NEW AUDIOPHILE
514 CD PLAYER
FROM NAD

SUPPLEMENT NO. 16
(overseas - inside)
free with this issue.

BASS POWER -
REL'S STADIUM II
SUBWOOFER

PINK TRIANGLE
VENTRICLE
LOUDSPEAKER

UNISON SIMPLY TWO
VALVE AMPLIFIER -
AFFORDABLE
SINGLE-ENDED

COMPETITION - WIN A MERIDIAN
HI-FI SYSTEM WORTH £25.00

Exercise your senses at the
London Sound & Vision Show
22nd - 24th September 1995
What else can we say....?
Too many of the valve amplifiers that reach us are crudely engineered. Beneath the veneer of a sexy chassis (!) they rely on copycat circuits hooked up to cheap output transformers. Buyers are being taken in. A well engineered valve amplifier is something very special, but there are few around. You’ll find one of the few on p42.

- NAD enter the budget CD battlefield with their new big gun, the 514. Champions of budget esoterica, they face off Marantz. Will the CD63SE win again, or have NAD got a killer on their hands? See p13.

- Linn’s LP12 is one of the world’s most famous turntables. It’s still good enough to bruise the competition. On p36 we bring you one of the most comprehensive Sondek features going.

- People love being moved by their hi-fi. REL subwoofers do just that. Their latest ground shaker appears on p27.

- Getting hi-fi from an old 1960s dictation medium like cassette is wringing blood from a stone. TEAC do it better than most, as their top V-8030S model testifies on p29.

We thought the valve revival was small time - a minor tributary of interest alongside the main stream of audio. But perhaps not. Now the music business are turning on to them; Pink Floyd’s new Pulse album uses valves in its mastering.

Couple this with a serious appreciation in the Far East and you have an increasingly valuable worldwide market. This resurgence isn’t passing unnoticed - everywhere. Western Electric of the USA are restarting 300B production. The Russians are already well in there, as are the Chinese of course. The tributary is growing into a river.

Noel Keywood, Editor
THIS MONTH'S REVIEWS

AMPLIFIERS

ALCHEMIST FORSETI
All that glisters is not gold, but Alchemist's latest pre/power combination is a gem, finds Eric Braithwaite.

UNISON SIMPLY TWO
Amidst a sea of black boxed solid-state mediocrity is a fine sounding tube amplifier adorned in wood. Douglas Floyd-Douglass gives it a listen.

SONY TA-F446E
David Price auditions Sony's latest entry into the super-competitive world of budget transistor integrateds.

COMPACT DISC

NAD 514
Does NAD's new no-nonsense 514 CD player slay the all-conquering Marantz CD-63SE? Dominic Todd finds out.

MARANTZ CD-16
Dominic Baker is seduced by the smooth, unassuming sound of Marantz's £1400 CD player.

AUDIO ALCHEMY DDE 1.1
The long awaited replacement to AA's first "Digital Decoding Engine" gets an extensive audition from David Price.

LOUDSPEAKERS

PINK TRIANGLE VENTRICLE
The unusual appellation isn't the only thing interesting about Pink's new high end loudspeaker, finds Noel Keywood.

REL STADIUM 2
Dominic Baker listens to REL's latest wall cracking, teeth rattling, low frequency generator.

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NEWS
You expound on issues that concern us all.

LETTERS
The team get to grips with your hi-fi problems.

QUERIES
Keep that system in the best of health.

COLUMNS
Comment, criticism and overviews.

NEXT ISSUE
September's Hi-fi World is jam-packed with the latest, greatest products from across the globe.

COMPETITION
Win yourself an instant upgrade!

The team get to grips with your hi-fi problems.

SUBSCRIPTIONS
No more tedious trips to the newsagent - and you'll have the pick of the classifieds. What other reason for subscribing do you need?

SPECIALIST HI-FI DEALERS
These dealers offer expert advice and service.

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Who makes what and how to get in touch.

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A range of high performance kits for those who keep soldering on.

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Who sells what, and how to get in touch.

HI-FI WORLD LIBRARY
An essential collection of highly readable titles.

ACCESSORIES
Remember to keep your system in the best of health.

MEASURED PERFORMANCE SECTION
Noel and Dominic heat up the HP3561A.

READERS' CLASSIFIEDS
Looking for that bargain Sondek - Hi-fi World classifieds are the place.

ADVERTISER'S INDEX

FEATURES

LP12 FEATURE
David Price brings you the definitive article on Linn's venerable LP12 turntable, complete with an introduction from the ever-ebullient Ivor Tiefenbrun.

READER'S SYSTEM
John Murt invites us home to peruse his enviable collection of vintage hi-fi.

TWEAKY CORNER
David Price and Dominic Baker listen to cables from Chord. Connections and MPI.

DIY SUPPLEMENT
This month's FREE Hi-fi World DIY Supplement includes a unique design for an open baffle midrange, three-way loudspeaker. It uses Audax High Definition Aerogel drivers and their special oval gold dome piezo electric tweeter. There's also letters, news, and much more!

COMPETITION
Win a stunning Meridian system worth £2500, including 506 CD player 551 amplifier an A500 loudspeakers!

MUSIC
Some excellent new releases for your perusal.

ROCK RECORD OF THE MONTH:
Paul Weller: Stanley Road

CLASSICAL RECORD OF THE MONTH:
Beethoven: Symphony No5 in C minor Op67, Symphony No7 in A major Op92, Vienna Philharmonic; Carlos Kleiber

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CLASSICAL
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The fact is that if you want the purest sound and the most uncompromising specification, it simply has to be New KEF Reference.

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We go to similar extremes in perfecting every detail. Some you can't see like Oxygen-Free Copper internal wiring or magnetic shielding (vital in Home Theatre). Some you can - sumptuously veneered cabinets with heavily gold-plated feet and terminals, for example.

In other words, each pair of Reference speakers is as close to perfection as KM can make it. When you know you can choose the best, would you willingly settle for anything less?

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THE KING IS DEAD!
Retailing for £199.95, the NAD 510 replaces the much loved budget 501 CD player. Gone are superfluities like remote control and in are a number of improvements including shorter analogue signal paths with better shielding from RF interference.

All secondary circuits including transport, servos, and display drivers, have been relegated to separate circuit boards, and separate power regulators for digital and analogue sections ensure proper electrical isolation.

The 510 sports a Bitstream single bit convertor with a 5 pole filter in the analogue stage using high grade components, which NAD claim results in "an unparalleled open and rich sound that is commonly only available from more expensive machines". We wait with interest!

NAD Building
401-405 Nether Street
London N3 1QG
T 0181 343 3240

WHARFEDALE EMPOWER YOU
Wharfedale’s new Valdus range signals the company’s return to its traditional stomping ground - conventional loudspeakers high on value for money. High efficiency means they can be used with modestly powered budget amplifiers. They feature five new driver designs, including a plastic dome tweeter mated to an elliptical horn, claimed to aid dispersion.

Commendably simple crossover networks are used, complete with electronic protection for tweeters.

Finished in traditional English black vinyl wrap, the five models range from the 2-way bookshelf Valdus 100 at £89.95 to the 3-way floorstanding 500, priced at £299.95.

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Sandles Way,
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Leeds LS15 8AL
T 0113 2601222
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Glasgow Stereo Audio 0141 248 4079
Kilmarnock Laser Audio 01563 40292

Northern Ireland:
Belfast Lyric Hi-Fi 01232 381296

Northern England:
Carlisle Peter Tyson 01228 46756
Newcastle Newcastle Hi-Fi 0191 285 7179
Leeds Audio Projects Ltd 0113 2304565
Hull Sound with Style 01482 222771
Oldham Audio Counsel 0161 633 2602
Chadk Audio Counsel 0161 428 7887
Doncaster Sound with Style 01302 321421
Rotherham Moongate Acoustics 01709 37066
Liverpool Better Hi-Fi 0151 227 5007
Warrington Chris Brooks Audio 01925 261212
Shetland Moongate Acoustics 0114 2756048
Sheffield Sound with Style 0114 2737893
Congo Lewon Congleton Hi-Fi 01260 297544
York Sound Organisation 01904 627108

Southern England:
Banbury Overture Ltd 01295 272758
Bishops Stortford The Audio File 01279 506576
Chelmsford Rayleigh Hi-Fi 01245 26650
Oxford Audio T 01865 65961
Rayleigh Rayleigh Hi-Fi 01268 779767
Southend-on-Sea Rayleigh Hi-Fi 01702 435255
Uxbridge Uxbridge Audio 01895 230404
Chalfont St Giles Dallas Audio Ltd 01494 874366
Enfield Audio T 0181 367 3132
Iford Audio T 0181 518 0915
High Wycombe Sound Gallery 01494 531682
London N1 Grahams Hi-Fi Ltd 0171 226 5500
London NW6 Audio T 0171 226 5500
London SE1 The Conran Shop Contracts 0171 357 7703
London SE13 Billy Vee 0181 318 5755
London SW1 Harrods 0171 730 1397 x 3 392
London SW13 The Listening Rooms 0171 226 5500
London SW5 The Listening Rooms 0181 357 7703
London SW7 Kraft 0171 581 8877
London W1 Son et Lumire 0171 580 9059
London W4 Uxbridge Audio 0181 742 3444

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Cardiff Audio Excellence 01222 22656

Northern Ireland:
Dublin Dublin Hi-Fi 00 353 147 852 05

South West England:
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Gloucester Audio Excellence 01452 300064
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Summer McIntosh

Although not terribly visible in the UK, McIntosh are stalwarts of the international superfi scene, with a reputation for excellent build. Their new glass fronted MCD7009 is no exception, boasting a TEAC-style VRDS transport with aluminium die-cast disc turntable. It also features a Bitstream Dual differential DAC per channel, with a 20bit 8 times oversampling digital filter. The MCD7009 is also quite "affordable" by McIntosh standards, at a trifling £2395.

MPI Electronic,
13 Western Road,
Guildford GU2 6AU

No Previous Connections

Resembling some kind of laboratory measuring instrument, Audio Alchemy's new Digital Line Controller is their first all-analogue product. This 4 input line-level preamp sports LEDs to indicate input selection and a pair of two-digit displays showing left and right gain in decibels.

U.S. Hi-Fi on the Up

Figures just released from the US Electronic Industries Association showing factory sales of audio equipment have interesting parallels with their British equivalents.

The overall picture is one of quiet optimism in the States at present, with total sales up over 12% in the year to date 1994. As with the UK, the most buoyant area is audio systems - the realm of minis and micros - which saw an improvement of 16.3%. Portable audio sales including CD portables and "boomboxes" (ghettoblasters to you and I) are also up 12.3%.

In the real hi-fi sector, separates sales - including America's healthy roster of expensive high-end equipment - have risen by a modest 3.1%. Like Britain, separates have been bolstered by audio/visual receivers and "home theater 'speakers", which are individually up a whopping 78% over 1993. But unlike our domestic market, the States seems to be eating up high-end A/V products, so for Americans at least, adding a couple of extra speakers to your cheapo mini-system just isn't real cinema sound.

America's Love Affair with Compact Disc Continues

If you're in the US music business, you've got much to smile about right now, as sales records are being broken as surely as Americans think it's always raining in Britain. Annual shipments of pre-recorded music and videos exceeded $12 billion in 1994, a record 20% increase over 1993, meaning 1.1 billion CDs, cassettes, LPs and music videos were sold last year.

Opinions voiced in the latest RIAA journal include BMG Distribution president Pete Jones' belief that much of this growth is thanks to more buyer-friendly retail outlets with 'listening stations'. Linda Ury Greenberg of Sony Music believes "this growth has obviously been fuelled by the phenomenal success of Compact Disc, which continues to represent the largest and fastest growing format in the market".

Radlett Move

Radlett Audio, formerly of 141 Watling Rd, Radlett, Herts, has moved to new premises at 9 Holywell Hill, St. Albans, Herts AL1 1EU. The new telephone number is 01727 855577.
You may be forgiven for thinking that the best solution for a speaker design is the commonly found, easy to manufacture, rectangular box. Not so.

The asymmetric cabinet used with all AUDIOVECTOR speakers is an example of the finest engineering and visual design.

- non parallel sides reduce standing waves
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For more information and demonstration, contact:

The Chord Company Ltd., 30a Sarum Business Park, Portway, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 6EA. Tel: 01722 331674 Fax: 01722 411388

Distributors of Audiovector speakers for F3/LYD, Meinungsgade 8, D2, DK-2200 Copenhagen N, Denmark. Tel: 01 39 60 60
At this rate, TEAC are going to get the Hi-Fi World gong for most diligent Japanese company of all time. If you so much as blink, you'll miss their latest product release, so eyelids were duly prized open for the announcement of their R9 DAT recorder.

The R9 is an interesting move in the face of so much down-market action by Philips and Sony with DCC and MiniDisc respectively. Retailing at £1195.95, it reinforces the trend of DAT as the choice of recording professionals and affluent home recordists.

Underlining this, the R9’s busy front panel bears a certain resemblance to TASCAM ‘pro’ products. A ‘shuttle dial’ provides video editing-style search facilities, full remote control is standard and the deck features separate one-bit A/D and D/A convertors for each channel. As per usual, UK buyers can have this 9.3kg monster in any colour they like as long as its black.

JAPANESE YEN FOR LESS

To revive their becalmed economy, the Japanese government is investing billions of yen in much needed public works programmes, while the electronics giants are heavily restructuring themselves in the face of an unstoppable yen (at the height of the ‘bubble economy’ in 1990 £1 bought 295 yen, now it commands just 130).

After several years of losses, many large electronics companies are showing modest returns to profitability, with JVC announcing total sales up to 541,000 million yen. Posting a 1,000 million yen profit for fiscal 1994 against a 20,000 million yen loss the previous year, things are looking better. Japanese corporate austerity measures mean JVC shareholders are being asked to make sacrifices, with yearly dividends for fiscal 1994 suspended.

Audio sales grew as strongly as video, up 5%. The area of greatest growth was “Information-related” product lines up 25%, while “Entertainment” dropped 11%. JVC say favourable business in Asian markets has supported the sales increases.

SNEAKY KUDOS IS BRILLIANT!

Hot from Ivor T’s cameo appearance in The Mail on Sunday as “the vinyl expert”, Linn announce the Kudos tuner, which comes as a Sneaky module to fit into the Wakonda preamp or Majik-I integrated for £349, or as a stand-alone unit for £549.

The Kudos is said to provide a standard of performance “close” to the flagship Kremlin tuner, prompting Linn to call it “astounding value for money”, even if they do say so themselves! The Kudos sports FM and AM, 50 presets, variable Threshold and Selectivity, plus an infra-red remote control.

COMPACT KEVLAR

B&W’s new CDM1 and CDM2 standmount loudspeakers continue the company’s amplifier-friendly form by using high quality Kevlar bass/mid drivers.
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Subject to availability. Some items only one off’s. Green Star offers not available with other promotions. E. & O. E.
Since NAD discontinued their Monitor range just over a year ago, they have been left without a suitable CD player to compete in the closely fought mid-range CD player market. Especially galling for NAD has been the success rivals have been having with such machines. The Rotel RCD970 (£350), Marantz CD-63SE (£350) and the Arcam Alpha One (£300) are three examples that spring to mind. Now NAD are set to make the task of choosing between these machines easier.
Getting a better, more involving, sound often means spending a lot of hard earned money. It's such a waste, because every system can benefit from our cables and accessories, at a fraction of the cost of some new "black box". Here are some of the ways we can help.

We have Oxygen Free Copper interconnects (£12.48) up to Pure Silver cables (£120.00) and high definition loudspeaker cables in Silver plated Copper or Pure Silver. Our main cables add weight, power and scale. Non inductive RF filtering (£10.00) and over voltage protection (£3.00) enhance performance still further. Gold plated AV cables, both RF (£19.95) and Scart (£23.52), help bring picture quality in line with NICAM sound resolution.

Valves, capacitors and transistors are all microphonic, they cannot perform optimally if vibrated. Our set of three Brass Isolation cones (£6.50) are worth their weight in gold - revealing low level resolution and dynamics hitherto hidden beneath electronic noise. We also have a cure for your noisy fridge or central heating motor (£3.50), enabling you to throw away your big mains noise suppressor, which has been giving you that "sat upon sound" for years.

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AUGUST 1995
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Lorita Grahame changed my mind about these 'speakers. The deliciously smooth delivery of her vocals, ringing with studio reverb, coloured for deliberate artifice, yet forceful and vibrant, answered a subconscious question: what is it about these speakers that's so good? It is a fabulously smooth, gorgeously revealing midband that can deliver female vocals with a sense of disarming naturalness. Arena II came over beautifully; I realised Pink Triangle's 'speakers have a certain magic.

Not that there's much magic in their name: ventricle is a chamber in the heart - yeech! Before I'd played Colourbox, the 'speakers had me intrigued, but undecided. They've a clean yet sweet and fluid midband, but couldn't place images with metric precision. Within an inch or so perhaps, but not down to a millimetre. Yet apparently contrary to this, violin sections of Chicago's Symphony Orchestra busily hovered with convincing life and body in Scheherazade. So many 'speakers make violins sound coarse, and often congealed into an amorphous mass too, because they fall into the critical break-up/crossover region between midrange and treble drive units. The Pink's benefit here by having a ribbon tweeter and a small, well damped treated-paper midrange cone.

Unfortunately, the midrange unit Pink use is barely able to reach up to meet this tweeter, leaving a shallow but broad midrange dip in the frequency response. I detected this immediately, noticing a softness and lack of midrange bite. And although massed orchestral violins were handled wonderfully, the 'speaker - almost paradoxically it would appear - muted Samuel Magad's solo violin in the opening sequences of Scheherazade. It was withdrawn on the sound stage and a little vague in image position in comparison to the Heybrook Sextets, for example. Images gelled best at high-ish volume; the Pink's came over as a little warm and mellifluous at low listening levels, in my view.

Another apparently contradictory feature of these 'speakers is that although basically warm sounding, they could on occasion display a bright edge. CDs with a lot of treble energy excited the tweeter peak; Steve Earle's close-miked, steel-string guitar cut like a switchblade, his "sixty-seven Chevy, she's old and sleek and black" hissed with sibilant fricatives. Pink Triangle are, like us, great respecters of the Quad Electrostatic. What they have attempted, with the Ventricles, is to capture its glorious midrange properties of transparency and smoothness. In this they've been successful. At reasonable volume the speakers revealed a rich palette of tonal colour and contrasts, and it was this that told me Lorita Grahame had never sounded so real. Differences between violin and viola, clarinet and oboe were resolved clearly, where other speakers can impose a uniformity of colour that acts to mask such differences.
The Pinks use a tiddly four-inch bass/midrange driver. Small bass drivers like this work hard for a living and, pushed hard, get into a tizy. I quickly found its limitations, the copious bass of Eddie Reader's eponymously named album imposing obvious strain, kick drum farting, bass guitar wallowing at high volume. Measurement revealed extremely low sensitivity of 81 dB, so an amplifier of at least 40 watts is needed for moderate listening levels, yet the small bass driver will not deliver high volume. Our 100W Audiolab monoblocks quickly taxed their strengths, so for most listening I used an Aura VA-80 (50 watts), reined back.

All the same, at moderate levels the Ventricle loudspeakers have healthy low-end output, giving them a warm, fulsome balance that brought body and dimension to orchestra and band alike. The Boo Radley's reggae bass line of Upon a 9th and Fairchild strode along cleanly, exhibiting a little softness, but without overhang, and the expansive production of Jackie Leven's Call Mother a Lonely Field filled our listening room beautifully. If you want to appreciate the rich, resonant tones of a baladeer like Leven, I'd have to say the Pinks are as good as any - and better than most.

The Ventricle loudspeakers have properties few others approach and many of us sat quite entranced at times - but they don't go loud. These 'speakers are for 'refined listening', shall I say, in small to medium rooms.

Pink Triangle Ventricle £896

Pink Triangle Projects,
4 Brunswick Villas, Camberwell,
London SE5 7RR
T 01753 789789

WORLD VERDICT
Smooth and refined. Some listeners will find them captivating.

Measured Performance
see p105-113
Externally, Marantz's CD-16 looks like any other Japanese CD player. Its moulded plastic fascia, thin steel top cover and neatly located control buttons and display would be equally at home on a £300 player. So what makes the CD-16 so special that Marantz feel it deserves a retail price of £1399.90?

The first clue comes as you lift it from its box. The CD-16 is a heavyweight player, weighing in at around 13kg. Looking underneath to remove the transit bolts it becomes more obvious where much of its weight comes from. The CD-16 is built on a thick slab of copper, with copper sides and rear. Copper is used because of its non-magnetic properties, which stops eddy currents disturbing signal purity. This shows real attention to detail and a level of dedication rarely seen in Japanese products bound for this country.

Inside the flow of copper continues, with plates screening critical areas such as the power supply, which has

**BALANCED OUTPUT**

Marantz's top-end CD-16 Compact Disc player neither giveth nor taketh away, finds Dominic Baker.
separately regulated sections for digital and analogue electronics. The control board, which controls the transport and decodes the signal from the laser into a digital bitstream, is separate from the analogue output board, where two TDA1547 (DAC-7) one bit convertors run in differential mode. These in turn feed Marantz's Hyper Dynamic Amp Modules (HDAMs). The majority of the components are high quality surface mount devices, with a few conventional leaded components scattered amongst them. The transport resting neatly amidst all this is the die-cast CDM-4MD, which although several generations older than the CDM-9 and 12 transports, Marantz feel gives a better performance.

**SOUND QUALITY**

Where most CD players have some area of their performance that you can pinpoint, like a brightness to the treble, a coarseness to the midrange or a strong bass, the CD-16 displays little character of its own. There is nothing about its sound which stands out, which initially leaves you a little unimpressed. Players with bass lift, bright treble or other traits sound more immediately impressive. The Marantz has none of this, remaining extremely neutral, smooth and reserved in its performance.

Marantz's own CD-63SE, some £1050 less, initially sounds clearer, faster and more detailed, until after several albums you realise that the CD-16 is doing everything the '63 is, only without making such a fuss about it. The '63 has all the glitter and shine of a star performer, but the CD-16 is a more subtle, mature artist uninterested in playing to the gallery.

I had been living with the CD-16 for several weeks before its real strengths dawned on me. I was unsure about it for a long time, finding it exceptionally smooth and fluid, detailed and pure, but it never surprised me like other players can. Sitting back and relaxing, concentrating on music rather than the player's sonic abilities, it struck me how consistent the CD-16's performance was. It plays disc after disc without exaggerating any part of a performance. An extremely natural sounding player, it resolves terrific amounts of detail, but without ever drawing attention to itself.

All too often, especially as a reviewer, you find yourself listening for the subjective qualities of a system, rather than the music itself. The CD-16 has an uncanny knack of allowing you to forget the hi-fi and concentrate on the music. Indeed after a while you forget it's even there. Belly's 'Judas my Heart', from their King album, enjoyed a wide open acoustic, with superb detail resolution, drawing you deep into the music. Vocals were especially smooth and free from coarseness or grit, flowing majestically from the speakers.

This super smoothness helped Salvatore Accardo's violin create a deliciously open and clear performance, which was tonally superb. Slight changes in pitch and the complex harmonic structure were captured without being overstated, to create a realistic and neutral performance. Although only a simple piece, this foné recording of I violini di Cremona demonstrated the CD-16's ability to resolve tremendous detail and produce the atmosphere around a piece which makes a performance complete.

With more complex pieces the CD-16 continued unflustered. This super-competent player remained unflustered by the multi tracked, heavily produced The album Mind Bomb, with all its effects and complex interleaving. With a wide sound stage, images tightly focused, its coherence made sense out of a recording which trips up most players.

**CONCLUSION**

Against discrete designs from Pink Triangle and DPA, the CD-16 loses little, which came as a surprise. The only appreciable difference is slightly more compressed stage depth and less low level detail but this is an area where most CD players are weak anyway. The CD-16 is very musical, never slipping up whatever material it's asked to play. There are more characterful players around that impress more in a demonstration, but they tend to favour particular styles of presentation. The CD-16 is one of the most universally consistent players around, bringing a level of musicality to all styles of music that will provide years of long term enjoyment.

Marantz CD-16 £1399.90
Marantz Audio (UK), 15/16 Saxon Way Industrial Estate, Moor Lane, Harmondsworth, Middx UB7 0LW. Tel 01753 680868

**WORLD VERDICT**

Highly capable yet self-effacing player with an endearingly neutral balance.

**Measured Performance**

see p.105-113

Marantz CD-16
£1399.90

Marantz Audio (UK), 15/16 Saxon Way Industrial Estate, Moor Lane, Harmondsworth, Middx UB7 0LW. Tel 01753 680868

**WORLD VERDICT**

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Muswell Hill in North London is home to Alchemist, as well as the infamous Hillbillies. It must be the lingering radiations in the air from the old Ally Pally nearby that influences them. Connections with Norse mythology are more obscure, but it’s there with the name Forseti.
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World Radio History
Well, actually, that's guesswork. I give up! For all I know, it could be the name of a Sicilian motorbike.

Come to think of it, there is a touch of Motoguzzi about this twosome. Both pre and power have aluminium grab-handles either side, stretching front to rear towel-rail style. In front, a brushed aluminium finish fascia is highlighted in gold; the control knobs are gold too, and even the indicator lights are amber.

Hefty power amplifiers sometimes glister on the outside but sound leaden when wired up to a pair of speakers. Not the Forseti however. It has a drive and nervous energy that is instantly attractive, with the dynamic ability to reproduce an acoustic instrument as though the real thing is in the room, instead of being a recorded toy. Blur's 'This is a Law' being a prime example, though the Hammond organ sounded rather subdued.

Hope Sandoval on 'Into Dust', sounded crisper and brighter, even the edge of fierce. The Alchemist pairing was certainly transparent enough to cast a keen eye on background goings on. It also surprised me with the two quite different acoustics on Miles Davis' 'In a Silent Way/It's About That Time', displaying the difference in dynamic range between them with digital-counter precision.

With a recording of Beethoven's Eighth, there was likewise a strong sense of depth and spaciousness, and the essential feeling of air around performers; du Pre's cello in the classic EMI Elgar concerto recording was lush and full-flavoured.

However, switching to a Michell Argo HR preamp suggested that the Forseti power amp came out of the Alchemist's alembic with a rather higher number of carats than the preamp. Villa-Lobos' Choros No 7 is a strange, wild, dancing and shimmering mix of rhythms and instruments (scored for flute, oboe, clarinet, alto sax, bassoon, violin, cello and tam-tam). With Forsetis together, it had a nervous, edge-of-the-seat energy and a strong sense of fore-and-aft space.

Taking my mind off the exceptionally quick-witted rhythm however, it became clear that the tapestry of the various instruments had its threads somewhat too close together. Plugging in the Argo, suddenly the bassoon's lower notes became richer and firmer, while violin, sax and flute when playing together could be more clearly discerned as separate textural strands in the score.

There was obviously something of a clever balancing act going on here, because though the Argo-pre/Forseti-power coupling had slightly softer dynamics and less space around the back than the pairing as delivered, it had a richer tonal colour in the bottom half of the instrumental spectrum. Here we go with yet another hi-fi paradox: the Forsetis together had the excitement and Brazilian verve that would have a parrot doing a polka, while the Argo/Forseti had a truer, wider and subtler rainbow of tonal feathers.

The Forseti power amplifier is true gold: near enough a piece of straight wire, with plenty of dynamic range - and strongly recommended. A spot of experimentation with preamplifiers is recommended, according to the flexibility of the purse. In other words, Alchemist's Forseti pre/power is a fair enough crock of gold for the price, but the power amplifier is beyond rubies.

Alchemist Forseti preamp £870
power amp £1250

Alchemist Products
4 Rosebery Mews,
Muswell Hill,
London N10 2LG
☎ 0181 883 3008

WORLD VERDICT

Outstanding power amp is hindered by a merely competent preamp. Well worth auditioning.

Measured Performance see p105-113
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SUBSTANTIAL

Dominic Baker powers up REL's latest subwoofer, the Stadium II.

With the £1225 Stadium II subwoofer, REL are catering for the serious audiophile who craves true full-range sound. Don't confuse it with downmarket contenders in the A/V subwoofer market, where the emphasis is on volume rather than quality, with resonant boxes, poor drivers and weak amplifiers all disguising the original signal under a powerful wave of waffle and boom.

The REL Stadium II features an amplifier improved since the already very good Mark I version, a top quality high power Volt bass unit, and an even thicker and heavier cabinet. These improvements amount to lower distortion and colouration, giving the Stadium II even tighter, cleaner bass with true definition. Put simply, it plays music - something that curiously evades so many of its competitors. The Stadium II uses REL's traditional coarse/fine roll-off controls which set the upper frequency limit, and an overall gain control. I have yet to come across a better system than this, allowing it to be matched very effectively with a wide range of loudspeakers.

As expected, when properly set up the Stadium added an extra dimension to everything played. Without drawing attention to itself it plumbed the depths, revealing bass lines and subsonic detail most loudspeakers completely miss. After living with a subwoofer or 'speaker capable of revealing all of this extra information, it's hard to imagine being without it. It is surprising how much detail those last few Hz carry, and how strong their effect is on a performance.

