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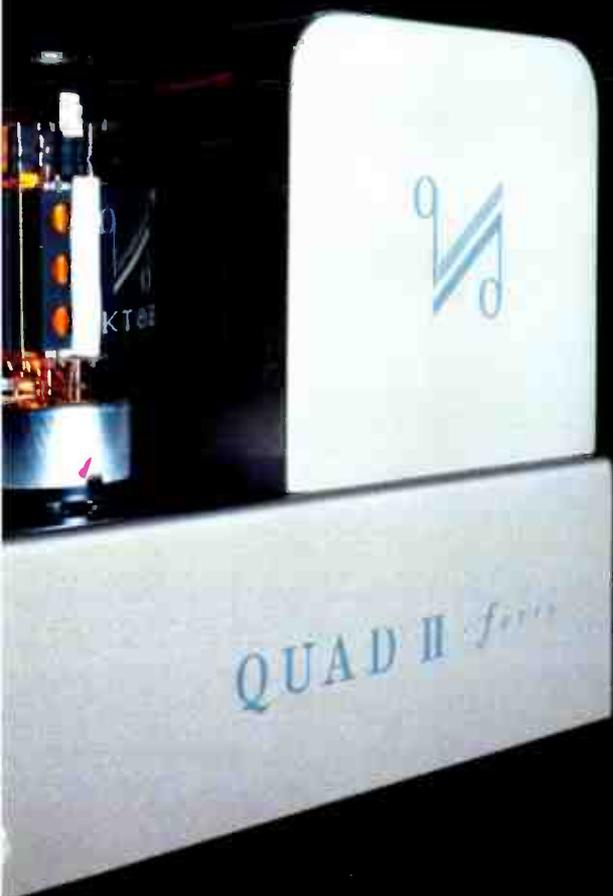
QUAD *II-forty & QC-twenty four*



For many audiophiles, the age of the transistor left a big hole in the emotion and pleasure provided by good valve amplification. The hi-fi world became orientated around numbers and statistics and a new product was bought largely on numerical specifications.

Based on the styling of and reflecting Peter Walker's circuit topology from the original, but brought up to date by the remarkable skills of our mechanical and audio engineers, this new system provides not only significantly more power, but also brings a richness and weight to any recording without the colouration many expect from such amplifiers.

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Quad Electroacoustics Ltd, IAG House, Sovereign Court,
Ermine Business Park, Huntingdon, PE29 6XU
Tel : 0845 458 0011 Fax : 01480 431767
www.quad-hifi.co.uk



Okay, so you've bought your DVD-A player, now what do you do with it? Take it out for long invigorating walks, cuddle up to it on the sofa in front of

the telly, or perhaps try a challenging game of chess? You could always play a movie on it, or even a CD - hooray! Well, had you bought one four months ago this could have well been the case. Things are at last about to change though, but (in the words of a prime time TV personality) not a lot.

For those who think DVD-A is dead in the water, and that there'll never be any high resolution music software, I'm pleased to say you're wrong. And for those who feel DVD-A is the new dawn for audio, with cutting edge artists and performers queuing up to use it, I'm afraid you're wrong too. Let's look at the performers whose treasured work can be found on the first batch of Warner DVD-A releases - Deep Purple, The Doors, Fleetwood Mac. Hardly cutting edge stuff, is it? Why not chuck in a few Max Bygraves tunes while we're at it?

This gives an insight into the market the record companies are targeting the software at - people who are pruning roses and playing bowls rather than building new music collections. In truth though, DVD-A software buyers aren't necessarily fifty-something art directors but young, thrusting IT types into new technology and new music. Those fifty-somethings have already bought the vinyl and the CD, so they're unlikely to rush out and buy the same stuff again. It isn't all dinosaur rock though, as several 'new' titles are also available, but sadly from artists about as popular as The Great Plague was. If (very) sub-Ella jazz crooners and hoe-down blue grass is your bag, you may be sorted...

Things aren't so bad for those whose musical tastes go back rather further, to the 19th century, however. There are a couple of DVD-A classical titles which show rightly that classical musicians and music lovers could take the format more seriously than pop and rock lovers - it's the nature of the beast. A six-disc

box set of Beethoven's symphonies is available (albeit for the price of a generous donation to the London Symphony Orchestra) as well as a few other titles of good performances by top class orchestras and performers.

I'm not griping for the sake of it, and it's not down to the manufacturers who naturally have the greatest wish for new formats to succeed. It's just that it shows how the music industry has a far greater influence on the manufacturers than they would like, or would like you to know. The classical music industry has nothing to lose as it's already in a desperate situation, so can afford to gamble on new formats in the vain hope of recovery. The big-wig execs that wheel and deal the fate of boy-bands, however, are more wary of risking money on a potential non-starter that would result in a vicious circle of sales and software availability.

Basically, someone has to stick their neck out as they did with Compact Disc. Back in the early days of CD - around 1984 - you could go out and buy something more than classical music or classic rock. True, Fleetwood Mac and Pink Floyd were there for the taking, but so were the Cocteau Twins and New Order. DVD-Audio desperately needs good quality contemporary music that attracts collectors and fans rather than one-off novelty buyers. This much talked about format is finally here, but not as we'd like it, Jim. ■



Simon Pope

HI-FI WORLD

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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.

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●●● — **ADEQUATE** - Room for improvement

● — **POOR** - Seriously flawed. Forget it!

● — **Half globes are added for those products that we feel are between categories**

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world news

► LINN DEMONSTRATION AT THE GROSVENOR HOUSE HOTEL

In collaboration with Linn Products, Hi-Fi World are giving you the opportunity to attend the ultimate comparison between LP and CD. On Saturday June 9th at the exclusive Grosvenor House Hotel on Park Lane in Central London, you'll be able to come along between 10.00am and 4.00pm to hear Linn's £12,000 Sondek CD12 CD player up against what is arguably the world's reference turntable, a top specification Sondek LP12 from the same company.

The idea started when David Price and I visited the company's headquarters in Glasgow. At dinner that evening we discussed many aspects of life, both audio and non-audio, with the redoubtable figurehead and founder of Linn, Ivor Tiefenbrun. As it always does in these situations, one thing led to another and we got onto two important subjects that heralded this event. The inevitable comparison of vinyl to CD arose, plus a discussion on the awesomely priced CD12, along with the information that a vast majority of our readers are Linn turntable owners. We then followed on with the fact that the analogue v. digital debate is one that still rages strong



Ivor Tiefenbrun, founder of Linn Products



Hi-Fi World Editor, Simon Pope

among our knowledgeable die-hard readership. During this exchange I could sense a light bulb illuminating above the head of Mr. Tiefenbrun, then, like a bolt from the blue, he popped the question in his unmistakable rich tone "Why don't we organise a CD v LP comparison for your readers?". It didn't take long to realise that this was a valid and interesting idea. After all, with the world's reference audiophile turntable still in production and a £12,000 CD in their arsenal, which other company is better qualified to put on such a show?

So, on the date above anyone can come along and hear the two battle it out. We'll be playing the same music on both CD and vinyl through a top

spec Linn system worth more than £50,000. There will be senior staff from both Hi-Fi World Magazine and Linn Products present and there's also the opportunity to join us, along with Ivor Tiefenbrun, for dinner at the hotel in the evening. The demonstration event is totally free and we want as many of you turning up as possible, so come along (and bring your friends) at any time between 10.00am and 4.00pm on Saturday 9th of June for one of the hi-fi events of the year. Hi-Fi World and Linn will be there to answer your questions on the demonstration, Linn or the magazine, or indeed anything to do with audio.

SIMON POPE
THE EDITOR

For details, including how to reserve a place for the evening dinner, see the advertisement on page 36 of this issue. It promises to be an enlightening and interesting day - don't miss it!



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World Radio History

▶▶ **REVOX RETURN WITH A VISION**

All those Revox fans out there who remember the heady days of the A77 reel-to-reel tape machines make sure you're sitting down. The Swiss company are set to return to the consumer electronics market with a new range of loudspeakers and plasma screens. The new sleek look for the company is a long way from the retro spooling tape reels of yesteryear. The Elegance 'speaker range features bookshelf and

floorstanding models for both two channel hi-fi and AV use, as well as a centre channel, two subs and a "Magic Cube" 5.1 channel surround system. These are joined by a range of sleek LCD and plasma screens available in a variety of sizes.

Musical Design Company
PO Box 4146
Epping
Essex CM16 6HJ
Tel: 01992 573030
www.revox.ch



▶▶ **ROTEL YER MA!**

Rotel are launching a new DVD-Video player on to the UK market. The RDV 995 is the latest addition to the company's fast growing home cinema line up, priced at £700. The main design criteria was to make the player as high quality, sonically, as possible, so the player has many attributes and components used in the company's two channel products. It features Dolby Pro-Logic, Dolby Digital and dts decoding, along with S-VHS composite outputs, plus playback of CD-R/W discs in audio format.



Gamepath Ltd.
28 Heathfield
Stacey Bushes
Milton Keynes MK12 6HR
Tel: 01908 317707
www.gamepath.co.uk

▶▶ **VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY**



Here is the new stylish product from the high-end company of Sheffield, Wilson Benesch: the £5,000 Discovery loudspeaker. Following in the sleek footsteps of landmark 'speaker the Bishop, the Discovery is the first product in the new Odyssey range which is to be introduced throughout the year. Described as a "micro floor stander" the whole 'speaker is designed from start to finish by the company and it features the Tactic multi role drive unit found in The Bishop, plus a clamshell Isobaric Tactic in the vertical axis directly underneath the forward facing drivers. This apparently addresses stability problems associated with mounting an enclosure in free space and "exploits the earth's gravity and the Earth itself to the full". The drivers are therefore placed very close to each other with the tweeter on axis between the front facing midrange and the woofer located at the bottom of the cabinet. Check out our review next month.

Wilson Benesch
Falcon House
Limestone Cottage Lane
Sheffield S6 1NJ
Tel: 0114 285 2656
www.wilson-benesch.com

▶▶ **B&W BOOST BUDGET MARKET**

B&W have launched the new 300 Series to do battle in the budget 'speaker market. The DM303 bookshelf monitor and LCR3 "AV" (magnetically shielded) 'speaker are the latest of the company's products to utilize their Nautilus technologies, originally developed for the flagship £35,000 Nautilus model. This is the first time the company have used such features in a range costing less than £200.

The DM303 is a two-way vented box system for either bookshelves or stand mounting. It uses a 160mm woven fibreglass bass/midrange unit and a 25mm metal dome tweeter with tube loading. Fibreglass was chosen as the substance B&W thought as close to the Kevlar used in their more expensive models. The Nautilus Flowport technology is used in the ports, where the port has a dimpled golf ball-like flared surface which helps to greatly reduce 'chuffing and compression effects. This dimpled effect is also used on the front baffle and the 'speakers are available in either black ash or maple finishes.

B&W Loudspeakers (UK) Ltd.
Marlborough Rd.
Churchill Industrial Estate
Lancing
West Sussex
BN15 8TR
Tel: 01903 750750



►► **RUARK 'N' ROLL**

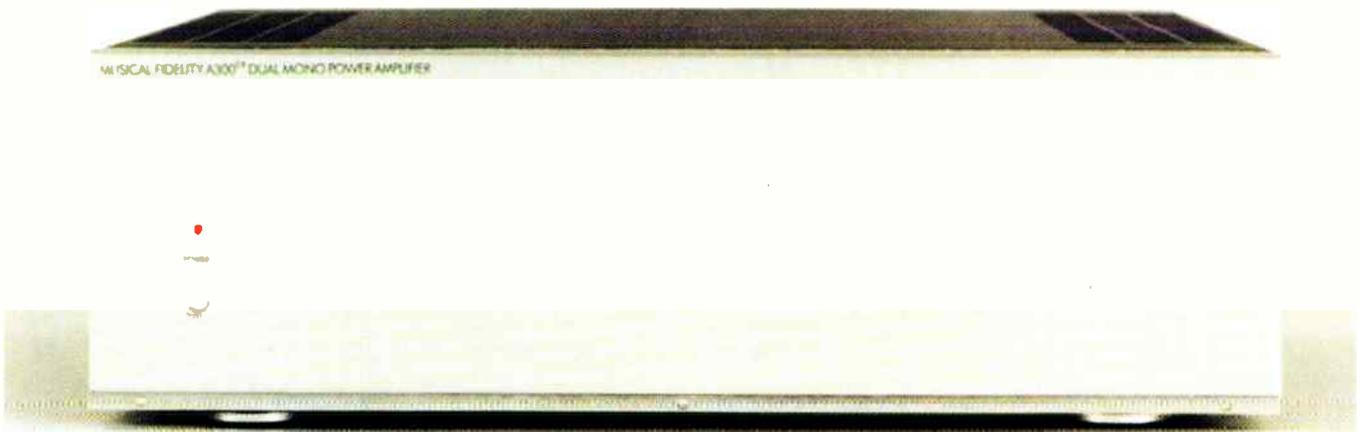
Ruark have launched two more new models in its premium Classic range, following on from the CL-20 introduced late last year. The new models are one standmount, the CL-10 and the floorstanding CL-30. The £900 CL-10 is a compact two-way rear ported design and the CL-30, priced at £2,500 is a full blown three-way model. Both 'speakers feature the same open weave pure silk dome 28mm tweeter and the CL-10 uses the same 180mm air-dried pulp paper cone bass/mid unit as the CL-20. The top dog CL-30

employs a Scan-Speak made midrange unit and a sizeable bass unit with a long throw voice coil. Featuring Ruark's own Acoustic Design Technology cabinets, both models are available finished in Steamed Beech, Natural Cherry and Rosewood.

Ruark Acoustics Ltd.
59 Tailor's Court
Temple Farm Industrial Estate
Southend-On-Sea
Essex SS2 5TH
Tel: 01702 601410



►► **YET MORE POWER FROM MUSICAL FIDELITY**



Musical Fidelity, who seem to be able to produce an alarming number of high quality products one after another, have launched a new power amplifier. The A300CR dual-mono power amplifier has a quoted power output of 225W per channel RMS and is born of the A3CR and the Nu-Vista M3 integrated. Its minimalist look is virtually the same as the A3CR. Expect the dimensions to be substantially bigger but there are changes aplenty inside the casework. The power transformers are housed within a separate box inside the main case to help ensure there is no electromagnetic or other interference from the circuitry. This, claim the company, gives all the benefits of the external power supply found in the Nu-Vista M3 but with the advantage of shorter

supply lines to the circuitry, which is itself an "improved" version of that found in the Nu-Vista integrated and power amps. The A300CR is available now, priced £2,200.

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MF House, 15-17 Olympic Park Trading Estate
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Wembley
Middlesex
HA9 0TF
Tel: 020 8900 2866

next issue

Here's a mere taster of what we hope to bring you in four weeks time

Denon DVD-3300 and Pioneer DV-939A.

These two DVD-A/V players battle it out in next month's issue. Which will reign supreme?

Linn Sondek CD12 CD player.

At £12,000 this is often hailed as the greatest CD player on the planet. See what we think next month.

Wilson Benesch Discovery loudspeakers.

These standmounts are the new stylish 'speakers from the Sheffield company. Will they justify their hefty £5,000 price tag.

A CHANGE (R)



You name it, it does it. Simon Pope meets up with Kenwood's DVF-R9030 DVD-A/V multidisc player.

After some three years of anticipation, DVD-A is finally here. Of course, it's been around in hardware form for quite some time now but, for reasons best known to the music industry, the software has been conspicuous by its absence. However, with the launch of titles from Warner and dts Entertainment imminent, it was time for Hi-Fi World to finally get hold of a player for review. And being Hi-Fi World, we didn't automatically go for the obvious - enter the Kenwood DVF-R9030.

Kenwood has been tied to DVD-A since its inception, and always intended to enter the market at an affordable level. To wit, there are two DVD-A players on the market for well under £1,000, the more expensive of which is the 9030. There's no denying that this machine is a bit of an oddity. Its big chunky looks hark back to the days of 1970s Americana, and the dimensions are close to the first VHS video recorders of the early nineteen eighties. The player features two attractive thick shiny plates on either side, apparently made from ebony,

although you'd never know it. Whatever - it certainly has its own special style. The mammoth build does however serve a purpose. Not only does the 9030, of course, play DVD-A discs along with DVD-Vs and CDs (as well as having CD Text compatibility), you can throw in five of them at the same time, thanks to a five disc 'carousel' draw based at the bottom of the player. This can accommodate a combination of any number (up to five) of various format discs that the player will read.

In addition to the multi disc facility, the 9030 is a veritable treasure trove of features. There's a six channel configuration of Kenwood's excellent 24-bit DRIVE II (Dynamic Resolution Intensive Vector Enhancement) circuit which uses no less than three of the processors. Used to good effect in previous disc spinners, this system claims to enhance low level resolution through dealing with quantisation distortion. Add to this the fact that there are high resolution 24/192 and 24/96 DACs on board and you start to realise you're getting an awful lot of digital technology for your money.

There are both Dolby Digital and dts built-in decoders and stereo PCM. There are six analogue audio outputs, plus one stereo pair of two channel PCM mixed outputs, a multichannel Dolby Digital/ dts/ MPEG digital output and an optical and coaxial digital output.

The video outs comprise 2 Scarts/2 Composite Video/2 S-Video Outputs, plus Component Video Output. The 9030 can be switched into 'pure audio' mode whilst playing a CD or DVD-A disc, which will shut down the picture-related circuits, allowing the player to concentrate on the job in hand.

Other features include all the functions associated with a CD player such as repeat and random play, plus Virtual Surround speaker and headphone modes, digital noise reduction and a five mode digital video adjustment.

SMOOTH OPERATOR?

Getting the player to do exactly what you want straight from the box isn't an easy task. An hour or two of 'Christmas morning' fiddling is called for to find your way around this

FOR THE BETTER?

complex beast. There are two instruction manuals supplied, one of which is a wire-bound A5 booklet of some ninety eight pages entitled 'How to Operate and Enjoy' - I initially did neither. The neat little supplied remote looks far too small to partner such a comprehensive machine until you realise it has three 'operating layers' so you must make sure the switch is set to the right colour before pressing anything or you could well scupper all your efforts.

The more I sat, read and fiddled the more I became familiar with the procedures, such as not opening the drawer whilst a disc is playing with the idea of retrieving it. It stays down in the depths until you press 'stop', which puts it back in the tray. Things worsened somewhat when it came to using Kenwood's On Screen Display which isn't the easiest to get your head round (that's an understatement). Still, I finally managed to get things rolling.

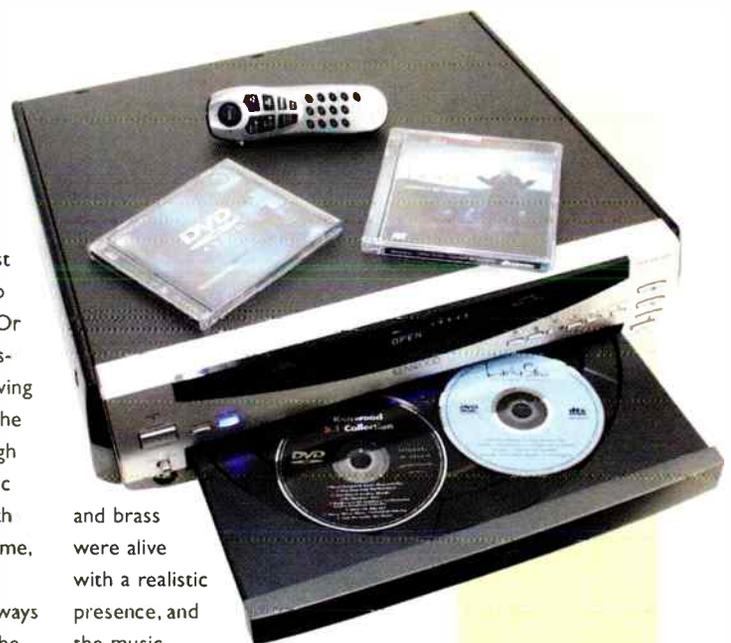
SOUNDING OFF

I tested the 9030 with a number of different discs on different formats in both multichannel and stereo, but started off with 5.1 channel DVD-A audio (no 24/192 discs were used due to the sad lack of software). Using Mission's FS2 flat panel speaker

package and Musical Fidelity's multichannel amplification, the first disc in was Kenwood's own demo compilation. Blondie's 'One Way Or Another' kicked in with an expressively clean and open sound, showing off everything that's good about the format such as clean and open high frequency information and realistic vocal lines. Debbie Harry's smooth sexy voice was smack in front of me, with her sweet, warm breath caressing my face. Well, we can always dream, but it was very realistic! The mix was crystal clear and precise, with bass full and tuneful, treble sweet and midrange uncluttered.

Moving to Billy Idol's 'Rebel Yell' saw further clarification that if your idea of audio is to hear everything that's going on with clean precision, then DVD-A could well be for you. Although a little too sterile for my personal taste, the mix was intricate and involving, picking out things you'd never previously felt existed - like music in Billy Idol. It even had me tapping my feet for the first time to the blonde-coiffured one - behold a miracle!

The sense of excitement that high resolution formats can bring to recordings was demonstrated by the first movement of Beethoven's Symphony No. 5, also featured on the Kenwood compilation disc. Strings



and brass were alive with a realistic presence, and the music ploughed forward with speed and agility. It doesn't improve the reading, however, as my remaster of Kleiber's 1970s recording on CD still left it standing but the format undoubtedly brings you more into the music than 44.1 does. Even in two channel form, which I tried with all the DVD-A discs, there's more detail and presence discernible.

A few dts DVD-A discs were next in the drawer, including Steve Stevens 'Flamenco a Go-Go' album. A great mix and use of multichannel was found here, with guitars thrumming from all angles. Again, detail was excellent and the Kenwood showed a smooth and easy going, if bass rich, sound.

The next discs in the drawer were all bog standard CDs, and showed the Kenwood delivering a very commendable, if not over enthusiastic, sound. On rock music such as The Smashing Pumpkin's 'Machina' album, it lacked the control of my reference Meridian 206.24 at



TAG McLaren



DVD32R

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THX

U L T R A

The DVD32R is Europe's first DVD player which exceeds the high THX® Ultra standards and allows reference standard replay of CDs.

High-mass Transport for Low Jitter

The DVD32R uses a top loading transport, allowing its drive motor and servo electronics to be mounted to a heavy, mass loaded sub chassis. The result is improved data integrity and reduced jitter.

Automatic, Adaptive Drawer Mechanism

The DVD32R aluminium diecast drawer door runs on a polished steel bar and a teflon glider for smooth and reliable operation, driven by an adaptively controlled electric motor via a steel wire.

Precise Clock for best Sound and Video

The low phase noise single frequency master oscillator ensures that all video and audio clocks are synchronous, with clock signals being transferred using independently buffered and precisely terminated traces.

Field-leading MPEG Decoder

TAG McLaren worked closely with National Semiconductor's field leading subsidiary Mediamatics, in finding the best MPEG decoder. After long evaluation Pantera DVD™, the

first IC to integrate all back end functions of a DVD player onto a single chip, was selected. This unrivalled level of integration includes host processing, a 32 bit RISC processor, 10 bit video DACs and the NTSC/PAL encoders.

Uncompromised Video quality

The video circuitry uses broadcast quality components, with video outputs being individually buffered and vertical and anti flicker filtering to deliver high quality graphics.

Test-Pattern Generator

In built test patterns and electronics test circuitry assist in calibrating the tv for best picture quality.

Advanced Digital Waveform Control

Advanced circuitry optimises rise and fall times whilst preventing waveform discontinuities, reducing the demand on the digital interconnects.

TAGtronic Link TPL for Minimal Jitter

TPL allows the DVD32R to lock its data output to the low noise, ultra low jitter DAC reference clock in the W32R.

Massive Power Reserves

The DVD32R uses a large toroidal transformer as this has the benefit of a very low stray magnetic field, reducing the possibility of interference with the audio data and video signals. A second, smaller

transformer is used to power the remote control circuitry, allowing very low electrical consumption when switched to standby.

Multiple Power Supplies

Separate power supplies reduce interference between the processing stages, right down to having separate windings on the transformer.

Multi-Layer Printed Circuit Boards

Multi layer pcbs provide controlled impedances and minimise coupling. Performance is further enhanced using leaded components for perfect analog signals and SMD for fast digital transfer, with quality being optimised using inert gas soldering.

Enhanced TAGtronic Bus

The TAGtronic Communication Bus allow products to work seamlessly together to form an effective, integrated system.

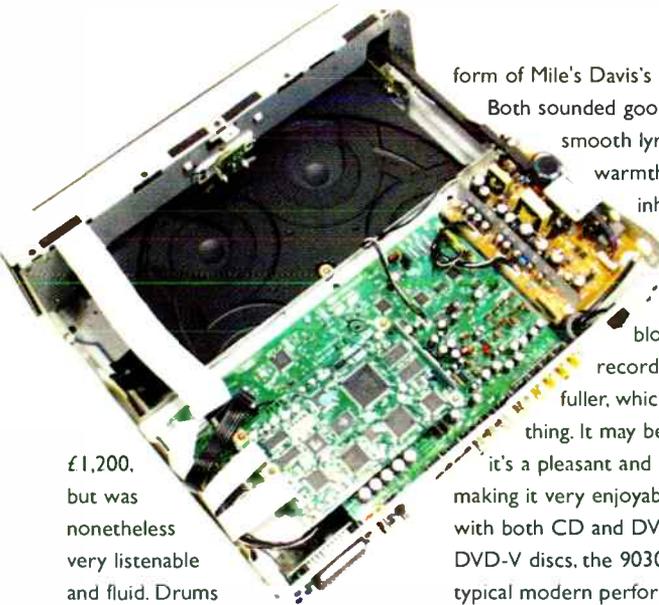
Upgrade Path

Building on TAG McLaren's class leading commitment to upgradability, the DVD32R is scheduled to receive a hardware upgrade to DVD Audio, Progressive Scan and Digital Video whilst functionality enhancements are distributed through TAG McLaren's website, allowing convenient software upgrades at home (using a PC).

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To book an audition contact one of these authorised DVD32R stockists:

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£1,200, but was nonetheless very listenable and fluid. Drums and bass guitars were strong and well rounded, but the 9030 lacked a bit of cohesion in the upper ranges, making cymbals a bit splashy and vocals a tad thin. This mellowed out with classical music in the shape of Mahler's sixth symphony on a DG recording, and jazz in the

form of Mile's Davis's 'Kind Of Blue'. Both sounded good, with a smooth lyricism and a warmth that is inherent in this machine's sound. The 9030's sonic bloom makes recordings sound fuller, which is no bad thing. It may be coloured but it's a pleasant and subtle euphony, making it very enjoyable to listen to with both CD and DVD-A. With DVD-V discs, the 9030 showed a typical modern performance as a movie machine. Picture was clean and colour natural.

CONCLUSION

This machine is a bargain - you get an awful lot for your money and it is all good quality too. The overall sound is perhaps a little warm and bass rich

for some but I personally found it enjoyable and easy to listen to with both DVD-A or standard Red Book CD. By high-end audiophile standards the machine isn't the best money can buy, but it costs less than £1,000 and plays a brand new format too. The only major downside are its ergonomics - it isn't the easiest thing to use, but after a few hours you should be able to master it. Recommended without hesitation then for anyone who enjoys music (and movies) in high quality, and requires a 'one-box solution'. ■ ▲

Kenwood DVF-R9030 £899.90

Kenwood Electronics UK Ltd.
Kenwood House
Dwight Rd.
Watford, Herts
WD18 9EB
Tel: 01923 816444
www.kenwood-electronics.co.uk

DVD-A DISCS - WHERE?



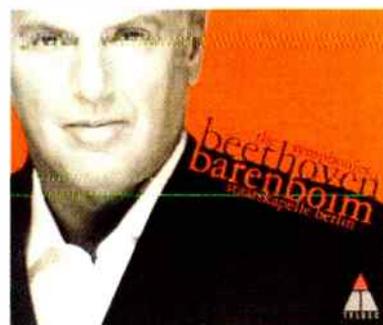
Although you may not have seen them yet, there are some discs available now. They are mainly dts available from Warner. Labels such as Silverline and Chesky have some titles out in the US and are also working on more and the bigger record labels say they are committed to the format, although it will be interesting to see what they release. Warner's titles are mainly for ageing rockers and classical fans, although The Corrs, Ry Cooder and Natalie Merchant appear on the list alongside Deep Purple, Brain Salad Surgery by ELP (Emerson, Lake and Palmer) and The Doors. The person at Dolby responsible for these titles is apparently an old hippy! On the classical side there are a couple of quality releases from Teldec (part of Warner's classical wing) including a complete Beethoven symphonic cycle from Daniel Barenboim conducting the Berlin Staatskapelle orchestra. So if you believe the old ones are the best then you should have no complaints. Many of the discs are available from Vivante (020 8977 6600) at around £25 (they have to import, hence the price).



◀◀
Ry Cooder -
Buena Vista Social Club



◀◀
ELP -
Brain Salad Surgery



◀◀
Daniel Barenboim -
Complete Beethoven
Symphonies



World Verdict
£ ● ● ● ● ●

A great all rounder that's good with CDs and excellent with DVD-As. Bulky and fiddly to use, but still excellent value. Measured Performance see page 111

A bunch **5**s of **5**s



Sony's first 'five series' SACD player, the SCD-555ES, promises to fill the yawning chasm between the company's high end fare and the low rent SCD-XB940QS. David Price spins the numbers.

► Sony's ES range has always been rather hard to fathom. It runs from the unimpressive tarted-up budget stuff (anyone remember 1992's CDP-X222ES?) to outrageously capable budget esoterica (like 1987's CDP-555ES). Truth is, much of it is good but not quite deserving of the respect Sony would have buyers accord it. If 'ES' means, as the company claims, 'Extremely high Standard', why then is it regarded in the company's native Japan as a mid-range brand? Lest we forget, the R (that's Reference, just in case you hadn't guessed) series is Sony's prestigious label over there (as in CDP-R10/DAS-R10, costing a trifling £18,000!) It's into this marketing conundrum that the SCD-555ES finds itself thrown. It has to fill the chasm between the able SCD-777ES and the middling SCD-XB940QS.

The SCD-555ES comes in either gold or black finish, and features a high quality frame and beam chassis construction giving it a total weight of 14.5kg. Sony's flagship top-loading disc mechanism, as used in the SCD-1 and SCD-777ES has been abandoned in favour of a conventional front-loading affair which is said to speed

up disc-loading. Shame, but one benefit is that you can stack it underneath your MDS-JE555ES should you be so inclined.

It features a twin-laser pickup for compatibility with both Super Audio CD and CD formats, and a host of tweaks for which the company has obligingly thought up acronyms. There's S-TACT (Synchronous Time Accuracy Controller) which is presumably a clever clocking mechanism, and the Accuracy Complimentary Pulse density modulation (ACP) system claimed to reduce switching distortion in the DSD decoding process. Blimey. The SCD-555ES also incorporates twin R-Core transformers, enabling the separation of the power supply to the audio circuit and the digital and servo circuit. At least I can vouch for the efficacy of these, because my beloved MDS-JE555ES shares them!

Unfortunately, the SCD-555ES is not the barnstormer that its MiniDisc brother is. With a CD sound best described as 'civilised', it's not half bad and possess a nice, full-bodied and rich tone that clearly distinguishes it from its budget '940 brother. There's an impressive

smoothness right across the frequency range and a pleasantly warm and fulsome bass too. Treble is decently extended and devoid of any nasties - all in all a very refined 'hi-fi' performance in the classic Japanese mould. You've got to hand to Sony, because I remember thinking exactly the same about one of this player's many distant ancestors, the CDP-X55ES, which retailed for precisely the same amount of money (¥180,000 in Japan, roughly £800 here) back in 1991!

Although nice enough taken in isolation, once you start comparing it with other machines you begin to dislike it. As it happens (guys and gals), I regularly use another Sony 'five series' CD player, the largely forgotten CDP-557ES. This was Sony's last ever high end multibit design using Philips TDA1541 16bit, 4 times oversampling DACs (I think - they're concealed by resin on the circuitboard, but I'm pretty sure it's them lurking underneath!). I use it because not only does it still sound extremely good (especially after having been Clock 3'd by Trichord), but it's a great antidote to all the press releases us journalists ►►

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we've
moved on



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Q
SERIES
Point Two



▶▶ get about 'how amazing' a company's latest silver disc spinner is, 'thanks to clever new technology' etc. A-B my Sony against the latest and greatest and you realise things have not got that much better in the last decade. The problem for the sparkling new SCD-555ES was that it got seven bells kicked out of it by my old faithful.

If you ever wondered why Ken Ishiwata gets hot under the collar about multibit, all you have to do is compare this new Bitstream design with good old 16x4. Propaganda's 'Duel' is a murky recording (done coincidentally on the first Sony digital recorder running at 16bit, 44.056kHz resolution back in 1984). Switching between the new and old Sony players was like night and day - the multibit had far more attack, speed and dynamics, plus a wider soundstage and a firmer, tauter bass. Okay, the treble was just a touch grainy and Claudia Brucken's awesome voice sounded even colder and steelier than it should, but by contrast the SCD-555ES sailed through the track missing half of its rhythmic and dynamic clues. Is this progress?

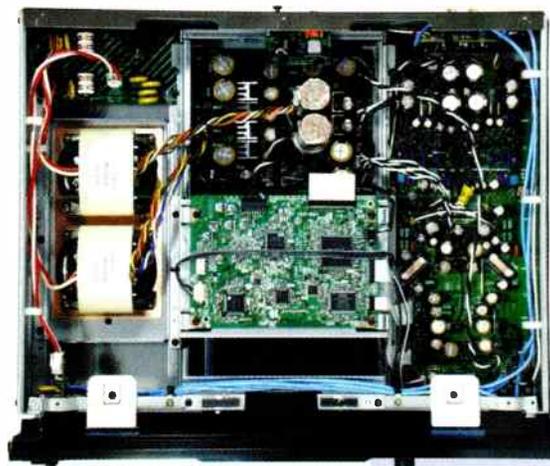
Moving to some warmly recorded acoustic rock in the (sublime) shape of Love's 'Forever Changes', the difference was less marked. The SCD-555ES set up a deliciously warm acoustic which didn't expand much further than the edges of the speakers. Into this, Arthur Lee's vocals were tightly located in the centre, just to the front of the guitars and bass. Commendably sweet and detailed, the only thing lacking about the sound was punch. When I switched to the old multibit machine, this came back in abundance, along with more 'brightly lit' cymbals and touch of upper mid coarseness. Lou Donaldson's 'Alligator Bogaloo', a favourite Blue Note recording of mine, highlighted the difference between new and old. George Benson's guitar had far greater speed with the latter, while the double bass lines really sang - as well as being better extended (albeit less tonally rich and 'fruity'), they boogied instead of plodded.

A 'good' but not barnstorming performance on CD then, but a little help was at hand in the shape of a

variable coefficient filter with five settings (std, 1, 2, 3 and 4) available with CD playback only. Standard is a sharp roll of filter, cutting off noise over 22.05kHz, whilst the remaining four are slow roll off, designed to cut off noise generated during sampling. Both of these actions are theoretically beyond the audible frequency and generally you need good equipment to sense any difference. With the standard setting playback was as described above, a powerful and somewhat forward sound. The number '1' setting resulted in a slightly more laid back sound with a mild lower mid bloom, but this was a minute difference compared to the standard setting. With setting '2' the midrange slightly cleaned up, with improved imaging (Sony describe this filter setting as one for vocal music), '3' made the most difference, acting like a very subtle loudness control, slightly muddying the sound and '4' (described as suitable for light classical) brought more detail to the sound and the biggest difference from the standard setting.

This all makes the 555 a little more user friendly and customer tuneable but it still lacked that last ounce of excellence to make the real difference. I'm afraid it was the same story with SACD. Of course, the format's greater resolution guarantees better sound in one sense (especially in the way it avoids all the traps sixteen bit can't, like reproducing female vocals with a semblance of accuracy), but SACD does not automatically guarantee a transcendental listen. If the basics aren't there in the first place (i.e. musicality, timing, dynamics), SACD won't compensate for them.

Marvin Gaye's 'Sexual Healing' is a track that Marantz's £5000 SA-1 made an awe-inspiring job of last month. In the Sony though, it was a shadow of its former self. Don't get me wrong, it wasn't unpleasant - sweet, smooth and creamy, it showcased Marvin's killer voice in a way no sixteen bit CD could, but it simply didn't make the grade in other respects. Those nasty drum machine sounds I spoke of in the SA-1 review sounded blurred and lacked the subtle dynamic accents that I'd been so impressed by previously. Ironically, my old Sony reference playing a CD of the same album actually sounded



more musically involving, even if it was tonally and timbrally in a league below.

The story continued with my limited collection of other SACDs. Hats off to its polished nature and evenness of tone and textural accuracy that even a £12,000 Linn Sondek CD12 would struggle with - it's just that the new Sony consummately failed to 'light my fire'. Compared to Marantz's admittedly far more expensive SA-1, it feels like Austin Powers minus his mojo.

The fact that an ancient ES player so obviously betters Sony's new SCD-555ES might cause a few blushes. But maybe we're being harsh here. Maybe we shouldn't be treating it as a no-compromise product focussed absolutely on CD playback? If potential buyers don't think they're getting a class leading thousand quid CD player that also plays SACDs, then they won't be disappointed. What this machine really is, is a dual purpose 'jack of all trades', rather than a no-compromise audiophile giant killer. Judged on these criteria, it scores rather better.

If conventional CD replay is of primary importance to you, you'll be far better off with a Meridian 506.24 or Arcam FMJ CD23. If, on the other hand, you're looking for an affordable entry into the wonderful world of SACD that isn't as obviously compromised as Sony's budget SCD-XB940QS, then this is a very good product to consider. ■ ▲

SONY SCD-555ES £1200

**Sony (UK) Ltd
Brooklands
Weybridge
Surrey KT13 0XW
Tel: +44 (0) 1932 816000
816000www.sony.co.uk**

World Verdict



This good value dual-purpose SACD/CD player is no substitute for a top class CD-only machine, but works well enough if you want a taste of SACD. Extremely well built. *Measured Performance*

see page 109

A lot of changes - and still rather a lot of money.



Speakers as universally revered as our Reference Series are a tough act to follow. After all, what can you do to improve on excellence?

Rather a lot, as it happens. Take the high order crossovers, for example. They've been completely redesigned, using advanced polypropylene capacitors for even greater lucidity. And every crossover is further fine-tuned to match the parameters of each individual drive unit. We even found ways of making the drivers themselves with greater precision to iron out the slightest sonic imbalance.

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REFERENCE SERIES



dual control

Silky smooth, but with a mighty punch. Noel Keywood warms to the sound of KEF's massive Three-Two Reference loudspeaker.

Standing 1137mm high, or a sizable 45ins as you might prefer it, KEF's massive Reference Series Model Three-two loudspeakers are imposing. Not for the smaller home, they're monitors that can handle real power - and deliver it as well.

There's an important difference between these two properties. Generating high volume levels in a room is a difficult thing to do, especially when the room is large, meaning above 18-20ft or so. Two-way loudspeakers sound fine in most homes but most will sound at least strained trying to fill a larger room. At worst they'll distort, bottom out and, in the end, burn out if pushed hard for too long.

The solution was to use big drive units, like the awesome Goodmans 12in woofers that once graced the windows of electronics shops near me in London. Nowadays, manufacturers prefer to use multiple drivers, mainly because narrow cabinets are visually more acceptable and they give better stereo imaging.

KEF manage to squeeze no fewer than five drive units into the Three-Two. Where they are all hidden is a guessing game. In addition to the two in front, there's a hidden tweeter and two hidden bass units. They quote a maximum power handling figure of 400W into these drivers and at 91dB sensitivity this should give around 115dB SPL at a listening distance of 2m or so in a reverberant room, in line with the figures KEF quote for the Three-Two. Around 100-110dB SPL at the listening position is very

loud to me so the Three-Two really can deliver.

I mention all this because delivering high acoustic levels cleanly is central to what the Three-Two is designed to do. The task facing KEF with a speaker conceived to do this is how to get it to meet or surpass today's sound quality expectations, because big multi-driver loudspeakers are difficult to make work well.

So back to our guessing game. The top Uni-Q drive unit has a perforated dust cap, behind which lies the tweeter. It fires out through the midrange cone to give what is known as a "point source", a single point from which all frequencies emanate. When tweeters are laterally and axially displaced from the midrange unit, as is common, phase problems arise and imaging and apparent "cohesiveness" suffer. KEF's Uni-Q unit elegantly overcomes this problem.

Below the Uni-Q unit lies a lower midrange unit (160Hz-500Hz) and hidden in the depths of the large cabinet are two bass drivers. They fire out through the huge front port, which is not a reflex port so much as an open vent.

Weighing 35kgs (77lbs), the Three-Twos are a two man lift. This is one big loudspeaker. They're



beautifully finished though and look smart in the home.

I ran the KEFs from a Mission

Cyrus 7 amplifier fed by a range of sources: tuner, CD and LP.

