

# Hi-Fi

# WORLD

OCTOBER 1996 £2.30

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COMPETITION:

# WIN

A JOHN SHEARNE  
PRE/POWER  
AMPLIFIER  
WORTH OVER  
£1500

NEW AUDIOLAB  
8000 CD  
TRANSPORT AND  
CONVERTOR

STAR SEARCH

# FINDING THE BEST AMPLIFIER

EPOS REVEAL  
NEW ES12  
LOUDSPEAKER



FIRST REVIEW

KEF'S REFERENCE  
MODEL 4  
SPEAKERS  
ARE...  
A REFERENCE!



PICK UP A  
BARGAIN IN OUR  
6 PAGE CLASSIFIED  
ADVERTS SECTION



Clear?





# THIS MONTH'S WORLD

- New from Epos is the ES12, successor to the much loved ES11. Its aluminium dome tweeter and mid/bass driver may be packaged in a diminutive cabinet, but Dominic Baker reckons small is beautiful. See page 14.
- In this month's Star Search feature Douglas Floyd-Douglass and Jon Marks find that £300-£500 nets an audiophile quality amplifier. The winners this month are revealed on page 19.
- The words 'three thousand pounds' and 'bargain' aren't often associated with each other in hi-fi, but that could be about to change with KEF's flagship Reference Four loudspeakers. See what our studio engineer, Douglas Floyd-Douglass, says on page 49.
- And on page 58 this month, there's a chance to win a John Shearne Phase 6/3 pre/power amplifier in our competition. We're also concluding our two-part JBL S2600 loudspeaker competition.

**T**he October issue marks the beginning of the hi-fi season proper, and already we're seeing rivals jostling for key launch positions. A bit of a surprise to most, including ourselves, is the arrival of Epos' ES12. This completely upgraded model replaces the audiophile fave ES11. A brave move? Maybe, but if they're successful, the timing's perfect for a prosperous season.

Also ready just in time are KEF's flagship Reference Series Model 4s. They are another loudspeaker looking to set standards others follow, albeit at the higher end of the scale. There's been an abundance of quality loudspeaker designs around recently, a trend I hope will continue through the season.

But do remember to make a considered decision before you part with your cash. Things aren't always the bargain they first seem. Don't forget to listen carefully; in the rush for the latest models, the real bargains are often missed.

*Dominic Baker, Editor*

## TEST EQUIPMENT



- *Hi-Fi World* has its own advanced test laboratory and acoustically treated listening room. No other hi-fi magazine has the benefit of such facilities.
- *Hi-Fi World* has a dedicated in-house team of experienced listeners, and uses selected freelance professionals. We review thoroughly by extensive auditioning, rather than by quick-fire group listening tests.
- *Hi-Fi World's* engineering team designs a wide range of products in-house. No other hi-fi magazine is so expert and dedicated.

## LISTENING ROOM

(TREATED BY RPG ACOUSTIC TOOLS)



# IN THE NOVEMBER ISSUE

## IN THE NOVEMBER ISSUE

Stave off the winter blues with a look forward to a selection of next month's highlights. Here's just some of what we hope to bring you:

### CELESTION KINGSTON

Pushing the boundaries of cabinet technology, Celestion came up with the injection moulded Alphacrystal enclosure of the Kingstons. Find out what they're made of sonically in November.

### TECHNICS SB-M1000

Question: what's the maximum number of drive units that can be fitted into one cabinet? If you thought the answer was three or four, think again. The top of the range SB-M1000 uses no fewer than seven drivers and four passive radiators to shift air. Can they continue the success of their smaller siblings?

### ROSE SCION

Aiming to combine the advantages of a pre/power amplifier set-up (separate power supplies and good interstage isolation) with those of an integrated amplifier (short signal paths and no interconnect cable to drive), Rose have come up with the Scion, a two box integrated amplifier.

### BUILD A SYSTEM - PART 3

The concluding round of our Star Search group tests. We've picked the best CD players and amplifiers, now it's time to investigate loudspeakers. We pick the best from a group of floorstanding and standmounting 'speakers.

### COMPETITION

In November's competition there's a chance to win £1,900 worth of Spondor loudspeakers. Don't miss out.

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## THIS MONTH'S REVIEWS

### AMPLIFIERS

#### AMPLIFIER STAR SEARCH

19

In this, the second part of our group test saga, Douglas Floyd-Douglass examines five hopefuls in the £3-500 amplifier arena:

- Arcam Alpha 5 plus
- Pioneer A-400X
- Rotel RA-970BX
- Mission Cyrus III
- Denon PMA-450SE

#### SUGDEN AU5 I PRE/PHONO AND SYMETRA MONOBLOCKS

34

Dominic Baker listens in to the AU5I pre-amplifier AU5IP phono stage and Symetra monoblocks from amplification veterans Sugden.



### COMPACT DISC

#### AUDIOLAB 8000CDT/8000DAC

16

New and improved, well just updated really, but our Jon Marks thought the effort well worth it. Find out how this revised model holds up against today's competition.

#### TEAC T1 TRANSPORT AND D-TI CONVERTER

41

The D-TI DAC-7 Bitstream CD converter is designed to partner the VRDS-equipped T1 transport. Douglas Floyd-Douglass finds out if they can make music together.

### TUNER

#### KENWOOD KT-3080

57

Carrying a price tag of £179.99, Kenwood's latest tuner looks set to do battle against the reigning top tuner, the NAD 412. Find out how the KT-3080 shapes up with David Price.

### LOUDSPEAKERS

#### EPOS ES12

14

The ES12 may be based on the near-legendary ES11, but there have been so many modifications it's more a question of revolution than evolution. Dominic Baker tries out Epos' latest £500 standmounter.

#### SPENDOR 2040

33

Jon Marks listens in to Spendor's would-be tower of power, the 2040, with its array of five drivers. But can it scale the heights of high fidelity?

#### KEF REFERENCE FOUR

49

Featuring KEF's fourth generation Uni-Q dual-concentric driver along with four midrange and bass drivers, the KEF Reference Four looks like it should be sitting at the top of the class. Douglas Floyd-Douglass discovers if it makes the grade.

### VINYL

#### PINK TRIANGLE ANNIVERSARY TURNTABLE/GRAHAM 1.5t TONEARM

30

Take one battery powered turntable, add a highly engineered and adjustable tonearm, and cook at gas mark 33.3. Dominic Baker tastes the proof that's in the pudding.



#### EMT HST6 CARTRIDGE

39

Priced at £850, EMT's HST6 cartridge could give your accountant a cardiac arrest, but can it win Dominic Todd's heart?

## WORLD VERDICT

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

GOOD - Has strong merit. Well worth an audition.

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

POOR - Seriously flawed. Not worth considering.



## REGULARS

### NEXT ISSUE

More exciting than a cup final? Yes, and it's all here on page 3.

### NEWS

Asbestos gloves are mandatory for news this hot.

### READERS' LETTERS

This month's post-bag is as diverse as ever.

### COLUMNS

37, 53, 56

Read between the lines with Noel Keywood, David Price and Dominic Todd on the world of hi-fi.

### SUBSCRIPTIONS

Can't face the monthly trek to the newsagent? Let us do the work for you.

### SPECIALIST HI-FI DEALERS

If you're looking for initiation into the black art of system synergy, you can't do better than to ask the specialists.

### MEET YOUR MAKER

Look no further for the people who put the music into the components.

### WORLD AUDIO DESIGN

This is where you can discover the satisfaction of burning the midnight oil to build the system of your dreams.

### WORLD BUYING GUIDE

A guide to all the best equipment, whether it's budget or bank-busting.

### HI-FI WORLD LIBRARY

Delve into the tomes on this page and you could find that missing electronic link you've been searching for.

### DIAL-A-DEALER

With your fingers doing the walking, tracking down the hi-fi you need couldn't be easier.

### 3 MEASURED PERFORMANCE

111

Our experts don their white coats for an in-depth technical examination of each of our reviewees.

### READERS' CLASSIFIED

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Check out some of the gems on offer from amongst the hundreds of second-hand and vintage bargains on offer here.

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### STAR AV HI-FI SHOW, MALAYSIA

27 Join Noel Keywood in Malaysia for the Star AV hi-fi show. Enthusiasm for audio runs high here, and there's plenty to feast your eyes on.

### A HISTORY OF LEAK

97

Take a look back at the long history of one of this country's most illustrious brands with our in-house historian, Noel Keywood.

## DIY SUPPLEMENT

In this month's fun filled and *FREE* DIY Hi-Fi Supplement, there's plenty to keep the enthusiast busy. We'll show you how to build a pair of loudspeakers so sensitive they only need a few watts to drive. Andy Grove brings you an exposé of the pentode valve, describing how it works and the most common variants. There are book reviews on Power Amp Projects and Building Your Own Test Equipment, as well as your letters and all the latest kit and component news from the industry. *FREE* with this issue.

## MUSIC

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Thomas Weelkes, Anthems

DANCE/AMBIENT 89

RECORD OF THE MONTH:  
Various, Eye-Q Classics

JAZZ REVIEWS 93

## COMPETITION

PAGE 58



If you're one of this month's prize winners, you could find a £1500 John Shearman Phase 6/3 pre/power amplifier sitting in your system.

# STENZON

# Pink



Come and see what's new at the Hi-Fi Show 96  
Ramada Hotel, Heathrow, 12th - 15th September  
Rooms 1061 & 1064

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**ALPHA ANEW**

Having spent over £750,000 on their development, Arcam has just announced the new Alpha 7, 8 and 9 series.

Modular construction is the name of the game throughout the range, especially with the CD players, where the entry level Alpha 7 can be upgraded all the way up to the flagship Alpha 9's specification. The integrated amplifiers all have pre-amp output sockets for bi-amping or multi-room use, and even the Alpha 7 tuner can be converted to the remote controlled Alpha 8 version. Prices start from £229.90 for the aforementioned Alpha 7 tuner, and rise to £749.90 for the Alpha 9 CD player.

**Arcam**  
 Pembroke Avenue,  
 Denny Ind. Centre,  
 Waterbeach,  
 Cambs. CB5 9PB  
 Tel: 01223 440964

**A NEW NAIM IN TOWN**

Naim's newest is the line level, remote control NAC 102 pre-amplifier, coming in at £998.75. The 102 was designed with experience gained in the development of the NAC 52, but differs from Naim's other pre-amplifiers in its rear panel power connections. These can be user-configured to accept various supplies, ranging from those in Naim's smaller power amplifiers to a combination of HI-CAP and NA PSC for the 102's digital control circuitry.

Vinyl spinners needn't feel left out though. One of the six inputs can be converted for use with a range of cartridges by fitting an optional 5 Series phono board.

There are also two new loudspeakers on the way, the £597 Intro and £987 Credo. Details are scarce at the moment, but we expect to see them launched some time in September.

**Naim Audio**  
 Southampton Road,  
 Salisbury SP1 2LN  
 Tel: 01722 332266



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**GET CONNECTED - FREE!**

If you're suffering from show withdrawal symptoms, we could well have the cure for your craving. We are giving away 25 pairs of tickets for Connect, the National Consumer Electronics Show running at Birmingham's NEC from 18-27 October. Alongside the Hi-Fi exhibitions will be The Soundstage, where top bands and DJs will keep the music flowing.

Doors are open from 9.30am to 7pm (except for the final day which closes at 5.30pm). Tickets will be given away on a first come, first served basis, so if you'd like to get into Connect without having to delve into your wallet, send in your name and address on a postcard or the back of a sealed envelope to:

**Hi-Fi World Connect Offer (CO 13) Times House, Station Approach, Ruislip, Middx. HA4 8NB**

Central Presents  
**CONNECT**  
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 NEC Birmingham 18 - 27th October 1996

**SETTING THE PACE**

If Pace Micro Technology realise their ambitions, the way many audiophiles obtain the music they listen to could soon change radically. Pace's new MSS300 receiver will be able to decode the CD-quality encrypted signals from Digital Music Express's 60-plus DJ-free channels, allowing listeners simply to home in on their favourite genre or artist for a monthly fee instead of having to buy CDs, cassettes or LPs.

The MSS300 will also be able to display information like album title, track name and artist. Available some time in the new year, a price for the receiver has yet to be set.



**Pace Micro Technology**  
 Victoria Road,  
 Saltaire,  
 Shipley,  
 W. Yorks. BD18 3LF  
 Tel: 01274 537082

**MCLAREN COMES TO ROGERS**

Peter Stevens, the award-winning designer and stylist of McLaren's F1 supercar, has joined forces with Rogers on their new 'speaker, the mysteriously named 'Project-D'.

The 'speaker is a two way, shielded, near field monitor, using a High Definition Aerogel mid/bass driver in conjunction with a polymer dome tweeter. Intended to take on JBL's Control series, 'Project-D' is 2dB more sensitive and has a high crossover point of 5kHz that keeps the transition between drivers away from the ear's most sensitive region.

The 'speaker's cabinet consists of an aluminium frame supporting a moulded carbon fibre body with no parallel internal surfaces to keep coloration low. Price will fall somewhere between £200 and £500.

**Rogers International**  
 Unit 13  
 Bath House Road,  
 Beddington Lane,  
 Croydon,  
 Surrey CR0 4TD  
 Tel: 0181 683 2101

**A HAPPY '95 FOR TGI**

It looks like Tannoy Goodmans International (which also incorporates Mordaunt-Short and Epos) has just had a good year. After 1995's £1.3m investment in loudspeaker research and development, and a spate of product launches, shareholders saw pre-tax profits rise 26% to £2.2m.

**CAN OPENER FROM AUDIO ALCHEMY**

Dissatisfied with the sound quality from the majority of built-in headphone amplifiers in pre-amps and the like, Audio Alchemy have produced their own stand-alone unit. The £249.95 HPA v1.0 is a pure class A design, fitted with Audio Alchemy's own Headroom Audio Image Processor, which is claimed to produce a more natural spread of sound than usual from headphones.

The HPA v1.0 can also be used in conjunction with Robyn I, Audio Alchemy's portable DC power supply for audiophiles on the move.



**Path Premier**  
 Desborough Ind. Park,  
 Desborough Park Road,  
 High Wycombe,  
 Bucks. HP12 3BG  
 Tel: 01494 441736

**IT'S GOOD TO TALK**

Hoping to blow up a storm with its new range of amplifiers is Talk Electronics, a subsidiary of Cable Talk. First off the production line are the £599.95 Hurricane 2 and £899.95 Hurricane 3 line level pre-amplifiers. For lacquer listeners optional phono stages are available, coming in at £50 for MM-only and £100 for an MM/MC version that can be switched by re-arranging a series of links inside the case. Upgradeability is assured with the Whirlwind outboard power supply, and fans of relaxation can take advantage of a remote control that will also talk to compatible CD players.

Partnering the Hurricanes are the 70watt Tornado 2 and 100watt Tornado 3 power amplifiers (£649.95 and £899.95 respectively). Joining the range later this year will be a flagship 110watt monoblock and an integrated amplifier.



**Talk Electronics**  
 Unit 12,  
 Farnborough Bus. Centre,  
 Eelmoor Road,  
 Farnborough,  
 Hants. GU14 7XA  
 Tel: 01252 378383

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## CARY SPIN THE SILVER

Coming courtesy of Cary is the new single box CD-300 CD player. Built around Pioneer's stable platter system, the player boasts such mod. cons. as HDCD compatibility, an anti-jitter mechanism and dual 20-bit DACs. Continuing Cary's thermionic tradition, the CD-300's line stage consists of three 12AU7 valves, which, say Cary, give the player a noticeably analogue sound.



The Audiophile Club  
PO Box 6477,  
London N13 4AY  
Tel: 0181 882 2822

## HEAVY METAL

Now in place atop Acoustic Energy's loudspeaker range is the £7995 AE5. This large four way floorstander utilises no less than six 130mm metal cone units and a 25mm magnesium dome tweeter mounted on a precision milled alloy front baffle. The AE5 is tri-wireable with a high sensitivity of 91dB, which makes it unlikely that its 250w power handling limit will ever be really tested. They come veneered with Natural Santos Rosewood.

Acoustic Energy  
16 Bridge Road,  
Cirencester,  
Glos. GL7 1PO  
Tel: 01285 654432

## IN NEED OF SUPPORT

Burridge Engineering are offering a range of wall rack systems for those who haven't yet succumbed to a floor populated by spike-footed black tables and columns. Two stainless steel beams in five sizes are designed to be mounted either horizontally or vertically to take the support arms. These are milled from high grade aluminium and come fitted with four height adjustable pads for equipment levelling. The arms can be had in six domestically harmonious colours, and system prices start at £105.



Burridge Engineering  
70 High Street,  
Clacton-on-Sea,  
Essex CO15 6PW  
Tel: 01255 420203

## HARTLEPOOL'S SILVER

Making its entry into the silver cables market is Heortech Soundlabs of Hartlepool with their Silvertex 1 interconnect. This cable uses a single strand conductor of 99.999% pure silver terminated with silver soldered gold-plated phono plugs. Prices for 0.5m and 1m are £73 and £86, and other lengths are available to order.

Heortech Soundlabs  
26 Ventnor Avenue,  
Hartlepool,  
Cleveland TS25 5LZ  
Tel: 01429 867432

## HI-FI CORNER GETS NETTED

After three months of virtual work, Hi-Fi Corner of Edinburgh has made it onto the Internet. According to Colin MacKenzie, the owner, this is good news for armchair shoppers across the land because Hi-Fi Corner's site is apparently the first to allow equipment to be ordered directly from the Internet. You can call into the Virtual Hi-Fi shop on:

<http://www.virtual-publishing.com/cyberfi/hifishop/>

## SHIELDED SCEPTRE

The most recent addition to Ruark's range is the Sceptre, a two way ported design intended for use on either stands or a bookshelf. Its 170mm mid/bass unit is manufactured to Ruark's own specification and features a balanced magnet assembly that allows the 'speaker to be placed close to TVs and monitors. This driver runs up to 2kHz where a hardwired crossover built with air-cored inductors and low loss capacitors rolls in the 28mm silk dome tweeter.

Cabinet construction is a combination of MDF and high density particle board which

Ruark claim shifts its fundamental resonance away from critical frequency areas. Bi-wireable and with a sensitivity of 88dB, the Sceptre will retail for £599.

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



## AN EVENING OF NEWS

Acoustica, Chester's specialist Hi-Fi dealer, is planning a series of musical evenings in October to coincide with the launch of new loudspeakers from Naim Audio and Ruark, and the new range of amplifiers and CD players from Arcam. For full details, call Geoff Coleman on 01244 344227.

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# PRODUCT SELECTION



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## ADDED VALUE SELECTION

this fine selection of quality hi fi includes our free accessory offer which we ask you to claim using the voucher on the following pages (free accessories are not available on price match sales)

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The example illustrated is only an approximation. All prices are valid until at least September 30, 1996. E&OE. ©

# MISSION

## EPOSSIBLE

**Loved by audiophiles, the legendary ES11 has just been replaced by the all new ES12. Have Epos tried to do the impossible, asks Dominic Baker?**



**E**pos created a bit of a legend in the ES11, so much so that they may have left themselves an impossible act to follow. Built along similar lines to their first loudspeaker, the ES14, its successor, the compact ES11, was more affordable, reaching a wider audience with the minimalist audiophile approach adopted by Epos from the start.



Certainly, the design of the new ES12s has been a considered one. They are a development of the ES11s, but so little has remained untouched that a new model number was deemed necessary. There's a brand new aluminium dome tweeter using an improved magnet system for greater efficiency, and an injection moulded cone for the bass driver with a new profile and stiffer neck for a better transient response. The driver's extended magnet pole reduces distortion while its phase plug increases midrange dispersion for smoother integration with the tweeter.

The cabinet has also seen some changes, with its revised internal bracing and radiused front edges which, like those of the floorstanding ES25s, reduce diffraction for sharper imaging. Epos even supply a grille now - the ES11s had a solid plastic front plate used solely for protection in transit.

The only features that remain the same are the mica filled polymer front baffle, into which the chassis of the bass driver locks, and the crossover which consists of a single capacitor on the tweeter.

Epos's ES11s could have been criticised for being perhaps a little too forward in the upper bass and adding a syrupy bloom to music. Although this is still present in the ES12s, it has been tamed to give a sharper smack to transients. Where I could have imagined Leftfield's 'Inspection (Check One)', with its thumping rubber bass line and plastiky drum crack becoming a tad gloopy on the ES11s, the 12s gave a tighter thwack to notes, really catching the leading edge of transients.

Like their predecessors, the 12s possess an amazing ability to resolve deep, deep bass, even on open frame stands a foot and a half off the rear wall where midrange gave of its best. At their size I can think of few 'speakers that can match them when it comes to digging low without producing bass that's overemphasised and overbearing.

Next Primal Scream's 'Don't Fight it. Feel it'. Cymbals were crisp and clean-cut, with sharp attack. Intricate interleaving beats and melodies proved little problem for the ES12s, which not

only displayed fine separation of instruments, but also an ability to image that placed them neatly in space across the soundstage.

Nightmare on Wax's 'Nights Introlude' had the ES12s clearly delineating the space and location each component of the melody was locked into. Interactions between accompanying instruments twisted together into a complex musical whole, the ES12s remaining unflustered throughout.

'Ritratto dell'Amore - Le Charme' was as charmingly and elegantly played on the ES12s as Couperin intended. With a clean tone, violin expressed itself well, its signature formed from an abundance of delicately structured harmonics. Low level detail was finely resolved as well, due in part, I'm sure, to the uncomplicated crossover. There was a slight cuppiness here though which I'd also noticed with Bjork's vocal on an early Sugarcubes album.

While vocals projected laterally, the scale and spread of sound through the mid-ranges was meagre compared with some rivals. In this respect, the ES12s resemble Mission's 752 floorstanders, sapping a little drama and impact from the music. The flipside of this, though, is an unforced and neutral sound that makes them consummately pleasing to the ear.

The 12s also share the rather one-note upper bass of the 11s. Whilst this means there is always a satisfactory thud to pound the bass line along, it can become monotonous on rock tracks with a heavy rhythm. It will lead to room fussiness as well, exciting the room's resonant modes.

Treble possessed admirable extension, having a sparkle to it where

many metal domes can clang their metallic signature over the whole upper reaches. Dubstar's 'Disgraceful' from the album of the same name saw copious treble raining down into the upper midrange, sweet, soft decay contrasting with the strong delivery. If I had to characterise the ES12s, they'd sit just on the bright side of the neutral line that strict accuracy dictates. But this does help to create a sense of spaciousness.

Even with the accentuated acid bite of treble on Jaydee's 'Plastic Dream', proceedings were refined, perhaps even smoother than intended from this raw track. The track swelled with its rich, fulsome bass line, shimmering treble and funky keyboard melody, which was hammond-esque in its smoothly flowing agility.

Musicality is also high on the list of the ES12's abilities. Captivating to listen to, they compel you to try track after track, album after album. They have their quirks - a fullness to upper bass and less authority to midrange vocals than some muster. But at £50 more than the ES11s were, the improvements add quality enough to place them on a par with the best at the price. Mission successful.

Epos ES12

£495

Epos Acoustics  
3 Ridgway,  
Havant,  
Hants. PO9 1JS  
Tel: 01705 407722

#### WORLD VERDICT

Strong, punchy bass is allied to detailed and articulate midrange and treble. Above all, these speakers are thoroughly musical.

Measured Performance  
see p111



# ONE and THE SAME ?



**They may look the same, but inside Audiolab's CD transport and convertor have been improved. Jon Marks listens for hidden talent.**

**A**fter a year or two of sterling service, our Audiolab 8000CDM has finally gone to that great digital antiques shop in the sky. "What sent it thither?" I hear you ask. Well, surprisingly enough, it was the new Audiolab 8000CDM. Like the rest of Audiolab's components, the £1399.90 8000CDM has come in for some modification as part of a range re-

vamp. In the transport's case, the major new ingredient is Philips' CDM 12.4 CD mechanism, which was designed for use in CD-ROM drives where accurate reading of the disc's contents is of the utmost importance.

Accompanying the 8000CDM that arrived was the £899.90 8000DAC, with its new 20-bit digital filter, simplified analogue output stages and

improved data re-clocking in order to reduce jitter.

Having hooked the DAC and transport up to Audiolab's own 8000S integrated amplifier and Heybrook Sextet loudspeakers, I engaged in a little subtle classical listening in the shape of Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*. Eat your heart out, those Old Spice aftershave adverts of the '70s. This was 'Fortuna





Imperatrix Mundi' with real headlong speed and abandon - an Imperatrix in tight-fitting leather outfit and a barbed wire cat 'o nine tails.

Power was the name of the game for the first movement, whether it was generated by thunderous timpani, raucous trumpet blasts or the crashing of cymbals. Through the Audiolabs, the uninhibited joy of 'Ecce Gratum' was just that, uninhibited. Percussion in particular demonstrated the digital combo's clear dynamics and a tonal resolution that set apart the musical strands of the piece and made the whole easily and enjoyably intelligible.

I turned to an orchestra of a very different sort to continue the Audiolabs' workout. Step forward, the Amoco Renegades Steel Orchestra of Trinidad, with their Tribute To Jit Samaroo CD. The vitality of the steel drum playing came through with full scale, unhindered by the sheer mass and complexity of sound produced by the orchestra. I was left with a nostalgic tear in my eye for the last time I stumbled along behind a float in an alcoholic haze at Notting Hill Carnival. The Audiolabs were rhythmically convincing, the taut, solid bass lines never compromising the drums' warmly resonant tone - I found my rhythm-driven espadrilles wearing a hole in the carpet in front of our listening sofa.

By way of musical contrast, I followed steel drums with some 16th

and 17th century polyphony from Magnificat, The Golden Age Vol. 1. Here, the transparency found me listening to track after track. To be frank, this isn't the kind of CD I'd drop into my player at home after a day's work, but then, enjoying music I wouldn't normally listen to is confirmation that this transport and DAC are engaging.

Changing direction with Tori Amos found her in fine form on Boys For Pele. Bass was clean, taut and powerful, and shared the detailing that ran across the frequency range to reveal subtleties like the extended decay of a harpsichord or piano note. The soundstage was deep as well as broad and had a cohesion that allowed instrumental images to populate the stage without overcrowding it.

Comparing old with new, I found the new 8000CDM produced a cleaner sound with tighter, more dynamic bass than its predecessor. Tori Amos' 'Putting The Damage On', for example, had clearer, better projected vocals. Where brass was warm and muted on the new transport, it sounded slightly woolly on the older version. Carmina Burana also showed obvious improvements - timpani possessed greater impact and control, and there was more detail and dynamic contrast to the performance as a whole. Soundstaging through the older transport lacked depth and breadth next to the new model.

Plugging the 8000CDM into our Da Capo DAC, I went in search of what kind of improvements a DAC at nearly double the cost (£1750) could bring. It wasn't quite a case of the law of diminishing returns applying, but most of the differences between the two

DACs were smaller than I'd expected. The 8000DAC lost ground to the Da Capo in terms of bass control, depth and impact, but closed the gap when it came to transparency, tonal colour and imaging. Giving the Amoco Renegades CD another spin through the Pink Triangle DAC had the orchestra sounding more open and less homogeneous, with enough rhythmic drive to get shoe soles smoking. The Da Capo also sounded more natural in its presentation, lacking the 8000DAC's slight artificiality. But considering that price gap, the Audiolab put up a good performance.

As a combination, the 8000CDM and DAC go hand in glove to put together a clean, detailed and lively view of music, with precise images set into a soundstage that enjoys real depth as well as width. All that remains to be said is that we now have a shiny, new Audiolab transport sitting in our system here at Hi-Fi World ●

**Audiolab 8000CDM** £1399.90  
**Audiolab 8000DAC** £899.90

**Audiolab**  
**Spitfire Close,**  
**Ermine Bus. Pk.,**  
**Huntingdon,**  
**Camb. PE18 6XY**  
**Tel: 01480 52521**

### WORLD VERDICT

**8000CDM** ★★★★  
 Clean, detailed and lively sound with true 3-D soundstaging. Impressively superior to its predecessor.

**8000DAC** ★★★  
 Offers good insight into music with its detail and control. Not as natural a sound as some though.

**Measured Performance**  
**see P111**



# DENON



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# AMPLIFIER STAR SEARCH

Douglas Floyd-Douglass and Jon Marks take a look at five amplifiers as part of our quest for the best value systems.

Following on from last month's round up of CD players, this month we take the next step towards building a complete system with five amplifiers. September's top CD players, the Marantz CD-63 mkII KI-Signature and

Trichord Genesis, were chosen above the other players in the group test for their remarkable blend of qualities at the price. They are now used for the amplifier audition session, along with our in-house reference Audiolab 8000CDM transport and Pink Triangle Da Capo CD converter.

The amplifiers tested here span a wide price range, from Arcam's £249.90 Alpha 5+ to Mission's £499.90 Cyrus III. Close on the Arcam's heels we have the Rotel RA-970BX at £249.95, followed by Denon's audiophile tweaked PMA-450SE at £279.99 and the legendary £299.95 Pioneer A-400X.

From these contenders we hope to pick at least two winners to go through to the next round where we'll be testing two groups of loudspeakers - floorstanders and standmounters - with a keen eye on system symbiosis.

Once the individual component play-offs are complete, we'll be bringing you two or three systems that offer the best sound and value money can buy. One

will be a powerful system with floorstanding loudspeakers for those looking to drive large rooms at high levels, the other a more compact system suitable for a small room, study or bedroom, using standmounting loudspeakers. So, if you're looking to buy a new system before Christmas, or make a good value upgrade, read on ●



NOVEMBER ISSUE - Loudspeakers  
DECEMBER ISSUE- Star Systems

£249.90

Arcam Alpha 5+

**T**he popular Arcam Alpha 5+ is, unsurprisingly enough considering the '+' suffix, a revamping of the Alpha 5 40watt which first saw the light of day around the middle of 1993. A little over two years later its successor arrived, bearing the fruits of revisions like extra screening on the toroidal mains transformer to reduce mains interference and higher quality coupling capacitors in an attempt to produce a more revealing and dynamic sound.

### SOON QUALITY

At low levels the Alpha 5+'s musicality was most impressive. It had a very uncluttered and articulate sound, delicately stringing melodies together in harmony. Paul Weller's vocal, for example, was forward and natural on the Stanley Road album, with good instrument sustain aiding the perception of a real acoustic. Bass, while musical, was a touch light though, and when pushed really hard there was some break-up evident in the upper midrange/lower treble.

With Tchaikovsky's 'Pathetique' piano was rather laid back and had a dull attack that took some of the sharpness away from transients. Piano notes lower down the scale were thick and suffered from a slightly shortened sustain, closing in the performance. Again, when the volume level was pushed upwards, the Arcam could become anharmonic and hard sounding, with break-up making its presence felt at realistic listening levels. Although the Alpha 5+ could sometimes lose its grip on the music, big classical sections causing particular difficulty, it generally put together an inoffensive and smooth performance.

With fast-paced material the Alpha 5+ performed better, the Commitments' 'Mustang Sally' possessing a dramatic and realistic vocal. Guitar stood out as a favoured instrument, the Arcam's



slight hardness placing it firmly in the mix. The lower registers were curtailed though, the strong bass line missing out on some of the scale that helps to underpin and drive this track along. Piano was also rather thin and distant.

Changing tack to Bob Marley, 'Zion Train' from the album Uprising had a bass line that buzzed richly, harmonising with the plucked Gibson. On this fuller recording the lack of low end power was less noticeable, giving a better all round performance. Combining a gentle, easy rhythm with good height to the soundstage, this was the Arcam's best performance.

### LOW BARS

Vivaldi's Four Seasons through the Arcam had quite a warm balance to it, with the period violins and cellos sounding slightly sweeter than is strictly accurate, but attractive nonetheless. The detail of Simon Standage's bowing was clear, revealing the subtlety in his playing, and cellos provided all the power and drive needed to keep the music flowing along rhythmically.

Switching to Tori Amos and 'Blood Roses' demonstrated that her voice was losing none of its force through the Arcam. Vocals stayed unconfused even in the company of the huge skull-cracking drum machine beats and crisp harpsichord of 'Caught A Lite Sneeze'. The soundstage here and on Banco de Gaia's Glastonbury album did, however, seem narrower than it was deep, but this never cramped the music's style.



The A-400X was developed as the successor to the renowned A-400 amplifier. It ruled the roost earlier this decade as the music lover's budget integrated amplifier of choice, with its transparency, sweet treble and bass depth. Pioneer then set themselves the task of improving on the A-400, and made a host of changes, not only electronic but also mechanical (mounting the PCB more firmly on the chassis, for example) which added up to the 'X' suffix that adorns the A-400X.

