DVD DYNAMITE

Denon’s DVD-2500 vs Pioneer’s DV-717

AND ALSO:

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T+A CD 1210 R CD PLAYER

MAXIMUM MINI:
JVC XM-228 MD RECORDER

GO FOR A SPIN:
VESTAX BDT-2000 TURNTABLE

TOP TECHNO:
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World Radio History
No, Jon hasn’t had cosmetic surgery! After three-and-a-half years of sterling work on the magazine, including a long stint as editor, Mr. Marks has decided to hang up his captain’s cap and head for pastures new. We wish him well, and can assure his friends and well-wishers that Jon will be continuing with World as an outside contributor.

I shall be taking over as General Editor and Richard White will be keeping an eye on things as Technical Editor. You can be sure that Hi-Fi World will continue to bring you the latest audio equipment reviews and news with the accessible in-depth style and technical proficiency that you have been used to.

This month’s group test poses the question “is bigger necessarily better?”, as we listen to eight assorted loudspeakers priced between £150 and £200. As we found out during listening, models are continually improving in this price bracket. It’s always presumed that floorstanders give better and lower bass than stand mounts, but is this always the case? Our results make for interesting reading.

How we test the products

- Hi-Fi World has its own advanced test laboratory and acoustically treated listening room.
- Hi-Fi World has a dedicated in-house team of experienced listeners. 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.

Other features that we bring to your attention this month include various brands of blank Minidisc and a look at some of the newest developments, including Sharp’s 1-Bit digital amplifier...
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111... DIY Q&A
If you're at the end of your technical tether, fret not. We will endeavour to supply the answers you seek.

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UP THE A3

N a radical move away from cylin-
ders towards the metal box, Musical
Fidelity have decided to house their
new £800 A3 integrated in a slim, six-
sided case.

Behind the milled aluminium fascia
with its gold-plated brass inserts hides an
85watt power amp section whose two
channels run from their own dedicated
transformers. Separate windings for the
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go to optimise imaging, apparently one of
the main aims in the design of the A3.

Accompanying the four line inputs and
tape loop is an MM/MC phono stage. All
of these can be relay-switched to the Pre
Out sockets that enable bi-amping with
any of MF's current power amps as they
all have the same input sensitivity.

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

MIGHTY MINI DISC

AS the world gets ever smaller, so
does portable hi-fi it seems.
Aiwa's AM-F70 MiniDisc
recorder measures a mere 77.6mm by
19.3mm by 97mm, and weighs in at only
187gms.

On top of all the common features
(amongst them optical and line-level out-
puts, backlit remote control, rechargeable
Lithium-ion battery) you get a stereo
microphone and a pair of ear-fit ear-
phones which "seal to the ear and deliver
a powerful bass".

Battery life is said to be 10hrs with the
on-board set, which jumps to 40hrs
when you add the external AA pack sup-
plied. AM-F70s are in the shops as we
speak priced around £200.

Aiwa
5 Heathrow Summit Centre,
West Drayton,
Middx. UB7 0LY
Tel: 0181 897 7000

THROUGHOUT THE AEGIS

THIS is Acoustic Energy's award
winning Aegis Series' new flag-
ship model. The three-way Aegis
3 will be shown to the press and public
at the Hi-Fi Show in September, when it
will be available for £349.95.
**SHIVER ME TIMBERS**

With the explosion of sales in digital recording media, it seems that musicians and recording companies are becoming increasingly involved with audio manufacturers in anti-piracy matters. One example of this was the co-operation of music companies and artists in the finalisation of the DVD-Audio specifications that resulted in what appears to be as watertight a system of disc copy protection as we have yet seen.

The latest news from the British Phonographic Industry highlights the way the music business is clamping down on piracy. Back in January of this year, an Oxfordshire bootlegger received a 15-month stretch at Her Majesty's pleasure, the longest sentence of its kind so far in this country. It was also the first time that musicians have given statements and even attended the trial itself - present were members of Blur, Kula Shaker and Jimmy Page among others. The guilty party had amassed a catalogue of over 5000 titles which were mastered and manufactured abroad and eventually sold from the UK.

It's not just CDs and tapes either. According to the BPI's own Anti-Piracy Unit, a significant new trend in piracy is the selling of MP3 compilations at various nation-wide computer fairs. There is consequently a planned crack-down on operators of search engines that store links to MP3 music files. This shows just how popular music and the Internet have become, despite the general public's relative lack of involvement with the latter.

**SING-A-LONG-A-TEAC**

After the launch of their budget tuner, the T-R460, Teac have followed up with a matching integrated amplifier, the A-600. You get plenty of power for the price of £200, the claimed figures 90watts per channel into 8ohms and 120watts into 4ohms. There are five inputs for audio, two for video, tone and balance controls and motor-driven volume. A bonus for would-be Elvises everywhere is the inclusion of a microphone mixing facility with level control "for karaoke".

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

**MINI LINKS**

To meet the demand for quality cable linking MiniDisc units to various other components via Mini-TosLink connections, IXOS have announced three new interconnects that deal with various couplings. First there is a 1m Standard TosLink to Mini TosLink (portables) for £29.95. Next is a Mini TosLink to Mini TosLink for connecting portables (at the same price). And finally a handy 3.5mm Mini Jack to twin phono caters for playing portables through your hi-fi at a cost of £19.95.

Path Group
Tel: 01494 441736
It was 20 years ago today....

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

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AFFORDABLE AV

As the cult of DVD spreads, the players are getting ever cheaper. Philips have now launched a multi-channel PCM, MPEG, AC-3, DTS and CD-RW compatible machine for £340.

The DVD710 is the first of four players to be launched by the Dutch giant this year. Philips claim that with the technology used in the 710, including 3D Sound, the machine can produce “virtual five-channel audio output from two loudspeakers”.

Philips
420-430 London Road,
Croydon,
Surrey CR9 3QR
Tel: 0181 689 4444

DPA'S PRICE IS RIGHT

The digital gremlins unfortunately got the better of us last month and changed the price of DPA's SX64 DAC from the correct £850 to £800.

JOHN WRIGHT (1939-1999)

JOHN Wright, founder of TDL and a member of the Audio Engineering Society, died on 1st of June. Born 60 years ago on the 11th May to parents who were music teachers, John was involved initially in music too, but then moved on into audio and became the joint-owner of a company importing microphones and tape recorder mechanisms in the Sixties.

The following decade saw time spent designing cartridges, turntables and record-cleaning machines before TDL was formed with IMF Electronics and ELAC. John sold his stake in the business in 1979 to join an academic research project in surround sound. Spells as a freelance audio journalist and consultant to the National Research Development Corporation followed before he returned to TDL in 1984.

In 1991, after a management buy-out from ELAC, TDL reverted to an independent hi-fi operation producing Reflex Transmission Line loudspeakers. Unfortunately, ill-health caused by cancer and the failure of TDL's main supplier meant John had to sell his interest once again, although he continued as a technical consultant up until his death.

QED ON THE OT

QNECT OT is the name of QED's latest length of digital interconnect. However, where the company's cables have thus far involved metal conductors, this one uses a medical-grade fibre-optic core polished at both ends for maximum signal integrity.

The OT is a TosLink optical connector shrouded in a PVC jacket and terminated with metal plugs rather than the standard flimsy plastic ones. According to QED, this attention to detail gives “higher resolution, sharper focus and more music”, all of which will cost either £30 (1m length) or £40 (3m length).

QED
Ridgeway Close,
Surrey GU18 5XU
Tel: 01276 451166

NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE

Here is but a small selection of the goodies that we hope to bring you next month:

CD-R Group Test
CD recorders are some of the fastest selling hi-fi components around. We listen, record and test our way through five CD-R machines the top performer from Pioneer, Marantz, Philips and Traxdata.

Cairn Aria HE Integrated Amplifier
This £450 integrated has all the cosmetic chic that you'd expect given its French origins. Will its Gallic charm extend to the ears of our reviewers though?

Cyrus FM7.5 Tuner
The freshest face from Cyrus is an upgraded version of their existing eight-year-old. Extensive use of surface-mount parts, gives improved sound without bumping up the price.
The hi-fi world team test budget stand mount loudspeakers against floor standers to see whether big-box bass is really worth it or just a ‘booming’ annoyance.

I If you’re after extra bass power – and a lot of people are – the accepted wisdom is to go for a good, big floor stander. There’s a lot of air in those tall cabinets to be set at-tremble, and they take up the same floor area as a stand mounter. Bass aside, most floor standers are models of elegance; their very proportions hint at performance superiority.

These days floor standers don’t even cost more. Between £150 and £200, there is a choice of brand and type, so why not get a “good big ’un”?

Well, there are arguments against floor standers. Their cabinets cost more in materials, as do their packing boxes and, since they weigh more, they cost more to ship. The extra expense builds up and is significant. If they are to retail at the same price as a stand mounter, savings must be made in the drive units and crossover. So arguably you get more bass, but poorer sound quality elsewhere.

TO SEE HOW things turn out in reality we’ve measured and listened to four affordable floor standers and four similarly-priced stand mounters.

Moving from the general to the particular, we armed ourselves with many reviewing discs: Skunk Anansie’s Stoosh; Radiohead’s Ok Computer; Reference Recordings’ CD of Stravinsky’s orchestral works; John Lee Hooker The Schein String Quartet; Angelique Kidjo; Grace Jones; Gabrielle and Diana Krall. Some have strong bass that runs deep, our measurements show (eg, Angelique Kidjo), to excite the cabinets and make the bass unit work hard. Drive was from a Musical Fidelity X-1A fed by a Teac P-30 transport and Alchemist TS-D-1 24-bit Digital-to-Analogue converter.
O RIGINALLY intended as a limited edition and priced at £199.99, the Anniversaries are now in full production and, like the Heybrooks, have enjoyed the benefit of a price cut (always good to see in this world of inflation).

The 7.2s are built like the other Diamonds from a four-sided wooden 'wrap' sandwiched between injection-moulded plastic front and back panels. Upgrading in this instance amounts to polypropylene capacitors in the tweeter section of the crossover.

Even though the cabinets are of similarly restricted dimensions to the Heybrooks, the Wharfedales delivered a more spacious sound that was also a touch treble prominent.

Stravinsky may have played to the sharp side of neutral for some, but to their credit, the Wharfedales refused to lose the quieter bass drum strokes in the ensemble. Their honest reproduction has its appealing points, but a suspicion of bass boom on certain tracks and lack of finesse mean the No! spot is beyond the Diamonds.

SEPTEMBER 1999  I  PAGE 13 HI-FI WORLD
These are the big boys amongst the stand mount line-up with their hefty cabinets. Tannoy haven't skimmed on the mid/bass unit either, so we were looking forward to a meaty, punchy bass. On Radiohead's Lucky, the Mercuries delivered, especially on the bass guitar line. What's more, there was a commendable lack of cabinet coloration.

On Rock, the m2.5s endowed music with real impact and scale. Admittedly, at times the results could be a bit 'shouty' and none too subtle, but having said that, this was power under control - there was little evidence of any boom in the lower frequencies. Imaging was also fine: smooth vocals hung nicely in the space between the speakers and the anthemic guitar chords panned left and right to create a grandeur that belied the Tannoys' dimensions.

Investigating the bass regions further, we lined up the opening double-bass figures of Diana Krall's All Or Nothing. This pizzicato pyrotechnic display covers over an octave and does a good job of catching out purveyors of one-note bass. The Tannoys played every note individually, which almost made up for a smidgen of harshness in the vocals.

As was fast becoming evident, the Mercuries were easily able to rustle up a very large sound which went down a storm on Stravinsky's Firebird. The orchestral big guns remained coherent and seamlessly integrated within the sound stage, the only fly in the ointment the slightly recessed acoustic.

It's not just at the bottom where the Tannoys deliver the goods. At the top-end, violins managed a pleasant clarity and sweetness joined by a woodwind section that was airy and light. At full stretch there was just a little brittleness in the upper midrange, but the Tannoys' virtues outweighed their faults many times over.
Here's a few things about these floor standers that strike you as unusual the minute they emerge from the packing. First, they're small; second, the mid/bass is positioned above the tweeter in an “upside-down” configuration; third, they have what seems to be a huge front-facing port for the size of the cabinet.

Tonaly the RAs proved to be a bit of an oddity. There was no shortage of bass, even if it came complete with touches of boom and coloration. And that monster port meant a lot of ‘boxy’ midrange, including vocals, made it out into the room, but the sound opened out and brightened the lower we positioned ourselves. Listening when sitting fully upright produced a ‘rounded-off’ treble; hands and knees are the order of the day for the best sound, either that or tilt the ‘speakers back so the sound opens up. The Minettes were exceptionally phase sensitive. Something that patience and experiment could iron out by finding the best backward angle.

Unfortunately, the port handicapped the Minettes as they went through their paces on Rock, with all-important midrange difficult to unravel in places. Vocals and guitars could be unnaturally loud as well, and bass erred more to the side of quantity than quality.

The silver lining to this cloud appeared when the Minettes faced up to Classical where orchestral textures were neatly balanced or Jazz - Benny Waters' Stockholm CD was easy on the ears. This is, however, a first-class recording, and the Minettes weren't tolerant of poorer material.

In the final analysis, the RAs aren't bad loudspeakers, but they're certainly individualists! Careful auditioning will be needed to ensure that they are right for you. With this caveat, £160 could buy your system a pair of interesting companions.

Mission describe these as ‘tower’ speakers and they're not far wrong. They stand tall and have an inverse driver configuration, which theoretically fires upward, but the all the same we found there were no major phase anomalies to worry about, unlike the Richard Allan Minettes.

The first thing about the 702es to strike us was that Mission have opted for a metal tweeter in place of their standard soft-dome types. The upshot, as it so often is, was that Skin’s voice on Skunk Anansie’s Brazen could have done with ‘de-essing’, as it was often sibilant and hissy. One of the Missions’ saving graces was thankfully bass, which was very good indeed. Bass guitar was invariably reproduced clean and clear, especially underneath complex ensembles. Better still, the bass drum thumped away with control and weight in equal measure.

Substituting a little small-scale Jazz into the equation testified to the fact that bass had superior definition to many inexpensive floor standers. And natural, acoustic vocals showed less evidence of the tweeter’s harshness; it was still present, albeit at a much lower level. This genre might not have been uppermost in the minds of Mission’s designers when they drew up the 702es, but then these are versatile performers.

With Classical music, again the Missions displayed a full, open midrange coupled with strong imaging, even if they couldn’t swing fully from one dynamic extreme to the other, dynamics being gently topped and tailed. On this tonally rich disc treble ‘fizz’ maintained a low profile as well, and midrange woodwind was full-throated with excellent detail. The 702es are very well constructed and engineered for £200, but their tonal balance favours the top-end and lets the side down with its lack of subtlety. Mind you, if you can live with this, buy with confidence.
Full 4 way system • 5th generation Uni-Q° technology • 15" dual suspension LF driver
individually selected crossover components • 3 dedicated separate enclosures • 25mm braced MDF construction • bespoke gold plated hardware • fine veneer and lacquer finish

Designed on computer • fine tuned by ear • hand built by music lovers

REFERENCE SERIES MODEL 109
THE MAIDSTONE
ELTAX LIBERTY 5+ £199.95

At first the Libertys gave promise of a full-throated and open sound, but after prolonged listening they showed up some significant subjective shortcomings.

Diana Krall's bassist sounded long on power but short on refinement. There was definite boom on certain notes which fast became distracting during ensembles. Vocals were incisive but unforgiving - if a Jazz chanteuse could be a diva, this might be what she'd sound like! Staying with Jazz, Benny Waters fared quite well; piano tone was particularly easy on the ear, so the midrange obviously must be there somewhere trying to get out, but it seemed lost. Integration on this 'speaker was not the smoothest.

With Rock it soon became apparent that while 'a little of what you fancy does you good', it's possible to have too much of a good thing. The bass guitar of Radiohead accentuated the cabinet boom and at the top-end the high registers became shrill. The strong bass lines of Angelique Kidjo's Fila had an inflated prominence, some coloration and an excessive presence in the mix. After a while it seemed to take over proceedings, pushing vocals and the rich instrumentation into the background.

These problems with frequency extremes, combined with the projection of vocals and tune-carrying instruments, became tiring listening after a while - the Eltax are unlikely to suit the audiophile listener. Strong treble of a bright and clattery variety, in conjunction with inflated bass and obvious cabinet boom predominated, forcing the midrange back. This does make the Eltax Liberty 5+s very immediately "hi-fi", but there is little subtlety or finesse.

We filled the "mass loading" chambers at the bottom of the cabinets with SoundBytes and found this tightened bass up a little, at the expense of portability. It did not change our overall views though.

TDL NUCLEUS 3 £200

At first sight these small floor standers don't look too substantial; not the best things in a draughty room, you might think. Rapping on the sides yielded a clonky resonance that didn't exactly inspire confidence. But, as so often is the case in hi-fi, especially at this price, a book should not be judged by its cover! The Nucleus 3s' flimsiness was belied by their commendably realistic performance.

The TDLs' tight, punchy bass combined grip with extension, avoiding the common sin of amount instead of worth - boom was almost non-existent. Vocals on both Skunk Anansie and Radiohead were smooth and full with clean consonants. The 'speakers dropped a point or two in complex passages and climaxes, where the sound had a habit of shrinking back into the boxes.

To play to the TDLs' strengths, we tried out some smaller scale pieces. On Jazz and Chamber music things were quite civilized, although a lack of slam in the bass and drum departments was partly to blame here.

Turning to larger Classical compositions, Stravinsky's all-out heavy orchestration caused the TDLs a few hiccups. When the full orchestra was employed, the Nucleus 3s lost their grip over the (admittedly huge) forces involved. This resulted in a few muddled passages and muted brass that was perhaps a bit too 'raspy', but overall the performance was more than believable. Highlights were smooth-sounding strings and delicate detailing in the quiet moments.

The TDLs are real growers. The more you listen to these, the more you appreciate them. If you're after a pair of floor standers to complement a record collection full of small-scale music, consider the TDLs. If you're a raver, headbanger or Wagnerite on the other hand, they may not be for you.
CONCLUSION

If big boxes give more bass than small ones, can we measure the differences? The simple answer is "yes".

All eight loudspeakers here are reflex types with a port. The port emits the lowest frequencies, so we measured the -3dB point. This gives a guide as to how low each design really goes. It may give no indication of quality or level, but it did provide some interesting data borne out by our listening tests. Here are the figures:

<table>
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<th>Stand Mounters</th>
<th>Centre point</th>
<th>-3dB freq</th>
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<td>Wharfedale Diamond 7.2</td>
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<td>Heybrook Heylette</td>
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<td>Floor Standers</td>
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<td>RA Minette</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eltax Liberty 5+</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The -3dB frequency in the right-hand column gives a good clue to the breadth of port tuning. The figures show that floor standers do generally go lower, but clearly there are exceptions in both categories. Tannoy have engineered one with their Mercury m2.5 stand mounter, which reaches down to a very low 21Hz.

The Tannoy’s impressed us with their dynamism, slickness of sound and depth of bass. They were a clear winner. But we all liked AE’s Aegis 1 as well and they came a close second, one person preferring them to the Tannoy.

Next came TDL’s Nucleus 3s followed very closely by Mission’s 702es. Both were quite impressive, but both had flaws. Wharfedale’s Diamond 7.2s occupied the fifth spot - they were good but a little disjointed and coloured. Heybrook’s Heylettes were similarly liked but with reservations. Trailing the group were the Richard Allan Minettes and Eltax Liberty 5+s. Neither were truly bad, as our measurements bear out, but subjectively they trailed the Tannoy significantly.

So, beware of boxes bearing many gifts! Not only was our winner a stand mounter - with big bass! - but the Tannoy Mercury m2.5s also offered a lot more in other respects.
Natural Beauty

Loudspeakers from Vienna Acoustics
Turntables from Pro-ject
Music from Austria
Distribution by Henley

Your Hi-Fi system should be as pleasing to the eye as it is to the ear.
Spoil yourself with the latest affordable masterpieces from Austrian craftsmen
BROTHERS and sisters, the revolution is here! Our enemy is fighting a losing battle, the tape that once made it strong now tripping it up. Cassette will soon be no more. The day of the disc is here. OK, perhaps that's more purple prose than the situation really calls for, but there's no doubt MD is gunning for cassette and getting results.

One of the old brown strip's last strongholds is the portable market, where MD machines' prices remain relatively high. The same can't be said of the in-home domain, where affordable recorders like the £230 XM-228 from the Japan Victor Company are winning the format war.

The rather visually unexciting JVC is no featherweight in the mass stakes, but there's not much to look at internally. The plastic and metal MD mechanism sits on four compliant mountings on a steel frame with the power supply board and analogue/digital input and output circuitry to its right.

Round the back, said inputs take the form of two pairs of phono sockets in the analogue loop and a single optical for digital. The former were employed to connect the JVC to a modified Pioneer DV-505 DVD player, a Kenwood DP-X9010 transport with Pink Triangle Ordinal DAC and a Trio L-07D direct-drive turntable. The Pioneer and Kenwood also supplied digital feeds.

PLUGGED INTO MVL's A2+ integrated in addition to a venerable Mission Cyrus 1, the JVC shaped up to a Sony selection of Classical favourites including slices from Vivaldi's Four Seasons and operatic excerpts.

For £230 I hadn't been expecting this machine to blow me out of my seat, but the music wafting towards my ears had a creditable poise, delicacy and enjoyability. The Vivaldi pieces, in particular, ebbed and flowed naturally, the musicians clearly and solidly portrayed pictured within the large acoustic.

Swapping the supplied mains cable for Campaign Audio Design's Conqueror at £45 brought further large gains, with the sound stage swelling and image focus sharpening up.

Replacing replay with record, I popped a Maxell blank MD into the '228 and enlisted the help of the Pioneer and the '9010/PT. With a couple of more testing, highly percussive tracks from Moloko's superbly-produced album, I Am Not A Doctor, the JVC managed a successful digitisation of most of the subtleties that go into enhancing realism and three-dimensionality. The Three Basics, bass, midrange and treble, were all intact too. Where this player's ATRAC left its impression on the signal coming in through the rear panel was in a slight dynamic compression and looseness to the bass, which slowed rhythm drive.

The more 'twang and thump' Rock of the second release from The Presidents Of The United States discovered the '228 in similar mood. After careful setting of the record level with the jog dial, aside from a relaxed approach to pace and a hint of fizz to the treble, what came out bore a very close resemblance to what went in. Of course, as we discovered on page 23 this month, disc quality plays a role in the final result, and swapping to a smoother, more open-sounding blank MD lifted the JVC's game.

As sales of MiniDisc machinery rise, so do the stakes, and there's plenty of fierce competition for buyers' money out there. As a budget deck, the XM-228 makes few mistakes with recordings, but to succeed these days, inexpensive hi-fi needs to be outstanding. It may be one to consider, but the XM-228 doesn't quite manage to win itself shopping-list top billing.

JVC XM-228 £230
JVC
Priestley Way,
London NW2 7BA
Tel: 0181 450 3282

WORLD VERDICT

Well-built recorder that's good but not exceptional.

Measured Performance see page 119
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Our resident MD fanatic Jon Marks listens to three examples of blank MiniDiscs that are available in your local high street shop.

**MAXELL MD74**

His snazzy translucent blue/grey disc ("Pure And Powerful Digital Sound!") got down to business inside JVC's XM-228 with a couple of tracks from Moloko's I Am Not A Doctor album. This production's sound staging and imaging clarity remained pretty much intact, as did its bass and treble definition, although neither, it has to be said, had quite their full tonal range.

On Miles Davis' Miles Ahead CD, the various brass instruments possessed bite and decent dynamics but sounded bright and a little tonally monochromatic. While the former added to vocal presence, the way the decay of notes was curtailed made for a reduced sense of space to the recording venue. You couldn't fault the Maxell rhythmically, however, as music tripped along in an involving fashion.

The Maxell has a character to similar to many of the cheaper MD blanks we've listened to. It's a competent all-rounder but it lags behind better discs when it comes to tonal colour, delicacy and three-dimensionality.

**FRENCH manufacturer MPO has come up with a rather impressive performer in their HiSPACE.** Of modest price and construction, it nonetheless provided a richer, more natural tonal balance than either the Sony or the Maxell. Low-level resolution was better too, which meant Suzanne Vega's Caramel (from her Nine Objects Of Desire CD) was a more intimate, atmospheric listen. Guitar harmonics were also more realistic, as was the muted brass of this track.

The HiSPACE's superior detailing ability manifested itself on Miles Ahead as greater impact and precision on brass and shimmer to cymbals without any extra brightness or midrange coarseness. Sound staging was deeper and broader as well, the space between individual images almost tangible.

The MPO is a very able MD. Its full-bodied, subtle yet crisp presentation avoids the clinical edge which mars the sound of much of the competition at the price.

**SONY PREMIUM 80**

No, there's no mistake in the two digits on the line above. By changing the pitch of the track spacing, Sony have managed to squeeze six more minutes' recording time onto their latest MD. But does this have any obvious impact on sound quality?

Sonomically, the Sony wasn't far off the Maxell. The basic nuts and bolts were all well catered for, but the Premium 80 didn't really sparkle in any particular department. Where the HiSPACE had shown it could produce a beguilingly natural facsimile of the original signal, the Sony betrayed its presence through a suspicion that it was processing the signal and removing some of its vitality.

The Premium 80 might not rise above the crowd when it comes to sound, but if you fancy cramming another favourite tune or two into your MD, there's not much competition currently. That situation won't last long, though, as other companies work on their own 80-minute blanks.
Richard Hirschmann
St Martin’s Way,
St Martin’s Bus. Centre,
Beds. MK42 0LF
Tel: 01234 345999

World Verdict

The T+A marries outstanding sound and solid build at a price which isn’t expensive considering what’s on offer.

T+A CD 1210 R £1150

Measured Performance see page 135
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Recently arrived from Japan is Vestax's £225 BDT-2000 turntable. Jon Marks checks its pedigree.

There have been few well-known record decks in the past to have built-in cartridge amplification - Technics' superb SL-10 linear tracker with its MC head-amp was one. This feature is usually fitted to budget turntables, like the Vestax, which are intended for use with Mini and Midi systems without a phono stage. Their sound quality can be distinctly hit and miss, though - some have all the dynamics and vitality of a limp lettuce leaf. So it was with some trepidation that I unpacked the BDT-2000 and began setting it up on a Perfect Pitch Sound Absorber platform.

The '2000 is very solidly constructed for the most part. The plinth consists of a wrap-around sheet of metal bowed at the front and sandwiched between two wooden end cheeks in traditional Japanese style. The main bearing may not be flashy but it does its job very effectively - there's no discernible play in the spindle. The DC motor makes for simple pitch control circuitry (adjusted by two knobs, Coarse and Fine) and speed selection (33, 45 and 78). Drive is via a flat belt to the lightweight, cast-aluminium platter. Oh, and in a somewhat puzzling move, Vestax have decided not to fit an arm-lift device, so you'll need a steady hand to cue your LPs.

To taste this interesting phonographic recipe, I enlisted the help of The Thompson Twins and their Into The Gap album. Doctor, Doctor proved a pucky listen through the Vestax, its on-board amp not squashing the life out of the signal. Since the stylus was still fresh in the arm, though, I let it run in for a couple of days before sitting down to some serious listening.

Returning to the BDT-2000 a second time, I was pleased to hear that some (but not all) of the rough edges had been polished off. Its previous speed and impact remained but the cartridge's sibilance on vocals was less obvious, and it tracked cymbal crashes more confidently.

As a test of sound staging and imaging, Bob Marley And The Wailers' digitally remastered Live! is a handy disc to have. Here, it was a game of two halves. Where the '2000 got the thumbs up was imaging, which was as clearly-defined as you can expect for an all-included turntable at this price. Thumbs down were awarded for restricted stage depth, Bob, his drummer and the backing vocalists flattened into the same thin plane just forward of the loudspeakers.

Suspecting that something more artificial might be up the BDT-2000's street (and in keeping with the company's predominantly DJ-centred output), I lowered the Prodigy's Fat Of The Land onto the rubber mat. With Breathe passing under the needle, the deck was more comfortable, the pristine but extremely electronic production giving it an easier time than more acoustic fare. The general balance favoured the top-end and midrange, which were accompanied by a lean but fast bass that carried a rhythm without any sense of struggling.

You can tell the BDT-2000 isn't bolted together by your average garden-shed specialist outfit. The combination of an on-board phono stage with its iconclastic looks (especially the metallic green paint job) are sure to raise a few eyebrows. At £225 with cartridge it's hardly expensive, but then neither is Rega's Planar 2, which has a superb (and tweakable) tone-arm. For style's sake, choose the Vestax, for sound's the Rega.

Vestax BDT-2000 £225
(incl. MM cartridge)

Vestax
18 St Christopher's Road,
Haslemere,
Surrey GU27 1DQ
Tel: 01428 653117

WORLD VERDICT

A fit-and-forget solution to LP replay, but not the top performer sonically.

Measured Performance see page 135
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HALF-A-GRAND STAND

Pioneer’s DV-717 and Denon’s DVD-2500 battle it out for the £500 DVD player title. Will it be a judges’ decision or a straight knock-out? Simon Pope makes sure there’s no hitting below the belt.

DVD is now nothing new, but the great debate still rages as to whether compatible players have aural advantages over standard CD machinery. Even those who remain unconvinced can’t argue with the value of a single box which will handle their video discs as well as CDs, especially in these times of format proliferation.

Two companies who have been major players in DVD production from the outset are Pioneer and Denon. The latter’s DVD-3000 was, along with Panasonic’s DVD-A350, one of the earliest players to feature in our pages back in August 1998.

THE DV-717 IS Pioneer’s most up-to-date DVD. It offers sturdy build and a stylish design finished in Japan’s favourite colour, champagne gold. The large display window sits below a chunky, central drawer in a front panel which is almost bereft of buttons - only Play/Pause, Stop and Skip Forward and Back are present. All other commands are supplied by the natty remote with its handy jog dial. On the rear panel are two pairs of audio outputs and two digital outputs (optical and coaxial).

After hooking up the ’717 to a system of Monrio’s Asty RM and a pair of Magneplanar 5McGas, I was greeted by the kind of presentation I’ve come to expect from the cream of the DVD crop. With its smooth, even balance, the Pioneer avoids the brittleness and sterility present in many CD-only players. Another bonus point was scored for the ability to bring out little nuances and details in the music that are all too easy to gloss over.

The Pioneer continued to win praise with the full-on Dance music of the Chemical Brothers as it produced an eminently musical sound. Its slightly rolled-off treble (confirmed by our measurements) and Legato Link Processing yielded a pleasantly sweet, mellow midrange, but one which was still lucid. Couple this with a firm, rhythmic bass attested to by the drums of the Exit Planet Dust album, and you have a real Rocker that will have you reaching for the volume control to get the neighbours in on the act.

TOO MANY CHEMICALS can be bad for you, so I headed for the other end of the scale and treated the ’717 to the ethereal sounds of The Sixteen working through a collection of 16th-century pieces from The Eton Choirbook. The clean polyphony of the Magnificat by William, Monk of Stratford (perhaps a relation to Darren, Painter and Decorator of Coulsdon?) flowed from the Magneplanars with an enviable freedom.

The Pioneer found separating the various vocal strands harder going here, even though no one part enveloped another. And soprano voices were unpolluted by shrillness, but the tone of the choir overall could have been slightly more natural - the ’717 added some warmth and richness which deviated from the strictly neutral. This player is less coloured than the Denon, but if tonal accuracy rather than musicality is your priority, you’d be better off with a £600+ CD player.
THE PIONEER DV-717 is one of the better CD players on the market (and incidentally, it also plays films with great clarity). To best appreciate its fine audio properties, match it with a slightly ‘cool’ amplifier such as the Asty or the Puccini SE. Then you’ll have a musical, enjoyable sound that should appeal to most CD-lovers whatever their musical persuasions.

HOT OFF THE production line comes the DVD-2500 from audio stalwarts Denon. Cosmetically it’s an improvement on the earlier DVD-3000, with which it shares a central display and drawer. Like the Pioneer it’s available in black or, in this case by special order, gold.

Features in common with the flagship DVD-5000 include ‘audiophile’ electrolytic and film capacitors in key circuit stages, and a metal fascia and treated circuit board aimed at reducing vibration.

IN USE, this Denon was a solid performer with an approach not a million miles away from that of the ‘717. Everything But The Girl showed that the DVD-2500 was challenged in the ‘sparkle’ department, the minute details of electronic cymbals and shakers not as evident as they had been with the Pioneer. In the title track, Walking Wounded, the vocals were just a little too much to the fore for my taste, although the midrange as a whole was well-detailed and open. It’s a pity things just failed to shine at the top-end where a lot goes on in this album. This meant certain recordings could sound veiled, especially Exit Planet Dust or any of the other albums by the Chemical Brothers.

Their ‘lo-fi’ productions need a clean, well-balanced treble to add space to the music. The Denon was too smooth a customer, as it failed to monopolise on the percussive impact in the treble which emphasises the humungous rhythms of these tunes. On a more positive note, bass was fast and agile enough to keep my feet tapping along. The powerful basslines retained that essential ‘bounce’ to them which, with this stuff, makes the crucial difference between exciting and dull.

THE VOICES OF The Sixteen were better suited to the Denon’s sophisticated sound. The ebb and flow of the choral parts were elegant, every easily-discriminable line demonstrating what a fluid and open midrange the ‘2500 had. The smooth sound of the player meant that soprano voices were even rounder than with the Pioneer, which added warmth to this CD recorded in rather a cold-sounding location. In spite of the laid-back balance, the rhythms and consonants were all precise and clearly audible.

Denon’s DVD-2500 is a commendably involving player with a musical and open mid band, particularly with Classical compositions and small scale music. It wouldn’t disgrace itself on the rack of any self-respecting audiophile, but the Pioneer wins out on overall sound quality and musical compatibility.
The goodies this month are Sony’s PBD-V30 portable DVD player, the HDCD-compatible RCD-951 CD player from Rotel, Sharp’s MD-MS722H portable MiniDisc recorder and the OBH-14, a combined DAC and passive pre-amp from Creek Audio.

For our latest bumper give-away, we have a foursome of stylish and innovative beauties all vying for a place in your heart and, hopefully, home. The first of these is Sony’s PBD-V30, a cool customer thanks to its powered lid studded with controls. Supplied with the Sony are a 7.2V rechargeable Lithium-Ion battery pack and a host of connecting leads.

Jon Marks was our man on the move in June’s issue, where he discovered the PBD-V30’s performance through both headphones and hi-fi was well up to spec. Spinning Red Snapper’s Making Bones CD he encountered a presentation of “satisfying weight and drive” in basslines, while treble had “an attractive shimmer” with annoying sibilance non-existent. The Sony’s smoothness is at least partly due to a subtly rolled-off tobegin that has the knack of taking the sting out of harsh recordings without diluting clarity or what Jon described as “a tunefulness that kept me pinned to the listening seat”.

As well as ordinary CDs, of course, the PBD-V30 will happily deal with 24-bit, 96kHz discs. It’s not just music either, as its main raison d’etre is naturally the replay of DVD films through an external screen.

Last month we reviewed the cracking new £300 CD player from Rotel, the RCD-951. This machine is one of the least expensive that’s able to capitalise on the quality of HDCD discs, which it plays with an insight and detailing unsurpassed at this price. The main components in this successful recipe are Burr-Brown’s PCM-69A converter and Pacific Microsonic’s PMD-100 HDCD filter.

An HDCD of Stravinsky’s The Rite Of Spring played by the Minnesota Orchestra showed that the Rotel was no mug. Simon Pope noted “I was taken aback at how a 100-piece orchestra could sound both light yet powerful in the same passages”. And the Rotel shows exactly how transparent HDCD can sound with acoustic instruments: “brass chords had a refreshing lightness and space to them”.

