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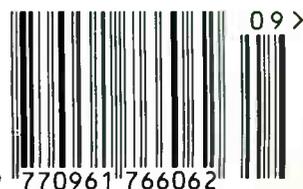


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LISTEN AND YOU'LL SEE

World Radio History



There are many mysteries in the world of hi-fi - were graphic equalisers originally invented as Christmas decorations and only later crossed into the audio arena; why are most components as stylish as breeze blocks? One of the more puzzling is, why aren't there more domestic active loudspeaker systems out there?

In recording studios almost everywhere you'll find a pair of active loudspeakers doing monitor duty. Not only does building your power amps into the cabinets save on space and spaghetti, but active operation has some very obvious sonic benefits over passive.

Direct connection of a tweeter or mid/bass unit to the power amp driving them means there are no large capacitors, resistors or inductors to taint the signal. Pushing the crossover back to a point ahead of the power amp where signal levels are lower allows the use of much smaller, higher-tolerance parts which cause far less coloration and distortion. Electronic crossovers also offer the chance to iron out a driver's occasionally over-enthusiastic output to yield a very, very flat



JON MARKS

overall response (some pro actives quote limits as tight as ± 1 dB, which would be nigh on impossible to achieve passively).

Since they effectively come complete with amplification and loudspeaker cables, most studio active monitors start at about £600-£800 and can run well into four or even five figures. But these are ruthlessly revealing, high-power devices designed to peel back the musical layers and peer deep into the mix, and that costs. However, domestic versions like Wharfedale's well-known active Diamonds don't have to operate under such arduous conditions, and so tend to be just a bit more affordable.

We've decided to look at active

loudspeakers from both professional and domestic fields to find out just how much better than passives they can be. This month, we've gathered pro candidates from companies like KRK, Soundcraft and Harbeth at prices from £800-£1000. In the next issue we turn our attention to the domestic offerings, starting with Jamo's £200 CS5. These shielded two-ways are aimed mainly at satisfying those who rely on their computers to provide music, but initial impressions suggest they make a strong case for themselves as strictly hi-fi transducers.

What the Jamos and the Diamonds show, though, is that the benefits of active technology are just as obvious in good budget equipment as they are in pricier alternatives. Which brings me back to my question: why aren't there more domestic active loudspeakers? We will be attempting to track down as many of these rare beasts as possible, but audiophiles can only hope home hi-fi manufacturers cotton on to the potential in this area and begin producing a wider range of models.

HOW WE TEST THE PRODUCTS

- *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.



WORLD VERDICT



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



GOOD - Has strong merit. Well worth an audition.



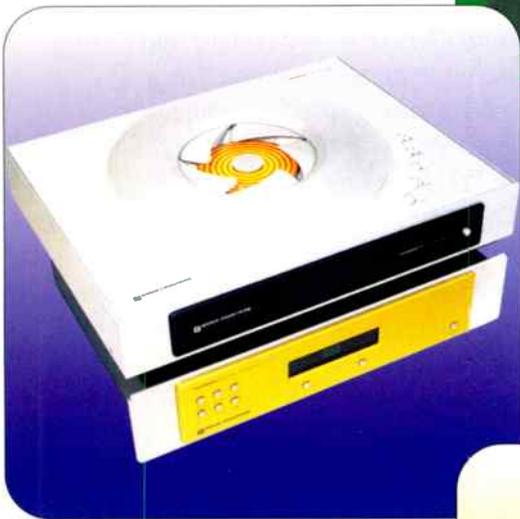
ADEQUATE - Mediocre in several areas. May be worth auditioning.



POOR - Seriously flawed. Not worth considering.

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- Clive Meakins - Hi-Fi News - June '98

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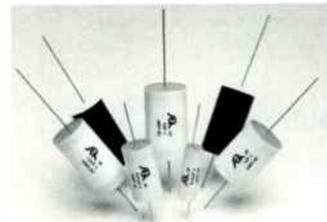


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DVD RECORDING ARRIVES

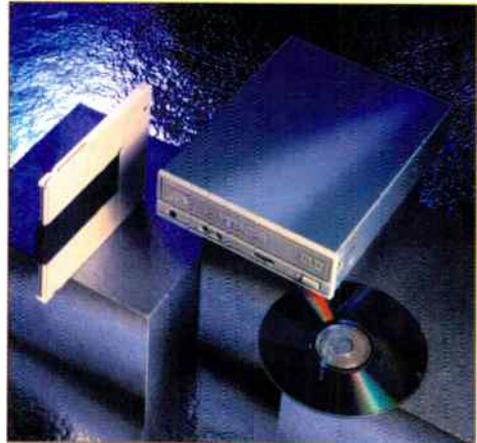
CD-Recordable and ReWritable may have been occupying centre stage recently in both the computing and hi-fi spheres, but there's a new format on the block which many have been awaiting with baited breath - DVD-RAM. The DVD technology which packs video or 24-bit/96kHz audio onto a CD-size disc has been read-only up to now. However, with the release of Toshiba's GF-1050 DVD-RAM drive, recordability has arrived.

The '1050 uses phase-change to store 2.6Gb per side on rewritable blank discs. At the moment, as is the case with CD-ReWritable, blank costs are high at £25 for a double-sided disc, and on top of that the Hitachi won't write to either CD-R or CD-RW. There's also the fact that you'll need a dedicated DVD-RAM drive to read the discs once they've been recorded onto, as standard DVD machines can't cope with them (again, another trait shared with CD-RW).

The £465 GF-1050 is designed to slot into a Personal Computer, but as many computer drive mechanisms have made

their way into hi-fi CD players, it's only a matter of time before it turns up on the specialist audio scene.

The fact that you can already buy 24/96 audio discs (albeit from a very limited range of titles at present), that DVD now comes in rewritable form and that it's likely to do well in the huge computer market strengthens the hand of DVD Audio in the face of the (hopefully) imminent launch of Sony and Philips' Super Audio CD.



16 NOT OUT

Wharfedale have produced yet another version of their ever-green Diamond bookshelf 'speakers to celebrate the 16th anniversary of the original launch. Styled the 'Anniversary Diamond' and limited in production to 5000 pairs, these two-ways are based on the Diamond 7.2 but boast a new 130mm mid/bass driver and a 1in.



silk-domed, ferro-fluid-cooled tweeter. With a new crossover and choice of Rosewood, light Oak or Teak veneers, the Anniversary Diamonds will set you back £199.95.

Wharfedale
Sovereign Court,
Ermine Business Park,
Huntingdon,
Cams. PE18 6WA
Tel: 01480 447700

HARD GRAAF

As many enthusiasts will be aware, valve amplifiers employing neither capacitors nor transformers between their valves and the loudspeakers they drive (otherwise known as Output Capacitorless and Output Transformerless amplifiers) have tended to be a touch on the esoteric side. Although the benefits are potentially great, so are the difficulties of devising a system which works reliably without the need for constant adjustment and is also cheap (in terms of replacement valves) to run.

Graaf's GM20 claims both these distinctions in what the company calls a user-friendly and stylish package. Not having a City and Guilds in audio equipment maintenance is apparently no bar to owning a GM20, which offers 25watts/channel in stereo configuration or 60watts when monobloc'd.

Interfacing directly with the loudspeakers are the 6C33 output triodes (two per channel in push-pull) which are readily available for £20-£30. The Graaf is available through JKD and costs £2750.

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CHESKY



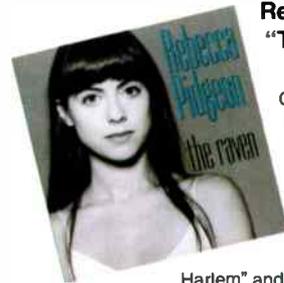
Rebecca Pidgeon "Four Marys" (CD)

Acclaimed singer/actress Rebecca Pidgeon takes listeners on a musical journey back to her Scottish roots with traditional songs of love, infidelity, war and revenge. Her crystalline voice blends magically with Scottish music's top

musicians. See Ms. Pidgeon in the new David Mamet film, "The Spanish Prisoner."

"... delivers delicate art songs and Celtic-derived folk, her arrangements achieving a cool jazz-meets-chamber - music elegance." -- Rolling Stone

"You want to listen to Pidgeon all night." -- Robb Report



Rebecca Pidgeon "The Raven" (CD)

On this audiophile classic, Ms. Pidgeon's lovely voice rings with honest, unpretentious confidence and vivid tenderness. Features her legendary rendition of "Spanish Harlem" and "Grandmother."

"96 kHz/24-bit super Audio DVD Releases



David Chesky "Three Psalms For String Orchestra" (CD, 96/24 Super Audio DVD)

David Chesky's newest composition for modern orchestra examines spiritual crisis. Recorded at 96kHz/24-bits with the Deutsches Film orchester Babelsberg and conductor Stephen Somary, "Three Psalms" is an emotional listening experience that will move lovers of modern romantic music.

"...real power and depth...[the sound] is expansive, both wide and deep" -- Audio



"The Super Audio Collection & Professional Test Disc" (96/24 Super Audio DVD)

Experience the new audio benchmark with the first original 96kHz/24-bit Super Audio DVD. Features 96/24 recordings of Sara K., Rebecca Pidgeon, Babatunde Olatunji, Livingston Taylor and more, as well as test tones for professional audio applications.



The John Basile Quartet "The Desmond Project" (CD, 96/24 Super Audio DVD)

John celebrates the genius of alto saxophone legend Paul Desmond with stunning new guitar quartet arrangements of classics like "For All We Know," "My Funny Valentine" and "Take Five." A 96kHz/24-bit recording.

"...the superior detail and life of the 96/24 DVD...provides some of the nicest soundstage detail around." -- Audio



Livingston Taylor "Ink" (CD, 96/24 Super Audio DVD)

"...from the opening passage of whistling to the end of ["Isn't She Lovely"]. Listen to this recording and your are never going to be fully satisfied with CD again..."



Sara K. "Hobo" Sara K. "Hobo" (CD, 96/24 Super Audio DVD)

"Hobo" showcases this powerful singer-songwriter's hottest and hardest-hitting

album to date with gorgeous 96kHz/24-bit detail. Features a smoking acoustic rendition of the Commodore's '70s smash, "Brick House," as well as Sara's beautifully composed and performed "Moving Big Picture." "Sara's voice took on layer after layer of velvety, throaty texture. Sounds expanded in space...Acoustic guitars sprang to life..." -- Fi



Babatunde Olatunji "Love Drum Talk" (CD)

The Father of World music returns on this superb-sounding 1998 Grammy-Award nominee for Best World Music Album. Irresistible dance

rhythms and beautiful ensemble singing show why Olatunji's music and spirit have been moving the soul since his landmark debut "Drums Of Passion."

"...I stand in awe of the recent Chesky Records release 'Love Drum Talk'...The sound quality is as staggering as the music." -- Fi

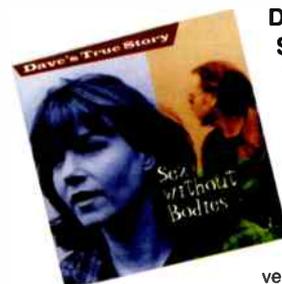


Paquito D'Rivera' "Portraits of Cuba" (CD)

On this 1997 Grammy-Award winner for Best Latin Jazz Album, saxophonist and clarinetist Paquito

D'Rivera and a top-notch jazz ensemble perform lush arrangements of classic, Cuban jazz songs. Very much in the spirit of Davis' and Evans' "Sketches of Spain," "Portraits" features "The 'I Love Lucy Theme'" and "The Peanut Vendor."

"...achieves an immaculate and detailed audio presentation..." -- Gramophone



Dave's True Story "Sex Without Bodies" (CD)

This hot jazz/beatnik/ lounge group creates an arresting world of love, lust and venetian blinds with

sultry vocals, ironic lyrics and jazzy chord progressions. Stir up those martinis!

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 "Smoldering lounge grooves and cheeky Beatnik lyrics" -- Billboard.

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World Radio History

BAG A BARGAIN

Bag End are offering their Infrasub-18 subwoofer (or is that sub-sub-woofer?) at a price of £1495. With a frequency response down to 8Hz at -3dB and a response tightly specified to ± 1 dB from 12Hz to 70Hz, the Infrasub is obviously intended to bring the house down.

An in-built amplifier capable of 400watts is trimmed and optimised for the 18in. driver by Bag End's ELF dual-integrator system. This offers the choice of operation from the output of a pre or power amp without risk of damage to the Infrasub's

amplifier or driver. The latter is loaded by a sealed enclosure of approximately three cubic feet, which is constructed from 0.75in. MDF. The Bag End measures two feet square by 18in. deep and tips the scales at 103lbs.

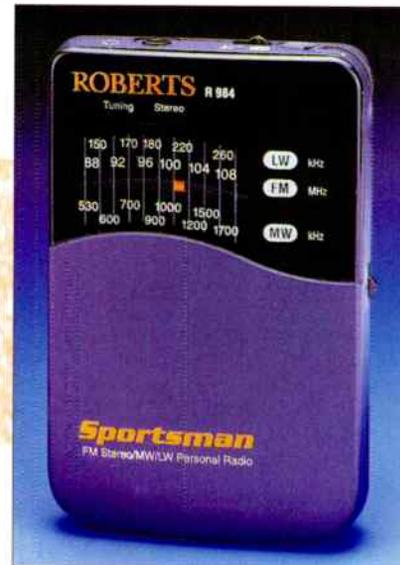
The De-Règle Group
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Cambs. PE13 3SL
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HOWZAT?!

Although perhaps more high-jinx than hi-fi, Long Wave is still an important part of the radio spectrum for the followers of the 'flannelled fools at the wicket' on Test Match days. Roberts Radio has decided to cater for these enthusiasts with their new Sportsman, a three-band pocket portable which covers the all-important LW as well as Medium Wave and FM bands. At

roughly the size of a pack of playing-cards, the Sportsman sells for £29.99.

Roberts Radio
Tel: 01709 571722



WELL, WADIA KNOW

A wealth of features adorns the new 830 CD player from Wadia Digital. Besides the firm's DigiMaster filtering system which uses 32-times resampling to give 21-bit resolution, the unit is readily upgradable to handle the 24-bit 96kHz standard by means of a simple chip replacement. Easy matching with

amplifiers is provided by the balanced output stage and Wadia's

'Direct-Connect' system, which eliminates the need for internal analogue pre-amp stages. This is claimed to give

improved performance in addition to reducing circuit complexity and keeping the cost down to £3000.



The Musical Design Co.
PO Box 4146,
Epping,
Essex CM16 6HU
Tel: 01992 573030

TERK FM PRO

TERK-ISH DELIGHT

American manufacturers TERK Technologies are hoping to bring their FM Pro aerial to these shores soon. The Pro has a built-in 11dB amplifier, which enables weak signals to be boosted prior to reaching the tuner. In strong signal areas, this facility can simply be switched off. The export version of the FM Pro has gold-plated co-axial terminals and does not require 'balancing' for use with standard UK 75Ω cables. This 57in. design, like all dipoles, needs to be broadside on to the

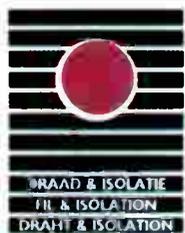
transmitter for best results and mounting outdoors is likely to be most effective unless you happen to need a dual-purpose towel rail.

Terk Technologies
63 Mall Drive,
Commack,
NY 11725
E-mail: www.terk.com

SOLD SHORT

In last month's letter replies we mistakenly quoted the price of a Pentacone turntable mat as £12.95. The correct price is, in

fact, £19.95. Pentacone can be contacted on tel: 01924 445039.



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★★★★ Hi-Fi Choice March '98 "A very winner" What Hi-Fi May '98

"It's a pretty different quality cable pair" Hi-Fi Choice March '98

★★★★ Hi-Fi Choice ★★★★★ What Hi-Fi?

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- Hi-Fi Choice

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The Teatrack Hybrid Bi-wire (£21.99/m)

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also: masterboard switch audio

T-UP

In addition to the T-40 integrated amplifier reviewed elsewhere in these pages, Myryad have announced two new CD players, the T-10 and T-20, both derived from the more expensive MC-100.

First for value is the T-10 (at £399.95), which offers 20-bit conversion. The £200 premium of the T-20 nets you the



added attractions of a 128-times oversampled, linear-phase filter and 100% DC-coupled circuitry. Both of the new

machines are finished with solid, brushed-aluminium fascias and come with remote control.

Myryad Systems
2 Pipers Wood,
Waterberry Drive,
Waterlooville PO7 7XU
Tel: 01705 265508

BLACK BOX FOR MINIDISC?

While MiniDisc has made a splash in professional audio as a format for storing jingles and adverts, its reception as a genuine high-fidelity medium in those circles has apparently been rather muted. However, according to MVL, a new development of theirs promises to assuage any doubts the pro scene might have about MD's sound. Although they're not releasing any details of the process yet, apparently it deals with weaknesses in the areas of harshness, unstable imaging and lack of excitement.

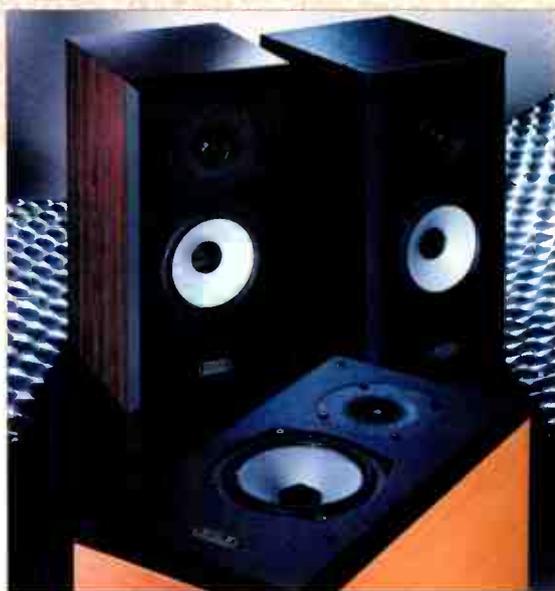
MVL's other releases consist of a number of power amps ranging from 50watts to 2kwatts in power output. Distortion is claimed to be "phenomenally low". Watch this space for more information.

MVL, 74 The Close, Norwich, Norfolk NR1 4DR, Tel: 01953 851242

AE UNCLOAKED

A fresh offering for metal-heads is Acoustic Energy's Aegis One loudspeaker, a two-way bass-reflex retailing at £149.95. A 25mm MDF front baffle houses the mid/bass driver (made from the company's favourite alloy) and silk-dome tweeter. The Aegis claims a frequency response of 38Hz to 22kHz with a power handling up to 120watts. Shielded magnets and Oxygen-Free Copper wiring are another pair of feathers in the Aegis' cap.

**Acoustic Energy, 16 Bridge Road,
Cirencester, Glos. GL7 1NJ
Tel: 01285 654432**



IN NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE

ACCUPHASE DG-28 DIGITAL VOICING EQUALISER

If you're living in a box then no amount of amplifier or loudspeaker upgrades will give you the perfect system sound. The answer is to upgrade your room with Accuphase's DG-28 digital EQ.

CRIMSON ELECTRIC CS630C MONOBLOC POWER AMPS

Find out if these 100watt black boxes

from Crimson can follow in the footsteps of their single-chassis sibling and blend power with musicality.

JPW RUBY 2 LOUDSPEAKERS

We test the mettle of JPW's £500 Ruby 2 stand mounters with their alloy mid/bass cones and tweeters.

SENNHEISER HD-580 PRECISION HEADPHONES

A price tag of £200 marks out these

Sennheisers as a special pair of cans. With their neodymium magnets and lightweight aluminium voice coils, can they make the grade?

APHELION AND CLASSIQUE SOUNDS PLINTHS FOR GARRARD MOTOR UNITS

Housing your cherished Garrard 401 needn't be expensive with plinths for £200 from Aphelion and £175 from Classique Sounds.



ONE-BOX WONDERS

Leo Lam enjoys the advantages of active operation with Harbeth's DPM1 Pro-Actives, Soundcraft's Spirit Absolute 4Ps, Event's 20/20bas and KRK's V8s.

TO START AT THE BEGINNING

There is only one definition of high fidelity, and that reads, "the accurate reproduction of sound". For acoustic instrumental or vocal recordings, this translates into how close the reproduced sound from your loudspeakers is to the original sound at the recording venue. For artificial, electronic recordings there is no natural 'truth' because everything has been synthesised, and the reference becomes the sound which the producers heard during the recording sessions, where they rely heavily on the studio's monitor loudspeakers. But what you won't find

most recording engineers and producers listening to are the common or garden passive loudspeakers resident in the majority of listening rooms.

WHY ACTIVE?

For real insight into the innards of a mix, and to save on valuable shelf space, recording studios tend to opt for active loudspeakers. These have their own dedicated active crossovers and power amplifiers built-in, which means there is no need for a sound-degrading passive crossover between the driver and the output of the amp.

One great benefit of this modus operandi is that the amplifiers can be designed to suit the electrical characteristics of a particular drive unit, thereby maximising sound quality and preventing overloading and clipping (see this month's letters pages for more on this topic), which are both highly destructive.

In strong contrast, combining passive 'speakers with suitable cabling and amplification can be a real lottery, as any one who has tried assembling a system without the help of a capable dealer will know. Active operation does away with these matching problems.

WE LIVE IN HOPE

Unfortunately, at present there are few domestic companies other than the likes of Wharfedale and Meridian who champion the active cause, although this situation will hopefully change as cross-fertilisation between pro and domestic sectors increases. So we decided to investigate candidates from the professional side of the audio fence where there's a thriving scene full of affordable active loudspeakers.

While one of the four models here comes from a name familiar to home listeners - Harbeth - the others supply the pro market. In fact, the models we have gathered here are used in recording studios in the UK and world-wide: Event 20/20bas, Harbeth Xpression! DPM1 Pro-Actives, KRK V8s and Soundcraft Spirit Absolute 4Ps.

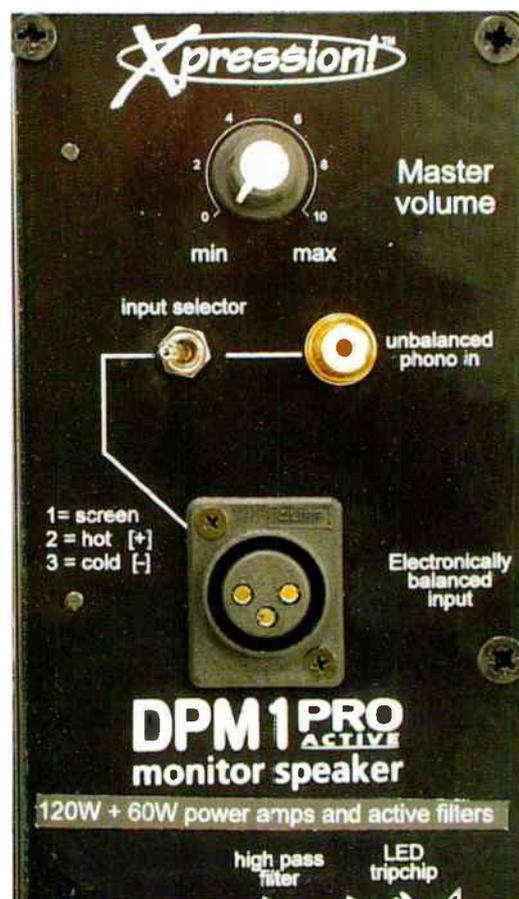
GRILL GENTLY. . .

For this review, we chose some of the most revealing recordings to determine if these monitors could live up to their active promise. The disc list included: the gold CD

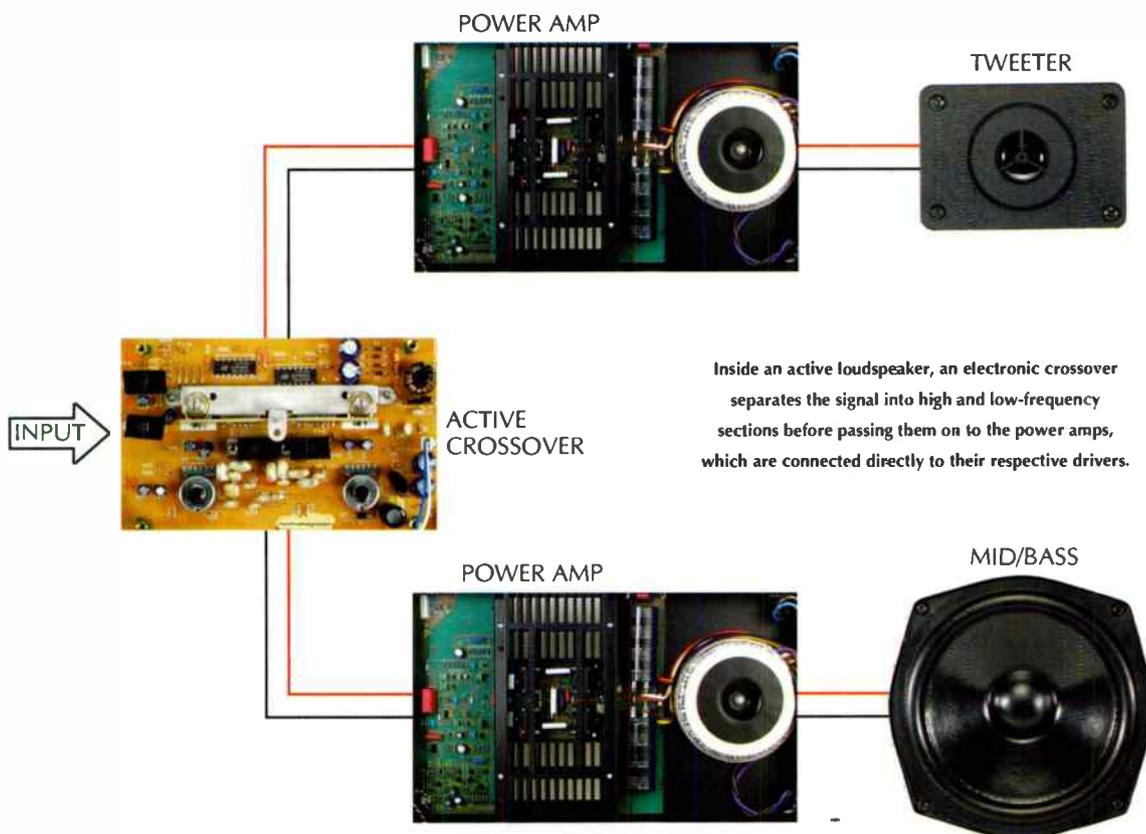
version of Herold-Lanchbery's La Fille Mal Gardée (Decca 430 196-2G); Rebecca Pidgeon's The New York Girls' Club (Chesky JD141); the Opus 3 Special 20th Anniversary Celebration HDCD Disc (Opus3 CD 19692); and The Eagles' Hell Freezes Over (GFCO 24725). Some more recent Pop/Dance discs were also used, among them Madonna's Ray Of Light and Merrill Bainbridge's The Garden.

THE FINAL INGREDIENTS

Most of the listening was carried out with a Teac T1 transport and a modified Assemblage HDCD DAC-2 as the source. Musical Fidelity's Nu-Vista pre-amp then fed the signal directly through two-metre lengths of Kimber cabling into the inputs of the 'speakers. A Myriad T-20 CD player and Creek OBH-12 passive pre-amp were used too.



Most active loudspeakers possess potentiometers to adjust input level, as well as a choice of sockets (RCA and XLR in this case).



Inside an active loudspeaker, an electronic crossover separates the signal into high and low-frequency sections before passing them on to the power amps, which are connected directly to their respective drivers.

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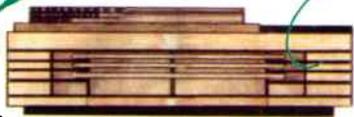
Performance:

DTS®: MPEG®: Dolby Digital®:
Dolby Prologic®: DSP Music Modes:
Custom Algorithms: DC Coupled Outputs:
Discrete Class A Output Stage:
20 Bit D/A Converters for all Channels

Features: Too many to list for the space left!!

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SOUNDCRAFT SPIRIT ABSOLUTE 4P

£799



THE TECHNOLOGY

Soundcraft is one of the professional wings of Harman International, which also owns JBL, Harman Kardon and Audax. The Spirit team within Soundcraft consists of eight designers, and the Absolute 4P is their flagship loudspeaker.

The 4Ps employ custom drive units from their sister company, Audax. To distinguish these from their more run-of-the-mill siblings, the frames are painted a fetching shade of metallic green. The better driver here is the 6in. long-throw mid/bass with its Aerogel cone. Aerogel has a stiffness-to-mass ratio higher than traditional materials - you can feel this just by gently pressing on the cone.

A ferrofluid-cooled, soft-dome tweeter takes care of the treble, behind which is located the rear-firing reflex port. One point to note for computer and cinemaphiles is that the Absolute 4Ps don't list magnetic shielding as one of their benefits.

Within those stern, grey boxes lurk four 100watt amps constructed predominantly from surface-mount parts. The matching constant-voltage active crossover at 2.4kHz features time compensation to account for the fact that the drivers' centres are not acoustically aligned on the front baffle. Current limiting and thermal protection for the drivers and amplifiers are included in the package, their status indicated by smart LEDs.

The cabinet is the group-standard MDF board finished

in grey veneer, which contrasts attractively with the green driver face-plates. Together with the shapely cabinet, this marks the 4Ps out as possibly the only domestically-harmonious monitor in the line-up this month. My only criticism would be aimed at the sharp edges on the heatsink.

Apart from a defeatable filter which rolls the bass off below 40Hz, permitting greater sound levels to be reached on bass-heavy music, the Absolute 4Ps have a lone level potentiometer (which is graduated). Socketry amounts to both balanced XLR and unbalanced RCA.

SOUND QUALITY

Before I unleashed any music through the 4Ps, I discovered a couple of minor hiccups. One was mains hum pick-up, the other a loud thump on start up. The hum was loud enough to be audible at night, and the thump was disconcerting.

The Spirits' manual recommended positioning the 4Ps close to a rear wall for extra bass reinforcement. I eventually settled on a location about 0.5m from the back wall with both cabinets firing directly at the listening spot and the subsonic filter switched off.

The 4Ps swiftly demonstrated the pedigree of their Aerogel main driver. On Pop mixes these 'speakers produced a balanced, solid sound with a very smooth midrange. The upshot was vocals which hung well free of the enclosures and suffered from very little coloration.

Dropping down the octaves, the 4Ps rustled up an excellent bass performance - it was lithe, forceful, tightly controlled and had a slam which you don't expect from boxes this small. More importantly, it was even from the upper bass right down to its limit at the bottom.

Nothing in this world is perfect, and the Absolutes' weakness was the tweeter, as we noted in our original review in October 1997. The string section of the orchestra in La Fille Mal Gardée had a sting in its tail which could become uncomfortable at highish levels, and the fine harmonic structure of the recording was slightly smudged.

The 4Ps had musicality on their side, but they didn't rank so highly in terms of all-out, analytical insight; next to the exceptional KRK V8s, they actually sounded slightly shut-in. Transients were tackled with ease, though, and the tonal balance throughout was superb, apart from the roughness to the tweeter.

Unlike the KRKs, the Absolutes seemed to thrive on complicated passages, especially at domestic rather than studio volumes. They replayed the Decca remaster in a composed and expressive manner, driving the music along with enthusiasm and never losing control.

This was one of the 4Ps' major merits. With all musical genres, they retained a very tight grip on rhythm and timing without becoming mechanical. Combined with a spacious sound stage and stable imaging, that's an attractive selection of attributes.

SOUNDCRAFT
Cranborne Ind. Est.,
Cranborne Road,
Potters Bar,
Herts. EN6 3JN
Tel: 01707 665000

HARBETH XPRESSION! DPM1 PRO-ACTIVE

£849

THE TECHNOLOGY

Looking at the Xpression! DPM1 Pro-Actives, you would never imagine they came from the same stable as the respected HL-P3ES stand mounters with their understated looks. After many years of 'BBC experience' gained manufacturing sober broadcast-grade monitors and domestic loudspeakers, it was a surprise to see Harbeth's Alan Shaw come up with such a 'colourful' loudspeaker.

Talking of colour, the name DPM1 comes from 'Deep Purple Monitors', after the Xpression!'s mid/bass cone which Harbeth designed and manufactured from the ground up with the help of a government research grant. Its injection-moulded polymer is claimed to be virtually free of audible coloration. The A2 driver which the cone fronts is an 8in. long-throw design reflex loaded and married to a 28mm Morel fabric-dome tweeter. The crossover frequency is set at 2.6kHz and carefully engineered to disguise the transition between the drivers, both of which are magnetically shielded.

Endowing these DPM1s with the 'Active' suffix (a passive version is also available) are the three high-power IC amps in each enclosure. One pair operates in push-pull to drive the bass, while a single chip is used for the less demanding tweeter, yielding 120watts and 75watts respectively. These are housed in a hard-wearing, grey cabinet of inch-thick MDF. Two LEDs mounted on the tweeter indicate On/Off and amplifier overload.

The Harbeths' rear-panel facilities are relatively minimal by the standards of this group. A gain control and a switch (which toggles between RCA and XLR inputs) completes the line-up, leaving the rest of the back panel to a large heatsink. The gain control on our sample had no clear marking or steps, making accurate adjustment a little awkward, but we have been told that production models will have a graduated pot fitted.

SOUND QUALITY

The DPM1s were placed around 75cms from the rear wall and over 1.5m from side walls, with their front baffles toed in to the listening position.

Turning to the DPM1 Pros right after the KRKs demonstrated the Harbeths' easy listenability - you could walk out of the studio after a good day's work still feeling fresh. The DPM1s don't swap enjoyability for accuracy, though, as they display plentiful detail in a transparent sound stage. Vocals were also well projected and there was very little coloration to them. Tonally, the Harbeths were more balanced than the KRKs as they were free from the latter's treble brightness, and they happily played music of any genre. String instruments had realistic presence and speed without a hint of artificial sharpness.

As I said earlier, in addition to being very easy on the ear, the Harbeths are highly detailed (if not as analytical as the KRK V8s). The important elements in the mix were well represented, and they were able to recreate a true sense of the size of recording venues.



With La Fille Mal Gardee, Rebecca Pidgeon and Merrill Bainbridge, the musical picture stretched wide and had fine, if not exceptional depth. Moving to Madonna (where the mix itself is two dimensional), the sound stage was more like a flat curtain, the DPM1s remaining faithful to the recording. Through the Harbeths, there was absolutely no escape from any effects pasted onto the music. For example, reverb (added to make a singer sound more sonorous) was all too clearly audible.

The A2 cone certainly lived up to its promise when it came to handling the natural flow of music, even if it couldn't quite manage laser-beam focus on imaging. Bonus number two was the bass, where the DPM1s really pulled out all the stops. They had an extension and slam beyond the capabilities of almost all passive domestic monitors at a similar price (and don't forget, they need amplification and 'speaker cable as well).

I didn't encounter any clipping problems as the in-built amps ran out of steam. The red clipping indicator only flickered briefly when my SPL meter registered over 110dB while I had industrial-grade ear-plugs in place.

Where Harbeth's background in the domestic as well as professional arenas pays dividends is the quality of the DPM1s' amps. In contrast with many actives, whose amplification can taint music with a hard, processed edge, the ICs inside the DPM1s match the drivers seamlessly. The Harbeths' whole is definitely greater than the sum of their parts.

HARBETH ACOUSTICS
Unit 1, Bridge Road,
Haywards Heath,
W. Sussex RH16 1UA
Tel: 01444 440955

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KRK V8

£995

THE TECHNOLOGY

KRK have been building professional monitors for 12 years at their Huntington Beach site in California. Their current range starts off with the £269 passive RoKits and stretches up to the flagship Model I5P-3 three-way actives. The V8s enter the picture as the company's least expensive powered 'speakers.

Like the RoKits, the V8s are reflex-loaded two-ways. Unlike the RoKits, separate power amplifiers are squeezed into the cabinets to drive the tweeter and the woofer via an active crossover. Somewhat curiously, the crossover frequency is set at a low 1.6kHz.

Both the 25mm fabric-dome tweeters and the 8in. Kevlar mid/bass units are manufactured to KRK's specifications and are magnetically shielded for use near computer monitors. The amps themselves deliver 70watts to the tweeters and 130watts to the woofers. Overload protection comes in the form of a resettable circuit.

The V8 is easily the most solidly-constructed model in this group. The 38lb cabinets are assembled from inch-thick MDF with all the edges rounded off to minimise cabinet diffraction. The drivers are then mounted flush with the front baffle to reduce diffraction further. Below them sits the wide-mouth, front-firing reflex port. A yellow LED embedded in the plastic 'V8 by KRK' badge indicates that the power is on.

Turn the V8s around and you'll find the controls which enable the loudspeakers' response to be tailored. The low-frequency roll-off (-3dB point) can be set to 45Hz, 50Hz or 65Hz and, since the V8s are meant mainly for use as near-field monitors, there's 1dB of cut or boost for frequencies above 2kHz to counteract response peaks and dips caused by objects in close proximity. There is also a gain control for equalising the volume when the V8s are fed from sources with different output levels. These can be connected through either XLR connectors or a 0.25in. jack plug (The Chord Company make suitable interconnects, tel: 01722 331674).

SOUND QUALITY

ON KRK's recommendation, the V8s were placed well away from walls and auditioned at around 1.5m away near-field. After some tweaking with the help of a Sound Pressure Level meter, I opted for the 45Hz bass roll-off and a flat high-frequency setting for my room.

Detail really is the V8s' forte. They pulled vast amounts of microscopic subtleties out of the recording, to the extent that the process could be painful with less-than-ideal discs. With decent ones, though, the V8s faithfully reproduced every last nuance, which helped them bring images into sharp focus - Rebecca Pigeon's voice hung pin-sharp midway between the two cabinets. However, prolonged listening showed a slight deviation from the tonal straight and narrow, a hint of cone coloration sneaking in at the top end of female vocals.

Considering their imaging skills, I was looking forward



to expansive sound staging from the V8s. The opening of La Fille Mal Gardee confirmed the KRKs' credentials in this area with the way they arrayed instruments across a very broad, deep acoustic. While the tonality was generally even and natural, a sharpness most obvious on strings made longer listening fatiguing. At least partly counteracting this were the swift transients and delicate, prolonged decay to notes which accompanied the V8s' controlled presentation. In fact, I'd have to say I've never heard more detail or precision from any other of the loudspeakers I've reviewed.

Dynamically these 'speakers were certainly no slouches - at normal listening levels they responded with great speed, accuracy and a delicacy you won't hear from even some very upmarket passive models. But during more energetic and complicated passages, the KRKs struggled to tease apart the layers of detail and could sound confused. This shortcoming only appeared on very dense orchestral recordings, though.

As befits their role as active monitors in a studio environment, the V8s dissect recordings and look deep into their constituent parts. Unfortunately for domestic audiophiles, this means the V8s highlight any and all faults in duff discs. Better releases suffered too - listening to these 'speakers for prolonged periods proved tiring because of their treble quality. Re-positioning and switching to -1dB above 2kHz did not completely cure the problem.

KRK
Berkhamsted House,
121 High Street,
Berkhamsted,
Herts. HP4 2DJ
Tel: 01442 870103

EVENT 20/20BAS

£829



THE TECHNOLOGY

Just like KRK, Event Inc. are based in California and have been manufacturing, "transducers, studio electronics and high-performance studio monitor systems" for over 25 years. The 20/20ba is their most recent model, designed using the latest Computer Aided Design tools.

The 20/20bas are unique in this group in the sense that, where all the other candidates source one or all of their drivers from outside suppliers, both the tweeter and the mid/bass unit in the 20/20bas are Event's own. This, of course, gives the designer great control over the performance of each component and the end result.

The Events' mid/bass driver is one of the larger in the group at 8in. Event say it has the extended upper frequency response of a conventional 6.5in. or 7in. driver, while its larger cone surface area improves the bass extension. Blending in with the woofer at 2.6kHz is their 1in. silk-dome tweeter, which is gently horn loaded.

Powering the 'speaker system is a pair of amps, which can pump 130watts into the mid/bass and 70watts into the tweeter. Making sure circuit failure or ambitious volume levels don't turn voice coils into cinders, Event have engineered comprehensive protection into the 20/20bas. This will apparently cope with Radio Frequency interference, output current overloading, thermal cut-out and turn-on transients. An undefeatable subsonic filter operating below 30Hz and a resettable

mains circuit breaker are also provided. However, to my surprise there was no external heatsink to the rear - the Events rely solely on their back panel and got very hot even when idling.

The general cabinet finish of these Californians was excellent in spite of their being no radiusing of the edges on the 1in. MDF panels. The large reflex port on the front isn't the slickest of the group, either.

Other than the mandatory gain control, the 20/20bas are fitted with 'LF Trim' and 'HF Trim'. The first alters the bass response below 400Hz by +/-3dB, the second controls the level above the 2.6kHz crossover frequency. However, neither of them is graduated and it was difficult to set the 'speakers up without the help of an SPL. The power-on LED below the bass driver doubles as a clipping indicator.

The 20/20bas use Neutrik's combined XLR/0.25in. jack sockets like the KRK V8 - no RCA unbalanced input is provided.

SOUND QUALITY

I set up the Event according to the manual by forming an equilateral triangle between the 'speakers and the listening position. The 20/20bas found themselves around two feet from the rear wall and toed in at 30degrees, so their front baffles were pointing straight at me.

Mercifully, the blandness of the Events' cabinets is not mimicked in the acoustic department. The 20/20bas had a comfortable, warm-ish balance that was immediately pleasing to the ears. The tweeter possessed a smooth output and a decent amount of high-frequency fine detail, which contributed to a sizeable sound stage. This much was evident on the guitar solo in the Opus 3 Anniversary recording, where the Events captured the string scratching, box beating and wooden resonance in all their glory.