### SOUND QUALITY

I started my audition of the Pioneer A-400X with Bob Marley, and was happy to be rewarded by a sound similar to the Rotel's. Uprising was clear and unconfused, the vocal laid back but well positioned and naturally open. It's a bit of an attention grabber, the Pioneer, with its involving, smooth and musical sound coupled to tasty dynamics.

Changing pace a little, piano and double bass from Satie demonstrated great authority from what is a relatively low power amplifier. Midrange control was also good, especially at high levels, sounding open and uncompressed. Warm and spacious, the Pioneer created a broad soundstage with excellent balance on orchestral pieces, bass playing with real depth, resonance and subtlety.

With life-like vocals and natural timbre from piano, The Commitments' 'Mustang Sally' really gripped me. Vocal and sax were powerful and well projected, with their imaging spot on. I could hear the room reverb clearly on vocals, giving a great sense of air, space and energy to the performance. In spite of an occasionally too sweet treble and slightly fat bass, the overall sound was very enjoyable and suited mid-price standmount loudspeakers particularly well.

Dire Straits' 'Six Blade Knife' made for an engrossing listen, with snare drums natural and full. While separation might not have been up there with the best, good depth and width to the soundstage gave plenty of scale to this track. Paul Weller's Stanley Road reinforced my views on the bass - it's luscious, liquid and warm. But the Pioneer does well to remain composed even when driven hard.



### JON SAYS

The transparency of the Pioneer was obvious right from the start, regardless of the genre of the music that was being fed into it. Tori Amos' 'Blood Roses' showed her voice and harpsichord set in a broad soundstage, the inflection in her playing and singing fully revealed. Electric guitar also had an impressively grungy, distorted edge to it which some of the competition gloss over in an unrealistic manner.

The Sons of Champlin really let rip through the A-400X, funky bass lines flowing out into the room along with smooth, open vocals and uncompressed horns. Timing here and on Banco de Gaia's album was excellent, light-footed speed in the midrange and treble working in conjunction with realistic bass punch. The passion in violin solos on the Four Seasons was also clearly communicated through the subtlety of the bowing, adding up to a convincing performance

in combination with the natural wooden resonance of the cellos' bodies.



# Pioneer A-400X

# £299.95

£249.95

Rotel RA-970BX

**S**itting pretty and slim like the Arcam Alpha 5+ is Rotel's RA-970BX. What lurks inside the casework is a circuit design which follows in the footsteps of Rotel's high-end Michi separates. In common with many of the amplifiers that have jumped on the audiophile bandwagon, the Rotel features short signal paths and close tolerance resistors. Unlike most of these often minimalist amplifiers, though, it also sports tone controls similar to the Arcam's.

**SOUND QUALITY**

The Rotel RA-970BX was immediately at home with Satie's piano works - notes were struck with realistic attack and resounding dynamics, and there was no sign of break-up even at high levels. Strings too were fresh and rich with good presence, forward sounding but smooth. Their resonant timbre complemented the tight, open bass produced by the Rotel.

The Stratocaster screamed a treat on the Commitments' album, making the most of a real guitar amp. sound, raw and ripping out through the 'speakers. Bass was similarly dynamic and pacey, each pluck of the bass strings tight and firm. The saxophone had potency to it as well, gelling with the other instruments to create a tightly structured and uncompressed sound that really did rock and roll.

The Rotel's command continued with Paul Weller's Stanley Road. On this album the RA-970BX was stable and powerful, with huge headroom that allowed it to swing realistic dynamics with verve. Drums were also indicative of its tight, fast upper bass. It is this control, coupled with a slightly rolled off treble, that enables the Rotel to go loud without strain.

This highly developed and polished performance was equally

impressive with Bob Marley's Uprising. Bass was forward and vocals recessed, exactly in keeping with the style of the recording. Cymbals had sharp attack followed by

soft decay, and maracas, woodchimes, conchas and clavino were all clearly separated, the interplay between them convincingly captured.

**JON SAYS**

The Rotel seemed to bring quite a fresh and open presentation to Boys For Pele, with Tori Amos' piano sounding life-like in its impact and dynamics. While her voice wasn't quite as smooth as it had been on the Cyrus III, it retained the emotional expressiveness that gives her songs their powerful character. Part of the Rotel's freshness, though, seemed to come from a slight midrange emphasis which could make the strings on orchestral works sound rather forward on crescendos.

Dancing it up with Banco de Gaia on the Avalon stage at Glastonbury found the Rotel filling the soundstage with the requisite crowd noise and pungent synthesiser melodies. Bass lines were taut and punchy, mirroring the dynamics that are inscribed on this disc. The same characteristic showed up on Vivaldi's Four Seasons, where cellos had all the tight focus needed to propel this piece along ●





**I**t looks as though LED lovers (LEDophiles?) like myself are in for a bit of a treat in the form of the Cyrus III's LED-fest of a volume control. This is microprocessor controlled; spinning the knob causes a string of green LEDs around its circumference to glow as the volume rises. Another attention grabber is the professionalism of the casework, a silky smooth casting with integral heatsinks which makes a lot of other amplifiers look like the proverbial biscuit tin.

### SOUND QUALITY

Starting with Paul Weller's Stanley Road, the Cyrus III immediately produced a smooth and very sophisticated sound. This allowed the vocal to breathe freely, decay petering out into a wide soundstage. For such a small package, the Cyrus had plenty of raw, tight power, delivering a well structured and precise performance. And more noticeable than with any other amplifier in this test was excellent channel separation, which helped the amplifier put together its convincingly wide soundstage.

Authority, weight and solidity were the Cyrus' sonic trademarks - it's the Wagner of amplifiers. Bob Marley's Uprising album was reproduced with all the power and drive it deserves. But there was subtlety too, with all the instruments clearly discernible and possessing a clean, if slightly clinical, sound. This trait cropped up on vocals too, which could sound a little artificial.

With rock based material from The Destroyers the Cyrus was clean in a tidy, ordered sort of way. But I did feel at times that some of the emotion was being stripped from the recording - George Thoroughgood's 'Bad to the Bone' was less liquid and communicative than through the Pioneer, but demonstrated the Mission's tight grip on the music.

Masterly quiet, refined and accurate, the Cyrus III handled Bach's Toccata with ease and superior control when compared to, say, the Arcam. Although the sound was sometimes a touch hard, midrange dynamics were very good indeed, especially on big chords where the Cyrus displayed class leading poise and control. All in all, an impressive performer.



### JON SAYS

Remote in hand, I tried the Cyrus out with a little Boys From Pele by Tori Amos. Her vocals were notably smooth throughout, as was the convincingly weighty and detailed harpsichord. Bass also had good control and possessed real insight, even on the heavy duty drum machine rhythm of 'Caught A Lite Sneeze' which can often sound rather characterless.

Banco de Gaia's Live At Glastonbury CD had all its rhythmic hip-swaying magic and atmospheric cohesion intact, bass lines possessing verve and impact. The Cyrus managed to capture the refined air that permeates a large part of Vivaldi's Four Seasons as well, although there was a hint of restraint on some of the more pyrotechnic passages. A clear, well proportioned soundstage did, however, allow the Cyrus to remain unconfused when the musical going got tough●



# Mission Cyrus III

# £499.90

£279.99

Denon PMA450SE

**D**enon have crammed what looks like an electronic smorgasbord of audiophile components into the PMA-450SE's circuitry. The list of Who's Who in the world of component manufacturers includes Ansar and Elna (capacitors) alongside Alps with their dual concentric volume control. Setting my back creaking was the toroidal mains transformer that makes up a large chunk of the amplifier's weight.

### SOUND QUALITY

Seeing as the Denon is the most powerful amplifier in the group, I started it off with some stirring music courtesy of Bob Marley. This quickly showed up a fairly sluggish bass which tended to over-ride the laid back vocal. Backing vocals fared better though, with an open and natural presentation. Whilst more complex instrumentation could sound confused, it spread well between the 'speakers to create fine stage width.

Next up was Tchaikovsky's 'Pathetique'. Here, the Denon failed to really draw me into the music, coming across as rather bland and hollow, especially on woodwind. While the 450SE may be quiet and smooth in operation, it can sound flat and dull - its lack of expression makes it appear lacklustre alongside the Rotel, for example. Although ambience and the decay of notes were both good, I was left with the impression that the Denon was trying too hard, not easing up enough to let the music flow naturally.

Paul Weller's Stanley Road took on a slightly down-beat attitude with a bass which, in spite of being slow, managed to maintain its evenness and lucidity. By way of compensation, the soundstage was broader here, a sense of space and openness coming from an emphasised vocal and generally clearer sound.

Although the PMA-450SE had plenty of power on tap, allowing high levels to be sustained smoothly, bass could still sound a little recessed at times, emphasising the scratchy treble and thin guitar on the recording of George Thoroughgood's 'Bad to the Bone'. The same effect produced some sibilance on consonants from The Commitments' 'Mustang Sally', where vocals and piano both sounded rather trebly.

There's no doubt that the Denon



has bags of power to drive 'speakers loud. It's just that it seems to have traded a lot of subtlety and refinement for this ability.

voice powerful as ever, but lacking some of its customary smoothness, the PMA-450SE sounding a little edgy across the midrange.

### JON SAYS

The first signal to make its way along the Denon's PCB tracks was Vivaldi's Four Seasons. The opening movement is recorded in quite a large hall and carries with it a feeling of this acoustic. Through the Denon, the sense of the acoustic was reduced, it producing a wide, but rather flat soundstage. Having said that, cellos drove the piece forcefully, even though bass could get a little soggy at times.

'Mafich Arabi', the most rhythmically addictive track on Banco de Gaia's Live at Glastonbury album, came through loud and clear, giving the floorboards a work out thanks to BDG's drum machine. Turning to Tori Amos for music of a subtler nature showed her





# AMPLIFIERS CONCLUSION

**W**ith classical works from Tchaikovsky and Satie, the Cyrus took the cake and ate it. It may be the most expensive amplifier in the group, but its price was reflected in its highly refined and detailed performance. The Mission was followed by an impressive challenge from the Pioneer, which, although coloured with a full bass and sweet treble, was impressively musical. Rotel's RA-970BX put together a good performance and certainly never disgraced itself, but I think the Arcam and Denon would be a disappointment to the serious classical listener.

It was with rock based material that the Rotel really stood out though, being balanced, fast, dynamic and powerful - just the ticket. The Mission's refinement on the other hand was lost a little here, and the Pioneer, with its full and rich sound, although still extremely musical, was a little too smooth to really rip with raw guitars and strong cymbals. Only the Arcam's lack of muscle prevented it from making it into the running with rock music, its low level musicality up with the best.

The same finishing order emerged on heavier reggae and bass-laden music. The Arcam was again sweet and clear at low levels, but no match for the Rotel, Pioneer and Cyrus when volume rose to more realistic levels. Pioneer's A-400X really took command of bass-lines, but could be a touch overblown with a powerful floorstander. It's

characters best suiting a floorstander or fuller sounding loudspeaker.

## IN A NUT-SHELL

1. **Rotel** - for my ears at least, the business. Very well balanced and smooth.
2. **Cyrus III** - greater refinement and precision than the rest. The one to buy if finances allow.
3. **Pioneer** - outstanding value for money. Complements all music. Powerful and confident.
4. **Arcam** - needs more power and control. Good with efficient 'speakers though.
5. **Denon** - a blast from the 1970-80s past. Big, brutish and bland.



The Rotel RA 970BX - pick of the bunch

definitely the amplifier to go for, though, if you want good punch and drive from a standmounter. The Rotel and Cyrus were perhaps more neutrally balanced, their drier

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### AMPLIFIERS:

1. PIONEER A-400X
2. MISSION CYRUS III
3. ROTEL RA-970BX

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Stacey Bushes,  
Milton Keynes,  
Bucks. MK12 6HR  
Tel: 01908 317707

Pioneer  
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Stoke Poges,  
Slough,  
Berks. SL2 4PQ  
Tel: 01753 789789

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Denny Ind. Centre,  
Waterbeach,  
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Tel: 01223 440964



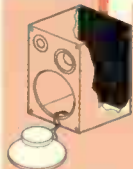
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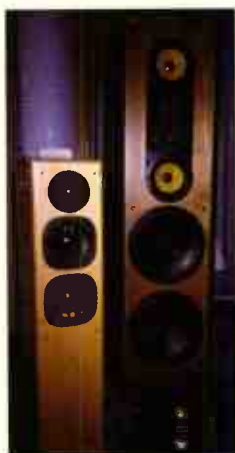
# MALAYSIAN HI-FI SHOW



Star  
**AV FEST**  
1996

**T**his is the show I enjoy the most. And who wouldn't? Forget soggy, overpriced hotel sandwiches. At this show you're faced with delights like Nasi Lemak, Beef Rendang and Rambutans, washed down by Tiger beer. And with ambient temperatures hovering around 30-35 degrees day in, day out and 98% humidity making the air feel like a hot face towel, I ended up drinking rather too much. Especially this time round, because the power failed, the air conditioning stopped and we were forced to spend Saturday night trying to keep cool by the hotel swimming pool. Best power failure I've ever encountered!

Malaysia has a myriad other delights, though. Hi-fi remains a dynamic business in the East, attracting a lot of interest from all over the region. People



Legacy loudspeakers, with Kevlar midrange and ribbon tweeter.

from outlying areas, especially the islands, fly in for an event like this from Indonesia, Brunei, Sarawak, Singapore and Borneo. The interest - and the wealth - makes for a very varied market; Malaysians import their hi-fi from all around the world. As usual, I uncovered some fascinating products.

Completely new to me as a brand was Balanced Audio Technology, from Wilmington, Delaware, USA. First to catch my eye was an 85lb monster 60W valve amp, the VK-60. Americans are into big valves like they're into big cars, this 17in. x 24in. thermionic aircraft carrier sporting four barrel proportioned 6C33C output valves and eight 6SN7 double triodes.

Reputedly a Russian trawler transmitter valve, the 6C33 is a low impedance triode that, aided by its dramatic profile and high power dissipation, is catching on fast in the States it seems. They certainly made the VK-60 look pretty awesome. Balanced also have a vast tube pre-amplifier to match, the VK-5,

and a less expensive VK-3. Surprisingly perhaps, they manufacture a solid-state monster amplifier as well, the VK-500, that produces a meagre 250W.

Another jewel to catch my eye was an intriguing Japanese CEC belt drive CD transport, the TLI, together with a more expensive variant featuring an open disc chamber and large spinning puck, used to hold the CD in place atop the spindle. CEC once made belt drive turntables, and claim that reduced noise



The massive VK-60 amplifier from Balanced Audio

and vibration, from isolation provided by the belt, lessen digital jitter and improve sound quality.

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company, from Palo Alto in California. Like CEC, they specialise in CD transports and players, concentrating on the signal processing rather than the mechanics. Their Quantum D/A converter uses the Pacific Microsonics HDCD converter chip, which I know to be very linear and super smooth in sound quality. They also have a transport called Cesium, which they claim has ultra low jitter.

Some new British products were making their debut at this show - I spotted a Naim pre-amplifier, the NAC102, being displayed by importer

Octave Electronics, who carry a full range of World Audio Design kits. Peter Qvortrup of Audio Note flew in too, as well as Alvin Gold, representing Hi-Fi News. All of us were roped into giving talks, in my case about the wonders of kit building.

Cary Audio of the States are prolific in the range of models they have produced over the

last few years. I was surprised to see the SE811 from Audio Electronics, a subsidiary of Cary Design. It's not an amplifier easily missed, since the Svetlana 811 triode valve it uses glows as brightly as a light bulb. The importer, Audio Perfectionist Electronics, who peculiarly uses a globe logo with byline "For the love of music" (wonder where they got that idea from!) was also displaying a range of Austrian loudspeakers I have not

seen before, Legacy. I was impressed by their twin Kevlar midrange units, used to limit dispersion angle and lessen high frequency reflections from floor and ceiling. Reducing reflected energy in a room cleans up the sound, although side walls usually reflect most energy. With no fewer than six drivers per cabinet, engineering correct phase relationship will be difficult, but the Focus holds promise.

Angel Heart amplifiers appeared again this year. Allegedly made in Britain, I believe they come from Taiwan, and

their distributor, complete with natty red braces, seemed as happy to see me (an inquisitive UK journalist) this year as he was last year!

Two new Malaysian loudspeaker manufacturers put in an appearance, Robertson and Hi-Fidelity Enterprise.

Robertson had a large reflex loaded floorstander that really shook the floor with its deep, solid bass. While the midrange projected well, the treble was on the coarse side. Using doped paper cones and a titanium dome tweeter (all made in Malaysia), the Robertson should be sensitive and easy to drive, and I wish it success.

Hi-Fidelity Enterprise presented both standmounting and floorstanding models, with a Scanspeak tweeter and SEAS bass/midrange on one model and Audax

drivers on another. Equipped with a good computer based loudspeaker design package, this company has promise. They also import loudspeaker components for the DIY market, which is still in fledgling form in Malaysia.

Fledgling it may be now, but I'd put my money on Malaysia gearing up rapidly over the next few years. The interest and enthusiasm I encountered were invigorating and made for a great show. Organised by Malaysia's most popular newspaper, The Star, this is a show, like Tiger beer, not to be missed ●



CEC's eye catching belt drive CD turntable



World Audio Design in the Octave Electronics room, overseen by Michelle Khoo.

Absolute Hi-Fi and an Audiolab CD player courtesy of Sapphire Audio Systems. Philip Swift himself, founder of Audiolab, was at the show to answer questions about the CD player.

New models apart, Britain was well represented, most brands being available in Malaysia. I attended the show not only to see what was happening, but to support our own local distributor,



The Robertson loudspeaker had thunderous bass



A Malaysian Hi-Fidelity Enterprise loudspeaker.



# BATTERY

# BLISS

## **Dominic Baker charges up Pink Triangle's latest battery powered Anniversary turntable fitted with a Graham 1.5t tonearm**

I jumped at the chance when Pink Triangle's new distributors, Michael Stevens, offered us the latest top end Anniversary turntable, set up with a Graham 1.5t tonearm. I'd used an Anniversary before, with an SME V and van den Hul MC10, and remembered the clarity and smoothness it possessed. But the Graham arm was new to me. I'd seen it before, and recently read a report on the same in *Stereophile*, but hadn't had the chance to use one. I was looking forward to its arrival.

The Graham 1.5t is a unipivot design - it pivots on a single-point, the bearings made of Swiss tungsten carbide. Silicone fluid in the pivot well helps control

damping and vibration in the bearing. To damp the arm tube, Graham use concentric tubes of aluminium and stainless steel with energy absorbing bands separating the two. This helps to soak up energy before it travels through the bearing and into the turntable's subchassis. The arm tube itself is interchangeable, using a Bendix aerospace connector.

Using the combination, I found the Graham as elegant as an SME V is steadfast. Where an SME is tightly engineered to behave with solidity, the Graham floats gently on its bearing, swaying this way and that until dropped lightly into the groove where it steadies

to tackle the waves of plastic ahead. It feels incredibly free and moves without the slightest hint of friction; it really is a lovely arm to use.

Pink's latest Anniversary turntable now has an improved clamping system to hold the record securely in place. The clamp itself is the same small puck that screws into a threaded insert within the spindle. But the platter is now slightly dished so that the edges of a record are held more tightly and any warps better suppressed.

Being a suspended design, accurate set-up with the Anniversary is critical if you want the best performance. Levelling is done with three Allen bolts,



one on either side and one in the top at the back. It is a simple enough procedure, but a record must be on the platter; since its weight is enough to affect the suspension. The turntable's DC motor came from Pink's outboard battery power supply in this instance, ensuring ultra quiet operation.

I began my listening with the Ortofon MC3000 cartridge that had been supplied with the deck. This is a cartridge I've heard a lot about, but like



the Graham, I'd never had the chance to audition it. Having lived with both an MC2000 and more recently a Rohmann, I wasn't expecting too many surprises.

How wrong I was! I track skipped through a handful of LPs with the MC3000 exploring its terrific ability to resolve detail deep within the grooves. It never tripped up, instead giving the electronic transients of Shamen's 'Lifespan' amazing energy and impact. Every programmed melody in the track was clear-cut, cleanly defined and forthright without overwhelming the interleaving sound patterns. It was a powerful performance, one I wasn't expecting from the 3000, nor the delicate and rather frail looking Graham arm, or the Anniversary with its supple suspension.

If someone asked me to characterise the sound of the Pink Triangle turntable, I'd start off by mentioning its tonal neutrality and crisp midrange and treble; they are a reference to others. But, compared to a

Gyrodec, the new Orbe, an SME Model 20 and others I hold in high regard, the Pink's bass, although taut and tuneful, isn't in quite the same league. It was with this preconception, that I had begun listening to the Pink Anniversary.

But in the same way it had allowed the MC3000 to leave no dust particle in the groove unturned in its search for detail, the Pink/Graham played a similar game when it came to displaying the essence of a bass line. So strong was the

rumble from Massive Attack's 'Karmacoma' I actually checked cartridge loading to make sure that there wasn't a mis-match causing some sort of bass lift. But the loading was fine, and so too was Pablo Moses. I'd never heard reggae bass quite so vigorously pumped out by the 'speaker cones.

Having run the MC3000 through some of my most testing tracks, I swapped it over for the Rohmann. I had been hoping that the Pink/Graham combination would take a similar grip on this cartridge as it had on the MC3000. I was not disappointed. With a little more character and body than the MC3000, the Rohmann benefitted more from the realisation of transparency and transient speed brought about by turntable and arm.

The Rohmann's fuller character bought with it a more involving sound, possessing greater perspective in all three dimensions. Like the MC3000, it stripped tracks to the bone in search of detail, but along with this came a more

organic texture. Although some might argue this is a departure from the MC3000's accuracy, it gave a sumptuousness to strings that made for a splendidly musical presentation.

Possessing such a polished and articulate sound that left little to speculation, the Pink Triangle Anniversary in its latest guise and fitted with the Graham arm is one of the most accurate vinyl set-ups I've come across. It was difficult to fault in any area, so complete was the performance in every respect. Pin point imagery and fine staging go without saying, although I never really found myself listening for such technicalities - they were simply there, natural and unforced.

Care in set-up and the correct choice of cartridge and ancillaries are well rewarded by the Pink and Graham. The arm was connected to the head-amp with silver cable, and the whole sat on a dedicated Frameworks support, helping to make this one of the best all round turntable packages I've come across ●

**Pink Triangle Anniversary and Battery Power Supply** **£2390**

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The Basement,  
Camberwell Bus. Centre,  
Camberwell,  
London SE5 7RR  
Tel: 0171 703 5498**

#### WORLD VERDICT

**Pink Triangle Anniversary.** ●●●●●  
With its battery supply and ultra-quiet DC motor, the Pink displays great accuracy and neutrality. A top flight deck.

**Graham 1.5t.** ●●●●●  
This arm has a stable, elegant and extremely detailed performance that impresses with its easy naturalness.

**Measured Performance  
see P111**



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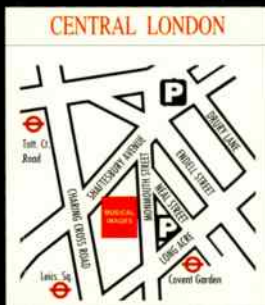
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# PLAYING THE NUMBERS GAME

**Spendor's latest loudspeaker, the 2040, uses the same elliptical cone technology as the 2030 floorstander, but packs in five drivers a side. Jon Marks finds out if there's strength in numbers.**

**W**ell, it looks like Spendor is the name if loading a 'speaker with drive units is the game. Each new 2040 proudly sports no fewer than four elliptical drive units (one for midrange, three for bass) in addition to its fabric dome tweeter. As Dominic Baker explained in his review of the smaller 2030s in the June '96 issue, Spendor have chosen to use an elliptical design in an attempt to raise the cone's upper cut-off frequency and reduce break-up, which should theoretically result in a cleaner, more extended response.

To find out whether Spendor have been able to turn theory into practice, I tried the 2040s out with a spot of bouncy pop courtesy of Erasure and their compilation album, *Pop 20 Hits*. 'Blue Savannah' had Vince Clarke's synthesisers waxing and waning alongside crisp electronic hi-hats at the front of the soundstage while the drum machine took up position at the rear. Andy Bell's singing, which is usually powerful and well projected, sounded rather thick and compressed through the Spendors and seemed to be set too far back in the mix. Moving on to 'Star' showed the three drivers working in parallel were doing a good job of snapping out the leading edge transients produced by the drum machine. Unfortunately, distinguishing the drum machine from the rhythmic synthesiser wasn't particularly easy; the 2040s seem to have a lump in their low end response that gives bass a rather one note quality.

Indulging myself in a little musical nostalgia, I popped Carlos Santana's eponymous CD into the 8000CDM's drawer. On 'Jingo', Santana's guitar was placed clearly at the front of the rather flat soundstage, with the huge conga beats rolling along beneath it. Although drumming had a good feeling of weight and scale, individual beats tended to blur into one

another, taking the edge off this track's anthemic drive. Vocals also suffered from the same malaise that had afflicted Andy Bell on the Erasure CD.

Classical music again vividly illustrated the two sides of the Spendors' presentation. The cellos and double basses of Tchaikovsky's sixth symphony blended into an amorphous whole, leaving violins, flutes and trumpets clearly separated, even on more frenetic passages. The same problems manifested themselves on Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, diminishing the music's flow and power.

It looks like the idea of using elliptical cones for a smoother, wider response hasn't quite worked for the 2040. While the tweeter holds up its end of the bargain with clean, concise treble, the mid/bass units' poor imaging and sluggish sound let this loudspeaker down. Audiophiles with £700-1100 burning a hole in their pocket would be better off trying either Castle Chesters or KEF's Reference Model 1.

**Spendor 2040**

**£899**

**Michael Stevens**

**Invicta Works,**

**Elliot Road,**

**Bromley,**

**Kent**

**BR2 9NT**

**Tel: 0181 460 7299**

## WORLD VERDICT

The tweeter works well, but a thickly recessed midband and one-note bass are this loudspeaker's Achilles heel.

**Measured Performance**

see P111

# 'A' CLASS ACT

**Dominic Baker warms the cockles of his heart and heats his house with Sugden's AU51C line level pre and AU51P phono amplifiers feeding the class A Symetra monoblocks.**



The AU51C pre-amplifier is DC coupled, so there are no capacitors in the signal path. Further reducing signal degradation are the miniature gold-plated contact relays that switch the six line level inputs. Giving the Symetra power amplifiers their name are the two symmetrically laid out halves that make up this bridged design. They run in pure Class A, producing 50watts of power and considerable heat to match; allow at least 30 minutes cooling time before you move them unless you want to turn your fingers into charcoal briquettes.

Turning to Grant Lee Buffalo through DPA's Enlightenment CD player to begin testing the Sugdens' mettle, showed the sting of the steel strung guitar crisp and forward in the mix, but without any hint of sharpness or accentuation. Harmonics from this acoustic instrument were delicious, echoing around within a vast stage.

*H*and built to order, Sugden's 51 series forms the pinnacle of a well established and highly regarded range of electronics. Much of this respect comes from their Class A designs, which have a characteristically rich and smooth sound, and generate enough heat to toast toes even in the depths of winter.



Dubstar's Sarah Blackwood also shone through the AU51/Symetra combination. Centrally imaged, she took the stage with a wonderfully smooth, dry vocal and tactile projection. Bass was fast and rhythmic, lavish with depth and colour and balanced by a sugary treble.

Slipping a copy of Pulp's His and Hers CD into the Enlightenment's drawer gave Jarvis Cocker's singing crisp consonants and a breathy, parched character. A little of the freshness of this recording gave way to the Sugdens' alluring silkiness, but this was only a mild colouring rather than a lack of accuracy, and didn't dilute the sharp timing of the overall performance.

Changing the scene with The Charlatans' heavily mixed grunge, the Sugden combination still managed to squeeze an articulate thwack out of plucked bass notes. The amplifiers also demonstrated the phasey character of this disc, providing a broad spread of sound as guitars blended with percussion.

As to which member of this pairing displays the stronger character, step forward the AU51C pre-amplifier. It bestowed a silky smoothness of its own to the sound that always gave a sweet and laid back presentation, whatever the partnering power amplifier. There is still plenty of detail there, though, creating real acoustic space around performers, but it's not thrown at you in ruthless fashion. Instead, the presentation is gentle, reserved and polite at all times.

Perhaps more neutrally balanced than the lush texture of the pre-amplifier, the Symetras still have a similarly warm glow and full bottom end. They drive deep too, providing astonishing bass power when I hooked them up to a pair of prototype loudspeakers using 13in. professional bass drivers. Even with smaller boxes, like Tannoy's D100s, they stamp their authority on proceedings by taking a firm hold of the drivers. Nor do high levels pose a problem for the Symetras, the bass guitar at the intro to REM's 'Low', for example, held a tight grip, fast transients followed by pounding waves of bass.

If you prefer riding the vinyl grooves to surfing CD's digits, then the AU51P phono stage caters for both moving magnets and coils. Like the AU51C, it's a DC coupled design, allowing the full power of bass from LP through to the 'speakers. While this makes for impressive extension, owners of reflex loudspeakers should beware - record warps are likely to cause considerable cone flap.

With a Pink Triangle Anniversary turntable, a Graham 1.5t tonearm and MC3000 cartridge on hand (they're reviewed elsewhere in this issue), the first LP fed through the AU51P was Teenage Fanclub's Thirteen. Distorted electric guitar, with its rich harmonic structure, helped by an extended decay that added to the size of the acoustic. Bass guitar and drum played their part too, kicking in hard without upsetting the balance of the whole.

With Texas' 'Southside', Sharleen Spiteri's powerful vocal was captured in all its fullness, gracefully spreading out from the 'speakers. The transient crack of snare had sharp focus and great attack, as did cymbals, although their metallic shimmer had a slightly plasticky edge to it. Lurking underneath the music was a dark silence, reinforcing the fact that even with a moving coil, this is one of the quietest phono stages around.

The AU51P was clean, stable and dynamic throughout REM's 'Shiny Happy People' as well. Here, midrange projected Michael Stipe and Kate Pierson's vocals and lead guitar clearly across stage. The dry bass on this album culled some of the Sugden's fullness, but notes still drove low enough to give a steady underpinning.

Although not the most powerful at 50watts, the Symetras will win fans for their refinement and cool control. They really take a grip on bass lines without ever sullyng midrange and treble purity. The pre-amplifier is a bit more of a character, possessing the kind of rich,

fulsome balance that makes an ideal tonic for dry or anaemic systems. And for the LP fraternity, there's the quiet, detailed, AU51P with its super bass and treble extension. Top grade amplification to depend on and enjoy everyday you use it ●



<b>SUGDEN AU51C</b>	<b>£995</b>
<b>AU51P</b>	<b>£895</b>
<b>SYMETRA/PAIR</b>	<b>£1550</b>

**Sugden  
Valley Works,  
Station Lane,  
Heckmondwyke,  
W. Yorks.  
WF16 0NF  
Tel: 01924 404088**

**WORLD VERDICT** ●●●●

This bevy runs hot and sounds warm. Symetra monoblocks impress with their control. AU51C has a smooth, rich sound, while the AU51P has good detail and low noise.

**Measured Performance  
see P111**

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The Leak history grew in stature as I researched it. In an early text, I wrote that America, with its enormous wealth and unrivalled industrial ability, gave birth to the notion of high fidelity. In the back of my mind was the fact that it was the well staffed and equipped labs of large US companies that perfected the valve at the turn of the century. It now looks as if Harold Leak was right in there at the beginning, pre-dating most others.

His first amplifier, marketed in 1936 superficially for PA use, was tailored with high fidelity very much in mind. A *Wireless World* advertisement for it makes fascinating reading. Until this advert surfaced, sent to me by Chief Leak engineer Ted Ashley, no Leak aficionados I know, myself included of course, had any idea Harold had produced such an amplifier in the thirties. This was well before companies like Quad, if not before Goodmans or Tannoy, both of whom also started in PA before World War II. The advert doesn't use the term "high fidelity" as such, but it does talk about offering high quality in conjunction with record and radio sources.

So I am indebted to Ted Ashley, who joined Harold before the war, for his help in ensuring the history was accurate, and for contacting Muriel Leak, Harold's wife, to obtain pictures of him. Sadly, when Leak/Wharfedale, situated at Idle in Bradford, wanted to expand some years ago, all Leak records were destroyed to make space. There seems to be little recorded information left on this pioneer; pictures of him and the Westway factory are hard to come by.