It’s not only on HDCDs that the RCD-951 turns in a convincing set of results - it delivers the goods with standard CDs as well. Bernard Butler’s ‘People Move On’ was clear and forward, and the multi-layered ‘Stay’ never sounded muddled or slow. Simon summed up the Rotel with these words: “as a normal machine it holds its own with the best of the competition; with HDCDs it starts to seriously rival £500+ players”.

Next up we have a portable MD recorder with a ‘must have’ techno-styling to it. As Richard White noted last month, the space-age appearance of Sharp’s 722 is coupled with diminutive build and sound as solid as you can get from a domestic portable. The secret to miniaturising the Sharp lies in the built-in battery, which is charged from the wall-plug included with the main unit.

When it comes to recording performance, crucially the ’722 uses 24-bit technology in its ATRAC data-reduction system. This gives high-resolution record-
ings that are very close to the source material. The bonus here is that, even though it was intended purely as a portable, the Sharp fits nicely into a home system, replaying both compilations and pre-recorded MDs with none of the “digital nasties” that characterised MD in the early days.

Fourth spot in the give-away list goes to the OBH-14, designed by Mike Creek of Creek Audio. This handy little device combines a 24-bit Crystal DAC with a passive pre-amp and a single analogue source input. Operating in digital mode, the OBH-14 picks up plaudits for the way it delivers impressive imaging and “expansive sound staging”. As a passive pre, it produces a level of performance similar to that of Creek’s excellent OBH-12. Simply put, the £240 OBH-14 has no competition.

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COMPETITION ENTRY QUESTIONS

1) What type of rechargeable battery does the PBD-V30 use?
   A. Lithium-ion  C. Carbon dioxide
   B. Kryptonite  D. Bangers-mash

2) What does HD CD stand for?
   A. Heavy Duty Computer Data  C. High Denomination Compact Disc
   B. High Definition Compatible Digital  D. Hot Dog Convention Drama

3) What does Sharp’s 24-bit ATRAC system do?
   A. Reduce the music data  C. Depress the data
   B. Date the compression  D. Deliver parcels within 24 hours

4) What is the model number of Creek’s DAC/passive pre-amp?
   A. CFC-10  C. CRE-14
   B. OBH-14  D. OB1-KNOBE

5) Which converter chip does the Rotel RCD-951 employ?
   A. Crystal 2218  C. AKM 609B
   B. Burr-Brown PCM-69A  D. Buster-Rhymes 666

COMPETITION VERSE (obligatory)

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COMPETITION WINNERS

July brought forth some amusing muses! The lucky winners were W Brown of Leicester, B Smith of Bideford and V Rosario of London.
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Teac struggle to improve the conventional power supply. Does their new design bring high-end sound quality to this budget amplifier?

Jon Marks and Noel Keywood listen and test.

While the budget end of the hi-fi market is definitely more healthy than the high-end in these days of computers, cellphones and digital gadgetry, a steady flow of technically, stylistically and sonically near-identical black boxes is enough to jade the most resilient of ears. Teac's A-E2000 may look like a chip off the old block, but what's under the lid and what comes out of the speakers isn't.

What differentiates this little £180 integrated from the masses is its Uni-factor power supply (see p39 for a technical explanation). Less mould-breaking are the bypassable Treble, Bass and Balance, the five line-level inputs, single MD/tape loop and Pre Out/Power In sockets.

On paper the A-E2000 looks highly promising. To find out if it could fulfill that promise, it was joined for the duration of the review by Teac's P-30 transport, Alchemist's TS-D-1 DAC and our own KLS9 loudspeakers. We were expecting something a little different from the norm, and we weren't disappointed, as the Teac immediately pulled a couple of aces from its sleek, black sleeves.

Sound stage width is normally less of a problem for solid-state, but the A-E2000 still picked up maximum points here as well. Where it pulled ahead of most of the competition again was in treble insight. On discs with crystal recording clarity such as Joe Beard's Blues Union, cymbals...
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TEAC POWER SUPPLY

I was fascinated by Teac’s ‘Uni-factor’ power supply, because I struggled manfully with a similar idea some years ago, using a “choke input” power supply for our K6L6 amplifier before abandoning it. The aim is to draw current from the mains smoothly, instead of in pulses.

Most amplifiers have simple, inexpensive “capacitor input” power supplies like the one shown in our diagram. The mains transformer’s output is turned from alternating current (a.c.) to direct current (d.c.) by a rectifier. Unidirectional (i.e. D.C.) half-cycles charge the reservoir capacitor C1. This only draws charge current when the D.C. value of the half-cycle across C1 exceeds its charge voltage, a situation that exists over a short period of the entire cycle. I have reproduced the voltage and current waveform diagrams from an early Radio Designers Handbook (1942) showing this.

The problem with this is that the amplifier draws current from the mains only over the peak of the A.C. cycle. This effectively pulses the amplifier’s mains transformer as well as the entire mains supply network right back to the generator in the power station. Electricity supply authorities/companies complain that it forces them to provide excessive power generating capacity to cope just with the pulse.

If current draw was steady over the entire cycle, power stations could be made more efficient we are told. Since electronic equipment draws little current compared to heaters it isn’t a major issue. But it is a neat idea all the same and is partly met by choke-equipped amplifier power supplies, which do improve sound quality, but have problems.

I wrestled with a “choke input” supply but found it impractical. The choke got very hot, produced a strong magnetic field and buzzed like a jar of angry hornets. Hanging a capacitor in front to smooth the incoming charge pulses overcame these problems, resulting in a ‘pi-filter’ supply of the sort found in our 300B amplifier, for example.

Teac’s A-E2000 integrated is certainly a very refreshing change technically. In a world of mundane, uninventive circuitry, Teac and their designer have dared to be different. Sonically, the amp proves that Uni-factor power supplies also offer benefits, even if these don’t yet apply to every area of performance. When new meets old on your shopping list, the A-E2000 should be there next to Denon’s stalwart PMA-250SE, but these are early days yet for Uni-factor. As development continues, expect to see and hear some impressive amplifiers.
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1000 FOR THE YEAR 2000

I'm fairly new to high fidelity and for the last year a thought has been buzzing in my head. As a left-hander, should I position the 'speakers of my system (which I don't yet own) or the cables from the amplifier the other way round (left-to-right), considering that my brain's hemispheres are the other way round compared to a right-handed person's?

I understand that this might seem a little silly, but I must say that I'm not really happy with the breadth of sound staging on even quite expensive systems I've auditioned. As I don't own a proper system yet (poor, lonesome student), I can't experiment to find out myself.

Stavros Kleidarias
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Speaking as a very right-handed person, I have found that it is custom alone which determines which way music 'feels' right through the loudspeakers. Since the layout of a symphony orchestra has been pretty much static for decades, when you listen, you expect to hear the first violins on the left and the 'cellos and basses on the right. This would apply whether you were left or right-handed, unless of course you invariably stand on your head when hearing live music! Don't forget that our brains manufacture 'stereo' from the data provided by our ears - it is not an acoustic phenomenon as such. Certain records of mine I 'learnt' with the pick-up cartridge wired left-to-right. It took me ages to acclimatize to the reverse after I'd discovered the mistake.

Although it sounds too simple to be true, breadth of sound staging has a lot to do with how far apart you are able to place the loudspeakers. The hole-in-the-middle effect with widely-spaced loudspeakers also owes something to psycho-acoustics. In the early days of stereo it was discovered that an unconnected (and therefore silent) speaker placed centrally effectively eliminated the problem for the majority of listeners! Personally I would recommend a minimum of six feet between the 'speakers, assuming that the dimensions of your listening room permit it. My own Klipsch Heresies are placed about eight feet apart and toed in slightly; I find this gives a breadth of stage that seems to extend well beyond the boundaries of the 'speakers themselves, yet retains very precise imaging. RMW

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Yamaha's chunky NS1000 loudspeakers have built up a loyal following, but they prefer some room to breathe.

1000 FOR THE YEAR 2000
I have heard the 'speakers for me, the Yamaha NS1000Ms, but I have a problem (haven't we all?) My room measurements are 3.5m long by 2.5m wide and the floor is wooden. Will the Yamahas cause bass boom in my room (my current 'speakers don't?) I intend to put the Yamahas on Kudos S50 stands (45cms high) with paving slabs beneath them. This will raise the 'speakers slightly above ear level. Do you think this might be a problem? My current system consists of JBL LX2 'speakers, a Kenwood KA-30205E amp, and a Marantz CD-67 MkII CD player. The cables are Ixos 104 (interconnects) and SonicLink Silver Aero S300 ('speaker).

If I do opt for the NS1000s, I will obviously have to partner them with some more up-market gear, but will they be OK in my system until I can save enough money for the upgrades? Talking of these, I had in mind Meridian 605 monoblocs and an Arcam Alpha 9 CD player.

Mark Skinner
Kent.

If there's going to be a bass problem with the NS1000s, you'll find it will be at roughly 75Hz and 140Hz, which correspond to your room dimensions. Seeing as one frequency is almost an exact multiple of the other, you might run into major boom at 140Hz-150Hz. And as 2.5m by 3.5m is on the small side, I suspect that there's also little heavy furnishing to soak up some of the Yamahas' prodigipus bottom-end. The best bet is to try it and see, but there's no guarantee of success.

If the XTC Pre-1 and Pow-1 would be a fine choice for amplification (Meridian no longer make the 605s, and the Yamahas need smooth, slightly warm amps to avoid a clinical sound). The Alpha 9 would make an appropriate source. JM

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OUT WITH THE OLD...
After reading many of your reviews, I have managed to piece together a fair system on limited funds. It comprises a NAD 502 CD player, Dual CS505 turntable (which was given to me), a pair of Mission 765i loudspeakers and Quad 33/303 amplification with an FM3 tuner.

I am happy with the interconnects as I made these using cable from Maplin. However, when listening to CDs and vinyl, I feel the system is very limited somewhere. Reading articles about the old Quad 33, its phono stage is not supposed to be too good. On top of that, I find the NAD sounds a bit laid-back.

I have a budget of around £400 and wish to bi-amp with another 303 as well. Would I be on the right track looking at the Marantz CD-63 mkII KI-Signature as a start?

Peter Ream
peteraream@hotmail.com

If you feel the pre-amp is holding things back, replacing it would be a better idea than bi-amping. At £130 there's Musical Fidelity's line-level X-Pre, which could be accompanied by the X-LP phono stage at the same price. Once you've made this substitution, money lavished on the Marantz would be well spent.

The next upgrade could be that second 303, although some cash on cabling might be a wise move too. Maplin's wires are reliably good, but their affordable offerings don't normally challenge dedicated hi-fi interconnects, such as SonicLink's Bonus, at £15/m and upwards. JM

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EPOS IS THE WORD
Following the news of an addition to the family, I feel now is the time to upgrade my system one last time. Currently it is an Arcam Alpha 6 CD player, Audiolab 8000A (1992 vintage) and Epos ES11s with a REL Strata II subwoofer.

Sometimes at 'adequate' listening levels the amp seems to lose a little control. At other times the treble can be very harsh and I wish to investigate the second-hand market for a suitable replacement, whether it be pre/power or integrated. A new CD player would then be the next move.

Dr Ian Harris
iharris@hcl.com

There's plenty of choice if you're prepared to purchase second-hand...
1) Bi-amp with a pair of Mission Cyrus 1 amplifiers using your Audiolab as a pre-amp. The 1s might not have massive grip and control as single units, but bi-amping helps, and these are extremely musical components which make listening to music very enjoyable. If you keep your eyes peeled, you can get Cyrus 1s for as little as £75 each.

2) Strange it might sound, but I've heard a couple of ES11 owners swear by suitable valve amplification. Dynaco's old ST70 can sound very tuneful indeed and has meaty bass, if you get it overhauled and sprung up. Then again, Audio Innovations' gear has built up a very strong following and is widely available second-hand.

3) If you can have a Y-interconnect made or find a pre-amp with twin outputs, you could investigate low-power valve amplification for the tweeters, leaving the bass to solid-state.

As for a new front-end, you could investigate machinery such as Creek's CD43 at £500. JM

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COPLAND COMPANION

The system: Copland CD288, 301 MkII pre and 505 power amplifier. The problem: I am looking for suitable speakers for this combination.

The floor of my room measures 25ft. by 12ft, but as it is a sort of attic, the actual usable area being only about 10ft. by 12ft. As you can see, this at least means there will be no walls near the speakers, but what models would suit the Coplands well? They should, I suppose, be small stand mounters that work well in free space; ideally, near-field monitors as there's not much distance between the speakers and the listening position.

When it comes to presentation, I am not worried about detail so much as good space and a realistically ‘live’

They might not spring to mind as choice No1, but Diapason’s tiny £1250 Karis stand mounters with their hard-wood cabinets have gelled nicely with a lot of the push-pull valve gear we’ve connected them to. With its 35watt output, the CTA 505 should be able to drive them in spite of an impedance dip at low frequencies, and their low sensitivity shouldn’t prove an obstacle in a small room such as yours. On the cabling front, you could try some Reson from DNM for both interconnects and loudspeakers. JM

(COVER) BUG OFF!

I’ve just been bitten by the upgrade bug - again! I’m the proud owner of a Rega Planar 3 turntable and I’ve used a Rega Elys cartridge intensively for over a year. It now sounds as if the cartridge is not as fresh as it once was, so it’s time for a change.

First, I was thinking of having my RB300 modified by Origin Live, but I’m not sure the upgrade is that effective on a ’300 bearing in mind what you said about the ‘250 being better after the changes have been made. What do you think?

Second, I was thinking of replacing my Elys with a Reson Mica or Reca. Would these be the right choices for the Planar 3 since VTA is not easily adjustable?

Third, the phono stage I use is my Audiolab 8000A’s internal one. Would it be worth getting a £200-£400 external phono pre-amplifier? I’ve never listened to any of these and have no idea if they would be a genuine improvement over the Audiolab’s.

Fourth, I feel that I’ll have to replace my Monitor Audio 3 stand mounters eventually, as I crave more bass. I am interested in a pair of high-sensitivity £900 Cabasse Farellas 401s as I hear they produce a substantial amount of bass. Do you reckon they would match my Audiolab? Or should I stick with my Monitor Audios and buy a REL Storm subwoofer?

Richard Vasseur
richard.vasseur@bigfoot.com

The simplest solution to the arm conundrum would be to sell your RB300 and pick up a second-hand ‘250 for modification. DNM’s Reca would be a step too far, but the Mica should be a sound choice, even if VTA adjustment on the Planar 3 is time-consuming.

The 8000A was a fairly decent amp in its time, but it’s dropped off the pace when compared to the likes of Pioneer’s A-300R Precision (£400) and Audio Analogue’s Puccini SE (£600). Your finances should be able to stretch to the latter if you sell the Audiolab.

The final purchase should indeed be a new pair of loudspeakers. The Cabasse Farellas are an unknown quantity to me. If you scrimped and saved for a while before selling off your Monitor Audios, you should seriously consider BKS’s 107 Mk2 ribbon-tweetered floor standers. These may cost £1500 but they’re worth every penny. Just make sure you arrange a demo with whichever amp you settle on as the 107s aren’t the easiest load for an amp. JM

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**GOING PASSIVE OR ACTIVE (OR CRAZY)**

I have a 60watt Bryston 2B-LP power amplifier and am currently looking for a matching pre-amplifier. The rest of the system includes an Arcam Alpha 6 CD player and Sonus Faber Concertino 'speakers mounted on SF's own stands. Interconnects and 'speaker cables are Kimber PBJ (1m.) and a single run of Kimber 8TC (should I bi-wire?).

Listed in your World Favourites Guide are both the Creek OBH-12 passive pre and the Audio Analogue Bellini. Which one should I pick? Should I go passive or active?

I have read that the high output impedance of a passive pre may cause some distortion when mated with low input impedance amplifiers (less than 20kohms) and that certain pre-amplifiers (even at the maximum volume setting) may not provide adequate loudness in 'speakers rated less than 87dB (the Concertinos are 86dB). Alternatively, should I consider valve pre-amplifiers such as Sonic Frontiers' Anthem Pre 1L or the Trilogy 900?

On the subject of CD convertors (my future upgrade), I notice that you recommend the pairing of Arcam Alpha 6 with DPA Little Bit III in recent issues. How about partnering the Arcam Alpha 6 with Musical Fidelity X-DAC?

**SYSTEMATIC SLIMMING**

My current system consists of a Wilson-Benesch Full Circle turntable, a Roksan Artxerxes X phono stage, ROK-L2.5 preamp, ROK-S1.5 power amp, Caspian CD player and Monitor Audio 703PMC loudspeakers connected using vdH Thunderline interconnects and Supra 4+ 'speaker cables. My musical tastes vary from Classical to Ambient while my wife generally listens to mainstream Dance music.

I auditioned each component (in demo rooms) prior to purchase but now find that the bass is 'muddy' and tends to overpower the music. Can you suggest potential upgrade paths to try to produce a more even sound? If need be, I have a budget of up to £2000 but a more cost-effective solution would please my wife!

As you mention, impedance mismatch can be a problem. We ran into this with Alesis' M1 active loudspeakers (reviewed last month) when we plugged our own line-level valve pre into them. Ideally, a passive pre should see 100kohms+ at its output to avoid matching difficulties. Unfortunately, a lot of modern amps have between 10kohms and 20kohms at their input, which is too low for passive pres. Unless the Bryston has a high input impedance, you'd be better off with the Bellini, which is a very transparent pre. Just make sure that you give it a minimum of 150 hours to burn in - it really does take that long and the sound changes quite dramatically.

Partnering the Arcam Alpha 6 with the X-DAC is certainly one marriage worth investigating. Whether the slight coarseness to the treble Dominic Todd noted in his January 1996 review is down to the transport or audio electronics is a moot point, so try before you buy as the MF is unlikely to forgive failings such as this. JM

Whatever the connection, DNM's Licon can improve its signal transmission.

Mark Pearse
Mark@pearsem.freeserve.co.uk

One improvement would be to track down a replacement for the Thunderlines. These are biased towards the bass and could be swapped for something like the more expensive vdH The First or QED's cheaper but excellent Quest Silver Spiral at £90.

Your 'speakers could also be partly to blame. Change interconnects first, and if that doesn't clear the problem, you could think along the lines of Jamo's Concert 8s or even, if you fancy a radical change, some of Magneplanar's MG12/QR panels, if you have plenty of space. JM

Magneplanar's panel loudspeakers offer a very lucid, natural sound but need lots of room.

Move closer to better bass with the aid of a pair of Siren interconnects from The Chord Company.
Hi-Fi World readers are well aware now of the imminent arrival of Super Audio Compact Disc from megatronics companies Sony and Philips. Both are currently working on players and ancillary hardware (Sony's SCD-1 player is already out in Japan) to turn this contender for the next-generation digital format into a reality. But what about the software, and how is it being made?

An SACD disc is a single-sided 'hybrid'. It consists of two separate strata, each 0.6mm thick, bonded together to form one dual-layer disc of ordinary CD thickness. The upper of these layers contains standard CD information, which Philips and Sony say can be read through the lower, semi-transparent SACD layer. This means that SACDs should be compatible with normal CD machinery as well as dedicated SACD players.

The high-density part of the disc contains the Direct Stream Digital (DSD) information with a storage capacity of 4.7Gbytes. This can be used for text, graphics and video information; if the music on the disc requires only two channels instead of six, there is room available for visual goodies to be added.

SACD is what Philips describe as a "migratory" format, one which paves the way for the transition from CD to SACD. It allows people to use their existing equipment, albeit without SACD quality, leaving open the option of buying an SACD player at a later date. Philips evidently expect this process to be a gradual one rather than an overnight phenomenon.

While this twin-layer construction could be vital to SACD's success, some have voiced the worry that not all existing players will be able to read through the upper hybrid layer. However, Philips quote results showing that a hybrid will play on 98.5% of all CD players; problems occur mainly on players 10 or more years old.

When it comes to source material for SACD pressings, there are already titles in production in both stereo and multi-channel formats. Philips Classics, Sony Classics and Telarc are all well into recording projects with noted artists and orchestras, hinting somewhat at the target buying market for early players. It seems that Sony will start with stereo Classical and jazz titles as they are aiming fairly and squarely at the specialist audiophile. The assumption in this case is that he/she will be able to splash out on what will be expensive hardware (at least in the early days), not to mention the likely £20 initial price of the discs.

Philips see matters slightly differently - they would prefer to start the ball rolling with cheaper machinery to bring SACD to the buying public as an affordable replacement for CD. It is possible that the Dutch company's current two-box prototype player may be transmuted into a less expensive model next year.

Keeping our finger on the pulse of SACD's sound quality, we listened in to one of Philips' demonstrations. Given what were less than ideal conditions, the results were still pretty impressive. Once the volume had been raised to a suitable level, a multi-channel live recording of the Budapest Festival Orchestra (on hard disc rather than dual-layer SACD) reproduced sound with realistic transparency.

The rear speakers were relaying most reliably the ambience of the recording venue, which allowed us actually to hear and feel the space! Although this impression was undoubtedly helped by the use of very expensive amps and loudspeakers, and the fact that the recording was coming from a hard-disc unpolluted by all the various disc-pressing processes, the potential is plainly there for CD-superior sound in the home, especially with the introduction of more affordable equipment.

With Sony's manifest commitment to SACD it would seem a bit daft for them not to exploit their signed artists and vast catalogue of popular music in their megalithic music wing.
feature

CHAMPING AT THE 1-BIT

Sharp's the word as they unveil their SM-SX100 1-bit digital amplifier.
Richard White took his eyes and ears along.

ALTHOUGH not everyone's immediate idea of a high-end company, Sharp have elected to start their bid for a stronger hi-fi profile with a hi-tech, high-finish amplifier.

As everyone now knows, the base line of digital audio quality is marked out by the amount of information processed and the speed at which it's done, commonly referred to as the sampling rate. Too low a score under either heading and things start to sound distinctly and unnaturally digital. Hence nowadays, everyone is beavering away at faster sampling rates in order to pick up the bits which CD ordinary drops through the cracks.

LET'S START at the very beginning...

Digital technology as it stands at the moment relies on sequences of binary codes which direct the plus or minus of a varying electrical voltage. For example, the simplest digital signal is 1 or nothing; YES or NO; ON or OFF. Add another 'bit' and there are four possible combinations. By the time you get round to the standard 16 bit 'words' which describe CD's information, one piece of binary information can have any value between 0 and 65000 odd. With 24 bits, the number of possible combinations is over 16 million.

As regards numbers, we're obviously spoilt for choice; unfortunately, all this switching on and off has to take place in fractions of a second and with great accuracy. This rapid evaluation cannot take place instantaneously, hence the limits inherent in the sampling rate.

Analogue obviously cuts out the middle-man of digital-to-analogue conversion by dealing solely with the ups and downs as, er, ups and downs. Well, anyway, while I'm teaching my grandmother to suck eggs, we move on to the principles of 1-Bit.

1-Bit technology operates on the principle that if you carry out a simple operation fast enough, the effect is the same as doing something complex once. To use a mechanical analogy, if you have the choice, you can weigh out an ounce of sherbert lemons 16 times, or a pound of them once. Provided both operations are done in the same time, the result is the same.

1-Bit processing opts for 'the ounce' 2.8million times a second, a mind-bending figure: in the time it takes to do one operation, a beam of light (186000 miles per second) would have travelled only about 350feet! This sampling rate is 64 times faster than standard CD; as a consequence it is possible to reproduce the analogue wave with far greater accuracy, losing much of the 'averaging' and plain 'wrong' which bedevils 16-bit formats.

Sharp's London demonstration of their new 100watt SM-SX100 1-Bit digital amplifier featured live versus recorded in the guise of a little Turkish finger bell. Heard through a pair of B&W 800 series loudspeakers, the likeness was impressive although, as was pointed out, an amp and source capable of reproducing sound up to 100kHz was a touch wasted on 'speakers which, like most, are incapable of scaling such rarefied heights. Snippets of small-scale instrumental music had also been especially recorded to SACD standard for the purposes of this demo and the results were certainly impressive.

SOME READERS MAY by now be wondering, why bother with a digital amp when the DACs inside a CD player turn bits into analogue, and the bulk of existing front-ends are still analogue? Within a very few years, as LP and cassette fade into mere memory for most music buyers, the majority of sound sources are going to be digital: CD; MiniDisc; computer audio; radio eventually. With all-digital 1-Bit amplification, existing digital-to-analogue conversion, by far the weakest link in the chain, will no longer be necessary. The amplifier will take a digital signal and turn it into a loudspeaker signal with no middle-man to muddy the waters.

Sharp have a medium-term plan to cascade the 1-Bit technology into more ordinary hi-fi separates by the end of 2001 with perhaps Midi to follow within a year or so of that. This is one subject which deserves pondering: if digital amplification becomes commonplace, poor sound processing will no longer be the necessary evil of an inexpensive system. After years of dumbing down, could we be about to level up? Watch this space...
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Nytech’s superb CTA252XDII ‘calculator tuner amplifier’ is an interesting but uncertain second-hand buy, says David Price.

For several years back in the Seventies, receivers were kings of the hi-fi jungle. Hugely popular in the US, dealers’ shelves groaned under the weight of massive brushed-aluminium behemoths packing tonnes of circuitry into one big box.

Although highly desirable to affluent audiophiles across the pond, these mega-receivers never really caught on here. The fact that most of us would have had to move house to fit the darn things in probably had something to do with it, but sound quality was surely the other main factor; then as now, most hi-fi hacks agreed that the careful purchase of a separate amp and tuner gave more sound per pound.

Nytech’s CTA252XDII ‘calculator tuner amplifier’ broke this golden rule spectacularly. Not only did it have a fantastic tuner section, one that bettered most hi-fi radios ever made, but it also boasted a corkingly good amplifier. Indeed, its two component parts were dynamite, either taken together or in isolation!

The original CTA252 appeared in late 1974, its ‘calculator’ moniker an amusing reminder that at the time calculators were large mains-powered devices measuring a good 15cm wide by 25cm deep! Where the latter would have had buttons and a giant fluorescent display, the Nytech had control sliders and three green, back-lit meters showing signal strength, tuning and FM frequency. The sliders took care of volume, balance, bass, mid and treble controls, and there were push-buttons for source selection, FM presets, mono and high and low filters. And for good measure the Nytech even fitted twin quarter-inch headphone jacks for romantic fireside evenings a deux!

In August ‘78 the CTA252XDII appeared, with a toroidal power transformer (said to double output power) and new interchangeable, card-based disc input circuitry. The S card had 1.5mV sensitivity at 47kohms for magnetic cartridges, the MC1 150µV for “higher output” MCs and the MC2 70µV for Ortofon and Fidelity Research coils. How times change!

The Nytech was great fun to use. You just switched on, selected your source and off you went. If you wanted the radio, you pressed the preset corresponding to the station you desired. There were only four presets, but back in 1978 there were barely four FM stations! Alternatively you could manually tune with a plastic thumbwheel, and if you found a new station it could be stored with one of the preset tuning pots concealed behind the sliding plastic cover. In any case, thanks to the Nytech’s habit of drifting off station, manual re-tuning was an occasional necessity.

In 1979 a new CTA252XDII would set you back £258.75, approximately nine pounds more than a brand new Linn Sondek LP12. It wasn’t cheap then, but against rivals anywhere near the price it was a bargain. The amplifier section alone was a gem - extremely punchy and musical. Stories abounded of people using the Nytechs with Linn’s insensitive Isobariks and still living to tell the tale. Not a recommended combo, but the CTA252XDII could certainly swing current.

By current standards the amp is still a cracker, with a very bubbly and rhythmic sound and strong sound staging. The tuner is insensitive compared with the latest digital delights, but with a decent twist its beautifully rich, warm sound will outpoint anything this side of a Troughline. The only snag is the Nytech’s lack of inputs - fine phono input aside, how does a single tape monitor loop sound?

Nytechs are dead cheap these days - pay £50-£100 depending on condition - and in reasonably plentiful supply. Go for as late a model as possible; the last ones were made in the early Eighties before Ion Systems, late Nytech disappeared completely. Condition is important - a rough one won’t last long, and as there’s no manufacturer any longer, I’m afraid it’s very much a case of buyer beware.
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PAGE 54 SEPTEMBER 1999
DIGITAL music files so small they can easily be stored in computer memory or sent via the Internet open up new possibilities in the way we listen to music. So much so that the computer business in particular is about to jump into audio with both feet, but not before the music business, who are kicking up a stink about piracy. As a result, it looks like MP3, a data-reduction format that reduces music files to one tenth of their original size, could get sidelined.

Diamond Multimedia did a fabulous job of publicising their Rio portable MP3 player as well as the MP3 medium. By getting the RIAA (Recording Industries Association of America) steamed up about piracy - yet again - and into litigation, MP3 made national press worldwide and quickly developed a massive underground presence.

The large music companies hate MP3. They are represented globally by the IFPI (International Federation Of The Phonographic Industry) as well as being supported by national associations like the RIAA in America and the BPI in Britain. The IFPI claim they "have been taking aggressive actions against the infringing (MP3) sites, and as a result of these efforts, hundreds or thousands of infringing files have been removed (from the Internet)."

Organised, large-scale exchange or sale of someone else's intellectual property is not defensible. But MP3 files are also a great way of making music available to a wider audience and overcoming marketing barriers by allowing unknown bands access to buyers.

I have seen many dedicated and talented musicians frustrated by the big music companies and their perception of current market requirement. Not everyone wants to buy Boyzone, but increasingly this sort of act is 'current idiom'. There's a need for alternative paths to the marketplace and small digital files like MP3 are one option.

In my experience, people want a music collection, which is difficult if you only have MP3s, even if they are burnt to CD-R. A small number of people always want something for nothing, but this shouldn't divert attention from the 90% or so who are likely to buy an album after hearing an MP3 file.

This argument, a common enough view, favours MP3 as a means of allowing people to hear sample tracks free, so an unknown artist or band can gain exposure. And having listened to quite a few myself, I know there are plenty of really good performers amongst all the dross. One survey says the Internet will certainly provide this exposure, to the tune of £2.7bn of music sales by 2005, equivalent to 10% of the market.

The major music companies oppose MP3 and have other plans that may well affect audio in general. The RIAA is an aggressive organisation that shamelessly pursues music business interests with a big stick. It doesn't get much sympathy as a result. I for one am glad they recently lost their US court action attempting to stop distribution of the Diamond Multimedia Rio on the basis that it infringed America's Home Recording Act. Had they been successful, MP3 would have died. There are now around 20 MP3 players ready to hit the market and it seems the floodgates are about to open due to this ruling.

Cynically, even the RIAA admitted its action against Diamond may have been unnecessary in the light of events. "Fortunately, the shared interest in such a marketplace has overtaken the lawsuit; the technology and music industries have already come together, in voluntary initiatives like the Secure Digital Music Initiative (SDMI), to create a secure environment in which consumers can access the music they love in new ways", said the RIAA afterwards. The SDMI initiative aims to develop an alternative and secure form of MP3, one that prevents illogical piracy.

But SDMI is just one threat to the future of MP3. IBM are working on the Madison Project, which is also a copy prevention system, and Sony is in discussions with Microsoft about yet another secure data-delivery system they can use with MiniDisc. At present Microsoft appear to be claiming they can compress music to half the size of an MP3 file and still retain quality. Well, they aren't alone, because AT&T, Real Networks, Liquid Audio and many others are also developing alternatives.

It's been a long time since audio attracted so much attention. It might be audio on computers at the moment, but it will spill out to affect more audiophile hi-fi soon. Sony are planning new formats of Walkman and MD recorder to meet this market right now. They don't want to use MP3 because it would expose Sony Music to piracy.

However, MP3 is gathering momentum and would seem to be the choice of the moment for individual bands and artists. It will be interesting to see how music distribution changes over the coming year, and how this will affect the way we listen to music. Whatever happens, expect to see these new formats being catered for in mainstream hi-fi.

There are now around 20 MP3 players ready to hit the market and it seems the floodgates are about to open.

Noel Keywood
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LAST month I looked at the various options open to audiophiles seeking music around the home. Different systems in several rooms seemed like the best compromise when balancing cost, ease of installation and, above all, musical enjoyment. On top of that, this approach offers the ability to mix the fortes of a lucid, mellifluous valve set-up in one room with a beefy, solid-state amp in another.

As I was recently in a position to practise what I was preaching, I set out to see what exactly could be done on a reasonable budget to fill two rooms with music. My main system remained untouched, but something was needed to stir the still air in the dining and sitting rooms.

For the sitting room I had in mind a basic amp and CD player, pairing with some large floor standers capable of producing plenty of bass for parties (and for when I was in the mood for the good old boom and bloom that my trusty Celestion SL600s simply can’t deliver). Nailing down suitable candidates proved problematic. The robustness of a transistor amplifier meant that buying second-hand would get me the best value. For a CD player, however, not knowing when the laser might fail persuaded me to purchase new.

Armed with a local paper and a copy of Hi-Fi World’s own classifieds, I scanned the pages for a bargain or two. As anyone who has bought a separates system knows, sticking to your budget is the hardest part of the process when you hear what £50 more gets you...

All I needed now was a pair of quality floor standers. This part didn’t prove as easy as I’d thought. A pair of decent cabling and stands. The total cost was around £600, but I was shocked to hear just how engaging the system was to listen to. It was no match for esoteric gear, but I’ve heard systems well into four figures sound worse.

The third system wasn’t quite as demanding - background music was all I required. With the PC already set up in the dining room, it seemed like a bright idea to incorporate the two. Active speakers looked like my first port of call as I could use the CD-ROM in the computer to play music discs. Despite their appeal, however, the vast majority of sub-£200 actives aren’t up to much. Wharfedale’s Diamonds are fine for £180 but I felt a separate amp and speakers would be less coloured and more flexible for the same sort of money. A pair of Gale Golds (£90) and a Cambridge A1 SE (£120) filled the bill nicely. The Gales are even bi-wireable. At just £250, this is a bargain.

As anyone who has bought a separates system knows, sticking to your budget is the hardest part of the process.

On the CD player front, I had been contemplating a matching Denon unit so I could run both from a system remote control. The charms of the valve-like Cambridge CD4SE soon put paid to that idea. £200 was a little more than I’d intended to spend on a player, but the £150 made it seem foolishly not to spend the extra on a component that should last six or seven years. As anyone who has bought a separates system knows, sticking to your budget is the hardest part of the process when you hear what £50 more gets you...

Wharfedale EM95s massively reduced from about £400 to £170 seemed like a bargain, but setting them up at home made me realise the compromises inherent in so many affordable floor standers. Yes, there was plenty of grunt and reasonable bass depth, and the pleasing real wood veneer meant they didn’t resemble two up-turned coffins.

The problem was that new speakers looked like my first port of call, but the separation between £200-£400 was too compromised. £180 but I felt a separate amp and speakers looked like my first port of call as I could use the CD-ROM in the computer to play music discs. Despite their appeal, however, the vast majority of sub-£200 actives aren’t up to much. Wharfedale’s Diamonds are fine for £180 but I felt a separate amp and speakers would be less coloured and more flexible for the same sort of money. A pair of Gale Golds (£90) and a Cambridge A1 SE (£120) filled the bill nicely. The Gales are even bi-wireable. And if it’s too much hassle to turn the computer on, any competent portable could be hooked up instead.

That’s it then, my personal solution to sounds at home. The best thing of all is that separates are so flexible, your choices could be completely different. Happy shopping!
Sunglasses by Ray-Ban,
suit by Cerruti,
watch by Cartier,
Hi-Fi by Marantz.
WE'RE on a sort of literary bent this month, pals. Not that I intend to plunder English literature for references to hi-fi because I don't think there are any. Shakespeare doesn't have a word to say about the subject and even Dickens makes only passing references. This is vaguely surprising given his interest in music, particularly Uriah Heep. Perhaps he was passing references. This is vaguely obscure reference to squeezing more lull attention. Even the Great McGonigall is silent on the subject, unless his "Beautiful Bridge Of The Silvery Tay is an obscure reference to squeezing more power out of an amplifier. Bringing things a little more up to date, the extent to which audio is a non-event in the world of letters borders on the astonishing.

