CANTON REFERENCE 9.2 DC loudspeakers EXCLUSIVE!

CREEK DESTINY 2 amplifier EXCLUSIVE!

SPENDOR A9 loudspeakers EXCLUSIVE!

MERIDIAN G08.2 CD player

COMPETITION
WIN A BENZ MICRO WOOD SL MC CARTRIDGE WORTH £950!

> KISEKI BLUE NOS MOVING COIL CARTRIDGE
> SPIRAL GROOVE SG2 TURNTABLE
> PREAMPLIFIER SUPERTEST
> CAYIN CD-50T CD PLAYER

10 PAGES OF LETTERS - THE BEST WINS A PAIR OF KEF IQ30 LOUDSPEAKERS! (UK ONLY)
Music is a universal pleasure that should not be denied to anybody. So, too, the beauty of music reproduced by valves. To make available to a wider audience the seductive, silky sound of the vacuum tube, PrimaLuna has developed a range of all-valve amplifiers with the construction, power and sonic performance of high-end electronics, but with one unique, inimitable feature: prices that can only be described as ‘entry level’!

Since the arrival last year of PrimaLuna’s first model, the ProLogue One, the audio community has been unable to contain its joy nor reign in its praise, because PrimaLuna has revolutionized the whole concept of ‘affordable audio.’ Commencing with a pair of integrated amplifiers with prices more typical of mundane, solid-state products, PrimaLuna has shown other manufacturers that compromises in fit and finish, styling and facilities are unnecessary.

And PrimaLuna has shown the music lover that ‘high end’ performance and pride of ownership can be made available to aficionados on a budget. But don’t take our word for it. Audition your preferred ProLogue or the newly-launched Dialogue models at the PISTOL Music dealer of your choice. And prepare your wallet for a pleasant surprise!
testing

To ensure the utmost accuracy in our product reviews, Hi-Fi World has extremely comprehensive in-house test facilities, and our test equipment - from big names like Rohde & Schwarz and Hewlett Packard - is amongst the most advanced in the world.

Loudspeakers are measured using a calibrated Brüel & Kjaer microphone feeding a Clio-based computer analyser, using pulsed and gated sinewaves, in a large room to eliminate the room’s influence. Pickup arm vibration is measured with a Bruel & Kjaer accelerometer.

No other UK hi-fi magazine has in-house testing, and none has access to such advanced tests across all types of equipment. That’s why you can depend on Hi-Fi World reviews.

David Price, editor

verdicts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTSTANDING</th>
<th>EXCELLENT</th>
<th>GOOD</th>
<th>MEDIocre</th>
<th>POOR</th>
<th>VALUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Go to our website www.hi-fiworld.co.uk to buy an electronic version of this magazine, individual issues, back issues or a subscription.

Welcome

Any hobbyist who’s experimented with making their own loudspeakers will tell you that getting the basics right is vital for superior sound. Keeping it simple with a couple of high quality drive units, rather than making a big box full of transducers with complex crossovers often yields the best results. In this sense, it’s fair to say that ‘less is more’...

That’s why a small coaxial speaker with one drive unit close to the another for ‘point source’ imaging, set into a tiny, resonance-free cabinet, can work so well. Our review of Tannoy’s Revolution DC4 [p69] shows how...

The same principle explains why valve amplifiers can sound more musical than solid-state. Using simple circuits with relatively few active electronic devices, they rely on quality transformers and wiring to give great sound. In contrast, transistor amps are more complex, with many more components and longer signal paths to sully the sound. Our classic Dynatron LS15 power amp review [p86] shows how keeping it simple is a timeless virtue.

One exception to this rule is Creek’s new Destiny 2. This solid-state integrated amplifier sports a passive preamplifier stage that removes the need for extra circuitry in the signal path. This, plus other clever tricks, makes it one of the best solid-state integrations we’ve heard. Read all about it on p50.

This issue’s preamplifier supertest clearly shows how basic engineering directly affects performance. The MF Audio and Creek passive preamps tested are so good because they’re so simple; the Icon Audio and PrimaLuna valve units add some valve warmth to the proceedings which some will love, while others will prefer the Cyrus and Electrocompaniet transistor designs that sound cleaner but less engaging. The action starts on p17.

In my view, the best maxim for hi-fi buyers is ‘each to their own’; take a careful look at what you want from a product and buy accordingly. The great thing about hi-fi in 2011 is that there’s so much to choose from; I hope Hi-Fi World helps you make sense of it all. Enjoy!

David Price, editor

distributed by Seymour Distribution Ltd 86 Newman Street London, WIT 3EX Tel: +44 (0) 20 7396 8000 Printed by St Ives, Plymouth Tel: +44 (0) 1752 345 411

Our Agents in Malaysia Millennium Hi-Fi & AV Simon Chang Showroom & office, 500-1-3 First Floor Wisma Indah (Shin Court), Jalan Tun Razak 50400 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia Tel: 603 9283 8171 Fax: 603 9283 3762 e-mail: info@millennium-audio.com

All unsolicited submissions and goods are at the owner’s risk. We accept no responsibility for such submissions, nor do we undertake to return them.

No material may be reproduced from this magazine without the publisher’s written permission. © Audio Publishing Ltd
MF Audio Classic Preamp: still great after all these years!

Cayin CD-50T: a fine affordable CD player from Germany.

Creek's Destiny 2 amplifier: a highly capable new integrated.

Canton's Reference 9.2DC: a pleasant surprise from Germany.

Meridian G08.2: a beautiful new high end CD spinner.

Spiral Groove SG2: a superb turntable from across the pond.
PREAMPLIFIER SUPERTEST
Tony Bolton tries two passive, two valve and two transistor preamplifiers, ranging from highly affordable to extremely expensive...

CREEK OBH-22
ICON AUDIO LA4
PRIMA LUNA PROLOGUE 3
CYRUS PRE-XP/PSX-R
ELECTROCOMPANIET EC4.7
MF AUDIO CLASSIC V2 SILVER

CREEK DESTINY 2
Noel Keywood is beguiled by this new solid-state integrated amplifier.

TEAC A-R650
Paul Rigby finds much to like in this affordable integrated.

MUSICAL FIDELITY M6 PRX
Rafael Todes takes a shine to this affordable high end power amplifier.

SPENDOR A9
Noel Keywood enjoys these sophisticated big floorstanders.

CANTON REFERENCE 9.2DC
A great new German standmounter, thinks Noel Keywood...

TANNOWY REVOLUTION DC4
This tiny speaker makes a big impression on Paul Rigby.

DIGITAL
MERIDIAN G08.2
David Price thinks this svelte new silver disc spinner is one of Meridian's best products in a long time.

CAYIN CD-50T
Superb value for money is the verdict on this reasonably priced German designed, Chinese made CD player.

OLDE WORLDE
DYNATRON LS15/LS16
Haden Boardman remembers these rare classic tube power amplifiers.

VINYL
VINYL NEWS
Paul Rigby reports on all the latest LP releases...

SPIRAL GROOVE SG2
Adam Smith is beguiled by this high end American vinyl spinner.

KISEKI BLUE NOS
Neville Roberts tells the story of this enigmatic classic moving coil cartridge.

PRO-JECT ESSENTIAL
Tony Bolton takes a fine new budget turntable for a spin.
PRIME
4 Input Pre Amp with Bidirectional USB.

SCAMP
50W stereo power amp with USB & RCA.

DUAL
Analogue & USB output phono amp.

PEACH
Coaxial, optical, USB, APTX Bluetooth DAC.

Chordette Carry
Secure and tough, the Chordette Carry holds up to four Chordette products. Easy storage at home or on the move.

See us at Sound & Vision The Bristol Show in the Copenhagen Suite. Friday 25th – Sunday 27th February 2011
ABOUT TIME
Meridian Audio has two new products out, the DSP3200 Compact Digital Active Loudspeaker and the Audio Core 200 Stereo Audio Controller. The speakers are said to echo the lines of Meridian's flagship DSP8000, and are the most compact Meridian loudspeakers designed to date. They feature Meridian's Digital Signal Processing (DSP) technologies, said to deliver powerful, room-filling sound with the performance of a conventional system many times the size.

Meridian SpeakerLink connectivity makes connecting the DSP3200 to the Audio Core 200 easy, too. They feature a wide-range driver that allows the DSP crossover frequency to be outside the speech band, for "quality sound at high levels and for prolonged periods", the company says. It comes in high-gloss white and high-gloss black.

The Audio Core 200 Stereo Audio Controller is said to be perfect for bringing together all audio sources; it's a digital preamplifier with upsampling DAC. The Audio Core 200 connects easily to almost any audio source, including PC audio replay via USB. There is a Meridian SpeakerLink input for single-wire connection to a Meridian Sooloos Digital Media System. Fully compatible with Meridian's i80 Dock for iPod, the Audio Core 200 will play iPod/iPhone via Meridian DSP Loudspeakers while it charges, and control what you hear via the front panel or remote handset. Audio Core 200 is housed in a newly designed compact case and is finished as standard in high-gloss black or high-gloss white.

The Meridian Sooloos Media Core 200 is said to make the Meridian Sooloos experience even more accessible. It's said to be "an elegant, compact and virtually silent system that requires only the user's choice of controller to perform". It can be operated by any of the network-based control systems available, including the iPad or iPhone App, a computer running the Control PC or Control Mac application, or a Meridian Sooloos controller such as the Control 15 or Control 10. At the heart of the Media Source 200 is a 500GB hard drive, storing around 1,000 CD albums in lossless quality for graphical and touch-screen access. Prices are £3,750 for the DSP3200 loudspeakers, £1,500 for the Audio Core 200 Stereo Audio Controller and £2,000 for the Media Core 200.

For more details, click on www.meridian-audio.com.

TUNING IN
Sony has launched a new streaming music subscription service which offers a different approach to digital music sales. "Qriocity" is a cloud-based digital music service which uses streaming, rather than digital downloads. As such, the service is not available on portable devices, so users are limited to home computers currently. The service has launched in the United Kingdom, Ireland, and will launch in the United States, Canada, Australia, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and New Zealand later in 2011. Music Unlimited lets users play music from a variety of Internet-connected Sony devices such as Bravia TVs, Blu-ray disc players, and the PlayStation 3 gaming console via a single ID log-in and wallet solution. For details, click on www.sony.co.uk/Qriocity.
NEW CONVERSION
The new (£1,250) PD 1 DAC from Electrocompaniet sports a PC/Mac USB input and remote control, making it ideal for the latest generation of computer sources, plus coaxial and TOSLINK inputs for CD player. The remote control has the facility to select the source and adjust volume up and down, and start/stop your media player and jump to the next/previous song in your playlist. If you want to avoid cables or want to put your computer away from your stereo system you can add the optional Music Streamer: This box connects to the USB port of your computer and steams music to you PD 1 via radio link — no wireless network is needed, says Electrocompaniet. See www.electrocompaniet.no.

NEW IMAGE
Klipsch’s new entry-level S3 headphone is said to “bring Klipsch’s signature sonic performance to an entirely new audience”. The £39.99 phones come in a choice of graphite grey, red, pink and green finishes, have a standard 3.5mm headphone jack and a durable, tangle-resistant cable. The cable is also moulded into the plug for improved strain relief. These headphones have undergone extensive resistance and strength testing to ensure they stack up to virtually every real-world scenario, the company says. The package comes with three pairs of differently sized oval ear tips (med, large, small/med dual flange) and a carrying case. Unlike circular-shaped ear tips that put stress on the pressure points inside the ear, Klipsch’s patented oval ear tips naturally fit the contours of your ear canals, providing comfortable long-term wear. These lightweight ear tips also offer superior noise isolation, blocking out almost all ambient noise and providing strong bass. For information, see www.klipsch.co.uk.

TWO PLUS TWO
The new Audience Clair Audient 2+2 is a new £3,950 standmounting loudspeaker that comes in a choice of Black Ash, Natural Teak and Wenge. It measures just 368mm high by 200mm wide by 260mm deep, and incorporates four proprietary Audience full-range A3-S drivers. Unique SSIT SweetSpace Imaging Technology means the drivers deliver exceptionally flat frequency response and eliminate the need for a separate woofer, tweeter, midrange driver and crossover network, the company says. The A3-S driver further features a large patented neodymium-magnet motor structure, voice coil and utilises a rigid lightweight anodised aluminium-magnesium alloy cone material. It is built using the company’s custom-made mono crystal Auric internal wiring and highest-quality components. For more details, call +44 (0)1775 761880 or click on www.highendcable.co.uk.

TENTATIVE APPROACH
HiFi Wigwam’s Pie-Fi Show takes place on the 6th March, 2011, and is described as “quite simply an opportunity for visitors to listen to some of the best audio equipment ever assembled in the same place”. From vintage valve classics to solid-state power-house setups, from vinyl to computer source, and from low-budget to no expense spared horns, bookshelf speakers and homemade electrostatics - just about every name from the world of hi-fi can be found in one of the sixty or so rooms. The event will be held at the spacious and luxurious Scalford Hall Hotel, Melton Rd, Scalford, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire LE14 4UB. Full details can be found at www.thehifishow.com.

ON THE MOVE
Avid HiFi Ltd has moved to new premises; their new address is Avid HiFi Ltd., Bicton Industrial Park, Kimbolton, Huntingdon, Cambs. PE28 0LV. Their telephone number is +44(0)1480 869 900, email is www.avidhifi.co.uk.
Paradigm announce the MilleniaOne. Imported via Anthem AV Solutions, they can be used as left, right or centre speakers, and are said to "provide versatility in a compact form factor whilst maintaining a superb level of quality and performance", the company says. The MilleniaOne is designed in a compact (195x115x145mm) oval cabinet and ships with a small bookshelf stand, minimising its footprint; it comes in white or black gloss finishes. Paradigm’s diecast aluminium enclosures provide superior rigidity while maintaining a thinner wall and acting as a heatsink for drivers and crossover components, it is claimed. The speaker uses an S-PAL tweeter dome with silver finish to match the cone and the tweeter motor employs neodymium magnets and extruded aluminium heatsinks. The speakers are sold either as a 2.0 left/right pair at £499, or as a MilleniaOne 5.0 system (including a horizontal centre speaker) for £1,249. Add-on the MilleniaSub subwoofer and you have a compact 5.1 home cinema system for less than £2,500. For more details, click on www.anthemav.co.uk.

Clearaudio have just introduced their new Concept MC cartridge, said to "provide the high level of performance for which Clearaudio moving coil cartridges are renowned, for the lowest ever cost". The £550 cartridge sports an aluminium magnesium alloy with ceramic surface layer, boron cantilever, OFC wound coils and a Micro Line Contact stylus. For details call Audio Reference UK Ltd. on +44(0) 1252 702 705 or click on www.audiorference.co.uk.
The Designer Technology Store

OUR GOAL
We aim to bring cutting edge design lead AV products to the UK, plus groundbreaking custom installation with exclusive brands & ranges, teamed with established design classics. Offering iPod and PC-MAC compatible fully integrated HI-FI MULTI-CHANNEL systems, we are the one stop boutique for all style aware technology customers.

ORDER ON-LINE
www.soundthinking-store.co.uk

ORDER BY PHONE
0844 809 4460
mon-sat 10am / 5pm

All prices quoted are inclusive of VAT - we reserve the right to change prices - please see the website for terms and conditions and delivery information
TAKE OFF
Bowers & Wilkins has announced a significant upgrade to its highly successful Zeppelin; the new Air is described as “the ultimate AirPlay wireless audio system”, and sports updated drive units, improved amplification and advanced Digital Signal Processing plus fully integrated AirPlay technology so users can easily stream music wirelessly from iTunes, iPhone, iPad or iPod touch. And “while Zeppelin’s iconic shape has been retained, subtly updated styling helps modernise this design classic”, says B&W. A fully active 2.1 design, the improved 4x25W plus 1x50W amplifiers power revised drive units, and the DACs have also been upgraded with 24bit/96kHz capability. AirPlay requires iTunes 10.1 or later and iPhone, iPad, or iPod touch with iOS 4.2 or later. Zeppelin Air is available from March 2011, and costs £499.99. For more details, click on www.bowers-wilkins.com.

SPEAK EASY
Launching at next month’s Bristol hi-fi show, the new XTZ MH800 DSP is described as “an entirely new hi-fi concept”, no less! A compact active digital speaker system, it uses patented Dirac HD Sound from Dirac Research which is in turn said to allow, “a totally new construction methodology”. The digital signal processing is claimed to produce a frequency response of 40Hz to 20kHz within +/-1dB. The speaker is a two way construction, equipped with advanced design drivers from Danish/American Tymphany. The 3 inch aluminium driver is from Peerless, while there’s a 5.25 inch a long-throw down firing polypropylene woofer, vented through a slit port on the front of the speaker. The cabinet is a painted contemporary MDF design. The amplifier is enclosed in an aluminium cabinet and offers 2x40 Watts of Class D power. The Dirac Sound Processor software is specifically designed to run Dirac technology in real-time from a Windows or Mac computer, and does not require any additional hardware. It is said to work just like a sound card and is claimed to correct the sound image, increase vocal clarity and bass tightness, flatten the frequency response, optimise the impulse response and extend the frequency range. For more details, click on www.audiosanctum.co.uk.

FOUR ON THE FLOOR
Quadral’s new Vulkan VIII is described as a three-way compression chamber, bass reflex, floorstanding loudspeaker which comprises a ribbon tweeter, plus Quadral’s own patented ‘ALTIMA’ membrane midrange and woofer speakers of 170mm and 320mm respectively. These are housed in a pressure chamber for the delivery of contoured deep, clear and punchy bass, the company says. Inside, premium components are used, with ‘Real Cable’ for the inner wiring. Each speaker stands 1,260x290x500mm and comes in a choice of three natural wood finishes plus any one of 190 lacquered special colour finishes! For more details, call +44 (0)1785 748 446, or click on www.quadralgb-ie.co.uk.
Arc Light

Meridian's new G08.2 CD player brings serious style, sound and sonics for substantially less money than their acclaimed high end players, says David Price...

The MCD was Meridian's first ever Compact Disc player, audaciously launched as the world's first such specialist hi-fi machine back in 1984. I'm not sure if Philips and/or Marantz would agree, given that it was a lightly tuned CD100/CD63 (which was certainly no bad thing), but it nevertheless set the blueprint for CD player design during the eighties, and showed how careful attention to detail over a silver disc spinner's various subsystems (power supply, passive componentry, vibration damping, etc.) could yield real sonic rewards. Oh, and it looked great too...

It was, along with the subsequent MCD Pro, a compact and swish piece of kit with gently 'breathed on' styling from Meridian's Allen Boothroyd, design director of Meridian and MD of Cambridge Product Design. He'd had a good few years, with everything from the bold Lecson range to the striking yet tiny 100 series of Meridian separates to the BBC Microcomputer, as arrows in his design bow. It was this striking industrial design, plus simple ergonomics and serious attention to sonics, that defined Meridian. And lo and behold, here we see it again, over a quarter of a century later with the G08.2...

By any standards, I think this is a beautiful product. Whereas I think Meridian rather lost their way for some of the last decade, with too much reliance on black plastic as a case material, here the company is back to its brilliant best. The 440x350x90mm 8.2 is hewn largely from aluminium, smoothly but unfussily surfaced, with the company's trademark glass top. It's a solid piece of equipment, and weighs 8.5kg to prove it. The fascia is interesting, with a large multi-character dot-matrix vacuum fluorescent display. By today's standards — beautiful fine pitch OLED and all that — the Meridian's display looks a tad dated, but still it blends in nicely with the overall fascia design so it's not distractingly old hat; tech obsessed sixteen year old boys would doubtless call it 'old school' and believe it to be deliberately retro...

I like the way the control keys get their legends from the display a la F80, and also the soft blue backlighting behind the keys. I'm also a big fan of the slot loading drive, which is becoming increasingly...
popular of late; it’s much nicer than having an (inevitably cheap) CD-ROM disc tray wobbling and grinding its way out to greet you. In use, the player as a whole feels slick and svelte, far more so than many similarly priced machines. As far as I’m concerned, the company is back at the front of the ‘feel good’ queue with the G08.2. Round the back it’s also pretty slick, the Meridian is a veritable festival of socketry; optical and TOSLINK digital output, RCA phono and balanced XLR analogue outputs, an RS232 port (remember them, microcomputer fans?), Meridian Comms socketry and an IEC mains input.

Inside, the CD mechanism itself is securely mounted, and as per all ROM drives, is capable of spinning up to many times ‘real time’ speed to perform multiple high speed re-reads to ensure the best data capture; it’s said to provide ten times the error correction of a conventional CD player. Then the onboard digital signal processor (said to work at up to 150 million instructions per second) upsamples the signal to 24bit, 176.4kHz for the onboard DACs and 88.2kHz for the digital outputs. The digital filter is a custom Meridian design with ‘apodising-like’ qualities; this first appeared in the 808.2, the company says, and there’s also a triple buffering system said to minimise jitter, plus a new design of high-stability clock. Multiple power supplies ensure that digital and analogue circuitry are kept apart and properly aspirated, and multi-layer boards are said to reduce system noise.

SOUND QUALITY

Every inch a modern, high quality CD player, the Meridian delivered a grand, spacious and poised performance with every disc it span. Central to its character is a very powerful bass, which doesn’t sound overblown yet is not that far from it; there’s absolutely no sensation that the Meridian is a thin, lightweight, weak-kneed contraption. Instead, it announces the G08.2’s presence in the room and in the system in no uncertain terms. Fragile State’s ‘Every Day a Different Story’ was a case in point, the washes and swirls of analogue synthesisers fluttering behind an extremely voluminous acoustic (as opposed to electronic) bass guitar which might as well have been a real instrument plugged into the auxiliary input of my amplifier, so strong was it! This underpinned a wide, capacious soundstage that doesn’t get much bigger via 16bit digital disc, and a busy upper mid and treble, bristling with detail. Happily, the Meridian managed to set all the various items in the mix neatly together with one another, all in their right places, in an utterly unfurled way. It was this particular aspect of its sound — along with that vast bass — that really sets it apart from other similarly priced machines I’ve heard.

Staying with techno and moving to 4hero’s ‘Planetaria (Hefner Remix)’, and it was again a chance to sample some beautiful bass, this time courtesy of real double bass, counterpointed by some deft snare drum work and cascading strings. The Meridian again showed itself as a major player, sounding suitably
Aquarius replaced the companies GII Mini Sub and is the latest product in IsoTek's unique range of multi-award winning power conditioners that are designed and handmade in England using the finest materials and built to the highest of standards.

Formed in July 2001, IsoTek's vision has been to create high-quality mains power conditioners that stretch beyond current conventions. Through careful market analysis and extensive research, IsoTek has been able to launch products that dramatically improve the performance of all components used within an audio or visual environment, a fact that has been proved by countless international reviews and over 25 audio awards.

"IsoTek is the leader in mains conditioning products"
Hi-Fi News

"IsoTek is the UK's biggest name in mains filtration"
Hi-Fi Choice

"Not all mains conditioners are created equal... IsoTek has built itself a reputation as a purveyor of mains conditioners that actually improve (as opposed to just alter) the sound"
Hi-Fi World

For more information and to obtain your free IsoTek brochure please call:

01276 501 392

info@soundfoundations.co.uk
www.soundfoundations.co.uk
www.isoteksystems.com

"The whole auditioning process took about 30 seconds. Play a piece of music on GII Mini Sub. Play it again on Aquarius and wonder why you were so attached to the GII Mini Sub." “Very highly recommended” Hi-Fi Plus. Issue 68.
fulsome and confident, utterly in control and unfazed by the sinewy rhythm part. This, rather better recorded and less electronically processed track (with largely acoustic instruments, recorded back in 1997 on analogue tape) gave me a chance to get a handle on the G08.2’s tonality. I have to say I’ve found some Meridian electronics a little dry sounding at times, and it’s certainly true that this machine doesn’t give an overly rosy rendition of the recording, but if anything I’d say the G08.2 is slightly on the smooth side; without doubt it’s not as clinical and thin as some Meridians we’ve heard in the previous decade. The superb detail rendition across the board means it’s actually very good at capturing the unique tonal ‘texture’ of different instruments, going way beyond a perfunctory reading of what’s on the disc. Again, this is the sort of thing that marks it out as a serious machine.

Stanley Clarke’s ‘1,2, to the Bass’ was a visceral delight; I heard this 2003 masterpiece in all its glory, the Meridian supplying a wonderful groove inside which the great man’s low frequency histronics were delivered with real authority. At the same time, Q-Tip’s great vocal work was carried with excellent timing; all the things that people used to say about CD (and indeed still do) seemed to recede into irrelevance as this player let the music sing. Importantly, this isn’t a player that itself sings; it doesn’t euphonise, embellish or augment the original recording; rather it got the feeling of it very carefully, systematically and purposefully unlocking it; letting out for the wider world to hear. Thus the G08.2 displays excellent timing, deep and brooding inter-transient silences and wonderful attack when the next snare hit is delivered. Dynamically too it was a complete success; unlike some higher end machines it doesn’t assault you and try to take your head off, by emphasising rhythmic accents as if to make a point. Rather it just lets the proceedings flow, according things an appropriate volume in a calm and unforced yet musically expressive way.

Moving to some classic, slickly recorded late seventies rock music from Supertramp, and ‘Take the Long Way Home’ assauged any doubts I had about the Meridian’s top end. Earlier in the audition period I’d felt it just a bit too brightly, shining slightly too bright a light on the proceedings. It turned out that running in and warming up was all it needed to smooth out; the mix on this album is quite toppy (presumably mixed for seventies Stateside FM radio) and yet the G08.2 wasn’t falling over its feet. Rather, it remained smooth and clear, with vivid detailing to, and a pleasing atmosphere around, the soaring hi hat and harmonica work. I also enjoyed the richly resonant piano sound, dripping with harmonics (well, as much as it possible with 16bit) and coming over with real finesse.

Highly accomplished with electronic dance, jazz fusion and rock, I was intrigued to see how well the Meridian would perform with classical and it was here I got my biggest surprised. The superb Linn recording of Mozart’s Symphony 29 in A major (Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Sir Charles Mackerras) showed how this player can really lock into what’s going on deep down in the recording, and as such it responds brilliantly to this flawless production. The G08.2 was breathtaking here, providing an incredibly lifelike string tone, devoid of screech yet getting deep into the grain of the massed violins; you could hear the bows on the wires as easily as the players themselves, yet there was a massive, cavernous recorded acoustic inside which the vast physical presence of the orchestra was set. Superb in transcription terms, the Meridian didn’t just stop there; it made the music flow with gusto, holding the listener a captive to the musical event before them. Again, this combination of being terribly assured and calm yet passionate with it, proved a winning one, making well recorded classical music a pleasure.

CONCLUSION
An excellent all round performer, the Meridian G08.2 is largely agnostic about the type of music you feed it; it rejoices in pretty much every genre from techno to classical. It’s very powerful and commanding by nature, yet incisive too, so listeners soon find how high it can fly with especially well recorded discs. Tonnally it’s excellent, with real finesse and delicacy, but it won’t smother harsh recordings in a comfort blanket and isn’t the machine you buy to calm a hard sounding system. Put it on the end of a well balanced set of mid or high price hi-fi separates though, and it’s an unalloyed pleasure. So, with top-notch sonics, lovely build, fine ergonomics and superlative styling, this machine seems a veritable bargain even at its not inconsiderable price.

REFERENCE SYSTEM:
Marantz CD72 CD player
dCS Dobbyssy DAC
Musical Fidelity AM335i integrated amplifier
Yamaha NS1000M loudspeakers

MEASURED PERFORMANCE
Frequency response of this player was perfectly flat to 20.2kHz our convolved impulse response shows. This will give the Meridian absolutely accurate subjective tonal balance, but it will not soften out the sound of older CDs as some players do.

The balanced outputs give a high 5V output and the unbalanced phono sockets 2.5V, also quite high against the Philips standard of 2V. Distortion from both outputs was the same, measuring a low 0.018% at -60dB, a very low value. This resulted in a good EIAJ Dynamic Range value of 58dB.

Jitter was extremely low all round, with signal related jitter induced by a -60dB 1kHz tone measuring a miniscule 12ps, the random jitter noise floor just 5ps and low rate clock drift 25ps. These are all class leading figures.

The Meridian G08.2 measured very well in every area and should give fine sound quality.

CONCLUSION
An excellent all round performer, the Meridian G08.2 is largely agnostic about the type of music you feed it; it rejoices in pretty much every genre from techno to classical. It’s very powerful and commanding by nature, yet incisive too, so listeners soon find how high it can fly with especially well recorded discs. Tonnally it’s excellent, with real finesse and delicacy, but it won’t smother harsh recordings in a comfort blanket and isn’t the machine you buy to calm a hard sounding system. Put it on the end of a well balanced set of mid or high price hi-fi separates though, and it’s an unalloyed pleasure. So, with top-notch sonics, lovely build, fine ergonomics and superlative styling, this machine seems a veritable bargain even at its not inconsiderable price.

CONCLUSION
An excellent all round performer, the Meridian G08.2 is largely agnostic about the type of music you feed it; it rejoices in pretty much every genre from techno to classical. It’s very powerful and commanding by nature, yet incisive too, so listeners soon find how high it can fly with especially well recorded discs. Tonnally it’s excellent, with real finesse and delicacy, but it won’t smother harsh recordings in a comfort blanket and isn’t the machine you buy to calm a hard sounding system. Put it on the end of a well balanced set of mid or high price hi-fi separates though, and it’s an unalloyed pleasure. So, with top-notch sonics, lovely build, fine ergonomics and superlative styling, this machine seems a veritable bargain even at its not inconsiderable price.

VERDICT

For
- commanding sound
- midband clarity and ease
- expansive soundstaging
- design, ergonomics, build

Against
- nothing at the price

www.meridian-audio.co.uk
QUALITY PRE-OWNED.

ART Stiletto Monitor Speakers. One owner, cherry, excellent condition, original packing. (£11195) £695
Verity Rienzi speakers. Dark Mahogany, mint, ex-demo. (£6495) £495
USher S-520 speakers. Birch, original packing, only 18 months old, as new. (£560) only £195
Linn Klimax 320A speakers. Cherry, in rare, cost new £17000. One owner, excellent condition, matching Linn stands, original packing. Huge saving. (£7495) £495
ATC C4 Subwoofer. Active, one owner, months old, mint, boxed, (£989) £395
Amphion Helium 520 speakers. Black, one owner, supplied by us, Excellent condition, few months old. (£1499) £795 be quick as these are virtually new.
Spendor S6. Mint, cherry, one owner and only a few months old (£1995) £795
Klipsch Heresy III speakers. Cherry, veneer, rare, cost new £3500. One owner, excellent condition, matching Klipsch Heresy stands, original packing. (£3600) only £195.
MBL 121 speakers. Satin black, one owner, supplied by us, months old, customer upgraded, mint, original factory crates. (£4000) with stands! £2495
Quad 112. High gloss cherry, ex-demo, mint condition. Boxed. (£1765) £995
ATC SCM 50 ASL Classic Actives. Walnut, ex-demo, mint condition. (£8970) £495
Klipsch Pro 391 Palladium series. Ex-demo, one of best speakers you’ll ever hear! (£14750) £7495
ADAM Audio APT Pencil speakers. Cherry/dark silver, astonishing articulation, excellent condition, all original box and packing. (£1300) only £795.
Audio Physic Virgo V. One owner, supplied by us, mint, original packing, (£5500) £395
Audio Physic Scorpion II. Latest model, cherry, ex-demo, unmarked. (£7775) £495
Quad ESL, 2905 speakers. One owner, mint, boxed, very low hours. Amazing reviews (£7000) only £495 with a 5yr warranty.
Audio Physic Trinco VI speakers. Maple, one owner, limited edition, original packing etc. (£2012) bargain at £1195.

ACCESSORIES
Sennheiser HD650 headphones. One owner, low hours, mint, has Russ Andrews Upgrade Jack cable (£400 + £75 for cable) £195
Grado GS1000 Statement Series Headphones. 1mths old, original packing & warranty card. As new! (£1100) be quick at £695.

MISC
Mission m7s Surround speakers. Black, original packing and manual. Perfect condition, and absolutely fabulous bi-pole rear speakers with incredible dispersion. Only £60
Pre Ordination

Tony Bolton tries a brace of the latest and greatest preamplifiers...

A modern preamplifier’s task is simple; it should be a piece of wire, possibly with gain and hopefully with switching! In days gone by, preamps were often button festooned knob fests, with lots of circuitry between the input and the output, and usually a phono stage for good measure. How times have changed...

The sheer variety of approaches to designing preamps surveyed here is impressive, with four mains powered units, two of which being valve driven from PrimaLuna and Icon Audio, the other two being solid state, manufactured by Cyrus Audio and Electrocompaniet. There are two passive units. Of these, the Creek uses a potentiometer and the Music First, a stepped transformer to control the gain.

As well as a range of differing methodologies, these preamps also span vastly differing price points, with the cheapest being the Creek OBH-22 at £338, through to the Music First Audio Classic V2 Silver at £4,500 (including VAT at 20%). If a range such as this can’t put the relative value for money of different designs into perspective, nothing can!

For the purposes of this test, each preamp was run in for fifty hours, then spent an evening being listened to on its own, before all of them were compared back to back using the same tracks. These included a 200 gram Classic Records re-pressing of ‘Belafonte at Carnegie Hall’, a 1958 Decca stereo recording of ‘The Grand March’ from Verdi’s opera ‘Aida’, and the pulsating dance beats of Fats Waller and his Rhythm playing a cover of the track ‘Dinah’ in the mid thirties on an LP called ‘The Vocal: Fats Waller’. Digital was represented by a CD called ‘Arabesque’ by Zouge 2. This is a fusion of Arabic influenced beats fused with laid back Western electronica.

Listening took place using a Clearaudio Master Solution / Benz Micro Wood SL / Leema Acoustics Agena phono stage combination, and the Leema Antilla CD player. Power ampls included a pair of Icon Audio 845 valve monoblocks and a Leema Hydra II solid-stater, powering my Chario Ursa Major loudspeakers. Needless to say I also tried them all through my pair of Quad 303 solid-state power amps bi-amping my Kelly KT3s as well. Cabling for the latter was by Atlas Cables, and for the former system using my Philosophy Cables loom. Mains was fed through either an Isotek Titan or Isotek Sigmas.

THE CONTENDERS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manufacturer</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creek</td>
<td>OBH-22</td>
<td>£338</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Icon Audio</td>
<td>LA4</td>
<td>£799</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PrimaLuna</td>
<td>Prologue 3</td>
<td>£1,590</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyrus</td>
<td>PRE-XP / PSX-R</td>
<td>£1,925</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrocompaniet</td>
<td>EC4.7</td>
<td>£1,930</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MF Audio</td>
<td>Classic V2 Silver</td>
<td>£4,500</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CREEK OBH-22 £338

The passive OBH-22 is relatively tiny, measuring a mere 150x100x66mm and weighing 610 grams. This polished alloy fronted, extruded aluminium box contains a 27mm Alps Blue Velvet motorised potentiometer alongside two gold plated relays for source switching and a muting relay that shorts the signal to ground when active. None of the relays are in the signal path. A micro controller decodes the infra-red signals from the SRC2 handset, and turns itself off after each operation to avoid any sonic degradation.

Power for this switchgear is provided by a plug in wall-transformer: Without it, volume can still be adjusted manually, but only the Line 1 input can be utilised. When power is present a green LED lights up over the appropriate input button. To the right of the volume control is the mute button. The back is packed with RCA phono sockets for the two line level inputs, the tape loop and the output, alongside the power input.

SOUND QUALITY
I started off with Zouge 2 and spent a pleasant seventy minutes immersed in an interesting mixture of sampled sounds and Middle Eastern wind and percussion instruments. The OBH-22 tackled the rhythms with zest and I found myself focusing on the complex patter of tabla and hand drum as they panned between the two speakers. The sonic image was a reasonable size, although it didn’t extend beyond the speaker boundaries. Neither did it extend forward very much, seeming to go backwards instead into a large and cavernous space.

This became more obvious when playing the ‘Aida’ piece. The stereo spread of the chorus seemed to extend away from me, with the orchestra in front but again I was aware of an open space between me and the front edge of the soundstage. The scale of the piece was portrayed, veering from the grandiloquence of the massed orchestra and choir, down to just the strings during the ballet sequence, but I felt that the expected impact of the orchestra and chorus striking up again afterwards was a little muted.

I liked the Creek OBH-22. It offers practical facilities and remote control, allied to a detailed and easy flowing sound. Ultimately I felt that it erred on the side of good manners in its nature, sometimes leaving me wanting a little extra slam in the dynamic of the music. However, it offers great performance at the price in a practical package, and has set a high standard for the rest to match. There’s very little that even comes close for the money, so if only minimal inputs are needed then many will surely choose this.

MEASURED PERFORMANCE
Testing revealed why we argue about this device and why opinions differ: it rolls off upper treble, heard as a slightly warm sound. At 2 o’clock of the volume control frequency response reaches just 15kHz (-1dB), quite a surprise. The reason is a high value potentiometer of 100k is used inside, allowing parallel capacitance to load the output at half volume, when output impedance is highest - a classic problem. At lower and higher volume settings the effect lessens.

Although high value resistors are noisy (Johnson noise) the OBH-22 produced a maximum of just 2.5uV (IEC A weighted) at half volume. Separation was 80dB, distortion negligible (0.00007%) but this is our Rohde & Schwarz analyser measuring itself and overload does not exist. Gain was exactly x1, meaning no gain is available as is to be expected.

The OBH-22 has rolled down treble and this will give it a warm sound, but the effect is volume control position dependent in degree. Our analysis shows the worst case result.

NK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency response</td>
<td>0Hz-15kHz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separation</td>
<td>80dB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noise (e.i.n.)</td>
<td>2.5µV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distortion</td>
<td>0.00007%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain</td>
<td>x1 (9dB)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overload</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FREQUENCY RESPONSE

NG
Leicester based Icon Audio have established a reputation for making affordable valve amplifiers for the past decade. The first LA4 introduced some five years ago was a solidly made all triode circuit design that includes valve rectification, using a Western Electric designed 274B, and the 6SN7 double triode for the amplification. This is the latest incarnation; housed in a robust 250x370x230mm alloy and steel chassis, it boasts an Alps Blue Pot motorised volume control, dual choke power supply, DC heater supply, what are described as 'audiophile' polypropylene audio capacitors (Jensens are available for another £200 over the £799 list price) and high quality 2W metal film and wire wound resistors.

The internal wiring is with silver Teflon coated cable, and the valve holders are ceramic. An optional acrylic valve cover is available for an extra £50.

The LA4 MKII is nicely proportioned all round as a valve preamplifier. It measures well and copes with most situations. NK

### Frequency response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2Hz-200kHz</td>
<td>77dB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Separation

-98dB

### Noise

0.0003% on Low and 0.004% on High, all second harmonic.

Like any good valve preamp the output swing was vast at 38V, making overload headroom enormous all round. Bandwidth was very wide too, the -1dB frequency response stretching from 2Hz - 200kHz, unaffected by volume control position. Input noise (A weighted) was 2.8uV at High and Low gain settings, or -91dB below a 100mV input signal — very low.

The LA4 MKII is nicely proportioned all round as a valve preamplifier.
Do you love life and value that special "je ne sais quoi"?

Then you should get to know the Chrono SL Series. These loudspeakers offer stylish luxury with outstanding sound quality and just a hint of extravagance. At the same time they set new standards in their class for components and craftsmanship. Diamond-machined aluminium trim rings and the lavish cabinet are just one element of the Chrono SL Series. Outstanding sound properties and a huge acoustic range complete the story.

"This is such a beautifully styled, finished and presented loudspeaker, it clearly comes from a major brand with plenty of muscle."

"Voices in general and speech, in particular, sound very clear and articulate, even when the speakers are playing very quietly."

"Image focus and lateral positioning is exceptionally precise."

Hi-Fi Choice

See us at The Bristol Show
Room 412

For you nearest dealer please see www.UKcanton.com or call 0208 3589 593
Established in 2003, Prima Luna are based in Holland and are the brain child of high-end distributor Herman van den Dungen. Along with designer Marcel Croese (previously with Goldmund) and Dominique Chenet (ex-Jadis), he has built up a range of amplifiers across two levels, of which the Prologue series are the less expensive. Despite this I could find no signs of poor quality in the finish or fit of components. The heavy gauge steel chassis was hand finished with five coats of a charcoal colour with odd metallic flecks in it. The front panel can be had in either this charcoal colour or in a silver finish. The casework measures 395x280x190mm and the complete unit weighs in at 12.7kg.

The circuit is a dual mono, non inverting design with no global feedback, fitted with 2x 12AX7s, 2x 12AU7s and 2x 5AR4 valves, the latter being the rectifiers. Volume is controlled by an Alps Blue Velvet Potentiometer. As with the LA4, ceramic valve sockets are specified, this time along with Nichicon, Solen and Swellong capacitors. The preamp is shipped ready to accept the optional onboard moving magnet, solid state, phono stage, which can be retrofitted at any time.

