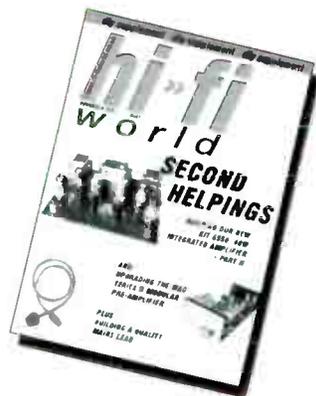


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With the advent of SACD and DVDA, you may be wondering why Creek have designed a new high-end CD player. Research has shown that while these new technologies allow for increased resolution, when plying discs recorded in the new formats, they are not so convincing at extracting the best from CD's. As CD has been around for 20 years, many people have built up large libraries of discs and want to get the best from them for years to come. Creek feel that a statement product is required to achieve this and have left no stone unturned in their attempt to achieve it. The CD53 is the ultimate reference standard, achieving the best performance money can buy. The CD53 uses a Philips transport, custom Creek software, ultra-low jitter master clock and waveform shaping, for maximum signal retrieval. In addition to its no compromise power supply circuitry, it uses professional standard balanced audio output filtering and buffer circuitry to provide the lowest noise and highest fidelity signal available.

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▶▶ **T**his year's IFA consumer electronics show in Berlin had me pondering the state of the UK market and its unusual mentality. IFA is massive, consisting of twenty five or so exhibi-

tion halls, some of which are as big as London's Olympia. The show runs for ten days and is packed to the rafters with both trade visitors and consumers alike. Presumably many of these people - and there were literally thousands - had taken a day off work to pay 25DM (about £8) to see the latest and greatest consumer electronics, from in-car subwoofers to new gaming technologies, via high end hi-fi and Internet villages.

I wondered if this kind of event would be as successful on these shores. For three or four days maybe, but ten days? Somehow I doubt it. Yes, we get crowds at our hi-fi and AV shows, like Novotel in London, 'Live' or 'Sound and Vision' at Bristol, but these are small fry compared to the swarms I encountered in Berlin. It seems the Germans are more interested in technology than we could ever be.

Colleagues and manufacturers I chatted to from mainland Europe couldn't understand why the UK was one of the fastest growing markets for DVD players, yet sales of receivers and 'speaker packages were slow. It also came as a revelation to them that you could pick up a DVD player while stocking up with fish fingers and cans of lager at your local supermarket, which is how I suspect these DVD player sales figures were so generously boosted. Yet you won't find receivers or AV 'speaker packages above the frozen peas, neither now nor ever, I fear.

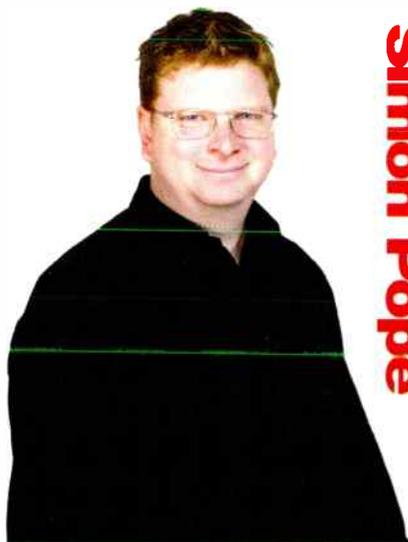
When they're done and dusted, compare the attendance numbers at this year's 'Live 2001' at Birmingham's NEC to those of the UK Ideal Home Exhibition, I suspect the latter will heavily outweigh the former. This is because mainland Europe simply doesn't have the obsession with property ownership that we have on our mad little island - and they're probably all the better for it. It is, therefore,

harder for them to understand that whilst an average punter in the UK is more than happy to shell out £150 for a DVD player, £500 of their hard earned cash is better spent on home improvement than purchasing an AV receiver and surround sound 'speakers. The former adds value to their pride and joy, whilst the latter simply clutters it up

It's something our European colleagues probably find hard to get their heads around, but the home rules your average Briton's life far more than his European counterpart.

Things aren't the same when it comes to music, however. Hi-fi hobbyists in Britain are more focused on the hardware than the AV brigade, who don't necessarily upgrade their receivers or DVD players in the way that a dedicated audiophile would his amp or CD player. Specialist audio will always sell in the UK - as a nation we're impassioned by music and our recording artists and industry are respected throughout the world.

This is certainly one of our better traits, and because of our musical heritage, 'hi-fi' will always sell - be it loudspeakers, amplifiers or midi systems. And for those who disagree, whilst Atomic Kitten may be groan-inducing chart toppers here, David Hasselhoff often shoots straight in at No.1 in Germany. I'm all for an integrated Europe, but you have to draw the line somewhere. ■ ▲



Simon Pope

how we test the products

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

NICE PRICE - Represents excellent value for money.

EXCELLENT - Superb sound, among the best available.

VERY GOOD - Well worth a listen.

ADEQUATE - Room for improvement.

POOR - Seriously flawed. Forget it!

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

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AV32R: maybe the most versatile av processor ever?

"Most home cinema processors can also double as component preamplifiers, but they are rarely transparent enough for serious use in quality systems. However, the AV32R is... This processor is a tour de force."

What Video & TV - 8/01

"Few processors can match the AV32R and none at the price comes close."

Hi-Fi Choice - 6/01

"I can endorse the AV32R whole heartedly... It would be very difficult to improve on its thoughtful design, basic performance, and craftsmanship, and its inherent simplicity appeals to me strongly."

Stereo Reviews Sound & Vision - 6/00

"Performance lives up to very high expectations, thanks to combination of finesse, clarity and control. Advanced software and full upgradeability protect substantial initial investment."

Audio Video - 4/01

"The AV32R can lay claim to being one of the very best audio products on the market. This machine will not only provide you with high-grade audio reproduction, it should also remain at the cutting edge for some time to come."

Essential Home Cinema - 7/01

"Flexibility is built into the AV32R at every level. Unlike others of this type, however, the processor is particularly well adapted to the task. Using stereo source material, it is particularly transparent and clean, easily matching many component two-channel audiophile preamplifiers... The AV32R is an equally excellent multi-channel processor too. Image steering is smooth, and imagery is generally seamless and homogeneous."

Home Entertainment - 9/00

Processing Formats

Mono, Direct, Pro Logic, Dolby Digital, DTS, TMS 7, DTS-ES Matrix, THX, THX Surround EX (Dolby EX)

Optional Formats

HDCD, Pro Logic II, DTS ES 6.1 Discrete, DTS Neo:6, MPEG-2

Upgrades via the Internet

PC owners can download software, incl. new sound formats, from the Internet

Latest DSP Technology

The field-leading 32-bit Analog Devices Sharc 21065L allows processing at all native sampling rates, incl. 96kHz/24bit

Minimal Jitter for superb sound

A twin phase-locked loop reduces jitter to a minimum, resulting in crisp sound

TAGtronic Sync Link

Allows the DVD32R to synchronise its clock to the AV32R, resulting in the lowest jitter technically possible

Enhanced TAGtronic Bus

This multi-device network allows information to be shared between products and can interface with multi-room systems

Best components

Multi-layer glass epoxy pcbs, soldered using a nitrogen filled reflow oven & wave soldering are combined with ultra stable Vishay resistors and ultra low noise Elna Cerafine and Wima capacitors

Proven Upgradability - not just promises

Nine upgrades since launch, for all AV32R -old and new- including:

- Dolby Pro Logic II
- THX Surround EX (Dolby EX)
- HDCD
- TMS 7
- DTS-ES + Matrix
- Remote controller I/O
- Automation triggers

And more are coming:

- DTS-ES 6.1 Discrete
- DTS Neo:6
- DTS 96/24
- 5.1 analog bypass
- Second 21065L DSP
- Second stereo zone
- Balanced (XLR) outputs
- Comp. video switching
- Internal video scaler
- Digital Video Interface
- DVD-A digital interface
- Precision tuner module



TAG McLaren Audio Latham Road, Huntingdon PE29 6ZU

tel: 0800 783 8007 e-mail: helpdesk@tagmclaren.com

To book an audition contact one of these authorised AV32R stockists:

Beds: Sevenoaks Sound & Vision, Bedford	01234 272779	Glos: Audio Excellence Ltd, Gloucester	01452 300046	Sevensoaks Sound & Vision, Southgate	0208 886 2777	Loud and Clear Glasgow	0141 221 0221
Berks: Audio T Ltd, Reading	0118 938 5463	Audio T Ltd, Cheltenham	01242 583960	Sevensoaks Sound & Vision, Swiss Cottage	0207 722 9777	Sevensoaks Sound & Vision, Edinburgh	0131 229 7267
Bristol: Sevenoaks Sound & Vision, Reading	0118 959 7768	Audio T Ltd, Basingstoke	01256 242311	The High End, Barnes	0208 876 3355	Sevensoaks Sound & Vision, Glasgow	0141 332 9655
Bucks: Audio Excellence Ltd, Clifton	0117 926 4975	Audio T Ltd, Chandler's Ford	02380 252827	Merseyside: Sevenoaks Sound & Vision, Liverpool	0151 707 8417	Stereo Stereo Ltd, Glasgow	0141 248 4079
Cambs: Sevenoaks Sound & Vision, Clifton	0117 974 3727	Sevensoaks Sound & Vision, Watford	01923 215353	Midlands: Audio T Ltd, Enfield	0208 367 3132	Shropshire: Shropshire Hi-Fi, Shrewsbury	01743 232065
Cheshire: Sevenoaks Sound & Vision, Clifton	01494 585855	The Audio File, Bishop's Cleeve	01279 506576	Frank Harvey Hi-Fi Excellence, Coventry	02476 525200	Radford's, Bath	01225 446245
Cumbria: Martin Kleiser Ltd, Beconsfield	01494 681300	HiFi Corner, Aston Quay	00353 1671 4243	Music Matters Ltd, Sutton Coldfield	0121 354 2311	Sevensoaks Sound & Vision, Ipswich	01473 286977
Devon: Sevenoaks Sound & Vision, Cambridge	01223 304770	Sharwood, Waterford	00353 5187 2622	Music Matters Ltd, Solihull	0121 742 0254	Audio T Ltd, Camberley	01276 685597
Dorset: The Audio File, Cambridge	01223 368305	The Hi-Fi Shop, Belfast	02890 381296	Sevensoaks Sound & Vision, Birmingham	0121 212 2977	PJ Hi-Fi, Guildford	01482 504801
Essex: Doug Brady Hi-Fi, Warrington	01925 828009	Sevensoaks Sound & Vision, Sevenoaks	01232 459555	Sound Academy, Wallcall	01922 473499	Sevensoaks Sound & Vision, Epsom	01372 745883
Gloucestershire: Peter Tyson Hi-Fi, Carlisle	01228 546756	Sevensoaks Sound & Vision, Tunbridge Wells	01892 523548	Stratford Audio Ltd, Metro Centre	0191 460 0999	Sevensoaks Sound & Vision, Kingston	0208 547 0717
Herefordshire: Audio Excellence Ltd, Exeter	01392 491194	Sevensoaks Sound & Vision, Preston	01772 825777	Stratford HiFi, Stratford upon Avon	01298 888644	Unitel Sound & Vision, New Malden	0208 942 9567
Herefordshire: Sevensoaks Sound & Vision, Plymouth	01752 226011	Audio Concept, Exeter	0208 567 8703	Stratford HiFi, Stratford upon Avon	01298 546756	Audio Designs, East Grinstead	01342 314569
Herefordshire: Suthons Hi-Fi, Bournemouth	01202 555512	Audio T Ltd, West Hampstead	0207 794 7848	Linton Audio Ltd, Metro Centre	0191 460 0999	The Powerplant (Hi-Fi) Ltd, Brighton	01273 775978
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Herefordshire: Rayleigh Hi-Fi, Rayleigh	01708 779762	Listening Rooms, Chelsea	0207 244 7750	Audio T Ltd, Headington	01865 765961	Audio T Ltd, Swindon	01793 538222
Herefordshire: Rayleigh Hi-Fi, Southend	01702 435255	Martin Kleiser Ltd, Chiswick	0208 400 5555	Oxford Audio Consultants, Oxford	01865 790879	Warcester HiFi, Worcester	01905 612929
Herefordshire: Sevensoaks Sound & Vision, Witham	01376 501733	Prestige Audio Ltd, Harrow	0208 868 3300	Scotland: Holburn Hi-Fi Ltd, Aberdeen	01224 585713	Moorgate Acoustics, Sheffield	0114 275 6048
						The HiFi Studios, Doncaster	01302 727274

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world news

▶ MAJORS SET TO RELEASE SACD TITLE



Mike Oldfield's *Tubular Bells* will soon be joined by other Virgin multi-channel SACD titles

Things could well be looking up for those audiophiles who are reticent about taking the plunge into SACD for fear of a limited catalogue of musically dubious software. Universal Music, the recording group that encompasses, among others, Decca, Deutsche Gramophon, Verve and Philips have announced that they are to release a number of both new and old titles on the high resolution format. The releases will be a mixture of both two channel and surround sound discs. This is potentially a very positive move, as Universal has a vast range of recording

artists and a huge back catalogue from various record labels to play with. The decision was apparently helped by the "increasing penetration of Super Audio CD players in the marketplace", as Universal's International CEO, Jorgen Larsen commented.

It doesn't stop at Universal either. At the recent IFA show in Berlin there was a press statement from EMI pledging allegiance to the format. As well as installing a DSD recording system at the company's Abbey Road studios in London, EMI have said they will initially release up to seventeen titles incorporating new and existing chart based material from the likes of Coldplay, Fun Lovin' Criminals and David Bowie. Add to this the fact that Virgin are also due to release more SACD titles towards the end of the year (Mike Oldfield's *Tubular Bells* is already available in a multichannel version) to include Simple Minds and Roxy Music and things certainly look rosy in the garden. Hopefully disc prices will start to drop accordingly.

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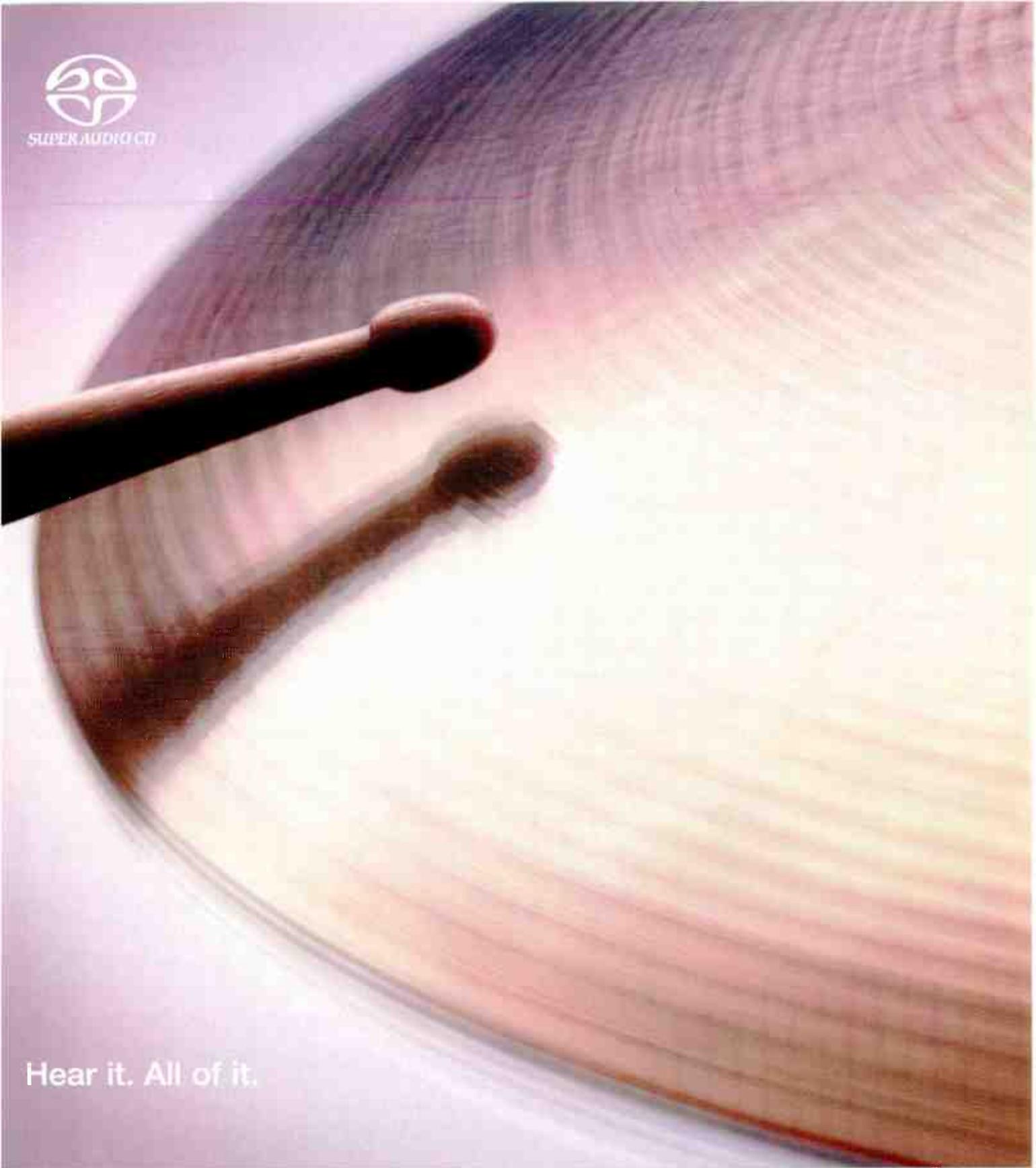
▶ PIONEER DEMO WORLD FIRST AT HI-FI SHOW



More news from the recent Hi-Fi Show at the Novotel, Hammersmith. At last it seems the wait for a truly 'universal' audio/video player is over. Pioneer are set to launch their DV-747A in December this year and it will be able to play DVD-A, DVD-V as well as multichannel and two channel SACD discs. In a move that could well open the flood gates for similar players, the 747 allows the user to enjoy the benefits of both new high resolution audio formats in one box. A high end DVD-A/SACD player already exists from Pioneer in Japan but will only play two channel SACD discs, so the 747 is a world first. Those expecting to pay an astronomical price for such a machine could well be surprised, as the 747 is expected to

retail around the £1000 mark. It's finished in silver with a double layer chassis and isolated loading tray and features audiophile grade components as well as progressive scan for NTSC. Production starts at the beginning of December.

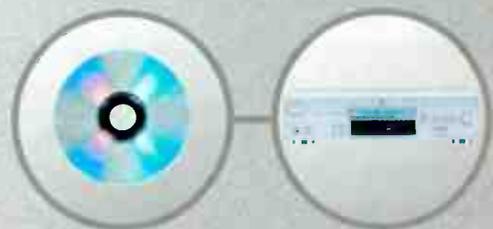
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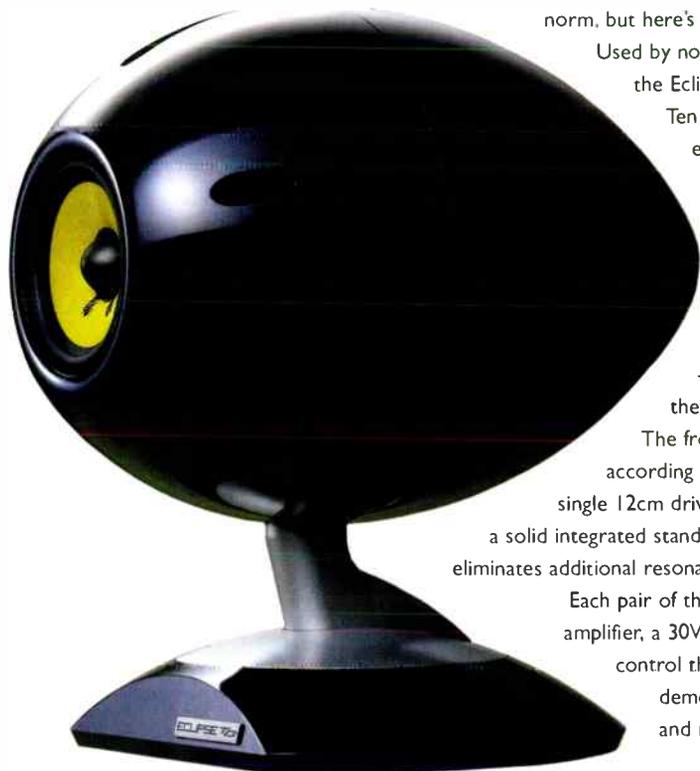
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World Radio History

▶ TOTAL ECLIPSE



There are plenty of loudspeakers around that are different to the norm, but here's a new one that really defies convention.

Used by no less than Brian Eno in his home studio, the Eclipse TD 512 was developed by Fujitsu

Ten and consists of an egg shaped enclosure into which sits a "full range" drive unit. The company claim the design is based on the time domain approach which is, in effect, "attempting to return the listener to the

point in space and time at which the recording actually occurred" - profound stuff indeed. The egg shape avoids any flat surfaces in the design and is made from a marble composite to avoid coloration.

The front of the 'speaker is the circular drive unit and therefore, according to the company, avoids diffraction by having no baffle, as such. The single 12cm driver is decoupled from the cabinet fascia and mounted internally via a solid integrated stand, which provides a "mechanical grounding". This supposedly eliminates additional resonance factors found in more conventional designs.

Each pair of the Eclipse's also comes with an equally stylish Eclipse A 502 amplifier, a 30W per channel integrated with a centrally placed split volume control that sits on the solid aluminium base. The package was demonstrated at the recent Hi-Fi Show in London and retails for £2600.



Eclipse TD

Tel: 020 7328 6100

www.eclipse-td.com

▶ DENON'S NEW BOX OF TRICKS



The new Denon ADV-700 is a slim, one box DVD system which comes complete with the company's own NXT flat panel 'speaker package. At a typical High Street price of £1200, the 700 is a stylish solution with a 'Chameleon Titanium' silver and part mirror display. Said to deliver the same audiophile quality performance as the company's other AV products, the 700 features Dolby ProLogic II (a first in this market), auto-decode (which allows for correct automatic settings) and 5x35W of power. The receiver features Dolby Digital and DTS decoding and an RDS FM/AM tuner and the machine will play CD-RW and MP3 discs. The 'speaker system features five matched, magnetically shielded NXT flat panels and a powered subwoofer. There are plenty of inputs and outputs for maximum flexibility and seven surround DSP modes to ensure a highly comprehensive package.

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



▶ SONY GO MULTI, MULTI CHANNEL

In their virtual onslaught of the SACD market, Sony have launched another two multichannel players on the market. Targeting the more audiophile end of the market, the SCD-XA777ES and SCD-XA333ES were launched at London's Hi-Fi Show. The £1700 XA777 incorporates no less than six new Sony SACD convertor chips, meaning each channel has its own dedicated SADAC, integrating a DSD filter, an oversampling filter and a multi-level DAC in each chip. The £1200 XA333 contains three SADACs and a bass management function for fine tuning. Both units are available now.

Sony UK Ltd.
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Brooklands
Weybridge
Surrey KT13 0XW
Tel: 01932 816000
www.sony.co.uk

pascal



You won't want to look at anything else.

It's rude to stare. But who can blame you? Our tiny Pascal 815ED hi-fi speakers are designed for eyes as well as ears. Their pure aluminium cases produce a sound so clear a Soprano would be jealous. And thanks to Extended Definition (ED) Tweeters they're perfect for Super Audio CD as well as Home Cinema. With a range of Pascal speakers to suit any budget, it all sounds very impressive. Unless you're a fish.



go create

SONY

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World Radio History

▶ **NEW BOSTON BOOKIE**



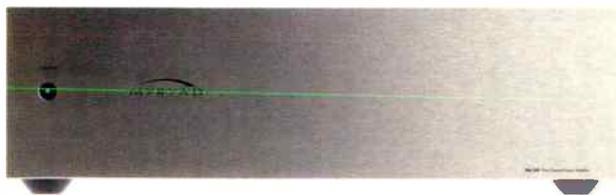
Boston Acoustics have introduced another bookshelf model into their CR Series range. The CR85 features a rigid cabinet with interlocking polymer posts that help to reduce cabinet vibrations and improve sonic performance. A new tweeter baffle is used to apparently increase the sensitivity of the assembly and the woofer

is a new design that features a polycarbonate phase plug to transfer heat away from the voice coil. The 'speakers are priced at £249 per pair and are magnetically shielded with the company's own Magnaguard.

Boston UK
Unit 9
Centre Park Holdings
Tockwith
York YO26 7QF
Tel: 01423 359069

▶ **MYRYAD'S MULTI MUSCLE**

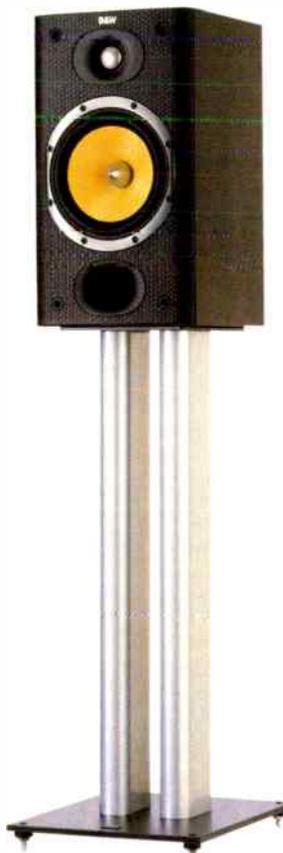
Myryad took the opportunity at the London show to demonstrate their new high powered multichannel power amplifier. The MA500 combines the power, sound quality and flexibility of the MA240/MA360 flagship power amps with the one box simplicity of the MA120. The emphasis here is on the audiophile quality of the amp, making it equally as suited to multichannel music as it is to Home Cinema. The power supply (with an 8.2kg toroidal transformer) uses Myryad's Power Steering Technology to deliver 100W to five channels into 8ohms. Priced at £1700, the MA500 is available now.



Sennheiser UK Ltd.
3 Century Point
Halifax Rd.
High Wycombe
Bucks HP12 3SL
Tel: 0800 652 5002
www.sennheiser.co.uk

▶ **B&W REVAMP THE 600 CAMP**

Although 'speaker giants B&W didn't exhibit at this year's Hi-Fi Show at Hammersmith's Novotel, they held a launch party at the nearby Riverside Studios to introduce the new DM600 Series 3. The company has introduced new technology into the range but they still feature the Nautilus tweeter that was introduced in the Series 2 range. The new range has changes not only to the drive units but to the cabinet, crossover and port too. The new DM601 at £229 has across the board changes for a greater dynamic range. The DM602 has a lower bass response. It is joined by the new 602.5 floorstander. The floorstanding DM603 has a new slimmer cabinet and the massive DM604 at £800 has had a complete overhaul. All models are available now.



B&W UK Ltd.
Marlborough Rd.
Churchill Industrial Estate
Lancing
E.Sussex BN15 8TR
Tel: 01903 750750
www.bwspeakers.com

CORRECTION - In September's issue, we were quoted an incorrect price for the ATC SIA2-1 integrated amplifier. The correct price is £2350.

Next issue

Here's a little taster of what we hope to include in December's issue

SEPARATES SYSTEMS

We concoct three super systems for around £1000. With names such as NAD, Mission and Rega involved it promises to be a treat. Read all about it next month.

MERIDIAN 588 CD PLAYER

Although Meridian are heavily involved with DVD-A, they still see CD as a viable option. We test their new flagship CD player in December's issue.

ATC SCM7 LOUDSPEAKERS

These new budget bookshelf 'speakers from ATC promise to be a real find for the money. Read what we think about them next month.

HIGH RESOLUTION SOLUTION



The market for high resolution audio players has opened right up. Hi-Fi World listens to four options available to suit all pockets.



In less than two years high resolution audio players have dropped from £2700 - for Sony's awesomely built SCD-1 - to the same company's SCD-XE670 multichannel SACD player at the relatively minuscule sum of just £299. And in between there's been a lot of development in the rival camp. Earlier this year DVD-A software saw its 'official' launch, along with a range of players from £500 upwards from the likes of Panasonic, Kenwood and Pioneer. After all the hype the players are finally here - and further

more they straddle the complete price range from the budget to the wallet-bruising. We've gathered four models that are representative of the market and given them the Hi-Fi World treatment. As a dedicated audiophile magazine we've concentrated mostly on their audio performance, with a few passing notes on picture quality and ease of use. Some players concentrate more on the visuals, whereas others are dedicated audio-only players. We'll tell you

which sounds best, measures best and which offer the best value for money.

If you're in the market for a new digital source and are scared of taking the plunge into the choppy waters of high resolution format players, hopefully we can help point you in the right direction. With models from £300 to £1800 there's something available for everyone - it just depends on your priorities... and the size of your pockets! ■ ▲

ONKYO DV-S939

£1800

The Onkyo DV-S939 has some impressive audio and videophile credentials, including the progressive scan feature so beloved of high-end DVD players, as well as a host of high-end components in the audio chain, to make the most of both CD and DVD A replay. Onkyo regard it as a high-end audio and video player in equal measures, nothing has apparently been sacrificed here, and at this price we should bloomin' well hope so!

In addition to progressive scan the 939 has internal Dolby Digital decoding (but no DTS decoder), high quality 192/24-bit DACs and separate transformers for the digital and analogue sections. Every video output possible is here, including Scart with RGB and two component video outputs with progressive scan. There is also THX certification, where LucasFilm test for video quality such as colour transfer and edge definition to assess the player's audio playback with a two channel downmix of a multichannel soundtrack.

The 939 uses the excellent mechanism seen in Toshiba's superb SD-900SE and the build is equal, if not better, than the Toshiba, with solid casework and a not inconsiderable weight of 11kg.



Performance wise it's extremely difficult to find anything wrong with this player. It may cost a lot but it also does a lot - with aplomb. Standard CD sound quality equals that of a £1000 CD player, so you're talking a DVD player that actually plays CDs as well as, say, a Roksan Caspian CD player, which is no mean feat. It maybe doesn't have the ultra smoothness and intricate detail retrieval of the best high end CD players but it's a very musical sound devoid of the overtly mechanical sound found in the majority of DVD player, with perhaps the exception of a couple. With a DVD-V disc of New Order concerts in PCM stereo the 939 became an accomplished communicator, with a fantastic pin-sharp picture quality which was

matched to equally sharp audio focus. DVD-A discs such as The Doors LA Woman and two channel 24-bit/192kHz discs of Chie Ayado's 'Life' were wonderfully atmospheric and detailed, complete with a sound that managed to bring me into the music and beyond the novelty factor of surround-sound.

The DVC-S939 is a cracking sounding DVD player. It has true audiophile playback status that's lacking in much of the competition, but you certainly pay for it.

Jamo UK Ltd.
Oakfield Park
Rugby
Warwicks CV22 7AL
Tel: 01788 556777
www.jamospeakers.co.uk

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The Onkyo has a well balanced flat response characteristic with a little filter ripple visible above 5kHz. It should sound pretty well balanced tonally, although possibly on the bright-ish side of things.

The distortion characteristics were a little under par. At high levels the Onkyo DV-S939 looked reasonably linear but at -60dB distortion had risen to 0.98%, around three times what is normal nowadays. At 90dB it was 40%. The convertors of this player were not too linear by current standards and it may well sound a little hard or harsh in use.

Channel separation was unusually wide in the midband, narrowing at high frequencies. The overall result was fine though. Noise was a low -122dB, probably due to muting at

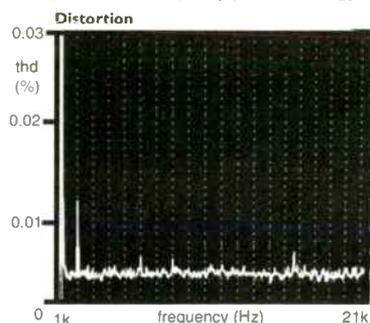
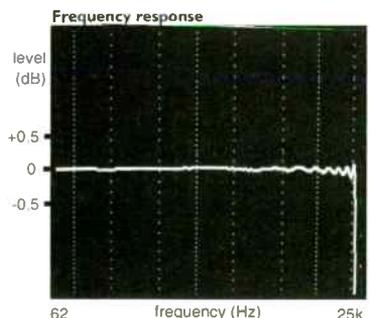
digital zero. High distortion levels had an impact on the EIAJ dynamic range figure, which came out a low 98.4dB. This compares badly with the current norm of around 108dB. Output was normal enough a 2V.

The Onkyo will likely sound bright and just a trifle harsh at times - a bit CD-ish in the traditional sense in fact. **NK**

Frequency response 4Hz-21.3kHz
Distortion

	left	right
-6dB	0.005	0.005
-30dB	0.015	0.017
-60dB	0.98	0.96
-90	40	42
Separation	left	right
1kHz	126	120
20kHz	97	95
Noise		-122dB

with emphasis	-121dB
Dynamic range	98dB
Output	2.0V



World Verdict



Not cheap but the most accomplished audio and video player around at the moment. Superb technical ability and build.

PIONEER DV-939A

£1200

The 939 is basically a DVD-A modified version of the 737 with a few extras such as the 24/192DACs, a backlit drawer and the odd blue LED here and there (in addition to the actual DVD-A mechanism, of course). Both Dolby Digital and DTS decoders are included, random and block video noise reduction, compatibility with CD-R/RW discs, a 10-bit/54MHz video digital to analogue convertor as well as multiple audio DACs in the shape of the company's AD1852 24-bit/192kHz employed for the main left and right channels and 24/96 AD1854s for the surround channels. Build quality takes it above average but it's not as bulky and solid as the more expensive Onkyo.

Connections abound and consist of two S-Video outputs, two Scart outputs and a component video with progressive scan capability. The usual analogue and digital audio outputs are located on the rear, too. The Japanese version of this machine contains an SACD chipset. However, we have to do without for the time being, although a truly universal machine is promised soon from Pioneer.

