Hi-Fi World
JUNE 1997 £2.30
For the love of music

DEVASTATING DIGITAL

TEAC P-30 CD TRANSPORT

JAMO CONCERT 8 loudspeakers
ROKSAN CASPIAN amplifier

DIY Supplement No 29 FREI with this issue (overseas inside)
If you thought transistor amplifiers invariably sounded grey, hard and uninvolving, think again. Roksan’s new £700 Caspian integrated shows that it sounds as good as it looks with an engagingly colourful and smooth character.

With £170 burning a hole in your pocket you could buy a lap-up family meal or about 12 CDs - but a genuinely hi-fi CD player? Well, in the shape of Kenwood’s DP-3080, budget cost doesn’t mean budget sound.

Jamo might not be a name that springs to mind when you think of hi-fi manufacturers. They do, however, supply many companies with their drivers. We find out if the £1300 Concert 3 ‘speakers with their double-skinned front baffle and hefty 25mm MDF cabinets put Jamo’s knowledge to good use.

As we all know, CD is a digital format. So, in theory at least, getting those little 1s and 0s from the disc and through your DAC shouldn’t pose any problems. But, as digital engineers have been finding out, theory doesn’t necessarily match practice. Jitter, which causes tiny timing irregularities in the digital signal, can make CD sound coarse and hard. And the transport which spins your CDs can also make a big difference to final sound quality, as we found out with Teac’s battleship VRDS P-30 and Parasound’s belt-drive C/BD-2000.

If you’re a dyed-in-the-wool vinyl fan, as I am, then there’s something to celebrate in the sound quality of some of the CD players being produced these days. Whether it’s Marantz’s CD-63 mkII KI-Signature at £500 or Teac’s £2500 P-30 with our £1400 Da Capo, we’re finding that CD can really make music. Let’s hope this development continues.

We’d just like to say thanks to all of our readers for helping Hi-Fi World to a new record high circulation - Jon Marks, 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 JULY ISSUE

Here’s a brief list of some of the movers and shakers we hope to reveal in the next issue.

QUAD 707 POWER AMPLIFIER
Based on the 606, the new £800 707 features a revised power supply to give 120W. Headed by the 77 pre-amplifier, we find out if the 707, single and bi-amped, is a worthy successor to the Quad tradition.

THE SOUND OF RECORDING MINIDISCS
You could be forgiven for thinking, “They’re only digits, so the recording MD brand doesn’t make any difference”. But as we discovered, this isn’t the case. We’ve found that different brands of blank MiniDiscs have characteristic sounds, as we reveal in July.

SPENDOR SP3/1P LOUDSPEAKER
Spendor aren’t alone in putting together quality stand mounters at around the £800 mark. We find out if the SP3/1P can take on the competition and win.

DENON DCD-S10 CD PLAYER
Denon are best known for their budget CD players, but they also make the DCD-S10 which costs £1300. Will its 20-bit 4-DAC Lambda convertor and floating suspension for the laser pickup place it at the top of the digital pile?

£40-£80 INTERCONNECTS
It’s back on the cable trail as we take a look at interconnects from the likes of Pentacone, Nordost, Ixos and Apollo in the quest for quality connection.
**THIS MONTH'S REVIEWS**

### AMPLIFIERS

**ROKSAN CASPIAN INTEGRATED 16**

Roksan are breaking the sonic mould with their new £700 Caspian integrated. Gone is the grey transistor sound of yore, Jon Marks is happy to report.

### LOUDSPEAKERS

**JAMO CONCERT 8**

Not a lot of people know this, but Jamo supply most of the loudspeaker industry with their drive units. Douglas Floyd-Douglass thinks the Concert 8s could show the competition a thing or two.

### TALK ELECTRONICS

**HURRICANE I PRE AND TORNADO I POWER AMPLIFIERS**

Cable Talk, famous for their interconnects and speaker cables, have decided to step into the amplifier arena. David Price bids them welcome.

### LFD MISTRAL INTEGRATED 57

£499 spent on LFD's new integrated amp could find you with a very happy smile on your face, reckons David Price.

### NAD 801 MINI MONITORS 65

NAD now have their finger in the 'speaker pie with the £100 801 mm. Dominic Todd takes a taste to find the proof in the pudding.

### TUNER

**DENON DRA-275RD RECEIVER 37**

A tuner and 40W amplifier rolled into one is Denon's latest offering. Ketan Bharadia scans the airwaves.

### COMPACT DISC

**TEAC P-30 VS PARASOUND C/BD-2000 TRANSPORTS 13**

What's the best way to squeeze top performance from your CDs? Find out as Teac's huge £2500 P-30 squares up to Parasound's £1700 belt-drive C/BD-2000.

**KENWOOD DP-3080 31**

Hundreds of CDs and only £170 for a CD player? It's not a problem. Dominic Todd thinks Kenwood's DP-3080 is the answer.

### VINYL

**PRO-JECT 1.2 TURNTABLE 33**

It's possible to pay £10,000 for a turntable/arm/cartridge combination, but Project have managed to do it for a paltry £200. Audiophiles on a budget queue here! Jon Marks finds out.

### 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.
REGULARS

NEXT ISSUE
Just a few of the goodies galore arriving in these pages in just four weeks’ time.

NEWS
Keep up to date with the latest components and inside information from the hi-fi industry.

READERS’ LETTERS
Six pages of post and e-mail with advice on tweaking and balancing your system for the best sound.

HI-FI WORLD LIBRARY
No chilly building full of dusty tomes, but a collection of the best audiophile books.

COLUMNS
More pearls of wisdom this month and a salute to Elcaset, which offered awesome sound but never took off.

SPECIALIST HI-FI DEALERS
With years of experience, these are the people to seek out for component advice.

MEET YOUR MAKER
If you want to rendezvous with the creators, these are the numbers to call.

HI-FI WORLD KITS
If you can read a circuit diagram and want to build the best yourself, make these pages your next stop.

DIAL-A-DEALER
Once you’ve made up your mind on the hi-fi of your dreams, all that’s left is to head for your nearest dealer.

MEASURED PERFORMANCE
Noel Keywood peers inside this month’s hi-fi patients to check their health.

WORLD BUYING GUIDE
The best components money can buy.

READERS’ CLASSIFIEDS
Otherwise known as a bargain hunter’s bonanza, these pages hold some of the best value hi-fi going.

ADVERTISERS’ INDEX

FEATURES

HI-FI UK LTD
Turntables that ran backwards and then fell apart? It could only be Strathearn, the first and mercifully last nationalised British hi-fi manufacturer.

HELLO JUNIOR
Rogers’ Junior monoblocs have been around for well over 30 years now but are they a classic?

DEMANDING SUPPLY
Hi-fi needs the purest possible electrical supply for optimum sound. We take a listen to two specialist mains cables to see if they have anything to offer.

LEAD THE WAY
Should you use long interconnects and short speaker cables or vice versa? And is bi-amping with a pair of £100 amps better than spending £200 on a single amp? Jon Marks and Ketan Bharadia reveal all.

OLDE WORLDE
We start off a series of articles on some of the second-hand components worth looking out for with Sony’s TC-K555 three-head cassette deck.

DIY SUPPLEMENT
This month we put together a superb $500 HDCD DAC kit from The Parts Connection, tune up our KLS9 loudspeaker and find out if four budget interconnect cables from Maplins can bring the DIYer closer to nirvana.

COMPETITION - PAGE 34
If you cherish the small silver disc over the large black one, take a look at this month’s competition. We have one of Teac’s excellent P-30 transports, worth a cool £2500, up for grabs.

MUSIC

ROCK AND POP
RECORD OF THE MONTH:
John Lee Hooker, Don’t Look Back

DANCE/AMBIENT
RECORD OF THE MONTH:
Various, The Winning Ticket

JAZZ REVIEWS

CLASSICAL REVIEWS
RECORD OF THE MONTH:
Robert Fayrfax, Antiphona Tecum Principium
77 Tuner...

The Quad 77 tuner eats airwaves...

...and breathes RDS

QUAD

t: 01480 433777
f: 01480 431767
email: info@quad-hifi.co.uk
www: http://www.quad-hifi.co.uk
THEN THERE WERE FOUR
Acoustic Energy continue to expand their 100 Series loudspeakers with a fourth member, the AE 120. This new speaker is a three-way floor stander which, unusually for its price, can be tri-wired via gold-plated binding posts. The driver tally consists of three 110mm mid/bass units, two of which deal with the bass and one the midrange. Treble duties are handled by a 25mm soft dome tweeter. All the units are magnetically shielded and the speaker boasts a sensitivity of 90dB. Available in Black Ash or Rosewood, the 120 will lighten your bank account by £499.95.

Acoustic Energy
16 Bridge Road,
Cirencester,
Gloucestershire GL7 1NJ
Tel: 01284 684432

9 INTO 500
If you own one of Teac's Reference 500 mini systems then there may be some good news for you. Teac have just introduced a CD upgrade in the form of the VRDS-9 player. This is styled and sized exactly like the other 500 Series components but incorporates Teac's well known VRDS drive mechanism. The player has a 20-bit, 8 times oversampling convertor and two digital outputs, one of which is optical. The price is set at £699.95 for both gold and black finishes.

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

LFD CONVERTED AGAIN
LFD Audio has just introduced its second Digital to Analogue Convertor, christened the DAC2. The DAC2 is based predominantly on the existing DAC3 but replaces that unit's costly Ultra Analog hybrid convertor module with LFD's own DAC based on Burr-Brown PCM 1702-J processors. Special attention has been paid to the power supply design which uses no fewer than 12 precision regulated independent power supplies to feed the various digital and analogue circuits. The power is drawn from three separate transformers, a custom 325VA unit for the analogue section and two 10VA transformers for the digital. Prices are £1950 for the standard finish and £2150 for the 'Conran'.

LFD Audio
7 Lancaster Gardens West,
Clacton-on-sea,
Essex CO15 6QG
Tel: 01255 422533
The Caspian Collection

...even better British Hi-Fi!

by

ROKSAN

T: 01480 433777
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SPREADING THE WORD
The Bath International Music Festival takes place on May 17th and 18th. As part of this event, local dealers Radford have organised a free hi-fi exhibition to introduce music lovers to serious hi-fi.

The list of manufacturers represented includes Linn, Meridian, KEF, Naim, Quad, Ruark, AudioNote and Roksan. One of the highlights is a demonstration of DVD by Meridian, in the Hilton Ballroom. The exhibition can be found in the Hilton National Hotel and is open from 10am to 5pm on both days.

For more information contact Radford, tel: 01179 240878.

SHURE-FOOTED FROM SLATE
Probably one of the most popular cartridges of all time is Shure's V1511. Although it's a little long in the tooth now that it has been around for 20 years, Slate Audio have decided to use it as the basis for their Brazen cartridge.

Existing owners of V1511s can send their Shures to Slate who start by removing the original plastic body and bonding the can (containing the generator and cantilever assembly) directly onto an alloy block. This is threaded so no mounting nuts are needed. The standard stylus is then replaced with Shure's new Micro Ridge as used in their £300 V15VxMR MM (reviewed in March 1997's Hi-Fi World). The final touch is getting rid of the stylus protector and plastic finger grip, which Slate claim are very resonant.

If you want to make a Brazen yours, the cost is a V1511 and £185.

BLACKSHORE'S BABIES
The latest new arrival on the loudspeaker scene is Blackshore Acoustics of Suffolk. Fans of the glowing bottle, Blackshore have designed their first two speakers, the Concept 200 and Concept 300, with efficiency in mind, claiming a 90dB sensitivity for the 300.

Making up the driver complement for the 300 is Audax's high quality piezo gold dome tweeter and a 180mm mid/bass driver with an anodised spun aluminium cone. This crosses over through a simple, first-order network at 6kHz. With a braced cabinet hewn from 25mm MDF and veneered inside and out, the Concept 300 will set you back £1800.

If your wallet and room are of more diminutive dimensions, then there's the £1200 Concept 200. This uses a smaller metal cone mid/bass driver allied to a soft dome tweeter screwed to the front baffle of a triangular enclosure.

PRIME'S NEW NUMBERS
It looks like competition in the amplifier market is hotting up with two newcomers from Prime Design. The A-100 is a £650 integrated that relies on a hefty 500VA mains transformer and a whopping 80000µF of capacitor smoothing. The front end of the A-100 is a pre-amp built around a custom designed IC which feeds a fully symmetrical power section with carefully matched transistors. And if the A-100 is wheeled in for party duty, over-current protection will ensure the output stage doesn’t go up in smoke.
Next time your CD player jumps—we'd like to suggest a four letter word

The unique TEAC VRDS mechanism really gets a grip on the sound. Unlike ordinary players, TEAC's VRDS design clamps the entire disc, thus eliminating errors caused by mechanical and physical factors. The VRDS-25 tracks discs with awesome precision and delivers data to the DAC with absolute accuracy. The result is a wonderful level of detail and musicality combined with rock-solid timing.

All this, a build quality second to none plus unbelievable ease of use—and you have a CD player that would grace any system.

Before you buy, you owe it to yourself to check out the new VRDS-25. Simply ask your dealer for TEAC—it should be the only four letter word you'll ever need.

TEAC UK Limited, 5 Marlin House, The Croxley Centre, Watford, Herts WD1 8YA
Brochure Hotline 01923 819630 Monday-Friday 9am to 5.30pm

The gold units featured in this photograph are available as a special order option.
Also joining the Prime team is the P-150 power amp. No prizes for guessing its 150W output although if this is insufficient, the amp can be bridged to provide 450W. There's been no skimping on the power supply here either with 12000μF of reservoir capacity and a 625VA toroidal mains transformer. Like the A-100, the P-150 has over-current protection and sells for £650.

Prime Design
Units 2/6,
170 Deans Lane,
Edgware,
Middx. HA8 9NT
Tel: 01819060181

THE COMPANY WITH NO NAME
If you're fed up with the agricultural styling of a lot of supports which are available in any colour you want as long as it's black, then No Name Acoustics' new stands might be a sight for sore eyes. Made from welded steel struts, NNA's goodies range in price from £225 for the 501 Isolation Platform up to £690 for the five-tier 505 rack. Colours available include blue, red, green and, of course, black.

No Name Acoustics
3 Ber House,
158 Ber Street,
Norwich NR1 3EN
Tel: 01603615817

HI-FI WORLD PAYS TRIBUTE TO GIOVANNI DADOMO
As regular readers will know, Giovanni Dadomo was responsible for some of the best music reviews around with his regular contributions to Hi-Fi World's Rock and Pop pages. So we were all shocked and saddened to hear that he passed away in April after a brief illness. He will be sorely missed by all who appreciated his wit and great love and knowledge of music. We will be reprinting some of his best reviews along with a look at his career in the July issue.

Coda 7SE
Following up the recent launch of its A1, A2 and A3 loudspeakers, Celestion is bringing out the i Series. Prices range from £119 for the small, two-way stand mounting 12i through £299 for the 23i up to £599 for the top of the range 45i three-way floor stander.

Celestion International
Foxhall Road,
Ipswich IP3 8JP
Tel: 01473322222

THE LEGEND CONTINUES
It looks like KEF have caught Special Edition fever with the Coda 7SE. Bringing the popular Coda 7 up to date and up to SE spec is a host of improvements including a more heavily braced cabinet, upgraded crossover components and a new, long-throw 130mm mid/bass unit. Benefits are said to be better dynamics, midrange and sound staging. And now that they're bi-wireable the £149 Coda 7SEs can be bi-amped to get the best out of them.

KEF Audio
Eccleston Road,
Tovil,
Maidstone,
Kent ME15 6QP
Tel: 01622672261
Every loudspeaker manufacturer has the basics. The cones, coils, crossovers and cabinets. The woofers, tweeters, magnets and faceplates. But only one really knows how to put them together. The proof, Celestion’s new i Series.

Built with 70 years experience of pioneering development in loudspeaker technology, this range blows your mind. It combines the highest level of audio fidelity with outstanding dynamic range. So you fully enjoy the true power of contemporary music and film recordings. Time and time again.

But don’t just take our word for it. Take it from Hi-fi World. “Powerful, dynamic, musical and convincing”, the i Series “shows just how strong British loudspeaker engineering really is”.

Spectacular praise, you might think. But where Celestion’s involved, it’s almost predictable.
TRANSPORT POLICY

Jon Marks finds that there's more than one way to spin those silver discs with Teac's P-30 and Parasound's C/BD-2000 transports.

Let's face it, your average CD playing system is an unexciting confection of off-the-shelf parts bolted together with minimal tweaking. Certain companies prefer to plough their own furrow though, two of them being Teac and Parasound. They've decided there's more than one way to skin the digital cat, as we discovered with Teac's P-30 VRDS transport and Parasound's belt-drive C/BD-2000.

What makes these two eye-openers different from their more mundane siblings is the fact that neither relies on commonly used transports. When you drop a CD into a standard transport's drawer and it slides shut, the disc is clamped by a lightweight magnetic puck onto the spindle of a small motor. This motor then quickly spins the disc up to the right speed for the laser to read the digits off the disc.

While this works well enough in principle, it doesn't answer all of the problems that can afflict CD replay. One of these is vibrations in the spinning disc which can cause the laser's focusing mechanism to work overtime. Another is warps in the disc itself, which can reduce the accuracy with which the data is read from the disc.

Teac and Parasound have both tried to address these problems with their transports. While the Teac pushes the CD up against a clamp to stop it vibrating and to iron out any warps, the Parasound prefers to use a large, heavy puck and belt drive.

So how well do these technologies work? Turn the page and find out...
The P-30 looks like it was hewn out of a single piece of aluminium and its weight is in keeping with its looks. Within the first five seconds of John Lee Hooker’s Boom Boom it was blatantly obvious that the P-30 is a bit special, even at its less than bargain basement price. Compared to our customary (and nearly half the price of the P-30) Audiolab 8000CDM there was an extra octave of bass. And this bass had some of the best impact, focus and (unusually for digital) rhythm I’ve heard in a long time. In fact, the P-30 feeding a quality DAC like Pink Triangle’s Da Capo would have some expensive turntables looking worried. Another benefit was a combination of complete control and an unforced, natural presentation.

It took a lot of will power to pull myself away from the adrenal overload provided by a range of funky Techno CDs to line the P-30 up with something more acoustic. Eric Bibb and Needed Time with their Good Stuff HDCD album then slipped smoothly into the Teac’s copper-plated interior.

One of the most exacting tests for sound quality is the human voice. The singing which emerged from the Sextet IIs when the P-30 was in circuit was some of the most convincing and least artificial I’ve heard. Recently, while on a trip to Milan I heard a CD/vinyl/active speaker set-up costing well over £100,000 and relying on a very expensive transport. The Teac was easily as convincing with its vocal rendition as that transport had been and just blew it into the weeds in terms of rhythm and tune-playing.

‘Saucer and Cup’, a solo voice/guitar number, showed how delicately revealing the Teac could be. It relayed impressive amounts of spatial information, producing a truly transparent acoustic. The tiny timing changes and inflections that make music involving were there in abundance too. The P-30 mixed up a dangerously effective brew of CD’s solidity and precision along with vinyl’s natural, easy flow. Dangerous because music as listenable as this will have you permanently bolted to your hi-fi.

Spinning a copy of Officium Defunctorum by Tomas Luis de Victoria I was greeted by a tonal smorgasbord close to that normally reserved for turntables. What surprised me here was the power of the choristers’ voices. Imaging was also more tangibly and precisely focused than through either the Parasound C/BD-2000 or Audiolab 8000CDM, giving the sound stage that extra depth so hard to come by in most components.

Measured Performance
see p103
Using Parasound’s C/BD-2000 is a bit like using a record deck. Slipping back the smoked Perspex transport cover, you have to put the disc over the spindle and then place the surprisingly heavy puck on top. By the way, don’t forget about the puck. The transport works whether it’s used or not, and leaving it off can result in the disc spinning crazily inside the machine.

Daboa’s From The Gekko album did sterling service opening the proceedings. The first track on this CD is ‘Canto Del Pilon’ which has some very artificial and extremely deep bass running through it. Here, the Parasound did a good job of controlling the lower registers. It stopped the bass from overwhelming the rest of the mix but fell short of the Teac in terms of smoothness and lack of grain, the Parasound was equalled by the Audiolab. And with this piece and Daboa’s From The Gekko, the 8000CDM actually proved the better of the two when it came to natural vocals.

Heading in search of the Blues, I treated myself to Eric Bibb and Needed Time’s Good Stuff. This HDCD recording produced a good left to right spread across the front of the speakers but the C/BD-2000 seemed unable to capitalise on the impressive depth of sound captured on this disc.

As far as wearing out the carpet with rhythm-driven Blues goes, the Parasound was again on a par with the 8000CDM rather than Teac’s involving P-30.

Dinemec’s deliciously sweet recording of Sophia Reuter et al performing Wagner’s Traume for violin and orchestra confirmed the C/BD-2000’s clear, tidy sound stage.

Unfortunately, it also confirmed a hardness across the midrange which had previously been obvious on vocals. Here, it manifested itself on violin notes, the upper registers of Sophia Reuter’s playing sounding uncharacteristically hard.

Turning to the 8000CDM found a gentler, more natural treble and deeper sound stage. The Audiolab was a more involving listen as well.

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**World Verdict**

Belt drive is an interesting idea but the Parasound is bettered by cheaper transports.

**Measured Performance**

See p103

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**Parasound C/BD-2000** £1695

Distributed by Heybrook Hi-Fi
Clemo Road,
Liskeard,
Cornwall PL14 3NH
Tel: 01579 342866
Jon Marks comes to the conclusion that Roksan's new Caspian integrated amplifier could be about to win a lot of friends.

Oxford Reference Dictionary, "Caspian: a land-locked sea enclosed by the USSR and Iran." My copy of the dictionary is obviously a few years old, talking as it does about the USSR. When I pick up an updated version, I only hope 'Caspian' will now merit an extra entry: "£700 integrated amplifier manufactured by Roksan. Completely free from the colourless, grainy sound that characterises most transistor amplifiers. As a result, it is one of the most enjoyable integrateds to listen to."

Helping the 70W Caspian on its way is a high quality Alps Blue Velvet motorised volume control. This kind of potentiometer isn't particularly common in £700 amps because of its relatively high cost, but it sounds rather good. Allowing Roksan to build the Caspian on a single circuit board (to keep signal paths short and reduce interference, they say) is the fact that most of the components are tiny surface mount devices.

Supplying the amp with power are a hefty, low profile toroidal transformer and two 6800µF Aerovox audio grade capacitors. Relays, mounted close to the back panel, are also used for input selection to cut down on unnecessary and untidy wiring. Upgrading is catered for too, with a set of 'pre-amp out' and 'power amp in' sockets for bi-amping.

Arrayed against the Caspian just waiting to reveal any shortcomings was some impressive hardware, from Marantz's CD-63 mk11 KI-Signature, Audiolab 8000CD and Denon's £1300 DCD-S10 to Teac's P-30 and Audiolab's 8000CDM transports and DACs from Pink Triangle (Da Capo) and The Parts Connection (DAC-2). Partnering 'speakers were Heybrook's Sextet IIIs, Jamo's Concert 8 stand mounters and our own KLS3 Gold.

Dropping the Caspian in at the deep end, I supplied it with the signal from the P-30 and Da Capo. Spinning inside the Teac was an HDCD recording of Eric Bibb and Needed Time, Good Stuff. This R 'n' B stormer swiftly showed that the Roksan was gifted in the rhythm stakes, assembling one of the most foot-tapping sonic experiences I've heard in quite a while.

The firm foundation this rhythm precision was built on consisted of controlled, extended bass which had impact and speed - a rare combination indeed, especially at £700. Bibb's singing proved that the midrange came no poor second to the bass, with impressive projection that was down to the Caspian's transparency, not an 'in your face' presentation that impresses in the showroom but curls your toes after a couple of hours at home. The icing on the frequency cake was a treble possessed of the kind of smooth sweetness and tonal capacity that normally only issues from a large box of glowing bottles sitting in the corner of a living room.

Chaka Demus and Pliers lent a hand next with 'Tease Me'. For all its artificiality, this CD has a refreshing clarity and airiness to its vocals, along with basslines that will give any amp's power supply a good work out. And the bass went a long way down as I found out with 'Nuh Betta Nuh Deh' and its near-subsonics. The Caspian had little trouble driving the Sextets' woofers to good effect.

The title track's bass remained focused and weighty even when I cranked the volume from the potato shaped remote control. Vocals had that tell-tale space to them, always a sign of an amp's ability to handle ambient subtleties. Present again was a rhythmic drive that makes a lot of the competition sound leaden footed by comparison. All this remained unflustered as the volume rose higher. And because the Roksan was getting the basics right, music had all the irresistible charisma of Hamlyn's famous piper.

Undeniable proof of this came in the form of the Chemical Brothers' "Setting
Sun'. Bass had great focus, depth and drive, retaining the extreme funkiness of this track where lesser amps lose it to blurred and sloppy bass. The Roksan's transparency was such that it even managed to reveal layering in the congested mix, usually the province of good pre/power combos.

Mopping my fevered brow, I headed for a slightly mellower work-out with Wagner, Brahms and Schubert all going under the laser. Tone and inflection turned out to be another couple of skills the Roksan has got sorted. Violins, both solo and en masse, had a deliciously natural resonance completely devoid of the solid-state glassiness that so often spoils the picture. Telling apart the various orchestral sections was easier than it has been with many an amp that has passed through our system here.

As with the rather cruder Chemical Brothers, the Roksan opened up the individual layers in Classical recordings, giving a sense of real depth to a sound stage already impressively broad.

And cranking the volume, even with heavily string-laden compositions, found the Caspian refusing to harden up across the upper registers.

Summing up the Caspian’s abilities succinctly was John Lee Hooker’s Boom Boom. Bass was deep and fast, midrange clear and powerful, treble crisp, dynamic and never fatiguing. If the Caspian was a suit, it would be a 1940s’ zoot suit sharp enough to cut granite. The spooky “I’m Bad Like Jesse James” had the kind of spine tingling menace that suggested if I stepped out of line, I’d be sleeping with the fishes. When music does this to you, you know that the hi-fi is doing its job.

By way of a yardstick I switched into the system Audiolab’s perennial 8000S (the original version - we hope to be reviewing the updated 8000S soon). Next to the Roksan, the 8000S’s version of events seemed rather small-scale. The sound stage shrunk in both depth and width and the bass lost its funkiness and impact (except in the upper bass region, where it was on a par with the Roksan).

Partnered with DNM’s Reson bi-wire speaker cable the Audiolab still lacked its spaciousness and musicality. The 8000S did draw level on imaging precision but then lost out on the subtleties that made the Roksan so much fun to listen to. And at high volumes, the 8000S started to sound slightly hard and ‘loud’.

Well, in the proverbial nutshell, it looks like Roksan have produced something rather special in the new Caspian. There’s a combination of valve-like tonality and smoothness with transistor bottom-end grunt and control which it’s hard not to be seduced by. If you’re on the look out for a £700 integrated that can be bi-amped to allow upgrading, then the Caspian should be sitting at the top of the list.

