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WORLD CG COMPUTER AUDIO

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OCTOBER 2001

NEW CD MASTER CD PLAYER

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Cyrus DVD7 DVD player
Wharfedale Diamond 8.2 speakers
Tag McLaren Audio DPA32R DAB preamp

Portables group test
Denon DCD 485 CD player
PMC FB1 speakers
Phono stage group test
Malaysia show report
Rega Mira amplifier

Computer Audio World

LaCie PocketDrive
Thomson Lyra PDP2222 MP3 player

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UNISON RESEARCH
For a lifetime of musical enjoyment

S6
Single-ended pure Class-A integrated amplifier. This is how Hi-Fi World (April 2001) described it: ...."Strong, confident power delivery, wide tonal palette, with sweetness, warmth, rhythmic alacrity and a deliciously clean, open sound......... "At the price, It's easily the best tube amplifier I've heard...Superb value for money".

S2K
Pure Class-A all-tube amplifier using the legendary KT-88 power valve in single-ended mode for maximum transparency and detail. The sound it gives is delightful, unforced and natural. S2K is truly a machine for making beautiful music.

SR1
Combines the virtues of valve and solid-state in a thoroughly modern, fuss-free design. With 80 watts per channel dynamic Class-A power, plus the grace and delicacy you would expect from triode valves. The SR1 really gives you the best of both worlds.

For more information on the range of Unison Research Products please contact:

23 Richings Way, Iver, Bucks, SL0 9DA, England
Tel: 01753 652 669  Tel: 07000 853 443  Fax: 01753 654 531
www.ukd.co.uk  email: post@ukd.co.uk

*models illustrated:  S6, £1600.  S2K, £1295.  SR1, £1250.  All complete with radiowave remote control.
Tracey Emin’s unmade bed being a prime example in the art scene.

There’s one major difference here though. Art makes money, hi-fi doesn’t! Buy the aforementioned bespoke bedroom furniture for countless thousands, and at the same time shell out over £50,000 for an Audio Note Ongaku. Five years later, sell both and you can guess the rest. There’s more work, though and expense gone into the Ongaku, but it will invariably lose money.

Modern art does the opposite - it’s often a healthy pension. I’m sure many audio designers would like to achieve the same effect. So how to go about it?

The answer is to be bold. Loudly proclaim your tortured childhood and how your audio ‘art’ embodies it. Move to Brick Lane or Clerkenwell (the current modern art ‘centres’ of London) and regularly kick up a drunken rumpus in Soho - preferably, the Groucho Club or Quo Vadis. Then throw a glass of unoaked Chardonnay into the face of a big mogul, staring from coffee table glossies and counting your loot as your audio esoterica gains true cult status!

Why on earth haven’t more designers thought of this?

The cost of cables, arguing that, “if you want to hear music as it really sounds, invite the local brass band to perform in your home. You’ll hear more in thirty seconds than you’ll ever achieve with hi-fi, even if its cables are made from oxygen-free copper mined on the moon.” Fair point, but I’m not too sure about the brass band, though!

He continued, “give the money to Sir Malcolm Sargent’s Fund for Children with Cancer. It will give you a much warmer glow than even a single-ended triode can provide. Remember, it’s the music that matters, not the flow of electrons.” Well, I couldn’t agree more.

...or donate some money to the Malcom Sargent’s Fund for Children with Cancer. It will give you a much warmer glow than even a single-ended triode can provide. Remember, it’s the music that matters, not the flow of electrons.” Well, I couldn’t agree more.

This got me thinking about the links between hi-fi and modern art. What’s the idea behind the latter, and why do people spend so much money on it? In both modern art and hi-fi we have the ‘intellectual property’ aspect. We know that a certain CD player simply isn’t worth - in pure cost terms - the asking price. So what are you paying for? In many cases it’s the idea, the design and the story behind it. Sometimes you’re even paying for the creator having the gall to ask serious money for it -

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Hey presto, you’re a millionaire hi-fi mogul, staring from coffee table glossies and counting your loot as your audio esoterica gains true cult status! Why on earth haven’t more designers thought of this?

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Why on earth haven’t more designers thought of this?
David Price tests out a selection of the latest portables on the market.

**cd/dvd players**

**SUGDEN CD MASTER CD PLAYER**
Mani Sandher listens to the new CD player from Sugden. How will it fare?

**DENON DCD485 CD PLAYER**
A replacement for the DCD 435 budget CD player. Dominic Todd compares and contrasts.

**CYRUS DVD7 DVD PLAYER**
Simon Pope encounters the first DVD player from specialist hi-fi company Cyrus.

**loudspeakers**

**PMC FB1**
These floorstanders are designed by an established company in the world of professional monitors. Simon Pope discovers how they sound in the home.

**WHARFEDALE DIAMOND 8.2**
The 8.2 is the larger of the two standmounts in the excellent new Diamond range. Mani Sandher listens in.

**amplifiers**

**AUDIO ANALOGUE MAESTRO**
This 150 watt per channel integrated is the latest product from Audio Analogue. Simon Pope considers its merits.

**TAG McLAREN AUDIO DPA32R DIGITAL RADIO PREAMPLIFIER**
Simon Pope listens to the line level preamplifier that also doubles as a DAB tuner and a DAC!

**REGA MIRA**
Dominic Todd listens to the bigger brother of the Brio

**MUSICAL FIDELITY A300CR POWER AMPLIFIER**
Andy Grove listens to the latest power amplifier model from Musical Fidelity.

**vinyl**

**PHONO STAGE GROUP TEST**
David Price rounds up five of the best phono stages under £300 for the budget minded vinyl lover.

**accessories**

**CABLES**
Simon Pope listens to two sonically and economically different interconnects.
We test out two types of isolation feet from Germany.

David Price charts the success of the Huntingdon electronics experts.

Noel Keywood travels to the Far East for the 2001 AV show in Kuala Lumpur.

In this month's competition we have a super stylish Sugden CD Master player up for grabs.

The World team get to grips with issues facing both the industry and hi-fi alike.

In a new feature industry guru Andy Giles shares with us his enthusiasm for classic recordings. This time it's the turn of Mahler's elegiac ninth symphony.

A bit of a rarity this month, as David Price relives the, er, Golden Days of DCC with Marantz's DD-82.

We test out the latest 20GB pocket hard drive for music.
ECLIPSE TD
AUDIO SYSTEM

as it was, so it will be again...

Eclipse TD, based on Time Domain technology re-engineers from first principles the way we listen to recorded music. The result is a speaker uniquely able to replicate the accurate time and phase imagery of the recorded source. What you hear is the sound as it truly occurred at the point in time it was recorded.

The award winning AV32R audio-visual processor from TAG McLaren Audio has had yet a further upgrade due to public demand. The processor will now decode HDCD discs as an optional software upgrade due to the positive feedback from customers in the TAG website’s Discussion Forum.

On paying a license fee to either their retailer or TAG McLaren direct and entering a unique Option Code into their AV32R via the remote control, existing customers can upgrade to HDCD. This upgrade version - 3.3 - is the ninth major upgrade for the processor since the launch in May 1999 and it also offers improved networking between other TAG McLaren audio devices when connected to the AV32R, such as the pause of a DVD disc in the DVD32R if the AV32R is muted and if the display of the AV32R is switched off, then all other displays and indicators are switched off too. Version 3.3 also includes a subtle change to the algorithms which generate multi-channel sound from stereo recordings to increase “bottom end energy” in line with customers expectations. There’s also a maximum volume setting to keep neighbours and parents happy. There are further software enhancements planned for later in the year, including DTS-ES E6.1 Discrete and digital radio capability.

TAG McLaren Audio
Tel: 0800 783 8007
www.tagmclaren.com

The Live 2001 consumer electronics show will feature a Hi-Fi Village with specialist exhibitors. Bose, for example will be exhibiting in a small house with a walkthrough tour to highlight the company’s multiroom/external capabilities. Various loudspeakers will be placed throughout the house and in the garden and other multiroom installations will be operational, such as wall plates and radio remote control. Other exhibitors signed up so far include Arcam, who will be demoing their Diva range, including the new DT81 digital tuner. They will have a separate demo room that will sit ten people per session. Other demonstrators include Sony, KEF, Celestion, Lenbrook/NAD, Boston Acoustics and Kenwood.

Live 2001 takes place at the NEC, Birmingham between 21st-23rd September 2001. It’s a big event and last year saw over 46,000 visitors attending over just three days. Ticket prices are £10.50 in advance via the phone number or website below, or £12.50 on the door.

Live 2001 hotline: 0870 902 0444
www.livexpo.co.uk

Two new amplifiers have been launched by Unison Research. Although the Italian company are valve specialists, the first of the two is a solid-state integrated design. The Unico I is derived from the SR I, especially the Mosfet output stage which has been developed to produce 100W per channel maximum output. One thing that does differ from the SR I is the input stage, which is entirely solid-state and uses a Burr Brown specially integrated circuit in the Sound Quality series that employs J-Fet technology. It uses a high quality Alps type RK27 potentiometer and features an MM/MC switchable phono stage and is priced at £800.

Next up is a new dual mono power amplifier that offers 150W per channel of power that can be bridged to form a 500W monoblock. Instead of a solid-state input stage, the DM uses ECC82 valves and twice as many Mosfets in the output stage as the SR I. There are balanced and unbalanced inputs which can be used simultaneously and the DM uses six voltage regulators for each channel. It is expected to retail for around £850.

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No other music system gets you closer. The Sony Super Audio CD provides you with unrivalled sound reproduction thanks to Direct Stream Digital (DSD). A clever little 1-bit recording system that samples audio signals at a rate 64 times higher than conventional Compact Disc. Giving you a dynamic range of over 120db and an unprecedented bandwidth of over 100kHz. With its multichannel capabilities, the new Sony SCD-XB770 immerses you in sound. So you do more than just hear the music, you are part of it. And because all Sony SACD players are compatible with conventional CDs, there’s no need to replace your CD collection. To see the Sony SCD-XB770 visit your closest Sony retailer. To hear one, why not try your nearest concert venue.
**ATC'S BUDGET PAIR**

New from ATC is the CA2 preamplifier. It features separate power supplies for each channel, as well as a digital input control, infra-red remote control and a phono input option. There are a total of five line level unbalanced RCA inputs and a separate tape loop and a stereo headphone jack (which can be used with or without 'speaker' operation). The main output is via professional grade XLR unbalanced sockets - ideal for use with active monitors - and there's a tape out via RCA phono sockets. The CA2 is priced at £750, with a phono stage available (via the aux2 input) for £280 extra.

ATC has also turned its expertise with professional and domestic loudspeakers to a new 'budget' passive monitor. The compact SCM7 employs a specially designed ATC drive unit and new crossover technology in a sealed cabinet design. It features a 25mm neodymium magnet/soft dome tweeter, plus a 150mm mid/bass driver which uses 45mm dome for dispersion of midrange frequencies. It's available in real wood veneers and "professional black" and optional floor stands and wall mounts and is priced at £480 per pair.

**NEW PARTNERSHIP HAILS CD'S SUCCESSOR**

It's been announced in the last week that InterTrust technologies, the company that designs DRM (Digital Rights Management) technology has teamed up with new format pioneers DataPlay. They intend to launch a portable recording format with protected prerecorded music.

As reported a few months ago in Hi-Fi World, BMG Entertainment are already signed up to this new format. So are music industry luminaries such as Universal Music Group and EMI. They all intend to release prerecorded music on the new format, which can be used in a variety of electronic devices, rather like SD card. To remind those readers who missed our last report, the DataPlay discs are just 32mm in diameter and can store 500MB of data and up to 11 hours of MP3 files. The discs are expected to retail in the states for around $5-$10 for the recordable variety and prerecorded discs around $15. Taking the pound for dollar usual rate, we can get some idea of the price when the format is introduced to Europe next year.

InterTrust has developed a new version of its DRM technology for DataPlay's portable devices with a "packager" that secures the data. Both DataPlay and InterTrust see the new format as a possible replacement for CD, due to its protection security, which they see as an essential factor for any future audio carrier. This new partnership makes DataPlay a serious contender among new audio formats.

The fact that the format is DRM-based will appeal to artists and record companies alike. They want to protect their work from piracy and DataPlay offer a more economic and appealing option to many in the industry than SACD or DVD-A.

Electronic manufacturers such as Toshiba and Samsung have already pledged allegiance to the format due to its versatility and portability. DataPlay may well appeal to consumers because of these properties, since people often favour portability over improved sound quality. There may well be quite a format battle looming yet again.

[www.dataplay.com](http://www.dataplay.com)
fig.1. AV receiver that sounds great in Dolby Digital.

“A strong budget contender for forward thinking music fans”  
Hi-Fi Choice September 2001

“Great stereo performance; commendably solid build”  
What Hi-fi? Sound and Vision September 2001

Sounds obvious, doesn’t it?

Unfortunately, AV products have always been a trade-off, usually sacrificing musical finesse in favour of brute strength and making too many compromises for them to ever find a place in an audiophile system. Now, NAD brings its wealth of experience in producing award-winning, no-nonsense stereo products to the world of home cinema, and the same principles of simplicity and value that make our amplifiers and CD players world-beaters, are now producing truly earth shattering AV receivers, DVD players and multi-channel amplifiers.

Contact us for your nearest NAD Home Cinema dealer, and figure it out for yourself.

fig.2. AV receiver that sounds great in stereo.

“A strong budget contender for forward thinking music fans”  
Hi-Fi Choice September 2001

“Great stereo performance; commendably solid build”  
What Hi-fi? Sound and Vision September 2001
Linn Products have announced details of three new loudspeaker models. The Espek, Ekwal and Melodik all employ new, advanced driver and crossover technology and high-density cabinet construction. The Espek is a dual-ported floorstander designed for both passive and active use. It features a soft dome tweeter and a polypropylene bass/mid unit, plus a rear firing bass driver, along with front and rear firing ports.

The Ekwal is another dual ported design, designed for either vertical or horizontal use, on a bookshelf, wallmounted or standmounted. It can be used as a centre channel partner for the Espek. Again, it's operational in either passive or active mode.

The last new model is the Melodik, an omnidirectional "bass reinforcement" loudspeaker. This features twin 305 (12") Isobarik coupled drivers with integrated amplification and, like the Ekwal, can be placed either horizontally or vertically. Prices are £750 for the Ekwal, £2,450 for the Espek and £2,850 for the Melodik.

Here's more news from the Glasgow manufacturer. The highly acclaimed Classik one box system has now the added benefit of two audio distribution options. The first allows simple multiple room audio with DIY installation. A single Classik can be connected to a maximum of four other separate Classiks to provide "an easy plug and play solution without any programming". Each secondary Classik can select, listen and control the main room Classik as well as its "local" source. The other option offers greater flexibility by connection to a Linn Knect system fitted by a Linn specialist custom installer. A Knect Classik can distribute other Classik sources with two-way control from up to four rooms with Knect capability.

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**THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS...BUT THEY AREN'T DANISH!**

In the sub-head of last month's NAD CS41 CD player review, it was stated that NAD were 'Danish giants'. NAD Electronics is not a Danish company but is part of the Canadian based Lenbrook Group. We apologise unreservedly for this inaccuracy.
David Price rounds up five of the latest leading portable music makers - pitting CD, MiniDisc and AAC/MP3 players against one another on the road.

**SHARP MD-MT88H £150**

This brand new design boasts bang up-to-date styling, but despite its relatively slimline proportions, still feels quite portly compared to the Panasonic (vital statistics: 81.1 x 19.9 x 92.4mm, 147g).

Still, it's not short of facilities, boasting the full MD-LP Long Play smash - its ATRAC3 encoding system gives 160 minutes of stereo recording on 80 minute disks in LP2 mode, or 320 minutes of stereo in LP4 mode. It has a useful 40 second shock resistant capability thanks to its 16Mbits of DRAM. It's pretty sparing on battery life, giving 20 hours of playback from a single AA battery, and there's an optional Ni-MH rechargeable available. Facilities are relatively modest, extending to a 3-mode 'Digital X-BASS' booster, which isn't really worth bothering with.

For me at least, the highlight of this portable is its 24-Bit ATRAC/ATRAC3 Encoder Sampling Rate Converter. It gives absolutely superb sound quality (for a portable) - incredibly big hearted and bouncy.

The Sharp has oodles of detail, sophistication and raw-edged musicality in equal measure. Whatever music you feed it, it just dives in and boogies! Bass is the strongest here (with all boosters, EQs etc. switched out) and treble the sweetest and most 'airy'. A fantastic performance then, and if you factor in the useful facilities and modest price, this is a winner.

**PANASONIC SJMR200 £199.95**

In Japan, Panasonic has a reputation for the very best build quality and reliability. This is hardly surprising, looking at this exquisite high end MD portable. The makers claim that it's the 'world's smallest and lightest recorder'. Whether this is true or not I can't say, but at 94g, it gives many solid-state MP3 players a run for their money. The finish is exquisite and it feels like a million dollars to use. The unit is packed with features, including...
a comprehensive backlit LCD remote control, large two line display with a remaining battery power indicator and a 'Smart Operation Pad' (touch pad) for easy text entry. Although lacking MD LP, it will record discs in mono, giving double the playing time - useful for off-air recording. Battery life is over 35 hours using 2 AA batteries and the built-in rechargeable. Supplied accessories include decent sounding earphones, an AC adapter/charger and rechargeable battery.

It's a shame about the bland sound though, which lacks the Sharp's punch or the Sony's refinement. Despite the best efforts of Panasonic's HDES (High Density Encoding System) and 24-bit ATRAC DSP, The SJMR sounds a little over polite. It really isn't bad, or offensive in any way - it's just that it all seems a touch too polished and prim to really pull you into the music. It's not a bad effort though - the strength of the overall package will endear this player to many buyers, with only dyed-in-the-grain audiophiles feeling the need to look elsewhere.

SONY MZ-R900 £229.99

Here's proof positive that less is more. This is an impressively small and light MD portable (78.9x17.1x72mm, 135g)

that's positively dripping with features, from MD Long Play (giving up to four hours recording and playback, with the commensurate loss of sound quality), a variable speed control, many and a very sturdy anti-shock protection system. It's surprisingly simple to use, thanks to Sony's usual Jog Level, plus a natty backlit LCD remote. The unit comes supplied with a rechargeable battery, dry battery case (housing one AA cell) and a carrying case with belt clip.

There's a choice of blue or silver colour schemes.

As you'd expect from a portable at this price, build and finish are excellent - although not quite up to the giddy heights of the Panasonic. Sound is superb, but still a whisker behind the Sharp - essentially it's extremely clean and crisp, with a lean, open midband bristling with detail. Where the Sharp pulls ahead is in the musicality stakes - it sounds more alive, with a more natural (less synthetic) sense of rhythm. Still, dance music and classical fans will love it's tidy and well ordered character. A lovely bit of kit with everything you could ever want, but so it should at this high price.

PANASONIC SV-SD75 £300
This is the digital audio portable everyone's talking about right now - mainly on account of its bold styling. Rather than being a standalone portable in the genre of Akio Morita's original Sony Stowaway (nee Walkman) from 1980, this is something you actually wear (hence Panasonic's fiendishly clever new 'e-wear' appellation). Still, this is a distraction, because what will really interest Hi-Fi World readers is its AAC capability. As well as playing MP3s, it also works with the new Advanced Audio Coding format. As there are relatively few AACs on the net for downloading, you have to rip your own music from your computer's CD-ROM drive, using Panasonic's supplied software, though.

No doubt about it - The SV-SD75 is beautifully built and eminently wearable. Not everyone will like its cod 'Buck Rogers in the 21st Century' styling though. The fine pitch, 12-character x 2-line dot matrix inverted LC display (silver characters on a black background) is easy to read and looks good. There are controls for Play/Stop, Skip/Search, volume, S-XBS bass boost and hold functions, and they're all easy enough to use. The comprehensive package includes 'in ear' headphones, a neck strap and wrist watch band, a 64MB SD memory card (giving around 1 hour of high quality AAC music) with storage case, a PC software disc, headphone extension cable, USB reader/writer and storage case. Playing time is around four hours from one small (AAA) battery.

Sound is excellent, especially when using AAC - smooth, sweet, clean and detailed with no audible artefacts. Although it's still a little way behind the best MiniDisc or CD has to offer, it isn't that much - I get the feeling that what's really holding the Panasonic back is its modest headphone amp rather than its MP3 or AAC decoder circuitry. When you consider how much lighter, more compact, portable and robust feeling this is than all the other formats here, this makes a very strong argument for itself, even at this high price. Brilliant, but pricey.

Just over a decade ago, Sony introduced its first 'CD Discman'. It's amusing to remember how it was greeted - seen as a veritable miracle of modern science. CD portables soon became 'Yuppie' fashion accessories, just as mobile phones would be a few years later. So what of the latest crop? Well, as the D-EJ925 proves, they've come along amazingly. Although bulky compared to the others here (of course, CD portables are limited to the size of CDs) at 127.2x15.4x135.6mm, it's still incredibly compact for a Discman and also reasonably light at 205g. It's a joy to behold and use, with a sleek aluminised plastic case and stick remote with backlit LC display. It uses two AA batteries to give a staggering 80 hours of playback time if combined with its internal rechargeable battery. Accessories include the aforementioned Ni-MH cell, remote, in-ear phones and carrying case.

Sound quality is excellent. Being a non-compressed digital audio format, it's got a headstart, but I've still heard many CD walkies that can't compete with superb MP3 portables such as Philips Rush SA-126, so that's not the only explanation. Ultimately, Sony has spent time and money engineering this player's one bit DAC to work well, and the result is a smooth, even, crisp and detailed sound. By separates standards, it's a little bass light and soft around the edges, and lacks real dynamic grip and gusto, but it's still surprisingly pleasant to listen to and worth the tag of 'real hi-fi' in its own right. Better still, there's an optical digital out, so you can always listen to it via a hi-fi DAC or hi-fi MiniDisc or CD recorder. Superb value.

SONY D-EJ925  £150

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SONY D-EJ925  £150
Perfect 3D clarity is what brings home theatre to life - you want to hear where the pin drops, as well as when.

The less that speaker tone varies, the crisper the soundscape becomes. No wonder the award-winning Q Series sounds so real: with identical Uni-Q drivers for each speaker, the system's tonal match is perfect. And by mounting an advanced tweeter at the acoustic centre of each midrange cone, KEF's Uni-Q technology creates what all speaker manufacturers aspire to: a sonic point source. Compared to the row of drivers you get in conventional centre speakers, this makes on-screen voices sound incredibly natural.

That's why nothing else at the price even comes close for delivering the full richness of today's digital soundtracks for everyone in the room. Loud and clear.
The CDMaster is a stylish new CD player from the venerable Sugden. Mani Sandher is suitably impressed.

I've been a fan of the old 16bit CD format ever since I purchased a Rotel Mitchi CD player, some five years ago. Yes, I know CD isn't as good as vinyl or the new high resolution formats, but CD can sound outstanding (just listen to some DCS gear if you don't believe me). There is a vast catalogue of titles, and it is easy to use and maintain. CD remains the digital format of choice for the majority of people, for now.

Sugden have a long and rich audiophile history and remain one of the oldest British owned hi-fi companies, continuing to make gear of constantly high quality where others have fallen by the wayside.

The first thing that struck me about the CDMaster is its size. Part of Sugden's Bijou range, at 140x 230x 267mm it's tiny by serious hi-fi terms, and incredibly cute. The player is designed to sit on top of other Bijou components, forming a 'midi'-sized system that looks as good as any lo-fi 'lifestyle' system out there. But Sugden haven't just focused on cosmetics, they've gone to great lengths to optimise the design of the CDMaster to improve sound. The case comprises two tiers: the lower housing the transport mechanism and the digital/analogue output stages, and the upper a digital display, the function controls and power supplies. The isolated transport mechanism is a heavily modified Philips 12.1. Interestingly, conversion is achieved through a DAC 7 18bit x 4 times oversampling hybrid IC, which I believe allows for a simple 1st order analogue filter. All digital filtering, noise shaping and analogue conversions are carried out on original Sugden circuit boards. The final analogue output has zero feedback and is a low impedance voltage reference stage, using discrete components throughout. Importantly, the CDMaster sports seven regulated power supplies to minimise interference between digital elements and the analogue output section.

Once I'd finished admiring the CDMaster's aesthetics and build, I began setting it up in my current system, comprising Pass Labs X1 preamp/Aleph 4 power amp, B&W Nautilus 803 speakers, Nordost Red Dawn interconnects/speaker cables and Cardas Golden Cross mains leads. The CDMaster sat directly on a Townshend 3D Seismic Sink (in my experience, for CD players to perform at their best, it is crucial to ensure adequate physical isolation from vibrations).

I lived with the CDMaster for almost two weeks, over which time I managed to listen to a great variety of music and become acquainted with its sound. I've come to the conclusion that this is one serious CD player - hats off to Sugden. For me, the most
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.

Having perfected the acoustics, we turned to aesthetics. Hence the choice of five stunning contemporary finishes - exquisitely book-matched veneers, now including Cherry and the highly figured pale Albina Burr, with corners carefully radiused to eliminate residual edge diffractions. In all, literally hundreds of painstaking improvements were made.

So many small improvements can make a big difference to sound quality - and these do. You’ll find the Reference Series—Two vastly more accomplished than its illustrious predecessors. Sweeter. Purer. Even more lavishly detailed.

Like all the best things in life, they still don’t come cheap - but to anyone who really appreciates sound, they’re better value than ever.
impressive aspect of the CDMaster is its top-end. On lesser machines, the top-end can sound dry and lifeless or nasty and edgy. But not on the CDMaster. The cymbals on Duke Ellington's 'Blues In Orbit' (MFSL pressing) sparkled, sounding airy and so sweet. They floated in space exactly where they should - never too forward and never too recessed. The opening track on Ry Cooder's 'Buena Vista Social Club' was presented with a realistic impression of the atmosphere and ambience of the Cuban studio ... in my living room! This is more the sort of top-end performance I associate with SACD than CD. Imaging, separation and depth are also impressive. All the tracks on the 'Buena Vista Social Club' were presented with a strikingly real and large sound stage, with each musician in his/her rightful place.

Fortunately, the CDMaster's mid-range isn't far behind its top-end performance. For the most part, the mid-range was pure and smooth, and never nasty or sharp. Vocals and horns were particularly impressive. The only music that gave the CDMaster any hint of trouble in the mid-range was piano. Keith Jarrett's piano on his famous 'The KolN Concert', was produced with a slight 'edge' around each note, which made some of the more intricate moments less satisfying to listen to than I remember. This is no big criticism as I find that piano is simply difficult to reproduce well, even for a great CD player. So, how are things down below? Well, not bad, but could be better. The CDMaster's low-end, though well extended, could be tighter and more focused. Also, low-end transients and dynamics are a tad flat, which has implications for timing and rhythm. The CDMaster had Maxwell's 'Embrya' shaking the windows out of my flat, but the bass was a tad too sluggish to do this music justice.

Overall, the CDMaster's resolving power was good, but not quite in the same league as my reference player - a highly modified Sony SCD-1! The CDMaster did a good job of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan's track on 'Spirit of India', but couldn't resolve the slight noises being made by the musicians as they sing and play around the lead vocalist. Now, how fair is it to compare a £1250 player to one that costs nearly four times as much (with the Sony's modifications taken into account)? 'Nell, take the fact that it is not disgraced in such company as an indication of how good the Sugden really is. CD replay has come a long way since 1983 and the Sugden CDMaster continues this upward trend. If you've invested in a reasonable CD collection over the years and are in the market for a CD player between £1000 and £1500, then do audition the Sugden CDMaster. There's strong competition in the bracket from the likes of Meridian's 206.24 and Arcam's FMJ 23 but it's up there with the best. It won't play movies or give you multi-channel sound, but is incredibly stylish, and makes good old-fashioned CDs sound great. You'll get a taste of what the truly great (and expensive) 16bit silver spinners can do.

Audio Synergy Ltd.
Valley Works
Station Lane
Heckmondwyke
W. Yorks
Tel: 01924 404088

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

This is a multibit player, which some people prefer for its sound, feeling it is punchier than today's bitstream. Performance figures suffer though. Distortion from this player was higher than today's norm, measuring 0.04% at -30dB and 1% at -60dB, about double what is common. There may well be a little bit of sharpness as a result.

Sugden have sought to prevent the sound becoming too hard by rolling off high frequencies gently, as our response analysis shows. This sort of roll down softens things out a little and often brings a sense of cohesion too.

The Sugden doesn't measure too well but Sugden are successful at offering a product that sounds good and I suspect it will be subjectively different. NK

Frequency response 4Hz-21.3kHz

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<td>-30dB</td>
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<td>-90</td>
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Separation

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Noise

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<th>noise with emphasis</th>
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<td>-96dB</td>
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Dynamic range 99dB

Output 1.9V

World Verdict

The stylish and sleek CDMaster is a fine performer that's easily at the top of its class. Highly recommended.
Professional loudspeakers don’t always work well in the home, but PMC’s transmission line FB1s are an exception, Simon Pope found.

The Professional Monitor Company supplies loudspeakers to professional knob twiddlers - and they are after the domestic market. If you’re used to professional speakers, what other recommendation do you need?

Unfortunately, it’s not always the case that hi-fi hobbyists will fall head over heels in love with speakers from a professional background. My experience of Pro monitors (mostly the passive type) is that they have a very detailed and forward sound. Whilst undoubtedly lively and exciting it can often be tiring. This is often the effect I’ve found with some Pro gear that’s transferred to the consumer market. Remember, this stuff isn’t necessarily designed to make music listening enjoyable; it’s often designed to bring out faults - both obvious and subtle.

From experience (albeit fairly limited) I know PMC to be slightly different. PMC’s monitors are found in studios and mastering suites throughout the world - from broadcast and film scoring to CD and DVD mastering. Just as Tannoy’s professional range of passive monitors can often be as effective in the home, so this company’s speakers migrate well into the world’s front rooms.

