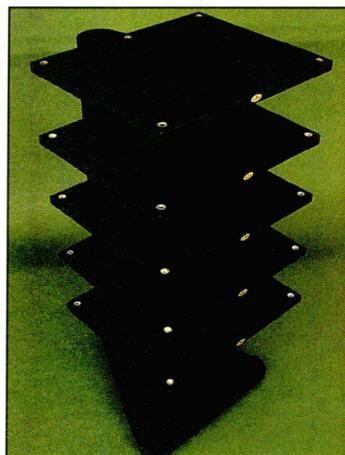


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What Hi-Fi? June 1995

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PRODUCT	£	ISSUE	SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
Sonus-Faber Electa	1,790		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 38,27,24cm • Compact, stand mount	
KEF 104/2 REC	1,799	60	coupled cavity • 5 driver • 92dB • 4 Ohms • 200W • 28,90,41cm • A reference point for dynamics, best without KUBE, suited to many rooms.	REC'D
Lowther Academy	1,805		horn • 98dB • 4 Ohms • 100W • 29,100,43cm • 16 Ohm option	
Naim SBL Passive	1,821	143	88dB • 6 Ohms • 75W • 27,89,27cm • Lively and punchy - smoother but more upfront than before.	REC'D
Ruark Equinox	1,849	140	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 6 Ohms • 150W • 25,88,34cm • Free space, stands included	REC'D
Proac Studio 200	1,850		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 117,23,28cm • Floor standing	
Triangle Aitinis	1,950		3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 300W • 104,22,22cm	
Spendor SP100	1,965		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 37,70,43cm • Classic monitor, free space	
Spendor SP7/1	1,990		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 85,30,35cm • Floor standing	
Acoustic Energy AE1 Sig	1,995		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 26,30,18cm • Special Edition version of AE1	
B&W Matrix 803s2	1,995		ported • 4 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 26,101,34cm • Matrix enclosure	
Clement Reference 7	1,995		88dB • 4.5 Ohms • 200W • 25,114,4cm • Ribbon tweeter	
Dawn Audio Symphony	1,995		sealed • 3 driver • 91dB • 8 Ohms • 34,113,32cm • Floor standing	
ATC SCM20 Tower	1,999		sealed • 2 driver • 83dB • 8 Ohms • 300W • 24,103,34cm • Floor standing SCM20	
Audio Physic TEMPO	1,999	143	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 22,107,47cm • Tall and unusually styled floorstander has stunning stereo but suspect bass tuning.	
B&O Beolab 8000	1,999		active • 100W • 15,132,15cm • Shielded column, int amps	
Gamma Acs Epoch 5	1,999		2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 28,26,90cm • Time aligned, piano black	
KEF Model Three	1,999		coupled cavity • 5 driver • 91dB • 4 Ohms • 300W • 27,114,34cm • Uni-Q, magnetically shielded	
Boston Acoustics 300L	2,000		2 driver • 83dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 23,34,28cm • Inc stands, black	
JBL T1 2000	2,000		sealed • 3 driver • 89dB • 4 Ohms • 200W • 33,82,30cm • Asymmetric, double wall	
Proac Response 2S	2,000		ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 175W • 46,23,28cm • special finishes £200 extra	
Lowther Bel Canto	2,035		horn • 97dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 28,132,44cm • Including adjustable stand	
Genelec Blamp 1031A	2,068		active • 104W • 25,39,29cm	
Tannoy D700	2,100		ported • 3 driver • 93dB • 6 Ohms • 200W • 37,99,36cm • Ten inch Dual Concentric	
Chord CEL201	2,130		ported • 3 driver • 85dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 46,28,33cm • Biwireable, 6 wood veneers	
Linn Kaber Aktiv	2,135		sealed • 3 driver • 20,90,28cm • Integral stands	
Monitor Audio Studio 20SE	2,200		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 20,92,26cm • Floor stand, metal cone bass	
Posselt Albatros	2,200		ported • 93dB • 6 Ohms • 200W • 31,186,32cm • Ultra sensitive	
UKD-Opera Caruso II	2,250		ported • 3 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 22,97,28cm • Solid walnut, floor standing	
Martin-Logan Aeries	2,286		hybrid • 89dB • 23,122,30cm • Two-way	
Apogee Centaur	2,300		hybrid • 88dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 33,102,25cm • Ribbon/dynamic	
Jordan Watts JH1 + 1 As K	2,310		ported • 2 driver • 85dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 92,40,22cm	
Helius Syrius II	2,395		ported • 95dB • 4 Ohms • 300W • 36,107,16cm	
Apogee Centarus Slant 6	2,400		hybrid • 88dB • Ribbon tweeter, dynamic bass	
TDL Studio Monitor M	2,449		ported • 3 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 27,112,43cm • TLS, metal drivers, int stands	
ECA SERVO A.2	2,450		ported • 2 driver • 80dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 22,102,30cm • True ribbon tweeter	
Shahinian Obelisk	2,490		ported • 3 driver • 89dB • 6 Ohms • 200W • 37,74,32cm • Omni-directional	
Fullers Pharaoh 3	2,499		ported • 4 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 46,118,45cm • Pharaoh + bass & subbass encls	
JBL T1 3000	2,499		sealed • 3 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 200W • 46,105,35cm • Asymmetric, double wall	
Allison I.C. 10	2,500		3 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 200W • 48,102,27cm • Floor standing, free space	
Audiovector 5	2,500		4 driver • 91dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 24,110,34cm • Black ash + cube	
B&O Beolab Penta 3	2,500		active • 150W • 22,165,34cm • Line array column, display	
Celestion Kingston	2,500		sealed • 2 driver • 84dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 99,21,35cm • Polymer box, inc stand	
Lumley Reference LM2	2,500		ported • 4 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 33,110,29cm • Open baffle, floor standing	
Lowther Delphic	2,525		horn • 98dB • 4 Ohms • 100W • 28,137,44cm • With adjustable stand, 16ohm o	
Magnepan MG-2.7 SE	2,650		electrostatic • 2 driver • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 250W • 56,180,-cm • 3x quasi-ribbon	
Impulse Ta'us	2,695		horn • 94dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 31,121,49cm • Floor standing	
SD Acoustics SD1E	2,695	80	ported • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 30,125,30cm • Large scale, airy and unusually detailed, with excellent dynamics.	REC'D
Ruark Accolade	2,699		ported • 3 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 29,100,38cm • Free space, floor standing	
Proac Response 2.5	2,700		ported • 3 driver • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 107,22,25cm	
Tannoy Edinburgh TW	2,700		ported • 2 driver • 95dB • 8 Ohms • 180W • 66,102,42cm	
Jordan Watts Asp JH1 + 1	2,745		sealed • 2 driver • 85dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 40,93,23cm • Matt - other finishes extra	
Thiel CS2.2	2,749		active • 3 driver • 86dB • 4 Ohms • 250W • 30,33,106cm • 15 wood veneers + black	
Rehdeko RK125	2,750		ported • 102dB • 8 Ohms • 34,61,28cm	
B&W Matrix 802s3	2,795		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 500W • 30,104,37cm • Matrix enclosure	
Chord CEL301	2,841		ported • 3 driver • 85dB • 4 Ohms • 120W • 92,19,21cm • Biwireable, 6 wood veneers	
Helius Syrius I	2,850		ported • 93dB • 4 Ohms • 500W • 36,107,16cm • Floor standing, biwire	
Triangle Altair	2,850		3 driver • 92dB • 4 Ohms • 300W • 35,120,30cm • Proprietary tweeter	
Quad ESL-63	2,860	60	electrostatic • 86dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 66,93,27cm • Classic electrostatic lacks punch, but has strengths some can't live without.	REC'D
Sonus-Faber Amator	2,992		ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 37,22,35cm • Compact, stand mount	
Martin-Logan Stylos	2,993		hybrid • 2x2dB • 88 Ohms • 23,35,28cm • In wall	
Acoustic Energy AE2 Sig	2,995		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 200W • 24,40,32cm • Special edition version of AE2	
Meridian DSP5000	2,995	140	225W • 90,21,30cm • Digital active DSP floor stand	REC'D
Gamma Acs Epoch R5	2,999		2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 95,26,26cm • Time aligned, floor stand	
KEF Model Four	2,999		coupled cavity • 3 driver • 92dB • 4 Ohms • 350W • 30,127,48cm • Uni-Q, shielded	
Genelec Triamp S30	3,055		active • 108W • 32,50,32cm	
Jordan Watts JH2K	3,230			
Martin-Logan Sequel II	3,277		hybrid • 89dB • 31,160,29cm • Dynamic bass/electrostatic	
Spendor SP9/1	3,300		ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 125W • 106,37,44cm • Floor standing monitor	
Audio Physic VIRGO	3,399		ported • 4 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 150W • 16,100,42cm • Floor stand, decoupled tweeter	
ATC SCM50	3,480		ported • 3 driver • 85dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 31,72,43cm • Passive/to special order only	
Apogee CDD Subwoofer	3,490		hybrid • 87dB • 63,38,55cm • Active moving coil sub	
Audio Physic TERRA	3,499		subwoofer • Active sub, adjustable	
JBL T1 5000	3,499		sealed • 3 driver • 91dB • 6 Ohms • 300W • 48,114,38cm • Asymmetric, double wall	
Tannoy GRFM TW	3,500		ported • 2 driver • 95dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 80,100,48cm	
Horning Agathon	3,570		horn • 2 driver • 96dB • 8 Ohms • 38,48,115cm • Lowther drivers	
MAG Audio Audio A90	3,600		ribbon • 80dB • 3.7 Ohms • 300W • 52,150,8cm • Two-way full range ribbon	
Apogee Stage Sub	3,645		moving coil • 86dB • 58,25,42cm • Active moving coil sub	
Apogee Centarus Slant 8	3,700		hybrid • 88dB • Ribbon treble, dynamic mass	
Electrocompaniet Ellipse	3,760		ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 43,120,23cm • D'Appolito monitor	
Sound-Lab Dynastat	3,790		hybrid • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 350W • 44,183,41cm • Oak or walnut finish £3990	
B&W Matrix 801s3	3,795	81	ported • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 600W • 44,100,56cm • Lacks transparency and the drama of the best dynamics, but acoustically a tour de force.	REC'D
Magnepan MG-3.5 SE	3,800		electrostatic • 2 driver • 85dB • 4 Ohms • 250W • 61,180,-cm • 3x planar, ribbon tweeter	
Thiel CS3.6	3,899		active • 3 driver • 86dB • 4 Ohms • 400W • 32,43,123cm • 15 wood veneers + black	
Triangle Octant TXe	3,950		3 driver • 94dB • 4 Ohms • 300W • 42,150,19cm • Ultra high sensitivity	
Apogee Caliper Sig	3,998	81	ribbon • 87dB • 58,127cm • Remarkable transparency and delicacy; loudness and 'grunt' are a bit lacking.	REC'D
KEF 107/2 REC	3,999		coupled cavity • 4 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 300W • 33,116,45cm • Raymond Cooke Special Edition	
Monitor Audio Studio 50	4,000		ported • 2 driver • 90dB • 8 Ohms • 300W • 20,104,30cm • Floor stand, metal bass & mid	
ATC SCM100	4,033		ported • 3 driver • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 40,84,53cm • Passive/to special order only	
Apogee Stage 1 GS	4,100		ribbon • 86dB • 55,82,5cm • Two way	
Jordan Watts Class JH2KM	4,250		ported • 2 driver • 87dB • 8 Ohms • 150W • 47,82,34cm • Line tweeter array	
Proac Response 3.5	4,250		ported • 3 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 127,28,32cm	
Rehdeko RK145	4,250		ported • 102dB • 8 Ohms • 39,66,29cm	
Martin-Logan CLS IIz	4,333		electrostatic • 86dB • 62,127,32cm • Full range panel	
Linn Keltik Aktiv	4,400		sealed • 3 driver • 26,104,37cm • Integral stands, Isobarik bass	
Boston Acoustics 500L	4,449		3 driver • 85dB • 5 Ohms • 350W • 122,23,47cm • Free stand, separate bass/top	

PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

Audiovector 6	4,600	ported • 3 driver • 92dB • 6 Ohms • 250W • 38,115,42cm • Black piano lacquer
Prof Monitor Co MB1P	4,681	ported • 2 driver • 91dB • 8 Ohms • 500W • 38,87,53cm • Transmission line
Bravura Brio	4,750	horn • 1 driver • 101dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 129,39,81cm • Coaxial Lowther driver
ATC SCM50A	4,864	active • 8 Ohms • 350W • 31,72,48cm • With int x'over and amps
Jordan Watts Classic JH5K	4,875	sealed • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 47,126,40cm • Floor stand, line array
Shahinian Hawk	4,950	ported • 3 driver • 90dB • 6 Ohms • 250W • 43,95,32cm • Modular, omni-directional
Apogee Centaur Major	4,980	hybrid • 88dB • 4 Ohms • 200W • 40,141,27cm • Ribbon/dynamic
Genelec Triamp 1037A	4,982	active • 191W • 40,68,30cm
Martin-Logan Quest Z	4,998	hybrid • 2 driver • 90dB • 4 Ohms • 42,160,29cm • Dynamic bass/electrostatic top
TDL Ref Standard-M	4,999	ported • 7 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 800W • 56,121,50cm • Dual TLS, metal drivers
B&W Silver Signature	5,000	ported • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 120W • 25,45,24cm • External crossover
Allison I.C. 20	5,500	2 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 400W • 53,122,31cm • Floor standing, free space
Bravura Accelerando	5,500	horn • 1 driver • 103dB • 8 Ohms • 100W • 129,39,81cm • Coaxial Lowther driver
Sonus-Faber Guarneri	5,500	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 19,38,38cm • Compact, limited edition
Tannoy Canterbury 12 ^	5,500	ported • 2 driver • 94dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • 58,90,43cm
Audio Physic AVANTI	5,599	ported • 4 driver • 86dB • 4 Ohms • 200W • 19,107,40cm • Decoupled mid/tweeter
Wilson WAP Puppy II	5,600	subwoofer • 91dB • 25,53,35cm • Passive subwoofer for WATT
ATC SCM100A	5,660	active • 8 Ohms • 350W • 40,84,59cm • With int x'over and amps
Jordan Watts Class JH5KM	5,860	ported • 2 driver • 89dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 47,125,40cm • Line driver array
Sonus-Faber Extrema	5,991	ported • 2 driver • 88dB • 55,27,46cm • 'Reference Standard'
Tannoy Westminster TW	6,000	ported • 2 driver • 99dB • 8 Ohms • 200W • <i>These awesome horn loaded speakers are remarkably controlled and impressive.</i>
Jamo Oriel	6,500	ported • 3 driver • 87dB • 6 Ohms • 300W • 178,40,30cm • Coupled cavity, flagship model
Prof Monitor Co BB5P	6,754	ported • 2 driver • 91dB • 4 Ohms • 600W • 43,104,79cm • Transmission line
Sound-Lab Pristine II	6,990	electrostatic • 88dB • 8 Ohms • 300W • 72,153,69cm • Steel frame, curved panel
Naim DBL Active	6,991	200W • 65,120,40cm • Boundary, floor standing
Tannoy Canterbury 15	7,000	ported • 2 driver • 96dB • 8 Ohms • 250W • 68,110,48cm
Wilson WAP Puppy 5	7,375	subwoofer • 91dB • Passive sub for WATTS
Rehdeko RK175	7,750	ported • 106dB • 8 Ohms • 50,96,37cm
Shahinian Diapason	8,350	ported • 5 driver • 91dB • 6 Ohms • 300W • 58,100,38cm • Omni-directional
Lumley Reference LM1	8,500	ported • 5 driver • 89dB • 4 Ohms • 500W • 71,122,40cm • 2 box, floor standing
Martin-Logan Monolith I1IP	8,730	hybrid • 89dB • 59,163,28cm • ESL/dynamic,tw o-way
Wilson WATT 5	8,800	ported • 2 driver • 91dB • 27,31,36cm
Jordan Watts Class JH10K	9,340	sealed • 2 driver • 92dB • 8 Ohms • 500W • 47,156,40cm • Floor stand, line array
Martin-Logan Monolith I1IX	9,354	hybrid • 89dB • 59,163,26cm • ESL/dynamic, active crossover
Infinity ARS Epsilon	9,995	sealed • 87dB • 4 Ohms • 500W • 152,47,41cm • Includes own servo control amp
Audio Physic CALDERA	9,999	5 driver • 91dB • 4 Ohms • 250W • 25,111,50cm • Pneumatic baffle, 3 cabinet

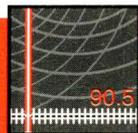
REC'D

SATELLITES & SUBWOOFERS

JPW AV2	300	sub & 5 sats • 8ohms • 87dB • 51,26,27cm • Minim/Subwoofer
JPW AV1	300	sub & 5 sats • 8ohms • 85dB • 51,26,27cm • Satellites/Subwoofer
B&W Solid Verticale	400	Sub, 2 x sat • 89 • 19,34,45cm
JPW AV4	400	2 sub & 5 sats • 8ohms • 87dB • 51,26,27cm • Minim/Subwoofer
JPW AV3	400	2 sub & 5 sats • 8ohms • 85dB • 51,26,27cm • Satellite/Subwoofer
Polk M Solution	999	sub, 4 sats • 8ohms • 89dB • 28,50,36cm
Polk RM7000	999	8ohms • 89dB • 28,50,36cm • su, 2 x sat, 1 x centre

ACTIVE SUBWOOFERS

Aiwa TS-W5	150	Stereo • 50W
Aiwa TS-W7	200	stereo • 100W
Kenwood SW-500	250	stereo • 50W • 29,50,48cm • Active crossover
Kenwood SW-900	260	stereo • 70W • 21,40,56cm • remote control
B&W Solid Powerbass	300	stereo • 75W • 33,34,39cm
Polk PSW100	499	1-box sterep • 65 W • 28,50,36cm
Triangle SAT III	650	stereo • 140W
B&W 800ASW	1,500	stereo • 200W • THX • 43,58,50cm



Tuners & Receivers

The radio medium operates at a lower profile than TV, but in areas outside pop music the BBC service is the envy of the world. Live Prom concerts rival all other sources from a hi-fi perspective. ■ Only the FM (VHF) bands give stereo hi-fi sound, though AM (MW & LW) are useful for certain transmissions in the UK. ■ Something of a hi-fi afterthought, tuners are often selected merely to match the cosmetics of a chosen amplifier. However, the task they discharge is far from simple, since it requires the skills of RF (reception) and audio (signal processing) engineering. The importance of

the former will depend on local reception conditions, but money invested in a high-quality outside aerial system is well spent. ■ Tuners come in two basic types. Analogue models tune gradually (and usually manually) across the bands, and can have analogue or digital displays; they are often preferred for sound quality, and are certainly best for AM bands. Digital tuners offer convenient automatic tune facilities and pre-set memories. ■ RDS (radio data system) is a feature originally designed for in-car applications. Basically RDS tuners can identify and display the name of the radio station being received, but

they offer a variety of other features as well. ■ Receivers are amplifiers with tuners built in. They are often equipped with surround-sound processing.