SOUND QUALITY
From the moment the needle hit the groove of Aida', I was aware that this was a very different beast to the Icon Audio. The sound had a darker hue, being very richly textured and detailed. The performers seemed more rooted to the ground than they did with the LA4, accompanied by the powerful rumble and roar of the timpani which extended very low indeed. Whether there really was more bass output from this preamp than the LA4 I don't know, but the sensation, caused, I think by the darker and richer flavour of the sound, gave that impression.

Moving over to CD and the Prologue 3 disentangled the complex rhythms of 'Arabesque' and presented them for analysis. I felt that there was more colour in this sound than from the LA4, but less in the way of filigree detailing and shape. Turning to the Fats Waller LP and I came to the conclusion that this preamp likes to show off recordings, and is prepared to flatter them a little. The energy in 'Dinah' was beautifully portrayed, but I felt that there was a little too much richness and perhaps a touch of voluptuousness in the sound, which, in a full bodied sounding system might prove too much.

Overall then the Prima Luna Prologue delivers a very good performance at its price, but will require a degree of careful auditioning and/or partnering; it's a warm sounding device for those who want precisely this. It's less neutral than the far cheaper Creek and Icon Audio preamps but doesn't comprehensively better them; rather it offers a different take on the music which some may prefer.

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The Prima Luna Prologue 3 measured flat across the audio band, an upper limit of 67kHz ensuring RF is not amplified. Gain was useful at x4 (12dB) maximum, but there is no phono stage and external stages will need to have quite high gain to work with this lowish maximum value, at least double the usual x100/x1000 values.

There was both input distortion (i.e. in the stages before the volume control) and output distortion (i.e. in the stages after the volume control), which leads to a complex distortion scenario, but with 2V in (e.g. from a CD player) and 1V out to a power amplifier, distortion measured a high 1.3% but comprised mainly second harmonic our analysis shows. This will not be obviously audible, as it takes a good 5% or more before timbre is lightened slightly, something that is very difficult to detect.

The Prologue 3 measured well enough in all areas and should give a good sound. NK

VERDICT
Dark and rich sounding valve preamplifier that's ideal for brighter power amplifiers and/or speakers.

PRIMA LUNA PROLOGUE 3
Pistol Music
(0) 20 8971 3909
www.pistolmusic.co.uk

FOR
- smooth, solid sound
- large soundstage
- deep bass

AGAINST
- over full for some systems
Furutech a (Alpha) OCC Pure Transmission conductors terminated with beautifully-engineered high performance rhodium-plated connectors. The substantially-built extremely nonresonant connector bodies are finished in layered carbon fiber and nonmagnetic stainless steel providing improved mechanical damping for greater resolution, clarity, and powerful dynamics.

FP-1363-S
FP-1363-D
High End Performance BS-1363 wall sockets with Pure Copper conductors. Rhodium or Gold plated.

FI-UK1363(R)
FI-UK1363(G)
High End Performance UK mains plug, straight or angled.

Furutech Co., Ltd. Tokyo Japan
service@furutech.com www.furutech.com

Introducing Alpha Design Labs
Furutech is justifiably proud of its reputation for engineering, build quality and performance, and has won the loyal support of audio enthusiasts worldwide for their finely made and beautiful sounding cables and audio accessories. Now Furutech greatly expands its reach with a new entry-level line called ADL (Alpha Design Labs). ADL was created by Furutech to imbue its Pure Transmission Technology into carefully engineered innovative designs that everyone can afford. ADL components and cables are made with the same dedication to total resonance control and refinement as all of Furutech’s many cables and accessories.

ADL GT40 USB DAC with Phono stage!
The GT40 records vinyl and other analog sources at 16/44.1 or 24/96 using its bidirectional USB connection and switchable Line, Phono MM/MC analog inputs, plus it features L/R analog outputs, a separate headphone amplifier, gold-plated Teflon-insulated RCA jacks in a high-quality aluminum chassis with a beautifully machined volume knob. CD Redbook 16/44.1 and especially 24/96 files reveal a vivid, captivating sound unheard of at this price.

Alpha design Labs Tokyo Japan
service@adl-av.com www.adl-av.com
CYRUS PRE-XP/PSX-R £1,925

The Pre-XP and PSX-R power supply are both housed in compact magnesium casework, diecast by Husquevana of Norway and measuring 73x215x360mm. The preamp weights 4kg and the PSX-R is 6kg. This power supply contains a 300VA toroidal transformer with 30,000 microfarad slotted foil reservoir capacitors. Plugged in via the attached chord, the PSX-R takes over supplying power to the audio circuits of the component that it’s connected to. In this case, the twin transformers in the Pre then take on only switchgear and display duties. The effect on the sound is very noticeable, with bass extending deeper and seeming faster, as well as the general levels of detail and separation improving. The front panel of the Pre-XP features two buttons for scrolling up or down the input selection. There is also a button labelled Zone 2, and one marked Setup which accesses the menu to allow for equalising input levels, assigning names to inputs and adjusting the display. This covers information about source choice and volume setting. The Zone 2 setting operates a remote amplifier based in another room, but sharing the same source components.

SOUND QUALITY

Via the preamp’s built-in DAC, with direct digital feeds from my MacBook, the results were very good and served to demonstrate the limitations of the DACs supplied in the Mac. I also tried the Antilla CD player’s DAC against the Cyrus’s own, using the Antilla as a transport. The results were creditable but not up to the standard as the Leema - hardly surprising considering the price differential. However, if you are running an older or cheaper CD or DVD player this is a very sensible way of improving the sound without have to replace the player.

Moving to the analogue inputs and I settled down with a Harry Belafonte on LP. I particularly enjoy both the ‘Jamaica Farewell’ and his version of ‘Danny Boy’. Both are slow, quiet numbers that focus on the vocals with minimal backing. Here they were taken apart and displayed with superb levels of detail, but without some of the richness of emotion that the previous three preamps had managed. The sound was cooler, and less involving because of it; some may prefer this more dispassionate take on things, especially with over coloured ancillaries.

So here’s a very well conceived, specified and made preamp, one that’s designed for those with a multiplicity of sources, and quite complex systems. The Cyrus gives a very clean, straightforward sound that’s polished and detailed but not the most romantic. If this blend of attributes is what you seek, this is an essential audition.

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

Frequency response 1Hz-200kHz
Separation 99dB
Noise (e.i.n.) 4μV
Distortion 0.005%
Gain x2/6dB (x6 max)
Overload 2.5V out
Frequency response (-1dB) CD 2Hz-21.2kHz
Distortion, 16bit (%) 0dB 0.001
-60dB 0.2
Noise (IEC A) -99dB
Dynamic range 97dB

VERDICT

Sleek and clean sounding compact preamp that’s exceptionally versatile.

CYRUS PRE-XP/PSX-R £1,925
Cyrus Audio Ltd
(+44 (0) 1480 435577
www.cyrus.co.uk

FOR
- detailed, pacey sound
- design, build, finish
- multiple inputs
- highly versatile

AGAINST
- too cerebral for some
ELECTROCOMPANIET EC4.7 £1,930

Established in Norway in 1973, Electrocompaniet make a wide range of premium electronics, and the EC4.7 preamp sits in the middle. It's a line level-only device offering six inputs, one of which can be in balanced XLR form. This is a big unit, measuring 483x410x155mm and weighing 8kg. The fascia is thick acrylic, into which are sunk four gold buttons controlling volume and source selection, the latter being displayed in an alphanumeric screen on the left. The volume position is noted by a blue light that travels in a circle around the gold E logo in the centre of the panel. These controls are also duplicated on the supplied remote control.

The back houses the array of phono sockets, plus a pair of balanced XLR inputs and outputs. Above the socketry there is a sliding switch to choose the required level of gain from the two settings. The pressed steel casework is finished in a crackle black paint that reminded me of the dashboard of an MGB sports car. It's neat enough but not as sleek as the Cyrus, for example. Internally there is a toroidal transformer and what is described as "a reservoir of capacitance far beyond necessary".

SOUND QUALITY

After the tonal richness of the Prima Luna and the rather colder take on things from the Cyrus, I found yet another presentation of the music with the Electrocompaniet EC4.7, which I'd call lyrical and polished. Playing 'Aida' I found myself more occupied with the melody and flow of the sound, rather than the high drama that the Prima Luna displayed. I would describe the sound as less impactful. There didn't seem to be quite as much bite on the crescendoes of music as the two valve amps managed, yet there was a sweetness to the sound that never let it be less than beguiling. It was never less than very nice to listen to.

Playing the Fats Waller track and I found myself noticing the detail of his fingering of the keys more than I had, but at the expense of a little of the perceived energy and power of the playing. Going over to CD and again I found it was the little bits of shape and detailing around the sounds that caught my ear, taking precedence again over the dynamic of the music. Little details such as the sound of hand bells being jingled, or the alteration of the shape of a drummers hand as it moved over the drum skin, were very clearly displayed. Such attention to detail meant that the stereo image was very well handled, with lots of shape displayed, yet still I'd have liked a little more solidity behind the sound, rather than the preamp seeming to focus just on delicate detailing. At times the performers felt a little too ethereal; not quite as substantial as I would have liked.

Overall this is a very capable conventionally sized preamplifier with a good range of inputs, and (for some) the all-important balanced operation; if the rest of your system can run balanced this is a real sonic benefit to have a balanced preamp. The Electrocompaniet is by nature a sweet sounding smoothie, just a little too soft, delicate and romantic for some perhaps, but a great many will love it all the same.

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The EC 4.7 has two gain settings, 0dB or no gain, and +9dB or x2.8 gain. The latter is a fairly standard figure and will cope with most sources, being equivalent to a 35mV input sensitivity when feeding a 1V sensitive power amplifier. External phono stages will need healthy gain to match, around x200 for MM and ten times more for MC.

Input overload was higher than 10V and output swing 21V before overload, so there are no limitations here.

Frequency response was wide, stretching from 1.5Hz up to 90kHz within 1dB limits and distortion very low at 0.0005%. Input noise was 6µV (A weighted), or -84dB below a 100mV input signal.

The EC 4.7 measured well in every area and is likely to have fine sound quality. NK

VERDICT

Versatile, fully balanced design with a very sophisticated and musical sound.

ELECTROCOMPANIET EC4.7 £1,930
Electrocompaniet
(+44(0) 20 8830 5835
www.electrocompaniet.com

FOR
- highly detailed sound
- polished presentation
- musically involving
- fine imaging
- balanced operation

AGAINST
- prosaic finish
MF AUDIO CLASSIC v2 SILVER £4,500

First launched in 2003, the Classic preamplifier can be had in two forms. Either the copper wound variant for £2,200 plus VAT or the silver would version here. The silver in question is in the windings of the transformer which is 99.99% pure; the V2 means this model is fitted with the newer, larger transformers. The casework is a handsome brushed aluminium case measuring 88x216x200mm.

On the front are two large rotary knobs, the left controls the volume via twenty four steps, and the right one, the source selection. At the back are four RCA unbalanced inputs and two XLR balanced ones; there is also a switch to change from 0 to +6dB of gain should you partner this with an insensitive power amplifier. The knobs use Swiss made Elma silver contact rotary switchers, and more 99.99% pure silver cable with PTFE insulation is used for the internal wiring.

SOUND QUALITY
This time I started listening with the Belafonte LPs and the Music First seemed to live up to its name with the most gorgeously open and detailed soundstage of any of the units here. I felt that I was closer to the actual performance than I had been before, with singers and musicians firmly placed on the stage at the Carnegie Hall. The background was the quietest yet, with an inky blackness that still managed to create a perception of the size of the space lost in the darkness. Stage width was impressive, although not quite the biggest that I have heard, that honour goes to the Modwright LS36.5 (with PS 36.5 power supply) that I reviewed in the May 2010 edition of this magazine.

Moving to 'Aida' and the level of detail that fell out of the speakers was impressive, as was the unforced way in which it was presented. Easy and effortless, the MF Audio just delivered music in a comprehensive manner that seemed just right; the sound was spacious, multilayered, with pinpoint precision in the placing of sounds in front of me, and had a tonal balance that was completely natural.

With 'Arabesque' via CD, I again found myself focusing on the inherent rightness of the sound. Bells tinkled, drums thudded and pipes whistled and droned, each seemingly correct in its relationship with the sounds surrounding it. My listening notes got a little sketchy here, because I must confess that I got so involved in the music that I forgot the reason that I was listening in the first place. This is the biggest compliment that I could pay this machine; it is simply superb. Although very expensive, the Music First preamp takes sound reproduction to such a level of realism that the very high cost seems completely justified. Very expensive yes, but this preamplifier was added to the group to see what's possible when serious sums are invested.

MEASURED PERFORMANCE
The Music First Audio preamp has a slight lift up in treble at high frequencies, peaking by a small +1dB at 35kHz, before rolling away to -3dB at 100kHz, when set to high gain. This flattened somewhat at half gain, but at all gains (or attenuations) response from 0.15Hz-2kHz was flat, except when feeding a load of less than 5k ohms, when treble started to roll down. As most inputs are 10k or more, this should be acceptable. Input impedances of 1kohms will be too low though.

Distortion was vanishingly low at all frequencies, right up to 10V output, the transformer is very linear, the worst case result being 10V in / 20V out at 40Hz, measuring 0.02%, second harmonic. But this is not a realistic situation.

Gain was exactly zero when set to 0dB and +6dB, x2, when set to +6dB. Noise was low enough at 22V. The Music First Audio preamp measures very well in all areas. NK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FREQUENCY (Hz)</th>
<th>THD</th>
<th>DISTORTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1kHz</td>
<td>0.02%</td>
<td>0.0002%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3kHz</td>
<td>0.06%</td>
<td>0.002%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VERDICT
Superb preamplifier that lets the rest of your system make hay. Clever transformer design gives balanced operation with gain. Expensive, but not over-priced for its performance.

FOR
- superbly clean and detailed
- excellent soundstaging
- shimmering treble
- balanced operation & gain

AGAINST
- price, sadly...

Group Test
“Hart, We Love Sound!”

The Hart EVO1 Dual Monitor Modular Loudspeaker

“Hart has delivered a true high sensitivity speaker without the difficulties inherent with horn systems. No wonder the Quad amp sounded so sweet”

September 8th, 2010
by Jason Kennedy
Source: HiFi+

See the full review, gallery and prices at www.hartaudio.com or telephone + 44 (0)1983 612 924
Give 'em a google too!
apply, this group didn't have any nasty surprises; essentially we had a mixture of passive, active tube and active solid-state preamplifiers and they all justified their position in life. What they did to is to cater to quite different audiences, which I'll try to demonstrate as I run through each machine individually.

Given the wide variety of prices here, any order of merit has to be based both on sonics first and foremost, but with value a key consideration too. However, others might conclude differently if they place the emphasis more on size, build, upgradeability and flexibility; as ever it's ultimately down to each customer's individual requirements.

So, at number six in overall quality was the Creek OBH-22. This is not damning with faint praise, but rather a testament to the capabilities of this unassuming little box that it can stand comparison with preamps costing between twice and well over ten times as much. In terms of the sound per pound you get, this is the winner, as it gives an open, detailed and accessible sound without the muddle of so many cheap preamplifiers. For the price it is peerless, but in outright terms it is beaten by the other (more expensive) competitors...

Next up was the Electrocompaniet EC4.7. I enjoyed its delicacy and detailing; it's svelte, cough, subtle and musical in a way that few price rivals are and it has the benefit of balanced operation which brings a more solid and punchy sound. However, via RCA phono I still wasn't entirely convinced about the substance of what I was listening to. If you generally play mellow melodic music then this will serve you well, but if you like a bit more passion and intensity in your sound you might do better to look to the fuller sounds of others here.

Coming from almost the opposite direction is the next runner up, the Cyrus Pre-XP and PSX-R combination. This is unbeatable in terms of facilities on offer and upgrades. I found the sound quite cool and even handed, but for my taste, a little too controlled, I like a bit of colour and fire in my sound, and whilst the Cyrus combination gave a very detailed and incisive rendition of whatever was played through it, I found that it didn't engage me emotionally as much as the next contender, which is....

The Prima Luna Prologue 3, which was all fire and intensity. Enjoyable but occasionally overpowering, the sound was deeply hued and very full bodied, but with a dark and slightly mysterious edge to it. If you imagine the voluptuousness of Nigella Lawson crossed with the gothic intensity of Morticia Adams and I think you have the sound of the Prologue 3! It was very enjoyable, with textures that you could run your fingers through, and sounds that had enough substance that you almost felt that you could eat them. However, I sensed that there was a slight tendency to over play things a little, and it seemed that a little honesty got lost in the process. This seemed a forgiving and somewhat flattering unit, which will make many friends, but proved just a little to full-bodied for my taste buds.

The second place winner is the Icon Audio LA4. Here I felt that the tonal balance was better maintained. Where there was colour on the sound, it was shown, but it wasn't as 'full-fat' as the Prima Luna had been, striking a more defined line between pace, shape and detail. Add in the fact that it is roughly half the price of the Prima Luna and it is something of an audiophile bargain. The substantial remote control is effective and the whole package is seemingly well put together and finished. Especially as it is the second cheapest unit under review here, it offers great sound, solid build and well thought out facilities.

This leaves the number one slot to go to the Music First Classic V2 Silver. In his review of this in the November 2010 issue of Hi-Fi World, David Price felt that a purchaser would have to spend over £7,000 to better its performance, and I would totally agree with this. The sound of this passive transformer preamplifier was unerringly open, expansive, beautifully detailed and tight in its timing and imaging. Without going into the 'silly-money' price tags I can think of nothing around that can better it in overall performance. It's very expensive but in no way exorbitant, I feel.

There's a vast gulf between the high end MF Audio and the budget Creek (excellent as the former is at the price), showing that huge sonic gains are possible by upgrading your preamp – think greater space, scale, depth, power and detail, plus more exuberant rhythms and dynamics...

MF Audio Silver Classic v2; capable of breathtaking sonics, and versatile too. Justifies its lofty price tag!

hugemonic gains are possible by upgrading your preamp – think greater space, scale, depth, power and detail, plus more exuberant rhythms and dynamics...
The brand new A9 is Spendor's latest high end speaker; Noel Keywood listens in...

A

h Spendor — Spencer and Dorothy! Long ago and far away from today's brutally commercial reality an ex-BBC engineer set out to produce a 'proper' loudspeaker, one that was pure and accurate. Spencer Hughes and his wife Dorothy put onto the market the BC1 and it got a great reception around the world. Today we choose to use Spendor S8e loudspeakers as our in-house 'benchmarks' against which other loudspeakers are judged — and they remain effective in this role after several long, hard years. So when Spendor's new A9s reached our offices recently I was eager to hear them.

Hailing from the BBC I don't think Spencer or Dorothy spent too much time listening to the Rolling Stones at that time; Spenders were voiced for classical music and have had an easy demeanor ever since. Forget speedy bass, or that slight crack in the upper midband, Epos style, that gives an impression of speed. Searing treble? Not here please!

For these reasons people are commonly underwhelmed, even disappointed, by the sound of our S8es (we use them as 'benchmarks' not 'references'). And over the years it has become obvious that the S8es suit solid-state amplifiers with a high damping factor; they sound distinctly tubby with valves or Naim's. Conversely, they have proven to be a magic match for our in-house Musical Fidelity AM550 amplifier; it holds their otherwise fulsome bass in an iron like grip whilst they act as a foil to the amplifiers dry, concise delivery, the final result being nothing other than impressive.

What I am identifying here is the intrinsic sound of Spendor's ep38 polymer cone that is clean and well damped, adding not one jot to the sense of upper midband hardness that so many transistor amplifiers display. This is quite unlike metal cones, that can be unfortunate partners for some less svelte transistor amplifiers.

The A9 also uses the ep38 cone material, in the critical midrange unit, affecting vocals and string instruments in particular. The smaller A6 is in fact the successor to our S8es, similarly being a two way loudspeaker. The A9 is designed for better bass handling, having two 180mm Kevlar cone bass units compared to the single ep38 polymer 150mm cone of the bass/midrange unit in the A6. That's quite a lot of cone area and Philip Swift, MD of Spendor, explained to me that he had tried for a more controlled bass than that of earlier models (note: Philip founded Audiolab and designed the 8000A amplifier; read more in Wikipedia).

Cabinet size always helps when we're talking bass and the A9s are quite big, just nudging past the 1 metre height norm; they stand 1030mm high without spikes and 1050 with them. In keeping with their pedigree a range of elegant real wood cabinet veneers are offered and our samples came in a well patterned Light Oak. Construction quality and finish are good, if conventional.

Weighing 27kgs the A9s are movable without difficulty, although as usual spikes complicate the issue a bit and alternative rubber or PVC feet are not an option.

This is basically a reflex loudspeaker; a long slot port sits at the bottom of the cabinet's rear face, to load the bass units.
smoothed nicely and needed little more. I gave them more all the same. After forty
eight hours of running in with pink noise, showed they had settled and

settle. Luckily, I know what Spenders sound like, including the STs (April 2010 issue) and the A9s were working properly in the end I feel.

As always, the review was started with our Musical Fidelity AMS50 Class A projector amplifier, one of the few transistor amplifiers that sounds as if it is working properly.

All the same, the AMS50 was perfect with our SB6s, offering redemption for their fulsome bass by holding it in a grip of steel, I did in the end drift away from the AMS50 to our Musical Fidelity MB845 Mklls for good reason. Treble from the A9s could be a little astringent at times and the AMS50 did nothing to hide the fact. The MB845s, that with other loudspeakers I have described as “almost soft”, helped lessen this effect. But even with the MB845 Mklls driving the A9s, damped ride cymbal hissed at me on Alison Goldfrapp’s ‘Fly Me Away’. This is an effect I remember from the ST and is Spendor’s view of how treble should be balanced relative to all else — which for me is too obvious to result in total happiness. But Alison Goldfrapp’s voice was clear as a bell, and even if a little sibilant at times, intensely detailed all the same. Raised treble sent forth waves of information and this gave the A9s a deeply insightful nature, synth rasping viciously in ‘Koko’ as Ms Goldfrapp went about her business of information and this gave the A9s a sense of dynamic contrast, placing a large and convincingly real orchestra

on the ‘Supernature’ CD.

Spender talk about the A9s sounding “fast” — not a phrase Spencer or Dorothy would have used methinks — and this they do. The high clarity of the s38 polymer midrange unit gives vocals a naturalness that I love and strong treble seemingly lifts speed and incision. Exactness where to draw the balance in this sort of trade off is an artistic decision made by the designer and Spendor’s is heading into modernity, shall I say. Even within a gentle song like Eleanor McEvoy’s ‘Just for the Tourists’ from ‘I’d Rather Go Blonde’ there was some obvious sibilance and in the opening of ‘I’d Rather Go Blonde’ the violin Eleanor plays so vigorously, as we saw and heard when she played live at the UK’s 2010 Whittlebury Audio Show, had a shriek that was challenging — and unlike the real

SOUND QUALITY

Listening to the A9s quickly as delivered, and then after forty eight hours of running in with pink noise, showed they had settled and

"the A9 has a wonderful midband and some of the best bass you'll hear from a loudspeaker of this type..."
EXCELLENCE VALUE DESIRABILITY

Inspire Hi-Fi

Presents
eclipse SE V2

TURNTABLE

FOR TWELVE INCH ARMS

IMPROVED TRACKING. AMAZING SOUNDS. STUNNING LOOKS

STRICTLY NO RETAIL MARK UP - SAVING YOU THOUSANDS OF £££'

QUITE SIMPLY - CHEAPER AND BETTER THAN THE REST!

"Ignore the price tag - the Eclipse sev2 12" is designed and manufactured to perform
(like our other turntables) BETTER than turntables at SEVERAL TIMES THE PRICE.
Book your Demo now (home appointments available). It brings a whole new meaning to
analogue reproduction - nothing added - nothing taken away... quite refreshing really!"

Robert Isherwood - Managing Director - Inspire Hi-Fi Ltd.

Also available with other 12 inch arms such as Audio
Origami PU7 12 and SME V12 - Ask for very special price

Part Exchange

We can take you old
turntable as part
payment!

www.inspirehifi.co.uk

Apollo TURNTABLE
eclipse SE TURNTABLE
eclipse SE TURNTABLE

vivid kit for Linn LP12 Turntables

World Radio History
big hit with the A9 is bass quality. From a slightly smaller cabinet the A9s manage the same sort of expressiveness as Triangle's Antals I reviewed last month. They have obvious bass power and are as tight and controlled as anything on the market today. Interestingly, bass quality was identical with the high damping factor AMSS0 transistor amplifier and the low damping factor MB845 valve amplifiers, suggesting they rely more on acoustic and magnetic damping within the loudspeaker itself than electrical damping presented by the amplifier. And that's good.

The A9s run low but keep the lows under good control so there's no waffle. This helped stabs of heavy synthesizer bass from 'Monster' push out firmly into our listening room, whilst Lady GaGa chimed out clearly centrestage. Always grippy, they beat out Led Zeppelin's 'Heartbreaker' with an insight I am unused to. It was breathtaking to hear those classic guitar riffs thrust out so clearly. Cymbal crashes were a little lively, but Bonham's drumming was perfectly captured.

It was with my usual bass test, the emphasised walking bass lines in Angelique Kidjo CDs, that the A9s were superb. They have no resonant lift, just an even delivery of bass notes across the scale from high right down to the lowest, with near perfect grip and power. The A9's bass is both powerful and fast. Lone strikes against a drum bass were strong, but not overly large, and the repeated low bass notes in 'Wombo Lombo' were handled with perfect control.

Spendor move up to the top of the league here; the A9s deliver bass that defines what is possible from a box of this size. I strongly suspect their bass drivers are very well proportioned for the task, because the lack of change in perceived bass quality between our amplifiers is unique to date and suggests better drive units than is common. Like the Antals, they had expressive bass, bass that you could say had detail, rather than being a mellifluous outline description of what was being played. Also, bass was tight enough and in suitable proportion to all else to allow near-wall-positioning in a room.

CONCLUSION
Spender's new A9 is one impressive loudspeaker. It offers a more modern take on sound quality than Spencer or Dorothy would recognise, yet it still has a wonderful midband and some of the best bass you'll hear from a loudspeaker of the type. Spender remain attuned to good engineering principles. Only the tweeter warrants remarking on, its lively nature meaning that buyers should make sure they've got a smooth front end and/or amplifier for best results. So the A9 is a very well developed loudspeaker with impressive ability, and proves well worth auditioning, whether you like Classical music like Spencer and Dorothy, or prefer Lady GaGa instead!

REVIEW

www.spendoraudio.com

SPENDOR A9 £3,995

CONCLUSION

Spender's new A9 is one impressive loudspeaker. It offers a more modern take on sound quality than Spencer or Dorothy would recognise, yet it still has a wonderful midband and some of the best bass you'll hear from a loudspeaker of the type. Spender remain attuned to good engineering principles. Only the tweeter warrants remarking on, its lively nature meaning that buyers should make sure they've got a smooth front end and/or amplifier for best results. So the A9 is a very well developed loudspeaker with impressive ability, and proves well worth auditioning, whether you like Classical music like Spencer and Dorothy, or prefer Lady GaGa instead!

MEASURED PERFORMANCE
Our stepped sine frequency response analysis shows a smooth characteristic down to 30Hz, albeit with a lift around 10kHz sufficient to add brightness to the sound, when measuring between mid and tweeter. Measuring on the midrange axis, phase matching was insufficient to avoid a deep phase notch appearing between mid and treble units.

A pink noise analysis carried out at various distances and heights showed the A9's bass extends down to subsonic frequencies, the port exciting a room mode at 24Hz for example. This is attributable to a peak in port output at 24Hz (see the red trace), the port providing bass below 70Hz, our red port trace shows. A pink noise analysis also suggested quite a light bass balance; this is not a bass heavy loudspeaker. But the subsonic peak will add 'heft'.

The impedance trace is impressively flat in basic trend, especially at low frequencies, meaning low reactance and even current draw from amplifiers, and this indicates good acoustic/magnetic damping and quite a tight or well controlled bass quality. There is no sign of under-damped boominess, or the lively bass quality this produces, and near wall placement may suit the A9. The 200mS decay spectrum was fairly clean, with some overhang at 280Hz and 80Hz.

Sensitivity was reasonable at 87dB, if not as high as many modern floorstanders that reach 96dB. One reason is use of a 7 Ohm DCR bass unit, where most are 4 Ohms and draw more amplifier power. Overall impedance measured a high 9.6 Ohms as a result and this is a true 8 Ohm loudspeaker, where most nowadays are 6 Ohms at most. Amplifiers of 60 Watts per channel are needed.

Bass distortion below 80Hz was higher than usual from the drivers, rising to 7% at 40Hz, but unusually low from the port, around 1%, down to 25Hz, as the port does most work at low frequencies these results bode well. From 100Hz to 6kHz distortion hovered around 0.3%, a normal enough result.

The A9 has an even tonal balance. It is likely to have an obvious subsonic kick, dry, well controlled and clean lower bass and an airy sounding midband, but some treble turbulence. UK

FREQUENCY RESPONSE

IMPEDEANCE

<www.spendoraudio.com>
On The Button

Teac's feature-festooned A-R650 amplifier promises a big bang for just a few bucks. Paul Rigby tries it for size.

Fans of true comedy will be familiar with one Anthony Aloysius St John Hancock, resident of 23 Railway Cuttings, East Cheam and the TV version of his highly successful radio series. Called simply, 'Hancock', it featured one of his best loved episodes called the 'Radio Ham' in which the lad was surrounded by boxes of complex amateur radio equipment, through which he would chat to fellow enthusiasts from around the world. The kit itself was full of switches and knobs, glowing dials and bits and bobs. If you look carefully, in scene two, when Hancock is in the middle of talking to a chap in Tokyo, just to the left of him on the desk, is a black box packed with dials. A busy, busy thing it is too; well, that's the Teac A-R650, that is...

Alright, it isn't. I was being facetious. But I ask you, take a look at this new budget amp from the company and tell me what is the difference between it and one of Hancock's toys? This is so retro that when I connected it up to my reference system to allow it to run in over several days, I almost expected to hear Dave Dee, Dozy, Beaky Mick & Tich warbling from my speakers...

Knob festooned it may be but it's also very well made, considering the low price. It has a fascia quality and finish that is typical of Japanese gear. As for that fascia, it comes with a gamut of facilities including a rotary source selector that, when turned, cycles though six sources including — despite what one popular hi-fi magazine declared during their review — a phono stage. Below the source selector is a brace of buttons to select one or two sets of attached speakers while, to the left, is a power and a standby button; a nice blend of the eco-friendly and convenience. Especially, when many modern appliances only offer a standby button and most hi-fi equipment only provides a power button. Underneath that is a headphone socket.

To the right of the source selector is a Tape 2 button. Again, a nice addition that recognises us Luddite types who still use the little analogue treasures. What might cause a sprinkling of consternation among audiophiles is the inclusion of bass, treble, balance and loudness controls. Most are placed centrally, in full view, standing proudly. It's as if Teac has put them in that place as a dare to anyone to kick up a fuss about it. Okay, I'll bite; why are they there? They degrade the overall sound rather than add to it. As soon as you use the things they warp and malform the sound that staggers its way to your ears and... yada, yada,
"A feisty, dynamic, forceful and spirited performer that's musical and fun to be around..."

Yada well, I suppose the point is that it's a budget device and in the real world people whose lives aren't governed by audiophile considerations, will still find them useful. Fair enough, but I still don't like 'em! I'd advise future owners of this amplifier to ignore them. Then they might go away of their own accord.

Below the Four Knobs Of The Apocalypse is the punch line, Teac's elbow in the ribs, their way of shouting, "gotchla!" Because there, in a swathe of subtle irony, is a Source Direct button that, when depressed, ignores all of the fancy knobs and switches, including the bass/ treble/ balance and loudness, cutting through to the core of the amplifier itself and concentrating on sound only. So, that's all right then. Needless to say, during the listening tests, this button was depressed so that I wouldn't be.

Switching to the rear and we can see two banks of speaker connectors (popular in Europe, apparently) plus outputs for a turntable, tuner, CD player, a tape or a CD recorder bank plus a second tape loop. Remote control sockets are included if you wish to buy the matching Teac CD player and tuner. Weighing in at 9.2kg, the Teac spans a fairly compact (for a Japanese box) 435x142x355mm.

**SOUND QUALITY**

The best way of assessing any piece of hardware — high-end or budget — is first to feed it with the very best source possible, so it can show its true colours, untrammeled by boundaries. Hence, the jazz-infused 'It Could Happen To You' from Diana Krall's LP, "From This Moment On" (Classic) was spun up on my reference Avid vinyl source. I initially tested the effectiveness of the Source Direct button. With it engaged, the Teac displayed more focus and detail around the vocal delivery while detail was more insightful and relaxed. The soundstage also magically transformed from two to three dimensions.

Generally however, the Teac did struggle to cope with the sheer amount of information that was being thrust upon it. My top end Avid turntable highlighted the Teac's slightly bright tonality, even via my valve-based phono preamplifier. Krall's vocal suffered from sibilance and, while bass was powerful and punchy, and upper mid frequencies were quite exciting via the extra bite applied to plucked strings, cymbals suffered from being too well lit.

Despite these initial problems, the Teac proved to be musical, lifting the mood and adding 'swing', making you want to move and dance with the rhythm.

The decision was made, therefore, to 'downgrade' to a Project Essential turntable, priced at around £150. The Pro-Ject's less detailed approach gave the Teac a way around those problem areas accentuated by the Avid deck. Vocal detail was reduced which eased the pressure on the wee amp to perform, while upper midrange information was less demanding, meaning that the Teac sounded less strained as it was asked to decrease its workload. So I'd recommend a competent budget turntable with the Teac, one which will still produce plenty of pleasure for analogue fans but not push this amp too hard. I'd also suggest running it into the amp's onboard phono stage.

As it transpired, my Icon Audio PS3 reference phono amp rather overwhelmed the Teac, causing it to sound strained. However, the Teac's own phono stage is quite perky and light on its feet for the price, keeping all areas of the soundstage in check and performing to an admirable standard. It's more than an afterthought, and suits the rest.
THE ROCK
TRUE FIDELITY...

FAST, ACCURATE, DETAILED

2 WAY ACTIVE MONITOR | BESPOKE TRUE CLASS A/B 100 WATT TIM DE PARAVICINI E.A.R. DISCRETE AMPLIFIER
CLOSED CABINET DESIGN | CORIAN FRONT BAFLE. HIGHLY POLISHED BLACK FINISH | GRADED & MATCHED COMPONENTS
2.3MM OFC VDC CYROGENIC SPEAKER HOOK-UP CABLE | 50KHZ FOLDING RIBBON TWEETER | 7½/180MM WOOFER
BALANCED XLR INPUT | UN-BALANCED RCA GOLD PLATED PHONO INPUT | PIANO BLACK HIGH GLOSS FINISHED
BALTIC BIRCH 9 PLY PLYWOOD CABINET | 11.2KG EACH | 290MM DEEP x 22MM WIDE x 325MM HIGH | BRUTALLY HONEST

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL UNITY AUDIO ON 01440 785843
F: 01440 785845  E: SALES@UNITYAUDIO.CO.UK  WWW.UNITYAUDIOPRODUCTS.CO.UK

SEE US AT THE BRISTOL SHOW - ROOM 316
of the amp, and similarly priced ancillaries, well.

In keeping with the notion of the Teac cutting its cloth to suit its style I then dropped my Quad ESL-57s and, instead, hooked up a pair of Mordaunt-Short Aviano I speakers (£200). With these budget speakers installed, the Teac made more sense. Being better matched and more confident, the Teac seemed to relax. Yes, vinyl still had that Alka-Seltzer treble (‘plink, plink, fizz’) but the bass seemed more integrated with the mid frequencies, making their output more cohesive and coherent. Also, Krall’s vocals benefited from not being examined under such a strong Quad spotlight.

Switching to rock and Kasabian’s ‘Shot The Runner’ from the album, ‘Empire’ (Columbia) improved the response even more. Rock blended well with the Teac’s penchant for reverb. In fact, with rock infused within its guts, the Teac was a very different machine indeed. Gone was the rather nervous, hesitant analogue transistor; to be replaced by this confident, swaggering macho hulk. In the digital domain, rock freed the Teac, encouraging bass to bounce like a manic squash court player while midrange and treble – while hardly incisive – offered enough information to genuinely excite the ear. Treble sounded more comfortable, no tizzy fizzies were heard and the lifted mids sounded more natural.

Finally, the included headphone stage was tested, sounding just as lively and happy as the Teac phono stage. Tested via a pair of Sennheiser HD650s, the headphone amp is well matched to the rest of the amp. Vinyl playback was relaxed and at ease with life while CD replay was lively, punchy and full of vigour.

CONCLUSION

The Teac A-R650 should not be viewed as a long term purchase for those looking to build a hi-fi with an ambitious upgrade path, as it’s not happy when matched with higher-end equipment. In fact, it performs better with like minded elements in the same hi-fi price bracket. Given compatible equipment to work with however, the Teac is a feisty, dynamic, forceful and spirited performer that is musical and fun to be around. You can’t say fairer than that; the company has obviously voiced it to work well within its comfort zone, so when matched with good similarly priced ancillaries, it really impresses. It’s only if you’re looking for a budget priced high end wonder that you’ll be disappointed. So I recommend careful auditioning to get the best out of it. When you do find those other boxes that ‘click’ with the Teac then break out the champers because you’ll have a hell of a party.
MAIL

TEAC VRDS-10, a lovely, big sounding, 18bit behemoth.

401 in a very solid heavy plinth. This has a Jelco 250ST arm with a Grado cartridge. I also have a Trichord phono stage. The amplifier is Icon Audio Stereo 40 and 'speakers are Tannoy 1 Sin Monitor Golds in Lancaster cabinets.

I also use a Leak Troubridge 3 tuner. I have about 1500 LPs.

I have thought about changing my very cheap CD player and will buy secondhand. What would fit in with my system? I could pay up to £500 if it was worth it. I am not familiar with current CD players but I need one as I own about 300 CDs.

Please keep up the excellent articles on vintage hi-fi and I like to hear about other people's systems.

David Oxtoby

Hi David — well as ever you've so much choice if it's 'up to' £500! If it's 'very cheap', then look out for a good used Marantz CD52SE for around £70, which is a surprisingly smooth and open performer; albeit a little light in the bass. Moving up by £100 and the CD63 KI Signature is a great machine; still lovely after all these years. A big, smooth, open and unerringly musical sound. At this £150 pricepoint the Cambridge Audio CD45E also appears; it's a John Westlake design and he tells me he's still surprised by how good it sounds. I bought one for my brother fifteen years ago and he still loves it. It's odd, hearted, bouncy and slick in the treble, considering it cost just £200 in the late nineties. Add another £100 or so and we're into TEAC VRDS-10 territory; lovely big sounding 18bit behemoths with the added bonus of still having user serviceable parts, at least the last time I checked! There's also the likes of Marantz's CD-72 at this price, which is another really well made machine with a wide, sweet sound. By the time you're getting up to £500-600 then look for modern machines now surplus to requirements; we'd suggest a three year old Astin Trew AT3500 is a really nice way to unload this sort of dosh.

Hope this helps! DP

IMPEDANCE MATCHING

Today, I received the February 2011 edition of Hi-Fi World and as per usual, perused the Readers Classifieds, before proceeding to the Letters pages, which — as usual — were a mine of information and ideas, but which — again as usual — left me with more questions than answers as to my own system.

The first query regards impedance matching of my Quad 57 'speakers and WAD KSB81 Mk2 power amp.

Since I acquired these items some years ago, the Quads have been connected to the WAD via the 8 Ohm connections, as that is how the amp was configured when I bought it. At various times since then I have read that the Quads needed to be connected to the 16 Ohm terminals; whereas, others say to the 8 Ohm terminals. Just recently, I have read that they should be connected to 4 Ohm terminals.

Naturally, this becomes confusing to those of us who don't have the electronic background, to fully understand these things.

Today, on Page 51 of Letters, under the item "Violins Etc. Part 3", Noel advises Peter Inghels of The Hague that he should connect his 6 Ohm Tannoyas to the 4 Ohm terminals of a Quad valve amp, as they will cope with even the 1 Ohm of an electrostatic speaker.

Given that the 57s are regarded as a very difficult load to drive — apparently drawing anywhere between 2 and 32 Ohms — would it be appropriate for the Thorens, as it is clearly too heavy for the suspension. I haven't been able to get it to bounce properly, despite fitting — and removing again — Linn LP12 springs.

I also have a Denon DP2000 Direct Drive turntable, which I was given two years ago, but which is still waiting to be used. In addition, I also have a Goldenberg GL75 — minus its arm — but the chassis has previously been butchery, by someone trying to fit another arm. Apart from a flat on the idler wheel, which induces wow, it appears to be in very good condition.

My problem is trying to decide whether to buy another arm for the Thorens — possibly a Jelco SA 750D, or Jelco 250ST, with a view to using a better cartridge — or building a chassis for the Denon DP2000 and sticking the Rega on that. I do know that the Denon runs absolutely spot-on, even with 180gm vinyl and the Rega/1042 in the groove.

