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THORENS TD124

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USED HI-FI

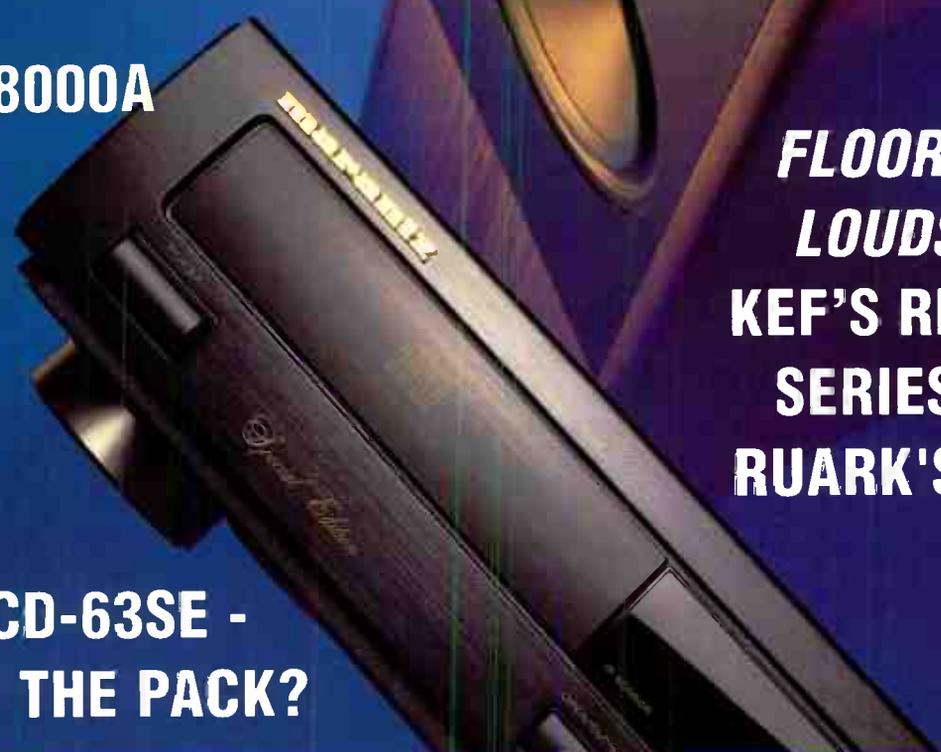
SCOOP!

EPOS ES25 'SPEAKERS WITH PUNCH!

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AUDIOLAB 8000A
AND NAIM
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MARANTZ CD-63SE -
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World Radio History

This Month's World

IT'S BEEN A GREAT MONTH FOR WELL ENGINEERED NEW PRODUCTS - THE INDUSTRY'S PROFESSIONALS HAVE BEEN HARD AT WORK! WE REVIEW THE RESULTS IN THIS ISSUE -

- Marantz are well respected in Japan and their latest CD63SE CD player, see page 13, shows why. They're one of the few large manufacturers still prepared to invest in serious audio engineering. This is the only way to produce truly better products.
- KEF know that engineering counts, but it's a difficult task master. Research labs, specialist engineers, prototype development and testing all cost money, but ultimately pay dividends with superior products like their new Reference Series One loudspeakers, reviewed on page 50.
- Audiolab and Naim are fiercely proud of their technical knowhow, and the resulting quality of their products. On page 21 their respective integrated amplifiers, both testaments to accomplished British engineering, face each other.
- But not everyone is convinced about the benefits of good engineering - Denon are now using cheaper parts to cut costs. Our records show their previous DRM-700 cassette deck had a better performance than the latest DRM-740, tested on page 36. This is how not to do it - we hope Denon have a change of heart.

Britons are buying more music than ever - but less hi-fi to play it on. Indeed, the latest figures suggest we're actually trading down to ever-cheaper systems. Expectations are very low nowadays. Hi-fi to many 1990s British buyers is a mini or micro system from Japan - all other hi-fi sales are in decline.

Yet in other parts of the world, especially the Far East, the outlook is entirely different. There they value music very highly, and accept that a decent hi-fi system will do a better job of conveying its message than a cheap and nasty mini or micro. Will things change in the UK?

Eventually, I believe they will, and so does Julian Richer - see his letter on page 38. Next month we'll take a closer look at the figures to get a better idea of what the future holds.

Noel Keywood,
Editor

TEST EQUIPMENT



- Hi-Fi World has its own advanced test laboratory and acoustically treated listening room. No other hi-fi magazine has the benefit of such facilities.
- Hi-Fi World has a dedicated in-house team of experienced listeners, and uses selected freelance professionals. We review thoroughly by extensive auditioning, rather than by quick-fire group listening tests.
- Hi-Fi World's engineering team designs a wide range of products in-house. We export kits, parts and built-up products around the world, delighting buyers in far flung corners of the globe. No other hi-fi magazine is so expert and dedicated.

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see page 68 for details

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AMPLIFIERS

AUDIOLAB 8000A vs. NAIM NAIT 3

21

The ubiquitous Audiolab 8000A in its latest incarnation meets Naim's evergreen NAIT, now with plenty of power and formidable sound. David Price does the listening.



HD AUDIO DUO

58

Eric Braithwaite reviews this pair of powerful MOSFET monoblock power amplifiers from newly formed HD Audio.

DELPH DA CAPO

59

Noel Keywood auditions a high end KT88 push-pull valve amplifier from Delph.

COMPACT DISC

MARANTZ CD63SE

13

Noel Keywood listens to Marantz's latest turbo charged budget CD player and comes away impressed.



MONARCHY DELUX 18

44

Monarchy's beautifully made upmarket CD convertor not only looks unusual but sports a volume control for direct connection to a power amp. Dominic Baker takes a listen.

LOUDSPEAKERS

EPOS ES25

18

The long awaited addition to the Epos range looks set to continue their fine reputation. Dominic Baker auditions this graceful three-way floorstander.

KEF REFERENCE SERIES ONE vs. RUARK PALADIN 50

Find what £1000 loudspeakers can bring to your system! David Price pits two heavyweights against each other.

CHARIO HIPER I

65

David Price listens to an unusually capable standmounting loudspeaker from one of Italy's largest independent 'speaker manufacturers.



CASSETTE

DENON DRM-740

36

Noel Keywood puts Denon's latest cassette deck through the rigours of the Hi-Fi World test procedure.

TUNER

GRUNDIG T4

13

35

Something different to the run-of-the-mill Japanese tuners that populate the bottom end of the market, Noel Keywood auditions a new Grundig RDS tuner.

TURNTABLES

GARRARD 401 vs. THORENS TD-124

28

These two vintage turntables are bought back to life by Loricraft Audio to battle it out in a head to head test. Which has aged best?

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MERIDIAN 500 SERIES

25

Dominic Baker listens to Meridian's svelte £2500 Compact Disc based system.



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World had an excellent show, with queues forming twice round the building just to buy the latest issue (well, almost). Dominic Baker takes you there.

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Noel and Dominic switch on the HP3561A and opine on matters technical.

MUSIC

Our guide to some of the best new releases.

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Antonio Vivaldi: Gloria; Taverner Consort and Players; Andrew Parrot

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COMPETITION

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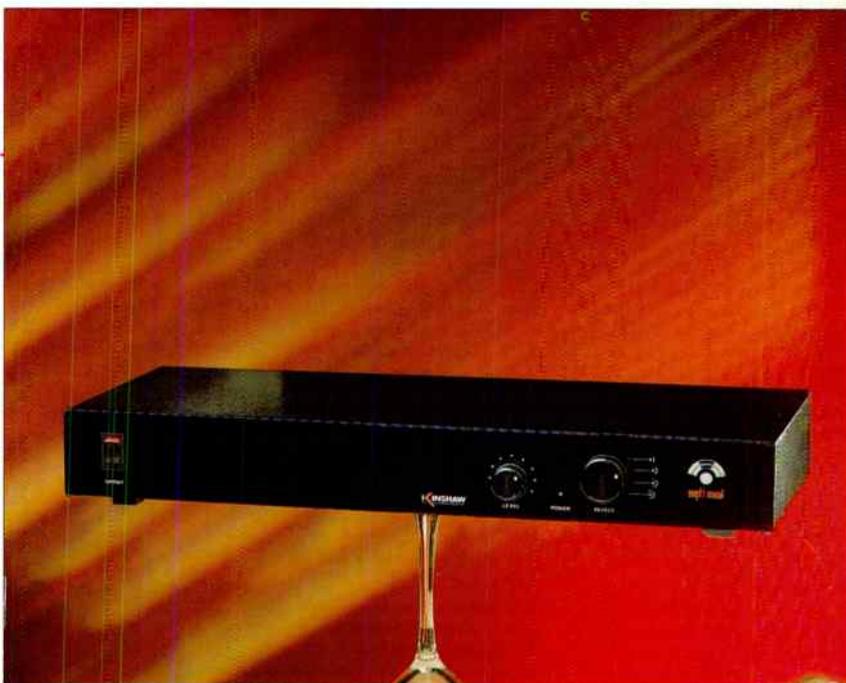
KINSHAW HAVE YOU SURROUNDED!

Kinshaw Electronics have introduced a new surround sound system called Amphi-Sound. What's surround sound doing in a resolutely hi-fi magazine like this, you ask yourself? Well, unlike Dolby Pro-Logic and its ilk, Amphi-Sound has been designed to improve the performance of hi-fi systems, as opposed to simply producing elaborate sound effects.

Kinshaw's Amphi-Sound 'black box' creates an additional rear channel to conventional 2 channel stereo, giving subtle ambient information only. Indeed Kinshaw say that if you hear bursts of sound from the rear, the system isn't working properly. Rather, it's claimed to be a serious hi-fi product which will reward with "a more plausible and realistic soundstage with more texture and presence", bringing the music out into the room better.

A fully featured Amphi-Sound processor costs £299.95, and Kinshaw have plans to introduce a stripped-down version this autumn, retailing for £149.95.

Kinshaw Electronics Ltd,
84 Pendarves Street,
Tuckingmill
Camborne TR14 8RE
Tel: 01209 715878



MORDAUNT SHORT'S HIGH PERFORMANCE

Mordaunt Short's new Performance 860 loudspeaker marks their return to the upper echelons of the hi-fi loudspeaker market.

At £1400 this three-way design features a six-sided 'ResinRock' cabinet, said to eliminate cabinet colourations, plus their 'Moulded Cone Surround' system and a minimalist crossover. The Performance 860 is finished in gloss black and is said to be intended primarily for export markets.

Mordaunt Short Ltd.,
3 Ridgway,
Havant,
Hampshire PO9 1JS
Tel: 01705 400099

trade winds

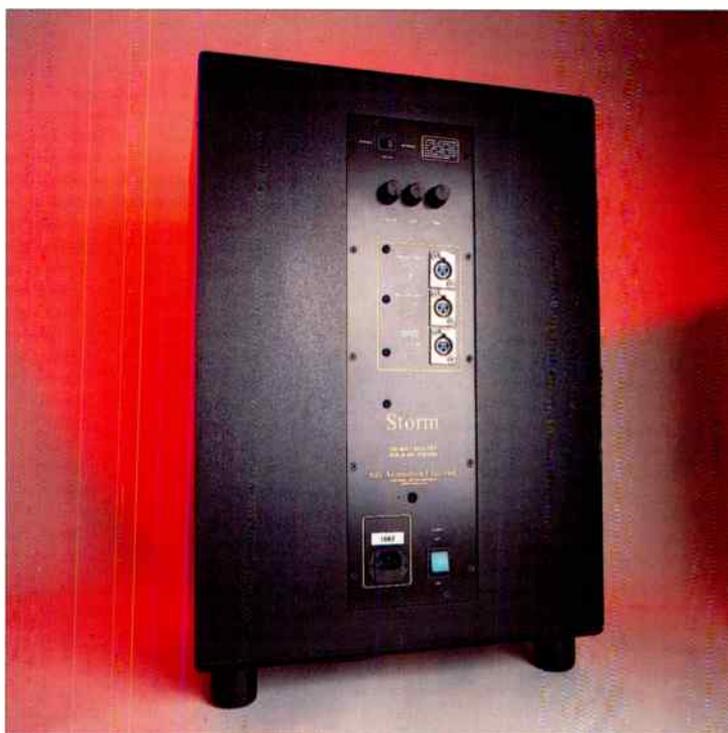
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REL GIVE YOU THE LOW-DOWN

The new £695 REL Storm sub-bass system is the latest development of the Strata. It's larger in size with a Volt 10" driver designed to be easily upgradeable to the unit used in the more expensive Stentor and Studio systems.

It features 3 XLR inputs and comes complete with a dedicated cable which may be terminated to suit either line-level or loudspeaker outputs. Finished in Grittex black, the Storm has a quoted power handling of 100watts.

Harman Audio,
Unit 2,
2 Borehamwood Industrial Park,
Rowley Lane, Borehamwood,
Herts WD6 5PZ.
Tel: 0181 207 5050



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V-8030S Cassette Deck

The latest example of TEAC's expertise in tape engineering features a 3-Head Dual-Capstan drive transport Dolby S Noise Reduction and separate Bias and Level controls - proof indeed that the cassette is still a viable source. Also available is the V-6030S



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Address _____

TEAC 5 Marlin House, The Croxley Centre, Watford, Herts. WD1 8YA TEL: 01923 819630 FAX: 01923 236290

*Bitstream Conversion is a trademark of the Philips Corporation.

SENNHEISER CLOSE IN

In the seventies, Sennheiser built their reputation around a series of superb open-back headphones, arguing only this type of design could sound truly accurate. Now they've just

announced a closed-back model, the HD265 Linear.

Admitting "even Sennheiser can't make a closed phone that sounds quite as good as an open one", they nevertheless insist that it comes closer than most. At £129.95, the HD265 is designed to have excellent external noise rejection.

Sennheiser UK,
12 Davies Way,
Knaves Beech Business
Centre,
Loudwater,
High Wycombe,
Bucks HP10 9QY
Tel: 01628 850 811



VINTAGE AUDIO FAIR

Interested in early radios or television receivers? Passionate about classic 1950s hi-fi? If so, the fourth National Vintage Communications Fair is for you. It takes place in the Pavilions Hall of the NEC on Sunday 14th May 1995. Admission is £5 for adults while under-14s are admitted free, and free car parking is available. Enquiries to:

Jonathan Hill,
2-4 Brook Street,
Bampton, Devon EX16 9LY
Tel: 01398 331 532

TEAC GO CHUNKY

TEAC have just announced a pair of high-end Dolby S equipped cassette decks designed to complement the chunky



looks of their enduringly popular VRDS range of Compact Disc players.

At £649.95, the V-8030S is a 3-head dual-capstan machine with quartz-locked direct-drive, vibration protection and a remote controller. The £549.95 V-6030S shares most of the specification of its bigger brother, with the exception of the quartz-locked transport.

TEAC UK Ltd.,
5 Marlin House,
The Croxley Centre,
Watford,
Hertfordshire WD1 8YA
Tel: 01923 819630

KEF'S EXPANDED CODA



Hot on the heels of their excellent new Coda 7 loudspeaker, KEF have announced what they describe as "a larger, beefier version", the £179.95 Coda 8.

Like its baby brother, it's a two-way bass reflex design for bookshelf or stand mounting, but sports a larger 166mm coated paper cone bass driver. It has a bigger 325mm x 200mm x 288mm cabinet, and more power handling, quoted at 10 to 100watts. The bad news is that it's finished in boring black ash, but we'll let KEF off on account of the Coda 8's superb sensitivity figure of 91dB! Look out for a review in Hi-Fi World very soon.

Kef Audio (UK) Ltd.,
Eccleston Road,
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The Chord Company, 30a Sarum Business Park, Portway, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 6EA. Tel: 01722 531674 Fax: 01722 411388

NAD UP THE STAKES

NAD have released a new £339.95 CD player, pitched directly against Marantz's giant-killing CD63SE. As their entry-level 501 player is so good, the advent of the more sophisticated 514



means the competition is going to have a fight on its hands.

Marrying an 18bit four times oversampled MASH digital-to-analogue convertor to a custom designed 5-pole filter in the analogue stage, NAD claim it offers "the best performance possible at the price". The NAD 514 also offers a carefully implemented digital output and a DC coupled output stage with no capacitors present in the signal path. Watch this space for a review!

**NAD Building,
401-405 Nether Street,
London N3 1QG
Tel: 0181 343 3240**

THE ITALIAN JOB

£995 buys you one of these single-ended pentode valve amplifiers from Unison Research of Vicenza, Italy, sporting nothing less than sculpted solid wood cheeks to the top and front of the casing!

The Simply Two boasts 12watts per channel, and is said to have "a quality of sound which is absolutely superb". Those wood adornments are there to "add a touch of pure luxury". If it worked for Rover cars, why not for single-ended

pentodes!

The Simply Four offers either triode or pentode operation, with 24 watts for £1495. The range is topped by the Smart 845, a triode monoblock design using the same 845 valve. At £2995 for a pair, it's got more of

everything, with 24 watts and lavish amounts of wood.

**U.K. Distribution,
23 Richings Way,
Iver,
Bucks SL0 9DA
Tel: 01753 652669**

US CASTS A SPELL ON VINYL

Audio Alchemy, the American manufacturer best known for their offboard CD convertors, has now made the move to vinyl, in the shape of their Vac-in-the-Box phono stage. The £249 Vinyl Analogue Convertor has been available Stateside for some time, doubtless doing well thanks to vinyl's recent resurgence over there.

The Vac-in-the-Box is said to have highly accurate RIAA equalisation, with left and right channels supplied by independent power supply regulator stages, and selected capacitors including Nichicon MUSE types are featured. This is said to give "a very clear, open sound...to extract new, unheard detail from ageing record collections."

The Vac can be optimised for almost any cartridge thanks to internal jumpers which select resistance, capacitance and gain, and comes complete with Audio Alchemy's 'Power Station One' power supply.

**Path Premier,
Unit 2,
Desborough Industrial Estate,
Desborough Park Road,
High Wycombe,
Bucks HP12 3BG.
Tel: 01494 441736**

REGA RESURGE

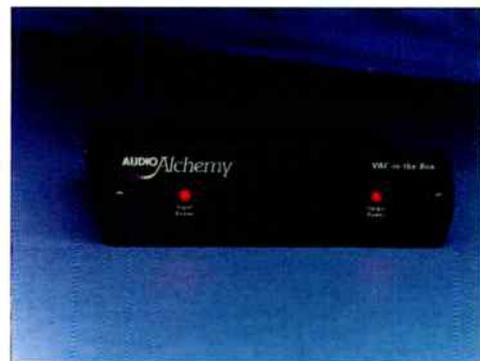
Shock waves currently resound through the hi-fi world as Rega Research, purveyors of the much-loved Planar 2 and 3 turntables, have announced a new flagship model, the Planar 9.

Due to the inevitable chaos industry-wide, details are scarce at the moment, but we're assured by Rega that it's "our (and the) definitive turntable".

Priced around £1500, the Planar 9 features a solid wood surround connected to a rigid inner plinth, and a dual speed outboard quartz crystal power supply driving a high quality motor via twin belts. Also included is an RB900 tonearm which boasts highly specified bearings, a new 3 point mounting and new low capacitance cable.

When the dust settles and the panic in the streets subsides, watch this space for a review!

**Rega Research Ltd.,
119 Park Street,
Westcliff-On-Sea,
Essex SS0 7PD
Tel: 01702 333071**



G T AUDIO



UNISON RESEARCH "SIMPLY TWO"
12 Watts Class A, Single Ended EL 34
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sound quality, price £2,995 per pair.

UNISON RESEARCH IS "SIMPLY" HERE AT G T AUDIO.

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TELEPHONE / FAX 01895 833099

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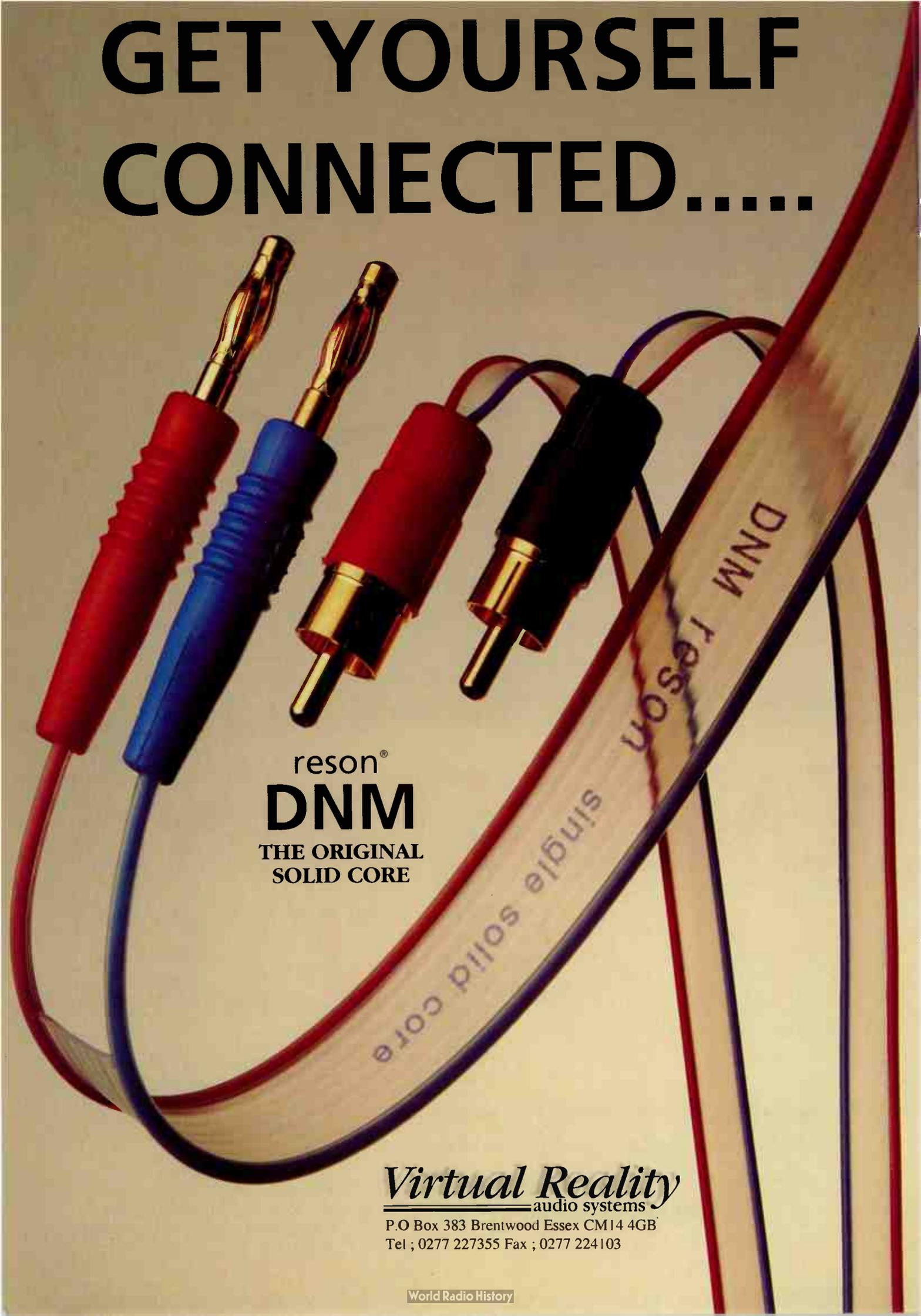


ENGINEERING SUCCESS

Marantz's CD63SE CD player avoids digital gimmickry, relying on quality engineering to produce a superb sound. Noel Keyword thinks its future looks good.

With their new CD63SE Compact Disc player, Marantz have kept their feet on the ground. Avoiding the radical and questionable DSP processing schemes being adopted by Pioneer (Legato Link) and Denon (Alpha Processing), they've come up with an affordable £349.90 audiophile player that relies on good conventional engineering.

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Marantz's top engineer Ken Ishiwata really knows his audio. This Special Edition player attempts to improve on the already competent standard model with a host of innovations, including audio grade components and specialised audio output amplifiers. Knowing how much component 'colouration' can influence sound quality, I have to say I'm very sympathetic to this approach. Ken told us Marantz have, with vibration transducers, measured the behaviour of capacitors in response to an applied impulse and find they 'sing'. Tannoy have said the same too.

We've also noted that component sound often relates to construction materials, e.g. paper-and-oil dielectric types sound damped and display beautifully dark inter-transient silences. But component type must be varied or the sound will become too unbalanced. Like chocolate cake, too many paper-and-oils are too much of a good thing. Ken was the first to raise this point with us, winning himself lots of extra Brownie points!

The CD63SE is low slung at 90mm high. At the price you can rely on a host of features, but these don't include Philips' dubious Favourite Track Selection (FTS) nor remote control of volume. I find the latter useful because the player can drive a power amp direct, but it's difficult to implement and probably not high on most people's agenda. The CD63SE nearly has a full complement of controls though, with just a few minor functions such as 'Repeat' being found on the remote control unit.

Marantz use their usual bright blue display with numerals clearly readable at a distance. Track and time are shown simultaneously, together with a small 20 track calendar which gives a permanent reminder of tracks played and remaining.

SOUND QUALITY

This player sounds good. Vivid midband focus gave vocals a strongly etched outline. John Lee Hooker's voice croaked and rasped on 'Deep Blue Sea', an ability to convey strong dynamic inflections projecting his voice forward

well. Hooker's chuckle at the end of this track jumped out in stark contrast to the background - lovely!

Considering our expensive reference Pink Triangle Da Capo barely sounded more convincing, I was impressed. Whilst strings were painted from a broader textural palette with greater body, the Marantz CD63SE sounded both clear and refined. Most people would be hard pressed to choose between the two.

Ripping treble energy from a disc makes particularly strong demands on digital filters, throwing up anomalous behaviour in many players. This causes peculiar dulling effects in processing players, or grittiness and shimmer. Hard struck chords on Steve Earle's 'Someday' are a favourite test of mine and the Marantz again survived them with composure, conveying the bite of the strings without undue coarseness. Like most Steve Earle albums this is a fierce recording, and only sophisticated convertors (here I'm thinking of DPA's) handle this sort of thing without falling apart or turning nasty. Likewise the CD63SE.

Although the Marantz playing Steve Earle produced treble strong enough to lacerate, the cymbals at the end of 'Someday' stinging my ears, they're supposed to! In the midst of this, the sound remained clean and I remained listening. Against Da Capo there was a little less atmosphere around vocalists and not quite the same fully cohesive picture, yet I'd bargain that the Marantz's upper treble was a mite cleaner and more refined. At the start of Jackie Leven's 'Gylen Gylen' the strings of a strummed guitar sounded especially sweet and clean. By any standards this player is a very classy act.

This followed through into classical music well. Horns at the start of Scheherazade had richness and bite, violins avoided shrillness and stayed well separated, exerting the nimble interjection intended when plucked -

light, fast and attention catching. This was another demonstration of the player's strong midband and apparent speed. But the Marantz has a light and bright tonal colour that may well not complement bright amplifiers so much as some of the smoother designs, Aura, NAD and Pro-Ject being amongst them.

Only further down the audio spectrum did the limitations of the Marantz become apparent, and they weren't great by any means. The laconic bassline behind Hooker's 'Chill Out' lacked expressiveness. It was a little bland in its playing, tonality and dynamics. The CD63SE has bass for sure, superficially it's pretty good, but against an expensive reference like Da Capo it proved

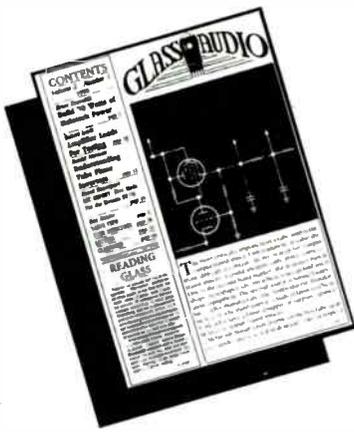
featureless and unengaging. This is the only reason why the Marantz ultimately wasn't as cohesive as a top quality convertor. Its glorious midrange and treble performance rather faded away lower down the musical scale, slipping from brilliant to just good - what you'd expect at the price. It's just as well, or Marantz would have cleaned up totally!

Taken as a whole, the CD63SE is one hell of a Compact Disc player. It's well built and compact enough to slide unobtrusively into most systems. Styling is neat and unassuming and finish is excellent. It's at one and the same time insightful and refined, with a gloriously engaging and dynamic midband with sweet, pure treble. That puts it right at the top in this price bracket. Free from current digital contrivance, it's a tribute to properly directed audiophile engineering. That really does make it special ●

Marantz CD63SE £349.90

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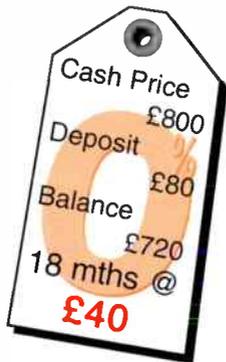
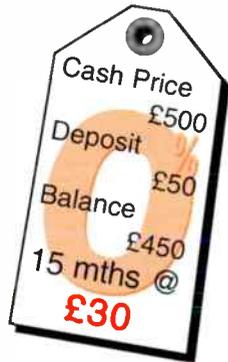
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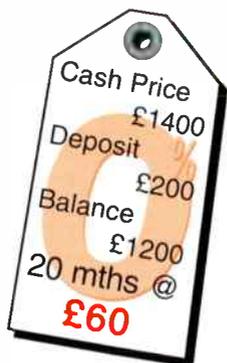
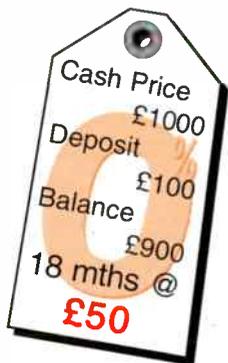


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Using elegant but simple engineering, these floors come up with a great loudspeaker in the new ES2. Dominic Baker comes away impressed.

ELEGANTLY SIMPLE

Epos have built themselves a fine reputation amongst audiophiles from just two loudspeakers, the ES14 launched back in 1986 and the more recent ES11, which took the industry by storm in 1990. Epos have never been ones to rush things, but there's been feverish activity in Havant recently with the development of an all-new floorstander, the ES25.

The first thing that struck me about these speakers was their quality of finish. Their cabinetwork was opulent, rivaling cabinets from the likes of Ruark and Castle. Every joint met perfectly and the real wood veneer is complemented by solid wood edging, a nice touch that allows knocks to be polished out.

Epos have an unusual but specific design philosophy. As far as possible they use simple first-order crossovers, which use very few parts, but have excellent phase and impedance characteristics. This in turn demands the use of good drive units, so Epos make their own.

The ES25 continues this tradition, using a dedicated midrange/treble driver fed from just one capacitor to make sure it doesn't have to handle heavy bass. Its treble output is augmented by a 25mm aluminium dome tweeter and this again works from just one capacitor to keep out low frequencies.

For bass, Epos have developed a high power, low distortion 8inch driver using a one piece Cobex cone with an integral dust cap to

improve stiffness. Around the back of this unit there's a massive magnet assembly fixed sturdily to a rigid diecast chassis - all custom built. This dedicated bass unit from a slightly more complex 2nd order filter, so it supplies bass alone.

Around the back of the ES25s are three sets of flush sockets for tri-wiring which accept only 4mm plugs.

Below them resides a rear-firing bass reflex port.

I found these speakers needed a lot of running in, improving after several days to reveal more and more of a performance. And "reveal" is what they do most potently, offering a transparent, nearly uncoloured window on a performance. This also means and they expose source components and in this respect are critical of amplifier and source.

Oasis' 'Supersonic' created a wide soundstage bursting with acoustic detail and ambience. Cymbals crashed frantically, fighting their way through the splashy reflections from studio walls that echoed across the whole studio. The ES25s have an extremely coherent and focused sound, like Harbeth's HL-P3s with greater scale. Their midrange projects freely and smoothly to create a deep sound stage having exceptional clarity and body, notable with vocals and strings. I found treble to be sweet and crisp.

Bass has been optimised to play deep, but these speakers don't go as deep and aren't as full as you'd expect from a cabinet of the size. All the same, they are cleaner and more precise than most, revealing the detail of a bass guitar rather than portraying

it as a powerful thud. Such bass resolution is a breath of fresh air, opening up a musical dimension that other loudspeakers only hint at. A lack of waffle or overhang made bass lines seem fast, tight and tuneful. There was enough bass power

to impart real impact to percussion, conveying low frequency dynamics well.

The ES25s stay firmly in control at all times, offering a dry, neutral balance, unlike the richer, more characterful ES11s. The 25s are more transparent, yet there's a touch of character from the midrange driver's plastic cone. It's sufficiently well

controlled not to detract from the tone and timbre of strings, but it does add colour.

This crisp, dry balance combined with their ability to resolve detail in a natural manner is absolutely captivating with classical music. I'm not a great connoisseur of classical, but the performance the ES25s created with Locatelli's Sei Introduzioni Teatrali, OpIV, was breathtaking. The last three tracks of this fine recording is a concerto for violin, strings and basso continuo. Despite its simple underlying structure the emotion from this sonorous, rounded piece was captured majestically. The purity of tone of violin, naturally coloured and full of body was a delight. I'll probably regret saying this, but it does highlight how processed and mechanical modern rock recordings can be.

A properly designed three-way loudspeaker can be something special. They are more complex than two-way designs, but as Epos have demonstrated with the ES25, the rewards can justify such complexity. These are true audiophile loudspeakers. They show that meticulous engineering and attention to detail can create something outstanding ●



“The ES25s have an extremely coherent and focused sound, like Harbeth's HL-P3s with greater scale.”

Epos ES25

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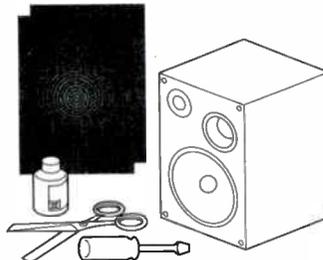
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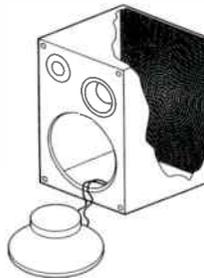


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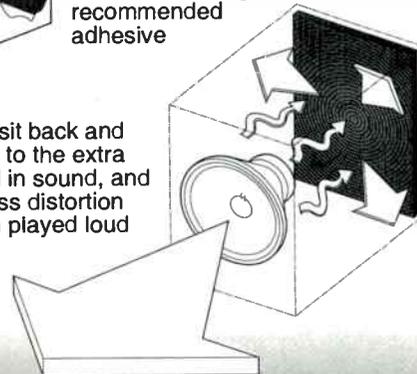
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Both the Audiolab 8000A and the Naim Nait 3 have followed that most British of practices, evolution. Audiolab and Naim both constantly refine their amplifiers. This product development philosophy wins British hi-fi many friends overseas, as there's something reassuring and eminently sensible about such an approach

Since their inception over a decade ago they've both come on in leaps and bounds. Once the Audiolab was well built but loose sounding, and the Naim musical but hopelessly underpowered. Nowadays, the former is a fine sounding proposition, and the latter a realistic one.

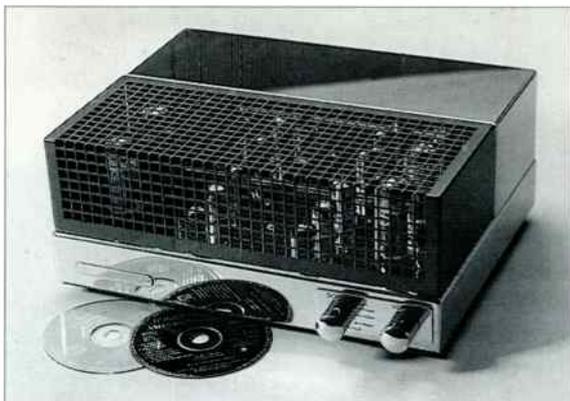
The Audiolab is a well featured machine with sensibly mild, defeatable tone controls, independent record and listen selectors, and a host of inputs including an excellent MM/MC phono stage. It's also famously reliable.

The Nait 3 has grown up to a standard full width case, but still espouses the Naim doctrine of minimalism. Finish is excellent, just short of Audiolab standards. Unfortunately, a phono stage costs extra, but as you'd expect from Naim, past masters of the art, it's superb.

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THE LISTENING

Both amplifiers were slotted between my Michell Gyrodec QC/Rega RB300/Audio Technica AT33 turntable and a pair of Chario Hiper I loudspeakers. Naim NAC 05 speaker cable was used with the Nait - Naims don't like 'foreign' cables - and Chord Company Flatline with the 8000A.

The Audiolab gave a great rendition of Jamiroquai's 'Return of the Space Cowboy', at once sounding super-confident. The opening electric piano was full bodied, imaging to the rear of the 'speakers, and vocals projected out with commendable clarity. When bass kicked in, the Audiolab made itself known through its tremendous punch - this was no delicate flower of an amplifier. Treble was a pleasure, sounding sweet and finely etched.

Rhythmically, the Audiolab also acquitted itself well, percussion being delivered in a supple, unmechanical fashion. Although bass lines were fairly taut, they weren't the last word on the subject, stopping and starting with more force than precision. Lots of intricate detail made its way through, with cowbells projected with unusual clarity. Dynamically the Audiolab was no slouch in its capacity to get louder and quieter as the occasion demanded.