This drought was alleviated also by John Howse, British Vintage Wireless Society Swapmeet organiser, who made certain my model dates were right, and by Jonathan Hill, who

provided the picture of the rare 0.1 Type 15 amplifier, only one of which is known to exist, residing with a collector in Bristol.

So who did coin the term "high fidelity"? I suspect it was someone in America, Saul B. Marantz or Avery Fisher. We'll publish Harold's first advert (circa 1938) soon, hopefully alongside others from the same period or earlier.

Just as I finished writing the above, my telephone rang. It was

## Mysteries from Noel Keywood

says: you're in the East.

This time around I landed in Singapore and took the train north, to relax and to see more of both countries, not to mention the Johore Causeway which I remember from my childhood. Nowadays, the causeway is a large concrete affair straddling the Straits of Malacca. Lines of lorries sit on it, waiting to get through customs into Johore Bahru, Malaysia's southernmost state. It's

the world's lingua franca. Since Malaya was once a British colony, they've a head start in this respect and use it well. Spoken and written English reaches a very high standard, allowing Malaysians to be a part of both the East and the West, seeming just as much at home in either, unlike the Japanese for example.

That's why I'd put my money on Malaysia being one of the strongest Asian Tigers in the long run. Who knows what China will do with Hong Kong - find it indigestible, I suspect. Singapore is short of land and is now very expensive, whilst Indonesia has a way to go, but with a huge population of 170 million has great potential. In Malaysia though, it's all happening now and I catch the optimism and enthusiasm every time I go there.

The broad outlook of Malaysians allows them to cope easily with all comers. They import just about every hi-fi brand the world has ever invented and it's this that makes their shows special. The hotels are luxurious 30 storey, swish air-conditioned affairs, over which the show might spread for three floors. People fly in from around the region to attend, from Indonesia, Borneo, Sabah, Brunei and Sarawak, since flying is cheap, fast and safe. The place is packed for three days of unmissable action and fun. This is how a hi-fi show should be ●

*"Malaysians import just about every hi-fi brand the world has ever invented"*

John Howse, a dedicated historian of hi-fi, who told me that Scott. of The Scott Radio Co., America, used "high fidelity" in an advertisement that appeared in 1935. Does anyone know of an earlier use of the term? If you do, phone or fax and let us know.

I wouldn't miss the Malaysian hi-fi show for anything. It's a long way to go for a Tiger beer, but if you love the East, this is one of the best places to be. Kuala Lumpur, capital of Malaysia, has prestigious high rise buildings, frantic streets, careering traffic, tropical palms and a delicious heavy aroma that

here that there has been a lot of Japanese electronics investment, from companies such as Onkyo and Aiwa, and Philips who have moved their Audio Division to Singapore. The lorries carry goods from Singapore to these southern Malaysian factories and are testament to the level of commercial activity in the region.

Whilst the manufacturing plants are largely Japanese, most Malaysians choose to study electronics in Britain. Language has got a lot to do with this. Whilst a knowledge of Malaysian is compulsory, in this wonderfully cosmopolitan country people are pragmatic enough to recognise that English is



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*Review of PASSION - Martin Colloms  
HiFi News April '93 and November '94*

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# MAKING TRACKS

**Hand assembled in Germany and fitted with a stylus from van den Hul of France, EMT's HST 6 comes to Britain via Definitive Audio of Nottingham. Dominic Todd is there to meet it at the end of its journey.**

It's hard to believe that a small piece of metal at the end of a tonearm can make such a difference to the overall sound quality of a system. But, believe me, it can. The cartridge is, after all, where the signal starts. So any loss of quality here can't be made up for later. A good cartridge can make all the difference.

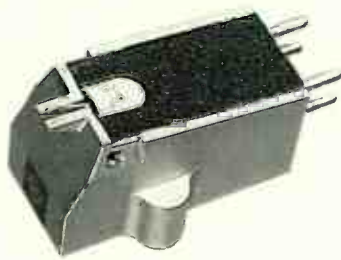
The EMT HST 6 is a good case in point. It's not much to look at. A rather plain looking solid aluminium body, with van den Hul tip may leave you feeling a bit short changed for £850. Look closely, and you'll notice a neatly integrated stylus protector. Read the blurb, and you'll be reassured by the fact that the EMT's hand-built in Germany. But it's still nothing to get really excited about.

The cartridge's distributor, Definitive Audio, recommend using a moving magnet (MM) phono stage with a passive step-up device and a tracking weight of around 2 grams. With this in mind I used the cartridge, attached to my Artimiz arm, through a Carver MC>MM step-up device. I found 2 grams to be a little too heavy sounding, settling on a weight of 1.6 grams in my set-up. The EMT's hand-built nature does apparently mean that ideal tracking weight will vary from model to model, tonearm and, of course, personal taste.

I began by listening to a jazz album by Zachary Breaux. My immediate impression was one of a Naim-esque style of rhythmic drive. The bass really drove the music along, lending it substance and depth. But this wasn't at the expense of timing, or the rest of the range. Brass instruments had real body to them, complimenting bass well. High frequencies weren't neglected either.

Although the HST didn't strip away detail with quite the alacrity of a top notch Ortofon or Audio Technica, it proved sufficiently detailed and natural. Cymbals, for example, shimmered rather than splashed through the tweeters.

A similar style of music by Miles Davis revealed excellent drum definition and a superb resonance from xylophone. Yet, despite excellent individual performances, it all hung together as a whole. Whilst leading from the front, the bass didn't overhang the rest of the mix, which allowed me to tap into the rhythm and become involved with the music.



With the Commitments, the powerful bass made its presence felt once more. It also gave an expansive sound stage, both in terms of width and depth. Vocals were articulate, although perhaps not quite as well projected as some. There was also a slight hardening when the vocals became complex. Having said that, there was no excessive sibilance and the overall balance erred on the right side of forceful. And even when stretched, the HST remained coherent and showed fine separation. Instruments were portrayed in their true colours rather than as a bland interpretation.

With June Tabor the EMT was not quite as impressive as it had been

beforehand. Female vocals weren't handled quite as delicately or beguilingly as perhaps van den Hul's MC 10. However, vocals were powerfully portrayed and the HST still gave excellent insight into the tonal characteristics of various vocalists. It also had the control needed to handle dramatic transients, lending drama and tension to the music.

It may look pretty anonymous, but the HST6 is certainly worthy of audition. It doesn't quite have the finely etched articulation or sweetness of some, but what it does offer is sheer musical cohesion and involvement. The bass is powerful and rhythmic, and instruments through midrange and treble are presented in their true colours and given plenty of body. The HST isn't the most neutral of cartridges and it won't suit all systems and tastes. However, those prepared to give it an audition will find it a rewarding and thoroughly involving experience ●

**EMT HST 6**

**£850**

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TRANSPORT

to DELIGHT

**Douglas Floyd-Douglass plays golden-eared gooseberry to TEAC's digital couple, the VRDS-TI/D-TI CD transport and convertor.**

**B**oasting the same tank-like construction that identifies their professional TASCAM counterparts, the TI transport and D-TI DAC look as though they'd have no trouble playing Mozart with unflustered finesse during an earthquake. The transport uses TEAC's Vibration-free Rigid Disc-clamping System and this and the convertor have a copper plated chassis to reduce eddy currents.

Looking for some sonic proof to back up my first impressions, I opened the proceedings with Dire Straits. 'Six Blade Knife' drove along with really tight bass - unusual for this analogue recording - and the high hat was clean and natural, with an open, even decay.

One of the tests for accurate high frequency reproduction I turn to frequently is Mike and The Mechanics' 'Another Cup of Coffee.' This wonderfully written song with a typically digital sound can be superb. On this occasion, though, the super clean TEAC combo. tended to mar the recording with a rather clinical presentation. And guitar had an edginess to its sound, which tended to mask the TEAC's transparency.

For classical listening, I matched the TI/D-TI first with B&W DM7 mklls and then with AR18LSs. On the B&W loudspeakers, the characteristically slow Bextrene woofer came to life with the sparkling speed of the TEAC, as did the marvellous soft dome tweeter.

On the paper-coned AR 'speakers (which have won the dubious accolade of 'Reference Monitor'), the sound was once again lively. The paper cones, which are efficient, but quite rough sounding at times, became more refined and polished fed from the TEAC.

Spinning inside the TI were Bach's cello suites, magnificently performed by Yo Yo Ma. Cello timbre on this CD was cut through with an occasionally aggressive slant, which for those enjoying the Bruch and Bruckner approach to solo strings might work a real treat. While the backing orchestra remained smooth and open at all times, it did appear to be behind the soloist in depth of soundstage.

Most of the all-digital recordings I tried were a little too bright for my taste. Dave Weckl, Spyrogyra and the Rippingtons were tight and well controlled, but overblown to the point where I felt I was sitting inside a good pair of Sennheisers, rather than being able to appreciate the 'live music' soundstaging benefits of a pair of loudspeakers.

Whilst the convertor is refined in it's sound, this is where I would point the finger for the source of treble lift. I paired up the TI transport with a professional CD convertor and was blown away by the smoothness and control of the music

they made - the edge had been completely removed from the treble.

There's no doubt the indestructible TEAC combination has been built up to a standard rather than down to a price. Personally though, I found the TEAC's sound a tad bright. It is, however, an extremely revealing combination that would benefit from a smooth or warm amplifier. And not only will it upgrade your system's sound quality, but it will also inject new life into loudspeakers that are starting to sound a bit sluggish around the woofers ●

**TEAC D-TI CD Convertor** £499.95  
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**WORLD VERDICT**

Bright, but lively. Refined midrange and fast, taut bass give this combination some fine qualities.

**Measured Performance**  
see P111

# World Mail

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### LOOKING FOR LONGEVITY

Until recently, I have used an inexpensive Ortofon cartridge and replacing the stylus only cost £14, which I did every year or so. Recently, I have considered upgrading my turntable to a Gyrodec and buying a good



A high quality MC like Ortofon's Rohmann should work happily for about 2000 hours.

moving coil cartridge to go with it. I was disappointed to learn moving coils are basically disposable, and, according to Mantra Audio, need replacing after only 500 hours usage. I would be happy to spend several hundreds of pounds on a turntable which would give many years of use, but spending £200 or more on a cartridge which would wear out after only 500 hours is ridiculous.

I listen to vinyl for approximately 3 hours a day, which would mean a cartridge life span of six months. As Mantra Audio are in the business of selling cartridges, I would like

to know how many hours of use you'd recommend before replacement.

Can Ortofon and the like not design a moving coil for which cantilever/stylus replacement is possible and cost effective? Also, what is re-tipping, and how often, and on which cartridges can it be performed?

**Gaye Hutchinson  
Leeds.**

*A quick call to Ortofon to let them know about the 500 hours you were quoted raised a couple of eyebrows in surprise. Their reply was that properly aligned in a good arm and turntable combination, a budget moving coil cartridge should give at least 1000 hours of*

## LETTER OF THE MONTH

### DON'T RUBBISH QUAD

What pique or hidden agenda has led your editorial staff on a crusade to rubbish the Quad II amplifier? I think it was the May issue which referred to its "puny eight watts", while Noel Keywood damns it with faint praise in the July issue. Twelve watts with low distortion would be nearer the mark, with the thick end of twenty available if one is prepared to tolerate higher distortion levels.

The root of the matter, I would suggest, is the ridiculous inefficiency of contemporary loudspeakers. When has it become

necessary for any amplifier to deliver full power to reproduce cymbals properly? Large power levels are needed for good bass; but the energy spectrum of a symphony orchestra tails off at the higher frequencies. I reckon that whoever bought Mr Keywood's Quads had them serviced straight away.

I would suggest further that in common with recording quality, no improvement has been made in loudspeaker design during the last thirty years. By any objective criterion, the Quad II is still one of the best audio amplifiers which has ever been produced and it has (or should have) more

than enough power for domestic conditions; in particular, when paired for stereo.

The language used by reviewers of equipment is these days becoming more and more like that traditionally used by art and literary critics - i.e. consisting of passages of prose almost completely devoid of any meaning. Just what is one to make of the adjectives such as 'fast', 'tight' or 'taut' and what is 'speed'? I have always held the view that hi-fi was about faithful reproduction of sound. To make judgements in this field requires some kind of reference point; the only



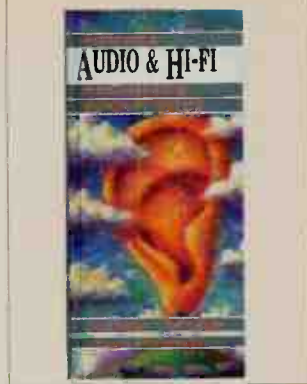
listening. More expensive cartridges, with their specialised diamond profiles and sophisticated suspensions are capable of lasting up to twice as long. Ortofon also offer a cartridge checking service free to anyone in the UK to make sure that you don't junk your MC while there's still some life left in it.

Unfortunately, moving coils can't be fitted with replacement styli because of the extremely fine wire that runs from the coils on the cantilever to the pins on the cartridge body. Fitting plugs to wire as fine as hair isn't really practical!

Re-tipping involves swapping the worn diamond at the end of the cantilever for a new one, although this isn't quite as sensible an idea as it

might at first seem. Most cartridge suspensions are made of rubber which hardens with age, causing mistracking. And with trade-ins on old MCs (commonly 25% off), re-tipping with a high quality diamond can be almost as expensive as buying a new cartridge. JM

Newnes Tel: 01865 310366



Find out more about what goes into a cartridge with the Audio and Hi-Fi Engineer's Pocket Book.

**DAC DELIGHTS**

I am writing to seek advice on my system, which comprises a Roksan DP I transport and digital to analogue converter, Naim Audio 72/140 amplification and Linn Keilidh speakers with stands.

The system is connected with Naim Audio interconnects and speaker cables (bi-wired) and seated on a Target Audio glass equipment stand. I have limited funds available to make what is hoped to be a lasting upgrade(s). I mainly listen to soul, jazz, jazz-funk, swing and classical music, and in particular, female voices. I have been quite lucky up to now in that all my upgrades have

been selected with the use of my own ears.

I would like a significant improvement in the bass (wouldn't we all, I hear you cry), more detail, emotion and separation. Can I have my cake and eat it too? The system can sound bright /edgy at medium



For easy, involving sound quality from CD, Pink Triangle's Ordinal or Da Capo converters are well worth a trip to your dealer.

sensible one is listening to actual voices and instruments

original or not, and if so, in what ways?



The Quad II produces just 8-10 watts, but it's enough to drive efficient loudspeakers in small rooms - if you don't expect high levels

in a real setting, be it studio, concert hall or living room. The only question worth asking is: is the reproduced sound significantly distinguishable from the

The use of so-called 'rock' and 'pop' recordings to demonstrate the virtues of equipment is therefore a snare and a delusion. Such music (if 'music' be the word)

is entirely synthetic and has no actual existence as an original entity. To evaluate audio equipment with such stuff is merely demonstrates the equipment as a machine for making interesting noises. It has nothing to do with high fidelity at all.

Grumbling apart, I would heartily endorse Dominic Baker's statements in the July issue on the subject of CD quality. I will not buy them at all. At the risk of being proved wrong I predict that within five years or so the present CD will be obsolete, at least at the top end of the market. It is interesting to note that those CDs which, to my ears, sound the best

are transcriptions of analogue recordings made in the sixties and seventies.

The hi-fi world (not the magazine) has been seduced by those two deceivers 'digital' and 'computer aided design' (and I am a computer programmer) and it needs the help of some down-to-earth souls to redeem it.

**M. D. O'Connor  
London.**

*The difference between 8W and 12W into 8Ω is small: 8V and 10V respectively. Quad IIs distort slowly and progressively, second harmonic dominant, making it difficult to fix a clip point. For 3% THD,*

volume levels with a loss of detail when things get busy. Don't get me wrong. These are not major failings in the system, but are items which I find fatiguing on prolonged listening sessions all the same.

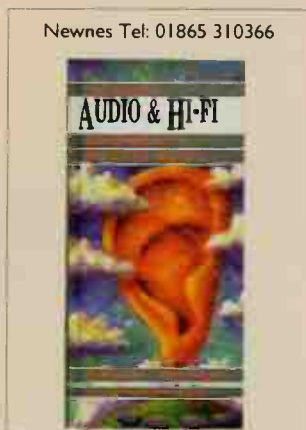
I recently borrowed a Naim CD2 integrated CD player from my dealer and was suitably impressed during a home demonstration with the increase in detail and separation. I have also tried adding a Hi-cap power supply to the pre-amplifier but this just highlights the things which I find wrong with my system.

Would the addition of a separate Roksan power supply to the D/A converter help improve things? Or a replacement/upgrade D/A converter? I have tried the Audiolab DAC and found this to be too analytical. Could you please recommend an upgrade path as I have been unsuccessful so far in resolving my dilemma. My room dimensions are 17ft by 10ft, the speakers firing across the short axis.

**Iain Campbell  
Crawley,  
West Sussex.**

*My recommendation would be to try a Pink Triangle Ordinal converter after your transport, or even a Da Capo. Both offer a superbly smooth, even mellow rendition from CD, and yet they are delightfully cohesive and natural sounding.*

*I suspect also that your Keilidhs are, for your tastes, a bit too upfront to be combined with a Naim amplifier, which is of the same basic character. One or other should go, if your tastes are to be satisfied.*



Newnes Tel: 01865 310366

Indulge in a little background reading on CD players, amplifiers and loudspeakers with the Audio and Hi-Fi Engineer's Pocket Book.

*The Mission 752s are easy on the ear yet very good in all areas, and the UKD Callas is similarly an easy listen, not overtly wanting in any area. Bass quality is always a problem and few 'speakers will significantly better the Keilidh in this area, so don't hold out too great a hope here. NK*

#### TWICE TOO LATE

I am a hi-fi enthusiast from Australia who's enjoying reading the only really professional hi-fi magazine. Finally I have come across a group of hi-fi enthusiasts who are not afraid to put down a system if it does not sound good. I sure like to know exactly what I'm buying.

Unfortunately, I only discovered real hi-fi after I had already invested in a less than satisfying system consisting of Jamo Cornet 70III speakers, Yamaha CDC645, and a Yamaha Prologic amp (480) with factory supplied interconnects and Taisonic cables.

I am now looking at upgrading. First to XLO or

Audioquest interconnects and cables, and then to the Marantz CD63SE and the Axiom amp. Do you think the upgraded system will give a warm, yet fast and punchy sound?



The Mission 731 LEs working in tandem with the CD-63SE and the VA 80 are the solution to your problem.

In your experience which do you think sounds better in the given price range, the XLO, Monster Cable, Audioquest or Van den Hul cables? My speakers at present do produce quite a warm, ambient sound but this

*output power usually lies in the 8V-10V range, very much according to condition. Quad tell me that even the transformers age, the paper interleave decaying with time. This alters distributed winding capacitance, the load the output valve sees at high frequencies, and degrades the slew performance.*

*Getting a Quad II back to original condition is therefore a difficult task if taken seriously. It's best to accept that most show lesser or greater signs of age, and be realistic about it. I have not measured more than 10V from a Quad II for 3% THD and could not endorse your*

*view that more is available. You also do not say how you have arrived at this figure.*

*We feel that around 20W minimum is needed to get reasonable volume with loudspeakers of decent sensitivity (i.e. around 86dB). This is very room and volume dependent, though. If you like to play rock loud and clean, as I'm sure many of our readers do, I would suggest 40watts as a minimum. Having said that, I'm well aware that Hi-Fi World also has a dedicated band of vintage equipment users who don't expect to shake their walls with Soundgarden (who*

*they?) at 110dB SPL. The sweetness of a Quad II for them is more than adequate compensation for its limited output power.*

*We have long campaigned for loudspeakers of higher sensitivity, to make the use of specialised, low power amplifiers - valve and solid-state - more practicable. Historically, Britain's loudspeaker industry swung toward low sensitivity power-gobbling designs when solid-state power became cheap way back in the seventies. These 'speakers traded sensitivity for bass output, but they often sounded dull and lifeless*

*with their heavy, wallowing bass cones.*

*There was considerable argument and angst over this sort of design. Engineers declared such 'speakers 'perfect' (an absurd notion with loudspeakers, but there you are), but buyers thought otherwise. KEF went bust over this, some in the company at that time blaming the press for poor reviews. I utterly reject this and any attempt to shift engineers' misunderstandings about market requirements onto the press. So you see, there's a lot behind the insensitive loudspeaker.*

*We strongly advocate*



can be veiled and lacks presence in the midrange. I have auditioned and love the Linn Sekrit and NHT Superzero speakers. Would you recommend them with the 63SE?

After reading your positive review of the beautiful Axiom amp in the September issue, I immediately set out to audition it. To my dismay no-one in Sydney stocked the amp, let alone has even heard about it! I gave up looking for it thinking it was only available in the UK.

Then came your long-awaited October issue in which there was a chance to win the amp. As they all say, "You've got to be in it to win it" and I desperately wanted to be in the running for it. However, when your October issue had finally hit the shores of Sydney and was ready for sale on the newsagents' shelves, which was in the first week of November, I realised that the competition closure date had already expired!

Why do we in Australia receive British magazines over one month late? Is there

a way round this problem? Will getting a subscription prevent the delay problem? Please include Australia as part of your hi-fi world. **Patrick Sze Tu New South Wales, Australia.**

*The problem with your system as it is lies more with the components than the cables, and a change of interconnects is probably not where you should start out on the upgrade road. A better idea would be to go for the Marantz CD-63SE CD player you already have in mind and match it with an amp like the Aura VA 80 and Mission's 731LE 'speakers, both of which featured in the January '96 supplement alongside the Marantz.*

*The VA 80 has all the control necessary to let the 731LEs really sing, and the combination of the Aura's warm tonal balance with the dynamic ability of the CD-63SE and the Mission 'speakers' clarity and speed should give you exactly the warm, fast and punchy sound you're after.*

*Ortofon's SPK100 cable would be ideal for hooking the 731LEs up to the Aura, and Chord's interconnects all work very well. If you want to avoid missing out on the closing dates for the competitions, airmail subscription is the way to go. JM*



Just what the doctor ordered, a set of Chord's Cobra interconnects.

#### PHONO STAGE UPGRADE

Would you please let me know your thoughts on the following subject. My system comprises a Linn LPI2 with Cirkus Kit, Ekos MkII, Arkiv,

Ringmat and Lingo PS, Audiolab 8000C/P, Mission 753 speakers, Chord Cobra interconnect cable and Linn K400 speaker cables.

I read with great interest your report on the Audio Innovations P2 phono pre-amp (Feb '96). The reason for the interest being that, at some time in the near future, I had planned on upgrading to an Audiolab 8000PPA, 8000Q pre-amp and 2 x 8000M monoblocs. I love the sound quality that my system gives me, so I was hoping the planned upgrade would give me more of the same. My problem now is which phono pre-amp to choose, PPA or P2?

My musical tastes range from Chuck Berry to current hits/dance music. I love good bass, but not necessarily Heavy Metal. The group I enjoy the most is Roxette. I never play any jazz or classical music.

After that upgrade the next thing that comes to mind would be new speakers and cables. I guess I can't do any more to improve the

... 47 ►

*sensitive 'speaker design because it forces engineers to work harder on the basic drive unit, encouraging use of stronger magnets, lighter cones and more efficient motor assemblies. Heavy plastic cones wallow and quack; today's cones utilise advances in materials technology (rather than 'speaker system design technology - the seventies thing) to give us High Definition Aerogel, carbon fibre and other stable and consistent materials that yield fundamentally better loudspeakers, all else being equal of course.*

*You might have seen my critical comments on the*

*whole idea of using a 'perfect source' for loudspeaker evaluation in the September issue. It's seductive in simple outline, but when you start to delve into this idea it becomes hopelessly unrealistic. You must use a perfect microphone (B&K make a commercial mic. that fits this description, but it isn't everyone's sonic cup of tea) and record in an anechoic chamber or similar venue.*

*The Japanese, being diligent fellows, do this sort of thing. Denon have recorded an entire orchestra in an anechoic (probably the Matsushita anechoic, which I've visited - it's like an*

*aircraft hangar). Yes, we have this recording at Hi-Fi World (and a flat B&K mic.) and no, we have no intention of using any of it for loudspeaker evaluation because it sounds totally unreal. A loudspeaker that made it sound better would actually encourage us to reach the wrong conclusion rather than the right one. In my view, this is hi-fi gone mad.*

*At the end of the day we have to accept that loudspeakers are far from perfect devices, and that there is some leeway for pragmatism in their evaluation. We do of course use measurement,*

*but alongside music used at home, from rock through to classical. NK*



You can find out for yourself on a friend's CD player how a 'perfect' venue sounds with this gold-plated Denon CD of the Osaka Philharmonic Orchestra playing in an anechoic chamber (available from Denon dealers for £35.25. Call 01753 888447 for your nearest dealer)

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LPI2.

What do you think? Please feel free to recommend or comment on any area, as I value your advice in this



Michell's Iso HR can be tailored to suit your Linn Arkiv as well as most other MCs.

respect.

One last thought. Sooner or later I will have to buy a CD player. My thoughts on this were to buy a Linn transport and DAC, the idea being that this would probably have a similar sound quality to my LPI2. Any comments on this?

I don't want to fall into the trap of upgrading for the sake of it, but I feel I can have better sound quality without things becoming (too) silly. **Graham Jelley**  
**Taichung,**  
**Taiwan.**

*You are definitely on the right lines with your upgrade ideas, but I'd suggest a slightly different approach. The 8000C, although a fine pre-amplifier, could definitely be improved on. You have a really top-flight front end, one that deserves the very best attention. Definitely audition the Audio Innovations P2 with its step-up transformer, which keeps noise ultra low, essential with your low output Arkiv moving coil cartridge. This is one of the best set-ups we've come across and I'm sure you'll be exhilarated by its*

*sound. The only other head-amp we've heard that could compete is the Michell Iso HR with its*

*Hera power supply.*

*The Iso HR is factory set to suit the cartridge it is going to be used with; Michell know the Arkiv well, so there is no problem here. Speak to Patrick Huang of Mr Audios, Michell's distributor in Taiwan who is based in Taipei.*

*His number is Tel: (02) 707 7907. With a bit of luck, you may be able to get to audition the P2 and Iso side by side.*

*Continuing in the direction from source to 'speakers, next I'd replace your 8000C with the 8000Q as you suggest. The Q is notably smoother and more refined, so you will then be able to appreciate even more of the quality of your front end.*

*Power amps next. I actually prefer the 8000P to the 8000Ms, strange as it may seem. Admittedly, the Ms do have more power and drive on tap, but you don't really need it as your Missions are quite an easy load anyway. I find the P doesn't lack any of the detail of the Ms, but is richer and more musical; the Ms can sound a touch sterile sometimes.*

*Where I feel you will hear a notable improvement though, is in adding a second 8000P to your system and bi-amping - one amplifier to drive the tweeters, one for the bass. Bi-amping has several advantages. Firstly, you should hear better control right across the range. More importantly, harmonics from strong bass transients developed*

*in the power amplifier won't reach the tweeter, which normally results in a sweeter and purer treble quality.*

*Once all this is in place, and if you want to follow your upgrade path right the way through, loudspeakers should be next on the shopping list. Mission's new 754 Freedom 5s, with their Aerogel midrange driver, are worth an audition (you could also add another 8000P to these and tri-amp) as are ProAc's Studio 200s and Spendor's SP7/1s.*

*Finally CD players. You've opened up a real can of worms here. With the above system, you're going to be getting such a good sound from your LPs that it's difficult to recommend any CD player that will come close. Pink Triangle's Da Capo convertor is one of the few we've managed to live with over an extended period, used with an Audiolab 8000CDM transport. Another top-flight player is the McIntosh CDM7009. Consider your choice carefully though. Often a CD player will sit unused in the company of such a well-sorted LP front end. Good luck. DB*

reel tape recorder. Can you say if Tandberg is still in business or has an agent in this country?

Better still, can you give the name of a British manufacturer of rubber belts for reel and cassette machines?  
**F. B. Rowland**  
**Melton Mowbray,**  
**Leicestershire.**

*Tandberg, in name at least, is alive and well. The Norwegians are quite proud of this little piece of their history, so I doubt it will ever be allowed to die. Essentially the name, rather than the original company, is still in existence, but they are an amenable bunch, and I'm sure would at least be able to point you in the right direction. HB*

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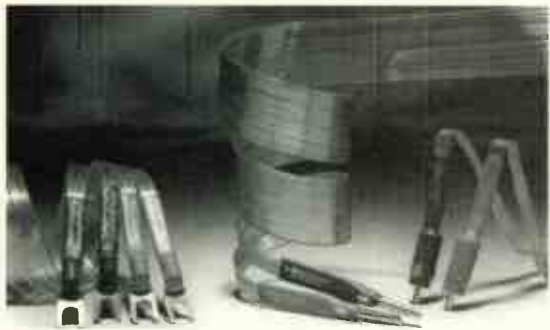
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Vitavox AK 157 (Alnico) 15" horn bass units	£550 each	
Vitavox S2 (Alnico) mid range horn drivers	£500 each	
8 x USSR 6B4G triode valves	£15 each	
Gauss 1502 High Frequency units	£150 each	
Krell Reference 4 box fully balanced pre-amp	£3525	£13000
Tour Coach	£POA	

Sale Items	Sale	List
Impulse H2 oak v. late pair. Immac. Like new.	£1700	£2250
Rotel Michi RHQ10 Phono pre	£490	£995
HØRNING Agathon. Oak	£3000	£3559
HØRNING Aristophane. Mahogany	£1600	£2600
MICROMEGA Stage 2 ex dem	£400	£750
MICROMEGA Stage 3 ex dem	£500	£900
Border Patrol 300B SE (Special)		
-Metalic blue/chrome outboard PSU	£3000	£4500
Audio Innovations S.500 Integrated	£450	£1200
Audio Innovations S.700 line integrated	£700	£1200
Audio Innovations S.1000 50w monos	£900	£1750
Audio Innovations S.1000 SE Ex D	£1500	£2500
Audio Innovations L2 line pre	£500	£760
Audio Innovations P2 phono MM	£550	£760
Monitor Audio MA 800 Gold. Rosewood. Giveaway £290		£880
Apogee Centaur Minor. Immaculate. Giveaway	£400	£1350
Alphason Sonata/ Atlas PSU/ HR100MCS	£700	£1500



# FOURS OF NATURE

**Douglas Floyd-Douglass and Dominic Baker put their ears to the port of KEF's Reference Four loudspeaker to find out what coupled-cavity bass adds up to.**

**M**y first dealings with the Reference Fours seemed to be characterised by thuds. The first was when I finally managed to manhandle them out of their boxes and onto the floor. The second was when I switched them on. And the third was me dropping tiredly into the comfort of my listening sofa. From that vantage point, the model Fours looked tall, imposing and very solid.

The cabinet build and Rosewood finish are both of a very high quality but can't hide the rather anonymous 'hi-fi loudspeaker box' shape of the 'speakers. I was very fond of the original KEF 104.2s, with their quirky design and individual styling. The Fours seem to have exchanged this stylistic flare for sonic ability.

The plastic grille does no justice to the baffle, which is impeccably finished. Once the grilles are off, though, you can start to appreciate the amount of time and effort that has gone into the Reference Fours' design. They are a six driver, four way system with coupled-cavity loading for the two opposed 10in. bass drivers. These are linked by a force cancelling aluminium rod (visible through the five inch port) and can deliver extreme sound pressure levels. The rest of the frequency range is handled by two polypropylene midrange units, topped off by the queen of midrange and treble integration, KEF's Uni-Q driver.

# perfect balance

## The New Meridian 566

A DAC with the performance where it counts. Meridian's twin Phase-Lock Loop yields the lowest jitter whilst our 20 bit DAC offers a new benchmark in clarity and deep fulfilling bass.



## The New Meridian 508.20

Taking CD replay to the edge with a new 20 bit converter and precision re-clocking used throughout. With the lowest jitter and pure Class A analogue balanced output the 508 reaches a performance level previously unheard.

## The New Meridian 557

Balanced has never been so right. With balanced inputs and a dual mono design this 200W amplifier is the perfect finish to our balanced range. A unique ground balancing system gives you the highest performance in bridged mode without compromising the superb stereo at which Meridian amplifiers excel. Bridged output into 4 Ohms gives a massive 1000W.



## The New Meridian 502

A Dual mono preamplifier design. Separating the channels onto individual boards gives Meridian a level of preamplifier performance to match our new 20 bit CD sources. With the highest quality components and Meridian's years of experience in preamplifier design we are now able to offer you a preamplifier that sonically disappears.