Even with recordings that aren't blessed with much subsonic information, the REL still brought about a great improvement. Blur's Parklife has firm, punchy upper bass lines, but little real depth. On most loudspeakers you can hear the small cone punching away frantically lending much of its own character to the sound, but with the REL installed a sense of control and ease takes over. A small cone has trouble producing low bass; it is on its limit where distortion rises and cabinet effects are strong. The REL is just cruising here, giving a natural but resolute performance with detail and dynamics aplenty.

So this new sub is a worthy upgrade to any system, making performances truly complete and adding a sense of realism to music that any serious audiophile shouldn't ignore. If you want true full range sound, you really must audition the REL Stadium II.

REL Stadium II £995
Harman International Industries Ltd.
Unit 2, Borehamwood Industrial Park
Rowley Lane, Borehamwood,
Herts WD6 5PZ
Tel: 0181 207 5050

WORLD VERDICT
Excellent bass performance means the Stadium II is definitely not a toy.

Measured Performance see p105-113
Once in a while a new product comes along which is destined to become a modern classic. The Simply Two is just such a product. Already nominated for the prestigious USA ‘Gold Note’ award for the best tube amplifier 1995, the Simply Two offers vintage valve sound encased in the luxury of real wood. Its elegantly understated looks tell you that here is an amplifier whose vocation is, simply, to make music an enjoyable experience. And its single-ended, pure Class A design gives the kind of sound which will put a smile on the face of any music lover. As the illustrious Hi-Fi reviewer put it: “For those of us with a lust for music, a craving for luxury and limited funds, the Simply Two is simply sensational.”

For full details on the Unison Research Simply Two integrated amplifier (£995), Simply Four (£1495), or the amazing ‘Smart 845’ monoblocks (£2995), contact:

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**N.Wales**: Acton Gate Audio (01978 364500)
**West Country**: Audio by Development (01984 623100)
**Yorkshire**: Hi Fi Studios (01302 781387)
If you had just woken up after a decade of suspended animation, you’d be forgiven for wondering ‘where have all the cassette decks gone?’ Compact cassette’s falling sales are making themselves conspicuous in the hi-fi field, and it’s getting harder to find a decent cassette deck. Sure, you can get serious-looking confections from other major Japanese manufacturers for considerably less than this TEAC’s £649.95 price tag, but they’re built down to a price, to put it politely.

TEAC’s V-8030S is built for those with professional demands from their cassette deck, Douglas Floyd-Douglass finds.
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UNISON SIMPLY TWO

When it comes to unaggressive, punchy, detailed, spacious, natural presentation, the new Unison Simply Two is The Canine’s Testes! (Whatever your speakers’ efficiency) (See review in this issue.)

TEAC V8030S CASSETTE DECK

We guarantee you won’t be able to spot a recording made on this machine from the original... If you can we will give you £20!! £ for £, spec for spec these decks cannot be beaten (See review in this issue.)

NEW REL STORM

We are REL subwoofer stockists (the only serious way to add quality bass.) (See review in this issue.)

For a chat about quality hi-fi phone Jeff, Neil or Lesley on Doncaster 01302 781387
The V-8030S is a veritable Rolls Royce of a machine, with substantial build and more facilities than you'll probably ever need, including Dolby S. Although to TEAC's credit, with the exception of remote control and music search facilities, most are actually designed to help you, and it, get the best from whatever formulation you care to place in its gilded cassette compartment.

Most useful is its off-tape monitoring facility, meaning you can monitor your recordings in real time in direct comparison to your source. Add to this variable bias and calibration, independently applied to each channel, and you have a cassette recorder which is compatible with most types of tape and more than capable of getting the best out of them.

The V-8030S has four internal motors that individually operate the transport mechanism, power loading, capstan and reel drives. There is comprehensive vibration protection in the chassis, feet and casing. The cassette door is made of 6mm thick aluminium, said to further reduce vibration. The transport mechanism is mounted on an internal sub-chassis, and judging by the results, this really works - it's faultless.

In use, the TEAC had no hidden surprises, but although clean and commendably linear, it lacked the innate musicality of a Nakamichi. My listening started with Sheffield Labs' pre-recorded cassette of 'James Newton Howard' and friends, which had a warm, solid synth bass line and crisp (never harsh) treble detail in the percussion. The Beatles' 'Nowhere Man' was brought to life by the V-8030S. It was like being at EMI's studios thirty years ago! The characteristic George Martin 'vocal pan to the right' had John and Paul sitting comfortably within hand's reach. The bass line was clear and well supported by the strummed rhythm guitar. 'Drive My Car' sounded equally good, the cowbell and snare adding solid presence. Guitar and piano sounded atmospheric, and transient chords cut forwards. The life-like backing vocals filled out the whole sound, in what is by any standards an 'old' recording. This deck certainly makes you listen to the music.

Sade's 'Diamond Life' sounded excellent, with the detail and attack of CD and a pleasant analogue feel. Even the intonation of the skin drums could be clearly heard. Latin percussion, maracas and bongos were played with rhythm and zest, and sounded just as good. Sade's vocal was beautifully preserved, and well supported by the tenor sax's gentle breeze. Pre-recorded on chrome cassette and Dolby B, playback response extended right up giving excellent treble quality. In short, TEAC's V-8030S proved its ability with pre-recorded cassettes, almost matching my own Nakamichi Tri-Tracer.

This machine presents a rich variety of recording options, possessing Dolby B, C and S noise reduction, plus the ability to tune-in ferric, chrome and metal tapes. On ferric (normal) tape, results with TDK AR - uncanny. Bias did not save the day. Dolby S helped, but did not save the day.

The TEAC V-8030S worked a treat on metal tape (TDK MA), with strong preservation of detail and was capable of huge input levels (+8dB) with Dolby S and almost as much with Dolby B - great for car stereo recordings.

Dolby B noise reduction did, however, introduce some treble roll-off at 10kHz, sounding muffled and losing detail. Dolby C was even worse, sounding compressed and not natural at all. These two systems did not seem properly set up. This sort of thing doesn't happen on a Nakamichi. I assume that TEAC included Dolby C purely for compatibility with previously encoded Dolby C cassettes. The TEAC monitor circuits had a slight colouration effect, sounding a little compressed. Via headphones, sound quality was excellent.

The Teac V-8030S is a solidly built, good all-round performer. It relies upon Dolby S to avoid the need for a head of Nakamichi performance standards, whilst incorporating a better transport than similarly priced Naks. It doesn't possess the replay response and Dolby tracking accuracy of a Nakamichi, which is disappointing. All the same, here's a top deck that's wonderful to use and gives superb results, for those who want the best from cassette.

**Sade's 'Diamond Life' sounded excellent, with the detail and attack of CD and a pleasant analogue feel.**

---

**WORLD VERDICT**

One of the highest quality Dolby S decks available, well built and easy to use. Very serious.

**Measured Performance**

see p105-113
Back when William Jefferson Clinton was a wide-eyed Arkansas governor, Audio Alchemy appeared from relative obscurity to launch their Digital Decoding Engine v1.0. Recently they've consolidated their range with some
moving to Miles Davis' Kind of Blue, the DDE/PS3 set up a deeper, wider acoustic, with stronger, more airy bass."
David Price looks at Linn's classic Sondek LP12 turntable. Designer and founder of Linn, Ivor Tiefenbrun, recalls its beginnings.

The Linn Sondek's twenty-two year life has seen it denounced, but also celebrated as symbolising everything good about the vinyl disc. Even today it provokes strong reactions. For some the LP12 is the last word in analogue, while others think Linn's hype exceeds the deck's capabilities. One thing's for sure: it's never been abandoned by controversy.

Cast your mind back to the mid-seventies, when the wisdom of the day held that loudspeakers were the most important part of the system. The turntable, people thought, simply had to revolve accurately at 33 1/3 rpm without rumbling. Duly, decks that measured well, like the Pioneer PL12D and Technics' direct-drive SL110, made great inroads into the British market.

In this climate, Ivor Tiefenbrun launched the Linn LP12, and became the first to argue something that's now accepted as common-sense - the source crucially influences a system's performance. As Linn's only product at the time was a source component, many saw his reasoning as a clever line in self promotion and said so with no lack of candour. However, using the "Garbage In Garbage Out" analogy from the computer industry, Linn took on the audio establishment by demonstrating that without a decent source, the rest of the system had little chance of success.
At over twenty-six years ago, when I got married, I bought my first hi-fi system. I noticed that the sound I heard through headphones altered when the speakers were switched off, so I placed the turntable outside the room, closed the door and immediately gained substantially improved performance. I realised that the output from the loudspeakers was interfering with the turntable system. A discussion with a friend involved with Decca for many years and familiar with every aspect of audio engineering, quickly convinced me the task of retrieving the fine information from a record groove was a challenge vastly beyond my expectations or previous understanding.

In the closed-loop record cutting process, movement between the cutting stylus and the acetate faithfully captures all relative motion occasioned by the music signal, but the playback process is an open loop with enormous scope for the loss of valuable music information.

These observations led me to the notion that the turntable, as the platform for the record/arm/cartridge combination, was the major determinant of the information that could be faithfully retrieved from a record. With invaluable input from my late father who was skilled in bearing design, and by employing the precision engineering skills and expertise that still exists at Castle Precision Engineering, the company my father founded, I developed and built a turntable which retrieved more information from the record. It also maintained more constant and stable rotational velocity and its operation was not only unprecedentedly quiet, but far less susceptible to external influences.

The idea that the quality of hi-fi systems was ultimately constrained by source quality offended anyone who believed that loudspeakers were the crucial components, the view at the time. Far from seeing the hierarchy of the system following its signal path from source to listener, most people believed the loudspeaker at the end of the chain was the most influential component. Fortunately for me, some open minded people were prepared to listen for themselves and make up their own mind, so some retailers were excited by the prospect of selling a product that could improve any system and give people more pleasure from their record collections. The question was how to sell such an advantage. It seemed obvious that the best way was to simply demonstrate the difference by comparison and let people hear for themselves what an LP12 would do to the sound quality of a system.

The pursuit of simplicity and innovation led to the continuous improvement of the LP12 as our knowledge grew. These values, standards and techniques enabled customers to upgrade their LP12 whenever they wished. This all helped to set Linn on a path that has made it, to those who use and enjoy our products, a key player on the global hi-fi stage.

The advent of Compact Disc in 1983 saw the first real challenge to its reign. Although the LP12’s sonics were well ahead, the silver devil nevertheless threw its failings into sharp relief. Imaging was vague and the lower midband coloured compared to “pure, perfect” digital sound. Linn responded with an improved bearing and a stiffer armboard, bringing greater focus and clarity. By the late eighties, CD was mounting a more serious challenge which Linn responded to with the Lingo power supply, while the new Ekos tonearm built on the Ittok’s strengths.

Most recently, the Cirkus bearing introduced a couple of years ago brought even sharper focus and more stable imaging.

Nowadays, the Sondek is no longer the undisputed king. But many believe its innate musicality, for which it was always famous, is still unsurpassed. As worldwide sales show, the Sondek has done no end of good for British hi-fi, bolstering this country’s reputation as a key player on the global hi-fi stage.
SOUND QUALITY

With a Klyde moving coil cartridge fitted, Linn’s £ 1138 ‘entry-level’ LP 12 Basik/Akito arm sounds impressive in the best sense of the word. Bass is deep and warm, while the upper regions exhibit the LP 12’s hallmark smoothness and cohesion. Sound staging is significantly better than pre-Cirkus models. Images have satisfying solidity and body, and stage depth, always an LP 12 strong point, is better than ever.

Hi-fi aspects aside, the deck’s strength has always been in the timing department. Here, the Basik LPI2 has a real grip on rhythms, working the old magic with the ability to make music sound like a group of real musicians playing together.

On the downside, there’s a flattening of dynamics, down to the Akito arm, which makes for a smooth presentation that won’t pin you to your seat. Tonally, upper bass is slightly coloured compared to rivals, but this isn’t necessarily a bad thing in the right system. Although timing also lacks the mechanical precision of the equivalent Michell Gyrodec, the Linn still manages to sound rhythmically more involving.

Allowing Linn Products to divest you of £ 2926 gets you the ultimate Sondek, complete with external Lingo power supply providing switchable speeds, the latest version of the Ekos arm with uprated bearings, and Trampolin base, which provides an extra degree of decoupling from surroundings. Our review model was also fitted with Linn’s tour de force moving coil, the Arkiv.

This incarnation represents the pinnacle of development for this venerable turntable. Simply put, this LP12 is one of the smoothest, most civilised sounding hi-fi components going. Its great refinement and poise shouldn’t be confused with blandness - today’s top LP12 is a lithe, dynamic device indeed.

This LP12’s most immediate improvement over the entry-level version is stage depth. Although slightly smaller on the horizontal plane between the speakers, it goes far further back and projects forward better. Images come into greater focus, underlining how much the Sondek has improved since the Cirkus bearing.

Indeed, the way music hangs back from the ‘speakers lends the deck grace that many will find endearing. Unlike the Gyrodec or Garrard 401, its musical presentation doesn’t grab you by force or detail, but by a beguiling subtlety. Those schooled on raucous CD players might find it antclimactic at first, but give it time and the Sondek will pull you in and keep you.

Suitably warmed up, this LP12 gave one of the best renditions of Lou Donaldson’s ‘Alligator Bogaloo’ I’ve heard, instruments located with pin-sharp precision in an expansive acoustic. Rhythm was sublime, capturing the stop-go feeling furnished by the overlay of solos on the constant beat. George Benson’s guitar was striking, showing gripping counterpoint with Leo Morris’ machine gun snare work.

This LP12 really puts the cat amongst the super-deck pigeons at low frequencies. While the Garrard 401 has a slight edge in the solidity stakes, LP12 bass emotes like no other, with a grasp on dynamics and detail which superbly underpins proceedings higher up. It was also considerably superior to the entry-level Sondek, with a supremely tactile delivery totally independent of events in the upper registers.

The Sondek remains a damn fine turntable that can teach newer rivals a thing or two. Like all top decks, the LP12’s strengths predispose it to particular types of music. In this guise, with the extra detail and delicacy of touch brought by the Ekos and Arkiv, its talents are honed for classical and jazz music. But its abiding talent with any disc you care to play is its tunefulness and musicality. Despite all the changes, this is one thing that’s stayed the same.
BUYING

The rule is the newer the better. An original 1974 model costs £699.50 to bring up to the latest specification, whereas a brand new LP12 starts at £784 plus base, so you’d have to find a pretty cheap example for this to be a cost-effective way of doing things.

To upgrade a 1974 LP12 to 1995 spec:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CIRKUS KIT</td>
<td>£299</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOTOR</td>
<td>£63</td>
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<tr>
<td>PLINTH</td>
<td>£157.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOP PLATE</td>
<td>£105.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>LABOUR [3hrs@£25/hr]</td>
<td>£75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>£699.50</td>
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Ensure there are no scuff marks where the outer platter has fouled the top plate. This suggests it’s been transported or moved without removing the inner platter, which can damage the expensive main bearing. Pull the inner platter out and check there’s no scoring of the spindle, and that reasonably clean oil drips down. Like car engines, Linn bearings don’t like running dry or with black treacle. Suspension bounce isn’t critical as it can be remedied with a new set of springs and grommets, costing about £25 and fitted by a dealer.

USED PRICE GUIDE

£2500 - Last year’s Cirkus LP12 with Lingo power supply, Trampolin, Ekos, and Archiv cartridge.
£1200 - Recent Valhalla Cirkus LP12 with Ekos arm and K18.
£700 - Three year old pre-Cirkus Valhalla LP12 with Ittok LVIII and K9.
£500 - Late eighties braced plinth Valhalla LP12 with Akito and K9.
£350 - Early eighties pre-braced plinth Valhalla LP12 with LVX and Basik cartridge.
£200 - Antique pre-Valhalla LP12 with SME 3009S2.

NEW PRICE GUIDE

LP12 LINGO  £1414.00
LP12 VALHALLA  £933.00
LP12 BASIK  £784.00
CIRKUS upgrade  £299.00
TRAMPOLIN base  £115.00
SOLID base  £55.00

TONEARMS

LINN BASIK  [s/h] £50
LVV (illustrated) is cheap and cheerful. Less crude, straight-pipe LVX has detachable headshell. LVX+ has better bearings and fixed headshell.
LINN AKITO  £299
Far superior to the LVX+, the Akito is an excellent entry-level arm but not quite up to Rega’s RB300.
LINN IITOK LVII/III  [s/h] £150-300
The newer the better, although early Scottish-built black LVIIIs have their devotees. Super-rare 12” version collectable but won’t fit LP12. The original superarm can still sound impressive.
LINN EKOS  £1397
For many the King. Super clean, whiz-bang impressive sound, but lacks Naim ARO’s cohesion. Latest models have retrofitable higher tolerated bearings.
NAIM ARO  £963
For many the ultimate partner to a Sondek. Lacks the fireworks of the Ekos, but brings a beguiling cohesion.
REGA RB300  £130
Dry, analytical sound counters the LP12’s bloom nicely. Clear midband but dynamics and frequency extremes behind Ittok standards. Won’t fit braced-plinth LP12s without surgery.
SME SERIES IV/V  £850-1232
These superb arms don’t seem to work synergistically on the Sondek, and their weight gives the suspension a hard time.

Linn Products  0141 644 5111

LP12 DEVELOPMENT  [serial no.]
1993  [90583]
Cirkus upgrade fitted as standard.
1992  [88950]
Improved top plate fixing.
1991  [87672]
LP12 called LP12 Basik, with option of Valhalla or Lingo power supplies.
45 adapter standard with Basik and Valhallas versions. Trampolin suspended base board option.
1990  [87672]
Solid base board replaces hardboard.
Valhalla  [87047]
Lingo  [87206]
Motor thrust pad cap fitted.
1989  [81000]
Lingo power supply option available.
1988  [79700]
Harder suspension grommets fitted.
1987  [79160]
Motor thrust pad changed.
1986  [70,000]
Improved bearing. Change to black oil. Suspension springs improved.
1984  [54,000]
Subchassis strengthening bar epoxy glued instead of spot welded.
1983  [53,000]
Enlarged plinth corner bracing.
1982  [38,000]
Valhalla power supply standard.
1981  [32,800]
Nirvana mechanical components.
1979  [27,000]
Lid and hinges changed.
1978  [23,000]
Top plate modified.
1974  [2,000]
Main bearing liner changed. Subchassis strengthened
Motor control and mains switch changed.
Valve amplification has been a passion of mine since the late sixties. At school in Northcote, Auckland, New Zealand, hi-fi was very expensive to a fifth former on limited pocket money. So with the help of a school friend, some gutted parts and about ten pounds, I cut my teeth on a Mullard 10-10 design, using EL84 pentodes in push-pull to obtain around 15 to 17 watts a side.

The rest of the system comprised the very first Garrard SP25 mk1 (I lusted after a Garrard 401 with SME3012, but who didn't), a Jensen dual-cone guitar speaker in a modified cabinet with another 12" dual concentric driver, probably a Rola or MSP from Australia, in a similar open baffle box. How did it sound when playing the Supremes' Greatest Hits? Fantastic!

Now I live in North East Australia in a popular holiday spot close to Noosa, where the weather averages around 23°, and summer temperatures reach the low 30s. My collection of early hi-fi covers Quad, Leak, Radford, McIntosh, Scott, Fisher, Lux, Pye (English), Rogers, Dynaco, Thorens, Garrard and Altec - about 55 valve amplifiers in total. My current interest is directly heated triode technology and my main directly-heated triode amps are Lux 300Bs which support single-ended 300B tubes in the output. They sound wonderfully fast and clean, with a midrange presence that is sheer heaven - and they look superb!

My current listening room measures 12'x18' which will suffice until my dedicated 'music' room is complete. I have two main areas of interest in hi-fi, vintage hi-fi which allows me to enjoy my 78s, and more modern designs. My vintage system comprises a restored broadcast console with a Garrard 301/SME 3012/Shure 44 combination playing through a highly original Leak Stereo 20 and Varislope III stereo preamp.

The 'speakers are a pair of Audax 2-way studio M10s, capable of remarkable results. I prefer modern 'speakers mainly because of low coloration, smoother frequency response and more accurate representation than sixties designs. I do possess older speakers including Quad ELS, Karlson 'Distributed Constants' coupler, Goodmans 80's, 60's etc., but for everyday use I come back to more modern designs. The Leak/Audax/Garrard system is also supported by an original Leak Troughline FM tuner, fired up every morning.

This system affords me many hours of enjoyable listening. Although not as sought after in Britain as down here because of its lower price, it still offers very good performance. I use a dedicated multi-band, high gain antenna.
VANTAGEPOINT

Brunswick Radiogram (circa 1930s) with Brown horn 'speaker.

that picks up two local FM stations and a couple from Brisbane (over 130km away). The Leak Varislope III is a much underrated stereo valve preamp, offering a wide range of inputs including two phono inputs (both 3.5mV), a tuner input (50mV), microphone input (2mV) and tape head (3mV), with sensitivity quoted at 3.5mV for an input impedance that varies from 50,000 to 100,000ohms.

The Varislope III, as with earlier Varislopes, is configured with RIAA equalisation and NARTB for pre-1955 LPs, USA 78s, LP (post 1955) and 780E (old European). Although not up to today’s standards as preamps go, it offers a warm, lucid midrange and is a reliable performer. The Leak Trougline II tuner is on every day for several hours. Although only mono, it is very satisfying. It lacks a little high end brightness but is remarkably dynamic and midrange fidelity is hard to beat.

Another favourite amplifier of mine is the Quad II/22 combination, The Quad 22 preamp offers the most comprehensive range of equalisation settings for 78 cartridges and is a delight to use. It is in original condition, as I prefer my equipment to be as good as possible.

One of the enduring features that Harold Leak had the foresight to provide was primary voltage selections from 200-250Vac. It’s not unusual for Australian voltage to run from 210 to 260Vac. I have heard of cases when it has been as high as 280Vac. Combine that with soaring temperature in the mid to high thirties in Queensland and you have a recipe for catastrophic transformer meltdown.

That brings me to my favourite small power amplifier, the Leak Stereo 20, finished in light bronze and offering similar performance to the earlier TL-12s. Firstly, it consumes only 105 watts at rated output, even on warm days it runs only lukewarm. Ideal for servicing, it has two virtually vertical circuits comprising a 3 stage triple loop feedback design, for which Leak claim 26dB of negative feedback over the complete amplifier. A low noise, high gain triode (12AX7) feeds into a second stage double-triode phase splitter, which in turn feeds two push-pull output valves arranged in what Leak call 'distributed-load' condition (ultra-linear). Leak used grain oriented steel in the cores of both the output transformers and the mains transformer. The EL84 (6BQ5) was primarily a 9 pin miniature to replace the 6V6 and when configured in the right circuit is very satisfying. This is why modern amplifiers like the Beard PB100 that employs six EL84s in push-pull parallel sound very good.

Although I possess a pair of TL50s and a couple of Stereo 60 power amps, I have much affection for this Stereo 20. The circuit is maintained very much to the original, if a resistor or capacitor needs replacing it is with a low noise metal type or quality WIMA. The Varislope stereo preamp is also pretty well original with just a few coupling and leaking bypass caps replaced.

I am presently looking for Leak TL-12 mono blocks, Radford STA-15 mono blocks, and Lux 3045s. If you would like to contact me, please write to PO Box 814, Tewantin, Queensland 4565, Australia. You can also phone or fax me on (006) 61 074 491 601.

John Murt is an associate member of the Institute of Radio and Electronic Engineers (Australia) and Founder President of the Wireless and Vintage Sound Society of Queensland.
Exciting style with a finish that would do Ferrari proud, this little Italian glower is belissimo with an antipasto price tag. Here is real value for money with no compromise. The £995 Unison Simply Two is adorned with real wood (not veneer) on a black steel case with neatly punched-out vents. Mirrored stainless steel forms the base from where the EL34 valves rise tellingly, suggesting an inherent sweetness of tone.

This is a carefully designed amplifier with much attention to detail. The speaker binding posts are solid and of the type you would expect on amplifiers costing at least twice as much. All inputs and outputs are gold-plated and

SIMPLY BETTER

Douglas Floyd-Douglass is enraptured by Unison’s Simply Two single-ended pentode valve amplifier.
securely mounted. The rotary volume control is smooth and matches the styling well, but the selector control is rather squidgy, and doesn’t click into source with much conviction. By all accounts this small single-ended 12watt valve amplifier is very good looking, unpretentious and is a noble step in the right direction. Congratulations Unison.

Little Feat’s ‘Last Record’ yielded superb transients and a smoothness which my ears greeted with joy. Clarity was good and consistent throughout the frequency range. Cymbals rang true with fabulous harmonic overtones and superb decay. Drums were presented with natural attack and soft presence, allowing the warmth of the bass guitar to sit comfortably at the helm of the mix.

The Simply Two can handle dynamics with extraordinary dexterity. The drum solo in ‘One Love Stand’ was tight and fast, with the stereo image projecting well into the room. Subtle little sound treats like the Fender Rhodes and Latin percussion rose almost as if by magic to the surface of a most convincing sound stage. In ‘Long Distance Love’ the balance between bass and vocals was particularly well defined, again suggesting excellent dynamic control. The acoustic guitar was well detailed and natural sounding - a treat.

Paul Barrere’s fine lead vocal was strong, and due to the natural affinity the Simply Two has for music, the charismatic gospel backing vocals shone through with real life. The bass on this album is often performed on a lower than usual scale, making it really deep. The Simply Two was not particularly tight, but it did keep control at all times.

Talking Heads’ live version of ‘Psycho Killer’ on ‘Stop Making Sense’ had a marvellous sense of space, and the sound of the crowd was particularly convincing. The Unison design is extremely musical and so compatible with a variety of styles. Even in the vocal extremes, where David Byrne really strains, the Simply Two maintained its composure with sufficient headroom to produce a flawless performance. More evidence that twelve watts of good Class A valve amplifier can sound really great, can be found in the ‘gated’ snare drum at the end of the track. As the only electronically enhanced sound on a predominantly acoustic backdrop, the snare produced a peak of at least two to three decibels, which the Unison handled with relative ease.

Tchaikovsky’s Pathetique, sensitively conducted by (Sir?) Yehudi Menuhin sounded magnificent. It is a work of contrasting deep melancholy and ecstatic jubilation. These emotions were perfectly translated by the Simply Two and the genius of this great Russian composer was clearly portrayed in this autobiographical work. From the first solo bassoon (which eerily warns of the impending crescendo) to the soft woodwind and strings, the Simply Two performed like a virtuoso. The overall sound was so open and uncluttered you could literally zoom in on single instruments amidst full orchestral or band performance, which I found most impressive.

I was so enveloped in the music that I was startled a few minutes later when an inconsiderate motorcyclist roared by, temporarily marring the sound stage! Nonetheless, this is what real hi-fi is all about, sound electronic design delivering natural musical reproduction.

The only disappointment was that solo piano tended to break up quite early. This meant that Chopin’s (unaccompanied) scherzo in B minor had to be played at a much lower level than of a standard grand piano. The piano’s tone was excellent however, with fine balance between attack, decay and harmonic detail. With a bit more level, it could sound really fantastic.

Alan Parsons Project’s ‘Old and Wise’ is a reminder of real music production with the engineering polish gained only from years of experience. His recordings are a pleasure to listen to on any sound system and this was no exception. The string section was soft and evenly spread in the sound stage, allowing the essential, but often missed church organ to be heard clearly. The saxophone solo soared through the finale in a triumph of musical arrangement and valve reproduction. Even at higher levels, despite a slight bass roll-off, treble remained clear and undistorted.

This is a fine example of a perfect transition in the audio chain from recording studio to listening room. Afterwards, I found myself breathing a really deep sigh - a combination of both pleasure and relaxation, like you do when an exceptional orchestral performance comes to a satisfying end. I want one. But then again, I may have to settle for Simply Two.

Unison Research Simply Two £995

U.K. Distribution,
23 Riching Way,
Iver,
Bucks. SL0 9DA
Tel 01753 652669

WORLD VERDICT

Good circuit design and a highly musical performance make this a top quality amplifier.

Measured Performance see p105-113

AUGUST 1995
and general performance standards. Sadly, separation and an ECC82 as the active element. The engineer for a famous radio prototype uses an ECF80 built by a retired friend of valve decoders and at the Quad FM tuner. Throughline gets all the kudos for the early Quad decoder that fastened on the rear of the one in the metal cage stereo version. Likewise were not happy with their Troughline owners who find any enthusiasm for the number of decoders to have actually supplied a bunching line Stereo.1 am sure it is the one fitted as standard by Fisher in their 500C and 800C receivers, an excellent design using three ECC83s. Having said that, it still can’t beat a modern, dedicated chip design.

Finally, a few comments on the Leak Troughline. Firstly, don’t have one realigned without first checking the components, particularly the higher value resistors. Often, changing a few wayward resistors can bring the tuner back into alignment. I have known resistors in a Troughline almost double in value!

