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Pg 95

# Hi-Fi

## WORLD

FEBRUARY 1997 £2.30

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**Will MiniDisc  
take over?  
We test Sony's  
MDS-JE500**



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Denon  
upgrade  
PM-250  
amp to SE.

SUPPLEMENT NO: 27  
(OVERSEAS INSIDE)  
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THIS ISSUE

## KEF's super new 'point-source' Q15 loudspeaker

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**KEF'S ENTIRE  
Q SERIES OF  
LOUDSPEAKERS  
MUST BE WON  
WORTH £3000!!**



The perfect 'point source' has been sought for over 50 years.  
**KEF patented it.**



## MONITOR

S • E • R • I • E • S

The acoustic 'point source' has long been the Holy Grail of loudspeaker design. Ever since the early days of high fidelity, audio engineers have sought this elusive ideal. Some have come close, but none have succeeded.

Except for KEF - and KEF alone. UK patent 2 236929 and US patent 5,548,657 are the proof

KEF's revolutionary Uni-Q® drive unit configuration is acknowledged as one of the great breakthroughs of modern high-end loudspeaker design.

The single coincident point source is achieved by placing the tweeter at the exact acoustic centre of the mid-range cone. With identical directivity and dispersion characteristics, this unique configuration creates an



immaculate stereo image over a far wider listening area than is possible with any conventional speaker.

To the listener, the difference is phenomenal. Off-axis response is superb - and undesirable crossover effects are virtually eliminated.

Progressively refined by Reference Series engineers, KEF's patented Uni-Q technology is what makes the new Monitor Series the ideal solution for studio professionals and serious audiophiles alike.

After more than 50 years the perfect point source has arrived.



The experience  
of sound

# THIS MONTH'S WORLD

● Dyed-in-the-wool enthusiasts have been singing the praises of battery power for years. Now Technics use it in their latest pre-amplifier. With remote control and an MM/MC phono input, for £350 it's something of a bargain. See page 13.

● KEF have launched their fabulous Q15 loudspeaker. It's only £200 but a cracker at the price, offering superb vocal quality in particular.

● Denon have produced the PMA-250SE, a tuned-up version of one of their budget amps that left Dominic Todd all but speechless.

● And Sony's latest MiniDisc player gets a thumbs up from David Price and the rest of us as a budget music carrier for cars, portables and the home.

**A**t their flagship Oxford Street store in Central London HMV have relegated rivals Digital Compact Cassette and MiniDisc to equal status - bottom shelf! I found a mere fifty DCC tapes and, just below, fifty MDs. Having been assigned to a single Island display unit, with minimal sign posting, quite obviously sales don't amount to much.

Down the road a little, Virgin have sided with Sony. I found no DCC tapes but MiniDisc, whilst hardly prominent - "It's in with the Reggae tapes, mate" - was at least sign posted. No one liked Sony's early ATRAC music compression system, which is why Sony concentrated on the portable market where quality isn't an issue. Now it has reached Version 4, ATRAC sounds respectable. So, with DCC fading away, it looks like MiniDisc wins by default. It has improved to become a small, durable, fast-access recording medium. It might catch on a little more quickly if Sony/CBS can release discs with something a little more contemporary than Bruce Springsteen and Bob Dylan.

*Noel Keywood, Editor*

## TEST EQUIPMENT



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

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

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

## LISTENING ROOM

(TREATED BY RPG ACOUSTIC TOOLS)



## IN THE MARCH ISSUE

### HARBETH HL-S8 LOUDSPEAKERS

Famous for their respected stand-mount loudspeakers, Harbeth have now decided to enter the arena of the floorstander with their HL-S8.

### ARCAM ALPHA 7 TUNER

We lend an ear to Arcam's latest budget tuner. Find out if it's £230 well spent as we take to the airwaves.

### Pioneer CT-95

After getting fine results from Pioneer's CT-S740S cassette deck in the June

issue, we head to the top of the pile for the flagship CT-95.

### CASTLE EDEN LOUDSPEAKERS

It seems Castle have caught the carbon-fibre bug - the new Eden standmounters use this high-tech wonder material in their mid/bass drivers. Can they build on the success of their stablemates, the Avons?

### AURA CA200 PRE AND PA100 POWER AMPS

Having been impressed by Aura's VA 80 integrated, we decided to take a look at their £1600 pre/power combo. But will

these chrome-plated amplifiers sound as good as they look?

### AUDIOLAB COMPETITION

Two top-flight CD players are up for grabs - Audiolab's 8000CD integrated and 8000CDM transport and 8000DAC convertor, worth over £3000.

### ORELLE CD-100E CD PLAYER

You won't have to part with your CD-100E when upgrading. There are two transport-only options, two Class A transistor output stage versions and even a valve output stage on offer!

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## THIS MONTH'S REVIEWS

### AMPLIFIERS

#### TECHNICS SU-C1000 PRE AND SE-A1000 POWER AMPLIFIERS 13

Jon Marks thinks Technics could be onto a pair of winners here, with their battery-powered pre and mains-operated power amplifiers.



#### DENON PMA-250SE 20

Wearing a near-painless price tag of £159.99 is Denon's latest budget audiophile offering, the PMA-250SE. Dominic Todd lends an ear.



### TUNER

#### KENWOOD KT-2080 33

Impressed by the KT-3080 in October, Jon Marks tunes into the airwaves with its smaller brother, the £130 KT-2080.

### COMPACT DISC

#### SONY MDS-JE500 MINIDISC 28

With DCC all but dead and the cassette fading fast, will MiniDisc clean up? David Price checks out Sony's latest £300 MDS-JE500, now with ATRAC 4. And we try and buy discs.



### LOUDSPEAKERS

#### KEF Q15 16

Baby of KEF's new Q range, the £200 Q15 features their Uni-Q point-source driver. Today's judge in the court of sonic value is Noel Keywood.



#### GALE 2i 39

Pitching into the ferociously competitive sub-£150 loudspeaker arena is Gale's 2i. Find out with Jon Marks if they make the grade.

#### ROKSAN ROKONE 57

David Price sways to the sound of Roksan's ROKones, built to bring out the emotion in music.



## WORLD VERDICT



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



**GOOD** - Has strong merit. Well worth an audition.



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



**POOR** - Seriously flawed. Not worth considering.

**NEXT ISSUE**

3 Just a month separates you from our next batch of World goodies. Read what's in store.

**NEWS**

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41 Jon Marks is your guide through our second group of budget interconnects.

**DON'T LOOK BACK IN ANGER**

37 Having problems with a broken stylus? No problemo! We've found the source of all replacements. This month, Shure's M7SEM.

**MALAYSIAN HI-FI SHOW**

49 Noel Keywood travels 6000 miles to report on all that's new at the Malaysian Hi-Fi Show, one of the East's most important audiophile events.

## DIY SUPPLEMENT

This month, as well as all the news, a pair of book reviews and four pages of topical queries and answers, we bring you a K5881 tweak-up with exotic capacitors. And whether you're a student on a budget or an audiophile looking to tri-amp, have a look at the first in a series of articles covering power on the cheap - the best of IC power amplifiers.

**COMPETITION - PAGE 66**

Looking for some superb new loudspeakers to finish off the system you've been building up? Try our £3000 competition, where you could win a pair of KEF's latest Q Series loudspeakers - we have the entire range to give away. Yahoo!



World Radio History

## MUSIC

**ROCK AND POP**

81 RECORD OF THE MONTH:  
Nick Drake: Fruit Tree

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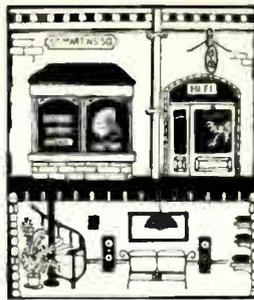
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**N.E.W. TO THESE SHORES**

The latest American arrival to make it across the Pond is a range of heart and hand-warming valve amplifiers from N. E. W. These occupy both sides of the power supply fence, half drawing their power from the mains while the others sup clean, clear battery juice.

Members of the mains group include a pair of Class A power amplifiers, the £999 A 20.1 (with, surprisingly enough, a 20watt output) and the A 60 at £1599. Working upstream is the P 3 single-ended triode pre-amplifier, which vinylphiles can partner with either the LP 4 (price not yet decided) or £499 LP 3 phono stage and its optional £399 upgrade power supply.

First of the battery brigaders are the DCA 33 and DCA 66 power amplifiers which also run in pure Class A and come in at £1899 and £2999 respectively. The delicate work is done by the £3099 DCP 44 pre-amp with its single-ended triode topology, while those of an analogue bent can relish the 6-valve, fully adjustable DCLP 55 and its £3199 price tag.

Redressing the balance for fans of digital is the DCCD 33 CD player, which uses a 'stable platter' mechanism and is HDCD compatible. As we go to press, the DCCD's price is still to be finalised.

MPI Electronic  
13 Weston Road,  
Guildford,  
Surrey GU2 6AU  
Tel: 01483 454993

**NAD NUMBERS**

Joining a select band of digital pre-amplifiers is NAD's new 118. Volume, balance, polarity and stereo/mono all work in the digital domain, fed from a Bitstream DAC which samples the incoming signal at 48kHz. The £999.95 118's audiophile goodies list includes a large mains transformer supplying power to no less than 10 separate regulators, surface mount design, metal film resistors and high grade op-amps.

Arriving alongside the 118 is the more modestly priced 116. £429.95 buys a remote controllable pre-amplifier with balanced XLR outputs as well as standard sockets, and a switchable MM/MC phono stage which runs off its own regulators.

Partnering the 116 is the aptly named 216THX power amp. Capable of delivering 125watts of stereo power, the £469.95 216 can be bridged to triple that figure. To make sure there's little interference between stages and reduce noise, NAD have opted to run the front end of the amp from its own power supply.

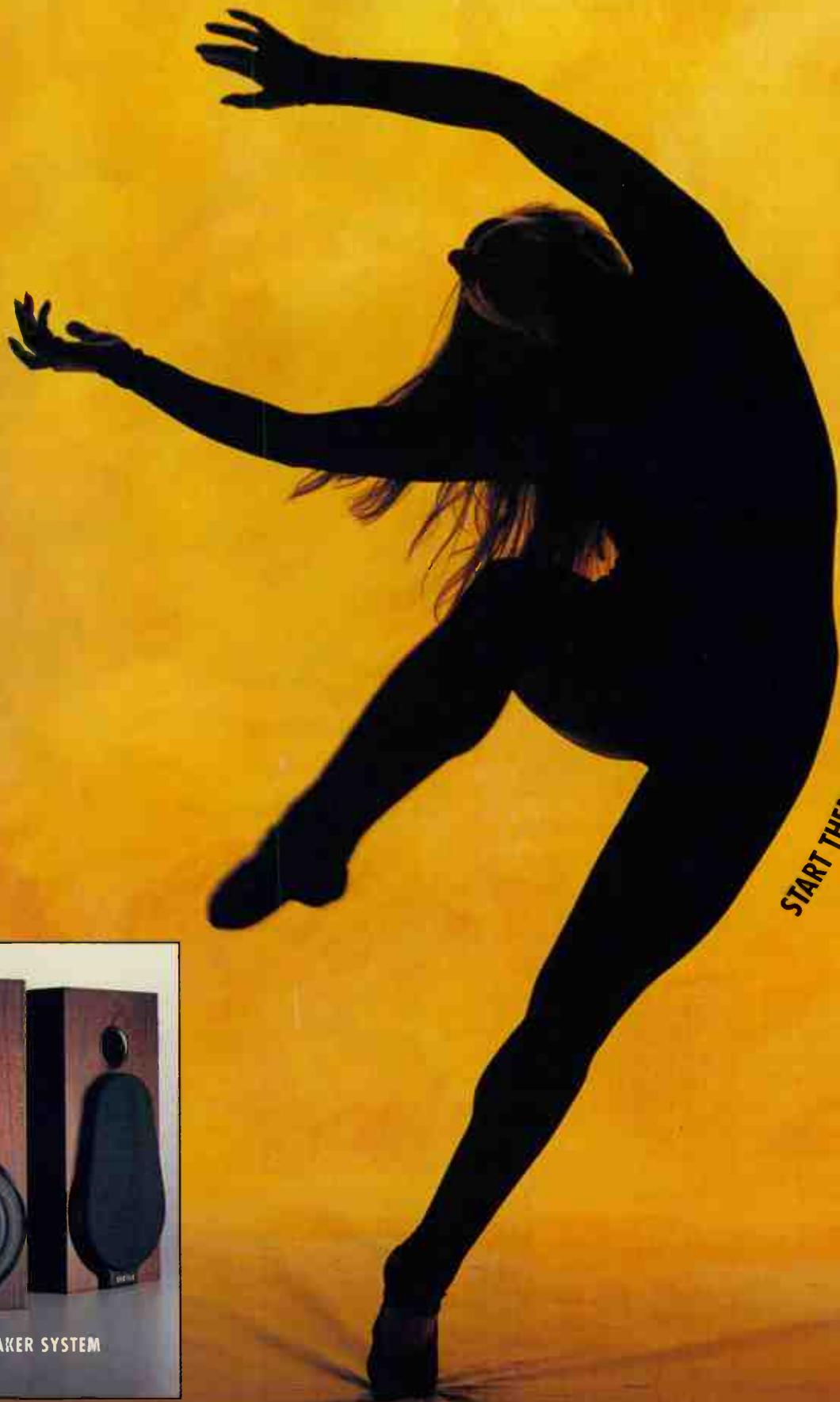
NAD  
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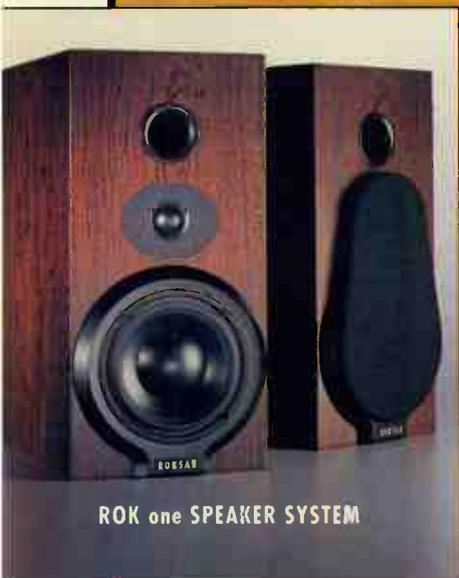
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World Radio History

## BUDGET BITSTREAM

Still suffering from that empty feeling in your piggybank after Christmas? Have a large CD collection that needs listening to? A mere £129.95 will buy you the latest digital member of TEAC's hi-fi family, the CD-P1800. Relying on a Bitstream DAC and 8-times oversampling filter, the '1800 comes complete with a TOS-Link optical output and remote control.



**TEAC**  
5 Marlin House,  
The Croxley Centre,  
Watford,  
Herts. WD1 8YA  
Tel: 01923 819630

## WILSON BENESCH TAKE THE STAGE

Continuing to beat their carbon-fibre path, Wilson benesch have just unveiled the Actor loudspeaker. The bass and midrange drivers of this three-way design both have fibrous pulp polypropylene cones reinforced with carbon fibre. Treble duty falls to a 25mm Ferrofluid damped silk dome tweeter. Splitting the music is a crossover which features air-core inductors and selected polypropylene capacitors in its short signal paths.

With gold-plated bi-wire terminals and 89dB sensitivity, a pair of Actors in your living room will cost approximately £3800, although the exact price has still to be set.



**Wilson benesch**  
Falcon House,  
Limestone Cottage  
Lane,  
Sheffield S6 1NJ  
Tel: 0114 285 2656

## POLK POWER

If it's detailed, musical, depth-plumbing bass you want, Polk Audio might have what you're looking for. The new £349 PSW50 and £499 PSW150 join the swelling ranks of powered subwooferdom, the former sporting an 8in. driver and 100Watts of power, the latter a 10in. unit and 200Watts.

According to Polk, the cone and dustcap assembly of the 10in. driver is so stiff it can support the weight of a man. They also claim this strength and rigidity (due to a mix of graphite and mineral polymer) ensures perfect piston operation at very low frequencies and hence detailed and musical sound.



Extending the bass is Polk's Power Port, designed with an eye to the aerodynamic efficiency that reduces turbulence and noise associated with high power reflex-loaded 'speakers.

**Polk Audio**  
Tyttenhanger House,  
Coursers Road,  
St. Albans AL4 0PG  
Tel: 01727 827311

## TAKE A STAND

If you're left unmoved by the agricultural styling of some stands, then Fi-Rax might be a name to look out for. Their new Premier range uses stainless steel support rods which come in a variety of finishes (from wood to marble effect) and toughened safety glass shelves.



Aimed at those whose world turns around the black disc is the Deadhead. Available as either a stand-alone unit or built onto the top of a stand, this consists of a sheet of laminated MDF sitting atop a sand-filled tray isolated from the rest of the structure.

**Fi-Rax**  
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**THE PATH TO POWER**

Meridian continue to build up their 500 Series with the addition of the new 505 monoblock power amplifier. With over 160watts on tap, getting those voice coils singing (or should that be singing) won't be a problem, and current-hungry loudspeakers will find 30A to dine upon thanks to a massive, low noise 800VA transformer. Stunningly attired in traditional Meridian gloss black, the 505s will set you back £795 each.



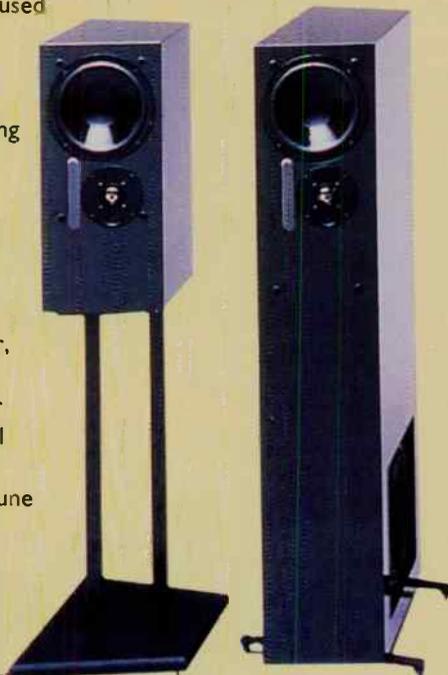
Meridian,  
Stonehill,  
Stukeley Meadows,  
Huntingdon,  
Cambs. PE18 6ED  
Tel: 01480 52144

**TALL, DARK AND SLIM**

Fresh from Californian production lines are NHT's three new loudspeakers, ranging from the modestly sized and titled SuperOne and Model 1.5 standmounters to the 2.5i floorstander. Costing £159 each, the SuperOne is a two-way design shielded for use close to TVs and monitors, and has its own matching stands, the OneStands. Next step up NHT's transducer ladder are the Model 1.5s. These £419 speakers are baby brothers to the flagship Model 3.3s, using the same 1in. aluminium dome tweeter partnered with a custom-designed 6.5in. long throw polypropylene woofer.

For precise imaging, the Model 1.5's cabinet shape embodies NHT's Focused Image Technology angled front baffle, claimed to direct the sound into the listening area and away from room boundaries.

Sharing FIT is the Model 2.5i, an update of its unprefixd 2.5 predecessor. With a side-firing 8in. woofer, the 2.5i manages to retain a slim baffle for good imaging, and will make your wallet similarly slim to the tune of £1079.



Sound Dept.  
19 Blacklands Way,  
Abingdon Bus. Park,  
Abingdon OX14 1DY  
Tel: 10235 555622

**HI-FI CRIMEWATCH**

On 11th November at 5.55pm, three Oriental gentlemen stole a Mark Levinson No26S pre-amp (serial No3710) and its PLS 226 power supply (serial No2971) from Dynamics, 10 Wiltshire Road, Welwyn, Herts. A substantial reward is offered for the return of these items. If you have any information, please call Bernie on: 01438 714038

**CAMPION COMPANION**

Joining Sonneteer's first product, the well-received Campion integrated amplifier, is a new, bigger brother, the £899.99 Alabaster. Fundamentally similar in design to the Campion, the Alabaster has a higher output of 50watts drawn through a more substantial power supply based around a custom-made transformer.



Other changes include an additional set of binding posts to facilitate bi-wiring and a thicker 5mm front panel.

FTM Marketing  
PO Box 163c,  
Esher KT10 0UD  
Tel: 01372 468676

**PRECIOUS SPEAKERS**

Audio Gem have just announced two sparkling new loudspeakers, the Opal and Emerald. The former, a two-way standmounter, uses a light, efficient paper-cone mid/bass unit and fabric dome tweeter to span the sonic spectrum. The Emerald on the other hand is a floorstander that relies on quarter-wave loading to boost its bass. Both loudspeakers are available in real wood veneers or the customary hi-fi black paint finish.

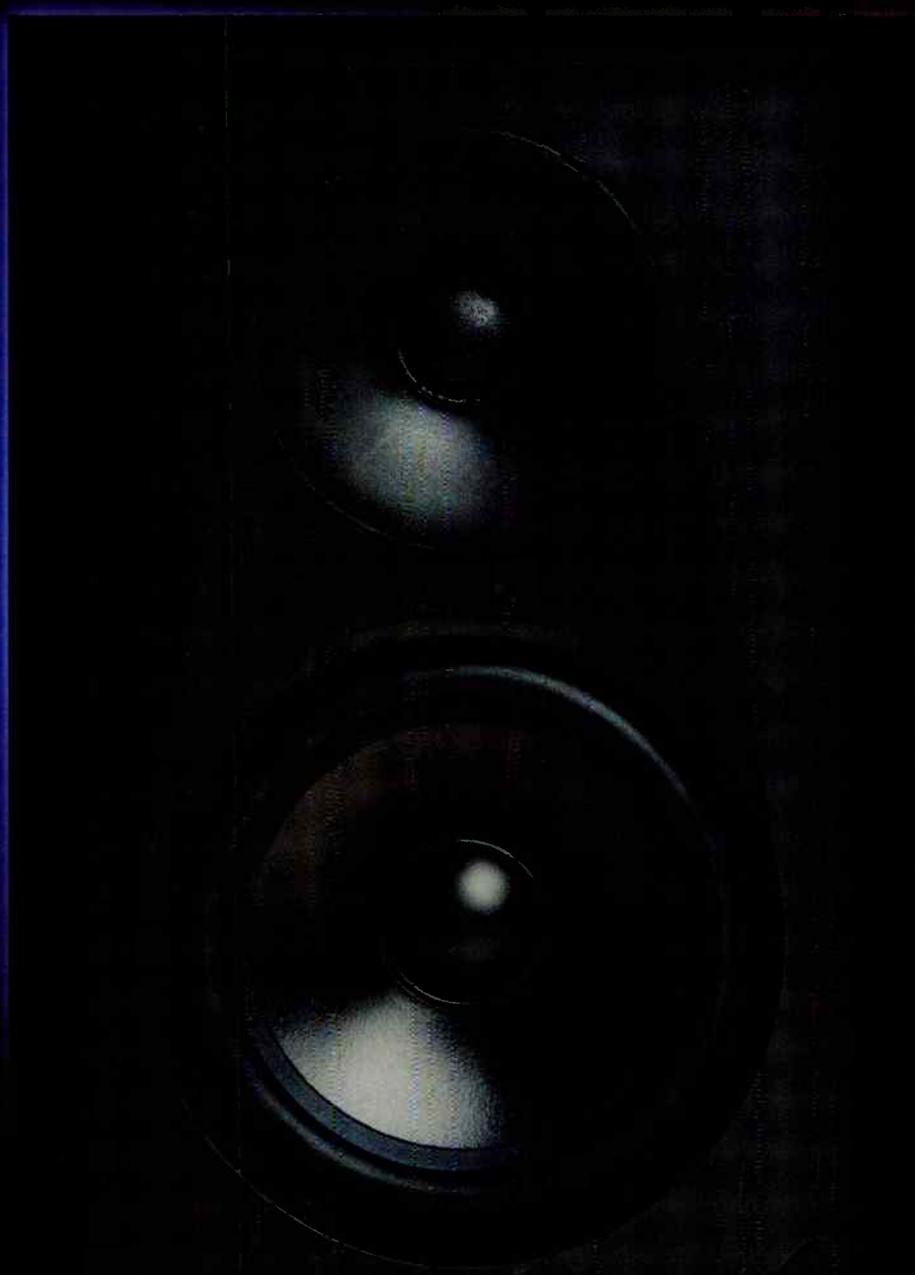
The Opal comes in at £240 in standard guise with £20 for veneers, while the Emerald's £540 price is boosted to £570 with the addition of a genuine wooden overcoat.



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# FAST CHARGE

**Jon Marks discovers the benefits of a pure DC supply with Technics' battery-powered pre-amp, the SU-C1000, and its partnering power amplifier, the SE-A1000.**



All those washing machines and fridges working throughout the day, plus dirty loads imposed by factory machinery, pollute our mains. Right now, the bureaucrats in Brussels are drawing up laws to put a stop to this, a peculiar outcome being the possibility that solid-state amplifiers may have to move to valve amp type power supplies. In the meantime, if you really want to get away from all the rubbish dirtying the National Grid's electricity, the only way to go is Battery. Technics have decided to travel down this road with the £350 SU-C1000 pre-amp. It isn't full of Ever Readys though; this little device works from rechargeable NiCads. Mains operation remains available during charging periods.

There's a natty little battery drawer on the front of the SU-C1000 pre-amplifier that takes the custom NiCad

rechargeables. We were a little disappointed that the pre-amp wouldn't work when disconnected from the mains, removing all electrical connection, because this eliminates recirculating earth currents. Nor will it work from dry cells, only the NiCads supplied. However, having deciphered what the instruction book is trying to get at, it seems the recharging system kicks in to keep the batteries topped up, giving a user warning through a charge LED that turns from green to

orange. Technics say the batteries supplied should last around two years.

The input selector is rotary, LEDs showing which input has been selected. There are tone controls that can be switched out, a grotty little balance control that cannot, and a convenient front-panel switchable MM/MC phono selector for LP. Two tape decks can be connected, with dubbing between them. Remote control is available for input



switching, volume control, muting and power on/off. The power amplifier certainly looks impressive with its huge, illuminated power meters. It also carries the headphone socket, not the pre-amp. Push-button switches select A/B loudspeakers and the rear panel carries wobbly screw terminals. Technics rate the SE-A1000 at 85watts per channel but our tests showed 100watts was available, with minimal distortion and good alround figures. Whilst the standard of finish was satisfactory, construction was lightweight and insubstantial.

Into the drawer of the 8000CDM/Da Capo digital duo slipped Time Out by the Dave Brubeck quartet. This recording has received the 'Full Monty' treatment from Master Sound, who tracked down the original master tapes and transferred them using 20-bit Super Bit Mapping. So this CD does a particularly good job of revealing the ambience and acoustic of the quartet's performance, along with the complex and subtle musical flow that gets feet tapping.

Having been dropped in at the sonic deep end, the Technics managed to swim rather than sinking. In fact, they did more than just swimming - they were pulling off 50m of butterfly at a heavyweight gala and barely even breaking into a sweat. Brubeck and his merry men proved this within the first 30 seconds of their album. There was that vital but near-intangible 'something' in the air - a mixture of tonal colour, detail, easy rhythmic flow and subtly revealed acoustic - without which no component stands a chance of lulling you into a sense of listening to a living,

breathing performance rather than a hi-fi reproduction.

So a pat on the back for each member of the design team thus far, but this was only the beginning after all. The walking beat of 'Time Out' gave way to the gentle, nodding funk of 'Kathy's Waltz'. The tingle-factor was once more present, from the relaxed (but never lax) rhythm and drive of the song, to the clarity and definition of individual images set within the sizeable sound stage. Binding images together was an overall cohesion, built on nuances like low-level detail retrieval and an ability to reproduce wide-ranging dynamic contrasts.

The end result of all these qualities is what, for me, really matters and what separates the best from the rest - emotion. The SU-C1000 and SE-A1000 rooted around in the music to come up with almost every last

ounce of emotion. Politicians might like to think of themselves as communicators but this pre/power combo could show most of them a few things about this particular black art.

Having been beguiled by Brubeck, it was time to try something completely different, time for Grace Jones to tip the scales from smoky bar room to processed pomp. Slave To The Rhythm has more samples than a die-hard carpet salesman. Even when these were flying around the sound stage at the hands of pan-potting producer Trevor Horn, the Technics' talent for holding a performance together didn't desert them.

Nit-picking cap on, I detected a hardness across the upper registers which manifested itself particularly on vocals as an artificial loudness. And bass lacked the seismic run-for-cover extension and control of Meridian's 502/557 pre and power amplifiers. In

spite of this, I was still more than happy to sit in front of the Sextets and let the music do its thing.

Backing off the adrenaline, 'The Crossing (ooh the action. . .)' proved again the Technics' clarity of sound staging and imaging, samples bolted into the mix without sounding either stilted or forced. Backdrop to all this were the contemplative tones of the synthesiser, helping to broaden this song's spread of sound.

I decided to head for an ear-bashing at the hands of the Chemical Brothers. 'Setting Sun' showed that while the SU-C1000 and SE-A1000 had sufficient power to shake the floorboards without difficulty, they couldn't match the 502/557 in either the speed or 'speaker cone-control stakes. Instead, the '1000s' lower registers sounded

slightly soft and loose. That said, the 557 is particularly good in this area and wears a price tag £1000 closer to emptying your bank account. 'Buzz Tracks', on the other

hand, reinforced impressions of good rhythmic drive and timing, its bass lines tripping merrily along.

The 16th and 17th century polyphony of Magnificat's Golden Age, Volume I, dispelled any slight, lingering doubts about the Technics' ability to construct a transparent sound stage with credible depth. The choir's voices hung in mid-air, the acoustic of St. Jude's on the hill arrayed around them. Regardless of whether I was listening at very low or very high levels, the '1000s impressed.

Brahms' violin sonata No1 in G Major, Op78 Regenlied, was similarly uplifting, its grace and flow undiminished. The resonances of the violin's body were pictured in all their detail and piano had realistic tonal colour. Putting my critical cap on again though, I found that same slightly hard upper midrange making the violin 'loud' and bass didn't have quite enough

*"The SU-C1000 and SE-A1000 rooted around in the music to come up with almost every last ounce of emotion."*

power or control to give piano its due impact or sonority. Still, I had yet to press the button marked Battery Operation.

With the red Battery LED glowing and the SU-C1000 running off pure, low-noise DC unsullied by any of the nasties that lurk on the mains, it was time to give my ears a treat.

The Technics said good-bye to that slight midrange harshness - switching to NiCads, it just disappeared. In its place was greater insight, a smoother overall sound, better dynamic contrast and a more natural feel to the music as a whole. The added sense of acoustic around the piano and violin made it that much easier to actually picture the performance in my mind's eye. The tonal palette expanded as well, becoming sweeter in the process.

Those diminutive NiCads definitely get my vote over mains power - they removed one more of those veils that separate hi-fi from the real thing.

My favourite tonal torture CD, Vivaldi's Four Seasons as performed by the English Concert and captured by Archiv, was easier on the ear now, where before the period instruments had shown a harshness on crescendos. With this gone and the additional depth to the sound stage, I found myself thinking about getting some more midnight oil in for a spot of around-the-clock listening.

Returning to the Chemical Brothers I found added weight and control in the bass and a smoother sound to this rough production. As the rest of the building discovered, I could now crank the volume without the Technics showing any strain or harshness.

The adrenal buzz missing before popped into the picture, pumping bass line and percussion along. Samples were more clearly separated from each other too, and the whole song gained in clarity and impact. Even with huge drum beats rolling around the room, vocals were still smooth, unfazed and easily intelligible. It was this lack of confusion that allowed this track's manic, pounding power to come through.



Much more of this and I'd be bending the power meters' needles on their end-stops trying to find out if the SE-A1000 could pin me to the wall and hold me there.

An original LP pressing of Brubeck's Time Out made comparisons between the line and phono stages easier. Unfortunately, after the smooth transparency and power of the line stage, listening to vinyl was a bit of a disappointment.

The sound was still smooth, but had dropped a notch in terms of stage depth and width, narrowing down and taking on a rather boxy feel. Mind you, vinylphiles won't be let down when looking for a shot of musical involvement - a slice of black plastic courtesy of the SU-C1000 was still engaging, with Brubeck's mellow tones emotionally undiluted on their passage through the pre-amp.

I wheeled in a pair of Meridian's new 505 monoblock power amplifiers to take the SE-A1000's place. With the pre-amplifier in mains mode, bass was tighter and cleaner, as was the sound in general. Definition was sharper, although the 505s' confirmed the SE-A1000's slightly warm and relaxed character. Imaging with the 505s was close to the way the SU-C/SE-A had sounded after I switched to battery power. The Meridians added transparency, smoothness and control to the proceedings, allowing the sound stage to fill out further. Mind you, this came as no real surprise given the 505s' £1600 asking price.

NiCad operation brought the anticipated extra couple of feet to the

breadth of the sound stage, highlighting the 505s' superior resolution and clarity. The balance was more neutral - by comparison the SE-A1000 sounded warm, but enjoyably so.

Whether taken as stand-alone components or a pair designed to work together, the SU-C1000 and SE-A1000 pay their way sonically without any excuses. Running off the mains, the SU-C1000 is already a fine pre-amp.

Switch to battery power though, and it gains a subtlety and clarity which put it into the ranks of £350 must-hear pre-amps. The 70watt SE-A1000 is also a fine buy, its warmth and power making an engaging match with the SU-C1000. Out of the two, I was more impressed by the pre-amplifier, but the power amp. wasn't far behind. It's just a shame Technics couldn't have lavished a few more groats on casework - both components are built like biscuit boxes.

**SU-C1000** £349.95  
**SE-A1000** £399.95

**Technics**  
**Willoughby Road,**  
**Bracknell,**  
**Berks. RG12 4PF**  
**Tel: 01344 862444**

**WORLD VERDICT**

**SU-C1000** ●●●●●

Good when mains powered, even better running on its batteries. Definitely one to consider at £350 if you don't mind the build and an average phono stage.

**SE-A1000** ●●●●●

Smooth, warm sound has plenty of grunt when needed and is very enjoyable to listen to.

**Measured Performance**  
**see p103**

# SHARPENING

## *The image*

**KEF's new baby Q15 loudspeaker has a Uni-Q point-source driver for better imaging. Noel Keywood likes its style.**

**M**iniature loudspeakers invariably image well, and that's what KEF have tried to capitalise on with their new Q15s. Small size provides good imaging by reducing cabinet diffraction effects and moving their frequency upward. I've always loved the pin-point images of minis like Wharfedale Diamonds and Goodmans

KEF 'speakers using it have attracted unbridled praise. I've heard them all and know broadly, from measurement and audition, what problems KEF have faced.

