SPIN DOCTORS

The best CD replay under £250

PINK TRIANGLE LITAURAL CD

FREE in this issue (OVERSEAS INSIDE)

CLASSIFIED ADS - 8 PAGES OF HI-FI BARGAINS
The Faraday ring may look insignificant. But it's this tiny component that gives the A Series its huge dynamic range.

By counteracting rising impedance in the voice coil, it allows more power into the tweeter. And with more power going in, you get more power out.

Even the highest frequencies sing out loud and clear, making the A Series the ideal speakers for the faithful reproduction of today's digital music and film recordings.

The Faraday ring is just one of many small, but vitally important components that make the new A Series so special. And there's only one place good enough for it. The beautiful box we put it in.
The Hungarian hi-fi company EtaIon have their feet in both the domestic and professional audio camps, and it shows in their impressive PreAmpli line-level pre-amp and Ampli power amp.

Pink Triangle have always gone their own way when it comes to CD players, and the new £2000 Litaural is no exception. This innovation adds up to superb sound.

Musical Fidelity have enjoyed a renaissance recently with their X Series of components. The new EI1 integrated amplifier shows they can do just as well with hi-fi of a more standard shape.

What goes under your hi-fi has a big impact on how it sounds. Some of the best platforms, built around wood, granite, glass and steel, can be found in this month’s support group test.

In the sea of mediocrity that is the multitude of Midi or Mini systems across the land, there is a beacon of high-fidelity hope shining out. It’s name is modern budget hi-fi and it’s well represented in this issue with a bevy of accomplished CD players. Hooked up to an amp like Denon’s PMA-250SE at £160 and Tannoy’s £140 Mercury m2 loudspeakers, the best of them will form a superb system for little more than £500 including stands and cables.

One of the cheapest upgrades that can be made to set-ups like these is correct positioning. In spite of the restrictions imposed by decor, there’s a lot that can be done. Moving your listening position and loudspeakers away from rear and side walls might give you less bass but you’ll get more of everything else. Spending some time finding the right position for your hi-fi really is time well spent.

Jon Marks, Editor

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.

March finds us rounding up a whole host of hi-fi’s most stylish components in a special Style Issue. These are just some of audio artworks to be exhibited:

MISSION 750 LE LOUDSPEAKERS
You’d be forgiven for thinking these classy stand mounters cost considerably more than just £250, especially as they use a high-tech Aerogel mid/bass driver and silk-dome tweeter.

DENON TU-S10 TUNER
Are all tuners black boxes full of air? Not all. Denon’s heavyweight AM/FM TU-S10 is resplendent in its copper-plated chassis and anodised fascia.

WILSON BENESCH FULL CIRCLE RECORD DECK
Yes, it’s that carbon-loving company again, this time with their latest Circle turntable with its carbon-fibre rod suspension, 0.5 unipivot tone-arm and Matrix cartridge.

UNISON RESEARCH SIMPLY 845 INTEGRATED VALVE AMPLIFIER
The Italians, especially Unison Research, seem to have a knack of allying form with function. In the 24W single-ended Simply 845, cherrywood and steel complement the sound quality this company are renowned for.

SONY CDP-X3000ES CD PLAYER
Sony’s latest £500 CD player, with its multiple filters that allow you to tune the player to get the sound you prefer, combines champagne-gold aluminium with clear perspex for stunning good looks.
THIS MONTH'S REVIEWS

LOUDSPEAKERS

B&W CDM7
Got £1000 to splash out on a pair of high-tech loudspeakers? Jon Marks samples B&W's freshest floor standers, the CDM7.

CELESTION 12i
Leo Lam finds out if these little £120 Celestions can outstrip their 'speaker peers.

COMPACT DISC

SUB-£250 CD PLAYER GROUP TEST
Five hopefuls from Kenwood, Technics, Denon, Cambridge Audio and Yamaha battle for digital supremacy under £250. David Price referees.

AMPLIFIERS

ETALON PREAMPLIFIER AND AMPLI POWER AMPLIFIER
Jon Marks lends an ear to a pre/power combination from Hungarian high-end manufacturers Etalon.

MUSICAL FIDELITY E11
It may be Musical Fidelity but this isn’t one of the X Series 'amps in a can’. Instead, the £300 E11 integrated, with 78 watts on tap, is a more standard black box. Leo Lam samples MF’s latest arrival.

AMC 3050A
The current king of the budget amps is Denon’s PMA-250SE. Dominic Todd wonders if AMC’s £170 3050A can knock it off the top spot.

VINYL

DNM MICA MM CARTRIDGE
Based on Goldring’s outstanding 1042 cartridge, DNM’s Mica promises much. Jon Marks puts needle to groove.

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.


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NEXT ISSUE
All the newest and best in hi-fi that we’ll be filling next issue’s pages with.

NEWS
If it’s information from the cutting edge of hi-fi that you’re after, this is where to look.

READERS’ LETTERS
Discover how to make your system sing with letters from this month’s varied post-bag.

HI-FI WORLD LIBRARY
If in-depth hi-fi knowledge is your goal, take a look at our well-stocked library.

COLUMNS
Words of wisdom from Hi-Fi World’s audiophile sages.

SPECIALIST HI-FI DEALERS
Save yourself the bitten nails and grey hairs that component-matching anxiety brings - let the experts do all the work for you.

MEET YOUR MAKER
Search for the source of all the equipment that fills the homes of music-lovers and you’ll find these manufacturers.

WORLD AUDIO DESIGN
If the words ‘kit’ and ‘sonic satisfaction’ are high on your list of priorities, home in on our in-house goodies for the DIY-inclined.

DIAL-A-DEALER
The system of your dreams is just a phone call away, courtesy of the dealers on these pages.

MEASURED PERFORMANCE
Hi-Fi World’s electronic surgeons peer inside this month’s hopefuls to check their vital signs.

OLDE WORLDE
This month it’s that BBC stalwart, the LS3/5a loudspeaker in all its guises, that hoggs the limelight.

WORLD BUYING GUIDE
A thorough run-down of all the products we would be happy to use ourselves, from the budget to the not-so-budget.

READERS’ CLASSIFIEDS
With six pages to choose from, there are bargains to suit every audiophile, from the aspiring to the well-heeled.

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VITAL FOR VINYL
Our LP expert David Price reveals the best ways to keep your precious vinyl in tip-top condition.

WORLD OF WIRE
Ketan Bharadia lines up three £140+ interconnects with van den Hul’s The First, Purist Audio Design’s Elementa and SonicLink’s Vermilion.

PLATFORM NO1
A firm foundation can make all the difference to your component's sound. Jon Marks and Ketan Bharadia audition five isolation platforms.

DESIGNER INTERVIEW
Douglas Floyd-Douglass meets David Mate, a designer whose background covers both domestic and professional hi-fi systems.

MUSIC

ROCK AND POP
RECORD OF THE MONTH:
Patti Smith, Peace And Noise

DANCE/AMBIENT
RECORD OF THE MONTH:
BBE, Games

JAZZ REVIEWS

CLASSICAL REVIEWS
RECORD OF THE MONTH:
Mendelssohn, Die Erste Walpurgisnacht

COMPETITION - PAGE 34
One lucky winner could be slotting Pink Triangle’s new £2100 Litaural CD player into their system in this month’s competition.
The best things in life cost quite a bit, actually.

Music is one of life’s great pleasures. But like caviar and Champagne, the best never comes cheap.

Take KEF’s legendary Reference Series. We set out to create loudspeakers of unrivalled acoustic transparency - and in the pursuit of perfection, price is a secondary consideration.

Nothing is allowed to compromise the purity of the recorded signal. High-order crossovers are computer matched for seamless integration. Internal wiring is oxygen-free copper, soldered by hand. The baffles are mineral filled and contoured to minimise edge diffractions. And before it leaves the craftsmen who build it, every loudspeaker is rigorously tested against a calibrated laboratory reference system.

Hence the flawless response. The astonishing lucidity. The consummate musicality. Technical supremacy in a Savile Row suit.

Actually, they don’t seem expensive at all.
While some of the sweetest sounds around still come from 12inches of black vinyl, there’s no doubting the commercial supremacy of the digital beermat in these modern times. According to figures published by the IFPI (the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry), CD sales for the first half of this year amounted to 64million albums.

CD’s dominance is only going to be prolonged by the likes of Philips’ £500 CD-R/CD-RW recorder, the CDR 870. While MiniDisc recorders are apparently selling well according to sources in the retail trade, and Sony expect world-wide sales of players to rise 140% over last year’s total to 7million (equivalent sales for CD players were 225million), MD seems to be stepping into cassette’s boots, not CD’s. With an almost non-existent pre-recorded catalogue, MD poses little threat to the abundant silver disc.

Audio-only DVD has yet to even appear on the scene as a standardised pre-recorded disc that will play on any DVD machine. With the computer industry driving development of re-recordable digital discs far faster than the audio industry, and DVD video slow to go anywhere, a replay-only DVD audio disc looks obsolete before it has even gone on sale. Which leaves the field clear for CD as the main pre-recorded and CD-R in conjunction with CD-RW as the main domestic recordable digital formats.

Most music buyers are perfectly happy with the sound of CD, and blank CD-R discs at around £3 each (and the price is still falling) look a very tempting proposition for compilations and recordings. As DVD tries to sort its act out, CD-R and CD-RW are moving into the domestic digital recording spotlight to stake an irresistible claim.

Following hard on the heels of the £7000 Excalibur floor stander, the Essex-based ‘speaker specialist Ruark has shifted its attention to the affordable end of the market with the announcement of its new entry-level model the Epilogue. This stand mounter features an MDF cabinet with 18mm thick sides and 15mm for the rest of the panel work.

The mid/bass driver is unusual as it features a 140mm paper cone which is cut into a pentagon rather than the standard circle. According to Ruark this helps dissipate vibrations around the cone instead of reflecting them back to the centre. The reduction in cone break-up is said to result in a smoother frequency response and less coloration. The tweeter is a 19mm fabric dome unit which is ferrofluid cooled and damped.

You can deck your Epilogue out with a black centre wrap and a choice of lacquered black or real wood veneers. The black version costs £239 and the veneers are £30 extra.
It was 20 years ago today....

In November '77, the design team of Bob Stuart and Allen Boothroyd launched their first Meridian product, an active loudspeaker of course! Since then, Meridian Audio has continued to pioneer advanced audio design in products such as the first high end CD player, the first CD transport, the first DSP domestic loudspeaker, the first digital home theatre and now, high end DVD.

Safeguard your investment, trust Meridian - the real leaders in audio and video

Meridian Audio Limited
Stonehill, Stukeley Meadows, Huntingdon, PE18 6ED
Tel (0) 1480 434334 Fax (0) 1480 432948
http://www.meridian-audio.com
FEBRUARY 1998

AUDIOLAB ACCELERATE

The TAG/McLaren Group, well-known for their involvement with Formula One motor racing, has acquired Cambridge Systems Technology Ltd and the Audiolab brand name. A newly-formed company called TAG Electronic Holdings Ltd will now control both Cambridge Systems Technology and TAG’s electronics division, TAG Electronic Systems.

Philip Swift, managing director of Cambridge Systems Technology Ltd, said of the change: “I am delighted to have secured this opportunity to combine the expertise of our companies. The increase in available resources, together with the introduction of leading technology which has developed within Formula One will clearly benefit all of our customers”.

BLUEPRINT FOR THE FUTURE

Blueprint is a new name established by 'speaker specialists Keswick Audio to concentrate on up-market, innovative loudspeaker designs.

The Blueprint range consists of three models at the moment, all of which are claimed to offer high efficiency combined with easy amplifier load characteristics.

At £1000 the Point 1 is the starter model. It’s a two-way design but features three drive units: a 28mm silk-dome tweeter combined with a 170mm mid/bass unit and a 25mm rear-firing super-tweeter. The latter operates over a very narrow frequency band and at a lower output level than the main tweeter. Blueprint claim the result is a more natural ambience to the music without any loss in image precision. An angled baffle gives precise time alignment and sensitivity is apparently 90dB.

The £1650 Point 2 is a true three-way 'speaker which adds a side-firing 200mm woofer to the Point 1’s drive unit complement. The top of the range Point 3 should be available towards the middle of the year and is expected to cost in the region of £3700. No more details are available as yet.

Blueprint Hi-Fi
Ferrybridge Workspace,
Pontefract Road,
Ferrybridge,
West Yorkshire WF11 8PL
Tel: 01977 671823

Primare, known for their elaborately engineered high-end components, are looking to more budget territory with the new Twenty series of components. First arrivals are the A-20 integrated amplifier and the D-20 CD player. The line-up will eventually include an in-line phono stage, three loudspeakers, a digital tuner and an AC-3 surround processor.

The £800 integrated amplifier is a dual-mono design built around twin 120VA toroidal transformers and 40,000uF of reservoir capacitance claimed to deliver 60 watts of power. Extensive use is made of surface-mount components which shorten the signal path and can offer greater reliability. Other facilities include full remote control and pre-amplifier output sockets so bi-amping is possible with the addition of an external power amp.

The CD player uses the latest version of Philips’ CDM12.4 transport and a 1-bit Delta Sigma DAC. Special attention has been paid to the power supply with two transformers providing isolated feeds to the digital and analogue circuits. Once again surface-mount components are preferred over their standard counterparts. The D-20, like the A-20, costs £800.

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Oxfon
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Turbaltics

QED

Quad
Quads\nRCA

Roger's

Roll

Royal

Sangean
Sanyo

Sennheiser

Sharp

Shure

SME

Sony

Spark

Speakers

Stands

Stereolux

Sumo

Systm

Tannoy Prestige

Target

TCL

TEAC

Technics

Thetres

Toyota

Techny

Van den Ac

Universal

Whirlpool

XLD

XTC

Yamaha

and Many More

*On selected items only. *Subject to availability and whilst stocks last. Offer not valid with any other promotions or offers. E&OE.
A NEW MILLENNIUM

Joining JPW’s Millennium loudspeaker line-up is the diminutive new ML 110. This £70 two-way sports a 10mm polymer-dome tweeter combined with a 100mm doped-paper woofer loaded by a port. With a claimed sensitivity of 89dB the ML 110 should be easy to drive and is designed to be positioned close to the rear wall. There are also plans underway for an active version.

Also new is the £200 SW40 active subwoofer. This uses an integral 50watt amplifier to power its 200mm reflex-loaded driver. Output level and crossover slope are both adjustable.

CLASSÉ TUNE IN

Classé Audio have released their first ever tuner, the imaginatively-named Tuner-1. This FM-only model will please armchair athletes with its full remote control and 80 presets. The threshold level is user-adjustable and can be set to reject stations which are too weak to be received properly. Balanced outputs in addition to the standard RCA are provided.

The Tuner-1 is available with either a black or soft-silver face plate and can be yours for a mere £1295.

NAME CHANGE FOR THOMAS

For the last three years Thomas Transducers have been building up a name for themselves with their Bravura horn loudspeakers. Unfortunately they’ve now discovered a Dutch subsidiary of the Bose Corporation owns the Bravura name. The new brand name Thomas Transducers have chosen to use is B’s-a (pronounced B-star-a). They’ve also moved operations to a different site, as detailed below.

CALLING ALL AUDIOPHILES

If you can’t wait to meet the latest hi-fi ‘in the flesh’, then you will be pleased to know it’s show-time again. The Bristol show will be held in its customary venue of the Marriott hotel in lower Castle Street, Bristol from Friday February 20th (11am to 6pm) to Sunday 22nd (10am to 5pm) and looks set to play host to over 45 exhibitors.

Hi-Fi World will also be there in strength with our stand and demo room, where we’ll be showing off our valve amp and speaker kits, including the latest version of KLS3, the Gold Dome MkII.

For more information, call Audio Excellence, tel: 01222 228565

BLACK PLASTIC

In last month’s Chesterfield show report, we printed the wrong telephone number for Black Plastic, manufacturers of Garrard plinths and power supplies. It should have read 01902 751861.

Black Plastic, manufacturers of Garrard plinths and power supplies. It should have read 01902 751861.

Audio Illusion
33 Langley Brook, Langley, Berkshire SL3 8NB
Tel: 01753 542761

UFecigD, reg
As sure as the leaves fall from the trees in autumn, budget CD players get upgraded. No sooner have you bought the latest model than it's been changed to 'a', 'i' or 'SE' spec. A fancy capacitor here, a gold-plated headphone socket there, or maybe just the latest type of rubber feet - the possibilities are endless. But make no mistake, this kind of tweakery is often more about hype than hi-fi.

So it was with more than a little cynicism that we approached this month's CD group test. With three freshly-reworked players from Cambridge, Denon and Kenwood, plus two recent arrivals from Technics and Yamaha, wasn't this going to be a triumph of marketing over music making? How wrong we were! All turned out to be pretty impressive in their own way, and two actually gave the reference £350 Marantz CD-67SE a hard time.

It's obvious from looking inside these players and from the way they sound that more and more manufacturers are realising how important component quality is. It's no longer possible to put together a sweet sounding player simply by filling its circuit boards with any industrial-grade resistors, capacitors and op amps. Selected audio-grade parts are now increasingly in evidence even in budget equipment.

The same is true when it comes to components in the digital domain. Here the Cambridge CD4SE stands out for using an in-house designed DAC instead of an off-the-shelf IC. Kenwood also have their D.R.I.V.E. chip for reducing quantisation distortion and improving low-level detail, while Technics use their M.A.S.H. noise shaping, Yamaha their PRO BIT and Denon their Lambda digital filters.

All of this means sonic treats on the cheap, as we discovered with this five-strong band of budget players.
CAMBRIDGE CD4SE
£199.95

THE TECHNOLOGY
Keen practitioners of the 'new, improved' approach to hi-fi, if a Cambridge product hasn't been updated recently you can be sure it's due for the 'SE' treatment soon. But in this case the Special Edition tag actually understates matters, because the CD4 hasn't so much been tweaked as completely redesigned.

Out goes the old Sanyo transport and in comes a Philips CDM12.1 with the hi-fi 7000-spec transport servos as used in more expensive Marantz players. Out too goes the Philips DAC to be replaced by two Crystal CS4327s in dual-differential mode, giving a claimed near-20-bit resolution.

Elsewhere we see surface-mount technology a la DPA and Linn, selected op-amps and the use of Cambridge's own Pacific Litz interconnect for internal wiring. There's an electrical digital output as well - even some thousand-pound Japanese players don't have this essential bit of audiophile kit.

SOUND QUALITY
From the opening chords of Van Morrison's 'Have I Told You Lately That I Love You' it was clear this player was right at the top of its class. With a highly fluid, natural character, plus rich, powerful bass, super sound staging and top-notch dynamics and timing, it just didn't sound like a budget CD player at all.

Bass was weightier than even the reference £350 Marantz CD-67SE. It was also beguilingly tuneful and melodic - bass guitar notes stopped and started with great speed and precision, communicating the music's delicate syncopations with consummate ease.

The CD4SE could be subtle when subtlety was needed, refusing to allow the bass to dominate when it should have taken a back seat.

Midband was another treat, with its detail, transparency and smoothness. Best likened to a good valve amp, the Cambridge's midrange ebbed and flowed effortlessly but ultimately missed out on the forensic detail of some of the competition. Likewise, treble was ever so slightly veiled and lacked bite.

Propaganda's 'P-Machinery', a complex and somewhat murky recording, sprang into life with the CD4SE. Synths, which can often sound dead, suddenly had texture and harmonics. Claudia Brücken's voice was deeper and more sensuous than normal, seeming to hang in the air between the 'speakers' rather than emanating from a fixed two-dimensional point. And when the chorus kicked in, grumbling low frequencies thundered out. Even the reference Marantz sounded polite and over-cautious by comparison.

Best of all though was the Cambridge's dynamic ability. Neil Richardson's 'Riviera Affair' from The Sound Gallery CD came over as a roller-coaster ride of crashing power chords, cascading strings, seismic basslines and sheer drama. Even the sumptuous two-track Blue Note recording of Lou Donaldson's 'Everything I Play Its Funky' couldn't trip the CD4SE up. It faithfully recreated the studio's original acoustic and conveyed the way the double-bass steamrollered the groove along fearlessly. The drum kit had an almost Linn LP12-like fluidity, the Cambridge imparting the song's slack rhythms like few others.

It would be churlish to complain about any aspect of this player's performance, but its treble quality couldn't quite match its excellence elsewhere. Here it was a touch muted - punchy Dance numbers saw the CD4SE losing some of the music's impact. Still, don't let this dissuade you - this is one of the most natural sounding players I've heard in a long time, and it's very possibly hi-fi's greatest bargain of the moment.

FEBRUARY 1998
The Caspian System by Roksan

tel: 07000 Roksan
fax: 070001 Roksan
email: info@roksan.co.uk
DENON DCD-635
£179.99

THE TECHNOLOGY
This shiny new incarnation of Denon's DCD-625, a budget favourite here at Hi-Fi World, is to my eyes the smartest looking player in the group. It simply doesn't feel like a sub-£200 player thanks to its weight and fine finish.

The spec is impressive, with an 18-bit Burr-Brown DAC, Denon's own eight-times oversampling Lambda filters with digital noise shaping, a floating suspension system for the transport and upgraded servo control for the laser. There's a Toslink optical digital output as well, along with a sizeable remote that includes a 12-step digital volume control. And last but not least, the centre-mounted display is defeatable; a real sonic boon.

SOUND QUALITY
Van Morrison's 'Have I Told You' was first on, and the Denon set up a deep, expansive sound stage just behind the plane of the 'speakers. Front-to-back stage depth was good but most impressive were the DCD-635's dynamics, which invested Van's crooning and the song's gushing string arrangements with real passion. Timing, arguably the other side of the same coin, was just as good, letting the musicians hold their own rhythms rather than making them sound like they were plugged into sequencers.

Tonally the Denon occupied the middle ground - bass was tight but a fraction light, which gave the music a real sense of urgency while diminishing some of its richness. Likewise the Denon's midband, which was nicely detailed and clean if a tad dry. Small backing keyboard parts shone out of the mix where other, more muddy performers simply buried them. Hi-hats were also particularly crisp and clear, refusing to be outdone by other more prominent instruments in the tune.

Indeed, Neil Richardson's 'Riviera Affair' proved the Denon to be a very musical player. Not only did it capture the song's epic feel but it also did well in areas like detail and sound staging. However, this acoustic recording showed the Denon to have a rather artificial tonality - it made the string section sound just a touch too close to a digitally sampled version of events. Bass suffered a similar plight - although faster and more tuneful than most it sounded more Human League than late Sixties valve bottom-end.

This slightly processed feel meant the Denon was never the warmest or most natural sounding machine. For example, it made the track's rich bass-guitar work and silky cymbals veer a little too far towards sounding thin and wiry. Even the synthesiser-based Propaganda track showed this up - it had codles of life and power but lacked grace and subtlety. Still, the Denon's lean, mean, dynamic disposition injected real zip into this rather loose and muddy recording.

Moving to Lou Donaldson's 'Everything I Play Is Funky', and again the DCD-635 really sang. Drum work was slick and rhythmic, and the counterpoint between Melvin Sparks' Jazz guitar and Charles Earland's Hammond organ satisfyingly tight. Like a Naim amp, the Denon was tonally dry but little the worse for it - only when I switched back to the reference Marantz did I realise I was missing out on sweet hi-hats and fruity bass. So, a dynamic and musical budget player, one which rhythm fans will love.
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FEBRUARY 1998 HI-FI WORLD
YAMAHA CDX-590
£229.95

THE TECHNOLOGY
As befits its status as the most expensive player here, the Yamaha looks a real piece of the hi-fi high-life. An attractively-finished metal front panel, tasteful and relaxing defeatable orange display and quality push-buttons give the impression of a well-built machine. The disc tray is quick, the transport quiet and the sizeable remote gives a host of facilities, including a digital volume control.

Inside, the CDX-590 uses a Sony transport, a Matsushita servo and Yamaha's own 1-bit YACS14 DAC and 'PRO-BIT' digital filter, claimed to work at 20-bit resolution. Yamaha UK have breathed on the internals, modifications including selected capacitors and op-amps. Unusually for a budget Japanese machine, the rear panel offers a choice between optical and co-axial digital outputs.

SOUND QUALITY
Initially, the Van Morrison track had me thinking the Yamaha was the best of the bunch. From the opening bars of the Avalon Sunset album, the CDX-590's svelte, sophisticated tonality, superb detail retrieval and imaging had me wondering if I'd missed a nought off the price tag. Van's voice was as smooth as cream, without a trace of glare or harshness. Cymbals were as sweet and crisp as an autumn dawn, and the bass guitar was extremely realistic. Very nice.

It was only when I moved to the Propaganda track that I began to twig that the Yamaha might not be the class leader. Again the opening bars impressed - Trevor Horn's little synthesiser twiddles chimed through with bell-like clarity while stereo images were very adeptly articulated. But the song's supposed to kick into life at the chorus with epic brass stabs over which dramatic synth power chords crash. Unfortunately this never really happened with the Yamaha, which carried on more or less as it had before - the CDX-590, I found, is not the most up-beat, dynamic player around.

Wondering if this was a freak result, I slipped in 'The Riviera Affair', which is about the most melodramatic three-and-a-half minutes ever committed to disc. The Yamaha sounded refined but lacking in passion, unable to cope fully with this number's swinging dynamics. A shame, because in so many other respects it worked so well. Again, the player's fruity tone, warm bass, superb sound staging and impressive composure were much liked.

Considering that dynamics and timing tie in together closely, I suspected the Yamaha might go awry on rhythmically complex music, but it didn't. Indeed, it was highly adept at rhythms - you could really hear the drummer banging away at the snare just very slightly off the beat - as real drummers do - rather than ticking away metronomically. All the musicians played technically very well together, it's just that through the CDX-590 they sounded like their hearts weren't truly in it.

Bass guitar was a mixed bag on 'The Riviera Affair' - although tonally warm and well rounded, the Yamaha's lackadaisical approach to dynamic accents meant that low frequencies existed more to pad out the rest of the sound stage rather than to drive the song along. Neither was it particularly tuneful - its timing was fine but didn't sing like it should have done. All this leaves the Yamaha a superbly detailed and refined player that can't quite get in touch with its soul.
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Trade and International Enquiries Welcome.
TECHNICS SL-PS570D
£199.95

THE TECHNOLOGY
The latest in a long line of MASH-based budget players, the SL-PS670 is undeniably a Technics. Bigger and better built than you'd expect for the money, with a blue fluorescent display bright enough to replace your car's quartz-halogen headlamps, it's an imposing piece of machinery. The corporate dark grey paint job is there, along with a gold-plated headphone jack with its own volume control, a direct access keypad, various editing features and a digital volume control from the supplied remote.

Inside it gets the benefit of special Take (pronounced tak-ay, not tacky!) and two 10V 100uf Os-Con capacitors, claimed to be particularly vibration resistant, thus resulting in a clear, solid sound. In addition, there are selected op-amps in the analogue stages. The disc mechanism is Technics' own, as is their favoured I-bit 'Multi-stage noise-shaping' DAC - hence the acronym. Round the back are gold-plated RCA phono sockets as well as the standard To slink digital output.

SOUND QUALITY
The Technics was obviously more attuned to punchy Dance-type music than the Van Morrison track I kicked off with. Although it made a stoic attempt - setting up an almost larger than life acoustic with strong left-to-right imaging - it all sounded rather mechanical. Instead of conveying the song's subtle flowing strings and thoughtful piano playing, things seemed to get hurried along as if they were being triggered by a drum machine.

Moving to Propaganda's 'P-Machinery', the Technics was far more at ease, almost in its element even. I was impressed by the SL-PS670D's many plus points, such as its cinematic sound staging, as vast as your local multiplex cinema. Its generous bass - almost steroidally enhanced - was a boon too, while a light, bright treble injected some much-needed zing into this analogue recording. Detail retrieval was also good and the player proved particularly gifted at conveying all those special effects so beloved by producer Trevor Horn. All in all a performance guaranteed to raise a smile in the hi-fi showroom or get that party swinging.

An olde worlde orchestral recording, 'The Riviera Affair' showed a few chinks in the Technics' armour. Bass was characteristically generous but could sound rather tuneless. Treble was also rather perfunctory, the player investing the delicate cymbal work with a tizziness which wasn't quite what was on the recording.

Big and bouncy was the Technics' way with Lou Donaldson's 'Funky' - I'd expected it to struggle with this simple acoustic two-track Blue Note recording, but it actually seemed more at home on simpler fare. Again the high frequencies got a little ragged at times, but the SL-PS670D never failed to inject plenty of gusto and bounce into the proceedings.

Recognising that the average Technics buyer might not be into late Sixties Acid Jazz, I tried some more contemporary source material in the shape of LTJ Bukem's 'Logical Progression' Drum 'n' Bass CD. It suddenly shifted up a gear - less able to show the poor recording quality and more inclined to add some flavour of its own, this player really started to sing.

Partner the Technics with appropriate music and you could learn to love it. Never one to let details get in the way of the big musical picture, the SL-PS670D might be coloured but it's always fun.
THE TECHNOLOGY
Editor Jon Marks was a particular fan of the original DP-3080, and had hedged his bets for the new version to take top honours. In the flesh it’s the same as the other players though - a needlessly big and bulky casing (most of it occupied by air, truth be told), a tidy but rather plasticky fascia, and the usual vast repertoire of facilities.