Secondly, if those flimsy AFC and LOCAL/DISTANT switches are a problem, wire them out of circuit, choosing either position of the switch to suit your preference. I say this because they are not easily replaced, as they are fastened by a rivet moulded into the facia plate.

Thirdly, regarding connection to a decoder, I prefer to take the output from the tuner, immediately after the discriminator. In the stereo version the output from the built-in decoder comes after the cathode follower stage. An unnecessary stage in my view, best eliminated.

Stan Halfyard, Studio 12, St. Ives, Cornwall.

Yes, the decoder isn’t the world’s best. However, we still find the Troughline so outperforms everything else that weaknesses seem academic. NK

ROB’S RESPONSE

I read with a great deal of interest and pleasure Hi-Fi World’s review on the Renaissance CD player (June 1995). I am pleased it generates much scratching of heads as to whether its outstanding and unusual musical performance was accurate or some kind of euphonic manifestation. To some extent the issue of accuracy does not matter. If the CD player sounds musical and involving with a sense of life and body, then it is immaterial whether it is accurate or not.

However, I maintain the CD player is giving an accurate rendition simply because there has been no conscious attempt during the design of the player to generate euphonic colourations. Indeed, my whole design philosophy is to make products as transparent as possible. This enables you to hear the subtle cues that go into converting a mere rendition into an involving musical event.

All the observations made about the sound of the unit are fully explicable and are mostly a function of the DX processor. For example, the outstanding sound stage reproduction is down to the extremely simple analogue section of the DX processor with only two passive components and the op-amp in the direct signal path.

The rhythmic abilities, timbre variation, rhythm and pitch reproduction qualities are due to the components, feeling they have better things to do, and like the option of having one big box to cover their audio needs. We're in the Big Mac culture!

[1] Proper hi-fi retailers can be excellent, but also eccentric, snobbish, patronising - you name it. I believe the real hi-fi world is constantly undermined by duff retailers. Why else do people go for the impersonal approach of the likes of Argos?

[2] Quality hi-fi looks awful. Most people regard audio systems as a necessary but evil
filtering structure of the processor as it has a lack of phase intermodulation distortion. The instrument separation, lack of modulation and purity is down to an elimination of amplitude modulation effects.

The above three defects are not exposed by traditional measurements which explains why it measures relatively poorly but sounds very transparent. Also, no other DAC in the world has been designed with any of these features as a design principle. This is why the DX processor sounds so unique compared to any other CD player or DAC available today.

Noel's "problem" - that the DPA tends to suppress noise and nastiness of relatively poor quality recordings - is again explicable. Most special problems of noise and scratches are caused by modulation of the instrument you are trying to hear. If it becomes difficult for the brain to separate individual instruments out, then noise and other distortions become subjectively much more prominent.

This is the irony of the situation, that better detail resolution and transparency allow the brain to ignore noise and distortions, giving a more musical event. Robert Watts, DPA Digital, Cardiff.

intrusion on their living rooms, and so a nearly invisible micro system gains approval. When manufacturers produce compact, pleasing components, they will gain wider appeal.

[5] People think their ears won't do justice to a 'proper' system. My dad, God bless him, isn't going to waste money on nuances he can't hear, is he?

[6] Finally and most importantly, people see music as a lifestyle accessory, not an essential. They want dinner party background music, Take That for the kids and naff Greatest Hits compilations to remind them of their youth.

However we all know there's a huge world they are missing, and with luck, the promotion of real hi-fi might open a few ears to the inspirational effect of music. Mike Henning Hants.

Thanks for keeping our feet on the ground with your summary of today's outlook. These simple but crucial views tend to escape most of the industry, including us. NK

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WHAT HI-FI? Verdict *****
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- What Hi-Fi? - July '93
WHAT HI-FI? Verdict *****
Gale 4 (pair) - £199.95

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... continued from page 45

of the concert and is it therefore realistic? Should we who listen to amplified instruments throw away our hi-fi products and install a JBL/Crown PA system or a row of Marshall cabs to achieve true realism? This is a subjective thing. Have a PA if you want and the neighbours don't mind, or use a low power valve amp with super-sensitive horns, or whatever.

Perhaps the key thing is this: whatever you listen to music on, if you like it, it's OK. After all, we listen for enjoyment, don't we?

Peter Withers
Pershore,
Worcs.

BLIND PREJUDICE
I have been a regular reader of all UK hi-fi magazines for many years: the good, the erratic and the short-lived. I even read with caution and derive some entertainment from Mr Nazir's magazine, the huge selling What Hi-Fi?

The viewpoint expressed by you in "dB on the level" (Hi-Fi World April '95) does not specify which journal's blind listening tests have given you the hump. By being so dismissive of blind listening tests, using such terms as "short cuts" and "fallacy" and not being specific as to whose blind listening tests you find "absurd", it may lead the reader to think of the notable blind listening tests conducted by Mr Paul Miller for Hi-Fi Choice. Was this your intention? If so I have point to the failings in your article.

It can be seen from long term reading that Mr Miller's panel is made from regulars taken from the industry obviously chosen for their ability to hear differences and their knowledge of what hi-fi can sound like. They all know each other, which makes for a relaxed atmosphere, and the music used is consistently the same over the last five years, played through a familiar reference system based around DPA amps and Audionote E 'speakers. Unlike your claim that only response errors can be picked upon, Mr Miller's panels have been able to not only discern multi-bit sound from low bit, but family sounds (Marantz, Rotel, DAC-7, etc.). Would you agree this is impressive?

And Mr Miller's exhaustive and comprehensive technical specification testing, which to us readers is easily understood and with which direct correlation can be found with the blind listening panels' findings. We can check the specification compatibility, for example the single-ended Philips DAC7-equipped CD players being run at the lower 256 rather than 384 oversampling rate. With a remarkably consistent plot in Mr Miller's graphs showing a vast rise in ultrasonic noise, it's become an easily identifiable fingerprint for such types of CD players (Philips and Marantz being two obvious examples). Pretty handy for us readers to know at a glance if our amps are wide or band-limited, whether our systems are swamped with this noise, wouldn't you agree? Having checked for technical compatibility, readers can refer to the panel's findings, which frequently pick up on "those underlying properties that might be more influential in the long term".

Your view that subjective tests still reign supreme is true probably only because it's easier than organising a panel of regular listeners, stripping down the equipment, lab testing it and putting it back together again. I shall continue to seek an overall view of specific equipment based on information gained from all techniques, objective and subjective from my select group of journalists, and yes, you are one of them. But for this reader, Mr Paul Miller is a true star and his methods faultless, wouldn't you agree?

John Slevin,
Stockwell,
London.

We were generalising, but our views reflect concerns widely expressed by others. I have participated in and have run group listening tests in the past. In my view, even when set up with care, they are of dubious value, imposing unrealistic listening conditions. In particular they provide far too short an exposure in oft compromised situations with an absurdly curtained selection of music. Wildly conflicting views often surface, which must be homogenised for the sake of apparent harmony. Otherwise, as a freelance, you are then faced with telling the magazine the listening test was inconclusive, whereupon they'll find someone who'll make it conclusive.

Many people in the industry refuse to participate in these affairs, including myself. I had to leave one session where seven one-minute excerpts of music were put through each loudspeaker. Let's look at how this comes about.

You have to 'phone and book a useful number of listeners, around 4-6. Getting them all into one place at one time is difficult. You get one shot at this; a second take isn't practical. Consequently, there's pressure to review as many items as possible, so a large-ish group is tested, up to ten. You have six hours at most, giving 36 minutes per item. In fact, this is generous - and not all of it is prime listening time. There are interruptions, discussions, change over time, tea, etc. Around 20 minutes per item is about normal.

So we are now assessing a piece of equipment in twenty minutes. With eight musical excerpts (four Classical/four Rock) that's 2.5 minute excerpts - not even one whole music track. If it's a blind test, then 'speakers cannot be optimally positioned.

This basic analysis shows just how unrealistic blind group tests are and why we reject them. NK

IGNORANCE IS BLISS
My views on the growth of midi sales, as opposed to proper hi-fi is simple. The British public is woefully ignorant about the performance and simplicity of separates and prefers this state of bliss to having to think and make choices about what is really available.

It's easy to buy a black box with lots of buttons and flashing lights with a couple of 'speakers. It is easy to handle, looks good and the noise from the 'speakers will shake the floor. But quality of sound seems to be a complete unknown to many who expect a complete system for £150. I have to admit that until 1981 I was as ignorant as anyone else until I bought a friend's Hitachi system and began to read What Hi-Fi? when I gradually changed my opinion and system, and then became really brave and bought my first soldering iron and began DIYing.

I think the only way to reverse the trend is for the industry to scrape enough cash together for effective advertising, mimicking car advertising on television, as continued on page 53...
The Synergy was designed for maximum pleasure minimum fuss.

All on one chassis it incorporates a remote controlled dual mono preamplifier (housed 2" from the inputs) and a dual mono power amplifier developing 150 watts per channel of smooth detailed muscle, plus an On Board Bias Control for easy and accurate tube maintenance.

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Tube Technology, Foxhills Farm, Longcross Road, Ottershaw, Surrey, KT16 ODN, England.

Tel: 01932 873444 ~ Fax: 01932 873012
All Tube Technology amplifiers are designed and manufactured in England.

From the moment you hear The Synergy...you realize that its unique styling is a major contribution to its musical performance.

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.
Buoyed by the combination of British kudos and a strong Yen, the likes of Aura and NAD are making inroads into the Japanese domestic market, believe it or not. While not quite in the same league as Sony or Panasonic, they’ve given the Japanese major manufacturers added impetus to compete not just on price, but quality too.

So here’s Sony’s new £250 TAF446E amplifier pitted against one of our own major league players: the Aura VA-80. With an Audiolab CD transport/PT Da Capo feeding the Aura, and a pair of Mission 752s on the other end, the Aura gave a wonderfully large, expansive sound. I’d forgotten. So impressed, I didn’t rate the Sony’s chances. “Answer that and stay in fashion”, I thought.

It did, bringing more atmosphere and detail to the soundstage, throwing out cymbals at the back of the mix that the VA-80 had missed. Tracey Thorn’s unmistakable voice had greater emotion, her intonation better carried.

So what’s the drawback, you ask? Well, it pains me to say, but solid-state mid-band glare reared its ugly head. Yes, the Sony is bright, and a touch hard. Rim shots were tighter and faster than those from the Aura, but also rather more tinny and transistorised. All the same, the Sony’s not beyond redemption; if it’s partnered sensibly this won’t be a problem.

With Siouxsie and the Banshees’ ‘Hyena’, the Aura delivered an emotional performance, tonally balanced with deep bass and sweet treble. The Sony changed the presentation, having more air in its slightly larger acoustic, and a good degree more depth too. But although nowhere near as bad as your average Jap. tranny amp., which has more grain than a health food shop, strummed guitar strings and percussion were a touch too prominent for me.

The Sony also possesses a curious form of bass, one that seems common at this end of the market. There’s certainly plenty of low frequency information - more than you’d expect at the price - and it’s also quite tuneful.

But it seems to have a cardboard quality that just doesn’t sound right. In this respect, Sony could learn a trick or two from NAD.

And finally, the phono stage. Japanese amplifiers have never been famous for the importance they attach to getting this right, but the TAF446E seems the exception that proves the rule. Whilst not quite an EAR834P, it was nevertheless good enough to let our Linn LP12/Ekosi/Archiv stick two fingers up at the Audiolab/Da Capo CD system that sat opposite. Noise was very low and the TAF446E proved smoother but just as dynamic from LP through its phono stage as it did with silver disc.

Which would I have of the Aura and Sony? I think I’d still buy British. The TAF446E is very capable - up with the best in many ways - but the Aura’s silky, self-effacing presentation wins the day for this reviewer. You may not feel the same; this amplifier has great definition, so ignore it at your peril.

Yes, it is a Sony, but is it a winner too? David Price pits Sony's new TAF446E amplifier against hot competition.

Sony TAF446E £250

Sony Consumer Products Ltd., Sony House, South Street, Staines, Middx. TW18 4PF T 01602 251517

WORLD VERDICT

Bright, clear and detailed, but needs a touch more refinement to prevail.

Measured Performance see p105-113
NOW HEAR THIS!

Douglas Floyd-Douglass listens attentively to N.H.T.'s latest standmount loudspeakers.

NHT, an American company, was founded in 1986 by two consumer electronics veterans. The £389 model I.3A is a two-way loudspeaker based on NHT's 'Focused Image Geometry', which basically means that they angle the baffle...
by 21 degrees so that the drivers fire inwards. This is intended to direct sound toward the listener, away from reflective room boundaries and give a more focused image. The angled front baffle also helps to minimise internal standing waves, giving less colouration.

The cabinets are rigid and well finished in a piano black effect material called Nevamar, which is scratch resistant. I mounted the I.3s on 22inch stands, approximately 3 feet away from the side and rear walls. As NHT rightly point out, experimentation yields the best results when positioning, and time spent doing just that with the I.3s is a good investment.

Jackie Leven's "Call Mother a Lonely Field" was introduced by a dynamic and resounding snare drum, and a fine neutral balance of background strings. The bar scene was atmospheric, and the chanting of 'Danny Boy' reminiscent of the probable pub-on-the-loch from where it originated. Lead vocals were rich and the supporting backing vocals smooth through the whole range.

Hi-hat and cymbal definition benefited from the fast response of the I.3s in the mid-high frequencies, sounding crisp and metallic. The mandolin and guitar were well balanced, and conjured up more authentic Gaelic imagery, creating a real sense of atmosphere in front of my seat. On 'Crazy' the acoustic guitar had super detail, with clear harmonic overtones. Vocal harmonies sounded natural and unrestrained, and combined with distant strings gave rise to a realistically deep sound stage. This translated into a good feel for the music, one which I found endearing.

NHT's 'Focused Image Geometry' is reasonably effective, the I.3s projecting a dominant central image. Solo instruments - as in Bach's cello suites - were realistically focused and well placed in the sound stage. However, with larger orchestral pieces the music seemed confined, failing to extend beyond the 'speakers. The actual 'sound' of the cello was tonally accurate, but the natural decay of acoustic instruments does occur prematurely. The initial transient grabs you, but then harmonics fade rapidly.

The I.3s do well at producing a good scale of music for their size, but are really best suited to smaller rooms, where they sound extremely good, if still on the drier side of neutral. Despite being designed as an independent full range system, a good sub bass would do them the world of good, adding richness.

I decided to give the I.3s the 'Radio Kaos' treatment next. In full blown digital audio, Roger Waters' law-breaking sound engineering places great demands on any system. The I.3s rose to the occasion, welcoming the genius of a great contemporary composer and the accompanying sound wizardry with open arms. Vocals were crisp and central, with exciting sound-bites popping out all over the place. The synth flute revealed a stereo pan-effect, which I had not heard before. On 'Powers That Be', the bottom end was tight and powerful. The guitar 'scrape', which has a fairly high peak, was dealt with smoothly, and without any break-up or edge.

'Four Minutes' reached wide out past the 'speakers, with unnervingly realistic vocals and the ringing telephone (off-axis and to the left). prompted me to automatically reach out and answer it. The guitar in 'Tide is Turning' is supported by warm strings and a homogenous blend of engineering and reproduction. The vocal delays can be heard clearly above the programme material, adding a pleasing ambience and fresh balance. This confirmed my hidden suspicion that the I.3s were probably intended/designed to deal with more digitally refined music programme.

Female vocals from Eddie Reader's 'Patience of Angels' had clinical accuracy, and me thinking I was in a control room, rather than in Hi-Fi World's listening room. The I.3s do sound like near field monitors a lot of the time. NHT have certainly succeeded in dealing with internal LF energy (standing waves). The detailed and clean midrange is a good example of this. The 'Focused Image Geometry' seems to work, but does produce a projected and focused characteristic, rather than a warm and more welcoming sound.

I would like to hear the I.3s with a well matched subwoofer as they are just too small to fill many larger rooms with sound, especially at lower frequencies. The I.3s do have a commendable lack of distortion and are capable of handling a good deal of power. They are also more than capable of delivering a lot of music for their size and price. For the budget conscious or those aspirant audiophiles wishing to impress with their first real system, these 'speakers are it.

NHT I.3A
£389
Sound Dept.,
33 Beaumont Street,
Oxford OX1 2NP
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WORLD VERDICT

Very clean, crisp sounding 'speakers best suited to smaller rooms.

Measured Performance see p105-113
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..., continued from page 47

I think midi systems and their ilk are serious threats to the hi-fi industry, because in the present economic climate at least, the town ain’t big enough for both of us. As you point out, this means large PR offensives to hit casual Saturday afternoon buyers. I thoroughly applaud BADA’s campaign for “real hi-fi”, but am worried that the hi-fi press isn’t pulling its weight.

In the early eighties the scourge of civilisation was the “music centre”. To its credit What Hi-Fi? spent much time and energy pointing out how inferior they were to equivalently priced separates. Now, both What Hi-Fi? and Hi-Fi Choice show a curious interest in the modern equivalent - the cheap and nasty micro/mini/midi system.

Entry-level hi-fi mags should be fiercely arguing the case for real hi-fi, because if they don’t, they’ll usher in their own demise - and everybody else’s. As they’re so good at tabloid front page headlines, may I suggest “Stunning Separates Murder Midi!” for the next issue of What Hi-Fi? We live in hope. DP

DRIVING AUNTIE’S BABY
I was interested to read in your April edition a letter from Martin Swain looking for a suitable amp to partner the LS3/5a speaker. I have been through a similar odyssey over the past 8 years trying various amps including the Cyrus I Mr. Swain has.

I now own a Radford STA15 which I restored myself and I find it the perfect partner for this speaker, possibly because valves tame their lispy treble, but perhaps more likely because you can match the amp’s output impedance to that of the speakers. LS3/5as were originally 15 ohm but modifications in the late eighties dropped this to around 11.

The comparatively low output of this amplifier (115 watts) can drive these inefficient speakers to loud enough levels for me, via a passive pot with no gain!

When restoring the Radford I actually removed the impedance selector and hard wired it through on the 16 ohm taps as I decided that the only speakers I was likely to use were the LS3/5a and the original Quad ESL.

It’s worth the trek as I have yet to find a speaker I prefer. Volumes have been written about this design, but I think it says something that while 50,000 pairs have been shipped throughout the world and four suppliers are still producing them under license (KEF, Rogers, Harbeth and Spendor). Not bad for a product that came out twenty years ago!

Jonathan Ives
Fleet,
Hants.

ANOTHER TYPE OF CROSSOVER
Why is Simon Hopkins reviewing records under a “jazz” heading? Is it because he can’t find a more relevant category for the ambient and thrust music (i.e. burbled) he seems to favour?

As a suggestion, you might institute a new “Engineering” review section, which should then give proper credit for the noises on these discs; perhaps also syndicating the feature to be carried by other publications, such as What Hearing Aid and The Frisky Society journal.

J McDermott, Maidenhead.

I don’t know, jazz these days just ain’t the same as when Louis and Ella used to do it, is it? Full of all these young upstarts with synthesisers who don’t know one end of a tenor sax from the other. Bring back national service, that’s what I say! DP

GRASS’ AND THE OTHER SIDE
May I tell you about the best hi-fi I’ve ever heard? It consisted of a Pink Triangle Anniversary with SME IV arm and Ortofon MC3000 cartridge, Michell ISO, Croft Super Micro III/V and a pair of Audioplan Kontrapunkts. And it sounded effortlessly smooth and dynamic with fantastic imagery.

The thinking behind my own system is broadly similar, except the front-end is somewhat more humble. It consists of a PT One (the poor man’s Anniversary!) and a Roksan Corus Black mounted in a late model ttok.

I feel it is time to replace the cartridge after two and a half years, but what wish? How can I even approach the architectural image quality of my ideal system, which I can’t even afford to stretch to the Ortofon MC15 Super II/EAR 834P combination you reviewed so favourably recently is out of the question. Perhaps the idea is designed to remain just that for the foreseeable future, something to believe in but not necessarily attainable.

Chris Moorhouse, Sheffield.

INTERFERING WITH THE MAINS
Equipment supports, ‘speaker cables and interconnects all play an important part in obtaining audio nirvana. But many may not realise that the mains supply can be a major culprit for preventing us getting there. Last year I started buying HFW and noticed Campaign Audio Design’s offer on mains cables. I sent off for a Conqueror mains lead to use with my amplifier but remained sceptical. However, its effect was nothing short of remarkable. For the first time I could actually sit down and become pleasantly engulfed in music. I have since had my CD player modified to accept an IEC mains socket and a Roksan Corus Black mounted in a late model ttok.

For anyone who may be interested, my system is as follows: Sony X77ES CD player on 40lb marble slab, Audiolab 8000A amplifier and Linn Kan ‘speakers on Linn stands with LK20 interconnect.

J. M. Willis
London.

World Radio History

Hi-Fi World

AUGUST 1995

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LAST OF THE INCAS
My system comprises a Michell Gyrodec/Alphason Xenon/Audio Technica ATF3 with standard Gyropower power supply, Incatech Claymore amplifier and Tannoy DC2000 `speakers, using Target supports and Naim NAC04 `speaker cable.

The amplifier has given up the ghost, so I'm looking to replace it. I initially want to spend around £500 and then another £700 or so at a later date. I was thinking in terms of an Audiolab 8000A, with an additional 8000P power amp to be purchased later. Would this give me the tight, punchy sound I'm after?

Simon King, Stroud.

The Audiolab is great value, but in absolute sound terms the Naim Nait 3 betters it in my view. With your budget, why not consider this route: buy a Nait 3 for £600 including MC stage, and when funds permit, for £16 your Naim dealer will re-configure it to a preamp. As the Nait 3's power amp section is actually a NAP90, you can then buy another for £415 and bi-amp them. This will give you plenty of power, with an easy upgrade path. You could then invest in a Flat-Cap power supply for by the vast array of equipment available. I've had only one system before, purchased 25 years ago, comprising B&O 1000 receiver and turntable and Celestion Ditton 15 `speakers. The B&O finally ended its days last year and I now have a Luxman 707.II amplifier and Sony ST-A3L tuner purchased second-hand from a friend, which I use with a Sony TC152 tape deck.

This works fine but I want a new system in the top room of the house (Victorian gable-end) which is to be a retreat. I am thinking of Castle Chesters and a Nakamichi DR2 tape deck, and possibly a second-hand Quad amplifier and tuner, but not the new 77 as it is too expensive and I can't cope with 'remote control'. I suppose my ears are now tuned to the Celestions' sound, as I like a warm, rich, mellow, full sound with depth, resonance and articulation, especially with human voice. My choice in music is catholic: liturgical, symphonic, early music, string quartets and some folk and rock, but my main love is modern jazz and jazz vocal.

I have a treasured record collection and also need a new turntable to go with this new system. I had thought of a Rega Planar 3. More importantly I am a keen Radio 3 listener (although it's hard to be keen about Radio 3 these days) and would be recording from the radio, so the tuner is a crucial item.

Your suggestions would be much appreciated. I am not into upgrading, so this system would be it for the rest of my life, hopefully.

Shirley Hillier, Bradford.

What a tall order! You're not very specific about your budget, but assuming you want to dabble in used equipment, here goes!

The excellent Rega Planar 3 is a little analytical for some tastes, but this can be assuaged by partnering with a Goldring 1042 cartridge. Tracking at 1.7gms, you'll find this top moving magnet sensibly robust, but its high tracking ability will preserve your records.

As far as amplification is concerned, you could look around for a second-hand Quad 34 preamp and partner it with an early (hence cheaper) 606 power amp, which has a satisfyingly sumptuous, well-upholstered presentation. The partnering FM4 tuner is the obvious choice of
radio, although the NAD 402 is a nice, warm sounding design at a more affordable price.

For speakers, the Castles you mention suit the bill admirably, but consider the big, warm Heybrook Heystak also, which sounds good with jazz.

The Nakamichi DR2 cassette deck is of course a must - almost compulsory if you want long, reliable service, coupled with genuinely high quality. Cables again depend on your budget, but Chord Company’s Flatline is an excellent value product. DP

The Sugden A21a also works extremely well with the Castle Chesters and has an excellent phono stage too, so will serve your records well. On the subject of records, the Planar 3 is getting long in the tooth now; also try auditioning one of the more modern Pro-ject turntable packages which all come with fine Ortofon MC cartridges, giving a super performance and top value. DB

Yes, but bear in mind that if you bounce one of these superb moving coils, bending the stylus, you must get buy a factory replacement, which costs serious money (£100+). I suspect this represents a level of commitment you’d find excessive. Like all moving magnet cartridges the Goldring 1000 Series have user replaceable styli and, because they are made in Britain by a long established and reputable company, spares are available and are likely to remain so. NK

Continued on page 61...

The writer of the most interesting system query will receive a free set of super Connections Jade interconnects.

A CONNOISSEUR OF VINTAGE
My system comprises an Arcam Alpha 3 amp, Denon DRS-610 tape and a Marantz CD52 II with Mission 760i ‘speakers, in my front room approximately 12’ by 12’. It is great, I thoroughly enjoy the sound. This cost about £700.

From a junk shop several years ago I purchased a ‘radiogram’ which was really a professionally built cabinet holding a Trio KA2000A amplifier, 1000A tuner and a turntable with no visible name. However underneath the turntable is a sticker with the legend Type BD2, A.R. Sugden and Co. Ltd, Brighouse, Yorkshire.

The pulley has a plastic cover with Connoisseur printed on it. Underneath are the numbers 23556 and EW in felt pen. The tonearm is 11’’ long with no name on the cartridge. The ‘speakers have no visible ID and are not even a pair.

It sounds superb and goes very loud and cost me £25. Is it worth re-housing in smaller purpose built containers, or is it worth spending money on a better turntable?

B.A. Morgan Gwynedd.

Your turntable is a Connoisseur BD2, a belt drive design from the early seventies, sold by A.R. Sugden (not to be confused with his brother J.E. Sugden, the amplifier manufacturer). The tonearm fitted to all BD2s was Connoisseur’s own SAU2.

The turntable was a good budget design of its day, competitive with best-selling Japanese designs like the Pioneer PL12D or Trio KD1033. In 1972 it retailed for £23 for the chassis, or £32 with a plinth and cover. (As a gauge, the standard entry-level Garrard SP25 Mk III was £13, the 401 cost £32 as a chassis only and the PL12 was £41 complete.) Your Trio amp was also a good budget design in its day, retailing for around £30 and offering 16W RMS per channel.

As far as re-housing the components goes, it’s up to you. I suspect the system has a big, warm, fruity sound with plenty of tonal colour that makes it nice to listen to. However, on the second-hand market it’s worth very little, so if you like the sound as it is, why not just enjoy it? For the sake of your records though, I’d buy a new cartridge, such as the Ortofon VMS2E or Stanton 500AL, both of which can work in ‘robust’ tonearms at higher tracking weights. DP

Yep, and get a decent pair of budget speakers as well, like Celestion 1s or Goodmans Maxims. NK
New England Audio Resource lay claim to being "The Leader in Metal Speaker Technology." 
N.E.A.R. have an in-house design and manufacturing facility which they say allows them to make superior components. All their tweeter and woofer models use metal alloy cone materials. N.E.A.R. has eliminated the centering 'spider' which they say is the single most distorting mechanical factor in a loudspeaker. They have replaced this with a solution called MLS, 'Magnetic Liquid Suspension', which is said to have no non-linearities, no distortions and no noise. A bold claim indeed.

The Mast is N.E.A.R's current flagship home theatre floorstander. Four foot tall, yet narrow at the waist, they are gracefully high-tech in
"Dead good speakers"
Mr. GR Hudson, Hampshire, on the Beretta

"Astonishing performance and value.
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Mr. D Mclean, Surrey, on the Purdey

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Malcolm Steward, Hi-Fi Choice
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Ray Nugent, RAM UK Ltd.

REVOLVER
by
Ram
The Soundmasts are labelled 'left' and 'right' on their bases, suggesting an optimal L/R configuration. In this instance, the cone tweeters face inwards. They have sufficient dispersion to cover a wide horizontal range and yet also enough directivity to ensure crisp speech intelligibility.

Within the first few notes of Bob James' 'Maputo' the bass was immediately impressive, suggesting the designers have succeeded in creating a first rate enclosure to complement their driver design. Percussion was precise and fast and the overall dynamic of the presentation was convincing. An example of this is the duet of Marcus Miller (bass) and Steve Gadd (drums) on 'More than Friends'. Here, two of the world's finest session/jazz musicians are seriously getting their musical rocks off, and yet the subtlety of the guitar riffs are never marred by the powerful, rudimentary drum patterns. Keyboards were smooth and transparent, while Al Jarreau's voice was like honey over the gloss tops and bottoms are well finished appearance. Standard piano black high-gloss tops and bottoms are well finished and add an air of quality. The cabinet design incorporates multiple cross bracing and has a large tuning chamber - all evidence that we are about to hear something that has taken a lot of planning to meet the variety of home musical and audiovisual needs.

The Soundmasts are labelled 'left' and 'right' on their bases, suggesting an optimal L/R configuration. In this instance, the cone tweeters face inwards. They have sufficient dispersion to cover a wide horizontal range and yet also enough directivity to ensure crisp speech intelligibility.