Their ‘entry level’ floorstander is the acclaimed FBI. It’s a very attractive looking speaker that blends unobtrusively into any room. The accumulated knowledge and experience of PMC has been incorporated into the production of the FBI. PMC state the different traits of domestic and professional speakers and make a choice of tasteful real wood veneers to make the essential change between ‘work tools’ and furniture.

The company employ their own version of the transmission line principal in an attempt to create a true full range sound from average cabinet dimensions. They claim that their transmission line technology meets the following criteria: full frequency response, lower coloration, neutral and dynamic performance and higher power handling without distortion or compression. If all this is found in the FBI than it promises to be one fine speaker - and perhaps an engineering first!

There’s a lot of serious work going on here. The cabinet construction is an in-house, computer-aided design where details such as the width and radius of the front baffle have been designed to eradicate diffractions. More details abound, such as tolerance selected crossover components, professional grade drive units and custom engineered internal acoustic foams. The bass/mid drive unit uses a 170mm doped cone, and a cast magnesium alloy chassis and the tweeter is constructed from aluminium alloy. It is phase corrected and ferrofluid cooled.

Round the back there are 4mm banana speaker input connectors in a bi-wire configuration (with bridging links for single wire option). Optional sculptured plinths can be used to add structural and sonic stability. PMC are also the UK’s distributor for the very fine Bryston professional amplifiers (again used in many domestic set ups) and the FBI s have unique mounting points for Bryston Powerpac 60 or 120 monoblock power amps, creating a tidy and powerful active loudspeaker.

Being negative and expecting the worst - everything else is then a bonus - I imagined the sound emanating from the alloy drive units would be the usual hard and furious ‘Pro’ sound that would have me
The year is 2001, the age of .com, poor service and fast turnover.

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Tel: 01235 511166, Fax: 01235 511266, E-mail: henley.designs@virgin.net, WWW.henleydesigns.co.uk
guitar tracks detailed and cohesive. as you'd get from, say, Mission's 783 Vocals were pin-point accurate and and you have one great rock ' speaker. forward sound that comes with the amplifier's feedback loop. Since the will draw little current and there's little reactive energy storage to upset an PMCs own very fast and accurate, beyond treble. whilst again forward, never fell prey to the overly harsh sound that can arise with metal dome designs; the detail in cymbals was quite clearly has twin peaks but they peaks" of a ported reflex. The FBI's wholeheartedly.

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

PMC say they "implement their own unique version of the transmission line" in the FBI. The ported reflex can be modified toward transmission line working however and this is what PMC have done with the FBI.

A true transmission line will have a flat impedance curve at low frequencies, instead of the classic "twin peaks" of a ported reflex. The FBI quite clearly has twin peaks but they are lower than usual, suggesting the line provides broader damping than a conventional port. It should, by inference, give tighter bass as a result.

Further up the audio band the FBI has a midband impedance peak with gentle slopes around it. This means it will draw little current and there's little reactive energy storage to upset an amplifier's feedback loop. Since the bass/mid. unit has a DCR of 6ohms, a few ohms above what is common these days, overall the speaker has a high-ish overall impedance of 8ohms (measured).

Put together, these properties make the FBI a very easy load for any amplifier, including valve amplifiers. They are a very tidy piece of design work and undoubtedly the designers know what they are doing. Sensitivity was average at 87dB from 1W input, partly due to the higher than average impedance, but the FBI is still reasonably sensitive. Frequency response measured flat over a wide range of forward listening angles, showing very good phase matching between the drive units. They have what I call "academic" flatness, except for a tweeter peak. Academic flatness can give a lean, dry balance, and a tweeter peak, especially with a metal dome is just unwise in my view. It's found in studio products to compensate for the hearing loss engineers suffer by blasting themselves whilst monitoring! Such a peak is plainly audible and can be unpleasant with bright CDs especially. The port's contribution to forward output is a little odd, but it seems to add rather than cancel, as a transmission line should, and PMCs claim that the FBI reaches down to a very low 22Hz is substantiated by our measurements; this 'speaker really does go low.

The FBI is a good bit of engineering. It definitely earns its place in the hi-fi market, offering a very balanced and quite advanced set of properties. It's suitable for transistor and valve amps. Definitely worth checking out, but forward treble may well be noticeable. NR

World Verdict

Highly involving professionally designed 'speakers with excitement and speed that make hi-fi a whole lot of fun.
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 specialists in high fidelity sound reproduction - since 1967
Simon Pope, with the aid of a block and tackle, encounters a larger than life musical Italian. . .

When an amplifier arrives on your doorstep inside a screwed wooden crate you know you're in for something serious. This new mega-integrated amplifier from Audio Analogue is 52 (yes) kilograms of metal in the true high end mould of design. It has a price tag of £2500.

The first noticeable thing about the Maestro, and excuse the schoolboy sniggering, is the size of its knob. A great hulking slab of a potentiometer control sits unashamedly in the centre of the fascia, accompanied in minimalist style by a selection of six small LEDs and three metal buttons. At the sides of the amp sit the aforementioned heat sinks - kids and pets, beware - and at the rear are just two pairs of speaker outputs, two balanced inputs and five line inputs, as well as an MM/MC internally switchable phono stage.

There is also a tape out and a pre out (although the idea of using a 52kg preamp is, frankly, bananas). It also comes complete with the coffin-like metal remote control attributed to the new Puccini Remote models. This is a 'mutha', as they say and make no mistake.

Power is rated at 150W per channel into 8ohms and up to 600W into 2ohms. The Maestro is designed as a separate pre and power pair inside the same casing, right from the power supplies to the amplification stages. The power supply is designed around two humungous 750VA toroidal transformers (helping, or rather hindering, to account for the weight of the thing) and the mains filtering is performed by four 15,000µF capacitors for each channel. The two channels of the preamplifier section are each fed by a dedicated power supply taken from the transformers' secondary wiring. This preamp section employs a wideband, low feedback circuit where close tolerance, low noise resistors work back to back with polypropylene and Os-Con capacitors.

In the massive power stage are eight 250W bi-polar devices and the company claim the 'speakers are not concerned by load phase and according to the press bumph should be "perfect for electrostatics and idiosyncratic 'speakers". Never one to turn down the opportunity to catch someone out, I duly hooked up my Quad 988 electrostats and got down to the serious business of listening.

Looks are deceptive, and just as the fairly mundane saloon look of a BMW M5 belies the ferocious fire power under the bonnet, so the dragon like look of the mean heat sinks belie the relative lack of fire breathing from the Maestro. There's more to powerful amps than just weight and clout and the Maestro is a prime example of this. Those hoping that the sound will match the mucho macho look will be sorely disappointed - there's none of your Naim NAP500 mega-slam here. It takes its sonic stamp from the traditional fluid sound of the rest of the company's amps such as the Puccini SE and the Bellini/Donizetti pre and power amps.

The sound centres more on fluidity and smoothness than rhythmic weight or low end grunt. That's not to say that it can't go deep and loud, because it can, but not to the extent of say, the aforementioned Naim amps, Krell's powerhouses or the upper range Musical Fidelities such as the M3 Nu-Vista integrated.

When I played a record of Paul Weller's Greatest Hits through the phono stage (MM) I was treated to a very smooth and well balanced sound that basically seemed far too polite for the amp's bad boy aesthetics. Most noticeable was the relative lack of deep bass compared to my
Most systems are spoilt by the preamp. Listeners do not realise how much information is being lost or corrupted by this under-rated item...

Preamps - is “good” enough?

Respected audio journalists sometimes remark that there is only a handful of good preamps in the WHOLE WORLD. Exaggeration?

Remember the best sound stage you ever heard: NATURAL-SIZE musicians, placed with unmoving pinpoint accuracy in WIDTH, DEPTH AND HEIGHT. Imagine the PHASE precision at all frequencies needed to conjure up that 3D holographic image from just two speakers.

We are very sensitive to TIMING with sound. Phase change, or time “smearing”, confuses imaging. Our brains also detect an “EVENT” before the pitch, so the START of notes is critical. Any damage will be amplified through the chain.

Preamps with wide bandwidth, fast power supplies and low noise are hard to design and expensive to build. Anything costing less than £3k is probably suspect.

We offer some very good preamps. Valve – Balanced Audio Technology (especially the VK555E), CAT SL1, Hovland HP100 and Nagra. Solid state – DNM and Spectral.

BUT do you need a preamp?! If your main source is CD consider a better DAC with DIGITAL VOLUME (eg dCS) and drive the power amp direct. Their new digital upsampler even has two ANALOGUE inputs...

Customers say we make some of the BEST SOUNDS they have ever heard, so you know we can do the same in your home. Our advice will take account of your best components and guide you where change is needed, in stages you can afford.

You AVOID EXPENSIVE MISTAKES, enjoy music along the way and save money in the long run.

JUST LISTEN AND YOU’LL KNOW

CD: ACCUPHASE, ADVANTAGE, AUDIO SYNTHESIS, BAT, DCS ELIAR, DELUS AND PURCELL, MERCUS, PASS, SAT, SUGDEN, WADIA, VINYL: BASS, CLEARAUDIO, CROWN JEWEL, DNM, GRAHAM, ORMHOV, LEHMANN, MICHELL, SUNDIAL BLUE POINT SPECIAL

TRANSFIGURATION, AMPLIFIERS: ACCUPHASE, ADVANTAGE, BANDED AUDIO TECHNOLOGY, CAT, DNM, GAVNIT, HOVLAND, NAGRA, PASS, SAT, SONNETEER, SPECTRAL, SUGDEN, LOUDSPEAKERS: AUDIO PHYSIC, BK5, ENH, LUMEX, NEAT, TOTEM, WADIA, TUNERS: ACCUPHASE, MAGNUM DYNALAB, CABLES: ARGENTO, CHORD CO, DNM, HOVLAND, NORDOST, SETEC, SPECTRAL, YAMAPURA, CHURCHILL, etc. SUPPORTS: STANDS UNIQUE, VIBRAPHONE, etc.
reference transistor Meridian 557 power amp. What it perhaps lacked in musical weight it made up for in staging and phrasing, though. Vocals were lyrical and clear and the amp honed in on the musical aspect of the mix as a whole, as opposed to showing off its super-fi credentials simply in terms of muscle.

It was in Jazz and classical that the Maestro, not surprisingly, felt more at home. Miles Davis’s Sketches Of Spain was aptly cool and restrained but was never lacking in atmosphere or intensity, the Maestro being suitably in control of everything.

Timbral qualities weren’t up to the best valve standards and the sound couldn’t be described as startlingly neutral, but Davis’s trumpet had a nice tone - not too bright - and there was especially good depth of field, with the sound stretching way back into the bay window.

Chamber music in the form of Spohr’s double quartets on a Hyperion CD fared surprisingly well. I say ‘surprisingly’, because it’s not necessarily a trait you associate with overtly powerful amplifiers. Here, however, the sound was well rounded and cohesive, strings never too harsh or scratchy and each line’s phrases well documented. A little bit of heavyweight orchestral in the form of Stravinsky’s Rite Of Spring showed that nothing was lacking in control but overall speed and attack, along with dynamics, could have been a little better executed.

The Maestro certainly stands out from the rest of the crowd when it comes to looks and sound. It has all the aesthetic appeal of a high end American powerhouse yet none of the sonic characteristics - it’s surprisingly warm and fluid to the extent that rock and dance music can actually sound a tad thin compared to the competition. You have to remember here that a big, heavy chassis doesn’t necessarily mean you get a ballsy sound. If you err towards classical listening, especially with vinyl as the phono stage is a fine one, you could do worse than give the Maestro a good listen. It has refinement and poise by the bucketload but it won’t suit heavy metal freaks or dance music bass heads. Just don’t forget the back support and block and tackle!

Audio Analogue Maestro integrated amplifier £2,500
UKD
23 Richings Way
Iver
Bucks SL0 9DA
www.ukd.co.uk
www.audioanalogue.com

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

Power 180 watts
CD/tuner/aux.
Frequency response 8Hz-140kHz
Separation 65dB
Noise -104dB

Distortion 0.02%
Sensitivity 230mV
dc offset 710mV

Disc
Frequency response 1Hz-98kHz
Separation 58dB
Noise -58dB
Distortion 0.022%
Sensitivity 0.23mV
Overload 9mV

World Verdict
Plenty of power on tap but it uses it subtly to favour jazz and classical. Build quality is simply superb for the money.
Dominic Todd listens to the latest budget CD offering from Denon, the DCD-485.

The new Denon DCD-485 is a replacement for the DCD-435, an evolutionary rather than revolutionary change. The 435 was well finished and reliable, but surprisingly fatiguing to listen to for long periods of time. Denon have sought to put this right with the latest model by fitting a new DAC. In Denon’s terms, it’s an “Enhanced Multilevel noise shaping” DAC no less. Otherwise, there’s little else inside to really get the juices going, but then for £140 it would be churlish to expect trick power supplies and capacitors!

This new Denon is extremely well built. From the neatness of the circuit layout, to the rounded lid casings, it’s clear that there is little that can touch it for class at this price point. It may look rather boring, but you just know it will last for many years. My local Virgin Megastore has dozens of older Denons playing all day long, which has to be the ultimate recommendation in terms of reliability.

Featurewise, the Denon can’t be faulted either. There’s an optical output, remote control, headphone socket and now the ability to play back CD-RW discs. In terms of design, in slick user friendliness only the Sony CDP-XE530 comes close. Along with the Marantz CD5000 at £150, these two machines are its main rivals. However, serious competition in the form of the NAD CS20 is available for just £30 more.

To see if Denon could match these fine static impressions with sound quality, I began with Claire Martin’s “Man in the Station”. Unlike the previous DCD-435, the newer Denon is highly refined. The guitar was sweetly resolved and the track flowed smoothly. What it was not, however, was particularly involving. Guest vocalist, John Martyn, and Claire Martin’s vocals both sounded rather indistinct. The bass response was rather lightweight too, although this isn’t unusual for a machine of this price. Whilst far from being unpleasant to listen to, the whole effect was rather bland.

Classical music showed the Denon in a better light. Mahler’s 8th, performed by the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, conducted by Riccardo Chailly, may not have been quite as dynamic as it could, but was vibrant none-the-less. The thunderous kettledrums had good impact, and there was plenty of vivacity from the brass section. Within the huge choir there was also decent separation between the differing vocal sections. The main vocalists did, however, come across as slightly undernourished and rather weedy sounding. But, over all, it was a fair performance, well layered and with good staging.

Cosmic Rough Riders, “Revolution”, proved more disappointing. Rather like the previous Claire Martin song, the whole performance came across as being too polite. The main culprit was a bass response that failed to really drive the music along with the gusto it deserves. In a neutral system, it would simply prove too light of touch to really involve the listener. This could perhaps be forgiven, if other aspects of the sound made up for it, but they didn’t quite. Whilst vocals were smoothly portrayed, they lacked emotion and colour.

On a more positive note, treble detail was good and I had no complaints with the guitar’s resolution.

Unfortunately, Moby’s ‘Porcelain’ did little to change the Denon’s apparent bias for classical music. Yet again it was the bass response that really let the side down - there was not enough and is was rather too soft. This had the unfortunate effect of playing havoc with the timing. Otherwise, separation was fine, detail fair and the piece flowed in a smooth and unfatiguing manner. A shame then, that although it was an easy machine to listen to for long periods of time,
one wouldn't necessarily want to because of the lack of involvement.

It seems Denon haven't quite got the best sonic balance here. It would appear that in order to improve refinement, which is certainly good, they have lost the emotional content of the music. In terms of timing, texture, timbre and depth of sound, the DCD-485 rather falls flat. It does, however, appear to favour classical music, and could be a useful addition to a rather bass heavy and brash system. Class leading build quality, finish and features also make it appealing for some. Yet, the truth is, all these are available from the equally soulless sounding Sony CDP-XE530. At least the Sony has a stronger bass response to compensate. But it's only when heard against something like the NAD CS20, that you'd really notice just how much extra musicality an extra £30 can buy. The Denon has evolved, but more work is still needed.

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

Denon have always made a good CD player: technologically they are one of Japan's more expert companies. The CD-485 has an almost ruler flat frequency response, our analysis shows. This is theoretically correct, but in practice it does tend to result in a bright sound.

Our distortion analysis of the player shows it is linear right through its dynamic range, on both channels. There was little distortion at -30dB, normal music level. The published analysis accompanying this report clearly shows a smooth noise floor, free from quantisation noise or distortion harmonics - a good result. Performance was equally good at -60dB and for this reason the DCD-485 turned in an excellent dynamic range figure of 110dB.

Output measured a normal 2.15V and channel separation was wide.

As expected the Denon measured well in all areas but it will likely have a presentation that is a touch bright. NK.

Frequency response 4Hz - 21.2kHz
Distortion left right
-6dB 0.005 0.005
-30dB 0.018 0.016
-60dB 0.4 0.42
-90 29 28

Separation left right
1kHz 110 111
20kHz 89 89

Noise -99dB
with emphasis -99dB

Dynamic range 102dB
Output 2.15V

World Verdict

A detailed and appealing performer - especially with classical - but although well built, the sonic competition at the price is simply too good.
**NXT Flat Panel Technology**

**Icon Speakers £2499.95**

Over two years in development, Icon is the world’s first high-end application of NXT’s flat speaker technology. The high performance “Cyrus SurfaceSound” driver has been meticulously engineered using advanced mathematical analysis and material technologies. The panel is assembled on a precision die-cast chassis. Dual carbon fibre skins form a balanced laminate on an aluminium honeycomb core. The single panel covers a wide frequency range from 400Hz up to 22kHz thus removing the need for any crossover in the critical voice region. A conventional doped paper pulp moving-coil bass driver supports the system allowing the speakers range to extend over 10 octaves.

“The most noticeable aspect of the icons is their seamless midband. Because the SurfaceSound panel handles everything from the low midrange upward, they produce one of the fastest and most articulate performances we’ve heard at mid-to-high frequencies. Conventional speakers will find this a tough act to follow as in their case the crossover between the midrange and treble units generally comes in between 2kHz-3kHz, precisely where the ears are at their most sensitive. True, some traditional designs convey vocals with a touch more body and warmth because of this, but the icons voices are seamless, articulate and expressive to an astounding degree.”

***** What Hi-Fi? I June 2001

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**DVD7 DVD Player £999.95**

“Unusually for a DVD player, we’re going to start off talking about stereo replay. There’s good reason for this. Cyrus has produced a great-sounding DVD player. Play a CD and the sound is not unlike the lean, dynamic presentation of the CD7, but unusually for a DVD player it’s also a dab hand with timing and rhythm... Switch to multichannel movies and performance remain high, with the DTS soundtrack of Close Encounters Of The Third Kind taking the breath away. The dynamics are first rate, but there’s also a sense of control and refinement that means the sound remains listenable even when things hot up.

We think the DVD7 makes a great compromise product for people looking for a one-box music and movies solution. When it comes to playing CDs it’s possibly the best ‘sensibly’ priced DVD-player we’ve yet encountered, while it also sounds great with movie soundtracks. Oh, and it’s no slouch when it comes to picture performance either.”

***** What Hi-Fi? I August 2001

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**Caspian MKII CD Player**

“if you can stretch to it, though, Roksan’s Caspian the player to go for. Yes, it’s the most expensive here, but no rival can touch it when it comes to bringing music to life - regardless of genre. And that’s what hi-fi is all about.”

***** What Hi-Fi? I May 2001

**Caspian MKII Amplifier**

“When it comes to dynamics, the Caspian’s a real star. Spin REM’s Reveal set and the natural sweep of songs like ‘Lilac Of Life’ is given superb air and space allowing the music to breathe effortlessly. The Caspian was a fine amp at the price. The Caspian MKII is absolutely stunning.”

What Hi-Fi? I September 2001

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**Caspian Series**

- **DVD Video Player £1199.95**
- **DSP Processor £1299.95**
- **5 Channel Power Amplifier £994.95**
- **2 Channel Power Amplifier £594.95**
- **Tuner £694.95**

**Kandy Series**

- **CD Player £494.95**
- **Integrated Amplifier £494.95**
- **Tuner £374.95**

Please Note: Some products may not be available at all outlets. Advertisements valid until at least 20th September 2001.
**ARCAM**

**DiVA Series**

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<td>AVR100 AV Receiver</td>
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**DiVA CD92 CD Player**

**DiVA A85 Integrated Amplifier**

Arcam's quest for higher performance, has led to the development of the new DiVA series, the most complete range of high performance home entertainment equipment ever launched by a specialist audio manufacturer. Innovative design and production techniques have enabled Arcam to build on established values of excellent sound quality and value.

The DiVA series comprises, two CD Players, three Integrated Amplifiers, two Power Amplifiers, an AM/FM Tuner, a high performance DVD Player and Arcam's first Home Cinema Receiver. All models are available in either silver or black.

**CDMNT Series**

The CDMNT series from B&W combines the unbeatable sound purity of their highly acclaimed Nautilus 800 Series and the classic looks of their predecessors, the CDM SE. Complete in both looks and sound quality, this is one of B&W's finest loudspeaker ranges to date. The CDMNT Series is available in a choice of beautifully finished real wood veneers.

**CDMNT Speakers (excluding stands)**

£749.95

"Positioned well clear of room boundaries and slightly toed-in, the CDM NTs perform superbly. They have an open and dynamic sound that simply draws the listener into the music. Play a song such as Hard Times from Courtney Pine's Back In The Day album and the way that these speakers communicate the emotions of the performers is mesmerising."  *****  What Hi-fi? December 2000

Also Available:

CDM 7NT £1249.95, CDM 9NT £1799.95, CDM CNT Centre £399.95 and CDM SNT Surround £749.95

**FMJ Series**

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.

**CD23**

£1099.95

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.
J A Michell
Gyro 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.

"The beautifully engineered Gyro SE not only looks the part but has a wonderfully clean and fluid sound." ****** What Hi-Fi? July 1999

Monitor Audio
Gold Reference

Monitor Audio has been designing and manufacturing high quality British Loudspeakers since 1972. In the mid-eighties, the RS52MD 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.

GR20 Speakers £1499.95

"Monitor Audio has made an immensely accomplished pair of speakers in the Gold Reference 20. In sonic and physical terms there is little to criticise; even the price is highly competitive. We have no choice but to recommend them highly." ****** What Hi-Fi? March 2001

A3 CD Player
Integrated Amplifier £799.95 £849.95

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.

A3 CD Player "OK, so not everyone will be drawn to the styling, but when it comes to turning on the sonic fireworks, few players come even close at this price... A class act and a worthy winner." What Hi-Fi? Awards 2000

A3 Amplifier "The A3 does a wonderful trick of conveying a great romantic sweep of music while at the same time delivering as much internal detail as anyone could possibly want... This is an amplifier capable of performing well beyond its price. We guarantee you won’t be disappointed." What Hi-Fi? Awards 2000

A300 Power Amplifier £2199.95
**LINN**

**Classik K CD Receiver**  £999.95

The Classik K 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 K 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.

**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.

**MISSION**

780 Series

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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.

Please Note: Some products may not be available at all outlets. Advertisement valid until at least 20th September 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-nine years of trading, the company has more than forty outlets nationwide, and is for many of the UK's leading manufactures of electronics and loudspeakers, their largest and most successful retailer.

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.

solutions

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Liverpool 16 Lynd Street 0151 707 8417
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Preston* 40-44 Lune Street 01772 825777
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Leicester 10 Loosely Lane 0116 253 6567
Lincoln 20-22 Corporation Street 01522 527397
Norwich 29 St Giles Street 01603 767605
Nottingham 59-59 Moseley Road 0115 911 2121
Oxford 41 St Clements Street 01865 241773
Peterborough 36-38 Pink Road 01733 897697

midlands and west
Birmingham 12 Queen Anne Arc Hts, Livery Street 0121 233 2977
Bristol 52b White Ladies Road, Clifton 0117 974 3727
Cardiff 104 Treharne Road 029 2047 2899
Cheltenham 14 Privy Street 01242 421177
Exeter 26 Cowack Street 01392 218895
Plymouth 107 Comwell Street 01752 226011
Swansea 24 Mansell Street 01792 465777

london and south east
Brighton 57 Western Road, Hove 01273 733338
Bromley 28a East Street 020 8290 1988
Chelsea 203 King's Road 020 7352 9466
Crawley 22 The Boulevard 01293 510777
Croydon* 36-93 London Road 020 8665 1203
Epsom* 2 Upperton High Street 01372 720720
Guildford 73 North Street 0483 536666
Holborn 144-148 Gray's Inn Road 020 7837 7540
Kingston 43 Field Road 020 8547 0717
Maidstone 90 Week Street 01622 686366
Reading 24 Kings Walk Shopping Centre 0118 959 7768
Sevenoaks 100-113 London Road 01732 459555
Southampton 35 London Road 023 8033 7770
Southgate 70-81 Chase Side 020 8868 2777
Swiss Cottage* 21 Northways Parade, Finchley Road 020 7722 9777
Tunbridge Wells 28-30 St John's Road 01892 531543
Watford* 478 St Albans Road 01923 213533
Witham 1 The Grove Centre 01376 501733

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Contact our outlets via E-Mail outlet@sevenoakssoundandvision.com

recordable DVD
With the DVD format well established as a video source the natural progression is to offer a recordable version.

DVD was originally conceived as a superior format for playing movies. However, when the DVD Forum announced the official recording standard - DVD RAM - its application was best suited to PC’s and data, and not to home video. Subsequently, three formats with their various backers have been vying to make recordable DVD for home video a reality.

DVD RAM, which is backed by Panasonic and Hitachi is a considerably different format to the RW alternatives. A DVD RAM disc is pre-embossed with a groove, which gives the recording laser a timing reference. The pits on the disc are also pre-embossed with headers which help to index the recording.

To protect the delicate DVD RAM disc, it is housed in a caddy. Unfortunately, existing DVD players are not equipped to accept caddies, so they cannot play DVD RAM recordings. To overcome this basic incompatibility, the first European DVD RAM recorders will adopt the DVD-R write once specification as a secondary recording system.

Pioneer who have been promoting the DVD-R system in Japan are also developing DVD-RW. The Pioneer re-writable system requires no caddy for the blank disc. The number of re-writes is lower than DVD RAM. However, when this is applied to video recording - as opposed to PC or data application - it is more than adequate.

The DVD-RW format works in two modes: one for editing, and one for video recording. Currently, edited discs are not compatible with existing DVD players, although Pioneer claim that the recording side will work with most DVD machines.

Technically, each system has strengths, but finding the most suitable application will undoubtedly be the factor that decides which will become as ubiquitous as DVD Video.

Potentially the most effective of the recording formats available for home video archiving is the DVD+RW system from Philips.

This format requires no caddy and, while both DVD RAM and DVD-RW records onto a pre-grooved blank disc. However, the laser only writes into the groove, so the disc can spin at a constant velocity - like a DVD Video disc. The DVD+RW system also writes its own headers onto the disc as it records, thus giving it more accurate labeling than the DVD RAM system.

DVD+RW offers up to four hours of recording time on a single, double-sided disc, and, has demonstrated its backwards compatibility with other formats.

The Philips DVD+RW system is incorporated into the DVR1000 recorder. As well as offering this groundbreaking new technology, the DVR1000 will play DVD Video movies, conventional CD’s, and both variants of the re-writable formats - CD-R and CD-RW. Thus, making it a comprehensive solution to many of today’s applications.

Philips DVR1000 £1299.95, available mid-August from all Sevenoaks outlets.
Mani Sandher gets intimate with the larger of Wharfedale's new Diamond models.

Wharfedale seems to have a very clear idea of its target market before releasing a product, and did its homework well before it released the first 'Diamonds' back in 1982. By the mid-80s, it seemed that the Diamonds were standard issue for any discerning, music-loving university student, including myself. As I recall, the most impressive feature of the Diamonds was their bigger-than-life sound.

Other manufacturers soon realised what they were missing out on and quickly got in on the act. In the intervening years, the budget speaker market has become increasingly competitive, but Wharfedale has managed to keep pace with the times, claiming the Diamond to be Britain's best selling speaker, year on year, for the last 18 years! To see if this trend is likely to continue, we decided to take a listen to the 8th incarnation of the Diamonds, in the form of the 8.2s.

Selling for a reasonable £150, the 8.2s sit in the middle of the current Diamond series between the excellent 8.1 and the 8.3 floorstander. Our samples came in a maple finish (black is also available), with a grey front baffle — not exactly my cup of tea, but they looked pretty unobtrusive sitting on top of my grey Atacama stands. Judging by the technology going into the 8.2s, it seems that Wharfedale are on a mission to keep that 'best selling speaker in Britain' position. The 8.2s are a completely new design, sharing not a single component with their predecessors. The reasonably small sized two-way design houses a 165mm Kevlar bass/mid unit and a 25mm silk dome tweeter. The bass/mid unit sports vented dual layer voice coils as well as a host of other features designed to control resonance. The tweeter sports ferrofluid cooling and a neodymium magnet.

I proceeded to connect the 8.2s to my reference system: heavily modified Sony SCD-1, Pass Labs X1/Aleph 4, with Pure Note Epsilon interconnects and Monster M2.4s bi-wire speaker cables. The 8.2s are designed to be bi-wired, but they come with jumpers, should you have only a single pair of speaker cables available. The 8.2s were left playing pink noise for half a day before any serious listening was undertaken.

As a fan of the high end, I have to admit I wasn't really looking forward to writing this review. What positives could I possibly come up with about a budget pair of speakers? Well, I needn't have worried. On first listening, I was impressed — I never imagined that budget speakers could sound this enjoyable! In general, the 8.2s sounded at their best with dynamic and electronically processed music, such as dance. Thomas Dolby's 'Hyperactive' was weighty and controlled, with a punchy beat and good rhythm. The opening bass line on the first track, 'Dissidents', was not only punchy, but also well focussed in the middle of the sound stage, with the percussion coming in to the left and slightly behind. Backing vocals were always clearly discernable to either side of Dolby's lead vocals. These are pretty impressive imaging capabilities from a budget pair of speakers.