The Audiolab 8000A managed the rare feat of sounding powerful and lithe at the same time, an enjoyable combination. But it wasn't until I powered up the Naim Nait 3 that its weaknesses became clear. Tonally the baby Naim was starker, with a rather monochromatic quality. Compared to the Audiolab, there was an emphasis on the mid band, with treble a touch duller and bass drier.

Back with 'Space Cowboy', the difference in control between the two struck me on the opening bar. Jay Kay's voice had more tangibility, making the Audiolab sound glossy and airbrushed by comparison. The electric piano was

imparted with a naturalness that had escaped the 8000A. As the groove kicked in basslines were less powerful, but tighter, more tuneful and expressive - you could hear the bassist's finger on the string, whether it was being slammed or lightly plucked.

The Naim also managed to separate out instruments better, bass hanging 'underneath' the mix, playing with its own phrasing which didn't inflect on the other instruments. Vocals seemed to float forward of the speakers, with the electric piano well behind. Silences between the notes were better carried than the Audiolab, which seemed to make notes run into one another.

Moving to dance music, the Audiolab made an impressive job of Sueno Latino's eponymous club classic, with a rich, fruity house piano sound and an expansive soundstage augmented by wallops of bass power. By contrast, piano on the Nait sounded a touch anaemic and lacking in warmth, the soundstage appearing smaller. However,

the Nait caught breathy female voice, flanged snare drums and ambient water effects with crystal clarity. The Naim wasn't over detailed in a pedantic sense, all strands of the mix were projected in a cohesive, musical way. Roland 808

hi-hats had a beguilingly natural texture, their timing beautifully carried, whilst sub-bass lines were at once super-tight and tuneful.

Indeed the Nait proved really emotive, with an uncanny ability to communicate the feeling in a musical performance. Clint Eastwood and General Saint's 'Jack Spratt', a vintage slice of reggae aided and abetted by the bass and drum talents of Sly Dunbar and Robbie Shakespeare respectively, was a joy. The 8000A pumped out great tracts of power, just what the music needed, whilst the baby Naim revealed Sly's supreme delicacy of playing and his beautifully nuanced syncopation with

Robbie's percussion.

This said, the Nait 3 still needs careful matching, preferably with efficient, warm sounding loudspeakers. The Audiolab on the other hand is less fussy about partnering equipment, its predilection for bass meaning it can inject weight into bass-light 'speakers. When suitably matched, the 8000A charms you through its gusto, and the Nait through its detail and grip.

THE VERDICT

The Audiolab is a big hearted performer with plenty of bass and the ability to pile-drive it into any load you care to mention. Midrange is clear and detailed, and treble smooth and sweet. It's superb value - for £500 you get a truly powerful, musical sound, an excellent range of facilities and true upgradeability. In short, the Audiolab 8000A is jack of all trades, and master of many.

The Naim does not and cannot aspire to this. Eschewing power and facilities, its sparse front panel announces its design aims in no uncertain terms. Tonally less inviting with a leaner sound, it nevertheless sounds supremely musical, getting to grips with rhythms like few amplifiers at any price can. If it's absolute sound quality you're after, the Naim Nait 3 gives a taste of true esoterica. Both these amplifiers are now excellent at what they're designed to do - evolution is a grand thing indeed ●

“The 8000A charms you through its gusto, and the Nait through its detail and grip.”

Audiolab 8000A £499.90
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CIVIL SERVICE

Dominic Baker finds the sound of this elegant, easy to use Meridian system will never offend.



Meridian's 551 integrated amplifier and 506 CD player are beautifully finished with a stylish, luxury feel that few others achieve. Add to this their interconnectivity via Meridian's 'comm-link', allowing all Meridian 500 series components to be controlled by one remote control, and it's a highly desirable set up. The two three-way floor-standing AS90 tweeters are the key to just the 500 series, together making an elegantly simple but mighty wireless system.



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MERIDIAN 551

The 551 amplifier has six inputs, five line level and one for an optional MM or MC phono stage, all of which have adjustable sensitivity, so a CD player with 2V output and a tuner with 0.5V can be configured to give the same level for the same volume setting.

Instantly impressive to listen to, the £795 551 has a smooth, powerful sound that places it up with the best integrateds under £1000. Belly's new album King showed just what a smoothie the 551 could be. Without a hint of midrange coarseness, Tanya Donnelly's breathy vocals soared gracefully upwards towards the crisp, focused cymbals. Treble is a touch bright in a harmonious way - open and delicate but solid, much like my benchmark Class A Sugden A21a.

The 551 has a sturdy bottom end too, putting real weight behind every note on Soundgarden's 'Black Hole Sun'. There's also a subtlety and finesse that suited the delicately played violin sonata of Giuseppe Tartini equally well. Here, strings often develop hardness, grating unharmoniously, but the 551 stayed smooth and sweet.

Although the Meridian 551 doesn't have the richness, clarity and ruthless detail of the A21a, it's still a fine amplifier capable of doing justice to a wide range of music.

MERIDIAN 506

Meridian have chosen to use Crystal's CS4328 delta-sigma convertor in the £875 506. This is widely used nowadays, being a high performance, easy to implement design that I normally recognise as a rich, full bodied sounding device, but in the 506 it sounded quite different.

Starting with The Stone Roses' Second Coming, the Meridian sounded lean and controlled. This album is richly textured in its own right, but the 506 stripped it down to bare bones, leaving a sterile, unemotional skeleton.

This presentation suited the more processed electronic pop of Blur's Parklife, where punchy synths and crashing cymbals were relayed cleanly

and concisely. Dynamically the 506 is strong, following a clear, well ordered beat with aplomb. But given instruments with more intricate harmonics and a live acoustic, the 506 tended to compress it into fundamentals.

Where CD normally benefits from a fuller more solid bottom end, the Meridian's bass was a little dry. This reduced musical scale, which along with a lack of projection through the midrange and definition in the treble gave a flat sound compared to better Crystal equipped players like the Quad 67. In fact, treble sounded quite soft, removing some of the bright metallic ring of cymbals for example, although this could well be a useful remedy in some systems.

If this sounds a little harsh, it's because of the level of competition at this price point. Quad's 67 is freer, letting music flow and evolve in a more communicative way, whilst Linn's Mimik beats it for ultimate detail retrieval and dynamics. This leaves the 506 stranded somewhere inbetween, having neither the sheer enjoyment of the Quad or the precision of the Mimik.

MERIDIAN A500

Beautifully finished with a claimed 90dB sensitivity for under £750, we were particularly keen to audition these new three-way floorstanders. The A500s use a silk dome tweeter, rather than Meridian's normal metal dome, which passes over to a 6inch heavily doped paper cone for midrange and bass. Below this a second 6inch driver reinforces the lower octaves. The A500s are a sealed design, both drivers sharing the same internal chamber. A machined front baffle stands slightly proud, over which the cloth grille stretches to give a clean, smart appearance.

The A500s have a dry, restrained character emphasised by their shallow stage depth, tending to compress sound

into a narrow plane. In their favour, lateral dispersion is very good, creating a wide and spacious stage that's captivating at times, even if the imaging within is rather dispersed.

Bass is deep and lacks nothing in slam, rendering Senser's 'What's Going On' with impressive force. There's little overhang or bloom, they have a dry character, but give them something like Nirvana's 'Come as You Are' and they'll demonstrate their ability to follow bass lines tunefully.

Crisp and detailed through treble and midrange, the Meridians projected well and were tonally very neutral. Here the paper cone midrange driver puts them well ahead of the crowd of plastic variations, giving a more natural texture to strings and vocals alike.

This showed itself especially well with Locatelli's Sei Introduzioni Teatrali, the A500s producing a smoothly refined and balanced performance. The tweeter occasionally became overwhelmed and compression would set in, but the A500s were always polite, meaning many will appreciate their civility.

THE SYSTEM

As a system, personally I'd change either the loudspeakers or the CD player which share the same restrained, unyielding presentation which doesn't let music breathe and flourish. Swapping the CD player for a Quad 67 or the loudspeakers for Mission 752s will give a more involving presentation. The individual components certainly have their strengths though, especially the 551 amplifier, and are all well worth auditioning in their own right ●

“The 551 has a smooth, powerful sound that places it up with the best integrateds under £1000.”

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THORENS TD124 &

Two classic turntables face each other in a bid for supremacy.

I spent years struggling to get reasonable results from old Lencos, TD160s and many others, sawing new plinths, soldering new tonearm wires and fiercely bolting things together to try and improve the performance from these beasts, many of which invariably ended up in bits. I was dreaming of the day I would be able to choose between LP12, PT Too, Gyrodec or Xerxes, or my favourite at the time, the Townshend Elite Rock. Then CD was upon us and I ceremoniously bought a Cambridge CD2, mistakenly believing it to be the best career move for my hi-fi at the time. The CD2 was O.K., but CD wasn't so hot at the time.

Now look at what has happened! Nearly ten years down the line CD as

we know it today is no longer the future medium. We are already looking forward to what will come next that can offer better, more LP-like sound!

You don't have to spin a new, upgraded 5in silver frisbee to get something more LP like when there are still lots of 12in black originals around, plus things to play them on. This test between the Garrard 401 and Thorens TD124 came about as a result of my visit to Loricraft Audio where they still specialise in turntables - vintage style. Regular readers will know that the best turntables from the past, notably the Garrard 401, can offer fantastic results when renovated. Loricraft renovated my 401, which I first spotted at Audio Gold in Crouch End. It was sitting in a corner, looking a bit grubby and fitted

to a plinth that consisted of little more than a plank of wood. Amazed by the dynamic bass and metronomic precision of Noel's Bastin restored 401, and keen to start seriously listening to vinyl again on a regular basis, a cash deal was quickly arranged.

After a lengthy conversation with Terry of Loricraft we agreed that he would completely strip down my newly acquired 401, rebuilding it piece by piece and fitting it to one of Loricraft's custom made plinths. When I arrived to collect my 401, I spotted a Thorens TD124 undergoing similar treatment. I had come across a TD124 once before, and the memory of the smoothly flowing lines of its base plate casting had stuck.

Suspecting that its presence was a



Garrard 401

Dominic Baker reveals the winner.

spin off from the popularity of Garrard turntables, I asked, "so this is the next great vintage turntable to be revived?" Terry retorted, "the TD124 is already extremely popular - many believe a properly sorted TD124 outperforms the Garrard". The turntable bug had hit once again. "can I borrow one to compare against my Garrard?", I asked enthusiastically.

So for this head-to-head test between two vintage greats each was treated to a full rebuild, a new Loricraft plinth and each was fitted with an SME 309 tonearm. Both were used with the same cartridge, an Ortofon MC30 Supreme, and in the same system. I already knew what the Garrard was capable of, but I had to know whether or not it was an improvement.

We covered the Garrard 401 in depth in the April '93 issue - suffice to say it's a beautifully built, solidly engineered device. Essentially, the Thorens TD124 is a very similar animal. Like the Garrard the platter is driven by a rubber idler wheel. But the drive to this comes from a machined hub, itself driven by a belt from the motor. The Garrard motor drives the idler wheel directly, which helps to explain its stable and powerful sound. But the belt Thorens use is short and thick, allowing the torque of the large motor to be efficiently transferred to the drive hub, and it has the additional advantage of mechanically isolating motor vibration from the platter. I was keen to see which compromise would give best subjective results.

GARRARD 401

There are two things which immediately set the Garrard apart from the crowd. The first thing you notice is its amazing bass slam. Notes go deeper and with more power and control than I have heard from any other turntable. A case in point here is Lou Reed's 'Walk on the Wild Side'. The double bass intro filled my room with a wall of thunderous, reverberant notes accompanied by rattling fret boards and a characterful bloom from the instrument's body.

Not only was the scale of the notes captivating, they were perfectly formed too. There was just the right amount of upper bass speed to give a clear and well defined leading edge to each string



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as it was plucked, accompanied by growling subsonics. I'm sure the Garrard's bass quality owes much to the direct drive system which gives terrific torque. There's no slurring of notes, which are played cleanly with metronomic attention to timing, giving the Garrard real authority with beat-driven pop tracks.

This is the clue to the Garrard's other great strength. Right through the frequency range, every piece of music is held in perfect synchronism, imparting solidity to percussion and a focused sound that grows out from between the loudspeakers into the room. However complex or vigorous the playing, the Garrard remains one step ahead, calmly extracting the information and relaying it in a structured, orderly fashion.

Although one of the best turntables I've come across, there are areas of its performance which have been bettered by modern rivals. The articulation in the bass doesn't completely carry through to the midrange and treble, which can be a little veiled. There's an ultimate lack of fine detail and transparency, where Pink Triangle and Voyd excel, giving a more spacious sound stage.

Treble, although solid and well defined, could do with being crisper, and is almost over-controlled, giving a blunt decay to harmonics. With older recordings this is particularly apparent. The Doors' L.A. Woman turned from dull to duller, the Garrard suppressing the atmosphere and insight that allows it to live.

The Garrard is still an extremely fine turntable and worth every penny when properly renovated. But turntable choice is an extremely personal thing, and if you're looking for the last word in transparency and detail, it falls short. Its strengths are in other areas: depth, dynamics, timing and a solidly focused sound. These are all worthy properties that suit orchestral pieces well. But for the acoustic and rock music I listen to

on an everyday basis, I wanted more excitement, detail and projection.

THORENS TD124

Enter the Thorens TD124, which needs more attention than the Garrard 401 for best results. Originally fitted with a flimsy arm board, Loricraft fashion a new one and bolt it rigidly to the thick top board of the turntable. The thin tin top cover of the platter is removed too, along with its plastic mat. A new heavy Thorens rubber mat is placed directly on top of the machined under-platter. The edge of this is painted fluorescent yellow, so although performance is greatly improved, appearance suffers a little.

Gently lowering the tonearm into position, I was immediately excited by

what I heard. The TD124 is quite different in character to the 401 but shares many of its strengths. It has the same focused sound and much of the 401's precise timing, but the sound is

altogether more open and detailed. Elica's 'Connection' was lifted from the tightly controlled and ordered performance on the Garrard to an altogether more inspiring level. Cymbals remained solid but grew an extra set of upper harmonics, adding spaciousness to the acoustic that made the music an event rather than just an accurate rendition of a recording.

I had originally selected Nirvana's 'Come as You Are' for its reverberant acoustic bass on which the Garrard thrived. When I played the same track on the TD124 the rest of the mix revealed itself. I hadn't really noticed the delicately tapped hi-hats, or the way Kurt Cobain's voice drifted out in front of the backing musicians to take centre stage several feet forwards. Where the 401 was closed in, the TD124 described every cymbal roll in its full glory.

Indeed the whole emphasis shifted - the bass was still very good, with bags

of punch, detail and tautness, playing tunes with remarkable ease. But compared to the Garrard's terrific depth and power it lost the bottom half octave and shed a few pounds in weight.

If tonal accuracy and breadth of colour are what you look for in a top turntable, then the Thorens takes the chequered flag first. The extra detail is accompanied by a lighter tone and a deftness that allows the TD124 to change note and pitch at an instant with absolute precision. In fact, the Garrard, although up amongst the best in its own right, sounded flat by comparison.

Helped by the extra projection of the sound the TD124 created a wide, deep, airy soundstage. The Garrard pinned performers rigidly to the spot, giving impressively precise imaging. The TD124 however held performers' bodies firmly but allowed the sound to grow more, filling the surrounding acoustic.

THE VERDICT

The Thorens' ability to make more of a performance from a piece of music, to locate it within a clearly defined acoustic and resolve greater detail, made it more enjoyable in my opinion. The Garrard 401 is an impressive turntable by any standards. Its sturdy and authoritative manner always gives a very solid, cohesive performance. But the TD124 gets within a stylus width of this, trading some ultimate bass power to re-invest it through the midrange and treble giving a crisper, more transparent sound. Now, does anyone know where I can find a secondhand TD124?

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“Where the 401 was closed in, the TD124 described every cymbal roll in its full glory.”

FUTURE MAPPING



Mastersound: "a giant step forward in CD sound...what your hi-fi has been crying out for". Really?

Sony have been riffling the vaults of CBS, dusting off some classic jazz and rock titles and re-releasing them on gold plated, Super Bit Mapped discs. The titles they've chosen, plus the lavish nature of the packaging gives the game away - they're aimed foursquare at affluent rock fans who more than likely bought LP versions the first time round, back in vinyl's heyday.

At a recent press conference we heard some pretty convincing demonstrations of Super Bit Mapping in the latest MkII guise. It's a CD coding scheme that improves midband resolution where the ear is most sensitive, at the expense of upper treble performance (above 10kHz) where it isn't. Early SBM was said to display audible anomalies. Sony engineers used extensive listening tests to minimise them for this latest MkII version, which they now seem confident about. At the press demo strings in particular displayed less digital screech and improved timbre, something I've subsequently noticed with Tring recordings of the Royal Philharmonic.

Prospective purchasers will doubtless ask what Mastersound Compact Discs can offer against the great performances originally issued on LP. Is SBM CD good enough to capture the magic of master tapes in a way that LP, because of its known limitations, never could? Are they worth their £16 retail price? We decided to find out, lining up the first ten Mastersound titles against their vinyl equivalents. Vinyl specialists Tower Records Kingston supplied Janis Joplin's Pearl, Bruce

If advertising agencies ruled the world, Super Bit Mapping would be the best thing since Compact Disc itself. Noel Keywood listens to Sony's Mastersound series of re-releases.

Springsteen's Born to Run and Meat Loaf's Bat Out Of Hell. Dave Brubeck's Time Out, Miles Davis' A Kind of Blue and Boston's eponymous first album were wrested from the spiders in the Hi-fi World vaults.

Of course, comparing Mastersound CDs to LP isn't comparing like with like. There are many variables that confuse the picture. SBM CDs are manufactured from original first generation mastertapes onto 24-karat gold discs. On the other hand, the LPs we used are standard UK and US pressings on recycled vinyl, possibly using master tapes of several generations' vintage - and who knows what the cutting master and stampers were like?

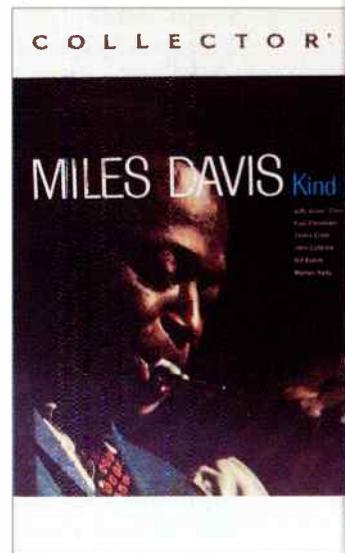
THE LISTENING

First I attended the press conference and was intrigued, then I heard the Royal Philharmonic and was impressed, finally I got some of these Mastersound Classics into our CD player and was disappointed. Trawling through LPs long since worn thin from too much playing, I selected Boston's first album. Although it had seen better days, it still sounded fluid and enjoyable, albeit slightly muddled. As soon as the shiny SBM Compact Disc was spun up, the differences weren't as great as expected. It was better than my over-

played LP, but not by a crushing margin. In a 'hi-fi' context it did all the right things - cleaner sounding and with stronger, punchier bass, plus a good kick from drums, but it still sounded a touch steely and mechanical. Certainly anyone with a half decent copy of the original LP would've been disappointed.

Next on the turntable was what's said to be the best selling jazz album of all time, Miles Davis' Kind of Blue. The SBM CD instantly impressed, sounding clean and crisp with a deeper and more extended bass than I'm used to. The presentation was certainly up front - feeling as if I was sitting right in front of the players.

Switching to vinyl brought a better sense of perspective, the listener being transported several paces back, able to feel the space around the players. Getting the vibe of the performance is



SUPER BIT MAPPING

● Sony claim "conventional 16-bit digital recorders...very seldom offer much better than 14- or possibly 15-bit resolution... because of randomisation in the least significant bits and inaccuracies in the recording, recovery and editing and conversion process"

● The Super Bit Mapping processor truncates and re-dithers 20-bit master tape signals to 16-bits for CD, truncating the least significant bit to produce what Sony claim to be "guaranteed 16-bit accuracy".

so crucial to jazz, and I'm sorry to say that even with SBM discs, Compact Disc still fails in this respect. CD located the alto and tenor saxophones more precisely, and the timbre of the latter was conveyed better. However the alto sax sounded flat, failing to really emote. Tonally I again preferred LP, Bill Evans' piano sounded glassy on CD, and ride cymbals were bright enough to make them over-conspicuous.

Moving on to Dave Brubeck's *Time Out*, things went the other way. Our LP was past its prime, sounding muddy and compressed compared to the super-clean SBM version. On CD, cymbals were texturally richer and more sonorous,

despite a touch of glare. Indeed, the only criticism here was CD's propensity to sound starker and more matter of fact - again hardly appropriate for that late night jazz club feel.



Moving to 'classic rock', Meatloaf's *Bat out of Hell* was pretty mediocre with both formats - on CD particularly it was muddled and harsh on vocals, whereas vinyl sounded a touch easier on the ear. LP also seemed to convey a better sense of drama, instruments seeming to get louder and softer with more alacrity.

Bruce Springsteen's *Born to Run* went the other way, CD sounding clean and clear where vinyl came across as a little thick and congested. Its single saving grace was bass, where vinyl seemed to have more rhythmic control the kick drum conveying better the way the bass player pushed along the groove.

Janis Joplin's *Pearl* was another close one, but again the familiar pattern of CD sounding glassy emerged. The recording was such that LP had a similar balance but still managed to sound more atmospheric, with more tonal colour and better emotion.

THE VERDICT

As far as the recording industry is concerned, Sony hope to sell the K-1203 SBM coding boxes to studios at around £10,000 a time, so getting approval for the end result doubtless helps their marketing, as well as lending their software releases that all-important 'audiophile' cachet.

To an extent SBM is a success, having raised the sound quality possible from Compact Disc. The downside is that it's a very modest improvement, unable to improve on analogue vinyl in terms of enjoyment. Opinions differed at Hi-fi World about these SBM discs. I felt that in objective terms (this is a conceit, objectivity being subjective) SBM sounded generally cleaner and clearer than LP and that, as far as any engineer was concerned, it was better. However, it also sounded sufficiently hard and glassy (unlike HDCD for example) as to be unsettling. Funnily enough, I was outvoted by the Young Turks (Dominic and David) on this one. The computer generation, brought up on CD, told me LP sounded better! Asking myself the simple question: "which would I listen to?", LP wins.

Overall, anything that improves CD, like SBM, is to be welcomed with open arms, but ultimately it seems the only way to bring CD sound truly up to scratch is by dramatically raising its audio specification. There's been a lot of activity on this front of late, and more is to come. Certainly Pacific Microsonics' HDCD system tested in the February issue was the best proof to date that CDs can sound vastly better.

As for Mastersound CDs, whilst subjectively their sonic improvements are small, they're beautifully presented and will sell on this alone. If you're considering a Mastersound CD instead of the vinyl version, think again. But if you've abandoned vinyl and are building up a CD library, they're worth having over the cooking mid-price versions. That, one suspects, is where those awfully clever Sony marketing men fit into the picture. I mean, if you've never heard *Pearl* and don't have a turntable, Mastersound CDs are definitely going to give a big buzz. In this respect, Super Bit Mapped Compact Disc can justify its existence ●

MASTERSOUND CDs

Miles Davis *Kind of Blue*
 Dave Brubeck *Time Out*
 Santana *Santana*
 Janis Joplin *Pearl*
 Robert Johnson *King of the Delta Blues Singers*
 Journey *Infinity*
 Boston *Boston*
 Meat Loaf *Bat out of Hell*
 Aerosmith *Toys in the Attic*
 Bruce Springsteen *Born to Run*
 Billy Joel *52nd Street*
 Bob Dylan *Blonde on Blonde*
 Toto *Toto IV*
 Boz Scaggs *Silk Degrees*
Westside Story OST
 Simon and Garfunkel *Bridge over Troubled Water*
 Sly and the Family Stone *Stand*
 Stevie Ray Vaughn *Couldn't Stand the Weather*
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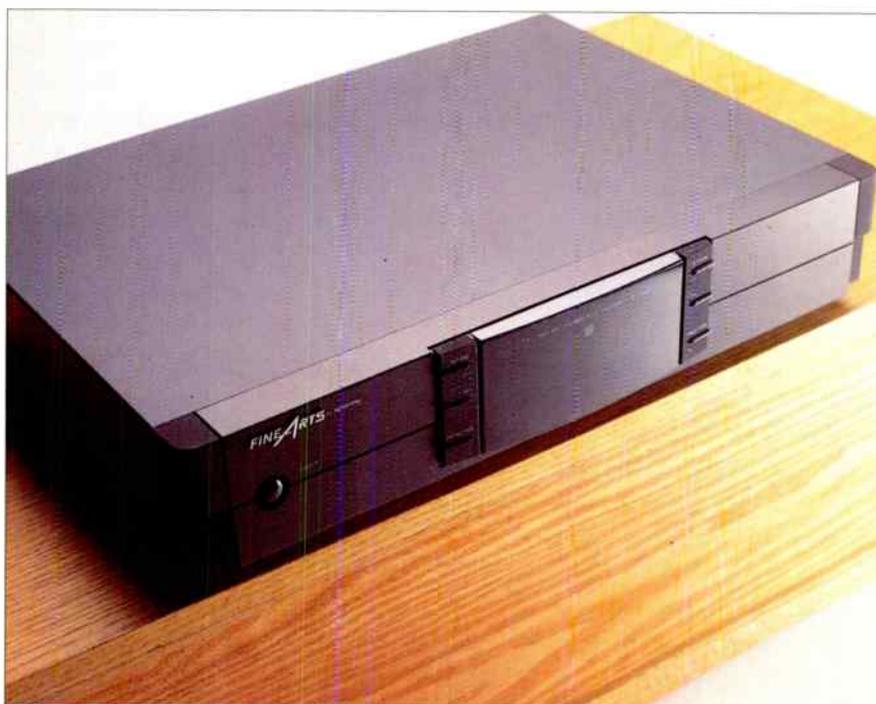
Grundig offer more complex, stylish products than those of parent company Philips. Their £210 T4 tuner is equipped with VHF/FM and Medium Wave reception and comes with RDS, which is starting to become useful now more stations transmit RDS data. Grundig include a comprehensive remote control too. The fascia has a drop-down panel that hides the minor controls, leaving only tuning, programme and power buttons on display, giving a neat, sombre appearance in current Euro-style idiom.

Thanks to the T4's illogical programming method, allocating stations to the preset memories was a chore. Low station muting level didn't help either, causing distant as well as local transmitters to be found when auto-tuning, using a good aerial. Because the signal strength meter has too many divisions covering weak signals only (200µV), it was difficult to distinguish these unwanted stations from wanted ones. To be useful, the signal strength meter should read up to 10mV. Making it hit maximum from a weak signal is a deception copied from the Japanese, who know users associate this with high sensitivity. Grundig need to pay more attention to user-friendliness and less on fancy displays of little worth.

In everyday use most people will operate the T4 by remote control I suspect, which is as comprehensive as possible, with volume, tuning, preset station scanning and programme type selection - an RDS facility. This means Sports stations can be found, or Classics, Rock and so on.

As perennial warhorse Richard Branson talked about "the essence of competition", I noticed that "essence" seemed to be formed from a string of sibilant fricatives that hissed like a basket of adders. Although interview microphones commonly have a little treble lift, our reference Leak Troughline showed there should have been less edginess.

The big band behind baritone saxist Pete Peterson on Jazz FM (102.2MHz) was well separated into its sections, horns blasting strongly from left, drums and cymbals hard etched and dry



OFF STATION

Noel Keywood finds the technical competence of Grundig's T4 tuner does little to help its sound.

sounding from centre stage. The T4 set up precision-edged images across the sound stage, even if stage depth was limited.

On Kiss FM (100MHz), a good selection of reggae and dub from Joey J showed the T4 provides tight, dry bass, even if Jah Works' 'Dub Crusaders' album sounded too lean and constrained in the bass than it really should have been.

I found the T4 fine at detail retrieval and analysis, looking right into a performance with an eyeglass, yet it's characterised by a bright, brittle sound. This reminded me of so many solid-state tuners, imposing a somewhat grey tonal colour and starkness on music that's ultimately less than inviting, even if it seems precise.

I'm afraid to say that a good set of performance figures and every facility possible isn't enough to make the Grundig T4 come out on top, when Denon's TU-260L and NAD's 402 offer a more natural, amenable sound plus a decent range of facilities, also at a very keen price ●

Grundig T4 £209.99
Grundig International Ltd.,
Mill Road,
Rugby.
Warwick CU21 1PR
Tel: 01788 577155

Measured Performance
see p105-111

CUTTING CORNERS

Noel Keywood finds performance has been cut too far with Denon's DRM-740 cassette deck.



Denon's new DRM-740 cassette deck turns its back on marvels like Dolby S, apparently offering only the important things that contribute to sound quality - for just £259.99. But it is fatally flawed. Based on a run of relatively successful previous models, DRM-700, 710 etc., all of which worked well, I was expecting a fine performance. Instead, I got a surprise.

The display panel carries a lot of useful information, identifying tape type (automatic), source direct or off-tape monitoring, elapsed tape time, Dolby B/C and other minor functions like MPX on/off. Below lies a neat horizontal row of clearly marked transport controls, and beneath that other selectable functions like counter set and Dolby B/C. I measured a healthy output of 600mV, enough to drive any amplifier and output level can be varied.

Denon fit variable bias for tape tuning, which I found from tests introduces a useful amount (+/-3dB at 10kHz) of variation with metal tape, as well as ferrics and chromes of course, so the DRM-740 can tune in all modern tapes, even difficult ones like high performance metals (e.g. Sony Super Metal Master, TDK MA-XG).

Motorised cassette doors have had their day as novel gizmos; the Denon clanks open under manual operation, revealing an unlit cassette compartment. These minor crudities are acceptable in a stripped down, low price machine though, since they don't produce much inconvenience nor do they affect sound quality. The Denon works fairly smoothly in general. There is a slight clankiness to its operations, but I didn't find it especially off-putting. Nakamichis might sound and feel slicker, but they also cost twice as much.

How did the poor head affect the sound? Metal tape measured worst and it sounded it too, becoming muddled, coarse and compressed on musical peaks, when hitting +5. Rock music suffered most, because of its continuously high levels. Keeping peaks down to +2 or so (equivalent to 0VU on other decks) allowed recordings on TDK MA to remain relatively clean and balanced sounding, but Dolby must be used to suppress tape hiss.

As is so often the case, results were better with chrome and ferric tapes,

because they demand less from a deck. TDK SA chrome tape handled Rock well and would be many people's choice I feel, since it has very low hiss and overloads gracefully by going dull and warm, disguising the DRM-740's problem.

TDK AR ferric tape had more hiss but with Rock put up a good performance, offering clean bass and an easy midband. Here, the Denon seemed to offer normal enough results, although in truth it cannot get the same sort of record levels down onto tape as its predecessors.

In use, adhering to Denon's record level meter, most owners would probably notice after a while that the DRM-740 comes over as coarse and rough sounding with metal tape, but apparently normal enough with chrome and ferric.

“Head quality has deteriorated quite significantly, presumably in an attempt to cut costs.”

It played pre-recorded tapes averagely well, suffering from some dullness due to head azimuth error - and again our tests showed that the earlier DRM-700 was better aligned.

So the new DRM-740 isn't what Denon cassette decks used to be and I'm hardly impressed by it. Knowing how the Japanese can drop a clanger one minute and then come back with a corker the next though, I'm by no means certain that this is anything other than a one-off aberration. Only time will tell ●

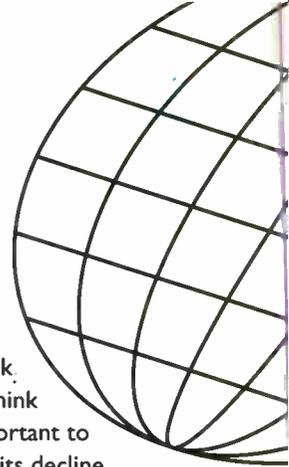
Perhaps because I've used and enjoyed cassette a lot over the years, settling on using a Nakamichi, Denon's similar approach appeals. Unlike most Japanese manufacturers Denon have avoided spurious gimmickry and technological hype with their cassette decks, offering a fine basic performance from clever component selection - especially head and transport - and knowledgeable design. With the DRM-740 tested here though, head quality has deteriorated quite significantly, presumably in an attempt to cut costs. Our records show that a DRM-700 I once tested could get +4dB onto tape (MOL315 or IEC IV), which is about right for a good deck, whilst the '740 tested here managed -1.5dB - a very low level by any standards and -5.5dB lower than the '700. To ameliorate head overload Denon have set the 0VU peak record level low to discourage the use of high recording levels, but as a result hiss becomes more obvious in a recording. Consequently, the '740 must be used with Dolby B or C.

Denon DRM-740 £259.99
Hayden Labs.
Hayden House,
Chiltern Hill,
Chalfont St Peter,
Bucks.
SL9 9UG
Tel: 01753 888447

Measured Performance
see p105-111



World



CHOICE'S BEST EVER SUPPLEMENT

I must congratulate you on your magazine, which I've been buying since the local magazine distributor made a blunder. Last October I bought a copy of, dare I say it, Hi-Fi Choice, which came with a supplement called "Hi-Fi World". At this time I didn't know that Hi-Fi World was a magazine in its own right.

In the 'supplement' it mentioned that the previous issue gave information on making your own interconnects. This appealed to me due to their high cost in the shops. I requested back issues of the 'other mag' and of course none of them contained info on making interconnects. Eventually I realised that the 'supplement' was in fact Hi-Fi World, so I phoned for a back issue and have been buying your magazine ever since. In fact, all the DIY articles have given me the enthusiasm to try some tweaking of my own.

I've had a NAD 5320 CD player and NAD 3130 amplifier for approximately five years now, and upgraded my Monitor R252s for Infinity Reference 30 speakers a year ago. I also have a custom made Soniclink Violet interconnect (made by the Custom Cable service who advertise with you). I have just recently bi-wired the 'speakers, Gamepath advising me on where to split the crossover. At the same time I replaced the electrolytics for polypropylenes, re-wired the drivers, fitted extra gold plated binding posts and put lead weights in the base of the cabinets to improve

stability.

My next idea, after reading all your articles, is whether it's possible to add a port into the currently sealed enclosure to improve bass reproduction. I believe there's a way of calculating the required specifications using the Thiele-Small parameters. Would you please advise if this would work?

I must confess after reading about valve amplifiers I would love to hear some, but where is this possible around Bournemouth?

**G. M. Philips
Bournemouth,
Dorset.**

We weren't aware Hi-Fi Choice was offering 'World as a Supplement - that explains their claimed UK circulation increase!

Regarding your Infinity loudspeakers, the driver used as a bass unit will have been designed to perform best in a sealed enclosure (Q normally above 0.37). Adding a port, even if correctly optimised, will make performance worse.

The Reference 30s are sensitive at 90dB, which means that they could well be a good match for a valve amplifier, albeit when used with a 4Ω output tap because of their lower than average impedance of 6Ω. The problem you'll find is that decent valve integrated amplifiers come in at around £1000. One alternative at a more reasonable price is the AMC3030. This is a hybrid design using solid state input circuitry and a valve

output stage. Contact Campus International on 0494 431290 for your nearest dealer. DB

PLUS C'EST LA CHANGE...

I read with interest your Kaleidoscope article in February's Hi-Fi World, in particular your comments on the rise and fall of the vinyl LP. Whilst I agree that neither Compact Cassette nor CD was directly responsible for the demise of

the black disc, I think it's important to look at its decline relative to its success in the '50s and '60s.

What many people fail to acknowledge is that high fidelity playback equipment has always been superior to the vinyl software. In other words, enthusiasts have always attempted to extract from the disc much more information than engineers allow for in the recording and manufacturing processes.

Letter of

NO ROOM FOR MIDI SYSTEMS IN HI-FI WORLD!

I was interested to read your article in the March 1995 edition about the growth of midi systems and the decline in hi-fi separates.

Whilst delighted to announce a dramatic improvement in our like for like sales of hi-fi separates last year, I too am certainly concerned about the industry's decline, exacerbated by the confusion caused by the electrical multiples who continue to describe £99 midi systems as "hi-fi". This infuriates me, and is very confusing to customers. Typically the public have three misconceptions about hi-fi. 1) They think budget midi systems are "hi-fi" because

this is what they are told in every advertisement they see from the multiples.

2) They think they can't tell the difference. We have a £300 midi system set up permanently against a £300 separates system. Believe me, everybody we have ever demonstrated them to can easily tell which is better.

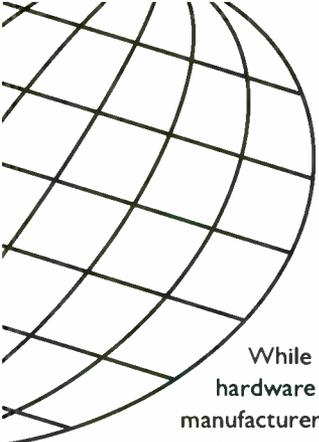


£300 midi systems are being marketed as real 'Hi-Fi'.

3) The public think a proper a hi-fi system will set them back thousands

Send your letters to Hi-Fi World Letter Page,

ewrites



While hardware manufacturers were making great progress during the 1960s and early 1970s, recording standards showed no significant improvement.