The ambience that the Masts conjure up is really quite remarkable: one might be forgiven for thinking they secretly contain a couple of advanced DSP chips! 'Caroline' from Fleetwood Mac's Tango in the Night sounded refreshing and upbeat. The air the Masts shift seems directed at the legs, and would go down a treat after dinner or any impromptu dance opportunity. Horizontal imaging was good, with floor toms rolling hard to the right, ending in a solid thud. The triangle which characterises this track was prominent, rising out of the percussion. Treble detail, or 'clarity' as some would call it, could sometimes be overwhelming to the point where some may find it distracting, especially as soundstage depth is somewhat compromised. Whilst such intensity isn't unmusical, it could make frequency extremes appear limited, whether imagined or real. There's evidence of this on pieces where treble roll off is quite noticeable, in the lack of decay of quieter acoustic instruments such as harpsichord, cello, and violins.

CONVENTIONAL DRIVE UNIT

CLASSICAL GUITAR ON 'FAMILY MAN' WAS REALISTIC WITH FAST, OPEN ATTACK. ON 'WELCOME TO THE ROOM', THE SOUNDSTAGE GAVE AN ALMOST LIVE FEEL TO THE LISTENING ROOM. BACKING VOCALS SEEMED TO ORIGINATE FROM WAY BEHIND THE MASTS, WHILE THE LEAD WAS PLEASANTLY UPFRONT. 'ISN'T IT MIDNIGHT' IS A GREAT ROCK PRODUCTION, FULL OF SOUNDBITES THAT DO JUSTICE TO THE IMAGING ABILITIES OF THE MASTS. THE LOW MALE VOICE RISES HAUNTINGLY OUT OF THE MIX AT POINTS WHEN YOU LEAST EXPECT IT, WHILE THE SUSTAINED LES PAUL GUITAR, SO CHARACTERISTICALLY FLEETWOOD MAC, IS TREATED TO AN AUTHENTIC AND EXTENDED LIE IN. THE MUSICAL ACTIVITY NEVER SEEMS TO CLUTTER OR BECOME TONALLY DISTORTED, EVEN IN BUSY ARRANGEMENTS.

The choir of King's College, Cambridge, under the baton of Stephen Cleobury, sounded majestic, with the space and depth of the cathedral well preserved. Organ sound was particularly good, due to the Masts' undeniable ability to handle low frequencies with style. Solo voices were well projected and had spine tingling reverberation. The atmosphere was a commendable testimony to the presentation of choral recording, which is often difficult to portray.

Marcello's oboe concerto was warm and relaxing, the depth of the Masts adding authority to the performance. The light and airy oboe had a good sense of timing and feel, while separation of orchestral parts was complemented by the wide soundstage.

N.E.A.R have succeeded in developing an A/V loudspeaker that can truly call itself hi-fi. The N.E.A.R Soundmasts would be equally at home delivering an authentic bone-crushing blow from Stallone as they would a chamber recital. This in itself is an achievement. As with all good loudspeakers, they have a distinct personality of their own. If you get on with their sound characteristics, you invariably end up living with them. Indeed, if you like them that much, you marry them. As for me, I'm an audio bachelor, still in search of that elusive loudspeaker that truly sounds like the 'real thing'. It's a sunny Friday afternoon and I'm off to enjoy a cold beer on the Thames, listening to a live gig. Well at least it's one step closer to the real thing!

N.E.A.R. Soundmast £1199

MPI Electronics 13 Weston Road, Guilford, Surrey GH2 6AU. Tel 01483 454993

WORLD VERDICT

An interesting, musical 'speaker that's good value even at this price point.

Measured Performance see p105-113
With the nights getting longer, how better to spend them than relaxing to music and reading the latest issue of Hi-Fi World. We'll bring you all of the latest news from the industry, features, readers' letters and queries, a super competition, reviews on the latest equipment and more. Here's just some of what the September issue hopes to bring.

**McINTOSH MA6800 AMPLIFIER**

Weighing in at around 40 kilos this monster integrated amplifier from the States certainly packs some punch. With 150 watts on tap and a peak current capability of 55 amps, it's an integrated with the power to impress.

**CASTLE SEVERN LOUDSPEAKERS**

One of the first of a new breed of Castle, the Severn loudspeakers use a recently developed 130 mm injection moulded bass driver with a 25 mm polymide tweeter. The Severns are a reflex design, their slim and elegant cabinets graced with real wood veneer.

**DPA DIGITAL LITTLE BIT III CD CONVERTOR**

With an expected retail price of around £300, the new Little Bit III will be the most affordable discrete design CD convertor available. Could this change the face of CD as we know it?

**TEAC A-BX10 AMPLIFIER**

TEAC have taken the minimalist approach with their new £999 integrated amplifier. Aimed at the audiophile, the A-BX10 claims 100 watts output and a low feedback circuit philosophy. We ask whether it measures up to the best of British.

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THE BOTTOM LINE
I have recently purchased a pair of Spendor SA2 'speakers and am delighted with them. They represent a considerable improvement over the Leak 3030s I was using before which were good in the midrange, but dreadfully inefficient and undynamic.

The rest of my system consists of a Logic DM101 turntable, Hadcock Unipivot arm and Ortofon FF15E cartridge, Mission Cyrus 2 amp and NAD 5420.

My main source is vinyl and I was wondering whether upgrading the cartridge would be sensible. I'm not too sure how good the Cyrus' phono stage is, but cannot get a head amp because I have no spare line inputs on the amp. Is it possible to bypass the phono stage and have it turned into a line stage to be used with a head amp?

M. Watchman
Sheffield.

Modifying your Cyrus in the manner you suggest doesn't sound a good idea to me, as it makes it hard to resell, and isn't really the root cause of your system's problems.

The first thing you should consider is the turntable itself, which was an excellent deck in its day, but that was a long time ago.

If you're happy with the Logic, consider having it serviced and fitting a new arm such as a Rega RB250. Contact Manticore Audio Visual on 01585 583653 who do a good range of spares for the DM101, including belts and springs. They'll also be able to advise about arm-boards, and arm fitting.

The other option on a budget is a second-hand Linn Axis, preferably with Akito tonearm, or a Manticore Mantra/RB300 of several years vintage. Ironically, the latter sounds richer and more Linn Sondek-like, while the baby Linn is lither and more neutral. With either the Logic or the Manticore I'd go for an Ortofon MC15 Super II, and I'd put a Goldring G1042 in an Axis. DP

ROOM REFLECTIONS
I read your recent article on loudspeaker positioning with interest, as I live in a modern house with low ceilings.

From where I sit, the distance to my 'speakers is greater than from the top of my 'speakers to the ceiling (even though they face across the room).

As you predicted, the stereo image improves when I sit closer to the 'speakers. However I don't want to move them as they produce the best bass about 10cm from the rear wall, and my wife won't let me have the settee in the middle of the lounge.

Would a lower, upward firing floorstander like the Townshend Sir David be better, or would an efficient panel 'speaker help? My system comprises Ruark Talismans, Beard BB100, with Rock/Moth/Goldring 1022GX turntable and Teac VRDS 10 CD player.

David Kelly
Cambridge.

If you are pleased with your Ruark Talismans, there is no need to change them. You have identified a 'sweet spot' by what you describe as a position where the stereo image is best. This position is also where the direct signal is at its strongest. The Talismans (which are fine loudspeakers in my opinion) are designed to be angled slightly upwards. A low ceiling such as yours may be subject to strong high frequency reflections. You may also have strong reflections off the rear, and possibly side walls as well.

The mirror test (HFW Nov '94) describes an accurate method of locating primary and secondary room reflections from room boundaries and surfaces which are responsible for the anomalies you are experiencing. With low ceilings you need to minimise strong treble reflections. The sound may be unbalanced because treble is a few dB up (louder) due to reflections from the immediate boundaries and room furnishings.

In small areas, an area of optimal diffusion (amplitude of original signal is not diminished, and energy is evenly distributed across the frequency spectrum) is most desirable; that is to say, preserving the integrity of the original music whilst allowing the room to create a natural, supportive acoustical environment around it. Once you have located these points of reflection, you have a number of options to improve the acoustical characteristics of your listening room:

1. Install professional acoustical materials to control these reflections and optimise your sweet spot through maximum diffusion.

2. Use home made materials. Carpet and egg boxes in various states of disguise can be quite effective, placed on the located spectral reflection points. (It should be noted that if you have excessive treble, absorptive surfaces are most effective.) Where detail and power is required, cardboard egg boxes are best. If a combination is required, back the boxes with insulation material. The sound will improve remarkably.

3. Where the above options are not possible, use your intuition, a bit of experimentation and careful listening to create the ideal blend of a home and music listening room. Large plants, strategically placed, can be useful diffusers. Tapestries can be effective HF absorbers. (Careful! Too much will leave the room sounding dull.) The thicker the depth and surface area, the more bass will be absorbed. Paintings can be used as reflectors when glass covered. DF-D

NAIM CHANGE FOR QUAD
As a keen hi-fi enthusiast I

Low ceiling

Mirror

Loudspeaker

Listener

Treat sound as light: find image of 'speaker in mirror and install sound diffuser at that position.
have at long last managed to afford some high end equipment. I used to have an Arcam Alpha 3 amplifier with Philips CD and Tannoy M20 speakers, Rega Planar 3 turntable, Denon 260L tuner and a Marantz cassette deck. Various hi-fi magazines were perused and a good dealer was selected (Sound Organisation, London). I chose to audition and buy Naim equipment. I decided on a combination of 72 preamp, 140 power amp, Hi-Cap, NAC5 and CDJ together with a Super Bias cartridge.

I took the equipment home, rigged the system up and began to listen. Imagine my disappointment when I heard hiss. My wife also commented on the noise level. She normally professes not to notice any difference in the sound and thinks that I waste my money on purchasing equipment. I had the equipment for a few months, during which time I made several calls to the dealer who told me there was possible RF interference causing the problem. I was advised to disconnect all the front end components and check for hiss. No change.

The dealer agreed to swap the Naim equipment after trying out another 72 and Hi-Cap with no change. I auditioned a Quad 66 preamp and 306 power amp which is now with me together with a Nakamichi DR3. The Quad is not displeasing and more bass response is elicited from the ELA's with no hiss, but I do not feel that the Quad sound is as precise as the Naim. I would like to know if I can improve on this - with a 606/2 power amp perhaps?

As a humble non-technical punter i'm at the mercy of hi-fi magazines recommending equipment and reputable dealers. Why are these most annoying defects in a system not mentioned in reviews?

M. D. Aitkins

Laindon West, Essex.

Baffled by this, we 'phoned your dealer, The Sound Organisation and Naim, as well as Son et Lumiere for general tests and advice, since they too have Naim and Rega and like to help out with such queries (you are ex-directory and supplied no 'phone number).

The Sound Organisation, sell the 72 preamp with the 140 power amplifier and Elas quite regularly (as do Son et Lumiere) and neither have received complaints about hiss. They confirmed that your Naim quiet room. Even then, on LP, disc surface noise would swamp this hiss. Son et Lumiere confirmed this.

Feeling that you are unusually sensitive to hiss, The Sound Organisation say they felt obliged to offer you a quieter power amplifier (you apparently complained about power amp hiss, since volume was at zero, they told us).

Unfortunately, some confusion may have arisen from the advice you received that you should "disconnect all the front end components and check for hiss". If you do this, the phono stage in

Sources of hiss. Here are the gain levels found in a typical hi-fi amplifier. The hiss you hear comes mainly from the first active device (valve or transistor) amplified by the gain of the following stages. For example, if the first stage has a gain of thirty and an intrinsic hiss (equivalent input noise) level of 1µV (one millionth of a volt), it will throw out 30µV of hiss. If the next device is twice as noisy (say), producing 2µV of hiss, hiss from the first stage will still be x15 greater. This example shows that input hiss usually swamps everything else. That's why hiss usually comes from the front of an amplifier and goes up and down with volume.

In our example, input hiss of the power amp. is amplified 15 times, that of the preamp 45times (3x15), but that of the phono stage (MM) no less than 5,400 (120x3x45) times! This is why phono stages are hissier than line stages (ignoring source noise). Moving coil cartridges need ten times! This is why phono stages are hissier than line stages (ignoring source noise). Moving coil cartridges need ten times more gain (i.e. x54,000 in all), so they're even hissier.

Naim amplifiers have an unusually high line input sensitivity of 70mV, three times normal, so with volume at maximum they will produce more hiss. However, this is an unrealistic situation. In use you'll simply turn volume lower, reducing hiss to the same level of any other amplifier.

 amplifier was working normally and that there was only the slightest amount of hiss, inaudible at a normal listening distance, unless, perhaps, you listen in a deathly particular will hiss like crazy, the only possible explanation for being able to hear hiss four feet away. Phono stages must be loaded by a cartridge to work properly. This, I

should point out, is input stage hiss, whilst with volume at zero you hear power amp hiss and I'm not really certain which you were suffering. However, since power amp hiss is very low, I suspect the former.

Naim checked and rechecked and told us they could only hear hiss with their ears against the Ela tweeter and certainly not at a normal listening distance.

These days hiss is inaudible through low sensitivity/gain CD/tuner/aux inputs, at normal volume and listening distances. You can just hear some hiss from the tweeter, but only 12in away or less. This, however, is of no importance. If you want near-silence from your Rega Bias, either an NAD, Audiolab or a Linn preamp are alternatives to the Quad, since all have class-leading hiss levels, assuming it is input hiss you are hearing.

We only criticise phono hiss when it is high enough not to be swamped by disc surface noise. Otherwise, criticism becomes academic and it can be counter-productive.

I hope all this isn't too confusing (input hiss, output hiss, equivalent input noise and gain are confusingly interactive parameters) and will give you some idea of what to expect, why, and the consequences. If you are still not happy, contact Naim direct on 01722-332266, or Alester Kells at Son et Lumiere on 0171-550-9059.

Oh, and finally Alester made the point that you must use 3.5m or more of pNaim NAC A5 loudspeaker cable with your 140 to load its output or it might not be happy. NK
The concrete loudspeaker cabinet is one of hi-fi’s barbarian ideas. It recirculates in the collective consciousness of enthusiasts like an endless tape loop carrying a demented message. Was it those concrete caissons, known as Mulberry Harbours, used in the D-Day landings of World War 2 that started this off? They were an unlikely idea that just about worked, leaving powerful images of strength, longevity and immovability - just like concrete loudspeakers. Trouble is, whilst immovability had its plus points in resisting assault by channel gales and Nazi bombardment, things aren’t so turbulent in the average British home. At least, not as far as I’m aware.

I suppose for those whose homes are a battlefield, the concrete cabinet is a great idea. You can shelter in them when a raid is on, can’t you? But then, you might ask yourself why the missus got like this in the first place - perhaps it was merely the sight of concrete cabinets that did it.

Anyway, this totally daft idea has settled upon us like a mystery virus from outer space. The logic is that wooden cabinets thrum, producing a wooden sound, and that concrete, as evidenced in motorway bridges and such like - quite apart from Mulberry Harbours - obviously doesn’t. Ergo, what’s good for motorways must be good for loudspeakers - a leap in logic that, well, defies logic. The final result is an object so heavy and coarse of finish it brings all the worst properties of Stonehenge into your living room.

That’s assuming you can get them in there of course. Coles do a nice line in mobile cranes that are of some use to those with an upstairs room fitted with a convenient skylight. Otherwise, you’ll need to read a few accounts of how they built the Pyramids to sort out the mechanics and logistics of this little exercise. Just remember that chopping down the street’s Plane trees to make room as they did in 2000 B.C., won’t make you popular with the local council.

Concrete cabinets don’t thrum. I can confirm this from experience, because I’ve heard a few in my time. So what? There are other, subtler problems that cancel this out. Just building the things in the first place is so messy and difficult, labour costs alone make the whole exercise uneconomic.

Mass production means hiring a fleet of cement lorries and a team of navies, neither of which fit in with most production managers’ ideas of heaven. Concrete loudspeakers steadfastly refuse to lend themselves to mass production, potentially consigning their over-ambitious but thoughtless designers to a lifetime’s toil with a trowel. This is why new models consistently have a short lifespan.

The final nail in the concrete coffin lies in the last but least considered part of the whole crazy scheme: delivery. Everyone forgets about delivery charges. Parcelforce don’t possess Scammel low loaders, so you have to ‘phone Bovington Camp and catch them on an off day when their Chieftains are being serviced. Contact the M.O.D. for a quote. This will prove my point.

Add up the cost of tackling these hidden difficulties and it becomes apparent there’s no money left for drive units, not to mention decent ones. So in go a pair of the cheapest imaginable and that’s that: the heaviest and worst sounding speaker in the world. Concrete loudspeakers are a daft idea, although if you throw them into the sea they do make passable Mulberry harbours.

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* * *

Let’s look at an alternative idea which I think is completely sane, but everyone else believes to be totally daft: a loudspeaker without a cabinet. The Quad ESL-63 is the best example, but Gilbert Briggs (founder of Wharfedale) and his chums experimented with conventional drive units mounted on open baffle back in the fifties, in an attempt to get rid of cabinet colourations and echoes. Nobody has said much about such speakers ever since, it appears to me. The big surprise is that an open baffle can produce deeper, higher quality bass than a cabinet. I thank Gordon Bank, chief designer at Celestion for this one. Until I heard the Celestion SL-6000 open dipole subwoofer I would never have believed it, although room positioning is critical. So a full range open baffle ‘speaker is not only possible, but of potentially higher quality than a box design too.

We hope to get around to revealing much more about this complex subject in a future issue.

In the meantime, Dominic has come up with a practical, space efficient arrangement of reflex bass cabinet and open dipole midrange/treble. It offers most of the advantages, but none of the disadvantages of a full range open-baffle: There’s great elegance in this ‘speaker’s apparent simplicity.
Happily, my decision to include my email address at the bottom of the last few articles has started to produce some active feedback from readers interested in the Maximalist Preamplifier series. There seems to be a great interest too in the information on the project which I have made available on the World Wide Web.

Emailed suggestions have included the addition of a processing loop so that a surround encoder might be switched into, or out of, circuit. This is a very topical point with the proliferation of A/V set-ups, so I'll try to pick up on this in a future article. Martin Leach (martin@apnix.demon.co.uk) kindly pointed out that I omitted values on the circuit included in the July issue. My mistake, sorry. They are as follows: Top Boost Control, 1K lin; Top Cut control, IK lin; Bass Boost control, 10K log; Bass Cut control, 100K log.

Neil Sumner (100541.3367@compuserve.com) complained that his Sony Minidisc only provides an optical digital interface and therefore, in order to enjoy the digital "tape-loop" on the Maximalist preamp, he would need to include an optical send and return. Fortunately this is not a complicated problem to solve and the circuit diagram below illustrates simple applications information for the Toshiba optical transmitter and receiver devices employed in the optical "TOSLink".

I feel however that I ought to justify what was a tacit decision on my part (and consequently may appear an apparent oversight) in omitting optical interfacing on the Maximalist Preamplifier. As I have mentioned before in these pages, in many ways an optical link seems to be the ideal solution for joining two pieces of digital audio equipment together. Obviously a link that has provide the very fastest (therefore "cleanest") signal path possible. However the optical TOSLink is widely regarded as sounding a little less crisp than its coaxial electrical counterpart.

There are a number of possible reasons for this. In the first place, the speed of the link is compromised by the relatively slow light emitting diode transmitter and photo-transistor receiver housed within the connector shells. Secondly, cheap optical fibres which allow the optical signal more than one direct path between transmitter and receiver ("multimodes"), causes a temporal smearing of audio pulses, resulting in an effect known as modal dispersion. This can cause a degree of timing instability in digital audio circuits (jitter) which can affect sound quality.

The only advantage the optical link confers therefore, is its inherent freedom from ground-path induced interference signals such as hum and r.f. noise. Yet at digital audio frequencies ground isolation, if it is required, is much better obtained by means of a transformer. And, as anyone who has been following this series knows, I have preached the benefits of transformers for digital signals from the start. Incidentally, if you want to modify a piece of equipment with an optical interface to include SPDIF coaxial output, I designed a modification for this which was published in *Hi-Fi World* September 1993. I'll also place that design on my Web pages for easy reference.

Neil Sumner also asked, "Did you know that the Soundblaster AW32 has an SPDIF digital output on the board?" The answer is, yes I did. The I/F is SPDIF format at TTL level so, provided the appropriate electrical transformations are made, this feature allows for the intriguing possibility of a direct digital output from the Soundblaster.

All the articles so far published about the Maximalist Preamplifier, as well as a whole host of other information, is available on-line by visiting my Electric Perception WWW home page at URL, http://www.demon.co.uk/epercept/. You can leave messages and comments for me there or, alternatively, at CompuServe ID 100601.1614 or via email 100601.1614@compuserve.com. I've tried to make sure I have replied to all your enquiries and suggestions but it's quite a task, so if you think I'm ignoring you, I'm not. Finally, I've considered providing the HTML files of the Web pages on floppy disc to save on phone bills. Does anyone think this is a good idea?
TOTALLY WIRED

David Price and Dominic Baker return to tweaky corner to test some interesting cables.

CHORD COMPANY
FLATLINE
At £73 for a 3m pair, Flatline Gold is the basic mono-wired version. They sound substantially cleaner and crisper than our budget reference QED 79 strand (of which there's also a flat version), but they should do considering the price difference. I was extremely impressed with the clarity and speed of Flatline Gold, together with its lack of grain and mush. In a sense, this cable is as inconspicuous sonically as it is visually.

Moving up to bi-wirable Flatline Twin at £120 for a 3m stereo pair brought further rewards, with more space around instruments and a general increase in effortlessness and poise. Whether it's worth the extra £50 or so depends on you and your system. Mono-wired Gold is such a good starting point that many will find it all they need before going crazy on ten awesome sounding metres of silver Blue Heaven at £1,182!

CONNECTIONS JADE
Connections' Jade is intended as an affordable upgrade to the standard patch lead supplied with most equipment which, if you are still using it, may be limiting the performance of your prized equipment quite considerably. Jade is made from a good quality 7 x 0.2mm cable, and silver soldered to reasonable quality gold plated phono sockets.

Replacing the thin patch leads I had deliberately placed between CD player and preamplifier with the Jade, the sound grew considerably. There was better body through the midrange, stronger bass lines and a finer, more focused treble. Also notable was the way the Jade relaxed the whole sound. Before it had sounded pinched and constrained, but now it took on a greater sense of ease. This level of improvement is well worthwhile, especially when all it costs is £21/m.

PRECIOUS METALS
SILVER
At £200/m for the Silver Signal 200 interconnect and £100/m for the bi-wire Silver Loudspeaker 240 'speaker cables, these certainly are precious metals. Made from a special silver alloy and fitted with solderless plugs for best signal purity, their construction is unique.

Both Precious Metal interconnects and 'speaker cables share a similar character. Like van den Hul's carbon fibre cables, they display a natural, sweet balance, but with a brighter tone. They also combine warmth with a crispness and precision that is beguiling to listen to. Particularly impressive was the way they coped with female vocals and strings through the upper midrange, an area where any hint of coarseness or grain is quickly recognisable. With these cables though, there was a super smoothness to the sound, clear and open and well projected, but never hard.

The Precious Metal cables come into their own in a top-end, well balanced system, where their supremely neutral character does little to colour the sound. With a blend of crispness and sweetness, they are well worth searching out, if you've got a deep wallet.

The Chord Company
30a Sarum Business Park
Portway,
Salisbury,
Wiltshire SP4 6EA
01722 331674

Connections UK
49 Bishops Road,
Peterborough,
Cambridgeshire.
PE1 5AP
01733 897379

Picture The Sound
13 Weston Road, Guildford,
Surrey GU2 6AU
01483 454991
This month's super competition prizes come from Meridian's stylish 500 series. We're offering a complete CD-based system which is fully remote controlled, has a top class sound, and is worth £2500. The system comprises the latest 506 CD player, 551 integrated amplifier and A500 loudspeakers, all finished to the impeccably high standard you'd expect from one of the country's leading hi-fi specialists. Also included in the prize is Meridian's 500 series remote control, which allows complete control of this dream system from the comfort of your favourite armchair.

Meridian's stylish 506 CD player uses Crystal's CS4328 convertor chip, known for its sweet and musical properties. The 506 has a lean and detailed sound, one that brings great insight to music. Its delicate, warm treble never offends, which compliments CD very nicely indeed, for it never sounds aggressive or sharp.

This player is partnered with their 551 integrated amplifier, whose smooth powerful sound placed it "up with the best integrateds under £1000" when Dominic Baker reviewed it in the May '95 issue of Hi-Fi World. The 55watt 551 has six inputs, five for line level sources and one for an optional MM/MC phono stage. All inputs have adjustable sensitivity, so they can be matched to a wide range of equipment.

Both the CD player and amplifier are remote controllable, and if you have the 500 series remote control, which Meridian have generously included in this prize, the whole system and all of its features can be

WIN A FABULOUS £2500 MERIDIAN SYSTEM!
activated from your listening chair. Completing this excellent system are the A500 loudspeakers. With high sensitivity from their light, doped paper drivers they have a fast and detailed sound. Their silk dome tweeter is tonally neutral, helping to ensure highs are always sweet and open. These speakers are a three-way design, combining this tweeter with two 6.5inch drivers, one for bass/midrange frequencies, and one to add extra power low down.

So if you're looking for a top class system that's stylish and has the luxury of full remote control, don't miss this one. All you have to do to enter the competition is simply complete the questions and tie breaker opposite.

Please send your entry on a POSTCARD, or the back of a SEALED ENVELOPE, and completed in block capitals, to arrive no later than 4th AUGUST 1995 to:

MERIDIAN SYSTEM COMPETITION
Hi-Fi World Magazine,
64 Castellain Road,
Maida Vale,
London W9 1EX.

COMPETITION ENTRY QUESTIONS
Cut out and affix to the back of a sealed envelope
1) Meridian's 506 CD player uses which convertor chip?
   A. Burr Brown PCM63
   B. Philips DAC-7
   C. Crystal CS4328
   D. Analogue Devices 1867

2) How powerful is the Meridian 551 integrated amplifier?
   A. 5watts
   B. 551watts
   C. 551watts
   D. 51watts

3) What material is used in the tweeter dome of the Meridian A500 loudspeakers?
   A. Paper
   B. Plastic
   C. Velvet
   D. Silk

4) What feature does the Meridian 500 series system in this competition offer?
   A. Full remote control
   B. Built-in alarm clock
   C. Voice activated control
   D. CD autochanger

TIE BREAKER (obligatory)
Lazy bones will Rock 'n' Roll
To a Meridian system with remote control
Discs will spin, cones vibrate
Raising the idle and prostrate

Name: ...........................................
Address: ...........................................
Post Code: .................... Tel No. ....................
☐ Please do not add my name to your mailing list.

COMPETITION RULES AND CONDITIONS OF ENTRY
[1] Only one entry per household will be accepted. Multiple entries will be automatically disqualified.
[2] In the event of more than one entrant submitting all correct answers, the winner will be picked from the tie-breaker by the editor. Will will endeavour to publish the results in the September 1995 issue. Purchase of the magazine is not a precondition to entry.
[3] No correspondence about this competition will be entered into and the editor's decision is final.
[4] No employees of Audio Publishing Ltd. or any companies associated with production or distribution of the prizes may enter.

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

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Unfortunately, all issues prior to October 1993 are completely sold out, but subsequent issues, as listed below are available for £3.00 including postage and packing in the UK. Overseas please add £1.00 per copy (surface mail).
I would like to use my column this month to mention a couple of products I have been using over the last few months. The first is the Stereo decoder supplied by Studio 12, and originally reviewed in Hi-Fi World Supplement No. 15. Stan Halfyard of Studio 12 has since made a couple of modifications which have resulted in greatly improved performance. The second is an interesting turntable stand from Acoustic Artists, which is radically different in its design.

### STUDIO 12 DECODER

Shortly after reviewing this stereo decoder, which can be plugged into the MPX outputs of any tuner to provide a full stereo signal, Stan of Studio 12 wrote to me suggesting some improvements. I found the original decoder a little dry; the lovely, big enveloping bass lines that set the Leak Troughline I was using apart from mass market designs being restricted. I also found the midrange a little more compressed, loosing that natural, close miked atmosphere of the studio that the Troughline captures so successfully.

Stan had spent some time after these comments working on ideas to improve performance, and I must say that what he came up with is very successful indeed. If you aren’t already the owner of one of Studio 12’s decoders, these modifications are now standard with the kit and built modules. For those of you who are already using one, here’s a brief description of the simple modifications.

You might like to do the modifications in two parts, as I did, curious about how each tweak affected the sound. The first modification is to remove the coupling capacitor between the MPX input socket and the potentiometer, direct coupling the MPX input to the decoder module. At the same time as this change the potentiometer to a 1MΩ type.

Listening straight after this modification, the sound was noticeably clearer and sweeter. Midrange seemed better focused, with images firmer between the ‘speakers, and less, distortion on weak signals.