Every drive unit has its own operating properties and tonality. Early Uni-Q drivers sounded less than sweet and attracted criticism for it. Other

make it sweeter sounding. Knowing electrostatics, ribbon tweeters and the Audax Gold Dome well, I've become accustomed to good treble and fairly intolerant of poor, which can be wearing. The Q15's tweeter has some mild sting, but tonally its brightness is pleasant. From albums like *Songhai II* it delivered wonderfully vibrant



Maxims which have both benefited from these advantages.

But the Q15s are more than this. By placing the tweeter at the centre of the woofer, as they have in the single Uni-Q driver of the Q15, KEF have produced not just a miniature, but a point-source miniature. And quite simply, they image beautifully. That in itself, though, is not necessarily enough.

Industry watchers and hi-fi enthusiasts with a few years under their belt will know that KEF's Uni-Q driver has been around a while. And not all

problems were phase-cancellation effects caused by the symmetrical positioning of the tweeter at the bottom of the bass-cone flare and a megaphonic coloration due to the treble firing out through the bass cone.

The company has responded to these comments, upgrading the Uni-Q driver progressively over the years. It still isn't perfect, but no driver is. Most importantly, its strengths have been maximised, whilst the weak points are now relatively benign.

The tweeter has been improved to

percussion, vigorously projected and sparkling, but not sharp or coarse.

Measurement showed the brightness is explained by a small treble peak. Only on occasions - cymbal crashes in Siouxsie and the Banshees' 'Ornaments of Gold', for example - did this peak make the Q15s hiss.

Just as consequential - more so in fact - is that the Q15 has no suck-out (dip) between midrange and treble, unlike so many loudspeakers. As a result, it projects vocals forward clearly, free from the softening effect of such

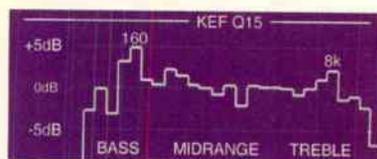
suck-outs.

The soft crooning of Gabrielle tests both image projection and clarity; she was delightfully clear on 'Forget About the World', forward in the soundstage and full-bodied too. So many systems have her mumbling in the background, it was gratifying to hear the diminutive Q15s doing so well.

Tonal colour (determined mostly by the materials used in the cone and dome of the drive units, but also by crossover components) was sweet. This made them an instant hit with many listeners - they have an immediately attractive sound.

The fine sense of body to singers and instruments is largely explained by a smooth lift in the lower midrange. There is also some boxiness to bass, a slightly 'boofy' quality, but then these small boxes produced bass of unusual power and depth for their size.

Plucked acoustic bass on Steve Earle's Goodbye was wonderfully strong for a cabinet that measures just 30.5cms high, 20cms wide and 24.5cms deep. It wasn't one-note either; I could easily

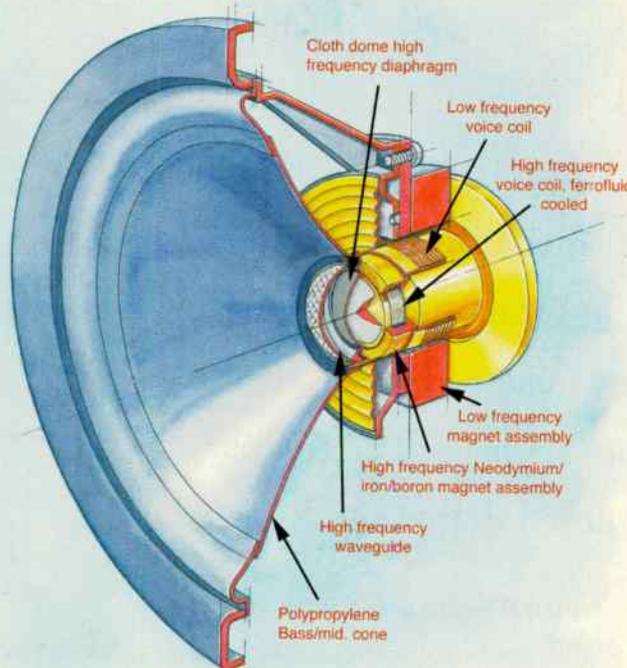


Treble and bass peaks at 8kHz and 160Hz respectively affect the Q15's sound, adding some brightness and lively bass with good downward extension.

make out the bass tune on this track and his Mercenary Song, both atmospheric mixes using simple instruments that paint an evocative picture of the Lone Star state and

neighbouring Mexico.

The superb lateral and vertical imaging of the Q15s meant that at any position in the room, standing or sitting, they sounded the same, an impressively clear and sweet panorama of sound stretching out between them. Only in depth perspectives and the arrangement of orchestral sections did they start to show limitations, sounding vague and bit jumbled. The orchestra was there, but between the 'speakers, not stretching



backward into the depths of a large hall as a microphone sees it. In this area the Q15s were less impressive, making for quite a sharp contrast of ability between Rock and Classical.

Balancing this weakness and some occasional muddle on complex orchestral works (e.g. Wagner) was the Q15s' sweetness, especially with strings. And the imposing threat spelt out by kettle drum in Tchaikovsky's Symphony No6 Pathétique was wonderfully delivered - our listening room all but shook. In spite of their foreshortened depth perspective, the Q15s still manage to sing and sound impressive with Classical works.

Measurement showed KEF have underdamped the bass-loading system a little to get good depth - the Q15s reach down to 50Hz with ease. However, it also showed the 'speakers

are a horrendous load as far as an amplifier is concerned, offering a low overall impedance of just 5.3Ω. This means the Q15s demand a lot of current, and hence power, from an amplifier, which gives them a high sensitivity of 90dB with solid-state amplifiers according to our measurements (KEF claim 91dB). Hook these little blighters up to an amp and they are loud!

Trouble is, their impedance characteristic swings violently from 3Ω to 30Ω, making them suitable only for beefy solid-state amps like the Sonneteer Champion, Audiolab 8000S and Meridian monoblocks I used with our KLP-1 pre-amp for this review. I found valve amps didn't want to know.

In a nutshell, the Q15s are a great little mini. They're sweet, clear as a bell - especially with vocals - and image superbly. They have great bass for such a small box and seem to offer amazing sound levels from a low volume control setting. But this is a trick. In truth, for best results the KEFs should be used with chunky 'speaker cables and solid-state power amps with real grunt. Then they'll sing like few 'speakers of their size and price ●

KEF Q15

£199.00

KEF Audio

Tovil,

Maidstone,

Kent ME15 6QP

Tel: 01622 672261

## WORLD VERDICT



Impressive bass and a sweet clarity make the Q15s 'speakers that'll put a smile on any audiophile's face.

**Measured Performance**  
see p103

# Five Stars

**Does the best price always mean the best deal?**

“I thought I had this buying hi-fi business sorted out. I bought all the hi-fi magazines and read them thoroughly, because I reckoned their experts knew exactly what they were talking about - at least a lot more than I did! It was reassuring to see the same product names cropping up regularly and I figured the writers’ experience and guidance would steer me straight to the system of my dreams. The trouble is I’ve ended up more confused than when I started.



One reviewer said a product I fancied was absolutely brilliant but another said it was nothing special at all. How can that be? Surely one CD player is pretty much the same as another? And how can a loudspeaker that’s one magazine’s top recommendation not get so much as a mention in any of the others? I don’t mind admitting it, I’m completely lost.”

## Plan B — I’m going for a deal

“So, I’ve decided to adopt plan B. I’m sure there can’t be any really dramatic differences between all this gear and it’s all bound to work together properly, so I’m going to check the price lists and the adverts and shop around for the best deal. I know getting the right hi-fi is important — hey, I’m as mad about music as anyone — but if I can get close to the mark and save a few quid, I’m sure I’ll end up with a good system and be happy. I know there are specialist shops out there that do demonstrations and reckon they’ve got all the solutions but, to be honest, I’m a bit scared of going to one. I’d really welcome some advice and guidance but I don’t know all the technical jargon and I’d feel daft sitting there trying to “hear the differences” if I couldn’t. Anyway, a friend told me that these shops only sell the really expensive gear and that they’re not interested if you don’t have loads of money to spend.”

And so another hi-fi buyer starts his journey down the road to dissatisfaction, endless upgrades and a permanent overdraft.

There is only one way to buy a hi-fi system that will prove satisfying, reliable and deliver true value for money, and that’s through a specialist hi-fi dealer. Let’s face it, you wouldn’t think about buying a car if you couldn’t take it for a test drive. You wouldn’t buy a house solely on the strength of seeing the estate agent’s details and a photograph. Even if you’re spending far less, say buying a jacket or a pair of shoes, you want to try them on to make sure they fit you.

Buying a hi-fi system is no different. It doesn’t matter what the specifications say or what the “experts” think: if it doesn’t measure up to what you want from a system, then it’s not the right choice. Knowing that you’ve bought a room full of five-star favourites or best-buys is no consolation when you can’t bear to listen to them for more than five minutes. Even that ten per cent discount on the price won’t make them sound any better.

## Buying or being sold to?

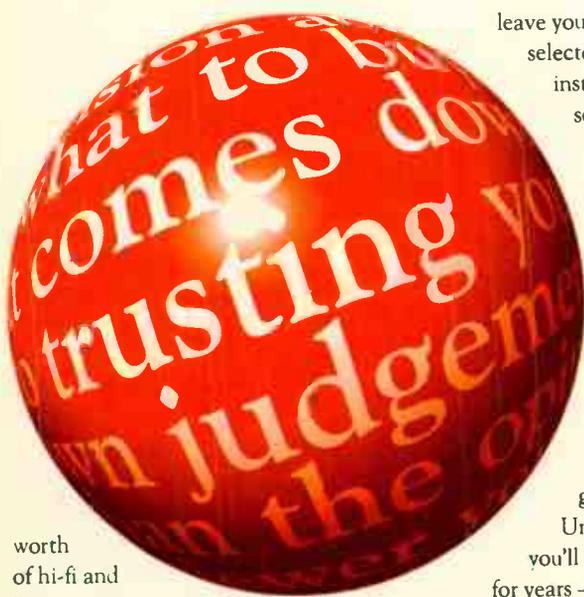
Mind you, most of us are easily suckered when it comes to buying hi-fi. Given the choice of venturing into the unknown territory of a specialist dealer’s shop and exerting some influence over what we buy, or taking what looks like the easy route — having adverts and magazine reviews push us along a path sweetened with discounts and special offers — we opt for the latter. We don’t buy a system, we allow ourselves to be sold one. We side-line our own ideas about quality and personal satisfaction and buy someone else’s opinion of what’s good for us and good value for our money.

## Take control!

Now there’s a group of long-established, independent specialist dealers who are totally committed to putting the customer back in the driving seat. They’re encouraging the buyer to take control ... with a little help and guidance provided where required. They know how difficult it can be to establish the true quality and

# For Value

Ask the UK's top twenty specialist hi-fi dealers.



worth of hi-fi and home cinema systems. They know that without experiencing the performance of the systems they offer, you can't possibly assess the value of them. That's why their idea of "selling" is to play the systems for you and allow you to be the judge.

Listening to your choice of music in a peaceful, well organised demonstration room, you may be surprised and, almost certainly, relieved to discover how easy it is to hear the differences between components and between systems. With the dealer's help and advice you will be able to make a clear and informed decision about what to buy. It comes down to trusting your own judgement rather than the opinion of a reviewer you've never met ... and who won't refund your money if you're not satisfied or be at the end of a phone to sort out any problems you might encounter.

The story doesn't end there. These shops won't abandon you once you've put your hand into your pocket. They won't

leave you to set up the system you've selected as best you can. They'll install it in your home, make sure that sounds great, and make sure that you're entirely happy with the way it works.

## Why bother?

There is, of course, one question that hasn't been answered: why should you and these dealers go to all this trouble? Well, from your point of view maybe it's because a good deal is about a great deal more than just price. Unless you've got money to burn, you'll be living with your new system for years — years during which most of those five star products will probably stop shining quite so brightly.

As far as the dealers are concerned, maybe they believe that taking care of their customers properly is a nicer way of doing business than just handing over boxes.

Listed on the right of this page are the best hi-fi shops in the country. They all have lots of stars. You'll find them on the shop floor: they're the people waiting to guide customers towards hi-fi that will give them years of musical enjoyment and total satisfaction.

## STAR QUALITIES

value for money  
service  
facilities  
verdict



## 20 OF THE BEST HI-FI DEALERS IN THE UK

### LONDON

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**W4**  
Martin-Kleiser Ltd  
108 Chiswick High  
Road  
0181 400 5555

### SOUTH

**Ashford, Kent**  
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40 High Street  
01233 624441

**Chelmsford**  
Rayleigh Hi-Fi  
216 Moulsham Street  
01245 265245

### East Grinstead

Audio Designs  
26 High Street  
01342 314569

### Kingston-upon-

**Thames**  
Infidelity  
9 High Street  
Hampton Wick  
0181 943 3530

### Rayleigh, Essex

Rayleigh Hi-Fi  
44a High Street  
01268 779762

### Southend-on-Sea

Rayleigh Hi-Fi  
132/4 London Road  
01702 435255

### Uxbridge

Uxbridge Audio  
278 High Street  
01895 465444

### MIDLANDS

**Banbury**  
Overture  
3 Church Lane  
01295 272158

**Birmingham**  
Sound Academy  
152a High Street  
Bloxwich  
01922 493499

**Leicester**  
Cymbiosis  
(Formerly known as  
Listen Inn)  
6 Hotel Street  
0116 262 3754

### Northampton

Listen Inn  
32 Gold Street  
01604 37871

### Shrewsbury

Creative Audio  
9 Dogpole  
01743 241924

### NORTH

**Cheadle (Stockport)**  
Audio Counsel  
14 Stockport Road  
0161 428 7887

### Oldham

Audio Counsel  
12/14 Shaw Road  
0161 633 2602

### Sheffield

Moorgate Acoustics  
184 Fitzwilliam St  
0114 275 6048

### SCOTLAND

**Edinburgh**  
Russ Andrews Hi-Fi  
34 Northumberland  
Street  
0131 557 1672

### Glasgow

Stereo Stereo  
260 St. Vincent Street  
0141 248 4079

review

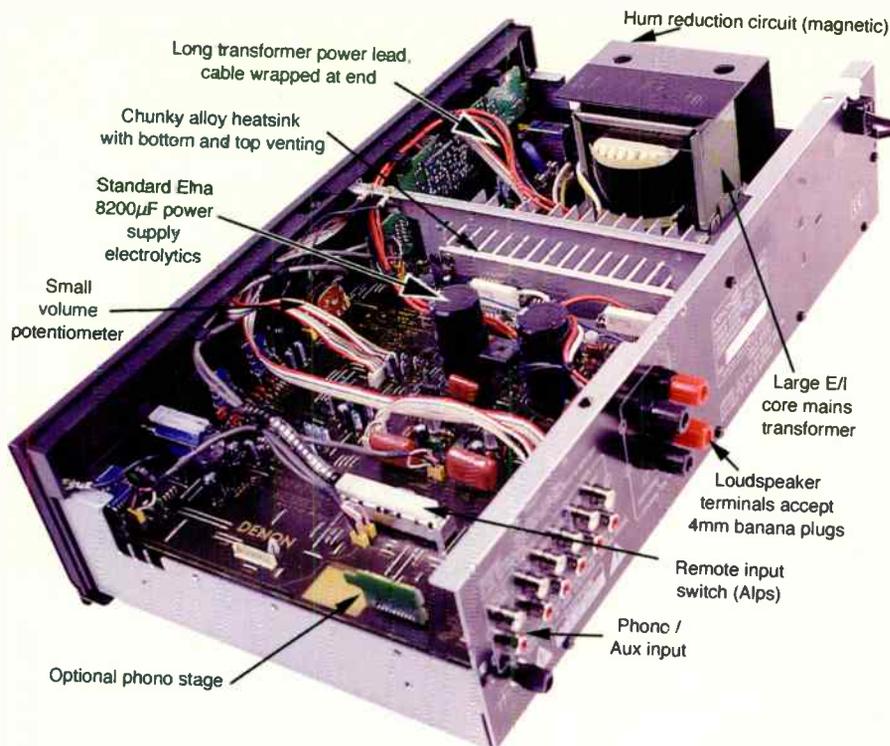
# For your ears only

**Dominic Todd takes a shine to Denon's latest special edition amplifier to benefit from British design input, the PMA-250SE**

It's not before time that Denon have decided to update their best selling budget amplifier. The PMA-250SE is the latest in a long line of well-regarded 250 amps. The last of these was the MkIII, which whilst being well built, reasonably stylish and competent in terms of sound quality, was becoming a little long in the tooth.

To address this Denon's latest SE version features a raft of both external and internal changes. The casework is larger to improve cooling, and allow for cleaner styling. Internally, signal path length and negative feedback have both been reduced in an effort to improve clarity and reduce distortion. The mains transformer and power supply have been beefed up, and the whole exercise has been overseen with a high UK input.





Nothing much has changed featurewise. A phono stage has now become a £15 option, and a switch away from the quaint 'CD direct' of previous models to a more standardised 'Source direct'. This allows for the shortest possible signal path on all inputs. Denon fans will be pleased to hear that build quality and finish are still excellent.

To test out the new 250 I used my usual sources and a variety of 'speakers including Celestion SL600s, Heybrook Heylios and the more likely partnering of Mission 731LEs.

First off was Donald Fagen's, 'On The Dunes'. The Denon immediately struck me as possessing a lean and highly controlled sound that wasn't going to let anything get the better of it. Treble detail was excellent for a machine of this price, revealing subtle decay at higher frequencies and a feeling of spaciousness. Yet it managed to achieve this without resorting to undue brightness. While bass notes weren't especially deep they were well controlled and brilliantly sustained, even with current-hungry Celestion SL600s.

After all this, vocals came as a slight disappointment, lacking projection. Yet they too were well attuned to the rest of the mix and free from nasal coloration. Some dynamic contrasts did seem a little rounded but sparkle at the top end and very good separation prevented a compressed sound stage from getting the better of the performance. The only other quibble I had was that the sax sounded a little weedy in comparison to the well defined percussion and bass. Still, the good far outweighed the niggles, and it was already clear that the 250SE is an involving amp to listen to.

My fear with Michelle Shocked's

Captain Swing was that the Denon's smooth balance would quash the raw effervescence of the piece. And to a degree it did. The guitar didn't fizz quite like it could and Shocked's vocals sounded a tad too polished. However, that marvellous treble openness saved things once again, and the smooth balance meant this album never became tiring to listen to. Without any nasties going on, the listener could enjoy the excellent sense of rhythm, and the appealing texture given to the double bass and guitar. Not to mention the fine integration and subtle layering of the Hammond organ in the background. The 250SE really is the antidote to all those grey, synthetic Japanese amps that are still out there.

Miles Davis' 'Big Time' also allowed the baby Denon to flaunt its emotional yet controlled appeal. The bass was powerful for such a small amp and the sax soulful. It could perhaps have been a little sharper with transients but timing was as good as it had been before. The intricate tambourine in the background was delicately revealed, and portrayed in a way many more expensive amps fail to manage.

Perhaps such a tight control on the music constrained the sheer expressiveness of the track, but it did little to prevent another involving performance.

The good impression continued with Classical music. Schubert's

Symphony No 8 demonstrated that the 250SE didn't have quite the power to bring me to the edge of my seat. But then I'd be surprised to find any of the Denon's peers that could do this either. What the 250SE did bring to the piece was a sense of texture and colour. It brought out the dark, moody nature of the music and made a fair stab at building up the desired tension.

Without a doubt, Denon have usefully improved on an already fine amplifier. Of course, none of this matters if the sound quality is poor. But it isn't. In fact, at this end of the market, it's extremely good. Controlled whilst still allowing colour and texture into the music. Detailed whilst avoiding sterility. Some may hanker after more vibrancy, but I suspect many more will think Denon have got the balance pretty much spot on.

I thought Denon had a serious competitor in the £200 amplifier market with the PMA-250SE. Then I discovered that the actual price of this little corker is just £160! At this price I don't think the Denon has such a thing as a rival ●

**Denon PMA-250SE** £159.99

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

**WORLD VERDICT** ●●●●●  
A mix of control, delicacy and detail allows the PMA-250SE to excel with any music. Little competition at the price.

**Measured Performance**  
see p103



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# Turning the tables

feature

**David Price looks at how Japanese turntables took over the world.**

In their heyday in the early 1970s, Garrard made over 50,000 turntables a week, employing 5000 people in three Swindon factories. Their decks were exported all around the world and were the envy of many. On November 11th 1979, less than a decade later, Plessey sold Garrard to Gradiante Electronica, a Brazilian consumer electronics giant. By then the company had less than 250 employees, and would soon have none at all. Garrard became a brand name on low quality cassette decks and 'speakers' - and still is.

Like much of British industry in the seventies, Garrard went the way of the Dodo because of the Japanese. Why? Because we'd critically failed to invest in new ideas, technology and production methods - in the early seventies, Japanese industrial investment levels were ten times ours.

Read on to find out how Japan displaced Britain as the world's premier record player manufacturer, and take a look at some of their tastiest turntables.

## WHEN WE WAS FAB...

In the 1960s, Garrard, BSR, Collaro, Connoisseur and Goldring-Lenco were the names for record players, appearing on everything from the lowliest radiograms to the best transcription motors. Britain's turntable industry was unassailable, or so we thought. Unfortunately, no one told the Japanese electronics companies this. Expanding



Mid '70s adverts preached direct drive's virtues.

fast and spending huge amounts on R & D, their products soon became competitive with what Britain had to offer. By the middle of the decade they were already winning friends, thanks to widespread dissatisfaction with our home-grown machines.

Lest we forget, the LP was the only real way to play music in those days, and the format was still struggling with rumble, wow and flutter, as well as

S-shaped tonearm, was a stunner.

Costing little more than a similarly attired Garrard SP25/4, the Pioneer caught the public's imagination by tracking the Shure M75ED cartridge at a mere 1.5 grams, an amazing feat. The decks duly whizzed off dealers' shelves in London's hi-fi-mad Tottenham Court Road.

Never ones to rest on their laurels, the Japanese looked for ways to make turntables spin more accurately for less money. The answer they came up with was direct drive, a high torque, low speed motor mounted around the bearing housing.

Technics were the first to popularise the system, with their svelte SL1200 model in 1972. Small, compact and very quiet, it was quite a revelation

compared to the likes of Garrard's plinth-mounted 401, which could rumble badly. Technics introduced a whole raft of SL series models, and in its armless SL120 guise sales rocketed.

## HIGHER GROUND

Our turntable market retrenched upmarket as Linn, Ariston, Fons, STD, and Dunlop replied with a new generation of belt drive super-decks, minimalist to the point of inconvenience. Our patriotic hi-fi press



Micro-Seiki DDQ500 - innovative styling.

groove damage caused by Neanderthal cartridges. The most popular deck of the day - the Garrard SP25 - was crude, noisy and distinctly low-fi, having a tonearm that mistracked at much under three grams.

Against this background, Japanese decks didn't have to be very good to oust their British rivals. They caught on because they were cheap but well built. The first deck to really make it was Pioneer's PL12, which, complete with its quiet belt drive, full-size platter and

loved them, and ushered in the golden age of British 'flat earth' hi-fi.

What followed was a long, pointless debate on which drive system was



Early Japanese import - 1968 'JP' motor unit

theoretically better. Reviewers argued that expensive, complex direct drive motors were riddled with problems that didn't affect the simpler belt drive designs, and gave short shrift to anything that didn't run on rubber bands.

Soon, however, improved production techniques enabled the big Japanese manufacturers to reduce prices, bringing quiet, stable direct drives to the masses. By the late seventies, sleek models like Pioneer's PL200X were available for less than £90, little more in real terms than the clunky old BSR autochangers of a decade before.

While the average DD worked satisfactorily, upmarket models were much better, with superior vibration-absorbing plinths, heavier, less bell-like platters and decently engineered arms.



1972 Technics SL1200 was an instant hit

This was where Technics' SL120 fitted in. Selling for around £200 in 1979, it proved popular with those looking for greater operational sophistication than

British belt drives could offer. Not quite the equal of the big Brit decks, it still offered a good platform for records.

For a few pounds more, there was a number of Oriental super-decks that claimed to rival Scotland's almighty Linn Sondek. They all had two things in common - excellent build quality and superb reliability, meaning most should still be in fine fettle even today.

As a yardstick, in '79 a Sondek would have set you back £295, little more than Denon's £250 DP2500 turntable (a beautifully engineered DD fitted with Denon's DA307 tonearm). Armless, with an SME cut-out, the DP2550 won many friends - even Britain's Luddite Popular Hi-Fi raved about it.



Pioneer PL12D - acclaimed in the early seventies

Denon's success gave added impetus to rivals, and soon there was a glut of competitors. As few of the big Japanese decks featured an independently sprung subchassis, the only shield from vibration was plinth weight, which seemed to increase every year. Trio achieved particular notoriety with their KD500, 600 and 750 series motors, all sporting massive 15kg ARCB marble-look plinths and SME cut-outs.

### FOREVER CHANGES

As Garrard slipped away at the end of the seventies, Japanese direct drives enjoyed the good times. Unfortunately, the Yen had become stronger on the back of Japan's remarkable industrial performance, and

suddenly companies had to cost-cut.

By now, complex electronics were cheaper to use than massive plinths and platters, so Japan's turntable



designers set to work on a new age of lighter, cheaper decks. Their work was made irrelevant though, because a new medium that didn't require expensive mechanical engineering was on the horizon - Compact Disc.

The speed at which CD caught on, especially in Japan, meant that many companies simply stopped producing turntables altogether. But there was one exception - the twenty-year-old Technics SL1200. Thanks to its bullet-proof build and sophisticated pitch controls, it was adopted by club DJs the world over. For many young people who've grown up with CD, it's the only turntable they've ever seen.

In the middle of the nineties, there are still legions of old Japanese turntables giving faithful service. If you want a cheap first turntable or an upgrade from your budget CD player,



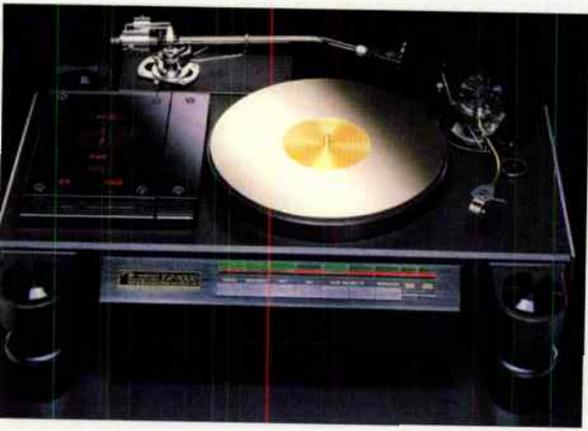
Technics SL110 Mk1 - Japanese heavy metal

there are plenty of bargains in the classifieds. Find a mint upmarket machine and you'll be laughing.

# JAPAN'S TOP TURNTABLES

## NAKAMICHI TX-1000

On its introduction in 1981, the TX-1000 'Computing Turntable' cost £3,500, (about the same as a basic spec Ford Cortina) and featured 'Absolute



Center Search System', an attempt to eliminate the wow problems of records with holes off-centre.

A typically obsessive and largely unnecessary feature, ACSS was half the reason for the deck's silly price tag, the other being its outrageously high build quality. Still, it accepted two tonearms and didn't sound half bad so all was forgiven and it's subsequently attained classic status in Japan.

## SONY PS-B80

Sony decided that the tonearm was the reason for all the turntable's ills, and produced the famous 'Biotracer' electronic arm. Speed sensors at the pivot end of the arm detected horizontal and vertical movement and passed control voltages to tiny linear motors in the bearing housing effectively controlling its movement. This meant the arm was electronically damped and could ride warps better. Sony forgot to partner it with a decent sounding motor unit and plinth though, resulting in a rather mediocre sound.

## DENON DP-100M

Denon's big direct drives were always something special, and to prove the point in 1981 they built the DP-100M. Available as personal import only in the UK, it was a predictably huge affair using a combination of spring and oil damping. This monster weighed in at over 50kg, and the price was - well, if you had to ask, you couldn't afford it. A nice bit of kit, sonically strong, but not the best.



rested on rubber feet, and onto each lobe a tonearm could be fitted, making for a versatile deck. Micro's idea was that by neglecting to fit a plinth and lid, the deck would be less susceptible to vibrations, and they were right.

## LUXMAN PD555

A seminal exercise in you've-got-to-be-kidding turntable design, the enormous Lux featured a 20kg plinth and a 10kg platter incorporating a vacuum pump system to clamp disc to



platter. Other features included provision for mounting two tonearms and a massive quartz-referenced

outboard PSU. Despite such excess, the Lux still managed to sound superb. And so it should have done, costing £1800 in 1980, when a Sondek would have set you back £340.

## MICRO SEIKI DDX 1000

The DDX was a massive three-lobed alloy block onto which a direct drive motor and heavy platter were fitted. Each lobe

## TECHNICS SL1000/II

Technics' professional series, comprising SPI0, SPI0/II, and SPI5 motor units, EPA100 and EPA500 tonearms and SH10B3 plinths, were fine products - many are still in use today in broadcast studios world-wide. An SL1000/II (comprising SPI0/II, EPA100 and SH10B3) sold for £1100 in 1978 when an LP12/Ittok cost half that. With more torque than a JCB, the motor units promise near-indestructibility, so second-hand prices are high. Sound is very strong and secure, with seismic bass and sweet mid and top.

## BUYING SECOND-HAND

What to pay for well-preserved specimens in the classifieds:

[QL] quartz lock [DD] direct drive  
[BD] belt drive [M] motor & plinth - no arm

|                      |             |      |
|----------------------|-------------|------|
| Technics SPI0/SH10B3 | [QL, DD, M] | £600 |
| Technics SL1200/2    | [QL, DD]    | £250 |
| Denon DP2550         | [QL, DD, M] | £250 |
| Micro-Seiki DDQ500   | [QL, DD, M] | £250 |
| Lux PD300            | [BD, M]     | £200 |
| Trio KD500           | [DD, M]     | £150 |
| Technics SL110       | [DD, M]     | £150 |
| JVC QL-Y5F           | [QL, DD]    | £100 |
| Sansui SR222/II      | [BD]        | £40  |
| Pioneer PL200X       | [QL, DD]    | £30  |
| Pioneer PL12/II2D    | [BD]        | £30  |
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review

# MINI SPECIAL



## David Price puts Sony's latest full size MiniDisc player, the MDS-JE500, through its paces.

If you've ever thought hi-fi recorders are fussy to use, then Sony's new £300 MDS-JE500 MiniDisc may change your mind. From the moment you pop in the disc and the machine says 'Welcome', you get the feeling it's been designed with people in mind.

The MD format is easier to work with than all its rivals, analogue or digital. Playing a MiniDisc is like playing a CD, while recording is similar to cassette, but simpler. If you're making a digital recording direct from CD things

couldn't be more straightforward, with automatic level setting, track numbering and sampling frequency conversion (from 48, 44.1 or 32kHz).

Analogue recording is also far easier than cassette - there's quick track numbering and level setting with small but effective meters, and no messing around calibrating tapes.

After you've made your recording, the MDS-JE500 offers a number of post-editing facilities which users of DAT, DCC and Compact Cassette can only

dream about. Thanks to MD's random access you can renumber tracks you've recorded, move them to any position on the disc, or erase one or all of them. You can also combine two or more tracks under a single name, or divide single tracks into identifiable sequences which can be combined with others.

This might sound a tad complicated, but it can all be done by pressing just a few buttons on the remote, and the alphanumeric display tells you precisely what's going on. So friendly is the Sony's

operating system that it's got more help messages than many home computers!

The deck is silent and foolproof in operation, and offers track access times of under a second for any operation - far superior to DCC or DAT, and faster even than many CD players.

MiniDisc's durability and lack of fuss make it the ultimate user-friendly format of the Nineties. Try it and you'll realise how tedious all the other formats are to use. By contrast, DAT and DCC's serial access are a real drag, while CD's fragility and non-recordability make it look obsolete, since MD discs are protected by a caddy, making them very durable.

## SOUND QUALITY

Lurking inside the MDS-JE500 is Sony's latest 1-Bit Hybrid Pulse DAC with a 20-Bit analogue-to-digital convertor and new fourth-generation ATRAC coding. All this high-tech trickery seems to have paid dividends, because this Sony MiniDisc really sounds good. In absolute terms it's not up to DAT or high-end CD, but it's not too far behind either.

Although the idea of ATRAC sends hi-fi purists into fits of apoplexy, its affect isn't particularly audible. In fact, the basics of MD's sound are absolutely right, with quite a neutral tonality, strong bass, clean treble and surprisingly good dynamics. You're quite at liberty to forget its digital data manipulation algorithms and actually listen to the music, should you so desire.

I started listening with direct digital recordings from a Sony X77ES CD player via the optical cable supplied. The MDS-JE500 turned in a musical rendition of Steely Dan's 'Rose Darling' with powerful bass, strong image projection and a sweet, slightly softened treble. Compared to a Sony TCD-7 DAT portable there was a slight lack of clarity and space to the acoustic, but it was marginal.

Moving to Miles Davis' 'Kind of Blue' CD, MD again made an impressive copy. Double bass was rich, drums and cymbals tight but subtle and Miles' trumpet clean and resonant. There was

a subtle change in the acoustic once more, with sounds in the far distance brought forward slightly, but if anything this seemed to improve the stereo effect.

Moving to analogue recordings made from my Michell Orbe turntable, the Sony did itself proud, conveying the full wallop of the bass sequences on ABC's 'King Without a Crown'. Midband was good, with just a hint of



MiniDisc is a compact format; there is plenty of space inside Sony's player.

clouding and a slightly diminished airiness to the acoustic. DAT also does this, but not quite as much. So gentle was the effect though, you wouldn't know unless you'd heard the original on a capable system. Alex Reece's 'Feel the Sunshine' was also storming sonic fun, with little deviation from the original. The only differences were a subtle softening of the upper treble region with some loss of lustre, a slight hardening of the upper midrange and a marginal loss of presence.