Key	
FM, M	.....wavebands received
A/V	.....surround sound capability
75W	.....power output/channel in Watts RMS
30 presets	.....number of presets offered
MM,3L,3T	.....number of inputs offered (see Amplifier category)
RDS	.....has Radio Data System compatibility

PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

TUNERS		
Goodmans GST650	90	FM,M,L • 36 presets
Sherwood TD1120	90	FM,M • 24 presets
Goodmans Delta 700	100	FM,M,L • 36 presets • 36,11,30cm
Sherwood TX1010C	100	FM,M • 30 presets
Denon TU-260L	120	93 FM,M,L • 20 presets • 44,8,24cm • <i>Careful minimalist design promises a surprisingly open and vivacious sound.</i>
Grundig T210	120	FM,M,L • 59 presets • Manual station name
Kenwood KT-1060L	120	FM,M,L • 30 presets • 44,8,26cm • Preset scan
Sherwood TX3010C	120	120 FM,M • 30 presets • <i>Lots of features and fine FM discrimination for price. Sound is communicative but inconsistently tacky.</i>
Teac T-R400	120	FM,M • 20 presets • 44,9,30cm
Grundig Fine Arts T1	130	FM,M,L • 59 presets • 44,9,30cm • User station name, gain switch
JVC FX362BX	130	129 FM,M,L • 40 presets • 44,8,30cm • <i>Disappointing all-round performance - watch out for aerial overload in strong signal areas. Tuning knob unspecial</i>
Pioneer F-203RDS	130	FM,M,L • 30 presets • RDS • 42,8,29cm • RDS at very budget price
Sony STS211LB	130	FM,M,L • 30 presets • 43,9,30cm • Station naming
Yamaha TX-480L	139	FM,M,L • 40 presets • 44,9,30cm
Grundig T310	140	FM,M,L • 59 presets • RDS • 36,8,30cm • RDS (PS, CT, RT, PTY)
Kenwood KT-2060L	140	FM,M,L • 30 presets • 44,8,26cm • Built-in timer, RDS
Teac T-R450	140	FM,M • 20 presets • RDS • 44,9,30cm
Denon TU-215RD	150	FM,M • 20 presets • RDS • 44,8,24cm • RDS Radiotext

B'BUY

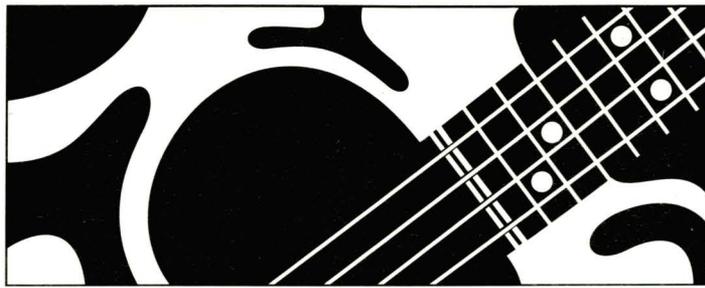
PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

Marantz ST-55	150	FM,M,L • 59 presets • 42,10,34cm • D-bus	
Technics ST-GT350L	150	142 FM,M,L • 30 presets • 43,7,30cm • Remote control capable	
Onkyo T-401	160	FM,MW • 40 presets • 46,8,31cm	
Philips FT930	160	FM,M,L • 40 presets • RDS • 44,11,30cm	
Grundig Fine Arts T2	170	FM,M,L • 59 presets • RDS • 44,9,30cm • RDS (PS, RT)	
Kenwood KT-3050L	170	120 FM,M,L • 39 presets • RDS • 44,10,28cm • <i>Excellent RF performance and plenty of features including RDS, but ordinary sound.</i>	
Pioneer F-303RDS	180	FM,M • 40 presets • RDS • 42,8,29cm • RDS with FON	
Onkyo T-430RDS	190	142 FM,MW • 30 presets • RDS • 46,9,30cm	
Yamaha TX-580RDS	199	FM,M • 40 presets • RDS • 44,9,30cm	
Denon TU-380RD	200	FM,M • 40 presets • RDS • 44,8,24cm • RDS Radiotext/EON	
Luxman T-353	200	FM,M • 30 presets • 9,44,36cm • System bus remote control	
Sony STS311LB	200	FM,M,L • 30 presets • RDS • 43,9,30cm • RDS EON, 'Autobetical' select	
Technics ST-GT550L	200	FM,M,L • 39 presets • RDS • 43,7,31cm • Remote control capable, RDS	
Grundig Fine Arts T4	210	FM,M • 59 presets • RDS • 44,9,30cm • RDS (PS, CT, RT, PTY)	
Arcam Alpha 5 Plus	220	142 FM,M,L • 24 presets • 43,8,27cm • Signal strength meter	
Rotel RT-950BX	220	142 FM,M,L • 20 presets • 44,8,24cm	
Onkyo T-409	230	FM,MW • 30 presets • 28,8,30cm • Mini component	
Pioneer F-502RDS	250	FM,M • 40 presets • RDS • 42,9,34cm • 2 ariel inputs	
Sony STS505ES	250	FM,M,L • 30 presets • RDS • 43,9,35cm • UK optimised sound	
Technics ST-GT650L	250	FM,M,L • 39 presets • RDS • 43,10,31cm • Class AA, remote control ready	
Onkyo T-450RDS	260	FM,MW • 30 presets • RDS • 46,9,31cm	
Onkyo T-411RDS	280	FM,MW • 30 presets • RDS • 28,8,30cm • Mini component	
Harman-Kardon TU9400	299	142 FM,M • 24 presets • 45,8,33cm • <i>This striking tuner exceeded our expectations. On stereo FM, it's HK's best yet</i>	REC'D
Kenwood KT-6050	300	FM,M • 39 presets • RDS • 44,10,33cm • IF switch, two antennae, RDS	
Marantz ST-72	300	FM,M,L • 59 presets • RDS • 42,10,34cm • D-bus, IF switch, local switch	
Musical Fidelity E50	300	FM • 20 presets • 44,10,34cm	
Aura TU80	350	FM,M,L • 30 presets • 43,6,27cm • Chrome finish add £50	
Nakamichi ST3s	350	FM • 30 presets • 43,7,32cm	
Arcam Delta 280	399	120 FM • 20 presets • 43,7,28cm • <i>Fine sound quality marred by mild synthesiser whine; RF performance only average. remote £60 extra</i>	
Mission Cyrus FM7	400	142 FM • 29 presets • 22,8,36cm • Remote control bus	
Onix BWD1	420	FM • 75,23,37cm • In-house front end	
Onkyo R-811RDS	420	FM,MW • 30 presets • RDS • 28,12,33cm • Mini component, incl timer	
Harman-Kardon TU9600	499	109 FM,M • 24 presets • 45,8,33cm • <i>Good bass, detail - and slightly enhanced dynamics</i>	
Musical Fidelity E500	499	FM • 20 presets • 44,12,35cm • AGC/IF switch, remote control	
Rotel RT-990BX	500	FM • 16 presets • 44,8,29cm • Remote control	
Naim NAT03	549	FM • 43,56,30cm	
Magnum Dynalab FT11	550	FM • Analogue, black finish	
Quad FM66	554	142 FM • 19 presets • 33,8,26cm • <i>Very pretty and compact but technically unadventurous. Sound is smooth, but only makes sense in Quad system context.</i>	
AVI S2000MT	599	FM • 16 presets • 31,25,9cm • R/C via system handset	
Meridian 504	625	FM • 30 presets • 33,9,34cm • System handset	
Audiolab 8000T	750	142 FM,M,L • 39 presets • 45,8,36cm • <i>Unusually combination of fine sound quality and RF performance (inc AM), and superb ergonomics</i>	B'BUY
Magnum Dynalab FT101	825	72 FM • <i>Although fairly expensive given its minimum set of facilities, its excellent sound provided ample compensation.</i>	REC'D
Michi RHT-10	895	FM • 16 presets • 47,8,34cm • Remote control	
Musical Fidelity FT	899	FM • 20 presets • 49,12,33cm • Remote control, AGC/IF switch	
Naim NAT02	998	FM • 43,56,30cm	
Magnum FT101 Etude	1,250	FM • Analogue, black finish	
Meridian 604	1,350	120 FM • 30 presets • <i>Unique digital converter makes most sense in Meridian system context: smooth, sweet sound with fine front end.</i>	REC'D
McIntosh MR7084	1,550	FM,M • 50 presets • 45,14,45cm • Links to McIntosh r/control	
Naim NAT01	1,599	142 FM • 43,56,30cm • <i>There may be better sounding tuners in the world, but we have yet to hear one.</i>	REC'D
Linn Kremlin	1,995	142 FM • 80 presets • 32,8,33cm • <i>Controversially good sound at a very high price. The reviewer's saving up but you should check it out for yourself.</i>	REC'D

