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DIY Supplement
No47 inside
this issue

SEPTEMBER 1999 £2.60

World

DVD DYNAMITE

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DVD-2500
VS
Pioneer's
DV-717



AND ALSO:
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TURNTABLE

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SEPTEMBER 1999



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MVL

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World Radio History



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SYSTEMS



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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.

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..



Simon Pope

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.



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



GOOD -
 Has strong merit. Well worth an audition.



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



POOR -
 Seriously flawed. Not worth considering.

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T3 June 1999

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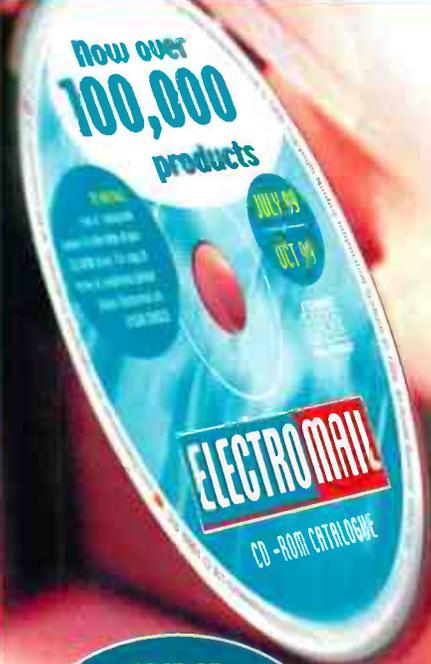
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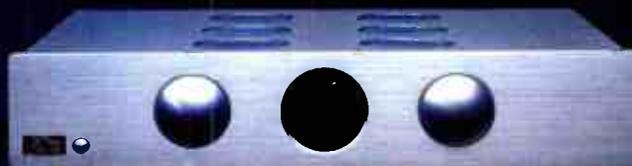
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K5



K1 HE

from £449....



UP THE A3

IN a radical move away from cylinders 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 pre-amp and remote control stages also 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 outputs, 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 supplied. 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



LOG ENTRY

MAKING its debut as we write is Ruark's latest subwoofer, the Log-Rhythm. Intended primarily to go hand in glove with the company's Prologue, Dialogue and Epilogue AV speakers, the sub's main ingredients are a 100watt power amp, a 12in. driver and an enclosure of 25mm MDF.

On the control side there is an active filter which includes low as well as high-level inputs, a variable roll-off frequency, a phase invert switch and a choice of hi-fi

and home theatre modes. Extras that don't come as standard in the £750 asking price are a pair of clip-on wood-veneered side panels (£75) and a set of four cone feet (£50).

Ruark
 59 Tailors Court,
 Temple Farm Ind. Estate,
 Southend-on-Sea,
 Essex SS2 5TH
 Tel: 01702 601410



THROUGHOUT THE AEGIS

THIS is Acoustic Energy's award winning Aegis Series' new flagship 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



BLUR.ORG.UK

5000 titles mastered and abroad and which were 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



TABLETTE 2000

NOT a cure for millennial hangovers but ProAc's replacement for their Tablette 50 Signature stand mounters. Dimensionally, old and new may be identical, but the 2000 Signatures have a more heavily-built box with extra internal damping. The mid/bass

is a custom 6.5in. unit with a copper magnet assembly and phase plug. Copper crops up again in the crossover where OFC multi-strand cabling links the audio-grade components to the shielded drivers. And the cost? £899.



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



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)

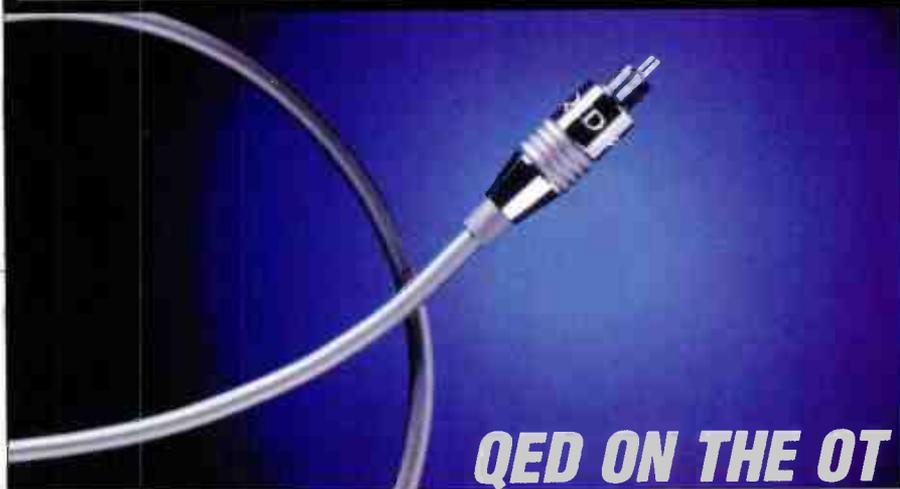
JOHN Wright, founder of TDL and a member of the **Audio Engineering Society**, died on 1st of June. Born 60 years ago on the 11th May to parents who were music teachers, John was involved initially in music too, but then moved on into audio and became the joint-owner of a company importing microphones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

TDL ELECTRONICS

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.

BIG-BOX BASS

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.

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 a-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-A1 fed by a Teac P-30 transport and Alchemist TS-D-1 24-bit Digital-to-Analogue converter.



WHARFEDALE DIAMOND 7.2

£149.95

ORIGINALLY intended as a limited edition and priced at £199.99, the Anniversaries are now in full production and, like the Heylettes, 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 Heylettes, the Wharfedales delivered a more spacious sound that was also a touch treble prominent. *Lucky* by **Radiohead** showcased the Anniversaries' sound stage width and focused imaging, **Thom Yorke's** distinctive whine precisely located.

Some of the Diamonds' weaknesses started to appear when **Skunk Anansie** were brought to bear. The midrange took a back seat to the fre-

quency extremes, which left the guitars back in the sound stage and the snare lacking in impact, although both remained tight and rhythmic. The backing strings were well-defined and full-toned to give a broader picture and fuller sound to the mix.

Letting jazz saxophonist **Benny Waters** find his way *Out Of Nowhere*, the Diamonds lagged with a rather crude presentation compared to some of our other reviews. As we're all very familiar with this CD, we were surprised at the way these 'speakers threw odd notes out with undue prominence from time to time, a peculiar effect and one which could easily become fatiguing.

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 No1 spot is beyond the Diamonds.

ACOUSTIC ENERGY AEGIS ONE

£149.95

AS we worked our way through the stand mounters, the protagonists got progressively larger and heavier. The Aegis One has a solid front baffle which houses a silk-dome tweeter and a white, alloy mid/bass unit in an eye-catching combination.

They may not be bi-wire ready, but these big-sounding 'speakers had a winning way from the word go. **Skunk Anansie's** aural onslaught, especially the hard-core Rap/Metal of *Milk Is My Sugar*, powered out impressively. The price to pay came in vocals that were occasionally sibilant and hard, but at least the heavy guitar lines drove along in real Rock 'n' Roll fashion. **Diana Krall's** dulcet tones, on the other hand, showed precious little sign of overstepping the mark on 's' sounds. Indeed, Miss Krall's sometimes too-serious approach came across as cheeky and endearing, a much more satisfying overall result!

Benny Waters and his Jazz

pals in Stockholm allowed the Aegises to show off their prowess when it came to acoustic music. The old master's breathy tone was beautifully portrayed and made listening a genuine pleasure, not something which can be said of many budget transducers.

The **Stravinsky** left us in no doubt that the AEs couldn't resist a bit of rhythm and percussion. The bass drum was taut and focused, and that metal mid/bass picked up some low frequencies that were well beyond the other hopefuls in this test. Less of a success was imaging, as was the case with the Heybrooks, and again the treble could harden up on trumpets and percussion.

The Aegis Ones are weighty, powerful performers with plenty of character to their presentation. They may not be the smoothest performers around but they handle scale like few other stand mounters. The AEs are exceptional value for money and deserve serious consideration.



TANNOY MERCURY M2.5

£159.90

THESE are the big boys amongst the stand mount line-up with their hefty cabinets. Tannoy haven't skimped 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

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.

HEYBROOK HEYLETTE

£199

WE first reviewed these revised models in June '98 when they tipped the scales at £270. Since then, Heybrook has become part of Audio Group International and the price has dropped to £199, which pits the Heylettes against a very different set of competitors.

Where these 'speakers haven't changed is size - they had the smallest dimensions of all our group test participants, so we weren't expecting a 'big' presentation from them. While scale wasn't their strong point, on *Brazen* by **Skunk Anansie** what the Heybrooks did demonstrate was a detailed and open midrange with well-focussed guitar and clean vocals, something of a rarity in this price bracket.

Shifting to a jazz setting, the Heybrooks showed themselves to have by no means the deepest bottom-end around, but one that was extremely tuneful, especially on plucked double-bass. A rather different track, *Lucky* by **Radiohead**, confirmed their

calibre, the firm bass guitar set against the sweet cymbals of the drum kit.

Imaging is a typically stand-mount strong point, but the Heybrooks were strangely reticent here on more modern music. They had a tendency to lump instruments together in the middle of the sound stage and compress their dynamics when it came to Rock and Jazz.

A return to the Heylettes' home ground of Classical fare found them in happier mood. **Stravinsky's** *Firebird Suite* showed they were capable of a broader spread of tonal colour and dynamic subtlety than they had previously hinted at. The orchestra sounded bright and vibrant, with all the frequencies evenly balanced, in spite of the fact that the performers still suffered from being box-bound.

The Heylettes are better suited to Classical than blistering Rock or Heavy Metal. Refined music fits their mellow character perfectly, their smooth sound one which will still appeal to many.



ultimate

RICHARD ALLEN MINETTE 3

£159

THERE'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-firing port for the size of the cabinet.

Tonally 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, some-

thing 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 the 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 either 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 702e

£199

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 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.



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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** *Fifa* 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:

	Centre point	-3dB freq
Stand Mounters		
Wharfedale Diamond 7.2	55	47
Heybrook Heylette	61	42
AE Aegis 1	50	35
Tannoy Mercury m2.5	35	21
Floor Standers		
TDL Nucleus 3	45	34
Mission 702e	50	25
RA Minette	55	47
Eltax Liberty 5+	42	21

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 Tannoys sounded deep, bearing out our measurements, and so did the Eltax and Mission loudspeakers. Both had broad port tuning that should, in theory, have exerted good bass damping, but they did sound a little boomy in places. Floor interaction can play a part in this.

Actually, not all of the Eltax cabinet volume is utilised to load the bass unit; the bottom section has a chamber for sand or lead-shot mass loading. This idea works well, but the extra weight makes a loudspeaker almost impossible to move after it has been filled.

Incidentally, in the interests of containing transport costs, inexpensive cabinets tend to be light, which is fine if they are braced well. If they're not, expect more panel coloration from a big loudspeaker than a small one. A rap with the knuckles on a side panel warns of the problem, although it isn't conclusive.

Plumbing the big bass depths is just one part of the equation. Remember that there are trade-offs and compromises, the eternal juggling act which constitutes the art of loudspeaker design. Here are our conclusions.

TANNOY'S m2.5s 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 Tannoys.

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 Tannoys 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.



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V FOR VICTORY?

Jon Marks travels to the format front-line with JVC's XM-228 MiniDisc recorder.

“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 phonos 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 rhythmic drive.

The more ‘twang and thump’ **Rock of The Presidents** 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
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WORLD VERDICT

Will build recorder that's good but not exceptional.

Measured Performance see page 119

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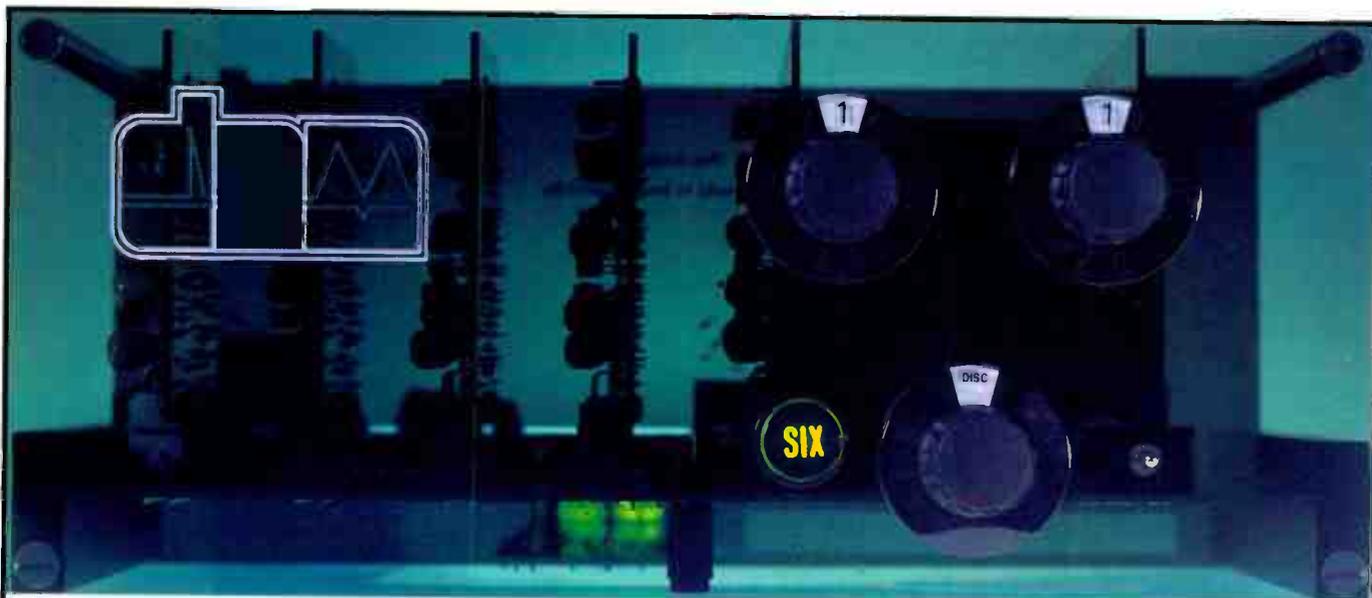
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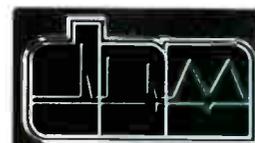
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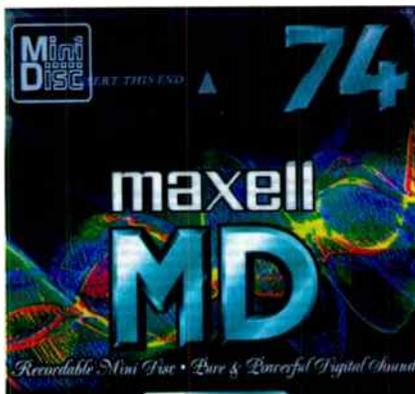
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MD ROUND-UP

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

MAXELL MD74

£N/A



THIS 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.

HISPACE MD74

£2.50



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.

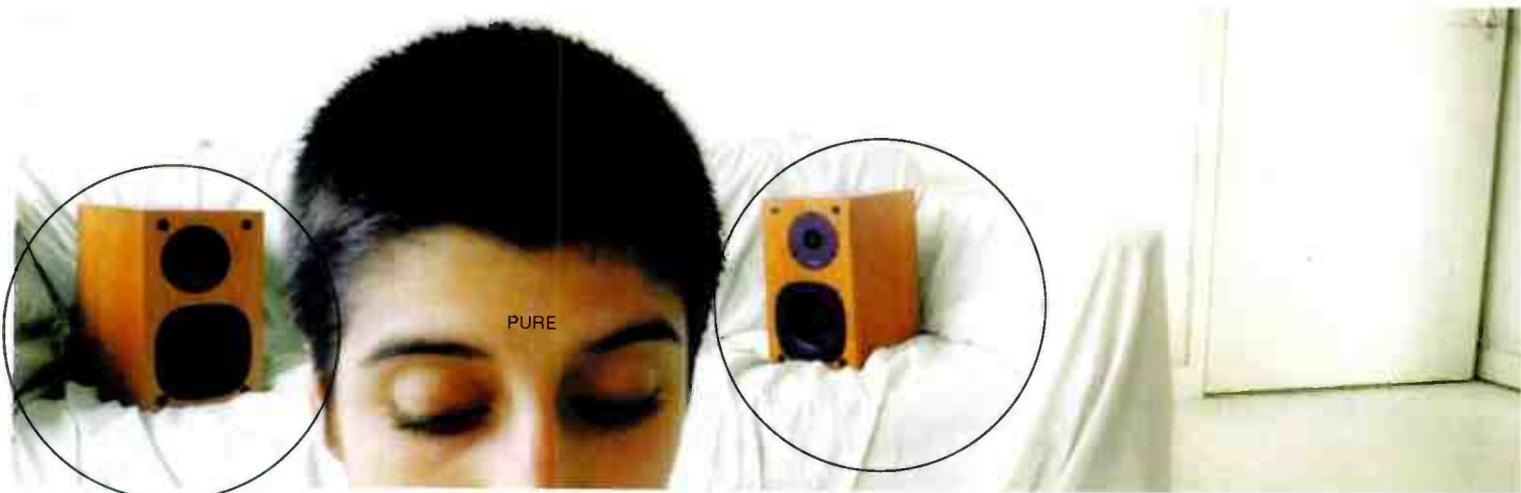
SONY PREMIUM 80

£N/A



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?

Sonically, 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



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TA VERY MUCH

Jon Marks turns Teutonic with the CD 1210 R CD player from German company T+A.

THERE aren't too many hi-fi companies who hide their lights under bushels - read most of their marketing blurb and you'd think their components were the best in the universe. T+A have managed to take the hype a step further in their brochure, though, where they describe the CD 1210 R CD player as "a priceless investment - for eternity." Well, it had better be good then!

This machine certainly feels the part; its thick-gauge steel chassis weighs 6.5kgs. and flexes about as much as a lump of concrete. There are no obvious corners cut inside either, where shielding for circuit sections and vibration decoupling hint at plenty of time and effort in the development of the internals.

Dealing with the conversion of digits to analogue are two Delta-Sigma devices working in double-differential mode. And like Sony in their more recent digital offerings, the T+A comes with a choice of five filters (selectable from the fascia) thanks to the use of DSP chips.

IT'S EASY to become jaded after so much equipment fails to live up to the hype, but you might not think even quotes like T+A's "priceless ornament CD 1210 R" too wide of the mark when you hear this player. Having settled on filter 3 after a long session of chopping and changing, I have to say this is an extremely vivid, life-like and involving player.

A couple of artists who rarely come alive on CD are **Jimi Hendrix** and **Miles Davis** - most machines lack the subtlety, dynamics and musicality to cut the mustard with these two. The 1210 had no trouble at all with either, portraying Davis' *Miles Ahead* album with a terrific spaciousness and realism. And where a lot of number crunchers fail abysmally to capture the impact and power of brass instruments especially, the T+A succeeded in putting the rasp and blare into trumpets without adding any artificial hardness or grain.

The sheer grooving ability evident on *Miles Ahead* came to the fore on a pair of more recent releases, **Red Snapper's** *Making Bones* and **Asian Dub Foundation's** *Rafi's Revenge*. The low-down grunt and drive on these Drum 'n' Bass masterpieces took me back to the days of top-notch Multi-bit converters, while the midrange and treble were conspicuously devoid of the nasties often associated with this older technology.

CONFIRMING THE T+A's finesse was **Suzanne Vega's** *Nine Objects Of Desire*. Her smoky tones on *Caramel* lost none of their knee-trembling ability, and this number's acoustic had a holographic clarity that highlighted just how flat the sound staging on your average player is. However, the characteristic that lifted the 1210 R's performance above the masses' was the way it could resolve the sort of low-level detail and tiny dynamics which make music convincing. This endowed the vocals of the American songstress with that rare articulation which has the power to move.

If you're going to lash out £1200 on a player, you've every right to expect something special. The T+A delivers - no doubts - no quibbles. Denon's DCD-S10 MkII and the superb but very analytical DVD-5000 are close in terms of price, but in spite of being strong performers in their own right, the CD 1210 R moves to the head of the class.

T+A CD 1210 R £1150

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.

Measured Performance see page 135



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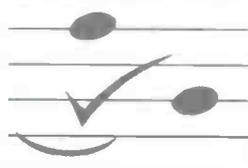
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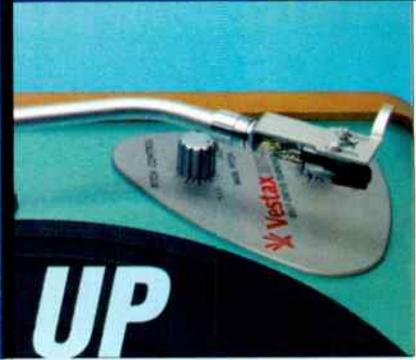
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BELTING UP

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 puchy 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
(inc. MM cartridge)

Vestax
18 St Christopher's Road,
Haslemere,
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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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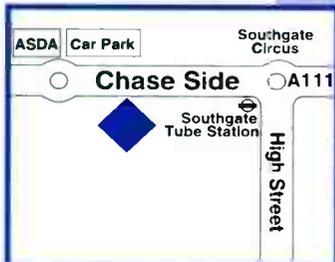
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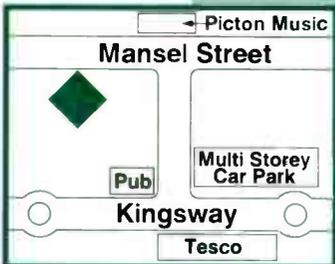
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HALF-A-GRAND STAND

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 SMGs, 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-discernable 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.



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WORLD VERDICT

PIONEER DV-717 £550
 Detailed and sweet-sounding, the DV-717 brings out the best in most discs. Not the last word in neutrality.

DENON DVD-2500 £499.99
 Fine with Classical but too warm and relaxed to appeal to fans of Rock and Dance.
 Measured Performance see page 135



WIN A DVD AN HDCD OR A DAC

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 top-end 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'être 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-



**Sony
PBD-V30
£700**



**OBH-14
£240**

OR MD PORTABLE, CD PLAYER, WORTH £1500



**Sharp
MD-MS722H
£230**

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.

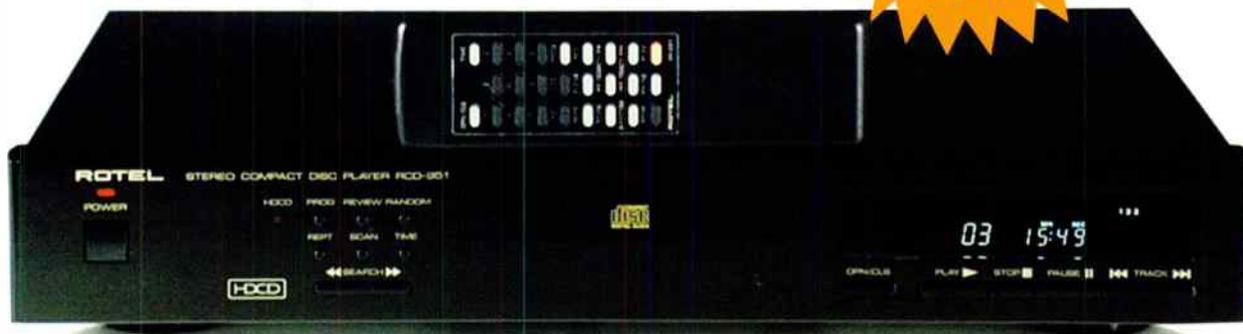
To enter, answer the questions below correctly and then complete the following tie-breaker in no more than 30 words. Stick the form, or a photocopy of it, on the back of (not inside) a sealed envelope or postcard and send it to the address below by September 6th:

September Competition
Hi-Fi World Magazine,
Suite F29, Imex House,
Kilburn Park Road,
London NW6 5LF



**Rotel
RCD-951
£300**

P.S. Please say which prize you'd like!



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 221B C. AKM 609B
B. Burr-Brown PCM-59A D. Buster-Rhymes 666

COMPETITION VERSE (obligatory)

Complete the following in fewer than 30 words

We've got prizes for a . . . Sony holiday,

Enter now to win a . . . Creek or two;

Fun with Sharp'll keep you . . . smilin' - what d'you say?

Or else a gem from Rotel will do . . . to make your dreams come true . . .

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. Congratulations!





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HIFI WORLD

Power Struggle



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.

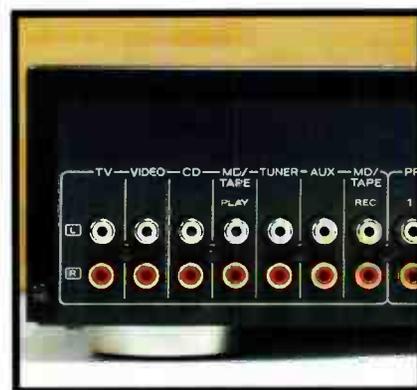
What differentiates this little £180 integrated from the masses is its Uni-factor power supply (see p39 for a technical explanation). Less mould-breaking are the bypassable Treble, Bass and Balance, the five line-level inputs, single MD/tape loop and Pre Out/Power In sockets.

ON PAPER THE A-E2000 looks highly

promising. To find out if it could fulfil 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.

Depth of sound stage isn't something sub-£200 amps are renowned for, but the Teac turned out to be a real corker in this respect. Even wholly electronic productions such as **Grace Jones' *Slave To The Rhythm*** single had an enviable front-to-back layering of the individual tracks within the song. This clarity paid dividends in the scale stakes too, as the sonic pyrotechnics blasted out of the 'speakers with real force.

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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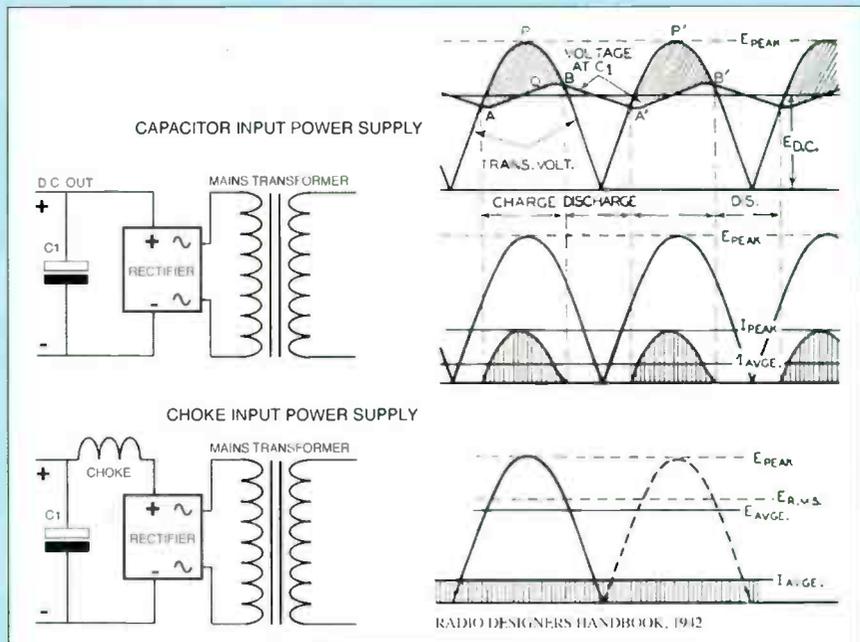
TEAC POWER SUPPLY

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.

This type of supply is common in valve amplifiers. Although Teac do not use it - and they provide no circuit to show what they do use - they may well capture some of the properties of a good valve amplifier in the A-E2000 by using a modern equivalent that draws current smoothly and continuously from the mains.

had convincing tonal colour and harmonics rather than spit and unnatural brightness.

The so-far happy storyline changed direction, however, as our ears tuned into the midrange and bass. On lightweight listening like Eric Bibb's *Saucer And Cup*, where there should have been his voice hanging almost tangible between the 'speakers, the Teac left a fine veil over the signal. And down below 100Hz, double-bass (which is so often the undoing of less expensive gear) was slower and looser than the rest of the music, which had a knock-on effect on pace and drive. Bearing in mind the £180 price tag, though, the Teac was par for the course in these areas, which was a bit of a let-down next to its winning sound stage transparency and treble finesse.



On denser mixes, the A-E2000 did a better job of disguising its foibles. As had been the case with Grace Jones, when this amp had a wall-of-sound tune to get stuck

into, the sheer weight of sound emerging from the KLS9s meant the shortcomings got buried in the proceedings. If you're getting the idea that the Teac suits **Garbage** more than string quartets or minimalist Blues, then you're heading in the right direction.

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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LETTER OF THE MONTH

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
s.kleidarias@lancaster.ac.uk

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



Listening backwards; our top tip for left-eared listeners!

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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-3020SE 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 with an XTC Pre-1 pre-amp 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' prodigious bottom-end. The best bet is to try it and see, but there's no guarantee of success.

Sitting close to three-way 'speakers could cause another hiccough with driver integration. While two-ways can be designed so that mid/bass and tweeter output blend together well for a listening spot only a metre or two away, doing the same for a 'speaker with three drivers is much tougher.

If, in spite of all the above, you discover the NS1000s fit snugly into your room, 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

Check out a free Ringmat Statmat in your CD player.



▲ It may not be the youngest player on the block, but Marantz's CD-63 mkII KI-Signature remains an outstanding performer.

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
peterream@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

For a major performance lift, fit free Chord Company Siren cables.

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BUY THE POWER OF BOTTLES?

Having heard a friend's valve amplifiers recently, I am almost convinced that this would make an exciting upgrade to my system. At the moment my neighbours are complaining about a Linn Sondek/Lingo/Ittok/Blue Sapphire and Linn Mimik II running through an old Exposure X amp driving a pair of

Acoustic Energy AE109s.

What sounds appealing, in theory, is a remote control pre-amp, maybe from Linn, and a valve power amp in front of the AE109s. Would this sound smoother than a complete Linn pre/power combination?