More long-term listening started showing up a few minor departures from the monitor ideal. Rebecca Pidgeon and Merril Bainbridge's vocals were mildly coloured - they sounded slightly muted, as if the performance was taking place behind a curtain. And a spin with Bryn Terfel's Something Wonderful uncovered some unevenness in the mid-to-upper baritone range.

For all their bass depth, the Events weren't quite as tuneful as the more nimble actives in this test - they tended to homogenise what was going on in the lower octaves with their slightly one-note approach. This was especially obvious with the flowing bassline of Madonna's 'Ray Of Light' and the descending octave in 'The Garden'.

The only operational foible I encountered with the 20/20bas was when the thermal protector shut them down twice during the audition, even though the volume rarely rose above normal levels. In strong contrast, all of the other reviewees were only warm to the touch after hours of continuous use.

EVENT
Key Audio Systems
Unit D,
37 Robjohns Road,
Chelmsford,
Essex CM1 3AG
Tel: 01245 344001

CONCLUSION

Listening to these monitors was an interesting experience. None of the loudspeakers is perfect. All the usual shortfalls - coloration, cabinet resonance and overloading - appeared in one or more of the contenders here. In addition, with the exception of the Harbeths and the Absolute 4Ps, the power amplifiers within the monitors were not as sonically adept as some of their domestic equivalents. However, the advantages still shine through.

With an outlay of £1000 or less, you can net yourself a pair of very well made and matched loudspeakers together with a set of power amplifiers tailored specifically to their drivers. All you need to add for a complete musical set-up in the home is a pre-amp like the dinky but excellent Musical Fidelity X-Pre, a pair of long interconnects and a CD player along the lines of Marantz's CD-63mkII KI-Signature. If you can afford to splash out more on source, pre and interconnects though, these actives will sound better still.

A similar passive arrangement might consist of a £400 integrated amp, £50 worth of loudspeaker cable and £500 loudspeakers. But from past experiments, we know this system would pale next to active alternatives with their far superior dynamics, transparency and control, particularly in the bass.

So, who will be crowned king of the active hill? Here are the podium positions in reverse order. . .

KORKING V8

If you prize detail above all else and prefer a fast, crisp sound, KRK's £1000 V8s could be right up your street. In the aforementioned areas, the KRK's lead the group, with their ability to unearth the tiniest of subtleties and present percussion with lightning-fast transients. The V8s also spread sharply-focused images across a sound stage which boasts genuine front-to-back depth as well as the more easily-achievable cinematic width.

In the 'nuts and bolts' of 'speakerdom, the V8s scored highly. It was in the more elusive qualities of musicality and listenability (which, to be fair, are more domestic than professional requisites) that they appeared less invincible. Their treble contributed a great deal to improved detail perception but rather less to unflagging long-term listening. No amount of adjustment in treble output could remedy this state of affairs, and next to the Harbeths and Events the KRKs sounded fierce.

20/20 VISION

Event's 20/20bas with their horn-loaded silk-dome tweeters came from the other end of the tonal spectrum to the KRKs. Their smooth high frequencies proved more pleasant partners for orchestral strings than had the V8s'. Detail was never in short supply, nor was spaciousness.

Counting against the 20/20bas were slightly veiled vocals and a tonal balance which deviated from the ideal in the upper bass. More worrying was the heat coming off the cabinets' rear panels and the two occasions when the

Events cut out altogether.

ABSOLUTELY FINE

Blending some of the virtues of the KRKs and the Harbeths were the Absolute 4Ps. Their grip on recordings was, well, absolute. When we first heard them, they had the kind of taut, powerful bass which only much more expensive passive loudspeakers and amplifiers could emulate. Nothing has changed in the meantime with this second pair. The Aerogel mid/bass driver continued to impress in the midrange, where it proved crisp but natural.

What prevented the 4Ps from overtaking the Harbeths were their tweeters, which were below par next to their Aerogel companions. There was a roughness to upper registers, and a smearing of delicate detail which had the Absolutes lagging behind the Morels fitted to the DPM1 Pro-Actives.

THE XPRESSIONIST! SCHOOL

Out of all our active contenders, the Harbeths do the best job of mixing domestic and professional. The DPM1s were immensely listenable without that costing them the accuracy and detail required for studio use. Through these loudspeakers, string instruments were expressive and sweet, and the emotion in music, rather than the mere combination of waveforms at different frequencies, was captured too.

The low-coloration Deep Purple A2 cone deserves praise as well, as do the Harbeths' amps, which showed little sign of stress during the listening session. The only 'could do better' comments relate to imaging and sound staging, although this amounts to no more than hair-splitting.



A SERIES COMPACT - SOMETIMES SMALL IS BETTER.



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It's hardly surprising. The Compact uses essentially the same advanced componentry as the acclaimed A1, partnering Celestion's famously sweet-sounding 25mm titanium dome tweeter with a potent 100mm long throw bass driver.

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You hear the difference straight away. The sound is noticeably sweeter, fresher, more open. The clarity, simply astonishing - and the looks speak for themselves.

As the saying goes, size isn't everything. It's how you use it that counts.

Model featured above in Cherrywood finish



Rosewood



Black Ash

ORIENT EXPRESS II

This month David Price scours Tokyo's hi-fi shops for the latest Japanese turntables, amplifiers and loudspeakers.

VINYL

Japan was arguably where the vinyl revival started, and it's a revival that's certainly showing no signs of slowing. Especially interesting is Sony's re-entry into the fray - could this be the start of something big? Here are some of the latest 'Analog Players', as they're now known in Japan.



DENON DP-900M

20 years back, Denon made some of the best turntables money could buy. Although nowadays vinyl is hardly the company's core business, it still has a very decent range of disc spinners. Top of the direct-drive tree is the DP-900M at ¥100000 (£460). A swish 13kg affair sculpted from mock-wood veneered MDF, it has an S-shape tone-arm that's eerily reminiscent of Linn's now-defunct Basik LVV (also sourced in Japan). Sound is very respectable - bass is tight, midband clean and treble sweet.



DENON GOLDEN 11

Many Japanese consumers believe foreign is best, providing 'foreign' means Europe or the US and not China or Korea. To wit, Denon's most expensive turntable - costing ¥140000 (£645) - is actually a Dual CS503 in drag! Called 'Golden' on account of it having gold bits (platter and arm tube), it offers kudos rather than quality. In truth, Denon's cheapest decks don't

sound much worse, and even their ¥15000 (£70) DP-26F midi-sized player measures better!

DENON DL-S1 MC CARTRIDGE

Arguably the longest-running hi-fi component ever made, Denon's DL-103 Moving-Coil cartridge is still being made today nearly 40 years after it was first introduced. Although not a bad sounding device, the only Denon you should really hanker after is the S1. Featuring super-pure 6N copper wiring and a special stylus profile, it produces a minuscule 0.15mV. But find a matching transformer like Denon's AU-S1 and you'll get some of the sweetest, most musical sounds around. Together, they'll set you back ¥160000 (£740).



MICRO SX-8000II

It's always puzzled me why Micro, purveyor of some of the finest high-end direct drives of the late Seventies, switched to belt drive. Well, all becomes clear when you hear the SX-8000II. Massive engineering - and when the Japanese do battleship build, it really is battleship - and elegant design conspire to make one of the world's finest turntables. The 28kg platter sits atop the main unit, which also houses two tone-arms. To the left, a separate Michell Orbe-style motor unit drives a thin rubber belt. Finally, both units are located on a massive, beautifully wood-veneered base. Motor torque is extreme, total weight 63kg, total price ¥1370000 (£6400) - say no more.





SONY PS-LX300H

Well, well - the mighty Sony Corporation, co-inventor of Compact Disc, making turntables again! Y35000 (£165) buys you this elegant black Technics lookalike. But wait, where's the 'Quartz-lock DD' label that festooned every vinyl spinner Sony ever made? Gone, because this one's a belt drive. Although built down to a price with slightly wobbly arm bearings, it's still a fine deck for the money with a pleasant sound.



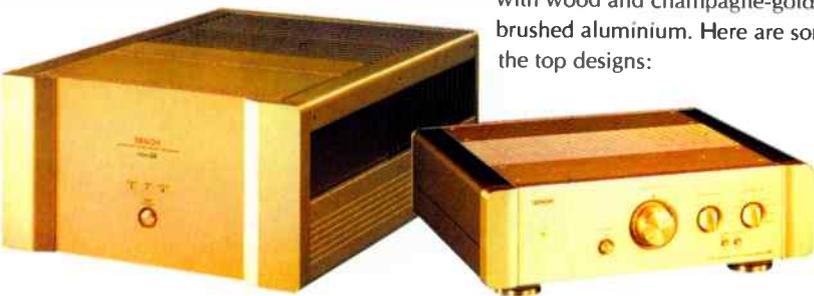
TECHNICS SL-1200Mk4

Yes, the SL-1200 is just as popular in Japan as it is everywhere else, with the slip-mat-equipped club version (SL-1200mk3D) selling for under Y50000 (£230) in discount stores. But for the home user, the new Mk4 gives you a proper rubber platter mat, OFC arm wiring and a 78rpm facility.

Technics' turntable users gives you a clue about the demographics of vinyl fans in Japan - they're usually either 'cool' baseball-capped clubbers or old fuddy-duddies who collect rare Jazz 78s! Still, in either guise the SL-1200 is a fine workhorse.

AMPLIFIERS

Although valves have really taken root in Japan, there are still some awesome transistor designs around. Invariably full or near-Class A biased and with tree-stump pulling power, they usually have a sweet and seductive sound. But reliability and finish are extremely important here too, which explains why Japanese amplifiers are massively over-engineered and dripping with wood and champagne-gold brushed aluminium. Here are some of the top designs:



DENON PRA-AS1/POA-AS1

A stunning combination, Denon's top pre/power makes you wonder if transistor amps get any better. Y3500000 (£16200) buys you the best discrete components around: there's extensive use of Denon's 'ultra high current' MOSFETs in the pre-amp's line stages and the power

amp output stages. The 25kg pre-amp features a separate box for its power supply, plus an exotic looking dual-ganged volume potentiometer. The power amp gives a claimed 250W per side into 8ohms, rising to exactly 1000W into 2ohms, which explains its 80kg weight.



KENWOOD K270(G)

The K270 'Large Integrated Audio System' is in fact rather small at only 300mm in width, and features an amplifier, CD player and tuner all in one. Just another Mini system you might say, but take a look around the back and you'll see an unusually beefy set of cooling ducts - strange considering its 10W rated power output. The reason is that it runs in pure Class A, and very nice it sounds too when said mode is selected from the front-panel switch. Partnered with B&W CDM1SEs it got rave reviews in a recent Japanese hi-fi magazine, and even the CD player sounds good. The cost is Y160000 (£740) including wooden side panels.



SONY TA-ER1/TA-NR10

This exotic combo follows the trend for running the pre-amp from a battery PSU. As you'd expect for Y2600000 (£12000), build is exemplary, with the best components used throughout. There's also the odd gimmick, like the temperature gauge each TA-NR10 monobloc has to tell you when it's getting hot. Still, it's a shame Sony UK doesn't import Sony's Reference Series, of which this is the flagship amplifier. Maybe it's because together, this little lot weighs in at 156kg!



SANSUI AU-07 ANNIVERSARY

The AU-07 has been around since the mid-Seventies

and, while never quite the best in its class, has always served up an impressive combination of sound and facilities. It's been revised many times to keep it at the top of the sales charts, and the Anniversary is the latest incarnation celebrating 20 years in the biz.

Construction is impressive, even considering its Y450000 (£2100) price tag. Inside we see a huge power transformer, massive smoothing capacitors, dual-mono construction and heatsinks big enough to cool the Sun. Trick passive components are used extensively, including (brace yourselves) 'Advanced Hyper Alpha' power transistors. The sound is sweet and civilised but not the last word in involvement. A nice, solid, middle of the roader.



TECHNICS SU-C7000/SE-A7000

More battery-powered pre-amps, this one from Technics. Hi-Fi World has been impressed with the sweet, clean sounding SU-C1000, and its big brother elicited a similar reaction from the hi-fi press in Japan. As Technics' flagship pre-amp, the '7000 enjoys a multi-layer 'THCB' base for vibration absorption, Panasonic volume pot, Technics Master Series capacitors and a little battery-level gauge set into the front panel.

Not to be outdone, the power amp has huge power meters, battleship dual-mono construction, MOSFET power trannies and mega power supplies, again using Master capacitors. Power is 200W into 8ohms, rising to 600W into 2. Price is Y900000 (£4200) for the pair.

LOUDSPEAKERS

Japanese 'speakers have traditionally been much maligned outside their home country. It's true many of the cheaper designs sound appalling to any ear, Western or otherwise. But there have always been interesting and innovative models, often valve-friendly with attention paid to ease of drive and sensitivity. Here are some of the latest:



PIONEER S-LH5

Although hardly synonymous with loudspeaker innovation in this country, Pioneer have a fine reputation in Japan. The S-LH5 proves the point: its 22cm woofer

uses a massive cast chassis, special cone profile and huge magnet, while the tweeter features horn loading. Unfortunately Pioneer invented a unique acronym for it: AFAST-SZ - Acoustical Filter Assisted System Tuning-Spread Zone, don't you know. Such cleverness makes for 33Hz-30kHz with a sensitivity of 90dB. Price is Y100000 (£465) including stands.

SONY SS-R10L/R

You've got to hand it to a company like Sony - its 'speaker range starts with the tiny SRS-A5 at Y2500 (£11.60), and ends with this amazing electrostatic behemoth. Over a metre and a half high, each 'speaker uses three mirror-image transducer panels of decreasing size to cover bass, mid and treble respectively. With the accompanying electronics, they tip the scales at 92kg per 'speaker - and a pair will set you back Y3000000 (£14000). A lot of money you might think, but after



you've heard them it may just seem a bargain.

TECHNICS SBM-10000

Standing over one and a half metres tall and weighing 160kg, Technics' top reference loudspeaker delivers a subwoofer-crushing 20Hz low-end performance, and is almost flat up to 100kHz! With more



drivers than Japan Railways - there are four visible and another eight inside

- an easy load it isn't. But if you can afford its Y2300000 (£11000) asking price, you can stretch to a Krell to drive it.

YAMAHA YST-SW1000L

This Y225000 (£1100) Yamaha subwoofer, with its massively-engineered 30cm driver, can manage a fair approximation of an earthquake. With a built-in 120WRMS amp, 16Hz lows and 48kg build, it's proof Yamaha can still do big 'speakers, and will doubtless find its way into many a home recording studio.



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EYE-O

£14000 for a transport and DAC? With a price tag like that, Sonic Frontiers'

One of hi-fi's golden rules, proved a million times over by the rare-as-dodo exceptions, is that what seduces the ears and fires the spirit then offends the eyes. This maxim is understandable when budget constraints dictate that styling may never move beyond six flat sides and a choice of Henry-Ford colours. But when costs rise towards the pain barrier, it's less forgivable. Unfortunately, large price tags often accompany boxes with all the design flair of an industrial waste disposal unit. While Sonic Frontiers' £7000 Processor 3 might sit to the wrong side of the fence, the Transport 3 is emphatically in the right.

Seen front-on, only the gentle bulge in the transport's top-plate indicates that there might be something beyond the norm going on here. Gaze down from above and press the Open/Close button, and you'll soon know what that something is. The Transport 3 has one of the most 'addictive' loading systems I've come across. Spending five minutes hitting Open/Close on a CD mechanism is a very sad admission to make, but when you see this SF in the flesh, you will understand - the pictures don't do it justice. When the curved 'petals' of the Iris slide apart camera-aperture style, you can't help but smile. And the round remote is a tasty touch too.

As you'd guess from this transport's weight, there's rather more to it than a fancy disc cover. Where most player's mechanisms are sprung to isolate them from vibration, the Sonic's is bolted

straight to the top-plate. This makes sense since said plate is an inch-thick slab of machined aluminium and the base perches on four soft feet.

Sonic Frontiers' brochures tend to feature lines like, "more than 12 regulated power supply stages", and thus it is with the Transport 3, where these are fed from multiple potted transformers.

HIP TO BE SQUARE

Soldered to the thick, heavily-plated PCBs alongside all the above goodies is a circuit you won't find on many other transports. It connects the Transport 3 to the Processor 3, but it isn't the TosLink, AES/EBU or S/PDIF you'll see everywhere else. I₂S is the moniker that could soon be ringing in the ears of many digital audiophiles of the two-box persuasion.

Many single-boxers already possess I₂S inside their black boxes, for the 'Inter-IC Sound' bus as it is otherwise known transmits the digits from a player's transport to its DAC. Sending data down a cable to an external convertor has, until now, been handled predominantly by Sony/Philips' Digital Interface Format (S/PDIF).

S/PDIF isn't perfect. It crams the digital signal, the bit clock (which lets the DAC know when each of

CD's 16 individual bits arrives) and the word clock (which tells the DAC when

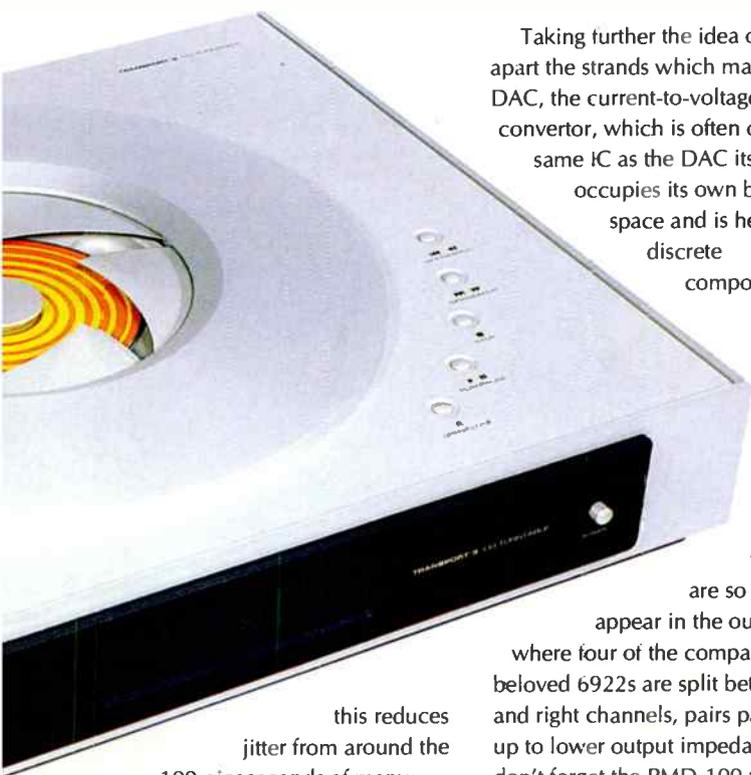


all 16 are in) onto a single conductor betwixt mech and DAC. These parts are therefore encoded together, transmitted, received and decoded, all of which introduces jitter.

SF's 'I₂S-enhanced' goes about things rather differently. Using a military-spec 13W3 cable (the normal-grade version of which you'll see connecting computers to their monitors), it sends each set of signals down their own separate conductors (five twisted, shielded pairs and two co-axial cables). According to SF,

PENNER

Transport 3 and Processor 3 have their work cut out, thinks Jon Marks.



Taking further the idea of teasing apart the strands which make up a DAC, the current-to-voltage converter, which is often on the same IC as the DAC itself, occupies its own board space and is hewn from discrete components.

The tubes which SF are so fond of appear in the output stage,

where four of the company's beloved 6922s are split between left and right channels, pairs paralleled up to lower output impedance. And don't forget the PMD-100 filter from Pacific Microsonics, whose HDCD initials can be found on a growing number of CDs.

FEAR THE REAPER?

One sure way to wobble the knees and wallets of someone who's invested the price of a new car in their DAC and transport is to whisper the words, "new format". However, Sonic have produced this duo more as an exercise in squeezing the very best from CD than as all-singing, all-playing multi-format machinery which lags in sound quality. That said, the Processor 3 has board space available for use after the dust has settled on what looks like it might be the duel between DVD Audio and

Super Audio CD. DVD as a video and audio format will be handled by SF DVD players specifically designed to deal with that format.

BREAKING THE SOUND BARRIER

The Transport and Processor 3 were left running over the course of a week before the listening began. Partnering equipment included Teac's P-30 transport, a range of standard digital interconnects (including Kimber and XLO), the Assemblage L-1 pre-amp and Jamo's Concert 8s bi-amped with Musical Fidelity's X-A200 monoblocs.

The law of cliches states that, with components this much more expensive than our customary sources, there should be much more of everything to be heard, and so it was. The bottom-end welly went down a treat with the drummer on Eric Bibb and Needed Times' eponymous album - he was smacking away on his kit with a raw, rhythmic energy which put the bump and grind back into 'Nothing Like You Used To'. The musical intent might have been hot and sweaty, but there was no lack of control to the SFs' output - imaging was pin-sharp, vocals smoother than a teflon-coated car salesman and sound staging spacious enough to bump up against the walls of our listening room.

From the same CD, 'Saucer And Cup', with its vocals and guitar, upped the ambient stakes. A lot of players seem to be able to put together a realistic acoustic only when there's a fair amount of instrumental action going on, and

this reduces jitter from around the 100 picoseconds of many capable digital front-ends to immeasurably low levels. And as we found when we swapped digital interconnects, you can hear the improvements very easily.

Once the data stream reaches the Processor 3, it encounters two dual, custom-made UltraAnalog DACs working in balanced mode. These sit on a PCB made of ARLON, a Teflon hybrid material. To keep noise and pollution out of the Processor's circuitry, SF have resorted to a hefty outboard PSU. The mains transformer is potted, like those in the Transport, and in the various regulators you'll find a sprinkling of the DIYer's friend, Sanyo's Os-Con capacitors.

Q. What have the BBC, The Royal Opera House, Dolby Laboratories, EMI and Abbey Road Studios have in common?

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then fall down on sparser numbers by reproducing lone images without the overall ambience which binds them into place. The Canadians did rather better here, with a holistic presentation which pulled all the strands together into a spatially and emotionally satisfying whole.

The Chemical Brothers' 'Setting Sun' is always a tough test of CD replay. This disc's production is hard, harsh, bright and very untidy. If a player has sufficient smoothness to make the track listenable, then its sheer funk usually suffers. Switch priorities and you have a boogy factor extreme allied to treble which will crack glass an inch thick. Spinning on the Philips CDM-12i under its petite magnetic puck, this single boomed out of the Jamos without causing a medical alert. The plunging bass beats and hacksaw midrange weren't shacking, rattling and rolling - pile driving, focused and powerful were more apt descriptions. Still, there was a sneaking feeling that there was just a hint, an iota of involvement missing. A change of cable beckoned.

Out went the assorted RCA, BNC

and AES/EBU interconnects to be replaced by the new I₂S-enhanced. Even fresh out of the bag, this link was far superior to its predecessors, and the gap grew as it burned in. The claimed drop in jitter manifested itself as a much more natural, flowing and expressive delivery. Stravinsky's Firebird metamorphosed into a more menacing, forceful composition on a larger scale as tiny dynamic contrasts stepped out of hiding. Timpani put on weight in the best possible sense of the words, too.

The most telling gauge of a change in sound quality is when you remove an upgrade, not when you first connect it up. After a day of I₂S-enhanced, returning to run-of-the-mill cabling was a real disappointment - sound staging shrank back towards the 'speakers, music lost pace and energy and muddle set in. At least the normal cabling gave me a chance to wheel in Teac's £2500 P-30 to put the Transport 3 into perspective.

Now, given the more than minor price differential, you'd expect a

pretty large gap in performance. The P-30 is very capable for the money though, so I was surprised by how thin, wiry and small it sounded by comparison. Orchestral climaxes were veiled and difficult to follow, and when the elbow grease was applied in Rock, the midrange coarsened. But for all its extra investment, for some reason the Sonic Frontiers wasn't quite as toe-tapping on the leather-clad lunchbox Rock of Led Zeppelin as the Teac (although reverting to I₂S-enhanced set the balance right).

TO BOLDLY GO . . .

With the new DAC to transport link, SF's Transport and Processor 3 make a seriously tempting proposition, if you can afford to play fantasy hi-fi and put your money where your dreams are. Working as a pair, they produce fluid, open and very natural results a long way from the hard, flat and uninvolved noise CD has often been accused of. Add to that the very classy looks of the transport, its gorgeous engineering and the upgradability of the DAC, and the sense of spending lots of money once on a source to last 10 years instead of buying cheap every two or three years is obvious●

The Processor 3's fascia has input selection via six buttons to the left. Phase and display brightness controls sit in the centre, with standby to the right.

Sonic Frontiers
Transport 3 £6999
Sonic Frontiers
Processor 3 £6999

Picture The Sound
13 Weston Road,
Guildford,
Surrey GU2 6AU
Tel: 07000 443426

WORLD VERDICT



A handsome combination both sonically and aesthetically which benefits greatly from the I₂S-enhanced interface.

Measured Performance see p111



The thin, wide I₂S-enhanced input joins an impressive array of socketry on the Processor 3's back panel.

If you've spent the winter (or the summer, for that matter) trying to warm your digits, here's *analogue* for the fire

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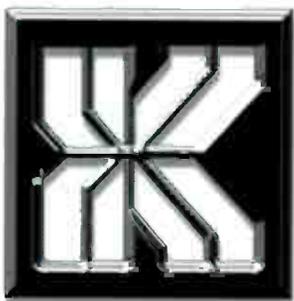
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Can Rotel's new RCD-971 create a rumble in the £350 CD player jungle? Dominic Todd referees.

Remember Rotel's RCD-865? About the time when I first became interested in hi-fi, Rotel were making the headlines for producing one of the first affordable Bitstream CD players. Of course, these days almost all CD players are one-bit, but at the time it represented quite a step forward. Now, after eight years of steadily improving the breed, Rotel have done it again. With the RCD-971 they have produced the most affordable HDCD-compatible player thus far.

A price of £350 isn't exactly cheap, but it's low enough for machinery which will play High Definition Compatible Digital discs for you to wonder where the catch is. Well, it's certainly not in the build quality or finish. The RCD-971 skimps on neither, and puts many a more expensive machine to shame with its sleek metal fascia and feeling of solidity.

The technical specification is also generous. As well as Pacific Microsonics' PMD-100 HDCD filter, there's a toroidal transformer, an output stage built from discrete parts rather than ICs, and a smattering of Rubycon's Black Gate capacitors. The assorted damping panels show the sort of additional effort which has gone into the '971.

With the HDCD recording of the

theme music to Local Hero by Mark Knopfler, what struck me most on the first playing was not so much how the sound differed from non-HDCD players, but how recognisably 'Rotel' the RCD-971 was. The smooth, seamless fluidity of sound that's been a hallmark of Rotel since the '865 was still there - guitar was beautifully resolved, and there was a real spaciousness to the sound.

Unfortunately, certain other Rotellian characteristics, such as a lack of projection and a rather reserved rendition of saxophone, were also still present. The RCD-971 bucked the family trend with highish background noise levels where the company's digital machinery has always seemed to pluck musical images out of an inky blackness in the past. Transient contrasts were lightly diluted too on a non-HDCD version of Clare Martin's 'Cornes Love' - there wasn't quite the tenacity and grip of something like a Marantz CD-67SE.

Where the Rotel won out over that particular machine was in its tonal richness and expression. The separation on percussion was also first-rate, with excellent decay to cymbals and absolutely no sign of any splashiness at higher frequencies. However, despite fine integration, bass wasn't the deepest -

drums lacked a little impact, creating the impression that the '971 was somewhat detached from the music it was delivering and not quite as involving as it could have been.

Strangely enough, in view of the preference for the genre which previous creations from Rotel have shown, Classical music turned out not to be a forte either. Corelli's Concerto De Chiesa No4 was as much of a mixed bag as other recordings had been. On the one hand, the timbre of instruments was fine, with good separation between them. On the other, cello lacked weight and the timing of the whole piece was a touch sluggish. And in terms of projection, the Rotel was rather restrained.

As appetizing as the RCD-971's ingredients are, the recipe doesn't quite live up to its full potential. Musically it is not one of the most gifted performers around, but at the price it is one of, if not the most refined players. Its smooth, cohesive sound stage could be the ideal tonic for those with a bright system or those who find the Marantz CD-67SE or Cambridge CD6 too up-front. For this, and the excellent build quality, the RCD-971 remains in the running. Just make sure you arrange an audition first.

Rotel RCD-971
£349.95

Gamepath
25 Heathfields,
Stacey Bushes,
Milton Keynes,
Bucks. MK12 6HR
Tel: 01908 317707

WORLD VERDICT



Solid build and sonic refinement are plus points, but a restraint and lack of vitality hold the Rotel back.

Measured Performance
see p111

WIN AN ASSEMBLAGE L-1 HYBRID PRE-AMP AND ST-40 VALVE POWER AMP



This month we're giving away two ready-built kits from Canadian company Sonic Frontiers' DIY wing, Assemblage.

If you lust after some of the gems of the Do-It-Yourself scene but don't enjoy the thought of solder burns and barbecued components, then this is your competition. For the prizes on these pages come assembled and checked by the Hi-Fi World team.

Leading the pair on offer here is the L-1 hybrid line-level pre-amp. Its design combines the best of thermionic and solid-state technology by pairing up an IRF730 FET on the output with a 6922 triode and a J271 J-FET on the input to ensure low noise and output impedance. Sonic Frontiers used a similar device combination in the £2000 Phono 1 phono stage.

Making the L-1 a little less minimalist than many audiophile pre-amps are its Balance, Mute, Stereo/Mono and Normal/Direct controls. The last of these allows you to switch source selector and Balance out of the signal's path and brings with it an appreciable increase in transparency and dynamics.

Nestling next to the Direct input on the rear panel are the two pairs of outputs (for bi-amping), a tape loop and the four line-level source inputs. All the RCA sockets are high-grade, gold-plated types soldered straight to the signal PCB tracks.

Socketry isn't the only area where parts quality is high. The L-1's resistors are supplied by Holco and the capacitors

by MIT, Wima and Solen. Potentiometers come from Noble and Bourns and Kimber steps in with the wiring. The metalwork is thicker and weightier than you'd find on many a power amp too.

Once the last cable had been soldered in place and the whole caboodle burned in over the course of a week or so, the L-1's pedigree became rather obvious. As Leo Lam found in August 1998's Supplement, "The control and timing were first-rate, tonal colour was rich and music flowed with the utmost ease." The Assemblage came up trumps with a clarity which gave sound staging the chance to blossom well free of the loudspeakers' cabinets. Abundant detail, presented in a cohesive and natural way, meant the L-1 never robbed music of its realism by glossing over the subtleties which make for a convincing portrayal.

Leo Lam fronted the L-1 for a while with Assemblage's DAC-2 convertor. But if you want to keep it in the Assemblage family downstream of the L-1, where do you turn? The ST-40 push-pull valve power amplifier.

The ST-40's two pairs of Sovtek EL34WXTs are good for 40watts per channel, say Assemblage. Boosting sound quality once more are a range of goodies from MIT, Holco and Kimber Kable. And, as with the L-1, you get the same bomb-proof construction which not only ensures a long life but also cuts down on the microphony which can colour



and blur valve sound.

In standard form, both the L-1 and ST-40 will give a lot of valve and solid-state equipment between £2500-£3000 a run for its money. But we won't be handing them over before they've been fitted with Assemblage's own upgrades. In the case of the L-1, that adds up to huge MIT and Solen capacitors for the PSU and signal coupling, Vishay and Caddock resistors, HEXFRED rectifiers, pure silver Kimber Kable wiring, special damping panels and anti-vibration feet. The ST-40 gains another set of MIT caps and Vishay resistors. The valve complement takes a step up as well, to Tesla gold-pin ECC803s and a Mullard CV4003 at the front end.

We'll be publishing a detailed review of the ST-40 in October's Supplement, and the upgrades for both pre and power will follow in November.

If you'd like the chance to win one of these two superb amps, just answer the questions opposite and complete the T.S. Eliot-inspired tie-breaker. You can either use the form provided for your entry, or it may be photocopied. The answers may also be written straight onto a postcard or the back of a sealed envelope. All entries, which should reach us no later than September 7th, should be sent to:

Assemblage Competition
Hi-Fi World Magazine,
64 Castellain Road,
Maida Vale,
London W9 1EX

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

COMPETITION ENTRY QUESTIONS

1) How many line-level inputs, including Tape and Direct, does the L-1 have?

- A. 11 B. 4 C. 6 D. 2

2) Which audiophile capacitors does the L-1 use?

- A. MIT B. LCR C. ICW D. CPS

3) What is the ST-40's power output?

- A. 40watts B. 25watts C. 75watts D. 0.1watt

4) What power valves does the ST-40 use?

- A. 300B B. EL34WXT C. PCL82 D. 2A3

5) In which country is Assemblage based?

- A. The USA B. Canada C. Britain D. Japan

TIE-BREAKER (obligatory)

Infants huddled round the fire

Are taught to chant this warning dire:

"An L-1 pre and ST-40

Will never come if you are naughty. . ."

Please tick your preferred prize: L-1 ST-40

COMPETITION WINNERS

In July we put the Denon DVD-3000, Creek OBH-8SE phono stage, Creek OBH-12 pre-amp and Creek T43 tuner up to be rhymed for. Our lucky winners are: P. Shaw of Cheshire (DVD-3000); Clive Baker of Billericay (T43); A.S. Baker of Bristol (OBH-12) and Carolyn Barnacle of Oadby (OBH-8SE).

Congratulations!

the man behind TAG McLaren's explains what's

Q: why have TAG & McLaren, best known for their Formula One racing team and watches, bought Audiolab?

Dr Udo Zucker, Physicist and founder of TAG Electronic Systems Ltd.

Largely because of me. I have always loved music. I have my best ideas listening to music and could not live without it. For a long time, I've nurtured an ambition to push music reproduction to the absolute limit. I believe that in TAG McLaren Audio we will be able to do that.

Q: what do you think TAG McLaren can bring to the world of high quality music reproduction?

Dr Udo Zucker: Several things: Firstly, radical ideas and the resource to carry them out. TAG McLaren has over 100 engineers already working in one of the most demanding of all disciplines - developing specialist electronics for Formula 1 racing. Some of this experience is directly applicable to hi-fi equipment - we have world beating experience in digital circuitry design, use of quality materials and in handling complex sensor data signals in the cramped, high vibration and electrically noisy environment of a racing car. There is also a unique, TAG McLaren attitude that overrides all this resource and expertise. This attitude is focused on winning, it demands excellence and is obsessed by attention to detail.

Q: what are your aims and aspirations for TAG McLaren Audio?

Dr Udo Zucker: My goal for TAG McLaren Audio is a simple one: to build the world's best sound reproduction systems. I want to recreate, with absolute fidelity, the artists' performance in your own living room, so that when you close your eyes you can believe you are together in that room.

Q: how has TAG McLaren changed Audiolab?

Dr Udo Zucker: Let's not forget that Audiolab have been making outstanding high fidelity products for many years. In this way Audiolab complemented our own way of working. In fact, both teams of engineers already have the intuitive understanding of people that have been working together for years. When Audiolab and TAG McLaren's electronics division joined forces we became one of the most powerful companies involved in high end audio products.



WORLD LAUNCH AT 'HIFI SHOW 98', EXCELSIOR HOTEL, HEATHROW, SEPTEMBER 19-20
email: helpdesk@tagmclarenaudio.com freephone: 0800 7838007

electronics behind TAG McLaren Audio.

Q: did you change the electronics and appearance of the product?

Dr Udo Zucker: Yes. Most importantly, with our additional resources, Derek Scotland, co-founder of Audiolab, has achieved significant improvements in sound reproduction. Our attitude has been one of 'no compromise', whatever it takes to raise the standard to the level of a true TAG McLaren product. Furthermore, Peter Stephens, designer of the McLaren F1 road car, has made a big investment in design and superior materials to give these products a look for the new millennium.

Q: will you add to the product range in the future?

Dr Udo Zucker: The first fruits of our collaboration will be the new F3 series. This will be the ultimate Audiolab product, but for TAG McLaren Audio it will only be the beginning. We plan to follow the F3 with two further, more advanced and therefore expensive, complete systems: the F2 series and F1 series respectively. These systems will take TAG McLaren Audio into genuine high end products and to new heights in high-fidelity.

Q: what music system do you currently have at home?

Dr Udo Zucker: To be honest, I listen to a much more expensive Krell system at the moment but I can't wait to replace it with a better TAG McLaren F1 Audio system.

Q: and finally, what sort of music do you enjoy listening to?

Dr Udo Zucker: Ah, the question they always ask in the hi-fi stores. But I believe the question is irrelevant. Perfection is what I want, not a system that 'colours' sound. Purity, to my mind, is the most desirable quality reproduced sound can have. So it shouldn't matter what I listen to. In delivering our promise of "hi-performance, hi-fidelity" we will make this question irrelevant for good.

TAG McLaren
audio

hi-performance hi-fidelity

WELCOME NUVISITOR

Leo Lam warms to Musical Fidelity's Nu-Vista pre-amp, built around a very special species of valve.



Musical Fidelity's X Series is on the move again. Last month we had a close encounter with the extravagantly powerful X-A200 monoblocs, whose transparency and musicality made a convert out of Leo Lam. Now, stepping in to partner these exotically-styled canisters is the £1200 Nu-Vista hybrid pre-amp.

The name Nu-Vista gives you a clue as to what sets this line and phono pre-amp apart from the thermionic masses. It opens up new horizons for the Wembley-based company in the technology harnessed within that curved casework. For the bottles within are not your common-or-garden tubes, but 6CW4 triodes, otherwise known as 'Nuvistors'. These iconoclastic

miniature valves (constructed only by RCA and Svetlana, to the best of my knowledge) were designed at the end of the tube era mainly for military purposes, and they are unique.

Solid-state JFETs are chosen for many input buffers because of a gate impedance far higher than most bipolar junction transistors. Similarly, the Nuvistor's grid manages an impedance of 450kohms, or roughly 10 times that of more standard fare.

TINY TUBES

Nuvistors themselves are no bigger than your finger tip as their innards were as advanced as tube technology could make them. Enclosed in a metal housing instead of glass (for magnetic shielding and improved shock-resistance) they possess the twin benefits of low microphony and high linearity. Furthermore, advances in manufacturing technology meant the parameters were more consistent from

one Nuvistor to another, emulating the close tolerance of the solid-state devices they were competing against. With long life and low noise to their credit as well, only scarcity has kept these bottles out of the hi-fi limelight.

The Class A Nu-Vista puts the tiny triodes to good use at its input, leaving the output stage to bipolar junction transistors and their low

output impedance. MF claim the input buffer is virtually impossible to overload, overall stability is excellent and the output can swing a massive 60volts. Particular attention has also been lavished on reducing the effects of vibration on the amplifier, with bitumen pads placed strategically on the casing, circuit board and tops of the Nuvistors.

When it comes to settling this pre into a system, there are five line-level inputs and a tape loop along with a solid-state Moving-Magnet phono stage which is loosely based on the forthcoming high-end X-Tract dual-monobloc design. Both volume and source selectors can be controlled from the remote.

LIVE LONG AND PROSPER

Just to make sure Nu-Vista owners the world over aren't left stranded in 12-15 years' time when their beloved triodes expire, Musical Fidelity has reserved a set of extra tubes for each unit sold. This unfortunately ensures a limited run of 500 pre-amps. Boosting the exclusivity is the rumour that a dedicated power amp is on its way, one which will be offered first to Nu-Vista owners.

Prior to serious listening the Nu-Vista was allowed to burn in for a few days. After that, it took little more than an hour to reach its performance pinnacle. Digital sources comprised a Teac T1/Assemblage DAC-2 combination and a Myryad T-20 integrated player. The sexy MF ended up driving Unison Research's Power 35 valve amp (reviewed last month) and MF's own X-A50 monoblocs. The loudspeaker line-up ran to Heybrook's Heylettes, Seas' Mini Monitors and a pair of Harbeth's DPM1 Pro Actives, these last connected directly to the Nu-Vista.

There's certainly no doubting the Nu-Vista's musicality. It's so enjoyably involving that you stop bothering to pick out individual attributes and relax into the music. The smooth, effortless flow of

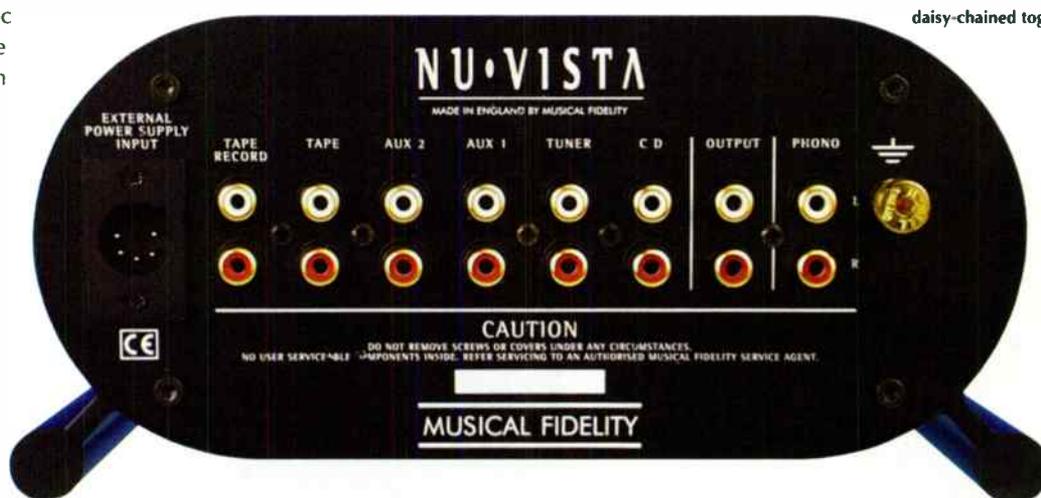
Puccini's arias would have pleased even the most hair-splitting of performers. A top C from Placido Domingo sounds as easy as a middle C, leaving others straining to hit the note. That's talent. And the Nu-Vista is a talented pre-amp.