Roksan has got sorted. Measurement see p103

Roksan
St Peters Road,
Huntingdon
PE18 7DB
Tel: 01480 433777

WORLD VERDICT

A £700 bargain. Mixes the best of solid-state and valve worlds to produce a seductive sound.

Measured Performance see p103
VIBRATION CONTROL PLATFORMS AND THE MODULAR AUDIO SUPPORT SYSTEM
MUCH MORE THAN JUST A STAND!

As a piece of functional furniture the BASE Racks and platforms together are a work of art - Dave Wiley, Audiophile Magazine.

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WORLD VERDICT
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Ortofon

Now that digital reproduction technology is so advanced, you can throw away all of your records.

"LOB LOCKS", as they say on the planet Anagramia
Douglas Floyd-Douglass finds himself captivated by a pair of superb stand mounters from Danish Jamo.

Jamo, the most unlikely sounding audiophile loudspeaker manufacturer from Denmark, have erased all doubts of their ability with an impressive design in the new Concert 8. Jamo, who years ago gave us dubious mass-market 'speakers (from the decidedly avant-garde to impressionist wall hangers) have now got down to the serious art of real loudspeaker design. They have now proven their standing as a market leader: the Concert 8 is exceptional.

I first came across the Concert 8 in Milan last year where a prototype was on display. I was especially impressed with the flashy, solid copper phase plug which looks like a 19mm anti-aircraft shell. It has a valuable acoustic function as well as looking seriously alluring though; directly coupled to the assembly, the imposing copper phase plug also serves as an ingenious heat sink for the magnet. If you look really close, you'll also be able to appreciate the engineering that has gone into this driver - there's not so much as a pastry flake's width 'twixt voice coil and copper plug.

The cabinet is constructed of wood-veneered 25mm MDF and an impregnated front baffle consisting of a mix of quartz sand and a resonance-damping binding agent said to minimise coloration. All Jamo want you to hear is the drivers. A deliberately simple low-order crossover uses the highest grade components, including foil caps with wirewound resistors and high Q coils. Finally, the crossover is hardwired directly on to the 24k gold-plated bi-wireable input terminals. Jamo-designed low capacitance, low inductance OFC cables link the drivers to the crossover. All of this attention to detail and no-compromise quality more than justify the £1500 price tag.

The fluid cooled tweeter incorporates a dome made of ‘Sonotex’, a multi-coated textile said to give the optimum combination of rigidity and damping. The tweeter's high sensitivity is achieved by using silver wire in the coil windings and a double magnet. Its baffle is cast in solid zinc, which apparently rejects resonance yet achieves maximum mechanical contact with the enclosure.

The mid/bass unit handles an enormous bandwidth, 60Hz-4kHz to be exact. This is a considerable achievement, the unit behaving impeccably across all frequencies. Most impressive of all, Jamo manage this by using die-cast magnesium in the construction of the diaphragm and the frame.

While the present vogue for new cone materials has resulted in a lot of mediocre drivers, I must concede that this one really does the trick. There are no technical anomalies or audible flaws in this design. A lot of painstaking research was obviously done here.

The mid/bass driver is also extremely well behaved. So much so that on a reasonably powerful transistor amp the sound can be brutally revealing, showing up recording and performance oddities which are usually masked by the inherent acoustical and harmonic
characteristics of lesser designs. I'm sure some detail fans will love this but I found it to be a tad unnerving at times. I ended up opting for a trusty single-ended amp and was delighted with the warmth of tonality, presence and authority from this delicate Danish depth charge.

The Concert 8 is comfortable with large orchestral pieces and is capable of great depth of image and clarity. Mahler's 5th symphony in C sharp minor (Frankfurt Symphony Orchestra) was eerily moving and majestically musical.

Bass is fast and powerful as demonstrated by Rush's 'Moving Pictures', with Geddy Lee's rattling Rickenbacker and superbly powerful attack on drums. Most remarkable is the distinct lack of cabinet resonance and coloration.

Pink Floyd's 'Division Bell' and 'Momentary Lapse' showed off the Concert 8s' dynamic abilities. At all times the 'speakers remained completely in control, clearly free of distortion and cone break-up. The result was an effortless and flawless performance.

Alanis Morissette's Jagged Little Pill album was resplendent in all its rough production - the Concert 8s are mercilessly revealing with substandard recordings. With all due respect to the creators of one of the great albums of the decade, Jagged Little Pill has appalling treble overkill and the Concert 8s were unforgiving. Whether this album's sound is down to the master tape, the over-absorption of the control room or the treble roll-off of the monitors we shall probably never know.

Solo instrument recordings - Vladimir Ashkenazy performing Beethoven's sonatas for instance - demonstrated the scale the Concert 8s could reproduce. Piano had a completely natural timbral and acoustic quality. The cabinet volume and design were given a real challenge with the pace of the presto agitato. The Jamos' midrange and treble speed turned out to be excellent and low harmonics were powerful and very real. It's a pity the squeak of the Bachstein pedal intrudes every few bars. However, in terms of imaging, the offending pedal is spot on; straight down, left of centre.

In summary, the Concert 8 is one of the most advanced loudspeaker designs on the market today. An impressive lack of resonance and coloration shows off the excellent drive units (the tweeter is truly exceptional and the mid/bass unit revolutionary), allowing the music to take first place and really shine. The '8s are a no-compromise, no-expense-spared credit to their designers. Jamo are now firmly in the super league and the competition had better beware!

Jamo Concert 8
£1500

5 Faraday House, Daventry, Northants. NN11 5RD
Tel: 01327 301300

WORLD VERDICT

The Concert 8s are superbly clean, crisp and transparent. Beware their revealing nature though - they'll show up any source shortcomings.

Measured Performance
see p103
Following in the path of the original and extremely well received Assemblage DAC-1, the DAC-2 appears to be another big hit with customers and reviewers alike. The DAC-2 builds on the strengths of the original DAC-1, with its dual Burr-Brown PCM 1702 20 bit DACs, Crystal CS8412 input receiver, toroidal power transformer and Analog Devices based output stage, but adds HDCD capability with the PMD-100 digital filter chip, an extra coaxial digital input on a BNC jack, a phase inverter switch, three more power supply regulation stages with greatly increased power supply capacitance, and improved parts quality in the analog output stage. The best news is that all these improvements come with a very small price, the DAC-2 digital processor kit is $499.00 U.S. Of course, the DAC-2 also comes with our 30 day satisfaction guarantee, two year limited warranty, AND our assembly guarantee (if you can't get it to work, we will!).

For those of you with the upgrade bug, we also have a parts upgrade kit available for the DAC-2. This kit includes Caddock resistors and MultiCap capacitors for the analog output stage, Kimber silver and Illuminati hook-up wire, EAR and Soundcoat isolation and damping materials, Linear Technology voltage regulators, and more parts that make a significant improvement in the performance of the stock DAC-2. The parts upgrade kit is available at a special package price of $149.00 U.S., which makes it even more good news!

At today's exchange rates, the DAC-2 will cost approx. £ 329 including VAT and shipping (10-14 day delivery).

For more information on any of our products, please Call, Write, Fax or E-mail us and we will be happy to assist you.

A few of the positive comments from the press:

"...for the price of $499.00, it produces remarkably excellent sound. This is a really good kit for the DA converter beginner."
Mitsuru Yoshioka, MJ Magazine (Japan) Dec. 1996

"Putting on Steven Stills' Manassas (Atlantic 82808-2) - a bona-fide, re-mastered-from-the-original-master-tapes, HDCD-badge-wearing, High Definition Compatible Disc was much better. The resemblance in quality to what I'd been hearing that day in the recording studio, listening directly to my own master tapes, was uncanny."
"The DAC-2 is the best DA I've ever had in my system, revealing musical details on familiar recordings that I was previously unaware of."
Muse Kastanovich, Stereophile, Vol. 20 No. 1, January 1997

"The DAC-2 is another well-engineered product from Sonic Frontiers. The unit had better bench performance than many more expensive processors. In particular, the DAC-2 had low crosstalk, very low noise, good linearity, and excellent reproduction of low-level signals."
Robert Harley, Stereophile, Vol. 20 No. 1, January 1997

Subscription Info: MJ Magazine (Japan) - 011 - 81-03-5999-5121

Visit our newly redesigned Web Site: http://www.sonicfrontiers.com/TPC
Nick Tate tells the strange tale of Strathern Audio Ltd, Britain's first and last publicly owned hi-fi manufacturer.

Many will remember the British Leyland Motor Corporation, the 1970s state-owned purveyor of such automotive design masterpieces as the Morris Marina and Austin Allegro. A decade of industrial strife and dreadful quality ensured BLMC's dalliance with disaster was well publicised, but what many don't know is that hi-fi had its very own equivalent, Strathern Audio Limited.

Cast your mind back to 1973, a time of great growth for hi-fi manufacturing. Hoping to cash in on this, a government quango set up to stimulate Northern Ireland's flagging economy decided that what Belfast needed more than anything else was a hi-fi industry. Top civil service mandarins in Whitehall agreed, and faster than you could say, "Yes, Minister", the government earmarked £3 million from the public coffers for the infant company.

With the help of the Northern Ireland Finance Committee, Strathern duly commissioned a Cambridge-based design centre, PA Technology and Science, to design a number of leading-edge hi-fi products. For their £350,000 fee, PATS came up with all sorts of futuristic ideas, from a new type of parallel-tracking tonearm and an electronic tracking force adjustment system to touch-sensitive switches and flat diaphragm loudspeaker transducers. Things looked good.

But the most interesting thing to emerge was a new type of direct-drive motor which was particularly cheap to produce. This being 1973, the year that Technics' swish direct-drives swept through Britain's High Streets striking fear into every belt-propelled turntable on the market, Strathern realised correctly that they were on to a winner. Gone would be the days of noisy Garrards and obsolete Thorens, for this was the brave new era of direct-drive and Strathern had got themselves a licence to print money - or so the theory went. But as with every bright idea, there was a problem.

The direct-drive system had actually been developed by PATS in conjunction with toy manufacturer Mettoy as a cheap, low-power device for use in kids' toys. It couldn't quite stand the rigours of high-torque use in turntables. When asked to provide enough grunt to keep records spinning at an accurate speed, the little motor would start to rumble. Unfortunately, in a textbook example of 1970s' management incompetence, Strathern didn't realise this until it was too late. They'd sensibly decided that producing some of PATS' other designs just wasn't on - they were too difficult to put into production. Instead, they'd opted to produce simple direct-drive turntables and loudspeakers.
Two turntables, the STM4 and SMA2, were introduced to the market. To look at they were very impressive, with clean, modern lines and, from a distance at least, a nice finish. The £80 STM4 was a budget direct-drive, designed to strike at Garrard's more expensive mass-market designs, and certainly looked quite capable of relieving Plessey of a few customers. The £120 SMA2 was positively dashing, very futuristic with its touch controls, sleek, low-mass tonearm and ultra-slim design. Unfortunately, they were about as well screwed together as an Austin Allegro on a rainy strike-bound Bank Holiday Friday afternoon.

Tales of Strathearn's 1975 press launch are legendary. The turntables were said to be appallingly designed, so susceptible to acoustic feedback that if the amp was turned up past one on the dial an ear-piercing howl from the Sensed. One of the teats that makes the SMA2 so special are the unique electronic controls, which can change the electronic setup for the cartridge, making the turntable very adaptable. The tonearm is made of solid brass, which is easy to handle for changing cartridges. Alternatively, you can buy a spare arm for your best cartridge to yield downward flexibility. But the main appeal is that the tonearm is solid and does everything as it should. We suggest you make sure it is the quality of your own home.

Graham Bish was brought in from ITT as Strathearn's supremo in February 1977. Unlike those before him, he was refreshingly candid with the members of the press. When asked what he thought of the situation he was reported to have said, "You can't make it any worse". Unfortunately he was wrong. Like rats leaving a sinking ship the company's top brass resigned, and Strathearn had to go begging to the government to have losses of £14 million written off.

By November Bish had also gone, and the new chief sensibly went incommunicado - journalists were asked to direct their questions to that Mecca of Whitehall sloth, the Department of Commerce. Momentarily the company concentrated on export markets and 'speakers would ensue. The tonearm's automation was absurdly slow, only fast when dropping - sorry, cueing - the stylus. The planar 'speakers were reported to be so dreadful that the company engineers who set them up hadn't even noticed they'd wired them out of phase. It was a boardroom farce, which would have been hilarious were it not for the fact that it was taxpayers' money being squandered.

Naturally, instead of doing anything about their sad excuses for hi-fi separates, the hapless company set about a PR charm offensive. With shades of government ministers blaming presentation for the Poll Tax's unpopularity, Strathearn showed an arrogance born of a complete misunderstanding of the problem in hand. To wit, various journalists who had been particularly hostile (i.e. objective) were approached to work on a 'consultancy basis'. Asked to report on their findings, they gave the company a damming indictment of their lemon-like creations. On receiving subsequent review samples they found their suggestions had been ignored. Had Strathearn hoped that the scribes would show loyalty to their paymasters? You might think that, and therefore they couldn't possibly comment... Anyway, unhappily for the company, the journos duly reported the decks' failings, giving them a serious drubbing in print.

The STM4 - a budget direct drive famous for poor build. Some were said to have motors that ran backwards.

The SMA2 - nice looks, shame about the construction and sound quality.

However, these 'simple' designs suddenly became very difficult to get right for mass production because ingeniously (not), the government quango involved had only asked the PATS centre for design prototypes rather than complete finished products. As Strathearn soon discovered, getting a direct-drive turntable out of the laboratory into the shops was easier said than done.

After this first critical mistake, Strathearn displayed an eerily politician-like uninterest in the detail of their production difficulties, turning instead to good old-fashioned public relations to dig themselves out of their hole.
Even at £30 off the original price, the STM4 was a bad bet and buyers stayed away in droves.

considered a change of name, but it was not to be.

By 1978 Strathearn STM4 turntables were falling off the backs of lorries for who bought the decks, Strathearn became a national joke. Stories even appeared about the motors going backwards. It was a sorry sight.

By 1979 Britain’s one and only ‘nationalised’ hi-fi manufacturer was dead. It wasn’t the workers’ fault, it was simply that people who didn’t know anything about hi-fi were running a hi-fi company, stupidly believing they could just buy engineering know-how off the shelf. It is reckoned they spent over £20 million by the end, and that the initial laudable aim of creating 1500 jobs for Ulster people had been pie in the sky - the best they ever achieved was closer to 300.

Strathearn Audio Limited - may they rest in peace, never to rumble again. And if on reading this obituary, they do turn in their corporate grave, may it not be backwards.

HOW TO DESIGN A TURNTABLE
BY HER MAJESTY’S GOVERNMENT

Both Strathearn turntables used a particularly weak motor originally designed for toys. Over-stressed, it was unusually noisy, measuring far worse than Pioneer’s cheaper belt-drive rival, the PL12D. Neither had suspension, platter damping was poor thanks to a ludicrously styled turntable mat, and both were flimsily built, making them appallingly sensitive to vibration. Both used small main bearings which further compromised their longevity, and their arms had badly adjusted, high friction bearings, skimpy plastic headshells and inaccurate bias controls. All things considered, it was remarkable they worked at all.

ENGINEERING THE HYPE
Strathearn’s media circus

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Nick Tate forecasts a fine future for Talk Electronics' new Hurricane I pre and Tornado I power amplifier combination.

Since 1990, Cable Talk have supplied fine sounding cables to that select breed of audiophile with more sense than money. Buoyed by this success they've decided the time's right to mount a full frontal assault on the amplifier market, under the radical name Talk Electronics. With characteristic thoroughness, they've invested vast sums (almost £150,000) designing their Hurricane, Tornado and Storm pre, power and integrated amplifiers.

All pre-amplifiers, from the £499.95 Hurricane 1 to the £1099.95 Hurricane 4, are Class A, J-FET designs with Cable Talk internal wiring. Going up the range brings standard remote control (from the £699.95 2 onwards), better power supplies and superior wiring (the 2 uses Broadcast, the 3 Reference). The top of the range 4 boasts an ALPS volume control, two tape loops, polycarbonate signal capacitors and superior reservoir caps. A MM/MC phono stage is optional on all the pre-amps, getting progressively better (and more expensive - from £49.95 to £99.95 extra) the further up the range you go. The Tornado power amps follow a similar upgrade path, offering from 50W to 100W of MOSFET power from £449.95 for the 1 to £1099.95 for the 4 monobloc pair.

Talk say there's a good reason to have such an extensive range. For hard-to-drive 'speakers buyers should go for a budget pre-amp with a more muscular power amp, while for better sound on a budget, a top pre-amp, basic power amp and sensitive 'speakers are recommended. The choice is the customer's. And there's more - all amps are further upgradeable with the Whirlwind external power supply, factory retrofitted for £649.95.

If such a bewildering array of options has confused you, let's remind ourselves that this review concentrates on the entry-level Hurricane I pre-amp/Tornado 1 power amp combination. And being an insatiable vinyl junkie, your reviewer has also specified the optional (£49.95) MM/MC phono stage. Weighing in at just under a grand, this combo has lots of serious competition - Audiolab's 8000C/P duo, budget Naims and Exposures, plus various 'budget superamps' like Mission's PSX-R powered Cyrus IIII and...
Rose’s Scion two-box integrated. As a particular fan of the last, I opted to use the Rose for comparisons.

On looks alone the new Talks aren’t going to raise many eyebrows. Ten years ago big black boxes were the dog’s proverbials, but now they just look dull. Although the Hurricane and Tornado are finely built and elegantly finished, in my opinion Talk have played it too safe visually. As far as sound’s concerned however, things are much brighter. First impressions were of a clean, confident, controlled amplifier with a powerful and detailed sound.

Alex Reece’s ‘Candles’, a drum ‘n’ bass track with the most powerful bass sequences this side of an earthquake, came across blisteringly. Compared to the Rose, the Talk combo drove the room better, reaching down to the deepest recesses of the Mission 752 Freedoms with consummate control. Sound staging and image projection were superb - so clearly did the female vocalist project forward that I almost didn’t notice these ‘speakers’ annoying directionality. And despite the combo’s thundering bass, subtle backing instruments came through clear as day rather than disappearing into the mix as with the Rose. Timing was also top class, with a better sense of space between the beats and more precise rhythms than the Scion could manage.

Wonderful stuff, but I began to discover some chinks in the Talk’s armour. First, treble lacked the Scion’s sweetness and veered towards harshness. Delicate, atmospheric cymbal work on The Pretenders’ ‘Brass in Pocket’ lost much of its clarity and warmth. Another minus point was its lack of urge through the phono stage. Even through line inputs the Talk wasn’t the most expressive of amps, majoring instead on fine detail retrieval and control. But with vinyl the tendency was exaggerated, making for a rather flat, undynamic sound. The Rose, although less impressive with detail, was a lot more emotionally engaging - you could really tell when Chrissie Hynde’s vocals were being whispered, spoken or screamed.

The latest audiophile vinyl pressing of Dave Brubeck’s Time Out album showed similar tendencies. ‘Take Five’ through the Talk was an impressively focussed experience, with loads of fine detail and a strong, almost architectural quality to the location of the various instruments within the sound stage. Drums were tight and double bass deep, well controlled and quite tuneful, but it was all a little detached for my liking. Switching back to the Rose, much of the music’s ‘vibe’ reappeared, along with some extra warmth to the intricate cymbal work.

Through line inputs at least, Talk Electronics’ Hurricane I/Tornado I pairing has much to recommend it - tight, clean sound with plenty of power, bags of detail and true out-of-the-speakers imaging. But in its quest for accuracy it misses some of the music’s emotion, meaning it’ll please control freaks rather than groove lovers.

Matching is the key word - use it to get a grip on soft sounding sources or ‘speakers. If they suit your system, then the Talks’ fine build, flexibility and upgradeability make them a good buy. Overall, they’re best described as showing real grace under pressure or, if you’ll forgive the expression, calm in the eye of the storm.

Talk Electronics Hurricane I £489.95
Talk Electronics Tornado I £449.95
Talk Electronics Unit 12, Farnborough Bus. Centre, Belmoor Road, Farnborough GU14 7XA
Tel: 01252 378383

WORLD VERDICT
Flexible pre/power with strong, controlled sound, but won’t suit all tastes.

Measured Performance see p103
WHAT HI-FI? WHAT HI-FI?
April 1997 May 1997
Concert 8 Concert Center

WHAT HI-FI?
April 1997
Concert 8

WHAT HI-FI?
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WHAT HI-FI?
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THE SOUND OF EXCELLENCE - Made in Denmark.
Let's get straight to the point here. Like other Japanese hi-fi manufacturers, Kenwood have had something of an uphill struggle to convince die-hard audiophiles that they can compete head-on with the specialist companies. In the world of hi-fi, less is generally seen as more, and with a few exceptions minimalism isn't generally a forte of the big multinationals.

Kenwood's new £170 DP-3080 illustrates the point. It's well built yet the front panel also houses a plethora of small buttons.

Inside the Kenwood sits a Bitstream DAC with Kenwood's own D. R. I. V. E. filter system like the one fitted to the DM-7090 MD player reviewed in April. This, Kenwood say, reduces the quantisation errors that occur on low level signals. These produce a 'stepped' waveform instead of a smooth one. D. R. I. V. E. filters out the 'steps' to give a smoother waveform and, apparently, a more subtle, natural sound.

'Hear the Voice' by Mighty Truth certainly left a good first impression. Vocal presence was excellent, with the singer projected from the rest of the mix and free from sibilance. The bass wasn't quite as deep as that of the NAD 510 but it did show the NAD up in the area of integration. I wasn't always so aware of the lower frequencies on the DP-3080 due to their cohesion with the midrange.

The same proved to be the case with the treble performance. Initially it didn't seem as detailed as the NAD 510, sounding a little blurred. However, further listening showed the Kenwood was truer to the original, simply sounding less exaggerated. The sheer smoothness displayed at higher frequencies is quite unusual in such a budget machine.

The Kenwood's balanced approach served it well with a variety of music. 'La Voix Est Terminate', from the Jam Nation CD showed a refinement lacking in the NAD. Control was excellent with fine detail retrieval and the '3080 was less inclined to 'throw' music at the listener as the '510 did.

It didn't all go the DP-3080's way though. Against the NAD and other machines, it did occasionally sound a little lacklustre and sluggish. This could be something to bear in mind if you've already got a smooth sounding amp and 'speakers.

The Kenwood was equally eloquent with Dance music. Using a Tony de Vit mix, the '3080 readily conveyed the atmosphere of the music. At times the lowest bass notes could sound a tad soft, but this didn't hinder the Kenwood's timing and spaciousness. Fine stereo depth also helped the cause.

One area in which the Kenwood trounced the NAD was with Classical music. With Mozart's Piano Concerto No22, the DP-3080's supremacy over the '510 came as quite a surprise. String tone was undiluted and piano possessed an impressive timbre for this class of machine. You'd have to look at machines from Rotel and Denon which cost at least half as much again to find any significant improvement here.

The tables were almost turned with Sting's 'Fragile'. Although the NAD sounded slightly 'looser', it undeniably had more presence and atmosphere.

However, when it came to portraying an individual guitar string the Kenwood etched out greater detail. This, combined with the depth of sound and smooth vocals, made for a sound that was beguiling in a manner the NAD couldn't quite match.

It says a great deal for the Kenwood's quality that not only keeps up with the NAD, but edges ahead for the most part. No mean achievement when you consider the £30 price differential in the Kenwood's favour. The sheer cohesion with which the Kenwood deals with all types of music shows a maturity well beyond the norm at this level of the market.

Kenwood have a real winner here.

Kenwood DP-3080
Trio Kenwood
Dwight Road,
Watford,
Herts. WD1 8EB
Tel: 01923 816444

WORLD VERDICT
At a meagre £170 Kenwood's DP-3080 makes excellent sonic and financial sense.
ProAc AT Musical Images

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World Radio History
Jon Marks finds the vinyl world receiving another push to keep it turning with Project's 1.2 turntable.

At £200 this is the kind of turntable people will encounter as - or if - they begin their vinyl odyssey. Set-up turned out to be a bit of a nightmare. However, speaking to Henley Designs who import the Project range I was assured that the turntable normally arrives ready for use - ours was out of kilter because it was the demo model. The second slight worry was a main bearing that had a little play in it. Mind you, for £200 you can't really expect the kind of micron-tolerance masterpieces Michell, Roksan and Linn produce in their £1000+ decks.

In spite of the difficulties with our review sample the 1.2 is actually a gifted sonic performer. Here, the platter's 1.7kgs can easily be heard, giving quiet backgrounds thanks to little noise from the suspended AC synchronous motor getting through the platter. Adding impact and crispness to the player's presentation was its inertia, which aided speed stability. The Spice Girls and Dodgy both showed that the 1.2 was happy to furnish boppy rhythms and decent, if not absolutely pin-sharp percussion timing. Separation was also good for £200 as the Spice Girls demonstrated, their individual voices clearly differentiated. What the Project was losing to more expensive decks was some tonal colour and bass definition.

Following on the heels of Dodgy came Third World with their LP of the same name. While the bass here was slightly amorphous, there was a broad sound stage populated with a skanking bassline and vocals that had surprising projection, even if they weren't precisely focused.

With Mahler's Symphony No 1, the Project put together an accomplished performance. The package as a whole, with Ortofon's S10 MM cartridge did tend to turn violin strings in their upper registers into a rather synthetic single note but balanced this by refusing to mistrack or lose grip on crescendos.

Since it's a solid sub-chassis turntable, the Project 1.2 is going to need a good support to give of its best. Placing it in our rack and tapping the MDF shelf with my finger resulted in the customary dull thuds coming from our Sextet 'speakers. We eventually settled on a sub-table in a bay window, the deck sitting on a layer of bubblewrap sandwiched between two MDF boards.

Foibles aside, the Project 1.2 is a persuasive argument in favour of the black disc. If you're a budding vinylophile and £200 is your ticket to ride, the 1.2 is a very good place to start.

WORLD VERDICT

A bargain at £200 with its substantial and involving sound.
For £2500 you’d expect Teac’s P-30 to be something rather special and this month’s competition winner won’t be disappointed. Stowed neatly away under the P-30’s 6mm aluminium top plate is a plethora of audiophile capacitors, including the little known but high quality Duorex II electrolytic capacitor along with Sanyo’s solid aluminium OS-CONs. And sitting on the back panel where it has been placed to cause minimum hum is a chunky mains transformer.

Helping boost sound quality even more is widespread use of copper plating. This has been done to give the cleanest possible ground, reducing noise in the power supplies. Teac take the plating further than most though. Not only do the heatsinks get the copper treatment but several sensitive ICs also receive copper shielding.

The jewel in the crown of the P-30 is the CMK-3 VRDS mechanism at its heart. Teac’s Vibration-free Rigid Disc-clamping System clamps the CD across its entire surface to iron out small warps and minimise vibration. Teac say this results in a more precise and consistent reading of the digital data from the disc. The clamp itself is housed in a sprung base constructed of a high-density polymer chosen to absorb vibration and therefore enhance signal accuracy.