RECEIVERS

Sherwood RX1010	120	FM,M • 30W • MM,2L,1T	
Grundig R210	150	FM,M,L • 50W • 59 presets • MM,5L • rem • 36,12,30cm • Gain switch, remote	
Denon DRA-265R	200	FM,M • 35W • 40 presets • MM,2L,1T • rem • 44,12,31cm	
Dual CR9000RS	200	FM,M,L • 55W • 30 presets • MM,4L,2T • rem • 44,14,30cm • System component	
JVC RX-212BK	200	FM,M,L • 50W • 40 presets • MM,3L,1T • rem • 44,13,34cm • 4ch surround	
Pioneer SX-203RDS	200	FM,M • 35W • 30 presets • MM,2L,2T • rem • 42,14,29cm • RDS tuner	
Technics SA-GX190L	200	FM,M,L • 60W • 30 presets • MM,2L,2 • rem • 43,13,31cm	
Kenwood KR-AA070	230	FM,M • 60W • 20 presets • MM,3L,2T • rem • 44,13,33cm • RDS	
Sony STRD311	230	FM,M,L • A/V • 60W • 30 presets • MM,2L,2T • rem • 43,14,30cm • System remote	
Denon DRA-365RD	250	FM,M • 45W • 40 presets • MM,3L,1T • rem • 44,12,32cm • System remote	
Grundig Fine Arts R2	250	FM,M,L • 50W • 59 presets • MM,5L • rem • 44,14,30cm • RDS, Radio text, remote	
Pioneer SX-303RDS	250	FM,M • 50W • 30 presets • MM,2L,2T • rem • 42,14,34cm • RDS tuner	
Teac AG-V4200	250	FM,M • A/V • 60W • 30 presets • MM,4L,3T • rem • 44,13,32cm • Dolby Pro Logic	
Yamaha RX-385RDS	269	FM,M • 40W • 40 presets • MM,3L,1T • rem • 44,13,30cm • System remote	
JVC RX-416VBK	270	FM,M,L • A/V • 50W • 40 presets • MM,1L,3T • rem • 44,13,35cm • Dolby Pro Logic	
NAD 701	279	FM,M • 25W • 24 presets • MM,2L,1T • rem	
Sony STRD511	280	FM,M,L • A/V • 50W • 30 presets • MM,3L,2T • rem • 43,14,30cm • Dolby Pro Logic	
Yamaha RX-V390RDS	299	FM • A/V • 60W • 40 presets • MM,3L,2T,2V • rem • 44,14,30cm • AV amp, stereo surround	
Kenwood KR-V5570	300	FM,M • A/V • 50W • 20 presets • MM,1L,2T • rem • 44,14,34cm • Dolby Pro Logic, RDS	
Technics SA-GX390L	300	FM,M,L • A/V • 50W • 30 presets • MM,2L,2T • rem • 43,13,36cm • Dolby Pro Logic	
Denon DRA-565RD	320	FM,M • 55W • 40 presets • MM,3L,2T • rem • 44,12,32cm • RDS	
Sherwood RV5030R	330	FM,M,L • A/V • 80W • MM,4L,4T • rem • Dolby Pro Logic	
Sony STRD611	330	FM,M,L • A/V • 60W • 30 presets • MM,3L,2T • rem • 43,14,30cm • Dolby Pro Logic	
NAD 705	349	FM,M • 40W • 39 presets • MM,2L,2T • rem	
JVC RX-616RBK	350	FM,M,L • A/V • 50W • 40 presets • MM,1L,3T • rem • 44,16,41cm • Dolby Pro Logic, RDS tuner	
JVC RX-508VBK	350	FM,M,L • A/V • 50W • 40 presets • MM,1L,3T • rem • 44,13,34cm • 5ch Dolby Pro Logic	
Kenwood KR-V6070	350	FM,M • A/V • 70W • 20 presets • MM,4L,2T • rem • 44,17,34cm • RDS, Dolby Pro Logic	
Technics SA-GX470L	350	FM,M,L • A/V • 80W • 30 presets • MM,4L,1T • rem • 43,14,36cm • Dolby Pro Logic	
Kenwood KR-V7070	400	FM,M • A/V • 100W • 20 presets • MM,3L,2T • rem • 44,15,40cm • Dolby Pro Logic, RDS	
Pioneer VSX-452	400	FM,M • A/V • 50W • 30 presets • MM,2L,2T,2V • rem • 42,14,35cm • Dolby Pro-Logic	
Sherwood RV6030R	400	FM,M,L • A/V • 100W • MM,4L,4T • rem	
Teac AG-V6200	400	FM,M • A/V • 90W • 30 presets • MM,4L,4T • rem • 44,15,40cm • Dolby Pro Logic	
Yamaha RX-V590RDS	449	FM • A/V • 70W • 40 presets • MM,3L,3T,4V • rem • 44,15,39cm • True DSP	
Philips FR940	450	FM,M,L • A/V • 100W • 30 presets • MM,4L,4T • rem • 44,14,30cm • Dolby Pro Logic	
Technics SA-GX690L	450	FM,M,L • A/V • 100W • 30 presets • MM,4L,1T • rem • 43,16,36cm • Dolby Pro-Logic, help function	
JVC RX-808VBK	500	FM,M,L • A/V • 70W • 40 presets • MM,1L,3T • rem • 44,16,40cm • 5ch Dolby Pro Logic	
Denon AV-1000	530	FM,M • A/V • 70W • 16 presets • MM,2L,2T • rem • 44,15,33cm • Auto input balance	
Marantz SR-73	599	FM,M • A/V • 75W • 30 presets • MM,3L,3T • rem • 43,15,38cm • Dolby Pro Logic	
Marantz SR-82	899	FM,M • A/V • 75W • 30 presets • MM,3L,2T • rem • 43,17,43cm • Dolby Pro Logic, multi-room	
B&O Beomaster 7000	920	FM,M,L • 100W • 20 presets • MM,2L,2T • rem • 42,8,33cm	
Harman-Kardon AVR-30	999	FM,M • A/V • 50W • 16 presets • MM,3L,3T,6V • rem • 45,13,35cm • Dolby Pro Logic	
Kenwood KR-X1000	1,300	FM,M • A/V • 110W • 20 presets • MM,8L,2T • rem • 44,17,40cm • THX, Dolby PL, RDS	
McIntosh MX118	3,075	FM,M • A/V • 12 presets • 5L • rem • 45,14,45cm • AV tuner control centre	

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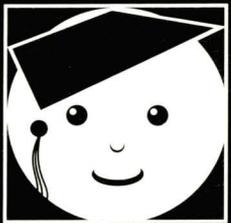
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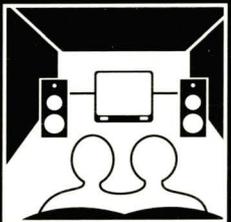
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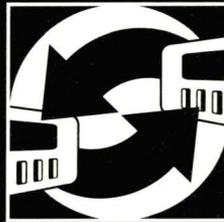
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Turntables & Arms

Specialist turntables are what high fidelity sound is all about. CD players may offer silent backgrounds and flat frequency responses, but they can't match the dynamics and superlative timing that serious turntable users take for granted. Turntables at the

cheaper end of the market tend to be supplied with a matching tonearm, and often include a 'starter' cartridge. Still better quality is found at higher prices among the separate motor units and tonearms. Careful partnering and set-up is essential for these components, but many so-called 'sympathetic' combinations exist.