Not surprisingly, it was the smooth, even sound of these loudspeakers that struck me most on first acquaintance. Here, the Three-Twos sound like they measure. From maraccas to cymbals at the higher end of the scale, down to bass trombones and string bass at the lower end there's seemingly no fear or favour in reproducing musical instruments. The Three-Twos sound as smooth as silk and wonderfully cohesive from top to bottom. It's a subtle but obvious quality that sets them apart from lesser designs straight away, a sort of relaxed confidence - one that's easily justified too.

Another obvious feature of the KEFs is the way they vividly display fine detail. Every little nuance of percussion was teased out of Toni Braxton's Spanish Guitar; the big KEFs had her breathing into the microphone so intimately it was almost embarrassing.

George Michael was given similar treatment singing Brother Can You Spare a Dime, on Songs From the Last Century. Tis a pity that "spare" is a sibilant lance of a word though. The KEFs emphasised it sufficiently to make me wince a little. Whilst I know from experience there's sibilance in this recording, I suspect the small peak in their response that so effectively pushes detail out also emphasises sibilance. Most of the time sibilance isn't a problem. Only on the odd close-miked recording can the Three-Twos sound just a bit too up-front. When you're listening to a singer breathing down the microphone it isn't an effect to spoil things, so much as upset the otherwise superb balance they display.

The brushing of snare over taut drum skin is the sort of fine detail the KEF's superb tweeter excels at reproducing. Once criticised for sounding a little harsh, the Uni-Q driver now has a sweet nature and blends in beautifully with the rest of the frequency range. The brush slid smoothly over the drum surface in a convincing picture that held together nicely, seemingly one event rather than two trying to be one. Too often the constituents come at me from different directions and don't really

gel. With a 'speaker like this the illusion is perfect.

Some of the smoothness seen in the response plot is, I suspect, due to the use of heavily damped polypropylene cones which are opaque to rear radiation. I say this because the KEFs do have a slightly "dark" sound about them. Whilst there's plentiful amounts of high level detail and a lovely even-handedness in their portrayal of instruments, there's less low level ambient information to give a feel for the space in which a recording was made. They string out a pin sharp sound stage left-to-right that is captivatingly vivid, but it does not reach either forward or backward as far as is possible. The drivers deliver a delightfully clean midband though which portrays vocal character strongly and this, together with fine stereo imaging contributes to the impact the Three-Twos make.

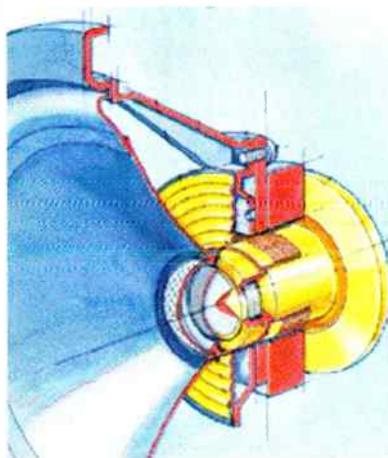
Able to smooth things out a little, the KEFs delivered a digital recording of Wagner's *Reinzi* overture by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra with the sort of conspicuous clarity modern classical recordings can have. By way of contrast an older analogue recording from the Kingsway Hall lost some of its atmosphere, it's own strengths less well identified. The Three-Twos are big hitters that relish large scale performances and deliver them with gusto. They highlight the strengths of good modern recordings, teasing out all the detail, dynamics and speed to give a big, vivid picture. Low level information isn't resolved with the same ability though.

As you might guess, with four drivers dedicated to low frequency output the Three-Twos have no difficulty delivering bass power. They have the sort of easy going, fulsome bass balance that I prefer, giving a sound with body and warmth. These are speakers with powerful bass, but as measurement suggested they go down only so far. Subsonic theatrics are missed. *Dark Side of the Moon* came in with neighbour-friendly heartbeats, when in truth if what lies on the disc is reproduced properly it won't be just the neighbours with a heart problem. This recording is a cone destroyer.

Luckily for the Floyd, most loudspeakers don't reproduce these 'heartbeats' fully. The sheer size of

the Three-Twos together with their multiple bass drivers suggested they might, so I was disappointed by this limitation. The big KEFs deliver clean, powerful bass right up to very high levels and subjectively they sound powerful. Some of the deep rumblings and effects engineers get onto recordings nowadays are lost, I found.

Able to handle a lot of power with ease and stay relaxed about it all, KEF's Three-Twos are for large rooms and powerful amplifiers. They make twin-driver loudspeakers sound



In KEF's Uni-Q driver the tweeter fires out through the base of the midrange cone, giving a 'point source' of sound.

strained, especially at high levels. To handle a lot of power multiple drivers are a good route to go and KEF have an ingenious solution in the Three-Twos. They are accurate, smooth as silk and wonderfully integrated too, justifying the Reference label.

The Three-Twos have dominant characteristics and some minor limitations I found, but this is the case for all large loudspeakers, they are such a bundle of carefully wrought trade-offs. The Three-Twos have a fine set of strengths that make them an impressive loudspeaker suited to the larger home. ■ ▲

**KEF Reference Three-Twos £2250/pr.
Albino or Rosetta bur £2750/pr.**

**KEF Audio (UK) Ltd.,
Eccleston Road, Tovil,
Maidstone, KENT ME15 6QP
Tel: 01 622 672261
Fax: 01 622 750653
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World Verdict



A big hitter of a loudspeaker - but with true Reference qualities. Smooth, detailed and impressive, if not perfect.

Measured Performance
see page 109

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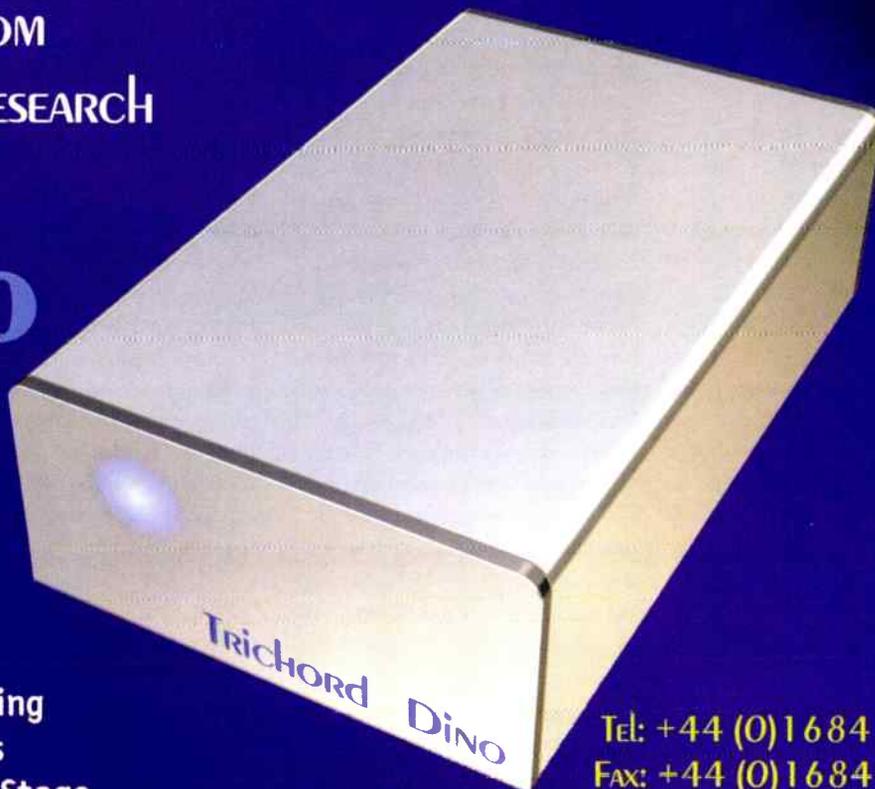
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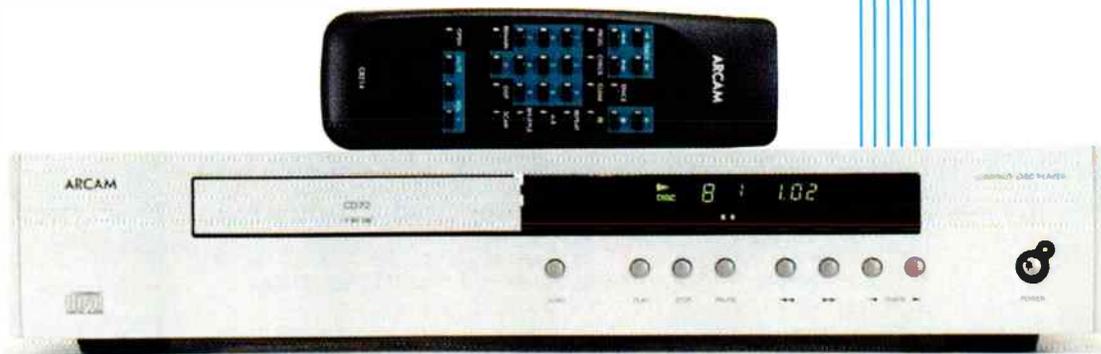


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PACK LEADER



Dominic Todd listens to the replacement for Arcam's much praised Alpha CD7SE, the CD 72 from the new DiVA range.

The sleek new styling, metal front panel, and choice of silver or black finishes are, to my eyes, worth the extra £100 over the outgoing Alpha 7SE. The overall effect bears a pleasing resemblance to Linn products. Although the replacement for the Alpha CD7SE, the CD72 is more than simply a re-boxed version. The new case contains a vibration absorbing base and the power supply unit from the more expensive Alpha 9 CD. The 24-bit Burr Brown DAC and Sony mechanism remain as before.

The only fly in Arcam's ointment is the similarly aesthetically improved and sonically revered Marantz CD6000 KI Signature at a competitive £450.

The increasingly popular Dido kicked things off with the pacy, 'Take My Hand'. From the outset it was clear that the CD72 relays all that's best from a decent 24-bit DAC. Spacious acoustics complemented by detailed and accurate timbre. Resolution of the acoustic guitar was particularly impressive. The rhythmic bass line which verges on dance club material, was reproduced in a taught and - well - rhythmic manner. If anything, though, it was perhaps a little too clean and the Marantz KI, for example, would have certainly provided an earthier, punchier sound.

I had few complaints with the sound staging though. From the layering of the backing vocals, to the

sweetly produced strings, every performer was given space to breathe within a broad stage.

Steely Dan's 'Jack of Speed', with its laid back pace suited the Arcam well. The three dimensional sound stage to the fore once again, showing just how flat some of the lesser competition can sound. Despite a fine dynamic response, the CD72 remained seamless throughout the frequency range so as not to irritate listeners with gaping holes at particular frequencies.

Fine reproduction of timbre continued to impress me, from the rasp of the brass to the exact degree of 'gravel' present from the ageing Fagen's vocals. Typical of the 24-bit breed, the performance ebbed and flowed through the piece with a refinement that would have been unheard of, in this price of machine, ten years ago. Also typical was the slightly light weight bass response, that anyone used to a decent old-fashioned 16-bit device might find a little too polite.

However, you'd hear no such complaints from listeners devoted to smaller piece Classical works. The speed and vivacity of Tartini's Violin Sonata in G minor was reproduced with the utmost eloquence. One really got the sense of the violinist's sawing arm movements as he attacked the strings with vigour. The decay and resonance reproduced from the spinet also revealed a rare

degree of transparency. With other Classical works I found the same to be true. Nothing grating, just a smooth, refined flow of music that, if I may be permitted to use a cliché, simply washed across me.

If Classical music proved to be the Arcam's forte, then the reverse was true of processed pop. The compressed nature of Eagle Eye Cherry's 'Long Way Around' was all too readily revealed. Yet at least the CD72 didn't go so far as to make the recording unbearable. It pulled apart the complex threads of the track, without sounding as clinical as some of the Far Eastern competition can do. More disappointing was the rather muddy bass and lack of involvement. The former due to the recording, the later no doubt could be partly placed at the players door.

With good system and cable matching to overcome slight politeness, the CD72 offers an insight into music rare at this price. Only if verve and outright punch were everything would I recommend the KI Signature. Otherwise, Arcam have produced a new class standard. Highly recommended. ■ ▲

Arcam CD72 £400

A&R Cambridge Ltd.
Pembroke Avenue Derry Industrial
Centre,
Cambridge CB5 9PB
Tel: 01223 203200
www.arcam.co.uk

World Verdict



Fluid sounding, refined, especially with classical, the stylish CD72 sets the new standard in its price bracket.

Measured Performance
see page 111

Ortofon



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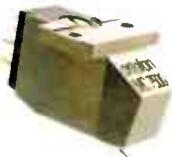
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SUPER TROOPERS

The SuperTwo is the entry level floorstander from Californian company NHT. Simon Pope says thank you for the music.

After the SuperOne stand-mount loudspeakers from Now Here This we were eager to hear more. I've since heard other models, including their high-end products, and now know NHT are something special.

At first glance the SuperTwos reviewed here look like a run-of-the-mill two-way bass reflex box. It's only when the supplied feet braces are applied to the bottom of the cabinet that you realise they're not. Craftily hidden underneath is an extra driver for bass reinforcement, making them a three-way design.

The bass/mid driver has a 170mm coated cellulose cone, and the down-firing woofer below is the same size but made of polypropylene, capable of 14mm peak to peak excursion. The fabric dome tweeter is the same smooth sounding model found in the SuperOne.

Cabinet finish is in an attractive high-gloss black laminate, but feels more solid and 'colourless' than most other models in this price range.

The look is sleek, simple and very effective - a bit similar to Meridian - which actually makes black look interesting!



The down-firing woofer at the bottom of the SuperTwo

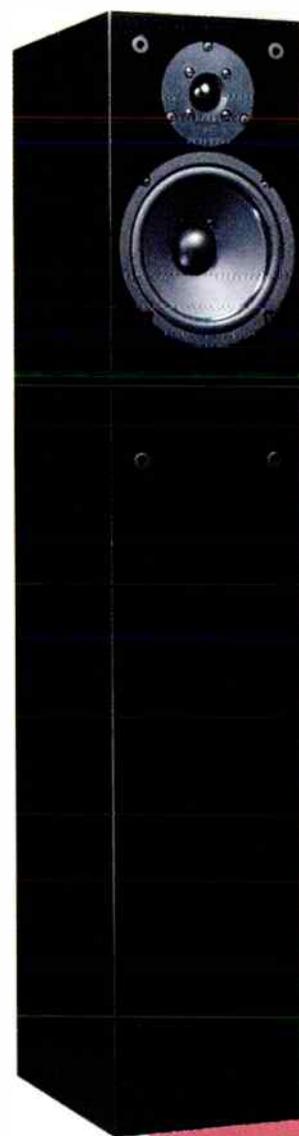
After encountering the SuperOnes I knew what traits to expect from NHT. Whilst the former didn't exactly delve the depths of lower frequencies, the closed cabinet ensured that what there was, was tight and well controlled. These floorstanders differ slightly in this respect. Like all other bass reflex designs with a down firing driver I've encountered, lows are deep and strong and can even sometimes be a little overwhelming, depending on your choice of source material. This was best exemplified by feeding Underworld's throbbing 'Push, Upstairs' through a Meridian 557 power amp. The sound was incredibly full and powerful, but this track is bass heavy and, whilst it wasn't boomy (they're best kept away from rear walls and corners anyway) it rather swamped the rest of the proceedings. Still, the NHTs were fast and controlled with rhythms, and there was no hint of them lagging behind the beat.

With rock music the sound became better balanced and more musical. Rage Against the Machine's 'Renegades' had depth and breadth as the tight rhythms and bass guitars pounded through the listening room. Although a good recording, this music can often induce a terminal migraine with 'speakers of a limited frequency range or a shouty mid, but the Two's fine extension and openness kept things musical and the aggressive guitars seemed less grating than usual.

Virtually everything I chucked at the Super Twos was handled with finesse. String quartets blossomed, with the violins nicely smooth, and

orchestral pieces had depth and colour. They don't have the control and detail of the smaller Ones but they do have an easy going, yet gripping sound. You also have to be careful with placement to avoid 'room' boom (although box boom is minimal).

Ultimately, the NHT SuperTwos don't offer the exceptional value of their smaller stablemates, but in all fairness they were a tough act to follow. The competition in the shape of Mission's more detailed and tighter sounding 782s - is tough, but these NHTs still retain the company philosophy of a high-end sound at a sensible price. Well worth searching out if you can find them. ■ ▲



World Verdict



Caution is needed with placement, but the SuperTwos are a very involving listen with fine bass depth. Recommended.

Measured Performance
see page 111

NHT SuperTwos £600

CSE Sales & Distribution
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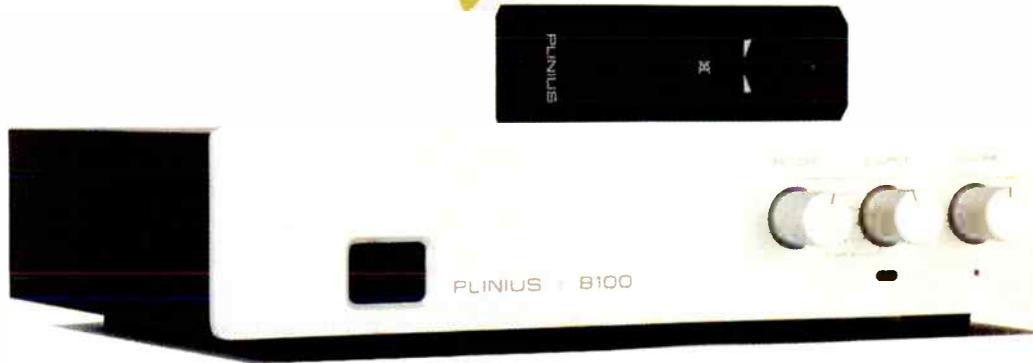
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Fruity

Kiwi



Simon Pope listens to the 8100 entry level integrated amplifier from the high-end New Zealand outfit Plinius Audio.

What immediately springs to mind when you think of New Zealand? The All Blacks, the Kiwi (both bird and fruit), scenery, space and sheep. Perhaps even Kiri Te Kanawa. Less well known however is Plinius. Started in 1979 by Peter Thomson and Gary Morrison, the company is based in Palmerston North (under the banner of Audible Technologies Ltd.), from where it goes about its business of hand building and supplying a range of Class A/AB amplifiers to the audiophile world.

The £1,400 8100 is the company's most affordable product. Offering 100W (into 8ohms), it comes in a choice of professional looking black or silver finishes. On the front panel there are just three simple rotary knobs (record, source and volume) joined by a functional looking heavy-duty power switch. The same chunky and minimalist aesthetics are found in the weighty metal remote, which features just volume up/down and mute functions. There are four line inputs and two tape loops along with just one pair of speaker output terminals. A preamp out is located on the rear for upgrading, where you'll also find the four tubular fuse holders complete with LED failure indicators for each fuse.

This amp certainly makes music - its relatively high power is channelled into creating a controlled sound rather than merely a loud one. It can go loud of course, but there's more to it than that. Staging and imaging are

very good indeed and dynamics are excellent. However, one thing any potential purchaser must realise about this amp is that it takes a lot of running in. Plinius recommend waiting at least 24 hours before expecting the best quality of sound, but I found this period to be nearer a week. Straight from the box I was greeted with a raw and somewhat thin sound that had me scrambling for the ear plugs. After a few days things loosened up a tad, stage depth and width increased dramatically and imaging improved vastly. Although the overall tone warmed up it still possessed the slightly grey and bright tone inherent in all solid state designs.

Rock music such as The Screaming Trees' 'Dust' showed the 8100's excellent handling of complex studio mixes. Every layer of the production was easily discernible - drums were especially clean and fast and bass deep and well focussed. Things were let down slightly in the midband though, which was a little edgy with vocals, but overall very involving. I also found the guitars rather grating, and high frequency information such as cymbals rather splashy. This said, not many amplifiers convey such a sense of power so well - the Plinius never sounded messy or confused.

A good test for high power amps is chamber music, or solo music like Yo-YoMa beautifully carving his way through Bach's cello Suites. The 8100 showed a fine sense of phrasing,

highlighting vibrato and dynamics well, but still lacked the smoothness of a good valve amp. The tone of the cello, whilst detailed and precise, sometimes needed more colour and warmth. Orchestral music in the form of Bruckner's 8th symphony sounded full and powerful with a good wide spread and deep sound staging. Dynamics were adeptly handled and climaxes had the right amount of excitement and grip - a trait of the true high end - and often rare with amps of this price range.

Overall, the Plinius 8100 is definitely one to consider for lovers of the classic solid-state amplifier sound. Very much in the Musical Fidelity/Bryston/ Krell mode of muscular transistor power houses, it delivers a clean, controlled sound that whilst not as smooth as silk is always involving and detailed. If you require plenty of clout and clarity it's easily up there with the best at the price. Indeed, I'd definitely look here before considering the entry level Krell integrated, which is at least another £1000 extra. The Plinius runs it very close indeed and has a more even handed and smoother sound. ■ ▲

Plinius 8100 £1,450

Absolute Analogue
PO Box 30429
London
NW6 7GY
Tel: 020 8459 8113

World Verdict



A crisp looking, well built and powerful integrated with a commendably clean and controlled sound. Definitely one to consider if it's the Krell sound you crave.

Measured Performance
see page 111

PRECIOUS GEMS!

Wharfedale is back, and this time it's personal. David Price auditions the sparkling new Diamond 8.1 loudspeakers.

▶ **W**harfedale's new Diamond 8.1s are the smallest incarnation of the new Pacific range. They're the brainchild of Steve Hewlett, the acoustic and drive unit designer of the Diamond project. With a background in the pro world, Steve was naturally concerned about using high quality cone materials. This is the same gospel Hi-Fi World has been preaching for the past decade.

Until recently, most commercial loudspeakers have used either paper, doped paper, plastic or polypropylene in their cones. These, as we often remind people, are far from ideal - paper is light but not stiff and therefore breaks up and distorts, whereas polyprop doesn't break up so much but is heavier, causing a rather slow, overdamped sound.

As Wharfedale recognises, Kevlar offers the best of both worlds - it's extremely strong (so much so that it's used in bullet-proof jackets) and light, the result being a clean and fast sound.

An encouraging start then - no silly marketing gimmicks, just sound engineering sense. The mid/bass driver itself is 130mm in diameter, and has a Flexaural rim surround which is said to reduce resonances. The cone surround is of Nitrile rubber and there's a profiled phase plug in the middle. Behind, you'll find vented, dual layer voice coils on an aluminium former, and the use of high temperature wire insulation and adhesives for consistency. All of this, with the exception of the Kevlar material used in the cone (which is a patented product from DuPont) is made in-house in Wharfedale's Chinese factory.

The tweeter is also 'new Wharfedale' through and through.

Misleadingly described as a 'silk dome', it's actually made from man-made fabric, but has similar properties without the drawbacks of having to come from silk worms! The 298x198x181mm cabinet is done in-house too, the MDF cut in the factory.

As you'd expect, it's a ported design (in the interests of efficiency and benign amplifier loads) and features an injection moulded front piece which fits over the MDF baffle. This was specified not for looks but for sound - it's said to smooth defraction and therefore improve imaging and smooth the frequency response. Other features include nice gold plated bi-wire terminals and hand soldered crossovers. Finishes are black or maple. Better still is the build, which is frankly quite amazing considering its £120 retail price. Solid, strong and elegantly finished, it feels like a decent mid-price product.

A BOY'S BEST FRIEND

What then of the Diamond 8.1's sound? At the risk of being called 'Diamond Dave' for the rest of my days, these are stunning budget loudspeakers. The best entry-level standmounters I've heard by quite some way, they could well be up there in the NAD 3020 amplifier or Marantz CD63SE CD player league of budget classics. They really are that good.

But - here it comes - to get anything near the best from them, you have to treat them like you would a pair of high end 'speakers. These won't give their best straight out of the box. First, tighten up the drive unit Allen bolts. The ones in the review samples all needed a good few turns before the drivers were rigidly clamped to the front baffles. Then there's the vexed issue of placement. I blu-tacked mine to my window ledge, which coupled them rigidly to the wall and gave them a touch more bass reinforcement. I also toed them in slightly, too. Of course, you can also use stands, but make sure they're as rigidly mounted as is humanly possible.

Next, you need a decent system to drive them. Something like the Cyrus 7 integrated (£700) gets them going. This is because they need at least 50W a side, and it has to be clean, undistorted power. As ancient Chinese proverb say, 'man with little box need big watts, grasshopper.'

I ended up driving them from the aforementioned Cyrus 7 plus my World Audio K5881AGS (Andy Grove Signature) valve power amp, with which the Diamonds sung.

What impressed me most was



their flat response. Most, if not all, mini-monitors at this price are carefully voiced to sound good with middling equipment. Essentially, an upper bass peak is engineered in (either by the port design or the crossover components) to give the false impression that they're bigger and more powerful than they really are. Add to this a slightly rising treble, and it's 'boom-tizz' all night long.

Not so the Diamond 8.1s - they're surprisingly even from head to toe, with just a touch of perceivable midband emphasis. Because small boxes don't go down very low and there's no artificial bass peak though, the initial impression is of bass lightness (which is why you need a quality front end). The effect soon subsides however, and you find yourself drawn into that glass-clear midrange.

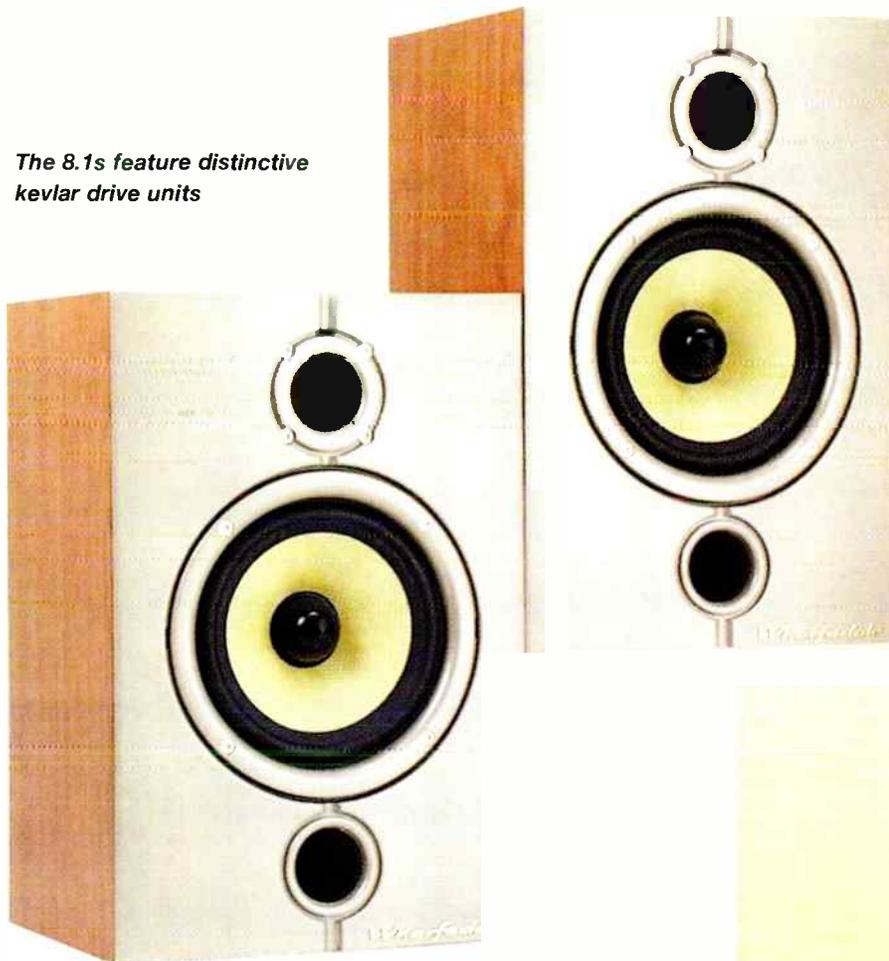
SPARKLING SOUND

Now, I'll concede that this isn't quite of Quad Electrostatic quality, but neither is it anywhere near the nastiness you'll hear from practically any other loudspeaker at or near the Diamonds' silly selling price. It's brightly lit (another reason why you need decent ancillaries) and not the softest around, but what it does, it does superbly.

Cue up MJ Cole's 'Crazy Love' and you'll see what I mean - it has awesome clarity and projection of female voices for a budget box. Elisabeth Troy Antwi's dulcet tones fire right out into space with amazing emotion. You simply don't believe this vividly etched, full bodied vocal is coming from something well under £500. Better still, the percussion hangs back with impressive restraint. Making everything sound forward on a speaker is easy enough, but getting different parts of the mix fixed at different points in space - even though they're of a similar frequency - is a sign of a 'speaker with fine dispersion and phase coherence.

Although the drums bang bang in the mix, they're still extremely tight. That light, stiff Kevlar cone stops and starts on a sixpence, giving excellent attack transients. And yes, it really is that mid/bass unit's speed you're hearing, rather than the artificial edge that some speakers garner by cranking the tweeter levels up (and making things sound harsh in the

The 8.1s feature distinctive kevlar drive units



process). The Diamond 8.1 HF unit is so smooth you almost don't notice it - it certainly adds very little 'zing' to the proceedings - meaning the great, foot tapping musicality of these speakers comes from good old fashion grip.

FLAWLESS

Cue up Nirvana's 'Come As You Are' and the Diamonds take you on a trip. The sound is extremely clean and smooth (which is just how it was mixed), but is remarkably punchy and rhythmically engaging. Image location is superb and stage depth good, although the Diamonds do tend to live in front of the plane of the speakers.

Bass isn't the deepest in the business - the baby Wharfedales are happiest with the higher reaches of the bass guitar - but it is grippy and tuneful. Midband and treble cross over fairly seamlessly, although there's just a touch of grain where the two drivers meet which you hear when those electric guitars are cranked up. Ride cymbals sound clean enough, even if they do lack sparkle.

In absolute terms the Diamonds

are a little rough across the upper presence region, veiled in the treble, dynamically limited and lacking in bass extension - but that's compared to my reference speakers, whose tweeters alone cost five times as much as a pair of 8.1s!

They aren't the best 'speakers in the world, but are simply far too good for £120 budget loudspeakers. With musicality, transparency, detail and grip way beyond their price point, they're a quintessential 'budget audiophile product'. For those starting out on the hi-fi ladder with serious intentions for the future, or for people with limited space and means, Wharfedale's new babies are now the budget boxes to have. Diamond, geezer! ■ ▲

Wharfedale Diamond 8.1 £120

Wharfedale International Ltd
IAG House
Sovereign Court
Ermine Business Park
Huntingdon
Cams
PE29 6XU
Tel: 01480 447700

World Verdict



Unexpectedly clean, smooth, open and engaging sound makes them a modern hi-fi classic. Superb value for money; but classy ancillaries are a must.

Measured Performance
see page 111



J A Michell Gyrodec SE Turntable **£974.95**

Founded in Borehamwood by mechanical engineer John Michell. For over thirty years, Michell Engineering have been at the forefront of quality audio, with world-wide appreciated products like the GyroDec and Orbe Turntables.

In the early eighties, the revolutionary GyroDec Turntable, with its elegant and effective suspension system, was introduced. The **Gyro SE** is a smaller and cheaper package that retains the classy sound of the GyroDec and can be upgraded to the full GyroDec specification by adding a plinth and dustcover. **Price includes Rega RB300 Tone Arm**

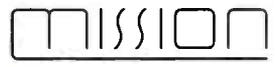


CD7 CD Player **£799.95** 7 Integrated Amplifier **£699.95**

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780 and **781** are the pinnacle of Mission's research into creating a three dimensional soundstage extensive bandwidth and dynamic range from the smallest possible cabinet dimensions. The **780** is diminutive in form but massive in its sonic capabilities. Its 130mm Keraform bass unit is carefully matched to a novel reflex enclosure for full bodied bass extension. The qualities of Keraform produce a dynamic and ultra detailed midrange. In the **781** a 165mm Keraform driver takes advantage of a larger, stand mount cabinet to extend bass performance and increase efficiency whilst maintaining that superb midband transparency and finely detailed treble.

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(((AE)))

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The crossover features upgrades to the internal wiring and industrial grade encapsulation is also applied to the total crossover assembly eliminating resonance, microphony and increasing power handling.



SONY

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The very latest processing technology used in SACD will allow recorded music to be reproduced at a much higher level.

Super Audio CD Players are available through all Sevenoaks Sound & Vision Outlets.



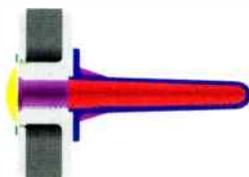


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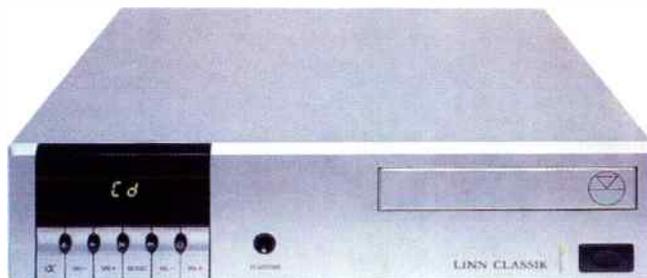
Flowport™ Technology
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LINN
the only sound™

Founded in 1972, independent precision-engineering company, Linn Products Limited, specialise in top performance sound reproduction.

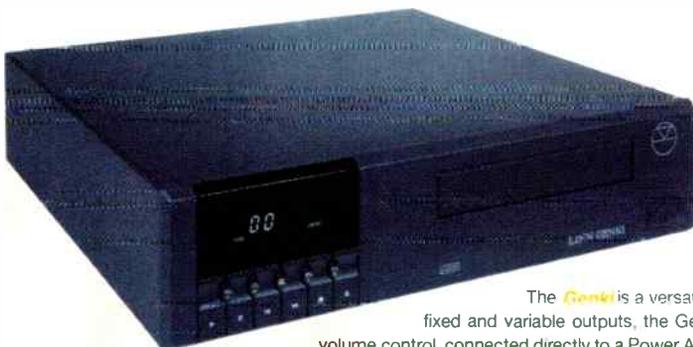
Linn's first product was the revolutionary Linn Sondek LP12 Turntable. 25 years later it is still, for many, the reference Turntable. Today, Linn's hi-fi range includes over 50 products including CD Players, Tuners, Amplifiers and Loudspeakers.



Classik CD Receiver £999.95

The **Classik** is an alternative to the sound and looks of mass market compact systems. Designed to be useful throughout the home, the Classik is simple and stylish with all the advanced features needed to satisfy the most demanding hi-fi enthusiast or discriminating music lover.

The Classik combines an extensive and flexible control system, high quality CD, Tuner, and powerful Amplifier, capable of driving any Loudspeakers, in a single, compact package and is available in a choice of colours.



Genki CD Player £994.95

The **Genki** is a versatile, high performance CD Player combining value and multi-zone flexibility. With both fixed and variable outputs, the Genki can be connected to a Pre Amplifier in the conventional way or, using its local volume control, connected directly to a Power Amplifier. **Features include:** HDCD playback capability, Delta-Sigma digital-analogue conversion, carefully implemented low-noise circuitry to deliver pitch accurate sound, surface mount electronics for optimum signal routing and layout and Linn proprietary Brilliant silent power supply technology.

Linn Selection

Ikemi CD Player	£1949.95
Majik Integrated Amplifier	£694.95
LK85 Power Amplifier	£494.95
LK140 Power Amplifier	£749.95
Katan Speakers	£634.95
Ninka Speakers	£894.95
Kolektor Pre Amplifier	£494.95
Wakonda Pre Amplifier	£794.95

Pekin AM/FM Tuner £544.95

Integrating the knowledge gained from developing other Linn Tuners such as the Kremlin, the Kudos and most recently the Classik, the **Pekin** AM/FM Tuner takes it one step further, to produce a powerful and truly musical performance to the unique standards that you expect from Linn.

Features include: 80 memory pre-sets, upgradeable software, fully screened low-noise circuitry, high overload margin and high sensitivity, low noise switchmode power supply and two audio outputs.



more entertaining



MUSICAL FIDELITY

Musical Fidelity's A-Series is a ground-breaking range of CD Players, Pre-Power and Integrated Amplifiers. The whole series has received enormous acclaim and has won many hi-fi awards worldwide.

X-Ray CD Player	£799.95
X-A2 Integrated Amplifier	£499.95
A3 Pre Amplifier	£999.95
A3 Power Amplifier	£999.95
A300 Integrated Amplifier	£1399.95
A3 Tuner	£599.95
HT600 5 Channel Power Amplifier	£1999.95
HTP Surround Processor	£1999.95



A3 CD Player **£799.95**
A3 Integrated Amplifier **£849.95**



MONITOR AUDIO Gold Reference Series

Monitor Audio has been designing and manufacturing high quality British Loudspeakers since 1972. In the mid-eighties, the R852MD was launched utilising Monitor Audio's unique C-CAM™ Metal Dome Tweeter. It sounded significantly smoother and more musical than its rivals and formed the basis for a whole new generation of Monitor Audio Loudspeakers. The company has been at the forefront of Loudspeaker technology ever since.

The new **Gold Reference** Series introduces advanced Drive Unit technology and the highest standards of engineering currently available. Each cabinet is hand crafted from 22mm thick MDF, using mirror matched veneers. Multiple internal bracing is positioned at critical resonance nodes to eliminate flexing and audible cabinet artifacts.



ARCAM

Arcam's approach to hi-fi has always been to provide the best combination of performance and price in the hi-fi separates market. The FMJ series not only continues this tradition but also evolves and extends it.

It quickly became apparent to Arcam's design team that the significant performance improvements gained from using more advanced chassis and casing materials and a solid metal front panel, could be taken further by revisiting the mechanical design of the units.

All FMJ products have finely textured, 8mm thick, aluminium machined front panels. These panels are then "sealed" by baking them in industrial ovens to ensure the durability of their high quality finish. Even the control knob on the A22 Amplifier is turned from solid aluminium before being given the same finishing treatment.

The **CD23** benefits from a second power supply transformer. This, like the power supply transformers used in nearly all Arcam amplifiers, is a toroidal transformer. Whilst being expensive compared to the alternatives, toroids are known to dramatically improve the audio performance of many hi-fi products. In this product, both transformers are custom made for Arcam and are used to supply the analogue and digital circuits separately.

Please Note: Some products may not be available at all outlets. Advertisement valid until at least 11th April 2001, E&OE.





who are **sevenoaks?**

Founded as Sevenoaks Hi-Fi in the summer of 1972, the original shop, in the market town of Sevenoaks, Kent, quickly gained a reputation for offering a wide range of products at competitive prices, and providing excellent service.

Exciting new technologies like compact disc, meant that throughout the 1980's there was considerable interest in hi-fi and Sevenoaks were able to grow. By 1990, the company was established as one of the leading independent hi-fi specialists in the country.

More stores were opened and a number of the original shops were relocated. In 1995 the important decision was made to change the name to Sevenoaks Sound & Vision, reflecting the wide appeal of new audio visual products.

After twenty-eight years of trading, the company has more than forty outlets nationwide, and is for many of the UK's leading manufacturers of electronics and loudspeakers, their largest and most successful retailer.

solutions

solutions



DVD Video is a great way of enjoying movies at home



The people at Sevenoaks appreciate that customers have a choice. This appreciation has meant that over the years Sevenoaks have had to adapt.

As new products and technologies have arrived, the staff have been trained to ensure that they can explain the issues, simply and informatively.

This orientation to customer service remains, and the implementation of a company charter is one example of this commitment.

By staying true to the original ideals of offering a wide range of the latest products, at competitive prices, and providing superb service in pleasant surroundings. Sevenoaks are able to listen, recommend, demonstrate and supply the products that best suit the needs of their many customers.

As the world becomes a more complex place and people search for entertainment and relaxation, Sevenoaks Sound & Vision believe that whatever the requirement, they have the solution.

brochure

available in all outlets

more entertaining

World Radio History





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- Watford** 478 St Albans Road **01923 213533**
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installation centres

With the pace of life and demands of work increasingly prying into our leisure time, being able to relax while enjoying music at home is a priority for many people.

By using a number of techniques, the hi-fi system, once confined to a single room, can be liberated to give musical pleasure all around the house. Hence the term 'multi room'. The degree of liberation can extend to every room in the house or even outside into the garden, although simple solutions, providing music in two or three of the most frequently inhabited rooms, are readily available.



Areas can be activated or deactivated when required, and the source being replayed can vary, along with the volume, in each of the different rooms. The possibilities with 'multi room' are endless.

The outlets in Bristol, Edinburgh, Manchester and Sevenoaks have been appointed as Installation Centres, because of their level of expertise in multi room solutions, system integration and remote programming.

Each Installation Centre is able to provide a complete service, including the manufacture and supply of 'bespoke' furniture, designed to house all of the components, whilst complementing the decor of the room into which it is placed.

dvd audio

As DVD Audio is expressly intended to offer sound quality significantly superior to standard Compact Disc, whilst retaining compatibility with DVD Video films, conventional CDs and the various recordable CD formats, it has the potential to be the most flexible and comprehensive solution to the future of sound and vision reproduction.



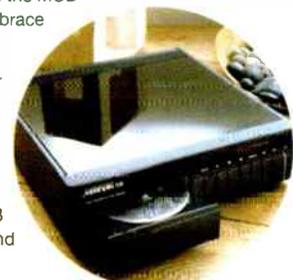
The availability of DVD Audio software has been an issue as numerous delays have resulted from encryption and security watermarking problems.