As far as sound quality is concerned the DV-939 is impressive. CDs are played with a lyrical and easy sound that is akin to a dedicated CD



player, although at times inferior quality discs, such as Soundgarden's 'Superunknown', were a little too compressed sounding and hard on the ear. A highly competent dedicated CD player takes this recording by the scruff of the neck and gives it a good dusting down; unfortunately no such luck here. However, Paul Weller's 'Stanley Road' had all the drive, control and detail found in a good quality midpriced CD player. Bass was firm and fast and the overall sound of the 939 with CDs was one of rhythmic emphasis as opposed to lyrical fluidity.

Moving on to DVD-V discs in the form of New Order's '316' and Bruckner's 8th symphony conducted by Pierre Boulez on a TDK disc, the 939 delivered good picture quality with a detailed sound.

The two channel 24/192 recording of Chie Ayado's overtly wobbly jazz crooning had oodles of intricate detail and breathiness. Here was a fine sense of presence and warmth that showed up DVD-A's best traits. Surround sound discs such as The Doors 'LA Woman' were again very detailed and inherently 'audiophile' in performance, with a fine tonal balance and natural timbres.

The Pioneer is a good player but competition is growing fast and it is now looking a little on the expensive side.

Pioneer GB Ltd.
Pioneer House
Hollybush Hill
Stoke Poges
Slough, Berks SL2 4PQ
Tel: 01753 789789
www.pioneer.co.uk

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

Pioneer's DV-939A had little distortion at low signal levels, the -90dB result of 7% being considerably less than the usual 30% figure. Denon and Kenwood use additional signal processing to get a similar result and their players sound smoother as a result. So in a nutshell, the Pioneer offers lower distortion than usual and almost certainly a smoother sound. Not surprisingly, our distortion analysis has a low noise floor and there's no sign of distortion products, right up to 20kHz.

There's just a slight roll down in frequency response, enough to enhance this player's sense of smoothness I believe. The noise floor was very low at -120dB. Channel separation was high and output normal at 2.2V.

Pioneer's DV-939 has obviously had some special effort put into it to lift sound quality to a high standard. It's a good player from a measurement point of view. **NK**

Frequency response 4Hz-21.3kHz

Distortion

	left	right
-6dB	0.004	0.004
-30dB	0.014	0.015
-60dB	0.28	0.27
-90	7.3	7.8

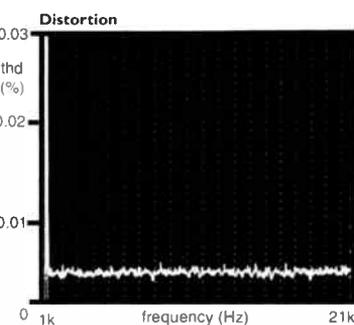
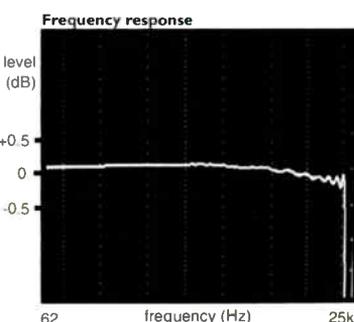
Separation

	left	right
1kHz	110	110
20kHz	102	102

Noise with emphasis -120dB

Dynamic range 110dB

Output 2.2V

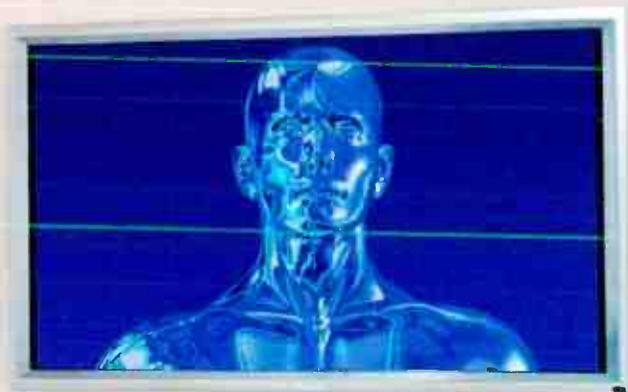


World Verdict



This isn't now the best value option on the market but it has good performance with DVD-A discs. Ordinary CD is good, but not tip top.

KEF Q series
home theatre.
Clearly
outstanding.



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

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

That's why nothing else at the price even comes close for delivering the full richness of today's digital soundtracks for everyone in the room. Loud and clear.



Q
SERIES
Point Source



The experience
of sound

SONY XE-670

£299

The 670, launched at this year's recent Berlin IFA show is a brand spanking new player and the latest from the Japanese giant to hit these shores. Together with the promised release of new popular titles from the likes of Virgin and EMI, this new player from Sony could well be the catalyst for real market penetration of SACD. If the 670 can't do it then I don't think anything else will - unless it's given away!

At just £299 you could say that the 670 is. It will play both multichannel and two channel SACD discs, as well as CD and CD-R/RWs. On paper it looks to be the audiophile bargain of the year.

Make no mistake, this is an attempt by Sony to get SACD to a wider audience, in an effort to make it a mass-market music carrier. Whilst it doesn't fall into the category of the company's combination SACD/DVD-V players (so it's bound to lose a few floating voters) it still has plenty to offer apart from simply the price. It's the company's fourth multichannel player in Europe and as well as two channel and multichannel SACDs, will also play CD and CD-R/RW discs. The player has a 5.1 multichannel output that processes the analog SACD signals and a new multilevel SACD D/A convertor is utilised. Also present is a "bass management"

function which allows the listener to subtly fine tune the sound to match components better. SACD and CD text is included, as is the infra-red remote.

I said earlier that on paper the 670 looks to be something of an audiophile bargain. You'll be glad to hear that it's also one in practice. OK, so it has a few little foibles to the sound such as a slight thinning of texture when mixes get complex but overall it's a smashing player. CDs such as Paul Weller's 'Stanley Road' sound open and exciting with a forward but not grating positioning of vocals and guitars. Drums were well positioned and clean, and bass was firm and fast. Two channel SACD material in the shape of Hyperion's recording of Fauré and Ravel's Piano Trios was airy and detailed with a good sense of ambience and a wide sound stage. Detail such as bows on strings was impressive and the treble,

whilst not silky smooth, was commendably sweet and open. Multichannel playback was fine. I tried out both unaccompanied vocal music and rock and both were involving and immaculately presented.

The 670 is an excellent opportunity to introduce the undeniably impressive merits of SACD to a wider audience. In this respect it's a benchmark product. The sound isn't up there in the control and sophistication stakes with the company's more expensive models, but you can realistically wish for nothing more for just £300. Highly recommended.

Sony UK Ltd.
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Weybridge
Surrey KT13 0XW
Tel: 01932 816000
www.sony.co.uk



MEASURED PERFORMANCE

Sony's SCD XE-670 has a slight fall in its top end response, our analysis shows. It's unlike Sony to use a filter with a characteristic like this; their players usually measure ruler flat. Such a result usually translates into a subtly softer presentation, often one that sounds more cohesive as well. Sony players traditionally have a hard, bright sound, which appeals to some tastes. This one will likely sound a little different.

Distortion levels were low through the entire dynamic range, our analysis at -30dB clearly showing a low noise floor and an absence of distortion harmonics.

Channel separation was high and output normal at 2.1V

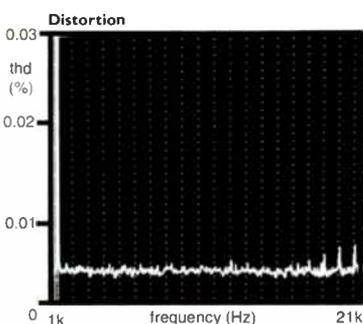
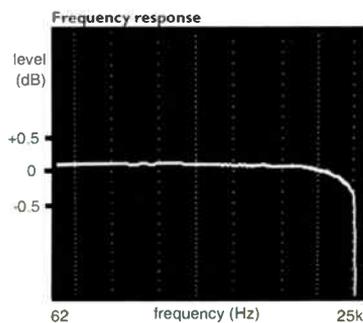
The Sony SCD XE-670 measured

well in terms of its CD performance. Sony don't compromise sound quality and, in fact, it looks as if they might have given it a little more attention than usual. **NK**

Frequency response 4Hz20.8kHz
Distortion

	left	right
-6dB	0.005	0.005
-30dB	0.007	0.007
-60dB	0.38	0.36
-90	29	29

	left	right
Separation		
1kHz	112	112
20kHz	93	93
Noise		-102dB
with emphasis		-102dB
Dynamic range		109dB
Output		2.1V



World Verdict

Plays multichannel and two channel SACDs with an impressive authority and detail. CDs sound full and involving too. At £300 it's a bargain

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



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

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

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

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

Like all the best things in life, they still don't come cheap - but to anyone who really appreciates sound, they're better value than ever.



REFERENCE SERIES



TOSHIBA SD-500SE

£500

If you regard the previous Sony product as a bargain on paper, then you could in theory claim this as its equal. For £600, you get not only audio reproduction in the shape of CD, CD-R/RW and DVD-A but you also get the added bonus of video reproduction as the 500 will, of course, play DVD-V discs. In fact it can play two at once, as the 500 features a dual-layer drawer in which two discs can be placed at the same time for a mini-changing facility.

Toshiba have surprised many industry pundits with their high quality DVD products, especially the top of the range SD-900SE, which can play audio discs to quality that's only dreamt of by other manufacturers. The key to this lies in the company's impressive DVD mechanisms which have been used by other manufacturers, Onkyo included.

The cheaper SD-500SE doesn't have the progressive scan capability of its bigger brother but specifications are still good for the money. There's HDCD, dual-focus mechanism, internal decoding for both Dolby Digital and DTS and a comprehensive remote control and an easy to use on-screen menu that's very user

friendly. Video outputs include Scart with RGB and S-video.

Performance wise the 500 isn't up there with its bigger brother when it comes to audio. The 500 lacks a bit of focus and slam with music on CD, delivering it in a soft and slightly fuzzy manner. Bass isn't too strong either and the sound overall is very mechanical, more like a DVD-V player than a specialist high resolution audio equipped machine. Despite this vocals were good, with a forward presence and fairly good clarity. DVD-Video discs such as New Order's '316' were well presented in the picture stakes but again suffered from some lack of bite in the audio department.

Picture quality is actually very good but if this is to be a choice for video footage loving audiophiles there

could be problems. Things looked up somewhat with DVD-A discs.

Japanese jazz singer Chie Ayado's disc had impressive presence and detail. Multichannel discs were also given a good performance for the money, although there was a slight edge to the sound in The Doors LA Woman, and to the violins of Barenboim's Beethoven recordings on Teldec.

Not a bad performer for the price then, but it's not the best sounding player around. Shelling out a couple of hundred pounds more can provide better results.

Toshiba UK Ltd.
Frimley, Surrey GU16 7JJ
Tel: 01276 62222
www.toshiba.com



MEASURED PERFORMANCE

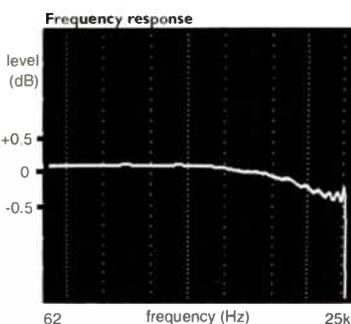
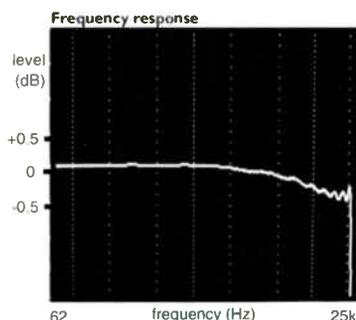
Toshiba don't have much of a presence in audio, unlike Sony, and the measured response of the SD500E reflects this I feel. Our analysis shows it has a peculiar downward slope toward high frequencies with a steep final cut off. The measured response limit of 21.1kHz (-1dB) was good enough but the slope will soften things out a little and it has a peculiar shape I have not seen before, so quite what the impact upon sound quality will be I am not sure.

The distortion plot looks more promising, lacking any sign of harmonics or uncorrelated components. The noise floor is low too, all good signs. The Toshiba is likely to sound fairly clear in the sense that it should lack the slight veiling and coarseness these effects produce.

With good channel separation and low noise, plus a healthy EIAJ dynamic range figure of 109dB this player works well enough, but it will likely have a softer sound than many.

NK

Frequency response	4Hz-21.1kHz	
Distortion	left	right
	-6dB	0.005 0.005
	-30dB	0.017 0.016
	-60dB	0.37 0.36
	-90	30 29
Separation	left	right
	1kHz	114 113
	20kHz	90 91
Noise		-120dB
	with emphasis	-119dB
Dynamic range	109dB	
Output	2.1V	



World Verdict



Not the best of the bunch when it comes to music but good picture quality. Lacks focus and control with CD.

CONCLUSION

The good buys in this round-up are to be found at both extremes of the price spectrum. The Sony SCD-XB670 is quite simply a bargain at the moment. Not only is it the cheapest new high resolution audio player on the market, it also plays multichannel SACD discs as well as it does the two channel kind and it is a pretty good CD player to boot. At just £299 this machine offers exceptional value. It's a good choice for anyone wishing to try SACD, without shelling out too much. After all, if for whatever reason the whole SACD shebang goes pear-shaped, you'll still have an impressive budget/midpriced CD player to enjoy!

great option if your pocket won't stretch to the Onkyo's dizzy financial heights. The company are rumoured to be launching in Europe a version of their Japanese market DVD player which will play both SACD and DVD-A, although it will be at a price.

It may be worth considering the Toshiba SD-500SE if you want a fairly universal player but don't wish to stretch to the £1000 mark. For £600 it does a fairly comprehensive job but doesn't cut the mustard when it comes to audio, especially CDs. If it's pure audio you're after for under £1000 look to Sony.

Having the time advantage over DVD-A, there are many more SACDs

chart and pop sections. One worrying factor was that the SACDs in Virgin's megastore were actually separately sectioned with all genres mixed together in the part of the shop that housed DVDs! Enquiries to local retailers such as Our Price/v.shop stores or independent record shops proved less successful. They'd rarely heard of the formats, let alone stocked them. There are always the specialist audiophile software dealers that have a decent catalogue of SACD and DVD-A discs such Vivante (020 8977 6600).

All this could soon change however. Players, such as Sony's £300 SCD-XB670 are hitting the shops,



Onkyo's extremely impressive DV-S939 is the complete opposite of the Sony in everything except its ability to excite. This is the bells and whistles end of the player market, handling DVD-A and DVD-V as well as CD discs with equal ability. It has superb picture quality but what impressed us more was its ability to produce the goods with audio discs, be it DVD-A or bog standard CD. It would appeal to those audiophiles who wish to delve into the DVD-A format whilst still wishing to glean the best from their catalogue of CDs.

Pioneer's fine 939 was one of the first DVD-A players on the market and still holds its own against the competition, even Onkyo's brute. It lacks that one last ounce of musical smoothness and warmth to bring it up to the Onkyo's level but it is a

around than its competitors can claim, with multichannel recordings now a growing sector. Numbers now reach four hundred titles but getting hold of them has been the problem. Hitherto shop assistants and managers had either, worryingly, stared blankly or replied "do you mean the discs that can be played in a DVD player?" After months of fruitless enquiries to the specialist departments (such as classical) of major superstores such as Tower Records and Virgin Megastore in central London both of these stores are now finally starting to stock a few SACD discs, but no DVD-A titles at the moment. There was more knowledge about the format, interestingly, from the specialist classical and jazz departments of these outlets then from the main

along with (soon) a batch of new, more mainstream, SACD titles from Virgin, Universal and EMI. Meanwhile, the excellent budget classical record company, Naxos, have one DVD-A disc available at the remarkable price of just £9.99 (unfortunately most SACD and DVD-A titles are £20 or more). Recently released, it contains music by Vivaldi, including the ubiquitous Four Seasons and features two different microphone techniques. There is still no news of high quality 24/192 two channel recordings being available in Europe as they are in Japan at present. If more record company's follow Naxos's route and price marketable music at an affordable or reasonable price, then there's a chance that sales could surge, along with the dropping price of players. Watch this space. ■ ▲

Ortofon



Pro-Ject

The year is 2001, the age of .com, poor service and fast turnover.

At Henley Designs we feel that things should be done differently. Customers should be treated with respect by staff who not only care, but who possess a knowledge and interest in the products they sell.

Our aim is to have a nationwide team of elite dealers who are able to offer advice, demonstrate and set up Pro-ject and Ortofon equipment. As a customer you should feel valued and comfortable during your purchase. As an owner, the value should continue through your pleasure in the music and its reproduction.

A limited number of dealers have been selected for their exceptional standards in customer service. Their staff have been trained by ourselves to ensure the highest level of expertise and at least one member of staff from each store is fluent in all aspects of our products.

We are proud to recommend the following dealers who have demonstrated their commitment and deserve the title:

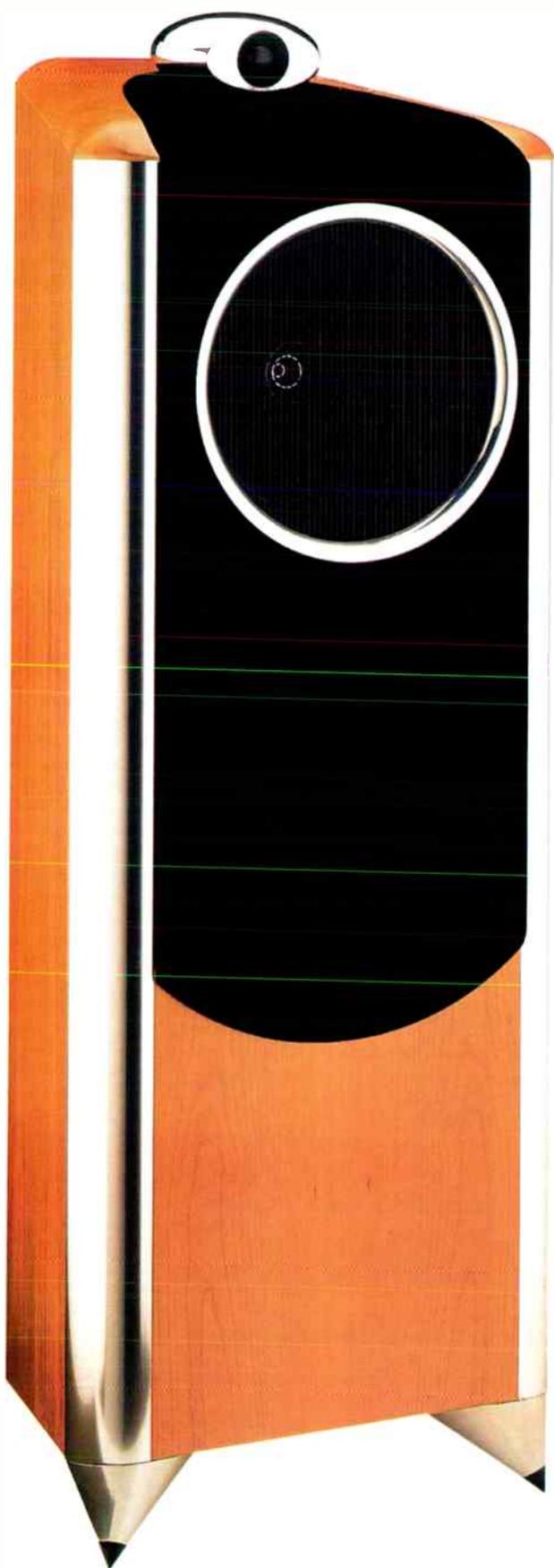
Centres of EXCELLENCE

Town	Dealer	Telephone	Store Expert
Aldridge (West Mids)	Sound Cnery	01922 457926	Clive
Ashby De La Zouch	Zouch Audio	01530 414128	Mick
Bedford	Richards A/V	01234 365165	Dave
Birmingham (Edgebaston)	Music Matters	0121 434 3298	Mike
Brentwood	Audio T	01277 264730	Paul
Bristol	Radford HiFi	01179 422860	Glen
Bristol	Audio Excellence	0117 9264975	Jason
Cambridge	The Audiofile	01223 368305	Malcolm
Cardiff	Sevenoaks S&V	0292 047 2899	Chris
Chester	Audio Excellence	01244 345576	Tyler
Colchester	Grayston S&V	01206 577682	Nat
Coventry	Frank Harvey	0247 6525200	David
Doncaster	The Hi-Fi Studios	01302 727274	Jeff
East Grinstead	Audio Designs**	01342 314569	Niel
Edinburgh	Russ Andrews*	0131 5571672	Drew
Exeter	Sevenoaks S&V**	01392 218895	Mark
Glasgow	Glasgow Audio	0141 332 4707	Bob
Helston Cornwall	Sounds Perfection	01326 221372	Nigel
Ipswich	Sevenoaks S&V	01473 286977	Chris
Kridderminster	Midland Audio Ex*	0156282236	John
Leeds	Sevenoaks S&V**	0113 245 2775	Chris
Lincoln	Sevenoaks S&V	01522 527397	David
London (Euston)	Karla	0207 3232747	Moss
London (Holburn)	Sevenoaks S&V	0207 837 7540	Matt
Manchester	Sevenoaks S&V**	0161 831 7969	Sam
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ROCKET MEN



After many years research Tannoy have finally launched their new flagship range, the Dimension series. Simon Pope encounters the stylish baby of the range, the TD8.

► Tannoy have produced many a landmark products in the history of audio. The design that started it all was the Dual Concentric drive unit, first introduced just after the second world war and still going strong in the upper echelons of the Tannoy range. It was used in a number of different forms in classics such as the Turnberry and the Westminster, much revered by the Japanese.

The dual concentric was developed in the valve era when large and highly efficient designs were needed. Tannoy's mission with this new series was to maintain the tradition of high quality dual concentric, high-end design but to tailor it to the modern day environment and a technically more demanding age. The result, after many years' blood sweat and tears, is the Dimension range featuring not only three floorstanding models (the smallest and cheapest of which is the TD8 reviewed here) but, shock horror, a centre 'speaker and a subwoofer to boot!

SHOCK WAVES

Whatever Ronald Rackham, the original Tannoy dual concentric engineer would make of the appearance is anyone's guess. Likewise, any fan of the traditional Tannoy look would drop his pipe straight into the fireplace with one glance at the



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Dimensions. The super sci-fi look is, probably deliberately, as far away as possible from the Prestige range. Gone is the 1940s drinks cabinet look. Here is a combination of a squat but elegant mini-rocket and a Dalek. The resemblance to a Dalek or a rocket is due to one major feature of the new range, the inclusion of a super tweeter atop the cabinet. As David Price reported in his recent review of Tannoy's stand alone super tweeter, this is a contentious product that stirs debate in the industry. They consist of an ordinary-looking 25mm metal dome tweeter surrounded by a ergonomically shaped puck of solid aluminium placed back on the top of the sloping cabinet for time alignment. These units can reach the upper echelons of the audio spectrum (50kHz -plus) - stretching way beyond the point of hearing.

Since we cannot hear above 20kHz can this really make a difference? This debate has been around for some time now, reignited by the emergence of high resolution audio formats such as DVD-A and SACD which can theoretically handle information up to 100kHz. We were told that CD's 21kHz limit was enough but many people had doubts, hence the new high bandwidth formats. Now we are being presented with matching high bandwidth amplifiers and loudspeakers.

After demonstrations from Tannoy and plenty of time spent with the super tweeters and now the TD8s I can put my hand on my heart and say it really works. The improvement won't immediately blow your socks off, as it's very subtle - but there is undoubtedly a difference, and it's an improvement.

The accompanying dual concentric drive unit is a more conventional one consisting of a 200mm (8") pulped paper cone (yes, paper) with a twin roll impregnated fabric surround. At the centre of this sits a 25mm, 50-micron aluminium dome unit with Tulip Waveguide.

The build of the cabinet is superb. A Trapezoid shape (to help reduce internal standing waves), it's

constructed from chunky birch ply with a top quality, real wood veneer finish. Detailing is strong. Aesthetically pleasing and design-integrated metal cones sit at the bottom front of the cabinet (more traditional spikes are located at the rear). A section of the top and front is coated in a very strokable black velvet, which whilst looking refreshingly different also provides surface wave damping on the front baffle.

A quality detachable grille is provided, albeit one of a peculiar



design that resembles a rubber harp, the elastic strips cover the actual drive unit when attached.

More novel features greeted me at the rear of the cabinet. There are two narrow bass reflex ports - nothing out of the ordinary there - but confusion sets in when you spy five binding posts in a carousel arrangement. So why the fifth? This is connected to the driver chassis and can be earthed to the amplifier, which apparently ensures the chassis doesn't pick up RF signals. This helps tidy up the sound.

PUT IN NEUTRAL

When it comes to sound quality, the TD8s are special. Theirs is not the most immediately appealing or impressive sound, but it's certainly a grower. They are extremely neutral and 'flat', with immense mid and upper range detail. They reminded me of the first time I heard a Quad electrostatic - once you've wondered what all the fuss is about you actually get to like it! In this respect the TD8 is a true 'reference' audiophile loudspeaker and one that's incredibly well-engineered.

I tried out the TD8s with a mix of source materials and amplification from a Meridian 557 power amp with

Creek passive preamp to World Audio Design 300B 20W valve monoblocks. The latter gave tremendous results, showing that the sensitivity is good enough for matching with medium output valve gear. This is no 'meat and two veg' sound; it's very different to the norm and certainly impressive. With classical music in the form of Mahler's 6th symphony in a beautifully open recording on DG with the Vienna Philharmonic under Boulez, the TD8s sang out with a clean and open sound. They aren't big and beefy but rather more concentrated, with space and air well beyond more

conventional designs, doubtless due to the super tweeters.

Woodwind was beautifully airy and light, and high percussive detail was scrutinised to a frightening degree. Brass came over as

shiny and lifelike, the supertweeters really coming into play here. I heard things at the mid and high registers that I hadn't encountered before except with Quads. Even restricted bandwidth recordings benefited. There was fine body to the sound of lower strings and violins fared well, although the extremely high registers sometimes had a glassy sound.

Moving on to Bob Marley's 'Exodus' LP on vinyl, the TD8s showed commendable smoothness with this most smooth of recordings. Whilst all the warmth inherent in the recording was present, the Tannoy's never made muddy work of it as some speakers can. This was impressive as the TD8s are not really an overtly smooth sounding speaker, they are open and slightly forward - unlike the sound from KEF's Reference series using the Uni-Q drive units, for example.

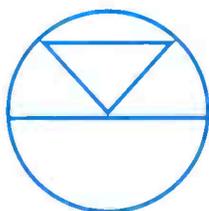
Bass depth isn't the TD8's forte. There's absolutely nothing wrong with what's there - it's fast and taut - but it doesn't extend as low as some might wish. Careful placement can improve results. As a result some of the glorious lower register dub shots were lost in the performance of 'Natural Mystic' which was a tad disappointing. However, lack of deep



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SACD/CD transports will now appear, eg the **dCS VERDI**, able to play both formats at high quality. Some of the early one-box SACD players were compromised on CD.

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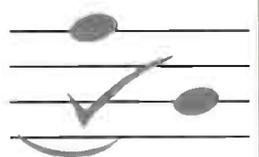
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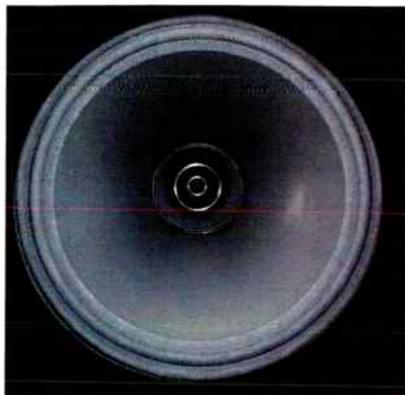


BATH

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CD: ACCUPHASE, ADVANTAGE, AUDIO SYNTHESIS, BAT, dCS (ELGAR, DELIUS PURCELL, GRIEG, VERDI) MERACUS, PASS, SAT, SUGDEN, WADIA. **VINYL:** BASIS, CLEARAUDIO, CROWN JEWEL, DNM, GRAHAM, THE GROOVE, LEHMANN, MICHELL, SUMIKO BLUE POINT SPECIAL, TRANSFIGURATION. **AMPLIFIERS:** ACCUPHASE, ADVANTAGE, BALANCED AUDIO TECHNOLOGY, CAT, DNM, GAMUT, HOVLAND, NAGRA, PASS, SAT, SONNETEER, SPECTRAL, SUGDEN. **LOUDSPEAKERS:** AUDIO PHYSIC, AUDIOSTATIC, BKS, ETHOS, LUMLEY, NEAT, TOTEM, VERITY AUDIO. **TUNERS:** ACCUPHASE, MAGNUM DYNALAB. **CABLES:** ARGENTO, CHORD CO., DNM, HOVLAND, NORDOST, SILTECH, SPECTRAL, YAMAMURA CHURCHILL ETC. **SUPPORTS:** STANDS UNIQUE, VERTEX AQ, VIBRAPLANE

bass was balanced out by superb staging and imaging of the TD8s - a true sign of quality in a loudspeaker. The mix was pin-point accurate and the drum kit was placed realistically towards the rear of the room, whilst Mr. Marley's vocals were magnificently sweet and lyrical and dead in the



centre of the stage.

Compressed rock music fared less well. With bad recordings such as Soundgarden's 'Superunknown' the guitars and vocals in the midrange

could sound a little too hard and forward, with sibilance quite pronounced. There was plenty of drive and momentum, but I came to the conclusion that the old adage 'garbage in. . . garbage out' applies to the TD8s more than most.

Control and musicality was more obvious with the choice of Yo-Yo Ma tucking into the tasty fare of Bach's wondrous 'cello suites. Here was a realistic performance, among the best I've encountered, with the bow clearly audible on the strings and finger work equally well revealed. A fantastic woody sound was produced as Ma worked his way through the mathematical flow of the master's music. The TD8s displayed impressive timbre with the 'cello that hallmarks quality.

This isn't a 'high-end' 'speaker with all the flim-flam that usually accompanies such a description, it's an extremely high quality music reproduction transducer from a dedicated and experienced company.

The TD8s are not cheap (but neither were the classics of the Prestige or Kingdom range) and they have a few quirks such as sensitive placement, slightly forward midrange and a less than immediately engaging neutrality. Once these barriers were passed, however, I realised that the TD8s were a fine 'speaker in the Quad mould - having a presentational way with music that more expensive and esoteric designs simply fail to capture. They're very easy to drive too.

Some serious work has gone into the Dimensions and it hasn't gone to waste. This is an impressive 'speaker, albeit one with its own character. ■ ▲

Tannoy Dimension TD8 £4,500

Tannoy Ltd.
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TANNOY DIMENSION TD8

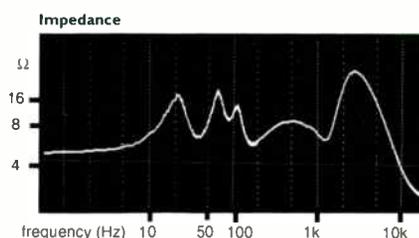
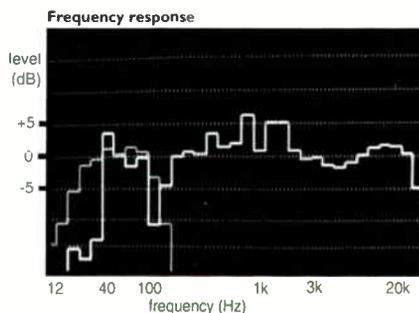
The Dimension TD8 is a different animal to the current crop of hi-fi loudspeaker. It uses a full range dual-concentric drive unit which incorporates the tweeter into the woofer - it fires out through the centre of the cone. Tannoy's dual-concentric has a paper cone and a well liked sound, but by today's standards it is, shall we say, "characterful". The big paper cone and tweeter together have been brought up to date, but all the same the driver is not as accurate as today's conventional drivers, as our frequency response analysis shows. Peaks in the midrange, around 1kHz, suggest there will be some colouration here, possibly heard as a brightening effect. Above this frequency, treble extends to 20kHz in our analysis, and there is no crossover suckout, so the sense of detailing should be good. Since our B&K measuring microphone, like most, reaches no further than 20kHz we were unable to measure the super tweeter, but Tannoy claim it extends output to 40kHz, hence the "Wideband" label.

With its big magnet and lightweight paper cone the dual-concentric is sensitive and fairly efficient, producing no less than 89dB SPL from one watt of input. Since the impedance of the loudspeaker measured out at approximately 7ohms overall, it manages this without drawing too much current. In fact the dual-concentric is a 6ohm unit rather than a 4ohm, the latter being most commonly used nowadays to maximise sensitivity. So the Dimension TD8 will go loud even from low power amplifiers and traditionally Tannoy's big Duals were liked for their dynamic sound.

Forward output from the Dual reaches down to 40Hz, a fairly conventional figure, and below this the two small ports extend output down to 25Hz. They are stagger tuned, imposing two discrete anti-resonances, one at 80Hz and one at 35Hz, to produce less total impedance swing at low frequencies than usual. This should help toward amplifier matching a little. Unfortunately, further up the audio band at

2.5kHz there's a huge peak in the impedance characteristic caused by the crossover. The steep impedance changes signal the presence of reactance in the load, which will affect some amplifiers more than others.

The Dimension TD8 is likely to sound "characterful", measurement shows. It isn't an especially accurate loudspeaker, nor an easy load, but it will likely be appealing. Very wide bandwidth and high sensitivity should give it a lively, open sound. **NK**



World Verdict



Very fine 'speakers, with great build and a true reference sound. Not the lowest base around but the midrange is beautifully detailed and open and treble superb.