Because my RB300 is now 16 years old, I have been trying to decide whether to have it overhauled and upgraded by Audio Origami, or to buy a Rega clone. Duo-Phonic are currently pushing the ISOkinetic ISO 700 and Rega ISOweight for 390 smackers. Obviously, I wouldn't consider putting it on the Thorens. Alternatively, the Michell Technoarm.
Hi Russ — firstly, I’m sure Noel will advise you on which taps are best to use for your ESL-57s. Let me say I think you’re doing the right thing getting them ‘One Thing’d; the One Thing ESL-57s I lived with for several months were one of the best speakers I’d heard in a long time. Second, I’d be tempted to get the RB300 rebuilt; there’s no point in buying another if you already have one. As you know I think Audio Origami do this superbly and so I’d send mine straight off. I’d also suggest the Denon as the better deck to use for your ESL-57s. Let me say to you. Noel will tell you that the Denon is perfectly healthy; some parts are no longer easily available, I am told. So, get the Denon replinthed and serviced (including a change of bearing oil, etc.), fit the AO RB300 and use a ‘loppy’ cartridge like an Audio Technica AT-0C9 moving coil. This done you’ll have a lovely front end with a lively balance that will suit your ears, and your speakers.

**Send your ESL-57s to One Thing Audio to have them renovated/Improved.**

In your opinion, given the above decks, which would you choose — and if the Thorens, which of the Jelco arms, or can you think of a better arm for it? Please note, that I am prepared to consider upgrading to a better turntable and arm, but not until I have had the Quad rebuilt, and as that isn’t likely to be before Easter, the turntable upgrade will have to wait until much later in the year, due to my limited income — possibly even 2012. I retired seven years ago — on medical grounds — to care for my late father and am just about to start caring for my aged mother, so my finances are somewhat limited at this time.

Any thoughts you may have on the above will be very much appreciated.

Many thanks, once again, for your excellent magazine. Long may you prosper.

Cheers,

**Russ Betts**

**Havant Hants.**

---

**OPTIONS**

I do not expect LPI2 quality as my budget would only be £250 maximum but I would appreciate your guidance on my best course of action. Thanks for a great mag.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Smith
Sheffield

You have two easy options open to you. One is to buy something like an M-Audio Mobile Pre USB (£110 approx), which will record a line level source into your computer, which you can then edit to your heart’s content with the supplied software, or something like Audacity (http://audacity.sourceforge.net/) which is freely downloadable from the internet. You can then burn this to CD on your computer’s DVD-RW drive.

The other way of course is to buy a secondhand CD recorder. All of those late nineties models from Philips, Marantz and Pioneer gave very good sound quality (surprisingly so) in recording mode, but they’re not ideal for playback; basically you’d need to record on them in ‘real time’ then play back the CD-R on a decent hi-fi CD player. This done, you’d get at least as good sonic results as if you’d gone by computer (probably better), but of course the editing/scratch removal possibilities are very limited compared to doing it on computer.

**VINYL TO CD**

I have recently sold my beloved Linn LP12 turntable as I am shortly downsizing my property and wish to save on space taken up by my vinyl collection. I will be saying goodbye to the vinyl, but before I do so I would like to burn copies of the ones I have not bought on CD. My problem is that I am unsure of which way to go about this task as I would like decent sound but also ease of use, without breaking the bank. I have looked in a few shops and also seen ads for software, or something like Audacity which you can then edit to your heart’s content with the supplied software, or something like Audacity (http://audacity.sourceforge.net/) which is freely downloadable from the internet. You can then burn this to CD on your computer’s DVD-RW drive.

My question is regarding cartridges. I have tried the Audio Technica OC9/11 and this is just too bright for my tastes and I have also tried a Dynavector 10X4 which gives me a nice sound but is lacking in the detail I want to hear.

I am at present using a Goldring Eroica L cartridge which, to my ears,
Hi Andrew — I think the Audio Technica AT-33EV (£450) is ideal for your purposes. It’s an interesting mix of the AT-OC9’s detail and incision, with a more benign and beguiling tonality and less upper treble lift. Whilst not exactly dull, it’s certainly quite sweet, and suffers poor recordings far better than the forensic, unforgiving OC9. I believe there’s been some positive discussion of them on the Timestep forum (www.time-step.net). DF

BETTER SPOTIFY
I’m looking to give my nephew a laptop, his first computer just for his own use, for a birthday present, in the early part of next year. As he seems to be genuinely developing an interest in music of various sorts, I am reluctant to just hand this over with the built in speakers — and that’s it. I know Spotify is useful and even an old codger like me can appreciate it (I guess) but having a competent sound is important. He knows about Spotify, and he also uses his father’s old turntable a little to play his dad’s old records, and he also has some CDs etc, etc, but he is also young and computers are really where he is going for sure.

I don’t want to complicate this, but also I don’t want to end up offering him a below par sound either. I know nothing of computer music really, at the moment anyway, and while I don’t want to spend a fortune, I am happy to spend what will make a serious difference, as I believe he will appreciate that, if he loses musical interest and takes up Quantum Mechanics instead, maybe his younger sister will inherit your words of wisdom.

Finally, simplicity must be the key. Over complication will probably not work for either of us.

Thanks guys,
Neil Porter

Hi Neil, well I’m not sure if you want me to recommend a computer as well as a computer sound system? I use an Apple MacBook Pro and find it brilliant for just about everything, including audio purposes, incidentally. Anyway, whatever computer you end up with, take it you want a small compact active speaker system with serious sonics? If so, the B&W MM1 (£400) would be my recommendation. They’re USB designs and have their own built in DAC, which means you’re not at the mercy of the nasty one (that’s likely to be) built into the computer. They have high quality two way drivers, and a decent amp, to give a fast, clean and delicate sound that’s a cut above the usual dire PC speakers. DF

BRENNAN
I came upon this web site http://www.brennan.co.uk/ and saw this device that seems to be a good storage and easy functionality. I own a Quad 34 that seems to be compatible with this device. I would like to know your opinion about it and if it’s really compatible with my Quad.

Thanks for your time,
Jos Carlos Elias

I’ve reviewed the Brennan for the Sunday Times, whilst Patrick Cleasby did it for this magazine, and we both agree that it’s a decent bit of kit, but those used to specialist audio might find it wanting. It’s certainly easy to use, and this is its real strength, but it’s hampered by middling storage (by modern standards) and a limited number of playback formats; you’re only really talking MP3 and WAV, so you can forget about FLAC and AAC, which I think are the two most important (and useful) formats around right now.

Whilst fine in consumer audio terms, the Brennan isn’t really hi-fi, and Quad owners will perhaps find it a little thin and two dimensional sounding, and a touch strident too. It’s a decent little thing, but you’d probably outgrow it fast! DF

CAN YOU HELP?
I am pretty sure all of my kit has received enthusiastic recommendations from you or your reviewers over the years, so I am hoping you can advise on where to go next. I have Spendor SP 9 speakers (with upgraded wiring), Tannoy Super Tweeters, Esoteric 01 D2 CD Player, Musical Fidelity KW 500, Nordost Red Dawn cabling throughout and IsoteK mains filter. Having built up the system carefully, I like all the kit and it all works very well on a Quad/Respire stand in a solid room. However, while
clear and powerful it can all lack a bit of emotion and warmth. Any thoughts welcome on which component I might change to get more warmth and feeling into the sound.

I was wondering whether changing the KW 500 to something else might do the job or maybe I am just finding the limits of the CD format? Any suggestions that you have in a price range appropriate to the rest of the kit would be greatly appreciated.

Simon Hodgson
Bath
England

Whilst I like a lot of what Musical Fidelity does, I find the brand can be quite variable in its output. This is partly because Anthony Michaelson has a wide ranging and somewhat eclectic set of proclivities; one minute he’s trying to do sweet sounding things with tubes, the next it’s massive transistor monoliths with more power than a JCB. With this in mind I never really warmed to the kW500. I was always impressed by it, sometimes even slightly scared by it (you don’t want to play fast and loose with the volume control, lest your loudspeaker voice coils end up in your lap!), but I was never charmed by it. That’s not something I can say about the Musical Fidelity AMS35i — which has a lot less power but a lot more life, and delicacy. The ‘35 won’t turn your listening room into a live venue with sound pressure levels to match a PA, but it will still go plenty loud with your Spendors and offer so much more detail, atmosphere and general musicality. As such this would be my choice. DP

MY NEW SYSTEM

I’ve been dreaming for the past 25 years, dreaming about valves and something like a Linn LP12, so I decided it must be time now to have a really nice entry level setup with the valve equipment coming from Icon Audio. I’m no expert in system building so I decided to speak to the editor from Hi-Fi World magazine where all my dreams began 25 years ago. David Price was on hand to help me but he did have concerns with the fact I was spending fifteen hundred on valves and only three-four hundred for something like a Pro-Ject turntable. His advice was to spend around a thousand on a turntable fairly soon, but in the meantime you’ve got a fine front end and it’s doubtless already making nice music. Add a pair of Black Rhodium Tango loudspeaker cables (£15/m), which will see you right for many future upgrades, and a pair of Rhythm interconnects (£30) which are a great match for your current good quality mid-price kit, and you’ll be cooking on gas. DP

LOUDSPEAKER CONNECTORS

Please help my constant fiddling. Over the years I have gathered what I regard as some nice equipment which should be satisfying my ears, so I can just concentrate on listening to the music instead of amusing (I think!) my wife and my dog with my constant speaker placement and checking connections.

My system consists of LP12/Circus, latest Akito/Adikt, Lingo 1, Primaluna Prologue 2 (upgraded KT88s), Project Tubebox, Missions 752F (bi-wired), all connections are Van den Hul First Ultimate and ‘speaker cable is Vhdi The Wind. I think my problem is with my speaker connections. When all connections are cleaned with Kontak the sound is beautiful, transparent and a joy to listen. But within a few days the sound goes off, so I start fiddling with speaker placement to re-gain that sweet spot, as now the soundstage is all over the place. This is when listening to hi-fi gets most frustrating, and tiring. Eventually I re-clean the speaker connections and wipe the perspiration from my worried brow. I know that the speaker cables are terminated with very inexpensive plugs, care of Maplins, but they can sound fabulous...until they don’t!

What would be a good compromise plug for the speaker terminations, and would these need to be soldered professionally? After so many years would it be wise to replace the ‘speaker posts on the Missions in case these are worn. If so, any thoughts with what?

I also read with great interest the replacement Tube review (Jan’10) and am considering the T1 Full Music 12AX7 as a suitable upgrade for the Primaluna. Would it also be a good investment to upgrade the 12AU7s from the same source, or other?

I want some stability in my hi-fi life, and just get back to the music, and to complete reading Hi-Fi World!

Many thanks, Martin Trevers
Croydon Green

Add a pair of Black Rhodium Tango loudspeaker cables and you’ll be cooking on gas, says David.

Hi Martin. That is a fascinating problem, one I have never heard before. However, I well remember one reviewer who insisted on using old 30A round pin plugs that he
from Diverse Vinyl with plenty of vinyl to sell. On Saturday the 6th after 12 noon, Eleanor McEvoy popped in to sign copies of her new album 'Id Rather Go Blonde'.

David, didn't you interview her for the December issue of Hi Fi World? I found her to be very charming, a real nice lady. I got my copy signed of course.

Anyway, back to the show. There was plenty of hi-end gear to drool over, some of which had never been shown in the UK before.

I was disappointed that you could not come over to give your backing to a great weekend. I came away £200 plus lighter but a very happy vinyl person.

Anyway, I hope this event was a success and that it will not be another 10 years until the next one. It really was a great weekend.

All the best,
Andy

Hi Andy, yes I did interview Eleanor and found her as charming as you did. Thanks for an upbeat report of the Northern Ireland show; we'll try and make it over to the next one!

DP

OLDE WORLDE V NEW ORDER

As a lover of hi-fi for many years I finally stopped changing gears due to fact that I completed a system which suits my musical tastes, sound and environment. It consists of Yamaha NS-690 II loudspeakers, Aragon 24k+ips AV preamp/2004 II power amp, Sony CD-PXAS0es CD player modded, Thorens 145 turntable VdH moded, various hi-end cables and accessories.

My question to you is can retro hi-fi be in real terms comparable with new one? So if I may suggest that you in your Olde Worlde column test similarly priced systems from £70 or £80 and some newer ones, so we will see are only design has been changed or we are missing something?

Anyways your magazine stands out from crowd. Please keep going. Best regards

Goran Obrad

Hi Goran — if you've read us over the years you'll know we've done a lot of classic reviews, and even sometimes slipped classic kit into modern group tests! You'll also know that we all use a combination new and classic kit in our reference systems; Noel the Garrard 401 turntable and me the Yamaha NS1000M loudspeakers, for example. As for Tony Bolton's system, well I struggle to find anything modern in it at all sometimes! Of course, some classic hi-fi is superb, and absolutely up to par (or indeed better) than the best of what is available now. But it depends on what it is: for example, turntables have moved on in the past twenty five years but CD players have only improved significantly relatively recently, and still the difference is less pronounced.

NORTHERN IRELAND HI-FI SHOW

Hello to all at Hi-Fi World. Just thought I would drop you an e-mail to say that the above event was great. It has been over ten years since the last hi-fi show in Northern Ireland and I think this one was better. There was 35 stalls over three rooms, including Krans, Lyric, Living Space and of course Paul and Matt

Eleanor McEvoy — charming and talented, says David.
PRO AUDIO & HI-FI

The review of the Weiss DAC in your December issue prompted me to write to you. For many years I have enjoyed music using a whole range of hi-fi equipment. As I became better paid I took pleasure in assembling systems with loops of ever thicker cable in an effort to hear music as I thought I wanted to hear it.

I am lucky to own two of Audio Aero's fabulous Capitole CD players; an earlier Mk I 241192 and a current Capitole Reference. Both have an excellent valve pre output although to use studio monitors all anyone would need is a pre-amp with XLR out.

I demonstrated the older Audio Aero with a number of studio monitors including Focal, PMC and Adam. The pre-audio centre was not used to seeing a hi-fi person arrive but they were interested, welcoming and served coffee just like in a hi-fi shop. What they did know about was music. They were in the business of creating, recording and mastering music and they know how it is meant to sound.

What I heard was a sound which was without the niceties of hi-fi. The monitors were open, detailed and fatiguing to listen to. I felt I needed to let my ears decide.

I am slowly going Kondo). The kit: LV-modded Canary Audio 601 Mk2, Avondale stereo power amp., Chord DAC64 Mk2, CECTLS1 drive, SME20 turntable with SMEV arm and Dynavector DV20XL cartridge, Aesthetix Rhea phono stage, Prooc Future .5 (cables are a bit of a mix, but I am slowly going Kondo).

The context - France, major city centre, 230V nominal, the hi-fi is on a dedicated spur I had installed when we bought the 1980s flat. The kit: LV-modded Canary Audio 601 Mk2, Avondale stereo power amp., Chord DAC64 Mk2, CECTLS1 drive, SME20 turntable with SMEV arm and Dynavector DV20XL cartridge, Aesthetix Rhea phono stage, Prooc Future .5 (cables are a bit of a mix, but I am slowly going Kondo).

There is no magic in Pro kit Karl. Often, the same components and design techniques apply, it's just there is a difference of outlook. Costs, however, where they vary, are due to various factors. Mass market pro gear is often cheaply made and just not up to scratch.

Pro loudspeakers commonly have midrange domes that, whilst in theory have certain strong benefits (dispersion), also break up badly, giving a sharp piercing sound at high levels - and studios seem to like this. But then they listen at very high levels from giant loudspeakers just 2m or so away; it's quite frightening. Domestic hi-fi is, generally, better honed. NK

Adam Audio make quality studio monitors and domestic hi-fi loudspeakers.

Adam Audio make quality studio monitors and domestic hi-fi loudspeakers. Wouldn't you explore that?

What I bought were Adam Audio S1Xs, a small monitor, £1500 a pair which, when teamed with the AA are just stunning and 2x7.5m Vovox matched pro XLR cables, at £340 a fraction of what similar high end hi-fi cables would cost but these are reference quality cables that are stunning. Less than £2k for top quality active studio monitors and pro cables.

Since I am unlikely to buy another CD player I see no reason to return to a stack of pre and power amps and esoteric cables to get high end sound. The worlds of pro and home audio need not be so far apart. Studio monitors offer a different active path to quality, high fidelity sound without the artifice of marketing matched veeners and hype that sometimes afflicts the industry with another wonder product. It is refreshing to get back to the music and depart from the convention that exists in the different worlds. Manufactures like Adam, Focal and Weiss seem to be prepared to stray back and I think it is worth a listen. It is working for me.

With regards,
Karl Podmore
North Yorkshire
If your mains supply is as bad as Nigel's, try regeneration with a Pure Power supply.

Initial results indicated that there are "significant" amounts of 150Hz, 250Hz and 350Hz on the waveform; there seems to be a 45s-47s cyclical voltage variation of about one volt; there seems to be some voltage on neutral and some DC. There is also 1.5kHz-16kHz created by the frequency generator associated with the lift-braking equipment. DC seems to be present, but in quite "normal" amounts (and given the humming of transformers isolated by 1kVA 1:1 devices is perhaps not so obviously the root of my problems, if I have understood anything).

In concrete terms, the 1:1 isolation transformers hum, buzz and sometimes create a lot of noise, as do the transformers in the hi-fi downstream of them (the level does vary during the day but never seems to completely go away). Inversing the input-output of one of the transformers in order to have a moderate voltage reduction did not change the situation.

What is there to be done to improve the situation and eliminate the above problems?
All the best,
Nigel Briggs
France

Bonjour Nigel. Since your current mains conditioners have been overwhelmed by what sounds like a chaotic supply, the only solution left is mains regeneration. In this process the mains is converted to d.c. where battery storage can be introduced, then back into clean a.c. through what are effectively high current, high efficiency power amplifiers fed from a sine wave source. This not only blocks all rubbish, it also provides immunity to short term power loss. Go to the Pure Power site at www.purepoweraps.com for more information where you will find 230V models. I presume you will be able to buy in France or the UK.

Nigel Briggs

If your mains supply is as bad as Nigel's, try regeneration with a Pure Power supply.

Satori in Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland could hardly be described as the land of the midnight sun, more appropriately the land of the midnight rain, sleet, snow, explosion. We have however just had our first audio show in 10 years which has prompted me to write and explain my 'sudden illumination', my Satori, in contradiction of the generally accepted industry philosophy which suggests that upgrades are only achieved by buying something better. As an enthusiast who for over 30 years has regularly swapped boxes in pursuit of hi-fi nirvana, much to my wife's chagrin and the groans of my bank account, I have arrived at my present system:

Vinyl - Gyro SE, SME IV with Furutech AG-12L arm cable, Ortofon 2m Black, HR Power Supply, Pure Sound phono stage connected via Chord Company Indigo Plus cables.
CD - Chord Electronics Blu Transport, DAC 64 with 2x Indigo Plus digital cables running balanced via Furutech Reference III XLR leads.
Amplification - DK Design (now LAS) VS.1 Signature Mk III hybrid integrated.
Speakers - Wilson Benesch Curves bi-wired using Furutech Reference III cables.

The system has a dedicated mains spur in a dedicated listening room 15ftx14ft and is connected with Furutech Reference and Evolution power leads (more about these later).

My sudden illumination came about when I was introduced to products, loosely termed accessories, which have had a dramatic and beneficial effect on my system and thus my enjoyment. Firstly my friendly local dealers and kindred spirits, those nice people David and Gary Campbell at Kronos Audio Visual (great coffee and conversation) suggested I try an Acoustic Solutions Resonator, a device which apparently improves bass response. As the eternal sceptic I was naturally doubtful that a block of wood with a bronze cup attached could have any audible effect, let alone improve the low end. Having installed said product I was astounded to discover that the bass had firmed up, became more tuneful and that paradoxically the top end was more focused with more air and space. A mere snip at the asking price.

Next I became acquainted with a resonance damping device - Black Ravioli. I borrowed three pieces and initially wondered if they would be better served with Arabiatta or Putanesca sauce as opposed to their suggested placement under my phono stage. Once employed I was pleasantly surprised, nay shocked, to find that Rickie Lee had a more palpable presence, had taken a step forwards into the room and that the sound stage had become more three dimensional with better separation and added weight.

At this stage I began to wonder if Kronos' David Campbells predilection for Greek myths would be better changed to Arthurian legend as these products were more likely to be the unnatural offspring of Merlins than Zeuss' father. I consequently used 6 more pieces of this black magic, employing 3 each under my CD transport and dac, yielding equally astonishing and beneficial improvements. CD now sounds more musical with a reduction in hardness without artificial warmth, Black Ravioli just allows the equipment to work to its full potential. An inexpensive upgrade.

I borrowed and subsequently bought high end power leads from Furutech, those previously referred to, these had similarly positive and dramatic effects resulting in increased openness, spatiality, detail and weight. Okay I know they are expensive but they are also a long term investment as getting the infrastructure correct can be of greater benefit than changing equipment.

My last tweak was to replace the valves in my Pure Sound phono stage and came about at the suggestion of Kronos and through meeting Guy Sargent at the NJ Audio Show. Guy kindly recommended gold pinned EB8cc and ECC803S to replace the stock valves. Once installed the Pure Sound which punches above its weight was metamorphosed into an entirely different animal, bass arriving in my listening room coupled with a sweeter and more open top end that one would normally associate with extremely high end esoteric - and all for the princely sum of £45.

As each product employed gave vast and audible improvements to what was already an open and musically resolving system I can only conclude that finding a good dealer, trusting their suggestions and wringing the best from what you have, thus resisting the temptation to swap boxes for the latest all conquering panacea can not only be a more cost effective but a rewarding experience. Whilst some may consider that blocks of wood/bronze cups, black pasta and wires are more audiophool than audiophile my ears tell me to adopt the diametrically opposed view point and I would recommend exploring such products without reservation.
Sometimes you just have to accept that what appears to be alchemy and black magic may lead to illumination.

Gary Gardiner

On matters like this readers must judge for themselves. I have not been convinced by various balls, triangles and other mystic devices demonstrated to me at Shows, but then a Show atmosphere isn't the best to discern fine differences. Perhaps dealers can provide home trials. NK

THORENS TD125

I hope you may be able to help me in locating parts for the above turntable. I have owned a Thorens TD125 turntable since the 1970s and ran it alongside a Sony amplifier. Initially I had a pair of B&W P2h speakers and subsequently changed for a pair of B&W DM 16s. I had to put the equipment into storage and because of the suspension unit on the deck put the Inner platter, outer platter, mat and what I would term the central pole (for the record to go on — sorry for the lack of technical jargon), with the amplifier in our loft. Unfortunately, as a result of some work being done to our plumbing in the loft it was not until some months later that I found that the above items had been stolen.

If you are unable to help directly with regards to the above parts, are you able to put me in touch with someone who may be able to help in order that I may know whether they are available and affordable?

Thank you,

Barry Gibbons

If you are indeed looking for the inner platter, main platter and bearing/platter spindle for a Thorens TD125, then the first person to call is the owner of www.theanalogdept.com. If they can't help then the only alternative in my view would be to buy a faulty turntable from eBay for the parts. The TD125 was unusual at its time as it used a Wein Bridge transistor sine wave oscillator and power amplifier to drive the motor, very advanced technology in those days! Let us know how you get on.

DAVE CAWLEY
SOUND HI FI

Hi Barry — another person to talk to is Haden Boardman (audioclassics@hotmail.com); I'm sure he'll have a solution for you. DP

ADVISE PLEASE

I wonder if you could provide some advice and guidance on the next step of my hi-fi journey please. My current system is as follows; Roksan Kandy LIII amp, Monitor Audio RSB speakers, Cambridge Audio DacMagic connected to PC via USB. Panasonic Blu-ray player also connected through the DacMagic but only really used for movies. Project Xpression III record deck and Ortofon 2M Blue used as main source of music.

I have recently moved into a smaller flat and the system is now in a room approx 4 meters by 4 meters with a ceiling height of approx 2.4 meters filled with the usual sofas and coffee tables etc.

I am very happy with both the amp (bought 2nd hand only about 6 months ago) and ‘speakers (though I do think that perhaps the speakers are too big for the room). However, since getting the DacMagic approximately 2 months ago I find that the PC side of things sounds a lot better than the turntable. More detail is apparent and it seems to have a bit more sparkle about it. Bass is also firmer and overall I just find it a more exciting listen.

With that in mind, could you advise on my next step in improving the turntable side of things. Vinyl is really the only form of music I actually buy and it's the medium I love the most. I do not have massive funds available but could make £500 to £750 available for this upgrade.

I have seen a Roksan Radius turntable available 2nd hand for around the £550. Would this provide a significant upgrade over the Project?

I have also fallen in love with the looks of the Michell Tecnodec, though a new one (including a Rega RB250 arm) would be at the top end of my budget. If I was to go with a new Tecnodec would it be worth using my existing 2M Blue until further funds are available? If not, what cartridge should I be looking at?

Also, what other turntables would you recommend looking at either new or 2nd hand?

Finally can you comment on the phone stage in the Kandy? Would it be worth upgrading this to a stand alone box before the turntable upgrade? If so what should I go for?

Finally I guess an idea of my listening trends might help! I like everything from heavy hard rock through to electronic dance music, pop and the occasional folk and jazz disks.

Thanks in advance,

Ben Sexton

Here is my two'pennyworth Ben. I am no fan of the lesser 2M cartridges from Ortofon, but the 2M Black transcends its limitations, quite dramatically so in my view; it is head and shoulders above the other models. It has the sparkle that you are looking for too. So either get an Ortofon 2M Black, or head toward the Goldring 1000 Series, like the 1024 GX or 1042. These are an easy listen, without being dull, and they have plenty of dynamic life to them as well, with good quality bass. Add in a very reasonable price and you are boogying. I can't help feel that you may be well advised to upgrade your record deck also, but David will say more on this. NK

The Kandy phono stage is surprisingly good, actually, Ben. What's really wrong in your system is your turntable, which is a fine machine at its price point but is a little out of its depth in the context of the rest of your components. If you're buying new, then stretching the budget to a Michell Tecnodéc would really bring big rewards; far more focus, grip and insight, plus a wider soundstage and a deeper bass than your Project. I also feel it would be better, if well set up, than the Roksan Radius but it's likely a close run thing. This said, you would have to mount the Michell carefully, preferably on a wall shelf, to get the best from it. Just sticking it on a chest of drawers will drop its performance down to Rega P3 levels. Use your 2M Blue until you can afford a 2M Black or, ideally, an Audio Technica AT 33EV.

DP
Sporting ‘the latest filter technology’, HDCD playback and a vacuum tube in the analogue output stage, plus chunky build and fine finish, the Cayin CD-50T offers a lot for a mid-price CD player, says David Price...

The small but energetic Chinese hi-fi manufacturing industry has had a surprising degree of success here in the limited time it’s been around, which is not very long at all. Being (almost) old enough to remember big Japanese brands attempting (and succeeding) to take over the UK audio market some forty years ago, I have to report that China has done things a little differently. Instead of doing it all themselves, Chinese mass market consumer electronics manufacturing is often conducted in cooperation with western multinationals such as Apple Computer for example, or small niche specialists such as the German company which is responsible for the design of this Cayin machine.

You’ve got to applaud the versatility of Chinese original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) then, as they will make anything it seems, from mega selling computer hardware products to specialist CD players which are hardly flavour of the month anymore...

Still, I am not complaining; I think it’s good that now Compact Disc is being banished to the fringes of the mass market, people are still investing time and money in the technology, which by absolute standards is of course antique now. Lest we forget, we’re approaching CD’s thirtieth birthday! Do you know any other thirty year-old-computer-based consumer electronics products still on sale? But now, as a new generation of music buyers emerges who simply don’t equate albums with anything physical you can hold in your hand or place on your table, the venerable format has finally got rather good. Lots of tricks have emerged to coax the goodness from it, such as high quality digital filters (and HDCD is usually synonymous with this), tube output stages, careful mechanical isolation and decent power supplies. And there you go, the Cayin has all this for under £900.

The Cayin eschews the stock Japanese 430mm width, coming in a compact case measuring 350x325x95mm and weighing in at 7.8kg. The front panel is a thick, extravagant even, slab of brushed aluminium, and sports a nice variation on this tried and tested theme because it’s sculpted in the lower centre. It’s certainly a little less generic looking and shows someone has actually bothered to think about its appearance, instead of doing just another ‘me too’ machine. The case is your usual pressed steel, but again
they've really tried hard with an excellent metallic graphite grey paint job and a serious bit of lacquering, plus satin finish screws.

The front transport controls are a bit fussy, with small fiddly buttons; the easiest to use one is the least used, namely the power switch. The display is standard issue Chinese blue fluorescent, dimmable, but has a tiny 'music calendar' reminiscent of late eighties Japanese machines, and — shock horror — some red detailing! It's quirky, and again they've made an effort, but it's not great. Round the back there are standard RCA outputs, an IEC mains in, and one optical TOSLINK and one coaxial digital out. Oh, and then there's a tiny 12AU7 tube poking its top out of a deep rear recess, just to remind you you're all valved up... The remote control is your usual Chinese fare; a metal faced job that's decent but nothing special; at least it's not nasty plastic.

Overall I was impressed with the Cayin's build at the price, it's certainly swish considering its lowly market position, and effort has clearly been made. That's not to say it doesn't face a hard fight with the likes of the Cyrus CD8 SE though, which is an even more lovely thing to behold in design, build and finish, and costs almost the same...

**SOUND QUALITY**

It's a fascinating conundrum, this CD player. Plugging it in, I could instantly hear a lot wrong with it, and yet there's also a lot right, and it's this good side of its character that dramatically outshines any downsides. The result is quite an interesting and quirky mix, and one that's a lot of fun, but it simply can't beat the cool neutrality of rival British designs. The question then becomes, do you buy this knowing it is flawed in some ways, or do you go for the likes of a Cyrus CD8 SE knowing it's a far more accomplished all rounder, but in some respects less satisfying to listen to? The answer, dear reader, rests with you; let me elucidate...

Having done all the running in and warming up, the first track I kicked off with was Simple Minds' 'Somebody Up There Likes You', the CD layer of the brilliant sounding SACD. At highish volume, at first listen I was bowled over. I had to remind myself that this is eight hundred and something pounds. It was wonderfully warm and sumptuous, with a delightfully solid weight to bass drums, and a lovely timbre to analogue synths, letting them wash all around. 'Wow', I thought to myself, this is giving a thoroughly satisfying rendition of the song with an epic sense of scale and power. If anything, it rather reminded me of the Astin Trew AT3500 in this respect; it was a big, bold bruiser that was nevertheless soft around the edges; nothing here hurt my ears.

I then switched to a Cyrus CD8 SE, and was struck by the difference. Where the Cayin gives a cascade of sound — swirling, haunting and ethereal when playing the Simple Minds track — moving to the Cyrus was like touching the shutter button on a good camera at first pressure, causing the autofocus to snap things into view. It gave a dramatically different window on the world, setting up a wider soundstage, making a slightly less strong centre image, giving a far better sense of front-to-back depth and tightening up everything in the mix, from the bass guitar to the hi-hat cymbals. Instead of being subsumed in a morass of sound, the song's guitar overdubs became more pronounced and explicit, whereas cymbals suddenly started timing better, sounding less sweet but ultimately more sonorous.

Switching back to the Cayin, I was struck by the fuller, bigger, faster sound, and intrigued to hear an obviously looser ( albeit fuller) bass line, with the player sitting on dynamic accents from both the bass drum and snares. It failed to eke out the counterplay between bass drum, bass guitar, snare and hi hat ( which is what the track is all about), whereas the Cyrus completely nailed it. Bass was now sounding ever so slightly overblown; it was as if the bass guitarist was fractionally overdriving his amp, giving a bigger sound but with a slight compression effect. A fascinating comparison then; the Cayin was doing a lot wrong, with the Cyrus proving a model of clarity and grip, yet I still rather liked the fuller more visceral sound of the CD-50T, for all its failings.

Moving to Steely Dan's 'Babylon Sisters' and the Cayin supplied a beautifully sumptuous signal to my amplifier and loudspeakers. It gave the sense of everything being turned up to eleven, the soundstage...
THE PERFECT NEW YEAR GIFT!

Subscribe to Hi-Fi World and choose either a Chord SuperScreen mains cable (1m), or a Chord CobraPlus interconnect (1m) FREE - for yourself or those nearest and dearest to you.

**Chord SuperScreen mains cable**
- Dual foil high frequency effective shielding
- Vibration damping external casing
- High purity multi-strand copper conductors
- Performance optimised internal wiring geometry

**Chord CobraPlus interconnect cable**
- Multi strand, oxygen-free copper signal/return conductors
- Twisted pair configuration
- Low density polyethylene dielectric
- High quality gold-plated RCA plugs

THE CHORD COMPANY in association with HI-FI WORLD

**TERMS & CONDITIONS FOR THIS OFFER:** You will receive twelve issues per annum. Minimum subscription term is one year. This offer is only available to new subscribers. Your subscription will start with the next available issue, at the annual subscription rate of £46.80. Offer ends 11th February 2011. Quote REF: HFW - NEW YEAR2011. To avail of this fantastic offer, go to pages 82 & 83 and complete the subscriptions form and tick the RED BOX i.e. NEW YEAR OFFER BOX and send to the address shown. Due to high demand on promotional offers, gifts are subject to availability. We reserve the right to send you an alternative gift if the above mentioned gift(s) run out.
bristling with detail, sparkling with hi hats and punching with a big fat Fender Rhodes electric piano sound. The brass stabs were clean and rich, Fagen’s vocals crisp and clear.

Moving to the Cyrus, I noticed a tighter framework to the music, with more rigid front to back imaging, a less fulsome centre image and wider left/right detailing from trumpet and hi hat. There was also more of a sense of being immersed in the organ playing, and greater definition and dynamics to the percussion work. The CD8 SE sounded great, but came a little closer to the rendition of this track I’m used to, via my high end direct drive turntable, which shows this recording to be just a little too bright and dry. The CD-50T however, was able to round off the recording’s faults and give a more euphonic rendition, which actually sounded better.

I found the same phenomenon with Microdisney’s ‘Town to Town’, namely a wide, powerful soundstage, strong bass and a very appealing overall balance. Here though the player couldn’t conceal one of the less appetising aspects of CD, a slight grain on strings. Even via the original vinyl pressing, the backing strings are a bit lively, and they don’t transfer to CD terribly well; the CD-50T grated a little here, with that tube buffer doing nothing to aid proceedings. Still, vocals proved full and commanding, with greater definition and dynamics to the percussion work. I heard snare drums tighter, tighter image location, a silkier and defined but the whole recorded work. I heard snare drums tighter, tighter image location, a silkier and defined but the whole recorded acoustic comes over as solid and planted.

Interestingly, whilst it would appear a simplistic turn of phrase! Instruments in the mix inside this aren’t that well ordered and accurate. Here, bass guitar sounded a tad lighter but far tighter, bass drums were beautifully taut, keyboard pads shimmered through the mix and treble was brighter and sharper, yet not painfully so. The sound didn’t quite have the louche, clubbable feel of the Cayin, though: it was a touch more like hi-fi (albeit very good hi-fi); the CD-50T just played music instead.

CONCLUSION
This isn’t the world’s best CD player, or even the best under £1,000 in absolute terms, but still there’s an awful lot to like. It’s obviously well made and intelligently designed, and the sonic results are always fun. It’s an ideal match for lean and slightly mean sounding budget or mid-price systems, and would really flatter the clinical sound of many modern loudspeakers. Put it in a super revealing system however, and you’re into choppier waters; you can hear it ‘editorialising’ a little too much, presenting its larger than life character up ahead of the music, whereas some rivals simply fade into the distance and let the music flood out. As such, in the right system, with the right music, the Cayin CD-50T could be the answer to all your troubles, but in the wrong one it certainly won’t be. So I’d suggest try before you buy; you may well be beguiled.

VERDICT
Strong sounding, larger than life silver disc spinner, but needs careful matching and still won’t be to all tastes.

CAYIN CD-50T
£859.99
Audio Sanctum
(+ 44 (0)7517 898 738
www.audiosanctum.co.uk)

FOR
- big, bold sound
- lilting rhythmic gait
- sumptuous tone
- build and finish

AGAINST
- soft lower bass
- slightly compressed

REFERENCE SYSTEM:
Cyrus CD8 SE CD player
MF Audio Silver Passive preamp
NuForce Ref 9SE power amplifiers
Yamaha NS1000M loudspeakers

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

Frequency response has an unusual steady rise up to high frequencies, our impulse analysis shows. We confirmed this with a sine wave tone test, it is so unusual, and the player does indeed have a rise of 1dB overall toward high frequencies, as shown. This will give it a bright balance.

Brightness than is common.

Distortion at peak level measured a high 0.26% but this was second harmonic only, so is inaudible. Distortion also rose at low levels, or so it seemed, the player measuring 1% against a common result of 0.27%, but this in fact was caused by noise, not distortion. Valve players need not be so noisy. The noise, measured -48dB, also degraded our EIA/D Dynamic Range figure, which measured 84dB against a usual 98dB.

The internal clock measured 44.106kHz, instead of 44.100kHz and the error prevented phase lock against our analysers reference internal clock, so jitter was measured using a Variable clock mode, a high 0.26% being an all-time worst.

Distortion also rose at low levels, or so it seemed, the player measuring 1% against a common result of 0.27%, but this in fact was caused by noise, not distortion. Valve players need not be so noisy. The noise, measured -48dB, also degraded our EIA/D Dynamic Range figure, which measured 84dB against a usual 98dB.

The internal clock measured 44.106kHz, instead of 44.100kHz and the error prevented phase lock against our analysers reference internal clock, so jitter was measured using a Variable clock mode, a high 300ps being recorded.

The Cayin CD-50T has an unusual performance, out of line with the norm, so it will have a distinctive sound. NK

Frequency response (-1dB)
4Hz-21.3kHz

MEASUREMENTS

Frequency response has an unusual steady rise up to high frequencies, our impulse analysis shows. We confirmed this with a sine wave tone test, it is so unusual, and the player does indeed have a rise of 1dB overall toward high frequencies, as shown. This will give it a bright balance.

Brightness than is common.

Distortion at peak level measured a high 0.26% but this was second harmonic only, so is inaudible. Distortion also rose at low levels, or so it seemed, the player measuring 1% against a common result of 0.27%, but this in fact was caused by noise, not distortion. Valve players need not be so noisy. The noise, measured -48dB, also degraded our EIA/D Dynamic Range figure, which measured 84dB against a usual 98dB.

The internal clock measured 44.106kHz, instead of 44.100kHz and the error prevented phase lock against our analysers reference internal clock, so jitter was measured using a Variable clock mode, a high 300ps being recorded.

The Cayin CD-50T has an unusual performance, out of line with the norm, so it will have a distinctive sound. NK

Frequency response (-1dB)
4Hz-21.3kHz

MEASUREMENTS
Future Perfect

Unprepossessing is the word I'd pull out of my bag of adjectives for this one, the new Destiny 2 amplifier from Creek. It was always so, yet Creek have a reputation like few others — and rightly so. A Creek amplifier isn't just a piece of natty electronic design; it is a quality audio amping device, the two being subtly but importantly different. Designer Mike Creek long ago put circuits together that delivered the right figures, in the late 1970s to be precise. At the start of the 1980s he formed Creek the company, the first product being an amplifier — the 4040. The new Destiny 2 reviewed here is a distant successor, 40 Watts having grown to 120 Watts, for that is what the Destiny 2 produces.

Reviewing a Creek, just about any Creek in truth, is easy for me because I have been doing it since they started and know the house sound, as well as Mike Creek. Before talking to Mike, as you can at hi-fi shows where he is usually to be found in the Creek/Epos room, you do need to brush up on your cascode devices and the number of poles in your feedback network, not to mention servo behaviour and output device failure modes. For Mike has been at it for a long time and is a man of deep experience, not a Johnny-come-lately with a freshly minted degree in electronics and dangerously little experience.

Grasp the Destiny 2 and lift it and you'll start to understand what this means. It is impressively solid, weighing a substantial 10kgs, beautifully built and slickly finished, yet there's no unnecessary visual embellishment. It is easy on the eye and lovely to use, with its powered Alps volume control and short throw push button selectors. Creek products have always been compact and the Destiny 2 will fit most racks, as it is a fraction under 17in (430 mm) wide. Although depth is 355mm, or 14in, it will just sit on a 12in deep shelf if bare wires are used to avoid projecting banana plugs. Height is just 80mm. From this compact package you get no less than 200 Watts into a 4 Ohm loudspeaker and this is more than enough to go very, very loud in just about any room. As I always point out in my loudspeaker reviews, I rarely manage to get more than 10V or so into a loudspeaker, which amounts to 25 Watts at most, so the Destiny 2 has huge reserves.

The Destiny 2 uses control logic and small signal relays for signal switching. Press an input selector and you are aware of this by the clicking sounds that issue forth. However, the amplifier does not use a digital volume control, like so many nowadays, but a high quality Alps potentiometer, motor driven to allow remote control. Mike likes to keep the signal path as simple and pure as possible, so avoids putting the signal through a volume control chip.

And unlike so many modern amplifiers the Destiny intentionally places no silicon chips in the signal path, when not used in optional Active mode, explaining why its topology may seem a little odd, but is in fact typical Creek style common sense. As I said earlier this is a proper hi-fi amplifier, not
REVIEW

a general purpose industrial design that thoughtlessly relies on all the clever doo-dahs companies like Texas Instruments churn out nowadays, such as voltage controlled gain chips, balanced line drivers, voltage regulators, etc. The Destiny has its own unique N-channel MOSFET output stage, driven by P-channel drivers, a circuit devised some time ago by Russian physicist Alex Nikitin (who now produces the ANT Audio phono stage and can be found at most audio shows, manning the Sound Hi-Fi stand).