The sound from my current system is good, but sometimes it's just too 'loud', and I'm having problems with excessive bass. The 'speakers are 80cms. from the wall and, in a room 4m by 5m, it does get a bit bloaty! I'm tully prepared to change both amp and 'speakers, if necessary, to obtain a smooth, musical sound using valves.

John Dickins
jd@photo.pentax.co.uk

P.S. I can't believe that the automatic spell-checker on my e-mail package wants to change "Sondek" to "Sundeck"! The cheek of it!

If you're having bass difficulties, switching to a valve power amp is unlikely to make things better. Unless they're working into fairly easy loads, most valve amps have a looser bot-

tom-end than transistorised alternatives, so going thermionic with your '109s would just exacerbate the current situation.

When it comes to amplification, I suspect you'd get superior results by reversing the positions. Croft's Micro has the sort of smoothness you're currently seeking, even if it doesn't have remote control. Another thing to bear in mind is that valve pres have highish output impedances, so they should be partnered with powers that have a high input impedance, rather than the 10kohms to 20kohms common nowadays.

If your loudspeakers are setting off room resonances, you'd do well to change to smaller stand mounters with quite a dry bass. These will sit happily near to a wall without booming. One name which springs immediately to mind is ELAC, with their JET 310is. These tiny £800 boxes are extremely revealing and very musical but only go down to about 80Hz. JM

For the vital extra touch of transparency, put a bottle of DNM's Licon contact enhancer to good use.

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 spruced 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'



▲ Creek's CD43 CD player is the one to beat at the price.

presentation. Any advice on cables (interconnect and loudspeaker) would also be welcome.

Dr. Vojkan Vukadinovic
vojcce@EUnet.yu

They might not spring to mind as choice No1, but Diapason's tiny £1250 Karis stand mounters with their hardwood 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

Talking of cabling, you could experiment with a free set of Siren Interconnects from The Chord Company.

(UPGRADE) 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-amp? 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 Farella 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.

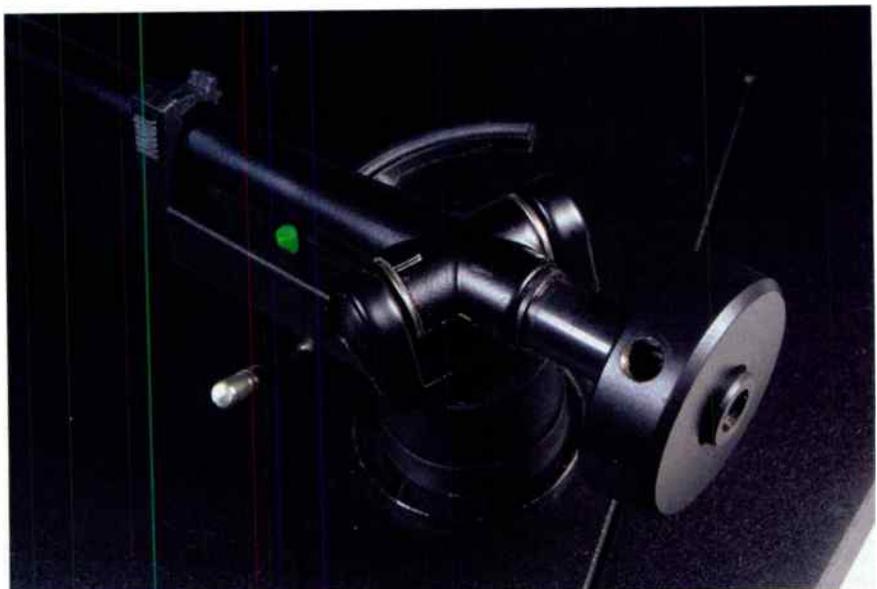
The 8000A was a fairly decent amp in its time, but it's dropped off the pace when compared to the likes of Pioneer's A-300R Precision (£400) and Audio Analogue's Puccini SE (£600). Your finances should be able to stretch to the latter if you sell the Audiolab.

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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▼ Origin Live's modifications turn Rega's humble RB250 tone-arm into a giant-killer.



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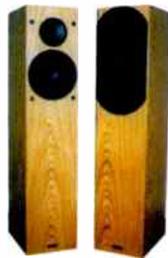
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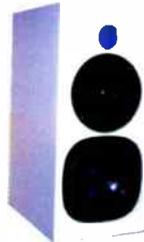
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GOING PASSIVE OR ACTIVE (OR CRAZY)

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?

Name and address withheld by request



▲ Audio Analogue's Bellini pre-amp possesses the same sonic prowess as the company's Puccini SE integrated.

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 mini-

mum of 150hours 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.

SYSTEMATIC SLIMMING

My current system consists of a Wilson-Benesch Full Circle turntable, a Roksan Artaxerxes X phono stage, ROK-L2.5 pre-amp, 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!

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 Qnect 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.

TWO'S COMPANY

Hi-Fi World travels to Philips' Hybrid Disc Pilot Production plant in Eindhoven to find out what goes into making a Super Audio CD.



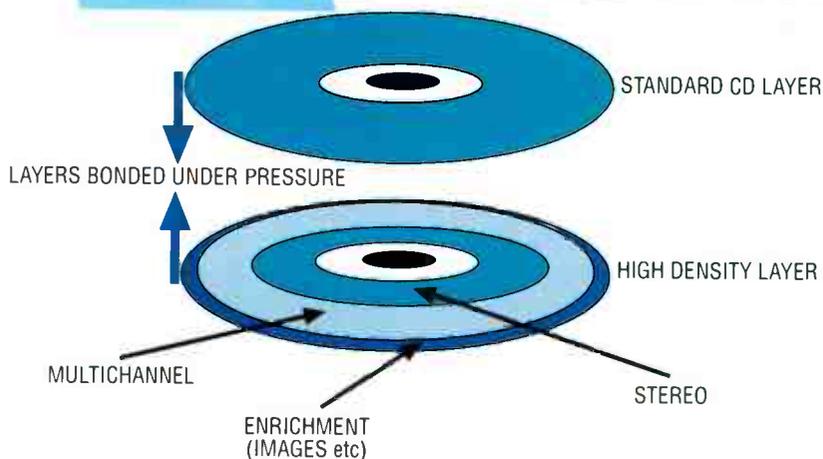
HI-FI World readers are well aware now of the imminent arrival of Super Audio Compact Disc from megatronics companies Sony and Philips. Both are currently working on players and ancillary hardware (Sony's SCD-1 player is already out in Japan) to turn this contender for the next-generation digital format 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 mostly 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 megathonic music wing.



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 beaver away at faster sampling rates in order to pick up the bits which CD ordinaire 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.

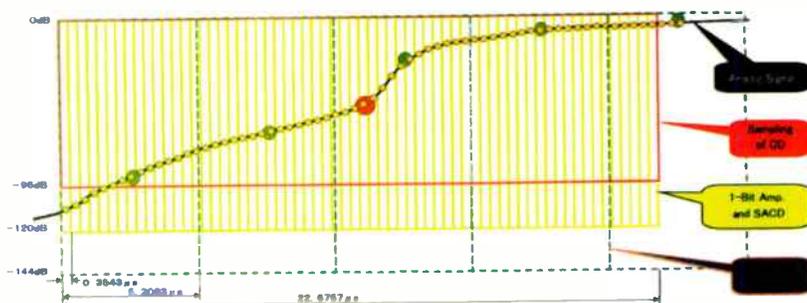
1-Bit technology operates on the principle that if you carry out a simple operation fast enough, the effect is the same as doing something complex once. To use a mechanical analogy, if you have the choice, you can weigh out an ounce of sherbert lemons 16 times, or a pound of them once. Provided both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



Thrilled to bits? 1-bit gives analogue a run for its money.



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Calculated Risk

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 fire-side evenings *a deux!*

IN FEBRUARY '78 the CTA252 gained an XD suffix along with a beefed-up power supply, an improved power amp and phono input, and upgraded rear-panel socketry. The latter included direct-wired 'speaker outputs as well as ones that went via the headphone sockets.



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 twig 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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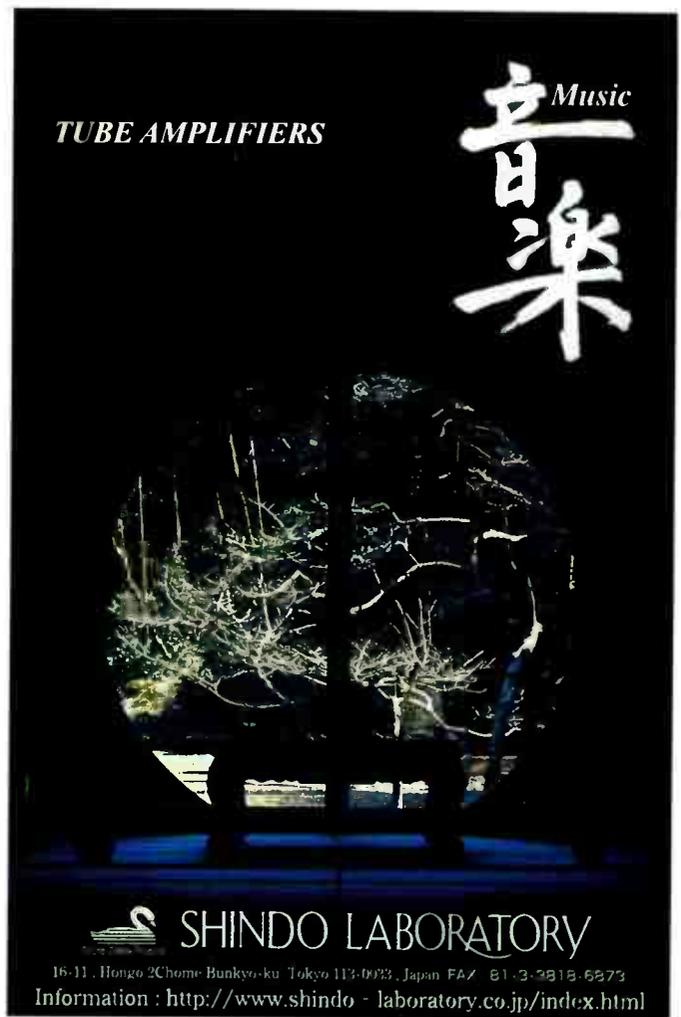
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DIGITAL music files so small they can easily be stored in computer memory or sent via the Internet open up new possibilities in the way we listen to music. So much so that the computer business in particular is about to jump into audio with both feet, 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 side-lined.

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 world-wide 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 of 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

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

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 ini-

tiative aims to develop an alternative and secure form of MP3, one that prevents digital 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 forms 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.



Noel Keywood

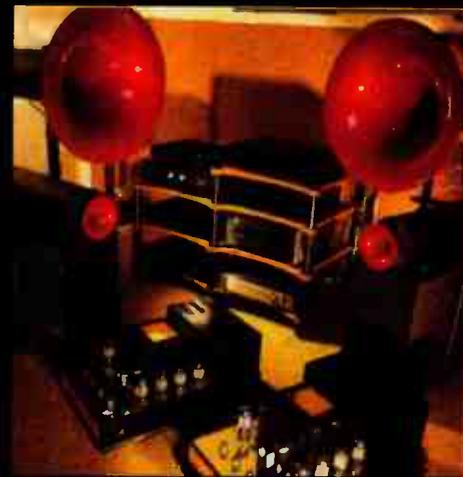
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LAST month I looked at the various options open to audiophiles seeking music around the home. Different systems in several rooms seemed like the best compromise when balancing cost, ease of installation and, above all, musical enjoyment. On top of 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 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. Ideally, I was looking to spend around £100 on an amp that would be fairly neutral and tolerant of various 'speaker loads. These were hardly qualities of the first candidate I came across, yet the Musical Fidelity E10 has its beguiling side and for £90 seemed too good to be true. And that's exactly what others had obviously thought, as the phone-weary vendor told me I'd already missed it.

Another near miss was Rotel's RA-820BX4 at the equally reasonable price of £40. Luck was on my side the third time around. The owner of an immaculate Denon PMA-350SE was trading up to an Arcam Alpha 8R. So, for £100 the Denon was mine, and an excellent basis for a second system.

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 step up from even the best players at £150 made it seem foolhardy 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...

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

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

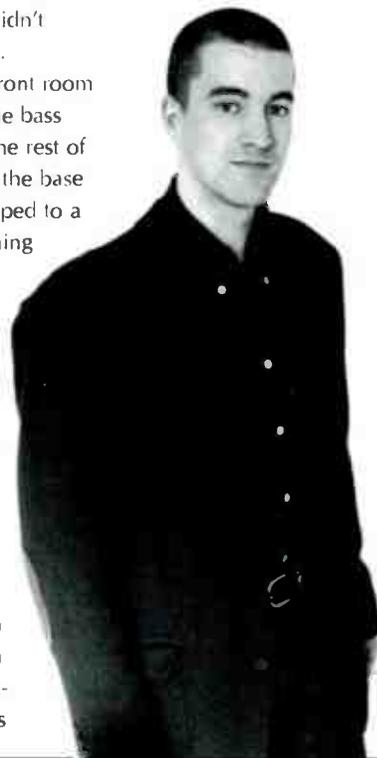
Wharfedale EM95s massively reduced from about £400 to £170 seemed like a bargain, but setting them up at home made me realise the compromises inherent in so many affordable floor standers. Yes, there was plenty of grunt and reasonable bass depth, and the pleasing real wood veneer meant they didn't resemble two up-turned coffins. Unfortunately, in my smallish front room with its wooden floorboards, the bass simply couldn't keep up with the rest of the frequency response. Filling the base of the enclosures with sand helped to a degree, but I was still left yearning for something more cohesive. Back they went. This is when a patient dealer willing to allow home trials is vital.

Listening to other floor standers between £200-£400 I was similarly left feeling they were too compromised. Turning to World favourites again, I was reminded of how the baby Mission 750LEs had impressed me so much back in March 1998. Therefore, system two finally ended up as a PMA-350SE, CD4SE and 750LEs plus

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) fitted 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!



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because music matters

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 Heap. Perhaps he was too busy getting conjuring tips from David Copperfield to give the matter his full 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 Mantovani' 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 Bloefelds 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 for 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

” The extent to which audio is a non-event in the world of letters borders on the astonishing.

good as they were ever going to get. Considering the rather indifferent pickups 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 unsusceptible of further improvement? Surely not. Have a look at some of the recipes in 'When Audio Was Young' if the point needs reinforcing.

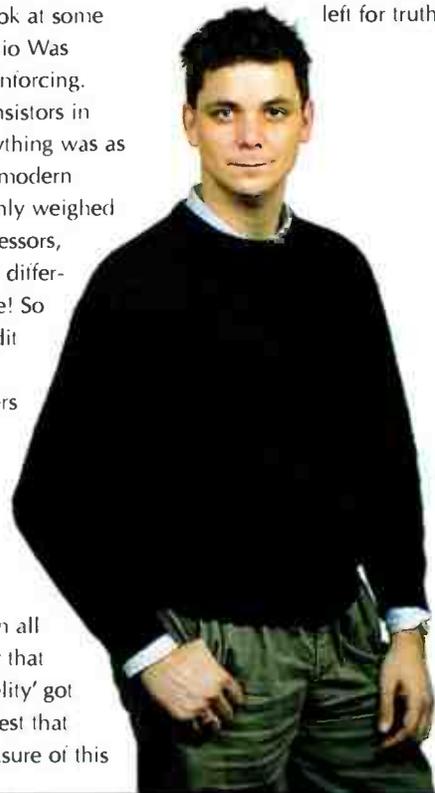
With the adoption of transistors in the Sixties, once again everything was as right as right could be. The modern amplifiers of the time certainly weighed much less than their predecessors, and if nobody could tell the difference, why, what an advance! So much so that by 1970, pundit John Earl was able to write "the days of valved 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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KLS9 TWO WAY FLOORSTANDER



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Here's a storm for you - KLS9, with its BB4 alignment bass cabinet and Audax High Definition Aerogel 8in bass/midrange unit. Designed by Noel Keywood to possess optimal bass damping and a clean step response. Aided by a teensy bit of bass lift, KLS9 really thunders; it will re-arrange your furniture. But it does not waffle, falling silent when there's no bass in the music. Aided by a high power 1in fabric dome tweeter, KLS9 is detailed, evenly balanced and images superbly. It is an easy 12ohm load and is 88dB sensitive. For amps up to 60W. Easy to build and great for beginners. Internal volume 70Ltrs, 18m MDF external dimensions 25cm(w) x 93cm(h) x 40cm(d).

DRIVE UNITS & CROSSOVER KIT £230.00
DRIVE UNIT PACK £160.00

KLS3 3 WAY CARBON-FIBRE DRIVER LOUDSPEAKER



£350

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 26cm(w) x 100cm(h) x 35cm(d).

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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 PACK £110.00

KLS12 TWO WAY FLOORSTANDER/STANDMOUNTER



£175

KLS12 is a versatile budget loudspeaker that delivers fine sound quality at a low low price. It utilises Audax's HT210F0 woven fibre glass cone, mid/bass unit, beautifully married with the TW034X0, 34mm diameter doped fabric dome tweeter. Noel Keywood says, 'The KLS12 is a transparent, vividly detailed transducer with fine projection. It has tight well defined bass, which means it is best positioned close to a rear wall. Vocals possess a clean 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) floor stander external dimensions(with sand filled space cavity) = 58cm(h) x 24.2cm(w) x 34cm(d)

DRIVE UNITS & CROSSOVER KIT £175.00
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Volume 45.5 litres External dimensions 31cms (w) x 37.3cms (d) x 64cms (h)

DRIVE UNIT & CROSSOVER KIT £595.00
DRIVE UNIT KIT £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
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KLS3 GOLD MK II



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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 PACK £450.00

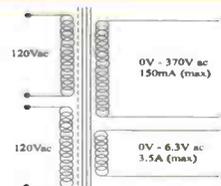
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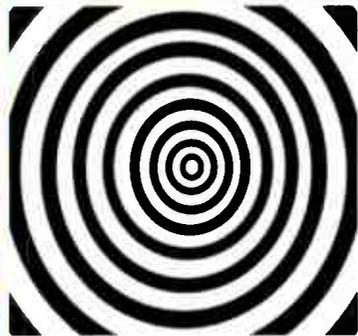


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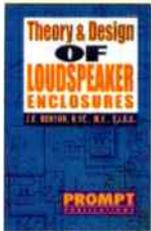
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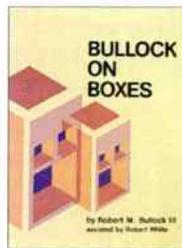
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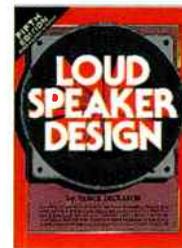
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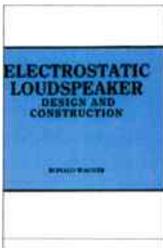
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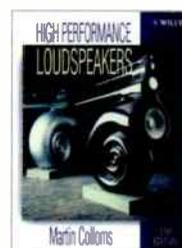
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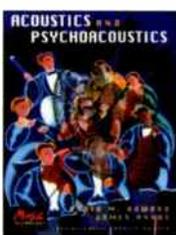
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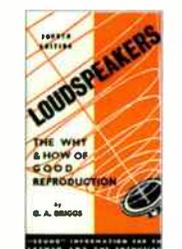
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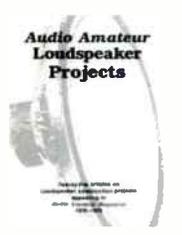
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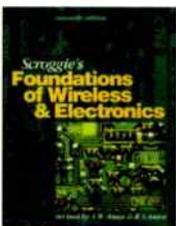


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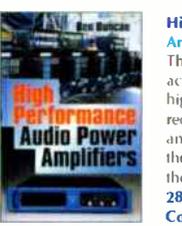


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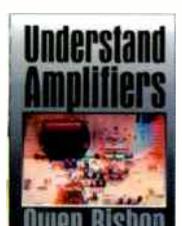
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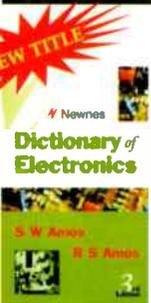
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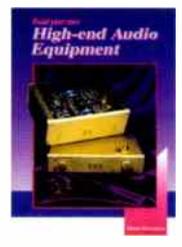
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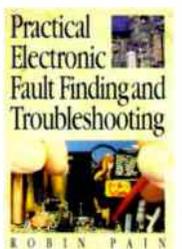
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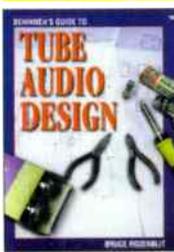
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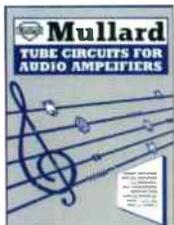
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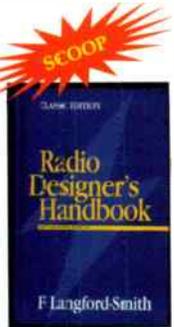
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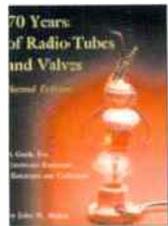
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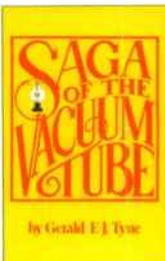
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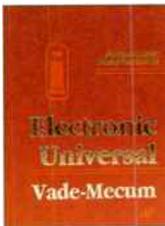
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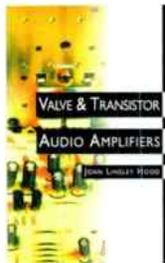
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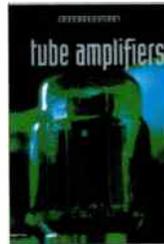


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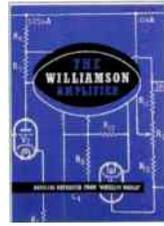


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Jon Marks gets hooked up with interconnects at £30-£39 from van den Hul, Connections UK and LAT International.

CABLE CRAZY!



VAN DEN HUL STORM II HYBRID £30/0.8m

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 pricier carbon offerings. There was no fizz to percussion or spit to vocals on **Suzanne Vega's** *Nine Objects Of Desire*, and even **Alanis Morissette'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



CONNECTIONS UK MIDAS £39/1m

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 I 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



LAT INTERNATIONAL IC-50 £30/1m

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 LATs 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 Morissette'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 LATs maintaining the speed and power of electric bass guitar lines.

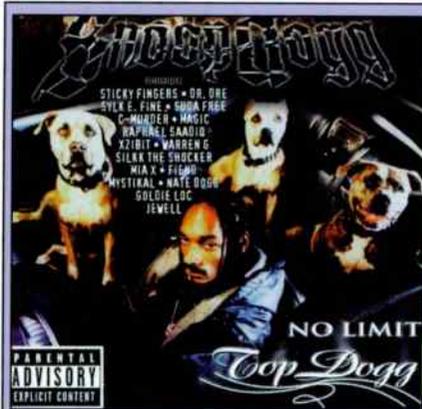
If your existing set-up treads a golden mean tonally and what you want is more of everything else, the IC-50s are sure to oblige. At £30, considering their construction and sonic calibre, they take this month's bargain biscuit.

LAT Int., Audusa, tel: 0181 942 6241

rock & pop

by Jon Clarke & Stuart Lenz

RECORD OF THE MONTH



SNOOP DOGG
TOP DOGG

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 shed the

Doggy part of his name, perhaps in a quest for redemption.

This choice didn't make things any easier for the former gunner 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.

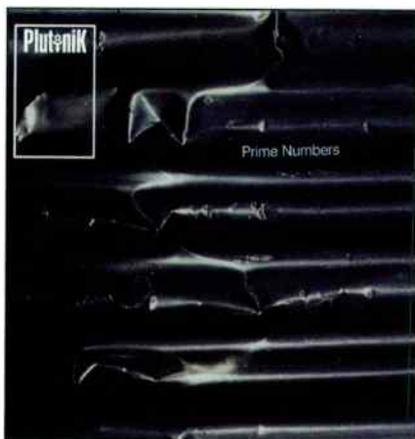
On the strength of this, his fourth LP, the Dogg hasn't completely lost the plot, however. It comes as a surprise that he has gone back to the same producer, Master P (albeit with extra help from old compatriots **Dr Dre** and **DJ Quik**) who was largely to blame for his poor third LP.

A great deal of the attitude and homeboy bravado has disappeared (hal-leluja) to be replaced by the full-bodied,

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...



PLUTONIK
PRIME NUMBERS

The logical meeting point of **Air**, **Morcheeba** and **Massive Attack**, **Plutonik** have a lot to offer the post-clubbing generation and chill-out room. Staunch proponents of the Bristol sound, the Midlands-based trio show a canny understanding of mood music allied to more than a passing acquaintance with Drum 'n' Bass. Not entirely original, the band nonetheless ploughs a subtle furrow away from Britain's previous Dance luminaries.

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.

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 hard 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

Eric B And Rakim *I Know You Got Soul* break beat before turning into an almost classic **Young Disciples**-type number. *Londinium* ain't half bad either.

Not an immediate winner, but ultimately *Prime Numbers* creeps up on you as stealthily as a stealth bomber on International Stealth Day. And before you know it, you're kippered, hook, line and sinker.



BASEMENT JAXX
REMEDY

As firing opening salvos go, they don't get much better than *Rendez-Vu* from this brilliant first album by **Basement Jaxx**.

rock & pop

by Jon Clarke & Stuart Lenz

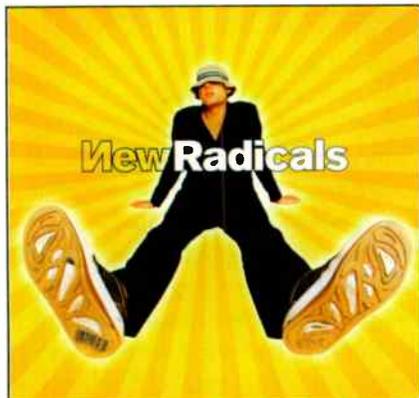
the list

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 DJing, **Basement 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, it has attitude oozing from its every pore.

Their background means that, on most of the album's 15 tracks, there's something unexpected in the mix - *Same Old Show*, a bumping Ska-boom of a track featuring a sample of *On My Radio* by two-tone originators **Selecter**, is the primest example.

You'll have heard quite a lot of *Remedy* already. *Red Alert* has been a club anthem all summer so far. *Rendez-vu*, likewise. But it's some of the less well-known tracks that sum up why **Basement Jaxx** are a welcome addition to the ever vibrant British club scene. *Stop 4 Love*, a slow-moving smoochie resplendent in its violins, deep bass and staccato beat, is a delightful foil to some of the heavier tracks, as is the final track *Being With U*. This is a deliciously Soulful ballad which brings the album to a very fulfilling end!



NEW RADICALS
*MAYBE YOU'VE BEEN
BRAINWASHED TOO*

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 MCA, 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 white Soul-boy Funk and clever Pop, a sort of cross between **Hall And 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-Oriented 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.

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 druggo 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.

5 (4) U2: THE BEST OF, 1980-1990

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.

classical

by Stephen Priest & Frank Blake



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 cast-iron 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
Fujioka
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's orchestral output - good three-dimensionality and breadth, with natural dynamics that result in an undemanding yet enjoyable disc.

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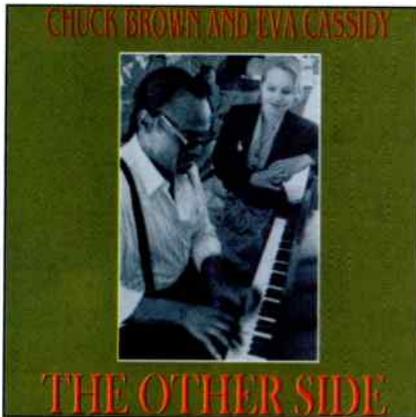
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jazz

by Ian Nicolson



EVA CASSIDY AND CHUCK BROWN

The Other Side

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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 down 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

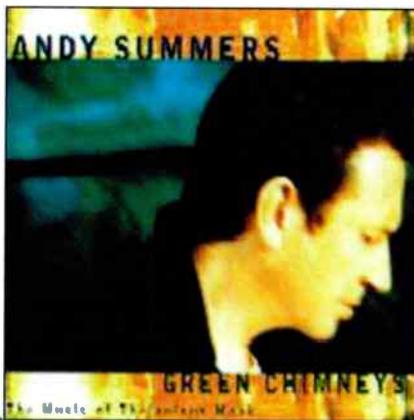


Judy Garland, in the good old days.

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 Jazzer 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** stinging 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 effortless leaps from supportive to lyrical to driving to painterly will be a joy revisited.



Sting contributes with his genuine style.

dance & ambient

by Sara Davis



TRANSGLOBAL UNDERGROUND

BACKPACKING ON THE GRAVES OF OUR ANCESTORS

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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 (featured here) *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.



HEADCASE

MUSHINESS

MUSHIMUSHI MUSHI001

If you remember the melancholy early Nineties Indie outfit **Curve**, then this bizarre collaboration will make your eyebrows levitate. After a couple of hits championed by a tasty lead singer with crooked teeth, *Curve* vanished into Indie oblivion. Now, like all respected musicians, the writer, producer and lead singer are dabbling in the more Ambient, guitar-orientated edge of Dance music, alas to muted effect.

Mushiness was previously available on the net (under the title *Mushi-Mushi*) 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.