Inside you get Kenwood’s latest digital electronics, including a 1-bit DAC with D.R.I.V.E signal processing - Dynamic Resolution Intensive Vector Enhancement, which has proved its sonic worth on previous Kenwood stalwarts like the DM-9090 MiniDisc player reviewed last month. Round the back is a standard beer-budget optical digital out, Kenwood system bus connectors and fixed line outs. All in all, hardly an aesthetic or ergonomic tour de force, but that wasn’t why we liked its predecessor - the fun started when it was plugged in.

SOUND QUALITY
The Kenwood proved a revelation with Van Morrison. From the opening piano chords onwards it sounded like real instruments being played by real musicians, rather than a digital facsimile. The sound stage had depth as well as width - you could clearly tell where the recording engineer had positioned each individual instrument and vocal track. Most of the action went on just in front of the plane of the 'speakers, but the Kenwood never sounded 'in your face' - instruments just hung in the air, a trick the reference Marantz conspicuously failed to turn.

Tonaly the DP-3080/11 was an accomplished performer, with superbly controlled and extended bass. Further up the range, the midband proved itself one of the best in the business, with real transparency and low-level detail. For example, with much of the competition the drum patterns on the Propaganda track were subsumed by louder elements of the mix to a greater or lesser degree. But the Kenwood was stunningly good at letting the listener follow them through, regardless of whatever else was going on.

Treble was a winner too. The tiny little drum machine hi-hats at the back of the sound stage sparkled away sweetly through the Kenwood. And as much as I hate to harp on, the DP-3080/11 is also a highly dynamic player. Rather than making everything sound loud, it’s able to follow all those little rhythmic inflections that help communicate the emotion in music. Its superb slam, allied to that deep, powerful bass, meant the Kenwood was tops at everything from the crashing chords of 'P-Machinery' to the manic Hammond work on 'Funky'. Make no mistake, if there’s any life in a piece of music, this player will find it.

The only aspect in which the Kenwood shies from total world domination is its fluidity. When you want to sit down and just relax into music the Kenwood can’t quite hit the mark. To call the DP-3080/11 an artificial sounding player would be to scurrilously misrepresent it - it’s a real music maker that does so much so well you’ll find it nigh on impossible to fault. But at the end of the day there are players which get into the groove better. Still, it’s one hell of a budget CD player.
One of the most natural sounding budget CD players we’ve heard, the Cambridge bettered even the reference Marantz CD-67SE in a number of areas. It has a rich, firm presentation with superb sound staging and dynamics, but most importantly it communicates better emotionally than all the other players here. Indeed, I’ve heard several £1000+ machines that aren’t anywhere near as musically convincing.

Only against the Kenwood does the Cambridge sound anything less than outstanding, the Japanese player showing its treble to be a touch veiled and uninformative. Fast-moving Dance music lovers may find this a problem, but virtually every other musical genre should be fine, the CD4SE’s superbly punchy, fluid bass making up for it in spades.

Better still is that this player will fit hand-in-glove into practically any system - it’ll love high-end ancillaries, make budget systems sing and save cheap and nasty ones from their worst excesses. Well done Cambridge - this is a deeply-impressive design!

The only player capable of mixing it fast, dynamic sound make the Denon DCD-635 a great buy. Although not the warmest or smoothest at the price, it’s one of the most musically engaging. In fact its freshness makes it a better listen than a number of far more refined high-end players - the DCD-635 knows a tune when it hears one.

The downside is its slightly lean and thin tone - not necessarily so bad in itself, but when used with similarly cold sounding budget ancillaries it might be too much to take. This means careful matching with a warm, civilised British amp like an Arcam or NAD and budget ‘speakers like Tannoy’s Mercury m2s or KEF’s Coda 7SEs. This done, it’ll sing.

In an odd way the Yamaha CDX-590 is probably the best player here - certainly one of the most refined and detailed, with a clean, open sound that belies its lowly price tag. The problem is that it’s too laid-back for faster tempos. So svelte and sophisticated is the Yamaha that it made even the more expensive Marantz reference sound rough, but it failed to really relay the music’s emotion.

Still, I can see many people liking the CDX-590’s presentation - fans of light Classical and mellow acoustic music will love it. It’s also one of the most refined front ends you’ll get at the price, making it particularly well suited to cheap and cheerful partnering equipment - civility is never a bad thing for budget hi-fi! A fine player, but not a true all-rounder.

Fifth by a whisker, the Technics SL-PS670D is a good player for the money and shouldn’t be underestimated. A bold and brassy performer, given the right music its big, punchy sound comes to the fore and really carries the music along. On Dance it’s probably the best fun of the lot. It’s only when you play more natural, acoustic music that the SL-PS670D’s rough edges show.

The best idea is to keep the Technics with relatively well-behaved budget equipment, where its lack of subtlety and coloration won’t be a problem. Properly matched it should be able to inject real life and bounce into the proceedings. A nice, versatile player that’s fine value for money, but not quite the equal of the others here.
Tube Technology is making waves with their new FULCRUM CD replay system and the SYRINX Stereo 45/Mono 90-Watt power amplifier.

The FULCRUM Digital to Analogue Converter combines the latest developments in digital design with exotic thermionic tube circuitry, resulting in a perfect balance between digital and analogue. Utilising advanced dual phase locked loops, data jitter is virtually eliminated. Converted into analogue by a 128 times oversampling 24-bit interpolation filter followed by an enhanced technology delta-sigma converter, this architecture ensures a very high insensitivity to clock jitter. Providing 20 Bit resolution, detail retrieval is amazing and the analogue signal interface, which is a super linear dual mono class A double triode thermionic amplifier, allows the digital recording to breathe with astonishing reality.

The SYRINX is a compact slimline all tube power amplifier offering a single variable input. The amplifier is switchable from stereo 45 watts to mono 90 watts offering the enthusiast a versatile upgrade path. The Syrinx can be stacked so additional units can be easily accommodated. Superb multi-section output transformers dominate the internals allowing wide bandwidth and low distortion. With minimal case work this tube amplifier is as affordable a product could be without compromising sound quality, allowing music lovers of all tastes to experience awe inspiring performances.
Does your turntable sound tired and lacklustre? David Price examines some
great record deck restoratives.

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also improve, becoming cleaner and
more detailed with excellent sound
staging, imaging and depth perspective -
something you don’t get with the
standard Rega 3! Even the treble sounds
smoother, sweeter and more finely
etched. An excellent upgrade and
superb value for money too. The only
problem is that on lesser decks like the
Rega, so good is the Megabearing that it
begins to show up faults elsewhere,
such as the Planar’s marginal speed
stability.

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stator to get it running as quietly as
possible. This means less vibration is
transmitted through the belt into the
record, reducing rumble and
background mush and thus improving
sound. It’s a very worthwhile mod, but
its effectiveness will vary from deck to
dec. Fine value nonetheless.

**SPECIFICATIONS**

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Designed for Rega’s turntables only, the
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and the sound is transformed. Bass fills out and becomes more tuneful, the midband is cleaner, more detailed and atmospheric and treble smoother and sweeter. Fantastic value and one of hi-fi’s ‘must haves’.

Many belt-drive turntables (such as LP12s) suffer long-term speed drift, but with the aid of a strobe disc they can be reset. As supplied with their Model 30 turntable, SME’s disc is accurate, easy to use and keenly priced. A useful device to have.

As fitted to the latest SME Series V tone-arm, these van den Hul MCS 150 silver Litz wires sound superb with fantastic depth, clarity and sweetness. They might be the most expensive short interconnects you ever buy but then the best is never cheap!

Even if your tone-arm has a calibrated spring-type tracking force adjuster (i.e. Rega’s RB300 and Linn’s Ittok), it will sound better if this is bypassed, and the tracking weight set by the counterweight alone using a stylus balance. This Ortofon is a fine example of the breed - cheap, easy to use and very accurate.

Another simple but accurate Ortofon gismo, this alignment protractor ensures correct siting of cartridges in headshells which is vital for the best sound and least record wear. It gives near-identical results to Mobile Fidelity’s excellent Geodisc at a fraction of the price. Every analogue addict should have one.
The cheapest clamp worth having, the Michell brings cleaner stereo and a deeper, firmer bass.

Although very expensive, these carbon-fibre cones from Audiophile-International really do the business under a turntable, bringing a faster, tighter sound with loads more detail.

A superb isolation platform that works every time. Available in two sizes, the Base brings a far deeper, smoother sound with really fluid bass.

Another much sought-after piece is Technics' famed electronic stylus pressure gauge, dating from 1977 and supplied as standard with the company’s high-end turntables and tone-arms of the time. Beautifully crafted from aluminium, it uses a super-accurate strain gauge linked to a microchip, and an analogue stylus pressure meter calibrated to the nearest 0.1 gramme.

Not as accurate as some mega-expensive digital pressure gauges costing four times its price, the SH50-PI nevertheless comes very close. Add the fact that it’s far nicer to use than conventional stylus balances, and it’s a delightful thing to have. Pay around £30 second-hand from our classifieds, and make sure the one you’re buying hasn’t been hammered.

The only thing to consider is the fact that Ortofon’s bargain-basement balance tested above gives surprisingly close results - and is readily available for £5!

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It's not only in Pop music and cuisine that Britain and the continent follow their separate 'never the twain shall meet' paths; hi-fi is also affected. There's a whole host of hi-fi that rarely puts in an appearance this side of the channel in spite of thriving on 'o'ther. Just one of these hi-fi names is the Hungarian company Etalon (featured once before in these pages in August 1996 with their Exception ' speakers and Exampli and Integral 1 amplifiers).

Sitting pretty in our listening room this time were the large £1095 PreAmpli line-level pre-amp and back-breaking heavy £2925 Ampli power amp.

Etalon certainly have an audiophile pedigree - their professional arm, Sonophil, has recorded more than 60 CDs for labels such as CBS, Naxos and Harmonia Mundi and makes its own studio microphones. Laszlo Sallay, Etalon's managing director, is a staunch believer in component development by extensive listening, going so far as to publish only the most basic measurements on his range (like channel matching, sensitivity and power output), dismissing other results as having little correlation with what's heard. If the music coming from one of his components doesn't sound like the real thing, then it gets redesigned.

Take a look inside the PreAmpli pre-amp and you'll find a dual-mono power supply, with individual toroidal transformers and rectifier diodes for each channel. Then there are four 2200uF 25V reservoir caps (each bypassed with polyester capacitors) for left and right halves of the circuit boards. The circuit board itself has a slightly 'home-made' look to it - after all, it says 'Carefully Hand Made By Etalon Ltd in Hungary' on the back panel. Balanced as well as RCA output sockets are provided and volume is controlled by the ubiquitous Alps Blue potentiometer.

While the pre-amp is a pretty solid affair the power amp is a real monolith. The casework has a thick aluminium fascia and sides, which the two pairs of output transistors in each channel are bolted to. Making up the bulk of the weight is a large toroidal mains transformer mounted on a metal plate decoupled from the amp's bottom plate by four rubber grommets. This feeds separate bridge rectifiers and a whopping 100000uF of Philips reservoir capacitors per side. This adds up to over 100watts of class AB power into 8ohms, our measurements found, with Etalon claiming the first 10watts are pure class A. As with the PreAmpli, there are three cone feet on the underside of the Ampli to give it a degree of isolation from vibration. Just make sure it's sitting on a hard foundation though, as those cones will happily sink into a wooden floor under...
review

for SUCCESS

and power amps.

before. This grip never left the pair sounding sterile or artificial though - they were unfailingly natural in their presentation.

And that clarity! We found ourselves moving whatever 'speaker was hooked up to the Ampli's bi-wire terminals further and further away from the back wall to enjoy as much sound stage depth as we could lay our ears on. This Hungarian duo shone with choral music, where the church acoustics blossomed wall-to-wall from the 'speaker cabinets and the midrange smoothness and purity were superb.

The Etalons can certainly rock too. Bjork's Homogenic and Skunk Anansie's Stoosh albums funk out with as much hipsway as Elvis' immortal pelvis. Quality Reggae recordings (few enough of those about!) bounced along with dreads a'swinging, Dub tracks in particular packing an almighty bass wallop.

There really aren't too many criticisms to make of this pair. A phono stage would be a welcome addition to the PreAmpli. However, we couldn't help but admire these Hungarians' three-dimensional imaging and sound staging, rich tonal colour and easy, involving character. And the Ampli measures up to its name with 170 watts into 4 ohms. These amps don't come cheap, but then you really do get what you pay for. European monetary union may be quite a way off; we can only hope European hi-fi union comes rather sooner.

WORLD VERDICT

PREAMPLI
Smooth, even and transparent. Well worth the outlay.

AMPLI
Very natural, substantial presentation with lots of power on tap.

Measured Performance

Etalon PreAmpli £1095
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HI-FI WORLD FEBRUARY 1998

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WHF? Dec 1997
Ketan Bharadia listens to Pink Triangle's new £2099 Litaural one-box CD player and comes away smiling.

Pink Triangle are never a firm to toe the line of conformity as even a cursory look at their products past and present will prove. So when they entered the digital fray in the early Nineties with the Da Capo and Ordinal Digital to Analogue Convertors they did so from a fresh point of view (the former used their own 1-bit DACs, not off-the-shelf chips) and came up with a pair of highly-innovative components which were right up there with the very best. It is this heritage that the Litaural integrated player must live up to, and with a price of £2099 it's got to be outstanding to compete with the host of top-class separate DACs and transports out there.

THE TECHNOLOGY
The Litaural uses a standard Sanyo transport but in this application all the transport control circuits are mounted on an independent board and powered by a dedicated transformer. A great deal of attention has been paid to the power supplies of this player; in fact the Litaural has three mains transformers, one for the analogue section, one for the digital and another for the transport and display.

Eleven separate regulators are fitted and bypass capacitors are used on the rectifier diodes (special soft-recovery types which inject less Radio Frequency Interference into the circuitry than standard ones) in order to reduce power supply noise. Pink Triangle continue their reliance on surface-mount components which were right up there with the very best. It is this heritage that the Litaural integrated player must live up to, and with a price of £2099 it's got to be outstanding to compete with the host of top-class separate DACs and transports out there.

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SOUND QUALITY
Taking the Litaural out of its box I must admit I was disappointed. It may weigh a lot and have an impressively solid brushed aluminium front panel but the actual casework feels flimsier than you would expect to find on a machine at less than half the price. The remote control was also a let-down, a tacky plastic affair where rivals like Marantz offer a much more solid and classy looking alternative for their CD17 KI-Signature which is £800 cheaper.

Still on a critical note (at this sort of price level there's nothing wrong in being picky) the front panel controls aren't laid out intuitively: the Power, Play/Pause and Stop buttons are grouped together on the right-hand side of the player. In the early days of ownership, it is extremely easy to switch off the player when you are trying to Pause or Stop it. And the digital display is so small and dimly lit it's hard to read from any further away than a few feet.

After reading all the above you might think this player could do with more development. In terms of construction and ergonomics, it could, but more than counterbalancing this is its outstanding sound quality. The Litaural is one of the best sounding CD players we've ever heard and certainly better than our
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long-term reference Teac P-30/Da Capo combination, the Da Capo being the weak link.

It normally takes quite a while to gauge the abilities of any component but within the first few moments of listening to Stravinsky’s The Song Of The Nightingale I knew the Litaural was something special.

This piece starts with a violent attack of violins almost overwhelming a lone triangle. The Pink managed to keep the triangle separate and easily audible while the violins built up furiously around it, which is no easy feat. To top that, each instrument maintained its own distinctive character full of a rich array of natural harmonics.

This player is extremely dynamic, a trait amply proven by the speed and impact of crescendos. Timpani, when hit hard, were as solid as I’ve heard from CD. A bonus was the way the Litaural’s great weight and control never muffled intricate detail and subtlety. At one point in this piece the timpanum is struck three times. Now I’ve listened to this piece on many occasions through a wide variety of CD players, some quite a bit more expensive than the Litaural, but I’ve never noticed so clearly that the timpanum was hit slightly harder each time.

The Pink was equally accomplished at the other end of the scale. Cymbals and triangles were focused and powerfully rendered - this player has those rare treble commodities of power and slam. The midrange was transparent though not quite as well projected as the frequency extremes, giving it a more distant feel. Whereas sound stage width was very good, depth fell into the ‘use a pair of binoculars to see the instruments at the back of the orchestra’ category.

Changing tack I put on Skunk Anansie’s Stoosh album to see how the Litaural would cope with something more modern. On ‘Brazen’, Skin’s vocals packed as much punch as a boxing glove full of horseshoes. Despite a flat, compressed production the Pink handled this album like it was born to rock, all the song’s elements gelling into a whole. Skin was presented slightly further back in the mix than I’ve heard but this didn’t detract from the music-making one iota.

A problem which has dogged CD since its earliest days is reproducing complex rhythms with conviction. ‘Viola Fora De Moda’, traditional Brazilian folk music by Ana Caram, proved there is no deficiency in this area with the Litaural. The triangles, bells and cymbals intertwined with Dave Finck’s drums to create infectious drive and rhythm. Just as importantly, within this framework instruments stayed well separated and kept their own unique texture and character.

Whatever disc we tried the two different filter settings on, we invariably found the HDCD smoother, subtler and more natural than the bit, which seemed rather bright and aggressive by comparison. The Phase switch can also have quite a large impact on the sound through a revealing system, although you have to experiment as some discs benefit and some don’t. The improvements are predominantly tighter, more three-dimensional imaging and sound staging, and greater rhythm.

One problem is that the filter and Phase buttons are not duplicated on the remote control which makes it that bit more awkward to find the best match for a disc as you have to keep moving from your listening position.

Whatever your musical tastes, the Litaural simply steps aside and lets the tunes speak for themselves. Its casework might leave a lot to be desired but then the sound quality on offer is amongst the best you’ll hear from CD at any price.

Pink Triangle Litaural £2099

Pink Triangle Projects
The Basement,
Camberwell Business Centre,
Lomond Grove,
Camberwell,
London SE5 7HN
Tel: 0171 703 5498

WORLD VERDICT ★★★★
One-box player with performance that can mix it with the very best.

Measured Performance see p111
Bring your CD collection back to life with this stunning integrated CD player from Pink Triangle worth £2099.

Pink Triangle’s Litaural comes in at the high-end of single-box players - most of its competitors are DAC/transport pairings. But the Litaural has little to fear as Ketan Bharadia discovered on p31.

Technically, a lot of painstaking work has gone into the design of this player. The power supply consists of three separate transformers (one for the analogue circuits, one for the digital and the last for the transport and display functions). The reservoir capacitors which tower over the PCB are Philips low-impedance types which further ensure a fast, stable supply.

Extensive use is made of surface-mount components which have the well-known attributes of compact dimensions - thus yielding short signal paths - and reliability.

The heart of the Litaural is a lightly-modified version of the 1-bit DAC chip from Pink Triangle’s respected Da Capo. Where the Da Capo’s filters could be swapped in a different module, all it takes with this latest player is the touch of a button. There is a choice of two filters; Pacific Microsonics’ smooth and atmospheric PMD100 HDCD and NPC’s brighter, more up-beat S813 20-bit design.

The transport allied to all these electronics is a standard Sanyo unit whose control circuits reside on a separate board powered by its own mains supply.

As well as being technically innovative the Litaural excels when it comes to extracting maximum information from the disc, as Ketan found out. He wrote, “It normally takes quite a while to gauge the abilities of any component but within the first few moments of listening to Stravinsky’s ‘The Song Of The Nightingale’ I knew the Litaural was something special. This piece starts with a violent attack of violins almost overwhelming a lone triangle. The Pink managed to keep the triangle separate and audible while the violins built up furiously around it, which is no easy feat”. He continued, “This player is extremely dynamic, a trait amply proven by the speed and impact of crescendos. Timpani, when hit hard, were as solid as I’ve heard from CD.” As the Da Capo was a reference convertor when it first came out, so the Litaural is a reference among one-box machines.

If you would like to win this superb player, all you have to do is answer the following questions and complete the tie breaker. Send in the entry form on the back of a sealed envelope or post card to reach us before February 6th to:

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Don’t forget to include your name, address and telephone number if possible so that we can contact the winner promptly.
COMPETITION ENTRY QUESTIONS

1) How much does the Litaural cost?
A. £1500  B. £2000  C. £2099  D. £3789

2) How many mains transformers does the Litaural have?
A. 1  B. 2  C. 3  D. 0

3) Whose transport do Pink Triangle use?
A. Sony  B. Technics  C. Sanyo  D. Teac

4) Which HD CD filter do Pacific Microsonics make?
A. PMC500  B. PMD100  C. TDA1541  D. CS4329

5) Pink Triangle make a DAC called?
A. Pink Linnk  B. Pip 2  C. The Anniversary  D. The Da Capo

TIE BREAKER (obligatory)

Complete the following in less than 30 words

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To better the Litaural you've got to go some,
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[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.

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Leo Lam relaxes to the sweet sounds of Musical Fidelity's E11 integrated amplifier.

Musical Fidelity have always been full of surprises. Back in the Eighties we had the pure Class A integrated, the A1, which warmed many audiophiles' hearts and houses at an extremely reasonable cost. Then came the high-end F-series, the hard-to-fault A2 integrated and the no-nonsense X-series, all with that amenable MF sound and down-to-earth price tags.

The old E10 integrated amplifier, which the E11 replaces, dated right back to the introduction of the Elektra series and was balanced towards Classical music. Though it was capable of a musical presentation, it wasn't really an all-rounder like many of the excellent sub-£500 amps it was competing with. Musical Fidelity's response is the 60watt E11 integrated.

THE TECHNOLOGY
I was pleased to see the new amplifier has retained its predecessor's glossy fascia and knobs illuminated by LEDs, which have made many fans since the Elektra series was launched.

Upgradability is also the name of the game with the separate pre-amp output for easy bi-amping. Six line-level inputs are provided as standard but there is no option for a phono stage, so vinyl lovers will be disappointed.

Under the lid on the left, a hefty toroidal transformer is bolted to the base plate, leaving the rest of the casework to be filled with the main PCB. Hereupon lurk 20000uF of reservoir capacitance. These are no 'designer label' types as the budget for the E11 has been spent elsewhere. The whole circuit is made up of individual components - there's not a single IC in sight - so those who believe in the supremacy of discrete circuitry over integrated should be pleased.

The pre-amp which handles small signals is separated from the eight high-current bi-polar transistors in the power amp to reduce intermodulation distortion. Star earthing has also been used to minimise high-frequency amplitude and phase distortion. The output stage itself operates in Class AB which is more efficient than Musical Fidelity's favourite pure Class A, even if it doesn't generally offer the same ultra-smooth sound.
- BACK TO THE FUTURE -

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RECORD OF THE MONTH

SOUND QUALITY

The amplifier was wired up to a pair of KEF Q30 floor standers and the signal supplied by a modified Arcam Alpha I through MF’s own X10-D buffer via Kimber cabling. A pair of Seas Mighty Mini stand mounters from Wilmislow Audio were hooked up too. By way of comparison, an Aura VA80 and a Marantz PM-66 KI-Signature were employed alongside the EII.

I sampled Daniel Chorzempa’s Organ Extravaganza CD because, from past experience, I knew the E10 could handle it so adeptly I couldn’t drag myself away from the music until the end of the last note. The E11 turned out to be a close tonal relation to the E10 but it drew much more detail off the disc, though it’s still a step away from the A2 at around double the price.

Another area where this amplifier improves on its older stalbemate is composure. With grand pieces like Die Walkure by Wagner which would have the E10 running out of steam, the E11 remained calm and controlled, taking the scale and drama of such recordings in its stride. The image of the organ was as stable as you could wish, although the sound stage it was set in could have been wider.

High marks for the pyrotechnics, what about delicacy I wondered, choosing cellist Mischa Maisky’s soothing Meditation album of relaxed pieces for solo cello and piano. Maisky’s playing has always been captivating and the music came through with all its emotional intensity. The sound of the cello was smooth and rich but not muffled in any way as can happen with some amps which take this approach too far. In spite of a hint of metallic sheen in the upper registers, the E11 still pulled ahead of the Marantz PM-66 KI-S. The Aura VA80 dug out more detail but couldn’t match the seamless cohesion of the Musical Fidelity’s overall performance.

I had been disappointed by the E10’s performance on Rock and Pop music - my air guitar didn’t make it out of its air case - so I decided to drop the E11 in at the deep end with the noisy Be Here Now by Oasis. Basslines were firm and precise and the timing has improved but some Rock fans might find the way rough edges are rounded off dilutes their musical adrenaline fix. That said, the sound stage never collapsed nor did the music become hard and gritty with the volume set to ’let the neighbours join in’ levels, a tribute to the generous power supply and low-distortion design highlighted by our measurements.

Relaxed Pop like Evolution from those latter-day crooners Boyz II Men was more the E11’s cup of tea, as pure vocals and an enticing melodic flow demonstrated.

Swapping the KEFs for the Mighty Minis posed the E11 no problems as it continued its run of easy, natural midrange and treble above weighty bass. Its warmth helped tame the bright treble of the Seas tweeters which can make for slightly tiring listening at higher levels. The E11 joins the ranks of MF’s other budget successes. It’s a mellow performer perfect for unwinding to at the end of a long day rather than thrashing along to courtesy of a cherished Heavy Metal album. Working into a pair of worthy ‘speakers like KEF’s Q15 or Q35, Mission’s 750LE or B&W’s 601 the E11 will do many an audiophile proud.

Musical Fidelity E11 £299.99
Musical Fidelity
15-17 Olympic Trading Estate,
Fulton Road,
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WORLD VERDICT

A very capable integrated with a smoothness and warmth predisposed to Classical rather more than Rock.

Measured Performance see P111
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This month Ketan Bharadia looks at three up-market interconnects from SonicLink, Purist Audio Design and van den Hul.

SONICLINK VERNILION £195/1m.
This bright red cable has an unusual 'tacky' texture which makes it feel distinctly odd to handle and its stiffness means you might have to bend it to shape. Listening started with Stravinsky’s The Sacrifice, a highly demanding piece because of its need for equipment to handle wild dynamics one second and then render a solo instrument with subtlety and delicacy the next.

The Vermilion did well here thanks to its speed and slam which make music exciting and up-front. Detail retrieval was also a strong point.

However, the Vermilion is up against some very tough competition here which readily showed up its shortcomings. There was an obvious brightness to this cable which helped emphasise detail and transient leading edges but gave a hard, aggressive quality to music as well. And low-frequency performance, although weighty and powerful, lacked definition, sounding blurred and fat at times. George Michael's 'Older' confirmed these traits.

The Vermilion will suit those who like a fast, up-front sound for Rock but it lacks the tonal balance and natural presentation necessary for Classical music.

PURIST AUDIO DESIGN ELEMENTA £145/1m.
The Elementa bears a strikingly close resemblance to a hosepipe in more ways than one. It contains liquid in its outer jacket to damp out vibration and give a cleaner sound.

Dave Brubeck and his Quartet started the proceedings with 'Take Five' and the Elementa impressed immediately. The band were set up in a open, precisely-defined sound stage, and while lots of detail was apparent, it wasn’t thrust out but presented as part of the music. Dynamics weren’t quite up to Vermilion standard and neither was slam but the Elementa came fairly close and was more evenly balanced.

With Stravinsky the Elementa scored again - higher frequencies retained a fluid smoothness and timpani were reproduced with real weight and power. There was plenty of space around instruments and even densely-orchestrated pieces didn’t get confused.

The way this cable affected the sound was benign, a touch of warmth and a slight lack of attack. The Elementa is a fine cable and good value.

VAN DEN HUL THE SECOND £199.99/0.8m.
George Michael did the honours first and the Second responded by giving an excellent account of itself. Rhythmically it was on a par with the Vermilion, heavy basslines reproduced with speed, definition and weight - a rare combination that wasn’t at the expense of any other part of the frequency spectrum. The vdH sounded exceptionally smooth but, unusually, there wasn’t a trace of added warmth or sweetness.

Another characteristic of this cable is its extremely quiet, inky black background from which the sound develops. This helps with low-level detail retrieval as well as dynamics.

With Stravinsky I was treated to a performance on a grand scale. Where the vdH succeeds is in the way it manages to combine the best of the other two cables on test without introducing any of its own weaknesses. There were the dynamics and get up and go of the Vermilion without the lapses into aggression along with the fluid, expressive approach of the Elementa. It looks like The Second comes first.
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**CAT A TONIC**

As a primarily vinyl-based jazz fan and hi-fi victim, I read Dominic Todd's column (November '97) on listener position with great interest. I fully concur with his opinion on moving the sofa away from the back wall to tighten up the stereo image.

Unfortunately, the back of the sofa is where the cat sleeps, and this repositioning has resulted in him rolling off and falling down into the gap between the sofa and the wall.

Please help!

Rod Bushell
West Wratting, Cambs.

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**LETTER OF THE MONTH**

**EXOTIC POSITIONS**

I'm having trouble with sound staging and imaging in my current hi-fi set up and would be very grateful for your advice. My room dimensions are 15ft. wide by 16ft. long, with Royd Prior 'speakers firing down the length, slightly toed in, 7ft. between the two.

These are driven by Naim NAC 72/NAP 180 amplifiers with Hi-cap, a Meridian 506 CD player supplying the source.

I have found with this current set-up that the closer I sit to the 'speakers, the more intense the sound staging effects become. In fact, sitting two to three feet away from the Priors appears to be the optimum position. Also, the greater the volume at this distance, the more mind-blowing the experience. You can almost visualise the position of the instruments with pinpoint precision.