The Destiny 2 uses a development of the original circuit found in the Destiny 1, Mike told me, where they managed to improve performance by using parallel cascode devices in line with the MOSFETs to share voltage swing, so obtaining very high power from a fundamentally linear output stage. It was quite obvious under measurement that the Destiny 2's output stage was deeply linear, as distortion at 10kHz continued to decrease below 0.5% Watt, where in so many transistor amplifiers it increases.

Also, Mike explained, the Destiny 2 has no preamplifier, unless it is switched to Active mode on the front panel. It simply places a high quality Alps volume control in front of the all-discrete power amplifier section, and in so doing minimises the number of active devices in the circuit (a man after my own heart!). The drawback is low sensitivity of 600mV, but this is enough for all silver disc players, CD, DVD and Blu-ray, as they all deliver 2V out.

All of which explains why, if you want more gain, then you must switch in a preamplifier, by pressing an Active button on the front panel. There are three gain options; 3dB, 6dB and 9dB, selected by a slide switch on the underside of the amplifier. The idea is that if you have a low output source like an old tuner connected to the Tuner input, you press Active, after selecting Tuner, to increase gain. When switching back to CD, with its higher output, Active is then switched off, eliminating the preamplifier and its amplifying devices from the circuit, optimising sound quality. It's purist, but then this is a proper hi-fi amplifier and I totally agree with the philosophy; as few active devices as possible should be used and all of those (and passive components) need to be audio grade quality, not the cheapest items in the component catalogue.

The downside is the amplifier looks a little less logical than many designs, especially those loaded up with digital volume controls and armfuls of control logic to provide an 'intelligent' user experience, or programmable input gain, but it is sensible if you want the best sound possible.

The Destiny 2 has room onboard for a phono stage plug-in circuit board, available as an extra. If not fitted (our review sample lacked this option) the input becomes another line level input to which can be connected an external phono stage; Creek suggest one of theirs. Including this input, there are four line level inputs, plus Tape In/Out sockets. There is also a fixed gain AV power amp input and a Preamp output.

If valve amplifiers did not exist and I had to choose an amplifier I could carry, it would be this one...

SOUND QUALITY

I mentioned earlier that Creek have a 'house sound' and it is easy enough to describe. Much of the hard, mechanical quality of transistor amplifiers is missing from Creeks, as well as what I identify as 'spitch', that upper midband glare that so many confuse with the projection of detail. It isn't - it's glare! Valve amplifiers do not have it, and nor do Creeks. But then, by using discrete electronic amplifying devices of suitable quality,
NEW MB845 II Super
“5 Globes” in Hi Fi World... “Smooth silky and full bodied yet with enormous dynamics, this muscle amp boasts extraordinary sound quality”... From £4,999.95

NEW ST20pp 15+15W Amp
Not sure if valves are your thing? Try our 12 months PX money back guarantee! Rich EL84 sound 15+15w Pure Valve heaven. Now with headphone socket. Drives most speakers. Only £449.95

NEW HP8 MK II Headphone Amp
The 6SN7 valve makes heavenly music! Will match Low Medium or High headphones. Very quiet. Built the same way as a small SE amplifier with 3 transformers, hard wired point to point ECC83 and two fabulous 6SN7 output valves. That's why it weighs 5KG! 14cm w, 25d, 16h. Only £449.95

NEW MB150 150w Mono Blocks
150+150w of pure UL valve power or 100 + 100w of pure triode. Using 4 KT90, KT88 or KT120. Based on our award winning MB90s. Unlike transistors, these giants retain the Icon warmth and texture at volumes, giving massive headroom and very low distortion. Various upgrades available. Now available with the new KT120! Only £2799.00 Pair

NEW 45w MB 805 SE Mono Blocks
For some only the single "Single Ended" sound works. But normally the output is too low. The Magnificent 805 triode delivers 45w, driven by our own design 6SN7/2A3 circuit. Our huge LOT (low distortion tertiary) transformers give unparalleled midrange definition with deepest tight bass. From £4,499.95

NEW MB90 MXII 115w with new KT120 valve
Fitted with 6SN7/6SL7 valves for better definition. Upgraded output transformers for better bandwidth. Now with special headphone windings for best results. 35+35w. Alps pot, 4/8 ohms, complete inc. cover Takes any valve 6L6 to KT88! FREE EL34 UPGRADE (limited offer)!

NEW PS 3 All Valve Phono Stage
“Our Fave Affordable High End Phono Stage”
N.K. Hi Fi World. Awarded 5 “Globes” Only a pure valve design can get the best from vinyl. All triode. No feedback. Passive RIAA. Custom British MC TX option. Valve rectified & regulated for definition and smoothness,14kg. From only £1499.00 complete (Inc MC option £749)

NEW Stereo 25 MKII
Fitted with 6SN7/6SL7 valves for better definition. Upgraded output transformers for better bandwidth. Now with special headphone windings for best results. 35+35w. Alps pot, 4/8 ohms, complete inc. cover Takes any valve 6L6 to KT88!
FREE EL34 UPGRADE (limited offer)!

Common Features: Icon Designs by David Shaw. Hand built ‘Point to Point wiring. Designed and finished in Leicester UK. No printed circuit board. ALPS Volume control. Gold plated terminals. Audiophile components Silver Teflon audio cable. Steel & alloy plate construction. Comprehensive manual inc DIY valve change info. We are looking for dealers in all parts of the world, email David Shaw for more information.

Buy direct from us, or through your dealer. Export no problem! (EU £30 per box) Want to know more? See www.iconaudio.com or ask for a leaflet.

Or ring us on +44 (0)116 2440593 email sales@iconaudio.com 351 Aylestone Road Leicester LE2 8TA (U.K.)

Whilst stocks last. Conditions apply ask for details *Prices correct with 20% VAT UK VAT 01/01/2011 We pay the extra VAT subject to change E & O E UK Visa, MasterCard and debit cards accepted
and as few components – active and passive – as possible, Creek amplifiers follow valve amplifier design principles and guess what – there are similarities in their sound. Not only did the Destiny 2 have not one jot of glare or upper midband hardness, it also did not bleach the character out of orchestral wind and string instruments, as so many amplifiers still do.

Pull these colourations out of a transistor amplifier and all of a sudden it starts to sound 'warm'. It isn’t of course, it is just that there is no upper midrange shout to artificially emphasise detail. That makes the Destiny 2 a remarkably relaxing listen; it is one of the easiest sounds you’ll come across in a modern amplifier – the very epitome of silkiness and smoothness. A gentle but clear rendition of Toni Braxton singing ‘Spanish Guitar’, was embellished with deep insight into the studio behind her. There was nothing forced here, just an easy, liquid transparency, especially convincing with human voice; it had Toni Braxton singing powerfully, yet with an unforced ease. The bass line was strong and full, relaxed in its progress, but with plenty of strength to the delivery. Backing singers spread out across the sound stage in a wide arc, forming a backdrop that was as smooth as silk.

With so much power in the closet, the Destiny 2 could let rip when asked to. Cranking volume right up with Lady Gaga singing ‘Monster’, the amplifier showed another face: steamroller drive that propelled deep synth stabs across the room with deceptive ease. They rolled over me like a tropical storm, and inside this I could hear how much insight the amplifier has. It laid out Lady Gaga’s lyrics with an unfurled insight, sudden changes of tempo captured perfectly. Gaga’s interjections ringing out clearly. This is an amplifier that impresses with silent control.

Musical Fidelity AM550 run from a Music First Audio preamp that I used as a comparative benchmark during listening tests. This latter combination had finer treble, brimming with gentle filigree detail, where the Creek sounded a little darker and simpler in its rendition, yet the Destiny 2 had much of the easy clarity, lack of glare and general grip of the AM550. It sounded a little more fluid, but less threatening. Orchestral strings were so utterly smooth through our Spendor SBes loudspeakers that the Destiny 2 was a near ideal choice for anyone wanting to steer clear of hot bottles.

Verdict

Big, powerful, full bodied but as smooth as silk. A deeply expressive amplifier that is as good as it gets.

CREEK DESTINY 2

£1,600

Creek Audio Ltd.

www.creekaudio.com

FOR

- powerful sound
- silky smooth midband
- totally free of colour

AGAINST

- few facilities
- phone stage an option

**CONCLUSION**

To my ears this is a top quality transistor amplifier, one able to run the best in the business. In fact I feel it is better than most amplifiers in the business, it’s just that you need to spend time with an amplifier like this and drop preconceptions based on previous experience. Like any really good hi-fi product it is silent in itself, adding little if anything to the music. However, as most transistor amplifiers add far too much for my liking – which is why I choose to use valve amplifiers – the Destiny is a bit different and may be a little challenging to anyone expecting even sharper crashes, bangs and wallops. It has vast power, a generously large demeanour and thunderous subsonics, but delivered in a velvet glow. It is a lovely piece of work, crafted with skill and experience to give a fantastic sound. If valve amplifiers did not exist and I had to choose an amplifier I could carry, it would be this one! Creek really have a reputation like few others, because their products are better than most others, and the Destiny 2 shows this. A top amplifier.
Black Rhodium

Enjoy the musical detail, speed and airiness of Black Rhodium's first ever DCT++ interconnect cable

By applying our more advanced DCT++ process to the cable before assembly instead of our standard DCT process after, we have further improved the sound quality of our award winning 'Polar Illusion' cable. At the same time we have added a very effective double braided screen and given the cable a new high end appearance.

Phantom is made from two tightly twisted silver plated copper solid cores insulated in low loss PTFE, responsible for its fast detailed sound quality. DCT++ processing adds depth to the sound and enhances the timing of the music's rhythms. Termination using the highly acclaimed Eichmann Bullet plugs ensures the ultimate in musical detail shines through.

The Phantom is a very special interconnect for Black Rhodium and we have written a short account of its progressive development from cables that have won 5 stars in What HiFi? and 'Best Buy' in HiFi Choice to our new Phantom that we offer today. Hear this cable at your nearest Black Rhodium dealer and you will want to buy it!

www.blackrhodium.co.uk
01332 342233 sales@blackrhodium.co.uk

Tellurium Q

The first cables designed primarily to combat phase distortion

"something that I've never heard from any cable at this price point."
Paul Rigby HiFi World August 2010

"Cavernous acoustic space.....palpable sense of reality...good sense of timing and pitch...the sound was controlled and didn't harden as the volume increased...even tonal balance."
Hi-Fi News (Feb 2010 edition)

"Whatever you do, don't audition the Ultra Black. As I said before, once you do, there's no going back."
Steve Dickenson, Hi-Fi Plus, Awards issue 2010

Find out why these new cables have won four awards in their first year including two separate product of the year awards

+44 (0) 1458 251997
and were obviously not plastic
with nary a hint of sheen or violin to dance in front of me,
though, the Cantons hardened artifice. Even with the MB845s
certain degree of relentlessness toned down a bit when
sharpness. shrieking treble or any sense of a drama many loudspeakers
stage just in front of me.

dancing vigorously on the sound and out of the mix it seemed,
a rich, brassy rasp. Vivacious vigour and horns called out with MB845 Mk11 valve amplifiers, a
lack, And all this without row listening perspective, and
handling of an orchestra, is a term that describes their

delivered by Canton's 9.2s. and this is how orchestra was
and wonderfully clear rendition
and revealing, brutally so at times. Yet

The Reference 9.2s are not backward to suppress subsonic cone flap from
impedance curve; it is almost flat at
low frequencies. N nidband distortion
from the drive unit and 6% from the
port, with no steep rise at subsonic frequencies. Midband distortion
damped by the bass driver, the Canton is an
Ohms overall) where current is drawn
peaks strongly at 50Hz, measurement showing it was + 4dB above the driver
at 80Hz. Low bass is provided by the
low frequencies. Although there is little
impedance curve; it is almost flat at

The Canton Reference 9.2DC is an
enjoyed their pace and vivacity: theirs is a sound full of life, accurately
presented – and it was exciting.
Loudspeakers are funny things but Canton have obviously tried to craft a
product that provides accuracy with excitement and this is worth hearing.

CONCLUSION
So Canton's Reference 9.2 DC loudspeakers are thoroughly modern and
revealing, brutally so at times. Yet

they are unusual for having what at
times could be described as a warm balance, with – most of the time –
easy sounding treble that never offended me. I took to this presentation
and enjoyed it, even if at times it could be a little challenging. What sounded
good when Steve Earle recorded 'The Hard Way' in 1990
doesn't compare to modern 24/96
from John Mayer or Carlos Santana,
or 24/192 resolution digital from the
2L label of Norway, with Percy Grainger's playing of Grieg's Piano
Concerto for example, that redefines
digital. Early digital deficiencies are
thrown at you by the Cantons, but
later quality made apparent.

So Canton's Reference 9.2 DC loudspeakers are forthright, but
truthful, and accurately balanced.
I enjoyed their pace and vivacity: theirs is a sound full of life, accurately
presented – and it was exciting.
Loudspeakers are funny things but Canton have obviously tried to craft a
product that provides accuracy with excitement and this is worth hearing.

MEASURED PERFORMANCE
This loudspeaker is distinguished by
its unusually flat frequency response characteristic. Not only is it flat in
terms of trend away from the 0dB
datum line, but it is fairly smooth too,
suggesting well suppressed minor resonances and a colour-free sound.
Only the tweeter breaks away from
flatness – and then only above 8kHz
where the effect will not be very
apparent. This will add a hiss to high
frequencies. N nidband distortion
from the drive unit and 6% from the
port, with no steep rise at subsonic frequencies. Midband distortion
hovered around 0.2%, a normal enough result.

The Canton Reference 9.2DC is an
interesting design, offering a unusually
even and accurate tonal balance, and
good engineering all-round. It should
sound very smooth and natural. NK

CONCLUSION
So Canton’s Reference 9.2 DC
loudspeakers are thoroughly modern and
revealing, brutally so at times. Yet

CONCLUSION
So Canton’s Reference 9.2 DC
loudspeakers are thoroughly modern and
revealing, brutally so at times. Yet

CONCLUSION
So Canton’s Reference 9.2 DC
loudspeakers are thoroughly modern and
revealing, brutally so at times. Yet

CONCLUSION
So Canton’s Reference 9.2 DC
loudspeakers are thoroughly modern and
revealing, brutally so at times. Yet

CONCLUSION
So Canton’s Reference 9.2 DC
loudspeakers are thoroughly modern and
revealing, brutally so at times. Yet

CONCLUSION
So Canton’s Reference 9.2 DC
loudspeakers are thoroughly modern and
revealing, brutally so at times. Yet

CONCLUSION
So Canton’s Reference 9.2 DC
loudspeakers are thoroughly modern and
revealing, brutally so at times. Yet

CONCLUSION
So Canton’s Reference 9.2 DC
loudspeakers are thoroughly modern and
revealing, brutally so at times. Yet

CONCLUSION
So Canton’s Reference 9.2 DC
loudspeakers are thoroughly modern and
revealing, brutally so at times. Yet

CONCLUSION
So Canton’s Reference 9.2 DC
loudspeakers are thoroughly modern and
revealing, brutally so at times. Yet

CONCLUSION
So Canton’s Reference 9.2 DC
loudspeakers are thoroughly modern and
revealing, brutally so at times. Yet

CONCLUSION
So Canton’s Reference 9.2 DC
loudspeakers are thoroughly modern and
revealing, brutally so at times. Yet

CONCLUSION
So Canton’s Reference 9.2 DC
loudspeakers are thoroughly modern and
revealing, brutally so at times. Yet

CONCLUSION
So Canton’s Reference 9.2 DC
loudspeakers are thoroughly modern and
revealing, brutally so at times. Yet

CONCLUSION
So Canton’s Reference 9.2 DC
loudspeakers are thoroughly modern and
revealing, brutally so at times. Yet

CONCLUSION
So Canton’s Reference 9.2 DC
loudspeakers are thoroughly modern and
revealing, brutally so at times. Yet

CONCLUSION
So Canton’s Reference 9.2 DC
loudspeakers are thoroughly modern and
revealing, brutally so at times. Yet

CONCLUSION
So Canton’s Reference 9.2 DC
loudspeakers are thoroughly modern and
revealing, brutally so at times. Yet

CONCLUSION
So Canton’s Reference 9.2 DC
loudspeakers are thoroughly modern and
revealing, brutally so at times. Yet

CONCLUSION
So Canton’s Reference 9.2 DC
loudspeakers are thoroughly modern and
revealing, brutally so at times. Yet

CONCLUSION
So Canton’s Reference 9.2 DC
loudspeakers are thoroughly modern and
revealing, brutally so at times. Yet

The Violins of The Chicago Symphony Orchestra jumped out at me from
a well lit orchestral space, playing Rimsky-Korsakov's 'Scheherazade'.
The Reference 9.2s are not backward in coming forward as they say, but
then that is the sort of presentation modern metal cones provide, when treated
with exotic materials, frozen to absolute zero or covered in pixie dust, as whim dictates.

But you get a surgically clean and wonderfully clear rendition and this is how orchestra was
delivered by Canton's 9.2s. Oboe had sparkling presence, violins jumped into the fray with
torch and horns called out with a rich, brassy rasp. Vivacious is a term that describes their
handling of an orchestra, instruments being lifted right up and out of the mix it seemed,
dancing vigorously on the sound stage just in front of me.

The Cantons offer a front row listening perspective, and with stable, well wrought images the whole came over with a

drama many loudspeakers lack. And all this without shrieking treble or any sense of sharpness.

Unsurprisingly, the Cantons toned down a bit when connected to our Icon Audio
MB845 MkII valve amplifiers, a certain degree of relentlessness leaving them, replaced by a
mellower, more considered presentation that allowed solo violin to dance in front of me, with nary a hint of sheen or
core. Even with the MB845s though, the Cantons hardened up on orchestral crescendos and were obviously not plastic

CANTON REF. 9.2 DC £ 2,300
Computers Unlimited
(0)20 8358 9593
www.unlimited.com

VERDICT
Brilliantly revealing yet accurate loudspeaker that's a scintillating listen. Match with a smooth source.

FOR
- tonally accurate
- ultra fast transients
- dynamically lively

AGAINST
- some midband emphasis
- fulsome bass

www.hi-fiworld.co.uk
TURNTABLES

PRO-JECT GENIE 2 2008 £175
A masterpiece of minimalism, this is well made for the money and includes a decent Ortofon OM3 moving magnet cartridge. Great sound per pound.

REGA P2 2008 £220
Some say the cheapest real hi-fi turntable money can buy - excellent value for money, engineering, easy set up and fine sound.

TECHNICS SL1200/M 1973 £495
Slick build makes it a respectable performer, although the cheapo arm limits it - fit a Rega RB250 and it's suddenly a brilliant mid-price machine.

MICHELL ORBE 1995 £2,500
The top Michell disc spinner remains a sweeper capable all rounder with powerful, spacious sound that's delicate and beguiling.

REGA P3-24 2008 £400
Seminal affordable audiophile deck with fine bundled tonearm. Tweakable, and really sings with optional £150 outboard power supply.

MICHELL TECNODEC 2003 £579
Superb introduction to Michell turntables - on a budget. Top quality build and elegant design make it the class of the mid-price field.

ROKSAN RADIUS 5.2 2010 £1,399
Effective, if expensive, update on the original formula. Highly musical, yet detailed and dimensional mid-price turntable with a naturally open and easy sound.

FUNK FIRM VECTOR II 2009 £680
Innovative engineering gives a nimble, pacy and musical sound that's one of the best at the price.

MARANTZ TT-1551 2005 £999
Cracking deck/arm/cartridge combination, this must surely be the best sounding 'plug and play package at this price point.

MICHELL GYRODEC SE 2005 £1,005
Design icon with superlative build and finish. Sound is beautifully smooth, effortless and exceptionally expansive. No longer peerless at the price, but still a brilliant platform.

ACOUSTIC SOLID CLASSIC WOOD 2008 £1,350
Majoring on impact, punch and drive, this is an impactful mid-price turntable in sonic terms as well as physical size.

REVOLEVER REPLAY 2007 £1,500
Revolver spring back into the vinyl market like they've never been away. With a stylish and solidly built LP spinner. Welcome back!

AVID DIVA II SP 2010 £2,000
New twin belt drive and power supply make this an even more commanding performer, although there's a substantial price hike. Its speed, dynamics and detail are hard to beat anywhere near the price.

MICHELL ORION 1995 £2,500
The top Michell disc spinner remains a superbly capable all rounder with powerful, spacious sound that's delicate and beguiling.

LINN LP12SE 1973 £3,510
Surely hi-fi's most iconic turntable, the legendary Sondek goes from strength to strength. New Keel subchassis and Radikal DC motor add precision and grip to one of the world's most musical disc spinners.

SME MODEL 10A 1988 £1,127
Exquisitely engineered deck and SME V tonearm combo that's an extremely accomplished performer with classical music.

SME SERIES V 1987 £1,614
The classic SME Series V updated to spectacular effect. Hand made to order, with any mass, length and colour you care for. Finish, and sound truly impressive.

NAIM ARO 1987 £1,425
Charismatic unipivot is poor at frequency extremes but sublime in the midband; truly emotive and insightful.

HELIX OMEGA 2008 £5,995
Stylish and solid lump of arm with fabulous build quality, that turns in a dynamic and weighty performance.

EAT FORTE 2009 £12,500
Lavishly finished two box, two motor turntable with gorgeous Ikeda 407 tonearm bundled. Exceptionally stable and unfussy performer with a relaxed but highly enjoyable gait.

TONEARMS

REGA RB251 2009 £136
Capable way past its price point, the new 3-point mount version of the classic RB250 serves up a tight and detailed sound. A little lean for some tastes, but responds very well to rewiring and counterweight modification.

MICHELL TECNOARM A2003 £442
The late John Michell's clever reworking of the Rega theme, using blasting, drilling and rewiring! Surely the best overall performer under £500.

ORIGIN LIVE SILVER 2006 £599
Expertly fettled Rega is still the 'affordable audiophile' choice, with an even, transparent and tuneful sound.

SME 309 1987 £767
Mid-range SME comes complete with cost-cut aluminium armbase and detachable headshell. Tight, neutral sound with good tonality, but lacks the IV's pace and precision.

SME SERIES IV 1988 £1,127
Offers nine tenths of the SME IV's magic at just over half price. Exquisitely built and finished, and a design classic. Faces stiff competition these days, but lovely nevertheless.

AUDIO ORIGAMI PU7 2007 £1,300
The classic Syrinx PU3 updated to spectacular effect. Hand made to order, with any mass, length and colour you care for. Fit, finish and sound truly impressive.

HELIX OMEGA 2008 £5,995
Stylish and solid lump of arm with fabulous build quality, that turns in a dynamic and weighty performance.

SME SERIES V 1987 £1,614
Vice-like bias with incredible weight, ultra clear midband and treble astound, although some don't like its matter of factness!
LINN EKOS 1987 £1,700 Subtle mods over the years, including revised bearings and the recent new wiring has kept it a serious contender in the superarm stakes. Lacks the SME's slam, the OL's clarity or the ARO's emotion, but has a feisty musicality all of its own.

SME 3/25 2010 £1,750 Twelve inch magnesium alloy armtube plus SME V bearings makes an impressive transcription tool with a highly insightful yet composed sound. Superlative build completes the package.

GRAHAM PHANTOM 2006 £2,495 Sonically stunning arm with magnificent bass dexterity and soulstaging. Build quality up to SME standards, which is saying something...

TRI-PHASE PRECISION 2006 £2,600 Stunning build, exquisite design and surely the most naturally musical and lucid sound around makes this a remarkable pickup arm.

OL ENTERPRISE 3C 2010 £4,500 Few if any pivoted arms come close to this arm's combination of liquid musicality and forensic grip.

CARTRIDGES

AUDIO TECHNICA AT-95E 1984 £25 Great starter cartridge that's detailed and musical beyond its price. Super glue the stylus in for better sound.

ORTOFON 2M RED/BLUE 2007 £60/£120 Modern, high resolution budget moving magnets that are always an engaging listen.

GOLDRING G1042 1994 £135 One of the best MM's going, with sweet and extended treble and punchy, muscular bass.

DENON DL103R 2006 £200 Awkward to get working properly with a poor mounting arrangement, yet it rewards with a musical performance that makes similar priced cartridges sound cold.

DYNAVECTOR DV10X2S2003 £250 Distant descendent of the classic Ultimo 10X, this has warmth and sweetness in spades, allied to a punchy bass. Beats G1042 comfortably.

ORTOFON 2M BLACK 2007 £350 Strangely good high-end MM that uses a stylus from the MC Jubilee and easily rivals Staggeringly good high-end MM that uses a ORTOFON 2M BLACK 2007 £350

STEREO ERA 2007 £890 Exceptionally tight sounding and detailed cartridge with the musical skills to match, this is up with the very best at the price, with a presentation all of its own.

ORTOFON Cadenza Blue 2009 £1,000 Musical, out of the box sound, allied to real finesse, makes this a great do-it-all high end moving coil.

ORTOFON MC Windfeld 2008 £1,799 Ortofon's new flagship MC is a sophisticated and alluring performer that takes the vinyl experience to a new level.

KOETSU RED K SIGNATURE 2007 £2,399 The new K Signature adds a hefty dose of insight and finesse to the already impressive Red and the results are fabulous.

DIGITAL SOURCES

MUSICAL FIDELITY V-DAC £170 Clear, concise, low distortion sound belies its giveaway price. Supelative value for money.

CAMBRIDGE AUDIO DAC MAGIC £229 An innovative and flexible new DAC, this is a svelte, rhythmic and impressive performer.

STELLO DA100 SIGNATURE £675 Superbly finessed sounding DAC at the price, with strong driving bass and plenty of air and space.

CAMBRIDGE AZUR 840C 2006 £800 Well built CD player with a silky, yet detailed sound and a whole host of useful facilities. Excellent value for money.

NAIM CD5i 2008 £995 Naim's new italic 'i' variant improves even further on the original mid-price classic, offering super tight, grippy and musical sound.

ROKSAN KANDY K1 CD 2010 £900 A charmingly musical performer at the price, this is a surprisingly sophisticated CD player for the money.

BENCHMARK DAC-15 2009 £930 Power, precision and poise - allied to real seat-of-the-pants musicality, this DAC justifies its premium price.

CYRUS CDD 5E 2008 £1,200 Bespoke Servo Evolution mech makes this the most musically engaging machine at the price, with super smooth tonality to boot. Optional PSX-R adds bass and dimensionality.

SIMAUDIOS 300D 2010 £1,290 Lovely fluid sounding DAC with a deep, dark, velvety tonality.

NAIM DAC 2007 £1,995 Painstaking design has yielded a brilliant 'affordable high end' performer that throws bright sunlight on the recording, yet remains unremittingly smooth and musically engaging.

CHORD QBD4 2008 £3,000 Bespoke architecture gives a truly uniquely musical sound that's beguilingly musical in nature, with dizzying incision and grip.

ELECTROCOMPANIET EMD-1UP 2003 £3,450 Quirky yet extremely capable high end upsampling CD spinner, with a musical fluency that beguiles more than it impresses.

ACCUSTIC ARTS CDP1MK2 2007 £3,985 Styling not to everyone's taste but build quality is impeccable and the performance is stunningly musical.

ESOTERIC X-5 2010 £4,495 Superlative 'affordable high end' CD5/4/ACD spinner with excellent build, massive detail and great poise.

NAIM CDX2-XP52 2003 £4,950 A fine high end machine, but add an XP52 and it becomes one of the most charismatically engaging 1bit machines we've ever heard. Plays music with such passion!

R.WIIM KANDY 2003 £7,050 The most polished Naim CD to date; tremendously capable and musical, but lacks the Rottweiler quality of the cheaper CDX2-XP52.

ACCUSTIC ARTS DRIVE MK2 TUBE DAC 2007 £7,980 Superbly built high end CD transport and DAC combo that shows just what the format can be capable of. Very tangible, musical sound with wonderful dynamics and glistening harmonics. Only curious styling and clunky build detract from its brilliance!
DCS PAGANINI DAC £9,599
Digital rarely sounds better; DCS's bespoke Ring DAC makes for power, punch and insight on an epic scale. Add clock and upsampler for an even more profound experience. Justifiably expensive.

LINN KLIMAX DS 2007 £9,600
Landmark network music player, offering brilliant sonics at up to 24/192 resolution from hard disk/NAS. Expensive, but you can hear why...

NAIM CDSSS/SSSSPS 2006 £14,000
Very probably the best CD player yet made - certainly the most expensive; a digital tour de force.

STANDARDS

60

Why... Very probably the best CD player yet made, with a complete phono-level preamp. Dynamic performer that can be used on its own. A complete phono-level preamp. Exceptionally musical and natural sounding all discrete transistor phono stage, with highly lucid, valve-like presentation.

AMPLICERS

SUGDEN MYSTRO 2010 £1,225
Sugden's first Class AB integrated in a long time surprises; rollicking good fun to listen to, it loses surprisingly little in smoothness to its Class AB siblings.

SUGDEN A21A S2 2007 £1,299
More power and greater transparency improve even further on the already impressive A21A to give truly impressive results.

NAIM NAIT X5 2009 £1,250
With much of the sound of the Supernait at half the price, this is powerful, articulate and smooth beyond class expectations.

ELECTROCOMPANIET

PI-2 2008 £1,430
Powerful integrated with seriously solid bass and impressive dynamic abilities. Superbly musical.

SUGDEN A21A S3 2008 £1,469
Crystalline clarity, dizzying speed and forensic detailing makes this seminal design the most musical at the price, but power limited so needs sensitive speakers.

NAIM A50R 2007 £1,600
Simple integrated amplifier with super bass grip and effortless dynamics.

VINCENT SA-336MK 2010 £1,749
Big, powerful and expansive sounding hybrid transistor amplifier, with bright, spry and musical nature.

MOON i-3RS 2008 £1,890
Grippy and clean performer with fine soundstaging and build quality.

COPLAND CSA29 2006 £1,998
Unfailingly evokes, sophisticated and smooth - both to listen to and look at - this is a truly desirable high end integrated.

NAIM SUPERNAIT 2007 £2,475
Integrated tour de force from Naim that combines impressive functionality and connectivity with super sound.

LUXMAN L-550A 2007 £2,800
Monster Class A integrated with powerful and revealing sound and a whole host of useful features, including a highly competent MM/MC phono stage.

ICON AUDIO STEREO 25 2008 £500
Cracking entry-level valve integrated, with a warm and engaging sound. Limited power so needs careful partnering, though.

ROTEL RA-06 2008 £550
Vivacious sounding device that, whilst lacking the finer musical points, wears its heart on its sleeve and has plenty of power to match.

NAIM NAIT Si 2007 £725
The italic 'i' version remains one of the most musically competent and dynamically engaging integrateds at the price.

CAMBRIDGE 840A V2 2007 £750
Version 2 addresses version 1's weaknesses to turn in a mighty accomplished performer, offering power, finesse and detail.

JUNGSION JA-800 2006 £899
Stunning value for money Class A monster integrated; extreme power and clarity at a puzzlingly low price.

SUGDEN IA4 2007 £3,650
Goodly amount of Class A power, icy clarity and a breathtakingly fast, musical sound make this one of the very best super-integrateds.

QUAD II CLASSIC 2010 £4,500
Beautiful retro styled integrated amplifier with a subtle, supple sound - although needs matching to speakers that are easy loads.

MUSICAL FIDELITY AMS35I 2010 £6,000
Gorgeous, liquid sounding solid-state full Class A integrated with a supernaturally sumptuous bass; surely one of the very best integrateds ever made!

RECORDERs

NAIM HDX 2009 £4,405
Interesting one-box network enabled hard disk music system gives superb sonics together with impressive ease of use.

SONY TC-W6475 2010 £130
Essential tackle for committed cassette users, they will calibrated double deck sounds way better than expected.

SONY RCD-W3 2002 £250

ICON AUDIO KORA 37 LTD 2010 £995
Exceptionally musical and natural sounding all discrete transistor phono stage, with highly lucid, valve-like presentation.

ICON AUDIO VISTA 25 2008 £500
Cracking entry-level valve integrated, with a warm and engaging sound. Limited power so needs careful partnering, though.

ROTEL RA-06 2008 £550
Vivacious sounding device that, whilst lacking the finer musical points, wears its heart on its sleeve and has plenty of power to match.

NAIM NAIT Si 2007 £725
The italic 'i' version remains one of the most musically competent and dynamically engaging integrateds at the price.

CAMBRIDGE 840A V2 2007 £750
Version 2 addresses version 1's weaknesses to turn in a mighty accomplished performer, offering power, finesse and detail.

JUNGSION JA-800 2006 £899
Stunning value for money Class A monster integrated; extreme power and clarity at a puzzlingly low price.

SUGDEN IA4 2007 £3,650
Goodly amount of Class A power, icy clarity and a breathtakingly fast, musical sound make this one of the very best super-integrateds.

QUAD II CLASSIC 2010 £4,500
Beautiful retro styled integrated amplifier with a subtle, supple sound - although needs matching to speakers that are easy loads.

MUSICAL FIDELITY AMS35I 2010 £6,000
Gorgeous, liquid sounding solid-state full Class A integrated with a supernaturally sumptuous bass; surely one of the very best integrateds ever made!
AV AMPLIFIERS
ARCAM AVR350 2006 £1,500
Superbly accomplished do-it-all AV receiver package, with an uncommonly warm, natural and musical sound. A winner goes from strength to strength.

HEADPHONE AMPLIFIERS
CHANNEL ISLANDS VHP-1/VAC-1 £390
A truly exceptional headphone output stage; the best at the price and an essential audition.

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-CAN V8 2000 £250
Open and explicitly detailed sound plus serious bass wallop and the ability to drive anything to very high levels makes this a great partner for most mid-to-high end headphones.

SUGDEN HEADMASTER 2003 £600
Unusual combined preamplifier and headphone amplifier, this boasts a surprisingly smooth and open sound.

PREAMPLIFIERS
CREEK OBH-12 2000 £220
Brilliant value budget passive, giving little away in sonics to far more expensive designs. Connectivity and build aren’t great, but what do you expect at this price?

MELODY PURE BLACK 101D 2007 £3,295
One of the best preamplifiers we have ever heard. Takes the clarity and openness we expect from valves and adds a staggering level of grip and detail.

MODWRIGHT 36.5 PRE/PSU 2010 £5,995
Exceptionally open and expansive, yet musically expressive sounding high end preamplifier.

MUSICAL FIDELITY PRIMO 2009 £7,900
Staggeringly expensive, but one listen explains why. Wonderfully exuberant sound that can only come from a top quality tube design.

POWER AMPLIFIERS
ROKSAN KANDY LIII 2008 £600
Fine budget power amp that punches well above its weight.

QUAD 909 2001 £900
The latest current-dumper has a smooth and expansive character with enough wallop to drive most loads. Not the most musical, but super value all the same. Lovely build, finish and Quad’s legendary service are nice.

NAIM NAP150 2002 £795
Driven by a decent source and a NAC112, this gives highly enjoyable results - providing you like the Naim sound! Taut, fast and feisty despite its relative lack of power.

SUGDEN MUSIC MASTER 2003 £1,200
Quintessential Class A Sugden sound is not warm as many expect, but extremely neutral and open with real tonal colour. Superb when partnered with efficient loudspeakers like Revolver R45s, but many will find it underpowered.

MF AUDIO PASSIVE PRE2003 £1,500
Effective pre with switchable gain via a transformer, and balanced operation. Open and incisive sound, yet makes most active rivals sound edgy by comparison. Silver version at the twice the price adds transparency.

MODWRIGHT SWL9.05E £2,000
Captivating sound quality that will transform your system. Build quality is equally impressive and value top-notch. Highly recommended.

NUFORCE REFERENCE 9SE V2 2006 £1,750
Brilliant value for money monoblocks with massive power and super-clean, three dimensional sound.

QUAD II-40 2005 £3,230
Modern tube monoblock power amplifiers with plenty of power, liquid and open midband and spacious, airy treble. Explicit, engaging sound, but not as euphonic as some.

QUAD II-80 2005 £6,000
Quad’s best ever power amplifier; this is a dramatic performer with a silky but dark tonal balance, blistering dynamics, serious power and a compellingly musical sound. They don’t come much better than these...

MUSICAL FIDELITY AMS50 2010 £7,000
Wonderfully assured high end full Class A integrated proffering icy clarity allied to real musicality. Lacks the lucidity of the best tube amps but redeems with power and punch.

LOUDSPEAKERS
Q ACOUSTICS 2020 2010 £140
Great little standmounters with a friendly, fun yet surprisingly refined gift. Excellent value starter speakers.

ACOUSTIC ENERGY NEO 1 2007 £199
Tidy and well balanced standmounters with pleasing clarity and detail.

KEF IQ30 2009 £330
Beautifully built, classily styled standmounters with exceptional image projection and a very clean, detailed sound.

DPA SA-1 2010 £2,850
Pace, engaging and rhythmic almost to a fault, this solid-state power amplifier isn’t the world’s most powerful but is none the worse for it.

SLK GLOWMASTER KT88 2007 £1,699
KT88 based power amplifier offers dramatic clarity and excellent bass heft.

QUAD II-40 2005 £3,230
Modern tube monoblock power amplifiers with plenty of power, liquid and open mid-bass and spacious, airy treble. Explicit, engaging sound, but not as euphonic as some.

QUAD II-80 2005 £6,000
Quad’s best ever power amplifier; this is a dramatic performer with a silky but dark tonal balance, blistering dynamics, serious power and a compellingly musical sound. They don’t come much better than these...

MUSICAL FIDELITY AMS50 2010 £7,000
Wonderfully assured high end full Class A integrated proffering icy clarity allied to real musicality. Lacks the lucidity of the best tube amps but redeems with power and punch.

LOUDSPEAKERS
Q ACOUSTICS 2020 2010 £140
Great little standmounters with a friendly, fun yet surprisingly refined gift. Excellent value starter speakers.

ACOUSTIC ENERGY NEO 1 2007 £199
Tidy and well balanced standmounters with pleasing clarity and detail.

KEF IQ30 2009 £330
Beautifully built, classily styled standmounters with exceptional image projection and a very clean, detailed sound.
Astonishingly capable budget standmounters

**XTZ 99.25**  
2010 £640

Dismally open and refined at the price, these standmounters bring unexpected civility, refinement and insight to the price point.

**SPENDOR S3/SE**  
2004 £950

A natural successor to the BBC LS3/5a, whose impressive neutrality, imaging and even-handedness makes this a superior, if less charismatic, loudspeaker.

**XTZ 99.25**  
2010 £640

Disarmingly open and refined at the price, these standmounters bring unexpected civility, refinement and insight to the price point. Exceptional value for money.

**WHARFEDALE DIAMOND 10.3**  
2010 £299

Great small standmounters for audiophiles with an absolutely captivating performance. Huge soundstage and bags of clarity.

**ACOUSTIC ENERGY AE1 CLASSIC**  
£845

Brilliantly successful remake of an iconic design; not flawless, but surely one of the most musical loudspeakers ever made.

**SPENDOR S8E**  
2010 £5,995

Massively capable loudspeakers that offer quite startling dynamics and grip. Still a great rock loudspeaker after all these years, with a vivid, live and engaging sound.

**ENERGY AEI CLASSIC**  
£845

Exceptional value for money.

**ARS AURES HI**  
2006 £5,995

Sublime build and finish allied to an insightful, assured and even-handed musical performance makes these an essential high end audition.

**REVOLVER CYGNIS GOLD**  
2010 £14,995

Big banger with enormous scale and vast power, although requires the right room and doesn’t cohere as well as a panel.

**ISOPHON CASSIANO**  
2007 £12,900

Drive units featuring exotic materials allied to superlative build quality result in an immensely capable loudspeaker. Not an easy load to drive, however.

**HEADPHONES**

**SENNHEISER MX-550**  
2005 £19

Our unqualified recommendation for those seeking a serious sounding pair of in-ear phones. Smooth, detailed and musical.
SENNHEISER PX-100 2002 £29
Cracking pair of lightweight open back cans ideal for personals, but good enough for real hi-fi use. Superb build allied to a smooth and engaging performance make them the spiritual successor to the HD400s.

GOLDRING DR150 2006 £70
Excellent build and fine sound makes these budget cans superlative value for money.

SENNHEISER HD-590 1998 £199
The company's best real-world cans to date. Open and smooth with plenty of detail. Brightly lit midband makes them an ideal partner for a valve headphone amp.

SENNHEISER HD-650 2004 £350
A super all round reference design with crisp, detailed and even sound allied to superlative build and comfort. Cable upgrade yields great results.

SENNHEISER HD800 2010 £1,000
The ultimate expression of the Sennheiser philosophy offers massive speed, clarity and insight, although lacks some of the charm of the softer, more beguiling rival Staxes.

GOLDWIRE OASIS 5 2003 £99/M
Excellent build and fine sound makes these musical performers with a smooth yet open sound.

CONDITOR 12A-6 BLOCK 2003 £120
Top quality 'affordable' mains outlet block, with fine build and good sonics. Well worth the extra over standard high street specials, which sound coarse and two-dimensional by comparison.