With pre-recorded MiniDiscs, things were less consistent. A 20-bit sampler disc sounded smooth and spacious, but the bundled Michael Bolton disc came across badly, sounding plasticky and artificial - although the jury's still out on whether this was down to the disc or the artist... Overall though, the MDS-JE500 was most enjoyable recording from a good source through its analogue inputs, a trait it shares with DAT. As I ran the gamut of my vinyl torture tracks, the Sony was hard to fault. Even compared to the best Nakamichi it offers 'good' sound, so for just £300 it's near remarkable. It

betters nearly all cassette decks (an obvious exception being Sony's own Walkman Pro, and even then MD is superior in some respects), regardless of tape type or noise reduction. So, for the price of a middling Dolby S cassette machine you get clean sound devoid of hiss, wow, flutter, dropouts, fiddly tape calibration or the need to turn the tape over after 45 minutes. Quite something.

## CONCLUSION

Traditionally, MiniDisc has given journalists the heebiegeebees because it breaks hi-fi's most important rule - thou shalt not lose information. MD's data coding does precisely that, so most of the great and good of hi-fi scribbling were agin it from the start. But consider this - if the end product sounds good enough, does it really matter how it goes about the job? This is Sony's answer to MD's detractors, and it's a compelling one.

At £300 Sony's MDS-JE500 has much to recommend it, not least the MD format itself which is great to use - so durable it makes CDs feel like 78rpm gramophone records. MDs really are far easier to handle, store and transport. And as far as sonics are concerned, even the most hardened hi-fi hack would have to admit that it's good. If I was forced to put my cards on the table and nominate cassette's rightful successor, then MiniDisc is it ●

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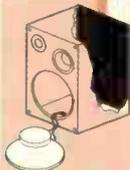
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MD is an optical disc in a protective case, about two thirds the size of a modern computer floppy disc. With the recording surface fully enclosed, MD is extremely durable, with a claimed life of up to one million recordings. It's also insensitive to shocks and extremely light and compact, making it ideal for mobile use. MD gives a playing time of up to 74 minutes in stereo or twice that in mono, and blank discs cost around £5 each at the moment. Although pre-recorded MiniDiscs are available they've yet to achieve widespread sales. However, an increasing number of new releases are now appearing on MD.

## WILL MD MAKE IT?

So what of the MiniDisc format? Well, in the Asia-Pacific region it's doing pretty well. In its native Japan MD always had a head start because of the unpopularity of pre-recorded music cassettes (MC). In the late eighties when MC was consistently outselling both CD and vinyl in the UK, they were nowhere to be seen in Japan - CD was all-powerful and vinyl but a fading memory. This meant there was a gap for a cheaper, smaller and more user-friendly format than CD and technologically more advanced than cassette - MiniDisc, in other words.

Having learnt lessons from their pre-recorded DAT fiasco (Ryuichi Sakamoto's 'Beauty' album was the only music DAT I ever saw in Tokyo), Sony

decided to target MD more accurately at the high spending, gadget-loving Japanese youth market. Lots of pre-recorded software was made available and the machines were more visible in record shops, department stores and shopping malls than they were in electronics outlets. Blanks were cheap, and on sale in that Mecca for Japanese teenagers, the local Seven-Eleven

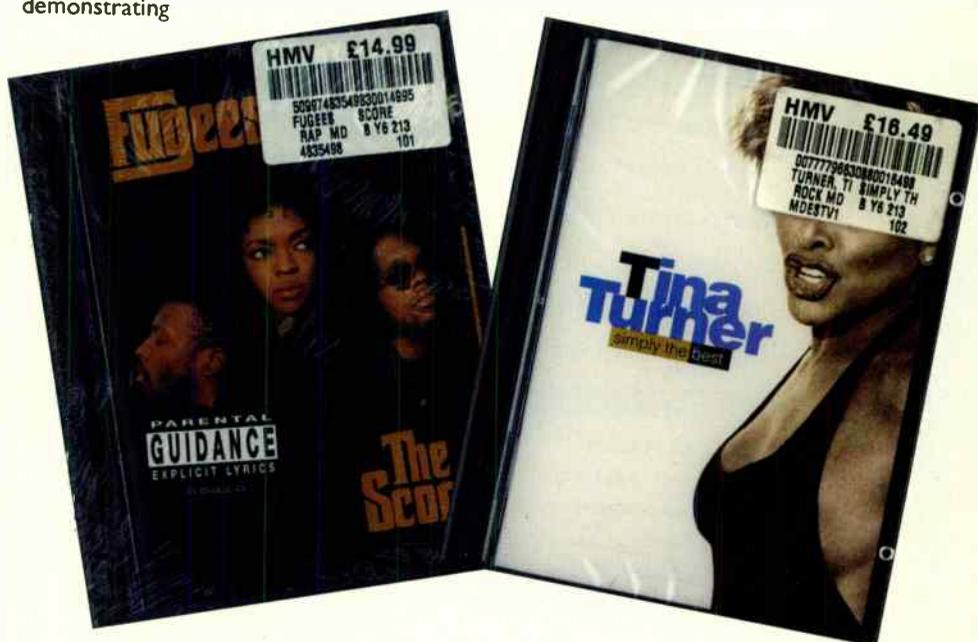
convenience store. And unlike the first DCC hardware, the first MD machines were of the trendy personal 'Walkman' type, barely larger than a CD Discman. Finally, Sony targeted much of their advertising at music and lifestyle magazines rather than the specialist Japanese hi-fi press.

The strategy worked, and MiniDisc has done well, if not spectacularly. At last Sony has shown itself fully conversant with its market, demonstrating

that it knows precisely who and what MD is for in Japan. So the big question is, does that same affluent teenage demographic exist in Europe or the States?

As far as the economically buoyant, gadget-fixated US market is concerned, I'd say yes. As far as Europe is concerned - the home of the compact cassette and with a teenage dance culture still quite committed to vinyl - I'm not so sure. If MD is to succeed here it needs to be cheap, bundled with every mini system, in every 'radio cassette' player, car and Walkman. It should be to the nineties what the cassette was to the eighties, the nation's staple music software carrier.

Still, I'm not so sure that MiniDisc has to be the exclusive preserve of teenagers anymore. It's done a lot of growing up itself, execrable ATRAC 1 now having reached version 4, and it's finally winning real hi-fi credentials. As soon as it can hold its head high in a decent home system, it should really fly in Britain. There are now many - myself included - who believe that time has come ●



## PRE-RECORDED - OUCH!

We searched high and low for pre-recorded MiniDiscs. Which is just as well, because in both HMV and Virgin Megastores, Oxford Street, London, they had been relegated to the bottom shelf. HMV had around 50 and Virgin 100, prices ranging from £14-£16 - ouch!

Worse, most are from Sony Music (CBS) back catalogue, including Bruce Springsteen, Maria Carey and Bob Dylan.

S'funny? Thought MiniDisc was for the young?

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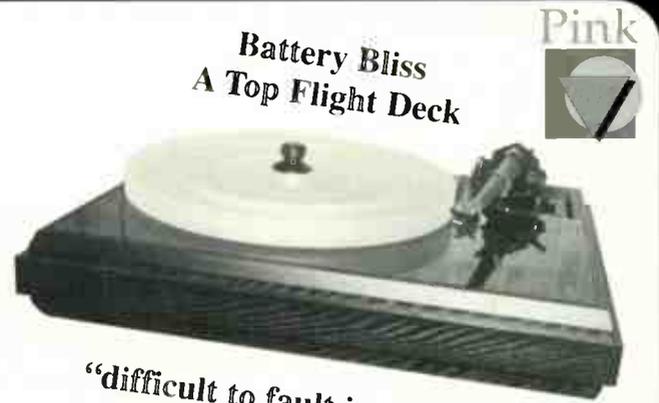
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# SURFING

review

## THE ETHER



Jon Marks takes to the airwaves with Kenwood's latest feature-laden tuner, the KT-2080.

While cheap tuners of yore often produced a lightweight, brittle sound, more modern offerings like the Kenwood KT-3080 (reviewed in October 1996) make for happy hours glued to the ether. But if the '3080's £180 cost made it unattainable, then audiophiles of limited wealth can take heart from the new £130 KT-2080.

This is a synthesiser push-button tuner aimed at the UK market by virtue of its being fitted with Long Wave (153kHz-279kHz) for reception of Radio 4. Nowadays, this is a rarity. Kenwood haven't skimped though. They have also fitted Medium Wave (531kHz-1602kHz) and, of course, stereo VHF/FM from 88MHz to 108MHz. Forty preset stations can be stored on ten buttons. And the tuning system is usefully 'circular', jumping from the top end of a band down to the bottom if the Up button is kept pressed.

With RDS too, you may ask how the '2080 differs from the '3080. Our tests show the '3080 is around 3dB quieter, providing it is given a healthy

signal of 1mV or more to get the tuner into 'full quieting'. Most users will need an outdoor aerial for this.

Build quality was fairly standard - nothing special here. The signal strength meter was dismal though, showing maximum (all five segments lit) with just 0.2mV from the aerial. The idea is to convince users the tuner is sensitive. In truth, the KT-2080 was no more sensitive than its rivals.

The drawback to this is that the meter will not differentiate between weak and strong stations, so when we auto-tuned Radio 2 a distant transmitter at 88.8MHz could not be separated from London's transmitter at Wrotham Hill, Kent, on 89.1MHz. Both lit five segments when working from our large, outdoor aerial (which we use to get optimum results). When tuning, a lot of rubbish crashed through the noise muting too, although this wouldn't happen either with a poor aerial or when operating from presets.

With the RDS display glowing 'Kiss', I tuned in to Steve Jackson's show. Even with a low-fi signal like this, the

Kenwood turned out to be quite a smoothie. Hi-hats 'tssked' along without ear-searing treble, hallmark of lesser tuners that the Sextet's Tonigen ribbon tweeters reveal so swiftly.

Simply Red and The Fugees' 'Angel' was testimony to the quality of the Kenwood's bass. This number bopped along in a top-down, sun-out kind of way, bass line well defined in spite of the signal compression that gave this station its 'squashed' sound.

Following Mick Hucknell and The Fugees was Damage with 'Forever'. Bass was again far removed from the emaciated bottom end that a lot of Oriental tuners seem to suffer from. Notes in the lower octaves were neatly separated from each other and packed a decent measure of dynamic punch. The KT-2080 also did a creditable job of decyphering the images of the bandmembers, with lead vocals set solidly at the front of the soundstage while backing vocals spread (not smeared) behind.

Hopping airwaves to Radio 1, I found Kula Shaker going through



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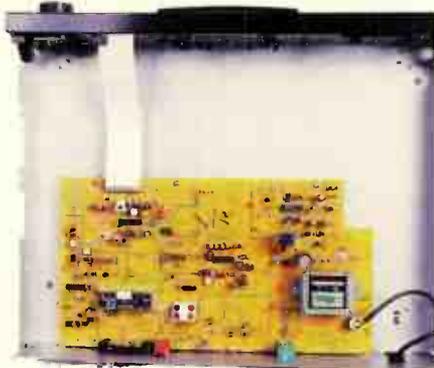
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'Govinda'. The Kenwood won a thumbs-up for managing to form a solid soundstage with discernible images out of a signal that sounded suspiciously like radio's version of pea soup. In addition, it dug out enough detail in the bass for me to hear what the bass player was actually up to on his fretboard.

This detail and control meant that, with a Tribe Called Quest's 'Stressed Out', rhythm shone through loud and clear. The layered vocals also avoided collapsing into a chaotic mess thanks to the Kenwood's firm grip on individual images.

Homing in on Classic FM found the news readers' voices powerful and substantial without overdosing on bass-laden chestiness. Orchestral music showed the Kenwood was adept at firmly placing instruments within the soundstage. Unfortunately, while the stage itself was clearly defined, it was

also rather reticent, hanging shyly behind the front plane of the 'speakers. The '2080 was unwilling to bring the



music forward of the Sextets regardless of how many stations I dropped in on. Mind you, this was more of a presentational quirk than a soundstaging error.

With its detail, control and smooth

overall balance, the KT-2080 looks like rather good value at its £130 asking price. It's certainly a world apart from the thin, stringy sound the majority of budget tuners produce. If you're about to set out on the air waves, the KT-2080 is a fine travelling companion ●

**Kenwood KT-2080 £129.95**

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**WORLD VERDICT**



Smooth, even balance allows the KT-2080 to convince with whatever it's receiving. £130 well spent.

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see p103**

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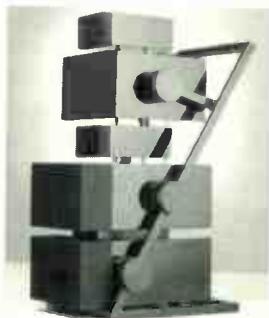
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# SHURE-

# NO QUARTER

review

## Noel Keywood revives Shure's classic M75EM Type 2 cartridge with a new needle from Musonic, Britain's last remaining stylus manufacturer.

This isn't so much a test as a re-test. One of the most popular cartridge ranges ever was Shure's M75 series. There are probably thousands of M75s still soldiering on. A company called Musonic, in Wembley, North London,



manufacture a large range of replacement styli, including those for Shure cartridges.

Since styli are precision devices, requiring a light but stiff cantilever with a precision ground diamond at one end and a strong yet light magnet at the other (on a moving magnet Shure, that is), a replacement stylus demands skilful manufacture. I measured the cartridge, with its Musonic stylus, and found it performed well.

Musonic obtain their diamonds from Switzerland, ground to specification. The M75EM Type 2 has a 0.0007in. x 0.0002in. elliptical stylus designed to track at 1.5gms maximum.

The frequency response of these Shures did exhibit quite a large drop through the midband, due mainly to high generator impedance (built in to get high output). So did our re-stylused

M75EM Type 2 sound warm, as its measured frequency response would suggest? Not really, is my qualified answer. It was obviously soft and lacked razor-sharp leading edges, but it wasn't dull. After the Goldring 1042 it lacked high treble retrieval, but the Goldring has an exceptional modern stylus. By comparison, treble from the Shure lacked air and extension around cymbals, bells and triangles, for example, but this didn't really detract much.

More to the point, the Shure on its own sounded thoroughly respectable and entertaining. I used it with the QED Discsaver, to get a little needed midband lift. The two worked wonderfully together.

There was no hiss, nor any hum. Disc surface noise was barely audible too, suggesting good diamond polish. Whilst the complex vocals and harmonies in the rich mixes of Kula Shaker were more distant than those of the CD, the Shure could have been labelled more natural for lacking CD's glassiness. Certainly, individual instruments like Tabla and Sarod on 'Sleeping Jiva' had plenty of presence and substance. Overall, the Shure managed to maintain composure even when the mixes got complicated. I was also constantly surprised by the lack of groove noise, a tribute both to the stylus and the vinyl quality of this Sony LP.

Jackie Leven's gorgeously atmospheric Call Mother a Lonely Field

seemed to crystallise the Shure's abilities. LP was softer than CD and the M75's falling response had much to do with this. But Jackie's deep, resonant vocals surely sounded fuller-bodied and more naturally set within a spacious acoustic from the Shure. And bass, when it kicked in, nearly blew our windows out. The CD didn't manage as well in any department of importance.

Overall, Musonic's N75ED Type 2 stylus was a great success. Shures always sounded confident in the groove, even if they arguably didn't offer the highest level of sound quality. Ours put up a lovely performance. It does have a soft balance, but it also sounded smooth and gloriously insightful with big, solid bass. It's quite extraordinary that a cartridge as old as this, fitted with a new Musonic stylus playing fresh vinyl, can still offer such a devastating performance. Great fun and fine value ●

Shure N75ED Type 2 Stylus £18.00

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### WORLD VERDICT

If you've got a Shure M75 series cartridge which has seen better days, treat your vinyl and your ears to this Musonic stylus. A bargain.

Measured Performance  
see p103

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# GALE FORCE

**Diminutive in price and stature they may be, but Gale's 2i loudspeakers are far from small-sounding. Jon Marks does the sizing up.**

**F**or many 'speaker designers, resorting to a little 'boom and tizz' that impresses in the show room is a good way of spicing up their recipe. As I found out though, Gale have opted for a more subtle, even balance in the 2is. Here's a 'speaker singularly devoid of artifice.

Karen Matheson with *The Sea Dreaming* CD was the first to emerge

and percussion into prominence at stage front.

Percussion and guitar on 'Rithill Aill' can both sound sharp and brittle when handled by unsympathetic drivers. Through the Gales there wasn't even the slightest trace of harshness. Our measurements confirmed this too; frequency response was impressively flat, so the 2is are genuinely truthful.

reflections to muddle the soundstage and imaging. Well defined bass did a fine job of lending the orchestra weight and substance. The 2is' gentle midrange also held up its end of the bargain with a violin pleasantly devoid of the kind of roughness caused by cone break-up.

Timing, rhythm and drive were all present and correct as well as Chaka Demus and Pliers ably demonstrated with their *Tease Me* album.

Heavy bass lines and electric percussion funk'd out into our listening room, giving the Gales a chance to show off their dynamics and rhythm.

Returning to the Classical idiom, I sampled *Four Seasons*, Vivaldi's best-known piece. It sounded fresh and vibrant through the 2is, and visualising individual performers within the recording's acoustic was easy.

Gale's 2is certainly look like handsome value at £120, although they're not the only ones. But if boom and tizz aren't your style and Classical means as much to you as Rock and Rap, they should be on your shortlist.

**Gale 2i** **£139.95**

**Gale**  
**Gallery Court,**  
**Hankey Place,**  
**London SE1 4BB**  
**Tel: 0171 586 5977**



from the Gales, with a breezy, open version of 'There's Always Sunday'. Separation was good, with female lead and male backing vocals clearly delineated both tonally and spatially within the soundstage. Helping the music gel was an evenhanded delivery.

Testament to this were the smoothness of Karen Matheson's voice and the way her backing singers hung mid-way between the front and back of the soundstage. This contrasts with brighter 'speakers which push vocals

Only in a couple of areas would I point the finger at the 2is. First, their tonal range is rather limited, even though it's sufficiently extended to avoid sounding grey. Second was a slight (and I do mean slight) tubbiness in the mid-bass which surfaced on certain drum machine beats and tom-toms.

Clarity at the ready, the Gales took on Wagner's *Traume* for violin and orchestra. Their small front baffles were obviously helping out with imaging - reduced baffle area means fewer

## WORLD VERDICT



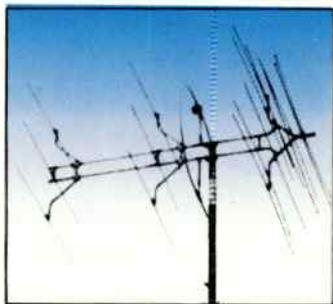
Smooth, well balanced performers that do a good job regardless of genre. Free from the nasties that afflict many sub-£200 'speakers.

**Measured Performance**  
**see p103**

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loud enough for those boys."*

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# GETTING CONNECTED



**Jon Marks hacks his way through the spaghetti jungle to bring you the best of six budget interconnects for a range of systems.**



## CAMBRIDGE ARCTIC

£19.95 (1M)

Initial impressions were of a clean, open presentation. This is a rather bright and tonally monochromatic cable in the upper registers, though. Down in the lowest octaves, the Arctic offered bass that had power and impact in spite of a slight blurring of details. Overall balance was rather dry and analytical. The timing brigade will like this one, though - transients stopped and started with lightning speed.



## CAMBRIDGE PACIFIC

£29.95 (1M)

The Pacific has softer, more natural treble than its cheaper stablemate. The upshot of this is a sweeter, smoother character that's not as upfront as the Arctic. Bass is also tighter and better controlled, which means the Pacific deals out a funkier rhythm than the Arctic.



## PRIMA LINKS PINK LINK GREEN

£29.95 (1M)

The Green put together a fine treble and bass performance, with violins showing fine tonal colour and cellos impressive focus and power. High levels of detail and good separation meant that the Pink Link Green stayed unconfused and controlled regardless of what was thrown at it. With a smooth, cohesive and powerful sound, this interconnect is one to look out for.



## CABLE TALK ADVANCED 2

£29.95 (0.5M)

The Advanced 2 produced a relaxed, involving sound thanks to its warm treble, open midrange (especially obvious on female vocals) and rhythmic cohesion. Sound staging was tidy, its clarity helped by good depth and impressive low level detailing. Easy on the ear, the Advanced 2 makes for long hours of enjoyable listening.



## CABLE TALK IMPROVED 2

£25.95 (1M)

The Improved 2 has similar treble quality to the Advanced 2, although it's slightly harder and less detailed, giving a more forward sound. Bass is also a little less controlled and focused, so bass lines aren't quite as taut and fast. Good for the money, but the Advanced 2 is better.



## INSERT AUDIO FOCUS 1.2

£19.95 (1M)

The Focus 1.2 assembles a sizeable and cohesive sound stage. Tonal colour spans an impressively wide range, and is evenly balanced with it. Tight, well defined bass makes the 1.2 a dab hand with rhythms and the recorded acoustic, adding to the music's sense of realism. A bargain at £20.



## THE SYSTEM

This month's interconnects were auditioned between our Pink Triangle Da Capo convertor and Audiolab 8000S integrated amplifier.

Valve amplification was also employed, with our own KLP-1 pre and K5881 power amps, to check the effect of a change in source and load impedances. Heybrook's Sextet II 'speakers were used with Chord Co Rumour 'speaker cable.

# World Mail



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### DISAPPEARING ACT

The acoustics of our rooms have a devastating effect on the sound we get from our hi-fi systems. If you have a CD test disc, just play the track containing the sine-wave sweep and listen to the enormous peaks and troughs in the level as the frequency rises from 20Hz to 350Hz, the range where the room has the most effect.

As well as this uneven response, the peaks in the bass level have a masking effect on the mid and high frequencies, causing a loss in clarity that negates just about all the improvement we expected from that last CD upgrade. And quite likely, the response off-axis will be even worse, causing a change in the tonal balance.

What would we all give for a much more even frequency response, with greatly reduced peaks and troughs, and an even reduction in level off-axis to preserve the tonal balance of the sound?

One partial solution is to make the room a lot bigger, thereby lowering the frequencies where room problems occur. The problems of off-axis tonal balance will still occur with conventional box speakers because they radiate sound in all directions below about 300Hz depending on the baffle size.

Another partial solution is to use miniature loudspeakers with no lower mid or bass output and so avoid the problem altogether. I do this in my kitchen by using a little tranny, but then that's not hi-fi. Unfortunately, we cannot make massive changes to our rooms, so we have to look for another answer.

There is another solution to these problems, however. What we need is a speaker that radiates a lot less sound off-axis, so diminishing the reverberant sound level and reducing the effect of room acoustics. This speaker has the same response

shape but at a lower level off-axis.

And what design will give us this goal that we are all trying to attain? A properly designed open baffle loudspeaker that operates down to the lowest frequencies. The reverberant sound is about one third of the level for a conventional speaker, so there's less noise in the room next door. We also lose the colourations caused by internal box resonances.

What we gain is clarity, openness and better imaging. It's uncanny, you quickly arrive at a situation where you are only listening to the music; the room, the hi-fi system and *the speakers just disappear*. I can now play and enjoy recorded material with a lot of bass, and not only hear it at the right level but also hear every detail down to the lowest notes without any false emphasis.

I only wish I had discovered the properties of open baffle speakers seven years ago when I

## LETTER OF THE MONTH

### BI-AMP BENEFITS

I was intrigued by the review of the Arcam Alpha 9 amplifier in the December issue, particularly the facility for bi-amping with the 9P power amp. As I'm the owner of a Linn Pretek/Powertek combination driving K400 bi-wired Index speakers, I had thought many times about bi-amping.

Reading your review set me thinking. I remembered that my old NAD 3020i integrated had an option to split the pre and power sections via the removal

of two links on the back panel. I set to work (fool I hear you say; you were right!).

Bi-amping the Indexes, with the power section of the NAD driving the treble and the Powertek driving the bass, gave a result that can only be described as dire in terms of tonal balance. The gain of the NAD was hopelessly mismatched with that of the Powertek, resulting in a significant loss of treble from the speakers.

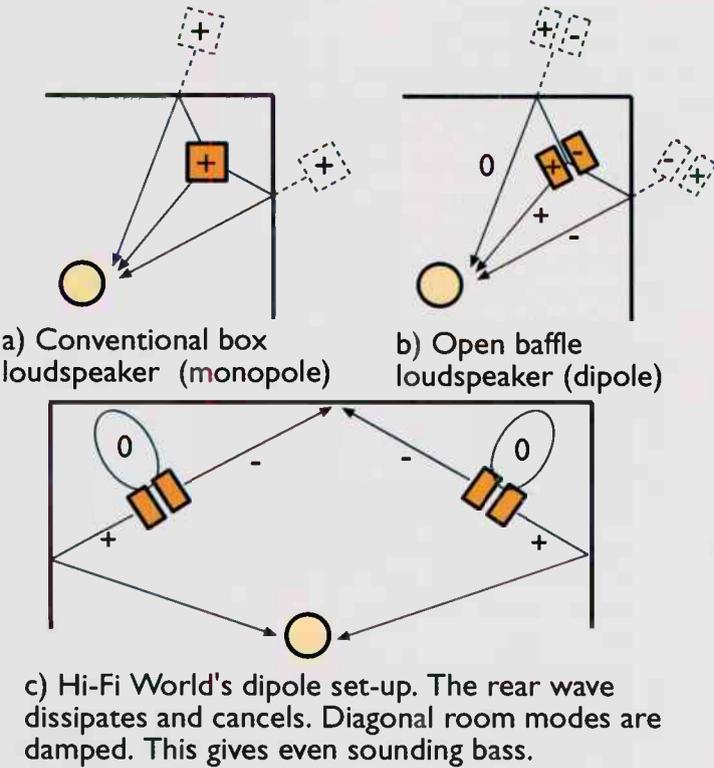
However, there was definitely something about the

sound that had not been there before; the system exhibited more midrange detail, more control, more musicality.

As I began to dismantle the system to revert to bi-wiring a thought suddenly hit. The spare pre-out connection on the back of the Pretek could be connected to the line input on the NAD. The L/R bass drivers connect to the Powertek with the NAD feeding the L/R tweeters. The NAD's volume control adjusts the treble level, and treble extension can be controlled via the tone adjuster



The writer of the  
'Letter of the Month'  
wins a free subscription  
to Hi-Fi World



started to design, build and develop speakers in earnest as a hobby. Then I could have avoided many of those 60 or so designs that have been constructed, and saved a packet on buying sheets of MDF. But then I would never have gained all that experience in developing crossovers and finding the best ways of measuring the sounds from the speakers I have built. I doubt that I will ever build any other kind of speaker in the future other than an open baffle design.

**Tony Seaford**  
**Marton Music**

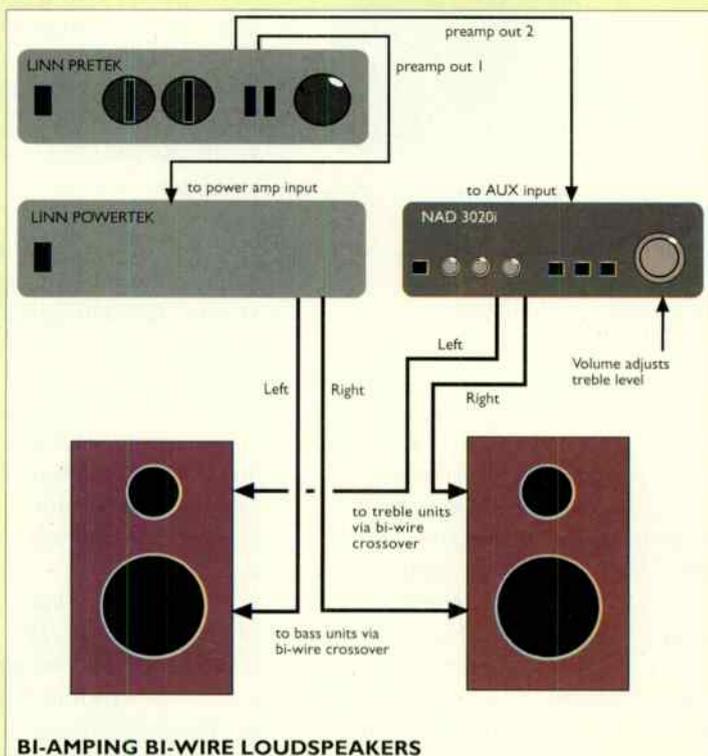
*Thanks for your observations. In this heresy - namely that loudspeaker boxes are not only unnecessary, but arguably obstructive to high fidelity - we appreciate your support! There are practical problems and some acoustic ones too, that need to be better understood before open baffles can become more common. Whilst the hi-fi industry remains obsessed with box building, into which it has invested much knowledge and capital, open baffles remain virgin territory for DIY. For the benefit of our readers, let me explain.*

*A box emits a bass signal of one polarity only. It does this by containing,*

**LETTER OF THE MONTH (CONT.)**

if desired. Due to the NAD's pre-amp section being driven from the Pretek's spare output, the Pretek's volume control acts as a master volume for the whole system.

Sound quality is simply stunning and lives up to the earlier promise. The system will play loud with no strain. It displays effortless dynamics and silky smooth, clear high frequencies, a pleasant characteristic of the NAD. Atmosphere is now well portrayed and the system has lost its previous rather harsh, dry, closed-in sound. Separation of instruments is far better and the famous 'tune playing ability' of the Linn speakers is even more apparent. All in all, the effort has been well worth while,



giving a significant improvement in sound quality for absolutely zero outlay. I would urge anyone who has an obsolete pre/power combination with a spare pre-amp output and a good quality integrated amp to try this inexpensive approach to bi-amping. There is nothing to lose and a great deal to be gained in terms of improved sound quality.

**Steve Cresswell,**  
**Mexborough,**  
**South Yorks.**

within the box, back radiation that is 180 degrees out of phase with the front radiation. It does so to prevent the back radiation cancelling the forward radiation, which would otherwise progressively attenuate bass output.

Trouble with a monopole is that, at long bass wavelengths reflected radiation from walls is additive, creating bass peaks (see diagram).

A dipole emits out-of-phase radiation, as shown, that can be used to tune out bass peaks. At either side of a dipole, where forward and back radiation meet there is a dead 'cancellation' zone, which can also be exploited to deaden areas of the room. Orientated correctly, by knowledge and/or experiment, these properties of a dipole can be exploited to give a more even bass quality than that from a monopole. Our diagram b) shows how reflecting 'images' of the speaker can be additive, neutral, or subtractive, according to how the speaker is orientated.

We have spent time on room tuning a bass dipole, the Celestion SL6000. Generally, the best position is that shown in c). At present we tentatively conclude that the rear wave is probably cancelling, if not at the wall (since negatives don't cancel), then at the opposite speaker, and that the side lobes help suppress diagonal modes.

It is our experience, like yours, that dipoles offer far better bass than today's box loudspeakers. But of course I haven't mentioned the need either for enormous baffle size or for equalisation, to

counteract the natural -6dB/octave bass roll-off of a dipole. Such difficulties are not insurmountable and are worth paying to reap the benefits you so valuably identify. At present though, I'd hazard a rude guess that 80%-90% of loudspeaker engineers have little knowledge of how a dipole can be used to tune a room. Leaving enthusiasts a lot of scope to do better. NK

### NAIM THAT UPGRADE

My system was once described as a classic many moons ago. It consists of a Linn LPI2 Valhalla, Ittok LVII, Naim 42.5/SNAPS/110 and Kan 'speakers. The supports are a Mana sub-table atop a Sound organisation 4-tier and Kan II stands. Speaker cable is NAC 4. The cartridge is the cheapest of the old Ortofon Q Series, and now needs to be replaced.



Make the most of the Naim 42.5's excellent phono stage with Ortofon's MC 25FL cartridge.

I am aware of the faults as well as the good points of this system, and I would like a cartridge which would obviously highlight the system's strengths. The 42.5's MC board was matched to suit an Asaka, the Q's predecessor. My price range is limited to around the £100 mark.

Having looked at your World Favourites Guide,

there seems to be a noticeable gap between £100-£200. I had originally thought of an Ortofon MC 25E which received good reviews, but I see it no longer appears in your guide. Has it fallen out of favour? I have spoken to a couple of Linn dealers who both recommended a K9.

For years now I have been putting off the need to buy a CD player, but the time seems right now, mainly because my daughter has managed to collect a sizeable number of decent CDs. However, my problem is twofold. One, I do not wish to spend a great deal of money. And two, in their heyday, both the Naim amps and Kan 'speakers were noted for giving CDs a hard time. How much money do I need to spend, and on which components, to get a half decent sound?

**M. Garner  
Liverpool.**

To start with, stay clear of the K9. It's a reasonable cartridge in an affordable system, but yours will reveal too many of its deficiencies. The MC 25E you mention is indeed a fine cartridge, but the FL is a notable improvement, resolving more of the detail and subtlety in a recording.

Which moves us on to your amplifier. To get a worthwhile improvement on your 42.5/110, you'd need to aim at least as high as Naim's 92/140 combination at around £1500. The 42.5/110 has a fast, crisp and detailed sound; it really isn't necessary to upgrade just yet.

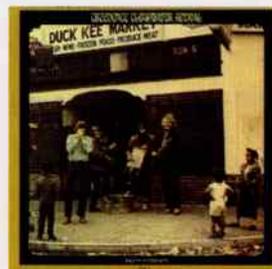
You could get both serviced by Naim (Tel: 01722 332266), at around £80 for the 42.5 and £50 for the 110 depending on condition. Or at least take

advantage of the upgrade service they offer on the 110 for around £125.

You're probably right to consider loudspeakers with an easier balance. As you have Kans at present, I presume you would prefer a smallish 'speaker to replace them. You couldn't go far wrong with Epos' ES12s, which have real weight and depth in the bass as well as a smooth, clear midrange and treble. They'd be a fine match for your Naim amplifiers.

With all this in place, you should now have a well balanced and musical system. Enter the Marantz CD-63mkII KI-Signature CD player. In a well-sorted system, it really does sound twice the player its £500 price tag would suggest. I'd get the rest of the system set up and then audition this one. DB

Chord Co. Tel: 01722 331674



Here's a little something for your new cartridge to get its stylus into - some quality vinyl from DCC Compact Classics.

### CURING STATIC

I need help. My system remained static and mainly unused as the children grew up, but about three years ago I bought a Rotel RCD 965BX and my interest in music was born again.

My next move was to change my old JBL Decade speakers and Quantum 102-202D pre and power for an Audio Innovations Alto and Castle Chesters.

The amp was the mistake. Although I like it, I could not play my LP collection so I added a QED Discsaver to use my old Dual 502 turntable which was adequate.