I know that the normal seating position from the 'speakers is approximately 6ft., which is where I am at the moment, but the difference between this position and right up close is phenomenal. Can this be right, or are my ears playing tricks with me? Because they are large floor standing 'speakers, it doesn't seem right to be sitting so close that I can almost touch them. Do you have any suggestions - could this be due to the fact that I spend more time listening to the system than the music? I look forward to your comments.

Ivan White
Milton Keynes.

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B&W's Listening Room Optimiser sits between transport and DAC and can create a digital filter to correct room response anomalies. Two benefits are better imaging and sound staging.

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**FEBRUARY 1998 HI-FI WORLD**
Moving both loudspeakers and listening position away from walls can improve imaging. snores, in which case the signal to noise ratio will suffer. 

If you're not much of a dab hand when it comes to sewing, you can fall back on the audiophile's best friend and Blu-Tack your cat to the sofa. JM

**AXIS PRACTICE**

My current system is a Linn Axis/Basik Plus/K9, Arcam Alpha 5+ CD player, Naim 92 and SMUU FYLUS FORCE GAUGE

No vinyl-lover's system is complete without one of Shure's excellent SFG-2 stylus pressure gauges.

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

artificial after you've listened to it for a while. Another problem is that your room is almost square and will suffer more than a rectangular room from lumpy bass due to room modes and the standing waves they cause.

We're using B&W's prototype Digital Listening Room Optimiser here at Hi-Fi World towers at the moment. In its Room Equalisation mode, the LRO, which sits between transport and DAC, sends out a test signal through the hi-fi system and analyses the results that come back through its measuring microphone. It then calculates a digital filter that will give the flattest obtainable response at the position of the microphone (the listening position). What this means is that the LRO can effectively remove room modes and loudspeaker response variations so the system sounds much more even - bass and lower midrange boom just disappear. Two of the beneficiaries are sound staging and imaging. With the LRO in our system (set up in our specially-treated room) both improved substantially. Although B&W have no plans as yet to produce the LRO on a commercial basis, devices like it look likely to play an increasingly important role in digital-based hi-fi systems in the future.

With your 'speakers arranged in a standard pattern, you could well be suffering from blurred bass which is having a knock-on effect on sound staging and imaging. Copious reflections off the rear wall won't help either. By pulling the 'speakers away from the rear wall you'll lose some bass extension but the sound will become more spacious and focused. You could also try toeing in the 'speakers in harder. You'll be listening to them at the same angle off-axis, just from outside of the cabinets' vertical axes, not the inside. This will also reduce reflections off side walls and further sharpen imaging.

If you find a toe-in doesn't help, then another area worth looking at is damping down high-frequency reflections further by hanging rugs on the walls of your room if you haven't already done so. Sound is reflected in the same way as light is in a mirror. You can actually find the best place for a rug by getting a friend to hold a mirror on the wall and move it until you can see the 'speakers. In our 14ft. by 16ft. listening room, we tend to position our Jamo Concert 8 loudspeakers 4ft. from the rear wall and 3ft. in from side walls. This gives dry bass from these stand mounters but the imaging and sound staging are fantastic. JM

I would like to upgrade with a budget of around £1000 and I'm after detail and punch. What would give best value for money; a DAC (or new player), a Hi-Cap or a pre-amp?

I think the vinyl replay could be better. Would a Goldring 1042 in the deck/arm be wasted? Can I obtain back copies of supplements? Lastly, although there is a lot spoken about the Sony WM-D6 Professional Walkman, how does the WM-D3 Professional fit into the scheme of things?

Eric Newman
London.

I know we rabbit on about the 1042, but it really is frighteningly good. I've heard one on the end of a seven grand system and it sounded gorgeous. So yes, chuck the K9 and get a Goldring. Also, try looking for a £150 second-hand Ittok or good Akito to go into your Axis - it's a quick and easy

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Elsewhere, I think the most effective upgrade would be a new CD player — personally I’d go straight for the Cyrus dAD3Q, with the Roksan Caspian as the best alternative. Either would be a big step up from the Arcam. Then, it’s Hi-Cap time, or you could look around for an old 32.5 pre-amp — not a visual match, I know, but a superb performer nonetheless. The WM-D3 is a good mid-price walkie, but not in the Nakamichi-slaying league of its bigger WM-D6 brother. Phone our office for back issues. DP

mods, Manticore MB6 power supply, Manticore Magician arm and one of Len Gregory’s latest MM cartridges, a Leak Troughline II with Hi-Fi World decoder and roof-mount aerial, and a Teac P-700 transport and custom-made 20-bit DAC.

My pre-amp, which works very well, is a scratch-built version of your valve phono/line pre-amp while the power amp is an old Naim 160 connected to a new pair of Jamo Concert 11 floor standers.

I am looking to upgrade the amplifier to get the kind of three-dimensional imaging which I know these ‘speakers detailed, smooth and spacious sounding. The Concert 11s should also work with the 300B kit - Douglas Floyd-Douglass had no problems driving them with around 20 watts from a valve amp in his December review of the Jamos. KB

The Concert 11 floor standers from Jamo are capable of superb sound staging given the right amp and source.

A QUESTION OF PERSPECTIVE

My current system comprises a Linn LP12 with all the latest are capable of. I had considered the likes of Krell’s KAV 300i, up-market Meridian amps or your own 300B design. I would value your advice.

Anthony Parkin
Ward End,
Birmingham.

Having had a pair of Jamo Concert 11s in for review recently we know just how good these floor standers are, especially when it comes to sound staging and imaging.

Top of the replacements list for your old 160 would be the gorgeous Michell Argo pre-amplifier/Alecto monoblocs which, in terms of sound staging, are some of the best we’ve ever heard. They combine the smoothness and detail of the best valve designs with plenty of power and dynamics. In addition to these, XTC’s Pre-1/Pow-1 pairing is well worth a listen as they too are

A set of The Chord Company’s Cobra 2 interconnects should work well between your DAC and pre-amp.

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A set of The Chord Company’s Cobra 2 interconnects should work well between your DAC and pre-amp.
PICK 'N' MIX
After several years of mixing and matching, I have ended up with a system that gives me a clean, accurate and somewhat 'ear friendly' sound. Sources are the Project 1.2 turntable with Ortofon cartridge and a Marantz CD-80 CD player with a DAC-In-The-Box convertor. The tuner is an Audiolab 8000T and edit@hi-fiworld.co.uk

Arthur Katakalos
arthurk@wr.com.au

I have to say you have a rather strangely-balanced system with an ageing CD player and one of the cheapest truly hi-fi turntables you can buy allied to an expensive tuner, amplification, cabling and 'speakers. Some money spent on a new digital source would be a very good idea - the Marantz is indeed long past its sell-by date. If you can afford to head towards the upper end of your budget, you should have a listen to CD players like Roksan's £900 Caspian and, seeing as you already like Audiolab's components, the £1000 8000CD one-box player. Alternatives are Marantz's standard £1000 CD-17 or, if your bank manager looks on you kindly, their £1300 CD-17 K1-S which is one of the sweetest, most natural sounding players around, especially with Classical music. JM

WAFFLE-FREE DIET
I am currently using a Pink Triangle Export turntable, SME Series V Gold tone-arm, Ortofon MC 2000 MkII cartridge, Michell Iso/i Hera PSU phono stage, AVI S2000MP pre-amp, Chord 1000B power amp and Kef 103/4 loudspeakers. All interconnects are SonicLink Violet and the loudspeaker cables are solid-core SonicLink Blue (bi-wire). The system tends to waffle in the low bass and the treble isn't very clear or precise. Substitution into the system of cheap QED multi-strand cable improves the treble and bass but at the expense of the midband and naturalness. I'd be very grateful for any advice that you are able to give me, particularly with regard to possible choices of 'speaker cable.

Nick Francis
nmfrancis@dera.gov.uk

If something as cheap and cheerful as QED multi-strand (around 80p/m) is outperforming 'speaker cable that costs £25/m, I think you're right to point the finger in that direction. I have to say I have my suspicions about the interconnects as well, from past experience and this month's review of the SonicLink Vermilion on p41. I'd recommend you audition Pentacone's loudspeaker cable at £177 for a 4m bi-wire pair (tel: 01924 445039) or DNM's Reson at £6.95/m. Both will be an improvement on your present cable. JM

One solution to your problems would be a set of loudspeaker cables from Pentacone.
CHARITY CASE

My turntable is a Systemdek IIIX900 with RB300 arm and Goldring 1042 cartridge. The main reason for having this is to play the new records I had before CD was introduced, as well as second-hand vinyl purchased cheaply – I’ve bought LPs from charity shops, car boot sales and record fairs for as little as 50p. There are also records which are still unavailable on CD, making a turntable an excellent investment. This has led to a more adventurous attitude to buying music (particularly with jazz) which I couldn’t afford if I only had a CD player.

Unfortunately not all the records are in mint condition. The biggest problem, even after cleaning with isopropyl alcohol, is when an album looks clean but the stylus digs out lots of dirt from the groove which seems to bind together. I suspect this may be due to cleaning with washing up liquid solution which used to be recommended in some circles a few years ago. This is difficult to remove from the stylus. Does it cause any damage?

The rest of my system is a Marantz CD-63SE via Kelvin Silver interconnects into a Sugden A2.1a driving Heybrook Quartets with Chord Flatline twin. The sound of both sources is close in terms of quality but I would like to raise their bass extension, and was thinking of trying an acrylic platter or a Ringmat. I would also like to upgrade the Marantz by adding a DAC. I have a budget of £500 and have no objections to buying used equipment.

Paul Ross
Saltburn,
JMlab
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LFD's Spirolink interconnects possess an addictive mix of sweetness, detail and bass wallop.

sound harsh is, I'm afraid, your QED Digit, which isn't exactly famous for its rich tonality, unlike Ishiwata san's CD-63. Improve your source and you'll find the KLS1s really come into their own and should easily surpass Epos's excellent but much cheaper ES12s.

I've found LFD's excellent Spirolink 3 cable works superbly with the KI-S, doing wonders for bass power and clarity — a good interim tweak. DP

CRYSTAL BALL GAZING

I enjoyed your November feature Choosing A Recorder, having just chosen and bought one myself. My conclusion was more straightforward. Clearly, CD wiped the floor with vinyl pretty fast but there is no equivalent digital technology for home recording. The Japanese love MiniDisc, but they loved 8-track, Elcaset, DAT, DCC (well some did) and CD-R. Pity the Japanese music enthusiast trying to keep his life-time music collection on so many media.

In the meantime, Compact Cassette has come a long way thanks to Dolby S, metal tape formulations and general technical development. Contemporary machines are nothing like the hiss-boxes we had in the Eighties. Sadly, the cassette's reputation has been harmed by cheap machines, just like the good old LP.

Obviously, when we do get cheap recordable digital home media, it will be great - but it isn't going to happen within the next few years.

My conclusion is to buy an expensive cassette deck (like my wonderful Sony 6ES) and enjoy near-perfect Dolby S on metal tapes, knowing that you will be able to replay them almost anywhere for the next few decades.

Michael Robey
E-mail address withheld by request

Well, if you've had a look at last month's review of Philips' CDR 870 CD-R and CD-RW recorder I think you'll agree the lie of the land has changed quite radically. There is now a digital home recording medium that can be replayed on any standard CD player - as you say, it's CD-R. And now that machine and disc prices are falling (£500 in the case of the '870 and about £3-£4 for a blank CD-R) it's coming within the reach of those who can't afford high-end gear (which is pretty much all of us!)

The Analogue to Digital Convertors in the CDR 870 are very capable, allowing it to outperform cassette without difficulty.

True, you should be able to play your cassettes almost anywhere for quite a while to come, but then the same goes for CD/CD-R as well, as there are literally hundreds of millions of CD players already out there.

Audio DVD, whether replay-only or recordable, is looking like a rather distant possibility at the moment. There are still wranglings over standards for video DVDs, and audio DVDs haven't even really entered the picture yet. There are a few around - Pioneer, for example, have pressed some up - but the day when you can walk into your local record shop and pick up a copy of your favourite artist's latest album on DVD looks to be at least three or four years away.

While DVD is still trying to sort itself out, inexpensive CD-R/CD-RW machines like the CDR 870 from Philips look set to take over, especially as prices will fall steeply when the transports start appearing in Midi and Mini systems.

Given the fact that the overwhelming bulk of music buyers are perfectly happy with CD's sound quality, they're pretty unlikely to want to switch to a technology like DVD unless your average DVD audio disc has two layers, one of which is a standard CD replayable on a normal CD player, and the disc itself costs no more than a CD. As both pre-recorded and blank cassette sales plummet, CD-R and CD-RW look to have a bright future ahead of them. JM

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Jon Marks listens to B&W's latest £1000 floor standers, the imposing CDM7s

You could be forgiven for thinking that B&W have been catching up on old Dr Who episodes of late - there is a Dalek-esque look to the CDM7 thanks to its pod-mounted tweeter. But there's a perfectly reasonable explanation for this arrangement that has everything to do with sound quality and nothing to do with taking over the universe.

Putting the aluminium-dome tweeter in a bulbous pod and rounding off the enclosure's edges here, as in the stand mounting CDM1s, reduces the amount of diffraction which causes blurred imaging.

Filling in the midrange and bass is a pair of reflex-loaded 165mm drivers, one with a cone of B&W's favourite material, Kevlar, and one of Cobex. These are bolted into a hefty 18mm MDF cabinet of 950mm height, 290mm depth and 220mm width.

Our measurements showed the B&Ws have a rather enthusiastic bass which peaks up by 6dB at its maximum. Given this and their downward extension I pulled them well away from the rear wall in our listening room. I also ended up with approximately 20 degrees of toe-in to mitigate a little of the tweeter's brightness. Driving the voice coils were Etalon's PreAmp and Ampl combo and Audio Analogue's £600 Puccini SE. Sources were Pink Triangle's Litaural and Roksan's Caspian CD players, with cables by van den Hul.

I expected crisp and suitably metallic percussion from B&W's metal-dome tweeter and I wasn't disappointed. Cymbals crashed powerfully on John Lee Hooker's Boom album, the slightly cold character of the tweeter counterbalanced by the sweetness and transparency of the Kevlar mid/bass driver.

The heavy basslines of this album certainly weren't sounding skimpy or undernourished through the CDM7s. Actually, as our measurements had pointed out, they were a little too well fed. Bass guitar and cello on Classical pieces, for instance, could sound rather tubby and sluggish in spite of bi-wiring, which is mandatory if you want to get the best from these 'speakers.

Grace Jones' Slave To The Rhythm shows up Trevor Horn's penchant for productions with a huge sense of scale, and here the CDM7s got the thumbs up for not sounding constricted or boxy, the samples that plaster this album whizzing around the broad sound stage with abandon.

Working with material set against a more natural backdrop the B&Ws warmed to Voces Sacrae and their rendition of Robert White's sacred music for choir. There was a generous acoustic, albeit one that lacked the last inch of front-to-back depth, and a tonal sweetness across the midrange thanks to that Kevlar cone. Vocal expression was highlighted in this smooth recording by sibilants given a touch of emphasis by the tweeter. The only time this caused a problem was when volume was raised and voices could harden up.

The CDM7s are a mixed bag of a loudspeaker. To their credit they have swift dynamics, good detailing, weighty bass and a wide sound stage. On the debit side the treble is bright and can become hard, and the Cobex cone sounds slower and muddier than the Kevlar. But match these B&Ws with an amp and source that possess fine bass control and good tonal colour and they can still impress.

B&W CDM7 £999.95

B&W Marlborough Road, Lancing, West Sussex BN15 8TR Tel: 01903 750750

WORLD VERDICT

With warm ancillaries the CDM7s produce a weighty, open sound. Bass could be faster though.

Measured Performance see p111
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I'm dreaming of Colossus, a computer with valves in it. This has surely got to produce better sounding CD-Rs and CD-RWs than today's solid-state computers, even if there might be a few 'difficulties' with thermionic technology. In the meantime, seeing audio on the home computer becoming ever more prominent and learning that it is one of the most popular domestic applications, I have been busy trying to brush up on what is happening on that side of the fence.

Computers and audio are merging, something of a two-edged sword for most consumers I suspect. The computer press are struggling with audio concepts and terminologies, but the audio press equally isn't going to have an easy time with computers. And whilst I'm not exactly computer illiterate, neither am I a computer expert. What the consumer will be faced with I hate to think, because audio on computers is just a trifle complicated.

So I have been building a computer to sort out, in advance, the kind of problems Hi-Fi World readers are likely to encounter when they try to burn a CD. And believe me, there are problems!

My first computer has no valves inside its case. Unlike Colossus - arguably the world's first computer - which had 2,500 of them (see http://www.cranfield.ac.uk/ccc/bpark/colossus.htm) and consumed 4.5kWs of power, Colossus is being re-built, but not by me - no way. I'm keeping it simple, following in the path of others in the audio business who have already done likewise.

Not unsurprisingly, the audio business harbours plenty of computer buffs, many of whom have built at least one PC. "Oh, you should try it Noel," was their common refrain. "Apart from setting the DIP switches, configuring the ultra-wide scuzzy-3 host card adapter to set the disc address to zero on the bus so the machine can boot, then downloading the BIOS, it's a doddle!"

I'm not so naive as to think that computers could ever be "a doddle". Somewhere back in the late Seventies I decided to get into the upcoming computer revolution (how come we still think it's revolutionary after 20 years?) and bought an ACT Sirius. "Just stick that in," the salesman said, handing me a 5in. floppy, "and type this", as he gave me a scrap of paper with the words 'C:/DIR' scrawled on it. "Then you'll be away."

That computer was meant to be a doddle too. I had never seen MS/DOS before and after a few frustrating days never wanted to see it again. In the end, of course, you get used to the 'command line' and off you go.

Publishing demands the use of Apple Macs for running all the commonly-used desktop publishing programmes we rely on to put this magazine together readers. Because 85% of the market prefers the less expensive and more flexible PC, so loudspeaker design software, most CAD/CAM (Computer-Aided Design and Manufacture), Spice electronic design and circuit simulation programmes and, now, CD track writers come predominantly in PC code, not Mac code.

The death of the Mac clones (Macs built by manufacturers licensed by Apple) spelled the end of the Mac to me. I was geared up for CHRP on the Mac, a system which would supposedly read PC code. It came as no surprise to me when Motorola's own first G3 effort vapourised traditional Macs, even if it seemed to surprise the Mac magazines. So Apple pulled the plug. This was the sort of competition from a clone manufacturer they didn't need.

But it's the sort of computer I did need, and possibly many other people too. So in true DIY style I thought, "Well, if I can't buy it, I'll build it". So I have, an enormous thing that is just showing the first tentative signs of life. I didn't design this computer of course. Computers these days are pretty well standardised: I simply bought all the necessary bits, including a Pentium Pro 233MHz MMX chip, Gigabyte motherboard, SCSI-3 Ultra Wide 4MB hard drive and a monster case with loads of bays ready for grilling hapless CD-R and CD-RW drives.

OK, I'm sure Motorola would laugh, but it's pretty nifty and it will have plenty of work to do very soon. We will be taking a close interest in audio applications on the computer now that CD-R and CD-RW have emerged, as well as some complex issues in interfacing domestic hi-fi with the computer so that LPs, for example, can be loaded onto CD. There's also the question of what kind of soundcard to use for transferring digital data from a music CD player onto PC. I'm sure a few valves and the wonders of the LP will help soften the cold face of any computer. Colossus may only be a dream but better sounding CD-Rs are a reality
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Ketan Bharadia and Jon Marks find a firm foundation with six stylish equipment platforms at £100-£500.

As any dedicated DIYer knows, capacitors and resistors have their own intrinsic sonic characters which can be put to good use tuning the amp or CD player they’re soldered into. But electronic components are only half the story. Vibration has a big influence on how your hi-fi sounds, and it’s definitely a case of the less shake, rattle and roll the better.

All of the platforms tested here were set up on top of our standard rack with MDF shelves and on a metal coffee table and tested with two CD players (Roksan Caspian, Marantz CD-48) and a pre-amp (Etalon PreAmpli) to ensure consistent results.

**RATA TORLYTE PLATFORM £99**

The RATA Platform might look like a simple slab of wood but as soon as you pick it up you realise appearances can be deceptive - the 445mm by 350mm by 35mm Platform is almost as light as a feather. The name comes from its construction, TORsion box, and its weight, LYTE. The outer surfaces form a thin skin over an internal wooden grid whose members are glued together. This gives low mass and good rigidity.

With the Platform in place treble sweetened and lost its rough edges, which made violins easier on the ear. High-frequency detail came out of hiding, as did vocals which were more solid and life-like.

If your system’s bass has a one-note, plodding feel to it, the Platform can help here too. Double-bass and electric guitar were tauter, more tuneful and weightier than our standard rack alone, although they could have gone deeper still.

For £99 the Torlyte Platform is a good buy. It is bettered by the Perfect Sound Absorber and the Elemental Audio in terms of openness and solidity, but then it costs less than either.

**ELEMENTAL AUDIO MONOPLINTH £499**

Inside the Monoplinth’s hollow steel frame (595mm by 460mm by 180mm) is a mix of small-diameter lead shot and extremely fine casting sand. This is high-frequency agitated, so there are no spaces left inside the frame. The 20mm thick rubber-damped marble-agglomerate shelf is located on four spikes through four small lead decoupling discs. More spikes in the hemispherical aluminium tube ends lift the Monoplinth off the floor.

All the time and effort that have gone into the construction pay aural dividends - there is a completely unflappable solidity to the sound. What surprised us though was the bass speed. Massy stands often slow bass down and give it a leaden quality; not so this one. Treble was grainless and powerful in its impact without any brightness, and the midrange had an addictive purity to it.

The Perfect Sound Absorber may come close in sound stage depth but the Monoplinth outstripped all the other platforms here in every respect, as you’d expect given its cost. £499 for the sonic and build quality doesn’t look expensive though.

**NO NAME ACOUSTICS ISOLATION PLATFORM £225**

The No Name is one of the simpler platforms here as far as innards go. The outer frame (508mm by 400mm by 50mm) is made from mild steel welded into a rectangle. Four diagonal braces, one in each corner, are filled with SoundBytes (to absorb vibration) and carry the adjustable spikes which sit in brass cups to protect soft surfaces. Four ball bearings mounted on threads allow the glass top-plate to be levelled.

This platform is the fiddliest to set up out of the six, thanks to the fact that you have to remove the glass plate to reach the spikes. The No Name managed all the customary improvements, with more...
The alphabet according to Musical Fidelity.

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precise focus across the frequency range and extra detail and expression. These were especially telling on tracks with a slower tempo which could sound slow and non-committal, as if the musicians couldn't really be bothered, with the normal MDF shelf in use. The No Name speeded bass up and boosted rhythm and drive.

Sound stage breadth and depth didn't benefit quite as much as we had hoped for £225, with slightly recessed vocals giving the game away. Higher up the midrange, cymbals and violins could also have done with a sweetness transfusion from the RATA Torlyte.

The No Name is far better than non-hi-fi supports but it looks rather expensive next to the RATA and the Perfect Sound Absorber.

At first sight the Absorber Platform seems like a thick piece of multi-ply wood. Measuring 440mm by 400mm by 36mm it's rather more complicated than it looks. Inside the platform there are 428 individual chambers each of which is 90% filled with small steel balls. The remaining space in the chamber is taken up by fine silica sand.

When sound or other vibrations cause the platform to vibrate, the metal balls and the silica sand rub together and turn kinetic energy into thermal energy so curbing the vibrations. The 6.5kg weight of the platform is also claimed to help sound quality, particularly in the lower to medium frequency ranges.

There are so many of these theories around that it's easy to become rather cynical but in the Absorber Platform they really work. The platform gave music a beguiling openness and increased the size of the sound stage, especially with regard to depth and the front-to-back layering of images. The separation of individual instruments dramatically improved, as did dynamics, bass weight and definition, all of which made it much easier to make out the various melodic threads in the music.

This platform represents excellent value for money and in areas like sound stages it was as accomplished as the massive Monoplinth.

The AirSus platform is a neat piece of design and, along with the Elemental, is one of the more classy looking platforms on test here. The top is isolated from the base and thus the outside world by 10 air-filled bladders arranged in a honeycomb configuration. The AirSus is quite compact at 335mm by 434mm by 70mm and so will fit comfortably on most tables or racks. The top and base are made of MDF which can be clothed in Mahogany, Oak or Black Ash finishes as standard; others are available on request.

On test the AirSus's effect proved variable. At its best on low tables (it doesn't like sitting atop tall racks) it gives the sound more solidity, focus, and greater front-to-back depth. Where the AirSus lags is in terms of rhythm.

Its additional bass weight comes at the expense of pace and drive, lending a slightly lacklustre feeling to up-tempo numbers. The level of extra detail unearthed didn't quite match up to the front runners either.

Although it's a smart looking platform the AirSus is up against stiff competition from cheaper rivals.

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It's a cliché that your best system is your first - upgrading from dire minis or midis to a well-matched budget system can be awe-inspiring. But where next? After all, from here on in your 'sound per pound' ratio can only go down.

When I was at the bottom of hi-fi's evolutionary scale, it always struck me as odd that expensive amps never had tone controls. How, I wondered, were you supposed to get bass and treble without them? For me, leaving the cloistered world of loudness enhancement was such a wrench that I hung on to my NAD for years after I'd supposedly upgraded. Like water wings on kids or stabilisers on bikes, my trusty 3020 was always there with its tone controls and pre-out sockets if my bass was down in the doldrums.

But looking back now I just can't fathom it. Tone controls are nasty, brutish things that foul your sound stage and wreck your acoustic, so why did I cling to them for so long? I guess I've changed the way I listen to music. No longer acoustic, so why speak to you too. Stereo should do more than just come from both 'speakers' - it needs definition and focus - while dynamics should always go as quiet as they go loud. This explains why the louder we listen to our hi-fi, the less happy with it we become. After the initial caffeine-rush of our first system, we crave another. The more you spend, the less happy with it we become. After the initial caffeine-rush of our first system, we crave another.

So, as we climb the hi-fi ladder, we increasingly swap quantity for quality. It's no longer enough that those basslines Rok Da House, they must sing to you too. Stereo should do more than just come from both 'speakers' - it needs definition and focus - while dynamics should always go as quiet as they go loud. This explains why the louder we listen to our hi-fi, the less happy with it we become. After the initial caffeine-rush of our first system, we crave another. The more you spend, the less happy with it we become. After the initial caffeine-rush of our first system, we crave another.

The trick is to transcend the 'mix and match' mindset that is far too pervasive in hi-fi. Success means getting each component's inherent characteristics to work with, rather than against, the others'. Failure is lavishing huge sums of money on the wrong end of the system chain, to the detriment of the sound. And you should also know your own mind. Do you crave the back-breaking seisms of Krell bass, or the lifting midband and treble of single-ended triodes - because it's damn near impossible to get both. The more you spend, the more you get transparency, subtlety and finesse, but you may also lose the grin-inducing bang and crash of your cheap and cheerful budget system.

For me, there isn't so much as a balance control or a loudness button to be found in my system. It now stands tall and proud with some clever, nay inspired, system matching. True hi-fi heaven, all comes down to knowing your own, your system's and your bank manager's limitations and getting round them all with some clever, nay inspired, system matching. For true hi-fi heaven, otherwise known as quiet as they go loud. Dynamics should always go up in the system chain, for true hi-fi heaven.

"For true hi-fi heaven, randomly mixing separates just isn't enough whether you're spending a hundred pounds or a hundred grand."

For example, I recently heard LFD's Mistral CD player sounding great, with one of the most fluid midbands this side of an LP12/Aro/Karma. The fact that Dominic Todd and the rest of Hi-Fi World weren't too keen on it puzzled me - we tend to come to the same conclusions here. Maybe the partnering equipment held the answer - the Mistral sang with ten grand's worth of valve amplification, but didn't work so well with more 'real world' ancillaries. A fine design, but what's the point if LFD's 'entry-level' player can't work in anything less than a super-fi system?

Usually, CD players aren't the fussiest of front ends though - in the awkward stakes vinyl wins hands down. Analogue junkies negotiating the snake pit of turntable, arm and cartridge combinations know the problem of system matching all too well. I remember being horrified when I heard a Pink Triangle Anniversary/SME V/Lyra Lydian being trounced by a decrepit Hitachi direct-drive tracking a threadbare Shure M75ED cartridge. Explanation? It was in an over-smooth system which actually benefited from the Hitachi's coarseness and grain!

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Can DNM's Mica cartridge, based on Goldring's evergreen 1042, take over as king of the diamonds? Jon Marks thinks so.

Deja vu: the feeling you've already seen something once before. Deja deja: the feeling you've already seen something twice before. Looking at the Mica Moving Magnet (MM) cartridge from DNM you might be getting deja deja deja deja vu. After all, Goldring were the first to bring out the 1042 MM, then Roksan produced its close relative the Corus Black, AudioNote are having a go too and DNM have joined in with their Mica at £150 (or £185 if you have no cartridge to exchange).

What is it that makes the 1042 a design so many manufacturers use as the basis for an MM of their own? A quick listen is all it takes to find out: sweet, open, detailed and dynamic, the 1042 makes a lot of midprice MCs quake in their generators. So how does DNM's Mica differ from the root stock? There was a certain reluctance to divulge secrets here beyond the use of higher tolerance parts than the standard 1042 and the obvious threaded holes in the Pocan body where the Goldring needs a nut and bolt arrangement. This made for easy attachment to a Technics SL-1000 MkII/SME V and Garrard 401SME 312 for reviewing through phono stages like DPA's 505 and the one on board the Puccini SE amplifier.