The second stage is to increase the two 0.1µF output coupling capacitors to 10µF. Plugging the module back in, I was surprised at how much this improved bass quality. The old Troughline warmth and depth was back, bass lines full and free flowing.

Switching between the decoder and the Troughline’s own decoder there was now less of a difference. Whereas before the decoder had made the sound harder, drier and more compressed through midrange and treble, now much of the Troughline’s sweet and atmospheric character was retained. But better still, the decoder was now giving a tighter focus to vocals, and although bass lost a touch of warmth, it now had better dynamics, speed and punch. This combined with the greater precision brought throughout the frequency range by the first modification, now makes the Studio 12 decoder in its latest guise even better value than before. I’m now considering a better potentiometer and a sprinkling of Solen polypropylene capacitors as its next upgrade. The Studio 12 decoder should definitely be auditioned by anyone using a vintage tuner with MPX outputs. Apart from being a simple and fun project to build, its performance is now top class.

### ACOUSTIC ARTISTS

This is a turntable stand for those of you who have the patience to get the very best from your record deck. I always find it fascinating how half a screw turn of adjustment can make such a large difference to a top flight turntable. Now Acoustic Artists have made a stand that demands similar tuning to get the very best from it, and it works.

Acoustic Artists have paid particular attention to preventing resonances within the structure of the table. The three legs the whole structure stands on are set at different angles and the glass sub-table and main supporting surface both sit on four spikes which are deliberately muffled compared to the Acoustic Artists which was brighter and crisper throughout the frequency range. Bass lines had even better punch and the whole image between the ‘speakers more solidity, both areas where the Pink is certainly no slouch anyway.

The Acoustic Artists isn’t the most elegant table to look at, and certainly isn’t cheap at £640. But if you’re using a top turntable it gets the very best from it. Providing you’ve got large amounts of cash with no home to go to, it’s a worthwhile upgrade. The difference it made was akin to having a worn cartridge that’s starting to loose resolution, replaced by a brand spanking new one.

Studio 12

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>01736 798 393</th>
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O ne aspect of hi-fi that never ceases to amaze me is how some people can spend hundreds (or even thousands) of pounds on a hi-fi, and never have it set up properly. This is especially the case with turntables, as they are often set up in the customer’s home by the dealer and then simply left until something breaks. Yet with a little care, a good turntable can last for decades, and often end up costing less to keep than C.D. players and cassette decks which eventually (or quite soon in some cases) need expensive new lasers or transport overhauls. Of course, not having your turntable set up properly not only effects longevity, but sound quality too. With this in mind, here are a few pointers to ensure you are getting the most from your turntable.

Placement and support are the first factors to look at. Ideally, the deck should be placed on a dedicated turntable stand or at the top of a hi-fi shelving unit. Try to place the support on the most stable and level section of the floor. If the floor’s completely shot, or space is tight then try a custom wall support. Once you’ve found the best position for the support, ensure the shelf is perfectly level, using a spirit level (most shelves are adjustable, and spiked feet are an additional means of levelling). With the support now secure and level, you might like to try some of the isolation units on the market. Although these may not necessarily suit all turntables, they can reduce motor noise and improve sound quality through isolation from vibrations travelling up the support. The most effective ones worth looking at are from Mana, Townsend, and Reference Imports new Air Pod system, which offers total isolation via magnets.

If your deck features adjustable suspension, check it is level and not sagging on one side. Generally, it’s best to run the platter as close to the plinth as possible, without it scraping. Make sure you allow for the extra weight of the record when making this adjustment. Adjustment is usually made via three Allen bolts (or similar). While making these adjustments, ensure that the arm wire isn’t snagging in the suspension, and that it has free movement across its arc. Next, check the belt is taut and hasn’t gone sticky. If it has, or it goes riding up the pulley, it’s usually time for a change. Clean the pulley and the inner rim of the platter (in other words, the path of the belt), using methylated sprit or something similar.

That’s the main part of the turntable set up. Next comes the arm. First check it’s securely mounted (you’d be surprised how many decks I see with loose arms). Then check the arm height. It should be level when playing a record. You may find the height is no longer correct if you’ve recently fitted a new mat such as the Ringmat. If it’s not quite right, then you can either adjust it with the built-in adjuster, or use spacers or large washers, placed between the arm and plinth, to build the height up.

The cartridge should be aligned using a specific alignment gauge. Be careful not to knock the cantilever, which hangs below the body when making this adjustment. Clean the stylus using a proper stylus cleaning brush (either electronic or manual), and check the condition using a mirror. If this is inconvenient, it’s usually possible to tell when a stylus is on its last legs simply by listening. If the sound breaks up at high frequencies (Mary Black’s vocals are a good test), then it’s usually time for replacement.

If you fit a completely new cartridge, ensure the four connecting leads are fitted the correct way round. If the cables are the wrong way round, you may still get sound out, but it will sound distant and muffled. Tracking weight and anti-skating can sometimes be knocked out of adjustment over time. The weight is found at the rear of the arm tube, and is usually adjustable via a screw thread, friction lock, or Allen bolt. The weight should balance out the weight of the cartridge. Then, extra weight is dialled in according to the cartridge manufacturer’s specifications. There are scales available which make the whole process a lot simpler. Next set the anti-skating. This is usually found on the base of the arm, or it could be a very small weight suspended on a piece of nylon. If it’s a dial type adjustment, simply set it to the same reading as the main weight (i.e. if the cartridge required a weight of 2 grams, set the anti-skating to 2).

Adjustments without markings are usually made via trial and error. Generally though, a middle setting will be equivalent to between 1.5 and 2 grams. Follow these simple steps periodically and you’ll find that not only will you get good service from your turntable, but you’ll also be giving your records a fighting chance to show just what they’re capable of.

"With a little care, a good turntable can last for decades, and often end up costing less to keep than C.D. players."
When the final Triumph sports car rolled off BL’s production line in 1981, many car enthusiasts shed a tear. As the last mass production British two seater, it seemed the end of a golden age of motoring epitomised by legendary marques such as MG, Riley, and Austin-Healey.

The way forward, thought BL and its competitors, was the “hot hatch”. Cheap, fast and easy to drive - perfect for modern motoring conditions. Thus began the eighties love affair with the GTi, signposting the decade’s fresh, efficient approach to the business of having fun on Britain’s roads.

But as sales soared and the roads swelled with hatchbacks bedecked in go-faster graphics, something strange started happening.

Almost overnight, a plethora of “classic” car magazines appeared on the nation’s news-stands, celebrating the inexpensive joys of ‘practical classics’ that readers of all mechanical persuasions (both the competent and the not so) had restored. Why on earth, amidst the thrusting, go-getting arriviste eighties, would anyone bother with rusting, sixties relics?

The reason was something that took mass manufacturers a long time to grasp, and one with resonances for the hi-fi industry too: true car enthusiasts were disparaged by the cynicism of automotive or audio. Real hi-fi is an active leisure pursuit. Audiophiles want products to enthuse about, covet, maintain, modify, tune or improve. And in the absence of modern, innovative designs many have started looking to the past.

Funny how times change. In the eighties, cars: warm, woolly and anachronistic as old sports cars; cars: warm, woolly and wet. This misapprehension was partly down to the allure of their computer-designed tin boxes, demand for classics only relented when new breed of hatchback. And it wasn’t all down to affluent old fogeys with too much cash to shake a walking stick at. Often, buyers of sixties machinery were too young to even remember their pride and joy in production. Instead, they wanted character cars, not the motoring equivalent of hi-fi’s bestickered black box, the hatchback.

So the classic car scene was partly a reaction to a lack of tempting modern hardware. Despite the corporate marketing muscle of major manufacturers trying to persuade people of the allure of their computer-designed tin boxes, demand for classics only relented when manufacturers started offering affordable, individualistic, specialist products once more.

Hi-fi is subject to similar market dynamics. There’s a parallel between the GTi and the generic Japanese hi-fi separate. Both are sometimes little more than older, unremarkable designs in modern packaging. Both are reliable, easy to use and require the minimum of dedication or specialist knowledge from their owners. Of course, these are positive attributes, but they don’t necessarily confer lasting happiness, automotive or audio. Real hi-fi is an active leisure pursuit. Audiophiles want products to enthuse about, covet, maintain, modify, tune or improve. And in the absence of modern, innovative designs many have started looking to the past.

Funny how times change. In the eighties, valves were seen as archaic as old sports cars: warm, woolly and wet. This misapprehension was partly down to the likes of the Quad II, whose sound epitomised the gentlemanly euphony of fifties designs, and partly because of a complete lack of understanding about how valve amplifiers work. Reviewers of the flat earth disposition showed little knowledge and interest, using quintessentially eighties’ hard-to-drive ‘speakers with which most valve amps struggle. Was it any wonder that Leak Stereo 20s wheezed and groaned under the load of a pair of Linn Saras?

But the nineties’ valve revival has lead to greater care being taken to match ‘speakers to amplifiers. The old orthodoxy of power sapping multiple-element crossovers, minimonitors tuned for bass extension rather than sensitivity and sponge-like cheap driver materials is on the way out. This in turn makes it much easier for valve amps to perform as intended.

But it’s not all love and peace on the thermionic front. Hi-Fi World’s patronage of all things warm and glowing has proved rather a double edged sword. Although we’ve identified music lovers with a focused, hands-on approach to hi-fi, we’ve also rather opened up a can of worms. In the same way that age maketh not the Hillman Hunter a classic car, being valved doesn’t make an amplifier a classic design. And now unscrupulous souls are rehashing obsolete sixties circuits, sticking them in fancy cases and selling them on that valve ‘authenticity’ cachet.

So if you’re auditioning amplifiers that glow in the dark with a view to buying, don’t make allowances for them. A decent modern valve design like the WAD 300B, which I’ve come across only quite recently, is smooth, yet so fast and dynamic it will have you running for cover.

Quality modern valve designs shouldn’t be viewed as the audio equivalent of the flat capped Home Counties’ MG brigade. “

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Quality modern valve designs shouldn’t be viewed as the audio equivalent of the flat capped Home Counties’ MG brigade - it’s not just a nostalgia thing. Like a lot of us, I’m looking forward to the day when the first modern mass-produced British valve amp rolls off the production line!
The Music Pages

Giovanni Dadomo

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Tank Girl O.S.T.
ELEKTRA 7559-61760-2

- Cult comic becomes cult movie sensation? Not being Jonathan Woss or Liz Hurley, I haven't yet sampled the delights (?) of the cinema translation of the grooviest band designee (that's French for comic, not being flash - well just a bit - just hate repeating words too esoteric to be comfortable thisclose together) this side of 'Ranxerox'. but as soundtracks go this is a well above average effort. This may well have something, perhaps everything, to do with the fact that like Natural Born Killers, it was put together by a musician, namely Courtney Love-Cobain. All of which can't help but point to the disc's weirdest moments which occur when Love's own band Hole's cut is immediately followed by 'Bomb', an item which sounds very, very, much like Nirvana. But here's the rub - the group hail not from grunge capital of the world Seattle, but the rather more mundane Shepherd's Bush. Not to mention the rather awesome Hammersmith Gorillas. (The dementoid lead Gorilla Josse Hector is treading the necessarily humble boards again, and should be seen at least once - a Great British Rock Eccentric, no exaggeration).

Anyway, back to La Love's inspired Tank Girl long-player. Your mis-spent earnings will grab you a nab of Devo's remarkably evergreen 'Girl U Want', L7's feisty 'Shove', not to mention the Magnificent Bastards - a name guaranteed to ask for trouble if ever...
there was one - with 'Mockingbird Girl'. Perhaps the most stupendous track is Joan Jett and Paul Westerberg (was not he in Devo too, or was it The Residents? Forgiven, either way).

Anyhow, said duet takes place alongside the eminently inestimable Joan Jett, who has solidified her career without the benefit of silicone or hyperbole - good on yer, chook! The last cut may well be the deepest, redolent with all the anger, passion and verbal dextrousness that only the singular Ice-T can muster. It's what you Girls out there, tank top wearing or not, might call a real ball- buster. Oi, me pobres cojones! (That's Spanish for "Ouch!", in case you were wondering.)

SCOTT WALKER Tilt FONTANA 526 859-2

- My first serious girlfriend, a postman's daughter name of June Eaton - where are you now, you were beautiful then and always will be - was fanatical about The Walker Brothers. I loved Scott's hair more than the massive ballads he and his nominal siblings turned out courtesy of pro song-scribblers like Burt Bacharach, Hal David and so on. But then a miracle happened - the Bros split and Scott went solo, discovered the genius of Jacques Brel, and went on to record a quartet of superb LPs.

True, some of his originals were word-wise a tad trite - 'Plastic Palace People', 'The Amorous Adventures Of Humphrey Plugg'? Do us a favour Mr Engel (that's his given name, for those who didn't know - presumably because it sounded fashionably British at the time). Still, he became a legend and an inspiration to generations that followed - Marc Almond, Julian Cope, even Pulp's Jarvis Cocker I'll wager. He had a splendid three-octave range, and was blessed with arrangers of true brilliance, Wally Scott to name but one.

But then he got all existential, moved to Amsterdam, or so the legend goes, and promptly vanished off the pop firmament for a decade. The Walkers reunited in the early seventies and made an electro-style pop LP that spawned a classic single in 'No Regrets'. Scott promptly vanished for another decade or so before putting out the idiosyncratic (or to some, crap) Climate Of Hunter. That was about ten years ago too. So now, ho, ho, ho, comes Tilt, a disc as unique and unclassifiable as Nico's Marble Index and as likely to be as slowly-but-surely influential as time goes by. Take it slow and easy, this man has a voice that can still shatter hearts and a rare and special musical imagination. Let's hope it's not a decade until the next one. And, Scott, why not get John Cale to produce the next one? A marriage made in Heaven that would surely be.

PS By the way, Mr. Engel's lyrics are miles better than of yore, catch only the clever-clever boxing metaphors on, er. the song with the boxing references.

THE LAST POETS Holy Terror RYKODISC RCD 10319

- The Last Poets must take most of the blame for the Rap Music phenomenon. I don't mean that with disrespect - quite the opposite: they almost single-handedly took a passing fad - a bad Allen Ginsberg-styled poet accompanying his bull-spoor with an equally malodorous bongo-player for backing. It's the sort of thing movie buffs will recall from early Roger Corman epics featuring the obligatory Beatnik scene - all girls in Juliette Greco shades and polo necks, all boys in badly-adhered goatees, berets and regulation black polos.

The Last Poets made their big crossover via a track on the Jagger film Performance, and titles such as 'Wake Up Niggers (Or We're All Through) were to inspire generations of black singer/writer/poets (not to mention a few white ones) from Gil Scott-Heron to everyone in the current crop, including all the Ices Baskin-Robbins never made (and Mr Vanilla, you definitely ain't on the list, sweetie). They're still as essential, relevant and PC as anyone under the rising sun. Dig, badass.

ROBERT CRAY Some Rainy Morning MERCURY 526 928-2

- Apart from startling second and third LPs, Robert Cray's later career has been a trifle topsy-turvy to say the least. Here at long last sees the New King Of The Blues back with a blistering disc. All the familiar concerns are present - love found, lost, crossed, and so on and so forth - but delivered with Cray's distinguished bravura and fire, be it on the vocal or guitar fronts. He's still the best of the new breed and whether you've never heard the word or given up on the bird, 'Some Rainy Morning' is as good as any place to join the Cray Fan Club.
RECORD OF THE MONTH

PAUL WELLER
Stanley Road
GO! DISCS 828-691-2

It's the name of the street he was born in, so we're told, and probably the best original title this side of The Kinks' Muswell Hillbillies. Me, I was raised in Northdown Street, not half a mile from Shane 'The Original Pogue' McGowan, and Steve Thingummy, co-founder of the late but eminently venerable Palace Pictures. Anyhow, I've always been of the opinion that Weller mk I (of The Jam) just happened to be one of the foremost song writers of his generation - particularly as he'd just about quit his teens and was turning out titles as strong as 'Going Underground'. 'A Town Called Malice' and 'Stare, combining social issues with great tunes even more frequently than their oft-admitted forefathers The Who. But then to this warped little mind at least, Weller took a brave but somewhat iffy turnaround with The Style

Paul's first solo effort went by like the proverbial fart in a hurricane, but 'Wildwood' put him back on front covers and sparked the charts heavy on the noggin. So too will 'Stanley Road', a deft blend of the rocky and olde English parochial. Why did I keep thinking of Traffic's epochal "getting it together in the country" period, 'Mr. Fantasy' onwards? Well, if it isn't Stevie Winwood on guest vocals! I don't think even the aforementioned Mr. Townsend was ever afforded that accolade. Tracks to open your lugs wide, one and all - what that fat Oirish geezer would call "a cracker". Lazarus doesn't stand a living chance alongside Weller's resurrection shuffle. Take my word for it.

magical and highly original moments, epitomised by 'Blow A Fuse' with its Sound Of Music-style build up and aggressive chorus.

The industrial spine of the album begins with the single 'Army of Me' and follows on into 'Enjoy', a grinding, repetitive tale of sadness and woe, and then into 'I Miss You'. There's also a heavy string and orchestral influence on particularly audible on 'Isobel' and 'You've Been Flirting Again', both tracks leaving a warmer feel.

But overall you get the impression of an embittered Bjork, revealing a newer, serious side - one that may claw her nearer to the icy peaks of pop credibility, but lose her some of her teenage fanclub. Her sense of fun is still however in evidence on 'Hyperballad' where we have Bjork at her brilliant old best. An intriguing, almost bitter release, with a fine balance of hard-edged, often beautifully delivered tracks.

Jon Clarke

BJÖRK
Post
ONE LITTLE INDIAN TPLPS1CD

Björk's second solo effort, following her highly acclaimed Debut of two years ago, is a step away from commercialism and a stride into a more industrial sound. And where there's some solid chart material in the guise of 'Army of Me' and 'Hyperballad', there's a much larger slice of experimentation, perhaps part-influenced by collaborations with Tricky in the studio, reminiscent of the young lady's Sugarcube days. Despite a weird, downbeat feel, within sit some
KILLING JOKE
Wilful Days
VIRGIN CDVD440

Post-punk ancients Killing Joke continue on the war path in 1995, as Jaz and fellow jokers release the interesting, but hardly essential Wilful Days. Like Stevie Wonder in the world of soul, on the punk scene Killing Joke are rather a spent force, their crown long stolen by bands like the Ramones, the Mission and SMASH. This compilation of 13 out-takes, B-sides, dance versions and extended mixes has both their high and (very) low points. While special moments like 'Eighties' and 'Love Like Blood' sound as good as ever today, others just go to show how a well-oiled machine can go rusty and break down. While it's great to reminisce on 'Sun Goes Down' and 'Follow The Leader', half these tracks are poor and would be unlikely to make a Best Of Killing Joke Volume II.

KRAFTWERK
Man Machine
EMI 74603928

KRAFTWERK
Computer World
EMI 74604024

Fuelled by a shell-shocked music press desperate to jettison its prog-rock credentials, the mid-seventies British music scene momentarily found itself dominated by punk. But as The Clash unleashed their smash-the-system polemics, changes were afoot abroad that were (arguably) to have more impact on today's pop music. Kraftwerk had just released Trans-Europe Express, a journey through the "elegance and decadence" of post-war Europe. Something of a transitional long player, it saw the group honing the formula for which they'd later become famous. Gone was the convoluted experimentalism of earlier work, and in its place a new economy of style, culminating in 1979's Man Machine.

An epic Fritz Lang-esque trip through some imaginary futurescape, MM is most famous for 'The Model', whose unconcerned, deadpan vocals and stripped-down electronics brought Kraftwerk their only UK Number One to date. The Bauhaus-inspired cover and modernist celebration of a future 'Metropolis' concerned some who saw it as flirting with fascist imagery. This was well wide of the mark - it was more of a classical European reply to the might of all-powerful American disco, which had the dance scene all to itself until then. After Man Machine, electronic music would never be the same.

Having worked their way through terrestrial and space travel with Autobahn, Trans-Europe Express and Man Machine, Kraftwerk shifted their gaze to the embryonic information superhighway with 1981's Computer World. By now they'd taken to appearing live with identical dummy replicas of themselves, their presence only discernible when previously motionless figures suddenly started playing Casio calculators hard-wired into their Kling Klang mobile studio! A sight to behold, these theatrics made them an instant cult among the electro cognoscenti and brought untold music and fashion press column inches.

The dramatic title track, built around heavy electronic percussion underpinning an impassive "business, numbers, money, people" refrain, suited the live shows just fine. But the German version, featuring Ralf Hutter's vocal intoning the mantric "Interpol and Deutsche Bank, FBI and Scotland Yard have information on you" chant, again upset concerned liberal types worried about the power computers conferred on government. For them, Kraftwerk's engagement with the new 'information society' all seemed a touch too wide-eyed and uncritical. Although this meant a frostier than expected reaction at home, the group's wry smiles weren't missed in Britain, where the synthi-blues of 'Computer Love' and proto hip-hop beats of 'Numbers' made it their greatest success to date.

Brimming with vintage analogue electronics, classic tunes and a resolutely internationalist outlook, many regard Computer World as Kraftwerk's finest forty minutes. Indeed, if you live and breathe techno, there's no way you won't already have heard vast tracts of this album sampled into the delirium of house and hip hop, from Afrika Bambaata to The Shamen, or cut-and-pasted across countless nineties ambient soundscapes.

David Price
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A reference guide to Britain’s Manufacturers and Distributors

ACOUSTIC ENERGY, 3a Alexandra Road, London W13 0P. Tel. 0181 840 6325. Acoustic Energy manufacture the award winning Reference Series AE 707, AE 705, AE 609, AE 509, AE 507, AE 307, AE 207, AE 107, AE Series Model 1, of all of which feature the unique AC metal cone drive units. The AE distribution division offers extensive stocks of the AC 610, MAUDW, GRYPHON, ENSEMBLE and TARA LABS.

ALCHEMIST PRODUCTS, 4 Roseberry Mews, London NW1 2LG. Call us for a list of our dealers in many areas of the UK. Tel. 0171 486 3341 Ext. 275. Wide range of high quality, stunning high end loudspeakers.

ALEMA UK LTD, 25 Montrose Road, Hove, BN3 1RD. Tel. 01273 202637. Audition “Edison” (Tradescan enquiries for our new extended range).

APPOLO. The UK based designers and manufacturers of high quality speaker stands and equipment racks. Not only added to their comprehensive range a modular system ideal for housing audio visual products and CD storage. Please contact for detailed information. Tel. 01273 726436. ARCAM, Pembroke Ave, Denny Industrial Centre, Waterbeach, Cambridge CB5 9PQ. Tel. 01223 424324. The 240B Amplifier and the Delta 290 Amplifier and the Delta 250 FM tuner. The two together produce a sound that has been described as “naked truth” and “a product of a new age” and that “provide that real ‘ping’ - discover it for yourself on information not only about these products but also the Arcam CD players. Speakers. Cassette Discs, etc. Phone or wire for a introductory letter - a brochure. The pleasure is all yours...

ATACAMA AUDIO SUPPORTS from Gambell Engineering are the leading distributor of the SE range of speaker stands, consisting of an 8’ 12’, 16’, 20” and the award winning 24’ high stand, as well as their proffessional models for the Tannoy etc loudspekers.

AUDIONOTE, CD Unit, 1 Block C, Hove Business Centre, Freeland Close, Hove BN4 1HA. Tel. 01273 250211. Audionote supply a range of very high quality and very expensive audiophile components including audio video transformers.

AUDIORAPID, 399 Kingsley Road, Hove, BN3 6HA. Tel. 01273 250611. AudioRapids manufacture the widest range available, including PROFI GOLD, SUPER GOLD and SUPER a+, offering a level of quality and very expensive audiophile components that has been described as “subtle and intriguing” and “a world of Music”. Call or write in or call for details on our full product range and your nearest stockist.

D & M DESIGN - BUNDEE CD REPAIR PROTECTION SYSTEM. Tried and tested on thousands of CD's. Repair, replacement, restoration of CD's, even those scrawled with steel wool. Effective for all audio dacs formats including CD ROM and CD ROM, CD MP3. Damaged CD's or CD's No new one when you can clean, repair and protect it? Contact David Mather for details of your nearest distributor.

D & M Design Ltd, Studio 6, Bentinck Court, Bentinck Road, West Drayton, Middlesex. UB7 7TW. Tel.: 0181 406 6655 Fax: 0181 425540. ECA DISTRIBUTION: for the “naturally neutral” chain. Nothing added, nothing taken away. The VISTA line amp, the LECTRON 5 power amp and the SERENIA 2 speakers. Roberton's Rank Research and Development, the ECA Design Team provides a “super-symmetry” circuit with the barest of electronics, impregnated air coils in the custom-made midrange unit for the speakers. P.O. Box 3023 London NW7 1UN. Tel.: 0181 406 6655 Fax: 0181 425540.

IAN EDWARDS, The Old Chapel, 285 Skipton Road, Harrogate, Yorks. Tel. 01423 504424. Somebody Somewhere must make brass cabinets for CD's, Music, Lp's, Hi Fi, Books, etc. than Ian Edwards. But until he appears, why not send for the brochure showing a selection of HAND MADE units? Do the please send x 25 lists cards.

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ENGLAND, 54 Coach Road, London. Tel: 0181 985 1646. Jordan Watts Auditions for Sight and Sound.

KESWICK AUDIO RESEARCH, 35 Farleigh Road, Dungannon, N. Ireland. BT74 1DU. Tel. 01843 688632 Fax 01843 460281. Keswicks the UK's only specialist HiFi Amplifier and Pre Amplifier and professional service repairs and accessories.

KRONOS AUDIO TECHNOLOGIES LTD. Cyntina Place, 201 Mare Street, Hackney, London E8 3QE. Tel. 01961 964 1466. Jordan Watts Auditions for Sight and Sound.

L MREW AUDIO, 5, Manor Road, Croydon, Surrey. Tel: 0181 557 3558. Jordan Watts Auditions for Sight and Sound.

LANDREGS LIMITED, 1, Mayo Road, Croydon, Surrey. Tel.: 0181 648 1664. In 1993. Write in or call for details on our full product range and your nearest stockist.

LUCAS PRODUCTS LTD, 1, Mary Road, Maidstone, Kent. Tel.: 01622 764874 Audition the products are detailed in a hi-fi annual catalogue and bespoke mains cables. Generous two week trial period.

MAREE AH AND AE2 loudspeakers and the new Aegis product range a modular system ideal for equipment racks have now added to their distributor list.

MAY AUDIO MARKETING U.K. LTD. 83 Main Street, Burnley, Lancashire. Tel: 01254 392 828. The DBS6 loudspeaker kit, as designed by Dave Berriman and featured in HI - Fi News Feb/Mar 1993. Write in or call for details on our full product range and your nearest stockist or distributor. Export enquiries welcome. DHM Design Ltd, Studio 6, Bentinck Court, Bentinck Road, West Drayton, Middlesex. UB7 7TW. Tel.: 0181 406 6655 Fax: 0181 425540.

J SUGDEN & CO LTD.. Valley Works, Station Drive, Kilmarnock KA3 7JA. Tel: 01563 71122 Fax: 01563 71123. The DBS6 loudspeaker kit, as designed by Dave Berriman and featured in Hi - Fi News Feb/Mar 1993. Write in or call for details on our full product range and your nearest stockist or distributor. Export enquiries welcome.

NIGHTINGALE AUDIO, 828026. The DBS6 loudspeaker kit, as designed by Dave Berriman and featured in Hi - Fi News Feb/Mar 1993. Write in or call for details on our full product range and your nearest stockist or distributor.

KESWICK AUDIO RESEARCH, 35 Farleigh Road, Dungannon, N. Ireland. BT74 1DU. Tel. 01843 688632 Fax 01843 460281. Keswicks the UK's only specialist HiFi Amplifier and Pre Amplifier and professional service repairs and accessories.

LANDREGS LIMITED, 1, Mayo Road, Croydon, Surrey. Tel.: 0181 648 1664. In 1993. Write in or call for details on our full product range and your nearest stockist.

LUCAS PRODUCTS LTD, 1, Mary Road, Croydon, Surrey. Tel.: 0181 557 3558. Jordan Watts Auditions for Sight and Sound.

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KITS HAVE NEVER BEEN SO GOOD!

NEW - KLPP1

£495

KLPP1 has five line inputs, a tape input with monitor, and a unique low noise valve MM/MC phono stage. There is a switchable subsonic filter to prevent output transformers of valve amplifiers saturating. The line stage has gain, so it will drive any power amplifier. Audio grade components are used and many parts are custom made for highest quality. KLPP1 has a super clear sound, sweet and detailed through line and phono inputs.

The World Audio Design range of kits are engineered like no others. Features of World Audio Design valve amplifiers include:

- Pure Class A working
- 4/8/16Ω taps for optimum speaker matching
- Custom designed transformers for unrivalled performance.
- Audiophile components
- Choke regulated power supplies
- Can be easily monoblocked for double power
- Welded steel chassis
- Hard wearing ‘baked on’ powder coat finish

800B VALVE AMP KIT

£850

This is a specialised 28watt amplifier based on the highly near 300B triode valve. Our 800B runs in Class A, giving one of the most sweet, open and neutral sounds possible today. It is so linear it can be used without feedback, but feedback can be switched in for difficult loads. Matched with good loudspeakers, it is unsurpassed. Can be monoblocked for 60watts.