Once the data has been read from the CD, it is clocked out of the P-30 (through co-ax, balanced or ST-Link optical outputs) using Teac’s Digital Servo Ratio Locked Loop, which gives very low jitter. And as Jon Marks found, it’s quality like this that produces top notch sound.

Even bearing in mind the £2500 price tag, the Teac P-30 sounds impressive. It has an air of total solidity and composure combined with the all-too-rare ability to really make music enjoyable. This is one of those magical pieces of hi-fi which will make you want to stay up to the early hours of the morning just listening to it. And even when no one’s listening to it, the Teac will still turn heads for its build and quality of engineering.

If you’d like a chance to win the P-30, all you have to do is answer the questions opposite and complete the tie breaker. Send in the entry form on the back of a sealed envelope or postcard, to reach us before June 4th, to:

Teac P-30 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 winner promptly.
TEAC’S BATTLESHIP WORTH £2500

COMPETITION ENTRY QUESTIONS

1) What is the P-30?
   A) A new passenger jet
   B) A type of cold remedy
   C) A secret service division
   D) A CD transport

2) What does DSRLL stand for?
   A) Digital System Reverse Latent Level
   B) Digital Servo Ratio Locked Loop
   C) Double Striding Right and Left Legs
   D) Direct Strobe Rotation Loop Lock

3) Why is the P-30’s mains transformer placed on the outside of the case?
   A) Because it’s too big to fit inside
   B) To minimise hum
   C) Because it looks too good to cover up
   D) To help weight distribution

4) How many outputs does the P-30 have?
   A) 4       B) 3       C) None       D) 1

5) What is the P-30’s top plate made of?
   A) Brass
   B) Steel
   C) Copper
   D) Aluminium

TIE BREAKER (obligatory)
Complete the following in less than 30 words
Teac’s battleship P-30 comes with VRDS,
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And because it’s packed with all the best parts,
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COMPETITION WINNERS

APRIL ISSUE COMPETITION

In our Apr I edition we had two superbly balanced digital systems to give away, one built around Marantz’s CD-63 mkll Kl-Signature CD player, the other around Kenwood’s DM-7090 MiniDisc recorder.

The winner of the CD system is
W Brown
of Leicester.

The winner of the MiniDisc system is
Geoff Adams
of Haywards Heath in West Sussex.

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.

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In your Hi-Fi system the 8000S can be an Integrated Amplifier or a Pre-amplifier. When combined with the Audiolab 8000P Stereo Power Amplifier it becomes an advanced pre-power amplifier. For the future the possibilities are limitless.

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What can you buy for £200 nowadays? A budget amplifier? A tuner? Well if you bought the Denon DRA-275RD, you would get both and more. The Denon is one of those products where you look at the specification sheet and wonder just how they managed to cram it all in. For this receiver has on its gooey list a two-band tuner with RDS, a 40W power amp, tone controls, remote operation and unusually for these days, a phono stage.

The first question that came to mind was, by including almost everything for £199.99, have Denon forgotten about the way the '275RD sounds? To find out, I connected the Denon between our Da Capo DAC (with the Teac P-30 transport) and Sextet speakers.

The first CD into the drawer was Gabrielle's eponymous album. I was impressed by the smoothness of her vocals which were clear and focused even though some of the finer details of her voice were being masked. Pumping basslines were reproduced with plenty of zest, the Denon only erring by sounding a little flabby and loose.

Next on the agenda was Magnificat. Here the Denon between our Da Capo DAC (with the Teac P-30 transport) and Sextet speakers worked.

The first CD into the drawer was Gabrielle's eponymous album. I was impressed by the smoothness of her vocals which were clear and focused even though some of the finer details of her voice were being masked. Pumping basslines were reproduced with plenty of zest, the Denon only erring by sounding a little flabby and loose.

Unfortunately this praise cannot be extended to the AM section which proved to be no better in sound quality terms than a clock radio. Continuing in the same vein the kindest thing that can be said of the phono stage was that it worked. Compared to the sound from the tuner section records sounded consistently more muddled. If you really wanted to listen to records, the QED Discsaver would be a wise investment.

To decide whether the Denon makes a good buy you really have to look at your priorities. For a receiver of this price the amplifier section is surprisingly good, and the FM section of the tuner isn't really that far behind. The performance of the AM and phono sections is disappointing though. But with remote control thrown in, fans of domestic harmony and compactness should give the DRA-275RD a listen.

DENON DRA-275RD £199.99

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

WORLD VERDICT

This fully featured receiver represents good value despite below-par performance from the AM section and phono stage.

Measured Performance see p103
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Ketan Bharadia wonders how far amplifier design has come in over forty years with Rogers' Junior valve monoblocs.

It's an odd feeling to realise that the piece of equipment I'm listening to started production well over a decade and a half before I was born. So how was I to judge its performance? Should it be treated like a classic car which is loved for its faults as well as its fortes? Or should it stand on its own merits and be measured against today's standards? In the end I judged it as I would any modern amplifier because a well engineered amplifier will always be recognisably good.
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Size 1.0m. x 28cm. x 22cm. Sensitivity 93 dB/w. Amplifiers from 12 watts. £ 1300.

Living Voice
Airscout/RW24 Bass Bin.
"It comes down to extraordinary resolution right across the band. Everything is there: full timbral colour, perfect timing, transparency without brightness and coherence like you wouldn't believe....don't expect to find a better speaker system". Hi Fi Choice Feb 97.

Sensitivity 108 dB/w.
100 watt power handling. Recommended amplifier power - 3 watts upwards. Airscout £14,750. RW24 Bass Bin £ 9,500.

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The Junior mono power amplifier was produced in four different guises with only slightly different circuits from 1954 until 1961. Priced at £16 it would be considered upper mid-price by today’s standards. It uses a pair of EL84 valves working in an ultra-linear push-pull configuration to produce a claimed 8 watts at 0.12% harmonic distortion.

Scouring classic hi-fi dealers I discovered that tracking down a pair of Junior monos is not always easy, especially since they have to be of the same circuit. A pair in good condition will set you back in the region of £350 and a rebuild (depending on what needs doing) costs approximately £150 excluding valves.

The Juniors were slotted straight into our reference system between our own KLP1 pre-amp and Heybrook Sextet II ‘speakers. The 88dB/W/m Heybrooks were chosen not only because they’re highly revealing but also for their easy load which suited the limited power of the Juniors.

The first disc into the Teac P-30’s tray was Halim by Natacha Atlas, best described as Arabic music with drum machines and a Dance beat. To say I was surprised as the first few bars flew past my ears would be an understatement.

What I was expecting was a polite, warm sound. What I got was clean and fast with the added benefit of being punchy and rhythmic. Percussion was clear, crisp and sharp but never aggressive. The Rogers had a presentation which tended to image forward of the ‘speakers rather than behind as some older amps with heavily rolled off treble can. But while the drum machine bass line was fast and jaunty there was a lack of depth to the lowest frequencies combined with a slight looseness. The word ‘slight’ is the operative word here though. This weakness aside, the Juniors were putting together a seamless musical picture with a broad tonality.

Next followed a couple of Classical pieces in the form of Shostakovich’s string quartet No7 by the Schidlof Quartet and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra playing Tchaikovsky’s 6th symphony. At one point in the quartet the viola whips up a storm with the cello. Here the Rogers managed to keep things under control so the piece remained easy to follow. Tonal colour was vividly portrayed unlike many of today’s amplifiers which can seem grey and expressionless by comparison. The amplifiers were sounding clean and precise with very little sense of processing the music.

There is some bad news though. It was obvious with this piece and subsequently the 6th symphony that there was a fudging of fine detail. Mind you this was done in a discreet manner and was barely noticeable until you listened specifically for it. Also apparent was the fact that 8 watts can take you only so far with ‘speakers of less than about 90dB sensitivity. This was underlined by the restricted dynamics and a lack of weight whenever the music became complex and demanding.

Take Five by the Dave Brubeck Quartet exemplified the Junior’s sound. The piano was focused and imaged well out of the right hand ‘speaker. It had fine texture and shape but lacked a touch of weight. Cymbals literally shimmered and sounded beautifully natural and detail was good. The downside was a lack of weight and depth to the rhythm section and ‘losing the plot’ when the going got tough.

So how exactly does a 45-year-old amp square up? In many respects the Junior does extremely well when judged by today’s standards - with efficient ‘speakers and small scale music it’s highly competitive. In terms of listenability it’s excellent. Though it does have obvious weaknesses, listening to the Junior did make me wonder just how much progress amplifiers have really made over the last four and a half decades.
Help! The time has come for me to upgrade my ageing Cyrus II amplifier but with so many options available I am unsure of the best way forwards.

I have listened to the most obvious replacement namely the Cyrus III (not the i) with my Mission 753 speakers and Pioneer PD-S703 CD player and it certainly improved the sound. However I am considering the following: a QED Vector passive pre-amplifier feeding two (second-hand) Pioneer A-400s thus bi-amping my 753s.

I have read a lot about the quality of the power amp section of the A-400 and how other people have used an external pre-amp to great effect but am unsure if what I propose to do will bring improvements. I'm assuming it is possible to run two A-400s off a single pre-amp. I know how well the 753s respond to bi-amping and so...

My music tastes range from Living Colour and Pearl Jam through to Bork and REM. I like to listen at above-average (realistic?) volumes and am looking for a more detailed sound, particularly in the treble which currently seem a little detached at times.

I would also be grateful if you could suggest some CD upgrades as I know the Pioneer.

Gyrodec and 'PSX-R' the Cyrus (so much for the 'no-cost' tweak?)

Which leads me onto my question. Which do you feel would give the greatest improvement - upgrading my Goldring 1042 cartridge to an Ortofon MC10 or MC20 Supreme or adding either the QC or PSX-R power supplies?

Other components: arm - RB300; phono stage - Rotel RQ970BX; 'speakers - B&W P4; cable - Cable Talk Talk 3; interconnects - Chord Cobra; CD player - Rotel RCD965BX LE Discrete.

Simon Kelk, skelk@amoco.com

For an upgrade that will really make an impression on your ears, try hooking up your Gyrodec to Michell's own QC power supply.

The fuses inside plugs that benefit from a bit of elbow grease. Cleaning the fuses inside the components themselves can also bear fruit sonically, although the equipment MUST be disconnected from the mains first and left to power down for a while. If this leaves your Brasso lust unsated, try...
I am currently using is getting a bit 'out of its depth' (although I have heard it sound better than in my current set-up). Would a DAC be a sensible upgrade? (Audio Alchemy's DAC-in-a-Box or do I look towards something like the Marantz CD-63 mkII Ki-Signature?) Please help as it is impossible to hear the QED/A-4005 combination and I can't afford to 'suck it and see'.

Peter Feltham
Wymondham, Norfolk.

I think using the power amp sections of two Pioneer A-400s to bi-amp your Mission 753 speakers could well be an excellent idea. Previous experience with bi-amping does strongly suggest you could get very good results. One problem though is that QED no longer make the Vector, but almost any other active or passive pre-amp with two pairs of 'pre-amp out' sockets should work.

Back in our February '97 issue, Steve Cresswell of South Yorkshire wrote in about bi-amping his system. He used the pre-amp section of a Linn Pretek integrated amp to drive a Linn Powertek power amp and the power section of a NAD 3026. Apparently, the results were impressive to say the least.

You can connect the QED to the A-400s using one amp for the left channel one for the right. For this layout, you'd need the left channel cables going into, say, the CD inputs on one A-400 and the right channel cables into the second A-400's CD inputs. The volume controls on both Pioneer amps should be set fully clockwise.

As Dominic Todd revealed in his column of Oct '96, this arrangement produces better sound quality than having one amp handle both bass drivers and one both tweeters.

As for the CD player the CD-63 mkII Ki-Signature would fit in well in this system but don't ignore the Trichord Genesis. KB
Audio T is one of the oldest and most respected hi-fi retailers in the world. We're Authorised Dealers for all the products we stock and have factory trained staff who know what they're talking about. Demonstrations: All our shops have single speaker dem rooms and all but two have a separate Home Cinema studio. PX: We're happy to take your old, working, equipment off your hands if you don't want to sell it yourself (although you'll do better if you do). Exchanges & Upgrades: You can change goods within 7 days if they are in perfect condition. You can also upgrade to more expensive products within 30 days at no charge. Interest Free Credit is available on selected items. E-Mail & the Web: We are contactable on "hifi@audio-t.co.uk" and on the web at "http://www.audio-t.co.uk" where you'll find our full sale list regularly updated. Guarantees: a full 3 year guarantee on all new hi-fi separates. Mini Systems, Video & TV are 2 years. We're friendly and un-intimidating, we can arrange home dems and home loans (subject to status) and we install equipment if required. We know you won't find better service. We know you won't find a better sound. But if you find a better price, let us know and as long as we can verify it we'll be happy to match it. Plus you will still get our 3 YEAR Guarantee*. * 2 Year on TV/Video/Mini Systems • 1 Year on Portables


For more information on our monthly specials list on our Web pages or in What Hi-Fi every month"
SYSTEM SOUP-UP
My current system is an Arcam Alpha 3 amplifier, Marantz CD-52 Mk2, Denon DRS 610 cassette deck and Mission 760i speakers. I have a budget of about £500 and I'm not sure where my money should be spent. Should I go for a better amplifier such as an Audiolab 8000A or Naim Nait 3, or would I get a bigger improvement by upgrading the CD player (Marantz CD-63 mkII KI-Sig, NAD 514) or 'speakers (B&W DM602, Celestion Impact 23)? Although more funds will be available in the future which would be the most effective upgrade right now!

My room is 10.5ft x 10ft x 8.5ft and my musical tastes are extremely varied ranging from Blues and World to Classical. Your help would be much appreciated.

B. A. Morgan
Gwynedd,
Wales.

It looks like you've actually got quite a well balanced system there. The weakest link is probably the Arcam amp. For £250 you could try Rotel's RA-970BX 100watt powerhouse which we reviewed in our amp group test back in Oct '96. Another candidate is Pioneer's A-400X at £300, which trades some of the Rotel's grip and speed for transparency and tonal colour.

With the money left over, a pair of 'speakers is in order. Unfortunately, your room is almost cube shaped, so I suspect a 'speaker like the DM602 which has great bass extension could cause problems like boomy, one-note bass. It's also a little metallic tonally, and would bleach some of the life out of the music. Better options would be Mission's 751Freedoms (£350), or Tannoy's mercury ii2s (£140 but a bargain at the price) and Mission's 751Freedoms (£350). This stretches the budget a bit, but the 751s have a sweet, musical sound and less of a bass lift than most stand mounters, so they shouldn't boom as much. And when the time for a new CD player arrives, either of the two you mention should fit the bill well, although the Marantz is probably better value even at £500. JM

Chord Co. Tel: 01722 331674

Take another step along the upgrade route with a set of the Chord Co's Siren interconnects.

STEPPIN' OUT AND UP
My system consists of a Kuzma Stabi turntable, Stogi Reference arm fitted with an Ortofon MC3000 Mk2 cartridge, T3000 transformer, Arcam 170.3 CD transport (Clock 2 modified) and a Black Box 3 upgraded to Black Box 50 standard. Amplification is performed by Audiolab's 8000C/2 x 8000P driving Castle Howard S2 'speakers. The interconnects are all van den Hul.

My problem is that the upgrade bug is biting. I'd like to purchase an Audiolab 8000Q but have been advised by my dealer that the T3000 transformer hasn't got sufficient output for the 8000Q line inputs. Could you suggest a way round this problem, or if it's intractable, possible alternative phono stages I should consider.

After getting hold of the 8000Q, I intend to replace the Arcam units with Audiolab's 8000CDM/DAC. I would very much appreciate your views, but as the north of Scotland is a hi-fi wilderness the item may have to be mail ordered.

Owen Beecroft
(Address withheld by request).

There seems to be a couple of misapprehensions here. The first is that an MC step-up transformer produces a flat frequency response from the cartridge's input. This isn't the case. A cartridge produces a very treble heavy, bass light output because of the way sound is recorded onto an album. This same response will emerge at the transformer's output, only at a slightly higher voltage (usually x10). It is only in the following MM stage that the signal has the RIAA equalisation applied to it to yield a flat response.

The second misapprehension is that a large enough signal can be squeezed out of an MC and transformer to work directly into a line level pre-amp. Unfortunately, MCs only tend to produce extremely feeble outputs which need a lot of amplification to get them to the sort of level a line pre-amp could deal with.

You could try Audiolab's 8000Q, although there are some very musical alternatives. One is XTC's PRE-1 at £1000 which, while it's warmer and more natural than the 8000Q, lacks the Audiolab's even-handed neutrality. Meridian's 502 (£1200) is also worth a listen for its clarity and precision.

To get the best out of your vinyl source I'd go for a phono stage like Audio Innovations' P2. This valve-regulated all-valve MM unit is nothing short of superb. And seeing as you have the MC3000's dedicated transformer, I suspect the P2 would complement the Stabi/Stogi/MC3000 almost perfectly. JM

Audiohile Int. Tel: 01276 855578

Make sure your P2 isn't amplifying scratches and pops by keeping your records clean with Audiophile International record inner sleeves.
PLATTER MATTER
As I have been in the electronics and latterly the computer trade for about 25 years I thought I should DIY things as any self-respecting techie would.

I have therefore started on the turntable. It's a first generation Thorens TD160 with an SME 3009 arm and Ortofon VMS20E MkII "needle". The sound has always been somewhat bass weak but before trying to find a new cartridge to fit the arm -

Attaching a modern MC to SME's 3009 tonearm might not yield great results, but an MM in a carefully adjusted 3009 can impress.

I thought some modifications wouldn't go amiss:

- The platter of the turntable has always been a bit naff. Two pieces of cast aluminium with a rubber mat on top allowed it to ring nicely when suitably excited.
- The answer here is to make a top plate of 8-10 gauge aluminium, creating a sandwich between the existing metal work and a piece of thin, anti-static foam.
- The two parts are squeezed together by MS counter sunk screws in both the rim casting and the hub. A dose of new grease in the bearing packed out with copper anti-seize paste improves things as well. The platter no longer rings and a top mat of chamois leather finishes the job.

How does it sound? Well bass is considerably better while the upper midrange is smoother, no doubt due to the loss of the excitation of the platter.

Dave Tutt
David.Tutt@mail.sema.co.uk

This is all very interesting, since the problem was spotted years back (late '70s, I think) and the then-UK Thorens importer went as far as offering a damping kit. This (a home version of which I tried) involved using bituminous pads under the platter and sub-chassis and around the walls of the wooden plinth and over the thin hardboard base.

This is highly recommended as well, since there are ringing modes in the sub-chassis too. There was much puzzling as to whether to retain the foam that damped the sub-chassis' springs; I opted for getting rid of it. In the end, I also opted for a heavy rubber mat to damp the top platter, the Avonmat.

Chamois leather does seem a rather good idea. You do have to watch the weight you're adding though; that Thorens motor doesn't have a vast amount of torque. I experimented with felt (as did Thorens) but I thought it was a bad move.

You also have to watch the sub-chassis springs, which should be removed (noting which belongs where - one is of a different tension) and replaced after a few days and re-adjusted so that the sub-chassis is level, with the arm and armboard in place. Grease in the bearing leaves a bit; light lubricating oil is what the manufacturers recommend - we're not involved with heavy machinery here.

By the way, a replacement stylus for the VMS20 is still available. You should acquire one immediately. Did you have the tiny plug-in capacitor which fitted over the cartridge pins of the VMS20? It was actually intended to smooth out a rise from 10kHz to 20kHz. Some of the "bass lightness" was the contrast with this treble peak.

The SME 3009 has had a bit of stick over the years, wrongly in my view. It was designed really more for MM cartridges than any current MCs, though with a little effort it's surprising what can be achieved. It works well with the high-output Denons and the high-output Ortofon MC15. But you have to be very patient getting the arm balance, tracking force and bias right. There isn't a lot of room for manoeuvre between the 309 and modern cartridge mass.

The blessing is that Thorens TD160s aren't expensive second-hand, so people can tweak away happily without suffering any financial disaster. Now look for an up-to-date amp and 'speakers. There is much at £500+ that is far, far better than it has ever been. EB
to a Quad 405-2 and lately a pair of original Quad ESLs. This has forced the existing Castle Pembroke 2s to face the wall in another room. Thank you all at HFW. Kind of makes you wonder what happened to progress.

I would like your thoughts on upgrading the system. My feelings point to the 405-2, replacements ranging from Sugden, DPA and Audio Innovations to AudioNote and HFW kits (built!) I would also want to upgrade the (Radio Spares) volume control on the EAR 834P.

Another option would be to bypass the volume control and go for an integrated line amp (8000S, Stemfoort, Sonnetteer, Sugden) or a separate line pre-amp (EAR834L, DPA, Passion, HFW kit).

Only the Audiolab is available here so demos are out. As in previous communiques, my requirements are for ‘neutral’ not ‘corrective’ components. Ultra-low bass is not needed - we have enough earthquake tremors here.

Manolis Kroussaniotakis
manolisk@spidernet.com.cy

Hope the Quads are working well - they are real classics. Be careful though. At present the diaphragms cannot be repaired, because the film supplier has ceased manufacture. The 405-2 does sound flat in imaging and lifeless. Quad tell us that a service replacing various capacitors improves it a great deal. We suspect it also has a lot of feedback though.

Amplifier choice is governed a little by the insensitivity of the Quads (around 82dB). In solid-state DPA and Sugden are the names to go for, but if you want local serviceability then Audiolab are good. With our amps monoblocked K8818s, which give 45 watts per channel, are an excellent choice.

Newnes Tel: 01865 310366

IAN SCILAR

Take a closer look at how hi-fi works with a copy of Electronics Made Simple.

ZEROING IN

In December, I sent you a fax describing my wholly positive listening experience after treating CDs with a Zerostat anti-static pistol, in exactly the same way as with LPs.

More listening has reinforced my opinion that CD playback after Zerostating is and your readers track down a Zerostat and give it a whirl.

I carried out a fun experiment measuring SPLs in 1/3 octave bands in my listening room using a test CD for 1/3 octave modulated sound (with my B&K 2231 Sound Level Meter), which proved that my room was more acceptable than I thought. I have access to a B&K real-time frequency analyser and a sound intensity probe, which can display phase information as well as SPL. I am thinking of mapping my listening room for SPL as well as phase variations. It would not be difficult, except to keep track of all the measurements and to plot them in a useful manner.

I would value your comments, especially since I know you have done some useful work on your own listening room.

Please could I end with a request? Would you consider doing a small piece on turntable power supplies? The reason I ask is that Naim make an observation on their web site that certain unnamed PSUs have a large detrimental effect on the performance of other system components. As someone who wishes to upgrade my LP12, I would like some impartial advice.

Thank you for a great magazine.

Hugo Cass
HCass2@aol.com

Rooms display complex behaviour and interpreting measured results is not easy. Sound Pressure Level measurements will show wild variations around the room, according to your position relative to inherent room modes. And phase measurement under such circumstances is not really meaningful, being a relative property that is difficult to interpret, let alone measure in a meaningful manner.

You have to bear in mind too that whilst you would be measuring ‘steady state’ conditions, the ear/brain brings into play various time related processes. It attributes all sound reaching the ear within 30mS or so as coming directly from the source. That reaching the ear after this time is heard as an echo.

For this reason, room acoustic measurements are often impulsive. You might try reading Acoustics and Psychoacoustics by David Howard and James Angus (Focal Press, ISBN 0 240 51428 9), which goes into a goodly amount of detail on room acoustics and human hearing.

On Linn LP12 upgrading, I wouldn’t worry unnecessarily about destabilising comments from others. Linn have a variety of parts available, from Lingo power supply through to Cirkus bearing. Contact them for details and prices on tel: 0141 307 7777. NK

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- B&B Hifi, Bracknell
- VJ HiFi, Folkestone
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- B&B Hifi, High Wycombe

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**THE LISTENING ROOMS**

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BASS IN MY SPACE

My system: Thorens 124 Mkll (in a custom-made Max Plank plinth), SME 3R tonearm, Shure V15 MkIV cartridge (with MR stylus), Croft Charisma valve pre-amp, Croft Series V valve power amp, Arcam Alpha Plus CD player (on a Seismic Sink), Nakamichi DR2 cassette deck, Arcam Alpha tuner and Royd Minstrel 'speakers.

All in all I’m quite pleased with my system. The most pressing upgrade at the moment are the ‘speakers. For the money (£240 for the pair) I’ve no complaints. But they are a little lacking in bass extension - I hunger for that lost octave.

Michael Wall

Michael Wall
mike@medinfo.demon.co.uk

A QUEST FOR POWER

I’ve been a music enthusiast from birth and a hi-fi enthusiast since the mid-Sixties. The majority of my system was accumulated in the mid-Eighties. Principal components for digital reproduction are: Luxman C120A pre/M120A power amp combo (120 wpc) linked with Chord Siren, Philips CD840 CD player to Dac-in-a-Box, connected with Chord Codac digital cable and IMF Studio Monitor transmission line ‘speakers.

I have had a bit of an enforced start following driver problems with the IMFs. To fix this and upgrade at the same time, Wilmslow Audio built me a pair of high quality crossovers split for bi-wiring and replaced the tweeters with some fabulous units from ScanSpeak. The results are astounding, so ‘speaker replacement is not now a priority.

I listen mainly to Jazz, Fusion, English Classical composers and light music. The IMFs’ low efficiency (82dB) means they need a lot of power. One of the best ways to do this, and improve sound quality, is to bi-amp. You could try Technics’ accomplished SU-C1000 battery-powered pre (£350) with a pair of SE-A1000 power amps (£800 the pair). There’s also Arcam’s impressive Alpha 9 integrated (£500) partnered with the matching 9P power amp (£400). Funds not permitting, you could try Rotel’s £250 RA-970BX integrated (100W into 8Ω and 156W into 4Ω).

CD players to consider are the ubiquitous (and deservedly so) Marantz CD-63mkII KI-Signature (£500) and Audiolab 8000CD (£1000). Given your musical taste, it would be worthwhile listening to Strata subwoofer but I couldn’t live with it - everything seemed to have that club-like heavy bass.

What I’m after is a pair of ‘speakers that can give me an integrated and seamless sound, with no obvious lumpiness. I used to have a REL Strata subwoofer but I couldn’t live with it - everything seemed to have that club-like heavy bass.

The other area where I would value your views is an appropriate upgrade for my cartridge. I like my MkIV, I just want a little more detail. I should point out that I’m a moving magnet fan. My budget for the ‘speakers is around £1000 and I have about £200 to spend on a cartridge.

Michael Wall

The Chord Co’s Siren interconnects should work nicely in your system.

Stuart Wyss

Stuart Wyss
wyss@mktgspulc.bytenet.co.uk

I’m surprised to hear you

Arcam’s Alpha 9 integrated and 9P power amps are a good combination.