SILVER DREAM

Traditionally associated with cutting edge budget hi-fi, Creek Audio is moving into new pastures with its no-compromise CD53 CD player. David Price takes the test drive.



You don't usually buy Creek gear for its audacious good looks or luxurious packaging - no, it's the sound that counts.

At £1199, the CD53 you see before you would seem to depart from this approach. You can't deny it's a well presented and - dare I say it - svelte looking bit of kit. Designed as a visual match for the company's own 5350 amplifier, it boasts a 10mm machined alloy silver front panel and near 2mm thick alloy casing of 430x250x70mm size.

Inside there's a 3-beam linear tracking Philips CDM12 transport with CD7 chipset, running on neoprene washers to acoustically decouple it from external vibrations. The microcontroller uses custom Creek software, running the entire mechanism and display functions. The latest 24bit, 192kHz Crystal Semiconductor delta sigma DAC is used, along with fully balanced circuitry featuring 0.1% precision resistors and 1% tolerance film capacitors for analogue filtering duties. A low jitter master clock is featured, along with additional jitter reduction circuitry. With an eye on the future, the CD53's DAC, master clock and power supplies are situated on one,

separate, PCB which can be easily removed for subsequent upgrading.

That chunky front panel has the basic play, stop, pause, open/close, skip and search controls, plus shuffle, repeat and standby functions (all of which are duplicated on the standard RC5 type remote). There's a low current consumption vacuum fluorescent green digital display, said to place very little demand on the power supply despite its lighthouse level of brightness. Round the back is the usual fused IEC mains socket and two gold plated RCA phono sockets for analogue out. Unexpectedly, these are complemented by two professional 3-pin XLR sockets for balanced audio output - common on Japanese high end players but not on British machines. A re-clocked, low jitter, transformer coupled digital output comes via optical and coaxial connectors.

After the usual burn-in period, the Creek found itself driving an LFD preamp/ World Audio K5881 valve power amp and Yamaha NS1000M loudspeakers. Kicking off with Van Morrison's 'Have I Told You Lately', I was impressed by the CD53's extremely smooth, open and organic sound. Less concerned with the minutiae of detail of the recorded

acoustic, it proved far more interested in the bigger musical picture. The result was a captivating performance that caught the mood of the song perfectly.

Van's voice proved incredibly expressive and emotive without ever sounding forward or harsh. The accompanying guitar runs were beautifully fluid, with the strings gushing away behind, giving the song a truly epic quality. Particularly impressive was the CD53's ability with background instruments. Rather than being subsumed by leading parts of the mix, they seem to float gracefully behind with a life of their own. The effect is tremendously evocative without sounding forward or 'in-your-face'. This contrasts with, say, Cyrus's CD7/PSX-R, which is tighter and more forensic sounding at the expense of the Creek's louche, effortless, natural style of music making.

Just because it ebbs and flows along beautifully though, don't expect a dull sound. Air's 'All I Need' was truly captivating, the Creek really getting to the nitty gritty of the song's heart. Whereas its Cyrus rival worked harder at describing the production details - from the relative position in space of all the items in

M M MACHINE

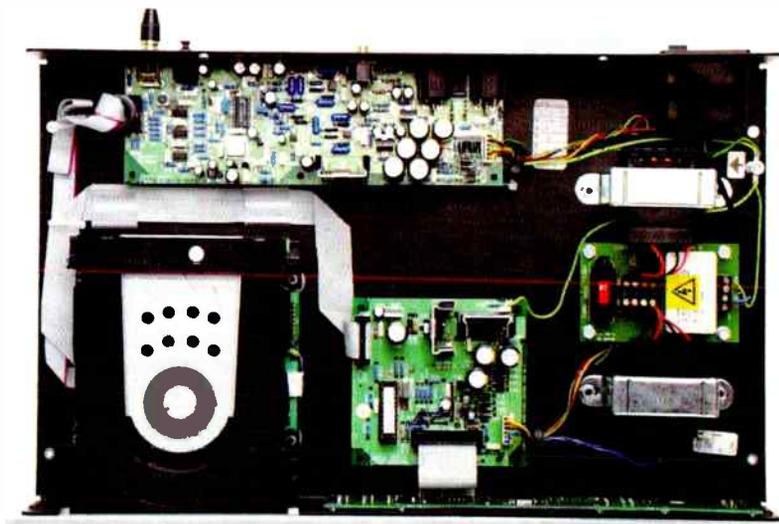
the mix to the timbre of everything from the analogue synthesisers to the female vocals - the CD53 cut to the chase and really emoted. With more sense of feeling - and less concern with technicalities - it proved by far the more enjoyable performer.

K-Klass's 'Rhythm is a Mystery' is a classic piece of dance that had this player really working out. Here its superiority to the Cyrus combo became less clear - the latter's taut, grippy bass and superbly clean attack transients had the CD53 sounding just a touch too Radio 2. This isn't to say it didn't make a fine job of it, it's just that it's better voiced for natural sounding, well recorded acoustic rock and jazz. By contrast, the Cyrus's terrier-like bite predisposes it to dance.

The strange thing is that despite its beautifully natural, organic sound and exquisite sense of timing, the Creek doesn't present a completely consistent front. Tonally it's quite

warm in the bass and midband - indeed bass guitars often sound a little too soft and rounded - but it still seems to accent the treble very slightly. Usually, 'topy' CD players are shrill and forward, but the Creek simply sounds sweet and smooth all the way up to the high frequencies, where it 'glistens' a bit. You can hear this on heavily struck piano chords where sometimes the upper notes chime out at you when you wouldn't normally expect it.

This is pretty much the only chink in an otherwise immaculate set of armour. The Creek is otherwise incredibly listenable, enjoyable, sweet, smooth and nicely textured, with a wide and enveloping soundstage with decent imaging within. ■ ▲



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Creek products have a family sound, one that is easy on the ear. Creek make hi-fi you can listen to! Usually, CD players with a rising top end I am suspicious about, but this one I trust will sound a little less glassy and hard than others with a similar characteristic.

In line with what I said about a smooth sound the D/A convertor used gives a very clean looking and smooth noise floor, completely free from quantisation noise and distortion harmonics. Our analysis clearly shows this and, in conjunction with rising treble, it suggests the player is likely to have a pure and open sound.

Output was a normal 2.1V and channel separation wide at 110dB. A low noise floor of -110dB was no surprise and dynamic range measured a high 110dB, due primarily to an

excellent performance at -60dB.

The CD53 is classically Creek in that it looks fairly humble, yet it has a top notch measured performance. I was a little surprised to see treble lift but in conjunction with all else I can't help but feel this will not be a problem subjectively. **NK**

Frequency response 4Hz-21.2kHz

Distortion

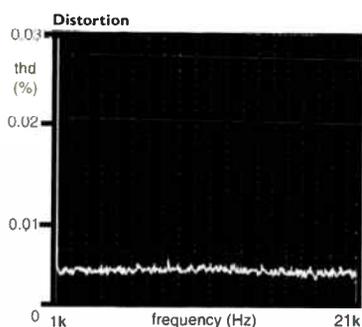
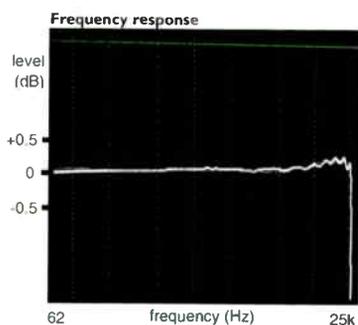
	left	right
-6dB	0.005	0.005
-30dB	0.007	0.007
-60dB	0.32	0.33
-90	28	27

Separation

	left	right
1kHz	110	110
20kHz	105	106

Noise -110dB

with emphasis	-110dB
Dynamic range	110dB
Output	2.1V



World Verdict

Tremendously engaging manner makes it an essential audition in an already competitive end of the market. A truly fine, musical performer.



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



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"Whether with the hard-edged dance of the late lamented KLF, U2's millennial rock, or the beautiful voice of American soprano Barbara Bonney, the **Classik** always sounds confident and fully in command with CD. At the same time, it gives music full expression - Take a listen to the new EMI recording of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* and the system displays good bite and rhythmic drive, along with a nicely neutral balance and a real feel for the excitement of this familiar music." ★★★★★ What Hi-Fi? | April 2001



Icon NXT Speakers £2499.95

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



"The most noticeable aspect of the Icons is their seamless midband. Because the

SurfaceSound panel handles everything from the low midrange upward, they produce one of the fastest and most articulate performances we've heard at mid-to-high frequencies.

Conventional speakers will find this a tough act to follow as in their case the crossover between the midrange and treble units generally comes in between 2kHz-3kHz, precisely where the ears are at their most sensitive. True, some traditional designs convey vocals with a touch more body and warmth because of this, but the Icons voices are seamless, articulate and expressive to an astounding degree."

★★★★★ What Hi-Fi? | June 2001



CD7 CD Player £799.95 7 Integrated Amplifier £699.95

The new **CD7** combines the latest transport developments with 24-bit DAC technology. The CD player can be easily upgraded by adding the external PSX-R power supply.

"This player is just as convincing with thundering orchestral strings and brass, making a great job of Bernstein's recording of *Mahler's Symphony No 5* and it has the definition to unravel the instrumental strands in the Kronos Quartet's disc of Phillip Glass string quartets... It's that that makes it special - and this is a very special player indeed."

★★★★★ What Hi-Fi? November 1999

The 60 Watt **One 7** is a powerful integrated amplifier and system controller that can be upgraded in many directions. This flexible unit will form the cornerstone of your system and provide access into Cyrus' Audio Visual and Multiroom systems.

"This is a fabulous amplifier. It's fast, punchy and has bags of power on tap but crucially delivers huge sackfuls of subtlety when the music requires. Some of the other amplifiers in this group may be better with particular genres of music but as an all-rounder it takes some beating."

★★★★★ What Hi-Fi? November 1999

CD Selection

Arcam DVA CD72	£399.95
Arcam FMJ CD23	£1099.95
Linn Genki	£994.95
Linn Ikemi	£1949.95
Marantz CD6000Ki Signature	£499.95
Meridian 588	£1799.95
Musical Fidelity NuVista 3D	£2959.95
Roksan Kandy CD	£494.95
Roksan Caspian CD	£894.95
Sony SCD-XA333ES SACD	£1199.95
Sony CDP-XE510	£129.95

Sevenoaks Pricing Policy

see page five for details

Please Note: Some products may not be available at all outlets. Advertisement valid until at least 17th October 2001. E&OE



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World Radio History



Amplifier Selection

Arcam DiVA A65 Integrated Amplifier	£379.95
Arcam DiVA A75 Integrated Amplifier	£449.95
Arcam FMJ A22 Integrated Amplifier	£999.95
Linn Wakonda Pre Amplifier	£794.95
Linn I K140 Power Amplifier	£749.95
Musical Fidelity A3 Pre Amplifier	£999.95
Musical Fidelity A3 Power Amplifier	£999.95
Musical Fidelity A300 Power Amplifier	£2199.95
Roksan Kandy Integrated Amplifier	£494.95
Roksan Caspian MKII Integrated Amplifier	£794.95
Tag McLaren 60i Integrated Amplifier	£499.95



DiVA CD92 CD Player £849.95
DiVA A85 Integrated Amplifier £749.95

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

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



CDM™ NT Series

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



CDM™ 1NT Speakers *excluding stands* £749.95

"Positioned well clear of room boundaries and slightly toed-in, the CDM 1NTs perform superbly. They have an open and dynamic sound that simply draws the listener into the music. Play a song such as *Hard Times* from Courtney Pine's *Back In The Day* album and the way that these speakers communicate the emotions of the performers is mesmerising." ★★★★★ *What Hi-Fi?* December 2000

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

SONY

DVP-NS700 SACD & DVD Player *Region 2* £369.95

"In typical Sony fashion, the **DVP-NS700V** boasts excellent set-up displays and a fine remote handset. Connections are a little more complex than the norm, because of the player's extra features, but once wired and fired, the Sony delivers fine pictures. Colours are vivid, the burned yellows and oranges of *Con Air*'s Nevada desert being particularly good. Movie audio performance is fine, too, with a muscular bass, although the best option is to use a digital connection for movie audio, and the six-channel analogue for SACD. As you'd expect, it's the Sony's music reproduction that most impresses. With *Zero 7* on the CD, the Sony has warm bass and fine imaging, while with *Mike Oldfield's Tubular Bells* on multichannel SACD, it sounds quite spectacular." ★★★★★ *What Hi-Fi?* September 2001



 **Super Audio CD is a superior performance format, developed by Philips and Sony, the original inventors of the Compact Disc.**

New Dual Layer SACD Discs will facilitate a seamless transition to the benefits of the new format, although SACD is fully compatible with existing CD software.

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



J A Michell Gyro SE Turntable £974.95

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

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

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

MONITOR AUDIO Gold Reference

Monitor Audio has been designing and manufacturing high quality British Loudspeakers since 1972. In the mid-eighties, the RB22MD was launched utilising Monitor Audio's unique C-CAM™ Metal Dome Tweeter. It sounded significantly smoother and more musical than its rivals and formed the basis for a whole new generation of Monitor Audio Loudspeakers. The company has been at the forefront of Loudspeaker technology ever since.

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

GR20 Speakers £1499.95

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

GR10 Ex-Stands £799.95

"We like the GR10s a lot: Monitor Audio has long been making beautifully upmarket standmounters, and this new model is no disappointment." ★★★★★ What Hi-Fi? | August 2001



A3 CD Player £799.95 Integrated Amplifier £849.95

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



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

Turntables, Tuners and Recorders

Arcam DIVA T51 Tuner	£799.95
Arcam DIVA T81 DAB Tuner	£649.95
Linn LP12/Basik/Akito Turntable	£1749.95
Marantz DR6000 CD Recorder	£399.95
Pioneer MJ-D508 MiniDisc	£179.95
Pioneer PDR609 CD Recorder	£199.95
Project Debut Phono Turntable	£139.95
Sony MDS-JE770 Mini Disc	£229.95
Videologic DRX601ES DAB Tuner	£349.95
Yamaha KX580SE Cass/Deck	£219.95

MUSICAL FIDELITY



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Loudspeaker Selection

MISSION

B&W DM303	£179.95
B&W CM4	£894.95
Cyrus CLS70	£799.95
KEF Q35.2	£349.95
Linn Ninka	£894.95
Mission M74	£299.95
Mission 780	£299.95
Mission 782	£699.95
Monitor Audio Silver 8i	£699.95
Ruark Epilogue Reference	£394.95

782 bases its performance on a 165mm Nomex bass unit fitted to a reflex enclosure ensuring excellent low frequency extension from a graceful and compact cabinet.

783 houses a larger 200mm bass unit with massive motor system, capable of floor shaking, yet tightly controlled low frequency extension. Both use Keraform midrange drivers for outstanding clarity and midrange detail coupled to superb dynamic range together with Mission's silk dome tweeter.

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

"Mission has the reputation for making some of the best affordable loudspeakers in the business, and the **780s** prove they sure haven't lost the knack." ★★★★★ What Hi-Fi? Awards 2000



Sevenoaks Pricing Policy

see page five for details

TOSHIBA SD900E DVD Audio Region 2 £999.95



"It's the DVD-Audio capability that is of most interest here though. The high-resolution format is able to store studio quality audio recorded at 192kHz/24-bit stereo, or up to 96kHz/24-bit in multichannel mode. This means potentially far greater realism than is possible with regular CD. There is still little DVD-A material currently available, but our modest collection of discs sounded-superb on this player..."



At this dizzy price point, we naturally expected something special and, in terms of both audio and video, were not disappointed. The **SD900E** is one of those rare players that can do both with equal aplomb, it could even be considered a bargain as you are getting a top-notch DVD player with a high-end CD player thrown in." Home Cinema Choice | March 2001



TAG McLaren

DVD32R DVD Player £3999.95
AV32R AV Processor £2299.95

DVD32R DVD Player "Once bedded in, the DVD32R adds further credence to the argument that DVD players have come of age. This is an excellent player: it handles music with an agility and confidence that belies its video heritage, delivering complex pieces with verve and energy. It handles movies superbly too. Colours exhibit a solid sense of naturalness and energy, while blacks are dense, deep and accurate. The crisp edge definition of *Chicken Run*'s 3D-animation works especially well. This TAG McLaren has been well worth the wait. It looks good, it's beautifully made and it's very easy to live with and use. Performance in all areas is well up to par, and it's fine CD machine. Even at the price, this is an enticing DVD player." ★★★★★ What Hi-Fi | February 2001

AV32R Processor "Shift to stereo, and your ears will be seduced by some of the sweetest-sounding DACs fitted to a home cinema processor. The result is a real hi-fi sound that can hold its head up next to pricey stereo-only designs - bravo! Throw in beautifully clear and logical set-up procedures, plus software-upgradeable processing to take in new tweaks as they're developed, and you've a long-term proposition that makes real sense. Not cheap, then, but a class product." What Hi-Fi | Awards 1999



AV Processors/Amps/Receivers Best Buy £501 plus

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who are sevenoaks?

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

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

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

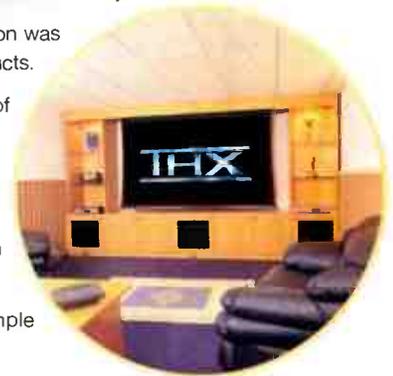
After twenty-nine years of trading, the company has more than forty outlets nationwide, and is for many of the UK's leading manufacturers of electronics and loudspeakers, their largest and most successful retailer.

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

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

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

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



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

solutions



sevenoaks sound & vision



DVD Video is a great way of enjoying movies at home

solutions brochure

Available in-store, our Solutions brochure explains many of the latest issues from Projection systems to conventional Hi-Fi separates. An on-line version is also available on our Website.

stock clearance

With more than forty outlets nationwide, the Sevenoaks Sound & Vision group stock and display a wide range of products. As technology delivers improvements in performance, so individual models and product ranges are changed or superseded. The preceding models are made available at a reduced price, for clearance. Visit our Website for an up-to-date list of the clearance stock, listed by outlet, within the Sevenoaks Sound and Vision group.

sevenoaks pricing policy

Whilst we do not claim always to be the cheapest, we try to ensure our prices are highly competitive. Take into account the expert advice, unrivalled product selection, demonstration facilities and excellent pre, during and after sales service and the lower price might not look such good value.

In the event you can find the same products and excellent service at a lower price, please bring it to our store managers' attention. We will always endeavour to offer you the best deal.



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scotland and north

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- Edinburgh** 5 The Grassmarket **0131 229 7267**
edinburgh@sevenoakssoundandvision.com
- Glasgow** 88 Great Western Road **0141 332 9655**
glasgow@sevenoakssoundandvision.com **Open Sunday**
- Hull** 1 Savile Row, Savile Street **01482 587171**
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- Leeds** 112 Vicar Lane **0113 245 2775**
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- Liverpool** 16 Lord Street **0151 707 8417**
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- Manchester** 69 High Street, City Centre **0161 831 7969**
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- Newcastle** 19 Newgate Street **0191 221 2320**
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sheffield@sevenoakssoundandvision.com **Open Sunday**

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- Nottingham** 597-599 Mansfield Road **0115 911 2121**
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- Peterborough** 36-38 Park Road **01733 897697**
peterborough@sevenoakssoundandvision.com

midlands and west

- Birmingham** 12 Queensway Arches, Livery Street **0121 233 2977**
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- Exeter** 28 Cowick Street **01392 218895**
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- Plymouth** 107 Cornwall Street **01752 226011**
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london and south east

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- Crawley** 32 The Boulevard **01293 510777**
crawley@sevenoakssoundandvision.com
- Croydon** 369-373 London Road **020 8665 1203**
croydon@sevenoakssoundandvision.com **Open Sunday**
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- Guildford** 73b North Street **01483 536666**
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- Holborn** 144-148 Grays Inn Road **020 7837 7540**
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- Kingston** 43 Fife Road **020 8547 0717**
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- Maidstone** 96 Week Street **01622 686366**
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- Reading** 3-4 Kings Walk Shopping Centre **0118 959 7768**
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- Sevenoaks** 109-113 London Road **01732 459555**
sevenoaks@sevenoakssoundandvision.com
- Southampton** 33 London Road **023 8033 7770**
southampton@sevenoakssoundandvision.com
- Southgate** 79-81 Chase Side **020 8886 2777**
southgate@sevenoakssoundandvision.com
- Swiss Cottage** 21 Northways Parade, Finchley Road **020 7722 9777**
swisscottage@sevenoakssoundandvision.com **Open Sunday**
- Tunbridge Wells** 28-30 St Johns Road **01892 531543**
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- Watford** 478 St Albans Road **01923 213533**
watford@sevenoakssoundandvision.com **Open Sunday**
- Witham** 1 The Grove Centre **01376 501733**
witham@sevenoakssoundandvision.com

installation centres

With the development of the various DVD formats, digital satellite broadcasts and the increased potential of home cinema products in a domestic environment, the level of expertise required to specify and correctly install a full system has increased.

Each Sevenoaks outlet can advise on installation, system calibration and remote programming.

The stores in Bristol, Edinburgh, Manchester and Sevenoaks have been appointed as Installation Centres, because of their level of expertise in these areas and their THX certification.

These outlets offer a wide range of products in each category. Widescreen television, plasma monitors and both CRT and DLP front projection systems, deliver the all important vision element of home cinema.

A selection of the finest audio visual processors, amplifiers and receivers can be matched with specially designed loudspeakers. Fully programmable remote systems can command the automation of a home cinema system, whilst neat touch-pads can control music all around the house.

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



UNITED STATES

Unison Research has launched its new Unico 1 solid-state integrated amplifier. Can the Italian tube master keep things together, asks David Price?

► There comes a time in every manufacturer's life when they feel it's time to move to pastures new. Invariably the cries of 'sell out' follow thick and fast, but sometimes the products are strong enough to shrug off the brand's baggage and take it to a new level. This is what Unison Research, hitherto masters of beautifully made 'affordable high end valve amps' hope to do with the fully transistorised £800 Unico 1. Making an all solid-state amp is surely a brave move for one of the masters of 'glow in the dark' audio.

Invariably, the Unico lacks the high visual drama of the tube amps - no beautifully fashioned bits of wood and shiny glass bottles to gaze adoringly at here. Instead, it's a beefy black box with a brushed aluminium front fascia chunkier than the dashboard of a nineteen sixties Fiat 132. The volume and source selector knobs are fashioned from exquisitely turned aluminium, and feel solid enough to turn your average seventies Japanese mega-receiver

green with envy. Round the back are two sets of plastic shrouded, gold plated speaker terminals the size of which I've never seen before. The hand turned, wooden cased remote (driven by radiowaves rather than infra-red, meaning it will work out of view) with two simple 'up' and 'down' volume buttons, looks and feels absolutely exquisite.

Inside we see a circuit design derived from the SRI, particularly around the MOSFET output stage which has been beefed up to give a claimed 100W RMS per channel. The output MOSFETs are driven by bipolar transistors which act as current amplifiers for linearity and stability, and there's a huge heatsink (said to weigh 1.4kg) with a temperature sensor that cuts power if things get too hot under the collar, flashing a warning light on the front panel. A custom made toroidal mains transformer delivers the power, and no fuses or relays are used in the output section.

The input stage however is all

solid state (unlike the hybrid SRI), using a special low noise, low distortion, high current Burr-Brown Sound Quality Series IC employing J-FETs which is made exclusively for audio use. Unison say this amplifier is a very low feedback design, kept to only 9.5dB in successive stages. A top quality ALPS RK27 volume pot completes the package.

The Unico has the usual six line level inputs, with no phono stage offered as standard. There is, however, an optional cæx board intriguingly entitled 'The Phono Unit' to cater for us discerning and cultured lovers of black plastic. It uses low noise op amps with active RIAA equalisation for the low frequencies, with passive filtering for the highs. Both MM and MCs are catered for and switchable gain is offered via jumpers.

Having hooked up my Mission 782 loudspeakers and Cyrus CD-7/PSX-R to the Unico, I gave it a good twenty four hours of burning in. During this time, it moved from

sounding edgy and shut in to its natural state of sweet, smooth, expansive good grace. Essentially, the Unison Research newbie possesses an eerily rich and resonant sound for a tranny amp. Make no mistake - it's no valve amp in disguise, but neither does it sound much like something that doesn't light up at night. There have been many attempts to fall between tube and transistor stalls, but most end in tears or indifference at best. This one, however, treads the lonely path of Sugden's A21a, by actually giving you some of the best of both worlds, rather than most of the worst.

Cueing up The Stone Roses' 'Made of Stone', I was immediately struck by the Unico's grippy bass. It isn't up in the rarefied climes of Naim's NAIT 5 or even the impressively taut Cyrus 7/PSX-R, but it's nevertheless tight and lithe and definitely up for bouncing around at the bottom end with all the speed you could reasonably desire. Thinking about it, the midband helps the impression of bass speed somewhat by being incredibly supple and expressive itself, which rather lifts the whole experience.

4 Hero's 'Escape That' was a total treat. Here we heard the sound of consummate musicianship at its best - terrifically engaging, moving, emotive

and expressive in its rhythmic and dynamic abilities, the Unico pulled off the double by also getting the tones and textures right. To wit, I could really hear the rasp of the brass stabs, resonance of the Fender Rhodes and rich vibrancy of the acoustic piano. While both the Naim and Cyrus were



just a slight bit tighter, the way the Unison almost matched them in speed and beat them on transparency and neutrality was a shock.

As the listening session progressed I was struck by the versatility of this amp. It made a delightful stab at Miles Davis 'Sketches of Spain', showing off a beautifully sweet upper midband and treble (perhaps just a touch too silky to be strictly accurate) with oodles of air and breadth. Soundstaging is big and

wide and enveloping in the idiom of the old Leak and Quad valve power amps, depth perspective is good (but not as tightly defined as the slightly narrower, deeper letterbox the NAIT 5 affords). Image location isn't brilliant but this almost doesn't seem to matter considering the amp's incredibly big hearted nature - rather like an old Thorens deck it's big, broad brushstrokes rather than pinpoint Michell style.

There's very little to criticise here. Listen hard with analytical speakers and you'll hear a slight low level hash that strips the sound of the nth degree of atmosphere. You'll also become familiar with its rich, euphonic character which imbues even cold, harsh recordings with a warmish glow. If this bothers you, best look towards the Cyrus 7/PSX-R. This said, I've heard few amps that are so powerful, strong hearted and engaging yet sweet and lustrous sounding. An extremely interesting product that can only augment Unison Research's burgeoning stable of fine amplification. ■ ▲

Unison Research Unico I £800
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 WeylverBucksSL0 9DA
 Tel: 01753 652669
 www.ukd.co.uk

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The Unico produced a healthy 112W into 8ohms, but it was unhappy supplying the heavier current demanded by a 4ohm load, going unstable above 100W output. This represents quite a high output in voltage terms so in use it may have little or no effect except at continuously high volumes. All the same, this amplifier appears to be marginally stable, which is a little worrying.

Distortion was quite high, both at high outputs and at high frequencies. Ironically, this appears to be a low feedback design, which suggests it should be more stable rather than less stable. Solid-state amplifiers with low feedback can generate quite a strong harmonic structure at high frequencies that usually produces greyness or

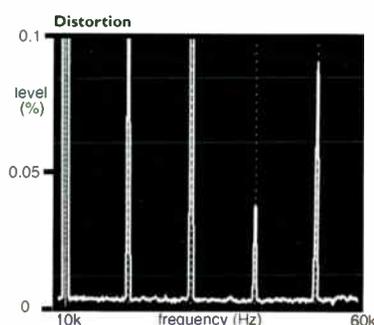
harshness in the sound. Our distortion analysis clearly shows this situation. Producing no less than 0.2% distortion at 1W/10kHz and 0.46% just below full output the Unico wasn't very linear by today's standards. Levels of distortion as high as this are usually discernable in some form or another.

Frequency response was wide at 11Hz-145kHz, wide enough for SCAD and DVD-A. Channel separation was adequate and noise low. Input sensitivity was normal, being good enough to match old tuners and cassette decks.

The Unico did not measure very well. It may well sound open, but likely a bit hard or transistory too. Low feedback transistor amps are worth a listen, but it needs to be a fairly long one to ensure they are

not fatiguing. **NK**

Power	112watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	11Hz-145kHz
Separation	64dB
Noise	-97dB
Distortion	0.2%
Sensitivity	280mV
dc offset	5/19mV



World Verdict

A brilliantly musical all rounder, the Unico gives you your cake and lets you eat it, with relish.



A GLORIOUS VISTA

After the huge success of Musical Fidelity's original Nu-Vista preamp there came an equally engaging high-end power amp, which was then followed by a superb integrated. This should have, thought everyone, exhausted the fairly modest supply of nuvistor mini-tubes that Musical Fidelity said they had acquired.

Not so it seems. Anthony Michaelson, MD of Musical Fidelity, had one last trick up his sleeve - and what a trick it is. Originally the 3D CD player was to be an SACD player but Mr. Michaelson became gradually disillusioned with the current state of play with the format - the lack of

Musical Fidelity rounds off its superb Nu-Vista flagship range with a source component, the 3D CD player. Simon Pope mourns the end of an era.

software, ridiculously high prices (especially for many re-issues) and the eternal contest with DVD-A.

He's not too enamoured with DVD-A either, seeing analogue watermarking as "a bad joke" that "sounds appalling" - never one to mince words, Mr. M!

So, he thought, why not put all the efforts, research and engineering

skills into making the best possible CD player on the face of the earth? Enter the Nu-Vista 3D. And what an entrance. This is by far the chunkiest, heaviest and serious looking source player that's ever held pride of place in my system rack (aside perhaps, from - ironically - Sony's flagship SCD-1 SACD player). Once I'd lugged it 70ft from my car, through the garden

and into the listening room with the aid of a groaning and creaking trolley, I then needed a block and tackle to get it onto a shelf. Absence of a block and tackle resulted in the aid of a willing and muscular neighbour. You get the idea by now - for a CD player, it's big!

The design criteria behind the 3D, in typical modest fashion, was to create what Musical Fidelity felt to be the best CD player around regardless of price and the idea, according to the man himself, was to make CDs sound as good as SACDs. There are a number of different and unusual ways in which they set about achieving this. A peek under the lid shows there's some serious differences with this player; it's stuffed to the gills with internal goodies.

Firstly, there's a choke regulated power supply, so beloved of high-end valve amps - and some solid state amps from the Musical Fidelity stable. Six separately regulated power supplies feed the DAC, spindle motor, display, NuVistor HT, NuVistor LT and logic/remote control. Numerous choke regulated supplies are used thanks to PCB-mounted dual layer chokes.

Musical Fidelity believe that high frequency distortion, noise and resolution are the biggest areas of difference between SACD and CD

saying that any problems in SACD occur "out of band, well above 25 or 30 kHz".

Also, they point out that SACD is devoid of high frequency filtering, so has neither group nor phase delay in the audio domain. In the Nu-Vista 3D, the solution was to use upsampling - to 24-bits at 107.42 kHz. This, claims the company, takes all digital error artifacts out of band "so they are not a factor up to about 35kHz", therefore apparently improving distortion and resolution.

More details are found in the layout itself, as the mechanism is enclosed in its own casework inside the box, to limit stray field from both the mechanism and its components. The nuvistor stage operates in dual-differential Class A mode and the circuit was designed to incorporate any analogue filtering needed in a

two-pole, passive network. As mentioned earlier, both the HT and LT (heaters) are separately choke regulated.

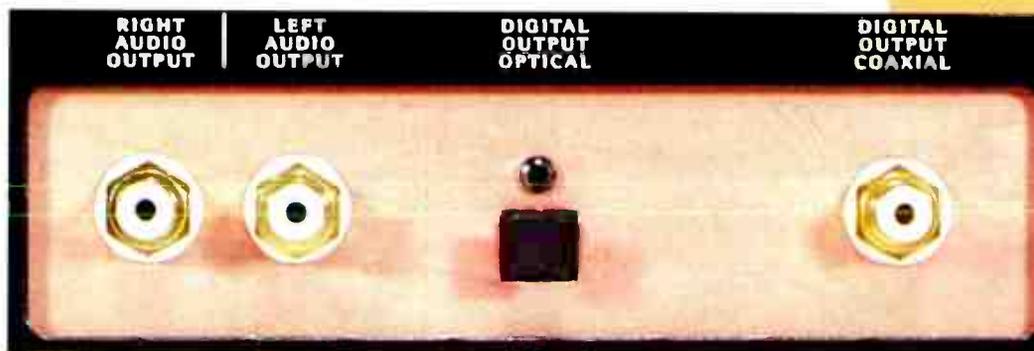
All the regular CD player features are here, including CD text but there's no HDCD playback facility. It comes with a basic (for the money) but effective remote control.

Such great, and seemingly crazy, claims were made for this player that I was expecting to be a little disappointed. No such luck I'm afraid. Firstly, it's important to point out that this player sounds like no other CD player I've ever heard. It's not your average digital sound but neither does it sound particularly 'analogue' to my ears. It's simply different - and wholeheartedly addictive too!

The first element of surprise comes from the top end. Whilst some Musical Fidelity equipment has a top end that's glittery and slightly bright, the 3D's top end also stands out from the crowd but in a different way. It has an ethereal and light

floorboards. I discovered this when testing out the player's dance credentials with Goldie's 'Saturn Returns'. There's some extremely low level stuff going down on some tracks and the 3D displayed them with grin-inducing accuracy. There's none of the digital intensity and surgical precision that you'll get from the like of seriously priced high end players from Wadia or Krell. This is a 'balls-out' sound - big and meaty, but that's not to say the 3D lacks any detail. Percussive intricacies were well relayed and the rich female vocals of 'Believe' were clean and realistically breathy.