I have now started to buy records



Naim's small, low power Nait 3 integrated would suit your system, especially as it comes with an excellent phono stage.

*A Rega Planar 3 turntable with Goldring 1042 will give you superb results from LP. Ironically, while the Alto is a good looking no-no, in my opinion, Audio Innovations' P2 valve phono stage is one of the best hi-fi products I have ever encountered.*

*It's £600 of pure audio magic, but possibly beyond your budget at present. NK*

Chord Co. Tel: 01722 331674



Try a length of the Chord Co's Cobra interconnect between your Rotel CD player and new amplifier.

### ESCAPE FROM ENCLOSURE

Having discovered Hi-Fi World in February this year, I was prompted to start playing my vinyl collection again, and very enjoyable it has been.



Wharfedale's Valdis 300 loudspeaker would work well with an Aura VA-80 to fill your room with music.

My system now consists of a Linn Axis with Akito/K5, Kenwood KA5010 amp and JPW Mini Monitors working with a home-built subwoofer (powered by a Quad 50E).

The Linn was recently acquired second-hand, and replaced a Dual 604 with AT 110 cartridge. I'm very pleased with the improvement, and the balance is about right now, although the music still sounds far from 'real', tending to stay 'speaker-bound'.

What then should be my next upgrade? Amp or 'speakers? If 'speakers, could you recommend a small, infinite baffle design to partner the subwoofer (whose upper cut-off point is adjustable), or something like the Tannoy 630? As I am a competent DIY-er, would I get better value for money from a kit?

Next, I gather that turntables need regular servicing. What does this involve in my case, and is it feasible to do it oneself in order to save expense? Perhaps you could include servicing information and tips in your excellent DIY supplements.

Lastly, I'm told that Linn no longer make styli for the K5, so when the time comes for a new one, would it make sense to change to another type of cartridge, and if so, what would you recommend to suit my limited budget?

**Alex Johns  
Bristol.**

*I'd try an amplifier upgrade first. Rotel's £250 RA-970BX would make a good choice, with its smooth, controlled*

*sound and 100Watt power output. Going down this route, Tannoy's superb little £170 631 Special Editions would open up your system with a broad, transparent soundstage.*

*If it's a warmer balance you want, then Aura's £280 VA-80 is well worth a listen. As for 'speakers, Wharfedale's infinite baffle £150 Valdis 300s (reviewed in July 1996) would partner the VA-80 well - you could tune your subwoofer to balance their rather dry bass.*

*For servicing, a trip to your nearest Linn dealer is a better bet than overhauling the Axis yourself, as turntables are rather delicate beasts. And a change of cartridge once your K5's run its course would definitely bear fruit - try Goldring's 1006 or 1012. JM*

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Spin some DCC Compact Classics vinyl on your Linn Axis to find out how your new system sounds.

### OUT OF BALANCE

The system - Pioneer A-400X biwired to TDL RTL2s with Nordost Flatline, fed by Project 6 with Ortofon MC 15 Super II via Monster 300. The CD source is a Philips CD360 (an ancient player with the CDM2 at its heart) connected with fairly expensive co-axial digital link to an Audio Alchemy DAC In

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

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Christopher Breunig,  
HI-FI NEWS & RECORD REVIEW, APRIL 1996.

*"With a Van Morrison album, recorded at Ronnie Scott's, vocals had a touch more body to them, and seemed to be slightly better projected. The saxophone had a more natural timbre and again, seemed better seperated from the rest of the mix. There was also an improvement in the decay of cymbals. The scale of music was heightened, helped by a more focused bass line...in my opinion theRingmat is still the best turntable accessory under £50."*

Dominic Todd  
HI-FI WORLD, August 1996.

*"For me, this is the only mat that has mattered on my AR ES-1 turntable,.....I can tell you that the new mat is superior to the old. I heard greater clarity, focus, slightly tighter bass, and a deeper, wider soundstage. Dynamics improved too."*

Sam Tellig, STEREOPHILE,  
Vol. 19 No.11, November 1996.

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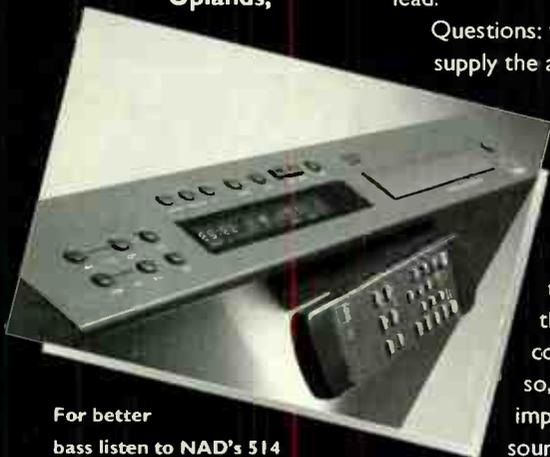
(Mail order p&p: £2.50 UK; £5.50 outside UK)

The Box via Monster 300 interconnect.

The problem - vinyl sounds terrific (even better now that I've put the glass platter on top of the felt) but when I switch to CD, my initial enthusiasm for the silent background and the apparent detail quickly pales. It sounds as though the music is there but is just not getting across.

The balance seems all wrong - lots of really quite nice top/mid (though not as 'acoustic' on my usual Jazz stuff as vinyl) with rather flabby and ultimately tiring bass. Without breaking the bank, what should I do to get something approaching the quality of my vinyl sound from CD?

**Huw Maddock**  
Uplands,



For better bass listen to NAD's 514 CD player.

Swansea.

*CD will never sound like LP, that's for sure. Your DAC is a bit on the polite side sonically. Nowadays, many manufacturers are understanding that just a teensy bit of bass lift and upper treble roll-off is enough to give CD a far more amenable sound which better approaches that of LP.*

*An NAD 514 CD player might be the best bet, since it has impressive dynamics and a hefty dose of bottom-end punch and should come close to the*

*sort of sound you're looking for. NK*

#### **A CALL TO ARMS**

I have recently been trying different interconnects between my Meridian 506 and Exposure XVII pre-amp and there is no doubt that they can make a considerable difference to the sound and reduce the size of your wallet.

What confuses me is not with my CD-based system but with my Gyrodec/Gyropower PSU/RB300/Eroica LX. The leads and connectors from the RB300 are what you would expect to find in a budget system and what you Hi-Fi mags would normally recommend binning. However, this is obviously not so easy with a tonearm lead.

Questions: why do Rega supply the acclaimed

RB300 with such a cheap lead and connectors?

Is it possible to upgrade this lead and/or connectors? If so, would this improve the sound?

For future upgrades to my Gyrodec I am considering QC PSU, better cartridge, second-hand SME 309 tonearm (if I can get one). In which order would you consider these and can you suggest a suitable cartridge in the £150 to £250 price range.

My speakers are Harbeth HL P3ES and my music tastes are almost anything apart from heavy Rock.

**Graham Tatum**  
Leigh,  
Lancs.

*Rega tell us the lead used with the RB300 tonearm has very low capacitance and it cannot be improved upon in this respect. They*

*said that rewiring invalidates the warranty and they do not recommend it.*

*The Eroica LX moving coil cartridge could well be upgraded to an Ortofon MC 15 Super or MC 20FL with its fine line stylus, and this is probably the most effective initial move you could make. After that, head for the QC power supply unit and, finally, the SME 309. I suspect, however, that if you want to significantly improve on the performance of your Rega RB300 you may be better*

Chord Co. Tel: 01722 331674



Chord's Cobra interconnect will work well between the NAD 514 CD player and your Pioneer A-400X amplifier.

*advised to think of the SME IV instead. NK*

#### **ONCE BITTEN. . .**

I currently own a PD-S904 Pioneer CD player. Although it's only a couple of months old, I am seriously itching to upgrade. I am told the coaxial digital connection sounds better than the TOSLink. Is this true?

Secondly, I am yearning for a significantly better sound from the 904. What DAC would you recommend up to £750?

I am currently using Rotel RB-970BXs bridged with a matching pre-amp into TDL RTL III 'speakers. Cabling is CableTalk Monitor II interconnects and Audioquest Indigo II 'speaker cables. Which is more

important, the interconnect from source to pre-amp, or pre-amp to power amp?

How important is it to keep to cables from one manufacturer - is it OK to mix and match? The upgrade bug is biting the hell out of me. Heeeellppp.

**Mr Banda**  
Dartford,  
Kent.

*As a general rule TOSLink sounds smoother and warmer, injecting less Radio Frequency Interference into the DAC. It's this RFI that gives coaxial digital interconnects their characteristically harder, cooler presentation, DPA's Rob Watts told us*

*You could get a good price for the Pioneer, leaving about £1000 to spend. Audiolab's new 8000CD makes an excellent one-box buy at £1000 and would seriously boost the sound quality you get from CD. On the other hand, if the bank manager beckons, you could go for the superb £500 Marantz CD-63 mkII KI-Signature that so impressed us back in June 1996.*

*Mixing and matching cables from different manufacturers is fine. In fact, if you're after a particular balance, you'll probably have to try cables from various companies to get the best results. JM*

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Hi-Fi NEWS & RECORD REVIEW



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# MALAYSIAN SHOW REPORT

**F**ar Eastern shows attract large, enthusiastic crowds and an equally large range of products, some of which pop up in the UK a while later, some of which don't. For example, I saw three DVD demos at the Malaysian Show (held by the Sun national newspaper in conjunction with Tanway publishing), even though this new, high capacity CD has yet to appear in Britain. And I discovered Sony make an electrostatic loudspeaker which hasn't left Japanese shores.

That in itself may be enough to make me travel 6,000 miles, but Malaysian food is an added incentive. There's every delight going, from street stalls where Bengali cooks rustle up the tastiest nans this side of Jupiter, through to local food stalls where a curry can be washed down with fresh coconut water.

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia's capital, is steaming hot all year round, temperatures hovering in the thirties, humidity up at face towel level. The country is rapidly industrialising, its

economic growth (7% per annum) being contributed to by factories transplanted from Japan - Sony employs no fewer than 6000 people making audio equipment, for example. Just about every other name in audio is here as well, either south in Johore, next to Singapore, or in the environs around KL. Which is to say that this is a great place for a hi-fi show, since it's very busy, there's lots of interest and there are plenty of innovative and unusual products.

Kuala Lumpur at night is ablaze with brightly lit modern office buildings and towers.

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# MALAYSIAN SHOW REPORT

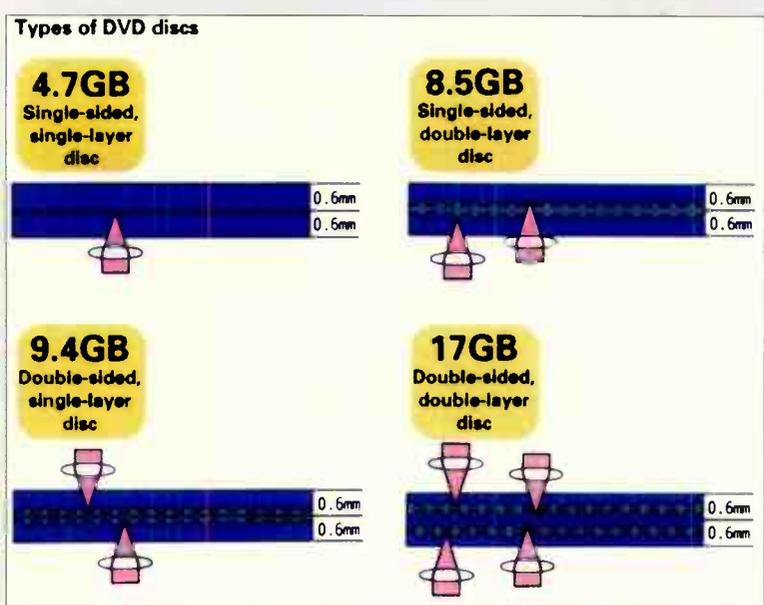
First: Digital Video Disc, or DVD for short. I was taken aback to find Toshiba, Pioneer and Technics displaying this new, high density CD. It has, to my knowledge, only appeared in the USA and Japan to date, in early form. One of the reasons is that Toshiba of Japan developed this new CD in conjunction with Time Warner and Hollywood's film industry. DVD is being aimed at the computer business too, which again hangs out on the West Coast of the States. So you could say this is a Pacific rim technology, but it will be coming to Europe soon.

can offer 24-bit quantisation (signal level description) for 144dB dynamic range, at a sampling rate of 96kHz to give 48kHz bandwidth. This will provide extraordinary quality, far superior to today's CDs.

More amazing is the fact that DVD can be double-layered and double sided as well, giving a massive 17GB of storage. As if this wasn't enough, for computers, music and video it looks as if the discs will (at last!) be



Sony's superb CDP-X5000 CD player, which moves the disc over the laser.



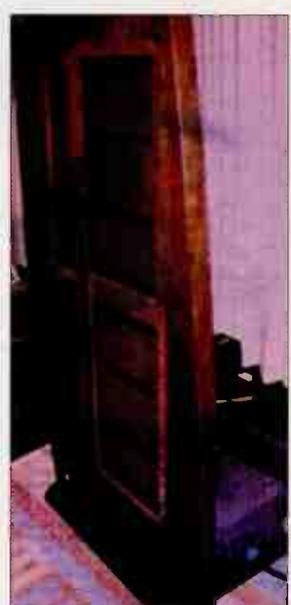
How DVD manages to offer four different storage capacities.

A 'standard' DVD stores 4.7GB, or seven times more information than a CD (650MegaBytes), although a DVD player can still play CDs. The new disc has been designed to effectively replace video tape, storing 135 minutes of video on one side. Alternatively, a hi-fi DVD

recordable. So, finally, CD-E (CD Eraseable) as Philips once called it, will become a reality. Prepare to abandon Nakamichis.

I was surprised by the Sony room too. Here was a range of specialised hi-fi separates new to me, topped out by

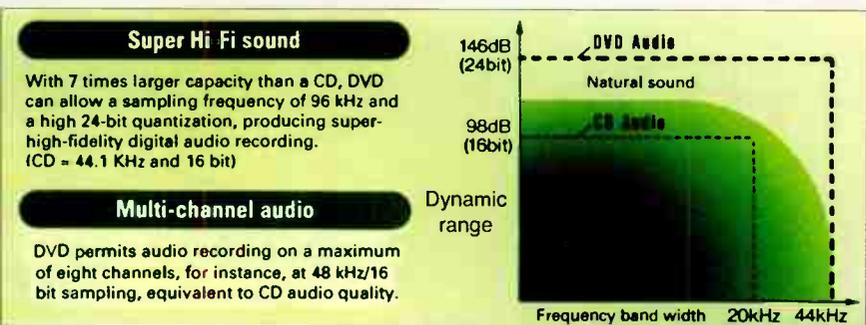
an Asia-Pacific dealers' conference bulletin showing a pair of Sony electrostatic loudspeakers. Being something of an electrostatic fan myself, running Quad ESL-63s, I was intrigued by details of the full range, three-way SS-R10s, priced at \$30,000 (I'd guess they'd go for £20k-£25k in the UK). Apparently, only ten pairs have been made so far.



Sony's full range electrostatic loudspeaker. The picture is from a wall board, since the 'speaker has not yet left Japan

On show were some tasty, gold-anodised products, including the TA-F5000 amplifier which uses specialised components throughout and the CDP-X5000 top-loading CD player with fixed optical mechanism.

The disc, with its heavy motor and spindle, tracks steadily over the laser, better resisting vibration than a laser in a lightweight arm. It all looks very dedicated and I'm intrigued that both vibration and component quality (the two are linked) have become an issue in Japanese high-end products.



A basic 4.7GB DVD disc offers 144dB dynamic range and 48kHz bandwidth for audio, or up to eight channels of today's 16-bit code.



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## MALAYSIAN SHOW REPORT



Panasonic's DVD player will play normal CDs.

Much of this kit, including 100watt Class A monoblock power amps, has never made it out of Japan though. As David Price (our expert who has lived in Japan) tells us, much of the best Japanese hi-fi isn't sold in the UK. We get the midi systems instead and, sadly, most UK punters think this is real hi-fi. The Japanese class it as unfit for home consumption.

However, it wasn't only Japan that had interesting new products. From Britain came a new AudioNote valve amplifier, Ankoru. Aimed mainly at the USA and the Far East, this monster uses two 845 triodes driven by a 300B to produce 40watts of parallel single-ended power. The chassis is a massive aluminium and copper affair and the power supply all-valve too, of course. Ankoru was designed in Brighton by Andy Grove, ex-Hi-Fi World engineer, as regular readers will know.

Malaysia has its own fledgling audio industry. The complaint is that Malaysians will not buy home-designed products, preferring those from overseas. However, with a good manufacturing base and component supply industry, only expertise is in short supply. I'm sure this will change,



AudioNote's massive Ankoru valve amplifier.

since the country is very well placed geographically and culturally to act as a conduit between East and West.

At present there are a number of Malaysian

loudspeaker manufacturers, including the charmingly named Ace Dynasty. They produce loudspeakers under many own-brand names, including the attractive new wood-finish Can, shown here. This has a metal dome tweeter with phase plate, a Kevlar



The attractive Can floorstanding loudspeaker from Ace Dynasty, a Malaysian loudspeaker manufacturer.

midrange unit and twin bass drivers working in parallel, loaded by a large reflex chamber whose port vents close to the floor for reinforcement.

LST Audio Lab of Selangor, close to KL, use the industry-standard LMS measurement system to define important parameters like frequency response and impedance. Their Basik Monitor, shown here, uses Scanspeak drivers, Solen polypropylene and American Sprague capacitors, and air core inductors. It was elegantly finished in a natural light veneer.

Robertson were displaying their large Silver Twenty Five loudspeaker with, as they put it, an integrated subwoofer. This comprises a large 10in. bass driver that was turning out some very solid bass.

Malaysia makes more than loudspeakers. There's the impressive Menthor stereo valve amplifier, a single-ended design using the 211 (VT4C) valve and Japanese Tango output transformers to deliver 20watts

Malaysians are proud of their Twin-Tower, the Far East's tallest building. It is just being completed.

per channel.

I also spotted an unusual valve pre-amplifier from Orbit, with wooden case and top-mounted controls.

My favourite of the show - and definitely for the Chinese market only - was a Solidex Karaoke unit, its large, illuminated push-buttons and front panel marked in Chinese characters. This looked altogether more exotic and fascinating than the usual run-of-the-mill Roman characters we've come to expect on electronic goods.

But then Malaysia is a polyglot society full of surprises at every level, from the food



The neat standmount Basik Monitor from LST Audio Lab, Petaling Jaya, near KL.



The Menthor 211 stereo 20watt valve amplifier, designed in Japan and produced in Malaysia.

to the customs. Indian celebrations of Deepavali (Diwali) were going on when I was there, so seeing a Karaoke machine marked up in Chinese characters looked entirely natural, if a bit challenging for a monoglot like me. But that is one of the delights of these shows - like the streets outside, they are full of interesting surprises.

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I said in last month's column that Digital Video Disc (DVD) was, as another non-recordable medium, redundant before it started. Sometime, we are now being told, it will transform into a recordable medium, which rather changes the picture. It also backs what I was saying, namely that non-recordable media are unwanted. The only people who disagree are those who feel recording threatens their livelihood, namely the music and film business.

Were it not for the music business, represented world-wide by the IFPI who lobby very hard, the global consumer electronics business would have produced recordable CD some time ago, I believe. CD-E (Eraseable CD) was openly talked about in the late Eighties and today we store Hi-Fi World in electronic form on 1.3GB Philips optical discs. The technology is available; this is where CD-E went to. At 130mm these discs are little larger than a 120mm CD, but being protected by a caddy are more resistant to abuse. At present there's a substantial price difference: a blank CD-R costs around £6 for 650MB of storage, whilst a computer optical costs around £40 for twice as much. But an optical recorder costs only as much as a good CD player.

So whilst the unshackled computer business races ahead with recordable optical media, the audio industry lurches from one proposition to another, not knowing what to do. In this sad state of affairs DVD offers us no way out. It assuages the fears of another industrial group, this time the US film business, as well as setting out to serve their needs.

DVD is meant to be a replacement for pre-recorded video tape, offering better picture quality, lower unit manufacturing, production (duplication) and shipping costs, and reduced distribution and in-store

storage areas. As always it meets the fundamental music/film industry criterion for acceptance that the highest quality carrier must not be recordable. Hence CD today remains unrecordable, even though computers are recording onto optical discs with four times as much capacity as a CD.

That's why I said DVD in unrecordable form would be, technically at least, redundant soon after it was launched. It looks as if Toshiba understand this. During my recent trip to the latest Malaysia hi-fi show, I unearthed a glossy brochure of theirs

## Mysteries from Noel Keywood

the latest technologies. Don't expect to see them in Britain or Europe too soon though, where powerful commercial lobby groups like the IFPI are utterly locked into the notion that high quality copying devices will destroy their future. It's a notion I would vigorously dispute, but I haven't the space here.

This leaves Toshiba touting DVD as a replay-only medium whilst at the same time coyly admitting it will, in the future, be able to record. They are caught between a rock and a hard place, doubtless knowing well from their own computer business

It hasn't escaped me that whilst the audio industry writhes and wriggles with formats, in a vain attempt to please both the music business and the buying public, the world moves on. Something totally different might be just over the horizon. It may not be long before we see the no-format format. Myriads of small audio companies around the world, fluent in digital, could easily produce a high quality general purpose A/D and D/A unit able to write to and read from a computer MO drive. Then it will be our own personal decision as to what form our domestic audio recorder takes, much as computers today are faced with a huge array of storage formats.

Ironically, the only people to suffer from this will be those in the music business, because lack of standardisation will make prerecorded software difficult to produce and sell. Which raises the spectre of a future where music ceases to be sold in shops on a universal carrier like CD. Instead we will simply download onto recorders - recorders of our own choice at last! Buying music will be like buying petrol; we will simply take a disc in and fill it up, perhaps choosing between high quality and long playing time. Or we will download from cable, satellite or the Internet. Prerecorded discs will become as redundant as tablets of stone

*"The world-wide buying public does not now get what is technologically possible, only what suits the interests of commercial pressure groups with global reach".*

promising recordable DVD in the near future. Trouble is, as we understand it after speaking to Toshiba UK, this will be incompatible with replay-only DVD!

Does all this sound like ever-increasing confusion? The world-wide buying public does not now get what is technologically possible, only what suits the interests of commercial pressure groups with global reach. Where their presence is weak, notably in the Far East, up spring

that optical recording technology is racing ahead and will have to be acknowledged by the audio industry in the end.

As I understand it though, recordable opticals (including MiniDisc by the way) are so easily damaged that a protective caddy is essential. If so, then unprotected DVD discs, as currently proposed, will be replaced by something else in future. Making read-only DVD redundant immediately. Great!



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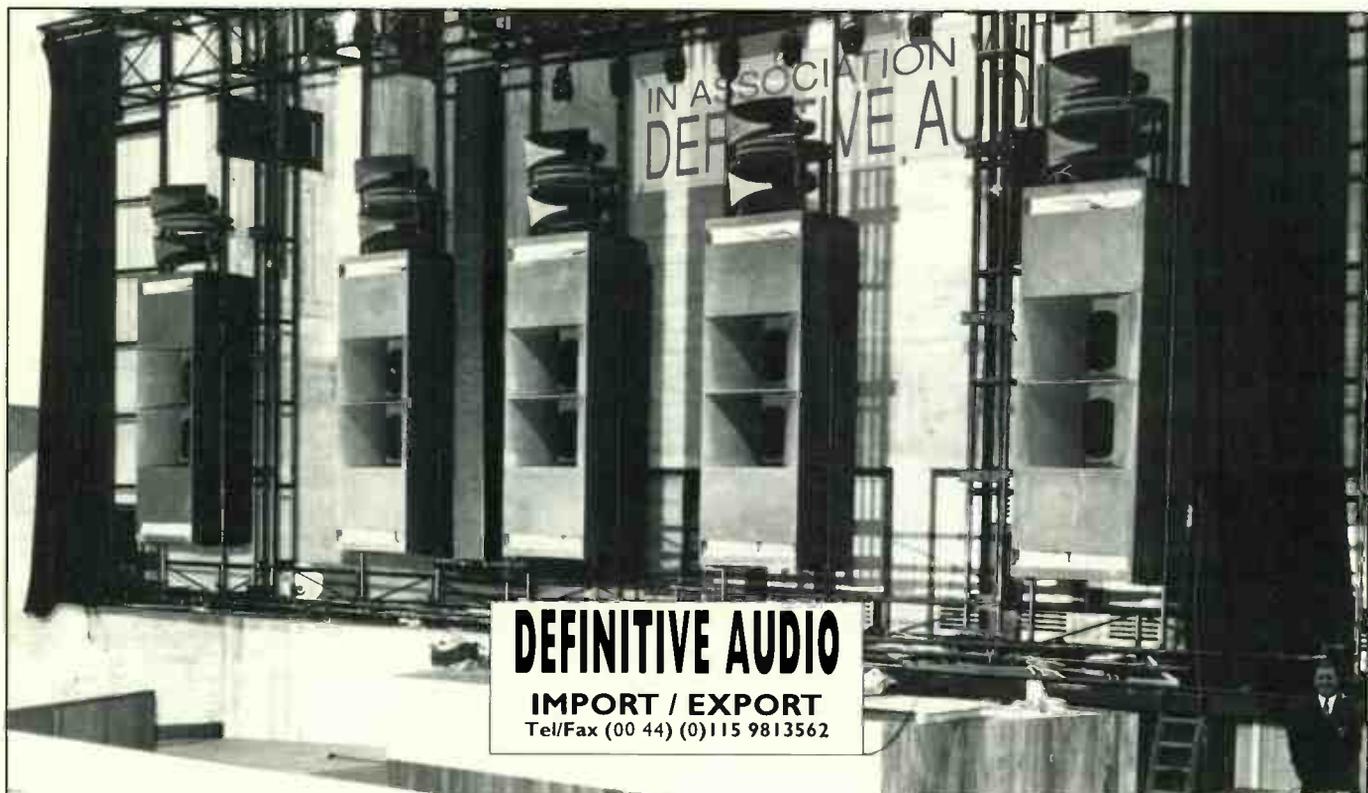
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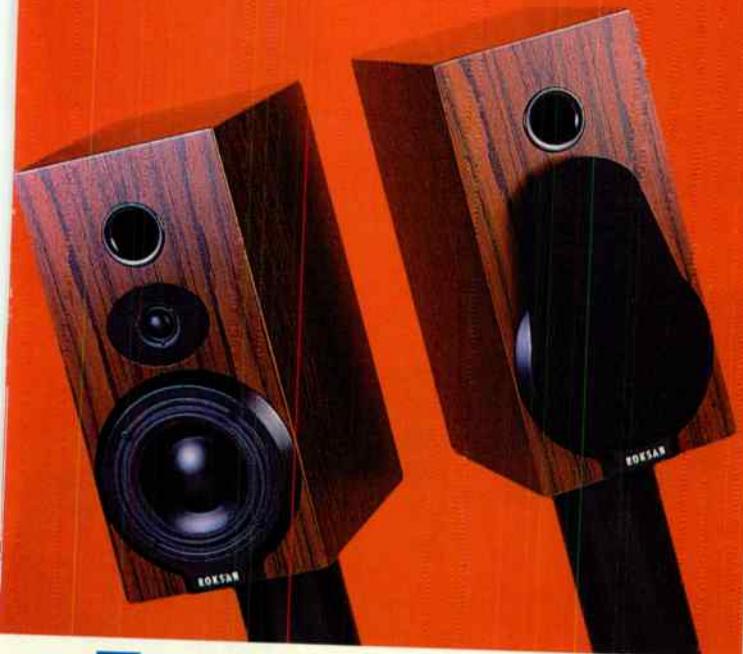
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# ROK THE HOUSE

As their name suggests, Roksan's ROKone loudspeakers are full of life. Nick Tate samples their sound.



For many people Roksan are synonymous with the classic Xerxes and beautiful Touraj Moghaddam Signature turntables. They also produce the distinctively styled ROKone loudspeaker, now being pitched into the over-crowded £600 market. But with the recent arrival of Mission's 752 Freedoms (costing £5 more without needing stands), the ROKones certainly have their work cut out if they're to succeed in this closely contested price bracket.

Roksan say the ROKones need plenty of running in. After a week of solid music-making, they were definitely a far better 'speaker. They also recommend positioning the 'speakers with a slight toe-in.

This done, I started off with Steely Dan's 'Deacon Blue', where the Roksans came up with a dynamic, punchy sound. Bass wasn't particularly extended but made up for lack of depth with excellent speed and tunefulness. First impressions were of a bright, breezy and thoroughly musical performer.

The flip-side of the ROKones' sonic coin was the way their crisp treble could verge on the coarse with forward recordings such as Steely Dan's 'Black Friday'. Here, Fagen's voice was a touch hard for my liking. But this didn't prevent the Roksans from being musically involving. They drew me into the music, making me forget the hi-fi,

something the super-detailed Missions often attempted less successfully.

Cueing up Neil Richardson's 'The Riviera Affair', the Roksans dived into the song with verve. 'Fast' is the best word to describe how these zesty little 'speakers got into the swing of things, powering the song along. While they captured the music's immense scale and drama superbly, all was not sweetness and light however.

The cascading strings that dominate the song were harder on the ear than usual, and tended to overshadow the more subtle elements of the mix. Fine filigree detail, for instance, was often submerged under the weight of leading instruments.

Tonally the ROKones turned out to be a little monochromatic, but at least they lacked the stark quality of the 752Fs' high-tech HDA mid/bass unit. Neither are they a super-transparent, BBC monitor-style loudspeaker, as the Bath Festival Orchestra's performance of Bach's Suite No 1 in C Major demonstrated. Here, the Roksans failed to convey the hall's ambience realistically, the talent of their Huntingdon cousins in this area, putting them to shame.

With Mother Earth's live recording of 'Jesse', the differences between the two loudspeakers really showed. Despite the ROKs' enjoyable foot-tappability, there wasn't an awful lot of depth to the bass, which left them

sounding rather forward and two-dimensional.

The Missions, on the other hand, had much more convincing imaging, with tighter placement of instruments and vocals within the recorded acoustic. They still couldn't match the ROKones for sheer emotional communicativeness though.

These two 'speakers occupy very different camps - where the Roksans emoted, the Missions deconstructed. And as their name suggests, the Roksans are best used with Rock music - Classical buffs are advised to look elsewhere. But I can certainly envisage situations where the Roksans would swing the decision thanks to the emotion they reveal in music ●

Roksan ROKone £595

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## WORLD VERDICT

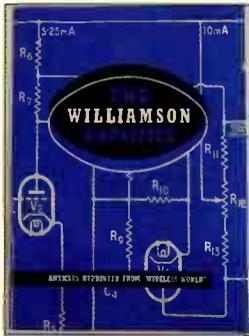
Musically involving 'speakers that many will enjoy, but a little unrefined at times.

Measured Performance  
see p103

## VALVE BOOKS

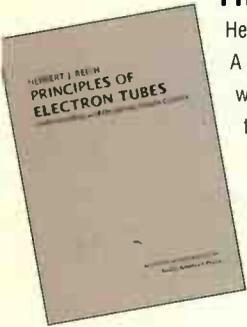
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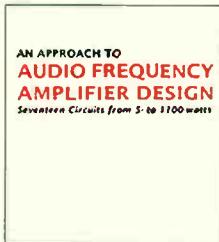
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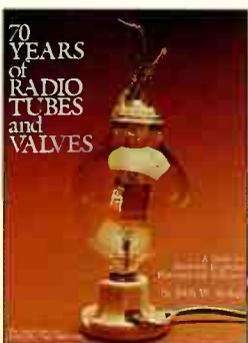
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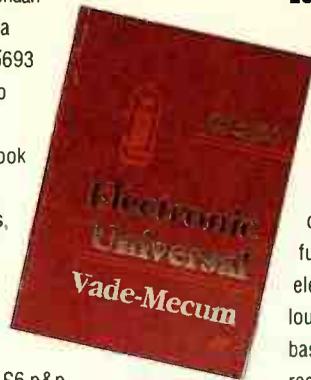
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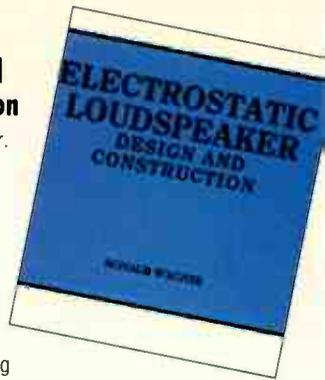
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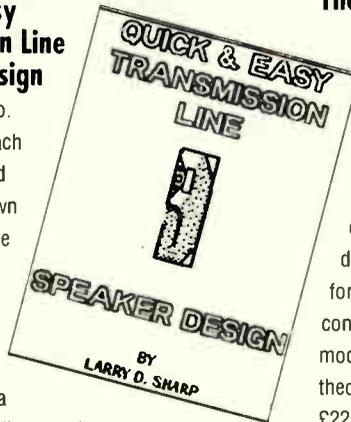
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## LOUDSPEAKER BOOKS

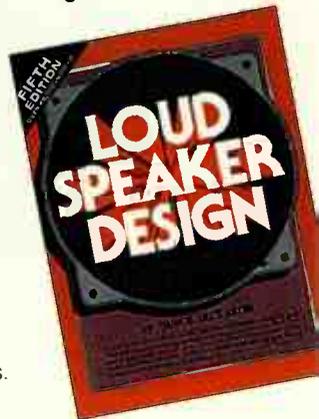
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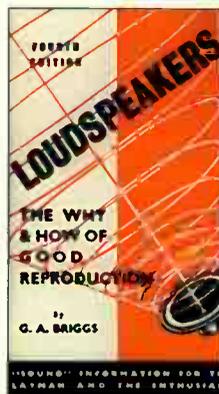
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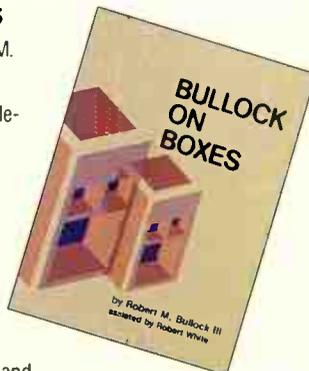
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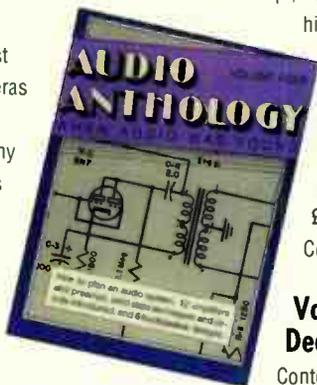
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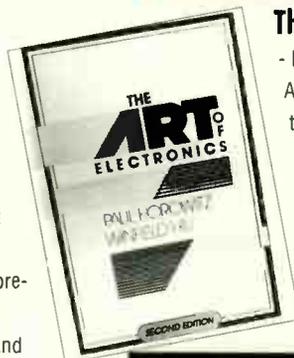
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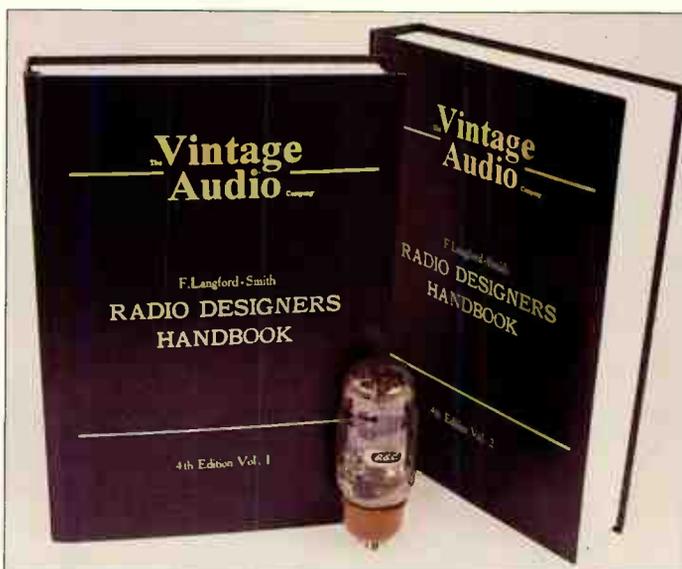
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Regular readers may know that I'm gradually building a new system from the ashes of my old 'Flat Earth' set-up. To wit, a Michell Orbe has replaced my much loved LP12 front end, while amplification duties had until recently been taken care of by a Meridian 551 which I'm a great fan of. Unfortunately Meridian had the effrontery to ask for it back - I don't know, what ever happened to payola?