By the time of the oil crisis, record companies, already concerned about long term profitability, were given the heaven-sent opportunity to charge more for less. Pressings got worse and discs got thinner. I well remember arguments with

record shop staff as I returned for the third or fourth time the faulty pressing which so offended my ear. Thus was the way paved for the CD player.

With two HDCD formats known to be coming onto the market, and the possibility of companies tearing up compatibility standards and releasing the red laser player, then a commercially viable blue laser player, perhaps it's time for hi-fi enthusiasts to realise that ultimately all the

equipment we buy, whether budget stereo or top-end audiophile, is for playing music. LP collections may represent a whole lifetime's commitment. Can we as collectors rely on the same commitment from CD manufacturers?

Some ten years after its introduction, CD's superior sound is still a matter of fierce debate. Conclusion: it was introduced for profit. If the format changes substantially it will be motivated by the same quest for profit.

**Vernon Liddell,
Bootham,
York.**

It's now becoming accepted that CD player sales are moving into long term decline in Britain. Their sales peak - the top of the bell curve - is over. As you say, this will have been spotted by marketing strategists around the world, signalling the start

of the race to find a replacement. Anything other than a 5in recordable CD (once dubbed CD-E by Philips) will be unacceptable I believe. NK

BACK TO THE FUTURE?

I am writing to say how much I enjoy your magazine. However, I would like to counter the tendency some of your correspondents show in emphasising vinyl and valves.

Let's be sensible. I have just played a CD of Chopin waltzes performed by Dini Lipatti in the early 1950s. Sixty minutes of this wonderful artist cost me £8 mail order. Now, even if I could have found these performances on records I couldn't dare play them knowing that every sound was caused by something

continued on page 41...

the Month

of pounds. This again is nonsense, as the above mentioned demonstration makes clear.

I also think it would be helpful if other hi-fi magazines didn't confuse the issue by reviewing midi systems as "hi-fi", which might give them an air of respectability! Keep up the good work.

**Julian Richer,
Chairman,
Richer Sounds
London.**

I'm glad to hear that our views coincide with your own, since coming from an entirely different angle - retailing - it suggests that we are not too far away from the truth. My disappointment is that enjoying music was valued in Britain, as you might expect in a country possessing such a large,

influential and profitable music business. How it can come to pass that the average Briton nowadays aspires only to a cheap mini or micro system whilst the rest of the world - especially the East - places increasing value on music and its appreciation through real hi-fi is difficult to comprehend. There has been a serious downgrading of expectation in the last two decades, which is perhaps an indication of shrinking disposable incomes. But the now-diminishing barrage of advertising from the mass manufacturers has wreaked havoc too. In the next issue (June 1995) we will be publishing a detailed feature on this topic. NK

64, Castellain Road, Maida Vale, London W9 1EX.

WIN HI-FI WORLD INTERCONNECT CABLES

OR PERFECT PITCH'S FRANCINSTIEN CD

ENHANCER

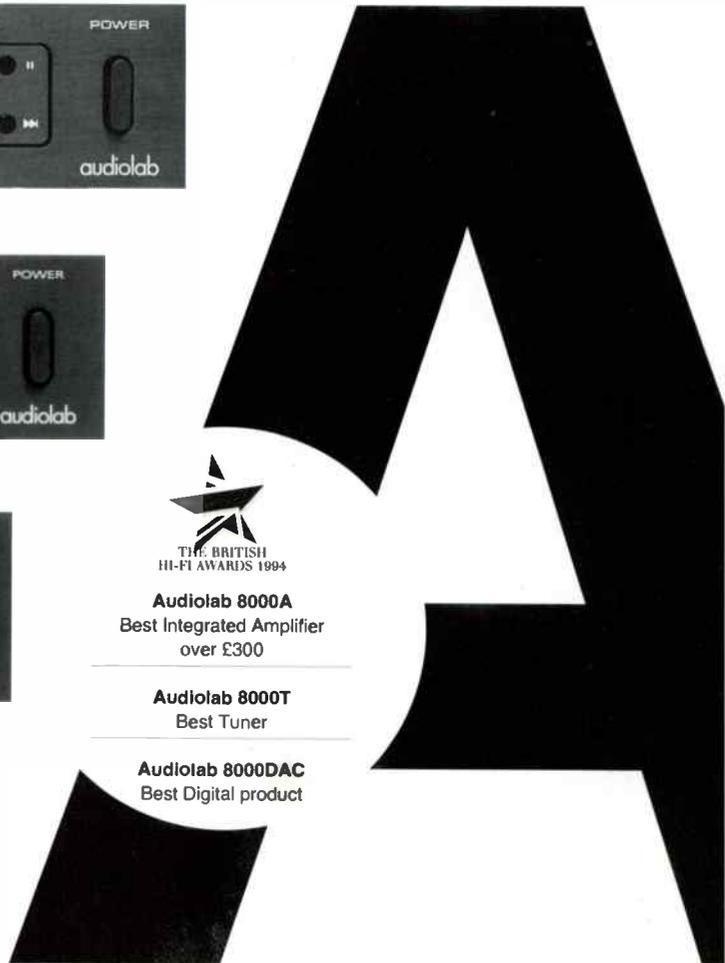
The writer of the most interesting or funniest letter will receive a choice of either: a free set of Hi-Fi World's silver plated copper interconnect cables, worth £69.95, or a Francinstien CD convertor enhancer worth £150.



The *new* Audiolab 8000Q Pre-amplifier



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 - 8000C Pre-amplifier
 - 8000Q Pre-amplifier*
 - 8000PPA Phono Pre-amplifier
 - 8000P Stereo Power Amplifier
 - 8000M Monobloc Power Amplifier
 - 8000T FM/AM Tuner
 - 8000DAC Digital-Analogue Convertor
 - 8000CDM Compact Disc Transport



AUDIOLAB

.... continued from page 39

bumping over such precious vinyl. Not to mention my cartridge wearing out at £100 every couple of years and valves at £15 a go.

And this wonderful warmth that valves give - come on chaps, you can play Mantovani over Naim amplifiers too and be swept away with cascading strings.

No. When you consider choice, clarity, convenience and the fact that nothing's being degraded with repeated playings, let's have some nice modern technology. Onwards not backwards.

Mr A. Clibbery
Minehead,
Somerset.

Believe me, just like riding a bicycle, once you've got used to playing a vinyl record it's second nature. Indeed, the microscopic stylus of my Audio Technica moving coil "bumping" through the groove at a crushing one-and-a-half grams sounds just fine.

As for things being "degraded", if you've heard HDCD you'll know standard CD does precisely that - to music. I agree that we should look forwards, which is precisely why we're so interested in pushing Compact Disc beyond its present crude, dated 1970s digital audio specification. DP

ENTHUSIAST CONTACT

As a regular reader of Hi-Fi World I was wondering whether I could use your letters section to get in touch with certain people (hi-fi addicts) out there. I have recently purchased a pair of Dali 310 loudspeakers. There are probably a few of your readers who own a pair of 310s and I'd like to get in

touch with them for advice on cables, stands and amplification as well as general comments on performance.

Please don't be shy in coming forward as I'd like as many people as possible to contact me.

Mr A. Forcer
5 St. Pauls Rd,
Hartlepool,
Cleveland.
TS26 9EY

HI-FI AND A/V - NEVER THE TWAIN

I'm writing to beg the question: "Why does the magazine not cater for music enthusiasts who have or are thinking about buying hi-fi built around A/V amps and receivers?" As an avid reader of your magazine for its excellent reviews, it must be said your magazine lacks coverage of A/V amplifiers.

Although A/V is a relatively new market there must be many enthusiasts like myself who enjoy both music and home theatre and would appreciate your expertise on testing it for the hi-fi interest and most importantly buying of source components.

Specialist magazines exist on the market catering for home theatre but do not cover straightforward testing of A/V equipment for music pleasure. So please Hi-Fi World, let's see A/V units included in your publication catering for the following:

- Group testing A/V amplifiers against stand-alone amplifiers for sonic ability, build and technical qualities.
- A/V amplifier and receiver group tests.
- A/V amps used as part of your reference systems, replacing conventional amps, for source component and speaker listening tests.

I feel people following the path I took with A/V wanting to upgrade or purchase source components to complement A/V amplifiers sonically can find very little

reading material for reference.

Tony Hicks
Cramlington,
Northumberland.

Hi-Fi World concentrates on the quality reproduction of music. This is a specialist field that takes much knowledge and expertise to cover properly. Some magazines try to cover hi-fi, A/V, home-entertainment and what have you, but we find their coverage very thin and weak in all fields - Jack of All Trades, Master of None. They're trying to be experts in too many fields to be of any real use in one, as you have found.

As far as A/V equipment is concerned, we are very sceptical! Simply plugging your video into a hi-fi, for dual-mono or stereo, gives a dramatic improvement in sound quality. There are no extra boxes and, more importantly, no extra cost is involved. Hi-fi World will be sticking to hi-fi, pure and simple - where we are experts and can be of most value to our readers. DB

8 TRACK, OPEN REEL, ELCASET, DCC!

I have put pen to paper once again to complement you on your excellent review on the Philips DCC 951 Digital Compact Cassette deck, and the subsequent article "Will DCC Make It?" You may remember my outburst in a letter you printed last year, accusing you of not giving DCC a fair crack of the whip, but after the latest article I must eat humble pie!

Not only has the high price of DCC machines and software (albums and blank tape) affected DCC hardware sales, but also their initial availability and Philips' appalling advertising campaign (has there been

one?). I've worked in the magazine printing business for 20 years and know full well the perils of not advertising your product fully - if you don't advertise you're dead in the water. However good your product is, it will never sell just by word of mouth.

The man on the street needs to know what DCC is and its advantages over conventional cassette tape systems, in clear, simple terms. I regularly go into record shops and find that the staff have no idea what a DCC tape is and furthermore appear not to really care.

The Daily Mail's Financial Section reported "Philips mounts a £50m digital assault". Let's hope they spend some of that money making people aware of what it is they're actually selling, otherwise they may as well set fire to their money, and the whole DCC format.

Kevin Williams.
Tredegar,
Gwent.

Quite. I must say how surprised I was by the latest machines, especially playing back 18bit pre-recorded tapes. But as Compact Disc has taught us, commercial success lies not in the sonic abilities of the format as much as the marketing department's ability to create and then satisfy a need. In this respect Philips have been sadly inept, shooting themselves in the corporate foot with excessive hardware and software pricing. Now they've re-launched it, let's hope there's still time for DCC to win friends. DP

A BETTER ATMOSPHERE

Having put into practice most of your tips and

continued on page 47



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(Ken Kessler, Hi Fi News & Record Review – October 94)

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SOUND & VISION '95

This year's Sound & Vision show, held at Bristol's Marriott Hotel between the 24th and 26th of February, was one of the busiest shows we've attended for quite some time; Hi-Fi World's room was bursting with people for all three days of the event. A wide range of manufacturers exhibited their wares to the masses that besieged the hotel. Here are some of the new and interesting products we spotted on our travels around the Marriott ●



MICHELL
John Michell was proudly showing his new Orbe turntable, complete with special silver wired and gold plated SME Series V tonearm.



ORTOFON ▲

A new venture for Ortofon, their range of affordable loudspeakers accompanying Project's amplifier and turntables (fitted with Ortofon cartridges, of course) was certainly attracting interest when we popped our heads around the door.



THE CHORD CO. ▲

The Chord Company are now distributing the Audio Vector range of loudspeakers from Denmark. We hope to be reviewing a pair in the near future



MOREL ▲

In the Morel room a range of Music First loudspeakers was being demonstrated, along with the recently introduced to the UK range of Denson amplifiers.



REL ▲

Richard Lord's latest earth-shaking creation is the new Storm subwoofer. Using a 100W power amplifier, a 30mm thick cabinet and a powerful Volt 10" bass driver, the Storm is priced at £695.



MIRAGE ▲

On show for the first time, a range of loudspeakers from Canada's Mirage, including their Bipolar series. Pictured here is their BPS-210 powered subwoofer.



QLN
QLN made a welcome return to the UK with new importers Projekt. On show were the QLN Signature standmounters, and sounding very fast and punchy too.

AMERICAN EXCESS?

**Monarchy's Delux 18 CD convertor is lavishly finished.
Dominic Baker finds whether this translates to a guilt-edged sound.**



Monarchy have built themselves a strong following in the States for their consistently well built, solid sounding range of CD transports and convertors. Their reputation is now steadily growing in the UK too, helped by their distributors Wollaton Audio.

The latest addition to the range is the Delux 18 convertor, which as its name suggests, gets a lavish, top quality finish. Rather than Monarchy's normal anodised and brushed black alloy front panel and chrome toggle switches, the 18 gets a pale grey fascia complemented by a gold volume control knob. This lends the convertor an exotic look and feel, unusual for something as functional as a DAC! Personally I really like this finish, as it certainly sets it apart from the crowd, but it's definitely one you'll either love or hate.

Fortunately, in the case of the Delux 18, beauty is more than skin deep. Component quality is extremely high, with audio grade components and a massive, quality Alps volume control for the variable output. A mains RF filtered inlet socket reduces noise from the mains, while the analogue and digital sections of the convertor each have their own separate transformer and power supply. The rear panel is equally well specified, with digital optical coaxial and AES/EBU XLR inputs, making this convertor a very flexible design.

In the past I've always been impressed by Monarchy's digital products, all of which possess a solid, enjoyable sound. And the Delux 18 is no exception, sharing with their other convertors that strong, solid bass which gives Compact Disc real scale and power. Indeed on Pink Floyd's 'What Do You Want From Me', bass had real slam and as well as a weighty punch, with bass guitars powering

down effortlessly and kick drums sending shockwaves from the back of the stage.

Vocals were well portrayed too, coming alive as if the Monarchy had a presence boost to deliberately push them out of the 'speakers into the room. Louise Wener's voice on Sleeper's Smart (another Belly/Breeders style female-fronted indie band) took on holographic quality, one you could almost walk into.

To its credit, the Delux 18 did all this without the slightest hint of coarseness, something few other convertors can claim. Using the optical input from an Arcam transport, it gave an exceptionally mellow sound, whereas the coaxial input brought a touch more grain, making for a rawer presentation that suited rock music. However, in my system, the softer balance seemed to work better.

Certainly through the treble the Delux 18 has a brightness to its sound, in a similar way to DPA Digital's excellent Enlightenment convertor reviewed in the March '95 issue of Hi-Fi World. This

lightens tone a little, producing an airy, effortless character. Like DPA's Enlightenment, its delicate brightness does a lot to open out music and create a sense of space around a performance. With rock especially, it adds a pleasant sparkle that brings a performance alive, along with sturdy bass and a focused midband.

To exploit this to the full, next into the Arcam transport went Grant Lee Buffalo's country-style acoustic album, Fuzzy. Steel strung guitar was sharply etched, searing out from the 'speakers to cut cleanly through the air. The Delux 18 had a similar effect on cymbals, imbuing them with bite and dynamic impact every time they were hit.

In a balanced system, this is

powerful stuff, rendering music strong and exciting. But if you already have a bright system, or loudspeakers with frisky metal dome tweeters, approach with caution. You'll certainly have to countenance using the smoothing effect of the optical input.

Another of the Delux 18's strengths is its variable output facility, which means the convertor can drive a power amplifier direct. Used in this way, doubtless helped by its top quality Alps potentiometer and dedicated output stage, the Delux 18 comes into its own, sounding altogether smoother and more sophisticated. As a stand-alone convertor, ultimately the DPA is cheaper and more musical, but the Monarchy isn't far behind. But when used as a preamplifier the Delux 18 starts to look even better value, with a more competitive sound.

Monarchy have produced another excellent product to complement their range, with a sound that never fails to create a realistic, enjoyable performance. Not only does it excel in this department, but it's also highly featured too, with that high quality variable output stage, plenty of digital inputs, as well as its excellent component quality and build. If you're in the market for a new convertor that's a substantial step up the ladder from good budget designs such as those from Arcam, Audio Alchemy or QED, and especially if you intend to drive a power amplifier direct, the Monarchy Delux 18 is well worth auditioning ●

“Like DPA's Enlightenment, its delicate brightness does a lot to open out music and create a sense of space around a performance.”

Monarchy Delux 18 £795
Wollaton Audio
134 Parkside,
Wollaton,
Nottingham.
NG8 2NP
Tel: 0115 9284147

Measured Performance
see p105-111

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*Review of PASSION - Martin Colloms
HiFi News April '93 and November '94*

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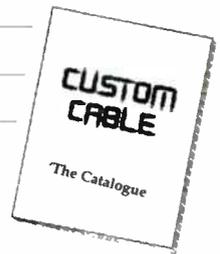
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.... continued from page 41

tweaks, all showing positive results of differing degrees, I stumbled upon an article in an erstwhile rival publication dealing with the effects of prevailing atmospheric conditions on a system's sound.

It theorised that high temperature and low humidity (a typical centrally heated listening room) made a system plod along, sounding lazier than on a cooler, more humid day when the sound would be tighter and more aggressive. This was attributed to the characteristics of the individual electrical components of the system changing due to temperature, humidity, etc.

This set me thinking. If these factors could influence my system, what else could be conspiring to corrupt its sound? I concentrated on my Diesis Solitaire 'speakers. After all, bass reproduction of an infinite baffle assembly is tailored by enclosure volume and hence internal pressure at high levels/large cone excursions. Manufacturers spend much time optimising these parameters, but in a truly sealed enclosure a change in external pressure would force the drivers to adopt a non-central position at rest. This results in unequal travel in the fore and aft direction as well as altered opposition to cone travel (more/less damping to forward travel due to higher/lower density of the air it must move as well as the tendency to be pushed forward/held back by the internal cabinet pressure). Does this happen in practice, and if so to what extent does it influence the loudspeaker's response?

I then wondered if this could be harnessed and used to good effect. For instance, enclosure pressure effectively damps a driver's movement. Two identical

drivers, one in a smaller enclosure than the other, would have different bass responses, the smaller speaker usually having a tighter bottom end even if not as deep and the larger 'speaker having those few extra Hz, although probably looser and lacking punch.

Could the internal pressure of an enclosure be adjusted to mimic enclosures of variant volumes? This could be done quite effectively by the simple addition of a valve at the back of the box to which could be attached a hand operated vacuum pump which could adjust cabinet pressure to find the preferred bass performance. At the very least it could be used to equalise internal and external pressures to return to manufacturers' designed reference of equal pressure.

Has this been tried before and if so with what results? What are your views on this proposed method and what flaws are there in this theory (for that is how it remains for the time being - I am not even contemplating drilling holes in my 'speakers until I have heard your thoughts - and even then I'll need a stiff drink first)?

Thanks once again for a truly great publication,
B.Martin
South Benfleet,
Essex.

The speed of sound in air and the density of air crop up in many of the design equations for speakers (see Martin Colloms' book "High Performance Loudspeakers", Chapter 2). Fortunately the theoretical changes in efficiency of varying temperature and density tend to cancel out for most direct radiating speakers. The increasing efficiency of a radiating piston with increasing air density is neatly countered by an increasing air load mass which itself decreases

efficiency. This is not the case for very light pistons such as ribbon tweeters and electrostatic speakers where the piston or diaphragm mass is smaller than the mass of air being moved to create the sound. In these cases lowering the density of air by either temperature or pressure causes the highest frequencies to roll off slightly. This means that electrostatic speakers or those with ribbon tweeters will sound slightly more dull at higher altitudes, say above 5000feet.

The effect of sudden atmospheric pressure variations in a closed box system will cause the drive unit cone to act like the mechanism of an aneroid barometer as it responds to the pressure differences on each side of the cone. This will cause an offset in the coil position relative to the magnet and increased harmonic distortion. Luckily speaker manufacturers arrange for a small bleed path in the construction which because of its high acoustic impedance does not interfere with bass performance, but effectively equalises very low frequency atmospheric pressure changes.

The air inside an infinite baffle speaker does not act as a damping medium, in fact it acts like an air spring. The stiffness of this air spring added to the stiffness of the drive unit suspension mechanism combines with the cone mass to give a fundamental resonant frequency. This is the lowest frequency that the speaker can reproduce accurately. The damping factor is a combination of the magnet strength, voice coil design and the ratio of cone mass (including the layer of air) to air spring. It is not the pressure of the

air which gives the damping, but the volume-to-cone area ratio.

As gas pressure and volume are related, there is a trick that speaker designers use which is to put acrylic fibre into the cabinet. This changes the gas operating conditions in the speaker from adiabatic to isothermal and increases the compliance of the gas spring to make the drive unit think it is working into a bigger box than it really is. An apparent increase of about 20% in cabinet size can be obtained by carefully introducing fibre into the cabinet and measuring the reduction in fundamental resonance. If you can measure the resonant frequency of your speaker system then this is worth trying to improve things. (Bonded Acrylic Fibre or 'BAF' is available as the filling for cheap pillows in most outlets of Texas World. Feather and down is very good but tends to fall to the bottom of the cabinet.)

Domestic hi-fi speakers are, to a certain extent, temperature sensitive because of the materials used to get good sound quality. The minimum temperature with most speakers for good reproduction is 15 degrees centigrade, with no maximum. Similarly, most in-car audio systems sound bass light in winter time until the heater has warmed up the interior of the car. Car manufacturers' specify that the speaker unit must not fall apart at extremes of temperature and that the performance must return when things have warmed up a bit. A bit like a good valve amplifier really...

Alex Garner
Technical Director,
Tannoy Ltd.

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Readers' Queries

SECOND SYSTEM

I currently have a complete Revox B-series system which is shortly to be relegated upstairs. I am therefore looking to establish a new downstairs system from scratch.

I would like to buy most bits second-hand, which rather precludes comparative auditioning, and the only absolute requirement is that all the components, apart from the tuner which will more or less be permanently on Radio 4, be remote controlled. I have in mind a Naim based system with CDS CD player, NAT-01 tuner, Nakamichi CR7E cassette deck, Naim 52/2x135 amplification and Mission SE20 loudspeakers. Current room size is 22x14ft. Music is seventies rock and classical.

I am familiar and pleased with the Naim tuner and amplification in isolation, but:

1. Would either the Marantz CD-10 or CD-16 suit my music better than the CDS?
2. Is the Nakamichi a reckless extravagance? It would be largely for replaying tapes made in the last 10 years - mostly on the Revox B215.
3. Are the Missions a happy match for the Naim amplification?
4. Any other suggestions?

On another note, it would be useful if in your

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comparative reviews you could include some older models as benchmarks. How for instance do modern Arcam and Sony cassette machines compare with the older Revox and Nakamichi? It is comparisons with older gear that anyone upgrading needs. Only the new buyer is best served by reviews of new products in isolation. Any chance of your adopting this approach?

**Dr Fraser Hadden
Suffolk.**

Firstly, you have listed a superb system that will certainly provide years of enjoyment. We have nothing against buying equipment second-hand, in fact you can find some fantastic bargains if you



If the rest of the Epos range is anything to go by, the new ES25s should be well worth an audition.

know what you are looking for, but in your case there is another option. Many Naim dealers will be able to guide you towards the equipment you want, having a large number of customers continually

upgrading and exchanging equipment. Chris at Pro-Musica in Colchester Tel: 0206 577519, which I believe is fairly close to you, will be happy to demonstrate and help you

Continued on page 55...

Anyone with more than a passing interest in hi-fi will have noticed that the last year has seen an explosion in the number of floorstanding loudspeakers. If you're fortunate enough to have a thousand pounds burning a hole in your pocket, big names like KEF start weighing in with their finest products, such as their £995 Reference Series Ones. Having enjoyed their bigger brothers, the Reference Series Twos, earlier this year, we were naturally keen to listen to them. And when Ruark's new £1099 Paladins became available, models designed to appeal to a different audience, we felt the chance to compare them closely was too good to miss.

RUARK PALADIN

Slotting in between the Talisman and Crusader, Ruark's Paladin is said to be an easy load to drive, designed to work with amplifiers of modest power output, and our measurements confirm this. They're a heavy, sizeable two way design, featuring a custom made silk dome tweeter allied to an 8" mid/bass unit with a pulp paper cone. The beautifully finished cabinets feature gently angled front baffles said to aid dispersion and stereo imaging, and can be mass loaded if desired.

When partnered with smooth, rich sounding ancillaries the 880 x 290 x 380mm Paladins will raise many a smile. Driven by an Audiolab 8000C/8000Ms combination, their vivacity and urgency reminded me of some of the best budget floorstanders. Like Mission 733s with big boots on, they get into rhythms with zeal, but unlike many cheap loudspeakers, don't fall prey to raucous behaviour when pushed to the limit. Their impressive soundstage images forward, sounding bright in the midband - perfect on rock music.

Lush's 'Nothing Natural' instantly endeared the Ruarks to me as they dived into the song, bouncing along with the accent on drums and rhythm guitars. Although the midrange was more brightly lit than strictly necessary,



APPRECIATING

**Ruark's Paladin and KEF's Reference Series One
for the money,**



ASSETS

**loudspeakers both offer fine performance
finds David Price.**

they remained couch even with fuzed guitars, projecting Miki's Berenyi's vocals well out into the room. Upper bass was tight, tuneful and supple, albeit a little dry and recessed, removing some speed and punch. Below this there's a deep kick which gives the sound terrific scale. Oasis' 'Slide Away' was better handled, the Ruarks setting up an open acoustic, catching rhythmic interplay between bass drum and hi-hats superbly. Indeed, the kick drums had an unusual slam, with guitars again coming through raw but couch.

Although the Paladins were rhythmically engaging, I began to feel ambivalent about their tonality, which was dry enough to have you running for the Perrier. This was particularly evident on Seal's 'Crazy', an epic Trevor Horn production. Whilst the Ruarks proved extremely revealing with rhythms, tonal contrasts in the upper bass sounded a little weak.

Indeed, what they did to UB40's 'King Step' was something of a double edged sword. Dynamically, the Ruarks were excellent, conveying the way Pato Banton's rap switched from a monotone to a shout, and this combined with their speed made for impressive listening. Throwing up a detailed, expansive soundstage with a lithe, tuneful bassline, they nevertheless displayed a dry, clinical presentation which compromised the character of the song. It was a shame because, apart from this one small but subjectively significant feature, they do so much right.

KEF REFERENCE ONES

It was nice to be back in front of a KEF Reference loudspeaker. They're far from perfect, but seem to shift attention away from their faults and straight into the music in hand.

It was only a couple of months ago that World said goodbye to the Reference Series Twos. Put on something with deep, rhythmic bass that drives the song along - any reggae song since Trojan Records first opened its doors - and they'd lollop around in the very low bass. KEF explained that they

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were for large rooms, more commonly found in the U.S. than in cramped Blightly, where the smaller Reference Series Ones are more likely to appeal. Losing a good half octave at the bottom, the smaller 864x230x300mm Reference Ones avoid this problem. I feel it does wonders for the overall sound, bringing the benefits of the Reference series into sharp relief. To continue the metaphor, the Ones are Twos with running shoes on.

This means they share the pin-point imaging and walk-around soundstage of their bigger brothers, plus a smooth, clean treble and midband. Bass isn't the fastest around, but it is agile. The magic of the KEFs is that they successfully combine detail and politeness. Put on a harsh recording (take your pick from any early digital example) and they'll let you know in the most genteel English way that it's vulgar, but will stoically endure it with a stiff upper lip. But there's a caveat: although a fairly sensitive load, the KEFs dip down to 3Ω in places, making them exceedingly tricky to drive. This means you'll need a solid-state amplifier as robust as our Audiolab monoblocks to get them working properly.

With Lush the tonal balance moved floor-ward in contrast to the Ruarks, bass guitar playing more of a part in proceedings. Cymbals were smoother and less prominent, with a new-found sense of air and space to the acoustic. Although instruments were further back behind the plane of the 'speakers, Miki's voice projected better than with the Ruarks. Indeed, although the Ones gave a smaller soundstage from left to right, front to back imaging was superior.

Rhythmically the Reference Ones were no slouch either. They're definitely faster than the Twos but still had a little way to go to match the Ruarks. With 'Slide Away' the kick

drum that drove the song along with the Paladins was a touch subdued. Although the KEFs lacked their swing, I'd say that they still made a better job of the song. Projected better, Liam Gallagher's voice sounded more impassioned, catching the pain of the words in a way that, because of their monochromatic tone, the Ruark's seemed unable to capture.

Seal's eponymous debut album was another eye-opener, coming across with a greater sense of scale in the recorded acoustic. The KEFs threw out extra detail, and were more tonally inviting, better imparting the timbre of the instruments, doubtless meticulously chosen by Mr. Horn.

'King Step' showed the KEFs have their

problems, but are fleet footed at stepping around them. Bass was more prominent, verging on the over generous. It was more sumptuous, with a gratifyingly rich tone, but this could turn boxy in the upper bass, particularly when strings were plucked hard. There was a tendency, albeit far from pronounced, to one-note the lower frequencies. More obvious was their lack of speed compared to the Paladins. Although the KEFs didn't lack agility, they didn't have the feeling of ease that the Ruarks exuded in this respect.

Despite this, I felt they still proved more entertaining. Because they're so good at what they do well, the KEF Reference Series Ones charm you away from their problems. I was certainly happy to sacrifice a touch of speed and bass control for a beautifully fluid, integrated midband and treble, with superb imaging.

THE VERDICT

Both these loudspeakers are highly accomplished in some areas. At this level you start to get a taste of real high

end exotica, with none of the nasties that befall so many 'speakers of the same size costing several hundred pounds less. Both had a seamlessness and a coherence that eludes cheaper designs, Mission's 752 arguably excluded.

Still, neither were beyond reproach. The Ruark Paladin is fundamentally a very capable 'speaker, offering a full range of abilities, majoring on bass control and speed. Ideally, it's best paired with a fast, powerful amplifier like a big Naim to capitalise on this property. However, it works from a restricted tonal palette which took some colour from music.

KEF Reference Series Ones offer most of the benefits of their esteemed bigger brothers, but avoid some, if not all of their pitfalls. For my money, thanks to their deliciously sweet, open midrange, the KEFs ultimately come closer to true musical enjoyment, but in this case I need to point out that, like the Reference Series Twos but unlike the Paladins, they they are a difficult load and must be auditioned with the amplifier they are to be partnered with. ●

“Because they're so good at what they do well, the KEF Reference Series Ones charm you away from their problems.”

Ruark Paladin £1099

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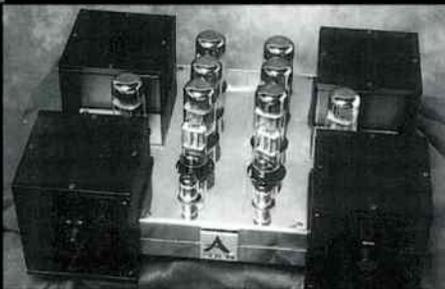
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.... Continued from page 49

with your new system. Graham at Basically Sound near Norwich, Tel: 0508 570829, was also very willing to help, and mentioned that he had an ex-demonstration 52 available, so it'd be worth giving him a call.

The Naim CDS has a forthright and powerful sound, with plenty of detail and impact, making it a tough act to follow. We haven't heard the Marantz CD-10 or CD-16 yet (although we are hoping to have a CD-16

special about the CR-7. It is the king of Nakamichis (better sound than a Dragon) and if carefully maintained will give you a fantastic sound for many years. If you can find a CR-7 in mint condition second-hand, it's a chance worth jumping at.

The Mission loudspeakers you mention we don't recognise, neither do Mission. In any case, judging by the rest of the system you are proposing, I'd recommend you audition the new Epos ES25s. These are a three-way floorstander and on a

current rather than old equipment. DB

NEW AMP FOR LS3/5A

I have just recently inherited a pair of Rogers LS3/5as, which are quite an improvement over my old Missions. I now feel though that my modest amplifier (Mission Cyrus I) and CD player (Marantz CD873 + QED Digit/Positron) are not doing the 'speakers justice. However, I recently borrowed my father's Aura VA-100 and Arcam Alpha 5 and was disappointed with the result, i.e. when swapping

the amplifiers there was little difference. There was a distinct change of character with the Alpha 5; more detail, deeper bass, crisper treble, but I did prefer the smoother sound of my own amplifier and CD.

I must point out at this stage that I have a small listening room 11'x11' with the 'speakers about 18" from the rear walls and 2' from side walls. I want to replace my amplifier and CD player and would appreciate any

recommendations you could make. I have a budget of around £500 now and expect to have a further £500 later in the year. What should I upgrade first? I have no qualms about buying second-hand. Could this be the way forward?

**Martin Swain
Lincs.**

The LS3/5as are inefficient, having a sensitivity of just 82dB. This means that they will need a lot of volts for decent levels. Luckily though, they have a high overall impedance, so they will not draw excessive current. This points

towards either a Japanese integrated amplifier such as the Denon PMA-450SE, which has a fast and clean sound, or something like an Audiolab 8000A. Both are capable of swinging a lot of volts, which is exactly what you need for the LS3/5as. If you are going to buy new, the PMA-450SE suits your budget fine, otherwise go for a recent second-hand 8000A, which start to appear at around £350.

Once the amplifier is in place, you should be able to hear more easily the change a better CD player makes. Have another listen to the Alpha 5 Plus, it is a very good player. DB

DAC UPGRADE

I confess to having rather lost touch with the CD player market of late, particularly with DAC technology becoming ever more complex and confusing.

My query therefore is a simple one. I am looking for the most cost-effective source upgrade to a system presently comprising: Technics SL-P477A (one of the first generation MASH players which was well reviewed about four years ago), Cyrus I amplifier, Tannoy M20 loudspeakers. More specifically, I am thinking of either adding an Audio Alchemy DAC-in-the-box to the Technics player, or splashing out on a Marantz CD63SE, which everyone seems to rave about.

It also occurs to me that the first option might offer more scope for future upgrading - by adding a separate transport to the DAC-in-the-box. However, I am concerned by the fact that the Technics appears to have only an optical digital out connection which, from what I have read recently, gives inferior results to a coaxial connection.

**M. Smith
Haywards Heath.**



The CD63SE is a fine machine capable of a sweet and dynamic sound.

delivered for review in the coming months) so I'd recommend you find a dealer that can demonstrate both against each other. If possible, try and arrange a home demonstration so that you can spend some time living with each of the players you are interested in.

Is the CR7E a reckless extravagance? Well, yes and no. A new DR-1 with new heads and in perfect alignment would probably sound nearly as good as the CR-7 with your old tapes at around half the cost. But there's something

short audition I was very impressed with what I heard. They are a very good match for Naim equipment, so I think you'll enjoy them too. Look out for a review in the coming months. Both Pro-Musica and Basically Sound have these in stock.

We do try and compare the equipment we review to 'benchmark' products, wherever possible and in some cases these are old faves, notably the Leak Troughline tuner and Garrard 401 record deck. However, most benchmarks are necessarily

You are right that the most cost effective upgrade would be to add an external convertor to your existing Technics player. Optical and coaxial digital connections between DAC and transport do seem to have a different sound. Generally, optical seems to give a softer, smoother sound and an electrical coaxial a dynamic presentation with more bite. Neither is inferior, they just give different subjective balances.

The DAC-in-the-box is a very good convertor, and would certainly be an upgrade on the Technics. Other options to consider include the Sonic Frontiers Assemblage SF-1 which has a sweet and detailed sound but requires some simple soldering (it comes as a kit with the main board built, but the sockets have to be soldered in place), and Select Systems' Dacula. DB

I've just finished auditioning the Marantz CD-63SE and can confirm that it justifies rave reviews. It has some

weaknesses but they are minor at the price. It has sweeter treble, plus better dynamic contrasts and shading in the midband than most, giving it a less "grey" tonal colour and more life. NK

UNHAPPY SPEAKERS

I have just sold my last pair of 'speakers after being unhappy with their performance and am now searching for a new pair. I'm looking for a detailed, smooth sounding bookshelf model that would work well in my system that consists of an Arcam Alpha 5 CD player and a Naim Nait 3 amplifier. I have a small listening room and a budget of around £400.

Also, do you think that my amplifier needs a better CD? A few dealers have said the Naim deserves a better source component. Should I add a DAC onto the Arcam player, or sell it and get a better model?

Dean Norton
South Wales.

The Naim Nait 3 amplifier produces just 28watts, so a sensitive 'speaker is a

must if you want a smooth sound. Unfortunately, high sensitivity and miniature loudspeakers don't go hand in hand; sensitivity is sacrificed to get deeper bass from the small cabinet. There are a couple worth trying though.

If you can use the loudspeakers on stands, Epos ES11s can sound brilliant. They are very room fussy though, so a home demonstration is essential. If these don't work in your bedroom, try Systemdek 931s. These are one of the few high quality miniatures that are reasonably efficient. They have a very smooth and polite sound and can be used on either stands or a bookshelf, which may be beneficial in your room. DB

MUCH NEEDED PRIZE

Thanks for a good magazine and for a first ever competition win from your Christmas issue, of a Denon PMA-450SE, a much needed boost to my rather mundane system. No esoteric equipment here I'm afraid, so thanks again.

The rest of my system comprises Ariston RD40/SME 3009/Ortofon 510, Technics SLPG-520A CD player and Genexxa GX600 speakers set on sand filled stands. These speakers are, and I quote, 6Ω, 86dB SPL (1W/1m) two-way coaxial system with downward facing super woofer firing through two front facing ports. I wonder if they are the cause of heavy plodding bass, not so evident on Jazz or Classical, but tiring and prominent on some rock and pop.