Take Fleming, Ian Fleming. Although he gives full details of all his hero's little best-buys, including the make of his wristwatch, car, lighter, cigarettes (60 a day!), shirts and luggage, to name but a few, I can't think of any mention of the fellow ever taking a moment to listen to a record unless forced to do so.

"Bond crossed the room with the stealth that his training (10 years ago) had made second nature. Pausing only for a brief coughing fit by the cocktail cabinet, which cunningly disguised the Tannoy Autograph in the corner, he clasped feverishly the sleeve of the 'World Of Manitou' that Decca of London had pressed especially for him. The highly polished diamond hovered lightly over the tantalizing black vinyl; with a muffled hiss the Garrard pulled the grooves round to meet it..."

You see? The opportunity for pages of product name-dropping and keeping up with the Blueefields missed. 'Tin- eared Jim' they must have called him in the officers' mess.

It's not only books that have passed our hobby by and it's not for want of opportunity. Suppose that when Marilyn Monroe was quizzed about her nude modelling she'd replied: "Oh no! - I had the Troughline on..." What a double-boost that would've been. As an honourable exception, one of the Carry Ons mentions the eastern quasi-deity 'Mustapha Leak', so the outlook's not all bad.

Let's face it, audio and high fidelity matters tend to be confined to the specialized press. Having drawn a blank in Eng. Lit., I decided it was time to have a look at the audio writings of days past. We are fortunate at World Towers in having a long run of assorted magazines from about 1943 to the present. Flicking through these, as often as not in order to do a little fact-checking (or a reader's letter, I am always struck by the same thing: everyone has always been right, all the time, for ever.

In the Fifties, especially after the development of the ultra-linear circuit, it was believed that amplifiers were as good as they were ever going to get. Considering the rather indifferent pick-ups and loudspeaker cabinets of the day, they might have had a point - 0.1% distortion was nothing compared with the limitations of the piezo cartridge, not to mention coal-bunker 'speaker cabinets. But insusceptible of further improvement? Surely not. Have a look at some of the recipes in 'When Audio Was Young' if the point needs reinforcing.

With the adoption of transistors in the Sixties, once again everything was as right as right could be. The modern amplifiers of the time certainly weighed much less than their predecessors, and if nobody could tell the difference, why, what an advance! So much so that by 1970, pundit John Earl was able to write "the days of valveed amplifiers and tuners have now gone for ever, never to return." He was right, of course, everybody always is right, at the time.

What troubles me is the function of the human ear in all this. Although we might say that earlier versions of 'high fidelity' got by because they were the best that could be expected, the measure of this 'best' has always been a pair of ears and, let's hope, a brain attached. Do we believe that at every point in the development of audio equipment, reviewers and the majority of listeners have been unable to compare the sounds they are hearing with their experience of any live music they have ever heard? By the same token, are we to suppose that everybody that's ever listened to recorded music has possessed perfectly time-attuned ears, enabling them to listen with pleasure to acoustic gramophones, to booming 'mellow' wireless sets, to still more booming 'high fidelity' 'speakers in the Fifties, shrieking, tinny music-centres in the Seventies... Well, I guess you can fill in the rest as well as I can.

I used to think that the oft-heard "they didn't know any better in those days" was simply chronological snobbery, but now I'm not so sure. Perhaps it's something to puzzle over as the next batch of formats battles it out. By their own terms of reference they are bound to be 'right' because everything always is, and always has been, and always will be, presumably. As each generation discovers its own standards of fidelity (with its own ears), it is becoming harder to find a common denominator for all the incarnations of hi-fi over the years. Once fashion and taste have had their say, will there be any room left for truth?

Richard White
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**HD83 VALVE HEADPHONE AMPLIFIER KIT**

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Please note that we are selling the full range of Sennheiser headphones at discounted prices when purchased in combination with our HD83. Please ring 0171 625 8032 for further details.

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KLPP1 has five line inputs, a tape input with monitor, and a unique low noise valve MM/MC phono stage. There is a switchable subsonic filter to prevent output transformers of valve amplifiers saturating. The line stage has gain, so it will drive any power amplifier. Audio grade components are used and many parts are custom made for highest quality. KLPP1 has a super clear sound, sweet and detailed through line and phono inputs. Weight 6.5kg. External dimensions 28.5cm(w) x 23cm(d) x 8cm(h).

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An audiophile parallel-single-ended valve amplifier at an affordable price. K5881PSE uses the reliable Russian 5881 output valve. Its 17 watts is enough to drive most loudspeakers, making high-end sound quality and design available to everyone. Can be easily monoblocked to give 32 watts. Weight 17kg. External dimensions with valves 40cm(w) x 32.5cm(d) x 17cm(h).

**300B VALVE AMPLIFIER KIT**

This is a specialised 28 watt amplifier based on the highly linear 300B triode valve. Our 300B runs in Class A, giving one of the most sweeter, open and neutral sounds possible today. Matched with good loudspeakers, it is unsurpassed. All parts are included in the kit, except valves since different 300B makes are available. Weight 26kg. External dimensions with valves 44cm(w) x 35cm(d) x 20cm(h).

**NEW!**

**K5881 MKII VALVE AMPLIFIER KIT**

A 20watt, Class A power amplifier that uses reliable Russian 5881 output valves, a military version of the American 6L6, designed for low distortion audio work. Now with a super shunt regulated push-pull (SRPP) input stage K5881 offers amazing sound quality. It can be used with a simple passive pre-amp or one of our own pre-amplifiers, and it matches modern loudspeakers well. Weight 15kg. External dimensions with valves 40cm(w) x 32.5cm(d) x 17cm(h).

**K5881 MkII Upgrade kit**

Upgrade your pre November 1993 K5881 amplifier to MkII status. The kit converts your amplifier to the new 7025 double triode input stage in place of the original EF86 pentode input.

**NEW!**

**315**

**495**

**315**

**£315**

**£175**

**£395**

**£650**

**£850**
KLS10 HIGH TECHNOLOGY COMPACT MONITOR

Our mini-marvel uses an Audax carbon fibre bass/midrange unit, married to the world's most advanced tweeter, the piezo-electric gold dome HD3P from Audax. KLS10 offers high performance from a small package. The main 'speakers' are designed to work alone, or with a dedicated subwoofer to extend their bass. Alone, they are suitably near-wall mounting and can be tuned by the port adjustment to suit personal taste and location. They are easy to drive and need just 30-60watts. KLS10 is unique. Technically advanced, yet compact and relatively inexpensive. There is little to match it. Sensitivity 89dB 1W/1m, 15mm MDF, internal volume 9Ltrs, external dimensions 19cm(w) x 31cm(h) x 23cm(d).

- DRIVE UNIT & CROSSOVER KIT £394.00
- DRIVE UNIT ONLY £358.00

KLS10 GOLD SUBWOOFER

Designed to complement KLS10 Gold standmounters by providing a deep and open bass. The subwoofer is inexpensive, easy to build, comprising a simple crossover network to a high quality 8 inch Aerogel dual voice coil unit. A must for all KLS10 Gold customers. Sens 89dB, volume 25 litres, external dimensions 26cm(w) x 100cm(h) x 35cm(d).

- DRIVE UNIT & CROSSOVER KIT £149.95
- DRIVE UNIT ONLY £71.00

KLS9 TWO WAY FLOORSTANDER

Here's a storm for you - KLS9, with its BB4 alignment bass/midrange unit designed by Noel Keywood to possess optimal bass damping and a clean step response. Aided by a teensy bit of bass lift, KLS9 really thunders; it will rearrange your furniture. But it doesn't waffle, falling silent when there's no bass in the music. Aided by a high power fn fabric dome tweeter, KLS9 is detailed, evenly balanced and images superbly. It is an easy 12ohm load and is 88dB sensitive. For amps up to 60W. Easy to build and great for beginners. Internal volume 70Ltrs, 18mm MDF external dimensions 28cm(w) x 65cm(h) x 36cm(d).

- DRIVE UNIT & CROSSOVER KIT £230.00
- DRIVE UNIT ONLY £160.00

KLS3 3 WAY CARBON-FIBRE DRIVER LOUDSPEAKER

KLS3 uses extremely light and stiff carbon-fibre cone drive units for a fast, accurate sound. A dedicated 4inch carbon-fibre midrange drive unit provides the clean, smooth and detailed midrange characterised by superb projection. Its high 90dB sensitivity and near flat 8ohm impedance make it one of the easiest loudspeakers to drive. An ideal loudspeaker for high-end valve amplifiers. 25mm MDF, internal volume 60Ltrs, external dimensions 25cm(w) x 93cm(h) x 40cm(d).

- DRIVE UNIT & CROSSOVER KIT £230.00
- DRIVE UNIT ONLY £160.00

KLS7 2 WAY CARBON-FIBRE DRIVER FLOORSTANDER

Compact and affordable two way reflex loudspeaker. KLS7's slim dimensions make it easy to accommodate, but it uses top quality carbon-fibre drivers, so performance isn't compromised. An audiophile bargain. Sensitivity 86dB at 1W/1m, 12mm MDF, internal volume 18Ltrs, external dimensions 15cm(w) x 80cm(h) x 22cm(d).

- DRIVE UNIT & CROSSOVER KIT £195.00
- DRIVE UNIT ONLY £110.00

KLS12 TWO WAYFLOORSTANDER/STANDMONTER

KLS12 is a versatile budget loudspeaker that delivers fine sound quality at a low, low price. It utilises Audax's HT210F0 woven ribbed glass cone, mid/bass unit, beautifully married with the TV03X40, 34mm diameter doped fabric dome tweeter. Noel Keywood says, 'The KLS12 is a transparent, vividly detailed transducer with fine projection. It has just the right definition, which means it is best positioned close to a rear wall. Vocals possess a clear outline with an intense clarity.' At 89dB the KLS12 is easy to drive, thus it is suitable for 20W and upward power amps. Internal volume = 34.1 litres standmounter external dimensions = 58cm(h) x 24.2cm(w) x 34cm(d).

- DRIVE UNIT & CROSSOVER KIT £175.00
- DRIVE UNIT PACK £100.00

KLS11 3 WAY DESIGN

Our newest design is a wonderful three way bass reflex enclosure stand mountor. Another star performer, featuring the superb gold dome tweeter, the HD3P. This, married perfectly to a BM10X0 midrange unit and utilising the deep full sound of the 10 inch PR24X0 bass unit. All units are from Audax. As both these units use high definition Aerogel cones they have similar sonic signatures, providing a deliciously gelled sound. Our KLS11 is a quality three way, with powerful bass and midrange driver that ensures vocals are handled with high fidelity. The treble is both smooth and sweet. Sensitivity 88dB. Volume 45.5 litres External dimensions 31cm(w) x 37.3cm(d) x 65cm(h).

- DRIVE UNIT & CROSSOVER KIT £595.00
- DRIVE UNIT ONLY £470.00

KLS8 TWO WAY HIGH SENSITIVITY

With a sensitivity of 94dB, KLS8 needs very little power. Its 10in. professional bass driver and horn loaded tweeter give it a BIG sound; Ideal for low power amplifiers. Internal volume 50.5Ltrs, external dimensions 29cm(w) x 65cm(h) x 36cm(d).

- DRIVE UNIT & CROSSOVER KIT £260.00
- DRIVE UNIT ONLY £175.00

KLS3 GOLD MK II

ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY THREE WAY LOUDSPEAKER

KLS3 Gold uses the latest version of Audax's innovative oval gold dome piezo electric tweeter, giving it the sweetest and most extended treble. Married to a 4in. carbon fibre cone midrange driver for neutral and clear reproduction, and a powerful 8in. bass driver for superb depth, this is our top-of-the-line reference 'speaker. Sensitivity 90dB at 1W/1m, 25mm MDF, internal volume 60Ltrs, external dimensions 26cm(w) x 100cm(h) x 35cm(d).

- DRIVE UNIT & CROSSOVER KIT £575.00
- DRIVE UNIT ONLY £450.00

Upgrade your KLS3s to Gold status. Includes latest oval gold dome piezo tweeter and all components.

- $330

WAP SURPLUS VALVE TOROIDAL MAINS TRANSFORMER

- $230

For 230V/240V operation: transformer core size: 145T175, 150mm diameter x 25mm high, 2400VA 20 Amps, 120mm(h) x 25mm dia, 15A @ 250Vdc.

For 110V/120V operation: transformer core size: 145T175, 150mm diameter x 25mm high, 2400VA 20 Amps 25mm(h) x 15A @ 120Vdc.
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A complete, modular system to help you achieve the perfect sound from your LPs

"The system is very effective... Surprise number one was the immediate beneficial effect on the bass... both the sound level and the accuracy were considerably improved... solo fiddle floated through the 'speakers with enchanting sweetness... the static-y clicks had disappeared. Records that generally track indifferently can be fine-tuned... this can make quite a difference..."

Richard White (Hi-Fi World, April 1999)

"The Ringmat Support System allows simple yet precise fine-tuning of stylus rake angle (SRA)...The improvement it makes to timing, articulation, transparency, fine detail and imaging is quite remarkable. Best of all, the music has a rhythmic snap and liveliness that made you want to dance... It's vital to appreciate that the changes go beyond hi-fi things like soundstaging, important as that is... An excellent product then, and very good value given the degree of improvements offered...Already I'm wondering how I ever listened to music without it."

Jimmy Hughes (Hi-Fi Choice, March 1999)

Prices:
RINGMAT 330 MkII XLR £ 50.00
P&P £ 2.50 within UK, £ 5.50 outside UK
Full System with RINGMAT 330 MkII XLR £ 160.00
P&P £ 4.50 within UK, £ 10.00 outside UK
Separate prices are available for individual modules, platter inserts for Roksan Xerxes & Garrard 401 turntables, etc.

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for an even better sound from your CDs

Prices:
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P&P £ 1.95 within UK, £ 5.05 outside UK
MkII replacements & exchanges (Post free) £ 12.50

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Tel/Fax 01709 579 010
Email:smcsimpson@compuserve.com

Bootleg Dylan
Now Officially Available

Finally, after months of pacing the warehouse floor and periodic bouts of brow-tapping, the Vivante team breathed a collective sigh of relief when Classic announced that, at long last, the Dylan Albert Hall box set had made its tardy appearance. It seems that the lavish colour booklet was the problem, with The Zim and his various managers, minders, niggers and assorted acolytes taking forever to approve the copy. That said, the end result seems to have been worth the wait and this top-notch set looks certain to become a much sought-after release in the months and years to come.

This must-have set is available as:
Deluxe 180g 2LP Box Set With Booklet: £ 34.95

On The Record
The UK's leading bi-monthly audioophile newsletter is free to Hi-Fi World readers. Simply give us a call and we'll be glad to forward the latest issue to you.
**WARNING**

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

**ORDER FORM**

Please send your completed order form to: WORLD AUDIO PUBLISHING LTD, Suite G4, Imex House, The Park Business Centre, Kilburn Park Road, London, NW6 5LF Tel/Fax: 0171 625 8032 e-mail: vad@hi-fiworld.co.uk

240/120 option - delete the voltage NOT required. If you wish for a built item, please phone for a quote.

Valves included except where otherwise stated.

If you would like a data sheet on any of the kits, please write a 'D' in the QTY box.

---

### DESCRIPTION ORDER No. QTY UK OVERSEAS (inc VAT & carriage) (exc. VAT)

#### AMPLIFIER KITS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
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#### LOUDSPEAKER KITS

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<td>KLS12 2-way fibreglass driver standmounter/floorstander loudspeaker</td>
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#### AUDAX DRIVE UNITS

Carriage and packaging please add £6.00 for one unit or a tweeter pair, otherwise add £15.00 for 2-6 units

* Not applicable to overseas prices

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<tr>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>Carbon Fibre Drivers</td>
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<td>Paper Cone Drivers</td>
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<td>25mm 92dB for 3 way systems</td>
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<td>25mm horn loaded 75dB</td>
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<td>34mm 93dB - powerful sound</td>
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<td>Oval Gold Piezo electric dome tweeter, 89dB</td>
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**OVERSEAS PRICES & DETAILS**

Please allow for your own local import taxes (customs duties) and for carriage charges, which must be added to the net price.

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Jon Marks gets hooked up with interconnects at £30-£39 from van den Hul, Connections UK and LAT International.

This new carbon-fibre/copper cable does little to draw attention to itself visually with discreet gold lettering on the brown ‘Hulliflex 3’ jacket. Nestling beneath in a foamed polyethylene dielectric lies a solid-core centre conductor of silver-plated copper coated in Linear Structured Carbon. Making up the outer shield are LSC in tape form under 112 strands of silver-plated OFC.

All of the above yield the sort of smoothness which marks out vdH’s prici- er carbon offerings. There was no fizz to percussion or spit to vocals on Suzanne Vega’s Nine Objects Of Desire, and even Alanis Morisette’s Jagged Little Pill proved sweet sounding.

Lack of edginess in itself was appealing, but the Storm II had a habit of glossing over low-level detail on Red Snapper’s Making Bones, which impacted on sound stage spaciousness. Individual notes in basslines lost some of their precision too, although this didn’t interrupt the vdH’s enjoyable musical flow.

As a counterbalance to bright components the Storm II works very well. It has a freedom from harshness unusual at this price and a mellow presentation that suits all bar the most frenetic recordings.

Van den Hul, tel: 0181 997 4280

If you like your cables loud in the colour sense, don your shades for these canary yellow exhibitionists! Thankfully, the sound of this double-screened, multi-strand copper confection was much less ‘in yer face’.

With its beautifully-constructed plugs linking a venerable Cyrus 1 integrated to a modified Pioneer DV-505 DVD player (as well as a PT Ordinal DAC and Kenwood ‘9010 transport), the Midas proved engagingly open and even-handed in its performance. Suzanne Vega’s vocals on Caramel lost none of their ability to pluck at the heart strings as they floated ethereally above the firm bassline.

On Nick Drake’s Pink Moon, the slight extra brightness to the Midas’ top-end helped to add crispness to this otherwise warm recording. One consequence of this trait is that the best context for these cables is a system which leans to the rolled-off treble side of neutral.

Aside from their additional midrange and treble sparkle, these Connections interconnects are very open, dynamic and involving thanks to low coloration. In a nutshell, not bad at all.

Connections UK, tel: 01487 832424

After the fine showing of their mains cables and blocks, hopes were high for the IC-50. While the construction may be different (polyethylene dielectric instead of Teflon), the sound was similarly refined and natural.

Clarity and control were the watch words on Red Snapper’s Making Bones. For a Drum ‘n’ Bass opus, this album is unusually well produced, and it showed through the LATSs in an image precision and sound stage depth unmatched by either Storm II or Midas. The same went for filigree detail and tonal colour, both areas where the IC-50s stood aside to let the music speak for itself.

Alanis Morisette’s Jagged Little Pill reinforced the impression of these cables as highly neutral - when the recording was hard, what came out of the ‘speakers was hard, and vice versa. With their overall grip, rhythms never failed to get feet tapping, though, the LATSs maintaining the speed and power of electric bass guitar lines.

If your existing set-up treads a golden mean tonally and what you want is more of everything else, the IC-50s are sure to oblige. At £30, considering their construction and sonic calibre, they take this month’s bargain biscuit.

LAT Int., Audusa, tel: 0181 942 6241
Since Long Beach resident Calvin ‘Snoop Dogg’ Broadus grew tired of the fractious gang-banging within Suge Knight’s infamous Death Row record label and walked out to join Louisiana’s No Limit stable, he’s also moulted and renounced Doggy part of his name, perhaps in a quest for redemption.

This choice didn’t make things any easier for the former guvnor of Rap, though, and last year’s effort, Da Game Is To Be Sold, Not To Be Told, basically stank: it was a shelf filler for want of a better term. With its many trigger-happy Raps, violent monologues and distinct lack of G-Funk, it was a miserable debut on his new label.

On the strength of this, his fourth LP, the Dogg hasn’t completely lost the plot, however. It comes as a surprise that he has gone back to the same producer, Master P (albeit with extra help from old compatriots Dr Dre and DJ Quik) who was largely to blame for his poor third LP.

A great deal of the attitude and homeboy bravado has disappeared (half from cello to saxophone, Plutonik weave together an unusual but intriguing tapestry of tracks. Off-key and often out of sync rhythmically, many of the 11 tracks on Prime Numbers have an odd and exploratory feel to them. Numerous Jazz influences also come to the fore, but the underlying mood remains melancholy.

Thanks to the unusual but hypnotic vocal talents of London-born Chrissy Van Dyke, a sort of cross between Shara Nelson and Nicolette, the beats of Alan Rowe and the keyboard skills of James D, Plutonik frequently soar. This is nowhere more apparent than on the opener Sitting On Top Of The World, the first single and an atmospheric Ambient number as chilled as it is beat laden.

Following on its heels is the storming That’s Not All There Is, a hard-core Drum ‘n’ Bass number which, while sounding slightly out of kilter, blasts away the cobwebs. Also well worth its weight in gold is the Hendrix inspired Bluesman, which begins with a classic guitar riff before drifting into a delicious Dance groove replete with psychedelic organ interludes and a good deal more. Rehab is a floaty, Soulful warble, set to a careering bassline beat, and Trust kicks off with its silken groove samples that made his name with Doggy style. What’s more, Mr Dogg has boned up on his rhyming skills too, and while there’s nothing of the stature of Gin And Juice, tracks like Trust Me, Party With A DPG and Buss’n Rocks move energetically, held aloft by various sampled greats from the likes of Earth, Wind & Fire and Funkadelic.

The best moments are when he tries a different tack. Ghetto Symphony, a jazzed-up stomp, is an entertaining party piece featuring six other rappers. But it’s his soulful duet with Raphael Saadiq on Somethin’ Bout Yo Business that steals the show: it’ll have Swing king R Kelly quaking in his boots.

Perhaps Top Dogg isn’t the greatest thing to grace the Rap charts, but it’s a clear sign that the trail of the bloodhound hasn’t yet gone cold. Give the Dogg a bone...
And it's a fitting release too, for it was at a monthly get-together in a dingy warehouse south of the River Thames that this DJ duo (Felix and Simon) became the hippest and most talked-about Dance phenomenon of the last 12 months.

Like the Chemical Brothers, who as the Dust Brothers made their name Ding-a-dong, Bassment Jaxx started life spinning the platters at a series of little-known London clubs a decade ago. An eclectic mix of Rap, Ragga, Salsa and Garage/House, Remedy is bubbling over with killer Dance tunes. Inevitably a London thang, Remedy is bubbling over with killer Dance tunes. Inevitably a London thang, Remedy brings the album to a very fulfilling end!

The New Radicals are the brainchild of Gregg Alexander, a man who snipes self-righteously at today's crop of wealthy Pop stars, asserting that the malaise currently affecting the Pop industry has been brought about by the heavy demands of commerce. A radical man indeed, but a man also signed to EMI, one of the world's biggest music conglomerates. As Anarcho-Punk proponents Chumbawumba probably decided a few years ago when they joined EMI, if you can't beat 'em, join 'em!

The story was put about that Gregg found inspiration from chasing the Bohemian dream while criss-crossing America 12 times in the last few years. Having met an assortment of murderous truck drivers and house-bound single mothers reared on a diet of Rikki Lake, it was said, he took up the gauntlet against modern apathy.

For all this naive hypocrisy, Maybe You've Been Brainwashed Too is a sparkling debut with a vastly eclectic range of influences which succeeds mostly because it is absurdly euphoric.

The opener, Mother, We Just Can't Get Enough, sets the pace with a mid-Eighties Rocking R'n'B groove, while the single that follows, You Get What You Give, for all its digs against Marilyn Manson and Courtney Love, is perhaps the killer hit of the summer.

This record is a contradictory mash-up of electronic Pop and clever Pop, a sort of cross between Hall & Oates, The Beach Boys, The Pixies and World Party, though if the truth be known, Gregg fancies himself more as the new Prince. At its best, with tracks like I Hope I Didn't Just Give Away The Ending and the title track itself, that's not such an OTT claim.

What starts to rankle as the tracks free fall towards their conclusion is that Gregg seems equally at home with the likes of Billy Joel, ELO and Eighties Adult-Orientated Rock, and that's really pretty unimpressive for a man supposed to be a genius. Nevertheless, as disposable Pop goes, Maybe... is about as good as it gets.

NEW RADICALS
MAYBE YOU'VE BEEN BRAINWASHED TOO

Here are our Top Five albums from previous issues:

1 (NEW) PLUTONIK: PRIME NUMBERS
In a debut album featuring instrumentation that ranges from tabla to violins and from cello to saxophone, Plutonik weave together an unusual but intriguing tapestry of tracks. Off-key and often out of sync rhythmically, many of the 11 tracks on Prime Numbers have an odd and exploratory feel to them. Numerous Jazz influences also come to the fore, but the underlying mood remains melancholy.

2 (1) SUEDE: HEAD MUSIC
Brett might have kicked the evil habits he was once so famous for, but he clearly doesn't want to venture too far from that winning druggy formula. Better the devil you know, as he might chunter, and that musical devil ain't half good.

2 (3) BLUR: 13
A good deal of 13 is hit and miss, but there is much to suggest that Blur will yet, like Radiohead, carry on producing important music well into the millennium. And who knows, there might be a happy ending: the tabloids are already reporting a baby on the way for Damon and his new flame.

4 (2) KULA SHAKER: PEASANTS, PIGS AND ASTRONAUTS
Peasants, Pigs And Astronauts very much keeps the faith and should please all those die-hard Kula fans out there. Spiritual and hypnotic, with an eclectic range of Oriental instrumentation, it has genuine passion in its grooves and offers one of the best returns to Sixties style for a long while. Whether it will win any plaudits for originality is debatable.

The inclusion of recent single Sweetest Thing, a love song originally from the Joshua Tree sessions, brings the compilation to a nicely-polished conclusion. It also proves that, this enduring combination drawn from both sides of the religious divide can offer some hope to even the most hardened sceptic of the Northern Ireland peace process.
BACH, BARTÓK, SCHUMANN
LORA DIMITROVA, piano
EASYACCESS ESL 199801

When Bulgarian pianist Lora Dimitrova began her career, it was difficult for an artist in the then-Eastern Bloc to become known in Western Europe without all the fuss and bother of defecting. Restrictions on travelling prevented her from performing in the West until 1989. Since then, despite concert successes, notably with Solti in 1994, Miss Dimitrova's playing has been unavailable to the record-buying public, her recordings made in Bulgaria now unobtainable.

Presented on this CD are works from three undisputed keyboard masters, representing the Baroque, Romantic and Modern traditions.

Bach's keyboard partitas need no introduction to serious listeners. Encapsulated within these at times deceptively simple works are subtleties which demand castigation technique and, be it said, taste. Bach was, of course, writing before the piano established itself, so his keyboard works are nowadays more usually recorded played on harpsichords or, occasionally, clavichords. This is not purely pedantry: the phrasing and especially the trills all imply an instrument without a sustaining tone. Miss Dimitrova brings off this elusive coup on piano with an elegance which might win over even the most sceptical.

Much as Bach with his famous 48 assembled a compendium of keyboard technique for his time, Bartók's Mikrokosmos begins with the easy and progresses to the finger-breakingly difficult in stages. Lora Dimitrova has chosen to play the last few 'grand finale' pieces; get through these and your credentials are beyond dispute!

With Schumann's offering we are on surer ground. Not only was this piece intended for performance, it was dedicated to Schumann's then sweetheart, Ernestine von Fricken. This collection of pieces has its origin in a set of variations written by Ernestine's father. Using the main theme, Schumann developed his own set which, after many revisions, became his Symphonic Studies.

Miss Dimitrova leads us through the 16 studies with individuality and drama, whilst maintaining proper subtlety and clarity even where the score dictates particularly rapid tempos.

Altogether an interesting disc from an artist who deserves to be better known.

Yoshimatsu SYMPHONY NO3/SAXOPHONE CONCERTO 'CYBER-BIRD'
BBC Philharmonic/Sachio Fujioaka
CHANDOS (CHAN 9737)

Takashi Yoshimatsu was born in 1953 in Tokyo and is - in purely academic terms - a self-taught composer (he chose to study engineering at Keiou University). After teaching himself the basics of composition, he received lessons from Teizo Matsumara and pursued a varied performing career working with both Jazz and Rock bands. Since his first published piece, Forgetful Angel (1981), he has composed various orchestral, chamber pieces and stage works as well as symphonies.

An advocate of 'new lyricism', his composer's 'voice' is very much that of the lyrical, tonal school with a small pinch of jazz harmonies for good measure. There is also sound academic knowledge of form and harmony evident that ensures it repays serious listening.

Yoshimatsu describes a symphony as "a type of format using the music stave as the software and the orchestra as the hardware, into which are released all one's emotions and memories". It would seem from this Symphony that he has had a fairly happy life, as the music never gravitates into the dark intensity found in Britten or Mahler, for example. All the contrasts are created by orchestral timbres, rather than emotional extremes.

'Japanese' styling is kept to a minimum. Throughout the Symphony, and especially in the final few minutes of the piece, there is extensive use of syncopated dance rhythms of the American classical tradition. There is no sense of this being watered-down Bernstein or Gershwin, but you can't help feeling that there's nothing particularly new about it either.

Yoshimatsu's Saxophone Concerto 'Cyber-bird' (for soprano sax) leans more to the jazz side of things. This is undoubtedly lighter material than the symphony, since Yoshimatsu is evidently familiar with the phrasing abilities of the saxophone, and Nobuya Sugawa responds sensitively, with a beautiful feeling for the linear aspects of the solo part. The Jazz harmonies coupled with French Impressionistic-style woodwind writing amount to a very accessible and ultimately satisfying slice of contemporary music.

Throughout the disc, the BBC Philharmonic play with commitment, with Sachio Fujioka controlling the balance in a manner that lets the various orchestral and harmonic hues shine through. The 20-bit recording is typical of Chandos' orchestral output - good three-dimensionality and breadth, with natural dynamics that result in an undemanding yet enjoyable disc.
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EVA CASSIDY AND CHUCK BROWN
The Other Side
HOT G1 10066

They were a prodigiously unlikely combination, especially to record such a versatile and uplifting collection of great American standards. One was the unworldly child of the white Washington DC suburbs, full of insecurities and uncomfortable with crowds, the other was the man who invented Go-Go, the mid-Eighties Next Big Thing that watched the heady rapture of its endless party grooves and good-times improvisation on the fertile theme of Funk drown in a welter of dodgy record deals and crack-fuelled violence at gigs.

But in early 1991, in the Washington basement studio of engineer Chris Biondo, veteran singer and band leader Chuck Brown finally found the partner he'd been looking for, and Eva Cassidy the voice to match that of her beloved Ray Charles and the respect she needed as an artist. It's a true Judy Garland/MGM musical storyline, but there's a twist of bitter lemon in the aftertaste.

Three years later, Eva was dead, her golden voice killed by a mole on her back. Those three years contained both musical fulfilment and business frustration as label after label, marketing meeting after marketing meeting told Biondo, Brown or Cassidy that until she stopped singing everything under the sun they just couldn't get a handle on her style.

And neither can I. There's a lick or two of Julie London or Shirley Horn for Jazz, some Roberta Flack for class, a dash or more of Bonnie Raitt for Blues, and a whole dollop of Aretha and Soul just clambering out of these songs and vying for our attention. What I will say is that, if you thought you could live without ever hearing another version of Fever, Dark End Of The Street or Over The Rainbow again, you should check out what Eva and Chuck put down and released on their own label just half a decade ago.

Eva's posthumous and slightly more Poppy Songbird album has already found more than 60000 UK fans over the last 12 months through word of mouth and a couple of DJ fans' dedication alone. This is the first time The Other Side has been available here. Search out a copy.

ANDY SUMMERS
Green Chimneys
RCA VICTOR 63472

What an albatross to have the Police hanging round your neck! So when it's all over, the singer gets even more famous and corners the market in sophisticated Jazz-Rock, the drummer gets on with spending the money and stretching into movies and session fun, and the guitarist gets to play whatever he wants. Which has varied from turn-it-up Progressive Rock to delicate Blues and Folk experiments. But Green Chimneys is another matter; it's an homage to the immortal Thelonius Monk from a British club Jazzzer who got very lucky in Pop.

Monk's mastery of compositional architecture propels good players toward the stars. On Green Chimneys, Summers even gets Sting in to schmooze his way through Round Midnight (except that Sting gives an affecting, genuine performance, while Summers' bigger band strip down to etched-naked chords and sinister brushes waiting for Andy's "Do I not like that?" solo.

Summers has added cello, trumpet, saxes and organ to his guitar trio. Now Evidence opens with a fat, tight horn trio's fast Funk theme against Summer's singing Blues leads, dissolves into Big-Band call and return, segues into a Blues-Rock chorus or two and then dances off, heading for where Jeff Beck plays Mingus. Another way of looking at it is as the Pat Metheny-on-peyote of Bemsha Swing, and Hackensack's New Orleans funeral band plugging into the mains while Joey DeFrancesco's B3 vamps from a flat-bed truck right behind the hearse.

Marking them out again is the way the band rhythmically collapse Three Blind Mice into the angular, stop-time Jazz-Funk of Monk's Dream, or the outrageous blend of Heavy Metal and Jimmy Smith on Shuffle Boil, where Summer's tone and phrasing deliver the impact usually carried by distortion.

If the straighter moments of Zappa's methodical madness and subtly-caged playing ever appealed, Green Chimneys will make you happy too. And if you saw Pete Erskine drum with the Yellowjackets in London recently, his endlessly inventive accents and effort less leaps from supportive to lyrical to driving to painterly will be a joy revisited.
Once upon a time there was a seminal tune that rocked the Tranced-up world of long-haired music-lovers and educated them in the ways of ecstatic musical experiences. It was named Temple Head and it fused the tribal emotion of ritualistic raving with Funk and groove. To hear it again, even sounding slow and easy in the context of our heady House culture, is a total treat, and it sets the precedent for a truly nostalgic compilation.

The question is, have Transglobal ever made a track better than the woozy, soothing Temple Head? The alternatives have been well documented on these pages and in every instance they have proved mediocre with a dash of inspiration once every 10 tunes. The likes of I, Voyager and Chariots have succeeded in blending Eastern instruments and singing with Western ambience in an easily pigeon-holed World Dance vein rather than showing their composers to be the innovators they have also proved to be.

On the plus-side, this album includes an extensive mix of last year's quite popular Nile Delta Disco and a bonus CD with remixes by Dreadzone, Kris Needs and long-time Norman Cook buddies Hardknox and Badmarsh (the Drum 'n' Bass dons of the underground). There's also the less well-known but very hummable I, Voyager. If you're going to head for meditation music, you could do worse than pick this route - it's a little rocky in places but it's essentially a picturesque path to ambient pleasures.

Mushiness was previously available on the net (under the title Mushi-Mush) and samples can still be downloaded from the Headcase website on www.mushimushi.net. You might get to hear Lola, the key track. It drifts along like a long lie-in, while Little White Dove puts you on such a mellow tip you'll feel like staying in bed all week.

Gasp For Air is probably the best justification for this rather predictable musical diversification. This Leftfield groove is far more convincing than the harder offerings - it feels far closer to the band's original perspective and escapes the overall sense of forced delivery that the album suffers from.

You can almost get into this album but stylistically, it's just a little too staid to really inspire. On the other hand, Curve were always one of those bands that required sustained listening before the tracks would take a grip on you. Given a fair hearing and enough time, it might just win you over.

It's not often that Japanese mix albums get released in Britain, but Takkyu Ishino's mix of driving, hard-core Techno will be well received. Actually, this is the second mix of Japan's answer to Dave Clark that React have put out, and their perseverance seems to have paid off. After a slot at this year's Berlin Love Parade he was awarded sixth Best International DJ just below the mighty Jeff Mills and Coxy. Takkyu is also a blinding producer and promoter (funny how these roles go hand in hand) and, as leader of Denki Groove, has sold in excess of 500000 copies per release.