MISSING LINK CRYO REFERENCE 2008 £375
Currently our favourite 'affordable high end' interconnects, with a deliciously smooth, open and subtle sound without a hint of edge or grain. Superb value, inasmuch as it's as good as some designs at three times the price.

CAMBRIDGE AUDIO ISOTRONIC 5/0.6M 2004 £125
Sweet sounding digital/analogue hybrid with fine build and finish at the price.

ARCAM FMJ T32 2009 £550
Excellent hybrid FM/DAB+ tuner with a smooth, engaging sound. Factor in its fine build and it's a super value package.

CREEK CLASSIC TUNER 2006 £550
No tuner offers better sound per pound; wonderfully three dimensional and smooth from bottom to top.

MYRAX MXT-2000 2005 £800
Truly sumptuous sound and excellent build is all most will ever need in a tuner; superb.

MAGNUM DYNALAB MD-100T 2006 £1,985
One of the best ways to hear FM that we know; superbly open and musical sound in a quirky but characterful package.

NAD C-7150 2008 £429
Small, neat looks cover a truly capable system that shows just what a compact design can achieve.
Rafael Todes fires up Musical Fidelity's punchy mid-priced transistor integrated power amplifier, the M6 PRX...

In recent months Musical Fidelity have come up with some interesting products. I recently had the company of an AMS100, a one hundred Watt power amplifier for a month, it took two burly men a good five minutes to haul this 150kg crate up a single flight of stairs. This is a £14,000 monster, pure Class A, and 100W of vice-like control. Musically however it is a cool customer and I never saw it break sweat in the time I had it. Its smaller sibling, the AMSSO has been adopted by Hi-Fi World as a reference due to its neutrality, super bass qualities, and ability to present detail.

Personally speaking, I am a worshipper at the thermionic temple. I love the sound that valves bring to acoustic instruments, particularly strings and voice. Typically, you can expect a liquid midrange that is sweeter than a transistor amplifier, and a sound stage that is deeper, and more holographic. There can be an airiness to the sound which is incredibly lifelike, or perhaps even Uber-real! After all when was the last time you heard that airiness in a real concert? The downside can come with valve amplifiers' control of bass frequencies. Often you will hear a soggy or bloated bass which lacks the same incision and accuracy of a transistor amplifier. These days, this downside can be partially alleviated by the use of a beefy, well made transformer, and high quality valves.

Is this beauty of tone genuine or not? Anti-valvistas would claim that the beauty of sound comes from second-order harmonic distortion, which is not present in well-engineered transistor amplifiers. This age-old debate will run and run, and ultimately people tend to choose the family of sound they want, and stick to it!

The maintenance costs of running valve amplifiers should not be forgotten. A new set of valves can cost anything from a hundred quid to...
"a big, no-nonsense, ballsy sound, extremely low levels of distortion, with plenty of grip..."
Definition is an outstanding new range of audiophile loudspeakers from Tannoy. Designed to get the very best from stereo music in the home, Definition distils and refines Tannoy’s eight decades of loudspeaker expertise into a design of unrivalled performance value and stunning aesthetics.

Defining the art of sound

The three strong range features the very latest Tannoy Dual Concentric™ drivers with WideBand™ tweeter technology, innovative ply-wood cabinets and revolutionary Deep Cryogenically Treated crossovers. Capturing the fundamental dynamics of music yet majoring on the finest instrumental detail, Definition defines the art of sound.

tannoy.com
flourishes, and textures. I had been so impressed at AMS100’s ability to spot light the individual instruments’ miking, as well as making me feel that I was standing in the midst of the string or woodwind section during the relevant passages. I feel this quality much less with its cheaper cousin, the sound feels like you are in the fifth row of a concert hall. But at £11,500 less than its smarter relative, this criticism is totally unreasonable!

There is some controversy about the attribution of Bach’s famous Toccata and Fugue in D minor, there is recently scholarship that suggests it was written after 1850, due to a number of kitsch musical touches that did not exist in Bach’s time. In this excellent recording by Peter Hurford on the organ of the Ratzeburger Dom (Argo ZRG943) the huge range of the organ is a good indicator of the tonal evenness of an amplifier across different registers. The M6PRX passes this test with flying colours. Its neutrality can be heard across the different registers of the German organ, and both the earth-shattering bass and the clarity with which it portrays the massive hell-raising diminished chord, is extremely impressive. You can distinguish every note of the chord, a feat that is not always possible amongst lesser amplifiers, in fact I heard a passing note that I have never heard before! The amplifier here has both muscle combined with clarity.

Ray Gelato’s ‘The Full Flavour’ is Linn Records’ tribute to Louis Prima, brilliantly recorded by Callum Malcolm. On this CD through a Naim CD5X and Flatcap 2X, the amplifier seemed in its element. It made a stunning rendition of the vocals by Ray Gelato and guest star Claire Martin, silky smooth, natural, and highly realistic. The band was beautifully portrayed in space, punchy bass, real zing on the drums, and the amplifier had no problems deconstructing the playing to reveal layers I hadn’t heard before. There seemed to be real synergy between the Naim and the M6PRX for this type of recording.

CONCLUSION

Anyone looking for a well-built power amplifier around the £3,000 mark shouldn’t miss auditioning one of these. It has a big, no-nonsense, bally sound, extremely low levels of distortion, with plenty of grip down below. It really excelled on CD playing studio-recorded jazz. It images well, and has many of the qualities of its more expensive relatives, at a price that represents fine value for money.
Vinyl is black!

The award winning A.N.T. phonostage is the preferred choice of many professionals. Featuring breathtaking realism and stunning dynamics, vinyl has never sounded so good! This no-compromise design is available in moving coil or moving magnet versions and features no overall feedback, passive equalisation and no transistors or op-amps. Hi Fi World said "Cue up your favourite LP and sit back in awe as the music issues from the groove. It's an exceptionally musical device, bristling with energy" Now available for 35% less directly from the factory!


All demonstrated in a relaxing setting with river views! Very high part exchanges & World wide mail order.

Sound Hi Fi Dartmouth Devon 01803 833366 web www.SoundHiFi.com

33½ per cent off all our vinyl LPs!
Save £££s on 2,000+ in-stock audiophile reissues and new releases

We are holding a record mega-sale to mark February's Bristol hi-fi show. Get A THIRD OFF our entire stocks of brand new vinyl titles, including several hundred high-end audiophile LPs. Plus, get a FREE high-quality record cleaning cloth with each purchase. Take advantage of this spectacular offer without having to leave the comfort of your armchair! Or visit our stand - C3 in the conservatory (by Wilson Benesch) - to meet our friendly sales staff, choose your LPs and place your orders. Alternatively pay a trip to our warehouse - an hour up the M5 from Bristol - and browse to your heart's content! We are open for business throughout the weekend of Feb 25-27.

Oyaide MJ-12 Turntable Mat
"gave a sense of ease to the musical proceedings in general and invested the high treble notes with a pleasing shimmer." HiFi World.

For more information on this truly exciting new product and many other high end audio upgrading accessories, including rhodium plated connectors and high purity silver and copper cables, please visit www.oyaide.com or contact your nearest Oyaide dealer on:

www.blackrhodium.co.uk/oyaideukdealers.htm 01332 342233 sales@blackrhodium.co.uk

E-mail or call us for details and/or a free catalogue
info@classiclpss.co.uk 01684 899 457 www.classiclpss.co.uk
Size Matters

When editor DP announced that my new mission in life was to review the Tannoy Revolution DC4 loudspeakers, I looked around and pondered the lack of space in my house, reflected on the vast amounts of kit already present, and wondered where the box might go when the couriers delivered them. But when the lorry turned up and a wee little package was handed over, I realised just how dinky these mini-monitors really are. They're so small that when I placed them upon my speaker stands, the little Tannoys were hardly able to span the four decoupling supports on the top!

Ranging over a restricted 270x152x162mm and weighing just 3.7kg, my first thoughts were to wave a tearful hanky at the retreating bass. I couldn't see much air being moved by these cuties. Driver-wise, the speaker looks very simple indeed, until you look a little closer then you realise that Tannoy has utilised a Dual Concentric design. In fact, a compact, wide bandwidth version of the more recognisable units that you may have seen Noel waxing lyrical about a few issues back. Part of the driver mix is a paper cone, a titanium domed tweeter with a Tulip waveguide backed by a neodymium magnet accompanied by a simplified internal construction. The rear of the chassis provides enough terminals for bi-amping, if required.

Rather than being honed to perfection in some remote Caledonian anechoic chamber, the trapezoidal chassis looks like designer Dr Paul Mills arrived at the shape while whistling a piece of wood on a porch during a balmy summer in Alabama, in the company of a bunch of 'good ol' boys', while slurping hooch and chewing straw!

It looks positively anorexic, but then interestingly with loudspeakers, less can often be more. Smaller cabinets mean less wood to resonate, and less air inside to chuff around, messing up timing.

Why do the Revolution DC4 at all? Well, partly because he could. Mills' self-imposed challenge was to get a dual concentric design into as small a space as possible and, with speaker materials evolving and improving all the time, Mills decided to do just that.

The second reason? Using the dual concentric design meant that only one driver had to be fitted which allowed the speaker to shrink further. Tannoy is looking seriously at this 'small' market. According to its own research, newbuild houses are shrinking. Apparently, each year they reduce in size by nine square foot! Who can live in a matchbox with a pair of B&W 802Ds? Soon, people
The Spirit of Music ...
... capture the essence!

"... ELAC's use of their JET ribbon tweeter is the hi-fi equivalent of a turbocharger; it magically wipes away so many of the pitfalls of small speakers by using a transducer that wouldn't disgrace a speaker at several times the price"

HIFI-WORLD Magazin January 2011 Edition
"It's so clean, so crafted and precise that an acoustic guitar solo is almost shocking in its presentation..."

**CONCLUSION**

The Tannoy DC4s are a bit of a Curve's Egg. Bass had to be drawn on a page and described to my ears, yet still when the DC4s became involved with the music the recording became captivating. I was surprised by these speakers' apparent dislike of vinyl – or certainly my particular vinyl front end. It felt like the turntable was throwing too much bass into the speakers, which they then struggled with, and muddled the upper frequencies. In my system, the Tannoy's certainly gave of their best in the digital domain. Exhibiting super instrumental separation, they revelled in the sheer joy of the CD-based music. The musicality of the entire presentation just picked me up and carried me away. The exuberance of the midrange frequencies couldn't fail to put a smile on my face. So do carefully audition these loudspeakers; they have a distinct and unmissable character of their very own.

**VERDICT**

Striking midrange performance makes these brilliant in small spaces, but lack of bass is not for all.

**TANNONY REVOLUTION**

DC4 £349.90

- Light low bass
- Transistor amps only!
- Trixky set-up

**MEASURED PERFORMANCE**

Unlike most Tannoy's, the DC4 has raised output from its concentric horn tweeter, giving a lift in frequency response of +6dB above 5kHz, a property that will be clearly audible as prominent or 'bright' treble. A small amount of droop in the crossover region around 2.5kHz will soften the upper midband. 70Hz will soften the upper midband. The DC4s underwent an immediate transformation because, oddly, the authority of this speaker lies in the midrange. The mids are almost visceral. Power, beautifully sculptured - but from ice - emanates from the midrange. It's so clean, so crafted and precise that an acoustic guitar solo is almost shocking in its presentation. Each string is plucked with an almost devastating clarity. Each plucked string is delivered like a punch that, even when it's over, your ears dwell upon what you have heard. For that reason, you need to take care on system matching. A forward front-end will produce brightness from the DC4s, staubbing your ears with midrange icicles!

Attach a warming CD player, like the Icon, and you have an almost clinically transparent transducer but without a single element of harshness that you might normally associate with that epithet. Spinning a reissue of Phil Manzanera's debut solo work, 'Diamond Head' (Expression), the word that springs to mind is 'fresh'. Mids and treble had bags of space to roam while the music fizzed with energy.

**SOUND QUALITY**

I began by spinning vinyl and Kate Bush's 'Bertie' from the Aerial (EMI) album. Surprisingly, I found the playback lacking in engagement. Not surprisingly, bass was largely absent but did resemble a hollow sculpture. That is, the bass was shaped and framed but without any low frequency substance while the vocals, normally rich and warm on wax, sounded rather cold and icy which removed much of the emotion of the performance. General midrange performance was excellent, though, with real organic clarity impressing over all instruments. Moving to the jazz-infused Krautrock of Embryo and various excerpts from the album 'Opal' (Wah Wah), there was less time for the music to become introspective, because the presentation was more up-tempo. I found myself carried away by the musicality and energy of the Tannoy's. This music didn't dwell on the cool nature of the DC4s, I was able to enjoy the crisp projection of the guitar solos and the sax bursts.

What was going on? It's partly a problem of perception - at least from myself. I expected more warmth and depth from vinyl playback. Not getting it, I felt robbed. Perhaps the DC4s were getting a little overwhelmed by my bass-heavy, valve phono stage enriched turntable, and just ran out of puff?

Moving to more balanced CD sources was a pleasurable experience; the Tannoy's simply adored the little silver disc. Suddenly the DC4s felt thoroughly at ease; this was synchronicity! Listening via the Icon CD player, I found myself relaxing for the first time and genuinely enjoying the listening experience.

Okay, bass was still absent without leave, but even here there was fun to be had. Imagine sitting at a dinner, after a good meal and lots of wine and up stands an after-dinner speaker who tells you the most splendid stories about Groucho Marx. Now, of course, you'd rather have Groucho there, in front of you, giving you the stories first hand but the second-hand stories make you laugh, you have a really good time nevertheless. That's what bass is like via digital sources through the DC4s. It describes what bass should be like without actually giving it to you...

I've saved the best till last, though. Playing Carol Kidd's 'It's Alright With Me' from 'Dreamsville' (Linn), the DC4s underwent an immediate transformation because, oddly, the authority of this speaker lies in the midrange. The mids are almost visceral. Power, beautifully sculptured - but from ice - emanates from the midrange. It's so clean, so crafted and precise that an acoustic guitar solo is almost shocking in its presentation. Each string is plucked with an almost devastating clarity. Each plucked string is delivered like a punch that, even when it's over, your ears dwell upon what you have heard. For that reason, you need to take care on system matching. A forward front-end will produce brightness from the DC4s, staubbing your ears with midrange icicles!

Attach a warming CD player, like the Icon, and you have an almost clinically transparent transducer but without a single element of harshness that you might normally associate with that epithet. Spinning a reissue of Phil Manzanera's debut solo work, 'Diamond Head' (Expression), the word that springs to mind is 'fresh'. Mids and treble had bags of space to roam while the music fizzed with energy.
Hear the Difference, Clearly.

The Lunar cables - Art & Technology that makes a Difference:
- State-of-the-art materials: A heavy gauge aerospace grade conductors and Teflon® insulation.
- Multi-layered structure: A triple layers of braided shielding ensuring fully protection from RFI & EMI.
- Pseudo balanced configuration: A floating double screen for black background and superb dynamics.
- Anti-vibration mechanism: An anti resonant polymer reduce cable-plug vibrations & improve clarity.
- Electrical connection method: A direct gold plating over pure copper WBT-110 plugs & 4% silver solder.

Please visit: www.AR-Sound.com  E-mail: support@ar-sound.com

SOUNDS SIMPLY SENSATIONAL

For superior sound quality, you should try the Isoplatmat. Made from SDS Aluminium, the Isoplatmat isolates your vinyl and needle from vibrations and feedback giving an exceptionally high quality audio. Just place the Isoplatmat on your turntable and to further enhance your music, you can also use Isofeet placed under the components, subwoofers and speakers. You will be amazed at the sonic improvement to your system.

Isoplatmat £87.50 + p&p
Isofeet x 4 £30.00 + p&p

arcm  audio technica
dynavector
epson
tidal
tlfk
town
tatter	nisblue
kudos
lyra
naim
neat
pmc
rega
stax
nottingham
ortofon
sumiko
trichord
well tempered

signals

ipswich (01473) 655171
www.signals.uk.com

arcam audio technica
dynavector
epson
tidal
tlfk
town
tatter	nisblue
kudos
lyra
naim
neat
pmc
rega
stax
nottingham
ortofon
sumiko
trichord
well tempered
WIN A SUPERB BENZ MICRO WOOD SL MOVING COIL CARTRIDGE WORTH £950 IN THIS MONTH'S GREAT COMPETITION!

Here's what Tony Bolton said about this fabulous cartridge, in the December 2010 issue of Hi-Fi World magazine...

"In the audio world, the Swiss home of precision engineering has produced Benz Micro, manufacturers of hand made pickup cartridges. Designed by Albert Lukascheck, who personally tests each unit before it leaves the factory, the Micro has been around for a few years, but recently the stylus profile has been changed from a Geiger S to a Micro-ridge design. This shape has several claimed advantages over other designs, including a very small contact area with the groove wall, promising good detail retrieval, and the curvature of the tip (3 micron radius) ensuring that wear to the tip does not alter the profile, giving long life and minimal wear to both stylus and records. This series of cartridges comes clothed in a wooden body. The official description calls the material Bruyere, and a little research found the English name, Briar-root wood (Erica Arborea), better known for making the bowls of tobacco pipes. Encased inside is the generator, a crossed-coil design as found in other Benz Micro products. The solid Boron cantilever, with 'side-bonded' stylus, grooved rear pole piece and countersunk O-ring damper are carried over from the previous version of this unit.

Playing a mid fifties mono LP in average condition, my first reaction as the run-in groove played was disbelief. Most of the background noise seemed to have disappeared! As the tracks played through, and a couple of the usual 'crunches' failed to materialise, I became more and more impressed with the Benz's tracking abilities. It seemed to follow the groove wall extremely accurately, digging into the groove to produce one of the best renditions that I have heard of this record. Musicians seemed to be working together in a particularly cohesive manner, and the whole experience demonstrated the reason that Goodman was known as the 'King of Swing' for over twenty years. The timing was immaculate and the presentation vibrant without being forward or fussy. In case you haven't guessed, I think I'm in love! I've never had a Benz cartridge to play with at home before, and I have been won over by its exemplary manners, virtually unshakable tracking ability and sheer musicality. It seemed unfussed by aged recordings (or vinyl) and just rolled up its sleeves and got on with the job in hand.

Here are the answers to the questions:

1) From which country does Benz come?
   a) Sweden
   b) Swaziland
   c) Surinam
   d) Switzerland

2) Albert Lukascheck does what?
   a) makes the tea
   b) calls the shots
   c) fixes the roof
   d) designs Benz cartridges

3) What type of stylus is used?
   a) elliptical
   b) spherical
   c) Gyger
   d) Micro ridge

4) Tony said he thought he was what?
   a) "the egg man"
   b) "all shook up"
   c) "confused"
   d) "in love"

March 2011 Competition, Hi-Fi World magazine, Unit G4 Argo House, The Park Business Centre, Kilburn Park Road, London NW6 5LF.
Here is our list of the great and good from audio's glorious past, products that have earned their place in hi-fi history. You'll also see some oddities which aren't classic as such, but are great used buys. The year of introduction is given, alongside the original UK launch price.

**DIGITAL**

**CAMBRIDGE AUDIO CD1** 1986 £1500
Inspired Stan Curtis redesign of Philips CD104, complete with switchable digital filter. Lean but tight and musical performer.

**ESOTERIC P0** 1997 £8,000
The best CD drive bar none; TEAC's Tokyo boys pushed the boat out in style. Brilliantly incisive, ridiculously over engineered.

**KENWOOD 9010** 1986 £600
The first discrete Jap transport was beautifully done and responds well to re-clocking even today.

**MUSICAL FIDELITY**

**TRI VISTA** 2002 £4000
When playing SACDs, the sweetest, most lyrical digital disc spinner we've heard. Old school stereo, pure DSD design. CD sound is up in the £1000 class, too! Future classic.

**DAP LITTLE BIT 3** 1996 £299
Rich, clean, rhythmic and punchy sound transforms budget CD players.

**PINK TRIANGLE**

**DACAPO** 1993 £N/A
Exquisite; the warmest and most lyrical 16bit digital audio we have ever heard. Clever plug-in digital filter modules really worked!

**COMPACT DISC TRANSPORTS**

**TEAC VRDS-T1** 1994 £600
Warm and expansive sound made this a mid price hit. Well built, with a slick mech.

**QED DIGIT** 1991 £90
Budget bitstream performer with tweaks aplenty. Positivetron PSU upgrade makes it smooth, but now past it.

**CLASSICS**

**WORLD CLASSICS**

**CAMBRIDGE AUDIO CD4SE** 1998 £200
A touch soft in the treble and tonally light, but outstanding in every other respect.

**LINN KARIK III** 1995 £1775
The final Kariik was a gem. Superb transport gives a brilliantly tight, grippy dynamic sound, albeit tonally dry.

**MARANTZ CD73** 1983 £700
A riot of gold brushed aluminium and LEDs, this distinctive machine squeezed every last ounce from its 14x4 DAC - super musical.

**MARANTZ SA-I** 2000 £5000
The greatest argument for SACD. This sublime Ken Ishiwata design is utterly musically convincing with both CD and SACD, beating most audiophile CD spinners hands down.

**MERIDIAN 207** 1988 £995
Beautifully-built two-box with pre-amp stage. Very musical although not as refined as modern Bitstream gear. No digital output.

**QED DIGIT** 1991 £90
Budget bitstream performer with tweaks aplenty. Positivetron PSU upgrade makes it smooth, but now past it.

**MERIDIAN MCD 1984 £600**
The first British 'audiophile' machine was a sweeter, more detailed Philips CD100. 14x4 never sounded so good, until the MCD Pro arrived a year later.

**TECHNICS SL-P1200** 1987 £800
CD version of the Technics SL-I200 turntable. Massively built to withstand the rigours of 'pro' use and laden with facilities - a great eighties icon. Sonically, it's pure fun, with hefty bass that can still show weedy modern players a thing or two!

**YAMAHA CD-X1** 1983 £340
Nicely built 16x2 machine with a very sharp and detailed sound; sometimes too much so. Excellent ergonomics, unlike almost every other rival of the time.

**NAIM CDS 1990 £N/A**
Classic Philips 16x4 chipset with serious attention to power supplies equals grin-inducing sonics.

**SONY CDP-101** 1982 £800
The first Japanese CD spinner was powerful and involving. Brilliant transport more than compensated for 16x2 DAC, and you even got remote control!

**SONY CDP-RI/DAS-R1 1987 £3,000**
Sony's first two boxer was right first time. Tonal lean, but probably the most detailed and architectural sounding machine of the eighties.

**SONY CDP-701ES** 1984 £890
Sony's first ever bespoke high end audiophile machine used a 16x2 DAC to provide a clinically incisive sound; supreme build quality allied to the pure unadulterated luxury of a paperback-sized remote control.

**SONY CDP-701ES** 1984 £890
Sony's first ever bespoke high end audiophile machine used a 16x2 DAC to provide a clinically incisive sound; supreme build quality allied to the pure unadulterated luxury of a paperback-sized remote control.

**ESOTERIC PO** 1997 £8,000
The best CD drive bar none; TEAC's Tokyo boys pushed the boat out in style. Brilliantly incisive, ridiculously over engineered.

**KENWOOD 9010** 1986 £600
The first discrete Jap transport was beautifully done and responds well to re-clocking even today.

**DACs**

**CAMBRIDGE AUDIO DACMAGIC** 1995 £99
Good value upgrade for budget CD players with extensive facilities and detailed sonics.
**TURNTABLES**

**ARISTON RD115** 1972 £94
Modern evolution of Thorens' original belt drive paradigm, Scotland's original superdeck was warm and musical, albeit soft. Still capable of fine results today.

**ADC ACCUTRAC 4000** 1976 £300
Bonkers 1970s direct drive that uses an infra-red beam to allow track selection and programming. More of a visual and operational delight than a sonic stunner.

**PIONEER PL12D** 1973 £36
The beginning of the end for the British turntable industry. When vinyl was the leading performance and stability to the class, plus a low friction S-shaped tonearm. Later PL112D off the pace compared to rivals.

**ROKSAN XERXES** 1984 £550
Supposedly the first to 'better' the LP12. Super tight and clean sound, with excellent transients. Less musical than the Sondek, but more neutral. Sagger plinth top-plates make them a dubious used buy.

**SME SERIES III** 1979 £113
Clever variable mass design complete with Titanium Nitride tube tried to be all things to all men, and failed. Charming nonetheless, with a warm and inoffensive sound.

**SONY PS-B80** 1978 £800
First outing for Sony's impressive 'Biotracer' electronic tonearm. Built like a tank with a clean and tidy sound, albeit lacking involvement. Scarily complicated and with no spares support - buy with caution!

**THORENS TD124** 1959 £N/A
The template for virtually every 1970s 'superdeck', this iconic design was the only real competition for Garrard's 301. It was sweeter and more lyrical, yet lighter and less impactful in the bass.

**TOWNSEND ROCK** 1979 £N/A
The product of academic research by the Cranfield Institute, this novel machine has an extremely clean and fluid sound. Substantially modified through the years, and capable of superb results even today.

**TRIO LO-7D** 1978 £600
The best 'all-in-one' turntable package ever made. Trio/Kenwood threw their 'engineering best practice' book at this one with startling results. Clean, powerful and three-dimensional sound, ultimately limited by the tonearm.

**ACOS LUSTRE GST-1** 1975 £46
The archetypal S-shaped seventy arm; good, propulsive and involving sound in its day, but ragged and undynamic now.

**TONEARMS**

**MICH 卷 GYRODEC** 1981 £599
Thanks to its stunning visuals, this bold design wasn't accorded the respect it deserved until recently. Early examples sound cold and mechanical, but now right on the pace. Clean, solid and architectural sound.

**TECHNICS SP10** 1973 £400
Seminal Japanese engineering. Sonics depend on plinths, but a well mounted SP1011 will give any modern a hard time, especially in respect of bass power and midband accuracy.

**REGA PLANAR 3** 1978 £79
Brilliantly simple but clean and musical performer, complete with Acos-derived S-shaped tonearm. 1983 saw the arrival of the RB300, which added detail at the expense of warmth. Superb budget buy.

**GARRARD 301/401** 1953 £19
Heavy metal - tremendously strong and articulate with only a veiled treble to let it down. In many respects, better than the seventies 'superdecks' that succeeded it.

**ROKSAN XERXES** 1984 £550
Supposedly the first to 'better' the LP12. Super tight and clean sound, with excellent transients. Less musical than the Sondek, but more neutral. Sagger plinth top-plates make them a dubious used buy.

**SME 3009** 1959 £18
Once state of the art, but long since bereft. Musical enough, but weak at frequency extremes and veiled in the midband. Legendary serviceability and stunning build has made it a cult, used prices unjustifiably high.

**GRACE G707** 1974 £58
This early Japanese example of the tonearm art has a smooth, lyrical sound. Imported by Linn, fitted to early LP12s. Sonically way off the pace now, though.

**ROKSAN RB300** 1983 £88
Inspired budget esoterica. Detailed, tight, neutral sound but tonally grey sounding in absolute terms. Responds well to tweaking, and its cheaper RB350 brother better still.

---

**CLASSICS**

**ALPHASON HR1005** 1981 £150
First class arm, practically up to present-day standards. Buy carefully, though, as there is no service available now. Totally under priced when new, exceptional.

**SME 3009** 1959 £18
Once state of the art, but long since bereft. Musical enough, but weak at frequency extremes and veiled in the midband. Legendary serviceability and stunning build has made it a cult, used prices unjustifiably high.

**GRACE G707** 1974 £58
This early Japanese example of the tonearm art has a smooth, lyrical sound. Imported by Linn, fitted to early LP12s. Sonically way off the pace now, though.

**REGA RB300** 1983 £88
Inspired budget esoterica. Detailed, tight, neutral sound but tonally grey sounding in absolute terms. Responds well to tweaking, and its cheaper RB350 brother better still.

---

**MARANTZ TT1000** 1978 £N/A
Beautiful seventies high end belt drive with sweet and clean sound. Rare in Europe, but big in Japan.

**MICHEL GYRODEC** 1981 £599
Thanks to its stunning visuals, this bold design wasn't accorded the respect it deserved until recently. Early examples sound cold and mechanical, but now right on the pace. Clean, solid and architectural sound.

**TECHNICS SP10** 1973 £400
Seminal Japanese engineering. Sonics depend on plinths, but a well mounted SP1011 will give any modern a hard time, especially in respect of bass power and midband accuracy.
INTEGRATED AMPLIFIERS/COMBOS

DELTEC 1987 £1,900
Fast, dry and with excellent transients, this first DELTEC integrated is the real deal for eighties obsessives. Ridiculously punchy 80W per channel from a tiny, half-size box. Radical, cool and more than a little strange.

ROGERS A75 1978 £220
The prototypical Audiolab 8000A - lots of sensible facilities, a goodly power output and nice sound in one box. The later A75/II and A100 versions offered improved sonics and were seriously sweet and open to listen to.

EXPOSURE VII/VIII 1985 £625
Sensual mid-eighties Exposure pre-power, offering most of what rival Naim amps did with just that little bit extra smoothness and sweetness. Still, it's by no means 'sweet' by today's standards, being lean, punchy, musical. It's also possessed of that quintessentially eighties look - frumpy black steel boxes with rough silk screened logos!

SUGDEN C51/PS1 1976 £130
Soft sounding early Sugden combo with a plethora of facilities and filters, complete with seventies-tastic DIN sockets. A sweet and endearing performer as you'd expect, but lacking in power and poor load driving ability, so partner carefully.

VTL MINIMAL/50W 1985 £1,300
Vacuum Tube Logic was one of the Europe's biggest tube names in the eighties, and it shows. Rugged, professional build and finish allied to a lively and punchy sound (albeit with limited power) make them an excellent buy.

A&R A60 1977 £115
Sweet and musical feature-packed integrated; the Audiolab 8000A used its blueprint to ably started the move to minimalism.

CREEK CAS4040 1993 £150
More musical than any budget amp before it; CAS4140 loses tone controls, gains grip.

AUDIOLAB 8000A 1985 £495
Smooth integrated with clean MM/MC phono stage and huge feature count. Extremely reliable, too, Post '93 versions a top used buy.

MCINTOSH MA6800 1995 £3735
Effortlessly sweet, strong and powerful with seminal styling to match.

SUGDEN A21 1969 £N/A
Class A transistor integrated with an eminently likeable smoothness and musicality. Ultra smooth output via DIN sockets.

MISSION CYRUS 2 1984 £299
Classic eighties minimalism combines arresting styling with clean, open, lively sound. Further upgradeable with PSX power supply.

MUSICAL FIDELITY A11 1985 £350
Beguiling Class A integrated with exquisite styling. Questionable reliability.

NAIM NAIT 1984 £350
Superb rhythms and dynamics make it musical, but tonally monochromatic. Fine phono stage, very low power.

NAD 3020 1979 £69
Brilliantly sweet, strong and powerful at the price and even has a better phono stage than you'd expect. The archetypal budget super-amp.

ROGERS CADET III 1965 £34
Sweet and musical feature-packed integrated; the Audiolab 8000A used its blueprint to ably started the move to minimalism.

MYST TMA3 1983 £300
Madcap eighties minimalism, but a strong and tight performer all the same.

ROGERS CADET II 1965 £34
Sweet sounding valve integrated, uses ECL86 output valves, even has a half useable phono stage, sweet, warm and a good introduction to valves.

ROTEL RA-820BX 1983 £139
Lively and clean budget integrated that arguably started the move to minimalism.

CHAPMAN 305 1960 £40
Smooth pre/power combo with a sweet and open sound. Not quite up to Quad standards but considerably cheaper second-hand.

CROFT MICRO 1986 £150
Budget valve pre-amp with exceptionally transparent performance.

EDWARD SULLIVAN 1953 £N/A
Brilliantly fast and incisive sound that's a joy with vinyl but a tad forward for digital.

CONRAD JOHNSON MOTIV MC-8 1986 £2,300
Minimalist FET-based preamplifier from the Yank valve specialists is brilliantly neutral and smooth with a spry, light balance in the mould of Sugden high end stuff. Something of a curio, but worthwhile nonetheless.

LEAK STEREO 20 1958 £85
Excellent workaday classic valve amplifier with decent power and drive. Surprisingly modern sounding if rebuilt sympathetically, irresistibly musical and fluid.

LEAK C53 1958 £25
The partner to the much vaunted Quad II monoblocks - cloudy and vague sound means it's for anorakophiles only.

POWER AMPLIFIERS

HH ELECTRONICS TPA-50D AMPLIFIERS 1973 £110
Simple design with easily available components, solid build quality and fine sound make for a surprisingly overlooked bargain. Not exactly stylish, however.

LEAK STEREO 20 1958 £31
Excellent workaday classic valve amplifier with decent power and drive. Surprisingly modern sounding if rebuilt sympathetically, irresistibly musical and fluid.
LEAK STEREO 60 1958 £N/A
Leak's biggest valve power amp offers 35 Watts per channel and more low end welly than the smaller Stereo 20. Despite concerns over reliability their rarity means high prices are the order of the day.

LEACON API 1973 £N/A
Madcap cylindrical styling alluded to its 'tower of power' pretensions, but it wasn't. Poor build, but decently clean sounding when working.

MARANTZ MODEL 9 1997 £8000
Authentic reproduction monoblocks still more than cut the sonic mustard. Highly expensive and highly sought after.

LEAK TROUGHLINE 1956 £25
Series I an interesting ornament but limited to 88-100MHz only. II and III are arguably the best-sounding tuners ever. Adaptation for stereo easy via phono multiplex socket. Fed by a modern outboard decoder they're deliciously lucid with true dimensionality.

MICHELL ALECTO 1997 £1989
Crisp, clean and beautifully controlled with gorgeous styling. Partnered with the £1650 Orca this sounds delicious!

LEAK POINT ONE, TL10, TL12.1 1949 £28
Early classics that are getting expensive. Overhauling is de rigueur before use, using original parts if possible. Surprisingly crisp and musical sound, that's far more modern than Quad IIs. Deeply impressive when in fine fettle.

LEAK TROUGHLINE 1956 £25

MUSICAL FIDELITY XA200 1996 £1000PR
200W of sweet smooth transistor stomp in a grooved tube! Under-rated oddity.

PHONO STAGES
CREEK OBH-8 SE 1996 £180
Punchy, rhythmic character with oodles of detail makes this a great budget audiophile classic. Partner with a Goldring G1042 for an unbeatable budget combination.

CREEK CAS3140 1985 £149
Noisemined MC phono stage built to partner the original Naim NAIT - yes, really! Fine sound, although off the pace these days.

LINN LINNk 1984 £149
Naim-designed MC phono stage built to partner the original Naim NAIT - yes, really! Fine sound, although off the pace these days.

REVOX B760 1975 £520
One of the first Dolby FM-equipped tuners. More a semi-pro machine than a domestic bit of kit, the Revox offers superlative measured performance although the sound isn't quite as staggering as the numbers. Fine nonetheless, and surely the most durable tuner here?

MICHELL ISO 1988 £N/A
This Tom Evans-designed black box started the trend for high performance offboard phono stages. Curismatic, musical and punchy - if lacking in finesse.

ROGERS T75 1977 £125
Superb mid-price British audiophile design, complete with understated black fascia. Fine sound in the true Rogers mould - smooth and sweet with fine dimensionality.

SONY ST-5950 1977 £222
One of the first Dolby FM-equipped tuners, a format that came to nought. Still, it was Sony's most expensive tuner to date, and boasted a very good sound quality allied to brilliant ergonomics.

NAD 4140 1995 £199
Brilliant affordable digital tuner has a smooth, detailed musical sound plus sensible real-world facilities.

NAD 4040 1979 £79
Excellent detail, separation and dynamics - brilliantly musical at the price. T40 continued the theme...

SANSUI TU-9900 1976 £300
A flagship Japanese tuner designed to steal sales from the likes of Accuphase and Revox, it boasts superlative RF performance and an extremely smooth and lucid sound, along with very fine build and finish.

SONY ST-5950 1977 £222

LEAD TACT 1958 £N/A
An interesting ornament but limited to 88-100MHz only. II and III are arguably the best-sounding tuners ever. Adaptation for stereo easy via phono multiplex socket. Fed by a modern outboard decoder they're deliciously lucid with true dimensionality.

LEAK STEREO 60 1958 £N/A

NAIM NAT03 1993 £595
The warm, atmospheric sound is further proof of Naim's proficiency with tuners.

PIONEER TX-9500 1976 £295
Another of the serious classic solid-staters. Boasts the usual high end Jap package of fine sound, brilliant sensitivity and superb build.

NAD 4140 1995 £199

PIONEER M-73 1988 £1,200
Monster stomp from this seminal Japanese power amplifier, complete with switchable Class A and Class B operation. Clean, open and assured sounding, albeit a tad behind the pace on high speed dance music. Rosewood side cheeks and black brushed aluminium completes the eighties-tastic experience.

LEAK STEREO 60 1958 £N/A

LEAK TROUGHLINE 1956 £25

ROGERS T75 1977 £125

LEAK STEREO 60 1958 £N/A

NAIM NAT03 1993 £595

LEAD TACT 1958 £N/A

LEAK TROUGHLINE 1956 £25

ROGERS T75 1977 £125

NAIM NAT03 1993 £595

LEAD TACT 1958 £N/A

LEAK TROUGHLINE 1956 £25

KRELL KMA100 II 1987 £5,750
Ludicrous monoblock version of the giant KSA-100 is one of the seminal eighties transistor power amplifiers. Massive wallop allied to a very clean and open Class A sound makes this one of the best amplifiers of its type, ever.

LEAK TROUGHLINE 1956 £25

NAD 4040 1979 £79
Tremendously smooth and natural sound allied to low prices and good availability. Make this budget analogue esoterica. Needs a good antenna to work properly, however.
TECHNICS ST-8080 1976 £180
National Panasonic’s specialist hi-fi brand was a big hitter back then, and this is no exception. Superb FM stage makes for a very clean and smooth listen with lots of detail and depth.

ANALOGUE RECORDERS

YAMAHA TC-800GL 1977 £179
Early classic with ski-slope styling courtesy of Mario Bellini. Middling sonics by modern standards, but cool nonetheless!

AIWA XD-009 1989 £600
Aiwa’s Nak beater didn’t, but it wasn’t half bad nonetheless. Massive spec even included a 16x4 DAC!

NAKAMICHI CR-7E 1987 £800
The very best sounding Nakamichi ever - but lacks the visual drama of a Dragon.

PIONEER CTF-950 1978 £400
Not up to modern standards sonically, but a great symbol of the cassette deck art nonetheless.

REVOX A77 1968 £145
The first domestic open reel that the pros used at home. Superbly made, but sonically off the pace these days. B77 better, but couldn’t match the Japanese.

SONY WM-DAC 1985 £290
Single capstan transport on a par with a Swiss watch, single rec/replay head better than most Naks. Result: sublime.

SONY TC-377 1972 £197
A competitor to the Akai 4000D open reel machine, the Sony offered better sound quality and is still no slouch by modern standards.

DIGITAL RECORDERS

SONY MDS-JE555ES 2000 £900
The best sounding MD deck ever, thanks to awesome build and heroic ATRAC-DSP Type R coding.

PIONEER PDR-555RW 1999 £480
For a moment, this was the CD recorder to have. Clean and detailed.

MARANTZ DR-17 1999 £1100
Probably the best sounding CD recorder made; built like a brick outhouse with a true audiophile sound and HDCD compatibility.

KENWOOD DM-9090 1997 £500
Serious and sophisticated sound thanks to well implemented ATRAC 4.5; surprisingly musical MD recorder.

SONY TCD-8 DATMAN 1996 £599
Super clean sound makes this an amazing portable, but fragile.

LOUDSPEAKERS

ACOUSTIC RESEARCH AR18S 1978 £125
Yank designed, British built loudspeaker became a budget staple for many rock fans, thanks to the great speed from the paper drivers, although finesse was most definitely not their forte...

BBC LS3/5A 1972 £88
Extremely low colouration design is amazing in some respects - articulation, stage depth, clarity - and useless in others (both frequency extremes). Came in wide variety of guises from various manufacturers building it under licence. Partner with Rogers A81 subwoofers for an extra two octaves of bass!

LOWTHER PM6A 1957 £18
This seminal full-range driver is still manufactured. High sensitivity, as fitted to many classic horn designs.

HH ELECTRONICS TPA-50D AMPLIFIERS 1973 £110
Simple design with easily available components, solid build quality and fine sound make for a surprisingly overlooked bargain. Not exactly stylish, however.

TANNOY WESTMINSTER 1985 £4500
Folded horn monsters which certainly sound good if you have the space. Not the last word in tauness but can drive large rooms and image like few others.

JRs 149 1977 £120
Infamous cylindrical speaker that was ignored for decades but now back in fashion! Based on classic KEF107 / B110 combo as seen in the BBC LS3/5a. Doesn’t play loud, needs a powerful transistor amplifier, but rewards with fine clarity and imaging.

SPENDOR BCI 1976 £240
Cerelton HF100 tweeter meets bespoke Spendor Bextrene mid-bass unit - and the result is a beautifully warm yet well focussed sound. A little bass bloom necessitates careful low-end mudding, but these prove that the seventies did have some fine designs after all!