The equipment is housed in a small room (12'x13') with soft furnishings and wooden suspended floors. The Denon has made the sound more lively - but oh that bass! So any thoughts or recommendations you might have would be much

appreciated.

J. M. Lipscomb
Andover.

There may be a very simple and cost-effective solution to your problem. You can easily reduce the output from the ports of your Genexxa GX600 loudspeakers by gently inserting foam bungs in the ports. The tighter the bungs are, the drier the bass will become.

If this still isn't satisfactory and you decide to upgrade them, try either KEF's new Coda 7s or GLL's Maxims as a starting point. DB

THE RIGHT ONE

I am planning to upgrade my current system step-by-step in the near future, so I need your help. It comprises: Rega Planar 3 split slab, Rega Elys, two Naim NAP90s (bi-amping), Hi-cap and NAC82 (old version 1988), Sony CD player CDP-557 ESD which I use with a DAC in-the-Box and a pair of German floorstanding loudspeakers, HGP "Klassik". My hi-fi is kept in a 2.8m x 4.8m listening room.

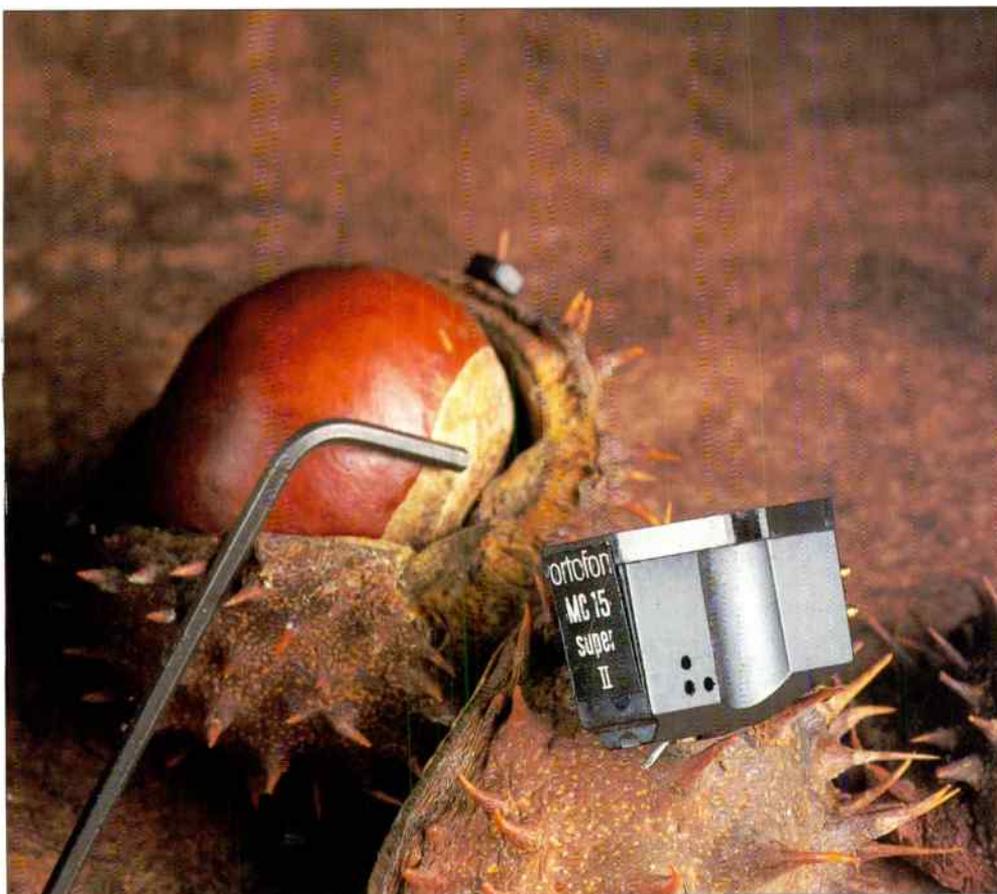
So here are my questions: 1) Would a Goldring 1042 be the right one to upgrade to or should I change to a complete Linn configuration? 2) Is a Naim CD3 the right one, because the CDI is too expensive for me.

I'm looking for a more natural, musical sound and my tastes are Jazz-Rock, Fusion (GRP-Label) and Southern Rock (Allman Brothers). At the present time, my system is not the way it should be. I think it would be right to start at the source and leave the end to last e.g. Naim SBL or Castle. What about a Seismic Sink for my CD player? My budget goes up to £2000. Thank you very much and keep on.

Rudolf Huber
Gailing,
Germany.



KEF's new Coda 7s have an engaging and detailed sound.



Ortofon's MC15 Super II is steal at £110.

The Goldring 1042 has a super stylus giving it a crisp and detailed sound. It is smooth too, with good bass weight and tracks well. We constantly recommend it as one of the best moving magnet cartridges around.

We haven't heard the Naim CD3 yet but if it's anything like its bigger brothers it is well worth an audition. Try and compare it to the Quad 67 CD player if you can, which is one of the best at the price with a lovely warm and musical sound.

Another alternative worth investigating is an external DAC that could be added to your Sony CD player. The best two around at the moment within your budget are the Pink Triangle Ordinal and DPA Digital's Enlightenment. Contact Hi-Fi Laden, Tel: (089) 76 52 19 for Pink Triangle or Hans at Gbunterhaltungselektronik

*for DPA
Tel: (040) 551 55 94. DB*

ARMLESS!

I wonder if you could help me decide on a possible future upgrade path for my turntable, a recent Linn LP12 with Akito/K18 Valhalla and Cirkus.

I would like to move up to a moving coil cartridge but am confused by comments I've read on tonearm matching. Can you comment on suitable non-Linn arms for the LP12? With the demise of the Ittok I'm sure there are many Linnies wondering about alternatives to shelling out well over a grand on an Ekos. The Naim ARO seems a popular but expensive choice. How does the Rega RB300 rate in all this?

**Colin Berresford,
Billinge,
Lancs.**

Unfortunately, modern Linn LP12s can't accept Rega arms thanks to the

plinth's rear right crossmember fouling the Rega's base. This problem can be remedied by a few minutes woodworking, but as Linn frown on this practice, I can't imagine dealers would be too enthusiastic about performing it!

When fitted to an LP12, the RB300 works well with a tight, clean sound, although bass isn't the best around. Whilst it's certainly better than the Akito, an Ittok would prove far superior, especially in LVIII guise. You could look for one in mint second-hand condition, but they're easy to damage if mishandled, so I'd only buy from a dealer.

SMEs, superb as they are, don't tend to work particularly well on Sondeks - once again it's that question of synergy rearing its ugly head. The Naim ARO is an interesting device. In 'hi-fi'

respects such as bass and treble extension it's inferior to an Ekos, but many obsessive Linnies swear by it. Its deliciously effusive, musical presentation certainly charmed me. If you like a bold, impressive sound, go for the Ekos - if it's delicacy and nuance you're after, many believe the ARO is the best partner to a Linn Sondek. DP

GYRO-POWER

My system comprises a pre-1988 Linn LP12/Basik arm and K9 cartridge with a Naim Nait One and Rogers LS7 loudspeakers. I want to purchase a Michell Gyrodec with RB300, but I'm not sure which cartridge yet. I'm happy with the speakers and I'm holding onto the Nait as a spare amp. I'm considering either the new Mission Cyrus or the Quad 77 integrated. Which do you think would be better?

**Bill Gunn
Clydebank,
Scotland.**

Ortofon's MC15 Super II is an excellent, if analytical sounding budget moving coil cartridge, or you could try Goldring's warmer and richer 1042 moving magnet. By the way, Gyrodecs are pretty fussy about positioning, but I've found Audiophile Furniture's Base platform really makes them sing.

The Mission Cyrus 3's phono stage doesn't have the strongest bass performance, and the Quad doesn't have one at all! However, Quad assure me they are working on an expansion module including an MM/MC stage for about £300, available next month. You shouldn't overlook the latest Nait 3 which has a superb phono stage for £95 on top of its £499 price - it's also certainly worth auditioning. DP

In this day and age, it is a brave company which decides to put a new pair of monoblock amplifiers on the UK market. Congratulations, therefore, to new company HD Audio for taking a risk that I would look askance at. For just under £1200, the Duo monoblocks aren't untypical of the hair-shirt basic British philosophy. Their two black brushed alloy-finished folded cases, the size of a shoebox, are relieved only by a discreet blue screen-printed name and LED indicator. Both, in fact are so discreet that from more than a yard away they disappear altogether.

HD claim 100w per monoblock,

although into the Harbeth BBC LS5/12a speakers used they sounded less powerful than that. They feature one phono input socket per monoblock, two pairs of 'speaker binding-posts and a red-illuminated power switch and heatsink to the rear. By the time this review is printed the partnering pre-amplifier with MM phono stage should be finalised for £585.

The Duos are a competent design, although bright flames were not visible from either the Thames or (rather nearer my flat) the Serpentine. Vocals were particularly clean, as was bass, though for some tastes this could be

described like some white wines, as too dry. It suited New Order well, driving along spry enough, if not with the strength of Paisley floodwaters. The whole mix was a touch laid back, rather than a forward projection.

Playing Art Blakey and the Afro Drum Ensemble, each component in the amazing array of percussion was finely detailed and etched into the empty studio background. Some drumming on this recording has a marked echo off the rear studio wall, which tends to give amplifiers a tough time. The Duos reproduced this, but curiously less distinct from the large toms than can be the case. Particularly good however was the characteristic slap and thunk of palms and the clatter of rimshots, tidily defined and as clean as the ring from a crystal glass.

Orchestrally, with Orff's Carmina Burana, which can sound a little muddy through some amplifiers, the Duos showed their mettle. A sweet top, clear chorus, reasonably heavy but clean bass, and a picture-window-like perspective on the orchestra which overall was reminiscent of the best aspects of the popular Audiolab 8000M monoblocks. Incidentally, the prices are not dissimilar.

Not everyone wants a burning sensation around the tops of their thigh-length fishing wellies. The HD Duos might not come top of the list for that sharp tingle of excitement that Salisbury has on offer, but combine a very respectable series of unexaggerated hi-fi virtues. Paired with speakers with a warmer top end than the somewhat cruel S/12as, they make a viable alternative to the Cambridge offering. The only snag is that one monoblock reacted less than pleasantly to a 5m interconnect from my Argo HR pre-amplifier, producing some nasty squeals on power-off. However, this I am told, is receiving attention ●

HD Audio Duos £1185
HD Audio,
25 Gardner Road,
Guildford, Surrey GU1 4PG
Tel: 01483 36988

DUO PURPOSE



Eric Braithwaite
thinks HD Audio's
new Duo monoblocks
have a fight on their hands in
the tough UK market.

Measured Performance
see p105-111

THE ORACLE OF DELPH

**Noel Keywood listens
to the enigmatically
named Delph Da Capo
valve amplifier.**

Mullard 5-20 users well know just how sweet and easy this early-Sixties classic valve amplifier can sound. The Delph Da Capo isn't a Mullard, but it's in the same idiom, a 'modern' valve amplifier that relies on feedback to deliver what should be a tidy measured performance.

The four gorgeously pneumatic looking output valves are KT88 equivalents from Chelmer, possessing similar specifications to GEC's originals. In front sit two smaller EF86 preamplifier valves and ECC81 double-triode phase splitters. All the valves are available today at reasonable cost, although KT88s hover at £40-80 per pair, according to grade. However, output valves like this should last at least three years, according to usage.

Delph Electronics use a folded steel chassis, but the corners aren't welded and buffed smooth. This reveals the sheet steel edge - not the slickest of sights especially at the price. Most manufacturers weld and buff to avoid this, which costs more. Otherwise the unit feels well made and satisfactorily



finished - neat, if a little sombre.

Chrome transformer caps add a nice touch and large power valves increase visual appeal too. Switching on brings total silence, then a click as a start relay activates, presumably to apply HT after the heaters are up and running. This preserves valve life. The Delph has negligible hiss and hum, a good feature.

Hooked up to KEF Coda 7s or Mission 733s the Delph produced a classic valve amplifier sound, with clarity, detailing and sound staging ahead of most solid state amplifiers. I was very impressed by its strong, articulate bass which had earth-moving power on John Lee Hooker's 'Boom Boom'. The flip side was that without a front end subsonic filter, strong record warps could saturate the output transformers (I used CD from our Pink Triangle Da Capo).

Eddie Reader's vocals were nicely placed between the loudspeakers. I detected a little coarseness at times and not quite the last nuance of detail, yet all the same, the Da Capo did well in reproducing female vocals.

Pushing this amplifier to find how its transformer problem affected sound quality, I heard a general hardening and sharpening in the treble at very high volume levels, a lot less noticeable than measurement would suggest. Turning as usual to the fierce attack of Steve

Earle's steel strung guitar on 'Guitar Town', the resonant twang turned progressively to glassy bite and his voice gained an equally sharp edge. But this was at high volume levels - normally the problem wasn't obvious, but changed for the worse with revealing KEF Reference Series I loudspeakers. The prominent treble from guitar and metallic percussion then came across as harsh and messy on Earle's 'Someday'. So the Da Capo has to be partnered with care, some speakers revealing its treble shortcomings more than others.

This amplifier is well engineered in most areas and providing it isn't pushed too hard, acquits itself satisfactorily. Seismic bass, a clear midband that gives lovely reproduction of vocals, and natural treble at low level all tell of its valve qualities. At the end of the day all this was easily enough to make the Delph Da Capo worthy of audition, but I still have reservations about its treble and the harshness it can produce as volume is turned up ●

Delph Da Capo

£1468.75

Cottage Audio
17 Bridge Street, Saxilby,
Nr. Lincoln LN1 2PZ
Tel: 0522 702834

Measured Performance
see p105-111

IN THE JUNE ISSUE

The June issue is accompanied by another of our DIY Supplements, which along with all of the great reviews, news from the industry, readers' queries, a fabulous competition and more, makes Hi-Fi World an essential purchase. Here are just some of the articles we hope to bring you in the June issue.

CAMBRIDGE DAC MAGIC



Designed by Pink Triangle, famous for their excellent digital audio products, the superbly presented Cambridge DAC Magic is available through Richer Sounds at an amazing £150. Is this the audiophile bargain of the year, we ask?

LINN COMPETITION

For next month's competition Linn have very generously donated an entire starter system comprising: Basik turntable with Akito arm and K5 cartridge, Mimik CD player, Majik-I integrated amplifier and floorstanding Keildh loudspeakers.

ROKSAN LI.5/M1.5

Newly updated from Roksan comes the LI.5 preamplifier and M1.5 monoblocks. These elegantly styled amplifiers get an exhaustive review.

TANNOY PROFILE 637



The Profile 637s use Tannoy's dual concentric principle to mimick a point source for better imaging, while their twin 6.5" drivers create a large, powerful sound. But how do they face up to the super-keen competition?

HIGH END MOVING COIL CARTRIDGES

Four of the best coils around are given an extended audition by the only magazine that still loves vinyl. Linn's Klyde, the Lyra Lydian, van den Hul's MC10, Ortofon's MC30 Supreme and Goldring's Excel all get the treatment! Don't miss it.

FREE SUPPLEMENT NO. 15

The June issue comes with Hi-Fi World's unique DIY hi-fi Supplement. In this next installment we bring you a valve preamplifier complete with valve phono stage, a simple stereo decoder for your vintage tuner, book reviews, kit news and more - don't miss it!

Hi-Fi World is still only £2, but with more editorial than most rivals. With the most enthusiastic and expert editorial team in hi-fi journalism, can you afford to miss it? Make sure you don't by filling in this order form and handing it to your newsagent.

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I've just started using my hard working, dog eared Quad ESL-63s again. What a surprise! I'd forgotten just why these electrostatic speakers are so famous. In fact, it's impossible to believe it until you hear it. On a scale of goodness I'd say they reveal 30% more of a performance than the best cone speakers - and that's not easy to believe. Even as a Quad owner I tend to forget it, until re-acquaintance time comes around. This occurs when I can grab them back off somebody who just happens to have "borrowed" them, usually for a long period!

They're just awesome these Quads. Once upon a time no self respecting 'speaker research department was without a pair. Wish that was the case nowadays. More of today's engineers (not to mention reviewers) need to be aware of this speaker's unique abilities. Perhaps it is because the Quads can also sound dynamically flat, dull and unengaging that they are often misunderstood and ignored. What struck me forcibly this time around is that whilst the ESL-63s don't exactly slam

“On a scale of goodness I'd say they reveal 30% more of a performance than the best cone speakers - and that's not easy to believe.”

listeners against the wall - they've got very little bass impact, one reviewer feeling that bass "drifts out" - they do have fantastic bass quality though. You've never heard the real timbrel information in cellos, plucked acoustic bass, drums and such like until you've heard these instruments through Quads.

kaleidoscope

Reflections
from Noel
Keywood



This is a slightly eerie property of ESL-63s, one that is at odds with the presentation of box speakers. Angelique Kidjo's 'Aye' album, which is founded on a peculiar type of deep, rumbling bass, illustrates differences clearly. This album upsets most box speakers badly. Those that do cope with it reproduce the dynamic information whilst ignoring most of the harmonic detail - you get the thud thud, as it were, but you can hear little of what's causing it. And that, I realised, is what most box speakers do.

They give you the dynamic outline of bass lines, but they seemingly erase all insight. The Quad's give it to you the other way around. They politely skirt around viscerality, concentrating instead on

content.

Which is right? In my view, neither. Open dipoles like the Quads have severe room matching problems at low frequencies, compounded by bass roll off below 270Hz due to panel dimensions with the ESL-63s, partly compensated for by floor reinforcement and a 90Hz resonance in the

dust covers. With this little bag of acoustic worms it's hardly surprising that ESL-63s have "unusual" sounding bass.

But so do box speakers. They rely on cabinet "boom" to create the impression of bass. To most people this sounds right, because such a sound is their most common experience of bass. Go to Rock concerts and you're faced by banks of box speakers. Even classical music venues, like London's South Bank complex for example, have sound reinforcement speakers nestling discreetly up the sides of the hall. Box speakers are our everyday reality; it's not surprising that most listeners are happy enough about using them.

In truth, there aren't so many occasions when you can get to hear instruments live, in an unamplified performance free of box speakers and even when you do, notice that musical instruments also use wooden sounding chambers (double bass) or a resonant chamber (drum). As you'd expect, any box speaker will mimick such instruments well, with the emphasis on *mimick*. That is not to say that it will reproduce them faithfully. A hi-fi loudspeaker should reproduce the signal it is fed, not try to produce its own version by mimickry,

so whilst Quads might sound dynamically weak, for the reasons I've given, they're actually very revealing in the bass, by not having a resonant box.

I'm not trying to preach about these speakers though. I know from our mail that a lot of you have them, oft bought second-hand, and I accept that most people would prefer to have more bass. Some time ago I designed, for my own use, a specialised crossover that integrated the ESL-63 to the Celestion SL-6000 dipole subwoofer. But the latter was expensive at around £1800 and difficult to use too, because of its size and weight. On the magazine we felt most of you would find the whole caboodle just too complex and expensive, so we didn't publish.

Now, there's a lot of discussion in our offices about making a DIY bass dipole for the Quads using modern Audax drivers, married to my original active crossover in modified form. Bass dipoles are awkward beasts, but when they're right they're also remarkable - and they don't rely on a box. Keep your fingers crossed. If our theories work (being modest, I'd give 'em an 80% chance!) we'll crack this problem sometime during the summer months and publish later in the year ●

The Synergy was designed for maximum pleasure minimum fuss.

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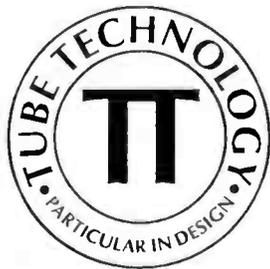
Even the remote volume is achieved using a separate gear box and motor together with a high quality attenuator.

Our build quality is of the utmost highest standard and we stand by it, offering a 10 year guarantee on our products.

Described here are only a few features of the Synergy, for a complete discussion and audition of this and our other remarkable products please contact us for your nearest dealer and colour brochure.

From the moment you hear The Synergy...

you realize that its unique styling is a major contribution to it's musical performance.



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All Tube Technology amplifiers are designed and manufactured in England.

Gold Aero

The Synergy is shown here fitted with Gold Aero tubes from the USA. These are high grade, audiophile vacuum tubes which have attained world class respect for their sonic qualities. Now available in the UK via Tube Technology & their selected dealers.

Please enquire for a tube list & brochure.



recorded message

Left by
Richard Brice



I had intended this month to introduce, with stoical courage, the scabrous subject of tone controls! But those following the series will already know that in designing the Maximalist Preamplifier I've cast aside conventional wisdom concerning preamplifier design and started instead from the premise of "think of every feature that you might ever need and design it in now".

This volte-face stems from my consideration of the role of the preamplifier in the context of what copy writers might call my "home-entertainment centre". Now for another appalling confession, I love optical disks. Not just audio CDs - although I actually like them too. Generally, I thoroughly approve of optical storage, be it video discs (which produce a picture quality far above the fuzzy, wobbly picture from tape), CD or CD-ROM disks.

Specifically, I delight in CD-ROMs. So much that after owning a ROM drive for a little while I bought some authoring software and am now writing and producing interactive titles for children. Given my enthusiasm for this technology and for the video bandwidth compression technology on which the video possibilities of this medium depends, I'm confident that I'll soon own a video CD player when these become available.

In considering the Maximalist Preamplifier's multiple roles in terms of "gluing together" computer, video and audio, I realised that any self-respecting, fully featured home entertainment control system of the future would have to provide for the ability to switch video signals emanating from video players, off-air/cable, CD-i, CD video, as well as video output from computer coder-

boards to a main picture monitor. At first I considered housing these functions in another unit but after some deliberation came to the conclusion that ergonomics alone (not to mention aesthetics) dictates that these features are included within the preamplifier.

The figure illustrates the main video input, output and switching circuitry. As with the electronics described so far, the emphasis is on performance rather than upon technology for its own sake. You'll notice that the circuit contains discrete transistors. This is common practice in the video world where fast operational amplifiers are more expensive and I, like other designers, can do as well or better with a bit of basic transistor design.

Ultimately I may opt for electronic switching rather than the mechanical switch illustrated - for the moment this simple arrangement will do. Switching between video signals will cause the monitor to "roll" as there's no common synchronism

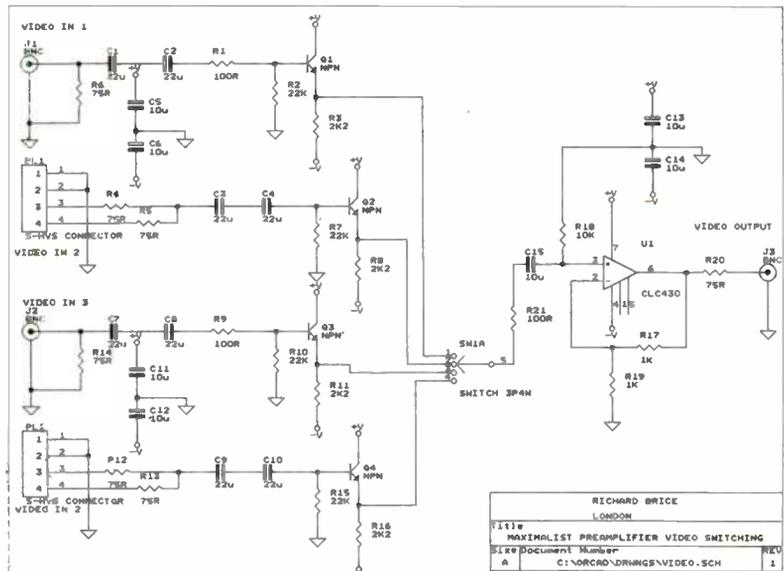
between the video signals. This is nothing to worry about.

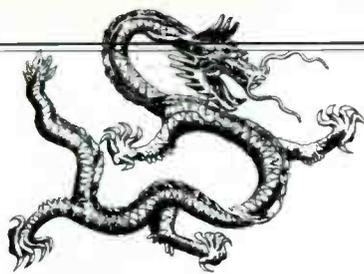
One nicety I could have included is d.c. restoration where all video signals are presented to the switch at roughly the same video black-level. If you would like to include this feature it's reasonably easily accomplished with the inclusion of a resistor and diode on each video input.

In the end, I decided against the extra complication. Most important of all is careful layout and power-supply decoupling. This is mandatory to secure good (or even adequate) performance from video circuitry. PCB design is therefore especially important. The prototype is designed with surface-mount technology which enables the components

to be assembled close together and helps to ensure against high-frequency instability, the usual bete-noire of video electronics.

I've assumed all video signals are treated as composite PAL signals even if they originate as Y/C signal (on a four pin mini-DIN connector). Y/C video signals send the picture brightness and colour information separately and this results in superior picture quality. My reason for simply "adding the luminance and colour back together" in the common resistor arrangement is that my monitor only allows for a composite signal input, so the extra switching complication would be pointless. Maybe next month I'll get around to tone controls!





Golden Dragon

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These beautifully crafted miniatures will appeal to affluent types with lovely homes but little space. The Hiper 1 is an entry level design from Chario S.A.S., one of Italy's largest independent loudspeaker manufacturers. Priced at £399 in wood veneer, plus £180 for a pair of matching veneered pillar type stands, they're an interesting addition to the UK market.

I found them unusually fussy about positioning and matching. After much experimentation they ended up spiked atop Linn Kan stands, half a metre from the rear wall, working with both a Naim Nait 3 and the latest Audiolab 8000P/8000M monoblocks, which really took them by the scruff of the neck.

The Chario Hiper 1s are open, clean sounding 'speakers with an exemplary sense of timing, particularly on spirited pop music such as Ultra Vivid Scene's 'Lightening'. Here they proved extremely tight, catching the subtle counterpoint between bass guitar and drums with rare accuracy, unrattled by the force of the snare drum hitting hard through the mix. Rhythm guitar could be heard driving the song along, tightly located in the soundstage.

Nor do the Charios achieve speed through adding an artificial, distorted 'edge'. Quite the reverse in fact, they've one of the sweetest, most transparent trebles around. Cymbals were a joy - brightly etched but in no sense coarse. They're extremely revealing, throwing up detail that many costlier loudspeakers lose. Kurt Ralske's voice hung lazily back from the fray, remaining crystal clear. Images were rock-solid, individual strands well placed around the plane of the speakers, but the Charios had to be positioned carefully to get them to image at their best - treble from the Scanspeak tweeters is more directional than need be.

Moving to reggae, and Augustus Pablo's 'Revelino Dub' showcased his genius with rhythms, a gift the Charios also shared. Highly capable in the way

they worked with spaces between notes, they imparted attack transients and decay with great delicacy of touch, making notes start and stop with a speed few other designs at this price can match. His finest subsonics threw up a problem though: the Charios emphasise upper bass, particularly noticeable on bass-driven music such as The La's 'There She Goes' - a guitar stomper pushed along by a powerful walking bassline. As the bassist moved up and down the fretboard, they tended to play certain notes louder than others, sounding a touch boxy.

Never ones to suffer poor sources gladly, these speakers could be characterised as 'bright' and revealing. Lesser designs similarly afflicted with a forward tonal balance often go to pieces when asked to play hard, steely recordings, such as 'L.F.O.' by L.F.O. - not so much a 'speaker assault course as a battleground. Where others turn harsh, the Charios captured the warmth of the analogue electronics juxtaposed with the cold

synthetic hi-hats. Sub-bass, so powerful that L.F.O.'s record company had to print warnings about it on album sleeves, was sublime. The Charios went deep down, their downward firing ports almost blowing them off the stands. In the midst of all this, they remained clean, composed and rhythmic, holding on tight to all strands in the mix. The Chario Hiper 1s thoroughly impressed me. They are music makers through and through with a great feel for rhythms and dynamics. Just as impressive is their refinement and poise, which shines with decent partnering equipment. A bargain by another name!

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Measured Performance
 see p105-111



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Five superb Marantz CD-63SE CD players are up for grabs in this month's bumper competition. Marantz have always enjoyed a fine reputation for their Special Edition CD players, and the CD-63SE is their best to date. At £349.90 it's superb value for the audiophile, giving a precise, musical sound.

The CD-63SE uses special discrete output amplifiers, or Hyper Dynamic Amplifier Modules (HDAM) as Marantz call them. In the CD-63SE these have been copper plated to give additional screening. Other special features include a transformer with Oxygen Free Copper windings, improved chassis bracing and a more rigid bottom plate as well as additional air slits so that the temperature of the sensitive components remains stable.

At the back of the CD-63SE there are gold plated phono sockets for audio output, plus digital coaxial and optical outputs should you wish to add an external convertor later. Inside, the CD-63SE uses a 1-bit convertor chip to give a smooth, easy sound, as well as many other high grade audio components.

To enter this competition, simply complete the questions and tie breaker opposite.

Send your entry on a POSTCARD or the back of a SEALED ENVELOPE completed in block capitals, to arrive no later than 5th MAY 1995 to:

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COMPETITION ENTRY QUESTIONS

- 1) What does Marantz's HDAM stand for?
- A. High Definition Amplifier Module
 - B. Hyper Dynamic Amplifier Module
 - C. Hyper Drive Audio Module
 - D. Highly Dynamic Audio Module
- 2) What is special about the CD63-SE's transformer?
- A. Its Oxygen Free Copper windings
 - B. The Turbocharger
 - C. The Copper plated HDAMs
 - D. Nothing much
- 3) How many Marantz CD63-SE CD players are on offer in this month's competition?
- A. Two
 - B. Three
 - C. Four
 - D. Five
- 4) What convertor does the CD-63SE use?
- A. 2-bit
 - B. 20-bit
 - C. 32-bit
 - D. 1-bit

TIE BREAKER (Obligatory)

HDAMs are a Marantz invention,
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Complete the above ditty in no more than thirty words.

COMPETITION RULES AND CONDITIONS OF ENTRY

Only one entry per household will be accepted. Multiple entries will automatically be disqualified.

In the event of more than one entrant submitting all the correct answers, the winners will be picked from the tie-breaker by the Editor. We will endeavour to publish the results in the July 1995 issue. Purchase of the magazine is not a precondition to entry.

No correspondence about this competition will be entered into and the Editor's decision is final.

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The Bristol Sound & Vision show this year demonstrated that there is still a very strong market for hi-fi in the UK. One of the busiest hi-fi shows we've attended for a long time, there were thousands of visitors genuinely interested in real hi-fi. Live 94, held at Earl's Court, saw more people through the doors over the five day period, but only a small percentage seemed interested in the hi-fi on show. Bristol was almost solely hi-fi, and managed to attract so many visitors that each morning the queues stretched around the front of the hotel.

This is good news for the industry, and hopefully will help to remind manufacturers of their home market. Since the eighties, hi-fi sales in the UK have been in decline and exports on the increase. Due to economic conditions we have become increasingly competitive in overseas markets, with many UK manufacturers claiming 80% or more of their sales outside the UK. Some even admit a lack of interest in the UK market, preferring to concentrate solely on export sales. And who can blame them? Many products manufactured in the UK are too expensive for the average Briton, who in many cases has to be persuaded that the ultimate hi-fi isn't a midi-system anyway. Overseas it seems the engineering quality of British hi-fi is better appreciated and it's affordable.

But things are definitely changing. Bristol saw a wide range of manufacturers, but the price range of equipment wasn't as great as in previous years. At either end of the spectrum there was little to be seen. Gone were a lot of the larger corporates and their package systems, and at the high end there were only a handful of products on display. The majority of the show

dB on the level

Dominic Baker



opinion

concentrated on the middle ground of affordable, high quality British separates.

In years past the UK has built a world-wide reputation for the quality of its budget loudspeakers. From the introduction of the first Goodmans Maxim and the original Wharfedale Diamond, through to the

system built along the lines of Arcam Alpha 5 Plus CD player, Naim Nait 3 or Audiolab 8000A integrated amplifier and Mission 752 loudspeakers, would blow away a system that cost twice the price only a few years back, such is the improvement in quality.

The strong export market has been responsible for keeping much of the UK hi-fi industry going through what has been a deep recession. As interest is re-kindled in the UK, many manufacturers are now in an extremely strong position, with ranges of very high quality products at competitive prices.

There is still the age-old problem of awareness that needs to be tackled, where the majority still believe that midi systems are hi-fi, but even this is now been given more careful consideration. BADA's 'Real Hi-Fi' campaign and Richer Sounds' back to back demonstration of similarly priced midi and separates systems in their showrooms are both doing their part to educate the buying public, and we have a few

ideas up our sleeve too.

At Hi-Fi World we have seen the increasing interest in real hi-fi of late. Our circulation is steadily rising, and we were mobbed at the Bristol show by thousands of visitors looking for advice on systems to audition and the most cost-effective way to upgrade.

Fortunately, there's now such a wide range of quality products out there that it makes our job a pleasure, knowing a product we recommend really will enhance the enjoyment of music.

As a closing point, I would like to suggest that, strange as it may seem, the increasing interest in all things hi-fi may be due to the renewed interest in vinyl and valve amplification. As valves and vinyl have come back into the limelight, they have bought with them a whole generation of audiophiles who've previously been ignored.

This works at both ends of the spectrum. It's not just the older enthusiasts remembering the good old days of Leak and Garrard, but younger listeners into dance and techno music, which has its own vinyl culture. Even on the professional recording side of the industry valve mics, mixers, compressors and so on are finding their way back into studios thanks to their superior musicality ●

“ Many products manufactured in the UK are too expensive for the average Briton, who in many cases has to be persuaded that the ultimate hi-fi isn't a midi-system anyway. ”

present day KEF Coda 7, we have been unbeatable. This competitiveness is now filtering slowly upwards. I can't begin to count the number of integrated amplifiers and loudspeakers newly launched onto the market in the last couple of years around the £300-500 mark.

The increased activity in this area has helped raise the standard of engineering and quality of hi-fi products no end. For example, a simple

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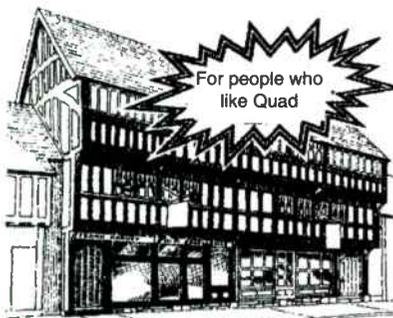
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System matching can be the most troublesome and frustrating part of reaching hi-fi Empyrean. Even the most experienced enthusiasts and retailers (the latter is no guarantee of the former) come unstuck on what should be a well matched system. Unfortunately there's no easy way of ensuring a perfect match using tried and tested formulae. Technical data, such as 'speaker and amplifier sensitivity and specific amplifier power outputs will help, but should be used a guide only.

One rule that should go without saying is don't always assume buying the most highly reviewed products (or "Best Buys") will guarantee an unsurpassable system at the price. It seems common sense, yet it never ceases to amaze me how many people buy hi-fi this way.

A typical example from a couple of years ago went something like this: A Pioneer A-400, Marantz CD 52 and Mission 760 'speakers. Yes, all components were (and indeed still are) highly rated individually, but as a system it was far from a success. For a start, the Pioneer doesn't really like budget 'speakers, and with all three items projecting an "upbeat" sound, the overall effect was uncouth, verging on unpleasant.

Sound quality was okay, certainly better than a midi system at this price, but far superior results could have been achieved by positively avoiding one or two of the "Best Buys". I remember demonstrating this system to customers, and then changing the 'speakers and amplifier to something like Heybrook Solos and a NAD 304. The difference between those customers that had simply bought the Best Buy system, and those that had actually listened to the alternatives was that the latter actually

Fair Views

- from Dominic
Todd, our man in
Scarborough



developed an interest in hi-fi and were more keen to upgrade.

The same caution should be exercised when purchasing second-hand equipment. I'd be the first to admit that there are some great bargains second-hand, and you can develop a system of far higher quality than if you'd bought new. But great care is needed particularly when buying privately, as you might not even get the chance to hear the particular piece of equipment in your own system. A thoughtfully put together, new mid-price system often sounds better than an esoteric, hastily assembled second-hand system. It's also more often the case that high quality hi-fi is harder to match due to particular eccentricities between brands. So make sure you know your products when buying second-hand.

The next aspect to consider when putting a system together is fund allocation, the proportion that goes on each particular item. Again there are no hard and fast rules governing this, but there are several schools of thought that have drifted in and out of fashion over the years.

In the seventies there was a popular notion that you should spend as much on 'speakers as possible and then see what remained for the source and amplifier.

This became unfashionable in the eighties as companies began advocating the 'inverse pyramid theory'. This entails spending as much as possible on the source, the next highest amount on the amplifier, and least on the 'speakers. Linn popularised the thinking that no matter how good your amplifier or 'speakers, they couldn't make up for what had gone before in the chain of things. Therefore the start of the audio chain should be of the highest quality, whilst the end bit (the 'speakers) didn't matter so much.

Both theories are of course flawed. Spending the most money on a pair of high quality 'speakers can simply expose the lesser partnering electronics. Especially as many expensive 'speakers are highly revealing. Yet this idea has made something of a comeback recently. Such is the quality of many budget amplifiers and CD players (the Denon PMA 350 and NAD 501 for example) these days, that greater improvements in sound may often be sought via the 'speakers rather than the electronics. So a thousand pound system could quite conceivably consist of half the amount spent on the 'speakers, and the rest on amplifier and source. However the number of budget electronics capable of pulling this off is limited,

so tread carefully.