The music was grainless and perceptibly distortion-free, which the Nu-Vista took advantage of to dig out extra details from recordings I thought I knew like the back of my hand. Not even the giant-killing Creek OBH-12 passive could embarrass the Musical Fidelity in this area. The NuVistors' high input

pure solid-state, it unashamedly betters it.

With all the ambient detail it extracted from recordings, the Nu-Vista spread out a sound stage which could only be described as wholly natural and holographic. One bee I've long had in my bonnet is the way some equipment 'creates' a sound stage instead of reproducing it, the concert hall swelling in size as the orchestral climax approaches. The Nu-Vista steers well clear here, with as much detail and space on tap at low volumes as there are at higher

The Nu-Vista has only one set of outputs as matching MF power amps can be daisy-chained together.



impedance had the DAC-2 stretching its muscles and revealing its potential. I have never heard it produce such explicit detailing, lightning fast transients and heart-attack-inducing bass slam before it met the MF.

Comparing the Nu-Vista to a variety of pre-amps currently chez Lam demonstrated that all of them except the Creek were manipulating the music in some fashion, adding too much warmth, too much treble, etc. The Nu-Vista goes about things rather differently. It wasn't warm, nor was it dry to the extent that the sound became either clinical or fatiguing; it was simply, well, correct.

This rectitude was most noticeable in the bass department. There was no boom or waffle (and this is in the absolute sense, not the relative), nor there was any of the apparent limitation on speed and control which afflicts most other tube-based pre-amps. At the low-end, the Nu-Vista doesn't just equal

settings.

Only one little hiccup spoils the experience. The Nu-Vista's remote shares some of the RC-5 code used by a lot of CD players (like the Myryad), and the MF's selector operated when I tried to change tracks.

First came budget hi-fi in a can when the earliest of the X Series emerged. Now there's the mix of rare valve technology and solid-state in the more expensive Nu-Vista. And it's a good investment too, since only 500 will be made and late-comers (especially in Britain, as most have been pre-ordered by overseas audiophiles) are likely to be disappointed. The only word of warning is that, with a sound as transparent as this, you're going to need a very capable power amp that won't disgrace itself. My girlfriend hates the Nu-Vista though, because now there's a hole in my wallet and the wedding has been postponed ●

Musical Fidelity Nu-Vista
£1200

Musical Fidelity
15-17 Olympic Trading
Estate,
Fulton Road,
Wembley,
Middx. HA9 0TF
Tel: 0181 900 2866

WORLD VERDICT



A truly competent pre-amp whose high-end sound comes with a very reasonable price tag.

Measured Performance
see p111

DON'T BUY IT JUST BECAUSE IT'S BEAUTIFUL



Titanium dome tweeter.



Extruded aluminium cabinet.



Die-cast aluminium top cap.



Gold plated bi-wire terminals.



Audiophile crossover components.

These may be the best looking speakers ever made - but our engineers hope you'll ignore their stunning appearance.

They admit that the extruded aluminium cabinets are undeniably elegant. But they want you to appreciate how their shape and rigidity reduces internal resonance.

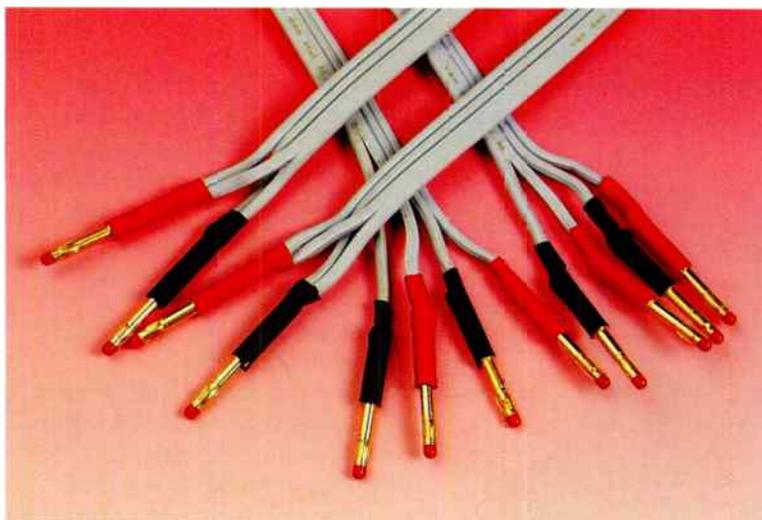
And they can understand how you might be seduced by the gorgeous titanium dome tweeter. But they'll ask you to close your eyes and enjoy its remarkable clarity instead. After all, it's thanks to their pioneering work in Finite Element Analysis that the HF response is so uncannily accurate and smooth.

Of course, they acknowledge that people are impressed by the sight of dual sets of gold plated binding posts and massive bus bar connections between the terminals and the crossover. But they respectfully point out that uncompromised signal transfer is what really counts.

At Celestion, we've always been quietly proud of our loudspeaker technology. But sometimes, design genius is just impossible to hide.

FLEXIBLE FRIENDS

Richard White liaises with budget loudspeaker cables from QED and van den Hul.



VAN DEN HUL SKYTRACK £5.95/m

Skytrack consists of four high-purity copper conductors coated with Linear Structured Carbon (LSC). Apparently this helps by bridging the gaps between the cable's individual strands and, in the manufacturer's own words, "partially converting the magnetic field into a constant electric field". The outer covering is finished in a delicate shade of baby-blue (although 'Babytrack' would have sounded silly).

Feeding our resident Jamo Concert 8s, the Skytrack swiftly proved it was not work-shy. Although an HDCD recording of Eric Bibb featured a great variety of sounds, from real double-bass to the distinctive sawtooth-wave of the mouth organ, the van den Huls never sounded less than musical.

The bass was a tad lean, borne out by the fairly narrow sound stage the vdH produced, but the overall balance was pleasantly even-handed. Pricking up my ears to the opening of Stravinsky's Firebird confirmed a smidge of muddying in the bass which took the edge off the piece's pace and excitement.

Crossing the octaves to the treble, I was happy to hear very little trace

of the maddening glassiness which can afflict some cables in this price bracket. Using the Skytrack in both single and bi-wire configurations showed it to be a smooth performer under all conditions. Perhaps its greatest merit was a refreshingly balanced presentation, free from any glaring accentuations.

QED PROFILE SILVER 12 £15/m

The Profile Silver 12 is made up of a ribbon of 12 silver-plated Oxygen-Free Copper cables grouped in

threes. These are then wrapped in a transparent plastic covering, the whole measuring about an inch wide.

The more expensive Silver 12 sounded very different from the van den Hul. The QED rustled up a much broader sound stage (which you'd expect for the extra money), enabling the old audiophile's game of Hunt The Instrumentalist to be played with ease. It had a fractionally louder sound than the Skytrack too, most likely down to the QEDs' lack of any serious midrange compression or confusion.

The same comments could be made of the apparent extension in the bass, although the Silver 12's lowest octaves were a fraction looser than the van den Hul's. At least this never degenerated into flabbiness, even on very testing tracks.

At the other end of the scale, touches of fine detail such as the guitarist's fingers slipping over the strings were transmitted with no questions asked. And the QED's fine tonal resolution means it will fit snugly into systems where many other lesser wires would be out of their depth.



van den Hul
Tel: 0181 810 9388

QED
Tel: 01276 451166

Letter of the Month

The writer of the 'Letter of the Month' wins a free subscription to Hi-Fi World as well as a Top Prize every other month

ACTIVELY YOURS

Help! My 'speakers have disappeared, there's a band playing in my listening room and the upgrade bug is not biting anymore. No, I've not gone mad, I've gone active.

I recently acquired a pair of Meridian M1 active loudspeakers along with a Meridian 101 pre-amp, and the sound is amazing. My friends affectionately call it the "wall of sound". It has a wonderfully wide and deep sound stage, a tuneful bass to die for and detail that has you going, "Wow! I've not heard that before" at boringly regular intervals.

Ever since I bought my first set-up based on the legendary Pioneer A-400 I

have striven to achieve sounds only heard at the Ramada hi-fi show courtesy of Boulder and Absolute Sounds. It has been great fun (and expensive) upgrading, tweaking and modifying over the years without ever totally reaching hi-fi nirvana.

Now my system is everything I have dreamed of. The added bonus is that I have been able to sell my previous amps and 'speakers and invest the proceeds in quality interconnects from vdH and others. As going active seems more

simple, logical and practical than the passive approach, I am rather surprised it has not been more widely embraced by the hi-fi community.

Would it be possible for your magazine to look at the concept of active 'speakers, or even produce a pair of DIY actives in the near future?

Victor Bullimore
vgb.cromer@BTinternet.com

We have looked occasionally at active loudspeakers in previous issues (see the Tannoy AMS 8s in August 1996 and the Soundcraft Absolute 4Ps in October 1997). Unfortunately, as Dominic Todd noted in his December 1997 column, there simply aren't that many domestic active loudspeakers around apart from offerings by Wharfedale, Meridian and Goodmans, for example. This is why the active and bi-amped 'speakers you'll find on p12 this month are aimed predominantly at home studio enthusiasts, although the companies behind one of the designs - Harbeth - may be familiar.

Active operation has so many benefits over passive - no power-hungry crossover components to fritter away or distort the amps' output, the ability to equalise driver response easily and



Tannoy's AMS 8s combine active operation with a dual-concentric driver.

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accurately, and a generally much more open and transparent sound.

One disadvantage can be cost, if you're on a tight budget, as the four power amps necessary for a pair of two-ways don't tend to come cheap. This means that prices

for most active loudspeakers start at around £800. Still, when you consider you won't need any 'speaker cable and the only other equipment to buy is a source and pre-amp, going active makes a lot of sense.

We are looking at DIY designs based around simple active crossovers like those for in-car use (which can be surprisingly good and inexpensive). Keep an eye on future Supplements for more on this topic. JM

GOING GROOVY

I would appreciate your help in putting together a new, budget vinyl system - a bit of a dying art in these CD-dominated times! Working backwards, Tannoy m2s seem the obvious 'speaker choice, but what about amps? I listened to the big names such as Sony, Marantz, Denon and Arcam but felt Technics' SU-A600Mk3 was the clear leader. It sounded more full-bodied, musical and exciting, and had a really strong, well-defined and tuneful bass. What would you recommend, bearing in mind that I would prefer tone controls and must have a balance control (to compensate for a slight hearing imbalance)?

I'm more confused about the turntable. Should I go for, say, a Rega Planar 2 with a Goldring GX cartridge or a Planar 3 with a cheaper cartridge? Or would a Project or Thorens be better - it's hard to find a shop where I can compare them head-to-head. I want a full, detailed, and natural sound with good, clean bass - nothing 'tinny'! Finally, what's the best budget cable around £2 a metre, and can I get a reasonable CD player for £150 or less?

3001 - A TURNTABLE ODYSSEY

Having recently acquired a Leak 3001 transcription unit in good condition, would it be possible for you to guide me in the direction of a source for a drive belt? I would also appreciate some aid on the removal of the turntable platter, without incurring any damage to same. I presume there is bearing oil - what type is required? Could you recommend a suitable cartridge? At present it is fitted with a Shure M75 MkII EJ, condition unknown. If this is suitable would a replacement stylus from Musonic be acceptable?

J.G. Heaver
Earby.

A Leak 3001 is not exactly the last word in turntables, dating as it does from the mid-Seventies when Rank's badge-engineering policy was in full swing. I would recommend you gave

D. Lambert
Kent.

From past experience with the m2s, personally I'd lean towards the



Technics' late Seventies SL-7 is one of the few small parallel-tracking turntables that show how well this technology can work.

clarity and neutrality of a Denon PMA-250SE amp, although if you prefer the Technics, go for that - you'll be the one listening to the system after all!

The vinyl side comes down mainly

replacement some thought since, aside from the belt problem, it's probable that much of the rest is nearing the end of its life. If you want to go ahead, a replacement belt and possibly some other bits and pieces should be available from L & W Services, 9 The Parade,



Shure's M75 cartridge may not be a spring chicken but it's worth investing in a new Musonic stylus for it.

to Planars 2 and 3 as well as the Project 1.2. The advantage of the former is that their arms can be upgraded by Origin Live. Of course, if you buy second-hand, you've got more financial room for manoeuvre.

Technics' SL-150 and SL-110 are both capable direct-drive decks which can often be had with SME 3009 arms for less than £200. Then there are the small but heavyweight SL-7 and SL-10 parallel-trackers which are much better than most used belt drives. Replacement T4P plug-in cartridges for these turntables can be hard to source, but there's always Sumiko's Blue Point and its Special variant, as well as a number of models from Ortofon.

For 'speaker cable on a shoestring, sample Gale's XL315 at £1.99 per metre. And the CD player is easy - Kenwood's DP-3080/II, which can now be had for as little as £130, is an excellent machine. JM

Spruce up the connections on your system-to-be with a bottle of DNM's Licon contact enhancer.

Bramhope, Leeds LS16 9AF.

The preferred method for removing the platter is to put upward pressure on the platter with your fingers (try to get your finger-tips under the rim if there's room) while some kind friend gives the spindle a light tap with a small hammer: this should give you access to the works. If you do get stuck it is always possible to make a new belt for yourself out of a couple of short ones from Maplin with the aid of a little super-glue. Provided the platter is heavy enough to iron out the slight fluctuations caused by the joins, this can be surprisingly effective.

In my view the Shure M75 is quite suitable: there is very little that can go wrong with the cartridge itself so by all means treat yourself to a new needle. Good luck! RMW

Delve deeper into the subject of hi-fi with a copy of John Linsley Hood's Audio Electronics.



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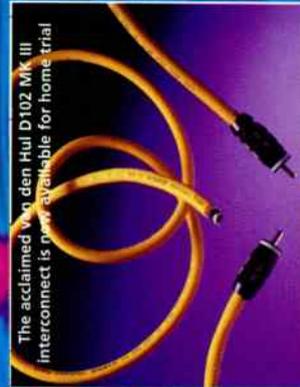


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GOING ALL THE WAY

Having recently replaced my old NAD 3020e integrated amplifier with the new AMC 3020, I was pleasantly surprised to hear a marked improvement in sound quality, along with further benefits from bi-wiring my JPW ML 510s.

However, another upgrade idea struck when my eye caught sight of the split pre/power sections on the AMC and my mind wandered back to a letter in the February 1997 issue of Hi-Fi World. There a happy reader described how he had connected his Linn Pretek (with two Pre-Outs) to his Linn Powertek and

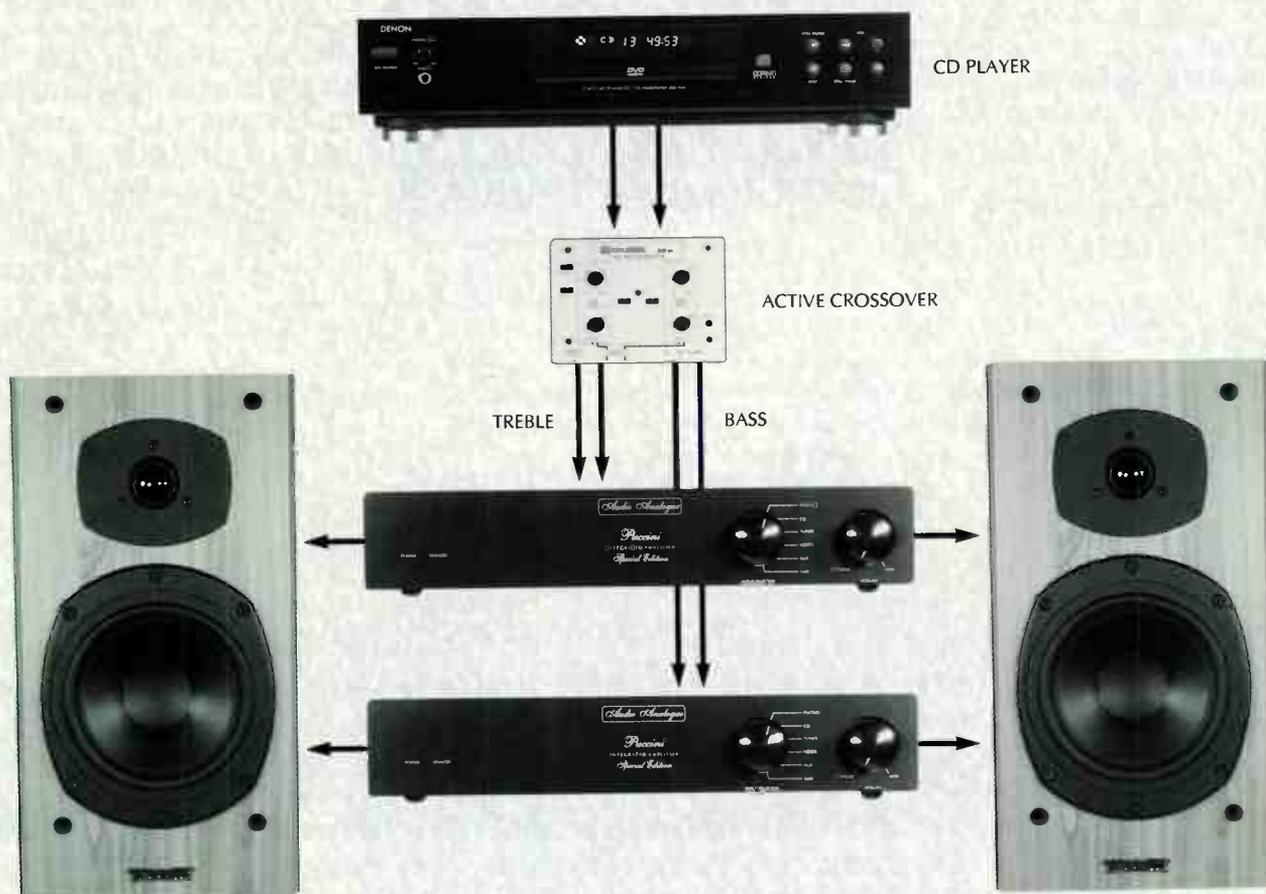
separation were all now considerably improved.

I was using relatively pricey interconnects (for this system), QED Qnect 2s. Nevertheless, I think my experience shows that, with the increasing number of cheap but decent integrated amps which have split pre/power sections and the increasing number of bi-wireable budget 'speakers, the benefits of bi-amping are increasingly accessible.

A.D. Mollah
Lancs.

of their guarantee period.

The best way to go active would be to hook up the AMC's Pre-Out to the active crossover's input. Then connect the bass output of the crossover to the Power In or Aux of whichever amp sounds best driving the woofers, leaving the treble output to the other amp. If you know the crossover point of your loudspeakers, dial the same frequency in on the active crossover. If you don't, start at 2kHz and work up to about



the Aux input of his NAD 3020i. The Powertek was used to drive the bass units of his bi-wired Index 'speakers with the NAD on treble duty.

Applying the above philosophy to my set-up, I connected the Pre-Out of the AMC to the Aux input of the NAD and then connected the NAD Tape Out to the AMC power section. The NAD was posted on treble duty with the AMC power section driving the bass units of the JPWs. After some adjustment with the volume of the NAD to achieve the correct tonal balance, I was astonished by the results. Dynamics, detail and

It's true that as the years go by and the cost of decent amps falls, there will be more and more opportunities for system improvements like this. Of course, the next step is to go for an active crossover, like the ones Maplin (tel: 01702 554000) sell. This obviously means removing your loudspeakers' built-in passive crossovers, which will invalidate any warranties, so either make sure you know exactly what you're doing first or postpone the mods until the 'speakers are out

3.5kHz for most two-way designs.

You can adjust differences in levels between amps on most active crossovers, and some even give you a choice of second or third-order roll-offs. The only time you may run into problems is if your loudspeaker has very steep roll-offs, say fourth-order, which can be difficult to find in inexpensive active devices. JM

For greater clarity and detail, hook up a set of The Chord Company's Siren interconnects.

e-mail

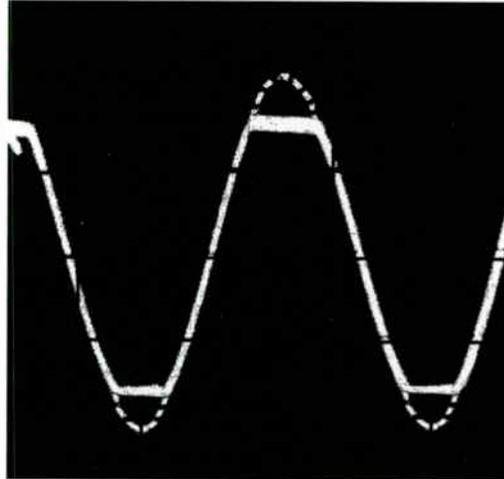
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POWER FOR THE GLORY

I am intending to replace my old Hitachi music centre with some Midi-sized separates (probably the Denon HP-500) and a digital recorder (probably the latest Sony MD at about £250) to lay down my extensive vinyl collection. I would like to keep the Hitachi 'speakers, which are excellent, but they are only rated at 50watts. A hi-fi salesman told me that I was more likely to damage them with a LESS powerful (30watt) rather than more powerful (60watt) amp. Does this make any sense? Also, am I mad buying MiniDisc?

Stevie
stib@earthling.net

What the salesman told you is actually right. When an amp runs out of steam, it can 'clip'. When



If you push an amplifier beyond its rated power output, it will start to 'clip' the signal. This can destroy loudspeaker drivers. The dotted lines show the unclipped waveform.

this occurs under test conditions, the tops of the sine waves often used to measure amplifiers are

'chopped' or 'clipped' off. If you're listening to music and this happens, you'll know about it - this distortion sounds very nasty. It can also damage loudspeaker drive units.

You're much better off with an amp which will drive your Hitachis to the required volume without sweating. Just make sure you don't then exceed your loudspeakers' power handling, which shouldn't be too tough as 50watts into most 'speakers in a living room would be very loud indeed. And you're certainly not mad to be buying MD either - it's much easier to use than cassette and sounds better too. JM

Make sure you're getting the most from your components with a set of The Chord Company's Cobra interconnects.

HEARING DOUBLE

I have a question concerning the double-wiring of 'speaker cables. I presently bi-wire my JMLab Profil 7 'speakers with 2.25 square mm stranded copper cable, custom made by a hi-fi shop in The Netherlands. They also make a silver version, which sounds better in the midrange and treble.

If I use this silver cable to the tweeter and double-up the two existing copper cables for the bass, would this cause any problems for the amp as far as impedance, capacitance or other mismatching goes? I won't try out the possible sonic benefits before I know I'm not damaging anything.

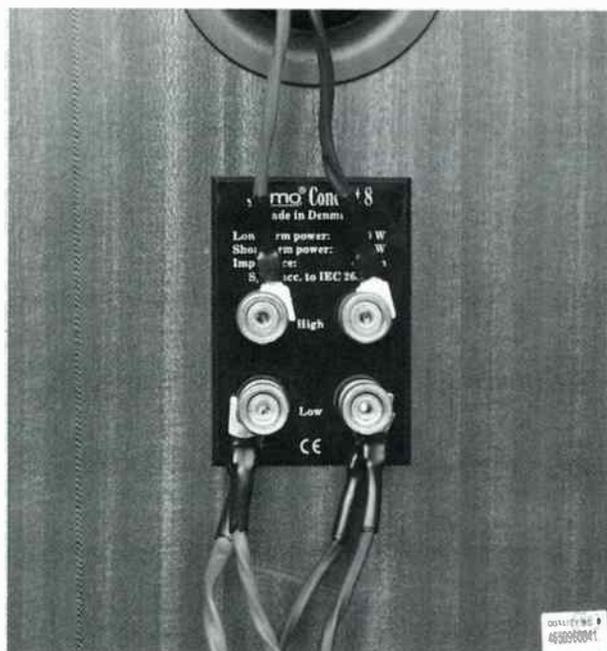
I also want to put my CD player on spikes. Should they point down to the stone surface

underneath the player, or must I turn them the other way around, pointing

upwards? Should I fix them to the player's feet or directly to its metal chassis?

Egil Erlandsen
egil.erlandsen@dagbladet.no

As long as you hook up your cables properly - make very certain there's no shorting - the effect of doubling up will be to halve their resistance but double their capacitance. According to Richard Lord, QED's cable designer, resistance and capacitance should ideally both be minimised. Some amps can struggle when faced by excessive capacitance, so it might be worthwhile putting your suggestion into practice on a cheaper, more disposable set of 'speakers first.



Doubling up loudspeaker cables, as shown here on the bass section of the Jamo Concert 8's crossover, reduces cable resistance and inductance by up to 50%.

If you do not want your e-mail address published, please let us know.

As far as spike orientation goes, it's simply a case of trial and error. However, if you find the spikes work best with their points facing downwards, it's

not a bad idea then to remove the CD player's existing feet and screw on the spikes instead. Just bear in mind that any DIY modifications like these will

invariably invalidate the player's guarantee.

Dab on a little DNM Licon contact enhancer to prevent dirty joints holding your hi-fi back.

LOP-SIDED

I have a Cambridge A3i amplifier and Wharfedale Valds 300 'speakers. My problem is, the bass seems to come from only one side. Is this a recognised fault in either of these two products, and what can I do in terms of repositioning the 'speakers, buying new components, etc, to remedy this problem?

Will Odell
w.odell@connect-2.co.uk

It sounds as if there's a fault somewhere along the line in your hi-fi, as neither the Cambridge nor Wharfedale should be behaving in the way you



The music from Wharfedale's Valds 300 loudspeakers should be evenly spread between the two cabinets. If it isn't, a dealer visit might be called for.

describe. It's very rare that positioning could cause such an imbalance, especially as low frequencies are pretty much omnidirectional.

Check that all your cable connections are sound and that the amp's balance control is set to the centre. Try borrowing components from a friend and substituting them into your system one at a time to pin down the weak link. Failing that, a dealer visit may be the only option.
JM

Once your amp and 'speakers are working properly, treat them both to DNM's Reson loudspeaker cable.

DIGITITIS, DOCTOR

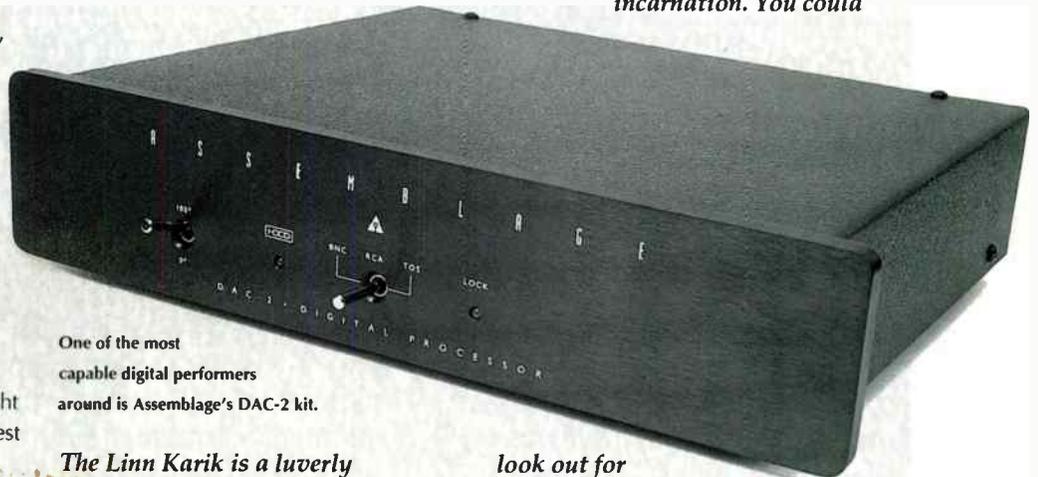
I'm in a difficult position which I don't suppose is that rare among audiophiles. My idea of hi-fi is a no-compromise one: it doesn't matter what the equipment looks like or how inconvenient it is to use or live with, the sound quality is paramount. My wife however disagrees, so we have a compromise. My system currently consists of a Linn LP12, Valhalla, Basik+, Marantz CD-75 Mk2, Cambridge Audio Dacmagic 1, Linn Kairn, Linn LK100 and KLS9 'speakers.

Obviously the front end needs looking at: I love the sound of my LP12 and am not looking to upgrade there. However, I've been unhappy with the sound of my CDs for some time and having auditioned a Linn Karik III thought that was the way to go (it matches the rest of the kit AND sounds good to boot!) Unfortunately your articles about the Assemblage DAC-2 have cast doubts in my mind. So, should I buy a DAC-2 and use it with the CD-75 until a good second-hand Karik transport comes up, or will the ageing CD-75 be shown up? Indeed should I even be thinking about the Karik any more? I know the player is good, but is the transport that special?

Will any small differences in sound quality be worth the grief gained by not having a matching system?

Mike Howard
mikehoward50@compuserve.com

DAC-2 could be used on the CD-75, it would be a case of 'never mind the quality, feel the width'. Bearing in mind your Linn sensibilities I would have to direct you back to your first choice, the Karik, in whatever incarnation. You could



One of the most capable digital performers around is Assemblage's DAC-2 kit.

The Linn Karik is a louverly transport and now, since the Majik's delta-sigma one-bit convertor was added on board, a fine one-box player. The Assemblage DAC-2 kit, particularly in upgraded form, is on the other hand a sweet and translucent convertor that can be unforgiving with less-than-great CDs and transports. So while the

look out for an early Karik 0 (just a transport, designed to BNC up to the 20-bit Numerik) and use that with an Assemblage kit, or go for a later model (SPS, II or III).
AH

While you're sorting out the CD side of things, enjoy a slab of audiophile vinyl from Vivante.

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Hi-Fi Choice Best Buy, Paul Messenger, July 1998

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Alan Sircom, April 1998

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WARM IT UP

My system is made up of the following components: Pioneer PD-T07A (Japanese version of PD-77), Audiolab 8000A (used as a pre-amp), Chord SPM 1000B power amp and Harbeth HL-P3ES. The interconnects are Monster Interlink 500s and the 'speaker cable is Chord Rumour.

I am generally quite pleased with the system in terms of clarity, definition and power. However, I find my system sounding very cold when compared to my brother's DPA/Harbeth set-up. Should I keep my CD player and add a more musical DAC or replace my CD player? Should I also replace my pre-amp? I have an Audiolab 8000Q or one of the Chord pre-amps in mind. My taste in music is mainly Classical, ranging from large-scale orchestral works to solo piano pieces.

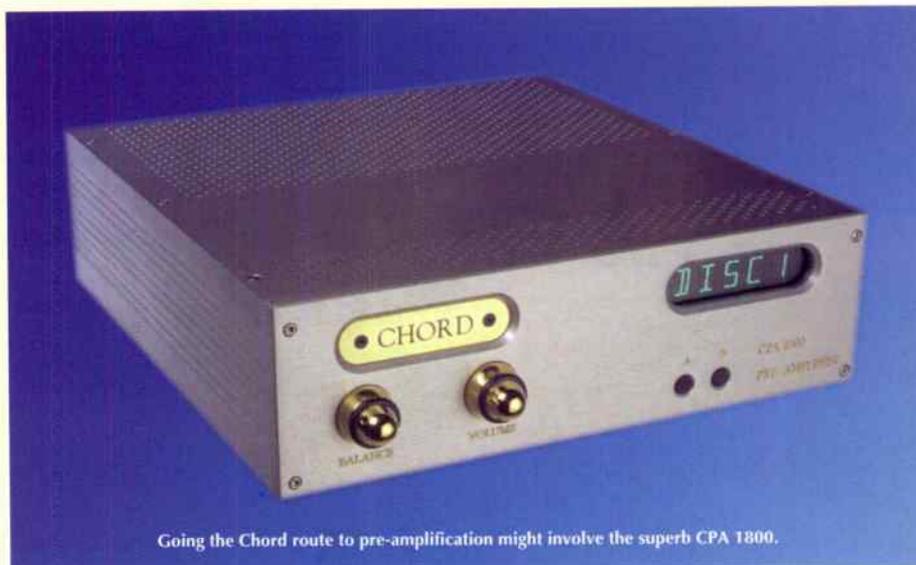
Peter Cheng
 pdlcheng@hotmail.com

It's unlikely the Pioneer is the cause of your problems - the Legato Link Conversion system sounds anything but cold. As the player itself is built along very solid lines, it would certainly benefit from an upgraded main clock; speak to companies like Acoustic Precision (tel: 01483 267516), Trichord

(tel: 01684 573524) and AudioCom (tel: 01834 842803). If you do decide to go the add-on DAC route, try new digital output boards from some of the same people.

The Audiolab 8000A's pre-amp stage really is overshadowed by

rather lean, dry sound which, coupled with the Harbeths' neutrality, will give your system that 'cold' sound. Swap the Rumour for a length of DNM's Reson, which should add tonal colour and a hint of warmth. You



Going the Chord route to pre-amplification might involve the superb CPA 1800.

your power amp and loudspeakers. Chord's CPA 1800 (reviewed in March 1998) at £1775 would make a fine match for the SPM 1000B and would be my recommendation over the 8000Q.

The Chord Company's first-generation Rumour cable has a

could use DNM's £36 interconnects too, although Roksan's HDC-01A at £90 is, as the price might suggest, considerably better. JM

Slip a Ringmat from Statmat into your Pioneer for a smoother, more open sound.

MD ON THE RECORD

I have noticed in your publication a number of letters relating to adding DACs to older CD players. These are normally answered with the recommendation to

DAC. However, the DAC recently started to hum loudly. As an interim measure until cash is available for a replacement, I used my Sony MDS-JE510 MiniDisc player with a disc in the Record/Pause

certainly no match for my T1, but given the choice between buying a DAC or a digital recorder for circa £150 to pep up an ageing CD player, I know where I'd put my cash!



With a MiniDisc player like Sony's MDS-JE510 in Record Monitor mode, you can use its internal DAC to convert the signal from a separate transport.

purchase a unit in the £100-£200 price range, as above this price it makes more sense to replace the whole unit.

I have another suggestion which I stumbled upon quite by accident. I use a Teac T1 transport and Cambridge Audio

position to listen to CDs. Then I found that, if you remove the disc and press the record button, the legend DA appears - the unit had turned into a DAC and it sounds as good as the Cambridge!

It's not a universal panacea and it's

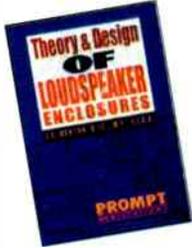
Ralph Seaton
 ralphseaton@email.msn.com

For a spot of in-depth hi-fi literature, dip into a copy of John Linsley Hood's Audio Electronics.

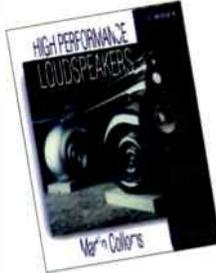
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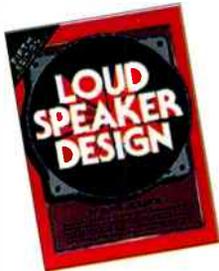
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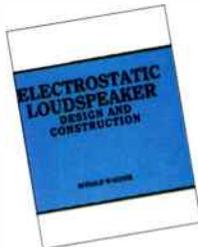


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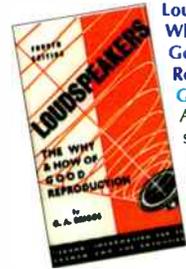


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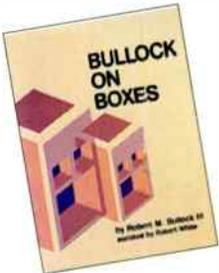


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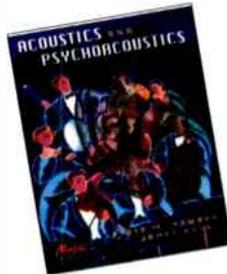


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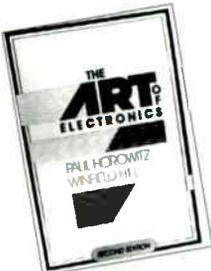
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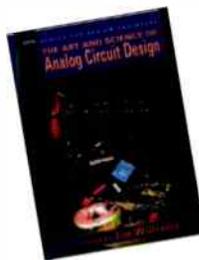


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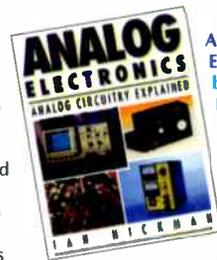


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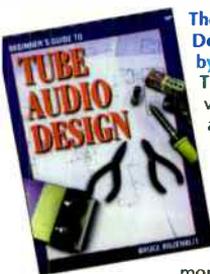
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by Robin Pain

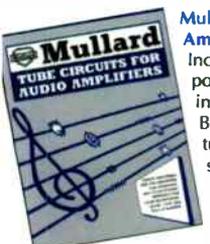
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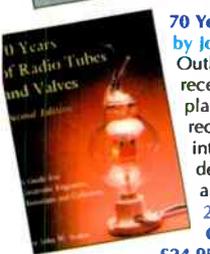
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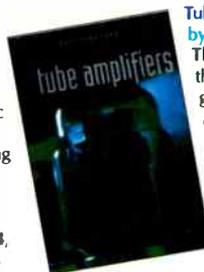
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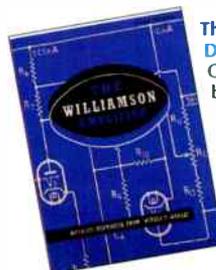
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DEATH, WHEN IS THY STING?



Richard White finds out if JVC's TD-V662 can stave off cassette's Big Sleep.

Compact Cassette may be a dying format but it would appear that it's determined to go down fighting. New and improved machines are still being introduced, and the tapes themselves keep getting better and cheaper. . . If this is death it makes you wonder whether that old eight-track up in the loft is simply shamming! One of the primary reasons for the format's leisurely decline is its comparative cheapness: few hi-fi components allow so much flexibility for so little outlay.

Although the TD-V662 isn't the cheapest cassette deck on the market, it does have some attractive features which put it in the league of serious domestic machines. There's the all-important third monitoring head, direct-drive for the two capstans and HX-Pro. Tape type selection (Ferric/Chrome/Metal) is automatic. The JVC also has facilities for direct input (bypassing its internal amp) from one of the company's CD players, enabling use of the deck's internal level-limiter and synchronised recording facility. On the downside, there's no Dolby S, nor is there a direct microphone input for home music makers.

Firing up the TD-V662 for action, I plied it with a selection of pre-recorded tapes including 'talking book' types through the monitoring (pre-amp bypass) loop. This swiftly

answered a lot of questions and proved the '662 has an even, neutral balance which bore up very well to continued listening. There was a touch of grain, certainly, but this didn't stop me enjoying the machine's musicality.

It came as something of a shock to realise that some of my own recordings made on another (nameless) deck were, ahem, letting the side down. To be quite candid, the JVC showed no mercy to my own tapes, revealing tape-hiss, over-recording, On/Off thumps, the works! All of which went to highlight the way the JVC could dig deep into recordings and pull out subtleties often buried by the medium.

Before attempting any recording on the TD-V662, I fine-tuned its bias for the tapes I was using, an easy and worthwhile operation. (I re-tested a range of blank cassettes as the days progressed to confirm that the bias setting wasn't drifting).

Taking a spin round the airwaves turned out to be a relaxing experience. I put the '662 through its paces on a variety of broadcast material, starting with Radio 3. Tuning in to a symphony concert I was rewarded with plenty of dynamic range and kept a wary eye on the level indicator; for the Chrome tape in the drawer, the manual recommended peaks were kept below

the +2dB mark. The JVC then took all in its stride, coming up with a satisfying simulacrum of the original thanks to rich, taut bass and clear, crisp treble. The Rock of commercial stations, in spite of the compression generously applied to it, still managed an up-beat vibrancy due to the stability of the direct-drive transport.

Recording from records failed to trip up the TD-V662. A short Haydn trio captured on the three different tape types pointed out ferric's customary shortcomings, although HX Pro stretched out its perceived bandwidth at the top end. On Chrome and Metal, results were more impressive. The cello part really sang through and, on more complex pieces like Handel's Concerti Grosso, the vital midrange remained focused and uncluttered. I have to admit to being no great noise-reduction fan. With the JVC's recording level properly set, most recordings sounded more natural without it.

JVC's TD-V662 is a serious contender in what many now, perhaps prematurely, consider to be a backwater of hi-fi. Compact Cassette may be heading for yesterday, but if you have an extensive tape collection and no MiniDiscs, £300 might be best spent on a capable cassette deck which is cheap to feed and will easily see the millennium out!

JVC TD-V662
£299.99

JVC
Priestley Way,
London NW2 7BA
Tel: 0181 450 3282

WORLD VERDICT



Only its price and a lack of Dolby S conspire against the otherwise able JVC.

Measured Performance
see p111

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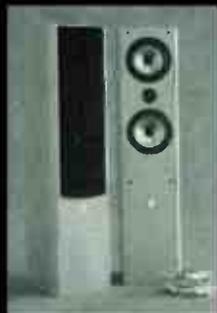
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stereophile Feb 98

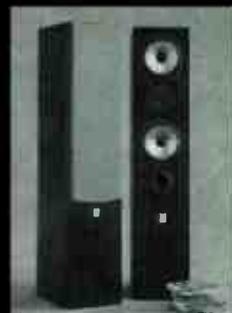


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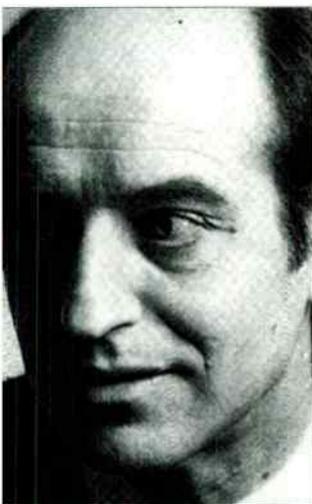
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Noel Keywood

The Nuvistor is a miniature valve that got elbowed out at birth by the transistor. It came and went pretty fast, I seem to remember. I fiddled with a few in my teens, was none too successful due to my own inability I'm sure, and returned to ECC83s and dreaded OC81s. The Nuvistor faded away. Now they have started to reappear in hi-fi, but little is known about them.