The first DVD Audio software titles are now available, courtesy of Warner Music. These titles - released in the USA in November of 2000 - can be found on demonstration, along with a selection of the latest DVD Audio players in all Sevenoaks outlets.

BOOTHROYD STUART MERIDIAN

Launched in 1977, Meridian have an enviable reputation for designing and developing 'class-leading' products. Indeed, with the release of the MCD in 1983, they were the first British company to embrace Compact Disc.

This appreciation of digital technology has kept their products in the spotlight, like their digitally driven loudspeakers, and helped them to write Meridian Lossless Packing (MLP), the mandatory data reduction algorithm for DVD Audio.



The latest addition to the Meridian Range is the 588 CD Player. Evolved from the 508 and 800, sound quality is clear, open and authoritative.

Meridian Audio products can be found in the Sevenoaks outlets in Bristol, Exeter, Guildford, Reading, Swiss Cottage and Watford.

THE NXT STEP

NXT plc is a company with a dazzling future. David Price speaks to its Chief Technology Officer, Henry Azima.

"To date, few hi-fi buffs outside audio's inner circle really understand what NXT is all about. Maybe this is because its boss isn't as loud and brash as most hi-fi head honchos. Rather, Henry Azima is demure, quietly spoken and positively backward in coming forward. But woe betide anyone who thinks he has nothing to shout about. From what I saw when I visited the company's Huntingdon HQ earlier this year, we shall all be hearing much more from this man.

Unlike traditional British hi-fi companies which both develop and manufacture their products, NXT's core business is technology licensing. The story starts back in 1994 when Mission began developing a patent held by the UK Defence Evaluation Research Agency (DERA) on a panel radiator. An idea based on using bending waves to generate sound, every textbook and all previous research had declared it a non-starter. Henry says his initial contribution was that, "I didn't dismiss it out-of-hand. I put my best scientist on it to do some mathematical modelling so we could get more insight into the potential." Henry's brother (and ex-Mission supremo) Farad Azima immediately recognised the significance and started a commercialisation programme. Rather than keeping the technology inside the organisation, he opted to license it. Henry's interest was aroused by the fruits of this research. Having been Mission's Technical Director for fifteen years, he knew a thing or two about loudspeaker design, and was intrigued with the results. "I became totally committed when we made the first ever panel that was barely adequate to produce mid-range. It had certain appealing sonic features that I had

been looking for in loudspeakers for over fifteen years of my career with Mission. Never have looked back since".

NXT plc is now in its fourth year of life, with a team of fifty employees and a headquarters just down the road from Mission near Cambridge. Hi-fi enthusiasts will be most interested in the company's NXT SurfaceSoundT panels. All R&D is done in-house, and then the company licenses it to third parties along with a package of software tools for their designers. An example of this is

Mission's latest FS-mm1, tested in this month's Computer Audio World, which was designed by Mission's own engineers using NXT support. Interestingly though, NXT also designs finished products for third parties, which then put their brand names on. An example of this is the new TDK Tremor multimedia loudspeaker - currently available in the US only, which is a full in-house NXT design, made in TDK factories and with a TDK badge stuck on the front. There are now over 200 SurfaceSound licensees, from Acer and Fujitsu to Philips, DaimlerChrysler, Tannoy and LG. Applications range from hi-fi to home cinema, in-car audio, telecoms, PDAs, computers, mobile phones, pro audio and public address.



Another key area is SoundVu, a further development of SurfaceSound which puts the speakers into completely transparent, ultra-thin panels that bring sound and vision together. Although licensees have yet to be announced, expect to see SoundVu computer screens, projection televisions, PDAs and mobile phone displays in the not too distant future. This is potentially an extremely lucrative area. Dave Fester, Microsoft's Digital Media division head, last year told me that Bill Gates sees 'mobile communication devices' that play streamed audio and video as one of computing's future 'killer applications, and by no coincidence NXT has just this technology. 20/20 Speech is another product we'll soon be reading about - a very sophis-

ticated voice recognition system, it also has a host of IT and AV applications.

Right now NXT is concentrating on 'the business side' - licensing its products to as many companies as possible to get royalties to bankroll the company's next stage of development. Henry is responsible for 'the technology centre', which works on refining applications, and for the research groups and patents which will bring the technology to a host of new applications. Obviously he's cagey about these - it is, after all,

AZI-MOUTH

Henry Azima speaks!

DP: When did you first become interested in audio, and why?

HA: During my university days in the late 60s, simply because I was interested to hear my favourite music on a good system. But it wasn't until I joined Mission that I started to appreciate the inner workings of a hi-fi system and truly appreciate the subtleties involved.

DP: How different was the hi-fi scene when you got into it?

HA: It was exciting, somewhat mysterious and magical. It was more personal in every respect. Relationships with the dealers, reviewers, and the press were very special. We used to have incredibly controversial, interesting and sometimes irritating discussions often through to the early hours. I felt that everyone cared enormously about the industry, and especially in the quality of the reproduced sound. Now I can tell by observing the younger generation that the industry is not the same by a long shot.

DP: What do you consider the most important products or technologies in the history of hi-fi?

HA: We need to go back to the basics here. Without the cone loudspeaker and the audio amplifier, which both I believe came out of Bell Labs in the 20s, we wouldn't be here today. Beyond those I think the turntable

sensitive commercial information. Suffice to say that the company's technology will be all over the high street sooner than you think.

Henry has had to both persuade people that the technology works and convince them they need it. He confesses that he's encountered more than his fair share of doubters along the way. Unfortunately the British hi-fi community - with some notable exceptions - has traditionally been extremely myopic about where it is headed. He confesses, "the first reaction from the industry was one of

was instrumental in elevating sound quality to such respectable levels as to create broad enthusiasm in music-lovers and become a powerful launching pad for the music industry. Much later, CD became a crucial technology to not only move us to the digital era but also to make quality sound available to masses with ease of use, consistency and much improved human interface. DVD looks set to continue fuelling interest in music, not necessarily in the traditional way, but in a more powerful multi-dimensional form in tandem with quality video. There are two companies that I admire for their unique approach to design and marketing hi-fi systems in their own individual ways and with a great deal of success - Bose and B&O. I think both have been ahead of their time in understanding their customers and identifying their needs.

DP: Which of the products you've personally designed is your favourite?

HA: Naturally there are a few, but probably one that I would pick (and still use every day) is the Cyrus I. I designed this amp from ground up, its electronics, mechanics, power supply, PC board, the lot. After well over fifteen years even now I think I could probably draw its circuit diagram with correct component values. I guess you could say that I breathed my soul into this product!

disbelief. We could strongly sense this during our debut AES conference of September 1997 in New York. Equipped with eight papers, something quite unprecedented, we had presence in almost every session and one could feel the uneasiness of the conference in receiving these papers."

Hi-fi, lest we forget, is very much a product of the 1960s and 1970s, when it was famously the third most expensive purchase a family would make after a house and a car. Azima says it is now locked into an ever-decreasing circle, "not unlike what Ferrari, Lamborghini and Morgan are to the car industry. What will probably happen to audio is expansion in two areas - the mid-fi of computer audio and the hi-fi of multi-channel music and AV".

He believes DVD will be the key to hi-fi's continued existence, but this still doesn't mean hi-fi won't have to radically change. He says the new multi-channel format will erode what he calls the "the traditional one person in the sweet-spot scenario". He's happy about this, seeing it as forcing hi-fi systems (and especially loudspeakers) to be "more inclusive, more emphasis is placed on aesthetics, flexibility, less clutter, and pressure on the inclusion principle of a large audience viewing and/or listening."

Henry joined Mission in 1979, and went on to indelibly stamp his engineering ability on the hi-fi world. Many thousands of audiophiles are in his debt for the litany of classic products he designed and engineered. From the (then) 'high tech' polypropylene coned loudspeakers of the late seventies (the 770) and the first commercial speakers to use High Definition Aerogel (HDA) in the mid nineties (the 752), to the stunning range of Cyrus electronics from the mid eighties onwards, this man has made a real contribution. Why then would he want to leave one of the most prestigious jobs in hi-fi to work with NXT? Some might see it as madness? With characteristic modesty Henry simply adds, "I cannot speak for others' perception but for me, I was totally comfortable to leave Mission and move on to this more exciting, challenging and intellectually rewarding new business". ■ ▲

HI-FI WORLD

would like to invite it's readers to a fascinating demonstration of LP versus CD

Hosted by **Linn Products**

Featuring the Linn Sondek LP12 and the Linn Sondek CD12

Which do you prefer? Come and let us know!

**The Venue: The Grosvenor House Hotel, The Burlington Suite,
First Floor, Park Lane, London.**

**The Date: Saturday 9th June 2001
The Time: 10.00am - 4.00pm Entrance: *Free***

We are also offering 50 readers a unique opportunity to have dinner with Linn founder and Managing Director Ivor Tiefenbrun M.B.E., Simon Pope (editor), David Price (contributor) and Noel Keywood (publisher) of **Hi-Fi World in the luxurious surroundings of The Grosvenor House Hotel, Park Lane, London**

Dinner tickets are £50.00 per head.

If you require any additional information please call Amanda Sweeney on 020 8864 4760

Dinner with Ivor Tiefenbrun M.B.E., at the Grosvenor House Hotel.

£50.00 (excl. drinks)

Dinner commences 8.00 pm

There are only 50 seats available, so to reserve your place fill in the section below and send it, along with a cheque for £50.00 made payable to Audio Publishing Ltd. to the following address:

*Hi-Fi World, Suite G4, Imex House, Kilburn Park Road, London. NW6 5LF
By Friday 20th April 2001 to avoid disappointment.*

Name -----

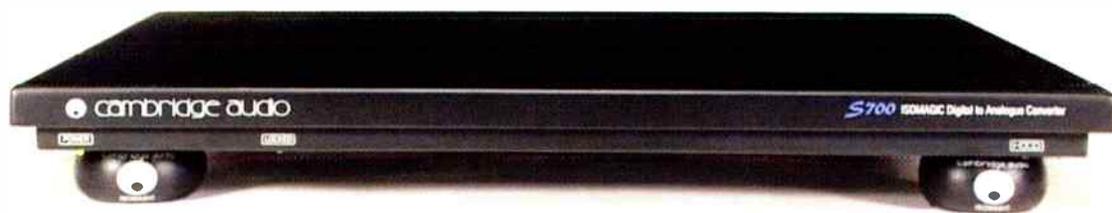
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Tel: ----- Fax: -----

Email ----- tick box if vegetarian meal required

ISO TONIC



David Price reviews a refreshing new take on digital-to-analogue converters, Cambridge Audio's Isomagic DAC.

It's a DAC and it's an isolation platform as well. It, ermm, comes with little puddings, and is from those Richer Sounds people. Nurse, take me home! No, this isn't another 'April fool', the £100 Isomagic is the latest Cambridge Audio DAC, and follows in the footsteps of the fine DACMagic 2. For such an odd product it boasts real audiophile credentials - it has a stack of digital connectors, plays HDCDs, uses an external power supply, has an external clock sync facility and will accept any digital signal from 32 to 48kHz.

The puddings in question - Cambridge Audio calls them PUDs - are little black spongy balls (no South Park jokes, please.) and look distinctly Sorbothane like, even though they don't have quite the same feel as FoculPods, for example. You get five of them, which fit into the indents on the underside of the Isomagic's chassis. Once the PUDs have gone underneath it, you then place your CD transport on top, plug the external power supply connector into the back and watch a little green power LED light up round the front. You can then plug your transport in via the coaxial or optical connections, and a clock sync should your machine be so equipped. If it isn't, make sure the little clock lock switch is set to off. The analogue outputs duly connect your amplifier, and you're off.

The Isomagic is a well built bit of kit for such a low rent product - you get gold plated connectors and the

isolation platform itself isn't insubstantial.

It sounds brilliant for the price - you get a smooth, refined listen that isn't a million miles away from the character of the old DACMagic, although from memory the Isomagic sounds cleaner and more detailed. There's still a touch of bass lightness and lack of treble extension, but this is relatively minor, and compared to your average budget CD player will sound like you've just pressed the loudness button.

Most impressive is the midband, which is extremely even and open compared to any DAC anywhere near the price. Alfonse Mouson's 'By All Means' sounded extremely clean and well ordered, with a strong and supple bass underpinning a smooth but impressively tight and grippy midband. Even through the Cambridge has no treble emphasis to speak of, guitars and pianos still started and stopped with great alacrity - this is a tell-tale sign of a fine design, one which relies on good old fashioned grip rather than an artificial edge. Although this DAC is generally pretty good at dynamics, in absolute terms there's a touch of compression on musical peaks - once again though it's churlish to complain at the price.

Quincy Jones' 'Summer in the City' showed it to have a fine focus - it throws up plenty of low level detail despite a gentle veiling of high treble. Also strong is its image location, which is tight and orderly at all times -

there's never any sense of the Isomagic losing control which again confirms its grippy nature. Again, in absolute terms the Isomagic doesn't project out very well, nor is it heroically accomplished with depth perspective, but you have to spend serious money to improve on what it does so ably for so little. HDCD sound was excellent - of course it won't give you the fireworks that high end players achieve with this sadly overlooked coding system, but it's an excellent bonus to have.

I have to say that I loved the Isomagic - it's a quirky product which happens to work superbly, and will embarrass any of its rivals anywhere near its price point. Essentially it's a civilised but beguilingly musical device which will upgrade even some mid-price CD players. Another classy product then from Cambridge Audio. Anyone trapped with the budget CD blues should hear it now! ■ ▲

Cambridge Audio Isomagic DAC £99.95

Audio Partnership plc
Gallery Court
Hankey Place
London SE1 4BB
Tel. 0207 940 2200

World Verdict
£★★★★

Extremely refined and sophisticated sound at a ridiculously low price make it another Cambridge cracker!

Measured Performance
see page 111



DOUBLE



Simon Pope takes Denon's new CDR-W1500 'twin deck' CD recorder for a spin.

Compared to all the fuss over the respective launches of SACD and DVD-A, the industry's been surprisingly quiet on the digital recording front of late. A couple of years ago, a format war between MiniDisc and CD-R was raging, but now it seems that worldwide MD sales have bombed to an embarrassing low. CD-R/W by contrast now looks the format of choice for digital recording. It's important to remember that, with all the high resolution format hype, CD recorders constitute a good proportion of top selling silver disc products in this country. DVD has put a stop to Compact Disc's growth, but for those who wish for music only, a CD-R offers the chance of quality playback plus, of course, the opportunity to record.

Twin deck CD-R/W recorders are nothing new. Philips has had a model on the market for almost two years and there are other double deckers from Pioneer and JVC too. It's a great idea that makes the CD

burning process a heck of a lot easier. The traditional downside to the double decker is the playback quality - with all the circuitry and controls the sound is often poorer than a decent £150 CD player. I was looking forward to seeing if Denon, with its redoubtable audiophile experience, could improve on this.

BOX CLEVER

Features and facilities abound on the CDR-W1500. Inside the large chassis are two Philips mechanisms - one transport and one CD burner - as well as a Pacific Microsonics' HDCD chip which will copy the HDCD sub-code information over from the source disc to the CD-R/W. Round the back are two pairs of selectable digital outputs (coaxial and optical) plus the usual analogue outputs. The machine is CD Text compatible and the burner can record at double speed with synchronisation direct from the machine's own transport. There's a choice of three sample rates (32/44.1/48kHz) and both

mechanisms can work simultaneously, so budding Pete Tongs out there are also catered for.

The overall look of the CDR-W1500 is classic Denon. The machine is a tad larger than average and is pretty sturdy too. The aluminium front panel constitutes a veritable button fest of controls, including a jog dial and headphones level. The supplied remote is in the DVD mould and is very comprehensive, all functions and recording variations can be controlled from the luxury of your armchair.

OPERATION

Those who always read the instruction manuals before daring to touch a knob on their new purchases may find the CDR-W1500 frustrating. Such is the mail-order-catalogue thickness (33 pages in each language) of the manual, it could well take a weekend's bedtime reading before you master all the functions. However, I skimmed through the less familiar bits for half an hour or so

DECKER

and found myself fiddling without too many hiccups.

I started by double speed dubbing the new Rage Against The Machine 'Renegades' CD - purely for my own purposes, officer.

The setting up and operational procedure was fairly painless and the results excellent. Digital copies were spot on; there was no discernible audible difference between the master and its first generation offspring. Although (as you'd imagine) not an HDCD disc, this does however have CD Text which was duly copied onto the CD-RW as well. During this recording I tried some of the 1500's features, such as fade-ins and fade-outs with times of between one and fifteen seconds, and setting intro scan play times (five to thirty seconds). All were executed with commendably little fuss. I also synchronised the playing of a single track successfully.

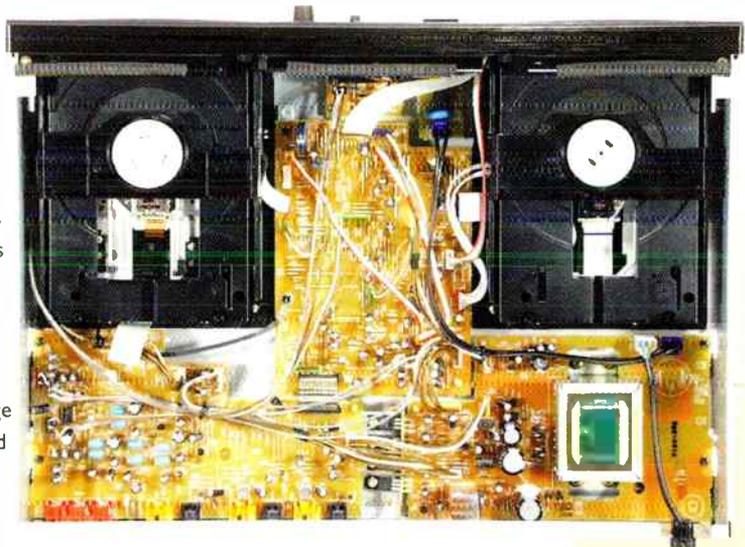
Next up was a bit of analogue recording in the shape of my New Order 'Movement' LP and a Michell GyroDec. Switching the 1500 into 'synchro off' mode and into ATM (Auto Track Mark), I set to work. The analogue recording level is set with the jog dial and is stored in the machine's memory, which is lost if the 1500 isn't powered up for three days. This recording came out a treat, with all the nuances and smoothness of the vinyl version beating my pre-recorded CD of the same album hands down, due to a better level and strangely less mechanical feel to the music.

PLAYBACK

Assessing playback-only, taking advantage of the HDCD compatibility, I loaded up my awesome Reference Recordings version of Stravinsky's The Rite Of Spring, played by the Minnesota Orchestra. This disc has an amazing dynamic range which was duly picked up by the 1500. Ambience and spaciousness were excellent, with the woodwinds sounding light and ethereal. Bass, in the form of some limelight-stealing bass drum antics, was tight and deep.

Moving to less lavishly recorded music courtesy of Supergrass's eponymous third album, the 1500 sounded less convincing than it did with the fine fare of the Reference Recording. Although smooth, fast and rhythmic, things were rather 'mechanical' in the vein of, say, a good £180-£220 machine. This was most noticeable in the upper registers, which failed to open up and sounded thin as a consequence. There wasn't the depth and breadth that you'd find with a similarly priced single CD players, although the overall sound still proved pleasant enough to the ear and totally inoffensive.

Without a doubt the chaps at Denon have put a lot of stuff into one box here, and to a certain extent



they've succeeded. For its range of facilities and functions, this machine simply can't be bettered. Twin decks don't play CDs as well as similarly priced single decks, but the Denon CDR-W1500 is perhaps the best sounding of the double deckers available. With this in mind, if you're in the market for such a machine then this is well worth auditioning. Copies are virtually identical to the source, and for such a complicated looking machine the ergonomics are excellent. As a CD player the 1500 can sound a little ragged and thin sometimes, but is generally smooth enough and fairly typical of Denon's single CD player sound. Given decent discs it makes a nice enough sound and is perfectly acceptable with poor ones too. ■ ▲

World Verdict

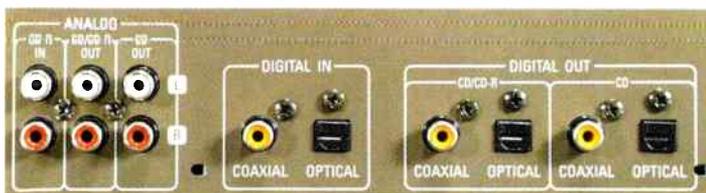


Relatively easy to use and crammed full of functions and facilities. Playback for a twin deck machine is better than the norm. Recommended.

Measured Performance see page 111

Denon CDR-W1500 £450

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



WHERE TO FIND US

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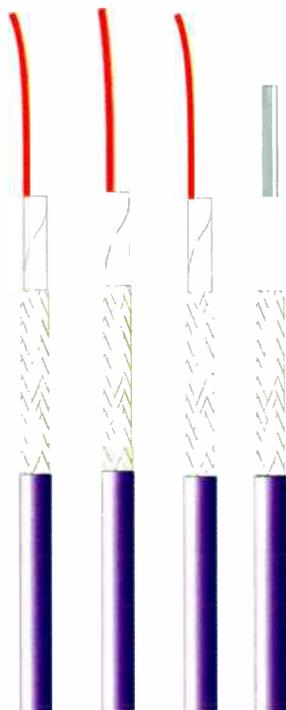
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Visually Arresting



Joining the ranks of audio companies going visual, Musical Fidelity has just launched its first A/V products, the HTP/HT600 home theatre processor and five channel power amplifier.

After a forceful initial assault from the Japanese giants, more and more British audio manufacturers are moving in on Audio Visual. Even erstwhile hi-fi specialists like Musical Fidelity are in on the act with stylish products like the HTP home theatre and HT600 power amplifier.

Unlike their oriental brethren though, you'll find no mammoth plastic knobs here. We have a stylishly understated and urbane fascia with the minimum of functions and fuss - just four push buttons to the left of the clear display, a finely finished rotary knob to the right and a power switch to the bottom right adorn the thick aluminium front panel. The HT600 five channel power amp is similarly naked with just five blue LEDs vying for your attention.

Although unusually bare of visual affectations, the HTP is nevertheless extremely versatile. Most essential features can be operated by using just the remote and front display, whilst more specialist tasks like adjusting the levels of each individual channel are dealt with via the comprehensive on-screen display. There are options for trimming each 'speaker level (which are cancelled once the HTP is in standby mode) and a test tone is present to aid set up. On-board we have both Dolby Digital 5.1 and DTS decoding.

The HT600 power amp actually comprises five separate power amplifiers in one box, complete with five power supplies, output stages and

heat sinks. It's been designed like this to minimise interference between the separate channels. Power is a quoted 100W into 8 ohms and 160W into 4 ohms. As far as inputs go, this one isn't too bad compared to the eye-popping socket fests found on the back of most Japanese models. We have eight analogue audio inputs, eight digital audio inputs, four video inputs with s-video and one each of coaxial and optical digital outputs.

After attempting to get my head round the instruction manual - more my fault than MF's I fear - I managed to get started without too much hassle. I tried out the combination with bog standard CD, 24/96 DVD-V audio discs (two channel), one of TDK's excellent classical DVD releases (Bruckner 9 conducted by Boulez) and a couple of movies (The Bone Collector and The Fifth Element). Few of you will be surprised to learn that the set up worked commendably well with CD. Although it lacked the cohesive depth and grip of MF's dedicated two channel products, there was still plenty of the trademark transparency and detail found in the company's hi-fi equipment. The same went for 24/96 audio discs, detail and presence being pretty near perfect, with a midrange as open as you'll get from any A/V amplifier at this price. With TDK's DVD of Bruckner's ninth symphony conducted by Boulez in Dolby Digital 5.1, the HTP/HT600 gave a spacious sound, recreating the feel of the acoustic of the St. Florian

Abbey with admirable breadth, phrasing and a natural decay. The HT600 power amplifier showed a fair measure of sheer clout with films such as The Fifth Element - dramatic dynamic climaxes had commendable shock value, plus the feeling that there was plenty more available. No matter how big the dynamics, the HT600 could handle it, be it two channel or 5.1.

Gripes? One serious problem (for me at least) is that its myriad facilities are hard to get your head round - it sometimes gets to the stage where a PhD in Applied Physics would come in handy! Others include the remote, which could also be a little more comprehensive, and the fact that there's no multichannel analogue input. It's an expensive package alright, but then again it's in another league to the lavishly equipped and often pricey Japanese competition in terms of both stereo and multichannel sound. It's ideal for those who see DVD and multichannel as an improved way of experiencing music. A great combination for those who take their A/V sound seriously then, with dynamics and transparency that suit both audio and video. ■ ▲

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Measured Performance
see page 111

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LETTER OF THE MONTH

TRANSCRIPTION TROUBLE

I have been reading your publication since its inception, and think you hit the nail on the head all those years ago with your celebration of the qualities of the humble valve, and more recently your inclusion of computer audio products. These forays have reinforced my love of hi-fi (and by that please also read music!), but I'd like to see you really take the bull by the horns and go further.

I have a World Audio KLPP1 preamp and HHB Circle 5 active monitors, fed by a Linn LPI 2/ Ittoki/ Sumiko BPS, with Origin Live DC motor/ power supply. I will soon have a Trichord modified DR6000 which feeds a Flying Calf Super DAC. My experience is that changing a single component in my existing equipment can give a far greater improvement than that experienced by other potential upgrade products. I have listened many times to new products with a view to upgrading, but an upgraded volume control on my preamplifier, motor upgrade on my turntable, or clock upgrade on my CD

player, can offer a much more dramatic improvement. So, could you answer the following questions?

[1] Are there any computer soundcards which will do a serious job of converting vinyl LPs into CD quality. Basically my LP archives burnt onto CD sound more musical, clearer and better than many of the CD reissues and I want to investigate this more as to why this should be the case, and most of all:
[2] My Marantz is about to come back with balanced digital outputs, which will feed the balanced digital inputs of my Flying Calf, which will feed my unbalanced KLPP1, which in turn will feed my Circle 5s through their unbalanced inputs. I would like to know if balanced might not be better? This has not really been covered by your

magazine, certainly not recently. If the answer is yes, with all this convergence going on can you make your quite excellent DIY kit more compatible with PC and "professional" gear or explain to me why unbalanced is just as good? With all this electrical gear inhabiting the same space (computers, TVs, surround sound, movies etc), does it not make sense to use balanced equipment? Would a balanced KLPP1 potentially sound better than the unbalanced version? What about a balanced phono stage?

Lets have more convergence between old and new, professional and home, computer audio and domestic but with the emphasis on quality. There's a great opportunity for Hi-Fi World to do it again in the brave new world of ►►



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converging media, and put more DIY projects and ideas out there which ensure that specialist hi-fi gets a look in the future. In the meantime I would love to see you tackle this convergence in your DIY range.

Simon Meneely

David Price replies:

We couldn't agree more, Simon. When we started the Computer Audio World section, large sections of the industry didn't have a clue what we were on about - after all, it wasn't 'hi-fi' as they saw it. Readers have been far more positive, however. After all, everyone listens to music in all kinds of different situations, and taking music out of black boxes and into computers really appeals to the kind of 'hands on' audiophile that reads Hi-Fi World.

You're quite right to say that CD-R copies of vinyl often sound better than the remasters put out by the record companies themselves. I noticed this a while back, and duly transcribed many of my LPs onto 70p CD blanks instead of paying £11.99 for music I already own. Now I can play them anywhere (car, train, spare room, shows, holidays etc.) with superb sound quality.

There are various reasons. A first pressing of a classic, analogue LP is a frighteningly high resolution music carrier, limited only by the original mastering quality of the disc when it was made all those years ago. The latest generation of turntables have finally allowed us to realise that the mastering is far better than we'd previously thought. The upshot of this is that a decent deck playing an original pressing (taken from the original master tape) is second only to having the original master tape spooling away in your listening room! This, then, is a great start for anyone doing their own 'remastering' at home. Thanks to modern PC technology, all you need is a decent analogue to digital converter and you're practically transcribing the original master tape yourself.

The innate warmth of the original analogue source (and your turntable adds a bit too, especially if it's a Linn!) complements digital's coldness, the result being an enjoyably neutral performance. Re: question [1], see my reply to 'Burning Question' below. **DP**

Andy Grove replies:

Balanced operation was created for the studio and stage environment where there are lots of devices all needing to be connected together with long runs of cable. Standard unbalanced operation is susceptible to hum pickup from magnetic fields originating in equipment and mains cabling. Because of balanced's centre-tapped nature it is also less likely to suffer from hum caused by earth loops.

A similar line of thought was used with balanced digital operation. Unfortunately, the situation is different at RF. While reducing hum pickup may reduce hum induced jitter the cable and connectors used were never intended for RF work, so in the end jitter may actually be increased through various mechanisms such as reflections within the cable and at the termination points, as well as RF pickup.

Balanced circuit design has some technical advantages, not least improved power supply rejection. The problem, simply put, is that you need twice as many valves, as there must be two signals in antiphase. Either that or you need input transformers.

That is the main reason Hi-Fi World products are all simple, traditional single-ended connection. In the home environment the problems which occur within studios are far less severe so unbalanced operation is sufficient. It may well be an advantage to go to a low impedance balanced connection for sound quality reasons but it works out a lot more expensive.

As for a phono stage the output from the cartridge is floating unbalanced. It is necessary for noise to be low and balanced circuitry is worse here than single-ended operation. That isn't such a problem if input transformers are used for MC but it could be for a direct MC input.

AG

II>SMOOTHER CONNECTION

I recently purchased an Arcam Alpha 7 CD. I love its dynamics and full sound, but it seems a bit too bright on certain recordings. I'm using Musical Fidelity X-A200 power amps with a Creek OBH-12 passive preamp. My speakers are going to be (in two weeks, or so) Sonus Faber Grand Piano. I'm currently

using simple Monster Cable interconnects for my CD, and a van den Hul 102 MkIII for the pre power.

I want to buy new interconnects for the Arcam but I remember you said that the Alpha-7 needs careful cable partnering. Any recommendations?

**Thanks,
Neil Goldman.**

You don't state which Monster cable interconnect you're using but in general they give a full and beefy sound to a system. Whilst a smooth sounding player, the Alpha 7 can still sound a bit rough around the edges with certain music such as guitar based rock and your soon to be delivered Sonus Faber's will accentuate this trait far more. If you're happy with the sound of the Alpha 7 - after all it is a great player but maybe not the ideal match for the high-end Fabers - try adding a pair of Chord Company Chorus interconnects at £200. It may seem a high price considering the Alpha 7's value but they are a remarkably smooth and musical sounding cable that bring phrasing and lyricism to the fore.

Your MF power amps are also transparent and a tad on the bright side and the Chorus could also calm these down a little. Alternatively, the Chord Company Sirens at £75 are a fine interconnect for the cash.

Also, when you feel it's time to upgrade the Alpha to something that will better match your Sonus Fabers and MF power amps, you could always consider the full sounding Linn Genki (with a variable gain output) which you can connect straight to the power amps! **SP**



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|| TAKE FIVE (YEARS)

Having finally finished unpacking after a house move I have just rediscovered my old Linn Axis/ Basik K9 which last played a record in 1995! Unfortunately (and probably not surprisingly) the original late 1980's stylus shaft fell off at its first contact with vinyl. As I've got used to CD's sound and convenience and have decorated the new lounge in a way that could never accommodate a black ash turntable, I've decided to use it in my games room as part of a second system using my old Pioneer receiver and Wharfedale speakers. I need to replace the disintegrated stylus with a new one. As this system is only going to be played for fun I don't need the world's best cartridge or stylus. Having taken out the world's largest mortgage I can't stomach the thought of forking out ninety quid on a replacement stylus for the K9, so what are my options? Upgrade with a half decent alternative from Goldring, Grado, Audio-Technica or Ortofon? Or should I keep the cartridge and fit a cheaper stylus from a K5 or Basik?

Nigel Pallace

The simplest solution is to buy an Audio Technica AT110E for around £30. This is a far more refined version of the old Linn Basik cartridge, which was an Audio Technica AT93 with its stylus glued in place, if I'm not mistaken. The 110E has a very warm and smooth sound (for an Audio Technica) and is nevertheless musical and dynamic too. It also responds to good turntables and arms, so it will be happy in your Axis. Yes, there are models from other manufacturers, but the AT will match or better them for performance at half the price.

The only other scenario would be to buy a £50 Goldring 1040, which is a good performer and has the benefit that you can subsequently upgrade the stylus to 1042 spec, which would turn it into a barnstorming £120 cartridge. This would create the problem that your Axis would sound so good that you'd sneak it down into your new living room and never want to move it back up again, despite the wife's cries! **DP**



Abandoned pooch needs new home!

|| SUBTERRANEAN HOME SICK BLUES

My system consists of Linn Kabers, triamped by Naim NAP 140X2 and a Naim NAP 180, sourced from a Naim 102, Supercapped, with Linn Axis OC9 and (Chord Anthem) Naim CD3 front ends. All other interconnects are Naim, plus NACA5 to the speakers. From the wall socket I also use a mixture of Russ Andrews mains cables and plug board. Most equipment rests on TT wall supports. Any expenditure I undertake to improve the system that is invisible - i.e. interconnects, amplification (lives in the cellar) and power supplies (ditto) is ok as it does not have to be explained to my other half. Anything above ground needs justification. This can distort upgrade expenditure, so I now need some advice.

Should I spend my next £2,000 or so below ground on a Russ Andrews ring main plus power cards or get a custom made Naim active crossover and go active, or better amplification, 3X180s? 140, 180 and 250? Or should I bite the bullet and replace the Axis with something like an Orbe, salvaging the Akito and OC9 for upgrading later? When the upgrade is finally visible it needs also to be remarkably audible. Are the sources so far behind the rest of the chain that a new front end will be stunning? I have a large classical record collection and a deal of Folk and Jazz on CD.

Dave Waters

What cries out to me when reading your equipment list is the imbalance between your front end and the rest of your system. Upgrading your amplification might please the wife (i.e. she wouldn't notice) but you'd get that sinking feeling having spent all that money with little to show for it (if you excuse my turn of phrase). You're right to identify your turntable as the weakest link - an Orbe will sound dramatically better than your Axis - so much so that even she might hear it. You'd notice a vast opening out and solidifying of the soundstage with oodles more detail and grip. The Orbe would work well with your Akito (which isn't a half bad arm), but you might find it's time to junk the OC9. I'd go for a Dynavector DV20X-L at £299 as a great sounding stopgap until you can afford the likes of a Linn Archiv. As the OC9, DV20 and Archiv are

mostly black (with a couple of gold bits), here's another great upgrade path the wife won't notice! Of course, power supplies are important, but you shouldn't be thinking about spending thousands on your mains until you've got a far more transparent system - so after the Orbe, go active before you get the electricians in. **DP**



Send your ears into Orbe-it

|| TROUBLE AND STRIFE

My wife has had the front room decorated and as part of this regime has asked for my 'too large' Heybrooks to be moved to another room. What are the smallest quality speakers you would recommend (possibly with wall mounted option as well?)

**Regards
Andy Lambert**

Ah, you're not alone Andy. But worry not, there are plenty of high quality stand or wall mounts around at a variety of prices. You could do worse then opt for Wharfedale's cracking new Diamond 8.1s at a mere £120. DP reckons they're the best he's encountered at the price, with a highly sophisticated and open sound. The bass isn't the deepest about but midrange detail equals a £500 model.

Alternatively KEF's Cresta 1 at £100 gives a similarly midrange detailed sound and is slightly more compact. Next price up is Mission's 780, again a very detailed performer with just a tad more sophistication than the Wharfedales. At £400 you have Dali's excellent Meneut IIs - real classy performers and lookers with a hardwood veneer and a solid well balanced sound.

Finally, pushing the boat out at £700 there's Opera's Operetta, that employ beautiful solid hardwood cabinets and high quality drivers, both of which at this price are virtually unheard of. All of these work well close to a rear wall and wall mounted

but for optimum sound quality, especially with the Dali and Opera models, use a solid 'speaker stand. Happy hunting! **SP**



The tuneful Operetta

||> **TORI! TORI! TORI!**

The pursuit of aural satisfaction is apparently long and fruitless! My cynicism follows my lengthy search for suitable partners for my beloved Micromega CD3.11 Duo BS2 CD player. I know it's capable of wonderful sounds

within the right system - at audition I was struck by its natural presentation and fine sense of timing. Yet suitable partners to oust my ageing Pioneer A400 and Mission 763s have yet to materialise.

I want a system that can accommodate The Charltons, Tori Amos, Branford Marsalis, and Sonic Youth, without either one of them sounding off-colour. So Tori can sound like she's here in the room, playing just for me; whilst the occasional badly-produced guitar track won't strip the wallpaper from my newly decorated (12'x13') listening room. Also, in the interests of domestic harmony, the system must be enjoyable at reasonably low levels.

I've tried several combinations. Naim-driven Naim Credos could have had me believing I was at a Sonic Youth gig - with all the subsonic clues on offer; but voices on less well-produced tracks sounded too harsh and aggressive. Rega amplification smoothed things out a little, but now Tori sounded less certain about which room she was in.

Naim-driven Dynaudio Audience 70s brought things a step closer, but Tori still didn't sound as playful as she had with the Credos. Naim-driven KEF Reference

Is were pretty much the same story. Tests with AVI integrated amp and Positron speakers failed to leave a mark on my memory, and I am unsure whether to take this as a positive sign or not.

My next audition is likely to require me to travel, so I would appreciate your help in narrowing down my choices. I would prefer floorstanding speakers designed for near-wall use. Remote control volume would be nice too. I am more than happy to buy ex-dem/second hand, providing I can audition the amp and speakers together with my Micromega. Should I be looking at the likes of Primare or Copland for amplification? Or valve amps? Will a pair of second-hand Naim SBLs give me the pleasure of the Credos without any of the pain? Should I give up and get out more? I expect I'll have to spend £1k-£2k.

Derek Parton

I'm not one to name drop but I once met Tori Amos. Anyway, that's another story...

Naim aren't really noted for their 'speaker technology but what they do, they do well - i.e. midrange detail.



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The Credos are great with midrange but are lacking in low bass and the treble can sound splashy. Hence, they're good with vocals (especially female) and are fairly rhythmic but don't boogie on down so well. My advice would be to listen to either a pair of KEF Reference One-Twos or Castle Howard S3s (both around the £1000 mark) with perhaps a Cyrus 7 integrated. The Cyrus 7 (£700) is a detailed and smooth customer with punch, and a brilliant all-rounder.

Alternatively you could go for the Naim option. The £800 Nait 5 integrated will give you the rhythmic grip you require but needs fast 'speakers to match, ideally a closed box design such as Linn's £1000 Ninkas. These have bass depth and speed mixed with good detail, control plus a touch of warmth. This warmth could balance out the slightly bright nature of your Micromega, and would be a good combination for your musical tastes. Good luck. **SP** ■



The Castle Howard S3's will bring Tori to life

BURNING QUESTION

I am considering purchasing a CD RW device. I was wondering what your views on the relative merits of a PC-based drive versus a standalone hi-fi unit like the Pioneer PDR 509 are? Do you find that there is any discernible difference in the sound quality of audio recordings from the two forms of CD burning? Presumably as the information consists of a string of 1s & 0s, the recordings should be nearly if not actually identical. My main concern is in the sound quality of recordings. Will a PC CD-R (non audio) recording playback in a normal CD player? I understand that a standalone unit will only record on audio CD-Rs only, which are more expensive.

Dr GY Shin
London UK

The main differences between a hi-fi CD recorder like the Pioneer you mention and a PC CD writer are flexibility and convenience. The PDR509 is a perfectly good machine, but limits you to real-time recording, just like in the old days of cassette, and negligible post-editing facilities. If, however, you buy a decent soundcard and CD burner, you can record everything onto your hard drive and edit it (i.e. remove the gaps between tracks), run it through Digital Signal Processing (to remove clicks, hiss etc. - you'd be surprised how effective and sonically beneficial this can be) and record it any number of times at up to 16x speed. If you're an avid home taper/compilation maker (as I am) with a large multi-format music library, I wouldn't even countenance a

non-PC based CD recorder, such is its power and versatility. There's also the bonus that computer CD-Rs cost pennies, whereas the virtually identical audio CD-Rs cost pounds. And yes, computer CD-Rs will play on most modern CD players.

Sound quality is to all intents and purposes the same. The major factor is the quality of the A-D converter in either the hi-fi recorder or computer soundcard. A-Ds were expensive, noisy and produced distortion, but the latest design are much improved. The hi-fi item is not necessarily better - it depends entirely on which make and model of soundcard or CD recorder you buy.