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## Meridian Audio Limited

Stonehill, Stukeley Meadows,  
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Tel 44 (0)1480 434334  
Fax (0)1480 432948



Like a boy with his new toy, I couldn't wait to fire up these stately 'speakers. Although the Reference Fours would look imposing in a small to medium sized room, in my 14m by 5m drawing room they had enough space to really breathe.

I started my listening with the Rogers E40a and TEAC's VRDS DAC and transport. The sound was immediately impressive, with an

attractive bottom end warmth at low listening levels. Soundstage depth was good too - almost on a par with Quad's electrostatics. The integration between drive units works so well that the transparency for a multi-transducer design is little short of excellent. This means that I wasn't just listening for reverberation clues to give me depth information, but looking at a soundstage I could literally have walked through.

Particularly impressive was their ease of drive - a 'modest' 40w pure class A amplifier can certainly make them sing beautifully. It was clear that there was a lot of engineering behind those flawless Rosewood walls, especially the discrete (not!) downfiring driver visible through the port.

It was time to shift some air, I decided. I had to find an amplifier capable of delivering real current - the Fours are hugely current hungry but deliciously responsive if you can deliver. I turned to my professional Yamaha 4002M, which is capable not only of delivering good, lean music, but of lighting up Brighton pier with its almost limitless power reserves.

As with most pro amps, there is often a discrete standby switch conveniently placed out of sight. When I innocently powered up the meaty 'Mama' and pressed Play on the TEAC, the attenuators were set just below half power. The blast of sound that followed before the protection relay clicked in brought my wife and neighbours rushing in, and left me with a large, indulgent smile on my face - at last, a PA system with quality, sophistication, volume and character.

Once peace and quiet had been re-established, I settled down to Berlioz' *Symphonie Fantastique*. This is one of my favourite test CDs partly because I love the piece itself and partly because its dynamics are unmatched at any listening level. The transparency and depth of soundstage that the KEFs managed to construct was extraordinary - I could have walked right in and picked out the individual instruments.

The Telarc recording of Tchaikovsky's 1812 emerged on a grand scale through the Reference Fours.

Timing, speed and midrange openness really allowed the orchestra to blast out triumphantly. The *Marche Slave* also took on new life, with the basses and cellos swirling in delightful unison - Pyotr Illyich would have turned in his grave (to move his ear closer to the KEFs!)

Pink Floyd's 'Brick in the Wall Pt 1' sounded magnificent. The low end bass richly illustrated the dynamic and transient ability of the Fours as Roger Water's vocal remained lucid, liquid and emotionally intact. When the crash sounds came in before "I don't need no arms around me", I could have sworn these 'speakers were made just for this calibre of recording.

Ricky Lee Jones' 'Pirates' showed poise and balance throughout, with the piano and vocals working in harmony. Upright bass was about as tangible as it could be, and the Uni-Q tweeter turned on the charm for what was an open, crisp and extended treble.

KEF's Reference Fours draw you into the music in an authoritative, engrossing and entertaining manner with their great bass realism. Listening to these 'speakers turned out to be a true pleasure, and I won't be happy to see them go. At the price they actually represent terrific value, and they make top quality hi-fi accessible, out-doing designs costing up to twice as much ●

#### KEF Reference Four

(Black Ash) £3099

(Rosewood) £3899

#### KEF

Tovil,

Maidstone,

Kent ME15 6QP

Tel: 01622 672261

#### WORLD VERDICT

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

#### Measured Performance

see p111

For those of you that think  
that modern life has been  
immeasurably improved by  
the advent of nuclear power,  
soap operas and the ending  
of all wars, you should replace  
all your records with CD's.



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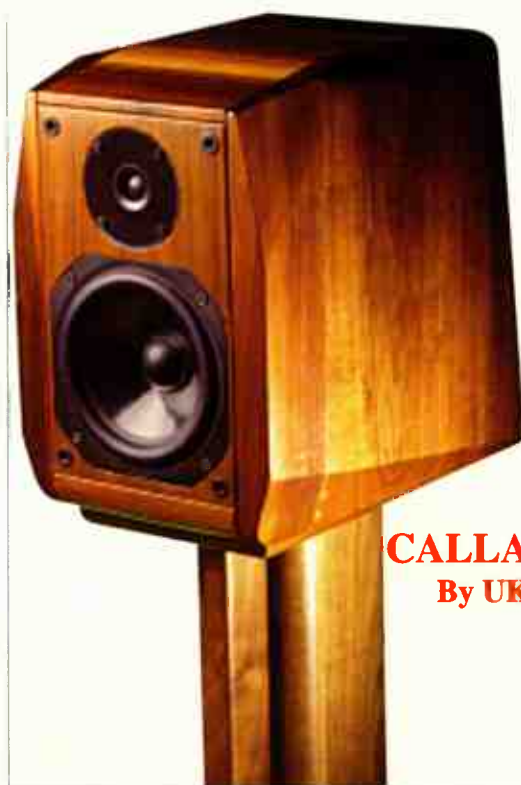
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# La Dolce Vita

To build a good loudspeaker, you must first build a good loudspeaker cabinet. So why do most manufacturers use MDF for their cabinets? The answer, in case you didn't know, is that MDF is cheap. But unfortunately, as materials go, it's also rather mediocre. At UKD, we do things differently. Every model in the Opera range is made by our own craftsmen from acoustically inert, beautiful hardwood.

Take the Callas, for example. Fashioned from one-point-four inch thick solid mahogany\*, using traditional furniture making methods, the cabinet is as dense and resonance-free as you can get. That is the *right* way to build cabinets, and the *only* way to allow the drive units to perform at their best. The result, you can be sure, is a loudspeaker that sounds every bit as classy as it looks. Which, quite simply, puts the Callas way out ahead for sheer musical enjoyment.

And at little more than the price of an ordinary pair of loudspeakers, what you get is a real piece of La Dolce Vita.



CALLAS  
By UKD

UKD

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\* From sustainable sources, naturally.



Are all hi-fi journalists as carnal, venal and drunken as they're commonly thought to be? Well, there'll always be those who let the side down... but generally, yes they are.

Okay, I'm kidding, because audio publishing isn't all long champagne-drenched afternoons at press receptions, freebies and ego-gratification (if only). The daily life of your average hack sees him sitting in front of a well worn Apple Mac, banging away at the keys writing one of those dull little corners of the mag that nobody reads (HFW excepted, of course). And that's the good bit, because the rest of his day could be spent wrestling a sixty kilo pair of monsters floorstanders into a half-decent position in the listening room. Or shorting himself out as he sweats amidst a maze of wires at the back of a ten foot mutant equipment stand (stop it, I'm crying).

No, hi-fi hackery isn't completely the stuff of dreams, but hey, we've all got to do a job, haven't we? But what about those who tirelessly mess around with hi-fi as an unpaid labour of love? Well, count me in on that score too - I've been through years of torture trying to get my system sorted, wasting more of my free time than any misguided footie fan or fitness freak would ever dream of squandering. As a student, my first few days tenure of whatever tumble-down house I happened to share consisted of pacing around my room knocking the walls, measuring the floor space and carefully regarding the location of the mains socketry. While the other kids were 'at the library' (i.e. down the pub), I'd be banging Linn Kan speaker stands into floors, trying to get the Sondek to bounce properly on my Sound Organisation table, or cranking up my NVA amp in search of the stereo image. The best days

# audiophilia

## David Price



of my life...lost to hi-fi.

Unfortunately this unnatural rite didn't stop with studentdom. I went travelling and ended up working in Amsterdam for a year. With no temperamental flat earth system to set up I felt quite liberated at the prospect of nothing more than a Walkie-Pro for company, but the plan soon started to go adrift. After a mad spending spree at Concerto Records (a wondrous

my flat. With no money left for a taxi, I had to take the tram, much to the bemusement of the ticket inspector who tried to charge me for the seat the system was occupying. On discovering I was one of those eccentric 'Engelenders', he shrugged his shoulders and gave up, while the other passengers looked on curiously, wondering what this foreigner was doing on a tram with such a pathetic-

fruitful hi-fi hunting ground I've ever encountered. The residents of this delightful town seemed to suffer excessively from that most suburban of malaises - keeping up with the Jones's (or should that be the Sakamotos?) This meant that whenever the big domestic electronics manufacturers decided to radically re-style their separates (i.e. just about every month), there'd be a glut of old, obsolete and unwanted hi-fi paraphernalia left out on the street with the rubbish. Whether this was supposed to be some kind of sign to the neighbours that the householder had just splashed out on all the latest gear, or just an open

*"As far afield as Tokyo's urban sprawl have I been spotted cowering under the weight of old bits of hi-fi"*

Dutch second-hand vinyl emporium) and a quick sojourn down to Munich one weekend where I discovered World of Music ("die schallplatten profi", if they do say so themselves), I found myself with loads of vinyl and nothing to play it on. Duly, I took the only option available to me and bought an ancient set-up from a junk shop for twenty quid (a grubby Pioneer PL12 record deck, a distressed Trio amp and well-worn Wharfedale Chevins).

After the first flush of satisfaction subsided, I suddenly realised I had to get this motley collection of seventies relics back to

looking collection of old audio junk. It's a question I too have often asked myself ever since.

And it didn't stop there either. As far afield as Tokyo's urban sprawl have I been spotted cowering under the weight of old bits of hi-fi I've found abandoned behind people's houses. I've liberated monster seventies Pioneer amps, gigantic Diatone tower speakers, massive old Sony open-reels and countless pensionable direct drive turntables - all hitherto bound for the crusher. Living in Gyotoku, which is to Tokyo what Slough is to London, proved the most

invitation for me to upgrade, I'll never know. Needless to say, half an hour of heaving the aforementioned discarded gear back to my place and a splash of furniture polish invariably meant my system got bigger once more.

If you think this all sounds a trifle undignified, sad even, you'd be absolutely right. But my experiences as an audio refuse collector taught me something I'll never forget - the best sounding hi-fi is free hi-fi. As I was later to discover, the hacks have known this for years, probably since hi-fi itself was invented. They're not stupid, you know●

# THE GULF BETWEEN NAIM & THE COMPETITION







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from  
*Dominic Todd,*  
*our man in*  
*retailing*

## Fair Views

'lifestyle' markets and concentrate on ease of use and neatness, the old adage "the more boxes, the better" is being ignored. I know it isn't always the case, but hi-fi does usually sound better when accompanied by myriad separate power supplies, DACs, phono stages, cross-overs and anything else that can be ripped out and put in its own box.

Testing a Shearne pre/power combination recently confirmed the advantages. The standard pre/power combination outstripped most integrated units at the price. But when a second power amp was added, the combination took a step up to the next quality league, such was its increased poise and control. When used with my own inefficient (82dB) loudspeakers, this wasn't such a great surprise. The surprise came when I found equally substantial improvements with 'speakers thought of as being undemanding and sensitive, in this case the Heybrook Quartets.

The width of the soundstage (which is where many recent hi-fi products are falling down) improved. As did the music's dynamics, which benefited from an increased alacrity and sharpness on transients. It seems that whatever the 'speaker, serious improvements in sound quality can be brought about by the adoption of an amp for each of them. Interestingly, bi-amping, whereby the treble and bass are run off separate amplifiers, didn't have nearly such a positive effect as with a stereo amplifier for each 'speaker. It goes to prove that utilising the hardware has as much to do with the final result as matching it in the first place.

Don't get me wrong, source components do affect overall sound quality. But the real heart of any system lies in the marriage of amplifier(s) and 'speakers. Get this bit right and the rest is plain sailing ●

Unless you're new to hi-fi, you'll know by now that system matching is crucial to audio Elysium. Just think of all those reviews you've seen with system matching provisos. And let's not forget the countless articles and letters on the importance of a good dealer to guide you through the hi-fi minefield. There's no getting away from the fact that system matching is an art (some would even go so far as to call it a black art).

It's not something that can be studied from reading countless reviews, either. A system put together from a selection of best buys will, in many cases, sound simply average. It's a mistake many still make, the end result often being that the hi-fi simply sits in the corner of the room, rather than being used and enjoyed. Ultimately, there's no substitute for simply listening to combinations of hi-fi to see which possesses that often elusive synergy.

Pursuing this theme further, I was recently reminded of the importance of the relationship between the amplifier and 'speakers. I believe that the union of these two components is the most vital in the entire system if it's to stand any chance of harmonising. So much so, that they should really be considered as a whole rather than two separate entities.

What reminded me of this was a customer who

had recently purchased a pair of Tannoy 637 'speakers, and was seeking an amplifier to match. Nothing too difficult in that, I thought. The Tannoys suit his taste in rock music played at ear bleeding levels, and are sensitive to boot. A high sensitivity 'speaker like this should match a wide variety of amplifiers. How wrong I was! I was just

broad spread of sound, they can also grate with the wrong choice of partners. And grate they did! It was becoming increasingly apparent that despite a high efficiency, the Tannoys needed an amp with high current output and a decent damping factor. Just the sort of needs, in fact, that you'd expect from an inefficient 'speaker! In the end, a

*“There was a time when a pre/power combo was de rigueur for any aspiring audiophile. Now it seems to be merely optional”*

about to be reminded (again) that high efficiency is no guarantee of high compatibility. And to prove it, we went through damn near the shop's entire stock of amps in an effort to make the Tannoys really sing (as I know they can).

There were the beefy Oriental types from Pioneer, Luxman, Technics, Yamaha, and the like. Respectable Brits consisted of Audiolab, Creek and Musical Fidelity, and a whole host of 'oddballs'. None of them could control the 637's copious bass while still maintaining a smooth, natural response in the upper midrange.

Although Tannoy's dual concentric drive units do allow for an unusually

solution was found without resorting to big bucks, in the form of a NAD 214/114 pre/power combination. It offered a decent bass and coherent control across the Tannoy's frequency response.

As the standard and resulting price tags of integrated amplifiers continue to rise, pre/power amplifiers don't appear to be as prominent as they once were. There was a time when a pre/power combo was de rigueur for any aspiring audiophile. Now it seems to be merely optional. Even that great bastion of separate amps, Quad, have recently given way to integration. It's a shame because whilst manufacturers pursue



# TUNER WITH MAYO ♦♦

In case you hadn't noticed, the BBC's 'first programme' has now jettisoned its pensionable ex-pirate radio 'jocks' and 'adult orientated rock', and is now a pure pop station once more. Here you'll find the likes of The Fugees, The Divine Comedy and Alex Reece - lots of good new music.

But if you're wary about rediscovering Radio One, why not let Kenwood's KT-3080 tuner help you? With its full RDS EON implementation it's an extremely user-friendly little device that tells you the name of the station you're listening to, its frequency and the time - as well as displaying scrolling Radio Text that'll tell you whose show it is. In short, the Kenwood's a cinch to use, and with forty presets, two antennae inputs with RF attenuation and switchable wide/narrow IF bands, it's combat-ready for today's crowded airwaves and cable radio.

All in all, you wouldn't really believe the KT-3080 to be the budget model it is. With all the gizmos, how come it only costs £180? Well, picking the thing up rather gives the game away - the only way a box this size can weigh so little is if it's got plenty of air inside.

After a day's soak testing and committing the supplied interconnect to the bin where it belongs, it could have made even old Radio One sound good (well, almost) - it was a gem. Faced off by my £400 Sony 770ES reference tuner (which sounds better than most CD players), the Kenwood acquitted itself very well with a big, bold, bouncy sound not unlike the old NAD analogue tuners of yore. As most budget Japanese radios sound painfully thin and harsh, I realised

I was onto something good.

Starting off with R1's excellent Essential Selection early evening slot, the Kenwood gave a very muscular rendition of Underworld's 'Born Slippy'.

It had strong, pounding bass, clear midrange

and a commendably refined treble, those looped hi-hats loosing just a touch of their brilliance compared to the Sony, but none of their sweetness. Low bass was a tad rolled off too, but upper bass was bigger and warmer - surprisingly good for such a low priced design. Moving onto ILR and Bill Withers' 'Lovely Day' (fancy hearing that on a local station?) came through with equal aplomb, if anything sounding more impressive than the Sony. The way the Kenwood seemed to drive the song along where its rival would try to deconstruct it made the KT ultimately more listenable.

Still, it wasn't all plain sailing. The Kenwood's slightly compressed stereo stage struggled a bit when asked to image far left or far right, and within the soundstage things weren't located as tightly as the more expensive reference tuner. Depth perspective too was a touch flat, particularly noticeable on some of R3's (still superb sounding) Proms broadcasts. Zapping over to R4,

... Campbell, Goodier or Lamacq. David Price rediscovers wonderful Radio One with the help of Kenwood's KT-3080 tuner.

the '3080 revealed more of its true self. The Archers' theme was pleasantly clear, rich and smooth, but male voices from young upstart John Archer to old soak Joe Grundy displayed a hint of chestiness - it wasn't at all offensive, it just sounded euphonic compared to the ultra-incisive Sony. As for AM, home of my new habit - Talk Radio - the Kenwood was only just up to par, with the usual nasties creeping through with James Whale (if you see what I mean).

This Kenwood really is a good buy, especially if you put facilities high on your shopping list. It possesses a surprisingly mature sound for the money that only class leaders like NAD's 412 can beat. In the words of fab sixties jock Tony Blackburn, it's 'sensational', well almost.

Kenwood KT-3080

£180

Kenwood  
Kenwood House,  
Dwight Road,  
Watford,  
Herts. WD1 8EB  
Tel: 01923 816444

## WORLD VERDICT ☆☆☆

Good sound and high feature count make the KT-3080 a great budget buy.

Measured Performance  
see P111



competition



## SHEARNE PRE/POWER AMPLIFIER WORTH OVER

# £1500

This month's competition finds us with a Shearne Audio pre/power amplifier to give away; the Phase 6 preamplifier and Phase 3 power amplifier, worth over £1,500.

**J**ohn Shearne joined the hi-fi fray in 1990, aiming to put together a range of amplifiers that embody the lucid midrange and sweet treble of valves coupled to the transistor's solid bass and reliability. July 1991, therefore, witnessed the release of the Phase 1 pre-amplifier and its partnering dual mono 80w power amplifier which introduced the world to Shearne's characteristic sound and marbled fascia.

Two years later, the Phase 1 was, unsurprisingly, followed by the acclaimed Phase 2 integrated, which led Eric Braithwaite in 1993's September issue to say of the music that emerged from it, "Live isn't the word. It had a sense of atmosphere and occasion that took me by surprise."

1995 saw the release of the 50w

Phase 3 power amplifier, whose layout was designed with valve circuit simplicity and topology in mind. While the Phase 3 power amplifier can be matched with almost any pre-amp, it also allows the Phase 2 to be effectively upgraded through bi-amping.

Moving three steps forward, Shearne's next offering was the £895 Phase 6 pre-amplifier. The amp's line stage itself is a simple class A design, and takes its power from two separate voltage regulator circuits, the first producing a relatively clean dual supply for the second to work from. Dominic Todd was duly impressed by the Phase 6's transparency and control in our September issue, when it was auditioned along with a pair of Phase 3 power-amps.

If you'd like to be in the running to win this John Shearne pre/power amplifier, all you have to do is answer the questions opposite and complete the tie-breaker. Send in your entry form on the back of a sealed envelope or postcard to reach us before October 4th to:

**Shearne Audio Competition,**  
Hi-Fi World Magazine,  
64 Castellain Road,  
Maida Vale,  
London W9 1EX

Don't forget to include your name, address and telephone number if possible so that we can contact the winners promptly.



## AUGUST ISSUE COMPETITION

### VALVE STARTER SYSTEM

In our August '96 issue, we gave you the chance to win a valve starter system made up of an AMC CDM7 CD player with valve output stage, an Audion Sterling ETSE valve amplifier and a pair of Wharfedale Valdus 300 loudspeakers. And the winner is: Susan Hamilton of New Romney, Kent.

**Congratulations!**

### COMPETITION RULES AND CONDITIONS

- [1] Only one entry per household. Multiple entries will be automatically disqualified.
- [2] In the event of more than one entrant submitting all-correct answers, the winner will be picked from the tie-breaker by the Editor. We will endeavour to publish the results in the second issue following the closing date.
- [3] Purchase of the magazine is not a precondition of entry.
- [4] No correspondence will be entered into; the Editor's decision is final.
- [5] No employees of Audio Publishing Ltd. or of any companies associated with the production or distribution of the prizes may enter.

If you would prefer *not* to receive details of new products or special offers please tick the box.

Hi-Fi World magazine is published by Audio Publishing Ltd.

## COMPETITION ENTRY QUESTIONS

- 1) Who set up Shearpe Audio?  
A. Frank Bough    B. Delia Smith    C. Nelson Mandela    D. John Shearpe
- 2) When was the Phase 2 released?  
A. 1896    B. 1996    C. 1993    D. 1943
- 3) How powerful is the Phase 3?  
A. 10kW    B. 3W    C. 600W    D. 50W
- 4) What class is the Phase 6?  
A. Class 2B    B. Class Z    C. Class A    D. Class FM
- 5) How many regulators does the Phase 6 have?  
A. 12    B. 1    C. 200    D. 2

### TIE BREAKER (obligatory)

Complete the following in less than 30 words

If it's music that you yearn,  
Try some amps from John Shearpe,  
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Gets you right into the groove,

.....  
.....

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

Post Code: ..... Tel No.....

Please do not add my name to your mailing list.

# JBL S2600 COMPETITION - PART 2



Here's what you've all been waiting for, the JBL token to affix to last month's entry form. Just cut it out and stick it to the entry form printed in last month's September issue. Now you can send in your completed entry form and have a chance to win a pair of £3,500 JBL S2600 hybrid horn loudspeakers. Good luck.



# SHEARNE AUDIO

P O BOX 22 STEVENAGE HERTFORDSHIRE SG2 8HF ENGLAND  
TELEPHONE 01438 740953 FAX 01438 740955

## HI-FI WORLD - PHASE 3 POWER AMPLIFIER

Hi-Fi World voted the Phase 3 power amplifier one of the best products of 1995 in the World Winner, January 1996 World Supplement. "It was dynamic, big, brassy and thoroughly exciting."

## HI-FI WORLD - PHASE 2 INTEGRATED with the PHASE 3 POWER AMPLIFIER

"The two are an astonishing sonic bargain in my experience. But with the Phase 2 alone Shearner owners start off a good few rungs higher up the quality ladder than most." Eric Braithwaite.

## WHAT HI-FI - PHASE 2 INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER

"The amplifier creates a big sound stage where instruments are easily pinpointed. Stereo imagery is also high on the absolute list, as in the amount of detail and presence it delivers. The scale and impact is never in question."

## WHAT HI-FI - PHASE 2 INTEGRATED and PHASE 3 POWER AMPLIFIER

"This amp pairing is full of zeal and excitement. Rock rhythms are lively, upbeat and punchy. Real edge of the seat stuff. The amps cope well with sudden dynamic changes, hitting hard in the bass and clearly revealing wide open sound stages."

## HI-FI NEWS - PHASE 2 INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER

"It was the grasp of the rhythm that really indicated how well the Shearner transmitted the magic of the musical performance. Mainstream vocals were thrown into prominence by the Shearner, frequently causing tingles along those parts of the anatomy that seem most receptive to musical emotions." Peter Collins.

## HI-FI NEWS - PHASE 2 INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER

"The last hint of the edge which makes some transistor amplifiers rather

wearing after an hour or so. The bass is excellently presented, with good solidity and control. and there is an impressive ability to layer elaborate orchestral textures." Ivor Humphreys.

DEMONSTRATING AT THE RAMADA HI-FI SHOW ROOM 1015.

### Dealers List:

Amadeus Sutton	Colfield	0121 354 2311	Salisbury Hi-Fi	Salisbury	01722 322169
Classic Hi-Fi	Kettering	01536 515766	Southampton Audio	Southampton	01703 288434
English Audio	Hereford	01432 355081	V:Audio	Bristol	0117 9686005
Hi-Fi Experience	Darlington	01325 481318	Zen Audio	Hull	01482 587379
Moorgate Acoustics	Rotherham	01709 370666	Zouch Audio	Ashby de la Zouch	01530 414128
Movement Audio	Poole	01202 730865	Hazelmere	Audio Bucks.	01494 437892
Phase III Hi-Fi	Worthing	01903 507007	Premiere	Audio Barnsley	01924 255045

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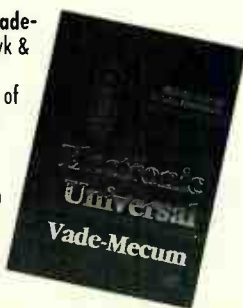
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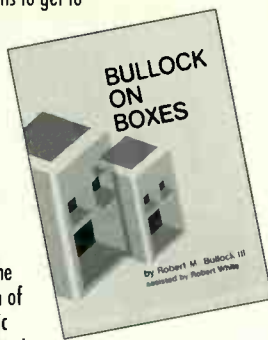
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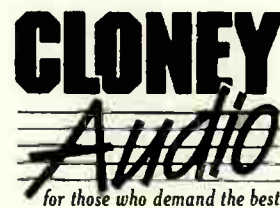
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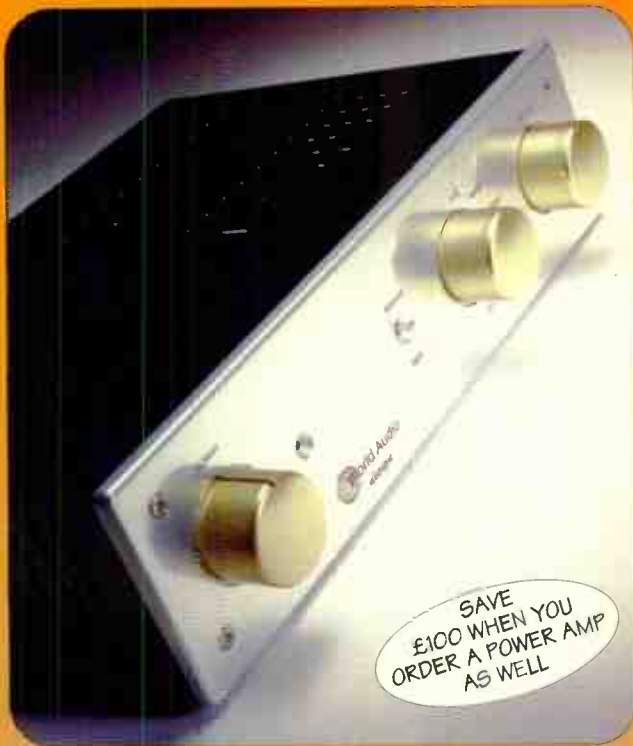
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### KL54 TWO WAY CARBON-FIBRE DRIVER LOUDSPEAKER

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### KL56 ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY THREE WAY LOUDSPEAKER

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Drive Unit & Crossover kit etc £825  
Drive Unit Pack £640

### KL57 TWO WAY CARBON-FIBRE DRIVER FLOORSTANDER

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### KL58 TWO WAY HIGH SENSITIVITY LOUDSPEAKER

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# World favourites guide

## COMPACT DISC PLAYERS

**QUAD 67** **second-hand**  
One of Quad's best products for a long time, the 67 is warmer and smoother than most, yet is highly musical and revealing. Good enough to frighten many rivals.

**DENON DCD-315** **£150**  
Real hi-fi and real music for a mere £150. Achieves a good semblance of orchestral dynamics and acoustic space.

**NAD 510** **£200**  
A competent all rounder with lifelike soundstaging and impressive treble clarity.

**NAD 512** **£250**  
Its smooth sound and fine treble extension make the 512 something of a rarity at the price. For the money rivals are few.

**ARCAM ALPHA ONE** **£300**  
An excellent entry-level player from Arcam that's far better than equivalently priced Japanese machinery.

**MARANTZ CD-63 Special Edition** **£350**  
A superb budget buy. Addressing the problems of the CD-52II SE, its detailed and musical sound embarrasses many expensive players.

**NAD 514** **£350**  
The 514 conveys deep bass notes with conviction and weight. A supremely relaxing player to listen to with fine build quality.

**MARANTZ CD-63MKII KI-SIGNATURE** **£500**  
Similar to the CD-63SE but with more powerful and authoritative bass and an all-round smoother sound.

**TRICHORD GENESIS** **£549**  
Conveys music in a powerful and dramatic fashion. Smooth and sweet, with a good sense of depth. Maybe a little soft sounding though.

**DPA RENAISSANCE** **£895**  
Words cannot describe its infinite variety, but suffice to say you'll love it or hate it. Highly emotional, involving presentation with not a hint of self-doubt.

**MARANTZ CD-16** **£1399**  
An extremely neutral CD player, smooth and reserved in its performance. Beautifully built too.

**LINN KARIK 3** **£1600**  
Superb one-box player. Its supremely rhythmic, musical sound with delicacy and finesse puts it up with the best of the rest.

**NAIM CDI** **£1600**  
This single box 16-bit player sounds very engaging compared to your average bitstreamer. Has that vital tingle factor of the larger, two-box CDS.

**MCINTOSH CDM7009** **£2635**  
A thoroughly inspiring machine. One of the most musical CD players around; sweet, open and detailed.

## COMPACT DISC TRANSPORTS

**TEAC VDRS-T1** **£550**  
Not as substantially built as its chunky looks suggest, the T1 is nevertheless a good entry-level transport with a warm, expansive sound.

**AUDIOLAB 8000CDM** **£1300**  
Beautifully built and finished, the CDM is packed with sensible features and performs superbly, day-in day-out.

## CD CONVERTORS

**DPA LITTLE BIT III** **£300**  
A lot more weight at frequency extremes than the II and far better control. For £300 there's nothing to beat it.

**THORENS TDA2000** **£700**  
Used with the TCD2000 as a transport, the TDA2000 produces a sound that is focused, detailed and spacious. Good value.

**DPA ENLIGHTENMENT** **£795**  
Some believe this to be the best convertor around. A truly charismatic performer, it dives into rock music with rare passion.

**PINK TRIANGLE ORDINAL** **£837**  
Pure, smooth sound free from hardness. One of the best at any price, losing little to the big guns.

**PINK TRIANGLE DA CAPO** **£1450+**  
Offers a choice of filter modules, all up there with the best. The Da Capo is superb in many respects, but can sound a touch polite on rock.

**DPA 1024** **£6000**  
Proof positive that today's CDs needn't sound CD-like! Uses an in-house discrete convertor, and DPA haven't skimped on the build either!

## TURNTABLES

**GARRARD 401** **second-hand**  
In a decent plinth with an arm of SME309 calibre, the 401 has a highly authoritative overall sound with the most solid, expressive bass in the business. Very musical, but treble isn't up to modern standards.

**THORENS TD124** **second-hand**  
One of Thorens' best-ever turntables. Needs a modern plinth to give of its best. Duly installed, it's good enough to face off the Garrard 401, swapping some of its bass power for a more delicate, incisive treble.

**SYSTEMDEK IIX900/RB250** **£330**  
A fine all rounder and easy to upgrade. Brings more depth and breadth than a Rega 3.

**SYSTEMDEK 2X2** **£499**  
Although tuneful, bass isn't as deep as some rivals. More than makes up for it though with neutral and precise midrange and treble.

**RESON rsl** **£600**  
A lean, yet vibrant sound quality that really draws the listener in. With good detail and rhythmic integrity this is an impressive turntable package.

**MICHELL GYRODEC** **£800**  
Stunning looks, build and engineering, and don't underestimate the sound. Standard PSU and Rega arm gives a detailed, architectural, if undynamic sound. With QC PSU and SME V, its scale and insight kills the competition at the price.

**PRO-JECT 6.1SA** **£999**  
The Pro-ject places the listener in the best seat in the control room. Outrageous dynamics and a punchy, seriously deep bass. Comes with Sumiko arm and Ortofon MC30 Supreme.

**LINN SONDEK LP12** **£840 - £1530**  
Cirkus bearing puts it back up with the best. Superbly beguiling, rhythmic sound that plays jazz like few others, but lacks the Gyrodec's detail or imaging. With a Lingo PSU and EKOS tonearm, you'll forget CDs were ever invented.

**PINK TRIANGLE ANNIVERSARY** **£1200**  
One of the finest-sounding turntables around, the Anniversary takes the listener nearer the recording studio than almost any other deck. Works with Rega, Linn and SME arms alike.

**MICHELL ORBE** **£1950**  
The Darth Vader of analogue, the Orbe builds on the strengths of the Gyrodec. An ultra-tuneful, expansive sound.