In DJF-400, Ishino's one-man Techno tornado rumbles through the likes of Surgeon and DJ Bam Bam taking in one of Takkyu's own Poppier Techno offerings as Denki Groove. It will shake your 'speakers harder than a dose of Thrash Metal - which is what Techno's there for, after all.

Prime cuts include Asunaro Sunshine (the full-on, thunderous dancefloor stomper), Acid Bonny (a psychedelic ground-breaker) and Polynasia, a pounding, rubber-suited monster that will have dreadlocks flying at many a Techno party this season. If Japan is hoping for a pneumatic superstar DJ that doesn't rely on psychedelic Trance, Takkyu is definitely the favourite.
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PAGE 801  SEPTEMBER 1999
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Tuneful and confident, those 'speakers are well suited to Pop and Dance music.

All the ingredients for listening fun are mixed into the DM300. Overall presentation could be more cohesive though.


Great value introduction to active. The sound is deep and powerful but could be a little coloured for some. Can work well if partnered to give weighty bass and smooth treble.

Reasonably neutral but ultimately lacks control. Control of treble and midrange poor.

Partner the Opals with warm amniples and you get an involving sound. Avoid bright amps and sources.

Energetic, bold and highly detailed, the Aura is one to consider for the budget-conscious.

Like Aura’s matching stand mounts, the 627Ms are lucid and controlled. Treble is bright.

Unrestricted and clean sound with satisfying musicality. An engaging subtlety not common at the price.

Clear and detailed sound but balance too forward and weak bass.

Exon with task-hitting bass with dynamic and unforced midrange. Metal dome tweeter bleaches out the treble.

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

A lively little animal, well worth the money.

The 12Vs powerful, confident sound belies a rather poor measured performance.

Big presentation but a rather distant quality. Sound could boom more and carry.

Steering performance in the bass with speed and control. Good midrange projection.

Quality construction and sound marry to produce a very capable 'speaker. Open treble and firm bass for the size.

If you want a 'speaker for the money. Punch and slam in the treble but sometimes thin in the treble.

Excellent imaging with clear treble and midrange. Bass slightly dry and boxy but would suit a smaller room.

In spite of a few colorations, the Jamos are fine examples of budget active operation.

With greater transparency and a bit more get-up-and-go, the 510s could be leaders of the budget pack.

The 608 is open and detailed but coloured too.

Rhythmic push and tuned bass are the plus points of those small standmounts.

The 700s are easily outclassed by Mission’s own superb 731 Pros at a £10 premium.

Well-behaved and with a decent tonal quality.

The 70s are easily outclassed by Mission’s own superb 731 Pros at a £10 premium.

An initially impressive, upfront sound but ultimately a little uninvolving.

Music makers with a clean, punchy sound. Real value for money.

Music lovers will greatly enjoy the clear, dynamic sound. Bass is weighty and well integrated.

Slightly less transparent and a bit more casual but audible.

Music lovers will greatly enjoy the clear, dynamic sound. Bass is weighty and well integrated.

A novel multi-media two-tweeters-and-sub which nevertheless demands to be taken quite seriously.

Very tight bass and a bit too much weight in this midrange.

With greater transparency and a bit more get-up-and-go, the 510s could be leaders of the budget pack.

Clear open and detailed sound but balance too forward and weak bass.

Acoustic music gels nicely. More artificial pieces sometimes don’t work so well.

All the ingredients for listening fun are mixed into the DM305. Overall presentation could be more cohesive though.

Tuneful and confident, those 'speakers are well suited to Pop and Dance music.

All the ingredients for listening fun are mixed into the DM300. Overall presentation could be more cohesive though.


Taut, dry and midrange bass but needing to warm amniples to avoid sounding bright.
### Loudspeakers £ Year Verdict

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Castle Herst</td>
<td>£199</td>
<td>Aug 99</td>
<td>Basis power and extension will impress but overall sound is uneven and rather sterile. The Kendals have great clarity but need coupling to warm ancillaries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caute Kendal</td>
<td>£450</td>
<td>Mar 98</td>
<td>Apart from some thickness in the tweeters, the Kendal 2s are accomplished all-rounders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castle Seren II</td>
<td>£379</td>
<td>Jul 98</td>
<td>Bass is well balanced and through and with a great feel for rhythm and dynamics. The Lynes are superbly built but their rising bass and treble suit home cinema more than hi-fi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chario Hiper 1</td>
<td>£549</td>
<td>Apr 99</td>
<td>A powerful and rich sound from these competitively priced floorstoppers makes them worth a recommendation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chario Lynx</td>
<td>£549</td>
<td>Apr 99</td>
<td>The Aali is a neutral, fast and dry sound. A good match for soft sounding systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chario Lynx</td>
<td>£300</td>
<td>Apr 95</td>
<td>Delicate, detailed sound, albeit with rather indifferent imaging. Will work well on a bookshelf.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chario Lynx</td>
<td>£300</td>
<td>Apr 95</td>
<td>The 910s aren’t perfect but they make music fun. Quality, power and extension, the Millenniums are worth a listen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chario Lynx</td>
<td>£300</td>
<td>Apr 95</td>
<td>Bass allied to warm electronics, the RPM 2s mix insight with plenty of involvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chario Lynx</td>
<td>£300</td>
<td>Apr 95</td>
<td>Partnered with the Rogers A1, this is a substantial marriage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chario Lynx</td>
<td>£300</td>
<td>Apr 95</td>
<td>Very accomplished midrange and treble but the dry, deep, powerful bass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chario Lynx</td>
<td>£300</td>
<td>Apr 95</td>
<td>The 995s look rather expensive at £1099 with their &quot;boom and tizz&quot; presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chario Lynx</td>
<td>£300</td>
<td>Apr 95</td>
<td>Can be uninviting because of a lack of scale and impact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chario Lynx</td>
<td>£300</td>
<td>Apr 95</td>
<td>High musical stand-mounters that give similarly priced floorstoppers a great deal to worry about.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chario Lynx</td>
<td>£300</td>
<td>Apr 95</td>
<td>Very polite and many will appreciate their civility. Deep, powerful bass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chario Lynx</td>
<td>£300</td>
<td>Apr 95</td>
<td>Captivating floorstanders that bring music to life - what good hi-fi should do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chario Lynx</td>
<td>£300</td>
<td>Apr 95</td>
<td>Engineered for low price and showroom appeal rather than absolute sound quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission 751 Freedom</td>
<td>£350</td>
<td>Apr 97</td>
<td>Charming little stand-mounters with a sweet, warm, musical sound.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission 752 Freedom</td>
<td>£350</td>
<td>Apr 97</td>
<td>Dynamic, punchy, and musical yet refined like few at the price. Bass lacks a little depth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission 757</td>
<td>£750</td>
<td>May 95</td>
<td>With the right ancillaries, the 757s have a clarity and colouration still rare at the price.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission 755</td>
<td>£300</td>
<td>Nov 99</td>
<td>Sweet sounding metal dome tweeter although the dry bass and rather plasticity midrange work against it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission 755</td>
<td>£300</td>
<td>Nov 99</td>
<td>Sophisticated, neutral sound and fine musicality put the 755s near the head of the class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission 733</td>
<td>£350</td>
<td>Apr 97</td>
<td>A thin and hard sound but precise with it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission 772</td>
<td>£430</td>
<td>Sep 99</td>
<td>Deserving 'speakers with good looks and build. Can fail to shine with over-polite equipment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission 751</td>
<td>£350</td>
<td>Apr 97</td>
<td>Very crisp sounding 'speakers best suited to smaller rooms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission 751</td>
<td>£350</td>
<td>Apr 97</td>
<td>The Primas offer a taste of the high-end at a sensible price. They are more fans of Classical than Rock though.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission 750</td>
<td>£474</td>
<td>Jan 99</td>
<td>Good value floorstanders with clean enjoyable sound - not quite superlative, though.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical Technology PM15</td>
<td>£599</td>
<td>Jul 95</td>
<td>The PSW15 adds depth to a system but can sound obvious at times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-Ject Imagine</td>
<td>£599</td>
<td>Jul 95</td>
<td>Amp-sensitive and slightly boxy in the lower treble, the Pro-Jects are still highly musical.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ref. T77</td>
<td>£650</td>
<td>Aug 98</td>
<td>Another capable sub from REL that boosts bass and improves sound staging.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rogers A8</td>
<td>£995</td>
<td>Jul 95</td>
<td>When used with the KEF LS35a this sub delivers the goods, beyond a doubt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotel RT-One</td>
<td>£495</td>
<td>Feb 97</td>
<td>The Rotel is a speaker that many will enjoy, but a little unrefined at times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequence 400</td>
<td>£299</td>
<td>Feb 96</td>
<td>Good at orchestral scale but coloured in the midband.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soundblaster Absolute 4P</td>
<td>£599</td>
<td>Jun 96</td>
<td>The Absolute 4Ps will be a fast look at the rather bright, hard treble. Bass is exceptional.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spendor 2030</td>
<td>£999</td>
<td>Jun 96</td>
<td>Smooth, focussed and coherent in their delivery with deep and taut bass extension. Not the most spacious sound.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systemdek, 165</td>
<td>£400</td>
<td>Feb 96</td>
<td>Dry and clean, but can become hard and confused when pushed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tannoy Precision P10</td>
<td>£300</td>
<td>May 98</td>
<td>Though very even in their performance, the P10s lack ultimate clarity and punch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tannoy Precision 633+</td>
<td>£300</td>
<td>Nov 99</td>
<td>Weighty bass and rhythmic detail work well on dance. Less satisfying with classical music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TDL RL A</td>
<td>£500</td>
<td>Feb 95</td>
<td>Enables easy going with plenty of detail and timbral richness with classical fare.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TDL TAL A</td>
<td>£500</td>
<td>Jan 97</td>
<td>Mixtrange and treble have good tonal colour, detail and speed. Bass is slow and blurred.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technics SB-M390</td>
<td>£500</td>
<td>Nov 95</td>
<td>A great sound with solid bass from a compact and well priced 'speaker.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technics SB-M550</td>
<td>£500</td>
<td>Nov 95</td>
<td>The Absolute SBs are very pleasurable and soundstage. More neutral with greater amounts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triangle Comète TXZx</td>
<td>£475</td>
<td>Jan 95</td>
<td>Quite pleasant, inoffensive sound but others costing less can offer more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wharfedale V adrenal</td>
<td>£500</td>
<td>Oct 98</td>
<td>Good for adding scale and power to a weak system or budget separates.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Soundcraft Absolute 4P.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audiofile E</td>
<td>£1450</td>
<td>Mar 95</td>
<td>Big, bulky and use-savvy with quick pace and a well balanced sound, but not without flaws.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio-technic M1 SLg</td>
<td>£1479</td>
<td>Aug 98</td>
<td>The M1 SLgs may be a little lack-laid, but have a pleasing and involving sound.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audiovector M2</td>
<td>£1499</td>
<td>Jun 99</td>
<td>The M2s are marked by a boom 'n’ tizz presentation that suits Heavy Metal but not much else.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B&amp;O CD14</td>
<td>£399</td>
<td>Sep 99</td>
<td>With warm ancillaries the CD14s produce a weighty, coars sound. Bass could be faster.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castle Howard S2</td>
<td>£1099</td>
<td>Mar 95</td>
<td>Fantasticly deep and tight bass but some treble sharpness requires careful matching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circle A2</td>
<td>£1959</td>
<td>Mar 95</td>
<td>The three frequencies are not a strength but bass extension and even tonality are. Metal tweeter can be bright.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chario Lynx</td>
<td>£1199</td>
<td>Dec 95</td>
<td>Musical realism and a great real-world finish make these 'speakers enjoyable, if not perfect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diapason Karis</td>
<td>£1250</td>
<td>May 99</td>
<td>Small cabinet precludes the deepest bass, but a sweet little act for all that. Seriously Imaging abilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrocompaniet E550</td>
<td>£1180</td>
<td>Sep 99</td>
<td>Aside from a slightly cost balance, the E550's shine. Dynamics, bass control and control are top notch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event 2000/200BAS</td>
<td>£299</td>
<td>Sep 99</td>
<td>Warm, detailed and well-endowed in the bass, the events lack only a touch of overall control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harbeth DCM Active</td>
<td>£849</td>
<td>Sep 98</td>
<td>Now HBB's Circa Actives, these loudspeakers mix the best of pro and domestic to produce first-class results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harbeth DCM Active</td>
<td>£849</td>
<td>Sep 98</td>
<td>But neither we nor the critics are the final judges. You are.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harbeth DCM Active</td>
<td>£849</td>
<td>Sep 98</td>
<td>So we'll also send you a list of dealers where you can sample the Harbeth experience for yourself.</td>
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</tbody>
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★ You won’t find better sound.
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Loudspeakers £ Year Verdict

£800-£1499

Klipsch Heresy II £1195  Apr 98
KRC 9 £1180  Dec 97
Mordaunt Short 860 £1180  Sep 98
Magnetic Magico MGI 6 SE £1370  Mar 95
Mordaunt Short MGI15/QR £1200  May 99
Mirage 890i £1075  Oct 95
Muran 750 £1199  Sep 98
Mordaunt-Short 860 £1450  Dec 95

Excellent bass performance means this subwoofer is no toy.

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

The K7s go very loud very easily but they don't possess the most even response.

The KT3s go very loud very easily but they don't possess the most even response.

Their strengths suggest a Classical 'speaker but they suit electronic compositions better. Rich tone but loose bass.

Ultra detailed and revealing, the V8s are true pro more than domestic transducers.

Give a big sense of scale on rock and jazz but not subtle and even enough for the critical classical listener.

The tweeter works well but a recessed midband and one-note bass are the Achilles heets.

An extremely coherent and focussed sound; these are true audiophile speakers. Captivating with classical music.

A worthy bigger brother for the Concert 8s, with a fast, transparent and even sound.

If you have enough room and money the 6s are capable of a highly musical, involving performance.

The 167 MkIis may look slim but they have a solid sound and are fabulously revealing.

Interesting design that incorporates an electrostatic tweeter. An impressive sound but an inconsistent performer.

An interesting design that incorporates an electrostatic tweeter. An impressive sound but an inconsistent performer.

Their performance makes them a potential speaker in any system. An easy going, open and natural sound makes the mirages an attractive proposition.

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

The 107 Mk2s may look slim but they have a solid sound and are fabulously revealing.

Detailed and revealing, the V8s are true pro more than domestic transducers.

Smooth and refined floorstanders that some listeners will find captivating.

An extremely coherent and focussed sound; these are true audiophile speakers. Captivating with classical music.

Fast, tight and informative, but a poor tweeter casts a grey shadow.

The quadcoils may look slim but they have a solid sound and are fabulously revealing.

An interesting floorstander that's good value even at this price.

The 107 Mk2s may look slim but they have a solid sound and are fabulously revealing.

The Concert 8s are superbly clean and transparent. Their nature will show up any source shortcomings.

Smooth, detailed and spacious with great scale, dynamics and imaging. Capable of a real performance.

Superb bass performance means this subwoofer is no toy.

Superb bass and near-electrostatic soundstaging make these involving 'speakers a bargain.

One of the cleanest and most expressive loudspeaker systems you'll ever find for a large room. Easy to drive, too.

Jacob's Ladder and phono stage: this is the largest gauge of power cord we know.
**Integrated**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Price Range</th>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Verdict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>under £300</strong></td>
<td>Musical Fidelity E11</td>
<td>Feb 98</td>
<td>A very capable integrated with a smoothness and warmth predisposed to classical rather than rock.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NAD 310</td>
<td>Apr 95</td>
<td>Fine quality bass but rather lackadaisical as regards timing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NAD C270i</td>
<td>Apr 95</td>
<td>Good detail and a spacious open sound gives acoustic music and the majority of rock superb clarity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pionier A103</td>
<td>Mar 96</td>
<td>Younger sibling of the famous 3020 with many of its virtues to boot. Pre-emminently balanced and natural.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parasound ZX-1000</td>
<td>Apr 95</td>
<td>Luxuriant presentation doesn't compensate for the tendency to ananhmonic effects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pionier Pro-7707</td>
<td>Apr 95</td>
<td>Another highly capable all-rounder although a touch sterile sounding for some tastes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rotel RA-9200</td>
<td>Aug 95</td>
<td>On a budget, the Pro-ject has strong merit, including an excellent phono stage. Not for all systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rotel RA-931</td>
<td>Dec 98</td>
<td>Fresh sound with sharp attack. A slight midrange emphasis can make certain music sound rather forward.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sony TA-F990</td>
<td>Aug 95</td>
<td>For the money there's no faulting such a gifted performer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Technics SU-A700 Mk3</td>
<td>Jan 97</td>
<td>Bright clear and detailed, but needs a touch more refinement to prevail.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**£300-£799**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Price Range</th>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Verdict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue Puccini.</td>
<td>Sep 95</td>
<td>Musically rewarding, deserves serious audition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>Nov 98</td>
<td>Not the most musical amp ever but good value. The tone controls and balance adjustment will appeal to some.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arcam Alpha 6v</td>
<td>Jan 96</td>
<td>Full and smooth sound, unfortunately with loose bass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arcam Alpha 9</td>
<td>Dec 96</td>
<td>Excellent value. A detailed and open sound gives great atmosphere to all types of music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>Sep 97</td>
<td>All the main ingredients like rhythm and dynamics present and correct. Natural smoothness and transparency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>May 95</td>
<td>Excellent sound quality gives the competition under £800 a lot to worry about.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>May 95</td>
<td>Tunes the rare beast of sounding powerful and tiles at the same time. Bass tight but not the last word.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>Dec 97</td>
<td>Powerful yet subtle sound which doesn't blench when driving awkward loads.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>Aug 96</td>
<td>Too thin and crisp which makes prolonged listening fatiguing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>Oct 96</td>
<td>Highly refined and detailed performance with a clear well-proportioned soundstage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>Nov 97</td>
<td>An extremely enjoyable, lucid little ampifier that really gets to the heart of the music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>Apr 98</td>
<td>An enjoyable and rhythmic sound but may be too lean for some bass-light speakers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>Jul 95</td>
<td>An engaging musical performance; sweet overall sound.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>Jul 95</td>
<td>A big open sound sound sets the Molt apart at this price. Low powered, though.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>Jul 95</td>
<td>An extremely enjoyable, lucid little amplifier that really gets to the heart of the music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>Apr 97</td>
<td>A good, honest bit of kit with a fine musical sound and no gaging voices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>May 97</td>
<td>If a musical adrenaline rush is what you seek, fine. Listening in bulk, rather clinical and cold sounding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>Mar 98</td>
<td>Solid build and a big sound make the ESI 10 worthy of audition. Not perhaps the transparent at the price.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>Jun 98</td>
<td>Powerful and refreshingly pure; a sound investment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>Apr 99</td>
<td>Excels with sound staging but lacks subtlety and tonal colour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>Jul 99</td>
<td>An extremely enjoyable, lucid little amplifier that really gets to the heart of the music.</td>
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<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>Jul 95</td>
<td>A big open sound sound sets the Molt apart at this price. Low powered, though.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>Nov 97</td>
<td>Two boxes don't form a fine and power in the X-KT but the result is nevertheless a winning combination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>Oct 97</td>
<td>Couple the Moly with a warm system and enjoy. Possibly a little lightweight on the Reggae &amp; Rap side.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>May 97</td>
<td>With 80 watts on tap, the NAD has power aplenty but is rather dynamically limited and ultimately unconvoluted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>May 97</td>
<td>Rather monochromatic with midrange emphasis and slightly the bass. Good imaging but smallish soundstage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>Jun 97</td>
<td>Clean, open, active sound. Smooth and detailed with good punch tone. One of the best at the price.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>Apr 98</td>
<td>A bargain at £400 pure and simple. Outclasses the competition in every area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>Aug 97</td>
<td>Complements all sorts of music with power and confidence. Outstanding value for money.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>Feb 98</td>
<td>Although classically orientated, the Quad will rock too. Precise and stabbie imagery and fidelity to tonal values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>Jun 97</td>
<td>Mixes the best of solid state and valve worlds (without valves!) to produce a seductive sound.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>Jun 97</td>
<td>Great packaging and superb sound make the Scion a winner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>Jan 98</td>
<td>Highly detailed and smooth sound. Worth searching out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>Jun 97</td>
<td>A price worthy to count balance its favour. Sony offers a last, rhythmic presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>Dec 98</td>
<td>Big and powerful sound, but a little unsuitable with it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>Sep 98</td>
<td>Normally a separate pre and power, but the pre can't work alone. Exciting but unbalanced.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**£800-**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Price Range</th>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Verdict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>Mar 95</td>
<td>Needs the right loudspeaker but a good musical presentation is In there somewhere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>Apr 96</td>
<td>A sweet and subtle sound. Fine midrange, transparent and open with vocals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>Nov 95</td>
<td>Novice construction gives strong stereo separation. Brutal resolution of detail but not the clearest ever.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>Jul 96</td>
<td>Partner with sensible loudspeakers of good bass depth, the Rhythm is capable of impressive performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>Apr 98</td>
<td>Has clarity in spades and an extremely rare tonal purity. Outclasses many transistor alternatives with ease.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>Apr 99</td>
<td>A highly convincing of power, facilities and style. And it sounds good to boot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>Jan 98</td>
<td>Awesome power and selection bass. A very good all-rounder with super-clean sound.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>Jul 98</td>
<td>Excellent performer with any music. Adept at handling subtle details. Difficult to beat at the price.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio Analogue</td>
<td>Nov 99</td>
<td>Excellent performer with any music. Adept at handling subtle details. Difficult to beat at the price.</td>
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<td>May 98</td>
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</table>

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**WORLD'S BEST AMPLIFIER UNDER £1,000?**

**WORLD VERDICT**

An excellent performer with any music. At present, it would be hard to imagine the A2 being beaten at the price.

**HI-FI WORLD MAY 1999**

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**Prices shown are those at the time of review**
### Pre-amps £ Year Verdict

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Under £300</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Technics SU-C1000Mk1</strong></td>
<td>£150</td>
<td>Mar 99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Creek OBH-12</strong></td>
<td>£200</td>
<td>Jul 98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Creek OBH-11SE</strong></td>
<td>£110</td>
<td>Mar 99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Musical Fidelity X-Pre</strong></td>
<td>£260</td>
<td>Jan 98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Musical Fidelity X-Pre</strong></td>
<td>£120</td>
<td>Mar 99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project 7</strong></td>
<td>£259</td>
<td>Feb 95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fidelio RC91</strong></td>
<td>£150</td>
<td>Mar 99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Technics SU-C1000MKII</strong></td>
<td>£299</td>
<td>Apr 98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Year Verdict**: Tone controls cannot be defeated and the sum total is a little metallic but value in spades.
- **Pre-amps over £300**: A very solid, natural headphone amp which scores highly on acoustic and Classical as it does on Rock.
- **Creek OBH-12**: Only poor cosmetics mar the Creek. Sonically it's a gem.
- **Creek OBH-11SE**: Won't win prizes for best build but a flexible effort for a passive. Somewhat dry presentation overall.
- **Musical Fidelity X-Pre**: If you haven't yet the world of headphone listening, the X-Cans is the way to start.

### £300-£799

| **Audio Analogue Bellini** | £475 | Apr 98 |
| **Aura CA200** | £749 | Mar 97 |
| **Cresta 911SEC** | £600 | Jun 96 |
| **Croat Epoch** | £550 | Feb 99 |
| **Cyrus Pre** | £549 | May 97 |
| **Heybrook Signature II** | £650 | Dec 95 |
| **Phil Audio Link L15** | £489 | May 99 |
| **Rothwell Indus** | £767 | May 96 |
| **Sono Athena II** | £615 | Jul 98 |
| **Talk Hurricane 1** | £600 | Jun 97 |
| **Technics SL-C1015** | £525 | Feb 97 |
| **Thorens TTA2000** | £849 | Jul 95 |
| **Unison Res. FasMera 1** | £795 | Aug 98 |

- **Audio Analogue Bellini** (Organic and transparent. Free from transistor harshness).
- **Cresta 911SEC** (A smooth and sweet sound devoid of roughness).
- **Phil Audio Link L15** (This valve pre-amp is very good value indeed).
- **Rothwell Indus** (Passive pre of box-of-switches, whichever way you look at it the Indus is stylishly finished and well conceived).

### £800-£1499

| **Audio Analogue Auralux** | £999 | Jan 95 |
| **Benton Preamp** | £1050 | Feb 98 |
| **John Shams Phase 6** | £850 | Apr 98 |
| **Linn Akadons** | £1255 | Dec 96 |
| **Marantit 502** | £1200 | Sep 98 |
| **Musical Fidelity Nu-Vista** | £949 | Apr 97 |
| **Naim MAC102** | £850 | Jun 96 |
| **Quad 774** | £850 | Jul 96 |
| **TAD M-1/Lunar PA10** | £1050 | Nov 99 |
| **XTC Pre-1** | £1100 | Nov 96 |

- **Audio Analogue Auralux**: Highly recommended for its blend of operational sophistication, build and sound quality.
- **Musical Fidelity Nu-Vista** (A truly competent pre-amp which high-end sources find very reasonable price tag).

### £1500

| **Audio Analogue PIPPS** | £1999 | Mar 95 |
| **Canary 601 Matt** | £1600 | Apr 99 |
| **Chord CPA-1800** | £1774 | Mar 98 |
| **Chord CPA-1800** | £1500 | Feb 99 |
| **Focusrite Pre 4** | £2345 | Feb 99 |
| **Galaxtron Pre** | £1100 | Nov 95 |
| **Marantit 502** | £3500 | Mar 07 |
| **Michel Orca** | £1100 | Oct 95 |
| **Unison Res. Mystery 2** | £1750 | May 98 |

- **Audio Analogue PIPPS**: A bright and lean approach to the valve sound.
- **Chord CPA-1800**: Justifies its price with a very musical and revealing performance.

### Power amps £ Year Verdict

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Under £800</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>AMC 2300</strong></td>
<td>£150</td>
<td>Mar 99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Arcam 9P</strong></td>
<td>£650</td>
<td>Dec 95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Arcam Alpha 10P</strong></td>
<td>£600</td>
<td>Jul 98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audio Analogue Donizetti</strong></td>
<td>£575</td>
<td>Apr 98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aura PA100</strong></td>
<td>£749</td>
<td>Mar 97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Creek Creek</strong></td>
<td>£499</td>
<td>Feb 98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cyrus Power</strong></td>
<td>£600</td>
<td>Apr 99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **AMC 2300**: A detailed and open sound gives great atmosphere to all types of music.
- **Arcam 9P**: This power amp lags behind the best of the competition, and like build is flimsy.
- **Audio Analogue Donizetti**: A smooth, sweet powerful sound free from the rough brightness that afflicts many solid-states.

### Prices shown are those at the time of review
### Power amps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Verdict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>under £300</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linn K740</td>
<td>£750</td>
<td>Aug 97</td>
<td>The LX420 plays tunes exceptionally well, tonal colour and image precision are not its fortes though.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meridian 912</td>
<td>£795</td>
<td>Aug 97</td>
<td>Crip, clear, Images are set in a broad spread between the 'speakers but the 912 lacks stage depth and grind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monarchy BM-70</td>
<td>£265</td>
<td>Jan 99</td>
<td>The Monarchy is a smooth, warm amp most at home with 'speakers that are not overly aggressive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motto 30 Power</td>
<td>£240</td>
<td>Mar 99</td>
<td>This power amp unfortunately suffers from sharp sounding treble and poor detail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Express 50</td>
<td>£245</td>
<td>Dec 95</td>
<td>Very smooth, sweet and musical performers, not over-analytical but very involving.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical Fidelity X-A50</td>
<td>£660</td>
<td>Jul 96</td>
<td>With good punch, speed and attack its not too bad but can be a little uninspiring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novus 72/160</td>
<td>£225</td>
<td>Mar 99</td>
<td>70 Watts a channel helps give lucid presentation with deep sound staging. Perhaps on the bright side.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novus Phase 2</td>
<td>£689</td>
<td>Apr 97</td>
<td>The Phase 3 possesses impressive clarity, detail and dynamics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tektum 1</td>
<td>£600</td>
<td>Jun 97</td>
<td>A flexible power amp, with a strong, controlled sound, but won't suit all tastes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technics SE-A1000</td>
<td>£400</td>
<td>Feb 97</td>
<td>Smooth, warm sound has plenty of plant when needed and is very enjoyable to listen to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thompson TYP 20/00</td>
<td>£500</td>
<td>Jul 95</td>
<td>Its best feature is the key on/off switch, otherwise its one of a poor sound quality and engineering.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### £800-£1499

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Verdict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Channeline Ruby</td>
<td>£95</td>
<td>Jan 96</td>
<td>Well specified and powerful, but dry and short of life. Suits Rock on bass-heavy 'speakers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choral SP44 460</td>
<td>£1125</td>
<td>Mar 98</td>
<td>This amp has it all - detail, transparency, slam and rhythm. In a word, excellent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croma C300/60C</td>
<td>£600</td>
<td>Nov 98</td>
<td>These monoblocs have a tonal richness and bass sound rates amongst powerful amps.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croft Series V</td>
<td>£630</td>
<td>Jun 96</td>
<td>Fast, clear and detailed sound will win friends in both the transistor and valve camps.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialog Direct</td>
<td>£1469</td>
<td>May 95</td>
<td>Quality bass and a clear midbass but the treble can be harsh at high volume.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPA 2065</td>
<td>£1245</td>
<td>Jul 93</td>
<td>Serious audiophile product at an affordable price. Well constructed, pleasant to use and fine sounding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parasound Power</td>
<td>£1200</td>
<td>Nov 96</td>
<td>Good sound but dull balance make the Galilean suitable for bright systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HD Audio Dup</td>
<td>£1199</td>
<td>May 95</td>
<td>Not dissimilar to the Audiolab monoblocs, the sound has a sweet top and amazing clarity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naim Nineteen</td>
<td>£950</td>
<td>Aug 97</td>
<td>Not quite as transparent as it could be but impresses with its smoothness and tonal colour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meridian 907</td>
<td>£1490</td>
<td>Dec 96</td>
<td>Great control and dynamics allied to seductive smoothness. A rare combination of power and delicacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical Fidelity X-4000</td>
<td>£1100</td>
<td>Aug 98</td>
<td>Highly powerful and controlled, the X-4200s are still superbly musical.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myrons MA1200</td>
<td>£1000</td>
<td>Apr 96</td>
<td>The sound is a somewhat acquired taste and a little rough In places.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ortho Jazz Cita</td>
<td>£699</td>
<td>Jul 96</td>
<td>A lot of amplifier for the money. Big, warm, sweet sound places it ahead of most.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quad 707</td>
<td>£800</td>
<td>Jul 97</td>
<td>The 707 embodies a rare blend of grace and power in Its sleek grey casework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rega Richard Jacksons</td>
<td>£1495</td>
<td>Nov 98</td>
<td>Low on power at $60 but fairly musical for all that. Good resolution of detail and texture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rimini Polarita III</td>
<td>£1995</td>
<td>Nov 98</td>
<td>More valve-like than transistor In sound, highly competent if not spectacularly musical.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mini Accuton</td>
<td>£1050</td>
<td>Nov 98</td>
<td>Fully justifies the cost with a very musical and revealing performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewart King</td>
<td>£1495</td>
<td>Jan 96</td>
<td>Lovers of light piano-based fare and Baroque music will appreciate this amp's delicacy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### £1500-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Verdict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audiovector LCD</td>
<td>£1195</td>
<td>Mar 95</td>
<td>Exchews the traditional lavish tube sound for a brighter and leaner approach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canary 301</td>
<td>£2055</td>
<td>Nov 98</td>
<td>The 301 puts the 300B's traditional virtues to good use In a push-pull design that will drive most loudspeakers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cary 303 SE</td>
<td>£2375</td>
<td>Nov 98</td>
<td>Cary have a winning amplifier that is a prime example of how a 300B can sound.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chord 826</td>
<td>£2255</td>
<td>Feb 98</td>
<td>Very natural, substantial presentation with lots of power on tap.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feithman Acoustic</td>
<td>£1500</td>
<td>Feb 99</td>
<td>Battery powered amp puts convincing scale and three-dimensionality into suitably sensitive loudspeakers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focusrite Red 9</td>
<td>£2957</td>
<td>Feb 98</td>
<td>Powerful, smooth and detailed sound. Not as clinical as some professional amplifiers can be.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gemini Samuas</td>
<td>£2150</td>
<td>Feb 97</td>
<td>Sound quality of these monoblocks is impressive but marred by a rather obvious hum. Build could be better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marantz 3000</td>
<td>£2895</td>
<td>Apr 97</td>
<td>These monoblocks are superb, producing a beguiling performance of great control and verve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical Fidelity X-A2000</td>
<td>£1300</td>
<td>Mar 97</td>
<td>The new Alico is cleaner, crisper and more controlled than earlier incarnations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myndos MA1200</td>
<td>£1099</td>
<td>Apr 96</td>
<td>A powerful grip on use, articulate and detailed too. A rare combination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parasound Power</td>
<td>£1699</td>
<td>Oct 94</td>
<td>Good sound quality and an impressive tonal balance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-Loge Power</td>
<td>£1550</td>
<td>Oct 96</td>
<td>The Symetra monoblocks impress with their grip. They run hot and sound warm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quad Rokoko</td>
<td>£2555</td>
<td>Jun 98</td>
<td>Valve monoblocks that produce explosive bass, midrange as clear a bell and shimmering treble.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference Red 4</td>
<td>£2555</td>
<td>Jun 94</td>
<td>Powerful, neutral sounding amps thanks to their modified 300B valves, but expensive for the same reason.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rega Richard Jacksons</td>
<td>£2350</td>
<td>Jul 96</td>
<td>A great compromise between delicacy, power and poctividy. Very musically satisfying, too.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reln 655</td>
<td>£2000</td>
<td>Nov 95</td>
<td>The $15's purity and clarity are impossible to beat for the money. Bass not brilliant, but still better than most.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REW 500</td>
<td>£2000</td>
<td>Nov 95</td>
<td>This power amplifier is smooth and seductive, although a little pricey.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CD Players

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Verdict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>under £300</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aaton 2020</td>
<td>£110</td>
<td>Oct 97</td>
<td>The CD8 is free from grain but can sound too polished at times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambridge CD4SE</td>
<td>£250</td>
<td>Feb 98</td>
<td>Natural and very likeable, the CD4SE enthusiasts many price players.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denon DCD-4000</td>
<td>£1450</td>
<td>Apr 97</td>
<td>Crisp, up-beat player which is Inconsistent In its overall presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denon DCD-6000</td>
<td>£2490</td>
<td>Nov 98</td>
<td>Rhythmically stick and dynamic, the Denon err to the point side of detail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denon DCD-9000</td>
<td>£2400</td>
<td>Sep 97</td>
<td>Warm and smooth, the 835 is laid-back rather than In-your-face.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynaudio 507</td>
<td>£157</td>
<td>Jan 99</td>
<td>Great for simple Jazz and Folk, but soft bass slows things down.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOC XLS-2500</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Slightly muddied In the base, the '330 isn't the most rhythmic of players.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Prices shown are those at the time of review
## CD Players