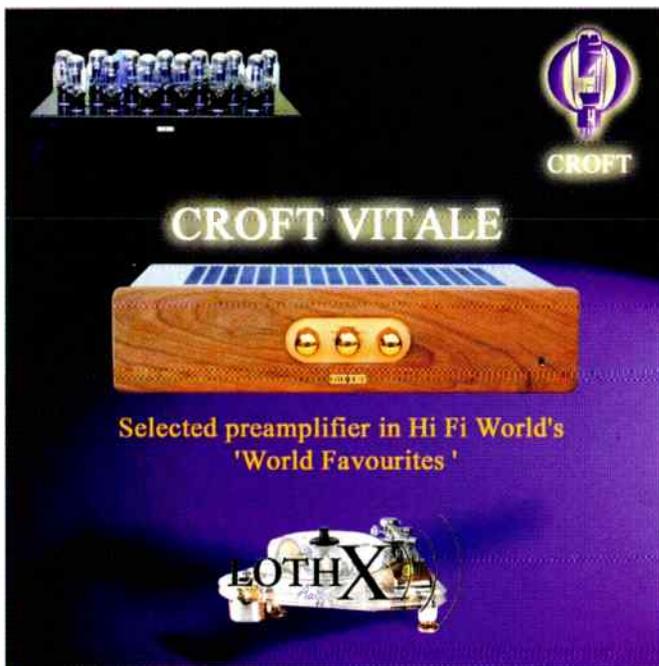
I'm afraid that the A-D in something like a Pioneer '509 isn't really up to it. I use the DAC built into my Sony TCD-8 DAT recorder, and feed the output directly into the digital input of a computer soundcard.

Alternatively, you can buy a soundcard with a decent A-D built in, such as Guillemot's MaxiSOUND ISIS (at around £200), or an offboard A-D such as the RME Audio (www.rme-audio.com/english) I reviewed a while back for £290, or a Midiman Flying Cow. Professionals would choose something like an Apogee Rosetta costing thousands, which would give stunning, studio quality results.

Even so, a £200 Guillemot and cheapo £70 CD writer would beat the Pioneer hands down in terms of audio quality. The choice is yours - the hi-fi unit looks pretty and is easy to use, whereas the PC audio system is dramatically more powerful. **DP** ■



The PDR-509 - Pioneering CD recording



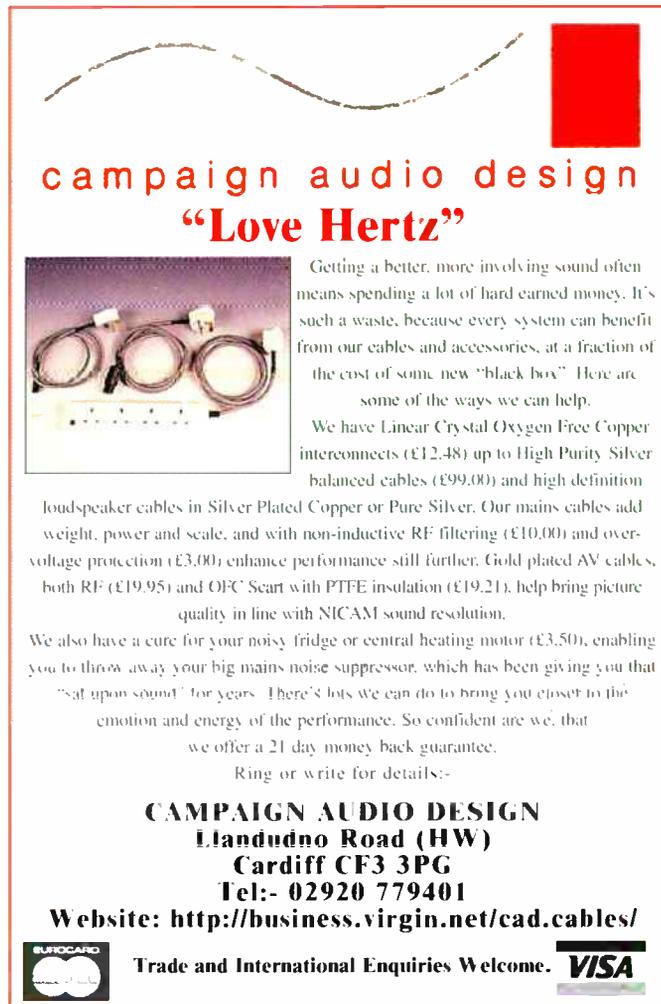
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HI-FI WORLD'S

GREAT COMPETITION GIVEAWAY

WIN A PAIR OF SUPERB CASTLE ACOUSTICS CASTLE HOWARD S3 LOUDSPEAKERS IN THIS MONTHS GREAT COMPETITION GIVEAWAY



Castle Acoustics has been one of Britain's leading specialist loudspeaker manufacturers since 1973. The company takes its name and logo from Skipton Castle, Yorkshire - Castle's home in the Penine hills since the outset. The company recognises the strong traditional craftsmanship of the area and this is carried through into its design philosophy together with the latest loudspeaker technology.

Castle Acoustics actually has its roots in another well known Yorkshire loudspeaker manufacturer, none other than Wharfedale. With the inception of stereo (and the need for two speakers) in 1958 and the massive growth of hi-fi in the 60s and 70s, demand for the product meant that the traditional hand built 'speaker was becoming a thing of Wharfedale's past. Instead, it began making more mass market products, using other materials than its traditional real wood.

Wishing to stay true to their roots, a group of senior managers from Wharfedale realised there was a gap in the market for those wishing for hand built, quality 'speakers. They opted to leave the company and set up Castle Acoustics on the 3rd September 1973 in an old woollen mill, producing traditionally crafted products with modern acoustic technologies.

In the early years the company grew rapidly, producing a succession of acclaimed 'speakers with traditional high quality finishes and a sound to match. Named after either British castles or rivers, the first

models bore titles such as Conway, Stirling and Clyde.

Almost twenty years after the company's foundation in 1993, a second group of Wharfedale executives made a proposal to buy out the original management team, all of whom were nearing retirement age. The idea was to build on the first twenty years' success and guide the company into the twenty-first century. With investment from the Yorkshire Enterprise Agency, Castle was allowed to grow and develop an essential new export business. New machinery was bought, along with a new plant, but at the heart of the company still lies the tradition of craftsmanship. Castle is the only British company to still build its own cabinets, buy and lay veneers for them and develop and build its own drive units. It's a well known fact that other UK 'speaker manufacturers use the company for making cabinets.

Hi-Fi World is giving away a superb pair of Howard S3s. This is the third incarnation of this large floorstander, which has long been a favourite of ours. Combining a tuneful deep bass response with beautiful clarity and detail, it's a very interesting design. At first it looks like an ordinary two-way floorstander, but the under the grille on the top panel is a drive unit which handles most of the audio range and fires up towards the ceiling. The effect is a heightening of the sound stage. This upward firing unit has another ace up its sleeve, though. It drives a long bass line that ports onto the floor underneath, giving the Howard its uniquely

impressive bass response.

Noel Keywood reviewed the latest Howards and found them to be one of the best sounding 'speakers around at any price. He said that with the Howards, "vocalists come over as full in body and healthy in voice. Instruments are layered backward in the mix and choirs fill the room convincingly... They also fill the room with sound, making the Howards sound equally good whether you're sitting, standing - or even out of the room!"

To get your hands on a pair of these magnificent 'speakers, simply answer these questions on a postcard, and send it to us (see address below) before April 30th, 2001. The lucky winner will be picked out of Hi-Fi World's now threadbare baseball cap. ■ ▲

Competition Questions

[1] From which building do Castle Acoustics get its name and logo from?

- [a] Edinburgh Castle
- [b] Skipton Castle
- [c] Sand Castle
- [d] Sandringham

[2] In which range of hills is the company's home?

- [a] Malverns
- [b] Penines
- [c] Mendips
- [d] South Downs

[3] The company named its first 'speakers after what?

- [a] British lakes and mountains
- [b] British seaside towns
- [c] Types of real ale
- [d] British rivers and castles

[4] The founders of Castle Acoustics originally worked for which company?

- [a] Rover
- [b] Leak
- [c] Wharfedale
- [d] Bang & Olufsen

Please send all entries to:

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PANEL POLITICS

After a long and successful partnership at Mission, brothers Farad and Henry Azima have parted professional company.

Farad, founder of Mission, Cyrus and NXT recently left the group. Henry Azima, a dedicated loudspeaker engineer, remains with NXT, contributing to the development of its flat panel technology and worldwide licensing - in this case to Mission. While NXT also designs full off-the-shelf loudspeaker systems for customers (TDK's Tremor being a case in point), in the case of the FS-mm1 it was Mission's engineers who designed it using development tools supplied by NXT.

NXT panels are now appearing in applications as diverse as Mercedes Benz door panels and \$5,000 hi-fi speakers, but Mission's FS-mm1 is the cheapest two channel multimedia application to date. They radiate sound all around by harnessing complex 'bending waves' using two small 'exciters' attached to each panel. It's an extremely mathematically complicated process which has proved very difficult to implement. Much of the research work that made this possible was done by the British government with military applications in mind.

NXT panels don't suffer the same inherent problems of conventional 'speakers, which only work in narrow frequency bands, have poor phase performance and require costly cabinets. They offer better attack transients, lower coloration and wider dispersion at all frequencies, and don't suffer from box boom.

David Price auditions Mission's brand new purpose-built computer audio speakers, the FS-mm1.

It was it really two years ago when we reviewed the Mission X-Space? I loved it. As a taste of the shape of things to come I thought it was a genius move. I also remember that after the review, a friend (whose opinions on hi-fi I respect greatly) suggested we pit them against my Mission 752s. These were £500 hi-fi loudspeakers that Noel and I agreed were better than many designs at three times their price. It came as something of a surprise then, that after being carefully positioned, the X-Spaces ran the 752s amazingly close in many respects. That for me was proof that Mission and NXT were onto something big.

The X-Space was far too large to behave as a discreet, desktop sized computer audio product and the FS-2 that followed last year was more a general purpose hi-fi/ multimedia product. Now though, Mission has come back with what many have been waiting for - a high quality, small footprint 2-channel sub and satellite system for general PC work. The package includes a small subwoofer housing a conventional 10cm drive unit. The result is a three box system with impressively compact dimensions - the 30W 'sound panels' are just 200x122x53mm and the combined 40W subwoofer and amplifier measures 260x100x355mm.

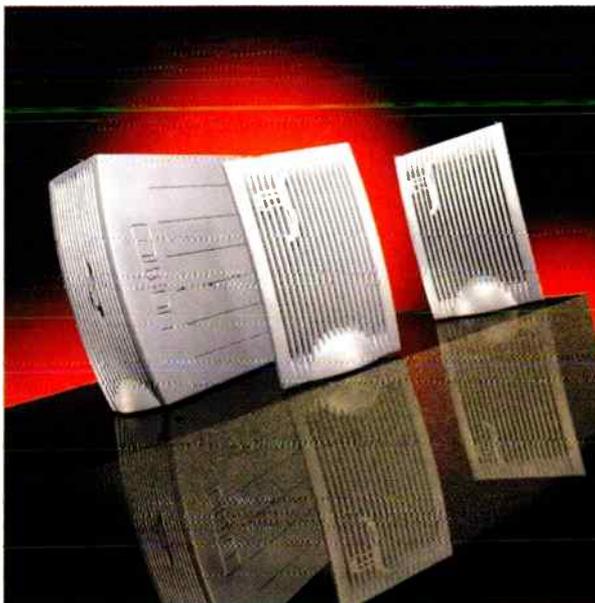
Considering the £169 price tag, you don't get many facilities. Inputs are limited to a 3.5mm stereo minijack and bare wire connectors that hook up to the speaker output

of an amplifier, while spring clip connectors for the satellites are the only outputs. Build is excellent - the rigid, injection moulded 'speaker cases mean the total system weighs in at 5kg,

hefty for something this small.

A tight and spacious sound plus tremendous imaging abilities makes these highly distinctive performers. Treble is sweet and smooth, if not particularly well extended. Midband is deliciously crisp and clean with remarkable soundstaging - the Missions have an almost holographic ability to project voices and instruments out into space. Whether you're thirty centimetres or three metres away, the sound level remains the same - a party trick that only NXT panels can play. By comparison, normal 'speakers sound 'boomy', 'boxy' and slow.

The only downside is the FS-mm1's bass, which some will find lacking. Despite the best efforts of the sub, which crosses over with the



panels quite high up, bass sounds lightweight and lacking in impact. If it's clarity, accuracy and speed you're looking for then this won't bother you, but if you want to rock the house, look elsewhere. A fascinating product then, that brings new qualities to small multimedia 'speaker systems, but they are not voiced to everyone's taste.

Mission FS-MM1 £169

Mission Symphonix Ltd.
Huntingdon
PE29 6EY

Tel: +44 (0)1480 423700

www.mission.co.uk

World Verdict



A great product with unique abilities in sound projection and seamless and neutral sound.

2001

Vivanco's tiny Vmax takes up practically no room at all in your pocket, whereas Samsung's YP-NEU is a touch bulkier but still smaller than most. Nick Tate enters the brave new world of this year's MP3 portables, where less is definitely more.

MINI-MAX

Let's be honest here - MP3 portables have two essential priorities - one is to play music and the other is to be compact and easy to carry. The problem for us audiophiles who like to get at least an inkling of how the original recording sounds is that one is often a harsh trade-off with the other. There's nothing special about the Vmax in this respect, but the interesting thing is the way the designers have effected this compromise - it's quite unlike most portables we've seen so far. This thing really is remarkably dinky - so wonderfully small and portable that the cynics among us invariably conclude that 'this thing can't possibly sound any good at all - surely it's little more than a toy!'

Well no, it's not going to give Sony's Walkman Professional any sleepless nights, but neither is it as bad as you'd think when you clock its remarkable size, or lack of it. And when I say small, I mean it. It weighs a piffling 30g and measures just 16x46x53mm. Barely bigger than the MMC cards it uses to store music, the largest thing on the Vmax is the rotary volume control which is barely larger than a penny piece!

If, however, it's Thomson Lyra-style five line backlit alphanumeric displays you're after, or lavish feature counts, amazing technological innovation or Audi-quality plastics, well forget it. The Vmax is designed to be very small and ultra-portable, and all else is a distraction. Without as much as a single digit display, the Vmax's poverty spec shouts 'less is

more'. The short feature list includes cheap

looking plasticky buttons for PLAY/PAUSE, STOP and RW/FF (track search), a three-position EQ switch settings and a little door that opens to take two MMC memory cards.

The Vmax also comes bundled with a Card Station, a rather fancier affair finished in iMac-style blue and translucent plastic. This is the bit that records music to the Vivanco's memory cards, and it works simply and easily. After auto-installing onto your computer as an extra drive (connecting via your parallel port or USB socket, depending on which model you buy), it lets you drag'n'drop MP3s from MMC to PC at the click of a mouse button. The bundled eJay MP3 Station software is a lavish affair with space-age visuals and easy navigation. It offers plenty of playlisting options, plus a wide range of recording quality options, from space-saving 64kbps to the fine sounding 320kbps.

Compared to its grown up rivals at the same price, the Vmax isn't

quite on the pace. With lightweight low frequencies and dull and fluffy treble, it's hardly a thrilling listen but still manages to play music quite sweetly and inoffensively. Unlike many cheapies, its sins are those of omission rather than addition. The point is that if the smallest, most portable way of playing music is what you're looking for, the Vmax is still just about good enough to make the grade, and certainly better than cheap cassette or FM radio.

So if the best sound per pound is your goal then this isn't the one for you. Where it shines is the way you can take it out and about and practically forget it's there - it really is streets ahead of any other mobile music player. Computer Audio World has so far tested in this respect. If you're after a miniature marvel with reasonable sonics, you won't be disappointed.



VIVANCO SPECS:

Built-in memory: 32MB
Expansion slots:
2x Multi Media Card (128MB memory max)
Supplied accessories: 2x 16MB MMC cards, in-ear phones, parallel card reader/writer, battery
Supplied software: eJay MP3 Station
Battery life: 4 hours
System requirements: Pentium P90 or better, parallel or USB port, 5MB HD space, Windows 98 min

World Verdict



Smallest MP3 player available right now, but off the pace for sonics, features and build.

VIVANCO VMAX £159.95

www.vivanco.co.uk

A Space Odyssey

DIG THE NEU BREED

Although definitely small fry by portable MD standards, Samsung's YP-NEU isn't quite as dinky as Vivanco's Vmax - very few things are. Still, it's decidedly better screwed together, boasting a soft-feel rubberised translucent blue plastic case. Although a tactile treat, I still reckon the last 'yep' we reviewed, the YP-E64, was even better made with its classy magnesium shell. The YP-NEU comes with 64MB of Flash Memory as standard, and has a slot for an optional SmartMedia card for extra storage. It's an oddly styled affair, measuring 60x85x27mm and weighing in at a waif-like 54g without batteries. Speaking of which, two AAA cells slot into the back to give around ten hours of continuous operation. In this respect, MP3 walkies are really forging ahead - eighteen months ago the first generation players were lucky to manage one quarter of that.

Compared to the Vivanco, the Samsung's ergonomics are cluttered. The front panel boasts the usual transport controls, plus an eject button - not for a cassette, MD or CD, but for the SmartMedia Card! When it's powered up, a little green LED glows from inside to show it's playing (or is ready to) play music, or red to show it's talking to your PC via its USB link. Speaking of which, the USB connector is very small and easy to use (it's identical to those used with many digital cameras). When you're not using it, Samsung has thoughtfully provided a little rubber bung to keep the dirt out of the YP-NEU's USB socket.

On top there's a volume control and a headphone/remote socket - that's your lot as far as facilities go, because as with the Vmax, the display is on the remote. This is a curiously styled affair, looking like a miniature

R2D2 and housing a clear, backlit alphanumeric display - RCA Lyra it ain't, but it's still better than the Vmax! The remote replicates the transport controls, and a user-selectable EQ facility (not really worth bothering with, as usual.) and A-B Repeat functions. A half decent set of in-ear phones, set of batteries, carrying strap and set up CD complete the package.

Samsung bundles the latest version of its yep Explorer software to take care of PC to portable file transfer duties. It does the job, but is hardly the most user friendly or confidence inspiring piece of code. Compared to the likes of s3's Rio 600 it feels far more 1999 than 2001. File transfers via the USB connection as ever were quick, fuss free and reliable. The supplied Real Jukebox music management software is swish enough to use, but miles behind the Vivanco's standard item thanks to its 96kbps ripping limit - if you want decent bitrates you have to buy the full registered version, which frankly isn't really worth it.

Just as I'd expected, the Samsung sounded excellent, with a typically clean, crisp and open performance that lacked any kind of nasty surprises. Compared to the Vivanco it was far quicker off the mark as far as dynamics and leading edges of notes are concerned, and its midband contained a wealth of detail which somehow got lost in the deep recesses of the Vmax's silicon brain. Indeed, so fresh and spry sounding was the YP-NEU that it proved quite difficult to fault at the price. With only 7mW on tap, the headphone output wasn't the beefiest around, and this made sticking with Samsung's supplied on-ear phones a good idea. If you want to listen through your Sennheiser HD-580s,

best get a Musical Fidelity X-CANS!

Unfortunately, the slightly anaemic nature of the headphone output did mean that the Samsung was not all it could

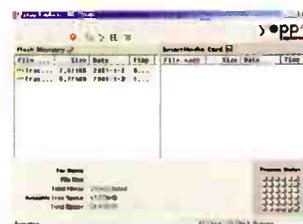
have been in the bass department - even oldsters like the jazPiper had the legs on it here. Yet as long as you didn't

push it too hard and don't listen to Goldie and Roni Size next to airfields, it shouldn't really be an issue. Treble was a particular treat - as sweet and finely etched as you'll get from an MP3 walkie, it put certain MD portables I've heard to shame.

Overall then, unless space was at an expensive premium, the Samsung would be the one I'd choose thanks to its superior sonics and still relatively diminutive size. The only cloud on the YP-NEU's horizon is s3's Rio 600, which feels an altogether more complete device that's better built and packaged - albeit a bit bulkier. The advice is, as usual, try before you buy.

SAMSUNG YP-NEU £230

www.samsungelectronics.co.uk



SAMSUNG SPECS:

Built-in memory:
64MB
Expansion slots:
1x Multi Media Card
(128MB memory max)
Supplied accessories:
USB connecting cable,
remote control, carrying
strap, in-ear phones, bat-
teries
Supplied software: yep
Explorer, Real Jukebox
Battery life: 10 hours
System requirements:
Pentium P133 or better,
USB port, 20MB HD
space, Windows 98 min

World Verdict



Great mid price portable with fashionably compact dimensions and fine sound.

CONNECT

Simon Pope auditions four interconnect cables, two below priced £50 and two above. . .

SonicLink SG Whisper £45.00 per metre pair

▶ This new budget interconnect from SonicLink is the replacement for the original SilverPink model. Not the most attractive of looking cables, this, unless you like pink of course - hardly a hi-fi colour considering it's a mainly male pursuit. I suppose it could always bring out your feminine side. It's got a nice flexible feel and the fleshy pink outer sheath reaches to the new, heavy yet squat gold plated phono plugs with a nicely profiled body for easy connection/disconnection. Designed to suit "low budget, high-performance systems", the Whisper has a screened coaxial construction which aims to improve RF rejection and is ideal for long runs that some A/V applications require (price wise, too). There are silver plated copper conductors for improved high frequency transmission and use of a low capacitance PTFE dielectric for rhythmic bass performance. The conductor cross section has been increased from the SilverPink, to 0.6 square mm.

Seeing if the above features did their required jobs, I chose two demanding review pieces for my cable listening. First up was a DG CD of Messiaen's *Et Exspecto Resurrectionem Mortuorum*. This piece has some quite frightening dynamics thanks to its orchestration of massive brass and woodwind forces and mammoth percussion section with large tam-tams (gongs) to the fore. The result is a hair raising sound that can leave audio equipment

weeping into its beer. For their fairly meagre price, the Whisper cables did a good job. There was space and detail aplenty, with woodwind light and flighty and brass crisp, if a little too harsh. The massive dynamics of the tam-tam climaxes were handled well, with decent decay. Rock music, in the form of Soundgarden's sometimes muddy sounding *Superunknown* didn't quite have the cleanliness of the Messiaen but vocals were clear and drums fast and powerful and bass deep. The midrange guitars weren't as precise and tuneful as they could be but the overall performance was good, especially for the price of these cables, which makes them a good value for money buy and a worthy audition.

SonicLink
Derwent Business Centre
Clarke Street
Derby,
DE1 2BU
Tel: 01332 361390
www.audiocables.co.uk

Origin Live Advanced £45.00 per metre pair

U nlike the other auditionees here, the Advanced interconnects come from a company that like to put their fingers in different audiophile pies, from loudspeakers to turntable motors, with a little cable designing in between. The Advanced is the entry level coaxial cable of the three interconnects in their range and consists of stranded

copper conductors, allied to "very high quality phono plugs" with, they say twice the conductivity of the more popular gold plated brass. There's no indication of which material they're constructed from, and the company wish to keep it a bit of a secret. The company pride this cable on being very system friendly and say its in possession of a well defined bass and good overall tonal balance. It was time to put these claims to the test.

Starting with the Messiaen piece it was obvious that this cable was very inoffensive. It has a smooth and lyrical sound, which wasn't as immediate or as fast-sounding as the SonicLink but was slightly more easy to live with. The downside of this was that the sound wasn't as full as that of the Whisper and the sound stage wasn't as deep as I'd experienced. But overall the sound was one that would be easy to live with, day in, day out - confirming that claim for system friendliness.

With Soundgarden's grunge rock, the Advanced showed again a lyrical characteristic, with Chris Cornell's phrasing long and uninterrupted. Guitars lacked the grate of the SonicLink but the clarity in the drumming was lost. Imaging was good, however and the overall tonal balance was excellent. Well worth a listen, these cables are tonally neutral but not cold.

Origin Live
87 Chessel Crescent
Bitterne
Southampton SO19 4BT
Tel: 02380 442183
www.originlive.com



**Sonic Link SG
Whisper**



**Origin Live
Advanced**



**Chord Company
Silver Siren**



**True Colours
Industries Cobra**

**Chord Company Silver Siren
£74.99 per metre pair**

The Siren is no stranger to us at Hi-Fi World and should be no stranger to many audio-philosophers. The Chord Company have redesigned the original Siren using 'lessons learnt' during the development of the company's excellent £200 Chorus interconnect. The new Silver Siren now features two stranded, silver plated oxygen free copper conductors insulated with teflon, in a 'twisted pair' configuration in order to improve RF noise reduction. The Silver Siren gets its single signal path technology also from the Chorus. The connections are made with silver solder and the plugs have silver plated contacts. The single signal path, the company claim, gives improvements in signal transfer and in the reproduction of low level detail. This very flexible cable is finished in a nice matt finish PVC jacket that's good to the touch and has the usual sturdy CC phono plug.

On listening, the cable has a lively and well balanced sound that's both neutral and fast. The Messiaen piece had a sense of fresh air to it that freed it from the 'speaker and the instruments had a 'real' sound, reproducing the natural colours with a realistic hue, the harmonics of the tam-tams especially impressive. Sound staging was both wide and deep, the percussion sitting at the back of the orchestra but still very much in the picture. A good sense of air and space was present but without the clinical nature that so often accompanies such traits of sound. This music friendly balance was shown again with

Soundgarden, finally showing the intricacies that lie within this mix that only the best stuff seems to highlight. Guitars were well defined and powerful and the drums and bass guitar below kicked like a wounded mule to give a very involving performance. The Silver Siren is a very good buy indeed, showing as it does all the traits of a more expensive cable, such as a lack of harshness in the treble that's matched by excellent detail and staging. Highly recommended.

The Chord Company Ltd.
30a Sarum Business Park
Portway, Salisbury
Wiltshire SP4 6EA
Tel: 01722 331674
www.chord.co.uk

**True Colours Industries
Cobra £119 per metre pair**

Whilst not quite the thickness of its namesake, the Cobra is nonetheless a strong and chunky interconnect. Like the Silver Siren, it is a twisted pair construction but with a double tin-plated copper braided screen around the two cores. The core material is silver plated copper alloy which is stranded with a cross section area of 2.91 square mm. This combination is chosen for what the company regard as the spaciousness of silver added to the "bass weight" and dynamics of copper. The core insulation material is PTFE whilst the outer insulation is black PVC. The Cobra features the high quality 'locking' WBT plugs but is also available in XLR to XLR and star earthing screen termination to

spades is optional on phono to phono for £20 extra.

There's no denying that this cable has presence. The Messiaen had a grip and poise that held my attention immediately. Spread and depth of sound was impressive and highlighted the superb quality of the recording. Tonal colours were strong, indicating that the cable has a certain coloration but a non-interfering one. Dynamics were also impressive, with the long tam-tam crescendos of the fourth movement developing to a frighteningly realistic level. The cable didn't fare as well with the Soundgarden CD, showing that the Cobra is better suited to high quality equipment and recordings. The album failed to have the drive and excitement that was found with the Siren, for example, but the bass response was strong and tuneful, the kick drum powering through the 'speakers with speed and agility. Although good with vocals, the Cobra didn't quite pick up all the detail present, although it was no means poor in this area, but delivered the music with a full and rich sound. This full sounding cable would work well with rather thin sounding or sterile equipment, where it will weave its magic and fatten up the sound without too much unnecessary distraction from the music. Good for the money, with typical high end cable traits in imaging and staging. ■ ▲

True Colours Industries
Unit A103 Portview Trade Centre
310 Newtonards Road
Belfast BT4 1HE
Tel: 07710 196949
www.true-colours.com

probably the best

NEW DEMONSTRATION ROOM NOW OPEN AT 12A SPRING GARDENS, NEWPORT PAGNELL,

Kel84 VALVE INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER KIT

This is our brand new, low cost, beginner level amplifier kit. It features a pair of EL84 valves per channel in push-pull configuration. They give 15 watts into an 8 ohm load - plenty for medium sensitivity loudspeakers. The output transformers are Ultra Linear, keeping distortion down to a minimum. Up front the ECF80 input/phase splitter valve has an extremely smooth sound.

The Kel84 has very low hum, to solid-state standards. For simplicity the kit is built on a printed circuit board. A strong steel chassis is fronted by a 3mm anodised front panel and attractive chromed custom made knobs. There are five line level inputs, plus one monitor input, with a tape output included, all controlled from the front panel. The phono input sockets and 4mm banana socket speaker terminals are gold plated.

At rear is a mains switch, an IEC power input and an earth post.

This kit is aimed at beginners. The instructions include pictures as well as diagrams, making them very easy to follow. At a UK price of £250.00 all inclusive you cannot ignore Kel84. Simon Pope says, "The quality that can be gleaned from this amp is a fine introduction to the joys of the valve sound. The Kel84 will highlight all the intricacies and

£250



depth of detail in your favourite recordings whilst retaining a warmth and fullness that is almost exclusive to pure valve amps and is rare at this price point."

Kel84 weighs 10kg. External dimensions with valves are 300mm(w) x 270mm(d) x 150mm(h).

KIT88 VALVE INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER KIT & KAT88 VALVE POWER AMPLIFIER KIT

Here is the amazing KiT88. The circuit is similar to that of our popular KEL34 with a few changes to incorporate the Tesla, JJ branded KT88 power tetrode. This is a pure Class A push-pull design providing 36 watts into an 8ohm load. Andy Grove has come up with a gem of an output transformer (E/I). With the KiT88 it offers a virtually unmatched result for a valve amplifier. Frequency response measures 11Hz to 75kHz, separation 71dB, noise 98dB, sensitivity 400mV and distortion 0.03%. "As valve amplifiers go, the KiT88 is one of the best measured performances I have ever come across", said Noel Keywood. Jon Marks said, "The KiT88 pulled a series of surprisingly fast, meaty basslines out of its trickbag when dealing with Suzanne Vega's Nine Objects Of Desire album. As if this wasn't enough, the mid and treble were nice

too - cymbals had a deliciously natural, golden shimmer without sounding soft, and vocals were extremely transparent and crisply defined. KiT88 didn't hang around when it came to exploiting the virtues of its four output valves on numbers such as 'Leaves' and 'Suspect Sustain' from Cirrus' Land's End Jazz CD. Saxophone had a wonderfully smooth, realistic character, and acoustic guitar mixed speed with harmonic richness to very impressive effect. Asian Dub Foundation and Moloko showed no sign at all of the sluggish, woolly bottom-end and poorly-delineated bass beats that most valve amps are to blame for. Which makes the KiT88 an all-round, high-end bargain." Weight 16kg, external dimensions with valves are 330mm(w) x 300mm(d) x 190mm (h).

**KaT88
upgrade kit now
available £140**

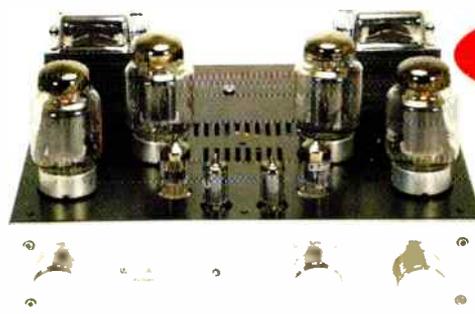
£425



← **KaT88 VALVE POWER AMPLIFIER KIT**

← **KIT88 VALVE INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER KIT**

£440



**KIT88
upgrade kit now
available £150**

ALL NEW SERIES II MODULAR PRE-AMP KIT

The PRE-II is a valve pre-amplifier with six inputs, tape monitor and two sets of output sockets. It utilises a high quality line driver transformer and x5 gain. The PHONO-II is a dedicated valve phono stage that incorporates a step-up transformer for MC users. Finally, PSU-II is a power supply unit that feeds both the PRE-II and PHONO-II.

Power Supply Unit (PSU-II)	£175.00
Pre-amplifier (PRE-II)	£175.00
Phono Stage (PHONO-II)	£100.00
Moving coil step-up transformer	£70.00



diy kits in the world

MILTON KEYNES, BUCKS MK16 0EE- CALL FOR DETAILS ON 01908 218 836

KIT34 VALVE INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER KIT

NEW KIT

£495

KiT34 is a 32 watt stereo valve integrated amplifier, featuring a pair of EL34s, in push-pull mode, per channel, plus an ECF80 pentode/triode as input/phase splitter. The power supply is valve rectified (2 x 5U4), using a heavy duty choke to achieve exceptional smoothing. The output transformers are 14% Ultra Linear tapped to keep distortion down to its lowest level and the kit is totally hard wired utilising three tag boards. It has five line level inputs, plus a tape-in and tape out, all controllable from the front.

Simon Pope says, "KiT34 carries a true valve signature, it has everything you could ever want and more from a tube amp, an absolute winner."

Weight 22kg, External dimensions with valves fitted - 390mm(w) x 360mm(d) x 210mm(h)



300B PSE MONOBLOC KIT

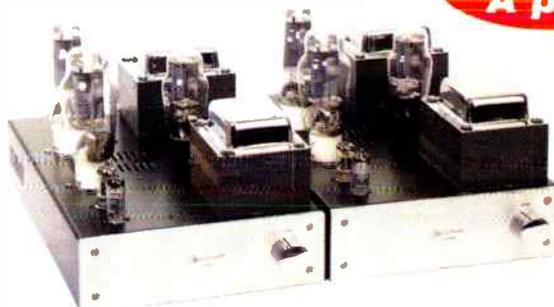
Our Parallel Single Ended amplifiers offer ultimate sound quality. Each monobloc has two of the beautifully linear 300B directly heated triode in its output stage, producing 20 watts into an 8 ohm load. At the front we have a 6AU6 pentode and an ECC82 as the driver valve. This design utilises a 5U4 rectifier valve in the power supply, in combination with a 10H choke, giving an extremely quiet supply. Both mains and output transformers we E/I pattern.

For purists, feedback is switchable and the kit is totally hard-wired.

For those that require valves we provide the superb Tesla 300Bs, Russian 5U4s and European 6AU6s & ECC82. Simon Pope says, "Not to put too fine a point on it, the sound these monoblocs create is among the finest that can be encountered in hi-fi." Our 300B PSE kit bears an affordable price of

£795.00 (UK price) excluding valves. Each monobloc weighs 23kgs., external dimensions with valves: 25cm(w) x 38cm(h) x 22cm(d) per monobloc.

£795
A pair



KEL80 MONOBLOC AMPLIFIER KIT

Following the success of our budget KEL34 40watt kit amplifier, we have come up with a 'big brother' design. The output stage uses two pairs of TESLA EL34 pentodes in parallel-push-pull mode, allowing KEL80 to turn out 80 watts into an 8ohm load. Heading up the input stage we have the wonderfully linear Russian 6AU6 working into an American 5687 phase-splitter. KEL80's output transformers are 4ohm and 8ohm tapped. With an input sensitivity at around 380mV for full output, it will happily partner both passive and active pre-amplifiers. It is easy to assemble. Simon Pope says, "The proof of the pudding is in the eating and the KEL80 is a feast for the ears, with solid bass attack, lightning fast reactions, that emphasises musicality as well as power. At £590.00 a

pair, a definite valve winner. Each monobloc weighs 12kgs., external dimensions with valves: 14cm(w) x 8cm(h) x 43.5cm(d).

£590
A pair



HD83 VALVE HEADPHONE AMPLIFIER KIT

The HD83 headphone amplifier is a beautifully simple design using Mullard ECL83 valves, a triode and power pentode housed in the same envelope. It works directly from any source, be it CD, tape, tuner etc., or from an amplifier's tape out or pre-amp out sockets. The circuit uses high specification E/I output transformers that will drive any headphone load from 16 ohms to over 300 ohms depending on how the secondaries are wired up. The HD83 is a single-ended design with the power pentode wired up in triode configuration for added sonic purity, and it is as quiet as a mouse. For sound quality Jon Marks says, "The bass is punchy and controlled without becoming artificial, while treble has the crispness of the best solid-state, with the tonal purity, delicacy and speed associated with valves." External dimensions 18cm(w) x 30cm(l) x 8cm(h) weight 4kg.

£175



probably the best

NEW DEMONSTRATION ROOM NOW OPEN AT 12A SPRING GARDENS, NEWPORT PAGNELL,

KLS10

HIGH TECHNOLOGY COMPACT MONITOR

Our mini-marvel uses an Audax carbon fibre bass/midrange unit, married to the world's most advanced tweeter, the piezo-electric gold dome HD3P from Audax. KLS10 offers high performance from a small package. The main speakers are designed to work alone, or with a dedicated subwoofer to extend their bass. Alone, they are suited to near-wall mounting and can be tuned by port adjustment to suit personal taste and location. They are easy to drive and need just 30-60watts. KLS10 is

unique. Technically advanced, yet compact and relatively inexpensive, there is little to match it. Sensitivity 89dB 1W/1m, 15mm MDF, internal volume 9Ltrs, external dimensions 19cm(w) x 31cm(h) x 23cm(d).

Drive Unit & Crossover kit **£394.00**

Drive Unit only **£358.00**



£394

KLS10

GOLD SUBWOOFER

Designed to complement KLS10 Gold stand mounters by providing deep and open bass. The subwoofer is inexpensive, easy to build, comprising a simple crossover network with a high quality 8 inch Aerogel dual voice coil unit. A must for all KLS10 Gold customers. Sens. 89dB, volume 25 litres, external dimensions 28cm(w) x 43cm(h) x 34cm(d).

Drive Unit & Crossover kit **£149.00**

Drive Unit only **£71.00**



£149

KLS3 GOLD MK II

ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY THREE WAY LOUDSPEAKER

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

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

Drive Unit & Crossover kit **£575.00**

Drive Unit Pack **£450.00**



£575

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

for

£330

KLS9

TWO WAY FLOORSTANDER

Here's a storm for you - KLS9, with its BB4 alignment bass cabinet and Audax High Definition Aerogel 8in bass/midrange unit. It's 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 Unit & Crossover kit **230.00**

Drive Unit pack **£160.00**

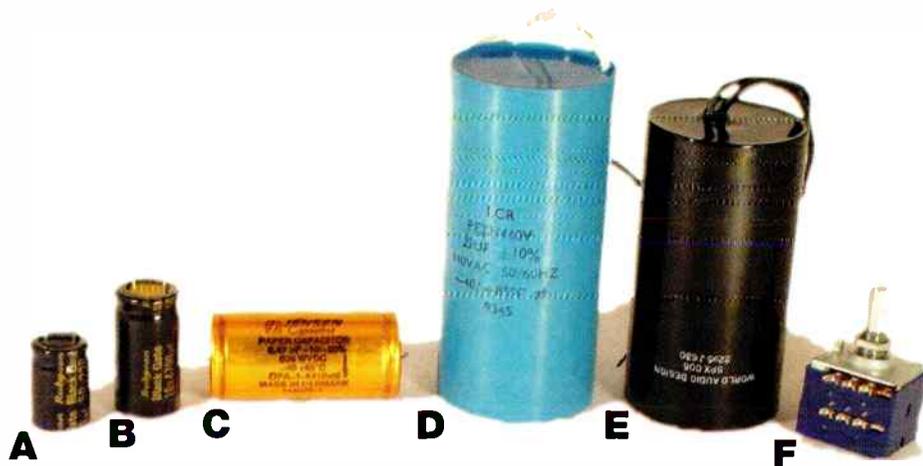


£230

diy kits in the world

MILTON KEYNES, BUCKS MK16 0EE- CALL FOR DETAILS ON 01908 218 836

capacitors, potentiometers & upgrade kits



- A. BLACK GATE 220 μ F, 50V electrolytic
- B. BLACK GATE 4700 μ F, 16V electrolytic
- C. JENSEN 0.47 μ F, 630V paper in oil capacitor
- D. LCR 22.5 μ F 440Vdc polypropylene capacitors (wire leadouts radial) 100mm(h) x 45mm diameter
- E. ANSAR 22.5 μ F 630Vdc polypropylene capacitors (wire leadouts radial) 85mm(h) x 45mm diameter
- F. ALPS blue audio grade 50k or 100dual log potentiometer 8.5mm diameter fitting hole

Kit88 upgrade kit

- 4 x Jensen 0.47 μ F, 630V
- 4 x Black Gate 220 μ F, 50V
- 2 x Black Gate 4700 μ F, 16V
- 1 x 100k Alps pot



KaT88 upgrade kit

- 4 x Jensen 0.47 μ F, 630V
- 4 x Black Gate 220 μ F, 50V
- 2 x Black Gate 4700 μ F, 16V



World Audio design

parts directory

NEW DEMONSTRATION ROOM NOW OPEN AT 12A SPRING GARDENS, NEWPORT PAGNELL, MILTON KEYNES, BUCKS MK16 0EE- CALL FOR DETAILS ON 01908 218 836

Mains transformers & Chokes

KEL84 mains transformer

1.5 inch stack, 90mm(h)x 80mm(w)x 95mm(d) drop through fitting with zinc cap. Secondaries: 0V-240V 300mA, 3.15V-0V-3.15V, 5.5A, suitable for 120/240V operation

KIT88/KAT88 mains toroidal transformer

120mm dia. x 60mm(h). Secondaries: 195V-0V-95V,450mA/0V-27V, 100mA/3.15V-0V-3.15V,9A, suitable for 120/240V operation

300B PSE mains E/I transformer

130mm(h) x 95mm(w) x 115mm(d). drop through fitting with zinc cap. Secondaries: 380V-0V-380V, 180mA/150-0V-150V, 25mA/0V-5V, 1.2A/0V-5V, 1.2A/0V-5V,3A/3.15V-0V-3.15V,0.4A suitable for 120/240V operation

KEL80 mains toroidal transformer (encapsulated)

130mm dia. x 65mm(h). Secondaries: 195V-0V-195V,390mA/0V-27V, 100mA/3.15V-0V-3.15V,7.5A, suitable for 120/240V operation

HD83 mains toroidal transformer

80mm dia. x 35mm(h). Secondaries: 0V-165V,75mA/3.15V-0V-3.15V,1A, suitable for 120/240V operation

PSU-II mains toroidal transformer

80mm dia. x 35mm(h). Secondaries: 0V-270V,60mA/0V-10V,2A, suitable for 120/240V operation

TRANS I mains toroidal transformer

95mm dia. x 50mm(h). Secondaries: 0V-370V,150mA/0V-6.3V,3.5A 300B E/I choke 65mm(h) x 70mm(d) x 80mm(w) open frame fitting,10H, 180mA,

KEL84 E/I choke

0.5 inch stack, 40mm(h)x 35mm(d)x 70mm(w) clamp fitting, 1H, 250mA

PSU-II E/I

40mm(h) x 35mm(d) x 70mm (w) clamp fitting, 15H, 20mA

KIT34 mains transformer

2.5 inch stack, 120mm(h)x115mm(w)x95mm(d), drop through fitting with zinc cap.Secondaries 365V - 0V - 365V,300mA/0V - 5V, 6A/3.15V - 0V - 3.15V, 7.5A. Suitable for 120/240V operation.