All parts are included in the kit, except valves since different 300B makes are available.

K5881PSE KIT

£650

An audiophile parallel-single-ended valve amplifier at an affordable price. K5881PSE uses the reliable Russian 5881 output valve in parallel-single-ended mode for outstanding detail and atmosphere. It produces 1 wattse enough to drive most loudspeakers, making high-end sound quality and design available to everyone. Can be easily monoblocked to give 32watts.

K5881 KIT

£395

A superb, Class A, 20watt stereo power amplifier that uses the Russian 5881 output valve, a military version of the American 6L6, designed for low distortion audio work.

Designed for long life, low running costs and excellent sound quality, K5881 is sensitive enough to be used with a simple passive pre-amp, or our own line-drive pre-amp, and it matches modern loudspeakers well.

World Audio design
Tel: 0171 289 3533

World Radio History
4W SINGLE-ENDED VALVE AMP KIT £385

The 4W Single-Ended amplifier kit is a line level integrated amplifier. It comes with three line level inputs and a tape output. High quality components are used throughout, including polypropylene signal capacitors, Alps volume control, custom C&K gold plated selector switch etc. Valves are included.

THREE WAY CARBON-FIBRE DRIVER LOUDSPEAKER

KLS3 uses extremely light and stiff carbon fibre cone drive units for a fast and accurate sound. A dedicated 4inch carbon fibre midrange drive unit provides the cleanest, smoothest and most detailed midrange characterised by superb projection.

KLS3 has been engineered to get the best from your amplifier, be it valve, solid state, single-ended or zero feedback. Its high 90dB sensitivity and near flat 8Q impedance make it one of the easiest loudspeakers to drive.

Drive Unit & Crossover kit etc £350
Drive Unit Pack £230
Built £1500

KLS4 TWO WAY CARBON-FIBRE DRIVER LOUDSPEAKER

Drive Unit & Crossover kit etc £230
Drive Unit Pack £120

KLPI VALVE LINE PREAMPLIFIER £345

Newly updated with an extra line input and output for bi-amping or subwoofer connection, the line level preamplifier uses one of the simplest and most elegant circuits to give a sound with remarkable clarity and detail. The components are all high quality and include Military Spec, Russian valves, Alps potentiometer, polypropylene signal capacitors, silver plated copper wire etc.

CLASS A 36W SOLID STATE MONOBLOCKS

A pure Class A transistor design offering superb clarity and transparency. The Class A monoblocks use special new super grade audio transistors. They are extremely fast and linear, giving a super measured performance without the need of high levels for feedback. Circuit board + output transistors £129.40

HDL-P3 OVAL GOLD DOME PIEZO ELECTRIC TWEETER £225

This special new tweeter from Audax gives exceptional clarity and detail - use with HM100Z0 high definition aerogel midrange unit on an open baffle (design available) for the ultimate in transparency.

HIGH TECH AUDAX DRIVE UNITS

The 1994 range of Audax drive units sees many modern high tech materials and technologies that would normally be unavailable to the home constructor. We offer a small range of the highest quality drivers, including High Definition Aerogel (HDA) units, carbon fibre and three superb soft dome tweeters. Sadly there isn't enough room to print the specs, but if you are interested in any of the following drivers, please ask us for a detailed spec sheet.

Audax Drive Units:
CAST CHASSIS UNITS

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FABRIC DOME TWEETERS

TV025M0 (25mm 92dB suitable for 2-way systems)
TV025M1 (25mm 92dB suitable for 3-way systems)
TV034X0 (34mm 93dB a large dome with powerful sound)
OVAL GOLD DOME TWEETER HP-P3 (comes complete with crossover. Works extremely well with HM100Z0 giving ultra flat response from 400Hz to 20kHz.)

Demonstrations!!
World Audio Design Products are on demonstration at:

Hi-Fi Confidential
34 Buckingham Palace Rd.
Victoria.
London.
Tel: Luigi on 0171-233-0774

Horsham Hi-Fi
28 Queensway.
Horsham.
W. Sussex.
Tel: Jeff on 01403-251587

See page 85 for order form...
Golden Dragon Triodes

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Ceramic Sockets and Hardware

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Golden Dragon Power Tubes

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A selection from our stock of over 2,500 different audio quality valves. Please enquire for items not listed.

- ECC81: BRIMAR £4.50
- ECC82: GE £4.50
- ECL82: TEONEX £3.50
- ECC83: TEONEX £3.50
- ECC85: TEONEX £3.50
- ECC88: TEONEX £4.50
- ECC88: BRIMAR £4.50
- ECF82: RCA £3.50
- ECL86: TEONEX £3.50
- EF86: TEONEX £4.50
- EFB40S: TELEFUNKEN £36.00
- EL34: TEONEX £6.50
- EL86: MULLARD £4.50
- EL504: TEONEX £3.50
- EL519: PHILIPS £15.00
- GZ32: MULLARD £8.50
- GZ37: MULLARD £4.50
- GZ34: TEONEX £5.50
- GZ37: GEC £5.50
- KT66: TEONEX £6.50
- KT88: TEONEX £12.50
- MB136/EC82: MULLARD £8.50

Golden Dragon Triodes

- M8162/EC81: MULLARD £8.50
- 6550A: TEONEX £12.50
- 12A76: BRIMAR £2.50
- 12AV6: RCA £2.50
- 12BH7A: USA £12.00
- 12E1: STC £15.00
- 13D3: BRIMAR £6.50
- 807: TEONEX £6.50
- 1625: RCA £6.50
- 5814A: GE £5.50
- 5881: USSR £6.50
- 6072A: USA £8.95
- 6146B: TEONEX £8.50
- 6158: BRIMAR £6.50
- 6189: BRIMAR £6.50
- 6199: BRIMAR £6.50
- 6463: UNITED £7.50
- 6870: BRIMAR £11.50

Golden Dragon Power Tubes

- EL34/6CA7 £25.00
- E34L £29.95
- EL84 £8.95
- E84L £12.50
- 6L6W/G881 £25.00
- KT66 £25.50
- KT88 £57.95
- KT88 Super £67.95
- 6L6GC £19.95
- 6550A £42.95
- 6550A Special £64.95
- 50CA10 £84.95
- 807 £25.00

Export Welcome
P.M. Components Ltd., Springhead Enterprise Park, Gravesend, Kent DA11 8HD, England
Sales Desk Tel: 01474 560521. Fax: 01474 333762
**WARNING**

These are expert kits, not for the inexperienced. You must be able to solder and read a circuit diagram. The valve kits contain lethal voltages. We cannot be held responsible for any errors arising from the construction of the kits.

---

**ORDER FORM**

Please send your completed order form to: WORLD AUDIO DESIGN, 64 Castellain Road, Maida Vale, London W9 1EX

Tel: 071 289 3533  Fax: 071 289 5620

240/120 option - delete the voltage NOT required.  
Valves included except where stated.

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE A DATA SHEET ON ANY OF THE KITS, PLEASE WRITE A 'D' IN THE QTY BOX CONCERNED**

'BUILT' - we can supply the amplifiers built up and tested by an approved service, for safety and guaranteed performance to specification.

**WARNING** - World Audio Design Ltd will accept no responsibility for kits, parts or modifications made or supplied by third parties and based on our designs.

---

**DESCRIPTION**

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<th>ORDER No.</th>
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With phenomenal work from John Zorn and Painkiller and various other great shakers taking so much space of late, dozens of fine jazz releases have almost slipped through the net, so here's a dash through some other recent must-haves.

Jazz record reviews

Simon Hopkins

JOHN PATTON QUARTET
Minor Swing
DIW 896

Organist John Patton was a legendary Blue Note regular in the sixties. Here he enjoys a welcome reappearance in stellar contemporary company. Zorn contributes wailing, crying alto, further proving he's one monster jazz altoist. Guitarist and Henry Threadgill sideman Ed Cherry flits from funky comping to lyrical, post-Jim Hall soloing, and drummer Kenny

STEVE BERESFORD - HIS PIANO AND ORCHESTRA
Signals for Tea
AVANT AVAN039

Zorn and Wollesen make up two fifths of this group, alongside fellow Masada men trumpeter Dave Douglas and bassist Greg Cohen. All answer to Brit improv man Steve Beresford ("the best fucking musician in Europe" according to Zorn) who here ditches his usual assortment of ancient clapped-out toys, arcane devices and general junk in
favour of a joanna and his voicebox.
The group work their way through a series of mildly jazzy tea dances whose tunes are Beresford's and whose feisty, ironic and witty lyrics ("Air after breathing, tasting of lung/Songs after singing, tasting of sung") are the work of Andrew Brenner. Considering this is the Masada group with a key figure of European improv, Signals couldn't be more unexpected, but it's a thoroughly charming, committed and utterly unpretentious album. A little record, for sure, but totally addictive.

**Evan Parker**

**Saxophone Solos**

**Chronoscopy CPE 2002-2**

- A world away and twenty years ago, another star of free improv single-handedly reinvented the possibilities of solo sax improvising. Saxophone Solos brings together long-unavailable recordings of some of Parker's earliest solo performances, recorded live in the studio in the summer and autumn of 1975.

Parker is of course one of the world's most remarkable musicians, one who's created or appropriated whole new technical strategies to extend his personal vision - multi-phonics, circular breathing and the simultaneous playing of two or more independent melodic lines chief among them. There's no question that while his solo records are undoubtedly a difficult listen, he nevertheless remains the most important improvising sax player since his hero, John Coltrane.

What makes this record essential is that we hear the very beginnings of Parker's ongoing solo project, and where the baby of Can, Neu, Faust and sundry art rock worthies haven't been thrown out with the bathwater of prog rock the minute punk arrived. Or something like that.

**Azimuth**

**How It Was Then**

**ECM 523820-2**

- Karyobin featured four other singular talents alongside Parker, among them English trumpeter and flugelhorn player Kenny Wheeler. Wheeler actually couldn't have followed a different musical path from Parker if he'd tried, however (although both still appear together in straighter "jazz" conditions than either normally inhabits).

No group has showcased Wheeler's playing more effectively than Azimuth, although it nearly didn't feature him at all. Pianist John Taylor and singer Norma Winstone had originally come together in the late seventies to work out Taylor's thoughts on a minimalist music which might serve as a platform for a more romantic, lyrical improvising. ECM main man and producer Manfred Eicher suggested the addition of Wheeler, and Bob's-your-uncle, Azimuth: one of the most outstanding and enduring groups in European jazz.

How It Was Then is the group's first new release in over five years. Gone are the synths and organ of previous records, but the sonic world conjured up from a piano, trumpet, flugelhorn and a human voice (and what a voice Norma Winstone has) is remarkable. This is gorgeous, ceaselessly exploring stuff - highly recommended.

**God**

**Appeal To Human Greed**

**Big Cat ABB79XCD**

- Last year, London-based industrial-jazz collective God turned in The Anatomy of Addiction, their fourth album, and one of the overlooked albums of the year regardless of genre. The brainchild of saxophonist, vocalist, sample manipulator and producer Kevin Martin, God are without doubt one of the finest groups in Europe, a musical alternative history where Miles Davis' and Herbie Hancock's psychedelic seventies albums have replaced Led Zeppelin and Deep Purple in the hearts of every would-be rocker on the planet, and where the baby of Can, Neu, Faust and sundry art rock worthies hasn't been thrown out with the bathwater of prog rock the minute punk arrived. Or something like that.

Anatomy was their most stripped-down outing to date, with the sound of the group's expansive line-up - tenor sax, two guitars, alto sax, electric viola, double bass, two bass guitars, percussion and drums - at once pummelled into hard rock riff madness and dubbed-out beyond the wildest imaginings of any HM freaks I care to think of. (In fairness God, and Martin's other projects - among them Techno Animal and the criminally-overlooked Ice - are part of a larger movement in UK music where rock musicians are taking the tools and techniques of dub, techno and rap and making them their own. Termed by some "post-rock", this is a "movement" which certainly ain't going to go away, but if God are one of the groups in this music's vanguard, they stand out from many of their fellows with a double debt to the legacies of hard rock and electric jazz).

Appeal To Human Greed nods even further in the direction of dance music's cannibalistic methodology by presenting four songs from Anatomy of Addiction all radically remixed by a pretty unlikely collection of knob twiddlers. 'Gold Teeth', the album's opener, is also its biggest blast; US hip hoppers New Kingdom have stripped out just about everything but the bass and Martin's growled berating from the original track and slapped under them a mad hip hop beat played on clay drums and Tibetan
bells. The effect is like a drunkard walking in on a hip hop sound system, wrestling the mic from the DJ and turning mad MC.

Martin's long-time collaborator, guitarist Justin Broadrick (who played throughout Anatomy and is Martin's partner in sampladelic ambient dub-hoppers Techno Animal, but is undoubtedly best known as leader of famed Midlands industrial thrash outfit Godflesh) has taken the album's already stomping 'On All Fours' and impressively, made it even harder.

Elsewhere, New York bassist, producer, bandleader and all-round New Music god Bill Laswell has mixed 'Bloodstream' into a downtowner's take on 'Eugene'-period Floyd. A brooding, malevolent ambient opening builds to a crashing psychedelic burn-out. Martin, ably assisted by fellow saxman Alex Buess of Swiss avant-jazz monsters 16/17, has also remixed 'Bloodstream'; 'Peckinpah Mix' says it all. And My Bloody Valentine's shoe-gazing guitar god-turned jungle explorer Kevin Shields out-psychedelics them all with a remix of 'Tunnel' which is for my money the album's stand-out track.

As rock music gasps its last breath, the music business is beset by revisionists who insist that any viable musical future has to look to its former glories to survive. I give you Blur, Suede, Pulp, the New Wave of the New Wave (ha!), the mod revival, the glam revival, the bloody Paul Weller revival. What the rock establishment ignores at its peril is that there's a generation of musicians whose tastes are broader than any other previous generation's. These musicians are as much influenced by, say Sun Ra or Miles Davis or John Coltrane as they are by Hendrix or the Floyd, and gratefully take on the mixological exploits of all dance music's wayward children, without giving a hoot about corporate ambis (hah!), the mod revival, the glam revival, the bloody Paul Weller revival. What the rock establishment ignores at its peril is that there's a generation of musicians whose tastes are broader than any other previous generation's. These musicians are as much influenced by, say Sun Ra or Miles Davis or John Coltrane as they are by Hendrix or the Floyd, and gratefully take on the mixological exploits of all dance music's wayward children, without giving a hoot about corporate ambis.

ERNIE WATTS

Unity

JVC-2046-2

- Although most tracks here are written by Lundy, many run beyond her vocal range, especially into the lower octaves where her voice breaks up, at least on this recording. This technique is often used in jazz, but to overuse it makes it look like neither Lundy nor her producers are aware of her vocal limits. Nevertheless, as MOR orchestrated jazz goes, it isn't bad, keeping the band well back - a touch too far, since they don't really seem to image properly - and choking any schmaltz early.

There's a curious texture to this recording, not gritty and raunchy but granular, at odds with the smoothness required of this kind of music. If it had more energy, the music would wear it better, but this is easy listening territory where challenge is an anathema to the listener, and sounds like a mix of artist and technical team which does neither justice, a pity because Lundy's control and emotion warrants a wider audience.

GARY MEEK

Time One

BW057

- Reviewing 'Finding One's Self on B&W last month was a revelation for me, but they've surpassed even that high standard this time. It's a good recording of Latin-laced mainstream sounds, passably well played and well recorded. My only quibble is that it's pretty derivative territory done better before by the likes of Zubop, but where they let humour pervade their work, Meek applies an artisan's methodical approach to add a more contemplative feeling, without weighing it down too far.

Simon Cooke

CARMEN LUNDY

Self Portrait

JVC-2047-2

- Although most tracks here are written by Lundy, many run beyond her vocal range, especially into the lower octaves where her voice breaks up, at least on this recording. This technique is often used in jazz, but to overuse it makes it look like neither Lundy nor her producers are aware of her vocal limits. Nevertheless, as MOR orchestrated jazz goes, it isn't bad, keeping the band well back - a touch too far, since they don't really seem to image properly - and choking any schmaltz early.

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WORTHING


WRIGHTINGTON


I IMP-

Peter Herring

It's sensational stuff: virtuoso fiddling from Italy, wrap-around Wagner from America, organ opulence from France (via Scotland) and most sensational of all, how Deutsche Grammophon have re-invented the LP (purely for promotional purposes, of course!)

PIETRO ANTONIO LOCATELLI
L'Arte del Violino Op3 (12 Concerti per violino con 24 Capricci ad libitum)
Elizabeth Wallfisch, violin; The Raglan Baroque Players; director, Nicholas Kraemer
HYPERION CDA66721-3 (3 CD SET) (DDD/213.06)

This is the kind of thing that Hyperion does supremely well: the polished and persuasive presentation of attractive but not necessarily well-known music and invariably in an irresistibly collectable package. So it is with L'Arte del Violino of the Italian composer and virtuoso, Pietro Antonio Locatelli, one of the most influential musical publications of the early eighteenth century.

Locatelli was born in Bergamo in 1695 and after sixteen years spent there moved to Rome in 1711 ostensibly to receive lessons from the established violin master, Arcangelo Corelli. However, it is doubtful if Locatelli even met Corelli and his tutor was most probably the violinist and composer, Giuseppe Valentini. He also worked alongside Valentini as a musician in the employ of the Caetani family.

In 1723, Locatelli left Rome to embark on a career as a travelling virtuoso and entertained the courts at Mantua, Munich, Dresden, Berlin and Kassel. He also visited Venice where he encountered the Venetian patrician, Gerolamo Michiel Lini, and subsequently dedicated L'Arte del Violino to this appreciative gentleman. Locatelli also wrote of his music being performed in a liturgical context and there is evidence that instrumental music was played during certain sections of the Mass: the Epistle (Gradual), the Elevation of the Host and during Communion. It is tempting to imagine the flamboyant Locatelli, whose temperament and personality apparently matched his explosive violin playing, delighting the assembled congregation during services at St Mark's but sadly no evidence exists to suggest it ever occurred. What is known, however, is that after six years 'on the road', Locatelli settled in Amsterdam, residing there until his death in 1764.

The title, L'Arte del Violino, suggests some kind of musical textbook of purely pedagogic interest, let me hastily correct that impression. The score consists of twelve concertos for solo violin, strings and continuo, with the added spice of a 'capriccio' - a kind of cadenza - inserted into the first and last movements. Naturally, the concertos are principally showcases for the violinist and, between them, they explore more-or-less the full range of the instrument's technical possibilities. The soloist's technique is tested to its limit with double-stopping, polyphonic writing, trills and exceptionally difficult bowing, and in the main all at fast tempos.

However, L'Arte del Violino isn't solely about technique and virtuoso display, it is also highly enjoyable, spirited music in its own right. A knowledge of the complexities of violin playing is not a prerequisite to being entertained by these scintillating concertos, here played with dazzling skill and élan by the Australian-born soloist, Elizabeth Wallfisch, and her colleagues in the Raglan Baroque Players. Ms Wallfisch plays with the
The wheel has come full circle. Do you recall how a decade ago we were being informed that black vinyl had been consigned to the dustbin of history and that those who persisted in advocating its virtues, Canute-fashion, would be lost in the tide of technology? And now look what’s happened: the marketing people who declared the LP to be dead-and-buried have suddenly discovered that it has a cachet which CDs, for all their qualities, still haven’t managed to capture.

But what to do to cater for this continuing appeal? Your factories cannot return to producing LPs, but they can make CDs that look like them. And that’s precisely what Deutsche Grammophon’s new ‘Originals’ series has done. The booklet covers reproduce the famous ‘yellow label’ LP covers and, most bizarrely, the ‘information’ side of the CD is designed to look like a five-inch version of a twelve-inch LP, i.e. black with a centre label. The temptation is to dismiss this as an idea dreamed up by the DG marketing department after an especially good lunch in one of Hamburg’s finest eateries, but you can’t because, putting the gimmickry to one side, the label is using this series to reissue some of the very finest performances from its back catalogue, and offer exceptionally good value into the bargain. However, erass the presentation, the content simply cannot be ignored. Someone in DG has made some inspired selections: Kempff playing Beethoven (both the sonatas and the concertos; Jochum’s Bruckner; Gilels’ Brahms; Rostropovich in Dvorak; Anda and Fricsay collaborating in the Bartok concertos; Abbado conducting Prokofiev. All eminently desirable, but for me one reissue stood out from the rest. now twenty years old and on LP one of Deutsche Grammophon’s greatest achievements.

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN
Symphony No5 in C minor Op67
Symphony No7 in A Major Op92
Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra;
conductor, Carlos Kleiber

DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 447 400-2 (ADD/72.08)

• Chances are you have the nine
Beethoven symphonies in your collection and, in works such as the ‘Eroica’ and the Ninth you may well have alternative versions. It may take some effort to persuade you of the value of investing in another performance of the Seventh, let alone the Fifth. But Carlos Kleiber’s are, to use an over-worked but wholly appropriate phrase, in a class of their own.

Kleiber is one of music’s most enigmatic figures. Unlike many of his contemporaries, he exhibits no desire to flood the catalogue with recordings. In the world dominated by the ubiquitous and, it has to be added, the utilitarian, he remains a specialist. Even now at the age of sixty-five, his recordings can almost be counted on the fingers of two hands. For Deutsche Grammophon, he recorded five operas: Verdi’s ‘La Traviata’, Weber’s ‘Der Freischutz’, Johann Strauss’ ‘Die Fledermaus’ and most memorably perhaps, Wagner’s ‘Tristan and Isolde’. On video only, he conducted Richard Strauss’ ‘Der Rosenkavalier’. Kleiber’s orchestral recordings are fewer still: a gripping interpretation of Brahms’ Fourth Symphony, two superb Schubert symphonies (the Third and the Eighth), and two symphonies of Beethoven. Both Beethoven performances were taped in the fine acoustic of the Musikvereinssaal in Vienna, the Fifth in March and April of 1974, and the Seventh in November 1975 and January 1976. They were released on two separate LPs, without ‘fillups’, and this was unchanged in their first CD reissue.

RICHARD WAGNER
Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg - Prelude to Act One/Rienzi - Overture/A Faust Overture/Der Fliegende Höllander - Overture/Tristan und Isolde - Prelude and Liebestod/Tannhäuser - Overture
Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra;
conductor, Jesús López-Cobos
TELARC CD-80379 (DDD/76.55)

• By far the most entertaining programme in Channel Four’s ‘Wagnermania’ season saw the composer’s great-grandson, a remarkably lucid and balanced character in comparison to some of the others who surfaced in the programmes, perform a refreshingly unbuttoned assessment of his illustrious antecedent’s glorious contribution to music, and his decidedly less glorious personality. You could sympathise with his heartfelt desire to blow up the grandiose statue of his great-grandfather which had haunted him since childhood, and admire the frankness with which he described the Wagner ‘shrine’, Bayreuth, as no more than a dull, bourgeois German town. Wagner Junior was also fairly dismissive of a great-
incarnation, which was also at full-price. This led the authors of the 1988 edition of the Penguin Guide to Compact Discs to describe the reissues as ‘uneconomic’ and they encouraged DG to find ‘fillers’ for the discs. Unfortunately, Carlos Kleiber is not the sort of conductor who drops by the studio to tape a couple of overtures or whatever as makeweights. Now though, DG have done the obvious and combined the two performances on one mid-price CD, offering a package which no critic could carp about.

But what makes these Beethoven performances so special? It is perhaps best summed-up by saying that, where other conductors feel they have to conduct the Beethoven symphonies, Kleiber passionately wanted to record these two works. It’s surely no coincidence that they are two of the most dramatic and spirited of the nine symphonies.

From the first familiar four notes of the Fifth Symphony it is strikingly clear this is no routine performance. The momentum and the energy are sustained throughout, and the effect is electrifying. With incisive and brilliant playing from the Vienna Philharmonic, Kleiber succeeds in producing a performance possessed of a freshness which would have seemed impossible in this work twenty years ago, let alone today when the catalogue is replete with polished but pedestrian recordings of this work. As he did two decades ago, Kleiber forcibly reminds me that it is not Beethoven’s Fifth that has become predictable, only the majority of its performances.

The Seventh is an equally edge-of-the-seat experience, but the effect is not achieved through exaggerated gestures and over-dramatisation. Instead Carlos Kleiber underlines the rhythmic vitality which led no less than Richard Wagner to describe this symphony as the ‘apotheosis of the dance’ and, as in the Fifth, he fully exploits the potent contrasts within the score. The result is thrilling but in no way superficial, and how the newly minted sound brings out the detail of this sharply etched performance. The VPO’s playing in the final allegro con brio, incidentally, is quite breathtaking.

While DG’s cunning presentation ploy will not persuade me to part with the original real LPs (we’re talking serious nostalgia here), I have to admit these fresh transfers are remarkably clean and transparent. DG call it ‘original image bit-processing’; I can only add that whatever it is, it does a good job. The result is one of the most desirable reissues of this or any other year, and an essential addition to any collection of the Beethoven symphonies.

granddad Richard’s work, citing ‘Tristan und Isolde’ as his one lasting contribution to musical progress - all good, provocative stuff, and a good antidote to those luminaries who neatly side-stepped the question of Wagner’s moral and political baggage.

I only mention this because this magnificent new recording from Telarc reminded me just how stirring and seductive Wagner’s music can be, whether it be the melting beauty of Tristan or the puff-chested pride of Meistersinger. And there are those including, I would suspect the composer’s aforementioned great-grandson who find a decent selection of famous orchestral excerpts quite sufficient and would rather not become embroiled in the sub-text of the Ring cycle, or the hidden fascist agenda of Parsifal.

Here, the very fine Cincinnati orchestra and its conductor offer a generous programme, one distinguished by its inclusion of the rarely heard overture to Wagner’s projected symphony based on Goethe’s ‘Faust’. The symphony was never completed but the overture survives to offer a tantalising glimpse of what might have been. Jesús López-Cobos is at his best here, as he is in lovingly-played Prelude and Liebestod from Tristan; but in the Rienzi overture he is too po-faced and ponderous - there is joy as well as devout solemnity here. The overture to Meistersinger also has a somewhat heavy tread, rather as if those taking part in the singers’ procession had just returned from a particularly heavy session at the bierkeller.

However, López-Cobos whips up a fair old storm for Der Fliegende Holländer, and the Tannhäuser overture supplies a majestic conclusion. Both are superbly played, and those seeking a sound quality to match the splendour of this music will not be disappointed. This is the ‘Telarc’ sound at its richest and fullest, with a towering range and broad soundstage (though I was not entirely convinced by the ‘surround sound’ claim ‘three dimensional surround sound listening experience using two ordinary stereo speakers’ as Telarc describe it - but this could well be valid in other listening circumstances). However, though a ‘big’ sound, this is not an unsubtle one, and anyone can enjoy the orchestral detail and colour which were the utterly uncontroversial aspects of Wagner’s music.
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● When you read that Weber’s only two symphonies were written within a few months of each other at the age of twenty, and that apparently he felt no further urge to return to the form, expectation does not run high. Yet these two works composed during the winter of 1804-1807 are not at all short on quality and offer much pleasure and a fair few surprises. In style, they are more akin to the high spirits of the youthful Schubert than to the iconoclastic Beethoven whose ‘Eroica’ had appeared just eighteen months earlier. There are also many Haydn-esque elements which is hardly surprising as Haydn was the favourite composer of Weber’s employer at this time, Duke Eugen von Wurttemberg-Ols. The Duke was also an accomplished oboist, and the delectable oboe solos of the symphonies’ slow movements were no doubt composed with this knowledge firmly in mind!

Both symphonies consist of the conventional four movements and unusually both are in C Major. The first Symphony opens with an energetic allaegro con fuoco reminiscent in many ways of the dramatic, fantastic world of Weber’s operas. A stately andante, ways of the dramatic, fantastic world of lyrical presto- dominated by an infectious melody reminiscent of Schubert - brings the work to a rousing conclusion.

While not ‘library’ works, Weber’s youthful Symphonies give pleasurable, undemanding and lively listening, and these performances by the ASMF can be warmly recommended, even if competition in the current catalogue is pretty much non-existent. The playing is characterised by some crisp string articulation and beautiful phrasing, especially from the woodwinds. Marriner’s tempos are appropriately brisk and the recording is well-defined and weighty, if a little one-dimensional; pity about the short timing, though, on the 1982 Mike Sheedy/Abbey Road production. It would have added to the attractions to have the ASMF in a couple of the popular Weber overtures.

Simon Bertram includes two pieces by Jehan Alain, brother of the well-known organist, Marie-Claire Alain. Born in 1911, Jehan Alain was never to fulfil his true potential as a composer. He had but a handful of masterpieces to his name when he was tragically killed in action in 1940. Litanies, completed in 1937, remains Alain’s best known work, a clemontic whirlwind of driving rhythm patterns which resolve themselves in a dramatic final cadence.