Compromising on 'speakers and amplifier, as Linn used to recommend is fine if you plan to upgrade in the near future. Otherwise you may find yourself left with an unsatisfactory system in which the 'speakers simply can't demonstrate the full potential of the source used. An example would be a system containing a Linn LP12 and Royd A7 'speakers. Although the combination has good timing and rhythm, that's about the full extent of it, elsewhere the duo are lacking. And yet there are people who persist with such pairings. Surely it would have been far better to have bought a Linn Axis and some Epos ES11s for example? This example is from the third school of thought that suggests an equal amount should be spent on all components. This makes sense and is a fine rule of thumb, but isn't infallible. A Pioneer A400, for instance, won't always work successfully with ancillaries its own price.

There's no "right" way to go about putting your system together. It's probably best to be flexible, and simply listen to the alternatives. You'll probably find you'll come away with something completely different to what you were expecting. But then at least it won't be left to gather dust alongside the Readers Digests!

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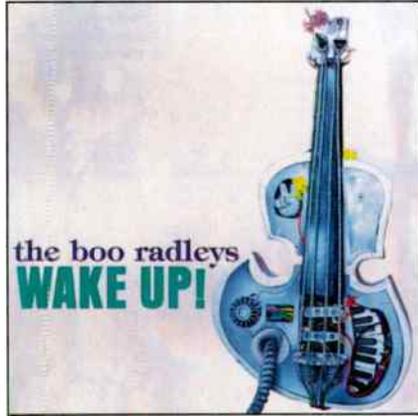
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Giovanni Dadomo

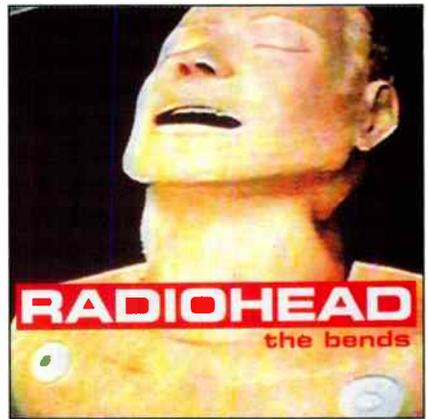


THE BOO RADLEYS
Wake Up
CREATION CRECD 179

● Big record numero three from Scotland's finest quartet and it's like summer's turned up early, all golden beams of speckled light, happy rainbows of sound and colour and...well, at the risk of sounding fey and hopelessly romantic, this is pure joy, lightening the spirits, lifting the heart and elevating the parts other bands never dream of, let alone are able to reach.

But it wasn't always so. As on previous excursions the Boos make no secret of their debts to, first and foremost, prime-time Beatles and Beach Boys and others of the first and greatest psychedelic era. That same sense of wide-eyed breathless innocence, a knack for a sprightly melody and a cheeky chappy attitude to studio jiggery-pokery makes their discs endless fun. They also have a winning sense of humour - who else ever claimed alcohol and psychedelics in equal measure as prime

minor key to the band's essence. Yeah, certainly one of those great records to put on first thing in the morning, whenever your morning might be.



RADIOHEAD
The Bends
PARLOPHONE TPS 7372

● The story now borders on the legendary - how this fivesome released a sublime pop LP Pablo Honey getting on for three years past, how it was virtually ignored by its homeland and went on to become a huge seller Stateside. It was only after this - and on something like its third UK release that the flagship single, the immaculate 'Creep' finally got

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them into the charts and onto Top Of The Pops. Pablo Honey went on to sell over a million discs worldwide, and now after much scratching of heads comes the much anticipated sequel. With the single 'Planet Telex' having already whopped the charts, singer Thom Yorke is a pop press coverstar, albeit a somewhat frail, nervous-looking one.

To those of us who soared in admiration to the clever pop tones of Pablo Honey, The Bends can't help but be a rich and vindicating successor, even if the title (what divers get when they come up too fast) must surely be intended with a deal of irony. Anyhow, it's what's in the groove that counts and Radiohead have come up with a cracker. And it stays one from the pained title cut to juicy excursions like 'Nice Dream', all shrieky guitar and vocal, ample nuttiness care of ace producer John Leckie. If they commit any sins it's that they don't follow trends or fashion, are very much their own men and make great records. Sins? I hardly think so.

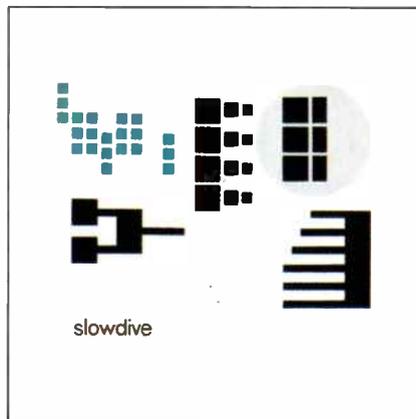


SLEEPER
Smart
INDOLENT SLEEP CD007

● Sleeper made the first great single of the year with 'Inbetweeners' - I saw it once on the box, fell immediately in love with sassy Louise Wener and went out and bought the 12-inch. True that none of the songs on the flipside matched 'Inbetweeners' in terms of catchiness or the wit of the lyrics - "He's not a prince, he's not a king/She's not a work of art or anything" and so on. Sublime, simply sublime. And then I caught a Sleeper live set and was disappointed some more, mainly because Wener's vocals tended to be all too frequently flat to carry an entire concert.

Well, girls and boys, me and the record only have a limited acquaintance so far but I don't think it ought to be

called "Smart" for starters. And although it has its moments (the raunchy 'Bedhead', the aptly-named 'Delicious') overall there's a feeling of sameyness here. By comparison with the similarly oriented Elastica, Wener and Co. don't spread their musical net wide enough and yes, her vocalising needs work on power and variety. Maybe she should ask Polly Harvey the name of her singing teacher. Hopefully it'll grow on me. And Wener does have tremendous presence. Surely 'Inbetweeners' can't have been a lucky one-off. This time out though it's a classic case of close, but no cigar. Shame.



SLOWDIVE
Pygmalion
CREATION CRECD 168

● Reading quintet and highbrow crits' faves Slowdive recently plugged this new LP by doing their promo interviews on the Internet. Apparently they were weaned on My Bloody Valentine and The Jesus and Mary Chain but that must've been eons past because the music here is the uneasy offspring of ambient post-modern techno. If you've read William Gibson's novels you'll know hardcore Cyberpunks have little holes drilled in their skulls so they can lock into cyberspace more efficiently. Maybe that would help appreciate what can be pretentious one moment and luxuriantly sensual the next. Unusual, certainly, but it sure ain't one for Guns 'n' Roses fans. Mind you, the CD-ROM version could well be a real trip, maan.

THE SMITHS
Singles
WEA 4509-99090-2

● After a couple of haphazard "Best Of..." compilations, WEA continue to milk the mighty Smiths back catalogue with this set of 'A' sides - everything



from 'This Charming Man' to 'Panic'. Trouble is, the accompanying booklet one usually gets with this sort of retrospective just isn't there. Hardly a respectful way to treat the great British band of the Eighties is it? Far better to wait and pick up the LPs about to be reissued at mid-price and, one sincerely hopes, in all their original glory.

Jon Clarke



Massive vs. The Mad Professor
No Protection
WBRCD3

● On an album scale, remixing seems a funny idea. Quite a recent phenomena - Soul II Soul and New Order started it last year - to re-release an album lock, stock and barrel after fiddling with the knobs on the mixing desk seems a bit of a con to me. Especially where an album as excellent as last year's Protection is concerned. But if there was ever a man to be trusted with this magnum opus, it has to be the Grandpa of dub, the Mad Professor.

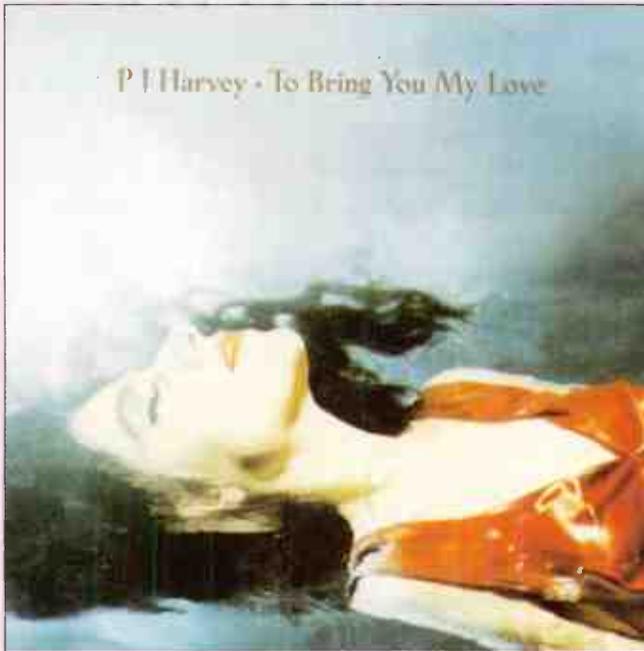
Having churned out a pipe-load of trippy dub anthems over the last

RECORD OF THE MONTH

P J HARVEY **To Bring You My Love** ISLAND CD 8035 524 085-2

● P. J. Harvey's changed - not simply because she now calls herself Polly Jane, not only because she's ditched her former band (the sparse, parsimonious Harvey guitar-fronted trio of her first two LP's 'Dry' and 'Rid Of Me'), or even because of the retirement of dementoid Indie legend-cum-terror-minimalist producer Steve Albini in favour of the more restrained Flood (of U2's Zooropa fame).

Perhaps the cover says all - Polly appears, flat on her back, half-submerged in water, black hair and blood-red silk ballgown billowing about her like a gruesome parody of the famous Pre-Raphaelite picture of a drowned Ophelia - but the key word here would appear to be colour. Gone are the stark arrangements, bold lyrics and stripped-down juddering guitar sound that typified the Polly of yore. Here she's quite happy to leave most of the guitar work to Joe Gore and Mike Harvey, former sidemen respectively to Tom Waits and Nick Cave. Harvey's admission that she's been taking singing lessons is more than evident in a wider range of tone and a breadth of vocal range distinctly at odds with her former persona.



Third albums are both a cliché and a bugbear, coming when artists have used up material spent a lifetime working out. To be crass about it, it's the point when minor talents start cutting songs about what a long, strange road it's been, tellies thrown from Hotel California penthouse windows, taking prodigious amounts of illegal chemicals and so on and so forth.

To Bring You My Love has been variously described as Harvey's Blues and/or Country album. That's a hard one to fathom - I hear no wailing pedal steel guitars, no "Yippee-eye-aye's", and there's nary a twelve bar or slide guitar in sight. On the other hand, Harvey's writing's always had the menacing sparseness of early Blues (take a bow the late, definitively

doomed Robert Johnson) allied to the equally hell-bound writings of Hank Williams. These have been part of both her uniqueness of approach and largely because it's rare for a woman to take on such universal themes of love, death, guilt and retribution - her particular points of appeal.

In this respect it's more than apt that she should take the deeply moving, near-hysterical major themes of vintage Country and Blues into a contemporary landscape. And if it's true that 'To Bring You My Love' lacks the sort of wry, post-feminist humour of her previous album's '50 ft. Queenie' the one about Tarzan as a wimp, then there's a breadth of emotional engagement. Harvey barely touches her knuckle-duster trademark guitar, preferring to concentrate on a variety of keyboards, collaborating on string arrangements and stretching her new-found vocal range. Still, the likes of 'Down By The Water', about a drowned baby, or is it a veiled reference to barmy old King Lear mourning his drowned Ophelia, is as potent as anything in Polly's recorded past.

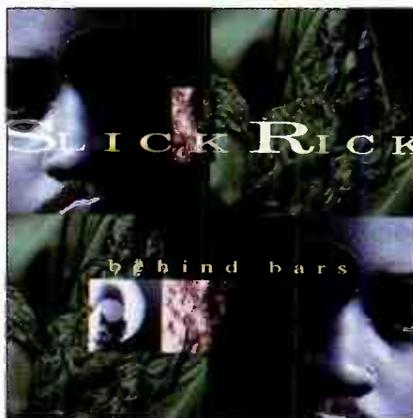
Compared to Polly Harvey, the new crop of young women singer/writers - your Echobelly's, Sleepers, even the more than occasionally magnificent Elastica - are girls in a woman's world. Think Chrissie Hynde, Patti Smith and you've a notion of Polly Jane Harvey's league. Amazing colossal woman.

decade, his knowledge of dub was sufficient to get him the job. And with Protection already comprising a fair element of dub reggae influences, the task wasn't the trickiest. Thus the Prof changed 'Weather Storm' into the laid back 'Cool Monsoon' and the laconic 'I Spy' into the chilling, scary 'I Spy'.

All eight tracks would happily sit alongside Jah Shaka or Burning Spear at a smoke-laden sound clash with their mellow rhythms. In each case the Prof has taken the basic elements and shaken and stirred to produce a more ethereal, spacey sound.

I gave Protection full marks last year, so the Prof's got a real challenge on his hands. The truth is this just about equals

it, if only for the fact that it's a fresh change to a brilliant work.

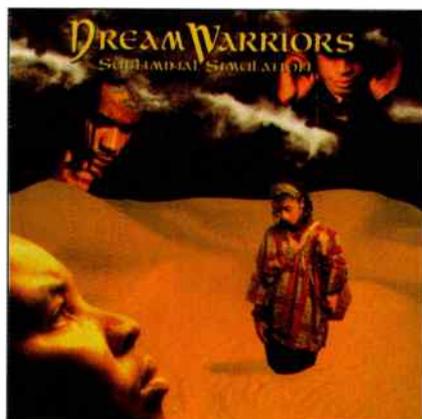


SLICK RICK **Behind Bars** 523847-2

● Touted as the year's best rap album in Loaded magazine, Slick Rick's Behind Bars is a sterling effort from a man, as the title suggests, currently residing behind bars. The bad boy rapper who visited these shores just three years ago with Public Enemy is now serving a ten year stretch for manslaughter.

Despite this Behind Bars, mostly recorded before Rick's incarceration, is a laid-back, catchy album with some excellent production work from among

others Pete Rock and Warren G. Stand out tracks on this interesting LP are the title track 'Behind Bars', with its jazzy and constructive message, and 'Lets Get Down', featuring the much respected fellow rappers Nice and Smooth.



DREAM WARRIORS
Subliminal Simulation
EMI 830 3452

● Like the Stone Roses, Canada's Dream Warriors disappeared off the music map for many a year following a successful debut album. But unlike the Roses, they haven't come back blossoming quite so much.

And Now The Legacy Begins was an album perfect for its day, a mellow vibe at a time when hip hop and gangsta rap was getting tiresome. The singles 'Ludi', 'Wash Your Face In My Sink' and 'My Definition of a Bombastic Jazz Style' did great on the dance floor and in the charts - they were catchy and fun.

But then they disappeared only to surface a year ago with a single 'I've Lost My Ignorance' featuring NY vibesters Gangstarr. It sits pride of place on Subliminal Simulation, Dream Warriors second LP and probably its best moment.

The rest of the album is mixed, lacking sparkle and originality. The Warriors don't seem to have adapted with the rap scene, but have metamorphosed en masse from four years ago till now.

But there are certainly some moments. 'Paranoia - The P Noise' is a strong track, 'Tricycles and Kittens' is catchy and 'I Wouldn't Wanna Be Ya' a decent end to the album. But all in all there's not as much to get excited about as their last outing. With the biggest name-check of rap bands ever seen on the sleeve you'd have thought they'd have picked up a tip or two.

David Price



TANZMUSIK
Sinsekai
RISING HIGH RSNCD26

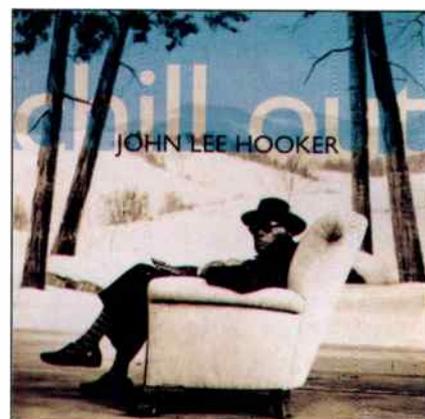
● Since the demise of the Yellow Magic Orchestra at the beginning of the 1980s, Japanese popular music has had little success in the West. Many have explained this in terms of the difference between our two cultures, but in truth it's just that so much has been God-awful, high on technique and low on imagination.

But now it's undergoing something of a renaissance, the likes of M-Age and Tanzmusik showing themselves as accomplished as anyone with dance music. The latter duo's debut 'Tan Tague EP' on Rising High last year avoided the predictable tuneless, meandering ambient road, instead keeping the BPM high. Now, their first album Sinsekai ("New World") sees them better than ever.

With sumptuous sounds reminiscent of 'Computerwelt'-era Kraftwerk, they've grown more subtle, keeping a resolutely danceable beat around which trancey melodies have been caringly crafted. Spanning filmic Sakamoto-style mood pieces ('Pique' is about gulls flying over the Kamo River) to hardcore techno wracked with noise, Tanzmusik aren't short on repertoire. But it's their mastery of texture that puts them ahead. Showing attention to detail *a la* the aforementioned 'pioneers of the hypnotic groove', they've combined the subtlest of 808 State rhythmic doodlings with the fiercest of 'We Are Back'-period LFO sounds.

Suitably self-effacing, Tanzmusik reject any link between their music and Tokyo's Blade Runner cityscapes, preferring instead to look to Europe's prime purveyors of electronic music for inspiration - the clue's in their name, which is both German for

"dance music" and one of Kraftwerk's earliest songs. Whatever their intentions, Sinsekai sees Tanzmusik well and truly crossing that great divide.



JOHN LEE HOOKER
Chill Out
VIRGIN VPBCD22

● From Clarkedale, Mississippi to San Francisco's Bay Area, John Lee Hooker has had one of the most remarkable careers in modern music, his unique brand of Delta Blues influencing the likes of John Mayall, The Yardbirds and Canned Heat, who all brought Blues to the modern rock idiom.

Chill Out, featuring some of the most influential players of the past few decades including Van Morrison, Carlos Santana and Booker T. Jones (of MGs fame), is an enticing combination of genius for sure. Hooker gets some classic performances out of them, from Charles Brown's superb piano work in 'Annie May' to Booker T.'s sublime organ grooves on 'Medley: Serves Me Right to Suffer/ Syndicator'.

The scale and drama of Hooker's performance is something to behold. From reworkings of his own classics such as 'Tupelo' to the lazy cool of 'One Bourbon, One Scotch, One Beer', Hooker's playing has never been better.

Displaying awesome economy of style for which he's famous, he makes every note menacing, every silence biting and every nuance thunder. John Lee's duet with Van is proof positive of their enduring friendship, Van returning the favour after the "King of the Boogie" surfaced on a heart-stopping rendition of 'Gloria' several years back.

Chill Out is testament to the enduring appeal of America's number one Blues Brother, proof as if we needed it, of the unique vision of a long-living legend.

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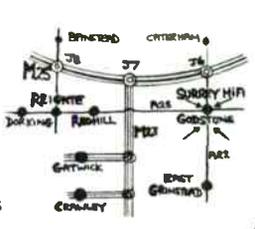
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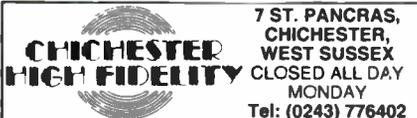
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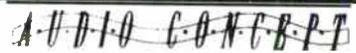
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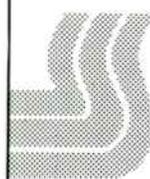
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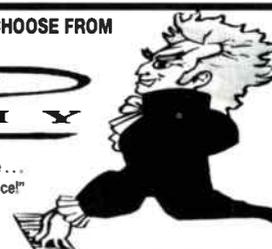
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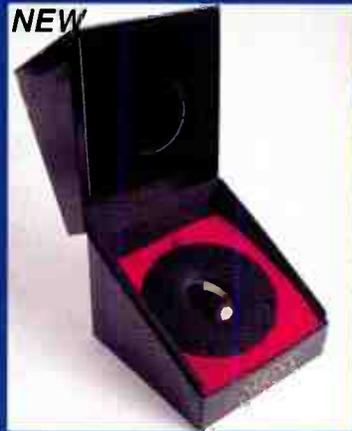
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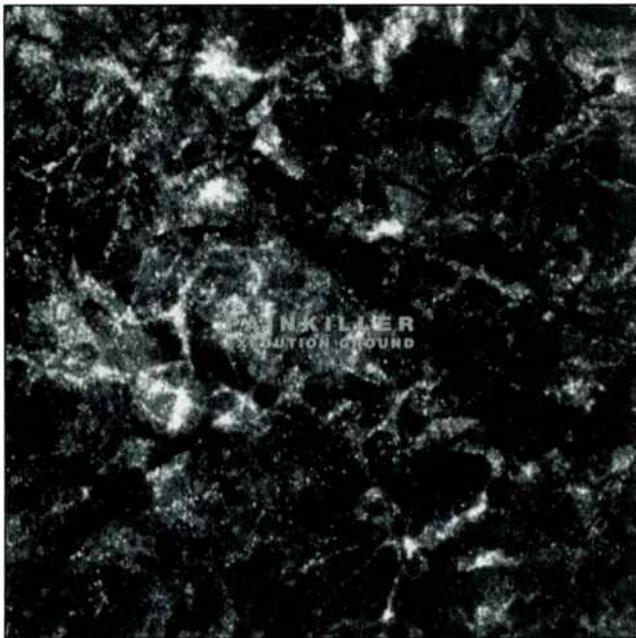
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Jazz

Simon Hopkins



PAINKILLER
Execution Ground
 SUBHARMONIC SD 7008-2

● Supergroups are much like concept albums and airbrush artworked LP sleeves: with much justification, they're generally regarded pretty poorly. Rock music is littered with the lacklustre product of ill-begotten unions of superstars. I give you Blind Faith, the Golden Palominos, and of course Live Aid, plus all those other horrendous "look how caring we all are"

collaborations - Red Hot and Blue, the Mandela concert, the Prince's Trust fiascoes - that followed in the wake of Sir Bob's grand day out.

Now four albums and as many years into its life, I doubt any of the trio of talents that comprise Painkiller would thank me for tagging them a supergroup, but this group's collective prehistory is an incredible one. (For that matter, concept albums and airbrushed artwork

perhaps need re-assessing, but that'll have to wait 'till some other time - perhaps when Roger Dean illustrates the cover of a Jon Hassell LP - a triple, of course - based on the life and work of Philip K Dick.)

Painkiller are John Zorn, hero, alto saxophonist, composer, collagist, conceptualist, music archivist, free improviser, hard bop virtuoso - and genius; Bill Laswell, renegade eclecticist, monster bass player, bandleader, producer of Herbie Hancock, Motorhead, The Ramones and Mick

Jagger and on and on, and label founder and Mick Harris, founding drummer of legendary Midlands giants of hardcore thrash Napalm Death, now one half of ambient dub crew Scorn and creator of long-term isolationist ambient project Lull. Which'll do for starters.

When the group's debut album *Guts* of a Virgin appeared on Nottingham's Earache records I guess everyone had certain expectations. Zorn had spoken openly of his admiration for UK hardcore on his trips here in the early eighties, and the work of his Naked City group showed signs of his infatuation with the purity of hardcore's speed-as-aesthetic. So the prospect of him in collaboration with "mad" Micky Harris was a noisy one.

And to a degree, *Guts* amply fulfilled these expectations. Yet it also hinted at another side, one which I'd hazard a guess at being the prime responsibility of the group's bassist. For one of Laswell's prime areas of interest and greatest areas of skill, whether he's working with the dub of Sly and Robbie or the downtown funk of Material or the hip-hop of Herbie Hancock or the narcotic rhythms of the Moroccan Joujouka musicians, has always been with groove. The moments of groove which broke through the largely cacophonous rhythmic maelstrom on *Guts* of a Virgin sublimely defined how monstrous the whole project was.

The group continued to find room to explore the war between a wall of sound and a driving groove on their two subsequent albums, *Buried Secrets*, also released in the UK through Earache and featuring superb cameos from guitarist Justin Broadrick and bassist GC Green (both of Midlands industrial-HM

grind-machine Godflesh), and last year's Live in Japan, available only on import on Japan's avant-pop psychedelics Toy's Factory Records, which featured the awesome contributions of Japanese guitarist Haino Keiji.

Yet great as these albums were, they certainly didn't prepare one for the achievements of Execution Ground, without doubt one of the finest records any of the group's members have ever made.

The album comes as a double CD, disc one featuring three long, fifteen-plus minute pieces, 'Parish of Tama (Ossuary Dub)', 'Morning of Balachaturdasi' and 'Pashupatinath', disc two featuring longer ambient mixes of 'Parish' and 'Pashupatinath', thus bringing another warring element into the group's genre battleground.

Execution Ground's first disc in many ways reiterates the group's usual obsessions with dub drum and bass grooves, stuttering, screaming, rage-driven saxophone wailing, blasts of rapid-fire punk-HM drumming (and Harris damn well invented that), dense and heavily-effected vocals and samples, and a general atmosphere of terror and persecution (the artwork for the group's debut was famously seized and destroyed by Her Majesty's finest C&E boys, and covers since have featured torture victims, S&M rituals and execution scenes, and the music has never failed to live up to its packaging's promise). But it does all these things so much better.

For one thing, the three long pieces allow the group more scope to expand their ideas. Previous albums have predominantly featured heart-stopping pop song-length pieces which would leave you begging for more. These long pieces cut between styles, tempi and moods audaciously, yet never with the collage techniques of Zorn's big-scale mid-eighties' pieces or Naked City work, nor of Laswell's tenure with the genre-crunching Praxis. Instead the pieces have a sense of overall architecture whose logic unfolds inexorably.

These pieces are also undoubtedly helped by the finest mixing and production the group's ever had (with a debt to Harris' dub leanings in Scorn and Laswell's recent unceasing ambient activities), and some of the best sax

playing Zorn's ever committed to prosperity, drenched in huge swathes of echo and monstrous harmonizing which indisputably bears the hallmark of Zorn's association with the London-based industrial-jazz collective God and the sax-as-guitar-substitute approach of leader Kevin Martin.

Then there's disc two. Ever since the rave crowd discovered the need to come down after a night spent dancing

“Vacuous as much techno is, its public acceptance has created an environment in which even the most experimental ends of the jazz, rock and classical spectra are receiving more critical attention than they have in over twenty years.”

its collective body into the ground, discovering that coming down was best spent in a cushion-filled room listening to endless electronic doodling; ever since kids who'd grown up on techno discovered seventies' art rock and electronic music; and ever since some clown mis-associated Brian Eno's post-Satie, music-as-environmental-additive term "ambient" with all these things, so much page-space and airtime has been chewed up by the "A" word that by now many of us are probably ready to choke on it.

Which is unfair. For one thing, vacuous as much post-rave techno is, its public acceptance (witness the fact that Aphex Twin can sell 50,000 plus copies of a double album of the most minimal, ascetic music in the UK alone) has created an environment in which even the most abstractly experimental ends of the jazz, rock and classical spectra are receiving more critical and public attention than they have in over twenty years. Not so much like punk never happened, more like it never threw out the baby of a genuinely subversive, experimental popular music with the bathwater of overblown, self-congratulatory prog rock.

For another, neo-ambient has developed a branch of darker sounds which way overstep its original remit to vaguely stimulate euphoric ravers. It's a branch now unfortunately tagged

"isolationist" yet which categorically owes more to the genuine influence of Eno's original concept - and especially to his On Land, Discreet Music and Thursday Afternoon - than anything in ambient techno. It's also emphatically not a movement but there are strands which run through the work of Thomas Koner, Main, Paul Schutze, Ice, Final, and a whole bunch of others, which tie them together in some occult way. Strands which also run through some of the recent work of Painkiller's members.

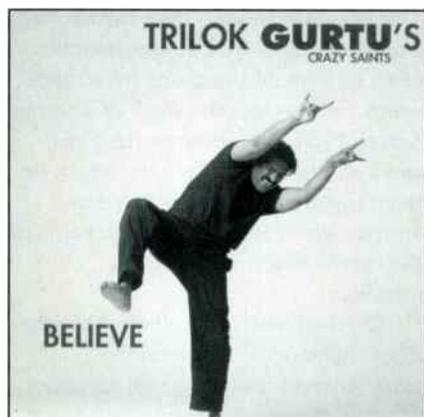
On the Naked City album Absinthe Zorn thematically explored the experience of taking the said narcotic liqueur, the musical results being one of the albums of last year, a dense, layered, edgy work. Harris' work with both Scorn and Lull falls squarely into this (non) camp; Lull create giant tapestries of darkly minimal sound which take up where On Land left off. Meanwhile, Scorn layer morbid, fearful textures against dub bass and beats like Lee Perry on bad acid.

And Laswell has perhaps jumped into the ambient arena - both mainstream "up" ambient and its icier "isolationist" counterpart - with greater enthusiasm than anyone. His labels have explored the hinterlands of dub and ambient while his collaborations with post-rave electronic experimentalists (Pete Namlook, Tetsuo Inoue) and avant-gardists (in Death Cube K and Automaton) alike has revealed a musical mind as attuned to atmosphere as it is to riddim.

So the results on Execution Ground's ambient disc are extraordinary, a richly dark field of echoing sax and screams, stomach-churning sub bass, sudden bursts of dub rhythms, seemingly unending drones. This is as experimentally atmospheric as improvised music can get, and as conservationist. It's music as its own source of constant re-invention. And the finest jazz, or at any rate near-jazz, album of the year.



Simon Cooke



TRILOK GURTU'S CRAZY SAINTS

Believe
CMP CD 75

● 'Fusion' is a word commonly used to describe Gurtu's sound, and it'll do as well as any, although interest in this band stems as much from his knee-cracking use of a 'floor-kit' - drums spread flat around him rather than stacked as usual - as his sound, which can change from straightforward rock to heavily traditionalist Indian music within a few bars.

The interesting thing for me is Gurtu's relative lack of percussive pizzazz - take any other percussionist and it's ninety minute drum solos and a rhythm which often drags the rest of the band along - definitely not a description of the Crazy Saints. They are a solid, comfortable group and Gurtu simply blends into the mix at times. It's an impressive display of all-encompassing jazz musicianship if, at the end of the day, perhaps a touch sterile to the less forgiving listener. Depends upon your point of view.



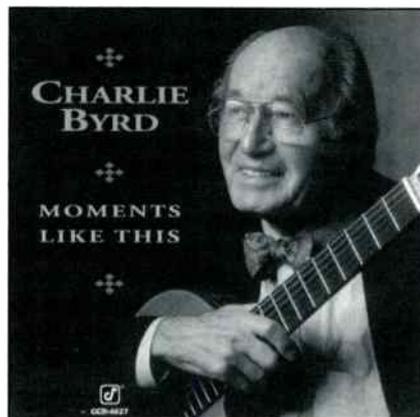
JEFF JEROLAMON'S

Swing Thing!

CANDID CCD 79538

● Big bands may be rare nowadays, but this quartet blast through their first bars with all the fire of full-blown big band. They soon remember that they're only a quartet, but that big sound keeps sneaking back. Between times they mellow into any tempo of mainstream jazz you care to name, and handle it with great assurance - impressive.

This is not a new release but one of a heap of older work (this from 1993) from various companies, Candid Productions in this case. It's a cracking CD for mainstream buffs, at least good enough to deserve a mention to those who, like me, missed it when it came out.



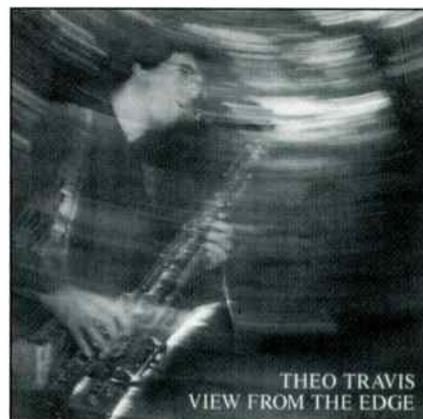
CHARLIE BYRD

Moments Like This

CONCORD CCD-4627

● One of the stalwarts of the Concord label, Charlie Byrd tends to be best remembered for his work with bossa nova in the '60s, but this time he damps the Latin fire and plays a more classical style. Concord seem to have a penchant for 'nice' jazzmen - relaxed, unpretentious, and perhaps a little safe - and Byrd is no exception, even when he knows that inestimable reedsman Ken Peplowski could easily romp off with this recording. Instead, there's a tangible respect

between these two which allows both enough room while keeping the spotlight firmly on Byrd. The flipside is that there then isn't enough space left for Chuck Redd's drums and vibes or Bill Douglass' bass, but you can't have everything for the price of a CD, can you?



THEO TRAVIS

View From The Edge

33JAZZO19

● The 'Thanks' list includes 33records' boss Paul Jolly for his "support and faith", which is an impressive tribute from someone of Travis' ability. All but one track on this new album were written by Travis, and on most his tenor sax is supported by David Gordon on piano, Rob Statham on bass, and Ichiro Tatsuhara on congas, with Tony Coe's clarinet, John Marshall's drums, Mark Wood's guitar and Jeff Clyne's bass occasionally leavening the mix. Again, another ensemble piece as much as anything, although in this case some more bassy systems may not do Travis full justice, as the guitars and bass have a tendency to 'push' forward a little. Nevertheless, a well-played, well-recorded CD of light fusion sounds.



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PJ HIFI, The HIFI Shop, 3 Bridge Street, Guildford, Surrey GU1 4RY. Tel. (0483) 504801. 9-6 Mon-Sat. Linn, Meridian, Rega, Arcam, Quad, Revox, Musical Fidelity, Rotel, NAD, Nakamichi, Marantz, KEF, Reference etc.

ROGERS HIFI, 13 Bridge Street, Guildford, Surrey, (0483) 61049. Aiwa, Creek, Denon, Dual, JPW, Marantz, Dnix, Pioneer, Systemdek, Ruark, Tannoy, Teac. Dem facilities available, no appts necessary, free installation, service dept. Access/Visa. Instant credit upto £1,000 subject to status. Monday-Saturday, 9.30-6pm, later by apt.

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Huddersfield HI-FI CENTRE, 4 Cross Church St, Huddersfield. (0484) 544668. B&W, Cyrus, Kenwood, Oenon, Rotel, Arcam, Musical Fidelity, Quad, Audio Lab, Marantz, Mission, ect. Dem facilities - appointment reqd. Mon-Sat 9-5.30, Thurs 9-8. Closed Wed. Free installation, credit facilities. Access, Visa.

AUDIO PROJECTS, 45 Headingley Lane, Leeds. Tel:- 0532 304565. A&R, Audiobab, Creek, Heybrook, Linn, Musical Fidelity, Naim, Quad, Rega, etc. Free installation, home trial., 2 year warranty, appts preferred. Tues-Fri 9.30-6, Sat 2.30 - 5.30.

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HOLBURN HI-FI, 441 Holburn Street, Aberdeen. Tel: 0224 585713. Arcam, Audiobab, B&W, Celestion, Denon, Dual, Epos, Heybrook, ION, Kenwood, Creek, Marantz, Meridian, Mission, Cyrus, M.S., NAD, Nakamichi, Pioneer, QED, Quad, Revox, Rotel, Ruark, Tannoy, Technics, Wharfedale, Yamaha. 9.30-5.30 Mon-Sat.

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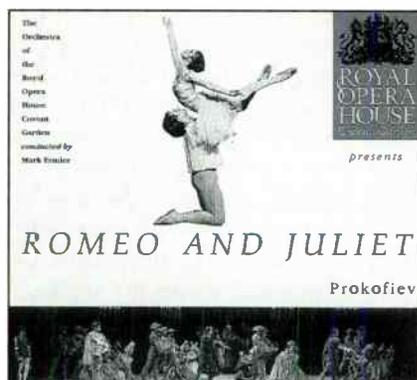
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Peter Herring

There were Communists and there were Catholic clerics, although questions were asked about 'The Red Priest' Antonio Vivaldi's devotion to the faith. Nevertheless, Vivaldi composed some glorious sacred pieces. The faith of one sixteenth century Spanish cleric-composer, however, was indisputable, and it is Tomas Luis de Victoria who, with apt timing, brings his own brand of mystical intensity to the message of Easter.

SERGEI



PROKOFIEV Romeo and Juliet - complete ballet Op64

The Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; conductor, Mark Ermler
ROYAL OPERA HOUSE RECORDS
 ROH309/10 (2 CD SET) (DDD/145.26)

● It was Bernard Haitink who first encouraged the Covent Garden orchestra to undertake concert performances beyond its usual duties in the opera house pit. In doing so, it has demonstrated that it is a fine ensemble in its own right, perhaps most successfully in its Tchaikovsky recordings under the direction of the Russian conductor, Mark Ermler. Now these artists have tackled the ballet which, on all musical counts, stands alongside the three Tchaikovsky masterpieces - Swan Lake, The Sleeping Beauty and The Nutcracker - Prokofiev's Romeo and Juliet. Prokofiev, like his compatriot and contemporary, Igor Stravinsky, cut his balletic teeth, so to speak, with works for Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. But Prokofiev's attempts to produce works

in the vein of Stravinsky's colourful Russian paganism never matched the success of the Firebird, or Petrouchka, or in the case of the Rite of Spring, the notoriety.