KIT34 choke

1.25 inch stack, 65mm(h)x105mm(w) with fitting holes x 60mm(d), clamp fitting, 2.5 H, 350mA

Output transformers

KEL84 E/I Ultra Linear push-pull output transformer

1.25 inch stack, 76mm(h)x 65mm(w)x 76mm(d) Primary - secondary, 8K with 12.5% UL tap - 8ohms, max o/p-15watts, max current 150mA valves EL84 etc

KIT88/KAT88 E/I push-pull output transformer

80mm(w)x95mm(l)x100mm(h). Primary-secondary 10K - 8ohms, max o/p-40watts, max current-160mA valves-KT88, 6550, EL34

KIT34 E/I 14% tapped Ultra Linear push-pull output transformer

2 inch stack, 80mm(w)x95mm(l)x100mm(h), drop through fitting with zinc cap. Primary-secondary 6.4K, 14% UL taps, Secondary 8ohm, max output 34watts, max current 150mA, valves EL34, 6L6, 6CA7

KEL80 E/I parallel-push-pull output transformer

95mm(w)x115mm(l)x133mm(h). Primary-secondary 4.6K - 8 & 4ohms, max o/p-80watts, max current-250mA valves-EL34,5881,6L6

HD83 E/I single ended output transformer

40mm(w)x50mm(l) x55mm(h). Primary-secondary 4K - 4 x 64ohms windings, max o/p-1watts, max current-25mA valves-ECL83 etc

Pre-II E/I driver transformer

80mm(w)x60mm(l) x65mm(h). 6:1 step down transformer, max current-10mA valves-6922 etc pre-amp stage

Printed circuit boards

Kel84 Printed Circuit Board

280mm(w) x 135mm(l)x 1.6mm(d)

KiT88/KaT88 Printed Circuit Board

140mm(w) x 310mm(l) x 2.4mm(d)

Kel34 Printed Circuit Board

140mm(w) x 310mm(l) x 2.4mm(d)

Kel80 Printed Circuit Board (a pair)

120mm(w) x 215mm(l) x 2.4mm(d)

HD83 Printed Circuit Board

140mm(w) x 160mm(l) x 1.6mm(d)

PSU-II Printed Circuit Board

105mm(w) x 130mm(l) x 1.6mm(d)

PRE-II Printed Circuit Board

105mm(w) x 130mm(l) x 1.6mm(d)

PHONO-II Printed Circuit Board

105mm(w) x 130mm(l) x 1.6mm(d)

TAG board

2 x 16 connections (hard wiring)40mm(w) x 140mm(l) x 3mm(d)

World
Audio
Design

GO

This year's Sound And Vision show at Bristol's Marriot hotel was a great mix of new technology and good old traditional hi-fi values. Simon Pope hopped on to the Hi-Fi World moped and popped down to witness it.

The Bristol Show has traditionally been a favourite with exhibitors and public alike, and apart from the Montego Bay Rum Punch at the Hi-Fi Beach Carnival, dare I say the favourite of journalists too. Not that us hacks are meant to enjoy such things, you understand - it's serious hard work you know.

The weekend of February 22nd saw the UK's hi-fi glitterati, addicts, liggers and journalists descend on the West Country for the first major UK show of the year. It was as successful and as enjoyable as ever. After nearly fifteen years in existence, the Bristol show is firmly ensconced in the world's hi-fi events calendar as an essential event. Not only do industry professionals from all around the globe make a pilgrimage to this most welcoming city, but the enthusiasts turn up in droves eager to see and hear the latest developments in the world of home entertainment.

This year was the biggest show to date, with ninety exhibitors showing over one hundred and fifty brands, taking over the whole hotel, as well as much of the city it seemed.

The statistics make for heartening reading. There was an overall fifteen percent rise in visitor numbers, with the attendance on Friday up twenty five percent on last year, showing that many die-hards took the day off to avoid the weekend crush. Two reckless individuals apparently even popped over from Vienna at the drop of a Sachertorte after seeing a report on Sky TV! An amazing total of eighty people registered as 'press', although I'd imagine a few



Hi-Fi World's crack sales team charm the public. . .

staff members of the Upper Mendip Gazette decided they were hi-fi hacks for the day.

The show kicked off with an informative and (unusually) well organised press conference, with a selection of industry bigwigs airing their companies' views, including Dr. Udo Zucker of Tag McLaren, Eric Kingdon of Sony UK, Meridian's ever-erudite Bob Stuart, Pioneer's John Bamford and Denon's Roger Bachelor. There was even a DVD-A software update from dts.

It was interesting to witness the presence of Sony alongside Pioneer and Meridian - the former champions of 'SACD as the future of hi-fi' and the latter two eager to impress upon the public and press hoards the bene-



That valve kit amp company whose name we can't recall!

WEST



What's all that queuing for - you'd think it was an open day at the cider factory?



Meridian's DSP8000 loudspeakers, yours for £13,000 each. We'll take three!

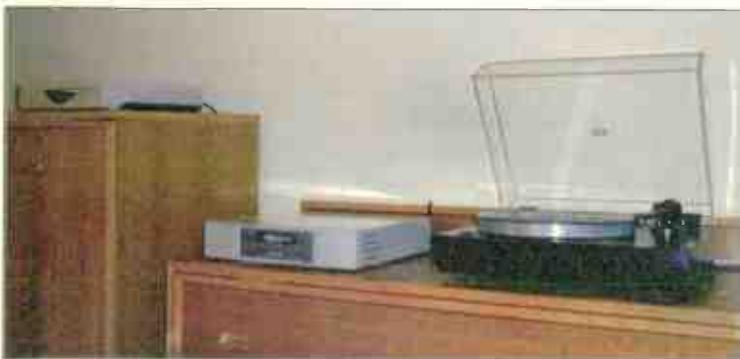
fits on DVD-A as the next step forward for audio. The previous year saw the aforesaid champions of DVD-A a little depressed, not to mention red faced, as their plans for audio domination had been scuppered by a teenage hacker from Sweden.

This year it was all change though, and we saw what could be described as 'the real launch of DVD-A' complete with software now available for the public to purchase (amazing but true). The first releases are only available in multichannel form (with 24/96 two channel capability), which was ironic as Sony

was previewing a prototype of its multichannel SACD player, which promises to hit the UK shops by the end of the year. Meridian has been associated with DVD-A technology from the outset, being the inventor of MLP (Meridian Lossless Packing, DVD-A's data compression system) and this year was able to give perhaps the most comprehensive and convincing 24/96kHz multichannel DVD-A demonstration I've heard to date.

Meridian used a prototype of its forthcoming 598 DVD-A/V player, with the awesome looking (and similarly priced) DSP8000 and 8000C for the front three 'speakers, plus DSP6000s for the rear channels. The result was undeniably impressive, with an all-enveloping and involving sound experience that undeniably brings you totally into the music.

The company also demonstrated the results of new developments in 'overhead' high-placed loudspeaker channels at the front left and right, where the centre and subwoofer channels are redirected to speakers positioned high above the main left and right channels. A few producers have been working this way, including those for some Chesky recordings. It brings an ethereal and ambient perspective to the music, ideal with acoustic material. Unfortunately, such musical riches don't come cheap - this set up would cost you somewhere approaching £100,000. ➡



Linn's LP12 and CD12 share the same room - may the source be with you!



Tor, blimey! Although allegedly cancelled, Glastonbury was actually held in Bristol this year.



ALR Jordan's gladiatorial Entry into A/V



The game of the Naim!

Other rooms by the British 'biggies' had people crammed in as much as Meridian. Naim, holed up in one of the top floor penthouse suites no less, was demonstrating the new 'budget' 5 Series to the assembled masses. Also present was the imposing, black hunk of metal known as the NAP500 £10,000 power amplifier, resplendent with its Mercedes gull-wing styling. What was particularly interesting to students of such things was the way visitors to the Naim room were sitting in pew-like rows in hushed reverence - one wag said they weren't audiophiles as much as acolytes.

Meanwhile competition from north of the Border was brisk. Linn was there in full effect, showing its new Ninka floorstanders and Katan stand mounts with the Sizmik sub woofer. Also on display in the same room was the £12,000 CD12 alongside the LPI2 - a real battle of analogue vs. digital, but from the same manufacturer! Full points for imagination.

Back on planet Earth, it was good to see the resurrection of a couple of familiar specialist names to the show ranks, like Royd Loudspeakers and Rega Research, both of which were demo'ing new

two channel products. Rega unveiled a swish new look to its existing range and demonstrated the new Planet 2000 CD player and Brio integrated amplifier. This company, perhaps more than any other, has played a significant part in vinyl's survival, so its expanding roster of affordable turntables was on show as you'd expect.

Many exhibitors incorporated the use of plasma screens and televisions into their demos. Most, such as the large Japanese companies (with the exception of SACD-touting Sony) were movie-based but some showed how the thirst for music can still be quenched using an A/V set up. ALR Jordan was a fine example of this, showing the Entry surround speaker system (based around the Entry S and matching sub) and using the DVD medium to play a range of live concerts and music compilations. A better sound from a discreet sub £1,000 speaker system would be hard to get.

There was still plenty to keep the hardcore audiophile happy though. High end companies like

Thomas Transducers with their Beauhorn, Avid with their awesome industrial style turntable, Veritas Horn Systems and a wacky new kid on the block, Glastonbury Audio (with some eye catching loudspeaker designs) all flew the flag for traditional specialist hi-fi. The 'Simon Pope Emeritus Editorial Award for Best Room at the Show' - a sort of Hi-Fi World equivalent of the 'Best in Show' at Cruft's - goes to an exhibitor that shall remain nameless. Suffice to say the guys there were demonstrating an amazing array of high quality kit valve amplifiers. A succession of great music being spun on the deck (much of which bizarrely mirrored my own record collection) ensured good vibes abounded, and there was absolutely no smoking going on - by the tube amps at least. All in all then, a fine time was had by all - Bristol's characteristically warm and pleasant 'vibes' were very much in evidence. ■ ▲

Ever since CD hit the streets the hi-fi business has been struggling to get more out of it.

Now SACD and DVD-A are with us the process will start all over again I suspect, because sound quality at present is less than spectacular and probably not a big enough leap to warrant the high prices that will undoubtedly be asked for discs. In the meantime Sony offers different filters to adjust sound quality (see our SCD-555ES review and tests) and where Sony go today others will follow.

Whether filters are the answer is doubtful though. CD is inflexible because it's specification is so tight. The idea of tiddling it with filters surfaced many moons ago with the Cambridge CD-1. It had a selection of digital filters. Digital being what it is, the bandwidth of the CD-1

back in 1984 is the bandwidth now of a player like the Sony; nothing has changed over sixteen years. Progress in core parameters is minimal with digital, unlike analogue. So the Cambridge reached 21kHz just like players of today, the theoretical upper limit of the system. It's filters could not extend response, which is set in stone by sampling rate, so Cambridge tailored what's there.

Quite what you should set out to achieve with different filters is open to argument. Some say they should do a better job in eliminating rubbish above 21kHz. This can compromise in-band frequency response though, which is audible. What we are talking about, technically, is trading one set of properties for another and there's little agreement about what is ideal.

My experience with the Cambridge was that the standard filter gave the best overall balance (it was a flat response with a small, smooth high-end roll down). Selecting other filters altered the basic balance of a recording slightly but in the end it was recording quality that dominated I feel. I was happy to let the player get the best from the recording without nay attempt at small tonal tweaks. The filters lay largely unused in the end.

I have a slight fear Cambridge CD-

owners out there are snorting with fury at a statement like this. This is where we get down to preferences of course. Some people like tone controls but others don't go near them. I am one of the latter. I'm of the view that the best hi-fi products are simple yet elegant, they are not crammed with gadgets and gadgets do little to alter the basic experience. The less signal processing we do the better the sound can be, always assuming good basic components. So a good, even, digital filter on a well designed player is likely to be the one that gives the best all



If the sound from a disc is unacceptably poor, most of it will be down to the recording and there's little that can be done about this.

round balance on most occasions. If the sound from a disc is unacceptably poor, most of it will be down to the recording and there's little that can be done about this.

A fundamental problem we have always suffered with CD is it's tight specification. Developed back in the late 1970s it is a very early and quite basic digital coding system. The CD sampling rate of 44.1kHz gives just enough bandwidth and no more, and the 16-bit description of a signal I always thought was right on the limits of acceptability. As you go downward in signal level distortion rises and rises until it far outstrips anything we ever suffered from LP. Worse, the distortion spectrum is nasty and it changes with level (i.e. modulates), all of which offends the ear much more than even quite large analogue distortions.

The arrival of SACD and DVD-A finally releases us from these sound quality restraints. I can't help but feel this will alter things nicely in the end, even if current samplers are mostly disappointing. Bandwidth up to 100kHz, five times wider than CD, gives room for good, slow analogue-like roll-offs, meaning an end to sharp digital filters at the top of the audio band. Twenty-four

bit resolution isn't about massive dynamic range in the home as so many engineers still seem to imagine, using old 1970s paradigms. It is about removing linearity from question over the useful range of music. At whatever level a recording takes distortion should not be an issue. This is the true value of 24-bit.

At present all sorts of odds and sods of recordings are being transferred to SACD and DVD-A, including old analogue recordings from bands like Deep Purple. I'm sure they'll be fun if you like that sort of thing but I'll listen to Flight of the Rat from the original LP thank you very much (and smile!). There's better to come though. If you go to internet sites like The Green Room (<http://www.auracle.com/greenroom/>) you'll see that the recording business isn't going to get caught out by digital this time; fantastic modern recordings are being made and will become available. I hope they'll be so impressive hi-fi manufacturers won't feel any need to give us banks of digital filters to try and make them sound better. That'll be the true test of high resolution digital - simple listenability. ●



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John's Hi-Fi, Brighton, 01273 676531
Photography, Brighton, 01323 662 230
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Revere Hi-Fi, Colchester & Ipswich, 01244 36340

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Audio Evidence, Exeter & Wexham, 01392 62416

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Orford Audio, Derbyshire, 0143 241304
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There's something about the Bristol Hi-fi Show that never fails to impress me. It isn't the Marriott Hotel where it's held, which is a rather middling affair that lacks any grandiose sense of occasion. Nor is the location particularly special unless you like the concrete jungle that is Bristol's Inner Circuit Road. No, I reckon it's the people, trade and public alike, who made it there.

According to the show organiser, there were more of them than ever this year. Visitors were up 15% over last year, and sales hit an all time record too, previously broken in the immediately pre-recession show of 1990. Even the press attendance was up - it's always a good sign if journalists can be bothered to turn up to one of the most important yearly celebrations of what they earn their living writing about. Even yours truly made it this year, without the shambling and pathetic (but true) excuse of my car breaking down en route like last year!

No, the show was positively 'smokin'. That's 'smokin' in The Fast Show sense of the word, and also in the literal sense too. Fortunately we were spared the spectacle of any of World Audio Design's tubular belles going pop, despite the hammering they

got in room 413. No, most sparks came from the cheap disposable lighters that the hard drinkin', hard livin' hi-fi trade brought along to ignite its many B&H. They're a healthy lot, hi-fi professionals.

The vibe at the show was great though. Loads of people milling around sampling the collective joys of the UK hi-fi scene. Of course, if you've ever been to such an event, you'll know from bobbing from room to room that they hardly offer ideal dem conditions. The amount of noise pounding the walls must have been matched point-for-point by that whizzing around the

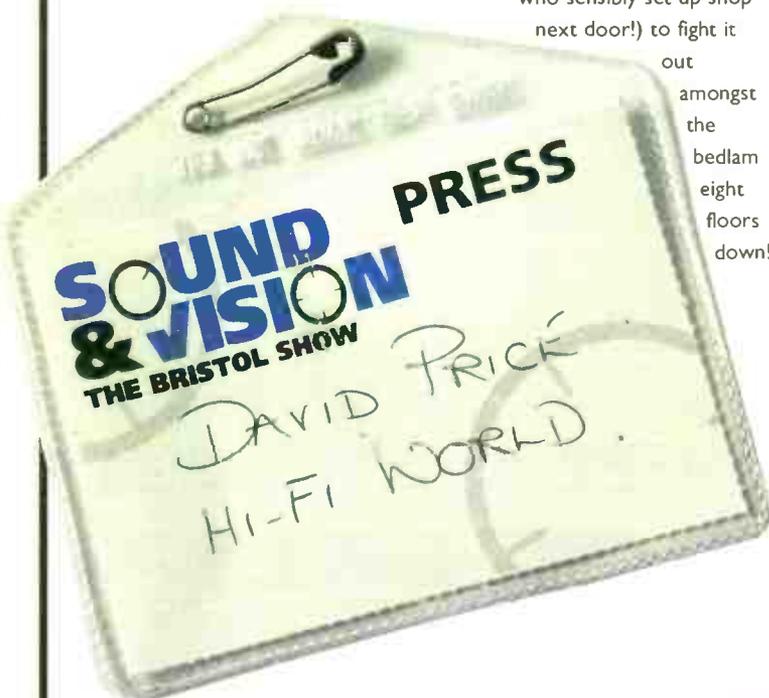
” **One surprise I hadn't been expecting was how bad the sound that some of the mass market Japanese brands were making.**

mains electricity supply. Why then anyone even took the comparative dems half seriously I'll never know. Still, for yours truly at least, it was an ear opener. I didn't hear any system, regardless of price, that even came close to my own. In that I include the very impressive Naim demo - not least because the Salisbury lads booked out a big suite on the tenth floor, leaving the 'swinish multitudes' (all 407 of them, not including Rega who sensibly set up shop next door!) to fight it out

amongst the bedlam eight floors down!

Maybe mediocre sound was a foregone conclusion anyway, in view of the acoustics, noise and what have you. But one surprise I hadn't been expecting was how bad the sound that some of the mass market Japanese brands were making. It was absolutely tragic - not mediocre, not 'okay considering the circumstances' but plain bloody painful. I could feel my teeth grinding as I walked past oceans of nasty transistorised distortion at 105dB. It frightens me that some of these guys even bothered to switch their systems on.

Best dressed man award went to Marantz's Ken Ishiwata, a guy who does not believe life should be conducted in a T-shirt and jeans. It could have been something I ate the night before, but I'll swear that blue satin jacket of his was glowing when I spoke to him on Sunday afternoon! Ligger of the show award goes to Linn's Brian Morris, who unadvisedly went out on the town on Saturday night with the Hi-Fi World crew - fortunately I made my excuses and left well before sunrise! All in all, a great time was had by all. If you get the chance to attend next year's Bristol bash, then go! ●



David Price



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Metaxus Charisma Pre. (M.M. / M.C. Phono-Stage) MINT / Boxed Etc (Sounds Superb)	1600.00	695.00
Art Audio Quint-tet Valve Power-Amp. (2 x 15 Watts Triode / 2 x 25 Watts Ultra-Linear) (Variable Negative Feedback) MINT / Boxed / Manuals	2137.00	895.00
Golden Tube SI-50 Remote Int. Valve Amp. (2 x 50 Watts) MINT / Boxed / Manual	1100.00	695.00
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Naim NAC-92 / NAP 90.3 Pre. / Power (M.M. J-Boards) (Matching CD-3 Compact Disc Player Also Available MINT / Boxed)	975.00	695.00
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Linn LK-1 Pre. + Dirak Power Supply. (M.M. / M.C. Phono-Stage) VGC / Boxed / Manuals	N/A	250.00
Moth Series 30 Active Pre. / Power-Amp. (2 x 30 Watts) MINT / Boxed (Black Ash Version)	600.00	269.95
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Audiolab 8000A Int. Amp. (Last Version) MINT / Boxed / Manual	500.00	329.95
Meridian 101B (M.M. Boards) (Black) MINT (Rare Black Version)	N/A	149.95
Marantz PM-6010 Remote Int. MINT / As New / Boxed Etc.	230.00	149.95
NAD 106 Pre (Balanced-Out) M.M. / M.C. Phono-Stage GC	250.00	99.95
Musical Fidelity Pre 3B Pre-amp. (M.M. / M.C. Phono-Stage) VGC	300.00	159.95
Musical Fidelity "The PreAmp" (Balanced-Out Etc.) MINT / Manual	280.00	129.95
Musical Fidelity B-1 (2 x 40 Watts Int.) VGC	300.00	99.95
Rotel RB-990 BX Power-Amp. (2 x 200 Watts) VGC / Manual	600.00	249.95
AMC 3050A (2 x 45 Watts / Full Remote Etc.) MINT / Boxed Etc.	300.00 +	109.95
NAD 3020i (2 x 25 Watts Int. / Phono-Stage) MINT / Boxed	180.00	99.95
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Naim CD-3 Remote MINT / Boxed / Manuals	950.00	599.95
Teac P-500 / D-500 (Transport & DAC) VGC	1200.00	499.95
Meridian 602 Transport / 606 D.A.C. (MSR Remote Control Station.) MINT / Boxed / Manuals	3100.00	1050.00
Rotel RCC-955 (5-Disc Multi-Player / HDCD) (2 in Stock) MINT / Boxed	525.00	219.95
Technics SL-PS 840 (Remote Etc.) MINT	420.00	219.95
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AMC CD-9 (Remote) MINT / Manuals / Digital Out	250.00	89.95
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If you're reading this, then there's a pretty good chance that at some time in your life you've upgraded your stereo. No matter how many times we seem to say, "this is it", financial circumstances change, or we simply get the urge to try something new. It's often immensely rewarding, of course, with a well-chosen upgrade offering us the chance to listen to a cherished music collection in a completely different light. The trouble comes in what to do with the old equipment. There are only so many spare rooms most of us have for second systems, and so the inevitable sale often has to take place.

When it comes to selling on unwanted hi-fi we appear to fall into two categories. Those of us who relish the prospect and those who loath the whole process. Selling hi-fi all day long I tend to fall into the second category. Hence, like many others I've often taken the easy route by simply part exchanging or "collecting" the cast-offs. Yet there comes a time when, if I'm actually going to be able to open the front door, some of the stuff has to go. The point has now come when I'm beginning to think just how many separate systems I need dotted around the house. When one is considering the choice of outboard DACs for the kitchen system, you know it's time to have a rethink!

With spring in the air, I can't help but think a good clear out is in order. Like our esteemed (keep going - ed) editor, Mr Pope, a compact all in one system is really beginning to appeal. Of course I don't mean a gaudy illuminated boom box, but something with decent sound that doesn't resemble a second hand clearance shelf from the local hi-fi store. A Linn Classik would do nicely. Somehow I don't think the local Linn dealer would take too kindly to me turning up with six boxes and a dozen cables to part exchange, though, so now it's just a case of flogging off some of my current stuff in order to finance the deal.

I thought that I'd start with two units. The first was an NAD 533 that had been made redundant after my Ariston RD90 restoration (see Hi-Fi

World, April 2001). The second was a Revox B760 tuner, which gets very little use and takes up a lot of space! Of course, in order to sell something one has to have an idea of the value. Even working in hi-fi, second-hand prices can still surprise me. After a little research it appeared to me that second hand hi-fi prices seem to be echoing the house prices divide between the South East and the rest of the country. Only in this case it's stalwart British kit verses the rest.

Scanning the various forms of small ads, I found that anything made

” Yet there comes a time when, if I'm actually going to be able to open the front door, some of the stuff has to go!

by Quad, SME, Naim or Linn appears to attract a premium price. Vintage kit, in particular, seems to be enjoying something of a revival. If anything, prices for older Quad and Naim amps, SME tonearms and Linn decks have gone up over the past year! As examples I found a worthy but not exactly spectacular Quad FM3 tuner for sale at £190 and a SME 3009 tonearm for £125. Granted the SME was in mint condition, but even the best would only fetch 50% of this figure a year ago.

By contrast, lesser-known kit can often be had for bargain prices. Witness an immaculate Logic DM101 turntable I saw sell for just £80. The reason for this, I suppose, must be two fold. Vintage equipment and particularly turntable sales are probably driven on, in part, by the revival in sales of vinyl. Secondly, over the past ten years we've seen the sad decline of many of the smaller cottage industries involved in hi-fi production. Unfortunately, no company usually means no spares! Hence, buyers tend to look towards the companies that have been in business for years, and have a superb reputation for service back up, such as Quad, SME, Naim and Linn. It strikes me that this is especially the case now. With the world economy stuttering somewhat, buyers seek certainty. Even

simply buying quality second-hand hi-fi can be a fairly costly business, because of the extra value attached to a recognised brand name.

If the prices for stalwart British kit came as a surprise to me, so too did that of FM tuners. I had expected them to have taken something of a knock, what with DAB becoming more established by the day. Yet they hardly appeared to have faltered, at least yet. Good news in respect to my Revox B760 then! I suppose, as one colleague pointed out to me, the switching off of FM transmitters is still someway off, and even then, there could always be the option of a "box-top" converter. Alternatively, sell your FM tuner to someone in the States, where they seem less keen to adopt DAB!

Slightly baffled as to what to ask I finally sold the NAD for £90 and the Revox for £190. So with two down and half a dozen more bits to go, I'm coming ever closer to that Classik. Then all I'll have to think about is what to fill the empty spaces around the house with. Probably hi-fi separates! ●

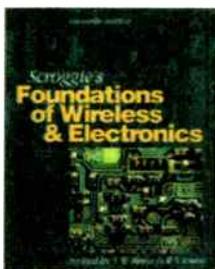


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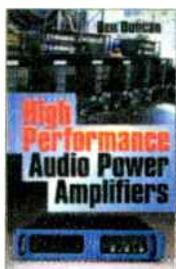
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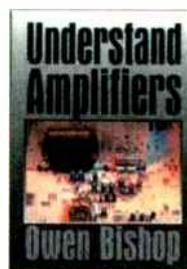
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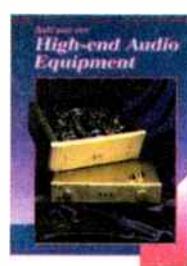
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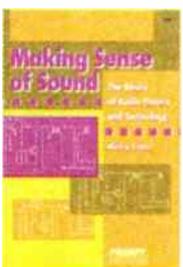
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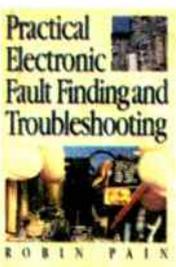
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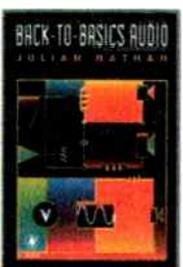
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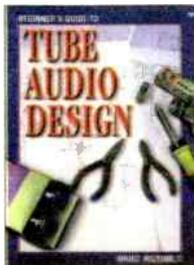
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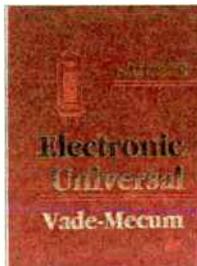
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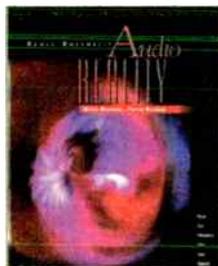
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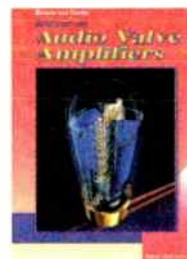
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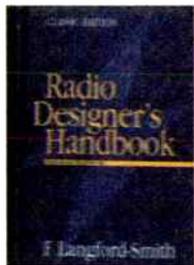
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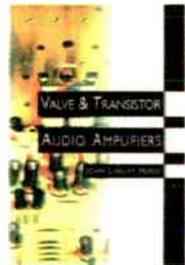
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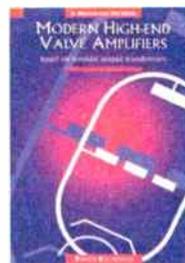
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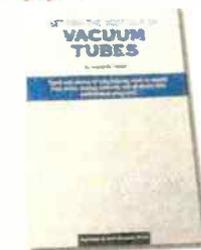
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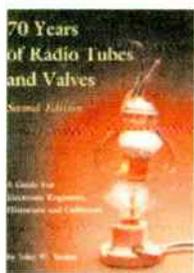
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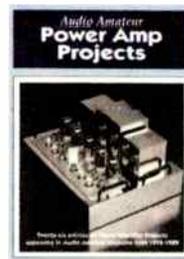
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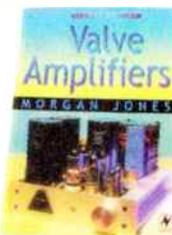
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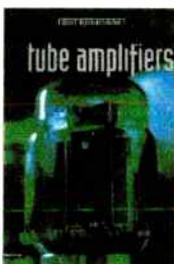
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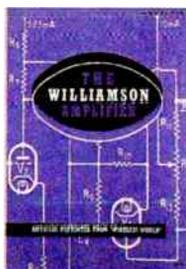
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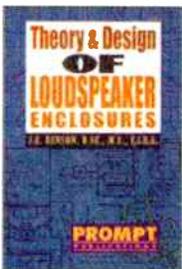
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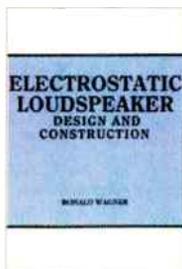
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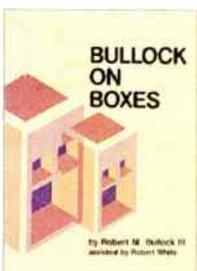
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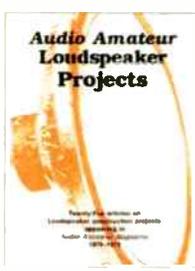
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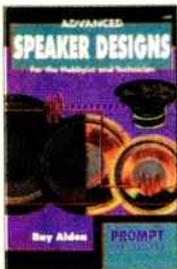
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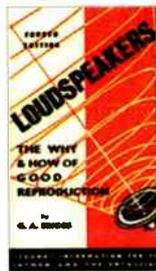
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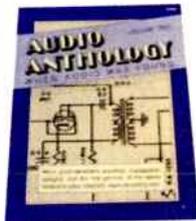
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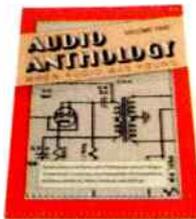
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Simon Pope checks out some excellent new DVD-video software from TDK.

▶▶ A new series of very interesting classical titles have been released on DVD from the unlikely source of Japanese recording media software company TDK. It's serious stuff indeed - with a catalogue spanning Simon Rattle, Zubin Mehta, James Levine, John Eliot Gardiner, Bernard Haitink, Claudio Abbado, Berlin philharmonic and Vienna hilharmonic. The discs range from older recordings from the mid-eighties to the latest titles with DTS five channel in addition to Dolby Digital 5.1 and stereo. I managed to procure a few titles for perusal and was struck by the quality of the video information, sound recording, overall production and last but not least, performances.

First up is a recording of Anton Bruckner's gargantuan, visionary 8th symphony in a memorial performance celebrating the 100th anniversary of the composer's death. The sound track is in both 5.1 Dolby Digital and stereo PCM and the performance was recorded on the 21-22 September 1996 in the Stiftskirche at St. Florian in Austria (the great man's old stamping ground). Pierre Boulez, once the 'enfant terrible' of the music establishment, has mellowed in his old age. The conductor and composer, whilst still a champion of the avant garde, now tackles tunes in his old age and has the intellectual backing of none other than the world's finest orchestra. As well as recording a Mahler cycle with the VPO, Debussy, Berlioz and now Bruckner are all in his repertoire. Listening to the recording you can see why Boulez was selected. He brings to Bruckner a slightly different interpretation that concentrates on texture and phrasing, but is still sympathetic to the inherent nature of the music. Tempos are slightly brisker than normal but there's no skipping detail in the score, every nuance and

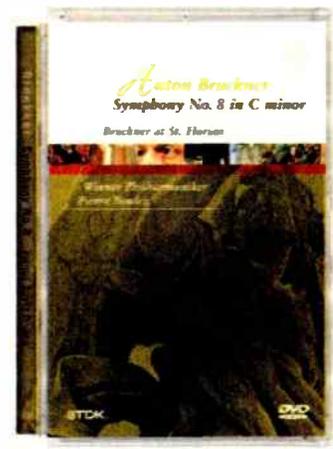
marking is treated with the utmost attention that brings you into the composer's ethereal sound world.

The magnificent slow movement doesn't have the tragic gravitas of Karajan's reading but Boulez's eloquent and serene sound brings a lightness and clarity to the Adagio. Indeed, the whole symphony follows this pattern - there's a glow to the orchestra that's a million miles away from the stodgy sound that can often be the overwhelming factor in 'bad' Bruckner. Production is excellent and the setting simply couldn't be bettered, but most importantly it is totally sympathetic to the music.

If you're a Bruckner fan, this is an essential buy and there's even an enlightening interview with Boulez included on the disc.

The other title I sampled was a concert by another of the world's great orchestras, the Berlin philharmonic, celebrating the tenth anniversary of their European concerts in May last year. Again in Dolby Digital or PCM stereo, this concert was recorded in the slightly more humble surroundings of the Philharmonie in Berlin, and features two works by Beethoven - the 2nd piano concerto and the ever popular 9th symphony, making a total of 115 minutes high quality music making. Again, the playing and performances are of the highest quality, with the Russian pianist Mikhail Pletnev giving his all in the concerto.

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Choir for the 9th symphony, which is a sparkling and exciting performance, if far less revelatory than Boulez's Bruckner. Orchestral playing is as good as ever by this fine band, the strings lush and rich, as emphasised in the beautiful slow movement, and the solos and choral singing precise and powerful. The disc has a great feeling of a live performance about it. These are two examples of what musical heights can be achieved with DVD.

There's a whole lot more waiting to be launched, including both jazz and pop titles and it's opening up new possibilities for audio/video interaction without the nasty boom and tizz 'appeal' of home cinema. ■ ▲

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DIAMOND LIFE

David Price looks warps back in time to one of hi-fi's classic budget blockbusters, the original Wharfedale Diamond.

It is 1984, and times are a changing. In fashion, politics, design and music, people are finally waving goodbye to the 1970s and moving on. In hi-fi, Compact Disc is beginning to hit the shops but is still very much a high end pursuit. Rather, turntables rule the roost and the ones to have include Dual's CS505, Rega's Planar 3 and Linn's LP12. Best selling amplifiers include NAD's giant-killing 3020 and A&R Cambridge's mid-price A60. Speakers are evolving too - Mission's 70, Boston Acoustic's A40 and Heybrook's HB1 are all walking off dealers' shelves.

With a stream of popular designs from the 1970s still in peoples' homes, Wharfedale is an incredibly popular loudspeaker brand. The feeling in hi-fi circles however is that the glory days of five years previous, when the XP, SP and E Series were the stars of every Lasky's showroom, are gone. What the famous Leeds company needed badly is another killer budget box.

It was into this world that the new Wharfedale Diamond was launched. Derived from research undertaken for the company's high end TSR102 project (trainspotters get fifty Olde Worlde points if they know that TSR stood for 'Total Sound Recall!'), they were essentially that speaker's treble and midrange unit in its own bespoke box.

The result was a loudspeaker in miniature, with a claustrophobic box space of just 5.2 litres to play with. Into this went a 19mm Son Audax plastic dome tweeter and Wharfedale's bespoke 120mm long throw mid/bass driver, sporting a (then almost state-of-the-art) polypropylene cone. Built on a rigid steel frame, it wasn't a bad little unit at all and gave the Diamond a fighting chance of producing a nice noise. Cabinets were thin 12mm chipboard



complete with the compulsory wood effect vinyl wrap. A ducted port, 30mm long and 65mm wide, fired out of the rear panel to give the Diamond a semblance of efficiency.

In true eighties audiophile tradition, the crossover was just two elements, plus a resistor to bring the tweeter level down. Lest we forget, five years earlier no self respecting loudspeaker went without a hopelessly complex, multi-element affair that sapped more power than an oven on Christmas morning. On the back were good old Seventies style spring clip terminals!

The result was a dinky little loudspeaker, just 240x185x205mm, which worked with amplifiers between 15 and 50W and had a relatively benign impedance of (nominally) 6 ohms. Sensitivity was just 86dB, meaning its 50W maximum input power was never going to sound very loud, but then again if you wanted disco power you bought JBLs!

Neither was bass anything to write home about; by around 75Hz it had all but disappeared. Hardly a startling set of statistics then, so why was the Diamond ever conceived?

The answer came when you listened to a pair. For under £80 you got loudspeakers that really took you to the heart of the music. In many hi-

fi respects they were ropey - bass was notable by its absence and treble extension and clarity poor - but in the musicality stakes they were corkers. That polypropylene mid/bass unit was clean enough to give you a window on the music that you just had to peer through. The Diamonds really capitalised on their design strengths - small cabinets meant a fast, tight sound with little overhang, and those tiny drivers made for near point-source imaging.

Wharfedale started changing the Diamond almost from day one. A year later the more balanced, sober sounding Diamond IIs came out, and thus followed the Super Diamonds complete with stronger, real wood cabinets and veneer, for nearly twice the price.

The following Active Diamonds were an incredibly good idea before their time. Few audio sources back then had line-level audio outputs, but now there are millions. A series of new Diamonds followed, each less focussed and audibly inferior to the originals. Buy the Is or IIs for around £20 to £50 depending on condition, and you'll have got yourself some eighties design classics. The new 8.1s sound much better, but for some of us dewy-eyed nostalgia merchants, the originals will never be surpassed.

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world favourites

Here's a list of products that are a good buy. We've tried to cater for a range of tastes, identifying strong products in every area. We're agnostic so you'll find a wide range of products, from valve pre-amps through to MiniDisc players. Products marked * are recently out of production but make a good second-hand buy.

Prices shown are those at the time of the review



Roksan Caspian CD player
Solid as a ROK

COMPACT DISC

ARCAM FMJ CD23 £1100
This British-built player is extremely versatile. Controlled and detailed with a musical insight that few match. (Jul 2000)

CAMBRIDGE CD4SE* £200
A touch soft in the treble but outstanding in every other respect. (Feb 98)

KENWOOD DP-3080/III* £180
Has great clarity and presence for the price. Not as naturally expressive as the CD4SE though. (Feb 98)

LINN KARIK III* £1775
Under rated and overlooked, the final Karik was a gem. Superb transport gives a brilliantly tight, grippy dynamic sound, albeit tonally rather dry.

MARANTZ CD-17 KI-S £1100
The Marantz excels in all areas. Without doubt this is one of the most involving CD players on the planet. Build quality is also exemplary. (Sep 97)

MARANTZ CD-63 MKII KI-S* £400
Similar to the CD-63SE but more powerful bass and an all-round smoother sound. The famous KI tweaks pay off again. Whether or not it is still pre-eminent against the vastly improved competition is a matter of opinion.

MERIDIAN 506 20-BIT* £1100
Very detailed and revealing player. More cerebral than visceral sounding, however. (May 95)

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-RAY £800
Commonsense sturdy CD player of exceptional ability. Clear and detailed with high quality internal processing system. The X-Ray is inclined to show up poor recordings, but it's only doing its job! (Feb 99)

NAD S500 £1000
This dynamic top of the range Silverline spinner delights with any type of music. Exciting, sophisticated sounding and highly recommended. (Jun 2000)

ROKSAN CASPIAN £895
The Caspian has a smooth, slightly bright sound with some of the clearest treble in the business. Very engaging, dynamic character. (Aug 97)

ROTEL RCD 951 £300
HDCD capability at a midrange price. Plain Jane looks but solid construction. There is some higher than average measured distortion which may take the edge off this otherwise tempting product. (Aug 99)

COMPACT DISC TRANSPORTS

SONIC FRONTIERS TRANSPORT £6999
Cutting-edge design and technology combine to make this one very desirable product. The only problem is the fantasy hi-fi price. (Sep 98)

TEAC P-30 £2500
Cheap it isn't, but then it sounds like a million digital dollars. Nothing short of superb. (Jun 97)

TEAC VRDS-T1 £600
Excellent mid-price silver disc spinner with a powerful, expansive and warm sound. Easily beats most sub-£1000 designs. A good choice for the budget conscious who want the best. (Feb 95)

CD TRANSPORTS

CAMBRIDGE AUDIO DACMAGIC 3* £99
Superb value for money with extensive facilities and solid, detailed sonics. Upgrades any sub-£300 player.