If your MM reveals few truths about your record collection, then a switch to the Mica would be a double-edged sword. The DNM, like the 1042, is revealing enough to have you reshuffling your preferred recordings list as you realise just how bad some albums really are. A couple of modern Pop LPs took the prize for 'recording most likely to have been made through a sock' in this respect.

Of course, the side of the blade that cuts to the audiophile's advantage is the one which gives pressings worth their salt a clarity and precision many seem to consider the preserve of CD alone.

You shouldn't hear smooth crooning from Janis Joplin on her Pearl LP, unless your system offers raw energy as an optional extra. What the Mica managed was that delicate tight-rope walk between the rough and the smooth. As with DNM's least expensive MC, the Aciore (reviewed in July 1997), the Mica needs a week or two spent running-in to take any last tiny imperfections off its Gyger II stylus. It also takes about 20 minutes to hit its stride at the beginning of a listening session and repays careful set-up too. Optimising the alignment and bias gave the sound extra space and focus, excessive bias causing a flat, closed-in sound stage.

Unlike the Aciore, the Mica is a tonally warmer performer, drawing more from a spring palette of colours than the MC, which had a hint of winter to it. This much was confirmed through our measurements, where the Aciore's treble lift at around 8kHz was replaced by a gently down-tilted response. A relatively even balance such as this meant the Mica was as smooth, clean and involving on Chopin's Etudes, Op10 and Op25, as it was on Jimi Hendrix's Axis Bold As Love.

Goldring's 1042 costs £120, the Mica £150. So the million-dollar question is how do they stack up against each other? Surely there wouldn't be that much variance between the two? Actually I was quite surprised at the scale of the improvement when moving from the 1042 to the DNM.

The Mica made its ancestor sound almost rough and ready. The Goldring had a looser grasp over the musical elements, especially the treble, which tainted cymbals with a touch of splashiness. Sound staging and imaging were both vaguer and flatter than the Mica, which was more convincingly three dimensional and solid in the way it handled the groove.

Goldring's 1042 is one of the best MM's around, but the Mica is better - it's as simple as that. Trade in your old MM or MC and £30 on top of the 1042's £120 nets you a clean, uncoloured and transparent cartridge that'll have MCs panicking all over again.

DNM Mica
Virtual Reality Audio Systems
PO Box 383,
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WORLD VERDICT • • • •
Betters Goldring's 1042 without difficulty. MC quality from an MM.

Measured Performance see P111
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Looking back at the history of hi-fi, it's hard not to notice one or two conflicts. In recent times we have seen the valve versus transistor debate, CD versus LP, Moving Magnet cartridges versus Moving Coil, and whether to use a head amp or a transformer to amplify the latter. But back in the 1930s, when hi-fi pioneers were cutting the first all-electric recordings and playing them back on the first all-electric gramophones, arguments raged as to whether electrical or purely acoustic methods offered higher fidelity.

In these times, when someone listening to vinyl is considered anachronistic, the idea of tracking a shellac groove at speeds of around 78rpm with a wooden needle coupled to a completely acoustic amplifying system in the form of a huge horn seems downright potty. And yet some enthusiasts still swear by the fidelity of the reproduction of old horn gramophones. One such person is Joe Winstanley, an expert on acoustic gramophones and 78rpm records.

Joe kindly invited me over to listen to his 1936 E.M.G. model 10B player. This was then and still is now considered one of the finest acoustic gramophones ever made and is valued today at over £5,000. Muddying the waters around E.M.G. is the fact that one of the directors (by the name of Mr E.M. Ginn) split from the company in the early 1930s to establish E.M. Ginn Gramophones. His product was very similar in concept to the lavish E.M.G. but went under the name E.M. Ginn "Expert" Gramophone.

The main reason for owning one of these old units, if you collect early 78s, is that it's considered essential to play the recordings back on something of the same vintage. Joe points out that diamond, sapphire and even steel styli ruin these old shellac discs, and he himself will only play his collection with a thorn needle. Nimbus Records, when transcribing old 78s to CD (on the Prima Voce series) had purpose-built a replica of an old acoustic gramophone, placed it in a suitable room and then recorded it with their Ambisonic process.

Joe told me about how he bought his E.M.G. in the 1950s. Apparently the seller was so pleased it was going to an enthusiast he delivered it to Joe in Lancashire despite living in Surrey.
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Joe's newly-made thorn-polishing tool is based on an original design.

This monster device completely dominates the Winstanleys' front room - it is absolutely enormous thanks to that papier-maché horn with its 30in. diameter mouth. The turntable, a Garrard model 201 (predecessor to the famous 301 and 401) is actually electric in this version of the E.M.G., although it could be purchased in either electric or spring-powered variants.

I must admit to thinking it was probably going to be a load of nonsense as I drove over to hear this old gramophone. I mean, I'm fond of pre-War hi-fi but this was getting silly: technology over 100 years old?

Joe started the platter turning under a simple violin and piano piece recorded in the early electric period (post-1927 and the rapid development of electric record cutting in this country by our old friend Voigt).

With a dull hiss as the freshly sharpened needle hit the record, the instruments burst through into the room. Being an analytical sort, it was easy for me to point out the restricted range and bandwidth akin to what you'd find on an AM radio set. But what totally knocked me over was the unbelievable presence, the absolute solidity of the reproduction. I am convinced most of this is down to the horn: with such a long path from the sound-box, and such a wide mouth, the sound really fills a room. Joe told me he has used the E.M.G. for filling concert halls in the past.

Joe has a massive collection of early acoustic recordings, dating from this century and the last. Not only is he familiar with the different technical developments and when they where implemented, he can also tell you about the recording artists themselves. He showed me rare copies of records made in the first decade of this century, single-sided like a CD, and demonstrated how better quality stampers made from the wax master in 1903 gave superior sound quality.

To keep your 78s free from dirt you could use an early 'buffing' pad like this.

I heard Carusos, unheard of (and unpronounceable by me) Italian solos, through to all kinds of Classical work. Organ was impressive but, because of the limited horn mouth area, somewhat lacking in the bass and power this grand instrument deserves. It's vocals that these gramophones thrive on; solo voice had real intimacy and amazing presence, something that few modern hi-fi systems can achieve.

This may sound like a bit of a sweeping statement - a gramophone made in the 1930s and based on technology from the 1800s matching and even surpassing some elements of hi-fi today. Well, those of us fortunate to have listened to a proper full-range horn system in the style of an Altec Voice Of The Theatre, or a Klipschorn, or an old Vitavox will know this feeling of intimacy and power. For these systems all owe their existence to horn gramophones, and would not exist today if it were not for the groundwork laid down by companies such as Western Electric in the 1920s.

With an acoustic gram, you are listening as direct to the singer as is physically possible in recorded media. It's true these systems are very coloured, pretty noisy (and not just the thorn needle pick-up; the mechanical racket coming off the old pre-War Garrard was quite astonishing) and somewhat limited dynamically. There is no electronic processing at all - the singer sang into a 'trumpet' at one end of the recording chain and the sound waves were cut direct to wax, and from this the records were stamped.

I personally could not live day-to-day with the compromises, but I was surprised by how good this old, purely-acoustic method of reproduction can sound.

Joe Winstanley is interested in anything and everything to do with early 78rpm recording and, if you can help him with his collection, he can be contacted on tel: 0151 334 7085.

Joe's other hi-fi system. A second gramophone dominates the foreground while a group of new-fangled all-electrical components occupies the background.
It’s finally gone - well, not so much gone as usurped. ’It’ is my trusty Pioneer A-400 amplifier that saw me through a legion of upgrades yet never failed to impress for one so financially attainable. Finding a genuine upgrade wasn’t going to be easy. One of the new band of transistor integrated at the £600 mark might do the job but for a really noticeable upgrade I soon realised that the £1000 arena was more suitable.

The amp that was going to fill the boots of the beloved Pioneer obviously had to offer notable improvements over the A-400, especially in terms of tautness of bass and timbral reproduction. If only it were that easy! The replacement also had to drive the hi-fi devils incarnate themselves, the 82dB-efficiency loudspeakers. Something with plenty of current and a genuine 100 watts was needed.

Sliding into hock over a new car last summer meant that ampus mirabilis would have to be bought second-hand. So with a budget of £200–£400 I set off to scour the second-hand shops and small ads. The result? A Thule IA100.

A what? Exactly. Thule are a Danish company whose minimalist, high-current designs mean they could be viewed as a Scandinavian Naim. The IA100 puts out a solid 100 watts from a single, rather unremarkable ‘crackle black’ finish box.

The price new is £950 though, I’d have been a little disappointed.

The IA100 does improve upon the A-400, especially in terms of bass control, but it’s not a huge improvement. But that says as much about the integrity of the original A-400 design as it does about the quality of the IA100. Nonetheless, it’s an improvement, and I’m happy.

However, inspecting the unit at home I realised I’ve now joined the minimalist set, lock, stock and barrel. I thought the A-400 was sparse, but compared with the Thule it seems positively frivolous. At least the Pioneer had an MM/MC phono stage (admittedly which I never used) and a headphone socket. The IA100 has neither. But rather than being an exception, this recently appears to be becoming the norm.

It’s the little knowledge of the more obscure regions of the hi-fi separates industry goes a long way. The Thule didn’t have the look of an Arcam, Quad or Audiolab. So for £200 cash I had myself an up-market integrated capable of holding its own against the

Looking around at the amps I review, more and more are eschewing phono stages and headphone sockets. I don’t think this is due to a minimalist campaign as tone controls are as popular as ever. The manufacturers would, I’m sure, point out that there isn’t the demand for such features. I can appreciate this with phono stages, as fewer people are using vinyl than ten years ago. But are there really fewer people listening to headphones? In these days of noise pollution and more compact accommodation, I would have thought the opposite was true.

The real reason, I’m quite sure, has absolutely nothing to do with the fact that by leaving out these phono stages, as fewer people are using vinyl than ten years ago. But are there really fewer people listening to headphones? In these days of noise pollution and more compact accommodation, I would have thought the opposite was true.

The real reason, I’m quite sure, has absolutely nothing to do with the fact that by leaving out these features manufacturers can cut costs. And by cutting costs their amps can compete with rivals from the class below. The only problem with this is that soon all the companies are at it, and we’re back to square one.

But putting cynicism to one side for a moment, this frugality of amplifier design has had a positive off shoot. The market for ‘add on’ devices seems to be enjoying a mini boom at the moment. Once, stand-alone phono stages occupied extremes of the market place - there were £20 devices for adding a turntable to a Mini/Midi system from Tandy at one end and fully-discrete, all-singing, all-dancing valve affairs that kept the audiophiles happy at the other. After all, how many valve amps have you seen with built-in phono stages and headphone sockets? Yet, these days you can hardly move for midprice designs that neatly fill a niche, often created by the very same manufacturers who’ve brought us the phono stage-less amps in the first place! This might look like a marketing rip-off were it not for the fact that most of these phono stages are excellent and offer vinyl users significant benefits over built-in devices.

Separate headphone amps are also enjoying a boost in sales. In the past there was only really the ‘Can Opener’ but now we have the larger specialists, such as Musical Fidelity, muscling in on the act. As with phono stages, this would appear a dubious ploy were it not for the fact that headphone listeners can now enjoy higher sound quality from such devices. So while hi-fi manufacturers may be cutting costs, it’s far from being to the detriment of the hi-fi and music enthusiast.
Musical Fidelity X-Series: Whole range, from the X10-D to the absolutely brilliant NEW X-A50 mono power amps stocked and on demonstration in our dedicated X-Suite. These products have taken the industry by storm and rightly so. Stunning looks and sound to match. You can now own a full Musical Fidelity system, based around the X-Series with your choice of CD transport & speakers. Whether you are looking for a cost effective upgrade to your existing system, or to purchase a complete new set of upgradable electronics, you owe it to yourself to seriously consider these superb products. Enthused about by the press, even outside of the normal Hi-Fi publications, these are real objects of desire. You have probably gathered by now that we rate the X-Series more that a bit!!.

BOSE: Another of our favourite products. Lifestyle 12 Home Cinema System and Lifestyle 20 multiplay, dual zone high quality audio systems on permanent demonstration in our dedicated BOSE Theatre. Superb sound and vision from these stylish, virtually invisible, user friendly works of art. Full range of BOSE products available including the other Lifestyle systems and the Acoustimass loudspeakers. The performance and pure lifestyle orientated ease of use of these products make them out and out winners. We currently have some very special offers on all BOSE products, giving you anything up to a FREE PC system and 0% finance !!. Call for details and to book the BOSE Theatre.

Audio Analogue: Puccini & Puccini SE integrated amps, Bellini pre and Donizetti power amps. You should be familiar with these very, and we mean very classy Italian products by now. The Puccini SE recently had a storming review in Hi-Fi World, the Bellini and Donizetti will be equally as well received. Available in both silver and high gloss black finishes, these products are destined to become future classics. We strongly urge you to book your demonstration now. Priced from only £ 450.00 for the Puccini integrated, the range represents unbelievable value in the sound per pound stakes. Another Italian import heading for the Premier League !!.

Partington: Speaker stands or works of modern art ?. How about both. After 25 years in the audio industry Partington have come up with what can only be described as a truly brilliant and revolutionary NEW loudspeaker support in the A7-60. Will sell by the bucket load on looks alone, but the sound enhancement properties of this support make for something bordering on the spectacular. The A7-60 should be deemed as an essential purchase for anyone wishing to extract the maximum performance from stand mountable loudspeakers. Forms an incredible sonic and visual statement with the Townshend SSS. We have been waiting for a speaker stand like this for ages. Nice one Partington !!.

OEE specialise in the supply of quality audio visual products that offer stunning sonic and visual appeal. Call for our full price list & product guide or to book one of our 4 NEW evaluation suites. FREE UK Mainland delivery on all mail order sales.

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& other quality audio visual products from around the World.
...But it’s true.

Peter J Comeau is no ordinary reviewer. As designer of the only product to win the coveted What Hi-fi Best Loudspeaker Award three times in succession, he’s generally regarded as the guru of small speakers. With 30 years’ experience as a specialist hi-fi retailer, co-founder of a highly respected UK hi-fi manufacturer and one of the ‘terrible three’ who pioneered subjective reviewing in the staid hi-fi press of the 1970s, his opinion carries formidable weight.

Seasoned hi-fi critics are notoriously hard to impress. So how come we weren’t surprised when Peter J Comeau enthused so fulsomely about our new 12i?

“They sound like a grand’s worth of exotic compact,” he wrote in October’s Hi-Fi News.

“If Celestion can achieve this sort of performance for a miserly figure, why are most of the speakers that arrive on the market so poor in comparison?”

Well, we can’t speak for anyone else - but we know what makes the 12i such a remarkable performer.

The smooth, natural-sounding vocals? Celestion’s 19mm tweeter, whose neodymium magnet is ferrofluid-cooled for improved power handling.

The phenomenal bass response? 130mm long throw bass drivers, which allow the cone extended movement without removing the HF coil from the magnetic gap where energy is most concentrated.

The acoustic purity and lack of distortion? The use of laser interferometry to tune out the response peaks of conventional speakers. Celestion crossovers to ensure seamlessly smooth transitions. Mounting the drivers and reflex port in a dense one-piece composite baffle to minimise resonance. Cabinets computer-designed to eliminate box coloration.

In the words of the Hi-Fi News lab report, “the horizontal off-axis trace is brilliantly managed.” To the listener, that means the same seductive audio experience wherever you sit in the room.

No wonder the 12i reproduces the most demanding material with such accuracy. [12]
and emotional depth.

"The coherence is extraordinary," Peter J Comeau remarks. "That each note is so well defined is remarkable for a speaker of this class."

Peter concludes "When you close your eyes, they (the artists) might just as well be in the room with you."

That's the ultimate accolade for any speaker, irrespective of price. At only £119, no wonder he couldn’t believe his ears.

"Nothing prepares you for the sound of this new model. Ask listeners to guess the price, I guarantee an answer closer to £500 than the spare change you have to sprinkle on the counter to own a pair."

...At only £119, no wonder he couldn’t believe his ears.
KITS HAVE NEVER

K5881 MkII VALVE AMPLIFIER KIT
A 20watt Class A power amplifier that uses reliable Russian 5881 output valves, a military version of the American 6L6, designed for low distortion audio work.

Now with a super shunt regulated push-pull (SRPP) input stage K5881 offers amazing sound quality. It can be used with a simple passive pre-amp or one of our own pre-amplifiers, and it matches modern loudspeakers well.

K5881PSE VALVE AMPLIFIER KIT
An audiophile parallel single ended valve amplifier at an affordable price. K5881PSE uses the reliable Russian 5881 output valve. Its 17watts is enough to drive most loudspeakers, making high-end sound quality and design available to everyone. Can be easily monoblocked to give 32watts.

300B VALVE AMPLIFIER KIT
This is a specialised 28watt amplifier based on the highly linear 300B triode valve. Our 300B runs in Class A, giving one of the most sweet, open and neutral sounds possible today. Matched with good loudspeakers, it is unsurpassed. All parts are included in the kit, except valves since different 300B makes are available.

KLS3 THREE WAY CARBON-FIBRE DRIVER LOUDSPEAKER
KLS3 uses extremely light and stiff carbon-fibre cone drive units for a fast, accurate sound. A dedicated 4inch carbon-fibre midrange drive unit provides the clean, smooth and detailed midrange characterised by superb projection. Its high 90dB sensitivity and near flat 8ohm impedance make it one of the easiest loudspeakers to drive. An ideal loudspeaker for high-end valve amplifiers.

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

KLS4 TWO WAY CARBON-FIBRE DRIVER LOUDSPEAKER
A two way standmounter using stagger-tuned reflex loading for good bass, plus light and fast carbon-fibre drivers.

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

KLS7 TWO WAY CARBON-FIBRE DRIVER FLOORSTANDER
Compact and affordable two way reflex loudspeaker. KLS7's slim dimensions make it easy to accommodate, but it uses top quality carbon-fibre drivers, so performance isn't compromised. An audiophile bargain.

Drive Unit & Crossover kit etc £195
Drive Unit Pack £110

KLS8 TWO WAY HIGH SENSITIVITY
With a sensitivity of 94dB, KLS8 needs very little power. Its 10in. professional bass driver and horn loaded tweeter give it a BIG sound. Ideal for low power amplifiers. Provides high level listening without fatigue!

Drive Unit & Crossover kit etc £260
Drive Unit Pack £175
THE KLP1 LINE LEVEL PREAMP

The KLP1 line level preamp uses one an
elegant cathode follower line drive circuit to
give a sound of remarkable clarity and detail.
The components are all high quality and
include Alps volume control, Sovtek valves,
silver plated wire etc. With a gain off x1, it
matches our sensitive power amplifiers.

Beautifully built, with solid machined alloy
fascia and gold anodised knobs, it looks
compact and elegant in the home.

KLPP1 VALVE PHONO PREAMPLIFIER

KLPP1 has five line inputs, a tape input
with monitor, and a unique low noise
valve MM/MC phono stage. There is
a switchable subsonic filter to prevent
output transformers of valve amplifiers
saturating. The line stage has gain, so
it will drive any power amplifier.

Audio grade components are used
and many parts are custom made for
highest quality. KLPP1 has a super
clear sound, sweet and detailed
through line and phono inputs.

KLSS3 Gold Mk II ADVANCED
TECHNOLOGY THREE WAY
LOUDSPEAKER

KLSS3 Gold uses the latest version of
Audax's innovative oval gold dome
piezo electric tweeter, giving it the
sweetest and most extended treble.

Married to a 4in. carbon fibre cone
midrange driver for neutral and
clear reproduction, and a powerful
8in. bass driver for superb depth,
this is our top-of-the-line reference
speaker.

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KLS9 TWO WAY FLOORSTANDER

Here's a storm for you - KLS9, with its BB4
alignment bass cabinet and Audax High
Definition Aerogel 8in bass/midrange unit.

Designed by Noel Keywood to possess
optimal bass damping and a clean step
response. Aided by a teensy bit of bass lift,
KLS9 really thunders: it will re-arrange your
furniture. But it does not waffle, falling silent
when there's no bass in the music.

Aided by a high power 1in fabric
dome tweeter, KLS9 is detailed, evenly
balanced and images superbly. It is an easy
12ohm load and is 88dB sensitive. For
amps up to 60W. Easy to build and great
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Drive units, crossover parts, wool etc

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KLSS3 Gold

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LOUDSPEAKER KITS

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<td>KLS3-D</td>
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<tr>
<td>KLS3 Gold Mk II 3-way carbon-fibre driver floorstanding loudspeaker with piezo tweeter</td>
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<td>KLS4 2-way carbon fibre driver standmounting loudspeaker</td>
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AUDAX DRIVE UNITS

**Please telephone for further details regarding other Audax Drive Units.**

High Definition Aerogel Drivers

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<td>HM100Z0</td>
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<td>HM130Z0</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.5inch bass/mid, 91dB</td>
<td>HM170Z0</td>
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<td>10inch bass, 90dB</td>
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Carbon Fibre Drivers

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<tr>
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Hi-Fi World's man in the studio, Douglas Floyd-Douglass, meets David Mate, a designer attempting to bridge the gap between domestic and professional hi-fi.

There are two quite different sides to the hi-fi coin: domestic and professional. Unfortunately, the two often don't see eye to eye. Many of those who work in studios look at most home hi-fi as a bit of an aberration at the best of times, thinking it sonically coloured, unreliable and generally not loud enough. The opinion from the other side of the fence is that a lot of what sits on top of your average mixing console has treble that could cut armour plate and little in the way of delicacy. However, the best of both worlds can sound very good.

One engineer who has built components for home and studio is David Mate of Orchid Precision Audio. In his quest to bridge the divide that exists between domestic and professional equipment, and to find the best components, David has travelled through the anomalies of phase linking, and the subjective and objective sides of audio. In the meantime he has been able to establish a respectable range of extremely good hi-fi products, including the RC750 power amp (see Eric Braithwaite’s review in August 1996) and the PLL1 loudspeakers.

I had a long listen to these large, uncompromising £7000 six-way floor standers, the first ‘speakers ever to make my 2kW monster MOSFET power amp look a tad pale. As with all electro-acoustics there is a trade-off depending on what you want to achieve, and you will need a damn good amplifier to get the best out of these demanding ‘speakers. They are astonishingly even (both measured and audibly), whilst also displaying commendable neutrality and openness.

They demand enormous amounts of power. If you can oblige, the PLL1s will delight you with their spot-on musicality, warmth and obvious pedigree. They have superb scale and dynamics, and some of the deepest bass in the business - down to 20Hz. Seriously serious audiophiles and liquid music lovers should note that the PLL1s would trounce the majority of popular studio monitors - and make worthy replacements. But how did their design, and that of the RC750, come about?

DF-D David, tell us about your background in audio.

DM Well, I have been involved in audio ever since I graduated from university. My first job was for one of those companies that made home organs. I was building the electronics.
You get out of university and you’re grateful for any type of job you can get; this might not have been exactly what I wanted to do, but it stood me in good stead for the future.

I then had various jobs in the electronics industry as well as computers, but I’d always pursued audio as my main interest. Going back to the States in the ’70s, the US was not ‘big’ in audio at the time. It took moving to England, 15 years ago, to make my first breakthrough into professional audio when I was employed by one of the largest recording console manufacturers in the world.

DF-D Were you prepared for what you found?

DM I may have thought I knew a lot about audio and electronics, but there is nothing like being involved with the rather cynical professional audio world. These are ‘nice guys’ but they’re pretty demanding about what they are prepared to accept.

You don’t become good at what you do without making mistakes - and I made a lot of mistakes in the process. I’ve designed two huge recording consoles though - and the last one went into production two years ago. All these famous people (who I never got to meet) bought it - Whitney Houston and Brian Adams, for example.

DF-D You work for one of the market leaders in console manufacturing. Most producers that I know are quite emphatic about their equipment preferences, whether it be ease of operation or sound quality. This is one of the great pro industry debates.

DM We need better music, not better equipment. Most equipment is very good nowadays - we need better music, better production and more record sales.

DF-D Here, here.

DM: Somewhere along the route - I think it was about three years ago - I thought: they (the studios) are buying reasonable consoles and good tape machines but they’re investing in appalling monitor loudspeakers. What is this phenomenon? Whilst it is music coming out the ‘speakers, it is not musical. Something has disappeared somewhere along the line.

DF-D Is this down to signal processing, for example digital compression?

DM I would say this is down to (unfortunately) the tail end of the chain. You discover a great deal about ‘professional discretion’ when it comes to things like monitoring, so you learn not to say anything when the monitored sound quality is sub-standard, particularly if the place in question is a successful commercial recording studio.

DF-D What really persuaded you to take domestic hi-fi seriously when, by virtue of design and application, the products are quite different to their professional counterparts?

DM There was this studio that had a whole pile of Krells given to them. I was in having a listen and the sound was quite acceptable. Then this ‘studio designer’ person recommended that the

The PLL I loudspeakers use six drivers a side: the famous Tonigen ribbon and two Morel MDT39 dome tweeters, one Morel MW145 and one Audax HM1002 midrange unit, and a Volt B2501.1 woofer. Unlike almost all passive loudspeakers, the PLL Is are phase linear, which benefits imaging precision and overall transparency.
client equip the studios with new Bryston amplifiers as they were 'pro spec'. I didn't go for that, and so when he was out, I compared them. The Krells sounded a lot better, but the studio owner still went with the pro product. 

It was about this time that I was seriously considering buying a good hi-fi system - but nothing in the pro sector could give me what I wanted. When I investigated the hi-fi industry, I found the loudspeakers to be closer to what I was looking for, although some of the prices did not seem to justify the product - loudspeakers at £6000 that could be made for £500, for instance. So I set about building loudspeakers with a view to satisfying both markets at a reasonable cost.

DF-D So, in essence, your new company Orchid is a hi-fi company?

DM It is probably a hi-fi company. If you forced me to say which side of the fence I was on, I would answer that it is a hi-fi company.

DF-D That brings me to the question I was going to put to you earlier, and that is: what are the essential differences between the domestic hi-fi and pro audio industries?

DM I think the point at which they split apart was interestingly enough one seminal event. Admittedly they do share a common interest. One side records music, the other side listens to music. But the event which split these two communities apart so they'll no longer talk to each other (and there are many such cases) was the rise of subjectivism. I think that subjectivism is a good thing, and it is the necessary antidote to undiluted measurement. Subjectivism is a breath of fresh air because you can say: I can hear something, I may have no idea why, but I hear it. Of course a lot of people had some pretty wild ideas about this, including the use of green ink on Compact Discs to improve sound quality.

The pro guys were having none of this minority wackiness, so they switched off from all home hi-fi, not just the weird bits. They said, "We don't want to hear about cables and all that nonsense", and so they retreated.

For a while reports were sent to the AES (Audio Engineering Society) saying that you could not hear the differences between cables and the pro guys went back to their black-faced rack-mounted amps that said 'pro' on the front. The hi-fi guys went the other way and just did their own thing.

The difference now between the two camps is a very confused issue. The hi-fi product might be lower powered, less expensive and possibly less reliable. A pro product may be characterised by higher sound pressure levels and a higher degree of reliability. Any notion that all pro audio products are built to a higher standard is patently false though. There is just as much bad pro audio gear as there is bad domestic hi-fi.

I could be talking utter nonsense saying that it might be possible to do something to heal the split. If not, I would come down firmly on the side of the hi-fi people because at the end of the day one community does it for money, the other for enjoyment - and I know which side of the fence I would rather be on.

Here at Hi-Fi World we will continue to track down quality equipment from the studio, like Soundcraft's Absolute 4P active monitors with their phase-linear crossovers reviewed in October 1997, that bridges the gap between pro and domestic equipment. Genelec's 1029A monitors with their cast aluminium cabinets and built-in power amps will be appearing in our April 1998 issue.

We can only hope that the pro and domestic communities grow closer together to the benefit of all audiophiles thanks to designers who have worked in both areas.
Now that Seattle is more famous for its Coffee Company than its once plentiful supply of Rock bands, we are perhaps witnessing the beginning of the end for some of the major players. Along with Nirvana and Mudhoney, Soundgarden were in the Grunge vanguard and came out of the Seattle swill-holes in the mid-80s. They all played loud, drank lager, wore their hair long and grew goatees. In short, Grunge was Metal with a distinct geographical root.

There is really nothing here which persuades me that it is otherwise; from their raucous Sub-Pop debut 'Nothing To Say' to their last album, 1996's Down On The Upside, the Soundgarden experience is like being caught in a driving thunderstorm with the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse bearing down on you. And though the only threat they carry is a famine of taste, you know you have to maintain a respectable distance. More so since lead vocalist Chris Cornell is apt to sound like Gillan.

As compilations go, this one ain't bad. It does at least include recognisable hits - well, 'Black Hole Sun' at any rate. Other songs which most discerning listeners will enjoy are 'Spoonman', 'Outshined', 'Pretty Noose' and 'Burden In My Hand'.

The earlier tracks are there mainly for the historical trainspotters amongst their fans but headbangers certainly shouldn't underestimate the total wall-of-noise quotient in this collection. Some of the numbers are just plain scary - 'Jesus Christ Pose' for instance is just one small step away from sounding like Satanic Metal, a sort of 'independent' take on 'Bring Your Daughter To The Slaughter'.