Valves in their day were a pain. When the valve was the only amplifying device available, it had to be used in radios and test equipment and, from 1943 on, in computers too. As more and more uses were found for amplification and electronics in general, the size, weight, power consumption and heat production of the valve proved an ever-increasing limitation. The transistor was invented in 1948, but even by the early Sixties it still possessed too much capacitance for VHF radio. That role was filled briefly by the Nuvistor, introduced around 1963.

At the start of the 20th century Marconi, Fleming and Lee de Forest were intrigued by electromagnetic radiation. An invisible signal that could travel through the 'ether' at the speed of light must have seemed pretty astonishing. The first use of the valve was as a rectifier and an amplifier capable of amplifying and detecting such signals. Radio was born. Audio amplification followed quickly in its wake, stimulated by the need for 'public address' (PA) within halls, cinemas and public exhibitions. I am talking about the 1920s-1940s here, when homes were lit by gas, public electricity supply was neither common

nor universal and few had either radio or TV. Mass entertainment was common though. The need for PA was met by companies like Goodmans and Tannoy, and Harold Leak built his first hi-fi amplifier in 1938.

By the time of World War II, early experiments in radar were taking place in Britain and already the cumbersome nature of the valve was being felt. Early experiments took place in bombers, because of their carrying capacity. Before the war radar was being tested over Britain in an old Heyford bomber, and during the war Mosquitoes were fitted out with air-to-air radar units to detect German night fighters. Ground and marine installations could cope better than aircraft, but even here the valve was

1943, it used 2500 valves and consumed 10kW. No fewer than ten were built. By 1948 ENIAC and Colossus had shown a need for amplifying devices which were smaller, lighter and less power-hungry than the valve. You'll find that those who lived through the valve period see it as an archaic device. You have to be a child of the solid-state age to see valves in a romantic light.

I was born on the cusp; transistors were being used in radios but generally had a bad reputation. They were crude, difficult, non-linear devices, with a tendency to go phut! The Japanese were having some success putting them into miniature radios that suddenly started appearing in public places, to the annoyance of many.

"You'll find that those who lived through the valve period see it as an archaic device."

proving difficult.

In America ENIAC, the world's first digital computer, mushroomed into an astonishing device. Designed in 1943, the US government progressively requested an improved specification. In the end, it used 19,000 valves, weighed 30 tons and consumed 200kW of power. Heat production was enormous and for reliability it could not be turned off.

In Britain, the GPO built what arguably was also a computer, called Colossus, to help Bletchley Park crack the German Enigma code. Completed in

Around this time the Nuvistor appeared. It was almost as small as a transistor, supposedly more reliable and suitable for high-frequency work, unlike transistors of the time. The Nuvistor used one-third the heater power of a valve - 0.135A at 6.3V instead of 0.3A. RCA's 6CW4 Nuvistor pictured here was an RF triode designed for VHF communications. Its anode needed around 135V and dissipated just 1 watt.

As promising as the Nuvistor might have appeared, it was soon replaced by high-frequency transistors and FETs, which of course need no heater supply. It is probably just as well because today's microprocessor chips use around 5 million active junctions on a substrate, and by the year 2000 this will have risen to 8 million junctions. That would be a hell of a lot of Nuvistors had they replaced the transistor. But in spite of a great name, the idea was late in coming and today this little device is but a fading memory.



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MANY-SPLENDoured MYRYAD



Dominic Todd goes budget with Myryad's £400 T-40 integrated amplifier.

One of the best aspects of the hi-fi separates business in this country is the large number of 'cottage-industry' companies. Through bringing innovative ideas to the audiophile world, they ensure the big boys never become too complacent. One such imaginative outfit is Myryad. With a reputation already established on some highly-respected equipment towards the high end, they're now hoping to woo a wider audience with a range which includes the T-40 integrated amplifier at £400.

The T-40 strikes one of the most effective compromises between features and minimalism I've come across for some time. There's full remote control, a Moving-Magnet phono stage (as standard, not an option; others please note) which is switchable to line level, outputs for bi-amping and two tape loops. The second of these is becoming ever more crucial as growing numbers of people keep their cassette decks running in tandem with MiniDisc or CD-Recordable.

What these features haven't compromised, however, is the component or build quality. Inside, the T-40 is every bit as good as its mainstream rivals, with its Alps volume pot and toroidal transformer. The damping braces used on the output transistors also show a dedication to detail.

After a thorough running-in, I hitched the Myryad up to my Roksan Xerxes X turntable and Celestion SL6 loudspeakers. With Claire Martin's 'Gettin' High' the T-40 brought back memories of Myryad's more costly amps. It endowed music with power and weight, belying its humble 50watt output. The sound stage was nicely layered too, vocals located to the fore with the instruments staggered behind them. In fact, detail, separation, dynamics and decay were first-rate for an amp of this price.

The sole blot or two on the musical landscape were a slight congestion in the midrange (which spoiled the realism of Martin's delivery) and a degree of 'splash' to percussion. The resolution of the double-bass didn't quite live up to the standard of the drums either, but was par for the class.

'Sex Without Bodies' by Dave's True Story was conveyed with equal enthusiasm. The Myryad proved unusually dynamic given its price, yet didn't lapse into the cool, occasionally mechanical delivery of some of its Far-Eastern competition. Again, both vocalists stood out from the mix and were tonally well defined. By contrast, the guitar and percussion stepped forward a bit too far. Those with aggressive or bright 'speakers might find the T-40's

presentation tilts the sound towards 'in-your-face', so warmish sources and transducers are the best bet. Playing its part in this midrange prominence was a Naimesque bottom end where integration and rhythmic speed took precedence over outright extension.

Switching to Space's 'There's No You' showed a degree of resolution rare in this class. Halfway through the track a ghostly synthesiser slips in at the far rear of the sound stage. While most amps fail completely to even acknowledge its presence, the T-40 picked it out with ease and set it within its own acoustic space. Again, although a slight harshness could set in on more complex sections, it was hard not to be impressed by the coherence and vivacity of the song.

Any doubts I had as to whether Myryad could mimic the success of their more expensive equipment at more budget prices faded the longer I lived with the T-40. This amp won't gel with brighter or rougher sounding sources and 'speakers, but that doesn't amount to a hill of beans next to the plus points. The Myryad's features list is full, the styling's neat and unobtrusive, and the build's solid. Partner the T-40 with care and you'll enjoy a blend of power and control with resolution and subtlety that's rare enough in the class above, let alone at £400.

Myryad T-40 £399.95

Myryad Systems
2 Pipers Wood,
Waterberry Drive,
Waterlooville
PO7 7XU
Tel: 01705 265508

WORLD VERDICT



Matched to the right components, the T-40 is detailed, controlled and very involving.

Measured Performance see p111

The Caspian System by Roksan



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HIT FOR SIX

Richard White looks to Boston's CR6s for loudspeakers which are small but perfectly formed.

The bookshelf 'speaker seems to be in no danger of losing its status as one of hi-fi's most popular purchases. Perhaps this is a knock-on from the expanding home-cinema market and its voracious appetite for more 'speakers in less space. Whatever the reason, loudspeaker manufacturers are vying with each other to produce more and more compact designs. "But surely," I hear you cry, "surely there comes a point when the size of the cabinet works directly against what you're trying to achieve?" Well, it is true that since the function of any loudspeaker enclosure is to acoustically load the cone, it follows that the less air actually enclosed, the more 'cheating' must be resorted to for an extended response. The trouble is, some designers nowadays appear to have leagued themselves with the devil and can occasionally produce surprisingly convincing results from matchboxes - figuratively speaking!

Boston's CR6 is a two-way bass-reflex which tries to navigate this minefield of compromise. The tiny cabinet measures just 10in. by 5in. by 8in. and holds the 4.5in. mid/bass driver and tweeter vertically in-line. The 1.5in. port has its profiled mouth moulded into the rear of the cabinet, above the gold-plated terminals. Telly-addicts and computer buffs will appreciate the fact that the drivers' magnets are shielded to permit siting near monitor or TV screens.

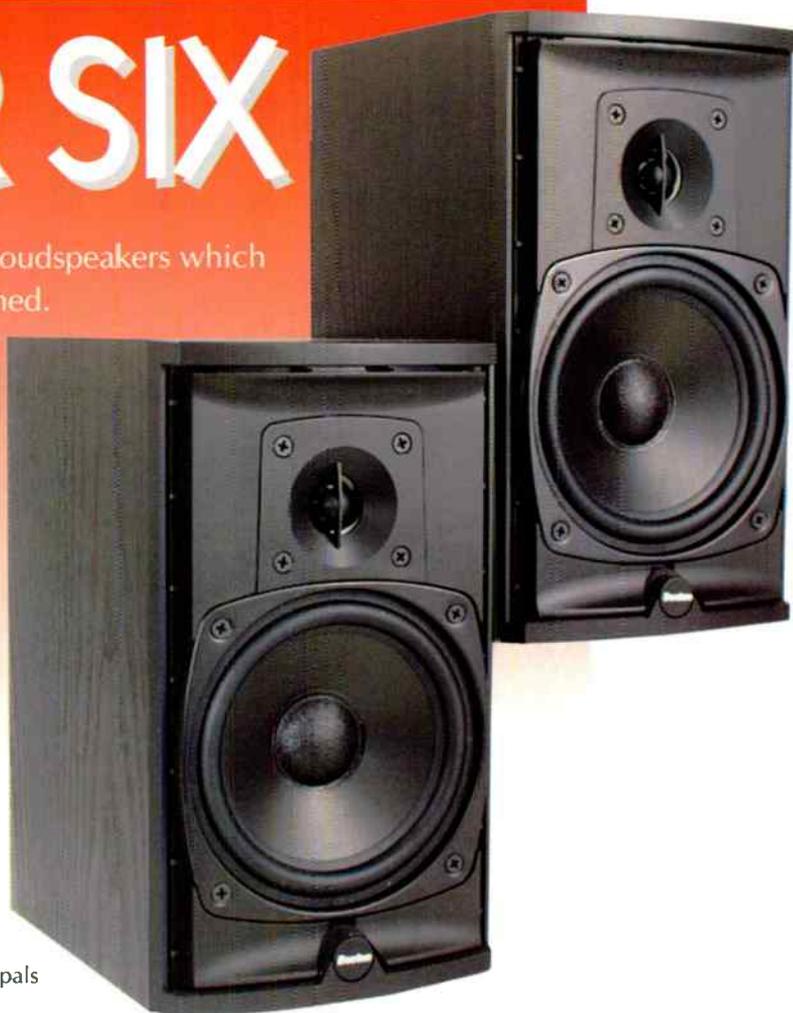
For the purposes of this test, we hooked the Bostons up to one of our own 300B valve amplifiers, coupled through an Assemblage L-1 pre-amp to Denon's DVD-3000. Audio Analogue's Puccini SE integrated was also pressed into service.

The starter on the musical menu

was a little low-down Blues from Ronnie Earl and the Broadcasters. At first sight, this may not be the most trying of obstacle courses, but recordings of semi-acoustic music can be fiendishly difficult to reproduce accurately (when did you last hear live Jazz with an amplified singer sounding alright?)

The CR6s coped with Ronnie and his pals quite creditably; the fundamentals of the bass were 'missing, presumed lost', but for all that, the bottom-end roll-off wasn't excessive, especially bearing in mind that the diminutive dimensions give a maximum enclosure volume of a paltry 6.5 litres. The sound stage, whilst a tad restricted from left to right, was realistically proportioned and imaging, as you'd expect from small front baffles, was precisely focused. The Bostons require careful positioning to give of their best in this respect though - pull them too far apart and the illusion of reality disintegrates.

Classical music proved to be more of a mixed Bach. The Sixteen's 'authentic' recording of the B Minor Mass suffered a looseness easily noticeable on kettle-drums and male voices were somewhat sibilant and lacked body. And although the chamber orchestra sections came across clearly, particularly the woodwind, there was a slight harshness laid across the music.



Compared with the way they had handled Ronnie Earl and Co., the Bostons were now struggling to open out the sound stage and keep control on crescendos.

Because of the CR6s' size, there is a minimum wattage necessary to make them blossom. Below this level, delicate signals tend to be almost inaudible. Move the volume control up a notch or so too far and the sound can become rather rough around the edges.

Boston's CR6s are a valiant try at cramming several quarts into a pint pot, but you can't have your small-cabinet cake and eat big bass. These 'speakers are at their best with fairly simple textures, certainly at higher listening levels. Tannoy's Mercury m1s at £30 less are more transparent and evenly balanced and not vastly bigger. If you're one of the growing band of computer audio enthusiasts though, the miniature Boston's and their magnetic shielding may well prove attractive●

Boston CR6 £149.95

Portfolio Marketing
PO Box 88,
Hedge End,
Hants.
SO32 2XN
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WORLD VERDICT



With uncomplicated music, the CR6s work well, but not quite as well as the best of the competition.

Measured Performance
see p111

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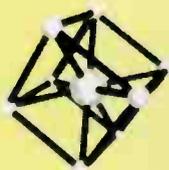


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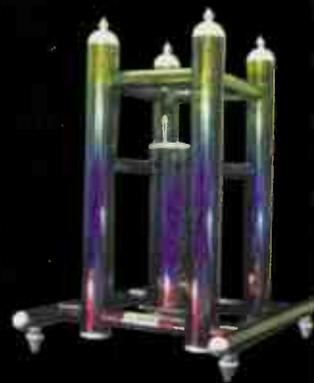
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(group tested Feb/98 Hi-Fi World)



David Price

Even its most ardent devotees - myself included - have to admit that Japan is a strange country. Only in Japan do car breakdown recovery companies call themselves 'Tortoise'; only in Japan do High-School girls hold their socks up with glue; and only in Japan, so its detractors would have you believe, is MiniDisc a resounding success.

MD MARCHES ON . . .

To give you an idea of how big the little format currently is, consider this: the most popular foreign Pop star in Japan at the moment is Jason Kay. Although he hasn't quite infiltrated the country's collective psyche to the degree of Lennon and McCartney, he isn't far off. The reason is that his band, Jamiroquai, is signed to Sony Music, who are presently running one of their biggest-ever TV campaigns. The product they're pushing is MiniDisc, and Jay Kay is the advert's star. He can be seen on every Japanese commercial TV network in what seems like every advertising break, grinning as he shouts, "It's a Sony, it's a MD!" In one ad he's listening to a portable MD while skateboarding, in another he's recording his vocal parts to 'Emergency On Planet Earth' (an early hit) on an MDS-JA50ES. And every Friday night on Tokyo Rainbow Station, he pops up on 'Sony Music Disc' - an hour's worth of (guess which record company's) videos upwards of 20 times!

If that wasn't enough, all the major recording media manufacturers have TV ads flogging a bewildering array of MDs (the key differentiation being the disc colour and the celebrity endorsing it). Sharp's campaign - showing pretty young

things moodily listening to their cute little MD portables - is everywhere, as is Kenwood's. Away from the goggle box, MiniDisc is plastered all over music, fashion and lifestyle magazines. Even the oldest grandmother in the remotest outpost of snow-covered Hokkaido or sub-tropical Kyushu now has no excuse for not knowing what MD is.

Fortunately for Sony et al, the media blitz has worked. Returning to Japan after an absence of five years, I've been struck by the dramatic change in the country's music recording habits. Take Yodobashi Camera's main store in the Shinjuku district of Tokyo, for example. It's a dream come true for home recordists, offering every single recording format from every brand - if you want an 'XL-AD Metal Master Super II' cassette in a C80 length, here's where you come. Or it was, because now most of its tape lines have disappeared due to lack of demand. In their place are rows

have been filled putting the latest fifth-generation machines to the test, and the conclusions have been surprisingly positive.

Japanese hi-fi hacks are often serious DAT users, while many have a cassette deck tucked away in the corner (like, say, a Nakamichi 1000ZXL) for good measure. There's also still a healthy penchant for the country's late Seventies battleship open reels (big 6-head, Quartz-locked Sonys and Technics that make Revoxes look like Dictaphones). So when these guys rate a format, you know it's got something going for it.

The upshot is that in Japan, cassette is now as dead as the proverbial Dodo, and firmly into its place has stepped MiniDisc. The only sign of the latter's mortality is in Tokyo's Virgin Megastore, a space normally packed to the point of claustrophobia, except around the MiniDiscs. The blanks sell well enough but takers for the latest pre-recordeds

*"In Japan, cassette is now
as dead as the proverbial Dodo,
and firmly into its place
has stepped MiniDisc."*

and rows of - that's right - MiniDiscs.

Compared to the UK, prices are very low. Even down at the local convenience shop, where everything costs far more than it has any right to (in the best traditions of British cornershops), a standard MD74 from Axia or TDK costs under £2. In a discount store like Yodobashi, Sony's top ES MiniDisc is little more - or you buy a box of ten Sonys with a free storage case for under £12.

All very well you say, but isn't MD a downmarket format, far detached from hi-fi's rarefied climes? Even as recently as a year ago you'd have been right - most of the action has been in the portables and small systems market. But now things are changing. Over the past six months, Japanese hi-fi magazines - even prestigious high-end titles like Stereo Sound - have been dripping with top-notch MD separates and in-depth software listening tests. Countless pages

(including the Godzilla Original Soundtrack and the Princess Diana tribute album, as I write) are few and far between. MD, it seems, is a cheap, convenient recording medium capable of fine sound with the right hardware. It is not, however, a new music carrier to usurp CD.

If you're still wondering what to replace your ageing three-head cassette deck with, wake up and smell the sushi. We can now be certain that MD won't go the way of Elcaset or eight-track. It's now king of the world's second largest hi-fi market and is getting stronger by the minute. If you can set aside your philosophical objections (ie, MD's data-reducing number crunching) and if you want to make good recordings simply and easily, MD is here now and it works. Amidst all the post-modern frivolity of contemporary Japanese culture, maybe that's one serious lesson we could learn?

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NUMBER CRUNCHING



Leo Lam gets to grips with Denon's DMD-1000 MiniDisc recorder and its ATRAC 4.5 compression system.

MiniDisc, now the de facto home recording format in Asia (especially Japan) is beginning to take over the British Isles at high speed. After what could euphemistically be called 'a sluggish start', the smallest of discs seems finally to have usurped cassette in the sales charts as the nation's recording medium of choice. What has wrought this change in MD's fortunes? The mediocre sound quality of early compression algorithms has given way to sweet, open DACs and ADCs in machinery which looks increasingly better value as prices continue to fall.

One prime example of 'New MiniDisc' is Denon's £300 DMD-1000. Much more solidly constructed than many a sub-£500 biscuit box, inside the player is even more promising. The oversized mains transformer has a TDK Radio Frequency filter at the output of its secondary to reduce RFI and keep the power supply clean. Another nail in the coffin of electric mush are the five separate regulator ICs. The final step is the audio-grade Silmic electrolytic capacitors.

Two optical and one co-axial digital input are provided for digital recordings, while the analogue input feeds enhanced Delta Sigma A/D convertors for analogue recordings.

Squashing all this onto a blank MD is the ATRAC 4.5 algorithm developed by Sony, who claim to have incorporated advanced adaptive controls which lead to more efficient data compression. For playback, Denon's proprietary Lambda Super Linear Converter system, based around a pair of Burr-Brown DACs with 20-bit digital filters, is used.

The DMD-1000 was accompanied by Audio Analogue's Puccini SE amplifier and Heybrook's Heylette loudspeakers for this review. Monitoring was achieved with the Teac T1 transport playing through the Denon's DAC. Analogue cables were sourced from van den Hul (D102 MkIII) and Kimber (PBJ), whose DV-30 co-ax digital interconnect also featured. I recorded onto Sony's Color Collections discs, and compared the '1000 with a previous-generation Sony MDS-JE510 and a couple of the latest portables.

Digital recordings transferred via the co-axial lead were noticeably superior to those made through fibre-optical links, so I stuck with the former. Although the Denon's ADCs are respectable, unsurprisingly digital copies were truer to the original. The two come closer together in terms of their general effect on signals.

I was happy to find atmosphere and ambient detail in abundance,

but the overall balance of music was subtly altered, vocals becoming tonally drier and more forward. Bass was firm and powerful, and in the timing stakes the DMD-1000 proved as swift and enjoyable as its CD brethren. In short, the Denon betters all the cassette competition under £500 in terms of detail resolution, low background noise and editing versatility. It possessed a clean, refreshing character which was only a little tonally challenged in the midrange and upper treble.

Comparison with the older Sony showed that the Denon was quite an improvement over the last generation of ATRAC. The prime beneficiaries were a better tonal balance, greater three dimensionality and fuller instrumental texture.

One interesting result came through during this review. The DAC incorporated within the Denon has some real merits. Plugging the T1 into the Denon revealed it was far superior to a lot of budget CD players, with loads of detail and a smooth rhythmic flow.

MiniDisc really does look to be going from strength to strength as ATRAC becomes less obtrusive in its operation. If more capable MD recorders like the Denon continue to appear, I can really see cassette entering its twilight years.

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Measured Performance
see p111

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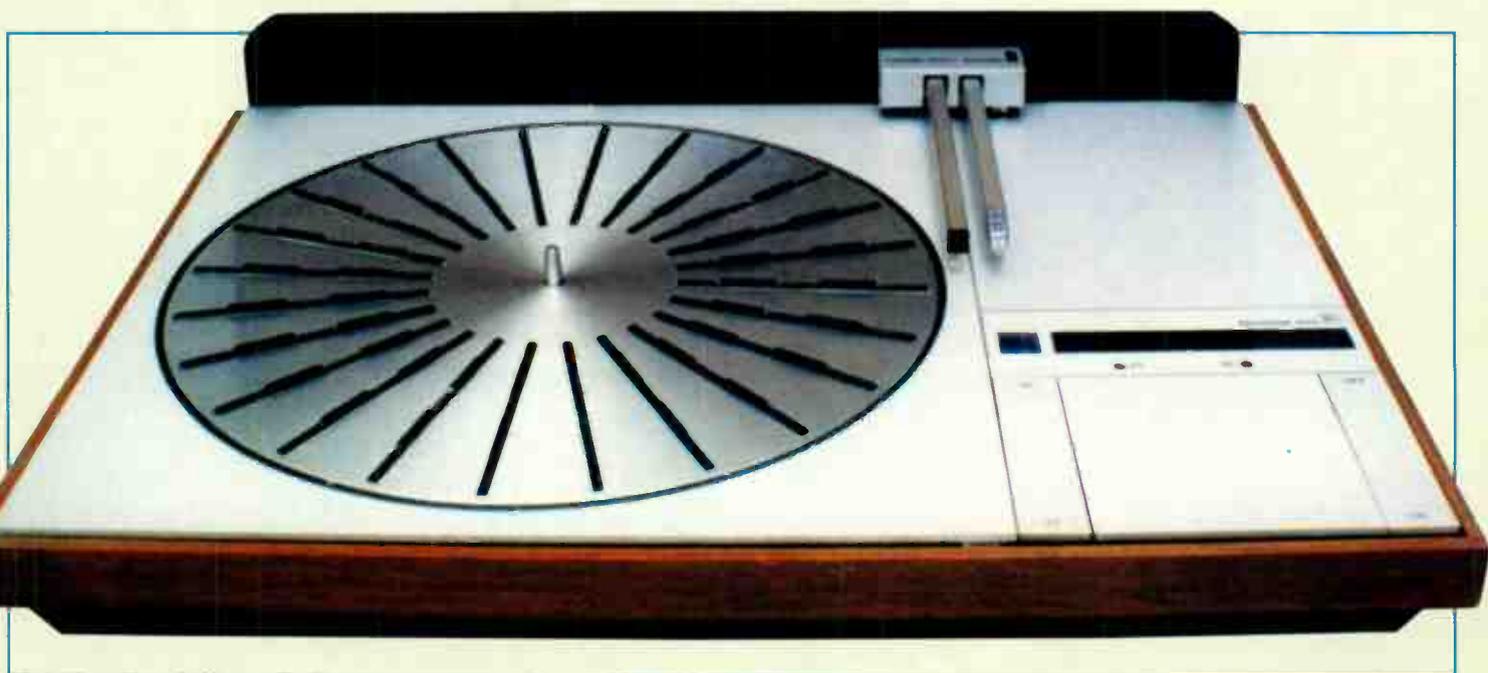
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VINTAGE VIRTUES

by Haden Boardman

Parallel-tracking turntables tend to have reputations as either sinners or saints. Saints? Well, fancy, imported exotica complete with air bearings and noisy air pumps from the good old US of A are considered by some the height of tone-arm taste, and in England, both Pink Triangle and Nottingham Analogue have had goes at parallel trackers which roll on ball races. Opus Three make one too, and, as Saints go, that's about it.

Sinners; ahh, now that is easier - just about every Japanese maker under the sun. Big culprits were Aiwa and Technics' cheaper offerings, and then there were the bizarre Mitsubishi and Sharp 'vertical' players. The Sharp VZ3000 even had a separate needle for each side of the record, so you didn't have to turn it over! These were definitely lo-fi, but highly amusing to watch in action.

The first commercially-available parallel-tracking tone-arm was an American design which ran off a 9volt battery. The Rabco was not actually as bad as it looked - it was certainly better than a Rega RB300, but it was temperamental, and just a little Heath Robinson in its modus operandi. But the deck that really made an impact,

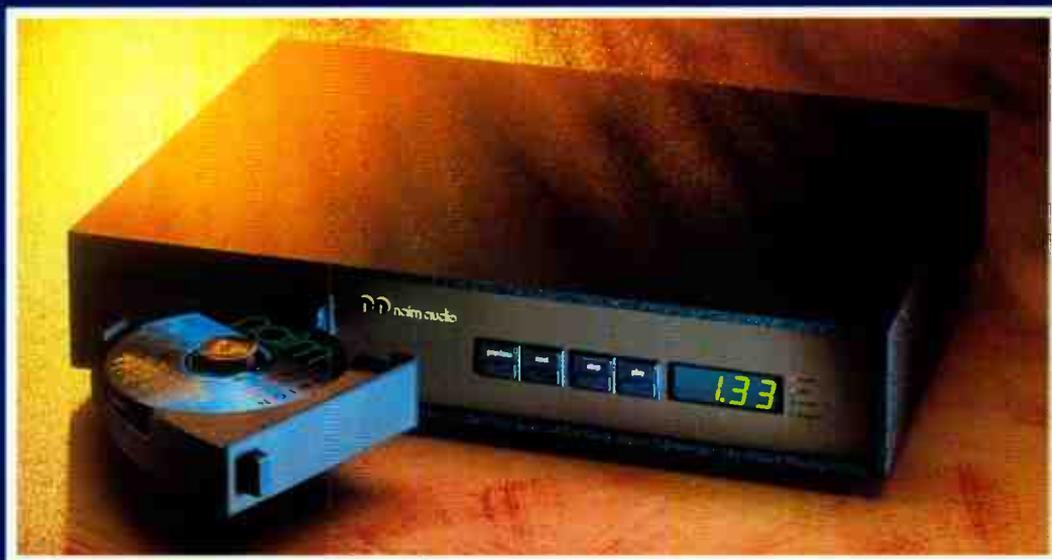
the brute that influenced a generation of designers, was Bang and Olufsen's Beogram 4000.

If it wasn't for the smoked lid and teak surround of this 1973 veteran, you would never think it vintage, so fresh are the lines. No conventional switches sprout from the deck - everything is operated by light-touch 'panels'.

Switch the deck on, the motor starts automatically and the twin arms track across towards the record. The first 'arm' contains a lamp and a light-sensor for detecting the size of record and setting the speed to 33rpm or 45rpm. When the record has finished, the arm returns to its rest and the deck turns itself off. There's manual override to cater for 12in. 45rpm singles (or 7in. 33.3rpm long-plays), electronic pitch control (which lights up to show the auto-selected speed), an under-platter stroboscope, and a rule, for accurate manual cueing. The arm is never touched by human hand - a large, four-way 'plate' cues and moves it left or right. Everything is controlled by electronics, quite a feat by the standards of the time.



The '4000 uses a superbly-finished main bearing.



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The look and style of this beast have always knocked me for six - I have to admit to being a closet B&O nut-case. The unit was designed by the Dane Jakob Jensen (born 1926), who joined B&O's team in 1968 with responsibility for all the product lines. One of his first hits was the fabulous Beolit portable radio set (these change hands for anything up to about £100), with very influential 'slide rule' tuning and a wide variety of quite cool colours. This 'slide rule' was copied en masse by other manufacturers, and B&O used it themselves on every other product they could not give complete 'soft-touch' electronic control to.



The '4000 has not got a single screw or nut showing on top. To gain access to the deck's innards, a screwdriver has to be inserted into the base and a couple of screws loosened. This releases the wood trim and the aluminium panels atop.

Inside, the deck is highly complex - it's a wonder they fitted everything in. The substantial platter fits flush with the aluminium top-plate; just the sonically useless plastic record supports protrude. Contrast this with the Beogram 1000, the deck which B&O had been making for a few years up to that point. Technically quite a nice unit, the '1000 is a simple idler-wheel drive with a superb arm. Its styling is simple and functional, but with screws sticking through the top and a simple matt-black finish, it was never going to win any style awards. . .

The '4000 was a pivotal product for B&O. Everything that followed was good design above anything else, even, dare I say it, sound quality. Where it's important though, the '4000 shines through. The main bearing is of superb quality, the sub-chassis is die-cast, and as far as I am aware, this was the world's first deck to use leaf-spring suspension. Even the arm's undercarriage is very substantial, way better than anything the Japanese followed it with. Its operation is undetectable and the optical sensor on the rear of the arm works incredibly well.

B&O have always made their own stunning cartridges. Based around a magnetic 'moving cross' system, they have similar properties to MCs without the higher mass or the low output. B&O's last MM cartridges, the MMC series, are awesome. The top of the range MMC1 has a sapphire cantilever, which is sadly let down by a poor mounting system. Overcome this though and you'll have one of the finest MM cartridges you can buy.

In terms of sound quality, the '4000 is good but not great. Surface noise tends to be exaggerated a little, and those plastic record supports are not much use at doing what they were intended to do. The whole presentation is polite and a trifle uninvolved. I suppose, in a way, this is a little like the operation of the deck - it lacks the usual human touch needed to lowering the arm onto the record.

There is no question what this deck is about; style. 25 years after its introduction, design critics have hailed it as a modern masterpiece. I was shocked on a trip to Paris to find one in a French version of Sir Terrance Conran's Habitat stores with a price tag of 5000FF. Still, in Britain a good, clean example can command £300.

These turntables are generally reliable, but as LEDs

(Light Emitting Diodes) were not common at the time, the arm relies on miniature incandescent bulbs for record sensing. This inevitably creates some minor long-term problems. Any deck moved violently without first securing its transit screw will probably have to have its arm carriage re-aligned, which is a pig of a job.

Not many service agents will look at B&O components - they're not very conventional and scare a lot of engineers. In reality, they're actually very straight forward and dependable. The example in the pictures survived when its transformer primaries were accidentally set to 100volts and then fed 240volts. The engineer who took it in for repair declared it past fixing. However, a diode and a fuse later found it working perfectly.

But be warned, servicing by B&O dealers is not cheap. If you want a '4000, make sure everything is fine and it should stay that way. Resurrecting a duff unit is not a viable proposition, but it might make a fine ornament.

Over the years, B&O have made genuine progress in high fidelity with ribbon microphones, pick-up cartridges, tone-arms, open-reel and cassette recorders. Dolby HX was a major B&O development which has made its way into nearly every cassette deck on the planet. But their products are more famous for their style than sound quality. Ultimately, the Beogram 4000 is an extremely innovative turntable, thanks to leaf-spring suspension, electronic automated control and a reliable parallel-tracking tone-arm. Sadly, the sound is not as stunning as the sleek looks, but it never could be. Jakob Jensen's masterpiece influenced a vast number of other manufacturers and marked a turning point for audio equipment●

Because of its pre-integrated circuit vintage, the electronic controls on the '4000 are bulky and complex.

The Beogram 1000 might not share the looks of its sleeker sibling, but it made up for it with decent sound quality.



We may be a nation of shopkeepers as Napoleon once noted, but this hasn't prevented us from becoming very sceptical consumers quite happy to go to some length to get exactly what we want for our hard-earned cash. These days we no longer seem content with what we're offered straight off the shelf.

You only have to look at the proliferation of Do-It-Yourself and furnishing stores, plus the barrage of home-improvement television programmes, to see how things have changed around the house especially. And these days, upgrading your car's hi-fi or fitting some alloy wheels to it will hardly cause a stir amongst polite company.

What we've seen is tweaking and modification move more towards the mainstream and general acceptance in a wide range of areas. This is borne out

alone, despite having the resources and talent to manufacture hi-fi separates as they once did.

The appeal and potential of the add-on market has been recognised by the likes of Musical Fidelity too. They have a complete series of components aimed at the higher end of the accessory market, right down to a stand-alone tone-control unit. Despite the launch of the X Series over two years ago, other manufacturers haven't exactly been tripping over themselves to follow suit. Perhaps this is another area where the majority of companies will take time to cotton on to its potential.

Of course the term 'accessory' also encompasses maintenance goodies. Along with cables and stands, there appears to be a rise in demand for CD player lens cleaners and system demagnetisers.

The idea of system maintenance may

“Since football fever has mercifully passed the Todd household by, I decided to turn my attention to the hi-fi.”

particularly clearly within the microcosm of hi-fi.

As little as 15 to 20 years ago there was derision heaped upon the idea that non-standard, non-bell-wire interconnects and loudspeaker cables could actually make a real difference to the sound of a system. Now the importance of both is as good as engraved on stone tablets, and it's really only the odd die-hard who would say otherwise.

What's more, there seems to be a hunger for other tweaky hi-fi products too, although buyers tend to steer clear of pricey, dubious fads and go for the more practical purchases instead. Over the past 10 years, the popularity of accessories such as loudspeaker stands, banana plugs and spike kits has grown enormously. In fact, so great is the demand for these items that there are companies such as QED who thrive upon selling accessories

seem rather tedious and dreary compared to the instant buzz of an effective equipment upgrade, especially when there are long summer evenings to be enjoyed, but it's one that makes a lot of sense. After all, you'd hardly buy a decent car and then expect it to run faultlessly for years without a service, so why should hi-fi be any different? And all it takes is half an hour every six months or so.

I was recently reminded just what a difference to sound quality a quick once-over can make in the context of my own hi-fi system. One drizzly day towards the beginning of the summer spelt a cancelled barbecue and an afternoon with time on my hands. Since football fever has mercifully passed the Todd household by, I decided to turn my attention to the hi-fi - it had been sounding uncharacteristically off-colour of late.



Dominic Todd

An hour's elbow grease of busy buffing and fiddling later and the differences were quite startling. There were noticeably more detail in the treble, greater sound stage front-to-back perspectives and cleaner, crisper transients. All this came from the simplest of maintenance routines; speaker cables were cut back to reveal fresh, untarnished wire, and phono plugs and sockets were cleaned and polished, as were the mains plugs.

Then I turned my attention to the CD laser lens, cassette heads and stylus before demagnetising the whole system with a simple Compact Disc designed specifically for the job. Spikes were tightened on supports, as were the Allen bolts holding on the loudspeakers' bass units (it can be quite disconcerting to see just how loose they become over the months).

My hard-working Xerxes turntable was re-levelled as gravity had taken a shine more to one side than the other, and the belt cleaned with distilled water and white spirit. The cartridge was also re-aligned in the headshell and its tags polished to a high shine. With the exception of spinning through the system-demagnetiser disc, the whole exercise cost a matter of pence and took no longer than 30 minutes.

The moral of this story is that, no matter how much you've spent on your system's individual components, a little tender, loving care now and again really can work wonders. And for those feeling a little more financially flush and adventurous, the odd accessory can be fun and might just boost your system to the level of a compelling listen. Still cynical? Give it a go - after all, you can trust me, I'm a shopkeeper!

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MIGHTY MINI

Dominic Todd discovers hope on a budget for the vinyl-inclined in NAD's £40 PP1 phono stage.

The phrase "better late than never" sprung to mind when I first heard about NAD's new phono stage. You see, they've been making a budget amplifier, the 310, for over four years now which isn't so equipped. Up to now, anyone wanting both an NAD amp and turntable source has had to look to the company's £80 more expensive 312 integrated, or towards a phono stage from another manufacturer.

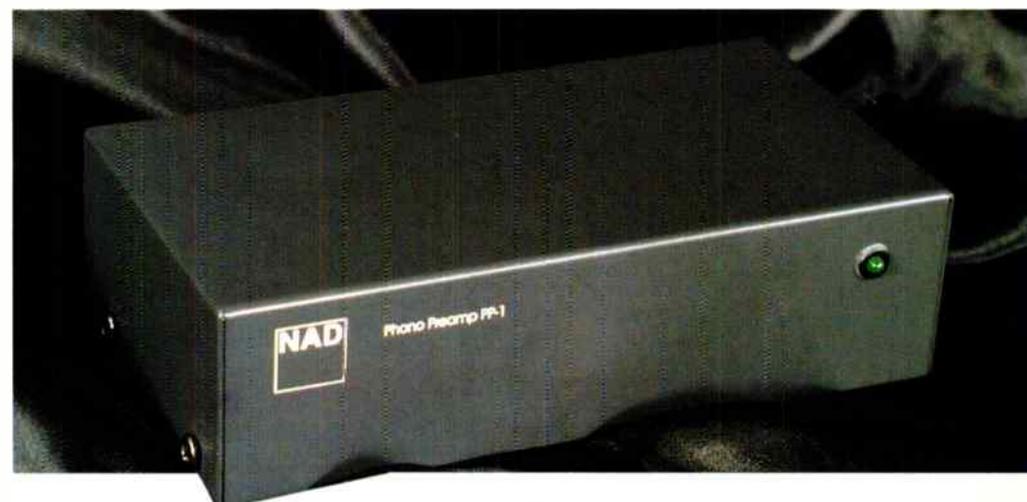
The thing is NAD aren't alone in not offering phono stages on amps. It has now got to the stage where more don't than do under the £130 mark. Never one to miss an opportunity, QED brought out the £35 Discsaver to plug this gap in the market. Now NAD are having a go too with the similarly-priced PP1.

SUM OF THE PARTS

The PP1 comes housed in a dinky metal case complete with gold-plated phono sockets rather than the shiny plastic affair used by QED. The captive output lead is of fair quality but doesn't give you the option of experimenting with different interconnects. Neither will the NAD run on batteries, so there are a couple of points the QED still has in its favour. Lifting the lid doesn't reveal any overtly audiophile components, but then the design is as good as a decent phono stage fitted to an integrated amp of between £200-£300.

SMOOTH OPERATOR

With an Audio Technica AT-110E fitted to my Artemiz arm, I plied the NAD with James Taylor Quartet's 'Stepping Into My Life'. It was a relief to find the PP1 didn't fall into the trap of sounding harsh and anaemic as



some phono stages can. Instead there was a broad sound stage with good depth and no real sonic nasties. The bass was a little soft, which could slow the music down if the PP1 was feeding a warm amplifier, but with anything more neutral or lean sounding, this would prove more of a benefit than a hindrance. Vocals also received the kid-glove treatment, fine projection never overstepping the line to become in-your-face.

The NAD proved similarly vice-free with Suzanne Vega's 'Calypso' as well. Her vocals lacked the unnatural sibilance common in lesser stages and were accompanied by a decent amount of detail. Granted you wouldn't expect to find razor-sharp insight from a phono stage for just four tenners, but percussion had separation, accuracy of timbre and decay which would come as real eye-openers to those more accustomed to low-cost CD players. One weak point though was the 'attack' when drums kicked in - it lacked the requisite edge-of-the-seat snap and impact.

NAD equipment has always seemed to favour Rock, Pop and Jazz

music over Classical and, to a degree, the PP1 maintains this tradition. With Schubert's Symphony No8 it had a winning smoothness but strings in particular were slightly glossed over - they lost out on sparkle and vivacity. QED's Discsaver injected a little more life and enthusiasm into the proceedings, despite sounding rather edgy at times.

The baby NAD was happier with Ian Shaw's 'This Can't Be Love'. The incredibly articulate vocals weren't stifled, the NAD faithfully reproducing the speed and dexterity of the upper registers. And far from spoiling the piece, the PP1's warmth actually heightened its atmosphere.

For only £40 the NAD PP1 is something of a bargain. It's unobtrusive and boasts a build which makes the competition appear flimsy. For the most part, there's very little to complain about in terms of sound quality either - it's smooth and even, with a broad sound stage offering fine separation. It will turn its hand to most music too, although the bass could be more controlled and open. But at this price, I think it would be churlish to complain.

NAD PP1 £39.95

NAD
Unit 15,
Faraday Road Ind. Est.,
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WORLD VERDICT



At £40, the NAD is an accomplished all-rounder. Slowish bass suits leaner systems though.

Measured Performance
see p111

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Jon Marks Hi-Fi World
July 1998

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DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE



Haden Boardman meets Chris Fang, with his vinyl-fronted collection of DIY valve amplifiers.

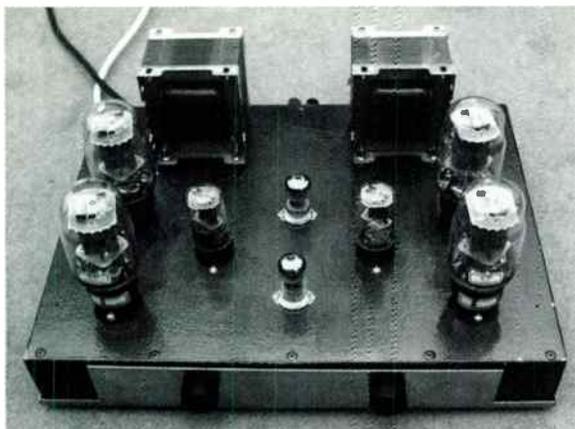
I always find it a great pleasure going over other people's systems; the diversity of the equipment out there, and the different bits of kit constructors string together is amazing. I suppose I personally have the greatest respect for the home DIYer, someone who is prepared to build their own components from the ground up, without recourse to buying ready-made commercial equivalents. This is not to say there's anything is wrong with factory-assembled gear. I just feel a lot of enthusiasts miss out on the pleasure of 'rolling their own'. My own personal biases push me towards those with analogue and valve tendencies, and there's a lot of

them out there!