The more I listen to various speakers, the more I prefer silk dome tweeters to their metal dome counterparts — the former tend to produce a sweeter sound. The 8.2s are no exception, being very easy on the ear. There is a complete lack of harshness in the high and mid-range, which is common in many entry-level speakers. Moby's 'Play' sounded smooth and nicely rounded. Even the piano on track 3, 'Porcelain', sounded good — not exactly real, but perfectly listenable (this is a better complement than it may appear).

I'd describe the top-end of the 8.2s as slightly recessed, giving them a laid back, but not dull, sound.
certain music, such as Journey's 'Arrival', this was more of a blessing than a vice. This recording can sound too bright and forward, but was presented with a nice tonal balance here.

So what about weaknesses? Well, for the price, none. If I were pushed to comment, in absolute terms, the bass is not particularly well extended, as might be expected from a smallish box. My preference was to place the 8.2s about 1m from the rear wall, which seemed to give a reasonable balance between low end extension and punch. But even close up to the wall (with a forward firing port, they can be used in this way to reasonable effect), the 8.2s are not going to shake the foundations of your house. If you are a bit of a bass freak, I'd recommend you listen to the Diamond 8.3s, which use identical drivers to the 8.2s, but are housed in a floorstanding cabinet. Also, I'd say the 8.2s can sound overly boxy, with certain music. Claire Martin's vocals on 'Take My Heart' sounded echoey and confined. Only on the simpler tracks, such as 'Queen Bee', could the 8.2s do this music justice. My Deutsche Gramaphon 4D recording of Orff's 'Carmina Burana' sometimes sounded muddled at higher volumes, as if it had been recorded in a cavern. However, these criticisms would be valid for most speakers costing considerably more money than the 8.2s.

Overall, the 8.2s are a great pair of speakers. Like the 8.1s, they need to be hooked up to a good amplifier (the 8.2s have a quoted nominal impedance of 6 ohms and a sensitivity of only 86 dB per watt at 1m).

If you're building a system on a tight budget, go and take a listen to the new Diamond 8.2s – you'll be impressed with the smooth and punchy sound that your £150 buys. 

WHARFEDALE DIAMOND 8.2 £149.95

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The new Diamond 8.2 is quite large. Diamonds have traditionally been half the size of this one. Bigger volume usually means stronger, cleaner and deeper bass. This Diamond reaches down to 40Hz from the bass cone's forward output, whilst the port extends down to around 25Hz. The port is widely tuned and quite well damped. As a result the Diamond should have pretty well controlled bass. This is also the reason for using a front firing port, which otherwise is better sited on the rear panel to reduce box colouration and port noises.

Quite a strong peak exists around 160Hz. If the 'speaker's front baffle is 38cm (15in) or so away from a rear wall this should partially cancel due to rear wall reflection, but it may also mean the Diamond sounds a little boxy or coloured.

Further up the frequency range the 'speaker measured well, with a reasonably flat and smooth response characteristic right up to 20kHz. There was no crossover suckout over a wide range of forward angles, showing the two drive units are well integrated. Treble output is strong up to 16kHz so the sound will not be lacking treble.

Output was quite healthy at 87dB Sound Pressure Level from 1W nominal (2.8V) of power. Wharfedale use a 4ohm bass/mid driver to help them achieve this, which with an 8ohm tweeter gives the Diamond a 6ohm overall impedance value, confirmed by pink noise measurement. The impedance curve swings around a bit, which is not ideal. This sort of thing accentuates amplifier differences. All the same, the Diamond 8.2 is a reasonable load, one that most amplifiers will handle well enough.

Wharfedale's new Diamond 8.2 measures well in all areas. It is a balanced design and likely to give a very good account of itself with a bright, detailed and lively sound, underpinned by well defined but dry bass. There may be colouration though. NK

World Verdict

Great value 'speakers that are detailed and smooth. Simply a steal at the price.
With vinyl’s continuing renaissance, budget phono stages are becoming ever more popular. David Price rounds up five of the best budget boxes.

**QED Discsaver £25**

This is arguably the one that started it all. Of course, Michell’s ISO preceded it, but that was an expensive high end design. By contrast, the Discsaver was an unashamedly entry-level product, with no airs, graces or fancy packages. Several years down the line, its bold simplicity still appeals. You plug your turntable into it, hook up the weedy looking power supply, depress its only button, the power LED lights, and hey presto - Thunderbirds are go!

Considering its beer-budget price tag - and remember this is less than the cost of two audiophile vinyl LPs! - it isn’t half bad. No, you’re not going to get a walk around sound stage, amazing bass power and wonderful treble finesse. Rather, you get a rather mechanical, transistory sound without much in the way of depth. There’s a surprising amount of detail, although if you listen hard into the rear of the acoustic, all you hear is a grey, transistory fuzz - no wondrous analogue air and space here!

But there’s a trick - simply unplug the grotty little mains adapter, unscrew two cheap looking Philips screws and pull the thing open. Therein, you’ll find a space for a PP3 9v battery (remember them?). Hook up one of these and you’ll hear a surprising transformation. Suddenly you’ll gain a fair degree of presence, and the little QED gets far smoother and more natural sounding. Thus aspirated, it becomes something of a giant killer - used in conjunction with a rich, smooth cartridge (i.e. Goldring 1042) it works a treat. It’s very musical and engaging, and sounds far more expensive than it looks. It’s still way behind the Dino, but kicks the NAD into the long grass and closes in on the Pro-ject and Creek. A bargain, if battery powered.

**NAD PP-1 £40**

It didn’t take long for budget hi-fi kings NAD to move in on the QED Discsaver’s action - the PP-1 was the result and it’s been on sale now for several years. It comes with a good pedigree because anyone who’s ever owned an original 3020 Integrated will know that this company knows how to do cracking phono stages on a budget. At 135x35x70mm it even looks like a shrunken NAD amp, so I was eager to give it a go.

Like the Discsaver, it’s MM only (a shame because the old 3020A offered MC too), with a sensitivity of 2.5mV. It comes with captive flying leads which is handy for Joe Public, but not to tweaky types like yours truly, as it means you’re limited by NAD’s choice of cabling. It uses an external 15v PSU (no battery operation here) and has gold plated input sockets and output plugs - luxury! In truth though, this won’t make a jot of difference to the sound and is more of a sales gimmick.

Sound isn’t so hot - a shame because I was expecting more. It’s perfectly adequate for your rediscovery of old fave albums, but if it’s serious fidelity you’re after, you’d be better off with a Discsaver - and a year’s supply of PP3s. It’s smoothish, but bland and muffled with a little too much of that transistory mush. Depth perspective is virtually non existent and stereo imaging is only after a fashion. Not at all bad for the money, and a fine little package - but not a giant killer like the battery QED.
Imported by Henley Designs (of Ortofon fame), these guys know a thing or two about black plastic, so it's no surprise they're carrying this little box of tricks. I remember reviewing Pro-ject's 7 integrated amplifier some six years ago, and being mightily impressed with how well it acquitted itself on vinyl. Even better was the existence of an MM/MC facility - rare at twice the price. The Phono Box, I presume, is this same phono stage without the rest of the amp - it certainly sounds that way.

An awkward looking contrivance, it's hardly a lifestyle product bristling with facilities. Indeed, it's a pain to switch from moving magnet (5mV sensitivity) to moving coil (0.45mV sensitivity), requiring removal of the case. Still, beggars can't be choosers - if you want fripperies, then buy one of those old Audiolabs! Otherwise, it's simple enough to use - just plug it in and go. Like the NAD, the lack of a power switch suggests it's designed to be left on permanently.

It sounds superb considering its slender means - once warmed up it's surprisingly smooth and there's actually a fair degree of three dimensionality to it. Put on an acoustic recording and you get a better sense of the recorded acoustic than with some CD players at 100 times the price (although that says more about the limitations of CD)! Although lacking bass power, it's also pleasingly rhythmical - good at conveying the subtle inflections of the music, it's an involving listen. Factor in a reasonable degree of detail and you've got a listenable phono stage for surprisingly little money. Treble is nice and sweet too, with little in the way of 'tizzy' distortion. Whole heartedly recommended.

This is the pricier moving coil version of Creek's popular £99 OBH-8 moving magnet phono stage, and has been on the market for some three years now. This one comes with the OBH-2 power supply, which is a high power, voltage regulated device costing £20 more than Creek's cooking OBH-1. The OBH-9 itself uses a Class A, single ended circuit with passive RIAA equalisation and discrete transistors rather than IC-based op-amps - Mike Creek is a passionate advocate of all-discrete circuitry. Although hardly a looker, it's superbly built and businesslike to use - another well conceived budget blockbuster from this company, methinks!

By the standards of the QED, NAD and (to a lesser extent) Pro-ject, it sounds great. Combining real smoothness and refinement with genuine musicality and tunefulness, it really enlivens your vinyl. It's satisfyingly smooth from bottom to top, if a touch bass light thanks to a warp filter thar comes in a little early. Soundstaging is another high point, the OBH-9 letting instruments hang in space with relative ease. The inclusion of the OBH-2 PSU really heats things up though, bringing real delicacy and finesse plus bags of low level detail and even better depth perspective. By absolute standards though, it's still a little rough around the edges and slightly mechanical sounding, but then you can't have it all at this price. If you want a bridge between the junior league of phono stages personified by the NAD, and the bigger, more pricey 'real hi-fi' designs that the Dino represents, this is the one to go for.
Expensive as entry level phono stages go, but if you're only looking to buy one (as opposed to upgrading over the years), this could actually prove the cheapest in the long run. A relatively new design, it comes in a beautifully finished silver all-Perspex case. Inside we find audio grade bipolar and JFET op amps, metal oxide resistors and ultra low impedance capacitors throughout. Underneath, four DIP switches let you choose between 1.1 nF, 33 ohms, 100 ohms and 1.1k ohms cartridge loading and 48, 52, 63, 70 and 74dB gain. This means it will accommodate practically any MM or MC cartridge around, which is brilliantly useful. The Dino comes with a bog standard Michell PSU (which is no lightweight) but can be upgraded with better power supplies at a later date, meaning it can carry you from budget to super-fi should you ask it.

Sound is superb - not just at the price, but by the standards of many other cost-no-object designs. With a clean, open, up-front presentation, there are plenty of similarities between the Dino and its Delphini big brother's sonics. Yes, it's definitely a solid state sounding device, but is still commendably neutral, lacking much of the transistor's trademark 'grey mush'. I'm still amazed by the maturity of the Dino sound - smooth right up the spectrum. One highlight is a bass that's both warm and fast and punchy. The effect is both engaging yet relaxing - you can get into the music without any distractions. It's detailed, although not forensic, so you needn't worry about the failings of your source as much as you would with a more expensive design. Treble isn't particularly sweet, but is still crisp and clean with no nasties. With great across-the-board abilities, this baby is all many vinyl junkies will ever need.
MEASURED PERFORMANCE
There are some interesting differences here. The Project makes no attempt to roll down low frequency gain below 40Hz, running flat to a very low 3Hz. Warped records will cause cone flap with reflex loudspeakers, but there will be a strong sense of bass depth and power. Gain was a modest x50 so this stage will not especially suit low sensitivity amplifiers, nor high output MCs. It is for normal MMs only. Modest gain plus a high output swing of 9.3V gives excellent overload ceilings. Equivalent input noise was very low at 0.26pV, the lowest of the group, so this stage is quiet. Ironically, since it catters best for high-ish output cartridges it least needs low input noise; Project could usefully raise gain a little to improve all-round matching, to both low output cartridges and low sensitivity amplifiers.

Equalisation was deadly accurate, giving the stage a very flat frequency response. This stage is well engineered, but will not match unusual conditions. NK

Frequency response 3Hz-80kHz
Separation 88dB
Noise 0.26pV
Distortion 0.006%
Gain (1kHz) x50
Overload 193mV in/9.3V out

MEASURED PERFORMANCE
We tested the OBH-9, designed for MC cartridges only, meaning a lot of gain is needed. This stage provides x1150 gain (62dB) according to our tests, which is about right for a general purpose MC stage. The OBH-9 will swing 5.3V out maximum and input overload measured 4.4mV. A little more overload would have been possible but the Creek is right down the centre line design wise. It will suit all MCs, but very low output types may need volume turned up, especially with low sensitivity amplifiers. Input noise was low at 0.13pV (IEC A wtd.) and channel separation adequate at 56dB. Creek have engineered a very accurate equalisation characteristic, resulting in 'flat' frequency response, as our analysis shows. This stage lacks the slight treble lift that many stages have, but gain starts to roll down below 40Hz so as not to emphasise warp signals below 10Hz. The roll down is slow however and does not affect gain from 40-100Hz, so the Creek will sound less lean than other stages with such filtering. It is a good balance.

The OBH-9 measured well in all respects. It is well designed and executed. NK

Frequency response 40Hz-86kHz
Separation 56dB
Noise (x150, MM) 0.8pV
Distortion 0.005%
Gain (1kHz) x1150
Overload 11V out

MEASURED PERFORMANCE
This stage is very flexible in that it caters for all cartridge types, from very low output Moving Coils (top-end MCs) to very high output moving magnets (budget MMs). The underside has switchable gains that range from x150 for budget MMs up to a massive x3500 for lowest output MCs. So the Dino will handle absolutely every cartridge available, past and present - not so common an ability.

Our response analysis shows the Dino has a small amount of high frequency lift (0.5dB) which will enhance detailing and clarity. Gain falls off below 23Hz (-1dB point) to provide some attenuation of warps. The Dino will swing 11V output. With the lowest gain available of x150, input overload should therefore be 73mV, which it was under measurement. It will be 3mV at highest gain for the lowest output MCs. Both these values are normal enough and satisfactory.

Channel separation measured 68dB, more than enough for the medium, where 30dB or so at most is available. Noise (equivalent input noise) figures were reasonably low, if not exceptional.

The Dino measured well in all respects. It is well thought out and can cope with anything thrown at it. NK

Frequency response 23Hz-40kHz
Separation 68dB
Noise (x150, MM) 0.8pV
Distortion 0.005%
Gain (1kHz) x150 - x3500
Overload 11V out

World Verdict
PRO-JECT PHONO BOX
Reasonable detail and sweet treble - a steal at the price.

CREEK OBH-9/0BH-2
Good low level detail and image depth from this MC-only design.

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Cyrus-ly Impressive!

The latest batch of products from Cyrus have been very impressive. Will their first DVD player carry on the tradition, asks Simon Pope?

Cyrus are the latest in a steady line of specialist hi-fi companies to not only realise the enormous growth and potential of DVD but to also do something about it. Instead of sitting on the sidelines and moaning, Cyrus are playing for the A-team with their new DVD7 DVD player.

As you'd imagine from a company with such a solid background in hi-fi the aim of the player was to reproduce audio to as high a degree as possible - all in their familiar compact metallic alloy chassis. As Cyrus's Peter Bartlett puts it "As a company with an established reputation for making some of the finest audiophile CD players, the challenge for Cyrus was to design a disc player with a sonic performance to equal a Cyrus CD player and DVD video performance to match." The company have taken many steps to tackle this task. The DVD7 uses similar 24bit technology developed for the excellent CD7 - the audio DAC features an integrated stereo filter DAC running at eight times base sampling rate. This results, say Cyrus, in exceptional dynamic range that ensures high quality audio detail retrieval. There's a traditionally engineered linear supply with low-noise toroidal transformer to provide the power source for the circuitry. Cyrus has good experience in power supply design and the DVD 7 uses twelve fully regulated power supplies. The power distribution is apparently based on a similar concept to that employed in the Discmaster transport (the company's classic two box player). A look inside the casework confirms there's interstage power supply decoupling and extensive star earthing throughout the circuits. A self centring suspension system isolates the disc mechanism from the rest of the innards to minimise vibration. Audiophile components are, of course found throughout the player.

But perhaps what the DVD7 has above its rivals is the possibility of audio upgrading on a big scale in the form of the Q7 DAC module and the PSX-R external power supply. The Q7 DAC module isn't available at the time of writing but is expected to cost around £00. It's an internal upgrade that features twin mono DACs with a differential analogue post-filter circuit that should really add some zip to the overall sound. However, the latter upgrade in the shape of the PSX-R external power supply is well and truly available (for all of the company's electronics) so one was called in for reviewing duties. It allows the player to 'tap' into its DC energy reserves and separates the analogue from the digital supplies.

As mentioned earlier the design is resolutely in the house style casework, complete with an excellent, easily legible dot matrix display window (as well as on-screen back-up display). Fascia buttons are kept to a minimum and the supplied remote control is simple looking and doesn't require a doctorate in advanced experimental physics to use. It's a very appealing
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Hi-fi, Issue 10 - Mar/Apr 2001
MEASURED PERFORMANCE

Our analysis clearly shows a top end roll off, output falling steadily above 10kHz. This sort of effect ensures there’s little sign of a ‘sting’ in the treble, keeping things nicely under control in terms of tonal balance.

Our distortion analysis at -30dB shows the DVD7 is very linear at ordinary music levels. There are no harmonics to be seen in the noise floor and the distortion readout was low enough at 0.01%. At lower levels the picture was not so rosy, distortion rising above what is normal for CD nowadays. As a result the B/I dynamic range figure was low at 102dB, against a more common 108dB or so. The effect upon sound quality is likely to be minor though.

Channel separation was wide and noise low at -99dB. Output was a normal 2.15V.

The Cyrus DVD7 measured well enough. It should have an easy sounding tonal balance and seem clean at normal music levels. NK

Frequency response 4Hz - 20kHz

Distortion left right

-6dB 0.005 0.005

-30dB 0.01 0.01

-60dB 0.669 0.62

-90 0.005 0.005

Separation left right

1kHz 112 113

20kHz 107 107

Noise with emphasis

-99dB

Dynamic range 102dBA

Output 2.15V

The Cyrus DVD7 is refreshingly unrecognisable as a DVD player. The DVD7 will play DVD video, CD, CD-R/RV and video CD discs. As far as connections are concerned, there are composite video, S-video and RGB (SCART) outputs as well as optical and digital audio outs and stereo decoded analogue out via a high quality DAC.

When it came to audio performance the DVD7 turned out to be a real gem, especially so with the PSX-R upgrade option. I started off with a few acid test CDs in the shape of Skunk Ananse’s Sunburned and Snowblind album and at completely the other end of the musical spectrum, Olivier Messiaen’s ruthless orchestral masterpiece, Et Expecto Ressurrectionem Mortuorum (if you think that’s a demanding title, you should try listening to it!). The Skunk Ananse album isn’t immediately appealing as a recording, being slightly rough around the edges and vague with most equipment but when played well it reveals a host of great traits such as imaging and detail. Both were in plentiful supply with the Cyrus playing the disc. Whilst the top end wasn’t as smooth as I’d have liked, the sound was generous and open with a great sense of both timing and dynamics. Vocals were clear and supple and the bass was firm, deep and downright dirty, giving great urgency and drive to tracks such as ‘Little Baby Swastika’ with it’s dynamic aural-assault chorus.

The Messiaen piece tests out hi-fi when it comes to detail and coherence, being scored for massive woodwind, brass and percussion sections (including, it seems, a whole army of very well-built gong bangers!). The DG recording is superbly clean and the DVD7 picked out intricacies in the scoring with commendable insight and delivered climaxes with a controlled and full wall of sound, even if the top end traits of the player reared their heads a little with the massed tam-tam (gong) crescendos, which although naturally extreme sounding, became a little too harsh for comfort. This music isn’t about tunes (there aren’t any!) but about orchestral colour and timbre and the DVD7 and PSX-R showed it could highlight different sounds and colours as well as any £800 CD player in the market, as well as being a very fine video player. It actually delivers the promise of an audiophile player more than most rivals. Although not quite as sophisticated or subtle as a £1,000-plus CD dedicated machine, it excels in drive and involvement to ensure that it’s never a dull listen. A must-listen audition!

Cyrus DVD7/PSX-R power supply £1000

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Huntingdon, PE29 6XY
Tel: 01480 43 55 77
Hello all at Hi-Fi World,

I have just finished reading Simon Pope's editorial in the August edition of Hi-Fi World, with particular reference to the "nodding off" or "snooze factor" as it is also known. I have found that the higher the quality of the sound system, the better able am I to snooze whilst listening through it. Smoothness and detail are the watchwords for applying this theory. For example, if I were to listen to say, a transistor radio, I would find it impossible to snooze, no matter how restful or sympathetic I may be to the music being played. I think that this is due to the inherent distortion in transistor radios, even when played quietly. At this point, I would have to exclude television from this theory. I can of course nod off to this medium quite readily which I put this down to visual boredom, which I find usually overcomes the generally indifferent quality of in-built TV speaker sound.

It is my belief that a listener should be able to nod off if they so choose, no matter what type of music is being played, or, within reason, the volume that it is played at. Yes, this would apply even to lively and inspiring music. Simon appears to have picked a good set of tuners to audition here, as he has not said in the review that any one of them has prevented him from applying the nodding off factor. Perhaps one of the most difficult places to nod off whilst listening is at the hi-fi show. This is mainly due to the inadequacies of the listening environment and sometimes the equipment being demonstrated! If a listener can snooze here, then the equipment must be truly magnificent in synergy with the listening room. Therefore, should an exhibitor detect a listener in his audience nodding off, the exhibitor should not assume that the listener is bored - it is more likely that he has found musical peace and therefore he should take great comfort from this.

Similarly, when purchasing a new piece of equipment, the "nodding off" test should be applied in the demonstration room, if a home trial is not possible. I would not go so far as to say that your reviewers should try to apply this test, or give scores, but it could be an important consideration for some people. After all, how many people can nod off through sounds (not music), which they find unpleasant, sibilant or hard? Note that I have not used the word "tiring". This is quite different phenomenon, and a listener is more likely to turn off a tiring sound rather than nod off.

Yours faithfully,

Alec Fray, Bolton

Wow! There speaks an expert. Are you sure you're not Rip van Winkle under a different guise? Presumably you take along a sleeping bag and night cap for your dealer demos... In my experience it's not just the "musical peace" factor - it also depends on the individual. Whereas I am quite content to hit the sack to the quiet strains of high fidelity music, my better half can only nod off to the spoken word - she apparently concentrates on the notes too much! It's a nightly battle between Radio 3 or 4 - thanks heavens there's a sofa bed downstairs in the listening room!

PS I'm sure if I applied the "nodding off" test to my reviewing routine a

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The editor finds musical peace, at last...

few manufacturers and my publisher would have something to say on the matter!

I require what can only be described as the hi-fi equivalent of International Rescue! Over the last 15 years I have acquired what can only be described as a 'stir fry' (everything chucked in) system. I am currently between houses and my hi-fi is all boxed up. It currently comprises: PT 7bo (with reference bearing, platter & clamp), Linn Ittok LVII & Dynavector I 702, Lynwood phono pre-amp and Audio Innovations 800 step up transformers, Audio Innovations L1 pre-amp, Audio Innovations First Audio power amp (2A3 model), Marantz CD52SE CD player, Aiwa cassette deck (for car tapes) and Heybrook Quartet speakers (now sold for domestic reasons - wrong sort of finish).

In the last few months before being packed the power amp died (I suspect it needs a total rebuild being 8 years old) so I have been using an old Musical Fidelity A100. My dilemma is what to do now? Do I get my power amp re-built (it had new valves shortly before it packed up) or do I cut my losses with my valve gear and go solid state? I was planning on tracking down a second-hand Audio Innovations PI phono stage, but this is on hold. Also I am in the market for new speakers but this is also on hold until the amp question is sorted out.

I also suspect that CD players have moved on since the days of my Marantz, so a replacement is probably on the cards. I do like the 'valve sound' but as I attend a lot of concerts I found it a bit lacking. In fact it sounded like two boxes 8 foot apart! My musical tastes are very varied. The new room will be 15'6" x 14'1" and the components will be adjacent near-by in the next room (again for domestic reasons!). Over the next year I can probably put up to £1500 (if I have to) towards sorting things out, also I have no qualms about second-hand equipment. So all and any suggestions will be gratefully received.

Ian Munday via email

I hate it when people ask me whether to go transistor from valve, or vice versa. It's like saying should I eat Japanese or Chinese - the answer is get the one you prefer! What I am certain of is of the quality of your existing Audio Innovations kit, and if it was me I'd get the amp overhauled and run with that. The PI is a great idea too, as it's a corking phono stage. This means you'll need a decent set of speakers, and again these are intensely personal choices and dependent on whether you stay with valves, not to mention 'her indoors' thoughts on the subject.

Try to listen to as many designs as you can, including Jamo Concert IIs, Dynaudio Audience 70s and KEF Reference Series One-Twos. As the new £1500 speakers market isn't actually overloaded with choice right now, you could always consider an overhauled pair of Quad ESL57s if you're into buying second-hand, possibly used in conjunction with a REL subwoofer (the bigger, the better) for some extra LF punch. You're right to identify your CD player as being a bit past it - but you really need to spend around £1000 to get a comprehensive improvement. In the context of Audio Innovations amplification, I'd audition Arcam's FMJ CD23, Meridian's S06.24 and Cyrus's CD7/PSX-R - all of which will give you loads more detail, power, poise and musicality. DP

Time for me to add a little something, Stick to valves - be different! And if you're sticking with the Audio Innovations as DP rightly suggests, I'd go for a big hearted 'speaker that's a little easier to drive than the Dynaudios, for example. Although not the best-lookers in the business (they make your old Heybrooks look like Kate Moss) try to get a listen to a pair of Heresy IIs from Klipsch. (0131 333 5179). These are remarkably well detailed and sophisticated sounding boxes (literally!) with more life than a bag of snakes. They aren't admittedly to everybody's taste but a taste of high end 'horn' esoterica for a relatively sensible £900. SP

The very fetching Heresy IIs - Ed's choice!

I badly need your help! I have just finished upgrading my system. It consists of a Cyrus DAD3Q player plus PSX-R power supply, bi-amping using CYRUS 3i amp plus PSX-R(woofers) and Cyrus XPA (tweeters) plus good quality interconnects. My final purchase was a pair of Ninka speakers from Linn. I was just congratulating myself on a fine sounding system when I made the mistake of listening to a pair of refurbished Quad ESL 57s driven by an historic Leak valve amp driven from a Wadia CD player. This sounded sumptuous, with gems of music laid out

THUNDERBIRDS ARE GO

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THE AGE OLD DILEMMA

DP

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precisely on a velvet background. Now I am far from sure about my own system which sounds rather vacuous in comparison. A couple of questions: was this great sound due to the player (unlikely I think), the valve amp, the speakers, or all three? If I traded my Ninkas in, would my Cyrus kit be able to drive an old toughie like ESL 57s, or would a valve amp soothe my current system and make it sound equally well upholstered?

Having just finished a spending round, money is tight. P.S. Grove reservations about David Price’s new hair style.

Peter Norrie
Leicester

Aha! Your dilemma goes to the very heart of hi-fi. Is it better to burn around in a 1960s E-Type or a new XKE? The newbie will in many ways work better at the job intended, but is patentless entertaining, sexy, engaging or just so much fun. This is more of a philosophical conundrum than an upgrading issue. The difference in sound isn’t just down to the Wadia/Cyrus dA3ii difference - both are excellent silver disc spinners, and although the Yank may have the legs on the Brit, we’re talking fractions of percent here (unlike the price). The difference you hear is a combination of the Leak’s famously musical, big-hearted sound and the Quad’s unique insight. Your Cyrus kit is all excellent, and the Ninkas are truly capable loudspeakers, but you seem to have inadvertently discovered that you’d rather be listening to a less neutral ‘classic’ system.

I’d venture to suggest that the Leak/Quad combo is incredibly able - especially in terms of musicality - but you may actually find that after the novelty has worn off, you prefer your Cyrus’. Give me the Leak/Quad system any day with Miles Davis’s ‘Sketches of Spain’, but when it comes to pile-driving out Goldie’s ‘Inner City Life’ I’d take the tranny set-up any day. Each unto their own. So where does that leave you?

Linn speakers aren’t famously adept at working with valve amps, which means if you wanted to change your amp you’d need to swap your speakers too. Only you can decide if you like the valve sound, or if you want more from your transistors. If it’s the former, then a rebuilt Stereo 20 from Graham Tricker is the way to go - or (more expensively) a new Unison Research S6 (as reviewed in April 2001) for £1600. You’d then need the aforementioned Quad ESLs, or if you wanted a modern pair of moving coil loudspeakers, the Mission 782s are superb - as good as the Ninkas but easier to drive.

Good luck!

PS - At the recent Hi-Fi World/Linn bash, someone came up to me and told me how ‘incredibly’ better I looked in real life than in my new photo - the only trouble was, he was a bloke! DP

If you want to chill out, take a Leak!

I'm a Believer

First of all thanks for a great read - I’ve just rediscovered the joys of vinyl after a long break ( Wee pin’ Willie - At Lost, On Time ) I was quite simply astonished how good it was. I’m a convert.

Rob Stevenson.
Chesterfield.

Hey Rob - nothing gets past you! Vinyl, as all but the congenitally cloth eared realise, is a far better sounding source than CD. No, it isn’t just a prejudice of mine, because everyone I meet these days tells me the same thing - as if it was a new discovery.
I THINKA NINKA!

Dear Hi-Fi World,

My system consists of a Meridian 506 18 bit CD player, SS integrated amp and Tannoy D11 speakers. I intend upgrading the speakers now, possibly adding a S36 or S57 power amp at a later date. With just over £1000 to spend I have considered the Kef Ref 1-2 and PMC FB1. However, in your recent review of the S57/302 you used Linn Ninkas. Would this be a better match?

Also, should I consider upgrading the 506? My musical taste is mainly folk - both acoustic & electric - but I also listen to classical & rock. My listening room is approximately 5x3.5m and well furnished. Your comments and advice would be greatly appreciated.