Key to turntables

manual, automatictype of operation
33/45 rpmspeeds offered

Key to tonearms

SME fittype of cut-out into which arm mounts
233mmeffective length of arm

PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

TURNTABLES	
Goodmans Delta 700	55 semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • 36,90,37cm • Part of Delta system
Genexa Lab-710	60 manual • 33/45rpm • Includes MM cartridge
Genexa Lab-810	70 semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • Includes MM cartridge
Sherwood PS1870	70 semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • Budget turntable with arm
Dual CS3700/3701	85 semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • 36,10,36cm • Midi-sized turntable
Sony PSLX150H	90 semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • 43,10,36cm • Player, with MM cartridge
Kenwood KD-492F	100 auto • 33/45rpm • 44,10,39cm • Includes cartridge
Pioneer PL-225	120 semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • 42,10,36cm • Belt drive, fitted cartridge
NAD 5120	129 semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • Includes arm
Dual CS435	130 33/45rpm • 44,12,36cm • Turntable includes cartridge
Systemdek I/920	136 manual • 33/45rpm • Semi-suspended deck
Pro-ject 0.5	145 semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • 42, 11, 3cm • With Ortofon OM5 cartridge
Pioneer PL-335	150 auto • 33/45rpm • 42,10,36cm • Belt drive, fitted cartridge
Sony PSLX431B	150 auto • 33/45rpm • 43,11,36cm • Player, auto rec size select
Ariston Pro-1200	160 manual • 33/45rpm • Semi-pro disco deck
Technics SL-BD20	160 semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • 43,10,38cm • Belt drive, includes T4Pcartr
Dual CS503-2	170 91 semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • 44,13,37cm • <i>Coarse and woolly sound - not inoffensive, but bettered by the CS-505-3.</i>
Moth Alamo	175 manual • 33/45rpm • Comes with RB250 arm
Akai AP A950	179 manual • 33/45rpm • 44,12,35cm • Inc cartridge
Grundig TT1	180 auto • 33/45rpm • Black finish
Technics SL-BD22	180 semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • 43,10,38cm • Belt drive, includes T4P cartridge.
Thorens TD180/AT91	180 semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • Belt drive
Pro-ject 1	185 manual • 33/45rpm • 42, 11, 3cm • With Ortofon 510 cartridge
Rega Planar 78	198 manual • 78rpm • 45,13,37cm • As Rega Planar 2, 78 only
Rega Planar 2	198 48 manual • 33/45rpm • 45,13,37cm • <i>A remarkable product at the price, surprisingly articulate and confident.</i>
Moth Turntable	199 manual • 33/45rpm • Split-plinth design
Dual 505-4 UK	200 103 semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • 44,15,37cm • <i>Consistent sounding and well isolated turntable. It is slightly lacking in oomph.</i>
Thorens TD180/S500	200 33/45/78rpm • Belt drive, plays 78s
Thorens TD280 IV/UK	200 semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • Electronic belt drive, AT95E
Thorens TD166 VI/UK/BC	200 manual • 33/45rpm • Blank armboard, cut to shape,
Pro-ject 1 (E)	209 semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • 42,11,32cm • Semi-auto version of Pro-ject
Systemdek IIX/900	230 103 manual • 33/45rpm • <i>A high performance budget turntable that is particularly strong at fine detail resolution and imagery.</i>
Systemdek I/920/Moth	235 115 manual • 33/45rpm • <i>The motor is derivative of the Rega Planar 2 with a Moth arm. Uptempo, even bright at times but never lacks enthusiasm.</i>
Moth Kanoot Mk I Arm	249 manual • 33/45rpm • Inc Rega RB250 arm
Pro-ject 2	249 manual • 33/45rpm • 46, 12, 3cm • Metal/glass platter, clamp
Rega Planar 3	260 48 manual • 33/45rpm • 45,13,37cm • <i>The '3 (with RB300 arm) sounded musical in a balanced and coherent manner</i>
Thorens TD166 VI/UK/AT	270 manual • 33/45rpm • Inc TP50 manual arm, AT95E
Pro-ject 2/Ortofon	275 manual • 33/45rpm • 46, 12, 3cm • With Ortofon MC1 cartridge
Moth Kanoot Mk III Arm	299 manual • 33/45rpm • Inc Rega RB300 arm
Thorens TD166 VI/UK/RB	300 103 manual • 33/45rpm • <i>Refined and solid sound with well focussed imagery; suitable for use with good MM and budget MC cartridges.</i>
Linn Basik	349 103 manual • 33/45rpm • 45,14,36cm • <i>Strong midband analysis and imagery; clean if sharp treble is matched to a good if occasionally wooden bass.</i>
Dual CS750-1	350 semi arm lift • 33/45/78rpm • 44,14,38cm • Turntable includes cartridge
Pro-ject 6	379 manual • 33/45rpm • 46, 17, 3cm • Suspended turntable
Systemdek IIXE/900Ap	388 103 manual • 33/45rpm • <i>The acrylic platter IIXE is one of the most capable budget decks on the market: good resolution, dynamics and timing.</i>
Michell Mycro	397 manual • 33/45rpm • 46,14,34cm
Pro-ject 6/Ortofon	435 manual • 33/45rpm • 46, 17, 3cm • As above, with Ortofon MC15
Dual Golden II	500 semi arm lift • 33/45/78rpm • 44,14,38cm • Piano finish CS750-1
Technics SL-1210MKII	500 manual • 33/45rpm • 46,17,36cm • Quartz DD, no cartridge
Technics SL-1200MKII	500 manual • 33/45rpm • 43,10,38cm • Quartz DD, includes T4P cartri
Michell Mycro/arm	539 manual • 33/45rpm • 46,14,34cm • Includes Rega RB300 arm
Manticore Madrigal	570 manual • 33/45rpm • 46,36,12cm • Turntable, lifetime guarantee
Roksan Radius	595 manual • 33/45rpm • 45,12,35cm • Motor unit
Notts Analogue Spacedeck	600 manual • 33/45rpm
Notts Analogue Illusion	600 manual • 33/45rpm
Thorens TD3001BC	630 manual • 33/45rpm • <i>No arm, but various armboards are available</i>
Pro-ject 6/Sumiko	699 138 manual • 33/45rpm • 46,17,3cm • <i>With Sumiko arm</i>
Thorens TD2001	700 91 semi arm lift • 33/45rpm • <i>Similar to TD320 but much dearer - why? Sound is comfortable but not very detailed.</i>
Linn LP12 Basik	745 103 manual • 33rpm • 45,14,36cm • <i>Trails the full LP12 significantly, but pace, rhythm, timing etc still top rank</i>
Michell Gyrodek	765 55 manual • 33/45rpm • 53,19,41cm • <i>Sweet and natural sounding player, well matched with the Rega RB300</i>
Thorens TD3001/UK	770 103 manual • 33/45rpm • <i>Excellent middle ranking esoterica, with strong all-round abilities rather than excellence in particular areas.</i>
Roksan Radius/Tabriz	795 manual • 33/45rpm • 45,12,36cm • As above, with Roksan arm
Townshend MkIII Rock	799 manual • 33/45rpm • Headshell end arm damping
Alphason Sonata	835 manual • 33rpm • <i>Good sound in all areas - bass, clarity and neutrality all in top class (tested with HR100S MCS).</i>
Manticore Mantra	890 manual • 33/45rpm • 46,36,12cm • Turntable, lifetime guarantee
Linn LP12 Valhalla	894 manual • 33/45rpm • 45,14,36cm • Electronic PSU, upgradable
Roksan Radius/Tabriz zi	895 103 manual • 33/45rpm • 45,12,35cm • <i>Musically it offers exceptional performance with a minimum of fuss.</i>
Origin Live Oasis-S	899 manual • 33rpm • Suspended turntable
Thorens TD520	900 semi arm lift • 33/45/78rpm • Pitch control, no arm
Michell Gyrodek/arm	907 manual • 33/45rpm • 53,19,41cm • Includes Rega RB300 arm
Pink Triangle Export	948 91 manual • 33/45rpm • 46,15,37cm • <i>The PT100 with built-in PS. Transparent and neutral, but review sample had high motor noise.</i>
Kuzma Stabi/PS	1,200 91 manual • 33/45rpm • 51, 18, 4cm • <i>(Tested with Stogi Reference) Solid oak plinth; sound is very clear, detailed and extended.</i>
Notts Analogue H.Space	1,200 manual • 33/45rpm
Notts Analogue Graphic	1,200 manual • 33/45rpm
Alphason Sonata/Atlas	1,235 manual • 33/45rpm • Motor unit inc PSU
Linn LP12 Lingo	1,345 91 manual • 33/45rpm • 45,14,36cm • <i>The classic reference is improved by the Lingo, but charming character remains.</i>
Roksan Xerxes 10	1,495 manual • 33/45rpm • 45,12,35cm • Black/rosewood veneers
Wilson Benesch	1,550 manual • 33/45rpm • High-tech turntable
Rivelin Audio Eclipse	1,595 144 manual • 33/45rpm • 45,13,38cm • Motor unit
Audiomeca Romance	1,675 manual • 33/45rpm • With Romeo unipivot arm
Pink Triangle Anniversary	1,797 91 manual • 33/45rpm • 45,15,37cm • <i>Possibly the most detailed, clear and neutral sounding deck around. Likeness to master tape is uncanny.</i>
Well Tempered Rec Player	1,800 67 manual • 33/45rpm • 45,18,36cm • <i>Intriguing and challenging design. Has a limpid quality and a lack of artificiality that sets standards.</i>
Alphason Symphony	1,860 manual • 33/45rpm • Motor unit & PSU

PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

Michell Orbe	1,950	manual • 33/45rpm • 55,29,71cm • Inc QC power supply	
Pink Triangle Anni/DC PSU	2,173	manual • 33/45rpm • 45,15,37cm • Battery PSU version of above	
Notts Analogue Mentor	2,200	manual • 33/45rpm • 75lb alloy or graphite platter	
Audiomeca J1	2,500	manual • 33/45rpm • 50, 40, 2cm • Top of the range model	
Roksan TMS	2,750	manual • 33/45rpm • 45,12,35cm • Black lacquer	
Well Tempered Classic	2,800	manual • 33/45rpm • 48,19,39cm • The original Well Tempered	
Kuzma Stabi Ref/PS	3,000	manual • 33/45rpm • Two motor, belt driven	
SME Model 20	3,240	manual • 33/45/78rpm • 42,16,32cm • Precision turntable	
DNM Reson Rota 1	3,500	manual • 33/45rpm • 59,14,37cm • Inc arm & cartridge	
Well Tempered Super	3,500	manual • 33/45rpm • 49,19,39cm • Classic with carbon arm	
Manticore Magister	3,800	manual • 33/45rpm • 57,46,18cm • Special order only	
Voyd 0.5	3,940	144 manual • 33/45rpm • 51,16,42cm • Cross between standard and Reference Voyds. Superb finish, colourful and dynamic.	REC'D
Audiomeca J1/SL5	4,250	manual • 33/45rpm • 50, 40, 2cm • With parallel tracking arm	
SME Model 20A	4,535	118 manual • 33/45/78rpm • 42,15,32cm • <i>Supplied with Series V arm. Engineered to last a lifetime, giving excellent stereo and detail retrieval.</i>	
Basis Ovation II	4,800	manual • 33/45rpm • 58,42,14cm • Lead/brass, record clamped	
DNM Rota 2	4,800	144 manual • 33/45rpm • 59,14,37cm • Includes arm and cartridge	REC'D
Notts Analogue Mentor Ref 4	4,800	manual • 33/45rpm • 150lb platter, graphite top	
Well Tempered Reference	5,000	manual • 33/45rpm • 49,19,39cm • 'Fountainhead' base/carbon arm	
Voyd Reference	6,500	91 manual • 33/45rpm • 51,16,48cm • Voyd's flagship, equipped with three substantial motors, is a strong contender for world's best.	REC'D
Basis Debut Gold Std III	7,200	manual • 33/45rpm • 58,42,19cm • Belt drive, high mass	
Basis Debut Gold Vacuum	9,250	manual • 33/45rpm • 58,42,19cm • Includes suction platter	
SME Model 30	10,166	manual • /78rpm • 45,22,35cm • Flagship turntable	
SME Model 30A	11,460	manual • 33/45/78rpm • 45,22,35cm • As above, with Series V arm	