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CD Players</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Verdict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>under £300</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naad DP-3000/8</td>
<td>£180</td>
<td>Jan 97</td>
<td>One of the best budget all-rounders there is. A shade treble-heavy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenwood DP-5020</td>
<td>£250</td>
<td>Aug 93</td>
<td>Waffly bass and enthusiastic treble mean the Kenwood prefers Classical to Rock.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenwood DP-5010/10</td>
<td>£180</td>
<td>Jun 96</td>
<td>A line performer. Lacks only some of the spirit of its predecessors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marantz CD-63</td>
<td>£249</td>
<td>Jun 94</td>
<td>Uplifts the Marantz tradition of lovely CD players.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marantz CD-57</td>
<td>£270</td>
<td>Nov 96</td>
<td>Fine vocal projection and treble. Bass is deep if not that tight.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAD 5020</td>
<td>£170</td>
<td>Jan 99</td>
<td>Hard to criticise at the price, with a typically smooth. Rid NAD sound.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philips CD731</td>
<td>£130</td>
<td>Feb 96</td>
<td>Warm and smooth, this is a cultured player. Can be over-civilised at times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philips PD-103</td>
<td>£140</td>
<td>Feb 95</td>
<td>Not the most accurate machine but holds to its own price.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotel RCD-9400/1X</td>
<td>£230</td>
<td>Oct 94</td>
<td>Controlled and Invigorating player albeit a touch sterile.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tec CD-PS4000E</td>
<td>£200</td>
<td>May 97</td>
<td>Refuses to become flustered. Can lock emotion on a music track.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tec CD-PS400</td>
<td>£249</td>
<td>Nov 92</td>
<td>Like many of its contemporaries, the Tec is too smooth to shine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technics SL-PG100A</td>
<td>£110</td>
<td>Jan 99</td>
<td>In spite of a bias towards bass and treble, this machine remains a bargain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yamaha CDX-480</td>
<td>£200</td>
<td>Mar 95</td>
<td>Mature, laid-back machine drops points for inferior timing and imaging.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yamaha CDX-540</td>
<td>£230</td>
<td>Feb 99</td>
<td>Detailed, refined but not particularly engaging or exciting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yamaha CDX-590</td>
<td>£180</td>
<td>Jan 99</td>
<td>Lean and up-front, the Yamaha is invincing on Rock but can sound rough.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>£300-£799</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMC CDM7</td>
<td>£340</td>
<td>Jun 96</td>
<td>Very musical outfit which gains sweetness with optional valve output stage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR 07</td>
<td>£300</td>
<td>Jan 92</td>
<td>The '07 is even hanced but has no real finesse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arcam Alpha 7</td>
<td>£320</td>
<td>Jan 97</td>
<td>Superbly designed, inimitably musical player destined for success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arcam Alpha 8</td>
<td>£799</td>
<td>Dec 98</td>
<td>Apart from its tonal brightness, the Alpha 8 is a very capable machine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio Analogue Pagodini</td>
<td>£789</td>
<td>Apr 99</td>
<td>Effortless, wholly musical delivery. The Pagodini does for CD what its stabbable Puccini does for amplification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio Innovations Alto</td>
<td>£449</td>
<td>May 96</td>
<td>Grainless treble is detailed but the Alto misses that vital emotional spark.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Axite CD100</td>
<td>£450</td>
<td>Jul 93</td>
<td>High measured distortion mars the treble and bass is dry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creek CD43</td>
<td>£499</td>
<td>Oct 98</td>
<td>A competitor player with a musicality that will seduce any music-lover.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyrus GCD 1.5</td>
<td>£398</td>
<td>May 99</td>
<td>Great detail and imaging with intimate music. Classical and Jazz but the 1.5 down to the ground but Rock can sound harsh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyrus GCD 2.1</td>
<td>£499</td>
<td>May 96</td>
<td>Lacklustre with Classical, dramatic and lively on Dance and Rock.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denon DCD-1550AR</td>
<td>£350</td>
<td>Jul 98</td>
<td>Clean and precise, the Denon lags only in warmth and openness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harman Kardon HDP700</td>
<td>£300</td>
<td>Aug 95</td>
<td>Strong on dynamics and drive, but lifeless treble can dampen music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leon Monik</td>
<td>£798</td>
<td>Apr 98</td>
<td>Totally hard but possesses many of the Linn rhythmic strengths.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marantz CD-63 Ki Sig.</td>
<td>£500</td>
<td>Sep 96</td>
<td>This is a rare player, greater than the sum of its parts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marantz CD-63SE</td>
<td>£550</td>
<td>Sep 96</td>
<td>Taken as a whole, the CD-63SE is one hell of a CD player. No digital niggles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mvgal T70</td>
<td>£600</td>
<td>Dec 98</td>
<td>With its brightness balanced by warm sonorities the T70 will win friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orlette CD100a</td>
<td>£650</td>
<td>Mar 97</td>
<td>Clean and tidy on electronic music. Not so good with acoustic material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plinian PD-2000E</td>
<td>£400</td>
<td>Sep 95</td>
<td>Fluid midrange leads a dry bass and tonally-limited treble.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quad 97</td>
<td>£790</td>
<td>May 93</td>
<td>One of the top players at the price with great speed and grip.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotel RCD-965XB Discrete</td>
<td>£375</td>
<td>Dec 94</td>
<td>Fast, clean sound on the clinical at times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roksan RS5/71</td>
<td>£350</td>
<td>Nov 97</td>
<td>Retraction is a nice touch but lack of vitality holds the Rotel back.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotel RCD-975</td>
<td>£450</td>
<td>Sep 96</td>
<td>Tuneful, pungent bass are the pros, flat sound staging and tone the cons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sony CDP-12000ES</td>
<td>£500</td>
<td>Mar 98</td>
<td>Neutral, dynamic and stylish but not quite up to the best.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sony CDP-3290E</td>
<td>£300</td>
<td>Mar 97</td>
<td>In spite of fine sound staging and clarity, the Sony fails to involve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technic CD-6</td>
<td>£350</td>
<td>Jan 96</td>
<td>Clean and dry, the Technic is rather sterile compared to the competition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technics SL-PD840</td>
<td>£450</td>
<td>Sep 95</td>
<td>Not the last word in bass control. Midrange is more persuasive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thore CD10</td>
<td>£600</td>
<td>Apr 99</td>
<td>A very smooth and refined player with the added bonus of good detailing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trichord Genesis</td>
<td>£549</td>
<td>Sep 96</td>
<td>Warm and bassy, but extremely neutral. Not the most consistent player.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trichord Revelation</td>
<td>£799</td>
<td>May 97</td>
<td>When it's good, it's very good indeed. Can get confused on dense recordings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>£800-£1499</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audiofika 8000</td>
<td>£1000</td>
<td>Dec 95</td>
<td>Sweet treble and full midrange give the 8000CD a lucid sound.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cappella CDA 266i</td>
<td>£1199</td>
<td>Nov 95</td>
<td>Perhaps lacks the last ounce of strength on Rock, nonetheless has winning all-round ability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDPhile CD12</td>
<td>£1279</td>
<td>Dec 97</td>
<td>It's warm, musical sound plus HDCD compatibility is a strong combination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cytus CD 2000</td>
<td>£350</td>
<td>Nov 97</td>
<td>Up with the best at the money, the Cytus simply sounds 'right'.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPA Renaissance</td>
<td>£995</td>
<td>Jun 95</td>
<td>Breath-taking imagery and dynamics. Not strictly accurate, but who cares?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harman Kardon HDT755</td>
<td>£595</td>
<td>May 94</td>
<td>Construction is price-correct, but not the excrutiatingly relaxed sound.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heybrook Signature</td>
<td>£899</td>
<td>Oct 97</td>
<td>The Heybrook loses out because of its rough treble and lack of clarity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helix Xaris</td>
<td>£950</td>
<td>May 98</td>
<td>It's not cheap but the Xaris scores for firm bass and exciting presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hi-Fi FF14</td>
<td>£650</td>
<td>Nov 97</td>
<td>The Mistral is outdated in areas like pace and bass depth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marantz CD-17</td>
<td>£600</td>
<td>Mar 96</td>
<td>The CD-17 has a presentation which excels in musicality and lucidity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marantz CD-17 Ki-S</td>
<td>£550</td>
<td>May 97</td>
<td>The-ki-S has a valve-like smoothness and clarity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marantz 506</td>
<td>£875</td>
<td>May 95</td>
<td>Characteristically dry Meridian balance could which with more emotion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical Fidelity X-Ray</td>
<td>£800</td>
<td>Feb 99</td>
<td>Bright, clear and well-built, the X-Ray's transparency can be heard on poor recordings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Buying Guide**

Sony CDP-X3000ES.

Marantz CD-63 Ki-S.

 Prices shown are those at the time of review.

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Amplifiers

Adcom GTP 500 MK 2 + Pre 150wpc £1200 £599
Albany 1008 Mk 2 Mono Block's £999 £499
A R Cambridge A60 Int Amp (Rea) £1200 £79
Arcam Alpha 10 Amp 5/1 (Current Model) £800 £499
Arcor Delta 110 Pre-Amp £700 £129
Arion Tycho Power Amp £1800 £999
Audio Innovations 2nd £3299 £1199
Audio Innovations Mono Blocks £3299 £1199
Audio Innovations Classic 25 Int £3299 £1199
Valve Amp £899 £499
Audiolab 8000A Int Amp (Black) £500 £299
Audiolab 8000 MX - 1 Pr (Mint) £1800 £1299
Audio Note Meishi Line Int Valve Amp £2750 £1299
Audio Synthesis Passive Passive Pre-Amp (BGC) £800 £359
Audion Sterling Int Amp (Ex Demo) £600 £299
Audio VA50 Int Amp £229 £129
Beard B100 Int Amp 100wpc £3299 £1199
Cambridge Audio C75 + 75 £800 £359
Cayenne P60 Power Amp (2 x 300wpc) £1000 £399
Counterpoint Solid State Power Amp £1495 £799
Creek 4000 Int Amp £1999 £999
Craft Series 3 CTL Power Amp £799 £799
Crafts Series 5 Power Amp £299 £299
Cyris ACA7 Latest Pre-Amp £800 £999
Cyris Pre-Amp £659 £599
Cyris PSX Signature (Gloss Black, Marked) £325 £129
DNA Pre 2-PAT Pre-Power £2800 £1099
DPA DSP 2000 A Pre-Amp £495 £299
EAR 509 Mk 2 Mono's + Matching Pre £7000 £3999
EAR 549 Mono Blocks (Good cond, as used by Pink Floyd) £6220 £3229
EAR B59 Int Amp (vg) £1700 £1049
Exposant 10 Int Amp £335 £169
Exposant 15 Int Amp £750 £399
Harmon Kardon AV1A Processor £2200 £1499
Knoll 300C Int Amp (Lowest ever price) £2590 £1699
Knoll KBL Pre-Amp + PSU - Bal £4998 £1999
Lexicon CP2 AV-Pro £325 £299
LFD LSB + PA2 Pre/Power £3800 £1099
Linn Kainn Phono Pre £1850 £999
Linn U2C Power Amp Upgraded to 280 Spec £650 £299
Luxman CL32 Pre + 3600 Power £7000 £1199
Meridian 201 Pre-Amp £760 £329
Meridian 557 Power Amp £1150 £299
Meridian 605 Mono's (150wpc Bal) £2850 £1149
Musical Chronica Pre-AMP + PSU (£1800 £999
Michell Argo Pre-Amp (Marked) £730 £295
Mississauga ISO Mono Stage (Rare) £420 £299
Musé Model 300 Mono's (150 WPC - Bal Solid State Superb) £4400 £1299

Musica: Fidelity A100 Int Amp
(Glass A Classic) £175 £169
Musical Fidelity E100 Int Amp £700 £399
Musical Fidelity E1 Int Amp £300 £129
Musical Fidelity F19 Power Amp
(Mint) £4000 £2699
Musical Fidelity MX Pre + PSU £1798 £999
Nad 3240 35wpc (Classic British Amp) £199 £119
Nad 1000 Pre/2700 Power 120wpc £359
Naim NAC 22 Pre-Amp £235 £59
Naim NAC B2 Pre-Amp 1996 (Mint) £2225 £1699
Naim NAC 92 Pre-Amp £499 £299
Naim NAP I40 Power Amp (Old Style) £2750 £1299
Nakamichi 620 Power Amp £1199 £1199
Nakamichi IA3 Int Amp £300 £129
NVA A70 Mono's - Hard Wired Cables £339 £149
NY Tech CPA 602 + CP 122 £2199 £1299

Cassette Decks

Denon DRM 6510's Cassette Deck
(With Dolby 's') £129
Nakamichi 682X2K Compact Head Cassette Deck £299
Nakamichi 7000ZLX Cassette deck (Needs Attention) £799
Revox A77 reel to Reels (Call for spec) £249
Sharp MD-KX40 Mini Disc/CD System £249
(As New) £329 £299
Saatel BD30 10 CD Player £770 £499
Technics SUP 200 CD Player £249
Technics SUP 400 A CD Player £999
Technics SUP 1200 CD Factory £149
Techni GENCA DAC (Silver) £479 £2299
Theta TLA + Upgraded PSU £400 £199
Yamaha CD 400 CD Player £999
Yamaha CDX 3030 £179

Turners

Braun 301 Tuner £599
Magnat Muganola FT11 Tuner £500 £289
Rexol 1800 Tuner £1100 £599
Techno STQOL Tuner £49
Trio KT815 Tuner - (Mint, Last Chance) £199
Yamaha CT 7000 Tuner £199
Yamaha T800 Tuner £119

CD Players & DACs

Acuphase DP-65 CD Player + Digital Volume £1700 £2299
Acuphase DP-55 CD Player £700 £249
Acuphase DP-1000 Box DAC £449 £349
Audio Alchemy DAC in a box £250 £159
Audiolab 8000 CD/DM Player £1400 £849
AVI 2000 Reference CD Player £1300 £789
DPA Enlightenment DAC £800 £399
DPA Mains filter £69

Loudspeakers

Apogee Stage £2300 £659
B W 2000 IPS Centre £789
B W D50 £1190
Cambridge Audio 820 (Transmission Line Classic) £299
Castle Durham Speakers + Stands £1399
Castle Howard (Rosewood) £1300 £999
Celestion 3000 Ribbon Hybrid £379
Sales/Expert Advice
(01733) 555514/341755

New/Ex Demo Hi-Fi - Genuine savings!

Amplifiers
- Arcam AV-50 Prologic Amp: £700 £599
- Arcam Zeta Otee Int Av Amp: £999 £749
- Audiolab 8000 UX Int Amp: £469 £399
- Audio Research SL5 Pre-Amp: £1450 £1249
- Audio Research L55 MK 1 Pre-Amp: £595 £499
- Capolond CSAB 51 Amp: £899 £749
- Capolond CT601 Pre-Amp (Ex Demo): £1249 £979
- Capolond CT601 Int Amp (Ex Demo): £1698 £1069
- Capolond CT601 Int Power Amp (Ex Demo): £1420 £979

- Cyrus 31 Int Amp: £600 £499
- Cyrus Power Amp: £500 £499
- Cyrus Pre-Amp: £650 £599
- Cyrus PSU R PSU: £330 £249
- Meridian 501 Pre-Amp: £740 £599
- Meridian 502 Pre Amp: £1385 £1149
- Meridian 556 Power Amp: £950 £749
- Musical Fidelity A220 Int Amp: £699 £599
- Musical Fidelity X Pre: £199 £149
- Musical Fidelity XA50 Mono Blocks: £699 £599
- Nad 208 THX Power Amp - Bal: £1100 £749
- Naim Nait 3R Int Amp: £800 £699

- Pass Aleph 5 Power Amp: £3150 £2499
- PS Audio P35.6 Pre-Amp (Ex Demo): £998 £749
- PS Audio P35.6 Pre-Amp: £549 £499
- PS Audio P56.2 Pre-Amp (Ex Demo): £899 £699
- PS Audio Delta Power (Ex Demo): £1499 £899
- Quad 77 Amp & Remote Console (Carbon): £850 £599
- Thorens TTA 2000 Power Amp: £599 £499
- Unison Simply Phono: £510 £419
- Unison Simply 4 Int Amp: £1155 £999
- Unison Research Simply 45: £3005 £2309

CD Player Trans & DAC's
- Audio Alchemy ACD2 CD Player: £469 £399
- Sealed box: £469 £399
- Copland CDA - 288 CD Player: £1999 £1599

Speakers
- ARS Reference Monitors (Huge Deep Bass): £299 £249
- Castle Avon Speakers: £729 £549
- Castle Seven 2 (Teak): £579 £499
- Epos ES22 (Teak): £1385 £1049
- Epos ES30 (Rosewood): £2550 £2199
- Kef Model 1 (Black): £1200 £999
- Kef Model 1 (Black, Rosewood): £1349 £1099
- Kef Model 2 (Rosewood): £1850 £1699
- Kef Model 3 (Black): £2250 £1699
- Kef Model 308 Subwoofer: £500 £399
- M K MXI SO THK Subwoofer: £1500 £1199
- Martin Logan Request (Mint): £5875 £4860
- Meridian DSP 5000 (Black): £3885 £2999
- Meridian DSP 6000: £950 £7999
- Mission 750 (Black): £250 £199
- Monitor Audio Studio 20 SE (Cherry): £2500 £1749
- Note Perfect Virtuoso: £1399 £1099
- Opera Duetto (Cherry): £209 £179
- Opera Plateo (Cherry): £380 £329
- Pro-Ac Response 2.5 (Cherry): £2790 £2299
- Pro-Ac Response 3.8 (Rosewood): £4390 £3599
- Pro-Ac Response 5 (Rosewood): £9995 £8899
- Pro-Ac Studio 100: £699 £549
- Pro-Ac Tablet (Cherry): £209 £179
- Quad ESL63: £3500 £2999
- Sonus Faber Electa Amator 2: £2849 £2349
- Wilson Audio Watt MK 1: £8988 £6199
- Wilson Benesch Orator (Cherry, Graded): £2900 £2199
- Wilson Benesch Actar (Cherry, Graded): £4000 £3499

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Business Hours: Tues - Sat 9.30am - 5.30pm, Closed Mondays, Visitors & Demonstrations by appointment
The Hi-Fi Company Trading Station, 35 Cowgate, Peterborough, PE1 1LZ
All major Credit Cards accepted
Roksan Caspian CD.

Prices shown are those at the time of review.

**CD Players**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Price Range</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Verdict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£800-£1499</td>
<td>Pink Triangle Nutshell</td>
<td>£1095</td>
<td>Apr 93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q77</td>
<td>£850</td>
<td>Nov 95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roksan Caspian</td>
<td>£899</td>
<td>Aug 97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Superb</td>
<td>£850</td>
<td>Nov 93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Virt</td>
<td>£650</td>
<td>Nov 95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Audio 98</td>
<td>£1300</td>
<td>Aug 98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PCD CUP-1</td>
<td>£1250</td>
<td>Dec 97</td>
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**£1500**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Price Range</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Verdict</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anthem CD1</td>
<td>£1600</td>
<td>Mar 96</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yamaha 99</td>
<td>£940</td>
<td>Aug 96</td>
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<td></td>
<td>McIntosh CTC7900</td>
<td>£2635</td>
<td>Dec 95</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Herd 24</td>
<td>£1995</td>
<td>Jul 95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Balm CD2</td>
<td>£1998</td>
<td>Apr 97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pink Triangle Tarantella</td>
<td>£2995</td>
<td>Jan 98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teac CD-X1</td>
<td>£3200</td>
<td>Jun 92</td>
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</table>

**Turntables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Price Range</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Verdict</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£800-</td>
<td>NAD 503</td>
<td>£200</td>
<td>Nov 94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Project 1.2</td>
<td>£200</td>
<td>Jun 97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thorens TD 120</td>
<td>£180</td>
<td>Feb 95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thorens TD 280 Mk4</td>
<td>£199</td>
<td>Jun 93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clearaudio Solution</td>
<td>£750</td>
<td>Sep 93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Linn Basik</td>
<td>£460</td>
<td>Sep 94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Michell Original SE</td>
<td>£775</td>
<td>Apr 99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mitchell Nyroco</td>
<td>£539</td>
<td>Jun 94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Layoffer ColourCamara</td>
<td>£390</td>
<td>Oct 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pink Triangle Tarantella</td>
<td>£675</td>
<td>Oct 97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Project 6.1</td>
<td>£3430</td>
<td>Sep 94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Systemdek 222</td>
<td>£500</td>
<td>Aug 96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Systemdek 2200</td>
<td>£450</td>
<td>Jan 93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thorens TD 141 Mk4</td>
<td>£465</td>
<td>Sep 94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Virtural Reality Reson r1</td>
<td>£600</td>
<td>Nov 90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Junior is a very good deck indeed, with an assured and involving sound.

**£800-**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Price Range</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Verdict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ashman Symphony</td>
<td>£1850</td>
<td>Nov 92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elach</td>
<td>£1950</td>
<td>Apr 95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Origin Line Origin A</td>
<td>£950</td>
<td>Dec 98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Draper Draper E</td>
<td>£2950</td>
<td>Oct 98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>APEX</td>
<td>£900</td>
<td>Aug 98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PT Anniversary</td>
<td>£2390</td>
<td>Oct 96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roksan Roksan X</td>
<td>£1995</td>
<td>Jan 97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ultra 2</td>
<td>£350</td>
<td>Oct 92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Technics SL-1200 LTD</td>
<td>£1000</td>
<td>Apr 97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wilson Benesch Full Circle</td>
<td>£1775</td>
<td>Jul 96</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Phono stages**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Price Range</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Verdict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£800-</td>
<td>Creek OBH-550/500-2</td>
<td>£160</td>
<td>Nov 97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creek OBH-550/500-5</td>
<td>£110</td>
<td>Nov 97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creek OBH-550/500-5</td>
<td>£110</td>
<td>Nov 97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For further information or a free brochure contact: JEM Distribution, Springfield Mills, Spa Street, Ossett Wakefield WF5 0HW. Tel: 01924 277626 Fax: 01924 270759

---

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If you have invested expertise and money in building up a sound system to your own unique specifications, then why compromise with indifferent housing units?

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*Finishes available to your choice.*

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*Sound isolation on shelving/feet.*

*World Class custom finishing to your choice.*

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*Finishes available to your choice.*

*Fully adjustable 6mm glass shelving.*

*Sound isolation on shelving/feet.*

*World Class custom finishing to your choice.*

"Fi-Rax - a sound investment for those who want the best from their equipment."
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phono stages</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Verdict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Under £800</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linn Unidisc</td>
<td>£395</td>
<td>Oct 98</td>
<td>Capable of involvement, neutrality and insight usually the preserve of stages three or four times the price.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LFD Mistral</td>
<td>£299</td>
<td>Sep 97</td>
<td>The most lucid and musical budget phono stage around - a true audiophile bargain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical Fidelity XLP</td>
<td>£130</td>
<td>May 99</td>
<td>First-class inexpensive phono stage. MM and MC inputs catered for. Low on distortion, high on clarity, build legendary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAD P-910</td>
<td>£160</td>
<td>Sep 98</td>
<td>At this price the NAD is an accomplished all-rounder. Slowish bass will suit leaner systems through.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OED Discoverer</td>
<td>£35</td>
<td>Jan 97</td>
<td>A bargain. Beguilingly musical presentation, with more than enough detail and power for a mere £35.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotel RQ-970BX</td>
<td>£130</td>
<td>Nov 94</td>
<td>Combine with a good cheap line level integrated and it will show you how good vinyl can be.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sommette Stilson MC/MM</td>
<td>£399</td>
<td>May 96</td>
<td>The Sedley combines transparency and fine dynamics with excellent rhythmic ability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unison Simply Phono</td>
<td>£495</td>
<td>Mar 96</td>
<td>Liquid sound with great dynamics, but a little slazy and muddled too. Beguiling, but not perfect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>£800+</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthem Pro 1F</td>
<td>£899</td>
<td>Aug 99</td>
<td>Despite a sizeable price tag the Anthem offers a smooth, lucid sound and superb build quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio Innovations F2</td>
<td>£749</td>
<td>Feb 96</td>
<td>Fantastic bass and superb insight make this one of the best phono stages around.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AudioVib 800OPPA</td>
<td>£800</td>
<td>Oct 94</td>
<td>Instruments can have a somewhat flat perspective, but excellent clarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minchew Perception</td>
<td>£525</td>
<td>Oct 94</td>
<td>Extremely impressive results, especially with MM cartridges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linn Livet</td>
<td>£850</td>
<td>Oct 97</td>
<td>Marries beautifully into the Linn family, but not too hot with other components.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitchell Mc</td>
<td>£528</td>
<td>Oct 94</td>
<td>Gives a thoroughly cohesive picture of a recording with a very tight and rhythmic bass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitchell Luxe HR</td>
<td>£850</td>
<td>May 93</td>
<td>Perhaps too good for some record collections. Extremely revealing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roksan Artaxerxe</td>
<td>£945</td>
<td>Oct 97</td>
<td>Doesn't worry about genre, it just gets on with the job of making music in an enjoyable way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonic Frontiers Phono 1</td>
<td>£2000</td>
<td>Apr 99</td>
<td>Excellent, yes, overpriced, no. The Phono 1 is a superb all-round phono stage.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cartridges</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Verdict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clearaudio Alpha</td>
<td>£130</td>
<td>Apr 99</td>
<td>Tends to sound quite hard at the top but imaging and detail are good. Best in a warm system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denon DL1000IV</td>
<td>£110</td>
<td>Aug 97</td>
<td>First manufactured in 1963, it sounds mature and sure-footed rather than over the hill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denon DL110</td>
<td>£865</td>
<td>Mar 94</td>
<td>May be a little soft-natured for some. Splendid dynamics and an even tonal balance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crystal UX</td>
<td>£193</td>
<td>Feb 98</td>
<td>Carves Goldring's 1042 without difficulty. MC quality from an MM.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goldring 1042</td>
<td>£90</td>
<td>Jan 93</td>
<td>One of the best MM at the price with practically no internal noise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grado Prestige Silver</td>
<td>£119</td>
<td>Apr 97</td>
<td>Good tracking and inoffensive sound, but somehow lacks sparkle in any department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linn K9</td>
<td>£58</td>
<td>Sep 94</td>
<td>Rhythmic bite compensates for a lack of vibrancy in music (MM).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ortofon 540</td>
<td>£110</td>
<td>Mar 95</td>
<td>Smooth operator and very good value for money (MM).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ortofon MC15 Super II</td>
<td>£110</td>
<td>Mar 95</td>
<td>In the right system, can be masterful with its dry and accurate response.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ortofon MC55E</td>
<td>£170</td>
<td>Sep 95</td>
<td>A considerable achievement that adds true verve to the MM.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roksan Classic Black</td>
<td>£160</td>
<td>Jun 93</td>
<td>Light and airy presentation with good presentation (MM).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siele Brazen MM</td>
<td>£185</td>
<td>Sep 97</td>
<td>If you like the V15 you’ll love the Brazen. Works well with an SME 3009.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sumiko Blue Point</td>
<td>£100</td>
<td>Oct 92</td>
<td>Excellent value for money. It does its job of transccribing the information on the disc with absolute fidelity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **£200+** | | | |
| Cambridge-MC MM Cartridge | £1549 | Feb 99 | Good price, high output and a warming musicality make this moving iron cartridge the one to be. |
| DMX LS80 | £1300 | Jan 99 | A Goldring make-over that tracks well and sounds good. Pricey, though. |
| DMX LRS MM Cartridge | £255 | Apr 98 | Though the LRS, has super-MM virtues. |
| Dynavector 20X2-1H | £299 | May 99 | Delightfully musical sound makes the Dynavector a very strong contender in the budget MC stakes. |
| EMT HST6 | £850 | Oct 96 | Solid bass and smooth, musical sound make this MC cartridge worth the money. |
| Goldring Excel MCX | £495 | May 97 | Has fine midrange clarity, but is bettered in other areas by cheaper competitors. |
| Linn Aries | £1200 | Dec 97 | Linn fans will love it but it's up against strong competition. |
| Linn Klyde | £489 | Jun 95 | Sumptuous sounding cartridge that borders on the bass heavy but has a good feel for music. |
| Lyra Lyras | £540 | Jun 95 | Extremely smooth, civilized MC with no obvious weaknesses. |
| Ortofon Jubilee | £1250 | Mar 99 | Detailed, musical and sure-footed, the Jubilee brings a new lease of life to those old turntables. |
| Ortofon MC25F | £225 | Sep 98 | Delightfully sweet, musical sound with added refinement on PL that takes some beating. |
| Ortofon MC30 Supreme | £450 | Jun 95 | Involving yet refined presentation but some could feel it's slightly coloured. |
| Ortofon MC7500 | £2000 | May 94 | Conveys the full gamut of emotion from A-Z with the fervour of a live concert. Expensive, but the business. |
| Ortofon Robinson | £1000 | Apr 96 | A top quality MC with superb tonal quality and excellent imaging. |
| Ortofon Studer V15S | £295 | Mar 97 | Warm, dynamic rendition of music with great detail and impact (MM). |
| Transfiguration Spirit | £1100 | Jul 99 | A balanced all-rounder that misses out only on the last ounce of detail and bass weight. |
| Van Den Hul Grasshopper | £180 | Jun 95 | Allows music to flow with superb fluidity and reveal things which were previously unheard - at a price |

---

Sonic Frontiers Phono 1. van den Hul Grasshopper.

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Web site: www.halfin.com/shop
### Buying Guide

**Tone-arms**

- **Haddock GH 228 SE**
  - £595
  - Year: Dec 98
  - Verdict: Construction won’t worry SME but its sound quality will unsettle a lot of the competition.

- **Origin Live RB250/RB300**
  - £599
  - Year: Nov 97
  - Verdict: These modified arms are a considerable improvement on the originals.

- **SME 309**
  - £659
  - Year: Jan 93
  - Verdict: Tight, neutral sound with good tonal balance, but lacks the SME’s pace and precision.

- **SME IV**
  - £628
  - Year: Mar 92
  - Verdict: Sexy chassis and staggering engineering along with potential performance earn it a place in audio history.

**Tuners**

- **Under £300**
  - **AMC T7**
    - £130
    - Year: Jul 97
    - Verdict: Although it has a tempting price, its sound quality is poor compared with its rivals.
  - **Anton Audio 7**
    - £230
    - Year: Mar 97
    - Verdict: An attractive, smooth sounding tuner that won’t break the bank.
  - **Cambridge T650**
    - £230
    - Year: Sep 95
    - Verdict: The T650 is one of the most gifted tuners under £300, a very accomplished all-round performer.
  - **Harman/Kardon Tu-350**
    - £200
    - Year: Jul 94
    - Verdict: Sound quality is generally impressive. Let down by a rather constricted sound stage, but still good value.
  - **Kenwood KT-2300**
    - £130
    - Year: Feb 97
    - Verdict: Smooth, even balance allows the KT-2300 to convince with whatever it’s receiving. £130 well spent.
  - **Marantz ST-57**
    - £150
    - Year: Oct 97
    - Verdict: The ST-57 is a smooth, warm tuner but lacks a little clarity and transparency.
  - **Mission Cyrus FM7**
    - £299
    - Year: Apr 94
    - Verdict: Musical, communicative and extremely detailed and a steal at the price.
  - **NAD 415**
    - £150
    - Year: Jun 94
    - Verdict: A remarkable musical and natural sounding tuner. Unbeatable at the price, or even twice the price for that matter.
  - **Onkyo T401**
    - £160
    - Year: May 64
    - Verdict: A competent machine, but time has taken its toll on the sound quality.
  - **Pioneer F-6SHDRS**
    - £300
    - Year: Dec 98
    - Verdict: One sole mark against the class-leading transparency is its slightly dry character.
  - **Rega Radio**
    - £230
    - Year: Jan 95
    - Verdict: Sounds on the whole more than its price, but in other respects it isn’t especially competitive.
  - **SME 309**
    - £175
    - Year: Apr 94
    - Verdict: The RT-930AX is a glowing little bargain. Real quality at a very realistic price.
  - **Sony ST-543ES**
    - £290
    - Year: Apr 97
    - Verdict: The Sony is worth every penny of its asking price. If you’re a fan of radio this one is to go for.
  - **Sony ST-SET500**
    - £180
    - Year: Aug 97
    - Verdict: The ST-SET500 is one of the best at this price. LW reception is a welcome bonus.

- **£300+**
  - **Addicom G55.2**
    - £399
    - Year: May 93
    - Verdict: Quite musical but does not rejuvenate the wave! Good solid performance but less than this.
  - **Burmester 931**
    - £437
    - Year: Nov 94
    - Verdict: This is not a cheap tuner, but it’s cheaper than buying a radio station, which is the only possible alternative.
  - **Creek T43**
    - £400
    - Year: Mar 98
    - Verdict: A great little tuner. This is the one in the price bracket.
  - **Denon Tu-510**
    - £350
    - Year: May 95
    - Verdict: Whether it’s sweaty disco or symphony hall, the Fanfare comes up to scratch.
  - **Kenwood PT-1**
    - £370
    - Year: Jul 95
    - Verdict: Well worth auditioning but basic rather dry and light.
  - **Kennwood KT-050L**
    - £400
    - Year: Oct 95
    - Verdict: A good value, excellent sounding ints tuner, but lacks full EGN facilities.
  - **Linn Krellman**
    - £164
    - Year: Feb 96
    - Verdict: Remarkable basic performance but, considering the price there are limitations.
  - **Linn Dynavox T104**
    - £749
    - Year: Apr 92
    - Verdict: Well worth auditioning but basic rather dry and light.
  - **Marantz ST-17**
    - £600
    - Year: May 95
    - Verdict: Knock-out build quality and rich velvety sound. Poor signal mute a bit too enthusiastic.
  - **Marten 954**
    - £660
    - Year: Mar 96
    - Verdict: A clear, natural sound with good punch. Has strong rivals at this price, but acquits itself well.
  - **NAD 702**
    - £730
    - Year: Jul 94
    - Verdict: A bit of an unusual design from Micromega that’s well worth trying and very expensive.
  - **Naim 422**
    - £330
    - Year: Jul 94
    - Verdict: Well worth auditioning, even if you’ve never previously considered a receiver.
  - **Pioneer F-50HRS**
    - £350
    - Year: Nov 95
    - Verdict: Well engineered and competent tuner, but a little uninspiring.
  - **Rotel Michi RHT11**
    - £955
    - Year: Mar 94
    - Verdict: This classy looking tuner can hold its head up high amongst the best tuners at the price.
  - **Rotel RT-925SBX**
    - £500
    - Year: Apr 95
    - Verdict: The price of twenty concert tickets, and for that you can listen as if you were there. A bargain.
  - **SME IV**
    - £1100
    - Year: Mar 99
    - Verdict: Extremely well built with a lucid if slightly dry sound. The only real drawback is the high price.
  - **Technics ST-GT350L**
    - £1100
    - Year: Dec 97
    - Verdict: An otherwise competent tuner is let down by a rather processed character.

- **Cassette**

- **Under £300**
  - **Ariwa AD-F560**
    - £150
    - Year: Apr 98
    - Verdict: No Dolby S, but three heads and two capstans make the Ariwa a bargain.
  - **Denon DR343-5SS**
    - £160
    - Year: May 96
    - Verdict: Good enough for the price and no worse than the competition.
  - **Denon DRM-450S**
    - £230
    - Year: Aug 96
    - Verdict: Top sound quality with ferric and chrome makes this deck a steal.
  - **JVC VD-965**
    - £209
    - Year: Sep 94
    - Verdict: Only the lack of Dolby S conspires against the otherwise excellent JVC.
  - **Kenwood KX-5060S**
    - £200
    - Year: Jan 97
    - Verdict: Stable transport gives fine results on metal and chrome. Rough on ferrics.
  - **NAD 513**
    - £230
    - Year: Jan 96
    - Verdict: Decent playback and good recording when used carefully.
  - **NAD 541**
    - £270
    - Year: Sep 95
    - Verdict: Excellent electronics are let down by a low-grade transport.
  - **Rotel RD-965BX**
    - £230
    - Year: Oct 95
    - Verdict: A solid, competent machine which is reasonable value for money.
  - **Sony TC-511**
    - £180
    - Year: Dec 93
    - Verdict: Auto-tuning is mediocre and the general results are unexceptional.
  - **Sony TC-K460**
    - £170
    - Year: Jan 93
    - Verdict: A mix of average heads and electronics don’t make for happy tapping.
  - **Teac V-510**
    - £100
    - Year: Apr 97
    - Verdict: The V-510’s performance matches its price well, but audiophile it isn’t.
  - **Teac V-540**
    - £150
    - Year: Sep 94
    - Verdict: Satisfactory in in-car recordings, but the low price shows.
  - **Yamaha KX-58i SE**
    - £250
    - Year: Sep 97
    - Verdict: The ‘580 lives up to its SE tag with a fine performance in all areas.