I Hayward

London

You have approximately the same size room as the one in which I did the review you refer to. Firstly I'd definitely upgrade to the S57 if you can manage it. It's one of the best amps Meridian have ever made - a big warm sound but with good neutrality and a fast, deep bass. It's a solid and reliable workman. The S56 is slightly thinner sounding and lacks the clout of the S57. Also, upgrading to the new 506.24 (24bit version) would reap rewards, giving more insight and three-dimensionality to your CD collection. But if you have to choose between the two, I'd go for the S57 above the 506.24 first - it will make the biggest difference. If you wish to get rid of your S51 to rustle up some cash, the powerful S57 also works well with a good passive preamp, such as those from Creek or Rothwell, if you're not fussy about multiple inputs and armchair usability.

When it comes to your choice of loudspeakers, both fit the bill nicely.

The Creek OBH-8 is a fine little phono stage.

DEFINITIVE AUDIO

Part exchanged and ex-dem clearance.

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<th>Product</th>
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<td>- Reference power supply for above</td>
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<td>Border Patrol 3008 SE - with new Western Electric valves</td>
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depending on what you want from the system. The Meridian set up will have a naturally deep and smooth sound which is well matched to the open and slightly forward Linn Ninkas. They add a bit of piquancy and spice to the sound that balances it out nicely, especially for rock and rhythmic, percussive classical. If you prefer a more bass light sound such as that of acoustic folk or chamber music, then the KEFs could be the right choice. Adding a touch more warmth than the Ninkas and a good sense of both intimacy and lyricism, although they are also as dynamic as anything else at the price. I’d suggest a good audition of both models with a Meridian 557 power amp, if possible, to find out which recipe best suits your taste. SP.

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Many thanks in advance.

Jakk Limungkoon

HI-FI WORLD OCTOBER 2001 PAGE 49

Dear Hi-Fi World
It’s taken me all these years to ask for help! I was 20 and it was 22 years ago when I purchased my first hi-fi system, it comprised of Aiwa mini components (smaller than some micro system available today). To cut a long story short, after some 300 hi-fi magazines and several upgrades later I’ve ended up with an AV system, plus the following: Thorens TD160/1 Stanton Cartridge + Sony CDPX2ES CD player, Marantz PM66Ki Sig.Amp + AR4B’s speakers.

I’d like to replace the cartridge (up to £40) and the speakers (up to £200). I have to say I can’t completely detach myself from the analogue source. To me the sound from my T/T still gives more presence and emotion than the CD source, therefore I want to keep it going despite my small collection of LPs. My taste in music is wide but mostly Classical, Instrumental, Pop and Jazz in that order.

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Jakk Limungkoon
Many people wish to welcome digital radio into their homes but regret spending hard earned money on just a radio. There is an alternative - Simon Pope listens to the multi-faceted DPA32R from TAG McLaren Audio.

This is a bit of kit very much in the ‘Superman’ mould (“Is it a bird, is it a plane...?”) as not only is it a line level preamplifier, it can also be a digital radio tuner and a DAC! Whilst TAG McLaren are now established as the manufacturer of some of the finest audiovisual components around, let us not forget they founded themselves in the wake of Audiolab and the expert technical and electronic development of the R7D dept. up in Huntingdon can still put their expertise to use in the shape of two channel components, a fine example of this being the product reviewed here. The DPA32R can be field upgraded at any time to receive digital radio broadcasts by adding the DAB module, which was jointly developed by TAG McLaren and Bosch Multimedia Systems. The company regard this as using high quality DAB broadcasts in a cost effective way, as the power supply and DAC for the tuner module are already housed in the preamp. The DPA32R can be field upgraded at any time to receive digital radio broadcasts by adding the DAB module, which was jointly developed by TAG McLaren and Bosch Multimedia Systems. The company regard this as using high quality DAB broadcasts in a cost effective way, as the power supply and DAC for the tuner module are already housed in the preamp. The 24bit/96kHz DAC used for the digital radio can also be used for direct connection of both digital and analogue sources, turning the DPA32R into an external number cruncher. The chassis also houses a 20bit/192 DAC that can be used for digital taping from an analogue source to replace the internal DAC inside the digital recorder. In this respect it’s quite a revolutionary bit of kit, as it’s both truly digital and analogue in a way that few other products are.

The preamp itself has five stereo analogue line inputs, one pair of tape in/outs and five digital inputs (three coaxial and two optical). Outputs consist of two coaxial digital and one optical digital as well as two pairs of stereo analogue. TAGtronic link is fitted, which allows the DPA32R to interface with suitably equipped components such as the CDT20R CD transport or DVD32R DVD player, ensuring the master clock is as close to the DACs as possible. ADC sampling frequency is selectable to suit the recording medium (44.1, 48 or 96 kHz).

The DPA32R has a nice and easy on the eye ergonomic look, with a fine, large and very high quality dot matrix display (more of which later) and a well weighted, machined rotary knob as well as an array of metal input buttons. It employs the same powerful 16bit micro-controller found in the excellent AV32R AV processor. This allows inputs to be sonically customised (they have adjustable sensitivity) and named to improve fluid and painless source switching. The impressive aforementioned display window is a custom designed Vacuum Fluorescent Display and features TAG’s ‘Dot Burst’ layout to result in pinpoint legibility and clarity - as good as you’ll get anywhere and at it’s gorgeous best whilst scrolling digital radio text! More high tech capability is found with the TAGtronic Communications Bus which allows for further future expansion in the form of multi-room control and internet PC field upgrades from the company website. As well as all this high tech frippery, you’ll also come across some serious ‘old fashioned’ audiophile componentry in the chassis, including Vishay resistors, Wima polypropylene and Elan Carafine capacitors and Burr-Brown op amps. The power
supply employs a low stray field toroidal transformer which feeds nine independent regulated supply rails.

The good news is that despite its heavy technological bias and system complexity, it's a bit of a doddle to use. The remote control is a full system type and very comprehensive and all functions can be executed from it without too much confusion. A variety of display options are available at the touch of a button, such as radio text, signal strength and broadcast data rate - in a variety of configurations, too. I used the unit as both a digital radio 'receiver' (ie. using it as a preamp as well) and also as a standalone digital tuner into a passive preamp. Like other digital radio receivers, you simply scroll through the stations and the multiplexes (which 'house' a selection of stations) until you come across the required broadcast. I used the small solid aerial supplied with the package that's connected via a BNC type socket. In a fairly poor reception area in Surrey I managed to get an average signal strength quality of about 80%, which is a lot better than I'd do with an indoor FM aerial. Of course, the only difference with digital signal strength comes at less then 10%, when you'll get either a loud digital glitch or nothing at all!

Radio Three and Four broadcasts were what I'd come to expect from digital radio - precise and clean with a good 'flat' sound. Live broadcasts on radio Three had a fine realism of tonality and the few Prom broadcasts tuned into were highly enjoyable - with the lack of interference or hiss, along with the digital radio live broadcast quality the DPA32R is the ultimate tuner for the trigger happy Proms recorder! You won't always get perhaps the analogue warmth of, say, a good Naim tuner, but in certain respects it's highly realistic. Orchestral works had a good depth of field and width, with the Albert hall acoustics helping to give a full and warm sound. There's an expectyional amount of detail to be gleaned, including the ubiquitous members of the Bronchial Complaint Lobby in the audience. A Prom performance of a new work by James McMillan and Strauss's Ein Heiden leben proved to be good reviewing fare. The McMillan piece was scored for a wide army of percussionists each with as seemingly large battery and the tuner relayed...
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FRONT PANEL.

TWENTY-FOUR CARAT GOLD
PLATED FITTINGS.

REMOTE CONTROLLED.

PHONO STAGE.

POWERFUL, ROBUST, BUILT.
the sometimes overwhelming sound
with good control and detail, even
though the scoring at times
resembled a primary school picnic in
a percussion shop the TAG coped
admirably!

Indeed, the quality was equally
impressive with commercial stations,
where although studio processing is
still evident the picture is less sibilant
and more natural than with FM
broadcasts. Good bass and an fine
open midrange were the highlights of
the overall sound, delivering as good
a digital broadcast sound as I've heard
from any other receiver. Vocals were
especially impressive and there's also
a good sound stage which creates a
fine openness to the sound, again
especially with live broadcasts.

As an external DAC, the DPA
32R also fared well with my reference
Meridian 506.24 CD player. Playing
Talvin Singh's new excellently
produced album, "Ha!" the bass was
firm and fast with superb detail in the
upper frequencies. With classical
orchestral music the separation of
instruments was very impressive,
cleaning the sound up somewhat, if
taking a little of the natural warmth
of the Meridian away. Likewise used
as a preamplifier the DPA32R is clean
and smooth, although a little thin and
lacking in overall transparency it
carries the music with vitality and
clarity.

The complete DPA32R digital
radio package isn't cheap. Other
radio modules are similarly (or more
expensively) priced, such as the
excellent Naim Nato2 and the now
defunct Linn Kremlin but all you get
(or got) with these is a tuner - albeit
a good one. I can't help thinking that
inclusion of an FM tuner would have
had the competition well and truly
stumped but you still get a very fine
digital radio (easily as good as
Arcam's 'FMJ' model), a very good
external DAC and a pretty good, if
slightly 'flat' sounding, line
preamplifier. So in this respect I
suppose you could say it's a bit of a
bargain. It's certainly a great way to
get digital radio, especially for
armchair Prommers with a bit of
cash.

DPA32R £1695 - digital radio option
£595 extra

TAG McLaren Audio Ltd.
The Summit
Latham Road
Huntingdon
Cambridgeshire
PE18 6ZU
Tel: 0800 783 8007
www.tagmclarenaudio.com

World Verdict
Expensive, but a
supremely versatile
machine that's not only
an excellent digital radio
but a pretty good
preamp and DAC too.

The NEW AFFORDABLE PHONO
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World Radio History
Question: Is this the best amplifier ever built?

Answer: oui, si, ya, nai, ja, igen, yes, haan, ken, evet, chai khan, ano, da, hai, ia......

In any language the answer is the same

The Veritas P400 Digital Power Amplifier.

400 watts of pure power.

Made in England without compromise.

"the most musically complete power amplifier I have used"

Ivor Humphreys, HiFi News
It's now commonly accepted that vibration is a bad thing when it comes to hi-fi. Simon Pope checks out two new affordable options for reducing it.

**CD-STR5 EQUIPMENT SUPPORTS**

There have been all manner of resonance damping options throughout the hi-fi ages from the simple to the bizarre but I can't think of any that have looked quite like the CD-STR5 supports. Designed and manufactured in Germany, each support ring consists of a strung ‘cobweb' of nylon that is wound around five metal rollers situated inside the 11cm diameter ring. Also attached to the outer ring is a screw for adjusting the nylon string's tension for accommodation of equipment weighing up to 100 kilos - make no mistake, these aren’t flimsy contraptions! They are compatible not only with source players but also amplifiers and loudspeakers.

Setting the discs up properly is essential to the sound quality and it’s a bit of a pain in the backside, to boot. Each foot of the component must be placed on the foam and plastic damped plate located in the centre of the cobweb. This is a fiddly job, as each disc's tension ideally has to be tightened to compensate for the uneven distribution of weight in any component, i.e. a power transformer on the right hand side of an amp will need a tighter tension than the lighter, left side.

Once you've fiddled around and tweaked 'til your hearts content, you'll actually encounter a difference to the sound. The greatest effect was on my CD player and resulted in a slightly more focussed sound with a tighter and cleaner bass – this was decidedly more effective with cheaper players. Although even my Meridian 506.24 was 'lightened' somewhat, too, as the bass was quickened. If you're after a reasonably affordable and effective upgrade to your source player (results were less discernible with amplification and 'speakers) I'd highly recommend these odd looking characters. They may take you the best part of a morning to set up properly, but they really work!

**CLEARLIGHT AUDIO RDC SUPPORTS**

These are far more traditional looking supports than the trampoline type CD-STR5 discs. Also German, these cones and support feet from Clearlight Audio are constructed of RDC, a resin-based compound which is made up of a host of materials ranging from rubber to lead, all in minute pieces. The idea is that the component materials make a composite structure that is resistant to resonance and passes energy in a linear fashion. Apparently the material has already been taken up by numerous hi-fi manufacturers for use in their equipment. As well as the RDC cones and feet I’ve tested here there is also an isolation platform that I’ll deal with at a later date.

The cones can be used again on source players or amplifiers and can be supplied with a screw thread to replace the bog standard spikes on your 'speakers. I tried them in a variety of circumstances, including under CD player, power amps and on the bottom of my Quad ESL-988s! Do they actually work? Well, yes. I’ve always been a bit sceptical of the black art form of equipment supports but I found they made the sound, not only from the CD player but also to a lesser extent, the power amp and 'speakers, more nimble and supple.

In creating a lighter sound, the bass was more tuneful and the whole sound was ‘lifted' somewhat without compensating for bass depth or grunt. The screw threaded and plain RDC1 cones worked well in all applications but the more expensive double layered RDC 4 cones took the CD player's performance one step further, although these aren't cheap (£150 for four). I'd definitely recommend the cheaper RDC 1 cones for CD players and 'speakers for a fun and cheap upgrade, you'll notice a difference - not a lot mind you, but a difference!

**CD-STR5** £59 set of four

www.hi-fi-accessories.co.uk

**CLEARLIGHT AUDIO RDC**

RDC 1 cones (with or without threads) £44.95 set of four

RDC 4 cones £149.95 set of four

www.hififorsale.com
Rega's Mira integrated amplifier jumps straight in at the £500 deep end. With so much strong competition, how will it fare? Dominic Todd investigates.

A word of warning to all potential Rega Mira buyers. When delving into the box to retrieve my latest review, my digits were met by a sharp and painful sensation! No, the couriers hadn't sent me a consignment from Gillette by mistake, but the Mira features a substantial heat-sink placed unconventionally at the base on the unit. This is just one of the features that makes the latest £498 offering from Rega rather unique.

The Mira is housed in the same solid casing and features a similar board layout as its baby brother, the Brio (Sept. 2001). A 50% increase in power-output, up to 60w, has been achieved via a larger Carnhill toroidal PSU and a doubling up of the 4700uf capacitors. The demonic heat sink is there to provide the extra cooling required.

Rega have fitted a bi-function control knob. Twist for volume, push and twist for source selection. It allows the Mira to be remote control ready, although a remote isn't provided as standard. Whilst this cleans up the styling a little, I did find the volume display rather irksome. Volume is displayed via an LED scale, which takes five clicks on the volume control to change. Although it's easier to make small changes in volume, the indication is rather vague. Rest assured, though, despite this electronic wizardry, the controls are still served by decent quality Alps pots. Finally, the new Rega also benefits from internally switchable pre/power connections, allowing for greater flexibility with multi-room systems, or when upgrading. As with the Brio the vivid orange circuit board is CAD designed, which explains its neatness of layout, and features a decent MM phono stage.

It's hard not to warm to the Rega's eccentricities and solid build quality, but the important thing here is how it sounds next to a whole host of pretty impressive competition. Rivals from the likes of the Marantz PM6010K1 (£400) and NAD C370 (£450) to more similar Brits such as the TAG McLaren Audio 60i (£500) and Musical Fidelity X-A2 (£500).

From the outset it was clear that the Rega was more from the school of 'resolution' as opposed to sonic fireworks. With Moby's 'Why Does My Heart Feel So Bad', the dynamic range was reasonable, but certainly not of the seat of the pants variety one would experience with the NAD C370. Likewise, the bass response was quite powerful, with reasonable extension. It certainly offers an improvement upon the Brio here, yet still doesn't have the ultimate power or control of some rivals. By contrast the piano from the song's introduction was superbly portrayed, as were the vocals.

Clare Martin's 'Monk's New Tune' made a better companion for the Mira. Here fine timing and detailed percussion made for a far more involving listen. Strengths that had only shown them briefly before made their presence felt. Martin's vocals were fluid and textured, with the amp showing a healthy dose of realism.

The Mira's characteristics were flushed out further with The Divine Comedy's 'The Beauty Regime' and 'Bad Ambassador'. With the later track there was just enough grit and drive to prevent the rendition from being too polite. That having been said, refinement was still a key
The Mira

feature, with good instrumental decay and excellent resolution of guitar and voice holding the listener’s attention. Whilst the upper bass response appeared strong, there did appear to be a lack of extension and, hence resolution, with the really deep notes. Sound staging and separation I’d judge as good, but not especially outstanding for this price of machine.

Sonomically. I was finding that the Rega seemed very much to tread the middle ground between the likes of the lush Musical Fidelity and the rather more rousing NAD C370 or precise TAG 60i. With the rich classical fare of George Butterworth’s The Banks Of Green Willow, I found the amp almost engaging, but not quite. It was sweet and mellifluous enough, but failed to let the music simply wash over the listener as the best, admittedly lower powered, Class A (and Class A sounding) amps can do. In its favour, the Rega does strike a fine balance with classical music, in that instruments sound realistic and the response doesn’t grate or try the listener over a sustained period of listening. Those with a taste for the likes of Mahler or Bruckner however, will find the dynamic response somewhat restrained.

The Rega Mira is one of those products that risks being damned by faint praise. In short, its sonic values are those of the middle ground and as such, it lacks a certain amount of character and listener involvement. It may not do anything poorly, but what it does well, it does merely well and not exceptionally well. In terms of timing, detail retrieval and timbre the Rega scores. It also proved a good long-term listen in that there’s nothing to obviously irritate the listener. Yet, despite the power hike over the Brio, there’s still not quite enough grunt to really drive dynamically demanding music.

For those looking for an all rounder at this price the Mira is still worth a listen. The sheer quirkiness of design is a further bonus, but just watch out for that heat sink! ■ ▲

Rega Mira £498
Rega Research
119 Park Street
Westcliff-On-Sea
Essex
SS0 7PB
Tel. 01702 333071

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The Mira produces 66W into 8ohms and a healthy 120W into 4ohms, so it has plenty enough power to go loud.

Distortion figures were well controlled, but did not quite match up to the best, with a little third harmonic present on a 10kHz test signal. Its level measured 0.016%, low enough not to be a problem subjectively. The output stage maintained this performance at low and high levels so the Mira is consistent in its performance.

Frequency response measured 10Hz to 53kHz within 1dB limits, Rega traditionally limiting both ends of the spectrum to give a fairly refined presentation.

The Mira’s inputs were sensitive too, needing 230mV for the amplifier to deliver full output. This means the amp will handle all sources, including low output tuners and cassette decks.

The phono stage is for MM cartridges, having a normal sensitivity of 3.5mV. Equalisation was accurate at high frequencies but there was a slow roll off below 500Hz that will give the amp a lean sound from LP. Gain was 1dB down at 35Hz and rolled off below this to suppress warps. There was little noise and a good overload ceiling.

The Mira is a neat performer in all areas. It measured well, as Regas usually do. NK

Power
66watts

CD/tuner/aux.
Frequency response 5Hz-105kHz
Separation 86dB
Noise -96dB
Distortion 0.004%

Sensitivity 220mV
dc offset 1.2mV
Disc MM
Frequency response 14Hz-30kHz
Separation 54dB
Noise -80dB
Distortion 0.004%
Sensitivity 2.3mV
Overload 53mV

World Verdict

Not the last word in dynamic resolution or bass clout, the Mira is nevertheless impressive when it comes to detail and timbre.

Rega Mira £498
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119 Park Street
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World Radio History
David Price traces the history of Cyrus Audio, purveyors of compact audio esoterica for over fifteen years, and talks to Peter Bartlett.

Ah, the Cyrus One! Henry Azima reflects fondly on one of his many fine creations. "I can still remember the complete circuit of that amplifier, down to the smallest resistor." And why not? It was, after all, an incredibly important amplifier, not just for him and his company Mission Electronics, but also for many impoverished audiophiles of the 1980s.

The story starts with his brother Farad, who launched Mission at the peak of the hi-fi boom back in 1977. Henry worked as designer and although new on the hi-fi scene, soon made his mark. His first effort was 1978's Mission 770 loudspeaker, the first audiophile loudspeaker to use 'high tech' polypropylene drivers. It was a sign of things to come.

In his subsequent products Henry showed an enduring passion for employing unusual materials. Then he did the first DC-coupled transcription tone-arm, 1979's Mission 774. His first dabble with audio electronics was 1981's Mission 776, which was the world's first DC-powered pre-amplifier, and the partnering 777, the fastest MOSFET power amplifier of its day.

What followed was a smaller, shoebox-like creation going by the name of the Mission 778 integrated amplifier. Although not a landmark product for Mission, it was to have enormous significance - for it was, in effect, the very first Cyrus amplifier.

One year after designing one of the first ever British Compact Disc players in 1984, Henry created the Mission Cyrus One amplifier, and the rest, as they say, was history. A range of 'budget audiophile' electronics was born, that would go on to win over forty international awards.

Today, Cyrus Audio is an independent company based in Huntingdon with sales running at over three million units last year. Cyrus’s Peter Bartlett believes the heavy R&D bias has been the company’s making. "We maintain an in-house R&D team who bring many years of audio experience to any new project. Thus Cyrus is one of a very small number of audio brands that are able to engineer new products rather than simply re-box an existing model and tweak a couple of components."

The Cyrus One was launched in 1985, costing £149. Although rated at a low 30W RMS per channel, it packed a bigger punch than the numbers suggested. The new Cyrus Two sold for £299, offering heavily reworked electronics to give 50W RMS a side, along with double the output current driving capability.

Although instant hits, both Cyrus amps got regular minor component changes and upgrades. The first 1985 incarnation had a plastic case and featured a push-button power switch beneath a pilot LED. The second series which followed was identified by a backlit Cyrus logo instead of an LED indicator, along with the use of a metal case. The third series arrived in 1990 and featured the new, non-backlit Cyrus logo (with no mention of Mission to be seen), flip up power switch and tiny round LED pilot lamp, plus a dual-ganged volume/balance control and switchable muting. The later the model, the better the sound.
In the early 1990s, the £499 50W Cyrus 3 arrived. It was better built than its predecessors, with an exquisite die-cast case that's gone on to embody the Cyrus Audio look. Signal paths were kept to the minimum, and the preamplifier's MM phono input was a dual stage plug-in module which could be converted to an extra line input simply by reversing its position.

At this time the PSX-R external DC power supply appeared, designed as a natural upgrade path for the Cyrus 3 and all forthcoming Cyrus separates. Offering a large reserve of highly regulated DC power, it gave a smoother midband and top end with faster and weightier bass. It wasn't all good news though, because many disliked the sound. The result was the Cyrus 3i, a gently reworked development which was a noticeably more musical performer. At the same time, Cyrus launched the SL (Straight Line) integrated amplifier, which stripped the 3i of its fancy microprocessors in an attempt to revisit the Cyrus One's value for money audiophile origins.

The early nineties also saw the new Cyrus DiscMaster/DacMaster CD player, a superb sounding high end player with an extremely sweet demeanour. Very quickly, Cyrus offered a cheaper, one box version called the dAD7. In 1995 this was joined by the dAD3. A more conventional tray-loader, it had a de-coupled Philips CDM12 laser transport assembly with an integral, self-centring magnetic disc clamp. In 1997 this too was tweaked into the £599 dAD3i, and joined by the £899 dAD7Q. This top-of-the-range dAD7 replacement boasted Cyrus's newly designed Q module using high quality 20bit Burr Brown converters (and then latterly 24bit chips, known as the Q24). Both dAD3i and (especially the) dAD7Q were superb sounding devices, which were often puzzlingly overlooked by the hi-fi press of the day.

In 1999, the range was joined by the entry level dAD1 which - although boasting the same exquisite external detailing - featured low specified circuitry to force the price down to £499.

Back in the eighties, Mission had briefly offered a digital tuner to partner the Cyrus One and Two and true to form, the new '3 series' also boasted its very own FM radio in the shape of the Cyrus FM7. An oddly styled device, its novel control layout had both manual tuning (via the rotary knob) and automatic tuning with 29 presets. Inside, there was a triple stage IF section and judicious use of both active and passive filtering in the stereo decoder made for minimal phase anomalies. It was a fine sounding device, but overshadowed by the success of the accompanying amps and CD spinners. After completely severing links with its Mission parent in October 1998, the newly born Cyrus Audio began work on the new '7 series'. This finally arrived in 2000 and brought with it a range of brand new, 'clean sheet' designs. All doubts about the Cyrus 3 integrated were allayed with the arrival of the £799 Cyrus 7 - which is externally identical but totally reworked inside. Sound is superb - and when used in conjunction with the latest £349 PSX-R is incredibly clean, tight and transparent as well as engagingly musical. Likewise the new £899 CD7, which again when aspirated by the PSX-R is supremely open and engaging for an amp of its price.

The range has since expanded with a line of new products, including the Cyrus aCA7 preamplifier, AV Master home theatre control processor and DVD 7 DVD player - all of which have proved popular thanks to the final tuning stage, says Peter. "Having taken a new design to the pre-production stage, where it would be launched by many companies, we have a listening panel to finesse the product until we are happy we have the best possible performance. This can be 3 months work and in other companies just could not be afforded due to financial constraints. This is one of the hidden benefits of the Directors being at the heart of the company."

So where next? He's optimistic about the future. "Ten years from now, hi-fi will sound better, speaker technology will move forward, prices will be higher as consumers demand better performance and build quality will become a bigger factor". Good news then - and it looks like we can expect a few surprises from Cyrus too. While continuing to specialise in two channel hi-fi, Peter also intimates that there may be action on the multimedia, MP3, SACD, AV and multi-room fronts. Having started as another company's budget amplifier brand, Cyrus is looking to the future with an open mind, with only full-width separates ruled out!
The Nu-Vista M3 Super Integrated Amplifier is the final amplifier in the Nu-Vista series. It has been designed for ultimate performance: an amplifier which is truly transparent with no sonic fingerprint.

Each power amp is effectively a monobloc. It has a separate PCB, separate heat sink, separate choke regulation and a separate mains transformer which is linked only to its power amp. Because the Nu-Vista M3 is configured as an integrated amp, the output stage of the preamp is perfectly optimised to drive the power amp. It produces predictable results all the time, every time.

The circuitry in the M3 is a revised version of the renowned Nu-Vista preamp and Nu-Vista 300 power amp and provides improved resolution of low level detail. The dynamic range seems larger, but what really happens is that the M3 achieves similar sound pressure levels but from a quieter starting point.

“This is one bit of kit I’m dreading giving back, but go back it must since only 500 will be made. If nothing else, this ensures it will attain cult collector status - expect to see one on Antiques Roadshow in a hundred years from now!.” Hi-Fi World • January 2001

The M3 has huge power, typically delivering more than 275W per channel. It will deliver about 40 Amps of peak current and drive any load without difficulty. It has an uncanny quality of effortlessness and ease, but is capable of dynamic peaks in the kilowatt range. As a result, it never sounds fizzy, bright or hard. And it never clips. The sensation of listening is one of complete relaxation, since the M3 does not impart any character of its own to the sound, ambience or dynamics. It never clips. It simply does what it is supposed to do, superbly.

By any measure, the M3 is an immense amplifier. Its appearance confirms this. The heat sinks are vast, custom-made sculptures. The front panel is machined from the highest-quality, ultra-pure HE39 material. The gold fittings are plated in 24K, hence the deep rich colour. The seven-part knob construction gives a visual indication of the depth and detail of the research and development that have gone into the M3.

We believe the Musical Fidelity Nu-Vista M3 is one of the best amplifiers ever.

The Nu-Vista 3D CD Player is the last Nu-Vista product ever, and the greatest. Chances are, there will never be another audio product made using nuvistors ever again, anywhere, by anyone.

Our research has shown that the audible differences between CD and SACD are caused by in-band non-linear distortions, group delay, phase-shifts and intermodulation anomalies. So we have engineered the Nu-Vista 3D to ensure that it has dramatically better HF performance than ordinary CD players in distortion, phase shifts, group delay, inter-modulation, non-linearities and noise ratios. The result is that in-band (20Hz to 25kHz), the Nu-Vista 3D actually measures better than SACD.

To achieve this, the Nu-Vista 3D up-samples 24-bits at 96kHz. This takes all digital error artifacts out of band so they’re not a factor up to about 35kHz. As a result, we were able to simplify and re-design the digital and analog filters to be far above the audio band, so that their phase shift and group delay is out of band. This allows for a reduction in overall feedback and simpler circuitry.

Quite simply, Musical Fidelity believes that the power supply almost is the amplifier. We have taken our famous choke-regulated philosophy and applied it to the Nu-Vista 3D. By putting choke regulation on every vital state of the CD player, we have ensured inter-stage isolation and an almost-silent power supply. Thus all elements of the Nu-Vista 3D circuit perform perfectly, with no interference from any other part.

“The 3D retails at £2960, which - for my money - makes it the best-value high-end CD player ever.” Hi-Fi News • September 2001

When we put this together with our up-sampling DAC improvements, we achieved dramatic improvements in CD performance.

A limited edition of 500

Musical Fidelity has enough nuvistor tubes to build 500 Nu-Vista 3Ds and also to hold a spare set for every unit. (The limited edition Nu-Vista preamp, power amp and integrated are proving to be remarkably reliable, with a tube failure rate of about 0.1%.) Music lovers don't need SACD technology, they just need a better CD player. Now a lucky few will be able to own the Nu-Vista 3D compact disc player. Out of the total production of 500, 265 are allocated for sale in England, and of these, 97 have already been reserved.

Please Note: Some products may not be available at all outlets. Advertisement valid until at least 25th September 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.

As the business grew the number of outlets increased, and by 1981 there were also branches in Beckenham, Brighton, Chatham, Tunbridge Wells and Woolwich.

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 steadily, both in size and stature. 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-nine 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 brochure available in all outlets

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.

www.sevenoakssoundandvision.com
The new Musical Fidelity A300\textsuperscript{2nd} power amplifier promises to be a great match for the recently reviewed A300 integrated. Hi-Fi World's resident amp expert, Andy Grove, pairs them up.