Anyway, in the absence of large amounts of free and unfeasibly esoteric hi-fi coming my way, I was forced to the desperate act of buying something myself. A little Pioneer A-400X was duly purchased. This was intended purely as a cheap, musical stopgap with loads of power to drive my amp-unfriendly Linn Kan loudspeakers.

As a system it worked pretty well, but didn't quite have the drama of last year's

GyroDec/RB300/OC9, 551 and Mission 752s.

The 'speakers, appropriated from the Hi-Fi World listening room in a rare moment when no one was looking, impressed me more the longer I lived with them. They seemed to have a speed and delicacy that even the Kans couldn't match, and their extra half octave of bass didn't go amiss either. So, finally having found something to better my treasured baby Linns, I reluctantly decided they'd have to go.

While phoning Mission last summer to order a pair of 752s, they intimated that they were about to introduce "new, improved" Freedom versions, and asked me if I wanted a pair of these instead. This put me in a bit of a quandary: after all, I'd no idea how they'd sound and I wasn't in the habit of buying hi-fi I'd never auditioned. Still, after a Herculean bout of hard sell, I said yes.

I knew they used the same superb HDA mid/bass driver as the originals, but had gained a sweet

# audiophilia

David Price



sounding silk dome tweeter. My hopes were high for instant magic in my system.

But how wrong I was. When first wired up, they were dreadful - hard and steely with no bass, treble or imaging. Normally, when review kit sounds bad it barely provokes me

the 752 Freedoms need at least a week of running in.

After a fraught seven days pondering whether to give the Freedoms to my girlfriend to use as superannuated candle stands, I finally plucked up the courage to listen to them again.

Brilliant. The nation

almost any other 'speakers I've used, the 752 Freedoms aren't backward in coming forward.

With CD things sounded bearable, but through my Orbe/SME V/AT-OC9 vinyl front end some recordings, especially digital ones, were getting physically painful. When I found one of my favourite pieces of plastic - ABC's *Lexicon of Love* - sounding horribly hard I had to act.

First, I dug out an aged NAD 3130 amplifier. Although lacking the Pioneer's punch and precision, that famous NAD richness managed to sweeten things up a bit. And swapping my OC9 for a far smoother Audio Technica AT33e finished things off a treat. For the first time the system gelled.

Now I'm really enjoying things, but twenty years of hi-fi addiction tells me I still haven't quite got the best from the Freedoms - you don't have to be Emmanuel Kant to know that a decade-old NAD isn't the highest of fi. I'm looking forward to the arrival of my World Audio K5881, which seems to have found its way into the hi-fi Bermuda Triangle that is the Editor's system.

How will it sound? Will I ever get it? Can I ever listen to music again? Do 6L6s heat chilly listening rooms better than Black and Decker radiators? Read all this and more in next month's missive ●

*"More so than almost any other 'speakers I've used, the 752 Freedoms aren't backward in coming forward."*

into an apathetic yawn, but having parted with my very own 'green and folding', my heart felt heavier than a bison heading for a diet. I wasn't a happy hi-fi hack.

Into action went my Emergency System Recovery Procedure, involving the dramatic last resort of reading the instruction manual. Accordingly, the Freedoms were moved further apart and positioned hard against the wall. Out went the Nordost Flatline copper cable and back in came my old NVA silver stuff. I switched on again.

Things were far better but still not right. So I left my CD player on repeat and put my faith in Mission's suggestion that

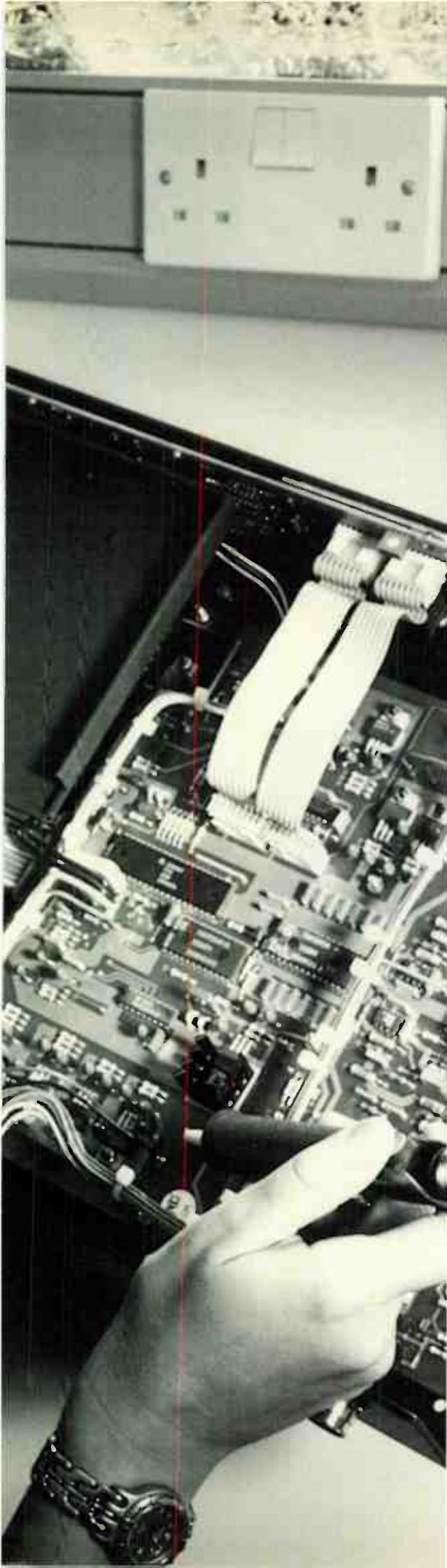
could relax now. And so began hours of ploughing through my record collection like only a reborn hi-fi-head can, marvelling at the hitherto unknown level of detail, separation, imaging and what have you. Faith had been restored, and I was seriously impressed with these new 'speakers.

Even so, after a fortnight's honeymoon period more problems surfaced. I was beginning to realise how different the Freedoms were from the original 752s.

While the oldies had quite a warm, friendly demeanour, the new ones are extremely stark and revealing of the system driving them. More so than

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At this point in the year, sales of hi-fi are at their highest. The time between mid-December and mid-January sees many retailers taking three or four times as many orders as they do in a normal month. However, all things being relative, sales aren't what they used to be twenty or so years ago.

You see, for many people, hi-fi simply isn't the high priority it used to be. This is reflected in figures showing disposable income. In the Seventies, hi-fi was third (after house and car) on the list of products which people spent their money on. These days it's slipped to eighth.

Of course, there are many causes for this. The increased popularity of computers, satellite television/video, clothes and travel account for much of the slip in ratings. But some of the blame has to lie with the hi-fi industry itself, and the way people actually define hi-fi.

It's unfortunate that many people seem to be trading in their trusty separate systems, bought in the Seventies or Eighties, for Midi or 'Lifestyle' systems. What's more, I've seen many cases where about the same, or even less, money is spent on the replacement, irrespective of inflation.

So what's wrong with Midi systems? Well, at the risk of preaching to the converted, here's a brief outline.

Midi systems are designed primarily as fashion items. Their styling can quickly become dated and sound quality is rarely a priority. As most units use only a single power supply, if one part of the system breaks down, then the whole unit can become useless. Build quality is frequently patchy as well, and parts are difficult to obtain after a few years. The more compact systems can be extremely difficult to repair, and yet people still spend as much on a



from  
*Dominic Todd,*  
*our man in*  
*retailing*

Fair Views

Midi system as a set of decent budget separates. And by separates I mean individual hi-fi components, not just boxes connected with ribbon cable. This is part of the problem - the public are being hoodwinked into thinking they're buying separates, when in fact they're not. The life of a midi system is intended to

that could be the future of hi-fi, and Mini is its name.

Mini separates can sound just as good as their full-size peers but have 'Lifestyle' good looks. The mere mention of their name may be sacrilege to many of the hairshirt brigade, but they could improve the fortunes of real hi-fi if carefully marketed.

potential buyers.

What's needed are similar sized machines at about a third to a half of this cost. After all, it's the budget market which still takes the lion's share of sales, and would appeal to those likely to be tempted towards Midi systems.

Retailers could play a part too. Components should be displayed individually rather than simply as a complete one-make affair. This way, the art of putting a good system together from different brands would still be maintained. Minis would then become more acceptable to traditionalists and those who know that to get the best sounding system at any given price you simply have to mix brands.

If you live in mainland Europe or the Far East, you may notice that Mini separates are already gaining popularity at a good rate. Hopefully, more companies can be persuaded into producing and importing them, especially at a budget level. A change in attitude from retailers and press could also see sales growing. And that growth would probably come at the expense of the systems industry rather than traditional separates. It would be one less reason for buying a Midi system, and may even improve the fortunes of hi-fi in general. Until then, Vive la difference!

*"Between Midi systems and separates lies a grey area, yet to be fully exploited, that could be the future of hi-fi, and Mini is its name."*

be short and replacement, when it comes, total.

In spite of all the above, there are strong arguments in favour of the Midi. Separates are frequently uncompetitive when price or size are major considerations. And I have to admit that some of the 'Lifestyle' systems look really rather good: you can't really blame someone for preferring a small sliver of shiny hi-fi in the corner of their room to a tower of black boxes.

As with all the best traditions though, there is a compromise. Between Midi systems and hi-fi separates lies a grey area, yet to be fully exploited,

The trouble is, these Mini separates are still thought of (and hence often sold) as 'systems'; Denon and Onkyo have had great success in this area. Perhaps individual Mini components should be reviewed in their own right.

"But hang on a minute", you might be thinking. Quad and Cyrus have already had success with small separates well before the term Mini was even invented.

This is true, but just look at the prices. Both company's CD players start at around £600. While this is good value for money, it's too much for many

*Leading specialists in valve and vinyl replay systems for those who appreciate music rather than hi-fi, we carry one of the largest selections of valve amplification on permanent demonstration.*

*Integrated valve amplifiers offer an inexpensive and compact way to enjoy the detailed and three-dimensional sound qualities associated with these designs.*

*From the single-ended approach taken by Audio Note, Gamma Rhythm and Unison Research Simply Two/Four models to the Graaf Vingticinque, all have different sonic characteristics and we will help you choose the one that suits you.*

*With a good CD front-end, such as Monrio, Parasound or Trichord, a valve based system could start from as little as £1,900, including speakers.*



Gamma Rhythm, Unison Simply Two, Graaf 25, Audio Note Oto SE

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competition

# KEF'S ENTIRE Q SERIES OF LOUDSPEAKERS

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**This month we are offering six prizes! You can win a superb model from KEF's brand new Q Series. Take this opportunity to make a fantastic, high-technology KEF loudspeaker yours!**

KEF's Uni-Q driver has been in production since 1988, improvements like a 20% stiffer mid/bass cone and soft dome tweeter bringing it up to date in its fourth incarnation. What separates Uni-Q from most other drive units though is the way the tweeter is mounted at the centre of the mid/bass cone, effectively allowing the loudspeaker to radiate sound from a single point, hence its 'point-source' label.

# WIN



Most other loudspeakers use a tweeter and mid/bass driver arranged vertically to handle the same frequencies, but this has a drawback. Because sound from the drivers comes from two different points, images are generally not as precisely focused as those of point-source drivers.

As Noel Keywood found with the diminutive £199 Q15 standmounter on page 16 of this issue, imaging is certainly one of the Uni-Q's fortes. The Q15 is built around a single Uni-Q, with its 19mm dome tweeter and reflex-loaded 160mm clear polypropylene mid/bass unit.

Awaiting another lucky winner is the Q35. This £350 floorstander sports the same driver as the Q15, but in a larger cabinet which is diagonally braced to cut down enclosure resonance.

Next in the line-up is the £500 Q55. This differs from the Q35 in the bass department, where it uses a 6.5in. circular bass unit to fill in the lower octaves.

The Uni-Q isn't the only new driver in the Q Series though. There's also the £799 Q65 featuring KEF's eye-catching 169 bass driver with its 'racetrack' shape. Above it is the flagship £999 Q75, which relies on this new driver too, working with the assistance of a passive radiator.

If you'd like the chance to win a pair of innovative Q Series loudspeakers, all you have to do is answer the questions opposite and complete the tie breaker. Winners will be judged on the quality of their tie breakers, winner No1 receiving the Q75, No2 the Q65 and so on down the range, with No6 picking up the Q95C, a centre-channel speech and vocals speaker for AV systems.

Send in your completed entry form on the back of a sealed envelope or postcard to reach us no later than February 4th to:

**KEF Q Series Competition**  
**Hi-Fi World magazine,**  
**64 Castellain Road,**  
**Maida Vale,**  
**London W9 1EX**

Don't forget to include your name, address and telephone number if possible so we can contact the winners promptly ●

### COMPETITION ENTRY QUESTIONS

- 1) Where is the Uni-Q's tweeter positioned?
 

|                                    |                                       |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| A. Above the mid/bass driver       | C. At the centre of the mid/bass cone |
| B. In a pod on top of the 'speaker | D. In the cupboard under the stairs   |
  
- 2) What is the Uni-Q's current generation?
 

|         |        |
|---------|--------|
| A. 1st  | C. 4th |
| B. 15th | D. 7th |
  
- 3) What shape are the bass drivers in the Q65 and Q75?
 

|           |               |
|-----------|---------------|
| A. Round  | C. Racetrack  |
| B. Square | D. Triangular |
  
- 4) How many models are there in the Q Series?
 

|        |       |
|--------|-------|
| A. 144 | C. 6  |
| B. 2   | D. 79 |
  
- 5) When was Uni-Q introduced?
 

|         |         |
|---------|---------|
| A. 1981 | C. 1988 |
| B. 1969 | D. 1066 |

### TIE BREAKER (obligatory)

Complete the following in less than 30 words

For imaging precision try Uni-Q,  
 In fourth generation form it's born anew.  
 KEF's point-source radiator does, you see,  
 give a soundstage as broad as the Mississippi,

.....  
 .....

Name: .....

Address: .....

Post Code: .....Tel No.....

Please do not add my name to your mailing list.

## COMPETITION WINNERS

### DECEMBER ISSUE COMPETITION

In our December issue we gave you the chance to win a superb £4500 CD system made up of TEAC's T1 transport and D-T1 convertor, Meridian's 502 pre and 557 power amplifiers, and a pair of Harbeth HL-K6 loudspeakers. And the lucky winner of our instant high-end system is:

**Mr J. E. Tignet of Christchurch.**

**Congratulations**

### COMPETITION RULES AND CONDITIONS

- [1] Only one entry per household. 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. We will endeavour to publish the results in the second issue following the closing date.
- [3] Purchase of the magazine is not a precondition of entry.
- [4] No correspondence will be entered into; the Editor's decision is final.
- [5] No employees of Audio Publishing Ltd. or of any companies associated with the production or distribution of the prizes may enter.

If you would prefer *not* to receive details of new products or special offers please tick the box.

Hi-Fi World magazine is published by Audio Publishing Ltd.

*Leading specialists in valve and vinyl replay systems for those who appreciate music rather than hi-fi, we carry one of the largest selections of valve amplification on permanent demonstration.*

### **Serious Single-Ended Triodes**

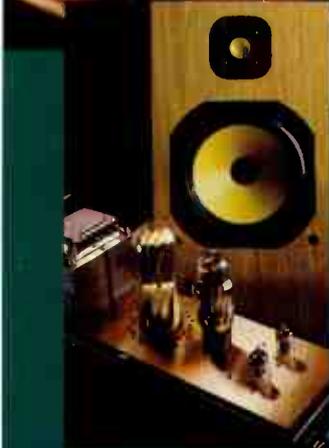
*Valve amplifiers based on the 211, 845 and Vaic 30B triodes can deliver the transparency and holographic imaging normally associated with single-ended designs, but these valves can also produce real dynamics and deep, detailed bass.*

*The Art Audio Diavolo, the Gamma Aeon and the Unison Research Smart 845 are among the best we have heard, yet they all sound different to each other. We will help you select the one that is right for you.*

*Listen to these amplifiers, coupled with revealing speakers such as the Impulse, Gamma, or the beautiful Diapason, and hear what we are talking about.*



Diapason & Unison Research



Gamma Aeon & Epoch Speaker



Art Audio Diavolo with Vaic 30B Triodes

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# MICHELL GYRODEC AND QC POWER SUPPLY



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 Ken Kessler - Hi-Fi News & Record Review August '94

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# World favourites guide

## COMPACT DISC PLAYERS

### QUAD 67 **second-hand**

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

### DENON DCD-315 **£150**

Real hi-fi and real music for a mere £150. Achieves a good semblance of orchestral dynamics and acoustic space.

### NAD 510 **£200**

A competent all rounder with lifelike soundstaging and impressive treble clarity.

### NAD 512 **£250**

Its smooth sound and fine treble extension make the 512 something of a rarity at the price. For the money rivals are few.

### ARCAM ALPHA 7 **£320**

This British built player is extremely good value. An upfront, punchy nature suits Techno and Rock particularly well.

### MARANTZ CD-63 Special Edition **£350**

A superb budget buy. Addressing the problems of the CD-52II SE, its detailed and musical sound embarrasses many expensive players.

### MARANTZ CD-63MKII KI-SIGNATURE **£500**

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

### TRICHORD GENESIS **£549**

Conveys music in a powerful and dramatic fashion. Smooth and sweet, with a good sense of depth. A little soft sounding though.

### DPA RENAISSANCE **£895**

Words cannot describe its infinite variety, but suffice to say you'll love it or hate it. Highly emotional, involving presentation with not a hint of self-doubt.

### AUDIOLAB 8000CD **£1000**

Great presence and body through midrange along with good stage depth give this player a seductive and musical sound. A real charmer.

### LINN KARIK 3 **£1600**

Superb one-box player. Its supremely rhythmic, musical sound with delicacy and finesse puts it up with the best of the rest.

### NAIM CD1 **£1600**

This single box 16-bit player sounds very engaging compared to your average bitstreamer. Has that vital tingle factor of the larger, two-box CDs.

### MCINTOSH CDM7009 **£2635**

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

## COMPACT DISC TRANSPORTS

### TEAC VDRS-T1 **£550**

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

### AUDIOLAB 8000CDM **£1300**

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

## CD CONVERTORS

### DPA LITTLE BIT III **£300**

A lot more weight at frequency extremes than the II and far better control. For £300 there's nothing to beat it.

### THORENS TDA2000 **£700**

Used with the TCD2000 as a transport, the TDA2000 produces a sound that is focused, detailed and spacious. Good value.

### DPA ENLIGHTENMENT **£795**

Some believe this to be the best convertor around. A truly charismatic performer, it dives into Rock music with rare passion.

### PINK TRIANGLE ORDINAL **£837**

Pure, smooth sound free from hardness. One of the best at any price, losing little to the big guns.

### PINK TRIANGLE DA CAPO **£1450+**

Offers a choice of filter modules, all up there with the best. The Da Capo is superb in any respects, but can sound a touch polite on rock.

### DPA 1024 **£6000**

Proof positive that today's CDs needn't sound CD-like! Uses an in-house discrete convertor, and DPA haven't skimped on the build either!

## TURNTABLES

### GARRARD 401 **second-hand**

In a decent plinth with an arm of SME309 calibre, the 401 has a highly authoritative overall sound with the most solid, expressive bass in the business. Very musical, but treble isn't up to modern standards.

### THORENS TD124 **second-hand**

One of Thorens' best-ever turntables. Needs a modern plinth to give of its best. Duly installed, it's good enough to face off the Garrard 401, swapping some of its bass power for a more delicate, incisive treble.

### SYSTEMDEK IIX900/RB250 **£330**

A fine all rounder and easy to upgrade. Brings more depth and breadth than a Rega 3.

### SYSTEMDEK 2X2 **£499**

Although tuneful, bass isn't as deep as some rivals. More than makes up for it though with neutral and precise midrange and treble.

### RESON rs1 **£600**

A lean, yet vibrant sound quality that really draws the listener in. With good detail and rhythmic integrity this is an impressive turntable package.

### MICHELL GYRODEC **£800**

Stunning looks, build and engineering, and don't underestimate the sound. Standard PSU and Rega arm gives a detailed, architectural, if undynamic sound. With QC PSU and SME V, its scale and insight kills the competition at the price.

### PRO-JECT 6.1SA **£999**

The Pro-ject places the listener in the best seat in the control room. Outrageous dynamics and a punchy, seriously deep bass. Comes with Sumiko arm and Ortofon MC30 Supreme.

### LINN SONDEK LP12 **£840 - £1530**

Cirkus bearing puts it back up with the best. Superbly beguiling, rhythmic sound that plays Jazz like few others, but lacks the Gyrodec's detail or imaging. You'll forget CDs were ever invented.

### PINK TRIANGLE ANNIVERSARY **£1200**

One of the finest-sounding turntables around, the Anniversary takes the listener nearer the recording studio than almost any other deck. Works with Rega, Linn and SME arms alike.

### ROKSAN XERXES X **£1295**

DSU or XPS 3.5 power supply £150/170 extra. Excellent pitch stability from a new Swiss motor and outboard power supply. Very tight bass, fine dynamics and revealing clarity.

### MICHELL ORBE **£1950**

The Darth Vader of analogue, the Orbe builds on the strengths of the Gyrodec. An ultra-tuneful, expansive sound.

### SME MODEL 20 **£2495**

Including the excellent SME V tonearm, the Model 20 is possibly the last great turntable, unless you've got £11,000 for the Model 30, that is.

## TONEARMS

### REGA RB300 **£130**

Supremely capable at the price, but not quite humankind's salvation as has been suggested. Detailed, tight, rhythmic sound but tonally rather grey and cold-sounding.

### SME 3009SII **£375**

This Paleolithic device doesn't bother with frequency extremes or detail, but its legendary serviceability makes it a cult in Japan. Oh death, where is thy sting?

### SME309 **£570**

A down-market version of the IV and V with aluminium armtube and detachable headshell. Tight, neutral sound with good tonality, but lacks the IV's pace and precision.

### SME IV **£850**

A Series V with lower tolerated bearings, cheaper cables and no damper. Still vastly over-engineered and almost capable of its bigger brother's sonic fireworks. SME's best value product.

### SME V **£1235**

A masterpiece of precision engineering with a cohesive, ultra-transparent sound. A dream to set up and use.

### LINN EKOS **£1400**

A thunderous battleship of an arm, with a very impressive sound, masses of detail and dynamics, but lacks the SME V's cohesion and musicality.

## CARTRIDGES

### ORTOFON VMS-2E **£10**

Warm, full-bodied, punchy and fast. Not to be sniffed at for a tenner. Can be upgraded with a better stylus at a later date.

# World favourites guide

## **GOLDRING 1012GX** £60

An accomplished MM with a solid bass, slightly forward midband and clean transients. £20 buys the faster, more dynamic 1022GX.

## **GOLDRING 1042** £100

The best moving magnet available. Has an extremely cohesive sound that's warm but highly involving. Deliciously delicate treble and strong, powerful bass.

## **ORTOFON MC15 SUPER II** £110

An excellent budget moving coil with a smooth, polished, detailed sound. Tracks superbly but verges on the analytical at times. A bargain.

## **ORTOFON SUPREMES** £225-£450

The MC10, MC20 and MC30 Supremes all offer superb sound and value for money, with a distinctively rich, smooth and detailed musical performance. The valve brigade love them.

## **ORTOFON MC2000** £650

We came across this one in an SME IV on a Garrard 401; it duly gave one of the best results we've ever heard.

## **ORTOFON ROHMANN** £1000

In a way it's MC2000 meets MC7500 with the tonal strengths and dynamo sound Ortofon have been putting into their moving-coil cartridges of late.

## **LYRA LYDIAN** £649

A truly musical, sophisticated device that makes most other MCs sound frigid.

## **VAN DEN HUL MC-10** £840

Fluid bass, finely etched treble and highly tuneful in between. The MC-10 is honey, pure and simple.

## **ORTOFON MC7500** £2000

Conclusive proof that there's hope for humankind. Makes music of enormous scale and vibrancy. CD lovers would die if they heard it.

## **INTEGRATED AMPLIFIERS**

### **NAD 3020** second-hand

Classic sweet sounding, punchy budget super-amp with strong phono stage. Able to embarrass many modern budget amps.

### **NAD 310** £130

A real hi-fi amplifier at a bargain price. Forms the heart of a separates system that will murder any midi system at twenty paces. No phono stage, but you can't have everything at this price.

### **NAD 312** £200

Smooth, clear and dry. Fine detailing with little to complain about at the price. Good facilities.

### **ROTEL RA-970BX** £250

With its smooth and powerful sound, the Rotel sings a seductive song with all types of music. Powerful enough for most 'speakers too.

### **AURA VA-80** £280

The VA-80 is superb for the price with a confident, powerful sound. One of the smoothest around, it is capable of embarrassing more up-market competition.

### **ORELLE SA-100** £449

Clean, open, active sound. Smooth and detailed with good punch too. One of the best at the price.

### **ARCAM ALPHA 9** £500

A detailed and open sound lends great atmosphere to music. Wide range of facilities too, including optional MM/MC phono stages.

### **AUDIOLAB 8000A** £500

A jack-of-all-trades whose facilities, build, power and top-rate phono input make it a steal. Sound is good, but less involving than the Naim Nait 3.

### **NAIM NAIT 3** £500

A taste of high-end audio. The most involving, musical design at the price, but low power. Superb phono stage is £100 extra.

### **MISSION CYRUS 3** £500

Superb engineering, a solid cast chassis and a clear, spacious sound. Phono stage could be better.

### **SONNETEER CAMPION** £579

An amplifier that delivers near studio definition along with exemplary timing. Utterly gripping.

### **DPA RENAISSANCE** £595

Rich and smooth, the Renaissance is one of the sweetest amps around, if lightweight.

### **AUDION STERLING ETSE** £600

Economically but well built single-ended valve amplifier. Wonderful clarity with vocals. £600 with 1 line input. £800 with 5.

### **SUGDEN A21a** £640

Class A instigator amp. Rich, crisp, deep, tight sound and it images well too. Wonderful.

### **AUDIOLAB 8000S** £650

Fast, clear, crisp sound with a wide-open sound stage. One of the best at the price.

### **MERIDIAN 55 I** £795

Beautifully-built integrated with a sweeter, clearer sound than mid-price alternatives. Plenty of facilities and remote controllable.

### **UNISON SIMPLY 2** £995

This single-ended valve amplifier is smooth, sweet and open. An extremely musical performer.

### **UNISON SIMPLY 4** £1495

Sonically similar to the Simply 2, but with more power and control.

### **AUDIONOTE OTO SE** £1500

Ten watts of the sweetest sound around. Use sensitive speakers though, because it's unlikely to crack windows or trigger earthquakes.

### **McINTOSH MA6800** £3735

The MA6800 not so much plays music as takes control of it, with effortless bass drive and a three-dimensional sound stage.

## **PRE-AMPLIFIERS**

### **NAIM NAC32.5** second-hand

Naim's one-time top pre-amp is still a force to be reckoned with thanks to its precise, fast sound and excellent phono stage.

### **ROTEL RQ-970BX** £130

Superb value entry-level phono stage with audiophile quality components and clear sound.

### **DPA DSP200S** £495

Not quite the 50S, but there's little to match it at this price if outright sound quality is your priority.

### **ROSE RV23-S** £495

This interesting valve/transistor hybrid has a smooth, rich, spacious sound.

### **AUDIOLAB 8000C** £520

Versatile with superb phono input. Can sound sterile, but latest version is much improved.

### **MICHELL ISO/HERA** £530

This phono stage has fine midband and treble detail, with taut bass. The £850 ISO/HR brings more of everything, and for many people is the last word on the subject.

### **AUDIO INNOVATIONS P2** £749

Fantastic bass and super insight make this one of the best phono stages around. One for vinyl lovers.

### **AUDIOLAB 8000Q** £995

Excellent line-level only pre-amp, greatly improves on 8000C with a more fluid, musical sound and greater grip. Remote control.

### **MERIDIAN 502** £1295

Transparent, detailed sound with good tonal range and a neutral presentation. Flexible and remote controlled too.

### **NAIM NAC82** £1945

This remote control pre-amp thrusts detail forth in true Naim fashion.

## **POWER AMPLIFIERS**

### **QUAD II** second-hand

Classic valve monoblock with many thousands still in use around the world. Archetypal warm, smooth valve sound, although not the last word in detail or dynamics.

### **LEAK STEREO 20** second-hand

The Stereo 20 can sound impressively up-to-date, although power and detail are ultimately limited.

### **QUAD 405II** second-hand

Solidly built, but lifeless sounding, power amp which can be substantially improved by a Quad factory service.

### **ARCAM ALPHA 9** £400

With 70watts on tap, the 9P will drive most loudspeakers with a spacious and detailed sound. Good bass drive too.

### **MISSION CYRUS POWER** £450

This power amplifier is a honey. Rich and smooth, but with a firm grip; a fine blend of properties.

### **ROSE RPI90** £495

Used with the partnering pre-amp it gives 70watts of smooth, relaxing sound.

### **SUGDEN AU41P** £530

Extremely competitive at the price with 100W of unusually smooth, full-bodied sound.

### **SHEARNE PHASE 3** £619

A neutral, highly dynamic and thoroughly exciting amplifier. A sonic bargain.

# World favourites guide

## QUAD 606II £675

Quad's latest 140W powerhouse is smooth and civilised, but engagingly musical. Legendary back-up service.

## DPA DPA200S £750

Better than anything else at the price. Not as dry as the S0S.

## NAIM NAPI80 £900

Partnered with a NAC82, this has classic Naim control, making for a superbly rhythmic presentation. A touch lean for some tastes.

## MICHELL ALECTO STEREO £1300

A refined transistor amplifier with valve-like transparency and a full, warm, easy-going sound. The £1800 Alecto monoblocks have rare lucidity and three dimensional realism.

## MERIDIAN 557 £1400

Great control and dynamics allied to seductive smoothness. A rare combination of power and delicacy.

## AUDIOLAB 8000M £1500

Beautifully built, powerful amps that will drive anything you care to throw at them. Detailed, analytical sound, but a touch grey compared to valve rivals.

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### KENWOOD KT-6050L £300

Very, very tuneful and as clear and detailed as CD. Tuners like this have you sitting in your seat wondering at the sheer wealth of music out there.

### MISSION CYRUS FM7 £300

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### ROTEL RT990BX £500

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### NAIM NAT03 £500

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### FANFARE FT-1 £1350

In its native US the FT-1 is no mere tuner but a 'broadcast monitor' no less, a task at which it acquits itself well, with a clear and powerful sound.

### NAIM NAT01 £1380

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### KENWOOD KX-3080 £160

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### DENON DRM-650S £230

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### AIWA AD-S950 £300

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A great piece of engineering from Pioneer, a bit complex, but a first rate sound on playback and recording. Dolby S included.

### NAKAMICHI DR2 £600

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### NAKAMICHI DR1 £850

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### NAKAMICHI CR7 £1500

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### MISSION 731 LE £149

An extensive reworking of Mission's entry level 'speaker, much tighter on transients and more refined treble. Neutral and revealing.

### TANNOY 631 SE £170

Great bass extension, super open and focused midrange and fine detail up-top. Work best on filled dedicated stands; unmatched at the price.