Checking out the intimacy of the player I opted for Yo-Yo Ma's recording of Bach's cello suites on Sony Classical. This is a pretty run-of-the-mill recording with a slightly dry feel to it, but the 3D performed it exceptionally well, homing in on the lyrical phrasing and vibrato to emphasise the importance of the performance, as opposed to



quality that, lo and behold, has that element of 'feeling' rather than just hearing, much akin to SACD at its best. Cymbals sparkle and come to life whilst trumpets have a natural quality that literally reflects light off the bell! Stravinsky's Rite Of Spring and Mahler's Das Lied von der Erde, both on Reference Recordings with the Minnesota Orchestra, are technically impressive recordings with a fine sound. They came even more to life through the 3D. Here was space and air in abundance, with tutti climaxes sounding dynamically impressive, clean and controlled. There was an admirable spread of orchestral instruments demonstrating a wide and deep soundstage.

The second shock comes the first time a deep bass note is encountered. The 3D has amazing low end energy that transmits through the

recording quality. This put me on a mission. I searched through my collection, picking out recordings that sound like a wet towel has been placed over the 'speakers, only to find that the 3D pulled that little bit of magic from each of them, making the most of a bad situation with both classical and rock. Hitherto ropey rock recordings were played with the emphasis on imaging and drum detail. It's refreshing and rare to find a musical optimist, instead of the usual fussy pessimist!

Are there any down sides to the 3D? Well, if you're a fully paid up member of the high end digital appreciation society you may want that little extra scientific edge to the sound, the one that digs out all the minute intricacies and details and delivers them in an impressive and precise package, albeit one that's

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WHAT HI-FI?

extract from June 1999

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ask that, you'll never know". Similarly, it's hard to put your finger on exactly why and how the 3D CD player turns in such a performance and to a certain extent it's a pointless exercise: it just does. OK, so at three grand it's a serious financial commitment, but if you're after a CD player to last you 'til you take your final breath it could well fit the bill. Get a move on, though, numbers are limited to just five hundred and they'll sell, believe me.

invariably expensive and sometimes a little musically uninvolved. What you get with the 3D is a full and big sound that plays on the side of creativity, as opposed to science.

With the emergence of new high resolution audio formats, some industry commentators predicted that instead of plumping for these options, die-hard audiophiles would seek sonic enlightenment in the company of high end CD replay. It looks like the 3D, along with Marantz's equally impressive but more

conventional sounding CD-7, is the first of these 'regressive' super-players. It has sparkle, control and an innate musicality that's sometimes hard to find in impressive, but sometimes musically unrewarding more expensive CD players. It's very, very hard to back your old player after spending some time with the 3D.

There's the famous story of the person who apparently asked the late, great Louis Armstrong 'What is Jazz?', only to be told "If you have to

Simply get a listen to one and go back to your reference player - all will be revealed! ■ ▲

Musical Fidelity Nu-Vista 3D £2,960

Musical Fidelity Ltd.
15/16 Olympic Trading Est.
Fulton Road
Wembley
Middx HA9 0TF
Tel: 020 8900 2866

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

Although it uses Nuvistors, miniature valves developed in America for early space shots, the 3D CR returned a fairly conventional measured performance. Our analysis shows frequency response has a little filter ripple but this should not affect sound quality. The overall trend is flat, meaning there'll be plenty of treble energy and a reasonably bright and clear sound. The upper limit measured a normal 21.25kHz (-1dB).

Distortion levels were very low right through the dynamic range, from 0dB peak level down to -90dB, the lower limit for CD. Our analysis at -30dB, which is typical music level, shows no sign of distortion and little sign of quantisation noise. The converters used by Musical Fidelity are linear, returning similar results on both channels. This sort of result is not uncommon nowadays, and it shows the 3D CR is up with the best.

Low levels of distortion at -60dB

help give the 3D CR an excellent EIAJ dynamic range figure of 111dB, slightly better than most rivals.

Measured noise was down at -109dB and output a standard 2.1V.

The 3D CR will likely sound fairly bright and clear, but also clean and un-fatiguing. **NK**

Frequency response 4Hz-21.25kHz

Distortion

	left	right
-6dB	0.005	0.005
-30dB	0.007	0.007
-60dB	0.34	0.35
-90	29	28

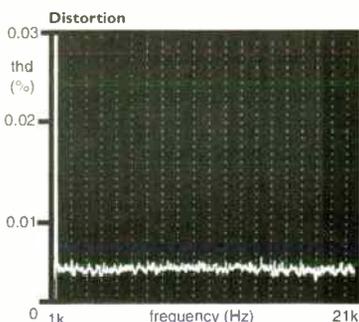
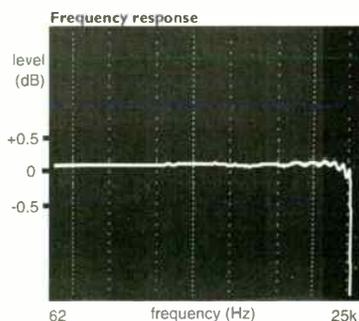
Separation

	left	right
1kHz	101	102
20kHz	100	100

Noise

	-109dB
with emphasis	-109dB

Dynamic range 111dB
Output 2.1V



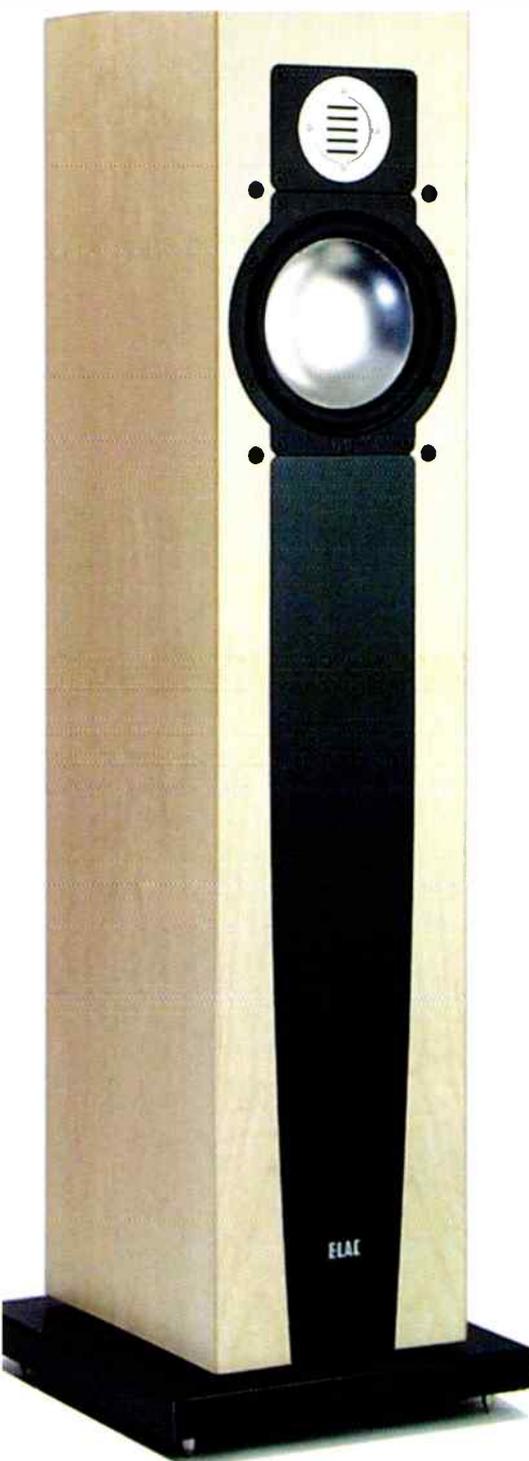
World Verdict



Amazingly big and bold sounding player that's among the finest around. Definitely different but certainly addictive.

METAL GURUS

German 'speaker brand Elac bring a refreshing change to conventional design. Simon Pope takes a listen to the 512 JET floorstander.



stylish, high end CL-330 stand-mount, complete with its futuristic high-tech stand with spikes that would bring delight to the eyes of the Marquis de Sade! The 512 in the JET range, reviewed here fits nicely between the two at £1,300. Build quality is, as you'd expect from a German company, superb. The cabinet is reasonably slim but tall and of solid build, as a quick rap on the side suggests.

Elac use interesting drive units, both of which are pleasingly different to the norm. Since both are also used in their £2,000-plus 330 flagship 'speaker, the 512 is by no means your average floorstander.

First is the inclusion of Elac's superb 'JET' folded ribbon tweeter. It is one of the most unusual and effective high frequency drive units around. The design is based on Heil's Air Motion Transformer which has been 'refined' by Elac many times to produce, they claim, effortless, distortion-free sound up to 30kHz. Behind the metal tweeter grill of the 512, the metal ribbon of the unit has been folded and contains over ten times the surface area of a traditional 25mm dome tweeter. The JET is fitted with Neodymium magnets which Elac claim deliver more power and control than ferrous magnets of the same size. Each JET tweeter is a delicate and complex design and is hand made in Elac's factory in Keil, apparently taking over forty minutes to produce (and that's in ever efficient Germany!).

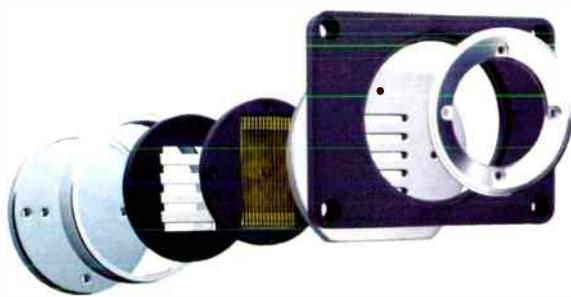
The bass unit that accompanies the JET tweeter on the 512's baffle is by no means bog standard, either. The 180mm design is constructed from an

aluminium alloy sandwich cone comprising 0.2mm of aluminium bonded to doped pulp fibre to form an extremely light but rigid cone with a high degree of self damping. The high power 37m voice coil and very wide double-asymmetrical rubber surround provides a very long throw of almost 30mm - as warped vinyl will attest! These bass/mid drive units are so durable, they're actually apparently tested to a high 50v, as opposed to the normal 15v.

The 512 employs a rear firing advanced gas flow reflex port designed to minimise flow noise and frictional losses. The complex crossover (resembling a very fine plate of sushi!) uses high quality audiophile components and separate filters for each drive unit. There are bi-wire terminals and bridging links are supplied for a single wire option. Plinths are supplied for extra stability of both structure and bass. There's a small lower chamber which can be sand filled if need be but such is the solidity of the cabinets that this shouldn't be called for in many instances.

When it came to the listening I was somewhat surprised by the 512s. My other experiences with the same drive unit configuration and JET tweeter both came in the form of the CL-310 and 330 standmounts which both use colour free and heavy metal cabinets. This results in a fast, clean and neutral sound which although very good, I find a little too cold and sterile for my personal taste. This all changes with the use of a thick, wood veneered cabinet, however. Still present was the speed and clarity but there was an extra dose of warmth added to the sound which counteracts the metal drive units

► The German 'speaker company Elac are distributed in the UK by headphone specialist, Sennheiser. We've encountered a few of the company's other products before, from entry level to the ultra-



music, with a nice open frequency spread without the compression that other speakers can offer under such pressure - no

rock music with Pearl Jam's 'Ten' and Paul Weller's Stanley Road the 512s showed they could rock with the best of them, delivering a fast and detailed sound with just the right amount of excitement and drive. Any more and they would have been too 'forward'. What this music did show up, though, was a slight lack of midrange detail. Acoustic guitars in the Weller album were short of that bit of detail which raises the reality stakes of the music. Vocals were good, though, with warmth and little sibilance.

Classical music fared better than it does through many other metal domed designs thanks to the sense of space created by the 512s and the airy, open sound of the JET tweeter. Violins in Mahler's second symphony had a full and rich tone, with little edginess and the woodwind section had space around the instruments - impressive.

The 512s have a full sound and

very deep bass. The forwardness of metal drive units is nicely cancelled out by the cabinet, so that they play most music you can chuck at them with competence. There's a treble peak there somewhere (but it's a 'good' one!) and the midrange, for my money, isn't the cleanest around.

They should be very high on your wish list, whatever your taste in tunes. Competition is tough around this price point but the Elac's fare very well indeed by relaying sheer enthusiasm and excitement, combined with detail. They certainly left an impression on me! ■ ▲



notes. These 'speakers go low... very low. Placing them about three-four feet from the rear wall and playing a CD of Goldie's 'Saturn Returns' resulted in a marvellous, big sound that encompassed the whole frequency spectrum.

Taking advantage of the neighbours' summer holidays I cranked up my 250W per channel Meridian 557 power amp to see just how far those cones could fly! This resulted not only in some seriously deep bass that came close to a REL Strata III subwoofer but was fast and tuneful, too - although not quite as taut as that from the aforementioned REL sub (but that's a very tough job to pull off).

The JET tweeter did its stuff well, creating dynamic, open treble that highlighted the delicate and subtle electronic percussion details in the Goldie CD perfectly. At high volumes the 512s kept good control over

ELAC 512 JET £1,299
Sennheiser UK Ltd.
3 Century Point
Halifax Rd.
High Wycombe
Bucks HP 3SL
Tel: 0800 652 5002
www.sennheiser.co.uk

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

With grill removed the Elac 512s look very different. They have a smooth, shallow metal cone bass/mid unit with no dustcap, and a ribbon tweeter protected by a slotted grille.

The dustcap of a conventional drive unit radiates high frequencies, acting as a mechanically coupled dome tweeter in effect. Although it lacks a dust cap our response analysis shows it works very smoothly right across the audio band. Integration was good at a wide range of forward (listening) angles too. It is impossible to see where the tweeter kicks in, the response analysis is so smooth. A dip in the impedance curve suggesting it is around 3.5kHz.

The tweeter continues smoothly right up to 20kHz as good ribbons can, I know from working with Tonigens. Although the slotted grille looks a little clumsy and obstructive in practice it seemed to affect high frequency dispersion little. From this response analysis I would expect the Elac 512 to exhibit less colouration than usual, to

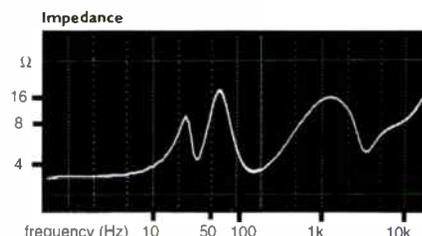
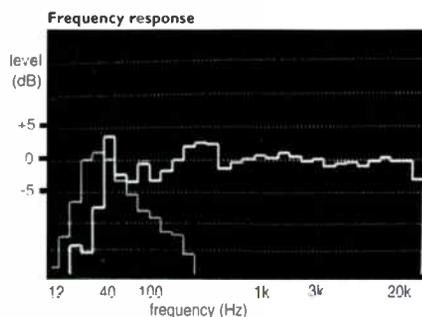
have smooth treble that likely might sound a little fast and incisive.

Down at low frequencies the bass unit reaches 40Hz before rolling off rapidly, due to port action. The port takes things lower, rolling off below 25Hz. The bass unit appears to be lightly damped, so I would expect quite a lot of low bass, possibly of a fairly soft, fulsome nature.

As a load the 512 isn't the easiest. It measures out at 5.6ohms overall, but our analysis shows Elac use a 4ohm bass unit, so a fair amount of bass current is drawn. The crossover point is reactive. With voltage sensitivity measuring 85dB, a pretty average value for a large floorstander, the 512 needs power to go loud.

In view of everything, including the likely revealing nature of the tweeter, this

loudspeaker demands a (very) good amplifier. It is likely to both highlight and reveal amplifier differences. Bright amplifiers may sound glassy or over-bright. But partnered with care Elac's 512 may well give excellent results. **NK**



World Verdict



Very fine speakers with a superb ribbon tweeter... treble and good, deep bass. Excellent build, too.



FOURTH SEASON

► **B**ang and Olufsen. The very name sends shivers down the spine of any serious audiophile. But if you think about it, the 'lifestyle audio' furrow that this famous Scandinavian company has ploughed for the past thirty or so years isn't so ridiculous after all. While its products' sonics don't hold a torch to the likes of Linn, Naim et al, the company cottoned on to something very quickly which has taken its 'purist' rivals many painful

Cyrus's new Quattro CD-tuner-preamp is a product of its time, for its time, says David Price.

years to learn - that many folk love music but have to live their lives too.

Cyrus saw the writing on the wall pretty early in the day too. Its Cyrus One and Two amplifiers were discreet, petite affairs when much of the

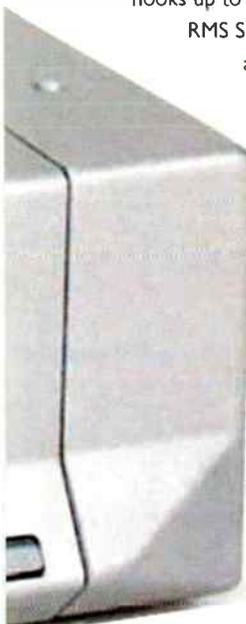
hi-fi world was still hell-bent of making the biggest, blackest and ugliest products imaginable - by comparison, wood planks looked exciting. Now, over fifteen years after its first new adventure in hi-fi, the Huntingdon

company has taken the plunge and done - whisper it - a 'lifestyle' audio system.

The result is the £850 Quattro, a combined CD and preamp which hooks up to the £550 70W

RMS SmartPower power amp. Like Linn's

Classik you end up with an extremely tidy and versatile box of tricks that not only looks the part but actually sounds it too. The Quattro appears much like the CD7, sharing the same



78x215x360mm inverted die-cast chassis with front loading CD transport. Inside the review sample was the optional FM stereo RDS tuner module costing £200, and there's also an optional 3 zone multi-room module for £350. A full function remote control comes as standard.

Round the back there are inputs for CD and Tape, with preamp, headphone, CD direct and Tape, plus three multi-room expansion outputs which are used only if the multi-room module is fitted, and an FM antenna input for use should the tuner option be specified. Usefully, there's a coaxial digital output from the CD player, something CD-R or MD recorder owners will greatly appreciate. Should your lifestyle become such that you feel it's time to enter the world of 'real' separates hi-fi, it's also possible to have the Quattro modified by your friendly local Cyrus dealer to give direct CD and tuner outputs to any line level preamp or integrated amplifier.

Connecting up the Quattro and SmartPower is simply a case of running a decent interconnect between the former's PRE OUT phonos and the latter's line inputs. As usual, Cyrus's corporate speaker plugs are a right pain if you're used to bananas or bare wires. As you'd expect, using the combo is a breeze.

It's a case of switch on and go - the unit functioning much like the company's own CD7 CD player with the exception of a source switch which selects either the FM tuner or one of the two line level inputs. The green backlit, fine pitch, dot matrix LC display tells you what the Quattro is doing at all times.

Recognisably Cyrus, don't expect smooth, languid, insouciant sounds wafting from this combo. Rather, it's very clean, dry, tight and taut with a relentlessly propulsive feel. Whatever music you choose, this goes for the rhythms like a rat up a drainpipe and delights in bringing them all back home. Curiously, it's very similar to its closest rival - the Linn Classik - in this respect.

Listening kicked off with Soul II Soul's 'Keep On Moving'. For those unfamiliar, it's a beautifully sweet, enveloping and soothing recording. The Quattro didn't dwell too long on this, preferring to run off and play with the percussion. The result was an extremely enjoyable and surprisingly musical performance from something so modest. The Quattro really gave a sense of the song's rhythmic nuances, the subtle inflections of timing, vocal phrasing and the way the track drew to a climax.

Next was my all time favourite reviewing disc (and it's not half bad musically, either), 4 Hero's 'Two Pages'. Running through the first CD, the Quattro's sonic signature was again soon apparent. Once again it proved a superbly engaging and emotional performer from its built-in CD source. Bass was quite tight and very fluid, midband bristling with detail and treble clean and spry. Imaging was strong and confident, soundstaging convincingly capacious.

'Two Pages' also highlighted the Quattro's downsides, though. The problem with it is crystal clear when you've just come from a CD7/PSX-R and Cyrus 7/PSX-R combo. Of course, this is a far, far more expensive set-up (and not really aimed at the same buyer), so this is

just for interest's sake. Essentially, the Quattro adds light, transitory mush to the music. The noise floor is higher, with a slightly foggy, dusky midband. This contrasts sharply to the brilliant sunny morning that the pricier separates give. Factor in the lack of tonal colour - Herbie Hancock's 'The Prisoner' show's there's a restricted tonal palette - and you've got the combo's essential weaknesses.

Still, you wouldn't expect to it even come close to a full-on Cyrus separates system - that isn't really the point. The main thing is that it now gives the potential Linn Classik buyer an alternative.

FM sound is a pleasant surprise, clean and quiet and detailed, it romps ahead of your average budget tuner and offers a genuinely useful extra listening dimension.

On all sources, Linn's Classik is tighter in the bass, and obviously more dynamic, but the Quattro pulls back in overall power output and a slightly fuller soundstage. Although it's pretty close, I'd say it just about beats



the Huntingdon twosome on musicality, but then the Quattro/SmartPower feels nicer to use, looks better, is more upgradable and more expandable. You pay your money and take your choice, as ever! No doubt about it though, it's a great product that fulfils its intended role brilliantly - at a price. I'm really getting to like this 'lifestyle' lark. ■ ▲

Cyrus Quattro FM £850
Cyrus Smartpower £550

Cyrus Electronics
Spitfire Close
Huntingdon, PE29 6XY
Tel: 01480 435577
www.cyrus.co.uk

World Verdict



Beautifully packaged, the Quattro performs its role superbly. Taut rhythmic sound and brilliant ergonomics make it an excellent second system.

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LETTER OF THE MONTH

IF IT AIN'T BROKEN

Dear Hi-Fi World, I have been a regular reader of your magazines for longer than I can remember and over the years I have built a superb sounding system using your excellent reviews: Gyrodec QC, SME IV, MC7500, Michell Delphini, Orca and Alecto Monos driving Jamo Concert 8s on Elemental Audio Reference stands. After some time saving up I'm now in a position to upgrade, but where do I go from here? Should I move up to an Orbe SME V, add Delphini or Alecto monoblocks to the amplification or is it time to say goodbye to the 8s? If the speakers have to go then I've always been interested in the Quad electrostatics. The 988 and 989's are a bit above my budget so would a pair of 57's or 63's be a good match - what would you recommend?

John Grumann

Wow, that's certainly a Hi-Fi World system you've got there! One thing - if the system is, as you say, "superb sounding" it does beg the question



A Michell Orbe would be the ultimate analogue upgrade for John Grumann

"why change it?". In some cases the only upgrade needed is a new batch of music! However, I presume you're

a dedicated hi-fi hobbyist, who like most of us, feels the need for change now and then. This is a pretty decent

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The NHT 2.9s have detail and space in abundance.

set up you've got and depending how much money you have to spend, you may simply end up with a different sound, as opposed to an upgrade! I can make some suggestions, however. The most obvious change is to say adios (or whatever the Danish is!) to the Jamos. Although the Concert 8s are very neutral and transparent you may get more of a more relaxed and musically warm sound elsewhere - your Michell components deserve it. The Concert 8s and Elemental stands are an expensive combination which could be sold second hand for a good £1,500 or more, this would add to the tally you already have and could perhaps raise the money needed for a pair of electrostatics. Ironically you'll get the same kind of detail and transparency with a pair of 988s as you do with your Jamo's - but expect more of it, with a warmer tinge. A decent pair of secondhand 63s would match your Michells but may lack that last ounce of speed and attack that the newer models possesses slightly more of.

Alternatively, try out a pair of Sonus Faber Elector Amator II standmounts at £2,500 (review coming soon!). Judging by your preference of loudspeakers you obviously crave detail and transparency over bass and whilst having a very fluid musical sound with

great detail, the Sonus Fabers also create a big sound from such small boxes and will suit the sound of your Alectos. Or if you fancy a bit more bass, NHT's 2.9s could fit the bill at £2,000. These are very fine and attractive 'speakers with a warm detailed sound and a deep and tight bass, only with their extraordinary physical depth you'll need a bit of space for them - exactly the opposite dimensions to a Quad electro-static!

If you do decide to opt for the front end upgrade, you could always simply add on the new VC power supply for the GyroDec, which will tighten up the sound even further for as little as £450 and leave you enough dosh to change the 'speakers as well. The Orbe/SME V option is, of course, a cracker - not cheap,

but musically rewarding - and hopefully you wouldn't get the 'upgrade itch' ever again! **SP** ■

BURNING QUESTIONS

I have recently rekindled my interest in hi-fi and picked your magazine off the shelf as it covered

computers as well. I migrated to the computer field back in the dark days of IBM ATs, and have been building PC's ever since. My last hi-fi system was purchased in the early 70s for about £2500, all of which is still in use. The only 'modern' procurement has been that of a Technics SL-PG590 CD player. My bridge back to hi-fi is through the use of computers to burn CD-Rs, and my current interest of transcription of LPs to CD format. There are some very good and powerful software programs which enable one to clean up old or damaged recordings and produce high quality CD output.

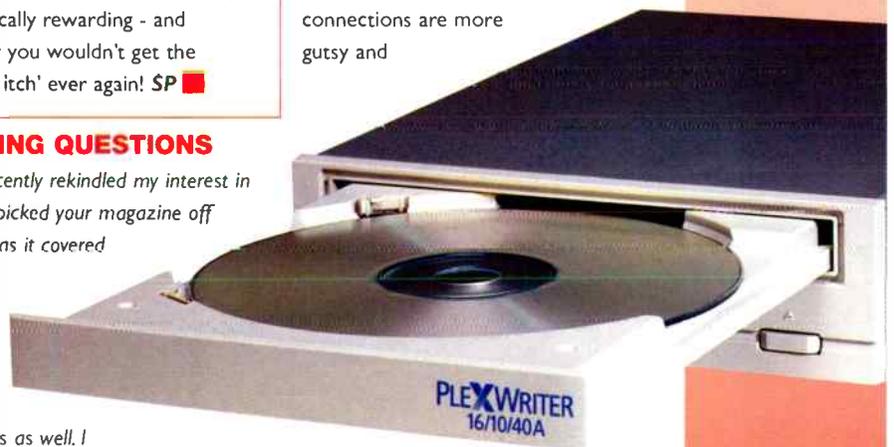
As I am striving to achieve the highest audio standard I became intrigued by what seemed a good method of connectivity (optical), but went nowhere. The Technics CD player has an optical digital out connection, however my amplifier and modern ones that I have looked at do not have optical

line in. Furthermore, in the computer domain, the top end sound cards and CD drives do not have optical connectivity. What if any benefit would be gained if there were provision to use optical linking between devices and why does my CD player sport a line out which I cannot use?

Regards,

Eric Vant

Most modern CD players feature digital outputs, which let you connect up an external Digital to Analogue converter (for better sound) or a MiniDisc or CD recorder for direct digital recording. Japanese players, such as your Technics usually have optical (TOSLINK) connectors, whereas European players such as Philips use coaxial electrical digital connections. There is much debate about which is better, but a general rule is that the optical connection sounds smoother and more 'hi-fi' whereas the coaxial connections are more gutsy and

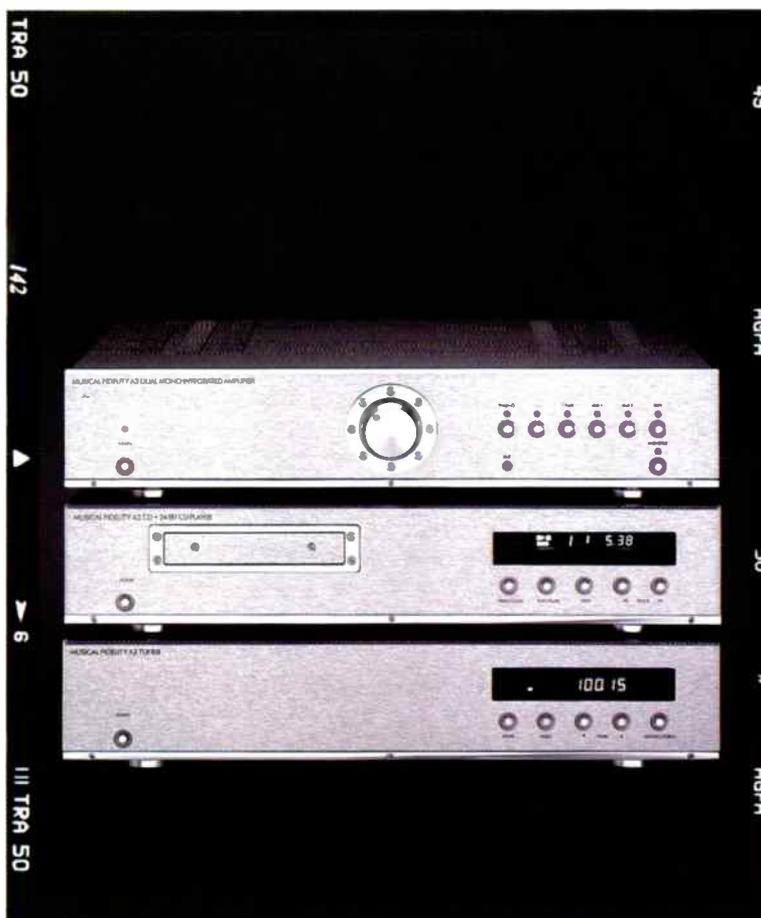


Plextour's PlexiWriter is one of the finest CD burners around

musical.

Obviously, as hi-fi amplifiers are analogue devices, they don't have digital inputs, although home theatre receivers with Dolby are thus equipped as they have built-in digital signal processors and decoders. For computer audio, it's useful to buy a soundcard like VideoLogic's SonicFury (£80) or Guillemot's MaxiSOUND ISIS (£250) which have digital inputs. Some soundcards have either optical or coaxial digital inputs, others have both. Help is at hand though in the handy shape of the Midiman Co2 which converts between the two types, and costs just £50.

Buying a digital input-equipped



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soundcard is a tremendous boon to serious hi-fi buffs. It means you can do direct digital recording to your computer's hard drive, which then lets you run one of the incredibly powerful sound editing packages (such as Cool Edit Pro) to clean up your recording, or just edit out tracks you don't like for recording to CD-R. Another point is that recording onto hard drive lets you defeat the SCMS digital copyright protection on your discs. But this is of course strictly illegal, officer. In my case, I'm constantly making music compilations to play in the car or my second system. This involves recording my vinyl onto DAT, recording the DAT 'rushes' onto my PC hard drive via my Zefiro ZA2's optical digital input, slicing my favourite tracks together into a 74 minute WAV file using Cool Edit and burning it to CD-R using Roxio's Easy CD Creator 5. In this context, an optical digital input is a boon. **DP ■**

whether there may be a different player out there which would be better. This is probably made more confusing for me as I am fairly new to the world of the audiophile! Any comments appreciated.

D. Whetstone

No, it's not down to the DAC, because both players you mention are Bitstream! So I thought I'd hand this over to 'the one and only' Mr Ken Ishiwata, Marantz Japan International's 'brand ambassador' and all round digital tweaker. "Well, about this letter! It's strange, both models are having multibit D/A! I don't think we can discuss just about what kind of D/A converter you are using in your CD player, because there are so many things affecting sound. For example, in the case of the CDi220, the power supply to video circuit is always on even you are only playing audio CDs! Of course this will affect sound as you can easily imagine. On top of this, the player's analogue circuits including power supply are not optimised for audio playback. So this player does not have the clarity or openness and is quite laid back sounding. Strangely enough, many people like this kind of sound because it's easy to listen and forgiving for bad recordings.

On the contrary, the 850/III is very 'hi-fi' sounding - it may be too hi-fi! This means it's often very easy to get tired and it is not forgiving at all! Then again, if you've got high end ancillaries then this player may sound remarkable for the price. So it's a very difficult issue since sound is

The Japanese especially have a very different way of taking this position. Unfortunately, in the case of Philips they mix it too much - the 850 was originally designed by the Japanese, and sounds like it, whereas the CDi220 was designed in Belgium, and you can hear the result!"

So there you have it - Ken sagely points out that there's more to the digital mix than the DAC, and says your preference for the CD-I is down to its synergy with your system and its 'European' voicing which lacks the showy, hi-fi sound of many Japanese designs. If it were me, I'd hang on to the CD-I because it's part of digital audio's weird and wonderful history. People will be looking at it in ten years (when even your cooker has a DVD player built in) and say, "did they really think this was the future?" If you must upgrade it, a CD6000KI is one of the most musical players at the price, but also audition the superb Rega Planet 2000. **DP**

▶▶ BIT PART PLAYER

Hello David, I'm new to your magazine, and after reading the comments on your site I have subscribed to Hi-Fi World in the hope that I will now be reading reviews from a more knowledgeable source than another more expensive magazine (which we won't mention), that I'm used to being fed with. With regard to your comments on the drawback of Bitstream players, do you think that this may be why my Philips CD-i 220 Matchline player has always sounded better than my Philips CD850 MkII player? It certainly sounds like it. I always leave the CD-i hooked up as it sounds so good but

▶▶ PREACHING TO THE CONVERTED



Naim's CD5 could fit the bill

Dear Hi fi World, Just a small query that I hope you might be able to help me with. My current system is a Meridian 200 transport with 203converter, a Croft Vitale pre amp, Audio Analogue Donizetti power amp and B&W P6 loudspeakers. I feel that after many hours of sterling service an improved front end may be due. With a budget of around £800 I would be very interested in your views and suggestions as to either a new converter, or a new one box player. Thanks for your time, Tony.