Once again I was greeted at the door by a wheezing delivery man. The A300\textsuperscript{2nd} is one heavy beast. Presumably the chokes in the power supply contribute to the amp's considerable weight.

My first impression upon opening the box was one of a product with quality and style. Although a simple shape, the amp's silver anodised front panel gives it a wide acceptance factor, because it matches modern décor. I know I should try to be as objective as possible, but as I said about the recently reviewed ATC integrated, if I'm presented with an ominous black box it has an adverse psychological effect on me.

This is really my only gripe with the QUAD 989s I use as my reference loudspeakers. Sitting in front of them I feel like one of the primitives in the opening sequences of 2001 A Space Odyssey. There are dents in the ceiling where I have tossed a bone into the air.

The rear panel also exudes quality, with double sets of gold plated speaker terminals of a very high standard. They looked like top flight WBTs, and were so beefy they could have accepted an arc welder cable with no problems at all. The amp was supplied with a special high current mains lead, presumably to give a lower resistance path back to the ring-main.

Unfortunately the interior of the amp remained a secret to me, lack of time, and lack of Torx drivers, deprived me of a peek inside. This amp uses chokes (inductors) in its power supply to improve filtering and regulation. This should result in less intermodulation of the signal by mains frequencies and less supply droop under dynamic conditions. It should provide an increase in clarity and sharper, snappier bass.

As far as I know, although chokes are used commonly in valve amplifiers, when it comes to solid state amps only Musical Fidelity and Cello use them in their power supplies.

The output stage of the A300\textsuperscript{2nd} obviously runs at a high quiescent current, as the box got quite warm after being switched on for a while. I would guess that there is quite a lot of Class A available at normal listening levels.

I started my listening with the Mediaeval Babes’ Women’s Blysse’ CD. This is a very complex recording of acoustic instruments and voices and instantly shows up any signs of distortion or ‘jamming’ of the signal. In true Musical Fidelity style, there was absolutely none. The soundstage was crystal clear, the girls' voices were projected into the room with haunting realism. Each voice harmoniously blended with the others, rather than turning into a grating drone which is a sign of intermodulation. Anybody who listens to choral music will understand what I am saying. Drums and percussion did not interfere in any way with the complex voice passages either. In fact, all of the instrument's characters were accurately defined and placed within the mix.

Possibly, the use of choke regulation contributes to the A300\textsuperscript{2nd}’s excellent midrange resolution. Higher frequencies did seem to be a little brighter than I’m used to, almost having a ‘silvery’ character. The acoustic drum used on this recording was reproduced with a very realistic resonant quality. I could feel the skin vibrate.

Moving on, I used the phono...
stage of the Musical Fidelity A3 I had as a preamp. I dug out a couple of my faves and gave them a spin. First on was Vaughan Williams 'Fantasia on a theme by Thomas Tallis' conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent. This piece has a wonderful flowing, rolling character and the A300c reproduced this feeling exactly and precisely, if perhaps lacking a little romance of the English countryside it depicts so well. Once again its powers of differentiation were blatantly obvious, the orchestra was presented before me in my living room. However, that over-sparkly treble was again present.

Dynamically the A300c is very agile - the smallest dynamic change was delicately reproduced. This is sometimes seen as the domain of the valve amplifier. But here was a big solid state amp dancing around like the slightest ballerina.

Next on the platter was Rimsky-Korsakov’s ‘Scheherazade’ - another favourite at the moment. Again the orchestra was laid out in front of me. Solo violin, which represents the Sultana Scheherazade’s voice, had an alluring shimmering quality, almost like birdsong. The strings of the Sultan’s stern voice possessed a booming, organic and wooden quality. These opening passages highlighted the amp’s large scale dynamic abilities, really taking a grip of the 989s by exploiting their lightning fast dynamics.

Now I wished for something a little different, so on went Korn’s “Follow The Leader” CD, in particular “Freak On A Leash” and “Got The Life”. The resultant seismic event in my front room was amazing. The power and anger in Jonathan Davis’ voice pushed me back against the rear wall. As you can imagine the system created an intense wall of sound. The A300c succeeded in “cleanly” reproducing what is essentially a heavily compressed and distorted recording.

Overall the A300c is an excellent amplifier, it is supremely clean and detailed, with a fleet footed dynamic ability. It has what seems to be an endless reserve of power, even when driving the relatively complex load of an electrostatic loudspeaker. The resolving power of the 989s did reveal that unusual glittery treble quality, which although different isn’t too intrusive. There are many out there who couldn’t ask more from a power amp - the A300c represents a slice of the hi-end for a fraction of the oft-asked-for price.

Musical Fidelity A300c £999
Musical Fidelity Ltd
15/16 Olympic Trading Estate
Wembley, Middx. HA9 OTF
Tel. 020 8900 2866

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The A300c has high power and good regulation; it produces 200W into 8ohms and no less than 324W into 4ohms, more than enough to generate high volume in most homes.

Our distortion analysis shows there are virtually no visible distortion harmonics with a 1W 10kHz test signal. It is at high frequencies that amplifiers can look weak in this area, but the A300c was linear at all power levels, producing just 0.016% second harmonic distortion at full output - a low figure. Low distortion figures are a good indicator of smoothness and cleanliness of an amplifier’s sound.

Sensitivity on all inputs was the same as an earlier combination at 220mV, enough to be able to cope with all sources, including older design tuners and cassette decks.

Musical Fidelity make the A3 preamp friendly to other ‘legacy’ sources (i.e. old kit you might still be using) by including a phono stage that handles Moving Magnets or Moving Coils at the push of a rear panel switch. The A3 does a good job of putting in a good set of performance figures with both types of cartridges.

The A3 preamp in conjunction with the A300c gives a powerful and specialised amplifier that is flexible in its accommodation of sources.
Ke184 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 Ke184 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 £278.00 all inclusive you cannot ignore Ke184. Simon Pope says, "The quality that can be gleaned from this amp is a fine introduction to the joys of the valve sound. The Ke184 will highlight all the intricacies and 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."

Ke184 weighs 10kg. External dimensions with valves are 300mm(w) x 270mm(d) x 150mm(h).

£278

KIT88 VALVE INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER KIT & KAT88 VALVE POWER AMPLIFIER KIT

Here is the amazing KaT88. 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 Ohm load. Andy Grove has come up with a gem of an output transformer (E/I). With the KT88 it offers a virtually unmatchable 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 KaT88 is one of the best measured performances I have ever come across", said Noel Keywood. Jon Marks said, "The KaT88 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. KaT88 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 KaT88 an all-round, high-end bargain."

Weight 16kg, external dimensions with valves are 330mm(w) x 300mm(d) x 190mm(h).

£468

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Power Supply Unit (PSU-II)</td>
<td>£195.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-amplifier (PRE-II)</td>
<td>£195.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phono Stage (PHONO-II)</td>
<td>£110.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving coil step-up transformer</td>
<td>£77.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive pre-amplifier (PAS-II)</td>
<td>£215.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NEW!
KIT34 is a 32 watt stereo valve integrated amplifier, featuring a pair of EL34s, in push-pull mode, per channel, plus an ECC80 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, “This integrated bring together the best sonic virtues of our KiT88, kel34 and top of the range 300B PSE in an affordable package. The highlights of the sound are a deep and taut bass response, together with an open and highly detailed mid and high frequency response that only the best valve designs can achieve... a true valve classic”. 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 E11 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 £875.00 (UK price) excluding valves. Each monobloc weighs 23kgs., external dimensions with valves - 25cm(w) x 38cm(h) x 22cm(d) per monobloc.

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 Ohm 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.

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 EI 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(h) x 8cm(h) weight 4kgs.

£875
A pair

£649
A pair

£195
KLS10 HIGH TECHNOLOGY COMPACT MONITOR

Our min-marvel uses an Audax carbon fibre bass/mid-range 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 30-60 watts. 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 28cm(w) x 34cm(h) x 23cm(d).

Drive Unit & Crossover kit £164.00
Drive Unit only £78.00

special offers

KEL84 E/I choke 0.5 inch stack, 40mm(w)x 35mm(d) x 70mm(h) clamp fitting, 1H, 25mA
PSU-II E/I 40mm(h) x 35mm(d) x 70mm (w) clamp fitting. 15H, 20mA
KIT34/KAT34 mains transformer 2.5 inch stack, 120mm(h)x 115mm(w)x 95mm(d), drop through fitting with zinc cap. Secondaries: 365V - 0V - 3.15V, 6A/3.15V - 0V - 3.15V, 7.5A, suitable for 120/240V operation.
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. Sensitivity 89dB, volume 25 litres, external dimensions 28cm(w) x 43cm(h) x 34cm(d).

Drive Unit & Crossover kit £164.00
Drive Unit only £78.00

KLS3 GOLD MK II ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY 3 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/m/1m, 25mm MDF, internal volume 60Ltrs, external dimensions 26cm(w) x 100cm(h) x 35cm(d).

Drive Unit & Crossover kit £633.00
Drive Unit Pack £495.00

Upgrade your KLS3s to Gold status. Includes latest oval gold dome piezo tweeter and all components.
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NAME:
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650V safety gloves (a pair)
Jensen 0.22uF, 400V paper in oil capacitor
Jensen 0.47uF 630Vdc paper in oil capacitor
1A36 36W KT88 integrated £ 895.00
PA11 Valve pre- amplifier £ 699 00
Black Gate 1000uF, 16V electrolytic
Black Gate 100uF 100Vdc electrolytic
Black Gate 4700uF 16Vdc electrolytic
Ansar 22.5uF 630Vdc polypropylene capacitors
Alps oilue audio grade 50K dual log potentiometer
Tag board 2 x 16 connections (hard wiring)
1A40 40W EL34 integrated £ 590.00
4W7 integrated £ 575.00
MB80 60W EL34 monobloc (pair) £ 1177.00
1A11 Value pre-amplifier £ 995.00
PSU- Il power supply unit module
PRE- II - pre-amplifier module
PHONO - II - phono stage module (with valves)
PAS II passive pre-amplifier module with 10K or 50K attenuator (pl specify)
Moving coil step up transformers
KT88 upgrade kit
KaT88 Valve integrated amplifier kit (with valves)
KaT88 Valve integrated amplifier kit (without valves)
KT88 upgrade kit
KT43 Headphone amplifier kit (with valves)
KeB0 Valve Monobloc amplifier kit (with valves) - a pair
KeB0 Valve Monobloc amplifier kit (without valves) - a pair
300B PSE Valve Monobloc amplifier kit (with valves) - a pair
300B PSE Valve Monobloc amplifier kit (without valves) - a pair
300B PSE Upgrade Kit - a pair
300B PSE Valve Monobloc amplifier kit (with valves) - a pair
300B PSE Valve Monobloc amplifier kit (without valves) - a pair

loudspeaker kits
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KLS3 Gold mk ii Drive Units + Crossover Kit etc
KLS8 Drive Units
KLS8 Drive Units + Crossover Kit etc
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KLS10 Drive Units + Crossover Kit etc
KLS10-Subwoofer Drive Units
KLS10 Drive Units + Crossover Kit etc

parts description
order No.  qty
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KT88/KAT88 mains toroidal transformer
KT88/KAT88 mains toroidal transformer (encapsulated)
HD83 mains toroidal transformer
PSU-II mains toroidal transformer
300B PSE E/I Each (T)
KT34 E/I choke
KD81 E/I choke
300B PSE choke
PSU-I E/I choke
KT84 E/I UL push pull output transformer
KeB0 E/I push pull output transformer
1A36 E/I push pull output transformer
KeB0 E/I single ended output transformer
Pre-I E/I driver transformer
Pre-Il E/I output transformer
KeK4 Printed Circuit Board
KT88/KaT88 Printed Circuit Board
KeK5 Printed Circuit Board
KeK6 Printed Circuit Board
H2 Printed Circuit Board
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PHONO I-PCB
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Electronic test

PAC\'  68 OCTOBER 2001 HI-FI WORLD  I

MADE SIMPLE

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work effectively as a designer. A hands.
them. Rosenblit covers stabilisation and
tube audio design. It explains how vacu-
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them. Rosenblit also includes detailed
descriptions of eight designs. A wealth of practical data, mea-
surements and interesting features will be
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stand both the theory and the practice
of valve audio amplifier design, such that
they can analyse and modify circuits, and

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World Radio History
HI-FI WORLD OCTOBER 2001 PAGE 69
Sugden are a hi-fi company very much in the traditional British mould. Jim Sugden introduced the first Class A integrated amp to the hi-fi world way back in the mid-sixties when, at the time, it was considered a revolutionary, even controversial, product. At the time the market was saturated with Class B designs and the audio press at the time furiously debated its merits. However, there’s no denying it placed Sugden firmly on the map.

Known as the A21, the design was a highly influential classic. The circuit was based on current feedback, which is now a commonplace technique in high-end amplification. When it’s done properly, as in the case of the A21, it’s superb. Tonally, the sound is smooth and easy going, with excellent balance.

After five years of the first Sugden Class A amplifier on the market, much of the competition had become Class AB designs. Meanwhile Sugden themselves had started manufacturing high bias Class AB units. They were more economic to produce, because greater efficiency resulted in smaller heatsinks. The expanding market dictated that AB was the economically viable option for progress.

In 1981 the ownership of Sugden changed but the aim of the company remained (and does to this day) to pursue the pinnacle of musical performance from their products. Their trademark warmth and smoothness, with explicit detail, are still apparent in all of their components - although they replace the word ‘warmth’ with ‘natural’.

Sugden have brought their characteristic sonic stamp and philosophy to current applications, retaining and unmistakable ‘analogue’ sound from digital sources. They apply wide bandwidth theory to their new products: “the physical presence of subsonic energy and the harmonic benefits of super-sonic capability can only enhance the experience of good music”, they say.

The company have also had to develop their equipment in relation to the growing improvement in loudspeaker manufacturing. As the sensitivity and efficiency of ‘speakers improved, so Class A solid-state amplifiers have seen a resurgence. The CD player we are giving away here is one of the latest generation Sugden products and although called the CD Master is joined by a pre and power amp as part of the series known as ‘Bijou’ - so called because of their compact dimensions.

There’s some serious engineering going on. The isolated transport mechanism is a heavily modified Philips 12.1. Interestingly, conversion is achieved through a DAC 7 18bit x 4 times oversampling hybrid IC. All digital filtering, noise shaping and analogue conversions are carried out on original Sugden circuit boards. The final analogue output has zero feedback and is a low impedance voltage reference stage, using discrete components throughout.

The CD Master is quite simply one of the best looking and sounding components throughout. For quite a while, delivering a highly detailed yet smooth and well balanced sound that never becomes tiring or boring. Reviewer, Mani Sandher, found the top end to be among the finest he has heard and also praised the open mid-range with its fine resolution.

To get your hands on this fabulous bit of kit, simply answer the questions below on a postcard and send it to the address below by September 30th. The first correct answer picked out of our hat will be the lucky winner.

**Competition Questions**

1. What was the model number of Sugden’s first amplifier?
   - [a] A12
   - [b] A21
   - [c] A31
   - [d] BS2

2. In which class did the first amplifier operate?
   - [a] class A
   - [b] class AB
   - [c] class D
   - [d] class of 68

3. In which year did the ownership of Sugden change hands?
   - [a] 1971
   - [b] 1991
   - [c] 1918
   - [d] 1981

4. The CD Master is part of the Sugden range also known as?
   - [a] Beaucoup
   - [b] Bijou
   - [c] Bateau
   - [d] Bellissimo

Please send all entries to:

October Competition
Hi-Fi World
Freepost LON3478
LONDON NW6 6YR

CONGRATULATIONS!
...to Mr. Mark Simkins of Middlesex, the winner of our August competition. A Unison Research S6 amplifier is on its way to you!
 touched down at Heathrow a couple of weeks ago and already it seems like a lifetime. Life in London is a world away from life in Malaysia’s capital, Kuala Lumpur. Two weeks without being able to relax at night in a gentle 35 degrees, using Tiger beer as a coolant, is two weeks too long.

Like anyone who spends a lifetime in something that caught their imagination young, it’s great to be able to jaw endlessly about hi-fi, as I can when I visit KL, without people all around dropping like mosquitoes hit by a cloud of DDT. The reason is this show attracts engineers from around the world, who like me appreciate an opportunity to exchange ideas, with no time limit! Phil Jones of American Acoustic Development - seemingly not a sensible name for a company run by a Welshman based in China! - flies in for this reason, and to support his local distributor at the show. We tend to talk loudspeaker design and audio world-wide into the small hours, over Nasi Goreng and exotic fruits, as plates and bottles pile up around us. At times like this it’s easy to forget that the country is host to manufacturing plants of the world’s largest electronics companies. With an economy dependent upon electronics it is hardly surprising that there’s a lot of interest in high fidelity.

Far East electronics shows are lively, vibrant affairs. Consumer Electronics products such as televisions and projectors dominate at KL’s A/V Show. Earlier years have seen the show held at the enormous Legend Hotel but this year it was the turn of the swisher J.W. Marriott. Their ballroom was awash with projectors and screens, which appeared to be pushing Plasma display screens to one side. Just how many people are prepared to turn their homes into cinemas I don’t know. Kuala Lumpur’s thronging streets, shopping malls and markets suggest to me Malaysians spend less time at home than most Europeans and are probably less likely to sit immersed in an expensive home cinema setup than we are. However this is the Far East, which seems to have an insatiable appetite for all sorts of electronics.

You’d think hi-fi and audio would struggle to get noticed in an atmosphere like this, but it doesn’t. High all year round running a valve amp might seem perverse, but nowadays it just means the air-conditioning works a little harder and your electricity bill takes a hit, first from producing extra heat and then from having to get rid of it.

I go to Malaysia every year for a variety of reasons. You’ve likely noticed we produce kit hi-fi at Hi-Fi World towers. World Audio Design products are manufactured by British subcontractors and sent to customers around the world. I was there to represent World Audio Design and support our Malaysian distributor, as well as cover the show on behalf of the magazine. As Simon Pope, our editor, found out when visiting China, there’s no shortage of valve amplifiers in the Far East where they have a dedicated following. World Audio Design amplifiers are there with the rest of them.

Another opportunity Malaysia offers is a chance to sniff around corners of the hi-fi business not commonly aerated by the UK press, to see what is happening with British companies outside Britain. In the past I discovered Ditton loudspeakers being marketed as a product hailing from Thames Ditton, Surrey, when in fact they turned out to be designed and built in Denmark, no less, for sale in the Far East only!

This year it is the turn of Rogers Loudspeakers to go East, as I explain in our Show report.

Malaysia is a key manufacturing area for most of the world’s large electronics companies. There are numerous smaller subcontractors that feed these giants and amongst them British companies find able manufacturers of their products. At present not every U.K. manufacturer is entirely convinced that manufacturing overseas is as economical as it appears. Superficially, prices are roughly half that of Europe or America, and in China even lower. The sting in the tail is quality control — or lack of it. If a batch of five hundred chassis comes back with an ‘orange peel’ paint finish they will be unsaleable, but specifying paint finish quality precisely in a contract isn’t easy. There are lots of horror stories like this and the only solution is to send an engineer out to watch over the manufacturing process. This soon chews up any savings made, making the whole exercise a bit pointless.

Malaysia is a world away, yet in some senses very close. Their domestic electronics industry has many links with Britain and British hi-fi has a good presence in the region. There’s nowhere else in this world that offers such a wonderful combination of heat, hi-fi and Tiger beer.
A Selection of our ever changing offers for sale
(all fully guaranteed)

**Audiophile**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Condition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JVL</td>
<td>VGC / Boxed / Manuals</td>
<td>Superb Amplifier</td>
<td>640.00</td>
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<td>Aura Evolution</td>
<td>VA-1000 Int. Amp.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>SMG Ribbon Panels</td>
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<td>Chario Syntar</td>
<td>100 / II Uni-Q Etc</td>
<td>MINT / Boxed</td>
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<td>Kef Reference</td>
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<td>MINT / Bowed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sennheiser</td>
<td>HD-580 / C.460 II</td>
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<td>Technics SB-HD 51</td>
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**LOUDSPEAKERS**

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<td>C.D. / Pre-Amp c. 209 Remote Control Station</td>
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<td>Maranta (Slimline Series)</td>
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**RECORDING EQUIPMENT**

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<tr>
<td>Cambridge Audio V5050</td>
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**FEATURES**

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<td>Smooth Bass Response</td>
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<td>Comfortable Listening</td>
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<td>Natural Sound Quality</td>
<td>15.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improved Musical Performance</td>
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- Buy the Two Phase 3's for £750.00 Saving £49.90
- Maranta Lifestyle. (Slimline Series) (Comprising: Remote Receiver / C.D. Player / Cassette Deck) INT / MINT / As New / Boxed | 1000.00 |

**AFFORDABLE AUDIO**

Affordable Audio is always keen to buy, or part-exchange on any of the above.

Don't forget we can offer mail order.

**WE CAN ALSO SELL YOUR EQUIPMENT FOR YOU ON A COMMISSION BASIS.**

(Keep the above address for your records. (Please phone Paul for details)!}

---

**PRODUCT OF THE MONTH**

Harbeth HL-5 (2-Way Monitor Loudspeakers) In VGC With Boxes.

**Last Retail Price** £1200.00

**affordable-audio.co.uk**
Sometimes, they'll stop at fuel stations
years now, tricksters have been driving
the natural outlet for unloading the
latter - and the only way you'll find
was originally made? Or a cheapo, mid
with brushed aluminium, packed with
bargain for the former, but a rip-off for
plastic front panel, and vinyl wrapped
costing thousands of pounds when it
ono".

Intriguing. Could it be a high end
1970s Japanese rack system, dripping
with brushed aluminium, packed with
massive toroidal transformers and
costing thousands of pounds when it
was originally made? Or a cheapo, mid
eighties stack with silver painted
plastic front panel, and vinyl wrapped
MDF cabinet? Seventy quid would be a
bargain for the former, but a rip-off for
the latter - and the only way you'll find
out is a phone call to someone who
can't remember the make and model
numbers. Unfortunately, in about 99
out of 100 cases, the news you get is
bad!

Local freebies have also become
the natural outlet for unloading the
infamous scam loudspeakers. For some
years now, tricksters have been driving
round inner cities in white vans.
Sometimes, they'll stop at fuel stations
or car parks and offer people the
chance to buy an amazing pair of
speakers - usually a 'cancelled export
order'. These things are branded with
names that sound similar to famous
marques, but aren't quite the same.
These alleged 'professional monitors'
are huge great tower affairs, packed
with drive units and look very flash to
the untrained eyed. The poor victim is
invited to pay 'a fraction' of their
(alleged) cost, between £100-£200, in
cash. Only when they get them home
do they discover that they're total
rubbish, with flimsy vinyl wrap cabs
end up in the chip shop!

Well, over the past few
years, avid bargain
hunters have become
increasingly spoilt for
choice. First and foremost,
there are the local 'free-ads' papers,
whose 'Hi-fi for sale' sections are a
veritable cornucopia of audio's good,
bad and ugly. Sadly, the advertisers
don't always share our definition of
what exactly constitutes hi-fi. Rather
than the 'real' variety this mag carries,
there's much that can be called - for
the want of a better expression - junk.
Consider this ad found a few months
ago, which is fairly representative of
the breed: "Hi-fi system, old but good
type, silver in colour with cabinet, £50
ono".

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can't remember the make and model
numbers. Unfortunately, in about 99
out of 100 cases, the news you get is
bad!

Local freebies have also become
the natural outlet for unloading the
infamous scam loudspeakers. For some
years now, tricksters have been driving
round inner cities in white vans.
Sometimes, they'll stop at fuel stations
and budget car audio drive units. Most
are for sale the next week in - yes,
you've guessed it - the free-sheet that
ends up in the chip shop!

Like everything else in its path, the
internet has transformed hi-fi buying.
There are a number of online auction
sites, and a couple have become
incredibly popular. The great thing
about these is the spontaneity - you
can log on, look at the picture, read
the description (often an exercise in
creative writing that would make
Jeffrey Archer jealous) and make a bid.
Most enticing of all are the ridiculously
low start prices - sellers set them at
unrealistic levels to get people hooked.
(This is a common trait with many
sites, especially when it comes to
tavel. £100 return to
Bangkok - sold once two
years ago and involved
travelling Aeroflot Cargo
Class via Tallin, Moscow and
Tashkent.) And it works - if
you logged on and saw
'Koetsu Rosewood Signature
moving coil, as new'
currently listed at £1 -
wouldn't you join in the fun?

The problem is that, amidst the
rare gems, there's an awful lot of
dross. An early eighties Sanyo
amplifier with LED power meters with
a £30 reserve? Not even a bargain at
one third of the price. A Hitachi direr
drive turntable for £50! I'll pass on
that one too. An old 12" SME for
£350! Fine, but you could pick one up
for half that in this magazine. Even the
top stuff is often overpriced, because a
pretty picture and a few glasses of
wine suddenly makes bidding that
much easier. Mission Cyrus Two/PSX
for £120? Thanks, but no thanks.

Ten years ago buying second-hand
hi-fi seemed a distinctly low rent,
dOWNMARKET PURSUIT. Since then, it's
cought on big time and many people
actually choose to pick up old stuff
instead of purchasing new. The result
is that - even for the middling,
mediocre kit - prices have rocketed
and the popularity of free-ads
magazines and online auctions has only
evacrated the situation. By contrast,
Hi-Fi World's pages of good, honest
classifieds every month seem an oasis
of sanity.

David Price
For his first choice recording of Mahler's great Ninth Symphony Andy Giles deliberately chooses an unfashionable live performance by Leonard Bernstein.

This is a monumentally death-imbued work — from the opening Andante in D, with its sparse preludial bars announcing ghostly orchestral colours, to its slow, lingering dénouement, peacefully fading into the distance. As Alban Berg wrote: 'The whole [first] movement is permeated by the premonition of death.'

This piece, which lasts for a good hour and a half (depending upon who's conducting — of which more later) is not to be taken lightly. Gustav Mahler's Symphony No.9 was composed between 1908 and 1911 (mostly 1909) and was first performed in Vienna in 1912 under Bruno Walter. The Ninth Symphony is a stark encounter with death itself, which invades the music, 'turning everything to dust and ashes'. Mahler returned to the purely orchestral symphony in four movements for what was to be his final completed work; but he still used a progressive tonality — the converse of the 'affirmative' one in the Fifth and Seventh Symphonies, moving downwards a semitone.

The orchestra is again normal, except for extra wind: the scoring uses both the middle-period harshness and the new rarification of The Song of the Earth; the style is a culmination of the tonal disruptions and the 'horror' elements of the Sixth and Seventh Symphonies.

There are countless excellent recordings of Mahler's Ninth Symphony. Many are swayed by the readings of Karajan, others by those of Tennstedt, Haitink and Solti. But, for me there's only one interpreter capable of expressing the tortuous beauty of Mahler's work and that is Leonard Bernstein. Bernstein, the great player, actor, performer, the man of flamboyance, grandiosity and ostentation. How he draws every tear from Mahler, every heartbeat, every slow passing into death. And — what better than Lenny doing all that live!

Being there. The sense, the feeling, the emotion, the orchestra, the extraordinarily expressive conductor, the magnitude of the whole thing — to be experienced as it happens. That's what it's all about — surely. Well, not really, I suppose. This idyllic reflection ignores the common cold with its inherent coughs and sneezes. Not to mention — and yes it does happen these days — mobile phones. Unwanted audience reaction and participation of this nature has ever been the bane of the live-concert recording engineer's life. But — step forward digital technology!

Like it or loath it (and I used to support the latter cause steadfastly) — the one thing that is definitely good about digital recordings is that they can take out all that unwanted intrusive nonsense like throat-clearing, clapping between movements (doesn't that just piss you off?) and general bodily grunts and groans. So, if you can get Leonard Bernstein conducting Mahler's Ninth live — without extraneous animal noises from the audience — what more do you want?

Bernstein's Deutsche Grammophon performance of Mahler's Ninth was recorded live in Amsterdam with the Concertgebouworkest in June 1985 (so no problems with mobile phones anyway). The conductor had earlier recorded the same symphony for CBS and some felt the DG recording presented a surprising — and largely unwelcome — contrast with his previous account. His basic speeds are so slow that they may, to some less maudlin individuals, lose necessary impulse, even with Bernstein's magnetic control. It is clear what Bernstein wished to imply — 'You're not here to enjoy yourselves, you know'. At the conclusion of the final Adagio, very slow indeed and heavily underlined, it really does feel as though the work will never end. But who wants it to? It's the end of life for heaven's sake! The middle movements are further brilliantly characterized by Bernstein's unique brand of histrionic grotesquery, but even there in the Rondo Burleske he rushes the music to its close, to undermine the virtuosity of even the Concertgebouw players. It is amusing that he should choose to speed up the bits he wasn't too happy about (because they were too cheerful?) and embrace a huge degree of enduring stillness within the slower passages. In summary, there is some beautifully refined playing in an atmosphere exactly right for the passion of the piece. It cannot be recommended more highly. But don't take it to a rave.
Remember listening to your first hi-fi separates system? Chances are you'd already heard from others just how great it would sound. Yet, to many, this isn't always the case. One reason is that after a lifetime of listening to portable, in-car, midi systems and even amplified live music, you may have become used to distortion. Hence a favourite track that had a prominent, booming bassline, now sounds rather weedy. It is not of course but is just correctly balanced by a decent system.

Another is the age-old favourite gripe of 'hiss'. Having conducted hundreds of demonstrations, I will still have concerned customers say to me, "there's something wrong with the hi-fi, it's hissing". On further investigation it inevitably turns out to be the hi-fi simply exposing the original recording.

Stalwart audiophiles are well aware that different brands, and even models, offer different levels of recording quality analysis. By means of construction and components a Linn product, for example, will focus upon rhythm and timing whilst, say a Musical Fidelity, will offer a more 'warts and all' approach. Yet to a newcomer it's all rather daunting.