### HEYBROOK HB1 S3 £269

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### CELESTION IMPACT 23 £299

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### B&W DM 602 £300

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### REL Q-BASS £350

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### EPOS ES12 £495

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### MISSION 752 Freedom £600

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### HARBETH HL-K6 £975

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### EPOS ES25 £1505

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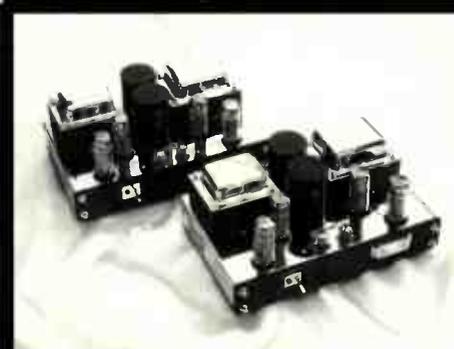
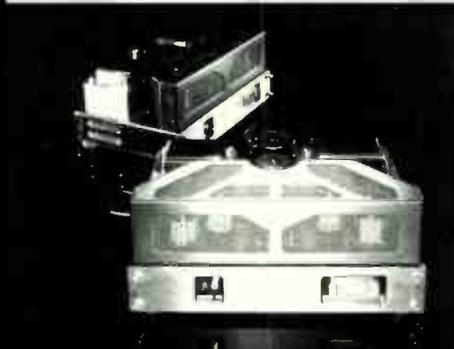
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| 300B Built.....   | 300B-B240/120.....     | <input type="checkbox"/> | £1150 ..... | £950 |
| KLP1 line level pre-amplifier .....                       | KLP1-K240/120 .....    | <input type="checkbox"/> | £345 .....  | £295 |
| KLP1 Built .....  | KLP1-B240/120 .....    | <input type="checkbox"/> | £545 .....  | £465 |
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| KLPP1 Built .....   | KLPP1-B240/120 .....   | <input type="checkbox"/> | £695 .....  | £595 |

**LOUDSPEAKER KITS**

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| Drive Units.....  | KLS3-D ..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | £230 ..... | £200 |
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| Drive Units.....  | KLS3-D ..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | £630 ..... | £540 |
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| <b>KLS6 3-way HDA driver floorstanding loudspeaker</b>                                      |              |                          |            |      |
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| Drive Units.....  | KLS7-D ..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | £110 ..... | £95  |
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# MUSIC REVIEWS

## I N D E X

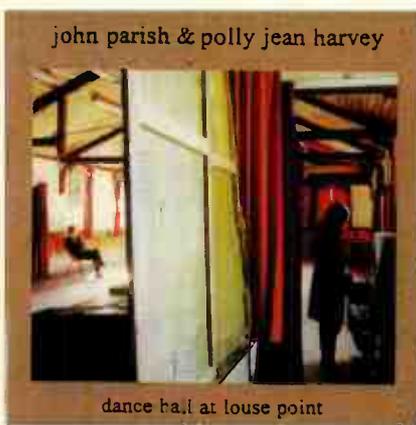
**ROCK & POP** .....81  
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### Giovanni Dadomo



see that at No1, can you?) to such self-explicit items as 'Taut' or the stinging 'Heela'.

A splendid excursion too in their take on the Leiber and Stoller classic, 'Is That All There Is?' which the duo deliver with masses of style, acumen, chutzpah and so on. Now that could well crack them charts apart. Give Polly a cracker.

JOHN PARISH & POLLY JEAN HARVEY  
**DANCE HALL AT LOUSE POINT**  
ISLAND LCD 0407

Ever the adventuress, La Harvey here enters into a series of collaborations alongside long-time accompanist John Parish. And you know what? It's a boss combination. But then I would say that, having been a Harvey fan since Year One. It just happens to be true though.

Parish, a keyboard man, has a more fluid, perhaps even emotive style than Polly's own more (deliberately?) hammered melodies and vocals. The results are excellent, as is much on Parish's eleven originals which run the gamut from the lonesome 'Urn With Dead Flowers In A Drained Pool' (can't



LIGHTNING SEEDS  
**DIZZY HEIGHTS**  
EPIC 488640 2

The sweeter side of Pop doesn't often get to me in a positive way - the

Beautiful South get right up my nose. But Ian Broudie's Lightning Seeds are something else.

The second LP and first band album proper (Broudie was the band on the first LP, playing almost everything himself), Dizzy Heights is still very much an expansion of the Broudie sound. There are loads of sixties' influences like Love, The Turtles and hordes of others, not to mention the inevitable Moptops. So what? At least Broudie's a bona fide Scouser (echoes of Teardrop Explodes in here as well, if you need convincing) so I'd guess he has at least as much right to be inspired by Lennon ('Wishaway' and heaps more are witness to that) as those lads in Oasis.

It's not the inspiration that counts but the results, and here the Seeds have delivered a disc that sounds like a 'Greatest Hits' compilation, and probably will be. It has a beauty and cohesion of sound and feel that rarely crop up. Small wonder they were neck to neck with the Gallaghers in a recent 'Best New Laddoes' (or something) poll.

So, the Liverpool Sound lives. You must know the hits 'What If . . .', 'Ready Or Not' and the rest. But they're not the only cherries in this cake. In fact, it's all cherries. Great Pop record, endlessly playable, packed not just with wild imagination but ablaze with irresistible tunes. What more you needs, Senor!

rock & pop reviews

# rock & pop record of the month

NICK DRAKE

## FRUIT TREE

HANNIBAL HNCD 5402

This is a welcome re-issue of a four-disc boxed set summarising the work of Nick Drake, one of the most interesting, talented and tragic figures of the late sixties.

In 1968, at the tender age of twenty, Drake was signed by the legendary Joe Boyd, record producer and talent hound extraordinaire, at a time when music was going through some profound and lasting changes.

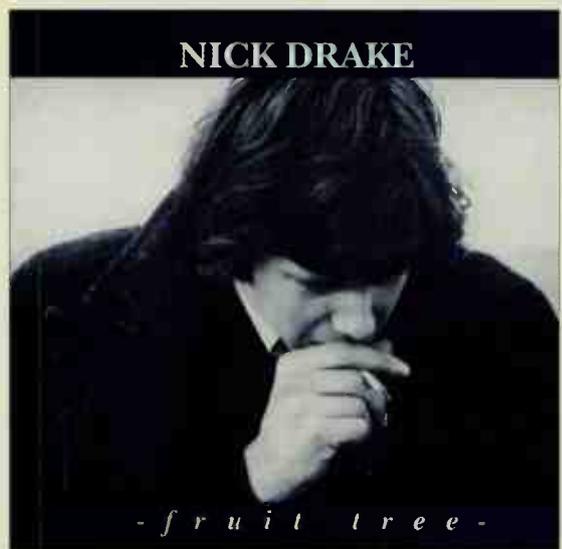
Thanks to pioneers such as The Beatles, Byrds et al, Pop was no longer one-dimensional kids' stuff. Psychedelia was engulfing the West, and with it Popular music was wearing bright new clothes of all descriptions, from the Music Hall-inspired concoctions of the Kinks and Small Faces, to the Blues-inspired strange days of Cream and Led Zeppelin, or the Folk Rock sired by the aforementioned Byrds and Mr Dylan.

Drake came out of the Folk corner, which had moved - largely via Dylan and Donovan - from its student/long hair/coffee bar-with-Kerouac-in-your-back-pocket provincialism to centre stage. Hence Boyd steered the glowing careers of The Incredible String Band and Fairport Convention. And when one of the latter suggested he check out this Cambridge undergrad who sang and played haunting tunes, he was in like Flint.

Drake must've thought his ship had come in - Boyd not only produced acts that were artistic and innovative, he also made records that sold. So Drake jacked in his degree and cut his first LP, the incandescent *Five Leaves Left*, with Boyd wearing his producer hat. But Drake was miles apart from his stablemates, having neither the colourful minstrelsy of the String Band, nor the sturdy, "Let's have another Scrumpy, me lads", band-bonhomie of the early Fairports.

He was a solo artist with the emphasis on the solo; at a time when people dressed like rainbows, Drake was the man in black. Where music was wildly eclectic and acid-dazed, his songs were spare to the point of being ghostly. Quiet and determinedly a loner, he was the last person you'd invite to a Love-In.

Small wonder that his records didn't sell by the truck-load - they were, like their maker, gently subtle affairs. His voice is soft, the words are poetic, and the music prefers to whisper in your ear rather than bite it off.



Sadly, Drake's death was possibly a result of his lack of commercial or public approval. He was also quite likely suffering from what we now know as Clinical Depression before the psychs even had a word for it. Anyway, his life ended far too soon. His music, on the other hand, has continued to be discovered by succeeding generations where some of his more flamboyant contemporaries had their fifteen minutes and promptly vanished.

It's a truism to say that one shouldn't make too many connections between an artist's personal life and their work; when they've died tragically young, it can get ghoulish. But you don't need to be Freud or Jung to hear the subtle echoes that

reverberate between Drake's work and his very real, sad apartness. Yet even if you knew nothing of the man himself, you'd need a heart of stone not to be touched by as bewitching a song as 'Time Has Told Me', the opener to *Five Leaves Left*, a shudderingly enticing disc full of sparsely glacial beauties.

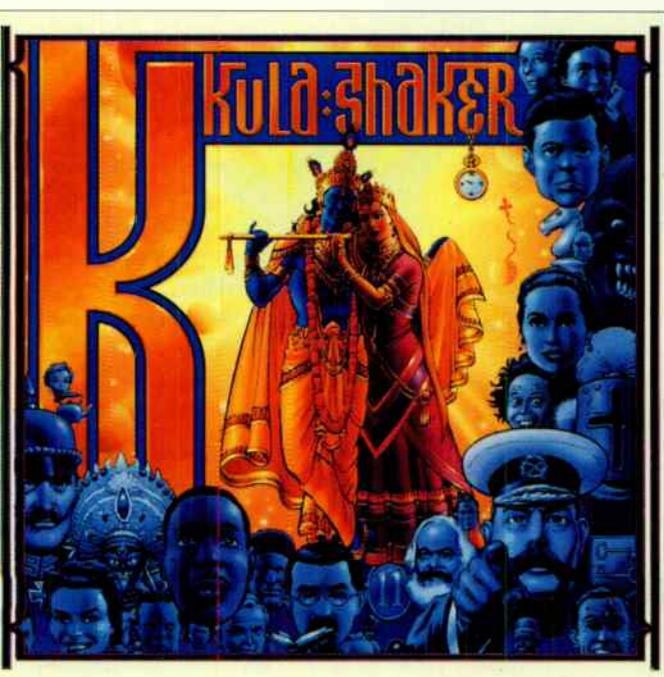
The succeeding *Bryter Layter*, with its fuller arrangements, showed Drake in, for him, a more 'up' mood. Still, it never overstepped the mark as the likes of 'At The Chime Of A City Clock' bear timeless testament to. Drake never overdid the dressing and that's precisely why his records have lasted and will probably continue to.

His last shout was *Pink Moon*, with another beautifully so-right title cut leading to what was perhaps his most cohesive and self-contained recording. Try the disarmingly provocative 'Things Behind The Sun' or the brief but perfect 'Horn', a one-word title when the things were unheard of. But with Drake, less is always more and this is no exception.

The ten 'lost' cuts constituting *Time Of No Reply* are unused material, home demos, even the last four songs Drake cut in early 1974. Here too, although the songs span six years and all manner of ambiances and production values, they melt together with marvellous fluidity and style. There's also an excellent wee booklet that relates the Nick Drake story in full and is beautifully put together. But the important thing as always is the music.

Nick Drake was a man out of time and place. He could well be this century's equivalent of John Keats (if that doesn't sound too pretentious), another delicate soul swimming against a cruel tide. But most of all, please just listen. Because Nick Drake was a true original and his sad song is touched with hope and a rare glory. It really is music that soothes the soul. Lovely.

Jon Clarke



KULA SHAKER  
K  
SHAKERI CD

Does talent run in the family? It certainly does in the Mills clan. Like father like daughter, and now like daughter like son.

Little could quintessential British actor Sir John Mills have guessed that he would one day be related to a kick-arse, cool Rock god. He had already spawned the delightful '60s sex symbol, Hayley Mills. The question was, could the Mills family now carry on their talented tradition?

With Crispian Mills they certainly have. The son of Hayley and lead singer of Kula Shaker has everything needed for a modern day music success - striking appearance, an almost ungodly talent for catchy pop songs and a good lead for stardom.

Kula Shaker take off from the sad demise of the Stone Roses, one of England's most talented bands that never was. One can only hope that KS

will fare rather better in the longevity stakes.

With debut album *K*, which has already spent weeks in the Top Ten, Kula Shaker have cleverly tapped into a timeless pool of classic '60s Rock and woven in '90s attitude.

One of the year's best by a long shot, *K* has an amazing repertoire of potential singles. In fact, almost every one sounds like it could be hit material.

Opening track 'Hey Dude' is a devastating introduction to the album's 13 songs. Rolling in with a classic, groovy beat, wah wah pedals ablaze, this is a track for a new

generation of dancefloor kids.

When Crispian Mills opens his mouth and sings, Ian Brown of the Stone Roses is literally put out to grass. While at times he sounds ridiculously gruff and lairy, like Shaun Rider, at best he competes with the likes of Jim Morrison.

Despite their heaviness, the suspiciously hippy-style riffs - a la Pink Floyd, Led Zeppelin, etc - set an almost mellow tone to the album, with an emphasis on the Hammond organ.

Take 'Govinda', a chant of Krishna consciousness, for example. It has Ravi Shanker sitar littered all over it. And while this might be appropriate for Sunday morning TV, it is almost criminal on an album in this day and age. But somehow Mills et al get away with it.

Before disillusionment can even think about creeping in, the Kulas storm back with 'Smart Dogs', another sure-fire burst of classic guitar action.

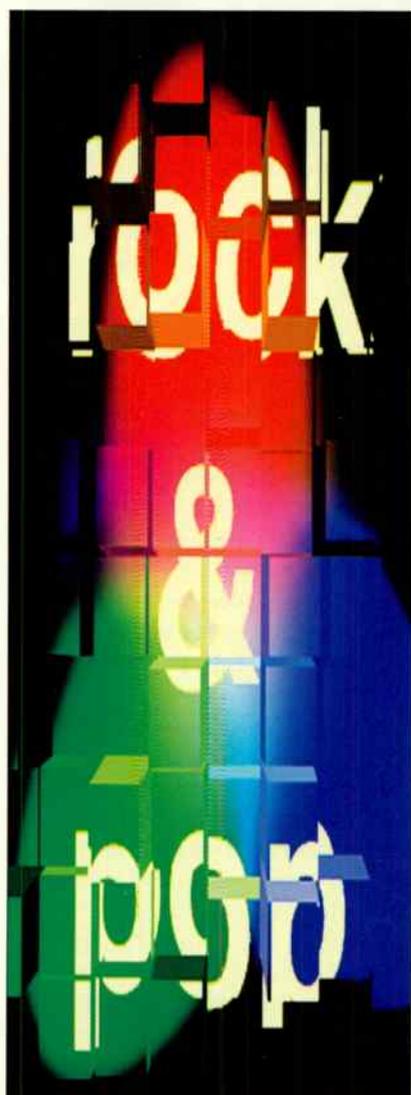
The rest of the album's tracks breeze past confidently, getting deeper and deeper into the rich and varied world of warped British Rock. From Pink Floyd to Deep Purple, it's an almost

tragic progression.

Take 'Tattva'. This song is aimed not at the Walkman but the spacious, smoke-filled room perfumed with the aroma of incense and peppermint, strewn with petals and virgins and sporting a legion of Opium hookah pipes.

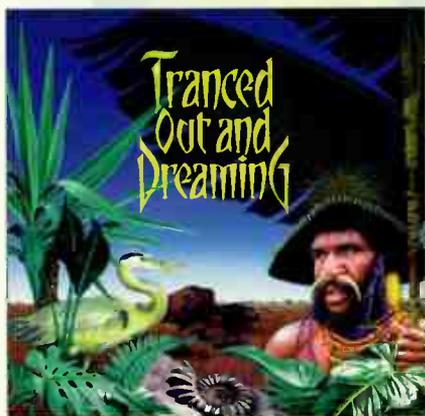
Everything, including the bright and trippy Indian-style cover - suspiciously Grateful Dead in conception - suggests a throwback to the sunshine '60s. Indeed, *K* is entirely retrospective. It doesn't offer much of a new stance or sensibility, seeming happy to carve up the Hendrix, Page and Lennon legends for the record.

But so what - it's all in fun and sounds great, particularly after six years of House and Brit Pop. This might herald a great return to the '60s and flares. Tread carefully and you won't trip up.



# dance & ambient

*Viv  
Craske*



**TRANCED OUT AND DREAMING**  
PLANET DOG BARK CD023

There are times when you just give up hope, when a new genre is jumped upon until every track sounds the same and every 12in. has the obligatory 'capture-a-new-audience' mix attached. And the worst offender of the last couple of years is, without question, Goa Trance.

So you can imagine my suspicion of any album with the word 'Trance' in the title. Oh no, more wibblings and key progressions going nowhere. But then again we're dealing with Planet Dog here, the people who brought you Banco De Gaia, and a hot contender for the Record Company Least Likely To Bandwagon-Jump award.

Yes, the Trance is particularly psychedelic, but the tracks are mainly from new signings, fresh blood in a stagnant niche. And what you get is Trance that knows when to let a track breathe, mellow out and be musical rather than banging away. There's a good chance that many of the featured artists will go far (e.g. Tony Hunt and Cybnaut), so there's trainspotter value too.

No more endless noodling, no Prog Rock-style musicianship throwbacks.

just good, old-fashioned Trance for a new year. Yep, trust me on this one. Planet Dog are the least likely to pull the wool over your eyes (unless it belongs to a lovely winter bobble hat).



**MINISTRY OF SOUND - THE ANNUAL II**  
MIXED BY PETE TONG AND BOY GEORGE  
MINISTRY OF SOUND ANNCD96

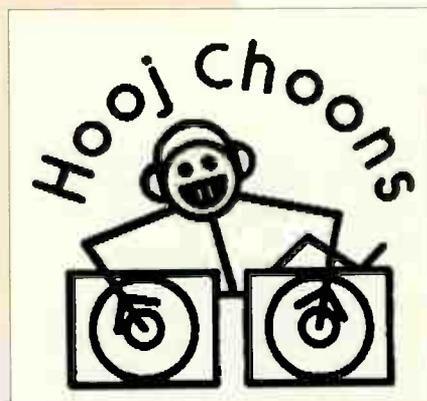
1996 may now be a week into history, but London's super-club will help you relive all those clubbing moments with their second annual.

So what do you get for your money's worth? Well, a 29-tracker double CD, featuring the best singles of the year plus a rather self-important 36 page booklet detailing a year at the Ministry and club culture in general. And of course, it's all wrapped up in brown fake leather.

If you're just getting into Dance music this is a real value-for-money purchase. There are all the year's hit artistes: The Prodigy, Underworld, Stretch and Vern, Tori Amos, CJ Bolland and Faithless. There are also

some more respectable numbers from Natural Born Grooves' 'Groovebird' to Eve Gallagher's 'Misunderstood'. And it's all given that market-friendly quality by Radio 1's Pete Tong and pop-star-turned-DJ Boy George doing the all-important mixing duties.

Let's face it: this compo is going to fly off the shelves faster than underwear off women at a Tom Jones concert. That's not really the point though. It's one more step up the Ministry's ladder of success, even if it's hardly a ground breaking album. But with so many dodgy Christmas compilations in the shops at the moment you could do a lot worse than caning some New Year wonga on this.



**SOME OF THESE WERE HOOJ 3**  
HOOJ CHOONS HOOJ50

1997 and still hung up on happy House, you may be thinking. If you are, you're sadly mistaken. For while I have no problem in admitting that I'm partial to the odd uplifting Nu Energy track, the so-called Handbag slice of Dance has come a long way.

Italian piano House has had its day,

the charts are saturated with big-label Pop/House acts and the true nature of Handbag is all but dead in 1995. If you don't believe me, just check Hooj's third compo of "Half decent house for a f\*\*\*d-up world".

There's the chart storming 'Nothing I Won't Do' from JX and the customary 4/4 rhythms, keyboard key progressions and girlie vocals (i.e. 'Diss-Cuss', 'Save The Day'), but there's so much more besides.

For starters there's Marmion's 'Schoneberg', a tasty number perfumed to the Goa side just when the vibe turned dirty. But 'Schoneberg' is far superior to 90% of Goa tracks, because it has energy and direction. Then again, on the Trance tip there's Antic's 'The Ultimate', which, apart from the occasionally irritating vocal, has enough dancefloor oomph to satisfy anyone's appetite.

Naturally, this compo is mixed by Malibu Stacey resident Seb Fontaine, a DJ with flair and a strong hold on how to make a crowd really beg.

Handbag? Rubbish! Hooj simply make House for the unpretentious. One for those who will still admit it's all about emotion and an adrenaline high rather than a twisted grimace and a fixed stare. Hooj are six years and 50

releases strong, and have survived where other independents have gone under. Nice one, boys and girls. Here's to keeping the acid House spirit alive.



YOKOTA  
**CAT, MOUSE AND ME**  
HARTHOUSE HHCD022

One of the first things the press release tells you about Susumu Yokota is that he's massively influenced by Joy Division. Fair enough, but quite what that has got to do with Cat, Mouse and Me is

anyone's guess.

As you might have deduced, Yokota hails from Tokyo, at a time when a lot of Japanese artists and DJs are finally catching up with the West. Up until a couple of years ago, the best that floated across from the Orient was banging experimental Techno give or take a few luminaries.

And now there's Yokota with a vast mix of sounds and styles including Funk, Hip-Hop and Techno, with the odd break in between. There's 'One Way', an addictive, floppy sort of tune in a Saturday morning waking-up vein. And 'Few', a twiddly Drum 'n' Bass number full of lush space noises. Perfect timing really, when more people are happy to kick back, relax and enjoy the show, appreciating Dance music of a less dance-oriented nature.

House on the Dubby side has been around for a long time, but it's pretty easy to get bored of producers when basically all you've got is a stripped-down track. What the new breed of producers world-wide have learnt to do is build the tension back up again without ruining the overall effect. And this is what Yokota also does. Well worth a spin this, if you need a little light relief. Or if you're just one kool kat like me ●

## dance & ambient record of the month

VARIOUS

### LOVE GROOVE DANCE PARTY VOL 3 + 4

METROPOLE MUSIC LGCD2

The Danny Rampling story has been more one of faith than trust, both on his part and that of the party faithful. Danny was one of the original few who went to Ibiza way back when and believed there was a vibe out there to be harnessed. He and his wife Jenni took a risk and set up the legendary Shoom night, one of a tiny number of clubs dedicated to ushering in a new sound called House.

Danny's achievements since are just as impressive, although too many to catalogue in such a short space. Suffice to say his DJ talents and remix (not to mention production) credits soon singled him out as one of Britain's top talents, always on the cutting edge, always mixing it up for the

hedonistic masses.

And then, two or three years back, his DJing became, for some, a little



bland, too four-on-the-floor shall we say. Following that he blagged a Radio 1 spot. But we still had faith.

And it was justified, for like

volumes 1 and 2, 3 and 4 are absolute stonkers. Here he's chosen to separate the two sides of his musical personality to give us 'The Glitterball Mix' and 'The Spacey, Trancey Mix'. The former offers up Kim English's re-released 'Nightlife' and The Absolute's 'I Believe', while the latter sweats it out with Leftfield, Scottish Techno-stompers Lochi and Neuro's gut-wrenching 'X Cabs'.

The thing with Rampling (like all the best DJs) is not so much the music but how he dovetails it and mixes it up to make a greater whole than the sum of the parts.

Top value for money, this outing has hardly a slack tune in sight, and is frankly a wonder to listen to, with fluid, full-on partying drive. In fact, if you're setting up a club, save yourself the money needed for an egomaniacal DJ and just pump this out. Runny Dumpling? I'll not hear a word of it ●

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World Radio History

# Simon Hopkins



DJ KRUSH & TOSHINORI KONDO  
KI-OKU  
SONY JAPAN SRCS 8093

the great misunderstanding about Japanese artistic/creative culture, it seems to me, is the rather arrogant assumption that what the Japanese do is like some Western (that is, let's face it, American or British) invention and re-interpret or improve it in either technological or artistic terms. Frankly this is hogwash. In the former case, take the Walkman. In the latter, well, cop these two CDs for a start.

As radically different as they are, what Mellow Out and Ki-Oku share is the fact that their music is not to be found elsewhere. It's not a question of indigenous vs international (or, for that matter, authentic vs faux). All creative innovation is a process of assimilation, and what these musicians have fashioned out of their findings is genuinely unique music.

First up is DJ Krush and Toshinori Kondo's Ki-Oku. Now unless Sony get around to releasing this in the UK (and the signs aren't good), I'm afraid the only way you're going to get hold of this little gem is by forking out a rather hefty wad on an import copy. But it's worth it, I promise you.

That this album inhabits a different musical universe to the Mainliner album probably goes without saying.

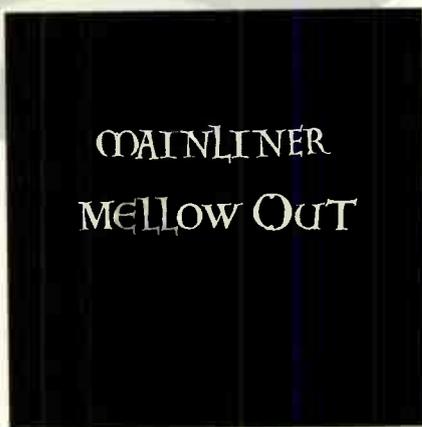
DJ Krush is a name familiar to those of you who've followed the rise and rise

of Trip-Hop over the last couple of years. As a genre, I have to say, it's produced more than its fair share of blandness that's somehow sucked all the guts out of its parent genre, full-blown Hip-Hop. Nonetheless, there are notable exceptions, and Japan's DJ Krush is undoubtedly one of them, his own music a seamless grab-bag of plundered genres and extremely alluring grooves.

This album sees him teamed up with the trumpeter Toshinori Kondo, one of the most impressive musicians to have emerged in the last twenty years. Taking both Miles Davis' '70s experiments and Jon Hassell's Fourth World excursions as his starting point, Kondo plays trumpet in combination with a deluge of signal processing.

In other contexts (with his own group IMA or in collaboration with New Music makers as diverse as John Zorn and Paul Schutze), Kondo can play ferociously. But here, with Krush's beautifully muted, lush grooves, the effect of his playing is altogether more discreet and carries a tropical flavour.

Mesmerizing.



MAINLINER  
MELLOW OUT  
CHARNELMUSIC/LAMUSICA CHCDL9

Power trio (and for once the term is very, very literal) Mainliner is the baby

World Radio History

of bass player, singer and composer Nanjo Asahito. Not untypically for musicians in the Japanese underground Rock scene, Nanjo is involved in apparently innumerable projects. He's probably best known to aficionados here as the mainstay of improvising hard Rockers High Rise, whose Disallow album is one of this year's finest.

For Mainliner, Nanjo has brought together Kawabata, the extraordinary guitarist with Musica Transonic (try to imagine Punk as played by King Crimson), and free-jazz drummer Koizumi.

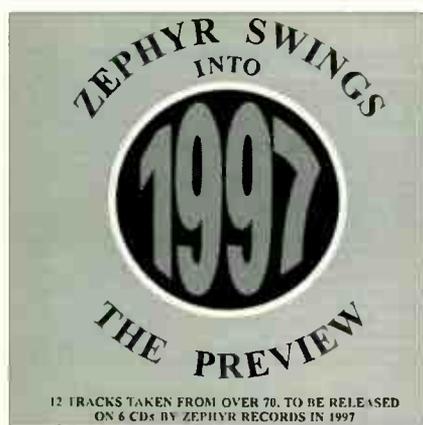
Now I quote from the album's liner notes: "Mainliner is a heavy new psychedelic band. High Rise is still active, but Mainliner was created to explore new possibilities. Mainliner is trying to explore revolution and exploration by different rhythms not possible with High Rise. . ." Well, quite. The salient point here is the "different rhythms". I might not know anything about Koizumi-san, but I can say that, on the evidence of Mellow Out, he's one mutha of a drummer, ably straddling frenzied, schizoid free-jazz clattering and monster hard Rock pounding.

The album consists of just three long pieces, which share a similar form - a slow, spacey, almost Floydian music that suddenly breaks out into frenetic guitar soloing over a rhythm section on the point of self-immolation. The album's closing track 'M' is archetypal, with a succession of freak-outs emerging from an edgy song. Each time one finishes, it's near-impossible to imagine anything more ferocious, but then the next comes along.

There are no stars here, as this is strictly egalitarian stuff, and each piece has all three players at full title. But Kawabata does deserve special mention. Japan seems to have more than its fair share of extraordinary improv Rock guitarists - Keiji Haino and KK Null, while stand-outs, are just the tip of the iceberg - but Kawabata is exceptional nonetheless.

Alarming, highly impressive stuff ●

# Simon Cooke



ZEPHYR SWINGS INTO 1997  
**THE PREVIEW**  
 ZECDI0

Well, if you'll forgive me, I'm going to indulge in the luxury of reviewing a CD which is not on general release. A few copies will be made available to the general public, but basically this is a sampler CD for lucky people such as myself.

I reviewed three CDs on the Zephyr label last month, and they showed that the company is capable of producing high grade recordings of British Jazz talent. This CD shows that it isn't just a case of beginner's luck (Zephyr have been around for less than two years, after all).

It's a selection of tracks from their next six releases, expected in 1997, and an album which works exceedingly well as a whole, not just as an amalgam.

The line-up includes Ruby Braff, Gerard Presencer, Warren Vache, George Masso and Roy Williams (brass), Alan Barnes, Iain Dixon, Andy Panayi, and Ken Peplowski on reeds, Andy Kerr on vibes, Howard Alden and

Dave Cliff on guitar, Alec Dankworth and Dave Green on bass, Martin Drew, Alan Ganley and Clark Tracey on drums and Zephyr's very own Brian Lemon on piano.

In short, it's an excellent combination of young and old Jazz talent, well enough recorded for me to recommend these forthcoming CDs before I've even heard them, such is the strength of this release. Look out for the label.



PHIL WOODS GORDON BECK  
**THE COMPLETE CONCERT**  
 JMS 083

Recorded live at the Wigmore Hall in May of last year, this double album gives you just under two and a half hours of apparently undiluted concert performance. I use the term 'undiluted' carefully because any recorded performance differs from one heard as a unique and irrevocably lost experience. Quite a few new releases claim that "Shredded Wheat" quality of no artificial additions or subtractions. I

admit (mea culpa) that I have, in the past, upheld the belief that it is possible for a recording to achieve this laudable aim. Perhaps I didn't make it clear that it is also a delusion. This is one CD that shows just how big a delusion it can be.

Phil Woods plays alto sax and clarinet while Gordon Beck tickles the ivories. In the space of the Wigmore Hall you would have thought there was room for a few more people to intrude into the players' arena. Apart from a little polite applause though, this could just as well have been recorded in a studio.

It's a sad comment on the reticence of a British audience when they respond to playing of this calibre with less emotion than party members do to politicians' platitudes. I'd give my right arm to have been at the Wigmore for this concert just to find out if the average British Jazz-going audience is as culturally and emotionally deficient as this one seems to be.

Woods and Beck give a masterful performance together, bringing the gentle tone of their combined mainstream playing to the kind of zenith rarely attained by a simple duet, where players' faults are all too obvious. There are none here to find, and these two swing together with the kind of rapport which is virtually extinct in the world of quick change Jazz line-ups.

Six of the fourteen tracks are written by one or other player, with Hagen/Rogers' 'Harlem Nocturne', Berlin's 'How Deep Is The Ocean', Davis' 'Solar', and Evans' 'Re: Person I Knew' notable among the remainder.

Beautifully played, well recorded and efficiently mastered, this is one recording not to be without ●

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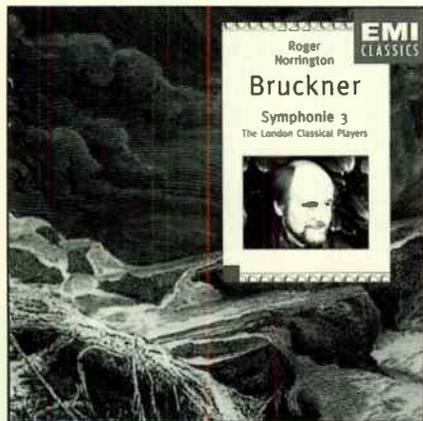
# Classical

Peter Herring

**The music may come from Austria, Germany and Italy (via France), but the performances are one hundred per cent best of British as some of our finest players get to the heart of Haydn and Beethoven, bring to life a great but neglected setting of the Requiem Mass, and present a formidable challenge to the whole European tradition of Bruckner interpretation.**

ANTON BRUCKNER

**Symphony No3 in D minor**  
**The London Classical Players**  
EMI CLASSICS 5 56167 2 (DDD/57.25)



It was inevitable. After Schumann, Mendelssohn, Brahms and Wagner, authenticity has arrived at Anton Bruckner. However, the justification for the exercise, argues conductor Roger Norrington, is not solely based on matters of instruments (type and number) or even on tempos and performing style. Rather, Norrington has set out to challenge a tradition of Bruckner interpretation, one that has tended to treat the symphonies as an extension of the composer's sacred music, 'wordless masses' if you like.

In this recording of the first version of the Third Symphony, Norrington leaves the listener in no doubt that this is music for the concert hall, not the church, and that for all his devotion, Anton Bruckner was also a man who liked to dance.

The story accompanying this symphony is complex even by Bruckner standards. The first edition appeared in 1873 and was dedicated to

Wagner, following the composer's visit to the shrine at Bayreuth to pay homage to his hero. In the ensuing four years, however, Bruckner undertook major revisions to the score, many of them misguidedly suggested to him by others. A new edition appeared in 1877, only to be followed by yet another revision in 1889, this being undertaken by Bruckner in conjunction with one of the Schalk brothers.

The original score was left to gather dust until that most sympathetic of Bruckner scholars, Robert Haas, prepared a new edition earlier this century. Sadly the printing plates for this edition were destroyed during an air-raid on Leipzig in 1944 before a single score had been printed, leaving conductors with a choice between the 1877 and the heavily-cut 1889 versions. Most opted for the former. Amazingly, it was not until 1977 that the original score was republished, as part of a new Complete Bruckner Edition, and another six years before it was recorded, with Eliahu Inbal conducting the Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra.

There's no doubt that, after familiarity with the later editions, hearing Roger Norrington and the London Classical Players' realisation of Bruckner's original thoughts comes as something of a shock. The tempos are brisker than normal, giving the whole performance a lithe, 'open-air' quality. Light and transparency flood every aspect of the score, inevitably eliminating some of that 'hushed mystery' that characterises other interpretations (arguably no bad thing) but without diminishing those moments of Brucknerian awe and majesty.

Following the example of the

Vienna Philharmonic of Bruckner's time, Norrington deploys a string band of just forty-five, and divides the violins to achieve a true 'dialogue' across the soundstage. The sound is underpinned by the cellos and basses, which face outwards rather than inwards, and the winds and brass are 'terraced' behind them. The effect is not for those who wish to luxuriate in lush orchestral textures, but it will be relished by those who want to appreciate the immense detail that fills this score, not least its abundance of quotations from such as Beethoven and, naturally, Wagner.

If I have a criticism of Norrington's approach it is that there were times when his tempos came across as just too inflexible, although there is no question that he brings a fresh cohesion to the decidedly uncohesive finale. And I thoroughly enjoyed his unapologetic treatment of the polka melody in this movement, something which too many conductors seem to consider a serious error of taste on Bruckner's part!