TONEARMS

Decca LI Arm	49	changeable armtube • proprietary fit • 212mm • Damped	
Moth Arm	95	60 fixed armtube • The ultimate budget arm? Refined, sweet, detailed and natural.	B'BUY
Rega RB250	95	fixed armtube • 237mm • Scaled down RB300	
Decca LIR Arm	99	changeable armtube • proprietary fit • 212mm • Rewired version of LI	
Rega RB300	139	60 fixed armtube • 237mm • Despite its modest price it sets exceptional standards and could be used on many high end turntables.	B'BUY
Moth Mk III	146	fixed armtube • Rebadged Rega RB300	
Linn Akito	209	fixed armtube • Linn/Alphason fit • 229mm • Statically balanced	
SME Series III S	242	changeable armtube • SME fit • 233mm • Economy version of Series III	
SME 3009 Ser II Imp	268	fixed armtube • SME fit • 231mm • Fixed headshell, low mass	
Roksan Tabriz Basic	275	91 fixed armtube • proprietary fit • 240mm • Targetted at the Xerxes, this is a good alternative to the Rega arm in many cases - a touch bright though.	REC'D
Alphason Xenon	286	fixed armtube • Linn/Alphason fit • 229mm • 1-piece titanium armtube	
SME 3009 S2 Ser II Imp	292	removable headshell • SME fit • 231mm • Detach headshell, medium mass	
SME Series III	335	changeable armtube • SME fit • 233mm • V-low mass for hi-compliance	
Notts Analogue Space	350	changeable armtube • proprietary fit • Opt silver wiring, unipivot	
Alphason Xenon MCS	370	fixed armtube • Linn/Alphason fit • 229mm • vdH silver wiring	
Manticore Musician	395	fixed armtube • Linn/Alphason fit • 230mm • Handmade, lifetime guarantee	
Roksan Tabriz Zi	395	fixed armtube • proprietary fit • 240mm • 'Intelligent' counterweight	
SME Series II 3009-R	445	removable headshell • SME fit • 233mm • Heavier version of Ser II S2 I	
SME Series II 3010-R	455	removable headshell • SME fit • 239mm • Detachable headshell, 10 inch	
Zeta as	469	Pivoted	
SME Series II 3012-R	489	removable headshell • SME fit • 308mm • Detachable headshell, 12 inch	
Alphason HR100S	490	86 fixed armtube • Linn/Alphason fit • 229mm • S-shaped arm sounds smooth, but nevertheless reproduces transients with fine attack.	REC'D
Helius Orion 4 Copper	549	fixed armtube • proprietary fit • 254mm	
Alphason HR100S MCS	550	fixed armtube • Linn/Alphason fit • 229mm • vdH silver, top bearings	
SME Series 300-309	597	79 fixed armtube headshell • SME fit • 232mm • Beautifully made and finished: fully adjustable and a highly neutral performer.	REC'D
Kuzma Stogi	600	fixed armtube • proprietary fit • Effective mass 13gm	
SME Series 300-310	611	removable headshell • SME fit • 238mm • 10 inch (nom) version of 300-3	
SME Series 300-312	694	removable headshell • SME fit • 308mm • 12 inch (nom) version of 300-3	
Manticore Magician1	695	fixed armtube • Linn/Alphason fit • 230mm • Polished armtube finish	
Helius Orion 4 Silver	725	fixed armtube • proprietary fit • 254mm	
Notts Analogue Mentor	750	changeable armtube • proprietary fit • Silver wiring, unipivot	
Manticore Magician2	795	fixed armtube • Linn/Alphason fit • 305mm • Polished armtube finish	
Townshend Excalibur	799	fixed armtube • proprietary fit • 220mm • Outrigger headshell damping	
SME Series IV	869	60 fixed armtube • SME fit • 233mm • Superb engineering and finish with a finely balanced sound, impressive stereo focus and low colouration.	REC'D
Roksan Artemiz	895	fixed armtube • proprietary fit • 240mm • Flagship arm, new style	
Naim ARO	963	changeable armtube • proprietary fit • Unipivot	
Wilson Benesch ACT1	975	fixed armtube • proprietary fit • Carbon-fibre armtube, unipivot	
Kuzma Stogi Ref	1,000	79 fixed armtube • proprietary fit • Large, solid and well made arm, gives exceptionally clear sound with just a hint of brightness.	REC'D
Notts Analogue Alien	1,200	changeable armtube • proprietary fit • Graphite tube, unipivot	
SME Series V	1,294	60 fixed armtube • SME fit • 233mm • Excellent in all respects, this arm arguably sets the standards for pivoted arms, regardless of price.	REC'D
Linn Ekos	1,297	67 fixed armtube • Linn/Alphason fit • 229mm • Superb, state of the art design which builds significantly on predecessor's strengths.	REC'D
Dynavector 507	1,400	fixed armtube • proprietary fit • Biaxial design	
Helius Cyalene 2	1,495	fixed armtube • proprietary fit • 254mm • Silver wired, pivoted	
Audiomeca SL5	1,999	fixed armtube • proprietary fit • Parallel tracking	
Graham 1.5T	2,550	changeable armtube • SME fit • SME base, unipivot	
Wheaton Tri-Planar 4	2,750	fixed armtube • proprietary fit • With terminal box	
Wheaton Tri-Planar 4C	3,000	fixed armtube • proprietary fit • As 4 with Cardas cable	
Air Tangent Tangent 10B	6,900	changeable armtube • proprietary fit • Air-bearing	



Cartridges

Cartridges fall into two groups: high output MM (moving magnet) models, capable of working directly into most phono inputs; and generally more expensive low and very low output MC (moving coil) models. MC cartridges usually have better mechanical integrity, tighter tolerances and give better performance. Many amplifiers are no longer equipped

with the necessary phono input for a cartridge, and a separate phono stage is necessary. Phono input equipped valve designs need a transformer to cope with MC cartridges.

■ Cartridge/amplifier interfacing can be very subtle, but even basic high output MM designs benefit in overall balance from optimised amplifier capacitance loading. Cantilever compliance (how springy it is) needs to be

considered in the light of the effective mass of the tonearm. High compliance (ie soft suspension) cartridges are best used with low mass tonearms and vice versa.

Key

fixed stylus, moving coil, moving magnetcartridge type
1.4 mVcartridge output in millivolts

PRODUCT £ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

CARTRIDGES

Ortofon VMS2	10	141 moving magnet • 5 mV • removable stylus • 5.0g • Entry level elliptical cart	
Audio Technica AT-91	13	moving magnet • 2.8 mV • removable stylus • 5.8g	
Ortofon OM-5E	16	moving magnet • removable stylus	

PRODUCT	£	ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS	
Goldring Elan P	17	moving magnet • 5.0mV mV • removable stylus • T4P version of Elan	
Goldring Elan	17	67 moving magnet • 5.0mV mV • removable stylus • A lightweight and frisky-sounding MM apparently based on Nagaoka MM4 body	REC'D
Ortofon OMP-SE	17	moving coil • 4 mV • removable stylus • 5.0g	
Shure ME70B	18	moving magnet • 6mV mV • removable stylus • Conical stylus	
Audio Technica AT-95E	19	48 moving magnet • 2.8 mV • removable stylus • 5.7g • Clear and dynamic, though richly balanced.	B'BUY
Pickering TE-15	20	moving magnet • removable stylus • Tracks 1.5gm	
Ortofon OM Pro S	21	moving magnet • 5 mV • removable stylus • 5.0g • Budget disco cartridge	
Shure M92E	22	moving magnet • 5mV mV • removable stylus • Dual T4P & normal fit	
Audio Technica AT-110E	24	moving magnet • 3.8 mV • removable stylus • 7.2g	
Goldring Elektra	25	moving magnet • 5.0mV mV • removable stylus • Elliptical stylus	
Ortofon OM10 Super	25	moving magnet • 4 mV • removable stylus • 5.0g • Elliptical stylus	
Pickering VE-15	25	moving magnet • removable stylus • Tracks 1 - 3gms	
Pickering T-E	25	moving magnet • removable stylus • Elliptical	
Grado ZTE +1	27	moving magnet • removable stylus • Moving flux, high output	
Pickering V15-DJ	28	moving magnet • removable stylus • Disco model	
Shure SC35C	28	moving magnet • 5mV mV • removable stylus • For limited use	
Arcam C77	30	48 moving magnet • 4mV mV • removable stylus • 6g • A sensible moving magnet package with good bounce at a competitive price.	B'BUY
Sumiko Oyster	30	moving magnet • removable stylus	
Ortofon OM Night Club S	32	moving magnet • 6 mV • removable stylus • 5.0g • Spherical stylus	
Ortofon 510/P	32	85 moving magnet • 3 mV • removable stylus • 5.0g • For the price, a good blend of virtues - weight, clarity and neutrality,	B'BUY
Shure M44C	33	moving magnet • 9mV mV • removable stylus • Professional, spherical stylus	
Rega Bias	34	67 moving magnet • removable stylus • 4.1g • Difficult to mount in some arms due to its shallow build, the Bias offers a gentle, refined sound.	
Rega RB78	34	moving magnet • 4.0g • for 78rpm records	
Stanton 500EL	34	moving magnet • removable stylus • Elliptical stylus	
Stanton 500AL II	34	moving magnet • removable stylus • Spherical stylus	
Pickering TL-E	35	moving magnet • removable stylus	
Grado ZCE +1	37	moving magnet • removable stylus • Moving flux	
Ortofon OM Night Club E	37	moving magnet • 6 mV • removable stylus • 5.0g • Elliptical stylus	
Shure ME95ED	38	moving magnet • 5mV mV • removable stylus • Elliptical stylus	
Arcam C77MG	40	67 moving magnet • 4mV mV • removable stylus • 6g • Punchy, with plenty of energy to liven things up. The solid body is well worth the extra £10.	B'BUY
Ortofon Concord Pro S	40	moving magnet • 5 mV • removable stylus • 19g • Pro use, inc headshell	
Pickering XV15-350C	40	moving magnet • removable stylus • Conical stylus	
Shure M55E	42	moving magnet • 6mV mV • removable stylus • Professional, spherical stylus	
Shure M104E	44	moving magnet • 5mV mV • removable stylus • DualT4P & normal fit	
Pickering TL-2E	45	moving magnet • removable stylus	
Grado Z3E +1	47	moving magnet • removable stylus • Moving flux	
Arcam E77	50	moving magnet • 4mV mV • removable stylus • 6g • Elliptical stylus	
Goldring 1006	50	moving magnet • 6.5mV mV • removable stylus • Elliptical stylus	
Pickering XV15-625E	50	moving magnet • removable stylus	
Pickering XV15-150-DJ	50	moving magnet • removable stylus • Professional cartridge	
Stanton 680AL/X	50	moving magnet • removable stylus • Spherical stylus	
Sumiko Black Pearl	50	moving magnet • removable stylus	
Rega Super Bias	52	moving magnet • 4.1g	
Linn K5	54	67 moving magnet • 4.5mm mV • removable stylus • 6g • Not as crisply focussed as the othe Linn magnetics, but the K5 is smoother.	REC'D
Ortofon Concord NC S	55	moving magnet • 6 mV • removable stylus • 19g • Pro use, inc headshell	
Ortofon 520/P	55	67 moving magnet • 3 mV • removable stylus • 5.0g • Sensitive to load capacitance, the 520/P has a lively, effervescent sound.	REC'D
Pickering TL-2-S	55	moving magnet • removable stylus • Line contact stylus	
Stanton 680EL/X	56	moving magnet • removable stylus • Elliptical stylus	
Arcam E77MG	60	48 moving magnet • 4mV mV • removable stylus • Our sample had a disappointing stylus, but gave a coherent, rich and laid back sound.	REC'D
Ortofon OM20 Super	60	moving magnet • 4 mV • removable stylus • 5.0g	
Ortofon MC1 Turbo	60	moving coil • 3.3 mV • removable stylus • 4.1g	
Ortofon Concord NC E	60	moving magnet • 6 mV • removable stylus • 19g • Spherical version of Concord	
Pickering XV15-75TS	60	moving magnet • removable stylus • Line contact stylus	
Pickering XV15-625DJ	60	moving magnet • removable stylus • Broadcast cartridge	
Shure ME97HE	60	48 moving magnet • 4mV mV • removable stylus • 7g • It won't turn a sow's ear into a silk purse, but it will produce an acceptable result.	REC'D
Arcam P77	63	moving magnet • 4mV mV • removable stylus • 6g • 'Profiled' stylus	
Goldring 1012GX	65	85 moving magnet • 6.5mV mV • removable stylus • Slightly harsh but plenty of life and detail. Some high frequency colouration apparent.	REC'D
Denon DL110	70	48 moving coil • fixed stylus • A fine all-rounder, this high output MC model is likely to perform well	B'BUY
Pickering XV15-1800S	70	moving magnet • removable stylus • Line contact stylus	
Sumiko Pearl	70	moving magnet • removable stylus	
Arcam P77MG	73	48 moving magnet • 4mV mV • removable stylus • 6g • Preferred to its cheaper partner thanks to a better tip. Channel balance poor	REC'D
Rega Elys	74	67 moving magnet • removable stylus • 4.7g • Clearly superior to the Bias, the Elys is both more detailed, accurate and convincing.	REC'D
Shure M110HE	74	moving magnet • 4mV mV • removable stylus • 7g • Dual T4P & normal fit	
Ortofon OM30 Super	80	moving magnet • 4 mV • removable stylus • 5.0g • Fine line stylus	
Pickering TL3S	80	moving magnet • removable stylus	
Grado ZF1 +	82	moving magnet • removable stylus • Moving flux	
Stanton 890AL/X	82	moving magnet • removable stylus • Professional cartridge	
Goldring 1022GX	85	85 moving magnet • 6.5mV mV • removable stylus • As with 1012, a touch harsh; detail and transient purity improved	REC'D
Ortofon MC10 Super	85	48 moving coil • 0.3 mV • fixed stylus • 7.0g • 'What a delightfully sweet-sounding cartridge this is....' we said.	B'BUY
Ortofon 530/P	85	moving magnet • 3 mV • removable stylus • 6.0g • T4P fit	
Denon DL160	90	43 moving coil • fixed stylus • 6g • Although listeners just preferred the 110, its brother here survived lab tests and is still 'thoroughly competent'.	
Pickering XEV-3001E	95	moving magnet • removable stylus • Elliptical stylus	
Notts Analogue Tracer I	98	moving magnet	
Denon DL103	100	103 moving coil • fixed stylus • 9g • Good performance in bass and good 'life' is seriously let down by its spherical stylus which kills subtle detail.	
Goldring Eroica LX	100	84 moving coil • 0.5mV mV • fixed stylus • Not the most subtle cartridge in the world: can sound edgy at times, but lively and informative.	REC'D
Goldring Eroica	100	moving coil • 2.5 mV • fixed stylus • Gyger II stylus	
Pickering XLZ-3500	100	moving magnet • removable stylus	
Pickering TL-4-S	100	moving magnet • removable stylus	
Sumiko Blue Point	100	moving coil • fixed stylus • High output MC	
Goldring 1042	105	91 moving magnet • 6.5mV mV • removable stylus • Not terribly subtle, and not such good value alongside 1012 and 1022. Quite lively though.	
Linn K9	109	Col moving magnet • 4.5mm mV • removable stylus • 7g • Linn improved this model by beefing up the Basik's bodywork and adding a super stylus.	B'BUY
Ortofon MC3 Turbo	110	103 moving coil • 3.3 mV • fixed stylus • 4.1g • The 3 Turbo is bright, cheerful and bouncy, but unsubtle - take it as it comes.	REC'D
Ortofon MC15 Super II	110	103 moving coil • 0.35 mV • fixed stylus • 7.0g • A good all-rounder, with outstanding resolution, if slightly bright and close up.	B'BUY
Ortofon 540/P	110	moving magnet • 3 mV • removable stylus • 5.0g	
Roksan Corus Black	130	91 moving magnet • 6.5mV mV • removable stylus • Recognisably related to the Corus Blue, but more civilised and smoother.	REC'D
Pickering TL-3003	145	moving magnet • removable stylus	
Audio Technica AT-OC5	146	103 moving coil • 0.4 mV • fixed stylus • 8.0g • Effortless and detailed, but rather relentless and tiring eventually.	REC'D
Grado Signature Junior	149	moving magnet • removable stylus • Moving flux	
DNM Reson Mica	150	moving magnet • removable stylus	
Pickering XLZ-4500	150	moving magnet • removable stylus • Line contact	
Dynavector 50X	159	moving coil • 2 mV • removable stylus • 4.5g • High output, exchange scheme	
Ortofon MC25E	160	139 moving coil • 0.5 mV • fixed stylus • 10.5g • High output, elliptical stylus	
Notts Analogue Tracer II	175	moving magnet	
Pickering TL-4004	175	moving magnet • removable stylus	
Dynavector 10X	189	moving coil • 2 mV • fixed stylus • 4.6g • High output, exchange scheme	