Apart from the crazy banjo thrown amusingly into 'Ty Cobb', this is mostly headcrushing heavy guitar and bass. The music here spans five albums up to their demise earlier in 1997 and would, in literary terms, make a fine Pass Notes guide to what has been described as Seattle's most underrated band.

The boys you once locked up your daughter for protection from are now the apparently respectable, mild-mannered grandfathers of the zimmerframe Rock world. And despite their combined age of 200-plus, they still seem a million miles from retirement. What the hell, playing's better than sitting by a pool in the south of France all year.

The last outing for these OAPs was the double-platinum-selling Voodoo Lounge album back in 1994, itself following on from the equally successful Steel Wheels. Sadly, since then Bill Wyman has decided to call it a day. But if you remember the last time a founder
member left the group, it was Brian Jones back in 1969, and the Stones then came back with what was arguably their greatest album ever, the seminal Let It Bleed.

In the case of Bridges To Babylon, however, while there are few signs of them slowing down, they seem to be churning out increasingly larger amounts of tired old Pub-Rock. How they love re-treading all those effortless, Bluesy riffs reminiscent of days gone by. 'Flip The Switch', the LP's opener, is pure riff city, as is 'Too Tight' though this one is altogether one of the album's finer moments.

More often than not, sadly, the Stones come over as simply macho loudmouths let down by banal, misogynistic lyrics. Listening to 'Gunface' with the eye-popping line, "I taught her everything, I taught her how to eat, but now she's obsolete" makes you wonder at what point they'll find time to grow out of their sad immaturity. In the years since 'Under My Thumb' was written more than three decades ago, it has become clear that Mick and pals still like to remind the fairer sex of where they think their place should be. .

Besides some painfully obvious retro mush, there is at least plenty of variety here for the curious: 'Already Over Me', a '90s version of 'Angie', that classic tale of love and loss; the howling 'Might As Well Get Juiced', a feast of bourbon Blues; and the highly commendable ballad 'Always Suffering'.

Patti Smith is famously known for one hit, the Bruce Springsteen-penned 'Because The Night', which is a little unfair given that her critical success lay everywhere else. Here was a woman steeped in Baudelairian poetry and beatnik philosophy, whose best songs were almost always rambling conversational tracts. Survival, faith, alienation and her longing for life's rich experiences tended to weave in and out of her songs like yarn in a tapestry.

'Waiting Underground', which opens this album, is a guitar Rock number complemented by dirge-like piano. And much like Lou Reed's New York album, the sparse backdrop of raw guitar, drum and bass serve to show the resonance of her lyricism and song-writing talent.

This is just as true for her other songs such as 'Spell' (which blends a repetitive guitar motif with a reading from Allen Ginsberg's Howl), 'Don't Say Nothing' (a JJ Cale soundalike) and 'Dead City', a Garage-type track which sees Patti reaching her vocal depths. Topics as diverse and compelling as China's invasion of Tibet ('1959'), AIDS ('Death Singing') and the desperate suicide of the Heaven's Gate community to join the Hale-Bop comet ('Last Call') are all treated with respectful pathos. Good though these are, the best is undoubtedly 'Memento Mori'.

This number is built around an improvised studio jam where Patti views the Vietnam tragedy from the perspective of the character Johnny from 1976's 'Land'. The hero no sooner resurrected returns from his tour of duty in a wooden box. It is an ambitious piece, the measured tones of Lenny's flanged guitar gradually intensifying as Patti immerses herself in the memory of the war dead.

Patti Smith is Girl Power incarnate, intelligent and wise and easily capable of consigning The Spice Girls to the detritus pile of history. She remains out there on the edge, in keeping with the spirit of her original Rock 'n Roll 'Nigger' track. A welcome return.
first time since 'Some Girls', letting the loveable Keith temporarily take over the vocals. With all the alluring charm of a packet of Capstan non-filters and a voice that has had one too many, our Keith manages to decorate the soul-feel but rasping 'Thief In The Night', the tender 'How Can I Stop?' and the dire Reggae track, 'You Don't Have To Mean It'.

It's quite apparent that Keef and co are not yet looking at the cost of stairlifts when good sense might dictate otherwise. They still enjoy it after all those years, and who can blame them really? While there is nothing here to make you sit up straight, Bridges To Babylon ain't too bad. It's just funny that so many people can be hoodwinked into believing that they still write classic songs.

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MIAMI DEEP: THE ESSENTIAL MURK AND FUNKY GREEN DOGS MIXES
HARMLESS RECORDINGS HURTCD 005

You can't stop them now! Early Nineties House jewels are popping up faster than snowdrops at the moment and thankfully replacing the '88/'89 Summer Of Love nostalgia fests on the record shop shelves. The latest, a compilation of pioneering Dance hits from the Murk boys, gives us a clue as to how House music has remained stubbornly popular for so long.

Murk, (Ralph Falcon and Oscar Gaetan) from Miami, could be described as the Daft Punk of their time. Their groundbreaking dark, deep and funky signature sound has generated enough critical acclaim to warrant their first retrospective from Harmless records. Miami Deep gives us all the old faves from the many pseudonyms of the Murk partners, including 'Reach For Me' by the superbly-named Funky Green Dogs From Outer Space (the record company obviously couldn't fit the full name on the sleeve). It throws up some new surprises too, like the unreleased Murk mix of Jay Dee's 'Plastic Dreams' but most importantly it provides the discerning lover of House music with the best tunes from the inventors of a whole sub-genre of music.

Always a bit different from the average club tracks of the day, Murk's laconic, late-night Dance never failed to raise a few eyebrows and plenty of sweaty hands at that. From the moment they took the club scene by storm in 1992 with 'Some Lovin', a raw, Disco-inspired floor quaker, it was clear they were about to embark on an alternative route to success from their polished peers. The Murk trademark, those rumbling bassline grooves, is distinctively prominent on most of the album, particularly their mean mix of Karen Pollack's 'You Can't Hurt Me', their first release on Emotive.

The Dance scene was soon craving Murk in a big way when they released the seminal Disco-House track, 'Reach For Me' by The Funky Green Dogs. Apart from virtually establishing the Murk sound overnight it had one of the funkiest basslines ever to grace a House track and remains a club classic to this day. Also hidden in the collection is Ralph Falcon's rude and raunchy slow House groove, 'Every Now And Then', infamous for its unworlly ranting but great when you give it a thrashing. Like all good musicians, Murk have inevitably been imitated. There is a lot of Deep Dish in Murk's music, especially their 1997 take on Adeva's 'Don't Think About It'. This apart, they have tried to remain one step ahead - Oscar Gaetan doesn't give music a long shelf life. What used to be the underground has now become the norm.

Fitly we are given some examples of the way Murk see the future of House music. 'Fired Up' from last year certainly did the business on both sides of the Atlantic and the '97 mix of 'Plastic Dreams' is brave but cranky.

On this evidence the Murky vision warrants a listen even if the future looks a bit blurred.

Speed Garage seems to be surviving its hype and rapidly filling the gap left by Drum 'n' Bass as The Next Big Thing. A genre with massive underground roots, the scene is already safe in the hands of the industry's marketeers, and from here on in it will be a constant battle to separate the good from the bad. If you want to hear Speed Garage as it is, 187 Lockdown Sunday Flavaz Vol I is a good bet because the men behind it, Danny Harrison and Julian Jonah, are also behind Gant and Nu Birth, and epitomise the Dubbier, more ragged side of underground Garage under all their three guises.

Flavaz Vol I includes soulful cuts from the likes of Todd Edwards ('Can't Live Without You') and an unreleased Booker T track featuring Mass Fusion ('Underground Fever'). There are deleted surprises as well, like the Tuff...
jam mix of R.I.P.’s ‘Deep Inspiration’ and 187’s own classic ‘Crazee’.

Other compilations are likely to err towards the Rosie Gaines’ style of smoochy, soulful Speed Garage, but this album makes a far funkier offering. Sometimes the Garagey rhythm is lifted with tints from the Techno school of thought, at other times it blends the hi-hat off-beats with House that sounds straight out of the Eighties.

If you want to know what all the kids have been grooving to over the festive season this compilation should provide most of the answers. The Ministry Annuals have made a lucrative habit of catching the musical ‘moment’ since the South London club’s transformation from a famously loud night spot into burgeoning music brand, and this compilation should keep them in favour.

A whopping total of 47 uplifting House and Garage tracks mixed by Radio One DJ Pete Tong and international Popstar turned DJ Boy George means there’s a place for all your favourites plus a few more just to prove they know more about House music than we do.

With fast, furious and virtually flawless mixing from the high-profile duo the music moves from funky House hits to in-demand anthems at breakneck pace. Indeed, after a measured warm-up on the first CD with Tong, Boy George raises the adrenaline levels on disc two with plenty of Dancey, up-tempo House on top of the now obligatory Speed Garage tracks.

As for the quality of music, Pete Tong seems to have beaten Boy George in the race for the winner tunes and his CD contains a much larger helping of club classics from 1997, including the likes of currently massive Rosie Gaines and Michelle Weeks.

‘Offshore ’97’ from Chicane with Power Circle provides some hypnotic House nostalgia, Dario’s ‘Sunchyme’ adds the commercial classic with Todd Terry’s ‘Somethin’ Goin’ On’ - a spooky intro making way for a huge bassline as a chorus of melodies and strong vocals combine to create that epic House feel - to fill it out.

Boy George hits us with a surprise or two although the now-standard appearance of Jay Dee’s ‘Plastic Dreams’ is definitely not one of them. Mr Dee must be in regular contact with the royalties guys now, which will probably soon be true for the hugely popular Pop/House crossover from Olive, ‘You’re Not Alone’. A superbly warming refrain if ever there was one.

Blue Boy puts some gloss over a mostly drab set of closing floor fillers with a finale of their Seventies-inspired Acid Jazz smash, ‘Remember Me’, already full of phat bass and ever memorable after the remix treatment from Sure Is Pure.

But if you look hard you’ll find some gems hidden in here and with so many hits turned Housey on this collection you’d think the Ministry was getting a bit commercial. Surely not!

GAMES
POSITIVA CD 4934 9322

As one of the more talented outfits to have floated into the mainstream of late, BBE’s new album will be welcomed with open arms by all. It’s largely thanks to ‘Seven Days And One Week’, the Ibiza club anthem and Top Three hit which featured on about a million compilations last year. Despite the overkill, the BBE melodic-magic is the type that never wears off. It’s a rare thing indeed, but the BBE sound is both populist and credible.

More than synthesiser-driven epic-House, Games borrows Robert Miles’ orchestra, does away with those breakdowns which everyone hates so much these days, and injects a really mean, churning pace. Those familiar with

Emmanuel Top (the ‘E’ of BBE) will notice how his unwavering minimalist melodies carry the album from start to finish. Dream House lovers will find that the classics ‘Flash’ and ‘Seven Days...’ become added bonuses when the emotive force of ‘Symphonic Paradise’ is felt.

Although there are a couple of bland tracks, like ‘Press Start’ (which on first listening came across as a soundtrack for a soft drinks commercial), this album is far more structurally exciting than your average Dream House and it has a refined musicality and tunefulness that sends it straight to the top of the class.

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Next, try the Alpha 5 FM tuner. Again, don't let its surprising affordability seduce you. Instead, listen to broadcast sound that is natural, clear and dynamic - qualities which gained it a class leading Recommendation in the 1994 What Hi-Fi? Awards.

Finally, feast your ears on the new Alpha 5 Plus CD player - quite simply, the best value high performance CD player ever produced by a UK manufacturer. Over the past year the critics have heaped praise on its predecessor, the Alpha 5 CD player, calling it "the player to beat" (What Hi-Fi?) and "standing head and shoulders above the rest" (Hi-Fi News)*. Now, thanks to new master clock circuitry, the 5 Plus sounds even better and once again sets the standards for other CD players to match.

Just listen. Close your eyes, open your mind, and see the light.

*If you already own an Alpha 5 CD player, we'd be happy to update it to full 5 Plus specification. Please call our service department at the number below during office hours for full details and prices.
Putting together various end-of-year round-ups for both professional and personal purposes (the latter being quite sad, I realise) I was struck by the number of favourite albums from this year that were released through the saxophonist/composer John Zorn's New York-based Tzadik label.

In its short history, Tzadik has already established a massive catalogue while operating along lines antithetical to normal music business practice, like refusing to promote itself through the traditional outlets. The net result of all this is that it can be horrendously difficult to keep up with their output. I almost missed this gem (missed it, that is, in terms of those end-of-year lists, which it surely made) by Brazilian master percussionist Nana Vasconcelos.

Fragments is released as part of Tzadik's Film Music series, already home to collections of cinematic music by, among others, Steve Beresford, Peter Scherer (on the stunning Chronologia), Elliott Sharp and Fred Frith. Other Tzadik series include New Composers, Japan, Radical Jewish Culture and an archival set exploring Zorn's own catalogue as composer. These examples give us a pretty clear insight into just how Zorn thinks, as well as providing a template for future radical music labels to follow.

Vasconcelos is almost certainly the world's pre-eminent Brazilian percussionist whose work has been showcased over the last twenty years in a bewildering variety of settings, from Pop session work to the New York avant-garde. He probably came to his widest public in the '80s, through working with musicians at the more tasteful end of Jazz-Rock, in particular with fusion guitar superstar Pat Metheny and Norwegian saxophonist Jan Garbarek.

In these settings he displayed his virtuosic yet supremely subtle skills on a myriad percussion instruments, specialising in the berimbau, a unique one-stringed Brazilian instrument (though one with obvious African precedents) that visually resembles a bow glued to a gourd. With a combination of berimbau and hand-held shakers, Vasconcelos spins out mesmerising rhythms which at once call up images of the rain forest and the metropolis.

To hear him do this on record is one thing, it's quite another in concert, where he's co-ordinating several instruments and rhythms at once without seeming to concentrate even slightly: masterful. Not that much of this high-profile work would necessarily give you any clue as to how this collection of scores for sundry art-house films would sound. In fact, if anything, the music here more vividly recalls some of his solo work for ECM, work notable for its breath-taking sense of arcane, ancient ritual and sheer space.

The greater part of the album consists of Vasconcelos' own playing and singing, sometimes stripped down and live, sometimes heavily multi-tracked and FX-ed. He is joined occasionally by accordionist Cidinho, bassist Rogerio, guitarist Romero Lubambo, percussionist Cyro Baptista (perhaps Vasconcelos' only true equal as a Brazilian percussionist working in contemporary music), singer Pamela Driggs (responsible for a delightful Pop-Folk song, reminiscent of the underrated Marisa Monte's contribution to the soundtrack of José Araujo's Landscapes Of Memory), long-time collaborator guitarist Egberto Gismonti (whose beautifully sparse string arrangements are heard sparingly here) and flautist Jim Cruz. All these play a crucial part in creating a kind of hyper-Folk music; Folk music, that is, in its sound and references, yet categorically not part of any real historical continuum, and without the fanatical purism with which so much Folk music is associated.

Yet this is really Nana's show. His playing and wordless singing are heard on this record at their absolute best. The need of film music to conjure up atmospheres and stories as much as to accompany them has brought out the very best in him. If I had to pick out one supreme moment, it would be the piece 'Vozes', from the sound track to Maja Zrnic's Rhythm Of Life.

The piece barely features Vasconcelos' percussion at all but rather his voice, multi-tracked and swamped in echoes, overlaid from time to time with the most fleeting of string arrangements. It's a wonderful work, timbrally rich, rhythmically driving, full of primeval magic and yet utterly contemporary. So yes, this is easily one of those albums of the year.
Keyboardist and composer Wayne Horvitz has not had, to my mind, a career as high-profile as it should have been. I first came across him as one of John Zorn's compadres in the saxophonist's Naked City group; his playing with that group was crucial, for the melodies and textures he contributed defined each genre Zorn's compositions raided - often at the rate of dozens per minute - perhaps more than any other single element in the group. At the same time, the group Horvitz himself fronted - The President - had their major label debut, Bring Your Camera, which showcased the keyboardist's unique writing, full of bold melodies and arresting rhythms.

The intervening years have not been ones in which Horvitz's career has particularly reflected his emerging talent, or at least that's how it seems from here, an ocean away. Monologue goes some way to showing why that's such a shame. The album brings together various short pieces written for dance performances by Washington DC's Liz Lerman Dance Exchange and Seattle's Crispin Spaeth Dance Company.

The immutable dictates of writing for dance have brought out the very best in Horvitz's writing; Monologue's 20 brief works are all self-contained little worlds whose quirky, loping rhythms are matched by strange, angular melodies shot through with an almost Pop sensibility.

With the exception of Ed Pias's percussion on two pieces, Horvitz plays all the material here himself on keyboards, samplers and drum machines. Where that kind of DIY approach has become all too often a template for indistinguishable - and undistinguished - Drum 'n' Bass or Tahitian performances of increasingly diminishing returns, Horvitz's sense of adventure, and, of course, his considerable instrumental abilities keep this material way ahead of the pack. A minor gem.

Charles Mingus and Lennie Tristano among them - and witnessed the development of a singular style, cool and at times highly abstract.

Bassist Dave Holland, although from a later generation, is still pretty legendary - having been discovered by Miles Davis at a ridiculously early age he has gone on to carve out a career in altogether freer Jazz settings.

Guitarist Bill Frisell, of course, should need little introduction here. His playing is one of the most distinctive voices the instrument has produced in the last 20 years.

Wheeler, whose career now goes back over three decades, has without doubt one of the most unique voices in contemporary Jazz. He is too often characterised as a player of romantic inclination; this is only partly the case. There is also a powerful drive towards abstraction in his improvising. As with Holland, with whom he's played throughout the last twenty years, this mixture of lyricism and free-playing has made his long tenure with ECM almost inevitable. And it makes this group one of the most integrated acoustic Jazz ensembles I've come across this year - a remarkable fact given that this was the first time they've played together.

Angel Song's music is, on one level, exactly what you might expect, drummerless 'chamber' Jazz with its roots in '50s and '60s cool Jazz worn on its sleeve. Yet there are surprises in here, too. Frisell, for one thing, is a very different player to his usual self. His characteristic distortion-soaked solos are kept on a tight rein. He turns in a more traditional Jazz guitar approach which still remains full of oblique melodies and uniquely voiced chords. And Konitz, for a man with that giant experience behind him, still sounds fresh.

This is remarkably subtle stuff. It isn't trail-blazing, but it's rare to find music this accomplished, this assured, which still shows the obvious delight of its creators' playing.
The image contains a page from a magazine article. The text is related to the audio and hi-fi equipment market, discussing various stores, equipment brands, and services offered by retailers. The text is not a direct quote and is provided as a natural representation of the information presented on the page.
We've a walk on the wild side with Felix Mendelssohn (which will surprise those who were convinced Mendelssohn didn't have a wild side) and there's an invitation to spend Saturday evening at the court of the Sun King. Add Bruckner's heavenly strings and the sacred truly does meet the profane. Why not enjoy both?

HENRI DUMONT
Les Litanies de la Vierge - sacred music from the household of Philipe d'Anjou
Ensemble Dumont; director, Peter Bennett
LINN RECORDS CKD667 (DDD/66.23)

Philipe d'Anjou was the younger brother of Louis XIV of France, a pious Catholic who took very seriously the political as well as the spiritual threat from burgeoning northern Protestantism. Urged on by his mother, Anne of Austria, he saw one way of preserving the status quo in ensuring the strict observance of the calendar of feast days, particularly those devoted to the Virgin. This would supply a regular reminder of the fundamental importance of Catholicism to France.

It became the custom in aristocratic households to stage Saturday evening concerts of sacred music after Vespers and Philipe d'Anjou's household in the Palais de Tuileries in Paris was one of the most active in this respect. Especially popular were works reflecting the mystical attributes of the Virgin Mary, pieces which drew on the effusive sentiments of the ancient Litany of Loretto. At these concerts, the singers were generally accompanied by bass and treble viols and by a harpsichord which, in Philipe's case during the 1650s, would have been played by one Henri Dumont.

Dumont - or to give him his correct name, Henry de Thier - was born in Liege (now in Belgium) in 1610. Taking the French equivalent of his name, he came to work in Paris around 1640 and sometime after 1652 was appointed organist to Philipe d'Anjou. His setting of the Litanies de la Vierge, which forms the centrepiece of Ensemble Dumont's programme, was published in 1657, part of a collection of vol preludes, songs and sacred music entitled Meslanges.

Although he became an important figure in French music during the Seventeenth century (in 1663 he was placed in charge of sacred music at Versailles by Louis XIV), history has overlooked Dumont's legacy in favour of those of Lully and Lalande. It is an oversight which this immensely appealing recording goes some considerable way to correcting.

These pieces - a pleasingly varied collection of vocal and instrumental items by Dumont augmented with four anonymously-penned motets taken from a manuscript compiled by Dumont's contemporary, Sebastien de Brossard - may not be newly-discovered masterpieces, but their beauty and craftsmanship are nonetheless engaging and heart-warming. There is also an unmistakable authority here (Ensemble Dumont is devoted to as near as is possible accurately recreating Seventeenth-century performing practice), and the recording - clean, airy and with each line of the texture nicely defined - is the ideal vehicle. One to seduce the most jaundiced ear.

ANTON BRUCKNER
Symphony No9 in D minor
JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH
Fuga Ricercare a 6,
orchestrated by Anton Webern
Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra; conductor, Riccardo Chailly
DECCA 455 506-2 (DDD/70.55)

As in the music of Mahler, The Netherlands' most prestigious orchestra has an historic tradition of performing the symphonies of Anton Bruckner, a tradition second only to that of the composer's compatriots, the Vienna Philharmonic. During the Seventies and Eighties, the Concertgebouw produced some outstanding Bruckner recordings for Philips under the baton of Bernard Haitink; now it is the turn of Riccardo Chailly and the engineers from Decca to exploit one of Europe's finest acoustics, one with the ample space to encompass a work such as the Bruckner Nine.

Given both an orchestra and an acoustic of such quality, neither Chailly nor the Decca team disappoint. For his part, Chailly displays a firm grasp of this colossal, sadly unfinished score. From the hushed, tremulous opening, his
This man can't believe what he's hearing...
handling of the tempo relationships is sure and well-judged. This is nowhere better exemplified than in the second movement where the seemingly straightforward setting of a tempo for the trio section has caught out many a conductor; Chailly judges this potentially awkward juxtaposition with the adjacent trio with seamless certainty.

It is typical of the cohesion and understanding embodied in this wonderfully-integrated reading of what was to become the last music Bruckner wrote. He was working on the fourth and final movement right up to his death on October 11, 1896, and the two hundred pages of drafts for this movement contain many sections which are fully scored.

Not surprisingly, given the dying Bruckner's physical and mental condition, these pages have proved too disordered and fragmentary for any musicologist to collate into a playable whole. One solution to the absent finale has been to conclude with the C major setting of the Te Deum, but this is an inappropriate ending for a symphony firmly rooted in the key of D minor.

Rather, as in Schubert's Unfinished, the profound, elegiac adagio of the Ninth is more overtly romantic than the rugged stoicism perceived here by several rival conductors. It may be too rich for some ears, but for me Chailly charts a compelling course through this movement right up to his death on October 11, 1896, and the two hundred pages of drafts for this movement contain many sections which are fully scored.

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There is an inescapable parallel here with Mahler's Ninth Symphony, which also ends with a mighty adagio of similarly sublime and lofty intensity, and that parallel is emphasised in Chailly's hands. Drawing sumptuously-sustained playing from the Concertgebouw strings, his view of this movement is more overtly romantic than the rugged stoicism perceived here by several rival conductors. It may be too rich for some tastes, but for me Chailly charts a compelling course through this movement.

On the last occasion I heard the Bruckner Ninth in concert, conductor Claudio Abbado rather bizarrely elected to encore with Tchaikovsky's Marche Slave. A less compatible piece would be difficult to imagine. More in keeping, Chailly adds Webern's orchestration of the six-part Ricercare from Bach's Musical Offering, but his often wayward performance is disappointing and unconvincing. Enjoy this CD for playing and recording of the highest order - and forget the encore.

Italian music was a source of inspiration to every major composer, from Rameau in France to Telemann in Germany and Handel in England. Then there were the Italian virtuosi, chiefly a succession of impossibly dextrous violinists but also many similarly adroit woodwind players.

One of the joys of a recording such as this which features obscure composers is coming across musical jewels of often unexpected originality. Ferrandini and Galuppi certainly qualify in this respect: the former's E minor concerto is splendidly idiosyncratic, plunging the soloist into a demanding cadenza immediately after the opening tutti. The adagio is all plaintive melancholy yet it is followed by a highly-charged allegro, full of contrasts. The concerto by the Venetian Baldassare Galuppi is more conventional but still conspires to surprise its audience with strange effects, and weird harmonies and chromatic intervals.

The G major concerto of Giuseppe Tartini, with its bustling opening allegro (an abundance of rapid scales and trills tests the soloist to the full) and its deeply-felt slow movement is more classical in character, as is the C major of Tommaso Giordani.

Born in Naples, Giordani spent his working life in London which is where he doubtless encountered the plaintive Scottish lament 'The Cypress Grove' whose theme supplies the basis for the central movement of this concerto.

This is a most entertaining programme with only the Albinoni - an arrangement of one of his concerti a cinque, Op7 - proving less than remarkable. Jed Wentz's solo playing is dazzling and he is well supported by his colleagues and by the recording engineers in the Oud Katholieke Kerk in Delft.
Die Erste Walpurgisnacht (The First Walpurgis Night), Op.60§/Twelve Songs (orchestrated by Siegfried Matthus)*

Deon van der Walt, tenor*; Jadwiga Rappe, altos; Anton Scharinger, baritones; Matthias Holle, bass§; Bamberg Symphony Orchestra and Chorus; conductor, Claus-Peter Flor

RCA VICTOR RED SEAL 09026 62513 2 (DDD/60.51)

Die Erste Walpurgisnacht, a dramatic cantata based on Goethe's ballad of the same name, effectively and compellingly dispels the traditional view of Mendelssohn's choral music as blandly sentimental, the embodiment of mawkish Victorian piety. Here, Mendelssohn is more on the side of the pagans than the puritans in this vivid depiction of wild, heathen ritual. It may lack the startling, macabre originality of, say, Mussorgsky (in A Night On Bare Mountain) or Berlioz (in the Symphonie Fantastique) in conveying much the same subject matter, but taken on its own terms, the writing - especially for the chorus - is of the highest order.

The poet, Goethe, appears to have been aware of the musical potential of Die Erste Walpurgisnacht from the outset: he gave the text to his friend, Karl Friedrich Zelter - Mendelssohn's teacher - with a note appended suggesting it might provide, "the material for a major vocal piece". That was beyond Zelter's capabilities, but not those of his young pupil who began working on a setting while in Rome during 1830-31.

The work was completed in Paris in 1832 and first performed in Berlin the following year. Mendelssohn revised the cantata some ten years later and it was this version which prompted Hector Berlioz to comment: "I really felt a sense of deep admiration from the first moment...for the brilliant composition." His judgement was spot-on: Die Erste Walpurgisnacht was an immediate success and by any measure became one of the most important secular cantatas composed during the last century.

The fascination of Goethe's text is that it is far more sympathetic to the pagans than their Christian oppressors; it is the latter who are ruled by foolish superstition and lack reason. A heathen tribe defies its Christian rulers to stage its traditional spring festival on a mountainside. The 'priest-ridden' Christians become convinced that some diabolical manifestation is taking place and the heathens, led by a Druid priest, decide that if it's the devil incarnate their rulers believe they are witnessing, then why disappoint them.

The combination of fantasy, romanticism and several memorable themes is classic Mendelssohn, and it receives a thrilling performance under the crisp direction of Claus-Peter Flor. The quartet of soloists is fine, but it is the Bamberg Chorus and Orchestra which take the laurels, and the recording - which for some unaccountable reason has had to wait three years for its release - balances the forces well and has an impressive immediacy and range.

The coupling is intriguing: orchestrations by the contemporary German composer Siegfried Matthus of eight songs by Mendelssohn and four of the Songs Without Words. Tenor, Deon van der Walt, is a sensitive interpreter of the Lieder, which set texts by the likes of Heine, von Eichendorff and Lenau, and Matthus clothes each piece in fitting orchestral colours, only occasionally allowing a little good-humoured self-indulgence (the inclusion of a twinkling mandolin in the Page's Song, for example). Dynamics and phrasing, however, are carefully respected as Matthus paints romantic scenes around these lyrical jewels. They are a perfect foil for the relentless momentum and dramatic sweep of the cantata.
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Leo Lam thinks £120 spent on Celestion's 12i stand mounters might be a wise investment.

The first pair of budget mini monitors that really impressed me with their sweet, transparent midrange and treble were the Celestion 3s back in the early Nineties. More recently competitors like the Tannoy Mercury m2 and Mordaunt-Short MS10i have taken over the top spot though. The new 'i' series is Celestion's answer to these challengers.

There is nothing radically advanced in the design of these small reflex-loaded two-way speakers. The tweeter is a 19mm fabric-dome type working in unison with a 130mm paper-cone woofer in an inverted arrangement. As our measurements showed, these certainly aren't the easiest speakers to drive thanks to their amp-unfriendly impedance curve, nor do they have a particularly flat response. There's a hint of biscuit box to the cabinets as well when compared to the Tannoy m2s (although it has to be said the Tannoys are £20 more expensive): the sides and back are 12mm particle board while the front baffle is a plastic injection moulding.