A mere 82dB? As you say, with a sensitivity like that, the IMFs will need very large amounts of power.
The Williamson Amplifier - D.T.N. Williamson. Offers practical advice on how to build and set up the amplifier for best results. £9.95 + £1 p&p Code: 1040

Principles of Electron Tubes - Herbert J. Reich. A textbook for beginners starting with the basics of how a vacuum tube actually works. Shows how a simple circuit is designed including amplifiers, transformers and power supplies. A must for both enthusiasts and hobbyists. £19.95 + £2 p&p Code: 1050

An Approach to Audio Frequency Amplifier Design - Seventeen circuits from 5 to 1100 watts - General Electric Co. High quality amp. designs using KT66s, KT88s, DA100s etc. Includes two valve pre-amps complete with phono stages. £13.95 + £2 p&p Code: 1080

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LOUDSPEAKER BOOKS

70 Years of Radio Tubes and Valves - John W. Stokes. Outlines the evolution of radio receiving tubes and the part they played in the domestic radio receiver. A reference for those interested in the history and development, and collectors alike. £19.95 + £2 p&p Code: 1050

Bullock On Boxes - Robert M. Bullock III. Using Thiele-Small parameters clearly, it offers lots of helpful tables and graphs to get to grips with the sizing of the box and port of a reflex loudspeaker. £12.95 + £2 p&p Code: 1060

Electrostatic Loudspeaker Design and Construction - Ronald Wagner. Step by step guide to the design and construction of a full range electrostatic loudspeaker, including basic operating principles. Strongly recommended for those wanting to either build, repair and/or restore or who are just interested in electrostatics. £16.95 + £2 p&p Code: 1070

The Loudspeaker Design Cookbook, 5th edition - Vance Dickason. This best seller offers up-to-date design information for the home constructor. It uses modern Thiele-Small theory and parameters. £22.95 + £2 p&p Code: 1080

Theory and Design of Loudspeaker Enclosures - J. E. Benson. Covers infinite empirical techniques that pre-date computer analysis. Strong recommendation for beginners. £10.95 + £1 p&p Code: 1090

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Quick & Easy Transmission Line Speaker Design - Larry D. Sharp. Practical approach to designing and building your own transmission line loudspeaker. Includes design examples, equations and a computer disk (Lotus123) for the maths! £10.95 + £2 p&p Code: 1000

baffle, reflex, passive radiator etc. in great detail with a highly mathematical approach making it unsuitable for beginners but highly authoritative to experienced designers.

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**Acoustics** - Leo L. Beranek.

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POWER TO THE CABLE

Having optimised Hi-Fi World’s system with quality interconnects and speaker cables, Ketan Bharadia inspects the last link, mains cables.

When you bought your last hi-fi component, did you replace the give-away interconnects supplied with it? Most audiophiles do. If you haven’t, it’s a good idea as the quality of the vast majority of these interconnects is fairly mediocre. But while most people wouldn’t think twice about changing interconnects they probably wouldn’t consider changing the supplied mains lead.

Both Moth and DNM think we should. So we decided to sample 1.25m of DNM’s white Reson mains cable at £25 and 1m of Moth’s Leyline at £65. The cables were used alongside standard versions in a system made up of a DPA Renaissance CD player, Roksan Caspian amplifier and Jamo Concert 8 speakers.

The improvements resulting from the DNM proved consistent whether it was plugged into the DPA or the Roksan. With the cable in use the sound was more obviously dynamic, bass lines bouncing along with increased power and slightly greater extension. The sound stage was clearer and wider as well. Previously unnoticed details made their presence felt, the sound with the standard lead seemed hazy and blurred by comparison. Without a doubt the DNM lead makes a difference, though the improvements are really quite subtle.

Swapping the Moth for the DNM I found a slightly different approach to music making. While benefits shared with the Reson included greater clarity and crisper dynamics, the Moth had an easier going feel to it. The sound stage stretched further back where with the DNM it had been less three-dimensional and tonal colours were better rendered. Of the two cables, the Moth had the more relaxed, natural sound. By comparison, the DNM was slightly mechanical and hard, although for less than half the Leyline’s price it represents the best value here.

The differences these two cables make to a system’s sound are hardly massive. And they may not have the same effect in all systems - a home audition is mandatory. But if you’ve already tweaked every other area of your hi-fi then specialist mains cables might well be worth an audition.

DNM Reson

Moth Leyline

DNM
Virtual Reality Audio Systems,
PO Box 383,
Brentwood,
Essex CM14 4GB
Tel: 01277 227355

Moth Marketing
10 Dane Lane,
Wilstead,
Bedford MK35 3HT
Tel: 01234 741152

WORLD VERDICT
MOTH LEYLINE
At £60 it doesn’t offer a large improvement over the DNM. Also needs auditioning at home.

DNM RESON
Looks like fair value for money at £25 but the improvements are subtle. Must be tried in your own system.
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JUNE 1997 HI-FI WORLD
This month I'm wearing my 'publisher' hat, something that comes free, like it or not, when you start a magazine. It means I'm interested in how we sell, and latest Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC) figures show we are selling better than ever. Our circulation has jumped 24% overall and we are now No2 on the UK bookstand, which is where it matters. This is great news for the magazine; it gives us leeway to bring you a better read in the immediate future. I'm very aware that many of the things we do are very popular - but you want more and you probably wouldn't mind if a few things we do did a little better! Quite right too. Providing we do what you want, it seems self-evident it matters.

I'm interested in how we start a magazine. It means something that comes free, you want, it seems self-evident it matters.

ABC figures bear this out.

Listening to what you want has been a great help. I value your letters and views, 99% of which are very constructive and helpful, even when they are critical. Recently, one reader wrote to say that the magazine "ended too quickly", suggesting it didn't offer enough. In truth it has more editorial in it than the other titles, especially when the Supplement is included. But all the same, for him it wasn't enough. He wasn't really being critical at all, so much as saying there was not enough of what he liked. Letters like that worry me and stay in my mind. Was he the only one to think so, or was his view representative of a silent majority?

Just in case it was the latter, we have re-arranged the issue slightly and added more pages. As a result, and in celebration of our new ABC circulation figure, Hi-Fi World is now bigger than it has ever been - and the price hasn't gone up! You need not harbour any fear that it is likely to go up soon, because paper prices are wobbling around and seem unlikely to rise, so neither

will our cover price.

Even letters begging us to produce apparently more pieces of esoterica, like valve headphone amplifiers for example, hit the nail on the head. They've helped keep us on course, and away from industry-led feeding frenzies like AV. We haven't picked up AV advertising, we've picked up readers instead. Somehow, I can't help thinking this is what we should be doing, even if our rivals disagree. Got any more daft ideas? They make great sense!

Our DIY Supplements came about solely because you asked for such a thing. They have been enduringly popular as a result. Likewise you asked us to produce kits of our designs, so we did and they have become enormously popular around the world.

So your views have been invaluable in getting Hi-Fi World up to its current position on the UK bookstand. But there is more to an ABC figure. The overall figure is made up from sales made in numerous different areas, many of which are amenable to - er - manipulation, shall we say. Since the overall figure is

the one most people, especially advertising agencies, look at to judge the apparent worth of a publication in terms of an advertising venue, it is the one that receives most attention by publishers.

If you want to make your name in conventional overground publishing, this is the area to study. I've known certain bright individuals to be so imaginative in this respect the ABC figure of publications under their control grew magically. So

whether they will ever become a major part of specialist hi-fi magazine sales figures, because they are too small to justify such efforts. Also, the Audit Bureau of Circulation delineate between 'straight' sales and incentivised sales, which helps discourage the latter by allowing advertisers to see what is going on. Why waste money giving your publication away when advertisers will only deride you for it?

For this reason I'm very glad the ABC have decided to publish current figures on the World Wide Web. If you are interested, surf into http://www.abc.org.uk and see for yourself. This helps make the circulation issue transparent, whereas it is a murky business at present, subject to as much obfuscation as publishers can possibly inject, just to secure advertising.

Here we come back to the AV and Hi-Fi World. In one infamous episode two fairly brusque fellows mis-spent their evening trying to persuade me to run AV articles, suggesting Hi-Fi World might then benefit from AV advertising. Exasperated, I eventually shouted "thermionic headphone amplifiers" at them and they ran off screaming. Hi-Fi World now has a great ABC figure and I'm confident that the next one will be even higher - on the bookstand where it isn't given away or otherwise 'incentivised'.

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MAY AUDIO MARKETING, AIRESIDE MILLS, CONONLEY, KEIGHLEY, WEST YORKSHIRE, BD20 8HW • TELEPHONE 01535 632700 • FAX 01535 632887
David Price auditions a new integrated amplifier from the 'Essex Riviera', LFD’s Mistral Integrated.

Was it Clacton about which Morrissey once wrote, “This is the seaside town they forgot to close down”? True enough, its legions of seagulls, chip wrappers and blue-rinses hardly fire the soul. And it would probably be the last place you’d think to find a high-end hi-fi company. Well LFD Audio, purveyors of the £500 Mistral Integrated, would disagree.

Comprising the £499 ‘Integrated’, a matching £299 ‘Phonostage’ and a £449 ‘Linestage’ pre-amp and ‘Power’ power amp, the line-up will soon grow to include a CD player and larger power amp. All share a common philosophy, “An aversion to over-complication”.

Clean circuit board layouts, short signal paths and point-to-point wiring are very much the order of the day. Carefully selected, high quality components including Rubycon electrolytic capacitors, wirewound resistors and selected ALPS pots are used, chosen after extensive listening tests.

The Integrated amp tested here is the basic DC-coupled, 50W MOSFET design with five inputs and a tape loop. Two types of integrated are offered, the moving magnet phono version costing £100 more than the line level unit.

In the flesh, the Mistral is a handsome devil, positively chic considering its place of origin. Indeed, it has the honour of being the first bit of hi-fi ever to elicit a positive comment from my other half (usually she’s hostile or at best indifferent). On the subject of its gold control knobs she intoned, “Hmmm… They’d make nice rings.” Well it’s a start! Even better to my eyes is the thick slab of brushed stainless steel used for the fascia, a real blast from hi-fi’s past. And then there are the gold fixings, solid black aluminium chassis and lid, plus gold-plated sockets for CD and Phono.

Between a Michell Orbe/SME V/Ortofon MC 1S2/ Henley HMC50 phono stage and Mission 752 Freedom loudspeakers, the Mistral quickly found its feet. Starting with the Brand New...
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"Don't Let it Go to Your Head" - a recording at least two parts ammonia, three parts surgical spirit - it proved a real smoothie. Not 'bland' smooth but sweet and civilised enough not to be caught out by the mix's distinctly toppy balance. Where lesser mps hiss and spit, the Mistral gave an immensely enjoyable performance - bass was big, fat and rich, mid class-clear and treble sweet and detailed.

Despite such refinement, it didn't take long to realise that this is one of the most musical designs I've heard in a long time. Like a moth to a flame, the Mistral went straight for the song's rhythms, allowing the bass guitar to push things along with real force and emotion.

Meanwhile, singer N'Dea Davenport's vocals were a treat - sonorous, dramatic and expressive like few others. Percussion came across with real precision, the amp imparting fine detail like the subtle tambourine work at the back of the mix without losing the song's overall rhythmic flow.

Moving to Lonnie Smith's 'Twenty-Five Miles', the Mistral gave one of the most communicative, least artificial renditions I've heard. Setting up a huge, sumptuous groove with a big fat bass guitar, the amp sounded beautifully smooth and clear in the midband. Ronnie Gruber's baritone sax was powerful and breathy without the slightest hint of harshness, while Lonnie's Hammond was rich and subtly syncopated with the delicate cymbal and drum work.

Superb with rhythms and the little dynamic accents that make music such fun, this amp just pulled me into the song and kept me listening. It conveyed a real sense of occasion, making the musicians sound like they were giving the performance of their lives rather than just another take.

Surprised by the Mistral's star qualities, I cued up America's 'Ventura Freeway'. Again the LFD went for the jugular, managing both to excavate vast tracts of detail and stir the soul. Even from my dog-eared second-hand pressing, vocals were deliciously smooth and beguiling, towering in front of the 'speakers. Bass was warm and wholesome, letting the bassist's every accent and intonation through. Rarely has the delicate, layered strumming of Classical guitars been as clear as this.

Try as I might to upset this little amp's limpet-like grip, I couldn't. Even the Pet Shop Boys' 'Single' - one of the nastiest, fuzziest digital recordings of late - came over surprisingly well. An Audiolab 8000S I had to hand made a bit of a hash of this song, the heavy, sampled electronic percussion descending into confusion. By contrast the Mistral held on against all odds, sounding sweeter, smoother, tighter and more dynamic. It even attempted a three-dimensional soundstage, something you don't expect from the Pet Shop Boys' processed Pop!

It's hard to criticise this amplifier without sounding like the Victor Meldrew of hi-fi journalism, mean-minded and pedantic. But if there's a downside it's the Mistral's over-enthusiastic nature which can make things sound larger than life rather than strictly neutral. Also, it isn't the most muscular of fifty watters, going fairly loud and then simply giving up, with no attempt made to hide the fact.

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INTERNATIONAL TRADE ENQUIRIES WELCOME
My piece on Sony’s Elcaset (‘Tape Failure’, November ’95) seems to have opened a few eyes. Recently Haden Boardman from Audio Classics told me someone had offered him a Sony EL7 for £500. After he’d picked himself off the floor and stopped laughing, Haden politely declined the kind gentleman’s offer.

The feature’s point was that Elcaset failed because no one wanted a new format. So why some Elcaset owners think their old machines are worth a hundred quid is anyone’s guess - delusions of grandeur methinks. My reason for writing the feature was simply because, even today, Elcaset is a great little format for home recordings. The machines are cheap to buy (I’ve heard of someone picking up a mint EL7 at a car boot sale for £30 - now that’s a bargain), still serviceable and the tapes are available from Shadoos (tel: 0161 224 4215).

Last month I decided it was time to breathe new life into my EL5, as it often wouldn’t record and sounded touchy asthmatic when it did. So I took it to a retired studio engineer friend, ex-Dolby Labs and Pye. Ken, an avid open reel enthusiast, was most interested, and owned a Sony open reel of a similar vintage - a mint TC399 - was curious about how the two formats would compare.

After an afternoon of poking and prodding he found out why the EL5 had trouble recording - just a microswitch whose gold contacts had tarnished. All it took was a dab of contact cleaner and it was as good as new. He then removed the thick film of dust and grime from the EL5’s housings, and cleaned and remagnetised the tape transport. A quick call to Nigel Stansbie at Sony’s Leeds Service Centre (plug, Ferrichrome tape and recalibrated the Dolby B circuit. Impressed with the machine’s heroic quality of engineering, we couldn’t help agreeing, “They don’t make them like that any more.”

Finally, he removed several kilograms of atmospheric pollutants from the internal fuses and phono sockets round the back with Kontak, and we were off. With a ‘new’ FeCr 60, we put the EL5 against Ken’s TC399 open reel, a mid-market machine from around 1978, which would cost around £1000 in today’s money. Like the EL5 it has only a single capstan and belt drive, but recordings at 7 1/2 ips, with a surefootedness beyond the realms of cassette, Dolby S or no. Despite the machine’s tardy VU meters (Ken said that in the trade, VU stands for ‘virtually useless’), you could record way into the red - up to +8VU - with no distortion, while wow and flutter were virtually non-existent.

With this in mind, my poor old Elcaset had much to live up to. The first surprise came when we ran the TC399 at the same speed as the Elcaset - 3 3/4 ips - and the EL5 trounced its bigger reel to reel brother. Clearer, tighter and more stable, the Elcaset completely outclassed the open reel recorder.

Switching the EL5’s Dolby out brought a further improvement. Ken is a true fan of Dolby’s professional SR system but doesn’t think much of anything that appeared for domestic consumption. I could see what he meant, as high frequencies got sweeter and cleaner still, and tape hiss only increased slightly.

Switching the open reel to 7 1/2 ips saw the playing field level out. Both Elcaset and open reel delivered a great big, bold, confident sound with fantastic ‘out of the speakers’ sound staging and the sweetest treble I’ve heard from tape - far superior to my cherished Sony TC-D3 DAT-man.”

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Dominic Todd finds out if NAD’s Italian built £100 801s can survive in the competitive world of the budget 'speaker.

NAD have always had a good reputation for their electronics. They are one of the few companies you can put together a single brand system from in the knowledge that all the components are class leaders. Of course, any one-make system needs a pair of 'speakers and NAD are no strangers to this field. Unfortunately for the 801s, competition has never been so intense in the budget loudspeaker market.

In terms of construction, the 801s meet all the criteria for a classic 'mini monitor' loudspeaker - a compact, infinite baffle enclosure, hard dome tweeter and paper cone mid/bass unit. Sheryl Crow provided initial impressions of the baby NADs. The midrange instantly struck me as being forward of the rest of the mix. This meant that Crow’s vocals were expressive and true to life with their nasal delivery. Treble detail was quite impressive at first, yet at times it could become too prominent. The flipside of this was an enthusiastic portrayal of electric guitar, which possessed real verve and bite. And bass, as well as being smoothly integrated, had fine depth and weight.

Classical music, from Rachmaninov’s Piano Concerto No3, showed up another character trait - a lack of true scale. Otherwise, the 801s gave a fair account of themselves. Piano timbre was good, as was the fluidity of string instruments. The forward midrange produced a spacious and airy sound stage that, as with all mini monitors, belied the loudspeakers’ size.

The prominence of the upper registers made itself felt with Robbie Robertson’s ‘Somewhere Down The Crazy River’ as well. This, combined with the typical small 'speaker lack of 'body' detracted from the atmosphere of the piece. Which is a shame as drums had strong dynamic impact and Robertson’s vocals were articulate and well projected.

Muddy Waters’ ‘Cold Weather Blues’ provided the kind of acoustic backdrop that mini monitors usually thrive upon. Sure enough, his vocals were as eloquent and expressive as anticipated. Guitar fretwork was well conveyed, although it lacked that last degree of analysis and revelation which marks out the best of this genre of loudspeakers.

The 801s gave of their best with Paul Weller’s ‘Wild Wood’. Basslines were strong and vocals suitably effortless. Drums reinforced Weller’s singing with a weighty impact and sharp transients. All in all this number gripped me, proving the 801s are capable of really making music.

Despite this, the NAD 801s don’t quite make the Premier League. There are competitors (Mission 731i, Gale 2i and Tannoy 631SE to name but three) which can provide similar results but with a smoother and more articulate top end. You could do a lot worse than to match a pair of 801s to a full NAD system. But a little extra time spent in the demo room will reveal rivals that can offer that bit more.

NAD 801 £99.95

NAD Marketing Ltd
401-405 Nether Street,
Finchley,
London N3 1QG
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WORLD VERDICT

Impressive bass extension and midrange clarity are plus points. Prominent treble stops the 801 from challenging the best.

Measured Performance see p103
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A ROLLING GUIDE TO BRITAIN’S MANUFACTURERS AND DISTRIBUTORS.

DIY. A REFERENCE GUIDE TO BRITAIN’S MANUFACTURERS AND DISTRIBUTORS.
I can't help but remember the first time I ever clapped eyes on a Sugden amplifier. It was a Series Four A48 and the year was 1978. At the time I was appalled that anyone dared paint an amplifier such a horrible shade of orange (even more revolting colours were apparently available!) The fact the paint was 'textured' didn't help either.

An engineer friend at the time commented that I should hold a Sugden amplifier in much respect. In his opinion, Mr Jim Sugden had saved our souls in the early 1970s by launching a range of transistor amplifiers that significantly improved upon the first generation of germanium-based Class B designs. A lot of early transistor amplifiers had been slated for poor sound quality. Some of the more critical listeners at the time were in fact saying that most transistor amps sounded really quite nasty.

Sugden's first amplifiers were marketed by Richard Allan.

Loudspeakers and so bear that company's logo. There were three products: the A21 integrated amplifier with 10W per channel along with the A41/C41 pre/power combination at 20W per channel. All of these operated in pure Class A and used silicon transistors.

Sugden proclaimed "switching distortion" the root of all evil and the main reason for transistor amplifiers earning a bad reputation. Switching distortion is mainly applicable to Class B designs and therefore the Sugden Class A amplifiers were free from such sins.

By the early 1970s, Sugden were going it alone. The Series Two amplifiers were launched under the Sugden name with minor revisions. The A21 now managed 12W, the A51/C51 25W.

A new arrival was the tasty R21/R51 tuner. This was the same tuner in a different case to match either the wooden-cased A21 or the metal chassis of the C51. Sugden made all the electronics in-house for this tuner, right down to the rather complicated front end. Later units benefited from Motorola's MC1340P Phase Locked Loop multiplex decoder and it has to be said the sound quality from these models is nothing short of excellent.

The A48 then came on the scene as a more powerful alternative to its predecessors, offering as it did 40W per channel and more facilities than the smaller A21. It was a commercial success despite (or probably because

Proudly sporting huge heatsinks is the rare A51 Series Two power amplifier.

As the stylish A21 Class A integrated amp moved from Series One to Series Two, output power rose from 10W to a massive 12W.

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World Radio History
Sugden tuners, like the R21, sound superb thanks to their in-house electronics.

By 1975, Class A was an anachronism. This didn't go unnoticed at Heckmondwike and so the Series Three amplifiers deserted Class A to follow the more efficient Class AB route. The A21 jumped to 25 watts and the A51 lost its crazy heat sinks to become the P51 50W amp, bridgeable to form a 100W mono bloc.

All these early amplifiers share a characteristic lively and open sound quality. The biggest drawback is the capacitor coupled output stage. Two very large electrolytic capacitors (one per channel) connect the output transistors to the loudspeakers. These capacitors really make a mess of the lower bass, which at best could be described as 'loose'. Midrange on the other hand is open and pleasant and the treble gently rounded off like an old valve amplifier.

Despite their shortcomings, the A51/C51 blow the Quad 33/303 into the weeds, the Sugdens are in a different class altogether. This is at least partly down to their dual mono construction and better build quality.

As I hinted earlier, later R21/R51 tuners are stunning. The only problem is a tuning range of 88MHz-104MHz, so some of the stations at the far end of the dial aren't accessible. In late 1975 the R21 cost £78 against the Quad FM3's £74. Sonically, however, the FM3 can't hold a candle to the Sugden, sounding flat and lifeless by comparison.

Sugden have never been as successful as Huntington-based Quad. This is reflected in much lower second-hand prices on early Sugden components which can offer great value for money. A good A21 or A48 will fetch between £50 and £100, half what the inferior Quad set will bring. The rarity of the A41 and A51 mean they command a premium of up to £250. You're better off picking up a Series One or Series Two A21 instead. The C41/C51 pre-amplifiers aren't so good and £50 should buy you a fine specimen. A P51 will change hands for about £120. Again, I'd be tempted to go for the A48 over a C51/P51 pairing.

The later tastefully coloured (oh, biting satire) models fetch the same kind of money, although production concentrated on the A48 and a lower priced pre-set only tuner, the T48. Tuner prices vary between £50 for an early non-chip decoder and £100 for a mint later R21/R51/T48 model.

In service all Sugden amplifiers are very reliable. Other than faulty power supply and output capacitors, there's really little to watch out for. If an amplifier has been left unused for a while then the selector switches can stop working properly and jam. A good cleaning solvent and contact preservant is usually all it takes to restore correct operation.

Tuners can pose more of a problem. It's damned near impossible to repair the unique Sugden front end and on the manual tuning R21/R51, the variable resistors can go wonky, resulting in odd tuning faults. And the power supply board, IF strip and stereo decoder are on plug-in boards and these can work loose. But basically, any Sugden kit you come across should be working well.

These items may not constitute the last word in ultra-high-fidelity (except possibly the tuners which merit a cult every bit as dedicated as the Leak Troughline) but they offer excellent value for money and are serious competition for second-hand Quad 33/303s and FM3s.
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From Dominic Todd, our man in retailing

There was an item at the end of the Ten O'Clock news the other night that stood out from the usual stories. Apparently, British built Nissan Primera's are being shipped back to Japan and sold there. They're not being sold as a regular line, hough, but as something special. something British. And just to make sure that everyone has noticed, they come complete with the prerequisite wood and leather trim and Union Jack stickers.

Britain still has a fine reputation for craftsmanship and skill, even in the motor industry. The same has long been the case with the British hi-fi separates industry. Most of the larger Japanese multinational companies now have some form of British input. It could be at the design stage or in the marketing of a product aimed specifically at the British audience as in the Far East.

So where does the Far Eastern fixation with British audio come from? Well, above the £300 price level, the British still pretty much rule the roost in most areas of hi-fi separates. The only real exception is recording formats. but when it comes to loudspeakers, for example, you'd be hard pushed to find a 'speaker not made in the UK in most retailers.

It's not through want of trying though that foreign manufacturers have yet to really crack the British market. Several specialist 'speaker companies have tried, usually with limited success. I remember a particularly fine range of French Cabasse 'speakers being imported into the country two or three years ago. Despite delivering the goods sonically and having an almost unheard of lifetime guarantee, they failed to cut it here.

Perhaps this was an isolated case of distribution problems. But the situation has been much the same with other brands. The American company Acoustic Research has probably had the greatest success, especially during the late Seventies and early Eighties, with the beloved AR9. In the past decade, however, fortunes have been rather more patchy.

Discounting Bose and Cerwin Vega, it's only at the true esoteric level that the Americans have had a sustained impact thanks to the likes of Wilson and Martin Logan. The same is true with electronics from Krell, for example, who still enjoy a strong reputation. But whatever happened to the more affordable Adcom range?

With the possible exception of Micromega, medium price playback sources, and almost the entire spectrum of loudspeakers, are dominated by the British over here. With this in mind it's understandable that the Japanese would want to muscle in on the scene using a little of what makes the British products so popular in the first place.

I believe it goes further than this though. Vintage British hi-fi has had quite a following in Japan for decades. Select British components attract an ardent following that has seen prices rise to levels still only dreamed about over here. Quad II and 22 valve amplifiers and the truly legendary ELS 57 electrostatic loudspeaker spring to mind. As do good examples of Tannoy's Gold series dual-concentric drive units which have long been changing hands for over £500.

Ironically, in the land that is a shrine to all things digital, vinyl is still very popular with audiophiles. Particularly respected are Garrard's 301/401 motor units and arms from SME. Things have caught up over here recently but I don't see there ever being quite the same vigorous interest as in the Far East. The reason for these products being so highly sought after does have something to do with the Japanese love of all things retro. It's also to do with qualities still apparent in the British hi-fi industry - inventive technical design, highly developed sound quality and often battleship build quality and/or quirky styling.

Just look at the technical ingenuity involved in some of today's products from DPA, AudioLab and Cyrus to name but three. Then there are the deservedly mighty reputations for build quality and service back-up of the likes of Quad and SME. And the highly original styling (which never eclipses function or sound quality) of Michell. The qualities that have made the British hi-fi industry respected not only in the Far East but around the world are still present these days.