---

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HFW 09/99
### Cassette

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Verdict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aiwa AD-5950</td>
<td>£300</td>
<td>Feb 96</td>
<td>Vice-free playback is mirrored by impressive recording.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denon D-110</td>
<td>£360</td>
<td>Jan 92</td>
<td>On the right tapes, the Denon repays with delightful sound quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JVC TD-V1010</td>
<td>£400</td>
<td>Sep 92</td>
<td>Disappointing on replay but recording is another kettle of fish altogether.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenwood KX-7006S</td>
<td>£350</td>
<td>Dec 94</td>
<td>Convincing all-rounder except for heavy-handed noise reduction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nakamichi DR-1</td>
<td>£750</td>
<td>Jun 93</td>
<td>Not perfect but as close as you can get for the money.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nakamichi DR-3</td>
<td>£950</td>
<td>Aug 93</td>
<td>Unfortunately keeping the price down keeps performance below Nak's norm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onkyo TA-250</td>
<td>£350</td>
<td>Oct 94</td>
<td>Top transport but the electronics aren't on a par.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pioneer CT-96</td>
<td>£1000</td>
<td>Mar 97</td>
<td>On chrome and ferric, the '95 is smooth and natural. Not so good with metals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pioneer CT-550S Precision</td>
<td>£350</td>
<td>Feb 99</td>
<td>Three heads, ease of use and high quality make the Dolby S equipped Precision a strong contender.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panasonic CT-7045S</td>
<td>£300</td>
<td>Jun 96</td>
<td>Complex but superb in every important area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sony TC-K611S</td>
<td>£330</td>
<td>Feb 94</td>
<td>Muffled on pre-recordeds but pulls out all the stops on recordings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technics RS-AZ7</td>
<td>£550</td>
<td>Nov 97</td>
<td>Solid build and solid sounds. Top-notch at the price.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technics VR-030S</td>
<td>£650</td>
<td>Aug 95</td>
<td>One of the highest quality Dolby S decks available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technics RS-AZ7</td>
<td>£300</td>
<td>Jul 96</td>
<td>Excellent bass but mid and treble lack dynamics. Auto-tunes poorly on metal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### DVD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Verdict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denon DVD-5000</td>
<td>£700</td>
<td>Aug 96</td>
<td>The Denon is a fine performer with CD and better still with 24/96.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denon DVD-6000</td>
<td>£1500</td>
<td>Mar 99</td>
<td>Builds to second to none. Sound is very solid convincing, but not as musical as the 3000.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panasonic DVD-A350</td>
<td>£700</td>
<td>Jul 98</td>
<td>The A350 wipes out the CD-only competition at the price and threatens players up to £2000.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panasonic DVD-L10</td>
<td>£1000</td>
<td>Nov 98</td>
<td>Isn't cheap, but it's an outstanding portable and a capable domestic device.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sony DVP-SP15</td>
<td>£700</td>
<td>Aug 95</td>
<td>The Sony is warm and smooth but lacks clarity and precision.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Headphones

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Verdict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sennheiser HD-580</td>
<td>£200</td>
<td>Nov 98</td>
<td>Wonderfully lucid and transparent panel-like sound.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sennheiser HD-800</td>
<td>£650</td>
<td>May 98</td>
<td>Excellent build quality and a sound quality to match.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sennheiser HD-415</td>
<td>£50</td>
<td>Nov 95</td>
<td>A warm and musical sound with a taste of high-end refinement and detail.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CD Transports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Verdict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audiolab 8000 CD</td>
<td>£1249</td>
<td>Aug 94</td>
<td>Distinguished by a wide array of facilities. Thoughtfully designed and high quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyrus Dac Master</td>
<td>£1800</td>
<td>Jul 94</td>
<td>Smooth and cohesive. The Disc Master looks good and comes with the Dac Master within the price.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPA Enlightenment</td>
<td>£655</td>
<td>May 95</td>
<td>Solid and lifelike sound with Rock music and full bodied on Classical.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harman DP-X9010</td>
<td>£530</td>
<td>Feb 92</td>
<td>Superb build for the money and a very musical sound. Benefits greatly from clocking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microgama Divo</td>
<td>£3435</td>
<td>Apr 93</td>
<td>Excellent build quality and a sound quality to match.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onkyo CDX-1000</td>
<td>£1595</td>
<td>Jun 94</td>
<td>Isn't cheap but has a solid dependable sound with a big, powerful presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parasound C-2000</td>
<td>£1695</td>
<td>Jun 97</td>
<td>The belt drive is an interesting idea but the Parasound is bettered by cheaper transports.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-ject CD-3</td>
<td>£1440</td>
<td>Apr 93</td>
<td>Heart-stopping speed and impact contribute to what is an exceptionally good machine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotel RCD-980</td>
<td>£450</td>
<td>Jul 96</td>
<td>Good, clean dynamic sound with a neutral and pure midrange tone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonic Frontiers SP-1</td>
<td>£2295</td>
<td>Aug 96</td>
<td>Top flight machine with an easy, musical and enjoyable sound; for those that can afford it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonic Frontiers SP-2</td>
<td>£1500</td>
<td>Jul 97</td>
<td>A handsome machine both sonically and aesthetically. We love the camera aperture-style loading system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teac P-30</td>
<td>£250</td>
<td>Jun 97</td>
<td>Coats a lot of money and sounds nothing short of superb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teac P-300</td>
<td>£850</td>
<td>Feb 95</td>
<td>Enjoyable player with good insight. Good finish and keen pricing make it a thoroughly good buy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technics CDP-30</td>
<td>£900</td>
<td>Jun 96</td>
<td>A soft and warm sound will please vinyl lovers, but it's not the last word in detail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technics Cdp-200</td>
<td>£500</td>
<td>Sep 95</td>
<td>A soft and warm sound will please vinyl lovers, but it's not the last word in detail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XTC CD1</td>
<td>£1200</td>
<td>Apr 96</td>
<td>A warm and musical sound with a taste of high-end refinement and detail.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CD Converters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Verdict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alchemist TS-D1</td>
<td>£300</td>
<td>Jan 99</td>
<td>Smooth, natural and relaxed, highly persuasive with acoustic material. A bit soft on Rock and Dance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audiolab 8000DAC</td>
<td>£750</td>
<td>Aug 97</td>
<td>Smooth and accurate treble and easy-going genres. Measuring and engaged; good value too.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambridge GSX850</td>
<td>£850</td>
<td>Aug 97</td>
<td>Treble roll-off serves to remove some of the music's sparkle; legs behind the group leaders somewhat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambridge GSX450</td>
<td>£150</td>
<td>Jun 95</td>
<td>Instant upgrade for a budget player but out of its depth within a properly designed hi-fi CD player.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Gerrish Acoustics

Avantia Garde RX20 - a mere 36" tall and 12" x 12" at the base - Absolute Sound record - "a true test piece with a bass line that's big, super fast and continuous - the Gerrish's handled it beautifully, sanely driven Infinity R1711s have more power but are way too loud (90-110). The Magnepan MG3-9.5, can't match the low bass impact of the Avant Garde, only the Thiel 3.6 too slow. The Magnepan MG3-9.5, can't match the low bass impact of the Avant Garde, only the Thiel 3.6 too slow. The Magnepan MG3-9.5, can't match the low bass impact of the Avant Garde, only the Thiel 3.6 too slow.

### Sunfire Corporation

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**International**

**E-Mail: propmar@msn.com**

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**Buying Guide**

- **Prices shown are those at the time of review**
- **Sony DVP-SP15**
- **Nakamichi DR1**
- **Panasonic DVD**

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**World Radio History**

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## Buying Guide

### Cassette

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Verdict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nakamichi (various)</td>
<td>£700</td>
<td>Dec 98</td>
<td>The Chord combines compressive effect and transparency. Fort Knox build and priced to match.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yamaha TC-800GL</td>
<td>£699</td>
<td>Jan 99</td>
<td>Combined DAC and passive preamp makes it at the money no competition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marantz DP-11</td>
<td>£825</td>
<td>Mar 99</td>
<td>Powerful, fast bass response remarkably solid higher frequencies. A nice touch with acoustic music especially.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cary Reference 100</td>
<td>£599</td>
<td>Jun 99</td>
<td>An engaging listen with good manners to build. Never unsatisfying or lacksliss, plays with realism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leak TL12 &amp; TL10</td>
<td>£1400</td>
<td>Aug 99</td>
<td>Don't be misled by the name - it's the budget converter to have. Impossible to criticise for the money.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leak Troughline II DAC</td>
<td>£695</td>
<td>Sep 99</td>
<td>A real smoothie for high-end analog conversion. Given the right transport, an outstanding sound is on the cards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leak Troughline</td>
<td>£795</td>
<td>Oct 99</td>
<td>If detail is high on your list of priorities, with forceful, hard-edged presentation, this looks like a very good bet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leak Troughline</td>
<td>£1700</td>
<td>Nov 99</td>
<td>A great little DAC which simply can't be beaten at the price. A bargain in all areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leak Pre-amps</td>
<td>£795</td>
<td>Dec 99</td>
<td>Fire-class as a DAC, doubles as an ADC for archiving to CD - great value.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leak Troughline</td>
<td>£299</td>
<td>Jan 99</td>
<td>Never offensive, its multi-bit converter packs a mighty bass punch. Useful analogue volume control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leak Troughline</td>
<td>£699</td>
<td>Feb 99</td>
<td>Delicate brightness does a lot to open out music and create a sense of space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leak Troughline</td>
<td>£999</td>
<td>Mar 99</td>
<td>Crisp, detailed and dynamic, the MF is a genuine music maker, if a touch hard and bright at times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leak Troughline</td>
<td>£1700</td>
<td>Apr 99</td>
<td>Outstanding value for money. Excellent sound in the usual attractively styled package.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CD Players

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Verdict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meridian 207</td>
<td>£700</td>
<td>Jan 95</td>
<td>Beautifully built two-box pre-amp stage. Very musical although not as refined as modern Briostrum gear. No digital output.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pioneer PD-91</td>
<td>£699</td>
<td>Feb 95</td>
<td>Built-to-last player with easy upgrade routes for modifiers. Not knock out as it stands but get one cheap and have a go!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leak Troughline</td>
<td>£1400</td>
<td>Mar 95</td>
<td>Ancestral of hi-fi, consequently expensive nowadays. As with all vintage stuff, overhauling is de rigueur before use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leak Troughline</td>
<td>£999</td>
<td>Apr 95</td>
<td>Line of 'good for their time' pre-amps. Use of E886 pentode for high gain rules out ultra performance. Not the highest-fi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leak Troughline</td>
<td>£1700</td>
<td>May 95</td>
<td>Excellent workaday classic. In good order the 20 will not disgrace itself. Various upgrades are available from specialist repairers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leak Troughline</td>
<td>£220</td>
<td>Jun 95</td>
<td>Plentyful monobloc equivalent in Stereophile. Reasonably priced and a true bargain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leak Troughline</td>
<td>£699</td>
<td>Jul 95</td>
<td>You can't argue with success! NAD's budget integrated gave thousands their first taste of hi-fi and remains great value.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leak Troughline</td>
<td>£795</td>
<td>Aug 95</td>
<td>By no means a bad job and value for money. With its matching 303 pre-amp makes a good introduction to audio classifies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leak Troughline</td>
<td>£1700</td>
<td>Sep 95</td>
<td>An affordable route into box-two players. Good, clean digital sound with a neutral and pure mild-range tone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leak Troughline</td>
<td>£795</td>
<td>Oct 95</td>
<td>Easy and fun to build, competitively priced and delivers live sonc results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leak Troughline</td>
<td>£1700</td>
<td>Nov 95</td>
<td>An awful lot of money - use it forever. Quality which can outlive any amount of cheaper purchases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leak Troughline</td>
<td>£300</td>
<td>Dec 95</td>
<td>The Troughline has a smooth and focussed sound, but partnered with the Ultra Listrington looks expensive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leak Troughline</td>
<td>£795</td>
<td>Jan 96</td>
<td>Partnered with the TCD 2000, produces a sound that is certainly focussed, detailed and spacious.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leak Troughline</td>
<td>£1700</td>
<td>Feb 96</td>
<td>A taste of the elegantly smooth, slightly laid-back sound - the epitome of American good taste.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Amplifiers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Verdict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leak Troughline</td>
<td>£700</td>
<td>Mar 98</td>
<td>A first class, anti Faitory servicing available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leak Troughline</td>
<td>£699</td>
<td>Apr 98</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Leak Troughline</td>
<td>£999</td>
<td>May 98</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Leak Troughline</td>
<td>£1700</td>
<td>Jun 98</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leak Troughline</td>
<td>£795</td>
<td>Jul 98</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leak Troughline</td>
<td>£1700</td>
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<td>Leak Troughline</td>
<td>£899</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leak Troughline</td>
<td>£1700</td>
<td>Oct 98</td>
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### Loudspeakers

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<th>Model</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Verdict</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Klipschorn</td>
<td>£795</td>
<td>Dec 98</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leak Sandwich</td>
<td>£699</td>
<td>Jan 99</td>
<td>Not exactly plentiful or cheap but a splendid beast. For efficiency they have seldom been equalled. Space hungry!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leak Sandwich</td>
<td>£999</td>
<td>Feb 99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leak Troughline</td>
<td>£1400</td>
<td>Mar 99</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Leak Troughline</td>
<td>£999</td>
<td>Apr 99</td>
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<td>Leak Troughline</td>
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<td>Leak Troughline</td>
<td>£795</td>
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<td>Leak Troughline</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leak Troughline</td>
<td>£1700</td>
<td>Dec 00</td>
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### Vinyl

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<th>Model</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Verdict</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acous Lustre</td>
<td>£700</td>
<td>Jan 98</td>
<td>Very honest piece of kit, well made and easily adjusted. Vinyl beginners could do very much worse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acous Lustre</td>
<td>£699</td>
<td>Feb 98</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acous Lustre</td>
<td>£999</td>
<td>Mar 98</td>
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<tr>
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<td>£1700</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acous Lustre</td>
<td>£1700</td>
<td>Dec 98</td>
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</table>

### Tuners

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<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Verdict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leak Troughline</td>
<td>£700</td>
<td>Jan 99</td>
<td>Interesting ornament but no longer hi-fi. Bandwidth limited to 8MHz to 15MHz only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leak Troughline</td>
<td>£999</td>
<td>Mar 99</td>
<td>Excellent tuner with indifferent stereo decoding circuit. Best when adapted to use modern outboard decoders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leak Troughline</td>
<td>£1700</td>
<td>Apr 99</td>
<td>Possibly the ultimate Tardis console, including an oscilloscope for checking the strength of signal. Excellent even now.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Prices shown are those at the time of review
CUTTING REMARKS

FOR those of you (and us, for that matter) still spinning gramophone records, Audio Amateur Press in the USA has rounded up and reprinted 35 articles on vinyl and its associated subjects under the provocative title *The LP Is Back*. As 'proper' vinyl-philes will soon tell you, there is a kind of fascination with the sheer mechanics of disc reproduction which the years have not noticeably scratched away.

Amongst the articles presented are recipes for DIY tone-arms, including one, The Praying Mantis, which has a touch of the Forth Bridge about it - better that than the Tay Bridge I suppose! In addition to these home-built items, there are tips on improving manufactured arms, including parallel trackers. As I’ve had occasion to remark before, American DIYers know no fear.

The names of Reg Williamson and A.J. van den Hul are among the more familiar of the contributors of articles which cover about 45 years of audio publishing. I am not so sure about some of the methods described for cleaning records, but if you wish to weigh the pros and cons yourself, there are at least three to chose from, assuming that the chemicals aren’t on the banned list yet.

As is usual, electronic matters like equalization and pre-amplification take a fair share of the space. If you have the patience to construct it, there is an equalizing circuit shown which enables the user to correct for any pre-RIAA record ever made - 32 turn-over frequencies each in treble and bass!

Whether you wish to have a go at any of the projects or just fancy rocking on the verandah (“He, he, he! I remember those, sonny...”) *The LP Is Back* is an intriguing, not to say boggling read.

The LP Is Back can be ordered through World Library, code no: 1620, price £8 and £1.50 p+p.

POWER TO THE PEOPLE

ICK Sheldon of the University of East Anglia is intending to start a series of five workshops beginning in October on the subject ‘super-fi’. We understand that the tamer parts of the course will cover more usual theory, but the piece de resistance will be the design and construction of a monster amplifier using 518OE valves at 6000V anode voltages. To get some idea of the power available, try imagining 100 KT88s!

Assuming there is something to show beyond a smoking crater (!), the “Story Of The World’s Biggest Amplifier” is to be published after the event.

If you’re dying to get involved, or perhaps stamp collecting has lost its edge, contact:

Nick Sheldon
21 Gloucester Street,
Norwich NR2 2DX
Tel/Fax: 01603 662438
e-mail: nick.sheldon
@sheldonassociate.demon.co.uk

BESIDE S C SIDE...

SCS - South Coast Speakers - have announced their latest model, the RM-142, a near-field monitor incorporating a Visaton RHT 12 ribbon tweeter. The ‘speaker, rated at 150 watts at a nominal 8ohms, is available either in kit form (£525), cabinet kit only (£55) or fully-built (£795).

Full details can be had from the manufacturers, along with their latest catalogue which lists the full range of kits and components. Alternatively, visit on-line at www.southcoastspeakers.co.uk

PUTTING THE SPARK BACK

ORTH West Kent College are intending to offer an Electronic Constructors course starting in September this year. The 12-month course costs £115 and will be conducted at Gravesend.

According to the draft prospectus, the course intends to “provide those who are new to electronics with the necessary underpinning knowledge to undertake a diverse range of projects”.

Although the programme is intended mainly for hobbyists, there is nothing to prevent participants going further and ultimately using the experience to enter for City And Guilds diplomas and the like.

In the letter accompanying the prospectus, the author states: “I am aware that many would-be enthusiasts are deterred from home construction due to the potentially lethal operating voltages present in thermionic equipment. Amongst our staff we have several dedicated ‘valve’ men who are actively engaged in the restoration and construction of vintage equipment...”

If all this sounds like your cup of tea, further information can be had from Paul Marshall or Steve Crockford at the College.

North West Kent College
Tel: 01322 629657

www.southcoastspeakers.co.uk

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ECC83 Philips 6.00 EZ81 Tesla 6.00
ECC83 R.F.T. 6.60 GZ32 Harma 9.00
ECC84 R.F.T. 4.50 GZ34 Harma 6.00
ECC85 Viss 4.50 KT66 Sovtek 20.00
F88CC Tesla 6.00 KT88 G.E.C. POA
ECC807 Primar 28.00 KT88 J/J/Tesa 68.00
ECF80 Mullard 3.50 300B Philips 5.00
E182C Mullard 12.00 5687WB R.C.A. 9.00
E188C Philips 8.00 5881 Sovtek 5.00
ECL82 Siemens 14.00 6072 USA 7.00
ECL83 Amperex 5.00 6550C Sovtek 16.00
ECL85 Polam 4.00 6550WE G.E. 12.00
ECL86 Harma 5.00 6CG7 USA 10.00
EF80S Siemens 24.00 6C5 USA 7.00
EF86 Siemens 7.00 6GK5 Sovtek 16.00
EL34WXT Sovtek 6.00 6L7WGT Sylvania 8.00
EL34 Svetlana 8.50 6SN7GTB G.E. 8.00
E34L Tesla 8.50 7044 G.E. 8.00
EL84M Sovtek 5.00 7591A Harma 16.00
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Customers have reported fantastic results with the World Audio 300B Kit Amplifier when fitted with Tesla 300Bs. Female vocals saw improvement in depth and clarity, and strings were better focused and more accurate. The Tesla valve features gold plated control grids and nife alloy core with heavy grade glass. The valve is covered by a unique warranty and comes with its own test report. This month we are offering a complete set of quality valves for this amplifier comprising of: 4 Tesla 300Bs in matched pairs, 1 G.E. 6072A, 1 Philips 5687WB and 1 Mullard GZ37 a great combination and all for just £280 per set excluding VAT.

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UNITS: by FOCAL &

TAPPED INDUCTORS: 0-10mH in steps & 0-1mH in 0.1mH steps

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A wide range of High-Tech Loudspeaker units.

Unit Spec Booklet available 30p.

Please send A4 SAE with 40p stamp (+60p overseas to:- (Dept HFW) Tabor House,
Nick Lucas and Jon Marks get to work on our HD83 headphone amp with a kit of upgrade goodies.

It has now been six months since the day when my HD83 headphone amplifier was permanently installed in the Lucas House Sound System. A soul-saver for myself, it provided a kind of musical mute button as the noise of family life magically disappeared with a turn of the volume control. It has the added bonus of providing my son great amusement as I don my Float headphones to become a still of Doctor Who's silvery enemy, the Cybermen. However, once the upgrade pangs set in, I realised it was time to return the HD83 to the Hi-Fi World Workshop for an audiophile overhaul.

To help in component selection I turned to 'Mod Father' Marks, with his last in-house assignment before he shifts from being a permanent fixture at World Towers to become a freelancer. I myself carried out all the soldering. The brief was to provide an out-of-this-world lift to HD83's sound for around 200.00 GBP (bearing in mind that the actual kit costs 175.00 GBP).

PICKING THE PARTS
When it came to component selection, we decided that a stepped attenuator would be the heart of our tweak line-up. We also decided to concentrate on resistors elsewhere in the design by employing a combination of Vishays and Holcos. Cap-wise, we went for Ampohm's paper-in-oils, though this time we paralleled them up with MIT Multicap polypropylenes.

The reason for these 'bypass' caps is as follows. In audio, ideally a capacitor should have the same characteristics over the entire audio frequency band; in essence, its impedance/frequency trace should be a horizontal line. In reality, the trace is more likely to be a parabolic curve with varying angles and depths depending on the value and type of capacitor. Parallelising a larger cap with a smaller one, the curves bisect to form a 'W' shape, providing an extended impedance/frequency curve that is generally a lot flatter. This effect can be taken further by adding capacitors across a range of values between the largest and smallest. Another bonus of bypassing is that smaller capacitors charge and discharge far more quickly than larger ones. The end results are increases in dynamics and space.

IRON IN HAND...
Installing the upgrade is pretty straightforward, but here's a few pointers to help you on your way:

1) As soldering to both sides of the PCB is...
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necessary, it is important that you're able to gain easy access to the PCB. Desolder all wires attached to the volume potentiometer as these will definitely restrict board movement. While you are working, avoid moving the PCB back and forth too often as this can weaken external joints to the board and even break them, causing problems later. You may like to go the whole hog and remove the PCB from the chassis completely, although this will obviously take you more time.

2) Remove all the old components carefully. At this stage it is a good idea to use a desolder pump or solder braid to soak up all the dead solder. Make sure you clean up all the remains as stray solder strands are little devils and can cause problems later. Use a tooth brush to clear off any loose debris.

3) Once the board has been made ready, it is worth doing a dummy run with regard to C6 and C9 as there is limited space here. Keep them as far away as possible from the ECL83s.

The paper-in-oil parts of this upgrade have inner and outer foil lead-outs. The outer is denoted by the shiny, black exposed resin end and should be positioned nearest to the earth potential of the circuit to exploit the inherent screening capabilities of these types of capacitors. This reduces any noise present. The orientation in situ is thus important and is marked clearly in the diagram. It is a good idea to use rubber sleeving on the component lead-outs as well to minimise the risk of shorts.

4) When fitting the Danish Audio Connect CT1, it is necessary to open up the chassis hole as the original Alps Blue pot has a diameter of 8mm; 10mm is required here. I used a reamer, but a drill bit used carefully will do the job. Make sure that you still have enough exposed metalwork internally as this is the chassis earth point. You will have to open up the M6 solder tag slightly to fit the shaft too.

5) The diodes used in the bridge rectifier upgrade are static sensitive and some measures have to be taken to prevent damage. Make sure you are static-free by discharging yourself on an earthed metal surface, be it a copper pipe or the metal case of a light switch. I made sure all the equipment I needed was on my work bench to reduce the movement which creates static. To be extra sure I only touched the components with insulated pliers.

6) Positioning the diodes is a bit of a fiddle. I eased things by using PCB pins since the lead-outs of the diodes are thicker than the PCB holes. Pay careful attention to the diagram as an incorrectly-oriented diode can be messy and potentially dangerous.

7) Double-check your handiwork a couple of times just to be sure. Then re-fit the PCB and reconnect any PCB-external connections before firing her up. You will notice an immediate large improvement in the sound, but there's more to come.

Components need to be burned in to their new living quarters for at least 50 hours' playing time, during which period the sound will get better still.

MAXIMUM UPGRADE

Benefitting from a combination of top-grade resistors and capacitors as well as Danish Audio Connect's superbly transparent CT1 stepped attenuator, the hot-rod HD83 was never going to sound dull or flabby, but I was still taken aback by how open the sound had become.

Instead of the music staying put predominantly between the earpieces, it enveloped my head in a sort of ball (rather than wall) of sound. Put on a recording with clean production and plenty of acoustic instrumentation (like
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Vinicius Cantuaria's Tucumã) and the performance just wraps around you.

Equally attractive was the gain in musicality with the reduction in general coloration caused by individual parts. Thanks to the Vishays et al, everything emerging from the Sennheisers had great rhythmic drive and dynamics matched to a delicacy normally associated with high-end gear.

Another aspect of the boosted HD83's presentation attributable to enhanced neutrality was the way it could handle higher volume levels without sounding merely 'loud'. Obviously common sense and caution should be exercised here as long-term excessive listening levels can cause permanent hearing damage, but lifting the volume a touch gave the music more realistic impact, even on sparse arrangements.

Headphone bass is often a bit of an acquired taste if you're used to competent floor standers and power amps with real slam. However, ravers and bassheads everywhere should have no problem converting to cans in this instance. With Transglobal Underground's Best Of CD (reviewed in the music section this month) whirring away, tunes like 'Temple Head' and 'Shimmer' proved that this HD83 could plumb the depths in a major fashion whilst retaining massive smack. This isn't to say that it has the sort of unnaturally hard and mechanical bottom-end that some amps suffer from, but if there's genuine speed and weight in the signal, you'll hear it through your 'phones.

OFF WITH THE MITS
First step back down the road towards the standard HD83 consisted of removing the 0.1uF MIT Multicaps bypassing the paper-in-oil 0.22uF coupling caps. The immediately obvious result was a shrunken sound stage and a top-end missing a lot of its previous sparkle and precision. The midrange and bass were affected too, as both lost out in terms of vibrancy and speed, music as a whole coming across as slower and less fluid.

Returning to Cantuaria, I found a less even-handed tonal balance which made for less convincing reproduction. Also on the loser's list was detail, as some of this CD's low-level ambience was glossed over.

DAC TO BASICS
By far the single most expensive component in the upgrade pack is Danish Audio Connect's CT1 stepped attenuator. Desoldering it confirmed the fact that it's an extremely effective way of lifting sound quality. Without it, sound staging contracted into a ball between my ears and a large dose of detail went AWOL.

After the major loss of clarity that came with a return to the Alps Blue (a very decent pot in its own right, but one which costs only a fraction as much as the CT1), listening to favourite tracks was a less addictive past time. What was coming through the Sennheisers remained involving, just less so than before as bass was flabbier, the midrange more coloured and treble scratchy by comparison.

SWITCHING SIDES
The fast-recovery rectifier diodes may only cost a few pounds each, but they play a not insignificant role in HD83's sound. Taking them out and replacing them with slower counterparts led to a performance which was more limited tonally, especially in the treble. Now Dance tracks which had previously had some shimmer to their hi-hats took on a more aggressive and spiky edge. Vocals picked up a little previously hidden sibilance too, although the ECL83 triode/pentode valves glowing within the casework ensured that this was still a million miles from some of the sonic crimes committed by less able solid-state equipment.

OIL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL
The next targets were the Ampohm paper-in-oil coupling capacitors. On their departure, these took with them a large chunk of...
PRICE VALIDITY TO END JUNE 1999 - ASK ABOUT ANY TYPES NOT ON THIS LIST

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRE-AMP TUBES</th>
<th>POWER TUBES</th>
<th>POWER TUBES</th>
<th>SOCKETS ETC.</th>
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of dynamics and detail, further slowing and colouring the sound. Acoustic as well as Dance tracks now gave the impression that they were going through the motions when compared to the wonderfully transparent and engaging version of events that the fully-loaded upgrade pack had produced.

Looking on the bright side, even in almost standard form the HD83 retained its innate winning qualities of smoothness and musicality. £200 spent on audiophile goodies does go a very long way, though, as you'd expect given the outlay.

NO PIECE DE RESISTANCE
The last of the luscious parts for the heave were the Vishay and Holco resistors. We pulled these out in two sections: those not directly involved in the signal path (cathode bypass, for example), then those the music flowed through. As before, it was pretty much the same story in both cases - sound staging shrank further and imaging became flatter. Pointers to the fact that clarity was in shorter supply now were the samples pasted onto the songs on Transglobal Underground’s compilation album. They had previously been individual living, breathing parts of the tune. Now they were more incidental background noises that didn't really figure in the overall musical picture.

A GAME OF TWO HALVES
Considering that the CT1 is responsible for the majority of the upgrade pack's cost, we decided to fit the DAC attenuator on its own as a single-part tweak. HD83 responded with a return to the bulk of its fully beefed-up form. The main beneficiary was at the bottom-end, where there was vastly greater weight, control and speed. The midrange and treble also opened right out, the evidence provided by a sound stage which swelled to beyond the Sennheisers' earpieces.

The HD83 upgrades are available as a kit from Hi-Fi World.

HD83 upgrade kit:

**UK (inc. vat & p&p)**

<table>
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<th>Part Description</th>
<th>Cost (£)</th>
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<td>VR1 (1 off) DAC CT1, 50k</td>
<td>195.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1/C9 (2 off) Aluminium foil/paper in oil, British made from Ampohm. An aluminium foil and impregnated paper dielectric capacitor of very high quality, ideal for valve audio.</td>
<td>170.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>C6/C9 cont.(2 off)</td>
<td>0.01uF 400V</td>
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<td>C6/C9 (2 off) 0.22uF 300V</td>
<td>MIT Multicap polypropylene bypass capacitor in parallel with C6/C9</td>
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<tr>
<td>C9 (2 off) 0.01uF 400V</td>
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<td>PCB pins small</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fitting parts (10 off)</td>
<td>PCB pins large</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Available in 2 colours & 3 lengths. Highly flexible copper.
BACK-TO-BASICS AUDIO

by Julian Nathan

T he expression 'back-to-basics' carries some unfortunate baggage in this country: failed vote-winning initiative; retributive pseudo-justice; short, sharp shock... Frankly the vibes are not good! With these 300-odd pages, though, it's well worth ignoring the emotive title for the in'ards, which are well worth a prolonged look.

It's surprising how much any audio semi-technical fan thinks he knows, without necessarily being able to put it into words. This book is careful to put into words the simple rules and laws that govern analogue electronics. Throughout the earlier and more theoretical pages of the book, first principles are posted like signposts with the explanatory text in the surrounding countryside. If you've blundered through a technical primer at any time, you'll have experienced the approach which argues that since everybody knows Ohm's Law, there's no need to state it in plain language or show its application in an environment which makes it clear what's going on. Alright, Ohm's Law can be dull, but so can learning your alphabet. I equals E over R; how often does an enquirer skip it to get on to the more exciting stuff in later chapters? Whether we like it or not, the highest intelligence is at a disadvantage without basic mental tools.

There are certain electronic phenomena which everyone needs to know about regardless of whether or not the full implications of this knowledge are to be used. Once again, Back-To-Basics Audio adopts the bold type, line-to-itself approach: 'an inductor passes low frequencies more readily than high frequencies'. What could be simpler and more readily understood? None of that 'straight in at the deep end with 90° phase angle lark; that comes later when the ins and outs (or is that ups and downs?) of graphical analysis have been explained.

Having covered the principles in broad outline, Chapter 2 deals with Meters and Electrical Measurements. Again, there is nothing to be afraid of here for the most numbskull novelty. At the same time, the book can be used as a bullet-point refresher course by 'I think I know' types. Although the instruments covered are among the simpler gadgets - multitesters and simple oscilloscopes - the business of where to put the probes, and more crucially where not to, is reduced to easily digestible bites: current is measured in series with a circuit or calculated from the voltage drop across a series resistor'. Curiously the author does not mention using a signal generator until the next chapter on amplifiers but concentrates instead on the experiments that can be made with just a 'scope.

Once the subject of audio thickens up, it is idle to pretend that topics can still be covered in Baby Bunny style. Notwithstanding this, common misunderstandings are nipped in the bud on the first page. For example, the difference between gain, power output and volume, a source of understandable confusion to the newcomer, is explained in a crystal-clear paragraph: the author's preface states "this is the book I wanted when I first started work in audio" and it's plain to see that he has stuck to his guns throughout.

Here are the main chapters:

- Electrical Principles
- Meters and Electrical Measurements
- Amplifiers and Transmission Lines
- Sound Waves and Decibels
- Transfer Characteristic and Networks
- Loudspeakers
- Tape Recorders and Monitor Selectors
- Mixers
- Acoustics
- Audio Cabling
- Transformers and Power Supplies
- Control Systems
- Solder and Assembly Methods
- Installation Planning
- Home Theatre Sound

Whilst it is not possible to say "if it's not here, it's not worth knowing", anybody who has thoroughly mastered these pages is in a strong position for an audio experience more complex than spinning a CD.

An Appreciation of these back-to-basics facts can preserve you from frustration when something goes wrong. You stand half a chance of getting beyond 'it doesn't work' to being able to sort out why. It's always nice not to be a victim of technology!

If you place any value on the pound in your pocket, it can be useful to be a step or two ahead of shop salesmen. There are times when you can be reasonably sure that you are being lead up the garden path, but can offer no resistance because you're not certain of the facts. Armed with a few of the concrete facts in this book, like the basics of your listening room acoustics, required number of watts and so on, you can become bullet-proof.

Back-To-Basics Audio doesn't offer much help with "if these 200W monitors are so good, how come you're selling 'em from a van....?" but for spelling out plainly what every audiophile should know, this book will be difficult to beat. RMW

DIY REVIEW

Back-To-Basics Audio

Julian Nathan

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**NON-STICK AMPLIFIER**

After much procrastination, I have completed a pre-amp project based upon your valve line-level KLP1, as published in June 1993. I made some modifications along the way in line with advice from my transformer manufacturer, Electro-Print Audio. Accordingly, the filaments were provided with a DC supply. Everything was secured to a heavy Teflon board and finished off with a gauge on the front panel which monitors the HT voltage. The attenuator is a stepped switch.

Thanks for a great design - the sound was even better than I had hoped for. In fact, I'm still getting used to how clean, transparent, detailed and smooth it is. I used high-quality parts which totalled about $500 from suppliers like The Parts Connection in Canada and Antique Electronic Supply in the US.

Joseph Csoka  
Florida.

After looking at the picture of the finished pre-amp, I'm not surprised it sounds good. Mounting everything except the mains transformer on a thick slab of Teflon will do a great job of minimising vibration, and Teflon just happens to be a superb dielectric.

I have always been puzzled by the way almost all thermionic designers bolt valves which they know to be highly microphonic straight onto resonant metal chassis. I'm sure that a little more thought put into proper mounting would produce commercial valve amplification of outstanding transparency.

If you wanted to take your pre-amp even further, you could fit fast-recovery rectifier diodes (assuming you haven't already done so), Caddock high-power resistors, high-voltage Elna Cerafine PSU caps and Os-Cons on the heater supplies (some or all of which are available from AudioCom, tel: 01834 842803). JM

**SIMPLE SUB SOUP-UP!**

Thank you for answering and publishing my letter regarding the subwoofer with the SMGa speakers in April's DIY Supplement. I thought I'd let you know the results of your advice.