I decided to give the Celestions a grilling with one of the most demanding audiophile CDs around, the live Hell Freezes Over album by the Eagles. The results were impressive: there was clean guitar followed by the famous ground-shaking bass drum kick on 'Hotel California'. In spite of the slightly 'cardboard' coloration that paper cones possess tainting the lower octaves, the 12is still had real punch and speed here. The edgy, quality that had characterised some of Celestion's Impact range was nowhere to be heard. Instead, my room was filled with a nicely-weighted, full-bodied sound, images hanging free of those little boxes. Not even the m2s are so hard hitting and rhythmic.

Bass is not everything, so I was pleased to find the Celestions have strengths in other areas. Vocals were detailed and refined, if a little diffuse - image precision could have been sharper and the various singers were blurred slightly into the rest of the sound stage instead of standing out clean-edged. Mind you, for £120 you can't have everything.

Detail retrieval was easily on a par with the competition's as Classical string solos demonstrated. The musicians' breathing, which always adds intensity to music, was certainly audible and the string tone was rich in harmonics. Piano was refreshingly articulate due to the fact that the dynamic variation between pianissimo and fortissimo was also accurately reproduced.

No budget 'speakers are faultless. As the volume rose above normal listening levels the 12is started to lose their grip on the upper midrange, adding an unpleasant edginess to the sonic picture. The enclosures began to get in on the act as well, their lightly-damped panels resonating quite obviously in time with the music. Even so, the Celestions' performance is going to gain them a loyal following amongst those who find Tannoys m2s either too expensive or too large. Just make sure you audition them with your own amp to make sure the marriage is a happy one.

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World Radio History
It's hard to knock the Taiwanese company AMC when it comes to value for money. The new 3050A integrated amplifier is a case in point. It's solidly constructed inside, pumping out healthy amounts of power thanks to a high-current toroidal power supply (which gives the amp a measured 60watt output, as opposed to the quoted 45watts), and boasts gold-plated binding posts and one of those rare beasts, an MM/MC phono stage, as standard. There's even remote control, although this doesn't offer tape switching or a mute facility. Nonetheless, for £170 it would appear to offer materially more than its immediate rivals. The trouble is, such rivals also happen to sound extremely good. Denon's PMA-250SE (£170) is very much the bench mark, with Musical Fidelity's E11 (noo) and Cambridge's A3i (£200) not to be ruled out.

The James Taylor Quartet's 'Stepping Into My Life' found the AMC capable of clean, articulate vocals tainted only by a nasal tone in the MC cartridges, the cheapest of which cost as much as the 3050A, will be hooked up to this stage. Dynamically, the AMC wasn't as incisive with LP as it had been with CD - the music seemed to drag its heels despite the fact that there was no trace of bass overhang. And while there was reasonable insight into the music, the disc stage wasn't as revealing or beguiling as the one fitted to Denon's PMA-250SE. Julia Fordham's vocals in 'Genius', for instance, were devoid of harshness but slightly veiled. Having said that, the AMC remained a pleasant listen, and the timbre and resolution of powerful amp for the money is not in doubt. I can see a lot of people taking to its high feature count and solid build. The sound quality does little to offend; unfortunately, it does little to inspire either. It's punchy and hangs together well as a whole on crescendos but it fails to offer the transparency and insight of something like the PMA-250SE. These qualities are what mark the Denon out as a truly audiophile amplifier. If it's more power you're after though, the AMC might be one to try.

AMC 3050A £169.95
Tangent Acoustics 115 New London Road, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 0QT Tel: 0500 828620

WORLD VERDICT
Offers plenty of power for the money but sound quality is not class leading.

Measured Performance see p111

POWER OR PASSION?
High power or quality sound is usually the choice with budget amplifiers. Can AMC provide both in their 3050A integrated, asks Dominic Todd.

ubit midrange. They were cleanly separated from the rest of the mix though and had a fair amount of projection out into the room. Treble was open and airy but could become piercing with overly bright ancillaries, a situation not helped by dry bass which rolls off below 60Hz.

Phono stages, especially those which offer a Moving Coil input as well as Moving Magnet, can be a bit hit and miss on cheap amplifiers. I gingerly cued up Miles Davis' 'Tutu' on my Roksan Xerxes X. As the manual had said, the phono stage had low noise, but then it also had fairly low gain too, meaning the volume knob had to be turned right round to ensure a decent output on MC. Mind you, it's unlikely low-output percussion and piano were well up to class standards.

Unlike NAD amps, with which AMC have a strong connection since their designs are based on the former's, the 3050A didn't appear to prefer Rock and jazz over Classical music. With Schumann's Symphony No1 in B flat, Op38, the AMC was just as comfortable as it had been with James Taylor. Strings were smooth and had just enough texture and tonal colour to be convincing. There was a sense of musical ebb and flow to the music too, where some rivals sound cold and mechanical instead. Yet the veiling was still there, leaving the overall result somewhat bland.

That the AMC 3050A is a measured performance.
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Audio Note Kit Amplifiers - Power-Amp Kit

The Audio Note Kit One (Illustrated)

Based around the justifiably famous 300B directly heated triode, we see this kit as the introduction to real Audio-Amplification, as it covers all the important aspects of design necessary, Single Ended, No-Feedback, Class A, Directly Heated Triode, to become a member of this exclusive club of amplifiers.

Kit One has one 300B per channel running at 420 volts with 75mA current giving 8-9 watts of the cleanest power you will ever hear, the input stage consists of a 6SN7GT with a 5677 double-triode driver stage running in SPP. The power supply is capacitor-choke-capacitor configuration with a 5U4G rectifier, the 300B's have a DC filament supply for hum-free operation whilst the other valves are AC Heated.

Component quality is similar to our Level 2 finished products, Audio Note paper in oil signal capacitors, Berylco 1 watt 1% metal film resistors, high quality electrolytics (Sony/B&K Gold Series) and a simple, attractive stereo chassis in black paintwork. We have several component and cosmetic upgrades available for Kit One, please ask for details.

The Kit One has recently been awarded the title "The Greatest Audio Bargain of the Twentieth Century" by Dick Olsher (ex-Stereophile) in a review on the Internet - this is just one of many rave reviews, copies of which we can supply on request.

Price: £799 incl. VAT, which includes ALL parts & valves (yes, also the 2 x 300B's needed) but not postage/packing which to UK customers is £12.

K I T O N E O R D E R C O D E : A N - K I T - 0 0 1

Audio Note is happy to provide a wide range of complete kits, output and mains transformers, chokes, paper in oil, aluminium, tin, copper or silver foil signal capacitors, Block Gate, Caratine or standard electrolytic capacitors, tantalum, carbon and metal film resistors, silver wires, interstage and driver transformers, switches, balance controls, potentiometers, attenuators, chassis's and fittings for the quality oriented DIY'er, whether you are a beginner or hardened experimenter, male or female, we have the best (and not always most expensive) parts for most projects.

Audio Note Loudspeaker Drivers & Kits

We shall be offering the speaker drivers that we use in our own loudspeakers for general sale from now on. You can buy the drivers individually or together with matched and crossed-over, cabinet drawings and reflex ports.

Audio Note Circuits, Valvedata & Basic Technical Information

If you would like some suggestions which we base a future project around, then we shall be happy to provide you with a circuit pack containing good circuits like ONSAKU, KEGON/KASSAI, NERO, GAKU-ON plus several other power amplifier circuits and the MT660 and MT610 pre-amplifiers, which are the best sounding pre-amplifier circuits we have come across.

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We are in the process of building up four separate ranges of Audio Note output transformers, in order to offer the best possible outputs at different pricepoints, they will fall into four categories.

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Audio Note offer a design, prototyping and production service, where we can supply for almost any requirement. Please telephone for details.

Audio Note Mains Transformers

Available for most popular designs. We shall continue to expand the range as opportunities become available.

The Audio Note Kit Two

Kit Two features a single 6550 tetrode running in Single-ended mode, yielding some 12 watts of pure Class A. With a valve rectified HT for the output stage, stereo chassis, and 6SN7GT input and 12AX7/ECC83 SPP silver bridge, componentry and chassis as Kit One.

Kit Two costs £599 incl. VAT, includes valves, but not postage/packing.

K I T T W O O R D E R C O D E : A N - K I T - 0 0 2

The Audio Note Kit Three

Kit Three features 2 x 300B's per channel running in single-ended parallel yielding 16/17 watts in pure Class A. This kit is on two mono chassis with valve rectified HT supplies, no signal feedback, it uses a 6SN7GT double triode as input valve and a pair of 5677 double triodes running in SPP as drivers. The Kit Three is essentially a mono version of the Kit One with double the power, the same component choices and on two chassis instead of one.

The Kit Three costs £1,550 incl. VAT but excluding delivery.

K I T T H R E E O R D E R C O D E : A N - K I T - 0 0 3

The Audio Note Kit Four

This Kit Four is really our introduction to valve amplifier kit building, the circuit and power supply being mounted on a single printed circuit board. The high-quality push-pull output and mains transformers are all mounted in a small aluminium chassis covering everything so nobody will be able to see that you have succumbed to the lure of the valve amplifier which is sweeping the world. The circuit consists of two 6667 tetrodes running in Push-Pull Class A, yielding about 10 watts, driven by a 6SN7GT and a 12AX7/ECC83 input stage. Easy to build, even for the beginner. Visually Kit Four matches the Audio Note Pre-amplifier shown here but with a single chrome plated volume control. As with all Audio Note kits everything (except solder) is included.

The Kit Four costs: £999 incl. VAT but not delivery.

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These handmade signal capacitors are sonically superior to any of the plastic or other paper types we have come across. If you have never experienced the difference that a really good paperyroll capacitor can make in a valve amplifier, then you really should try.

Audio Note Paper in Tin Foil Signal Capacitors

The foil is better than au foil for most applications, we recommend you try them!

Audio Note Paper in Oil Copper & Silver Foil Signal Capacitors

These copperfoil paper signal capacitors are considerably better both than the standard offerings and the foil type, to start with these will be a few values / voltages of each available and we will expand as fast as we can to cover all the popular values.

Audio Note Acid & Chloride Free Silver Solder

The best solder available, used in all our amplifiers from OTO to the mighty GAKU-ON.

Audio Note Cables & Wires

Audio Note manufacture a range of high quality copper and silver cores, speaker and wiring cables, which, depending on the overall price of the project, will do justice to any hi-fi system, regardless of price. Please call for prices and details.

Audio Note High Quality Stepped Attenuators & Switches

These handmade attenuators and switches are manufactured by a friend of Mr Kondo of Audio Note. They are the best you can buy.

Audio Note High Quality Valve Bases

All of our valve bases are of the highest possible quality materials. Ceramic, Teflon and gold and silver plated. If you want the best look no further - they are the ultimate.

Audio Note Resistors

Audio Note endeavour to stock the entire E12 range of all the different makers of resistor, since most are used in our products stock is generally available within four weeks.

Audio Note High Quality Valve Bases

Audio Note Magnetics

Audio Note offer a design, prototyping and production service, where we can supply for almost any requirement. Please telephone for details.
The Audio Note Pre-Amplifier Kit (illustrated)

A pre-amp kit loosely based on the Audio Note M7 Tube pre-amplifier circuit is now available. The moving-magnet compatible phono stage consists of a cascade input, with passive RIAA equalisation and anode-follower output using the 12AX7/ECC83. Line buffer amplification for the four line follower output using the 12AT7/ECC82 configured in parallel anode-follower mode. For the power supply we use rectifier and choke-input filtering with parallel anode-are employed. All circuitry is housed in a non-magnetic aluminium chassis giving the very best sound quality.

Both phono and line stages are built on 'tracks' pcbs allowing easy construction but with the sonic benefits of hard-wiring. The standard-quality version of the pre-amp kit includes Roederstein polyester film capacitors. Beyschlag 1 watt 1% amp kit includes Roederstein polyester film capacitors. Beyschlag 1 watt 1%

Cost of The Pre-Amplifier Kit is: £349 incl. VAT but not delivery.

Audio Note Black Gate Electron Transfer, High Performance, Graphite Foil Capacitors

Audio Note is currently the sole source in Europe that holds any significant range of Black Gates in stock. We use literally 100’s in production, as we were the first company to realise the tremendous benefits that Black Gate capacitors offer, and as we are to date the only high-end audio company in the world to incorporate Black Gate capacitors consistently in our finished products.

These are very few audio parts that promise a guaranteed improvement when replacing practically any other part, but this is what the BLACK GATE capacitors actually do. Exchanging any electrolytic capacitor anywhere in the circuit of an amplifier or in the crossover of a speaker will greatly improve sound quality. We are working on some guidelines as to where, how and which types of Block Gates to use. Exchanging any electrolytic capacitor anywhere in the circuit of an amplifier or in the crossover of a speaker will greatly improve sound quality.

Audio Note Ceratine Powdered Ceramic Electrolytic Capacitors

We have at long last secured a reliable source for these fine power supply filter capacitors, a must in any single-ended project. The Ceratine really cover many of the Black Gates values and where the prices for the BG’s are prohibitive the Cerafines really cover many of the Black Gates values and where the prices for the BG’s are prohibitive the Cerafines really cover many of the Black Gates values and where the prices for the BG’s are prohibitive

Audio Note Potentiometers

The best available from a sound quality / price viewpoint, made by Noble in Japan, using high quality conductive plastic film. However a better alternative is the KON volume control and can be obtained by sending a stamped addressed envelope to us requesting this leaflet. Further information is available on request.

Audio Note Moving Coil, CD Line & Input Matching Transformers

Audio Note now offer moving coil, CD and input matching transformers for general use. Common to all of these is that they are made to our own design and not available elsewhere in the market.

Audio Note Selected Audio Valves

Our valves are selected from the best available sources and are tested to the same stringent standards that we apply in the production of our own amplifiers. We have a vast range of valves which are no longer in production. We have compiled a special list of the NOS items, which are available against a stamped addressed envelope, if you live outside the UK, send US $7. You should be aware that the valves on this list are NOT cheap, but we have stock of original GE, RCA and United Electronics 211, both standard versions and reinforced anode triodes for the US market, 845 Westinghouse, T120/1G10X, T160/201A, WE300B, STC430A, Mullard G234/CV1377, Tungsol 54U4 (best sounding 54U4 we have ever heard), Chatham SK4/6V6G and many others.

Audio Note Recommended Magazines

Full list available on request.

Listener - Review based music & hi-fi magazine that contains some of the best considered & well written articles in print. A very good read, £4 per copy.

Sound Practices - Our best seller. A must for all DIY projects. Contributors include Audio Note, Herb Reichert and Diego Nardi £ 5 per copy.

Vacuum Tube Valley - Specialising in anything to do with audio valves. A wealth of information on specific valves and their applications. £6.50 per copy.

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<tr>
<th>WAS</th>
<th>NOW</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ATC SCM120T R/W</td>
<td>£2650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B&amp;W DM601</td>
<td>£200</td>
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<tr>
<td>B&amp;W DM602</td>
<td>£300</td>
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<tr>
<td>B&amp;W DM302</td>
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<tr>
<td>B&amp;W CC6</td>
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<td>B&amp;W CC3</td>
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<td>CASTLE EDEN</td>
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<tr>
<td>CASTLE HARELCH (YEW)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CASTLE KEEP</td>
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<tr>
<td>CASTLE HOWARD S2 (YEW)</td>
<td>£1400</td>
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<tr>
<td>DENON NS-1 - S/H</td>
<td>£800</td>
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<tr>
<td>DENON DC6 700 S/H</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUSICAL FIDELITY E101</td>
<td>£500</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUSICAL FIDELITY A2</td>
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<td>MUSICAL FIDELITY A220</td>
<td>£700</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAIM DBL (PASSIVE) - S/H</td>
<td>£8525</td>
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<td>REGA ELA - S/H</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOLID HCM2</td>
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<td>TDL RTL 3 II SE</td>
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<td>TDL T-LINE 3</td>
<td>£750</td>
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<tr>
<td>TANNOY 632</td>
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MEASURED PERFORMANCE

CARTRIDGE

**RESON MICA MM**

The Reson tracked well at low frequencies where groove excursions are high. It was a bit more limited in the midband where pivot damping can affect acceleration of the tip, clearing 18cms/sec cleanly. However, average velocities on disc are much lower and only the occasional vocal peak might upset the Reson.

Distortion levels were a little high, but since most of it was second harmonic this is of little subjective consequence. A high vertical tracking angle of 30degrees raised distortion on vertical modulation to 4.5%.

Channel separation was high at 32dB and so was output at 6mV for 5cms/sec rms groove-modulation velocity. Our response analysis clearly shows the cartridge tracks high frequencies cleanly.

There's no peaking at all and inner groove losses amounted to 1dB or so, both signs of an excellent tip profile. With an upper midrange that dips down less than 1dB relative to low frequencies the Reson will sound detailed, smooth and accurate. This aspect of its performance is right up with the best of today's cartridges and makes the Reson look good. NK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tracking force</td>
<td>1.7gms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weight</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vertical tracking angle</td>
<td>30degrees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency response</td>
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<td>Channel separation</td>
<td>32dB</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tracking ability (300Hz)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>lateral</td>
<td>63µm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vertical</td>
<td>45µm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lateral (1kHz)</td>
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Distortion (45µm)

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<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Level (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lateral</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>vertical</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Output (5cms/sec rms)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level (mV)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6mV</td>
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</table>

LOUDSPEAKERS

**CELESTION 12i**

The impedance characteristic of Celestion's small 12i is very low, plunging to 2.5ohms minimum at 10kHz and a mere 3ohms where power is required, at 200Hz. It will draw a lot of current from a solid-state amplifier. Celestion have doubtless used this trick to increase apparent sensitivity; the 12is managed 86dB for 2.8V. But they will give amplifiers a hard time and highlight sound quality differences between models.

Frequency response was bumpy and peaky as our analysis shows. The paper cones gave a coloured sound with the noise-test signal. At any price there are better engineered speakers than this. NK

**B&W CDM7**

The CDM7 differs from most UK loudspeakers by possessing raised treble and bass. This is common in other countries. It makes a loudspeaker stand out in a showroom demo and suggests the CDM7 has been designed to cater for B&W's strong export market. The CDM7 will have very obvious treble, especially in conjunction with B&W's metal-dome tweeters which are not paragons of neutrality. The progressive lift in output to 12kHz is not a recipe for euphony either. Many may like the CDM7's lightly-damped, strong and enthusiastic bass though. I'd expect a clear, detailed midband from the Kevlar driver and lack of crossover dip.

At 89dB the CDM7 is sensitive and will need little power. Unfortunately, the impedance characteristic is one of the most challenging I have seen, swinging from a very low 3ohms DCR to over 30ohms at 2kHz, vertiginous slopes meaning the load is highly reactive. Amplifier differences will be highlighted. It should be auditioned with the amplifier used to drive it. I view this as injudicious design work. Technically, little about the CDM7 leaves me impressed, but it will probably invoke the opposite reaction in a showroom. NK
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Catalogue Preview Of Selected Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Value (unit)</th>
<th>Price (unit)</th>
<th>Price (5+)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nichicon MUSE KZ Premium Grade Electrolytes (Made For Audio Featuring Low Distortion, OFC Wire Lead-Outs)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>25V/100</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25V/470</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25V/1000</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>3.00</td>
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Fully Annealed, Long-Grain Pure Silver Wire 99.99% (4N)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diameter</th>
<th>Price (4.0mtr)</th>
<th>Price (5+)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.45</td>
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<td>0.71</td>
<td>5.30</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>8.05</td>
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Sanyo OS-CON SG Electrolytic Capacitors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value (µF)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16V/1000</td>
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<tr>
<td>16V/470</td>
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<td>20V/100</td>
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<td>1.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50V/10</td>
<td>1.50</td>
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**MUSICAL FIDELITY E11**

A power output of 78 watts per channel is more than enough to get high volume from even insensitive loudspeakers. Low loads of 4 ohms draw 120 watts so there's quite a lot in reserve with this amplifier. Interestingly, at high powers the distortion spectrum was benign, comprising only second harmonic at 0.01%. Higher-order harmonics appeared at lower outputs, as our analysis shows, but they were low in level, total harmonic distortion measuring a low 0.02% maximum at high frequencies, an excellent result.

Noise was low and sensitivity normal at 240mV for CD/aux/tuner inputs.

**ETALON AMPLI AND PREAMPLI**

The Etalon is very powerful, producing 105 watts into 8 ohms and 170 watts into 4 ohms - a good increase, as I'd hope in view of mains transformer size. Distortion was under control at all power levels, measuring 0.044% at one watt output and much the same at full output. There was little change at high frequencies too, a good sign, the worst figure produced being 0.06% at 10kHz, full output. I'd expect the Etalon to sound clean, although there may be a bright edge due to the extended harmonic structure in our analysis.

Power amplifier bandwidth was very wide at 3Hz-150kHz (-1dB). Coupled with high power output this usually results in a forceful sound, assuming good speakers are used. Etalon have kept DC output offset low at less than 1mV on both channels and input sensitivity to the whole system (pre+power) was usefully high at 70mV, Naim-like and enough to cope with just about all sources.

This is a well-designed amplifier combination capable of delivering plenty of clean power. NK

**AMC 3050A**

The AMC produces plenty of power: 60 watts into a normal 8 ohm load and no less than 100 watts into a 4 ohm load. That's enough to handle most loudspeakers in all rooms except the largest. Like most AMC amplifiers the circuitry used gives very low distortion at all power levels, right across the frequency band. AMC used to manufacture NAD amplifiers; their own range performs very similarly.

Sensitivity on CD/tuner/aux. measured a useful 200mV, enough to match most items. I was surprised to find that both channels suffered early bass roll-off, their lower -1dB limit measuring around 65Hz, high enough to give the amplifier subjectively light bass. Worse, one channel exhibited plateau loss at high frequencies, measuring -1dB at 4kHz. The other channel was correct, reaching just 20kHz (-1dB) before rolling off.

Unfortunately, this response problem, being in the line stages, affected disc frequency response too, so both MM and MC frequency responses were poor on one channel. Noise was low on MM though and satisfactory on MC which had a 47k input impedance, being in effect the MM stage with a x10 gain block after it. MM sensitivity was a normal 2.6mV and MC 0.26mV, overload headroom 65mV (MM) and 6mV (MC).

The AMC 3050A measured well except for a curious response anomaly on one channel that let it down. NK

**Power**

- E11: 78 watts
- Etalon: 105 watts
- AMC 3050A: 60 watts

**Frequency response**

- E11: 7Hz-46kHz
- Etalon: 3Hz-150kHz
- AMC 3050A: 72Hz-6kHz

**Sensitivity**

- E11: 240mV
- Etalon: 70mV
- AMC 3050A: 2.6mV

**DC offset**

- E11: 16mV/66mV
- Etalon: 0.3mV/0.2mV
- AMC 3050A: 6mV

**Distortion**

- E11: 0.01%
- Etalon: 0.044%
- AMC 3050A: 0.008%

**Noise**

- E11: -91dB
- Etalon: -63dB
- AMC 3050A: -80dB

**Separation**

- E11: 87dB
- Etalon: 90dB
- AMC 3050A: 70dB

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CD PLAYERS

DENON DCD-635

The Denon has a very flat frequency response with little of the roll-off at high frequencies that most manufacturers engineer in. This may result in a bright and coarse treble when combined with the relatively high levels of harmonic distortion present in the -30dB oscillogram shown. The separation figures were satisfactory at -111dB and -104dB and noise performance was fine at -106dB. Output was slightly below standard at 1.9V but not low enough to cause any problems. KB

KENWOOD DP-3080/II

The Kenwood has a very unusual frequency response for a CD player - it's far less even than normal. Suspecting the Kenwood wasn't responding well to the impulse test on the Denon test disc we normally use, I tried a range of other tests, including a frequency sweep, all with the same result. Aside from this, the Kenwood measures well, with very low distortion figures and an impressively clear trace at -30dB. Output was quite high at 2.25V. The only area of concern was poor suppression of spurious outputs which were measured at -33dB. KB

YAMAHA CDX-590

The -30dB oscillogram shows the Yamaha produces fairly high levels of harmonic distortion. As both even and odd-order distortion are present I would expect a slight coarseness to the sound, with percussion instruments sounding grainy and sharp. The frequency response is basically flat with just a very slight roll-off at the top end. Distortion measurements were, in general, good, although an odd result was the rise in distortion when the signal was dithered at -90dB. Separation results were acceptable but spurious output wasn't as well suppressed as it should have been. KB
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Spectral preamp, phono £1,250
Futterman OTL valve power monoblocs 120 watt, pair £2,995
Pink Triangle Da Capo 1307 £725
Wadia 3200 DAC £650
Concordant Exhilarant, preamp mint £399
SME 309b lps perfect £225
Mitchell ISO Hera mint £225
Technics ST-9600 (one of the superb analogues, AM/FM) £625
Sony CD-R1A two piece transport + DAC, quite outstanding, hardly used £5,500
Audio Physic Virgo (90db, and no horns! - Ex dem, reduced) £2,450
Concordant Exhilarant, preamp mint £1,550
Spectral preamp, phono £1,250
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Concordant Exhilarant, preamp mint £1,550
Spectral preamp, phono £1,250
**PINK TRIANGLE LITAUROAL**

The Litaural's frequency response shows a gentle roll-off of high frequencies to ensure a smooth treble, though the high levels of non-harmonic distortion shown in the -30dB oscillogram could well add some grain and sharpness to the sound. Separation figures were excellent, though the subjective benefits are harder to quantify. Spurious outputs were very well suppressed at -80dB and output was fine at 2.1V. KB

**Frequency Response 4Hz-21kHz**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distortion (%)</th>
<th>left</th>
<th>right</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-6dB</td>
<td>0.007</td>
<td>0.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-30dB</td>
<td>0.019</td>
<td>0.020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TECHNICS SL-PS670D**

The Technics SL-PS670D is a low-distortion design. The -30dB oscillogram, chosen as it represents a typical music signal, shows very small traces of harmonic distortion. The frequency response is flat up until the peak from 10kHz upwards. This is likely to add brilliance to instruments such as cymbals but, because of the distortion performance, shouldn't have any unpleasant side effects. The rest of the measurements are satisfactory. KB

**Frequency Response 4Hz-21kHz**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distortion (%)</th>
<th>left</th>
<th>right</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-30dB</td>
<td>0.019</td>
<td>0.019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-6dB</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-90dB</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-90dB dithered</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separation (dB)</td>
<td>left</td>
<td>right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1kHz</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CAMBRIDGE CD4SE**

We had a great deal of trouble getting the Cambridge to trigger on the Denon impulse frequency-response test we normally use. A standard frequency sweep worked, but the player had difficulty with most of the impulse tests we tried. Only one actually worked, giving the result shown. The measurements were very good, giving a clean -30dB trace. Separation results were excellent at both 1kHz and 20kHz, though suppression of spurious outputs could have been better than -44dB. Output is very high at 2.3V and should be taken into account in a comparative audition. KB

**Frequency Response 4Hz-21kHz**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distortion (%)</th>
<th>left</th>
<th>right</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-6dB</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>0.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-30dB</td>
<td>0.007</td>
<td>0.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-60dB</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-90dB</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>29.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-90dB dithered</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separation (dB)</td>
<td>left</td>
<td>right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1kHz</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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- Audible Elegance, Herne Bay, Kent, 01227 - 742928

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Offer Price</th>
<th>List Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voyd turntable/SME V</td>
<td>£1600 (£3250)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(AudioNote silver wired)/Goldring 1040</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helius Cyalene tonearm (AudioNote silver wired)</td>
<td>£900 (£1799)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Amplication:**

- Border Patrol 300B SE 10W single-ended power amp: £1750 (£2500)
- Audio Innovations S200 pre-amp: £250 (£350)
- Naim NAC 42 offers

**Cables:**

- AudioNote AN-SPx silver speaker cable: £1000 (£2750)

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diverse vinyl

We also stock and sell a wide range of Hi-Fi literature in store. Magazines available include Hi-Fi World, Hi-Fi News, Hi-Fi Choice, Hi-Fi Review, AVF, Sound & Vision, Audio-image,丨Super Audio Video, Professional Audio Magazine, ProAudio, Modern Classic, Hi-Fi Excellence, The Audiophile and more.