Hi Tony, The amplification in your system is a good, musical combination so little work is needed here. As far as your source is concerned, like the rest of the industry now does, I'd stick to one box options - the two box CD replay system has mostly had its day. If you're happy with



"It's CD Jim, but not as we know it" - Rega's Planet CD player.

when I finally get around to purchasing a new CD player, I would like to go for the Marantz CD6000 KI. However, having a Bitstream D/A, I wonder

very subjective, you know that very well. But as a manufacturer we have to take certain position, which changes from one brand to another.



The Croft Vitale as used by Tony is one of the cleanest sounding preamps on the market

the Meridian sound but just feel that the 200/203 combination is a little frayed these days the obvious choice is the company's latest 506.24 entry level CD player. However, at £1200 it is slightly out of your price range. It gives a smooth and sophisticated sound in the traditional Meridian mould but you'll find it slightly more pacy sounding than your existing combo - keep scouring the secondhand classifieds at the back of this very mag if you can't stretch to a new one. Still over budget but equally refreshing is Naim's new entry level CD5, not as fast and furious as previous Naim CD players, with a very musical character - detailed and subtle when need be.

Alternatives within your price range are Roksan's latest version Caspian at

£895 (still one of the best around at the price - fluid and engaging), Audio Analogue's Paganini at £795 (smooth and refined - not for rockers!) or Arcam's CD92 at £850 (great detail and grip but a little forward sounding for some). As far as the 'speakers are concerned, try some Mission 782s instead of the B&Ws. This should give you a fine sounding set-up. Happy hunting. SP ■

► MUSIC MATTERS

I bought Madonna's latest album 'Music' the other day, on vinyl, sounds great. There seems to be something more romantic and hands-on about playing a record - maybe it's the fact that you can actually see it playing, unlike a CD which just disappears into the machine's innards! Me and my good wife are

getting the vinyl bug recently since we both like modern rock/pop and wish to buy more modern music on vinyl, I have a few questions:

Are vinyl releases of present day artistes, (e.g. Madonna's 'Music') merely analogue pressings of a digital recording? Or is there still an analogue master recorded first? Surely it goes against the whole point of an analogue replay format if this is true. If this is true, what kind of digital format is used to record modern music and from what source is the vinyl record mastered?



All cutting lathes now use a digital delay line

definitive audio

Part exchanged and ex-dem clearance.

Digital

	Sale	New
Sugden Masterclass CD - new - boxed	£1990	£2500
Helios Model CD21 - new	£890	£1200
Helios Model CD3i - ex-dem	£690	£900
Linn Genki - 1yr - boxed	£650	£1000

Analogue

Nottingham Analogue Mentor - with reference platter	£1900	£2900
- Reference power supply for above	£490	£800
Nottingham Analogue 'Foot' - 12" carbon fibre tonearm - new	£700	£1100
Nottingham Analogue Space Deck - with SME arm mount	£650	£850
Helius Cyalene - tonearm	£590	£1350
Hadcock GH228 Super - 9" tonearm - nearly new	£440	£640

Loudspeakers

Living Voice Auditorium - Hi-Fi Choice 'Best Buy'		
4 pairs - Walnut - ex-dem	£1150	£1500
Cadence DS	£750	£1750
Dali 104 (MS)	£390	£650
Lowther Bi-Core 2000	£500	
Klipsh LaScala Black	£1750	£3500
Quad ELS63 - fully reconditioned by Quad	£1500	£3000
Quad ELS63 - fully reconditioned by Quad	£1300	£3000

Amplifiers

Border Patrol 300B SE - with new Western Electric valves.		
Light Oak - the best SE available - ex-dem	£3750	£4500
Canary Audio 301 - 24 watts stereo power amp with		
2 matched pair Western Electric 300B - fabulous	£3900	£5200
Art Audio Concerto - integrated 40 Watts Class A. V.good	£1500	£2650
Audio Innovations S1000 - 50 watt class A monos	£790	£1550
Joule Electra 2 box phono pre-amp	£800	£2000
Art Audio VPS - valve line pre-amp	£600	£1400
Sugden A21 - integrated (line only) ex-dem - mint condition	£750	£900
Musical Fidelity A1000 - 'super pre main' class A	£850	£1800
Cary '2A3' 7 watt power amp. 1992	£850	
Cary 5500 Line pre-amp. 1992	£550	
Unison Mystery One PR+	£950	£1750
Tube Technology MAC phono pre-amp. Fully refurbished by manufacturer. Including Hovland film and foil capacitors.	£900	£1400
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Surely the vinyl record is not mastered from the 16 bit CD? Otherwise what possible sonic benefits there be?

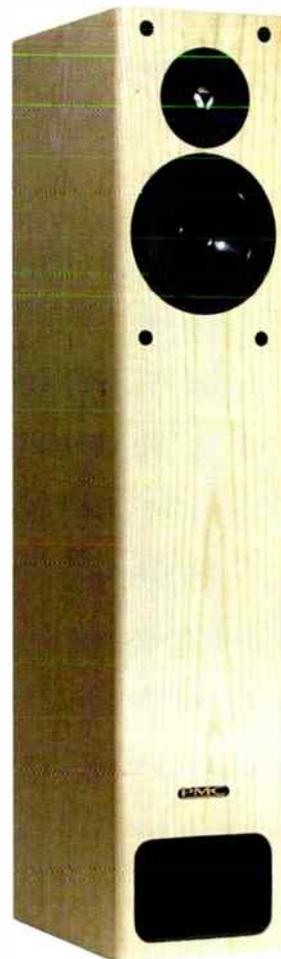
Yours confused,

Steve

Glad to hear you and your better half are getting into the groove. It's hard to give a definitive answer to your first question. Without doubt, many modern recordings are done digitally, but there are still many artists and studios who prefer analogue simply because of the warmer (or should that be less cold?) sound analogue tape gives. Some, such as Neil Young, make a point of declining digital and the result is plain to hear. The

have had their precious signal pass through a high quality analogue to digital, digital to analogue loop. This is why sixties and seventies pressings tend to sound better, because they were cut before digital delay lines were introduced.

As for digital recordings, the quality depends on the studios used. Most small studios use high quality 16bit, 48kHz hard disc or DAT recording systems, whereas the bigger facilities are now installing 24bit, 96kHz (and progressively, 192kHz) systems. >From this high quality digital master, a 16bit, 44.1kHz master will be made (using down conversion and down sampling) for pressing to CD. Even LPs of digitally recorded and mastered albums can theoretically sound better. Put simply, this is because vinyl is such a high resolution carrier that you end up listening to the mastering plant's high quality D-A converter via your turntable, rather than listening to the same digital audiostream via your CD player's not-so-great internal DAC! **DP ■**



The PMC FB1s represent good value with their exciting and full sound



Mission's 782 should make for easier listening

problem as far as vinyl is concerned that even analogue recordings which have been analogue mastered still have to go through a digital loop right at the end of the process.

This is because the cutting heads on the lathes in modern mastering studios are driven digitally. This requires the signal to pass into the digital domain in order for the heads to figure out where they're going to go next, before being converted back to analogue. Essentially then, it's fair to say that all analogue recorded, analogue mastered LPs cut on modern lathes (since the late-eighties)

► **STROKE OF LUCK!**

Dear Hi-Fi World. Due to a lightning strike I recently received a free upgrade to my system from a Linn Karik and Quad 34 & 405/2, my speakers which did not need replacing are Mission 751s on Atacama SE24 stands. This has left me wondering about the potential improvement to be had if I upgraded my speakers. The Mission's have a very bright sound which can become a little tiring if played loud. I would prefer floorstanders as

they are used in a relatively large room and with a trade in have a budget of around £500.

Within this budget would there be a worthwhile upgrade or would I be better to wait a year or so at which time I could go up to about £1000? What speakers would you recommend at both price points?

► **HOWARD MEREDITH, LONDON**

There are a few (very few) occasions when being hit by lightning can be beneficial to the audiophile, when in need

of a new system is one such example! The obvious replacement for your 751s are the 782 floorstanders. These new models are full of life and detail, and can be powerful and subtle in equal measures. Imaging is near spot on and I find the 782s (a personal reference at the price) wonderfully involving and listenable for long periods of time. The 783s, at £1,000 are bigger (and bigger sounding) offering just a little more insight into recordings but retaining the 782s clarity and detail.

If you're after something different, though, you could always listen to two recent auditionees that have impressed us. One is the floorstanding PMC FB1, at just over £1000, which is a fast and attacking customer, yet has oodles of detail and subtlety when called for. The other option comes in the striking form of Elac's Jet 512. This has a very high quality folded ribbon tweeter to deliver some of the best treble in the business, along with a solid tall cabinet that produces some awesomely low and powerful bass - it's a great all rounder.

SP ■

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I'm surprised that some people dislike computer audio. It seems a natural partner to traditional DIY of the sort we are so keen on in Hi-Fi World. Increasingly computers are being honed to strengthen their audio functionality. Yet computers still polarise people into 'love 'em' or 'hate 'em' camps. I see computers as a great ally to DIY, as is the internet. Some readers feel they are 'not hi-fi' and shouldn't be in a hi-fi magazine, which I have some sympathy for. They are not hi-fi, so much as an important adjunct to it. It is the people in Britain's hi-fi industry who see little connection between computers and hi-fi that I find strange.

The hi-fi business is a classic cottage industry. It has a solid and charted history, it is founded on the standard industrial notion of regularly producing new and better physical products, and it has a stable workforce many of whom start out in audio and stay in it all their lives. People know each other, there is a group outlook with only a small amount of variance, as you'd expect. Outside pressures, mainly commercial, make this inevitable. The outside pushes in and the inside pushes out, as it were.

Audio as we know it has always been something you make, a tangible product. Temples of production have been constructed to support it. Harold Leak, an early pioneer of true hi-fi, had a dedicated plant on the Westway Trading estate in the 1950s. More recently Mission built an automated factory at Huntingdon and Linn one in Waterfoot, Glasgow. Factories like this appear to symbolise the link between hi-fidelity and manufacturing, reinforcing a hardware based view. I say "appear" very deliberately, because ironically both Mission and Linn are very involved in digital audio and software. But appearances count and turning out 'product' and selling it is what seems to drive many people in the industry who earhole me about audio and the meaning of life.

If you have a factory that represents a big investment that cannot be abandoned and changed overnight you need to keep it busy Multi-channel

audio is a godsend to anyone in this position. If home cinema or A/V starts to become important in peoples lives they'll have to discard their stereo pair and buy and install no less than six loudspeakers instead. That's one in each corner, a centre channel for speech reinforcement and a subwoofer. The stereo amplifier will have to go too, replaced by an enormous six channel unit. Throw in half a mile of cables and you are starting to get there. This is a mountain of kit so if A/V were to take off in a serious way most

” The hi-fi business is a classic cottage industry. It has a solid and charted history.

dedicated hi-fi factories would have plenty to do. I think you can understand that there are lots of people within the hi-fi business who hope this is the way things will go.

OK, so computers in themselves are not a perfect hi-fi environment. But as they become increasingly powerful they start to make an unassailable argument for themselves. Now you can get a fast PC for just £600 or so that does just about everything except play the music, and of course it will do this if you so wish. As David Price makes plain this month after Napster the music business has come to realise that music distribution will never be the same again. Music and the internet will become slowly more entwined. I've downloaded little in the way of music from the net, partly because living in London I like to trot down to Oxford Street and peruse the music megastores every now and then.

As CD-RW drives get faster and more reliable, and as hard drives get bigger, the 650MB of a music CD becomes a mere trifle. Music, data and test signals can all be processed with such ease and speed the old days of being constrained by technologies such as CD are at last beginning to

fade away. In this issue we review the first mini-CD player. You don't have to put up with big CDs any more. You can now buy more convenient mini versions just 8cm in diameter. You can put normal audio on them, or mp3 at the data rate/quality standard and playing time you choose. You can compile your own CDs, edit them and heaven knows what else. Now that 96kHz sampling rate sound cards are coming onto the market I am starting to consider replacing our spectrum analyser with a sound card and software. This illustrates just how powerful and capable computers are becoming with regard to audio. They can offer FFT spectral analysis with a few hundred pounds worth of software.

What is it that computers can't do with audio? Little it seems. Today's prices make fast computer processing and music download accessible to all. The internet is full of interesting hobbyist sites. I have become totally hooked on the computer in audio. As a valve man and someone who likes DIY, the computer is the best thing that ever happened to audio in my view. ●



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World Radio History

Back in the seventies, when everything depended on the width of your flares and the size of your power meters, cables were things you sent to contact people in a hurry. Having spent thousands of pounds of his hard earned, inflation ravaged cash on the system of his dreams, Joe Smith would drive home from Tottenham Court Road in his lime green Capri XLR with happy thoughts of installing his new pride and joy in the heart of his bijou, purple wallpapered bachelor pad.

This process would involve pulling the Pioneer rack system out of its boxes, hastily screwing some mains plugs on - usually discovering he didn't have enough and then having to grab a few from the bedroom spotlights - and switching on. Next would come the connecting up of the individual bits. Being a swanky new Japanese affair, our man would be worried about the new fangled phono leads - all his spare 'leads' would be DIN to DINs, mostly mono, nicked from his Dad's old Grundig tape recorder. Fortunately, those 'sly', 'inscrutable' Japanese will have provided the right wires and it would simply be a process of plugging them in and cueing up the Earth, Wind and Fire twelve inch.

A couple of years later, our man would read of a strange new way of improving his system - 'speaker cables'. A company called QED now marketed '79-strand' stuff that the hi-fi hacks swore blind sounded better than the bellwire he was running from his amp to his three-way, teak finished, vinyl wrapped loudspeakers sitting on chromed, castored, tripod stands. Oh well, why not? He'd nip down his local hi-fi emporium and buy a few feet - after all, he could always use it to feed another set of speakers if it didn't really make any difference.

Leap forward another ten years and our man is running a Linn-Naim system, with two runs of NAC05 powering his biwired Kans. In between his pre-power he's got

Chord Company's finest and has just bought his CD player a 0.6m slice of DPA's Black Slink. Inca Tech gold plated mains plugs litter his house, and for the first time in his life he's buying Duraglit and Brasso. The 79-strand is now used by his Kenwood car hi-fi.

This will have been many people's experience with cables. I remember a time when people would have called the men in white coats if anyone had so much as hinted that they'd heard a

“ Personally, I don't set too much store by exotic interconnects

difference. Now though, people routinely spend hundreds - if not thousands - on little bits of wire with fancy names and colours. In my opinion at least, this is just as laughable as playing around with bellwire.

Personally, I don't set too much store by exotic interconnects. I'm of the opinion that they have about as much effect as pumping up your car tyre pressures a PSI or two, or moving the seat around a bit for a better driving position - a small but useful difference, and that's it. As a result, I tend to stick with what I know and like, and for me that's LFD's SpiroLink. This is an extremely neutral cable with very little footprint. My system's well matched and set-up, and they 'let the flavour flood out'!

Recently though, I've become a fan of van den Hul's Integration Hybrid (www.vandenhul.com). At £180 for a 0.6m pair, they're fiendishly expensive, but they've disappeared so effectively into my system that I kind of don't want to go back. The Integration uses extremely pure copper, zinc and silver, blended into shiny gold coloured conductors which have an amorphous structure that's free from inter-crystalline

boundaries. It's based on the D102III Hybrid, but uses these four stranded conductors rather than the latter's two stranded metal cores.

The sound is pretty staggering, and only serves to remind me of the quality of the source, electronics and speakers in my system. It's best characterised by what it isn't, which is coarse, fuzzy, mushy, grainy and mechanical or silky, sweet, euphonic and smooth. The sum total of the Integration's effects on the system is a big, fat, zero. It simply disappears - which in my opinion is what proper cables should do. Totally self-effacing, it makes even the SpiroLink sound a little 'woody'.

So is it worth spending out on this kind of thing? The answer, has to be 'no' unless the rest of your system is spot on - in which case the answer is a resounding 'yes'. A.J. van den Hul has always been a bit useful when it comes to making phono cartridges, and now I rate his talents with bits of wire too. If you've trodden the rocky road from 1970s Tottenham Court Rd. towards audio nirvana, then you'll find the Integration gets you a little closer. ●



David Price

Question: Is this the best amplifier ever built?

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haan, ken, evet,
chai khan, ano,
da, hai, ia.....

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*" the most musically complete
power amplifier I have used"*

Ivor Humphreys, HiFi News

Progress. The hi-fi industry is far from being unique in its quest for using improved technology to produce a superior product at a lower price. All the same a newer product isn't always a better one. Once in a while a company will surpass themselves, producing a product so good it's a thankless task to attempt to replace it. Wise folk within the industry simply won't even attempt the nigh on impossible.

One needs look no further than Linn, Rega, Michell and Naim to illustrate this. While all continually develop new products, their star performers are left alone. Well, not quite totally alone, but the LPI2 Sondek, Planar, Gyrodec and NAT01 tuner have only been subtly modified over the years, not radically changed. Crucially, they also all these products look pretty much as they did when launched 12-25 years ago.

Not all manufacturers are quite so shrewd or fortunate though. I know it will bore some of you to hear, but the original Pioneer A-400 is still a great favourite of mine. Some felt it too clinical, but I felt it gave a taste of true high-end equipment when partnered carefully. The "wideband" design and benign third harmonic distortion certainly meant it was unconventional in its time. Unlike certain competitors, though, it was totally reliable, user friendly, and would drive 2 ohm 'speakers without kicking up a stink! In short, it was the consummate all-rounder. Pioneer knew they were up against it when they launched the A-400X. I reviewed it in October 1993 and felt that, despite being a good amp', it lost the presence and vibrancy of the original. Technically it was much the same, yet sonically it failed to be quite so inspiring as the first A-400.

Subsequent models such as the A-300 Precision were good too, but never good enough to rekindle the original fervour of ten years ago. It's been some time since I can even remember hearing about a new Pioneer amp now. I doubt Pioneer will be too concerned as they're doing great business with DVD Recordable I believe, but it's a shame to

think that they could still have a great budget/mid-range amp' had they been a little more careful come replacement time.

Another company to get its fingers burnt, yet have since made a comeback, is NAD. The original 3020, 3020e and 3021, were best selling and best sounding budget amps that dominated the hi-fi market right through the 1980s. Perhaps NAD had become rather blasé when they launched the 302 in 1992. To me it was a disappointment, to put it mildly. Compared to the 3020s I found it edgy, two-dimensional and rather mechanical

„ Whilst being far from poor 'speakers, they don't have quite what it takes to fend off the likes of Mission, Tannoy and KEF

sounding. Observations that seemed particularly unusual from such a respected brand as NAD. It didn't take long for NAD to respond either. Despite generally favourable press reviews, poor dealer feedback lead NAD to upgrade the amp sooner than they otherwise would have done. The resulting 312, which was actually based upon the 304, was a huge improvement and worthy of its ancestors laurels. Since then, we've had the C320, which remains one of the best selling, and best sounding amps in its class. NAD made a mistake in 1992, but at least they've learnt their lesson since.

During the NAD 3020's heyday, there was a particular 'speaker that enjoyed equal status as budget stalwart. In the late 1980s and early 90s it could be found in students digs, shops, pubs and all those other places budget boxes turn up at, across the country. It was the ubiquitous JPW Sonata. Remember it? Well, the chances are that if you don't then it's more to do with JPW's failure to maintain the momentum it created with the 'speaker than any other reason. Even today, the real wood veneered Sonata would turn in a decent performance, shaming many rivals. Yet JPW's decision to add a metal domed tweeter to the design ruined its cohesive sound quality. Furthermore, when they finally got around to replacing it, and the equally

successful Mini Monitor, their new ML range simply flopped. They're still around today, but the ML310 and ML510 simply don't sell, at least in this country. Whilst being far from poor 'speakers, they don't have quite what it takes to fend off the likes of Mission, Tannoy and KEF. Twelve years ago things were very different.

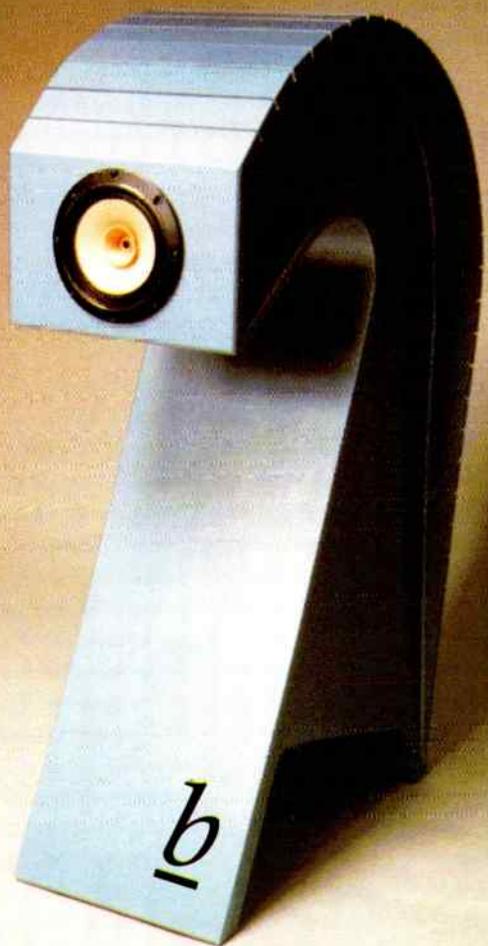
Even the likes of the consistently successful Mission can get it wrong. The Mission 700 followed a line of brilliant baby Missions stretching back over a couple of decades. Trouble was, it was built on the cheap, and sounded it. A Mission employee once admitted to me that it wasn't really a hi-fi 'speaker and that it was really aimed at the midi/mini system market. The brand name and reasonable reviews meant it still sold, but just listen to its replacement, the m71, to see just how off the mark it was. Like NAD, Mission has since moved on.

So, even the most respected hi-fi brands can occasionally get it wrong. These are just a few examples. Rest assured, most model replacements do offer an improvement in sound quality, small though it may be at times. Hi-fi is a market where technological progress and fashion count for less than sonic quality and good value. Happy listening! ●



Dominic Todd

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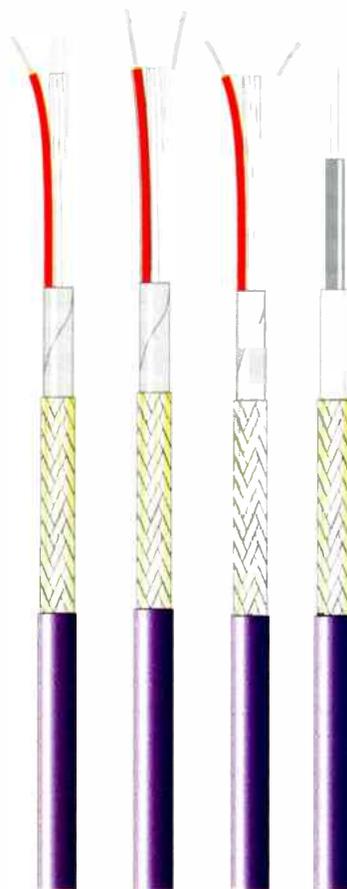
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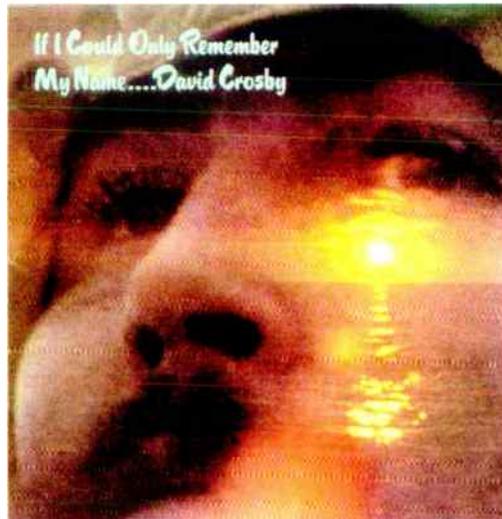
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CLASSIC CUTS

Andy Giles takes a trip down memory lane, almost literally, as he assesses David Crosby's remarkable 1971 solo album 'If I Could Only Remember My Name'.



► In 1970, in San Francisco's Bay Area, a friend suggested that we each try half a tab of the acid he had scored from a guy who had scored from a guy who supplied David Crosby. 'Apparently, it's beautifully mild, kind of speedy and very pure' announced my friend. About an hour after dropping the said half-tab – I had serious difficulty in remembering my name. It was beautiful – but not mild.

Without indulging in any self-congratulatory narcotic bragging, I had done many trips before this one – but it was – and still is – the strongest mind changing hallucinogenic I had ever taken. Not surprising, then, that at that time David Crosby was laying down the tracks of what was to become the most poignant and extraordinary solo album of the '70s – 'If I Could Only Remember My Name'. I don't know how much of this stuff he was doing then, but when I listen to this extraordinary collection of tracks I know it had an influence – to say the least. In no way do I condone drug taking, nor do I recommend or uphold this as an album that exemplifies the way that substances like LSD affect thoughts and emotions. But the fact remains that 'If I Could Only Remember My Name' is a masterpiece of 'reeling from the wreckage' rock and is acid imbued from grove to groove.

Much of the wreckage from which Crosby was reeling was the death of his beautiful and beloved girlfriend Christine Hinton in a tragic car crash in 1969. One track on the album, 'I'd Swear There Was Somebody Here' is a strikingly haunting evocation of her soul incarnate. It's almost a primal scream of despair and loss, with uncanny depth of sorrow. But despite the

obvious cathartic nature of its creation, 'If I Could Only Remember My Name' is not all set in a minor key.

The opening 'Music Is Love' is a classic hippy anthem, as is 'What Are Their Names?' both tracks replete with guest appearances from the West Coast rock-chic cognoscenti of the time, including Grace Slick, Joni Mitchell, Jerry Garcia, Neil Young and Graham Nash. You can almost smell the Patchouli oil. Nash teams up with Crosby on the electrifying set 'Cowboy Movie' (eight minutes of blistering western rock) and duets in perfect symmetry with him on 'Tamalpais High (At About 3)', 'Orleans' and 'Song With No Words' – which is exactly that. You get the impression that someone was too far out of it to think of any. The sublime track 'Laughing', with its gorgeous Jerry Garcia steel guitar licks throughout, is seminal Crosby, with his voice in ecstatic form. He sings as if the act of laughing is something that happens to other people – not him.

The quite dazzling (some would argue downright weird) 'Traction In The Rain' defies description. Its lyrics bear no close inspection by those who have not dabbled in the powers of Lysergic Acid Diethylamide. There is an overwhelming rapturous sense of questioning in this track. In many ways it sums-up the album. Crosby had lots of mystery being replaced by some species of explanation.

'If I Could Only Remember My Name' was recorded in San Francisco during 1970 and released at the end of February 1971. The studio memoirs tell us that (not surprisingly) the recording sessions were notable because of 'David's willingness to experiment, to explore new

directions, and to involve his friends in his particular vision'. Crosby said of it, '...it was me trying to get myself going again. And I had a lot of songs, new ones and old ones. I did make what I think is a fascinating album. It's very strange and it mirrored the strangeness in my life after Christine died and I started to get it all back together again'.

'If I Could Only Remember My Name' is a fascinating album. It is very strange. But it's also an outstanding contribution to the '70s West Coast rock genre of which Crosby was very much an influential facet. Described by many critics at the time as 'self indulgent', it has now become a cult album. I know real rock-heads who only got to listen to it a few years ago and now rate it as amongst their top five great all-time LP records.

This is a gorgeous album. Full of sensuality, excitement, rock and protest. It is exactly indicative of its time, crafted by an intelligent man with a deep scar to heal but with the warmth and the foresight to realise that the healing process is marked through beauty and truth. And, what's more, you don't need to have indulged in any drugs whatsoever to enjoy this album. So don't. Ever. ■ ▲

David Crosby's 'If I Could Only Remember My Name' is available on CD on Atlantic 7302-2. There are rare (and excellent) vinyl cuts about. Surf the net!

HEAD LINE

Andy Grove gets heavy with Sugden's top of the range pre and power amps.

▶ I've always had a liking for Sugden products and their design philosophy. This company goes back a long way, but unfortunately until recently their pedigree has remained somewhat





on the same chip, all thermally coupled. This allows an order of magnitude improvement in high frequency performance over the older type devices in common use such as the MJ15003 and so on from the USA.

In a similar way to an FET output stage, the improved high frequency performance of the output stage allows a better stability margin when feedback is applied, and less supply rail

overshadowed by famous names with louder voices. Nowadays Sugden is taking more of the limelight, putting forward a stronger image and introducing some great new products.

These two units really do look the part, very nicely finished at the Sugden factory in Yorkshire. The power amp's speaker terminals are the best I have ever seen, once again from Herr Thoerner (WBT). These mighty things have a collet inside which screws up tight onto your banana plug, biting into it, thereby making the best possible connection. The preamp phono sockets are of very high quality as well, also from WBT.

The pre has 4 inputs and two tape loop options. Switching is accomplished by relays at the back of the unit minimising the length of the signal path inside. The volume control is operable by remote control, but I think that would be a shame not to twiddle those chunky knobs by hand!

The connection between the pre and power can be either single-ended or balanced via XLRs. Balanced operation might be an advantage if you have a long cable run from pre to power (i.e. an American style setup).

Always to be associated with Sugden is the phrase "Class A". In both the American sense, of being of utmost quality, and also the electronic engineering sense. It is a fact that power output is a specification which buyers take into major consideration when selecting an amplifier. This resulted in manufacturers designing

amplifiers with, quite often, unnecessary power outputs to get one up on the competition. In fact, a little like the American muscle cars of the sixties and early seventies.

To maximise the "horsepower per dollar" factor, Class B operation using vast amounts of negative feedback to reduce the various distortions to an (un?)acceptable level is the order of the day. Sugden have kept with the electronic ideal as far as possible by utilising Class A operation. Here distortion, especially crossover distortion, is minimised at the source by the use of a high bias current in the output stage. This results in a smoother and sweeter presentation. Visualise the difference between a turbo four pot and a V12 of similar power output.

Sugden use the highly advanced Sanken LAPT (Large Area Parallel Transistor) output devices from Japan. These babies are constructed from an array of small transistors all fabricated

clamping with high power high frequency signals.

A natural smoothness was



evident as soon as I started to use the combination and the amplifier only improved as it warmed up. There was nothing soft about it, just an organic naturalness and fluidity. For my more critical listening I used some harsher sounding recordings just to make sure

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WHAT HI-FI?
June 1999

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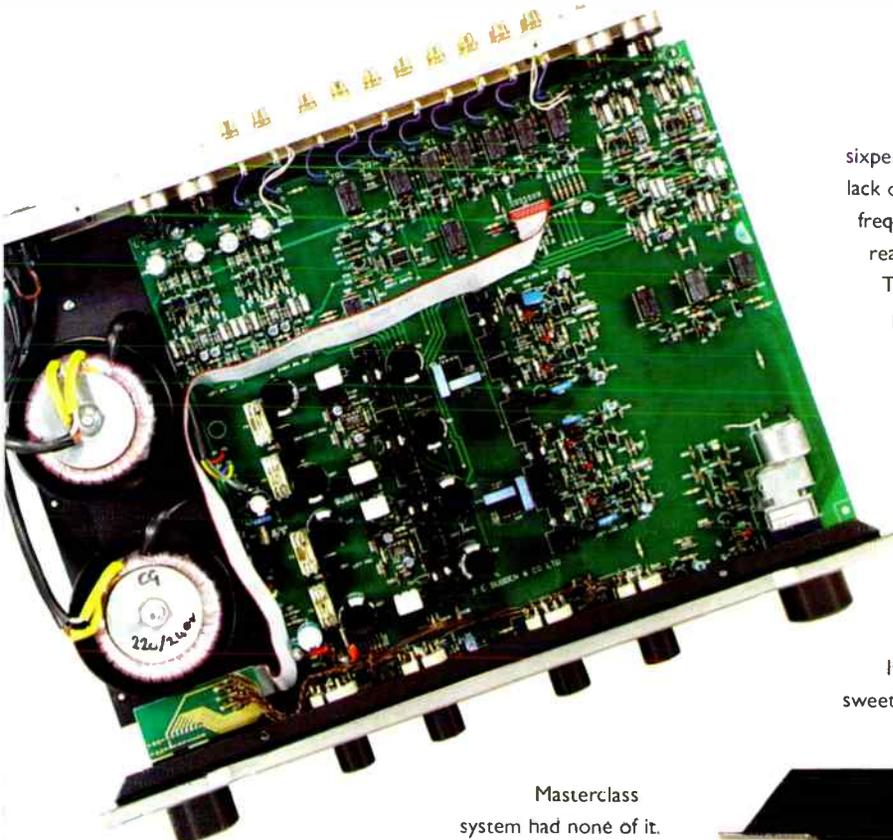
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the amps weren't going to over sweeten the dish. The Masterclass system had already excelled itself in all ways with leisurely classical listening by the time I was satisfied that the system had warmed up. Bjork's sometimes less than subtle voice was presented firmly and precisely within the soundstage with fantastic focus. That "hmm, I'm not sure about this girl's sanity" edge to her voice and her amazing vocal athletics on 'Human Behaviour' conjured images of a live concert. The sharp, forceful presence of her voice was something to be heard, and could be a little painful if listened to very loud. I know from personal experience that some women's voices can switch between the dulcet tones of the Siren, and the pain inducing sonic weapon used for the control of naughty children (and maybe husbands too?). To illustrate the point, quieter passages when Bjork's vocal chords weren't being pushed so hard, the Masterclass system/ ESL989 combination portrayed a breathy, atmospheric, close mic'd vocal quality which was very sexy and intimate - like someone whispering into your ear.

Now, comparisons are supposedly odious but bright tracks like Bjork's 'Human Behaviour' or traditional rock such as Jeff Healey's 'See The Light' CD, when played on the Musical Fidelity A300cr, had a glittery edge in the treble, which was a bit much for me at times. The

Masterclass system had none of it. The treble was exquisitely clean but there was no scratchiness up there other than that which I assume is present on the recording. There was plenty of air and space up there too. This was more noticeable on classical music, where the ear takes phase clues from the high frequency direct/ reflect sound of an acoustic recording. Hall ambience was superb on all recordings I tried. The soundstage extended way outside the wall boundaries of my room and the subtlest shufflings of the audience were clearly audible, illustrating the combination's superb dynamic resolving power.