QUAD ESL57 1956 £45
Wonderfully open and neutral sound puts box loudspeakers to shame. Properly serviced they give superb midband performance, although frequency extremes less impressive. Ideally, use in stacked pairs or with subwoofers and supercweeters.

KEF R105S 1977 £785
Three way Bextrene-based floorstander (complete with castors!) gave a truly wideband listen and massive (500W) power handling. Very neutral, spacious and polite sounding design, but rhythmically well off the pace. The quintessential nineteen seventies loudspeaker.

IMF TLS80 1976 £550
Warm and powerful nineteen seventies behemoth with transmission loading and a mixture of KEF and Celestion drive units. Impressively physical wideband sound but rhythms aren’t its forte.

MAGNEPLANAR SMG 198X £800
Technological loudspeaker with genuinely musical abilities; fast, smooth, open, dry,
and one of the first of the polypropylene designs. Warm, smooth, clean and powerful.

Back in its day, it was an innovative product for valves.

MISSION 770 1980 £375

LEAK SANDWICH 1961 £39 EACH

Warm sounding infinite baffle that, with a reasonably powerful amplifier can sound quite satisfying.

MISSION 752 1995 £495

Cracking Henry Azima-designed floorstanders combined HDA drive units and metal dome tweeters with surprisingly warm results.

MISSION X-SPACE 1999 £499

The first mass production sub and sat system using NXT panels is a sure-fire future classic - not flawless, but a tantalisingly unboxy sound nevertheless!

LEAK SANDWICH 1980 £1200

An update of the ESL57, with stiffer cabinets. Until the 989, the best of the Quad electrostatics.

CELESTION SL6 1984 £350

Smallish two way design complete with aluminium dome tweeter and plastic mid-bass unit set the blueprint for nineteen eighties loudspeakers. Very open and clean sounding, albeit course at high frequencies and limp in the bass. Speakers would never be the same again...

QUAD ESL63 1980

High tech Beryllium midband and tweeter domes and bristly 12" woofers in massive sealed mirror image cabs equals stunning transients, speed and wallop allied to superb transparency and ultra low distortion. Partner carefully!

MISSION 770 1980 £375

MISSION 752 1995 £495

Cracking Henry Azima-designed floorstanders combined HDA drive units and metal dome tweeters with surprisingly warm results. Benign load characteristics makes them great for valves.

HEYBROOK MB1 1982 £130

Peter Comeau-designed standmounters with an amazingly lyrical yet decently refined sound. Good enough to partner with very high end ancillaries, yet great with budget kit too. A classic.

CELESTION SL6 1984 £350

Smallish two way design complete with aluminium dome tweeter and plastic mid-bass unit set the blueprint for nineteen eighties loudspeakers. Very open and clean sounding, albeit course at high frequencies and limp in the bass. Speakers would never be the same again...

QUAD ESL63 1980 £1200

An update of the ESL57, with stiffer cabinets. Until the 989, the best of the Quad electrostatics.

MISSION X-SPACE 1999 £499

The first mass production sub and sat system using NXT panels is a sure-fire future classic - not flawless, but a tantalisingly unboxy sound nevertheless!

LEAK SANDWICH 1980 £1200

An update of the ESL57, with stiffer cabinets. Until the 989, the best of the Quad electrostatics.

CELESTION SL6 1984 £350

Smallish two way design complete with aluminium dome tweeter and plastic mid-bass unit set the blueprint for nineteen eighties loudspeakers. Very open and clean sounding, albeit course at high frequencies and limp in the bass. Speakers would never be the same again...

QUAD ESL63 1980 £1200

An update of the ESL57, with stiffer cabinets. Until the 989, the best of the Quad electrostatics.

MISSION X-SPACE 1999 £499

The first mass production sub and sat system using NXT panels is a sure-fire future classic - not flawless, but a tantalisingly unboxy sound nevertheless!
WELCOME TO THE NEW FACE OF OUR SPRING SHOW!

26th - 27th March
The Park Inn - Heathrow

A separate pre owned audio auction. View Saturday – buy Sunday.
Guest speakers and clinics. Top names, easy entrance.
New media sponsors
Improved parking facilities: guaranteed you'll be able to park for just £1 per hour.
Free magazines – and no increase in admission.
Special visitor snacks and drinks.
Improved ticketing and registration.
Lots of new names.

NEW WEBSITE
CHESTERGROUP.ORG
DOWNLOAD TICKETS NOW

Contact
Justin Bird +44 (0)1244 559033
Justin@chestergroup.org
Show organisers, Intellectual rights reserved.

National Audio Show '11
Australian Audio & AV Show '11
RUSS ANDREWS

**SPEAKER FOCUS RINGS £10**

These are simple creations but ones that work on a very basic principle. In essence, they aim to minimise the interaction of the high frequencies coming from your tweeter domes with the metal faceplate surrounding the tweeter, and the consequent interference to the sound waves that can result. To this end, the rings are simply felt items with a self-adhesive backing that are stuck in place around the tweeter dome. They are not actually circular in shape, but are oval and therefore there is the possibility of experimentation of orientation, to obtain the best results. The fitting guide on the Russ Andrews website suggests vertical orientation for loudspeakers with wider baffles but the rings can be loosely positioned and removed without leaving a sticky mess if you wish to try all possibilities.

I actually fitted the rings to several pairs of loudspeakers and found that they made a difference in every case. With some, such as a pair of Creek CLS10s made by Goodmans, which have a carefully shaped diffuser around the tweeter, results were quite subtle, but on my own Ferrograph S1s, which have replacement tweeters that do not perfectly fit the cutout for the originals, the effects were quite ear-opening. Settling with the rings oriented horizontally, the speakers' entire top end seemed to snap into focus across the central plane of the soundstage, whilst high frequency effects that are tucked away in the back of the performance suddenly were able to draw much more attention to themselves. The soundstage itself seemed better locked into place and, even in direct sonic terms, there was a delicate hint of extra crispness to everything. So these seem something of a bargain at their current website price of £10.08. For a simple but non-permanent change that gave a surprisingly vivid effect, I would strongly recommend giving them a go. AS

[Contact: +44(0)845 345 1550, www.russandrews.com]

---

**ISOTEK SYNCRO MAINS CABLE £875**

Arguably one of the strangest looking (and most expensive) mains cables ever to appear on the market, the Syncro features a pre-filter device situated within an anti-resonant chassis. The point is to synchronise (hence the name) the mains supply to offer the attached component a symmetrical sine wave, realigning the waveform. This is claimed to give a reduction in mains-related noise. To test the new Syncro, I plugged it into a wall mains socket and hooked the other end to power up my Isotek Aquarius mains conditioner with a series of Isotek Elite and Isotek Optimum mains cables running from the Aquarius to my reference hi-fi system. For comparative purposes, I also tried an Isotek Extreme mains cable but was noticeable by its very absence when the cable was replaced with the Syncro. The result was a beautifully smooth series of vocal performances which glided over the soundstage, lacking any sort of harsh delivery and making subtle vocal inflections and varying vocal power surges wholly more obvious. All organic instruments now exhibited sparkle and shimmer while the removal of the excessive distortion allowed all instruments, of whatever variety, time to breath. Bass, meanwhile, was no longer trying to be understood. That is, there was now a complete lack of lower frequency strain. With the Extreme cable, bass seemed to be almost artificial in nature, as if it was being propped up by scaffolding. With the Syncro, those same lower frequencies exhibited a shape and structure. A highly impressive piece of kit, to match its equally hefty price! PR

[Contact: +44 (0)1276 501392, www.soundfoundations.co.uk]
UK SUBSCRIPTION
SAVE UP TO

SAVE UP TO 12.5% off the cover price when you subscribe to Hi-Fi World. That's an amazing £3.41 per issue, including postage.

FOR BACK ISSUES ENQUIRIES PLEASE CALL
01442 879097

OVERSEAS SUBSCRIPTIONS IF YOU LIVE OUTSIDE THE UK, PLEASE CALL FOR OUR LATEST PRICES
+44 (0) 1442 879097

SO WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? CALL NOW!!!
SUBSCRIPTION HOTLINE 01442 879097
Lines open Mon-Fri 9.00-5.00 or (weekend answering service available)

FOR OUR ON-LINE MAGAZINE SEE P119
email: hifiworld@webscribe.co.uk
Fax No: 01442 872279
I would like to avail of the New Year promotional offer see p71 quoting ref HFW - NEW YEAR 2011.
At the full subscription rate of £46.80 is applicable.

TICK APPROPRIATE BOX:
- Chord SuperScreen main cable.
- Chord CobraPlus interconnect cable.

WHY SUBSCRIBE TO HI-FI WORLD?
- 12 issues a year delivered straight to your door.
- Be first to grab a bargain in our "Free Reader Classified Ads" section.
- Run by dedicated hi-fi engineers and enthusiasts.
- Subscribers receive a minimum 10% Discount annually.
- Hi-Fi World has become famous for its informative reviews and radical kit designs.

PLUS! Subscribe by Direct Debit and receive a 12.5% discount (UK only).

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit

Please fill in this form and send to:
Hi-Fi World, Webscribe Ltd, PO Box 464, Berkhamsted, Herts., HP4 2UR

Name and full Postal Address of your Bank/Building Society:

To: The Manager Bank/Building Society

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society

Please pay Webscribe Ltd Direct Debits from the account in this Instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Webscribe Ltd and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Signature(s)

Date

The Direct Debit Guarantee

This Guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay Direct Debits.

If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit, Webscribe Ltd will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or, if you have agreed otherwise, you will receive confirmation from Webscribe Ltd before debiting your account.

You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by contacting your bank or building society.

Send this form to:
Hi-Fi World, Subscriptions Department PO Box 464, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, HP4 2UR.
DAVID BOWIE

This album followed a series of stop-start single releases via Bowie during the early sixties, a time where the man had dabbled with a variety of musical collaborators and associated record labels to little effect. It was only when he joined Decca that a new album, via that company's imprint, Deram, was mooted. Decca, for its part, was eager to make up for its earlier mistake of rejecting The Beatles. It was now eager to find young, new talent and to exploit it to the full.

The first single off the new Bowie album, 'Rubber Band' (re-recorded on the album itself) with The London Boys (which was not featured on the album) was not well received, largely due to its quirky, nostalgic arrangement. The rest of the LP was received in the same manner as it failed to chart. The album, in fact, was a little odd. There were obvious influences from The Kinks' Ray Davies with Bowie directing his gaze at English society as well as English history and its character. Staggering along with Deram, unsuccessfully, until Decca dumped him, Bowie left to join Mercury and relate the story of Major Tom in 1969...

Now reissued in its obscure glory. Decca has packaged both of the original mono and stereo versions in a nicely presented double album gatefold and 180gm vinyl. The inner sleeves are very interesting. One LP provides a photocopy of both sides of an included single sheet biography, while the second LP provides an original copy of the sleeve art and rear sleeve liner notes. It might not be the best album that Bowie ever produced in his life (the man himself is not exactly enamoured of the work) but it's a vital element of the Bowie canon and essential for any Bowie fan.

ROGER BUNN

There's cult albums and then there's this piece from Roger Bunn, a man who never found fame but who mixed with many stars of his age. During the sixties he worked for British rockabilly star Joe Brown, later he teamed up with jazz greats such as Graham Bond and Zoot Money, then briefly rubbed shoulders with Jimi Hendrix and Marianne Faithfull, featured in a band called Djinn (which, at one time, included David Bowie) and became the original guitarist for Roxy Music... and that lot is just the edited highlights. This, his one and only solo album, was made in 1969 but never received the general distribution that it deserved and Bunn didn't live long enough to see the LP enjoy a final general release in 2006 (he died the year before).

The album itself is a weird mixture of jazz, freak beat, folk and psychedelia in which Bunn sings, sometimes unrecognisably but within a cockney idiom, in such a cool mannered way that he always retains your interest. The track 'Fantasy In Fiction', for example, sounds like the man's had a few too many to drink but not enough for him to lose his grip on the performance. Backed by a full orchestral band, the track, like so many others on this album, makes the listener sound like a fly on the wall to a one-man private party. You feel that you're intruding on a great time. 'Crystal Tunnel', on the other hand, offers a cool jazz flow that demands small hip movements and subtle shoulder swings. As an arrangement, in fact, Donovan fans should take note as the LP's production reflects the balladeer.

Bunn would have been proud as this new reissue provides the full scope of Bunn's vision in all its eclectic glory.
This is an infamous album partly for the content, yes, but mostly because of the marketing campaign that was laid upon it by the German, avant-garde group's UK label, Virgin. At the time of its release, Virgin decided to push the album, a collection of home recorded bits and pieces assembled by the group's fans, into UK retail for just 50p a pop. It worked. Around 50,000 albums were sold, a feat that would make any modern UK label or distributor faint!

The krautrock outfit was set apart from its contemporaries such as Embryo, Tangerine Dream, Can and Ash Ra Tempel. Formed by ex-music journalist, Uwe Nettelbeck, along with Hans Joachim Irmler, Jean Hervé Peron, Werner "Zappi" Diemelar, Rudolf Sosna, Gunther Wusthoff, and Arnulf Meifert, Faust pushed the very edges of music form and structure. The album presents a cacophony of avant-garde noise, frantic jazz and manic rock pieces that are split up into, well, I wouldn't call them songs, more like movements or soundtrack filaments; hence the twenty-six track listing with most of them entitled 'Unknown'. There are gentle oasis within this hectic flambe of experimental music such as the track, 'Chere Chambre', which lays a male French speaking voice over a beautiful acoustic guitar track. Faust has a habit of doing this sort of thing, however, contrasting the controlled, the melodic and the serene either directly over or at least adjacent to the disorganised, chaotic, almost Fractal-like, primeval noise expurgations. The contradiction has always appealed to the band and reflects life itself in its disorganised, multi-faceted manner.

A LP that demands a bit of time to allow it to sink in and for the ear to adjust to the Faust philosophy, this album is solid quality. This issue is limited to just 1,000 copies.

EDDIE VEDDER
Into the Wild
Music On Vinyl

An intriguing album based on an intriguing film of an intriguing life that focused on the days of Christopher J. McCandless, a fit, intelligent young man who gave up an existence of potential affluence, savings of $24,000 and, ultimately, his future. Despairing of society, McCandless turned his back upon it and headed for the wilds of Alaska, dumping all of his ID and paper money. He was destined never to return, dying of starvation at just twenty-four years of age. Sean Penn starred in a film about his life in which themes of sorrow, redemption and loss are explored.

It was Penn who requested that Pearl Jam front man, Eddie Vedder, provide the soundtrack to the film. In return, Vedder reflected the wilderness of the story, giving his album, which was initially released on CD in 2007, a selection of roots-based tunes mixed with folk and some rock elements. It was a tough assignment for Vedder, who sometimes struggled to come to terms with the wrenching, emotional subject matter laid bare by the film.

What happens is that Vedder sometimes drowns himself in a sea of passion and sentiment. Some might say that, faced with the assignment, Vedder should have seen this coming and politely refused Mr Penn.

That said, this album will still be of interest to Pearl Jam fans because it shows Vedder as a maturing songwriter. On this album, he is way out of his comfort zone, pushing his talent to the utmost and finding new material which he can develop and evolve over time to the benefit of forthcoming albums. Fans will view this album as an important piece in an evolutionary jigsaw, therefore. An excellent edition from MOV, it includes a 26-page, full colour booklet.
Family run Dynatron had an enviable reputation for quality radio and television products, says Haden Boardman, as he samples their upmarket LS15 and LS16 Stereo Valve Power Amplifiers...

Stared back in 1927 by teenage brothers Ron and Arthur Hacker, from its very earliest days, the Dynatron company had a shrewd eye for high quality set design and manufacture. Very much at the top end of the market, some incredibly ambitious radio sets had been designed and manufactured, in both cabinets and circuitry. Because of the age of the two 'boys', the company was actually founded in their fathers' name, H. Hacker.

By 1936, the company was trading successfully as Dynatron Radio Ltd. from Maidenhead, Berkshire. Post World War Two trading could be difficult; a surprising amount of consolidation within the Radio trade occurred, and this small top end company needed larger corporate support to survive. In 1955 the company became fully owned by the Southend on Sea based EK.Cole (EKCO), Radio & Television manufacturing company, famous pre-WWII for the innovative use of Bakelite cabinets and top industrial designers.

Both brothers stayed on the board until EKCO ended up in serious financial difficulties, and a bail out from Pye of Cambridge. At this point the Hacker Brothers went their own way, setting up the fabulous Hacker Radio Company, famed for table radio models such as the Mayflower (featuring FM performance to rival a Trougline, and a push pull ECL86 amp with similar guts to a Cadet III) and the much more famous transistor portable 'Sovereign'.

Hacker ceased trading in 1977, and through the Philips acquisition of Pye, the Dynatron name was passed on to the family run business of Roberts Radio in 1981. It could be said that this amplifier set was the last of the true Dynatron lineage. In terms of high fidelity amplifiers, these two little models made up in the EKCO era to about 1960, were about the last.

Under EKCO/Pye the company specialised more in high quality cabinets based around the better stock models and chassis from the EKCO/Pye radio and television range. The first ever Hi-Fi Year book lists just one Dynatron amplifier combo; the TC10 (preamp) and LF10 power amplifier (using 7 pin OSRAM output valves), selling for £25 complete. This was slightly less expensive than a Leak TL10 combo (£28-10s) at the time. By 1959 the line up had expanded to two mono preamps; TC15CS, TC20CS and TC16CS Stereo pre, and all together four power amplifiers; LF11 (EL84s) LF20 (EL34s) and these two, the LF15CS and LF16CS. Although two different model numbers, the two are designed to go together as a stereophonic 'set'.

The '15 has a larger mains transformer and a whole set of connections to power the matching preamplifier and tuner set. Output transformers are identical, as is the audio circuit. The '16 can plug in to the '15 for mains power. There were a couple of matching tuners, including a fixed preset model (remember there was only three stations on FM back in the 1950s: Home, Third, and Light from the BBC!) and a range of loudspeaker cabinets based around Goodmans loudspeaker chassis.

Technically the circuit is basic and honest. And the Hacker Brothers did not follow the late 1950s form building a stock Philips/Mullard 5-10 design, although there is nothing wrong with that circuit! A compact 7 1/2 x 12 x 5 1/2" chassis, painted in a green Hammerite-type finish, each mono block is fitted with a single ECC83 dual triode valve which is arranged as voltage gain amplifier and split load phase splitter. This drives the two EL84 pentode output valves in a classic ultra linear push pull configuration, with bias provided by cathode resistors. Overall negative feedback was applied across the entire circuit (stated as 20 dB) and a very decent set of output transformers fitted. Output is provided for 3.75 or 15 ohms (use the lower setting for 4-8 ohm modern speakers), frequency response quoted as 15-30,000Hz and...
a full one volt sensitivity available for full 10 Watts output. Input connections are via a RF coax plug (easy to change for a modern phono socket!), and the layout of the whole thing is very well thought out and very well screwed together. The power supply on each amp is based around an EZB1 rectifier valve.

Service-wise there are no real issues or problems with these amps. The High Tension is set quite low (still lethal remember!) and the amp’s biassed well under the maximum seventeen Watts rating of each of the EL84s, ensuring a pretty long valve life. Clearly anything with a damaged transformer should be avoided, but all passive parts are pretty easy to source, with EL84s and ECC83 still in manufacture.

Modifications or improvements are not really on the cards here. A complete front end rebuild swapping out the ECC83 for a circuit using an ECC88 might make use of a little more gain. But that would be fairly drastic action on a fairly rare amplifier, and in my opinion a tad unfair on the little Dynatrons. It may be necessary to change most of the passive component with time.

The low 1V sensitivity dictates the use of a preamp, and so for auditioning purposes, I used a new Croft Micro 25. Our set of power amplifiers had been serviced at some point with some of the original coupling capacitors changed, but for an amp pushing fifty years old, this set was in amazingly original and good condition. The turntable used was also a totally original Thorens TD150 (Mark I) with a Pickinger XV15/625E cartridge; digital replay came via a based DAC via computer and CD transport sources. Loudspeakers were a set of early Rogers LS1/5a, with all cables from The Chord Company.

**SOUND QUALITY**

I began with ABBA’s remastered ‘The Visitors’ CD, and my favourite track ‘The Day Before You Came’. This can be quite a challenge for most systems; the better the system, the more you get a sense of Agnetha’s choked up vocals singing about her breakup with fellow band member. The little Dynatrons played this track with passion; although not managing to completely do the track justice, all the complex layers were in evidence. Still, the vocals sounded a tad grey and flat, lacking real guts.

A complete change of mood, and Pink Floyd’s ‘Dark Side Of The Moon’ underlined this very slight softening of the sound. Everything was present, but could have been more dynamic and more involving.

Staying in the nineteen seventies with ‘Jazz At The Pawn Shop’ (I have sadly rediscovered this album’s delights!) suited the little amplifier much better. This really had boogie factor and had plenty of weight, with perhaps just a touch off softness... Vinyl replay suited the amp much better. Similar tracks played on the record player revealed a solid, three dimensional presentation missing from the digital replay. Fun was had trawling through a bargain charity shop selection of Vinyl replay suited the amp much better. Similar tracks played on the record player revealed a solid, three dimensional presentation missing from the digital replay. Fun was had trawling through a bargain charity shop selection of immaculate Decca Phase Four and EMI Studio Two mid Sixties stereo recording; these suited the set well. These ‘panoramic’ recordings (I am being kind, some may say ‘ping pong’!) were a real hit on the little Dynatron amps. Flipping through a few 1980s seven inch singles was great fun on this set up. Again, I felt the amplifiers a little soft, and in direct comparison to a set of rebuilt Leak TL12+ monoblocks, I felt the Leaks won out by quite a reasonable margin. Noise wise, in stock form the Dynatrons were much quieter than the ‘standard’ Leaks, but also much less sensitive (standard Leak TL12+: 0.1V for same output) making a true direct comparison an impossibility. Tonaly the Leak seemed to have the better balance; it was an interesting comparison.

**CONCLUSION**

These little Dynatrons are very rare. I must have had well over a hundred Leak TL12+ power amps through my hands, and even more Stereo 20s, but I have only ever had three or four Dynatron models, and this the only set of this unusual little stereo combination I have seen. As such prices are higher for these than that of the much more common Leak TL12+ or Stereo 20. From a pure audio point of view, buy the Leaks. In stock and standard form, the Dynatrons are a lovely thing, but frankly not that amazing, and despite the superb build, and the petite looks they are certainly not worth paying a heavy premium for. I feel this is one for Dynatron collectors, unless a set turns up for less than the same money as a set of Leaks, the latter is a more sound buy in today’s market.
The entire world of music delivery.
In a nutshell.

UNITIQUTE

An incredible array of features in an amazingly small unit, UnitiQute enables you to connect with your music like never before.

Digital Stream Player, Multi-Format Tuner (DAB/FM/Internet Radio), Digital iPod/MP3 Player, USB Memory Stick Player, Digital to Analogue Converter, Integrated Amplifier.

For a demo, please connect with your nearest retailer at naimaudio.com/in_a_nutshell

World class sound...
As a child, there wasn’t much I liked about Blue Peter. Even before I’d grown a single rebellious bone in my body, the prospect of John Noakes, Peter Purvis and Valerie Singleton showing the five year old me how to make pottery from garden waste or finding yet another application for wood-effect, sticky-back plastic hardly filled me with awe...

Yet, forbidden by my mother to return to the apparently unwholesome show that was Magpie, I dutifully sat through Blue Peter three times a week for the entirety of the nineteen seventies, comfortably numb. It had its moments (elephant poop on the studio floor was a key one), but mostly it was unalloyed tedium. “And here’s another report from a mudhut in Africa,” said Lesley Judd. “Great,” I’d say sarcastically; a worrying attitude for a recent graduate of playschool.

Yet there was one thing on Blue Peter that set my imagination running free; the ‘time capsule’. Buried at one Christmas, I set about an epic recording session. My Linn LP12 turntable, Italyk LV7 tonearm and Supex SD900V moving coil provided the music via the preamp section of an NVA AP30 amplifier, which fed the wee Sony DATman. I disappeared with ten DAT 120s, and didn’t see my family for weeks...

It worked brilliantly. Back in Japan, I listened with relish to my ‘digital LP12’ as I walked the mean streets of Shimokitazawa, like Cliff Richard I was well and truly wired for sound!

By about 2000 I had a Michell Orbe, Origin Live RB300 and Ortofon MC30 Super as my front end, and the DAT tapes faithfully signposted the different sounds of the respective sources; I didn’t record over my original tapes, so I could make instant A-B comparisons, as if ten years of upgrading had taken mere seconds.

On moving house recently, I found this long-lost stash of DATs again. Suddenly my only aim in life became to get them going, through a modest arm and middling cartridge, the Orbe was a sublime music carrier; it’s still an enjoyable. I once thought my LPI2 ever garnered.

Indeed, I still think the Linn is a lovely thing to listen to, albeit not terribly accurate. Laser LP12s of course have got far less romantic and far more accurate. The Michell amazes me; it has much of what’s good about both the Linn and the Marantz plus special charms of its very own; you’re never going to hear a soundstage like that again! It remains a brilliant design that deserves all the acclaim that the LP12 ever garnered.

Unearthing my audiophile ‘time capsule’ and doing careful comparisons shows me that top turntables through the ages can be quite different in their core competencies, yet just as lovely to listen to. It also reminds me that vinyl is a brilliant music carrier; it’s still an amazing format, long may it run. I’m looking forward to vinyl, 2021-style.

David Price

So, upon my return to Blighty one Christmas, I set about an epic recording session. My Linn LP12 turntable, Italyk LV7 tonearm and Supex SD900V moving coil provided the music via the preamp section of an NVA AP30 amplifier, which fed the wee Sony DATman. I disappeared with ten DAT 120s, and didn’t see my family for weeks...

It worked brilliantly. Back in Japan, I listened with relish to my ‘digital LP12’ as I walked the mean streets of Shimokitazawa, like Cliff Richard I was well and truly wired for sound!

By about 2000 I had a Michell Orbe, Origin Live RB300 and Ortofon MC30 Super as my front end, and the DAT tapes faithfully signposted the different sounds of the respective sources; I didn’t record over my original tapes, so I could make instant A-B comparisons, as if ten years of upgrading had taken mere seconds.

On moving house recently, I found this long-lost stash of DATs again. Suddenly my only aim in life became to get them going, through a modest arm and middling cartridge, the Orbe was a sublime music carrier; it’s still an enjoyable. I once thought my LPI2 ever garnered.

Indeed, I still think the Linn is a lovely thing to listen to, albeit not terribly accurate. Laser LP12s of course have got far less romantic and far more accurate. The Michell amazes me; it has much of what’s good about both the Linn and the Marantz plus special charms of its very own; you’re never going to hear a soundstage like that again! It remains a brilliant design that deserves all the acclaim that the LP12 ever garnered.

Unearthing my audiophile ‘time capsule’ and doing careful comparisons shows me that top turntables through the ages can be quite different in their core competencies, yet just as lovely to listen to. It also reminds me that vinyl is a brilliant music carrier; it’s still an amazing format, long may it run. I’m looking forward to vinyl, 2021-style.
Inspire Hi-Fi

It's not over til' the fat lady sings!

OUR UK MANUFACTURED HIGH CLASS, AWARD WINNING TURNTABLES WILL LEAVE YOU IN NO DOUBT THAT VINYL IS SECOND TO NO OTHER KNOWN REPLAY MEDIUM.

WITH DIRECT SALES FROM THE MANUFACTURER THERE'S NO RETAIL MARKUP - SAVING YOU 40 - 50% ON RETAIL PRICES OF OTHER MANUFACTURERS / RETAILERS.

INSPIRE HI-FI BRINGING VINYL REPLAY TO THE FOREFRONT OF THE RECORDED ARTS.

Ask us for an instant Part Exchange quote

£

Compare our prices with other manufacturers

Compare

British Made for better sound + better quality

DemoSuite

Listen to our award winning equipment at our Demo Suite. Situated 1 minute from M1 J29A. Part Exchange available.

Unit 11 Markham Vale Environment Centre Markham Vale Chesterfield S44 5HY Tel: 01246 827272 Mobile: 07932 367555 Email: robert@inspirehifi.co.uk

www.inspirehifi.co.uk

XTZ

so much for so little

XTZ

Cayin

HI-FI WORLD MARCH 2011
If you look at general music magazines, check out fan websites and gaze at music retail lists, the majority of music on offer tends to originate from either the UK or America. Okay, you’ll see some world music, now and again, with a smattering of esoteric releases thrown into the mix but, considering we’re supposed to be attached to the European mainland — by politics and trade if not physically — then it’s surprising that markets that sit, in geographical terms, around the corner, are not more fully represented. Which leads you to conclude that cultural differences and similarities play more of a part in music appreciation than distance.

However, if you made the effort to reach out to our European and even Asiatic neighbours and took the time and trouble to investigate just what they are capable of then you’d be pleasantly surprised, at least, with a good chance of being completely bowled over.

Anyone looking to dabble in such esoterica would be advised to check out the Ace record label catalogue because it has a wealth of interesting yet obscure material, lovingly sourced and remastered. Selected from the archives of musical history, the individual CDs cover music from the territories of France, Japan, Iceland and Australia. They provide an ideal entry point into a world that can be termed as strange, rather lovely, intriguing, weird and very different.

Mick Patrick co-compiler of the, ‘C’est Chic: French Girl Singers OfThe 1960s’ collection and who provided assistance to the ‘Nippon Girls’ CD compilation (subtitled the ‘Japanese Pop, Beat and Bossa Nova 1966-70’) commented, “As you can imagine, the ‘Nippon Girls’ compilation was very difficult to complete because all of the material had to be licensed from Japan and we were all working in a foreign language. The Japanese, though, are very meticulous about their masters and sources”. Patrick believed that this was why the sources for the ‘Nippon Girls’ were so well preserved and well catalogued.

Patrick’s love for French girl singers derived from a wish not to restrict himself to UK or American music. “There’s plenty of great music coming from other countries. French music has its own identity. In the same way that you can admire British music for its Britishness, you can admire French music for the same related reason.”

Patrick, like many other French music fans of the sixties in fortunate geographical locations around the southern areas of England, used to be able to tune into French radio stations to hear and become familiar with many French pop songs of the period. Not many of those records were ever released over here, thus their foreign nature and their rarity value adds to their appeal. Patrick also admitted to their other-worldly strangeness and their contrast to the British norm. “French girl singers have their own particular style. Many of them don’t really sing that well but it doesn’t matter too much. They don’t care either, they’re a bit nonchalant. They’re a bit blank too – and I find that quite appealing.”

The Australian CDs definitely have their own identity too. They are loud and crude — sincere about their feelings, honest and raw in nature. “They are not cheesy pop records, they’re beat group, surf and garage songs and it really works in the Australian style.”

Surprisingly for such rare releases, many of the tracks within these CDs are sourced via original master tapes. Patrick confirmed that, for example, his ‘C’est Chic’ disc is, with one exception, entirely derived from master tapes which is impressive. “Only one track is dubbed direct from record,” Patrick confirmed. “Although, because we have our own, in-house, studio who are expert in modern remastering techniques, you’d be hard pressed to tell which of the tracks was taken from disc.”

Most of the masters were stored in France and only one of the tracks on this compilation has ever been released in the UK. Yet, there were some licensing problems which means that fans expecting to find music via their favourite artist may be out of luck and the reason is intriguing. “Some artists have clauses in their contracts which means that you can’t use their music on various artists compilations. They tend to be the larger, more famous artists. Sylvia Vartan was one example.”

One of the great things about French records, and this holds true for some other European releases, is that the format of their released music was different to ours. During the sixties, many singles arrived on four-track EPs with beautiful sleeve artwork. “They were like mini-albums,” said Patrick, “with stiff, glossy covers. You’ll find many of them pictured in the included CD booklet, making them attractive to record collectors. They’re also worth a lot of money.”

Other compilations that may be released via Ace in the near future which might include a CD themed on Italian music and possibly a general European collection.

When spinning records on your shiny, hi-fi system, take time to consider music away from your usual haunts. There’s plenty of gems out there. These Ace compilations represent just one time period. Check ’em out, you might just surprise yourself! ☀
Witness the launch of dozens of new products with many brought directly from the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas.

Visit the What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision stand for a demo or an answer to any questions you might have.

Speak directly to the manufacturers and designers.

Win a great prize in the Show Competition!

Pick up a fantastic show bargain... with deals on most purchases!

Enjoy Cabot Circus shopping and entertainment area with easy parking right next to the hotel.

It's the biggest and the best show of its type in the country - in its 24th successful year!

NEWS

The Show is known as THE place to see and hear all the latest products. Keep checking the website as news will be added on a weekly basis.

BRYSTON - introducing the BDP-1 digital music player.

ARCAM - UK debut of the AVR 400 receiver.

WHARFEDALE - European launch of the Jade hi-end loudspeaker range.

B&W - UK launch of the new Zeppelin Air.

For the very latest information please visit www.bristolshow.co.uk

There are also many new brands making their first appearance at the Show!
"overall, it's fair to say that the progress of Digital Audio Broadcasting is once again stagnating..."

steven green

Up until around a year ago, DAB+ appeared to have built up enough momentum to become the common European digital radio system that so many companies and organisations crave. Since then however, DAB+’s progress has faltered, as a number of countries that had been bullish about launching the technology chose not to go ahead with their plans. Part of the blame for this can be attributed to the global recession hitting, but I’ve no doubt that the sheer enormity of the task of switching a country’s population from analogue to digital radio, and in particular the time and costs involved in doing so, would also have acted as a major deterrent to organisations considering such a move.

The situations in France and Germany sum up the fortunes of DAB+’s progress over the last couple of years. In Germany, the broadcasters had originally announced plans for a “big bang” relaunch of digital radio using the DAB+ standard to take place in 2010, but the commercial broadcasters then backed out, leaving the relaunch plans in tatters. France was also set to launch digital radio last year, only using the DMB standard rather than DAB+. DMB is the same as DAB+ apart from the fact that DMB can carry video whereas DAB+ cannot – the French broadcasters wanted to deliver low bit rate video streams alongside the radio stations’ audio. Once again, however, as the time to launch digital radio neared, broadcasters withdrew their support for the launch, and the plans were cancelled...

As things currently stand, the only countries with a large population to have launched digital radio using the DAB family (DAB/DAB+/DMB) of standards are the UK (population of 62 million) and Australia (population of 23 million), which commercially launched digital radio using DAB+ last year. Overall then, it’s fair to say that the progress of DAB is once again stagnating.

This situation is clearly bad news for the British DAB chipset manufacturing company Frontier-Silicon, so in order to give DAB+ a boost, Frontier-Silicon has agreed to purchase an unspecified amount of advertising airtime from five German commercial radio stations for the next four years. In exchange for this investment, the stations must launch on a German national DAB+ multiplex, which is due to launch in autumn this year, and which will also carry stations from the public service broadcaster, Deutschlandradio.

In other words, Frontier-Silicon has agreed to subsidise the launch of the five commercial radio stations on DAB+.

Although the launch of this national multiplex is obviously a boost for DAB’s supporters, the future of DAB+ in Germany is still anything but secure, as the vast majority of commercial radio stations in Germany are still opposed to the launch of DAB+. The VPRT, which is the organisation that represents commercial radio stations in Germany, was responsible for the proposed “big bang” relaunch being abandoned last year after the VPRT condemned the proposals, and the stations withdrew their support. And the VPRT has reiterated its stance towards digital radio following the developments with the national multiplex. “As we know, DAB failed in the market. Against this background, plans for the closure of FM – originally scheduled for as early as 2015, but now postponed – are absurd from an economic and social perspective and are therefore unacceptable.”

And you certainly cannot blame the German commercial radio stations for being sceptical about launching their stations on DAB+.

Almost a decade on from DAB being relaunched in the UK, there still isn’t a single digital-only station in the UK making a profit, and according to UK commercial radio’s trade body, the RadioCentre, 5% of the entire industry’s revenues are being sunk into DAB just to keep it afloat. Furthermore, despite the dishonest claims made by the BBC-funded organisation Digital Radio UK about when switchover could take place, the reality is that it’s still another ten to fifteen years away. Why, you might ask, would any company want to try and emulate that?

As Frontier-Silicon has had to subsidise the launch of commercial radio stations in Germany, it is clear that the main drawback is still the high transmission costs involved in launching stations on digital radio – unsurprising considering that FM and DAB+ might have to be broadcast simultaneously for up to twenty five years! I suggested in 2007 that WorldDMB, the organisation in charge of the DAB family of standards, should develop a new standard that isn’t constrained by the need to be backwards-compatible with the original 1980s version of DAB, as this would allow a far more efficient system to be designed, which would in turn reduce the transmission costs for stations. But WorldDMB has predictably done nothing, whereas the forward thinking DVB (Digital Video Broadcasting) organisation has designed and released the highly efficient DVB-T2 system, which could be used to deliver digital radio, and it would allow the transmission costs for radio stations to be reduced to just a third of the cost of transmitting on DAB+, and to a tenth of the cost on DAB!

Whether WorldDMB will ever wake up to the requirements of radio stations before the DAB/DAB+/DMB standards fail completely remains to be seen.
THE ULTIMATE REAL WORLD TONEARM

A new benchmark for musical communication

One of the truly special products I've reviewed in the past

The best tonearm I've heard

So far ahead of the pack .... looks about to lap them

Multi-award winning ORIGIN LIVE TONEARMS make an enormous difference over other arms due to their market leading performance. Delighted owners report that the level of improvement is many times that of a cartridge upgrade - and lasts a lot longer.

These arms simply give an entirely new level of musical satisfaction according to many independent sources - Please see Origin Live web site for full reviews and information.

To eliminate any risk on your part, all arms are offered with a full money back refund should you not be anything other than delighted.

Tonearm Models

Enterprise
Conqueror
Illustrious
Encounter
Silver
OL

Reproducing the original sound

Winner of the Most Wanted Product in the USA
 Designed and handbuilt in the UK
 Used all around the world!
 Specialising in high-end vinyl playback
 Tel: +44 20 3176 0376

UNIVERSAL MOTOR UPGRADE

Upgrades & replaces motors & power supplies for ALL belt drive turntables

The single most important upgrade you can ever make to any record deck concerns the motor drive...nothing can prepare you for the shock of going DC. In a word, gobsmacking.'

It's value is nothing short of tremendous.

The LP12 remains a classic ...but ..upgrade kits by Origin Live can bring a vast improvement to it's performance

UNIVERSAL TURNTABLE MOTOR KIT - No one would blame you for being sceptical of an easy to fit, inexpensive dc motor upgrade. Especially one that improves on the best of other power supplies costing over 4 times as much or your money back. It is simply impossible to imagine the level of improvement attained by eliminating the motor vibration that your stylus amplifies over 8,000 times! Our DC motor kit offers massive improvements to all versions of Linn Lingo / Valhalla, Rega, Sytemdek, Rekam, Rotel etc. The kits consist of a drop in replacement high grade DC motor and off-board 2 speed control box.

Why not order now? - see web site or phone.

Standard dc Motor Kit - £250
Advanced dc Motor Kit - £339
Ultra dc Motor Kit - £570
Upgrade Transformer - £195
Upgrade DC 200 motor - £129 with kit

ORIGIN LIVE
Tel/Fax: +44 02380 578877
E-mail: originlive@originlive.com

www.originlive.com
"there is something very strange about transformers; they harbour, in their lumpy iron cores, magic and mystery..."

**noel keywood**

Slowly, as the years go by, I find myself becoming almost religious about something that's little more than a block of rusty old iron, or so it appears to the average unappreciative eye. This block, this weight, this industrial lump, one that has almost broken my back in the past when forced to unload a couple of tons of them from a lorry, is the transformer. And not only is it a dirty, heavy object of great underlying beauty, just like those rocks Naomi Campbell was allegedly given by Charles Taylor, but I have been listening to one — or another one should I say — that is so good I swear it is surrounded by magic. It is the Music First Audio transformer preamp, reviewed in this issue by Tony Bolton.

Our esteemed editor David Price, who has a fine ear, has consistently raved this preamp as one of the best, yet it has eluded me. These things happen; moving coil cartridges of high quality elude David and everyone else when I am around because a good MC is a little bit of magic too, magic I like to sequester before anyone else can even get close! But in this case a Music First Audio 'magnetic preamp' has been floating around eluding me regularly, until recently. When I finally heard it I was almost perplexed by its subtle beauty. It has a sound, but barely a sound, that is so utterly and persuasively correct, and beautiful like a sweet spring breeze, that I was instantly won over. I cannot quite imagine how it could get better.

And what is a Music First Audio preamp? A transformer. Yes, another lump of old iron. In case this all sounds bafflingly obscure, let me explain that this preamp, like any preamp, makes the music louder. However, it needs no power; no batteries, no mains connection, no solar cell, not even a hamster in a wheel. It uses a transformer, one of the world's least sexy objects, to 'step up' the signal to double what it was. I think you could triple the signal, but then the impedance matching problems may intrude in some set ups; there is a practical limit, if not a theoretical one.

Absence of a running hamster isn't the reason to get excited about this item though. Sad as it may be, I get excited because the rightness of this preamp seems to be forged elsewhere, in a place where simple perfection reigns. It is minimalist; it relies on Zen like perfection — and that always pays off in audio — and it uses a magical process: electromagnetic induction.