Okay, so I'm standing on my soap box with Union Jack boxer shorts and a bull dog named Bruno. I don't mean to sound like a patriotic zealot but doesn't it make a change to see an area in which Britain truly excels? And if this means Union Jack stickers an' all, then so be it.
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| Amplifier Kits
| NEW K5881 Mk1 20W push-pull valve amplifier | K5881-K240/120 | £395 | £350 |
| NEW K5881 Mk11 Built | K5881-B240/120 | £595 | £550 |
| K5881PSE 17W single-ended amplifier | K5881PSE-K240/120 | £650 | £555 |
| K5881PSE Built | K5881PSE-B240/120 | £850 | £725 |
| 300B 28W valve power amplifier (Not inc. Valves) | 300B-K240/120 | £850 | £725 |
| 300B Built | 300B-B240/120 | £1150 | £950 |
| KLP1 line level pre-amplifier | KLP1-K240/120 | £345 | £295 |
| KLP1 Built | KLP1-B240/120 | £545 | £465 |
| KLPP1 valve phono pre-amplifier | KLPP1-K240/120 | £495 | £425 |
| KLPP1 Built | KLPP1-B240/120 | £695 | £595 |

** Loudspeaker Kits**

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**Audax Drive Units**

(P&P Extra - please add £5.75 for individual units or tweeter pairs, otherwise add £10.)

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| High Definition Aerogel Drivers
| 3inch midrange, 93dB | HM100Z0 | £35 | £30 |
| 4inch midrange, 92dB | HM130Z0 | £45 | £40 |
| 6.5inch bass/mid, 91dB | HM170Z0 | £50 | £45 |
| 8inch bass, 91dB | HM210Z0 | £60 | £55 |
| 10inch bass, 90dB | PR240Z0 | £75 | £65 |

**Carbon Fibre Drivers**

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<td>25mm Aerogel loaded 97dB</td>
<td>PR125T1</td>
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<td>34mm 93dB - powerful sound</td>
<td>TW034X0</td>
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**Overseas Prices and Details**

Please allow for your own local import taxes (customs duties) and for carriage charges, which must be added to the net price. Telephone or Fax for a quote. **METHODS OF PAYMENT**

International money order in Sterling, Visa, Access.
These days it's pretty much a universally recognised fact that cables, be they interconnect or 'speaker, make a difference to how a system sounds. Good cables allow a system to perform to its full potential while poor cables can seriously undo much of the sterling work the rest of the components are doing.

Here at World Towers we decided to take a look at cables from a different point of view. If you already have a cable you like, will it sound even better once it has been shortened to the minimum length possible? Would the change in length even be noticeable?

To find out we tried two lengths of Shark Wire interconnect. One length was the minimum needed to link the CD player to the amplifier (about 0.3m) and the other was a more typical length of 1.5m. For 'speaker cable we chose a standard 79 strand from Maplin. This was also tried in two lengths, one of 1m and the other of 5m.

**THE INTERCONNECTS**

I must admit that I was more than a touch sceptical about whether there would be a noticeable change in sound between the two lengths of cable. After all, in the overall scheme of things there's not a great deal of difference in length between the two. In the event, I was actually surprised at how much of a change in sound there was.

The improvements I heard aren't the kind that hit you between the eyes instantly but more the kind that give you a gentle prod over the short term but mean a lot in the long term. With the shorter interconnect cymbals on Dave Brubeck's Time Out CD sounded slightly more forward without being harsher. Their initial strike and subsequent decay came over in a more believable manner as well. Overall dynamics were stronger and more forceful while the focus and positioning of the various instruments in the sound stage was also improved. Generally, the
shorter interconnects sounded less grainy, better focused and more dynamic.

THE SPEAKER CABLES
After hearing the difference between interconnects, I was looking forward to something similar from the 'speaker cables. What surprised me was that the improvements were so much more obvious than those heard with the interconnects.

With the shorter cables in place, the sound was immediately clearer and less grainy. The sense of the amplifier being in control was striking, highlighted by the fact that the bass end was tighter and more clearly defined. Dynamics were faster and packed more of a punch to boot.

If I was asked which link was more sensitive to length, it would have to be the 'speaker cable. It really does seem that the shorter the cabling within a system, the better the sound will be. (For more information on this subject see Rob Watts' [of DPA Digital] comments on p42 of January 1997's issue).

ONE LUMP OR TWO?
Upgrading is a subject close to every audiophile's heart. For a long time, the amplifier upgrade path has consisted mainly of shelling out extra money for a more expensive component. Bi-amping is gaining more of a following these days though as it doesn't involve selling off your previously beloved amp or plumping for a replacement with a different and possibly less likeable character.

The benefits of bi-amping are well known; a more open, solid and dynamic sound with a lot of extra detail is a typical result. But a question we are increasingly being asked is not "Is bi-amping the best way to upgrade an amp" but, "Is it better to buy a single integrated amp or bi-amp with two for the same price?" Looking for a budget answer to this query, we lined up one of NAD's £260 314 integrateds against a pair of the same company's £100 310s. We hooked the amps up to our own KLS9 'speakers with short runs of 79 strand loudspeaker cable and used Shark Wire interconnects as reviewed on p13 of this month's DIY supplement.

SINGLE NAD 310 SYSTEM
With the newly tuned up KLS9 connected to its 'speaker terminals, the 310 was supplied with Chaka Demus and Pliers' 'Tease Me' CD, always a good test for midrange clarity and bass control. Working into an easy load like KLS9, the 310 proved surprisingly weighty and enjoyable, although more difficult loads like Jamo's Concert 8s had the NAD running out of steam pretty quickly.

Bass lines had speed, impact and focus, tripping along rhythmically and there was a fine overall control to the 310's presentation. One area where the amp turned out to be slightly lacklustre was midrange projection. Vocals on this album are crystal clear and situated towards the front of the sound stage. The 310 had them sitting further back and sounding slightly veiled. Still, for a mere £100 you can't expect perfection and the 310 was well capable of exploiting a lot of KLS9's bass extension.

Choral works showed up the same traits, voices recessed within the sound stage but never sounding sharp or harsh. Smaller scale instrumental pieces like Shostakovich's string quartets No4 and No7 (as performed by the Schidlof Quartet) had an open, tonally colourful quality with crisp dynamics.

It was only with large scale pieces that the 310 started to sound a little confused. The allegro energico finale of Bruch's concerto for violin and orchestra No1 found the NAD struggling, lower notes from cellos blurring together and violin tone hardening. Dense, high-octane Rock and Pop mixes caused similar problems but bearing in mind this is a £100 20W amp the overall sound was really rather good.

SINGLE NAD 314 SYSTEM
With its 35W output, the £260 314 offered higher volume levels and greater control across the whole frequency spectrum than the 310. Silkscreen, for example, stayed focused even when the band members were thrashing their way towards sonic overload, and bass had greater control and punch. Also missing was some of the 310's reticence across the midrange - vocals instead took up their rightful place near the front of the sound stage.

Returning to Classical music, crescendi and rousing finali were better handled too. While separation of the individual strands making up the music was superior to what the 310 had managed, the 314 didn't pull quite as far ahead of the 310 in terms of transparency as its £150 premium might suggest. That said, the Schidlof Quartet now came across as more dynamic and, when required by the music, more menacing. And details like background shuffles and breathing made for a more realistic musical picture.
310 BI-AMPED SYSTEM

The most immediately obvious benefit of bi-amping with one 310 dedicated to each speaker was greater dynamic contrast. What this added up to was an ability to clearly portray very low level signals, like those that make up ambience and sound stage, alongside higher level signals like those of instruments and vocals. This made whatever music I put through the bi-amped system more subtle and involving, all the little accents that make music a joy to listen to audible.

While the 314 had done a good job of getting a lot of these points right, the two 310s took things a stage further. This was due in part to a lack of cross-talk between channels through the amps’ power supplies and the fact that each 310 was only working hard on the one channel driving the mid/bass cones of KLS9. The other channel was supplying the very small amount of power needed by the tweeter and having a relatively easy time of it.

Bruch’s violin concerto No 1 now possessed greater transparency and was being performed in a larger acoustic than £200-£300 single integrated amplifiers can produce. The sole problem here was the same tendency for the 310s to sound compressed on crescendi where a pair of the more powerful 314s wouldn’t suffer the same fate.

Gaining the most from a pair of 310s working together was Classical music recorded in a real acoustic. The sound stage produced by the NADs was larger and better defined than a single 314 or any other £260 amp for that matter. Tonal colour and musical and vocal inflections also moved a couple of rungs up the quality ladder.

Bi-amping with a pair of budget integrateds really does work - bi-amping’s improvements aren’t limited to more expensive components. And considering the two 310s are actually £60 cheaper than a 314, bi-amping seems to make uncommon sense. If you need more than 20W to drive your speakers and can afford more than £200, other amps to look out for include Aura’s VA805Ex with 45W, Denon’s 50W PMA-350SE and Rotel’s 100W RA-970BX. Happy bi-amping!
It's a treat and it's a Van Morrison album. Always great but not always good, Van Morrison is utterly distinctive and never less than interesting. That dark brown voice just drips out of the 'speakers like molasses, snaking around the horn section and the backing vocals.

Here he has a large group of very fine musicians who give him a lush background reminiscent of the halcyon days of The Caledonia Soul Orchestra and past triumphs like 'Hard Nose To The Highway'. Funky, soulful, mellow, moving - just go ahead and add your own list of adjectives from the lexicon of Soul.

Nick Cave, here in subdued mood, ponders love, death, truth, faith and similar trivia. No one who picked up on Nick Cave and The Bad Seeds for the first time through the release of last year's enormously successful Murder Ballads is going to be disappointed by The Boatman's Call. Musically they're very similar and, if there's going to be any drawback, it's because Kylie Minogue and PJ Harvey haven't put in an appearance this time round. You can't expect them to turn up for every recording and The Boatman's Call has plenty going for it without Kylie and Polly's presence.

Many of the songs are structured as ballads while the music is, if anything, quieter and more melodic. If it weren't for the subject matter you could be forgiven for getting this outing mixed up with Murder Ballads. In the latter the stories were just fiction. On this album though, Nick Cave gets personal.

Having bared his breast and stuck his heart on his sleeve, he's penned a group of songs which all centre around love, loss, death and faith in God. 'Brompton Oratory' has him sitting on the church steps comparing holy communion with love and the death of Jesus to the loss of his lover. For direct self-revelation there is 'West Country Girl' who, "with a crooked smile and a heart-shaped face", would seem to be PJ Harvey.

You could of course forget about the lyrical soul searching and treat this as classy background music. That would be a shame because this is an interesting and complex album which creeps up on you and repays serious attention.

Many of the tracks are both hymns and love songs while 'There Is A Kingdom' is purely and simply a hymn and could be sung as such on Songs Of Praise. Although 'There Is A Kingdom' may not have been treated as a tongue-in-cheek pastiche it is definitely put over with a sense of irony and distance. It could be sung straight in a school assembly but not by Nick Cave.
Back in 1977 an ancient hippie band called Spirit attempted a comeback. (Remember Spirit? You know, Randy California and that bald bloke. They had an album called The Twelve Dreams of Dr Sardonicus that's a bit of a minor psychedelic classic). They released a double album called The Spirit of '77 and even did a short UK tour; The Police, of all people, were the support band.

Of course what England's punters absolutely, really and truly wanted in the summer of '77 was an ancient, laid-back hippie band from one of those nice sunny bits of the USA. Drifting, stoned vibes from Tampa, Florida fitted so perfectly with the bin bag and safety pin outfits that were de rigueur back in that summer of UK anarchy. The album sank, not quite without a trace but with only a very minor ripple. Anyhow, what's this got to do with the latest offering from U2? Well, if it were The Spirit of '97 instead of '77 that Randy and Slaphead were pushing, this is probably what it would sound like. U2 and Spirit have a similar type of line-up and these two records are in many ways related - there's a guitar-band psychedelia about Pop but with that hard edged, repetitive '90s Dance beat.

It's not a specific track or technique, it's the feel, the vibe, maan. The slightly distorted guitar wanders through the multi-layered shimmers of the acoustic, hitting the foreground for a burn-up every once in a while. The echoes echo and the synth effects warble from 'speaker to 'speaker, as does the almost imperceptibly treated vocal. Hard driving and heavy or softly sung and acoustic, there's a loose, structureless feel to this album. Tracks have a habit of meandering into each other, drifting between moods and textures. But this is still recognisable U2 and U2's brand of stadia Rock is very much evident. Numbers like the lead track 'Discotheque' and 'Do You Feel Loved' boom out in the customary way and will be flattening happy audiences all over the Mid-West.

Pop it is called and Pop it is, well sort of. On top of the basic U2 sound a layer of soft psychedelia has been spread, the soft Pop/Rock psychedelia of England's version of the Summer of Love, of Traffic and The Pretty Things rather than The Grateful Dead or Jefferson Airplane.

A record like this could be from almost any period within the last 30 years and U2 could have made it at almost any period in their career. Only the rhythm, the production and the fashionable borrowings from Acid Rock mark it out as a product of the '90s. No fan is going to be disappointed with Pop but equally no one not already dedicated is likely to pick this out as an item they've just gotta own.

Crawling out of the archives comes John Lee Hooker, a man many people apparently believe slid his last bottleneck many years back. Well, for a dead guy he sure makes great records. JL Hooker Esq is no Zombie Blues man - on this evidence he's truly live and well kicking. He's hanging out with some class mates as well - the backing band on this record is Los Lobos and Van Morrison did the production.

Van, not content with twiddling the knobs in the back room, duets with John Lee on four of the album's eleven tracks, including the title track of his own new album The Healing Game. They're a great combination.

John Lee Hooker, with as much grit and growl as he has ever had, works his way through a set which features a couple of old standards but is mostly new material. Of all the old Blues men who 'made it' Hooker was, and still is, the master of the heavy riff. There's plenty of that here but there's an added soulfulness which is probably down to having Van Morrison in the control room.

Too often modern Blues sounds like a sterile exercise in cultural archaeology or an excuse for some guitar type to show off his notes-per-second rating. This here is your actual genuine article - the Blues in all its glory.
BRIGHTEN THE CORNERS
PAVEMENT
DOMINO WIGCD3

Quirky, irreverent and full of indigestible lyrics, Damon Albarn's Chelsea mucker Stephen Malkmus and his American cohorts have spawned a blinder of an album. Falling somewhere between the CBGBs and Blur, Pavement have managed an uncanny marriage of art house Rock and Britpop.

Jaunty, sharp guitar sounds echoing early Talking Heads and The Fall sit comfortably alongside mellower Beatles/Velvet Underground-influenced songs like 'Type Slowly'. Perhaps his days down the Shed have had some influence on him, as Stephen Malkmus seems to have picked up the British sense of the absurd. "One of us is a cigar stand and one of us is a blue incandescent guillotine" he mumbles on 'Type Slowly'. Quite.

With Mitch Easter of REM fame having produced the album one would expect clear similarities in the way the two groups sound. But no, this is not REM at all; just Pavement with their old, fuzzy chords popping up in the unlikeliest of places.

Pavement write songs delivered as spoken words, ones that often make no sense at all and drift aimlessly. With the exception of the odd raucous track, like the Pixies-sounding 'Embassy Row', the album has a relaxed quality. The truly charming 'Blue Hawaiian' and 'Transport Is Arranged' are highlights. The latter has Malkmus sounding remarkably like a lazy Lou Reed.

Pavement are often, it has to be said, very Fall-esque with their musical discordance and Malkmus' rambling monologues are often on a par with the best of Mark E. Smith. The band have even been inspired to look and dress like The Fall, which in US terms would be very definitely K Mart fashion.

Brighten The Corners is an ill-fitting collection of studenty Pop songs which are nevertheless strangely irresistible. It is certainly their most commercial album to date and will hopefully put them centre-stage.

We don't understand you Pavement but come out, come out wherever you are...
Jumping straight back towards the chart arena after the Christmas success of The Annual 2, the latest Dance Nation swaps Boy George for Judge Jules while keeping the one and only Pete Tong. Once again the double CD comes in pretty packaging complete with pics of beautiful clubbers in the accompanying booklet.

You know the set-up by now. Two DJs, two CDs, a mix of accessible, chart-lingerer House and the occasionally more meaty offering. However, in the booklet egos run away a bit. There's a range of top-class clubs described therein, from Ibiza's Pacha to New York's The Sound Factory. And guess what? England's representative is the Ministry, "the definitive world club". That should read "the most pretentious"? Still, fair play considering where they are in '97 - it's an instant snapshot of a year or so of releases. If you want something more experimental, you're going to be out of luck.

The Orb is a strangely beautiful and twisted beast of Houdini-esque beats, combined with an 'if it moves, you've probably imagined it, but let's nail it down anyway' ethos to sampling. Still, that's where Orbivion comes in handy. There's a return to form of Dub Reggae influenced beats, of strange widdles where others would put hi-hats and, most importantly, of mad, rambling samples.

The obvious stand-out track is 'Toxygene', a twist on Jean-Michel Jarre's 'Oxygene' and the most spot-on, bouncy ambience since 'Little Fluffy Clouds'. Add to that the Amazonian vocals of 'Bedouin', the conspiracy theories sampled for 'S. A. L. T.' and the twelfth track hidden at the end of the CD (a rolling Drum 'n' Bass that loses the plot sublimely) and you're on to a winner.

OK, so the NME may not stick them between Byron Stingly and Submerge while slotting in the odd surprise in the form of Brainbug's sinister 'Nightmare' and typical wall-of-sound grooviness from the Properheads.

Judge Jules cuts things up a bit more, venturing The Absolute alongside Energy 52's immense loved-up classic 'Cafe Del Mar' and Roger Sanchez's take on the Fine Young Cannibals' 'She Drives Me Crazy'.

This CD set is selling by the skipful and rightly so - it's an instant snapshot of a year or so of releases. If you want something more experimental, you're going to be out of luck.

The sound was seriously novel, taking the noodlings of Prog-Rock, early electronica and sci-fi and spaceman samples to a new level of blissed-out beats for a time when the Rave crowd had jelly legs and weary ears.

The strange thing is that the Rock press and fans embraced The Orb with as much glee as the House heads, despite the band members cocooning themselves in banks of synths and wearing silly hats. Soon everyone wanted a piece of mesmeric tracks like 'Little Fluffy Clouds' and 'Perpetual Dawn'.

Once the floodgates were open however, the music press, fickle as they are, dedicated themselves to the classic 'build 'em up, knock 'em down' approach, when The Orb's next couple of offerings, Pomme Fritz and Orbus Terrarum, didn't quite live up to expectations.

What Orbus Terrarum tried to do was put the beats back in, get the kids dancing again and back on their side. However, corking as they sometimes were live, the album never seemed to take off.

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on their front covers anymore but this album will get the kids back up and dancing like it's '91 again.

"Belissima" by DJ Quicksilver. There are also Healy and Amos' 'Stamp' and funky cuts from George Morel and Natural Born Grooves.

Side B takes no time at all to kick off. The opening track is Baby Doc's 'La Batteria', one of the hardest and sexiest percussion-driven tunes of all time. Soon, we're into sinister territory with the superbly moody 'Nightmare' by Brain bug. Then the tone lightens up with Qastara's 'Come With Me', The Lisa Marie Experience's 'Do That To Me' and Black Magic's 'Freedom'.

Not bad at all. Cheers, Positiva.

ACCESS ALL AREAS
POSITIVA CDTIVA 1015

Access All Areas is a compilation of the last 12 months or so of Positiva's output. And when you're faced with them all together it's amazing to see what diverse singles Positiva have delivered. When you have BBE and Reel 2 Real storming up the charts all the time it's easy to forget that Positiva are responsible for releasing some of the best tracks of last year.

Side A offers up Amen UK's 'Passion' and the ridiculously good 'Belissima' by DJ Quicksilver. There are also Healy and Amos' 'Stamp' and funky cuts from George Morel and Natural Born Grooves.

The album consists of all things Housey, bouncy, Trade-esque, Nu Energy and hand baggy, mixed by those cheeky monkeys Hyperlogic. Things kick off straight away with the Allnighters' 303-laden 'Black Is Black' swishing into Porn Kings' pumping 'Up To No Good' and Sash! with the chart-topping 'Encore Une Fois'. Hyperlogic indulge in a bit of self-promotion with the arm-raising 'U Got The Love', borrowing samples from Shades Of Rhythm, The Prodigy and, of course, the vocals from Candi Staton.

CD Two picks up the pace a bit with 99 Allstars' 'Luv Is All You Need', DJ Randy's 'Digital Mass' and Amen, Giotto and SJ's 'Fever'.

This is a CD in search of hedonism, the kind of thing you stick on your Walkman and stand at the bus stop gurning and dancing to. Dangerous stuff.

Totally Klubbed Up
Mixology TKUCD

Hmmn, Dance mags sorting out record releases, eh? That could be a really bad idea or equally a stunningly good 'un. And luckily, it's the latter here with Mixology mag showing everyone how it's done with this two-CD set.

But the real bonus is the fat booklet of interviews with the artists, full of info on their Djing, remixing and producing skills. All other comps should take note. If you want our money, how about some depth, a splash of personality, value for money? And there's always the trainspotter touch of having a BPM guide for the CDs.

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This is a CD in search of hedonism, the kind of thing you stick on your Walkman and stand at the bus stop gurning and dancing to. Dangerous stuff.

The Rain Falls' before gliding effortlessly through a couple of (hopefully) soon to be released Paul de Aragon cuts, Chakra's 'I Am' and Shango's beautiful 'Tunnel Vision'.

With such a tasty line-up this release is practically faultless. In fact I've only got two things to whinge about. The original mix of Blue Amazon's 'No Other Love' is the classic. The Edge Factor Acid mix is good but... And Digweed and Muir's Dream Dub of Chakra's 'I Am' dreams for just a little too long. Petty really, 'cos this is a set of quality tunes and worth buying to hear Tenth Chapter's 'Wired' alone.

This is the kind of album I'd put together for home listening if I could be bothered. But I can't. So cheers and a round of drinks to Jackpot for sorting this one out *
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with some trepidation, though I'm not entirely sure why. I first saw the 42-year-old American-Danish percussionist perform live relatively recently, about four or five years ago, with Jan Garbarek's group of the time. Her performance, even in that company, was easily the show's highlight, full of a rare blend of bravura and sensitivity, dexterity and inventiveness. And while Garbarek's group recordings (as opposed to his more stirring individual work) have left me fairly unmoved, Mazur's contribution to them has, for my money, generally eclipsed all others. And Mazur's background is unquestionably impressive, with time spent alongside Gil Evans and Wayne Shorter as well as, crucially, in Miles Davis' group for three years.

Furthermore, the musicians who comprise Future Song - which Mazur has, against all the trends in jazz, miraculously kept together for almost eight years - have real pedigree and talent.

Singer Aina Kemanis is astonishing. She has graced sessions with such contemporary jazz notables as Barre Phillips, John Surman and Pierre Favre, but her singing here, while basically wordless improvisation, manages to avoid all the clichés and embarrassments that might imply. Instead she melds a folk singer's overriding sense of drama with a vast vocabulary of odd growls, screeches, moans and drones.

Norwegian trumpeter Nils Petter Molvaer is a wonder too. Like several of the group here he's a graduate of many sessions recorded for Manfred Eicher's ECM label (sessions as diverse as the albums recorded by the unsung Masquarero and warped singer-songwriter Sidsel Endresen). His playing is full of passionate melodic invention. Drummer Audun Klieve provided the backbone for guitarist Terje Rypdal's ferocious Jazz-Rock outfit The Chasers, and it's intriguing here to witness his Rock-derived sense of rhythmic power alongside Mazur's mercurial wizardry.

Meanwhile, saxophonist Hans Ulrik emerges as a strong voice. His style (somehow unmistakably Scandinavian) inevitably recalls Garbarek's yet is still his own. And bassist Klaus Hovman has that canny ability to find a groove in the most abstract of settings.

Which leaves this album's two outstanding performers (Mazur aside naturally): Yugoslavian pianist Elvira Plenar and Norwegian electric guitarist Einsind Aarset.

Plenar is wonderful and I'm ashamed that I haven't heard her playing before. Apparently having performed with such musical adventurers as Alfred Harth, Lindsay Cooper and Peter Kowald, she's one of those fantastic jazz musicians who's transparently at home in both 'free' and 'formal' jazz settings, bringing to each a sense of romantic expansiveness. Her playing here undoubtedly shapes the music perhaps more than anyone's other than Mazur's.

Aarset, on the other hand, while a Future Song member for five years is pretty much unknown beyond the group. Our loss. Regular readers will know that this column has a taste for explorers of the world's most overplayed instrument, and I'm frankly impressed with Aarset's sense of drama and colouring, wrung out of heavily signal-processed electric guitar.

And yet I genuinely expected a lot less of this record. While ECM's New Series has been responsible for some of the most essential contemporary 'art' music recordings of the last decade, increasingly its contemporary jazz repertoire has left this fan a tad jaded. Even the label's most celebrated musicians have sometimes begun to sound like they're making beautiful music by numbers. The potential for a group of well-meaning, relatively young European improvisers to produce an earnest but turgid jazz-World music crossover is considerable. And the album's opening percussion solo couldn't bear those hallmarks more portentously.

Then, just a few moments in, the music erupts in a burst of frenzied, oddly vocal guitar and the album is intriguing from there on in. Beautiful, abstract ballads emerge from guitar and drum madness, then once again dissolve. Wildly freeform jazz-rock co-exists with fragile fourth World sounds that strongly echo Mark Isham and David Torn's work together. Stirring folk melodies are constantly underpinned/undermined by free jazz's clattering polyrhythms.

Throughout Mazur is superb. As a player she has an all-too-rare ability to hold the thread of rhythmic drive together in musical situations on the brink of collapse. As a composer she brings together disparate stylistic and formal influences with a lack of self-consciousness. As a leader she has assembled an outstandingly exciting young contemporary jazz group. Highly recommended stuff.
J Simon is Cooke

OUTSIDE IN
JITCD9606

This album comes courtesy of another respectable small British label, Jazzizit. The name of Sax Appeal will probably be known to you if you are at all aware of the London Jazz scene. They are one of the hard working, constantly playing modern groups which seem to hold the whole scene together at certain times of the year.

As their name suggests, they rely heavily on a certain reed instrument, Nelson Rangell, Derek Nash, Scott Garland and Matt Wates playing alto, Dave O'Higgins and Gary Plumley playing tenor and Bob McKay baritone. That's an awful lot of sax, reined in by Steve Hamilton on piano, Simon Hale on Hammond organ, Tony Smith on guitar, Phil Mulford on bass, Mike Bradley on drums, Gary Hammond on percussion and Tubby Wadlow on trombone. You can tell from the line-up that they aren't into a paltry, feeble sound and when they get going they produce enough power to blow a clean sound stage out of even the woolliest 'speakers.

The ten tracks presented are all originals from the pen of Derek Nash, with the exception of one by Dave O'Higgins. These are modern tunes that manage to avoid the trap of sounding like TV theme tunes.

With a group this size delivering that amount of power, this whole CD packs a hell of a punch and its quality production presents a big, solid stage free of the 'speaker cabinets. If you like modern Jazz, this is a very good buy.