I spun a bit more Bjork by way of Hyperballad, as it has a very strong and deep synthesised bassline. Compared to the A300cr, the Masterclass's low bass was possibly a little softer, or maybe 'elastic' in presentation but seemed to be deeper and richer. As the 989 electrostatics have no box coloration, and the fact that they do not use high order resonant reflex systems to achieve bass depth they have a superb bass transient response. This give's an insight into both the recording and the driving amplifier system.

I had some fun with the bass using Missy Elliot's 'Get Ur Freak On', which seriously kicks. The Masterclass grabbed hold of the panels and shook the room and me with it, starting and stopping on a

sixpence. Obviously there was no lack of power at low and subsonic frequencies, I'm sure my neighbours really appreciated it.

The Masterclass preamp and power amp are real top class pieces of equipment.

The fit and finish is of the first order, all built in Britain as well! The sound is superb, natural and organic but with real power available. I think that the treble quality of this system is maybe it's finest point.

It is almost valve-like in quality, sweet and detailed without a hint of



grain or over brightness. The system suited all types of music which, to me, is the sign of thoroughbred, no compromise amplification. ■ ▲

Sugden Masterclass preamplifier £2100
Sugden masterclass power amplifier £3150

Sugden
Audio Synergy Ltd.
Valley Works
Station Lane
Heckmondwike
W. Yorks WF16 0NF
Tel: 10924 404088

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

We regret being unable to run a full measured report on this amplifier. The figures below were provided by Sugden:

Power	50watts (8 ohms) 75watts (4ohms)
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	10Hz-190kHz
Separation	78dB
Noise	-110dB
Distortion	0.006%
Sensitivity	1 volt

World Verdict



These are serious amps albeit at a serious price. Beautifully built with a smooth, sweet, valve-like quality but with plenty of power.

There are few hi-fi companies around today that have as full and rich a history as Castle. Founded in 1973 in Skipton, Yorkshire by a team from Wharfedale, the line stretches right back to the inception of stereophonic reproduction in the 1950s. Few companies left today are still concentrating on this aspect of loudspeaker manufacturing as much as Castle. Apart from the odd economically necessary foray into multichannel application, plus modern design in the unusual shape of the Inversion series, Castle resolutely stick to two channel 'speakers in the true British fashion in their Classic Series, where the emphasis is very much on traditional craftsmanship. This is where Castle's strengths really lie, I feel.

As more and more manufacturers opt for the sleek and chic cabinet work and flat panel designs, so more conservative customers will opt for the traditional products of the likes of Castle, of which the latest standmount is a fine example.

The new Warwick 3 isn't perhaps the pick of the litter when it comes to looks. It has a bulky and tall cabinet and notably isn't labelled as a 'bookshelf' model (you'd have to own a whole library of World Atlases to use it on a bookshelf). But the build quality is superb - considering that these are standmounts they weigh quite a bit more than a few floorstanders I've encountered!

The Warwick 3 employs a newly designed 150mm bass/mid unit with a woven carbon-fibre cone, Kapton voice coil former and copper coated aluminium winding. The driver also features a shaped "pole piece" (or phase plug) which Castle say improves linearity of piston movement. The tweeter is a 19mm low modulus polyamide dome design placed below the mid/bass unit and offset on the front baffle. This is used by manufacturers and designers, as in this case, to minimise diffraction and improve imaging.

Although resolutely 'hi-fi' in design, the Warwick is fully shielded to ensure safe placement next to a television for AV use. It's a bass reflex design and the port is front mounted making close wall placement a viable option.



SWEET & LOW

Castle Acoustics have released the latest version of their Warwick standmount 'speaker. Simon Pope listens in.

The cabinets use 18mm MDF panels finished with Castle's usual choice of nine very attractive real wood veneers. The large size of the cabinet should also ensure deep bass for a standmount and the extensive use of internal bracing used should make it taut, too.

According to Fred Clayton of Castle, the main criterion was to design a standmount 'speaker which would bring together "twin benefits of greater clarity and superb dynamic performance". I have to admit that these two traits weren't the most obvious on initial listening! Placed on a sturdy pair of Atacama stands and hooked up to a Meridian 506.24 CD player/Meridian 557 power amp and a Cyrus 7 integrated I found their fluidity and openness the most striking sonic features. With rock and dance music, such as Paul Weller's 'Stanley Road' and Underworld's 'Beaucoup Fish' the Warwicks displayed an open and spacious sound, with a warm and deep bass response. Low frequency percussion pumped well through the room and dug easily as low as a few lower priced floorstanders on the market. What I also found, however, was that at times - especially with the bass heavy Underworld CD - the lower bass dragged slightly behind the beat a little which made the sound a tad



sluggish. This wasn't as pronounced with the Paul Weller CD, which demonstrated a good way with the midrange detail in vocal lines and guitar tracks.

Best of all was the impressively open and sweet treble of these speakers. Ride cymbals and other percussive tinklings were smooth and well detailed, with no harshness whatsoever. Imaging with rock recordings was fine, with the mixes sounding intricate and exciting.

The nature of the Warwicks dictated that classical would be their cup of tea, and so it was. Largish orchestral pieces such as Beethoven and Schubert symphonies sounded aptly lush and rich, with the Warwicks just missing out on the

rhythmic drive of the former's style. However, phrasing and line was excellent and the upper strings were smooth and lush, without becoming muddy. Larger fare such as Mahler's 5th symphony was well handled well faring better than with the competition when it comes to scale. I still failed to get the whole picture because somehow the cabinets still restricted dynamics and scale. Performances of Chopin's Nocturnes for solo piano and Shostakovich's string quartets were very good, with commendable detail..

The Warwicks are a traditional sounding 'speaker with smooth, sweet treble, an open midrange and deep bass. You won't get the rhythmic grip and bass control of a infinite baffle design, but on the other hand, the Castles were a fairly easy load to drive. They are pretty much recording friendly and give a good rendition of anything you chuck at them but I found the bass a bit too slow sometimes with bass heavy material. ■ ▲

Castle Warwick 3 £549 (seven finishes, £659 in Yew and Rosewood)

Castle Acoustics Ltd.
Shortbank Rd.
Skipton N.Yorks BD23 2TT
Tel: 01756 79533

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

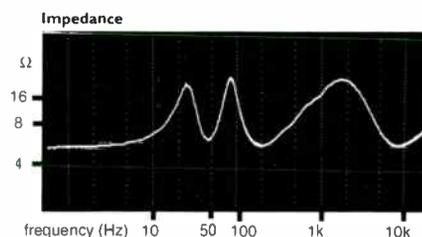
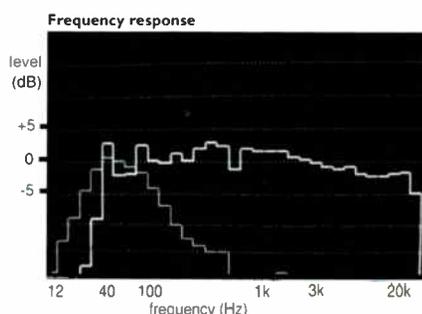
The Castle Warwick sounded smooth under test, and a little warm. Moving my head up and down in front of it - a standard trick - showed that from above they sound like this, but on the tweeter axis they sound brighter. Measurement confirmed their apparent warmth; there's a slow roll off in treble energy toward high frequencies, clearly shown by our pink noise analysis. This isn't the sort of warmth produced by driver mismatching at the crossover point, usually 3kHz, which produces a dip, since there is no dip. So the Warwicks will likely sound quite detailed without being sharp. I find this sort of balance natural and relaxing; it suits classical very well. The Warwicks do need a high-ish stand though, because they should not be far below ear height.

Bass extension was good,

forward output reaching down to 40Hz, before rolling down steeply. Below this the port operates, maintaining useful output down to 25Hz. It a good performance for a cabinet of the size. The port is front mounted, which can highlight internal box noises (whoomphs, etc) but in this case there was no such colouration from the port.

Castle usually engineer an 8ohm impedance and this was the case with the Warwicks. As a result they do not draw as much current as most 'speakers on the market, and their load characteristic is relatively mild too; there are no heavy reactive swings, so energy storage is acceptable. Producing 85dB from one watt of input is a good enough sensitivity too; they go loud for any particular volume setting, if not as loud as floorstanders.

The Warwick 3 is very much a Castle, which is to say neatly engineered in every area and a smooth, civilised performer. This is well balanced loudspeaker engineering. ■ ■



World Verdict



The Warwick 3 is warm and friendly sounding. Deep, if at times sluggish bass and a fine, sweet treble. Up against strong competition, though.

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with valves or 220mm(h) with cage. Simon Pope says - "If you favour attack and rhythmic grip, together with a smoothness of sound that's incredibly easy to live with, the KiT6550 could well be the kit amp for you. The 6550 is one for those who like a valve sound married to the attack and clout of a good quality solid state design".

Kel84 VALVE INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER KIT

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

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

At rear is a mains switch, an IEC power input and an earth post. This kit is aimed at beginners. The instructions include pictures as well as diagrams, making them very easy to follow. At a UK price of £278.00 all inclusive you cannot ignore Kel84. Simon Pope says, "The quality that can be gleaned from this amp is a fine introduction to the joys of the valve sound. The Kel84 will highlight all the intricacies and depth of detail in your favourite recordings whilst retaining a warmth and fullness that is almost exclusive to pure valve amps and is rare at this price point." Kel84 weighs 10kg. External dimensions with valves are 300mm(w) x 270mm(d) x 150mm(h).



KAT88 VALVE POWER AMPLIFIER KIT

Here is the amazing KaT88. The circuit is similar to that of our popular KEL34 with a few changes to incorporate the Tesla, JJ branded KT88 power tetrode. This is a pure Class A push-pull design providing 36 watts into an 8ohm load. Andy Grove has come up with a gem of an output transformer (E/I). With the KT88 it offers a virtually unmatchable result for a valve amplifier. Frequency response measures 11Hz to 75kHz, separation 71 dB, noise 98dB, sensitivity 400mV and distortion 0.03%. "As valve amplifiers go, the KaT88 is one of the best measured performances I have ever come across", said Noel Keywood. Jon Marks said, "The KaT88 pulled a series of surprisingly fast, meaty basslines out of its trickbag when dealing with Suzanne Vega's Nine Objects Of Desire album. As if this wasn't enough, the mid and treble were nice too - cymbals had a deliciously natural, golden shimmer without sounding soft, and vocals were extremely transparent and crisply defined. KaT88 didn't hang around when it came to exploiting the virtues of its four output valves on numbers such as 'Leaves' and 'Suspect Sustain' from Cirrus' Land's End Jazz CD. Saxophone had a wonderfully smooth, realistic character, and acoustic guitar mixed speed with harmonic richness to very impressive effect. Asian Dub Foundation and Moloko showed no sign at all of the sluggish, woolly bottom-end and poorly-delineated bass beats that most valve amps are to blame for. Which makes the KaT88 an all-round, high-end bargain." Weight 16kg, external dimensions with valves are 330mm(w) x 300mm(d) x 190mm (h).



DIY KITS IN THE WORLD

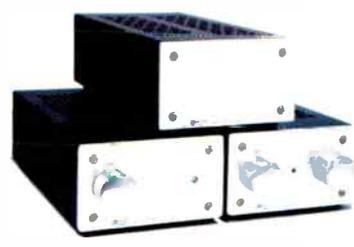
MILTON KEYNES, BUCKS MK16 0EE - CALL FOR DETAILS ON 01908 218836

ALL NEW SERIES II MODULAR PRE-AMP KIT

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

Power Supply Unit (PSU-II)	£195.00
Pre-amplifier (PRE-II)	£195.00
Phono Stage (PHONO-II)	£110.00
Moving coil step-up transformer	£77.00
Passive pre-amplifier (PAS-II)	£215.00

NEW!



KAT34 VALVE POWER AMPLIFIER KIT & KIT34 VALVE INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER KIT

£480



NEW KITS



£495

KIT34 is a 32 watt stereo valve integrated amplifier, featuring a pair of EL34s, in push-pull mode, per channel, plus an EC808 pentode/triode as input/phase splitter. The power supply is valve rectified (2 x 5U4), using a heavy duty choke to achieve exceptional smoothing. The output transformers are 14% Ultra Linear tapped to keep distortion down to its lowest level and the kit is totally hard wired utilising three tag boards. It has five line level inputs, plus a tape-in and tape out, all controllable from the front.

Simon Pope says, "This integrated brings together the best sonic virtues of our KIT88, kel34 and top of the range 300B PSE in an affordable package. The highlights of the sound are a deep and taut bass response, together with an open and highly detailed mid and high frequency response that only the best valve designs can achieve... a true valve classic" Weight 22kg, External dimensions with valves fitted - 390mm(w) x 360mm(d) x 210mm(h)

300B PSE MONOBLOC KIT

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

For purists, feedback is switchable and the kit is totally hard-wired. For those that require valves we provide the superb Tesla 300Bs, Russian 5U4s and European 6AU6s & ECC82. Simon Pope says, "Not to put too fine a point on it, the sound these monoblocs create is among the finest that can be encountered in hi-fi." Our 300B PSE kit bears an affordable price of £875.00 (UK price) excluding valves. Each monobloc weighs 23kgs., external dimensions with valves: 25cm(w) x 38cm(h) x 22cm(d) per monobloc.

300B PSU upgrade kit now available £150

£875 A pair



KEL80 MONOBLOC AMPLIFIER KIT

Following the success of our budget KEL34 40watt kit amplifier, we have come up with a 'big brother' design. The output stage uses two pairs of TESLA EL34 pentodes in parallel-push-pull mode, allowing KEL80 to turn out 80 watts into an 8ohm load. Heading up the input stage we have the wonderfully linear Russian 6AU6 working into an American 5687 phase-splitter. KEL80's output transformers are 4ohm and 8ohm tapped. With an input sensitivity at around 380mV for full output, it will happily partner both passive and active pre-amplifiers. It is easy to assemble. Simon Pope says, "The proof of the pudding is in the eating and the KEL80 is a feast for the ears, with solid bass attack, lightning fast reactions, that emphasises musicality as well as power. At £649.00 a pair, a definite valve winner. Each monobloc weighs 12kgs., external dimensions with valves: 14cm(w) x 8cm(h) x 43.5cm(d).

£649 A pair



HD83 VALVE HEADPHONE AMPLIFIER KIT

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

solid-state, with the tonal purity, delicacy and speed associated with valves." External dimensions 18cm(w) x 30cm(l) x 8cm(h) weight 4kg.

£195



World Audio design

PROBABLY THE BEST DIY KITS IN THE WORLD

NEW DEMONSTRATION ROOM NOW OPEN AT 12A SPRING GARDENS, NEWPORT PAGNELL, MILTON KEYNES, BUCKS MK16 0EE. CALL FOR DETAILS ON 01908 218836

KLS10 HIGH TECHNOLOGY COMPACT MONITOR

Our mini-marvel uses an Audax carbon fibre bass/midrange unit, married to the world's most advanced tweeter, the piezo-electric gold dome HD3P from Audax. KLS10 offers high performance from a small package. The main 'speakers' are designed to work alone, or with a dedicated subwoofer to extend their bass. Alone, they are suited to near-wall mounting and can be tuned by port adjustment to suit personal taste and location. They are easy to drive and need just 30-60watts. KLS10 is unique. Technically advanced, yet compact and relatively inexpensive, there is little to match it. Sensitivity 89dB 1W/1m, 15mm MDF, internal volume 9Ltrs, external dimensions 19cm(w) x 31cm(h) x 23cm(d).

Drive Unit & Crossover kit **£433.00**
Drive Unit only **£394.00**



£433

KLS10 GOLD SUBWOOFER

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

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



£164

KLS3 GOLD MK II ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY 3 WAY LOUDSPEAKER

KLS3 Gold uses the latest version of Audax's innovative oval gold dome piezo electric tweeter, giving it the sweetest and most extended treble. Married to a 4in. carbon fibre cone midrange driver for neutral and clear reproduction, and a powerful 8in. bass driver for superb depth, this is our top-of-the-line reference 'speaker'. Sensitivity 90dB at 1W/1m, 25mm MDF, internal volume 60Ltrs, external dimensions 26cm(w) x 100cm(h) x 35cm(d).

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



£633

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

for

£363

Mains transformers & Chokes

KIT6550/KAT6550 mains transformers

2 inch stack, 130mm(h)x120mm(w)x135mm(l) drop through fitting with zinc cap. Secondaries 425V-0V-425V, 350mA, 0V-5V, 6A, 3.15V-0V-3.15V, 9A. Suitable for 120V & 240Vac operation

KEL84 mains transformer

1.5 inch stack, 90mm(h)x80mm(w)x95mm(d) drop through fitting with zinc cap. Secondaries: 0V-240V 300mA, 3.15V-0V-3.15V, 5.5A, suitable for 120/240V operation

KIT88/KAT88 mains toroidal transformer

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

300B PSE mains E/I transformer

130mm(h) x 95mm(w) x 115mm(d), drop through fitting with zinc cap. Secondaries: 380V-0V-380V, 180mA/150V-0V-150V, 2.5mA/0V-5V, 1.2A/0V-5V, 1.2A/0V-5V, 3A/3.15V-0V-3.15V, 0.4A suitable for 120/240V operation

KEL80 mains toroidal transformer (encapsulated)

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

HD83 mains toroidal transformer

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

PSU-II mains toroidal transformer

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

TRANS1 mains toroidal transformer

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

KEL84 E/I choke

0.5 inch stack, 40mm(h)x35mm(d)x70mm(w) clamp fitting, 1H, 250mA

PSU-II E/I

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

KIT34/KAT34 mains transformer

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

KIT34/KAT34/KIT6550/KAT6550 choke

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

Output transformers

KIT6550/KAT6550 E/I 16% TAPPED UL

push-pull output transformer 2 inch stack, 80mm(w) x 95mm(l) x 100mm(h), drop through fitting with zinc cap. Primary-secondary 4.5K, 16% UL tapped. Secondary 4 Ohm, pls specify on order. max output 45 watts, max current 180mA, valves, KT88, 6550 etc

KEL84 E/I Ultra Linear push-pull output transformer

1.25 inch stack, 76mm(h)x65mm(w)x76mm(d) Primary - secondary, 8K with 12.5% UL tap - 8ohms, max o/p-15watts, max current 150mA valves EL84 etc

KIT88/KAT88 E/I push-pull output transformer

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

KIT34/KAT34 E/I 14% tapped Ultra Linear push-pull output transformer

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

KEL80 E/I parallel-push-pull output transformer

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

HD83 E/I single ended output transformer

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

Pre-II E/I driver transformer

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

300B PSE E/I parallel single ended output transformer

130mm(h) x 95mm(w) x 115mm(d), drop through fitting with zinc cap. Primary 1K5 Secondary 8R, output .

Printed circuit boards

Kel84 Printed Circuit Board 280mm(w) x 135mm(l) x 1.6mm(d)

KIT88/KAT88 Printed Circuit Board 140mm(w) x 310mm(l) x 2.4mm(d)

Kel34 Printed Circuit Board 140mm(w) x 310mm(l) x 2.4mm(d)

Kel80 Printed Circuit Board (a pair) 120mm(w) x 215mm(l) x 2.4mm(d)

HD83 Printed Circuit Board 140mm(w) x 160mm(l) x 1.6mm(d)

PSU-II Printed Circuit Board 105mm(w) x 130mm(l) x 1.6mm(d)

PRE-II Printed Circuit Board 105mm(w) x 130mm(l) x 1.6mm(d)

PHONO-II Printed Circuit Board 105mm(w) x 130mm(l) x 1.6mm(d)

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

special offers

Kel34 chassis

330mm(d)x190mm (h), ideal for the constructor who requires a compact chassis to incorporate 4 octals, 2 B9A & B7G bases mounted on kel35 PCB - £12.00 2x 78 lam holes, and fixing for a 115mm dia toroidal mains. rear has 5 phono pair holes & 2 XLR holes.

KIT88/KAT88 chassis

330mm(w)x300mm (d)x78mm(h), ideal for the constructor who requires a compact chassis to incorporate 4 octals, 2 B9A & B7G bases mounted on kel35 PCB - £12.00 2x 78 lam holes, and fixing for a 115mm dia toroidal mains. rear has 5 phono pair holes & 2 pairs of 4mm socket. Includes 6mm front plate plus chrome knobs - £100.00 (uk prices)

These are expert kits, not for the inexperienced. You must be able to solder and read a circuit diagram. The valve kits contain lethal voltages. We cannot be held responsible for any errors arising from the construction of these kits.



order on our website @

www.worldaudiodesign.co.uk

amplifier kits description

KaT6550 valve power amplifier kit (with valves)
 KaT6550 valve power amplifier kit (without valves)
 KIT6550 valve integrated amplifier kit (with valves)
 KIT6550 valve integrated amplifier kit (without valves)
 KAT34 valve power amplifier kit (with valves)
 KAT34 valve power amplifier kit (without valves)
 KIT34 valve integrated amplifier kit (with valves)
 KIT34 valve integrated amplifier kit (without valves)
 Kel84 valve integrated amplifier kit (with valves)
 Kel84 valve integrated amplifier kit (without valves)
 Kel84 upgrade kit
 PSU II power supply unit module
 PRE II pre-amplifier module
 PHONO - II phono stage module (with valves)
 PAS II passive pre-amplifier module with 10K or 50K attenuator (pls specify)
 Moving Coil step up transformers
 KIT88 upgrade kit
 KaT88 Valve integrated amplifier kit (with valves)
 KaT88 Valve integrated amplifier kit (without valves)
 KaT88 upgrade kit
 HD83 Valve Headphone amplifier kit (with valves)
 Kel80 Valve Monobloc amplifier kit (with valves) - a pair
 Kel80 Valve Monobloc amplifier kit (without valves) - a pair
 300B PSE Valve Monobloc amplifier kit (with valves) - a pair
 300B PSE Valve Monobloc amplifier kit (without valves) - a pair
 300B PSE Upgrade Kit - a pair

order No.

KaT6550 (with valves)
 KaT6550 (without valves)
 KIT6550 (with valves)
 KIT6550 (without valves)
 KAT34 (with valves)
 KAT34 (without valves)
 KIT34 (with valves)
 KIT34 (without valves)
 Kel84 (with valves)
 Kel84 (without valves)
 Kel84 upgrade
 PSU - II
 PRE - II
 PHONO II
 PAS II
 MC - step up (pair)
 KIT88 upgrade
 KaT88 (with valves)
 KaT88 (without valves)
 KaT88 upgrade
 HD83 (with valves)
 Kel80 (with valves)
 Kel80 (without valves)
 300B PSE (with valves)
 300B PSE (no valves)
 300B PSE upgrade kit

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 £164.00

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 £150.00
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 £336.00
 £369.00
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parts description

KIT/KaT6550 mains transformer
 KIT34/KAT34 transformer set
 KIT34 mains transformer
 Kel84 E/I mains transformer
 KIT88/KaT88 mains toroidal transformer
 Kel80 mains toroidal transformer(encapsulated)
 HD83 mains toroidal transformer
 PSU-II mains toroidal transformer
 300B PSE E/I mains transformer
 KIT34 E/I choke
 Kel84 E/I choke
 KIT6550 choke
 300B PSE choke
 PSU-II E/I choke
 KIT34 E/I UL push pull output transformer
 KIT/KaT6550 E/I UL output transformer
 Kel84 E/I push-pull output transformer
 KIT88/KaT88 E/I push-pull output transformer
 Kel80 E/I parallel-push-pull output transformer
 HD83 E/I single ended output transformer
 Pre-II E/I driver transformer
 300B PSE E/I output transformer
 Kel84 Printed Circuit board
 KIT88/KaT88 Printed Circuit Board
 Kel34 Printed Circuit Board
 Kel80 Printed Circuit Board
 HD83 Printed Circuit Board
 PSU-II Printed Circuit Board
 PRE-II Printed Circuit Board
 PHONO-II Printed Circuit Board
 Tag board 2 x 16 connections (hard wiring)
 Alps blue audio grade 50K dual log potentiometer
 Alps blue audio grade 100K dual log potentiometer
 Stepped attenuator with resistor pack 10K of 50K (pls specify)
 LCR 22.5uF 440Vdc polypropylene capacitors
 Ansar 22.5uF 630Vdc polypropylene capacitors
 Jensen 0.47uF 630Vdc paper in oil capacitor
 Jensen 0.22uF 630Vdc paper in oil capacitor
 Jensen 0.22uF 400V paper in oil capacitor
 Black Gate 220uF 50Vdc electrolytic
 Black Gate 4700uF 16Vdc electrolytic
 Black Gate 100uF 100Vdc electrolytic
 Black Gate 470uF 16Vdc electrolytic
 Black Gate 1000uF 16V electrolytic
 Black Gate 100uF, 50V electrolytic
 KIT88/KaT88 chassis
 650V safety gloves (a pair)
 6550/34 cage

order No.

6550 mains T
 34 T set
 KIT34 - mains T
 Kel84 - mains T
 88 - mains T
 Kel80 - mains T
 HD83 - mains T
 PSU-II - mains T
 300B - mains T (each)
 KIT34 - choke
 Kel84 - choke
 KIT6550 choke
 300B - choke
 PSU-choke
 34 - O/P T (pair)
 6550 O/P T 4ohm?/8ohm?(pair)
 Kel84 - O/P T (pair)
 88 - O/P T(pair)
 Kel80 - O/P T(pair)
 HD83 - O/P T(pair)
 PRE-II - driver T (pair)
 300B - O/P T (each)
 Kel84 - PCB
 88 - PCB
 Kel34 - PCB
 Kel80 - PCB(pair)
 HD83 - PCB
 PSU-II - PCB
 PRE-II - PCB
 PHONO-II - PCB
 TAG
 ALPS - 50K
 ALPS - 100K
 Attenuator + resistor pack
 LCR - 22.5U
 ANSAR - 22.5U
 JEN - 0.47U
 JEN - 0.22U
 JEN - 0.22U, 400V
 BG - 220U
 BG - 4700U
 BG - 100U
 BG - 470U
 BG - 1000U16V
 BG 100U50V
 88-CHAS
 SAFETY GLOVES
 34/6550 cage

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 £10.20
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 £5.20
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World Audio Design Amplifiers fully built from Malaysia

Title	Description	Price (exc. VAT + Carriage)
1A40	40W EL34 integrated	£590.00
1A36	36W KT88 integrated	£895.00
P2DA	20W 5881 power amp	£795.00

Title	Description	Price (exc. VAT + Carriage)
MB80	80W EL34 monobloc	£1190.00
PA11	Valve pre-amplifier	£699.00
PH11	Valve phono stage for PA11	£199.00

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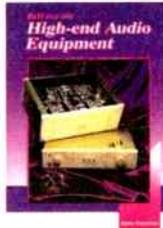
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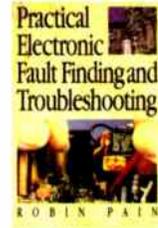
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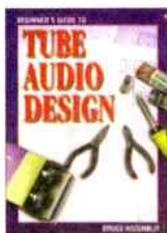


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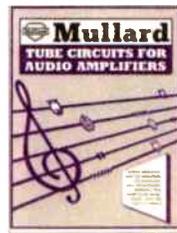


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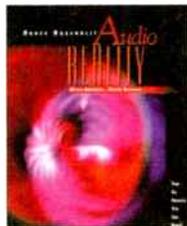


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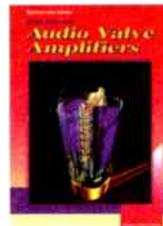
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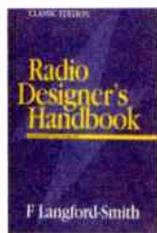
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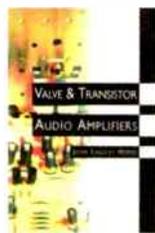
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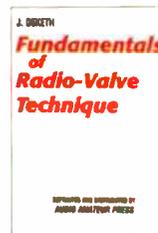
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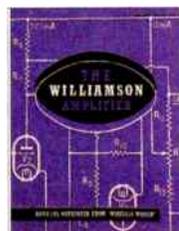
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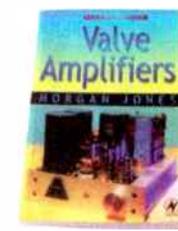
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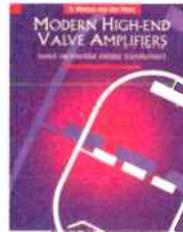


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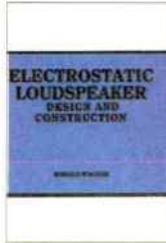


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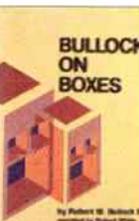


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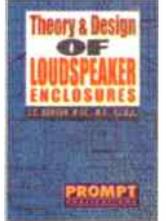


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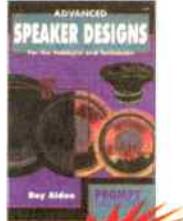


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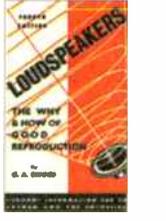
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BUDGET TIPS

Budget cartridges might have a simple stylus tip, but they can still give a good account of themselves, Noel Keywood finds.

Cartridges continue to improve even though the LP died as a major format some years ago. It's a little strange that today's pick cartridges are a lot more accurate and CD-like, I could say, than they ever were in the LP's heyday. It was a surprise to see just how well the budget cartridges here tracked, for example, because this is one area where low priced models of yore commonly looked at little grim. Now they ride a groove well, which helps preserve record life no end.

It doesn't help if you once ran a Shure M55E like I did, thinking at the time that it was the doggy's. Nor for that matter a revered Decca London, which ploughed its own groove. Records sounded great until another cartridge was used, then all of a sudden the truth became apparent. Those days are over. In spite of their low cost and low pretensions the four cartridges tested here will preserve your vinyl, new or old, immaculately. All of them sailed through tests tracks that older designs of any pedigree would blanche at.

Good tracking ability is one important aspect of cartridge

performance, at a sensible playing weight I should add. Where once designers (at Shure and Empire for example) attempted to get cartridges to track at 1gm or so, nowadays around 1.6-2gm is more common. The reason is that a good tip will distribute the downforce well enough not to damage the groove by pushing it past the elastic limit, even at 1.8gm. Higher playing forces improve tracking and make the arm more stable in the groove. A bouncy floor or closing door would disturb an arm at 1gm downforce, but far less so at 1.8gms. So don't worry about downforce - it need not be very low. This is not a measure of goodness.

Another common feature of budget moving magnet cartridges was a warm sound, but the models here have moved away from this sort of presentation. Three of the four sounded a little bright; only the budget Goldring Elektra was softer, but that's not to say dull or warm. It's a little ironic perhaps that cartridges have moved toward the sound of CD, but I know in practice that with good recordings where tonal balance matches, LP often wins the sound

quality contest. If you are new to vinyl, be prepared for a great sound, even from budget cartridges like the ones I review here.

If you are going to spin 45s the higher groove speed cleans up sound quality a lot. High quality recordings on 45rpm, 12in singles really do leave CD standing, especially in the bass, which is partly why the LP is enjoying a Dance revival I suspect.

Talking of which, cartridges for DJing have very high tracking forces to keep them in the groove. We're talking 3gms or more. High downforces mean stiffer suspension and a strong cantilever, both of which affect performance for the worse. Hi-fi cartridges are different animals, tuned more toward sound quality than the brute durability needed to withstand arduous conditions. There's a significant difference between the two and the models reviewed here are not suitable for DJ work.

These budget moving magnet cartridges here are a great introduction to getting true hi-fidelity from the LP, by combining good sound quality with affordability. They really are top tips. ■ ▲

CONCLUSION

In terms of measured performance Goldring's Elektra is the odd man out in this group. This affected sound quality which was uninvolved. But it was the cheapest of the group at just £30. It is a good starter car-

tridge perhaps.

Just £2.50 more buys Ortofon's Super OM10 and it is the bargain of the group in many ways. Offering a high standard of sound quality with superb tracking it's far and away the best value buy in this group.

Audio Technica's AT120E offers

real bass power and a great results for £52. For anyone who wants full on Rock this is the one to go for.

Which leaves Goldring's superb 1006. It is a bit expensive but it does have a tad more bass control than the AT120E. For those who want real dynamics it's a strong choice.

AUDIO TECHNICA 120E

£52



Audio Technica's AT120E comes neatly packed in a plastic case, accompanied by stylus brush, small screwdriver and lightweight aluminium screws. I didn't wrestle to get it out, like the Goldring, but I did wrestle to get it in - to get the stylus carrier into the body, that is, because if you push it in gently it doesn't mate. I have had this problem with Audio Techs. before; the stylus assembly must be pushed home firmly so it engages fully. Otherwise, with a light push, it will appear to engage but not do so.

This apart the AT120E is easy enough to fit, being of normal dimensions, and it balances out without difficulty, possessing a normal body weight of 6.2gms. Audio Technica quote a wide tracking force range but I used 1.6gms.

In a nutshell the AT120E gives a seemingly panoramic sound compared

to the other units here. I am not alluding to image width so much as frequency range. Bass seems wide and deep; treble reaches up smoothly and endlessly. It offers a big, generous sound that on casual listening is expansive and obviously larger than that of its rivals. In the past Audio Techs. went down well with listeners - usually into Rock exclusively - who wanted lots of bottom and top end action.