**SME MODEL 20** **£2495**  
Including the excellent SME V tonearm, the Model 20 is possibly the last great turntable, unless you've got £11,000 for the Model 30, that is.

## TO NEARMS

**REGA RB300** **£130**  
Supremely capable at the price, but not quite humankind's salvation as has been suggested. Detailed, tight, rhythmic sound but tonally rather grey and cold-sounding.

**LINN AKITO** **£300**  
A well made entry-level tonearm which works especially well with the LP12, but struggles to match the RB300 on other decks.

**SME 3009SII** **£375**  
This Paleolithic device doesn't bother with frequency extremes or detail, but its legendary serviceability makes it a cult in Japan. Oh death, where is thy sting?

**SME309** **£570**  
A down-market version of the IV and V with aluminium armtube and detachable headshell. Tight, neutral sound with good tonality, but lacks the IV's pace and precision.

**SME IV** **£850**  
A Series V with lower toleranced bearings, cheaper cables and no damper. Still vastly over-engineered and almost capable of its bigger brother's sonic fireworks. SME's best value product.

**SME V** **£1235**  
A masterpiece of precision engineering with a cohesive, ultra-transparent sound. A dream to set up and use.

**LINN EKOS** **£1400**  
A thunderous battleship of an arm, with a very impressive sound, masses of detail and dynamics, but lacks the SME V's cohesion and musicality.



# World favourites guide

## CARTRIDGES

### ORTOFON VMS-2E £10

Warm, full-bodied, punchy and fast. Not to be sniffed at for a tenner. Can be upgraded with a better stylus at a later date.

### GOLDRING 1012GX £60

An accomplished MM with a solid bass, slightly forward midband and clean transients. £20 buys the faster, more dynamic 1022GX.

### GOLDRING 1042 £100

The best moving magnet available. Has an extremely cohesive sound that's warm but highly involving. Deliciously delicate treble and strong, powerful bass.

### ORTOFON MC15 SUPER II £110

An excellent budget moving coil with a smooth, polished, detailed sound. Tracks superbly but verges on the analytical at times. A bargain.

### ORTOFON SUPREMES £225-£450

The MC10, MC20 and MC30 Supremes all offer superb sound and value for money, with a distinctively rich, smooth and detailed musical performance. The valve brigade love them.

### LINN KLYDE £450

The Klyde's soft treble and prodigious bass mean it's tonally unbalanced, but it's still a real music-maker that many will love in the right system.

### ORTOFON MC2000 £650

We came across this one in an SME IV on a Garrard 401; it duly gave one of the best results we've ever heard.

### ORTOFON ROHMANN £1000

In a way it's MC2000 meets MC7500 with all the tonal strengths and dynamo sound Ortofon has been putting into its best moving-coil cartridges of late.

### LYRA LYDIAN £649

A truly musical, sophisticated device that makes most other MCs sound frigid.

### VAN DEN HUL MC-10 £840

Fluid bass, finely etched treble and highly tuneful in between. The MC10 is honey, pure and simple.

### ORTOFON MC7500 £2000

Conclusive proof that there's hope for humankind. Makes music of enormous scale and vibrancy. CD lovers would die if they heard it.

## INTEGRATED AMPLIFIERS

### NAD 3020 second-hand

Classic sweet sounding, punchy budget super-amp with strong phono stage. Able to embarrass many modern budget amps.

### NAD 310 £130

A real hi-fi amplifier at a bargain price. Forms the heart of a separates system that will murder any midi system at twenty paces. No phono stage, but you can't have everything at this price.

### NAD 312 £200

Smooth, clear and dry. Fine detailing with little to complain about at the price. Good facilities.

### ARCAM ALPHA 5 £230

A well-engineered budget amplifier with a bold, exciting presentation. Plenty of power and facilities, but lacks subtlety.

### ROTEL RA-970BX £250

With its smooth and powerful sound, the Rotel sings a seductive song with all types of music. Powerful enough for most 'speakers too.

### AURA VA-80 £280

The VA-80 is superb for the price with a confident, powerful sound. One of the smoothest around, it is capable of embarrassing more upmarket competition.

### ORELLE SA-100 £449

Clean, open, active sound. Smooth and detailed with good punch too. One of the best at the price.

### AUDIOLAB 8000A £500

A jack-of-all-trades whose facilities, build, power and top-rate phono input make it a steal. Sound is good, but less involving than the Naim Nait 3.

### NAIM NAIT 3 £500

A taste of high-end audio. The most involving, musical design at the price, but low power. Superb phono stage is £100 extra.

### MISSION CYRUS 3 £500

Superb engineering, a solid cast chassis and a clear, spacious sound. Phono stage could be better.

### SONNETEER CAMPION £579

An amplifier that delivers near studio definition along with exemplary timing. Utterly gripping.

### DPA RENAISSANCE £595

Rich and smooth, the Renaissance is one of the sweetest amps around, if lightweight.

### AUDION STERLING ETSE £600

Economically but well built single-ended valve amplifier. Wonderful clarity with vocals. £600 with 1 line input, £800 with 5.

### SUGDEN A21a £640

Class A transistor amp. Rich, crisp, deep, tight sound and it images well too. Wonderful.

### AUDIOLAB 8000S £650

Fast, clear, crisp sound with a wide-open sound stage. One of the best at the price.

### MERIDIAN 551 £795

Beautifully-built integrated with a sweeter, clearer sound than mid-price alternatives. Plenty of facilities and remote controllable.

### UNISON SIMPLY 2 £995

This single-ended valve amplifier is smooth, sweet and open. An extremely musical amplifier.

### UNISON SIMPLY 4 £1495

Sonically similar to the Simply 2, but with more power and control.

### AUDIONOTE OTO SE £1500

Ten watts of the sweetest sound around. Use sensitive speakers though, because it's unlikely to crack windows or trigger earthquakes.

### McINTOSH MA6800 £3735

The MA6800 not so much plays music as takes control of it, with effortless bass drive and a three-dimensional sound stage.

## PRE-AMPLIFIERS

### NAIM NAC32.5 second-hand

Naim's one-time top preamp is still a force to be reckoned with thanks to its precise, fast sound and excellent phono stage.

### ROTEL RQ-970BX £130

Superb value entry-level phono stage with audiophile quality components and clear sound.

### DPA DSP200S £495

Not quite the 50S, but there's little to match it at this price if outright sound quality is your priority.

### ROSE RV23-S £495

This interesting valve/transistor hybrid has a smooth, rich, spacious sound.

### AUDIOLAB 8000C £520

Versatile with superb phono input. Can sound sterile, but latest version is much improved.

### MICHELL ISO/HERA £530

This phono stage has fine midband and treble detail, with taut bass. The £850 ISO/HR brings more of everything, and for many people is the last word on the subject.

### AUDIO INNOVATIONS P2 £749

Fantastic bass and super insight make this one of the best phono stages around. One for vinyl lovers.

### AUDIOLAB 8000Q £995

Excellent line-level only preamp, greatly improves on 8000C with a more fluid, musical sound and greater grip. Remote control.

### NAIM NAC82 £1945

This remote control preamp thrusts detail forth in true Naim fashion.

## POWER AMPLIFIERS

### QUAD II second-hand

Classic valve monoblock with many thousands still in use around the world. Archetypal warm, smooth valve sound, although not the last word in detail or dynamics.

### LEAK STEREO 20 second-hand

The Stereo 20 can sound impressively up-to-date, although power and detail are ultimately limited.

### QUAD 405II second-hand

Solidly built, but lifeless sounding, power amp which can be substantially improved by a Quad factory service.

### MISSION CYRUS POWER £450

This power amplifier is a honey. Rich and smooth, but with a firm grip; a fine blend of properties.

### ROSE RP190 £495

Used with the partnering preamp it gives 70watts of smooth, relaxing sound.

### SUGDEN AU41P £530

Extremely competitive at the price with 100W of unusually smooth, full-bodied sound.

### SHEARNE PHASE 3 £619

A neutral, highly dynamic and thoroughly exciting amplifier. A sonic bargain.

# World favourites guide

## QUAD 606II £675

Quad's latest 140W powerhouse is smooth and civilised, but engagingly musical. Legendary back-up service.

## DPA DPA200S £750

Better than anything else at the price. Not as dry as the 50S.

## NAIM NAPI80 £900

Partnered with a NAC82, this has classic Naim control, making for a superbly rhythmic presentation. A touch lean for some tastes.

## MICHELL ALECTO STEREO £1300

A refined transistor amplifier with valve-like transparency and a full, warm, easy-going sound. The £1800 Alecto monoblocks have rare lucidity and three dimensional realism.

## AUDIOLAB 8000M £1500

Beautifully built, powerful amps that will drive anything you care to throw at them. Detailed, analytical sound, but a touch grey compared to valve rivals.

## CHORD SPM 1200 £2995

This is one of the best solid-state power amps around, with a massively powerful, dynamic and detailed sound.

## TUNERS

### LEAK TROUGHLINE second-hand

Our favourite way of listening to the wireless. A deliciously smooth, mellifluous sound that will have you junking your transistor radio in seconds. Ergonomics are crude, and you'll need a decent aerial and stereo decoder.

### NAD 412 £190

The 412 is remarkably musical and natural sounding. Rich sound and full bass are a rarity. Unbeatable at the price

### KENWOOD KT-6050L £300

Very, very tuneful and as clear and detailed as CD. Tuners like this have you sitting in your seat wondering at the sheer wealth of music out there.

### MISSION CYRUS FM7 £300

Clear and lucid sound that puts it up with the best regardless of price. Superb build and superior ergonomics to the NAD.

### ROTEL RT990BX £500

High quality Michi-based tuner with a sophisticated, forward sound with great imaging and soundstage. Sensible facilities and remote control.

### NAIM NAT03 £500

The NAT03 is further proof of Naim's proficiency with tuners, with a warm, easy sound and a good sense of atmosphere.

### FANFARE FT-1 £1350

In its native US the FT1 is no mere tuner but a 'broadcast monitor' no less, a task at which it acquits itself well, with a clear and powerful sound.

### NAIM NAT01 £1380

The best solid-state tuner available. For better radio, live in the studio.

## CASSETTE DECKS

### AIWA AD-S750 £150

Sonically a very decent machine. For the price there's nothing better. With Dolby B, C and S

### DENON DRM-650S £230

Forget metal tapes, but sound quality with ferrics and chromes makes it a bargain.

### PHILIPS DCC 730 £250

Digital playback gives a good 'analogue' presentation and analogue playback is reasonable too. A DCC bargain.

### AIWA AD-S950 £300

A stable transport, superb head and Dolby S make this an excellent recorder.

### PIONEER CT-S740S £430

A great piece of engineering from Pioneer, a bit complex, but a first rate sound on playback and recording. Dolby S included.

### NAKAMICHI DR2 £600

Where serious cassette decks start. The DR2 pushes recordings to the limit, remaining unflustered at all times.

### NAKAMICHI DRI £850

Better still than the DR2, with manual head azimuth adjustment to boot.

### NAKAMICHI CR7 £1500

Kills every other cassette deck and stamps on their graves.

## LOUDSPEAKERS

### MISSION 730iSE second-hand

Big clear sound and tuneful bass with plenty of punch. An audiophile bargain at a budget price.

### KEF CODA 7 £129

Arguably the new king of budget standmounters, the 7 has a highly musical presentation.

### MISSION 731 LE £149

An extensive reworking of Mission's entry level 'speaker, much tighter on transients and more refined treble. Neutral and revealing.

### TANNOY 631 SE £170

Great bass extension, super open and focused midrange and fine detail up-top. Work best on filled dedicated stands; unmatched at the price.

### B&W DM601 £200

Tight, solid and tuneful bass with a clean and pure tonal quality. Midrange is a little laid back, but sound stage is wide and open.

### ELTAX SYMPHONY 6 £240

A touch bright, but clean, open and lively sounding with it. They're well built and use high quality drive units. Top value.

### ROGERS LS33 £249

Big sound and a wonderful impressionist. Combine with matching AB33 subwoofers for extra bass depth.

### TDL RTL 2 £300

Bass on a budget from one of TDL's best floorstanders. Solid, vibrant and spacious sound.

### REL Q-BASS £350

Few subwoofers match the Q-Bass at the price. The tuning controls can be a bit of a fiddle, but once set up the rest is pleasure.

### EPOS ES12 £495

Strong, punchy bass is allied to detailed and articulate midrange and treble. Above all, these 'speakers are thoroughly musical.

### REL STRATA £500

The Strata is not a toy. Offers superb, true hi-fi bass depth and power.

### MISSION 752 £500

More capable than many twice the price. Using advanced High Definition Aerogel drivers, the 752s are clear, crisp and focused. Good sensitivity makes them easy to drive.

### TANNOY D100 £650

This small dual-concentric loudspeaker produces believable three dimensional imaging.

### PROAC STUDIO 100 £700

Excellent monitors with detailed, natural sound and plenty of atmosphere.

### HARBETH HL-P3ES £799

A fine example of good loudspeaker engineering. The top of the mini-monitor league.

### KEF REFERENCE SERIES ONE £995

The KEF's combine pin-point imagery and detail with a smooth and polite balance. Good, agile bass too.

### HEYBROOK SEXTET 11 £1129

Heybrook have retained the strengths of the original Sextet, whilst improving on bass extension and smoothness. Treble and imaging still up with the very best.

### MISSION 754 FREEDOM 5 £1299

Highly articulate and informative sound with fine imaging and tight, deep bass extension. Uses silk dome tweeter, High Definition Aerogel midrange and bandpass loadad 8" driver for bass.

### HARBETH HL COMPACT 7 £1329

Dry and analytical, but truthful and uncoloured with it. A cohesive sounding top class monitor.

### EPOS ES25 £1505

Epos' best. Combines near-uncoloured tonality with characteristic fireworks in the rhythm department. Superb by any other name.

### SPENDOR SP7/1 £1970

This big Spendor is very appealing thanks to its lucid sound and valve-friendly load.

### TANNOY AMS8 £2700

Bold sounding professional active monitor with solid bass, clearly focused midrange and delicious treble. Built-in amplification.

### QUAD ESL-63 £2860

A reference against all other loudspeakers, with superb imaging qualities and genuine transparency. Earlier ESL model is an excellent second-hand buy; both enjoy legendary Quad service back-up.

### KEF REFERENCE SERIES FOUR £3099

Superb bass and near-electrostatic soundstaging make these involving loudspeakers a reference to others. Need a strong amplifier though.

### JBL S2600 £3500

Smooth, detailed and spacious with great dynamics and fine imaging. Capable of producing a superb performance when used in a big room.

### TANNOY WESTMINSTER ROYAL £10,000

An incredibly dynamic, detailed full-range horn design with a rich sound. Its high sensitivity predisposes it to valve amplification.





# MUSIC REVIEWS

## I N D E X

**ROCK & POP** .....81  
Giovanni Dadomo  
Jon Clarke

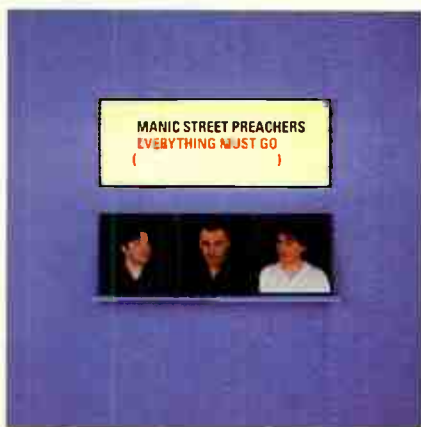
**CLASSICAL**.....85  
Peter Herring

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Viv Craske

**JAZZ**.....93  
Simon Hopkins  
Simon Cooke

*Giovanni  
Dadomo*

MANIC STREET PREACHERS  
**EVERYTHING MUST GO**  
EPIC 483930 2



With their cheap publicity stunts and even cheaper old-hat sloganeering, I have to confess I was not too impressed by the earlier Manics - they were at best bad Clash, which was weedy David Peel and The Lower East Side. But as the crooning swooner Max Bygraves used to love to say, "That's another story".

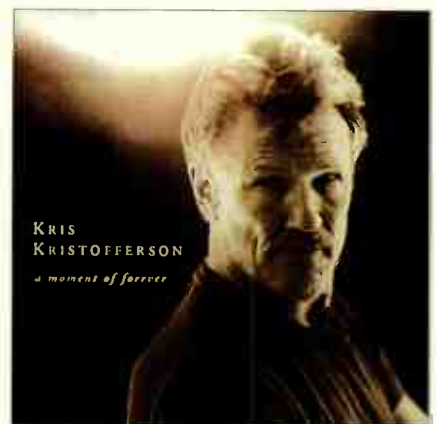
Somehow, since Richie did his Lord Lucan-type disappearing act, the Manics seem to have both grown and matured. This is a strong, sprightly disc, brimming with neat tunes, arrangements,

production. . . You name it, these boys have done themselves, not to mention their double-edge sword reputation, more than proud.

The ironically titled (actually, I happen to think it's one of the year's best yet) Everything Must Go is the lads' finest work to date, overspilling with hot choons, strong vox and a welcome sense of subtlety and restraint. I mean, there's only one memorable quote in the packaging and that's a splash of verbal diarrhoea from the late Jackson Pollock. But then the man was a genius, and so are we all, except in most cases it's more a fifteenth of a second than Warhol's fabulous fifteen minutes.

All of these asides aside, one is obliged to presume that what you really want to know is, what is the new MSP album like? Well cut off my legs and call me shorty, put an egg in my shoe and tell me to beat it, but this is one neat, spunky, not to say rather desirable use of natural resources. 'Australia' is so good it almost makes 2000 years of really bad Aussie soaps - not to mention Jason and Kylie - worth the pain. Yes, pop kids, this is one purchase-worthy bit of round shiny stuff; the MSPs have finally come of age. And by the way, if no other ghouls suggested it yet, can I have Richie's motor if he doesn't turn up for the next recording session?

KRIS KRISTOFFERSON  
**A MOMENT OF FOREVER**  
JUSTICE RECORDS TRACD 220



I'd almost forgotten about this man, but my best friend just happens to be a life-long (well, 25 years-odd anyway) fan, and a couple of months back she dragged me to see him make a rare appearance at the Mean Fiddler where the guy was simply ace; his country/folk fusions can bring a tear to the hardest eye.

KK made his name in the early Seventies with much-covered songs like 'Me and Bobby McGee' (Grateful Dead, Joplin, etc.) and still nobody who's ever heard that song can deny the lasting

power of a line as wisely wry as "Feeling far more faded than my jeans". Anyway, after a lengthy hiatus, Kris is back on form and turning out classically American celebrations as powerful as anything by, say, Ry Cooder or even the Boss, a man who owes Kristofferson more than a small debt as I've only just realised.

Kristofferson's a stylist par excellence, and uses country riffs and formulae but with massive style and panache. This disc's 'Slouching Toward The Millenium' is an apt rewrite, tune and all, of a song called 'Welcome To The Year 2000' that he recorded over two decades ago. But so what? The only real, not to say sad, aspect of Kristofferson's return to the limelight is that it should be on a relatively small label.

Lord knows it's a welcome return, with songs as strong and poignant as 'Casey's Last Ride' or 'Johnny Lobo' and the impeccable performance of the long-toothed, but massively capable combo of Jim Keltner (drums), Waddy Wachtel (ace guitar) and Tom Petty's Benmont Tench on keyboards to name but a few. Don Was' superb production helps to make this a disc no one who loves great and highly spirited country music should miss.

THE ARTIST FORMERLY KNOWN AS PRINCE

**CHAOS AND DISORDER**

WARNER BROS 9362 46317-2



Sometime in the late Seventies I was in a London rock'n'roll club and was amused to see two black dudes dressed identically in cheap green ex-German army coats with biker studs on the shoulders. The interesting part was they looked like twins - except one was around six feet tall while his clone must've been about the size of a

garden gnome.

A day or so later a mate asked me if I wanted a couple of free tickets to see a new American act at the Lyceum, name of Prince. Well, blow me down if it wasn't the gnome with his mate on bass. More surprisingly still, the wee one was an amazing performer. By the time he'd gotten stripped down to slim pants and suspenders, he'd managed to put on a show that melded the best of Little Richard, Jimi Hendrix and James Brown - strong songs, great theatrics and some truly breathtaking guitar. I've bought every record he's made since, and although it's arguable that Sign 'o The Times is his recording apex, he's never made a totally naff disc.

This new one's mainly stripped-down rock'n'roll patently aimed at live performance. The lyrics are, of course, filthy, the sleeve notes' spelling leaves a lot to be desired, but Prince (forget that stupid symbol) is on fine form. Catch the axe-stranglings of 'Zannalee' and the righteous pump-action power of 'I Rock, Therefore I Am'. Hot stuff, sho'nuff, with far more bullseyes than not.

**rock & pop record of the month**

PETER PERRETT IN THE ONE  
**WOKE UP STICKY**  
DEMON FIEND CD 773

Mr Perrett was, as you might perhaps know, the face, voice and main writer of the Only Ones. They were, to paraphrase one of Pete's own lines "Always in the right place at the wrong time". The band made their entrance at the peak of punk and were too old/different/special - any or all - to cut the mustard of prevailing fashion. But they were triff, both live and in the studio, as songs like the masterly 'Another Girl, Another Planet' or the LP Only Serpents Shine or even the relatively recent Radio One live sessions LP continue to illustrate.

PP started out imitating Lou Reed (who didn't?) but once he formed his



band and found his own Sarf London vocal style, he was as good as it gets. To put it briefly, he wrote some of the best mad-love-meets-bad-drugs songs ever. For whatever reason, largely indifferent to his major talent,

he became a slave to his own dark mythologies, so he and his lovely band dropped out of time and sight.

Well, in true Lou, Clapton, Keef R fashion, Perrett was down but far from out. I saw his new combo (The One, what else?) a few months back, and the band were young and hot as the proverbial, while Pete was in vibrantly fine form as ever.

Now the new and long overdue return to the studio emphasises this again and again and... Well, how many 'agains' do you need? I mean, who else could come up with a title like the, um, title track or lines such as "It's a cryogenic shame"? No, don't mock the afflicted as the great Frankie Howard used to say. And howabout "Strange hands carry me away/ I fall asleep in a catatonic way"? A gem, and welcome as hell ●

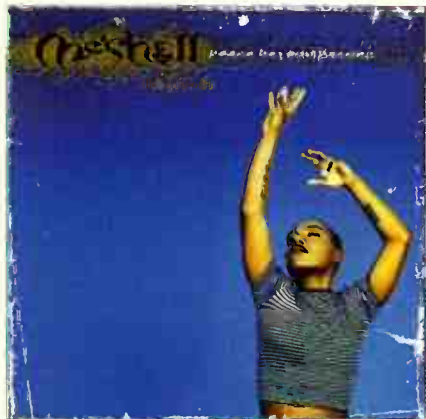


## Jon Clarke

ME'SHELL NDEGEOCELLO

### PEACE BEYOND PASSION

MAVERICK 9362 46033 2WE833



As album titles go, this is an appropriate one. And nowhere is the classic battle between peace and passion more eminent. Having hibernated for two years, the controversial black singer - with the trademark military issue skinhead haircut - is back. Blacker, harder and in every way as attention-grabbing.

Problem is, while she looks every bit as cutting edge as before, her music has somehow lost its way.

In 1994 Me'Shell was acclaimed music's "brightest hope" by highly-respected US magazine Rolling Stone. She had been nominated for four grammies with her debut album *Plantation Lullabies* that year, and with the support of Madonna she was riding the crest of a wave.

The style and clarity of *Plantation Lullabies* are, alas, a background affair on *Peace Beyond Passion*, her new release on Madonna's Maverick label.

Deliciously produced, with some real high points, it finds a much mellow Me'Shell, more soulful, less angry. While lyrically adventurous - and always questioning - much of the album plods along with a Luther Vandross/Bedroom soul feel. 'Mary Magdelene' is the most obvious example. Catchy in a charty, poppy way, it falls short of expectations from this obviously very talented musician.

Stronger tracks like 'Deuteronomy: Niggerman' and 'Leviticus: Faggot', in many ways make up for the quieter shortfalls, but still fail to notch up full marks. With its sharp and groovy

bassline, though, the former comes mighty close. A critical look at the sexual mores of the black man, it rolls along with an accomplished swagger.

The album kicks off nicely enough with 'The Womb', a free-flowing instrumental, which moves straight into 'The Way', a funky rhyme with catchy chorus. It also ends on a high note with a completely different and original version of Marvin Gaye's 'Make Me Want To Holler'.

It's the flowery stuff in between, though, which lets Me'Shell down. Happy, more at peace with herself, probably in love, she has lost the aggression which ultimately fired up the brilliant tracks on *Plantation Lullabies*. And there we have it, troubled pop stars make better music. Marvin, Jimi, Elvis. Need I go on?

*Peace Beyond Passion* - more like *Peace* at the expense of *Passion*.

VARIOUS

### MISSED BEATS

BBJ CD002



On this interesting little dance compilation one of Britain's numero uno record spinners has let us into a couple of secrets.

Dr Bob Jones, the Keeper of the Groove, has for the first time given us a peek at the sleeve notes of his favourite 'no name' floor fillers.

How nice that a DJ would reveal the very thing that sets him apart from the crowd. Like a Swiss bank account or the ingredients in a can of Coca Cola, a disc jockey's record box is a closely guarded secret. Its hidden tunes - or missed beats - are his bread and butter, guaranteeing his originality.

But Bob has decided to spill the beans, and into *Missed Beats* he has slung 10 high quality grooves that, often inexplicably, never quite made it big.

They are without exception rarities from around the world that you probably won't be able to find - even knowing the name. And they are ten mighty fine slices of music.

Mostly a combination of rare grooves, fused with Jazz and a touch of house, the elusive tracks kick off with Aquatreq's 'Save All Your Smiles', with a Dr Jones remix. Strangely, this is the album's weakest track and things just get better and better from here on in.

The next few cuts are drawn from Italy and the US, with Don Carlos's 1994 'Aqua Pt 2' probably the best of them. A spacey, flowing track full of jazzy rhythms, it truly raises the tempo. National Rare Groove continue the party, handing over to the worthies of side B where you can find The Interns' dangerously funky 'General Anaesthetic' and the Reality Brothers' 'Trouble Mind', which is a kind of Reggae Dub meets disco. Definitely a groovy selection to be cherished.



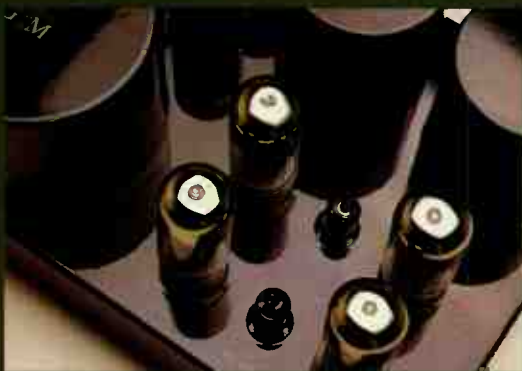
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# Classical

Peter Herring

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LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

## Missa Solemnis in D Major Op123

Rosa Mannion, soprano; Birgit Remmert, alto; James Taylor, tenor; Cornelius Hauptmann, bass; Choirs of the Chapelle Royale and the Collegium Vocale; Orchestre des Champs Elysees (Alessandro Moccia, violin solo); conductor, Philippe Herreweghe

HARMONIA MUNDI  
HMC901557(DDD/77.23)

Beethoven's monumental choral work has been described as "one of the transcendent masterpieces of music, an affirmation of justification of the human mind and spirit of the most comprehensive kind", and that assessment is borne out from first bar to last. But if the stature of the work has remained unchallenged, the performing tradition has undergone something of a revolution of late. The Missa Solemnis has attracted virtually all the giants in the conducting pantheon, with Toscanini's arguably the finest recording of the mono era. Then, for many years, Klemperer's 1966 EMI set became the benchmark by which all other interpretations were judged and, despite its flaws (an uneven solo quartet, a somewhat plodding approach to the mighty fugues of the Gloria and

Credo), it remains a performance of unerring conviction and authority.

The first attempt at a 'period' performance of the Mass in D came from Nimbus, under the baton of the Norwegian conductor, Terje Kvam. At the time of its release, some critics - unfairly in my view - suggested that the brisk tempos were influenced more by the commercial consideration of containing the work on one CD than by musical judgement. However, time has shown that Kvam's interpretation had a durable integrity, and even if the playing and singing are not of the highest order, it is well worth hearing.

John Eliot Gardiner's 1991 recording for Archiv, also on period instruments and with period-size forces, was a towering achievement, and a deserving winner of Gramophone magazine's Record of the Year award that year. Now, though, after five years at the top of a very long list, Gardiner's version faces a formidable challenge, and from a somewhat unexpected quarter.

Philippe Herreweghe's recording for the French label, Harmonia Mundi, has been drawn from two public performances given in Montreux in February 1995 and has all the electricity you would expect from such an occasion, yet it is musically as polished as any studio production. Herreweghe employs French choral and orchestral forces, but opts for an international quartet of soloists: the American tenor, James Taylor; alto, Birgit Remmert, and bass, Cornelius Hauptmann, from Germany; and the Liverpool-born soprano, Rosa Mannion - and a uniformly excellent team they make. Moreover, the orchestral playing and choral singing bear comparison with any of the more famous ensembles. Most importantly, though, Herreweghe captures the spirit of this mighty work, its intense devotion and - something which eluded many earlier recordings - its joyful exultation and vigour. Seldom

can the fugues have carried such a spring in their step and, while Herreweghe's brisk tempo for the Credo may initially startle, it quickly becomes wholly convincing. He handles the key moments of the Mass with both skill and sensitivity, not least the apex of the work, the sublimely spiritual passage leading from the Et incarnatus est to the explosive joy of the Et resurrexit.

Altogether, this is a consummate musical experience, and a recording that will surely enjoy the kind of enduring greatness already bestowed on such as Klemperer, Jochum, Bernstein and Gardiner. It is technically impressive too, finely balanced and combining a detailed presentation with the kind of weight and fullness of sound that this music demands. And I'm pleased that the applause hasn't been edited out, as on many live recordings; it was, after all, richly deserved.



FRANÇOIS COUPERIN

## Concerts Royaux Pieces a deux clavecins The Smithsonian Chamber Players; director, Kenneth Slowik

DEUTSCHE HARMONIA MUNDI  
05472 77327 2 (DDD/70.38)

A case of Americans in Paris, but offering a very different view of France from George Gershwin. As the name

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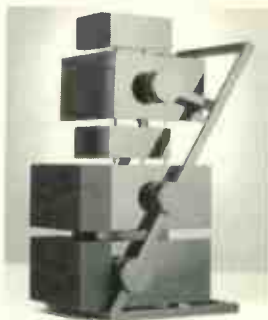
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# dance & ambient

## Viv Craske



VARIOUS  
**CLASSIC BALEARIC**  
MASTERCUTS CUTSCD34

With dance music arguably ten years old, for some of us, nostalgia is starting to set in. For evidence, just check out the wealth of classic re-releases this summer. Set against this background, an album celebration of the roots of house seems well placed.

The Balearic Isles, and notably the sun-kissed party resort of Ibiza, were transformed in the 80s from a stop-off for wandering hippies to a veritable wonderland of happy vibes and musical freedom on long, golden shores - THE place to get off your trolley and chill out. So it was inevitable that DJs Paul Oakenfold, Danny Rampling, Andy Weatherall and Alfredo would take their hols there and bring the Ibiza vibe back to seminal UK clubs Shoom and Spectrum in '86/'87. And the rest, as tired hacks say, is history. . .

Don't be phased by Classic Balearic's opening with a Chris Rea track - 'Josephine' is as sexy sweet as any hands-in-the-air house production of the 90s. And, of course, who can deny the influence of 'Sueno Latino', originally a 30-minute epic made 15 years ago, that rapidly became the ultimate spiritual feeling of 1989.

The album continues in this vain beautifully, weaving through classic euphoria and dreamy anthems, sensual delights every one. Electribe 101's 'Talking With Myself' was the track that brought Billy Ray Martin's eerie vocals to clubland, while Moodswings' 'Spiritual High (State Of Independence)' sums up the mood that could never be expressed in so few words.



ANGEL MORAES  
**HOT 'N' SPYCY**  
SUBVERSIVE SUB17D

"Close your eyes, relax your mind, feel the music in your soul", runs the intro to Moraes' 'Welcome To The Factory', which, when it pushed forward the somewhat stagnant garage scene at the start of '95, propelled the musical arena from posey, dressy clubland to the big-style tune box of DJs around the world. So, if you like labels on your dance music, this is one album that epitomises the garage sound, the nine tracks depicting one very misunderstood and sometimes undervalued contribution to the sweaty summer dancefloors.