I first met Chris Fang when he was studying at Cambridge a few years ago (he is now a busy Junior Doctor). He had, by that time, built about half a dozen or so amplifier projects, all valve.

ON A MISSION

Chris first became interested in audio in his early teens, but pocket money when at school doesn't quite stretch quite as far as buying hi-fi. Interest was lost until Chris purchased his first system consisting of a Mission CD



Chris's home-made push-pull amplifier is built from the ground up and uses KT66s in its output.

player, Musical Fidelity B1 integrated amplifier and a set of Mission loudspeakers.

Even when he picked up this system, he was hankering after valve amplification. His mind had been set on one of our own Hi-Fi World amps, but his student budget held him back. Luckily, his father came to the rescue, and purchased a kit for his 21st birthday; an Alema Mullard 5-20.

To say the 5-20 was a big improvement on the little B1 amp would, according to Chris, be a bit of an understatement. After putting the Alema together, Chris decided not to return to the fold of bespoke manufactured equipment, mostly because of the law of diminishing returns and his limited student spending power. The only way he could afford expensive valve equipment was to fabricate everything himself, only buying in more complex parts like mains and output transformers.

ONE VALVE OR TWO?

Currently, Chris is lucky enough to have a choice of using either Single-Ended or Push-Pull pseudo-triode amplifiers, with his home made 'Romulus' phono pre-amplifier (constructed from Sound Practices magazine), Garrard 301 turntable/SME 3009, and one of the few 'bought' items, a Maxplank plinth system. His present



Chris's single-ended amplifier uses the PL509 valves which Vadis rely on in their S15 OTL power amp.

loudspeakers are a pair of Lowther Acoustas, complete with PM7A twin-cone drive units. Chris is very pleased with the sound, but cannot decide if single-ended is better than push-pull.

His SE power amplifier is a well-know design published a few years back. It uses a PL509 pentode connected as a screen-grid triode. The advantage of this arrangement is good linearity. The rest of the circuit consists of a cascode gain stage connected via a cathode-follower in a pseudo-direct-coupled manner.

The amplifier does have overall negative feedback, which produces some of the sonic results Chris does not like. The amp itself is built on a single chassis in a very similar layout to the "commercial" version, but Chris's one is hewn from solid brass!

The push-pull amplifier uses KT66s in conventional triode mode (ie, screen grid connected to the anode). Although this is much more conventional, a KT66 wired like this has very similar linearity to a true PX25 directly-heated triode. (For the record, a PX25 is much better than a 300B, and a PX4 much better than a PX25!)

This design has three stages, starting with an ECC83 input phase-splitter, followed by a push-pull 6SN7 driver stage and finally the pure Class A output. The amp has



no overall feedback, and produces about 12watts, the same as the single-ended amp mentioned above. The power supply is located in a separate case, and looks as if it might be a little over the top, although I wasn't allowed to peek inside!

When I heard the two amps, the differences were really quite obvious. The push-pull had much more weight to its presentation, with extended bass and treble. In contrast, the single-ended sounded rather compressed. I feel this is probably an affect of the overall feedback taken from the secondary of the output transformer on the SE amp. Where the SE amp turned the tables was in that traditional strongpoint of the midrange, which had better clarity than the PP amp, but not by much. Overall, I can see why Chris has both amps. If I had to choose though, I would plump for his push-pull.

Unfortunately, woodworm was as fond of the Lowther Acoustas as Chris himself!

TRANSDUCER TREATMENT

Incidentally, Chris stuck with the little Mission 'speakers for some time. Pressures of student accommodation and grants meant he wasn't in a position to upgrade those little beasts. He also claims he's not much of a dab hand at woodwork and didn't fancy having a bash at DIY loudspeakers. However, I happen know that one of Chris's other DIY activities is constructing his own violins, which sounds slightly fiddlier (no pun intended) than 'speaker cabinets.

After reading an article in *Sound Practices* about Lowther loudspeakers, the decision was made to try and purchase a set. After the baby Missions he had been using, Chris equated the difference to what he'd heard when he switched from transistors to valves; larger dynamics, clearer overall sound.

Lowther ownership is not without its foibles - an accident saw the delicate surrounds damaged. These can be very temperamental loudspeakers, as the tiny voice-coil gap cannot stand any of the cone mis-alignment that would be caused by damage to the surround material. The cost of repairing the units was high, so Chris upgraded from PM6s to PM7s instead.



The Garrard 301 motor unit in its Bastin plinth heads up this 'valves and vinyl' system.

INVASION OF THE SPEAKER-EATERS!

Another nightmare was the discovery of live woodworm in one of the cabinets! Fortunately the little beasts had not migrated from the Lowthers' woodwork, and the damage to them was very slight, if costly to correct.

At the front of his system, Chris used an old Mission CD player until he came across his Garrard 301 going for a song in the classifieds. This was duly serviced and brought up to as-new specification by Garrard Guru Martin Bastin. An old SME 3009 tone-arm was then added, and he scraped enough cash together to buy the best Maxplank plinth system. The whole turntable system (301/SME/Ortofon MC15) has convinced Chris of the superiority of vinyl - he wastes no time in declaring his absolute and total preference for vinyl over digital material.



As Chris has discovered, valve phono stages tend to be extremely difficult to get right.

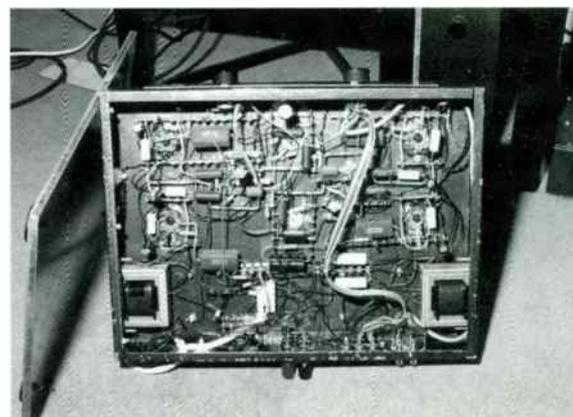
NEEDLEWORK

The most difficult item Chris built was the phono pre-amplifier. He found it much harder to construct this than any of the power amplifiers he has built, and you get the impression he's still not 100% happy with it. Having said that, his next project (a single-ended, directly-heated triode with inter-stage transformer) is already heading for the drawing board. This sort of thing is not cheap though - quality inter-stage units carry scary price tags - and Chris has declared his intent to put together the 'ultimate' amp, with the best transformers he can get hold of. With his push-pull KT66 design, he admits the transformers weren't the best he could have obtained, but the best he could afford.

LOOKING EASTWARDS

The inspiration for his latest design comes from reading a pile of Japanese journals, such as *MJ Stereo Sound*. He feels drawn to the simpler circuits, and with the mega-efficient Lowthers, only needs one or two watts to achieve decent listening levels.

Chris's music tastes are very much Classical and Fifties/Sixties Blue Note and Verve Jazz pressings. I asked him to narrow his Classical choice down a bit, and got the reply, "anything on vinyl". Well, you can't argue with that!



The innards of Chris's amps show just how much planning and effort goes into hard-wiring your own designs.

ROCK & POP

by Jon Clarke & Stuart Lenz

THE BEST OF DAVID BOWIE 1974/1979



DAVID BOWIE
**Best Of David Bowie
1974/1979**

EMI 7243 4 94300 2 0

1974 through to 1979 perhaps represented the most prolific and experimental period of David Bowie's career, a time when he had forsaken his Glam heights and killed off Ziggy Stardust well before the folly of the Glass Spider epoch.

Bowie was a changeling who delighted and disgusted the rapt media in equal measure with his pronouncements of bisexuality and fascist salutes at main-line stations. His music of the time, not incongruously, touched such extremes too, reflecting the personalities which he had become in the process. The mutation from the fey, white Soul singer (aka the Thin White Duke) to the sombre, German proto-Punk happened in the space of four short years.

It was patently a confusing time to be one David Jones. 1974 saw him embark zealously on his 'Soul' persona, taking in the Philly sound of Gamble and Huff and the services of then-unknowns David Sanborn, Chaka Khan and Luther Vandross (a roster of luminaries if there ever was one). 'Young Americans', 'Can You Hear Me' and 'Golden

Years' proved the most workable songs, while his version of Eddie Floyd's classic, 'Knock On Wood' only rubbishes his supposed R 'n' B roots.

By the time his followers had ditched their Glam stacks and turned to Soul, our artful friend had already decamped to Berlin to sample the delights of schnapps, wurst and electronic Krautrock.

The experimental tracks laid down between 1976-78 represent Bowie at his seminal best. This is not to dismiss the Iggy Pop albums he produced at the time, *The Idiot* and *Lust For Life*, but alongside 'oblique strategist' Eno and various collaborations with musicians like Robert Fripp, he created his own remarkable trilogy of albums that drew on much of contemporary German Electro pioneers, Kraftwerk and Can.

Bookended by the sweeping 'Wild Is The Wind' ('76) and the sugary 'Boys Keep Swinging' ('79), the frontiers he pushed back at the Hansa studios justified to some extent the tag 'The Man Who Fell To Earth'. Amidst the majority of instrumentals he created, the vocal efforts were classics, sparse, elegiac and impassioned; take, for instance, 'Heroes' and 'Sound And Vision', or the positively space-age 'The Secret Life Of Arabia'.

In some ways, by 1978 the game was over; 'Boys Keep Swinging' marked a return to the camp Glam-Rock gutter. As a result, the selection of tracks here may be a little uneven for some, but they perfectly capture all the styles and personalities ingested by

David Bowie at the time, not to mention certain lines of white powder.



SONIC YOUTH
A Thousand Leaves
GED 25203

Over the course of the last 17 years, Sonic Youth have made albums that have cajoled, tested and bruised their listeners. In essence an Arthouse band who make a bloody racket, they are one of the very few to have lain the foundation for bands like My Bloody Valentine and Nirvana. This, their 14th album, paves the way for a more expansive, mature, post-baby sound which plays as much with free-form Jazz as with their customary discordant Rock musings.

Taking on board some of the looser musical ideas of Pavement, in particular, and the avant-garde Jazz instrumental EPs that have been released on their own label (Sonic Youth Recordings), Sonic Youth now sound frankly like a cross between Stockhausen and a subdued Velvet Underground.

Very little remains of the typical Sonic Youth, perhaps only 'The Ineffable Me' (in the vein of 'Panty Lies') and the floaty opener, 'Contre Le Sexisme', which seems to pick

up from the last album, *Washing Machine*. However, they have dispensed with their Poppy side, displayed on *Goo* (1990) and *Dirty* (1992), and have long since given up on total wall-of-noise assaults such as the earlier *Death Valley 69* or *Bad Moon Rising*.

The noise, when it does come, is more of a fog, as on the growling 'Female Mechanic Now On Duty', Kim Gordon's song billed as an answer to Meredith Brooks' 'Bitch', an anti-female-stereotype that broods more with the group's old menace than with a yearning for kids. Likewise 'French Tickler', where Kim gives of her best yelping, bawling and purring.

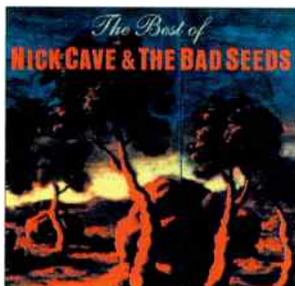
These numbers aside, *A Thousand Leaves* is more inspired by drawn-out jam sessions, which, dare I say, seem to catch them unfamiliarly relaxed. At the helm of tracks such as 'Wildflower Soul' is Thurston Moore. Beginning with Moore's understated vocal, this offering then embarks on a series of passages evolving slowly over a repetitive riff before breaking apart. 'Karen Koltrane' is much the same - effortless, cool and long, with Moore's vocals gradually becoming lost in the low-level guitar fuzz. Add to these 'Hits Of Sunshine' (for Allen Ginsberg). For 'long' read 'plain distended', at over 10 minutes. Mellow certainly, but equally aimless, unprovocative and noodling - the band have now become a little too comfortable with idle jamming.

The best tracks are not nearly so self-indulgent. Songs

ROCK & POP

like 'Karen Koltrane' and 'Heather Angel' are amongst the best, but far and away the stealer is 'Sunday', a reworked number from the film *Suburbia* which has the catchiest guitar riff outside of the Velvet Underground's 'What Goes On'.

A long-winded instrumental album, *A Thousand Leaves* yields only an occasional glimpse of the sardonic humour and nastiness that we have come to expect from Sonic Youth. Catch them quick before they disappear up their own clever backsides.



NICK CAVE AND THE BAD SEEDS

The Best Of

MUTE L4

To many he is the Black Crow King, the demon preacher with his sack of souls. To others he's merely an Antipodean Rocker of some standing. Whatever your slant, Cave is not so much Pop Star Of The Moment, more a reliable block of musical masonry - timeless and enduring.

The Best Of... is a compilation of songs which leads you on an epic and colourful journey through the twisting (or should that be twisted) and turning road of Cave's now-somewhat-fulfilled career. Picking and choosing

from 10 (yes, unbelievably 10) mostly great albums, this disc starts from 1983's *Birthday Party*, when Old Nick first set out on the choppy seas of fortune with Mick Harvey, Blixa Bargeld, Kid 'Congo' Powers and assorted extras.

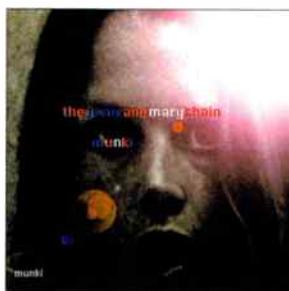
For the first-time listener, this is as good an introduction as you're going to get to one of music's finest performers, but it must have been hard work to cull these 20 tracks. So difficult, in fact, that Nick himself tried and failed and had to pass the buck to his long-term and original collaborator, bassist Mick Harvey, to make the final selection.

That done, the question must be: why the hell did you pick 'Deanna' to kick it off, Mick? This is possibly Mr Cave's most irritating track. Still, many may disagree, and at least from there things can only go uphill.

And they do, very quickly. The next track is 'Red Right Hand' (drawn from *Let Love In*), a catchy, almost Funky number with a sort of wagon-trail, Wild-West beat to it.

What follows is the first taste of real class. 'Straight To You', from *Henry's Dream*, showcases Cage at his most melodic and uplifting, with its spirited guitar strum and rolling, almost cheery lyrics. The subsequent 'Tupelo', a tribute to Elvis, is one of those classic primitive-growl sessions for which the man has become famous. Stripped-down Blues; heavy drinking; thundery, deep-South sentimentality; 'Tupelo' shows Cage as a man possessed, and it's one of his defining moments. It's just a

shame he didn't find space for 'In The Ghetto'.



JESUS AND MARY CHAIN

Munki

CRECD232

Back in the days before The Manic Street Preachers thought they were the new Clash, a band formed by two brothers in the backwaters of East Kilbride proclaimed themselves the new Sex Pistols. By guile and gobs larger than the Gallagher Brothers, their Punk-Rock spirit has kept them alive for a surprising 15 years to assemble this, their eighth album. What a sleazoid album it is - like the distant debut *Psychocandy*, shredded with the aural equivalent of a chainsaw.

Munki is replete with just the kind of arrogant-outcast attitude which befits a band that can start an album with 'I Love Rock 'n' Roll' and end it abruptly with 'I Hate Rock 'n' Roll'. In the space of 17 tracks, the pair stride through the whole gamut of Rock styles, from the dissonant (Velvet Underground) and the dandy (Beach Boys) to the plain dopey (Ramones).

In spite of working these strange allegiances relentlessly, Munki retains more of the acoustic, Gothic feel of 1987's *Darklands* than the frenzied

noise loops of 1992's *Honey's Dead*. Still, in anyone's books this is a no-nonsense return to their garage Rock roots.

For every 'Cracking Up' or 'Degenerate' (thumping Stooge-type numbers), there's a song of sweetness to be found - 'I Can't Find The Time For Times' or 'Dream Lover'. It helps immensely of course if that lazy, Sixties melody/feedback thing is your bag; imagine a dash of Teenage Fanclub with a twist of Dinosaur Junior.

The brothers slip unsuspectingly at times into Trip-Hop territory, and 'Perfume' (even if it does feature Mazzy Star's Hope Sandoval) is as shoddy and lacklustre as it gets. The return to their own brand of scuzzed-up Rock is never soon enough.

Respect is due for haircuts that still raise two fingers to the ravages of time and the sensibilities of fashion. Jesus And Mary Chain still wear black and they don't care. Welcome back.



THE UNBELIEVABLE TRUTH Almost Here

CDVX2849

Openly acknowledged as the brother of Thom of Radiohead, frontman Andy Yorke does his best to press *The Unbelievable Truth* towards an enviable

ROCK & POP

RECORD OF THE MONTH

GANG STARR

Moment Of Truth

EMI 7243 8 59032 2 9

Possessors of more bounce than the stars of the NBA jam, Premier and stalwart partner in rhyme Guru are back in business after four missed years with *Moment Of Truth*, another spiritual journey through the Brooklyn ghetto homelands and embattled youth consciousness.

Premier has been the most consistently-talented Hip-Hop producer of the 1990s since the world cowed under the brilliance of Gang Starr's second album, 1990's *Step Into The Arena*. RZA of the Wu fold may be beginning to close on him, though it's undisputed that his trademark sound has been franchised to a whole army of knob-twiddlers and tweakers. Furthermore, Premier and Guru always had the breadth to produce many more inventive things, Premier with his long list of production credits and Guru with his Jazzmatazz projects.

20 tracks are squeezed onto the latest venture, with little in the way of filler

(although the music is, as Guru admits, an update of a favoured formula and not a ground-breaking idea, but they don't let you down).

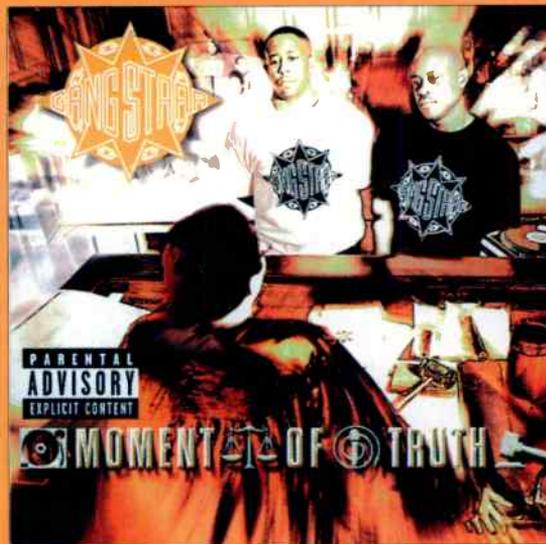
Moment Of Truth opens

feature another Premier-production standby, the looped string arrangement which gives songs like 'Royalty' and the great title track a darker, more ominous

and relentless verbal whipping throughout. There are enough street stories, moralising episodes and tributes to dead friends and strong women to cover all the bases.

If there is anything at all which differentiates *Moment Of Truth* from its predecessors, then it lies in the slew of cameo appearances from individuals beyond the Gang Starr extended family. The gelling is particularly good on 'Above The Clouds', when Wu's Inspectah Deck makes a worthy addition, as does Scarface on 'Betrayal'. The weak link is 'Royalty', which features K-Ci and JoJo, the fraternal duo who make up R 'n' B band Jodeci. Soul and Hip-Hop do not often make great bedfellows, and this is dangerously close to being one fusion short of a total style-sellout for Gang Starr; their sparring partners should be chosen more carefully in future.

The grim realities of life in the Brooklyn tenements have been brought to life once again with high-calibre beats and samples, and rhymes as sharp as razors don't come much better than this.



with 'You Know My Steez', a storm of a song, subtly crafted with a clever jazz-line and a thumping bass over which Guru breathes his lyrical monotone. The quasi-jazz leanings make further appearances in 'What I'm Here For', with its excellent piano tinkling, and the addictive 'She Knows What She Wants', St I others

vibe. And if all else fails, there's nothing to raise the spirits more than Premier's collection of the well-known sonar 'underwater' sounds used to startling effect in, say, 'Above The Clouds' and 'Make 'Em Pay'.

Jazz or no jazz, the beats and rhymes they kick down are an alchemist's dream, Guru serving up his familiar

status all of their own, but can't avoid comparisons with brother's band - earnest, despairing, cerebral with a hint of the romantic. Unfortunately, *The Unbelievable Truth* are another bunch of bleeding hearts judging from the evidence of this outing.

Like the Hal Hartley film from which they get their name, the group's music has a rather stylised perspective, sort of fey and airy with nothing much

going on. Now, that doesn't detract from the celluloid at all, but it does slightly from the aural pleasures.

While most bands are apt to include softer, more intimate acoustic numbers as Cappuccino-type intervals between more strident numbers (ie, the hits), this album is almost entirely devoted to them. Andy Yorke, for one, comes across as a latter-day James Taylor who's

just found himself in the wrong decade.

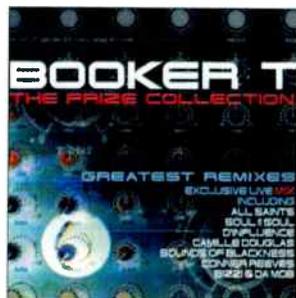
The singles 'Higher Than Reason' and 'Solved' come close to being restorative moments, and they are undeniably good - good enough to convert the most hardened critic. The rest fade to grey for all the piano dexterity on 'Stone' or the string adornments of 'Finest Little Place'. By the time you reach 'Building', you're leaving

your own and heading for the pub.

The Unbelievable Truth doubtless have potential, but it's not been realised here. A few powerchords and a bit of quirkiness really wouldn't go amiss. What they need before their next musical foray are lagers and a Big Night Out with Vic Reeves and Bob Mortimer to cure those emotional ills and overly earnest intentions.

DANCE & AMBIENT

by Sara Davis & Leon Palmer



VARIOUS
**BOOKER T, THE PRIZE
COLLECTION**

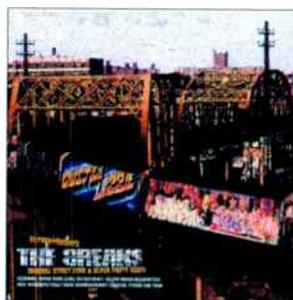
AZULI SOLID CD 15

Booker T has emerged as one of the likeliest candidates to take the House music movement forward, and is currently hot property in the remixing stakes. The Prize Collection is Azuli's bid to crown what has been a prolific six-month period for the DJ/producer from London, who has remixed a string of chart and dancefloor hits on his way to clubland notoriety. His hi-energy formula has even attracted US management interest from the Def Mix camp behind Morales and Knuckles. If Booker T can produce half as much magic as his more established US counterparts have, he'll be well pleased - transforming respected live acts like The Brand New Heavies into cutting-edge House masters it was they did best.

Here, Booker T chooses some great bands, including Soul II Soul and The Sounds Of Blackness, but doesn't quite hit the same highs. There are some firing dancefloor anthems scattered around, yet they come from the world of Pop rather than

House - not everyone expects to hear a remix of an All Saints record, even if the remix of the Double-Platinum-selling 'Never Ever' is a corker indeed.

Those looking for a bit more meat to their music should check out the sexy and soulful vocal Garage of Connor Reeves' 'Nobody Like You' or the fabulously Funky 'Don't Leave Me Hangin' from Camille Douglas. If that doesn't grab you, not much else will, as Booker T's slickly-produced album nods on steadily but never quite reaches the peak which his mixing can rise to.



VARIOUS
**DJ POGO PRESENTS: THE
BREAKS**

HARMLESS HURT CD 012

Hip-Hop owes its very existence to the era that produced this set of funk-ed-up Breakbeat classics. DJ Pogo gives a very big 'thank you' to all those involved by way of his celebratory The Breaks compilation.

The London-based DJ and producer has worked with plenty of respected Rap and Hip-Hop acts including Monie Love, MC Mello and De La Soul. And here we

find out if he has the credentials to pull off an album claiming to be the definitive guide to the roots of Dance music.

Depending on how funky your musical vocabulary is, the tracks chosen from the rich mine of early Seventies Breakbeat originals aren't quite in the all-stars league - some are fantastic for a while but hardly precious. Well-known numbers like 'It's Just Begun' by The Jimmy Castor Bunch and 'Ashley's Roachclip' from the Soul Searchers are so body-rocking that they have both been re-released under numerous guises and are slightly over-done as a result. The wild-Western Funk frenzy of The Incredible Bongo Band's 'Apache' livens up the opening, but is all too familiar to be labelled a classic.

However, with so much to choose from, there's bound to be something better hiding away. That's where the one James Brown number, 'Funky Drummer', steps in. This track with its original Clyde Stubblefield Breakbeat taps away the most danced-to and sampled drum pattern ever. The track that launched a thousand imitators is one heady highlight followed by some equally memorable Funk-fuelled floor-shakers. Tracks like Dennis Coffey's 'Scorpio' mark the crossover to Jazz Funk which has so inspired DJ Pogo and helped wise up many a Jazz buff to groove to this music too.

DJ Pogo's vision of the history of Hip-Hop manages not to be blurred by 30 years of Funk, Jazz and Disco. That's probably because he hasn't had to look too far for inspiration - the dancefloor. Breakdown, as JB would say.



VARIOUS
MOVING HOUSE VOL 3

SSR SSR 199

Belgium hasn't exactly been renowned for its House music over the years - Techno and the infamous Gabba or 'nose-bleed Techno' have seen to that. But SSR and Freezone are out to change this with their third volume of Moving House. Mixed by rising star DJ Geoffroy, this album produces some of the best moves Belgium has seen since Frankie Van der Elst retired from international football. Surprisingly mellow, the selection is not as dark and loud as you might expect from a Techno-loving country. Instead, the tracks are straightforward lively house.

After the initial vocal euphoria of the summer anthem 'When I Fall' from 'Canada Bratticus' (which whets the appetite), we are

DANCE & AMBIENT

RECORD OF THE MONTH

VARIOUS
**FUSED AND BRUISED -
 DAYTRIP TO BRISCO**
 FABRISCO

Fused And Bruised are churning out some storming sounds at the moment, championing a brilliant new breed of Breakbeat crossed with Disco that someone in a moment of, er, genius cleverly dubbed 'Brisco'. This album showcases the talent that resides with the label and includes Subtropic, The Mild Mannered Janitors and Sgt Rock in the form of 11 class tunes that take the musical concept to all limits.

Listening through Elite Force's opening taster of funky Breakbeat action and on into Subtropic's smoochy, synthesised deep Funk, there is not a single duff track to



be found on Brisco, just 11 versions of the coolest new Dance sound since Breakdancing.

Tracks to keep an ear out for include Surreal Madrid who have turned out a scorcher; 'Girls Of The Night' is its title. Imagine these words chanted in a cheeky cartoon voice over a funky bass beat that's phatter than Chubby Checker. Futurecore introduce a haunting Ambient slant to the proceedings, but the Brisco elements (Rockin' electric guitar, Disco handclaps like the ones on a Bontempi electric organ, and a heaving, Hip-Hop rhythm that just won't go away) turn up later.

This is Hip-Hop landing after a huge leap in the funky direction, an infectious aural experience that will have you body poppin' again. This Brisco business is cool - do not miss!

soon left disappointed by the tameness of the bulk of the remainder. In between, however, Royal Gate Tones give us something to let go to with the driving sounds of 'Wheel It Out' - hard-edged House with plenty of good, old piano breaks. And UK DJ and producer Phil Asher serves up one of his finest with a Jazzy, bass-driven excursion entitled 'Restless Soul'.

Overall the mood remains cheerfully up-beat, and its inventiveness that sets this apart from the average UK compilations, albeit in small doses. Be prepared for a strange mix of tunes both ordinary and outstanding.



RUMOUR RECORDS
**FREE PARTY MIXED BY
 STEVE JOHNSON**
 TRIPCD14

Many will know of Steve Johnson from his stints at the Leisure Lounge and Bagleys. Definitely a DJ who plays for the people, Johnson's roots lie in free party purveyance in the likes of the Californian desert,

so he's just the man for cramming a stack of corking Techno tunes onto a compilation CD. Picking the cream of Techno dudes - Oliver Lieb as LSG, Helix and Fury, and DJ Iceburg among others - Johnson sweeps at an unrelenting pace through the long mixes of tracks, from MC's 'MC' and the Rushhour's 'Music Maker', with its Disco vibe and heart-pounding breakdown, to Iceburg's Titanic and on. If you were to hear these notes floating out of a marquee in the countryside you would know you were in for a great party - these rising, anthemic Techno tunes are the sort that always put smiles on faces.

This is probably one of the largest mix collections of late to capture the free party spirit on CD. Although it's never quite the same when you're sitting indoors, this is one of the most uplifting sets to come out of Rumour Records of late, truly inspiring the sporting of silly hippy hats and bouncing about in fields.

Johnson's own track, 'Tune In', just goes to demonstrate more good taste. His choice of music is excellent and his mixing Rocks too, but if you think you can do better, drag out the CDJ and mix it yourself - there's a wicked second CD with all the tracks unmixed and at full length. Serious good value●

English Analogue's Top Selling Classical LPs For Summer '98!

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conducted by Kertesz with the LSO
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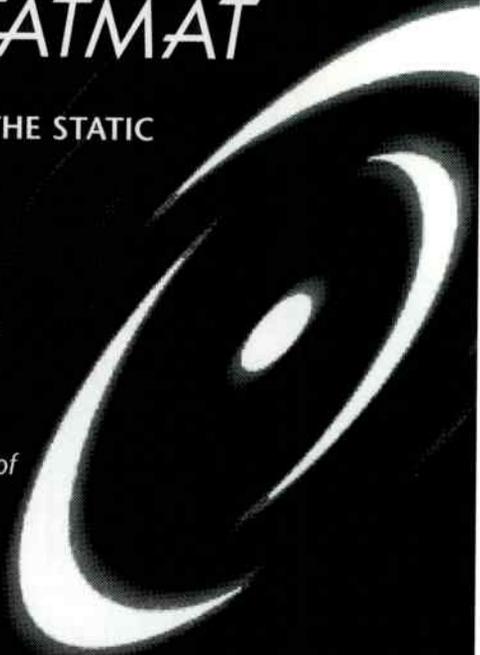
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Christopher Breunig
(Hi-Fi News & Record Review, Nov.1997)

"...it definitely worked. What I heard was impressive...The sound isn't just smoother, sweeter or sharper. Rather the music itself seems to change, becoming rhythmically more cohesive and altogether more purposeful and coherent."

Jimmy Hughes (Hi-Fi Choice, Dec. 1997)

"...What happens to the sound with Statmat? Digital becomes more like analog, that's what. The introductory press release offers a laundry list of sonic claims -all of them true, so far as I can hear...The Statmat provides "clearer ambience of recording venue". To my jaded ears, *this* is what the Statmat does -better than anything I've tried...Sorry to say -40 bucks, please- the Statmat improved the sound of every CD I played in every player I had, sometimes quite dramatically..."

Sam Tellig (Stereophile vol.20 n°12, Dec. 1997)

"The Statmat actually worked rather well...the biggest change is in the treble, which becomes clearer and more detailed while the rest of the sound gets more dynamic. The bass end firms up a tad too and the sense of rhythm improves...the sonic changes are well worth the money"

Ketan Bharadia and Jon Marks (Hi-Fi World, Jan. 1998)

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JAZZ

by Ian Nicolson



JACQUES LOUSSIER TRIO
Satie
TELARC JAZZ CD-83431

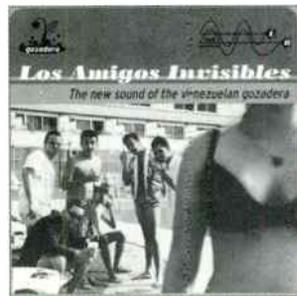
When Classical pianist Loussier founded his Trio in 1959 to "Play Bach" - imaginative, gently-swinging Jazz interpretations of Baroque harpsichord and piano pieces by the master - few people expected the three laid-back French Jazzers to sell six million records over the next five years.

For much of the Sixties, the Loussier Trio rivalled the MJQ for pride of place on Victrolas around the world. Now well into his own sixties and still playing with his original drummer, the inventive and delicate Andre Arpino, Loussier stepped away from his studio business last year and made two delightful new recordings.

1997's Four Seasons deconstructed and rebuilt Vivaldi to catchy effect. This year he takes on the most eccentric of the turn-of-the-century French art composers, Eric Satie, and succeeds in revitalising the Montmartre madman's over-recorded, sardonic yet reflectively beautiful Gymnopédies and Gnossiens.

Even if you love the originals for their minimalist beauty, there's much here to appreciate and, if you're ready

to enjoy Loussier's romantic and rhythmical rearrangements, the same delicate humour, wit and melodic inspiration that characterises the originals.



LCS AMIGOS INVISIBLES
The New Sound Of The Venezuelan Gozadera
LUAKABOP 46839

This distinctly funky, danceable and sometimes entertainingly rowdy crew from Caracas pick up where the Acid Jazz scene left off. There's also plenty of that ironic, loungecore, almost Las Vegas cabaret feel kicking in here. If you can imagine a hybrid of Donald Fagen and Tito Puente produced by Kid Creole and all his Coconuts then you're getting close.

The Amigos were caught in action in Venezuela with a little help from US Latin Jazz fans Bill Ware and Arto Lindsay, and signed to David Byrne's always-intriguing Luaka Bop label. A little Spanish may make the lyrics easier to check, but what we're here for is the interplay between infectious Latin percussion, inescapable rhythms and classy melodies. Considered, sophisticated production - by Chaka Khan and Arto Lindsay alumnus Andres Levin - is another

surprising strength for the first album from such an unexpected source.



THE ANDREWS SISTERS
WITH THE GLENN MILLER
ORCHESTRA
The Chesterfield Broadcasts, Vol 1
BMG CLASSICS 09026 63113

Recorded and broadcast live to air from New York City between December 1939 and March 1940 complete with evocative introductions and advertisements for sponsors Chesterfield, these 15-minute performances by America's Sweethearts and America's Number One Dance Band usually consisted of one song from the Sisters, a tune from the Miller band, a whole slew of commercials and regular awards to Miller.

38 acetates were made by Miller himself so he could monitor the band for mistakes and check the arrangements, but until recently legal issues kept the recordings unavailable. Now restored and remastered by John Snyder in New York and presented as a single live performance, this is history in the making, as the new sound of the Miller orchestra and the spirit-of-the-age vocals of the Sisters work out on what have become classics: 'Begin The Beguine', 'In The Mood', 'Bei Mir Bist

Du Schon', 'Tuxedo Junction' and 'One O'clock Jump'. Worth the investment for the sheer verve of the performances alone, and the kind of treasure trove that deserves wider exposure.



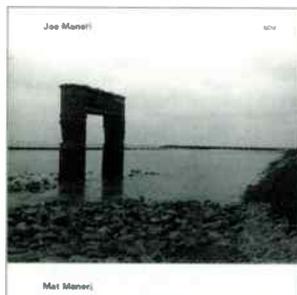
STACEY KENT
Love Is... The Tender Trap
CANDID CCD79751

Stacey Kent (the young New Yorker who came to London for a year at the Guildhall School of Music and ended up singing with the Ritz Hotel's Swing orchestra and recording one of the best-selling British Jazz albums of 1997, Close Your Eyes) has a new release out which continues her inspiring approach to songs that Billie and Frank and Cole made icons of taste.

If you think there's nothing new under the torch singer's sun, dip into the combination of pianist David Newton's vivid solos, effective production by tenor player Jim Tomlinson and Kent's distinctive, mannered but delightful phrasing. It's no easy task, but like a confident, sassy, even muscular Blossom Dearie, Kent breathes a fresh layer of life and meaning into her 12 standards. Another winner, and good enough to make Chicago or New York perk up too.

JAZZ

by Simon Hopkins



JOE AND MAT MANERI

BLESSED

ECM ECM1661

In some ways, *Blessed* has been 22 years in the making, for it's been just so long that clarinetist, saxophonist, pianist, improviser, theorist and composer Joseph Maneri has been playing with his son. That's 22 years for young Mat to become steeped in his father's elaborate, microtonal system of musical theory, a theory which has seen Maneri Sr divide the octave into as many as 72 individual notes, a theory born of years of studying the Czech Alois Haba, the Mexican Julin Carrillo and such American mavericks as Harry Partch.

Despite Joe's long career, spent integrating these theories with both his Jazz and Eastern European backgrounds, there is precious little of his music on sale. He and his son - a specialist on various violin derivatives, including the unwieldy five-string viola, electric six-string and baritone violins - have recorded together before, on the ECM album *Three Men Walking*, a trio date with guitarist Joe Morris. But this is their first date as a duo, and it's great.

The Maneris' musical language is so involved that listening to this very, very

intimate session is like peeping into a private world. Each melodic line weaves its own exotic magic, each piece is its own little world. Naturally, this is intense stuff - rather stately and introverted, a highly-rarefied Chamber-Jazz - but well worth your close attention.



AIRTO MOREIRA AND THE GODS OF JAZZ

KILLER BEEZ

MELT 2000

In November 1989, Brazilian Jazz percussionist Airto Moreira, 10 years in California and tired of a life in session work and all-too-regimented lite Jazz, felt the urge to do something a bit freer. He wanted to get back to his roots playing in the lofts of New York in the Seventies, nostalgic for all-night sessions spent jamming with players like Chick Corea, Dave Holland and Jan Hammer. In an attempt to recapture some of that magic, he called a couple of good friends and long-time associates, keyboardists Chick Corea and Herbie Hancock, and bass players Mark Egan and Stanley Clarke (true giants of fusion all) and asked them to come along to record some free jams in the studio.

Killer Beez presents those group improvisations, many of

them first takes, with occasional, discreet overdubs by singer Flora Purim, tenor and soprano saxophonist Gary Meek, and guitarist Hiram Bullock. The result is an intriguing album.

If *Killer Beez* is not always 100% satisfying, then that's down to the music's genesis. But to hear such genuinely legendary Jazz players, all of whom have perhaps tended to become predictable in much of their output, perform in such spontaneous circumstances is a very pleasant surprise.

The music itself is extremely diverse: strange electronic landscapes slashed through with blasts of Free Improv, arch Rock-Funk, Free-Bop, all summoned out of thin air with consummate musicianship. This may not please your average Fuzak fan, but who cares? A brave record.



MASS

MASS

PARATACTILE PLEI 100-2

Gary Smith has been a constantly-nagging presence on the British Improv and Avant-Rock scenes since his days with Seventies Jazz-Rock-Improv unit The Acme Quartet. That he is barely known even to the generally rather voracious Improv

audience is a huge shame, for Smith is undoubtedly one of the most original, virtuosic and searching guitar players working in Improv anywhere, let alone within the UK.

Ironically, it may be his virtuosity which has kept him from wider attention within Improv circles, who could balk at the exuberance of his playing. He employs a two-hands-on-the-fretboard technique and careful use of an elaborate FX chain in a way that spontaneously creates lines of melody, often several at once. The end product explodes with ferocity and contrapuntal invention.

This CD marks the debut for his new power trio Mass, in which he plays with bassist and electronics-manipulator Gary Jeff (a one-time member of Kevin Martin's almost legendary London-based Industrial-Jazz powerhouse God) and drummer Lou Ciccotelli (himself a one-time God-person and, more recently, live drummer with Laika and the rhythms behind Freak-Rock collective Ice).

The album (itself a debut for the Paratactile Label, a new venture for Trevor Manwaring, prime mover of Jazz and Improv-reissue label Chronoscope) was recorded live-to-tape, with no post-production.

Phew, this is intense stuff. Comparisons have been made elsewhere to early Lifetime, and, yes, I can see that, but this is its own, deeply impressive music: aggressive Free-Rock. Smith apparently has more releases on the horizon - both with Mass and solo - and I'll keep you up to date with them all ●

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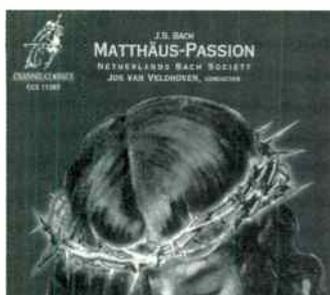
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CLASSICAL

by Peter Herring

This month we boldly go into the strange sound world of Iannis Xenakis. And, yes, that is *The Four Seasons*, Jim, but definitely not as we know it!



JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH
Mattheus-Passion (St Matthew Passion), BWV244
Gerd Turk, Hans Jorg Mammel, tenors; Geert Smits, Peter Kooy, basses; Johannette Zomer, soprano; Andreas Scholl, countertenor; Choir of the Netherlands Bach Society; Boys' Choir of St Bavo, Haarlem; Baroque Orchestra of the Netherlands Bach Society; conductor, Jos van Veldhoven
 CHANNEL CLASSICS
 CCS 11397 (3-CD SET)
 (DDD/164.55)

Although now seldom performed in its strict liturgical context, maintaining a balance between the devotional and the dramatic remains the cornerstone of any interpretation of the St Matthew Passion. Towering musical masterpiece it may be, but the work was originally intended as a part - albeit a significant one - of the entire Lutheran vespers service for Good Friday. It is for this reason that Bach concludes with Christ's entombment, not his Resurrection, which of course

would have been celebrated on Easter Sunday.