I have to say the 120E is impressive and, surprisingly, bright in a different and perhaps less intrusive way than Goldring's 1006. Or perhaps not. It depends on what annoys and pleases you. Lower the stylus and you are met with strong ticks and pops; this cartridge emphasises surface noise quite noticeably. The stylus, however, seems to have an excellent profile because it delivered wonderful levels of fine detail and seemingly possessed laser insight into a groove, making Goldring's 1006 seem a little crude in this area. The Audio Tech could at times sound very sharp though; its treble peak can be heard.

Down at the bass end this cartridge delivers generous quantities of bottom end power, if with less

resolution and grip than Goldring's 1006.

What a great cartridge to use for grungy Rock like Skunk Anasie's 'We Love Your Apathy'. Guitars were raunchy, Skin snarled loudly from centre stage and the whole performance moved forward strongly, filling the room. The AT120E isn't controlled and grippy so much as big and raunchy. If you like Soundgarden and stride around your bedroom with cardboard guitar, get a 120E.

All the same, it does truly have finesse in the treble and mountains of ability, tip toeing through Gabrielle's 'Should I Stay' with just the odd spitch, but plenty more treble insight than the others. The unit's end-of-side performance was good.

The AT120E is a big performer with lots of ability. I could not fault it and was at times enormously impressed. It's great fun with rock and good value.

Audio Technica Limited (UK),
Technica House,
Royal London Industrial Estate,
Leeds LS11 8AG, UK
Tel: 0113 277 1441
www.audio-technica.co.uk

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The first thing that struck me about this cartridge is that it's one helluva tracker. Not that the others are bad, but this one cleared every test track with an ease that eludes the most expensive designs. There wasn't so much as a murmur even at 25cms/sec at 1kHz - a track that few cartridges clear cleanly. What this means is that the AT120E will sound very confident, even with high level vocals. By remaining in the groove it will also not cause damage by mistracking. Audio Technica quote a tracking force range of 1-1.8g; I used 1.6g.

Audio Technica favour rising treble in their cartridges. The AT120E has rising output above 4kHz and will sound quite obviously bright as a result. This is not a subtle effect, output peaking by +4dB at 10kHz. The stylus is a good one, which means - ironically - that there were no inner groove losses to compensate in

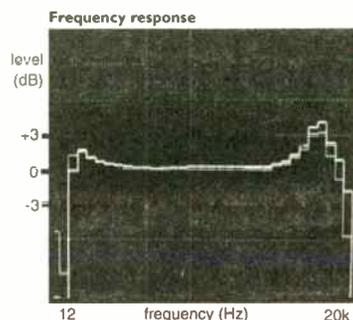
other words, the cartridge will sound bright at any point on a disc, from outside to inside. Both the Goldring and Ortofon have similar, if less pronounced characteristics though.

Vertical tracking angle measured 21 degrees, almost spot on the 22 degree figure stipulated (but rarely achieved) by Standards. As a result the AT120E produced little distortion on vertical modulation (which affects left and right stereo images). Channel separation was good enough at 24dB and output healthy at 5.6mV at 5cms/sec rms.

The AT120E is a neatly engineered little unit that works well in all areas but it will have a bright sound. **NK**

Tracking force	1 - 1.8g
Weight	6.5gms
Vertical tracking angle	21 degrees
Frequency response	20Hz-20kHz

Channel separation	24dB
Tracking ability (300Hz)	
lateral	90µm
vertical	45µm
lateral (1kHz)	25cms/sec.
Distortion (45µm)	
lateral	1%
vertical	1.5%
Output (5cms/sec rms)	5.6mV



World Verdict
£

A big sound with lots of treble detail make the AT120E great for Rock. Lots of fun.

588

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GOLDRING 1006

£70



Getting the 1006 out of its packing was a bit of a wrestle. Two red plastic clips must be levered outward using a fine screwdriver and the cartridge body eased up whilst doing so. I cursed this a bit. The 1006 is well made and finished and Goldring supply it with a good fixing kit comprising non-magnetic, stainless steel, allen-head screws, with key and spanner no less. The 1006 body fits all headshells and its normal weight presents no arm balance problems either. Fitting was easy enough and I ran it at Goldring's recommended 1.7gms downforce.

I use a Goldring 1042 and know the 1000 Series sound well. However, whilst the 1042 is generally acknowledged to be a fine unit for the price its budget partners fare less well. The 1006 could well have been a disappointment then, but it wasn't. It has an obviously bright subjective balance, as measurement suggested

and this is maintained across much of a disc side. But whereas the Elektra always seemed muted in colour and dynamic the 1006 was an altogether different proposition. The bass line behind Tina Turner's Steamy Windows was supple, powerful and strode along with verve. Turner's vocals were nicely revealed and clearly set up centre-stage. At all times I was aware of some brightness and a little spit in the sound; the 1006 borders on being quite sharp, especially with modern loudspeakers possessing strong treble. At the same time it is fast, well focussed and nicely detailed. Cymbals crashes could crash a little too hard perhaps and bright recordings, like Grace Jones The Hunter Gets Captured by the Game' became very bright. Yet all the time the 1006's tight, rhythmic bass and clear midband served to make the overall presentation exciting enough to be captivating. Eddy Grant's Electric Avenue spinning at 45rpm delivered wonderful dynamics, with deep rumbling synth sounds, a reverberant drum machine line and stereo images that flashed hard left to hard right. The 1006 dug out and delivered the pyrotechnics of this disc, firmly making the point that high

speed vinyl still trounces CD.

Gabrielle's difficult 'Rise' album came over well. Here the 1006's brightness and insight served to assemble images and detail with some deftness. The end-of-side problem track 'Should I Stay' sounded clear and relatively confident. There were one or two pitches but they held steady on the sound stage and seemed more part of the music, as if the stylus was reading the distortion rather than freaking out about it.

This is a good design with plenty of life and detail. It has dry but powerful bass, keeps the strands of music well sorted and offers a lovely sense of clarity. It is bright and treble can be a little fierce at times, especially with bright recordings, but for the most part I would say the 1006 does vinyl justice and is a fine cartridge.

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Tel: 01279 501111
www.vedaproducts.co.uk

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

Goldring manage the same carefully wrought frequency response balance with the 1006 as Ortofon with their OM10. On outer grooves the frequency response is flat and smooth, with a small amount of treble lift. Measuring +2.5dB at 12kHz this is not great, however, certainly not enough to make the cartridge's sound unduly sharp or bright. The 1006 lacks the upper midrange droop that once characterised moving magnets so it should sound detailed and likely a little less warm than trad designs.

Tracing losses are not great, measuring -5dB loss on inner grooves. This is just enough to give a falling response and a softer sound at the end of an LP, but not a dull one. The 1006 essentially measures flat and is impressively accurate.

Tracking performance was superb at 300Hz; the 1006 sailed

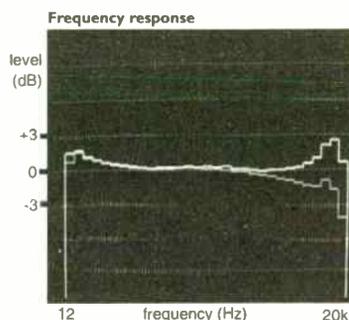
through top level tracks. It managed well in the midband too, clearing 25cms/sec at 1kHz, a level which causes some cartridges to let go completely and skate over the vinyl surface!

Goldring manage a relatively high channel separation figure of 28dB and also provide a healthy output of 5.8mV at 5cms/sec rms. With a vertical tracking angle of 28degrees vertical mod. distortion was 4.3%, a reasonable value.

The 1006 measured well in all respects. Flat frequency response will result in a smooth yet accurate sound whilst good tracking will instill a sense of confidence. **NK**

Tracking force	1.7g
Weight	6.3gms
Vertical tracking angle	28degrees
Frequency response	20Hz-20kHz

Channel separation	28dB
Tracking ability (300Hz)	
lateral	90µm
vertical	45µm
lateral (1kHz)	24cms/sec.
Distortion (45µm)	
lateral	1%
vertical	4%
Output (5cms/sec rms)	5.8mV



World Verdict

A tad bright but very detailed with good bass. A little expensive all the same.



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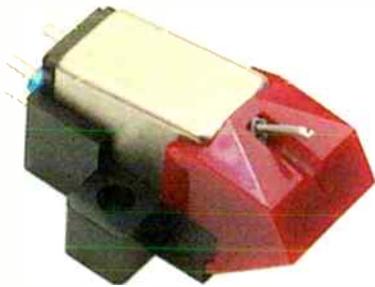
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GOLDRING ELEKTRA

£30

The Elektra comes in simple packaging comprising plastic case, instruction sheet and one set of metal fixing screws. There are no tools, unlike the Audio Technica for example. I have to say the Elektra looks budget too, with a simple but shielded metal body and red plug-in stylus assembly. The stylus guard is an awkward clip-on affair. I was surprised to see the cartridge is made in Japan because that country doesn't, these days, produce much budget kit.

Fixing was easy enough, because the body is a standard shape and size. The arm's counterweight comes in close to the pivot because the Elektra is so light, but the 12in SME3012 I use

was happy enough.

From measurement I was expecting a slightly soft and bland sound and that is more or less what I got from the Elektra. It is mild, inoffensive and a trifle bland. Goldring have made sure it is inoffensive and it has enough basic capability to get across the basic message and dynamic embedded in an LP track. Tina Turner's 'Steamy Windows' had good bottom end power, for example, but the emphasis that the cutting engineer put on the bass line doesn't really come across. It's there, it works and it sounds normal enough, until you hear something better.

The Elektra wasn't particularly bad in any area, so much as bland and unexciting in most of them. With LPs that are, in themselves, slightly soft, such as Gabrielle's 'Rise', this cartridge made them even softer, moving into muzziness at times. I only sat up in serious doubt when checking inner groove performance with 'Should I Stay'. There was a lot

of spitching and the spitch would jump from side to side, suggesting the stylus was leaving the groove. From measured performance this would seem unlikely and this track does have recorded-in spitch (i.e. peak distortion on sibilance), likely put there by the cutter. All the same, the Elektra seemed more upset by this track than the others and any listener would have been a little perturbed I believe.

Generally then, the Elektra is a somewhat soft and bland sounding budget cartridge that can get dull at the end of a side. All the same, it is pretty inoffensive and for the most part does its job well.

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MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The Elektra is a neat little budget moving magnet weighing just 4.2gms - very light. Cartridge weight forms a large proportion of headshell total moving mass; a light cartridge helps improve tracking over warps by lowering inertia. Less is more in this case.

Although a budget special the Elektra now tracks very well. I was surprised that it now gets through top level torture tracks at 300Hz and 1kHz, better than I can remember from earlier versions. So there's no limitation here and the Elektra will preserve records by tracking securely.

Frequency response droops slightly at high frequencies (200pF load) our analysis on outer grooves shows. Yet it is at the same time quite smooth, free from the peaking that commonly occurs around 16kHz, or tip mass resonance. On inner grooves stylus tracing loss becomes significant, which will subjectively soften out the sound. Level

measured -6dB down at 20kHz. On balance the Elektra will sound soft and smooth, possible a little dull on inner grooves.

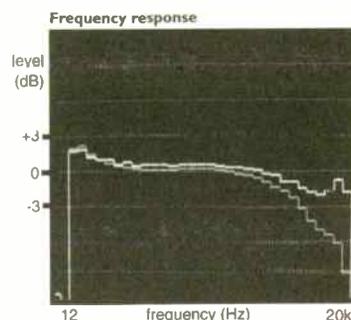
Channel separation was poor, measuring 17dB, and this is the prime limitation of the Elektra, together with low-ish output of 4.6mV at 5cms/sec rms. The more expensive 1006 tackles both limitations. Poor separation, however, subjectively strengthens centre images, bringing more prominence to vocals for example, and in practice it doesn't degrade the sound so much as alter it a little.

The Elektra has high disc clearance to cope with warps. This gives it a high vertical tracking angle of 29 degrees which leads to significant vertical mod. distortion of 8%. Luckily this is primarily second harmonic, which lightens timbre rather than sounding nasty. All cartridges produce 3-6% vertical distortion, to get the Elektra into perspective.

The Elektra is a neat enough package well designed for budget

duty. Measurement suggests it sound smooth and confident. **NK**

Tracking force	1.7g
Weight	4.2gms
Vertical tracking angle	29degrees
Frequency response	20Hz-20kHz
Channel separation	17dB
Tracking ability (300Hz)	
lateral	86µm
vertical	45µm
lateral (1kHz)	24cms/sec.
Distortion (45µm)	
lateral	1%
vertical	8%
Output (5cms/sec rms)	5mV



World Verdict



Not the most exciting performer around but does the job well enough, and at £30 it's as cheap as chips.

ORTOFON SUPER OM10 £32.50



It has an unusual shape, but the OM10's footprint is fairly conventional, so it fits headshells without difficulty. I had to crimp the tiny connectors of the cartridge headshell leads, because the output pins of the cartridge seem to be a little smaller in diameter than the other units and the leads would spring off. It's a fiddle but not too difficult. Ortofon use a screening can around the generator to reduce hum pickup and it earths through the right channel ground pin (green).

The Super OM10 is another very light cartridge, weighing just 5gms. To balance an arm the counterweight will have to come right in close to the pivot. I set tracking force at Ortofon's recommended value of 1.5gm.

A neat feature of the OM10 I appreciate is the ability to see the stylus. With other units it lies beneath the body; with this one a small recess makes it visible - great for accurate cueing.

The OM10 has always been a

strong budget favourite because of its superb tracking ability. However, Goldring and Audio Technica have closed the gap. Now it is sound quality that separates the cartridges more than technical performance. The Super OM10 retains its strong midrange projection that pushes vocals forward on the sound stage, making them almost shout. Jackie Leven's lyrics on 'Call Mother a Lonely Field' were clearly resolved; he was forward but there was a little shout here I felt, plus some treble sharpness, although no more of this than that displayed by the other cartridges, except the Elektra. Perhaps the shout of this cartridge comes from the fact that it has slightly recessed bass. Although tight enough, bass lines were a little back in the mix, something I noticed immediately when spinning Skunk Anansie. Vocals were projected clearly and treble was clean and clear, if a little strong, but the track just lacked scuzz.

Cranking mod levels up a bit by switching my Garrard 401 to 45rpm and putting on 'Electric Avenue' confirmed that dynamic bass lines in particular were not well resolved. The deep bass synth stabs and drones didn't come through with the strength and presence managed by the Goldring 1006 or AT120E.

The Super OM10 does, however, have a great sense of confidence and composure that in many cases places it to the front of the field. Gabrielle's 'Rise' album is a bit of a bland cut, yet here the Super OM10 teased out every piece of detail possible, setting up one of the clearest and most stable sound stages I have yet to hear from this album. If you played 'Rise' alone, then you'd buy the Super OM10! This remained the case right through to the difficult end-of-side track 'Should I Stay'. Again the OM10 gave a clearer and more confidently composed performance than any of the other units reviewed here.

Ortofon's Super OM10 remains a great performer: It has real projection. It is perhaps a bit more academic in what it does than the others, possessing the best resolution of them all, whilst at the same time suffering a lack of real dynamic bass drive.

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Unit 10, Moorbrook
Southmead Industrial Park
Didcot, Oxfordshire OX11 7HR
Tel: 01235 511166
www.henleydesigns.co.uk

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The OM10 has always measured well and our review sample suggests the tradition continues. In spite of possessing a simple elliptical stylus the cartridge traces short wavelength inner grooves almost as well as outer grooves. There's -3dB treble loss from outer to inner, our frequency response analysis shows, but Ortofon have balanced the responses neatly so that there's a little treble lift and brightness in outer grooves (47k/200pF load) but an almost flat response on inner, to give optimum results where most muddle and distortion occurs. If my memory is correct the OM10 used to have a falling response and has been brightened up a bit.

Worth noting is the complete lack of an upper midrange 'generator' droop that classically made moving

magnet (MM) cartridges sound warm. The OM10 will sound detailed and even a little bright in comparison.

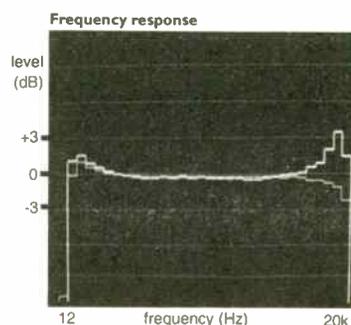
Output remains very high, measuring no less than 7mV at 5cms/sec rms. This was always the case with the OM10 and it minimises phono stage hiss. In spite of high output tracking hasn't been compromised. It remains very high at 300Hz and 1kHz, up with the best, so there's little chance of groove damage. This cartridge really hangs on at the recommended tracking force of 1.5gms.

The OM10 measured very well in all areas. It remains a superb piece of budget engineering by Ortofon, where everything balances beautifully.

NK

Tracking force (rec.) 1.5g
Weight 5gms

Vertical tracking angle	26degrees
Frequency response	20Hz-20kHz
Channel separation	24dB
Tracking ability (300Hz)	
lateral	85µm
vertical	45µm
lateral (1kHz)	24cms/sec.
Distortion (45µm)	
lateral	0.7%
vertical	5.5%
Output (5cms/sec rms)	7mV



World Verdict



A fine detailed performer but lacks a bit of bass grunt.

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

Setting up a cartridge is a little fiddly but not too difficult. Here's a simple and comprehensive step-by-step guide, where we tell you what to do and why. Just be aware that the stylus cantilever is a delicate lightweight alloy tube that will bend easily if knocked. Take precautions to avoid this happening!

1) Remove cartridge carefully from packaging. This is a potential danger area. If you have to wrestle a unit out, remove the stylus guard and then the stylus from the body. Moving magnet stylus assemblies always pull out.

2) To fit the cartridge it is safest if you remove the stylus assembly first. Then screw the body to the headshell, making certain it is not skewed. This is quite important, since a degree or two of skew will put the tracking right out and raise distortion. Look at my diagram to sort this one.

3) Connect headshell leads to cartridge output pins.

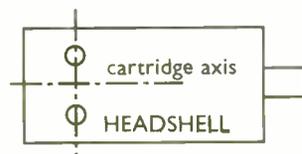
Red: right channel hot; Green: right channel ground; White: left channel hot; Blue: left channel ground. Take care not to get green and blue mixed up, which can happen in artificial light.

4) Replace stylus and guard. Refit headshell if it is removable. With fixed headshell arms like the Rega RB250/300 slide cartridge to centre of adjustment groove.

5) Remove stylus guard and balance arm, then apply tracking force. Use either the manufacturer's recommended figure or a value toward the top of any suggested range,

1.6-1.8gms being a sensible figure. Don't apply bias force yet.

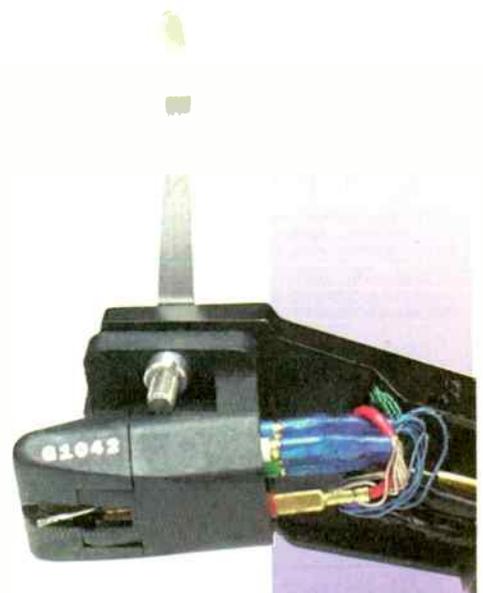
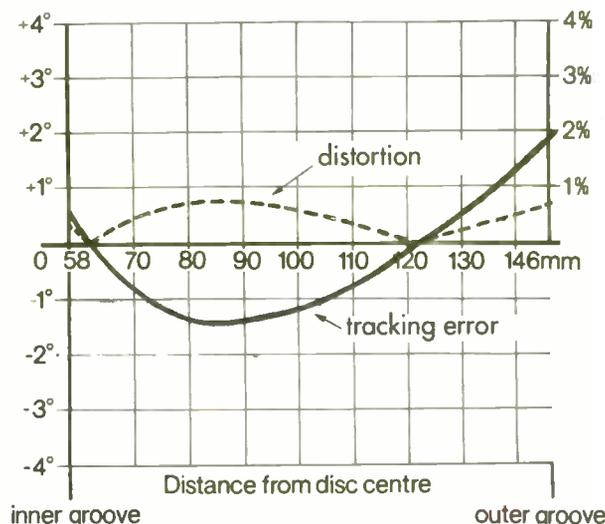
6) Slide cartridge or entire arm on the arm's alignment protractor so that it lines up (i.e. is tangential to the groove) at the points specified, usually at the inner groove radius (60mm from centre spindle) and at 120mm from centre. By doing this you are minimising tracking error distortion. Tighten screws. Re-check tracking force and re-set if necessary.



Align the cartridge carefully so it lies at right angles to the fixing screw holes. If the headshell sides are parallel they can be used as a reference face.

7) Set headshell so that the cartridge is upright, where such adjustment is possible.

In theory at least, this optimises channel separation. In practice it does not because separation is set by the



Shown above - the edge of the cartridge must align perfectly with the headshell's reference face to minimise distortion from tracking error.

cutter's modulation axes, and also by disc warpage, which gives the vinyl surface a slant. The LP is an inexact medium!

8) Set arm height - again if this is possible. This sets vertical tracking angle and it is best to start with the arm pivot as low as possible, because most cartridges have excessive VTA and this minimises it and resultant distortion. You'll soon find though that a cartridge will not ride warps if you take things too far, because the body will hit the warp. Generally the arm can be lowered from horizontal at the pivot by only a small amount. Note that the AT120E reviewed here has correct VTA (22 degrees) and does not need any such compensation. It needs the arm to be horizontal.

9) After all adjustment has been completed, apply bias force and you are ready to play. ■ ▲

The tracking error of an arm is it crosses an LP produces distortion, shown here. Careful alignment of cartridge in headshell and of arm geometry minimises the problem.

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MEET-YOUR-MAKER

THREE'S COMPANY

David Price listens to one of Trio's top tuners, the late, lamented KT7500.



Back in the seventies, Trio was a name to conjure with for many an impoverished audiophile. Trio-Kenwood Corp. - which later became just plain Kenwood - was a purveyor of fine quality affordable hi-fi separates, selling to a market not entirely dissimilar to that of Arcam today. As well as making a cracking entry-level budget turntable (in the shape of the KD1033B), it sold a number of affordable amplifiers (KA1500, KA3700, KA-405) to hi-fi nuts hungry for its well designed and beautifully made wares.

In Japan however, the company was better known for its high end esoterica - its L0-7D turntable was a pretty resounding two fingers up to the newly fashionable Linn Sondek and Oracle super decks, and there were some pretty useful electronics to partner it. The KT7500 you see here was the company's top tuner for us mere mortals, however. Costing the best part of £180 in 1978, it wasn't that much cheaper than the aforementioned LP12 anyway.

As you'd expect at this not inconsiderable price, the Trio was built like the proverbial brick outhouse. Weighing the best part of 10kg, the standard 430mm width case contains less than its fair share of air. In its place is a generously sized frame type transformer, beautifully laid out all-discrete circuitry and a flywheel tuning assembly the size of a big bit of scaffolding. Round the back there's a switchable de-emphasis facility (giving

a choice of 50 or 25 uS), in anticipation of the expected-but-never delivered Dolby FM. Along with the usual antenna connections and fixed and variable audio outs, two FM multipath sockets are provided.

At the front, the obligatory half-inch thick brushed aluminium fascia sports suitably chunky controls for power on-off, variable output level, IF band (wide/narrow), muting and AM-FM waveband selection, with a switchable MPX ('High Blend') filter. Being an analogue design - in the days before digitally synthesised tuning had ever set foot on a showroom shelf - the user interface is a joy. A wide, brightly backlit scale works in conjunction with two meters (signal strength and tuning) and a heavily weighted flywheel. The result is far more tactile than the plastic preset buttons we take for granted these days - it's like reel to reel compared to MiniDisc!

Power the Trio up and you'll get a shock - unlike the synthesised designs that were poised to replace it, the KT7500 is an incredibly natural and open sounding design. It's as 'analogue' as they come, giving a sweet, lilting FM performance with plenty of detail and an eerily three

dimensional soundstage. It's no Troughline, but then again it's far more sensitive, better built and has just a hint of the Leak's incredibly organic nature - far more so than any digital tuner of today. A great boon is its AM performance - incredibly quiet, smooth and open, it makes listening to music on this distinctly low-fi waveband perfectly enjoyable, whereas BBC Radio Five Live and TalkSport have never sounded so clean.

This Trio isn't the best Jap analogue tuner ever made - that accolade probably goes to Yamaha's far, far more expensive CT-7000. But it, and a number of other late seventies high end designs from 'big name' manufacturers (Pioneer, Sony, Sansui, Technics) make superb second-hand buys. At under £100 for a mint boxed example, it's cheaper to buy than a bottom-of-the-range Sony from your local Dixons, and will probably outlast it too. In the meantime you'll have something that makes listening to analogue radio a surprisingly natural and satisfying experience - you might even find your CD player gets an unscheduled rest. Digital audio broadcasting - no thanks! 🎧

HI-FI WORLD'S

GREAT COMPETITION GIVEAWAY

WIN A SUPERB **CYRUS SYSTEM** WORTH £1900 IN THIS MONTH'S HI-FI WORLD GIVEAWAY



► **W**e've a real treat for all our readers this month. Cyrus Electronics have donated a Quattro one-box CD/tuner/preamp along with a matching SmartPower amplifier and a pair of CLS-50 loudspeakers for our November competition, worth £1900.

The company itself has an interesting background and inception. It started back in 1981 when Mission's founder, Farad Azima, and his brother Henry (a designer at Mission) released the company's first electronics in the shape of the Mission 776 preamp, along with the 777 MOSFET power amplifier.

The first 'true' Cyrus product - the name Cyrus being taken from a well-known Persian king - came in 1985 with the Mission Cyrus One integrated amplifier designed by Henry. One of the things that made it stand out from the crowd at the time was its compact dimensions. Now the whole hi-fi industry clamours to produce more from smaller boxes. It shows just how far ahead of their time the company were!

This amplifier had the company's now-hallmark shoebox proportions, a fine musical sound and a sensible price tag. Although rated at only 30W per channel it had grip and control way above the competition. At £149 it was simply a bargain. It was a recipe for hi-fi success and they haven't looked back since. Further success followed

with the higher power rated Cyrus Two, which offered 50W at £299. Both used a larger toroidal mains transformer and ran in Class A/B mode. The Two could also accommodate an external power supply, something else the company has adhered to throughout its history.

A second, upgraded, series of these classics appeared, followed by a third in 1990, when the name Mission quietly disappeared (Mission and Cyrus are now separate companies).

The well-built Cyrus Three (followed by the 3i) arrived in the early nineties and heralded the start of the classic die-cast Cyrus look and the PSX-R power supply upgrade was introduced, along with the company's first CD player - the two-in-one-box DiscMaster/DacMaster.

After a growing range of products throughout the mid-nineties the company finally cut its ties with Mission in 1998 and became a wholly independent company. The year 2000 saw the launch of its highly successful 7 series of components. This range now expands to encompass DVD and surround and a home theatre processor, all with the same emphasis of high quality audiophile

performance. This range also includes the excellent Quattro and SmartPower we have to give away here.

Over the last year the company have stated producing high quality loudspeakers in the shape of two fine-sounding standmounts, the CLS-50 and 70, as well as the ground breaking, flagship Icon which employs NXT flat panel technology.

The system we have to give away here shows the best of Cyrus's current technology. The Quattro and SmartPower make for a powerful, musical yet convenient hi-fi solution and the CLS-50 produces a controlled and detailed sound with plenty of attack and slam from such small boxes.

To get your hands on this superb system, simply answer the questions below on a postcard and send it to the address below by October 31st. The first correct answer picked out of our hat will be the lucky winner. ■ ▲

Hi-Fi & Computer Audio World Competition rules and conditions of entry

1. Only one entry per house hold.
2. Multiple entries will be automatically disqualified.
3. Purchase of the magazine is not a pre-condition of entry.
4. No correspondence will be entered into.
5. The Editor's decision is final.
6. No employees of Audio Publishing Limited, or of any companies associated with the production or distribution of the prizes may enter.

CONGRATULATIONS!

...to D. Palmer of Bourne, Lincs, who won our September competition. A NAD C541 and C370 are on their way to you!

QUESTIONS

[1] What are the first names of the Azima brothers?

- [a] Henry & Farad
- [b] Henry & Ford
- [c] Bill & Ben
- [d] Capacitor & Resistor

[2] In which year was the Cyrus One amplifier launched?

- [a] 1981
- [b] 1977
- [c] 1985
- [d] 2000

[3] What was the name of Cyrus's first CD player?

- [a] CDMaster
- [b] DiscMaster/DacMaster
- [c] DiscSpinner
- [d] DiscoFever

[4] The name 'Cyrus' is taken from what?

- [a] A Persian queen
- [b] A Persian king
- [c] A Persian cat
- [d] A Persian rug

Please send all entries to:

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CAN YOU DIG IT?

The record industry is gearing up for a new era of music distribution. So how will we collect and enjoy music in a world where it comes down our telephone lines? David Price investigates.



music33.com's Tony Wilson is an arch proponent of on-line music

► “Napster was the triumph of the new bootleg,” proclaims Music33.com's Tony Wilson. The man who brought us countless classic Joy Division, New Order and The Happy Mondays LPs, and inspired a whole generation of vinyl junkies, is now a passionate advocate of digital music downloads. “It visited the future, letting us have, receive, consume and love a piece of music without having to get down to HMV first. It will catch on - big style - when we're all broadbanded and on (the net) all the time”.

Right now, the world's first and best file swapping resource is in suspended animation as it works out a new identity for itself as a pay-per-download site. While its days as a global online music library may be

numbered, the effect it's had on the recording industry most definitely isn't. Now, in the words of Universal Music's Alby Galuten, “a generation of music buyers thinks the art is free and the plastic costs money”.

In Napster's short two year history it went from zero to hero, personifying the net's libertarian ethos by offering access to virtually any piece of music ever recorded - free, gratis and for nothing. To say it horrified the music business is an understatement. The lawyers were called in and it was finally forced to suspend its service this summer. The world is now waiting for a new ‘Napster 2’, now owned by Bertelsmann, where users will pay a small, fixed fee per month for their downloads.

COME TOGETHER RIGHT NOW

“Consumers obviously enjoyed free music distribution by the truckload,” says Fergal Gara, EMI's New Media head, “the effect Napster had on US singles sales was so sudden and so manifest, it was like falling off a cliff”. While US CD album sales rose by 4% last year [source: Jupiter MMXI], singles sales dropped by nearly half. At the same time, the leading music download sites showed a 36.7% increase in users, amounting to 32.3 million unique visitors, which is up from 23.7 million a year earlier [source: Jupiter MMXI]. In the UK, which still has ‘metered’ (i.e. pay per

minute) telephone calls, the same pattern is emerging - the first half of 2001 showed album sales up 8.2% and singles sales down 1.8% [source: BPI]. When you factor in the explosion in popularity of recordable CD-Rs, and the fact that almost 70% of US online music users who download MP3s reportedly burn them onto CD-Rs [source: RIAA], it seems that computers now pose a major threat to music industry pocket books. “If a kid makes a CD-R copy of an album for his friend then that's one thing,” adds Fergal Gara,



discs are now cheap and plentiful.

“but if he makes another 30 for his classmates, that's another. CD burners may be responsible for the biggest form of piracy right now”.

While it's hard to prove definitively that Napster in isolation has hurt the music industry, when you factor in the wide availability of cheap computer ‘CD burners’ (and software that easily converts MP3 downloads

onto discs playable on any CD player), the argument looks compelling. The combination has given online music hitherto undreamed of universality, and the multimedia PC is now an essential tool for today's music fans. Cheap, universal and easy to use, it's become the 21st century music centre. No longer the exclusive stuff of offices, PCs are in over 41.3% of British homes [source: TGI, 2000] with over 26.3% of users having Internet access at home or work. Microsoft is determined to offer ever more multimedia functionality in its operating systems - as its head of Digital Media, Dave Fester, puts it, "the plan is to make Windows Media technology available everywhere, anytime on multiple devices".

So computers are muscling in on music, and things will never be the same again. The recording industry is now gearing up to make online music distribution - royalties paid in full of course - a reality. Howie Singer, a2b music's Chief Technical Officer [www.a2bmusic.com] adds, "Record companies want a system that helps them reach more fans and sell more music. Every new format has resulted in industry growth in the past. But they hate it if the net becomes a way to get any song you want for free - even when the artist wants to be paid. Recently, every major record company has come to realise that how they feel about this matters very little. They know that it is coming and the net will reshape their industry."

I'M NOT HAPPY

Where does this leave music buyers? The problem for many fans is that it's very hard to replicate the old fashioned experience of going to a shop and buying a physical product online - indeed, many have a sense that the format is part of the overall experience. Rather than downloading a stream of digits from a computer, the cover art, packaging and inserts that come with 'physical' formats like LP and CD really lift the finished product.

Record Collector magazine's Daryl Easlea says there's a romance attached to buying music in the format it was originally released, which music downloads simply lose.

He says, "it's an obsession with authenticity, with keeping it real, with ownership. Owning the real physical product says something to other people about your life - it's almost a status thing". For many fans, their



SKAM: multimedia music website at its best.

prized recordings become artefacts to covet as much as artistic works to admire. He argues that, "vinyl, for instance, has become more loved than ever, and this is reflected by the standards of packaging which have increased thirtyfold since CD arrived on the scene."

"I loved the physicality of the vinyl, but that was then and this is now," counters Music33.com's Tony Wilson (also founder of Factory Records), "I don't want to go to a shop - I want that shop to exist on my computer". He's genuinely unmoved by the potential passing of what he calls "physical souvenir formats" like LP or CD. Rather, he believes that online music distribution offers an artistic experience that totally transcends the old ways of collecting the artist's complete works in your home.