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PRODUCT

£ ISSUE SPECIFICATIONS & COMMENTS

Linn K18/II	197	moving magnet • 4.5mV mV • removable stylus • 8g • Metal body	
DNN Reson Aciore	199	moving coil • fixed stylus	
London Decca Maroon	199	67 moving magnet • 5.0mV mV • fixed stylus • <i>Now manufactured under the London brand name, this Decca cartridge is as iconoclastic as ever.</i>	
Denon DL304	200	moving coil • fixed stylus • Elliptical stylus	
Goldring Elite	200	103 moving coil • 0.5mV mV • fixed stylus • <i>The basics are right, and it will cheerfully tackle any source material, but its sound has a certain dirtiness.</i>	
Pickering XSV-5000U	200	moving magnet • removable stylus • High output	
Pickering XLZ-7500	200	moving magnet • removable stylus • Hy brid, low impedance	
Pickering TLZ-7500-S	200	moving magnet • removable stylus	
Ortofon MC25FL	210	139 moving coil • 0.5 mV • fixed stylus • 10.5g • High output, Fine Line stylus	
DNN Reson Recca	225	moving magnet • removable stylus	
London Decca Gold	239	moving magnet • 5.0mV mV • fixed stylus • Elliptical stylus	
Audio Technica AT-OC9	245	moving coil • 0.38 mV • fixed stylus • 8.8g	
Audioquest MC5	250	moving coil • 1.4mV mV • fixed stylus • High output MC, line contact	
Grado Signature 8MZ	250	moving magnet • removable stylus • Moving flux	
Ortofon MC10 Supreme	250	moving coil • 0.5 mV • fixed stylus • 10.7g • High output MC	
Sumiko BPS	250	moving coil • fixed stylus • Nude stylus	
van den Hul MM-1	250	103 moving magnet • 5.5mV mV • removable stylus • <i>If woody midrange could be tamed, imaging and security would pull it through</i>	REC'D
London Decca Maroon Dp	259	moving magnet • 5.0mV mV • fixed stylus • Deccapod mounting	
Shure V15V-MR	265	38 moving magnet • 3mV mV • removable stylus • 6.6g • <i>Extended familiarity gave the feeling of a lack of energy and a 'shut in' sound.</i>	
DNN Reson Etile	299	moving coil • fixed stylus	
London Decca Gold Dpd	299	moving magnet • 5.0mV mV • fixed stylus • Elliptical stylus, Deccapod	
Milltek Aurora	299	moving coil • 2.0mV mV • fixed stylus • <i>An overall feeling of relaxed ease characterised this clear and atmospheric Kiseki-built cartridge.</i>	REC'D
van den Hul MM-2	299	moving magnet • 5.5mV mV • removable stylus	
London Decca S Gold	339	84 moving magnet • 5.0mV mV • fixed stylus • <i>Immediate and detailed, but coloured, nonlinear with a questionable effect on records.</i>	
Notts Analogue Tracer III	350	moving magnet	
Ortofon MC20 Supreme	350	moving coil • 0.5 mV • fixed stylus • 10.7g • High-output elliptical MC	
Dynavector 23RS	375	moving coil • 0.15 mV • fixed stylus • 5.3g • Jewel cantilever, exchange	
Grado Signature MCZ	375	moving magnet • removable stylus • Moving flux	
London Decca S Gold Dp	399	moving magnet • 5.0mV mV • fixed stylus • Deccapod mounting	
Milltek Olympia	399	moving coil • 2.0mV mV • fixed stylus • As Aurora, sapphire cantilever	
Linn Klyde	449	moving coil • 150uV mV • fixed stylus • 8g • Alloy body	
Dynavector 17D2	450	91 moving coil • 0.15 mV • fixed stylus • 5.3g • <i>Clear, detailed, neutral and generally informative - excellent.</i>	REC'D
Ortofon MC30 Supreme	450	moving coil • 0.5 mV • fixed stylus • 10.7g • High output	
Kiseki Blue GS	499	moving coil • 0.4mV mV • fixed stylus	
Notts Analogue Tracer IV	550	moving magnet •	
Audioquest 404L	599	84 moving coil • 0.5mV mV • fixed stylus • <i>Slight harshness detracted from the performance of this otherwise clear-sounding and detailed cartridge.</i>	
Benz-Micro The Glider	600	moving coil • 1mV mV • fixed stylus • Semi-nude design	
Audio Technica AT-OC30	619	moving coil • 0.4 mV • fixed stylus • 7.8g • Nude micro linear stylus	
Grado Signature TLZ	650	moving magnet • removable stylus • Moving flux	
Ortofon MC2000II	650	moving coil • 0.12 mV • fixed stylus • 9.6g	
Lyra Lydian	699	moving coil • removable stylus	
van den Hul DDT-II	699	moving coil • 0.4mV mV • fixed stylus • Silver coils	
Benz-Micro H200	700	moving coil • 2mV mV • fixed stylus	
Benz-Micro M090	700	moving coil • 0.9mV mV • fixed stylus	
Benz-Micro L040	700	moving coil • 0.4mV mV • fixed stylus	
van den Hul MC-10	799	60 moving coil • 0.4mV mV • fixed stylus • <i>A neutral, balanced performer gives, fine depth and focus and a firm, extended bass</i>	REC'D
Audioquest 404iMH	899	moving coil • 1.4 mV • fixed stylus • Boron cantilever	
DNN Reson Lexe	899	144 moving coil • fixed stylus	REC'D
Kiseki PHS	899	moving coil • 0.4mV mV • fixed stylus	
Audio Technica ART-1	944	72 moving coil • 0.4 mV • fixed stylus • 8.8g • <i>This is a delicate and very fluid-sounding MC that tracks well.</i>	REC'D
Ortofon MC3000II	950	84 moving coil • 0.12 mV • fixed stylus • 9.5g • <i>A real eye-opener. Nothing to criticise anywhere, one of the very best.</i>	REC'D
Grado Signature XTZ	975	moving magnet • removable stylus • Moving flux	