You see, 'Welcome. . .' was just a tad different from what had been put

out before. There are the vocals, sure, and those bouncy undercurrents of bass, but what sets it apart is Moraes' addition of just the right tunes - simple and sexy, pushing the music and giving it that essential late night disco edge.

And there was more where this came from. 'I Like It' brought us snatches of percussive brilliance, those simple, floating lyrics and layers of soul. Next up was 'Heaven Knows' with its funky-arsed swank, and a fragility and subtlety all of its own.

Then Angel Moraes goes and collects these cuts on one album, an offering sure to go down a storm with those searching for that elusive 3am-lost-on-the-floor moment. He's even mixed the tracks together, bless 'im, so you don't lose that flow he's lovingly produced.

Yes it's groovy, yes it's sweaty, sexy dance-tastic. Yes, it does the business.



VARIOUS  
**CREAM LIVE TWO**  
DECONSTRUCTION 74321 39125 2  
VARIOUS  
**RENAISSANCE - THE MIX  
COLLECTION PART THREE**  
NETWORK RECORDS RENMIX3CD

Welcome to the clash of the titans. On the one hand there's Liverpool's Cream who, with that logo, are virtually a household name. Then, on the other hand, you've got Renaissance, whose

dance and ambient reviews

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first two mix CDs went through the roof and set the standard for others to follow, their club nights complete with mental dancers and flying cherubs pressed onto plastic.

Whose triple CD will reign supreme, then? It's like Coke v Pepsi, Oasis v Blur. Well, Cream are on catch-up from their last mix CD, which wasn't exactly pushing new genres if you know what I mean. This time around though, there's Nick Warren's floor-filling mix of his own Way Out West's 'The Gift' and Castle Trancelot to hot things up. Paul Oakenfold provides light relief along with Salt Tank, Robert Miles and Grace, but the shining star is James Lavelle with his blissed-out dubs and cuts from The Scientist's classic 'The Bee' to Dr Octagon and Josh Wink.

Renaissance is a different affair altogether. It's a bit of a departure from the last two mix CDs from Sasha and John Digweed that took us through the realms of sexy, epic house. This one comes courtesy of Italian duo Fathers Of Sound and provides all things vocal from Inner City's 'Your Love' to Sarah Washington's 'Heaven' and Black Magic's 'Freedom'. A sort of return to the old school kinda feel, fun and frivolity reign here.

If you can afford both, go for it. With 84 tracks between them, it ain't a bad deal, but for pure variety, Cream's the winner. Maybe it's that logo?



**HARDFLOOR**  
**HOME RUN**  
HARTHOUSE HHLPO19

No doubt about it. Hardfloor are cool in their own little way. They notched up a top 50 chart success with 'Hardtrance Acperience', their first single back in '92, which was a superb dedication to the TB303 - an arse-kicking stonker of a

track by all accounts. Add to that the ongoing baseball theme of the tracks on this third album, and a total obsession with all things Beavis and Butthead, and you can see why even their press release describes them as the Morecombe and Wise of techno!

Is this a case of sad transpotters then? Well, maybe. But they undoubtedly rank as techno gods all the same, techno gods with pinball machines in their kitchen, a deep love of Spiderman, and more 303s than most producers could shake a stick at. But then we wouldn't expect anything less from Dusseldorf's Oliver Bondzio and Ramon Zenker.

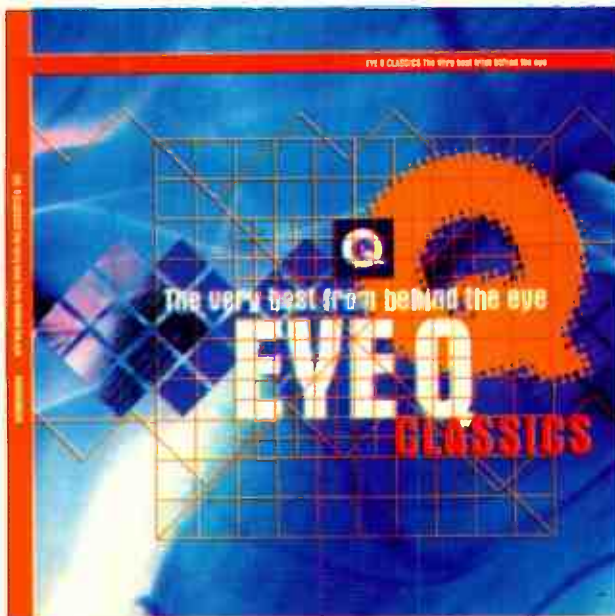
Fierce, hammering acid and luscious machine funkiness is the name of the game here, Hardfloor only managing to resist those full-on 303s for opener 'Strikeout', before the cascading sequels from those little silver boxes emerge on 'Home Run'.

While pounding acid-tastic flavours abound, it's the down-tempo tracks like 'Knuckle Skills' that really show off the art of 303 techno. The sounds take you to a time when dinosaurs ruled the earth, 303s screeching and lolloping across the plains. Tenuous link alert - this really is a monster of an album!!! Sorry!

## dance & ambient record of the month

VARIOUS  
**EYE Q CLASSICS**  
EYE UK CD011

Subtitled "The very best from behind the eye", and that's exactly what this 'ere is. Classics is a fine selection celebrating one of the most tip-top on-the-ball hard house/techno labels around. After six classic re-releases in as many months, this is the culmination. Obviously, the highlight has to be 'Vernon's Wonderland' with its orchestral climaxes sweeping throughout the track. But every song's a corker, nay, a classic in its own right. And top marks for a double CD. No fillers here, just 20 slices of nostalgic spacecake, of losing it to a gargantuan tune around 5 in the morning.



And this isn't one of those albums that is only effective in the club context. Try it out in the car, the office

or doing the ironing and you'll be there hopping around the room, burning holes in the ceiling on those hands-in-the-air bits. Well, probably. There are the hard tunes as well (Summer Breeze and Earth Nation's 'Alienated'), but this is the true dream music. Tracks like Java's 'Cosmos' or Cygnus X's 'The Orange Theme' or 'Superstring' are in places too endearingly tuneful for words, vibrant headrushes of sonic engineering akin to sticking your head in ice-cold water on a scorching summer's day. I wish I had the space here to describe every track, but, alas, such are the constraints of trying to explain in words the truly ethereal vibe of a techno compo like this. A better cure-all than penicillin or aspirin. Just pop one and see!

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One thing the Lalis did that few other speakers do was make listening to music fun. Chris Beeching, Hi-Fi News '95

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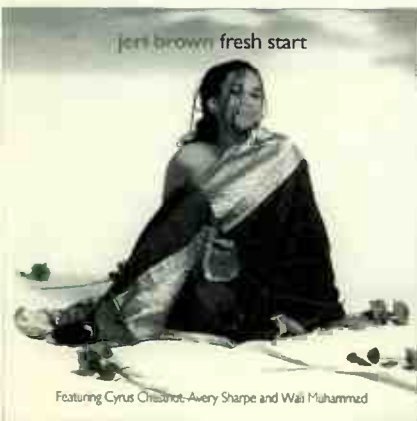
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# Simon Cooke

**JERI BROWN**  
**FRESH START**  
JUST 78



This CD contains twelve tracks sung by Brown, backed by the team of Cyrus Chestnut on piano, Avery Sharpe on bass, Wali Muhammad on drums, with Greg Carter guesting on sax for one track. Half of the numbers here are written by Brown herself in collaboration with either Sharpe, Carter or Chestnut, the sleeve notes (and the title) confirming this outing as a new direction for Brown's work.

It's difficult to say whether Brown's voice really can make a fresh start, as each syllable she sings seems to be touched by every great female vocalist of the last forty years or so. This makes it virtually impossible to pigeonhole her vocal style, or even end the list of legends with whom Brown's voice could be compared. There is certainly great emotional depth in her singing, by turns plaintive, husky, seductive, commanding, joyful and all points between.

It's a pity the sound quality occasionally falls short of resolving Brown's voice fully. Her vocal power should leap from the 'speakers but often failed, giving the recording a boxy and

stilted air at odds with the material.

The instruments fare rather better at the hands of the recording's shortcomings, although Sharpe's basses do have a tendency to bottom out and billow a little too high up the musical scale, I feel.

All in all, the musicians and vocalist perform substantially beyond the limits of the recording.

**SOWETO STRING QUARTET**  
**ZEBRA CROSSING**  
BMG 74321 26865 2



South African music definitely seems to be the flavour of the decade in jazz, and now it's gone all respectable in the form of a string quartet.

But South Africa, especially in the group's home township of Soweto, is not known for po-faced musicians in full bib and tucker solemnly sawing away with their bows. The Soweto String Quartet brings the hot-blooded rhythms of African traditional music to the cool sophistication of their classical instruments. The result is delicate and demanding rhythm and sound; something entirely new.

Not all the tracks are South African,

however. Dave Grusin's 'Bossa Baroque', 'St. Agnes and the Burning Train' and a medley taken from Paul Simon's seminal 'Graceland' album are tucked away carefully between ten original or traditional tracks. These ten in themselves encompass several discrete South African styles and include 'Nkosi Sikelele' iAfrica (God Bless Africa), the South African National anthem.

SSQ are the three Khemesa brothers, Sandile and Thami on violins and Reuben on cello, with Makhosini Mnguni on viola. They, along with a cast of excellent backing musicians, make Zebra Crossing a startling, original and stylish album. A must if you like South African music and a killer album for relaxing to.

**COUNT BASIE**  
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If you take a more traditional view of jazz, then this will appeal more than the other two albums. Frankenstein records (sorry, GRP, I mean) continue to rake over all the dead and forgotten bits of their back catalogue to stitch them

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# Simon Hopkins



together to form some weird composite being.

They also continue to breath life into material which is often no longer in the pristine condition it was when originally transcribed. In this case, they revive not only Basie's whole orchestra, but the musicians themselves. Names like Lester Young, Herschel Evans, Buck Clayton, Walter Page and Harry Sweets' Edison can all be heard so that a new generation can gain the same enjoyment, experience and insight into their music that has inspired so many players in the past. Again, GRP have come up with a worthwhile investment in past treasures which knocks spots off most re-issues.

DAVID MURRAY OCTET

## DARK STAR [THE MUSIC OF THE GRATEFUL DEAD]

MASTOR PLACE TCD4002



Jazz musicians' appropriation of the raw building blocks of a pop song (the melody, the chord changes, and to some extent even its rhythms) or of an entire

pop songwriter's oeuvre, is as old as the music itself. Indeed, it is the music in its earliest incarnations. Despite the explosion of the genre in a thousand different directions, despite the rise of the jazz musician him/herself as a composer, this tradition continues. However, it somehow ignores a central fact of pop music's development over the last thirty years. While the rock world is constantly hung up on the overriding importance of the song, pop's trajectory since the very beginning of rock 'n' roll has been the development of sound itself. There's nothing going on harmonically or melodically in any Western pop music that wasn't pretty much dealt with in symphonic and chamber music by the end of the previous century.

But sound. . . Well, in spite of the great leaps forward by various art music mavericks and manifesto writers at the beginning of the century, a listening audience in 1945 would be unlikely to have heard many actual sounds that hadn't been heard over the last 200 years. Pop music went and changed all that. Yet this fact, a fact we're surrounded by day in day out, goes largely unremarked. A handful of pop music pioneers - Phil Spector, Les Paul, Joe Meek, Brian Wilson, Brian Eno - have been sufficiently well documented, but there's generally something grudging about any admiration stated, as though to draw attention to the sound of music might detract from the role of the songwriter. The truth is pop music's central concern is not the song, it's the performance, and specifically, the record.

So when Miles Davis, for example, took it upon himself to cover songs by Michael Jackson and Cindy Lauper

during his 80s 'comeback', we had the spectacle of one of music's finest innovators taking perfect records and completely mangling them, reducing beautiful arrangements and production to half-baked chords played on crappy-sounding synthesizers and precise metres cursorily rushed through as though they got in the way of the music's real substance, the improvising. (There's a further irony here. Through the sixties and seventies Miles, and a handful of his alumni, embraced the actual sound of psychedelic rock music and fashioned something altogether startling out of it, a music which to this day stands as some of the finest - and most heinously ignored - of the last thirty years.)

Which is a long preamble to a short review, but it points up all the faults in this ambitious release by the massively prolific tenor saxophonist, David Murray. On *Dark Star*, Murray interprets the music of The Grateful Dead. It's a great idea on paper - of all the psychedelic rock groups of the seventies, right up to Jerry Garcia's untimely death last year, the Dead remained perhaps the most explorative. So, for searching jazz musicians of Murray's calibre to pay tribute to them seems fair enough. And surely, there are some rip-roaring performances here. Murray, as ever, blows the house down; James Spaulding's alto is searing; and Fred Hopkins is, I swear, the most propulsive double bassist working in jazz.

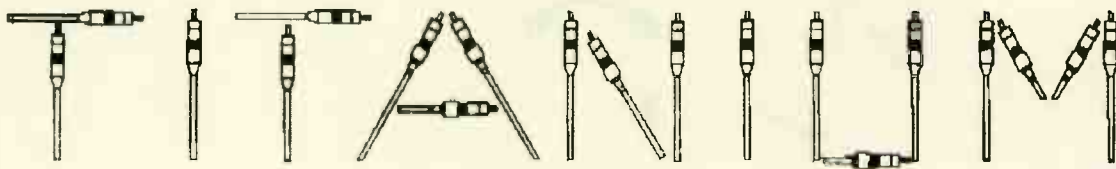
But, but, but. . . This album simply doesn't get under the Dead's skin. At best it takes their music and spins some fantastic improvising out of it, but never takes on board the band's lazy energy, or their fantastic sound ●



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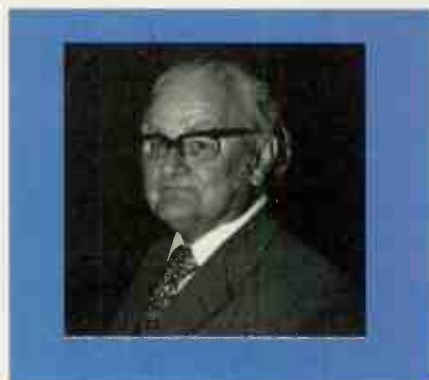
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## The beginnings of hi-fi. A history of ~

# H.J. LEAK & Co

In the twenties the wonder of the age was “wireless”. Nowadays, called radio, it is a small part of general electronics; then, it was all that existed. The first radios were simple and listening required headphones. The arrival of the loudspeaker, invented by Rice and Kellogg (circa 1925), brought about a need for power amplifiers; stand alone designs soon appeared, mainly for Public Address at fairs, theatres, circuses, public meetings, shows and cinemas. In the home, where wireless sets were run from accumulators, low power consumption headphones were the wisest choice. But as mains electricity distribution became widespread, the domestic power amplifier followed it.

Harold Leak, born 8th January 1907, was so fascinated by the new wonder of wireless and amplification that he formed a wireless society at his Middlesex school in 1922. Using a crystal

detector and valve ‘reflex’ working (positive feedback to boost sensitivity) he picked up American stations as early as 1923. After a short and not very engaging period in the wine trade he joined Gaumont British to install cinema amplifiers, where he studied electronics and amplifier design.

Eager to run his own business in a field where there was a lot of leeway for entrepreneurs

(and some shining examples of success, like Burndept) Harold struck out alone in 1926 with £22 and a hand cart. His scheme? It was simple, bold and doubtless shrewdly conducted. Using a proposition and slogan modern Americans would recognise - “no cure, no pay”, Harold set up as a Wireless Doctor. During 1926 he built a portable wireless weighing



Harold Leak was encouraged to move by the Luftwaffe. No! 24 Daling Road remains a bomb site today, used as a playground. The house at right still bears the scars.



a moderate (for the time) 20lbs. By 1927 Harold had built a pickup for the 78rpm shellac records that were appearing, a two-stage amplifier and a moving coil loudspeaker.

The Wireless Doctor scheme was a success, allowing Harold to leave the wine trade. He took to designing and building commercial amplifiers, working from a small premises at 124a Dalling Road, Hammersmith, West London. Harold doubtless had his eye on good road links, a thriving market of millions of Londoners and low rent.

In spite of the recession of the thirties, the market for PA amplifiers was booming. Harold founded H. J. Leak on September 14th 1934. He built the business through the thirties, relying mainly on producing amplifiers as a sub-contractor for larger companies. The company produced its first commercial amplifier, for PA use, in 1936, exhibiting it at Olympia, a large West London exhibition venue just a few miles from his factory. At this time Harold's advertisements identified him personally as "H. J. Leak, Sound

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The post-war TL12 0.1 amplifier. Produced between 1949-57, this was one of the first commercial hi-fi amplifiers to be offered to the public. Popular in its day, it can still be found on the second hand market, often in bad condition and at a low price. This is a collectors item and will produce a fine sound even today, after renovation.

Engineer-Technician". His first amplifier used a pair of very early triodes (PX25s) to produce 13watts for "speech output". One was installed in the Palace Theatre, Shaftesbury Avenue, in the heart of London, where it "easily fills this 2,000-seater" Harold claimed. A wide frequency response of 40-14,000cps (cycles per second, nowadays Hz) was quoted, within tight 1dB limits. Harold noted that

"it is of course equally suitable for radio and gramophone reproduction". The price, ex-factory, was 13 guineas (£13 and 13 shillings). This amplifier remains virtually unknown today and it's likely no examples exist, yet it is one of the world's first hi-fi amplifiers.

The clouds of war were gathering in the late thirties. Leak thrived, building amplifiers for



Leak moved from Dalling Road to a double fronted house on the Uxbridge Road, London and remained there during the war.



A prestigious factory was built at the Westway Trading Estate, Acton, London, just after the war. Recently demolished, it sat in front of the railway footbridge.

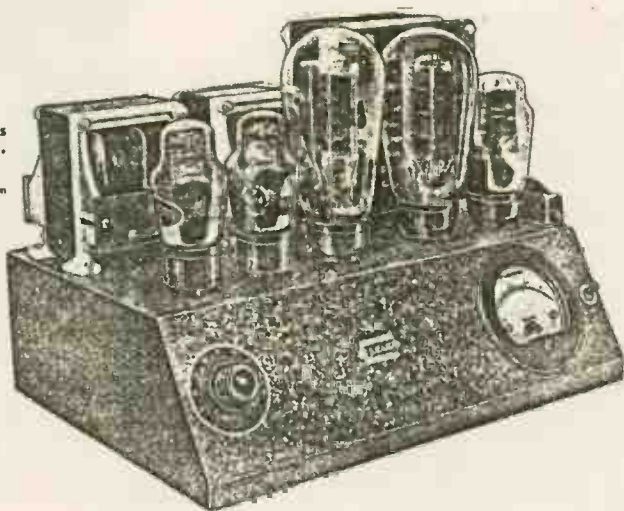




SOUND EQUIPMENT by  
**LEAK.**

The standard 13-watt chassis introduced at Olympia, 1936-37.

13 GNS. Complete with Osram valves, lens meter. (see works).



**H. J. LEAK,**  
Sound Engineer-Technician,  
124A DALLING ROAD,  
HAMMERSMITH, W.6.

This amplifier is, as far as we know, Leak's first product. Although for Public Address (PA), within theatres and such like, Leak claimed a "frequency range of 40/14,000 c.p.s. within 1dB" and "imperceptible distortion". Introduced at Olympia in 1936, it pre-dates most others and is virtually unknown. It appears none remain in existence.

Immediately after the war, in 1945, Harold designed, developed and was able to announce the introduction of the world's first amplifier to produce 0.1% distortion, at a time when 2% was a laboratory standard and 5% or so the common domestic standard. Known as the Point One Type 15, it was initially a four-stage design. Later models were made three-stage to improve the feedback stability margin. These amplifiers sold in small quantities to the public. It wasn't a great time to be selling such expensive goods. Britain was in poor shape after the war, with food rationing remaining in place until 1948. Consequently, Leak continued to sub-contract during this period.

Government and large organisations. At this time Ted Ashley joined him, later to become chief engineer, remaining with the company until it was sold. Ted contacted Hi-Fi World some years ago about the Leak Troughline tuner, and in conjunction with Muriel Leak, whom Harold married in 1942, provided invaluable information for this article.

The war was to have an influence on Harold Leak in many ways, not all intended. Early in the war the Dalling Road premises was hit by a bomb. Even now, the site bears the scars; No 126 still has no neighbour, just a children's playground where 124 once stood. And the front of the house to which No 124 was attached ends in

a jagged row of bricks.

Leak then moved to a double fronted house at 470 Uxbridge Road, London W12. It was converted to commercial use and this is where the company grew during the war, primarily making amplifiers under sub-contract for GEC, STC, Telephone Rentals, and others.

The company's expansion during the war meant that bigger premises were needed. Production was transferred to a purpose built factory on The Westway Trading Estate at Brunel Road, Acton, in London. Here Leak remained until sold to Rank in 1969. Only today are the post war factories on this quiet, leafy and well maintained

A rare 0.1 Type 15 amplifier, first produced in 1945. Leak claimed to be "first in the world" to achieve such a specification. This amp was based on wartime production for Government Departments.



## Recommendations



QUEEN - A Day At The Races

'A Day At The Races' was the follow-up hit to 'A Night At The Opera'. All of Queens glam art rock, majestic sound is captured on this fantastic MFSL reworking of the 79s classic. Recorded 1976 in England between July and November this album features the two 70's hit singles "Tie Your Mother Down" and "Somebody To Love" amongst others. £25



LORI LIEBERMAN - PLAYING LIVE !!!!!

Lori Lieberman originally wrote a poem about Don McLean, this she later turned into a song called "Killing Me Softly With His Song". Roberta Flack, after hearing Lori's song refused it, the result was a huge hit and the biggest selling single in her career. Recently The Fugees have taken "Killing Me Softly" to number one again.

This year at The Hi-Fi Show at Heathrow's Ramada hotel hear Lori play live in her first concert since the 70s. This is going to be THE performance of this year. In the mean time listen to Lori's wonderful melodies on two killer albums by Pope Music, available exclusively through Audiophile International.

## Accessories

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## Lou Reed on 180gm Vinyl

LOU REED: Set The Twilight Reeling.

In a career that has spanned three decades, Lou Reed has been many things. From raw beginnings this punk rock superstars socially aware narrative lyrics crawled out like something he was reluctant to part with. It is hard to find a logical conclusion for this latest incantation, but this is the best Lou Reed album for sometime. Lou has not lost his demons. There is still a certain raw power, but the overall mood is of someone who is more in control. His lyrics no longer toy with drug addiction or violent sex, but behold, in most instances, honour and emotion. This album possesses all the qualities of his early work, but with a refinement that doesn't bleach the overall picture. Mastered by Bob Ludwig at Gateway Mastering and pressed onto 180 grammes of virgin vinyl by Warner. Recommended.

Limited supply £25

## New Classic Records

Classic Records 180gm HQ LPs - our recommended selection from the vast range covered in our catalogues.

JENNIFER WARNES - Famous Blue Raincoat	£25
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"At last a female vocalist whose CDs deserve gilding." Ken Kessler

### PM 2001 LORI LIEBERMAN: A 1000 DREAMS.

This new gold CD release heralds the triumphant return of an original singer/songwriter with a voice of gold. Having co-wrote the number 1 Grammy Award winning hit, "Killing Me Softly With His Song", Lori adds 13 more "Songs For The Asking", weaving a multitude of moods into an album you will fall in love with. A thousand dreams is an all acoustic recording engineered by audiophile legend Mark Levinson using only two microphones. In the words of Joseph Cali, executive producer, "Lie down, sit down or put your car in drive. She will take you to the places in your heart that only Loris music can find." 'GOLDEN NOTE NOMINATION'

HQ 24kt Gold CD	£25
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### PM 2005 LORI LIEBERMAN: HOME OF WHISPERS

A classic follow up album, with Lori at her most personal. Her voice has never been more captivating or the arrangements been richer. Lori just keeps getting better and better, you will not be left unmoved!

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estate being demolished to make way for new units. Unfortunately, Leak's old factory was demolished at the start of 1996; when we arrived hoping to get a picture, only a building site remained.

In 1948 Leak decided to concentrate on the domestic

market, confident that he could improve the level of quality attainable in the home. The famous TL/12 12watt power amplifier was born. Unlike Harold's earlier amplifiers, this sold in sufficient quantity for units to be available on the second hand market today,

albeit at a price when in good condition. Accompanying the TL/12 was the RC/PA pre-amplifier, designed to work with records, radio and a microphone. It cost £6.15s, the TL12 £25.15s. The market for hi-fi in Britain was small, making export necessary for growth. As early as 1949 Harold Leak was demonstrating the TL/12 and its pre-amplifier at an Audio Fair held by the Audio Engineering Society in New York.

By this time the "wireless" industry had grown to the point where it was beginning to diversify into specialised sectors, high fidelity being one of them. Rich and relatively unscathed by the war in contrast to Europe, America could afford to embrace high fidelity. Interestingly, while H. J. Leak & Co. was identified in Britain as a "manufacturer of high quality radio equipment" (who hadn't produced one radio - tuners were to come later!), in America the company was known as a maker of "high-fidelity instruments, designed for the connoisseur who wants his radio and gramophone records reproduced with the highest attainable quality".

An imaginative and vigorous salesman, Harold built up a thriving export business. On his trip to the U.S. he met Leonard Carduner of the British Industries Corporation, importers into America of Ersin Multicore Solder and Garrard turntables. They agreed to take on Leak amplifiers and America soon became one of the company's largest markets. Others were Canada, South Africa, India, Australia, New Zealand, South America, Singapore and the Middle East. The standard TL/12,

from "THE NEWS CHRONICLE," Friday, Nov. 4th, 1949.

## One-man dollar drive



Mr. Harold Joseph Leak  
"His set is extremely fine"

From STANLEY BURCH  
News Chronicle Correspondent  
NEW YORK, Thursday

**T**HIS is the story of an Englishman who determined to do something for Britain's dollar drive and took his chance in America.

For 15 years Mr. Harold Joseph Leak, managing director of H. J. Leak & Co., has been designing and manufacturing high quality radio equipment.

In a factory at Acton with a score of expert craftsmen he has built up a post-war business making high-fidelity instruments, designed for the connoisseur who wants his radio and gramophone records reproduced with the highest attainable quality

### U.S. welcome

In a recent Saturday morning

Mr. Leak read of an exhibition to be held in New York by the Audio Engineering Society and the same day he wrote asking if they would admit a British exhibit.

A week later he got a reply saying they would welcome it.

He applied to his bank the next Monday for permission to draw dollars for the trip.

Three days later the money had been authorised and cabled to New York.

### Astonished

He brought three sets of equipment, which were demonstrated at the exhibition for three days and astonished the Americans with their craftsmanship and quality of reproduction.

American agents competed for the right to handle Mr. Leak's product and he had signed up one as sole agent on the first day of the show.

### Experts' praise

I asked two experts today what they thought of Mr. Leak's amplifier.

Edward Talmall Canby, of New York City's municipal radio station, said: "For the past week I have heard nothing but 'Leak.' His set is extremely fine and it produces a very beautiful sound indeed. It's in the top category."

Irving Kolodin, famous record reviewer: "It's exceptionally good—really first class"

★

In London last night Mr. J. F. Hawkins, a director of the firm, said: "We are already exporting to Canada, South Africa, India, Australia, New Zealand, South America, Singapore and the Middle East. The South African Broadcasting Corporation had placed an order for amplifiers."

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*Dear Mr. Soper,*

*Thanks for sending me the plinth for my Garrard 401. I must confess, that I was a bit sceptical about it, when I ordered one - after all, I bought it, without the possibility of listening to it first. But the results I get are really unbelievable. There is no rumbling, instead deep, deep bass and an authority, I never heard before from my records. And believe me, I tried some of the best turntables around (Linn LP 12, Roksan Xerxes). Now I'm waiting for the forthcoming power-supply. The day I place my order for it, I will do so without being a bit sceptical. Thanks again for a marvellous piece of art.*

MR TEILINGER - AUSTRIA



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modified with line input transformer and volume control, was sold to the BBC in 1951 for fitment into their monitor loudspeaker, where it found use in Britain and abroad.

Harold toured Britain during the fifties demonstrating the wonders of high fidelity to an

output. There were two new pre-amplifiers: the RC/PA/U and the Varislope I.

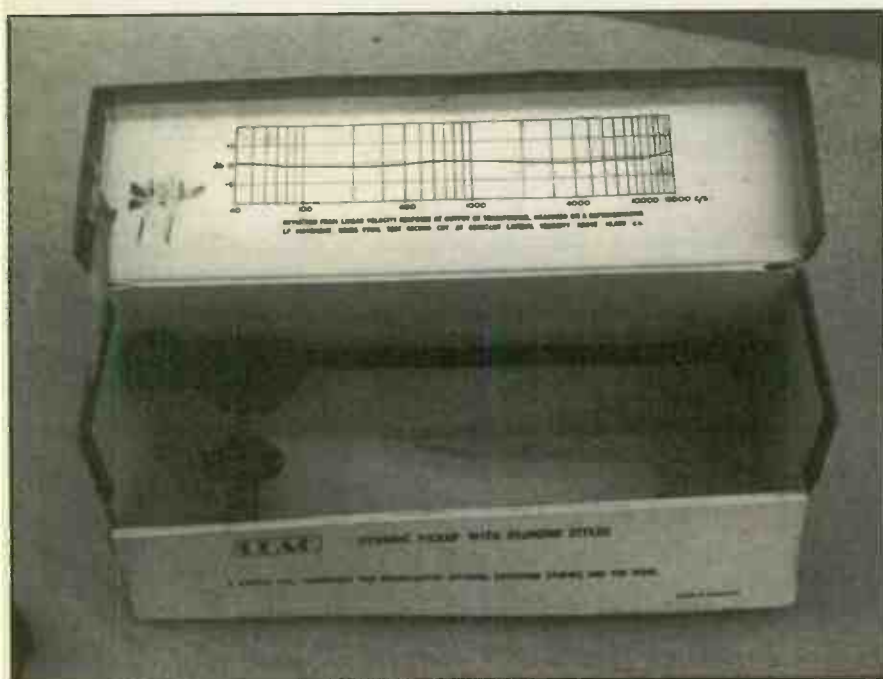
Throughout the fifties and sixties the Leak laboratories, well staffed and equipped, turned out numerous innovative products. In 1954 came a new pickup arm, complete with moving coil head

system. Frequency response was claimed to be 40-20,000cycles (Hz) within 1dB limits - as good as modern cartridges - although quite frankly measurement LPs accurate enough to form the basis of such an assertion were not available at the time.

In spite of being described as a manufacturer of high quality radio equipment, Leak only introduced their first tuner, an AM design, in the early 1950s. When FM broadcasting started, it was followed by the first of the innovative Troughlines in late 1955. At a time when many tuners suffered from frequency drifting and the associated distortion that forced re-tuning, the Troughline, which used a waveguide inductor, proved relatively stable, although it still needed AFC (automatic frequency control).

Amongst the welter of new products designed in the fifties lie some rarities. During 1955 the company promised to introduce two new loudspeaker motors (drive units) "within months". One was a 15in moving coil bass unit, the other "a balanced push-pull electrostatic loudspeaker having astonishingly low transient and intermodulation distortions". Brochures printed late 1957 show the electrostatic panel 'speaker, but it never reached the market. The higher powered and more expensive TL25 Plus and TL/50 monaural power amplifiers of the early fifties are rare birds too.

The late 1950s must have been a particularly busy time for the company. The Troughline II was introduced in 1958, stereo-ready with a multiplex output. Stereo came also to the LP - 1955 saw



Leak's first pickup was introduced in 1948. The Dynamic Pickup, shown above, followed it in June 1954. Shown below are microgroove LP head (left), as well as a 78 head for shellac discs. Both were moving coil cartridge designs needing a



audience of Britons new to this technology. The product range had by now been expanded to include a more powerful version of the TL/12, the TL/25A with 25watts

that tracked at 2-3gms on microgroove LPs (5-6gms on shellac 78s). This boasted low effective mass (inertia), low friction pivots and a plug-in head



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the introduction of EMI's famous ping-pong stereo demonstration LPs. Leak met the challenge by

introducing in 1958, at London's Audio Fair, the Leak Point One stereo pre-

amplifier (£21), the Stereo 20 power amplifier (£31) and the Stereo 50 power amplifier (£42). With no fewer than five monaural power amplifiers in production, it was quite a range.