Disillusioned with life in the West, Prokofiev took the unusual step of returning to the Soviet Union, where he largely abandoned the iconoclasm and hard-edged satire of much of his early music and settled into a more lyrical, more straightforward style of composition, which not only suited his development, but the dictates of Stalin's cultural apparatchiks. Romeo and Juliet dates from this period during the 'thirties and, while the wit and satire are still evident, they are sublimated to a rich lyrical and melodic content, and to a strong symphonic foundation. There are dissonances which echo the 'out-to-shock' modernism of early Prokofiev, but nothing here could be described as music 'forged in iron and steel', a description applied to works such as the Scythian Suite, with the searing brutality of its opening chords. Yet Romeo and Juliet still managed to fall foul of the Soviet authorities, partly because the entire works of Shakespeare had been deemed undesirable! The original Bolshoy production was abandoned after several months of rehearsals and the premiere of the ballet was given almost unnoticed by a Yugoslavian company in Brno, Czechoslovakia, during 1939. The first Russian performance was given by Leningrad's (now St Petersburg's) Kirov ballet the following year.

The problems he encountered in getting the ballet produced led Prokofiev to compile three orchestral

Antonio Vivaldi remains the most celebrated composer of the Italian Baroque. He may not have attained the spiritual or intellectual heights of Bach, or possessed the seemingly limitless inspiration of his other great contemporary, Handel, but as more and more of his vast musical output gets an airing, there emerges a composer of far greater stature than was assumed a few decades ago, when Stravinsky made his famous remark about the "same concerto composed five hundred times over". Given Stravinsky's character, the comment could have equally been merely mischievous and provocative as it was disparaging.

Although he was primarily a composer of concertos, chiefly for the violin, his own instrument, but also for a wide variety of other string, brass and woodwind soloists, Vivaldi nevertheless left a substantial legacy of vocal music. There are a number of operas, now largely unperformed apart from a few 'plum' arias, and a great many very fine sacred compositions whose consistent quality is at last being widely recognised. Vivaldi, whose father - in true Italian tradition - was a barber-cum-musician, trained for the priesthood but the evidence suggests this was more out of necessity than vocation: he is recorded as frequently being chastised for his failure to say Mass. During his varied career as a musician-cleric, the 'Red Priest', as Vivaldi became known because of the colour of his hair, twice held the post of maestro di coro

(choirmaster) at the Ospedale della Pietà. There were four such establishments in Venice during the eighteenth century, each a kind of cross between an orphanage and a convent. The incumbents were exclusively young girls, with the only male allowed on the staff of Ospedale being the choirmaster. Inevitably, this has led to all manner of speculation about Vivaldi's extra musical activities during his spells at the Pietà between 1713 and 1717, and 1737 and 1739.

However, no evidence exists to suggest that the 'Red Priest' did anything more than train up what became one of the most accomplished and admired choirs and orchestras in Europe. The testament of many notable travellers to Venice bears witness to wonderful music-making at the Pietà.

Yet these contemporary accounts leave one question unresolved: if no male voices were permitted to join the choir - and, if they had, then surely one visitor would have commented upon the fact - how were the tenor and bass lines of Vivaldi's vocal scores performed? Of course, they can be sung by women's voices, but at what pitch? As written, the tenor line descends well below their range of most of today's female soloists.

To my knowledge, this quandary has never been tackled in recordings of Vivaldi's sacred vocal music - until now. Andrew Parrott, the conductor of the Taverner Choir and Consort, has come up with a very plausible solution for his recent recording of

the well-known Gloria in D Major and several other pieces written for the women of the Pietà.

While the published scores are scored for the conventional four parts (soprano, alto, tenor, bass) - Vivaldi, after all, wanted to earn money from them beyond the confines of the Ospedale - Parrott's version speculates that, for performance in the Pietà, the tenor and bass parts were sung an octave above written pitch. The parts, therefore, would be soprano, soprano, alto, alto, with instrumental doubling of the bass part at written pitch. This would overcome any distortion of the harmonic content.

And why did none of the distinguished audiences at the Pietà concerts comment upon this unusual arrangement? Well, unless they possessed scores, they would not have been aware that any change had been introduced. Both theoretically and historically, this radical approach to the performance of this music has much to commend it, but how does it work in practice?

ANTONIO VIVALDI Gloria in D Major RV589/Magnificat in G minor RV610b/Laetatus sum RV607/Laudate Dominum omnes gentes RV606/In exitu Israel RV604/Sinfonia 'al sancto sepolcro' in B minor RV169/Sonata 'al Santo' sepolcro RV130

suites from the score and these have been widely recorded. The suites are fine for getting to know the melodic riches of the work, but a full appreciation of this marvellous score demands access to a recording of the complete ballet. Only then does Prokofiev's mastery of its musical development reveal itself, along with the astonishing consistency of inspiration which is sustained over a span of nearly two-and-a-half hours.

To become fully acquainted with Prokofiev's Romeo and Juliet, I would suggest this new recording from Royal Opera House Records is pretty high unbeatable. As he did in his ROH Tchaikovsky sessions, Mark Ermler gets right to the emotional heart of the work, but never over-plays the

sentiment. It would be easy to say that this music is 'in the blood' of a conductor born in St Petersburg and, at one time, permanent conductor of the Bolshoy Ballet in Moscow, but Ermler also displays a judgement and grasp of structure which only comes with experience and understanding.

The Covent Garden orchestra proves highly responsive to Ermler's direction, with some superlative playing from - brass and woodwinds especially. The attractions of the set are completed by a spacious, finely detailed sound quality (a 20 bit recording engineered in All Saints Church, Petersham, Surrey, by Tryggvi Tryggvason) and by a pleasingly literate and informative booklet note by David Nice.

HENRY PURCELL Essential Purcell - selections from the odes, welcome songs, anthems, services and secular solo songs

Various soloists; The King's Consort; director, Robert King
HYPERION KING 2 (DDD/79.22)

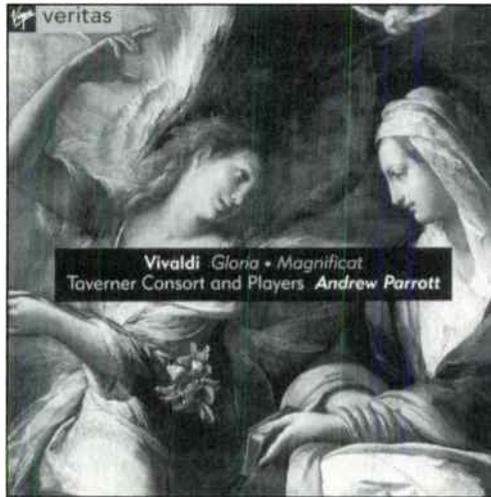
● The ideal 'Purcell primer'? Unquestionably. This twenty-track selection draws upon the recordings made over recent years for Hyperion by that most enthusiastic of Purcell advocates, Robert King, and the 'cherry-picking' has been accomplished with some finesse. During the making of his Purcell series, Robert King has worked with a glittering array of soloists, names such as Barbara Bonney, Gillian Fisher,

Emily Van Evera, soprano; Nancy Argenta, soprano; Alison Piace, mezzo-soprano; Margaret Cable, contralto; Taverner Choir and Players; conductor, Andrew Parrott
VIRGIN CLASSICS VERITAS VC7 59326-2 (DDD/67.41)

● The compelling authority of this recording does not derive solely from the musical argument outlined above. As in previous, and highly successful recordings of, for example, Monteverdi's *Vespers of the Blessed Virgin*, Handel's *Carmelite Vespers* and Guillaume de Machaut's *Mass for Notre Dame*, Andrew Parrott performs Vivaldi's scores within their ecclesiastical context, bringing a satisfying cohesion and organisation to the recording. The *Gloria* is prefaced, quite properly, by a *Kyrie*, in this instance the plainchant 'Cum júbilo', and then followed by a reflective *Sinfonia 'al Santo Sepolcro'*, which would have been especially composed for liturgical performance.

After this, Parrott programmes the *Vespers* psalm, *Laetatus sum*, the Marian hymn *Ave Maris Stella*, which is sung in the plainchant, and then complements the splendour of the *D Major Gloria* with the similarly sumptuous *G minor* setting of the *Magnificat*. Here, Vivaldi fully exploits the dramatic possibilities afforded by various combinations of solo, choral and orchestral forces. The demands made of the strings in, for example, the incisive *Fecit potentiam* section,

provide a convincing guide to the standard of string playing Vivaldi must have achieved at the *Pieta*; he may not have been conscientious in carrying out his priestly duties, but his commitment to teaching was surely nothing less than wholehearted. After the richness of the *Magnificat*, Parrott places the sharply contrasting simplicity of the plainchant antiphon *Salve Regina* and follows this with another of the *Vespers* psalms, *Laudate Dominum omnes gentes*, an exquisite instrumental church sonata,



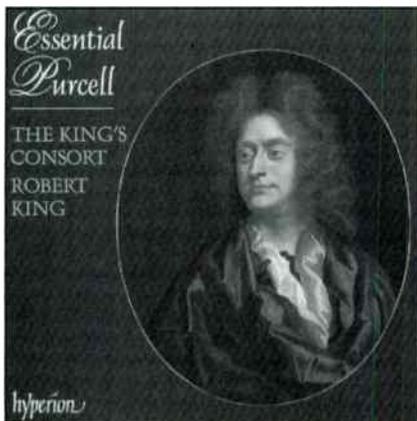
and concludes with Vivaldi's setting of Psalm 123, *In exitu Israel - When Israel came out of Egypt*.

Perhaps more than anything, this recording by Andrew Parrott and his Taverner colleagues brings home the remarkable richness and variety of music making in Vivaldi's Venice. If this was indeed the programme for one of

the weekly performances of the choir and orchestra at the *Pieta*, then the audience must have been delighted with what they heard, even though propriety dictated that the female musicians be hidden from their guests' gaze by a screen!

Taken alone, this performance of the *Gloria* stands comparison with any currently available. The use of female voices alone, with the instrumental doubling of the bass line as described earlier, brings to the sound a lightness and jewel-like brilliance which serves to emphasise the exultant nature of the piece. It might be thought that this lightening of texture might rob the concluding chorus of *Cum Sancto Spirito* of some of its weight, but no: the lofty majesty of the final section remains undiminished.

The Taverner Choir and Consort are in top form here, and the distinguished line-up of soloists makes the most of its many opportunities to shine. The combination of Emily Van Evera and Alison Piace in the *Laudamus te* from the *Gloria* is but one delightful example. Producer David Murray and engineer Mike Hatch have made the most of the fine acoustic of St Augustine's in Kilburn, north-west London, and the recording offers good balance between instrumental and vocal forces while retaining the essential atmosphere of this kind of liturgical recreation demands. In every respect, this is a truly outstanding and valuable production.



James Bowman, Michael Chance, John Mark Ainsley, Rogers Covey-Crump, Charles Daniels and Michael George, as well as two fine choirs: his own *Choir of the King's Consort*, and the *Choir of New College, Oxford*. Predictably, the

results have been consistently fine, as this compilation proves.

But compilation is perhaps not quite the right term here, with its implication of jarring juxtapositions of wholly unrelated pieces. Here, the selections have the coherence and contrasts of a well-planned concert programme, each seamlessly leading to the next. Performances and recordings are consistently excellent, and any changes of acoustic appear to have been balanced out in the remastering (although I suspect most of these pieces were taped in the same venue).

Among the gems on offer are Barbara Bonney's rendition of *Oh, fair Cedaria* - surely one of the most purely beautiful soprano voices to have emerged of late - and the combination

of Messrs Bowman, Daniels and George in the famous 'Bell Anthem', *Rejoice in the Lord* always. Gillian Fisher is at her most poignant in the equally well-known *When I am laid to earth*, Dido's lament from Purcell's opera *Dido and Aeneas*. A footnote reveals that this recording has been licensed by Hyperion from a recording Robert King made for Pickwick. All the other items, though, come from the twenty five CDs which *The King's Consort* has produced to date for Hyperion.

Awareness of the music of the composer whom his contemporary, Thomas Tudway, asserted "was confessedly the Greatest Genius we ever had" is steadily improving. It used to be said that Purcell was more appreciated by the French than in his

own country! Thanks to the likes of Robert King, that situation at least has changed and, in this the year of the tercentenary of Purcell's death, there will be wider recognition of Purcell's stature. The BBC is playing its part by broadcasting all of Purcell's music on Radio 3 during 1995, but CDs such as this Hyperion compilation will also play a key role - not least, I would venture, in persuading many listeners to explore further the whole King/Purcell discography. I can only add that if you find you like the taste of what's on offer, a sumptuous feast awaits.



TOMÁS LUIS DE VICTORIA Responsories for Tenebrae (from Officium Hebdomadae Sanctae)*/Litaniae de Beata Vergine#/Motets: Gaudent in coelis#; O magnum mysterium#; Ave Maria#; Ascendens Christus in altum#

The Westminster Cathedral Choir*; conductor, George Malcolm*; The Choir of St John's College, Cambridge*; Cambridge#; conductor, George Guest#
DECCA SERENATA 425 078-2 (ADD/76.06)

● George Malcolm and George Guest, along with Bruno Turner, were among the first choral conductors to introduce the musical treasures of Spain's 'Golden Age' to modern audiences, chief among them the remarkable liturgical works of Tomas Luis de Victoria. Little is known of Victoria's early years: he was born in Avila around 1548 and studied in Seville under the composer, Escobedo. His promise must have quickly revealed itself because Victoria received a royal grant to continue his studies at the Collegium Germanicum in Rome. He had already spent some nine years singing in the cathedral choir of his home city and, in Rome, became singer

and organist of the Aragonese church of Santa Maria di Monserrato, a post which he held for at least five years.

In 1575, Victoria was ordained into the priesthood and three years later he joined the Congregazione dei Preti dell'Oratorio, a newly-established community of lay priests led by St Filippo Neri. It is to the decade Victoria spent with this community that the works on this recording belong.

In his Officium Hebdomadae Sanctae (Office of Holy Week) of 1585, Victoria composed thirty-seven polyphonic pieces for three, four, five and six voices. They re divided between Palm Sunday (three pieces) and the Thursday, Friday and Saturday of Holy Week, with antiphons, tenebrae lessons and responses and Passions according to St John and St Matthew. The polyphony is intended to alternate with the appropriate Gregorian monody, improperia and so forth. It is from this anthology that the music comes which, perhaps more than any other, best expresses the fervent, intensely mystical quality that burns within Victoria's compositions, and doubtless burnt within the man himself.

The Responsories for Tenebrae would have been sung on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday, part of the office of Matins held in darkness in the early morning. The term Tenebrae (darkness) derives from the fact that the darkness would be intensified a during the service as, one-by-one, the candles were extinguished, so emphasising the especially solemn and sombre nature of the proceedings.

The text for the Responses is a deeply-moving amalgam, thought to have been produced during the fourth century, of New Testament narrative and Old Testament prophecy, together with other quotations of unknown origin. In Victoria's settings, the words are conveyed with a drama and emotion unequalled in any similar

composition, and the control and structure which Victoria imposes only served to intensify the expressive effect.

The heartfelt poignancy of the work comes over strongly in George Malcolm's pioneering 1960 recording of the Responses. The Westminster choir sings with full-blooded involvement and, although some of the boys' voices make less-than-attractive sounds, the overall impact is undeniable. Some more recent versions, although technically more polished, sound distinctly cool in comparison. Decca's remastering has enhanced the superb acoustic of the recording - made in Westminster Cathedral - but at the expense of revealing a fair amount of background 'shuffling'. Did the Cathedral remain open to worshippers during the sessions, I wonder? Nevertheless, there are many moments during this performance which remain achingly moving and heart-wrenching. For that alone George Malcolm's performance earns a place alongside the more recent, and technically better versions by Pro Cantione Antiqua, the Tallis Scholars, the Choir of Trinity College, Cambridge, and by today's Westminster Cathedral Choir under its current director, David Hill. The Responses for Holy Week are generously coupled with Victoria's exquisite setting of the Litaniae de Beata Virgine, and with four of his finest motets, all in performances by George Guest and the Choir of St John's, Cambridge. These are later recordings, from 1967 and 1968, and are cleaner and quieter than the Westminster tapings. And, overall, the Cambridge choir is the better ensemble but, as George Malcolm demonstrated thirty-five years ago, this extraordinary music requires passion as well as precision.



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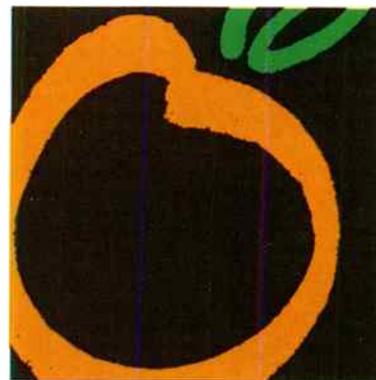
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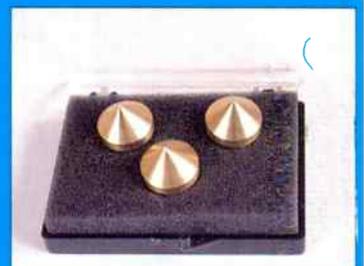
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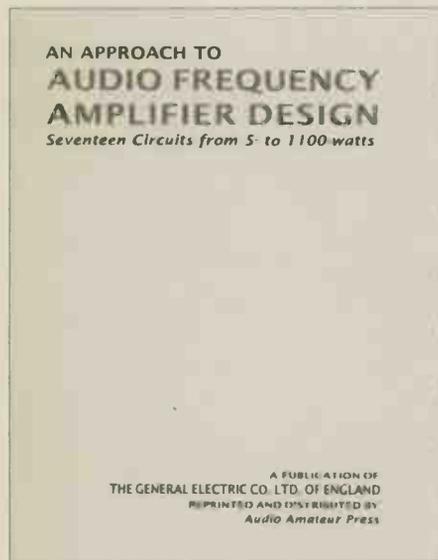
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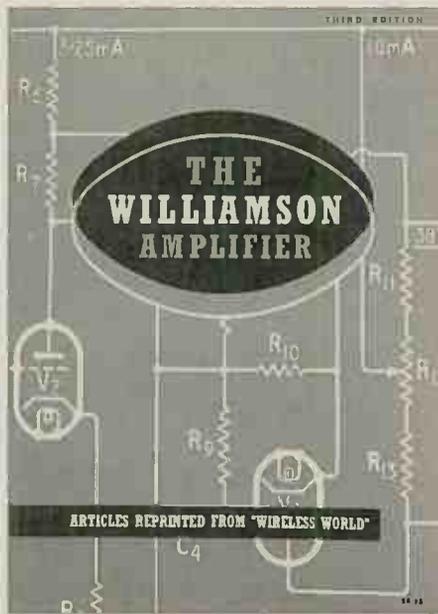
AN APPROACH TO AUDIO FREQUENCY AMPLIFIER DESIGN, seventeen circuits from 5 to 1100watts. General Electric Co. £19.95

Seventeen high quality amplifier designs from the Research Laboratories of the General Electric Company (UK). Designs range from 5 to 100watts, using KT66s, KT88s, DA100s, etc. Also includes two valve pre-amplifiers complete with valve phono stages.

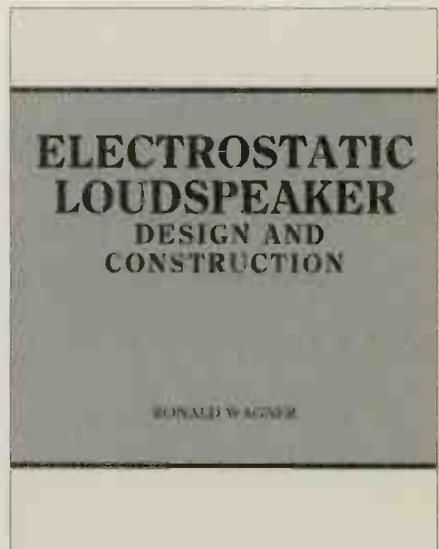


THE WILLIAMSON AMPLIFIER, by D. T. N. Williamson. £9.95

In April 1947, Williamson's valve power amplifier became an overnight success. The author takes you deep into his design decisions and offers practical advice on how to build the amplifier and set it up for best performance.



ELECTROSTATIC LOUDSPEAKER DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION, by Ronald Wagner. £19.95

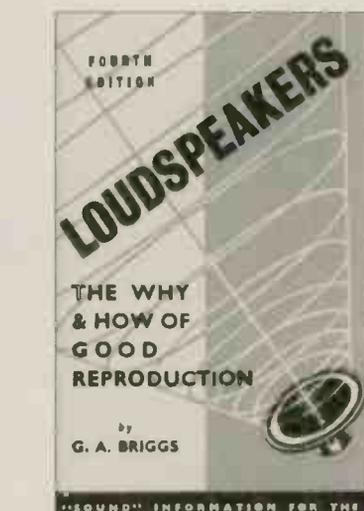


This book takes you step by step through the design and construction of a full range electrostatic loudspeaker, including the basic operating principles behind electrostatics. Whether you intend to build your own electrostatic, repair and restore a vintage electrostatic or are just interested in the principles behind electrostatics, this book is a must.

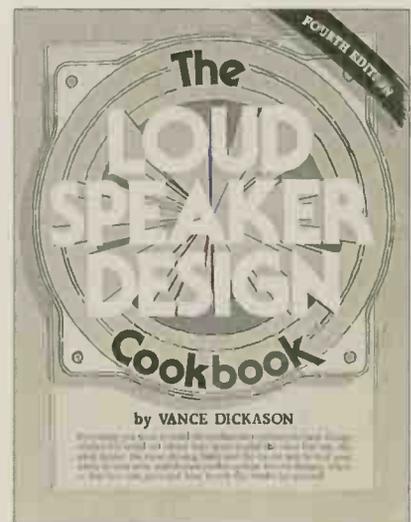
LOUDSPEAKERS

LOUDSPEAKERS: THE WHY AND HOW OF GOOD REPRODUCTION, by G. A. Briggs. £10.95

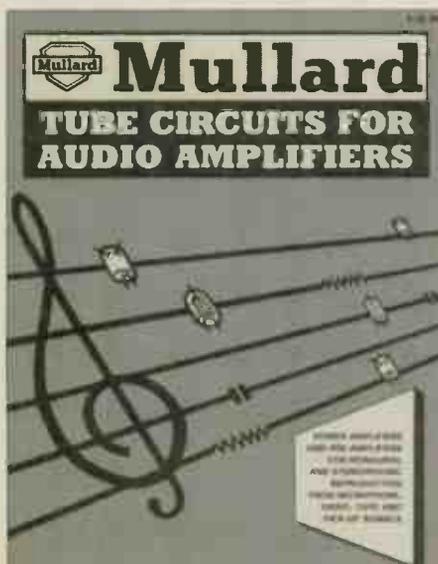
A popular and easy to understand book on building loudspeakers, using empirical techniques that pre-date computer analysis. A fine grounding, written by a manufacturer with first hand experience - recommended for beginners.



THE LOUDSPEAKER DESIGN COOKBOOK, by Vance Dickason. £23.75



This best selling book in the field of loudspeakers offers good, up-to-date practical design information for the home constructor. Like today's manufacturers it uses modern Thiele Small theory and parameters

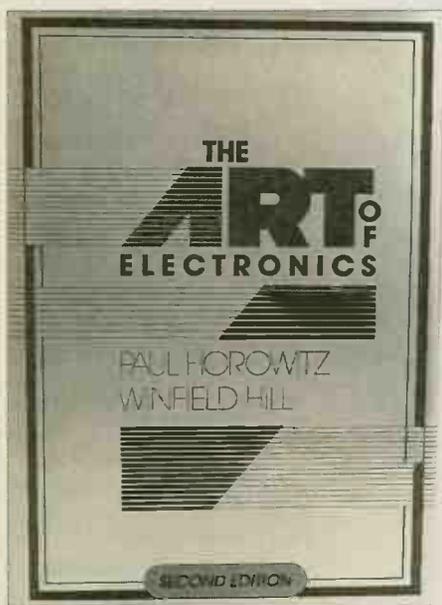


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SOLID STATE ELECTRONICS

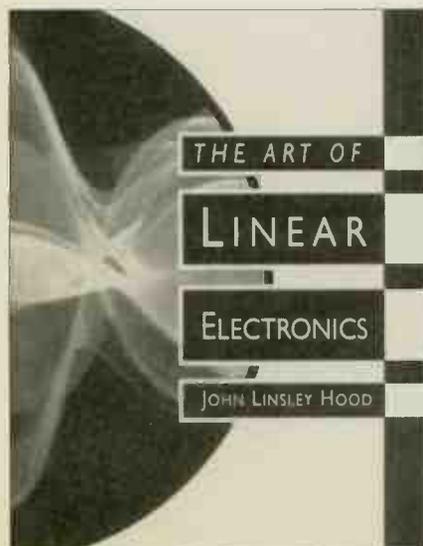
THE ART OF ELECTRONICS, by P. Horowitz and W. Hill. £35

The definitive electronics book. The Art of Electronics is an ideal book for the beginner through to the engineer. Written in easy to understand English, each chapter takes you from basic first principles through to full design exercises and practical circuits.



THE ART OF LINEAR ELECTRONICS, by J. Linsley- Hood. £16.95

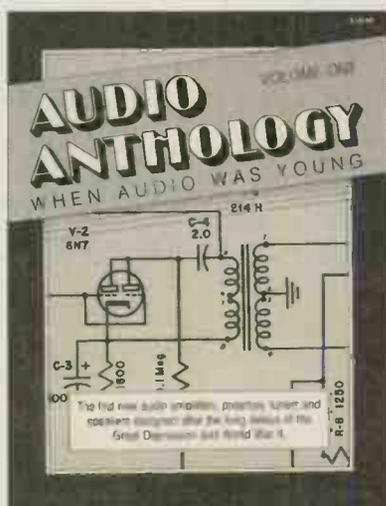
Concentrates specifically on analogue electronics for audio and goes into detail on obscure topics like the drawbacks of feedback, as well as its advantages. Covers mainly solid state but also includes valves. A must for serious enthusiasts and budding designers.



AUDIO ANTHOLOGIES

Audio Anthologies - When Audio Was Young

There are five volumes of the Audio Anthologies, listed below with a brief description and guide to their contents. They cover one of the most exciting and important eras of hi-fi, from the end of the second world war, through the introduction of stereo, magnetic recording, binaural recording and the FM Multiplex decoder. They contain many ground breaking circuits and theory covering all aspects of hi-fi design. A must for valve enthusiasts.



Volume One - May 1947 to December 1949

The first new audio amplifiers, tuners and speakers designed after the long delays of the Great Depression and World War II.

Summary of Contents: 9.5watt, 5watt and 6.5 watt 6AS7G amplifiers, 30watt 300B amplifier, valve FM tuning indicator, 30watt 211 power amplifier, cathode follower amplifier using 6V6, an adaptation of the Williamson amplifier, valve phono preamplifier, several horn and reflex loudspeaker designs and much more.

Volume Two - January 1950 to July 1952

More great amplifiers, preamps, loudspeaker designs, and the first glimmer of the stereo revolution plus magnetic recording aids.

Summary of Contents: Ultra linear 6L6 design and operation of the Williamson, a direct coupled amplifier, Williamson type amplifier using 6A5s, 40watt 845 push-pull amplifier, valve phono and line preamps, valves and loudspeaker damping, design and construction of reflex and horn loudspeakers.

Volume Three - August 1952 to June 1955

Seven power amplifiers, eighteen preamps, twelve loudspeaker designs, including four horn types and binaural recording techniques.

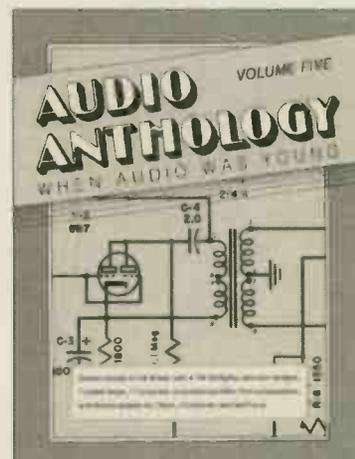
Summary of Contents: Simple valve phono stage, transformerless amplifier using 6082, 20watt 5881 amplifier, 10watt 6V6 amplifier, stereo valve preamp, high quality valve phono stage, a preamp for the Williamson, low distortion tone control preamp, binaural or stereophonic?, transistor phono amp, corner horn loudspeaker, concrete horn loudspeaker.

Volume Four - July 1955 to December 1957

How to plan an audio system, twelve amplifiers and preamps, solid state techniques and circuits introduced and six loudspeaker designs.

Summary of Contents: 18watt 5881 amplifier, 4watt single-ended tweeter amplifier, budget 11watt amplifier, versatile bass/treble control, transistor theory, transistor preamp, transistor techniques, battery powered transistor phono preamp, loudspeakers explained.

Volume Five - January 1958 to December 1959



Stereo comes to full flower with four FM Multiplex decoder designs, seven power amps, eleven preamps, a commercial killer, five loudspeakers, and theory articles by Olson, Crowhurst and McProud.

Summary of Contents: Stereo valve multiplex decoder, 7watt EL84 amplifier, valve active crossover and 20watt treble amp/50watt bass amp., monaural, binaural, monophonic and stereophonic explained, heterodyne FM multiplex adapter, transistor preamp, 60watt EL34 amplifier, high power audio amplifiers, hi-fi loudspeaker enclosure.

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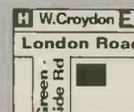
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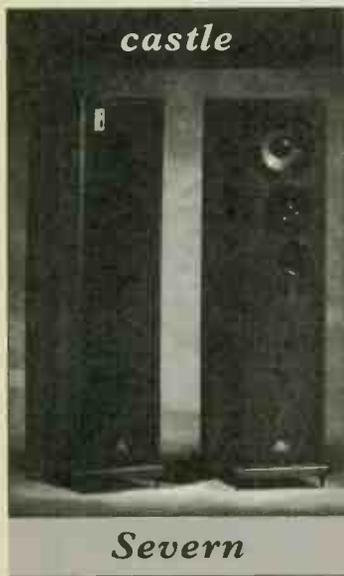
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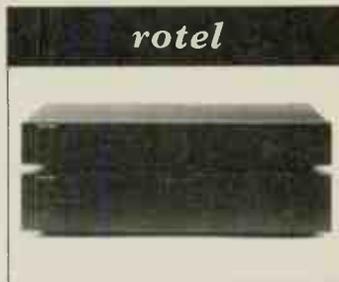


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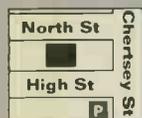
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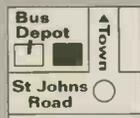
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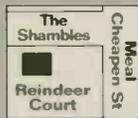
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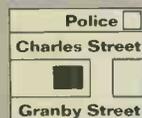
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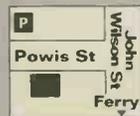
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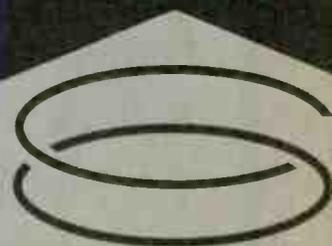
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MEASURED PERFORMANCE

CASSETTE DECK

DENON DRM 740

The first DRM-740 I tested measured well in all areas except for its head. This overloaded at an unusually low level of +1dB (MOL315Hz) with metal tape, compared to around +4dB or so. Since even budget machines manage as well or better, I asked for a second sample.

This was worse! Head overload with metal tape measured -1.5dB (see the MOL/SAT figures) - an absurdly low value for such an apparently sophisticated machine. All the treble overload figures (SATuration) were bad enough to suggest Dolby HX PRO was not working.

Premature head overload limits recording level. Our second sample could get around 5dB less signal onto metal tape than earlier Denon cassette decks, or rival models. If lower recording levels are used (and I noticed that the indicated peak recording level, 0VU, had been set very low to encourage this) to avoid the distortion that results from overload, then hiss becomes commensurately more obvious. So you either suffer more distortion, or more hiss.

Until Denon do something about premature head overload in the DRM-740

it cannot be recommended.

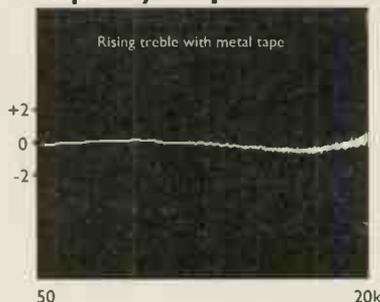
As a footnote, I should say that in the past Denon's cassette decks have always returned excellent head overload figures, so all this is out of character. **NK**

TEST RESULTS

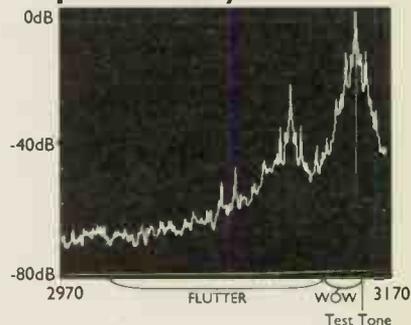
REPLAY (pre-recorded tapes)	
Frequency response (-2dB)	30Hz-12kHz
Speed accuracy	+1%
Hiss (70uS, Dolby out)	-59dB
RECORDING (blank tapes)	
Frequency response (IEC Primary Refs.)	
ferric	(IECI) 10Hz-20kHz
chrome	(IECII) 10Hz-20kHz

metal	(IECIV) 10Hz-20kHz
Separation	(1kHz) -55dB
Distortion	(315Hz) 2%
Hiss (70uS, Dolby out)	-57dB
Speed variations (DIN total)	0.1%
Flutter energy (3-3.13kHz)	-23dB
MOL/SAT (IEC Refs)	315Hz/10kHz
(first sample)	
IEC I	(ferric) 3.5dB/-3dB
IECII	(chrome) 1dB/-3.5dB
IECIV	(metal) 1dB/-1.5dB
(second sample)	
IEC I	(ferric) 2dB/-8dB
IECII	(chrome) -1dB/-8dB
IECIV	(metal) -1.5dB/-4dB

Frequency Response



Speed Stability



AMPLIFIERS

HD AUDIO DUO MONOBLOCKS

Power output of the HD Audio Duo monoblock amplifier measured a healthy 78watts into a normal eight ohm load and 110watts into 4ohms. I would hope for a x2 increase of power from a monoblock due to a halving of load, since they have plenty of room for a hefty transformer. So regulation from this one wasn't great, even if it was satisfactory. Usually, this affects bass control and slam.

Distortion was negligible at all output levels and frequencies, measuring no more than 0.013% worst case. Our analysis (1 watt/10kHz) shows just the smallest amount of third harmonic. The Duo should sound clean and controlled as a result, since it doubtless uses significant levels of feedback.

Sensitivity was low at 850mV, so this power amplifier must be used with a preamplifier having gain, unless it is coupled to a CD player alone.

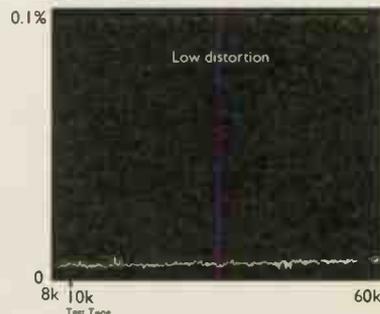
Bandwidth was satisfactorily wide at 8Hz-33kHz. The designer has kept it in check, but not stringently so.

The Duo turns in a good set of measured performance figures, showing it is a competent modern design. **NK**

TEST RESULTS

Power	78watts
Frequency response	8Hz-33kHz
Separation	∞
Noise	-108dB
Distortion	0.007%
Sensitivity	850mV

Distortion



Continued on page 107

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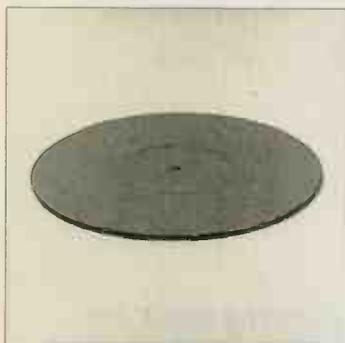
Dear Mr. Soper,
Thanks for sending me the plinth for my Garrard 401. I must confess, that I was a bit sceptical about it, when I ordered one - after all, I bought it, without the possibility of listening to it first. But the results I get are really unbelievable. There is no rumbling, instead deep, deep bass and an authority, I never heard before from my records. And believe me, I tried some of the best turntables around (LP 12, Xerxes). Now I’m waiting for the forthcoming power-supply. The day I place my order for it, I will do so without being a bit sceptical. Thanks again for a marvellous piece of art.

Yours

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AMPLIFIERS

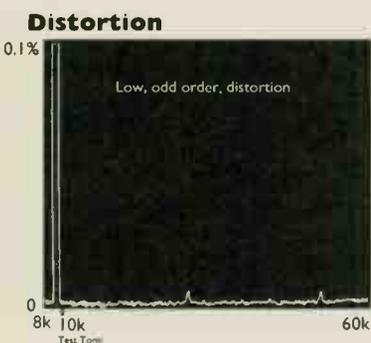
MERIDIAN 551 AMPLIFIER

The 551 amplifier produces a healthy 55watts per channel into a normal load (8Ω), rising to a healthy 80watts into a low load of 4Ω, so it has a good power supply and plenty of oomph. I'd expect the 551 to handle most loads, even difficult ones, quite well.