TAKKYU ISHINO

DJF-400

REACTCD162

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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HI-FI WORLD

Buying Guide

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Loudspeakers £ Year Verdict

Under £300

Acoustic Energy AE100	£200	Jan 96	Reasonably neutral but ultimately lacklustre. Control of treble and mid-range poor.
Audio Gem Opals	£240	Dec 97	Partner the Opals with warm ancillaries and you get an involving sound. Avoid bright amps and sources.
Aura LSB-627M	£230	Aug 98	Energetic, bold and highly detailed, the Aura is one to consider for the budget-conscious.
Aura LST-627	£299	Oct 98	Like Aura's matching stand mounters, the 627Ms are lucid and controlled. Treble is brightish.
B&W 601	£200	Jan 96	Unrestricted and clean sound with satisfying musicality. An engaging subtlety not common at the price.
B&W DM302	£130	Apr 96	Clear open and detailed sound but balance too forward and weak bass.
B&W DM602	£250	Nov 96	Excel with taut hard-hitting bass with dynamic and uncoloured midrange. Metal dome tweeter bleaches out the treble.
Boston CR6	£150	Sep 98	With simple music, the CR6s work well, but not quite as well as the best of the competition.
Castle Isis	£230	Jan 96	A lively little animal, well worth the money.
Celestion 12i	£119	Feb 98	The 12is' powerful, confident sound belies a rather poor measured performance.
Celestion Impact 15	£200	Jan 96	Big presentation but a rather distant quality. Could sound boomy and confined.
Celestion Impact 23	£299	Nov 96	Sterling performance in the bass with speed and control. Good midrange projection.
Chario Hiper 1000	£299	Feb 99	Quality construction and sound marry to produce a very capable 'speaker. Open treble and firm bass for the size.
Eltax Liberty 3+	£150	Jan 98	A lot of loudspeaker for the money. Punch and slam in the bass but sometimes thin in the treble.
Eltax Symphony 6	£240	Nov 96	Although bright, the Symphony 6s score for clarity and power. Bass is fast and accurate.
Gale 2i	£140	Feb 97	Smooth, balanced performers that do a good job on any genre. Free from the nasties that afflict many at the price.
Gale Mini Monitor	£50	Apr 97	Not the last word in midrange or bass clarity, but gives real hi-fi results for a paltry £50.
GLL ICT100	£170	Nov 95	For their size and price they offer some super qualities, especially stable imaging.
Heybrook Heylette	£270	Jun 98	A mini monitor with more precision and dynamism than the size and price tag would suggest.
Heybrook Optima	£259	Oct 98	Capable all-rounders, the Optimas combine smoothness, insight and control to great effect.
Heybrooks HB1 S3	£269	Nov 96	Excellent imaging with clear treble and midrange. Bass slightly dry and boxy but would suit a smaller room.
Jamo CS5 Actives	£200	Oct 98	In spite of a few colorations, the Jamos are fine examples of budget active operation.
JPW ML510	£130	Jan 98	With greater transparency and a bit more get-up-and-go, the 510s could be leaders of the budget pack.
Kef 60S	£200	May 96	The 60S is open and detailed but coloured too.
Kef Coda 7	£129	Apr 95	Rhythmic push and tuneful bass are the plus points of these small standmounts.
Kef Coda 8	£200	Jan 96	Breezy presence, good dynamics and a sense of fullness. Not the utmost in clarity, some box colouration.
Kef Coda 9	£299	Jul 96	Strong bass can get out of control, as can treble. This tends to overpower the midrange.
Kef Q15	£199	Feb 97	Impressive bass and a sweet clarity make the Q15s 'speakers that'll put a smile on any audiophile's face.
Kenwood LS90UK	£129	Jul 98	The LS90UKs have dry bass and limited tonal colour, but staging and imaging are superb.
Linn Sekrit	£298	Apr 96	Well-behaved and with a decent tonal quality.
Mission 700	£130	May 98	The 700s are easily outclassed by Mission's own superb 731 Pros at a £10 premium.
Mission 731	£129	Apr 95	An initially impressive, upfront sound but ultimately a little uninvolved.
Mission 731 Pro	£139	Jul 97	Music makers with a clean, punchy sound. Real value for money.
Mission 731i	£130	Nov 96	Mission's babies are a truly worthwhile improvement on the original 731s.
Mission 731LE	£150	Nov 95	Excellent sound puts the competitors in the shade. Well built and pretty too!
Mission 732i	£200	Aug 97	If you've got £200 with 'loudspeaker' written on it, then the 732i should be on your shopping list.
Mission 771	£170	Jul 98	Superb stand mounters of real refinement and musicality. A touch bass light.
Mission 772	£230	Apr 99	Civilised standmounters which lack nothing in control, finesse or transparency.
Monsoon MM-1000	£200	May 99	A novel multi-media two-satellites-and-sub which nevertheless demands to be taken quite seriously.
Mordaunt-Short MS20i	£200	Jan 96	Very tight bass and an all-round big sound. Some sharpness in the treble but assertive and clear.
Nad 801	£100	Jun 97	Impressive bass with midrange clarity are pluses. Prominent treble stops the 801 from challenging the best.
Paradigm Mini Monitors	£230	Aug 97	The Paradigms have a generally enjoyable sound but treble is sharp and midrange recessed.
QLN 122	£270	Jun 96	Solid bottom end will drive a large room well, but they're a bit bright too.
RA Labs Mini Ref	£99	Jul 95	Engineering is not tip-top, but with a smooth system they will produce a clear and open, if bright, sound.
Revolver Purdey	£200	Jan 96	Rather small sound for a big cabinet. Absence of deep bass hard to forgive.
Rogers LS1	£149	Feb 96	Clear, bright and open but with weak bass. Best used close to or against a wall.
Rogers LS33	£250	Nov 96	Detailed and clear with a forward midrange. Could be a little rough on vocals; bass extension is limited.
System Audio 1005	£299	Aug 96	Excellent all-rounder that provides a real open window into almost every genre of music.
Tangent Monitor 11	£200	Nov 97	The Tangents' bass has attractive speed and impact, matched with smooth treble and open midband.
Tangent Monitor 2	£60	Jul 96	Good imaging as well as control. Tweets a bit too much but more than fine for the money.
Tannoy Mercury m1	£120	Jun 98	The best at the price and capable of embarrassing many more expensive 'speakers.
Tannoy Mercury m2	£140	May 97	For £140, you get a 'speaker with transparency and enjoyability unmatched at the price.
Tannoy Mercury m3	£240	Nov 97	Even overall balance and taut secure bass, if not the deepest ever. Slightly lightweight and uninvolved.
Tannoy R1	£199	Nov 98	Worth an audition if you need to balance a bright source and amp, but treble lacks clarity.
TDL NFM 1	£120	May 97	Bright treble is partially balanced by taut, well integrated bass, but outclassed by the competition.
TDL Nucleus 1	£60	Apr 97	Clean, incisive, detailed and revealing, especially in the bass.
W'dale Active Diamond	£180	Mar 99	Great value introduction to active. The sound is deep and powerful but could be a little coloured for some.
Wharfedale Valdis 300	£150	Jul 96	Can work well if partnered to give weighty bass and smooth treble.



Aura LST 627.



Blue Room Mini Pod.

Prices shown are those at the time of review

£300-£799

B&W CDM1SE	£600	Apr 98	Tuneful and confident, these 'speakers are well suited to Pop and Dance music.
B&W DM305	£350	Mar 97	All the ingredients for listening fun are mixed into the DM305. Overall presentation could be more cohesive though.
B&W P4	£600	Mar 95	Good-looking solid 'speakers with great spirit and tenacity but with a dry treble. Not fans of classical music.
Blue Room Minipod	£400	Jan 97	Arresting style allied to an engaging sound makes the Minipods attractive. Best with smooth amps and source.
Carlsson OA 50.2	£585	Dec 98	Acoustic music gets nicely. More artificial pieces sometimes don't work so well.
Castle Avon	£699	Dec 96	Taut, dry bass and lucid midrange but need matching to warm ancillaries to avoid sounding bright.

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Loudspeakers £ Year Verdict

£300-£799

Model	Price	Year	Verdict
Castle Harlech	£799	Aug 96	Bass power and extension will impress but overall sound is uneven and rather sterile.
Castle Kendal	£450	Mar 98	The Kendals have great clarity but need coupling to warm ancillaries.
Castle Severn II	£579	Jul 98	Apart from some hardness in the tweeters, the Severn 2s are accomplished all-rounders.
Cnario Hipart 1	£399	May 95	Music makers through and through with a great feel for rhythm and dynamics.
Charlo Lynx	£549	Apr 99	The Lynxes are superbly built but their rising bass and treble suit home cinema more than hi-fi.
Dali 450	£700	Feb 96	A powerful and rich sound from these competitively priced floorstanders makes them worth a recommendation.
Epos ES12	£495	Oct 96	Strong, punchy bass allied to detailed and articulate midrange and treble.
Heybrook Heylios	£339	Mar 97	The Heylios stand out for their bass depth, dynamics and sound staging. Overall balance prefers Classical to Rock.
Heybrook Heylo	£389	Oct 95	Posses a neutral, fast and dry sound. A good match for soft sounding systems.
Jamo 307	£300	Apr 95	Delicate, detailed sound, albeit with rather imprecise imaging. Will work well on a bookshelf.
JPW ML910	£300	Nov 97	The 910s aren't perfect but they make music fun. Quality, power and extension, the Milleniums are worth a listen.
JPW Ruby 2	£395	Oct 98	Once allied to warm electronics, the Ruby 2s mix insight with plenty of involvement.
Kef LS3/5A	£599	Jul 95	Partnered with the Rogers AB1, this is a substantial marriage.
Kef Q35	£350	Nov 97	Very accomplished midrange and treble but the dry in the bass. For Rock fans the upper bass speed is appealing.
Kef Q55	£499	Aug 97	The Q55s look rather expensive at £500 with their 'boom and tizz' presentation.
Kef RDM1	£499	Oct 97	The RDM1s soundstage well thanks to their Uni-Q drivers. Can be uninvolved because of a lack of scale and impact.
Linn Tukan	£389	Dec 95	Highly musical standmounters that give similarly priced floorstanders a great deal to worry about.
Mandian A500	£750	May 95	Very polite and many will appreciate their civility. Deep, powerful bass.
Mission 733	£300	Apr 95	Captivating floorstanders that bring music to life - what good hi-fi should do.
Mission 734	£430	Sep 95	Engineered for low price and showroom appeal rather than absolute sound quality.
Mission 751 Freedom	£350	Apr 97	Charming little stand-mounters with a sweet, warm, musical sound.
Mission 752 Freedom	£578	Jan 97	Dynamic, punchy, and musical yet refined like few at the price. Bass lacks a little depth.
Mission 774	£500	Feb 99	With the right ancillaries, the 774s have a clarity and lack of colouration still rare at the price.
Mordaunt-Short MS25i	£300	Nov 96	Sweet sounding metal dome tweeter although the dry bass and rather plasticky midrange work against it.
Musical Technology PM15	£474	Jan 99	Sophisticated, neutral sound and fine musicality put the PM15s near the head of the class.
Near 10M	£500	Jan 96	A thin and hard sound but precise with it!
Neat Critique II	£445	Jan 99	Deserving 'speakers with good looks and build. Can fail to shine with over-polite equipment.
NHT 1 3	£389	Aug 95	Very crisp sounding 'speakers best suited to smaller rooms.
Opera Prima	£495	Feb 99	The Primas offer a taste of the high-end at a sensible price. They are more fans of Classical than Rock though.
Ortofon ConCorde 6	£329	Oct 95	Good value floorstanders with clean enjoyable sound - not quite supersonic, though.
Polk PSW150	£500	Jul 97	The PSW150 adds depth to a system but can sound obvious at times.
Proac Tablette	£600	Aug 98	Amp-sensitive and slightly boxy in the lower treble, the Proacs are still highly musical.
Rel Q Bass	£350	May 96	Needs care in setting up but this subwoofer offers serious quality bass for not a lot of money.
REL Q100E	£500	Apr 98	Another capable sub from REL that boosts bass and improves sound staging.
Rogers AB 1	£499	Jul 95	When used with the Kef LS3/5a this sub delivers the goods, beyond a doubt.
Roksan RokOne	£595	Feb 97	Musically involving 'speakers that many will enjoy, but a little unrefined at times.
Sequence 400	£329	Apr 96	Good at orchestral scale but coloured in the midband.
Soundcraft Absolute 4P	£799	Oct 97	The Absolute 4Ps excel in all areas except for the rather bright, hard treble. Bass is exceptional.
Spendor 2030	£599	Jun 96	Smooth, focussed and coherent in their delivery with deep and taut bass extension. Not the most spacious sound.
Systemdek 165	£400	Feb 96	Dry and clean sound, but can become hard and confused when pushed.
Tannoy Precision P10	£300	May 98	Though very even in their performance, the P10s lack ultimate clarity and punch.
Tannoy Profile 633 plus	£300	Nov 96	Weighty bass and rhythmic detail work well on dance. Less satisfying with classical music. Firm imaging.
TDL RTL 4	£650	Feb 95	Easy going with plenty of detail and timbral richness. Better with classical fare.
TDL T-line 2	£550	Jan 97	Midrange and treble have good tonal colour, detail and speed. Bass is slow and blurred.
Technics SB-M300	£350	Nov 95	A great sound with solid bass from a compact and well priced 'speaker.
Technics SB-M500	£450	May 96	Clean, dry and taut with good imaging and sound staging. More neutral than Mission's 752s but less euphonic.
Triangle Comete TZXe	£475	Jan 95	Quite pleasant, inoffensive sound but others costing less can offer more.
Wharfedale Valdsu 500	£300	Oct 95	Good for adding scale and power to a weak system or budget separates.



JPW Ruby 2.



Soundcraft Absolute 4P.

£800-£1499

Model	Price	Year	Verdict
Audionote E	£1450	Mar 95	Big, bulky and ultra-sensitive with quick pace and a well balanced sound, but not without flaws.
Audiovector M1 Sig.	£1479	Aug 98	The M1 Sigs may be a little laid-back, but they have a pleasant and involving sound.
Audiovector M2	£1499	Jun 98	The M2s are marred by a boom 'n' tizz presentation that suits Heavy Metal but not much else.
B&W CDM7	£999	Feb 98	With warm ancillaries the CDM7s produce a weighty, open sound. Bass could be faster.
Castle Howard S2	£1099	Mar 96	Fantastically deep and tight bass but some treble sharpness requires careful matching.
Celestion A2	£1499	Jun 98	Focus is not a strength, but bass extension and even tonality are. Metal tweeter can be bright.
Charlo Academy One	£1199	Dec 95	Musical realism and a great real-wood finish make these 'speakers enjoyable, if not perfect.
Diapason Karis	£1250	May 99	Small cabinet precludes the deepest bass, but a sweet little act for all that. Seriously imaging abilities.
Epos ES22	£1185	Jun 98	Aside from a slightly cool balance, the ES22s shine. Dynamics, bass depth and control are tops.
Event 20/20BAS	£829	Sep 98	Warm, detailed and well-endowed in the bass, the Events lack only a touch of overall control.
Harbeth DPM1 Active	£849	Sep 98	Now HNB's Circle Actives, these loudspeakers mix the best of pro and domestic to produce first-class results.
Harbeth HL Compact 7	£1329	Jun 96	Dry and analytical but truthful with it. A first class monitor ideally suited to acoustic or classical music.
Harbeth HL K6	£975	Dec 96	Clean, musical and classy - Harbeth have done themselves proud again!
KAR Torino	£895	Jan 97	The Torinos' stylish sound won't shame any system. That powerful bass does need space to breathe properly though.
Kef Reference 1	£995	May 95	Beautifully fluid and integrated mid band and treble but can be slow, with a little loss of bass control.
KEF Reference 2	£1499	Jan 95	Handles rock and classical with equal aplomb, with the ability to reproduce detail that flummoxes many others.

Prices shown are those at the time of review

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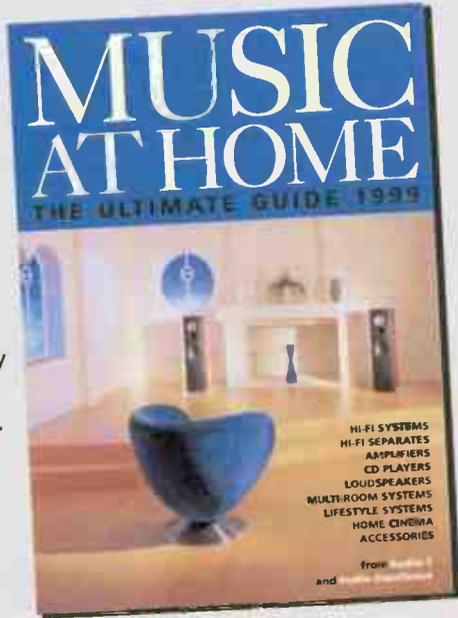
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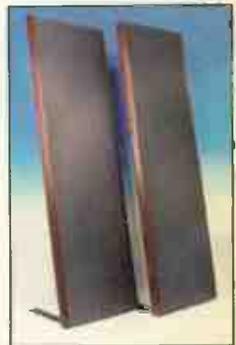
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Loudspeakers £ Year Verdict

£800-£1499

Kelley KT3	£1199	Apr 98	The KT3s go very loud very easily but they don't possess the most even response.
Klipsch Heresy II	£1150	May 99	Horn and infinite-baffle hybrid with power to spare. Phasing and frequency accurate beyond belief.
KRK V8	£995	Sep 98	Ultra-detailed and revealing, the V8s are true pro more than domestic transducers.
Magneplaner MG0.6 SE	£1370	Mar 95	Very clear detail and separation, but just fails to produce a fully 3-dimensional sound.
Magneplaner MG12-QR	£1200	May 99	Lightness of touch, dynamics and clarity in trumps. Needs powerful amplification for 77dB/W/m. Not a valve 'speaker.
Mirage 890i	£1075	Oct 95	An easy going, open and natural sound makes the mirages an attractive proposition.
Mission 754 F5	£1299	Sep 96	Articulate and informative sound with fine imaging and tight, deep bass.
Mordaunt-Short 860	£1450	Dec 95	Fast, tight and informative, but a poor tweeter casts a grey shadow.
Musical-Tech Falcon	£955	May 96	Give a big sense of scale on rock and jazz but not subtle and even enough for the critical classical listener.
NEAR Soundmast	£1199	Aug 95	An interesting, musical floorstander that's good value even at this price.
Origin Live Sovereign	£1225	Jun 98	The OLs have transparency and detail in considerable amounts. Bass can be loose though.
PT Ventricle	£896	Aug 95	Smooth and refined floorstanders that some listeners will find captivating.
QLN Signature	£1499	Mar 96	Super sound staging, openness and detail. Well worth seeking out.
REL Stadium 2	£995	Aug 95	Excellent bass performance means that this subwoofer is no toy.
Rolsan Ojan 3	£1000	Jan 98	Unusual 'speakers with great rhythmic capabilities and bass. Could be more transparent.
Ruark Paladin	£1099	May 95	The Paladins possess a detailed and expansive soundstage but also a rather dry character
Spindor 2040	£899	Oct 96	The tweeter works well but a recessed midband and one-note bass are the Achilles heels.
Spendor FL8	£1275	Jun 98	The FL8s are warm, mellow performers which prefer Classical to Rock.
Tannoy D300	£1000	Apr 97	Impressive bass extension and control go hand in hand with precise imaging to make the D300s a snip at £1000.
Totem Model 1 Sig.	£1250	Sep 97	Good but the move from standard to Signature has taken speed and punch out of the Model 1s
UKD Callias Gold	£995	Jun 96	A rich and open sound, extremely musical if not strictly accurate. Great bass extension for their size.
UKD Divina	£1390	Jun 95	Not the most neutral 'speakers but they are extremely smooth with an overall coherence to the sound.



Magneplaner
MG12/QR.

£1500-

Audiovector 6	£4600	Jun 95	If you have enough room and money the 6s are capable of a highly musical, involving performance.
BKS 107 MKII	£1500	Dec 98	The 107 Mk2s may look slim but they have a solid sound and are fabulously revealing.
Cadence ES	£3500	Sep 95	Interesting design that incorporates an electrostatic tweeter. An impressive sound but an inconsistent performer.
Carlsson 52.2	£1500	May 99	Unusual design which is placed back against a wall for optimum performance.
Celestion A3	£1800	May 97	The A3s are quite simply superb. All you'll need to enjoy them is a large enough listening room.
Epos ES25	£1505	May 95	An extremely coherent and focussed sound; these are true audiophile speakers. Captivating with classical music.
Harmeth HLS8	£1999	Mar 97	Glassy clarity, bright treble, with bass that comes alive when given welly. Expensive though.
Heybrook Octet	£1800	Jul 98	The Octets are smooth, laid-back floor standers. Lack speed and transparency.
Jamo Concert 11	£2000	Dec 97	A worthy bigger brother for the Concert 8s, with a fast, transparent and even sound.
Jamo Concert 8	£1500	Jun 97	The Concert 8s are superbly clean and transparent. Their nature will show up any source shortcomings.
JBL S2600	£3500	Jul 96	Smooth, detailed and spacious with great scale, dynamics and imaging. Capable of producing a real performance.
Kef Reference 3	£2000	Nov 95	For superb reproduction within large rooms, the 3s are a force to be reckoned with.
Kel Reference 4	£3099	Oct 96	Superb bass and near-electrostatic soundstaging make these involving 'speakers a bargain.
Living Voice Auditorium	£1500	May 99	Their strengths suggest a Classical 'speaker but they suit electronic compositions better. Rich tone but loose bass.
Proac Studio 150	£1500	Mar 99	They may be musically engaging but the tall ProAc's brightness suits them best for smooth valve amplification.
Slate Audio Stormforce	£8000	Feb 99	The best home for a reflex-loaded Tannoy dual-concentric, but they don't come cheap!
Spendor SP7.1	£1970	Jan 95	Gorgeous looking. Listening becomes an enjoyable experience, full of surprises from subtleties.
Spendor SP9/1	£3400	Apr 96	One of the clearest and most expressive loudspeakers you'll ever find for a large room. Easy to drive, too.
Tannoy AMS6	£2702	Aug 96	Bold and powerful sound with solid bass, clearly focussed midrange and delicious treble. Well worth tracking down.
Tannoy D900	£3999	Sep 97	£4000 may be a lot to pay for a pair of 'speakers, but the Tannoys deliver to great effect in all areas.
Technic SB-M1000	£1500	Nov 96	Materially excellent value. Sound clean and extended but can lack involvement.
Thomas Transducers Brio	£4750	Feb 95	Capable of producing a captivating performance of life-like proportions with a great air of naturalness.
Thomas Virtuoso Gold	£3395	May 98	Impressive horns that combine lightness of touch with power and clarity.



Jamo Concert 8.

Integrated £ Year Verdict

under £300

Alchemis M3aim	£299	Mar 96	Fluid and musical but upper bass is a little dry. Useful phono stage with but with a little sibilance and ringing.
AMC 3025	£150	Nov 96	A lot for very little money - sweet sound and good build make the AMC 3025 a great starter amp.
AMC 3050A	£170	Feb 98	Offers plenty of power for the money but sound quality is not class leading.
Arcam Alpha 5 plus	£250	Oct 96	Good with efficient loudspeakers but generally needs more power and control.
Arcam Alpha One	£230	Jan 99	In a smooth system with a warmish bias the Alpha One makes a strong case for itself.
Aura VA80	£279	Apr 95	Excellent value for money and will get the best from any component. Needs a separate phono stage.
Aura VA80 SEx	£250	Mar 96	The Aura has a smooth, civilized sound with fine detail. Bass punch really rolls along. Good phono stage.
Cambridge A1 MkIII integ	£100	Jul 98	Involving and finely detailed, the Cambridge pushes forward the boundaries for inexpensive amps.
Denon PMA 250SE	£160	Feb 97	A mix of control, delicacy and detail allows it to excel with any music.
Denon PMA 425R	£230	Sep 96	Good drive, punch and an open soundstage, but suffers from confusion plus a thin midrange and treble.
Denon PMA 450SE	£280	Oct 96	Big and brutish but unfortunately bland with it. Something of a blast from the 1970s-80s past!
Harmon Kardon HK610	£180	Jun 95	Thorough-going down to earth liveliness. Bright but clean which gives appealing vivacity.
Harmon Kardon HK620	£280	Oct 95	Not quite a giant killer, the Harman is nevertheless a good solid budget buy.

Prices shown
are those at the
time of review

LAT AC-2 Power Cords and Distribution blocks are available from:-

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 Orpheus Audio - Lancs. 01257 473175
 Sounds of Music - Tunbridge Wells - 01892 547003
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Integrated £ Year Verdict

under £300

Musical Fidelity E11	£299	Feb 98	A very capable integrated with a smoothness and warmth predisposed to classical rather than rock.
NAD 304	£239	Apr 95	Fine quality bass but rather lackadaisical as regards timing. Phono stage moderate. Needs careful matching.
NAD 310	£130	Jan 95	Good detail and a spacious open sound gives acoustic music and the majority of rock superb clarity.
NAD C370	£200	Apr 99	Younger sibling of the famous 3020 with many of its virtues to boot. Pre-eminently balanced and natural.
Pioneer A103	£130	Mar 95	Luxuriant presentation doesn't compensate for the tendency to un-rhythmic effects. MM phono stage.
Pioneer A300X	£230	Apr 95	Another highly capable all-rounder although a touch sterile sounding for some tastes.
Pro-ject 7	£259	Apr 95	On a budget, the Pro-ject has strong merit, including an excellent phono stage. Not for all systems.
Phono RA 310BX	£250	Oct 96	Fresh sound with sharp attack. A slight midrange emphasis can make certain music sound rather forward.
Rofel RA-931	£150	Dec 98	For the money there's no faulting such a gifted performer.
Sony TA-F44BE	£250	Aug 95	Bright clear and detailed, but needs a touch more refinement to prevail.
Technics SU-A700 mk3	£250	Jan 97	A smooth, unassuming sound misses out on the subtlety which brings music to life.

£300-£799

Acoustic Audio	£300	Sep 95	Musically rewarding; deserves serious audition. Great British hi-fi on a budget.
AMC 3150A	£329	Nov 98	Not the most musical amp ever but good value. The tone controls and balance adjustment will appeal to some.
Arcam Alpha 6+	£350	Jan 96	Full and smooth sound, unfortunately with loose bass.
Arcam Alpha 9	£500	Dec 96	Excellent value. A detailed and open sound gives great atmosphere to all types of music
A. A. Puccini SE	£595	Dec 97	All the main ingredients like rhythm and dynamics present and correct. Natural smoothness and transparency.
Audio Anal. Puccini SE	£595	Sep 97	Excellent sound quality gives the competition under £800 a lot to worry about.
Audio Lab 8000A	£500	May 95	Manages the rare feat of sounding powerful and lithe at the same time. Bass taut but not the last word.
Audiolab 8000S	£700	Dec 97	Powerful hefty sound which doesn't blench when driving awkward loads.
Benchmark Raynor SIA 1	£680	Aug 96	Too thin and crisp which makes prolonged listening fatiguing.
Cyrus 3	£500	Oct 96	Highly refined and detailed performance with a clear well-proportioned soundstage.
Cyrus Straight Line	£398	Nov 98	A good, honest bit of kit with a fine musical sound and no glaring vices.
Densen Beat	£650	Dec 97	If a musical adrenaline rush is what you seek, fine. Listening in bulk, rather clinical and cold sounding.
Edmund ESI 10	£400	Apr 99	Solid build and a big sound make the ESI 10 worthy of audition. Not perhaps the transparent at the price.
Hofm Audis	£750	Jun 98	Powerful and refreshingly pure; a sound investment.
Kempell KA-7000R	£400	Apr 98	Excels with sound staging but lacks subtlety and tonal colour.
LFD Mhitral	£499	Jun 97	An extremely enjoyable, lucid little amplifier that really gets to the heart of the music.
Marrant PM-66 KI-S	£400	Nov 97	An enjoyable and rhythmic sound but may be too lean for some bass-light 'speakers.
Monrio MJ	£695	Jan 97	An engaging musical performance; sweet overall sound. Doesn't cope with difficult loads so well.
Mono 10 Integrated	£320	Jul 95	A big open sound sound sets the Moth apart at this price. Low powered, though. Distinctly amateurish looks.
Musical Fidelity X-A1	£480	Dec 98	Two boxes don't form a pre and power in the X-A1 but the result is nevertheless a winning combination.
Myrrad T40	£399	Nov 98	Couple the Myrrad with a warm system and enjoy. Possibly a little lightweight on the Reggae & Rap side.
Nad 317	£470	May 97	With 80 watts on tap, the NAD has power aplenty but is rather dynamically limited and ultimately uninvolving.
Naim Nair	£500	May 95	Rather monochromatic with midband emphasis and slightly dry bass. Good imaging but smallish soundstage.
Oralle SA 100	£449	Jul 96	Clean, open, active sound. Smooth and detailed with good punch too. One of the best at the price.
Pioneer A-200R Precision	£400	Aug 97	A bargain at £400 pure and simple. Outclasses the competition in every area.
Pioneer A400X	£300	Oct 96	Complements all sorts of music with power and confidence. Outstanding value for money.
Quad 77	£595	Feb 95	Although classically orientated, the Quad will rock too. Precise and stable imagery and fidelity to tonal values.
Roksan Caplin	£695	Jun 97	Mixes the best of solid state and valve worlds (without valves!) to produce a seductive sound.
Rose Scion	£615	May 97	Great packaging and super sound make the Scion a winner.
Sonnesteer Campion	£579	Jan 96	Highly detailed and smooth sound. Worth searching out.
Sony TA-FM20R	£300	Feb 99	Partnered correctly to counterbalance its forwardness, the Sony offers a fast, rhythmic presentation.
Teac ABX7R	£700	Jun 96	Big and powerful sound, but a little unsuitable with it.
Technics SE A900 Mill	£300	Mar 99	Nominally a separate pre and power, but the pre can't work alone. Exciting but unsuitable.