At least a passing acquaintance with the work's primary function should surely underpin any performance. Equally, it is vital that the listener is left in no doubt about the flesh-and-blood reality of the torment and suffering portrayed. While a melodramatic theatricality would be both tasteless and inappropriate, lofty detachment does Bach's conception a similar disservice. In steering a successful course between these extremes, almost as much responsibility resides with the key vocal soloists as with the conductor. This is the fundamental strength of Jos van Veldhoven's realisation of the Passion, a collaboration principally between Dutch and German forces recorded in concert in Utrecht during March last year.

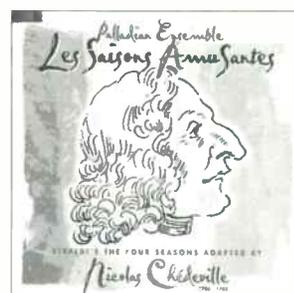
Central to the performance is the excellent tenor Gerd Turk who brings a compelling authority to the linchpin role of the Evangelist. Here, above all, it is essential to have a singer of both intelligence and clarity, one able to invest the passages of Gospel narrative which bind the work together with a suitable degree of animation and resonance. Vitality, Turk sounds as though he's intimately concerned with telling a story, and is fully aware of the terrible significance of the words he is uttering.

No less convincing is the bass Geert Smits who, while sustaining the essential dignity,

nevertheless brings a touching humanity to the role of Christ. Other outstanding solo performances come from soprano Johannette Zomer and countertenor Andreas Scholl, who is at his finest in that most heartfelt of arias, *Erbarme Dich*. The Netherlands Bach Society Choir, too, is in resounding voice, and bold enough to take the libretto at its word when it indicates crowd scenes as "a mob".

Jos van Veldhoven's approach leans towards the expansive rather than the incisive, but his performance is not lacking in immediacy or urgency as he directs both the vocal and instrumental ensembles with sureness and sensitivity. Unusually, in his double orchestra, Veldhoven dispenses with a second organ and instead introduces a harpsichord into the continuo department, but rather than adding colour, its metallic jangle is annoyingly intrusive in the otherwise well-balanced orchestral picture. In contrast, the obbligato instrumental contributions never outstay their welcome, and the overall warmth of the sound, with its slightly soft-edged quality, is most appealing. Audience noise is minimal.

Those daunted by the 'monumental' tag attached to the St Matthew Passion and the spurious mystique surrounding it will find the door to Bach's musical and philosophical universe painlessly opened by this unpretentious, wholehearted, yet polished Channel Classics production.



ANTONIO VIVALDI
Les Saisons Amusantes (arr. Chedeville)
Concertos for Violin and Orchestra, Op8 Nos1, 3 and 4 (Spring, Autumn and Winter)/Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, Op8 No9/Violin Sonata No2 in A minor, Op2 No2

NICOLAS CHEDEVILLE
Recorder Sonata in A major, Op13
The Palladian Ensemble; Richard Egarr, harpsichord and organ; Nigel Eaton, hurdy-gurdy; Jean-Pierre Rasle, baroque musette
 LINN RECORDS CKD070
 (DDD/59.53)

Any case for a moratorium on recordings of *The Four Seasons* would have my earnest approval. However, the seemingly insatiable appetite for these concertos is by no means a recent phenomenon. Following the publication of Vivaldi's *Opus 8*, titled *Il Cimento dell'armonia e dell'inventione* (The Trial of Harmony and Invention), of which the *Four Seasons* are part, in 1725, the music took fashionable Europe by storm. The 'Red Priest' of the Pieta in

THE listening rooms

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CLASSICAL

Venice became a cult composer: just about anything with the name Vivaldi attached to it would sell, and for some this was too good an opening to miss. One such opportunist was the French musician, Nicolas Chedeville, whose chief claim to fame was to have been elevated to the curious status of high priest of the hurdy-gurdy.

In the early part of the 18th century, it was the fad among French aristocracy to indulge in a brand of faux-naïf rusticity - not unlike today's green-welly brigade. Safely within the confines of their estates, they pursued what they imagined to be an idyllic peasant lifestyle (omitting, of course, the poverty and misery). This involved making music with 'rustic' instruments, among which they numbered the hurdy-gurdy and the bagpipes.

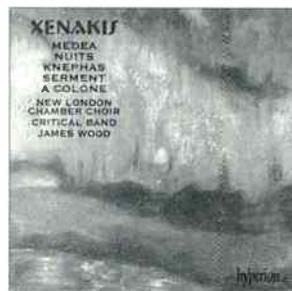
This bucolic buffoonery was, literally, music to the ears of the self-styled "master of the musette (a kind of upper-class bagpipe) to the ladies of France", Nicolas Chedeville. As well as teaching the wives, daughters and, doubtless, mistresses of the aristocracy, Chedeville also had a nice line in making their instruments and writing music for them. To supplement his own efforts, he also made arrangements of other composers' works, among them The Four Seasons. However, Chedeville did not produce a straight transcription: he freely swapped movements around, reworked others, and omitted Summer altogether, replacing it with a concerto

from Vivaldi's Opus 9. The title he gave to his efforts was Les Saisons Amusantes.

This wasn't the first occasion that Chedeville had taken liberties with Vivaldi's reputation. He had previously published a set of his own recorder sonatas, Il Pastor Fido, as Vivaldi's and, as he had expected, this ensured healthy sales. But Chedeville had overlooked one thing: in order to collect the royalties he would have to own up to the deception (which he did).

True to Chedeville's title, his Saisons are both amusing and enjoyable, especially when played with such evident relish as here. The augmented Palladian Ensemble, with those two masters of their instruments, Nigel Eaton (he of Blowzabella, Ancient Beatbox and Whirling Pope Joan) on hurdy-gurdy and Jean-Pierre Rasle on musette, produces a ripely colourful and piquant sound, and in the process makes a convincing case for Chedeville. His arrangements will never displace the originals, but they are far from being the poor relations (though it helps to have playing of such enthusiasm and vitality).

Finally, to demonstrate that there is more than the Saisons to both Vivaldi and Chedeville, members of the ensemble play virtuoso pieces by each composer. Rachel Podger is the eloquent soloist in a violin sonata by the former, while Pamela Thorby produces the sweetest of sounds in a fine recorder sonata by the latter. Chedeville, you are left feeling, offers more than curiosity value.



IANNIS XENAKIS
**A Colone/Nuits/
 Serment/Knephas
 New London Chamber
 Choir; Critical Band;
 conductor, James
 Wood**
 HYPERION CDA66980
 (DDD/58.04)

Music and mathematics may be entwined in the compositions of Iannis Xenakis but, as these performances vividly demonstrate, that has not inhibited their emotional charge or physical impact. Quite the opposite: with their unconventional, even bizarre effects, and richly idiomatic vocal language, these must number among the most challenging pieces in the choral repertoire. And, like his music, the career of the 76-year-old Xenakis has developed along far-from-conventional lines.

Born in Romania in 1922 of Greek parents, Xenakis's family moved to Athens when he was 10. His early studies as an engineer were interrupted by the Second World War, during which Xenakis enlisted in the Greek resistance movement. He was periodically imprisoned and, in 1945, was severely injured, ironically not by German guns but by a British mortar attack. In 1947, by now

under sentence of death from the new rulers of Greece, he escaped to Paris where, alongside his work with the architect Le Corbusier, he began to refine his raw musical talents.

Largely self-taught in music (although he took lessons with Olivier Messiaen), Xenakis published his first composition, *Metastasis*, in 1954 and quickly established himself as one of the most strikingly original personalities in contemporary music. Drawing upon his earlier academic inclinations, the principals of geometry and mathematics, and most significantly the theories of mathematical probability, became the governing factors in Xenakis's compositional processes (he coined the term "stochastic music" for his work). However, inspiration also came from less abstract sources, such as classical Greek theatre.

The diversity of Xenakis's choral music is well portrayed in the five works here which begin with *Medea* of 1967, a setting of 79 verses from the eponymous text by the first-century Roman philosopher Seneca. By some measure, this "stage music" (as Xenakis describes it) is the longest work in the programme and its score for men's chorus and instrumental ensemble has a raw, even raucous vitality and directness. As elsewhere, the singers of the New London Chamber Choir embrace Xenakis's demanding style with enthusiasm and remarkable facility; and the contribution of the instrumentalist of the Critical Band is equally proficient and committed.

CLASSICAL

RECORD OF THE MONTH



WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Piano Concerto No.22 in E flat major, K482 et al

Robert Levin, fortepiano; The Academy of Ancient Music; conductor, Christopher Hogwood
L'OISEAU-LYRE 452 052-2 (DDD/58.33)

A crucial element of Robert Levin and Christopher Hogwood's cycle of the Mozart piano concertos, of which this is the fifth instalment, has been the attempt to convey some of that spontaneity and anticipation which would have surrounded performances in the composer's time. Given that

these concertos have been the staple fare of pianists both great and not-so-great over two centuries, and been recorded on countless occasions, any effort to turn the clock back to 18th-century Vienna would seem a fruitless quest. Yet, undeniably, these performances of two of the most popular among the mature concertos have an exceptional freshness, due mainly to the boldness and imagination of the soloist, Robert Levin.

We have become accustomed to modern recordings being described as "scrupulous" and "faithful to the composer's intentions". The kind of tinkering with the score that certain performers regularly and cheerfully indulged in is now viewed as arrogant and insupportable. However, admirable as it is in many respects, this preoccupation with accuracy and fidelity frequently runs the risk of depersonalising the very thing it seeks to promote, witness the abundance of well-played and well-conducted,

yet utterly unmoving and anodyne recordings of the so-called 'standard repertoire'.

In welcome contrast, Robert Levin does not accede to the opinion that Mozart's scores are tablets of stone which you tamper with at your peril, which is not to suggest that either he or his accompanist take unacceptable liberties with what appears on the page. Rather, Levin does exactly what Mozart would have done in concert: he embellishes, he decorates, he fleshes out the skeletal passagework with dashes of glittering colour (Mozart often left the solo writing in his piano concertos in virtually sketch form because he knew what he, the soloist, would be doing).

Levin continues the policy of previous recordings in this series in improvising his own cadenzas (apparently his even differ between takes during the recording sessions). Displaying a degree of plain audacity, he elects to improvise a cadenza in the opening allegro of the A major concerto, K488, a movement where, uniquely,

Mozart's own cadenza is fully notated in the orchestral score.

Levin makes splendid use of the space offered by Hogwood's relatively relaxed tempos in the orchestral accompaniment, perhaps gilding the lily a little too much only in the adagio of K488.

There is much to enjoy, too, in the playing of the period instruments of the Academy of Ancient Music, especially in the more extrovert E flat concerto, K482, and the orchestral sound is full, clear and nicely balanced with the fortepiano. The timbre of this instrument, a 1986 replica of a 1790s Viennese fortepiano by Anton Walter, initially takes some getting used to (at times it has a peculiarly harp-like quality) but all doubts are quickly cast aside by the agreeable music-making.

From first hearing, Levin and Hogwood's Mozart makes for fascinating listening, and it's a fascination I'm sure will be retained, even if the concept of 'repeated spontaneity' is a contradiction in terms!

Also dating from 1967, *Nuits* was Xenakis's forceful and angry response to the political situation in his homeland, Greece at that time being in the grip of a military dictatorship. Dedicated to all those imprisoned for their beliefs - as Xenakis himself had been - the 'text' to *Nuits* is synthesised from Sumerian and ancient Persian but the work is wholly dependent for its impact not on semantics, but on sound alone.

And what sounds: a startling repertoire of howls, wails, growls and violent shrieks, and yet an unexpectedly coherent one, for which the precision and control exercised by conductor, James Wood, and his twelve-voice ensemble must take a fair degree of credit.

In *A Colone* of 1977, Xenakis once again combines voices and instruments to brilliant effect, this time utilising a text from Sophocles'

Oedipus At Colonus. The atmosphere here verges on the ceremonial, whereas that of *Knephas* (*Darkness*) of 1990 is shot through with rage and sorrow, again to striking effect. Finally, *Serment* (*Oath*), from 1981 and the shortest work in the programme, is another vocal tour-de-force, by turns complex and austere.

Given confident and strongly-projected performances, and a finely-

focused, open sound that illuminates the often dense textures, this Hyperion recording makes a welcome addition to the limited Xenakis discography. It's an essential purchase for those already initiated into his music, and those whose curiosity has been aroused will find it a stimulating introduction, not least thanks to Nouritza Matossian's insightful booklet notes, to an exotic and unique sound world. ●

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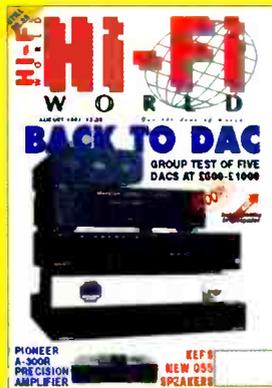
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Martin Colloms
HI FI NEWS / RR March 97

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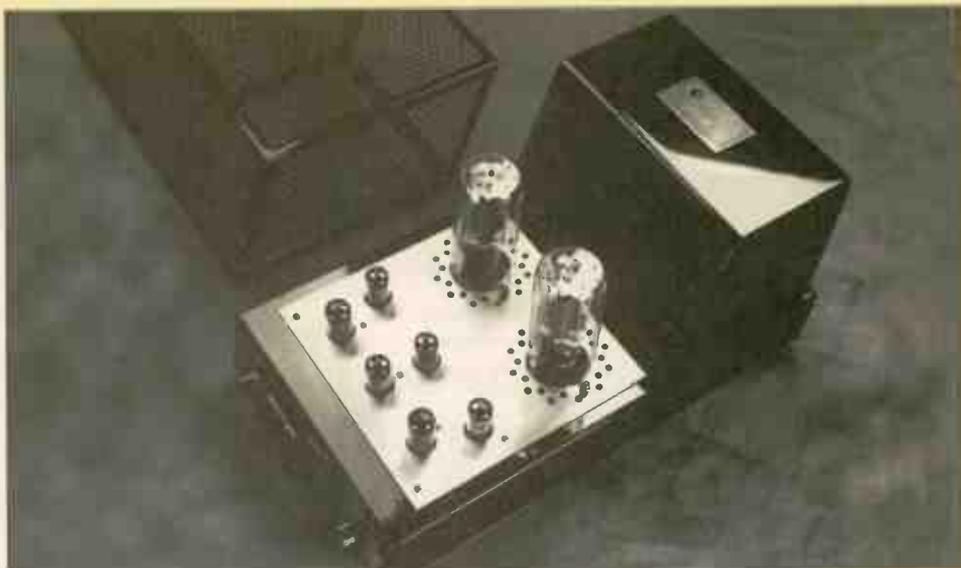
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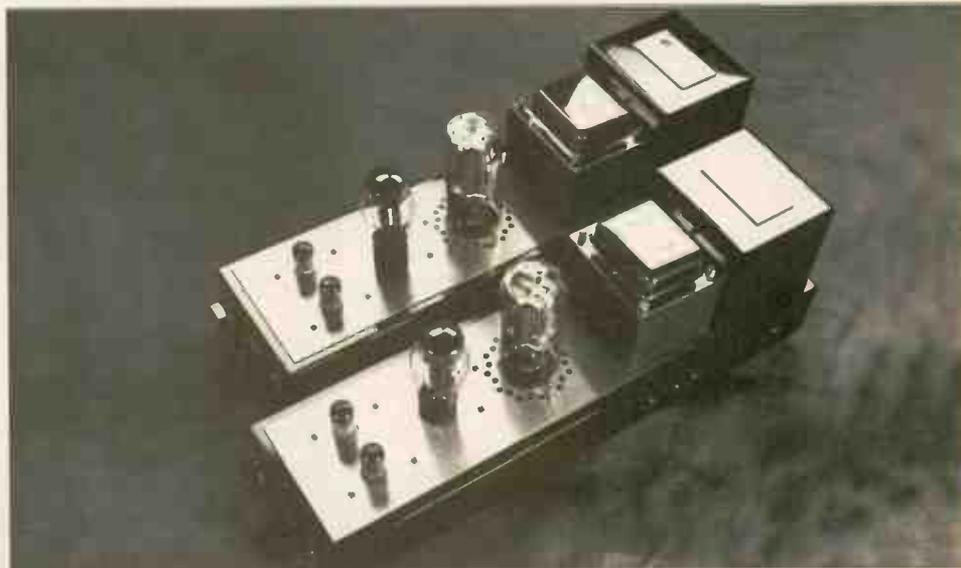
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Electrocompaniet EC4R	£1495	£1195
Jamo Concert 8 (SH)	£1300	£999
Heybrook Optima (XD)	£260	£220
Magnum Dynalab FT 101A	£825	£669
Marantz CD67SE (XD)	£300	£239
Marantz PM66 KI Sig (XD)	£400	£330
MICROMega Stage 4	£600	£450
Neat Critique (SH)	£385	£285
Restek Sixtant Pwr Amp	£900	£599
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Amplifiers

Naim 102 remote preamp	850	1,080
Naim 180 poweramp	850	1,090
Alchemist Nemesis incl. Phono stage	550	750
Roksan Caspian inc remote	595	700
Rotel 921 New Model	70	100
Marantz PM66 KI Signature	349	400

Loudspeakers

ProAc Response 2.5's (Cherry, mint cond.)	2,100	2,700
ProAc Tablette 50 (Light Oak, mint)	475	600
Rega Kyte (Black)	149	200
Naim SBL, latest, (black)	1,500	2,300
Kef Q55	399	500
Roksan Rok 1 (Light Elder)	475	645

Headphones etc

Grado SR60	50	80
Sennheiser HD 535	75	105
Sennheisers from £9.99 - please ask		
Nordost Blue Heaven 2.5m BiWire	280	380
Custom Design 24" stands, Ferrari Red	60	85
Musical Fidelity X-LP mm/mc Phono stage	100	130

HI-FI HOME CINEMA

It has been clear for some time now, from the phone calls we get that there is an increasing interest in home cinema and as we always aim to provide what customers want, have been in the process of incorporating a video projector/screen setup in our demonstration room. The building work which has been going on for some months now has helped, as we have been forced to empty the room, so we could start again. (We still have products we are happy to sell off as mentioned in Feb, so do ring!). It has all taken longer than expected, so our apologies if we have let anyone down, but we are up and running with a SELECO SVP350, which produces a superb picture for £3700. As with all CRT projectors it is large compared to an LCD projector but we find LCD's have too many problems, and are only worth considering if one really can't find space for a CRT unit. With the arrival of digital television and hence 16/9 widescreen images, we feel that TV's are just not big enough for watching films and a projector/screen setup is the thing. TV programmes look excellent as well, and the 350 has TV Tuner and teletext built in. So if you want to see this in our domestic surroundings do give us a ring as there aren't many around in the south west.

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CD & DAC's

	Cost	Price		
MICROMEGA STAGE 3 trichord 2 and psu	1000+	500	AVI INTEGRATED	1000 600
MICROMEGA MICRO DAC	350	175	MARC LEVINSON No. 26 pre with mc boards	5450 2000
MICROMEGA DUO 3.1 transport	1500	850	one of the last ones made still under guarantee	
MICROMEGA T-DRIVE transport&T-DAC with AES-EBU lead	2150	1000	HENLEY MC 200 MC phonostage	800 400
MICROMEGA DRIVE 2 cd player	1000	500	MICHEL ISO	429 250
MICROMEGA LEADER mk II cd player	600	250	LFD MC1 phonostage	1000 450
PIONEER PL1200 Cd/laserdisc player	500+	100	LFD PA1 power amp	900 450
TEAC VDRS-T1 transport	550	325	LFD MC1/LS1/PA1	2600 1250
TEAC P-500/D-500 transport & dac	1200	600	LFD INTEGRATED ZERO LE	800 500
AUDIONOTE CD2	1000	600	MUSICAL FIDELITY E100 remote integrated	700 400
TEAC XI beautiful japanese heavyweight cd player	2250	1000	MUSICAL FIDELITY MX pre with mc/mml	400 550
MISSION DAC7	300	100	MUSICAL FIDELITY PRE 8 export version pre	3150
PINK TRIANGLE DA CAPO 18 bit dac	1500	750	MUSICAL FIDELITY MX/PI80/CRPS	2700 1000

VALVE-AMPS

AMC 30 watt power amp	450	200	MUSICAL FIDELITY A1000 two box integrated fore runner to A1001	950
CROFT SERIES V power amp	650		MUSICAL FIDELITY SYNTHESIS integrated	150
TRILOGY 958 100 WATT monoblocks	2500	1350	NVA AP30 integrated	350 150
ROGERS E40a integrated with mm phono	2000	700	QUAD 44/FM4/405 11 with cd input but old colour	65
AUDIO INNOVATIONS 400 integrated amp	650	300	QUAD 34/306 pre/ power amp GREY	400
GAMMA GEMINI line level integrated	650	300	QUAD 34 old colour but with cd input	150
AUDIO INNOVATIONS 200 power 400	200		QUAD 44	200
GAMMA AEON monoblocks orig version and £100s spent	5000+	2250	QUAD 405 MK1	160
BEARD P35 mkII power amp	500		NAIM 62 pre old style with mm or mc boards	200
BEARD P100 MKIII line level integrated	1500	700	NAIM 140 power old style	350
BEARD P500A valve pre with phono	450		NAIM HI-CAP old style	350
BEARD P80 power amp big ugly beast with vu meters	500		NAIM 250 old style	
MORE FIDELITY 300B single ended stereo power amp	2000	900		
VELLEMAN kit monoblocks pair	200			
KTSI monoblocks 20 watt design pair	300			
ORANGE pre mm/line very smooth sound	300			
AUDIO RESEARCH SP14 pre	3298	1350		
MELOS SHA GOLD remote control line only preamp 2000 with headphone output	1100			

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ORACLE DELPHI MKII BOXED WITH KOETSU ARM ,& 2 box psu	850			
OXFORD ACOUSTICS CRYSTELLE turntable(floorstanding model) with sme integrated	1500	700		
BEARD P500A valve pre with phono	450			
BEARD P80 power amp big ugly beast with vu meters	500			
MORE FIDELITY 300B single ended stereo power amp	2000	900		
VELLEMAN kit monoblocks pair	200			
KTSI monoblocks 20 watt design pair	300			
ORANGE pre mm/line very smooth sound	300			
AUDIO RESEARCH SP14 pre	3298	1350		
MELOS SHA GOLD remote control line only preamp 2000 with headphone output	1100			
CONRAD JOHNSON PV10AL line pre amp	1000	550		
AUDIO NOTE P2 power amp 18 watts	600			
AUDIO NOTE PISE single ended power amp similar to OTO SE	600			

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CAMBRIDGE R50		100		
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SONUS FABER ELECTA AMATOR		1500		
SONUS FABER other models available		150		
CELESTION SL65		150		
ACOUSTIC ENERGY AE I mk1 without stands		400		
LINN ISOBARIKS early pair no grilles or stands		400		

CASSETTE DECKS & TUNERS

TANDBERG 3011 fm tuner	285			
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PIONEER CT979 3 head dual capstan	425	200		
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REVOX A77 2 track	250			
SUGDEN R21 tuner in teak case	100			
SUGDEN RS1 black & silver front	100			
YAMAHA CR1000 tuner amp	150			

WANTED RADFORD VALVE AMPS including single monoblocks
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 MARANTZ MA24 monoblocks, NAIM NAC 82, NAT 02, PIONEER CTF 1000 or similar, QUAD 66
 or 67 CD player, QUAD FM4, REVOX 8760, SONY ESPRIT PRE/POWER, TANNOY LANCASTERS
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Grant G100 Valve Mono's	£650
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Linn LK100 x 2 1 year old	£350
Linn Kairn Phono	£495
Linn Kans + Stands Teak	£150
Linn Sara 9 + Stands Black	£295
LD L51 Pre	£295
Linn Kabers Walnut + x over (latest)	£895
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Denon 6600 - A Mono Blocks (S/H)	Sale	£595
Conrad Johnson PV-10A - Phono with SE upgrade	Sale	£1250
Spendor SP2/3 Loudspeakers (Walnut) (S/H)	Sale	£495
Chord 1200B Power Amp (S/H)	Sale	£1950
Mirage M3/SI Speakers (S/H)	Sale	£1950
Pink Triangle Literaul CD Player (EX/DEM)	Sale	£1795
Audionote OTO SE line only (S/H)	Sale	£800
Audio Alchemy DAC 1.2	(£595) Sale	£375
Chord Electronics LS512A Loudspeakers (Ebony)	(£1679) Sale	£1200
Parasound P/LD 2000 Preamp	(£1495) Sale	£1095
Alon Petit Loudspeakers (walnut)	(£1087) Sale	£795
Alon 1 Loudspeakers (oak)	(£1616) Sale	£1200
Michell Argo HR Pre-Amp	(£1339) Sale	£1050
Beyer 531 Headphones	(£120) Sale	£85
Stax SR-84 Electret Headphones	(£259) Sale	£195
Questar QA2 Active Speakers/Stands/ 3M Kimer 4TC	£300 the lot	
Trichord Pulsar 1 DAC	(s/h) £825	
Meridian 200 CD transport	(s/h) £400	
Proac Studio 100 loudspeakers (cherry)		
3 weeks old		£550
pre/power combo		£450
SD Acoustics SD3 loudspeakers	(ex dem)	£350
SD Acoustics Alexandra stands for above	(new)	£220

New in this month and on permanent dem:-
Audio Synthesis Dax Decade and Desire Decade, Tube
Technology CD player plus Proac Response 3.8's
Diapason Loudspeakers Graaf GM20 Amp and
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AT 110 E	£25 £13	AN2, AN 70 £11
AT OC 9	£280 £210 EX	Dual DN 145 E, DN 165 E £13.50
Denon		Goldring G800 Super E £13.50
DL 110	£70 £55 EX	JVC DT 55, DT 60 £9
DL 304	£190 £160 EX	National EPS 24 CS, P 30 D, P 33 D £9
Goldring		Ortofon FF 15 E II, VMS 20 E II, DM 20 £13.50
1012 GX	£74 £48	510 £22*
1022 GX	£90 £60	Pioneer PN 210, PN 220, PN 240 £9
1042	£110 £74	Shure N 75 C, SC 35 C, £9
Erica (LX or H)	£102 £78 EX	N 75 ED T2, N 75 EJ T2 £11
Elite	£200 £153 EX	N 95 ED, N 95 EJ, N 75 3 (78) £13.50
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Grado		N 95 HE, N 97 HE, VN 35 HE £22
Prestige Black	£44 £24	ND 142 G, ND 150 G, ND 155 G £9
Prestige Gold	£134 £74	GN234 £11
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MC 30 Supreme	£392 £333 EX	Concorde DJ SSS Pack £82 Stylus £21
Rohmann	£725 £645 EX	HEADPHONE SELECTION
Shure		GRADD Prestige Series SR-40 £45
V 15 V XMR	£265 £178	SR-60 £75
SC 35 X	£29 £20	SR-80 £90
		SR-125 £135
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		SR-325 £270
		Reference Series RS-1 £590
		RS-2 (new) £425
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Myriad M1.120 remote int. (phono-stage/upgrade)(mint/as new) s/h	700.00	499.95
Papworth Audio M.100 valve monobloc power amps	-	-
2x 100 watts 8 ohms (mint/as new) s/h	3800.00	2150.00
Chameleon Ruby power amp (2 x 200 watts 8 ohms. vgc) s/h	1200.00	449.95
Quad 44 pre amp (brown) s/h	700.00	249.95
Quad 306 power amp. (mint/as new) s/h	400.00	229.95
Quad 33/303 pre/power amp (gc) s/h	-	P.O.A.
Quad 303 power amp (gc) s/h	-	100.00
Quad 405 1x 100 watts power amp (gc) s/h	-	199.95
Kinshaw Overture int. 2 x 45 watts (mint/as new) s/h	435.00	269.95
Aura Evolution VA.100 int. (vgc) s/h	300.00	149.99
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Mission Cyrus 1 (very late model) (mint/as new) s/h	230.00	149.95
Mission Cyrus 3 remote int. amp (mint/as new) s/h	500.00	299.95
NAD 304 int. (Choice Best Buy) (gc) s/h	230.00	149.95
NAD 302i int. (gc) s/h	-	89.99
Naim Nait 3 int. (vgc) s/h	575.00	399.95
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Technics SUV 9000 MkII remote pre/power (mint/as new) s/h	500.00	399.95
Pioneer A.400X int. (mint/as new) s/h	280.00	179.95
QED A.270CD int.(vgc) s/h	370.00	179.95
QED A.240CD int.(gc) s/h	170.00	109.95
Denon PMA 250 III int.(mint/as new) s/h	160.00	119.95
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Rega Rytas (black) (mint/as new) s/h	200.00	139.95
Mission 73C shielded centre speaker (black) (mint) s/h	160.00	99.95
Wharfedale Diamond 7.2 (black) (new)	140.00	119.95
Celestion SL65 (black) (fc) s/h	400.00	199.95
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Ruark Talisman II (rosewood) (mint) s/h	750.00	499.95
Ruark Templar II (light oak) (mint)	600.00	399.95
System 935 (Systemdeck) (mint/as new) s/h	400.00	249.95
Harmon Kardon LS D500 (Kevlar Drivers) (black) (mint) (to clear) s/h	450.00	269.95
Naim Credo (ebony) floorstanders (gc) s/h	1090.00	695.95
Castle Isis (yew) (mint/as new) s/h	270.00	199.95
Linn S110 surround speakers (mint) s/h	295.00	169.95
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Musical Fidelity Electra E 50 digital tuner (mint) s/h	-	60.00
Leak Trougline II FM tuner (no decoder but mint cosmetics) s/h	250.00	169.95
Sony ST SA RDS digital tuner (mint/as new) s/h	180.00	139.95
Technics ST GT 550L RDS digital tuner (mint/as new) s/h	-	-
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A selection of our ever changing offers for sale (all fully guaranteed)

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Audio Alchemy D05II remote player / transport (mint) s/h	500.00	229.95
Arcam Alpha Plus remote (gc) s/h	300.00	189.95
Cambridge Discmagic I transport (mint/as new) s/h	300.00	99.95
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Musical Fidelity X ACT DAC (new)	-	120.00
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b

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Teac VRDS 10SE	849	649	LFD PA2	1499	999
Roksan Caspian	899	749			
Naim CD2	1998	1399	SPEAKERS		
Marantz CD17KI	1099	899	Heybrook Heylo	449	275
Teac VRDS T1 Transport	549	399	TDL Studio 1	849	349
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DAC in the box	159	99	Kef Q90	799	399
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Audiolab 8000 DAC	899	599	Harbeth HLP3 ES	799	349
Teac DT1 Esoteric DAC	1999	850	B&W CDM1	599	399
LFD DAC2	1990	1499	Monitor Audio MA700 (Rose)	699	475
Audiolab 8000 CD	1000	749	Castle Avon	729	575
			Ruark Talisman	799	649
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Roksan Caspian	699	525	Castle Harleck (Yew D/Lux)	999	749
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Musical Fidelity E100	600	299	Magnaplanar MG3.3	3300	1995
Marantz PM66KI	399	325	Wilson Benesch Act 1 Cherry	6800	5249
LFD Integrated 0	549	399	TDL RTL 3	400	225
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			SME 20, No Arm	2995	2250
POWER AMPS					
Audiolab 8000M (Pair)	1599	1150			
Naim Nap 135 Pair		1995			
Naim Nap 250	1720	1250			

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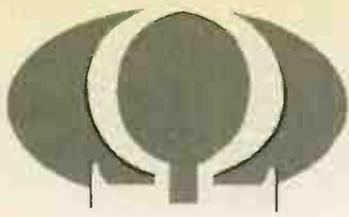
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VOYD, The Voyd, 3 motor split-phase mahogany	£895	(£1850)
HELIUS Cyalene tonearm (AudioNote silver wired)	£800	(£1799)
AUDIONOTE AN SPX silver speaker cable. (Two 3m sets).	£995/set	(£2750)

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MEASURED PERFORMANCE

CASSETTE DECK

JVC TD-V622

Variable bias on this deck worked with all tapes. It yielded a good, flat frequency response, so the TD-V662 will sound tonally balanced. Our analysis shows results with IEC IV Metal standard tape, bias set at the middle position.

The transport mechanism proved very speed stable. There was little drift and low levels of wow and flutter. The analysis shows this as a sharp peak (low drift) with little sign of capstan 'shoulders' (wow) and minimal flutter. A rock-steady sound with good clarity and little cassette "paperiness" will result.

The replay amplifiers were quiet and replay frequency response, which affects pre-recorded tapes and compatibility between machines, was excellent. There will be little sign of dullness in the sound.

Hiss levels were relatively low with Dolby B and C engaged, but Dolby S is missing. However, the JVC gets very high signal levels onto all tape types. The

TD-V662 was accurately aligned and adjusted to give balanced results, whether handling blanks or pre-recorded tapes. **NK**

REPLAY (pre-recorded tapes)
Frequency response (-2dB) 30Hz-20kHz

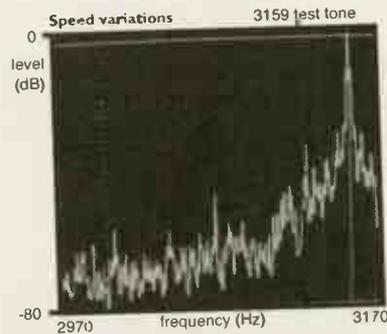
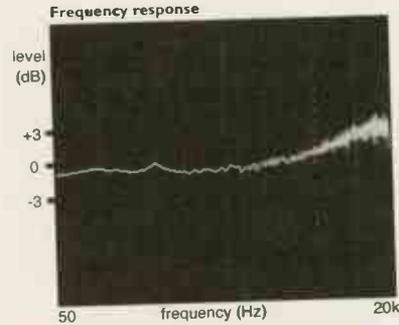
Speed accuracy +0.4% fast
Hiss (70uS, Dolby out) -61dB

RECORDING (blank tapes)
Frequency response (IEC Primary Refs.)

Ferric (IEC I) 40Hz-18kHz
Chrome (IEC II) 40Hz-14kHz
Metal (IEC IV) 40Hz-20kHz

Separation (1kHz) 49dB
Distortion (315Hz) 1%
Hiss (70uS, Dolby out) -56dB
Speed variations (DIN total) 0.05%
Flutter energy (3-3.13kHz) -32dB
MOL/SAT (IEC Refs)

315Hz/10kHz
IEC I (Ferric) 3.5dB/-9dB
IEC II (Chrome) 3dB/-7.5dB
IEC IV (Metal) 4.6dB/0dB



CD PLAYER

SONIC FRONTIERS PROCESSOR 3

Our frequency response analysis shows the Processor 3 DAC produces a conventional response characteristic, despite its use of valves. There was one small measurable difference - bandwidth had contracted by 1kHz or so, from a typical 21kHz to 19.8kHz, but this would be inconsequential in terms of sound quality. The smooth, flat response suggests a natural tonal balance, free from warmth or brightness.

Distortion levels were relatively low at all signal levels, ranging from 0.008% at -6dB to 29% at -90dB, comparable with the best DACs available.

Channel separation was high at 130dB in the midband and dynamic range very good at 112dB, due mainly to low distortion levels at -60dB. The only unusual feature was

a high output of 2.9V, around +3dB louder than the CD standard of 2V.

Sonic Frontiers' Processor 3 measured well in all areas. **NK**

Frequency response 4Hz-19.8kHz

Distortion (%)

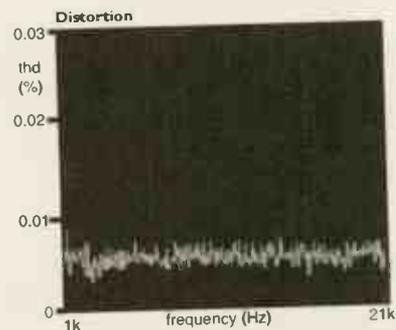
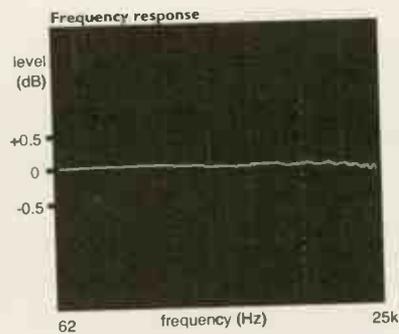
	left	right
-6dB	0.008	0.008
-30dB	0.017	0.017
-60dB	0.4	0.4
-90dB	29	29

Separation (dB)

	left	right
1kHz	130	130
20kHz	102	102

Noise with emphasis -108dB

Dynamic range 112dB
Output 2.9V



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ROTEL RCD-971

This player has the now popular and common slow roll-off in upper treble that makes for a smooth sound reasonably free from CD hardness and brightness. The low end reaches down to a subsonic 4Hz, like most players.

Distortion was well controlled, measuring identically on both channels. At 0.02% on a -30dB signal, and 0.5% on a -60dB signal, the Rotel produces little distortion by any standard, an impressive result.

Our distortion analysis shows little in the way of distortion harmonics, seen as spikes, so the Rotel should sound fairly clean and free from obvious digital coarseness.

Output was normal at 2.3V and channel separation high too.

Coupled with a high dynamic range

value of 110dB the Rotel measured very well all round. NK

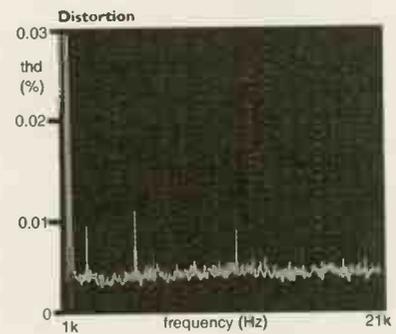
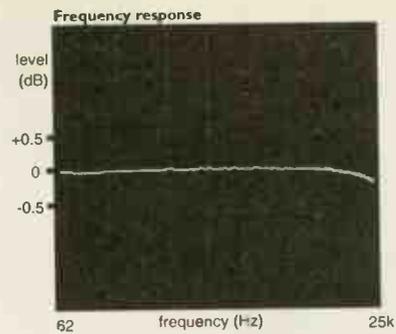
Frequency response 4Hz- 21kHz
Distortion (%)

	left	right
-6dB	0.01	0.017
-30dB	0.02	0.019
-60dB	0.5	0.5
-90dB	29	29

Separation (dB)	left	right
1kHz	102	103
20kHz	98	99

Noise with emphasis -104dB
-104dB

Dynamic range 110dB
Output 2.35V



PHONO STAGE

NAD PP1 PHONO STAGE

This is a fine little unit based around the NE5532 op amp, an old favourite in the audio biz. NAD seem to have reduced noise even further than usual from it (this is a very quiet chip), equivalent input noise measuring an extremely low 0.175uV, CCIR weighted. I expected to measure 0.3uV-0.8uV, so the NAD is outstanding in this respect. Hiss from the electronics is inaudible

at this level; it comes from thermal noise in the signal coils instead.

NAD have not included a warp filter, so those with warped records need to watch out because gain is high right down to 9Hz. Overall gain at 1kHz, input to output, measured x100, normal for MM but on the low side for MCs of any flavour. RIAA equalisation proved accurate between the 9Hz-54kHz (-1dB) frequency limits.

The output overloaded at a fairly

low level of 5.5V. Around 10V is more usual. However, this is still good enough in my view.

The NAD is a neat little pre-amp with no weaknesses. NK

Disc - MM only
Frequency response 9Hz-54kHz
Separation 91dB
Noise (e.i.n.) 0.175uV
Gain x100
Overload (in/out) 60mV/5.5V

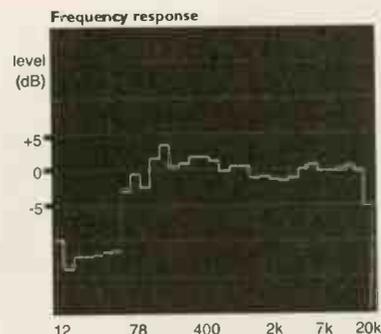
LOUDSPEAKERS

ABSOLUTE 4P ACTIVE

The Absolute 4P reaches down to 60Hz from forward radiation and the port works down to below 40Hz. A slower roll off than is usual from a reflex suggests there may be some subsonic boost. Switching in a 40Hz subsonic cut filter eliminated vigorous LF cone movement under pink noise test, so the 4P extends down well and is likely to exhibit healthy deep-bass output in a room big enough to support low frequencies. Otherwise the 4P is as

flat as one would hope from a well-engineered active design.

My only slight reservation is an academically flat treble extension to 20kHz; might sound right in theory, rarely sounds right in practice. Only Tonigen or HD3P tweeters are good enough for this. I would expect challenging treble, from a recording that contains such energy in the first place, of course. The 4P may occasionally sound a little bright and/or hard as a result. Otherwise it is well engineered. NK



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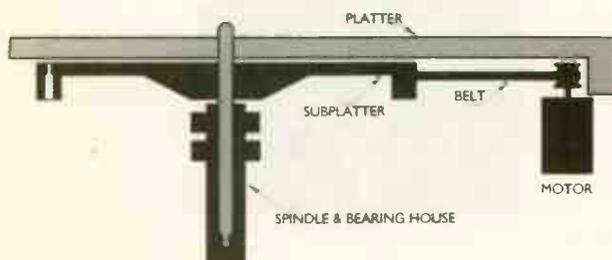
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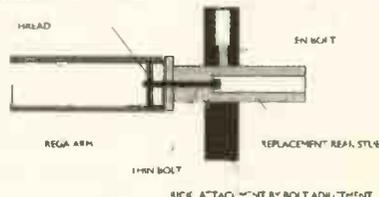
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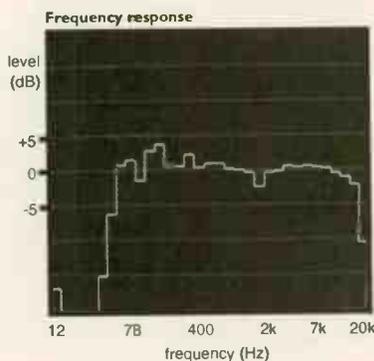
KRK V8

The KRK has three treble levels, shelf boost, shelf cut and normal. Here it is tested in normal mode, like the other loudspeakers, and with maximum bass extension ("-3dB at 15Hz" quoted). Dispersion and phasing were pretty well controlled, making frequency response reasonably consistent over a wide forward angle.