Jean Langlais succeeded Charles Tournemire as the organist of the Basilica of Sainte-Clotilde and went on to hold the post for forty-two years. And, like Tournemire, Langlais used his time there to make a substantial contribution to the canon of French organ music. Simon Bertram plays three of Langlais’ finest works, including the Chant Heroique, which was dedicated to the memory of Jehan Alain. The Chant de Paix, also from the Neuf Pieces of 1943, is an altogether simpler and more tranquil offering, but no less affecting in its quiet plaintiveness.

Another famous resident of the organ loft at Saint-Clotilde, a nineteenth-century Gothic-style church in the heart of Paris, was Belgian Cesar Franck, and it was the church’s magnificent Cavaille-Coll organ which inspired some of his finest composition, including the majestic Priere. Simon Bertram concludes this wide-ranging programme with another of the tributes to Jehan Alain by his fellow composer-organists, Maurice Durufle’s Prelude and Fugue sur le nom Alain. By transposing the letters A-L-A-I-N into musical notes, Durufle obtained the theme for both the prelude and fugue, A-D-A-A-F, and then proceeded to develop it into a wonderful composition of which Alain himself would have been proud.

Simon Bertram shows kinship with the French repertoire in his playing, and the recording both produced and engineered by Henry Mitton, is stunning in its detail, range and truthfulness. Perhaps this excellent partnership can be persuaded to explore this ‘French connection’ still further - there’s a wealth of wonderful music out there.
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LOUDSPEAKERS
Smooth, flat frequency response is important to ensure a balanced sound. Look carefully at overall trends; rising treble will give a bright sound, falling treble a dull sound. A rise through the midrange normally corresponds with good projection.

High sensitivity (better than 86dB) means less power is needed for a certain volume, meaning a low power amp. can be used.

The impedance curve tells us how easy loudspeakers are to drive. Low or wildly varying impedance is bad; a flat impedance around 8ohms is good.

CD PLAYERS
Even small trends in frequency response of CD players can affect their subjective performance. Low or wildly varying impedance is bad; a flat impedance around 8ohms is good.

Selectivity (at 0.4MHz) should be no more than around 0.2%. Even order (2nd, 4th, 6th etc) distortion is aurally innocuous, but odd order (3rd, 5th, 7th etc) distortion makes for a glassy, hard sound, or grittiness.

Frequency response can be band limited, with bass and treble rolled off just out of the ear's range, or wideband. Each has its own characteristics. Small wideband response variations colour tonal balance.

Power output is easy to understand: the higher the figure, the louder it will go. Just make sure there's enough power output to drive any loudspeakers you intend to use.

TUNERS
Frequency response, as always, says much about tonal balance and character traits, like peaky treble (due to a mis-matched MPX filter). Distortion and channel separation need to be less than 0.3% (according to harmonic structure) and better than 25dB.

Hiss level must be lower than -70dB for Radio 3 silences to be just that - silent. And full quieting, the strength of aerial signal needed for optimum results, should be around 1mV or less.

Selectivity, the ability to separate stations under the most difficult conditions should be better than 60dB and sensitivity better than 30µV on stereo.

CASSETTE DECKS
Replay performance is measured to IEC 94 Standards using IEC test tapes. This ensures that recordings made on a machine transfer to a car player, personal stereo or another domestic recorder properly, as well as ensuring optimum results with commercially prerecorded tapes. Look for a quoted replay response of 40Hz-10kHz, no more than 1% speed error and hiss in the replay amps lower than -58dB.

Recording quality considers frequency response, bias variation, head performance and alignment. Frequency response should stretch from 40Hz-15kHz or so. Head overload (MOL315) must be above 0dB, reaching around +4dB for good results.

From the transport mechanism look for less than 0.15% wow or flutter. Overall (DIN weighted) wow and flutter should be no more than 0.1% or so.

TUNER

HARMAN KARDON TU-930
The TU-930 has a frequency response judiciously rolled-off above 12kHz, giving a softer, easier sound than designs possessing treble lift (of any degree). Denon and Technics have both learnt about this, if not others, who engineer for "detail" in the sound I suspect, getting unpleasant brightness too - but not Harman.

Distortion was higher than that of rivals, but not disastrously so. Channel separation on stereo proved good right across the audio band and unwanted outputs above 15kHz minimal due to good pilot/sub-carrier filtering. At -69dB, hiss wasn't as low as hoped and will just be audible during Radio 3 silences, if at no other time.

Audio output was very high at 1.5V and full quieting satisfactory at 1mV and above. With normal sensitivity and very high selectivity, the TU-930 proved well engineered. NK

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

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The impedance curve tells us how easy loudspeakers are to drive. Low or wildly varying impedance is bad; a flat impedance around 8ohms is good.

CD PLAYERS
Even small trends in frequency response of CD players can affect their subjective sound. Rising treble can produce a sharp sound.

The distortion plot we show is taken at -30dB, to represent a typical music signal. High distortion at this level, combined with rising treble, can result in a harsh sound. Yet other effects have to be considered, especially low level linearity, which we also test for, including -90dB signals with dither applied.

AMPLIFIERS
Distortion from solid state amplifiers should be no more than around 0.2%. Even order (2nd, 4th, 6th etc) distortion is aurally innocuous, but odd order (3rd, 5th, 7th etc) distortion makes for a glassy, hard sound, or grittiness.

Frequency response can be band limited, with bass and treble rolled off just out of the ear's range, or wideband. Each has its own characteristics. Small wideband response variations colour tonal balance.

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From the transport mechanism look for less than 0.15% wow or flutter. Overall (DIN weighted) wow and flutter should be no more than 0.1% or so.
Our Other Brands Include: Arcam, Mission, Marantz, Micromega, Revolver, Technics, Denon, Kenwood and Much More

O.K. O.K. so Audio Note make the best sounding valve amps, of course there is the question as to whose transistor amps work best? We may have led you readers out there, to believe that at Serious Kit we only stock Audio Note products. Not so! In fact we’ve been promoting and selling another of “Britain’s best kept secrets” since we started. I do of course refer to the excellent products of Yorkshires very own J.E Sugden & Co.

Here we have a range of products that are designed and hand made by a dedicated team of music lovers. There are amplifiers from £300 (inclusive of m.m phone stage) through to the remote Optima series of amps and CD player, right up to the AU51 series of “professional level” line pre-amp & power amp. there is also a Pro-CD range (also with the AU51 label).

However, me being me, I’ll talk to you about my own personal favourite from this most under-estimated manufacturer. The much loved (by Hi-Fi World) A21a integrated amplifier is also one of my own most loved amps under £1000. this little gem runs @ 25w per channel class ‘A’ and sell @ a mere £700 including m.m. and or m.c. phono board. However it is also available as line level only at a mere £629 inc. VAT.

It runs really hot, and sounds very sweet and open. Transparency is its middle name. Although not the worlds most powerful amplifier, by carefully matching the loudspeakers (Impulse/Pro-Ac/Keswick Audio). One can reach more than enough S.P.L, for all but the largest of rooms. So, why pay more? Many of you won’t have to, as the A21a is in my opinion the class leader, on a plateau of its own!

Of course if you have already made a speaker purchase and have something that requires good current delivery or major voltage swing, you must shortlist the AU5 I power-amp. here is a beast in wolf’s clothing, delicate yet muscular, tonally neutral but enthralling, open and involving . What comes close @ £1295. Search me , this amplifier has seen off more than one or two of the so called “American heavy weights”. It’s natural partner is of course the AU51 line pre-amp @ £900. Here we have as over engineered pre-amp as you’ve seen. the switches are all super quality as is the volume control. Naturally all inputs and outputs are gold-plated phono, and all internal signal wire is silver. This combination works especially well with “difficult” loudspeakers like Electrostatics, call for a demo and experience the “emotional factor”.

Sugden also produce a range of digital products. Before you spend a load of hard earned cash on a DAC you should definitely check out the SDA-1. Anther personal favourite @ £750, there ain’t much at twice the price that comes close. It is so un-digital in its presentation, so un-analytical but detailed. The SDA-1 is one of those products that makes a mockery of many so called “STATE OF THE ART” products costing many times more. Another bargain from Yorkshire.

Most of our digital customers over the last few months have wanted to spend around the £1000 mark for their CD replay requirements. Most of them had been disappointed by the many “recommended by the mags” products previously auditioned. All of them were sent home with an SDT-I integrated player for home audition. All of them purchased SDT-I CD players. Quite remarkable really when the “under-dog” product leaves the biggest positive impression. Of course there is no “black magic” in the SDT-1, just lots of top quality components. The standard Philips 7220 filter, but used in conjunction with the TDA 1541 ‘crown’ pedigree DAC chip. Very few manufacturers use this version of the TDA 154.1, because it is expensive, however in usual Sugden style they bring it to all Audiophiles and music lovers in a fully integrated player for a mere £995.00.

If you want a CD player that thinks its a record player, audition this one. It’ll become a way of life!

Remember, audio reproduction is not about product hype, or blessed products sent from above. It is simply engineering. True, some engineering is more effective than others .

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Kind regards

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AMPLIFIERS

ALCHEMIST FORSETI
The Forseti APD20A power amplifier is unusually powerful, delivering 145 watts into 8 ohms and 225 watts into 4 ohms, so it is meant for big speakers and rooms. It runs quite hot, suggesting strong bias into Class A.

Bandwidth was adequately wide, measuring 9 Hz to 30 kHz, -1 dB, some band limiting being used at high frequencies, generally wise thing to avoid transient distortions.

Although harmonic distortion was low overall, not exceeding 0.1% (full output, 10 kHz) I noticed harmonic patterns changed as signal level rose - not the best of phenomena to encounter, since distortion will be modulated by signal level. Feedback does tend to create this effect, although it isn't usually so noticeable. In areas like this only listening tests can decide whether they may be consequential or not. Noise and channel separation were satisfactory.

The Alchemist measured well. It is a powerful amplifier, but strong Class A working may well provide good low level performance. NK

TEST RESULTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Power</th>
<th>145 watts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CD/tuner/aux. Frequency response</td>
<td>9 Hz-30 kHz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separation</td>
<td>82 dB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noise</td>
<td>-103 dB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distortion</td>
<td>0.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitivity</td>
<td>300 mV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.C. offset</td>
<td>-16/10 mV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distortion</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SONY TA-F446E
The TA-F446E offers plenty of power: 55 watts into 8 ohms and no less than 80 watts into a low 4 ohm load. That's enough to make most 'speakers go very loud, especially today's more sensitive designs, so the Sony has plenty of grunt.

Distortion was all but unmeasureable, hovering around 0.004%, third-harmonic only, at all frequencies and power levels. With a satisfactory bandwidth of 10 Hz-63 kHz (-1 dB) and high sensitivity of 150 mV, the line inputs offer good results.

Finding the phono stages measured unusually well, and similarly between MM and MC - a rare thing in Japanese amps where design philosophy hardly exists - I opened up the case and found an all discrete phono stage section - rare indeed. These days silicon chips reign unopposed, so I wonder where Sony found the designer. All figures for disc - both MM and MC - were very good. My only minor gripe is that MM bass rolls off slowly but MC bass rises slowly, differences between the two amounting to 0.7 dB or so at around 80 Hz. I'm not sure anyone will notice, but I don't like to see bass fall in this part of the phono spectrum. MC in particular was unusually sensitive, so it will accept high quality MCs, and it was quiet too - a serious design.

The TA-F446E is powerful, well engineered and has very good MM and MC phono stages. It is one of the better designs of its type. NK

TEST RESULTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Power</th>
<th>55 watts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CD/tuner/aux. Frequency response</td>
<td>10 Hz-63 kHz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separation</td>
<td>71 dB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noise</td>
<td>90 dB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distortion</td>
<td>0.004%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitivity</td>
<td>150 mV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.C. offset</td>
<td>26/28 mV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distortion</td>
<td>0.004%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

UNISON SIMPLY TWO
By using just one valve in inefficient single-ended mode the Simply 2 is necessarily limited in power output, producing just 8 watts. That's roughly what's expected.

Overload (clipping) was gentle and progressive, and also symmetrical - good signs on a low power amplifier that will almost certainly be run into peak-clip. I noticed in particular a fairly benign distortion spectrum with, as expected from our own experience, more innocuous second harmonic in low feedback mode. Increasing feedback produced better distortion figures - 1.4% instead of 1.8% at 1 watt output - but worse distortion. Interestingly, there was no increase in distortion at high frequencies.

Bandwidth was adequate at both feedback levels (13 Hz-33 kHz, -1 dB worst case) and full output was delivered at 10 kHz - very encouraging. Too many valve amps don't manage this important prerequisite. The Simply 2 proved better engineered than most of the modern S.E. breed and I'd expect it to deliver the sort of qualities expected from a such a design. NK

TEST RESULTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Power</th>
<th>8 watts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CD/tuner/aux. Frequency response</td>
<td>10 Hz-40 kHz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separation</td>
<td>71 dB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noise</td>
<td>96 dB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distortion</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Continued on page 109
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Rotel Madi RHA 10 £995 £795

Rotel Madi RHB 10 £1650 £1290

Exposure 15 Integrated (M/M) £725 £580

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Exposure 17/18 Pre/Power (M/C) £1525 £1100

Audion Silver Nights (Push/Pull) £2000 £1500

Mission 755 (Rosewood) £800 £640

Poli RM300 £500 £500

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Sugden A21a Integrated £350

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**CD PLAYERS**

**AUDIO ALCHEMY DDE VI.1**

We tested two samples of the DDE 1.1, the first measuring poorly enough to suggest a small fault. The second sample was a lot better in many areas, but still retained many of the first sample’s quirks. Distortion is high right across the board, being more than ten times higher than the best at -30dB, a level picked to represent a typical music signal, as can be seen in the plot below. On top of this the DDE 1.1 showed high noise out of band, the noise floor being nearly higher than the fundamental signal between 70-80kHz.

Frequency response was very well engineered though, being very flat and smooth with just a gentle roll off above 10kHz, which should smooth the subjective balance.

Elsewhere things measured normally enough, the only area worth mentioning being the higher than standard output of 2.67V. The DDE 1.1 will sound louder in a demonstration against a competitor adhering to the Philips 2V standard, but this extra output does give a little extra room for passive preamplifiers.

---

**NAD 514**

The frequency response of the new NAD 514 CD player is nicely engineered, having gentle treble roll-off to prevent sharpness, and a slight lift towards lower frequencies. Although only subtle, this should ensure solid bass and a smooth balance through midrange and treble.

Distortion is a little higher than the best at -30dB, a level picked to represent typical music signal level. The best get as low as the NAD at 0.018%. It displayed a small amount of innocuous 2nd harmonic, and some scattered higher order distortion too.

Elsewhere the 514 measures competently, having low noise, a healthy dynamic range of 110dB, and good output at 2.2V.

---

**MARANTZ CD-16**

The Marantz is one of the best, if not the best CD player we have measured for a long time. Previously, Pink Triangle’s Ordinal has set the standard for others to beat with a flat frequency response and super low distortion. The Marantz CD-16 has a similarly smooth response, with treble above 10kHz just falling a fraction; never a bad thing with CD.

Distortion is extremely low right across the board, with not a single harmonic visible at -30dB, a signal picked to represent typical music level. I’d expect the CD-16 to sound very clean and free from grain or sharpness as a result.

At -60dB distortion is still extremely low, at 0.36%, which gives rise to a wide dynamic range of 111dB (EIAJ test). Separation is wide, noise very low, and output spot on the Philips standard at 2V. This impressive set of test results shows fine engineering.

---

**TEST RESULTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency response</th>
<th>Distortion (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4Hz-21kHz</td>
<td>0.007 0.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-6dB</td>
<td>0.005 0.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-30dB</td>
<td>0.005 0.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-60dB</td>
<td>0.46 0.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-90dB</td>
<td>25.2 25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-90dB dithered</td>
<td>5 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separation (dB)</td>
<td>left 99 99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>right 119 115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noise</td>
<td>106dB 108dB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamic range</td>
<td>110dB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output</td>
<td>2.2V</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TEST RESULTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency response</th>
<th>Distortion (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4Hz-21kHz</td>
<td>0.005 0.006</td>
</tr>
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Continued on page 111
**Hi-Fi Confidential welcomes you...**

**Hi-fi Confidential** welcomes you to their Hi-Fi World. They are offering a special upgrade for your player’s transports with clock modification. Clock Mod’s from £80.00. Contact Nigel or Russell for further information.

### AMPLIFIERS

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### CD PLAYERS

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### LOUDSPEAKERS

- **ATC SCM 20'S (TEAK)** ........................................... £750
- **B&W 805 MATRIX (BLK)** ....................................... £675
- **ACOUSTIC ENERGY AE2 + STANDS** .......................... £775
- **EPOS ES14 (BLK) + STANDS** .................................. £450
- **TANNOY GI5'S (FLOORSTANDERS) BLK** .................. £425
- **NEAT PETITES (BLK)** ........................................... £134
- **ACOUSTIC ENERGY AE2 + VARIOUS STANDS FROM** ................................. £30
- **TANNOY G15'S (FLOORSTANDERS) BLK** .................. £450
- **ENSEMBLE PRIMADONNAS (BLK)** ............................ £3000
- **HEYBROOK HBI 53 (BLK) + STANDS** .................... £200
- **NEAT PETITES (BLK)** ........................................... £395
- **ACOUSTIC ENERGY AE2 + STANDS** .......................... £395
- **B&W 805 MATRIX (BLK)** ....................................... £675
- **ACOUSTIC ENERGY AE2 + VARIOUS STANDS FROM** ................................. £200

### X-DEM + S/H EQUIPMENT SALE

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**X-DEM + S/H EQUIPMENT SALE**

- **AMP MONOBLOCKS x 4 (340WPC)** .......................... £1950
- **AUDIOLAB 8000C 8000P** ................................... £500
- **PHILIPS C9000** ........................................... £159
- **PHILIPS C9000** ........................................... £179
- **PIONEER PD-703** ........................................... £239
- **ROTEL RCD-55 AX** ......................................... £190
- **ROTEL RCD-55 AX** ......................................... £200
- **ROTEL RCD-565** ............................................ £250
- **TEAC VHCS-10** .............................................. £729
- **TEAC VHCD-71** .............................................. £476
- **YAMAHA CDS-580** ........................................... £195
- **YAMAHA CDS-860** ........................................... £229

### CD PLAYERS

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**Genuine Hi-Fi Sale**

Hi-Fi Confidential welcomes you... 100's of Items Reduced

- **Clock This**
- Upgrade your player's transports with clock modification. Clock Mod's from £80.00.
- Contact Nigel or Russell for further information.

**R. J. F.**

**Audio Visual**

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SME 20 V ARM Ortofon MC 7500
(MINT, 100hr’s USE) EX DEM £4250
Roksan Xerxes, Artemiz, Shiraz...
Artaxerxes £1425
Roksan PRE L2 £595
Roksan Power S1 £845
Accuphase C200 P.300 Pre/Power £1495
TDL Monitors £975

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Tel: 01209 612260 Fax: 01209 711939
LOUDSPEAKERS

NEAR SOUNDMAST
Near’s Soundmast loudspeakers show reasonable integration through the midrange, but above and below this things get a little lumpy. Treble level falls above 8kHz and below 800Hz there is a dip which may subjectively “thin” male vocals. A peak at 250Hz will add speed and punch. The Soundmasts are likely to have quite a distinct character.

At 85dB measured at 1m with a nominal watt (2.83V) pink noise signal, they are of average sensitivity. Impedance is just a fraction under 8Ω too, so the Soundmasts will be easy enough to drive by most modern amplifiers. I’d recommend 30watts or more for best results. DB

Frequency Response

Impedance

PINK TRIANGLE VENTRICLE
The Ventricle peaks in the upper bass, whilst lower bass steadily falls away, although the peaking helps maintain output down to 63Hz (-6dB) - a normal value. All the same, subjectively, upper bass will dominate.

Midband output was smooth and even, but almost inevitably, the driver used cannot reach up high enough to integrate smoothly to the ribbon tweeter (few do), resulting in a -2dB suckout above 3kHz, an effect that will suppress detail, but aid perceived smoothness.

When the tweeter cuts in (6kHz) treble output lifts, peaking by +2dB at 16kHz. This will cause some treble sharpness or ‘thinness’.

Sensitivity was very low at 81dB, partly due to a high overall impedance of 12ohms.

At least 40watts will be needed for decent volume, although too much will also overdrive the small bass unit. A strong dive in impedance above 5kHz means low output impedance amps are technically the best match (solid-state or high-feedback valve designs). NK

Frequency Response

Impedance

NHT I.3A
The NHT I.3As are very well engineered in some areas, but are a little unfortunate in others. Their response is commendably flat and smooth, showing fine treble extension and super crossover alignment. But below 500Hz or so output falls off by -3dB, which will tend to give them a light and thin balance with little bass power. So although they have a very well engineered response, they are likely to be bass light in practice unless used close to a wall.

Sensitivity of the NHT I.3As was very low, measuring 83.5dB at 1m for a nominal watt (2.83V) pink noise signal. They will need an amplifier capable of delivering a lot of volts if you like your music loud or have a large room. Their impedance curve is very smooth, lifting gently through the midrange.

They will present a very easy load to an amplifier in this respect, being mainly resistive and with a high overall 9Ω impedance value.

The NHTs are well engineered in many respects, but will have light bass unless close to a wall and they need a powerful amplifier (50W min.) for decent levels. DB

Frequency Response

Impedance
Try the CD Filter with a difference in your own home

When we listen to music, both the high and low frequency sounds help our brains to paint a 3 dimensional stereo picture. But when we listen to CD, the high and low pictures do not perfectly realign. With their clinically clean electronics, CD players lack the beneficial, subtle signal handling of analogue equipment which can actually “re-converge” the two stereo images. So creating the convincing illusion that is the hallmark of good analogue systems.

Franclinstein, designed by Hi-Fi World columnist Richard Brice, breathes life into digital stereo. By simulating the best aspects of analogue equipment, it restores the sense of depth - and even height - to digital recordings. And it does it without introducing any of analogue's vices!

Simply plug Francinstitien between your CD player and pre-amplifier (or integrated amplifier) and you can have your cake and eat it. Analogue imaging and “involvement” with the clarity and “bite” of digital. But you don’t have to believe us because you can try Francinstitien on home trial.

“It’s a gentle elegant effect - and a very even one...One simply becomes more aware of the music.”
— Eric Braithwaite - Hi-Fi World

“CDs sounded better defined, the soundstage having a more definite shape. It was as if there was more air around each strand in the mix, allowing you to hear it more distinctly, more separately...I didn’t immediately want to switch the CD player off and relax with some LPs, instead I went on to make further explorations of my CD collection”
— Andrew Cartmel - Hi-Fi Choice

Let the Francinstitien improve the audio quality and stereo imaging of your system. To send you a demonstration unit we require either cheque or credit card payment for £7.00, to cover postage and administration. If you wish to purchase a Francinstitien please call us and £7.00 will be deducted from the total price of £150 inc. VAT. However, if you do not wish to keep the Francinstitien then simply return the unit to us within 10 days.

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LOUDSPEAKERS

REL STADIUM II
The two plots show the Stadium II with its filter controls at either extreme, rolling into the main loudspeakers between 90-150Hz, combined with the output from the large downward firing reflex port.

Although the response isn’t as smooth as with some of the previous REL subwoofers we’ve measured, it does extend extremely low, port output being just -6dB down at around 14Hz! This is very low, low enough for the longest organ pipe to be reproduced with enough power to send you and your neighbours across the room. Ultimately though, bass quality is a very subjective thing, and can only be assessed after extensive listening. DB

CASSETTE TAPES

TEAC V-8030S
The replay amplifiers were quiet, and replay speed correct, but slight head adjustment (azimuth) error caused a little high treble roll-off. This will make many pre-recorded tapes sound a little muted in their treble with Dolby B applied (which amplifies such error). At these price levels it is worth having head alignment tweaked by an engineer.

The head has, in itself, a wonderfully flat frequency response from 20Hz to 20kHz, as our analysis with the new IEC IV Primary Reference Tape shows. Better, much the same result was achieved with quality ferrics and chromes, although I was surprised that bias had to be cranked back near to minimum to accommodate TDK AR. As the other end of the scale however, Teac had taken into account the need for variable metal bias and accommodation of TDK MA-XG. Here, though, came a big disappointment; the head’s overload ceiling (MOL315) was just +2dB onto TDK MA and +4 onto MA-XG. Any 3-head Nakamichi manages +6 or more, even without the benefit of Dolby HX Pro to support treble with high bias levels. The V-8030S was a disappointment in this respect, but it has Dolby S, which itself possesses overload prevention (companding). Head finish was superb though; I’ve rarely seen such steady output at 20kHz from cassette.

Also superb was the transport, in absolutely every area. I measured flutter, but found it was being produced by the Maxell Vertex cassette. TDK MA-XG eliminated this, giving the low modulation-noise/flutter floor seen in our analysis. The unusually clean test tone spike at right has no capstan wow ‘shoulders’; wow was minimal at 0.03%. There was no drift either. This was a superb result.

Dolby C did not provide full hiss reduction benefit, but I imagine most people will use B with pre-records and S when recording, both of which worked properly.

In all areas except head overload, the V-8030S worked superbly. It should be seen as a top line Dolby S model, not as a bare-knuckle Nakamichi rival, which it is not. NK

TEST RESULTS

REPLAY (pre-recorded tapes)
Frequency response (-2dB) 30Hz-15kHz
Speed accuracy 0%
Hiss (70uS, Dolby out) -61dB

RECORDING (blank tapes)
Frequency response (IEC Primary Refs.)
- ferric (IEC I) 20Hz-20kHz
- chrome (IEC II) 20Hz-20kHz
- metal (IEC IV) 20Hz-20kHz

Separation (1kHz) 42dB
Distortion (315Hz) 1.4%
Hiss (70uS, Dolby out) -56.6dB
Speed variations (DIN total) 0.04%
Flutter energy (3-13kHz) 42dB
MOL/SAT (IEC Refs) 315/10k

EC I (ferric) 2.8dB/-4.5dB
IECII (chrome) 1.5dB/-5dB
IECIV (metal) 2dB/0dB

Frequency Response

Speed Stability
Juicy fruit from London’s newest, freshest hi-fi/home cinema retailer. Telephone for demonstrations or just pop in. All the usual, i.e. friendly and efficient service, free home installation + credit cards, 0% credit finance available.

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Wilmslow Audio

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The Result . . . • Stunning accuracy and clarity
• Clean well damped bass
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• No overdraft!!!

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(Turn Tables)

Garrard 301

EMT 927

With replacement parts

TRIOIDE SUPPLY JAPAN

DA30, PX25, 4300A/B, Ed, ADI, RS237, WE300B, 274A/B ETC.

(Turn Tables)

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(Turn Tables)

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIST</th>
<th>SALES PRICE</th>
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<tr>
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<td>5843.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>KRELL K.S.L.2</td>
<td>3331.00</td>
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<td>*as above but including phono board</td>
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<td>AUDIO RESEARCH LS3</td>
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<td>APOGEE STAGE</td>
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<td>2299.00</td>
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<td>CLASSE DR4</td>
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<td>MARTIN LOGAN QUEST</td>
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<td>REL STUDIO SUBWOOFER</td>
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<td>AUDIO RESEARCH SP9 mkII</td>
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<td>KRELL PAM7 PRE/AMP</td>
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<td>MUSICAL FIDELITY P270II</td>
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<td>FANFARE FT1 REMOTE TUNER(BALANCED OPTION)</td>
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<td>STEREOPHILE RECOMMENDED</td>
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<td>PIONEER CTS 8305 3H. CASS/DECK</td>
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<td>THETA COBALT ONE</td>
<td>699.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLASSE 7000 PRE/POWER AMPS</td>
<td>2789.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

D - EX-DEMO
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As any hi-fi specialist will tell you, to get the maximum benefit from your loud-speaker / speaker stand combination, you should fill your stands with a suitable material. Until now, the most common medium has been sand or a sand-based alternative. The other option was lead shot that, although very dense, is extremely expensive and difficult to source.

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Ray Charles & Betty Carter

The charms of Ray Charles and Betty Carter are evident on this 1961 landmark album. The arrangements of Marty Paich's big band vary from lush to raucous, with a sumptuous string section evident. Carter's vocal is brilliantly accompanied by Charles on piano. Tracks include "Baby It's Cold Outside", "People Will Say We're In Love" "It Takes Two To Tango"
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If you yearn for a taste of the “high end” but have a budget that threatens to restrict your upgrades, then this might suggest you investigate the excellent performance of the new ‘Orelle products including their superb DAC-180 converter and CD-100 player. Both products now being demonstrated.