DCS ELGAR £8500
Future-proof convertor which will handle 24/96 and 24/192. Extremely open and natural performer. (Nov 97)

DPA LITTLE BIT 3* £299
A taste of the high end on a budget. Rich, clean, punchy sound transforms budget CD players.

MIDIMAN FLYING COW £299
Excellent as a DAC and doubles as an ADC for archiving to CDR. (Jun 98) Great value, as is junior version Flying Calf at £109. (Feb 99)

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-DAC* £300
A bargain for normal CDs and even better with HDCDs. (Nov 97)

SONIC FRONTIERS PROCESSOR 3 £6999
Quality never comes cheap! This DAC oozes class and when matched with the Transport 3 is certainly up with the best. (Sep 98)

TURNTABLES

LINN SONDEK LPI2 BASIK £1100
Off the pace these days in many respects but still an extremely sweet and engaging listen with a quintessentially analogue sound.

MICHELL GYRODEC SE £775
Exquisitely built, infinitely upgradeable deck that gives true high end sound at mid-fi prices.

MICHELL ORBE £2000
Fantastically capable all rounder with commanding, powerful, detailed sound that gets the best from almost any arm and cartridge. Supreme build, brilliant value. (Apr 95)

ORIGIN LIVE STANDARD (KIT) £145
Good in standard form with AC motor; frighteningly good with a DC motor and battery PSU.

PINK TRIANGLE TARANTELLA £680
Not only does the Tarantella have more style than a catwalk full of models, it also combines PT's usual clarity with real authority. (Oct 97)

PRO-JECT DEBUT £110
Straight out of the box and onto the shelf! Nothing short of a bargain. Vinyl's never had it so good, so cheaply!

REGA PLANAR 2 £214
Brilliant starter deck with extremely polished manner. Better built £274 Planar 3 is a great all-in-one package that eats mid-price CD players for breakfast.

ROKSAN XERXES X £1295
DSU or XPS 3.5 power supply £150/170 extra. Excellent pitch stability from a new Swiss motor and outboard power supply. Very tight bass, fine dynamics and revealing clarity. (Jan 97)

SYSTEMDEK IIX900*/RB250 £330
A fine all-rounder and easy to upgrade too. More depth and breadth than Rega Planar 3. (Sep 94)

VESTAX BDT-2000 £225
A stylish looking deck with infinitely variable speed 16-90 rpm, DC belt drive and built-in MM phono stage. Good value, with plenty of chassis room for alternative arms, if required. (Sep 99)

TONEARMS

HADCOCK 242 SE £649
Latest of a long line of unipivot arms. Added mass makes the 242 suitable for both low compliance MCs and straw-in-the-wind high compliance types. Revised geometry and chromium plating completes a first-class job. (Jun 2000)

NAIM ARO* £975
Truly endearing and charismatic performer - wonderfully engaging mid-band makes up for softened frequency extremes

REGA RB300 £180
Some may prefer the simpler RB250 at £130. Detailed, tight, rhythmic sound but tonally rather grey and cold-sounding. Still excellent value, though.

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1022 GA	£112 £77 EX £77	ANC AN 70 £13.00
1042	£130 £93 EX £93	Dual DN 145 E, DN 165 E £15.00
Eroica LX/H	£121 £84 EX	Goldring G800 Super E £16.00
Elite	£232 £163 EX	JVC DT 55, DT 60 £11.00
EX - Exchange price for a Goldring Any make/model of cartridge accepted		National EPS 24 CS, P 30 D, P 33 D £11.00
Audio Technica		Ortofon FF 15 E II, VMS 20 E II, DM 20 £15.00
AT 95 E	£23 £15	Pioneer PN 210, PN 220, PN 240 £11.00
AT 110 E	£28 £16	Shure N 75 C, SC 35 C, £11.00
AT OC 9 ML	£315 £237 EX	N 75 ED T2, N 75 EJ T2 £13.00
Denon		N 95 ED, N 95 EJ, N 75.3 (78) £15.00
DL 110	£79 £62 EX	VN 35 E £18.00
DL 304	£210 £179 EX	N 95 HE, N 97 HE, VN 35 HE £25
Grado		Sony ND 142 G, ND 150 G, ND 155 G £11.00
Prestige Black	£46 £25	CN234 £13.00
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MC 25 FL	£227 £193 EX	Prestige Series
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MC 30 Supreme	£452 £385 EX	SR-125 £139
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Prices shown are those at the time of the review



Musical Fidelity X-Cans2
Warm, sumptuous, sweet sound

SME 3009SII £309
Once state of the art, but no longer. Weak at frequency extremes and detail, but its legendary serviceability makes it a cult in Japan. Can be picked up for peanuts second-hand. (Jan 93)

SME 309 £689
A down-market version of the IV and V with aluminium armtube and detachable headshell. Tight, neutral sound with good tonality, but lacks the IV's pace and precision. Like the older SME 3009 series, this arm is also available in 10" and 12" versions. (Jan 93)

CARTRIDGES

AUDIO TECHNICA AT-110E £30
Great starter cartridge that's refined, detailed and musical beyond its price. Best value MM under £50

GOLDRING 1012GX £74
An accomplished MM with a solid bass, slightly forward midband and clean transients. Very reasonable price for such an able performer. (Jul 93)

DNM MICA £185
Better than Goldring's 1042 and costs only £135 on trade-in. An assured and transparent MM. (Feb 98)

DYNAVECTOR DV20X-H £299
The best modern budget MC combines deliciously sweet sound with fantastic get-up-and-go. High output version works a treat with valve phono stages too.

MUSIC MAKER £575
When mated with a good quality arm, this hand finished high-output pick-up gives an ear-boggling account of itself. Very high compliance ensures maximum information retrieval. An absolute (grain orientated) gem. (Feb 99)

ORTOFON MC 7500 £2000
Conclusive proof that there's hope for the world. It's a long time ago now but this high-priced favourite still earns its niche - CD lovers would die if they heard it. (May 94)

ORTOFON MC 15 SUPER II £140
Not quite as good as the dearer Supremes but the Super II is a splendid introduction to the joys of moving-coil cartridges

GOLDRING 1042 £130
One of the best Moving Magnet cartridges going, with beautiful treble and muscular bass. New low price makes it a bargain.

ORTOFON ROHMANN £1000
In a way it's MC 2000 meets MC 7500 with great tonal strengths and a dynamo sound. (Apr 96)

INTEGRATED AMPLIFIERS

AUDIO ANALOGUE PUCCINI SE £595
This superbly-built Italian integrated has a lucidity and control which leaves others nowhere. Sound stage a wow. (Dec 97)

AUDIOLAB 8000a * £495
Well rounded integrated with smooth and detailed sound plus a huge feature count. Great build makes later versions a top used buy.

DENON PMA-250SE £160
It might not have bags of grunt but the Denon can sound exceedingly natural and open. (Feb 97)

McINTOSH MA6800* £3735
The MA6800 not so much plays music as takes control of it, with effortless bass drive. (Sep 95)

MISSION CYRUS 2 * £299
Classic eighties minimalism combines arresting styling with clean, open, lively sound. Further upgradable with PSX power supply.

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-CANS2 £160
Warm, sumptuous, sweet sound h/phone amp. gives startling results with a decent set of headphones.

NAIM NAIT 3 * £575
Superb rhythms and dynamics make for great music making, but tonally monochromatic. Super optional phono stage makes it ideal for vinyl junkies.

ROKSAN CASPIAN £695
Smooth, warm integrated with remote control that works happily into most 'speakers. (Dec 97)

SONNETEER ALABASTER £995
Builds on the strengths of the Campion with ample control, colour and drive. (Oct 97)

PHONO STAGES

CREEK OBH-8 SE £180
Punchy, rhythmic character with oodles of detail makes this a great budget audiophile product.

LFD MISTRAL PHONO STAGE * £300
The Mistral has a warmth and involvement that make many pricier stages sound overpriced.

MICHELL DELPHINI MONOBLOCS £1995
Analogue tour-de-force gives supremely clean, detailed and finely resolved sound with breathtaking dynamics. Great value, even at this price.

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-LP £125
One of the famous MF X series. Full marks throughout for clarity and detail. Switchable between MM and MC. Indestructible build! (May 99)

PRO-JECT PHONO BOX £39
Not the last word in many respects but a thoroughly honest piece of work. Inexpensive introduction to all that vinyl has to offer. MM and MC provision plus choice of two impedances.

ROKSAN ARTAXERXES X £950
With the Atessa PSU the Artaxerxes X MM/MC stage still shines. Great stage depth, neutrality and tonal colour. (Oct 97)

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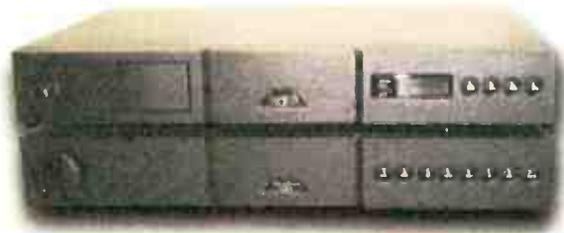
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SONNETEER SEDLEY £399
Combines transparency and fine dynamics with excellent rhythmic ability. (May 98)

PRE-AMPLIFIERS

AMC 1100 £150
Suffers from un-defeatable tone controls but an extremely good value piece of kit. Partners the similarly budget level AMC 2200 power amplifier, also at £150. Comfortable beginners' choice. (Mar 99)

AUDIO ANALOGUE BELLINI £475
Showcases AA's characteristic mix of clarity and musicality and blasts the competition. (Apr 98)

CHORD CPA1800 £1800
Clarity, insight and control are second to none - an addictive mixture. (Mar 98)

CROFT VITALE £350
A modestly priced valve pre-amp with exceptionally transparent performance. MM phono stage plus three line stages are standard. Volume controls are separate for each channel, thus giving balance adjustment. A remarkable item in all respects. (Feb 2000)

XTC PRE-1 * £1000
Almost valve-like in its smoothness, the line-level Pre-1 is warm and seductively clear. (Nov 96)

POWER AMPLIFIERS

ARCAM 9 * £400
With 70W on tap, the 9P will drive most loudspeakers with a spacious and detailed sound. Good bass welly too. (Dec 96)

CHORD SPM400 £1400
There's a sense of effortless power to the Chord that gives music real scale and presence. (Mar 98)

MARANTZ MODEL 9 * £8000
Authentic reproduction monoblocs still more than cut the sonic mustard. Highly expensive and highly sought after. (Mar 97)

MICHELL ALECTO £1989
Crisp, clean and beautifully controlled with gorgeous styling. Partnered with the £1650 Orca this is a superb winning combo. (Oct 96)

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-A200 £1000/pair
200W of high-end monobloc power in a grooved tube. (Aug 98)

NAIM NAPI80 £1060
Partnered with a NAC82, this has classic Naim control, and a superbly rhythmic presentation.

TUNERS

CAMBRIDGE T500 £180
An extremely engaging tuner with a performance at odds with its low price. Not exactly a Troughline, but you may not notice... (Feb 99)

CREEK T43 £399
Excellent detail, separation and dynamics. A great little tuner and unbeatable at this price. (May 98)

MARANTZ ST17 £600
A positive dreadnought of a tuner. Sweet and refined but with a heavy punch when needed. A tuner of this quality demands a decent aerial. (Jul 99)

MISSION CYRUS FM7* £300
Clear and lucid sound puts it up with the best. Superb build too. (Apr 94)

NAIM NAT03 £595
The NAT03's warm, atmospheric sound is further proof of Naim's proficiency with tuners. (Sep 93)

SONY ST-SA3ES* £250
Beguiling RDS tuner for the sonically discerning. Good ergonomics and sensitive too. (Apr 97)

CASSETTE DECKS

AIWA AD-S750* £200
Sonically a very decent machine at the price. Comes fitted with Dolby B, C and the dead handy Dolby S. (Apr 96)

AIWA AD-S950* £300
A stable transport, superb head and Dolby S make the AD-S950 an excellent all-rounder. (Feb 95)

KENWOOD KX-3080* £160
A simple deck, but excellent-quality head and transport give top quality sound. (Oct 96)

PIONEER CT-S740S £430
A great piece of engineering from Pioneer, with first-rate sound. (Jun 96)

YAMAHA KX-580SE* £250
The 'SE' tag is more than a marketing gimmick. Sound is solid and clear with Dolby S. (Sep 97)

LOUDSPEAKERS

CASTLE EDEN £469
Impressively vice-free 'speakers that offer great transparency and involvement. One of a select band that simply makes music regardless. (Mar 97)

EPOS ES12 * £495
Strong, punchy bass is allied to finely detailed, articulate midrange and sparkling treble. (Oct 96)



Kef Cresta I loudspeakers
A very musical sound

KEF CRESTA I £100
Delightfully sophisticated presentation for the price. Won't blow the roof off, but will deliver a very musical sound. (April 2000)

KLIPSCH HERESY II £1100
An outstanding high sensitivity loudspeaker with midrange and treble horns coupled with infinite baffle 12" bass driver. Effortless, fast and accurate. (May 99)

MISSION 752 * £495
Cracking mid-price mini towers combined HDA drive units and metal dome tweeters with surprisingly warm results. Benign load characteristics makes them great for valves.

MISSION 771 £170
Characteristically fast, punchy Mission sound from the Aerogel mid/bass and silk-dome tweeter. (Jul 98)

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Linn CD12 CD Player normal price £12000
Linn AV 5103 Preamp normal price £5100



Linn AV 5103 DTS Preamp (RF Demod) £3395

QUAD ESL 63 * £3450
A reference against which all other loudspeakers are judged, the '63s have superb imaging and genuine transparency.

TANNOY AMS8 * £2700
Bold sounding pro active monitor with solid bass, clear midrange and delicious treble. (Aug 96)

TANNOY MERCURY m2 * £140
A true audiophile bargain which embarrasses many more expensive boxes. Never mind the price, let your ears decide. (May 97)

MINIDISC PLAYERS

KENWOOD DM-9090 £500
One of the best MD players yet. ATRAC 4.5 gives clean and very musical recordings from this Kenwood. (Jan 98)

SONY MDS-JB930Q £250
Great mid-price machine that adds better build and facilities to the '530's already excellent sonics.

SONY MDS-JA50ES * £1300
This Sony can put the wind up Nakamichi cassette decks when used with better blank MDs. (Apr 98)

SONY MDS-JE555ES £520
MiniDisc recorder
The best sounding MD deck made so far, thanks to awesome build and heroic ATRAC-DSP Type R coding.



Alesis Masterdisk
A glimpse of the future

SONY MDS-JE510 £300
An impressive sound and unmatched convenience make this MiniDisc player an excellent buy.

DIGITAL RECORDERS

ALESIS MASTERDISK £1400
A groundbreaking hard disc recorder with a built-in CD drive. An amazing bit of kit, and a glimpse of the future. (July 2000)

KENWOOD DMF-9020 £500
An excellent tool for home recording, combines convenience, superb sound and a fair price. (Aug 99)

MARANTZ DR-17 £1100
Probably the best sounding CD recoder on the market. Built like a brick out house with a true audiophile sound. HDCD compatible. (July 2000)

PHILIPS CDR-765 £360
One of the first twin deck recorders/players that boasts high speed dub facility. Playback could be warmer, but still a bargain. (Oct 99)

PIONEER PDR-555RW £480
Excellent mid-priced CD recorder that both plays and records with equal panache. (Oct 99)

SONY TCD-8 DATMAN * £599
Super clean and detailed sound makes this an amazing portable. Not as robust as it should be though.

DVD PLAYERS

DENON DVD-5000 £1600
Monster build, as you'd expect at this price. Facilities and gadgets galore and drop-dead high end looks. A very smooth and sophisticated sound, although not as good as similarly-priced CD players (Mar 99)

PIONEER DV-717 £700
Well built and a solid performer, with a 'true' 24/96 digital output. Facilities in abundance and a controlled, exciting way with CD replay. Shame it lacks a Dolby Digital decoder! (Sep 99)

SONY DVP-S725 £490
One of the best buys in the DVD market. Available in a dodgy white case, but the facilities and performance more than make up for this. Excellent with both music and visuals, and a whole host of up to the minute facilities to keep you occupied. (Mar 2000)

HEADPHONES

JECKLIN FLOAT MODEL TWO £99
Wonderful panel-like and open sound from these esoteric-looking headclamps. Do not wear in public unless you like being made a fool of!

SENNHEISER HD-490 £50
Good value cans with an exciting and bassy sound. Everything one should look for in headphones at a sensible price.



Nordost Blue Heaven
A simple and effective upgrade

INTERCONNECTS

CHORD COMPANY CHAMELEON 2 £90/m
One of our favourite favourites, the Chameleons are musical performers with a smooth yet open sound.

DNM RESON £40/m
Neutral and transparent, and a steal at forty quid!

NORDOST BLUE HEAVEN £150/m
Some of the fastest and most transparent cable around. A simple and effective upgrade.

VAN DEN HUL ULTIMATE THE FIRST £260/0.6m
Carbon interconnects that help you forget the electronics and concentrate on the music. Miraculous transparency.

LOUDSPEAKER CABLE

CHORD COMPANY RUMOUR £9.95/m
The Rumour is our reference at the price. Tight and tuneful bass mixed with air and space results in a cracking cable for the money.

DNM RESON £6.95/m
This cable has a transparency of sound that's rarely heard at the price. Excellent value for money.

NORDOST BLUE HEAVEN £375/3m pair
This isn't cheap, but it sounds absolutely fab. An open and spacious sound that simply carries music.

Billy Vee
SOUND SYSTEMS

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0% APR is available on purchases of more than £650. Please call for details. * Prices Correct at 12/12/00 E&OE

Arcam AV50 Amplifier	(699.00)	£499.00	Nakamichi DVD10s Reg0 DVD (2Yr G/tee)	(599.00)	£395.00
AVI Biggatron Speakers	(599.00)	£399.00	Naim Nait 3 Amplifier S/H (1Yr G/tee)	(650.00)	£399.00
KEF Concerto 1 Spkrs (5Yr G/tee)	(599.00)	£399.00	Naim CDI CD Player S/H (1Yr G/tee)	(1650.00)	£929.00
KEF Concerto 2 Spkrs (5Yr G/tee)	(799.00)	£529.00	Naim Nait 3R Amp (1Yr G/tee)	(799.00)	£569.00
Linn AV5103 RF Demod DTS Preamp(2Yr)	(5100.00)	£3395.00	Naim AV1 Surround Procs E/D (2Yr G/tee)	(1835.00)	£795.00
Linn CD12 CD Player E/D (2Yr G/tee)	(12000.00)	£7995.00	Naim SBL Passive Speakers S/H (1Yr G/tee)(2475.00)		£1495.00
Linn Keilidh Spkrs Black inc Stands	(885.00)	£699.00	Naim SNAXO 2/4 Crossover S/H (1Yr G/tee) (770.00)		£375.00
Linn Kaber Passive S/H(1Yr G/te)	(2000.00)	£795.00	Naim Credo Speakers (2Yr G/tee)	(1285.00)	£895.00
Linn LK85 Power Amp S/H (1Yr G/tee)	(499.00)	£375.00	ProAc Response 2 Spkrs S/H (1Yr G/tee)	(1995.00)	£1190.00
Marantz DV4000 DVD Player (2Yr G/tee)	(399.00)	£289.00	PMC LB1 Speakers (2Yr G/tee)	(1150.00)	£825.00
Marantz CD 6000 Ki CD Player (2Yr G/tee)	(499.00)	£359.00	Rega Luna Amplifier (2Yr G/tee)	(375.00)	£249.00
Marantz PM 6010 Ki Amplifier (2Yr G/tee)	(499.00)	£349.00	Rega Jura Speakers (2Yr G/tee)	(498.00)	£329.00
Nakamichi DVD10a Reg2 DVD (2Yr G/tee)	(799.00)	£329.00	Rotel RB991 Power Amp (2Yr G/tee)	(650.00)	£459.00

World classics

CASSETTE

NAKAMICHI DR-2

A great machine with Nakamichi's legendary heads. The lowest cost 'true' Nakamichi at the time, retailing for £600.

NAKAMICHI CR-7

The last of the great ones, and definitely the best Nakamichi ever (yes, better than a Dragon)

YAMAHA TC-800G

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

CD PLAYERS

MERIDIAN 207

Beautifully-built two-box with pre-amp stage. Very musical although not as refined as modern Bitstream gear. No digital output.

PIONEER PD-91

Built-to-last player with easy upgrade routes for modifiers. Not knockout as it stands but get one cheap and have a go!

CAMBRIDGE CDI

The first two box player with weighted mechanics and even an optional Dropout/error counter. Radical and effective at the time - a classic.

AMPLIFIERS

LEAK POINT ONE, TL12 & TL10

Ancestors of hi-fi, consequently expensive nowadays. As with all vintage valve stuff, overhauling is de rigueur before use, using original parts if possible.

LEAK PRE-AMPS

Line of 'good for their time' pre-amps. Use of EF86 pentode valve for high gain rules out ultra performance. Not the highest-fi.



Garrard 401
A legendary turntable.

LEAK STEREO 20

Excellent workaday classic valve amp. In good order the 20 will not disgrace itself. Various upgrades are available from specialist repairers.

LEAK TL12+

Plentiful monobloc equivalent of Stereo 20. Reasonably inexpensive and a tweekers' dream. Genuine valve hi-fi on a budget.

NAD 3020

You can't argue with success! NAD's budget transistor integrated gave thousands their first taste of hi-fi and remains great value.

QUAD 33/303 PRE/POWER

Great style and construction, also bullet proof. Warm and wooly sound, but easy going. A good introduction to early transistor audio classics.

QUAD 22/II PRE/POWER

One of the all-time classic valve amplifiers. Unusual circuit but it works beautifully. 22 pre-amp not up to today's standards.

SUGDEN A21

Seventies transistor integrated has an eminently likeable smoothness and musicality. Limited inputs via DIN sockets.

TECHNICS SE-A5 Mk2

Nice transformer and electronics, shame about the casework. With tweaking, this 150watter can sound sweet.

LOUDSPEAKERS

KLIPSCHORN

Not exactly plentiful or cheap but a splendid beast. For efficiency they have seldom been equalled. Space hungry!

LEAK SANDWICH

Rather warm sounding big infinite baffle but cheap with it. With a reasonably powerful amp can sound quite satisfying.

LOWTHER PM6A

High quality full-range driver; still manufactured. High sensitivity, as fitted to many classic horn designs.

MAGNEPLANAR SMGa

Touch dry in the bass but a technological loudspeaker with genuinely musical abilities.

MISSION 770

Father of the 77 range which continues to this day. Well mannered with a warm sound and a kind load to amplifiers.

QUAD ESL57

Unrivalled. Properly serviced there is nothing like them. Their natural presentation may make them caviar to the general.

YAMAHA NS1000M

Hi-tech favourites of the Japanese and Americans. Viewed more warily in the UK but can give excellent results.

TANNOY GRF & AUTOGRAPH

Folded horn monsters which certainly sound good if you have the space. For Tannoy vintage see HFW November 1998.

WHARFEDALE SUPER 8 RS DD

Ideal experimenters' driver. High sensitivity ~14,000 Gauss magnet and extended frequency range. Inexpensive too!

TANNOY YORK, LANCASTER

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

Very honest piece of kit, well made and easily adjusted. Vinyl beginners could do very much worse.

ALPHASON HRI00S

First class arm, up to present-day standards. Buy carefully, though, as there's no service available now.

ARISTON RDI I

A one-time king of turntables very similar to the Linn LP12. Now deposited but worth a look at the right price.

LINN AXIS

Uncomplicated, lower-price version of the famous Sondek. Less expensive than some of its stablemates.

GARRARD 301 & 401

Legendary turntables, once fairly plentiful. Excellent back-up available; many different custom plinths available. High quality.

GOLDRING Lenco 88 & 99

Great deck for the kitchen table enthusiast. Garrard fans won't look at 'em but cheap and capable. Servicing available.

HADCOCK 228

Recently out-classed by Hadcock's updated 228 Special Edition but a proper hi-fi arm for all that. Makers still service.

MICHELL FOCUS ONE

20 years and still going strong. Early runner in the 'modern' turntable cycle with a first class arm. Factory servicing available.

SHURE M75

Recent line-contact improvements have left the M75 behind but the wide range of needles make it a handy tool.

SME 3009 IIS

Everlasting classic tone-arm. Spares permanently available from SME. No longer the last word but peanuts second-hand.

THORENS TD124

Best classic deck ever? Judging by the prices they fetch it's possible - 78rpm too!

THORENS TD150

Mid-price deck with a keen following. No real difficulty with servicing - novices may find the suspension system unnerving.

TRIO L-07D

Knockout heavyweight from 1980 with stainless bearing and 11lb platter! Not a give-away and beware! - spares scarce.

TUNERS

LEAK TROUGHLINE (ORIGINAL)

Interesting ornament but no longer hi-fi. Limited coverage of 88MHz to 100MHz only.

LEAK TROUGHLINE II & III MONO

Arguably the best-sounding tuners ever. Adaptation for stereo easy via phono multiplex socket.

LEAK TROUGHLINE III STEREO

Excellent tuner with indifferent stereo decoding circuit. Best when adapted to use modern outboard decoder.

MARANTZ ST-8

Possibly the ultimate Tardis console, including an oscilloscope for checking the strength of signal. Expensive even now.



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Hi-Fi Separates

Arcam Xeta II amp	£199	Musical Fidelity X-Plora	£499
Audiolab 8000A Amp	£299	Marantz CDR 4050 Recorder	£299!
Audiolab 8000-CDM	£499	Marantz Ki Sig 6010 Amp Gold	£350!
Linn Axis Turntable	£250	Marantz Ki Sig 6000 CD Gold	£450!
Linn Karik CD	£799	Mission Cyrus Amplifier & PSUX	£399!
Linn Kairn Phono Pre-amp	£999!	Music Technology Harrier walnut	£299
Linn Mimik CD	£599	Naim CD-3	£660
Linn Majik amp (used)	£450	Naim NAC-92 Pre/NAP-90 Pwr	£650
Linn Kolektor Pre-amp	£399	Nait II Amplifier	£299
Linn LK-140 Pwr-amp	£550	Quad 34 Pre/ 306 Pwr amps	£399
Linn Keildh Speakers	£500	Rega Radio (still boxed)	£150
Linn Ikemi CD Player	£1599	Rega Planar 25 Turntable	£550!
Linn Itok LVII Tone arm	£299	Rotel RCD-971 CD Player	£299
Musical Fidelity A2 CD	£249	Rotel RC-970BX/RSP960-AX	£299
Musical Fidelity X-A1 amp	£399	Sony ST SA3ES Tuner	£199

AV Separates

Arcam AV-50 Amplifier	£199	Pioneer NS-DV1AV System	£999
H/K AVR-65 DTS/AC-3 Amp	£499	Rotel HDV-985 DVD	£400
H/K AVR-45 Amp Receiver	£399	Selecto SVT-195CRT Projector	£1499
Naim AV-1 Processor	£799	Yamaha RXV-795 Amp/Rec	£499
Marantz DV-4100 DVD Player	£299	Yamaha RXV-395 Amp/Rec	£199
Pioneer DV-626 DVD Player	£299	Yamaha DSP-492 Processor	£149
Pioneer DV-535 DVD Player	£199	Yamaha RXV 496RDS Amp/Rec	£249

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- Acoustic Energy
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- Audible Illusions
- Audio Physics
- B.A.T
- Boulder
- Bryston
- Cary
- C.A.T.
- Chord
- Clear Audio
- Denon
- DNM
- Dynavector
- Egglaston Works
- Electrograph Delphi
- Genelec
- Gryphon
- Graham
- Helios
- J M Lab
- John Shearn
- Krell
- Lexicon
- Loewe
- Mark Levinson
- Michell Eng.
- Musical Fidelity
- NEC
- Nordost
- Oracle
- Plinius
- P.M.C.
- Primare
- Quadraspire
- Selecto
- REL
- Rockport
- Roksan
- Ruark
- Shahinian
- SME
- Straight Wire
- Sugden
- Tara Labs
- Teac
- Thule
- Totem
- Transfiguration
- Trichord
- Trilogy
- Van den Hul
- VPI
- Wilson Audio
- Wilson Research
- YBA

H I - F I

HOME CINEMA

MULTIROOM INSTALL

RESELL

New this month

POWER AMPLIFIER

Jadis JA30 Monoblocks	£2,495.00	£6,000.00
Trilogy 948 Stereo	£1,295.00	£2,000.00
Audio Note P2 SC	£850.00	£1,500.00
Graff GM200	£4,750.00	£8,000.00
ML 436 Mono Power Amps	£10,500.00	£12,000.00
Advantage M300 Monoblocks	£2,750.00	£4,000.00
Cello Duetta 350	£4,995.00	£10,000.00

PRE AMPLIFIER

YBA 2 Alpha Pre mm/mc	£On Dem	£2,200.00
Trilogy 901 Pre	£549.00	£995.00
Krell KSL + Phono	£1,295.00	£ -

SPEAKERS

JM Lab 810 New	£POA	£799.00
JM Lab 815 New	£POA	£999.00
JM Lab 807 New	£POA	£599.00
JM Lab 515 New	£POA	£499.00
Proac Response 3.5 Cherry	£2,250.00	£4,250.00
Proac Response 3 Rosewood	£1,495.00	£ -
Sonus Faber Guarnari + Stds	£3,995.00	£6,000.00

CD PLAYERS & DACS

YBA CD Speciale	£595.00	£675.00
Theta Data II/ Progen III Bal	£2,750.00	£8,500.00
Advantage CD S1	£2,750.00	£4,000.00

TURNTABLES, ANALOGUE, VARIOUS

Rockport Capella/ Air Tangent 2B/ Clear Audio Insider	£11,995.00	£17,000.00
Michell ISO/ HERA	£395.00	£600.00
Roksan Shiraz (New)	£550.00	£1,000.00
Transparent Music Wave Ultra 8ft Pair	£1,495.00	£2,100.00
Ortofon MC 3000 mk II	£695.00	£1,000.00

Pre amplifiers

Mark Levinson 380S	£3,995.00	£6,495.00
Naim Hi Cap	£350.00	£ -
Cary SLP 50	£795.00	£1,195.00
YBA Pre 1 Alpha & psu mm/mc	£On Dem	£4,900.00
YBA Passion Pre + mc	£On Dem	£5,595.00
Boulder 2010 Pre	£p.o.a.	£25,000.00
Plinius I6L	£On Dem	£3,200.00
Krell KSL pre	£1,295.00	£ -
Audible Illusions LI	£1,595.00*	£2,000.00
C.A.T. ultimate reference Pre Amp Incl Phono Stage X-Demo	£4,895.00*	£5,750.00
Tube Tech Seer Pre Amp	£595.00 *	£935.00
Audible Illusions P3A Pre MM/MC	On demo	£3,140.00
Audio Research LS9	£1,995.00	£2,500.00
Electrocompaniet EC 4.5 (new)	£895.00	£1,195.00
Exposure VII	£295.00	£600.00
Exposure XI pre XII psu	£795.00	£1,500.00
Jeff Rowland Consumate + phono (3box)	£3,750.00	£8,000.00
John Shearn Phase 6 Pre	£695.00	£900.00
Mark Levinson No 28	£1,750.00 *	£4,000.00
Naim 42.5	£195.00	£450.00

Quality speakers

B & W Nautilus 804	£1,995.00	£2,500.00
Avalon Ascents	£6,995.00	£12,000.00
JM Lab Micro Utopia	£On dem	£3,899.00
JM Lab Mini Utopia	£On dem	£4,500.00
JM Lab Mezzo Utopia	£On dem	£7,300.00
B & W Nautilus 801	£6,995.00	£8,500.00
JM Lab Electra 915.1	Ex Dem	£1,895.00
Audio Physics Tempo III	£On Dem	£2,000.00
Cadence Arca	£6,995.00	£10,000.00
Naim SBL's	£1,695.00	£2,225.00
BC Acoustics Tibre	£795.00	£1,100.00
ClaraVox Magnifica	£9,500.00	£14,500.00
BC Acoustics Araxe	£895.00	£1,195.00
Ensemble Speakers PA1	£995.00	£2,000.00
Acoustic Energy AE120	£350.00	£500.00
Alon Adriana (new)	Special	£10,000.00
Alon V MK III	Special	£5,500.00
Audio Physics Caldera	On demo	£10,000.00
Audio Physics Libra	X-demo	£4,799.00
Audio Physics Rhea Sub	£2,350.00	£3,099.00
Audio Physics Spark	On demo	£1,749.00
Audio Physics Steps	On demo	£999.00
Audio Physics Virgo	£2,395.00	£3,295.00
Electrocompaniet Qube	£895.00	£1,400.00
Orelle Swings	£695.00 *	£1,200.00
Rogers LS55 (new)	£330.00	£430.00
Wilson Cubs	£4,995.00	£6,000.00
Wilson System 5.1	£8,500.00	£18,000.00

Power amplifiers

Cary SLA 70 mk II70	£1,450.00	£2,250.00
YBA 2 Alpha amp (DT, HC)	£2,295.00	£3,050.00
Audio Refinement Complete Amp	£695.00	£895.00
Audio Research VT200	£7,795.00	£9,998.00
Audio Research Ref 600 mk II	£29,995.00	£ -
YBA Passion Monoblocks	£On Dem	£8,995.00
YBA Passion Stereo	£On Dem	£5,995.00
Krell FPB 300c	£8,500.00	£9,998.00

Krell FPB 200c	£7,500.00	£8,450.00
Sunfire 300 Power Amp	£1,495.00 *	£2,400.00
Sugden Master Class	£1,995.00	£3,000.00
Plinius 50s	£On Dem	£3,000.00
Krell FPB 250M Monoblocks	£7,990.00	£10,796.00
Krell FPB 200	£4,750.00	£7,000.00
Plinius 250 mk IV	£Dem	£6,000.00
Audio Note Kasi	£14,950.00	£30,000.00
Cary 805 C Monoblocks	On Demo	£8,250.00
Lavardin Model IS Integrated x 2	£1,295.00 *	£2,200.00
Boulder 500 AE	£3,495.00	£5,500.00
Audio Note Neiro (as new)	£7,995.00	£16,500.00
Audio Note Ongaku (new)	p.o.a.	£45,000.00
Cary 300 se LX20 Monoblocks	£3,750.00	£5,250.00
Cary 572 se Monoblocks	£1,750.00 *	£2,350.00
Counterpoint SA12	£795.00	£1,400.00
Exposure IX Power supply	£795.00	£1,500.00
Exposure VIII	£450.00	£700.00
Jadis Defy 7 MK III	£2,000.00	£4,790.00
John Shearn Reference Phase 3 Power Amp	£550.00	£749.00
Kenwood L1000C pre/ L1000M Power Amp	£1,195.00*	£2,500.00
Krell FPB 300	£6,500.00	£9,990.00
Krell FPB 600 c	£9,995.00	£14,994.00
Meracur Intrare 6 (int) X-demo	£1,795.00	£2,000.00
Sugden AU51	£995.00	£1,500.00
Pioneer A300 Int	£90.00	£180.00
YBA 3x Pre/PWR	£1,295.00 *	£2,400.00

CDplayers & DACS

Thule Spirit CD 150B	£ On Dem	£899.95
Audio Refinement CD Complete	£650.00	£875.00
Wadia 860	£5,495.00	£8,500.00
Teac P30	£1,995.00	£2,500.00
Boulder 2020 dac	£p.o.a.	£24,000.00
California Audio Lab Sigma II dac	£1,495.00	£2,400.00
California Audio Lab Delta Trans		
Cyrus Dac Master & Cyrus Disc Master	£450.00	£899.00
Forsell Air Ref Transport MK II	£495.00	£899.00
Helios Model 3	£4,995.00	£8,000.00
Krell KAV 250 CD	£450.00 *	£700.00
Krell KAV 300 CD	£1,895.00	£2,599.00
Krell KPS 25sc	£2,750.00	£4,290.00
Marantz CD14	£18,995.00	£23,498.00
Mark Levinson 30.5/31	£1,295.00	£1,600.00
Mark Levinson No.39	£11,500.00	£24,000.00
Micromega CD 3.1	£4,250.00	£5,000.00
Oracle CD 2000 Transport	£1,095.00	£1,995.00
Pink Triangle Da Capo	P.O.A.	£7,299.00
Teac P500	£795.00	£1,595.00
Theta Data II Transport AT + link	£395.00	£600.00
YBA CD Integre	£1,995.00	£4,000.00
	On Demo	£1,095.00

AV components

Harmon Kardon AVP1	£250.00	£ -
Pioneer CLD 2850 Lazerdisc	£250.00	£ -
Thule PR250B DTS/ Dolby	£On Dem	£1,549.95
Thule PA250B 5 Channel Amp	£On Dem	£1,549.95

TELEVISIONS & DVD PLAYERS BY LOEWE

Loewe DVD	On Demo	£495.00
Loewe Aconda	-	POA
Loewe Planus + Std	-	POA
Loewe Xelos + Std	-	POA
Loewe LZA Active Speakers	-	POA

PLASMAS

NEC	-	POA
Electrograph Delphi	-	POA
Panasonic	-	POA

Turtables & analogue

TURNTABLES/ ANALOGUE/ VARIOUS

Voyd Reference/ IO Limited/psu/ reference psu/ step up	£12,999.00	£25,000.00
Plinius 14 Phono	£1,995.00	£2,750.00
Transparent Audio Music Wave Ultra XL Bi-Wire	£2,100.00	£3,200.00
Cary PH301 MM/MC	£995.00	£1,695.00
Koetsu Red K Sig.	£1,295.00	£2,000.00
Michell Orbe	£1,395.00	£2,000.00
SME V Gold (Silver Wired)	£1,595.00	£2,500.00
Nackamichi DR 3	£225.00	£400.00
Ortofon MC7500 Cart. (NEW)	£1,295.00 *	£2,000.00
Nakamichi 202E	£295.00	£600.00
Tom Evans - The Groove	£On Dem	£1,500.00
Clear Audio Reference Mc phono stage X-demo	£1,695.00	£2,065.00
Rega Planer 3 + Hi Fi News Out Board Power Supply	£320.00	£423.00
Clear Audio Symphono phono stage X-demo MM/MC	£640.00	£740.00
Clear Audio Evolution + ARM	£995.00	£1,475.00
Lavardin Reference Phono	£ -	£2,500.00
Musical Fidelity XLP2	£395.00	£495.00
Oracle MK V Turntable	P.O.A.	£4,199.00

Clearance items

Micromega Tempo 2 Integrated	£395.00	£900.00
Burmester 850 Monoblocks	£1,295.00	£3,000.00

* Price reduced this month

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Apex Acoustics

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Cable news at Apex – 14 day home trial available. This successful try before you buy method is proving popular with Apex customers.
Cables available for trial

Ecosse Reference

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The Composer
The Conductor CA1
The Maestro MA2
The Quartet MS2 new arrival
The Producer Digital

Speaker Cables

CS2.3
MS2.3
MS4.45 biwire new arrival



Latest arrival the new Ecosse Reference MS4.45 biwire cable and MS2 Quartet balanced interconnects when used together will open the window on your system. Phone for details of special deal when purchased together. Second Hand cables available from MIT Naim Nordost QED Roksan etc. 14 day trial also available on these cables. P/Ex and payment terms available on cables. For Ex Dem and Secondhand equipment check trade ads at rear of magazine.

Steve Mosedale

Phone 01527 450500

E-Mail Apexsnm@aol.com

For Details and appointments

VdH

The Source Hybrid
The D-102 111 Hybrid
The First
The First Ultimate

Speaker Cables

CS122 Hybrid
CS122 Teatrack
biwire
Royal Jade Hybrid
The Wind Hybrid



Veritas – The Truth News!!