£800-

Audiophile Soro Se	£1999	Mar 95	Needs the right loudspeaker but a good musical presentation is in there somewhere.
Capland CSA 14	£1099	Apr 96	A sweet and subtle sound. Fine midrange; transparent and open with vocals.
Densen DM 10	£1299	Jun 95	Dual mono construction gives strong stereo separation. Brutal resolution of detail but not the clearest ever.
Gambus Rhythm	£2499	Jul 96	Partnered with sensible loudspeakers of good bass depth, the Rhythm is capable of impressive performance.
Lovardis IT	£3200	Apr 99	Has clarity in spades and an extremely rare tonal purity. Outclasses many transistor alternatives with ease.
MaIntain MA3600	£3735	Sep 95	A mighty confection of power, facilities and style, and it sounds good to boot.
Musical Fidelity A1001	£2499	Jun 98	Awesome power and seismic bass. A very good all-rounder with super-clean sound.
MVL Integral A2	£850	May 99	An excellent performer with any music. Adept at handling subtle details. Difficult to beat at the price.
MVL A2+	£1250	Jun 99	Seamless, natural and very open, the A2+ sets the pace at the price.
Shawnee Power 2	£800	Apr 97	Even-handed performer deals confidently with music regardless of genre. Not as smooth as the best.
Sonic Frontiers Anthem	£1295	May 98	A characteristically competent and musical integrated. Prefers fairly efficient loudspeakers though.
Sonnesteer Albaster	£900	Oct 97	Excellent high-end integrated with a real love of music and plenty of poke.
Teac AB X10	£1000	Sep 95	Very strong all round performer with excellent build and finish. Verging on the expensive though.
Unison Rec. Supply 845	£2950	Mar 98	Allied to all the right 'speakers will handle all musical genres with smoothness and power.



Audio Analogue Puccini.



MVL A2+.

Prices shown are those at the time of review

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Pre-amps £ Year Verdict

under £300

AMC 1100	£150	Mar 99	Tone controls cannot be defeated and the sum total is a little metallic but value in spades.
Creek OBH-11SE	£199	Apr 99	A very lucid, natural headphone amp which scores as highly on acoustic and Classical as it does on Rock.
Creek OBH-12	£200	Jul 98	Only poor cosmetics mar the Creek. Sonically it's a gem.
Moth 30 Passive	£149	Mar 99	Won't win prizes for best build but a flexible effort for a passive. Somewhat dry presentation overall.
Musical Fidelity X-Cans	£130	Mar 98	If you haven't yet experienced the world of quality headphone listening, the X-Cans is the way to start.
Musical Fidelity X-Pre	£200	Jan 98	A smooth, sweet and musical performer.
Musical Fidelity X-Tone	£120	Mar 99	Easy-to-use stand-alone modern tone control with subtle effect. Rather a bargain.
Project 7	£259	Feb 95	Immensely enjoyable and listenable, a rare mixture of sophistication and fun.
Rotel PC 971	£150	Mar 99	Five line-level inputs and tone controls make for a flexible unit. Partnered by the RB-971 power amp, very good value.
Technics SU-C1000MkII	£299	Apr 98	Needs slightly more taut bass and a less grainy midrange to bring it up with the best.

£300-£799

Audi Analogue Bellini	£475	Apr 98	Organic and transparent. Free from transistor hardness.
Aura CA200	£749	Mar 97	A smooth and sweet sound devoid of roughness.
Crmoil CS610C	£440	Nov 98	The phono stage is the main area of weakness. Can sound a touch muddled at times.
Croft Epoch	£600	Jun 96	A fine sounding preamp, but the phono stage is weak in the bass.
Cyrus Pre	£650	Feb 96	Pre-amplifier has plenty of facilities, but sounds a little unexciting and 'conventional'.
Heybrook Signature II	£549	May 97	Impressive smoothness and tonal colour, transparent as well.
PM Audio Lab L1S	£650	Dec 95	This valve pre-amp is very good value indeed.
Rothwell Indus	£499	May 99	Passive pre of box-of-switches, whichever way you look at it the Indus is stylishly finished and well conceived.
Sumo Athena II	£767	May 96	More valve-like than transistor in sound; highly competent if not spectacular.
Talk Hurricane 1	£500	Jun 97	Flexible with a strong controlled sound, but won't suit all tastes.
Technics SU C1000	£350	Feb 97	Good when mains powered, even better running on its batteries. One to consider at the price.
Thorens TTA2000	£550	Jul 95	Poor sound quality and engineering let this pre-amp down. Pricey too.
Union Res. Feather 1	£795	Aug 98	Warm but still exciting, it is only let down by a slightly recessed midrange.



Musical Fidelity X-Tone.

£800-£1499

Audiolab 8000Q	£999	Jun 95	Highly recommended for its blend of operational sophistication, build and sound quality.
Etalon Preamp	£1095	Feb 98	Smooth, even and transparent. Well worth the outlay.
John Shearme Phase 6	£895	Sep 96	Matched with a smooth amp and 'speakers the Phase 6 is capable of a transparent and rewarding performance.
Linn Wakonda	£900	Apr 98	In terms of musicality and involvement it falls short.
Meridian 502	£1295	Dec 96	Transparent, detailed sound with good tonal range and very natural presentation.
Musical Fid. Nu-Vista	£1200	Sep 98	A truly competent pre-amp whose high-end sound comes with a very reasonable price tag.
Naim NAC102	£999	Apr 97	This even-handed performer images well and deals confidently with music regardless of genre.
Quad 7741	£850	Jul 96	Bright and detailed, but phono stage is inadequate at this price.
TAG McLaren PA10	£850	Nov 98	Justifies its price with a very musical and revealing performance.
XTC Pre-1	£1000	Nov 96	This pre-amp is highly detailed and spacious.

£1500

Audicative PPP30	£1995	Mar 95	A bright and lean approach to the valve sound.
Canary 601 MkII	£1600	Apr 99	Very musical, very revealing. A credit to the valve tradition with considerable kick in reserve.
Chord CPA 1800	£1774	Mar 98	Has it all - detail, transparency, slam and rhythm. In a word excellent.
Final Music 5	£1500	Feb 99	Partner for the Final Music-6 power amp. Battery powered.
Focusrite Red 4	£2345	Feb 96	Smooth and detailed sound. Not as clinical as some professional amps can be.
Galactron Pre	£1630	Nov 95	Smooth, but dull balance makes it suitable for bright systems.
Marsart 7	£3500	Mar 97	Superb, combines delicacy and power, especially with a vinyl source.
Michel Orca	£1650	Oct 98	With its Panasonic pot, the Orca reaches new standards of transparency and involvement.
Union Res. Mystery 2	£1750	May 98	Offers finesse, control and clarity for a very reasonable outlay.



Chord CPA-1800.

Power amps £ Year Verdict

under £800

AMC 2200	£150	Mar 99	Super value separate with first-rate sound staging. Midrange subtleties sometimes suffer but at this price...
Arcam 9P	£400	Dec 96	A detailed and open sound gives great atmosphere to all types of music.
Arcam Alpha 10P	£600	Jul 98	This power amp lags behind the best of the competition, and the build is flimsy.
Audio Analogue Donizetti	£575	Apr 98	As smart as an Armani suit, they sound powerful in a natural, organic manner.
Aura PA100	£749	Mar 97	A smooth, sweet powerful sound free from the rough brightness that afflicts many solid-states.
Creek A43	£399	Mar 99	Shows what a skilled designer can do, even when hooked up with a passive pre. A very realistic approach.
Cyrus Power	£449	Feb 96	The Cyrus Power is simply impressive in all respects.
Linn LK100	£650	Apr 98	Well built, but judged purely on a musical basis they fall short.

Prices shown are those at the time of review

AUDIO ANALOGUE

In just a short while, Audio Analogue has won plenty of admirers. When Hi Fi World tested the *Puccini* Special Edition, they gave it their top star rating with the words

"Excellent sound quality ensures the *Puccini* S.E. outstrips the competition at up to £1,000". And the influential USA magazine *Stereophile* (Dec.98) praised its "harmonic richness, stunning purity of tone and sheer musicality". To top that,

the basic £475 *Puccini* won Hi Fi Choice's Best Buy for amplifiers in an up-to £1,000 group test (Feb. '98). In their words: "This is a first-rate budget amplifier that looks and sounds like an altogether more costly model. Check it out". The *Bellini* preamp and *Donizetti* power amp fared equally well. Ken Kessler in *Hi Fi News* (Jan. '98) had this to say. "A new benchmark in the value for money stakes". Now, we're proud to introduce you to the

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Power amps £ Year Verdict

under £300

Usher LK240	£750	Aug 97	The LK240 plays tunes exceptionally well, tonal colour and image precision are not its fortes though.
Meridian 505	£795	Aug 97	Crisp, clear images are set in a broad spread between the 'speakers but the 505 lacks stage depth and grunt.
Monarchy 38A-70	£595	Jan 99	The Monarchy is a smooth, warm amp most at home with 'speakers that are easily driveable.
Mo'n 30 Power	£249	Mar 99	Refined approach with the lighter acoustic music but lacking a little in overall clout.
Multi Swave 60	£549	Dec 95	This power amp unfortunately suffers from sharp sounding treble and poor depth.
Musical Fidelity X-A50	£500	Jan 98	Very smooth, sweet and musical performers, not over-analytical but very involving.
Quad 775T	£600	Jul 96	With good punch, speed and attack its not bad at all but can be a little uninspiring.
Rotel RA-371	£225	Mar 99	70 Watts a channel helps give lucid presentation with deep sound staging. Perhaps on the bright side.
Sosme Phase 2	£689	Apr 97	The Phase 3 possesses impressive clarity, detail and dynamics.
Tellie Tornado 1	£500	Jun 97	A flexible power amp with a strong, controlled sound, but won't suit all tastes.
Technics SE-A1000	£400	Feb 97	Smooth, warm sound has plenty of grunt when needed and is very enjoyable to listen to.
Thoratec TP 2000	£500	Jul 95	Its best feature is the key on/off switch, otherwise its a case of poor sound quality and engineering.

£800-£1499

Chameleon Ruby	£995	Jan 96	Well specified and powerful, but dry and short of life. Suits Rock on bass-heavy 'speakers.
Chord SPH 400	£1325	Mar 98	This amp has it all - detail, transparency, slam and rhythm. In a word, excellent.
Comex C2000C	£800	Nov 98	These monoblocs have a tonal richness and bass speed rare amongst powerful amps.
Croft Series V	£800	Jun 96	Fast, clear and detailed sound will win friends in both the transistor and valve camps.
Deich Di Capri	£1469	May 95	Quality bass and a clear midband but the treble can be harsh at high volume.
DPA 200S	£1245	Jul 93	Serious audiophile product at an affordable price. Well constructed, pleasant to use and fine sounding.
Galactron Power	£1200	Nov 95	Smooth sound but dull balance make the Galactron suitable for bright systems.
HD Audio Duo	£1185	May 95	Not dissimilar to the Audiolab monoblocs, the sound has a sweet top and amazing clarity.
Highway Signature 5	£1051	May 97	Not quite as transparent as it could be but impresses with its smoothness and tonal colour.
Meridian 557	£1400	Dec 96	Great control and dynamics allied to seductive smoothness. A rare combination of power and delicacy.
Musical Fidelity X-A200	£1000	Aug 98	Hugely powerful and controlled, the X-A200s are still superbly musical.
Murray MA170	£1000	Apr 96	The sound is a somewhat acquired taste and a little rough in places.
Orion Jewel One	£899	Jul 95	A lot of amplifier for the money. Big, warm, sweet sound places it ahead of most.
Quad 707	£800	Jul 97	The 707 embodies a rare blend of grace and power in its sleek grey casework.
Reflex Hubson	£949	May 99	Low on power at 8 watts but fairly musical for all that. Good resolution of detail and texture.
Sime Polaris III	£898	May 96	More valve-like than transistor in sound; highly competent if not spectacular.
TAG McLaren 600	£850	Nov 98	Fully justifies the cost with a very musical and revealing performance.
VHR Adair	£1495	Jun 95	Lovers of light piano-based fare and Baroque music will appreciate this amp's delicacy.

£1500-

Autovox LC6	£1995	Mar 95	Eschews the traditional lavish tube sound for a brighter and leaner approach.
Canary 301	£3055	Nov 98	The 301 puts the 300B's traditional virtues to good use in a push-pull design that will drive most loudspeakers.
Carry 3000 SW	£3975	Feb 95	Carry have a winning amplifier that is a prime example of how a 300B can sound.
Etalon Antipol	£2925	Feb 98	Very natural, substantial presentation with lots of power on tap.
Final Music 6	£1500	Feb 99	Battery powered amp puts convincing scale and three-dimensionality into suitably sensitive loudspeakers.
Focusrite Red 5	£2057	Feb 96	Powerful, smooth and detailed sound. Not as clinical as some professional amplifiers can be.
Gumma Axiom	£4999	Apr 97	Sound quality of these monoblocs is impressive but marred by a rather obvious hum. Build could be better.
Marsatz 9	£8000	Mar 97	These monoblocs are superb, producing a beguiling performance of great control and verve.
Michael Aerts	£1989	Oct 98	The new Alecto is crisper, cleaner and more controlled than earlier incarnations.
Orchid RC750	£6600	Aug 96	A powerful grip on usic, but articulate and detailed too. A rare combination.
Shosha Phase 1	£1999	Oct 94	Good sound quality and an impressive tonal balance.
Sydney Symetra	£1550	Oct 96	The Symetra monoblocs impress with their grip. They run hot and sound warm.
Tube Technology Genesis	£2599	Jun 94	Valve monoblocs that produce explosive bass, midrange as clear as a bell and shimmering treble.
Union Res. Smart 300B	£4250	May 98	Powerful, neutral sounding amps thanks to their modified 300B valves, but expensive for the same reason.
Union Res. Power 30	£1525	Aug 98	A great compromise between delicacy, power and practicality. Very musically satisfying, too.
Vesta S15	£2350	Jul 98	The S15's purity and clarity are impossible to beat for the money. Bass not brilliant, but still better than most.
WTD PCW1	£2000	Nov 96	This power amplifier is smooth and seductive, although a little pricey.

CD Players £ Year Verdict

under £300

AMC CD8	£150	Oct 97	The CD8 is free from grain but can sound too polished at times.
Cambridge CD4SE	£200	Feb 98	Natural and very life-like, the CD4SE embarrasses many pricier players.
Denon DCD-425	£150	Apr 97	Crisp, up-beat player which is inconsistent in its overall presentation.
Denon DCD-400	£180	Feb 98	Rhythmically slick and dynamic, the Denon errs to the cool side of neutral.
Denon DCD-435	£280	Nov 98	Warm and smooth, the 835 is laid-back rather than in-your-face.
Shindo CD3	£240	Sep 94	Great for simple Jazz and Folk, but soft bass slows things down.
JVC XL-V230	£157	Jan 99	Slightly muddled in the bass, the '230 isn't the most rhythmic of players.



Final Music-6.



Cambridge CD4SE.

Prices shown are those at the time of review

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CD Players £ Year Verdict

under £300

Kenwood DP-3080/II	£180	Feb 98	One of the best budget all-rounders there is. A shade treble-heavy.
Kenwood DP 5050	£250	Aug 93	Waffly bass and enthusiastic treble mean the Kenwood prefers Classical to Rock.
Kenwood DPF-3010	£180	Jan 99	A fine performer. Lacks only some of the spirit of its predecessors.
Marantz CD-63	£249	Jun 94	Upholds the Marantz tradition of lively CD players.
Marantz CD-67	£270	Nov 96	Fine vocal projection and treble. Bass is deep if not that tight.
NAD 510	£200	Oct 95	Hard to criticise at the price, with a typically smooth, fluid NAD sound.
NAD 522	£170	Jan 99	Warm and smooth, this is a cultured player. Can be over-civilised at times.
Philips CD721	£130	Feb 96	Not the most accurate machine, but holds its own at the price.
Pioneer PD-103	£140	Feb 95	Rolled-off treble limits detail. Light bass retains foot-tapping ability.
Rotel RCD-940BX	£230	Oct 94	Controlled and invigorating player albeit a touch sterile.
Teac CD P3450SE	£200	May 97	Refuses to become flustered. Can lack emotion as a result, though.
Teac CD-P4500	£249	Nov 92	Like many of its contemporaries, the Teac is too smooth to shine.
Technics SL-PG490A	£100	Jan 99	In spite of a bias towards bass and treble, this machine remains a bargain.
Technics SL-PS570D	£200	Feb 98	Typical Technics' bright and bassy sound. Prefers Dance and Rock.
Yamaha CDX-480	£200	Mar 95	Mature, laid-back machine drops points for inferior timing and imaging.
Yamaha CDX-590	£230	Feb 98	Detailed, refined but not particularly engaging or exciting.
Yamaha CDX-593	£180	Jan 99	Lean and up-front, the Yamaha is involving on Rock but can sound rough.

£300-£799

AMC CDM7	£340	Jun 96	Very musical outfit which gains sweetness with optional valve output stage.
AR 07	£300	Jan 92	The '07 is even-handed but has no real fortes.
Arcam Alpha 7	£320	Jan 97	Superbly-designed, instinctively musical player destined for success.
Arcam Alpha 8SE	£599	Jun 98	The 8SE builds on the strengths of the standard 8 with HDCD filtering.
Arcam Alpha 9	£799	Dec 98	Apart from its tonal brightness, the Alpha 9 is a very capable machine.
Audio Analogue Paganini	£749	Apr 99	Effortless, wholly musical delivery. The Paganini does for CD replay what its stablemate Puccini does for amplification.
Audio Innovations Alto	£449	May 96	Grainless treble is detailed but the Alto misses that vital emotional spark.
Aure CD50	£450	Jul 93	High measured distortion mars the treble and bass is dry.
Creek CD43	£499	Oct 98	A competent player with a musicality that will seduce any music-lover.
Cyrus dAD 1.5	£398	May 99	Great detail and imaging with intimate music. Classical and Jazz suit the 1.5 down to the ground but Rock can sound harsh.
Cyrus dAD3	£598	Dec 96	Lacklustre with Classical, dramatic and lively on Dance and Rock.
Denon DCD-1550AR	£350	Jul 98	Clean and precise, the Denon lags only in warmth and openness.
Harman/Kardon HD730	£300	Aug 96	Strong on dynamics and drive, but lifeless treble can dampen music.
Linn Mimik	£798	Apr 95	Tonally hard but possesses many, if not all, of the Linn rhythmic strengths.
Marantz CD-63 KI Sg	£500	Sep 96	This is a rare player, greater than the sum of its parts.
Marantz CD-63SE	£350	May 95	Taken as a whole, the CD-63SE is one hell of a CD player. No digital nasties.
Myriad T20	£600	Dec 98	With its brightness balanced by warm ancillaries the T20 will win friends.
Orville CD100e	£650	Mar 97	Clean and tidy on electronic music. Not so good with acoustic material.
Pioneer PD-S304	£400	Sep 96	Fluid midrange leads a dry bass and tonally-limited treble.
Quad 87	£790	May 93	One of the top players at the price with great speed and grip.
Rotel RCD-965BX Discrole	£375	Dec 94	Fast, clean sound verges on the clinical at times.
Rotel RCD-971	£350	Sep 98	Refinement is a plus point, but lack of vitality holds the Rotel back.
Rotel RCD-975	£450	Sep 96	Tuneful, pungent bass are the pros, flat sound staging and tone the cons.
Sony CDP X3000ES	£500	Mar 98	Neutral, dynamic and stylish but not quite up with the best.
Sony CDP-XE930E	£300	Mar 97	In spite of fine sound staging and clarity, the Sony fails to involve.
Teac CD 5	£350	Jan 96	Clean and dry, the Teac is rather sterile compared to the competition.
Technics SL-PS840	£450	Sep 95	Not the last word in bass control. Midrange is more persuasive.
Thule CD100	£600	Apr 99	A very smooth and refined player with the added bonus of good detailing. Can lack rhythmic bite at times.
Trichord Genesis	£549	Sep 96	Warm and bassy, but extremely natural. Not the most consistent player.
Trichord Revelation	£799	May 97	When it's good, it's very good indeed. Can get confused on dense mixes.



Sony CDP-X3000ES.



Marantz CD-63 KI-S.

£800-£1499

Audiolab 8000	£1000	Dec 96	Sweet treble and full midrange give the 8000CD a lucid sound.
Cambridge CDA 26e	£1199	Feb 99	Perhaps lacks the last ounce of strength on Rock, nonetheless has winning all-round ability.
Symbol CDP12	£1279	Dec 97	Its warm, musical sound plus HDCD compatibility are a strong combination.
Cyrus dAD 7	£899	Jan 95	Up with the best at the money, the Cyrus simply sounds 'right'.
DPA Renaissance	£895	Jun 95	Breathtaking imagery and dynamics. Not strictly accurate, but who cares?
Harman/Kardon HD7725	£800	Jan 94	Construction is price-correct, but not the excessively relaxed sound.
Heybrook Signature	£989	Oct 97	The Heybrook loses out because of its rough treble and lack of clarity.
Hofli Xara	£950	May 98	It's not cheap but the Xara scores for firm bass and exciting presentation.
LFD Mistral	£999	Nov 97	The Mistral is outclassed in areas like pace and bass depth.
Marantz CD-17	£800	Mar 96	The CD-17 has a presentation which excels in musicality and lucidity.
Marantz CD-17 KI-S	£1300	Sep 97	The KI-S has a valve-like smoothness and clarity.
Meridian 506	£875	May 95	Characteristically dry Meridian balance which could do with more emotion.
Musical Fidelity X-Ray	£800	Feb 99	Bright, clear and well-built, the X-Ray's transparency can be hard on poor recordings.

Prices shown are those at the time of review

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CD Players £ Year Verdict

£800-£1499

Pink Triangle Mithras	£1099	Apr 98	This very natural one-box fully justifies its £1000 price tag.
Quad 77	£850	Nov 95	Competent, entertaining machine with neat styling and remote.
Roksan Caspian	£895	Aug 97	The Caspian is a gifted player well worth its asking price.
Harman SOT-1	£850	Mar 93	A superb all-rounder with particularly convincing rhythms.
Teac VRDS-HIDE	£850	Apr 96	Draws you into the music. Soundstaging fine but treble is a little bright.
Teac VRDS-25	£1300	Aug 96	Solid build doesn't make up for sound which lags in integration and detail.
ATC CDP 1	£1250	Dec 97	Rhythmically satisfying, but can sound hard in the wrong system.

£1500

Anthem CD1	£1600	Mar 98	Sweet sound and numerous features make the Anthem fine value for money.
Denon DC37	£5460	Sep 94	Amongst the best with its belt-drive transport.
McIntosh CDM-7009	£2635	Dec 95	Unmatched quality from CD at a high but fair price.
Meridian 508.24	£1995	Jul 98	The 508.24 is one of the top performers at its price.
Naim CD2	£1998	Apr 97	CD2 excites at the expense of subtlety. More at home in a Naim system.
Pink Triangle Libellula	£2099	Feb 98	One-box player with sound capable of mixing it with the best.
Teac CD-X1	£2300	Jun 92	You'll either love or hate this machine's great flair and confidence.



Roksan Caspian CD.

Turntables £ Year Verdict

Under £800

HAO 535	£200	Nov 94	Based on a Rega Planar 2. Both pleasant to use and look at with a mature sound, all for £200.
Project 1.2	£200	Jun 97	A bargain at £200 with its substantial and involving sound.
Thorens TD180	£180	Feb 95	A good, basic budget bargain.
Thorens TD280 Mk4	£199	Jun 93	Superbly lucid and clear midrange, but lower reaches are a little lightweight.
Cyberaudio Solution	£750	Feb 99	If you seek a powerful presentation where musicality takes precedence over absolute finesse, this could be the answer.
Linn Basik	£400	Sep 94	Definitely a turntable for devotees of attack and strong bass lines. Not strong on imaging.
Michael Gyrodec SE	£775	Apr 99	Great sound, superb build and excellent upgradability make the 'spider' a wonder at the price.
Mitchell Micro	£539	Jan 94	Silent and beautifully made, with transparent reproduction.
Orion 3 Continuo Cantus	£900	Oct 95	Solid as a rock and almost as heavy, it's a satisfying performer, but not quite the best.
Pink Triangle Tarantella	£575	Oct 97	Simply the best at the money. Combines PT's customary transparency with real authority.
Project 5	£350	Dec 93	Involvement and rhythm are priorities. Highly recommended.
Project 6.1	£435	Sep 94	The 6.1 gives a very full, strong sound. A very exciting deck.
Systemdek IX2	£500	Aug 96	Clear and precise sound through midrange and treble puts it up with more expensive rivals.
Systemdek IIX900	£415	Sep 94	Detailed sound stage and broad imaging with a good, even range of tonal colour.
Systemdek IXE	£450	Jan 93	Combined with an SME 309 it achieves great results, with a massive sound stage.
Thorens TD116 Mk6	£405	Sep 94	Tonally smooth with a warm midrange, but a little too laid back.
Virtual Reality Reson rs1	£600	Nov 95	With fine detail resolution, transparency and a neutral balance the Reson rs1 represents super value.
VPI Junior	£500	Oct 97	The Junior is a very good deck indeed, with an assured and involving sound.



Pink Triangle Tarantella.

£800-

Approach Symphony	£1860	Nov 92	The Symphony has to be one of the best the British can offer. It's expensive, but a true sophisticate.
Mitchell Orbe	£1950	Apr 95	Fast and detailed with crisp sheer treble and clean, deep bass.
Orion Live Oasis-A	£950	Dec 98	Nice looks and a good sound, but can be bettered on price.
Orion Live Oasis-S	£2250	Oct 98	The Oasis-S is a cool, lean but very transparent performer thanks to battery power. Up against strong competition.
Project Perspective	£900	Aug 98	Aesthetically, the Perspective is a winner, but better sound can be had from cheaper decks.
PT Anniversary	£2390	Oct 96	With its battery supply and ultra-quiet DC motor, the Pink displays great accuracy and neutrality. A top-flight deck.
Rega Xarxes X	£1295	Jan 97	An undoubted bargain and class leader in all areas with a precise, confident and well-balanced sound.
SME Model 20	£2500	Oct 92	This is a deck for those with a substantial record collection who demand the best. Exemplary sound.
Technics SL-1200 LTD	£1000	Apr 97	Looks expensive at £1000, but don't let that put you off the capable standard version.
Wilson Benesch	£1775	Jul 96	Gives a technically excellent rendition but fails to really communicate the emotion in music.
Wilson Benesch Full Circle	£2000	Mar 98	Offers clarity in abundance with a natural ease. Looks gorgeous too.

Phono stages £ Year Verdict

Under £800

Creek OBH-8SE/OBH-2	£160	Nov 97	One of the best MC phono stages on the market at the price
Creek OPH-1/OBH-1	£110	Nov 97	Smooth and truly musical, exceedingly worthy entry-level phono stage.
Densen DP Drive/DP-02	£350	Sep 97	A beautifully made, fine sounding device that looks great too.
DMA DSP 200SD	£495	Oct 94	Could be too forceful for some, but with excellent detail and extremely powerful bass.
EAR 834P	£340	Oct 94	Very fine phono stage with precise imagery and a bargain at the price.

Prices shown are those at the time of review

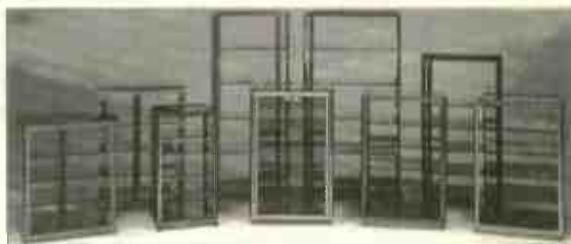
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Phono stages £ Year Verdict

Under £800

Linnmann Black Cube	£395	Oct 98	Capable of involvement, neutrality and insight usually the preserve of stages three or four times the price.
LFD Mistral	£299	Sep 97	The most lucid and musical budget phono stage around - a true audiophile bargain.
Musical Fidelity X-LP	£130	May 99	First-class inexpensive phono stage. MM and MC inputs catered for. Low on distortion, high on clarity, build legendary.
NAD PP1	£40	Sep 98	At this price the NAD is an accomplished all-rounder. Slowish bass will suit leaner systems though.
OED Discwasher	£35	Jan 97	A bargain. Beguilingly musical presentation, with more than enough detail and power for a mere £35.
Rotel RQ-970BX	£130	Nov 94	Combine with a good cheap line level integrated and it will show you how good vinyl can be.
Sennheiser Sedley MC MM	£399	May 98	The Sedley combines transparency and fine dynamics with excellent rhythmic ability.
Unison Simply Phono	£495	Mar 96	Liquid sound with great dynamics, but a little hissy and muddled too. Beguiling, but not perfect.

£800+

Anthem Pre 1P	£899	Aug 98	Despite a sizeable price tag the Anthem offers a smooth, lucid sound and superb build quality.
Audio Innovations P2	£749	Feb 96	Fantastic bass and super insight make this one of the best phono stages around.
AudioLab 800PPA	£800	Oct 94	Instruments can have a somewhat flat perspective, but excellent clarity.
Kinshaw Perception	£525	Oct 94	Extremely impressive results, especially with MM cartridges.
Linn Linn	£850	Oct 97	Marries beautifully into the Linn family, but not too hot with other components.
Michell Iso	£528	Oct 94	Gives a thoroughly cohesive picture of a recording with a very tight and rhythmical bass.
Michell Iso HR	£850	May 93	Perhaps too good for some record collections. Extremely revealing.
Roksan Artaxerxes/DS5	£945	Oct 97	Doesn't worry about genre, it just gets on with the job of making music in an enjoyable way.
Sonic Frontiers Phono 1	£2000	Apr 98	Expensive, yes, overpriced, no. The Phono 1 is a superb all-round phono stage.



Sonic Frontiers
Phono 1.