Here, as throughout the symphony, EMI's recording from Studio 1 at Abbey Road fully complements Norrington's quest for clarity and precision, and the balances are exemplary.

Needless to say, this is a recording that demands to be heard by any serious Bruckner enthusiast. But I would venture that any listener will be excited and intrigued by the experience - there are fresh insights to be gained here into Bruckner's musical vision. For all that he was dubbed 'God's musician', it is Bruckner's warm humanity that is at last allowed to reveal itself, but without his music ever sounding earthbound.

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LUIGI CHERUBINI

**Requiem in C Minor/Marche Funebre**  
**Corydon Singers; Corydon Orchestra; conductor, Matthew Best**

HYPERION CDA66805 (DDD/53.22)



If your work had been endorsed by no less a figure than Ludwig van Beethoven, you might reasonably expect your place in music's pantheon to be assured for all time. But that was not to be for the exotically-named Maria Luigi Carlo Zenobio Salvatore Cherubini, who was born in Florence in 1760 and died, aged 81, in Paris in 1842. Beethoven acclaimed Cherubini as "Europe's foremost dramatic composer", and of his C Minor setting of the Requiem Mass, declared: "If I were to write a Requiem, Cherubini's would be my only model."

The work which so impressed Beethoven was conceived towards the end of Cherubini's long career, the bulk of which was spent in France. He had made his name both as a renowned teacher and as a composer of opera, the finest of which - *Medea* - was first produced in Paris in 1797. By the turn of the century, however, Cherubini's star was on the wane: operatic taste had changed and his fortunes in post-revolution France were not helped by having enjoyed the patronage of the King's brother, the Comte de Provence.

For a time, Cherubini quit musical life altogether. In 1808 though, a request to compose some church music rekindled his creative flame and he went on to produce five settings of the Mass, numerous Latin motets and other

choral pieces. The popularity of these works re-established Cherubini in French musical life to the extent that he was awarded the prestigious position of Surintendant de la musique du Roi. This post led to the French government giving him the somewhat bizarre commission to compose a Requiem Mass to mark the anniversary of the execution of Louis XVI. The work was received triumphantly at its first performance in the crypt of the Cathedral of St Denis in January, 1817.

Thereafter, the Requiem was performed frequently, earning the praise not only of Beethoven, but also Brahms and Schumann. It is easy to understand why; less so to comprehend the work's neglect in more recent times. For the music brims over with magnificent choral and orchestral writing (wanting to avoid any operatic associations, Cherubini dispensed with the usual quartet of solo voices).

The Requiem, as I discovered when I first heard the work in a Radio 3 broadcast, is full of original touches, with the drama of the *Dies Irae* foreshadowing Verdi's considerably better known setting.

On record, the choice was limited to Riccardo Muti's fine performance on EMI, but that now has a formidable rival in this Hyperion issue where Matthew Best directs his Corydon forces to electrifying effect. Both chorus and orchestra are outstanding, the former responding to the texts with both sensitivity and passion.

The recording, engineered by Antony Howell and Julian Millard, possesses all the breadth and space this work demands without sacrificing clarity. Moreover, there is a bonus in the shape of Cherubini's *Marche Funebre* from 1820, a grimly dramatic death-march which opens with a startling gesture on tam-tam and timpani. No wonder Beethoven was so impressed; he won't be the only one.

FRANZ JOSEF HAYDN

**String Quartets Op33 No3 in C Major (The Bird)/Op33 No5 in G Major/Op33 No6 in D Major**  
**The Lindsays**

ASV CD DCA938 (DDD/60.40)

The special affinity which the Lindsays possess for the string quartets of Haydn



is once again abundantly evident in this new recording of three works from the Opus 33 set of 1781.

In an interview a while back, the leader of the quartet, Peter Cropper, emphasised to me that he and his colleagues never view Haydn as a kind of musical 'appetiser' for more substantial fare such as Beethoven or Schubert when putting together a recital programme. This approach has brought a deep understanding and affection for a body of work which never fails to reward exploration. At the same time, he added, it was vital not to adopt an excessively severe view of these quartets: Haydn's music overflows with genial good humour and frequently includes more than a moment of pure tongue-in-cheek wit.

Certainly the humour quotient is high in the Op33 set, which has acquired the nickname 'Russian' not through any wholesale use of Slavic dance rhythms but purely through its dedication to a Russian grand duke who happened to be visiting Vienna at the time of their publication. However, you may detect a Balkan gypsy flavour to the finale of Op33 No3, a work where the nickname has a distinct musical relevance: the 'chirruping' violin lines heard in two of the movements inevitably led to the quartet being dubbed 'The Bird'.

The Lindsays penetrate the heart of each of these quartets, with playing that combines warmth, exuberance and depth of expression in equal measure. Always attentive to matters of style and taste, they nevertheless exude a fluency and spontaneity that is utterly engrossing. Haydn's cause can seldom have been better served than by the Lindsays, not only in this recording, but also in their others on the ASV label, which include two thrilling, live recitals from London's Wigmore Hall.

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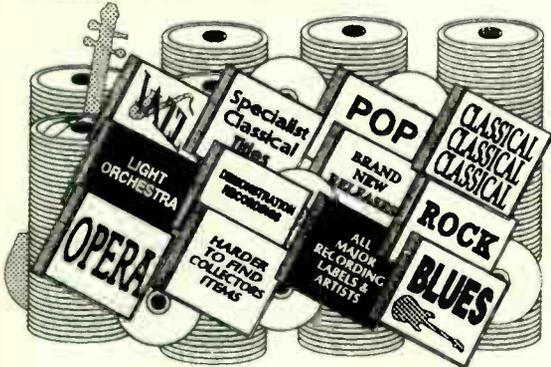
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Back in the late 'seventies, Bernard Roberts - then principally known as a chamber music player - made recording history. Up until then the direct-cut or direct-to-disc recording system (where the signal is fed directly from the microphone and its amplifier to the cutting head of the lathe) had mainly been employed for 'low-risk' repertoire, where the absence of a master tape and editing facilities was unlikely to be critical. The notion of recording some of the greatest and most demanding piano music using such a method was regarded as, at best, over-ambitious and, in some quarters, as positively absurd. Even the finest pianists, it was argued, needed the insurance of the editing desk to correct minor blemishes.

However, for some years, Nimbus Records had been maintaining that far from merely being employed to amend the odd wrong note, the editing process had become a means whereby a 'perfect' performance could literally be assembled from hundreds of takes. Defying this trend, Nimbus adopted a policy of using the edit only to 'save' a great performance, not to create one. This approach was more than justified by the recordings which came out of the studio at Wyastone Leys near Monmouth, and in the ensuing years many other engineers and musicians opted successfully for the 'minimal editing' recording philosophy.

However, it was Bernard Roberts who provided arguably the most triumphant vindication of that philosophy. His cycle of the thirty-two piano sonatas of Beethoven, recorded direct-to-disc during 1978 and 1979, simply didn't have the option of post-production editing. The results were outstanding, with the fourth volume, containing the formidable peaks of the last five sonatas, perhaps the most

successful of all. Ironically, just as the direct-cut analogue LP was reaching its zenith with Roberts' Beethoven, so the first commercial digital recordings were becoming widely available.

By its very nature, the direct-to-disc process was strictly 'limited edition'. Doubtless wishing to bring Bernard Roberts' marvellous Beethoven interpretations to a wider audience, Nimbus invited him to re-record the cycle using the new digital medium. Now, of course, there would be the security of an editing facility, but the vitality and momentum of the playing suggests it was little used.

The bulk of the re-recording was



undertaken in 1984 and 1985, the exceptions being No14 Op27/2 (the eternally popular 'Moonlight' sonata) which dates from 1982, and No30 Op109, taped in 1988. It is this cycle which has now been collated on eleven CDs and reissued as a very desirable box set, with a satisfying consistency of both performance and recording.

Such collections are sometimes adjudged a lazy, unthinking method of acquiring the basic classical repertoire, part of which, without doubt, are the thirty-two Beethoven piano sonatas. It is eminently possible, with research and patience, to assemble a complete set of the sonatas from individual discs and with a variety of pianists. For once, however, opting for the all-in-one approach does not involve a

compromise.

Bernard Roberts' cycle must now be included alongside those of Artur Schnabel (recorded pre-war but still sounding remarkably fine in current transfers), the marvellous Wilhelm Kempff (from the early 'sixties on Deutsche Gramophon), and, most recently, Richard Goode (complete recording for Elektra Nonesuch).

In terms of sound, this last is the sole rival to the refreshingly natural recording quality Nimbus give Bernard Roberts, and there is little to choose between them. Nimbus opt for a more intimate acoustic than previously, but nothing is exaggerated and the piano tone is clear, detailed and well-focused - paralleling Bernard Roberts' interpretations, it imposes nothing between composer and listener.

Roberts' playing eschews mannerism and idiosyncrasy in its fidelity to Beethoven's intentions, but there is never any lack of character in these performances. If anything, Roberts shows more freedom here than in the earlier cycle (which is not surprising given the constraints imposed by the recording technique). This is cogent, compelling playing, vigorous and, at times, rugged, as befits so much of Beethoven's writing. And it is presented, with one exception, not in numerical order but rather in well-judged self-contained recitals - an ideal way of exploring the variety of this cycle and examining the composer's development from the Op2 of 1795 to the culminating masterpiece of Op111 from 1822. The exceptions are the three Op10 sonatas which form an ideal single-CD triptych.

These sonatas are not all 'great' Beethoven, but that is one of the enduring attractions, as comparative trifles such as the Op49 pairing can be enjoyed alongside the pinnacles of the Waldstein, Tempest, Appassionata and the like. It adds up to one of the most enriching experiences music has to offer, made all the more rewarding by Nimbus' fine production and the clear-eyed pianism of Bernard Roberts ●

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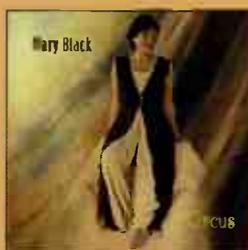
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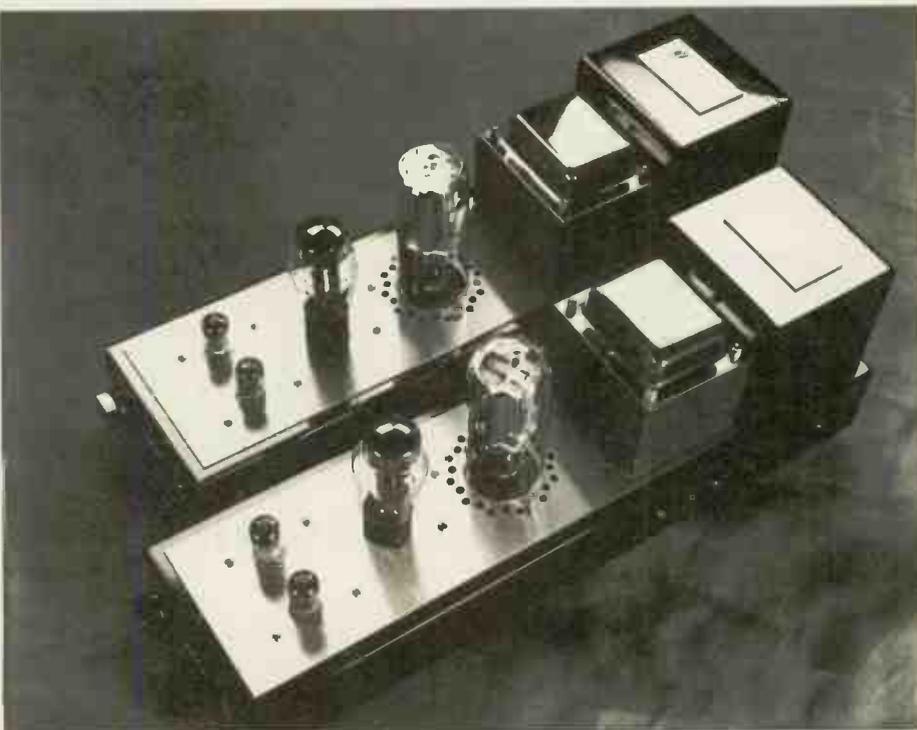
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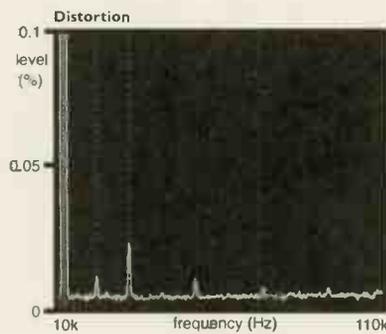
### DENON PMA-250SE AMPLIFIER

The new PMA-250SE produced a healthy 50watts into 8ohms and nearly doubled its power into 4ohms, reaching 80watts. This is down to good regulation from the mains transformer, a function of its size. It helps provide a solid bass kick.

Frequency response measured a wide 6Hz-38kHz, plenty enough to capture low bass and subsonics from CD. The distortion characteristic was fairly benign, second harmonic predominating at high frequencies. As signal level changed the harmonic structure remained fairly constant too, so there should be little sign

of coarseness in the sound.

Sensitivity proved normal at 200mV and noise low at -97dB.NK



|                    |           |
|--------------------|-----------|
| Power              | 50watts   |
| CD/tuner/aux.      |           |
| Frequency response | 6Hz-38kHz |
| Separation         | 64dB      |
| Noise              | -97dB     |
| Distortion         | 0.03%     |
| Sensitivity        | 200mV     |
| dc offset          | 1.7/0.3mV |
| Disc               | None      |

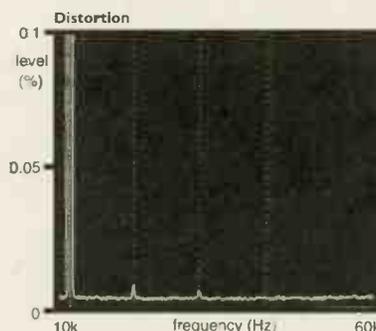
### TECHNICS SE-A/SU-C 1000

Although physically large the SE-A1000 power amplifier has a relatively modest output of 90watts per channel into 8ohms. This increased to 156watts into 4ohms, suggesting the power amp. handles low loads reasonably well.

Measured distortion was low, especially at high frequencies, where just 0.026% total harmonic distortion was generated at 10kHz, full output. I'd expect the combo. to sound clean, but because MOSFETs have wide open-loop bandwidth it is feedback that produces this result, rather than innate linearity. Since feedback flattens perspectives, there is a price to be paid. Frequency response was adequately wide at 10Hz-40kHz, -1dB, separation good and noise low.

The disc stage has both MM and MC stages and in frequency response they were much the same, displaying a measured bandwidth of 15Hz-30kHz. The Japanese do not believe in warp filters, so the Technics does not have one.

Consequently the disc stage reaches down to 7Hz (-3dB). This does give deeper bass, but warped discs will cause cone flap with reflex loudspeakers (as most are nowadays). Hiss was very low on MM (-88dB), but not so low on MC (-66dB). The MC stage has plenty of gain, however, but input noise was high all the same, calculating out to 0.11µV (CCIR), when more serious MC stages manage 0.05-0.1µV. So high-ish output MCs are best used if hiss is to remain unobtrusive. NK



|                    |            |
|--------------------|------------|
| Power              | 90watts    |
| CD/tuner/aux.      |            |
| Frequency response | 10Hz-40kHz |
| Separation         | 60dB       |
| Noise              | -95dB      |
| Distortion         | 0.012%     |
| Sensitivity        | 170mV      |
| dc offset          | 1.6/0.2mV  |
| Disc MM            |            |
| Frequency response | 15Hz-32kHz |
| Separation         | 56dB       |
| Noise              | -88dB      |
| Distortion         | 0.014%     |
| Sensitivity        | 2.8mV      |
| Overload           | 130mV      |
| Disc MM            |            |
| Frequency response | 12Hz-26kHz |
| Separation         | 54dB       |
| Noise              | -66dB      |
| Distortion         | 0.014%     |
| Sensitivity        | 0.22mV     |
| Overload           | 10mV       |

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# CARTRIDGE

## SHURE M75EM TYPE 2

The square wave produced by this cartridge showed rounded leading edges, indicating falling treble. Our response measurement confirmed it. Across the frequency band there's a 7dB change in level, from +3dB at low frequencies to -4dB at 10kHz, with a lift up to a peak at 16kHz, visible at right in the analysis. This will give the M75EM Type 2 a warm, fulsome sound balance.

The left and right channels were very well matched in response. On inner grooves there was further loss of upper treble, above 10kHz, due to tracing losses imposed by stylus tip radius dimensions.

Tracking ability, for which the Shures were famous, was extremely good, both at 300Hz and at 1kHz.

Vertical tracking angle was a little high at 27 degrees, which lifted

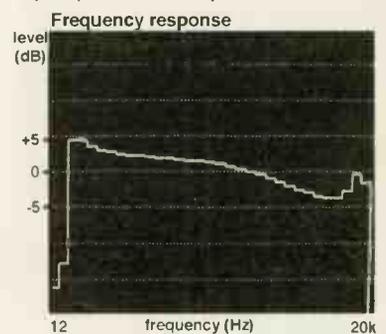
vertical modulation distortion to 3.6%. Lateral distortion was average at 1%. These are normal enough figures and although high sounding, are mainly second harmonic, which is difficult to detect.

Output was very high at 6.5mV at 5cms/sec rms. Shure put a lot of turns on their generator coils to get this, which is also why response falls at high frequencies. There's a trade off here.

The M75EM Type 2 with Musonic stylus measured much like an original Shure, retaining its main characteristics and strengths. NK

|                           |           |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| Tracking force            | 1.7gms    |
| Weight                    | 6gms      |
| Vertical tracking angle   | 27degrees |
| Frequency response (-3dB) | 30-5k     |

|                          |            |
|--------------------------|------------|
| Channel separation       | 34dB       |
| Tracking ability (300Hz) |            |
| lateral                  | 63µm       |
| vertical                 | 45µm       |
| lateral (1kHz)           | 20cms/sec. |
| Distortion (45µm)        |            |
| lateral                  | 1.2%       |
| vertical                 | 3.6%       |
| Output (5cms/sec rms)    | 6.5mV      |



# TUNER

## KENWOOD KT-2080

Although a budget tuner, the KT-2080 measured well. It has a flat frequency response to 15kHz, both channels having just a little (0.25dB) treble lift up to the point of roll off imposed by the MPX filter. The filter worked well, suppressing pilot tone and subcarrier by more than 60dB, giving an audio output free from unwanted and potentially troublesome signals.

Hiss was low at -74dB, but no less than 5mV was needed from the aerial for this - a lot of signal. Since 1mV gave -71dB hiss, the Kenwood was no different from most other tuners in terms of sensitivity, as the normal mono and stereo sensitivity figures of 2µV and 30µV show. Selectivity (alternate channel) was high at 80dB both sides of a wanted signal, cutting out interference.

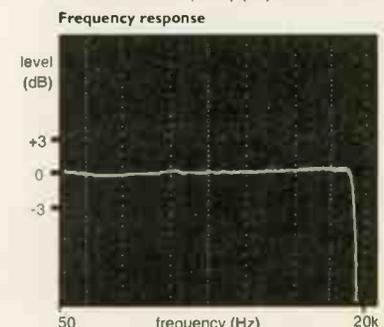
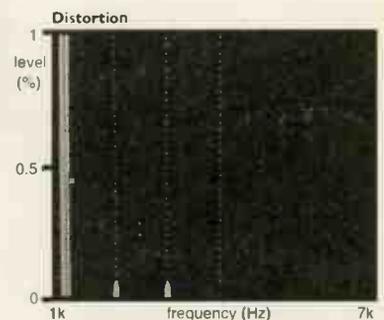
The five segment signal strength

meter indicated maximum with just 0.2mV from the aerial, insufficient for optimum quality. This limits its usefulness; it has been designed to impress.

The Kenwood is well engineered and will give good results. NK

|                    |           |
|--------------------|-----------|
| Frequency response | 5Hz-15kHz |
| Stereo separation  | 45dB      |

|                         |                      |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Distortion (50% mod.)   | 0.1%                 |
| Hiss (CCIR)             | -74dB                |
| Signal for minimum hiss | 1.6mV                |
| Selectivity (at 0.4MHz) | 80dB                 |
| Sensitivity             |                      |
| mono                    | 2µV                  |
| stereo                  | 30µV                 |
| signal strength meter:  |                      |
| (µV)                    | 5, 8, 25, 125, 200µV |



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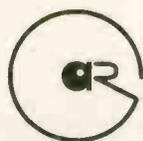
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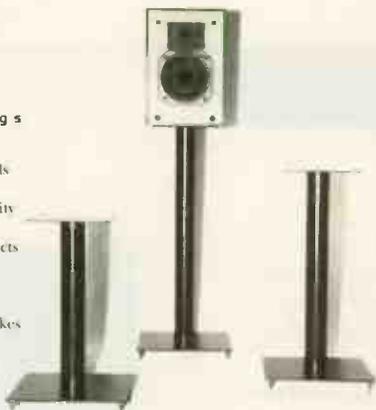
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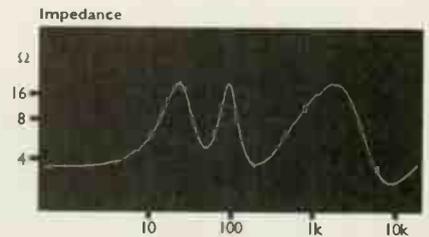
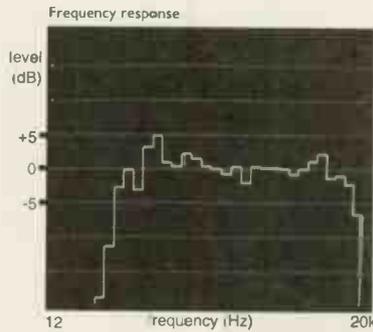
## KEF Q15

The Q15s were interesting and very different to measure. The concentric tweeter is wonderfully integrated with the bass/midrange unit, so the speaker measured as shown at all frontal angles. There's a small treble peak that is likely to produce a smidgeon of brightness, plus a bass hump around 120Hz that will give good speed to percussion. By allowing the chamber to 'go off' like this, bass extends down to 50Hz - great for a small box.

Sensitivity was also amazing for a small box - 90dB. However, KEF achieve this by making impedance low, just 5Ω

overall. The impedance swings are vertiginous, indicating heavy reactance, and

the minimum impedance a very low 3Ω. For good bass control a beefy amplifier with excellent regulation is needed, but power need be no more than 40W (8Ω). The Q15 may upset some amplifiers; try and see first. **NK**



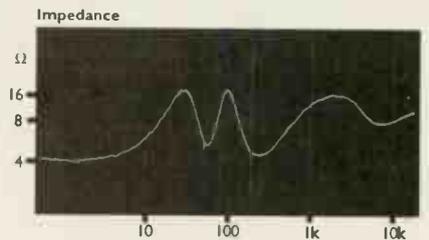
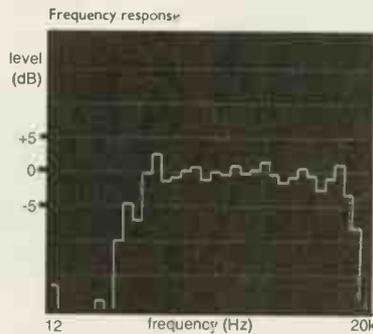
## GALE 2i

The Gale 2i frequency response again shows how miniatures can be deadly accurate in basic balance, and these even have some proper bass in the 60Hz-80Hz region. It could be brought up in level by near-wall placement. The tweeter was very well integrated and absence of a crossover suckout should make the sound detailed.

Sensitivity was normal at 87dB, requiring a good 40watts or so for reasonably high volume, but impedance measured a normal 7Ω overall. The

impedance curve dips to 4Ω at 500Hz and below 5Hz and hits 20Ω maximum. It's

fairly well controlled and should not upset amplifiers. The Gale is well engineered. **NK**

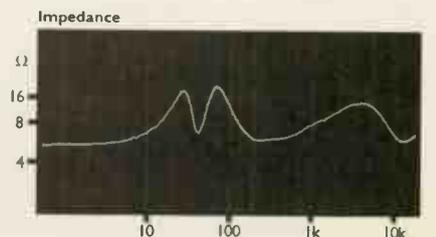
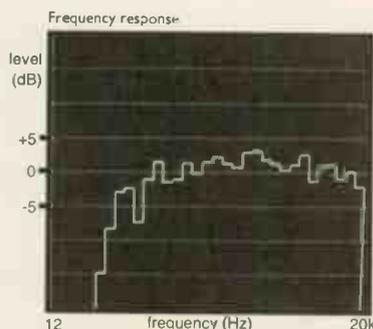


## ROKSAN ROKONE

I was impressed by the tweeter/midrange integration of these speakers. They have a smooth response, as shown, at all frontal angles. There is a distinct midrange lift, which will project vocalists forward. Treble should be smooth but gentle in balance, whilst bass will be lifted by the presence of a rear wall.

Overall impedance was exactly 8Ω and the curve a gentle one, hitting 6Ω minimum. Sensitivity was normal at 87dB for 1W, so amps of 30-80W or so should be about right.

Overall the Rok 1 is a well engineered speaker. **NK**



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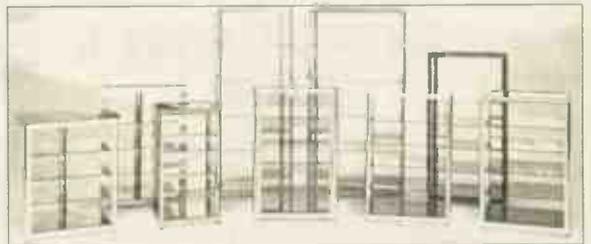
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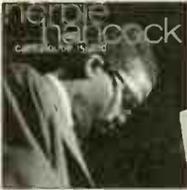
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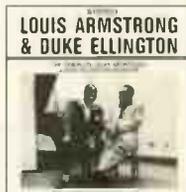
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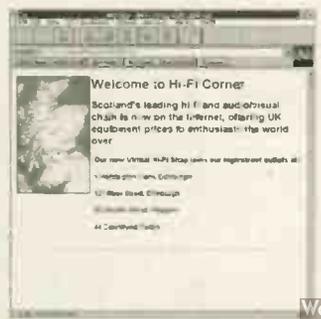
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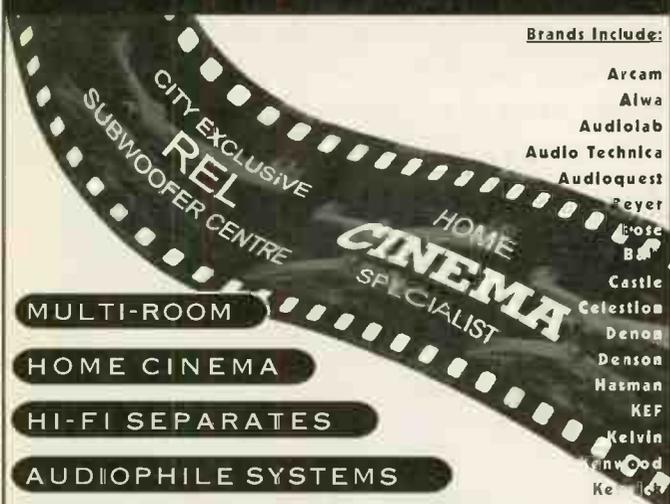
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Tel: 0118 939 3836 (Reading) Or 0956 519 912 (anytime)

LINN KELTIK speakers black Ash unmarked £2350. Linn LK100 amps x four £1300 Two pairs of Tukans £250 each. Roksan Atessa CD DAC power supply. DP2P MkII. DP2T MkII. DA2DSSS £1150. Roksan QJAN 3 speakers £450. All 8 months old. Jerry 01702 353 777

PINK TRIANGLE Ordinal 22 bit £575. Audio Innovations P2 M/C phono amp £450.  
Tel: 01543 264 860 (Lichfield)

THETA TLC Jitter Buster. 1 year old £135. Quad 34 pre-amp £210, FM4 £210 or £400 the pair.  
Tel: 01530 831 357 (Leics)

ACOUSTIC ENERGY AE2 A's with stands £495. Robertson 40/10 monoblock power amps £380. Quad II's with GEC valves + spare set. GT Audio serviced £375. Will dem.  
Tel: 01895 252 007 (Uxbridge)

MISSION 780 Speakers £80. Mission 731 speakers £55. Target turntable wall mount £20. All mint condition.  
Tel: 01376 553 045 eves. (Braintree, Essex)

KEF 104.2 REFERENCE Speakers, walnut. Superbly dynamic and revealing sound. Very efficient. Can dem and deliver £700.  
Tel: 01908 368 664 (answerphone during day)

LINN LP12, Ekos, Ortofon MC 3000 Mk2. As new, cartridge 10 hours use (cost £1000). Young children forces sale £1300 ono.  
Tel: 01992 444 951

AUDIO INNOVATIONS Line 2 pre-amp, boxed £300. 1st Audio stereo amplifier £750. For sale. If purchased together £950  
Tel: 01923 282 129 (Herts)

**PINK TRIANGLE Ordinal, as new complete with superb 1307 filter plus digital interconnect. Current cost £1060. Accept £450 for quick sale. Tel: 01636 814 235**

HEYBROOK HB100 speakers, black £140. Foundation stands available. Mordaunt-Short MS20 speakers £40. Rotel RCD965BX £150. Cambridge DacMajic-1 £100. Excellent together. All mint, HFC Best Buys, boxed, manuals, cables. Tel: 01942 816 773 (Bolton)

DPA LITTLE BIT Three D/A converter. Stunning sound, 10 months old, 2 years warranty left. Boxed + instructions. Digital cable included. New £300. Accept £170. Can demonstrate.  
Tel: 0181 852 5184 evenings.

QUAD 405/2 Avondale modified £300. System Audio speakers (Danish) Floor standing new boxed £750) £300. Revox G36 1/4 track, pristine £425. Sendor SP1 (deflexed)+Target stands £200.  
Tel: 0181 393 4265 day 0181 393 4147 eves.