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- Eric Dolphy: Out To Lunch £14.90
- Freddie Hubbard: Hum Times £14.90
- Grant Green: Idle Moments £14.90
- Joe Henderson: Page One £14.90

**New Audiophile New Releases:**

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- Deep Purple: Made In Japan - 2LP 1971 £15.90
- Foo Fighters: Everlong - Jap LP 26/1 £17.90
- Ian Drury: Monkey Business 2/2 £18.90
- Kristin Hersh: Strange Angels 2/2 £9.90
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- Jimmy Rogers: Blue Bird - 180gm £25.90
- Junior Wells: Hoodoo Man Blues - 180gm £25.90
- Mike Davis: Cookin - 180gm £25.90
- Santana: Santana - 180gm £19.90
- Tina Brooks: Back To The Track - 180gm £21.90

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- Cate Blanchett: Tago Magico £12.50
- Enya: Live - 2LP £16.90
- John Lennon: Lennon Legend - 2LP £15.90
- Katull Keeling: Jive £12.90
- Rob: Tales From The Mabinog £6.90

Linn Records - Titles At £9.90 While Stocks Last - Ask For List P and £1.00 1st LP additional LPs 50p each (max £3.50)
MANTRA AUDIO

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NEW</th>
<th>EX</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audio ATN 6 E, ATN 10 E</td>
<td>£21*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technica ATN 60 E</td>
<td>£23*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADC XLIM 68</td>
<td>£46</td>
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<tr>
<td>Antiq. AH 90</td>
<td>£90</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denon DN 165 E, DN 165 E</td>
<td>£11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gilding Gold GB05 Super E</td>
<td>£13.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>NL 12 (for 1000 Series)</td>
<td>£24*</td>
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<tr>
<td>NL 42 (for 1542)</td>
<td>£74*</td>
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<tr>
<td>National EPS 140, P. 140, P. 310, P. 810</td>
<td>£13.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eloca FS 99 II, YMS 92 E, OM 20 SH</td>
<td>£22*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Excel VX</td>
<td>£66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OVER 500 STYLUS TYPES STOCKED</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>All Stylus quality diamond stylus except &quot;originals&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWITCHING &amp; CONTROL UNITS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NEW</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOMA 7 E Mono Spool Speaker Switch (Fixed)</td>
<td>£32.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOMA 5 E Mono Spool Switch (Punchable)</td>
<td>£32.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOMA 4 E Mono Spool Switch Pencil Control</td>
<td>£32.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOMA 2 E Mono Spool Switch</td>
<td>£32.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOMA 1 E Mono Spool Switch</td>
<td>£32.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOUDSPEAKER CABLE &amp; INTERCONNECTS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NEW</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEMO ToneMatch 60 Mm. 60 Mm.</td>
<td>£15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio Analogue Linear (1,500 Mm. 1,500 Mm.)</td>
<td>£32.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilby CC127 Gold Plated Cone plug 4.8 K</td>
<td>£20.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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KORDANI
VAN DEN HUL
ORTOFON

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BEYER
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AXE
GRADO
ALCROQUEST

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**CABLES**

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VAN DEN HUL
GOLDING
CED

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TEAC
OLIV

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---

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MARKANZ
OLIV

---

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TASCAM

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TASCAM

---

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

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

Dominic Todd
HI-FI WORLD, August 1996.

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

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

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“This Vinyl font end had my jaw heading towards the floor with the solidity and transparency of the music it was making”...

“... the standard came up with crystal clear images set in a broad sound stage”...

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HI-FI WORLD SUPPLEMENT NOV 97

For further information contact:-
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Tel: 01703 578877 / 442183 Fax: 01703 398905
e mail: origin.live@virgin.net
web site: http://freespace.virgin.net/originlive/index.html

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Mark Levinson No. 27.3 Power Amplifier - Still under warranty - As new - £5400 £5000
Alchemica “The Alchemist” 200wC Power Amplifier - Little use - £400 £900
Infinity IRS Sigma Rhythm Hybrid Loudspeakers - A few hours use - £800 £690

MARK LEVINSON No. 27.3 Power Amplifier
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Cost New: £5,400 Sale Price: £3,200

Audio Research LS22 Lineage Preamplifier - A few hours use - £1390 £1250
Mark Levinson No. 27.3 Power Amplifier - Still under warranty - As new - £5400 £5000
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OXFORD AUDIO CONSULTANTS

OUR SUPERB SERVICE IS THE SAME, REGARDLESS OF PRICE.
Back in the early Seventies, the BBC needed a monitor speaker compact enough to fit into their outside broadcast vans. After extensive development work from the Beeb's Research Department what transpired was arguably the most diminutive serious hi-fi loudspeaker the world had yet seen, the LS3/5a.

A two-way infinite-baffle design squeezing a KEF B110 Bextrene mid/bass driver and 19mm mylar-dome tweeter into a cabinet just 304mm by 190mm by 160mm, it was remarkably compact. Frequency response was quoted as 70Hz-20kHz (+/- 3dB), but the complex 26-element crossover and 83dB sensitivity meant the L53/5a wasn't ideal for low-power amplifiers. And with a power handling of 25 watts "speech and music" and a maximum SPL of 95dB, nor was it ideal for muscle amps - it was a specialist design in the strictest sense.

As the Beeb didn't actually manufacture 'speakers itself, the LS3/5a was licensed to Rogers, Chartwell, Audiomaster, Spendor and Harbeth to produce. At first the response was mixed - people were used to far larger designs and just couldn't believe full-range 'high-fidelity' was available from such tiny boxes. And the sound was rather a shock after the big, wobbly plumminess of many larger 'speakers. The LS3/5as had small, rigid, well-damped cabinets with little sonic footprint, and sometimes the truth was hard to listen to!

Best characterised as clear, clean and uncoloured, particularly in the midband, LS3/5as sound amazingly balanced even today. Another forte is imaging - with a wide, deep and consistent sound stage they're excellent on Classical and choral music, where voices and individual instrument groups in the orchestra are faithfully rendered. As the saying goes, the LS3/5as are like much bigger loudspeakers minus the low bass. And that's the problem - they just can't shift air like boxes with big cones and really go to pieces if asked to. Another failing is the treble, which is pleasantly sweet but not the most transparent in the business.

The BBC revised the crossover in 1988 and the load was no longer specified at 15 ohms - quoted impedance became nominally 110ohms. Subsequently bi-wiring was introduced and the LS3/5a became the 'speaker it is today, with a power handling of 80 watts. And in 1995 Rogers introduced a matching stand-type subwoofer, the £549 AB1s. With an extra B110 kicking in below 120Hz, they transformed the LS3/5a into an even more attractive prospect. Not only do they go deeper, they'll also go louder and sound a lot less constrained when asked to boogie. Although not ideal Rock transducers, the LS3/5a/AB1s make a very respectable job of it.

Throughout its long life, several variants of the LS3/5a have surfaced, most interesting of which was the JR149. Designed by Jim Rogers, one of the great and the good in the BBC's Research Department, it uses the same drivers as the LS3/5a in a cylindrical aluminium housing. Aside from looking radical, the cylindrical enclosure is more rigid and holds fewer standing waves, making for an arguably better sound. But the most successful LS3/5a spin-off is Harbeth's HL-P3ES. Although departing from the original in many ways, they're very much the LS3/5a in a modern setting - with a smoother, cleaner, tighter and more detailed sound.

The great thing about LS3/5as is that they're readily available second-hand, and their owners rarely use them as party 'speakers! Go for as new a model as you can, preferably with the phase two bi-wireable crossovers. A pair of brand new Rogers LS3/5as costs £699 (in Walnut, black Ash or Teak), so pay between £100 and £500 second-hand, depending on age and condition. As for the different brands of LS3/5a, this is a veritable snake pit of controversy, but if they didn't all sound practically the same, the Beeb would not be amused.
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Similar to the CD-63SE but more powerful bass and an all-round smoother sound.

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

**ROKSAN CASPIAN**
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The Caspian has a smooth, even sound with some of the clearest treble in the business. Very engaging, dynamic character.

**MARantz CD-17 KL-S**
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The Marantz excels in all areas. Without doubt this is one of the most involving CD players on the planet. Build quality is also exemplary.

**NAIM CD1**
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**MCINTOSH CDM7009**
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**TEAC VD-RS-T1**
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**AUDIOLAB 8000CDM**
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**PINK TRIANGLE DA CAPO**
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**DPA 1024**
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Proof positive that today's CDs needn't sound CD-like! Uses an in-house discrete converter, 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**
£2,300

A fine all rounder and easy to upgrade too. Has more depth and breadth than Rega Planar 3.

**PINK TRIANGLE TARANTELLA**
£575

Not only does the Tarantella have more style than earlier VI 5s. Stimulating looks, build and fine sound. Standard PSU serviceability makes it a cult in Japan. Oh death, where is thy sting?

**THORENS TCI91**
£599

Tight, neutral sound with good tonality, but lacks the IV's pace and precision.

**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 V**
£1,235

A masterpiece of precision engineering with a cohesive, ultra-transparent sound.

**LINN EKOS**
£1,400

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 YMS-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, slightly forward midband and clean transients. £20 buys the faster, more dynamic 1022GX.

**GOLDRING 1042**
£100

The best moving magnet available. Has an extremely cohesive, weighty sound that's warm but highly involving.

**SHURE V15XMR**
£295

The Shure produces a warm, dynamic sound which has great detail and impact. Far superior to earlier V15.

**PINK TRIANGLE ANNIV.**
£2,495

One of the finest-sounding turntables around, the Anniversary takes the listener nearer to the recording studio than almost any other deck. Works with Rega, Linn and SME arms alike.
The MC 10, MC 20 and MC 30 Supremes all offer superb sound and value for money, with a rich, smooth and musical performance.

In a way it's MC2000 meets MC7500 with the LYRA LYDIAN. A truly musical, sophisticated device that makes most other MCs sound frigid.

A taste of high-end audio. The most involving, musical design at the price, but low power.

This superbly made Italian integrated has a lucidity and control which leave the competition at up to £1000 standing. Sound stage depth is unequalled.

This phono stage has fine midband and treble detail, with taut bass. The £850 ISO/HR brings more of everything.

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

Economically well built single-ended valve amplifier. Wonderful clarity with vocals.

A neutral, highly dynamic and thoroughly exciting amplifier. Better than anything else at the price. Not as dry as the 505.

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

World Radio History
### World Favourites Guide

**Cassettes Decks**

- **AIWA AD-S750** £150
  Sonically a very decent machine. For the price there's nothing better. Comes fitted with Dolby B, C and SD.

- **KENWOOD KX-3080** £160
  A simple deck, but high quality head and transport give an unusually high level of performance at this price. Not to be missed.

- **YAMAHA KX-S805E** £250
  The 'Special Edition' tag is more than a marketing gimmick. Sound is solid and clear with Dolby S.

- **AIWA AD-S950** £300
  A stable transport, superb head and Dolby S make the AD-950 an excellent all rounder.

- **PIONEER CT-740S** £430
  A great piece of engineering from Pioneer, with first rate sound on playback and recording.

- **NAKAMICHI DR2** £600
  Where serious cassette decks start. The DR2 pushes recordings to the limit, remaining unfettered at all times.

**Cassette Decks**

- **NAKAMICHI DR1** £850
  Better still than the DR2, with manual head azimuth adjustment to 2000.

- **NAKAMICHI CR7** £1500
  Kills every other cassette deck and stamps on their graves.

**Loudspeakers**

- **KEF Q15** £199
  These stand mounters offer impressive bass and excellent clarity but need a powerful amplifier to perform at their considerable best.

- **HEYBROOK HBI 53** £269
  Fine tonal resolution through midrange and a smooth and extended treble make the HBI 53 ideal for Classical/acoustic music. Bass is a little boxy and constrained though.

- **CELESTION IMPACT 23** £299
  A smooth and even handed loudspeaker. Has clear and well extended treble and deep, tight bass. Midrange is focused and pure with plenty of detail and speed.

- **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.

- **B&W DM 602** £100
  Deep and strong bass, pure, projected and uncoloured midrange. Treble quality a little metallic, but imaging precise. A lively, enjoyable sound.

- **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 subwoofer is not a toy. It offers superb, true hi-fi bass depth and power, and opens up sound stage depth in particular.

- **MISSION 752 FREEDOM** £600
  Use advanced High Definition Aerogel bass/midrange driver and silk dome tweeter. Dynamic, punchy and musical, yet refined like few others are at the price. Not as sweet or soft as the original 752s though.

- **HARBETH HL-P3ES** £799
  A fine example of good loudspeaker engineering. The top of the mini-monitor league.

**Tuners**

- **NAKAMICHI DR1** £600
  Authentic reproduction, monoblocks still more than the sonic mustard. The sound combines grunt with great tonal colour and expressiveness.

- **MARANTZ MODEL 9** £8000
  Where serious cassette decks start. The DR2 unflustered at all times.

- **AIWA AD-S950 IC** £300
  A great piece of engineering from Pioneer, with a gimmick. Sound is solid and clear with Dolby S.

- **YAMAHA KX-580SE** £250
  A simple deck, but high quality head and transport give an unusually high level of performance at this price.

- **KENWOOD 1CX-3080** £160
  Sonically a very decent machine. For the price it is well, with a clear and powerful sound. 'Broadcast monitor' no less, a task at which it acquits itself well, with a clear and powerful sound.

- **NAIM NATO3 £500**
  The NATO3's warm, atmospheric sound is further proof of Naim's proficiency with tuners. Naim itself well, with a clear and powerful sound.

- **ROTEL RT990BX** £500
  High quality Michi-based tuner with a sophisticated, forward sound with great imaging and stagestade. Sensible facilities and remote control.

- **NAIM NATO3 £1380**
  The NATO3's warm, atmospheric sound is further proof of Naim's proficiency with tuners.

- **FANFARE FT-1 ** £1350
  In its native US the FT-1 is no mere tuner but a 'broadcast monitor' no less, a task at which it acquits itself well, with a clear and powerful sound.

- **NAIM NATO1 £1380**
  This is the best solid-state tuner available bar none. For better radio, go and live in the studio.

**Speakers**

- **HARBETH HL-K6** £975
  Clean, musical and classy - Harbeth have done themselves proud again.

- **KEF REFERENCE SERIES ONE** £995
  The KEFs combine pin-point imagery and detail with a smooth and polite balance. Good, agile bass too.

- **HEYBROOK SEXTET II** £129
  Heybrook have retained the strengths of the original Sextet, improving on bass extension and smoothness. Treble and imaging still excellent.

- **MISSION 754 FREEDOM 5** £1299
  The 754 Freedom 5 has a highly articulate and informative sound with fine imaging and tight, deep bass extension. Uses silk dome tweeter, HDA midrange and 8in woofer.

- **AMO CONCERT 8** £1500
  With their inch-thick cabinets and fabulous drive units, the Concert 8s are the most transparent stand mounters around. They don't suffer poor sources gladly though.

- **EPOS E525** £1505
  Epos' best. Combines near-uncoloured tonality with characteristic fireworks in the rhythm department. Superb by any other name.

- **SPENDOR SP7/1 ** £1970
  This big Spendor is very appealing thanks to its lucid sound and valve-friendly load.

- **TANNOY AMS8** £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 which all other loudspeakers are judged, the '63s have superb imaging qualities and genuine transparency. Earlier ESL model is a fine second-hand buy.

- **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 detailed, designed full-range horn design with a rich sound. Its high sensitivity predisposes it to valve amplification.

**Minidisc Players**

- **SONY MDS-JE500** £300
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NAMAMI DRI Perfect condition. Only 25 hours use. I would like it to go to someone who will use and appreciate it! £500 ono. Tel: 0161 718 8135 (Feb)

ROEHAM XEREXES (black) with Artesmus arm and XPS II power supply £650. Tel: 0181 452 1452 (Feb)

NAIM CLASSIC Silver edged 32.5 (upgraded 72), Hi-Cap and 250 power amp. Immaculate condition £1000 ono. Tel: 01443 405 347 (Mid Glam) (Feb)

HEYBROOK QUARTETS, Walnut, 90dB £280. Upgrading. Tel: 0161 247 5365 office hours, ask for Tony (Feb)

WANTED: LEAK Stereo ‘70’ amplifier and Stereofonic tuner, must be in mint condition throughout with original boxes and instruction leaflets. Tel: Peter 01273 583 475 before 7pm (Feb)

H.F.A. SPEAKERS T.L. B139 bass, B110 mid, 127 tweeter, STC 4001 super. Finished in rosewood formica, black grills £225 ono. Monitor Audio R852 MD speakers with 25” stands (all black) £200 ono. Tel: 01992 576 533 (Esson) (Feb)

AUDIOLAB 8000M Monoblocks, two pairs, 1996 spec, perfect condition, fully boxed and documented. £955 per pair (£1600), both pairs £1900 (£3200). Tel: 01225 777 367 ext 3223 (work): 0850 792 927 (mobile) anytime, ask for John (Feb)

FOR SALE: Pioneer PD5703 CD £135, Sugden A21-9 amp £425, Sugden SDA-1 DAC £450, Monarchy 'DIP' super drive £145. Wanted: Mana Soundframes, Target R2 stands, Kimber BTC cables. Tel: 0411 316 586 or 0181 521 0843 (Feb)

PINK TRIANGLE 22 Bit filter £80. Beyer DT313 headhones and HFN amp £90. AudioQuest Diamond 0.5m £150. VDH The First 1.0m £190, 0.6m £100 0.45m £120. Arwa AD810 £90. Tel: 01592 772 806 (Feb)

LEAK TL1.2.1 BBC version. Rare collectors items. Used by BBC as ams for monitor speakers hence national broadcast quality sound. Best offer over £1500 secures. Tel: 01423 536 692 (Feb)

AUDIO INNOVATIONS Series 300 £190, Edison 18 line valve amp (built by Audion) £190. Audion Phono Stage (2 box) £145. Evolution Audio Single Ended transistor amp £295. REL Subwoofer unopened, unwanted, Marantz CD67 player unopened, unwanted £220. Tel: 0370 435 952 (Feb)

MUSICAL FIDELITY A1000, Marantz CD10, Pioneer PD75, Meridian 606 DAC, Ref 103/4, Ref 104, Cambridge Audio R50's, Reference speakers, Leak Sandwich, (all boxed/mint) Ref Cartlons, Ditton 25's. Tel: 01992 718 265 (Feb)

WANTED: PICK-UP arm, unipivot type, required for London Gold cartridge. Tel: 01208 821 394 (Cornwall) (Feb)

INFINITY RS III A speakers, free standing oak cabinets, twin 10 inch bass drivers, 'Emit' electro-static tweeters. Bargain at £500 (new price £2500) due to house moving. Tel: 01922 479 034 (Bloxwich, West Midlands) (Feb)

CYRUS PRE & PSX-R + Cyrus power & PSX-R for sale, approx 1 year old. Excellent sound & condition. Will not split. Genuine reason for sale £1000 ono. Cost £1800. Tel: 01582 826 528 (Feb)

MISSION 753 (rosewood) £425. 2 x Mission DAC 5 (mint, cost £500) £300 the pair. Quad 606 II (boxed, 16 months) £425. Quad 606 II (boxed, 18 months) £425. Ruark Talisman II (walnut, mint) £425. Tel: 01132 821 428 (3 mins M1/M62 intersection) (Feb)

RUARK TALISMAN II (walnut, mint, 16 months) £425. Quad 606 II (boxed, 18 months) £425. Denon DCD 5000 Mk II (mint, cost £500) £150, Mission DAC 5 (mint, cost £300) £200. Marantz ND635E (mint) £195. Tel: 01132 824 428 (3 mins M1/M62 intersection) (Feb)

TRIANGLE TE60 Class A integrated amp. Smooth yet powerful Vgc £250 (£700 new) Marham Kardon HK6550 amp, LS200 Kevlar speakers, stands and Audioquest cable (20m) £125 (£810 new). Tel: 0117 924 297 (Feb)
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CYRUS 111i Amplifier £398
CYRUS PSX-R Power Supply £328
CYRUS daD30 CD Player £398
Mission 752F TOTAL £578

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QUAD 77 Control Amplifier £349
QUAD 77 CD Player £699
QUAD 77 Tuner £699
Quad 101 Speakers £599

PART-EXCHANGE (example)
or Deposit £646
BALANCE £2000*
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There is still something so beguiling about the quality of vinyl that even now, some fifteen years after the introduction of digital sound, many of us treasure our LPs more than ever. You know that old saying "you don't know what you've got until you lose it!" If you're no longer playing your old albums, or if you've replaced your collection with CDs, it's worth knowing that we have a high demand for quality used turntables - so whatever you do, talk to us - please don't throw it away! But, if you're a 'vinyl junkie' you'll want to speak with kindred spirits.

PINK TRIANGLE TARANTELLA With Rega RB300 & Grade £1199
COPLAND CSA 14 Amplifier £1499
SONUS FABER Concertino Spkrs £999
SONUS FABER Speaker Stands £1290

INTEREST FREE PAYMENTS 12 X £185

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There's little we can say about Audiolab and Monitor Audio that isn't already well known. Other than that they are near neighbours of ours in a concentration of top-name manufacturers in the hi-fi hot-bed that is Cambridgeshire. The two companies come even closer in this system, demonstrate how hi-amplifying a superb two-way speaker with Audiolab's latest 'minimal' integrated and additional power amp creates a soundstage of amazing scale and precision. We commend Audiolab and Monitor Audio, not only for such obvious sonic qualities but also for their outstanding engineering as well as a cosmetic finish which enhances the sheer desirability of all their award winning components.

AUDIOLAB 8000CD CD Player £999
AUDIOLAB 8000LX Integrated £449
AUDIOLAB 8000SX Pre Amp £549
MONITOR AUDIO Studio 12 Floorstanding Speakers £999

TOTAL £3016

PART-EX (Example) or Deposit £756
BALANCE £2260*
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If you're after that "hoo-tappin', finger poppin', hand clappin', thigh slappin'" sound experience - simply call in and listen! We'll demonstrate Naim, a company that places a convincing emphasis on the true value of system synergy. For a growing number of our customers, Naim reproduces music the way they like it, and we'll place a bet that when you listen, you'll probably discover that you do too!

The system is of course on demonstration and if that is something you would like to experience for yourself, please contact us and we will be delighted to make the arrangements for you. The system is of course on demo in our store.

**NAIM Credo Speakers £1060**

**NAIM 180 Power amp £1060**

**NAIM CD2 CD Player £2000**

**AUDIO RESEARCH VT50 CD player £3399**

**AUDIO RESEARCH L59 Pre £1949**

**AUDIO RESEARCH V150 Pwr £2895**

**KRELL 11(0250A Pwr £3195**

**MARTIN LOGAN C1511 £4555**

**KRELL (AV300CD CD player £3549**

**MERIDIAN 519 RF emod £450**

**MERIDIAN 518 Processor £5995**

**MERIDIAN 500 CD Transport £1745**

**MERIDIAN 565-7.1 5/5 Decoder with AC3/DTS £2850**

**MERIDIAN DSP 5000 Digital spkrs Rosewood (2 pairs) £9999**

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Audio Research have earned a global reputation with their highly sophisticated vacuum-tube amplifiers which, with the help of their new CD player in this system, will produce an utterly convincing portrayal of all types of music. Add the Probe Response 2.5 loudspeakers and, in our view, these devices help this system create the transparent sound of electrostatics with the sheer power that only superior cabinet speakers can achieve.

For many years we have delighted in the transparency of electrostatic speakers, but never more than when driven by huge power Class A amps. Electrostatics really open up to Krell amplifiers, enhancing their clarity with a three dimensionality which can be eerily real in some instances. With well recorded discs one can feel as if it's possible to walk right through a literally transparent soundstage to mingle with the musicians in your own living room!

Any system offering this level of performance usually deserves a home demonstration and if that is something you would like to experience for yourself, please contact us and we will be delighted to make the arrangements for you.

The system is of course on demo in store.

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PRIVATE

FOR SALE: Conrad Johnson PV10 AL (Special Edition) pre amp. Improvement over standard PV10 easily heard (£1300 new) £885. Tel: 01086 821 577 (Feb)

CELESTION DITTON 66 speakers, rewired, new cones by Celestion, excellent condition £325. 2 metre pair transparent speaker cable c/w spades/plugs £79. For details Tel: Paul Allen 0115 981 7814 (work) (Feb)

CASTLE HUMWAD Speakers, dark oak, upgraded by Rata, mint £525. Chord SPM 800 power amp £850. Quad 66 pre (upgraded) remote and tuner £725. Tel: 0121 233 321 (South Devon) (Feb)

LOWTHER. PAIR of original Lowther PM6 drive units, good condition but need reconing. £100 or best offer. Please Tel: 0191 233 8827 (Feb)

LIND LP12 Motor unit with 1996 mechanical upgrade, motor & Yatohala £375. Ringmat 330 XLR £70. Tel: 01664 822 648 (Melton Mowbray) (Feb)

EPOS ESII + Dedicated stands. Good condition £250 ono. Various speaker cables, Linn, Naim, Ortofon. Phone for details. Tel: Neil Hughes (Home) 01744 600 639 (Work) 01695 577 123 (mobile) 0468 896 979 (Feb)

CLEAR OUT: Linn KAN 2 speakers (free stands) £225. Polk LSFX speakers (surround dipole) £300. Pioneer 3 head cassette deck £75. Rappaport pre amplifier (separate power supply) £100. Tel: 01292 441 544 (Weekends) (Feb)

LIND KEILIDHIS With Kii-Stone plinths and 8m of X-400 bi-wire cable (£1000) £945. Chameleon Ruby power amp (£1000) £395. Will sell both for £695 for very quick sale. Tel: 0121 705 4859 (Feb)

MAGNAPLANAR MG1C Panel speakers, true audiophile speakers, big but they produce a beautiful soundstage £450. Quad 34/405.2 pre/power amps, excellent condition £325. Tel: 0131 661 5427 (Feb)

RADFORD MONITOR Loudspeakers, mint condition, wood unmarked, excellent bass. Will sell reluctantly due to space problems. Good offer secures. Ex. working order Quad tuner £30. Tel: 0131 364 6678 (Feb)

JOLIDA SJ-502A Int amp. extra tube, Teac P-700 CD transport, Cambridge DAC Magic II (fully modified), Tara Prism digital cable, Audioquest power cord. All £1100 (cost £1800) Tel: 0181 364 5687 (Feb)

LINN AXIS Turntable, Akito tonearm, K9 cartridge, ex. condition £280. Other cartridges available - offers. Wanted. Conrad Johnson pre-amp (phone) PV10A or similar. Also Linn Lingo PSU. Tel: 0121 353 1286 (Sutton Coldfield) (Feb)

CELESTION SL6005 speakers with DLP 600 and Kudos Lead filled stands £550. Rotel RIch MHT10 tuner £450. Theta TLC £1150. Goliath PSU for TLC £100. Sony Minidisc recorders MS30/MS37 £150 each. Cables; VdH First pairs 0.8m £85, 0.6m £70, Digital £40, Versalabs Wood Block £50. Tel: 0181 871 2345 evenings (Feb)

SNELL T Kore X Speakers, excellent condition, boxed, black ash £225 ono. Stands available. Also possibly for sale, Nakamichi Tri-Tracer 1000: Offers. Tel: James 01865 728 938 (Oxford/London) (Feb)


MARANTZ CD12 Limited Edition CD player for sale. As new condition, excellent sound, learning remote control, very high end transport and DAC. Cost £3000 when new. Sell for only £1400. Rotel RB-10 Michi power amplifier, very high quality power amplifier, excellent sound, cost £2300 when new, 200 watts RMS. Sell for only £1000. Tel: 01725 333 020 or 0647 234 218 (Bristol) (Feb)

MACKINTOSH MC60 (1962) valve monoblocks - offers. Meridian 208 CD/Pre-amp £595 ono. (new £1350) Quad 44/405 MkII pre/power amps £355, may split. Quad 306 power amp £155. Croft valve pre-amp £170. Tel: 01746 780 000 (Feb)

COLLECTORS ITEMS: QUAD 22 amp £75, Revox G36 tape recorder in case, excellent condition but noisy output stage £85. Ferrarlog Logic 7 tape recorder, good condition, playback only, used for editing £75. Also Dual CS 505-4 turntable plus Audio Technica cartridge. Excellent, boxed with manual £60. £250 for the lot. Buyer collects. Tel: 01222 617 767 (Cardiff) (Feb)

KLIPSCH CHORUS Speakers, excellent condition £900 ono. Tel: 0171 790 3404 or 0468 362 087 (Feb)

AUDIOLAB 8000S Amp. 6 months old, boxed, clear transparent sound £529. Audioquest Quartz 2 analogue interconnect £60. Tel: 0115 952 1820 (Feb)

ORACLE ALEXANDRA Mk3, SME309, ATOCs, Mana Soundframe £750. Fons MkI 3 speed, Rega RB250, OM10-7B stylus £100. Tel: 0181 554 6199 (Feb)

ORIGINAL DIRECT Cut vinyl disc, 'Thelma Houston' 'I've Got The Music In Me'. Serious offers invited. Collectors item. Other direct cut/super cut records available, i.e. Beatles Abbey Road. Tel: 01227 360452 (Feb)

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RAUKR SABRE loudspeakers in unmarked condition and walnut veneer £195 ono. Exposure loudspeaker cable. Two 8m lengths £30 ono. Tel: 01302 716 197 (Feb)

NAIM O2 TUNER (new) Linn Pretek, 2 Powerstek, Keithlich speakers (new). Meridian 200 CD player, 203 DAC, Nakamichi cassette deck 2. Target stand. All excellent condition. Offers. Tel: 0794 523 746 (Feb)

PROAC STUDIO 100 speakers with Target R1 stands. Both in excellent condition. (£900 new for pair) Selling for £595 on the pair. Tel: 01780 764 149 (Feb)

NAIM CD5 £700. NAP 180 £1350. NAP 180E (£2110). Epos ES1 £230 (mah.) SoundStyle rack £100 (£220). May split. Tel: Colin 01293 416 022 (Feb)

MISSION 752 Freedom (rosewood) Mint condition £430. Marantz CD63 KI Signature, mint condition £725. Arcam 6+ amp vgc £140. All boxed and instructions. Tel: 01508 499 568 after 4pm (Norfolk) (Feb)