BRAFF PLAYS WIMBLEDON

This really is a dream CD, including Noble's 'The Very Thought Of You', Lerner/Loewe's 'Wouldn't It Be Luverly?', Jenkins 'This Is All I Ask' and Young/Heyman's 'When I Fall In Love' in its nine tracks and fifty-seven minutes.

It's a sweet recording of Braff on form fronting a group who are more than accomplished in their own right. They are playing standards of this calibre and I can't even complain that there aren't enough tracks for the money because Zephyr will be releasing a second Braff CD in a year's time, apparently from the same sessions.

I think that in Zephyr I've finally found a record company which will fulfil my wildest audiophile aspirations. Watch this space for details. In the meantime, buy this CD.
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It's all about getting it right: the right approach to the vocal treasures of the early Tudor period and the right piano for Mendelssohn.

Had Bach completed this project, the 'little' of the title would have been something of a misnomer. His original plan was to compose no less than 164 chorale preludes for ecclesiastical use. They would not only have catered for all the seasons and festivals of the liturgical year, but have embraced a broad range of sentiments and situations. As the titles of some of the forty-six he did complete indicate, there is music to reflect salvation through faith and trust in God, for example. In the event, however, it seems that even Bach's fount of inspiration was exhausted when it came to finishing the Orgelbuchlein.

The 'little' of the title refers as much to the physical size of the manuscript containing the music (it measures just 15.5 x 19 cms) as to the concise nature of the preludes. Only two are of more than three minutes' duration and the majority last less than two.

But what rich variety these miniatures contain and it is a variety to which Christopher Herrick's imaginative and stylish playing is perfectly matched. With its wide palette of colours and sonorities, the Metzler organ of the Stadtkirche in Rheinfelden, Switzerland, seems an ideal choice of instrument. The marvellously expressive qualities of the performance indicate that Herrick is keenly aware of the words which are attached to each of the preludes and the sentiments they convey - each is invested with an individuality within the cohesive whole.

Christopher Herrick has chosen to present the pieces in a logical sequence based on the liturgical seasons, from Advent to Pentecost via Christmas, Easter and Ascension. The accompanying booklet also usefully lists them in the sequence in which they appear in Bach's manuscript, so allowing the listener to programme the CD accordingly. A clear, wide-ranging and satisfyingly airy sound, one which captures the polychromatic splendour of the Metzler instrument, sets the seal on another highly successful Hyperion venture.

The cachet of an endorsement for your product from the great and the good of the day is by no means a new phenomenon. As a nineteenth century piano maker, you would have relished nothing more than having one of your instruments used by a high-profile virtuoso and composer - the 22-year-old Mendelssohn certainly fitted into that category.

By the time Mendelssohn was ten, in 1820, his family had acquired an English-built Broadwood piano, an instrument whose powerful, rich tone was in sharp...
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On the other hand, you could invest in a lesser Hi-Fi system than Arcam...

But why deprive yourself, never mind future generations?

“One day son, all of this will be yours”
contrast to the lighter, thinner sound of the typical Viennese product. Beethoven appreciated the potential of the Broadwood sound, and it evidently had a similar effect on the young Mendelssohn.

Then, while touring England in 1829, he made the acquaintance of the French piano builder Pierre Erard who had workshops in both Paris and London. The Erard demonstrated a noticeable improvement in tone over comparable instruments and when, two years later, the makers offered Mendelssohn one of their pianos, he enthusiastically accepted the offer. By 1838, the instrument had seen so much use that it was worn beyond repair. Hearing of Mendelssohn's plight, Erard shrewdly despatched a new piano to him.

In the same year that he took delivery of the second Erard, Felix wrote to his sister, Fanny, that he felt the urge to compose a couple of "good trios". He lamented that the potential of chamber music with piano was "quite forgotten nowadays". As he would have expected to take the piano part in these trios himself, we can safely assume that when the first of these works was completed in 1839, it was with the sound and the balance of the Erard in mind.

The second trio, in C minor, was composed in 1845, two years before Mendelssohn's death. Together with the famous Octet Op20, they constitute the apotheosis of his chamber music output.

What distinguishes this new recording of the two trios from Holland's Globe label, apart from the glorious playing of all three instrumentalists, is that it is the first to employ the piano Mendelssohn envisaged, in this case a superbly restored 1837 Erard.

This difference in sound is critical. Where the fuller-toned modern piano would almost have to be 'reined in' if it were not to dominate the strings, the pianist here - the excellent Julian Reynolds - has to work as hard as his colleagues to strike the right balance (it was Mendelssohn's practice to place the piano opposite the violin and cello rather than attempt to integrate the sounds).

This laudable quest for fidelity would count for little if the end result were not up to the mark. Thankfully, the playing of Julian Reynolds and his Dutch colleagues is inspired throughout and the recording is agreeably warm and cleanly-textured.

And the music? Those who still consider Mendelssohn something of a comparative lightweight should hear these trios, each of which is full of passion and vitality. The finale of the C minor trio is the crowning glory. Here, the composer triumphantly introduces a chorale melody but this time one of his own invention not borrowed from Martin Luther! It makes for a fitting conclusion to one of the finest and most valuable chamber music recordings to have appeared in recent times.

**Bela Bartok**

**Concerto for Orchestra**

Maurice Ravel

Daphnis and Chloe: Suite No2

Czech Philharmonic Orchestra; conductor, Jiri Belohlavek

CHANDOS CHAN9462 (DDD/S5.11)

Two of the most performed and recorded pieces of twentieth century music they may be but the juxtaposition of Bartok's Concerto for Orchestra (the colourful showpiece which he completed in exile in America in 1943) and the second suite from Ravel's magical ballet score of 1912 is an unusual one, even if both enjoy the common attribute of sumptuous and brilliant orchestration.

Finding them performed by the Czech Philharmonic is equally unexpected. Which is not to suggest that the Czechs are incapable of playing Bartok and Ravel - any such notion is utterly dispelled by this recording. But, to date, the Chandos-Czech Philharmonic collaborations have successfully concentrated on the music most associated with the orchestra. The recordings of, for example, Josef Suk's Asrael Symphony, the coupling of his Fairy Tale and Serenade, of Bohuslav Martinu's Fourth Symphony and Field Mass and of Dvorak's Sixth and Seventh Symphonies can all be enthusiastically recommended.

However, with this recording made in the Spanish Hall of Prague Castle, the Czech Philharmonic shows that when it comes to virtuosity, it is now a match for anyone. Bartok's Concerto for Orchestra, as the title suggests, gives all departments of the orchestra a chance to shine and it is an opportunity that all involved here seize with relish.

This performance is much more than simply an orchestral tour-de-force though. Belohlavek underlines the elegiac, poignant elements of the score as convincingly as its witty geniality - Bartok's wry parody of Shostakovich's Leningrad Symphony with its earthy 'raspberry' on the trombones seems even more piquant than usual. The Ravel is no less persuasive and characterful and, like the Bartok, benefits from a spacious, opulent and vividly detailed Chandos sound. An unexpected success, perhaps, but assuredly the expected Chandos quality throughout the production.
ROBERT FAYRFAX

Antiphona Tecum Principium - plainsong/Missa Tecum Principium/Music for recorders*/Maria Plena Virtute
The Cardinall’s Musick; The Frideswide Consort*; director, Andrew Carwood
ASV GAUDEAMUS GAU 145 (DDD/70.52)

There can be few more adventurous, or more rewarding ‘early music’ discographies than that offered by ASV in its Gaudeamus series. Among its achievements, however, the revelatory recordings of the music of three long-neglected Tudor composers must surely rank highest. Two of that triumvirate are the Scot, Robert Carver, and Nicholas Ludford. The third and arguably the greatest is Robert Fayrfax.

Compared to some of his contemporaries, we know a great deal about Fayrfax. He was born at Deeping Gate in Lincolnshire in 1464. His musical talents obviously came to the notice of those in high places because, from around 1496, he was one of the Gentlemen of the Chapel Royal. This body of clergy and eminent musicians had been in the service of the English crown since at least 1135, the date of the earliest surviving records. Under Henry VIII, a monarch whose love of ostentation was equalled by his fondness for music, the musical staff of the Chapel Royal rose to seventy-nine.

Fayrfax became something of a favourite of the King and was one of the select band of choristers chosen to accompany him to the Field of Cloth of Gold in June 1520. It was in this month that, as the two monarchs vied with each other in the splendour of their encampments (hence the ‘Cloth of Gold’), Henry VIII unsuccessfully attempted to forge an alliance with Francis I of France.

Prior to that, college records reveal that Fayrfax took a doctorate in music at Cambridge in 1502 and a further degree at Oxford in 1511. He then became organist of St Alban’s Abbey in Hertfordshire. It was there that he died in 1521, described in a contemporary account as a man held ‘“in high renown and accounted the prime musician of the nation”.

Robert Fayrfax’s music can be seen as the culmination of the English medieval choral tradition, a tradition which was of course concerned with the Latin (Catholic) rite. Henry VIII’s break with Rome and the Reformation closed the book on that tradition, at least as far as public worship was concerned (although composers such as William Byrd succeeded in defying the new dogma and wrote music to accompany both the Protestant and Catholic liturgies). It is little wonder therefore that the works of Fayrfax and his pre-Reformation contemporaries largely disappeared until relatively recently under four centuries of Anglican sacred music.

The Mass Tecum Principium, which is recorded here along with its plainsong antiphon, is one of five surviving settings by Fayrfax. All of them consist of five parts: treble (here female sopranos are employed in preference to boy trebles), alto, tenor, baritone (or second tenor) and bass. All five Masses occur in both the Lambeth and Caius College choirbooks and in its choice of recording venue, ASV has admirably linked past and present.

The collegiate chapel of the Holy Trinity, which lies within the precincts of Arundel Castle in Sussex, not only offers an ideally spacious yet warm acoustic, it also has strong links with Fayrfax’s music. The aforementioned Caius College choirbook was a gift from the master of Arundel College, one Edward Higgins, while the Lambeth volume was almost certainly in use at Arundel from 1524 onwards.

There could well be an historic precedent for performing Fayrfax’s music in the Holy Trinity chapel, although as David Skinner, who prepared the performing editions for this recording, points out in his illuminating booklet notes, accurately recreating the sound that would have been heard in the chapel four centuries ago is impossible.

Combining scholarship and sonority, Andrew Carwood and his colleagues in The Cardinall’s Musick make a very convincing case for their mode of performance. This is a cappella choral singing at its very finest - fresh and clear yet intense and captivating from the first purely intoned phrase. And they are handsomely served by Martin Haskell’s beautifully balanced recording, which gives a sound of almost ethereal transparency.

Along with the Mass, the choir also performs one of Fayrfax’s votive antiphons, Maria Plena Virtute. This is a work whose striking originality is still readily apparent and which David Skinner suggests could be regarded as the composer’s most accomplished work. Listening to it for the first time, it is apparent he has good grounds for making that assertion and the performance is again spellbinding.

In an imaginative touch, sandwiched between the choral works are three miniatures for recorder consort which are the only known instrumental pieces by Fayrfax. Probably composed for social or courtly entertainment (Henry VIII was something of a recorder enthusiast), they are delightfully played by the members of the Frideswide Consort. Altogether, this is a true Tudor musical feast.
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Dear Mr. Soper,

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

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“This amplifier possessed a seductive vitality, a marvellous sense of communication with the heart of the music. Vocals were most communicative, subtle dynamic contrasts were portrayed very well, and the music bounced along with a fine sense of rhythm. This amplifier was seriously transparent, showing great clarity, fine stereo depth and very fine presentation of space and ambience in the sound stage.”

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Martin Colloms
HI FI NEWS / RR March 97

The Rythm presentation as a whole could be described as clean and powerful, in an appealing natural way.”...“Whether it was the string quartets of Ravel or Debussy, Alanis Morisette or Joni Mitchell being fed into the Rhythm, what emerged always impressed with its natural, easy power and control. For those in search of an alternative to the 300B, one which couples the organic feel of valve amplification with a rather un-valve-like ear-opening bass extension and control, the rhythm is definitely worth audition.”

Jon Marx
HiFi World July 1996

WORLD VERDICT
Parthered with sensible ' speakers of good bass depth, the Rhythm is capable of impressive performance.

WHAT HI*FI? says
sound *****
facilities *****
build *****
verdict *****

Dan Houston
WHAT HI*FI May 1997

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Frequency response reached just 14kHz (-1 dB) through CD, at all volume control positions. This is somewhat extreme. It's common to make 20kHz the -1dB point even when trying to be drastic about response tailoring for a warm sound.

I wondered whether Talk Electronics were trying to ameliorate the effects of strong high frequency distortion. Total harmonic distortion measured a high 0.3% at 1 watt (10kHz) and 0.4% at full output, levels at which coarseness usually starts to become apparent. Rolling down the treble response would ensure there was little emphasis on this region.

Power was reasonable at 50 watts into 8 ohms, but power supply regulation was mediocre, this value rising little (56 watts) into 4 ohms. A beefy amplifier will double power when load halves.

The disc stage was configured for moving coil cartridges, proving sensitive at 0.24mV for full output. It was relatively quiet too and overload headroom was healthy at 10mV. However, equalisation was awry, with raised bass and a +3dB peak at 10Hz, as well as falling treble (-1dB at 12kHz).

The measured performance of this amplifier was unimpressive. NK

Power 50 watts
CD/tuner/aux Frequency response 10Hz-14kHz
Separation 59dB
Noise -88dB
Distortion 0.3%
Sensitivity 110mV
dc offset 56/50mV
Disc Frequency response 17Hz-12kHz
Separation 45dB
Noise -72dB
Distortion 0.04%
Sensitivity 0.24mV
Overload 10mV

ROKSAN CASPIAN

The Caspian is powerful, producing 78 watts per channel. The figure rose to 120 watts into 4 ohms, so with low impedance loudspeakers the Caspian can produce some wallop. It is suitable for filling large-ish rooms, and for driving insensitive loudspeakers.

Distortion was low, but at high frequencies and low levels, odd order zero-crossing distortion became obvious on the analyser screen, reaching up to 100kHz. This may add a little sheen or sharpness into the treble. Otherwise, with measured levels below 0.03% at any output or frequency, the Caspian proved satisfactorily linear.

Sensitivity was high at 200mV, providing good compatibility with all sources, including budget cassette decks, tuners, etc.

Frequency response proved wide, running right down to 6Hz, low enough for good, solid bass. The upper limit rolled off at 46kHz, not too high, a good feature.

The Caspian is powerful and was well engineered all round. NK

Power 78 watts
CD/tuner/aux Frequency response 6Hz-46kHz
Separation 43dB
Noise -100dB
Distortion 0.027%
Sensitivity 200mV
dc offset 19/37mV
LFD MISTRAL
The Mistral is a medium power amplifier that produces 40watts per channel into a normal 8ohm load. Power rises little into lower loads, so LFD pay less attention to power supply regulation than most specialists, but perhaps not without some justification. It usually results in softened bass wallop, but equally there are plenty of other concerns needing attention in solid-state amplifier design. This amplifier is powerful enough to make most loudspeakers go loud.

Frequency response was wide, stretching out to 160kHz. This often gives a clearer sound, but one with less warmth. Noise was low and channel separation usefully high. The amplifier isn’t very sensitive though; some budget sources like tuners and tape decks produce only 300mV. Volume will need to be turned right up.

Distortion was low, measuring 0.01% or so right across the audio band at medium output levels. This rose to 0.12% or thereabouts across the audio band at full output, still a good performance. However, the distortion spectrum contains extended harmonics and these may add some slight sharpness to the sound. I’d expect the Mistral to sound bright and clear, rather than warm. NK

Power 40watts
CD/tuner/aux. 6Hz-160kHz
Frequency response 65dB
Separation -106dB
Noise -100dB

ROGERS JUNIOR
The Mullard EL84 output valve is capable of producing around 8watts output in push-pull mode and that’s just what the Rogers Junior achieves, showing it’s a well executed design. Some of today’s designers like to use multiple EL84s in preference to bigger valves because they are plentiful, inexpensive, run at low HT (320V or so) and sound sweet. Rogers’ Junior starts out with this innate advantage.

Rogers claimed 0.1% distortion and our samples, from Classique Sounds, met this claim (0.15% second harmonic at 1watt output) even after forty years - not bad. Output transformers can deteriorate with age by the way, if their interleaving dries out. The Juniors appear not to suffer this. At full output distortion rose to 0.2% in the midband. At high frequencies (10kHz) the Junior was less linear, but whilst distortion level measured 0.4% it comprised subjectively innocuous second harmonic only. The amplifier clipped very slowly and smoothly, as only low-feedback amplifiers do. This is another plus point, allowing 8watts to sound like considerably more.

Sensitivity was mediocre at 0.6V input for full output (8V). A pre-amplifier with gain will be needed unless the amps are used only with CD (2V output).

Frequency response was wide, running from 7Hz up to 150kHz. The upper limit is impressively high, suggesting good output transformers. Power bandwidth was good too; full output was delivered at 10kHz.

Hiss was minimal, as expected. There was a little hum at 2.2mV but this would be barely audible, except with sensitive loudspeakers (>90dB).

The Juniors worked very well and are something of a bargain for thermionic beginners. NK
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<th>Equipment Type</th>
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<td>Sone FA 3ES Remote Int/2 x 70 watt</td>
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LOUDSPEAKERS

JAMO CONCERT 8

The Concert 8 looked well thought out, with its bevelled edges, soft diffusive front covering and copper coloured phase plug. It measured well too, producing a very smooth, even response over a wide range of forward positions. There’s little phase error between the drivers, helping them give superb integration.

Bass output stays high right down to 63Hz, before the usual rear port phase suckout appears (50Hz). The Concert 8 will certainly have plenty of bass and it should play tunes evenly.

Unusually, for a European - non-UK that is - loudspeaker, the Concert 8 has a reasonably high impedance. It measured 7ohms overall, dipping down to 4ohms minimum, as our analysis shows. Being smooth, the Concert 8 is a reasonably easy load, a feature aided by a healthy sensitivity of 86dB. Amplifiers will find the speaker easy to drive.

This loudspeaker is very well engineered. It should deliver an accurate sound with good bass. NK

NAD 801

Both of the NAD 801s possessed a sharp dip in their frequency response, between bass/midrange unit and tweeter. Reversing the phase of the units showed both were wired incorrectly.

Our analysis shows response of the unit when wired properly, with only a small dip between midrange and treble. The tweeter peaks strongly, so a phase plate has been used to damp down its excesses, inserting another dip higher up, from 8-10kHz. Bass rolls down steadily below 300Hz, coming back up at 160Hz with the aid of some bass peaking. Miniatures these days are usually smoother than this across the low frequency regions.

The impedance curve was very smooth, aided by infinite baffle (closed box) loading. But by possessing a minimum close to 8ohms, the overall value turned out high-ish at 9.5ohms, which restricts current and, therefore, power draw. This makes the loudspeaker easy to drive, but it needs lots of volts to go loud, so volume will need to be turned up.

Sensitivity was low at 85dB SPL for one nominal watt of input (2.84V).

Even for a budget miniature, the 801 is not very impressive. NK
Westwood & Mason
Oxford

Naim Audio are revising their CD3 CD Player with a new transport and the possibility of upgrading the performance by connecting either a Flatcap or Hicap power supply. The Naim intro and Credo Loudspeakers are also being upgraded with external crossovers similar to those fitted to the SBL. These new products should be on demonstration by appointment by the time you read this.

We stock: Naim, Rega, Arcam, Marantz, KEF, Mission, Klipsch, Denon, Yamaha, Rotel, B&W, JBL, Infinity, Denson and many more.

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LEY LINE MAINS CORD: a multi-strand, multi-conductor cable using high quality copper, terminated as required, bare cable, mains connector, or multi-way plug block, with or without spike control.

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Are Proud To Announce The
Silhouette Series Digital To Analogue Converter
and External PSU Combination

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Upgrading the DAC with the optional analogue stage power supply will further enhance the performance by feeding a high current, low impedance supply to the analogue circuitry to further improve detail and bass control. This combination will give you an audio experience that will not be surpassed by any other manufacturers.

The unit is supplied with a specially high quality Oxygen Free copper stranded interconnect lead fitted with professional grade gold plated connectors for minimal signal loss.

Silhouette Series Digital to Analogue Converter £495.00 inclusive
Silhouette Series External Power Supply Unit £129.00 inclusive
A £50.00 saving is available when purchasing both units simultaneously.

All Marston Audio Research products are covered by a full 2 year warranty

Electronic Design by John Cheadle of Sedum Audio Ltd
Also available through Marston Audio Research:
Sarepta Audio Ltd. CD Player and Transport modifications - £135.00
Pico-Drive Digiclock (no additional PSU required) £99.00
Analogue Output Stage £75.00
Digital Output Stage £79.00

Marston Audio Research
P.O. Box 89, King's Lynn, Norfolk, PE30 5DN. Tel: 01553 772375
WEBSITE: http://www.planetweb.co.uk/marston
E-MAIL marston@planetweb.co.uk
KENWOOD DP-3080

The Kenwood had rising treble on both channels, but the right (shown) had more lift than the left. I'd expect this to make the player sound bright. Distortion was low at levels from 0dB peak right down to -90dB, a good performance. There was little quantisation noise too, so I'd expect the Kenwood to sound pretty clean. It did not perform so well with dithered signals, which is peculiar, but although distortion measured 15%, it did comprise low order harmonics as hoped when dither is applied.

Channel separation was wide right across the audio band and noise very low, but I suspect the machine was muting at digital zero.

Out of band spurious products were well suppressed, measuring -55dB or lower, but dynamic range was average at 103dB. Output measured a normal 2.1V.

DENON RECEIVER DRA-275RD

The Denon receiver is powerful, producing a healthy 60watts per channel into 8ohms. Power didn’t increase much into 4ohms, power supply regulation being poorer than that of more expensive kit, but the Denon still managed 80watts.

There was also more odd-order distortion, harmonics of a 10kHz test tone running right up to 100kHz. However, since level measured 0.05% total the effect is unlikely to be too audible. Frequency response was adequately wide on CD/tuner/aux, but Denon have used a warp filter on the disc stage, which cuts out low bass below 40Hz.

Frequency response proved accurate though, so both disc (LP) and CD ran flat up to 50kHz.

Sensitivity was normal on all inputs and noise low. The amplifier section worked very well in fact.

The tuner has a downward sloping response characteristic, as our analysis shows - likely to give it a warm sound. It was sensitive, very quiet - hiss measured a low -74dB - and very selective too, alternate channel rejection measuring 80dB. With low distortion of around 0.1% and good pilot tone/subcarrier rejection, Denon have left nothing to chance. The tuner section is thoroughly impressive.

The DRA-275RD proved very well engineered. It is great value.

---

**CD Results**

KENWOOD DP-3080

- **Frequency response**: 5Hz-21kHz
- **Distortion (%)**: left -6dB 0.004, -30dB 0.02, -60dB 0.6, -90dB 17, -90dB dithered 15
- **Separation (dB)**: 1kHz 117, 20kHz 92

- **Noise**: with emphasis -118dB
- **Dynamic range**: 103dB
- **Output**: 2.1V

---

**Tuner**

DENON RECEIVER DRA-275RD

- **Frequency response**: 38Hz-5kHz
- **Stereo separation**: 33dB
- **Distortion (50% mod.)**: 0.18%
- **Hiss (CCIR)**: -74dB
- **Signal for minimum hiss**: 1mV
- **Selectivity (at 0.4MHz)**: 80dB
- **Sensitivity**: mono 3μV, stereo 30μV
- **Signal strength meter**: none
ROKSAN
Midland Audio Exchange are still able to offer Xerxes owners the upgrade to Xerxes 10 Spec.

Normally £1600 inc XPS 3.5/DSU
Now £950 inc XPS 3.5/DSU

Available in Rosewood or Black. Limited stocks apply.

**Arte Xerxes 10** Phono stage is probably the best Head amplifier on offer today. At £395 (psu extra) it has amazing flexibility within the phono domain. Listen now or miss out on this truly magnificent product.

Caspian Amplifiers + CD players now in stock, fully remote controlled and with stunning looks. £695 for the amplifier. £895 for the CD player.

MICHIEL ENGINEERING
Midland audio Exchange now carry all of the product range including the fantastic Michell alecto monoblocks - ISO/Hera - Gyro/QC, Orbe - SME V - Argo HY Mycro.

PROAC
Our keen favourites, never seem to disappoint any one who come’s to listen. Currently demonstrating Tablette 50/Tablette 50 Sigs/Response/SC Response 2.5.

**AUDIO NOTE** MAX are currently demonstrating Otte SE/M1 Phone/P2/DAC 1/AN-K/AN-J and the new Audio AN TTI inc IQ2

Here are our current vinyl favourites on sale at the moment:

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<th>Vinyl</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<tr>
<td>Eagles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cassandra Wilson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kulashaker</td>
<td>£10.90</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suede</td>
<td>£10.90</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tom Petty</td>
<td>£12.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elvis Costello</td>
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<td>EMI 100 Years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Placebo</td>
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<td>The Blue Nile</td>
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<td>Wes Montgomery</td>
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<td>Jamiroquai</td>
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<td>Stevie Ray Vaughan</td>
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<td>Rickie Lee Jones</td>
<td>£21.95</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reef</td>
<td>£12.00</td>
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</table>

Always the finest selection of hi-end turntables on permanent demonstration. We are never too busy to talk to you on any aspect of turntable permutations. We also have a fine selection of moving magnet and moving coil cartridges available to listen to before you buy.

**Don't chance it - Take it to the M.A.X.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
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<tr>
<td>Linn Sondek LP12 Basik Plus - K9 (Black)</td>
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<td>Linn Sondek Avondaly PSU Ekos Klyde</td>
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<td>Roksan Xerxes Walnut XPSZ/RB300/OC5</td>
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<td>Teac VRDS 7 CD player/transport</td>
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<td>Meridian 200/203 transport DAC</td>
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<td>Finestra pre amp inc. phono stage</td>
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<td>Naim 42.110 pre/power</td>
<td>£600</td>
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<td>Yamaha 580 casette deck</td>
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<td>Yamaha XX 690 3 head casette deck</td>
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<td>Theta Data II Transport</td>
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<td>Theta Gen III DAC</td>
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<td>Audio Research D400 Power Amp</td>
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<td>Audio Research BL 1 balanced converter</td>
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<td>Audio Synthesis Pro Passion inc Switcher</td>
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<td>Celestion SL700 inc stands</td>
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<td>Gamm Acoustics Gemini SE valve integrated</td>
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<td>Restek Prolong Esoteric phono stage</td>
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<td>DPA Little Bit III D/A (3 months old)</td>
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<td>PS Audio 1VA phono stage M/CM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hitachi DE 27 casette deck</td>
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Rega Ela speakers (littest version)  | 350  |
QLN Cubic III speakers  | 199  |
QLN Cubic 122 speakers  | 279  |
QLN Cubic 222 speakers  | 329  |
Heybrook Sextel II (light ash) | £1200|
Mana Acoustics mini table | £175 |
Mana Acoustic Frame  | £130  |
Musical Technology Harriers with stands | £650 |
Rotel RB 956 BX 6 channel amp | £280 |
Aura VA 80 amplifier  | £350  |
Aura TU 80 tuner       | £400  |
Aura CD 100 CD player  | £80   |
Tripod 5 tier table (Naim Gaps) | £175 |
Gamm Acoustics Gemini SE valve integrated | £100 |
Restek Prolong Esoteric phono stage | £100 |
DPA Little Bit III D/A (3 months old) | £350 |
PS Audio 1VA phono stage M/CM | £150 |
Hitachi DE 27 casette deck | £35  |

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**Suppliers of the World's Finest Components**

**Audio Preview On Selected Popular Values**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nichicon MUSE KZ Premium Grade Electrolytics</th>
<th>(Made For Audio Featuring Low Distortion, OFC Wire Load-Outs)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>VALUE ($)</strong></td>
<td><strong>PRICE($) 1+</strong></td>
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<td>25V/100</td>
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<td>50V/1000</td>
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**Pure Silver Wire 99.99% (4N) Fully Annealed**

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**DNF Slot foil electrolytic Capacitors**

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<td>63V/22000</td>
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**Other Products Included:**
- Alps, BHC, ASROVOX, Burr Brown, Caddock, Danish Audio Connect CTI Attenuators, Elma, Elma, Electrolites, Linear Technology, ATC, MultiCap, Sony, OS-CON, Suttle, Sutherland, Vista, all at fair prices.