Ultimately though, it's all down to the quality of the recording. I've been recently reminded of the phrase "garbage in garbage out" whilst reviewing several products. No matter how good the product in question, several recordings have sounded down right awful. It's quite amazing to think that in over a hundred years of recorded sound, we still don't always get it right.

Speaking to classical music fanatics, I've found the consensus to be that the heyday of quality was during the 1950s and 60s. It was at the dawn of stereo, when microphone and editing techniques were kept simple. During the 1970s orchestras were often recorded in far shorter bursts, and 'pieced' together in the final mix. Multimic and spot-microphone techniques also became commonplace. The end result often sounded exactly as one would expect: processed and lacking continuity. This wasn't helped by the mid-70s introduction of Quadraphonic sound. Although such recordings were supposed to be compatible with stereo equipment, the resulting sound was often rather odd to say the least. Novel it may have been, but the novelty of a violin floating around the room soon wore rather thin. Many recordings had to be reissued in stereo shortly after.

Things didn't really get better in the 1980s with digital processing. How could we forget the much-vaunted DDD! Essentially, at a time when a logo meant: everything, the triple D symbol implied that the piece had been recorded using a digital deck, mixed and edited digitally, and then mastered digitally. This was meant to be the pinnacle of advanced recording technology. The only problem being that many such early recordings sounded 'glassy' and artificial, especially with stringed instruments.

It is only recently that we've seen a return to really fine quality recordings. Digital technology has of course improved, but there's also a realisation that it's not the be-all and end-all of a fine recording. This doesn't stop their being some clonkers about though!

The history of popular music is rather different. Whilst classical music hit a low in the 70s and 80s, pop still managed to sound mostly reasonable during the 70s. Recordings of the big bands of the time still make for enjoyable listening today. Punk is something else, but by its very nature it was never meant to sound lush or refined! Later on, though, pop was affected just as badly as classical by the digital 'revolution'. Listen to many of your 80s favourites now and you'll find them impossibly thin and compressed sounding. More latterly there have been some improvements. Towards the end of the 80s bands such as Cowboy Junkies took the back-to-basics approach (long before the politicians took the same route). They recorded using just a single Ambisonic microphone and DAT machine. The results sounded great on a decent system, but rather unimpressive on lo-fi equipment. Here lay the crunch.

Record producers realised that most of their output would be listened to by a younger audience, on a burgeoning array of portable and in-car units. It's still the case today that the final mix is often composed via speakers of the most basic type possible. This is so as not to upset the limitations of the Argos fifty quid special, or a Mondeo's standard door-fit dual-cones. Listen to Radio 1 and the effect is compounded by a further level of compression.

None of this bodes particularly well for the keen audiophile. The classical fan is well catered for these days. There are also some fantastically recorded jazz and vocal pieces. Yet if your taste is more contemporary, you're still going to have to suffer the odd "duffer". In this case, choosing the right equipment that doesn't exacerbate the problem is even more vital than ever. Just one thing though, when you're having your demo, don't complain to me about the hiss!
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PHILIPS SHRINK EXPANIUM

Philips are due to release the world’s smallest MP3-CD player. The eXpanium EXP 401 measures just 8cm (3”) and uses the ‘mini’ CD format on which up to three hours of compressed music can be stored in formats such as MP3, UDF or AAC. Scheduled for release in the Autumn, the pocket-sized EXP 401 weighs just 220g and is powered by a single AA battery. It features continuous CD playback with Philips Magic ESP (Electronic Skip Protection) technology, which provides a 100 second music buffer for MP3 CD files compressed at 128kbps. There’s also a two level Dynamic Bass Boost on board.

This latest eXpanium model comes within a year of Philips first MP3-CD products. Later in the year Philips are due to release further products in the range, which as well as featuring portables, will also encompass home audio systems. No price is yet confirmed for the 401.

www.philips.com

SONY PROMOTE PC LINK

Sony have launched a campaign to make more consumers aware of the PC linking capability of MiniDisc. They are investing heavily in the promotion. Purchasers of selected MiniDisc products will get the chance to buy a PC Link kit which will enable them to download music files from their PC onto MiniDisc.

There is a website (address below) which is acting both as a purchase point for the PC Link kit and an information guide to its capabilities. The promotion will last until Christmas of this year and will be backed up with national and regional radio advertising, as well as in-store point of sale displays in certain stores.

www.pclink.com
www.sony.co.uk

TRAVELLER’S TALES

A new gadget for those computer audiophiles on the move. Freecom have announced details of their new Traveller II CD-RW/DVD “combo” which is released mid August. The original Traveller II portable CD recorder was the smallest available at the time and now they’ve strengthened the range with a CD-recordable that also doubles up as a DVD player. Connections are well catered for and a single drive can be connected to USB, FireWire/iLink, CardBus, PCMCIA and Parallel Port, with USB-2 to be added soon. The company claim there is no more comprehensive plug-and-go solution available.

www.freecom.com
Thomson's new Lyra PDP2222 is a fraction of the size and weight of the previous version, and far more desirable. David Price tries out this new dinky diamond.

It's a sign of the times. Summer 2000 saw a profusion of big, butch second generation MP3 walkies offering more perceived value than their predecessors but little in the way of improved user-friendliness. Thomson's Lyra was the quintessence of this - a huge, lumbering 120g giant, it was barely any more portable than the latest crop of Minidisc machines. True, it offered the all-important 64MB of memory and a lavish 5-line LC display, but still seemed to miss the point of digital audio portables somewhat.

Following the now well established trend for third generation designs, the new Lyra is dramatically smaller at 46x57x28mm and weighs a sylph-like 80g. This makes it a close rival for the likes of Vivanco's Vmax, currently the dinkiest digital audio player around right now. Unfortunately it comes with a mere 32MB of Flash memory onboard, but this is no longer the issue it once was. The optional Multi Media Card (MMC) slot takes up to 96MB and prices are tumbling - the days when the cards cost more than the players seem to be gone!

It isn't the best built portable around - 'hewn' (or should that be moulded) from middling quality, silver painted plastic it's a long way behind the likes of Philips' Rush SA-126 or SonicBLUE's ubiquitous Rio 600. Gone is the old model's superb LC display, and in its place a non-alphanumeric CD portable style affair showing track and time, DSP mode and settings, bitrate, USB download, play mode, hold, volume and battery status. Four front-mounted 'transport' buttons make it easy to use on the move - in this respect it's better than almost all its rivals. No fuss here. To the side, there's a 3.5mm stereo headphone jack with digital volume control, plus a Play Mode button (offering Play, Shuffle, Repeat (All), Program) and DSP switch (Flat, Bass, Rock, Pop or Jazz). LCD Display provides the following information.

Round the back go two AAA batteries giving up to 12 hours of playback, and there's an auto-power down after 15 minutes of non-use from the pause mode, or 60 seconds after the stop button has been pressed. The comprehensive list of bundled accessories includes the CD-ROM Music Management Software, a USB CompactFlash External Drive (which transfers audio files from your PC to the Lyra), a pair of poor sounding stereo headphones, 'sports accessory band' and neck strap, a carrying pouch and batteries.

One great asset to the package is the supplied MusicMatch Jukebox software, which lets you organise your tracks in a digital music library, create custom playlists by 'dragging and dropping', play tracks on your PC and download files to the Lyra. MMJ encodes MP3, RealAudio G2 and WMV files, and will let you export them to WAV format. Importantly, it comes bundled with the Fraunhofer Advanced codec, guaranteeing excellent MP3 sound. The Lyra is said to be software upgradeable to new compressed digital audio formats including AAC - although this feature isn't standard. The new Lyra isn't a great sounding MP3 walkie. It's eerily reminiscent of the last model, which by the standards of its day was fine, but time moves fast with these machines. The original Lyra came before the great Philips Rush, a player that redefined the standards of the breed. The best way to describe the Rush in 'conventional' hi-fi terms is to compare it with an old Philips DCC portable - warm, powerful, sweet and smooth. Back to the Lyra, and there's an obvious lack of this natural musicality. It all sounds a little too compressed and mechanical. Don't get me wrong though, it's still perfectly listenable - refined, decently dynamic and with a willing, punchy bass - it's just that it doesn't have its Philips rival's instantly recognisable organic quality. One point the Lyra has in its favour though is its headphone output stage. Where most are gutless and barely able to drive basic in-ear phones, this one had a good go at aspiring some power hungry Sennheiser HD570s!

This is a good player, but undistinguished in any respect save its diminutive dimensions. It gives a sound comfortably ahead of its rival miniature (the Vivanco Vmax), but compare it to bigger designs like the Rush or Rio 600 and it's found wanting.

Thomson Lyra PDP2222 £160

www.lyrzone.com
David Price reviews an interesting portable storage solution for PCs and Macs alike, LaCie's PocketDrive.

As computers perform an ever-growing multimedia role, so the demand for high speed, high capacity data storage grows. While CD-R is an immensely handy (and cheap) way of storing 650MB of information (or around 10 hours of MP3 music), many people now want more. Enter La Cie's new PocketDrive range - starting at the £199 design for £199 and spanning the £290 20GB and £399 30GB models, and finishing with the £489 unit (with its price to be announced).

The PocketDrive is a purpose-designed, portable hard drive with a range of connection options that make it very easy to use in a variety of situations, with both Macs and PCs. As far as data storage devices go, it's an attractive little bit of kit - not quite as chic as the latest range of Lips (although it isn't really a natural rival to these), but still very compact (at a mere 27x87x143mm) and light (355g). It even features 'silicon bumpers' to give it extra shock protection while on the road - LaCie says the PocketDrive is designed to be carried around on a day-to-day basis - and the groove around the edge also helps to keep cables tidy.

With such a serious amount of storage capacity, users can access, backup or transport their entire digital music (or video) collections. The 20GB PocketDrive tested here will store 340 hours of MP3 music or around 30 hours of uncompressed 16/44 PCM digital audio in WAV format. The larger 30GB unit can store over two and a half hours of Digital Video, while the forthcoming 48GB PocketDrive can store more than four hours of DV video and over 70 CDs worth of uncompressed music! There are numerous other applications too, including graphics, imaging, pre-press, DTP, archiving, audio editing, local backup and additional storage. You can even use it as an electronic photo album for your digital camera!

The PocketDrive connects up via a standard USB or 1-Link connector, but also works with the faster, more modern FireWire (IEEE 1394) interface too. Via FireWire it draws power directly from the computer, but needs the supplied mains adapter when using USB or 1-Link. It is hot-pluggable, meaning that whichever interface is chosen, it can be removed or swapped without having to shutdown or reboot the system. It mounts automatically as soon as it's connected to any Macintosh (Mac OS 8.6, 9.x, Mac OS X) or PC (Windows98SE, 2000 & Millennium) computer.

The package comprises the PocketDrive itself, installation CD-ROM and LaCie's Silverlining utilities - offering full disk management, formatting, partitioning and maintenance (including RAID 0 or bootability option for MacOS). The software works effortlessly and easily, and there were no glitches getting the PocketDrive up and running on my Windows 98SE notebook PC. When formatted on a PC using its FAT 32 file system, files stored on a PocketDrive are also viewable on a Mac Platform, making it truly cross-platform.

I used the PocketDrive for swapping my music compilations (stored in massive WAV files, recorded on Cool Edit Pro) from machine to machine, and backing them up. With its very fast transfer rates it was a joy to use - you certainly don't get the feeling of having to wait ages, as you do with everything from Omega Jaz drives to CD-Rs. Working with a FireWire card, it needed no separate power cables, and was instantly recognised by whatever machine it was plugged into. They're also good for backing up data, thanks to the 1.2GB per minute (35MB/sec via FireWire) transfer speed, which is over 5 times faster than a tape drive, and twice as fast as a conventional FireWire. Another point that predisposes a PocketDrive for multimedia use is the low noise - it's one of the quietest external drives on the market.

LaCie's new PocketDrive is a great way to store multimedia content and move it around - right now, it couldn't get much easier. The only downside is its high price. It costs very considerably more than a naked 20GB hard drive. If, however, you're prepared to forgive LaCie the price, you'll love the convenience. Highly recommended.

LaCie 20GB PocketDrive £290
020 7872 8000
www.lacie.co.uk

World Verdict

Excellent way of storing and moving music, but expensive too.
Once again Noel Keywood travels to the mystic east for our report on Malaysia's annual audio showcase

This year's A/V Show venue, the J.W.Marriot hotel in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, complete with lush tropical vegetation surrounding its entrance (www.ytlhotels.com.my).

The super-shiny Zanden 7000 845 equipped single-ended power amplifier priced locally at a cool Rm30,000 (£6000). It is shown by Masao Fukata, Zanden's Singapore based worldwide export agent (www.bmb.com.sg)

The Far East always has surprises for me when I visit Kuala Lumpur for the AV Show. This year they were less about new models and technologies than people and personalities. But that is not to say there weren't a few interesting items tucked away here and there.

Last year Panasonic gave a lavish press presentation for SD card, a memory card system that has only just arrived in Britain. Perhaps it's the climate, but they do things with a lot more razzmatazz in the Far East. There were lasers, dry ice smoke, pounding music and almost unfeasibly slim girls in elegant outfits to catch our attention at the Panasonic launch – and it does make an impression. This year Kuala Lumpur had no new technologies like SD Card, but it managed a bit of razzmatazz with car audio all the same. Outside the smart environs of the J.W. Marriot hotel stood a line of cars under large parasols, with huge in-car systems pounding away. This time the show girls had a harder job – how to look cool when there's no air-con and the temperature is hovering around 35 degrees C. Being just a few degrees North of the equator, KL is never cool; in July its streets sizzle gently. Pioneer and Kenwood were there all the same pulling the crowds with a fetching combination of monster bass units and elegant girls. The crowds stopped and seemed suitably impressed by gut wrenching bass, whilst we studied the 18in drivers and Phil Jones gave me a running commentary on who in this world makes such things and the problems they have in doing so. I'm not sure I heard what he was saying.

Phil is a British designer who travels in from China, where he runs the manufacturing side of American Acoustic Development. He wasn't the only Brit. there by any means, since Malaysia is also home to a lot of electronics manufacturers of all sizes, large to small. That means there are a host of subcontractors that cater for British companies, which in turn attract visiting engineers.

Exposure are a name undergoing transformation at the moment with the injection of Far East funds. Sales Director Andy Whittle was tramping the aisles of my 747 to KL and we met again at the Exposure room where he showed me their new products. Andy was a designer at Rogers before it slipped from view in the UK after management problems following its takeover by the Wok Kee Hong Group. I got a good shot of him chatting to Phil Jones, reproduced here. Both of them are design engineers and both run hi-fi companies so they had a lot to talk about. Which brings me onto a piece of Eastern intrigue - and something they didn't talk about.
Rogers new LS118 (left) and LS108 floorstanding loudspeakers, designed and built in the Far East. The UK operation closed down a few years ago. Rogers is now a part of Wo Kee Hong group (www.wokeehong.com.hk).

The LS118 four-way was priced at Rm2190 (£ 438) and the LS108 three-way at Rm1950 (£ 390).

I was surprised to see a new range of beautifully finished, glossy Rogers loudspeakers in the Wo Kee Hong room. Knowing that Rogers (UK) is no more, it was obvious that this new range had been sourced in the Far East. Since many UK loudspeakers are, these days, manufactured in the Far East in any case there's nothing unusual here. Doubtless they'll reach the UK in due course. Andy Whittle was as surprised as I to see a new Rogers range and knew nothing about their origins. I asked Phil Jones what he knew and he just smiled knowingly!

Audiospace were back with their range of sumptuously finished valve amplifiers from Hong Kong, manufactured by a company fetchingly called Top International Electronic Ltd. It's better than the Wan Kee Electronics Co. I saw in my travels around KL; there's always a smile to be had in these names. Top International put some effort into getting a superb finish on their amps, inside and out. Prices are frighteningly low too at around RM6000 (£1200) for their KT88 based AS-8i. As yet, these amps only make their way into a few outlets in the USA, Australia and China, as well as Malaysia of course, where importers A&L Audio Station put up a good demo every year.

Even rarer are Zanden from Japan. They too had a range of beautifully finished valve amplifiers on display as my pictures hopefully show. The Zandens were in another league price wise though, reflecting Japan's differing manufacturing costs and upmarket view of the world nowadays. The Model 9000 is a push-pull 300B design producing a claimed 20W per channel. Its power supply has valve rectifiers and the chassis is aluminium plated with gold colour aluminate finish. The 9000 had a sticker on it for Rm60,000, equivalent to around £12,000, no less. The 845 single-ended 7000 costs Rm30,000.

And finally, an unusual idea we may just see soon, namely a DVD recorder from Datavideo that records mpeg2 video to CD-Rs. The MP-3000 can store up to 18 minutes of DVD quality video on a 650MB CD-R disc that can be replayed on the latest generation DVD players, they claim. As Datavideo say, the amount of incompatibility in the DVD field is great at present and is just about to increase as Philips introduce their own DVD+RW recording system. Since discs will cost at least £20 you can see the attractions of the MP-3000, which uses low cost CD-R discs.

As demand for Consumer Electronics products slows in America and Europe, and as Japan stays flat economically, the manufacturing plants and economy of Malaysia remain in limbo. The country has still hasn't fully recovered from 1997's economic downturn, but that doesn't stop the yearly AV Show being popular with locals and visiting engineers alike. ❘ Glacier一段时间
Simon Pope encounters two interconnect cables from different extremes of the market.

**NORDOST QUATRRO FIL INTERCONNECT**
**£1,375 per metre**

Throwing away their Flatline design for once, the Quattro Fil still uses the company's Micro Monofilament technology but in four groups of conductors (hence the name). Each of these is made up of 99.999999% OFC conductors covered with 50 microns of extruded silver. Each conductor is also wrapped in a very fine helix teflon spacer with minimal contact to the surface of the metal. A Teflon tube is then extruded over the spacer, which seals the conductor, sealing it "in inert air" to apparently prevent oxidation. And there's more! Four Teflon tubes are then wound around each other and bonded together by a proprietary wrapping technique. A dual layer of silver shielding is then wound around the assembly over which a further Teflon layer (the jacket) is extruded.

Whereas these cable's won't enhance bass or smoothness of sound, the Quattro Fil will pick up on the musical traits of your system, such as fluidity and lyricism and deliver a musical yet exact sound with oodles of detail and presence. It's a fine sounding cable - as it bloody well should be for this money - similar to SonicLink's equally wallet bruising Black Rhodium. The Quattro Fil sounds full and fast without any overtly scientific sterile sound that the rest of the Nordost line up can sometimes err to (albeit with finesse). This is for detail freaks with a very high disposable income; what it does, it does very well indeed.

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**VAN DEN HUL STORM GOLD HYBRID INTERCONNECT**
**£30 per metre**

Here we have a brand new interconnect from the other end of the price scale to the Quattro Fil from the Dutch masters of cable construction. For the money, there's a lot going on here. The Storm Gold employs a single high grade OFC (oxygen free copper) core with a dense pure silver layer surrounded by a linear structured carbon coating.

Capacitance between the signal lines is apparently extremely low. This is achieved by using foamed polyethylene electrical insulation which vdB claim has a "superb dielectric constant". The shielding is 112 strands of silver plated copper, layered over a carbon-satured tape.

Considering its humble price tag, the Storm Gold is quite remarkable. Just one step up from the audio cables supplied with budget equipment, the difference is amazing. There's plenty of detail and excitement, along with fluidity and smoothness with every type of music you wish to play. Soundstaging is nice and deep and the treble is never harsh or rough. Most cables of this price will sound slightly more veiled than that of other models up to, say, £200 - not so the Storm Gold. I found it as clean and detailed as anything I could muster out of my cable box up to £100. You won't get the subtler details and audiophile traits of van den Hul's more expensive carbon designs but this is one of hi-fi's newest and best bargains, and a great upgrade for the budget restricted. Incidentally it also doubles as a very fine digital cable, too!
Digital Compact Cassette was proof positive that Philips could screw up like the rest of them. But this makes for incredible second-hand bargains now, like this Marantz DD-82, says David Price.

I remember the scene well. Tokyo 1991, Tower Records, Shibuya. At one end of the huge shop floor lurked two strange new hi-fi oddities. One was a Sony MZ-I, which was a tiny (by the standards of the day), black MiniDisc portable. The other was a massive Technics DCC recorder, about the size of a 1970s video and complete with ‘tasteful’ wooden side cheeks. There was a crowd of people around the MiniDisc machine, but the DCC sat awkwardly beside it completely unnoticed. This scene was rich with significance - who in the shiny, new high tech 1990s wanted another big, fat, dumpy looking tape based format?

The tragedy was that after the crowd cleared, I sauntered over to try the two formats out. The Sony MiniDisc was playing some god-awful Michael Bolton disc, and the sound was appalling. Laced with digital nasties - weird, phasey effects, ‘breathing’, odd digital artefacts - even allowing for the questionable programme material, it was virtually unlistenable. The Technics DCC by comparison sounded superb - I remember being amazed by its clarity, evenness of tone and musicality. Even as a regular DAT user (I carried around my Sony TC-D3 DATman everywhere I went, using it as a Walkman), I was surprised how good this data-compressed format sounded. Even as a regular DAT user (I carried around my Sony TC-D3 DATman everywhere I went, using it as a Walkman), I was surprised how good this data-compressed format sounded. Only when you wanted to change track or post-edit your recordings did it become a total pain.

I told Marantz’s Ken Ishiwata this recently and he didn’t sound surprised. As far as he’s concerned, there was little wrong with DCC’s sonics. Even today, the DD-82 you see here sounds incredibly open and smooth - you don’t hear any compressed audio nasties - and in some respects actually seems warmer and more satisfying than uncompressed DAT. Later machines like this had a wide, 18 bit Bitstream and some very respectable digital and audio circuitry inside. As I found when I reviewed this machine’s cheaper Philips cousin - the DCC951 - in early 1995, if you put these into MONITOR mode, they’ll act as off-board DACs which actually sound better than some more expensive, purpose built designs. You can thank a nicely implemented Philips SAA7350 Bitstream chip for that, plus Ken’s myriad tweaks, ranging from trick op-amps in the analogue output stage to the ubiquitous copper screws!

The DD-82 is a big old beast (420x132x344mm, WxHxD), and weighs a lot more than your average MiniDisc recorder (8.2kg!). Place it against a modern MD machine - say a Sony MDS-JB940QS - and it’s an ergonomic disaster area. With buttons scattered randomly all over the place, huge 16 segment bar graph display and an oppressive black fascia it’s very nineties mucho macho.

Round the back, there’s a choice of coaxial or optical digital inputs plus line in (running through a fine sounding A-D converter) and fixed and variable analogue outs. Otherwise, that’s your lot - the magic of this machine is in the listening, not the beholding.

If you have enough hours in the day to endure DCC’s fussy whirring and tedious track search antics, and want something that makes great recordings cheaply, there’s simply nothing better. Because DCC went the way of the Dodo, causing Philips to flush away (probably) more money than the EU manages to squander in a decade, it’s a terminally unfashionable format. This in turn means that you can pick DCCs up in the classifieds for next to nothing - and yes, you can still buy the tapes. This one cost £50 including 10 DCCs - to buy new five years ago it could have added up to over £700 - can’t say fairer than that!
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Arcam, Alchemist, Apollo, Audioquest, Audio Research, B&W, Cable Talk, Castle, Celestion, Chord, Copland, Cyrus, Denon, DPA, JBL, Kef, Krell, Marantz, Martin Logan, Meridian, Musical Fidelity, Panasonic, Pioneer, REL, Rotel, Ruark, SME, Sennheiser, Sonus Faber, Tag McLaren, Teac, Theta, Yamaha etc. Classical CD's available at Birmingham only. Demonstration rooms, service and installations. BADA member. VISA / MASTERCARD / AMEX / SWITCH. Open 10-5.30 Tuesday to Saturday. Late night Thursday till 7.00 (not Stourbridge).

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w elcome to
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

**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 CD45SE** £200
A touch soft in the treble but outstanding in every other respect. (Feb 98)

**KENWOOD DP-3080II*** £180
Has great clarity and presence for the price. Not as naturally expressive as the CD45SE though. (Feb 98)

**LINN KARIK III** £1775
Under rated and overlooked, the final Kariik was a gem. Solid transport gives a brilliantly tight, grippy dynamic sound, albeit tonally rather dry. (Feb 98)

**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-43** £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 5300** £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 tempest product. (Aug 99)

**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-TI** £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 wants the best. (Feb 95)

**DACs**

**CAMBRIDGE AUDIO DAC MAGIC 3** £99
Superb value for money with extensive facilities and solid, detailed sonics. Upgrades any sub-£300 player. (Apr 97)

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

**DACMAGIC 3* £99**
UIViewable price with some of the clearest treble in the business. Very engaging, dynamic character. (Aug 97)

**MUSICAL FIDELITY X-DAC** £200
A bargain for normal CDs and even better with HDCDs. (Nov 97)

**SONIC FRONTIERS PROCESSOR 3** £6999
Quality never comes cheap! This DAC oozes 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 tempest product. (Aug 99)

**TONEMARMS**

**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.

Roksan Caspian CD player
Solid as a ROK
### Cartridge Selection and Stylus Prices

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<th>Brand</th>
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### Plinius Amplifiers and Phonostages

**Plinius 8100 Integrated Amplifier**
- Recipient of two Golden Ear Awards from *The Absolute Sound* magazine.
- "Overall, the Plinius 8100 is definitely one to consider for lovers of the classic solid-state amplifier sound.... If you require plenty of clout and clarity it's easily up there with the best at the price." - Simon Pope, Hi-Fi World

**Why pay more and get less?**

All Plinius models are now supplied with Sonic Link power cables as standard - at no extra cost!

**High end performance at a sensible price**

---

**Audio Matters**

New Ex-Dem & Part Exchange Equipment for Sale

020 8255 0572/0973 436135
CARTRIDGES

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 309 series, this arm is also available in 10" and 12" versions. (Jan 93)

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 Magnets 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 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 £105
Betters Goldring's 1042 and costs only £135 on trade-in. An assured and transparent MM. (Feb 98)

DYNAVACER DV220X-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.

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-Cans2 £160
Warm, sumptuous, sweet sound 15mm Xphone amp. Gives better results with a decent set of headphones.

NAIM NAIT 2 £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)

SOMMETEER 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.

MICHIEL DELPHINI MONOBLOCS £1995
Analogue sound-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)

PROJECT 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 Artesa PSU the Artaxerxes X MM/MMC stage still shines. Great stage depth, neutrality and tonal colour. (Oct 97)
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 mixure. (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 monoblocks still more than cut the sonic mustard. Highly expensive and highly sought after. (Mar 97)

MICHELL ELECTRO £1989
Crisp, clean and beautifully controlled with gorgeous styling. Partnered with the £1650 Orca this is a superb winning combo. (Oct 98)

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

NAIM NAP180 £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 as odd as its low price. Not exactly a Trougline, 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)

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

SONY ST-S3AES £250
Beguiling RDS tuner for the sonically discerning. Good ergonomics and sensitive too. (Apr 97)

CASTLE EDEN £469
An extremely engaging tuner with a perfor- mance at odds with its low price. Not exactly a Trougline, but you may not notice... (Feb 99)

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

NAIM NAP80 £1060
The NAT03's warm, atmospheric sound is further proof of Naim's proficiency with tuners. (Sep 93)

PIONEER CT-740S £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

CAFRE LESE £649
Immensely wise '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 CRESCU 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
Impressively vice-free 'speakers that offer great transparency and involvement. One of a select band that simply makes music regardless. (Mar 97)

MISSION 771 £170
Characteristically fast, punchy Mission sound from the Aerogel midbass and silk-dome tweeter. (Jul 98)
**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-J839Q** £250
Great mid-price machine that adds better build and facilities to the '39s already excellent sonic.

**SONY MDS-J855SES** £1300
This Sony can put the wind up Nakamichi cassette decks when used with better blank MDs. (Apr '98)

**SONY MDS-J555SES** £520
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-J510** £300
An impressive sound and unmatched convenience make this MiniDisc player an excellent buy.

**DIGITAL RECORDERS**

**ALEXIS 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 '00)

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

**MARANTZ DR-17** £1,100
Probably the best sounding CD recorder on the market. Built like a brick out house with a true audiophile sound, HDCD compatible. (July '00)

**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-555RWR** £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** £1,600
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-5725** £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 '00)

**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.

**NORDOST BLUE HEAVEN** £150/m
Neutral and transparent, and a steal at forty quid!

**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.

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

**CHORD COMPANY**

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

**LOUDSPEAKER CABLE**

**VAN DEN HUL**

**ULTIMATE THE FIRST** £2600.6m
Carbon interconnects that help you forget the electronics and concentrate on the music. Miraculous transparency.

**DIGITAL RECORDERS**

**ALEXIS 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 '00)

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

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+

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 22/11 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 HR100S
First class arm, up to present-day standards. Buy carefully, though, as there's no service available now.

ARISTON RDII
A one-time king of turntables very similar to the Linn LP12. Now deposed 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 Haddock'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.
**New this month**

### Amplifiers

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### Systems

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<th>Model</th>
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<td>£1,795.00</td>
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### Turntable Analogue, Tapes & Headphones

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<td>£750.00</td>
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</table>
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Here are a wide variety of specialist hi-fi products and services. Keep an eye open for regular advertisers, who know the market and serve their customers in a friendly and reliable manner.

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SILVERFUSE is a near alloy of silver and copper. It is NOT SIlVER PLATED OR SILVER CLAD. Plating (or clad, which is the same thing as plating) causes a dioding effect when signal is passed through resulting in brightness and distortion. The Silversfuse process starts with seven nines OFHC copper wire with a diameter that is slightly larger than the required size. It is then pulled through a trough of molten silver. The wire with a silver deposit, is then forced through a compacting die where it is subject to tremendous pressure. The silver and the high purity copper are fused together into a near alloy. The compacting fusion also reduces the wire diameter to the desired size. No dioding subsequently occurs with this process. The result provides for the benefits of silver: which are excellent definition and clarity, with lower loss.