Our letters pages this month carry some intriguing observations what lies behind this unattractive yet magic device and — yes — I think I can justify use that great Sixties description — it's cosmic! I saw a giant power transformer on the back of a low loader some months ago and it was hardly a pretty sight. And then there are the lumps of iron with tangles of wire sticking out that grace my work room at home. Transformers are such ugly, anonymous objects I always want to heave them out, but I know that if I do I will regret it. I don't yet admit to having transformers under my bed, but they're everywhere else and spreading slowly it seems, like something from The Quatermass Experiment.

The reason for this is my love of valve amplifiers of course. Each one needs at least two output transformers and one mains transformer; and the one I choose to use at home has seven transformers on it, if you include the chokes. And interestingly, the more of these things you use, the fewer electronic components are needed, meaning in principle at least, quality improves. So this infatuation, obsession or belief system isn't entirely irrational. Not at all, and as the years roll by it's getting worse, not better!

Even though the transformer is a thing of metaphysical magic and mystery, because it passes current through nothing and directly you look into how it can do this you bump up against the end stops of our knowledge of the behaviour of the light, electromagnetism, wave/particle duality and a postulated mechanism for energy transmission, the photon, I admit to never having wound one. Having worked with an expert in audio transformers though, Andy Grove, who designed all World Audio Design transformers — the ones I sometimes helped unload from lorries — I have never quite wanted to step over that threshold. Easy in principle, good audio transformers are hideously difficult to build in practice; complex layering and sectioning are essential. Few transformer manufacturers can handle this and when they can it is usually the work of one dextrous individual, invariably a woman, to build the things. If she decides there are more exciting things to do in life, like start a family (this is a true tale), then your amplifier business is doomed... So you can see now, we have moved from lump of old iron, to magical preamplifier, to the heart of every valve amplifier, to cosmic principle to — er — having a family! The more I consider transformers the more I become convinced that there is something very strange about them and they harbour, within their lumpy iron cores, magic and mystery. Is it the case that a transformer preamp, by its very nature, had to be better than anything else? Done properly, I believe so.
SPEAKERS CORNER
A couple of jazz issues from German-based reissue record label (www.speakerscorner.de) focus on two of the legends of the genre: 'Bill Evans At The Town Hall... Volume One' (1966) is a quality live recording with notable highlights that include 'Who Can I Turn To' and the remarkable 'Solo - In Memory of His Father', a sonic exploration. Also look out for Illinois Jacquet's 'Swing's the Thing', a collection of two dates from 1956 and 1958 (originally issued as 'The Cool Rage', both originally released as a 10" LPs). A vital and critical study of the man's art...

THE FUTURE?
Keep an eye on Music On Vinyl (www.musiconvinyl.com). This Dutch-based reissue company, with a very active UK office, has well over 100 releases under its belt in its short life and, significantly for this independent company, has achieved 'Preferred Status' with Sony Music so that MOV has first pick on many archival and the vinyl versions of contemporary releases. Is the Preferred Status cooperative showing the way forward for the vinyl industry?

PUNK (SPIV!)

Three punk reissues from the Italian outfit, Rave Up (www.bataclan.it/raveup) include The Ed Davis Band's 'Keith Richards' Dead'. The band played in the Cincinnati area of USA. This release includes their 'Keith Richards' Dead' single plus 4-track demos and live cuts. The 'Saucers & The Allies' '78-'81' is subtitled 'East Bay Punks — From the Streets Of Berkeley' which says it all, really apart from the fact that the Saucers were later renamed as The Allies. Live cuts and demos are transcribed from both. Also look out for the Diodes' 'Time/Damage Live 1978', a punk band who had plenty of European success. This album features a live Toronto, Canada gig.

...AND FINALLY

From Munster (www.munster-records.com) comes ex-Baracudas man and now alt.country maestro, Jeremy Gluck with the help of Rowland S Howard, Nikki Sudden, Epic Soundtracks, Jeffrey Lee Pierce and more. 'I Knew Buffalo Bill', recorded in 1986 and 1988, is a centre of glorious weirdness. Sometime Caboladies man, Carl Calm, has issued ambient, meditative mini-symphonies of relaxation with Dayglo Port via Dekorder (www.dekorder.com) that's full of interesting textures. Rob Mazurek's Exploding Star Orchestra (Delmark; www.delmark.com) is a modern, exploratory jazz outfit whose new album, 'Stars Have Shapes' has always been constructed like a vinyl A/B-side, even in its CD incarnation, offering a cinematic jazz flow. Fabienne Dell's 'On My Mind' (Damaged Goods; www.damagedgoods.co.uk) is her third solo project. Anyone who enjoys a French, sixties flavoured female vocal to trigger spine tingles should apply forthwith!

The new album by Stereolab, 'Not Music' (Duophonic; www.duophonic.com) is apparently derived from the same group of 2009 sessions that created 'Chemical Chords'. Typically innovative, it provides sixties flourishes and electronic invention.

Presented on 180gm vinyl with a CD, Caro Emerald's debut, 'Deleted Scenes From The Cutting Room Floor' (Dramatico; www.dramatico.com) presents a classic jazz vocal style but adds elements of samba, mambo and more. Emerald offers undiluted energy and romance in her delivery.

Finally, look out for Twin Sister's 'Vampires With Dreaming Kids'/'Colour Your Life' (Double Six; www.dominoconnect.com) whose album is basically the melding of both of the band's earlier EPs. Mixing an indie pop bounce with a 4AD-like ambience, the band obviously enjoy sonic explorations...

DIP INTO THE WORLD

The amount of musical discoveries sourced via world music artists has been brought to the public's attention by a small band of dedicated labels. Soundway is one of those whose archival passion has resulted in a range of significant finds. 'The World Ends: Afro Rock & Psychedelia in 1970s Nigeria Part 1' is a triple album compilation. Featuring plenty of rare photographs, record sleeves and labels, this gatefold edition includes output from The Funkees, The Wings and The Identicals.

Also look out for Vampi Soul's (www.vampisoul.com) double album compilation of Bola Johnson's works. Mixing humour with a self-deprecating take on life and his relationships with women, Johnson provides a high energy Afrobeat, funky, groovy and roots-like content that keeps the party jumping...
Adam Smith gets all in a spin with the mighty Spiral Groove SG2 turntable...

A new name to many I suspect, Immediasound are a US-based company, founded by a gentleman called Allen Perkins, who manufacture and distribute an impressive range of high end audio equipment. The name actually derives from the words 'media' and 'immediate' in order to convey Allen’s attentiveness and desire to fulfil customers’ requirements in a timely and efficient manner. An ex-designer of both SOTA and RPM turntables, Allen formed Spiral Groove in 2005 in partnership with Lisa Thomas, a lady of many talents including film and music producing as well as being CEO of Clif Bar – a company manufacturing a range of all-organic energy and nutrition foods! The story goes that the two met when Lisa came into Allen’s shop to buy a hi-fi system; the two struck up a rapport, a deal was done and Spiral Groove was the result.

With manufacturing facilities in California, the Spiral Groove range currently consists of two turntables and an arm, but there is the promise of a forthcoming DAC/preamp and a Class A power amplifier. Whilst the SG1 is the range-topper, the SG2 is most certainly no poor relation, as might be suspected by its not inconsiderable £14,000 price tag including the Centroid tonearm. It merely has a few subtle differences that set it apart from its bigger brother but without compromising the design goal of being "simple, elegant, reliable, and faithful to the source".

Weighing in at a noticeable 23kg, the SG2 turntable is a belt drive unit based around a five layer plinth, consisting of aluminium top, centre and bottom sections decoupled by elastomer sections. The motor, bearing and tonearm mount are all mounted on different layers in order to aid decoupling and the platter is belt driven around its periphery by an AC motor which is in turn powered by its own offboard sine wave generator. The platter also consists of differing layers – above the aluminium drive ring is a layer of vinyl, and on top of that a layer of graphite which provides the interface to the record, helped by the screw-down clamp. Interestingly, the spindle is decoupled from the bearing and completely separate; moreover the aluminium ring that carries the belt groove is only fixed to the outer part of the main platter – all of this adds up to a requirement for some seriously impressive tolerancing in order to maintain concentricity!

The Centroid arm is a unipivot design that, on the SG1, uses a novel bayonet style mount to offer speedy arm changes, but the SG2 makes do with a simpler system of six bolts. Incorporating what Spiral Groove call 'Balanced Force Design', the arm is designed using CAD to simulate the forces that act upon it as the cartridge tracks the record, allowing for them to be mechanically compensated so that the arm can offer a stable platform on which the cartridge can work most effectively. The counterbalance is large and wraps around the arm pillar to keep the centre of mass close to the pivot point and the carbon-covered aluminium arm tube promises low mass but good rigidity.

Build and finish of both deck and arm are superb, as one would hope from the price tag, and setup is not a difficult procedure, the clear and concise arm instruction manual helping greatly here.

The deck itself is switched on and off and has speed selection performed by two buttons on its top surface, with appropriate illumination. Of the arm, I have only one minor criticism; namely that there is no damping at all to the cueing mechanism – unlike Noel and David I do not hand cue, and I greatly appreciate a nicely damped mechanism that drifts the stylus gently down to the vinyl, which the Centroid most emphatically does not do. Still, at least the manual does provide a warning to this effect!

SOUND QUALITY

So, with cartridge loaded, deck warmed up and the stylus (carefully!) lowered onto the record, I sat back...
"the SG2 simply cast aside my loudspeakers as if they were a nuisance and left me with this massive swathe of sheer insight right across my room..."
Each Avid product is born of a passion for real music. The visceral dynamic of a live performance captured in a moment on vinyl is a special treasure. One which requires a superlative hi-fi system to convey realistically.

Turntables, amplifiers and accessories from Avid are dedicated to reproducing this realism.

To experience the truly sublime, please contact an Avid dealer to arrange your private audition.

Analytical Seduction, 4 Dragonfly Close, Hampton-Hargate, Peterborough, Tel: 01733 344768

Audio Workshop, 31 Prince of Wales Road, Norwich, Tel: 01603 61852

O’Brien Hi-fi, 60 Durham Road, West Wimbledon, London Tel: 020 8946 1528

Progressive Audio, 2 Maryland Court, Rainham, Kent, Tel: 01634 389004
place you right into the heart of the performance. With a smooth, almost velvety midband that pulls singers to the fore with ease, the SG2 has no difficulty in projecting a lifelike 3D image into the listening space, aided by a top end that captures every single nuance, no matter whether it is right in the heart of the action, or subtly tucked away in the background; all topped off with the sort of smoothness that would only normally be found atop a proper Irish pint of Guinness.

Dylan LeBlanc’s ‘If Time Was For Wasting’ from his ‘Pauper’s Field’ album was next onto the platter and was another cause for settling back with a sigh of pleasure. Once again, the Spiral Groove seemed to take great delight in highlighting something that I had not noticed properly before, and this time it was the pedal steel guitar, with notes starting before, and this time it was the SG2 proved more than equal to the task. Whilst not exactly a recording to challenge exacting audiophile standards, the deck spruced it up very well indeed to leave me enjoying the sheer verve and passion of the performance. Other similarly rocking music showed the Spiral Groove to be a more than capable rhythm machine, with a bass that was tuneful, very well detailed and surprisingly deep, as evidenced by the surprising impact of the subsonic rumbles featured in the Eagles ‘Long Road out of Eden’. A little more speed and tightness would have been nice when things really turned hard and fast, but I suspect that unless you are a regular hardcore drum and bass listener, you are unlikely to notice.

CONCLUSION
One of the joys, for me, of a high end vinyl spinner is the sheer sophistication that it can offer. A good affordable turntable is, in some ways like a revvy sports car which puts a smile on your face as you thrash it but soon leaves you with a sore back and ringing ears! The Spiral Groove SG2 is more of a Mercedes Maybach in which you can lay back and feel the music wash over you in the sort of way that leaves you never wanting to switch it off. Expensive it most certainly is but, I somehow suspect that if you were to find the necessary funds, you would be extremely unlikely to feel short-changed by this highly capable record player.

The Spiral Groove SG2 turntable ran a slight -0.25% slow as delivered, an insignificant error pitch wise, but it can be adjusted if desired. Unweighted Wow & Flutter was low, hovering around 0.12%. The IEC weighted Wow and Flutter value measured 0.0625% our Rohde & Schwarz analyser said, as seen in the analysis here, as low as it gets.

The wrapped aluminium unipivot arm was well damped our vibration analysis shows, the main bending mode at 150Hz being well damped. The common third order bending mode at 450Hz has a little more amplitude but the peak is narrow and does not encompass much energy; and in relative terms this performance compared well with the best arms available. Also encouraging is a total lack of high frequency vibration in the headshell and along the tube, quite a rare strength. All in all, this arm should have a very smooth and character free sound, and also strong dynamics.

The Dynavector XV-1 moving coil cartridge was flat in frequency response, exhibiting a small -1dB drop across the midband but almost no treble peak, a negligible +1dB lift at 15kHz so will sound warm as MCs go. Tracking was very good, 63µm being cleared confidently, but there was slight mistracking at 59µm. Distortion was very low on both lateral (0.7%) and vertical modulation (0.8%), the latter...
“If you want to make someone feel emotion, you have to make them let go. Listening to something is an act of surrender.”

Brian Eno

Performance
with PASSION

A deep understanding of the critical areas of a musical performance has helped us to develop cables that will let you hear your favourite music at its very best.

If you want to know more, please call us on +44 (0)1980 625700, or visit:

www.chord.co.uk
Martin Bastin has long been my source of Garrard parts; he's spent a lot of time researching the consistent parts of 301s and 401s, down to almost molecular levels. He started with the main bearing, developed the Maxplank plinth and in more recent times has been seeing what can be done to improve the idler drive wheel. On a Garrard this little rubberised wheel is the link between the inside of the platter rim and the motor pulley. Martin has long made noises about the original ones being "okay, but improvable". So after many years in the shed, Martin has developed special rubbers, a decent casting and much better bearings than the original Garrard item. There is a special procedure to ensure perfect finish to the edge, and to make sure the thing is truly round in shape. The new idler wheels are supplied complete with a tube of suitable grease. Total cost is £120, which I do not think is bad considering the amount of work that has gone in to development and manufacture.

Fitting the idler is of course a doddle. If on a standard Garrard 301/401 main bearing, raise the edge of the platter with your fingers, and strike the bearing with the wooden end of a small hammer. The original idler is then removed with one screw. Put a small amount of grease on the idler's bearings, and replace everything back as normal. It was clear the new idler fit much tighter in the bearings...

Sound wise I was quite staggered to find it did indeed make the deck quieter. A familiar recording of Jimmy Smith's 'Organ Grinder's Swing' lost noise that I had put down to a faulty pressing, a kind of worn groove 'shush' in the back drop disappeared. Similar on a charity shop special Decca Phase Four Stereo Sampler there was just an extra edge of detail, due to this marginal lowering of the noise floor. The more dynamic recordings didn't seem to benefit much, but there was no demerit either. A win-win situation then. Strongly recommended, it's a real improvement on the original Garrard item. HB

Contact: +44 (0) 15584 823446

**RECORD REVIRGINIZER £29.95**

Record cleaning machines, gadgets and fluids sit, cheek by jowl, within a crowded accessories arena. The feeling is that it would take something pretty unusual to make a splash and get noticed — and that's what the Record Revirginizer, all the way from Australia, does.

A manual method of cleaning your records, this system is in the current market, unique and intriguing. It arrives within a 500ml bottle containing a viscous liquid; this light blue coloured, anti-static polymer is simple to use but does require patience. You pour a quantity of the liquid directly onto your vinyl. Judging the right amount will be down to time and experience but I would recommend a little at a time. The Revirginizer is viscous but non-toxic and, once you've poured a quantity onto your record (avoiding the record label), you carefully spread it over the vinyl and then leave to dry for a few hours (which is where the patience comes in). The company recommends that you lay a small piece of paper or card on the edge of the record so that, when the liquid dries, the card can be used as a handle or tab to help pull off the rest of the film. Once dry, you simply peel the now skin-like material off the record and discard. What you have left is a clean record!

I tested the liquid on an old, original issue, Peggy Lee LP that had more than its fair share of 'Rice Crispy' noises on playback. Listening to the treated LP, I noticed significant noise reduction, of around eighty percent I'd guesstimate. It may seem obvious, but it's worth stating that the reduction in noise allows more sonic details to be heard, especially the more subtle, nuanced information which was being blanketed by the noise. My LP may have benefitted from a second application but I believe that a fair amount of the remaining noise was basic wear and tear.

As with good quality record cleaning machines, LP cleaning like this does more than remove the more obvious pieces of muck and grime from clogged grooves, it also removes the release agent. Hence, an unexpected benefit of the treatment was general sonic improvement. The overall presentation sounded more focused, with a new and unexpected transparency that revealed a welcome clarity. This is an effective cleaning system. PR

Contact: www.recordrevirginizer.com,

**soundbites**
Small Wonder

Neville Roberts tells the strange story of the enigmatic Kiseki Blue NOS moving coil cartridge, and tries a brand new limited edition...

Back in 1979, it is said a certain Japanese gentleman, Mr. Goro Fukadu, formed a company called Audiophile Products in the Netherlands. The story goes that he had been experimenting with a wide range of audio products, one of which was the silver wired moving-coil transformer MCT-1 for low-impedance moving-coil cartridges. He used a winding machine that he invented for this purpose and then later developed it for winding coils for moving-coil cartridges...

Unfortunately for a number of interested manufacturers, Mr. Fukadu decided not to sell this winding lathe to them as he preferred to manufacture them himself, which had the brand names of Kiseki (which means 'Little Miracle') for the elite range and Militek for a more affordable range of high-output cartridges. The Kiseki Blue was the first moving coil cartridge made by Mr. Fukadu and was a low output, low-impedance design, which soon joined the ranks of the elite, being considered a reference cartridge by audiophiles worldwide. It subsequently underwent a number of improvements over the years to become the Blue Silverspot and later the Blue Goldspot. In addition to the unique winding lathe, high quality oxygen-free copper was employed for the coils and a special fluid was used on the coils to minimise the effect of room-temperature changes. The magnets were charged after the yokes had been connected, to maximise the strength of the field.

This is the stuff of which legends are made — quite literally — as it never happened! In truth, Mr. Fukadu did not exist at all and was actually invented by a Dutch audio entrepreneur who decided to launch his own brand of cartridges to his own design that he had custom-made by Dynavector! The Kiseki cartridge is in truth the brainchild of Herman van den Dungen, the man behind the Ah! Prima Luna and Mystere range of audio products.

Back in the last century, a company called Audiophile Products was formed by Herman in Holland which, as Durob Audio, was the European distributor for Koetsu cartridges. Audiophile Products still exists today as the holding company for DE HiFiWinkel in Beek-Ubbergen and Durob Audio in Vlijmen. However, following supply and quality control problems with the Koetsu cartridges, Herman decided to produce his own high quality cartridges to compete with Koetsu. He prepared hand drawings for the body of a cartridge and some of his associates prototyped six aluminium bodies. These bodies were then sent to three cartridge manufacturers in Japan to make six prototype cartridges for him to assess. Of these, one was chosen and the first of his new cartridges was born.

In choosing a name for the new cartridge, he asked one of his Japanese friends to translate into Japanese, "I make a new start". The answer was 'Ata ra shii ka do de', which was a bit of a mouthful as a brand name, to say the least. He then tried "little miracle" and that came out as 'ki se k' and hence a new brand was launched and the rest is history!

What about Goro Fukadu? Well, he was actually Mr. Goro Fukada, Herman's cartridge maker at that time, but Herman decided to modify his name to preserve Mr. Fukada's anonymity and to enable Herman himself to effectively own the name! Curiously, Herman's business partner at the time who knew about Mr. Fukadu/ Fukada thought that the name 'Kiseki' (which he pronounced as 'qui sait qui?) meant 'who knows who?'

Anyway, the good news for the hi-fi industry is that Herman has now decided to resurrect the brand, starting with the launch of a 'signature edition' of the Kiseki Blue in the form of a limited run of 100 Kiseki Blue NOS (New Old Style) cartridges. This new cartridge has been manufactured using a few of the original components that comprised the top of the range Kiseki of the nineties (and because no better parts are available now) plus some other components where new technology offered significant improvements. According to Herman, the resultant cartridge has 'all the romance' of the original cartridges, but will be the last of its type as many of the original components are no longer available, hence the limited run of 100 cartridges. One of the original components is the lovely turned wooden presentation box. However, it has a hard-written serial number on the box, with a matching number on the cartridge — in my case, No. 026.

Once in my hot little hands, out came the tools and the Lyra Clavis DC cartridge in my ISO1000 (an OEM Rega RB1000) arm was swiftly replaced by the Kiseki Blue. The next job was the not-so-swift calibration and alignment of the cartridge in
its new home! I carefully set up the cartridge in the tonearm using an alignment protractor and set the VTA approximately correct by having the tonearm parallel to the record, then fined tuned it by ear. [See MEASURED PERFORMANCE].

**SOUND QUALITY**

The first recording I played was Louis Fremaux and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra performing 'Saint Saens Organ Symphony No. 3' on the HMV Greensleeve label (ESD 7038 — stereo/quadraphonic). A really fabulous sounding disc, in particular, the second movement has some amazing 16Hz organ notes which are a great test of the bass response of a system. So this was the first record to grace my turntable and it was playing with the new cartridge fitted. The first recording I played was Louis Fremaux and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra performing 'Saint Saens Organ Symphony No. 3' on the HMV Greensleeve label (ESD 7038 — stereo/quadraphonic). A really fabulous sounding disc, in particular, the second movement has some amazing 16Hz organ notes which are a great test of the bass response of a system. So this was the first record to grace my turntable and it was playing with the new cartridge fitted. The first recording I played was Louis Fremaux and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra performing 'Saint Saens Organ Symphony No. 3' on the HMV Greensleeve label (ESD 7038 — stereo/quadraphonic). A really fabulous sounding disc, in particular, the second movement has some amazing 16Hz organ notes which are a great test of the bass response of a system. So this was the first record to grace my turntable and it was playing with the new cartridge fitted. The first recording I played was Louis Fremaux and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra performing 'Saint Saens Organ Symphony No. 3' on the HMV Greensleeve label (ESD 7038 — stereo/quadraphonic). A really fabulous sounding disc, in particular, the second movement has some amazing 16Hz organ notes which are a great test of the bass response of a system. So this was the first record to grace my turntable and it was playing with the new cartridge fitted. The first recording I played was Louis Fremaux and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra performing 'Saint Saens Organ Symphony No. 3' on the HMV Greensleeve label (ESD 7038 — stereo/quadraphonic). A really fabulous sounding disc, in particular, the second movement has some amazing 16Hz organ notes which are a great test of the bass response of a system. So this was the first record to grace my turntable and it was playing with the new cartridge fitted. The first recording I played was Louis Fremaux and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra performing 'Saint Saens Organ Symphony No. 3' on the HMV Greensleeve label (ESD 7038 — stereo/quadraphonic). A really fabulous sounding disc, in particular, the second movement has some amazing 16Hz organ notes which are a great test of the bass response of a system. So this was the first record to grace my turntable and it was playing with the new cartridge fitted. The first recording I played was Louis Fremaux and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra performing 'Saint Saens Organ Symphony No. 3' on the HMV Greensleeve label (ESD 7038 — stereo/quadraphonic). A really fabulous sounding disc, in particular, the second movement has some amazing 16Hz organ notes which are a great test of the bass response of a system. So this was the first record to grace my turntable and it was playing with the new cartridge fitted. The first recording I played was Louis Fremaux and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra performing 'Saint Saens Organ Symphony No. 3' on the HMV Greensleeve label (ESD 7038 — stereo/quadraphonic). A really fabulous sounding disc, in particular, the second movement has some amazing 16Hz organ notes which are a great test of the bass response of a system. So this was the first record to grace my turntable and it was playing with the new cartridge fitted. The first recording I played was Louis Fremaux and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra performing 'Saint Saens Organ Symphony No. 3' on the HMV Greensleeve label (ESD 7038 — stereo/quadraphonic). A really fabulous sounding disc, in particular, the second movement has some amazing 16Hz organ notes which are a great test of the bass response of a system. So this was the first record to grace my turntable and it was playing with the new cartridge fitted. The first recording I played was Louis Fremaux and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra performing 'Saint Saens Organ Symphony No. 3' on the HMV Greensleeve label (ESD 7038 — stereo/quadraphonic). A really fabulous sounding disc, in particular, the second movement has some amazing 16Hz organ notes which are a great test of the bass response of a system. So this was the first record to grace my turntable and it was playing with the new cartridge fitted. The first recording I played was Louis Fremaux and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra performing 'Saint Saens Organ Symphony No. 3' on the HMV Greensleeve label (ESD 7038 — stereo/quadraphonic). A really fabulous sounding disc, in particular, the second movement has some amazing 16Hz organ notes which are a great test of the bass response of a system. So this was the first record to grace my turntable and it was playing with the new cartridge fitted. The first recording I played was Louis Fremaux and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra performing 'Saint Saens Organ Symphony No. 3' on the HMV Greensleeve label (ESD 7038 — stereo/quadraphonic). A really fabulous sounding disc, in particular, the second movement has some amazing 16Hz organ notes which are a great test of the bass response of a system. So this was the first record to grace my turntable and it was playing with the new cartridge fitted. The first recording I played was Louis Fremaux and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra performing 'Saint Saens Organ Symphony No. 3' on the HMV Greensleeve label (ESD 7038 — stereo/quadraphonic). A really fabulous sounding disc, in particular, the second movement has some amazing 16Hz organ notes which are a great test of the bass response of a system. So this was the first record to grace my turntable and it was playing with the new cartridge fitted. The first recording I played was Louis Fremaux and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra performing 'Saint Saens Organ Symphony No. 3' on the HMV Greensleeve label (ESD 7038 — stereo/quadraphonic). A really fabulous sounding disc, in particular, the second movement has some amazing 16Hz organ notes which are a great test of the bass response of a system. So this was the first record to grace my turntable and it was playing with the new cartridge fitted. The first recording I played was Louis Fremaux and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra performing 'Saint Saens Organ Symphony No. 3' on the HMV Greensleeve label (ESD 7038 — stereo/quadraphonic). A really fabulous sounding disc, in particular, the second movement has some amazing 16Hz organ notes which are a great test of the bass response of a system. So this was the first record to grace my turntable and it was playing with the new cartridge fitted. The first recording I played was Louis Fremaux and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra performing 'Saint Saens Organ Symphony No. 3' on the HMV Greensleeve label (ESD 7038 — stereo/quadraphonic). A really fabulous sounding disc, in particular, the second movement has some amazing 16Hz organ notes which are a great test of the bass response of a system. So this was the first record to grace my turntable and it was playing with the new cartridge fitted. The first recording I played was Louis Fremaux and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra performing 'Saint Saens Organ Symphony No. 3' on the HMV Greensleeve label (ESD 7038 — stereo/quadraphonic). A really fabulous sounding disc, in particular, the second movement has some amazing 16Hz organ notes which are a great test of the bass response of a system. So this was the first record to grace my turntable and it was playing with the new cartridge fitted. The first recording I played was Louis Fremaux and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra performing 'Saint Saens Organ Symphony No. 3' on the HMV Greensleeve label (ESD 7038 — stereo/quadraphonic). A really fabulous sounding disc, in particular, the second movement has some amazing 16Hz organ notes which are a great test of the bass response of a system. So this was the first record to grace my turntable and it was playing with the new cartridge fitted. The first recording I played was Louis Fremaux and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra performing 'Saint Saens Organ Symphony No. 3' on the HMV Greensleeve label (ESD 7038 — stereo/quadraphonic). A really fabulous sounding disc, in particular, the second movement has some amazing 16Hz organ notes which are a great test of the bass response of a system. So this was the first record to grace my turntable and it was playing with the new cartridge fitted. The first recording I played was Louis Fremaux and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra performing 'Saint Saens Organ Symphony No. 3' on the HMV Greensleeve label (ESD 7038 — stereo/quadraphonic). A really fabulous sounding disc, in particular, the second movement has some amazing 16Hz organ notes which are a great test of the bass response of a system. So this was the first record to grace my turntable and it was playing with the new cartridge fitted. The first recording I played was Louis Fremaux and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra performing 'Saint Saens Organ Symphony No. 3' on the HMV Greensleeve label (ESD 7038 — stereo/quadraphonic). A really fabulous sounding disc, in particular, the second movement has some amazing 16Hz organ notes which are a great test of the bass response of a system. So this was the first record to grace my turntable and it was playing with the new cartridge fitted. The first recording I played was Louis Fremaux and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra performing 'Saint Saens Organ Symphony No. 3' on the HMV Greensleeve label (ESD 7038 — stereo/quadraphonic). A really fabulous sounding disc, in particular, the second movement has some amazing 16Hz organ notes which are a great test of the bass response of a system. So this was the first record to grace my turntable and it was playing with the new cartridge fitted. The first recording I played was Louis Fremaux and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra performing 'Saint Saens Organ Symphony No. 3' on the HMV Greensleeve label (ESD 0
Special offers to celebrate our new website
Acoustic Solid’s “Sold Machine” - big savings on ex demo unit

Anatek MCI fantastic award winning MC Phono Stage - £875 (save £100)
Clearaudio Audio Turntable plug n play award winning package - £975 (save £125)
Decent Audio Twin Wallshelf - free upgrade from HDW to ODW spec worth £100
Dynavector DV20x3 High output MC huge improvement over comparable MM - £375 (save £75)
Michell Gyro SEduction new limited edition - with cartridge of your choice value up to £250 included free
Orton - Free Van Don Hull alignment protector with any moving Cam tile
Roksan Xerxes 20 Turntable in high gloss maple finish with XP79 Power supply - £2455 (save £613)
Trichard Dino2LC or Diablo NC claim free High Performance interconnect worth £130

www.turntableworld.co.uk - the analogue specialists - 01642 267012

2NDHANDHIFI.CO.UK Guaranteed used and ex-demo audio equipment from HiFiSound - the UK's premier source
Call: 0845 6019390 Email: World二手handhifi.co.uk

TurntableWorld

Amplifiers

*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499

Loudspeakers

*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499
*Anthem M80 Super Hi-Fi, Mission 774, vgc due in* 1499

Radios/Recorders

*Arcam Alpha D199 in black, nr mint boxed* 299
*Arcam Alpha D199 in black, nr mint boxed* 299
*Arcam Alpha D199 in black, nr mint boxed* 299
*Arcam Alpha D199 in black, nr mint boxed* 299
*Arcam Alpha D199 in black, nr mint boxed* 299
*Arcam Alpha D199 in black, nr mint boxed* 299
*Arcam Alpha D199 in black, nr mint boxed* 299
*Arcam Alpha D199 in black, nr mint boxed* 299
*Arcam Alpha D199 in black, nr mint boxed* 299
*Arcam Alpha D199 in black, nr mint boxed* 299
*Arcam Alpha D199 in black, nr mint boxed* 299
*Arcam Alpha D199 in black, nr mint boxed* 299
*Arcam Alpha D199 in black, nr mint boxed* 299
*Arcam Alpha D199 in black, nr mint boxed* 299
*Arcam Alpha D199 in black, nr mint boxed* 299
*Arcam Alpha D199 in black, nr mint boxed* 299
*Arcam Alpha D199 in black, nr mint boxed* 299
*Arcam Alpha D199 in black, nr mint boxed* 299
*Arcam Alpha D199 in black, nr mint boxed* 299
*Arcam Alpha D199 in black, nr mint boxed* 299
*Arcam Alpha D199 in black, nr mint boxed* 299

Accessories/Cables

*Audio Analogue Crescendo Amp 6 CD, ex demo* 799
*Audio Analogue Crescendo Amp 6 CD, ex demo* 799
*Audio Analogue Crescendo Amp 6 CD, ex demo* 799
*Audio Analogue Crescendo Amp 6 CD, ex demo* 799
*Audio Analogue Crescendo Amp 6 CD, ex demo* 799
*Audio Analogue Crescendo Amp 6 CD, ex demo* 799
*Audio Analogue Crescendo Amp 6 CD, ex demo* 799
*Audio Analogue Crescendo Amp 6 CD, ex demo* 799
*Audio Analogue Crescendo Amp 6 CD, ex demo* 799
*Audio Analogue Crescendo Amp 6 CD, ex demo* 799
*Audio Analogue Crescendo Amp 6 CD, ex demo* 799
*Audio Analogue Crescendo Amp 6 CD, ex demo* 799
*Audio Analogue Crescendo Amp 6 CD, ex demo* 799
*Audio Analogue Crescendo Amp 6 CD, ex demo* 799
*Audio Analogue Crescendo Amp 6 CD, ex demo* 799
*Audio Analogue Crescendo Amp 6 CD, ex demo* 799
*Audio Analogue Crescendo Amp 6 CD, ex demo* 799
*Audio Analogue Crescendo Amp 6 CD, ex demo* 799
*Audio Analogue Crescendo Amp 6 CD, ex demo* 799
*Audio Analogue Crescendo Amp 6 CD, ex demo* 799
*Audio Analogue Crescendo Amp 6 CD, ex demo* 799

Special System Deals

Call: 0845 6019390 Email: World二手handhifi.co.uk

2NDHANDHIFI.CO.UK Guaranteed used and ex-demo audio equipment from HiFiSound - the UK's premier source
Call: 0845 6019390 Email: World二手handhifi.co.uk
Following on the success of the both the Debut and Genie series of turntables, Czech Republic based manufacturers Pro-ject have introduced a new entry level turntable, the Essential. Costing £155 for the black model (the matt red and matt white editions are £170) this new deck sports a new unipivot tonearm.

This new all undamped aluminium design is Pro-ject's first non-gimble bearing arm. The unipivot itself is made from a hardened steel point which rests against a hardened and polished steel pad. This is all housed out of sight under a big curved housing, which must be gently lifted when setting up the deck to remove the transport lock. Care is needed to avoid damage to the delicate signal leads which also share the housing. Behind this, on a low slug stub, is the counterweight.

This has an eccentrically positioned hole so that the centre of gravity of the weight is low, helping the arm to track warps more easily. The anti-skate weight is attached to a rod sprouting from the centre of the top of the bearing housing and dangles from a piece of wire. At the front of the arm is the pre-fitted Ortofon OMB 3E moving magnet cartridge.

Power is provided from the motor mounted in the rear left hand corner and propels the 300mm MDF platter via a silicone drive belt resting against the rim. A thin felt mat sits on top of this. The plinth measures 415x112x335mm with the clear acrylic lid closed, and is made of particle board. The whole unit rests on three rubber feet which provide only rudimentary isolation.

Setting up was easy, requiring three transport clips removing from the arm, the belt attaching and the counterweight and anti-skate weight fitting. Getting the arm correctly balanced was the longest job, with only minuscule movements of the counterweight sending my digital scales a little too far either side of the recommended 1.75g downforce. Once the correct setting was achieved the counterweight was secured using the supplied Allen key. The one thing that the otherwise helpful manual didn't point out is that being a unipivot design, the arm can tilt to the left or right so the counterweight needs to be centred to make sure that the arm is level and that the Vertical Tracking Angle is correct. The cartridge alignment is set at the factory, although a cardboard, two point alignment gauge is supplied.

SOUND QUALITY
I did most of my listening with the Essential mounted on a Target wall shelf. A bit of care in the choice of location is a must, I found. This done,
Cairn

Wharfedale W3 or m directonal speakers £ 195

condition new £ 1500 £ 795

box gread against rear walls £ 395

Snell Type K bookshelf loudspeaker oak finish sealed

Sentoran early 60s corner speaker pair £ 295

Quad 10L piano black finish £ 195

Quad ESL 988 Electostabc speakers Nouveau version £ 1995

Neat Petite SO £ P0A

Mono Pulse 32A 8 months old ex dem, £ 495

Aerogel drive units £ 295

SF1 FF1 wbn baffle speaker with Fuji motor range and f595

Nagoka Swan high efficiency speaker cult item £ 195

Musical Stones Italian Sold Marble floorstanding

Mission 753 black £ 245

Martin Logan Aeon Electrostatic speakers 12

KEF Celest 3

JM Lab Chores speakers £ 225

Celesten DL4 £ 95

JM Actne Pm 9 speakers Rosewood finish & den £ 795

ATC SCM 10 single & ly speaker was used

Acoustic Energy original black Aluminium pillar

WE NOW HAVE ON DEMONSTRATION THE SUPERB LEEMA PtILSE + STREAM SPEAKERS

Yamaha natural sound stereo receiver model

Sonneteer Seeley adjustable MM(MC phonostage £275

Rogue Audio AdM EL34 power ev £ 1195

Radford ST25 MKIII power amp £ 1195

Tam 903 power amp boxed £ 225

Musical Fidelity A100 50watt Class A amp with Ausical Fidelity A1001 Class A super integrated

Pioneer CT 40w per channel £ 795

Les.CLASS 40w per channel £ 795

Musical Fidelity Reference 2 excellent condition £ 195

SME 776/777 pre and power amplifier 100w cast

lesion 776 pre arm well phone stage & EL34 power amp £ 995

Cyrus CLSSO £ 245

Celesten TL12a rare hammered paint finish 1961 £ P0A

itaketsnd pre arm well phone slage & EL34 pre amp £ 995

Fasten

Cyrus PSOPT boxed £ 295

Audelab 80000 british built mint boxed £ 395

AMPLIFIERS

Anatek monoblocs £ 2400 new £ 995

inrp senously powerful amplifier £ 895

re-valved with 6550 valves boxed £ 1395

agden Auditen - Poo-der amp £345

ased work a real classic £ 795

Marantz PMB200 integrated amp. £ 395 new boxed mint £ 275

Dead 2 mono blocs mint original valves £795

lesion 776/777 pre and power amplifier 100w cast

_Leema Stream CD player £ 695

into extemal dac boxed £ 695

DCS upsampler great upgrade for plugging

Consanance 00120 £295

Cyrus DAC X boxed mint £ 595

Cyrus 8 CD player £ 295

Thorens TD166 MKII £ 95

Technics SL1200 MKII £ 195

System Deck II biscuit tin model ( SME  mount) £ 245

SME series 3 tonearms various from £ 175

phonoplugs boxed £ 225

SME tracking tonearm excellent xenon vastes from £ 195

Revco 13790 direct drive turntable with linear

Rega P5 turntable no arm with outboard PSU £ 245

S shaped tonearm hmewarp condition boxed £ 195

Pro1ect Tube Box II £ 195

la

Linn LP12 venoms from £445

Linn Lingo power supply £ 495

Garrard 301 with custom aluminium and slate plinth £ 1195

Clearaudio Victory cartndge £ 1000 new £ 445

Chord companies Focus Reference 4 £ 1000 upgrade

Clearaudio Reference Focus £1000 upgrade

Pioneer Pioneer AU-30500 and AU-30600 amplifiers £495

Pioneer AU-30000 and AU-30500 amplifiers £495

Pioneer AU-30000 and AU-30500 amplifiers £495

Cyrus CLSSO £ 245
"for the price of a week's shop, here's a well thought out package that's easy to use and which makes the sonic grade..."
**HI FINESSE**

Audio Technica US Phono Plus Preamp £97 analogue digital computer interface

**MILLY PRO & ELETTRONICA**

Shure SF2 Style Force Gauge £38

**REPLACEMENT STYLIS**

Swiss Quality Diamond Styls £19

**DENON FULL RANGE INC**

Arai Anai, An 50, An 6 £15

**MI**

Krell PAM-1 Preamplifier. Dual mono design with two in off-board PSU. Silver finish. MM & MC input. Great condition. £99

**Music Fidelity M-12110 pre amp with PSU. Silver. £399**

**CREEK/EPOS £ POA AUDIO TECHNICA HEADPHONES £ POA**

**PROJECT £ POA**

**SUMIKO BPS/EVO III £ 205***

**PRESTIGE BLACK 1 £53***

**PRESTIGE Gold 1 £POA**

**NAD full range inc**

**NAD 504 CD player. Ex condition No display £49**

**Denon DC-1060 CD player. Good condition. £29**

**Leak Stereo - 0 rebuilt with quality paper in oil caps £299.00**

**CREEK/EPOS £ POA AUDIO TECHNICA HEADPHONES £ POA**

**TRANSFIGURATION AXIA £900**

**LEHMANN AUDIO £ POA**

**SUMIKO BPS/EVO III £ 205**

**PREP 1012 OX**

**BROCHURES OR PRICES. SUPPLIER OF HIFI PRODUCTS & ACCESSORIES SINCE 1986 MAIL ORDER ONLY FROM; IAN HARRISON, 7 MILL HILL, LEICESTER, LE2 8yr**

**QUAD ES157 & ESL63 PANELS/SERVICING ETC**

**QUAD ES157 & ESL63 PANELS/SERVICING ETC**

**QUAD ES157 & ESL63 PANELS/SERVICING ETC**

**QUAD ES157 & ESL63 PANELS/SERVICING ETC**

**QUAD ES157 & ESL63 PANELS/SERVICING ETC**
NEW demonstration facilities at the WITHAM store, which offers the best Hi-Fi and Home Cinema products along with professionally installed multi-room systems, lighting, seating and furniture.