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### Progressive Audio

**New Products in This Month and On Permanent Demonstration:**

- **Cadence ES Loudspeakers** - Now Much nicer looking and sounding brilliant!
- **Ultimate CD Player by Digital Analogue Company** - As reviewed in What HI-FI (Five Stars)
- **Alon V Loudspeakers** - Very Special Prices on All Alon Products - Call for Details.
- **Audio Synthesis Desire Power Amp**
- **Pink Triangle Numerical, Literal CD Players and Brava Paralled Tracking Tone Arm**
- **Audionote M3 Pre-Amp** - Staggering Performance at a Sensible Price.
- **Tube Technology Synergy Signature P.P.S Amplifier - Looks and Sound to Match.**
- **Coming Soon Y.B.A. Equipment.**
- **Plus All the Regular Items from:**
  - Proac Audionote, Audion, C.J. Unison Research, Cadence, Origin Live, SD Acoustics Analysis, Callas, Sugden, Moth, Pink Triangle, Michell, Audio Synthesis, Lyra, Ortofon, SME, Alon, Graaf, etc. etc.

**For Sale:**
- **Ex Demo:**
  - impulse Ta'Us £1950
  - impulse LAL £1250

**For Sale:**
- **Secondhand Krell KST £100 (Mint)** £1350

**For More Information or to Book a Demo:**
- Call Dave on 01634 389004 any time.

### Diverse Viny

**New and Forthcoming Releases**

**Jimi Hendrix 180g LPs Mastered From First Generation Tapes**

- **Jimi Hendrix**
  - Are You Experienced - 2LP £18.90
  - Axis Bold As Love £14.90
  - Band Of Gypsys £18.80
  - First Rays Rising Sun - 2LP £18.80

**Cees**
- Mother nature Calls £10.50

**Charleston**
- Telling Stories £9.00

**Chemical Brother**
- Dig Your Own Hole £13.90

**David Bowie**
- Earthling Lid Gated Sleeve £14.90

**Dinosaur Jet**
- Hand It Over £11.00

**Gary Moore**
- Dark Days In Paradise 12/5 £17.90

**Gorkys Zygotic Mynot**
- Baratinde £10.90

**Grass Show**
- Something Smeels Good £12.50

**Iggy and the Stooges**
- Raw Power - Iggy Remix £9.90

**Jackie Leven**
- Story Tales For Hardmen £9.90

**Jay Hawkins**
- Sound Of Lies £8.80

**Ocean Colour Scene**
- B-Brief Speeds Frenzies £13.50

**Paul McCartney**
- Flaming Pie 12/5 £17.90

**Richard D Thompson**
- Industry 12/5 £17.90

**Son Volt**
- Straightaways £12.50

**Supergrass**
- Hold on To The Handrail £12.50

**Superharp**
- Some Things Never Change £13.90

**These Animal Men**
- Accident And Emergency £11.50

**Vamos Welsh Bands**
- Dail M For Merthyr - double £10.90

**New And Back Catalogue Stock Selection**

| Blue Note/Impulse 180g Reissues | See Pages 112 & 113 |

**P and P £1.00 1st LP additional LP's 50p each (max £3.50)**
impulse limited edition re-issue LP's
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Expected for release at the end of May

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John Coltrane "Live At The Village Vanguard Again"

Sonny Rollins
"On Impulse"

Gabor Zabo
"The Sorcerer"

Ahmad Jamal
"The Awakening"

Mccoy Tyner
"Plays Ellington"

Charles Mingus
"Plays Piano"

Archie Shepp
"Four For Trane"

Benny Carter
"Further Definitions"

Oliver Nelson
"More Blues And Abstract"

Alice Coltrane
"Journey To Satchidananda"

Sonny Rollins
"Alfie"

Pharoah Sanders
"Black Unity"

JJ Johnson/Kai Winding
"The Great Kai And JJ"

Coleman Hawkins
"Desafinado"

John Coltrane Quartet
"Plays"

Quincy Jones
"The Quintessence"

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"Inception"

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<tr>
<th>VALVE</th>
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<td>6 way QUAD 2 plug</td>
<td>£4 ea</td>
<td>0-600 volts £15 ea</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mains plug QUAD 2</td>
<td>£4 ea</td>
<td>0-150 milliamps £15 ea</td>
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<td>Octal Free plug</td>
<td>£3 ea</td>
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<td>£3 ea</td>
<td>Sealed 0-10 £15 ea</td>
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<td>B9A Skt Chassis</td>
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<td>Meter 2&quot; Dia Dual Scale Ferranti</td>
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<td>£3 ea</td>
<td>0-15 volts £25 ea</td>
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<td>£2 ea</td>
<td>Meter 1.5&quot; Dia GEC Brand new bxd</td>
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<td>£4 ea</td>
<td>0-200 milliamps £20 ea</td>
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<tr>
<td>DA100 Bocolite Base UK made</td>
<td>£45 ea</td>
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World Radio History
Wilmslow Audio Ltd are pleased to announce their acquisition of Kord Audio (Nottingham), who have a range of fully finished high quality loudspeakers. The ‘Tornado’ and ‘Vulcan’ have been updated and will continue to be sold under the brand name of Kord Audio. Other upgrades and new models are planned, including a floor stander and a bookshelf design.

Any Dealers interested in adding these superb speakers to their range of stock should contact the Directors at Wilmslow Audio Ltd.

Wilmslow Audio are known throughout the industry for their high quality self assembly loudspeaker kits, which have been sold for over 30 years to demanding institutions such as Broadcasting companies, Ford Motor Co and the Royal Opera House as well as to the general public. But this is only a small part of their business with the main stay of trading coming from the sales of Drive units and Components to OEMs, Hi-Fi Traders and enthusiastic DIYers. Wilmslow Audio stock a vast range of replacement drive units and are usually able to offer suitable alternatives even if the original manufacturer has long gone out of business. They are the UK stockists for imported drive units from Dynaudio, Morel, Peerless and Scan-speak along with British manufactured units from ATC, Coles and Volt. This range of drive units is complimented by an extensive array of high quality components such as Ansar polypropylene capacitors, Volt air cored inductors, Puresonic cables and Bennic connectors. All orders for drive units are dispatched via a national carrier and addresses in the UK should receive their goods within 48 hours.

VOLT

Wilmslow Audio are pleased to be associated with the sales of Volt Loudspeakers whose range of loudspeaker chassis are designed to offer clean uncoloured sound with smooth frequency response characteristics that allow simplified system design. Their Pro and Studio ranges have such features as dual rear suspensions and symmetrical field magnets with an extended centre pole. Manufacture is rigorously controlled to ensure consistency of construction and performance. Volt’s extensive research and development has generated high performance products that are reliable in applications worldwide. One of their innovations is the unique Radial chassis loudspeaker as used in Wilmslow Audio’s new 3 way system, the Prestige, which typifies how well established techniques are intelligently re-engineered to provide better loudspeakers. This concept addresses the biggest problem for high power loudspeaker manufacturers in the prevention of excessive voice coil temperatures. Lower temperatures mean better output, better bass performance and more reliability. As well a stocking Volt loudspeakers Wilmslow Audio also carry a large range of high powered air cored inductors manufactured by Volt to professional standards.
MOREL
Morel are one of the newer names in loudspeaker drive units within the UK market, their consistent quality in sound and design have ensured a growing presence with loudspeaker manufacturers throughout Britain. In January of this year Morel decided to close their Ipswich factory, which mainly produced car audio drive units, and appoint Wilmslow Audio as the sole distributor for their products in the UK. Whilst some would think this a strange move for a company whose sales are growing in Britain, it should in fact improve and strengthen their position and market share. This move has enabled Morel to concentrate their efforts in Israel on the production of Hi-Fi drive units and control the world-wide distribution from one source, thus ultimately giving a better service to the end user. In the past drive units were produced in Israel and then sent to Ipswich to be redistributed around the UK, often meaning delays in dispatch to the manufacturers. Now the larger manufacturers will receive their deliveries direct from Israel with all retail, samples and smaller trade sales being serviced by Wilmslow Audio, and coordinated by Morel’s UK sales manager Russel Kaufmann. This decision to utilise Wilmslow Audio was in part due to the realisation that they were experts at distributing smaller consignments on a daily basis throughout Britain and were a company determined to bring a new style of professionalism to the industry.

PEERLESS
Wilmslow Audio, the UK stockists for Peerless, have now included drive units from the new range of CSC woofers within their stock profile. Peerless’ Composite Sandwich Cone improves accuracy and consistancy of sound reproduction over the entire frequency range, creating a more ‘musical’ driver. These units have extra thick, rattle-free stamped steel baskets allowing woofers to be more easily mounted - with no countersinking necessary. The basket windows have been enlarged to minimise rear deflection interference. They also include a new ‘Linear Restoring Force’ spider which maintains consistent frequency response over the entire power range - even at the lowest volumes. The inverted, non-reflecting dustcaps minimise distortion created from edge interference. Peerless began by reinventing woofer cone material from the ground up, by laminating multiple material layers of differing physical characteristics. Peerless engineers created a combination that reinforces the best qualities of each material. Thus the ‘Composite Sandwich Cone was born.

ATC
ATC studio drive units, stocked by Wilmslow Audio, are built for people who want nothing less than the highest quality and the highest performance. Because ATC use state of the art design, and are subject to very tough quality control, their studio drivers have a reputation for reliability second to none. The ATC SM75-150 soft dome mid-range driver has established new performance limits for such units, although only a 3 inch unit, it combines high sensitivity with extremely low distortion and has a usable frequency response from 30Hz to 4kHz. There is no doubt that ATC’s mid-range has an unrivalled combination of efficiency, compactness and power handling capability.

SCAN-SPEAK
The Scan-speak product philosophy includes a single goal that transcends all others: to produce the highest quality drive units that can be used in loudspeaker systems to reproduce music with the highest fidelity to the original source material. One element in their product philosophy is to use technical sound methods and equipment in their production, using expert engineering capacity, the finest raw materials, the most advanced measuring techniques and equipment, and a thorough testing and quality control system. Another part of their production philosophy is good design work, striving to seek better sound rather than better response curves. Ensuring the sound has integrity and a natural balance among the elements; detailed and clear definition; realistic imaging from left to right, up and down and front to back. Good sound reepresents every instrument and all types of voices with their own unique characteristics. The Scan-speak philosophy is also reflected in their choice of materials and components used in the production of their drive units, along with the choice of distributor to service the sales market. This is confirmed by the continued use of Wilmslow Audio as their UK distributor, enabling the company to concentrate on the production whilst knowing that the distribution and sales are in safe hands.

THE DYNAUDIO FOCUS
Foccus is seen to be the most successful High-End Compact Do-It-Yourself-speaker in recent years. The only moderate sized Foccus renders an optimum of dynamic bass and music quality in total. Since its introduction Foccus has proven in many comparing tests that it does not require voluminous crates to deliver impressive and realistic music reproduction. The front firing reflex opening allows to place Foccus on bookshelves. Should occasionally the bass response be boosted by adding of a damping pad to the reflex pipe. Some owners of big systems have employed Foccus in their smaller room with great pleasure.

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

MARANTZ CD-43 Special Edition £350
A superb budget buy. Addressing the problems of the CD-521 SE, its detailed and musical sound embarrasses many expensive players.

MARANTZ CD-43MKII 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-T £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 111 £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 hardnass. 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 many respects, but can sound a touch polite on rock.

DPA 1024 £6000
Proof positive that today's CD's 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 vs1 £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 QCC PSU and SME V, its scale and insight kids 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 - £1350
Cirrus 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?

SME 309 £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.
GOLDRING 1012GX £60
An accomplished MM with a solid bass, tightly forward midband and clean transients. £20 buys the faster, more dynamic 1023GX.

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 tuned 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 modern budget amps.

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 upmarket 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.

DA P RENAISSANCE £795
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 S.

SUGDEN A21a £640
Class A transistor 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 551 £795
Beautifully-built integrated with a sweeter, clearer sound than mid-price alternatives. Plenty of facilities and remote controlable.

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. Usual sensitive speakers though, because it's unlikely to crack windows or trigger earthquakes.

MINTOSCH MA6800 £13735
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 £495
Not quite the $50, 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.

MICHEL ISO/HERA £540
This phono stage has fine midband and treble detail, with taunt bass. The £850 ISO/HER brings more of everything, and for many people is the last word on the subject.

UNISON SELECT C £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 NAC32 £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 40511 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 RP190 £495
Used with the partnering pre-amp it gives 70watts of smooth, relaxing sound.

SUGDEN AU40P £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.
TUNERS

**DENON DRM-650S** £230

Forget metal tapes, but sound quality with ferrics and chrome makes it a bargain.

**AIWA AD-S950** £300

A stable transport, superb head and Dolby S makes this an excellent recorder.

**PIONEER CT-ST705S** £430

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

Where serious cassette decks start. The DR2 pushes recordings to the limit, remaining unfettered at all times.

**NAKAMICHI DR1** £850

Better still than the DR2, with manual head azimuth adjustment to boot.

**NAKAMICHI CR7** £1500

Kills every other cassette deck and stamps on their graves.

LOUDSPEAKERS

**MISSION 731i** £130

A truly worthwhile improvement on the old 731s, sounding faster, stronger, tighter and more subtle. Able to take on all comers.

**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, superbly open and focused midrange and fine detail up-top. Work best on filled dedicated stands, unmatched at the price.

**HEYBROOK HB1 53** £269

Fine tonal resolution through midrange and a smooth and extended treble make the HB1 ideal for Classical/Acoustic music. Bass is a little bovy and constrained though.

**CELESTION IMPACT 23** £299

Smooth and even handed. Clear and well extended treble and deep, tight bass. Midrange is focused and pure with plenty of detail and speed.

**B&W DM 602** £300

Deep and strong bass, pure, projected and uncored midrange. Treble quality makes it a bargain.

**REL Q-BASS** £350

Few subwoofers match the Q-Bass at the price. The tuning controls can be a bit of a fiddle, but once set up the rest is pleasure.

**EPOS ES12** £495

Strong, punchy bass is allied to detailed and articulate midrange and treble. Above all, these 'speakers are thoroughly musical.

**REL STRATA** £500

The Strata is not a toy. Offers superb, true hi-fi bass depth and power.

**NATIONAL 557** £1400

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

**REL Q-BASS** £350

A fine example of a superbly engineered loudspeaker. The top of the mini-monitor league.

**HARBOUR HL-PJES** £799

A well-finished set of loudspeakers which have a lot of detail and pace. Nothing else can match these for the price.

**HARBOUR HL-K6** £975

Clean, musical and classy - Harbeth have done themselves proud again.

**KEF REFERENCE SERIES ONE** £995

The KEFs combine pinpoint imaging and detail with a smooth and polite balance. Good, agile bass too.

**HEYBROOK SEXTET** £1129

Heybrook have retained the strengths of the original Sextet, whilst improving on bass extension and smoothness. Treble and imaging still up with the very best.

**HARBOUR HL COMPACT 7** £1299

Dry and analytical, but truthful and uncoloured with it. A cohesive sounding top class monitor.

**EPOS ES25** £1505

Epos' best. Combines near-uncoloured tonality with characteristic fireworks in the rhythm department. Superb by any other name.

**SPENDOR SP7I** £1970

This big Spendor is very appealing thanks to its lucid sound and valve-friendly load.

**TANNOY AM58** £2700

Bold sounding professional active monitor with solid bass, clearly focused midrange and delicious treble. Built-in amplification.

**QUAD ESL-63** £2860

A reference against all other loudspeakers, with superb imaging qualities and genuine transparency. Earlier ESL model is an excellent second-hand buy, both enjoy legendary Quad service backup.

**KEF REFERENCE SERIES FOUR** £3099

Superb bass and near-electrostatic soundstaging make these involving loudspeakers a reference to others. Need a strong amplifier though.

**JBL S2600** £3500

Smooth, detailed and spacious with great dynamics and fine imaging. Capable of producing a superb performance when used in a big room.

**TANNOY WESTMINSTER ROYAL** £10,000

An incredibly dynamic, detailed full-range horn design with a rich sound. Its high sensitivity predisposes it to valve amplification.
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...horns for music lovers

Some people think that horn loudspeakers all 'honk' or sound 'cuppy'...others have listened to our new Virtuosos and they know that's not true. You love music, you want to hear your power amplifier give its best - these are the speakers for you.

Highly sensitive and fast, their high average impedance and smooth (as these things go) impedance curve makes them exceptionally easy for an amplifier to drive and control - and you don't need megawatts to bring them to life.

The Virtuosos is an affordable true horn speaker, has life. It's highly sensitive and fast. Their high average impedance and smooth (as these things go) impedance curve makes it easy for an amplifier to drive and control - and you don't need megawatts to bring them to life.

Midas 1m gold plated phono - phone...

Black Velvet interconnect - Renowned for its smooth transparent sound thanks to a layer of semiconductor which reduces noise levels.

Black Velvet Standard 1m gold plated phono - phone...

Black Velvet DIN - Using a special low profile version of our Black Velvet cable we offer a wide range of very high quality DIN interconnects.

Black Velvet 1m 5-pin DIN - 5-pin DIN...

Black Velvet 1m 4-pin DIN - 4-pin DIN please call.

Black Velvet 1m 2 phono - 4-pin DIN please call.

Black Velvet 1m 2 phono - 5-pin DIN...

Black Velvet 1m 4 phono - 5-pin DIN...

Midas OFC interconnect - An outstanding cable with high quality gold plated phono plugs offering excellent value for money.

Midas 1m gold plated phono- phone...

Fathom Loudspeaker Cable - Using the same technology as our Black Velvet interconnects, this cable offers outstanding resolution and excellent bass performance. The perfect complement to our interconnects.

Fathom 2m pair with gold plated 4mm plugs...

Fathom Bi-wire 2m pair with gold plated 4mm plugs...

"The Black Velvet's musical atmosphere is proved engrossing over the long term. There was great insight into performances, thanks to an uncanny retrieval of low level subtleties."

(Noel Keywood - Hi-Fi World magazine January 1997)

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ALL USED EQUIPMENT FULLY TESTED & SOLD WITH WARRANTY. CALL FOR UP-TO-DATE LIST.
Dear Val,

When I first switch on my system, one of my speakers produces a little noise, not unlike a cross between an Intercity train and Brian Blessed belching. Obviously I would like to solve this, as when guests visit they invariably think it is me.

Fred Kenner
Macclesfield.

Switch on noise may indicate the amp's PSRR may be out of permissible tolerance, which means your amp's reservoir capacitors may need replacing. However, I would suggest you eat less bran just to be on the safe side.

VV

Dear Val,

I recently bought an enormous length of cable from my local dealer. It was a copper stranded affair with a sensible price tag, so I thought I'd done quiet well. However, once at home I connected it up and went to switch on - nothing happened. It was then I realised, I don't in fact, own a system. What do you suggest?

Neil Sharples
New Malden, Surrey.

Your dealer must have forgotten to tell you a good sounding cable would still need to be hooked up with a decent system. So go back and buy yourself a decent system...you'll probably get a free set of speaker cables thrown in!

VV

Dear Val,

My poor gran's ears suffer terribly from the cold in winter so I decided to buy her some smart 'phones to wear whilst going about her daily business in general. I opted for Beyerdynamic's DT311s which have particularly large circular ear cushions which can be comfortable and warm. However, she wears lot of silver jewellery and these 'phones required gold plated jacks. HELP!

Donald Gregory
Eltham, Surrey.

Poor gran, I suggest Vianco's IR 9001s. They're slightly more expensive but they are infra-red headphones. Failing that, Woolworths do a lovely range of candy striped fur hats at £2.99 each which should suffice.

VV

Dear Val,

I have recently acquired some 'Sunsplash' storage units for my extensive vinyl collection and have found I can only fit two or three albums in each one. What am I doing wrong? I have enclosed one for your inspection.

John Wilson
Scarborough, W. Yorks.

This is the 'Sunsplash Orb'. You need the 'Sunsplash Cube'. The orb is shaped like a goldfish bowl and is therefore unsuitable for anything much other than goldfish.

VV

Dear Val,

I recently bought an expensive CD player which I took home to use. It was extremely quiet and I returned it, presuming it was faulty. The dealer had a good laugh at my expense when he pointed out the fact that there was no plug on it. Needless to say I was a tad embarrassed, but not half as embarrassed as him when he realised he'd sold me a sandwich toaster in error! Just goes to show you, eh?

Johnny Fletch
Sidcup, Kent.

It certainly does Johnny. If any other readers have an amusing or embarrassing experience relating to the purchasing of their hi-fi, please write in and we can ALL have a good laugh at their expense.

VV

Dear Val,

I've always been a little on the forgetful side but this recent experience surely must take the biscuit. When a friend informed me I needed to improve my connections with some banana plugs, I dashed out to my local dealer to buy some. A while later that same friend passed the local estate agents where he spotted me drinking bubbly and celebrating the purchase of a rather large banana plantation in Honduras. Have any other readers had a problem of a similar nature?

Andrew Lynch
Stevenage, Herts.

No, Andrew, I shouldn't think so. But, if any readers ARE particularly scatty or forgetful, write to us (NOT your local gas showroom) and tell us of your experiences.

VV

A TIP OR TWO:

1. Fool your friends and neighbours into thinking you won the latest esoteric system by throwing a brief but wild party during a home demo. Ask the demonstrator if he wouldn't mind serving the drinks.

2. Always keep Isopropyl alcohol and haemorrhoid ointment well separated in your bathroom cabinet.

3. To combat the frustration of listening to other people's loud, hissy Walkman, travel on the tube or train with a blank tape on your own Walkman at full volume.

4. Forget multiroom installation. Purchase wall to wall mirrors throughout your home and hey presto! of your own Walkman at full volume.

More of Val Vamp's nonsense can be found on our WEB site: WWW.hi-fiworld.co.uk.

Problems with your front end?

Maybe you can't get your cross over?

Basically imbalanced?.....

...well don't fret, you're not on your own. Write in with your problems to Val Vamp, aka Caroline Knott, Hi-Fi World's very own agony aunt, and she will endeavour to resolve it......or at least offer some practical advice (a problem shared and all that....)
Jon Marks takes a look at some of the bargains waiting for the impecunious audiophile in Hi-Fi World's classified pages. This month the star is Sony's TC-K555 cassette deck.

"£75? Done." There was that glow of a low-cost audiophile craving satisfied as I handed my hard-earned over in return for Sony's 1982 TC-K555 tape deck. Three heads mounted on a close-loop, dual-capstan mechanism and a claimed frequency response up to 19kHz on metal tape can't be bad for £75 I thought.

Peeking under the lid I was surprised by the sheer amount of circuitry packed into the chassis. Considering its vintage, the Sony is also unusual for its use of Elna For Audio capacitors in the power supply. The heart of the deck is a transport whose very hefty capstan flywheels are turned by a single BSL (Brushless, Slotless) motor chosen for its smooth, high torque running.

The first pre-recorded cassette the TC-K555 faced up to was a copy of Frankie Goes To Hollywood's single 'Two Tribes'. Here the sound was refreshingly funky and driving - timing and rhythm are both above average on this deck, especially after it's been given a couple of hours to warm up. Thanks to the dual-capstan mechanism imaging was very stable and the overall presentation had greater solidity to it than cheaper transports can provide.

The title track on this tape is followed by a brief interview with the band and again the Sony impressed with cohesive sound staging and natural vocals, both of which were reaping the rewards of a lack of flutter and the papery, insubstantial sound associated with it.

Popping a new TDK AR cassette into the Sony, I tried a spot of recording with Chaka Demus and Pliers. Thanks to the three heads, setting bias was simply a question of switching between tape and source to make sure the recording was a close tonal match with the original.

Results were excellent, with rock-solid imaging free from even the slightest hint of wandering around the sound stage and a firm if slightly rotund bass. Midrange clarity, a hallmark of this CD, was captured without difficulty by the '555, making for a crisp, low-noise performance.

Moving to TDK SA chrome tape found recordings possessed of a healthy dose of transparency, impact and swift dynamics. Classical music proved the speed stability of the transport with violin and piano notes pitch-steady. The main differences between recording and original were a marginal loss of tonal colour and a slight blurring of notes across the frequency range.

The TC-K555 started to show its age a little with type IV metal formulations. The problem is that bias is only adjustable on ferric cassettes and while the deck seemed well matched to TDK SA chrome tape, it sounded dull and sluggish with TDK MA. There was also a mismatch in channel balance, suggesting a component in the metal EQ section had given up the ghost.