Cartridges £ Year Verdict

Under £200

Clearaudio Alpha	£130	Apr 99	Tends to sound quite hard at the top but imaging and detail are good. Best in a warm system.
Denon DL103M	£110	Aug 97	First manufactured in 1963, it sounds mature and sure-footed rather than over the hill.
Denon DL110	£65	Mar 94	May be a little soft-natured for some. Splendid dynamics and an even tonal balance.
EMT Mica	£185	Feb 98	Better Goldring's 1042 without difficulty. MC quality from an MM.
Goldring 1042	£90	Jan 93	One of the best MMs at the price with strainless delivery.
Goldring 1012GX	£60	Jul 93	Great with Rock music, the 1012GX is the best value low-price MM.
Grado Prestige Silver	£119	Apr 97	Good tracking and inoffensive sound, but somehow lacks sparkle in any department.
Linn K9	£58	Sep 94	Rhythmic bite compensates for a lack of vibrancy in music (MM).
Ortofon 540	£100	Jan 93	Smooth operator and very good value for money (MM).
Ortofon MC15 Super II	£110	Mar 95	In the right system, can be masterful with its dry and accurate response.
Ortofon MC25E	£170	Sep 95	A considerable achievement that adds true verve a pizzazz to the MC15 Super II
Roksan Carver Black	£120	Jan 93	Light and dry presentation with good presentation (MM).
Slate Brazen MM	£185	Sep 97	If you like the V15 you'll love the Brazen. Works well with an SME 3009.
Sumiko Blue Point	£100	Oct 92	Excellent value for money. It does its job of transcribing the information on the disc without fuss or bother.

£200+

Cartridge Man Music Makers	£549	Feb 99	Good price, high output and a winning musicality make this Moving Iron cartridge the one to beat.
DNM Lexa	£1300	Jan 99	A Goldring make-over that tracks well and sounds good. Pricey, though.
DNM Rica MM Cartridge	£255	Jun 98	This better the Mica, has super-MM virtues.
Dynavector OV20X-H	£299	May 99	Delightfully musical sound makes the Dynavector a very strong contender in the budget MC stakes.
EMT H8Te	£850	Oct 96	Solid bass and smooth, musical sound make this rare MC cartridge worth the money.
Goldring Excel VX	£495	May 97	Has fine midrange clarity, but is bettered in other areas by cheaper competitors.
Linn Arkan	£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.
Linn Lydian	£649	Jun 95	Extremely smooth, civilised MC with no obvious weaknesses.
Ortofon Jubilee	£1250	Mar 99	Detailed, musical and sure-footed, the Jubilee goes a long way towards justifying its elevated price tag.
Ortofon MC21F	£225	Sep 95	Delightfully sweet, musical sound with added refinement on FL 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 Rohmann	£1000	Apr 96	A top quality MC with superb tonal quality and excellent imagery.
Shure V15VxMR	£295	Mar 97	Warm, dynamic rendition of music with great detail and impact (MM).
Transfiguration Spirit	£1000	Jul 98	A balanced all-rounder that misses out only on the last ounce of detail and bass weight.
Van den Hul MC10	£840	Jun 95	The MC10 is very hard to fault. A honey, pure and simple.
VDH Grasshopper IV	£3750	Dec 95	Allows music to flow with superb fluidity and reveal things which were previously unheard - at a price!



van den Hul
Grasshopper.

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HI-FI WORLD

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Tone-arms £ Year Verdict

Hadcock GH 228 SE	£595	Dec 98	Construction won't worry SME but its sound quality will unsettle a lot of the competition.
Orion Live RB250/RB300	varies	Nov 97	These modified arms are a considerable improvement on the originals
SME 309	£689	Jan 93	Tight, neutral sound with good tonality, but lacks the IVs pace and precision.
SME IV	£828	Mar 92	Sexy chassis and staggering engineering along with potent performance earn it a place in audio history.

Tuners £ Year Verdict

Under £300

AMC T7	£130	Jul 97	Although it has a tempting price, its sound quality is poor compared with its rivals.
Arcam Alpha 7	£230	Mar 97	An attractive, smooth sounding tuner that won't break the bank.
Cambridge T500	£180	Feb 99	The T500 is one of the most gifted tuners under £500; a very accomplished all-round performer.
Herman Kardon TU-950	£200	Jul 96	Sound quality is generally impressive. Let down by a rather constricted sound stage, but still good value.
Kenwood KT-2080	£130	Feb 97	Smooth, even balance allows the KT-2080 to convince with whatever it's receiving. £130 well spent.
Mirantz ST-57	£150	Oct 97	The ST-57 is a smooth, warm tuner but lacks a little clarity and transparency.
Mission Cyrus FM7	£299	Apr 94	Musical, communicative and extremely detailed and a steal at the price.
NAD 412	£190	Jun 96	A remarkably musical and natural sounding tuner. Unbeatable at the price, or even twice the price for that matter.
Onkyo T401	£160	May 94	A competent machine, but time has taken its toll on the sound quality.
Pioneer F-504RDS	£300	Dec 98	One sole mark against the class-leading transparency is its slightly dry character.
Rega Radio	£230	Jan 95	Sounds on the whole more than its price, but in other respects it isn't especially competitive.
Rotel RT-930AX	£175	Aug 94	The RT-930AX is a glowing little bargain, real quality at a very realistic price.
Sony ST-SA3ES	£250	Apr 97	The Sony is worth every penny of its asking price. If you're a fan of radio this is one to go for.
Sony ST-SE700	£180	Aug 97	The ST-SE700 is one of the best at this price. LW reception is a welcome bonus.
Technics ST-GT-350L	£140	Jun 95	Not a bad buy at all and a very good fit for budget and mid-price systems.
Yamaha TX5e0 RDS	£200	Feb 95	If you want something for casual listening with superior aesthetics, this might be the one for you.



Hadcock 228 SE.

£300+

Adcom GFT 555 .2	£399	May 93	Quite musical but does not rejuvenate the waves! Good solid performance but less than luxurious.
Burmester 931	£4347	Nov 94	This is not a cheap tuner, but its cheaper than buying a radio station, which is the only possible alternative.
Creek T43	£399	May 98	A great little tuner. This is the one in the price bracket.
Denon TU-S10	£400	Mar 98	A stylish, well-built tuner which has a detailed sound but needs careful partnering
Fanfare FT 1	£1350	Mar 95	Whether it's sweaty disco or symphony hall, the Fanfare comes up to scratch.
Kenwood KT-6050L	£300	Oct 95	A good value, excellent sounding rds tuner, but lacks full EON facilities
Linn Kremlin	£1645	Mar 92	Commendable basic performance but, considering the price there are limitations.
Magnum Dynalab FT101A	£749	Apr 92	Worth auditioning but bass rather dry and light.
Marrantz ST-17	£600	May 99	Knock-out build quality and rich velvety sound. Poor-signal mute a bit too enthusiastic.
Meridian 504	£660	Mar 96	A clear, natural sound with good punch. Has strong rivals at the price, but acquires itself well.
Micromega Tuner	£700	Jul 95	An unusual design from Micromega that's well built but sonically unrewarding and expensive.
NAD 702	£330	Jul 94	Well worth auditioning, even if you've never previously considered a receiver.
Naim NAT 03	£499	Sep 93	Soft and pure, especially across the midband. Speech very well reproduced plus solid weighty bass.
Pioneer F-504RDS	£350	Nov 95	Well engineered and competent tuner, but a little uninspiring.
Rotel Michi RHT10	£895	Mar 94	This classy looking tuner can hold its head up high amongst the best tuners at the price.
Rotel RT-990BX	£500	Apr 95	The price of twenty concert tickets, and for that you can listen as if you were there. A bargain.
TAG McLaren T20	£1100	Mar 99	Extremely well built with a lucid if slightly dry sound. The only real drawback is the high price.
Thorens TRT-2000	£500	Dec 97	An otherwise competent tuner is let down by a rather processed character.



Rotel Michi Tuner.

Cassette £ Year Verdict

Under £300

Alwa AD-F580	£150	Apr 98	No Dolby S, but three heads and two capstans make the Alwa a bargain.
Denon DR11-351	£160	May 96	Good enough for the price and no worse than the competition.
Denon DRM-650S	£230	Aug 96	Top sound quality with ferric and chrome makes this deck a steal.
JVC TD-V662	£299	Sep 98	Only the lack of Dolby S conspires against the otherwise excellent JVC.
Kenwood KX-5080S	£200	Jan 97	Stable transport gives fine results on metal and chrome. Rough on ferrics.
Nad 613	£230	Jan 96	Decent playback and good recording when used carefully.
NAD 614	£270	Sep 95	Excellent electronics are let down by a low-grade transport.
Rotel RD-960BX	£230	Oct 95	A solid, competent machine which is reasonable value for money.
Sony TC-K311	£150	Dec 93	Auto-tuning is mediocre and the general results are unexceptional.
Sony TC-K490	£170	Jan 93	A mix of average heads and electronics doesn't make for happy taping.
Teac V-610	£100	Apr 97	The V-610's performance matches its price well, but audiophile it isn't.
Teac V-600	£150	Sep 94	Satisfactory for in-car recordings, but the low price shows.
Yamaha KX-580 SE	£250	Sep 97	The '580 lives up to its SE tag with a fine performance in all areas.

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Cassette £ Year Verdict

£300+

Cassette	£	Year	Verdict
Aiwa AD-S950	£300	Feb 95	Vice-free playback is mirrored by impressive recording.
Denon DRS-810	£300	Jan 92	On the right tapes, the Denon repays with delightful sound quality.
JVC TD-V1010	£400	Sep 92	Disappointing on replay but recording is another kettle of fish altogether.
Kenwood KX-7060S	£330	Dec 94	Convincing all-rounder except for heavy-handed noise reduction.
Nakamichi 1.5	£500	Jan 92	The Cassette Deck 1.5 has no rivals in its ability to recreate a realistic performance.
Nakamichi DR-1	£780	Jun 93	Not perfect but as close as you can get for the money.
Nakamichi DR-3	£300	Mar 93	Unfortunately keeping the price down keeps performance below Nak's norm.
Onkyo TA250	£350	Oct 94	Top transport but the electronics aren't on a par.
Pioneer CT-95	£1000	Mar 97	On chrome and ferric, the '95 is smooth and natural. Not so good with metals.
Pioneer CT-S550S Precision	£340	Feb 99	Three heads, ease of use and high quality make the Dolby S equipped Precision a strong contender
Pioneer CT-S740S	£430	Jun 96	Complex but superb in every important area.
Sony TC-K611S	£330	Feb 94	Muffled on pre-recordeds but pulls out all the stops on recordings.
Tecac V-8030S	£550	Nov 97	Solid build and solid sounds. Top-notch at the price.
Tecac V-8030S	£650	Aug 95	One of the highest quality Dolby S decks available.
Technics RS-AZ7	£300	Jul 96	Excellent bass but mid and treble lack dynamics. Auto-tunes poorly on metal.



Nakamichi DR1.

DVD £ Year Verdict

DVD	£	Year	Verdict
Denon DVD-3000	£700	Aug 98	The Denon is a fine performer with CD and better still with 24/96.
Denon DVD-5000	£1500	Mar 99	Build is second to none. Sound is very solid convincing, but not as musical as the 3000.
Parasound DVD-A350	£700	Jul 98	The A350 wipes out the CD-only competition at the price and threatens players up to £2000.
Panasonic DVD-L10	£1000	Nov 98	Isn't cheap, but it's an outstanding portable and a capable domestic device.
Sony DVP S715	£700	Aug 98	The Sony is warm and smooth but lacks clarity and precision.

Prices shown are those at the time of review

Headphones £ Year Verdict

Headphones	£	Year	Verdict
Ergo Model 2	£140	Mar 99	Wonderfully lucid and transparent panel-like sound.
Jardin Float 2	£100	Mar 99	Clarity and openness are their traits, rather than slammng bass, but still good value.
Sennheiser HD-580	£200	Nov 98	In the company of a smooth, warm system the 580s can shine.
Sennheiser HE60 V70	£1000	Feb 95	Electrostatic that set a class standard and can put a case for chucking out your power amp and 'speakers.
Vivanco FMH-6800	£80	May 98	Have a lot of potential but basic operating problems have to be cleaned up first.
Vivanco SR850	£50	Nov 95	Excitement that is rarely heard in headphones, but have a little trouble with heavy orchestral loads.



Panasonic DVD.

CD Transports £ Year Verdict

CD Transport	£	Year	Verdict
Audiolab 8000 CDM	£1249	Aug 94	Distinguished by a wide array of facilities. Thoughtfully designed and high quality.
Cyrus Disc Master	£1800	Jul 94	Smooth and cohesive. The Disc Master looks good and comes with the Dac Master within the price.
DPA Enlightenment	£695	Mar 95	Solid and lifelike sound with Rock music and full bodied on Classical.
Kenwood DP-X9010	£530	Feb 92	Superb build for the money and a very musical sound. Benefits greatly from clocking.
Micromega Duo	£3435	Apr 93	Excellent build quality and a sound quality to match.
Monarchy DT-40A	£1595	Jun 94	Isn't cheap but has a solid dependable sound with a big, powerful presentation.
Parasound C/BD-2000	£1695	Jun 97	The belt drive is an interesting idea but the Parasound is bettered by cheaper transports.
PT Cardinal	£1440	Feb 95	Heart-stopping speed and impact contribute to what is an exceptionally good machine.
Rotel RDD-980	£450	Jul 96	Good, clean dynamic sound with a neutral and pure midrange tone.
Sonic Frontiers SFT 1	£2295	Aug 96	Top flight machine with an easy, musical and enjoyable sound, for those that can afford it.
Sonic Frontiers 3	£6999	Sep 98	A handsome machine both sonically and aesthetically. We love the camera aperture-style loading system.
Tecac P-38	£2500	Jun 97	Costs a lot of money and sounds nothing short of superb.
Tecac VRDS T1	£499	Feb 95	Enjoyable player with good insight. Good finish and keen pricing make it a thoroughly good buy.
Thornburn TCD 2000	£900	Jun 96	A soft and warm sound will please vinyl lovers, but it's not the last word in detail.
XTC CDT1	£1200	Apr 96	A warm and musical sound with a taste of high-end refinement and detail.

CD Convertors £ Year Verdict

CD Convertor	£	Year	Verdict
Alchemist TS D-1	£300	Jan 99	Smooth, natural and relaxed, highly persuasive with acoustic material. A bit soft on Rock and Dance.
Ansari BR500	£750	Aug 97	Smooth and accurate treble and easy-going rhythm. Measured and engaging; good value too.
Audiolab 8000DAC	£900	Aug 97	Treble roll-off serves to remove some of the music's sparkle; lags behind the group leaders somewhat.
Cambridge Dac Magic	£150	Jun 95	Instant upgrade for a budget player but out of its depth within a properly designed hi-fi CD player.



Sonic Frontiers 3.

Gershman Acoustics

Avante Garde RX20 - a mere 36" tall and 12" x 12" at the base - Absolute Sound review - "a true torture test with a bass line that's big, super fast and continuous - the Gershman's handled it beautifully, servo driven Infinity RS1 towers have more power but are way too slow. The Magnapan MG3.5/R's, can't match the low bass impact of the Avant Gardes, only the Thiel 3.6 can handle this track with aplomb and even they don't sound quite as fast. Unquestionably, the Avant Gardes are a tremendously musical loudspeakers".
X-1, Specter, Enigma 500-X, GAP-520X

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CD Convertors £ Year Verdict



Midiman Flying Calf.

Chord DSC 900 DAC	£1700	Dec 98	The Chord combines composure with musicality and transparency. Fort Knox build and priced to match.
Chord OBH-14	£239	Jun 99	Combined DAC and passive pre-amp; at the money there is no competition.
DPA Enlightenment DAC	£795	Mar 95	Powerful, taut bass and remarkably solid higher frequencies. A nice touch with acoustic music especially.
DPA Enlightenment	£825	Aug 97	An engrossing listen with good manners to boot. Never uninvolved or lacklustre, plays with realism.
DPA Little Bit 3	£300	Nov 95	Don't be misled by the name - it's the budget converter to have. Impossible to criticise for the money.
DPA SX517 DAC	£8000	Jun 98	A real smoothie for high-end digital conversion. Given the right transport, an outstanding sound is on the cards.
Marston Silhouette/PSU	£895	Aug 97	If detail is high on your list of priorities, with forceful, hard-edged presentation, this looks like a very good bet.
Midiman Flying Calf	£109	Feb 99	A great little DAC which simply can't be beaten at the price. A bargain in all areas.
Midiman Flying Cow	£300	Jun 98	First-class as a DAC; doubles as an ADC for archiving to CDR - great value.
Monarchy Audio Deluxe 18	£595	Aug 97	Never offensive; its multi-bit converter packs a mighty bass punch. Useful analogue volume control.
Monarchy Deluxe 18	£795	May 95	Delicate brightness does a lot to open out music and create a sense of space.
Musical Fidelity X-DAC	£300	Jan 99	Crisp, detailed and dynamic, the MF is a genuine music maker, if a touch hard and bright at times.
Musical Fidelity X-DAC	£300	Nov 97	Outstanding value for money. Excellent sound in the usual attractively styled package.
Onix DA188	£399	Jun 95	Nicely built using quality components, the DA-188 has a lively sound. Solid bass, tidy midrange and crisp treble.
Pink Triangle Da Capo	£1400	Feb 95	An old hand at the game. One of the first HDCD-compatible converters is still a fine piece of gear.
Pink Audio	£699	Nov 95	A fine musical performance makes this idiosyncratic CD converter worth searching out.
Rotal RDP 980	£450	Jul 96	An affordable route into two-box players. Good, clean dynamic sound with a neutral and pure mid-range tone.
Sonic Frontiers DAC III	£240	Jan 95	Easy and fun to build, competitively priced and delivers fine sonic results.
Son Front. Processor 3	£7000	Sep 98	An awful lot of money - use it forever. Quality which can outlive any amount of cheaper purchases.
Sonic Frontiers Transdac	£699	Jul 95	The Transdac has a smooth and focussed sound, but partnered with the Ultra Jitterbug looks expensive.
Thorns TDA2000	£700	Jun 96	Partnered with the TCD 2000, produces a sound that is certainly focussed, detailed and spacious.
XTC DAC	£1200	Apr 96	A taste of the elegantly smooth, slightly laid-back sound - the epitome of American good taste.

World Classics Section

Cassette

Nakamichi (various)
Yamaha TC-800GL

See main Guide

Early classic in serious cassette. Its ski-slope looks got it a cult following once it had ceased to be simply ugly.

CD Players

Mendian 207
Pioneer PD-91

Beautifully-built two-box with pre-amp stage. Very musical although not as refined as modern Bitstream gear. No digital output. Built-to-last player with easy upgrade routes for modifiers. Not knockout as it stands but get one cheap and have a go!

Amplifiers

Leak Point One, TL12 & TL10
Leak Pre-amps
Leak Stereo 20
Leak TL12+
NAD 3020
Quad 33
Quad II
Sugden A21
Technics SE-A5 Mk2

Ancestors of hi-fi, consequently expensive nowadays. As with all vintage stuff, overhauling is de rigueur before use. Line of 'good for their time' pre-amps. Use of EF86 pentode for high gain rules out ultra performance. Not the highest-fi. Excellent workaday classic. In good order the 20 will not disgrace itself. Various upgrades are available from specialist repairers. Plentiful monobloc equivalent of Stereo 20. Reasonably inexpensive and a tweakers' dream. Genuine hi-fi on a budget. You can't argue with success! NAD's budget integrated gave thousands their first taste of hi-fi and remains great value. By no means a bad job and value for money. With its matching 303 pre-amp makes a good introduction to audio classics. One of the all-time classic mono amplifiers. Unusual circuit but it works beautifully. 22 pre-amp not up to today's standards. Seventies transistor integrated has an eminently likeable smoothness and musicality. Limited inputs via DIN sockets. Nice transformer and electronics, shame about the casework. With tweaking, this 150watter can sound sweet.

Loudspeakers

Klipschorn
Leak Sandwich
Lowther PM6A
Magneplanar SMGa
Mission 770
Quad ESL57
Tannoy GRF & Autograph
Wharfedale Super 8 RS DD
Yamaha NS1000M
TannoyYork, Lancaster etc.

Not exactly plentiful or cheap but a splendid beast. For efficiency they have seldom been equalled. Space hungry! Rather warm sounding big infinite baffle but cheap with it. With reasonably powerful amp can sound quite satisfying. High quality full-range driver; still manufactured. High sensitivity, as fitted to many classic horn designs. Touch dry in the bass but a technological speaker with genuinely musical abilities. Usual warnings re: dipoles apply. Father of the 77 range which continues to this day. Well mannered with a warm sound and a kind load to amplifiers. Unrivaled. Properly serviced there is nothing like 'em. Their natural presentation may make them caviar to the general. Folded horn monsters which certainly sound good if you have the space. For Tannoy vintage see HFW November 1998. Ideal experimenters' driver. High sensitivity - 14,000 Gauss magnet and extended frequency range. Inexpensive too! Hi-tech favourites of the Japanese and Americans. Viewed more warily in the UK but can give excellent results. Many similar models of infinite baffle or reflex design. Not the last word in tautness but the drivers work well in modern cabinets.

Vinyl

Acos Lustre
Alphason HR100S
Ariston RD11
Garrard 301 & 401
Goldring Lenco 88 & 99
HadcocK 228
Linn Axis
Michell Focul One
Shure M75
SME 3009 IIS
Thorens TD124
Thorens TD150
Trio L-07D

Very honest piece of kit, well made and easily adjusted. Vinyl beginners could do very much worse. First class arm, up to present-day standards. Buy carefully, though, as there's no service available now. A one-time king of turntables very similar to the Linn LP12. Now deposited but worth a look at the right price. Legendary and fairly plentiful. Excellent back-up available; many different custom plinths available. High quality. Great deck for the kitchen table enthusiast. Garrard fans won't look at 'em but cheap and capable. Servicing available. Recently out-classed by Hadcock's updated 228 Special Edition but a proper hi-fi arm for all that. Makers still service. Uncomplicated, lower-price version of the famous Sondek. Considerably less expensive than some of its stablemates. 20 years and still going strong. Early runner in the 'modern' turntable cycle with a first class arm. Factory servicing available. Recent line-contact improvements have left the M75 behind but the wide range of needles make it a handy tool. Everlasting classic tone-arm. Spares permanently available from SME. No longer the last word but peanuts second-hand. Best classic deck ever? Judging by the prices they fetch it's possible - 78rpm too! Mid-price deck with a keen following. No real difficulty with servicing - novices may find the suspension system unnerving. Knockout heavyweight from 1980 with stainless bearing and 11lb platter! Not a give-away and beware! - spares scarce.

Tuners

Leak Troughline (original)
Leak Troughline II & III mono
Leak Troughline III Stereo
Marantz ST-8

Interesting ornament but no longer hi-fi. Bandwidth limited to 88MHz to 100MHz only. Arguably the best-sounding tuners ever. Adaptation for stereo easy via phono multiplex socket. Excellent tuner with indifferent stereo decoding circuit. Best when adapted to use modern outboard decoder. Possibly the ultimate Tardis console, including an oscilloscope for checking the strength of signal. Expensive even now.

Prices shown are those at the time of review

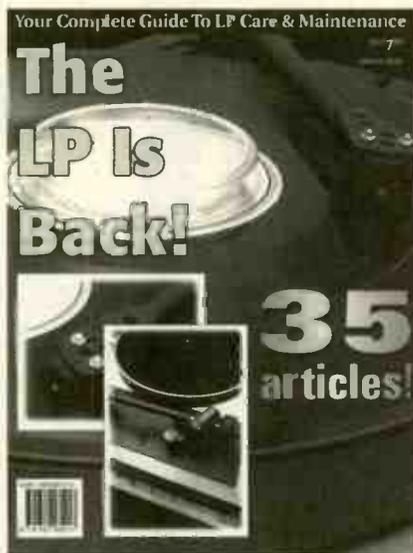
CUTTING REMARKS

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 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 choose 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

NICK 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 5J18OE 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 150watts 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. Alternately, visit on-line at

PUTTING THE SPARK BACK

NORTH 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
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E88CC	Tesla	6.00	KT88	Sovtek	20.00
ECC807	Brimar	28.00	KT88	G.E.C.	POA
ECF80	Mullard	3.50	300B	JJ/Tesla	68.00
E182CC	Mullard	12.00	5687WB	Philips	5.00
E188CC	Philips	8.00	5881	Sovtek	5.00
ECL82	Siem/Telefun	14.00	6072	R.C.A.	9.00
ECL83	Amperex	5.00	6550C	Svetlana	16.00
ECL85	Polam	4.00	6550WE	Sovtek	16.00
ECL86	Harma	5.00	6CG7	G.E.	12.00
EF804S	Siemens	24.00	6CZ5	USA	10.00
EF86	Siemens	7.00	6GK5	USA	7.00
EL34WXT	Sovtek	6.00	6SL7WGT	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
EL84	Philips	12.00	12AY7	Mixed	9.00
EL86	Siemens	7.00	12BH7A	Harma	9.00



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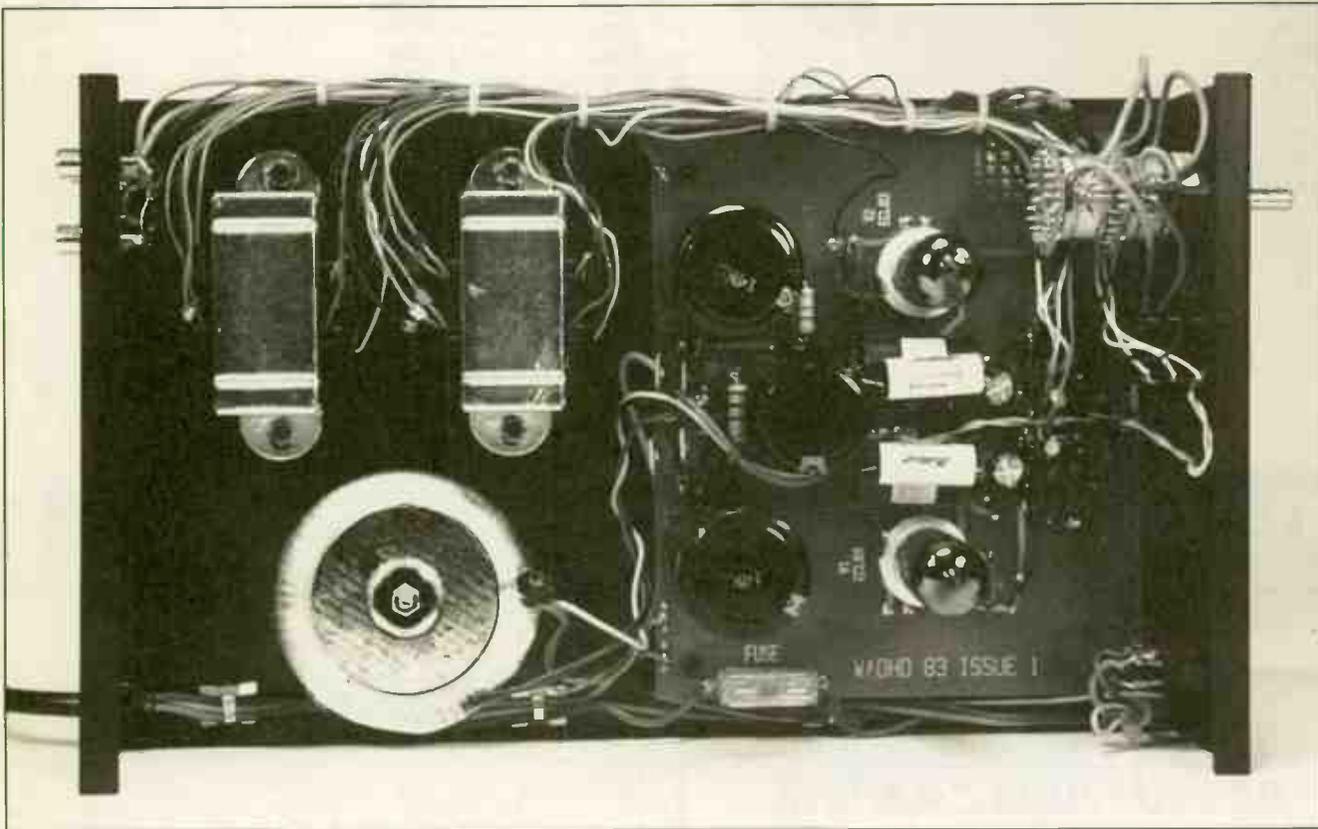
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HEAD CASE



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 Floot 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. Paralleling 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 straight forward, but here's a few pointers to help you on your way:

1) As soldering to both sides of the PCB is

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.

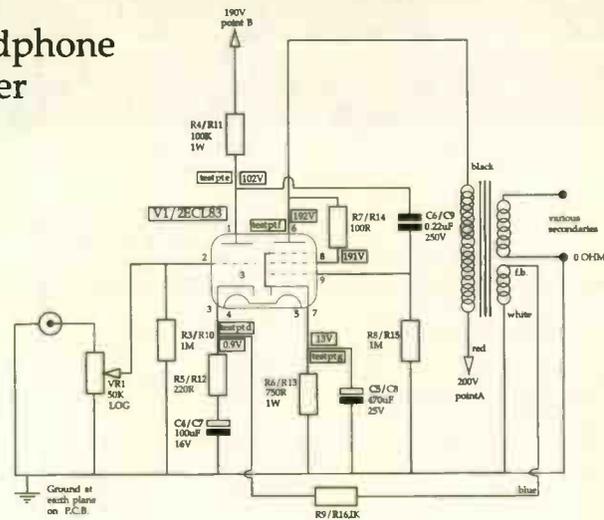
The paper-in-oil parts of this upgrade have inner and outer foil lead-outs. The outer is denoted by the shiny, black exposed resin end and should be positioned nearest to the earth potential of the circuit to exploit the inherent screening capabilities of these types of capacitors. This reduces any noise 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.