You suggested using the DR66W active crossover from Maplin. I've actually used their CJ07H subwoofer crossover, which has both high and low-level inputs, so I have coupled it directly to the 'speaker outputs on my main amp. I didn't realize that this unit was for in-car use, so a suitable power supply was needed (order code UG01B). This is a simple wall-plug type adaptor and costs about a tenner. The crossover costs about £30.

I scoured the local second-hand shops and found an elderly but surprisingly good JVC A-10X integrated amplifier complete with matching tuner for £28. The tuner I can sell. After doing some surgery on the amp and removing and bypassing the volume, balance and loudness controls, I fitted a new front panel (again from Maplin) which I bought blank, drilled and fixed to suit. Finally, I removed the original passive-crossover inductors from the subs' enclosures and fired them up...

After an initial period of about two hours of bass-fest, I eventually fine-tuned the level on the crossover to match my system. I can only say that for the money it is by far the best upgrade I have ever made. Not only is there a better bottom but it seems to have had an effect on the overall sound stage too.

Alan Parkinson  
Merseyside.
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AP Electronics
A TUBULAR TAKE-OFF

Over the past few months I've developed an interest in older hi-fi equipment, especially valve amps. I've even gone so far as to design a pre and power amp combo but thought it'd be daft to jump straight in with such gubbins when I've never worked with valves before.

I've decided that the best thing to do would be to try and get my hands on an old (and cheap - less than £100) piece of kit, working or not, just to familiarise myself with the basics of how the things are put together, etc. What might be a good starting point?

I wondered if you knew of any classic/specialist/2nd-hand hi-fi dealers in the north (preferably NW) of England or SE Scotland who might be able to supply me with such a thing. Most of your ads seem to be for companies down south. Also, I'd kill to go to these 'audio jumbles' I've seen advertised in your magazine. Are there any such events up here?

John D. Thompson
9542879@harris.sms.ed.ac.uk

A brave man starting valves from scratch at this late date! To a degree nothing could be simpler, although unless you strike lucky I think your price limit may be a little optimistic.

First and foremost, there is very little to be learned from an amplifier without its circuit diagram: you can learn that valves will burn your fingers and that HT (High Tension) current can make your hair stand on end but that's about it. Therefore I strongly recommend that you try and find a bargain with a famous name for which the diagram is readily available. This needn't be as difficult as you'd think because it used to be de rigueur for manufacturers to supply a service sheet with their stuff.

Cock of the walk for serviceability are probably the Leak amplifiers: the undersides are so carefully laid out that with the aid of the diagram you can easily see what goes where and, in a surprisingly short time, the 'whys' start to become apparent. Although the Quad II amplifier is even simpler (and Quad still supply service sheets), the circuit is not nearly so quintessential. Master a Leak amplifier and you have grasped the key to most valve amplifiers built between, say, 1954 and the End of Steam. Your best bet for 300 volts through it.

Thanks to a plethora of recent reprints, book-larnin' is not nearly as difficult as it was, say, 10 years ago. Our World Library stocks both the Mullard and GEC books which show the general electronic arrangements typical of practically all commercial amps (Quad II excepted) of the great days of British Hi-Fi.

For second-hand dealers in your area, the world of audio is not a large one so it's not unlikely that the better local dealers will know of someone near you. A browse through our dial-a-dealer section may be of help in starting a lead here. As regards Audio Jumbles in the North - organizers, please keep us posted and we'll pass on the details! RMW

NAIM THAT UPGRADE

Within my Naim system I have recently upgraded from a NAC92 to a second-hand NAC72 to partner my NAP140 and CD3.5. However, I find I preferred the phono stage in the '92 to the '72, so I now face a dilemma; do I live with the '72 for the better CD/tuner/tape sound, or modify the '92?

Should I decide to modify, I am considering, as a first step, changing the volume pot from the standard Alps blue to either a black or a Panasonic For Audio (if it will fit). Would this be a sensible move, and can I expect it to be cost-effective?

What would be the next step? I suspect capacitor or resistor swaps. For these changes a circuit diagram would be useful; could you suggest a source?

Eric Newman
London.

And the results in reverse order are...

Contact Naim themselves for a circuit diagram, and you will certainly need one before attempting any modifications. If you're going to go to the trouble of swapping the pot, you might as well fit the Panasonic as it is considerably better than the Alps black and vastly better than the blue.

Another area worth investigating is the power supply. Caps like Black Gates would be wonderful but expensive. Elna Silmics are also very good indeed. Then there are other types of mains transformer such as the almighty C-core. Again, pricey but highly effective as an upgrade and probably better value for money than resistor substitutions. JM
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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
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<tr>
<td>CD Players &amp; DAC's</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arcam Alpha One CD Player</td>
<td>299</td>
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<td>Audio Note ANCD2 Valve CD Player (New boxed)</td>
<td>1000</td>
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<td>Audio Synthesis DXA 2 D/A Converter Balanced</td>
<td>2900</td>
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<td>AudioLab 8000C/DC4 Transport</td>
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<td>DPA SX64 24/96 DAC (New style)</td>
<td>850</td>
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<td>DPA Little Bl Iii (4 months old)</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>219</td>
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<tr>
<td>DPA Renaissance 24/96 CD Player (New style)</td>
<td>985</td>
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<td>Turntable Turearms &amp; Cartridges</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aphileon Audio 401 Phillips (New &amp; various finishes)</td>
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<td>Preamplifiers</td>
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<td>Rega HAL Pre Amp MM/MC Remote</td>
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<td>Rotel RC 970 BX Pre Amp (New)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tube Technology Serier Line Pre</td>
<td>1000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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As leading manufacturers in single ended triode valve amplifiers and CD players Audio Note have introduced a complete new range, The Zero Series now makes Hi-end audio affordable and very desirable.

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The M Zero Line level preamplifier has 4 inputs and tape out, utilises a 6111 WA valve, it also has multiple outputs for bi-amping at a later stage, The price £299.00.

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Thorens TD180</td>
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<td>Micromega Microdac</td>
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<td>Monarchy Audio D18B</td>
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<td>Marston Silhouette</td>
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<td>Gamma Rhythm</td>
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<td>Michell Gyrodec RB300/OC3/Gyropower</td>
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<td>Michell Argo</td>
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<td>Alphason (5 shelf, black)</td>
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<td>SPEAKERS</td>
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<td>Ruark Epilogues (cherry)</td>
<td>£269</td>
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<td>Lumley Monitor LM 2.5 (L. Oak)</td>
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<td>Lumley Monitor LM 3.5 (Walnut)</td>
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<td>Totem Rock (Mahogany)</td>
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<td>AVI Bigatrons</td>
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review

testing...testing

Simon Pope and Richard White reveal two more of their favourite recordings for grilling hi-fi components.

PROPRIUS/SWEDISH SOCIETY/PROPHONE AUDIOPHILE SAMPLER

Samplers are, of course, produced in order to sell the records sampled. A quick look in any charity shop will turn up plenty of ‘Supersonic Stereo Six’ samplers, full of middle-of-the-road orchestral arrangements of the year-before-last’s Hit Parade. This CD is a little different in that it features tracks from records that an audiophile (elusive character) might genuinely wish to buy.

Three of the leading Swedish recording companies seem to have clubbed together to present their wares on this one, with results that are varied to say the least. What’s more, as seems to be the case with the majority of ‘serious’ offerings from Sweden, the quality of recording is little short of breath-taking. The engineers have apparently learned the difference between crystal clarity and piercing clarity: ne’er the twain should meet if music is the object.

With pieces ranging from Sixteenth-century Spanish to a Venezuelan Folk waltz (!), there is a sideways look at everybody’s taste. For sheer surprise value, my favourite has to be Elgar’s Chanson de Matin played on five recorders - very odd, but very refreshing nonetheless, although one wonders whether Elgar’s wife would have been quite so delighted!

If a change is as good as a rest, this CD is a fortnight at the seaside. RMW

RICHARD WAGNER
TRISTAN UND ISOLDE
DEUTSCHE GRAMOPHON
(413 315-2 FOUR-CD SET)

It’s very hard in this little section to differentiate between favourite recordings and favourite music. This is one that has a foot in both camps. This is Klieber’s only recorded venture into Wagner opera and the results, like most of his work, delve deep into the spirituality of the music whilst still maintaining tight control - everything is technically well-judged, from the singers, to the orchestra, to the tempi.

I won’t even try to explain what it is about this opera (and recording) that makes it so special to me. The Dresden band are one of the finest (and the oldest) established orchestras in the world and their handling of the Germanic repertoire is deeply rooted. The way that Klieber and the strings handle the wonderful Prelude to Act Three must be some of the most sublime playing ever put to disc.

The singing is spacious, with Magaret Price’s Isolde captured at the height of her lyrical powers, and Rene Kollo’s Tristan solid and heroic in the classic heldentenor vein. Fischer-Dieskau as Kurwenal, is, well ..!

Anyone who has heard him sing anything will know exactly what I mean - he actually sings the notes!

In the UK, to purchase the four-and-a-half hours of this glorious wave of sound will set you back the wrong side of £50. Personally, it’s probably the best £50 quid I’ve ever spent! SP

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"In every instance the Border Patrol effect was nothing short of a transformation. Bass solidified, imaging became significantly more three-dimensional and substantial, and the power supplied amp made the regular version sound, quite literally, a mess."

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Jason Kennedy Hi-Fi Choice April 97

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THE REVIEWERS
"The Slate deck defines what real instrument solidity should be. It's in a class of its own". Alan Sircom, Hi-Fi Choice. "The build and performance of the Slate Audio 401 are the audio equivalent of the E type Jaguar". Audiophile. "I have never used a system like this one. It gets everything right. Peter Soper insists Garrards are best mounted on marble or stone, and from my experience with this plinth I wouldn't disagree". Noel Keywood, Hi-Fi World. "The garlands main problems are dealt with most effectively by three cures: correct set up, heavy plinth and appropriate mat. Peter Soper has mastered them all, the results are close to miraculous". Ken Kessler, Hi-Fi News R/F. "I have been using the fantastic Slate plinthed Garrard; the sound was nothing short of breathtaking. The basic Garrard without the Slate plinth is well engineered and pleasant sounding, but they only give limited work that went into the design". R. Newman. "When I first put up the Slate Audio 301 I must admit to having quite a shock, forever converted". K. Van Green, Electric Eel Studios. "I'm over the moon, the plinth looks and sounds superb, stunningly beautiful!! I would very highly recommend any of your customers to seriously consider this great combination". J. Marsh. "I must say Peter that you have done an incredible job, they really are quite fabulous". Viscount David Linley.

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

Kit One has one 300B per channel running at 420 volts with 75mA current giving 8-9 watts of the cleanest power you will ever hear, the input stage consists of a 6SN7GT with a 5687 double triode driver stage running in SRPP. The power supply is capacitor-choke-capacitor configuration with a Bakelite rectifier, the 300B's have a DC filament supply for hum-free operation whilst the other valves are AC heated. Component quality is similar to our level 2 finished products, Audio Note paper in oil signal capacitors, Beyschlag 1 watt 1% metal film resistors, good quality electrolytics (sorry NO Black Gates!) and a simple, attractive stereo chassis in black paintwork. We have several component and cosmetic upgrades available for Kit One, please ask for details.

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

Price: £799 incl. VAT, which includes ALL parts & valves (yes, also the 2 x 300B's needed) but not postage/packing which to UK customers is £12.00.

KIT ONE ORDER CODE: AN-KIT-001

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

Audio Note Loudspeaker Drivers & Kits

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

Audio Note Circuits, Valvedata & Basic Technical Information

If you would like some suggestions which to base a future project around, then we shall be happy to provide you with a circuit pack containing good circuits like ONSGAKI, KEGON, WASSAN, NERO, GAKU-ON plus several other power amplifier circuits and the M7Tube & M10 pre-amplifiers, which are the best sounding pre-amplifier circuits we have come across.

Audio Note Quality Output Transformers

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

Economy range - Selected to ensure quality audio in a price efficient package.

Mid-price range - Top quality with specially selected components.

High Quality range - Double C-core outputs for single-ended circuits exclusively.

Super High Quality range - All-silver wired outputs of the best possible quality.

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

Audio Note Mains Transformers

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

The Audio Note Kit Two

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

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

KIT TWO ORDER CODE: AN-KIT-002

The Audio Note Kit Three

Kit Three features 2 x 300B's per channel running in single-ended parallel yielding 16/17 watts in pure Class A. This kit is on two mono chassis with valve rectified HT supplies, no signal feedback. It uses a 6SN7GT double triode as input valve and a pair of 5687 double triodes running in SRPP as drivers. The Kit Three is essentially a mono version of the Kit One with double the power, the same component choices and on two chassis' instead of one.

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

KIT THREE ORDER CODE: AN-KIT-003

The Audio Note Kit Four

The Kit Four is really our introduction to valve amplifier kit building, the circuit and power supply being mounted on a single printed circuit board. The high-quality push-pull output and mains transformers are all mounted in a small aluminium chassis covering everything so nobody will be able to see that you have succumb to the lure of the valve amplifier which is sweeping the world. The circuit consists of two 6W6GT tetrodes running in Push-Pull class A, yielding about 10 watts, driven by a 6SN7GT and a 12AX7/ECC83 input stage. Easy to build, even for the beginner. Visually Kit Four matches the Audio Note Pre-amplifier shown here but with a single chrome-plated volume control. As with all Audio Note kits everything (except solder) is included.

The Kit Four costs: £299 incl. VAT but not delivery.

KIT FOUR ORDER CODE: AN-KIT-004

Audio Note Driver, Interstage & Pre-Amplifier Output Transformers

Here is a product group that you do not see advertised every day! As usual we start small with the intention to grow quickly.

Audio Note Paper In Oil Signal Capacitors

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

Audio Note Paper In Oil Tin Foil Signal Capacitors

The tin foil is better than alfoil for most applications, we recommend you try them.

Audio Note Paper In Oil Copper & Silver Foil Signal Capacitors

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

Audio Note Acid & Chloride Free Silver Solder

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

Audio Note Cables & Wires

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

Audio Note High Quality Stepped Attenuators & Switches

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

Audio Note High Quality Valve Bases

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

Audio Note Resistors

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

Audio Note Mains Transformers

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

Audio Note Pre-Amplifiers

Audio Note Mains Transformers

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Audio Note Pre-Amplifiers

Audio Note Mains Transformers

Audio Note offer a design, prototyping and production service, where we can supply for almost any requirement. Please telephone for details.
Audio Note now offer moving coil, CD and Input matching transformers for general Audio Note Moving Coil, CD Line 8( Input Matching Transformers

mumetal screening can with a threaded spindle with a nut for mounting. All circuitry is housed in a non-magnetic aluminium chassis giving the very best sound quality. Both phone and line stages are built on chassis using easy construction but with the sonic benefits of hand-wiring.

The standard-quality version of the pre-amp kit includes Roedendam polyester film capacitors, Bayschlag 1 watt 1% metal film resistors, Noble open-frame style potentiometers and all caps, valves, wire etc. Various component upgrades are available, details upon request.

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

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

Audio Note is currently the sole source in Europe that holds any significant range of values in stock, we use literally 1000's in production, as we were the first company to realise the tremendous benefits that Black Gate capacitors offer, and we are to date the only high-end audio company in the world to incorporate Black Gate capacitors consistently in our finished products.

There are very few audio parts that promise a guaranteed improvement when replacing practically any other part, but this is what the BLACK GATE capacitor actually do. Exchanging any electrolytic capacitor anywhere in the circuit of an amplifier or in the crossover of a speaker will greatly improve sound quality. We are actually doing this and exchanging any electrolytic capacitor anywhere in the circuit of an amplifier or in the crossover of a speaker will greatly improve sound quality. We are actually doing this.

We have at long last secured a reliable source for these fine power supply filter capacitors, a must in any single-ended project. The Cerafines really cover many of the Black Gates values and where the prices for the BG's are prohibitive to Cerafine capacitors, a fine sounding alternative. We have increased the range of Cerafines we stock quite recently, and strongly recommend all the Cerafines as a far superior replacement or substitute for ordinary electrolytics, and at the prices offered that is a fine sounding alternative. We have increased the range of Cerafines we stock quite recently, and strongly recommend all the Cerafines as a far superior replacement or substitute for ordinary electrolytics, and at the prices offered that is.

We have long awaited the arrival of the new in-house made Audio Note copper foil paper in oil signal capacitors, we are pleased to offer a 60% discount on current list price on all Tobias Jensen made paper in oil aluminium, tin and copper foil signal capacitors. Offer strictly limited to availability, while stocks last.

Minimum Order
4 pcs single or mixed values or £20.00.

Audio Note Selected Audio Valves

Our valves are selected from the best available sources and are tested to the same stringent standards that we apply in this production of our own amplifiers. They fall into two categories, standard production items and rare, mostly NOS (New Old Stock) valves which are no longer in production. We have compiled a specialist list of the NOS items, which is available against a stamped self addressed envelope. If you live outside the UK, send US $2. You should be aware that the valves on this list are NOT cheap, but we have stock of original GE, RCA and United Electronics 211, both standard versions and re-issued anode type for the US airmen, 845 Westinghouse, 2A75/12070Y/12AU7, 2A3/201A, WE330, 6WA5/a, Mullard GZ34/CV1377, Tunung 5U4G, (best sounding 5U4G we have ever heard!), Chatham 5R4/W6N, and many others.

Audio Note now has a dedicated division to keep pace with the growing demand for amplifier kits and specialist components. Music's Finest Conductor Limited will now be able to provide a specialist service to DIY enthusiasts and record collectors. Personal callers strictly by appointment only.

Call us today for more information and catalogues on the following numbers:

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Specialist Record Sales
Tel: +44 (0)1273 324029 Fax: +44 (0)1273 773476

Please make all cheques payable to: Music's Finest Conductor Ltd

All other enquiries relating to Audio Note products should be addressed to their head office: Audio Note (UK), Unit C, Peacock Industrial Estate, Lyon Close 125-127 Davigdor Road, Hove, East Sussex BN3 1SG

Tel: +44 (0)1273 220511 Fax: +44 (0)1273 731498

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Now you can save money and build your own high performance deck. The standard kit version is offered at £135, and the ultra version at £175. Both decks come with a full set of drawings and guidance instructions. The kit allows for your creativity or there are optional parts that will enable you to assemble a tried and tested design within 1-4 hours. This is probably the easiest kit you will ever make.

"this Vinyl font end had my jaw heading towards the floor with the solidity and transparency of the music it was making"... "the standard came up with crystal clear images set in a broad sound stage"... "With all these goodies in place, the standard would give turntables at the £1200-£1400 mark a hard time."

HI-FI WORLD SUPPLEMENT NOV 97

"is exceptionally easy to build and professional in both sound quality and appearance"

HI FI NEWS SUPPLEMENT NOV 97

---

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HI-FI WORLD, FEB 1999

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WHAT HI-Fi Sept 98 gave this modification a 5 star rating.

For arm modifications we normally return your arm in 2-3 days.

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Email: origin.live@virgin.net
web site: http://www.originlive.com

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R.J.F.

AUDIO VISUAL

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Sharp XV-C20E LCD projector £1,350.00
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SME series 300 model 309 pick-up arm £POA
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Most Models Of Leak Mono + Stereo Pre-Amps in Stock.

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---

VALVE ALERT

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£10 EACH INC P&P
FOREIGN ORDERS WELCOME
MINIMUM ORDER 10 VALVES

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Leak sandwich speakers early type 15 ohms (pair) £50
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Wanted


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HI-FI NEWS: Ken Kessler. I What I think weird
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The Rubicon is a stereo valve power amp using triode configured EL84s to give a remarkably delicate sound, guaranteed to captivate Bridgeable for monobloc operation.

The Indus is the ultimate passive pre-amp based on Rothwell's unique stepped attenuator. This precision device has fine and coarse volume controls to give 132 volume settings and unbeatable sonic accuracy.

Rothwell

Valve Amps of Distinction

This prepower combo has been winning admiration and praise from customers throughout Britain and abroad for over five years. Many are so impressed with the performance that they have invested in a second Rubicon, running the two amps as monoblocks.

To find out for yourself why these music lovers are so dedicated to Rothwell, contact your nearest dealer for a demo.

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Kevin Galloway Audio
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“disappear” and not influence the enjoyment of the music. The tracking
CTI offers you a more professional equipment. Besides, CTI is very
effortless sound, more details, better dynamics,
4 step preasion switch.
\[\text{VALVES}\]
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|}
\hline
Valve & Price (GBP) \\
\hline
6072A & 0.44 \\
6A3/110B & 1.10 \\
6SN7 & 0.35 \\
5R4GY & 0.50 \\
5Y3GT & 0.60 \\
808 & 0.80 \\
6SL7 & 1.00 \\
6A90 & 1.10 \\
6E12 & 1.30 \\
6N7 & 1.50 \\
6SN7 & 1.60 \\
6SN7 & 1.80 \\
6F86 & 2.00 \\
EL84 & 2.20 \\
6BCC & 2.40 \\
MB137 & 2.60 \\
EF37A & 2.80 \\
EL84 & 3.00 \\
A2900 & 3.20 \\
EL37 & 3.40 \\
ML6 & 3.60 \\
KT88 & 3.80 \\
6L7 & 4.00 \\
6SN7 & 4.20 \\
6SN7 & 4.40 \\
6F86 & 4.60 \\
8D8 & 4.80 \\
6SN7 & 5.00 \\
5Y3GT & 5.20 \\
5R4GY & 5.40 \\
5R4GY & 5.60 \\
3A/110A & 5.80 \\
3A/110B & 6.00 \\
6072 & 6.20 \\
5751 & 6.40 \\
6B4 & 6.60 \\
5U4G & 6.80 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\[\text{VALVE SOCKETS}\]
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|}
\hline
Socket & Price (GBP) \\
\hline
Mc Murdo Octal & 0.25 \\
Mc Murdo B7G & 0.50 \\
P T.F.E. Skirted B8A & 1.00 \\
P T.F.E. Skirted B7G & 1.25 \\
USA Ceramic Octal & 1.50 \\
Mc Murdo Ceramic Octal & 2.00 \\
Marconi Ceramic Octal & 2.50 \\
Marconi Ceramic E4 & 3.00 \\
Chinese Twist Loc X44 & 3.50 \\
RCA Twist Loc 211 & 4.00 \\
RCA Twist Loc 211 & 4.50 \\
Marconi Baccello DA100 & 5.00 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\[\text{PLUGS AND SOCKETS}\]
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|}
\hline
Socket & Price (GBP) \\
\hline
Chinese Twist Loc X44 & 0.25 \\
RCA Twist Loc 211 & 0.50 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\[\text{CTI Audio Attenuator / Volume Control}\]

CTI offers you a more effortless sound, more details, better dynamics, lower distortion and improved bandwidth. CTI has the ability to "disappear" and not influence the enjoyment of the music. The tracking between stereo channels and the attenuation is within the range of professional equipment. Besides, CTI is very compact for easy build-in.

\[\text{T.C. C. AXIAL OIL FILLED PAPER CAPACITORS BRASS CASED}\]
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|}
\hline
Capacitor & Price (GBP) \\
\hline
1000pF & 0.10 \\
350pF & 0.20 \\
15pF & 0.35 \\
5pF & 0.50 \\
2pF & 1.00 \\
1pF & 2.00 \\
8pF & 3.00 \\
12pF & 4.00 \\
250pF & 5.00 \\
500pF & 6.00 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

\[\text{OIL FILLED TRANSFORMERS}\]
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|}
\hline
Transformer & Price (GBP) \\
\hline
Marconi £ 25 & 0.25 \\
Mullard £ 40 & 0.40 \\
Haltron £ 5 & 0.05 \\
Mullard £ 10 & 0.10 \\
Mullard £ 12 & 0.12 \\
Mullard £ 12 & 0.12 \\
Mullard £ 12 & 0.12 \\
USA £ 12 & 0.12 \\
USA £ 35 & 0.35 \\
USA £ 5 & 0.05 \\
USA £ 8 & 0.08 \\
RCA £ 12 & 0.12 \\
STC £ 15 & 0.15 \\
STC £ 8 & 0.08 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

\[\text{STANDARD SOCKET TYPES}\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Voltage</th>
<th>Current</th>
<th>Price (GBP)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cinch Skirted B9A</td>
<td>350V</td>
<td>250mA</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinch Skirted B7G</td>
<td>400V</td>
<td>300mA</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinch Skirted B8A</td>
<td>500V</td>
<td>300mA</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinch Skirted B7G</td>
<td>600V</td>
<td>300mA</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinch Skirted B8A</td>
<td>700V</td>
<td>300mA</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinch Skirted B7G</td>
<td>800V</td>
<td>300mA</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinch Skirted B8A</td>
<td>900V</td>
<td>300mA</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[\text{EQUIPMENT FOR SALE}\]

\[\text{New EX-DEM & PART EXCHANGE EQUIPMENT FOR SALE}\]
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\[\text{LIST}\]

\begin{tabular}{|c|c|}
\hline
Equipment & Price (GBP) |
\hline
Alchemists Forsetti pre + power & £2398 |
Alchemists Kraken Anniversary MkII & £579 |
Anthem CD player (5 star What Hi-Fi)(ex/d) & £1999 |
Audioamca Mephisio CD transport & £2400 |
Audio Research D240 Mk.II & £3500 |
Audiomati Silvernight 300B monoblocks & £2750 |
BEARD P100 pwr. amp & £500 |
Chario Academy 1 solid walnut (ex/d) & £1299 |
Chario Academy 2 solid walnut & £1649 |
Conrad Johnson P10AL Pre & £995 |
Dynaudio Contour 1.3 MKII & £1198 |
Genesis Gen 500 spks in Built Active Bass & £11000 |
\hline
\end{tabular}

\[\text{SUPERB}\]

Krell Kav 300I & £2495 |
Krell Kav 250A & £2149 |
Naim 72 pre (MC Bouds) & £767 |
Naim 140 pwr. & £793 |
Quad 77 Int. Carbon & £700 |
Quad 66 pre & remote & £897 |
Quad 66 fmi & £850 |
Quad 606 pwr. & £250 |
Revos HI cassette & £1150 |
Tube Tech. Unisis & £579 |
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excellent, s/h (£1000) £395

Quad 77 amplifier. Grey, boxed s/h (£350) £295

Quad 77 CD Player (stand alone model with r/c). Gray,
boxed s/h (£400) £399

Quad 77 rechargeable system controller s/h (£320) £150

Quad 77 tuner. Carbon finish, s/h excellent. (£370) £399

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<td>Definitive Audio</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Manchester</td>
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**Measured Performance**

**amplifiers**

**TEAC A-E2000 AMPLIFIER**

Power output measured a useful 40 watts per channel into 8 ohms with no rise into 4 ohms, as is common from a "constant voltage" amplifier. This is because the power rail drooped 4 volts under heavier current draw, reducing maximum voltage swing and hence power. The power supply is therefore not as "stiff" as many and bass quality potentially softer as a result. There is more to a power supply than just regulation, though, and Teac are aware of these characteristics. They claim the power supply "looks" resistive and is frequency independent.

There was some odd-order distortion but levels never rose above 0.1%.

However, I would expect a little sharpness from the odd-order harmonic structure. Noise was low, but then so was sensitivity at 500 mV.

Frequency response was curtailed to 21.6 kHz, a tight lower limit. This should make the amplifier sound a little warm and enclosed, but smooth too.

The Teac turns out a respectable measured performance. It will go loud but some edginess from distortion may be evident. NK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Power</th>
<th>40 watts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CD/tuner/aux.</td>
<td>4 Hz-21.6 kHz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separation</td>
<td>92 dB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noise</td>
<td>-100 dB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distortion</td>
<td>0.013%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitivity</td>
<td>500 mV</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**cd players**

**T+A CD 1210 R**

The CD 1210 R has a pronounced high-frequency roll-off, enough to put some extra warmth into its sound compared to other 'flatter' players. Bass response extends down to 4 Hz, so the player is conventional enough here.

Distortion levels were extremely low, if not a match for special processing schemes used by Pioneer and Denon. All the same, this player will certainly sound smooth, due to low distortion in combination with rolled-off treble response.

Output was normal at 2.3 V, channel separation good and dynamic range exceptional because of low distortion.

The CD 1210 R measured extremely well. NK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency response</th>
<th>4 Hz-20.8 kHz</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distortion (%)</td>
<td>left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-6 dB</td>
<td>0.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-30 dB</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-60 dB</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-90 dB</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separation (dB)</td>
<td>left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 kHz</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 kHz</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noise</td>
<td>106 dB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamic range</td>
<td>111 dB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output</td>
<td>2.3 V</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<td>£1295 (£1995)</td>
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<td>Teac PS500</td>
<td>£650 (£995)</td>
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<td>£650 (£1215)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helius Auriculus</td>
<td>£125 (£375)</td>
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Selection of cables (Audio Note AN-8, AN-8P, AN-6V) (please enquire for more details)

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<td>TEAC</td>
<td>AUDIO TECHNICA GOLDMUND</td>
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<td>Audiophonic 1</td>
<td>DEMO</td>
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<tr>
<td>EMI</td>
<td>AUDIO TECHNICA GOLDMUND</td>
<td>TEAC</td>
<td>AUDIO TECHNICA GOLDMUND</td>
<td>GOLDMUND</td>
<td>Audiophonic 1</td>
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<td>HMV</td>
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<td>COLUMBIA</td>
<td>AUDIO TECHNICA GOLDMUND</td>
<td>TEAC</td>
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<td>GOLDMUND</td>
<td>Audiophonic 1</td>
<td>DEMO</td>
<td>DEMO</td>
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<tr>
<td>RCA</td>
<td>AUDIO TECHNICA GOLDMUND</td>
<td>TEAC</td>
<td>AUDIO TECHNICA GOLDMUND</td>
<td>GOLDMUND</td>
<td>Audiophonic 1</td>
<td>DEMO</td>
<td>DEMO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON, PHILIPS</td>
<td>AUDIO TECHNICA GOLDMUND</td>
<td>TEAC</td>
<td>AUDIO TECHNICA GOLDMUND</td>
<td>GOLDMUND</td>
<td>Audiophonic 1</td>
<td>DEMO</td>
<td>DEMO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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DENON DVD-2500

The Denon's response rolls off smoothly, our impulse analysis shows. Reaching 21kHz, bandwidth matches that of normal CD players, but the slight roll-off will contribute to a warm sound.

Helping in this respect is low distortion. At -30dB distortion measured a very low 0.017%. However, this was noise rather than distortion harmonics; an absence of spikes protruding from the noise floor verifies this. So the Denon was linear at normal music levels and further down the range, returning a creditable 0.37% at -60dB.

With low noise, wide channel separation and a normal output of 2.1V, the Denon measured well all round. It should give a clean, smooth sound. NK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency response</th>
<th>4Hz-21kHz</th>
<th>Separation (dB)</th>
<th>left</th>
<th>right</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distortion (%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-6dB</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-30dB</td>
<td>0.017</td>
<td>0.017</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-60dB</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-90dB</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

PIONEER DV-717

Pioneer use a digital processing scheme in this player which is likely a version of Legato Link. It gives reduced bandwidth under impulse or transient conditions, but improves low-level linearity. Our impulse test reveals this clearly, frequency response rolling off rapidly above 13.5kHz (-1dB), hence our low quoted bandwidth figure. Denon's Alpha processing scheme produces a similar result, by the way. Tested with steady tones, however, the DV-717's bandwidth reaches 17kHz (-1dB) and is an acceptable -2dB at 20kHz. This means it will have a warmer sound than most players.

Distortion levels were conventionally low down to -60dB, but below this the Pioneer put up a much better performance than usual. Distortion from most CD players hovers around 30% at -90dB, from the Pioneer it was just 12%.

With low noise and wide channel separation, the DV-717 measured well. It will have a warm, smooth sound. NK

| Frequency response | 4Hz-13.5kHz | Separation (dB) | left | right |
|--------------------|            |                |      |       |
| Distortion (%)     |            |                |      |       |
| -6dB               | 0.006      | 0.006          |      |       |
| -30dB              | 0.017      | 0.017          |      |       |
| Noise              | -116dB     | Dynamic range  | 108dB|
| Dynamic range      | 101        | Output         | 1.97V|

With low noise and wide channel separation, the DV-717 measured well. It will have a warm, smooth sound. NK

| Frequency response | 4Hz-13.5kHz | Separation (dB) | left | right |
|--------------------|            |                |      |       |
| Distortion (%)     |            |                |      |       |
| -6dB               | 0.4        | 0.37           |      |       |
| -90dB              | 12         | 12             |      |       |
| Noise              | -118dB     | Dynamic range  | 110dB|
| Dynamic range      | 101        | Output         | 2.1V |
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**ACOUSTIC ENERGY AEGIS 1**

Bass peaks up +3dB at 160Hz with the Aegis 1, much like the Tannoy m2.5. The smaller bass unit of the Aegis rolls off faster thereafter, although it still gets down to 63Hz, which is respectable. The port is tuned to 50Hz.

This 'speaker has a smooth, well-integrated response where tweeter output is a little lower than the mid/bass, which maintains an amenable balance and also disguises a minor tweeter peak at 12kHz.

Impedance was high at 9ohms, which reduced sensitivity to 87dB, but this is still a decent value. A flat impedance means an easy load which will suit all amps. The Aegis 1 is well engineered all round. NK

![Frequency response graph](image1)

**ELTAX LIBERTY**

This floor stander obviously runs flat over a wide frequency range, reaching right down to 50Hz, with a peak at 63Hz for good measure. The port is tuned to 42Hz, taking output down further. The Eltax will go deep, although without the bass lift of many other 'speakers, it may sound drier.

The tweeter is well integrated but has a +2dB overall lift and will make the 'speaker bright. Sensitivity was high at 89dB but impedance low at 5.7ohms, so the Eltax needs an amp to deliver current. The Liberty measures very well and is likely to be distinctive in its sound. NK

![Frequency response graph](image2)

**HEYBROOK HEYLETTE**

The Heybrook Heylette has an even response helped by a well-integrated tweeter. High-frequency output falls away to around -3dB at 20kHz, our analysis shows, meaning it will have a warm balance. Tweeter output looks smooth, except for a narrow peak at 16kHz, which is unlikely to be much of a problem subjectively. The bass unit works down to around 80Hz before the port takes over.

Sensitivity was 88dB from one nominal watt, but a low-ish impedance of 5.6ohms helps. The 'speaker is an easy load and generally well engineered. NK

![Frequency response graph](image3)
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MISSION 702

The Mission 702s have some traits in their response. The tweeter integrates on-axis, but this is a little low for a floor stander. A little above axis the tweeter starts to go out of phase, a dip appearing around 3kHz, which is not ideal. The tweeter also peaks up a little. Combine both effects and it is likely the tweeter will not integrate too smoothly.

The mid/bass unit peaks up quite strongly at low frequencies, around 125Hz. This is likely to add a little boom. It gets down to 50Hz before the port takes over. The electrical response for the port shows a peculiar breadth of port tuning, suggesting port behaviour is complex and the port exerts less acoustic damping than usual, since it is drawing less power. Port frequency should be around 40Hz but it is not having maximum effect here, measurement shows. The 702 looks unusual in its porting.

Sensitivity was good at 88dB for 2.8V input (one nominal watt). A low impedance of 6.6ohms helped toward this, causing the 'speakers to draw more current. The slopes of the impedance curve were fairly gentle, showing low reactance and energy storage, a good sign.

The 702s measured well but their frequency response curve reveals the likelihood of certain subjective effects. NK

TDL NUCLEUS 3

The Nucleus 3 has an uneven forward response compared to a loudspeaker like the Tannoy Mercury, but it stays within reasonably tight 3dB limits all the same, right up to 20kHz, which is good for the price. Bass rolls off slowly, meaning it is well damped and should sound tight. It has good downward extension to 55Hz before the port takes over at 45Hz, so the Nucleus goes low.

Sensitivity was high at 89dB from one nominal watt input (2.8V), helped by an overall impedance of 6.7ohms, so the Nucleus doesn’t need very powerful amplification.