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LAT AC-2 Power cable. We have developed a cabling (weaving) pattern along with an unusual shielding/filtering system that gets rid of the garritage that contaminates your components. The difference you hear with our cord is astounding. Our power cord takes advantage of silver in its design through use of our proprietary Silverfuse conductors. The conductors are 10 gauge and insulated with Teflon; the best insulation available. Fitted as standard with an IEC and MK Toughplug. Other connectors are available incl Schuko, 16 amp IEC, Figure of eight etc. 2ft £56, 3ft £68, 4ft £78, 6ft £99.

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NEW GOLD MK Tough plug with gold plated pins (£14)
Otto Heil IEC with gold plated contacts (£10)

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with SRC sampling rate and bit converter translates 16,18 and 20 bit inputs to 24 bits format. All 32, 44.1 and 48kHz frequency is re-sampled to 96kHz. The SRC is comparable with that used by DCS in the Purcell unit. Prices start from £1245 for a CDP with SRC.

DVD with SRC and CV2. CV2 Video system for unmatched picture quality - best with projection systems and large Flat CRT, TFT, LCD, Plasma TV's. DVDS with SRC and CV2 start from £1730. DVD with CV2 £1245.
**Forthcoming Releases**

- **Miles Davis** - Kind Of Blue (correct speed) **£25.90**
- **Various** - Rubble 16/17/18 each **£16.90**
- **Byrds** - Live At The Fillmore-2LP **£TBC**
- **Sarah Vaughan** - The Lonely Hours **£25.90**
- **Eva Cassidy** - Songbird 1/9 **£TBC**
- **Beatles** - Live At The BBC **£TBC**
- **Led Zeppelin** - Physical Graffiti **£41.90**
- **Love** - Forever Changes (Sundazed) **£15.90**
- **Genesis** - Lamb Lies Down (Classic) **£25.90**
- **Spirit** - Clear/Family That Plays **£15.90**
- **New Order** - Get Ready **£TBC**

**ALBUM OF THE MONTH**

**Mercury Rev - All Is Dream** **£11.90**

**New Stock And Recent Releases**

- **Aretha Franklin** - I Never Loved A Man 180g **£15.90**
- **Beta Band** - Hotshots Part 2 **£15.90**
- **Bjork** - Vespers **£TBC**
- **Graham Coxon** - Crow Sit On Blood Tree **£TBC**
- **Bob Dylan** - Times Are A Changin (mono) **£16.90**
- **Holy Cole** - Temptation (Classic Records) **£39.90**
- **Crosby&Nash(Classic)** - David Crosby & Graham Nash **£25.90**
- **Roots Manuva** - Run Come Save Me **£13.90**
- **Jesus And Mary Chain** - Complete John Peel Sessions **£16.90**
- **Lou Reed** - American Poet(Live 72) **£12.90**
- **Matt Deighton** - The Common Good **£14.90**
- **Muse** - Origin Of Symmetry 2LP **£12.90**
- **Twink** - Never Never Land **£10.90**
- **Saul Williams** - Amethyst Rock Star **£15.90**
- **Gorky's Zygotic Mynci** - How I Long To Feel Summer **£12.90**
- **The Strokes** - Is This It? **£12.90**
- **Stereolab** - Sound Dust **£TBC**
- **Various(Soul Jazz)** - Saturday Night Fish Fry 2LP **£14.90**
- **Who** - Quick One/Live At Leeds each **£19.90**

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RCA - SB - 2000/6000, VICS, SER
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Fax: 44 (0) 1635 524239

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PHONE FOR LATEST LIST
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product Description</th>
<th>RRP</th>
<th>SALE</th>
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<td>£799.00</td>
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<td>Arcam Alpha 8R Amp.</td>
<td>£350.00</td>
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<td>Arcam Alpha 7R Amp.</td>
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<td>£229.00</td>
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<td>Arcam Alpha 9P Pre. Amp.</td>
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<td>Acoustic Energy AE1 MKII</td>
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<td>Copeland CDA266</td>
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<td>Linn Kabet</td>
<td>£1,995.00</td>
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<td>Neat Mystique</td>
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<td>Cyrus SL Amp</td>
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<td>Audio Research VT50</td>
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<td>Audiolab 8000PX</td>
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<td>Rotel RX965RDS A/V receiver</td>
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<td>Sonus Faber grand piano (original)</td>
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<td>Tannoy Revolution R3 speakers</td>
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<td>Denon DVD5000</td>
<td>£1,500.00</td>
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<td>Meridian 500 Transport (mint)</td>
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<td>Meridian 502 Pre. Amp</td>
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<td>Meridian M33 Active speakers</td>
<td>£1,495.00</td>
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D = EX DEMONSTRATION, N = NEW, S/H = SECOND HAND

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Summer sale of ex.display and customers' equipment

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Product Description</th>
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<td>Micromega Stage 1 CD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quad 34/306/FM4</td>
<td>£750</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rotel RC980/RB980/RB980</td>
<td>£650</td>
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<td>Audio Analogue Donizetti Power</td>
<td>£475</td>
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<td>Audio Analogue Bellini Pre-amp</td>
<td>£395</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quad 99 Pre &amp; CD</td>
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<td>Rotel 951 CD. Ex.Disp.</td>
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<td>Quad 50e (pair)</td>
<td>£350</td>
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<td>Harman/Kardon KD720 CD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marantz CD63 II SE</td>
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<td>Linn Classik (silver,ex-dem)</td>
<td>£800</td>
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<td>Linn Sondek</td>
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<td>Michell Alecto Stereo</td>
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<td>Quad 44 pre-amp (mint condition)</td>
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<td>Quad 66 pre-amp</td>
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<td>Quad 66 CD</td>
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<td>Quad 988 speakers</td>
<td>£3000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michell Gyro SE with RB 300</td>
<td>£785</td>
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</table>

Stock constantly changing - many other offers
When Tim de Paravicini does a job, he does it properly. Whether it's putting together a turntable or a complete hi-fi system, he treats it like the EAR 834P! With years of experience in design and manufacturing, nobody can match the quality of his work. He always meets the highest quality standards.

Take a look at the EAR 834P. It is enclosed in a tough, rigid metal case and is fully CE type approved. The price is €380.00.

There are now four models in the EAR lineup:

- Sugden Warnes 8L6 Integrated/Pre-main amplifier
  - When Tim de Paravicini does a job, he does it properly. Whether it's putting together a turntable or a complete hi-fi system, he treats it like the EAR 834P! With years of experience in design and manufacturing, nobody can match the quality of his work. He always meets the quality standards. When Tim de Paravicini does a job, he does it properly. Whether it's putting together a turntable or a complete hi-fi system, he treats it like the EAR 834P! With years of experience in design and manufacturing, nobody can match the quality of his work. He always meets the quality standards.

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  - EFF-1S 3N OFC glass bedsides £89.99/pair
  - EFF-25 24K gold plated brass £115.99/pair
  - EFF-1XR XLR connectors £89.99/pair

- **Digital Cables (1m)**
  - TRICO 24K gold plated brass £39.99/pair
  - DAC-LCR 1018m OFC £64.99/pair

- **Fibre optic cables (1m)**
  - ZAC (Available in 3 versions: Toslink, TosLink, 3.5mm Toslink, or 3.5mm 3.0mm) £29.25/pair
  - X-ZAC (Xenon 3-2OFN) £99.99/pair

- **AV Cables (1m)**
  - Fully wired scart £39.99/pair
  - AV2 s-video £36.99/pair
  - AV3 Component £64.99/pair
  - AV6 phono £109.99/pair

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- www.custom-cable.co.uk

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*Example prices (in Black Ash):*

- Bookshelf/standmount M1 (bi-wire/bi-amp) £649.95p
- M1 Signature £1,179.95p
- Floorstanding speakers M2* (tri-wire/3 way) £999.95p
- M3 (tria-amp/5 way) £1,199.95p
- M3 Super £1,699.95p

*“M2 Recommended” Hi-Fi Choice*

If you need any more information or have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

**World Hi-Fi Radio History**

**October 2001**

**Page 103**
### Audio Equipment Listing

#### Audio Innovations 200 Pre/Power Amps
- **Orange Audiophile Preamp (4 yrs old was £1800 new)**
- **Cary AE-1 Preamp & Exposed Valves Very Pretty**
- **Audiovalve PPP45 Monoblocs Stunning Look 2x45 watts**
- **Audio Innovations Second Audio Monoblocs (684G) Superb Amps**
- **Technics SLP2000 Reference CD Superb MINT £575**
- **Marantz PM95 Digital Class A Reference Integrated Remote Etc (Was £2000)**
- **Nad C370 Remote Inegrated Amp (Very Highly Reviewed)**
- **Lincoln STRATO Preamp & 20 120 Watt Monoblocs MM/MC Etc (Very Rare/Good)**
- **Alchemy Freya Preamp 62 Genesis Monoblocs Extremely Rare Beautiful**
- **Audio Synthesis Passive Preamp Excellent Pre Black Marble Case**

#### tuner: creditcard payer £150
- **DEC 3000 Improved Headshell Fluid Damper**
- **Signet 9300 Turntable**
- **Quad 561 Turntable**
- **Phono Preamplifier**

#### Loudspeakers
- **Martin Logan Octave Extreme Upgrade Magnificent**
- **Tannoy Ardenel 10 Drivers Invisible**
- **Klipsh EoC 4 X 2 för Floorstanders**
- **Klipsch 200 Watt Powered Sub Awesome**
- **Audio Note Ainslie Silver Wired & Audiophile matching Heavy Stands**
- **Linus Dynamics 4 X 0.5 För Floorstanders**
- **TECHNICS SLP 2000 Reference CD Superb**
- **Audio Note Ainslie Silver Wired & Audiophile Matching Heavy Stands**
- **Marantz PM95 Digital Class A Reference Integrated Remote Etc (Was £2000)**
- **Newform 161 Hybrid Canadian Floorstanders (Bion Super Tweeter)**
- **Audiovalve PPP45 Monoblocks Stunning Look 2 x 45 WATTS**
- **Linus Dynamics 4 X 0.5 För Floorstanders**
- **Klipsh 200 Watt Powered Sub Awesome**

#### Digital
- **Audio Note Nero Power Amp**
- **Audio Research 0200 Power Amp**
- **Audio Note Nero Power Amp**
- **Teac VRDS9 CD Player (mini)**
- **Rogers 6404 Integrated Amplifier with Phono-stage (New)**
- **Meremega Leader CD Player**
- **Rolex BX965 CD Player**

#### Cables: Loudspeaker/Interconnect/Digital
- **Audiovalve PPP45 Monoblocks Stunning Look 2 x 45 WATTS**
- **Linus Dynamics 4 X 0.5 För Floorstanders**
- **Klipsh 200 Watt Powered Sub Awesome**
- **Audio Note Ainslie Silver Wired & Audiophile Matching Heavy Stands**
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- **Linus Dynamics 4 X 0.5 För Floorstanders**
- **Klipsh 200 Watt Powered Sub Awesome**

#### Speakers
- **Apogee 775 Tenen 2995**
- **Apogee 775 CO Player**
- **Apogee 775 Preamp**
- **Apogee System**

#### Vinyl
- **1/11CRC.AEGA SOLO CI AS.4C DATADIALCG TRANSPORT & DAC 23 YEARS OLD VERY HIGH END SOUN**
- **Audio Note CMS4 (Was £400)**

### Heathcote Audio
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- Panasonic DMP-BD50 Region 2: £400 £320
- Pioneer DVR-205D multi-region: £500 £200
- Sony DVP-533EC multi region: £470 £330
- Toshiba SD1000EBAS multi region: £250 £210
- Toshiba SD2000EBAS multi region: £350 £300
- Yamaha DVD-595 Region 2: £550 £475

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- Denon AVR2300: £600 £369
- Denon AVR1801: £400 £330
- Denon AVR601: £650 £475
- Roksan DSP Processor Mk1: £1700 £900
- Roksan 5 Channel Power Amplifier Mk1: £1000 £600

**Loudspeakers**
- Acoustic Energy Aegis Two: £700 £150
- Acoustic Energy Aegis Three: £500 £230
- Ruark Epilogue Ref: £400 £300
- Ruark Prelude Ref: £775 £650
- Ruark Dialogue One Ref: £380 £280

**CD Players**
- Denon DCD435: £130 £39
- Roksan Caspian Mk1: £695 £915

**Miscellaneous**
- Denon DG1 System: £400 £250
- Linn Classik System Mk1: £1000 £1100
- QED MusiQ RFS: £1000 £700
- Marantz RC5000 System Remote: £300 £230
- Marantz RC2000 System Remote: £150 £100

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- £450 £280
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- £350 £300
- £350 £280
- £350 £300
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Sale of Ex-Demo & P/E equipment
Ex-demo (s) or P/E Approx New price Sale price

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equipment</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ruark Solstice Reference monitors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Triangle ZAYS (91db) black/walnut</td>
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<td>£1200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Castle Howard MKII (cherry, as new)</td>
<td>P/E</td>
<td>1100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jamo 507's (black)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>750</td>
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<tr>
<td>Linn Sondek/Lingo/Mission Mechanic/ Klesk Blu (V.D. Hul new)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oracle Delphi MkII/Renga 250(+1)</td>
<td>P/E</td>
<td>1500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sony VPH 100Q CRT projector</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davis Home Cinema 1 (DLP)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>4200</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATC SCM 40S (black)</td>
<td>P/E</td>
<td>2050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATC SCA 2/SPA2-150 pre/power</td>
<td>P/E</td>
<td>6800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note: offers on the above may be considered)

New Speaker's

I have probably referred previously to the new AVI PRO-NINE's, the latest addition to AVI's range of loudspeakers. However much I may love them, it's nice to see such an excellent review in HI-FI NEWS, confirming what we already know. That makes 5 speakers in this range, namely the NU-NEUTRON III, the BIGATRON, the PRO-NINES, the POSITRON (floor stander) and their flagship 'GRAVITRON'. All are excellent musical speakers, well worth auditioning. Also worth mentioning is the excellent value ATC SCM-10A-2, an active speaker at £999 a pair, in aluminium cabinet, and the Opera SP1 at £500 in real wood, as always a joy to behold.

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TANNOY ti 15

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I M P I J L S F H7

Audiolab 8000C late black pre, excellent

TOWNSEND GLASTONBURY'S Mk I serious speaker

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YAMAHA F2200 professional series power amp 200 watts per channel

**AV1 20 bit dac**

**THRESHOLD 5303 monster power amp 303 watts**

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**MICHEL ISO/HERA mc phonostage**

**MICHEL ISO mc phonostage**

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**THRESHOLD 5303 monster power amp 303 watts**

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LINN Kolumn, cherry condition but clean.

ORIGIN LIVE RESOLUTION with stands

DAP DSP005 pre amp, line only

LINN UX1/UX10 remote pre

MARK LEVINSON ML2 pre, with phono

PINK TRIANGLE PIP TVO with battery psp

SOUND DESIGN line level valve pre

CARDAS QUAD LINK 5-C, 1.5M blue interconnect

NEW EQUIPMENT available for Home Demo

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PINK TRIANGLE PIP TVO with battery psp

SOUND DESIGN line level valve pre

CARDAS QUAD LINK 5-C, 1.5M blue interconnect

NEW EQUIPMENT available for Home Demo

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contact Nick on 01379 650744 or Ellis on 07931 184216 or email: emporium@dircon.co.uk
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>THETA CASANOVA SILVER DTSNSC AS NEW</td>
<td>£3995 SH</td>
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<tr>
<td>PATHOS ACOUSTICS TWIN TOWERS AMPLIFIER</td>
<td>£2495 SH</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAIM 72 PREAMP</td>
<td>£495 XD</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAIM 90.3 POWER AMP</td>
<td>£395 SH</td>
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<tr>
<td>AUDIO RESEARCH VT50 POWER AMP</td>
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<td>KRELL KAV3001 AMPLIFIER</td>
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<td>KRELL 300CD</td>
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<td>MARANTZ DVD890 DVD PLAYER</td>
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<td>PIONEER AV908 A/V AMPLIFIER</td>
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<tr>
<td>ONKYO DR90 DVD/AV AMP</td>
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<td>KRELL 250P PREAMPLIFIER</td>
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<td>KRELL 250A POWER AMPLIFIER</td>
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<td>MARANTZ DVD DUAL PLAYER</td>
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<td>PROAC TABLETTE 50 WALNUT + TARGET STANDS</td>
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<td>NEAT MYSTIQUE CHERRY</td>
<td>£750 250</td>
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<td>NHT 2.51 SPEAKERS</td>
<td>£1400 595</td>
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<td>EQUATION 2 SPEAKERS</td>
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<tr>
<td>PATHOS ACoustics TWIN-TOWERS AMPLIFIER</td>
<td>£2495 SH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNISON RESEARCH SMART 854 - our demonstrators</td>
<td>£1995 XD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Linn Kaimono Phono-ampl £999
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Linn Axis turntable £250
Linn AVS105 power amp £899
Linn Keiichl speakers £500
Linn Musical Fidelity XRay CD £699

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#### CD Players

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<tr>
<td>NAD C540</td>
<td>£279</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marantz CD42</td>
<td>£59</td>
<td>£160</td>
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<td>Marantz CD63</td>
<td>£69</td>
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<td>Sony CDP591</td>
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<td>Sony CDPXE220</td>
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#### Amps

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<tr>
<td>Meridian 201 pre</td>
<td>£395</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meridian 205 monoblocs</td>
<td>£795</td>
<td>£1600</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAD 3020A</td>
<td>£95</td>
<td>£150</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAD 312</td>
<td>£179</td>
<td>£229</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pioneer VSA303</td>
<td>£249</td>
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#### Speakers

<table>
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<tr>
<td>TDL T-Line 2's Rosewood</td>
<td>£399</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kef Cresta 3's cherry</td>
<td>£229</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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For a limited period, the stunning, much loved and highly reviewed Harbeth Compact Seven loudspeakers are being offered with FREE Something Solid stands throughout. Boxed and unmarked.

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**Hi-Fi World October 2001 Page 111**
### Hi-Fi World

**Mana Five Tier Soundstyle five shelf silver/glass**

**Totem Model One**

**NAD 1550 DVD player** - (regions 1 and 2)

**NAD 535 turntable**

**MISCELLANEOUS**

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- **Neat Petite HI (rose)**
- **Neat Mystique II (cherry)**
- **Naim SBL walnut**
- **Monitor Audio Silver 3i**
- **Living Voice Auditorium (walnut)**
- **AVI Neutron Ill**
- **Audio Physic Step**
- **Acoustic Energy AE100**
- **Heybrook HB3 beech**
- **Living Voice Auditorium (walnut)**
- **Monitor Audio Silver 3i**
- **Neat SPL22 (black)**
- **Totem Model One**

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- **DCM 5000**
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- **DCM 7000**
- **DCM 8000**
- **DCM 9000**
- **DCM 10000**

**USED EQUIPMENT**

- **NAD 1550 DVD player**
- **NAD 535 turntable**
- **Spendor SP2/2**
- **Opera Platea**
- **Neat Petite HI**
- **Neat Mystique II**
- **Naim SBL walnut**
- **Monitor Audio Silver 3i**
- **Living Voice Auditorium (walnut)**
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- **Heybrook HB3 beech**
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- **NAD C300 integrated**
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- **Crimson 610 preamp**
- **Audio Analogue Donizetti**
- **Audio Analogue Bellini/Donizetti**
- **LFD Mistral pre amp**
- **NAD Silver S500**
- **NAD C521**
- **Myryad 110**
- **CO PLAYERS**
- **Exposure 2010 (as new)**
- **ON DEMO**
- **VERITAS P400 DIGITAL POWER AMP**
- **MC Gold**
- **tau Micro of Swirland**
- **Stenheim 115-1 Speakers**
- **Zephyr X5**
- **Glider X5**
- **Vents Comet Tints XS**
- **Triangle kudspeaken**
- **Calko Gold ON DEMO**
- **Super Pgmorotti ON DEMO**
- **Opera Speakers**
- **Series VC**
- **Onyx SC NEW•ON DEMO**
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### Contact Information

- **E-Mail:** audio@connoisseur.co.uk
- **Website:** www.connoisseuraudio.co.uk
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- NAIM CDX CD player, Mint. Boxed. £650.
- NAIM 72 Pre amp, Latest casework. Mint. Boxed. £P0A.
- NAIM HCDG. Latest casework. Mint. Boxed. £POA.
- NAIM SBD loudspeakers. Black, (suitable to latest specification. Mint. POA)
- TUBEC TECHNOLOGY Fusion valve CD player with digital interconnect. £POA.
- CHORD system remote. New. £175.
- NAIM SBL loudspeakers. Black. Just upgraded to latest specification. Mint. £P0A.
- NAIM 90 Pre amp. Latest casework. Mint. Boxed. £P0A.
- NAIM CD3 CD player. Mint. Boxed. £P0A.
- LINN LP12 (Rosewood) £1300/Display £1500. Mint. Boxed. £P0A.
- CHORD SCD 2200 power amp. Black. Less than 6 months old. £1500 new. £1295.
- CHORD system remote. New. £175.
- CHORD SCD 2200 power amp. Black. Less than 6 months old. £1500 new. £1295.
- CHORD system remote. New. £175.
- CHORD SCD 2200 power amp. Black. Less than 6 months old. £1500 new. £1295.
- CHORD system remote. New. £175.
- CHORD SCD 2200 power amp. Black. Less than 6 months old. £1500 new. £1295.
- CHORD system remote. New. £175.
- CHORD SCD 2200 power amp. Black. Less than 6 months old. £1500 new. £1295.
- CHORD system remote. New. £175.
- CHORD SCD 2200 power amp. Black. Less than 6 months old. £1500 new. £1295.
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NAIM 90.3 POWER AMP £395 SH
NAIM SBL BLACK EX DEM PASSIVE £1495 XD
REGA PLANAR 3 £175 SH
NAIM SBL BLACK EX DEM PASSIVE £1495 XD
NAIM 90.3 POWER AMP £395 SH
NAIM 72 PREAMP £495 XD
THETA CASANOVA SILVER DTS NSC AS NEW £3995 SH
PATRIO ACOUSTICS TWIN TOWERS AMPLIFIER £2945 SH
UNISON RESEARCH SMART 845 - our demonstrator.

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MICHEL MYCRO WITHOUT ARM £295 SH
AUDIOLAB 8000P POWER AMP £945 SH
COPLAN DCA288 £795 SH
TEAC P90 CD TRANSPORT £795 SH
LOUWE PLANUS 32 WITH CABINET ARCTIC EX DEM £1350 XD
PINK TRIANGLE LPI TURNTABLE £395 XD
KRELL KF100 POWER AMPLIFIER £7495 SH
PRO AC TABLETTE 50 CHERRY £395 SH
NAIM 180 POWER AMPLIFIER £695 SH
COPLAN CA S 8 POWER AMPLIFIER £5495 SH
ARCAT 260i POWER AMP £2645 SH
ONKYO 1/10000 POWER AMP £5990 XD
KRELL KAV 100 AS NEW £2995 SH
KRELL 250A POWER AMPLIFIER £2695 XD
KRELL 300B 3000W £2945 SH
PIONEER AMOS AV AMPLIFIER £999 XD
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KRELL 3000 INT INTEGRATED £2945 SH
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**Hi-Fi WORLD OCTOBER 2001 PAGE 117**
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<tr>
<td>PRECIOUS METALS SILVER COPPERTECH 102 SIGNAL</td>
<td>£110.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>PROJECT 2.9 RECORD DECK WITH ORTOFON CART. CHERRY</td>
<td>£399.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>QED PASSIVE CD PRE AMP ALPS POT.</td>
<td>£65.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>ROGERS CADET III VGC</td>
<td>£150.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>ROTHWELL INDUS PASSIVE PRE AMP STEPPED CONT</td>
<td>£799.00</td>
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<td>ROTHWELL RUBICON POWER VALVE AMP</td>
<td>£799.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>SONY MDS-JE30D MINI DISK PLAYER-N9 REMOTE</td>
<td>£120.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOUND ORGANISATION RACK - SILVER 4 SHELVES 40% OFF</td>
<td>£120.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOUND STYLE XS RACK - ICE BLUE GLASS - 5 SHELVES</td>
<td>£299.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>TANNOY MONITOR RED 10&quot; DRIVER + XOVER - MINT</td>
<td>£100.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>TEAC A3300-12 REEL TAPE DECK</td>
<td>£160.00</td>
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<td>TRIPPLETONE MONO BLOCKS PR</td>
<td>£100.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>TRIPPLETONE STEREO INTEGRATED</td>
<td>£95.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNISON RESEARCH SMART 845 MONO BLOCS - MINT</td>
<td>£1,699.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>WARDALE 415 BOOKSHELF SPEAKERS</td>
<td>£85.00</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Was Price</th>
<th>Now Price</th>
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<tr>
<td>Alchemist Nexus CD</td>
<td>£599</td>
<td>£480</td>
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<tr>
<td>Atacama Audio Rack 6 shelf</td>
<td>£1,699</td>
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<tr>
<td>Atacama Speaker Stands</td>
<td>£279</td>
<td>£235</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creek 4330 integrated</td>
<td>£795</td>
<td>£650</td>
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<tr>
<td>DPA Enlightenment Pre amp</td>
<td>£825</td>
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<tr>
<td>DPA Enlightenment DAC</td>
<td>£995</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exposure 21 Pre amp</td>
<td>£1,100</td>
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<td>Exposure 18 Power amp</td>
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<td>Exposure 25 integrated</td>
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<td>JM Lab Tantal 515</td>
<td>£499</td>
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<td>JM Lab Cobalt 810</td>
<td>£799</td>
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<td>JM Lab Electra 905</td>
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<td>Linn Numerik DAC</td>
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<td>Linn LK100 Power amp</td>
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<td>Linn Wakonda Pre amp</td>
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<tr>
<td>Magnet Needle floorstander</td>
<td>£479</td>
<td>£300</td>
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<tr>
<td>Magnet Vector 55 floorstander</td>
<td>£299</td>
<td>£225</td>
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<td>Magnet S1 sub and satellite</td>
<td>£249</td>
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<td>Micromega Sage 4 CD</td>
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<td>Mordant Short MS 301</td>
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<td>NAD 310 integrated</td>
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<td>Neat Petite cherry</td>
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<td>Rogers LS4a</td>
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<td>Sonnetteer Byron CD</td>
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<td>Sonnetteer Alabaster integrated</td>
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<td>Sonnetteer Campion integrated</td>
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<td>TDL RTL 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trichord Revelation CD</td>
<td>£800</td>
<td>£575</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yamaha DSP E492 Processor</td>
<td>£175</td>
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"this Vinyl front end had my jaw heading towards the floor with the solidity and transparency of the music it was making"...

The standard came up with crystal clear images set in a broad sound stage"... "With all these goodies in place, the standard would give turntables at the £1200-£1400 mark a hard time."

HI-FI WORLD SUPPLEMENT

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The Original blue ‘n white

We lead; the others follow! In 1995 AudioSource launched the first high-end interconnect at mid-fi prices. Those who heard, believed, and spread the word. Now we have so many Scottish copies, we are flattered. Unfortunately, they rely on the same expensive dealer network. They also lack the expertise and enthusiasm of our design team of three. Six years of painstaking professional (but unpaid) development work on three Petros interconnects have culminated in the latest Stratos Series III.

The result is to experience sonic quality delivered from your existing components - the justification for highly priced cables, but in our case the reason for a relatively inexpensive interconnect. From 1997 we provocatively advertised: "Try an £800 interconnect in your system and keep it for only £125" for that is the price of our one metre flagship model. Today we still invite comparisons with the most expensive and acclaimed cables. There are good reasons detailed in our literature and the forthcoming website because AudioSource is now selling internationally, exclusively distributed by The Audio Salon, direct to the user. The provocative valuation of our audio interconnect at more than five times our price point, incidentally, was suggested and subsequently supported by our customers.

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Univalved transport, elusive, peerless build

Audio Note DAC-4.1x Sig
A/S (Onogakou) silver fabric, revised RF transformers

Marantz CD67SE
Second-hand but mint condition

Mark Levinson No 39 CD Processor
Recently serviced. Five year warranty

Mark Levinson 31.5 CD Transport
Hi-res from the universal format. sold by us new

Mark Levinson 30.6 DAC+PLS-330 PSU
£16495 £8,995

Perpetual Technology P1-A Upsampler
With JPS SC 2 digital lead

Amplifiers
ATC SCA2/phonon/ Billet Remote
Back on market as owner keeps deciding to keep it!

Audio Note Kegon
One of only seven made; this is the real Kegon
Revalved inc. 2 matched pairs Western Electric 300B

Audio Note Quests with Border Patrol PSU
Solid 300B monoblock amps supplied by us. One careful user, buying Diavolo. Priced for quick sale.