On or above the tweeter axis a sharp crossover phase suckout appears, so ideally this loudspeaker

should be listened to on-axis in the near field. Our analysis shows it has a flat frequency response, with a little top end roll-down, useful in avoiding treble hardness and sharpness. There is a small amount of bass lift to add body and warmth to the sound; without this a loudspeaker sounds 'thin'.

The low frequency limit (-6dB) on our analysis is 50Hz, good for such a small cabinet. The port will extend this down further, so measurement confirms the published specification.



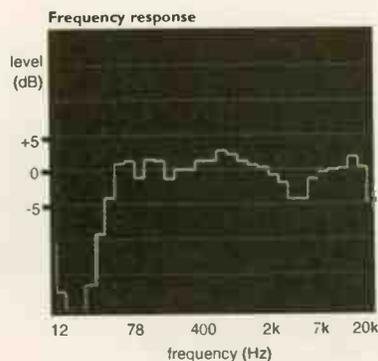
The KRK is neatly engineered and free from major problems. NK

EVENT 20/20BAS

The Events sounded soft and smooth under pink noise test, the cause being a crossover dip that attenuates frequencies around 3kHz. This dip changed little with vertical microphone position so it appears to be in the amplitude response, rather than being a phase suckout. It will make for an 'easy' sound less forward and detailed than a 'flat'

loudspeaker. The broad peak in output around 630Hz should push speech and vocals forward a little. Downward bass extension was to 50Hz, below which a front-firing port operates to take output down further to around 40Hz.

The Event will have its own sound. Being easy on the ear it may be liked, but in truth the presentation isn't strictly accurate. NK

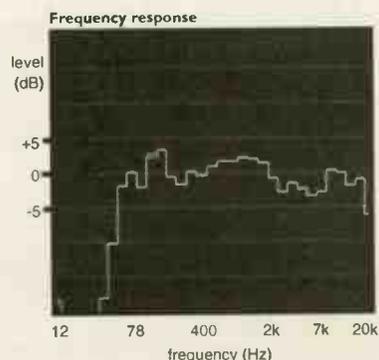


HARBETH XPRESSION! DPM1 PRO-ACTIVE

The Harbeth has an upper-bass peak around 140Hz and reaches down to 50Hz. I would expect the peak to add some speed and impact to hand drums and such like. A broad peak around 1kHz will push vocals forward a little and a crossover dip above this point, around 4kHz, will

add some softness to treble. Taken together these effects will add character to the sound, for better or worse according to the tastes of the listener.

In absolute terms the Harbeth is not especially accurate. Many active and passive loudspeakers are flatter in their response characteristics these days. NK



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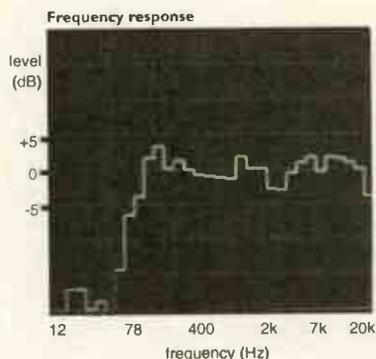
BOSTON CR6

The Boston may be small and inexpensive but it has a reasonably flat overall frequency response. Budget drivers usually add spurious peaks and troughs, and there are some here. They are indicative of coloration. The tweeter is prominent in its output, meaning the 'speaker will sound a little bright. Bass output reaches down to around 80Hz from forward radiation, below which a

port kicks in.

A low overall impedance of 5.7ohms draws amplifier current, aiding apparent sensitivity when working from a constant voltage source like a solid-state amplifier. The speaker delivered a healthy 88dB SPL from a nominal watt of input (2.8V).

For a budget loudspeaker the Boston gives a satisfactory performance. NK



AMPLIFIERS

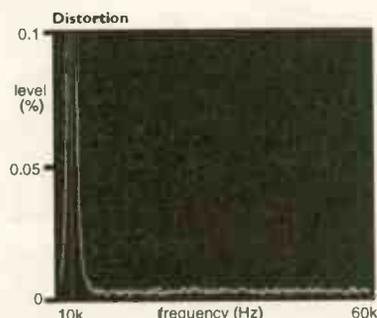
MUSICAL FIDELITY NU-VISTA PRE-AMPLIFIER

One feature of any good valve amp is its maximum output. Whilst solid state typically swings 10V, valve pre-amps swing 60V or more, including the MF Nu-vista. Since most power amps need no more than 1V to deliver full output, the extra 59V or so is headroom.

A pre-amp needs at least x3 gain, so this unit's x6 gain via CD/tuner/aux. is more than enough. It combines with a conventional x100 phono (MM) gain value to give x600 overall via phono, enough for a high-output MC. There are no input or output overload issues because of the headroom available.

Input noise on phono was very low at 0.3uV. Hiss will not be a problem. The phono stage had accurate RIAA equalisation and it features a warp filter that rolls off gain below 35Hz.

Musical Fidelity's Nu-vista pre-amp measured very well in all respects. NK



CD/tuner/aux.

Frequency response 8Hz-48kHz

Separation	93dB	Separation	72dB
Distortion	0.004%	Noise	0.3uV
Gain	x6	Distortion	0.005%
In/out overload	10V/60V	Gain	x600
Disc		In/out overload	10mV/60V
Frequency response	35Hz-48kHz		

MYRYAD T-40

The Myryad produces 60watts into 8ohms and no less than 100watts into a 4ohm load, so there is power in reserve for low-impedance loudspeakers.

The Myryad produces little distortion right across the audio band, at low or high-power outputs. With good sensitivity, negligible DC offset and wide bandwidth, it performs well.

Myryad fit an MM phono stage for LP lovers and it measured correctly in all areas, being quiet, sensitive and satisfactory in overload. Frequency response rolls

off below 25Hz or so, meaning some attenuation of warps exists.

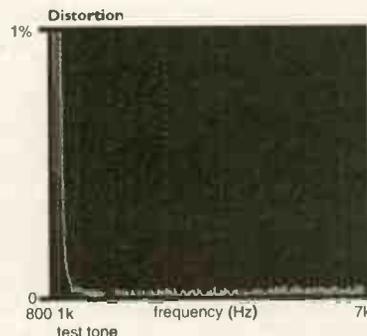
The Myryad T-40 measured well in all respects. NK

Power 66watts

CD/tuner/aux.

Frequency response 5Hz-80kHz

Separation	74dB	Separation	70dB
Noise	-100dB	Noise	-77dB
Distortion	0.006%	Distortion	0.008%
Sensitivity	280mV	Sensitivity	2.5mV
Overload	>3V	Overload	80mV
DC offset	0mV/0mV		
Disc			
Frequency response	22Hz-55kHz		





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World favourites guide

COMPACT DISC PLAYERS

QUAD 67 second-hand

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

KENWOOD DP-3080/II £180

Has great clarity and presence for the price. Not quite as naturally expressive as the CD4SE though.

CAMBRIDGE CD4SE £200

A touch soft in the treble but outstanding in every other aspect.

ARCAM ALPHA 7 £320

This British built player is extremely good value. Upfront, punchy nature suits Techno and Rock.

MARANTZ CD-63MKII KI-S £400

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

PHILIPS CDR 870 RECORDER £500

Replay quality is on a par with £250 machines but analogue and digital recordings on CD-R and CD-RW are outstanding.

ROKSAN CASPIAN £895

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

MERIDIAN 506 20-BIT £1100

Very detailed and revealing player. More cerebral than visceral though.

DENON DCD-S10 £1300

A warm, atmospheric and smooth performer that never fails to involve.

MARANTZ CD-17 KI-S £1300

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.

PINK TRIANGLE LITAUROAL £2100

Possesses the same lush tonal colour as the Da Capo but is superior in every other way.

MCINTOSH CDM7009 £2635

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

COMPACT DISC TRANSPORTS

TEAC VDRS-TI £550

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

AUDIOLAB 8000CDM £1300

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

TEAC P-30 £2500

Cheap it isn't, but then it sounds like a million digital dollars. Nothing short of superb.

CD CONVERTORS

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-DAC £300

A bargain for normal CDs and even better with HDCDs.

ASSEMBLAGE DAC-2 £400 (KIT)

Takes little building to produce a clean, clear sound. HDCD filter included.

MARSTON SILHOUETTE £795

With Crystal Semiconductors' 18-bit DAC the Marston produces clean-cut images and a transparent sound stage. Very rhythmic too.

PINK TRIANGLE DA CAPO £1450+

Offers a choice of filter modules, all up there with the best. The Da Capo is impressive in many respects, but is long in the tooth now.

DPA 1024 £6000

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

TURNTABLES

GARRARD 401 second-hand

In a decent plinth with an arm of SME 309 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.

ORIGIN LIVE STANDARD £145 (KIT)

Fine in standard form with AC motor, frighteningly good with a DC motor and battery PSU.

SYSTEMDEK IIX900/RB250 £330

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 a catwalk full of models, it also combines PT's usual clarity with real authority. The biz.

VPI HW 19 JUNIOR/RB300 £599

With its control and grip on music the Junior never fails to engage. Set-up is a piece of cake and there's a whole range of upgrades on offer too.

MICHELL GYRODEC £800

Stunning looks, build and fine sound. Standard PSU has detailed, architectural, if undynamic sound. With QC PSU, scale and insight kill the competition.

PRO-JECT 6.1SA £999

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

ROKSAN XERXES X £1295

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

MICHELL ORBE £1950

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

SME MODEL 20 £2495

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

TONE-ARMS

LINN ITTOK S/H

This early heavyweight arm benefits from fine engineering. Good dynamics and grip.

REGA RB300 £130

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

SME 3009SII £375

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

SME309 £570

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

SME V £1235

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

CARTRIDGES

ORTOFON VMS-2E £10

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

GOLDRING 1012GX £60

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

World favourites guide

DNM MICA £185

Bettors Goldring's 1042 and costs only £135 on trade-in. An assured, detailed and transparent MM.

ORTOFON SUPREMES £225-£450

The MC10, MC20 and MC30 Supremes all offer superb sound and value for money, with a rich, smooth and musical performance.

ORTOFON MC2000 £650

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

ORTOFON ROHMANN £1000

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

LYRA LYDIAN £649

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

VAN DEN HUL MC-10 £840

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

ORTOFON MC7500 £2000

Conclusive proof that there's hope for humankind. CD lovers would die if they heard it.

INTEGRATED AMPLIFIERS

MISSION CYRUS I/II S/H

Both versions give a detailed, articulate and dynamic sound but can sound lean.

DENON PMA-250SE £160

It might not have bags of grunt but the Denon can sound very natural and open.

ROTEL RA-970BX £250

With its smooth and powerful sound, the Rotel sings a seductive song with all types of music.

PIONEER A-300R PRECISION £299

This is the cooking A-300 tweaked with special components and it shows. Rhythm and detail are first-class and the phono stage isn't far behind.

AUDIO ANALOGUE PUCCINI SE £595

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

SUGDEN A21a £640

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

ROKSAN CASPIAN £695

Smooth, warm integrated with remote control that works happily into most 'speakers.

SONETEER ALABASTER £995

Builds on the strengths of the Campion with ample control, colour and drive.

UNISON SIMPLY 2 £995

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

UNISON SIMPLY 4 £1495

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

McINTOSH MA6800 £3735

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

PHONO STAGES

QED DISCSAVER £35

A true bargain that offers a cohesive, musical sound but avoid using it in thin sounding systems.

ROTEL RQ-970BX £130

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

LFD MISTRAL PHONO STAGE £300

The Mistral has a warmth and involvement that make many more expensive phono stages sound overpriced.

MICHELL ISO/HERA £530

Open, spacious and 3-D sound. Not for fans of warmth though.

AUDIO INNOVATIONS P2 £749

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

ROKSAN ARTAXERXES X £950

With the Atessa PSU the Artaxerxes X MM/MC stage still shines. Its fortes are great stage depth, neutrality and tonal colour. Musical too.

PRE-AMPLIFIERS

AUDIOLAB 8000C £520

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

AUDIOLAB 8000Q £995

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

XTC PRE-1 £1000

Almost valve-like in its smoothness, the line-level Pre-1 is a warm and seductively clear.

CHORD CPA1800 £1800

Clarity, insight and control are second to none - an addictive mixture.

MARANTZ MODEL 7 PRE-AMP £3500

A '60s reissue, the Marantz pre-amp still sounds superb. Has a great phono stage.

POWER AMPLIFIERS

QUAD II second-hand

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

LEAK STEREO 20 second-hand

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

ARCAM ALPHA 9 £400

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

MISSION CYRUS POWER £450

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

SUGDEN AU41P £530

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

NAIM NAP180 £900

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

MICHELL ALECTO STEREO £1300

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

CHORD SPM 400 £1400

There's a sense of effortless power to the Chord that gives music scale and presence.

XTC POW-1 £2000

Like the SPM 400 but loads more power on tap. Will drive just about anything.

CHORD SPM 1200 £2995

As smooth and composed as the Pre-1, the POW-1 has bags of power and refinement.

MARANTZ MODEL 9 £8000

Authentic reproduction monoblocs still more than cut the sonic mustard. The sound combines grunt with great tonal colour and expressiveness.

World favourites guide

TUNERS

LEAK TROUGHLINE second-hand

Our favourite way of listening to the wireless. A deliciously mellifluous sound will have you junking your transistor radio in seconds.

NAD 412 £190

The 412 is remarkably musical and natural sounding. Rich sound and full bass are a rarity.

SONY ST-SA3ES £250

Beguiling RDS tuner for sonically discerning button lovers. Good ergonomics and sensitive too.

MISSION CYRUS FM7 £300

Clear and lucid sound puts it up with the best regardless of price. Superb build too.

ROTEL RT990BX £500

High quality Michi-based tuner with a sophisticated, forward sound with great imaging and soundstage. Sensible facilities and remote control.

NAIM NAT03 £500

The NAT03'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 acquires itself well, with a clear and powerful sound.

NAIM NAT01 £1380

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

CASSETTE DECKS

AIWA AD-S750 £150

Sonically a very decent machine. For the price there's nothing better. Comes fitted with Dolby B, C and S.

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-580SE £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-S950 an excellent all rounder.

PIONEER CT-S740S £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 unflustered at all times.

NAKAMICHI DR1 £850

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

NAKAMICHI CR7 £1500

Kills every other cassette deck and stamps on their graves.

LOUDSPEAKERS

TANNOY MERCURY m2 £140

A true audiophile bargain which embarrasses many more expensive boxes.

KEF Q15 £199

These stand mounters offer impressive bass and excellent clarity but need a powerful amplifier to perform at their considerable best.

MISSION 732 £200

Characteristically fast, punchy Mission sound. Very well balanced tonally.

B&W DM 602 £300

Deep and strong bass, pure, projected and uncoloured midrange. Treble quality a little metallic, but imaging precise. A lively, enjoyable sound.

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.

CASTLE EDEN £450

Impressively vice-free 'speakers that offer great transparency and involvement. Unbeatable at the price.

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.

HARBETH HL-P3ES £799

A fine example of good loudspeaker engineering. The top of the mini-monitor league.

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.

JAMO 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 ES25 £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 floorstander is very appealing thanks to its open, 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 sound staging make these involving loudspeakers a reference to others. Need a strong amplifier though.

JBL S2600 £3500

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

TANNOY WESTMINSTER ROYAL £10,000

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

MINI DISCS

SONY MDS-JE500 £300

An impressive overall sound quality and unmatched convenience and editing facilities make this budget MiniDisc player an excellent buy.

KENWOOD DM-7090 £500

Both replay and recording quality are superb through this Kenwood. Nakamichi owners should start getting worried - at last there's competition.

Choice hi-fi - the original and the best!

✓ New in This Month

	Choice Price	Original Retail Price
POWER AMPLIFIERS		
Threshold S150	£995	£3000
Krell KSA 80	£1495	£3000
Krell KSA 200 B	£3000	£5550
Quad 77 Integrated	£495	£700
LFD PA2M/LS2 Stone	£1995	£4700
PRE AMPLIFIERS		
Meridian 541 Dolby Surround	£895	£1095
Conrad Johnson PV10 (mm/mc)	£895	£1250
Audio Research LS3B	£1295	£2250
Audio Research LS7 (Black)	£1095	£1750
SPEAKERS		
Mission 754 Freedom (Rosewood)	£895	£1495
J M Lab Alcor	£2995	£5000
Wilson 5.1 (Piano White)	£12000	£19000
Thiel CS1.5	£1695	£2700
KEF Reference Model One (Walnut)	£295	£795
Apogee Mini Grand	£2995	£7600
TURNTABLES/ANALOGUE/VARIOUS		
Voyd Reference	£5000	£10000
Audio Technica ART 1 (Re-tipped + boron cantilever)	£550	£1000
SME IV	£750	£980
Alphason Sonata (No arm)	£395	£700
C.D PLAYERS & DACS		
Linn Mimik	£595	£900
Meridian 500 Transport	£995	£1245
Meridian 566 DAC (24 Bit)	£995	£1245
Meridian 566 DAC (20 Bit)	£895	£1095
Roksan ROK-DA1	£295	£495
Altis CDT III Transport	£3495	£5000
Micromega CD3 Transport	£995	£1500
Micromega BS DAC	£295	£500
Musical Fidelity FCD	£995	£1500
Quad 77 C.D. Player (Quadlink)	£495	£700

Pre Amplifiers

Naim Nac 72	£550	£750
Audio Research LS7 Black	£1095	£1599
Audio Research SP11 mk II	£1695	£3500
Audio Research LS2 mk II	£1595	£3400
Balanced Audio Technology VK3i	£1495	£3000
Krell KRC 2	£2250	£3690
Chord 3200 pre	£2250	£3800
Musical Fidelity F25	£1095	£1500
Musical Fidelity X-Tone + X-psu	£225	£320
Conrad Johnson PV12 (mm/mc)	£1995	£2590
Krell KRC	£3795	£6700
AVI 2000 pre/ remote	£575	£900
CAT SL1 mkII Black/Silver	£4500	£6500
Audio Research SP14	£1395	£3000
Tesserac Tala	£795	£1495
Conrad Johnson Prem 7B	£5995	£11000
McCormack Micro Line Drive	£395	£595
Jadis JP 80 mm	£4995	£8000
Audio Research LS3	£1195	£1900
Audio Research SP15 Rev A	£2495	£6000
Audio Research LS5 mk II	£3000	£5700
Magnum P200	£995	£1895

Power Amplifiers

Chord SPM 1200 B	£1895	£3840
Musical Fidelity A1000	£895	£1600
EAR 549 balanced/SE	£3500	£7000
Audiolab 8000 P/C	£895	£1600
Exposure XV	£495	£795
Jadis JA500	£7995	£21000
EAR 509 mk II (Gold)	£1395	£2500
Audio Research Classic 60	£1495	£3600
Musical Fidelity F16	£2095	£2500
Boulder 102 AE	£2650	£3400
Linn Kairn pro (Brilliant psu)	£900	£1400
Pioneer A400	£195	£300

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Krell KSA 150	£2295	£4000
Conrad Johnson MF 2300	£1895	£2990
Audio Research M300 monoblocks	£4995	£10000
Boulder 500 AE	£3795	£5000
LFD PA1/LS1	£895	£1998
Meridian 505 Monoblocks	£1195	£1590
Audio Note P1 SE	£595	£950
Jadis JA 80 Monoblocks	£4995	£10000
Meridian 551 Integrated	£650	£900
Audion Golden Knights	£2495	£4000
LFD PA2/LS1/MC1	£1495	£3000
Audion Silver Knights (Gold)	£1495	£2250
Musical Fidelity P140/P3A	£450	£900
Jadis Defy 7 mk III	£3750	£4790

Quality Speakers

Quad ESL 63	£1595	£3200
Acoustic Energy AE2 + Stands	£1095	£1700
Muse 18 sub woofer	£1995	£4000
Gale 401	£250	£ -
Apogee Duetta Sig	£1495	£3500
Magneplanar 2.5	£995	£2000
Monitor Audio Studio 50	£2950	£5500
Celestion SL600	£450	£800
B & W 802 mk III (Walnut)	£1895	£2800
Martin Logan Aeriis I	£1595	£2299

Choice Hi-Fi make it easy for you to fulfil your sonic dreams. Quality hi-fi is not just about expensive brandnames, it's about aspiring to the very best sound, about choosing your ideal system from the widest selection in the country, in a unique no-pressure environment. It's about taking advantage of our unrivalled knowledge and being given the freedom to choose and upgrade the audio equipment you want, when you want. Others may sell you hi-fi, Choice Hi-Fi will sell you solutions.

Acoustic Energy AE1	£595	£795
Acoustic Energy AE120	£365	£500
Acoustic Energy AE109	£260	£350
Ensemble PA1	£995	£2000
Klipsch La Scala	£1695	£2400
ATC SCM 10 Black	£795	£1150
Alon IV mk II	£2000	£3500
Monitor Audio 700 PMC	£450	£600
Proac Response 4	£7995	£12500
Royd Priors	£495	£950
Alon V mk II Bk	£2500	£5000
Wilson System 5.1	£10995	£17000
Wilson 3/2	£5995	£15000
Alon Lotus SE	£3000	£ -
Sonus Faber Extrema + Stands	£4250	£7000
Linn Kan	£250	£500
Linn Keillhds	£395	£700
ATC SCM 50 A Rosewood	£3995	£5500
Sonus Faber Sub woofer + X-over + power amp	£1495	£3200

CD Players & DACS

EAD DSP 1000	£695	£1495
Kenwood 9010	£250	£500
Audio Synthesis Dax (AT&T/AES,EBU)		
Ultra Analogue/re-clocked	£1095	£2500
Theta Pro Basic 3A (Bal)	£1995	£4500
DPA DX512	£5995	£8000
Pink Triangle Da Capo 1307 HDCD	£995	£1600
Theta Data basic 2	£1695	£2397
C.A.L Tercet mk III	£895	£1700
Teac D10 dac	£495	£800
DPA Renaissance +the power	£795	£1100
Teac P10 transport	£850	£1600
Audio Alchemy DDE V1.0 + psu 1	£195	£300
P.S. Audio Ultralink	£795	£2390
EAD 9000 Series III HDCD	£3250	£6000
Krell SBP 64X	£3500	£9900
M C Cormack DAC-1	£695	£995
Acuphase DP70	£2250	£4500
Acuphase DP90/91	£9950	£20000
Forsell Air Ref Transport mk II		
Forsell Air Ref dac	£8995	£13800
Audio Alchemy Transport DDS 2	£495	£900
Mark Levinson 30.5/31	£11500	£24000
Meracrus Transport	£1995	£3995

Turntables & Analogue

Linn LP12/ Avondale/ Akito	£895	£2000
Linn LP12/ Valhala/ Basic +	£400	£1000
Oxford Crystal Ref + Stand	£1295	£2500
Oxford Crystal Ref + Stand/		
SME IV Dynavector 17D2	£1995	£3500
Michel ISO	£250	£350
Piere Lurne J1/SL5	£1750	£4500
Basis Ovation	£3495	£4950
Piere Lurne J1/Sowther mk III	£1800	£4500
Forsell Air Force One	£11995	£25000
Kinshaw Overture Phono	£250	£395
Kiseki Purpleheart Sapphire	£495	£1200
Systemdek II XE 900/RB 250	£395	£650
Sequera Tuner (Original)	£4500	£ -
LP12/Ittok	£695	£1500
Quad FM3 Tuner	£225	£ -

Clearance Bargains

Quad II's 2 x 2 monoblocks (special)	£495	£ -
Audio Research D240 mk II	£1495	£3500
Beard P35	£495	£1395
Chameleon Ruby Power Amp (200W)	£495	£1200
Alchemist Kraken x 2 Stereo & Pre-amp	£695	£1400
Audio Innovations S500 Integrated	£450	£999
Exposure IX professional power supply	£495	£1595
Exposure V Active x over	£295	£995
EAD 7000 Transport	£995	£2495

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CONSULT THE ORACLE



Never forget Oracle's classic Delphi turntable, says David Price - there's even more potential than meets the eye.

The timing was uncanny. After years of turntables that seemingly came from the same plinth-based, belt-drive mould, the world's two most visually-arresting decks arrived within months of each other in 1981. One was the Michell GyroDec, the other the Oracle Delphi.

Despite their obvious visual similarities, they were not related in any way - the Michell was of Hertfordshire stock, the Oracle Canadian. Rather, an analysis of the problems of the Thorens/Linn/Ariston school of design had lead each company to similar conclusions. In both cases that dramatic styling was, first and foremost, functional.

The Oracle eschewed a plinth in the conventional sense because of its propensity to resonate and muddy the sound. Instead, a large (483mm by 165mm by 368mm) acrylic base was chosen for its excellent damping properties. Above sat a laminated magnesium-alloy sub-chassis, resting on three 'piers' inside which coil springs resided. These had adjusters fitted, making levelling the sub-chassis easy.

Ingeniously, one set of springs could be substituted for another with different compliance, allowing the deck to be accurately set up for the intended 3.5Hz suspension bounce. In conjunction with an

adjustable dynamic balancer clamped to the underside of the chassis, the deck could accommodate just about any tone-arm available, from the then-popular featherweight ultra-low-mass designs to big battleship arms like the Linn Ittok. Gone at a stroke was all the silliness of trying to get particular arms to work with particular decks - the Oracle could handle anything.

Rather than adopting the ubiquitous Airpax AC synchronous motor, the Oracle ran a high-quality DC Papst unit whose speed was electronically switched from the deck's front panel. An outboard power supply meant the transformer could be sited well away from the arm's sensitive signal leads.

Disc support and damping were also innovative. Rather than the usual bell-like alloy platter and obligatory felt or rubber mat, the Oracle used a dense neoprene sponge wave-trap fitted to the 2.8kg platter's outside rim to minimise resonances. The mat was a tacky (in the true sense of the word) carbon-fibre reinforced affair, which proved very good at absorbing vibrations. A screw-type record clamp, dished on the underside for a strong grip on the record, completed the package.

Sadly for the Oracle, several things conspired against it. First, the build quality

of very early units was patchy, unlike that of the Linn LP12, the turntable it had to beat. Second was the price: launched at about £600 (around £2000 in today's money), it wasn't cheap by the time it got to Britain. Third, the UK hi-fi press of the time was hardly the most open-minded and took great pleasure in rubbishing it in favour of their beloved Linn.

In truth, the Oracle was a completely different kettle of fish to the LP12. Best described as dry, it lacked the Sondek's rhythmic zest, and also its coloration and imaging problems. Instead, you got a widescreen perspective with great clarity, depth and focus. Bass was lean and lithe, midband spacious and treble detailed. True, it didn't carry a tune quite as well, and listening to it was always a more cerebral affair, but many liked it like that - especially fans of Classical and Choral music.

The Oracle remains in production to this day, and although now in Delphi MkV guise, it's largely visually and mechanically unchanged. It's still a fine new purchase but great used bargains can be also be found - pay around £500 for a good, boxed, middle-aged example. Problems? Parts are pricey, but you shouldn't really need any, save the occasional drive belt.

Maybe now's the time to stop overlooking the Oracle, which is still strikingly fresh-faced and capable of excellent sound with an arm of the calibre of SME's Series V●

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Audiolab PPA Phono stage	£900	£628
Basis Gold Vacuum + Air Tangent 2B	£12,990	£7998
Grado tonearm		£498
JVC QL-70 Direct Drive/Rega RB300		£150
Linn LP12 Valhalla Zeta Koetsu Blk	£2500	£998
Linn LP12 (Afr) Zeta		£795
Linn LP12 LV2 Ittok OC9	£1990	£798
Linn LP12 (Blk) Ekos/Lingo	£3500	£1798
Linn LP12 Basic/LVX/A&R	£1400	£595
Linn LP12 Basic Plus	£1400	£595
Linn Arkiv 1 Cartridge	£900	£408
Lyra Parnasus		£POA
Mana Reference T/T support system		£188
Manticore Mantra / Magician + MBP6 pwr sup / Ort MC3000		£998
Mantra + Magician, AT OC5 & PSU		£748
Michell Gyro + SME 309 Denon 304 and Gyropower supply	£1995	£1298
Michell ISO phono stage + PSU	£420	£298
Oracle Delphi/Dynavector DVXX1 /Koetsu Pink Triangle Export (Ex/dem)	£900	£1498
Revolver / Helius Scorpion / P77		£597
Roksan Xerxes/RB250/Rega Cart	£1000	£249
Technics SL150 + SME Series II		£495
Technics SL1210/Stanton AL500		£195
Thorens TD160 Super/SME 3009		£265
		£175

AMPLIFIERS - SOLID STATE

Albarray AP3 (Pre)	£100	£100
Alchemist Maxim Intgtd	£319	£195
Arcam Delta 110/120 (Pre/Pow)		£550
Arcam Alpha 5	£250	£175
Arcam Delta 120 Power	£1250	£550
Arcam Delta 120.2 Power I		
Audiolab 8000A	£500	£365
Audio Research D200(Ex Dem)	£3250	£1997
Aura Evolution		£195
Aura SE-X (Integrated)	£250	£178
AVI S2000 MP Pre	£799	£498
Chameleon 900S 2 x 300w pwr	£1000	£495
Chord SPM1000B (S/H)	£2785	£1295
Counterpoint Solid 1 Pwr	£1495	£845
Cyrus 2 + PSX		£415
Cyrus 3	£500	£365
Deva 250 Pre + PA Pwr		£495
DPA 50S Power	£1500	£695
DPA DSP200 Line Pre (Ex Dem)	£499	£397
DNM Pre Series 2	£900	£528
DNM PA1 Power	£1800	£1168
Dynaco ST120 (Classic circa '76)		£328
ElectroCompaniet Anniversary Pwr	£4000	£1198
Exposure 15 (Intgrtd)	£799	£535
Finestra EC (Inc mains filter)		£795
Heybrook C3+P3 Pre/Pwr	£1425	£795
Heybrook Integra (Integrated!)	£555	£250
Jeff Rowland Consumate Pre	£5500	£1498
Harmon Kardon AVP1a Processor	£2000	£695
Kenwood THX-ICMX1000 Amp	£375	£228
Krell KAV300i (Intgrtd) Mint	£2550	£1998
Krell KSA100 Mk2	£4000	£2498
Krell KSA100S (Ex Dem)	£5843	£3497

Krell KSA150	£5500	£2395
Krell KSA200B	£5500	£2758
Krell KSA250	£5500	£3298
Krell Ref KR5BP(6 comp balanced pre)		£3995
Krell KPE Phono stage		£698
LFD LSB + PA2 (Pre/Pwr)	£3800	£1150
LFD LS2/PA1 (Pre/Pwr)	£2600	£1198
LFD Mistral (Head amp)		£250
Linn LK100 Power		£398
Mark Levinson No.28 Pre + PLS 228 PSU + No.29 Pwr	£6500	£4098
Meridian 603 Pre/DAC	£1750	£794
Michell Argo + Hera (Pre/PSU)	£900	£595

FOCUS ON MUSICAL FIDELITY

Hugely and deservedly popular, especially for their exceptional value, these Musical Fidelity items are now a 'sonic steal' - so be quick!

Musical Fidelity P270/1 Power	£1395	£648
Musical Fidelity P270/2 Power	£1500	£878
Musical Fidelity P173/P270	£2200	£1098
Musical Fidelity 3a Pre	£379	£248
Musical Fidelity 2a Pre	£299	£178
Musical Fidelity Synthesis (Int)		£198
Musical Fidelity MA6 Monoblocks	£895	£628

Naim NAIT 2		£298
Naim NAC12		£165
Naim NAC12S		£95
Naim NAC22		£145
Naim NAC32.5		£195
Naim NAC42		£195
Naim NAC72	£725	£498
Naim NAP160 (Old style)		£495
Naim NAP250 (Old style)	£1655	£795
Naim NAP250 (Late)	£1655	£1148
Naim 102 + NAP5C MM Board	£1337	£925
Nakamichi 600 Pwr		£290
Nytech CTA252XD Receiver		£POA
Obelisk 2 Integrated		£95
Orelle SA100 (Intgrtd)	£550	£375
Pioneer A300R	£400	£278
Pioneer C90a/M90 Pre/Power		£698



QUAD

Quad 33/303 Pre/Power		£POA
Quad 66 Pre-amp		£498
Quad 44 Pre-amp		£265
Quad 405 Power-amp		£195
Quad 707 Power-amp	£799	£565

Quad stock constantly changing and always sought for cash - please call.

PS Audio TwoC power amp		£325
QED A270 Integrated		£225
QED Systemline Kit + Mods (Ex D)	£3000	£1897

Rega Elicit	£740	£498
Revox B750 (Mint/Boxed/Manual)	£550	£358
Roksan L1 Pre + PSU	£1100	£758
Rotel RB850 pwr amp (3 in stock)		£95
Sonographe SC1 Pre	£1250	£450
Sugden A48 (Integrated)£135		£1798
Sugden Optima 140 (2X70w) pwr	£770	£448
Threshold S300	£4500	£1500
Thorens TTP2000 Mk1 Pre (Ex Dem)	£499	£397
Thorens TTA2000 Pwr (Ex Dem)	£599	£477
YBA 2 Pre-amp	£1700	£878

VALVE AMPLIFIERS		
Art Audio Quintet (Monos)	£2000	£878
Audio Alchemy		
Vac-In-The-Box Phono/Pre	£249	£197

AUDIO INNOVATIONS SALE

Destined for the realms of classic British collectables these beautiful sounding products now offer exceptional value

Audio Innovations Series 1000 Mk1 M'blocks		£598
Audio Innovations Series 1000 Mk11 Monoblocks		
Plus Border Patrol PSU	£2600	£1498
Audio Innovations Series 500 Int 25w		£495
Audio Innovations Series 200 Pwr Amp		£250
Audio Innovations L1 Pre-amp	£369	£269

Audion Silver Knight		
Anniversary Monoblocks	£3400	£2697
Audion Silver Knight		
Integrated 300B	£1125	£897
Audio Note P3 (300B Power)		£1298
Audio Research BLI Cnvtr (Ex Dem)	£888	£587
Audio Research V70 Pwr (Ex Dem)	£4480	£2487
Audio Research LS5/1 Line Pre (Ex Dem)		£5295
Audio Research SP10	£2500	£1098
Audion Sterling Integrated	£595	£428
Avantic SPA II Vintage valves		£188
Croft Series 5 (Power)		£495
Copland CTA501 Power amp	£1800	£1198
Golden Tube Audio 5150	£1000	£695
Gordon Welford (Pre-amp)		
Hand made, Hard Wired		£448
Graaf 5050 Power (Ex Dem)	£2150	£1657
Graaf WFB 2 Pre (Ex Dem)	£1195	£897
Grant G100 Pre / Pwr		£650
Papworth Audio M100 Monos	£3600	£2600
PM Components MPL1 Pre plus		
2 x Mp211 Power amps (Ex Dem)	£5000	£2507
Tube Technology Prophet/Genesis	£4800	£2898
Tube Technology Unisis	£1550	£985
Unison Mystery One		£POA
Unison 845 Monoblocks		£POA

PART-EXCHANGE

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CD PLAYERS / DACS

Arcam Alpha CD		£138
Arcam Alpha Plus CD		£148
Arcam Alpha 1 CD		£150
Arcam Delta 170 Trans	£750	£368
Arcam Delta Black Box (DAC)		£148
Arcam Delta Black Box 5 (DAC)		£248
Audio Alchemy Drive System 3		
4 Box CD Player	£1950	£898
Audio Alchemy Drive 3		£695
Audio Alchemy DACMAN(Ex Dem)		£149
Audio Alchemy DAC-IN-BOX(Ex D)		£229
Audio Alchemy ACD2 Plyr(Ex D)		£490
Audio Alchemy V1 DAC		£168
Audiolab 8000CDM Tims (Ex Dem)	£1399	£1097
Audiolab 8000DAC		£1000
Audio Research DAC 1 + ATNT	£3800	£1945
AVI 2000MC Reference CD		£1300
Cary Valve CD Player	NEW and ON DEM NOW	
Cambridge Audio CD2		£99
Cambridge Audio DAC Magic		£118
Cyrus Discmaster + Dacmaster	£1400	£818
DPA Little Bit 2 (DAC)	£250	£148
Kinshaw Overture DAC		£195
Krell SBP64X DAC	£9900	£1798

MERIDIAN

Meridian CD101 CD		£175
Meridian 200 Transport	£818	£445
Meridian 203 DAC	£560	£295
Meridian 206 CD	£1300	£495
Meridian 207 CD/Pre	£1400	£548
Meridian 500 Transport	£1245	£878
Meridian 506 16 bit CD		£548
Meridian 509 24 bit CD (Ex Dem)	£2000	£1799
Meridian 566 DAC	£765	£468
Meridian 602/606Trans/DAC	£3350	£1498

We've been Meridian dealers since they began in business. We also stock their full range of hi-fi and audio-visual components.

Micromega Duo (2 box)	£2299	£998
Micromega Stage 4 CD (Ex Dem)	£600	£397
Micromega Stage 5 CD (Ex Dem)	£750	£597
Micromega Stage 6 CD (Ex Dem)	£950	£747
Micromega Stage 6 CD	£950	£550
Mission DAC 5		£85
Monarchy DIP Jitterbuster(Ex Dem)	£245	£197
Musical Fidelity Digilog DAC		£140
Parasound DAC-1000	£795	£528
Pioneer PDM900 (Multi)	£600	£228
Pioneer PD77 CD Player	£1100	£495
Pioneer PD91 CD		£398
Pioneer PDS-505 Precision CD	£450	£298
QED Digit Reference	£450	£284
Revox B266 CD Player	£1300	£678
Roksan DPI/DA1 Trans/Dac		£POA
Roksan Artessa (CD)	£2300	£795

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Rotel RCD970BX	£300	£198
Sugden SDT-1 Pro CD	£1300	£795
Theta TLC Jitter Buster (Ex Dem)	£229	£177
Trichord Pulsar 1(DAC)	£1195	£758
Wadia 2000 (Trans/DAC)	£15,000	£5598

TAPE DECKS / TUNERS

A&R Cambridge Alpha Tuner		£75
Avantic BM611 Valve Tuner		
Circa 1960 (no decoder)		£148
Magnum Dynalab FT11	£550	£398
Marantz SD55 3 hd / 2 mtr	£400	£195
Marantz SD1010	£250	£165
Nakamichi 1000ZXL		£1698
Nakamichi 481		£298
Nakamichi BX-2	£400	£198
Nakamichi 630 Tuner/Pre-amp	£500	£295
Quad FM3		£95
Quad FM4 (Beige)		£225
Rega Tuner	£230	£160
Revox A77 1/2 track		£POA
Revox B226 'BBC' CD Player	£1300	£650
Sequerra Reference	£5973	£3498
Sony TCK 611S	£330	£218
Theta Lynx Tuner	£500	£324

LOUDSPEAKERS

Acoustic Energy AE2 + Stands	£1800	£898
Alon 5 Mk2	£5000	£2898
Apogee Caliper Signature	£4000	£748

APOGEE Diva Grigio/Perla

Complete with Active and Passive Crossovers, and all cabling. As seen in the New York Museum of Modern Art

£18,000 £6998

ATC SCM10 Black (Mint)	£1000	£698
ATC SCM20 Black (Mint)	£1599	£998
B&W THX System (Ex Dem)	£4975	£2977
B&W DM601 (As new)	£200	£138
Castle Chester (Yew)	£995	£879
Castle Harlech (Ex-dem/Yew)	£995	£879
Castle Howard Mk2 (Ex Dem)	£1200	£947
Celestion SL600 + Stands		£295

DCM Time Windows £395
Well reviewed floor standers like this are hard to find at such a price. Great bass, dynamic sound quality ... and discreetly elegant too!

Epos ES11		£385
Epos ES14 Black	£900	£575
Gale 301 (Black)	£250	£159
Harbeth HL3 Teak	£1000	£298
Harbeth HL4 + Stands	£1000	£398
Harbeth HL Compact 7 (Ex Dem)	£1499	£1197
Harbeth HL K6 (Ex Dem)	£1049	£847
Harbeth HL5 Teak		£798
Heybrook HB3 Oak		£168
Horning Agathon Sig Bronze	£3500	£1795

KEF Ref Model 1 Blk (Ex Dem)	£1199	£997
KEF Q30 (Black)	£350	£248
Klipsch Heresy 11 (Black)		£754
Klipsch SW15 Mk2 Sub (2 avail)	£1800	£1148
Linaeum LFX	£649	£445
Linn Isobarik Passive (Teak)		£750
Linn Kaber (Marked)	£2000	£898
Linn Sara + Stands		£295
Linn Nexus	£450	£265
Linn Kan (Black)		£295
Magna Planar SMGA (Bik & Chrome)		£450
Magna Planar SMGA (Wood/Brown)		£450
Mission 754F (Ex Dem)	£1498	£997
Mission 763 (Black)		£195
Monitor Audio R352 (Teak)	£395	£248
Monitor Audio R852 (Teak)		£248
Musical Fidelity MC2		£150
Musical Technology	£500	£325
Neat Petite (Black)	£550	£365
Note Perfect Virtuoso (Ex Dem)	£2750	£1497
Note Perfect Concert (Ex Dem)	£2450	£1297
Pink Triangle Ventrail (Ex Dem)	£896	£597
ProAc Response 3.5 (Ex dem)	£4250	£3494
Quad ESL57	From...	£395
Quad ESL63	£3500	£1595
Rata Three	£4375	£3198
Rega Kites	£200	£128
Rega XEL (Rosewood)	£1040	£758
Rogers Studio 3	£600	£388
Royd Minstrel (Walnut/UK)	£240	£168
Royd Abbot (Teak)	£750	£495
Shahinian Obelisk	£3000	£1898
Sonus Faber		
Electa Amator Mk1 (Ex Dem)	£3293	£2497
Spendor BC1		£238
Spendor BCIII (Walnut)		£395
Spendor SP2/3	£1195	£775
Tangent RS2 + Stands	£400	£225
Tannoy Devon (12" drivers)	£795	£298
Tannoy Oxford (10" drivers)		£195
TDL Studio 1 (Teak or Black)	£800	£395
TDL RTL3 (Rosewood)	£400	£275

WILSON WITT

Wilson Witt Mk1 (Ex dem)	£8888	£6887
Wilson Witt Mk1 (Sept '97 Mint)	£8888	£5998

Remember, INTEREST FREE CREDIT and PART EXCHANGE makes it so easy!