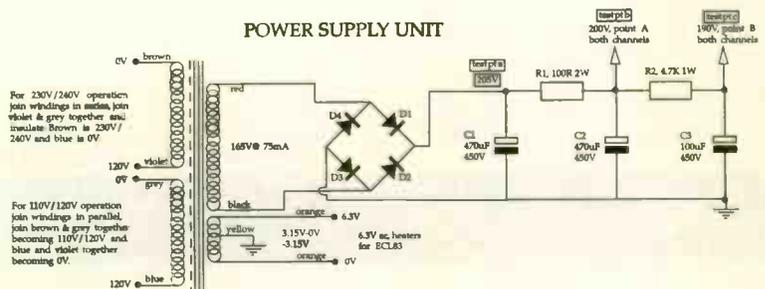
5) The diodes used in the bridge rectifier upgrade are static sensitive and some measures have to be taken to prevent damage. Make sure you are static-free by discharging yourself on an earthed metal surface, be it a copper pipe or the metal case of a light switch. I made sure all the equipment I needed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

HD83 headphone amplifier

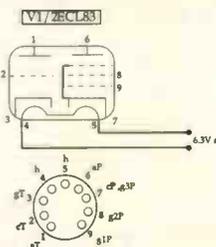
SIGNAL CIRCUIT (ONE CHANNEL)



POWER SUPPLY UNIT



VALVE PIN LAYOUT



Views are from underneath valve or valve holder
h=heater hct=heater centre tap c=cathode a=anode nc=no connection T=triode P=pentode

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 50hours' playing time, during which period the sound will get better still.

MAXIMUM UPGRADE

Benefiting 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

α

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6BQ5/6CH6 Brimar UK - these 6CH6 are similar to 6BQ5 but have different pin out. Data on request	£1.95 each	£1.40 each	Socket	Chinese, magnoval socket (for PL519, 40KG6, 78KG6, 7868) PCB mount, ceramic. New 90 day guarantee. Ref 915PC 50 pcs @ £1.00 200 pcs @ £0.50 100 pcs @ £0.36
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12AT7 Tungsol	£2.80 each	£2.80 each		
85A2 Mullard	£3.00 each	£1.00 each		
EB91 - SEE 6AL5				
ECL86 - SEE PCL86 similar item - data on request				
KT88 - SEE 6550B				
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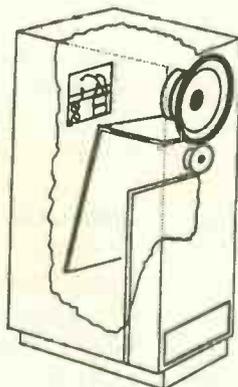
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Vinicius Cantuaria's Tucumã) and the performance just wraps around you.

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

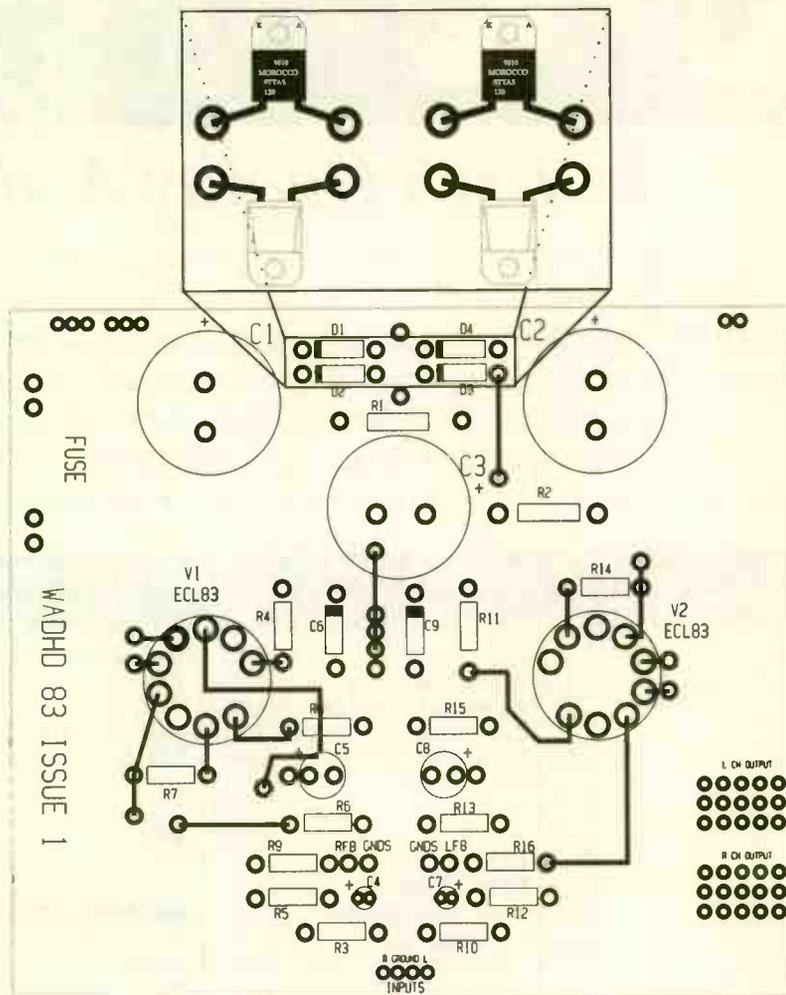
First step back down the road towards the standard HD83 consisted of removing the 0.1uF MIT Multicaps bypassing the paper-in-oil 0.22uF coupling caps. The immediately obvious result was a shrunken sound stage and a top-end missing a lot of its previous sparkle and precision. The midrange and bass were 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 detailing, 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.

Diagram shows HD83 printed circuit board, component side, detailing the orientation of D1 - D4, C6 and C9.



- KEY: — Component side - follows the route of all the track and the position of the tabs on the side where the components sit.
 — Ident - denotes the position, outline, name and orientation of the component on the component side
 ■ Paper in oil orientation guide - denotes the outer foil end (shiny black resin) of capacitor C6 and C9

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/pen-tode 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

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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 engrossing 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 instance), 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 CT1 uses two Ema switches operating on a pair of small PCBs, which carry the SMD resistors.

PARTS AND PARTS DESCRIPTION FOR HD83 UPGRADE KIT

VR1 (1 off)	DAC CT1, 50k Danish Audio Connect stepped attenuator. 24-step precision switch, all contacts gold-plated, with low-noise, non-magnetic SMD resistors. Five times shorter signal path than conventional designs.	MIT Multicap polypropylene bypass capacitor in parallel with C6/C9
D1-D4 (4 off)	STA5 Turboswitch. These diodes have a very fast switching time and are electrically very quiet in operation.	R8/R15/R3/R10 (4 off) Holco H2, 1M
C6/C9 (2 off)	0.22uF 300V Aluminium foil/paper in oil, British made from Ampohm. An aluminium foil and impregnated paper dielectric audio capacitor of very high quality, ideal for valve audio.	R5/R12 (2 off) Vishay VSRJ, 220R
C6/C9 cont.(2 off)	0.01uF 400V	R6/R13 (4 off) Holco 2 x 1k5 in parallel
		R7/R14 (2 off) Vishay VSRJ, 100R
		R4/R11 (2 off) Holco H2, 100k
		R9/R16 (2 off) Vishay VSRJ, 1k
		Fitting parts (10 off) PCB pins small
		Fitting parts (10 off) PCB pins large
		Fitting parts Rubber sleeving (20cms)

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

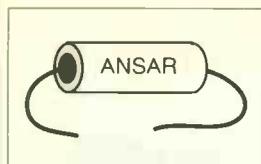
	UK (inc. vat & p&p)	Overseas (exc. p&p)
HD83 upgrade kit:	195.00	170.00
Call or fax Nick Lucas on:	+44 (0)171 625 8032 (9am-5pm, Monday-Friday)	
e-mail:	wad@hi-fiworld.co.uk	

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CW470N	CAP PROPYL 470nF	£1.25
CW680N	CAP PROPYL 680nF	£1.25
CW100U	CAP PROPYL 1µF	£1.25
CW150U	CAP PROPYL 1.5µF	£1.50
CW220U	CAP PROPYL 2.2µF	£1.50
CW330U	CAP PROPYL 3.3µF	£1.85
CW470U	CAP PROPYL 4.7µF	£2.00
CW680U	CAP PROPYL 6.8µF	£2.50
CW100H	CAP PROPYL 10µF	£3.50
CW150H	CAP PROPYL 15µF	£4.50
CW220H	CAP PROPYL 22µF	£6.50
CW350H	CAP PROPYL 35µF	£9.95
CW100U	CAP PROPYL 100µF	£20.00

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CP330P	CAP PROPYL 330pF	250V	£0.35
CP470P	CAP PROPYL 470pF	250V	£0.35

Part No	Specification	Price
P15	150µH 0.150 8x19mm	£2.00
P22	220µH 0.210 8x19mm	£2.50
P33	330µH 0.210 8x19mm	£3.00
P47	470µH 0.250 50x19mm	£3.50
P68	680µH 0.350 59x19mm	£4.50
P100	1mH 0.40 59x19mm	£6.50
P150	1.5mH 0.50 70x30mm	£6.50
P220	2.2mH 0.60 70x30mm	£8.00
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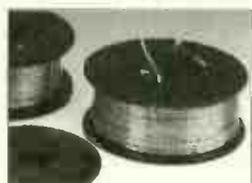
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1H50	LO 2 HI TEMP 1µF	50V	£0.25
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10H63	LO 2 HI TEMP 10µF	63V	£0.25
22H63	LO 2 HI TEMP 22µF	63V	£0.30
47H63	LO 2 HI TEMP 47µF	63V	£0.35
100H63	LO 2 HI TEMP 100µF	63V	£0.50
220H50	LO 2 HI TEMP 220µF	50V	£0.75
470H63	LO 2 HI TEMP 470µF	63V	£1.25
1000H35	LO 2 HI TEMP 1000µF	35V	£1.50
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F470	4.7mH 0.250 140W	65x30mm £11.00
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EC682	TRIODE	£4.50
EC683	TRIODE	£4.50
EF86	LOW NOISE PENTODE	£9.90
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EL34	OUTPUT VALVE	£3.50
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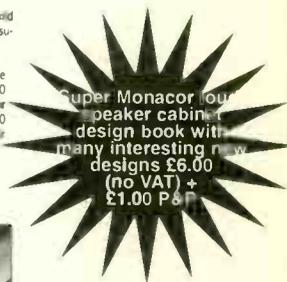
Part No.	Length/Colour	Price
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LP11QV	0.8 Metres/Violet	£5.50
LP22QV	1.5 Metres/Green	£6.50
LP22QV	1.5 Metres/Violet	£6.50
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BACK-TO-BASICS AUDIO

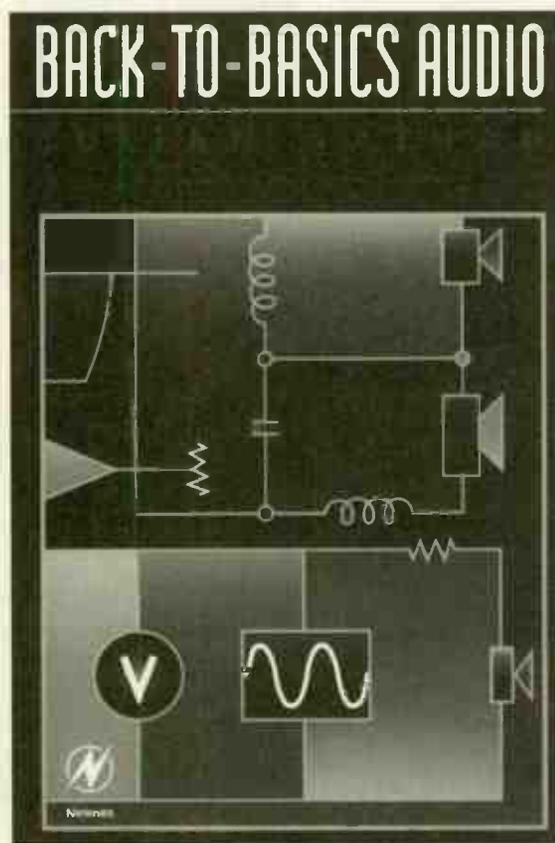
by Julian Nathan

THE 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. $I = E/R$; 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 numbskulled novice. 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 - multimeters 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 bull-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

Back-To-Basics Audio

Julian Nathan

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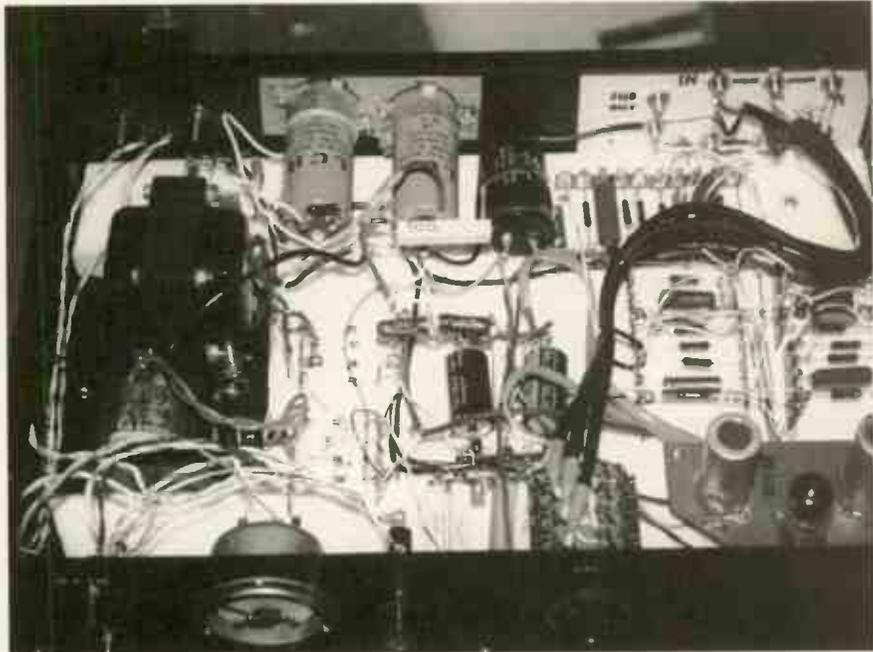
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NON-STICK AMPLIFIER

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

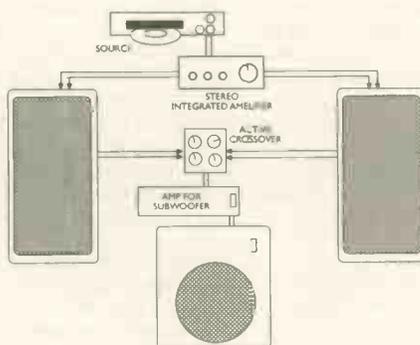
even further, you could fit fast-recovery rectifier diodes (assuming you haven't already done so), Caddock high-power resistors, high-voltage Elna Cerafine PSU caps and Os-Cons on the heater supplies (some or all of which are available from AudioCom, tel: 01834 842803). JM

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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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.

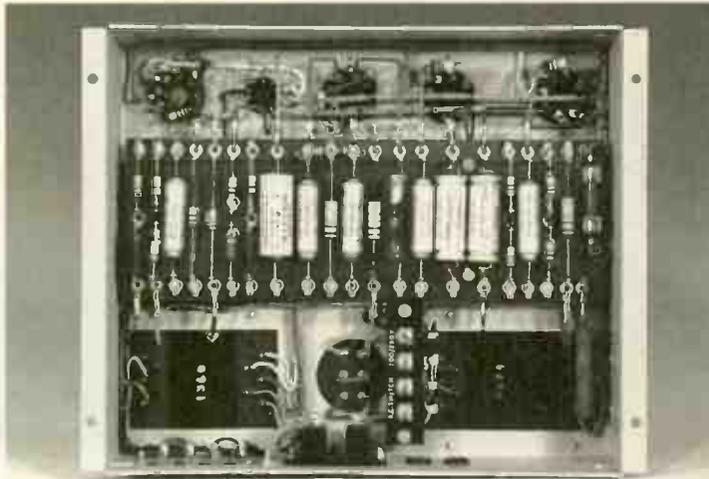
First and foremost, there is very little to be learned from an amplifier without its circuit diagram: you can learn that valves will burn your fingers and that HT (High Tension) current can

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

make your hair stand on end but that's about it. Therefore I strongly recommend that you try and find a bargain



▲ The underside of a Leak mono amp - what could be simpler?

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

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

Leak is the TL12+. A good working example can still be found under £100 if you are patient and there are plenty of breaking-for-spare examples available for considerably less. Granted that the TL12+ is a monobloc, it is usually possible to get two for stereo for less than the price of a Stereo 20 which is the 'doubled up' version. I cannot emphasize enough that no fingers should be poked into anything without acquiring the circuit diagram. (L & W Services, 9 The Parade, Bramhope, Leeds, LS16 9AF. Price £4). This will show what's safe to touch and, conversely what's got

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

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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Clearance Items

	Our Price	Original Retail Price
Exposure V Active x over (3 Way)	£ 295.00	£ 995.00
EAD 7000 Transport	£ 895.00	* £ 2495.00
Magnum P200 pre amp	£ 895.00	* £ 1895.00
Alon PW1 Subwoofer (Passive)	£ 295.00	£ 750.00
Gale 401	£ 250.00	£ -
Kinshaw Overture Phono	£ 195.00	£ 395.00

New in This Month

POWER AMPLIFIERS		
KSA 200B	£2495.00	£ 6000.00
Naim Nap 250 (Latest version)	£1150.00	£ 1800.00
Audio Research D130	£1395.00	£ 1850.00
Electrocompaniet ECI-2 Integrated	£ 695.00	£ 1000.00
Denon 4400 Monoblocks (New)	£ 595.00	£ -
Conrad Johnson Prem 11A (Stereo)	£2250.00	£ 3500.00
Meridian 556 Power amp	£ 850.00	£ 950.00

PRE AMPLIFIERS		
C.A.T. SL1 Signature mk III	£4500.00	£ 6900.00
Conrad Johnson Prem 7B	£5995.00	£11000.00
Conrad Johnson PB10 with phono stage	£1695.00	£ 975.00

SPEAKERS		
B & W C.D.M 1	£ 375.00	£ 600.00
Roger LS35A	£ 295.00	£ 798.00
Alon Adriana (New)	£Special	£10000.00
Alon V mkIII	£Special	£ 5500.00
Wilson Benesch ACT 1	£5500.00	£ 7000.00
Pro Ac Response 2	£1195.00	£ 2200.00
ATCS CM100A SL Active Speakers	£4500.00	£ 7000.00
QUAD ESL 63 Electrostatic Spk	£3449.00	£ 1995.00

C.D PLAYERS & DACS		
Naim CD 3.5 + Flat Cap	£ 995.00	£ 1500.00
Naim CDI	£1195.00	£ 2000.00
Marantz CD94 Mk2 Transport & Dac	£2000.00	£ 795.00

TURNTABLES/ ANALOGUE/ VARIOUS		
Linn Sondeck LP12 Vallhala/ Basic	£ 295.00	£ -
Pink Triangle Export (Ref bearing & Platter)	£ 850.00	£ 1050.00

Power Amplifiers

Copeland CSA 14 Integrated (Silver)	£ 795.00	£ 1195.00
Restek Extract Monoblocks (180 watt)	£ 1995.00	£ 3500.00
Mark Levinson 331	£ 3395.00	£ 5000.00
Krell KAS 2 Monoblock	£ 9995.00	£18000.00
Michell Alecto Stereo	£ 995.00	£ 1500.00
Jadis JA500	£ 7995.00	£21000.00
Boulder 102 AE	£ 2650.00	£ 3400.00
Boulder 500 AE	£ 2995.00	* £ 5000.00
Audio Note P1 SE	£ 500.00	* £ 950.00
Jadis JA 80 Monoblocks	£ 4995.00	* £10000.00
Audion Golden Knights	£ 1995.00	* £ 4000.00
Audion Silver Knights (Gold)	£ 995.00	* £ 2250.00
Jadis Dely 7 mk III	£ 3250.00	£ 4790.00
Micromega Tempo 2 Integrated	£ 550.00	* £ 900.00
Krell FPB 600	£ 8995.00	£12900.00
Krell KSA 250	£ 2750.00	£ 6700.00
Audio Note Ankoru Monoblocks	£ 8500.00	£14500.00
Micromega amp	£ 695.00	* £ 1295.00
Micromega Tempo P	£ 695.00	* £ 1250.00
FM Acoustics 611X Resolution Power	£14995.00	£22000.00
Audio Research M300	£ 4995.00	£12000.00
Lamm M1 Monoblocks (100W)	£ P.O.A.	£ P.O.A.
Quad 77 Integrated (Quadlink)	£ 495.00	£ 700.00
AVI 2000 Monoblocks (As New)	£ 895.00	£ 1400.00
EAR 519	£ 2695.00	£ 4699.00
YTL 225 Monoblocks	£ 2250.00	£ 5000.00
Audio Note Kassi	£12995.00	£30000.00
Audio Note Kagon	£29500.00	£80000.00
Exposure Dual Reg IV x 2	£ 895.00	£ 1800.00
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Exposure Super XV integrated	£ 450.00	£ 795.00
Exposure XV integrated	£ 350.00	£ 750.00
Aura Evolution A100	£ 195.00	£ 350.00
Exposure XII psu	£ 495.00	£ -
Krell KMA 100 mk II Monoblocks	£ 1799.00	£ 7000.00
Musical Fidelity F19	£ 2250.00	£ 4000.00
Krell KSA 80B	£ 1850.00	£ 4000.00
Krell KSA 50 mk II	£ 995.00	£ 3000.00

Pre Amplifiers

Jeff Rowland Consumate + Phono (3box)	£ 3995.00	£ 8000.00
Meridian 541 Dolby Surround	£ 650.00	* £ 1095.00
Audio Research LS7	£ 1095.00	£ 1620.00
F M Acoustics 266 Resolution	£10995.00	£17000.00
Krell KRC2	£ 2200.00	£ 4190.00
Audio Research LS2	£ 2250.00	£ 3300.00
Meridian 501.2 (New)	£ 595.00	£ 700.00
Quad 34	£ 220.00	£ -
EAR 802 (inc phono)	£ 650.00	£ 1200.00
Musical Fidelity F25	£ 795.00	£ 1500.00

Quality Speakers

Wilson 3/2 (Black)	£ 5995.00	£11995.00
Sonus Faber Extrema + Stands	£ 4250.00	£ 7000.00
Thiel CS1.5	£ 1595.00	* £ 2700.00
B & W 801 Series 2 (Black Ash)	£ 1895.00	£ 4000.00
Apogee Stage	£ 995.00	£ 3000.00
Quad ESL 63 Black	£ 1895.00	£ 3200.00
Sonus Faber Guarneri	£ 4500.00	£ 6500.00
Roksan ROK 1	£ 295.00	£ 600.00
Sonus Faber Concerto Grand Piano + Stone base (Piano Black)	£ 1700.00	£ 2200.00
Wilson System V.1 (Black)	£12000.00	£18000.00
Rogers LS3/ 5A Black (NEW)	£ 575.00	£ 798.00
Rogers AB1 Sub (NEW)	£ 395.00	£ 598.00
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Linn Khelids (Oak)	£ 395.00	£ 750.00
JM Lab Spectral 909.1 (External Damage)	£ 595.00	£ 1375.00
Rogers LS55 (New)	£ 330.00	£ 430.00
Aliante Spazio	£ 250.00	£ 500.00
Kef C95	£ 250.00	£ -
Meridian D.S.P. 6000 Active SPK	£ 4995.00	£ 8500.00
Martin Logan Stylos	£ 2200.00	£ 2900.00
Monitor Audio Studio 50SE	£ 2495.00	£ 4000.00
AE 2 (Piano Black)	£ 795.00	£ 1495.00

CD Players & DACS

Cambridge Dac Magic	£ 150.00	£ -
Mark Levinson No 39	£ 4250.00	£ 5000.00
M C Cormack DAC-1	£ 450.00	* £ 995.00
Forsell Air Ref Transport mk II	£ 4995.00	£ 8000.00
Forsell Air Ref dac	£ 2995.00	£ 5800.00
Mark Levinson 30.5/31	£11500.00	£24000.00
Meracus Transport	£ 1500.00	* £ 3995.00
Meridian 566 DAC (20 Bit)	£ 895.00	£ 1095.00
DPA PDM 1 mk III	£ 550.00	£ 1000.00
Naim CD2	£ 1695.00	£ 2200.00
Krell KPS 25s	£13995.00	£19995.00
Krell KAV 300 CD	£ 2500.00	£ 3500.00
Quad 77 CD Player (Quadlink)	£ 495.00	£ 700.00
Genesis Digital Lens	£ 10995.00	£ 1900.00
Meridian 203 dac	£ 225.00	£ 500.00
Krell KPS 20ii	£ 6995.00	£12000.00
Pink Triangle de Capo/ Cardinal	£ 1495.00	£ 2331.00
Audio Lab Transport 8000cdm	£ 900.00	£ 1400.00
Audio Lab Dac 8000 dax	£ 550.00	£ 900.00
Arcam Alpha plus	£ 195.00	£ 500.00
Meridian 500 Transport	£ 750.00	£ 1245.00
Meridian 562 V	£ 495.00	£ 800.00
Marantz 63 Ki Sig	£ 195.00	£ 2750.00

Turntables & Analogue

Voyd Reference/ Reference Power supply/ Helios Cyalene/ Audio Note IO limited + P/S	£11500.00	£ 22000.00
Roksan Xerxes/ Linn Akito/ PSIII/ DSU	£ 650.00	£ 1200.00
Piere Lume J1/SL5	£ 1500.00	* £ 4500.00
Forsell Air Force One	£11995.00	£ 25000.00
Linn Klyde	£ 450.00	£ 600.00
Pink Triangle PT Too Ref Bearing, platter, clamp	£ 595.00	* £ 950.00
Transparent Musiclink Reference (RCA-RCA)	£ 1000.00	£ 2200.00
Transparent Musicwave Ultra Bi-Wire 3.6mtr	£ 1600.00	£ 3300.00
Linn LP12/AR0/Armeddon/ Prefix/ Hi Cap/ 17 DL	£ 2500.00	£ 4000.00
LFD MC1 Phono mm/mc	£ 550.00	£ 900.00
Lyra Parnasus (NEW)	£ 1200.00	£ 2000.00
Clear Audio Master Reference/ Clear Audio Insider Reference (Wood)	£ 8995.00	£ 16000.00
Basis Debut Gold/ Graham Model 2.0 (Ceramic)	£ 7500.00	£ 12500.00
Linn LP12/ LVIII Lingo Cirkus K9	£ 1095.00	£ 2000.00
Audio Research PH3 Phono Stage	£ 850.00	£ 1490.00
Meridian 504 Tuner	£ 495.00	£ 800.00

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S/hand and ex-demo clearance items - September '99

	Was	Now
CD Players & DAC'S		
Arcam Alpha One CD Player	299	175
Audio Note ANCD2 Valve CD Player (New boxed)	1000	695
Audio Synthesis DAX 2 D/A Converter Balanced	2900	1399
Audiolab 8000CDM Transport	1400	799
DPA SX64 24/96 DAC (New style)	850	625
DPA Little Bit III (4 months old)	325	219
DPA Renaissance 24/96 CD Player (New style)	995	795
Naim Audio CDI Compact Disc Player	1790	995
Radford/Woodside WS2 CD Player	1200	399
Rega Planet CD Player	450	349
Roksan Atessa DP3T Transport	1295	699
Roksan Caspian CD Player	895	650
Roksan DA2 DAC	595	449
Roksan DP1 Transport	995	399
Sony CDP X33ES CD Player	599	250
Sugden SDT-1 Special Edition CD Player	1499	895
Teac T1 Transport Black	550	299
Turntables Tonearms & Cartridges		
Aphelion Audio 401 Plinths (New & various finishes)	250	175
Audioquest PT8 Tonearm (New & boxed)	599	295
Basis 1400/Rega RB300	1175	899
Basis 2000 series Turntable / Air tangent 1B Tonearm	4000	2500
Decca London cartridge (Re built)	N/A	99
Garrard 401 (Reconditioned)	N/A	145
Heybrook TT2 Turntable (Black)	N/A	199
Heybrook TT2 Turntable Walnut/SME 3009/V15	N/A	299
Impulse Moskito/RB300 Turntable (New & boxed)	695	399
Roksan Radius 3/Tabrizi/Chorus Black	1170	595
Supex 900 MkII Cartridge (Good condition)	N/A	150
Syrinx PU2 Tonearm	N/A	150
Preamplifiers		
Audio Note M3RIAA Phono Stage	3950	1750
Audio Research LS3b Remote Volume (Black)	2750	1395
Audiolab 8000C Preamplifier	450	229
Conrad Johnson PV10 AL SE	1299	750
DPA Enlightenment Preamplifier (New style)	795	599
Michell Engineering Orca Pre amplifier (4 Months old)	1650	1195
Naim Audio 62 mm boards	389	195
Naim Audio NAC 32mm/MC Preamplifier	N/A	149
Naim Nait 2 New Style	480	250
Quad 34 Preamplifier	N/A	150
Rega EOS Phono Stage	398	279
Rega HAL Pre Amp MM/MC Remote	998	499
Rotel RC 970 BX Pre Amp (New)	175	99
Tube Technology Seer Line Pre	1000	450

	Was	Now
Amplifiers		
Audio Innovations 800 Series III power amplifier	999	499
Audio Note Meishu New Vaic Valves Silver wired	4000	1995
DPA Enlightenment Poweramplifier (New style)	995	795
Electrocompaniet AW100Dmb 100W Class A	2095	1750
Linn LK100 Poweramplifier	650	350
Meridian 205 Mono block Amplifiers	1100	499
Orelle SA 100 Amplifier	449	299
PassLabs Aleph 3 Stereo Class A	2299	1699
Quad 306 Poweramplifier	N/A	175
Roksan Caspian Power Amplifier	595	479
Tube Technology Genesis Monoblock 100W	4000	1699
Unison Research Simply 845 Valve Integrated	3095	2250
Unison Research Simply Four Valve Integrated Pentode	1595	1099
Unison Research Smart 845 mono single ended valve	3450	2099
Loudspeakers		
BKS 128 Hybrid Ribbon Loudspeakers	2500	1695
Impulse Lali (Cherry) Loudspeaker	1750	1199
Impulse Maya loudspeaker	695	459
Musical Fidelity MC5 Loudspeakers / stands	899	379
Odeon Riggletto 94db horn loaded (Beech)	1700	950
Roksan Rok-1	650	279
Ruark Equinox (Black ash) loudspeakers	1750	950
Snell J MK2 Loudspeakers (Black) Huygens Stands	900	399
Cables & Accessories		
AudioNote AN-Vz 60 Strand Silver Interconnect 1M	1520	750
DPA The Power / Power slink	199	125
GM Audio Heavy Speaker stands 24"	599	250
Kimber 8TC Loudspeaker cable 2x 7m	630	299
Linn Analogue Interconnects	70	39
Nordost Blue Analogue 1M	98	45
Shun Mook Large Table/Board inc Mypingo discs	199	109
Shun Mook Small Table/Board inc Mypingo discs	149	79
XLO 1.5m Reference RCA Digital Cable	200	99
Tuners & Tape Decks		
Aiwa F550R Cassette deck	N/A	59
Arcam Alpha Tuner Original analogue one	199	79
JBL ESC 200 Surround Package	299	179
Revox A77 fi Track 3fi & 7fi Mk3 Reel to reel	N/A	249
Revox B77 fi Track 3fi & 7fi MK1 Reel to reel	1600	595
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Corus Black Cartridge	£130.00
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Top Ten Analogue Best Buy

1. Roksan Xerxes X Package (Only Limited numbers Left) £1200.00
2. Lenmann Audio Black Cube Phono Stage (Always in stock) £395.00
3. Rega Planar 25 turntable (Available in a choice of finishes) £598.00
4. Michell Gyrodeck SE (Immediate delivery) £775.00
5. Rega RB 600 Tonearm (Always in stock) £350.00
6. Densen DP02 Drive Phono stage (Always in stock) £350.00
7. Lyra Lydian Beta M/C (Exchange scheme in place) £599.00
8. Ortofon MC 30 Supreme (Exchange scheme in place) £549.00
9. Ringmat Developments Support System (Always in stock) £160.00
10. Electrocompaniet ECP-1 Phono Stage (Only a few left) £499.00

These products are just a selection of the popular Vinyl based products which Midland Audio X-change stocks and recommends.