Bow Technologies Wazoo XL
Ex-dem. gem

Conrad-johnson Premier 14 Pre-amp
£4,495 £1,995

Conrad-johnson Premier 15 PhonoStage
£3,995 £2,195

Mark Levinson No 380 pre-amp
£3,995 £2,600

Mark Levinson No 334 amp 125wpc
£5,495 £3,750

SJS Arcadia 26 wpc SET
British built "Kegon" using 2x MP, JY12B
Copper chassis, silver wired, superb

Loudspeakers
Acoustic Energy A120
£999 £250

Audio Note K/D with own stands
Ideal match and performance for valves

£809 £450

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

Established 1979 as The Music Room, Four demo rooms. By appointment please.
TRANSPARENT ULTRA bi-wire speaker cable 12ft £1100 (£3400). Elemental Audio Modular Reference equipment stands special pewter finish, half price £800 (£1600). Two stands of four shelves available. Tel: 01797 253 073 (Oct(I)

THIEL CS3.6 speakers, one of the world's best! Mint condition + boxes in 'Amberwood', 3 yrs old, current model. £2895 (5k new) see www.theaudio.com for info. Tel: 07881 550 627 or Email: Pk67@btinternet.com (Oct(I)

TANNY BERKELYS 15 inch dual concentric £750 or offers. Tel Jim 020 8805 5313 days or evenings up to 10pm (Oct(I)

MUSICAL FIDELITY A3-CR Power Amplifiers x 2, as new, boxed, instructions etc. £675.00 each - can deliver. Ruark Prologues Ref 1, Cherry Veneer, brand new boxed, £750.00. Tel: home 01622 721 011 / mobile 07973 899 651. (Dec(I)

RUARK EQUINOX Loudspeakers, walnut veneer, unmarked, absolutely mint condition, boxed, lovely sounding hi-end loudspeakers, Stereophile recommended, £2000 new, £1150 ono. Tel: 01224 211 203, 0794 136 8479 (Oct(I)

300B HOLIDAY without your music! Two holiday cottages in spectacular position, off coastal path in South Cornwall. Quality music system based on our own design 300B/EL34 SE amplifiers with CD/tuner input. Available from the Autumn. Sea views, indoor pool, log fires, central heating, all year. Contact Martin and Fiona Niccole 07000 423 000 (Oct(I)

LEAK FM Troughline 3 mono tuner, Radford FM7 stereo tuner, Quad FM3 stereo tuner, Quad 33 Meridian p/amp also Sansui 253 stereo tuner, Quad NF7 mono tuner, Radford FM7 mono tuner, Radford FM7 mono tuner, Radford FM7 mono tuner, Radford FM7 mono tuner, Radford FM7 (Greater Manchester) (Oct(I)

B & W NAUTILUS 801 loudspeakers for sale, £6000, 2 months old, as new, not even run in, boxed with manuals, including free delivery. Tel: 00353 509 35469 or 00353 86 819 6711 (Oct(I)

MUSICAL FIDELITY F16 poweramp. 200wpc (switchable class A). Excellent condition. Boxed. £900 (£2500). Tel: 01759 373 133 (Oct(I)

TANNOY EXCALIBERS (Black Piano Lacquer) five months old £5,995.00 . Sony SCD-777ES (SACD Player) £1,200.00 . Tag Maclaren T32R Analogue Tuner (Silver) £850.00 . Kef Reference 104/2 (Walnut) £475.00 . Technics SCM-100 Power Amp and SU-A40 pre £300.00 . All are mint with their boxes / manuals etc. Tel: 01622 721 011 or 07973 899 651. (Dec(I)
WE MAY HAVE MOVED * WE MAY HAVE MOVED * WE MAY HAVE MOVED

*WE MAY HAVE MOVED* SEE ABOVE FOR NEW ADDRESS

**VALVE Amps**

- AUDIO INNOVATIONS 500 integrated with phono: 1000 500
- AUDIO NOTE 970 SE with phono: 1200 750
- AUDIO NOTE QEST MONOBLOCKS (single ended 300b): 1500 1000
- AUDIO RESEARCH LS15 line-level preamplifier from mint and boxed with remote: 1500 1000
- AUDIO RESEARCH 899 pre: 1500 1000
- AUDIO RESEARCH PHIL phonostage: 1500 1000
- AUDIO RESEARCH VH750 power amp: 1500 1000
- AUDIO SILVER NIGHTS 300b push pull punchy 17 watts: 1800 1200
- AUDION RESEARCH VT60 power amp: 1800 1200
- AUDION RESEARCH PHI phono stage: 1800 1200
- AUDION RESEARCH LS15 line-level preamplifier from mint and boxed: 1800 1200
- EAR BMK phonostage: 1800 1200
- QUICKSILVER LINE PREAMP: 1800 1200
- ROGUE AUDIO 95 pre amp with phono and sep psu: 1800 1200
- UNISON RESEARCH simply 4: 1800 1200
- ALON 11 open baffle mid and top, 10" bass: 1800 1200
- EAR BMK phonostage: 1800 1200
- ECHOSILVER NIGHTS 300b push pull punchy 17 watts: 1800 1200
- AUDION RESEARCH CD3AQ: 1800 1200
- CYRUS DISCMASTER/DACMASTER: 1800 1200
- CYRUS CD3AQ: 1800 1200
- KRELL DSP: 1800 1200
- LINN KARL UPGRADED TO BRILLIANT PSU: 1800 1200
- MARK LEVINSON ML 3.5 reference transport - what can I say WOW: 1800 1200
- MARANTZ CD6000 cse boxed as new: 1800 1200
- MERIDIAN 3090i update: 1800 1200
- KAGAMICHI DRAGON CD AND DAC another set: 1800 1200
- ROTEI RCD 980/980 transport, boxed: 1800 1200
- STAX QUARTO II ct player: 1800 1200
- TURNTABLES, ARMS & CARTRIDGES
- HEYBEYK Book TT/UNIH ITTOK: 1800 1200
- UNIH TROK A rebuilt by cartridge man: 1800 1200
- LINN LP12 4 arm 1215 cartridge: 1800 1200
- LINN LP12 valve/ttlcock: 1800 1200
- LINN ITTOK LSI: 1800 1200
- LINN LP12 c valve/ttlcock: 1800 1200
- MICHEL GYRODECK (black acrylic): 1800 1200
- MICHEL GYRODECK with QSC psu: 1800 1200
- MICHEL ORBE as new: 1800 1200
- MICHEL OPEN PHONES: 1800 1200
- VINTAGE PHONES (MC): 1800 1200
- ORTOFON ROHMANN mc cartridge 1 owner boxed: 1800 1200
- PINK TRIANGLE PT TOO with sime 309: 1800 1200
- PINK TRIANGLE LITTLE PINK THING, m250: 1800 1200
- REGA PLANAR 3 arm with: 1800 1200
- REGA PLANAR 2 arm with: 1800 1200
- ROCK TURNTABLE with Exciters, original model with hydroplan: 1800 1200
- SUMIKO BLUE POINT SPECIAL high output mc cartridge boxed: 1800 1200

**LOUDSPKERS**

- ALOIN 1/2 open baffle mid and top, 10' bass: 1800 1200
- AUDIOPHILE active subwoofer AS USED WITH QUAD ES: 1800 1200
- B&W DM14: 1800 1200
- B&W CD 7SE floorstanders boxed: 1800 1200
- CADENCE ARCA recently upgraded to latest spec: 1800 1200
- CASTLE STORM 1/3 way stand mounters: 1800 1200
- CASTLE SKY 1/3 way stand mounted: 1800 1200
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- MARTIN LOGAN SEQUELS upgraded with sani panels: 1800 1200
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- Proac SUPER TABLETTES: 1800 1200
- PROAC RESPONSE 2 with stands: 1800 1200
- RUAHR CRUSADERS boxed: 1800 1200
- SONUS FABER ELECTAAMATOR 11 with stands: 1800 1200
- TOWNSEND GLASTONBURY MK1 serious speaker: 1800 1200
- TANNOY H 15: 1800 1200
- TANNOY DECOD: 1800 1200
- TOWNSEND GLASTONBURY mk1 serious speaker: 1800 1200
- TRANSPORTER Amps
- AUDIOLAB 8000C late black pre, excellent: 1800 1200
- BARTOLINI/si 140 Italian integrated amp: 1800 1200
- BOTE 1801 monitor 250watts per channel with vu meters and vol control: 1800 1200
- BRITISH 2550 preamp with phono: 1800 1200
- CRIMSON 610625C pre/power: 1800 1200
- CRIMSON 620 stereo power amp older version: 1800 1200
- CYRUS PMkII power/power: 1800 1200
- CYRUS 5.5 X acoustic power supply 3 available each: 1500 1200
- CYRUS HOMI 304A power amplifier: 1500 1200
- EXPOSURE 100se pre/power: 1500 1200
- EXPOSURE 200se pre/power: 1500 1200
- GOERTZ 681/2 veracity with kimber plugs: 1500 1200
- HMA “The Beastie” 211 SINGLE ENDED POWER AMP: 1500 1200

**CD & DACS**

- HIFI HAND BUILT COMPONENTS
- A serious loudspeaker with startling dynamics - Alnico magnet Vitavox drivers used with traxtix mid / bass horn to give seamless integration with the pressure unit. It is large but designed to work in room corners retail £6000.

**NEW EQUIPMENT** available for home demo

- “HBC HAND BUILT COMPONENTS” SINGLE ENDED AMPLIFIERS AND HORN LOADED LOUDSPEAKERS introducing exciting new products

**SEPTEMBER CLEARING OUT SALE**

- SOUN DESIGN line level valve pre: 150 150
- CELLO SERRAIF active speakers: 1500 1000
- HALE TRANSIENDENCE 3 boxed/cherry 3 way: 1500 1000
- KLYSPI BELIES: 1500 1000
- LINN Speakers Only include, made but cheap, brand new: 1500 1000
- ORIGION LIVE RESOLUTION with stands: 1500 1000
- DPA DSP8005 pre amp, line only: 1500 1000
- LINN LK 1/130 remote pre: 1500 1000
- LINN MINX boxed integrated amp, remote: 1500 1000
- MARK LEVINSON ML 1/2 pre, with phono: 1500 1000
- NAJM 90 1m line style: 1500 1000
- PINK TRIANGLE PT TOO with battery psu: 1500 1000
- QUINTESSENTIAL PHONO 2 POWER: 1500 1000
- ROCKPORT 6000 airbearing arm: 1500 1000

**NEW EQUIPMENT** available for Home demo

- DISTRIBUTORS for HMA “The Beastie” 211 SINGLE ENDED POWER AMP from £1500
- AUDIONOTE ZERO SYSTEM LAVARDN IT AMPLIFIER LAVANDR LAMPAVER

**THE BEASTIE** and THE BLACK BEASTIE 18 watts of pure single ended triode power, with zero feedback, retail price £1650 extremely open and clear sound with punchy bass But performs many more expensive amps - these amps contain no circuit boards but are completely hard wired to ensure a long operating life. The valves are good for 10,000 hours and selected quality components are used for the sound quality including oscicon capacitors and silver cable.

**THE EMPORHORN**

- A serious loudspeaker with startling dynamics - Alnico magnet Vitavox drivers used with traxtix mid / bass horn to give seamless integration with the pressure unit. It is large but designed to work in room corners retail £6000.

**DEALER ENQUIRIES WELCOME**

- contact Nick on 01379 650744 or Ellis on 07931 184216 or email: emporium@dircon.co.uk www.emporium.dircon.co.uk

- WORLD RADIO HISTORY

- PAGE 122 OCTOBER 2001 HI-FI WORLD
UNISON RESEARCH 300B monoblocks set, new and boxed plus warranty £2600 (£4250), N-T-W, Six KT88 valves 2-G-Lion £125 lot. Nikkon FM tuner £50. N-T-W please. Tel: 01562 827 710 (Oct(I)


PLINIUS PRE/POWER. Preamp M16 with phono stage. £1200 (£3600). Power amp SA 250/4. Class A 250 watts, as new. Top reviews in UK & US, warranty £3500 (£6000). Tel: 01527 401 954, 07831 095680 (Redditch) (Oct(I)

INTERCONNECTS. TWO pairs of Transparent Audio Music Link Plus (£240 each) for £150 each. One pair of Transparent Audio Music Link 100 (£130) for £75. Speaker cables – Nordost Super Flatline – 4 metre pair bi-wire (£220) for £140. Tel: Demetris 020 7711 0426 work, 020 8886 2699 home (Oct(I)

AVI MEGATRONS. Amazing 3 way speakers 2 x 10" bass per side, mid and top separate box's, cherry finish. Move forces sale. 1 year old. Over £4000 new. £2200 ono. Tel: 07980 211 447 home 020 7439 1365 (Nov(I)

B & W SILVER Signatures. B & W serviced, original stands, excellent £2100 (£5000). Sonus Faber Electa Amator 2 marble/wood £3000+. Roger Subs for LS5A. £250. Tel: 01527 401954, 07831 095680 Redditch (Oct (I)

MUSICAL FIDELITY A3CR power amp mint boxed £600. Arcam CD72 mint, boxed £250. Marantz CD600KIS sealed box unused £325. Unison Research Simply Two integrated amp, mint £450. Tel: David 01491 572 684 days (Oct(I)

MICHELL GYRODEC, QCC power supply, updated springs, demounted motor. Rega RB300, OL counter-weight, incognito wiring, height adjuster, excellent £1100 ono. Tel: Malcolm Lee 01274 582 266 (daytime) 0161 284 8651 (evening) (Oct(I)

QUAD 405 MkI power amp £195. Bush Bakelite valve radio working £49, old Pioneer analogue silver tuner immaculate £10. Furakawa interconnect cost £100, bargain £20. Tel: 01480 353 649, Email: david.gkelly@ntlworld.com (Cambs) (Oct(I)

LINFOS BARUKS. Pentultimate model 7699 7700. black, exceptional condition £695. Will demonstrate. Tel: 01484 841 482 (Yorks) (Oct(I)

78'S AND RECORD PLAYER. Treasure trove of 300-350 78's and LP's. Mostly classical 78's, some LP's – Gilbert & Sullivan, Flanders & Swann etc. Record player is a Van Der Molen PU 508T. Plays all speeds. Offers invited. Tel: Penelope Hawkes 01989 750 615 (Herefordshire) (Oct(I)

KIMBER H.C. Powerkord (Hubbell), ideal for M.F. Nu-Vista £70. Audio Synthesis 3 metre, silver blue interconnect £60. Denon TU260L tuner £40. Tel: 01296 437 314 (Aylesbury, Bucks) (Oct(I)

PRIMARE A30.1 100W integrated amplifier with remote. Boxed excellent condition. Upgrade forces sale, hence only £950 ono. Tel: Richard 020 7281 3297 (Oct(I)

MONOLITH 20/20, 3 metre pair £100. Sonic Link AST 200 bi-wire, 7 foot pair £100. 2 tier Mana Soundframe £190, Soundstage £20. 3 metre AT + T digital £60. Tel: 01296 437 314 (Aylesbury, Bucks) (Oct(I)

PHILIPS 16-BIT CD player circa 1987–1989 or Philips TDA 1541 chip not TDA 1541A or Magnavox CD8473 wanted. Please help. Tel: 01509 215 230 ask for Mike or leave message (Oct(I)

GAMMA ACOUSTICS Aecon MKII silver 211/VT4C single ended monoblocks / line power amplifiers as new, awesome! £1250 (£4999). Rhythm integrated exquisit ex 211's £700 (£2499). epoch Ref V Mk III loudspeakers stunning £900 (£3000). Gemini integrated £200 (£659). Tel: 07980 676071 (Oct(I)

B + O HI-FI speakers. Brand new in the box, never been used. Worth £3800 for sale £3000. Tel: 07811 656 429 Email: philjoness11@hotmail.com (Oct(I)

MUSICAL FIDELITY 16-bit CD player £250 ono. System Audio MI 120 integrated amplifier (£2000) ono. 2 pair MI120 integrated amplifiers (£3000). Cary SLP50 preamplifier, include stepped attenuator option and oil capacitors £299. Nairn N- 1000. black, exceptional condition £399. Tel: 01484 841 482 (Oct(I)

MUSICAL FIDELITY Simply Two integrated amp, mint £450. Tel: David 01491 572 684 days (Oct(I)

AVI MEGATRONS. Amazing 3 way speakers 2 x 10" bass per side, mid and top separate box's, cherry finish. Move forces sale. 1 year old. Over £4000 new. £2200 ono. Tel: 07980 211 447 home 020 7439 1365 (Nov(I)

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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Was</th>
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<td>CD Players &amp; DAC's</td>
<td>Accuphase DG28 Digital Equaliser S/H</td>
<td>5600</td>
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<td>Audio Analogue Paganini 24/96 CD Player S/H</td>
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<td>Audio Note CD2/ Border Patrol PSU Fitted S/H</td>
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<td>Naim Audio CDIXFS 2 Box CD Player S/H</td>
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<td>Micromega Data/Dialog 2 Box CD Player S/H</td>
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<td>Quad 77CD+77 Integrated i-bus system S/H</td>
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<td>Wadia 860x Silver CD Player S/H</td>
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<td>Turntables Tonearms &amp; Cartridges</td>
<td>Audio Note ANS-2 MC Transformer Ex-demo</td>
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<td>Audio Note Zero RIAA Phono Stage Ex-Demo</td>
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<td>Infinity Outrigger jr Outdoor Speakers (New&amp;Boxed)</td>
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<th>Clearance Items Under £100</th>
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<td>Rega 2 Tier Modular Stand Ex Demo</td>
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<td>Roksan HA01 1M Interconnect S/H</td>
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<td>Shaiki Stone (new &amp; boxed)</td>
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<th>Item Description</th>
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<td>Leak Stereo Troughline MK3 Tuner S/H</td>
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<td>Finite Elemente</td>
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www.midlandaudiox-change.co.uk

Midland Audio X-change are looking for Audio Research, Krell, Mark Levinson, Naim Audio, Theta, cash paid call John Roberts on 01562 822236 now!

Midland Audio X-change is looking for Krell, Mark Levinson, Naim Audio, Theta, cash paid call John Roberts on 01562 822236!
SUGDEN CD master 3 months old mint, boxed (£1250) £850 ono. Yamaha NS 1000 monitors, excellent, original condition £695. Ecosse Reference speaker cable 2 x 5 metres £85. Atacama stands R724 £45. Electrofluidics interconnects £25. Tel: 020 8952 2044 (Oct(I))

LEAK STEREO 20 amp rebuilt excellent £250. Border Patrol PSU £380. Rogers HG88 power amp £70. Apollo pillar stands 25" high £25. Tel: 0113 256 5915 (Oct(I))

WANTED CHORD pre amp must be black, prefer remote control. For sale Quad FM4 phono grey £195. Roksan DA1 D.A.C. mint boxed £200. Tel: 01909 518 131 answerphone (Oct(I))

EXPOSURE 19/18 pre power amplifier. Boxed, good condition, £999, will not split. You'd be hard pushed to find an amplifier as good as this. Tel: 07973 218 787 Email: james@storetellers.ltd.uk (Oct(I))

AUDIOLAB 8000 Q preamp pair 8000M monoblocks £1350. Lynwood mains condition £175. SX SoniLink mains leads £45 each. Chord Chorus interconnect 1m £110. 0.5m £75 all mint. Tel: 0115 964 1033 or 01623 752 036 (Oct(I))

AUDION SILVER nights 300B valve monoblockamps with volume controls 18 watts push pull offering clear sweet sound. Will drive most speakers. Tel: 01707 896 760 (Herts) (Oct(I))

WANTED TURNTABLES: clean examples from Alphason, Ariston, Garrard, Goldring, Heybrook, Kuzma, Linn, Manticore, Michell, Nottingham, Oracle, Oxford, Pink, Project, Quasar, Rega, Roksan, Systemdek, Thorens, Voyd etc. including unusual items. Tel: 01455 613 489 (Oct(I))

CASTLE RICHMONDS brand new unopened pair deluxe yew finish five year warranty (surplus to requirement) huge saving @ £200 pair. No time wasters please. Buyer collects. Tel: Smith 01252 813 749 (Oct(I))

SPEAKER HOUSINGS superbly handcrafted pair cabinets deluxe yew finish width 15" (38cm) height 31.5" (80cm) depth 12" (30cm). Perfect for installing your choice of drivers £200 pair. Buyer collects. No time wasters. Tel: Smith 01252 813 749 (Oct(I))

AUDIONOTE KIT 2 amplifier assembled 6 months old, 6550 SE 15W £450 (schematic inc.) Tel: 07802 936 049, 01902 751 703 (Oct(I))

CYRUS COMPONENTS, excellent condition with accessories and packaging. Sale due to upgrade. dAD7 CD player £550. PSX-R power supply x 3 £225 each. Power; power amps x 2 £325 each. Tel: 07958 373 514 (Oct(I))

MERIDIAN 260 CD player perfect, must go £300 ono. Castle Avons vgc boxed, manuals £375 ono. Tel: 01293 546 160 (Oct(I))

REVOX A77 3 3/4 & 7 1/2, £300 ono. Tandberg 62, open reel, recently refurbished with new valves components, rubbers etc £250 ono. Both machines half track stereo. Excellent condition. Tel: 01226 756 453 (Oct(I))

GENESIS 5 Dipole speakers plus bass amp, 400 watts in rosewood mint cond. plus boxes, cost £15,000 accept £5,000. Synergistic Research Speakers, not run in. Mint cost £3,600 accept £1,850 ono. Plus NBS speaker cables + interconnects for sale. Audio Note ANVZ interconnects 1 metre cost £1,400 accept £550 ono. Mute sub woofer light oak. Awesome bass. Mint cost £4,000 accept £1,400 ono. Tel: 01206 298 836 or 298 567 (Oct(I))

WAD MODULAR pre amp consisting of PSU II Pre II Phono II with step-up transformer. Surplus after KLPP I rebuild. Professionally built. £450. Tel: 01296 436 024 (Aylesbury) (Oct(I))

REGA P3, black chassis with RB300 arm, excellent condition £120. Rotel RA971 MkII integrated amp, boxed, as new, £180. Rotel RCD 965 BX CD player, excellent condition £60. Can demonstrate. Tel: 01274 580 089 (Bradford) (Oct(I))

EPOS ES22, floorstanders, cherrywood £635. REL Storm Mk1 subwoofer £325. Both excellent condition, original packing, manuals, super sounds. Will demonstrate (no offers thanks). Tel: 0131 538 9073 evenings (Oct(I))

SUGDEN A21a power amplifier (black), boxed £455. Musical Fidelity F-22 pre amplifier, recent valves £495. Sumo Nine plus power amplifier, Class A boxed, manual £375. Nakamichi 680, offers? Tel: 07941 923 881 (Oct(I))

NAIM DBLs. Black with PXOs and NAXO. £3950. Michell Orbe QC & a.c. motor wanted £250 waiting towards your VC upgrade. Tel: 020 7774 6647 (work), 01245 283 125 (home) (Essex) (Oct(I))


STUDER A80 RC MkII 1358 hours original trolley ex-BBC, buyer collects. Reason for sale, too large for my hi-fi room £400 ono. Email: epCraig@bigfoot.com (Oct(I))
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**MUSICAL IMAGES**

**PRODUCT**

**LIST**

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<th>EX/Demo</th>
<th>£850</th>
<th>£425</th>
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<td>ACOUSTIC ENERGY AE509 Speakers</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACOUSTIC ENERGY AE520 Speakers</td>
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<td>B&amp;W DM602 Black Speakers</td>
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<td>CHORD DSC1100 Silver DAC inc Trigger</td>
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<td>CYRUS AVMASTER+ Processor</td>
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<td>JAMO ATMOS Black Speakers</td>
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<td>MARANTZ DV3100 Black/AV Player</td>
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<td>MARANTZ DV5100 DVD Player</td>
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<td>MERIDIAN 519 Demodulator</td>
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<td>MICROSCAPE STAGE 65 CD Player</td>
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<td>NAIM INTRO Black Speakers</td>
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<td>ROKSAN RADIUS Turntable + PSU</td>
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<td>SONY SDPEP5ES A21 Processor</td>
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<td>SONY STRBD940 Silver AV Receiver</td>
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<td>YAMAHA AX599B Amp</td>
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**SEE IT! HEAR IT! BUY IT!!**

---

**Quad**

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<td>Quad M12 Transformer</td>
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<td>Quad QCI Pre-amp (Early Model)</td>
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<td>Quad QCI II Pre-amp</td>
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<td>Quad FM1 Tuner</td>
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<td>Quad II Main Transformer</td>
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<td>Quad II Subwoofer</td>
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<td>Quad II Choke</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quad II Fuse Holder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quad II Chassis + Wiring Loops</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Leak**

| Leak Troughline 127 T (mono) | £75 |
| Leak Troughline 3 T (Mono) | £75 |
| Leak TL121 (Pair) | £150 |
| Leak Stereo 20 | £250 |
| Leak Stereo 60 | £550 |

**Most Models Of Leak Mono & Stereo Preamps In Stock**

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**Valves (G.E.C. Mullard etc.)**

<table>
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| Leak Stereo 60 | £550 |

**Classical LP Records & Spare Parts.**

---

**Hi-Fi YEAR BOOKS** - Please phone for details

---

**Quad ESL75 Electrostatic Loudspeakers**

2 pairs, both in excellent condition and sounding superb. £600 (pair)

Pair 1: Bronze, Serial No. 3562, 35500

Pair 2: Black, Serial No. 11031, 7143

Packaging available in handmade quality cartons £150 (pair)

---

**WANTED**

LARGE COLLECTIONS OF CLASSICAL LP's
SONY CDP 915E excellent sound & condition £85 (£300). World Audio K5881 MkII valve amplifier superb sound almost unused surplus to requirements £530 (£595). Tel: 01452 713 211 (Oct(l)

PINK TRIANGLE Export £350. S.M.E. 309 £300. £600 the pair. Mint. Parmiko M.C. transformer £60. S.M.E. record clamp. Flatline Gold speaker cables biwire and single wire 3 metres. Tel: 01636 683 830 evenings (Oct(l)

SUGDEN SIGNATURE 41 remote line level pre with AV41 power £500. Spendor SP/2 black with dedicated stands £400. Tel: 01733 810 516 (Peterborough) (Oct(l)

JAMO CONCERT centre American cherry speaker boxed, excellent condition £350. Tel: 01803 522 041 (Oct(l)

CABLE CLEAROUT: Townshend Isolda 15 foot pair £300. Music Works 6 foot mains £20. AQ video Z digital 1 metre BNCs £20. Tel: 020 8879 0364 (Oct(l)

REL Q50 subwoofer £170. Monitor Audio MA 14 small floorstander black £100 demo available Tel: 020 7731 6497 (Oct(l)

ROTEL RB981 power amp, 160 WPC, 360 watts bridged, boxed £195. Sony TA-F3000ES amplifier, remote, 45WPC, MM/MC phono, £275. Heybrook HBI, HBSI stands, walnut, as new! £75. Possible P/X WAD valve amp? Tel: 01706 345 418 (Oct(l)

NUVISTA PRE/POWER amps in mint condition plus 3 sets of replacement valves (unopened since 1981). Recently serviced by Musical Fidelity. Limited edition of 500 – unbelievable value, rare reviews. Best offer over £7300 secures audio bliss (£4.5k list price). Tel: 01242 262 515 (Oct(l)


ELECTROSTATIC RESEARCH hybrid speakers black, C/W subwoofers stunning £975. Celestion SL600si biwireable nice condition £250. May consider swaps or part exchange. Tel: 0118 981 5681 or 07909 697 060 (Oct(l)

LEAK 2075 speakers, very good condition £350. Tel: 01744 755 434 (Oct(l)

JEFF ROWLAND Model I. McIntosh 240 valve. Michaelson Audusius valve. Helius Syrus I. Spks Tannoy Chevits Chrisma Metaxa pre. Exchange for Mercedes Diesel Estate or similar. Tel: 01626 774 246 (Oct(l)

MUSICAL FIDELITY A3-CR Power Amplifiers x 2, as new, boxed, instructions etc., £675.00 each - can deliver. Ruark Prologues Ref 1. Cherry veneer, brand new boxed, £750 o.n.o. Tel: home 01622 721 011 / mobile 07973 899 651) (Oct(l)

KRELL KSP7B pre amp £650. Musical Fidelity F18, 200wc hybrid power amp £1500, was £5000 new. Chord Anthem balanced interconnect £200, was £300 new. Tel: 01270 759 143 evenings (Oct(l)

MUSICAL FIDELITY A220 class AA amplifier new £700 @ £300 ono. Eltax LR 6.5 wired internally with QED silver @ £175 ono. Yamaha KX580 @ £100 o.n.o. Call Ian 01268 478 268 after 8pm. Email: redyri@yahoo.com (Oct(l)

300B. HOLIDAY without your music? Two holiday cottages in spectacular position, off coastal path in South Cornwall. Quality music system based on our own design 300B/EL84 SE amplifiers with CD/tuner input. Available from the Autumn. Sea views, indoor pool, log fires, central heating, all year. Contact Martin and Fiona Nicolle 07000 423 000 (Oct(l)

QUAD 57's two pairs stacking frames if required new H.T. CCTS, also Audio Pro Bi-45 subwoofer. Tel: 01225 315 401 (Bath) (Oct(l)

SONUS FABER Grand piano loudspeakers, stunning solid walnut & leather finish, immaculate condition complete with marble plinths £1130 ono. Sonus Faber centre speaker latest model only a few months old £225 ono. Denon AVC-A1-D, 5 channel home cinema amplifier, immaculate condition £950 ono. Tel: 01835 862 152 (Oct(l)

300B. HOLIDAY without your music? Two holiday cottages in spectacular position, off coastal path in South Cornwall. Quality music system based on our own design 300B/EL84 SE amplifiers with CD/tuner input. Available from the Autumn. Sea views, indoor pool, log fires, central heating, all year. Contact Martin and Fiona Nicolle 07000 423 000 (Oct(l)

GUIDELINES FOR BUYING AND SELLING SECOND-HAND EQUIPMENT

FOR THE BUYER
1. Not everyone is honest - Buyer Beware!
2. Don't send cash!
3. Accept no verbal guarantees.
4. Have you heard the item or something similar? If not, why do you want it?
5. Don't pretend to have knowledge - it's your fingers that will get burnt!
6. Is it working? If not, why not?
7. Has it been modified and, if so, have new parts been kept?
8. Was it any good in the first place?
9. Don't send cash!
10. If you are in the slightest doubt, arrange an audition (see point 5). If it's too far, wait for another time.
11. Either buy it or don't: vendors are excusably impatient with 'consultation' exercises.
12. Don't send cash!

FOR THE SELLER
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 some one 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, wash out the deal.
8. There will always be time-wasters; be tolerant within reason!
UK SUBSCRIPTION £27
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