Frequency response of CD/tuner inputs measured 4Hz-36kHz (-1dB) suggesting high frequency band limiting and a low frequency limit applied by d.c. feedback loop, rather than a capacitor, since Meridian favour all-direct coupling. In spite of high gain and good sensitivity (140mV) noise was low at -88dB. As expected from Meridian, distortion was low right across the audio band at all output levels.

As expected, this is a well engineered amplifier. **NK**

Power	55watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	4Hz-36kHz
Separation	-81dB
Noise	-88dB
Distortion	0.005%
Sensitivity	140mV



NAIM NAIT 3 AND AUDIOLAB 8000A

The Naim Nait 3 has a limited power output of 25watts into a normal load, but it can deliver 45watts into a low load, so canny buyers will do best by pairing it with a low impedance loudspeaker, or one of very high sensitivity (88dB minimum). Naim roll off treble response early at 22kHz but extend bass down to a low-ish 11Hz, to give some thunder. Distortion was very low at all frequencies. The Nait 3 measures well, but must be partnered with care if the best is to be had from it.

Audiolab's 8000A has plenty of power. It develops 66watts into a normal load and 120watts into a low load, so this amplifier has enough power to drive most speakers. It has a wide bandwidth via CD but warp filters cut output below 50Hz on both MM and MC disc inputs. Distortion was low and sensitivity high through all inputs. The 8000A measures very well in all respects. **NK**

NAIM NAIT 3	
Power	25watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	11Hz-22kHz
Separation	-76dB
Noise	-85dB
Distortion	0.005%
Sensitivity	50mV
dc offset	-8mV

AUDIOLAB 8000A	
Power	66watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	22Hz-41kHz
Separation	-74dB
Noise	-93dB
Distortion	0.005%
Sensitivity	120mV
dc offset	1.5mV
Disc	
Frequency response	50Hz-30kHz
Separation	-70dB

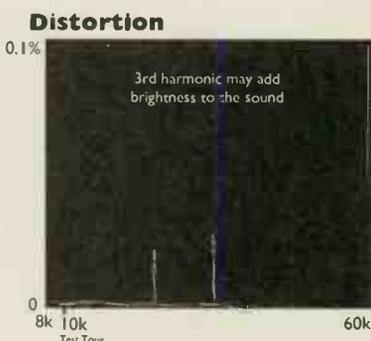
Noise (MC/MM)	-71/-77dB
Distortion	0.007%
Sensitivity (MC/MM)	0.14/2.5mV
Overload (MC/MM)	9/140mV

DELPH DA CAPO

A power output of 28watts appears to give this valve amplifier more muscle than most self-biased designs. Unfortunately, power output fell severely at high frequencies, reaching just 8watts at 10kHz for 0.5% distortion. This is almost certainly attributable to high reactance in the output transformer - as Andy put it, the output valves are driving the transformer rather than the load. Large cores give full low frequency output, the Delph being able to swing 25watts at 40Hz with ease.

Otherwise, the amplifier measured well, having low distortion, low hum and hiss, and good channel separation. A low-ish sensitivity of 550mV means an active preamplifier with gain will be needed with most sources, except CD. **NK**

Power	28watts
Frequency response	11Hz-22kHz
Separation	88dB
Noise	-107dB
Distortion	0.02%
Sensitivity	550mV
dc offset	none



GRUNDIG T4

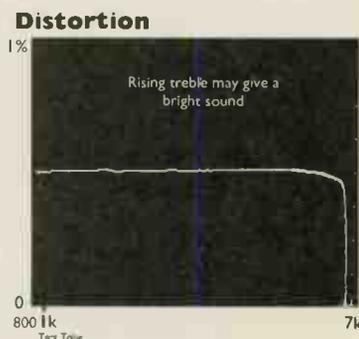
The T4 has a very sharply defined selectivity skirt that rejects powerful nearby stations when it is tuned to a weak one, even when set to Wide IF mode. Like so many RDS tuners though, sensitivity was mediocre at 32μV on stereo and 2μV on mono. Give it a powerful aerial signal of 2mV or more and hiss sinks to a very low -78dB, about as low as the best. This ensures that hiss is inaudible on Radio 3, providing broadcast hiss isn't present.

The audio side of things held up well under test too. Frequency response was flat to 15.5kHz, as our analysis shows, but a slight overall tilt upward at high frequencies will almost certainly give this tuner a bright and possibly thin sound.

Distortion was low all round and channel separation on stereo high across the audio band. Unwanted outputs above 16kHz (pilot at 19kHz and sub-carrier at 38kHz) were very low and will not be a nuisance to tape recorders. Audio output was high at 1.1V - enough to drive most power amps through a passive preamp. **NK**

Frequency response	11Hz-15.5kHz
Stereo separation	40dB
Distortion (50% mod.)	0.1%
Hiss (CCIR)	-78dB
Signal for minimum hiss	2mV
Selectivity (at 0.4MHz)	80dB
Sensitivity	
mono	2μV
stereo	32μV

signal strength meter	
LED No.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
level (μV)	1.6 3 8 25 50 125 200



Continued on page 109

CD PLAYERS

MARANTZ CD63SE

This player doesn't throw the rule book out of the window. It has low distortion and a flat frequency response, so there's no contrivance behind its presentation, unlike Denon and Pioneer "processing" players. A slight roll down in the upper treble, seen in our convolved impulse response analysis, is enough to avoid brightness. No distortion was detectable at ordinary music levels, meaning levels were lower than 0.004% - a good if not unique result nowadays.

Output measured a healthy 2.3V and channel separation was very wide at around -130dB. Dynamic range, largely affected by -60dB distortion level, was reasonable if not exceptional at 105dB.

The Marantz CD63SE offers a fine measured performance in all areas. **NK**

TEST RESULTS

Frequency response	4Hz-20.8kHz	
Distortion		
-6dB	0.004	0.004
-30dB	0.004	0.004
-60dB	0.6	0.5
-90dB	39	37
-90dB dithered	13	11
Separation	left	right
1kHz	130	137
20kHz	127	128
Noise	126dB	
with emphasis	126dB	
Dynamic range	105dB	
Output	2.3V	

MERIDIAN 506

Meridian's 506 uses Crystal's CS4328 convertor - and uses it to good effect. Distortion is low right across the board, as can be seen by the absence of distortion harmonics in the plot taken at -30dB (representative of typical music level). The frequency response is extremely flat too, with just a touch of bass lift which normally makes for a solid bottom end.

Elsewhere the Meridian has wide separation, low noise, good dynamic range and output just above the Philips standard at 2.2V. All-in-all, a very competent machine. **DB**

TEST RESULTS

Frequency response	4Hz-21.25kHz	
Distortion (%)		
-6dB	0.004	0.004
-30dB	0.006	0.006
-60dB	0.64	0.63
-90dB	35.9	35.4
-90dB dithered	8.1	7.4
Separation (dB)	left	right
1kHz	109	100
20kHz	90	77
Noise	-90dB	
with emphasis	-95dB	
Dynamic range	106.6dB	
Output	2.2V	

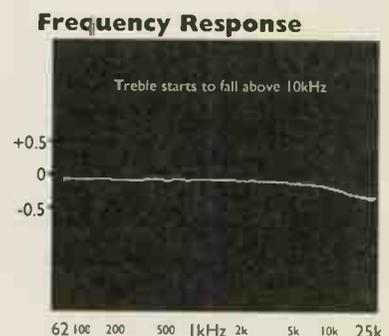
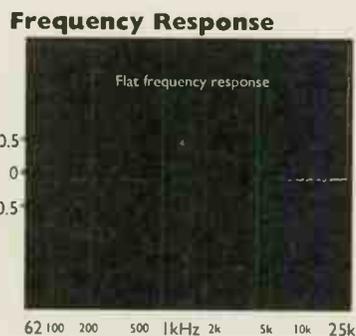
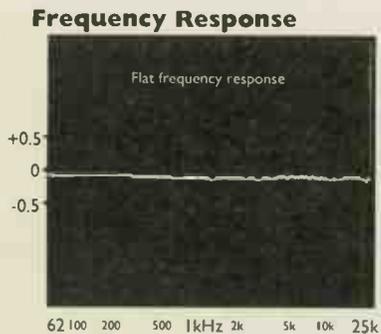
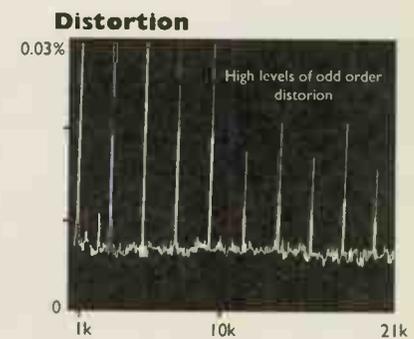
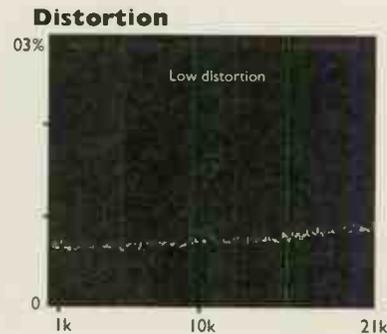
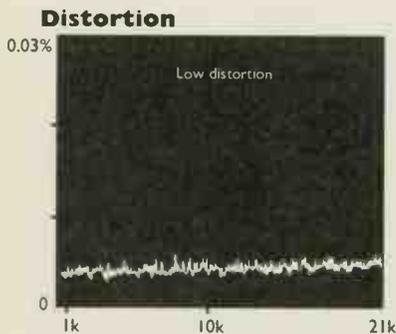
MONARCHY DELUX 18

The Monarchy Delux 18 was an interesting convertor to measure. From the falling treble response you would expect it to sound quite soft, but listening tests revealed a bright and open treble quality. This is almost certainly attributable to the high levels of odd-order distortion the Delux 18 produces, which will brighten tone.

The high distortion at -60dB limits dynamic range to 93dB (EIAJ test), a low figure for a modern CD convertor. Elsewhere the Delux 18 measures well enough, with low noise and wide channel separation. Output is high at 3.2V which gives a useful amount of extra headroom for passive preamps. **DB**

TEST RESULTS

Frequency response	4Hz-21.3kHz	
Distortion (%)		
-6dB	0.015	0.014
-30dB	0.078	0.083
-60dB	2.04	2.35
-90dB	42.6	43.5
-90dB dithered	27.5	28.4
Separation (dB)	left	right
1kHz	118	119
20kHz	104	100
Noise	-97dB	
with emphasis	-100dB	
Dynamic range	93dB	
Output	3.2V	



Continued on page 111

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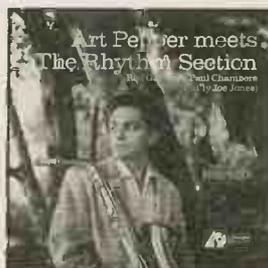


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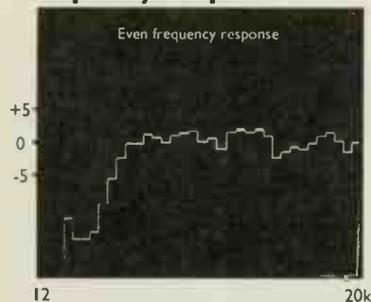
LOUDSPEAKERS

EPOS ES25

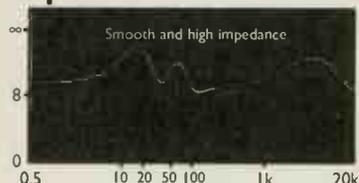
The ES25s aren't the flattest response loudspeakers we've ever measured, but they are smooth enough considering that every attempt has been made to keep the crossover as simple as possible to ensure they have a good phase characteristic, which gives a coherent sound. Bass extends well too, suggesting deep and powerful lows.

The ES25s are a sensible load, one that will suit a majority of amplifiers. With sensitivity just above average at 88dB, and a smooth impedance curve that never dips below 5Ω to give an average of 7.8Ω overall, I'd recommend amplifiers capable of producing 30watts or more for best results. **DB**

Frequency Response



Impedance

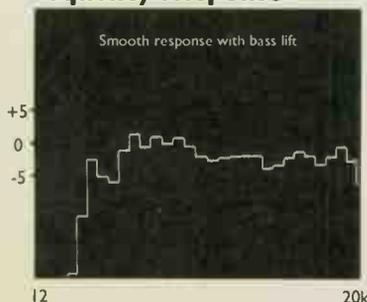


KEF REFERENCE MODEL 1

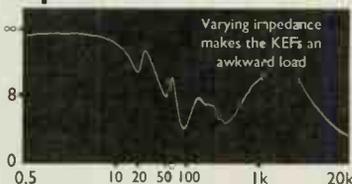
The Model One's frequency response is flat and smooth through the midrange and treble with a bass lift below 500Hz that will give them a big and powerful sound.

KEF's Model 1s are sensitive, pushing out 90dB sound pressure level at 1m for a nominal watt pink noise signal. This means that they will go loud at low-ish volume settings. But the impedance curve dips low between 100-500Hz and again above 10kHz, giving a low overall average of 6.9Ω. So although sensitive, the Model 1s draw current and need a powerful amplifier for best results. **DB**

Frequency Response



Impedance

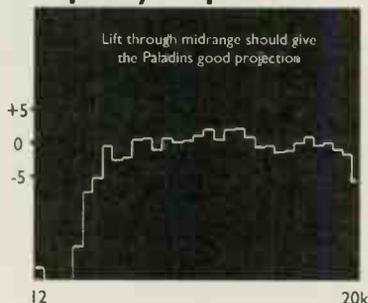


RUARK PALADIN

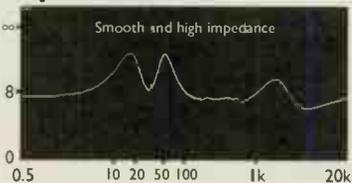
Ruark have aimed their new Paladin loudspeakers at the increasing number of high quality, low power valve and transistor amplifiers around. They are both sensitive at 88dB and have a high overall impedance of 8.9Ω, which means they won't draw heavy current. This makes them suitable for just about any amplifier, including zero feedback designs, thanks to their smooth impedance curve.

Their frequency response is well tailored too. The fabric dome tweeter is gently rolled off to give a smooth sound, and the gentle lift through the midrange will give these speakers good projection out of the box. Bass output isn't especially strong, but with some room reinforcement it should sound balanced and even. **DB**

Frequency Response



Impedance

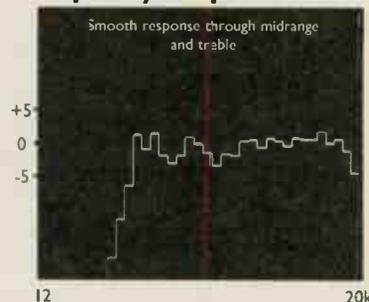


MERIDIAN A500

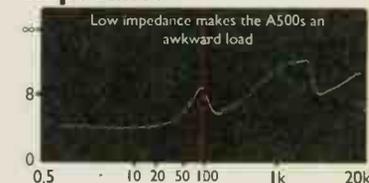
The A500s have a smooth frequency response through the midrange and treble which should ensure a balanced sound. There is a shallow dip in the lower midrange though, that may well remove some punch from their sound. Bass extends well though, so I'd expect deep and powerful lows.

Although Meridian's A500s reach their claimed 90dB sensitivity, they are not the easiest of loads to drive. Below 500Hz impedance takes a dive to around 3Ω. This gives the A500s an overall impedance figure of just 4.2Ω, a very low value, so they will require a powerful amplifier for best results. Care is needed in amplifier matching. **DB**

Frequency Response



Impedance



CHARIO HIPER 1

Chario's Hiper 1s have their reflex port located on the base of the cabinet, spaced from the surface they sit on by short rubber feet. The bass quality will vary depending on what surface they sit on, so some experimentation may be necessary for best subjective results.

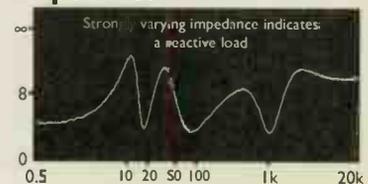
Their frequency response is typical of a miniature, showing rising bass to give a solid bottom end, and balanced by an equally rising treble response. This kind of response normally gives good kick and bite to rock tracks. The trough from 2-8kHz may well reduce detail projection though.

Although reasonably sensitive for their size at 85dB, the Hiper 1s aren't the kindest of loads. Impedance drops severely in the bass and again at 100Hz, 200Hz and 1.8kHz to around 3.5Ω. This gives a low overall impedance figure of 6.2Ω, so a powerful solid state amplifier should be used for best results - I'd recommend at least 50watts. **DB**

Frequency Response



Impedance



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- Donald Byrd - Kofi
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- Lonnie Smith - Live At The Club Mozambique

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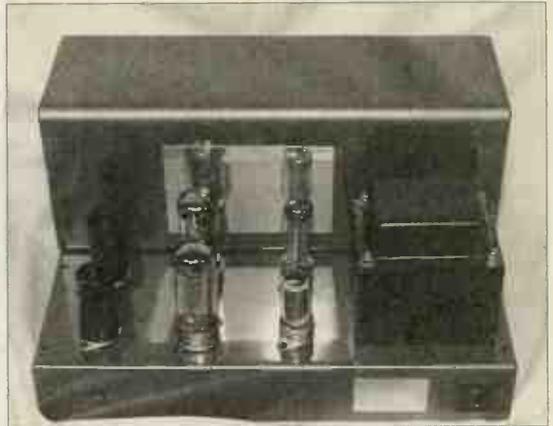
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	E77, E77 Mg	N/A	£25.00	R20 XE, QLM 34/36, 12LM III	£12.50				
	P77, P77 Mg	N/A	£48.00	AN 5/11 30/60/87/45	£8.00				
Audio Technica	AT 95E	£21.00	£12.50	Alwa	AN 2/50/70/77/0/493/2/8743				
	AT 110 E	£26.50	£16.00	RS 3/35/38/84/85/90	£10.00				
	AT 450E	£57.00	£34.00	BSR	ST 3/4/13/12				
Denon	AT OC3	£92.00	£94.00*	ST 14/18/16/17/19/21	£2.50				
	AT DC 5	£125.40	£90.00*	DN 145/155/165/E DN 149 S	£3.00				
	AT DC9	£116.00	£150.00*	G800/820/850 (D=10/11/20/D140)	£12.50				
	DL 110	£65.00	£32.00*	G800 Sup E, G80H - 78pm	£12.50				
	DL 160	£85.00	£58.00*	DS-ST 7/12/14/15/26/30/35/142	£8.00				
Goldring	DL 304	£180.00	£165.00*	DS-ST 5/13/23/24/25/55/103/104	£10.00				
	ELECTRA	£24.00	£16.00	DT 33-35/36/45/53/60/85, DT 21 S	£8.00				
	1006	£44.00	£29.00	JVC	N 47/48-51/53/60/61/63/66/72				
Ortofon	1012 GX	£58.00	£38.00	Kenwood	N 36/37/38/45/56/59/62/67/69/71				
	1022 GX	£76.00	£49.00	(Trio)	N 36/37/38/45/56/59/62/67/69/71				
	1042	£94.00	£61.00	National	EPS 2/4/24/25/33/35/1 - GS27/9/D				
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Audio	Universal Headshell c/w Leads	£8.50	£8.50	500 AL Disco	£30.00	£18.00			
Technica	ANT-544 Inner Ear Stereophones	£16.00	£16.00	680 ALX Disco	£44.00	£32.00			
Ortofon	T Force Gauge	£3.00	£3.00	680 ELX Disco	£54.00	£39.00			

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NEWSLETTER NO. 1

Valve amps, Valve amps. Valve amps! So many names. so much choice. Who's the best manufacturer to buy from? Should it be a pentode, or a cathode, what is triode? Should it be 10w per channel or 100w per channel?

No wonder customers get confused. valves are back with a vengeance and in greater numbers than ever! At Serious Kit we have watched many potential new products come and go. having failed in some major way, whether musically or mechanically!

At last, a range of product is now available which completely re-writes the rule-book.

Audio Note UK Ltd. are a company who have enjoyed many superb reviews worldwide. and indeed some controversial press here in the UK. Recently I decided to check them out for myself. After a four hour drive in the pouring rain I eventually arrived at Audio Note Headquarters. and was made welcome to the usual coffee and nice chat about the weather!

Enough of all this, lets get to the HiFi nay, music system on offer! Ready and waiting for my attention was a Voyd Reference turntable through the mighty 9 watt OTO S.E. (Phono) amplifier with the company's own type 'E' loudspeakers. What transpired next, lead me to totally rethink all I have learned about the "mechanics" of audio system reproduction of music. Joan Armatrading, The Police. Shostokovich, Strauss, Nine Inch Nails, all played so convincingly. that to say I had to have it, was rather an understatement! True, a top end system will always require a first class source, and loudspeakers but what I had experienced was a mere 9w single ended valve amplifier, sound like 100 watts of pure energy, that was so dynamic and awesome in presence, detail and harmonically correct. I was breathtaken. It took a while to come back to earth, but I left the worship place of all things valve, with an OTO S.E. under my arm(s). Oh no, I had to endure another 4 hours of torrential weather on the motorway to see if this little

beast really was as good as I believed

You bet! On plugging the amp into my own Voyd record player and hooking the speaker leads up to a pair of Pro-Ac Response Two's. I was overwhelmed by the deep, spatial image. the quick, deep bass response. the precision of soundstage. The Pro-Acs disappeared completely from the Demo-room. The most impressive quality of the OTO S.E. is it's ability in communicating the emotional content of recorded information. Literally the hairs on the back of your neck stand up whilst listening to this amp as part of a well set up music system. A thought rushed through my grey matter, if this £1499 amplifier sounds this good. how do the more expensive components behave?

More tooting and froeing from Brighton to Manchester ensued over the course of the following few weeks.

The good news is, that here, at last is a range of products, that the law of diminishing returns does not affect. Whether you are interested in the aforementioned £1500 bargain OTO S.E. or a MEISHU @ £3250, you can hear the improvements consistently. Here is a range of amplifiers that can be integrated into systems that feature high quality source components whether analogue or digital, and will always allow the music to breathe, image to be focused, and soundstage to be enhanced.

These are the valve amplifiers of the next decade

Tune in next month for the next episode of the Audio Note story.

Kind regards

David Speirs - Proprietor

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NEW this month is the long awaited Gamma Valve Amplification which we are demonstrating with the new Epoch Loudspeaker system. We believe this provides frighteningly realistic presentation with all types of music. Bookings for dems. now being taken.

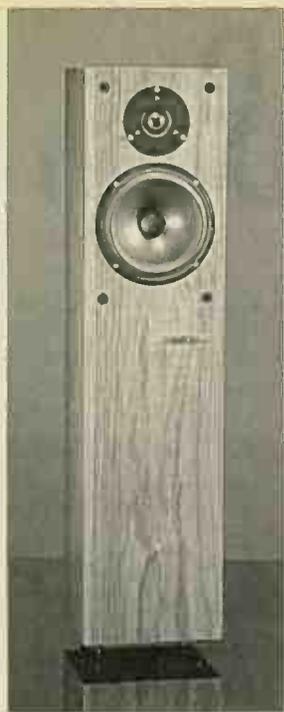
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THIS MONTHS SALE STOCK

	WAS	NOW		WAS	NOW
IMPULSE H2 LOUDSPEAKERS - light oak, mint	(2650)	1550	Audio Innovations Series 200 Preamp - ex dem	(349)	225
Fullers Audio sultan loudspeakers - mint	(400)	195	Audio Innovations Series 200 Poweramp - ex dem	(500)	299
voyd 0.5 reference turntable - light oak, mint	(3600)	1850	Audio Innovations Series 1000 Mono		
Helius cyclone tone arm - unused	(1400)	750	Poweramps - ex dem	(1650)	995
Audonote 1011 Cartridge - very low hours	(1350)	699	Audio Innovations Alto Integrated Amp - unused	(329)	249
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BRISTOL SOUND & VISION '95

All you customers out there are keeping me so busy, I can only assume you must be reading my AD's! It also means I had little time to spend at the show this year, but I don't think I missed too much. Until I manage to produce a good sound at such a show myself, it's probably not fair to criticise, but one or two managed it. In particular Portfolio were getting fine sound out of various Boston 'speakers fronted by my favourite AMC CD6 CD player, plus a new line in Thorens amplification. John Michell was playing his new ORBE turntable and very beautiful it looked. Although fellow listeners in the Naim's room with £50K's worth of home cinema seemed suitable impressed, I can't say the sound was that impressive; even if the effect in 'Jurassic Park' was good, that was mainly due to the size of the screen. It was interesting to note how much better the Naim SBL's sounded in the vinyl room compared to the CD room, and how many rooms were using vinyl. The Shahinian speakers were sounding much better than last year.

RUARK EQUINOX

During the QLN speaker demo at the show the representative commented that when they first produced the production samples, they couldn't understand why they didn't sound as good as development samples, but then discovered it was due to the x-overs being inside on production units - hence the x-overs are now outside the cabinet. Co-incidentally I now have in stock the 'Equinox' which has the x-over in the stand pedestal and my demo pair or Ruark Accolades have external x-overs, so that I can experiment with driving them actively. According to QLN it is better to have THE x-over close to the amp, so that is a test we must try when time permits. In the meantime do come and audition the Equinox - we are still running them in and finding out what works best with them. In addition another beautiful speaker, the Opera Callas, is warming up and proving to be a fine performer on rock as well as classical, as it's name might otherwise imply.

If, by the way, you are interested in auditioning an item we don't normally stock and you can't hear locally, do give me a ring. Manufacturers are usually happy to supply for auditions.

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AUDIOLAB 8000C & P £400. DELTEC Little Bit DAC £150. Both mint condition and boxed.
Tel: 051-339 4857.

NAKAMICHI WANTED: Cassette decks RX505 or CRS Phone Steve 0753-879468 (office). 0753 529926 (evenings)

MERIDIAN 200, 263, £850, NAIM NAC72, NAP140 £750, Heybrook HB3/2 including stands £300 Mission DAC5, new, unopened £200, NAIM NAC72 £400, Arcam Alpha CD £220. Wanted: ISOBARIKS, SBLs.
Mick: 01926 831388.

TANNOY J95 3-way, floorstanding speakers, mass loaded and deflex panelled, awesome at £390. AVI 52000 MP preamp, virtually unused, £530. Both mint.
Tel: 0222-499561.

S.D.I Acoustics (MK2 upgrade). 3-way floor standing speakers. 250 watts / easily driven. Superb open sound, will demonstrate, £600 (£900 saving on new).
Tel: 0276 477256 (Bagshot / Surrey).

AUDIO INNOVATIONS 1st Audio Monoblocks, £1,250. E.C. Audio Pre with Pandora £795. Snell J11s with Pirate stands £750. Series 200 power amp £350. Epos ES11s with stands £375. All boxed. ANY cable available.
Tel: 0472 882928.

AUDIO QUEST Jade loudspeaker cable. A 5m terminated single bi-wire pair, cost new over £800, asking £350. Deltec Black Slink interconnect, £100. KEF Cube 200, £100.
Tel: 0296 437314 evenings (Aylesbury).

AUDIO INNOVATIONS L2 Preamp and 2nd Triode power amps, exquisite sound, both just 4 months old, new priorities force sale. As new £3,700 asking £2,450.
Tel: 0296 437314 evenings (Aylesbury).

TUBE TECHNOLOGY Integrated valve amplifier £795. Exposure VI pre amp, VII power supplies (two) and VIII Super power amp £495. Spondor SPI speakers (Teak) £360. Foundations stands £45. All as new.
Tel: Stafford 0785 665933

AMPLIFIER MUSICAL Fidelity power amp P270 + MVT pre amp Both excellent condition. Can demonstrate. £950 ono.
Tel: Edinburgh: 031 661 6040.

FOR SALE: Acoustic Energy AE1 speakers. Piano Black with dedicated stands. Mint condition, boxed. £650 ono.
Phone: 051 229 4734 day or 051 722 2916 evenings.

NAIM/LINN Buy Sell: S2 CDS, 250 135, 140, ARO etc.
Tel: Bob 0382 819732.

AUDIO SYNTHESIS Passion controller. Original model, factory built, as new. £250.00. PAS-02 controller £100.00.
Tel: 0181-994 2030 after 7pm.

GOODSELL GW180G service info needed. Will buy; have McIntosh literature to exchange. Also want Quad valve amps. Provide description; price. Anthony Schultz, 10020 Vista Montano, Escondido, California 92026 U.S.A. (619) 751-1552.

QUAD CD67. Absolutely mint, boxed, £550. No offers. Gale 301, Black Ash, good condition £75. Up-grading. Can demonstrate both.
Tel: 0795 536574 (Kent-Daytime).

MAGNEPLAN R MG11a and 5MG4 Boxed and in pristine condition. Genuine reason for sale. Cost £2,000 and £650. Asking £975 and £340 respectively.
Tel: 0585 731083 after 1pm

WANTED: Target AER5 equipment rack; Hitachi 7500 power amp; Cambridge C70 power amp; Phase Linear Series 700 amplification Spares. Enrico.
Tel: 0222-499561.

ATC SCM50A, 350W/GH active spks. with stands and boxes. 2 years old. Fabulous sound. Reluctant sale (4497) 2999 ono.
Tel: 0279 813450 (lan).

BARGAIN EQUIPMENT: Celestion SL600 loudspeakers £250, Meridian tuner £75, QED Digit + Positron £120, Cambridge CD2 £290.
Tel: 071 286 4143

ORELLE D.A.C. 180 (boxed) £480 o.n.o. Audio Alchemy Datastream Transceiver (boxed) £140 (£200 new). Motion Electronics Nicam TV Stereo tuner with remote £140.
Tel: 0229 470259.

LINN KABERS Black immaculate. £700 AVI 52000MA stereo power amp. £350 Naim, 2 sets. 6 metres Tri-wire NAC5 cable, terminated £90
Tel: 081 689 6855, evenings/weekend (Croydon, Surrey)

QUAD 67 CD Player and 606 MK2 power amp wanted.
Christchurch (01202) 479800.

NAKAMICHI 600 cassette deck, 610 preamp, 620 power amp and 630 FM Tuner preamp in free standing, black metal System One cabinet £650.00 with original manuals. Evenings 081-398 1943 (Surrey).

LINN LP12 Lingo Ekos Ortofon MC3000. Afro finish, 1990 spec. £1,200. Meridian 208 pre-amp/cd + 209 remote control £550. Both mint/boxed. No offers.
Tel: 01924-290749 (Yorkshire).

REVOX PAIR F-36 Stereo valve recorders, new heads on one £375. Sugden Craftsman 3 turntable chassis, 3-speed £75. Mono Pickups: Garrard TPA 10/Golding 600 £35. Leak Dynamic/78rpm MC Head/Transformer £45. Heals Wall Cabinets for Quad Valve system £75. Heals, folding wall cabinet with Thorens TD 124/Shure M212 £275. Single Lowther Mini Acousta PM6 £85, 3x Leak Sandwich 600 £145.
Tel: 071 372 3724.

WANTED! WANTED! WANTED!
WANTED! WANTED! WANTED!
WANTED!
1x Goodmans Axiom 300, 1x Quad II near serial number 2727, 1x Quad II. Near serial number 51518. 1x Leak TL 10, 1x TL 12, SME 3012/Early 3009 2x Rogers LS3/5A, your (reasonable!!) price paid for near mint items!
Tel: 071-372 3724.

HEYBROOK POINT 5 mark one loudspeakers on HBSI stands. Little used. Cost £200. Accept £110 ono. Lewes, East Sussex.
Tel: 0273 477683.

JBL 3x L-100 Monitors, Signature Series, £395 pair Tannoy Chevening, HPD 295, £275 pair Rogers 2-way export monitors, £195. Yamaha B-2 poweramp, massive dual supply, £495. Thorens TD-126 MK4, Thorens arm, Brandnew, £295, Vitavox S-3 Drivers, new + Vitavox Radial Horns, used, £595.
Tel: 071-625 8966.

MUSICAL FIDELITY A100 (integrated Class A amplifier), excellent condition, one owner. Cost £550, sell for £230. Inherited upgrade, forces sale.
Call Jim on 0202-717746 anytime.

SPENDOR SPl/2 and M.A.F. stands 5 months old £900, or exchange for KEF Reference 2 or Magnepan 5MG11 speakers. Leak Stereo 20 £220. Sony CDP103 CD player £150.
Phone: 081-531 5979.

COLLECTION OF quality Hi-Fi equipment (47 pieces) for sale. Includes Quad, Yamaha, Burmester, Nakamichi, Sugden, Thorens, Luxman, Meridian, SME, etc.
For details Ring: 0372 273774.

QUAD ELS63 speakers, new/boxed £1,995, SME V (Gold version) new/boxed £995, Quad II (pair) £350, Quad ELS £350, Revox B77 MK2 2T-Mid Speed, mint condition £795.
Tel: 01444 459196.

FOR SALE: Naim Hi-Cap, 7 months old, 30 hours use as new £500.
Tel: 0886 821577.

NAIM 32.S. Good condition, boxed £220.00. Audiotech T/Table Wall shelf - £30.00.
Tel: 071-606 0888 days, 081-665 6183 evenings/weekends.

MERIDIAN 208 CD player / preamp / incl phono stage with 209 Master R.C., Remote volume control, superb sound and appearance £525.00 Rodgers Cadet III Stereo valve amp/pre amp Good condition working + circuit / components List £60
Tel: 0628 822040

LINN SONDEK LP12, Valhalla power supply, Itok arm, A&R cartridge £550. Sheffield. 0114 248 2483.

WANTED: LINN ITTOK LVIII tonearm, mint condition.
Tel: 01952 249627 Harold, Telford.

QUAD II AMPLIFIERS, serviced £260 o.n.o. Quad AM3, mint £120. Leak Troughline 3 (mono). £60. Sugden CS1, Sugden Stereo tuner (working mono) both mint £60 pair o.n.o.
Tel: 0482 53192.

3 MONTHS OLD Arcam Alpha 5 plus C.D. £430. Boxed, as new.
Tel: 0895-443573.

NAKAMICHI 1000 ZX1. The cassette deck (rare) truly little used, unmarked, mint. £2,300.00 ono. One owner from new. Meridian 203 DAC. Mint, £200.00.
Tel: 0364 72292.

NAIM NAC 62 Pre-amp. Old style case. Selling due to upgrade to NAC 72. £225 o.n.o. boxed.
Tel: 0425 620022 (day) 0590 682710 (evenings) (Hampshire).

MUSICAL FIDELITY A100 amplifier £150. SIRAC 50 watt valve power amp KT88, re-built. £250. Appollo 24" Lead shot filled speaker stands £75.
Tel: (Tamworth) 01827-261082.

PROAC STUDIO Ones mark two £385. Audio Dimensions custom four pillar stands for above £115. 10 metres of Sugden Sound Stage cable £30. Will haggle.
Call: 0634 377339.

OXFORD CRYSTAL Reference turntable SME V tonearm. £1,400 or split £700 each.
Tel: Steve 0623 755347 after 7pm (Notts).

NAIM NAP 180 power amp, 9 months old. Mint condition. Cost £940. Sell £700.
Tel: 0181 840 7000 Pager: 0814723. N. London.

PIONEER CLD 1750 PAL/NTSC Laserdisc player, immaculate, boxed, never used, £395; Meridian 203 DAC excellent condition, £195.
Tel: 081-467 6220.

NAIM CDI, Immaculate condition, eighteen months old, boxed, remote. £1,375 ono. Naim NAP 250, 1989. Model (Silver edged). Also immaculate. £800.
Ask for Chris on 01793-612210, or 01793-534104 (Swindon, Wilts).

FOR SALE: Proac Studio 3 EBS floorstanding speakers. Black ash. Excellent condition. £700 ono.
Tel: 081-952 2044 evening and weekends.

ROKSAN DARIUS Speakers. Latest spec. in Rosewood complete with T-bar stands and crossovers, in perfect condition with original boxes. £1,000.00.
Telford (0952) 727866.

OFFERS WANTED FOR: Technics SL110 Turntable, SME 3009 arm, Shure V15 and Ortofon cartridges, Technics SU8600 amp and 579600 tuner, Celestion Ditton 66 speakers and Revox A66 tape deck.
Phone: 0494-715282.

CABLES. V.D. Hul source 4 x 3 metre £70. Silver Sounds 2 x 3 metre £150, Monster 2 x 3 metre £25. Burmester pre phono £1,800. New £380. Yamaha. DSP £85.
Tel: 0753 857530.

WANTED KEF CELESTE or Concord speakers. Must be in good condition. Will collect.
Tel: (Ruislip) 0895-633687.