As the 1960s dawned, Leak were still going strong. Their first loudspeaker to come to market was the Sandwich, designed by Dr Don Barlow. Launched in 1961, it used a 13in bass driver where lightweight polystyrene was sandwiched and bonded, for strength and rigidity, between layers of thick aluminium foil. This driver was accompanied by a 3in paper cone midrange/treble unit. The Sandwich loudspeaker was popular enough, even though it cost £40, and gave Leak a full range of attractive hi-fi products. Demand was strong enough for a new factory to be built at Downham Market, Norfolk in the mid-1960s, to handle loudspeaker assembly. It subsequently took on the manufacture of electronic sub-assemblies.

The Sandwich was followed, in 1963, by Leak's first

transistor amplifier, the Stereo 30. Crossover distortion in early transistor amplifiers could be

severe and plainly audible. Leak engineers realised this. They kept the problem well in check on the Stereo 30 and later, in the more powerful Stereo 70 amplifier,

released in 1968. Wary of prejudice against the transistor in magazines of the day, however,

Harold Leak carefully avoided having the Stereo

30 reviewed and the Stereo 70 only had its first review in 1970, by which time it had plenty of competition from Japan. In spite of this, these amplifiers still managed to sell well. 1968 witnessed the development and launch of the all solid-state Stereofetic tuner which superseded the Troughline tuners - Leak's range was now solid-state throughout.

Citing stringent Government taxation as the reason, Harold sold Leak to the Rank Organisation in 1969 for £1m. By this time he was 62, had spent his lifetime running the company and faced overwhelming competition from Japan, which had become strong in hi-fi. He retired to Jersey three years later, where he remained until his death on 27th August, 1989, leaving two sons, a daughter and his wife Muriel ●

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Harold Leak with the company's first 'speaker, the two-way Sandwich introduced in 1961. It used a 13in bass driver and 3in mid/treble unit. The Sandwich 600 followed it.



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	SC35X	ETBA	ETBA		ND 133/134/142/150/155/200 G
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### Stereophile

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# MEASURED PERFORMANCE

## AMPLIFIERS

### ARCAM ALPHA 5

Frequency response through the 'flat' CD/tuner/aux inputs was wide at 4Hz-70kHz, with plenty of subsonic extension for CD, which with some discs does help show up some surprisingly low information. High sensitivity (170mV) makes it compatible with all sources, no matter how low their output.

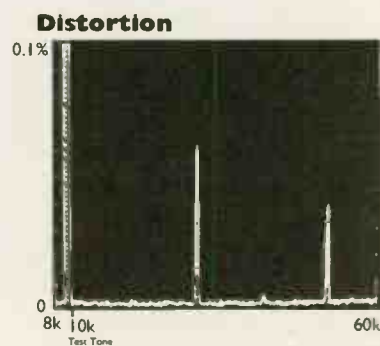
Distortion was low across the midband, measuring 0.07%. It rose a little toward high frequencies, hitting 0.07% comprising odd order harmonics. I start to get worried when levels exceed 0.2% at 10kHz.

The disc stage has a warp filter at 50Hz, bass lower than this being attenuated.

Equalisation was, otherwise, accurate right across the audio band, giving a flat frequency response, but I would expect some obvious lack of bass extension on LP. Sensitivity was high at 2mV and overload satisfactory at 105mV. Input capacitance measured around

180pF. The Alpha 5 measures well in all respects. NK

Power	55watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	4Hz-70kHz
Separation	72dB
Noise	-94dB
Distortion	0.007%
Sensitivity	170mV
dc offset	0/1mV
Disc	
Frequency response	50Hz-60kHz
Separation	48dB
Noise	-74dB
Distortion	0.008%
Sensitivity	2mV
Overload	105mV



### PIONEER A-400X

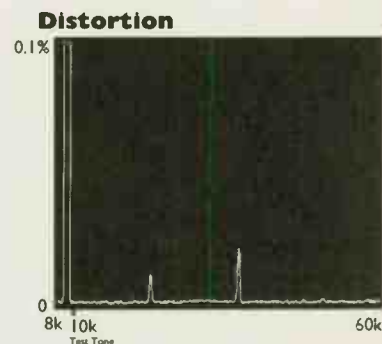
Power output was good at 60watts into 8Ω and 100watts into a 4Ω load, so the Pioneer should have little difficulty driving most modern loudspeakers. It has a wide frequency response ranging from 4Hz up to 60kHz on line level inputs. The distortion analysis clearly shows a third harmonic spike that will certainly contribute to its unique sound.

The phono stage caters for both MM and MC cartridges, selected via a switch. Both were very quiet and the MC stage was surprisingly sensitive, being suited to high quality, low output cartridges. Loading conditions were correct for both cartridge types: 100Ω for MC and 47k with 220pF in parallel for MM.

The Pioneer A-400X measures well in all

areas, a competent all-rounder. NK

Power	60watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	4Hz-60kHz
Separation	73dB
Noise	-101dB
Distortion	0.02%
Sensitivity	240mV
dc offset	-0.5mV
Disc (MM)	
Frequency response	9Hz-46kHz
Separation	70dB
Noise	-90dB
Distortion	0.03%
Sensitivity	3.5mV
Overload	150mV



### MISSION CYRUS III

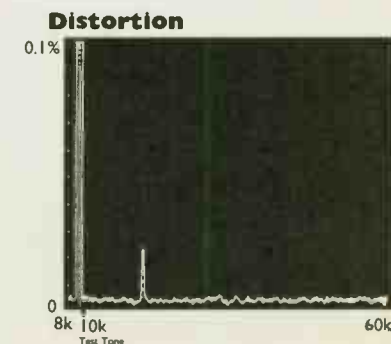
The Cyrus III turns out a lot of power - 66watts into 8Ω and 100watts into 4Ω - and is unaffected by reactive loads, so will drive most loudspeakers with ease.

Line level inputs have a wide frequency response with enough low frequency extension to do justice to CD. Treble starts to roll gently off above 20kHz, which is normally a good idea. Needing just 230mV for full output, the line level inputs are sensitive enough to accept low output sources. Distortion was low, the plot showing just innocuous 2nd harmonic at high frequencies which should ensure smooth treble.

The disc stage has a slowly falling response below 600Hz, dropping off at a more rapid 12dB/octave below 50Hz. This will give the Cyrus a light balance with LP.

Noise was low though, so the Cyrus' phono stage will be hiss-free in operation. NK

Power	66watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	9Hz-60kHz
Separation	88dB
Noise	-90dB
Distortion	0.004%
Sensitivity	230mV
dc offset	2/14mV
Disc (MM)	
Frequency response	50Hz-52kHz
Separation	50dB
Noise	-75dB
Distortion	0.006%
Sensitivity	3.2mV
Overload	50mV

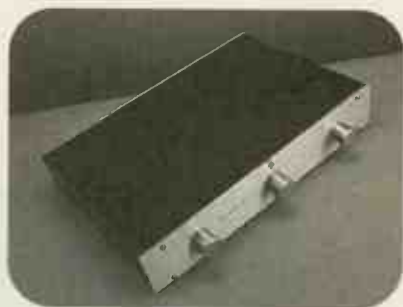


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# AMPLIFIERS

## DENON PMA-450SE

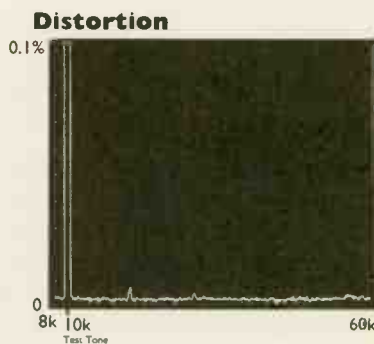
Most powerful in this test, the PMA-4650SE delivered an impressive 90watts into 8Ω and 144watts into 4Ω. With an input sensitivity of 170mV, it has plenty of gain too. This makes the 450SE an attractive proposition; it can sit between a low output source and insensitive loudspeakers comfortably.

Bandwidth on line level inputs was wide enough to cover the audio band, but sensibly limited to 13Hz-41kHz. Amplifiers like this usually have high feedback, so it was no surprise to find distortion low at all levels and frequencies. There's just the smallest amount of 2nd and 3rd harmonic visible in the plot below.

The MM disc stage is nicely engineered too. Equalisation was accurate and a warp filter has been applied to roll off bass below

33Hz, preventing record warps. Noise was low too at -76dB. NK

Power	90watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	13Hz-41kHz
Separation	90dB
Noise	-97dB
Distortion	0.004%
Sensitivity	170mV
dc offset	-1.8/-2mV
Disc	
Frequency response	33Hz-55kHz
Separation	72dB
Noise	-76dB
Distortion	0.004%
Sensitivity	2.7mV
Overload	150mV



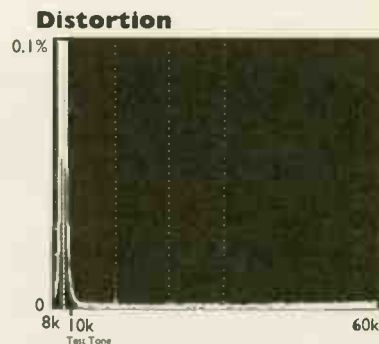
## ROTEL RA-970BX

The RA-970BX is a real powerhouse, turning out 100watts per channel into 8Ω and no less than 156watts into 4Ω. This is an amp for insensitive speakers, big rooms and headbangers.

It has an incredibly wide bandwidth of 8Hz-150kHz, for deep bass and open treble. However, wideband amps usually sound bright too.

With minimal distortion and noise, the RA970BX measured well. It's a great amp for those who want plenty of power. NK

Power	100watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	8Hz-150kHz
Separation	88dB
Noise	-94dB
Distortion	0.004%
Sensitivity	200mV



## SUGDEN AUS I/AUS I P/SYMETRA

The Sugden Symetra power amp is a Class A bridge design that produces a healthy 50watts into 8Ω. Bridge amps must not have the loudspeaker negative line earthed; they must only see a fully floating load. My experience is that bridge amps also tend to sound strong in the bass and smoother than a single channel design, possibly due to distortion cancellation. So there are some interesting features to consider.

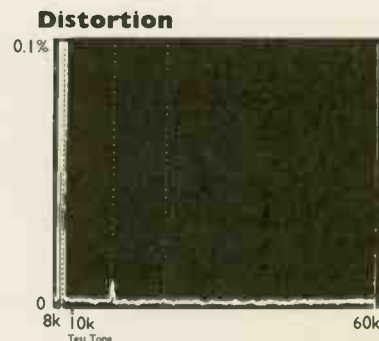
The Sugden measured very well, as I'd expect. It has wide bandwidth, a very progressive distortion characteristic that gave 0.01% of benign second harmonic at low levels, but a larger 0.3% at full output. These aren't amps to be run hard; run within their limits the distortion should not be a problem. Sensitivity is very high at 80mV.

The phono stage has a limited gain of x65 on MM, but very high gain of x1300 on MC.

The low MM gain matches the high gain of the pre/power combo., giving a normal enough sensitivity, but the high gain MC stage is for low output (i.e. high quality) moving coil designs. Hiss on MM was very low, but on MC high (0.14μV CCIR wtd. equivalent input noise). This phono stage is best with the Sugden amps and with high-ish output MC cartridges to avoid hiss becoming obvious. Frequency response was flat and wide, aided by lack of a warp filter. NK

Power	50watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	11Hz-67kHz
Separation	80dB
Noise	-91dB
Distortion	0.01%
Sensitivity	80mV
dc offset	0mV

Disc (MM/MC)	
Frequency response	10Hz-67kHz
Separation	65dB
Noise (e.i.n.)	0.17μV/0.14μV
Distortion	0.003%
Gain	x65/x1300





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# LOUDSPEAKERS

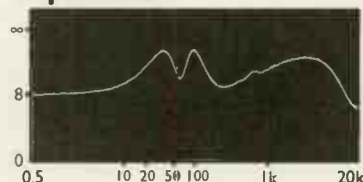
## EPOS ES12

The ES12s use a very simple crossover, just a single capacitor on the tweeter in fact. This means that the roll off rates of each driver are slow, giving a wide overlap. However, Epos have done well to ensure that the two drivers stay in phase over a wide area, and as I pulled the microphone back to around 1m from the 'speakers, the response flattened out nicely, the two units integrating well. There is still a slight dip visible where the two meet, but this fills in further afield.

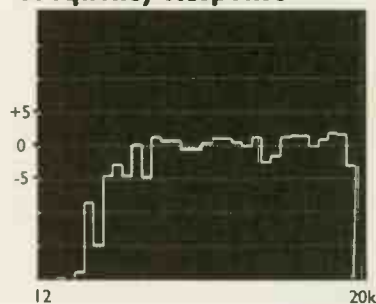
With an overall impedance of  $9.5\Omega$  and an impedance curve that stays well above  $8\Omega$  for the majority of the audio band, the ES12s are a light enough load. Sensitivity is low though; they produced just 84dB supplied

with a nominal watt pink noise signal. This means that for good levels you're going to need a powerful amplifier. I'd recommend 50watts as a minimum in a medium size listening room. DB

Impedance



Frequency Response



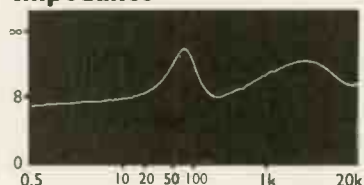
## SPENDOR 2040

What a line up of drivers; there are three elliptical bass drivers, an elliptical midrange driver and a 1" fabric dome tweeter in each of Spendor's 2040s. The response looks like it's made up of several different parts too. Treble is flat and smooth, but although our plot shows reasonable integration between this and midrange, this was only at one microphone position hinting at phase problems; everywhere else there was a strong suck-out. The lump between 2.5kHz and 500Hz is the midrange driver output, and then below this is the output from the three bass drivers. The three parts don't join up that well in measurement terms, but overall the response is wide and balanced, so I'd expect a natural enough sound.

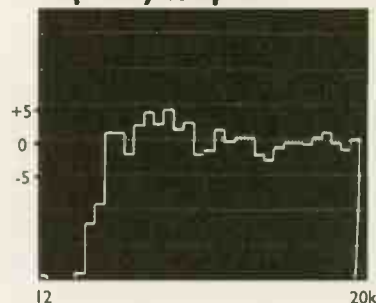
Like the 2030s before, the 2040s are inefficient. Producing just 83dB at 1m for a

nominal watt pink noise input signal, the 2040s need a lot of volts to go loud. Fortunately, impedance is high overall at  $9\Omega$  and the impedance curve smooth, so they won't load an amplifier too heavily. I'd recommend around 70-100watts for best results. DB

Impedance



Frequency Response



## KEF REFERENCE MODEL 4

What a monster. The Reference 4s took two of us to man-handle them up the stairs, partly due to the weight of the 6 drive units in each box. There's a pair of heavy duty bass drivers in coupled-cavity arrangement for bass, a pair of 6inch drivers for upper bass and a 6inch Uni-Q midrange with its centrally mounted tweeter.

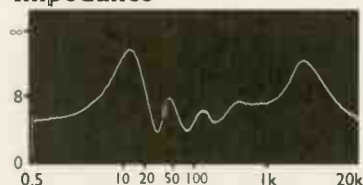
For so many drive units, KEF have balanced the 4s extremely well. The response was even and consistent over a wide range of microphone positions, indicating good phase relationship between drivers, which in turn normally correlates with a focused sound and good imagery. Bass, as you'd expect from a box this size, goes low, but there isn't as much lift as with the smaller Reference models, so I'd expect a dryer, tighter bottom end as a result.

Very much like the other Reference

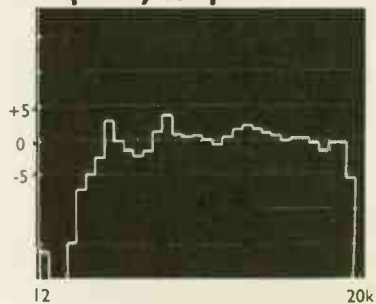
models though, they're not the most friendly load. The impedance curve looks like a cross-section of a Tour-de-France mountain section, reaching peaks of  $30\Omega$  and falling as low as  $3\Omega$ . Even with a high sensitivity of 89dB, their overall impedance of  $5.5\Omega$  and reactive nature means that you're going to need a stable and powerful amplifier to drive the best out of them. It's difficult to

recommend something specific, but look towards a hefty power amplifier boasting 100watts or more and with the ability to drive low impedance loads well. DB

Impedance



Frequency Response



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# CD PLAYERS

## AUDIOLAB 8000DAC

Audiolab's latest 8000DAC shows some notable improvement over its predecessor. Right across the board, distortion was lower and more linear in its behaviour. At -30dB, a level picked to represent a typical music signal, there's only the slightest 2nd harmonic visible. As even order distortion is generally innocuous, I wouldn't expect this to colour the sound, especially at such a low level too. At -60dB distortion was just 0.34%, one of the lowest we've measured, giving an impressive dynamic range figure of 111dB (EIAJ test).

Separation at high frequencies has improved and noise is lower too. Frequency response has changed little though, which is probably a good thing. With a little bass lift and gentle high frequency roll-off, I'd expect powerful bass lines and smooth treble. Output accords with the Philips standard at exactly 2V. DB

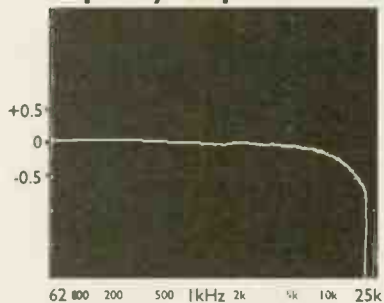
### TEST RESULTS

Frequency response	4Hz-21kHz	
Distortion (%)		
-6dB	0.005	0.004
-30dB	0.004	0.004
-60dB	0.34	0.34
-90dB	28.3	28.0

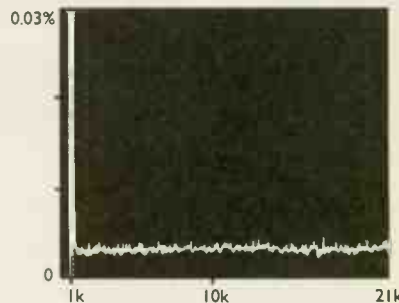
### Separation (dB)

	left	right
1kHz	123	119
20kHz	106	99
Noise		-108dB
with emphasis		-108dB
Dynamic range		111dB
Output		2V

Frequency Response



Distortion



## TEAC VRDS-TI/D-TI

Like the last few TEAC CD players I've measured, the D-TI showed notable treble lift. Beginning its slow climb at 5kHz, the frequency response hits +0.5dB at 20kHz, not drastic, but enough to give the D-TI a bright edge in my experience. If the TEAC manages to stay smooth with it though, this may well give a degree of extra insight and detail. There is also a slight lift in the bass though which will go some way to balancing the sound and give solid bass lines.

Harmonic distortion stayed reasonably low at all signal levels, but with quite strong in-harmonic appearing at -30dB (signal level picked to represent a typical music signal) as seen on our plot. In other areas the TEAC is well enough engineered, with wide separation, low noise and output just a touch above the Philips standard at 2.25V. DB

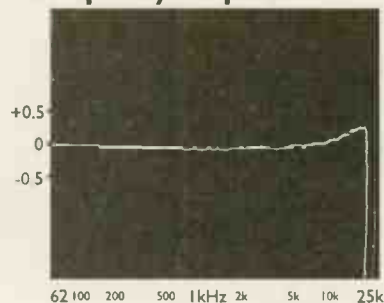
### TEST RESULTS

Frequency response	4Hz-21.1kHz	
Distortion (%)		
-6dB	0.007	0.007
-30dB	0.011	0.011
-60dB	0.64	0.60
-90dB	30.4	30.0

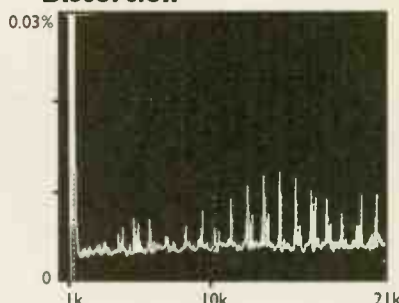
### Separation (dB)

	left	right
1kHz	129	130
20kHz	117	116
Noise		-116dB
with emphasis		-116dB
Dynamic range		105dB
Output		2.25V

Frequency Response



Distortion



# TUNER

## KENWOOD KT-3080

Kenwood have traditionally specialised in radio and even manufacture tuner RF test equipment. The KT-3080 measured well, as expected. It has a flat frequency response that reached 15kHz, low distortion of around 0.14% and good separation right across the audio band, even at high frequencies.

Where most tuners nowadays produce around -72dB hiss when in full quieting (i.e. when fed enough aerial signal), the KT-3080 reaches a creditable -77dB, or 5dB better than usual. It's a good choice for R3 connoisseurs.

Sensitivity was good, but not exceptional, like most RDS tuners. Selectivity was also fine, even in wide mode. Narrow mode gave improved adjacent channel (+/-200kHz) discrimination, needed in crowded conditions.

The signal strength meter wasn't especially sensible, showing maximum at 320µV, well before the tuner was getting enough signal for full quieting. This is something that all Japanese companies do, to make their tuners appear more sensitive than

they really are.

The Kenwood worked well in most areas and should give a clean, tonally balanced sound. NK

### TEST RESULTS

Frequency response	3Hz-15kHz	
Stereo separation	42dB	
Distortion (50% mod.)	0.14%	

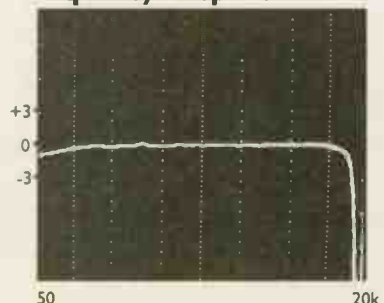
### Hiss (CCIR)

Signal for minimum hiss	1mV
Selectivity (at 0.4MHz)	>80dB

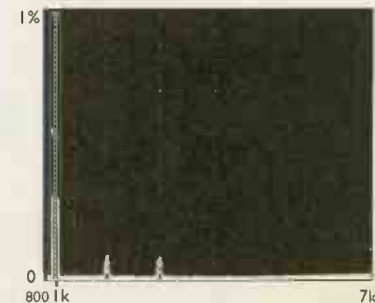
### Sensitivity

mono	2µV				
stereo	32µV				
signal strength meter: (µV)	1	2	3	4	5
	5	10	25	160	320

Frequency Response



Distortion



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### Roy Gregory Hi-Fi Choice

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### Alan Strcom, Hi-Fi World

### MAESTRO

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### Noel Keywood, Hi-Fi World

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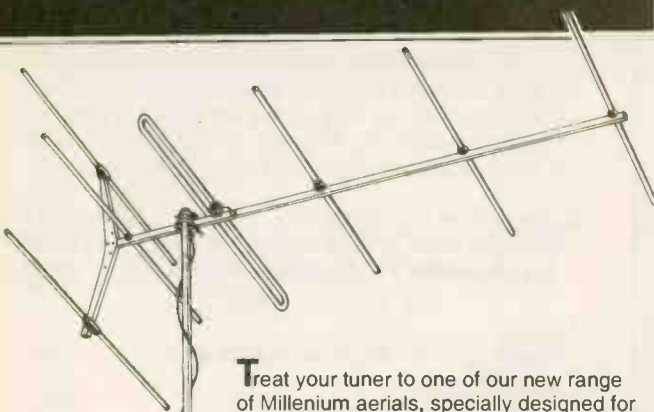
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**AMPS:-** SUGDEN:- WHOLERANGE, CHORD 3200PRE, 800, 1000 + 1200B POWER. MICHELL ISOS, ARGOS AND ALECTOS. AUDIONOTE OTO, MEISHU, QUESTS + CONQUESTS AND M2 PRE. TUBE TECHNOLOGY. UNISON RESEARCH 845s, SIMPLY TWO AND FOUR, DENSEN BEAT AND DM10. PARASOUND PRE+POWERS. CONRAD JOHNSON PV10+MV55. AUDION STEREO + MONOLOCKS. LFD PRE+POWER. HARMON KARDON. AUDIO INNOVATIONS. MOTH.

**LOUDSPEAKERS:-** PROAC R1S, R2S, R2.5 AND R3.5 TABLETTE50, STUDIO 100, 150 + 200. IMPULSE LALI + TA'US. SD ACOUSTICS SD3, 5 AND 1. UKD OPERA + CALLAS. AUDIONOTE K, J + E. SPENDOR. ORIGIN LIVE. JPW. TDL. QUANTUM AUDIO. HARLEQUIN. ALON PETIT, 0.5 AND 1. AUDIOSTATIC ELECTROSTATICS. ANALYSIS RIBBONS. REL SUB WOOFERS. MOREL. ORTOFON.

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HARRISON TEST CASSETTES ARE USED BY HIFI ENTHUSIASTS, RECORDING STUDIOS AND RADIO & T.V STATIONS. THE MULTI-PURPOSE TAPE HAS BEEN RECOMMENDED BY HIFI NEWS, HIFI CHOICE, HIFI WORLD AND AUSTRALIAN HIFI. PLEASE PHONE OR WRITE SHOULD YOU REQUIRE FURTHER ADVICE OR INFORMATION

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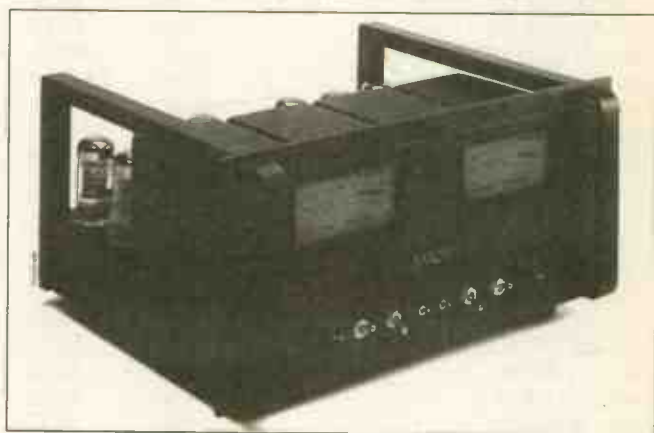
7 MILL HILL, REPTON, DERBY, DE65 6GQ. TEL: 01283 702875. 9am - 9pm.

## Valves and the CD medium

Of all hifi magazines I suppose Hi-Fi World includes more than most on valve amplifiers including home-built kits. Certainly, there can be no doubt that there has been an amazing resurgence in valve amplifiers and the main reason I believe lies in its ability to tame some of the nasties of the CD medium, or at least make them more palatable. Another reason is the comparative simplicity of manufacture and far too many valve amps are simple rehashed old designs put into pretty boxes, that don't sound all that special! You won't find many references in my adverts about valves as the systems we put together using solid state equipment sound perfectly acceptable even with CD, so we don't feel the need to get too involved with valves, which always raise the problem of reliability and valve replacement. A number of valve amps are too low powered for most of the speakers we recommend, and mean we are restricted to highish efficiency units by Triangle, Heybrook and possibly The Alon 1. We do like powerful, dynamic valve amps such as the Primary Acoustics Cadence 100watt (£2.2k) monoblocks, which will drive any speaker we sell, including even the difficult ATC 10's, 20's and 50's (Passive). As they don't now make a matching preamp, we usually front the monoblocks with the AVI preamp, but that's not unusual!

Record cleaning using VPI HW17F, available from colleague 'The Audio Valet' at 80p per record. Phone (0117) 987 7904

**V'audio Hi-Fi Consultants**  
36 Druid Hill, Stoke Bishop, Bristol BS9 1EJ  
Tel/Fax: 0117 9686005



## Mesa Baron

Last week however we auditioned another valve power amp from America by Mesa Engineering, namely the Baron, which was very favourably reviewed by Ken Kessler in Hi-Fi News. This amp unusually can be operated in either triode mode at 55 w/ch and in various mixtures of triode and pentode until full pentode operation at 150 w/ch. Although expensive at just under £4K, it impressed enough in 30 minutes, mainly in pentode, for me to include it in this advert. The amount of feedback is also adjustable, but I suspect that zero feedback would generally be preferred. The triode option gave a slightly softer focus which might be preferred on some systems, but as the Ruark Accolade and Alon II's were used, the pentode operation sounded sweet and dynamic. If of any interest do give us a ring. It's fun watching those





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MICROMEGA LEADER CD Player boxed, remote	£300
MICROMEGA Minimum amp	£200
MARANTZ CD75 dx CD Player	£120
5 Channel PIONEER dolby Prologic	£300 ring
MUSICAL FIDELITY PRE3a tweaked with silver wire and MVT psu	£225
ROKSAN XERXES with ext psu roksan tabriz zi	£500
LINN LP12/valhalla grace 707 arm	£250
NAIM NAIT 2	£150
OLD CROFT MICRO	£150
HEYBROOK QUARTET	£350
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Roksan L1 Pre-amp ex dem	£1595	£1275
Roksan L2 Pre-amp ex dem	£995	£795
Roksan S1 Power-amp ex dem	£1495	£1195
Aura VA80 Integrated amp ex dem	£279	£199
Quad 44 Pre-amp	£575	£375
Quad 405 Power Amp	£395	£225
Quad 606	£718	£495
Cyrus One Amplifier	£270	£180
Cyrus II Amplifier/PSX	£595	£395
Moth Passive Pre 2 x Monoblocks	£599	£399
Yamaha DSPE300 Processor	£649	£349
Yamaha DSPA1000 A/V Amplifier	£899	£595
Quad 77 amplifier(ex-dem mint)	£849	£649
Naim 160x3 power amps/Alps PSU)		
NAC42 Pre/Naxo/Linn Isoboriks	£7000	£2750

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	Today's RRP	S/H
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Rolei RCD965 Discreet	£425	£249

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Linn LP12/Basik/Ortofon	£899	£499
Thorens TD180 MKV/Stanton 500	£399	£199
Mission/Nagaoka MP20	£249	£149
Rega Planar 3/RB300	£300	£200
Roksan Artemiz/Xarxes/Goldring 1020 (Mint)	£1500	£795
Systemdek Mission Arm Grado	£350	£245
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Celestion SL6	£399	£220
Yamaha NS1000 (rare in black)	£1395	£875
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SD Acoustics Monitors	£1800	£599
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# Classified Ads

For details on how to place a Classified Advertisement, please see page 137



PRIVATE

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AGNEPLANAR MG 2.5 panel speakers. Light Oatmeal grilles and Teak surrounds. Excellent condition and superb, natural sound. £175. Tel: 0161 432 6120 (Stockport)

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SD ACOUSTICS SD1 New model (2000) £650. Beard P100Mk2 (Gold Lions) £700. Audionote OTO SE (1250) £700 mint. Pro-Passion unbalanced (400) £200. Wanted: Maggies - Blown tweeters O.K. Wanted: Quality record deck. Tel: Andy 01993 883 882

WANTED - TOSHIBA 6400DXC 486 laptop PC computer. Any considered. Tel: 0181 830 7214

QUAD FM2 £70, Leak Throughlines stereo/mono £100/£70. Micromega Logic £150, Pioneer 9090 £70. Leak Minisandwich £30. Garrard 401/SME 3009/Howland West plinth £200. Tel: 01608 643 553 (Chipping Norton)

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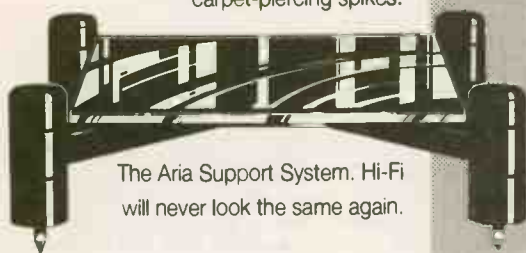
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PAIR KLS3 6 months old, professionally built, piano black. Reason for sale - building KLS6s. Price £775 ono. Tel: 0115 929 4060 (after 5.30pm, Nottingham)

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A.E.S. UK has a new series of products being premiered at the Ramada Hi Fi show in September. The "Carlisle", a hybrid amplifier providing 80 Watts of power with the ultimate in detail, sound stage and control; The "Argisle" speakers, designed to match the quality of the Carlisle. Both of these products are designed and offered as a "complete package" as well as individually.