The Nucleus 3 is well engineered to give balanced all-round results. NK

RICHARD ALLAN MINETTE

The most distinctive feature of this loudspeaker was its load characteristic. Overall impedance measured an unusually high 12ohms and current draw was half that of the other 'speakers. To an amplifier, this is a featherweight loudspeaker: it needs very little pushing. Yet in spite of this, in terms of sensitivity the Minette was up with the best in the group, measuring 89dB, meaning it goes loud at low volume settings. By a long way it was the most efficient of the group and it’s an easy load for any amplifier.

Like the other floor standers, the Minette reached down to 50Hz. It has some floor-related bass droop around 80Hz-120Hz which, although not so pronounced at a distance, is still likely to mean the 'speaker will boom a little more than the others, especially since there is a peak at 63Hz. With smooth treble a little lower in level than the bass and midrange, the Minette is amenably balanced and its tweeter well integrated.

The Minette is an interesting bit of work. It has some great strengths. NK
**TANNOY MERCURY M2.5**

The new Tannoy Mercury m2.5 has an impressively smooth forward response that slopes downward gently toward high frequencies. With no crossover suck-out and an absence of treble peaking, it should sound detailed but even.

A bass lift of +4dB around 160Hz means there will be a good sense of bass speed on hand drums and also a liveliness that comes from light damping. Measurement shows the lower limit is 50Hz - good for a small loudspeaker. The port is tuned to 35Hz, so it takes the m2.5 down low.

**WHARFEDALE DIAMOND**

There is a peculiar step effect in the frequency response of the Diamond 7.2, with tweeter energy lower than that from the mid/bass unit. This is likely to give the Diamond some extra body in its sound and treble should come across as smooth since there's a complete absence of peakiness. A small lift at 630Hz may add presence to vocals, however.

Bass rolls off slowly and looks as if it will suit near-wall placement. Measuring -6dB at 63Hz the Diamond goes low, the port taking over at 50Hz to extend bass down further.

Although sensitivity measured a high 88dB, it is partly due to low impedance (5.5ohms overall), so the Diamond draws current. The loudspeaker is a reasonably easy load in terms of reactance, since there are no steep slopes in the impedance curve, but it still needs a decent amp for good bass drive.

The Diamond should give a very civilised presentation, with good vocal projection. NK

**JVC XM-228**

The frequency response of this recorder looks much like that of an early CD player. High frequencies roll off and there's a small amount of filter ripple, which reduces treble energy and should help prevent the player sounding sharp. A slight lift across the midrange may well endow speech and vocals with extra presence, or it could introduce some glassiness. Only listening tests can determine what the subjective effect will be.

Like most MD recorders, the XM-228 produced little distortion across its dynamic range from 0dB to -90dB. Our analysis at -30dB shows an absence of distortion harmonics, the situation at all levels.

The player gives a healthy 1V output at 0dB, so it will work with any amplifier. The input sensitivity of 350mV is a little low; cassette decks commonly measured impedence and will draw current. Ideally it should be partnered with a chunky amplifier.

The m2.5 has a fine measured performance and should give a big, smooth sound. NK.
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MICHELL ISO HR phono stage. Mint condition, cost £850, £499. Tel: 0141 956 1440 (Sep(I)

AVI BIGGATRONS. Rave review speakers. 1 month old, genuine reason for sale, £525. Tel: 01246 434 822 (Chesterfield) (Sep(I)

PIONEER PDS703 CD player, little used, excellent sound, £75. DPA Littlebit DAC Mkl (£356) £80. DPA mains noise filter (£123) £50. Hitachi FT5500 tuner (£169) £30, old but good. Tel: 01526 320 513 (Lincoln) (Sep(I)

NAIM CD3, CD player mint condition with all original packaging and manuals. £575 ono. Tel: 0118 966 9889, e-mail: neil.goddard@virgin.net (Sep(I)

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TAG MCLAREN Audio PA20R pre and 2x125m monoblocks £2695 (£3900). Also T20 tuner £995 (£1100). Epos ES22 in light cherry £850 (£1350). All in immaculate condition and boxed. Tel: 01703 872 620 (Southampton) (Sep(I)

WANTED: QED T.S.22 speaker (TRI) stands. Tel: 0181 262 7568 evenings (Sep(I)

LINN SONDEK
LP12/Akito/K5. £445. Tel: 0121 355 0426 (Sep(I)

NOTTINGHAM ANALOGUE Interspace turntable, complete with Mission 774 arm and Nottingham Analogue Tracer One cartridge. Excellent condition and sound £400. Tel: 0121 344 3598 (Birmingham) (Sep(I)

NAIM 42 NAP 110 preamp/power amp £330 or ono. Tel: 01435 865 535 (E. Sussex) (Sep(I)

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EXPOSURE CD player, 18 months old, immaculate condition will demonstrate £500. Tel: Mr. Cartwright 0191 287 3365 after 7pm (Sep)

ALPHASON HR-100S-MCS tone arm wanted in good condition, Technics P205C Mk3 cartridge wanted or EPS-P205 ED3 stylus assembly. Tel: 01752 266 753 anytime (Sep(I)

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Martin Colloms
HI FI NEWS / RR March 97

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John Marks
Hi-Fi World July 1996

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build *****
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Dan Houston
WHAT HI-FI May 1997

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ARMSTRONG 625/6, Leak 2000 receivers £50 each. Revox G36 £295. QED SILTECH FTM4 Sg G3 interconnects, silver and gold strands - fantastic stuff! 2x half-metre pairs. WBT RCA plugs £350 per pair (£670). Stratos transparent high quality copper 1m pair interconnects £70 (£120). Lynwood Advanced mains cleaner £60. Tel: Jerry 01372 468 266 (Sep/I)

LINN ISOBARIK SPEAKERS, 4th order crossover, black, immaculate £975 ono. Tel: 0171 373 6175 (home) 0171 336 3632 (work) (Central London) (Sep/I)

SUGDEN AU41 PRE & POWER with phono 100w. Hi-Fi World favourite (£1000) £460. Musical Fidelity Ti digital tuner (£300) £80. Rega Elas (£500) £100. Quad 33/330 FM3 pre-power-tuner excellent condition with quality interconnect £160. Linn LP12 Valhalla Ittock LVII, Asak (MC) new motor and service £150 spent, superb condition (£2000) £420. Tel: 0161 762 9884 or 0797 0353 569 (Sep/I)

POLK RT8 SPEAKERS £400, complete refit by South Coast Speakers (Morel/Seas) £300 ono. Tel: Martin 0171 354 4228 (Sep/I)

EPOS ES14 speakers, black with Epos dedicated stands. Immaculate condition (not bi-wireable), original cartons, instructions. Will demonstrate £295. No offers. Tel: 01254 261 162 (Lancs) (Sep/I)

EPOS ES22 SPEAKERS, 1 month old, immaculate, cherry walnut veneer £770 (£1350) or swap recent cherry Naim Credos. Tel: Cedric 0181 691 0098 (Greenwich) (Sep/I)

LINN SONDEK LP12/Ittok/ Valhalla £275. Sonus Faber Concertino speakers c/w ADJ Ironwood stands vgc £500. Tel: R Burton 01403 250 570 after 6pm and weekends (W Sussex) (Sep/I)

SILTECH FTM4 Sg G3 interconnects, silver and gold strands - fantastic stuff! 2x half-metre pairs. WBT RCA plugs £350 per pair (£670). Stratos transparent high quality copper 1m pair interconnects £70 (£120). Lynwood Advanced mains cleaner £60. Tel: Jerry 01372 468 266 (Sep/I)

THETA DS PRO Basic III DAC £1375, Tel: 01984 629 086 (Sep/I)

NAIM SBL SPEAKERS, factory Mk2, black ash, excellent condition (new £2395) accept £725 ono. Naim 82 pre-amp, excellent condition, £1400 ono. Tel: 0370 893 531 (day), 0118 941 2221 (eve), Email: OSMco@aol.com (Sep/I)

GARDIN DE 401, SME, Pickering X2 7500S. Mission 752s, bi-amped to Arcam 290s, Akai GS65 cassette deck, Mana type wall rack, table, soundstages, LP collection over 700, not splitting. Tel: 01793 723 510 (Swindon) (Sep/I)


STUDER A810 (2 machines), OTAR MTR 10, MX505. Quarter-inch tape recorders. Otari stereo, Studers mono, all in excellent condition. £200 each or £750 the lot. Tel: 01883 717 633 or 0181 643 9466 (Sep/I)

GOLDRING LENCO 85/P/C turntable, immaculate condition £75. Cambridge TU55 tuner £45. Dynaco PAT4 transistor pre-amp £75. Leak Stereo 70 £60. QED 2-way speaker switches £10 each. Tel: 01372 467 264 (Surrey) (Sep/I)

XLO PRO BI-WIRE speaker cable, 2x 17ft, reluctant sale, genuine reason, £200. Tel: 01702 714 576 (Essex) (Sep/I)
### Compact Disc Players

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**ALL GOODS ARE NEW OR EX-DISPLAY UNLESS MARKED OTHERWISE**

**TEL:** 0181 336 0012  
**FAX:** 0181 336 2703  
**71 HIGH STREET, NEW MALDEN, SURREY, KT3 4BT.**
KEF MODEL ONE reference speakers in rosetta bargain, two years old, mint condition £695 or PX for Sonus Faber Concerto. Contact me for Nordost Red Dawn interconnects £160 mint. Tel: 01795 870 157 (Sep/I)

1 PAIR DYNALAB SDA 2.8 speakers, brand new made in USA, 200 watts, 39-22,000Hz frequency response, 13mm titanium dome tweeter. Selling for £29-22,000. Tel: 0181 575 1396 (Sep/I)

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-P100 + AS100, unopened new boxes, genuine reason £1000. VdH Cleartrack 2x7m (£220) £95. QED Silver Spiral interconnects 1m £40, 0.5m £30. QED Genesis 2x 7m (£450) £200. Denon TU260 Mk2 £85. Built KLS8, laminated yellow, sound & look superb £500. Tel: 0114 239 2797 (Sep/I)

ALPHASON HR100-S arm (needs re-wiring) on Alphonson Sonata turntable, bought 1990 £300 buyer collects. Tel: 01643 821 021 (Somerset) (Sep/I)

TANNOY THRESHAM SYSTEM, 2 amplifier 240 watts/channel, cost £650 in 1983 (receipt), perfect £200. Marantz DD82 digital cassette recorder, perfect, 5 tapes £85. Owner delivers. S. East. Tel: 01628 484 078 (S. Bucks) (Sep/I)

WANTED: BATTERY Power supply for Pink Triangle Anniversary turntable. Tel: 01224 483 642 (eves & wknds) or Fax: 01224 530 859 (Sep/I)

LOWTHER ACADEMY horn, piano black 2x PM7C each cabinet 98dB £1200 (£2200). Audion Silver Night, 300B push-pull monoblock, new valves £1100 (£2200). One owner, together £2000. Tel: 0181 743 0580 after 7pm (Sep/I)

TURNTABLE SYSTEMDEK IX900, black, vgc, sound, Roksan Burrr, two years old, mint £299. Tel: 01795 870 157 (Sep/I)

EAD 509 Mk2 100 watt monoblock valve power amps. HFC recommended £1250 (£3800). Tron Line Level remote volume pre-amp (valve), see rave review in HFN/RR, £1350 (£2200). £2450 together, great combination, swaps considered. Tel: Jerry 01372 468 266 (Sep/I)

QUAD 22, FM1, 2x QII, pair EL357, offers around £950 for the set. QED Discaver unused £20. SME 309Q/SLI improved, with spare headshell, unused since updated by SME £125. Can Opener £20. Goldring GL75 turntable, near new condition £75, another £15. Beyer DT990 headphones £70. Tel: 0113 257 7793 (Leeds) (Sep/I)

WOODSIDE ISA230 Integrated valve amp, mint condition, excellent sound £395. Tel: 01707 891 974 (Herts) (Sep/I)

AUDIOLAB 8000 DAC £400. Arcam Delta 250 transport, Black Box 50 £595. Audioquest Crystal + 2x 3m £80. Nordost Flatline Gold bi-wire 2x 2m £40. Audioquest Video2 0.5m £30. Tel: 01202 381 413 (Sep/I)

FOR SALE - DAUGHTER changed mind! Audiolab 8000C/P perfect (8000C warranty), cables, complete with Sound Organization 5 tier stand £550. Mana Soundframe, perfect £50. Buyer collects, no offers - priced to sell, all bills. Tel: Brian 0181 841 5782 (Northolt, Middx) (Sep/I)

MUSICAL FIDELITY 551 integrated amp MSR2 £500. Meridian 504 tuner £400. Rogers LS55 rosewood floor-standing speakers £200. Nordost Gold Flatline Bi-wire 2x 5m lengths £110. Tel: 01493 851 296 (Gt Yarmouth) (Sep/I)

AUDIONOTE OTO SE with phono stage, recent extensive service with Audionote, 12 months guarantee £800. Copland CSA 12 hybrid amp in excellent condition £550. Tel: 0141 571 3596 (Sep/I)

DYNALAB SIGNATURE REFERENCE SDA 2.8 speakers, 200W, 2x 8" 'High Modulus' bi-iam cone butyl surround woofers, 13mm titanium coated dome tweeters, crossover. New, boxed £650. For full specification Tel: 01635 871 656 evenings (Sep/I)

ATC SCM10 LOUDSPEAKERS, light ash, boxed, excellent condition £495. Tel: 01942 891 741 (Sep/I)

TWO LUMLEY STEREO valve amps VTA 1030 £695 each or £1200 the pair. Sheng Ya valve pre-amp £275. Pink Triangle Export with Rega arm £450. Musical Fidelity X-DAC £140. Tel: 0181 658 2490 (Sep/I)


ALPHASON HR1000MCS £300. TdP 'The Head' MC TX £300. Leak AM tuner TdP rebuild £150. Ortofon SPU Gold £150. Ortofon SPU Gold Reference £300. KEF LS3/5a piano L.E. £600. Tel: 01942 257 525 (Sep/I)

CELESTION A1 SPEAKERS, cherry with target R3 stands, best buy, highly recommended, five star, as new and boxed. (£1200) £725. Tel: 01992 626 138 (Herts) (Sep/I)

AUDIO RESEARCH D115 MkII power amp £1000. Audio Research LS3 pre-amp £1000. Both items immaculate. Magnaplanar MG28 speakers only £595. Regrettable sale due to buying a house. Tel: 0410 275 149 any-time (Sep/I)

SOUNDFILE BLACK GLOSS tripod stand, 4 glass shelves as new. NAD 302 amp. Marantz CD50SE. Akai 3-head cassette deck plus 15 dark grey acoustic foam tiles. Offers - all must go! Tel: 0181 974 8576 (Sep/I)

REL STADIUM SUB-WOOFER, 100 watt MOSFET power amp. Hifi World recommended. Cost £900 new, accept £395. Tel: 01635 387 686 (Sep/I)
ASSIVE SUMMER SALE

Thousands of pound's worth of second hand and ex-demonstration stock to be cleared this summer.

Our new demonstration room is now complete. The Serious Kit sound room has been acoustically designed to be as neutral as possible, so you can hear equipment at its very best, so book a dem.

The Serious Kit summer sale offers the best brands at give away prices - call us now so you won't be disappointed! Full list available.

SERIOUS KIT TEL. 0161 7989649
431Bury New Road Prestwich Manchester
By Appointment only.

JELEBRITY CABLES AT POPULAR PRICES!

Petros Blue and Stratos Series II interconnect cables are sold direct by Jack Lawson, proprietor of The Music Room and Audio Note Salon. At last, they break the 10% Rule in the need to spend at least 10% of the overall budget on interconnects in order to tap the potential performance of all your equipment. The cable design goal was universality: neutrality, detail, open sound, rather than any tonal character for bright or dull equipment.

The Petros Blue cables were designed to outperform the market leaders at £150 to £200, the Stratos cables are a recent full kit implementation of the same technology as evolved over three years leading to the Plus Silver level. From August 1, Stratos Series II uses phone plugs built to a new specification using a machined body (earth shield) and phosphor bronze centre pin, both with enhanced contact mechanisms and factory-coated and enhanced. The increased number and incredibly small strands (130 x 0.07mm) give the Stratos cable high bandwidth to ensure no resonance and harmonics, and certainly no roll off, at frequency extremes. High purity, low temperature cast (long crystal) copper is used as the equivalent cast in silver is poor quality metal yielding harsh unnatural signal even after extensive break-in.

AudioSource cables use expensive phone plugs machined from solid blocks (balanced cables use Swiss professional Neutrik XLR plugs) because folded metal stress- es the long grain crystals. Signal pins are phosphor bronze, gold plated without intermediary, and the Kontak cleaner and molecular pit filler (needs re-applied after about six months); they are spring loaded. Solder joins are silver using carefully discovered 3-T formula (temperature, time and technique). The time is more than mechanical bond but less than neatness level which etches the interface with solder chemicals. Except for the entry level PB, interconnects are dual leads with outer braid earthed at source or star configuration, and mechanically damped. RF and EMI are further rejected by intermediary coated foil wrap.

The performance is achieved at a quarter of the normal price because packaging and marketing adds about the same as the cost of build, and dealer margin plus VAT doubles this cost to the consumer again.

We have a large list of ex-dem and part-exchanged speaker cables and intercon- nects for anyone who has heard and wants to stay consistent with Audio Research, Audio Note, AudioQuest, Gryphon, Kimber, van den Hul, XLO Signature and indeed some of our own Petros/Stratos Series One interconnects. Please phone, fax, e-mail or visit our site for the current list. The savings are substantial. On the following, the savings are even greater: DON'T BE FooLED BY THE PRICE!

STEREO INTERCONNECTS per metre pair

Petros Blue £48 (for 0.5 metre, £40, per additional metre +£16)
Petros Blue +£58 (for 0.5 metre £52, per additional metre +£18)
Petros Blue + Silver £65 (for 0.5 metre £65, per additional metre +£18)
Stratos Series II £125 (for 0.5 metre, £105, per additional metre +£35)

DIGITAL

Petros Blue+ Silver £35 (for 0.5 metre, £26)
Stratos Series II £65 (for 0.5 metre, £40)
Prices include VAT but please add £2 for First Class post, or £4 for overnight carrier within UK.

Celebrity Cables at Popular Prices are at The Audio Note Salon, 5 Crown Terrace, Glasgow G12 9HA Scotland.

PHONE 0141-357 5700. FAX 0141-339 9762.
E-MAIL: jack@audiosource.co.uk The web is at www.audiosource.co.uk.
TUBE TECHNOLOGY
UNISIS integrated valve amplifier 35 watts, high spec valves, boxed, cost £2300 accept £1100, possible exchange for pre/power amplifier of similar value. Tel: 01803 297 691 (S Devon) (Sep(I)

NAIM 32.5 PRE-AMP £175. Naim 90 power amp £200. Naim Snaps power supply £120. Superb entry level system (£475) for the serious listener. Tel: John 0956 329 067 (Essex) (Sep(I)

AUDIO RESEARCH L 5.8 pre-amp £875. Krell KSA 150B power amp £1475. Unison Research Simply 4 valve integrated amp £725. All excellent condition with boxes. Tel: 01604 645 590 (Oct(I)

B&W P2s IN GOOD CONDITION £325. Nakamichi 700 Mk2 boxed £225. Musical Fidelity the pre-amp 2 £150. Quad 11s serviced by Quad £350. Technics EL-cassette deck and matching pre-amp £100. Wants: Decca London cartridges, Zeta arm. Tel: 01608 643 553 (evens) 01608 810 332 (day) (Sep(I)

NAIM NATO1 Tuner, Napst power supply, cable as new. Cost £1830 for sale £959 ovno. Tel: Chris 01293 603 189 (day) 01293 416 247 (evens) (Sep(I)

PM COMPONENTS MP-L15 Mk2 pre-amp with MP211A single-ended pure class A monoblocks. Cost £5000 asking £1695 boxed, re-advertised due to time-waster. Tel: 01904 763 157 (York) (Sep(I)

IMPULSE H6 HORN-LOADED speakers in light oak £400. Tel: 0181 449 4722 (Oct(I)

CABLE CLEAR-OUT 2x Chord Chorus 0.5m £85 each (£165). Chord Chameleon 2m £50 (£90). QED Silver Spiral 0.5m £40 (£78) vdh the Second 0.6m £100 (£185). Tel: 01703 872 620 (Sep(I)

LINN LP12 Valhalla excellent condition, boxed £299. Linn Akito arm £100. Linn Itlock arm £200. Linn K9 £30. Linn Asaka £49. 45rpm adaptor for LP12 £10. Tel: 01793 526 796 (Sep(I)

ACOUSTIC ENERGY AE11 (new tweeters) £375. Naim Hi-Cap new style £400. Naim 140 (power), new style £400. Naim 72 (pre), new style £375. All Naim items £1000. Tel: 01793 784 207 (Sep(I)

NAIM CDI PLAYER £825. Naim Credo speakers, latest cherrywood veneer £3750 asking £1695 ono. Tel: 01793 318 183 (Sep(I)

NORDOST RED DAWN interconnect 1 metre phono-to-phono £300 new will accept £160. Tel: 01574 277 129 (Sep(I)

EPOS ES22 speakers (new) £700, Myryad T40 amp £190, Rogers Avanti 625 speakers (new) £225. Rogers home cinema receiver £175, Audio Synthesis DSM DAC with power module £400. Tel: 01344 872 568 (Sep(I)

ALCHEMIST NEMESIS 80wpc integrated amp. Stunning sound and design. Three years old. Excellent £350. Proc Super Tablette speakers, vgc £165. A&R P77 cartridge, 6 months use £35. Tel: Chris 01420 88769 (Hampshire) (Sep(I)

NO GRILLS SAVE £250 Quad 77-10L loudspeakers, unused, mint condition, quality finish and sound £350. Chord Cobra DIN to phono (Naim) interconnect £20. Tel: Roy 01933 411 774 evenings (Northants) (Sep(I)

WHARFEDALE DOVEDALE 3 loudspeakers £30. John Bowers Active One loudspeakers. 3-way active floor-standers, cost £1500, will accept £450 ono. Quad 500 monoblocks, perfect working order £190. Small Sony amp 30watts/ch £25. Technics S-EA5 Mk2 150watt power amp £350 ono. WANTED: Trio L Series separates, working or not. Also Sansui flagship direct drive turntable. Tel: Jon 0181 904 8023 (Sep(I)

PIONEER A300R Precision with Tom Evans modification £299. Rotel 971 CD player £275. Moth Active preamp £180. DN1 610/680 pre + monoblocks, brand new £895. SME 309 tonearm £450. Tel: 01582 724 414 (Sep(I)

RESTEK CONCRET CD Player £750. Lumley Reference ST70 power amp, chrome £750. LV1 pre-amp black/chrome £250. SD Acoustics SD4 speakers £250. All items boxed and excellent condition. Tel: 0116 281 1736 (Sep(I)

NAIM (ALL Old Style) 32 pre-amp, 140 power amp £500. Naxo 2-4 crossover + Avondale PSU £300. NAT 101 tuner + SNAPs PSU £375. Linn Isobaikins + stands £650. Tel: 01484 688 331 (Sep(I)

JOHN SHEARNE Phase 2 integrated amplifier, pristine condition £295. Tel: 0121 733 1961 weekly days after 6pm or weekend. (Sep(I)

MAGNUM DYNALAB FTII FM tuner £350. Rogers LS3/5A new £500. Copland CTA401 mint £1000. Copland CTA 505 mint £1500. Teac VRDS 7 £150. Lin Lan stands £50. Tel: 0181 856 1047 (Sep(I)

LINN AKITO (mint) latest model £125. Linn K9 cartridge £25. Superb combination. Tel: 0956 329 067 (Sep(I)

J HORN Loudspeakers fitted with Lowther DX3 units, 1 month old, superb sounding, light oak finish £1500 (retail for £2700) Tel: 0181 994 2030 after 6pm (Sep(I)

BRYSTON BP25 pre-amp (MC), pair of 7B monoblocks, 3 years old, as new condition £3200. Denon DN 790R cassette deck, little used 6 months £400. Tel: 01295 780 363 or 0831 809 346 (Sep(I)

MUCH LOVED Pair Musical Fidelity P180 power amps, each with CPSRS - power subtlety, superb imaging - a true classic £1100. MM pre-amp (MM/MC) £150. Both mint with boxes. Tel: Alan 01372 463 910 (Sep(I)

CABLE CLEAR-OUT 2x Chord Chorus 0.5m £85 each (£165). Chord Chameleon 2m £50 (£90). QED Silver Spiral 0.5m £40 (£78) vdh the Second 0.6m £100 (£185). Tel: 01703 872 620 (Sep(I)

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LINN AKITO (mint) latest model £125. Linn K9 cartridge £25. Superb combination. Tel: 0956 329 067 (Sep(I)
The Audio Note Salon is a five-demo room consultancy located in the Glasgow's tranquil west end, but with a national and international clientele. Continuing the Music Room, founded in 1979, it is one of the few dealerships dedicated to optimising systems and investments in stereophony.

Unfortunately, the industry is overwhelmed by myths. Certain manufacturers are favoured for reasons which are not the best. The dedication of the pre-eminent valve and transistor manufacturers, AUDIO NOTE and MARK LEVINSON are our major agencies and pre-occupations. We do not sell ourselves by lengthy and impressive agency lists, and our demo rooms aim to make it immediately obvious why we will not compromise in order to sell the favour or flavour of the month.

None of our rooms have treated acoustics nor dedicated mains (in fact both are very poor) but we match equipment with care, and we use quality cables. We are as guilty as many in neglecting equipment supports, but two recent products, both extremely cost-effective, have introduced the audio equivalent of spectacular improvement. From Stands Unique, the new RMS floor support (6 shelves of 10mm glass) sound as good as it looks. The ifull hifi system comes in at £1,400 but it is so amazing that you realise that before you were listening to your hi-fi table, or whatever. Isolated by the new carbon fibre ibig feeti replacing spikes etc, the pre-stressed carbon fibre upstanders are shrouded in natural timber. They support the shelves by SUís amazing carbon stars and brass cones, and play a major role in the essential role of earthing static from equipment cases. Phone or write for full details.

Especially in USA the benefit of air bearings and air sus-pense platforms have been extremely influential. And expensive. Now Townshend Audio are manufacturing in Britain, we can enjoy the high technology at low prices. Their latest product is their best to date in a long line of excellence. The Seismic Sink platforms for turntables and CD Players operate in vertical and horizontal planes with low yaw. The result is probably the most cost-effective SHOCK enhancement from any accessory. You will not be disappointed is an understatement. We hastily placed a delinquent turntable half-set-up and the platform focussed and naturalised the sound to the extent that all jaws dropped, and we looked at each other in disbelief. The price is £230. If you want the ultimate, we have an unused Vibraplane for £1,500 with Jun-Air compressor (list price £2,400). See US reviews or phone for details.

## ANALOGUE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>List Price</th>
<th>New Price</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Systemdek IIX (walnut) with Linn LVX and MM cartidge Perfect</td>
<td>£740</td>
<td>£250</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goldmund STUDIO turntable No box</td>
<td>£4,757</td>
<td>£1,150</td>
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<tr>
<td>Linn Ittok tonearm Boxed</td>
<td>£429</td>
<td>£199</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vibraplane active air support with Jun-air pump, up to 275lbs, itself weights 147lbs, the most serious analogue platform conceived for electron microscopes.Unused</td>
<td>£2,420</td>
<td>£1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIGITAL Theta Data II CD Transport and Pro Gen III DAC with fully bal and AT&amp;T enhancements. Along with ML 31/30 the Reference; review reprints available. Priced to sell, not by true worth. Boxed Perfect</td>
<td>£9,730</td>
<td>£3,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audiolab (now IAG) CDM8000 transport and latest 8000DAX significantly upgraded by AudioCom (details and parts list available) Boxed Perfect</td>
<td>£3,100</td>
<td>£1,350</td>
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## SPEAKERS

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<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>List Price</th>
<th>New Price</th>
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<tr>
<td>Audio Note KEGON Hand-made pathfinding amplifier, dual 303B, magisterial, priced to sell POA</td>
<td>£18,500</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>KRELL KAV300I absolutely mint, 2 years old Boxed</td>
<td>£2,499</td>
<td>£1,599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Levinson 10-A Pre-amp with phono stage, top of the tree at this reduced price? It is true! Mint</td>
<td>£2,400</td>
<td>£1,099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonic Frontiers Line One remote fully tube pre-amp, super company, very distinguished product, sexy style! Mint</td>
<td>£2,499</td>
<td>£950</td>
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## AMPLIFIERS

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>List Price</th>
<th>New Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conrad-johnson Premier 14 r/c, line pre-amp, vacuum tube legend, rare opportunity, very new Mint, Box</td>
<td>£4,495</td>
<td>£2,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chord SP41200B Amp (black) 250 wpc as new, hardly run-in Mint, box</td>
<td>£3,790</td>
<td>£2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gryphon Limited 75/100, State of the Art Pre-amp with phono stage, dual monoblock construction, musically right, convincing. One for £3,500 Mint boxed</td>
<td>£6,500</td>
<td>£2,750</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Audio Physic Virgo 2 Birds Eye Maple, one of the world's great speakers, unique opportunity, may be auditioned in London area Mint | £3,390     | £1,990    |
| Dynaudio 1.8 Contour, superior Mk I (not ported) in light oak Mint | £2,195     | £995      |
| ProAc Response Two, mahogany, wonderful speaker! Fine, s/h | £1,670     | £799      |
| PSB Status Mini n Stereophile award 1997 design, Piano Lacquer with stands, first time in UK! Mint Review pair | £1,390     | £690      |
| Wilson Watt/Puppy Tail by NBS (Statement) Perfect | £3,750     | £1,500    |
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**Special Internet offer**
see page 154 for details

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**WANTED - EARLY HI-FI LOUDSPEAKERS**
Tannoy, Lowther, Pardewco, Voigt, Vitavox, RCA WE etc.

**TURN TABLES**
Garrard, BBC201, EMT SME, Ortofon, Decca, etc.

**VALVE AMPLIFIERS**
AEI, EMJ, Leak, Rogers, PYE, Quad, WE etc.

**AUDIO VALVES**
DA30, KT66, KT88, PX4, PX25, PP3/350, WE300

**CLEAN CRYSTAL SYSTEMS**
John Petrie Baker
Tel: 0171 328 9275

**BUY-SELL-EXCHANGE.**
Vintage wireless and classical audio. Repairs, spares, restoration, modification to all valve equipment. Quad II, Leaks etc, shipped worldwide, best prices, call us at 17 Bell Street, NW1 5BY.

Tel: 0171 258 3448
Tel/Fax Arkless Engineer. Tel/Fax Arkless

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**ARCAM DELTA £299/2499, Cyrus III £299, Cyrus SL display £299, Exposure Super 20 £449, Mission 752F £299, Pink Triangle FTTO/FXTA £499, Quad 34/405 £379, Ruark Talsman2 £399, Sony DTC90ES (DAT) £429. Tel: 01733 897 697 (Sep(I))**


**STUDER A812, VU trolley, 12.5 NAB, 4-speed £17,000 new £1600. A tape recorder for the price of a Revox. Tel: 01246 235 024, Fax: 01246 550 421 (Sep(I))**

**STUDIO EVIDENCE:**
Acoustic Energy AE1 II (piano black) + stands £899 AE2 II (Santos rosewood) + stands £1399. Castle Avon (Santos rosewood) £595. Kendal (walnut) £299. Denon AVC2800 £409.

**EX-DEMONSTRATION:**
WADIA CD16, 3 years old, boxed, manual £2950 (E7350pp). Audio Research SP9 MkI, immaculate £1200 ono. Quad 406 MkII £170. Denon DRS 810 cassette deck (rp new £300) £130. Pioneer CT 443 cassette deck, bargain, black GX Pro etc £150. B&W DM110 speakers £60. Taba Labs interconnect 1m £250 (rp£650). Krell KSA 50 MkII, immaculate £1200 ono. Arcam Alpha 6 amp/Arcam 5 CD/Arcam Alpha 7 tuner £550. Tel: Jules 01792 280 061 (Sep(I))

**IMPROVE THE MUSICALITY of your system with a pair of in-line attenuators that remove CD to amp input overload. £20/pair plus P&P. Tel: Grant 01792 280 061 (Sep(I))**

**ROGERS SPEAKERS (and ex-demo) still for sale, massive discounts. Studio 9 £15£, Studar 350. Studio 5 £250, BBC, Gold and LS ranges available. E40A valve amps £1000. Spares and servicing. Mitcham Loundspeakers Tel: 0181 648 0743 or 01344 672 568 (Sep(I))**

**CASTLE LOUDSPEAKERS**
New. Discounts available. Deliver Anywhere UK. Please telephone for details. First Days Hi-Fi Fidelity Ltd (Est 1972), 12 Islington Row, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 ILD Tel: 0121 455 6667. Tues-Sat 10.30-6.00 (Sep(I))

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**NO VINTAGE! No New! But lots inbetween, 70’s and onwards hi-fi. Phone for stock information. 0181 590 2890. Essex Sound & Vision, 762 High Road, Goodmayes, Ilford, Essex IG3 8SY. Mail Order Available. (Jan00(I))**

**THE “PICKUP” SERIES 1-5 cartridges. A range of quality analogue devices. For further details contact; Lake Audio. Tel/Fax: 01209 613 733 (Sep(I))**

**EX-DEMONSTRATION:**
WADIA CD16, 3 years old, boxed, manual £2950 (E7350pp). Audio Research SP9 MkI, immaculate £1200 ono. Quad 406 MkII £170. Denon DRS 810 cassette deck (rp new £300) £130. Pioneer CT 443 cassette deck, bargain, black GX Pro etc £150. B&W DM110 speakers £60. Taba Labs interconnect 1m £250 (rp£650). Krell KSA 50 MkII, immaculate £1200 ono. Arcam Alpha 6 amp/Arcam 5 CD/Arcam Alpha 7 tuner £550. Tel: Jules 01792 280 061 (Sep(I))

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**ROGERS LS66 stand mounting and LS88 floor standing speakers. Brand new and boxed. Last versions of classic LS6 and LS8 designs in black and rosewood. LS66 priced £150 pair, LS88 £200 pair. Save around 60% on list! Don’t wait, call Mitcham Speakers 0181 648 0743 (Sep(I))**

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**CASTLE LOUDSPEAKERS**
New. Discounts available. Deliver Anywhere UK. Please telephone for details. First Days Hi-Fi Fidelity Ltd (Est 1972), 12 Islington Row, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 ILD Tel: 0121 455 6667. Tues-Sat 10.30-6.00 (Sep(I))

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**IMPOR...**
**HI-FI WORLD CLASSIFIED ADS ORDER FORM**

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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<tr>
<td>Private: Display Black Box - Free Internet</td>
<td>£15.00 per month</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trade: Free Internet</td>
<td>£10.00 per month</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trade: Display Black Box - Free Internet</td>
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**Name**

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I enclose cheque/postal order for £ Made payable to: Audio Publishing Ltd.

Please debit my VISA/MASTER/SWITCH CARD Card No.

**Expiry Date**

**Cardholders Signature**

Send this form together with your payment to: Hi-Fi World Classified Ads., Audio Publishing Ltd, Suite F21, Imex House, The Park Business Centre, Kilburn Park Road, London, NW6 5LF.

**DEADLINE FOR OCTOBER 1999 ISSUE IS FRIDAY 6TH AUGUST 1999**
"For me, this is truly the ultimate desert island loudspeaker..."
Jack English, Stereophile, volume 19 no. 5.

"I am comfortable in saying that, to this point, these are the best speakers I have ever heard. I love them..."
Johnathan Scull, Stereophile, volume 21 no. 4.
Behind beauty...

...lies technological elegance.

Real wood veneers:-
From sustainable European forests

Spring loaded tweeter:-
Ensuring clarity through isolation.

Sculptured 35mm Medite baffle:-
Maximum rigidity without reflective surfaces

Aerogel:-
Lightness with carbon fibre rigidity.