After a stunning display at Bristol Hi-Fi show with the new P400 power amp and stand mounting 7 speakers Apex are proud to have this combo on permanent dem. Also available are the 20's 25's and H1 Horns. Other speakers in the range available by arrangement

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VALVE AMPS	
ART AUDIO QUINTET stereo power amp	1500
AUDIO INNOVATIONS 500 integrated with phono	1000
AUDIO INNOVATIONS 200 integrated	4200
AUDIO NOTE P4 monoblocks 18 watts	4200
AUDIO NOTE P-ZERO phono stage in stock	1700
AUDIO NOTE M2 phono preamp	700
AUDIO NOTE ZERO preamp/monoblocks silver finish ex dem with full warranty	2100
AUDIO 4 SILVER HI-GI FT3	2250
AUDION PREMIER line preamp	900
AUDION REFERENCE pre amp with phono, old but good	1750
AUDIO RESEARCH SP11 MKII	2250
AUDIO RESEARCH LS15	1000
BEARD P35 power amp	400
CONRAD JOHNSON PV10A pre with phono, boxed	800
CONRAD JOHNSON PREMIER 11A power amp 70 watts per channel	3750
6 months old mint, upgraded op valves, boxed	2000
CONRAD JOHNSON PVS PREAMP with phono	2000
COUNTERPOINT SA100 100 watt valve/master hybrid excellent sound	2000
EDISON pre/power	3500
GAMMA ERA REFERENCE preamp with phono	3500
GAMMA RHYTHM REFERENCE	3000
GOLDEN TUBE AUDIO SE 40	1100
HBC "BEASTIE" 211 single ended amp	1500
HBC "black beetle" NOW AVAILABLE	1600
LUXMAN CL 32/MQ 3600 valve pre/power	1000
MELOS 222 two box pre with phono	3000
ORANGE PREAMP	275
SONIC FRONTIERS SFM 160 MONOBLOCKS	5500
SONIC FRONTIERS SFS 40 POWER AMP	2000
SOUND DESIGN LINE LEVEL valve pre	3500
VAC AVATAR new remote controlled	1500
VTL MONOBLOCKS 1500 600	1500

COST	PRICE	NAIM NAC 32
		NAIM SNAPS
		NAIM NAP 90 / NAP 90
		NAIM 32/110 old style
		NAIM NAC125 75
		NAIM me phono boards 40 pounds/pair suit 32, 42, 62, etc
		NAIM NAIT ONE integrated
		NAIM NAP 160 power amp very old style
		NAIM 250 very old style but rebuilt by Naim in 1998
		NAKAMICHI LA3 integrated amp
		PINK TRIANGLE PIF FVVO FRENCH (two box wuu)
		dry cell psu serviced last year
		PSAUDIO MODEL TWO PLUS C power amp 75wpc
		QUAD 34/306 pre/power amp grey
		QUAD
		QUAD 44/405 MkII
		QUAD 33/388
		QUAD 303 rare grey version serial No 94000
		QUAD 522 power amp
		QUAD 606 power amp
		SONY TAE 868 eqn preamp boxed
		SONUS FABER musica
		SUGDEN P28 Power 100 WATTS
		SUGDEN A48 mk2 and matching tuner
		SUGDEN A48 MK1 in wooden sleeve 130
		TECHNICS SU-C2000SE-A2000 PRE POWER 200 watts
		THRESHOLD SL10 and CAS 2 pre/power
		TOCCA 22 class A power amp

150	SUGDEN R21 tuner matches old a21	80
150	TANDBERG TCD 300 cassette deck	50
each 300	YAMAHA CR 600 silver with wooden case	100
350	YAMAHA ES1000 surround sound processor/AMP	100

LOUDSPEAKERS	
	ACOUSTIC ENERGY AE109in rosewood
	ACOUSTIC ENERGY AE1 mk2 in rosewood with matching pillar stands
	APOGEE MONITORS hybrid standmounts with slate audio stands
	ATC SC110 black boxed ex dem
	AUDIOGRAMME ELLE ONE electrostatics 1 year old
	AUDIOMASTER LS3/5A test
	AUDIONOTE ANZ1 on demo
	AUDIOPLAN KONTRAST 2 german silver wired floor stands
	B&W S30 SILVER SIGNATURE FLOORSTANDERS boxed
	CELESTION SL6
	CELLO SERAPH active speakers with stands
	EPOS ES22 mint and boxed cherry
	GALE 401
	HBC "EMPHORHORN" SERIOUSLY HORN LOADED
	HBC CONCERT 11
	KEF 200c rosewood CENTRE SPEAKER
	KEF LS3/5A Raymond Cooke Ltd Edition piano black
	KLIPSCH BELLES same drivers as the Klipschorn
	LINN Kakers BLACK
	MORDALINT SH-ORT 737 with Kelly Ribbons
	ORIGIN LIVE RESOLUTION with stands
	ROGERS BRAC LS14
	RUARK TALISMAN II
	RUARK TEMPLAR II
	RUARK SABLE MKII
	SNELL TYPE
	SONUS FABER ELECTA
	SONUS FABER GUARNERI with stands
	SONUS FABER CONCERTO GRAND PIANO
	SPENDOR BC1
	TANNIY ARDEN'S empty cabinets
	UKD CARLUSO Ltd Edition, four way floorstanders
	WILSON CLUBS

120	ALPHASON SOLO + BASIK arm	450
120	ARCICI LEAD BALOON TURNTABLE STAND	150
1800	ARISTON RD11 ELECTRONIC with arm	250
1800	AUDIO NOTE AN-52 step up transformer	150
1900	GARRARD 301 in green marble plinth with BLACK SME 3009r arm	2500
	GRAHAM I.S.ARM	1200
	LINN AXG5	1400
230	LINN LP1 2 black boxed / cirrus/lingo/ekos	500
	LINN LP1 2/TITOK	1500
	LINN TROIKA boxed needs rebuild	750
1250	LINN TROIKA boxed good with decent tip	450
1080	MICHEL GYRODECK black/gold with linn basik arm	650
2500	10000 NAIM prefix phono stage	400
	NOTTINGHAM ANALOGUE INTERSPACE with SPACE ARM boxed 1000	600
	ORTOFON MC25FL excellent	250
	ORTOFON ROMANIAN plays but needs rebuild	1000
	PIERRE LURNE II turntable with rega arm	2600
	PINK TRIANGLE LITTLE PINK THING with RB300	350
	ROCKPORT TECHNOLOGY 6000 ARM	3000
	ROKSAN ARTEMIZ ARM	350
	SOTA SAPPHIRE with Helius Orion arm	1300
	SYSTEMDECK II biscuit on style	150
	THORENS TD 125SH IMPROVED in thorens plinth	170
	VOYD THE VOYD with reference bearing and lexan reference platter with split phase psu	1350
	VPI TNT 3 with mk6 Airpod feet, flywheel and heavy platter all boxed	2800

TRANSISTOR AMPS

600	300	ALCHEMIST KRAKEN integrated amp
500	250	ARCAM DELTA 290 amp remote
400	220	ARCAM 290P power amp
5700	450	ARCAM ALPHA 10P 3 channel power amp
2350	1150	AVI S2000MP/5000MP pre & monoblocks 150 watts
1000	500	AVI INTEGRATED
1300	475	AUDIOLAB 8000C/P pre/power grey colour
1000	500	AUDIOLAB 8000A pre
2000	1200	AUDIO SYNTHESIS DESIRE power amp
	600	Bose 1801 250W
25000	10000	CELLO PALETTE MIV multi input version with Master psu
	250	CYRUS 3
	450	CYRUS ONE
	300	DNM 2 pre with 3 boards and upgraded by audiocom with oscons etc
	500	DPA DSP2005 pre amp
	500	Electrocompaniet pre/power original 25W class A
1400	600	HEYBROOK C3/P3 Pre/Power with Teak cases
	100	HITACHI HMA7500 power amp
	100	KELVIN LABS class A integrated with phono stage nice
	3000	KRELL KSL line pre
	3200	LAVARDIN IT line integrated
	2000	LAVARDIN AP/PA pre/power 1 year old ex demo
	5700	LFD LS1/P41 some upgrades done
	1000	LINN LK1/LK280
	800	LINN MAJK
	1000	LINN STRATOS 100watt monoblocks
	200	MAGNUM IA-125 integrated amp
	3500	MARK LEVINSON ML12 pre
	1000	MERIDIAN 101/103 pre/power
	1000	MERIDIAN 531 integrated amp
	1100	MERIDIAN 541 PROCESSOR/PRE
	1350	MICHEL ARGO HR line level pre
	650	MOTHL 60 WATT power amp wood mint boxed
		MUSICAL FIDELITY
		MUSICAL FIDELITY PREAMP/TYPHOON/TYPHOON
		MUSICAL FIDELITY A1 classic class A amp
		MUSICAL FIDELITY A100 as above but with more power
		MUSICAL FIDELITY MASO class A monoblocks
	270	NAD 114 pre
		NAIM 140 new style

850	450	ARCAM DELTA 100 cassette deck
	80	EDINBURGH WIRELESS FM TUNER
	200	LEAK TROUGHLINE III STEREO
	200	LINX THETA FM tuner
	400	LUXMAN ST10 lab reference series tuner
	350	MERIDIAN 204 FM tuner
	350	NAKAMICHI BX2 cassette deck
	100	QUAD FM2
	100	QUAD FM3 tuner
	90	QUAD FM4
	250	REVOX A77 mk4 2 track with Dolby nice two track
	250	REVOX G36 2 TRACK
2500	1000	
7500	3500	

TUNERS, CASSETTE DECKS & REEL TO REEL

SEE WEB SITE FOR FULL LIST

850	450	ARCAM DELTA 100 cassette deck
	80	EDINBURGH WIRELESS FM TUNER
	200	LEAK TROUGHLINE III STEREO
	200	LINX THETA FM tuner
	400	LUXMAN ST10 lab reference series tuner
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	350	NAKAMICHI BX2 cassette deck
	100	QUAD FM2
	100	QUAD FM3 tuner
	90	QUAD FM4
	250	REVOX A77 mk4 2 track with Dolby nice two track
	250	REVOX G36 2 TRACK

1500	pair	ALTEC 1960s studio monitors 2x10" and horn
600	300	Bearm Echo Avantic DL7-35 single copper coloured amp
250	pair	HEATHKIT HA12 68A monoblocks with vol control
3000	100	PYE MOZART pre/power a bit rough
2000	800	QUAD II output transformer
3500		QUAD I single amp
400		ROGERS JUNIOR with eb84 single amp

WANTED

1250	3000	THORENS TD 125SH IMPROVED in thorens plinth
2000	500	VOYD THE VOYD with reference bearing and lexan reference platter with split phase psu
1125	500	VPI TNT 3 with mk6 Airpod feet, flywheel and heavy platter all boxed

VINTAGE

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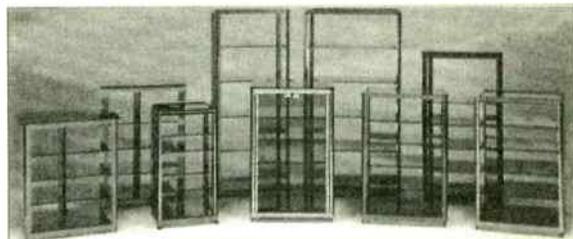
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NAIM NAIT 3	£ 395	SH
NAIM SBL BLACK EX DEM PASSIVE	£1495	XD
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NAD 304 AMPLIFIER	£100	SH
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MUSICAL FIDELITY XA-50 POWER AMPS EX DEM	£ 395	XD
MUSICAL FIDELITY XA100R AMPLIFIER EX DEM	£795	XD
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OPERA PLATEA SPEAKERS MAHOGANY EX DEM	£595	XD
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KRELL KRC PREAMPLIFIER	£2495	SH
KRELL 250CD MK 2 EX DEM	£2795	XD
KRELL KAV300 CD PLAYER EX DEM	£2995	XD
KRELL KAV300CD AS NEW	£3450	
KRELL KAV250 CD PLAYER	£1795	SH
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AUDIOLAB 8000Q	1350	695
AUDIONOTE EL SPK MINT INC STANDS BOXED	1780	850
ALCHEMIST NEXUS APD32A 24 BIT CD PLAYER NEVER USED	599	495
TARGET R4 SPEAKER STANDS	325	225
ALCHEMIST TS-D1 24 BIT DAC	299	225
AVI S2000MC 24 BIT CD PLAYER	999	895
ALPHASON AKROS 2 SPEAKER STANDS BOXED	65	40
AV1 S2000 MM MONOBLOCKS	1399	1195
AVI S2000MT11 AM/FM REFERENCE TUNER	899	725
EAR MC3 MC TRANSFORMER	629.95	495
DALI ROYAL MENUET MK2 CHERRY FINISH	399.95	295
DALI EVIDENCE C70 CENTRE SPEAKER	399.95	325
HEYBROOK QUARTET ROSEWOOD FINISH	550	295
LAT AC2 6 WAY DISTRIBUTION BLOCK 3 FT	194	170
LAT AC2 POWER CABLE 3 FT	65	55
SME V ARM MINT/SEALED BOX	1460	1300
TALK ELECTRONIC THUNDER 1 CD PLAYER	599.95	495
NAIM 01 TUNER BOXED	1800	1095
NAIM CDX CD PLAYER	2300	1800
MICHELL GYRODECK SE/RB300 MINT BOXED	975	875
MICHELL ARGO/HERA PRE/PSU		325
TALK ELECTRONIC CYCLONE 1 INT AMP R/C	599.95	495
MICHELL ALECTO MONOBLOCKS	1989	1599
TRICHORD RESEARCH DINO MM/MC PHONO STAGE		299
MICHELL ORCA PRE AMP	1286	1100
MONRIO ASTY INT AMP MINT/BOXED	425	275
LINN PRETEK MM/MC PHONO		150
NAD C320 INT AMP/REMOTE MINT	200	125
NAIM SBL LOUDSPEAKERS WALNUT FINISH	2100	895
NAIM 250 POWER AMP	1750	1095
MARANTZ CD 63	300	150
TANNOY MERCURY M3 SPEAKERS BLACK/BOXED	230	150
LINN INTEK INT AMP/BOXED		150
QUAD 405 MK 2 POWER AMP		225
MARK LEVINSON 27.5 POWER AMP		3500
KRELL KAV 300 CD /BOXED	4200	2995
MERIDIAN 501 PRE/ MSR		425
PRECIOUS METALS SILVER SIGNAL 202B BALANCED	430	350
PRECIOUS METALS SILVER SIGNAL 204 INTERCONNECT 1 METRE	430	350
PSB ALPHA 6 ACTIVE SUBWOOFER	499.95	425
PROJECT CLASSIC/PROJECT9/510 CHERRY MINT	450	325
REGA BRIO INT AMP		180
PROJECT PERSPECTIVE/PROJECT 9 ARM BOXED MINT	750	525
LAT 6 F POWER CABLE UNUSED/BOXED	99	65
MERIDIAN 206B CD/REMOTE/BOXED		325
MERIDIAN M30 ACTIVE LOUDSPEAKER	950	450
SONICLINK VIOLET INTERCONNECT (OFF THE REEL)		17.5 METRE
PROAC RESPONSE 1S BOXED INC STANDS		795
STAX SRS 2020 MK2 EARSPEAKERS	395	325
TARGET MX100 SPEAKER STANDS PIANO BLACK	79	60
TRICHORD RESEARCH 500 POWERBLOCK	299	265
SUMIKO BLUE POINT SPECIAL MC NEW UNUSED	249	225
SONETEER THE BYRON CD PLAYER	795	645
SONETEER THE SEDLEY PHONO STAGE MM/M/C	399	325
SONICLINK VIOLET INTERCONNECT CABLE 17.5 METRE		
LYRA LYDIAN BETA MC CARTRIDGE	599	495
SONICLINK 8 WAY DISTRIBUTION BLOCK 2 METRE CABLE	225	175
TOM EVANS MICROGROOVE MM PHONOSTAGE	400	295
EAR 834P MM/MC PHONOSTAGE	529	450

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S/hand and ex-demo clearance items - May'01

	Was	Now		Was	Now
CD Players & DAC'S			Loudspeakers (con't)		
Accuphase DG28 Digital Equaliser S/H	5690	3750	Royd Sourcecor Walnut Bookshelf S/H	650	379
Audio Analogue Paganini CD Player S/H	750	549	Sonus Faber Concerto GP Walnut Ex-Demo	1699	1250
Audio Note CD2/Border Patrol PSU Ex-Demo	1694	1199	Sonus Faber Concerto Walnut Ex-Demo	899	699
Audio Note DAC 3 Signature New Style Ex -Demo	2850	1495	Totem Acoustic Arro Cherry S/H	995	599
Densen Beat 400 CD player HDCD S/H	1280	899	Velodyne TX810MK2 Subwoofer S/H	695	379
Einstein Valve CD Player Ex-Demo	2899	1899	Yamaha NS1000M Black Monitors S/H	1200	595
Mark Levinson 31.5 Transport S/H	9500	5999			
Monrio Asty CD Player Ex-demo	695	549	Cables & Accessories		
Rega Jupiter Transport/Io DAC Ex-Demo	975	650	Air Sus Cherry Platform Ex-Demo	169	99
Resolution Audio D92 24/96 Dac/Processor Ex-Demo	1500	949	Audio Sculpture 2m RCA Interconnect Ex-Demo	380	149
Resolution Audio VT960 DVD Transport Ex-Demo	3500	1899	Bow Technologies Wand Remote S/H	349	199
Roksan DA2 DAC S/H	599	299	Deskadel 1M Interconnects WBT/RCA S/H	300	150
Roksan DP2T Transport S/H	1295	599	Einstein Octopus 8 Way Mains Block (Ex-Demo)	199	149
Roksan DS5 PSU S/H	579	399	G- Flex isolators (New & Boxed)	199	75
Theta David II CD/DVD Transport (4 Months old) S/H	5698	4500	Lindsey Audiophile 2m Satin RCA Interconnect New	495	199
Theta Digital Pro Prime II DAC S/H	1699	599	Madrigal HPC 2m Balanced Interconnect Ex-Demo	310	149
			MIT MH750 Speaker Cable S/H	N/A	699
Turntables Tonearms & Cartridges			Naim Audio NAC A5 2X6m S/H	N/A	50
Basis 1400/RB250 (New & Boxed)	1200	899	QED Silver Spiral 1m RCA Interconnect S/H	90	50
Basis 2000/RB300 (New & Boxed))	2000	1599	Shakti On Lines (New&Boxed)	85	45
Garrard 401/Aphelion/RB300 Ex-Demo	N/A	599	Rega 6 Tier Modular Stand Ex Demo	375	175
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Roksan DS 5 Attessa PSU Ex-Demo	549	399	Tara Labs 2x2m Bi-Wired Nexa Terminated	150	75
Roksan Radius 3 Turntable (98) Ex-Demo	470	250	Target 5 Tier Silver Stand MDF Shelves Ex-Demo	249	145
Roksan Xerxes Piano Lacquer XPS 1 (SME Cut) S/H	1295	399	Target HM 50 Stands (New&Boxed)	99	69
			Tripod 4 Tier Table S/H	N/A	59
			Vdh Skytrack 2X4M Bi-wire Speaker Cable S/H	75	39
Preamplifiers			Tuners & Tape Decks		
Alchemist Forsetti Signature Preamplifier S/H	1500	749	Cymbol C DAB Digital Tuner (Ex-Demo)	1000	599
Audio Research LS22 VT Line Preamplifier with Remote S/H	3999	2250	Roksan Caspian Tuner AM/FM (Ex-Demo)	699	359
Conrad Johnson PV 10 A Ex-demo	1299	899			
Conrad Johnson PV 12 A Ex-demo	2300	1799	Clearance Items Under £100		
Densen DM20 Preamplifier Ex-Demo	1380	899	Denon DCT-670R CD/RDS ICE S/H	269	79
DPA Enlightenment New Style Preamplifier Ex-Demo	799	449	Dais Turntable Motor Unit Only S/H	N/A	99
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Michell ArgoHR/Hera Preamplifier S/H	N/A	459	Naim Audio 32 MM/MC Preamplifier S/H	N/A	75
			Sony Playstation With 2 controllers S/H	N/A	59
			Trio K500 SME Cut S/H	N/A	99
Amplifiers					
Alchemist Forsetti Signature Power Amplifier S/H	2000	999			
Arcam Alpha 10 Integrated Phono/Remote S/H	850	499			
Audio Analogue Puccini SE Integrated S/H	635	449			
Audiolab 8000S Integrated S/H	900	459			
Bartolomeo Transperenza ST140 Power Amplifier S/H	1500	695			
Bow Technologies Wazoo XL Integrated S/H	2499	1895			
Chord SPM1400B 500W Mono Blocks (Silver) S/H	11200	5999			
DNM PA3S Stereo Power Amplifier 6 months old S/H	2999	2495			
Graaf 50/50 Push Pull Power amplifier (New&Boxed)	2100	1695			
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Krell KAV 300I Integrated S/H	2790	1799			
Pass Labs Aleph 4 100W Class A Stereo S/H	5100	2750			
Primare A30.1 Integrated Ex-Demo	1500	1099			
Rega Maia Power Amplifier Ex-Demo	475	349			
Sugden SP30 Class A Stereo Power Amplifier S/H	950	599			
Loudspeakers					
Audio Note AN-K/SP Light Ash Loudspeakers Ex-Demo	1070	629			
Audio Note AN-Z Two Floor standers (Black) Ex-Demo	549	395			
Boston Acoustics VR 10 Centre Channel (New&Boxed)	250	175			
Diapason Karis Walnut 2 Way Monitor (New&Boxed)	1250	899			
Infinity Outrigger jr Outdoor Speakers (New&Boxed)	249	129			
JM Lab Colbalt 807 Cherry Monitors Ex-Demo	595	425			
JM Lab Colbalt 815 Dark Cherry Floor standers Ex-Demo	950	749			
Martin Logan SL3 Hybrid Electrostatics S/H	3400	2495			
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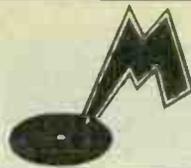
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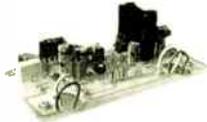
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Speaker's Corner!

While the various CD formats battle away and we wait for things electronic to settle down, speakers still remain one of the more fascinating aspects of hi-fi and that final vital link. Not much new at the recent Bristol Show, and not frankly many rooms producing fantastic sounds, whether hi-fi or home cinema, but conditions, lets face it are not ideal!

Not at the show however, were three manufacturers I deal with, namely AVI, ATC and Alon. All three have new speakers out, AVI with the Pro-Nines at £700 a pair (but can be bought in fives for A/V), ATC with "THE NEW ACTIVE 10" at £999, and Alon with quite a collection of A/V speakers, subwoofer and hi-fi units.

Most interesting in the Alon range are the Exotica at around £10k, using a ribbon tweeter, plus the Capri at about £2k with 2 x 6 1/2" bass/midrange and 1" silk soft dome tweeter. These are all a departure for Alon, from their previous, but still available open baffle mid/tweeter speakers such as the Alon I to V.

The only one from the above that I have actually heard is the AVI Pro-Nine, which offers an excellent mixture of bookshelf size, detailed open character and clean bass for it's size. Very good on voice and ideal for those in flats who can't play music too loud but want detail and depth. Great on opera as a result. Please call for a demo.

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MEASURED PERFORMANCE

LOUDSPEAKERS

KEF REFERENCE THREE-TWO

Here is an interesting performance from a loudspeaker. The frequency response of KEF's new Model Three-Two is peculiarly flat. I've talked about flat responses before, but never as super-flat as this. As transducers go this is an almost strange result. What it means is there are almost no resonant systems at work anywhere, nor any unwanted reflections. The implication is this loudspeaker will be not only sound super-smooth, but very coloration free.

Manufacturers have complained to me about my frequency response measurements, saying the 5dB vertical scale was too critical, compared to the industry standard 10dB. Times have changed. Drive units have steadily improved, design techniques honed and the 5dB scale is common. Now, against this critical scale, loudspeakers measure flat within a few dB, but still rarely as flat as this KEF. Let's get a little more critical though.

There is a small peak at 3.15kHz of around +2dB. At this frequency it is almost certainly attributable to a little peaking in the upper midrange unit before its natural roll-off. The peak will add just a little sharpness into the sound. The tweeter in KEF's Uni-Q driver sits at the base of the bass/mid cone, firing out through the protective grill of the centre cap. The tweeter integrates well; there's no midrange crossover dip. There is, however, a little treble lift of +2dB from 12kHz to 16kHz, which will add a little spit to high treble - when it exists in a recording.

Overall then, the remarkably flat and smooth frequency response of this loudspeaker, from 125Hz up to 20kHz is punctuated by two minor effects that will add some sharpness and brightness. Otherwise, from our frequency response analysis I'd expect this 'speaker to sound smooth, coloration free and very well integrated.

I should add, for the more technical amongst you, that this is a long-averaged result taking in a few different vertical microphone positions to represent different but realistic listening heights. Doing this also takes into account phase matching irregularities, which doesn't flatter poorly phase-matched loudspeakers. It does suit the KEF Uni-Q though which gives very consistent results over a very

wide frontal range.

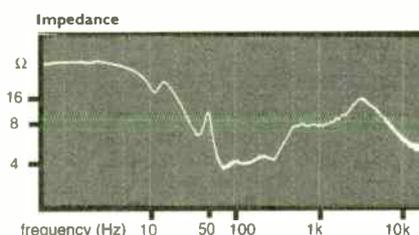
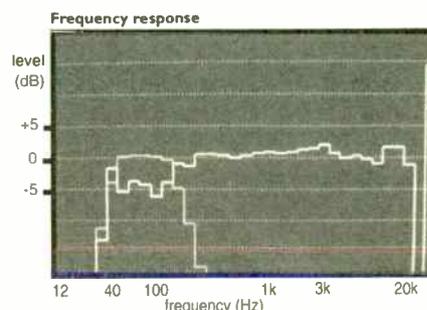
The radiation symmetry of the Uni-Q and its tight phase matching mean that if you walk around a room whilst music is playing the sound remains consistent, filling the room well. It is a useful ability, making a specialised design like this easy to live with. Castle pursue the same end by a different means in their Howard S3 I reviewed last month.

So much for performance above 125Hz. Below this frequency, forward output shelves by many dB in a pronounced fashion, otherwise reaching smoothly down to 40Hz flat. Our analysis shows the port covers the frequency range where the forward driver shelves, but this isn't so much a port as an output for the coupled-cavity bass units.

The Three-Two rolls off steeply below 30Hz. KEF use an input capacitor as a high pass filter to achieve this roll off, something the impedance curve shows clearly. Impedance measures 8ohms at 35Hz and rises rapidly below this frequency, rejecting amplifier signals much below 20Hz, including DC switch-on disturbances or standing offsets.

In spite of its size - 1137 high, 238 wide and 359 deep (mm) - plus an enormous weight of 35kgs (77lbs) the Model Three - Two reaches down to 36Hz (-6dB) KEF claim, which isn't especially low, and my measurements back this up. The speaker cuts off fast and hard below this frequency, which does influence sound quality. It has massive deep bass, but not subsonic bass, unlike a slow roll-off transmission line for example, or even a large reflex like our own KLS-9, which quite obviously goes lower. Instead, the KEF has massive output and power handling ability (300W quoted) over the ordinary bass range. This sort of performance means its bass will sound relatively "fast", since real subsonics tend to linger, making for apparently slow bass. Delivering goodly amounts of power down to 36Hz means the speaker will shake a room firmly, but there are recordings around that go lower and the KEFs will miss some of their awe.

Sensitivity was good at 89dB for one nominal watt of input (2.8V). I measured impedance as 5.8ohms (i.e. 6ohms nominal) and KEF quote 4ohms. This is a 4ohm speaker over a limited range, from 65Hz



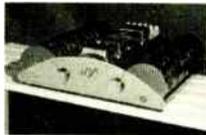
up to 250Hz, where it is drawing bass current from an amplifier. Otherwise, impedance is higher, so 4ohms is a minimum value. There's nothing unusual here; most modern loudspeakers hit 4ohms across the bass octaves nowadays in an attempt to boost the quoted (and perceived) voltage sensitivity. It's just a bit odd that KEF call it a 4ohm 'speaker.

Although there is a sudden impedance change at 60Hz, which suggests significant reactance, the Model Three - Two is otherwise fairly resistive and, as far as an amplifier is concerned, a reasonably easy load.

To get bass power into a speaker like this from a valve amplifier it is best to use a 4ohm tap, which gives optimum power matching into the speaker at low frequencies. Large, sensitive loudspeakers like this are not unsuited to valve amps surprisingly. Listen first though because the Three-Two isn't really designed for such use. Impedance varies from 20ohms to 4ohms between 50Hz and 20kHz. A 40W feedback amplifier with 4ohm output might suit well though.

The Three-Two is an imposing device and truly a reference loudspeaker in terms of frequency response flatness. It measures very well, as I'd expect from KEF, but all the same it does have some unusual features, notably the fast deep bass cut off. **NK**

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WHARFEDALE DIAMOND 8.1

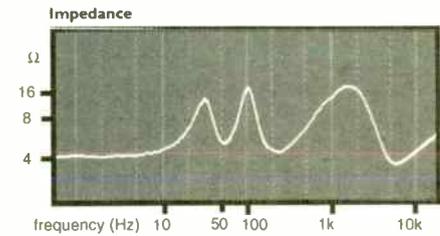
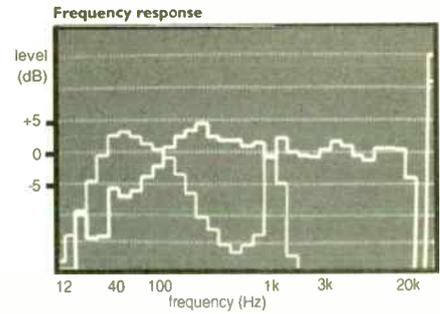
These days miniature loudspeakers commonly measure very flat - and they sound like it too. Wharfedale's new Diamond 8.1 has a few ups and downs in its response but otherwise it is pretty flat, although there is a small low frequency lift at 250Hz before output rolls down smoothly below this frequency.

Surprisingly, cone forward output reaches down to 40Hz, but the slow roll down does suggest a rear wall would help boost low frequencies a little. The port is very well damped, suggesting acoustic damping on the cone will be good at low frequencies. The Diamond is likely to have quite clean, well controlled bass as a result. Unfortunately, the forward firing port whistles at 1kHz and will certainly

add a little coloration into the 'speakers upper midband.

Impedance measured nearly 6ohms but the minimum is 4ohms or so. This is a low impedance loudspeaker which uses a 4ohm bass unit for maximum voltage sensitivity. Delivering 86dB for one nominal watt of input it goes quite loud for a small speaker, meaning the drivers are quite efficient - a good sign. Fast impedance changes also signify heavy reactance though. Together with low impedance these 'speakers are quite a load and will need a stable amplifier with good current delivery.

The Diamond 8.1s are neatly engineered in every area and should give a very good account of themselves. **NK**



NHT SUPER TWO

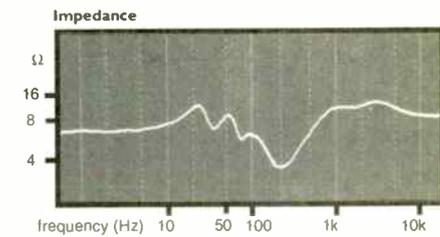
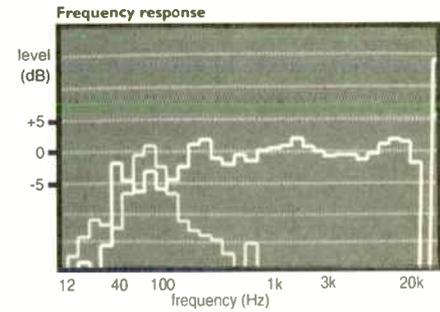
The Super Two has two forward firing units and a bass driver in the bottom panel firing onto the floor, loaded by a reflex ported cabinet, so this is a three way. The bass driver works quite high up and in a narrow band from 40Hz to 80Hz. It augments output from the front panel bass midrange unit and will drive a room's height mode well which, in the right sized room with a ceiling of 9ft or so, will give bouncy, fast bass. The Super Two doesn't go especially low, however.

Further up the range frequency response has some mild undulations but remains essentially flat to 20kHz. The rise in tweeter output will certainly add some spit to high frequencies, and a small amount of midrange peaking at 1.6kHz will push images forward a little. Absence of a crossover suckout will ensure the loudspeaker delivers detail and phase matching proved good over quite a large vertical range.

Nowadays most manufacturers use a 4ohm bass/midrange unit to get maximum voltage sensitivity. NHT have used a 6ohm unit and over much of the audio range the impedance curve lies at 8ohms or even above. With smooth slopes, there's little reactance, making this loudspeaker very nearly an ideal resistive 8ohm load. What a pity a dip down to 3.8ohms at 250Hz spoils an otherwise interesting characteristic.

Overall impedance measured 6.5ohms. Predictably, voltage sensitivity was mediocre at 85dB for one nominal watt (2.8V) of input so the NHTs will not appear to go too loud at any particular volume control position, although they are no different from small bookshelf loudspeakers in sensitivity.

The Super Twos are tidily engineered in every area. They should sound quite fast and detailed, if a little bright or sharp at times. **NK**



AMPLIFIERS

MUSICAL FIDELITY HT600

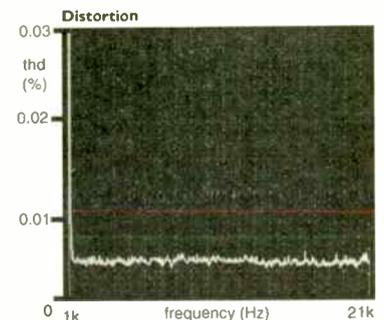
The HT600 pumps out 91watts on each of its four channels, into an 8ohm load. This figure rises to 132watts into a 4ohm load, so with either there's plenty of power available to shake a room with film sound effects. Since the HT600 has five channels (left, right, left surround, right surround, centre) a powered subwoofer is needed and will add even more energy into a room, making the HT600 part of a very loud system.

Measurement showed there was little distortion, at all frequencies and power levels, with no sign of high order harmonics likely to cause grittiness. Although DVD video surround-sound can run at

96kHz sampling rate, requiring a 50kHz analogue bandwidth, the HT600 reaches up to 100kHz, just to be on the safe side. This accommodates the needs of SACD and DVD-A.

The HT600 measures well in all areas, offering masses of power with hi-fi quality. **NK**

Power	91 watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	5Hz-94kHz
Separation	98dB
Noise	-129dB



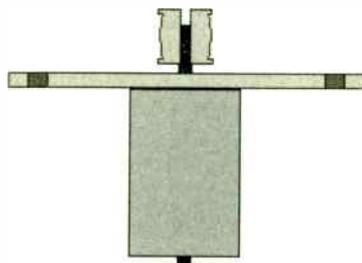
Distortion	0.005%
Sensitivity	900mV
dc offset	1/0.8mV

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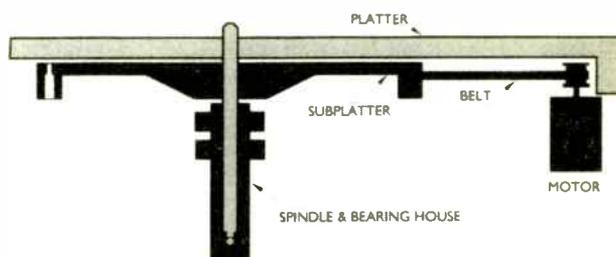
Now you can save money and build your own high performance deck. The standard kit is offered at £195 and is complete apart from a plinth. The kit comes with a full set of drawings and guidance instructions. It allows for your creativity or there are optional parts that will enable you to assemble a tried and tested design within 1 - 4 hours. The optional parts include the ultra platter (£84), plinths for suspended and non-suspended designs along with sub-chassis etc. The optional parts upgrade the standard kit to high end performance levels and is probably the easiest kit you will ever make.

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HI-FI NEWS SUPPLEMENT



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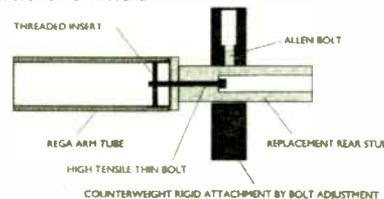
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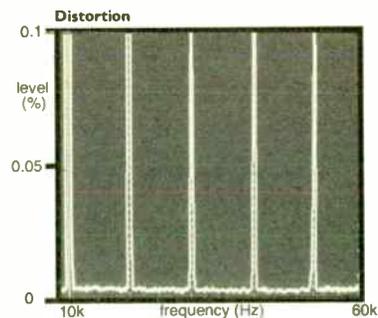
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PLINIUS 8100

The Plinius is powerful, producing 144watts into 8ohms and 210watts into 4ohms, plenty enough to get really high volume. However, the way this amplifier measured suggests the designer had parameters other than power on his mind, since there are some strong features. Most notable was the presence of a lot of distortion, especially at high frequencies. With levels hitting 0.45% at 1W, 10kHz - a very high figure - I'd suspect this is a low feedback design. I have yet to hear low feedback work with solid-state devices. It's a contradiction in terms based on a misunderstanding in my view! And you can't get more confused than that. A valve is an innately low-distortion device; a transistor is not. Removing feedback from either device reveals other proper-

ties - good in the case of valves, bad in the case of transistors. What holds for one does not hold for the other. Because they are radically different: one has a dielectric, the other does not; one has high current density, the other very low current density.

Anyway, this is a high distortion amplifier, also with tightly constrained bandwidth. It will sound different and that may be enough for some, but with extended harmonics I would be cautious. The Plinius does not measure well in the conventional sense. I will not condemn it out of hand but careful auditioning is needed to make a judgement on the effectiveness or otherwise of such an approach to solid-state amplifier design. **NK**



Power	144watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	7Hz-27kHz
Separation	62dB
Noise	-98dB
Distortion	0.45%
Sensitivity	380mV
dc offset	1/3mV

ADDENDUM

ARCAM DIVA 85 AMPLIFIER

In our last issue I measured the sensitivity of this amplifier as 700mV and said it "does not match legacy sources" (p111,

April 2001).

This is the sensitivity as set by the factory. It is user adjustable and can be varied from 280mV up to 1.28V, so the

the Diva 85 can be matched to low output sources. **NK**

CD PLAYERS

DENON CDR-W1500

An inexpensive recorder like this one with two CD mechanisms, two replay D/As and a record A/D will, inevitably, be built from budget parts. There was performance variation as a result, the CD replay section giving a flatter frequency response than the record transport. With a little bass loss and extra distortion the latter gives worse result than the former, so playing CDs is best done on the play-only mechanism.

From a record perspective the Denon manages satisfactorily, but it doesn't reach the standards of recent Philips hi-fi recorders, for example. Frequency response gets wobbly above 3kHz and starts to roll down above 8kHz, a performance similar to good cassette tape.

Whilst distortion was low enough at ordinary music levels, measuring 0.044% at -30dB, further down the dynamic range it rose considerably, reaching 1.4% at -60dB for example, four times that of a quality recorder. Noise through budget A/Ds is always on the high side, in this case resulting in a -84dB noise figure. Although higher than the -96dB target value for a 16-bit system it remains low enough to make hiss inaudible in use unless very low recording levels are used.

Input sensitivity was a reasonable 550mV. Older tuners and similar sources give around half this so they'll only get the record display up

to -6dB, a point to bear in mind if going into an ageing system. This will give an effective hiss level of 78dB - good, but not wonderful, about the same as chrome tape on a cassette deck, with Dolby C. In other words, a slight hiss might be perceptible.

A deck like this, crammed with facilities, does sacrifice performance. Denon do a good enough job at the price in my view. **NK**

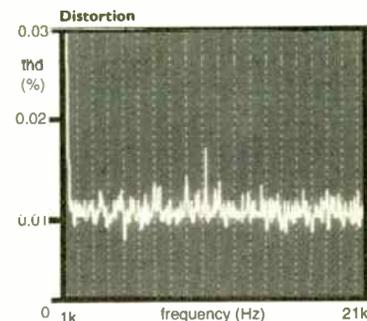
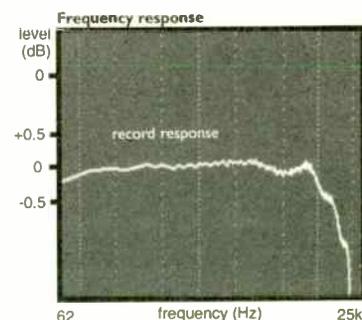
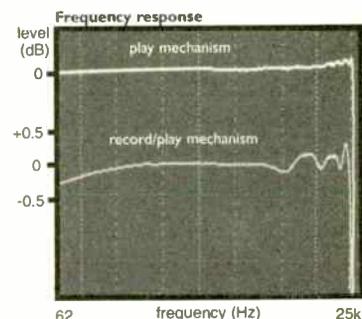
Frequency response (1)	4-21.2kHz
(2)	4-21.2kHz
record	4-16.3kHz

Distortion	left	right
-6dB	0.005	0.005
-30dB	0.04	0.04
-60dB	1.36	1.33
-90	35	40

Separation	left	right
1kHz	90	90
20kHz	65	65

Noise	-101dB
record	-84dB

Dynamic range	102dB
Output	1.99V
Sensitivity	550mV



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SONY SCD-555ES

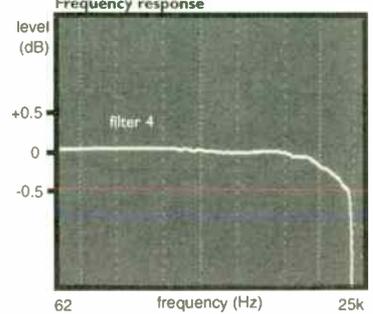
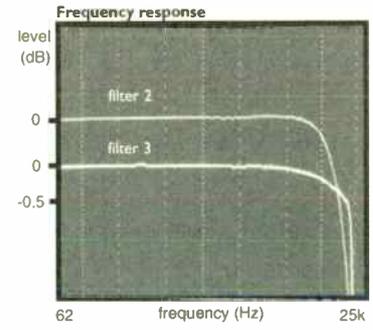
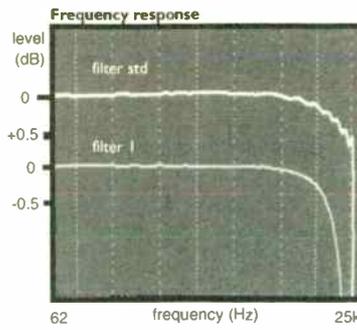
Sony offer now fewer than five different filters on this machine, each of which gives different frequency response characteristics. Our frequency response analyses shows the player has a small amount of high frequency roll down with this filter set as 'standard'. This gives the broadest response figure, which measured a conventional 21kHz (-1dB).