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Micromega Microdac	£499	£199
Monarchy Audio D18B	£595	£399
Marston Silhouette	£899	£649
Linn Classic	£995	£849
Gamma Rhythm	£2500	£2300
Michell Gyrodec RB300/OC3/Gyropower	£1320	£1099
Michell ISO	£420	£299
Michell Argo	£730	£549
Meridian		

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STANDS

	<u>Was</u>	<u>NOW</u>
Alphason (5 shelf, black)	£205	£185

SPEAKERS

	<u>Was</u>	<u>NOW</u>
Ruark Epilogues (cherry)	£269	£235
Lumley Monitor LM 2.5 (L. Oak)	£1750	£1500
Lumley Monitor LM 3.5 (Walnut)	£1050	£900
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PPS PROM 9601**

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 Kleiber'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 **Kleiber** 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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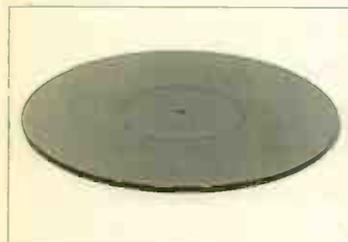
THE REVIEWERS

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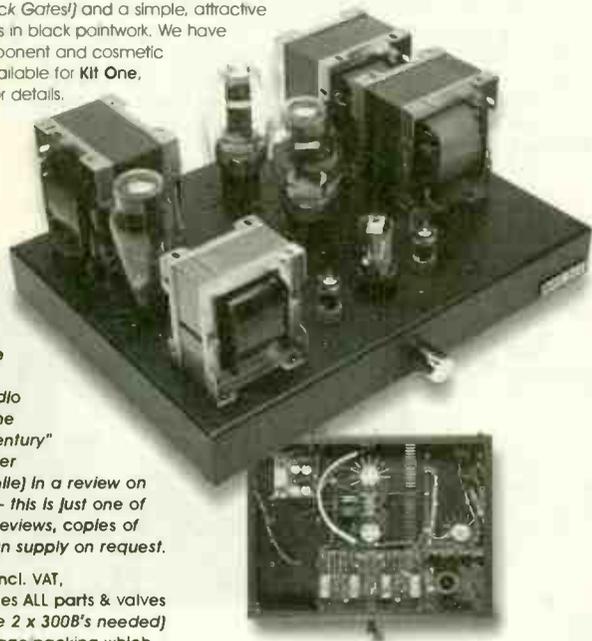
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The Audio Note Kit One *(illustrated)*

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The Audio Note Kit Three

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Components & Valves

Pre-Amp Kit

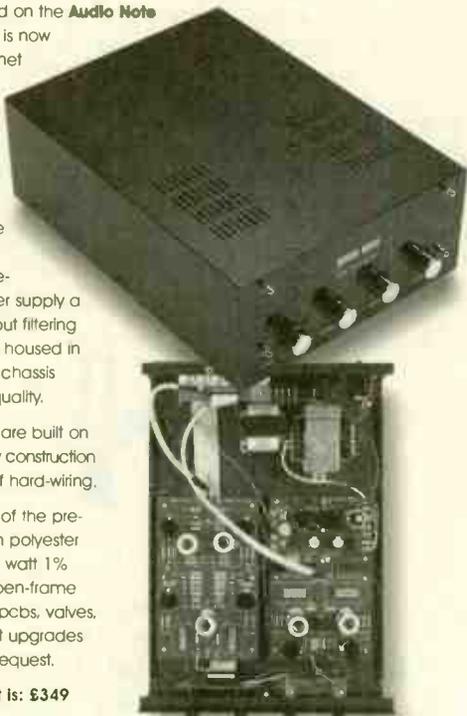
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Both phono and line stages are built on 'track-less' pcbs allowing easy construction but with the sonic benefits of hard-wiring.

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

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



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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 the Cerafine 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 should be within most budgets. All power supply Cerafines are supplied with a capacitor clamp and are upright mounting.

Audio Note Potentiometers

The best available from a sound quality / price viewpoint, made by Noble in Japan, utilising high quality conductive plastic film. However a better alternative is the KO-ON volume controls which are used in pre-amplifiers like the M7 Tube, M7Line, and in a mono version on the input in the NEIRO, KASSAI, KEGON and GAKU-ON, these are very good sounding pots by any standard.

Audio Note also carry large quantities of STANDARD TYPE SWITCHES, STANDARD ELECTROLYTIC CAPACITORS (good quality industrial types), RCA, BNC, BANANA, PLUGS, RCA SOCKETS, SPEAKER & GROUND TERMINALS & LOUDSPEAKER SPADES.

Audio Note Moving Coil, CD Line & Input Matching Transformers

Audio Note now offer moving coil, CD and input matching transformers for general sale. Common to all of these small signal transformers is that they come in a mumetal screening can with a threaded spindle with a nut for mounting.

Stock Clearance SALE

In anticipation of 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 the 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 special 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 reinforced anode type for the US airforce, 845 Westinghouse, VT25/10/10Y, VT62/801A, WE300B, STC4300A, Mullard GZ34/CV1377, Tungsol 5U4G (best sounding 5U4G we have ever heard!), Chatham 5R4WGY and many others.

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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
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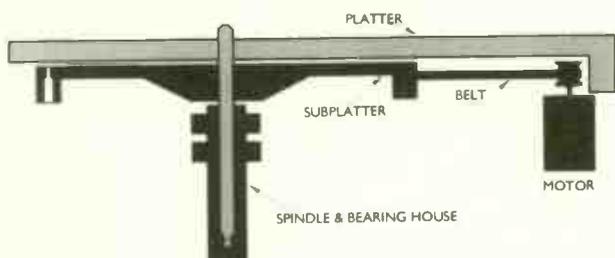
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"is exceptionally easy to build and professional in both sound quality and appearance"
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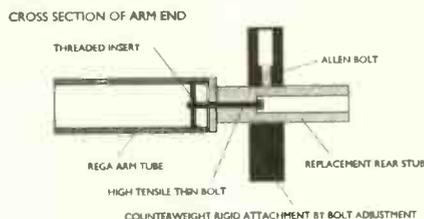
"Nothing less than total dynamite!"

HI-FI WORLD, FEB 1999

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For further information contact:-

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Email: origin.live@virgin.net

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AMPLIFIERS

	Equivalent New Price	Sale Price
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Audiolab 8000A int. (very late model) (mint) s/h	500.00	349.95
Arcam A60 (1981) (vgc) s/h	300.00	89.95
Cambridge P.35 int. amp (g.c.) s/h	200.00	109.95
Creek CAS 4040 int. P.M. Phono (vgc) s/h	-	95.00
Denon PMA 320 int. P.M. Phono (vgc) s/h	200.00	109.95
Marantz PM55 SE 2x55 Wafers/Ful Heron Inc. (mint) s/h	200.00	169.95
Mission Gyra 8/PSX (late model) (vgc) s/h	600.00	379.95
Mission Gyra one (early) (g.c.) s/h	-	89.95
Meridian MCA int. amp (curr. model) (vgc) s/h	-	199.95
NAD 3130 int. (vgc) s/h	300.00	129.95
Papworth M100 100 watts valve monoblocks power amps (mint) s/h	3800.00	1995.00
P.M. Components MP LIS Mk. II late Pre-amp (NGC) s/h	450.00	299.95
Pioneer A400 (original) int. (vgc) s/h	280.00	149.00
Quantum 102/2020 pre/power 2x 35 watts/phone stage (vgc) s/h	-	149.95
Rotel RB 9608X (2x60watts) power-amp (vgc) s/h	-	149.95
Sony TAF 3000ES remote int. (gold) (mint) s/h	500.00	349.95
Surgelab S1 pre-amp (vgc) s/h	-	89.95
Union Research Simply Two Valve Integrated (Mint) s/h	1150.00	795.00

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Dali Royal Menuet II mini monitors (cherry) (mint) s/h	500.00	299.95
Dynalab SDA 2.8 Floorstanders (Big Rock Box) (mint/as new) s/h	300.00	199.95
Infinity Reference 10 (vgc) s/h	200.00	129.95
JPW Monitors c/w stands (black) (vgc) s/h	250.00	139.95
Monitor Audio III Mk.2/Plinths (pine) (mint/as new) s/h	400.00	299.95
Monitor Audio R300 MD (black) (vgc) s/h	300.00	159.95
Monitor Audio R852 MD (gold) (vgc) s/h	450.00	189.95
Ruark Paladin (Dark Walnut/Soundbytes) (vgc)	1100.00	499.95
Sendor SP.2 (walnut) (vgc) s/h	450.00	229.95
Tannoy T185 Dual Concentric (Walnut) (vgc) s/h	loads	249.95
Rega Ela Floorstanders (black) (mint) s/h	500.00	299.95
Celestion 7 II (black) (mint) s/h	250.00	149.95
Lots of L.S. stands in stock including Target/Alphason etc.		

A selection of our ever changing offers for sale (all fully guaranteed)

	Equivalent New Price	Sale Price
Musical Fidelity X-100 missing Link Line Buffer (Mint) s/h	120.00	90.00
Philips CD1 210 (interactive) (mint) s/h	400.00	109.95
Pioneer PDS 703 (stable platter) remote (vgc) s/h	450.00	179.95
Rotel RCD.9708X Remote CD Player (Mint/As New) s/h	350.00	249.95
Sony CDP-X 3000 ES Top-Load (Gold) CD Player (mint/as new) s/h	500.00	349.95
Technics SL P550 remote (vgc) s/h	-	129.95
Technics SL P777 remote (vgc) s/h	350.00	129.95
Technics SL-PG 200A remote (vgc) s/h	-	69.95
Teac YRDS.7 (mint) s/h	600.00	379.95

OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

Alphason Glass 4 shelf mini stand (ideal for X Series) (mint) s/h	100.00	69.95
Cable Talk LS Cables / Inco's now in stock "New"	-	POA
Mortant Short Decoder One (Dolby Pro Logic Processor) (inexpensive route to home cinema) (mint) s/h	400.00	149.95
Magnum type III inco's s/h	-	25.00
1/2 metre Neutrik prof.1 interconnects (Recording studio over purchase, and they're good)	-	per pair 30.00
Puresonic 9010A Psooc interconnects (New)	£100.00	£79.95
Remote Angel 8 into 1 programmable remote control (mint) s/h	90.00	59.95
Yamaha DSP A92 remote Pro Logic amp (mint) s/h	250.00	169.95
Yamaha DSP A 592 remote prologic amp (mint) s/h	330.00	199.95

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Denon DRM 6505 Dolby B 5 etc (Mint) s/h	230.00	149.95
Denon DRM10.HX cassette deck / 3 motor / HX.Pro etc (vgc) s/h	-	119.95
Denon DRM 550 HX PRO etc (mint/as new) s/h	160.00	139.95
Pioneer CT.W. 20SR Twin/Auto Rev. etc (mint) s/h	160.00	99.99
Teac TH 500 R.D.S. Tuner in gold (mint/as new) s/h	170.00	119.95
Technics ST-GT350 FM Digital Tuner (New)	150.00	119.95
Technics RS-1R13 Twin/Auto-REV/HX-Pro etc (vgc) s/h	180.00	109.95

COMPACT DISC PLAYERS/TRANSPORTS/D.A.C.S.

Arcam Alpha 5 remote	450.00	249.95
Cambridge Dismagic 1 / Dacmagic 1 (vgc) s/h	500.00	249.95
DPA little bit 3 DAC (vgc) s/h	350.00	199.95
DPA Enlightenment DAC (mint) s/h	850.00	425.00
Marantz CD.42 (f.c.) s/h	250.00	119.95
Marantz CD-10 S.O.T.A. one box CD Player (vgc) s/h	1200.00	599.95
Marantz CD.73 (Gold) Drawer/Loader CD Player (vgc) s/h	loads	99.95
Marantz CD.52 remote player (vgc) s/h	300.00	129.95
Micro Mega CD3 top loader transport (Acrylic) (vgc) s/h	1500.00	795.00
Micro Mega Stage 3 (Tinchord Clock 2 MOD.) remote (vgc) s/h	800.00	349.95
Musical Fidelity X-Ray 24/96 player (superb player) (new)	799.00	-
Musical Fidelity X.24k DAC (new)	300.00	-
Musical Fidelity X-Act DAC (new) (ex-dem)	130.00	100.00

TURNTABLES/ARMS/CARTRIDGES PHONO-STAGE ETC

Audion Sterling valve P.M. phono stage (mint) s/h	350.00	225.00
Decca Super Gold / P.O.D. (boxed) (vgc) s/h	519.00	250.00
Garrard 401 (Chassis only) (vgc) s/h	loads	120.00
Heybrook TT 2 / Formula Four / Grado MC + (vgc) s/h	500.00	249.00
Kuzma Sings silver - wired tonearm (mint) s/h	750.00	299.95
Linn LP12 / Baak Plus / Track MLC (vgc) s/h	2000.00	549.95
Linn LP12 Also/Vahla/Baak plus/Denon DL-110 cart (NGC)	1500.00	499.95
Mission TFS 5M/774 arm/MS 20E (vgc) s/h	loads	399.95
Monoarc SPR.6 MM Phono Stage/PSU (Brilliant Value) New	£26.95	-
Musical Fidelity X LP (The One At The Price) MP/MC NEW	-	130.00
Q.E.D. R332 /arm/ATA RP.20 (g.c.)	200.00+	109.95
Reveler Rebel c/w arm/AT. cart (mint) s/h	-	149.95
Rega RB 300 (Stainless counterweight) (mint) s/h	110.00	90.00
S.M.E. 3012 S2 Tonearm (vgc) s/h	700.00	350.00
Trio RMA50 MLC head arm (vgc) s/h	-	79.95

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Canon S.35 inc. stands (vgc) s/h	300.00	169.95
Canon SU.15 mini monitors (mint) s/h	110.00	74.95
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Celestion SL 65 (black) (f.c.) s/h	400.00	169.95

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Avante Garde RX20 - a mere 36" tall and 12" x 12" at the base - Absolute Sound review - "a true torture test with a bass line that's big, super fast and continuous - the Gershman's handled it beautifully, servo driven Infinity RS1 towers have more power but are way too slow. The Magnepan MG3.5/R's, can't match the low bass impact of the Avant Gardes, only the Thiel 3.6 can handle this track with aplomb and even they don't sound quite as fast. Unquestionably, the Avant Gardes are a tremendously musical loudspeakers".
 X-1, Specter, Enigma 500-X, GAP-520X

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WHAT HI-FI: Verdict *****

Leading French magazine Diapason voted the V20 Amplifier of the year. To hear what all the fuss is about phone now for a personal home demonstration

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JR 149 Spks original GRILL mint condition	£175.00
Rega Planar 3 with RB250 arm 4 yrs old	£175.00
Musical Fidelity XLP valve phono stage	£495.00
Sondex integrated amp	£75.00
Tannoy III LZ 10" Monitor golds	£350.00
Meridian 100 series tuner, power amp & PSU	£350.00
Rodgers SL6 speakers	£125.00
Meridian 506CD player 18bit	£495.00
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Garrard 401 Turntable	£95.00
Audio Innovations S200 Valve Pre with MC	£195.00
Revox A78 Amp MK II	£95.00
Meridian 500 Transport	£625.00
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Quad FM3 tuner with quality interconnect	£125.00
Lumley ST 40 valve power amp. 5881 x 4 valves 40 watt.	£595.00
chrome finish boxed unmarked £1300.00 new	£595.00
Lumley 120 valve monoblocks Triode/Petode 120 watt chrome black finish mint. fantastic drive	£3700 new £1995.00
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Audiolab 8000 M mono blocks (pair)	£795.00
Audiolab 8000 A Integrated amp 9 months old	£295.00
Quad 77 Tuner as new boxed	£399.00
Quad 77 Integrated amp with quad system remote	£399.00
Pye FM Tuner valve with rose gold finish	£150.00
Leak stereo 60 mint & professionally rebuilt	£595.00
Denon DP 60 direct drive turntable rosewood finish	£195.00
Meridian 602 Transport	£695.00
Meridian 601 PRE/DAC	£995.00
Meridian 604 Tuner	£895.00
Leak Stereopic Tuner mint	£50.00
Leak Stereo 30 amp mint	£50.00
Leak Stereo 70 amp mint	£65.00
Thorens TD124 BBC turntable very rare	£350.00
Audio Innovations class A series 800 valve amp	£275.00
Revolver turntable blue marble finish new AT95E cart	£95.00
Arcam Alpha 8 CD player 12 months old	£250.00
B&W 603 floorstanders boxed	£195.00
Meridian 205 monoblocks 100 watt	£395.00
Leak TL10 monoblocks with spare valve	£395.00
Quad 101 spendor spks as new	£395.00
Quad II pair various	£300.00
Leak TL12+ pair	£300.00



Small but perfectly formed MC3

Producing the very best from vinyl has long been a black art and it's no wonder with so many permutations involved. Most people agree that Moving Coil cartridge design is technically superior than the Moving magnet but demands much more from it's ancillaries, especially the phono stage.

E.A.R./Yoshino have just launched the MC3 Cartridge Transformer with a band width of 3Hz-100kHz, facilities for a wide range of quality cartridge outputs and twin isolated earth terminals for maximum noise reduction.

The MC3 captures all the subtleties from the most complex recording without resorting to thrusting or spitting it out. Its extreme clarity and graceless presentation makes for a superb vinyl experience.

ART DUDLEY: Leading American hi-fidelity critic.

'I'm impressed with the MC3, and from a musical point of view, I think it's worth every penny of the price. Those of you who have tube-based systems & can afford it should pester your local dealer until he lets you take one home and try out Value/Quality *****'

EAR 834P	£235.00
Meridian 206 Delta Sigma CD	£250.00
Revox B77 Open Reel mint	£495.00
Leak Troughline 3 Tuner	£95.00
Leak Troughline Tuner with studio 12 decoder full rebuild	£150.00
STD Turntable	£145.00
Cary 300b kit amp professional build	£495.00
Stax head phones and energisers various models	(phone)

Due in:
Leak TL 50 + bronze & black, Quad 77 System, Leak Stereo 60, Meridian 601, 602, 604, PX 25, KT 61, KT88 (valves new boxed), Quad boxed ESL57 mint, Thorens 124, Garrard 301, Revox G36, Radford STA15, SME 12" Tonearms (various models)

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B&W603	Loudspeakers	Ex-D	£500 £285
Cyrus 3i	Integrated Amplifier	Ex-D	£598 £395
Cyrus Pre	Pre Amplifier	Ex-D	£648 £350
Epos ES12(D.Cherry)	Loudspeakers	Ex D	£550 £350
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Krell PAM3	Pre Amplifier	Used	£1900 £500
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ROGERS STUDIO 1	275		THORENS TD 124 mk2 n green marble plinth with silver wired SME 312/6 months old!	2000 1200
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HIGA ELAB ex dem		375	TRANSCRIPTORS Hydraulic reference	250
SPENDOR sp1, bwire	1000	500	VPI TNT MK III with base and pmw memorial arm cost 7000 mint and boxed for only	3500
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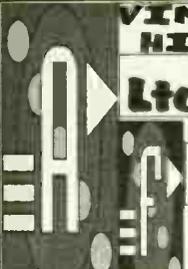
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World Radio History

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Measured Performance

amplifiers

TEAC A-E2000 AMPLIFIER

Power output measured a useful 40watts per channel into 8ohms with no rise into 4ohms, as is common from a "constant voltage" amplifier. This is because the power rail drooped 4volts 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%.

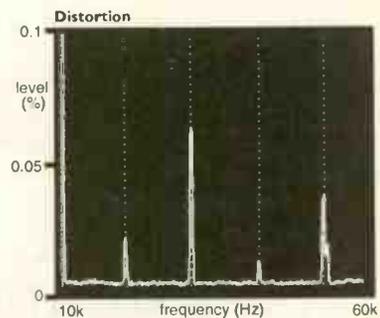
However, I would expect a little sharpness from the odd-order harmonic structure. Noise was low, but then so was sensitivity at 500mV.

Frequency response was curtailed to 21.6kHz, 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

Power	40watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	4Hz-21.6kHz

Separation	92dB
Noise	-100dB
Distortion	0.013%
Sensitivity	500mV



cd players

T+A CD 1210 R

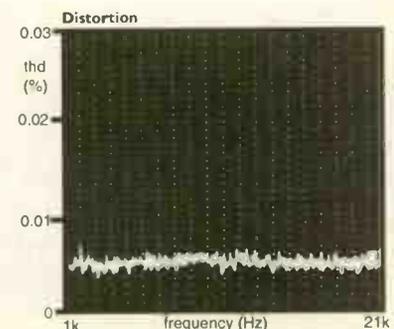
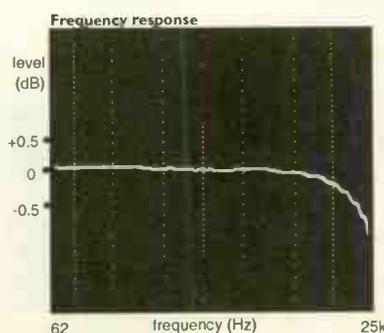
The CD 1210 R has a pronounced high-frequency roll-off, enough to put some extra warmth into its sound compared to other 'flatter' players. Bass response extends down to 4Hz, so the player is conventional enough here.

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 2.3V, channel separation good and dynamic range exceptional because of low distortion.

The CD 1210 R measured extremely well. NK

Frequency response	4Hz-20.8kHz	Separation (dB)	left	right
	left	1kHz	115	125
	right	20kHz	93	108
Distortion (%)		Noise	-106dB	
-6dB	0.007	0.007	Dynamic range	
-30dB	0.01	0.01	111dB	
-60dB	0.34	0.34	Output	
-90dB	28	28	2.3V	



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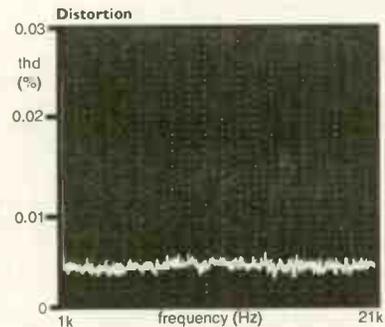
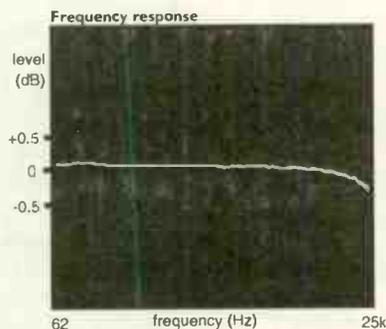
DENON DVD-2500

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**

Frequency response	4Hz-21kHz		Separation (dB)	left	right
	left	right	1kHz	102	102
Distortion (%)			20kHz	73	74
-6dB	0.005	0.005	Noise		-118dB
-30dB	0.017	0.017	Dynamic range		110dB
-60dB	0.37	0.37	Output		2.1V
-90dB	29	29			



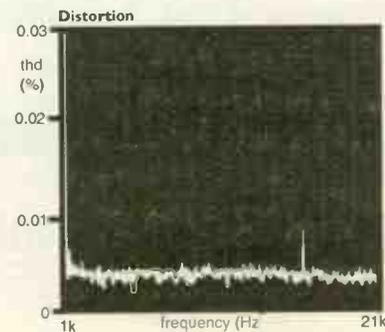
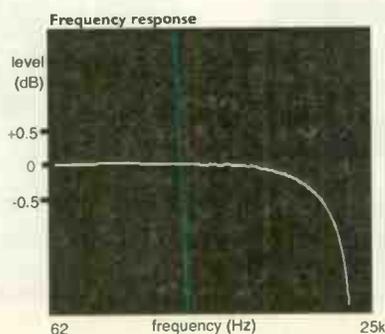
PIONEER DV-717

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 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
	left	right	1kHz	100	101
Distortion (%)			20kHz	79	79
-6dB	0.006	0.006	Noise		-116dB
-30dB	0.017	0.017	Dynamic range		108dB
-60dB	0.4	0.37	Output		1.97V
-90dB	12	12			



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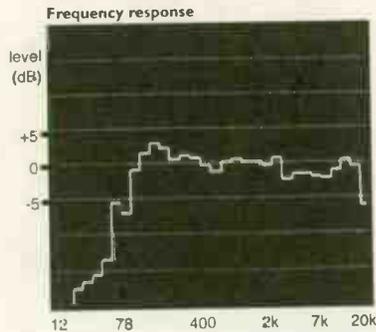
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ACOUSTIC ENERGY AEGIS 1

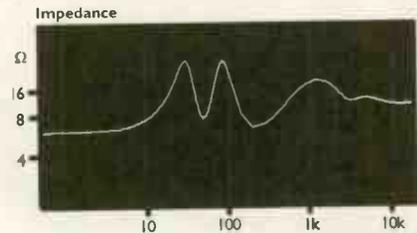
Bass peaks up +3dB at 160Hz with the Aegis 1, much like the Tannoy m2.5. The smaller bass unit of the Aegis rolls off faster thereafter, although it still gets down to 63Hz, which is respectable. The port is tuned to 50Hz.

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



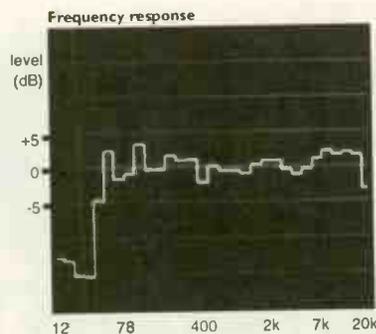
reduced sensitivity to 87dB, but this is still a decent value. A flat impedance means an easy load which will suit all amps. The Aegis 1 is well engineered all round. NK



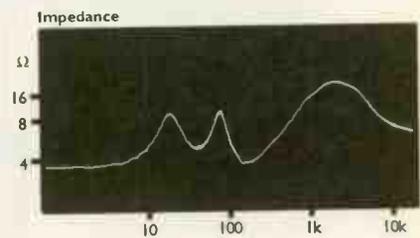
ELTAX LIBERTY

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



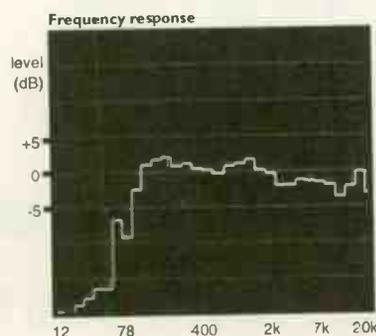
the Eltax needs an amp to deliver current. The Liberty measures very well and is likely to be distinctive in its sound. NK



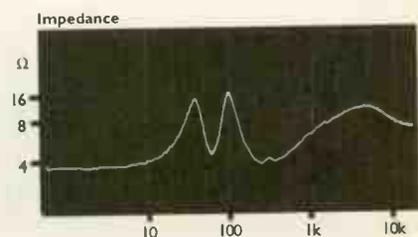
HEYBROOK HEYLETTE

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



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Meridian A500 r/wood	£875	£650
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HK Citation 11/12 pre/power	
& 15 tuner the very first models,	
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Marantz CD63 II K1-S	£275
CD85 (built like a tank)	£250
Mission 776/777 batt pre amp &	
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Quad 22 pre & powers	£600
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34 pre-amp	£150
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pro-nabs, op cover	£850
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SME original 3012	£175
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Dual Concentrics, walnut	£350
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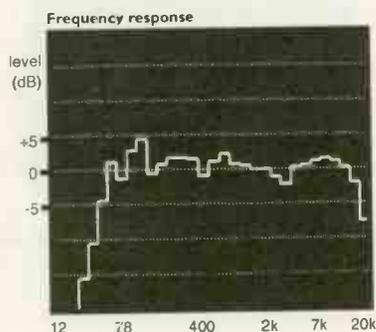
MISSION 702

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

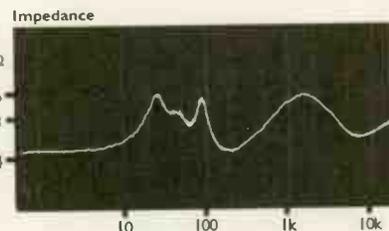
usual, since it is drawing less power. Port frequency should be around 40Hz but it is not having maximum effect here, measurement shows. The 702 looks unusual in its porting.