If you're after a good second-hand deck and you tend to record on ferric and chrome tapes, Sony's TC-K555 is an excellent choice. Prices range from about £75-£100 depending on condition. Just be sure to put the deck on a good support - it's surprisingly sensitive to vibration.
ARCAM DELTA Black box 5 DAC plus leads £190 ono. North Kent) Tel: 01474 672248

HI-FI WORLD JUNE 1997

ARCAM DELTA Black box 5 DAC plus

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ARCAM DELTA Black box 5 DAC plus leads £190 ono (North Kent) Tel: 01474 672248

NAIM LINN BUYSELL, 52, CDs, 250, 135, 140, HICAP, ARD, 72, 62, ETC. Tel: 0118 918 8172

ARCAM DELTA Black box 5 DAC plus leads £190 ono. (North Kent) Tel: 01474 672248

NAIM LINN BUYSELL, 52, CDs, 250, 135, 140, HICAP, ARD, 72, 62, ETC. Tel: 0118 918 8172

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NAIM LINN BUYSELL, 52, CDs, 250, 135, 140, HICAP, ARD, 72, 62, ETC. Tel: 0118 918 8172

NAKAMICHI - Mobile TD700e, very careful owner, superb performance, VG condition £500. Tel: 01474 889 677

QUAD ESL 33 SPEAKERS £900. Quad 4/5 power amp £500. Quad 5/5 power amp £200. Quad 34 control unit £200. All in excellent condition. Instruction booklets; one owner. Tel: 01635 90342 (Shropshire)

FOUNDER SPEAKERS STANDS £35. 2x Naim 106 power amps £200. Torens TD160, 160a, 100 £300. AKG Concerto 1102. 2x Mullard 3D null single ended mono blocks £200. 2x OK output transformers £30. Townshend loudbox cable 2x5 mtrs £130. NAD 304 amp £90. Garrard 401 £75, plus manuals £10. Rotel RKT 960 RX BO photo stage £70. Tel: 0114 231 2517

COPLAND CS 14 hybrid integrated amp £700. 80 wpc. Superb sound, built with care, but with power of solid-state. Excellent build. Excellent condition.Tel: 01923 247799 (evenings)

MEGAFONE DUO CD TRANSPORT, cost £2000 new, boxed, with manuals and box. Tel: 01222 693922 (Cardiff)

NAKAMICHI - Mobile TD700e, very careful owner, superb performance, VG condition £500. Tel: 01474 889 677

QUAD ESL 33 SPEAKERS £900. Quad 4/5 power amp £500. Quad 5/5 power amp £200. Quad 34 control unit £200. All in excellent condition. Instruction booklets; one owner. Tel: 01635 90342 (Shropshire)

FOUNDER SPEAKERS STANDS £35. 2x Naim 106 power amps £200. Torens TD160, 160a, 100 £300. AKG Concerto 1102. 2x Mullard 3D null single ended mono blocks £200. 2x OK output transformers £30. Townshend loudbox cable 2x5 mtrs £130. NAD 304 amp £90. Garrard 401 £75, plus manuals £10. Rotel RKT 960 RX BO photo stage £70. Tel: 0114 231 2517

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MEGAFONE DUO CD TRANSPORT, cost £2000 new, boxed, with manuals and box. Tel: 01222 693922 (Cardiff)
Ili JUNE 1997 HI-FI WORLD

HAVE YOU EVER WISHED
that your speakers gave you more?

Well now they can!

Discover the full heart and passion contained within your music.

Origin Live speakers will fulfill the highest musical aspirations in exemplary fashion. With their stunning good looks they are intended for those who desire something special.

These speakers have that rarest of all qualities - the ability to bring music to life, effortlessly, gracefully, and utterly convincingly.

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Origin Live, 87 Chesel Crescent, Bitterne, Southampton, SO19 4BT
Tel: 01703 442183 / 671237 Fax: 01703 398905
**Hi-Fi World**

**ROTEL RB1070C phone stage £70. Nakamichi amplifier £75. Denon TU260L tuner £60. Akai AF450 cassette deck £50. Onkyo MCT6 Super ii cartridge (less than 70 hours) £55. Tel: 01243 839559 (Bedford)**

**KEF 104/2 LOUDSPEAKERS. Teak.** Perfect condition, dynamic, high sensitivity, powerful, articulate £950. Also TDL RT3. £3 in box. First class condition, boxed £250. Can demonstrate. Tel: 01308 888044

**MARTIN LOGAN AERIUS, light oak, 12 months old, under warranty £450 or exchange for £350. Tel: 01372 1042.**

**AUDIO GOLDEN NIGHT SCHE 3050 monoblock power amps with Target Audio platforms. Absolutely mint £1040.**

**DPA LITTLE BIT D 3AC £150.** Technics SL-P770 CD Player £150. Sony CD Player £150. JBL L1 speakers £600 - Georgia, Bridgford, E.Yorks Tel: 01262 605451

**MICROMEGA STAGE 6, 6 months old, upgrade features £850 ovno. Tel: 03102 640753 (Oncoraster)**

**WANTED: MERIDIAN 1018 Pre-amp plus Meridian 135 mono blocks, will collect. Cash waiting. Tel: 01633 25673 (Nico)**

**AUDIO SYNTHESIS D A/D converter 20 Bit Burr Brown DAC. Perfect condition £750. Wanted. Marantz CD44 DAC must be in excellent condition. Tel: 0802 332295 (daytime) 01780 546940 (evenings) (Paul)**

**MERIDIAN M30 active speakers/stands £1000, Pair Decca London Enclosures, need waiting. Tel: 01923 822354**

**XL0-Phono-Interconnect Reference One, 0.5m stereo interconnects. Great sound, excellent condition and boxed. Tel: 01702 353777 (Jerry)**

**FOR SALE: Naim NAC27, K Board £450. Naim NAP250, £750 ovno. NAC 90.7m 750. Square face with brown grills. Reluctant sale, too big for house £755. Tel: 0161 994 1025 (Middlesex)**

**FOR SALE: Arcam amplifier Delta 90.2 Arcam tuner Delta 60 £220, Perfect condition, boxed £250. Tel: 0171 9127 7925 (Michael)**

**TANNY CH-EVICTO 12" dual concentric loudspeakers. Very sensitive, excellent sound. Good condition. Teak finish with brown grills. Reluctant sale, too big for house £275. Tel: 0161 994 1025 (Middlesex)**

**WANTED: NITTY GRITTY record cleaner. Good anytime £50. Tel: 01900 826400 day 0831 323111 (Martin)**

**RARE OPPORTUNITY Phillips N452 £995. Also Van Den Hul The First machine of its kind ever made. £1000**

**FOR SALE: NAKAMICHI DRAGON Serviced 1997 £600, Meridian 201 Pre Amp £300. Tel: 01364 72153 (Jerry)**

**CLEAROUT: TRIPOS HIFI racks 3 shell £30, 4 shell £100. Quad 44/405 £200. Musical Fidelity MC1 £100. Sequence of budget and grunge HiFi equipment. Available by Visa/Mastercard possible. Tel: 01634 650473 (Jeremy)**

**FOR SALE: SUTTS Andrews special CD interconnect Kimberkable to prevent preamp overload. 1 pair 300MV input, 1 pair 100MV input. As new £40 each. Tel: 01903 247777**

**FOR SALE: SUGDEN AD12 amplifier £750, Sugden SDA-1 DAC £550. Micromega Leader CD £125. All ovno or £100 the lot. Wanted- Mana Speakers equipment rack, Kimber Powerwedges. Tel: 0181 802 3190 (Jerry)**

**KLEI X-150 Professional amp £160. Krell KSP71S pre amp £750. Linn Rokbarskis rosewood £50. All mint. Tel: 010276 473158 (evenings)**

**ATC SCM 50 A SPEAKERS for sale. One caring owner both speakers in wonderful condition. Reluctant sale due to move to smaller premises £2000 ovno. Fabulous sound across the range. Peerless in classical music. Please ring 0181 355 9086.**

**SONUS FABER MINIVA AMATOR L/S (By target stands £1095. Van den Hul Revelation L/S Cable (4.2m 6.4 no. 1.5m) £955. Linx Theta tuner £50. All boxed, mint, £10. Tel: 0171 722 3748 (Hampstead)**

**PHONO STAGE C7 STUDIO Tape Head Interface for the true connoisseur. The C7 is probably the best value on the market today £975. Tel: 0117 997 8434 (Tony)**

**FOR SALE: WADAC DIGIMASTER x 32. Mint boxed manuals, bargain £495. Wanted: Nitty gritty record cleaner. Good price paid. Tel: 01487 814015**

**SUPERB- Very late (4500) black Quad £325. Mint, little use £750. Spendor BC1s, vg £190. Luxman LX33 valve amp, £750. Pair Vortexon valve monoblocks, lovely sound £395. Tel: 01346 721535**

**PIONEER PD 91 Reference CD player, mint condition cost £900, accept £350. Denon 1560 CD player, mint condition boxed with manual, cost £800, accept £250 ovno. Tel: 01634 387685**

**FOR SALE: Puts Andrews special CD interconnect Kimberkable to prevent preamp overload. 1 pair 300MV input, 1 pair 100MV input. As new £40 each. Tel: 01903 247777**

**RKSAN D1 5.1 CD Transport, DPA 111 Mall DAC, both excellent condition, single-owner and recent manufacture. Audioguided Video 2:1 digital and Audion Pure Silver 56-Smaller component cans. Together £1100, may swap Direct Pass & Pre £150, Chord Flite line £205. 195/55R15 £20. Tel: 07930 885100 anytime**

**NAIN HI-CAP, SBL s (black), Boxed and immaculate. Find 2XACs, NAC612 & K Music Board. Tel: 01643 939539**

**MIDIAN S55 POWER AMP, new, excellent condition and boxed. £500**

**RARE OPPORTUNITY Phillips N452 open resealed. Budget and grunge HiFi equipment. Available by Visa/Mastercard possible. Tel: 0117 997 8434 (Tony)**

**Hi-Fi World – Classified ads**

**CLASSIFIED SONY ES. Integrated amp TAF545ES, PMAM Tuner STS444ES £60. Cassette deck TCX444ES £150. CD Player CMP555ESD with D/A Converter DAS70 £200. Speakers AP22 £250. Sony FM Stereo Receiver STRD1 £65. Soundstyle £50. Linn Autosonik £60. Tandy LSQ3P. Cassette Recorder BMA EVS 700 UB £60. All Items min. Tel: 01205 312109**

**ARCAH ALPHA PLUS CD Player in perfect order, Cost new £220. Bargain at £210 for quick sale. Tel: 01638 812345 (Notts)**

**REKSAN D1 5.1 CD Transport, DPA D1 Mall DAC, both excellent condition, single-owner and recent manufacture. Audioguided Video 2:1 digital and Audion Pure Silver 56-Smaller component cans. Together £1100, may swap Direct Pass & Pre £150, Chord Flite line £205. 195/55R15 £20. Tel: 07930 885100 anytime**

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**ARCAH ALPHA PLUS CD PLAYER in perfect order. Cost new £220. Bargain at £210 for quick sale. Tel: 01638 812345 (Notts)**
Better Off Dead

No vibrations, no dead sounds perfect.

What the press says about us.

I thought they worked very well on some low-cost CD sets. I had knocking about...

Hi-Fi Choice

July 1995

FOCULPODS & POLIPOLS are high performance vibration absorbing supports designed to be placed under Compact Disc Players, Turntables, Amplifiers, Loudspeakers and all other Audio & Video equipment. Designed using computer modelling techniques the spherical surface provides even contact and uniform energy distribution.

4 FOCULPODS will support a maximum of 20 Kilos

50 mm dia. x 20 mm

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Available from most good Hi-Fi dealers.

4 POLIPOLS will support a maximum of 5 Kilos

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DEFLEX Speakers or 2 items or lightweight Hi-Fi CD players, allowing the transport to sit more smoothly and give a more open and natural sound, and better stereo imaging.

You need at least 2 Deflex panels for a pair of small bookshelf speakers. 4 points for a pair of floorstanding speakers. At least 6 panels for larger speakers.

Your Deflex will work under the speaker or on a shelf above the speaker.

DEFLExo ACOUSTIC PANELS

The simplest and most cost effective way to upgrade your existing system.

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- Place the Deflex panel on the inside or outside of the cabinet, remove foam and/or wool damping from the inside of your speaker cabinet.

Price list:

Standard Panel £14.95 (25cm x 25 cm)
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Adhesive £3.50

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The only world acclaimed flexible acoustic damping pads for eliminating loudspeaker noise.

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http://www.signals.demon.co.uk

icacessories >>>byspoe <<<

Cartridges: demon, goldring, lyra, ortofon, roson, sumiko

Cables: audiowest, cable talk, chord company, heyrokroak, iox, ikir, kimber, kontak, ltd, nordost flatline, ortofon, qed, sonic link, trichord, von den hul, xio,

Stands: alphason, apolo, atacama, heyrokroak, sound organisation, something solid, soundstyle, stands unique, target.

Headphones: beyer, earax, grado, jecklin, sennheiser, stax

Accessories: audiowest, bib, creek, denon, denarc, disocwasher, goldring, hunt, iox, kontak, michell, mitty, monarchy, maths, musical fidelity, pxroll, qued, rms, rato, sequence, share, trichord.

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Email: enq@signals.demon.co.uk
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Http://www.signals.demon.co.uk

Second hand & ex demo

Audiovector 3 loudspeakers, black anodised (£1500), very valve friendly - £475

Cuvier TL3200 CD player exc. boxed s/h - £215

Unison Research Mystery One pre-amplifier, absolutely perfect - (£1750) ex displays - £1395

Unison Research Simply Two integrated single ended valve amplifier, s/h - £650

Quad 54 pre-amplifier (Grey / RCA), with phone stage, perfect s/h - £180

Quad 405A Power amplifier (Grey / RCA), one of the very last built, perfect s/h - £210

Morel 705SE loudspeakers, absolutely perfect (£1750) ex display - £650

Quad 34 pre-amplifier, Grey / RCA, with phono stage, perfect s/h - £650

Audioquest Indigo loudspeaker cable, 5m set, boxed, as new - (£150) - £60

AudioQuest Quartz loudspeaker cable, 5m set, boxed - (£150) - £105

DPA IS loudspeaker cable, 3m terminated pair, s/h - (£140) - £65

DPA IS /9 loudspeaker cable, 3m terminated pair, s/h - (£140) - £65

AudioQuest type 4 loudspeaker cable, 5m terminated pair, s/h - (£640) - £375

AudioQuest Indigo loudspeaker cable, 5m set, boxed, as new - (£75)

AudioQuest type 4 loudspeaker cable, 5m set, boxed, as new - (£75)

AudioQuest Quartz loudspeaker cable, 5m set, boxed, as new - (£130) - £65

Nordost flatline gold bi-wire cable, 5m pair, ex display, s/h - (£150) - £125

AudioQuest Indigo loudspeaker cable, 5m set, boxed, as new - (£110)

AudioQuest Indigo loudspeaker cable, 5m set, boxed, as new - (£100)

AudioQuest Indigo loudspeaker cable, 5m set, boxed, as new - (£100)

AudioQuest Indigo loudspeaker cable, 5m set, boxed, as new - (£100)

AudioQuest Indigo loudspeaker cable, 5m set, boxed, as new - (£100)

AudioQuest Indigo loudspeaker cable, 5m set, boxed, as new - (£100)

AudioQuest Indigo loudspeaker cable, 5m set, boxed, as new - (£100)

AudioQuest Indigo loudspeaker cable, 5m set, boxed, as new - (£100)

AudioQuest Indigo loudspeaker cable, 5m set, boxed, as new - (£100)

AudioQuest Indigo loudspeaker cable, 5m set, boxed, as new - (£100)
WILSON BENGESCH ACT2 20 tong arm Cardas wires, low cost used wire £1200, £1750. World Audio KLEB loudspeakers fully built with stands £300. Tele: 0333 40 0024.

TRICHORD Gear for sale: Digital Transport 209x, Pulsar DAC £755, power supply £250, Pulsar Master £195, plus Sheene Phase II Integrated amp £375, Phase III filter amp £325. Tel: 01404 269183 (Dorothy)

STAX LAMDA SIGNATURE PRO headphones with SRD-X Pro energiser £350, Rega RB300 toenam £60, Mod Squad passive pre £160. Tel: 01922 774218 (Avondowner)

LINN EKOS TONEARM & Troika cartridge, vgc £60. Sony 700ES cassette deck virtually unused £300. Tel: 0151 821 6871

ACOUSTIC ENERGY AE3's (rosstow), STA2e stands £550 (new £1000). REL REL2 Subwoofer £550. Empire keyboards £130. £350. Early Lowther wanted. Tel: 0191 981 0762 (Richard)

MERIDIAN 200 TRANSPORT & Meridian 650, Peak One loudspeaker. £350. Any inspection welcome. Tel: 0115 733055 (Tony)

DRA R. BAILEY Non-Resonant Cabinets £300, Audax 8"-10" drivers, believed Tapapan Interior Boards (the best ever!), can deliver £550. Tel: 01869 350 188

Q.L.N. SPITF1ELD SIGNATURE £3000, superlative sound, excellent condition £2000. Can delivers. Tel: 01703 345188 after 6.30pm

AOCUSTIC ENERGY AE3 loudspeakers, mint condition. Any inspection welcome. £450. Tel: 0181 746 1395

ACOUSTIC ENERGY AE3 loudspeakers, mint condition. Any inspection welcome. £450. Tel: 0181 746 1395

FOR SALE: ROKSAN XERXES TR 42.50 10 pre/power £295 ono. Meridian 2.0 1000 £120 ono. 250 £100. Tel 01440 730769 £50. Ortofon T5 moving coil transformers £25. Tel 01440 730769 £50. Ortofon T5 moving coil transformers £25. Tel 01440 730769

PIONEER DIGITAL AUDIO TAPE (DAT) Recorder, Model D-C8 + spare battery + 50 TDK DAR 120 tapes + TDK Head Cleaner. All brand new and unused £1500. Tel: 01335 345554 (Derby)

PRO-AC RESPONSE 2.5 Test, mint, boxed. 1 yr old (too big for room) reduction sale £1999.00. DPA. £200.

WARDEN DIGITAL AUDIO TAPE (DAT) Recorder, Model D-C8 + spare battery + 50 TDK DAR 120 tapes + TDK Head Cleaner. All brand new and unused £1500. Tel: 01335 345554 (Derby)

QUAD 3440/2-5, Mint condition, grey models, 18 months old £400. Offer. £50. 4-band Dynamic Range Expander £100. Manual and extended warranty. £20. Tel: 0114 272 9667 (Chris)

ACOUSTIC ENERGY AE3 loudspeakers, mint condition. Any inspection welcome. £450. Tel: 0181 746 1395

ACOUSTIC ENERGY AE3 loudspeakers, mint condition. Any inspection welcome. £450. Tel: 0181 746 1395

SUGDEN SYMETRA Mono amps, ten months old £250 or swap for Michelle Gyrodec OC PSU or Pink Triangle anniversary. Tel: 0161 928 1158 after 5pm

WANTED: Ion Systems power amps. MA400 preferred. Sale: 0.6M VHD the second phone £50. Manga Sound Frame £50. Rega 3 £50. Tel: 0304 413994

REVOL REVOX REEL TO REEL 4 Track £450. Rock Turntable + Ecclesbar Amp £350. Offers Tel: 01740 27485.

LINN KARL CD Player £895, Linn Kaern CD1 £1200 pre amp £695, Meridian power amp £250, Naim NAT 1 102 box tuner £395. Manuals and leads in and mint condition. Tel: 015 9010544

SNE 300/90FH ARM, mounted on Arison RD110 Deck, (floating suspension similar limb) Leather inlay, beautiful mahogany wooden base with smoke finish hinges covered. - VGC. £200 ono. Tel: 01845 526611

AUDIO INNOVATIONS First Audio stereo valve amplifier for sale. Excellent condition, will demonstrate, £650. Tel: 01933 281219 (Herts)

NAM NAP160 full size 50W power amp boxed £350 ono. NAC 72 preamp with Cord Co. leads boxed £350 ono. NAC 42.5/1100 preamp £250 ono. Meridian 585 £225 £425 ono (£750 new). Tel: 01225 339841 (Bath)

KEVRON RENAISSANCE CD PLAYER. 4 Track £65. Trench Turntable + Ecclesbar Amp £350. Offers Tel: 01740 27485.

LEAK STEREO 20 Amplifier - revised, Leak Varislope Pre-amplifier. 2x Leak Sandwich speakers in leak. Reluctant to split hence £425 the set. Tel: 01992 67940 Daytime only please

ALLISON ONE SPEAKERS in walnut-superb sound, excellent condition £250 ono. Tel: 01363 820747 (NC)

LEAK STEREO 20 Amplifier - revised, Leak Varislope Pre-amplifier. 2x Leak Sandwich speakers in leak. Reluctant to split hence £425 the set. Tel: 01992 67940 Daytime only please

MERIDIAN 502 Pre and 557 Power amplifiers with remote. As new, recent competition prize, ideal for my small room. Bargain at £1700. Buyer collects. Tel: 01425 274265 (Donce)

NAIM PRE-POWER AMPLIFIERS 62-140 with 4 metres of A5 speaker cable, all in mint condition, boxed with instructions £485 ono. Tel: 0161 308 2188

DPA REINASSANCE CD PLAYER, 4 months old, boxed, (Hi-Fi World review June 1995) cost new £350. Will accept £250 ono. Tel: 01522 625544 (Burnley, Lancs)

FOR SALE: Impulse H2, speakers years old. £1200 in oak with mait black stretched cloth. Forceld sale due to work reslocation £990 ono. Tel: 0402 119171

LINN LP12 Due to Linn Cirrus upgrade Pre Cirrus components for sale. Also black ash plinth. All in excellent condition. Any inspection welcome. Tel: 0115 9847462 (Andy)

BLACK LINN KAY TWO Speakers £520 ono. The ultimate Smooth Polk Plate (LSF)/PX Speakers £450. Box with all free stands. Teac VRDS7 CD Player £250. Roosevelt Purchases. Tel: 01922 441544

QUAD 405, box, mint, £165. Leek Troughline with Studio 12 Decoder £50. Supex Cartridge £65. Wanted: Koettis, Carnegie, Ql. Tel: 01804 592511 0796 439739

OXFORD CRYSTAL Reference Turntable with Antartgen 28 air-bearing tonearm £2300 ono. Van Den Hul Grasshopper Mark IV GLA MC Phono cartridge £2000 ono. Imminent arrival of baby necessitates sale. Also a superb looking (and sounding) record playing combination. Tel: 01403 733055

Van den Hul The Elvis 11tr. boxeed. £95. REL Subwoofer unboxed, unwanted. Audio Archery DAC Boxed £110. Tel: 0370 439592

DPA SYSTEM: Enlightenment Drive, Enlightenment DAC, 200's Power Amps x 2, DSP 2005 Pre Amp. Absolutely mintboxed 6 mths old. New £3500 accept £2200. May split. Tel: 01843 578426

LEAK STEREO 20 Amplifier - revised, Leak Varislope Pre-amplifier. 2x Leak Sandwich speakers in leak. Reluctant to split hence £425 the set. Tel: 01992 67940 Daytime only please

ALLISON ONE SPEAKERS in walnut-superb sound, excellent condition £250 ono. Tel: 01363 820747 (NC)

MUSICAL FIDELITY A100 & MC4 Mk2 & Rel Anamorphic 4x3 screen £175 ono. MUSICAL FIDELITY A100 & MC4 Mk2 & Rel Anamorphic 4x3 screen £175 ono.

TENPMO 1020A 2 Way stereo speakers in walnut. £450 ono. Tel: 01962 853225 (Cotswolds)

SHELL CHORD CLASSIC 1700 (£1999 inc VAT) £1500 ovno. Tel: 01161 344854
HI-FI WORLD

PRIVATE

TANNOY LANCASTERS 12" Monitor
Amplifiers:
Redback B600. Monoblock Gold 10" £1150.
LSUHF1/8/II/2 BU/2 Black custom made
cabinets £200. Goomanis 12" Axoms
120 hours, stands £200. Lyngard Leno
G LC 72 in plinth £75. Revox A72
2 Track/10 met adaptor, some faults
£350. Tel: 01342 541014.

NAIM AUDIO NAC 62 (phono box
preamp) Excellent condition. Sale due to
upgrading to £200. Tel: 0121 512 118 (Nhi)

NAIT NAI0 TUNER, old style, superb
condition, excellent box etc. £750. Tel: 01761
410625 (NE Somerset).

ARCALA DELTA 70.3 CD Player including
remote and Audioquest Interconnects,
excellent condition and box £250. Audioquest
Black Diamond interconnects £1M. Tel: 01730
794114.

LYLA CLAVIS DA CAPO (10 hours used)
superb cartridge £175. Michael McLaughlin
quality £350. Tel: 01904 573 (Andover).

MUSICAL FIDELITY E500 FM Tuner,
original box with instructions, full remote
control, unwanted gift (I have no area)
as new £275. Linn K1 pre-amp, boxed with
directors £90. Tel: 01904 763157

QUAD ESL57 £520. Linn Kan 2x and
stands £220. Tannoy type 110 £120. Akai
1721L open reel £90. Pair Tannoy
DUS316 gold drive units, offers. Hi-Fi
 drowned. £750 or offer 1995. Tel: 0181 593
1985.

ART AUDIO "CONCERTO" Power
amplifiers. 2 x 125W £350. "Hollic others
resistors", 30 W Triode/50W
push pulled valves, various.
Avalon £390 or swap for quality valve
preamp £350. Tel: 0181 579 7451 (Home)

SOUND S1-1 SPECIAL EDITION CD
Player, factory fitted analogue output
stage upgraded with separate power supply.
Truchord 2 deck system with power
supply. Bargain at £350. Tel: 0181
661 4989

KRELL KSA 250, just serviced, mint
£2000. Audio Research LS 20 Mk1
11mths old £1250, serious bargain. Tel:
01623 871950

LINN AKTIV CROSSOVER for lsobariks,
amp £155. Quad FM4 £475. Tel: 01834
860681 (Wiltshire).

ROKSAN QANJ 3 ROSEWOOD £505,
Audioengines Hodges speakers £100. Rega
Puma £130, Target Audio 5
shell equipment very £100. Linn
unboxed. Truchord 2 deck system with
power supply. Bargain at £150.
Tel: 01761 45426 (Steve)
DENYS TRICKETT'S HI-FI CURIOSITY SHOP

Valve Equipment. The best rebuild and repair service for Quad, Leak, Radford etc. E.G. Leak ST20 + Pre rebuild £100. Quad £120 2 year guarantee.

We buy sell and exchange all valve vintage and classic Hi-Fi: Quad, Leak, Radford, McIntosh, Fisher what have you.

Other Classic Hi-Fi. Buy-sell-exchange-repair all Quad models 33/303 34/44/405. ELS, Tannoy, Lowther, Altec, Revox, McIntosh, Fisher, Nakamichi, Garrard 301, 401, 4HF. Thorens 124, 135, 160, 125, 126, 224.

Mastercard: Visa
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NW1 5BY
Tel/Fax: 0171 723 8545

“Against similarly priced competition, the Crofts will take some beating.”
Haider Bahrani HI-FI WORLD JUNE 1996

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Evenings: +44 (0)1902 659150
Ans. Machine: +44 (0)121 373 1442
Fax: +44 (0)121 681 8772
Hi-Fi World

PRIVATE


Pair quad 6L6 power amp £1350. Deco flatline twin speaker cable £125. Dogwood loudspeakers £325.

KEF 105/3 or 107/2 speakers or WHY?

Tel: 01792 280716 (Jules)


Pair Quad ESL63, brown with trolley stands. Immaculate £1600. Tel: 01206 862259 (Colchester)

Linn KAIRI PRO line level preamplifier with S.P.S. in excellent condition boxed as new with handset and instructions and manual £750. Tel: 01922 51388 (evening)

## POWER AMPLIFIERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jadis JA80 Monoblocks</td>
<td>£495.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeff Rowland Model 3 monoblocks</td>
<td>£599.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Audio Masters</td>
<td>01608 645954</td>
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<tr>
<td>e-mail: <a href="mailto:sales@audio-masters.demon.co.uk">sales@audio-masters.demon.co.uk</a></td>
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