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AUDIOLAB 8000A AMP £225; rcam Alpha 5+ amp £150; Sony CK611S cass/deck £130. Sell due to upgrade. Buyers must collect. Tel: 0121 326 8083 (Birmingham)

MERIDIAN 605 MOSFET Power amps. 150 wpc (rave reviews) £950. AD 302 stereo amp as new hardly used £95. Akai GX65 3 head cassette deck £125 ovno. Dual CS 35-4 turntable with Ortofon cartridge, offers. Tel: 0181 332 6140

MAGNUM A50 MOSFET Monobloc power amps 280 wpc £500 Tel: 0181 332 6140

EAK AMPLIFIERS 2 x TL10s £500, 2 TL12 plus £400, ST20 and Stereo arislope £300, single TL12 plus and mono Varislope £90, Troughline Stereo 3 £80 Tel: 01273 684 424 (Brighton)

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MUSICAL FIDELITY CDT single ended triode CD player £250. Single speakers; Tannoy 15" DC HPD £80; Woodmans Audiom 91 18" bass 20; Naim MC boards £30; Quad 4 MC board £10. Tel: 01273 684 424 (Brighton)

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PRELLE 100 CDSE Excellent reviews, two hours use £425 ono. Jellius Cyalene II Audio Note wired £95 ono. Audio Note tone arm lever wired £600 ono. Tel: Tony 01483 34795 or 0385 114 13

LINN LP12 LATEST Spec Ekos MkII, rktiv 90hrs. Kairn, Klout, Kabers, all cables as new can demo cost £8000 asking £4,400. May split. Tel: 01480 217 66 (Cambridge)

QUAD FM TUNER £50, Quad QCII 20, Quad II £150, Garrard 4HF 20, or complete in Oak cabinet £220. Quad ESL £180. Leak Troughline Stereo £60, Leak Stereo 0 £20. Tel: 01452 617 761 (Gloucester)

OWNSHEND ELITE ROCK, B250 arm, boxed £250. Rogers S4A speakers as new £125. Myst ma amplifier £50. Pioneer A400 iTE and RATA upgrades £175 boxed, Aiwa 810 3-head cassette deck unused and boxed £100. Tel: 0114 221 5271

OPA 50s PRE/POWER PSU Black link cables etc. Highly praised £950 £500 Tel: Adam 01268 711 536 (Mon-Fri only 9am-6pm)

QUAD ESL SPEAKERS, mint condition, serviced April '93, new treble panels, protection circuits, covers. Metal stands if required £425 ono. Tel: 01904 626 915 between 7pm-9pm (York)

NAIM SBLs BLACK, PAXOs £800. Linn LP12 Valhalla, late Ittok LVII £550. Ortofon Rohmann, just run in £750. Tannoy D500 loudspeakers, 3 months old £950. Thorens TD150 MkII, Linn Basik Plus K9 £150. All vgc ono. Tel: Leigh 0171 774 3934 (day) 01245 283125 (evening/weekends)

AUDIO INNOVATIONS 500; Revox turntable; Revox CD player; Revox amplifier; Revox speakers; Heybrook Quartets + stands; Audion PP valve monoblocks. Wanted: Snell Ks (Js) Offers to: Tel: 01179 559 342 (Bristol)

CABLE CLEAROUT, Deltec Black Slink Goretex (1m), Deltec Slink (0.75m), Chord Flatline Gold (3m pair), Absolute Wire Force 4 (5m pair). Offers? Tel: 0151 489 1770

AURA CA-200 Remote preamp with excellent phono stage. Only 2 months old, cost new £699. Asking £399. Rotel RHC-10 passive preamp, cost new £795 asking £200, just 6 months old. Tel: 01296 437 314 (evenings, Aylesbury)

AUDIOLAB 8000A boxed as new £300. Quad II power amplifiers, Quad 22 control unit, Quad FM tuner, sell complete £550. Wanted: Stage for Gyrodec? Naim Tuner? Tel: 01243 265 126 (Bognor)

NAIM NAC 32.5 £175, Hi-Cap £300, NAP 250 £650 classic old style threesome of good vintage. SBLs £750, NAC 5 2x7m gold plugs. Tel: 0973 737 957

NAIM-AFFORDABLE UPGRADE. 92 (MC boards) mint. Hi-Cap/140 old type excellent condition £975 ono. Genuine reason for sale. Tel: 0113 260 8656 (eves, Leeds)(No dealers)

LOWTHER ACOUSTA'S PM7(A)'s housed in dual position Acousta enclosures £500 ono. Revox tape recorder model A77. 2 track, built in output amps and speakers, microphone and tapes £350 ono. Tel: 01705 230 689

ROGERS LS1B Original centre bass unit for LS3/5a. Walnut £200. Technics EPC205C Mk3 cartridge (very low miles) and spare stylus (unused). SME fitting £65. Armstrong 521 tuner £20. Nytech CTA252 Series 2 £75. Kef Coda 2s £65. Wanted: Elite 600 power amp. Tel: 01620 823 678 (Haddington)

AUDIOLAB 8000 DAC MkII £400 (digital lead included) Tel: 0141 649 2773

KEF 104.2 REFERENCE Speakers walnut in mint condition, boxed £600 ono. Thorens TD160 c/w SME III arm plus Goldring boxed £100 ono. Buyer collects. Tel: 01736 719 023 (Penzance)

WANTED URGENTLY. SENNHEISER HD580 Jubilee special headphones must be mint and fully boxed. Tel: Paul 01524 400 642 or 0836 327 370

KEF 105/3 ROSEWOOD 14 months old £1200. Roksan Attesa with DA2 D/A converter and DSS dedicated power supply £2500 new, immaculate £1400. Audiolab CDM transport with Audiolab DAC brand new £1300. All are boxed and can be auditioned. Tel: Bob 0181 863 9117 or 0181 864 4492

MICHELL ALECTO Stereo power amp. 4 months old, boxed as new cost £1150, bargain £795 (monos forces sale) Tel: Paul 0956 169 161 (NW London)

NAIM WANTED OLD STYLE NAP 250s - 2 offt. for Sale: (all new style) Six NAP 135s, DBL active X/over, Hi-Cap, DEL PXO, DBL speakers, original unmarked condition, 16 months old, highest offer secures. Tel: 01924 271 043

QUAD 606 POWER AMPLIFIER, 66 pre amplifier, 66 FM tuner and control panel £1300. Meridian 506 CD player £450. Tel: Debbie 01274 816 714

ROGERS LS4A Loudspeakers, Black. Tel: 0181 302 9063

WANTED: TANNOY 615 Floorstanding loudspeakers preferably with mass loading floor stands must be black Ash models and immaculate. Cash waiting. Tel: 01256 58669

LINN LP12 with Basik plus arm, K5 cartridge £250. Casio DAT recorder with accessories £250. Revox B77 for spares £100. Philips 220 CDI £200. Tel: 0141 632 5408 (Glasgow)

AUDIO TECHNICA AT160 ML and Technics EPC205 Mk4 cartridges wanted in good condition. Tel: 01752 266 753 anytime

BRAND NEW AT OC9 Cambridge £200. DPA 200/S pre power immaculate condition £700. Roksan Xerxes, black Ash, Artimix tonearm, Shiraz cartridge, XPS MkII PSU £1,100. Tel: Jules 01792 280 061

LINN LP12. VALHALA, Ittok, K9, black Ash, immaculate £450. (Option on 200 rock, folk, blues LP collection) Linn LK1/LK2 pre/power, with remote, immaculate £350. Tel: Pete 01945 772 393 (eves)

REL Q-BASS SUB BASS system, 4 months old, excellent condition £220 ono. Tel: 0402 507 902 (mobile)

B&W P4 SPEAKERS. New, unwanted prize, still in original unopened boxes. Retail at £675. Serious offers by facsimile to 01903 816604. Successful bidder collects from Worthing area.

AUDIO INNOVATIONS Series 800 Anniversary limited edition. Just ten weeks old. Mint condition. Paid £1450, accept £1050. Transport arranged. Tel/Fax: Anthony 01790 753 151

ROGERS VINTAGE LS3/5A 15 ohm, Teak speakers vgc £225. Leak Delta 70 amp £45. Leak Varislope Stereo pre amp £35. Isophon KK8 tweeters £10 pair. Peerless KO 10 HFC tweeters £10 pair. Some X/overs and components. Tel: Tony 01472 313 707

MICHELL GYROPOWER QC for Gyrodec, box still under warranty, deck stolen, replaced by Orbe £200. Tel: 0171 499 3007 or 0171 495 0935

AUDIO INNOVATIONS Series 500. Excellent condition plus replacement set Groove Tube EL34s £550 ono. Type J 'speakers walnut immaculate + Huygens stands £400 ono. OR200 speaker cable 5 metre set £50. First Audio stereo triode power amp reconditioned £750. Tel: 01403 734 189

SPENDOR SPI/2 SPEAKERS + MAF stands immaculate condition 12 month old very little use £800 (£1500) or exchange for quality amplifier. Tel: 0181 531 5979 (day or evening)

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ROGERS LS3/5 (15 ohm) £220 ono. Thorens TD 126/II (3 speed) £185 ono. Lux 309V int amp (75wpc) with matching tuner (T3004). Both in rosewood cases £200 ono. Arcam Alpha CD player with Black Box 2 £235 ono. Tel: 0191 422 3415

KRELL CD DSP MkII Top loader with clear acrylic lid, single ended and balanced outputs and 3 inputs. Not just a CD player. Mint condition boxed with manuals, probably the last time I will advertise. List £5,000. Incredible bargain £1,995 (please no offers) Tel: Ian 0171 589 4840 or 0171 584 5784

LINN KAIRN £800, Linn Klout £1300. Boxed as new. Speakers kit built by Audio Pro. KEF CS9 (105.1), Dynaudio Twin, well finished. Offers. Tel: 01295 780 363 or 0831 809 346

WANTED: TRIO/KENWOOD Turntable model No. KD850 or KD770 or KD990 or KD5100. also Hi-Fi year books 1958-1960-1968/69-1981. Tel: Malcolm 01837 546 83 (evenings)

MCINTOSH VALVE MONOBLOCKS MC30 £1,600. McIntosh valve monoblocks MC60 £2,200. Krell integrated CD DSP, boxed £2,200. Magna Planars Typnis Electro-Statics speakers price £1,500. Also vintage 1930-40s hi-fi equipment; Leaks, Lowther, EMI, RCA, Vitavox, Sound Sales, Lowther Audiovectors PM2Cs etc. Tel: 0171 591 0395 Fax: 0171 460 6538

WANTED: PAIR OF QUAD 405-2s. Recent models with phono inputs to swap for my Quad II valve monoblocks with gold phonos mint condition. Tel: 0181 980 8149

A.V.I. PRE £440 A.V.I. MONO Amps £580 A.T.C. 10s £650, Quad 66 Pre £550, 606 power £375. A.E. Aegis speakers with stands £325, Arcam Alpha 6 CD £350, Alpha 6 amp £225, Teac VRDS10 CD player £400, Quad 34 pre 306 power £350. Tel: 01977 643 629

ARCAM A60 AMP. Very good condition £65. Wanted: Pioneer SA 606 amp. Tel: 01228 745 37 (Cumbria)

LINN LP12 BLACK Valhalla Akito, K9 immaculate £415; Celestion SL6Si speakers black £190, Harbeth HL-P3 walnut £325, B&W CM2 (minatures plus subwoofers) £285, Thorens TD125 £95. Tel: 01257 263 403 (Lancs)

MISSION 752, NEW 28/12/95 £375. Musical Fidelity MC2, bi-wireable £160. Quad 33 pre £65, Legend C10, P300 pre, power, 180wpc £400, Royd Abbots £325. Wanted: Nakamichi decks. Tel: 01926 831 388

LINN SARA's, ISOBARIK speakers, boxed, vgc, spiked stands, Force-4 flat cables £380. Wanted: pair Meridian floor standing speakers with built in power amps. Tel: Tom 0181 360 4610 (evenings & weekends)

MERIDIAN D.A.C. 263 Delta Sigma. As new, boxed, three years old £175 ono. Tel: 01530 261 468 (after 6pm, Leic)

SONIC FRONTIERS SFD1 DAC (balanced) HDCD compatible, amazing sound, boxed as new, 18 months old, 3 1/2 year warranty. Bargain at £1,695 or will sell together with Theta Data Basic. Fabulous combination. Tel: 01623 871 950

PINK TRIANGLE ORDINAL, 22-Bit + Monarchy DIP + 2 x XLO digital type 4, new £1300 for £600, Yamaha DSP 390 Dolby Surr Proc. £200, Naim Nac 5 loudspeaker cable, 4 x 8m, £100. Tel: Michael 0171 937 7935 (evenings)

RUARK TALISMANS MKI in rosewood. Immaculate and boxed £395 ono. 2 x Rogers Cadet valve stereo power amps (currently used as monoblocks but will separate) £75 each. Tel: 01480 460 502 (Cambridge area)

PIONEER A-400X £150. Sony TCK730ES, (Nakamichi quality cassette deck) £200. Sony TC399 open reel, needs service £50. All mint, boxed. Wanted: Old Hi-Fi mags. Tel: 016974 785 37 (Cumbria)

CROFT SERIES 5 VALVE amplifier as new condition 30+30 watts £300. Stereo valve amplifier, Sowler transformers, VT46 outputs, 6SN7 driver, black chassis £500. Tel: 01698 264 698 (Scotland)

LIMITED EDITION TRIO KD550 Direct Drive turntable with cast resin concrete plinth for low noise performance. Comes with an SME armboard and Series III tone arm £110 ono. Ariston Q deck, needs a simple DC power supply and cartridge £25 ono. Sony CDP-555ESD remote control CD player. A bit of a back breaker at 14kgs. Makes most CD players look and sound like biscuit tins. Stuffed full of ELNA caps and copper plating with two high quality potted transformers on the rear. 110v version but step down transformer is provided. £900 2 years ago, will accept £300. All are in excellent condition. Tel: Jon 0181 255 3978

NAIM CDS CD PLAYER, NAC 52 preamp with remote, NAP 250 amplifier, all brand new Dec 1995, absolutely mint with packaging, manuals and warranty; change of circumstances forces very reluctant sale. Also Mana 5-tier table (Feb 1996), Heybrook Sextet II, walnut (March 1995), chord Flatline bi-wire 2 x 5m Telephone for special prices. Tel: 01460 543 22

POWERSOUND 1600 HD DAC Only two months old, with 4 inputs including balanced in and out. Excellent sound with first class specification. Genuine reason for sale £1150. Tel: 01208 872 316 (Bocmin)

NAIM CD1, PRISTINE, 6 Months, NAC92, Flatcap, immaculate, 3 months, NAP90, RTL2, mint, all boxed. New £3,600, sell £2,400 ono. Reason serious upgrade. May split. Tel: Naheed 01642 249 035

B&W 801 SPEAKERS With wood Teak finish in superb condition £1,100. Tel: 01823 277 289 or car phone 0585 652 557

ORTOFON MC2000 AND T20 Mk2 transformer. No box for MC2000 hence £300 for both, can dem within 30 miles of Northampton. Tel: 01933 650 803 after 6pm

SME SERIES TWO 3009R arm, brand new, unused, still sealed in makers box. SME current list price inc VAT £488. £200 plus p&p. Tel: 01273 583 675 (Brighton)

QUAD 66 PREAMP & CONTROL, 14 months old £550; Quad 33 preamp £90; Leak Sandwich speakers £100 pr; Marantz 104 tuners £30. Or sensible offers. Tel: 01789 205 191 (Stratford Upon Avon)

CARVER LOUDSPEAKERS, Forsell reference transport and DAC, OCM preamp/mono amps, Sunfire 5 channel amp, Audio Artistry Dvorak loudspeakers, variety of cables. Tel: 01232 319 148 for details and prices 6pm-10pm.

NAIM IBL BLACK ASH Loudspeakers in immaculate condition with original packaging £450 ono. Tel: 01273 772 379 early evenings or weekends

PINK TRIANGLE PT T00 with Linn Ekos/Karma. Mint condition £750. Koetsu Urushi low usage, boxed £800. Ruark Swordsman Plus (Mahogany) boxed unused. Receipt for £315, accept £230. Tel: 01924 290 749

AUDIO TECHNICA OC9 moving coil cartridge (unused) £180. Tel: 01249 812 565

LINN EKOS TONEARM rewired with Audionote silver wire with Audionote ANV silver arm lead. £700. Tel: 0161 434 5680

LINN KAIRN PRE-AMPLIFIER and Linn LK280 power amplifier £950 ono. Exposure VIII power amplifier £195 ono. NAD 910 Dolby Pro Logic surround sound processor £195 ono. Aiwa Dolby B & C cassette deck £50 ono. Tel: 01423 528 256 (Harrogate)

REEL TO REEL Professional 1/4" tape 1200ft 7" spools all boxed/unused. Also leaders and splicing tape. Will split but prefer to sell together. Offers. Tel: 01451 832 177 (Cotswolds)

LARGE SPEAKERS HUGE SOUND. Pair of Nightingale NM1 monitors, bass units KEF B139, mid range Peerless. Height 865 mm, width 405 mm, depth 280 mm. Oiro £300, but best offer will secure anyway - we need the space! Tel: 01543 251 281

PAIR SNELL K SPEAKERS plus stands £150. Topaz 1m interconnect £10. Lynwood mains filter £30. Tel: 0181 556 9102

PAIR FULL RANGE ELECTRO-STATICS (not Quads) very large and unusual. Offers? Pair Quad II Concordants EL34 x 2 + 6550. Good condition £350. Exchange, swap, WHY. Tel: 01295 261 863 eves (Oxfordshire)

HEYBROOK HBI LOUDSPEAKERS upgraded to S3 with Heybrook stands £100. Pioneer A300X £110 both boxed and mint. Tel: 01905 830 120 (Worcester)

ION NEXUS SPI PRE (MM/MC Boards), Nexus SAM 40 power, X-Pak 1 PSU, X-Pak 2 PSU. Boxed. Cost £1,100. Wanted £550 ono. Rega ELA speakers. Cost £405. Wanted £200. Tel: 01663 744 803 (Stockport)

DNM 2A PRE AMP with single power supply £300. Exposure VIII power amp £200, Linn Ittok tonearm £160. Tel: 01189 328 282 day, 01189 477 542 evenings.

WANTED: ARCAM BB5 DAC. BB3 for sale, £100. Tel: Steve 01763 848 390 weekday eves only. (Herts/Cambs)

WANTED: PAIR OF MERIDIAN DSP 5000 digital loudspeakers and one DSP 5000C digital loudspeaker. Will pay up to £3000. Tel: 01423 528 256 (Harrogate)

COMPLETE SYSTEM, LINN LP12, Lingo, Akito, K9, Exposure pre/power amps, Linn Kaber speakers, Pioneer cassette, tuner, Marantz graphic, Philips CD, all cables £3000 ono. Tel: Adrian P. 01734 819 990





PRIVATE

THORENS TD124 II and manual. Mint condition. £185. Tel: 01302 724 384

LINN KEILIDH SPEAKERS + plinths £525. Tel: Tim - Pager No. 0941 119 432 Please leave a contact telephone number.

GALE FORCE 4 SPEAKERS - Floor standing, slimline, excellent performance £175 ono. Tel: 01422 842 022

TDL STUDIO 3 TRANSMISSION line speakers plus TDL stands. Reluctant sale for £425 or serious offer. (current price over £1000) Can demonstrate. Boxed. Tel: 01386 423 957 evenings (Evesham)

LINN TUKANS, ROSEWOOD FINISH, 9 months old, hardly used, boxed as new, stands included. Cost £600. Sell £350 ono. Tel: 01242 527 481 eves/w/ends

REVOX B77 TAPE RECORDER. Very low home use only. 1/4 track, 3 3/4 and 7 1/2 I.P.S. Can demonstrate £450. Tel: 0191 281 0260

SME IV TONEARM, VGC, £450. Ortofon MC2000, less than 20hrs use, £300. Upgraded to Rohmann. Kinshaw Perception 2-box phono stage, £200. Also two DPA The Power RF mains filters, £40each or £70pair. Tel: 0181 830 7214, Chris.

QUAD 67 CD PLAYER £575, Ruark Talisman II speakers £475, both items mint condition, boxed with manuals. Tel: 01978 780 580 (Wrexam area)

VERY RARE EAR 529 Monoblocs, 500 watts per channel, recently overhauled by Tim Paravinci, £1500, or may exchange. Tel: Andy 0171 928 8242 (Waterloo area)

AUDIOLAB 8000C Four months old, boxed, pristine £375. Musical Fidelity T1 FM tuner guaranteed 10months £230. Maplin Millenium valve monoblocks new valves £245. Tel: Robert 0121 427 8810 (B'ham)

REVOX A77 Mk3, Hi-Speed, half track. Mint condition, original instruction book, NAB adaptors and tapes £325 or exchange for a Quad 66 CD player or tuner. Tel: 01275 835 334

DPA RENAISSANCE intergrated amp, less than 1 year old, mint, still under guarantee., can demo. £300 ono. Tel: 01283 840 466 (Midlands)

AUDIO NOTE ANSP Speaker cable. 2 metre pair terminated with gold plated spades. Bargain at £550 (list £1100) Tel: Gerard 0181 743 7809 after 7pm

KEF REFERENCE 103.2 SPEAKERS, black Ash, with Partington spiked stands and Audioquest Brown cables (2 x 6m) £220. Also Geoff Bull upgraded Philips CD650 player £200. Tel: 01903 205 585 evenings (Worthing)

MONITOR AUDIO STUDIO 20SE's for sale, 9 months old, piano black lacquer finish, immaculate, boxed, £1750 ono. Tel: 01753 883 377 or 0385 231 850

NAIM CDI, Mint condition, can demonstrate. £1350 ono. Tel: 01443 405 347 (Mid Glam)

PINK TRIANGLE Da Capo DAC (1307 filter) and Cardinal transport with re-clocking card. Massive soundstage, smooth and open. Cost new £2700, only one year old, asking £1450. Tel: 01296 437 314 (Aylesbury)

MUSICAL FIDELITY A1 Class A amplifier £135. NAD 7020E receiver £95. Sony TCRX55 cassette deck £65. Garrard SP25 Mk5/Shure M75-6 in plinth £25. Tel: 01268 795 235 (Essex)

AUDIO INNOVATIONS Series 500 integrated amp. Triode-coupled, new output valves, perfect, boxed £450. Audionote ANB speaker cable, 6m pair £95, 4m pair £65. Audioquest Lapis interconnect, incredible £175. Tel: 0181 747 1968

NAIM/RUARK. Naim NAT 02 tuner, mint £480. Also Ruark Talisman speakers (Mk1 with Mk2 tweeters) mint £399. Tel: 0161 351 1598 after 7.30 pm/weekends

PAIR DENON POA 4400A mono blocks, 160 watts rms each. Cambridge C100 pre-amp £600. Pair Harbeth HL monitors (walnut) £250. Yamaha CDX510 recently serviced £95. Tel: 01544 318 189

RADFORD SC25/STA35 Pre-power amplifier £850 (£2400 when new). Audio Alchemy DST digital cable £120 (£200 when new). All in excellent condition. Tel: 0181 559 9562 or 0181 270 0595

KRELL KSA-100 Poweramp. Cost new £5150. Unmarked. Big and heavy. Phantastic sound, holds speakers in iron vice-like grip. £1950 for quick sale. Will demonstrate. Tel: 0161 904 8081

LINN SARA speakers, walnut, stands £250. Mission PCM2 CD player £150. Marantz 65SEII CD player £100. All boxed in excellent condition. Tel: 01543 686 845

PIONEER 12 Disc CD player, remote control, black unit, only 18 months old, still boxed as new. Cost £550, sell for only £220 ono. Tel: 0973 254 183 or 01905 767 274

FERROGRAPH SERIES 5, 3 speed valve, mono, aluminium case, mint condition with large quantity spares and new tapes £300. Mullard mono 10 watt valve amplifier and pre-amp £50. Shure cartridges new £5 each. Tel: 01425 619 376 (New Milton)

CROFT ENIGMA 'ELITE' Pre-amp. Modified by Glen Croft, latest caps, 9 months old, 20 hrs use. Absolutely mint condition and superb sound. Cost £1600. Mega Hi-Fi bargain at only £750. Tel: 01902 786 818 (Wolverhampton)

LOWTHER ACOUSTA speakers/PM6 drivers, tatty £125. Leak Delta 30 vgc £35. Pair AR22BX speakers, GVO £35. Rogers Cadet power amp, needs valves £25. Quad 303 faulty £15. Teac cassette faulty Free! to a good home. Goods located in Cheshire. Can deliver/demo, within reason. Tel: 01633 262 904 (Newport)

KEF REFERENCE 103/4 speakers, mint £675 ono. (cost £1300) Kef Kube 200 for use with Reference series speakers, offers? (cost £375) 4 x 10 metre lengths Mission stranded speaker cable £12.50 per length. Tel: 01703 738 935 (Southampton)

THORENS TD124/II, SME arm, cartridge, complete £230. Microomega Stage One £350. Pioneer CD703 £130. Royd Minstrels £145. All boxed, as new. Wanted. Templars/Abbotts, Itok, Exposure amp. Tel: 01792 205 598 (Swansea)

VINTAGE VALVE Amplifiers collectors clearout. Quad, Leak, Radford, Rogers etc. Phone for details. Epos ESII speakers, mint £250. Tel: 01548 821 360

ROKSAN ATTESSA Integrated CD top loading, mint, boxed, cost £1495. Sell £795. Revox A77 reel/reel half track high speed excellent condition £275. Sony E570ES tuner with RDS. Mint, boxed £99. Can demonstrate. Tel: 01279 724 804 (Herts)

CROFT SERIES 6 power amplifier, 120 watts superb sound £900. Leak Troughline stereo tuner with 'EAR' decoder £195. Wanted: Croft Series 5. Tel: 0192872 4589 (evenings) 0192876 2254 (day)

AVI S2000MC CD Player. As new and hardly used. Absolute bargain at £750. Tel: 0181 870 3630 day or evening

SHEARNE PHASE ONE pre/power amps (rrp £2200) for your Audiolab 8000Q/8000P amps. Audio Innovations S500 amp, recent valves, boxed, mint £475. Spendor BC1s on stands £180 ono Tel: 0171 730 1614 daytime

AUDIOLAB 8000A Latest spec £325. Kef Q60 speakers + Atacama stands £325. Linn LK100, year old. Rega ELA speakers £250. Linn Intek £250. Pioneer SD-T5000 50" TV £2900. Tel: 01952 502 097 (Telford)

ROKSAN DPI/DA1 Transport & DAC £700. Naim 72/140/Hi-cap pre-power £1350. Denon DRM 800 cassette deck £150. Linn K20 4 x 5 mtrs bi-wired speaker cable £50. All equipment boxed in excellent condition. Tel: 01293 883 730

SONUS FABER Minuetto's plus matching iron wood stands perfect condition, absolute bargain, personal reasons forces reluctant sale, hence £850. Tel: Darren 01792 464 001 (ext 216) or 01792 420 801 after 5pm. (Swansea)

DELTEC DPA 50S Power amp + 2x3.5m Black Sixteen + Black Slink £650. Naim Nait £135. Nakamichi 480 cass £135. Nakamichi 580 cass £195. Troughline III Stereo £85. Tel: 01304 813 572

QUAD 606 POWER Amplifier £440. Quad 405-2 power amplifier £195. Leak Troughline 3 tuner £95. Wanted: Remote control for Hitachi D-3300M cassette deck. Tel: 0151 924 2793

KEF REFERENCE 105/3 Speakers, black Ash finish, boxed and documented, excellent condition £1195. Tel: 01959 577017 daytime (answerphone) and evenings

AUDIO INNOVATIONS L2 Line pre-amp £450. DAC-In-The-Box £140. Both boxed and immaculate. Also EMI Sound Quad decoder from early 70's, and issues of Audio/Practical HiFi and Audio 1974-1977. Tel: 0121 441 2944

MARANTZ SC22 Pre-amp £650. Matching MA24 Class A mono blocks, almost new £1900 (cost £2600) Tel: 01703 774 914 evenings

AUDIOLAB 8000A Integrated amplifier, immaculate, boxed, happy to demonstrate £325 ono. Target TR60 speaker stands with Soundbytes filling £35 ono. Tel: 01702 470 084

APOGEE MINOR Ribbon Hybrid speakers, excellent £650 ono. Leak Stereo 20 amp vgc £150. Leak Stereo 30 amp £35. Leak Delta 75 receiver £45. Leak Sandwich speakers with horn tweeter £60. Avo meter £25. Alphson 12" speaker stands £30. Tel: 01892 838 532 evenings

TANNOY BERKLEY Speakers £400. Castle Kendal speakers £60. Tel: 01273 684 424 (Brighton)

# audio arts

**H I - F I C O N S U L T A N T S**  
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Audiomeca Mephisto.....	ED	£1,599.00	Marcus Transport.....	ED	£3,400.00
Mark Levinson 31 transport.....	M	£4,450.00	Magneplanar MG3A.....	M	£1,695.00
Counterpoint IIE.....	ED	£1,499.00	Koetsu Chang.....		£1,400.00
Teac VRDS 10.....	M	£399.00	SD3 + Target Stands.....		£275.00
Audio Note DAC 3SIG.....	ED	£1,599.00	<b>NEW IN THIS MONTH</b>		
CAT SLI Phono.....	M	£2,850.00	Krell KSA 150.....		£2,100.00
Counterpoint SAII.....	M	£3,450.00	Krell KSA 250.....		£3,300.00
Audio Research SP14.....	M	£1,550.00	Krell KSA 100.....		£1,499.00
Trilogy 901.....	M	£499.00	Audio Research VT60.....		£1,750.00
LFD PAI/LS1.....	M	£899.00	Audio Research SP11.....		£1,750.00
Jadis JP 80.....	M	£6,250.00	Audio Research SP9.....		£899.00
Adyton Pre Amp.....	ED	£1,900.00	Mark Levinson 38s.....		£3,750.00
Arion Pre Amp.....	ED	£799.00	Counterpoint SA20.....		£1,150.00
Counterpoint SA4.....	M	£3,900.00	Wadia 6.....		£2,000.00
Jadis Defay 7.....	M	£3,099.00	Wadia 15.....		£2,000.00
Audio Research LS3.....	M	£1,250.00	Y.B.A. C.D2.....		£1,699.00
Jadis JA80.....	M	£4,450.00	Audio Meca Kreatura.....		£899.00
Mesa Barron.....	ED	£2,850.00	Meridan 500 Transport.....		£899.00
Adyton Cordis 1.6.....	ED	£2,950.00	Theta Data II Gen III - Balanced+AT+T.....		£3,999.00
Adyton Opera.....	ED	£1,950.00	Magnaplaner MG3A.....		£999.00
Arion Tycho.....	ED	£950.00	SME V.....		£899.00
Audio Innovations Ser 1000.....	M	£1,200.00	Audio Physics Vingos.....		£2,850.00
EAR 834.....	M	£950.00	Impulse H2.....		£1,550.00
Sonus Faber Minima Amators.....	M	£1,100.00	Martin Logan Aerlus.....		£1,499.00
Audio Physic Steps.....	Mkd	£799.00	Mark Levinson 31.35.....		£7,999.00
Cadence Speakers.....	M	£2,750.00	LFD Monoblocks.....		£999.00
Mirage M1.....	M	£3,400.00	Goldmond Studio T3F Arm.....		£3,750.00
Triangle Altinis.....	ED	£1,499.00	Proac Tablett Sig+R4 Stands.....		£799.00
Mirage M3.....	M	£2,300.00	Audionote Meishu.....		£2,450.00
Sonic Frontiers Trans Dac.....	M	£500.00	Audionote DAC 3 SIG.....		£1,699.00
VPI TNT III.....	AN	£3,450.00	Sonus Faber Amators.....		£1,899.00
Rockport Arm.....	AN	£3,995.00	Sonus Faber Minima Amators.....		£1,050.00
Soundlab A3.....	M	£3,550.00	Mark Levinson 38.....		£2,200.00
LFD MCI Phono Stage.....	M	£750.00	Quad ESL 63 - Black.....		£1,499.00
Audio Research PH2.....	M	£1,850.00	Quad 606 Amp MkII x2.....		£699.00
Audio Note ANJ.....	M	£500.00	Quad 44 Pre-Amp.....		£399.00
Lurne JLSLS.....	M	£2,200.00	Quad 66 CD Player.....		£275.00
Audio Physic Tempo.....	ED	£1,599.00	Audio Research L55.....		£2,450.00

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B&W P4 CHERRY	£1195	£650
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Audionote Kit 1 300B S/H		
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Inc. Snake interconnect S/H Mint		£325
Audionote AXVX/ANP 1.25M Interconnect	£830	£300
Audionote ANE SpX S/H	£2699	£750
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BARGAIN exdem	£3999	£1700
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