THIS MONTH’S SALE STOCK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>WAS</th>
<th>NOW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fuller Audio Sultan Loudspeakers - mint</td>
<td>(400)</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audiovector IQ II Cartridge - very low hours</td>
<td>(1350)</td>
<td>595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOCA 22 Watts S.E. Amplifier - unused</td>
<td>(2000)</td>
<td>995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOCA 50 Watts S.E. Amplifier - devastating sound</td>
<td>(6000)</td>
<td>1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meridian 201 D in A Converter - mint</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leak Troug,hline 11 Tuner - as new</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio Innovations Series 200 power - unused</td>
<td>(500)</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio Innovations Ato Integrated Amp - unused</td>
<td>(399)</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio Innovations Second Audio 2A3 Trinide Poweramps - ex. dem, very low hours</td>
<td>(3000)</td>
<td>1595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biwre Set Audiovector A.N.B. Speaker: cable 2 x 3 meters</td>
<td>(295)</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock Reference Turntable</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rock III Turntable</td>
<td>500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAR 807 Preampifier</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helton Series II Loudspeakers - excellent cond.</td>
<td>950</td>
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<tr>
<td>Line LP1/2 Turntable with ITDKD record - mint</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>550</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vold Valdi Turntable with HELLUS tonearm</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>595</td>
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<tr>
<td>Audio Innovations T2 Stepup transformer</td>
<td>(350)</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rega Planar 3 Turntable - mint</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>175</td>
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<tr>
<td>JPW AP2 Loudspeaker - ex. dem light oak</td>
<td>(199)</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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SERIOUS KIT

The Serious Kit Summer System Review!

As ever, at Serious Kit, we take one aspect of a hi-fi system and take it very seriously indeed! I of course refer to that elusive condition of TOTAL SYNERGY.

So many systems that we come across should simply have never been put together. Pre-amps from one manufacturer that will not “drive” power amps from another. Speakers that are unsuited by tonal character to cartridges or digital from ends! It makes us wonder if some “dealers” actually care about the music, let alone the customer?

Here lies the beauty of a Serious Kit system. Every component works with the next in the audio chain, dynamically, rhythmically, electrically and totally sonically! (Wow, not a lot of ly’s)

For instance, one of our favourite systems has been the incredible SUGDEN SDT-1 @£ 995 CD player, running into the AUDIONOTE OTO S.E. which then plays into the AUDIONOTE ’1’ speakers.

At a touch over £3,000 including stands and cables, the gauntlet is thrown to find a more musical system. In terms of transparency, 3-D imagery, tonal “rightness” intimacy of performance, I ask the question “Is there anything better costing 50% more?” I fear not. Here is a system that works, magically and majestically. Vivid instruments and voices appear in mid-air, hung between the speakers, under the speakers. Yes it is possible to demonstrate “surround sound” using only 2 loudspeakers. Call for a dem, if you don’t believe me.

It is Serious Kit policy not to stock “flavour of the month” products, but rather to build systems that synergise long term. Our products tend to have a long shelf life, rather than a “this year’s model” attitude. All too often an expensive product appears, lasts a production life of 12 months and is replaced by the same thing “with a go fast stripe”. This renders your model as out of date, with a very low re-sale or trade in value! Not the way forward.

This is one of the beauties of dealing with a carefully chosen hard-core of manufacturers and distributors. Rather than deal with “everyone” and be a “jack of all trades but master of none”. Serious Kit only deals with the smaller hand-crafted manufacturers. The end result being less of an overall selection of products. The up-side, being able to string the pearls together to form something magnificent! Specialist systems for music lovers seeking something out of the ordinary! It has to be said, that an awful lot of equipment being offered as serious hi-fi, simply is not. It takes a lot more than a nice box, and clever advertising campaigns to produce music from the black or silver disc. I feel that a complete change in the audio industry is taking place. Pads come and go, only a hand-ful of products carry on, gathering momentum as they go. These products are manufactured by companies who put the music first and the hype last.

Put simply, there is Serious Kit available, but hi-fi not necessarily at the local High St. and seldom offered by the hifi chain stores that offer “amazing hi-fi value”.

Real HiFi, real musical reproduction is here, probably under your nose! Call me to audition a serious audio system at your convenience! I don’t think you’ll find better advice, or sound quality anywhere, so treat yourself today!

As ever, happily listening, thanx for reading the blurb!

Kind regards

David W. Speirs
(PROPRIETOR)

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A superb budget loudspeaker for under £130

MISSION 753
Winner
Loudspeaker over £300
Another award to add to the collection

MISSION 731
Best Loudspeaker under £300
A superb budget loudspeaker for under £130

MISSION 753
Winner Loudspeaker over £300
Another award to add to the collection

ARCAM XETA ONE
Best Home Cinema Amp
Home cinema amp with a musical pedigree

CYRUS III
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Product Description</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<tr>
<td>Apogee</td>
<td>Centaurus Minor loudspeakers (b/ash)</td>
<td>£750</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATC</td>
<td>SCM 50A loudspeakers (black)</td>
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<td>AVI</td>
<td>SCM 50A loudspeakers (walnut)</td>
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<td>B&amp;W</td>
<td>£2000MD doc</td>
<td>£375</td>
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<td>Chord</td>
<td>801 loudspeakers no acoustic hood 8/ash</td>
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<td>Harmony Kardon</td>
<td>655 int amp 40 wpc</td>
<td>£150</td>
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<td>Kimber</td>
<td>Cable</td>
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<td>Kinshaw</td>
<td>Overture integrated amp</td>
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<td>Kinshaw</td>
<td>Perception preamp</td>
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<td>LFD Audio</td>
<td>WMCQ phonostage mm/mc</td>
<td>£299</td>
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<td>Linn</td>
<td>Kaber loudspeakers</td>
<td>£700</td>
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<td>Linn</td>
<td>Klaim preamp (phono socket model)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Linn</td>
<td>UX100 power amp</td>
<td>£325</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lumley</td>
<td>75sec monoblocks (por) new valves</td>
<td>£350</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meridian</td>
<td>201 preamp mm/me stage</td>
<td>£299</td>
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<td>Meridian</td>
<td>203 doc</td>
<td>£250</td>
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<tr>
<td>Musical Fidelity</td>
<td>A100 integrated amplifier</td>
<td>£250</td>
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<tr>
<td>Naim</td>
<td>NAD1 Tuner</td>
<td>£950</td>
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<tr>
<td>Origin Live</td>
<td>O2X loudspeakers (black ash)</td>
<td>£450</td>
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<tr>
<td>Origin Live</td>
<td>O2X loudspeakers (black ash)</td>
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<tr>
<td>QED</td>
<td>Digit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quad</td>
<td>606 mk1 power amp (green)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Royd</td>
<td>A7 series II loudspeakers (b/ash)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Royd</td>
<td>Abbot loudspeakers (walnut)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Ministral loudspeakers (grey)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sansui</td>
<td>AV2000 DSP/Pro logic A/V amp</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sequence</td>
<td>Model 30 loudspeakers (dark)</td>
<td>£150</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sequence</td>
<td>Model 30 loudspeakers (light)</td>
<td>£160</td>
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<td>Sony</td>
<td>715 CD player as new</td>
<td>£195</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sprinor</td>
<td>99/73 loudspeakers in walnut</td>
<td>£600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target</td>
<td>Open Frame 20&quot; stands</td>
<td>£25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thorens</td>
<td>Single column 22&quot; stands</td>
<td>£65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thorens</td>
<td>166 mk VI tunable &amp; AT95 Cambridge</td>
<td>£199</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**WANTED**

**ALL CLASSIC VINTAGE VALVE HI-FI EQPT.**

**PRICES PAID. UP-TO:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<tr>
<td>EMT</td>
<td>£400</td>
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<tr>
<td>ROGERS CADET 23</td>
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<td>ROGERS HD88 MK1/2/3</td>
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<td>ROGERS JUNIORMASTER</td>
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<td>RADFORD STA 15/SC2</td>
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<td>AVANTIC DL/TS/5</td>
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<tr>
<td>AVANTIC SPA/11/2</td>
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<tr>
<td>RCA NEW ORTHOTHOMIC</td>
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<tr>
<td>LATHHER VALVE AMPLIFIERS</td>
<td>£100</td>
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<td>LATHHER SPEAKERS</td>
<td>£150</td>
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<tr>
<td>TANNY SPEAKERS</td>
<td>£80</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**OTHER CLASSIC HI-FI EQUIPMENT ALSO WANTED. IE SCOTT, DYNAYELECTOR, DYNAVOX, MCINTOSH, BEARD, CROFT, LUXMAN, EAR, MICHAELSON AND AUSTIN, ETC. RING FOR PRICE PAID.**

**MODERN VALVE AMPLIFIERS ALSO PURCHASED FOR CASH. IE CROFT, CONCORDAUNT, AUDIO RESEARCH, CONRAD JOHNSON, LUMLEY ETC. AUDIO VALVES WANTED.IE MULLARD, GEC, BRIMAR, OSRAM ETC.**

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Linn LP12, Lingo, EC9 £1,100
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Mission DAD7000 CD player £50
Pioneer SX747, 4ch receiver £75
Quad FM4 stereo tuner £200
Quad FM3 stereo tuner £100
Quad 33/303 pre-power £185
Quad 33 preamp £65
Quad 3303 poweramp £150
Quad II power amplifiers (pair) £350
Quad FM75D (matches 33) £100
Radford STA15/3, SC22, FMT2 £500
Radford STA25/III £450
Sony ES88T TAN900, 200W monoblocks £800
Tandberg TD20A, open reel, quarter track £300
Tommy "WESTMINSTER", horn speakers £3,000
Thorens TD124, chassis only £120
Walker CJ58, SME3009/III £75
UHER 4000 report, just the machine £50

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2-way floorstanding

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- User Interface: Intuitive and Easy-to-Use
- Advanced Monitoring and Analytics
- Future-Proof Compatibility
- Built for Longevity and Reliability
- Safe and Secure Design

**Key Features**
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- Improved Energy Efficiency
- Enhanced Security Measures
- Real-Time Monitoring and Analytics

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<td>Pioneer Impresso Mini</td>
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- Rotel 965 CD Player: 300 → 229
- Sony S505ES Tuner: 250 → 189
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WANTED: MARANTZ C.D. 94, Sony ES 337/233/553/% matching E.S. tuner. Any Naim or Quad equipment. Gyrose/DLP/12 and any good quality arm. Tel: 0114 248 6493.

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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>SME 3009 II Improved - Boxed,</td>
<td>£150</td>
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<td>perfect</td>
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<tr>
<td>SME Model 20 Boxed/Unboxed - available immediately</td>
<td>£2650</td>
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<td>£2950</td>
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<td>Sony 25&quot; SV4244 Dolby Pro Logic TV - New, Boxed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sony MHC 2900 AV Mini system x 2, boxed, unused</td>
<td>£1200</td>
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<tr>
<td>- £150</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neat All Mahogany - Excellent condition</td>
<td>£1700</td>
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<tr>
<td>- £450</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Audio Innovations 1st Audio I 7.0w Triode - ex demo</td>
<td>£800</td>
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<tr>
<td>- £1550</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jowther Acoustica - New PMMA drive units - excellent cabinets</td>
<td>£390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange Valve pre amp</td>
<td>£400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMT 930 St. Turntable eq. + tonearm</td>
<td>£600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micromega Solo - Excellent condition</td>
<td>£600</td>
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<td>- £150</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mathos Series 30 phonos/power</td>
<td>£350</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helius Scopus - needs attention x 2 ozx</td>
<td>£50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helius Aurum Tonomar</td>
<td>£130</td>
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<tr>
<td>- £200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helius Auris II Tonomar</td>
<td>£100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Souther Linear Tracking arm</td>
<td>£400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Croft pre amp - super micro</td>
<td>£1300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sony 715 CD player - 30 hours use - Hi-Fi Choice Best Buy</td>
<td>£180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 VitVit 7457 Alnico Drive Units: Each</td>
<td>£150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio Innovations 210 pre power</td>
<td>£400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio 3088 Silver Night (2 p) pairs</td>
<td>£1250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All prices exclude carriage. Delivery worldwide.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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ARISTON - LOGIC - THORENS SPARES

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Logic DM101 spring sets £23.00
Rega armspacer - polished aluminium 1mm increments £11.00
Impex motor, pulley and PCB £90.00
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Mantecore Magister with 12" Magician £3,800.00
Mantecore Mantra turntable - the classic - no arm £495.00
Mantecore Musician tonearm £995.00
Mantecore Magician tonearm £995.00
Mantecore 12" Magician tonearm £795.00
Part-ex available against all other tonearms
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MBSi off-board power supply £490.00
Motor re build £150.00
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DALI 10AMS - 93/94dB/W Houstandiers. "Hi-Fi Choice August 1995 Star Review" an analysing sonic beauty which far surpasses many speaker rivals - an acnancy ability to suck you into the musical experience. £508.00

WADIA - The most intelligently and completely designed digital source components currently available. Models 23, 21 and 16.

MONARCHAUDIO - A selection of excellent digital products including the model M16 DAC and the DIP. The latter is used between the transport and DAC, providing excellent improvements to the dynamics, band width and coherence. The better the existing components, the greater the improvement.

MICROMEGA - Upgradable digital source components from £550 to £750.

AUDIO INNOVATIONS - AUDIO NOTE - BORDER PATROL - An extensive range of high quality valve amplification.

VOYO - After 10 years in the market place, this turntable design still represents the most intelligent choice of analogue source component.


LOWTHER - Full range of drive units always available. £150, £880, £768.

Other PM6000 &OA

Price £2,000

Alchemy

£1555

£4500

£1500

£1650

£1100

VOYD - After 10 years in the market place, this turntable design still represents the most intelligent choice of analogue source component.

WINNOW R

£200

£300

£190

Other Other

Other Other

Other Other

Audio accessories

Price £1100

£250 Intelligent choice of analogue source component.

Audio Innovations - AUDIO NOTE - BORDER PATROL - An extensive range of high quality valve amplification.

Monarchaudio - a selection of excellent digital products including the model M16 DAC and the DIP. The latter is used between the transport and DAC, providing excellent improvements to the dynamics, band width and coherence. The better the existing components, the greater the improvement.

Micromega - upgradeable digital source components from £550 to £750.

Audio innovations - audio note - border patrol - an extensive range of high quality valve amplification.

Voyo - after 10 years in the market place, this turntable design still represents the most intelligent choice of analogue source component.


Lowther - full range of drive units always available. £150, £880, £768.

Other PM6000 &OA

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Alchemy

£1555

£4500

£1500

£1650

£1100

Voyd - after 10 years in the market place, this turntable design still represents the most intelligent choice of analogue source component.


Lowther - full range of drive units always available. £150, £880, £768.
SONY TC 399 reel to reel. Recently serviced. Offers. Glover
Tel: 0181-940 4394.

LINN LP12 turntable, Valhalla PS,
Akito arm, 8 x 8 matrix. Latest spec
bar Cirrus. Pristine condition with
boxes and receipts. Costs £1,270 new.
£500 ono.
Tel: 01925 730 (0) or 0181-466
396 (H) .

GYRODEC BRONZE, Kuzma arm,
AT-GCQ phonograph power supply.
Perfect. £650 .
Tel: 01372 373069 .

EXPOSURE 7 AND 8 pre/power amp,
easy model with balance controls,
£225. Linn Kan speakers, MK I with
MK II stands - Rosewood, £225. Linn
Akito pick-up arm £65. Sound Org.
Tel: 01372 373069 .

BRAND NEW AUDIO Technica OC9
cartridges £175 inc BPB. Quad 34/366
minton condition £380. Heybrook HB1
MKII minton condition, boxed etc. £180.
Naim 42/540 £450. Wanted: FSX.
Wanted: Cyrus Tuner.
Tel: 01792 286 4143, C. Scott.

CELESTION SL600s, crossover
gupgraded with Solen Polypropylenes,
£225. Cambridge CD2 CD player,
light use, vgc. £230. QED Digit and
Postron, vgc. £110. Sony Walkman
Pro and heavy duty external PSU,
£200.
Tel: 0171 286 4143, C. Scott.

WANTED TONEARMS, BREWER,
Fidelity Research, Ortofon, Cartridges,
Deca, Kotsu, Ortofon SPA (any model).
Trotables. EMT 927.
Technics SP10. Amplifiers, Audio
Research SP6. Naim Nap160, Lux
KX33, CDi. Paragon CSD80.
Tel: 01642 559435.

WANTED: Revox B790 or B795
demo. £120.
Tel: 01276 29922 evenings/weekends.

WANTED: Valve compressor,
working or not, circuits diagrams for
same, equalisers and early transistor
examples. All sought by enthusiast of
limited means.
Clive: 01-492 8129 .

JAN 33/30/393 minton condition.
Handbooks. Unused since full Qaud
service. £225. Audio Technica OCS5,
few hours use. £75. Shur V115/V15 good
stylus. £30 .
Phone Barry: 0141 621 0480.

GARRARD 401 DECK and SME 3009
arm. Both in excellent condition, very
little used. £145. Includes Share H55E.
plinth and cover.
Tel: 01422 846681 (office) or 01422
456357 (home).

SNELL TYPE E II speakers complete with
Pirate stands, immaculate condition £700.
Very sensitive - make ideal partners for Audio Innovations
amplifiers. Please call Mark on 01252-
845128 (Reeves, Hampshire).

RAY 82 (MC + MM, HiCap. 250 -
£2,400). HiFi World August 1995
SME 3009 arm, £180. Kette, Isokii
Blue - £30. Epos E514 + Stands -
£400 .

Nakashichi C77 cassette deck, mint
condition boxed with manual and
remote £650 ono. Dus turntable with
Zeta tonearm and Audio Technica
ATO99 cartridge (hardly used), boxed
£750.00.
Matt: 0141 621 0480.

VIVEMEGA DUO CD3/DUO BS.
Very little use, boxed £550.00.
Nakamatsu DR2 £375.00 boxed. Sony
Professional Walkman £160.00.
Boxed. All immaculate.
Tel: 01735 368487 (London, Heathrow).

ROXANU DP1 compact disk
transport, black, boxed, £700 ono.
Can demonstrate.
Jon 0181-888 2537 after 6.00pm.

MUSICAL FIDELITY MC2 loudspeakers £130. Musical Fidelity
pre-amp £38 (130). Rotel RB-33AL
tuner £50. Rega RB303 turnarm £50.
Heybrook HB1 stands £40.
Tel: 01342 811456 (evenings and
weekends).

WANTED: PROAC EBS loudspeakers
and stands. Must be in mint condition,
late model (1988) and preferably one
owner. Excellent price paid for the right
pair. Vincent Poole.
Tel: 01-423 1391 (work) or 01606
782877 (home after 7pm).

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Must be in mint condition, late model (1988) and preferably one
owner. Excellent price paid for the right
pair. Vincent Poole.
Tel: 01-423 1391 (work) or 01606
782877 (home after 7pm).

ROUGHS L54/2 speakers. £110.
Quads 433 mono amplifier with separate
phono amp £125 .
Tel: 01948 667521 .

ROCK REFERENCE, Syiphon Platform
£1,150 SME 4 with 3 Wiring Trough
£695 Davytron XX-C £225, Sumo
Polaris £225 MF III VT4 1495, Geneva
(Rinalmus) Alphanon Stands £175.
Tel: 01273 515095 .

ARCAM DELTA 290 integrated
amplifier, boxed, £300 ono. Apollo 3
tier equipment rack, square section
construction 220mm, 32mm shelf
spaces. £35. All as new.
Tel: 0121-605 5218 .

RCAU SWORDSMAN, black £160,
Linn Ibosarkis 3513R, mahogany £150.
Linn speakers £150. V.D.H. Clearwater
cables 2 x 10m £50. Minolta X700
camera, black bellows outfit. Half
price, excellent condition.
Tel: 01206 861457, Jim.

MUSICAL FIDELITY "Studio T" power
amp. £400. MVT pre-amp with Sax
SR84 headphones £450. AI integrated
amp £125. Marantz CD 873 £420.
Technics ST E450L tuner £75.
Tel: 01635 36019 evenings (Newbury).

MAGNAPEN 1.5SE. 1/2 years: Dac-
In-The-Box, once used, Yamaha tuner
TX 580, new, Chord Company
Flatwire 4 x 8m; Monster Phono Link
M 1000, 3 pairs; all 30% off.
Tel: 0171 439 7986.

RASPO STA25 valve pre, power
amplifier with matching valve tuner,
elegant £175. Cambridge R50
speakers £240. Oracle Delphi with
Swing arm and Ortofon MC cartridge
£450 .
Tel: 01274 545219 .

ART AUDIO QUINTET Plus VPI valve
amps, Sonic Link Violet interconnect
£775 o.n.o. Penthagone A speakers (black ash) plus stands plus cables
£275 o.n.o.
Garry, Wakefield (01924) 290949 day,
365376 evenings.

NAIP NAIT 3, FITTED with MM
phono boards. Mint condition £390.
Townsend Sesame Sink isolation
support. Standard size £80.
Tel: 01256 41453 (Basingstoke).

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C/W Leak Stereo 30 Plus amp in
double black ash sleeve £130.00. Leak
Stereo tuner (C/W Leak Stereo 30 plus
amp) in double black ash sleeve
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£395. Avo MK4 valve tester, data book
£275 o.n.o. CD player TD-125.
SME3090, plinth £12. Various
toughlines from £60. Pyle black box
£50. Wanted: single Reford MA153,
P4X4444, £100, Wanted: single
Paragon CSD80, £150. Wanted: single
Kolle T850s. Newswrap (150).
Tel: 01350-740272.

CROFT SUPER MICRO pre-amp,
Crost series five amp £50 o.n.o.
Mitchell Focus One turntable and
Mayfair earm and Mayfair cartridges
£100 o.n.o. Rotel RAD 865 CD
player £150 o.n.o. All in excellent
condition.
Dave: 01902-29665 (Wolverhampton).
The Last Days of the Sale

Record Players
Linn LP12 LV11 Ittok. Used, with Valhalla, £479.00, with Lingo £799.00
Rega Planar turntables, ex-dem Planar 2 was £198, now £158.00 Planar 3 was £260, now £215.00
Ex-dem cartridges available.

Audio Research LS1 valve line level pre amp, rare black finish. Was over £1700, now only £699.00
Audio Research LS3 line level pre amp. Ex-dem, immaculate, was £1695, now only £1195.00

CD Players
Arcam Alpha 1 one box player. Ex-dem immaculate condition, was £300, now only £259.00
Arcam Delta 270 one box. Ex-dem immaculate, was £800, now £639.00
Micromega CDF1 Pro multibit player, Duo style with perspex lid. Used, now only £449.00
Micromega Duo CD2.1 transport. Ex-dem, good condition, was £2750, now only £2199.00 Duo BS2 converter, was £650, now £529.00

Electronics
Exposure XV integrated with phono stage. Used, only £379.00
Quad 66 pre-amp, full remote. Used immaculate, was £863, now £499.00
Fender power amp as above £300, now £199.00 306 power amp as above £360, now £199.00
Naim Nac82/Nap180 Ex-dem, as new. Nac82 was £1998, now £1598.00 Nap180 was £950, now £759.00

Loudspeakers
JPW Sonata and AP2 ‘best buy’ models. Sonata was £120, now only £90.00 AP2 was £200, now only £119.00
Monitor Audio MA201 Used, good condition, were £300 no box, now £179.00
Heybrook Heystack rosewood. Ex-dem as new, were £500, now only £369.00

Naim IBL compact floorstander. Used very good condition, were £906, one pair now only £449.00
Pro-Ac Super Towers black ash floor-stander. Used, excellent condition were over £1300, now only £695.00
Roksan Ojan 3 rosewood. As new, were £995, now only £749.00
Sonus Faber Minuetto solid walnut, were £898, one pair only £749.00
Sonus Faber Minima Amator solid walnut Immaculate, were £1498, now £998.00

This is only a small sample of the product available in our sale. Please call for a full list

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Hi-Fi Consultants
BRITISH HI-FI IS THE BEST IN THE WORLD

It is a little known fact that although the Japanese send millions of pounds worth of hi-fi to the UK, the Japanese, and the Eastern countries, in general, look upon British and American hi-fi as being the best! Specialist British hi-fi companies would probably not survive if it were not for exports, and only had to rely on the UK market.

Two very successful companies are ATC and AVI, both located in Stroud. The smallest speaker that ATC produce, the SCM10 was voted ‘Best Small Loudspeaker of the Year’ in Audiovisual Magazine; ‘Best Audiovisual Loudspeaker of the Year’ in Hi-Fi Magazine and ‘Component of the Year’ in Stereophonic Sound Magazine. All three magazines are Japanese. Nearly all Hollywood and UK films with orchestral scores are monitored on ATC systems. Top recording artists using ATC equipment include Mike Oldfield, Peter Gabriel, Paul McCartney, Tina Turner and Pink Floyd.

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Tel/Fax: (0117) 9686005
Spendor SP2 speakers. Foundation MISSION CYRUS 2 plus PSX ( Mk I ). reluctant sale, £1,150. winner, excellent condition, boxed, and Quad boxes for speaker complete with all accessories and E.O.N. tuner - ' What Hi-Fi?' award Leeds (0113) 2454 829. All boxed, as new. Wanted: Goodmans Maxim IIs. per channel. Magnificent sound. Tel: 01206-825887 (Colchester). glowing reviews (see M. Colloms CHORD 1000 poweramp. 250 watts £75 o.n.o.; Mission 760; SE £75 o.n.o. "Strobe", original manual, receipts. excellent condition, all original QUAD 22 & PAIR IIs with GEC KT66 Boxed. £1,000 (new £2,400). Tel: 01934 626959 (Weston super Mare). Tel: 01405 768845. Dovedale IIs, solid mahogany power amp. Extensively uprated with RESTORED CLASSIC EL84 valve Ariston Forte turntable. Where did WANTED DESPERATELY: Belt for MERIDIAN 201 pre-amp. £250. 204 £135. All books, boxed and pristine. Phone 01728 830778. SNELL K £250; Heybrook HBI/3 £150; HB11 stands £60. 16 inches wide stands £95; Musical Fidelity A1 final edition £275; A1 MK2 £255; Audio-technica Super AF (1m) £65; Silver Sounds 16/4 (1.5m) £95; NVA Sound Pipe (2m) £70; KC DIGIKig (0.5m dual) £70; Massilon and Black Dinal (1m) £45; Cogan Hall Spk. cable (3m) £50; V.D.H SC152 (2m) £60; plenty of other spk cables (Cyrus, boxes etc) in short lengths. Mission £5; Michel Tendertfeet (9) £1.50 each. See on Phone £1858598 after 6pm.


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Brentwood Hi Fidelity

2, Ingrave Road, Brentwood, Essex, CM15 8AT
Tel: 01277 221210 Fax: 01277 261175

Sale of ex-demonstration stock

Make | Model | RRP | Sale
--- | --- | --- | ---
Audio Innovations | 1000 Series Pre Amp | £1549 | 999
Audio Innovations | 2nd Audio Power Amplifiers | £2999 | 1999
Audio Innovations | L2 Pre Amp | £699 | 549
ECA | Vista/Lectem S Pre/Power | £1640 | 1099
Chord | SPM 800 Power Amplifier | £1749 | 1299
Chord | SPM 1200 Power Amplifier | £2995 | 2249
Project | 7 Integrated Amp | £259 | 199
Rotel | RA93SBX Integrated Amp | £225 | 149
Marantz | CD 10 CD Player | £1199 | 849
Marantz | CD 12 Transport/DAC | £2800 | 1499
Mantico | Mantra Turntable | £429 | 279
Pink Triangle | Anniversary Turntable | £1797 | 1199
Systemdek | IX/900 Turntable | £229 | 159
Aura | TU 50 Tuner | £299 | 199
Impulse | H6 Speakers | £1495 | 995
Impulse | H2 Speakers | £2250 | 1499
Faura | Crusader II Speakers | £1595 | 1349
TDL | Studio 1M (inc. stands) | £974 | 749
SME | Series V Arm | £1295 | 799
DPA | DAC (inc. Interconnected) | £8/125
Kinshaw | Perception Phono Stage | £8/299

All ex-demonstration products include full warranty

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TRADE


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FOR SALE: LINN Lingo less than half price £300.00 inc. Free fitting by Linn Dealer. Tel: 01625-876268. Ask for Steve.

RCI ORTHOPHONIC MONO set and Hifa, clean £175; Tannoy 3LZs £195; Audio Services (Shackman) electrostatics (defective) large cabs £65; Armstrong 624 tuner £20. Wanted clean record/CD collections. also SMGQE quantities books Hifi/Pop, old-new, fiction/fact, (any subjects) plus popular sheet music 1920s-60s. Can collect. Tel: 01452 750242.

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WANTED: 30 year old hi-fi enthusiast seeks change of career to evolve passion into business. Detailed product knowledge covering a broad spectrum. Confident manner with excellent interpersonal skills due to current customer facing role.

WANTED: 18 year old (un-employed) with long interest in Hi-Fi, good technical understanding and product knowledge seeks full time employment in Hi-Fi retail within London. Please phone Leight 0181-366 3662.

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WANTED - CLASSICAL VINYL. Classical LP records of most types purchased. Unmarked condition essential. Can travel for large quantities. Please contact Roger F. McNicoll, General Classical Records (Birmingham) on 0121 - 455 6829, any time.

WANTED: 30 year old hi-fi enthusiast seeks change of career to evolve passion into business. Detailed product knowledge covering a broad spectrum. Confident manner with excellent interpersonal skills due to current customer facing role.

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“Remember it’s still not over till the fat lady sings”