MAGNAPLANNER MG10 £650. Quality monoblocks (prototypes) £350. Rega Planet CD + remote, boxed as new £375. MacIntosh MC 2100 power amp + power supply £700. Musical Fidelity XLP, boxed as new £100. Linn LP12 Valhala/Syrinx PU2/Rega Elys £500. All vgc. Tel: 01273 607 068 (Feb)

MUSICAL FIDELITY Myx2 pre-amp, 4 line + MM/MC phono stage, mint, boxed, cost £2300 new. Accept £695. Musical Fidelity P180 power amp £450. M. F. P270 MkI £695. Pink Triangle Da Capo DAC 22 bit and 1307 filters £695. Tel: 01634 287 686 (Feb)

SPENDORS SPI 001270/1 boxed perfect £250 or XC. Phillips Motional F/B LSS41 £65. Thorens 125, plinth, 3009, v15 £120. Revox Mint 791 tangential £175. Quad F4M mint boxed Charcoal No. 018246 £225. 5m remote for Teac R/R £25. Sony auto rev TC-V7 £40. Sony TC-1200 eating £75. £350. Nairn NAP 150. All mint and boxed. Tel: 01977 643 691 (Feb)

BBB LSS/124 Monitors, new, boxed, half price £600. Stands £50. Scope dual beam scope + manual £75. Fluke 802A digital multimeter + temp. probe + manual £65. Lowther PM5 drive unit £45. Tel: 01303 258 961 (Feb)

SYSTEMDEK IIXE 900, Acrylic platter, metal armboard, RB300/Golding 1020GX cartridge. Nice condition £350 ono. Sony Pro Walkman, leather case, cables, boxed, nice condition £150 ono. Tel: 0117 722 7969. 123 543 843 (Feb)

RIVERSIDE Processor. As new, boxed £600. Silliam, high end, silver screened digital cable, 1m, £60. Tel: Gerry Hassell 0181 751 3771 or 0181 890 3302 (business hours) (Feb)

COUNTERPOINT DA10/DA11 combo. Latest spec, high-end 20 bit DAC & transport. HDCD, JAC anti-jitter board etc. Black/silver finish. Half price - both items as new, boxed. DAC £1000. Transport £800. Silletech digital cables, 1m £100, 0.5m £65. Tel: Gerry Hassell 0181 751 3771 or 0181 890 3302 (business hours) (Feb)
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QUAD 412P (1948/51), actual one photographed for 'Audio Audio' book, plus matching Quad H.R.I tuner. Both in excellent original condition, serious offers only. £2000. Tel: 01550 777 336 (Feb)

ART AUDIO Tempos Class A triode monoblocks 30W, new £2700, £1200 ono. Ruark Acrodials, top of the range tri-wireable new £2700, £1200 ono. Silver Seven interconnects one metre £75. Caranee speaker cable, two 3.5 metre tri-wire lengths £70. Tel: Chris 0181 993 2006 (Feb)

QUICK SILVER valve monoblocks GEC XTB8 100wpc £(5500) £175. Quick Silver valve pre-amp MC phono (£2700) £725. Naim 42 with Avadale PSU £450. Radford Woodside WSC20 CD player Trichord Clock2 (£1100+£176) £450. Audio Synthesis Silverblue 2.5m £185. Oracal Delphi turntable Helen Scorpio arm Onix PSU £550. Mitchell Hydrolic Reference turntable Linn arm and cartridge £250. All mint and boxed. Tel: 01274 428 170 (Feb)

QUAD 77 CD (main) £600. 77 pre & system controller £550. 77 Stereo power amp £400. All grey Nextel. Tel: 01733 551 881 (Feb)

NAIM NAC2 and Supercap power supply, one year old but good as new. Unusual reason for sale. £3250. Tel: 01635 866 004 (Feb)

NAIM NAXO 3-4 crossover, new model, boxed, never used, currently located at a house in Guildford. List price £766. Will sell for £400. Tel: Ireland 01 739 984 (Feb)

SURROUND SOUND System (separates) high quality, boxed as new, mint. Sale due to bereavement. Denon, Rotel, Kenwood, Monitor, Celestion, Target, TV cables. Cost £2950, accept £1500. Details Tel: Charles 01398 323 406 - 01823 324 811 (Somerset-Derby) (Feb)

MUSICAL FIDELITY Ti Tuner. £80. Linn Valhalla PSU board for LP12 £55 (with 45 adaptor). Tel: 01522 694 871 (Lincoln) (Feb)

NEW VALVE Amplifiers using classic Mullard 5-20 circuit with modern high-quality components. Tesla/Sovtek valves, 25 watts per channel. Monoblock pair £250, single-chassis dual mono £300. Tel: 0181 427 1370 (Harrow) (Feb)

REGA ELA Loudspeakers (black) 12 months old. Immaculate condition. Five years warranty remaining, only £400. Also Soundstyle 4 shelf rack blue/black marble effect £200. Tel: 01257 401 954 (Feb)

FOR SALE: PT Two, RR250, boxed, excellent £350 ovno. Linn Basik, Akito, K6, boxed, excellent £75. RR300 silver wired by Audio Synthesis on Linn board £110 ovno. Tel: 0191 226 0174 (Feb)

TECHNICS SLP1200 CD player as in November 97 Hi-Fi World, page 47. Complete boxed £375 ovno. Tel: Lyn 01302 321 066 (Doncaster) (Feb)

NAIM 82 £1350, 3 x Hi Caps £400 each. Naxo 2/4 X-over £300. All new style. 2 x NAP 250 serviced & matched, old style £650 each. Avadale 42 preamp with CD input & power supply £300. All perfect c/w boxes & manuals. Tel: 01527 401 954 (Feb)

WANTED: QUAD 66 Pre amp with remote. Quad 66 tuner, Quad 67 CD. Must be mint. Also LEL 63's Tel: 01453 764 734 (Feb)

XTC PRE 1, pre amplifier, lacquer black, remote control, superb performer, highly reviewed, 3 months old, boxed, as new, cost £1250, sell £800. Tel: 01634 365 153 (Kent) (Feb)

REGA ELA Loudspeakers (black) 12 months old. Immaculate condition. Five years warranty remaining, only £400. Also Soundstyle 4 shelf rack blue/black marble effect £200. Tel: 01253 844 023 (Blackpool) (Feb)

TANNIO CHATSWORTH Speakers 12" Monitor Gold, in mint condition £375. Tel: 01829 702 115 (Cheshire) (Feb)

QUAD ESL 63 with MAF stands. Black grilles, rosewood finish. Mint condition, boxed as new. Reluctant sale due to recent move £1500. Tel: 01727 315 723 (Feb)

ROSE RX-235 valve pre-amp £300. Audiocon Sterling valve power amp £350. Buyer collects. Tel: 01529 460 016 (Lincs) (Feb)

WANTED: E.M.I. TR900 tape recorder. Someone must have one! Will collect. Tel: 01580 830 558 (Feb)


NAKAMICHI DR3 10 hours use £199. ProAc Super Tablettes inc Target stands, vgc £350. Meridian 204 tuner £249. Quad 306, vgc £190. Yamaha E200 Dolby Pro Logic processor, vgc £149. Tel: 01293 886 205 (evenings) Sussex (Feb)

LINN CD and active crossover. Linn Karik 3 CD player, 9 months old £1350. Active electronic crossover for Isobarik £500 ono. Tel: 01753 851 429 (Feb)

PAIR DENON 6600A Monoblock power amplifiers. Excellent with Isobariks or similar hard to drive loudspeakers. 260W into 8 ohms, 450W into 4 ohms. Spare pair boxed £500. Tel: 01455 233 017 (Feb)

PAIR UNISON Research Smart 845 monoblocks. Superb sound. Mint condition, hardly used. Boxed. Upgrade necessitates sale. Demonstration, and delivery may be possible. £2300. Tel: 01666 504 550 (weekend) or 01772 853 658 (work) (Feb)

ROTEL RCD96SBX, Micromega Microdac, Linn Intek, Tannoy 609's, Target stands, quality interconnects, bi-wired (cost £1500), boxed, mint £600. Tel: 01282 817 143 (Lancs) (Feb)

THORENS 155 Mk II turntable with ADC cartridge, two Mordaunt Short MS600 mahogany speakers (Decca ribbon tweeter, Celestion 10" woofers), Akai GXC3200 cassette deck. Best offer accepted. Tel: 01491 612 521 (Feb)

AND O RECYCLED DDB5 transport with £350 Trichard mods £550. SD10 speakers just run in new £2950, £1800, Zeta Vd tonearm and reipped Koetsu Red Signature £800. old style SD1 speakers £450. All mint, any demo. Tel: 01343 614 916 after Fri (Feb)

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Not all products are available at every branch - please check before travelling.

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Hi-Fi World Classified Ads

PRIVATE

HAIN GEAR (New style) - CDS £2200, NAC52 £3300, NAP250 £1000, NAT01 £900. LP12 Lingo, Ekos, Arkiv £1200. Malakamiich C87 £1100. Marantz CD10 £400. Two Rotel Dolby units £100. All mint. Tel: 01047 110 414 (isw) (Feb)

CLASSE AUDIO DR6 preamplifier, boxed in very good condition £1100. Theta Pro Basic III DAC (upgradeable). Boxed in mint condition £1300. Townshend Seismic Sink (£). Small size, for £036 (Northamptonshire) (Feb) interconnects £15. Tel: 01933 356 8952 (Feb)

FOR SALE: Technics SL-1000 MkII turntable with Technics plinth (original heavy version). Modifications include high-grade regulators, Ceraline and Nichicon PSU caps. Comes with SME armboard. Superb sound, £650. Wanted: Kenwood L02A integrated, Sony TA-N888 power amp and Technics SST-1 speakers. Also circuit diagrams for Technics ST-3500 and ST-9600 tuners. Tel: Jon 0181 992 241 (Feb)

SONUS FABER Electa speakers, mint, boxed (£1900) £900. Atacama SE24 sand filled stands £40. Micromega T Drive, T Dac with digital interconnect, mint, boxed. (£1200) £850. Tel: 0181 543 8625 (Feb)

TDL STUDIO 1 Speakers, walnut, immaculate £450 incl. stands, and Naim cables, boxed. Tel: 01494 727 504 (Feb)

MOTH 30 SERIES, 40W monoblocks £350. Moth Leyline black interconnects £75. Tel: 01933 356 086 (Northamptonshire) (Feb)

ARCAM ALPHA 6 CD player £350. Arcam Alpha 6 plus amplifier £220. Kef Coda 9 loudspeakers £160. Audioquest Ruby interconnect £45. 2 Cabletalk professional interconnects £50 each. Tel: 01489 570 990 (Feb)

IMPULSE H6's Horn loaded speakers (89dB) superb sound. Walnut real wood finish, as new condition, recommended by Jimmy Hughes. Demo welcome. Cost £1425 bargain at £675. Genuine reason for sale. Tel: 01780 764 149 (Feb)

MERIDIAN M2 Active speakers, all new drive units fitted '97, mint. Bring your own records/TT for demo. £500 incl. stands. Tel: 0181 682 4588 or 01733 715 223 (Feb)

ROYAL CAROLINA C87 used one month and stored since 1991. As new in original packing £900. Marantz CD94 II similarly stored and immaculate. Has AT&T additional re-clocked output (also coax) for use as very high quality transport. Hardly used £850 ono. Tel: 01483 282 864 (Feb)

AFIOLAB 8080C and 8080P plus Cabletalk Reference 2 interconnect, less than one year old. Pair Harbeth SHL speakers (teak) and stands (6 years old) £950 ono. Tel: 01483 503 579 (Feb)

QUAD F4 Tuner, bronze colour £185. Pair of Leak 2075 speakers. OK condition but one tweeter gone. £140 ono. Tel: Ralph 0121 783 3928 (Feb)

PAIR OF B&W 801 Series 2 Matrix speakers, black ash hoods with American upgrades i.e. Sound Anchor stands and Maughanbox Line stages. £1800 just for the upgrades alone. £2800 ono. Tel: Ralph 0121 783 3928 (Feb)

FOR SALE A 60lb heavyweight Nakamichi amplifier CA7E plus matching CASE pre-amp. Recently serviced by importers Bowers & Wilkins. Originally cost in excess of £2500. Offers in the region of £900. Tel: 01799 550 208 (Essex/Cambs borders) (Feb)

ATC 100 Active speakers £4000. Martin Logan Aerus speakers £1150. Micromega Stage CD drive £300. Rotel Pro-Logic pre amp and 6 channel power amp £400. Tel: 01977 643 629 (Feb)

DYNACO VALVE Set comprising Pas-3 pre, Stereo-7 power and FM-3 tuner, all excellent £800. Leak 2075 loudspeakers, amazing sound quality, excellent condition £750. Rogers Cadet 3 £95. Armstrong valve amp £125. Radford 180/50 studio monitors £220. Castle Conways £195. Tel: 01484 603 107 (Feb)

LEAK TL12+ amplifier, Variospace mono pre- amplifier, Troughline 3 mono tuner, Sandwich speaker, Goldring GL58 turntable, original owner complete with instructions and guarantees. Also Leak Stereo 70 amplifier and Akai GXC 3100 tape deck. Sensible offers. Tel: 01923 234 190 (Feb)

ARCAM ALPHA 5+ CD £475 sell £199. Cambridge Audio CD4 £75. Both mint, boxed. Speakers B&W CD2 £399 sell £199. Rogers LS1 £65 as new boxed. Tel: 01865 559 737 daytime (Oxford) (Feb)

MISSION 753 Freedom loudspeakers £499. AVI S2000MP pre amplifier with remote control and £2000MA power amplifier £449. Tel: 01270 214 143 day or 01270 625 159 evenings (Feb)

MERIDIAN 551 Integrated amp with 209 remote £475. Meridian 551 power £400. Creek OBH-8 stereo stage with power supply, magnetic £80. Pink Triangle L.P.T. piano black, RB300, Simuko Blue Point £350. Audiolab 8000 amp £275. Royd Minstral speakers £140. Tel: 01226 710 605 (Yorkshire) (Feb)

WANTED: MISSION Cyrus III or SL integrated amplifiers. Must be in good condition and perfect working order. Tel: 0181 452 1452 (evenings) (Feb)
WINTER SPECIAL PRICES

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Product Description</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<tr>
<td>ART AUDIO QUINTET MONOBLOCKS (CHROME/GOLD)</td>
<td>£2095.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>BEAM ECHO DL7-35 MONOBLOCKS</td>
<td>£2500.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>GAMMA ACOUSTICS GEMINI LINE INTEGRATED</td>
<td>£450.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>GAMMA ACOUSTICS RHYTHM PHONO</td>
<td>£1100.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>GAMMA ACOUSTICS AEON MONOBLOCKS</td>
<td>£2995.00</td>
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<td>TUBE TECHNOLOGY SYNERGY PRE POWER</td>
<td>£3995.00</td>
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<td>TUBE TECHNOLOGY UNISIS POWER</td>
<td>£1195.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>TUBE TECHNOLOGY PROPHET PRE AMP</td>
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NAIM 72 Pre-amp, MM boards, new style case £395. Naim Hi-Cap new style £395. Micromega Duo Pro 2 DAC, boxed, new £1350. Will accept £650. All excellent. Tel: 01524 381 389 (Lancaster) (Mar)

REL STORM sub-woofer £450. Alchemist Odion power amp 80w A/B £350. Rotel RCD 965 CD player £125. All mint and boxed. 8 meters Qudos bi-wire £20. Tel: 01992 626 138 (Feb)

VOYD VALDI turntable, Helius Aurens arm, Rega RB300 if preferred. Goldring 1042, 5 years old, but little used, perfect condition £375. Tel: 0181 994 2030 after 6pm (Feb)


NAIM NAP180 power amplifier. Absolutely mint condition, boxed £695. Tel: 01225 812 314 (Feb)

LEAK TL10 with pre-amp, totally original and excellent condition, GE KT61 £200. Frequency Counter, Racal-Dana 9001, Nano-second resolution, DC-160MHz, PC Comm's etc, extremely high spec lab grade instrument, virtually mint condition £500 (£1000+) Tel: 01384 411 488 days (Feb)

RESTEK CHALLENGER Integrated pre-power amp £425. Naim Hi-Cap £280. Mod Squad line drive/phono drive units £295 pair. Tel: John 01494 837 358 (Bucks) (Mar)

ARCAM ALPHA 6 CD player. Mint and boxed with remote and manuals. Cost £600 will accept £300 or £150 player plus cash. Audioquest Video X digital interconnect £20. Tel: 0191 374 5563 (work) 0191 373 1062 (home) (Feb)

EPOS ESU loudspeakers including dedicated stands. Good condition £250 ono. Tel: 0121 344 3598 (Feb)

AURA YABO Amplifier, boxed, good condition £135. Denon PM350 SE amplifier. As new, 5 months old, boxed £100. Mission 733 floorstanding speakers. Good condition £110. Tel: 01604 39482 (Northampton) (Feb)

MERIDIAN 551 Integrated amp with 209 remote £475. Meridian 555 power £480. Primare A20 integrated amp with remote £600. Wanted: Lescon AP3 Mk2 and Lescon tuner. Also reel tape. Tandberg, Teac etc. Tel: 01226 710 605 (Yorkshire) (Feb)

QUAD FM4 tuner, bronze £200. Meridian 501 pre-amp with brand new Meridian system remote control £450. All the above in mint condition, boxed with manuals. Tel: 01257 277 857 (Lancs) (Feb)


THORENS TD124, Alphason HR100 MCS, Denon DL304 £450. Quad 33, FM3, 405 £190. Sugden R21 amp R21 stereo tuner £150. Garrard Zero 100 £25. Wharfedale Tritons £40. Goldring 1960 arm £25. All excellent. Tel: 01709 555 403 (Rotherham) (Feb)

WANTED: MARTINS Speakers, circa 1970 (very approx) Tel: 01270 67717 (Crewe, Cheshire) (Feb)

MOBILE FIDELITY LP's for sale. Excellent, 600, mint condition. Dean Atm speakers including stands £445 ono. Excellent condition, Rotel RB-870/RC-870 pre & power amp, as new £225 ono. Tel: 01443 645 432 (Feb)

QUAD II (one only), 22 pre + FM tuner GEC KT66's + manual, mint £190. Quad II FM tuner £60. Quad 33 pre £60. Roberts R707 radio £40. Tel: 01902 870 101 (Feb)

MARTIN LOGAN SL3 (light oak), purchased new 15/8/97. Superb, boxed, mint £260. Wanted: Sonus Faber Extremas or Wilson Benesch A.C.T. One's. Tel: 01902 786 818 (Midlands) (Mar)

AKAI GX600DB Reel to reel tape deck. Vgc plus 6 Maxell 10" tapes. As new £175. Tel: 01253 824 005 (Feb)

NAIM NAC27 (new style), Hi-Cap (old style), NAP90 (new style) £950. Chord interconnects and Naim speaker cable £50. Tel: 01902 878 228 or 0991 245 322. (Tunbridge Wells) (Feb)

AUDIO INNOVATIONS Series 1000 pre-amp £1500 new, boxed, £500. Dunlop Transcription tuntable with Signet arm £200. Tel: 0181 776 0044 (Feb)

NAIM 82/180 S+X boards £250. Linn Arrivk low hours £345. Linn Kan II speakers + stands £245. Arcam 70.3 CD player £245. Sound Org. T/T support + 4 tier stand £60. 2 x 4m Naca 5 cable £20. Tel: 01256 704 273 (Feb)

LEAK TL10 Amplifiers, pair, Stereo 20 + Point One pre + Trouthline tuner. TL12 + gold, mono. Pye Mozart mono. Rogers Cadet III power. KG88 mark I. Quad 33/303/FM3, Quad ESL 57 Serial nos. 51,000. Late model, immaculate. Quad 66 CD player. Phone for details. Tel: 01752 837 338 (Feb)

WANTED: QUAD II Control unit, Quad II power amps, Quad FM tuner, AM tuner, Quad ESL 57 speakers. Complete system preferred. Tel: 01225 461 148 (Bath) (Feb)

CHORD SPM 800 Amp, mint condition, boxed with instructions £990. Tel: 01642 822 066 (Feb)

AUDIO RESEARCH LS7 valve pre- amplifier, cost over £700, £1150, and Audio Research V706 valve power amplifier, cost over £2200, only £1350. Mint condition, all manuals and packing. Tel: 0181 995 6451 (Feb)

ORIGIN LIVE Sovereign floor stander, superb redwood veneer, boxed as new, cost £1100, only £690. Naim NAC92/NAP90.3 pre-power, cost £920, no packing, so only £495. Tel: 0181 995 6451 (Feb)

ART AUDIO 'Diavolo' power amp (225's) as new, 7 months old, £3500 new, will accept £2600. Tel: 01509 231 254 (Feb)
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CASTLE CHESTER. Speakers in medium oak finish. 2 years old, excellent condition £350 one. Tel: 01785 816 581 (Feb)

BEARD P35 valve power amp £400. Quad ESL 57 speakers £350. Lexicon CP2 processor £300. Harbeth P3 speakers £250. Tel: 0181 898 8292 (Mar)

QUAD ESL63 pair blacks £1700. Pair Quad II monoblocks £450. Quad 22 £100. Quad ESL57 one only bronze £190. Quad II monoblock £235. Quad 22 £100. All fully overhauled by Quad Aug 97 and unused since then. Heathkit tuner £75. All equipment bought for test purposes but no longer required. Tel: Malcolm 01923 285 266 (day) 282 638 (eve) 285 160 (fax) (Feb/I)

MERIDIAN 541 £750 with MSR M600 centre £750. Both £1400. Also M60 Actives £500. All £260. Six month used. All mint, boxes, cables etc. Tel: 01509 219 489 Mobile 0498 712 975 (Loughborough) (Feb)

EPOS ES14 Speakers, walnut, phase plug model, including Epos stands, not bi-wire but any Epos dealer can convert £325. Tel: 0131 310 2174 evenings/weekends (Edinburgh) (Mar/I)

TWO QUAD ESL63 Electrostatic speakers £1000. Audio Pro sub woofer £100. Meridian MCD Professional CD player £100. Quad 405 current dumping amplifier £50. Quad 44 control unit £50. All vgc. Tel: 01932 877 917 (Feb)

WANTED: PINK Triangle Pip II pre-amp. Must be mint. Tel: 0181 461 4797 after 6pm (Mar)


MERIDIAN 2078 CD Preamp 204 tuner, both Meridian serviced Sept 97. M.S.R. Meridian M30 II active speakers stands £950. Play split. Y/D.H. source 2x 1/2 mtrs £55. Tel: 01493 851 296 (Great Yarmouth) (Feb)

300 WPC MUSICAL Fidelity F19 poweramp. Current top of the range amp. Awesome dynamics, effortless sonic delivery. Cost new £9995, asking £1250. Tel: 01796 437 314 (Aylesbury, Bucks) (Feb)

RIJARK ACCOLADE loudspeakers, 3 way design, Dynaudio bass, mid and high drive units. Stunning appearance, effortless dynamic presentation. Cost new £2700, asking £1450. Tel: 01296 437 314 (Aylesbury, Bucks) (Feb)

QUAD 67 Compact Disc wanted, with remote & manual (book), boxed if possible. Tel: 0151 336 1808 (Feb)

QUAD 77 INT Amp. Carbon, boxed, mint £450. Acoustic Energy AE1’s. New bass units, dedicated stands, black gloss cabs. Boxed. £650. Linn Sondek, black, Ittok MC200, Ortofon, boxed etc. £550. OCL 0.1 interconnect 1.0 mtr (erp £180) £100. Tel: Jules 01792 280 061 (Feb/I)

TANNOY EATON (10” HPD) in excellent condition & boxed £295. Pair Seas 25FWRX boxed £50. Thorens TD150 II vgc & original £45. New Tannoy 625 ALF subwoofer £260. Tel: 01494 874 381 (Bucks) (Feb)


REVOX A77 Mk3 reel to reel tape deck, high speed, two track, needs major service. Also more than 250 tapes, mainly EMI Professional. Best offer or good use secures. Tel: 0171 251 8893 (Feb)


TUBE TECHNOLOGY Synergy PPS valve amplifier. Four months old (balance of 10 year guarantee left) boxed with instruction book £3950 (£6900) No offers. Tel: 01703 601 222 (Southampton) (Mar)

LEFD INTEGRATED Zero amp, mint & boxed £300. Pair Kel SP1014 £60. Leak Troubridge Stereo tuner £45. Pair Jordan Watts tweeters £20. Yamaha keyboard, 5 octaves + stand, tutor manual £70. Tel: 01202 429 353 (Bournemouth) (Feb)

LECSON HL-1 Horn loaded loudspeakers, excellent condition £295. Buyer must collect due to size! (Pembrokehire). Audio Innovations Series 200 prep/power, mint £450. Tel: 01834 680 681 (Feb/I)

WANTED: LEAK Stereo 20 in vgc or rebuilt; a Williamson amplifier, original or newly built; Muvistor preamp (from Glass Audio); Hi-Fi World’s KL101 preamp, 300B and KSB81PSE power amps; Conrad-Johnson PV-5, MY-50; VdH or Garrot Decca. Tel: 0181 883 5618 (Feb)

DYNACO PAS 3 Stereo valve preamp £160. Dynaco Pat 4 Stereo preamp £85. Technics SU6000 Stereo Class A amp £90. Wharfedale Linton Stereo amp £50. Nelson Jones Stereo tuner £35. Tel: 01372 467 264 (Eshe) (Feb)

AUDIOLAB Hi-Fi System for sale. 8000Q £750, 8000 CD £900, 8000 DAC £500, 8000M’s £1200, 8000T £450. Nakamichi DR-3 £200. All as new, boxes & manuals. Call for further details. Tel: 01275 333 020 or 0467 234 218 (Feb)

CELESTION A-3 Loudspeakers for sale, as new condition, only 3 months old, black ash, complete with boxes etc. As new condition cost £2400. Sell for only £1800. Tel: 01275 333 020 or 0467 234 218 (Feb)

NAKAMICH P47 Power amp 200w £795. Stax pre-amp with built in headphone driver. Includes moving coil amp + Gamma Pro headphones. Rare. £750. Infinity RS5 speakers £250. All mint. Tel: 0151 259 4703. (Feb)

RON SMITH Galaxie 17 tuner aerial, as new £50. Sennheiser 565 Ovation headphones. Boxed, immaculate condition £60. Tel: 01633 667 346 (Feb)

ROYD MINSTRAL floor standing, black ash speakers. Excellent condition. 1 year old, ‘run-in’, boxed. Cost £235. A bargain at £120. Tel: 01904 708 834 (Feb)

NAIM 110 Power amp £225, Naim 265 preamp £175, old style. Linn Kans, with Kan II stands £210, 20 metres Linn K20 cable £25. Naim m/coil boards £30. Tel: 01902 373 396 (Feb)

ARCHAM ALPH 6 CD player, as new condition £325 one. Tel: 01745 331 681 (Feb/I)

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VAN DEN HUL MC2 Cartridge, only 100 hours use. Perfect and rebuilds are cheap £450 (£1350). VPI Unipivot arm, The JMW £850. Both immaculate. Tel: 0181 325 2585 (Feb)

PRIME DESIGNS A100 Mk2 integrated amp. 100 watts. Sweeter sound than earlier version. Brand new condition. £400 (£650) Tel: 0171 221 0691 after 5pm. Leave message on ansaphone.

LUXMAN 308 Amplifier £250
Yamaha DSP/970 Prologic amplifier £300. Pioneer PL12 turntable £30. Rega R200 arm £50. Armstrong A121 valve stereo receiver £60. Sony TCX 60 cassette £40. Tel: 01708 457 691 (Feb)

ARCAM ALPHA 5 Plus CD player. £300 rebuilt by RATA. Excellent sound, manual and boxed. Upgrading. £210. Tel: 01903 247 779 (Feb)


WANTED URGENTLY: QUAD 67 CD Player to replace stolen item. Tel: 01453 764 734 or 0370 951 875 (Mar)

Mr. A. J. Brown, 55 Upperton Rd, Southport, Merseyside. Tel: 01704 521 387. (Mail: GerryWhitlow@compuserve.com (High Wycombe) (Feb)

STOCK CLEARANCE of Audio Engineering Systems interconnect cables. Blue Moon pure silver cable £60, normally £190. Yellow Crystal silver plated cable £45, normally £140. Tel: 01189 891 752 evenings or weekends only. (Feb)


NAI MANCES & HANGA BUY/SELL ALL ITEMS e.g. 52, CDC, SCAP, NAKO, HICAP, NAKO, 135, 250, SBL, IBL, 180, 140, 72, 32, MANA etc. Tel: BCB 01382 819 732 (Dec)

NAI M NCT 72, Avondale NAP 140, HiCap £1050 ono. 2 x 5 Na In 1M A5 £30. Tel: 01925 772 243 (eve & w/ends) (Mar)

WANTED EARLY HI-FI LOUDSPEAKERS
Tannoy, Lowther, Parmeko, Voigt, Vitavox, RCA WE etc. TURNTABLES
Garrard, BCCD1, EMT SME, Ortofon, Decca etc. VALVE AMPLIFIERS
AEI, EMI, Leak, Rogers, PYE, Quad, WE etc. AUDIO VALVES
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COPPER SHIELDING
CD 'Roof': RF interference and casing vibration cut dramatically. Also damping pads, component shields. Sheet copper for DIY. SAE: Koppera, PO Box 6681, Dundee, DD5 1YB. EMail: wkopp@taynet.co.uk (Feb)

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