Switching to Filter 1 brought the measured response down to 15kHz and imposed a nice, smooth roll off, with good rejection above 21kHz. This filter will both smooth and warm the sound.

Filter 2 gave a bit more high frequency energy to brighten things up a little, and filter 3 and 4 offer more variations on this theme, extending response just a little, whilst lessening stop band attenuation. However, the Sony's filtering was good and distortion low, no matter what filter was selected, so it will sound clean.

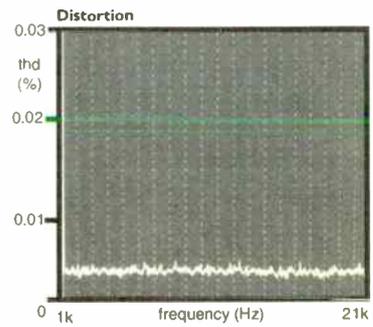
Channel separation was high even at high frequencies and noise very low from this player. Output measured a normal 2.1V

Sony seem intent on offering every response option possible with this player, making it tunable in effect. It measures well all round and should give interesting results. **NK**



Frequency response (std) 4Hz-21kHz

	left	right
Distortion		
-6dB	0.005	0.005
-30dB	0.007	0.007
-60dB	0.32	0.31
-90	28	28
Separation	left	right
1kHz	122	123
20kHz	107	109
Noise		-110dB
with emphasis		-110dB
Dynamic range		110dB
Output		2.1V



KENWOOD DVF-R9030

Kenwood's DRIVE system processes 'low level' digital signals to improve linearity. A form of interpolation system, it smooths the waveform below -60dB and in doing so reduces distortion significantly. One of the lies of CD was the claim for low distortion. Producing up to 30% distortion, or worse, it was always capable of making the LP look like advanced technology. Early classical recordings in particular often sank under a sea of the most excruciating form of distortion ever concocted by the audio industry. Both Denon and Kenwood have come up with distortion reducing mechanisms for CD players, and in this model low level distortions are reduced from typically 30% to 6% - a large reduction by any standards.

Further up the amplitude scale, at -60dB and above, Kenwood's system ceases to work so the player returns 0.33% here, low by CD standards but still relatively poor by hi-fi standards considering the nature of the distortion, but this applies to all CD players. Kenwood's is up with the best here, as it is right up to full level (0dB, 2V out).

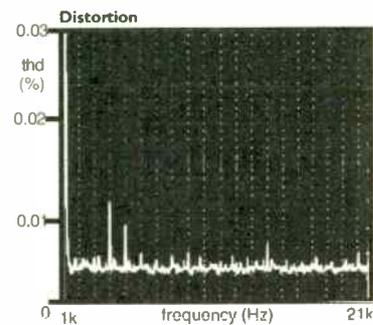
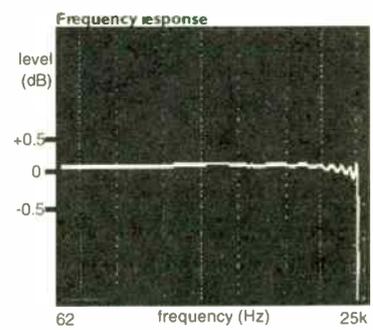
Frequency response has a slight upward lift above 5kHz, just enough to

add a little sheen to treble where there's a lot of high frequency energy in a recording. This characteristic can make a player sound 'hard' with mediocre recordings, by emphasising distortion harmonics. It will also give a 'fast and incisive' sound.

In all areas the Kenwood player measured well. It should provide interesting results. **NK**

Frequency response 4Hz-21.2kHz

	left	right
Distortion		
-6dB	0.004	0.004
-30dB	0.019	0.02
-60dB	0.36	0.33
-90	6.2	6.5
Separation	left	right
1kHz	98	98
20kHz	73	72
Noise		-126dB
with emphasis		-126dB
Dynamic range		110dB
Output		2.06V



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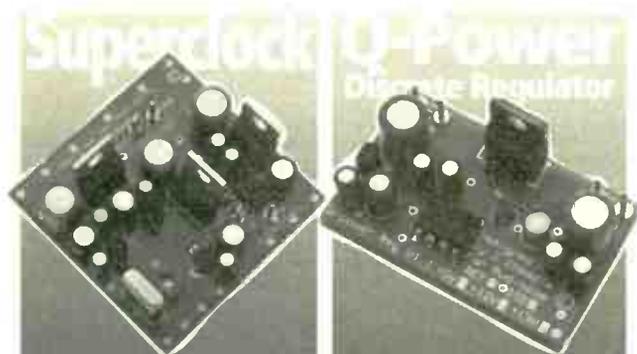
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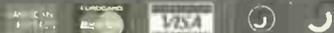
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CAMBRIDGE ISOMAGIC S700

Our convolved-impulse frequency response analysis shows the Cambridge has a pronounced high frequency roll off above 10kHz compared to other converters or players. Measuring -0.8dB at 20kHz experience shows this is clearly audible as a slight softening of the sound, which removes digital's hardness. Perhaps I should say 16-bit's hardness, but until we have more experience of higher bit rate recordings the 16bit code of CD is our only experience of digital. Cambridge will, I suspect, have knowingly applied this effect to give the Isomagic a characteristic smoothness. Slow high frequency roll offs also tend to make the sound seem more cohesive, cymbals appearing to blend in more naturally, for example, than would be the case with a ruler flat response, for example.

The Isomagic looked linear in that our analyser showed there were few distortion harmonics to be measured. However, overall distortion levels were a little higher than the best, due to noise being a little higher than usual. This is not seen in the noise figure, but this is due either to mut-

ing at digital zero or the presence of some noise in the electronics. Since noise dithers a digital signal to reduce distortion and improve smoothness this may well be a good thing.

Output was curiously low at just 1.66V, well below (-1.6dB) Philips 2V standard. In a comparable demo the Isomagic could be 2-3dB less loud than a rival, something to bear in mind.

This is an interesting convertor, nicely engineered to offer a smooth sound. I'd expect the Isomagic to give a welcome alternative to 'hard' CD. **NK**

Frequency response	4Hz-21kHz	
Distortion	left	right
-6dB	0.005	0.005
-30dB	0.041	0.042
-60dB	1.22	1.3
-90	41	44
Separation	left	right
1kHz	106	107
20kHz	99	101

ARCAM CD72 PLAYER

The CD72 had Arcam's usual response, falling upper treble giving a slight warmth and cohesiveness - at least relative to flat-response players, which can sound sharp. It's interesting to see how many players have this characteristic nowadays.

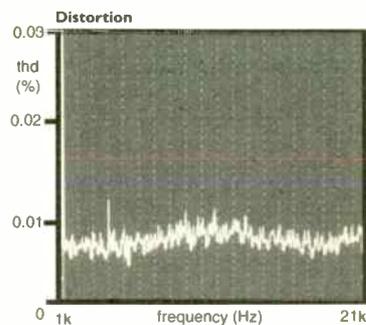
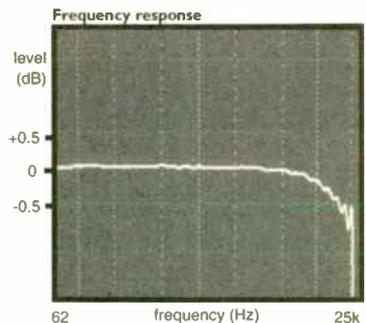
Overall distortion levels were low over the whole dynamic range, a property of 24bit convertors. There's no sign of either distortion harmonics or quantisation spikes in our distortion analysis at -30dB. I'd expect the player to sound smooth and refined.

Output measured 2.3V and dynamic range was wide at 110dB, due to low distortion at -60dB.

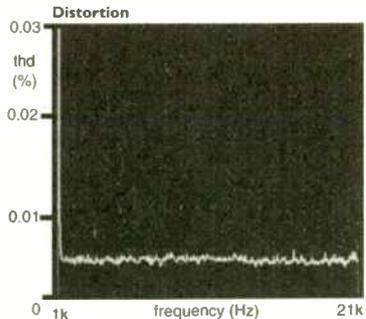
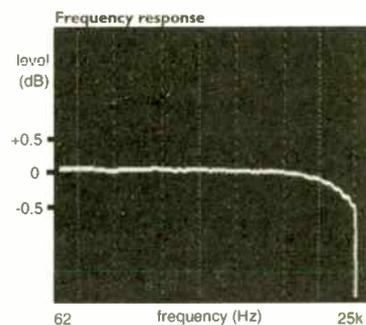
This is a well engineered CD player that turns in a good set of measured per-

formance figures. **NK**

Frequency response	4Hz-20.8kHz	
Distortion	left	right
-6dB	0.005	0.005
-30dB	0.017	0.016
-60dB	0.4	0.42
-90	29	31
Separation	left	right
1kHz	110	110
20kHz	100	100
Noise with emphasis		-109dB
		-110dB
Dynamic range		110dB
Output		2.3V



Noise with emphasis	-101dB
Dynamic range	104dB
Output	1.66V



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SD Acoustics SL100. Very nice. Cost £160	£ 99
Ruarq Sabre. Black finish. Mint condition	£ 170
Small 22 speakers. Black finish. Ex condition. Boxed	£ 495
Par Rogers. Studio 5 speakers. Rosewood finish	£ 250
Celestion Dutton 15. Complete with stands. Geomet	£ 70
Another pair NS100M spks. Cabs need minor work	£ 495
Acoustic Glasshorn 2 speakers. Ex condition	£ 750
Par IMF T1 S81 monitor speakers. Very dynamic	£ 295
Celestion Dutton 44	£ 120
Richard Alan monitor speakers. Good condition	£ 85
Heybrook Heylos. Black. Boxed. Ex condition	£ 199
Dispensive X covers. Gut wrenching base. Awesome	£ 295
Phate stands for Small J speakers. Black	£ 100
Ker Cresta 2. Black. Mint condition. 4 months old	£ 110
Heybrook HBI speakers. Praced to sell	£ 50
Dunlop 22 recon speakers. Cost £1200. Unused	£ 450
Heybrook HB2 speakers. Teak finish	£ 99
Bose 301 MK3. Unused. Boxed. Mint. Black finish	£ 249
Mordant Short MS310. Mint. Boxed. Black finish	£ 40

OTHER ITEMS

Nakamichi CRF1 cassette deck. 3 heads. Good cond	£ 299
Nakamichi BX 301. 3 head cassette deck. Good cond	£ 249
Quad 44 MC board. Boxed and instructions	£ 49
Sugden SD11 & SD11 Transport & Dac remote	£ 849
Roel RQ970 MM/MC phono pre amplifier	£ 89
Supers SD940 Super MC cartridge. Brand new. Bsd	£ 210
Sony ST77B S tuner in excellent condition	£ 110
Roel 965 BX CD player. Excellent condition	£ 190
SME 3009 Series 3 tone arm. Mint. Boxed	£ 149
Soundsbyte Rack 4 shelf 4 bays. Black finish. Ex. Linn Tuner. Mint. Boxed. Very unusual. Cost £549	£ 120
National Panasonic 205E. 11 low impedance stereo integrated complete with SMI style headshell. Unused. Boxed	£ 89
Philips 100 ed player. The first. Good condition	£ 100
Denon DCD1700 CD player. Cost £650. Boxed	£ 100
Marantz CD 501 CD player. Ex condition. Boxed	£ 80
Revox B77 2 speed reel to reel. Ex condition	£ 495
Leak 200 tuner. Serviced by One Thing. Mint	£ 49
Audax HD13D 3H tweeters. New old stock	£ 25
Arcom Black Box 80 DMC mixed cost £480. Mint	£ 249
Trio KD500L synthesiser. Mint. All in Black	£ 75
Technics SL-PS620A CD player remote	£ 95
SME 3009 tonearm from	£ 80
Avantec 2000. Multi AME. Serviced	£ 150

QUAD ESL57 PANELS/SERVICING ETC

Reconditioned Quad ESL57 speakers from only £750.00 pr. Why spend £4000+? Have your ESL57s refurbished for only £349.00/Pair. Ring for full details. Exchange/recon ESL57 bass panel £120. Treble £100. ESL63 panels £100 Refurbished. New socks for ESL63s £38 pr. Many other spare parts available. Please ring. "Classique Sounds servicing restores the Quads to a position where they can hold their head high", Jon Marks. HI-FI WORLD. April 1999 Full servicing facilities available.

Troughline tuner service & realignment £95.00. (excludes valves. Rarely needed). Subject to tuner being in a serviceable condition, with no major faults or modifications.

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Forthcoming Releases

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Bruce Springsteen	Live In NYC 3LP SET	£TBC
David Bowie	Man Who Sold The World	£TBC
David Bowie	Diamond Dogs (Simply Vinyl)	£TBC
Erik Truffaz	Revisited (Blue Note)	£TBC
Fun Lovin Criminals	Loco	£TBC
Led Zepellin	3 & 4 (Classic Records)	£25.90
Nick Cave/Bad Seeds	No More Shall We Part	£TBC
Richard Thompson	Action Packed (Best Of) 2LP	£17.90
Terry Callier	Alive - Live @ Jazz Cafe	£10.90

THIS MONTH'S FEATURED NEW RELEASES
SMALL FACES BBC SESSIONS
 Recordings from Beeb archives from 65-68 - LTD LP £16.90
ERIC CLAPTON "REPTILE"
 Brand new studio album - Double LP released 05/03 - £15.90
JOHN COLTRANE "HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION"
 Complete Atlantic Recordings 12 LP Box Set - £125
BEASTIE BOYS "SOUNDS OF SCIENCE" - THE BEST OF
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Other New Stock And Recent Releases

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Bonnie Prince Billy	Face Down The Road	£12.90
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Crosby Still and Nash	CSN (Classic Records)	£25.90
Daft Punk	Discovery	£18.90
Erykah Badu	Mama's Gun	£15.90
Gepheis	Foxtro/Nursery Cryme (CR)	£25.90
Impressions	Foxtro/ Mods Forgotten Story	£12.90
JJ Perry	The In Sound From Way Out	£13.90
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Ornette Coleman	Free Jazz	£10.90
Paul Simon	You're The One	£16.90
Queen	Night At The Opera	DCC £29.90
Rubbles Vols 13 -15	Psyche Reissues	£18.90
Stephen Malkmus	(Ex Pavement)	£12.90
The Who	Live @ Isle Of Wight	3LP £29.90
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Turin Brakes	The Optimist	£12.90

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see page 130 for details

ACOUSTIC 3311C Studio monitor speakers, boxed, unused, max power 125watts £650 (£1800 new). Tel: 0131 334 8956 (Edinburgh) (May/1)

LINN INTEK amplifier £150. Linn Index speakers plus stands £150. Naim 42 pre-amp £80. Single Celestion SL600 speaker £50. Audiolab 8000C £250. Yamaha tuner £50. Marantz CD 52 Mk2 £90 vgc. Tel: 020 8681 1054 (Croydon) (May/1)

NAKAMICHI DR10 cassette deck as new. Bought April 2000, £325. Tel: 01302 761 058 (May/1)

THIEL CS3 speakers £175. Quad ELS63 speakers £1100. Shearne integrated £375. Sugden tuner £55. 14 new quality E88CC valves £5.00 each. Cabletalk/van den Hul interconnects, new £40/£50. All ono. Tel: 0121 745 6516 (May/1)

MICHELL ORBE, SMES
Transfiguration Temper Supreme, high-end, half-price and perfect £2500. Klyne phono preamp for all settings and taste £675. Rohmann cartridge £375. Cartridge Man £175. Both perfect. Tel: 01483 284 997 (May/1)

MERIDIAN 500, 563 £800. Audiolab 8000T £450. Harbeth Compact £650. Quad 77, 707 £800. Quad ESL63 £900. Linn LP12. Ittok £400. KEF 104ab £250. KEF 103.4 £150, boxed, mint. Tel: 0113 250 4262 (Yorks) (May/1)

LINN ACTIVE System LP12 Lingo Ekos Klyde, Kairn pre-amp, 4No. LK100 power amps, Keltik speakers, all cables £7450. Tel: 01977 643 629 (May/1)

NAIM CD3.5 player with remote control, manual, boxed, mint condition (£1100) £675 ovno. Linn Kaber floorstander loudspeakers, cherry finish. Very open detailed sound, elegant looks (£2200) £675 ovno. Tel: 0121 358 0459, mobile: 07960 945 994 (May/1)

LINN AXIS, LVX plus arm, K9 cartridge £175. LP12 LVX arm, Rega Bias £240. Trampoline base £75. Naim IBL's (black) boxed £275. Sugden T48 tuner £50. Naim Nait 3, mint £325. Meridian 209 remote £30. Tel: 0114 221 5271 (May/1)

FOR SALE Unison
Research Simply Four triode £950 ono. Excellent sound, can be heard. Tel: 01924 515 006 (Dewsbury) (May/1)

LINN HI-FI Numerik DAC £450. Kairn (phono) £750. LK280 Poweramp £250. LK280/Spark £350. Kabers (active) c/w crossover £800. Tel: 01787 462 940 Email: us@hillsidecottage.co.uk (N.Essex) (Jun/1)

NAIM INTRO II speakers.
Rosewood finish, 2 months old. Cost £900. Immaculate and boxed £600 ono. Tel: 01782 543 821 (May/1)

QUAD 77 system: pre and power amplifier, 77 CD player. Mint and boxed £1100 ono. Castle Avon speakers, yew, boxed £500 ono. 2 x 7m of Chord Rumour cable £50. Tel: 01480 412 464 after 6pm. (Jun/1)

WILSON BENESCH Orator loudspeakers, ash, 6 months old, as new. £2400 ono. Tel: 07785 231 850 or Email: calico@dircon.co.uk (Jun/1)

ARCAM ALPHA player. Trichord modification £120. Arcam Delta amplifier £100. Epos ESII (teak) spiked stands £150. KEF C25 (black) £25. Mana support table £25. Aiwa 3150 Sony STJX4L tuner. Tel: 01225 465 529 (May)

HALES TRANSCEDENCE 5 loudspeakers American hi-end only, marginally bettered by Wilson's / Revel Baby forces occasional use! R.R.P. £5825 accept £3250. Open to p/x decent loudspeaker for occasions! Tel: Kevin 01245 251 235 (May/1)

AVI BIGGATRONS new Red Spot version in cherry, 3 months old, still in boxes £440. Sendor SA1 bookshelf speakers in wood finish, superb sound £145. Tel: 01455 212 671 or 212 977 (May/1)

MICHEL MICRO £300. Audio Lab integrated £200. Monitor Audio speakers £200. Musical Fidelity phono stage £50. Target speaker stands £40. Sony radio £30. Ortofon FL25 £50. No offers. Tel: Steve 07752 417 437 night 01376 519 965 (May/1)

FINAL 0.3 electrostatic
loudspeakers silver trim less than one year old as new extremely revealing sound £1500. New quick sale £600. Tel: anytime 0402 239 669 (Bucks) (May/1)

LINN MIMIK CD player as new £350. Boxed. Linn Keilidh speakers with plinths, American cherry £300 as new. Boxed. Three pairs active cards £150. Tel: 01206 503 603 Mobile: 07760 432 518 (May/1)

SENNHEISER HE60/HEV 70 electrostatic headphones £400. Tel: 01277 233 183 evenings (Brentwood, Essex) (May)

TOWNSEND ROCK turntable Rega RB250 arm £430. Ion Oberlisk 2 amp £140. Tom Evans "micro groove" phono stage £325 (cost £700). Various interconnects half price. Tel: 0208 952 2044 (May/1)

NU VISTA 300 amp absolutely as new, 15 hours use only, £2750. Audio Research CD2 one of the very best, stunning sound, immaculate £2100. Tel: 01438 359 600 Mobile: 07773 172 569 (May/1)

LINN LP12 Ekos Lingo Trampolin, brand new Arkiv 2, pristine condition £2100. Tel: 01438 359 600 Mobile: 07773 172 569 (May/1)

AUDIONOTE VALVE pre amp mint phono 4 inputs paper and oil caps Alps pot £275. Leak ST20 grey refurbished Vishay, valves paper caps superb £325. Tel: 07773 260 458 (Tamworth, Staffs) (May/1)

ARCAM ALPHA 6, CD player, R/C, £250, Audiolab 8000S amplifier, R/C £310. Both in excellent condition. Sold separately or together for £500. Tel: 01959 563 152 eves or 07702 292 403 day. Email: willbo@btinternet.com (May/1)

LINN KOLLECTOR pre-amp boxed 5 months old (£500) £329. Rotel 99L power amp 200 WpCh, 5 star best buy, balanced and phono connections 5 months old £449. Harbeth HL-K6 speakers walnut bi-wire (£1000) £700. Tel: 07747 762 672 (Nottingham area, could deliver) (May/1)

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L Nakamichi Soundspace 8 (XD) - £700
E Musical Fidelity XAS 100 (XD) - £650
Musical Fidelity Explorer (XD) - £450
Linn LK140 Power Amplifier (XD) - £545
Linn LK100 Power Amplifier (SH) - £300
Linn Keilidh Speakers (Black)(SH) - £325
Proac Studio 150 Speakers(SH) - £700
Roksan Kandy CD Player (XD) - £350
Roksan Kandy Tuner (XD) - £275
NAD Turntable (XD) - £150

Energy Encore A.V. Sub&Sat Speaker Set (XD) - £850
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Myryad MDP500 Pre-amplifier Processor (XD) - £1150
Myryad T70 5 Channel Power Amplifier (XD) - £375
Myryad MC100 CD Player (XD) - £550
Castle Howard S2 Speakers (SH) - £650
Loewe Planus + Base 32" Wide Screen 100 Hz - £1200
Rega Planet CD Player (SH) - £250
Musical Technology Kestrel Speakers (XD) - £350
AVI Nu-Neutron Speakers (Cherry)(XD) - £350
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Alchemist Forsetti APD15 ARC		£1200	£750
MVL A2+ (Stainless)		£1480	£750
John Shearne Phase 6 Pre-amp		£799	£499
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Tag McLaren PA-10 Pre		£849	£449
Audiolab 8000C Pre (S/H)		£499	£249
Arcam Alpha 9 Pre/Power		£800	£499
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	Speakers		
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	Tuners		
Micromega Stage Tuner (S/H)		£800	£299
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	Cassette		
Nakamichi 1.5, 3 head (S/H - Mint)		£600	£295
Naim			
NA 1X0		£515	£399
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TWO MERIDIAN 555 power amplifiers plus Meridian 501 pre-amplifier for sale. Not boxed, but mint condition, £1000. Email: Kevin@sagepartnership.com or 01189 344 007 (Reading) daytimes. (May/I)

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-24K DAC £150. Acoustic Research EB101 with Goldring 1006 cartridge £100 ono. Cyrus One amplifier £100 ono. Tel: 0121 744 7040 (h), 07760 103 592 (m) (May/I)

AUDIONOTE TURNTABLE Two including arm £295 ono. Sumiko Bluepoint special low hours £135. Marantz PM 711 AV surround amp £95. Aiwa twin cassette £95. Sony MD 5539 Minidisc player £95. Tel: 01295 277 358 (Banbury) (May/I)

CASTLE CHESTER loudspeakers £200. Rogers LS7 loudspeakers £250. Partington stands £35. Sony CDP 761E and Philips CD624 £80 each. Denon DRA25L receiver £75. Akai AA1135 receiver, fantastic flywheel tuning £40. All excellent condition, most boxed with manuals. Tel: 01844 216 706 (May/I)

MUSICAL FIDELITY A300 dual mono integrated amplifier. One year old. Boxed. £1400 new, accept £900. Sale due to upgrade. Extremely good amplifier. Contact David English on 01530 460 696 (Central England) (May/I)

REGA PLANAR 3 RB200 £75. RB300 tonearm as new £110. Rega Elys, little use £35. Royd Minstrels, black, rebuilt biwireable crossovers £130. All boxed, excellent condition. Tel: Mark 01543 414 936 (Staffordshire) (May/I)

NVA P50 passive preamp plus A80 monoblock power amplifiers with Soundpipe interconnects £500 total. NVA Phono 2 phono stage with separate power supply and interconnects £150. All excellent. Tel: 01904 762 686 (York) (May/I)

JBL 120ti loudspeakers, 250 w/c, teak finish, (£1400), with professional custom stands (£500). Mint condition in original packaging. Happy to demo. £1000. Tel: 01337 831 842 or 07939 571 186 (Fife) (May/I)

MUSICAL FIDELITY A1000 amplifier owned from new v.g.c. boxed £795 ono. Meridian 506.24 CD player as new, boxed £750 ono. 2 Definitive Audio Mystic Mats £30 each. Tel: 0191 281 5066 (May/I)

2 HIGHLY UPGRADED Pioneer A300R Precision amplifiers boxed as new ideal for bi-amping £400 each ono. Sound like £2500. Happy to demonstrate. Tel: 01202 397557 (Bournemouth) (May/I)

CASTLE HOWARD S2 loudspeakers. Medium oak, superb sound. Excellent condition can demonstrate £500. Tel: 01843 298 538 or Email: ian.lord@estuaryglobalnet.co.uk (May/I)

ATC SCM10 loudspeakers, boxed, excellent condition £399 ono. Nakamichi BX125E cassette deck, excellent £149. AVI S2000 CD Reference CD player, boxed £595. Quad 33/303/FM3 £149. Tel: 01942 891 741 (May/I)

SEQUENCE 400 wall speakers boxed mint £120. Maker's guarantee. Tel: 01642 822 066 (May/I)

NAIM CD2, 3 years old excellent condition. Box, manuals. Pleased to demonstrate £1375. Linn Sara loudspeakers, stands, cable, boxed. Still superb. You must listen to these. £300. Tel: 01296 770 906 (May/I)

MERIDIAN 506 CD player with remote controller £420 ono. Ferrograph 724 quarter track reel to reel recorder £110 ono. Tel: 01642 511 369 (Middlesbrough) (May/I)

AUDIOLAB 8000 Q pre amp £525. Two Audiolab 8000 PX stereo power amps £400 each. Tel: 01895 443 404 (May/I)

GARRARD 401 grey hawthorn veneered plinth turned aluminium armboard, SME 3009 £300. Aura VA100 amp, low use £120. JPW Sonata speakers walnut £45. No offers. Tel: 01422 846 582 (West Yorks) (May/I)

VALVES 16 No.5 GAS7G's in original boxes. Result of unfinished project. £50 the lot. Tel: 01384 271 571 (West Mids) (May/I)

GARRARD 401 limed oak plinth £250. Thorens 160 oak plinth £75. Goldring 88, heavy plinth £100. Linn Basic plus arm £70. Mayware unipivot £70. No offers. Tel: 01422 846 582 (May/I)

WANTED PAIR of Quad 10L speakers. Tel: 0116 233 9843 or 07976 787 254 (May/I)

VOYD THREE motor turntable, split phase power supply £825. M.F P270 MkII power amp 150w per channel mint (£1500) accept £695. Atlas P.S.U. for Alphason Sonata turntable £195. Aragon 24K I.P.S. pre-amp cost (£1700) accept £495. Audionote A.N.V. 1 metre interconnect £95. Tel: 01634 387 686 (May/I)

WANTED SOUND

Factory stands Firm Tripod system equipment stands. "S" modules suitable for Naim equipment would be ideal, however, any size considered. Tel: 01494 863 305 (h) or 01923 699 005 (w). (May/I)

B&W DM2 Series 2 mint £250. Sugden A21 £100. Koss ESP9 electrostatic headphones £140. Jeklin Float electrostatic headphones £140. Griffin speakers 3 way £60. Linn LP12 early model Mission 774 arm £200. Decca London boxed £95. Coral step up £50. Classical LPs Decca SXL etc various prices or may px rare progressive eg Decca Nova/Vertigo Spiral/Deram lable. Wanted: Ear 834P phono/px any above. Tel: 01543 453 069 (May/I)

LOWTHER ACOUSTAS PM6A's rubber surrounds birch ply ex condition £325. Model 911's in walnut PM7C's silver coils £450. Yamaha NS20 speakers 27" x 18" bass £150. Mullard monoblock TL12.1 transformers £150. Tel: 01736 740 421 (May/I)

SPEAKERS, ROGERS LS7, black finish on metal stands, rated to 200w. Excellent condition. Equivalent quality cost around £1000 today. Upgrading therefore £280 ono. Tel: 0207 328 5544 (London NW6) (May/I)

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Alchemist Forsetti R/C Int Amp	£1250	£650
Alchemist Genesis monoblocks	£1500	£695
Anthem CD player (5 star What Hi-Fi)(ex/d)	£1699	£899
Audio Research D240 Mk.II	£3500	£1195
Audion Black Shadows 845 valve monoblocks	£4000	£POA
Audion Silvernigh 300B monoblocks	£2250	£POA
Audio Alchemy drive 3 + V3DAC + 3PSU	£1649	£759
AVI S2000MP Pre + Rata PSU	£1450	£750
AVI S2000 Monoblocks	£1400	£750
Chario Academy 1 solid walnut (ex/d)	£1299	£800
Chario Academy 2 solid walnut (ex/d)	£1649	£1100
Conrad Johnson PV10AL Pre	£1095	£595
EAR 859 pwr. amp	£1599	£750
Krell Kav 300I	£2495	£POA
Krell KSA 80 pwr. amp	£3498	£1495
Krell KSA 250 pwr. amp	£6700	£2500
Krell KSL pre amp	£2298	£995
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CELESTION 300 floorstanding transmission line biwireable speakers, walnut, £350 ono. Diamond Rio 600 MP3 player £60. Tel: 07932 768 837 (May/I)

PIONEER PD91 Reference CD player, boxed, manuals, mint condition £450. Electrfluidics 5 mtr pair monolith 2020 speaker cables £250. Tel: David 02476 679 165 or Mobile: 07989 559129 (May/I)

AUDIONOTE KIT2 amplifier assembled £650. SME detachable head 52R for 3000952 new £30. MM cartridge Stanton 681EEE £30. Sony CD player CDP770 £100. Turntable Thorens TD166 MkII with Stanton 8815 £200. Tel: 07802 936 049 or 01902 751 703 (May/I)

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LINN GENKI CD player, 6 months old, mint condition, highly reviewed £690. Audioquest Emerald, half metre interconnect £125. Musical Fidelity A1 amplifier, working but needs service. Offers. Tel: Dave 01782 413 896 (Stoke) (May/I)

PIONEER PD-S505 Precision £160. Musical Fidelity X-10D £65. Interconnect pairs: DNM 0.75m £17. Audionote AN-S 0.30m £25, Audioquest Python 1m (costs £360) £160. All material mint and boxed. Tel: 0117 974 3363 (May/I)

EAR 509 monoblocs, Musical Fidelity A1001, Meridian 602/606, Sonus Faber Musica, Copland CT401, Musical Fidelity MA50 monoblocs, Tannoy Berkely 15" units, new cabinets. All mint. Details on 01992 718 265 (Jun/I)

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AUDIO INNOVATIONS Alto Class A £175. Cambridge C70 pre £75. Pioneer PL12D £50. Wharfedale 12" dual concentrics £75. Lowther Mini Acousta cabs £50. Quad 405 £150. Tel: 01736 740 421 (May/I)

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AUDIOLAB 8000 D.A.C. £260. Arcam Alpha 5 tuner £75. Both in excellent condition. Audio Prism ISO Bearing 33 vibration support globes £40. Tel: 01268 758 285 evenings (Benfleet) (May/I)

REVOX B77 4 Track, dust-cover, very good condition. Quad 405 II power amp, one owner £850. Tel: daytime 01929 421 320, evenings 01929 427 357 (May/I)

SD ACOUSTICS SE1E loudspeakers. Recent upgrade by Wilmslow Audio. Perfect condition, boxed (£3500) £1500 ono or exchange Transport. Will demonstrate. Tel: Steve 01283 820 470 or Email: Pricefamily@draycott5.freeserve.co.uk (May/I)

ACOUSTIC PRECISION Eikos speakers £380 (cost £800). 10 metres Monolith 20/20 cable £200 (cost £400). Pioneer PDS505 Precision CD with Tom Evans upgrade (£300) £395. Ion Oberlisk2 £145. Tel: 0208 952 2044 (May/I)

B&W LCR6 loudspeakers, 2 months old. Excellent. Cost £690. Accept £495. Tel: 02894 479 385 (May)

GUIDELINES FOR BUYING AND SELLING SECOND-HAND EQUIPMENT

FOR THE BUYER

1. Not everyone is honest - Buyer Beware!
2. Accept no verbal guarantees.
3. Have you heard the item or something similar? If not, why do you want it?
4. Don't pretend to have knowledge - it's your fingers that will get burnt!
5. Is it working? If not, why not?
6. Has it been modified and, if so, have notes been kept?
7. Was it any good in the first place?
8. **Don't send cash!**
9. If you are in the slightest doubt, arrange an audition (see point 4). If it's too far, wait for another time.
10. Either buy it or don't: vendors are excusably impatient with 'consultation' exercises.

FOR THE VENDOR

1. Not everyone is honest - Seller Beware!
2. Make no verbal guarantees.
3. Even 'nearly new' is still second-hand. If the manufacturer's guarantee is no longer in force, your price should reflect this.
4. There is very little intrinsic value in second-hand hi-fi; it's only worth what someone will pay for it.
5. The best guide to pricing is last month's Classifieds: that a 'classic' was worth £xxx a year or two ago is no guide. Values fall as well as rise.
6. Amateur second-hand dealing is not a big money game: you win some, you lose some.
7. Be prompt with despatch. If in doubt about buyer's bona-fides, either wash out the deal or send C.O.D.
8. There will always be time-wasters; be tolerant within reason!

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DPA Renaissance CD	995	700
Exposure 21 Pre amp	1100	900
Exposure 18 Power amp	1000	800
Exposure 25 integrated	1100	950
JM Lab Tantal 515	499	375
JM Lab Cobalt 810	799	600
JM Lab Electra 905	1199	999
Linn Numerik DAC	1500	950
Linn LK100 Power amp	750	500
Linn Wakonda Pre amp	650	400
Magnat Needle floorstander	479	300
Magnat Vector 55 floorstander	399	225
Magnat S1 sub and satellite	249	195
Micromega Sage 4 CD	600	400
Mordant Short MS 30i	350	200
NAD 310 integrated	110	80
Neat Petite cherry	795	575
Rogers LS4a	-	150
Sonneteer Byron CD	795	600
Sonneteer Alabaster integrated	900	700
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Check our web site: www.soundcraftkent.ltd.uk

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S/hand and ex-demo clearance items - May'01

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Audio Analogue Paganini CD Player S/H	750	549	Sonus Faber Concerto GP Walnut Ex-Demo	1699	1250
Audio Note CD2/Border Patrol PSU Ex-Demo	1694	1199	Sonus Faber Concerto Walnut Ex-Demo	899	699
Audio Note DAC 3 Signature New Style Ex-Demo	2850	1495	Totem Acoustic Arro Cherry S/H	995	599
Densen Beat 400 CD player HDCD S/H	1280	899	VelodyneTX810MK2 Subwoofer S/H	695	379
Einstein Valve CD Player Ex-Demo	2899	1899	Yamaha NS1000M Black Monitors S/H	1200	595
Mark Levinson 31.5 Transport S/H	9500	5999			
Monrio Asty CD Player Ex-demo	695	549	Cables & Accessories		
Rega Jupiter Transport/lo DAC Ex-Demo	975	650	Air Sus Cherry Platform Ex-Demo	169	99
Resolution Audio D92 24/96 Dac/Processor Ex-Demo	1500	949	Audio Sculpture 2m RCA Interconnect Ex-Demo	380	149
Resolution Audio VT960 DVD Transport Ex-Demo	3500	1899	Bow Technologies Wand Remote S/H	349	199
Roksan DA2 DAC S/H	599	299	Deskadel 1M Interconnects WBT/RCA S/H	300	150
Roksan DP2T Transport S/H	1295	599	Einstein Octopus 8 Way Mains Block (Ex-Demo)	199	149
Roksan DS5 PSU S/H	579	399	G-Flex isolators (New & Boxed)	199	75
Theta David II CD/DVD Transport (4 Months old) S/H	5698	4500	Lindsey Audiophile 2m Satin RCA Interconnect New	495	199
Theta Digital Pro Prime II DAC S/H	1699	599	Madrigal HPC 2m Balanced Interconnect Ex-Demo	310	149
			MIT MH750 Speaker Cable S/H	N/A	699
			Naim Audio NAC A5 2X6m S/H	N/A	50
Turntables Tonearms & Cartridges			QED Silver Spiral 1m RCA Interconnect S/H	90	50
Basis 1400/RB250 (New & Boxed)	1200	899	Shakti On Lines (New&Boxed)	85	45
Basis 2000/RB300 (New & Boxed)	2000	1599	Rega 6 Tier Modular Stand Ex Demo	375	175
Garrard 401/Aphelion/RB300 Ex-Demo	N/A	599	Shakti Stones (New&Boxed)	195	120
Linn Sondek LP12/Black/Rega RB200/Goldring1020 S/H	N/A	379	Slate Audio Stands 21" S/H	489	199
Mantra Manticore Reference/Musician/Eroica) S/H	2100	695	Sound Org Record Racks Double with CD Inserts S/H	199	75
Rega RB300 Orgin Live Moded S/H	350	199	Tara Labs 2x2m Bi-Wired Nexa Terminated	150	75
Roksan DS 5 Atessa PSU Ex-Demo	549	399	Target 5 Tier Silver Stand MDF Shelves Ex-Demo	249	145
Roksan Radius 3 Turntable (98) Ex-Demo	470	250	Target HM 50 Stands (New&Boxed)	99	69
Roksan Xerxes Piano Lacquer XPS 1 (SME Cut) S/H	1295	399	Tripod 4 Tier Table S/H	N/A	59
			Vdh Skytrack 2X4M Bi-wire Speaker Cable S/H	75	39
Preamplifiers			Tuners & Tape Decks		
Alchemist Forsetti Signature Preamplifier S/H	1500	749	Cymbol C DAB Digital Tuner (Ex-Demo)	1000	599
Audio Research LS22 VT Line Preamplifier with Remote S/H	3999	2250	Roksan Caspian Tuner AM/FM (Ex-Demo)	699	359
Conrad Johnson PV 10 A Ex-demo	1299	899			
Conrad Johnson PV 12 A Ex-demo	2300	1799	Clearance Items Under £100		
Densen DM20 Preamplifier Ex-Demo	1380	899	Denon DCT-670R CD/RDS ICE S/H	269	79
DPA Enlightenment New Style Preamplifier Ex-Demo	799	449	Dais Turntable Motor Unit Only S/H	N/A	99
Einstein Valve Preamplifier Ex-Demo	6000	2999	Heybrook TT2 Belt Drive Turntable S/H	N/A	99
Michell ArgoHR/Hera Preamplifier S/H	N/A	459	Naim Audio 32 MM/MC Preamplifier S/H	N/A	75
			Sony Playstation With 2 controllers S/H	N/A	59
			Trio K500 SME Cut S/H	N/A	99
Amplifiers					
Alchemist Forsetti Signature Power Amplifier S/H	2000	999			
Arcam Alpha 10 Integrated Phono/Remote S/H	850	499			
Audio Analogue Puccini SE Integrated S/H	635	449			
Audiolab 8000S Integrated S/H	900	459			
Bartolomeo Trasparenza ST140 Power Amplifier S/H	1500	695			
Bow Technologies Wazoo XL Integrated S/H	2499	1895			
Chord SPM1400B 500W Mono Blocks (Silver) S/H	11200	5999			
DNM PA3S Stereo Power Amplifier 6 months old S/H	2999	2495			
Graaf 50/50 Push Pull Power amplifier (New&Boxed)	2100	1695			
Graaf GM100 Power Amplifier (New&Boxed)	4450	3299			
Krell KAV 300I Integrated S/H	2790	1799			
Pass Labs Aleph 4 100W Class A Stereo S/H	5100	2750			
Primare A30.1 Integrated Ex-Demo	1500	1099			
Rega Maia Power Amplifier Ex-Demo	475	349			
Sugden SP30 Class A Stereo Power Amplifier S/H	950	599			
Loudspeakers					
Audio Note AN-K/SP Light Ash Loudspeakers Ex-Demo	1070	629			
Audio Note AN-Z Two Floor standers (Black) Ex-Demo	549	395			
Boston Acoustics VR 10 Centre Channel (New&Boxed)	250	175			
Diapason Karis Walnut 2 Way Monitor (New&Boxed)	1250	899			
Infinity Outtrigger jr Outdoor Speakers (New&Boxed)	249	129			
JM Lab Colbalt 807 Cherry Monitors Ex-Demo	595	425			
JM Lab Colbalt 815 Dark Cherry Floor standers Ex-Demo	950	749			
Martin Logan SL3 Hybrid Electrostatics S/H	3400	2495			
ProAc Tablette 2000 Light Oak Monitors Ex-Demo	695	450			



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