REAL STORES • REAL PEOPLE • REAL PRODUCTS • REAL VALUE

Sevenoaks Sound & Vision and Audio T are in the process of merging their respective businesses and will become one of the largest independent hi-fi and home cinema chains in the UK with over 50 stores nationwide.

Until the merger is complete, which will take a few months, Sevenoaks Sound & Vision and Audio T will remain separate legal entities.

Visit our website for the latest offers and news, as well as the convenient option to order many products on-line or click to reserve before you travel.

www.SSAV.com
REAL PEOPLE
Our staff are friendly, knowledgeable and passionate about music and film and the equipment needed to get the most out of your collection. They will be delighted to assist you in making the right selection to ensure you enjoy your system for years to come.

REAL STORES
Sevenoaks Sound & Vision and Audio T have over 50 Stores nationwide. Each store carries the very best in Home Cinema and Hi-Fi equipment on display, ready for you to watch, listen to and compare in our dedicated demonstration rooms.

REAL PRODUCTS
A wide selection of products from the world's leading manufacturers, both traditional and contemporary is in stock and available for you to take home. We also offer a delivery and installation service as well as a convenient on-line option to click and reserve many of our products before you travel.

VIENNA ACOUSTICS
CONCERT GRAND
Featuring the Beethoven Concert and 'Baby' Grand. The composer name is selected based on the scale, complexity and power of performance for which they are best known.

MONITOR AUDIO
BRONZE BX SERIES
Consists of seven models that build on the strengths of the award-winning BR Series.

REGA
RPI TURNTABLE
Excellent build quality, reliability and ease of use combine to make the RPI a product that will offer a lifetime of musical enjoyment.

BOWERS & WILKINS
CM SERIES
The CM series offers a combination of high performance and exquisite styling at a very affordable price.

KEF AUDIO
Q SERIES
Experiencing the Q Series is like hearing a system costing many times more. Key features include an all new Uni-Q array with advanced bass technologies.

MARANTZ
CD6003 • PM6003 CD / AMPLIFIER
This award-winning CD and amplifier continues the Marantz tradition of building products that represent outstanding value.

CYRUS AUDIO
With three ranges - the high performance X series, the prolific 8 series and entry level 6 series - Cyrus award-winning hi-fi systems are a wonderfully rewarding way to bring music into your home.

ROKSAN
CASPAN M2 CD / AMPLIFIER
The award-winning M2 amp boasts R5wpc, ultra low noise transformers and five line inputs while the matching CD features a 24-bit D/A converter with dedicated power supplies for the outputs.

Please Note: Some brands/products are not available at all stores. Special/added value offers are not in conjunction with any other offer. Pricing in Ireland is different to that in the UK. Advert valid until 10/03/2011. E&OE.
KEF KHT 7005
AV SPEAKERS
Stunning 5.1 surround sound from only four slim speakers for your flat screen TV
£4199  SAVE £ 300

KEF KHT 8005
£699  SAVE £ 300

PIONEER
800 LX52 BLU-RAY PLAYER
With its advanced features and specification, the LX-52 ensures the highest quality playback of Blu-ray discs, DVDs and CDs.
£249  OR LESS!  LESS THAN HALF PRICE

YAMAHA
CD S300 • A-5500 CD / AMPHIFIER
With its high quality sound and features such as iPod and MP3 WMA compatibility the CD-S300 is an ideal partner for the award-winning A-5500 integrated amplifier.
£299  OR LESS!

DENON
AVR-1911 AV RECEIVER
The 3D ready receiver supports Dolby TrueHD, DTS-HD Master Audio and other HD Audio formats along with Dolby Pro Logic Il.
£299  OR LESS!  SAVE £200

LEEMA
STREAM III • PULSE III CD / AMPHIFIER
This CD and amplifier combination features an all-new slot loading transport along with a number of analogue and digital inputs.
£1295 each  SAVE £200

LEEMA
STREAM 111 • PULSE 111 CD / AMPHIFIER
The CD and amplifier combination features an all-new slot loading transport along with a number of analogue and digital inputs.
£1295 each  SAVE £200

YAMAHA
3D / UNIVERSAL DISC PLAYER
The new BD-51067 3D Bluray player has been designed for high performance and for optimum matching with Yamaha AV receivers and is SA-CD and DVD-Audio compatible.

CYRUS
CD6 SE • 6 XP CD / AMPHIFIER
Award-winning 40wpc integrated amplifier and CD player available in black or quartz silver finish.
£749 each  SAVE £200

CYRUS
CD6 SE • 6 XP CD / AMPHIFIER
£49 each  SAVE £200

AUDIOLAB
8200CD • 8200A CD / AMPHIFIER
The 8200 range includes the award-winning 8200CD which features a wealth of digital inputs that will keep it playing all your music regardless of how it may be stored.

PAELTREE AUDIO
PEACHTREE AUDIO NOVA DAC • AMPHIFIER
Make your computer sound like a high-end CD player with this USO equipped 80wpc integrated amplifier and 24/96 upsampling D/A converter

SPENDOR
AS SPEAKERS
These compact floorstanders deliver exceptional performance and are available in a variety of high quality wood finishes.
£1495  SAVE £100 • CLAIM QED CABLE WORTH £150

ARCAM
SOLO NEO NETWORK MUSIC SYSTEM
Combines superb music performance and network audio capabilities allowing it to play stored music in a multitude of formats along with its internal CD player and radio tuner.

ELITE
MAFtANTZ NA7004 NETWORK AUDIO PLAYER
Connect to your favourite music whether it's from your PC, external hard disc or as an FM/DAB radio station broadcast or even on the other side of the world via Internet Radio or music service.

OLIVE
OLIVE MUSIC SERVERS
Access your digital music from one centralized library. Everything from 16-bit converted CDs to 24-bit HD files will be at your fingertips as well as the ability to play it all in any room of your home.

SEVENoaks
SOUND & VISION
Vinyl Passion Accessories Now Available
- Record Cleaning Fluid
- Record Sleeves
- Record Cleaning Machines
- Stylus Cleaners
- Shelves & Cases
- Isolation Accessories

We are now Specialist Dealers for Vincent Audio with Full Range of Equipment available for Demonstration

Vincent Audio 'Hi Fi World' Standards
Missing Link 'Hi Fi World' Standards

Special Offers until Xmas on selected purchases of Vincent Equipment with Missing Link Cables Included
~Ask for Details & Book a Demonstration in our new Music Room~

www.the-missing-link.net
01623 844478

Making the music flow
Located in the midst of rural Norfolk, Basically Sound offers a relaxing, out of town location for you to visit and experience the best performing audio systems available.
From turntables to the latest in network audio solutions, we ensure that you hear music as it should be heard - and the parking and coffee are free.

Audio Home Cinema Multi-Room Installation

BASICA LLY SOUND

The Hi Fi World Show 2011

BAKE-OFF

The 'must see' event of the hi-fi year - run by enthusiasts, for enthusiasts

The Hi-Fi Show - Scalford Hall, Melton Mowbray, 6th March 2011
www.thehiﬁshow.com for more information
There are plenty of DAB radios on sale these days, and Pure have played more of part in this than most companies. But there are few that do 'ruggedised' portables, things which Sony used to do under the name of 'Sports', back in the eighties, for example. Most modern radios are either plasticly and flimsy or luxurious and lavish — but certainly not tough, so when Pure came out with the original Oasis back in 2007, it found an appreciative audience. With a tough aluminium frame, rubberised in the right places to protect it, rubber covered socketry to prevent the ingress of water and special controls, it proved ideal for bathroom or outside use; you couldn't exactly throw it in a lake and expect it to work, but it didn't give up the ghost at the first sign of a drop of rain. The new Oasis Flow is basically this same radio, but with internet radio/music streaming capability, and a better, fine pitch backlit OLED. Sadly though, the direct input preset buttons have gone, meaning a slightly less direct user experience.

It's very easy to set up - five minutes or less has all the DAB stations in, plus your Wi-Fi network's particulars. The built-in ChargePAK battery will take an hour or so to charge, after which it gives around fourteen hours of use on FM, less via DAB or Wi-Fi. There's also a 3.5mm input for your iPod, should you need it. The display is excellent, navigation easy and the radio has its predecessor's excellent sound quality (considering its mono design); it's loud, punchy and robust sounding, although don't expect a particularly extended treble from its single full-range speaker. The Oasis Flow has all the frills of the latest generation of Wi-Fi radios, works well as a portable — outside and/or away from the mains — and is big enough to fill your back garden with music, should your neighbours tolerate it. It has a premium price, but certainly does the job it's designed to with little fuss. DP

[Contact: +44 (0)845 1489001, www.pure.com]

PHILIPS FIDELIO DS8550 £250

Hot on the heels of the superb DS9000 iPod speaker system reviewed last autumn comes this, more compact version with wireless Bluetooth capability. Its 562x216x214mm cabinet follows its bigger brother's styling, being curved to minimise sound diffraction, with the rear curved to stamp on internal standing waves. Two 3" full range drivers are reflex loaded, and fed by a 30W RMS amplifier; this is fed by an onboard DAC; the DS8550 takes a direct digital output from the docking connector of an iPhone, iPod or iPad, and will recharge them at the same time. DSP is used to optimise the speakers to the cabinet. The unit can also connect to iPads via Bluetooth, so it doesn't have to be physically attached to its source. This feature, plus the built in rechargeable battery (which gives about five hours) and built in carrying handle, makes the Philips truly portable, although it must be noted that it's not really robust enough for the great outdoors; it's certainly not splashproof. As per the DS9000, it has a proximity sensor which lights up the controls when your hand gets close, which is a nice touch although not strictly necessary. There's also a supplied remote control.

The DS8550 sounds surprisingly good considering its modest price, with a decently clean and open sound; it certainly doesn't give the impression of being just another piece of consumer electronics to which no attention has been paid in the performance department. Fed via an iPod Classic running Apple Lossless, the Fidelio sounded big, confident and musical, with a nice rhythmic gait and nothing nasty as far as the sound balance was concerned. They haven't over-egged the bass port loading, so there's no sense of a dirge like boomy bass, and there's a decent degree of nice open treble too, although the pricier DS9000 is wholly superior as you'd expect. Overall, a fine, versatile and well built iPod dock that's good value even at £250. DP

[Contact: 0906 1010 016, www.philips.com]
High End Cable
www.highendcable.co.uk
Call Dave on 01775 761880

Overall, very impressive. Robert Townsend -- Stereophile Jan 08

Audience have been producing High End Cables for sometime now culminating in the new Au24e. Top systems need the best and with Audience there are none to surpass them at their price points. 1m pair Au24e RCA interconnects cost just £729.00 with the matching 3m pair of speaker cables just £1,559.00. Very affordable excellence.

If your budget can not stretch to the Au24e then the Meastro might fit the bill at £259.00 for the interconnects and £670.00 for a 3m pair of speaker cables.

Please visit the website for the full range of Audience Hi-fi products including their excellent power conditioners and power cords.

To advertise in this space please call

Debi Silver
01723 500 435/ 07966 843 536 email: debisilver@hi-fiworld.co.uk

Brad Francis
01923 677 256/07715 421 569 email: brad francis@sky.com
Subscribe to our eco-friendly e-edition of Hi-Fi World and receive a 50% discount!!!

• Receive your issue a week before on-sale dates.
• Be the first to grab a bargain in our Free Reader Classified Ads.
• In-house lab. tests to AES and IEC standards
• Run by dedicated hi-fi engineers & enthusiasts.
• No missed issues, or postal delays.
• Access your issues from anywhere in the World.
• PC and Mac friendly.
• Eco-friendly.

Subscribe today and receive 12 issues for £20 – that’s an amazing £1.90 per issue!

check out our free trial issue

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.hi-fiworld.co.uk and select "ELECTRONIC EDITION"

To purchase your e-edition click here
This is a comprehensive directory of Hi-Fi Dealers throughout the UK and Ireland.

BERKSHIRE

LORICRAFT AUDIO
Loricraft Audio is now open for visitors but please call to arrange for a visit. You can buy all our products directly from us or through your local dealer. Our internet shop site can take direct orders for our turntables and accessories! Loricraft Audio, The Piggery, Mile End Farm, Wantage Road, Lambourn, Berkshire, RG17 8UE Office Phone/Fax: +44 (0)148-72267 Email: terry@garrard501.com Website: http://garrard501.com

STUDIOAV LTD
44 High Street, Eton, Berkshire SL4 6BL Tel: 01753 631000 sales@studioav.co.uk www.studioav.co.uk We are Berkshire’s premier Linn dealer (complete range) and LP12 specialists. Nam, Focal, Totem, The Chord Company, Lyra, Dynavector, Benz Micro, with more to follow.

BRISTOL & BATH

THE RIGHT NOTE

V’AUDIO HI FI CONSULTANTS

CHESHIRE

ACOUSTICA
17 Hoole Rd, Chester CH2 3NH. www.acousticachecer.co.uk. Tel: 01244 344227. Hi-Fi & Home Cinema from Amphion, Arcam, ART, Ayre, B&W Nuance, Classe, Focal JM Lab, Monitor Audio, Nam Audio, Primare, Rega, REL, Rotel, Sander, Sugden, Thiel, Wadia. We offer full demonstration facilities, interest free credit, delivery & install systems throughout Cheshire, Merseyside & North Wales. Tuesday to Saturday 10.00 to 5.30.

ACTON GATE AUDIO
www.acton-gate-audio.co.uk 4 Ruabon Road, Wrexham, LL13 7PB, Tel: (01978) 364500 Arcam, Atlas, Audiolab, Croft, Denon, Grado, JM Labs, KEF, Michell, Monitor Audio, Musical Fidelity, NAD, Ortofon, Opera, Onkyo, Pro-ject, OED, Quad, Rel, Roksan, Sugden, Sennheiser, Unison, van-den-Hul, Wharfedale, Yamaha. Tuesday - Saturday 9.00 - 17.00 email: info@acton-gate.com

DOUG BRADY HI FI KINGSWAY
Studios, Kingsway North, Warrington, WA1 3NU Tel: 01925828009 Fax: 01925 825773. Visa Mastercard, 2 dem rooms, home trial, Agencies include: Arcam, AV1, Chord, Copland, Exposure, Krell, Lyra, Michell, Meridian, Musical Fidelity, Monitor Audio, Naim, ProAc, Roksan, SME, Stax, Isotek, Kudos, Sonus Faber, Spendor, Ortofon, Prima Luna, Quad, Avid, Moon, Nordost, Wilson Benesch, and many more.

ESSEX

HOUSE OF LINNER MANCHESTER
Telephone: 0161 766 4837 Email: Info@HouseofLinna.co.uk www.houseoflinna.com The Linn specialists. Independently owned by former Linn staff. Straightforward, professional expertise with demonstration, sales, installation and support for the Linn range of components and systems. The listening experience is so good that demonstrations can last for hours. Discover how we make music sound real in your home! Appointments only.

ZOUCH AUDIO
The Old Coach House, Off South St, Ashby de la Zouch, Leicestershire, LE65 1BQ. Tel: 01530 414128 Email: mike@zouchaudio.co.uk Specialist Audio Equipment from Audia, Audica, Apollo, Ayon, Black Rhodium, Boulder, Cord Electronics, DAU, Edgar, Fatman, Graham Slee, Isotek, LSA, Marantz, Mission, Monopulse, Musical Fidelity, NAD, Nordost, Ortofon, Project, Q Acoustics, QED, Quad, Roksan, Spectral, System Fidelity. Tom Evans, Usher, Vitus. Over 30 years experience and 4 demonstration rooms.

LONDON

THE CARTRIDGE MAN LTD
88 Southbridge road, Croydon CR0 1AF Telephone: 020 8989 6585 Website: www.thecartridgenan.com

THE RIGHT NOTE

V’AUDIO HI FI CONSULTANTS
email address:thecartridgeman@talktalk.net. UK Distributor: Haudio Distribution Makers of the prize-winning range of MusicMaker cartridges and other desirable audio accessories. We also have a cartridge refurbishing service and rebuild classic valve equipment to the highest standards. "It doesn't have to cost an arm and a leg - but there is no such thing a free lunch, either."

MONMOUTHSHIRE & GLOUCESTERSHIRE
CERITECH AUDIO
Wyestone Business Park, Wyastone Leys, Monmouth. Tel: 0844 736 5719. Email: info@ceritech.co.uk.

We provide bespoke Hi-Fi and AV services to customers throughout Gloucestershire, Monmouthshire, Herefordshire and surrounding areas. We offer honest and expert advice, and professional demonstrations of top brand products. BADA Member & Authorised Agents for Arcam, Clearaudio, DALI, Focal, Leema, Moon, Naim, Neat, Primare, ProAc, Rega, Vienna Acoustics and others.

MY AUDIO DESIGN
35 Whitehall, London, SW1A 2BX.
Tel: 020 7839 8800 / 07782 137 868.
E-mail: sales@madengland.com.

Website: www.madengland.com.

We offer MAD, Benchmark Media, SONOS, WBT, Trichord Research, ATC, FatmanTube, Project, Linn, Dynavector, Koetsu, Krell, roksan, thamson, trichord, vdh. Check our website for ex dem and secondhand bargains. Free car parking. Tues - Sat 10 - 5.30.

SOMERSET
ALTERNATIVE AUDIO,
Taunton, Somerset.
Tel: 01984 624242.
Email:peter@alternativeaudio.co.uk.

www.alternativeaudio.co.uk.

We specialise in valve amplification and vinyl replay with the accent on high quality musical enjoyment, demonstration by appointment. Ex-Dem and used equipment for sale. Analysis Audio, Brinkman, EAR, Yoshino, Graham Engineering, Experience Filtration, Lector, LFD Audio, Lyra, Music First Audio, NAT Audio, Nottingham Analogue Studio, Quadraspire, Shun Mook, SME, Transfiguration, Vandersteen Audio, Wave Mechanic.

YORKSHIRE
THE AUDIO ROOM
2 George Street, Hedon,Hull, HU12 8JH.
01482 891375.
www.theaudioroom.co.uk.

Authorised agents for Audio Research, Bowers & Wilkins inc 800 series, Bryston, Classe, Denon, Dynavector, Koetsu, Krell, Linn inc Klimax Range, Micromega, Naim, Prima Luna, PMC, ProAc, Quad, Rega, Roksan, Sonus Faber, Stax, Wilson Audio and others.
Free & easy car parking, 4 demonstration suites, part exchange welcome, quality & friendly staff, mail order available. The North's most complete hi-fi dealer!

AUDIO REPUBLIC
78 Otley Road, Leeds.
Tel: 0113 2177294.
www.audio-republic.co.uk.

For the best in quality hifi in West Yorkshire, representing Naim Audio, Rega, Sugden, Audio Research, VPI, Krell, Copland, Sonus Faber, Arcam, Nottingham Analogue, Roksan, Hutter, Martin Logan, Proac, PMC, M&K, Finite Elements, SME, Cardas, Kudos Loudspeakers and others. Open Tuesday-Saturday 9.30am to 5.30pm.

FANTHORPES HI-FI, TV & CUSTOM INSTALLATION SPECIALISTS
HEPHERSTON ARCADE, SILVER STREET,
HULL, HU1 1JU.
Established over 60 years.
Tel: 01482 223096.
Web: www.fanthorpes.co.uk.
Email: shop@fanthorpes.co.uk.


IRELAND
TONE-PEARLS RECORDS
“REVOLUTIONARY OLD”
Tel: 353-87-942-7618.
Email: info@tonepearls.com.

New audiophile LP vinyl records using the revolutionary new Tone-Pearls and pure analogue techniques. Live recording, unedited, unprocessed, pure analogue recording and cutting, 180g virgin vinyl pressing. New LP released: Piano Music in a Church of West Ireland, Classics of Chopin and Debussy and more...

ARDHOWEN HIFI
10 Menapian Way
Enniskillen
Fermanagh
BT74 4GS

07800 575070 Tom.
### Ex-demonstration and Second Hand Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Was</th>
<th>Now</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Digital</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accuphase DP65 CD Player S/H</td>
<td>2800</td>
<td>1199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arcam Alpha 8SE CD player S/H</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heed Audio DAClitus DAC BNIB</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>living Control Music Box 3 BNIB</td>
<td>2887</td>
<td>1499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>living Control Room Box4 BNIB</td>
<td>1712</td>
<td>999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primare CD30.2 CD player S/H</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quad 67 CD player S/H</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sony CDP555ESD CD player S/H</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anologue</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear Audio Solution / SME Cut</td>
<td>2400</td>
<td>1199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graham Slee Era V Gold S/H</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heed Audio Quasar MM/MC 2 box Phono stage x-demo</td>
<td>740</td>
<td>499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heed Audio Questar MM Phono stage BNIB</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuzma Stabi / Stogi S double arm version x-demos</td>
<td>2795</td>
<td>1750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuzma Stogi Tonearm x-demos</td>
<td>1390</td>
<td>799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Levinson No320s Phono Module x-demos</td>
<td>995</td>
<td>649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roksan TMS/Atremiz/DSS Turntable S/H</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preamplifiers</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio research LS25MKII S/H</td>
<td>5799</td>
<td>2299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio research LS 16 MKII S/H</td>
<td>3189</td>
<td>1599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audolici AP01 preamplifier S/H</td>
<td>2100</td>
<td>999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conrad Johnson Classic Phono x-demos</td>
<td>2400</td>
<td>1750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECS Finestra Preamplifier Phono S/H</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quad 66 Preamplifier S/H</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amplifiers</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47 lab 50 Humpty PSU x-demos</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>1199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47 lab 50 w Gain card x-demos</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>1199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio Technica AT-MA50 Mixing Amplifier S/H</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chord Electronics SPM1400 B mono Integra S/H</td>
<td>12000</td>
<td>4799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croft Vitale VC power amplifier S/H</td>
<td>1250</td>
<td>599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bel Canto eVou4 Poweramplifier S/H</td>
<td>3400</td>
<td>1649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrocompaniet AW250R S/H</td>
<td>4999</td>
<td>2499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrocompaniet EC15 Integrated Amplifier x-demos</td>
<td>2699</td>
<td>1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graaf GM100 Power amplifier re-valved S/H</td>
<td>5999</td>
<td>2299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heed Can Amp Headphone amplifier BNIB</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Loudspeakers</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heybrook Point 5 S/H</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leema acoustics Xero Black Ash S/H</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living Voice Avatar II Cherry S/H</td>
<td>3000</td>
<td>1499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin Logan Fresco pair inc stands S/H</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin Logan Quest Light Oak (new panels) S/H</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin Logan Vantage dark cherry x-demos</td>
<td>5149</td>
<td>3499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin Logan Source D Cherry S/H</td>
<td>1799</td>
<td>1199</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Cables and Accessories**

- Attacama Equinox 3 tier stand x-demo: 375 N/A 199
- Apollo 80cm single column Stands S/H: 149 99
- Cardas Cables Golden Cross 3m speaker cables: 1999 999
- Electrocompaniet ECS1 M6 feet x4 BNIB: 189 49
- JPS Ultra Dual bi wire 2x8 Spades to banana S/H: 549 277
- Jadis KT90 Valves x 4 BNIB: 600 300
- MIT Terminator II Biwire 2x10ft S/H: 599 249
- Magridal MDC1 1m AES/EBU 110 ohm Digital Cable S/H: 420 179
- Siltech HF9 AES/EBU 1m Digital S/H: 420 179
- Spectral MI-350 20ft interconnect S/H: 2100 899
- Stereovox 2x2.5m HDXV speaker cable S/H: 350 169
- Stereovox HDXV 0.5M digital S/H: 199 75
- Synergistic Research AC master Coupler 5ft IEC-UK S/H: 499 149
- Transparent Balanced Reference 2x30ft x-demo: 6345 3299
- Transparent Reference SC 2x10ft x-demo: 6192 3199

**Tuners & Tape decks, power supplies**

- Cyrus DAB 8.0 Tuner Silver S/H: 600 399
- Magnum Dynalab FTR remote/Tuner for Etude S/H: 395 199
- Quad 66 Tuner S/H: N/A 249

Midland Audio X-change are looking for Audio Research, Krell, Mark Levinson, Naim Audio, SME, Wadia.
WANTED: AKAI 4000 reel to reel tape deck preferably with GX head, silver finish. Deck must be in very good condition. Also any 1960's tape recorder magazines. Tel: Roger 0784 757 3031 anytime

SME SERIES III tonearm c/w Shure V15 III cartridge £100. Also Sony MDS JE440 MiniDisc player £40. Collect or buyer pays postage. Tel: 07854 03347 (Wirral)

ROKSAN RADIUS 5 turntable in clear acrylic version with Origin Live Rega RB600 arm. Excellent condition, superbly transparent sound. £850 ono. Tel: Andy 01484 427 426

SALE OR EXCHANGE: Pristine condition Graaf WFB2 valve line preamp, MM/MC, 10 pairs RCA connectors, plus immaculate RDS valve tuner, remote (£1275). All original packaging, for Michell Orbe or Gyro with arm, cartridge, working or offers. Free to callers: Sony belt, Technics Direct Drive TT's, CDP, all nice condition, good looking. Tel: 07951 553 091 (London NW)

BANG & OLUFSEN Beomaster 5500 receiver, Beogram CD6500, Beogram 5500 record deck. All remote control via master control unit. Beovox 3702 speaker. All immaculate. £520. Might split. Tel: 01708 457 691

SME IV tonearm as new under warrenty. Bought May 2010. Boxed, tools, instructions. £995. Tel: Mike 01246 209 578 or 07780 888 686

MICROMEGA CD player stage 2, mint condition c/w remote control £90. Shure V15 type 3, with vn35he stylis £29.00 tel 07711741860 (West Sussex)
HEATHCOTE AUDIO
WE NEED YOUR SURPLUS HI FI NOW!! 07860 511111

SOLID STATE

LUXMAN C-5500 500W 4 CHANNEL Mono £2995
PS AUDIO BFA II 250W 2 CHANNEL Mono £795
Krell KXV 3000 300W Mono £1295

dex LABS P-3000 300W Mono £1095
Yamaha CX2 200W Mono £350

ADVANTAGE 1200 INTEGRATED AMP

ART AUDIO INTEGRA 30W INTEGRATED INC.P/ STAGE ( ONE OWNER FROM NEW) EXCLT
LYNX STRATOS PRE AND 2 MONOBLOCS  ( ONE OWNER TIME WARP USE ONLY)
ALCHEMIST FORSETT12 BOX PRE RCA/XLR ( ONE OWNER)
JEFF ROWLAND COHERENCE- 1 2 BOX PRE C/W PHONO STAGE AND CAMBRIDGE AUDIO  AZUR 740 A- B ( ONE OWNER LITTLE USE)
YAMAHA MX2 POWER AMP ( 200 WATTS X 2)
KRELL 402E EVOLUTION STEREO POWER AMP ( ONE OWNER)
PS AUDIO A100 POWER AMP RCA & XLR
LUXMAN L-550all CLASS A INTEGRATED (£ 2800 11 MONTHS)

VALUE AMPS

TUBE TECHNOLOGY SYNDRO SYMPHONY FANTASTIC! (£1000 +) GC/BOXED
PUPA PRO F75 MONOBLOCK ( ONE OWNER FROM NEW) MINT/BOXED £ 2995
ROYAL HIFI PRE-AMPS PHILIPS ( ONE OWNER FROM NEW) MINT/BOXED £ 2995
UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY QUAD 2 DIAMOND JUBILEE BLACK MONOS UNUSED
HEIMAT GURU TUNER ( ONE OWNER 2008) MINT BOXED £ 999
ART AUDIO JOTA CHROME/OPTICAL CHASSIS ( ONE OWNER FROM NEW) MINT/BOXED £ 2995

REOVS 4-3 INTEGRATED & OPTIONAL REMOTE (ONE OWNER)
DENON PHA 3000 SIZEABLE INTEGRATED PHONO PHO

TRANSPARENT MUSIC LINK PLUS 1 METRE RCA
TARA LABS RSC POWER CORDS 6FT

AMPMETERS

ASSEMBLIS CRONDO TRANSPORT CR-CHRONO DAC/ACPRE £2995
ARCHETYPES TRANSPORT £1995

DIGITAL

ESSENTIAL CHRONO TRANSPORT CR-CHRONO DAC/ACPRE £1995

INTEGRATED CABLES

TRANSPORT WIRE BELL $ 995

TRANSPORT WIRE BELL $ 995

SPEAKERS

THEIL CS 1.5 ( ONE OWNER FROM NEW) MINT BOXED
AURUM CANTUS LEISURE 3SE OEM/BOXED
ENSCHER HI-FI 'CHRONO' DUAL CABLES 5M £2995

HIFI WORLD
www.hi-fiworlde.co.uk

To advertise in this space please call
Debi Silver 01723 500 435/07966 843 536
email: debisilver@hi-fiworld.co.uk
Brad Francis 01923 677 256/07715 421 569
email: brad.francis@hi-fiworlde.co.uk

07860 511111 WEB SITE www.heathcoteaudio.co.uk
SME 3009i improved head shell
Plus ADC types £20 inc P&P
Record clamp clear acrylic £5 +
P&P Alignment Gauge Elite £5 +
P&P Carbon Fibre brush record
cleaner £5 + P&P 01909 730 681 -
07783 327 689

RARE EUPHYA Alliance
Symbiosis Amplifier Separate
power supply 80W per channel
Remote Silver casing mixture of
non-magnetic metal and perspex
Cost £3450 Sell £1450 Tel 01243
582010 West Sussex

MUSIC FIRST Passive Pre-amplifier
(Copper Version) in excellent
condition, boxed and with
instruction manual. Recently
serviced and upgraded to MkII copper transformers. £1400.
Contact Jeff on 01305 263069
(W. Dorset).

SUGDEN A215E class A integrated
amplifier and mint. Boxed. Can
dem £1350. Fully
refurbished Celestion Ditton 44
speakers £250.00, Call Steve
after 6pm 01268 785808 for
details.

LEGACY AUDIO Home
Theatre: Focus HD speakers.
Mains, Rears, Centre and
Subwoofer in Rosewood. Perfect
condition. Buyer disconnect and
collects. Cost £15,000.
£6,000 ono.Warwickshire.
finnegan@email4us.com for
more information.

PROJECT RECORD deck + project
photo amp! Music Fidelity
XA-1 Pre Amp!Acrcam Alpha 9
CD Player!Arcam P60 Power
AMP/Rogers Studio 5 Speakers!
Includes all power cords (Russ
Andrews) and cables/speak
stands and equipment stand
Value £ 3700 Sell £1300 ono
Must be heard Contact Steven on
03035 87 637 6623

TRIANGLE TITUS TXZ speakers
Power: 60W Peak power: 120W
Impedance: 4 ohms Sensitivity:
90db/W/m Dimensions (approx)
12" H x 8" W x 11 D Our offers
on £225 Buyer to collect (Somerset)
Call: Carol on 01373 836695
Email: clrdriver@b-speedworld.com

MISSION 752 Freedom Floor
Standing Speakers for sale. Black.
Immaculate. £285 ono.Tel: 0115
9170472 (Nottingham)

SME IV tonearm cable including
RCA's VDH 501 interconnects
Offers Stuart Bedfordshire T:
07870 912 963 Email:
stuarrtdarshan67@gooolgemail.com

PROJECT RPMS with Ortofon
2m red only used 4 hours £300
include all cables and new
unmarked, excellent. £50. Sony ecym-957ms
mic.used twice. £50. 01777
711386. staffordpg@btinternet.com.

CYRUS CDX-T CD Transport
(Quartz silver) in mint as new
condition, little use,boxed,(new
£800) accept £250 (N.B.
Transport only requires dac/ excellent
review) 01483 271669 (Surrey).

LFD PA/P2 Power Amplifier In
Excellent condition, owned from
new, Updated by Richard
Bews. An excellent power amp
very controlled, open, &
Musical. Can demonstrate.
Excellent example - Offers.
Stuart Bedfordshire T:07807 912
963 e: stuartdarshan67@gooolgemail.com

HEED ENVOY floor standing omni directional speakers cherry
teen very fine £315.00 Sale
£125.00 0208 658 2490 Mobile
07956 584363

NAD C315BEE 40 wpc amp,
with MP3 input plus matching
(excellent) C515BEE CD player:
both mint, boxed and
unmarked, titanium finish, £250
the pair including FREE NAD
4225 AM/FM tuner. Gale Silver
monitor speakers black, (boxed,
as new) only £40 if bought with
these. Rod -
mail@rotdhebdaliforce9.co.uk

SHALNING MC30 single-ended
valve ampeg/cd player/tuner/MP3
dock. Silver, all alloy, Philips VAM
1202 transport, Burr Brown 1738
DAC,AM/FM tuner (20 presets),
pre-out, aux input, metal remote.
Boxed as new, RRP £800, pay me
£425 for this one owner, mint
unmarked example. Rod 01706
345418, email
mail@rotdhebdaliforce9.co.uk

CASTLE CONWAY Speakers,
quality black ash cabinets. Superb
dynamics with a smooth, fulsome
quality black ash cabinets. Superb

SHANLING MPS-30 single-ended
valve amp/0.5pF & translation
transistor & output stage.
Condition, boxed £200.00. Tel
01306 887554.

WANTED LINN hifi? Anything
considered. Happy to pickup and
pay cash. Please call Richard on
01300 345 827, thanks!

2 PAIRS OF Lowther Speakers
for Sale pictures available
Acoustic circa 1970 PM7A driv-
ers -o-ut rim requires replacing
Home Made cabinets PM6 drivers
- excellent condition
Tel. 01438225340 martin.
kingston3@ntworld.com

AUDIO RESEARCH valve pre-
amp with photo stage. Eighteen
months old. New valves (Electro-
Harmonix) Nov 2010. Perfect
condition as new. £1650 ono.
Nw London.Tel:0207-642-0054.
nmac13@gmail.com

WANTED A faulty or non work-
ing Quad 44 preamp, Contact
Mike 01758 613790.
40 years of expertise in sound and vision make Audio T the perfect place to choose the latest technology...

Music streaming devices from Sonos, Naim, Olive, Peachtree and Arcam. The very best sounding iPod docks from B&W, Arcam and Geneva. Plus the latest in 3D projectors from JVC and Sony or 3DTVs from Panasonic, Sony, Philips and Samsung.

We are trained in these technologies and can help you set up the products in your home. From the affordable to the sublime you can be sure to find what you are looking for at Audio T.
“A worthy award-winner”
Best Loudspeaker up to £2,000
Hi-Fi Choice Awards 2010

“A true resurgence for the Castle brand.
The Knight 2 has a beguiling sound
quality and enviable finish”
- November 2010

Also Available: (Bookshelf) Knight 1;
(Floorstander) Knight 3, Knight 4, Knight 5
April’s Hi-Fi World ushers spring in with a smile, showering you with fresh new products! We’ve a wonderfully eclectic mix, from the latest lavish Luxman D-05 CD spinner (pictured below) to the high end Quadral Vulcan VIII loudspeakers; from Ortofon’s budget Vivo moving coils and KEF’s Q100 loudspeaker (left) to Bricasti’s pro audio studio DAC — and so much more. Here’s some of what we hope to bring you:

**ORTOFON VIVO RED & BLUE MOVING COIL CARTRIDGES**

**HART EVO1 TRI-MONITOR MODULAR LOUDSPEAKERS**

**BRICASTI M1 DIGITAL TO ANALOGUE CONVERTOR**

**UNITY AUDIO THE BLACK ROCK LOUDSPEAKER**

**ORIGIN LIVE TECHNICS SL1210 TURNTABLE**

**KINGSDATE PRINCESS II LOUDSPEAKERS**

**OLDE WORLD: B&W P1 LOUDSPEAKERS**

**QUADRAT VULCAN VIII LOUDSPEAKERS**

**SUTHERLAND HUBBLE PHONO STAGE**

**PROJECT CD BOX STD CD PLAYER**

**ONKYO TX-SR608 AV RECEIVER**

**YAMAHA CD-S300 CD PLAYER**

**HADCOCK GH-228 TONEARM**

**LUXMAN D-05 CD PLAYER**

**INSPIRE VIVID LINN LP12**

**KEF Q100 LOUDSPEAKER**

---

*PICK UP THE APRIL 2011 ISSUE OF HI-FI WORLD ON SALE FEBRUARY 25TH, OR SUBSCRIBE AND GET IT DELIVERED TO YOUR DOOR: p82*
# FREE READER CLASSIFIED ADS

**ORDER FORM**

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS:** Only one advert per reader. Maximum length per advert is 30 words. Adverts over 30 words will not be accepted. No Trade Adverts. This section is strictly for readers selling secondhand hi-fi equipment only. Telephone numbers and E-mail addresses are treated as one word. Model numbers are treated as one word i.e. Quad 303 = two words. Sorry, we cannot accept adverts over the telephone. The Publisher reserves the right to judge submissions.

You can email your advert to us at: classifieds@hi-fiworld.co.uk or write or type your advertisement copy in block capitals with one word per box and post it to us at:

Hi-Fi World Free Readers Ads,
Unit G4, Argo House, Kilburn Park Road,
London, NW6 5LF.

We will accept photocopies of this form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Name:  
Address:  
Post Code:  
Daytime Tel:  

**FREE READER CLASSIFIED ADVERTS COPY DEADLINES**  
APRIL 2011 - 2ND FEBRUARY 2011  
MAY 2011 - 8TH MARCH 2011
Published by Wrasse Records (www.wrasserecords.com), this significant box set tracks the career of the Nigerian singing superstar, Fela Kuti, the man who invented Afrobeat, over twenty-seven discs, including one DVD. Kuti, the subject of a new stage show, 'Fela!', currently underway in London, was politically active, singing inflammatory lyrics and suffering for his cause by taking numerous physical beatings while his family and property were regularly attacked by governmental agencies.

Jo Ashbridge, co-owner of Wrasse and creator of the box set, is in no doubt as to the man's worth and significance, "Fela Kuti was an absolute genius. No-one else has really replicated his music, mainly because he had a unique edge. Fela fought for what he believed in, he was passionate. His music was politically driven and he wanted to change Africa, how the average Nigerian lived, where the country's riches in terms of its natural oil and the money generated from it was going and the, unfortunate, accompanying widespread corruption.

In response, he was beaten regularly, because of his outspoken words, by the militaristic government. Fela also objected to the associated behaviour — that corruption becomes so much the norm, passed down generations, that it becomes accepted. Fela thought that such corruption just made his country and the people in it slaves when, in fact, they should have had control of their lives and the oil money that was being produced."

In addition to the complete box set, Wrasse has decided to publish an additional series of three box sets in which the same albums have been divided up into three portions, nine discs in each, for those who find the complete box set rather too costly to buy in a single lump.

"The discs within the three smaller box sets are apportioned in a completely random manner but there is a reason for that," said Ashbridge. "A few years ago, we published a Fela Kuti anthology which was intended to span three volumes and would do so in strict chronological order. The first anthology was fantastic, it had all the early musical years featured, Fela's core music. The second anthology was good but the included music was not quite as vital. Anthology three, which never appeared, would have featured that material from the end of his career but which lacked a certain edge and, thus, we think, would not have been as popular in terms of sales."

To prevent the same quality problem occurring in the new, three-set, series, Ashbridge decided to mix and match albums from all of Fela's eras, equally, among each of the three box sets. "I thought that there was no point in putting all of the good stuff in the first set because that volume would be the only one which would be going to sell," said Ashbridge.

The original batch of 26 albums (covering 46 original vinyl albums) were once available in France via Universal but the lesser titles that didn't sell as quickly or moved through the system were dropped over time and haven't been available for some time. Hence, this box set provides a great service for Fela fans.

Why France? World music and Fela in particular are very popular in France and world music sells well there. "Germany is also massive on world music with the Netherlands in third and then we come in after that. This box set is selling well over here, however. We created three booklets for the discs that we spread over the mini-box sets. All three are included within the complete box with text written by Chris May, who knew Fela personally."

The only problem with the main box set is that the booklets and CD sleeves give you no guide as to the chronological dates of each album, which may trouble some listeners who want to listen to each portion of music in date order. Speaking to Wrasse about this point, however, and stating that Hi-Fi World readers would appreciate some chronological assistance, the label did declare that it would place that information on their website.

The music however, is superlative. Full of energy, pride and confrontation, it brings a party to the ears of those who care only for the music but a sense of purpose, drive and zeal to others who see and hear it as a rallying call. Fela Kuti's music remains relevant. Check out this little box of magic and prepare to be dazzled.

PR
Dare to challenge

Dynamic. Transparent. Precise. Powerful. Ever so smooth. Reference 18 is how we topped the world class Ref 9V3SE that has won so many awards and elevated it to a whole new plane.

The Reference 18's every aspect has been evaluated against those of the Ref 9V3SE in order to identify areas available to improvement. Input-stage circuitry, solid-state and passive components have been reconfigured with an eye to providing a quieter, more distortion-free environment, and greater speed via a capacitor board we call the Cross-Matrix Array (CMA), the effectiveness of which becomes especially apparent in the Supremely fast delivery of musical transients.
The New Integrated Amplifier ECI-5 MK II

Our aim when designing the ECI-5 MK II was to make the sound more modern, enhancing the details and dynamics. Feedback from our listening team tell us that we have succeeded — "this amplifier sounds much larger than the size and the price tag"