MISCELLANEOUS

Harmonix TU812 LP Record Clamp	£220	£170
Pirate speaker stands (Black gloss)		£118
Siltech 560 Balanced cables 1mtr pr	£1600	£898

PHOTO-OPPORTUNITY!

High quality cameras and photographic outfits considered in part-exchange for new or previously used hi-fi equipment. Please call for details.

Note: All 'previous' prices as shown are either the former manufacturers' list prices when new; prices customers paid for their equipment (receipted) at the time of purchase; or the estimated price of comparable equipment/models at today's value.

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S/Hand and ex-demo clearance items - August '98

	Was	Now
Alchemist Kraken Stereo Power X2	1098	559
Arcam Delta 70.2 CD Player	699	225
Audio Analogue Puccini SE Amplifier	595	479
Audio Research D400 Power Amp	5800	2300
Castle Acoustics Isis	249	169
Cogan Hall Intermezzo - EM 0.75M	295	100
Dpa Enlightenment DAC	825	499
Linn LP12/Ekos/Lingo/Klyde 91 Spec	3500	1200
Linn LP12/Grace G707/Supex 900	N/A	395
Marantz MA500 Monoblocks	499	245
Micromega Stage 1 CD Player	549	259
Monitor Audio 352 Rosewood Speakers	299	129
Musical Fidelity MA50 Mono Power Amps	850	399
Musical Fidelity MC4 Loudspeakers	N/A	250
Musical Fidelity Pre 3A Pre-Amp	399	159
NAD 5120 Turntable	99	35
Naim Audio NAC 32.5 MM/MC Pre-Amp	N/A	225
Naim Audio NAP 250 (Old Bolt Casework)	N/A	499
Naim Audio NAP 110 Power Amp	N/A	219
Naim Audio Naxo 3/6 X-Over (New Style)	650	349
Nakamichi BX 150E Cassette Deck	N/A	139
QLN Model One Black Ash Loudspeakers	800	399
Rega Elicit Integrated Amplifier	740	595
Rega EXS Stereo Power Amp	598	425
Rega HAL Pre Amp MM/MC Remote	998	695
Rogers Ravensbrook Tuner	N/A	35
Roksan Artemiz Tonearm	895	495
Roksan Caspian Power Amp	599	475
Roksan Xerxes / Artemiz / XPS 3.5/DSU	2000	995
Roksan XPS 3.5/DSU Power Supply	320	249
Rotel RB 970BX Stereo Power Amp	225	175
Rotel RC 970BX Pre Amp (New)	175	129
Rotel RCD 965 BX Discrete CD Player	399	229
Royd Doublet Black Ash inc. Stands	520	349
Royd Priors Walnut Loudspeakers	998	495
Ruark Sceptre S Cherrywood	599	449
Ruark Templar II de-luxe	629	479
TDL RTL 3 Rosewood Loudspeakers	399	249
Teac P500 Transport	600	355
VPI TNT Mk 2.5 (New Parts Fitted)	3995	2499

Midland Audio X-change are looking for good used British & American Hi-fi, cash paid call John Roberts on 01562 822236 now!

Single-ended excellence from this superb Italian valve manufacturer

Simply Two A pentode design featuring a full 12 watts pure class A, with feedback control switch and 4 & 8 ohm tapings £995 suggested retail

Simply Four Available in pentode or triode design. Giving all full 11 watts of output in triode and full class A, or pentode 24 watts full class A Pentode £1555 Triode £1595

Simply 845 Anyone who has heard this stunning amplifier has not been disappointed. This is truly the most magnificent valve amplifier available at this price. Single ended class A triode, giving a full 24 watts. Affordable high-end with style has arrived £2995

Simply Phono On the rear of all the previously mentioned amplifiers there is a power outlet so that the simply phono stage may be used. M/M and M/C settings are allowed via switches on the rear of the unit £499

Unison Research 300B Smart Monos producing 24 watt Triple single ended Triode power. An 'open window' into what truly is possible with valves today £4250.00

Bob Dylan - Time out of Mind 120grm double	£14.99
Bob Dylan - Blood on the Tracks 180grm	£19.99
Bob Dylan - Highway 61 Revisited 180grm	£19.99
Dave Brubeck - Time Out 180grm	£21.95
Eric Clapton - Pilgrim Double	£15.99
Jimi Hendrix - First Rays of the New Rising Sun 180grm	£24.95
John lee Hooker - The real Folk Blues Alto 180grm	£19.95
Oscar Peterson - The lost tapes MPS180grm	£19.95
Radiohead - OK Computer Double	£15.99
Santana - Abraxas 180grm	£21.95
Yes - Somethings Coming Double 180grm	£17.99

These titles are available from stock mail order - a charge of £2.00 per consignment will be made

Unison Research

Vinyl

Audio Note

Audio Note have a new compact disc player now available at an astonishing price of £999.00, it incorporates a 20-bit D/A conversion system, and a state of art SONY mechanism. We anticipate a high demand for this baby, so book a demonstration today to avoid disappointment

Midland Audio X-Change will also be demonstrating the all-new M3 Line/Phono Pre-Amplifier without a doubt the finest valve Pre-Amp we have had in the building. At an affordable price of £2950.00 for the line version and £4650.00 for the phono. If a 'Three dimensional open window' is what your system lacks, then look no further

Analogue fanatics will glad to hear that the old range of Voyd turntables is now available under the Audio Note banner

The Voyd Valdi is now known as the AN TT Two	£995.00
The Voyd is now known as the AN TT Three	£1995.00
Super Version	£2450.00
Reference 0.5	£4450.00
Reference	£9900.00
Super Reference is a staggering	£36,500.00

Current Audio Note products on demonstration

OTO SE Phono	£1495.00
M1 Pre-Amplifier Phono	£750.00
M2 Pre-Amplifier Line	£995.00
P1 Power Amp	£995.00
P2 SE Power Amp	£1499.00
DAC 1 Digital to Analogue Converter	£675.00
AN S2 Moving Coil Transformer	£449.00
AN TT 1 Entry-level Turntable inc. RB250 & IQ1 Cartridge	£725.00
AN TT 3 Hi-end Turntable inc. AN 1S/AN V Tonearm	£3190.00
Meishu 300B Integrated Line Amplifier	£2750.00
Conquest Mono 300B SE Power Amps	£4450.00
AN-CD1 Integrated CD Player	£599.00
AN-CD2 Integrated CD Player, ECC 82 Output Stage	£999.00
AN-CD3 Integrated CD Player Black Gate PSU	£1699.00
Audio Note Loudspeakers AN-KSP/JSP/ESP From	£830.00 to £1860.00
Audio Note silver Interconnects AN-S / AN-V / AN-VX from	£139.00 to £575.00

Stop-Press

Due to a change in the casework - special offer on CD 2 while stocks last £850.00

Also we are selling our demonstrator Ongaku list £59,500 - our price, a mere £24,500 serious enquires only please

New additions and on demo

Audio Analogue Bellini/Donizetti	£1050.00
Audio Analogue Paganini CD Player 24 Bit	£695.00
Audio Note M3 Phono Balanced Pre-Amp	£4650.00
Audion Sterling Valve Single Ended	£599.00
BKS Hybrid 107 Mk II Granite	£1750.00
Clearaudio Sigma 24k Gold M/C Cartridge	£550.00
Diapason Karis Monitors	£1250.00
Dpa Renaissance 24 bit CD player	£950.00
Electrocompaniet ECI-3 Remote controlled Integrated	£995.00
Krell Kav 300I Integrated	£2545.00
Lehmann Audio Black Cube Phono Stage	£495.00
Michell Alectos Mono Amps - latest version	£1998.00
Michell Orca Pre-Amplifier	£1599.00
Nagra PLP Battery Powered Pre-Amp	£6995.00
Opera Platea Floorstanding Speakers	£795.00
Pass Labs Aleph 3 Class A Power Amp	£1995.00
Sirius D200 Dual Mono Power Amp	£2995.00
Unison Research Feather/Power 35 Pre/Power	£2600.00

Vinyl Nutter Accessories

Decca CA 2+2 Record Cleaning Brush	£9.95
ECO 2 Demagnetizer Fluid/Spray	£29.95
Einstein Octopus Mains Filter/Conditioner	£199.00
Kontak Electrical Contact enhancer	£14.95
Last All-purpose Record Cleaner	£19.50
Last Power Cleaner For Records	£32.50
Last Record Preservative	£32.50
Last Stylast Treatment	£27.50
Last Stylus Cleaner	£17.50
Michell Record Clamp	£19.95
Mobile Fidelity Geo-Disc Alignment Gauge	£19.95
Nagaoka No.102 Antistatic Record Sleeves 50	£12.50
Ortofon 6nines Cartridge Tags	£29.95
Ortofon Alignment Gauge	£4.95
Ortofon T Force Gauge	£4.95
Shure Stylus Balance Gauge	£19.95
The Cardas Sweep Record	£14.95
Winds Stylus Gauge - The finest known to man	£720.00

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Dealers must not advertise in the Private Classified section. Monthly consecutive insertions will be considered Trade advertising. The Publisher reserves the right to judge submissions.

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PAGE 138 FOR
DETAILS

LOWTHER ACOUSTAS cabinets with PM7A drive units, silver-wired. £325. (vge), though without grilles; better than PM6A; bought from Haden Boardman for £500 Mr Fung Tel: 0131 668 3389 (E-mail: fung@div.ed.ac.uk) (Sep(I))

QLN REF HD II speakers in cherry (£2500) £1700 Micromega Transport Duo 3.1 (£1500) £800 Audiolab C+2xP's (£2000) £900 may split. 2x1m Chord solid interconnects £100. 1x0.6m Bluehaven inters £80. 1x0.5m Moonglo bal inters £70. 2x4m Flatline Biwire speaker cables £80. Sale due to divorce. Tel: (John) 01706 628 470 Lancs) (Sep(I))

QUAD ESL 63 loudspeakers, mint condition with MAF stands £1250 ono Tel: (Dave) 0171 209 1468 (Sept(I))

NAIM NAC 32, MM and CD boards £140. WANTED: 1 Rotel RB850 poweramp or 2 similar poweramps Tel: 01623 644 474 (Sept(I))

CROFT CHARISMA Elite pre-amp, £750. Notts Analog, Tracer 4 cartridge £250 Cartridge Man's Grado unused £200. Matched pair Leak TL12.1 BBC version power amps, £1250, Tel: 01423 536 692 (Harrogate) (Sept(I))

SME20A and VDHMC1 £1750. Audio Note M1 phono £400 and Kit3 300B chromed £1500. Naim NAT01 £700. CD17K1 Sig £900. Mana tables half price. All mint. Tel: Nick 01373 471 642 (Sep(I))

HIGH QUALITY German pre and power valves. NOS for audio purposes. Fax: 01049 696 032 4346 (Oct)

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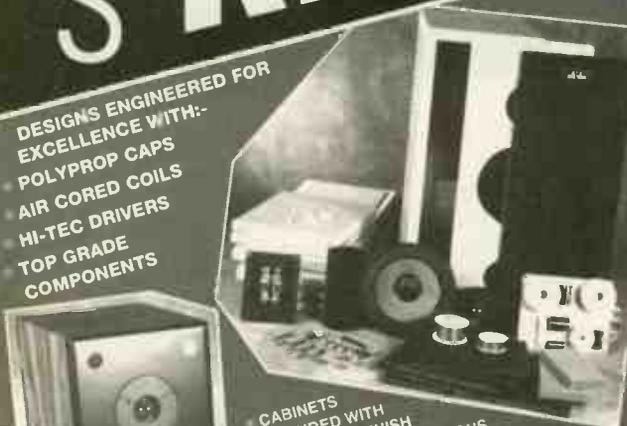
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ROTEL RB 980BX power amp approx. 3 yrs. old, mint with instructions but no box £250. Tel: Steve 0181 301 6076 (evenings) (Sep/1)

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TOWNSHEND GLASTONBURY 2 speakers £750. Rogers Studio One speakers (refurbished) & stands £275. Naim Nait 2 £250, Michell Orbe sealed box £1450. Epos ES14 & stands (new) £495. Quad 77 CD (mains) £475. Meridian 206B CD £450. Telford: 01952 502 097 (Sep/1)

IMMACULATE LUMLEY Reference 70 valve amplifier, triode switchable £850. Audio Research LS3 preamp £800. Polk Audio RM5000II surround speakers £350. QED pre-amp £30. Quad valve FM2 £30. Studio 12 decoder £30. Tel: 01279 832 883. (Sep/1)

QUAD 606 44 £425. JBL L96 speakers £225. Thorens TD147 M/C £125. Yamaha 1060 CDP £300. Nikko NT790 tuner £100. Sound Organisation: 2 floor stands £100 & pair speaker stands £50. Tel: 0956 444 157 (Sep/1)

GARRARD 301 Serial No. 75175 with strobe turntable, original manual, inspection report & template, all immaculate (as new) £375. SME 3012 detachable headshell, completely original & immaculate £250. Tel: Colin 01635 550 980 (Newbury) (Sep/1)

NAKAMICHI DR2 cassette deck, mint, boxed £415. Castle Howard speakers, antique oak, excellent. £455. Tel: 01568 620 104 (Herefordshire) (Sep)

QUAD 707 amp exc. cond. £500. Michell Argo/Hera, vgc £300. Rega Planar 3/Elys, vgc £150. Naim Nait (1), Sony Walkman Pro, vgc £120. Tel: R.Burton 01403 250 570 (Horsham, after 6pm and weekends) (Sep/1)

DENON DRM 500 cassette deck, offers. AE2 speakers (MK I) in rosewood Target R1 stands, £600 or exchange hi-end pre-amp W.H.Y. Tel: 01395 275 698 evenings (Devon) (Sep/1)

AUDIOLAB 8000S amplifier. £400. Arcam Alpha 5 Plus CD player £190. Both as new, boxed, instructions. Foundation 24 ins speaker stands £50. Tel: 01273 515 053 (answerphone) (Sep/1)

AUDIO RESEARCH SP6 valve pre-amp, sensible offers. Luxman CL32 and MQ3600 triode pre/powr amps, revalved £725. Yamaha CT7000 tuner, £425. SME 309 arm, boxed, with series V armlead £375. Gale 401A speakers and stands, recent overhaul £450. Tel: 01603 714 528 daytime/evenings. (Sep)

FOR SALE (all mint condition). Audiolab 8000S £550. Teac VDRS 7 CD player £550. Marantz 92 DCC player £400 ono (£800). Audiolab DAC £450. Technics cassette deck £100. Pioneer budget hi-fi system £250 (£700). Tel: 01292 441 544. (Sep/1)

AUDIO RESEARCH LS 2 MKII Line pre-amplifier, six inputs, tape copy, unbalanced phono outputs plus two pairs XLR balanced outputs for biamping. Still the best, mint, boxed, manual, £1550 (£3300). Tel: 01483 282 364. (Sep)

MUSICAL FIDELITY P173 preamp (6 line and MM/MC) with separate PSU. AVI S2000 MA power amp. £250 each / £450 the pair. Tel: 01793 790 072 or prsjnb@bath.ac.uk. (Sep/1)

AUDIO RESEARCH CD2 CD player, mint, £2200, boxed, manual. Meridian 500 CDT and 563 DAC £100 for pair. Tel: 01273 693 631 (Sep/1)

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LINN KELIDH loudspeakers (walnut) cost £750, except £345. Marston Audio Silhouette DA convertor, superb sonic performance, cost £800, except £425. Condition of all items as new! Teac P500 CD transport fitted with Superlock module, £400. Tel: 01834 814 799 (Sep)

MARSTON AUDIO CD player, boxed with remote, highly acclaimed CD player, cost £795, except £425. Trichord clock 2, £45. Trichord Pulsar DA convertor with external PSU, without casework, hence, £695. Audioquest video2, £45. Tel: 01834 814 799 (Sep)

NVA A80 Monoblocks (Dual PS) £775 pair (£1650). NVA P80 pre-amp £200 (£450), Cable Talk Broadcast 2 £60 (£110). NVA Soundpipes 1.2m £45 (£95). VDH 102 III 0.5m £30 (£65). Chord Flatline 4.5m £55 (£110). All as new and boxed. Tel: day 0370 893 531, eve 0118 941 2221 (Berks) (Sep)

SNELL TYPE E/II, oak finish, imported from the U.S.A. with rear mounted super tweeter. Excellent condition with original boxes. Asking £750. Tel: eve. 01865 308 415 (Oxford) (Sep)

MISSION 751 Freedom speakers, black ash, in excellent condition with box £175. Tel: 01258 458 674 (Dorset) (Sep)

NAIM NAC 82 pre-amp mint, boxed, as new £1400. Creek CD06 CD player, boxed, mint (new £600) £250 ono. DPA Enlightenment transport and DAC. mint cond. need cash hence £750 (both). Quad 77 carbon finish amp boxed, mint, £380. Roksan Xerxes Artmize Shiraz, black ash, boxed, excellent cond. £750 ono. Tel: Jules 01793 280 061 (Sep)

QUAD 34 & 405 Mk2 mint £250, Magnaplanar SMGA's boxed £275. Cyrus2 & PSX boxed £245. NAD 3020, 4020, 6050 tape boxed £150, NAD 310 £40, Radford 2022 pre £65, Rogers Cadet 2 pwr £45, Rotel RC 970 BX MX2 £75. Tel: 0141 571 4947 (Sep)

ASAI 12.3 speakers. Pair. 3-way: 12"; 5.25"; 13mm. 200w power. Treble/midrange adjustment. 91dB sensitivity. 8 ohm impedance. Asymm. LCR crossover. New, boxed. £540. Tel: 0181 543 5939 (Wimbledon) (Sep)

MARANTZ CD63SE compact disc player, boxed, little used, with remote, £130. NAD 3020a amplifier, good working order, £55. Naim Hi-cap, old style, £300. Tel: 01705 296 117 (Hampshire) (Sep)

NAIM/REGA. Nait 2 amp. late spec., green fascia, excellent condition, boxed. Betters Nait 3. £250. Rega ELA Mk2 speakers, black ash, superb build and sound, excellent condition, boxed £275. Wanted Snell K Mk1 speakers, LFD Zero amplifier. Tel: 01429 429 953 (Sep)

EPOS S25 speakers, walnut, £1200, superb. Marantz CD67SE £235, PM57 amp £140, Tannoy M2, Apollo stands, cable talk 3.1 £160, Nakamichi DR3, brand new, offers? Naim Supercap with cables £1500. Tel: 01535 605 692 (Keighley) (Sep)

LINN SONDEK LP12 Valhalla turntable. Linn Ittok LVII arm. Linn Klyde cartridge. Hardly used, excellent condition. £1000. Tel: 01239 820 927 (Sep)

LINN LP12, walnut, Lingo, Ekos, Karma, with Mana Ref table, mint condition, boxed £1000 ono. Tel: 01293 888 953 (Crawley) (Sep)

CONRAD JOHNSON PV10 pre-amp, latest specification, excellent condition £650. Tel: Stuart 0181 539 9295. (Sep)

CAMBRIDGE AUDIO CDI £500. Rega RB300 £60. Leak TL12+ £250. Yamaha CT-1010 superb analogue tuner £50. Tannoy 625ALF active subwoofer £125. Genexxa Pro LX7 (better than LX5) £75. Wharfedale Harewood speakers £125. Tel: 0181 672 4319 (Sep)

NAGRA IV-5 Pilot, deck only no leads, offers. Connoisseur 5.66 valve amp, £150. Leak Stereo 30 & Troughline 3 Stereo £130. Kef Celeste speakers £75. More available. Tel: 01235 813 832 (Sep)

NAKAMICHI CR4 Discrete 3 head cassette deck £275. Naim 32.5 pe-amp £150. Both in good condition with instructions. Quad FM4 tuner, mint, sealed, £175. Tel: 0181 778 3172/0976 153 726. (Sep)

AUDIO RESEARCH SP10 MkII. All tube 2 box pre-amp. Unmarked, boxed with manuals and some spare tubes. Superb high-end sound. Can demonstrate, £1000. Tel: 01582 629 556 eves. (St Albans area) (Sep)

HEYBROOK SEXTET speakers latest MkII with contour switch, black ash, walnut trim, mint condition boxed, £690. Mission speakers with stands, mint condition £120. Tel: 0114 2325116. (Sep)

LINN ISOBARIK speakers: walnut finish, unmarked cabinets/grills, spiked stands, excellent sound, original boxes & receipts, £500. Could arrange home demonstration/delivery to very serious buyers only. Tel: 01273 325 307 (Brighton) (Sep)

CYRUS III AMP & PSXR power supply £390. Marantz CD63 Mk2K1 Signature £250. Tel: Adrian 01903 785 997 (Littlehampton area) (Sep)

MANA 4-TIER custom amp stand with Soundstage ideal for large power amplifiers £700; Mana mini table and flat top £200; Audiolab 8000CDM transport £500; Tel: Kevin 01953 600 142 evn. (Norfolk) (Oct)

AVI S 2000MC Reference CD player, AVI S2000MM Monoblocks (150wpc). Castle Harlech speakers, £2300 or will split (cost new £4630) Tel: 01786 834 796 (Sep)

SONUS FABER Extrema with custom slate stands £3495. Pierre Lurde Mephisto transport £1195. Nakamichi Dragon £950. Quicksilver 100W.P.C. valve monos £875 pre-amp £475. All mint and boxed. Tel: 01274 545 219 or 0973 797 691. (Sep)

LUX MQ3600 valve power £1200. Lux CL 32 valve pre-amp £450. Elite Rock, Rega arm, Denon 304 cartridge £325. Royce Spectrum, Mission 774 arm, Audio Technica OC9 cartridge £250. Epos 14 speakers, black ash, c/w stands £325. Tel: 01932 889 547 (Sep)

APOGEE MINI Grand Speakers (new £8000) £2500. Krell KSP-7B pre and KSA 200 power £3000. Musical Fidelity F18 200 watt Hybrid power £1700. Tel: 01782 522 213 evenings or 07771 804 532 (mobile) (Sep)

WANTED LS3/5A sized cabinets or similar with B10 baffle cutouts. Tel: 0181 451 3093. (Sep)

WANTED. TRUVOX P99 reel to reel stereo tape unit. Tel: Alan 01634 403 122 (Sep)

WANTED. B&W DM70 improved loudspeakers with curved 702 electrostatic units. Any condition or parts for spares considered Tel: 01703 732 024 or 01373 822 767 (Sep)

MUSICAL FIDELITY A1000, pure Class A. One of the finest integrated amplifiers. £915 (£1500). Two years old, little used and absolutely mint condition. Tel: Day 01273 464 449, evening 01273 441 151 (Sep)

CYRUS 31 £375, Quad 306 power-amp £150, Leak Stereo 20 and pre £300. all vgc, open to reasonable offers. Tel: 01487 824 4418 evenings (Sep)

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ARCAM Delta Black Box II Dac	£175
AUDIONOTE M2 Line Pre-amp	£599
LUMLEY Promenade SP1 Loudspeakers NEW	£250
LUXMAN M03600 K788 Stereo Power amp	£1295

LUXMAN 5T10 Tuner	£450
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LUXMAN C1000 Pre-amp & M4000 Power amp	£1495
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NAKAMICHI 682ZX Cassette Deck	£595
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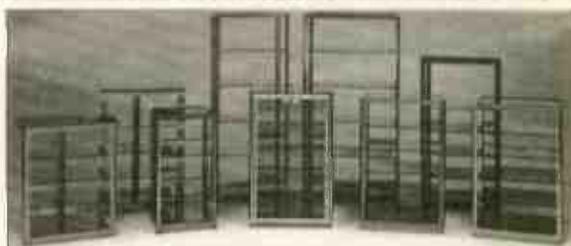
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SPENDOR BC III monitor loudspeakers, white, 4 units, one careful owner from new. £275. Yamaha KX 580 natural sound stereo cassette deck. Instruction manual, £80. Tel: 01623 512 427 (Sep/I)

AUDIO INNOVATIONS Series 200 pre-amp £220, power amp £220, in mint condition with new valves, the pair for £400. Set of four matched replica KT66 (KT66R) unused in original packaging £125. Sony CDP101 superbly engineered first generation CD player, mint £150. Technics SL 1610DD turntable £195. Tel: 01834 860 681 (Sep)

LINN KEILIDH speakers, black ash with polymer bases, as new condition, boxed. £490. Tel: 01722 334 694 (Sep/I)

DPA PDM 256 DAC. Eight digital inputs. Mixture of Coax. Toslink. AT&T. Two digital outputs opt. Coax. Three Deltran outputs Toslink. New £3650, asking £1200 onno. Tel: 01724 710 547 (Lincs) (Sep/I)

LINN HELIX speakers LS 150 on stands. Mint cond. £175 onno. Tel: 01252 653 854 evenings. (Sep/I)

SD 1s RIBBON speakers for sale £550. Infinity Research speakers £550. Wharfedale E70 speakers for sale £150. Quad 57 electrostatic speakers, midrange panel damaged £150. Altec Langsing, horn drive units, rare £600. Ferrograph S1 monitor speakers £110. Tel: 01342 850 306. (Oct/I)

REVOX B77 H/S 1/2 track and remote control (very rare), Revox B760 tuner, pair of Maggies MG 2B (very large) DVD/LD multi-system believed first in UK. Excellent prices, emigrating! Tel: Alex 01638 750 961 (Newmarket) (Sep/I)

TDL RTL 3 loudspeakers (black finish) £200. Tel: 01483 275 389. (Sep/I)

ELECTROCOMPANIET ECI-2 class A intergrated amp. Mint. Absolutely wonderful high end bargain. Any trial, £650 (£1000). Audio Note DAC I. Mint. detailed, creamy £375 (£675). Audioquest Video 2 digital interconnect £40 or £400 for both. Tel: 01308 868 044 (Oct/I)

STUDER C-37 studio tape recorder 7 1/2 15 ips. I.E.C. EQ. 1/2 track stereo classic valve sign, sounds superb. Ex BBC Maida Vale, hardly used last 10 years. Installed in low level BBC console. Serious offers please. Tel: 01752 775 158 after 6 pm. (Sep)

ORELLE CD 10T transport and DA 180 DAC boxed £625. van den Hul The Second boxed £100. Tel: 01633 667 346. (Sep/I)

ROTEL AMP RA 930 AX, Rotel CD RCD 965 BX Denon tuner TU 260L, Mission 780 speakers & stands. Immaculate £475. Tel: 01920 467 017. (Sep/I)

KLIPSH KG35 speakers in medium oak, sensitivity 95dB and Unison Research Simply Two valve amplifier, mint condition, boxed, manuals, one year old £850 onno. Teac reference 500, new, two years warranty with Alphason HI-FI unit £600 onno. Tel: George 01483 824 602 (Oct/I)

REVOX B77 high speed. Perfect £440. Revox F36, spotless, sound wooly £85. Quad 34 and 22 control units. Leak Sandwiches £75. Kef 104 II, black £575. Quad bus seats wanted. Tel: 01623 812 455. (Mansfield) (Sep/I)

WANTED: AUDIONOTE Kit One, cash waiting. Tel: 01302 360 939 after 6pm (Doncaster) (Sep/I)

AUDIO TECHNICA ATH9000 £160. Quad 77-10L yew speakers, mint, boxed £350. Atacama 8E24 stands, Soundbytes £65. Tripletone valve amp £30. Linn LK400, 5 metres £50. Cable talk professional 2 interconnect £30. Tel: 01793 526 796 (Sep/I)

GRUNDIG FINE Arts receiver (R2) and compact disc player (CD2), matched pair. Full remote control, excellent performers, little used and absolutely as new. £170 pair onno. Tel: 01727 859 377 (Sep/I)

MERIDIAN 562V with 516 mm phono 3 525; 563 DAC (20-bit upgrade to 566) £525; 506 Mk2 CD £495; 518 audio processor £575; MSR £40; boxed, immaculate. Tel: 01389 859 526 email: neil@kjaearlig.force9.co.uk (Sep/I)

B+W P5 speakers in cherry veneer in mint condition (boxed). Can demonstrate. £500. Tel: 01494 716 909 (Bucks) (Sep/I)

A.V.I. CD player £475, A.V.I. pre-amp £380, A.V.I. monoblock poweramps £750, Sony 176EB speakers £175, Teac D500/P500 CD player £600, Mission 753 speakers £450 Tel: 01977 643 629 (Sep/I)

AUDIO SYSTHESIS DAX 2 £900, Meridian 602 transport £550 both AT&T. Audio Innovations P.2. phono sage £500. T.V.A.I. Michaelson and Austin power amp. £600. All mint. Tel: 01274 545 219 or 0973 797 691 (Sep/I)

WANTED: AUDIOLAB 8000M Monoblocs pair vgc. need to demonstrate. London area Tel: (pref. weekends) Dr. Wijay 0181 898 7978 (Sep)

CYRUS 781 boxed £70, Micromega DAC boxed £100, Goldring Lenco GL75 £35, Armstrong 526 £30, Mordant Short Carnival £15, Sound Advice Hi-Fi cabinet £60, Linn LVV £30. Tel 0116 276 3020 (Leics) (Sep/I)

AUDIOLAB 8000S amp, 3 months old. As new condition £400. Kef Q15 £80. Pioneer PD 9700 stable platter CD player £185. Tel: Miles 01604 752 437 or 770 350 (Northants) (Sep/I)

LINN EKOS Mk1, brand new bearings. £545. Linn Tukans £295, both immaculate and boxed. Tel: Edwin 01225 337 270. (Sep)

REGA RB300 tonearm, new, hardly used, boxed, all accessories. £95 onno. Tel: 0181 672 1636 (Sep/I)

UHER 4400.IC report tape recorder plus case, unused tapes and many accessories. Remote microphone. Telephone adaptor. total cost £2000 plus. All mint condition, virtually unused. Give away at £500. Tel 01737 644 804. (Oct)

EXPOSURE XX AMPLIFIER for sale Boxed/excellent condition One careful owner. £400. Tel: 01223 290 619 (Cams) (Sep)

QUAD 67 CD player £600 19 months use. Mint condition. Boxed and in the attic since system upgrade November 1997. Tel: 0181 520 3580

WANTED: AIWA P50 power amps. Also circuit diagrams for P50 and Technics ST-9600 tuner. Also wanted: Technics SST-1 loudspeakers and arm tube for Technics EPA-501 tonearm, also Cyrus II amps. Tel: Jon 0181 904 8023 (Aug/I)

KEF 107 black ash, good condition £895, no offers. Tel: 0121 472 8746 (Sep/I)

LINN KEILDH Speakers. Mint, boxed, 10m Linn K20 biwired, stands. Walnut £500. Tel 0116 270 5149 (Leic) (Sep/I)

WANTED: AUDIO Alchemy DTI-Pro 32. Also for sale- Audio Pro B1-45 sub woofer £100. onno. Tel: 01642 559 078 (Stockton on Tees) (Sep/I)

SMGA's boxed with upgraded crossovers, mint £265. Quad 34 + 405 Mk2, mint £265. NAD 3020A, boxed £45. NAD 4020A £35. NAD 6050c Tape, boxed £70. Cyrus PCMIII CD, boxed, mint £125. Rogers Cadet 2 pwr amp £45. Radford 2022 Pre £55. All + P+P. Tel: 0141 571 4947 (Sep/I)

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STUDIO 12 Stereo Decoder for Troughline tuner. Assembled and aligned PCB with instructions £18.50. Boxed, mains powered outboard unit ready to use £56.50. Tel: 01736 798 393 (Nov/1)

SPENDOR SPI Birwired speakers with sand filled stands £250. Arun valve line level preamp £150. Tel: South West Analogue 01643 851 351 (Sep/1)

BUY-SELL-EXCHANGE. Vintage wireless and classical audio. Repairs, spares, restoration, modification to all valve equipment. Quad II, Leaks etc. Regonda and Vega T.V. and Radio parts in stock. 17 Bell Street, NW1 5BY. Tel: 0171 258 3448 Fax 0171 258 3449 (Apr99)

BEAUCHAMP ACOUSTICS Vintage Hi-Fi repairs and sales of valve equipment and tape recorders, record playing equipment. Rebuilds also undertaken etc. Tel: 0181 255 3019 Fax: 0181 286 6096. (Twickenham) (Sep)

AUDIO RESEARCH SP111 Rev. A. Mint as new (£6000). With spare valves, manual and shipping cartons £2750. Tel/Fax: Audio Visual Concepts 01628 440 873 (Sep/1)

VINYL CARE Station Sounds UK offer their two record cleaning machines, highly impressive results from both models and are priced at £180 an £280 Incredible value for money. these machines are the cheapest on the market (this is a special offer). Station Sounds. UK. offer their solid plinths for Garrard 301 & 401, and Thorens 124 finished in top quality veneers and hand finished. All at the low price of £150 For further information write to: Station Sounds, Unit 7, Beetleworks, Monks Ave. Lancing, West Sussex Or Tel: 01903 202 488 or 01903 262 062 eves. only Trade agents wanted for the cleaning machines. Phone Mike Urgently required: Classical records Best prices paid (Sep/1)

EX DEM Micromega Stage 5 £500 Micromega drive / DAC £1000 Audio Innovations 200 £375. Orelle DA 180 DAC £380 Many used items: Audio Analoge Donizetti £400 Tangent RS8 speakers £250 Part ex welcome. Island Hi-Fi Centre. Tel: 01983 563 993. (Sep/1)

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AUDIOLAB XDISPLAY BARGAINS, 8000A (£500) £399 8000Q (£1249) £899 8000S (£699) £549. 8000M (£800) £599. 8000CDM (£1400) £999 8000DAC (£900) £469 Castle Chesters £299. Linn Mimik II CD £549 Others available Objective Audio. Tel: 01279 426 647 or 0973 452 368 Hi-Fi purchased. (Sep/1)

INTERCONNECT CABLES: Handmade. Silver plated instrument wire PTFE insulated copper. Transparent silicone rubber sleeving. Neutrik Profi professional phono plugs. Gold plated electrodes. PTFE insulator. Spring loaded earth ring. Soldered on with silver bearing solder. Stereo pairs to 1 metre £125. To 2 metre £165. Contact Beauchamp Acoustics Tel: 0181 255 3019. Fax 0181 286 6096 (Sep)

MICROMEGA TRIO 3 box CD setup (£6000) £1799 Stage One (£550) £229 Linn Kaus Mk1 £149 Mk2 £199 Linn Klout £999. Pink Triangle Anniversary (£2400) £1599 Audiolab 8000CD £899 x display Hi-Fi purchased, Objective Audio. Tel: 01279 426 647 or 0973 452 368 (Sep/1)

E.A.D. T8000 Laser/CD high end transport. Just serviced by manufacturers, comes with free RF demodulator (worth £600). Fabulous quality machine. Wrapped in 24 ct gold. New £4500, sell for £2800 ono. Tel/Fax: Audio Visual Concepts 01628 440 873 (Sep/1)

WANTED - EARLY HI-FI LOUDSPEAKERS Tannoy, Lowther, Farmeko, Voigt, Vitavox, RCA WE etc **TURNTABLES** Garrard, BBC301, BMT SME, Ortofon, Decca, etc. **VALVE AMPLIFIERS** AEI, EMI, Leak, Rogers, PYE-Quad, WE etc **AUDIO VALVES** DA30, KT66, KT88, PX4, PX25, PP3/350, WE300 **CLEAR CRYSTAL SYSTEMS** John Petrie-Baker Tel: 0171 328 9275

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REPAIRS, MODIFICATIONS, Restorations and up-grades to all amplifiers, ancient and modern. One-off's built to order, kits debugged. Power supplies, P.A. amps etc. Tel: 01642 860 881 Jan99/1)

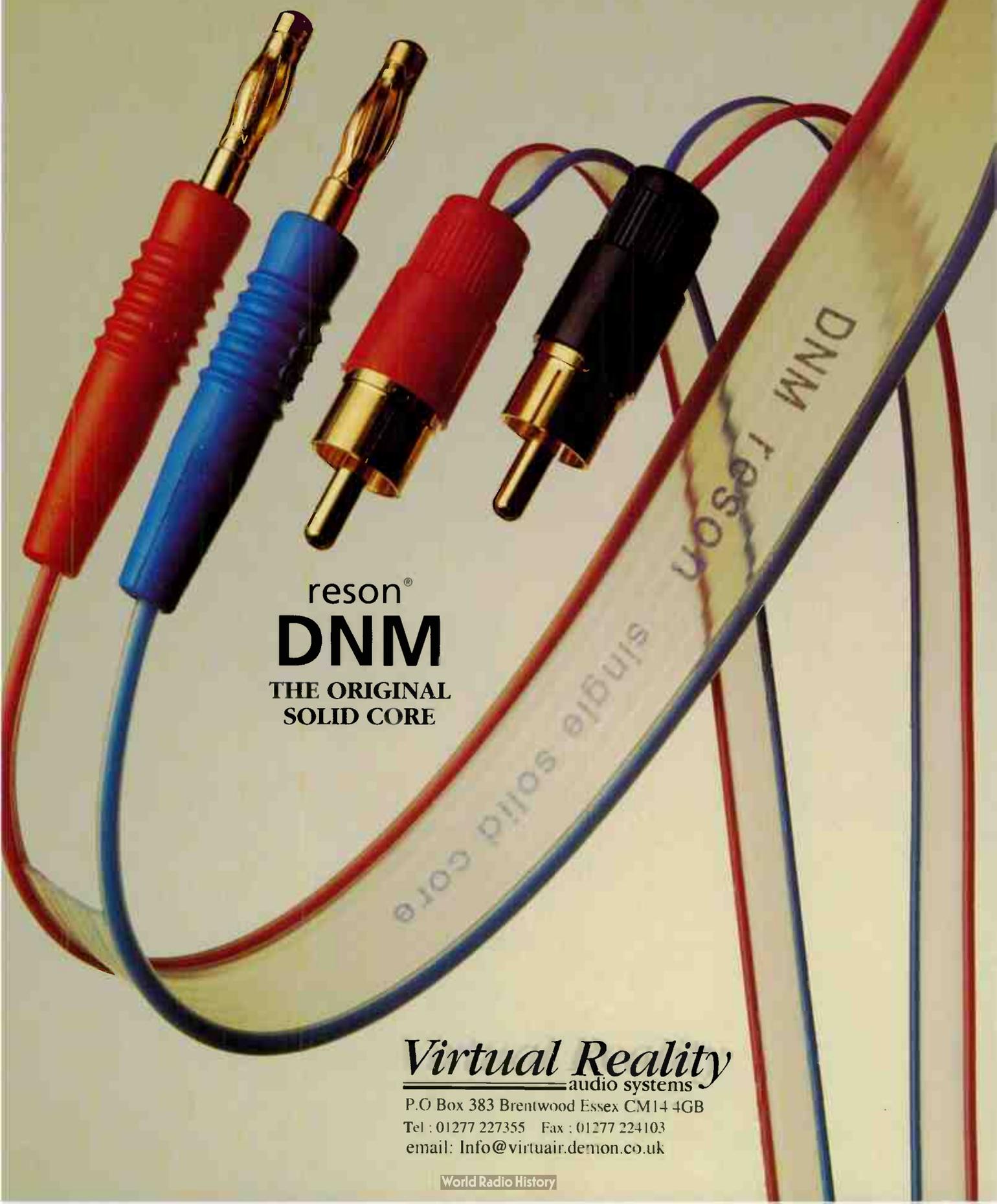
ZEROFEEDBACK Audio consultants summer clearance sale:- The following items are available at greatly reduced prices. Alphason Sonata with HR100SMCS tonearm, second hand £600. Audion Sterling ETSE amplifier, ex demo £350. Audion 300B SEL amplifier, ex demo £700. Arion Electra latest model, ex demo, a few light marks hence £550. Audion Sterling phono stage, ex demo £250. Triangle Titus speakers, ex demo £200. Triangle Zephyr latest model, ex demo slight mark hence £450. Klipsch KG3.5 speakers, ex demo £350. Meridian 200/203 CD player and DAC, second hand £500. Free delivery in Lincs area. Please note we do not accept credit cards. Business hours 5pm to 10pm. Talk to Shaun for details on Tel: 01472 883 722. (Sept/1)

SALE. SALE Sony F220 amp excellent £50 Naim 42.5 £80 Stax SR34 £95 Arcam Alpha 3 £129 DPA LBII DAC £139 (£450) Denon PMA920 £150 (£300). Marantz CD675E (new) £249 TDL T2's rosewood £450 (£600) Trio KD1033 T/T £39 Tannoy M20 Gold Spks. £85 Tel: Jim 01206 510 392 (Colchester) (Sep/1)

VINTAGE BUY-SELL. Wanted 1930/60s Hi-Fi's Lowthers, Williamsons For Sale: Tannoy GRF corner x 1, Tannoy 15" Black Autograph x 1 £3500 Tannoy 15" Lancaster pair, Goodmans corner x 2 huge Valves: DA100 x 4 new, PP4/500 / LP4, PX4s Pye HF25/Pre Old Days Vintage Tel/Fax: 0171 349 9675/0958 607613 (Sep/1)

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