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ACOUSTIC ENERGY AE 2 ROSEWOOD	# £599	£1100
AUDIO INNOVATIONS S. 500 INTEGRATED	# £550	£1000
AUDIO INNOVATIONS S. 800C PRE.	# £250	£450
KRELL PAM DUAL MONO PRE.	# £650	£2600
MUSICAL FIDELITY M.A. 100 MONOS.	# £700	£1500
AUDIO INNOVATIONS S. 800 MCT	# £140	£200
IMPULSE H5. ASH	# £900	£1850
SILVER SOUNDS WHISPER 12/4S/C	# £120	£240
SOUTHER LINEAR TRACKING ARM	# £500	£1350
GAUSS 1502 HF BULLET TWEETERS (PAIR)	# £300	£460
Audio Note ANV 1m	# £150	£225
Lowther Audio Vector (PM6A) Pair	# £450	
Michell Gyrodek	# £450	
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PRIVATE

SUGDEN SDT1 CD player £550. Audioquest speaker cables: Jade 2m pair £120, Midnight 3m pair £80. All in excellent condition. Southend 0702-618922.

A.V.I. MONO BLOCK amps 150 Watts £750, Sumo pre amp £300, Quad FM4 Tuner £230, Musical Fidelity P150 power amp, Ruark Sabres plus ATAcama stands £260, Myst TMA3 amp £120, Technics PS 700 C.D. player £170, Quad 33/405 amp £210, Michell ISO £230. Tel: 0977-643629.

AUDIO RESEARCH LS5 (Black). All valve tube pre mint condition £2,800.00. DPA 100s pre brand new, £950.00. Tel: David 071-272 7380.

LINN KEILIDH speakers with ceramic plinths £425 ono. Naim Nac 62/Hi-Cap/NAP90, NACA5 speaker cable, Chord Cobra interconnect. Naim MM Boards £925 ono (no split on amps). Tel: Damian (01233) 641993.

AKAI AMPLIFIER £70 speakers £70, cassette deck, GMX M10 £60. Distal tuner AT VOT £80. Yamaha Graphic Equaliser EQSS0 £60. Technics CD player PG 100A with Trichord Clock 2 fitted £90. Tel: 0667-456009 (evenings).

ROTEL MICH1 RHT-10 tuner £495. Tel: 0628-26085.

LINN KABER ACTIVE loudspeakers including Linn Kaber Active crossover unit £750, 2 x Linn LK280 amplifiers £325 each, all boxed immaculate condition. Cash sale. Tel: after 6pm: 0924 383935.

FOR SALE: LINN LP12 (black) Valhalla, Naim ARO tonearm, Linn cartridge, mint condition, never been used £850.00. Early Linn Kans and Sound Organisation wall stands £180.00. Tel: Paul 0737-762196 (Surrey) evenings/weekends.

DUAL 32 Function remote control Auto Reverse Hi-Fi system. Strobe T/Table, tuner, amp, receiver, speakers, rack system, perfect. Probably best system from Germany cost over £1,500, accept £750. Tel: 0895-253259 (Hillingdon).

AUDIOLAB 8000T tuner £550, Shearpe Phase 2 amplifier £400. Project 6, exquisite heavy hardwood plinth (easily restored to standard) £300. All items beautifully cared for. Tel: 0233-860737 evenings (Ashford, Kent).

LINN AXIS BASIK plus P77, Naim Nait Mk1, Sponder Preludes, Heybrook speaker stands. £200 complete. Tel: 0279-504926.

NAIM NAIT II (mm) £200. Linn Kan II with Kan II stands (black) £275. Mission Cyrus II (Mk1) £160. Demonstration possible. Ealing area. Tel: 081-723 0967 (evenings).

A.V.I. 2000 Series D.A.C. £250. AKG 1000 Headphones £250. Both in very good condition. Tel: (0703) 738271.

AUDIOLAB 8000A amplifier. Excellent working order, owned from new. 8 years. £100. Tel: 0823-490913 (Taunton, Somerset).

ENTHUSIASTS CLEAR OUT. Aura YA100 Evolution amplifier, the original and still the best! £200 o.n.o.; Tannoy 6091ls £200 o.n.o.; Celestion DL31ls £75 o.n.o.; Dual CS 5051l £65 o.n.o. All boxed U.G.C. wanted Goodmans Maxim 20. In good condition, reasonable price paid. Tel: 0202-475781.

ROK5AN ROK-DPI CD transport, £600. Audio Alchemy DDE DAC, £220. Sony Walkman Pro, £150. Audio Syntheses Passion Passive pre-amp, £300. Hart Audiophile MC/MM pre-amp, £120. All boxed. Tel: 01202-884148.

LEAK STEREO 20, Varislope 2 preamp, Trough Line 3 tuner, Garrard 301, Decca FF55 Pickup, little used, original valves, original boxes, original invoice for most £550. Tel: 01442 822355.

DYNACO CLASSIC USA Valve equipment. ST70 power amp £275 PAS 3 preamp £150. FM 3 tuner £120. PAT 4 transistor preamp £100. FM5 transistor tuner £100. All excellent. Esher 0372 467 264.

MERIDIAN 206B CD player. Boxed, mint condition. Hardly used. £500 ono. Oxon (0235) 817258 (evenings).

NAIM 42/110 pre/power amp, moving coil, £395. Naim 110 power amp, £250. Naim Nait 2 integrated amp, £250. Linn Sondek LP12. Valhalla, Ittok, Audio Technica OCS, £600. Ruark Crusaders, rosewood. £700. Tel: 01383 410851 or 0374 864541 (Fife).

NAIM 32 pre-amp (32.5 conversion), moving coil, variable auxiliary, £150. Bandridge Super Goldline interconnect, £15. "Esoteric Audio" speaker cable (US import), 20 metres, £30. Tel: 01383 728076 (Fife).

MERIDIAN M1 Active loudspeakers, rosewood, nice condition with original packaging £650.00 ono. MERIDIAN M30 Active Loudspeakers, black, with stands and original packaging £550.00 ono. EAR 802 valve preamp, black, £600.00. Tel: 0985 844651 (Wiltshire).

WANTED: TECHNICS, Stereo / Mono DC power amplifier, model SE-9060 and FM stereo tuner ST-9030. Call Mr. Butt on, Tel: 273 592495 work, 273 422308 home.

KEF 105-3 Reference speaker: rosewood finish, excellent sound and condition. Bargain £1,000 Denon 33,000 CD player. Cost new £1,200, sell for £395 o.n.o. P.X. considered. Tel: (0225) 400911.

MONITOR AUDIO / Creek equipment. M.A. R852. Metal dome speakers with Linn Sara stands. £135. CAS3140. Tuner £90. CAS4140II. Amplifier £85. All immaculate. boxed with manuals. Gaily dem. No offers. Tel: 0254 261162.

LINN LP12/Ittok/Asaka (1987/88/90) - £600; Linn LK280 (1990) - £350; various Hi-Fi magazines, 1970's onwards - offers? Northampton (01604) 403947 after 7pm.

LFD PA2 stereo power amplifier 80 wpc. Superb sound and excellent condition. Owner up-graded to monoblocks. £950. Audio Synthesis type, dual mono passive pre-amp (stepped attenuator) £300. Telequipment oscilloscope £50. Tel: 0621-860 630.

ROGERS HG88 MkIII stereo valve integrated amp, matching tuner, £200. Strathclyde turntable 305m, brushed steel heavy plinth. SME 3009-11 arm, £100. Swaps, Croft Micro, FM4, British CD, Sony Elcassette. Liverpool 280 3216.

MUSICAL FIDELITY CDT, triode valve CD player, black/chrome, £375. Art VP-1 rack size valve pre-amplifier, £375. Leak Troughline 3 stereo tuner, £85. Tel: Brighton (0273) 684424.

LINN NEXUS speakers in excellent condition. Finished in black ash veneer, complete with dedicated Ku-Stone stands. Good imagery and tonal balance, powerful bass. £450 o.n.o. Phone: Horsham (0403) 253873, evenings/weekends.

LEAK TRANSCRIPTION turntable, Arcam P77, both excellent £80. Cyrus PSXII Pristine, 12 hours use, boxed, guarantee £190 (£300) or swap de Paravacini 834P phono stage, in good condition. Tel: 01446-721871 PHK.

LINN LP12; Lingo; Ekos; Troika. Little used. £1,350. Tel: (Taunton) 0823 443825.

AUDIO RESEARCH D12: STAX LAMBDA Signatures SRMT1 new diaphragms, Macintosh MR67 valve tuner, custom Audionote M7 valve preamp, S.E. Monoblocks, Brook 12a, EMT tonearm, M.C. transformers, Meridian 206 delta/sigma. Tel: 01642-559543.

COMPLETE QUALITY Stereo - Rotel AM/FM receiver RX-940AX, Rotel CD RCD-965BX, TEAC Double auto reverse cassette WV-525R, Rogers loudspeakers LS4a/2, Target stands, Isolating transformer. £650.00. Tel: 0860-459799. Great Dunmow.

PINK TRIANGLE EXPORT, Tabrizi arm, Corus Black, mint, £425 o.n.o. Kelvin Labs integrated amplifier 22+22. Superb sound 2 years old. Mint £350 o.n.o. Tel: 0663-733119.

WANTED: MERIDIAN M2 loudspeakers, must be in good condition and preferably walnut. Can collect. Phone: 0604 643383 after 6pm.

AUDIO NOTE K/5P loudspeakers, silver-wired, black finish with Huygens K4 stands £425. Tel: 081-572 2504 (evenings).

LEAK TROUGHLINE 3 Stereo, serviced, aligned by London Sound, written report, superb £160. Naim Nait 2. £250. Rega 3, RB300, K9 £200, both mint and boxed. J.P.W. Sonata £55. Tel: 0753-653765.

MANTICORE MAGICIAN tone arm chrome finish, van den Hul wired, Linn fitting, excellent condition. £650 new, bargain at £200 including part worn ATOC9 cartridge. Tel: 0525 382710

LINN ISOBARIKS, recently serviced inc. stands. 5" NAC A4 very good condition, £650. Naim NAC 42.5 and NAP90 £450. Rotel RC870 pre £140. RB850 x2 £220. KEF 103/4 unused £800. Audio Technica OC9 cartridges, brand new £160. Tel: Jules on 0792 280061

WHARFEDAL HAREWOOD SPEAKERS, were £900, only £350, 5 star review "What Hi-Fi" September 1992. Ortofon SPU cartridge, recently re-built and re-tipped by the cartridge man, £300. Harman Kardon Citation Twelve power amp, £150. Linn Linnk, Naim made MC to line level step up £100. F & S Trading single-ended Class A 12W valve monoblock power amps, Gold Dragon valves, £380 new, £230. Phone: 081 767 2660.

LINN LP12 Lingo Ekos Ortofon MC3000, Afro finish, 1990 spec. £1200. Meridian 208 pre-amp/cd + 209 remote control £550. Both mint/boxed. No offers. Tel: 01924-290749 (Yorkshire).

DELTEC DPA50s, four box pre, power, phono, amp combination, including speaker and interconnect cables, latest spec., boxed, manuals, mint, see review H.F.W. April '91. £1,295. Tel: 0703 223065.

CR DEVELOPMENTS Calypso, new £395. Stax SR30 - SRD4 headphones £90. Linn Kans black bi-wireable £250. Leak Stereo 20, £200. KT 88-6S50. Single ended monoblocks £595 PR, 300B single ended monoblocks £695 PR, part exchange welcome, valve equipment wanted for cash. Tel: 0121 784 8765.

VALVE COLLECTION: McIntosh MA-230 integrated, £490. Radford STA-25/3 £450. Leak: ST-50 £450, Troughline Stereo £140. Rogers HG-88/2 £190, Cadet/3 £90. GEC 4xKT-88, used £150, new £350. Mullard 4xEL-37 new £160. Tel: 0171-625 8966.

AUDIO INNOVATIONS L2 Pre-amp (new £800) £495 (recent service). Semmheiser HD 480 headphones £25. Upgrading again! Telephone day: 01484 429844 Night: 01484 534890. West Yorks. Ask for Simon.

LINN KABERS PASSIVE Black £925. Kaber Aktiv cards £525. Linn Keltiks, new stands, walnut £2,795. Marantz CD10 £695. Linn LK1 and LK280 £495. Tel: 01525 860000 Ext.2349 days; 01582 456137 evenings.

ROGERS LS4a/2 speakers. £110. Nakamichi IA3 amplifier with separate phono amp. £125. Tel: 01948-667520 (North Shropshire).

LINN AXIS turntable with Akito tonearm and Linn K9 cartridge. Boxed £325. Quad 33 control amp, £100. Quad F.M. 3 tuner, £100. Afrormosia sleeve for above £30. Tel: 0233 732673, Ashford, Kent.

ROGERS P22 LOUDSPEAKERS Walnut, including 4 No. 8m lengths of Cable Talk, Concert 2 cable £450.00. Tel: 01252 843391 (Hartley Wintney, Hants.).

DNM PA2 MONOBLOCKS, 4 chassis, 70 watts, balanced, tri-wire, star-earthed. £1,500, ono. (May also sell matching 3B twin pre-amp and cables). Magneplanar 5MGa panel speakers. £350. Tel: 01506 825546.

AUDIO RESEARCH LS3 pre-amp, black, boxed, mint condition £900. Tel: 071-622 2350.

MICROMEGA C.D.3 transport £675, mint condition. Year old, cost new £1,200. Alphason Orpheus speakers with Alphason Titan stands, walnut. Cost £1,190. Sell for £475. Phone 0884 32465.

IMPLUSE H2 loudspeakers, in cherry, little use, less than 1 year old, mint, boxed. £1,350. Audion 300B Silver Night monoblocks, export model (20 WPC), little use, mint, boxed, £1,400. Tel: 01734 664001 (Reading). Buyer collects.

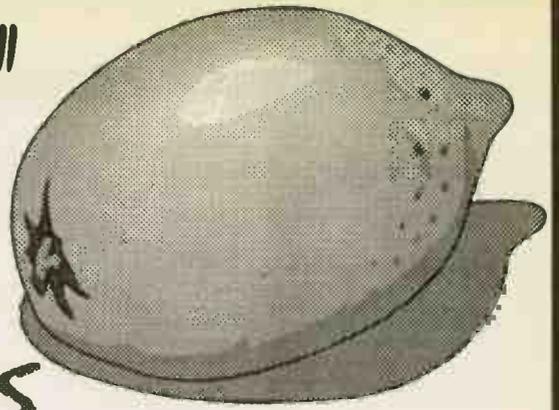
THORENS 124 T.T. 4-SPEED Plinth mounted. 5.M.E. arms 12" and 9", extra arm boards. Audio Technia M.C. transformer and cartridge (as new). Pair Lowther horns, fitted new Swedish speakers, grills, stands and bi-wired. Mahogany. 6-8 hours use. Hitachi, solid state receiver 5R. 700. Sanusi cassette deck, Dolby S.C. 700. Motion Electronics television sound receiver. Fitted in small solid oak cabinet circa 1910. Offered as working whole £1,150.00 or might separate. Also Haffler amp and pre amp, £300.00. WANTED: Audio Research stereo valve amp. Tel: 051-924 6808 any time.

SUGDEN: A-48/2 integrated amp £150, C-51/P-51/R-51 separates £295, Craftsman/3 turntable £75. Garrard 401 chassis £175. Lowther PM-6 Acoustas, handcrafted, beautiful £330. 2xKEF Kantor, ultra slim 2-way £80. Tel: 0171-372 3724.

QUAD ELS-63s. + 606/2. + Burmester 785A £2,450. Luxman PD-300 + Alphason HR-100s + Adcom v.d.Hul £875. Nakamichi 620 poweramp, 100 wpc. + M. Fidelity "The Pre-Amp" £425. Technics SL-1400/2 £145. Revox A-78/3 integrated amp £175. Tel: 0171-372 3724.

MUSICAL FIDELITY A370.2 power amp (£3,000 new) and P173 preamp with separate power supply (£775 new). Both 26 months old, mint and boxed. £1,850 ono, may split. Tel: 0131 225 9030.

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AUDIONOTE VALVE DAC 3 Signature DA Converter. Unused prize. New £2,700 accept £1,600. Audionote AN-L Speaker Cable 5 metres Bi-wired pair unused, new over £600, accept £300. Tel: 01303 840 303.

REVOX A77 REEL-TO-REEL (3.75/7.5 I.P.S.) Two-track tape deck with cover, remote control. Dolby, immaculate condition, very little use. £400.00 o.n.o. Tel: 0181-948 7694.

ARCAM ALPHA Series II speakers with quality stands £100. A & R A60 amplifier £100. Sansui TU217 tuner £30. One owner, all boxed. Tel: 01993 775623 Whitney (evenings).

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LINN SONDEK LP12, Lingo, Trampolin, Ittok, Asaka (under 150 hours use), Afro finish, mint, boxed - £925. Tel: 01978-780580.

GYRODEC RB300 QC power supply £775 - one off black finish, Snell Type C £1,300. Magnum A200 monoblocks P200-PS200 preamp £2,800. Pioneer CT91a cassette deck £375. Blacklink interconnect £110. Tel: 0272-730819.

NEW VALVE AMP, 20 watts Class A, push pull, oversize custom designed Sower transformers for maximum frequency response, steel case, gold phono 3 line inputs, balance, Alps vol. £460. Tel: 01928 713676.

REVOX B77/11 (H.S.) with manual £600 ono. May P/EX for pre/power amp (Naim/Quad or Musical Fidelity). Technics (ultimate) analogue tuner ST9600 £200 o.n.o. Luxman 507x amp (Rosewood) £150 o.n.o. Tel: 091-4877796.

SUMIKO BLUE POINT special cartridge £150. Origin Live speaker stands advanced model £135, Kimber 4PR speaker cables 2 x 20 metres £40, QED Discsaver phono stage £20, QED CD switchbox £15. Tel: 0171-769 7074.

MARK LEVINSON AMPLIFIER. Pre (ML12A), power (ML11) with dual power supply (PL5-124) plus 2 adapters, 2 pairs of silver interconnect cables, total cost over £6,000, quick sale for £2,000 ono; SilverSound speaker cable (4/16), 2x2m, £100. Tel: 0181-542 5025 (London).

MERIDIAN A500 LOUDSPEAKERS, black ash, £450. Meridian 508 CD player £850. Meridian 551 integrated amplifier £450. All brand new, redundancy forces reluctant sale. Classical record collection for sale. Tel: 021-783 8214.

PHILIPS REEL-TO-REEL Radio and REC deck hi-fi, original boxes and manual. Bristol. Offers. Arral. Tel: 01705 524811, work.

EXPOSURE SYSTEM dual wired VKK, two VI PSU's, IV power amp, superb condition, all boxed, must sell, bargain £750. Monitor Audio Studio 10s, Rosewood, excellent condition, boxed, £475. Tel: 0296 623762.

DECCA SH4E £99.00. Decca FFS5 £49.00. SME 3009S2 £45.00. SME 3009 DET £40.00. SME 3009 DET £40.00. Marconi 78 Pick-up £20.00. Garrard TP pick-up £20.00. Ortophon VMS III £5.00. Shure M75EDII £5.00. Shure V15III body £5.00. M.A. 10mm Gold Tweeters £20.00. Tel: 0525 384174.

WANTED. NEW TAPE HEADS for Philips N4506 open reel tape deck. Tel: (0602) 383897, Nottingham.

LEAK STEREO 20, mint, original condition £225. Leak Point One stereo pre-amp £85. Leak Troughline II mono, £40. Connoisseur Craftsman with arm and Decca needs plinth and restor. £75. Tel: 01629 733634.

PIONEER A400. Little used. As new £130. Tel: 0795 425355.

FOR SALE - PRIVATE: Apogee Divas with Dax de-luxe version (list £17,500) £5,250. Krell KRS200 amps four 200watt Class 'A' mono-blocks (list £12,000 each) £4,800 each; KRS pre-amp 6 components (list £11,500) £4,700; Cardas Cable 2 x 15M single twin-link (list £9,500) £3,800. Tel: 0945 63077.

WANTED - PRIVATE: Denon POA 6600 mono-block amps must be mint - cash or P/X Rolleivision 35 twin projector with IR remote control and 2 x 70-120mm Zoom f3.5 lens. Tel: 0945 63077.

SUMO ANDROMEDA power amp 275 watts per channel. Sounds, looks superb. £450. Monitor Audio MA14 Gold, £240. Klipsch Heresy £450. Garrard 401, SME, £130. Musical Fidelity 2A £80. Tel: 0280-706488.

PINK TRIANGLE Anniversary Deck. All mods. £825 (£1,800.) Van-den-Hul MC Two cartridge. Special sample, unused. £750 (£1,300.) SME V arm £795 (£1,300). Tel: 081-450 7384.

RUARK BROADSWORDS; black, upgraded crossover, bi-wireable £300. Phone 01223-290619 anytime.

DOLBY SURROUND System: Audioplan speakers, Monitor Audio centre channel speaker, 4-rear effect speakers, passive control centre and 3 Rotel power amps, Lexicon CP2 processor. True quality T.V. audio system costing £2,250 new, sale for £1,100. Tel: 0442 219394 (9 - 5pm).

MITCHELL ARGO line level pre-amp with extra heavy P.S.U. cost £850. As new £475 o.n.o. Also phono stage by Bill Beard, MM-MC, (Beats Mitchell ISO), cost £600 as new £325 o.n.o. Tel: 01634 365153 (Kent).

PROAC EBS SPEAKERS and stands (mint) £799. Exposure VII-pre, IV-power, IX-Mps (all mint) £800. Marantz CD94 (mint and superb) £395. Tel: 0492-580 201 (North Wales after 6pm).

WANTED: Serious collector of Paul Voigt's loudspeakers, horn's, pick-up's and microphones. Also searching for any sales brochures, ephemera and information on Voigt patents and P.G.A.H. Voigt. Please contact John Howes 01892-540022.

LOWTHER/QUAD/Vitavox loudspeakers (pairs), Lowther PM6 Mk1s, rear horn loaded, efficient, £185. Quad original ELS. £250. Vitavox HF horns, 53 drivers, plus enclosure. £450. Tel: 01452 760746 (Glos).

ROGERS RAVENSBROOK stereo tuner; Rogers Ravensbrook stereo amplifier; KEF Chorale speakers, Thorens deck, Pioneer stereo cassette tape deck and tuner - CTF 2121 (with Dolby). Tel: (01276) 23072.

SUPRA 4mm (2 x 3M), gold plugs £24. Monster optical DAC cable £25. Kontak digital cable £30. Stan Curtis system "A" heatsinks, (0.5c/W) 12 x £10 each (PCB's available). 530VA toroid 30-0-30v £18. Tel: 01254 264593.

QUAD ESL-63 SPEAKERS. Chocolate brown. Excellent condition. Bought 1983. £1,100 o.n.o. Tel: 01366 728129 (Norfolk).

QUAD 67 CD PLAYER, cost £825, sell £570. Audio Innovations A500 integrated amp, triode coupled, cost £1,049, sell £450: Ruark Talisman II speakers, cost £700, sell £399. All immaculate condition and boxed. Tel: 0404 814188.

DELTEC (DPA) PDM I Series 2 DAC, co-ax in, vgc £220; Philips CD473 CD player, co-ax out, remote, FTS £75. Tel: 0727-827630 after 6.30pm.

WANTED: AVANTIC DL7-35, Leak TL12, Avantic SP21-2, good SME arm, boxed valves. 'Hi-Fi News' magazines 1950s - 1980s buy or exchange others, two for one. TJM, 18 Silver Street, Thorverton, Devon EX5 5LT. Tel: 01392 860182.

NAIM 42.5 PRE-AMP and 110 power amp, SNAIC - £280. Tel: (Leeds) 0113 279 1337.

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HEYBROOK SEXTET speakers with stands, black/walnut. Mint condition - (New £1,100) - bargain at £700 with boxes. Tel: 0181-203 9712 any time

TEAC XI000R open reel including all accessories and stand £480. Naim NAC 12s/NAP 120 £275. Yamaha K960 cassette £40. All ONO and original boxes. Consider exchange LP12 or ARO. Tel: 01962 852378 Ed.

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MARANTZ CD12LE Trichord / Rata upgrades ultimate CD performance, new £3,000 c/w £300 Siltech / Kimber leads £1,200 EAR 802 valve preamp / power amp combination £1,200 Alphason Orpheus speakers £250. Tel: 0727 867645.

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MERIDIAN M20 active speakers, walnut, immaculate, with balanced/unbalanced leads (7 metres), fully boxed. £390. Tel: 0181-689 6855 evenings/weekends, Croydon, Surrey.

DPA PDM2, TWO BOX DAC, boxed, all leads, £1,300. Tel: 01962 774218 (Winchester).

SPENDOR S100 monitor loudspeakers tri-wire, black, boxed as new £650. Custom stands for above or NS1000 £100. Tel: 01623 755347 after 6pm.

ROGERS LS6/a speakers, bi-wired with Vdh cable, RATA and Delflex modified internals, excellent condition, in boxes £120. Tel: Lincoln 01522/694871.

GARRARD 401, SME 3009II, original plinth restored, superb, £249 ono. Leak Troughline, pristine £120 Valve phono stage £130.00. Plus other vintage equipment, Arcam Two's £130.00. WANTED: SME309, VPL pre. Paul 0895 446713.

LEAK STEREO 20 (rebuild, serviced), Audio Innovations L1 preamp with Sovtek, Gold Aero and spare valves. Rotel RQ970BX phono stage. 2x3m Audioquest F14 cable. Excellent condition and sound, £570, may split. Tel: 0171-8330482.

LINN HI-FI FOR SALE: Klout £1,390; Kabers (black) £980; Kaber Aktiv modules £550; LP12 (black, Valhalla, Cirkus, solid base) £690; Ekos £980; Arkiv (10 hours use) £690; Tel: (01922) 640737.

MUSICAL FIDELITY The Pre-amp 2A, excellent condition, boxed £125.00 ono. Mission 767 Loudspeakers, rosewood with active LFA unit and PSX power supply, includes Linn speaker cables £1,700.00 o.n.o. Carlisle 0228-21533

APOGEE CENTAUR Minors with stands £900; consider part exchange for Harbeth, ATC, Spondor. Sony 337ESD CD player £275. Nakamichi ZX-7 cassette deck £400. All mint, with original packing. Tel/Fax: 01273 464449.

CHAPMAN VALVE POWER amplifier. Refurbished by Definitive Audio - Cornwall. Partridge transformers, etc. Ideal partner for Horn speakers. Excellent condition. £575 ovo. Mark - 0752 691273 (Devon).

NAKAMICHI DRAGON cassette deck. Mint condition. Boxed c/w manuals. New £2,350, accept £1,200 ono. Mark - 0752 691273 (Devon).

ORELLE DA 180 MKII DAC £295, Arcam Delta 170.3 CD transport £295. Both as new, can demonstrate. Reading 0734 753335.

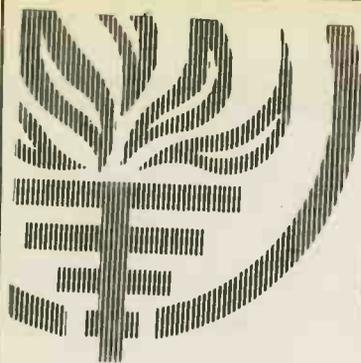
AUDIO RESEARCH SP14 pre-amp, cost £3,298 accept £1,295 and Stax CDP Quattro II integrated CD player, cost £2,995 accept £795 both three + half years old and mint condition. Tel: Robert Wilson on 0181-981 140

MERIDIAN 206B, immaculate £395 o.n.o. (£1,000). SD Acoustics SD1 mark 2, walnut, 4 feet, mint, £750 o.n.o. (£1,800). Audiolab 8000C pre-amp, mint £250 o.n.o. (£480) Musical Fidelity B200 MK2, mint, £145 o.n.o. (£370). Tel: (0141) 6210636.

ARCAM DELTA 290 integrated amplifier, excellent condition, still under warranty, £300 o.n.o. Tel: 0442 66628.

LINN SONDEK LP12, Ittock, black, little use, immaculate £525. Naim 32.5 pre-amp MM/MC boards, excellent condition £250. Naim NAP 250 old style £550. Linn Karik CD as new £875. Tel: 0181-871 0424.

PIONEER A400 £200, EPOS ES14/Stand £295, Linn Axis - Basik Plus - K9 £295, Philips remote CD850 £75, Aiwa ADF360 cassette £45. Little used. All in excellent condition. East Sussex 0797 253073.



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MST TECHNOLOGIES valve pre-amp with 2X Quad 303 power-amps, recent service. Very high quality, all Triodes. Any trial welcome. Also Leak Troughline 3 and 33pre. David on (01489) 878534 or (0973) 316046.

LINN KAIRN £850. Kaber Active £700 (or £750 Passive) Active X over £550 Ekos arm £750. Hafler DH101 pre inc MC Xformer £175. Quad ESL63 stands £120. Ring 0753 851429 evenings or weekends.

FACTORY SERVICED QUAD II amplifiers, 22 control unit and FM tuner, (modified for stereo). All with original manuals. £340. Also Garrard 301 with manual £120. Both together £450. All in V.G.C. Tel: 01334 472645 (Fife).

CHORD SPM 1000 power-amp, 250 watts per channel, rave reviews, magnificent sound. Immaculate condition £1,200. (List price £2,400). Tel: 0206 825887.

WANTED: HEYBROOK arm for use on Heybrook turntable. Tony Harlow, 11, Perrycoaste Court, Taylor Close, St. Albans, Herts. (Neighbour's Telephone - 0727 862228).

REVOX G36, 1/2 TRACK £225. Meridian 205 power-amps, 3560. Pair B & W 804, rosewood £850. Tel: 01892 536919, West Kent.

QUAD ESL BRONZE, Quad IIs, resistors and capacitors replaced. Recent new valves. Quad 22 £700.00. Hadcock 228 Super £20.00. WANTED: H.F.N. January 1985. Tel: 0243 576073 (Chichester).

FOR SALE - LINN LP12, (Lingo, Cirkus, Trampoline, Ekos) turntable (£1,295). Pink Triangle Da-Capo DAC (1307 Filter) (£975). Kinshaw Perception stereo power amp, (only 3 months old, 150W x 2, balanced and normal inputs, (new £975) (£595). Heybrook Sextet speakers (rosewood) (£695). All items mint and boxed, will demonstrate. Phone 01324-563364.

LEAK TROUGHLINE '3' stereo tuner, excellent £135. Quad FM tuner mono £35. Quad E.L.S. bronze, grills marked hence £175. Stern 5-10 valve monoblocks with pre-amp £85. Call Barry 01472-871199.

QUAD ELS (boxed), Revox A77, DBX 119, Uher 4000lc report, Linn Sondek LP12 Valhalla and Nirvana and Basik and P77, Naim I25 and M/M and M/C boards and PSU. All owned from new. 0825 890607 or 0825 761054 or Fax: 0825 890104.

MUSICAL FIDELITY A1 F.E. and Mk II amps; Audiolab 8000A/II; 5nell Ks; NAD 3130; Kudos stds. (18in); Audiotech sub-table x2; Seismic Sink; Base boards x 2; 5 Ran and Granite platforms; XLO, 5il. Sds., Audioplan and Deltec Interconnects; various speaker cables (short lengths); RATA and Sonic Link mains cables; RATA super clamp; Art QD ampers; Target T22; Audiotech wall shelves. Open to offers on all. Phone Steve on (01685) 385898 after 6pm.

GOLDRING 1042 cartridge (30 hours) £55. One each 5 & 8 metre cabletalk 2 bi-wire cable terminated £60. Tel: 0384 637230 (W. Midlands).

SPENDOR SP2/2 Loudspeakers, teak, Target stands £395. Linn LK100 power amp, seven months old £450. Linn LK400 bi-wire cable, 2 x 6 metres £140. Linn Intek amplifier, £295. Tel: (01603) 36203.

LINN LP12 VALHALLA Afro Ittok arm. New Audio Technica OC9 cartridge. £495.00. Tel: 0344-762805

DECCA GOLD "Garrotted", line contact stylus £90; KEF B139 bass units £100 ono; pair vintage Chapman Multiwave tuner S6BS-FM £45; Thorens TD 150 £35; Rogers Ravensbrook £35. Rotherham 010709 555403.

WANTED: CELESTION 66 loudspeakers. Mint condition would be nice, but not essential. Can collect. Phone Charles on 021-628 2085.

MERIDIAN 208 £650. Exposure VIII monoblocks £750. Denon AVC 1530 prologic £325. Canon S30 with stands/bass station subwoofer £275. Canon SC10 £85. Tel: 01252 878200.

CASTLE WINCHESTER loudspeakers, very good condition, £780. Tel: 0171-917 2465 (day), 0462-712583 (other times).

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QUAD ESL loudspeakers, bronze £300. Colchester (0206) 868314.

CYRUS II AMPLIFIER £150.00. Tannoy Cheviot speakers (classic design) £275.00. Yamaha CDX700 CD. Player £135.00. All excellent condition. Tel: 01462 442717.

QUAD 44/405. FM4 TUNER. Thorens turntable. SME 3009 Series 2 with Ortofon M15e Super. B & W P2H speakers. 500. Nakamichi Tri Tracer with remote control 120. Sony TA-5650 amplifier 99. Tel: 0769 540353.

KEF 104/2 SPEAKERS, walnut, bi-wired £650. Quad 34/606 pre/power amplifier £550. Thorens TD-125 II / SME3009 IMP arm / ABR P77 £250. Sony TC-K 1010 cassette deck £70. Tel: 0895 271953 (Uxbridge).

LOWTHER BEL CANTO speakers (£2,400) £1,150. Maggie 1.5 QR (£1,650) £1,050. Brand new, Martin Logan CLS c/w brand new panels £1,200. Impulse HI speakers special models by designer £1,100. Tel: 0181-289 3875 evenings.

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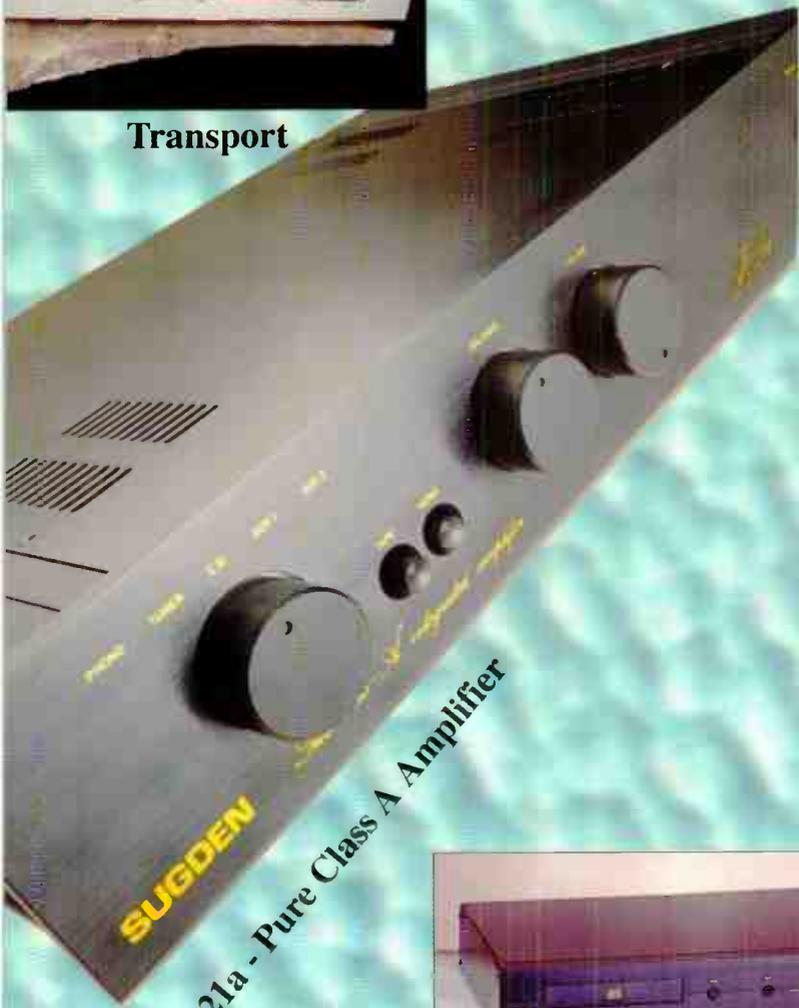
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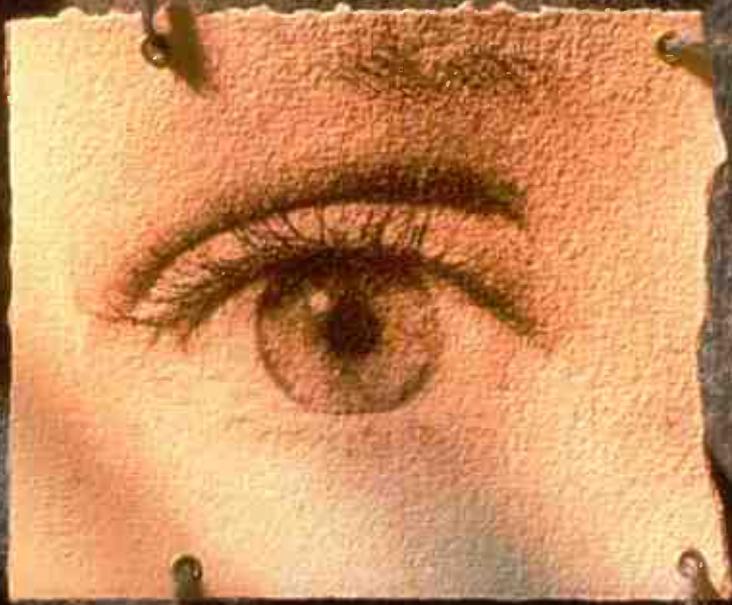


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