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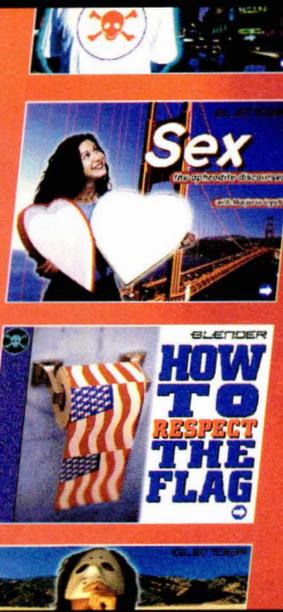
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GILSON AUDIO LTD, 172 Borough Road, Middlesbrough. (01642) 248793. Exposure, Arcam, Mission, Denon, Marantz, NAD, Rotel, Pioneer, Audiolab, Tannoy, Teac, Yamaha. Micromega, Rel. Demonstration facilities in main shop and 2 dem. rooms, 1 AV room, appt nec, home trial facilities, free install. on request, service department. Access, Visa, HP. 10-5 - 6 days.

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HI-FI EXPERIENCE, Lion House, 227 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 1HX. Tel Help Line 0171-580 3535 24 hour, fax 0171-436 4733. Agencies include: Arcam, Audiolab, Bang & Olufsen, Castle, Celestion, Chord, Cyrus, Denon, Heybrook, Harman, IMF, KEF, Marantz, Mission, Musical Fidelity, Meridian, Nakamichi, Nad, Pioneer, Quad, Rotel, Shearman, Tannoy, TDL, Yamaha. 8 listening rooms, 3 years guarantee. Free delivery and simple installation (M25 periphery), home cinema specialist. **BADA**

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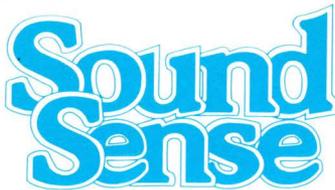
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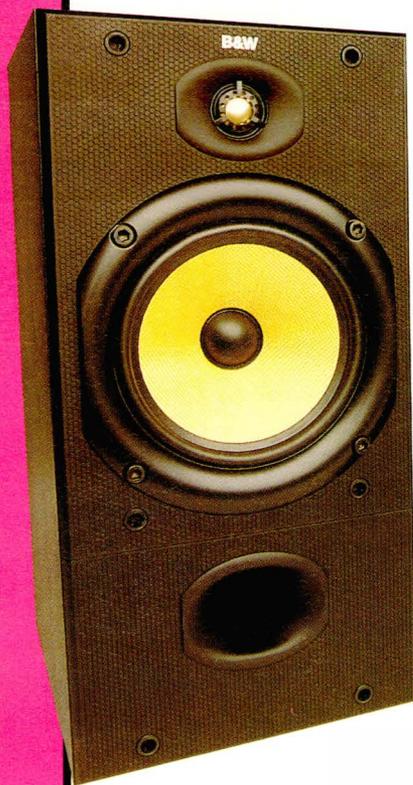
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LOUDSPEAKERS

"Is it serious, Dr Messenger?" Angela asked, her eyes brimming with tears. He drew her close, enclosing her in his manly arms. "Yes, I'm afraid it is," Paul growled in his dark, dusky tones. She could feel his hot breath on her cheek, her hands pressed closely against his heaving chest. "It's 14 mid-price speakers, including new models from Heybrook, Mission and Monitor Audio, all tested in next month's issue."

DAVE BERRIMAN EXPLAINS AMPLIFIERS

As the lions tore into his side, Capt. 'Daktari' Berriman drove further into the jungle, in search of his long-lost, unrequited love, Sister Mary. She was last seen ten miles from her Mission, explaining the intricacies of hi-fi amplifiers to Pygmy tribes in the surrounding area. "Perhaps they were not ready for Class A circuitry," he pondered, thinking of the young novice with a kind of lustful protectiveness...



IN SEARCH OF THE ULTIMATE RECORDER

Melissa screamed as the roar of the jet engines grew, ripping her clothes into tatters. She clung for dear life to the man she loved — Horst. "Actually, my real name's Alvin Gold," he whispered, his strong jaw thrust powerfully into the jetstream. "And have you seen any cassette recorders lying about?"



PLUS:

All the latest, most ruggedly-handsome products reviewed in Sessions by swarthy Malcolm Steward • Win a romantic evening for two in front of a blossoming hi-fi system • Pouting, heaving breasts in Regency A-line dresses • Sweaty men in jodhpurs • Plus loads, loads more.

MORE ROMANTIC THAN A LIGHTLY-OILED JULIO IGLESIAS ON A BED OF PHEROMONES

The March issue blossoms into pouting, yet still innocent maturity on Friday 2nd, February, 1996. Dare you miss the experience?

Personal

Looking for a good reason to re-explore vinyl?
Paul Messenger believes it's called Rega Planar 9.

Messages

Last month's Sessions feature carried an all-too-brief mention of one of the most interesting products to come my way in a long time. The item in question is a brand new and decidedly unusual hi-fi component: a very serious and radical turntable, from one of the best established and most successful practitioners of the art.

When CD first took off in the mid '80s, a Sony spokesperson told me in all seriousness that vinyl would be dead by the end of that decade. Happily, this has proved untrue, and I still make the majority of my purchases on vinyl.

However, while some LP software is still available, the development of vinyl replay equipment has slowed to a trickle. There are between fifty and hundred new

very different from my normal Linn/Naim hybrid turntable system — even better, in some important respects. But whether one or the other is more 'correct' is far less important than the way each expands musical horizons in its own particular way.

I was relieved that Sessions only required *Planar 9* to be reviewed as part of a complete end-to-end system. This is an altogether easier task than trying to define a turntable in isolation. However, curiosity got the better of me, and I quickly discovered that Rega's 'normal' top moving magnet cartridge (the £74 *Elys*) was one limiting factor. A good quality moving coil type sweetened things up a lot.

However, it also brought home how I had become poorly equipped to isolate variables and do proper turntable comparisons.



CD players each year, but just a handful of interesting vinyl components. And since hi-fi magazines are determinedly review-oriented, vinyl ends up with the lowest of profiles. *Choice* gave its annual six-page allocation last July — in an issue which also devoted 14 pages to separate CD transports and outboard DACs!

I'm not denying that important differences exist between CD players, but substituting vinyl components is an altogether more dramatic experience, as a few hours playing with Rega's *Planar 9* clearly illustrates. *P9* sounds

The guys from Rega came down for a fascinating day, trying out various combinations, mixing and matching between the two systems. I still wouldn't say I've got the *P9* properly pinned down, but this did start a craving for its unique strengths which will only be satisfied by buying one.

For any reviewer or enthusiast, the architect for any component is how much you miss it when it's gone. Trial by Deprivation is the only truly valid means of cutting through all that superficial perceptual bullshit and getting down to the heart and essence of the matter. I'm currently *P9*-less, and it hurts. It was a deliberate ploy. I asked them to take it away in order to discover the consequences.

In a few weeks I'll get another stab, only this time it'll be fitted with a Naim ARO arm

pillar. I'll also have the right preamp boards installed, so I don't have to worry about tone arm and cartridge factors when getting to grips with what's going on.

One high point of the *Planar 9* day was a chance to try a pre-production sample of a new cartridge planned by Rega. It's a variation on the *Elys* theme, and still operates according to the moving magnet principle. This has the attendant advantage of high output voltage with no need for additional step-up arrangements. The essential differences between the as yet unnamed newie and *Elys* is that the former has hand-wound coils inside, and a classy Vital stylus on the end of the cantilever.

The resultant improvement when mounting the *P9/RB300* was little short of staggering. This MM model will be quite capable of mixing it with the top MCs. The price tag will be pretty firmly up in MC country too, probably around £250, as the extra work sends production costs soaring.

Regardless of cartridge, the *Planar 9* does astonishing things in the midband, generating coherence, focus and seductive, indisputable rightness. Piano music is one of the toughest vinyl tests of all, and *P9*'s ability to capture the percussive qualities as well as the tonal and decay character is breathtaking.

Experience has made me suspicious of stunning midbands, which often seem to be achieved by sacrificing bandwidth.

Added to which, my speakers are better suited to a turntable with a richer and more laid back character than the resolutely extended but indisputably dry *P9*. It could even turn out to be a case of two rights making a wrong. I chose the Rehdekos mainly for their extraordinary voice band focus — and *Planar 9* does something similar at the source end.

This could prove to be the rescue of many a laid-back system. For whatever reason — probably associated with that high inertia/stiffness ceramic platter — *Planar 9* sports the up-front precision one associates with good quality CD players. Yet, it performs that trick within the effortless musicality of the vinyl medium.

It is, in short, an ideal machine to lure CD converts back into re-exploring vinyl. £1,600 isn't cheap, but it's well below the serious high-end, and very good value for the performance and engineering on offer. The solid construction gives a fuss-free slickness of operation which can match virtually any silver disc spinner. Roll back the tide! ▲

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