MERIDIAN 541 surround sound processor (£1095), MSR system remote (£70) and M60C centre speaker (£1125). Immaculate boxed, still under warranty. Stunning home cinema sound. All for £1400.  
Tel: 0181 675 6604 DYNACO

# HI-FI BARGAINS IN PETERBOROUGH

| AMPLIFICATION/SYSTEMS                           | Equivalent £ Today | S/H   |
|---|--------------------|-------|
| Audiolab 8000G Mint                             | £1050              | £ 800 |
| Audiolab 8000M x 2                              | £1500              | £1100 |
| Dellec DSP505 + 2 x 505 Power Amplifiers        | £1995              | £ 995 |
| Naim NAC425/NAP110                              | £1400              | £ 650 |
| Haffer DH200 Power Amplifier                    | £ 795              | £ 395 |
| Roppaport Pre 2 Pre-amplifier                   | £ 595              | £ 395 |
| Denon DAP5500/POA800 Pre-Power amplifier        | £ 800              | £ 425 |
| Albarray APS1 PSU DMP1 Pre/M408 Power           | £1400              | £ 700 |
| Yamaha DPSPA1000 A/V Amplifier                  | £ 900              | £ 545 |
| Sonograph SC1 Preamp Mint                       | £ 700              | £ 425 |
| Cyrus 2/PSX Graphite Model                      | £1140              | £ 795 |
| Concordant Excelsior preamp/groove/power supply | £ 950              | £ 595 |
| Art Audio VPI valve amplifier                   | £2400              | £1800 |
| Linn Klout Power Amplifier                      | £1300              | £1075 |
| Audiolab 8000C/P Black Mint                     | £1300              | £ 695 |
| Audio Innovations 1000 Pre/200 Power            | £ 750              | £ 375 |
| Craft Series 5 Power Amplifier                  | £ 350              | £ 250 |
| Nakamichi IA-3 Amplifier                        | £ 599              | £ 350 |
| Math Passive Pre 2 x Manablocks                 | £ 849              | £ 649 |
| Quad 77 amplifier (ex-dem mint)                 | £2670              | £1895 |
| Meridian 200 System 204/207/m30/209             |                    |       |

## IT'S 1997 - LET'S DEAL

| CD PLAYERS/TUNERS             | Equivalent £ Today | S/H   |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|-------|
| Morantz CD10 Mint             | £ 900              | £ 575 |
| Arcam Alpha 6 CD Player       | £ 600              | £ 469 |
| Arcam Black Box 3 DAC         | £ 400              | £ 249 |
| Sony CDP557ESD CD Player      | £ 800              | £ 400 |
| Linn Karik CD Player          | £1850              | £1400 |
| Quad 77 CD Player (ex dem)    | £ 899              | £ 699 |
| Micromega Trio Trichorded CD1 | £4200              | £2150 |
| Quad FM3 Tuner                | £ 150              | £ 100 |

## TAKE AN EXTRA 10% OFF LISTED PRICES THROUGHOUT JANUARY

| TURNTABLES                                      | Equivalent £ Today | S/H   |
|---|--------------------|-------|
| Linn LP12/Syrinx arm/PP3 cartridge black finish | £1500              | £ 645 |
| Roksan Xerxes/Kuzma Stogi/ATF3                  | £1600              | £ 800 |
| Oracle/Grado Tonearm                            | £1750              | £ 895 |
| Reveler/Helius Scorpion/A&R P77MG               | £ 795              | £ 395 |
| Thorens TD180 MKV/Stanton 500                   | £ 399              | £ 199 |

## PART EXCHANGE YOUR SPECIALIST HI-FI IN JANUARY AND IT COULD BE WORTH 15% OFF OUR TOP BRANDS

| LOUDSPEAKERS                      | Equivalent £ Today | S/H   |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|-------|
| Linn Kabers Walnut Passive        | £2000              | £ 950 |
| Bose 901                          | £1995              | £ 895 |
| KEF Ref. 105/3 Mint               | £1995              | £ 995 |
| Quad ESL63/Gradient SU63          | £5000              | £2750 |
| Linn Keilidh/Kustone Stands       | £ 885              | £ 595 |
| Quad ESL63 Black/Stand            | £3750              | £2095 |
| Spica TC505EX External crossover  | £ 950              | £ 650 |
| Spendor S100 Mahogany Mint        | £2125              | £1300 |
| Spendor S20 Walnut Mint           | £ 770              | £ 500 |
| Yamaha NS1000 Rare in Cherry      | £1399              | £ 700 |
| Quad ELS57 Black                  | £1500              | £ 495 |
| IMF TL580 Teak                    | £1800              | £ 600 |
| Spendor BC3 Teak                  | £1500              | £ 600 |
| Celestion SL6 Walnut              | £ 399              | £ 220 |
| Monitor Audio MA800 Rosewood      | £ 795              | £ 495 |
| Rogers LS7 Teak finish            | £ 550              | £ 300 |
| Time Window 1A                    | £ 999              | £ 499 |
| Castle Durham 900 Yew Finish Mint | £ 380              | £ 300 |
| Royd Apex                         | £ 600              | £ 300 |

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**The HiFi Company**

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# Classified ads

STEREO 70, superb valve amplifier, rebuilt, uprated vgc £475. Pair later Spendor BC1 speakers vgc £195. Rogers Cadet and HG88II valve amplifiers. Pair wonderful B&W DM7 speakers £225. Leak Troughline tuner vgc £50.  
Tel: 01364 72153

PRO-AC RESPONSE 3 Speakers, cost £3300, 3 years old, mahogany, mint, £1650, delivered.  
Tel: 00 3531 459 1432

PROJECT 6.1S Jumiko arm. Ortofon MC30 Supreme cartridge only 20 hours use, boxed £700. Quad CD67 Trichord Clock2 £550 boxed. Audiolab 8000DAC £350 - 8000A £150. Monarchy DIP £150.  
Tel: 0181 655 2733

NAIM NAC 82 with phono boards £1250. Pink Triangle DaCapo with 1307 chip £950. Both immaculate condition.  
Tel: 01565 733 525 (Cheshire)

Spendor SP9/1 Rosewood speakers £2000, Chord 1200 amp £1400, A.V.I. CD player £675, A.V.I. pre amp £460, Revox Tuner £400, A.V.I. Neutron speakers £350. Tel: 01977 643629

WANTED: PAIR OF QUAD II valve monoblock amplifiers, mint condition.  
Tel: 01483 565 241 evenings

LEAK STEREO 20 for sale, rebuilt, full working order £200. Wanted: Naim 02 tuner (old style) Tel: 0181 991 1089

GARRARD 401, SME 3009, SME plinth, manuals, excellent £150, Garrard 401, sound £80. Thorens TD145 II, no arm, spare cover £45. Connoisseur BD2, SAU2, M75EJ £20, Armstrong 226/77 valve receiver, manual, not working £25. Deram pickup arm, boxed £5.  
Tel: 01503 250 679  
evenings/weekends

EAR 802 PREAMP and EAR 509 MkII mono blocks £1750. Pro-Ac Response 3 speakers, walnut £1750. Sugden SDD1 and SDA1 Cd player £850. All mint, boxed.  
Tel: 01332 521 518

THORENS TCD 2000 CD Player. Three months old £680. Quad 77 integrated amplifier ten months old £420. Both as new.  
Tel: 01256 461 453 (Basingstoke)

NAIM CD3. 18 months old, boxed, immaculate. For sale due to windfall generated upgrade! £600 ono.  
Tel: 01952 255 281 (Telford)

GARRARD 401, Little use, perfect £150. Pair Gold Leak TL12 plus monoblock valve amplifiers, superb

£350. Four new, unused original boxed GEC KT88 valves. Offers. Original GEC KT66 valves. Good. £38.  
Tel: 01364 72153

REVOX A78 Amp. 80wpc, wood case, excellent condition £135 ono. Also Revox wanted.  
Tel: 01923 443 490

QUAD 44/303 £200. SME 3009 Mark 2 fitted with Shure V15 1V cartridge and new stylus £150. Quad 606 power amp £440 boxed with manuals. All in excellent condition.  
Tel: 01257 277 857 (Lancs)

FOR SALE: Audiolab 8000P, 12 months old; sale due to upgrade, boxed etc £350. Collection by purchaser: Surrey.  
Tel: Chris 0468 404 914

IMPULSE H1 mahogany Kimber re-wired vgc £1,800, NAD 1000s/2700 THX Pre/power boxed mint £450, Lynwood Mega mains conditioner £200.  
Tel: Roshan 0171-242-9050 ext 3664 day, 0181-452-1394 eve

NAIM NAC52 £2950, NAP250 £1095, CDI £1295, Gale GS401A speakers (Chrome) £250. Avondale modified Naim 12S pre, with 6APS six pack power supply £750, KEF Reference 104/2, rosewood £595.  
Tel: 01926 831 388

KEF 107 REF Speakers, mahogany £1350, Cord Solid 1/2 metre lengths x 3 £40 each ono.  
Tel: 01274 817 035

POWERSOUND 1600 HD DAC. USA designed and Imported by Heybrook Hi-Fi. Superb sound excellent specification £1050 ono. A bargain for astute enthusiast, only 6 months old.  
Tel: 01208 872 316 (Cornwall)

AUDION SILVER Nights 300B valve monoblock power amplifiers. 18wpc class A. Variable gain, stunning sound £1200 ono. Sonus Faber Electra speakers. Excellent condition. Superb sound £800 ono.  
Tel: 0117 973 6586

MIRAGE M3i Bipolar speakers. Gloss black. Latest model. Completely as new £1900. (£3300) VPI TNT Mark Three record deck, perfect £3400 (£6000) Graham 1.5 T arm. £1600 (£2750): 0181 325 2585

QUAD ESL Speakers, good condition £150. Tel: 01525 751 973 (Beds)

LINN EKOS Tonearm. Mint & boxed £595. NVA P80/A60 passive pre/power amps with Phono 1 (MC). Excellent condition £395. Wanted: NVA TES CD player. Tel: 0181 871 0424 (SWLondon)

**C.R. DEVELOPMENTS 35w valve amp Romulus V3 integrated amplifier. Mint condition, boxed, recent prize in competition. Not required. Stainless/black enamel. £675 (original price £1200)**  
Tel: Mike 01734 340040 Reacing.

KRELL KSA 50S £2250 Krell KRC2 £2250. Theta Data Basic transport £1400. Theta Pro Prime 2 £1300. Monitor Audio Studio 50's piano ebony £3250 (£4950). All immaculate.  
Tel: 01797 253 073 (E. Sussex)

**SUGDEN MARK IIAU51 pre-amplifier £600, power amplifier £350. Celestion SL600 speakers plus foundation stands £300. Trio KT990 tuner £150.**  
Tel: 01702 58821£ (Southend-on-Sea).

AUDIO ALCHEMY DDS III, DDE V3.0, DTI V2.0, Pøwer Station 2, Datastream transceiver. Complete lot £1300 (£2300). Also DDE V1.0 with p.s.u. £200. Tel: 0181 449 8639

EXPOSURE XV Integrated amplifier MC phono, boxed as new £395. Michell Focus One 'S' turntable with Mission arm/Dynavector IOX3 cartridge £95.  
Tel: 01628 416 471 (Berks)

PINK TRIANGLE 'Ordinal' DAC with 1307 filter £400. (new cost £1060). Arcam Alpha Plus CD player £175. Exposure X amplifier £250.  
Tel: 01636 814 235

MAGNUM A40 Power amplifier 110 watts r.m.s. per channel £350. Arcam Delta 290P power amp £325. Audio-Pro sub woofer £250. Cambridge C100 pre-amp £120. Can demonstrate.  
Tel: 01544 318 189 (Herefordshire)

THETA DATA Basic transport £900. Audio Synthesis DSM-X (equivalent to DAX), Ultra Analog D20400A module £500. Mod Squad Wonderlink digital interconnect £125. The lot for £1250.  
Tel: 00 3531 459 1432

NAIM NAC82, HiCap, NAT01, 2 months old, immaculate and boxed. Cost £4373 will accept: £3850. Mortgage forces sale.  
Tel: Steve 0171 215 3924 day or 0181 558 4870 eves

WHO WOULD Like to swap Tannoy D-500, rswd + cash for Quad ESL-63.  
Tel: Michael 0171 937 7935 evenings

MARANTZ CD-63mkII Kl Signature, new £400, XLO Phono Type 1 Ref. 1m and 2 x 0.5m £300. Seismic Sink £80.  
Tel: Michael 0171 937 7935 evenings

LINN SYSTEM Comprising of Majik-I amp, Mimic CD, Keilidh speakers with stands, LK100 amp. All on Audiontec table in excellent condition £2050 ovno.  
Tel: 01908 670 271 (Milton Keynes)

REGA 2 UNPACKED offer or p/exch Revox B77 1/4 track 3 3/4-7 1/2. Write: Johnson, 77 Bewick Court, Princess Square, Newcastle, Tyne NE1 8EQ

AUDIO INNOVATION 2nd Audio monoblocks (recent new valves) L2 pre amplifier (both boxed and in excellent condition) £900 & £400.  
Tel: Carl 01926 773 512

AUDIO SYNTHESIS DAX D/A converter, single co-ax input, multi-frequency option. Perfect sound and condition, hence £750 or offer. Reason for sale: upgrading (again!)  
Tel: 01603 593 185 daytime (Norwich). email: s.clegg@uea.ac.uk.

**ATC20T ROSEWOOD floor standing speaker £1490. Infinity 2B oakwood reference speaker £1300. Krell KSA80 £1650. Audio Reach SP9 MkII £900.**  
Tel: 01344 777 516

DPA EQUIPMENT: T1 transport £395. PDM2 converter £1095. DSP50S/DPA 50S pre/power £1065. DPA50S power £585. Various DPA cables. Sony Tuners: STS700ES £100. STS730ES £140. VDH/Naim cables. Tel: 01977 790 310

MUSICAL FIDELITY A1 Final edition amplifier. 40 watts/channel, luxury finish, separate power supply, mm/mc, superb sound, mint, boxed £285 - no offers.  
Tel: 01234 853 959 (Bedford)

HELP! MOVING House, all must go, cheap! Mainly 1970's, 40 turntables, 35 cassette decks, tuners, amplifiers, receivers, Ferrograph/Wayne Kerr audio test equipment. Yamaha shop comparator, Grundig massive stereogram, (Garrard Model 'A'), 500 styli, miscellaneous items, cheap. Make an offer and take. Write, phone/fax for list. Roy Walker, 1, West Grange Green, Belle Isle, Leeds, LS10 3BB.  
Tel/Fax: 0113 277 8863  
NAKAMICHI DR3 cassette deck, recently serviced, vgc £260.  
Tel: 01234 241 976

NAD 3130 Amplifier 30 watts per channel, recent refurbish with new electrolytic capacitors £85. Onkyo TX-810 quartz synthesised tuner amplifier 45 watts per channel, boxed £95. 01743 365 061 (Shrewsbury)

EPOS ES11 Loudspeakers plus dedicated stands. Excellent condition, boxed with manual £250. No offers. Tel: Carl 01245 263 222 (Chelmsford)

**NAGRA 4S 1/4" analogue portable tape recorder. VGC, usual refinements. Manual and carrying case included. £1200.**  
Tel: 01794 388981

NAIM 82 Preamp + HiCap new shape, excellent condition. Can dem, boxed. £1500. Shahinian ARCS, black Mk2, biwired, boxed £1100.  
Tel: 01333 424 642 after 6pm

LOWTHER ACOUSTAS £200. Beard P35 valve power amp, excellent condition, boxed £500. AR EB 101 record deck, Linn cartridge £120.  
Tel: 0181 898 8292

**WANTED MUSICAL FIDELITY A1000 class A. Pre-main, amplifier. Must be in good condition.**  
Tel: 01491 825534 Mr. Law (Oxford)

STAX CDP Quattro II integrated CD player (1991) Cost £2995. Mint condition £1250 ono. Tel: 0181 523 1134

NORDOST SUPER Flatline bi-wire cable, three metre pair for the price of two metre pair £100. Boxed & unused.  
Tel: 01903 750 962 (West Sussex)

METRIX U61B Valve analyzer £150. Rogers Cadet 3 £50. Troughline Stereo £55. Troughline 3 £50. SME Series 1, arms offers. HT/LT/choke transformer sets £45. Ion O/B psu £35.  
Tel/Fax: 01273 419 298

LINN ITTOCK LVII with Roksan Corus black cartridge. Excellent condition. Recently checked by 'Audio Excellence' of Preston (Linn Dealer). Upgrade forces sale.  
Tel: Lawrence 01772 621 337 (Preston)

GARRARD 301, SME 3009/2 (both with manuals), Shure V15 111, Sugden pre-amp C51, Quad Acoustical FM tuner, offers? Foundation Sterling stands, 21 and 23 inches, unopened boxes £40.  
Tel: 01323 728 118 (Eastbourne)

PAIR OF RUARK Crusaders Mk II speakers. 2 years old, as new, boxed £800. Tel: 0191 287 3365 after 6pm (Tyne+Wear)

**MUSICAL FIDELITY A1000 50w pure class A 2 months old. Boxed, mint £1500 (new) £900. Genuine reason for sale. Tel: 0171 624 2777 daytime.**

B+O CLASSICS, 6000 receiver, 8002 turntable, 9000 cassette deck £750, might separate. Garrard 401 SME 3009/II arm. All excellent condition.  
Tel: 0181 852 1069

WANTED: AUDIOLAB 8000P, no more than 2 years old and in very good to mint condition only. Cash waiting. Can collect.  
Tel: 01229 431 607

MERIDIAN 200+203 DAC7 CD player £690. Quad FM4 tuner £200. Musical Fidelity The Pre-Amp + Dr. Thomas power (150 watts) amp £300. All mint, boxed. Tel: 01707 643 832 (Herts)

COUNTERPOINT Pre-amp SA-7 (lovely valve sound) £300. ModSquad passive pre-amp £199. Swap new Gortex Black Slink 0.75m for old style 1m. Silver Sounds 2 x 1.5m bi-wire £99. Wanted: Red speakers near to No. 61023.  
Tel: 0378 730 365

ARCAM ALPHA 5 Amp. Phono (MM), 4 line, tape and tape out. 2 speakers, switched, as new £110. Also Roksan Hot Cakes. Big sound. Discreet appearance. Piano black £90. Tel: 01553 840 973

**WANTED. MISSION 753 or 752 speakers. Mission centre speaker 75c or 73c wanted. REL subwoofer, stadium/stentor/studio wanted. Must be in excellent condition. 01482 871498 after 6pm**

B&W CDM1 Loudspeakers. Condition as new, walnut finish, worth £600 accept £380. Meridian 206 CD £599. Wanted: Musical Fidelity X10P valve add-on.  
Tel: 0171 289 1174

**HIGH-END VALVE monoblocks (new) with interesting past and future £1750 ono. Michell ISO/HERA (MC) £350 ono. Pair Lowther PM6C drivers in perfect working order £150 ono.**  
Tel: 01635 867139 (Newbury)

ATC SCM 50 Active speakers, rosewood £3900. AVI Reference S2000MC CD player £750. REL Stentor II new model, rosewood £1500. All boxed and as new.  
Tel: 0181 874 6262 daytime

MERIDIAN DSP 5000 £2200. DSP 5000 Centre £1150. 500 transport £850. 562V £650. 504 £475. 555 £495. A500 £495. 565 Processor £1650. 518 Master Processor £650. M60 actives £1600. All mint, boxes, cables etc. Tel: 0121 783 8227, mobile 0468 908 452

NAIM CD3, 4 months old immaculate. Cost £970, bargain £700. Upgrading. Chris 0181 943 1278

CELESTION SL6S Speakers (walnut) New bass units fitted by factory £160. Linn Ittok LVII arm £140. Meridian 104 tuner £80. Decca Gold cartridge £30. Wanted: Meridian 209 remote. Tel: Rod 0181 205 6778

# IAN HARRISON HI-FI SALE

TEL: 01283  
702875  
9am-9pm

| TDK                | MAXELL     | SALE; SPECIAL OFFERS |
|--------------------|------------|----------------------|
| D 90               | XLII 90    | £1 60                |
| AR 90              | METAL      |                      |
| SA 90              | CD 90      | £1 75                |
| SAX 90             | MXS 90     | £2 50                |
| MA 90              | DAT 120    | £5 45                |
| MAXG 90            | UD 35/90   | £6 75                |
| D/IT180            | XLI 35/180 | £21 75               |
| TDK                |            |                      |
| ALKALINE BATTERIES |            |                      |
| 4AA                | £1 00      |                      |
| 4AAA               | £1 45      |                      |
| PP3 9V             | £1 45      |                      |
| HD30               |            |                      |
| DEMAGNETIZER       | £10 95     |                      |
| XLI 90             | £1 05      |                      |

**TEST CD'S & CASSETTES; TEST RECORD**

|   |        |                         |      |
|---|--------|-------------------------|------|
| HIFI NEWS TEST CD3                                | £13.00 | SENNHEISER HD565        | £110 |
| HIFI NEWS TEST RECORD                             | £14.50 | SENNHEISER HD580        | £150 |
| CHESKY ULTIMATE DEMO CD                           | £13.00 | SENNHEISER HD265        | £110 |
| DENON AUDIO TECHNICAL TEST CD                     | £15.00 | SENNHEISER HE60/V70     | £830 |
| HARRISON MULTI-PURPOSE TEST CASSETTE              | £20.00 | BEYER DT911             | £185 |
| HARRISON 20Hz-20KHz FREQUENCY SWEEP TEST CASSETTE | £ 7.50 | BEYER DT531             | £107 |
| HARRISON AZIMUTH TEST CASSETTE                    | £ 7.50 | BEYER IRS890            | £175 |
| HARRISON SPEED TEST CASSETTE                      | £ 7.50 | AUDIOQUEST QUARTZ 0.5M  | £75  |
| TELARC 20BIT SURROUND SOUND DEMONSTRATION CD      | £12.50 | AUDIOQUEST LAPIS 0.5M   | £220 |
| DELOS SURROUND SOUND CD                           | £12.50 | AUDIOQUEST DIAMOND 0.5M | £285 |

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IAN HARRISON HI-FI; MAIL ORDER ONLY FROM 7 MILL HILL, REPTON, DERBY, DE65 6GQ. TEL: 01283 702875 9am-9pm

# AUDIO ILLUSION

23 Langley Broom  
Langley  
Berkshire SL3 8NB  
(2 mins June 5 off the M4)  
Tel: (01753) 542761; Fax: (01753) 772532  
OPENING HOURS  
10 am-6pm Monday-Saturday (By appointment)



|   |               | NEW   | SALE  |
|---|---------------|-------|-------|
| EAD CD1000 Series 3 CD Player with HDCD   | Ex Demo       | £2000 | £1495 |
| Theta Cobalt 307 DAC  | Ex Demo       | £ 700 | £ 475 |
| Audio Research LS3B Balanced Line Preamp  | Ex Demo       | £2250 | £1495 |
| Audio Research LS7 Linstage Preamplifier  | S/Hand (mint) | £1600 | £1150 |
| Counterpoint SA 3.1. Tube Preamp MM/MC  | S/Hand (mint) | £ 595 |       |
| Classé 70 Balanced 70W Power Amplifier  | S/Hand (mint) | £1400 | £ 850 |
| Graham 1.5T State of Art unipivot Tonearm - the best arm I've heard! Few hours use only - my own arm supplied boxed   | As New        | £3000 | £2350 |
| Audio Alchemy VAC in the Box Phono Stage including upgraded Power Supply PS3  | Ex Demo       | £ 500 | £ 325 |
| Mirage:   |               |       |       |
| M-190 2-way vented Bookshelf Monitor  | Ex Demo       | £ 300 | £ 185 |
| M-290 2-way Audiophile Compact Monitor  | Ex-Demo       | £ 400 | £ 250 |
| M-1090 2-way, 4 driver symmetrical Bipolar Radiator   | Ex-Demo       | £1300 | £ 950 |
| MBS the World's smallest symmetrical Bipolar Speaker includes matching stands - superb sound  | Ex-Demo       | £ 400 | £ 285 |
| BPS-100 Active 100W Bipolar Subwoofer (Blackash)  | Ex-Demo       | £ 575 | £ 395 |
| SD Acoustics SD2 Loudspeakers supplied with Origin Live Tripod Stands - silly price to clear  | S/Hand (vgc)  |       | £ 249 |
| Magneplaner MG 1.4 Ribbon Loudspeakers - these were good value £1100 new, so I tell you these are finished with oak frames and oatmeal cloth and in mint condition for £450 - what are you waiting for? | S/Hand (mint) | £1100 | £ 450 |
| Dynaudio Kraft Reference Monitors including Stands  | S/Hand (mint) | £2600 | £1495 |

# MANTRA AUDIO

• HI-FI/VIDEO ACCESSORIES  
• MAIL ORDER DIRECT 1-10 DAYS  
• COMPETITIVE PRICES (inc P&P)

| MAKE              | MODEL                                  | CARTRIDGE   | STYLUS   | SWISS QUALITY DIAMOND STYLUS              | PRICE  |
|-------------------|--|-------------|----------|---|--------|
| Arcam             | C 77 C77 Mg                            | N/A         | £18.00   | OLM 30 RD 3M                              | £9.00  |
|                   | E77 E77 Mg                             | N/A         | £36.00   | R20 KE, OLM, 34/36, XLM III               | £13.50 |
|                   | P77 P77 Mg                             | N/A         | £48.00   | AN 5/11/30/60/8745                        | £9.00  |
| Audio Technica    | AT 95E                                 | £21.00      | £12.50   | AN 2/50/70/77/D/4932/8743                 | £11.00 |
|                   | AT 110 E                               | £25.00      | £13.00   | RS 33/35/38/84/85/90                      | £9.00  |
|                   | AT OC9                                 | £280.00     | £210.00* | SP 8/9/12A                                | £25.00 |
|                   | AT 120ET                               | £45.00      | £31.50   | ST 14/15/16/17/19/21                      | £3.00  |
| Denon             | AT 311 EP (T4P)                        | £25.00      | £13.00   | DN 145/155/165/E, DN 149 S                | £13.50 |
|                   | AT 311 LP (T4P)                        | £36.00      | £22.50   | Goldring G800/820/850 (D110/D120/D130)    | £11.00 |
|                   | AT 440 ML                              | £81.00      | £62.50   | G800 Sup E                                | £13.50 |
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|                   | DL 110                                 | £70.00      | £55.00*  | DT 33/35/36/45/55/60/65, DT Z1 S          | £9.00  |
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|                   | 1022 GX                                | £70.00      | £46.00   | EPS 43/52/75/76/STSD P30/33 D             | £9.00  |
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Tel: 01664 822648 (Leics.)  
NAKAMICHI'S FIRST CASSETTE DECK the 1000 Tri-Tracer in full working order. Pictured in Hi Fi World July 1996. Offers please. Can demonstrate, buyer collects  
Tel: 01202 397545 (evenings) (Bournemouth)

ROTEL RCD865 CD player. Little used, as new £80  
Tel: 01923 234956 (Herts)

SONUS FABER ELECTAS £850. Woodside ISA 230 amplifier £495. Radford WS2 heavily modified CD £420. Orelle DA180 £260. Origin Live O.L.2s £300. Ortofon MC20 Super (new) £30 Neat Critiques £195.  
Tel: 01707 321878 (Herts)

MUSICAL FIDELITY PRE3A and pair MA65 mono blocks, chrome finish £500, Linn Kans & stands £100, Rega RB 300 arm £40, no offers.  
Tel: 0151 645 4803 (evenings)

NAIM HICAP £250, NAP250 £750 old style. Mana Reference table £250. Audiomeca Kreatura CD transport plus Audionote DAC 2, superb vinyl like sound £1350. Quad ESL bronze, refurbished by Quad £500.  
Tel: 0181 546 2881 (evenings)

NAIM AUDIO 32.5 preamp boxed excellent condition £210. Wanted: Naim CD1 or CD3  
Tel: 01623 796266 mobile 0860 923573 (Nottingham area)

REGA PLANAR 3 inc. RB 300 arm, Elys cartridge boxed can demo £120 ono  
Tel: 01704 550868 (Southport)

GARRARD 401. SME 1009. New Goldring 1042. Mixed vinyls. £200  
Tel: 01454 614427 (Bristol)

NAIM AUDIO CDS.52, £5000. 72 Hi-cap, 180, £1400. SBL's (new bass cone) £1200. All about 2 years old  
Tel: 01494 442934

NAIM 62 PRE-AMP & 140 power-amp mint condition, boxed can demonstrate with three Chord Company interconnects and NACA4 speaker cable £650  
Tel: 01277 657964 (Essex)

B&W 802 MATRIX SPEAKERS. New boxed, bargain to serious listener. £2800 new will accept £1800 ono  
Tel: 0171 542 8727

RADFORD DSM control unit, Radford STA12 power amplifier. Radford FM tuner, Goodsell MA25 power amplifier, Goodsell FTC

control unit (choice of two), Rogers valve FM tuner, Wharfedale super 12/CS/AL speaker. Also other items.  
Tel: 01924 468189 day or evening (D. Ward)

LINN LP12 black Lingo Ekos Trampolin current spec between one and three years old, wonderful condition, includes K18 cartridge only £2100. New price is now over £3400  
Tel: 01684 773387

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MERIDIAN 200 DAC (original) £200 ono  
Tel: 0121 605 6665 or 0468 520634 (Chris, Birmingham)

TOWNSHEND ELITE ROCK Mk II £200, Thorens TD 160S, Rega RB250 arm £100, can open headphoned device £30. Snell J Mk II walnut £300, Rotel 820 AL tuner £30, Notts Analogue Tracer II cartridge £50  
Tel: 0114 2215271

AUDIO RESEARCH LS7 preamp black absolutely as new £1200. V.D.H. The First 0.8m interconnect boxed unused £140. Apollo Aria double rack black/glass inc. CD drawer cost £400 - £175  
Tel: 01829 741270  
ACOUSTIC STUDIO MONITORS 3311 series 125 Watt. 3" tweeter, 5" mid, 12" woofer, two frequency controls. Liquid cooled, boxed, unused, warranty, black ash finish. Worth £700 each, take £900 for pair  
Tel: 01752 262626 (Plymouth)

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Tel: 0181 421 2226

QUAD VALVE TUNER, full Quad overhaul, £75. Decca FFSS, excellent, £60. Connoisseur transcription motor, 1955, suspension needs repair, £25. Two Lowther Acoustas, £100 each. Pair B&W two-way speakers, biwireable, immaculate, £100. Demos first. Pair very early

Leak mono varislopes, offers  
Tel: 01825 790480 (Sussex)

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Tel: 01827 62981 (day)**

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**MERIDIAN 207 CD / preamp and 209 remote £325. Meridian 203 DAC £225. Linx Vega 75W poweramp £200. All mint, boxed, with manuals. Magnaplanar SMGAs £250  
Tel: 01732 463314 (Sevenoaks)**

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Tel: 01734 787225 after 6pm

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Tel: 01628 788502 / 0836 268050 (Ian)**

CROFT SUPER MICRA II valve pre-amplifier No 918 phono, serviced, box, mint £350  
Tel: 01746 783650 (Midlands)

E.A.R. 802 PREAMP £465 ono. Quad II power amplifiers gold phonos, building posts, re-structured by Tim Paravicini £325 ono. Leak 20 amplifier £225 ono. Leak tuner Troughline 3 mono £65  
Tel: 01745 331681  
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Tel: 01622 844409

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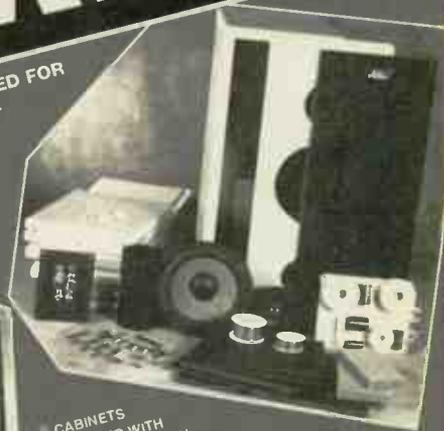
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| REGA ELA II | (£539)     | £429  |
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| AURA VA 100II            | (£350)  | £279  |
| ONIX OA31                | (£460)  | £299  |
| QUAD 77                  | (£650)  | £519  |
| QUAD 66 Pre/66 Tuner/606 |         |       |
| Power Amp + RC           | (£2306) | £1599 |

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|                | was:    | Now:   |
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| LINN MIMIK     | (£840)  | £529   |
| AURA CD 50     | (£350)  | £239   |
| NAIM CDS       | (£3752) | £ Tel. |
| TEAC VRDS7     | (£650)  | £499   |

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**KRELL K.S.R. 100 power-amp warranty until Feb 1998 £1700 ono. KEF 103/4 speakers £800 ono**  
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**GARRARD 401, SME 3009/11, teak plinth with cover, bought new in 1971, very little used, mint condition, £195 ono**  
Tel: 0121 445 5710

**MUSICAL FIDELITY E200/300 c/w phono (£1458) £800, Audiolab 8000 DAC (£800) £400, Arcam Delta 170.3 (£750) £375, all boxed and mint. Can demo. Wanted- Nakamichi DR2**  
Tel: 0161 304 8400 (day) 01204 651540 (eves) Michael

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Tel: 01934 813666 (South of Bristol)

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Tel: 01703 405722

**ALPHA ARCAM 170 CD transport with Arcam Black Box 5 digital converter boxed as new £430. Meridian 101 pre-amplifier £75. Pair Rogers LS35A speakers with foundations stands Teac 3300S reel tape deck £250. Dual 505 turntable £60**  
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**QUAD ELS63's £950, Quad 34 pre-amp £175, Quad FM4 tuner £195, Quad 306 power amplifier £175, Quad 606 Mk 1 power amplifier £295**  
Tel: 01444 459196

**GARRARD 401 £100, Garrard 301 £120, Garrard arm (rare) £95, Technics SP10 Mk 2 in Stuart Engineering Plinth £695, Leak TL12+ £195, Quad 22 pre-amp £35, Leak Stereo 70 £75, Leak Stereofetic Tuner £40, Audio Technica AT1005 Mk11 arm £50, SME 3009II £40**  
Tel: 01444 459196

**QUAD ESL 63s, GRADIENT SW63s, 2x Deltec DPA50s poweramps, Deltec DSP50S preamp, dedicated 500S speaker cable, Black Slink interconnects, boxed manuals, for sale. As system, £3500**  
Tel: 0385 783413 evenings (Hampshire)

**NAKAMICHI CASSETTE DECK Model BX 300E S.N.32575 for sale. Completely overhauled by Nakamichi and unused since servicing. Around £300.**  
Tel: 01844 292198 (night) or 01865 553201 (day) (Helen, Buckinghamshire)

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Tel: 01895 823390

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**LINN KARIK 3 CD £950. Marantz 52MkSE £175. Arcam Delta 280 tuner £225. Arcam Alpha 5 CD £225. Linn Kabers £650. Rega EL8 (walnut) £175. Pioneer projection TV SD-T5000 £2750**  
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**WANTED - WADIA CD Player or transport/DAC combination, Jeff Rowland or Counterpoint pre/power amplifiers, must be good condition, working order, private purchaser, distance no object, cash settlement**  
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Tel: 01429 867432 (Steve, Hartlepool)

**SONIC FRONTIERS SFS-50 power amplifier (valve) £700, excellent condition. Stax Lambda Signature headphones boxed and mint £275. Krell KSA 200B Class A power amplifier balanced inputs mint £2800**  
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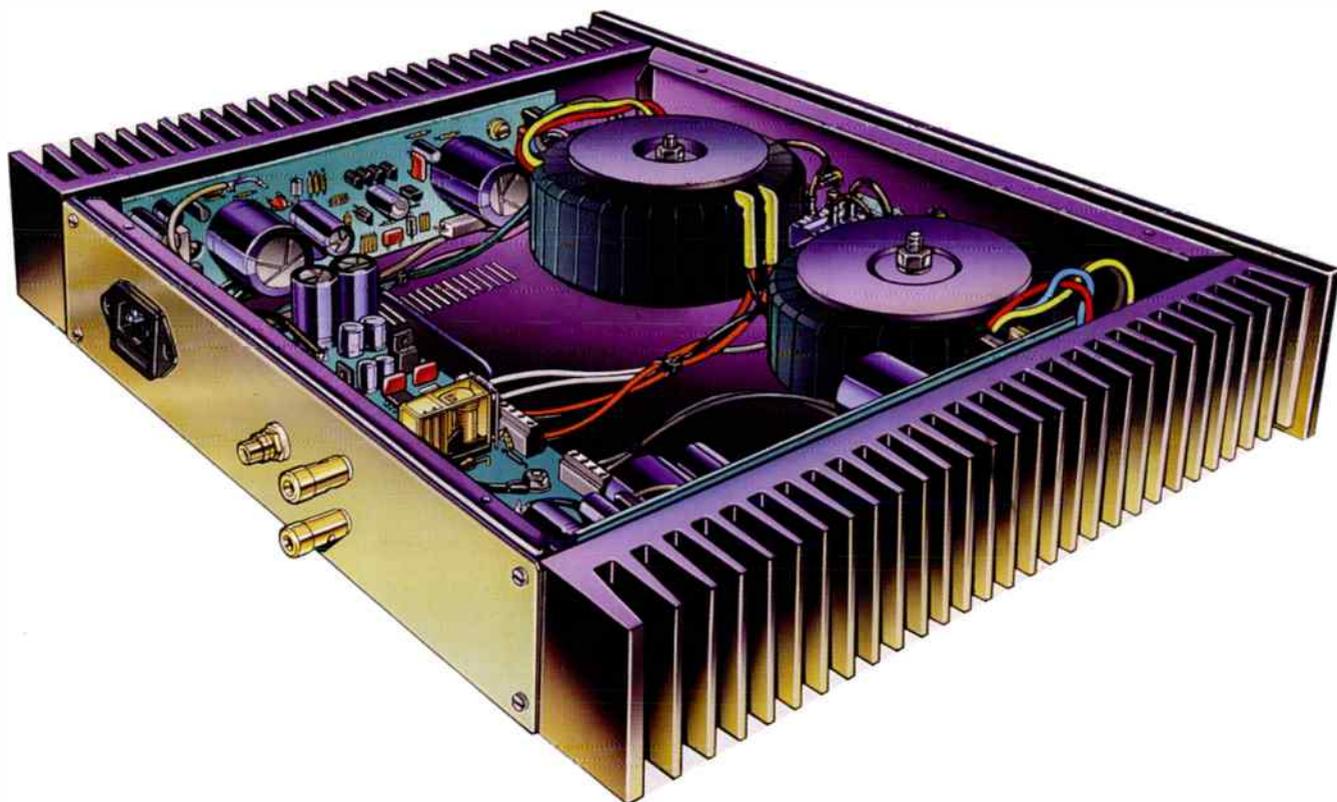
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