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

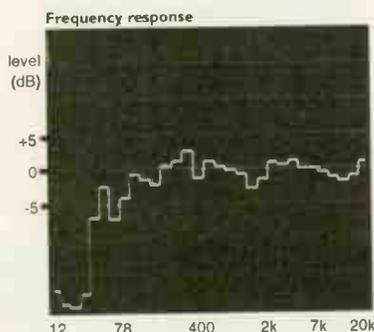


TDL NUCLEUS 3

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.

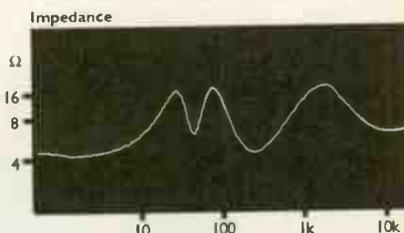
Sensitivity was high at 89dB from one nominal watt input (2.8V), helped by an

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

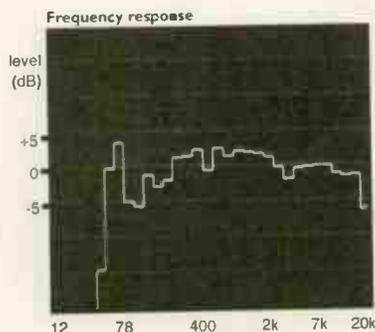


RICHARD ALLAN MINETTE

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.

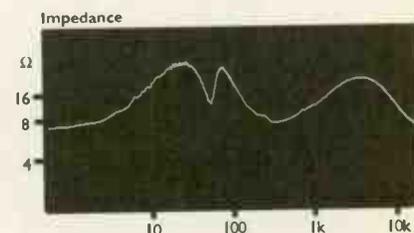
Like the other floor standers, the Minette reached down to 50Hz. It has

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 amenable balanced and its tweeter well integrated.

The Minette is an interesting bit of work. It has some great strengths. NK

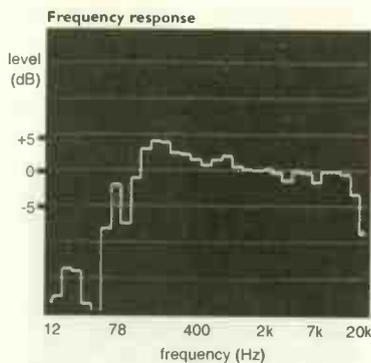


TANNOY MERCURY M2.5

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.

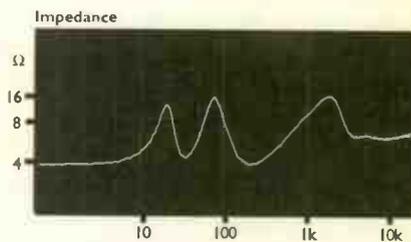
A bass lift of +4dB around 160Hz means there will be a good sense of bass speed on hand drums and also a liveliness that comes from light damping. Measurement shows the lower limit is 50Hz - good for a small loudspeaker. The port is tuned to 35Hz, so it takes the m2.5 down low.

Although sensitive at 89dB from a nominal watt, the Mercury has a low



impedance 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**



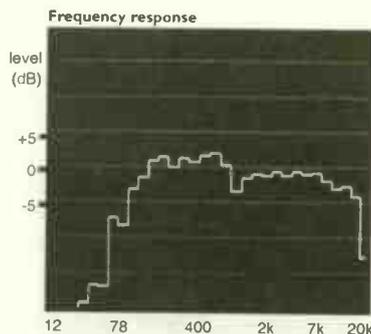
WHARFEDALE DIAMOND

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.

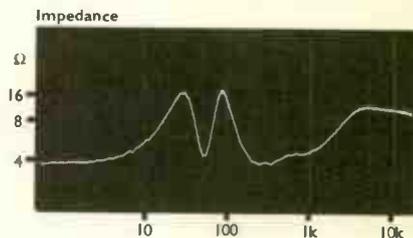
Although sensitivity measured a high

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**



minidisc

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.

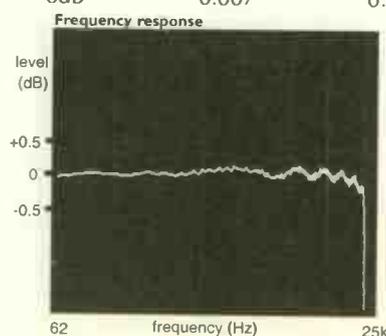
The player gives a healthy 1V output at 0dB, so it will work with any amplifier. The input sensitivity of 350mV is a little low; cassette decks commonly measured

100mV for 0dB. Full record level will be reached with most sources, if not some tuners.

The JVC XM-228 measured well in all areas. It has no major weaknesses. **NK**

Frequency response 4Hz-20.5kHz

	left	right
Distortion (%)		
-6dB	0.007	0.007

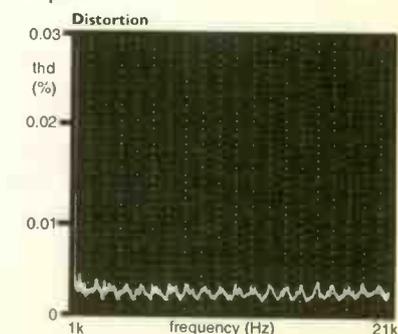


-30dB	0.013	0.014
-60dB	0.7	0.68
-90dB	2.5	2.5

Separation (dB)	left	right
1kHz	93	95
20kHz	60	60

Noise -86dB

Output 1V



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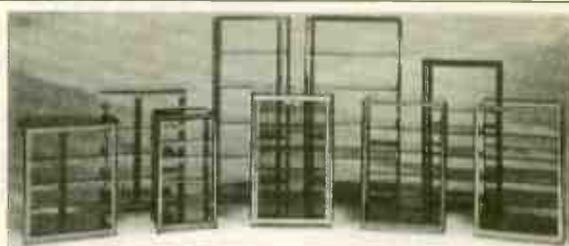
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ROGERS LS3/5a Teak 15ohm with stand £300. AE1 stand £200. Quad ELS57 £300. Roksan Xerxes Rossword XPS3.5 Atessa £600. Garrard 301 + 3009 + M75, vgc £300. Tel: 0181 203 3150 (Sep/I)

SONUS FABER CONCERTO plus Ironwood fixed stands. Six weeks old, mint, in walnut. Six hours use, transferrable guarantee £900 ono (£1235 new). Tel: 01932 841 361 evenings (Sep/I)

MOBILE FIDELITY LPs for sale. Lyra Parnassus £500. B&W Silver Signature speakers £2200. 4ft XLO Signature speaker cable £500. Signature 1m balanced interconnect £450. Tel: Marc 01708 471 727 Mobile: 0780 135 8102 (Oct/I)

JAMO CONCERT 11 (mahogany) six weeks old £1750. House move forces sale. Naim Nait 3 amplifier £325. NAD 4150 tuner £65. NAD 3150 amplifier £100. Tel: 01482 890 456 after 7pm (Sep/I)

WANTED: QUAD 67 CD player. Tel: Tim 01727 844 845 (Sep/I)

WILSON BENESCH's top WB turntable, Act Two arm, Cardas arm cable, Triptych stand (£4000) £1500. Audio Innovations 800 MC transformer £50. Technics EPC-205Mk3 and EPC-U205Mk3 cartridges £50 each. Marantz DA-12 DAC (£1250) £300. Riverside P2 valve phono stage (£275) £75. Tel: 0181 672 4319 (Sep/I)

RUARK TALISMAN II speakers, light oak two years old, cherished, cost £750 sell £415. Subwoofer M&K VX7-II stupendous bass cost £450 sell £220. Move forces sale. Tel: 01404 822 193 (Sep/I)

QUADRASPIRE Q4 HI-FI rack, 5 tier, each tier removable, cost £275 sell £115. Also QAVC AV table 2 tier cost £325 sell £160, all cherry. Tel: 01404 822 193 (Sep/I)

THORENS 124 Mk2 £175. Garrard 401 £120. JR 149 plus stands £175. Pioneer TX608 tuner £35. Hi-fi rack £75. All vgc. Tel: 01224 646 473 (Sep/I)

MICHELL ARGO PRE-AMP with Hera PSU, recently up-graded with Panasonic pot volume control. Excellent condition and sound bargain at £395. Audio Note CD3, brand new, boxed etc. £1200. Tel: 01952 406 759 (Sep/I)

LINN LP12/PINK LINK/Ittock/ OCA £575. NVA A80 monoblocks (chrome) 6 months and P50/Soundpipes £1175 (£2000+). NVA phono 2 (MC) plus 2x PSUs £350. NVA AP20 £110. Mission 752 £250. Tel: Paul 01271 324 995 (Sep/I)

TUBE TECHNOLOGY SYNERGY PPS integrated valve amplifier. All valves upgraded with spares and originals. Two years old (guarantee remaining). Excellent condition, boxed with instructions. £3850 (£6900). Tel: 02380 601 222 (Southampton) (Sep/I)

NAIM CDX, 9 months old as new, box, all accessories £1650. van den Hul D102/III interconnect, balanced XLRs £50. Linn LP12, Akito, K9 Valhalla £350 ono. Tel: 01793 526 796 (Sep/I)

LINN KARIK (Brilliant PSU) superb quality CD player, immaculate condition, Linn packaging/manual accept £750. Wanted Kimber equipment, Silver Streak or KCAG interconnects, 6-way mains block and Powerkords. Tel: 01429 429 953 (Hartlepool) (Sep/I)

MUSICAL FIDELITY P270 amplifier and 2A pre-amp, good condition, boxed £550. Celef RT1 speakers with stands, boxed £200. Tel: 01703 466 853 (evenings); 01703 445 090 (day) (Southampton) (Sep/I)

NVA MONOBLOCKS and pre-amp powered by six transformers, serious sound quality, £850 ono. Many other high-grade items, may PX WHY. Tel: 01473 824 215 (Sep/I)

TRICHORD CLOCK 3 with power supply £85. LFD MCI phono stage £390 (£999). LFD LSI preamplifier £275. Both stunning sound, mint and boxed. Proac Studio 100s mahogany, mint £350. Tel: 01780 764 149 (Sep/I)

GAMMA ACOUSTICS

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

"It sounded quick, direct, uncomplicated, with an ability to resolve subtle textures in instrumental scoring. Taken overall, the sound quality score (on my usual subjective listening test scale) was an impressive 23 points.

Martin Colloms

HI FI NEWS / RR March 97

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

John Marks

Hi-Fi World July 1996

WORLD VERDICT



Partnered with sensible speakers of good bass depth, the Rhythm is capable of impressive performance.

WHAT HI-FI? says

sound ★★★★★

facilities ★★★★★

build ★★★★★

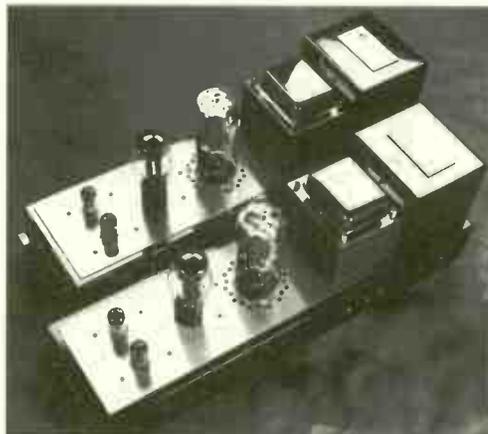
verdict ★★★★★

Dan Houston

WHAT HI-FI May 1997



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EPOCH REFERENCE 5 LOUDSPEAKERS £2999

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Rythm Reference	3499	1999
Aeon	4999	2999
Gemini	699	349
Alchemist Forseti integrated	999	360
Audionote SPX 2 mtr bi-wire set spk cable	3850	1999
Epoch reference V black S/H		1099
Aeon S/H		1999
Rythm Line S/H		999
Rythm phono S/H		999

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£3999



*Special Internet offer
see page 154 for details*

AUDIO NOTE OTO SE amplifier with phono stage. Excellent condition. £800 ono. Tel: 01407 765 294 (Sep/I)

NAD SILVERLINE
S300 integrated amp - unwanted competition prize - unopened boxes. Also C2 Celestion speakers. Total RRP £2600 selling for £2000 or separately. Tel: 0141 573 3840 (Sep/I)

ARMSTRONG 625/6, Leak 2000 receivers £50 each. Revox G36 £295. Celef Mini-Monitors £60. Sony TCK 136 cassette deck £40. Thorens TD150AB £30. Pioneer PL12D £25. Infinity RS2001 speakers £80. Tel: 0181 941 6882 (Sep/I)

BEAT THE DEALERS!
Levinson 331 400 watts transparency into 2 ohms (can be upgraded by path to 334 status). Warranty expires 2002, genuine bargain £2900. Tel: Kevin 01322 408 802 (Sep/I)

MICRO MEGA STAGE 1 CD, mint condition, boxed & remote £175. QED Qudos bi-wire speaker cable, air-lock plugs, 5m cost £80 accept £40. Quad FM4, grey, phono, £250. Tel: Andrew 07775 515 189 (Sep/I)

TEAC VRDS10 immaculate, boxed, bargain £350. Philips CD104 £25. Marantz receiver £25. Townsend pre-amp, superb £85. Armstrong mono valve receiver, beautiful £25. NAD 4225 tuner as new £40. Tel: 01480 353 649 (Cams) (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)

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 33/303/FM3 pre-power-tuner excellent condition with quality interconnect £160. Linn LP12 Valhalla Ittok 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)

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)

GARRARD 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)

BOWERS & WILKINS CDM7SE speakers £800. Meridian 200/203 CD £375. Musical Fidelity A200 Class A amplifier £250. Audio Innovations 1000 power amps £650. Audio Research LSI pre-amp £550. Tel: 01952 502 097 (Telford) (Sep/I)

STUDER A810 (2 machines), OTAR MTR 10, MX5050. Quarter-inch tape recorders. Otaris stereo, Studers mono, all in excellent condition. £200 each or £750 the lot. Tel: 01883 717 633 or 0181 643 9466 (Sep/I)

NAKAMICHI OMS-5E CD player, Nakamichi CA-5E control amp, Nakamichi PA-7E power amp 200W per channel, B&W 802 speakers (black), boxed £1495. Tel: 01462 673 524 (Sep/I)

ACOUSTIC ENERGY 109 floorstanding loudspeakers, black, tight, deep bass and excellent dynamic range, high sensitivity, quality finish. Good condition 12 months old £220. Audioquest Quartz 1m interconnect £70. Tel: 01388 527 186 (Sep/I)

WANTED: AVANCE Z504 'The Power' power amp or possibly A Z501. Tel: 01204 531 016 anytime (Sep/I)

ARCAM ALPHA II tuner, boxed, instructions £75. Quad FM3 £75. AMC 3030 hybrid integrated £195. Leak Troughline + Studio 12 decoder £140. Money back if not happy. Tel: 01202 481 386 (Sep/I)

AUDIO INNOVATIONS SERIES 1000 Mk3 mono power amplifiers plus L2 pre-amplifier, all boxed, mint condition £825. Tel: 01308 424 138 (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)

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MARANTZ CD67 OSE	£ 300	£ 239	AE AE109	£ 330	£ 279
MARANTZ CD63 II K.I.	£ 400	£ 329	AE AE120SE CH	£ 600	£ 479
MARANTZ CD17 K.I.	£ 1100	£ 899	ATC 20TSL R/W	£ 3055	£ 1999
MERIDIAN 200/DPA L8T III S/H	£ -	£ 599	ATC 20A TSL CH	£ 4250	£ 2999
NAD 512	£ 250	£ 175	ATC 100SL R/W	£ 5450	£ 3549
NAD 514	£ 370	£ 259	CASTLE EDEN CH	£ 470	£ 375
PROCEED CDP S/H	£ 3400	£ 1499	CASTLE SEVERN II	£ 580	£ 449
PROCEED CDP	£ 3400	£ 2799	CASTLE HOWARD S2 MH	£ 1200	£ 799
PIONEER PDS 904	£ 400	£ 275	DIAPASON ADEMANTES III INC. STANDS	£ 2500	£ 1999
PIONEER PDS505 PRECISION	£ 460	£ 359	EPOS ES22 CH	£ 1350	£ 949
ROTEL RCD 951	£ 300	£ 259	JAMO CLASSIC 6 R/W	£ 330	£ 229
ROTEL RCD 971	£ 400	£ 339	JBL TI200 BEECH	£ 400	£ 299
TEAC VRDSTI/DT-I	£ 1050	£ 849			
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GRAAF GM20 & WFB2 PRE/POW	£ 4200	£ 3299	MARANTZ ST59	£ 150	£ 125
LINN MAJIK L	£ 650	£ 455	MARANTZ ST17	£ 600	£ 489
LINN KAIRN PRE	£ 1700	£ 1199	PIONEER F204RDS	£ 140	£ 119
MARANTZ PM57	£ 200	£ 135	ROTEL RT 935 AX	£ 175	£ 145
MARANTZ PM66SE	£ 230	£ 189	TECHNICS STGT550	£ 180	£ 155
MARANTZ PM68	£ 300	£ 239			
MARANTZ PM66 K.I.	£ 400	£ 329	CASSETTE		
MARANTZ PM17 K.I.	£ 1300	£ 1059	MARANTZ SD455	£ 170	£ 139
MARK LEVINSON 380S PRE	£ 6495	£ 5495	MARANTZ SD57	£ 200	£ 169
MUSICAL FIDELITY XA100R	£ 1000	£ 789	PIONEER CTS 250	£ 150	£ 125
MUSICAL FIDELITY E11	£ 300	£ 199	TEAC 8030 GOLD	£ 700	£ 449
MUSICAL FIDELITY E20/30 PRE POW	£ 900	£ 649	TECHNICS RSAZ6	£ 270	£ 229
NAD 312	£ 200	£ 139			
NAD 314	£ 260	£ 179	MISCELLANEOUS		
PIONEER A207R	£ 150	£ 125	CABLE TALK SIGNATURE 1M	£ 300	£ 189
ROTEL RA 921	£ 125	£ 99	PIONEER CLD515-1 LASER DISC	£ 550	£ 249
ROTEL RA 951	£ 175	£ 135	STANDS UNIQUE STANDS FIRM	£ 300	£ 239
ROTEL RA 971	£ 225	£ 179	STANDS UNIQUE HIGH AV10	£ 429	£ 299
ROTEL RC972/RB971 PRE/POW	£ 450	£ 379			
TECHNICS SUA 700 MK3	£ 250	£ 199			

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Please sign your approval and re-fax ASAP TODAY if correct.
Thanks Faiza

Special Internet offer
see page 154 for details

KEF MODEL ONE reference speakers in rosetta burr, two years old, mint condition £695 or PX for Sonus Faber Concerto. 1 metre 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 a bargain £600 ono. Tel: 0181 575 1396 (Sep/I)

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-P100 + X-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 Alphason 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 ono. Marantz DD82 digital cassette recorder, perfect, 5 tapes £85 ono. Deliver 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 (£2000). One owner, together £2000. Tel: 0181 743 0580 after 7pm (Sep/I)

TURNTABLE SYSTEMEMDEK IIX900, black, vgc, sound, Roksan Tabriz arm, Goldring 1012 £220 Tel: Andy 01684 295 552 eves/weekends (Tewkesbury) (Sep/I)

EAR 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 ELS57, offers around £950 for the set. QED Discsaver unused £20. SME 3009/SII 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)

MERIDIAN 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-lam 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 LOUD-SPEAKERS, light ash, boxed, excellent condition £649. 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)

MUSICAL FIDELITY F22 pre. Meridian 200/Deltec PDMII. DPA 50S power amp. Revox A77 high speed. Revox A77/A78/A76 all boxed/mint. Radford K25 monoblocks. Radford STA25/SC22 as new. Quad ESL57, very late black, mint. KEF 105/4 Reference. Tel: 01992 718 265 (Oct/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 MG2B speakers only £595. Regrettable sale due to buying a house. Tel: 0410 275 149 anytime (Sep/I)

SOUNDSTYLE 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, Hi-Fi World recommended. Cost £900 new, accept £395. Tel: 01634 387 686 (Sep/I)

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CELEBRITY 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 of your equipment. The cable designer's 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 hit implementation of the same technology as evolved over three years leading to the Plus Silver level. From August 1, Stratos Series II uses phono 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 with KONTAK contact cleaner and enhancer. 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 cost in silver is poor quality metal yielding harsh unnatural signal even after extensive break-in.

AudioSource cables use expensive phono plugs machined from solid blocks (balanced cables use Swiss professional Neutrik XLR plugs) because folded metal stresses 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 joints 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 interconnects 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!

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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)

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see page 154 for details

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 IIs serviced by Quad £350. Technics EI-cassette deck and matching pre-amp £100. Wants: Decca London cartridges, Zeta arm. Tel: 01608 643 553 (eves) 01608 810 332 (day) (Sep(I))

NAIM NATO1 Tuner, Napst power supply, cable as new. Cost £1830 for sale £995 ovno. Tel: Chris 01293 603 189 (day) 01293 416 247 (eves) (Sep(I))

PM COMPONENTS MP-L15 Mk2 pre-amp with MP211A single-ended pure class A monoblocs. 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 2 1m £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 Ittock 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 (£1250) £550. Both items mint and boxed. Interconnects:- Chord Solid, DIN (£119, receipts) £60. Transparent Musik Link Plus, phono (£249) £95. Tel: 0181 566 5293 (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. Proac Super Tablette speakers, vgc £165. A&R P77 cartridge, 6 months use £35. Tel: Chris 01420 82679 (Hampshire) (Sep(I))

JT 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))

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 50D 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. DNM 610/680 pre + monoblocs, brand new £895. SME 309 tonearm £450. Tel: 01582 724 414 (Sep(I))

MUCH LOVED Pair Musical Fidelity P180 power amps, each with CPRS - power subtlety, superb imaging - a true classic £1100. MX pre-amp (MM/MC) £150. Both mint with boxes. Tel: Alan 01372 463 910 (Sep(I))

BRYSTON BP25 pre-amp (MC), pair of 7B monoblocs, 3 years old, as new condition £3200. Denon DN 79OR cassette deck, little used 6 months £400. Tel: 01295 780 363 or 0831 809 346 (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 + SNAPPS PSU £375. Linn Isobariks + stands £650. Tel: 01484 688 331 (Sep(I))

JOHN SHEARNE Phase 2 integrated amplifier, pristine condition £295. Tel: 0121 733 1961 weekdays after 6pm or weekends. (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 II £50. Tel: 0181 856 1047 (Sep)

LINN AKITO (mint) latest model £125. Linn K9 cartridge £25. Superb combination. Tel: 0956 329 067 (Sep(I))

The Audio Note Salon

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 dem 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 sys-

tem 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 feet! replacing spikes etc, the pre-stressed carbon fibre upstanders are shrouded in natural timber. They support the shelves by SUi's amazing carbon stars and brass cones, and play a major role in the essential role of earthing staitc 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 Vibrplane for £1,500 with Jun-Air compressor (list price £2,400). See US reviews or phone for details.

	List	Now			
ANALOGUE			Audio Note KEGON Hand-made pathfinding amplifier, dual 300B, magisterial, priced to sell not by value or performance Perfect Crated	POA	£18,500
Systemdek IIX (walnut) with Linn LVX and MM cartridge Perfect	£740	£250	KRELL KAV300i absolutely mint, 2 years old Boxed	£2,499	£1,599
Goldmund STUDIO turntable No box	£4,757	£1,150	Mark Levinson 10-A Pre-amp with phono stage, top of the tree at this reduced price? It is true! Mint	£2,400	£1,099
Linn Ittok tonearm Boxed	£429	£199	Sonic Frontiers Line One remote fully tube pre-amp, super company, very distinguished product, sexy style! Mint	£2,499	£950
Vibrplane active air support with Jun-air pump, up to 275lbs, itself weighs 147lbs, the most serious analogue platform conceived for electron microscopes.Unused	£2,400	£1,500	SPEAKERS		
DIGITAL Theta Data II CD Transport and Pro Gen III DAC with fully bal and AT&T enhancements. Along with ML 31/30 the Reference; review reprints available. Priced to sell, not by true worth.Boxed Perfect	£9,730	£3,750	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
Audiolab (now TAG) CDM8000 transport and latest 8000DAX significantly upgraded by AudioCom (details and parts list available) Boxed Perfect	£3,100	£1,350	ProAc Tablette, cherry wood, mint, the ultimate mini speaker with a big sound, an LS3/5a that breathes Mint Ex-dem	£599	£399
AMPLIFIERS			Dynaudio 1.8 Contour, superior Mk I (not ported) in light oak Mint	£2,195	£995
Conrad-johnson Premier 14 r/c, line pre-amp, vacuum tube legend, rare opportunity, very newMint, box	£4,495	£2,750	ProAc Response Two, mahogany, wonderful speaker! Fine, s/h	£1,670	£799
Chord SPM1200B Amp (black) 250 wpc as new, hardly run-inMint, box	£3,790	£2,500	PSB Stratus Mini ñ Stereophile award 1997 design, Piano Lacquer with stands, first time in UK! Mint Review pair	£1,390	£690
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	£8,500	£2,750	Wilson Watt/Puppy Tail by NBS (Statement) Perfect	£3,750	£1,500

The Audio Note Salon, 5 Crown Terrace, Glasgow G12 9HA. Tel. 0141-357 5700. Fax 0141-339 9762. E-mail: jack@audiosource.co.uk . Website audiosource.co.uk.

hi-fi world Trade Ads

Special Internet offer
see page 154 for details

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Monthly newspapers insertions will be considered Trade advertising.
The Publisher reserves the right to reject advertisements.

WANTED - EARLY HI-FI LOUDSPEAKERS
Tannoy, Lowther, Parmeko, Voigt, Vitavox, RCA WE etc
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VALVE AMPLIFIERS
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PYE- Quad, WE etc
AUDIO VALVES
DA30, KT66, KT88,
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ROGERS SPEAKERS (new and ex-demo) still for sale, massive discounts. Studio 9 £550, Studio 7 £350, Studio 5 £250. BEC, Gold and LS ranges available. E40A valve amps £1000. Spares and servicing. Mitcham Loudspeakers Tel: 0181 648 0743 or 01344 872 568 (Sep(I))

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))

ARCAM DELTA £290/£249, Cyrus III £299, Cyrus SL x/display £299, Exposure Super 20 £449, Mission 752F £299, Pink Triangle PTT00/XETA £499, Quad 34/405 £379, Ruark Talisman2 £399, Sony DTC60ES (DAT) £429. Tel: 01733 897 697 (Sep(I))

TECHNICS SP10 £250. Studer A710 £500. Studer A80 £800. Studer B67 £600. EMT 948 £550. EMT 950 £850. Revox G36 £600. Studer A810 £800. Revox PR99 £850. Revox B77 £700. Revox B126 CD £450. Studer B62 £400
Tel: 01246 235 024 Fax: 01246 550 421 (Sep(I))

XTC PRE-1 (x-demo) £750 & POW-2 (x-demo) £850. Orelle SA-100 (x-demo) £290. Orelle SA-020 (s/hand) £195. Orelle Orators 2 way loudspeakers cost new £850. Rosewood £395 inc stands (x-demo). Black £350 inc. stands (x-demo). Orelle SP-101 85W/Ch power amp, cost new £555, s/hand at £150. Tel: 0181 931 1206, Mobile 0788 757 8060 (Sep(I))

FOAM EDGES from cone to chassis replaced from £15.00 plus VAT. Tel: 0121 327 3111 (Oct(I))

CASTLE LOUDSPEAKERS New. Discounts available. Deliver Anywhere UK. Please telephone for details. Five Ways Hi-Fidelity Ltc (Est 1972), 12 Islington Row, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 1LD Tel: 0121 455 0667. Tues-Sat 10.30-6.00 (Sep(I))

WADIA CD16, 3 years old, boxed, manual £2950 (£7350rrp). Audio Research SP9 MkII, immaculate £1200 ono. Quad 405 MkII £170. Denon DRS 810 cassette deck (rrp new £300) £130. Pioneer CT 443 cassette deck, bargain, black HX Pro etc £150. B&W DM110 speakers £60. Tara Labs interconnect 1m £250 (rrp£650). Krell KSA 50 MkII, immaculate £1200 ono. Arcam Alpha 6 amp/Arcam Alpha 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 01752 202 841 (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))

AFFORDABLE VALVE COMPANY Model EL34, quality 30 watts class A valve amplifier £600. Thick aluminium front panel. Detachable safety cage for hot valves. FREE colour literature. 1 month HOME TRIAL. Tel: 01634 373 410 anytime (Sep(I))

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: Acoustic Energy AE1 II (piano black) + stands £899. AE2 II (Santos rosewood) + stands £1399. Castle Avon (Santos rosewood) £595. Kendal (walnut) £299. Denon AVC2800 Prologic amplifier £409. Exposure CD player £699. 25 integrated amplifier £799. 21 pre-amplifier £799. 18S power amplifier £699. Mission 771 (cherry) £129. 772 (rosewood) £159. Monitor Audio Silver 9 £799. Myryad T-10 CD player £249. T-20 CD player £349. Pioneer PDS505 CD player £299. F504RDS tuner £179. A300R integrated amplifier £249. Polk Audio CS275 centre speaker £175. Tag McLaren Audio CDT20R CD transport £1199. DAC20 DAC £999. 60I integrated amplifier £599. 60P power amplifier £699. PA10 pre-amplifier £649. PA20R pre-amplifier £1299. Teac Reference 500 Mini-system £599. Yamaha DDP2 AC-3 processor £289. AX492 integrated amplifier £179. Full warranty. Tel 01234 272 779 (Sep(I))

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STANDING OVATION

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