He cites the example of Heavenly Jukebox, created by Mark Geiger of artistsdirect.com. Right now, he says, serious music collectors have to buy and then store vast amounts of space-consuming LPs and CDs in their listening rooms if they wish to explore their favourite musicians' work. Heavenly Jukebox however, can stream practically any piece of music ever recorded to fans, and also links directly to related songs and artists. In this way, for example, people can click on Dodgy and then progress back through early REM to The Byrds

and The Who - without having to own physical copies of the recordings in the first place. This he believes, "encourages consumption by adding real immediacy, which is something you don't have if you've got a room full of records to wade through".

It's an interesting idea, but what it lacks is what Easlea calls "the social experience of music collecting". He points out that music fans often network with one another extensively, "there's still that thing of hearing things and seeing things together, the frisson of going down to your favourite record shop and getting a recommendation from

someone you know". He argues that much of the joy of music is hearing it together. "Creamfields, Reading, gigs, clubs - a tune can get validated by going somewhere and enjoy it in the company of others"

While digital downloads look set to become a vital part of tomorrow's world, not even the net's greatest proponents expect them to completely replace physical formats. The CD single's



PC CD recording could now be hitting singles' sales

days may be numbered, as the net encroaches on its 'trying out a band' role, but albums may well be a different matter, as they're an artistic concept that's far harder to replicate online. As Tony Wilson points out, the album itself was very much a construct of its time. "The idea was invented in the sixties, either by the Beatles' 'With The Beatles' or Bob

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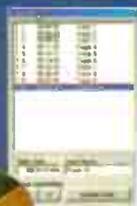


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Dylan's 'FreeWheeling', depending on your point of view. Remember the LP had been around ten years before the album as we now know it arrived".

NEW GOLD DREAM?

So when the download era arrives in full, how can artists present their work? It's a difficult question for a music industry that still hasn't really come to terms even with the constraints of Compact Disc. After the seminal cover photography of BlueNote jazz LPs, innovative artwork on Beatles albums and lavish gatefold sleeves of seventies pop records, many found fiddly CD 'jewel case' inserts an anticlimax. "My biggest problem with silver discs was the packaging," says Marantz Hi-fi designer Ken Ishiwata. "I loved the beautiful artwork on LP sleeves, and for nearly two years I had to buy both formats simultaneously because CD simply didn't compare".

As digitally downloadable music has no physical form at all, packaging it could be a real problem. Some, however, think that it no longer really matters. Darryl Easlea believes that whereas previous generations



The Stereophonics Rio 600: a fiendishly clever way to market MP3

stories in music industry history - vinyl. The resurgence in popularity of both the LP and twelve inch single (up 21.7% and 13.3% respectively in the first quarter of 2001 [source: BPI] suggests that music buyers don't like the 'one size fits all' approach that CD ushered in. If anything, people want more of something unique, with special cover art, sleeve notes and better packaging. Tony Wilson cites Skam's website [www.skam.co.uk] as a possible model, "It's fantastic - I'm getting design, art, creativity from websites when I used to get them from Peter Saville's album sleeves".

Gorillaz is perhaps the net's most advanced music project to date. The brainchild of Damon Albarn (lead singer of Blur) and Jamie Hewlitt (animator previously responsible for Tank Girl), it's a website-based 'virtual band' that's proved massively successful, notching up over 1 million visits in its most popular month from 575,000 unique users [August 2001, source: EMI]. One look at its brilliantly designed and written site shows that the internet needn't just make up for the lack of physical formats with pretty sleeves, but can really push the envelope forward. Fergal Gara says selling music this way "can bring the artist as close as possible to the fan in a unique way. You're getting an incredibly powerful communication tool".

"In future, new music consumers will want to see real benefits - not just another technology for the sake

of it", says Ken Ishiwata. Just as coloured vinyl, picture discs, gatefolds and digipacks have parted music buyers with their hard earned cash in the past, so a new breed of 'supersite' looks set to make the experience of being a fan better than ever tomorrow. The success of Gorillaz, Beatles.com and Robbie Williams' new 'Swing When You're Winning' site proves there's life after the old physical formats - even if some of us won't be giving up our prized Elvis, Beatles, punk, indie or dance singles just yet, thank you very much. ■ ▲

GREAT XP-ECTATIONS

In 2000, Microsoft famously introduced its own rival for MP3 called Windows Media Audio (WMA). The company justified the new format by saying it gave better sound than MP3 using less memory space. This was arguable, but what was certain was that it gave the US computing giant a presence in the online music marketplace. Next came the launch of its landmark Windows Media Player 7, bundled with the new Millennium Edition operating system that reached Britain last September. A brilliant application, it genuinely moved the game forward as far as experiencing sound and vision on a PC was concerned.

Now comes news of Microsoft's new XP operating system, due out on October 25th. Alongside a better looking, less cluttered desktop, it adds yet more multimedia features under the guise of Windows Media Player 8, including more powerful digital audio capabilities and even built-in CD recording software. More than ever, this puts Microsoft up against RealNetworks, the company formed in 1994 by ex-Microsoft man Rob Glaser. Its RealPlayer format now claims 200 million unique users, which is more than all the other formats put together. In January 2001, RealPlayer was used by 25m home and 10.2m work users, up 49% and 57% respectively year on year. By contrast, Windows Media Player grew slower, up 31% to 5.1m home users during that same period [source: Media Matrix]. The great PC multimedia format war rages on.



Gorillaz: the future of on-line music?

slavishly collected limited editions as an expression of their dedication to their favourite artists, now "life and leisure have become the artefact". He says that there's now so many new ways to express your lifestyle - from the ringtones you download to your choice of default website on your browser - that "downloading the artefact isn't really the issue anymore"

It's early days for internet music, and musicians and recording companies are both still feeling their way around the new medium. Let's hope they learn a lesson from one of the most remarkable recent success

HALF TIME

By using 8cm CD-Rs, Philips new eXpanium EXP401 digital audio player gives the benefits of disc-based digital audio players in half the size. David Price kicks off.

Most people in Britain won't have seen an 8cm (3 inch) Compact Disc for a very long time. Back in the late eighties, various record companies released singles on these diminutive digital discs, but by the end of the decade the format had withered and it was 12cm silver frisbees all the way. In Japan however, the dinky format carried on regardless, becoming the standard medium for CD singles.

Back to 2001, and the wee disc is back with a vengeance, this time as a computer CD-R storing 185MB of data. This isn't a new idea either though, because Sony (of course) also sold a Data Discman in Japan for several years, offering handy portable access to maps, encyclopedias and dictionaries from pre-recorded CD-Rs. What is new though is Philips' decision to use the baby silver disc for audio. As it can only manage twenty one minutes of uncompressed 16/44 digital sounds, MP3 proved ideal for expanding playing times by a factor of ten. Better still, the Dutch electronics giant added AAC (Advanced Audio Coding) which offers similar sound to top notch MP3 in even less space. The combination of dinky size, great sonics and over three hours of music on every disc makes the new Philips eXpanium EXP401 potential dynamite.

The new machine feels dramatically smaller than your average full size MP3 CD player. About as bulky as the biggest of the second generation MP3 walkies (RCA Lyra take a bow!), it's no microscopic marvel, but neither is it a chore to carry around. At 220g and 92x119x28.5mm, it will just about fit in a trouser pocket. Mobile MiniDisc users will still find it bulky, but then again they probably wouldn't even countenance a full size CD Discman. Neither does it skip - Philips'



proprietary Magic ESP (Electronic Skip Protection) boasts a beefy 100 second buffer (for 128kbps MP3-CD files). Usefully, it's powered by a single AA battery (giving around 6 hours of playing time) and is well hewn from heat-resistant plastic.

As you'd expect, it's a breeze to use. Just burn an 8cm CD-R on your existing computer CD writer, either as a data CD-R (or CD-RW) containing MP3, UDF (Universal Disk Format) or AAC files or as a standard audio CD, and load it into the eXpanium. Press Play and the large LC display will show 'CD read' as it goes off to find the TOC. This done, you can navigate via album and track numbers, or program in up to 50 tracks. There's the usual DBB bass booster (best left alone) and jacks for the supplied stereo in-ear headphones, 4-key remote control and AC adapter.

I tried the new eXpanium both through its standard in-ear phones and plugged into my main hi-fi system (currently Denon PMA-850 amp and Yamaha NS1000M loudspeakers). It's not a dazzling hi-fi performer, but few portables are. I was, however, impressed with how smooth and listenable this little thing sounded -

even when driving some very revealing speakers. Kicking off with uncompressed CD audio, the EXP401 sounded soft, warm and fluffy with no rough edges at all. Bass was loose but quite sumptuous - probably on account of the rather curtailed high treble rather than any particular gusto down at the low end. Midband lacked dynamics, precision and grip - with a poor sense of soundstaging, but was nevertheless quite refined and pleasant. Treble was rather perfunctory, but not in the least bit harsh or fatiguing - just as a portable should be.

Playing MP3 and AAC files, the new eXpanium was surprisingly convincing. Obviously, it depends what bitrates you choose for either of these file types, but 256kbps MP3 (the player goes up to the format's maximum permissible 320kbps) and 128kbps AAC (ripped by the latest RealJukebox 2) gave fine results. The Philips sounded warm, engaging and beguiling with few artefacts, even if it wasn't as clean or transparent as Philips' own flash memory-based Rush SA-126 digital audio portable running MP3.

A great little product then - small(ish), reasonably light and perfectly listenable, it's a cheap way to get over three hours worth of music on the move. My only reservation is how it will look in a year or two, when flash memory prices have got so cheap that you can spec your digital audio portable up to 256MB (giving over three hours of music) for just a few pounds. In the meantime at least, this is a fine solution, if something of a halfway house. ■ ▲

PHILIPS EXP401 £149.99
Tel: 020 8665 6350
www.expanium.philips.com

World Verdict
Great little walkie, going some way to offering the best of disc and flash memory-based digital portables in one package.

BURNING QUESTION

Is it worth paying extra for a 'name brand' CD-RW? David Price tries out Plextor's premium PlexWriter 16/10/40A.



► These days, you can pick up half decent computer CD burners for under £100 if you go to the right places. So why pay more? Well, spend an additional £100 and you're into the realm of grown-up products with all the bells and whistles, such as the one you see here. Plextor's PlexWriter 16/10/40A isn't the fastest, but is certainly one of the best built - the company has a formidable reputation for well screwed together 'data storage solutions', and this is no exception.

It offers useful 16x write, 10x rewrite and 40x read speeds, although it can't perform digital audio extraction this fast. In a sense though, these sizzling numbers are academic - as many disc copiers have discovered. Philips Red Book error correction isn't quite tight enough for audio copying at the speed-of-light, and sound can degrade badly (presumably) as jitter gets into the system. For best sound, you should always stick to lower speed settings, such as 4x, 2x or even real time.

As the numbers get higher, and ever more academic, useful 'real world' features like BURN-Proof Technology become the thing to look for. This feature - in conjunction with its decent 2MB internal buffer - eliminates the dreaded 'buffer underruns', which is where the burner's buffer momentarily runs of out data to write to the CD-R, causing a fatal crash. Like all burners equipped with this clever Sanyo technology, this one doesn't suffer from this at all.

As you'd expect from Plextor, it's an unremarkably styled design. It's standard sized at 146x41.3x202 mm and weighs 1.2kg. The front panel features an eject button (along with recess for emergency manual eject, should the disc get stuck inside), read and write LEDs and a 3.5mm headphone jack (0.8V at 32 Ohms). Round the back there's the power supply connector (DC +5V and DC +12V), analogue audio outputs and a digital S/PDIF out. It connects up using the regular E-IDE connector (aka ATAPI, PIO Mode 4, DMA Mode 2). The firmware is stored in FlashROM which makes it possible to quickly and easily upgrade to the latest version.

The package includes blank CD-R and CD-RW disks, WinOnCD and DirectCD recording software, plus Plextor's PlexTools utility software. There's also a well written manual (in 16 languages!) and all the mounting bits you need, including screws and E-IDE (ATAPI) and audio cables. Installation is completely straightforward - thanks in no small part to the excellent documentation. Drivers are included for Windows 95, Windows 98, Windows ME, Windows NT and Windows 2000.

The PlexWriter is hard to fault in use. Unlike burners of a couple of years back, this one does what it says on the box with no messing. The joy of BURN-Proof designs is that you can leave the burner cooking in the background while you do something else on your PC, safe in the

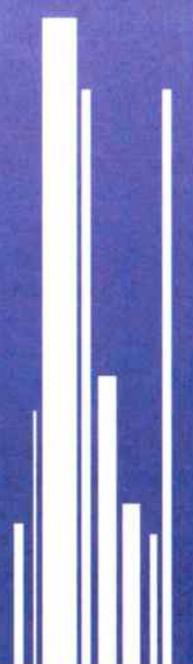
SPECIFICATIONS-

Writes CD-ROM Modes 1 and 2, CD-XA Form 1 and 2, CD-DA, CD-I, Video CD & Photo CD. - Creates Audio CD, CD Extra, Enhanced CD, Photo CD, CD-I & Video CD Titles. - Supports Disk-At-Once, Track-At-Once, Multisession, Packet Writing modes.

knowledge that it isn't going to go AWOL. Run at lowish speeds, this burner makes superb sounding CD-Rs - whether copying direct or burning from WAV files. The sound is beautifully crisp and clean and open, without the rounded edges of some others around right now. The CD copying crowd also reckons it's unusually good at digital audio extraction.

The accompanying CeQuadrat WinOnCD CD authoring software isn't as user friendly as, say, Roxio's Easy CD Creator but neither is it as fussy as Ahead Software's Nero Burning ROM. You can of course use the Roxio package instead, but if you do this, you lose the BURN-Proof facility. As with most of the latest designs, the PlexWriter supports CD-Text (reads it and writes it), and this is accessed via WinOnCD. A fine package then - although not the cheapest around, it positively oozes quality. ■ ▲

PlexWriter 16/10/40A £185
www.plextor.com



World Verdict



Fast, well built and featured design. Although pricey, it will last the distance.

welcome to world favourites

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

Prices shown are those at the time of the review



Roksan Caspian CD player
Solid as a ROK

COMPACT DISC

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

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

KENWOOD DP-3080/11* £180
Has great clarity and presence for the price. Not as naturally expressive as the CD4SE though. (Feb 98)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

COMPACT DISC TRANSPORTS

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

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

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

DACS

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

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

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

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

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

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

TURNTABLES

LINN SONDEK LP12 BASIK £1100
Off the pace these days in many respects but still an extremely sweet and engaging listen with a quintessentially analogue sound.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

TONEARMS

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

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

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

AUDIO MATTERS

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Alchemist Product 8 dac & drive (on dem)*	£1898	-
Alchemist The Statement pre amp ex/dem	£4999	£2295
Alchemist The Statement Stereo pwr ex/dem	£3999	£1995
Audion Black Shadows 845 valve monoblocks	£4000	£POA
Audion Silvernight 300B monoblocks	£2250	£POA
Audion Golden Nights	£4000	£2200
Bow Technology Wazoo (ex/d)	£2195	£1595
Bryston BP ST4 pwr	£2100	£1195
Chario Academy 1 solid walnut (ex/d)	£1299	£800
Classe DR 6L pre	£3400	£1295
DPA Renaissance CD player ex/d	£995	£595
Krell 250 CD Player	£2592	£1795
Krell Kav 300I	£2495	£POA
Linn Karin pre	£1400	£595
Mark Levinson 331 pwr	£4500	£2695
Mark Levinson 23.5 pwr	£7500	£3195
Meridian 551 int. amp	£845	£425
Meridian 555 pwr. amp	£750	£395
Naim 72 pre	£800	£395
Naim 90 pwr.	£487	£250
Perreux AC 3 pre ex.d	£1700	£1195
Perreux 6 ch. pwr amp	£2500	£1695
Roksan Caspian (AC3 DTS) pre & 5 ch. pwr amp (on/dem)	£2290	-
Ruark Prologue re 1 spks.	£999	£595
Monitor Audio 20SE	£2200	£950

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Denon DL 110	£79	£62	EX
DL 160	£95	£74	EX
DL 304	£210	£179	EX
Grado Prestige Black	£46		£25
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Ortofon 510 Mk II	£34		£22
MC 15 Super II	£130	£110	EX
MC 25 FL	£227	£193	EX
MC 10 Supreme	£304	£258	EX
MC 20 Supreme	£382	£323	EX
MC 30 Supreme	£452	£385	EX
Rohmann	£837	£742	EX
Shure SC 35 C	£35		£27
V 15 V XMR	£285		£190

EX - Exchange price against any Audio Technica, Denon, Goldring or Ortofon moving coil type cartridges

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Ortofon FF 15 E II, VMS 20 E II, OM 20	£15.00
Pioneer PN 210, PN 220, PN 240	£11.00
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N 95 ED, N 95 EJ, N 75 3 (78)	£15.00
VN 35 E, VN 35 E	£18.00
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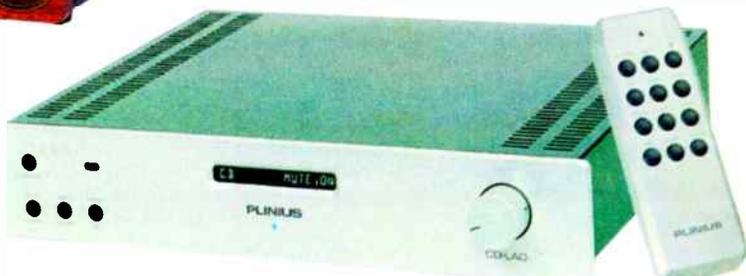


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Prices shown are those at the time of the review



Musical Fidelity X-Cans2
Warm, sumptuous, sweet sound

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

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

CARTRIDGES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

INTEGRATED AMPLIFIERS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PHONO STAGES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Individually, Linn Classik - any colour £995. Celestion Compact A £599

SONNETEER SEDLEY £399

Combines transparency and fine dynamics with excellent rhythmic ability. (May 98)

PRE-AMPLIFIERS

AMC 1100 £150

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

AUDIO ANALOGUE

BELLINI £475

Showcases AA's characteristic mix of clarity and musicality and blasts the competition. (Apr 98)

CHORD CPA1800 £1800

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

CROFT VITALE £350

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

XTC PRE-1 * £1000

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

POWER AMPLIFIERS

ARCAM 9 * £400

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

CHORD SPM400 £1400

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

MARANTZ MODEL 9 * £8000

Authentic reproduction monoblocs still more than cut the sonic mustard. Highly expensive and highly sought after. (Mar 97)

MICHELL ALECTO £1989

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

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-A200£1000/pair

200W of high-end monobloc power in a grooved tube. (Aug 98)

NAIM NAP180 £1060

Partnered with a NAC82, this has classic Naim control, and a superbly rhythmic presentation.

TUNERS

CAMBRIDGE T500 £180

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

CREEK T43 £399

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

MARANTZ ST17 £600

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

MISSION CYRUS FM7* £300

Clear and lucid sound puts it up with the best. Superb build too. (Apr 94)

NAIM NAT03 £595

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

SONY ST-SA3ES* £250

Beguiling RDS tuner for the sonically discerning. Good ergonomics and sensitive too. (Apr 97)

CASSETTE DECKS

AIWA AD-S750* £200

Sonically a very decent machine at the price. Comes fitted with Dolby B, C and the dead handy Dolby S. (Apr 96)

AIWA AD-S950* £300

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

KENWOOD KX-3080* £160

A simple deck, but excellent-quality head and transport give top quality sound. (Oct 96)

PIONEER CT-S740S £430

A great piece of engineering from Pioneer, with first-rate sound. (Jun 96)

YAMAHA KX-580SE* £250

The 'SE' tag is more than a marketing gimmick. Sound is solid and clear with Dolby S. (Sep 97)

LOUDSPEAKERS

CASTLE EDEN £469

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

EPOS ES12 * £495

Strong, punchy bass is allied to finely detailed, articulate midrange and sparkling treble. (Oct 96)



Kef Cresta I loudspeakers
A very musical sound

KEF CRESTA I £100

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

KLIPSCH HERESY II £1100

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

MISSION 752 * £495

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

MISSION 771 £170

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

Billy Vee

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Featured - CD5 Player (Top) & Nait 5 (Bottom)

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

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

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

MINIDISC PLAYERS

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

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

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

SONY MDS-JE55ES £520
MiniDisc recorder
The best sounding MD deck made so far, thanks to awesome build and heroic ATRAC-DSP Type R coding.



Alesis Masterdisk
A glimpse of the future

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

DIGITAL RECORDERS

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

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

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

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

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

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

DVD PLAYERS

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

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

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

HEADPHONES

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

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



Nordost Blue Heaven
A simple and effective upgrade

INTERCONNECTS

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

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

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

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

LOUDSPEAKER CABLE

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

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

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

Billy Vee
SOUND SYSTEMS

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0% APR is available on purchases of more than £660. Please call for details. * Prices Correct at 12/06/01 E&OE

Arcam AV50 Amplifier	(699.00)	£179.00	Naim NAC72 Preamp (1Yr G/tee)	(760.00)	£449.00
KEF Concerto 1 Spkrs (5Yr G/tee)	(599.00)	£249.00	Naim NAT 02 Tuner (2Yr G/tee)	(1240.00)	£849.00
KEF Concerto 2 Spkrs (5Yr G/tee)	(799.00)	£369.00	Naim AV1 Surround Procs E/D (2Yr G/tee) .	(1835.00)	£659.00
Linn Karik CD Player S/H (1Yr G/tee)	(1498.00)	£895.00	Naim SBL Passive Speakers S/H (1Yr G/tee)	(2475.00)	£1495.00
Linn 5120 Centre Spkr (1Yr G/tee)	(725.00)	£395.00	Naim CD2 CD Player S/H (1Yr G/tee)	(1995.00)	£1199.00
Linn AV5140 Speakers (Cherry)(2Yr G/tee) (2150.00)		£1395.00	Naim Intro Spkrs - Beech (1Yr G/tee)	(790.00)	£590.00
Linn 5150 Subwoofer-Cherry (2Yr G/tee)	(2999.00)	£1995.00	Naim Credo Speakers (2Yr G/tee)	(1285.00)	£895.00
Linn Kairn Line Preamp (1Yr G/tee)	(1400.00)	£799.00	Naim NAP 250 Power amp (1Yr G/tee)	(1855.00)	£1390.00
Linn CD12 CD Player E/D (2Yr G/tee)	(12000.00)	£7995.00	Naim Flat Cap Power Supply (1Yr G/tee)	(370.00)	£249.00
Linn Keilidh Active Spkrs inc Stands & cards(1135.00)		£695.00	ProAc Response 2 Spkrs S/H (1Yr G/tee) .	(1995.00)	£1175.00
Marantz DV4100 DVD Player (1Yr G/tee)	(399.00)	£299.00	PMC TB2 Spkrs S/H - Cherry (1Yr G/tee)	(700.00)	£549.00
Marantz DV7000 DVD Player (1Yr G/tee)	(599.00)	£449.00	PMC LB1 Speakers (2Yr G/tee)	(1150.00)	£825.00
Marantz SR5000 AV Receiver (1Yr G/tee)	(499.00)	£375.00	Rega Jura Speakers (2Yr G/tee)	(498.00)	£329.00

World Classics

CASSETTE

NAKAMICHI DR-2

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

NAKAMICHI CR-7

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

YAMAHA TC-800G

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

CD PLAYERS

MERIDIAN 207

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

PIONEER PD-91

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

CAMBRIDGE CDI

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

AMPLIFIERS

LEAK POINT ONE, TL12 & TL10

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

LEAK PRE-AMPS

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



Garrard 401
A legendary turntable.

LEAK STEREO 20

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

LEAK TL12+

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

NAD 3020

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

QUAD 33/303 PRE/POWER

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

QUAD 22/II PRE/POWER

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

SUGDEN A21

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

TECHNICS SE-A5 Mk2

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

LOUDSPEAKERS

KLIPSCHORN

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

LEAK SANDWICH

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

LOWTHER PM6A

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

MAGNEPLANAR SMGa

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

MISSION 770

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

QUAD ESL57

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

YAMAHA NS1000M

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

TANNOY GRF & AUTOGRAPH

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

WHARFEDALE SUPER 8 RS DD

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

TANNOY YORK, LANCASTER

Many similar models of infinite baffle or reflex design. Not the last word in tautness but the drivers work well in modern cabinets.

VINYL

ACOS LUSTRE

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

ALPHASON HR100S

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

ARISTON RD11

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

LINN AXIS

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

GARRARD 301 & 401

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

GOLDRING LENCO 88 & 99

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

HADCOCK 228

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

MICHELL FOCUS ONE

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

SHURE M75

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

SME 3009 IIS

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

THORENS TD124

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

THORENS TD150

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

TRIO L-07D

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

TUNERS

LEAK TROUGHLINE (ORIGINAL)

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

LEAK TROUGHLINE II & III MONO

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

LEAK TROUGHLINE III STEREO

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

MARANTZ ST-8

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



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- Dynavector
- Egglaston Works
- Electrograph Delphi
- Genelec
- Gryphon
- Graham
- Helios
- J.M. Lab
- John Shearn
- Krell
- Lexicon
- Loewe
- Mark Levinson
- Michell Eng.
- Musical Fidelity
- NEC
- Nordost
- Oracle
- Plinius
- P.M.C.
- Primare
- Quadraspire
- Selec
- REL
- Rockport
- Roksan
- Ruark
- Shahinian
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- Wilson Audio
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H I - F I

HOME CINEMA

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New this month

POWER AMPLIFIER

Audio Research DI15 mk II	£995.00	£3,150.00
Audio Research DI25	£1,995.00	£5,000.00
Aloia ST13.01/ PSU 13.1 Power/ PST/PSU 11.1 Pre	£4,250.00	£6,000.00
Krell FPB 300	£5,995.00	£9,990.00

SYSTEMS

Cello Audio Suite/ Palette/ Performance 2 Monoblocks/ Grand Master (Piano Black) Speakers	£38,000.00	£80,000.00
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PRE AMPLIFIER

Hovland Line Pre HP 100	£P.O.A.	£4,950.00
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SPEAKERS

Soundlab A3 Plus	£5,995.00	£12,000.00
KEF Ref 1.2 Rosewood	£995.00	£1,350.00
KEF Ref 2.2 Cherry	£1,350.00	£1,750.00
KEF Ref 3.2 Bur	£2,095.00	£2,750.00

CD PLAYERS & DACS

Theta Data Basic (transport)	£1,095.00	£2,000.00
Theta DS Pro Basic (D to A)	£1,095.00	£2,299.00

Power amplifiers

2 x Linn LK140 Power (price each)	£550.00	£750.00
Krell FPB 200	£4,995.00	£8,450.00
Conrad Johnson Prem 8a Monoblocks	£7,595.00	£14,000.00
Krell KA5 2 Monoblocks	£9,995.00	£20,000.00
Cary 572 se Monoblocks	£1,750.00	£2,350.00
Naim Nap 250 Old case, just serviced	£895.00	£1,800.00
Krell KST 100	£895.00	£2,995.00
Linn Klassik	£895.00	£1,030.00
Boulder 1060 Power	£On Dem	£16,500.00
Albarray M408 Monoblocks	£495.00	£1,200.00
Copland CTA 501	£895.00	£1,800.00
Cary Audio 300 SE 5ig. WE300B	£3,495.00*	£5,304.00
VTL 120	£1,495.00	£3,500.00
Primare 30.1 Integrated (new)	£1,195.00	£1,500.00
Copland CTA 402	£1,395.00	£1,800.00
Plinius SA100	£On Dem	£3,400.00
Cary SLA 70 mk II Silver	£1,295.00	£2,250.00
Krell FPB 600	£7,500.00	£12,000.00
Audio Research Classic 150 Monoblocks	£3,750.00	£12,000.00
Copland CTA 402	£1,395.00	£1,700.00
Krell 250 A/3 3 Chanel amp	£2,995.00	£4,698.00
Audio Note P2 5E	£795.00	£1,500.00
Graff GM200	£4,750.00	£8,000.00
ML 436 Mono Power Amps	£10,500.00	£12,000.00
Cary SLA 70 mk II	£995.00	£2,250.00
Audio Refinement Complete Amp	£695.00	£895.00
Audio Research VT200 mk II	£695.00*	£9,998.00
Audio Research Ref 600 mk II	£29,995.00	£40,000.00
YBA Passion Monoblocks	£On Dem	£8,995.00
YBA Passion Stereo	£On Dem	£5,995.00
Krell FPB 300c	£8,500.00	£9,998.00
Sunfire 300 Power Amp	£1,395.00	£2,400.00
Plinius 250 mk IV	£Dem	£6,000.00
Audio Note Kasi	£12,495.00	£30,000.00
Cary 805 C Monoblocks	£On Demo	£8,250.00
Audio Note Neiro (as new)	£7,995.00	£16,500.00
Cary 300 se LX20 Monoblocks	£3,750.00	£5,250.00
Counterpoint SA12	£795.00	£1,400.00
Jadis Defy 7 MK III	£2,000.00	£4,790.00
John Shearn Reference Phase 3 Power Amp	£550.00	£749.00
Krell FPB 600 c	£9,995.00	£14,994.00
Sugden AU51	£995.00	£1,500.00

Quality speakers

Linn Keilidh Speakers + Plinths	£550.00	£750.00
Apogee Mini Grand	£2,500.00	£4,500.00
Magneplanar 2.5R	£995.00	£2,500.00
Wilson Max (new)	£29,995.00	£39,000.00
Harbeth HLP3es	£495.00	£800.00
Sonus Faber Extrema + Stds	£3,750.00	£6,500.00
JM Lab Utopia (Ex Dem)	£12,495.00	£16,999.00
Vienna Acoustics Mozart	£1,095.00	£1,699.00
Audio Physic Avanti	£On Dem	£7,500.00
Kef 104.2	£695.00	£1,200.00
Audio Physic Steps and Stands	£899.00	£1,300.00
Audio Plan Contrast 3	£1,795.00	£3,200.00
Proac Response 3.5 Cherry	£1,895.00	£4,250.00
Proac Studio 3 Rosewood	£995.00	£1,200.00
Avalon Ascents	£6,995.00	£12,000.00
JM Lab Micro Utopia	£On dem	£3,899.00
JM Lab Mini Utopia	£On dem	£4,500.00
JM Lab Mezzo Utopia	£On dem	£7,300.00
JM Lab Electra 915.1 (ex dem)	£995.00	£1,895.00
Audio Physic Tempo III	£On Dem	£2,000.00
Naim SBL's	£1,695.00	£2,225.00
BC Acoustics Tibre	£795.00	£1,100.00
ClaraVox Magnifica	£8,500.00	£14,500.00
BC Acoustics Araxe	£895.00	£1,195.00
Ensemble Speakers PA1	£995.00	£2,000.00
Alon V MK III	Special	£5,500.00
Audio Physic Caldera	On demo	£10,000.00
Audio Physic Libra	X-demo	£4,799.00
Audio Physic Rhea Sub	£2,350.00	£3,099.00
Audio Physic Spark	On demo	£1,749.00
Audio Physic Steps	On demo	£999.00
Audio Physic Virgo	£2,395.00	£3,000.00
Rogers LS55 (new)	£330.00	£430.00
Wilson System 5.1	£330.00	£430.00

Pre amplifiers

Linn Wokonda Pre	£550.00	£750.00
Audio Synthesis Passion 8M bal/ remote	£1,095.00	£1,895.00
Naim Hi Cap (Old case)	£395.00	£850.00
Naim Naxo 2/4 x-over	£395.00	£850.00
Audible Illusions Modulus P3A mm	£1,795.00	£2,565.00
BAT VK505E	£5,295.00	£6,500.00
Krell KSL 2 Pre	£1,750.00	£3,000.00
Musical Fidelity X-Tone + XPSU	£149.00	£225.00
Cary SLP98L Remote Pre	£1,750.00	£2,794.00
BAT VK51 + remote	£2,350.00	£3,995.00
Audio Research SP9	£895.00	£1,200.00
Cary SLP 74 pre	£795.00	£1,500.00
Conrad Johnson PV10 AL	£895.00	£1,200.00
Boulder 1012 (pre amp/ 24.96 dac/ Phono)	£ On Dem	£13,000.00
Krell KRC3	£549.00	£995.00
Trilogy 901 Pre	£1,295.00	£1,295.00
Krell KSL + Phono	£ On Dem	£4,900.00
YBA I Alpha Pre mm/mc + psu	£ On Dem	£5,595.00
YBA Passion Pre + mc	£p.o.a.	£30,000.00
Boulder 2010 Pre	£ On Dem	£3,200.00
Plinius 16L	£ On Dem	£5,750.00
C.A.T. ultimate reference Pre Amp Inc/ Phono Stage	£595.00	£935.00
Tube Tech Seer Pre Amp	On Demo	£3,140.00
Audible Illusions P3A Pre MM/MC mk II	£695.00*	£1,195.00
Electrocompaniet EC 4.5 (new)	£2,995.00	£8,000.00
Jeff Rowland Consonate + phono (3box)	£1,495.00	£4,000.00
Mark Levinson No 28	£195.00	£450.00
Naim 42.5		

* Reduced this month

CD players & DACS

Linn Karik CD Transport	£795.00	£1,500.00
Linn Numerik	£895.00	£1,800.00
Pink Triangle 24 bit Module	£395.00	£645.00
Mark Levinson No 39	£3,995.00	£5,000.00
Copland CDA 266	£995.00	£1,199.00
Teac P30 X-Dem	£1,995.00	£2,500.00
Acuphase 90/91	£6,999.00	£16,000.00
YBA CD1 Alpha	£3,495.00	£5,000.00
YBA CD Speciale	£495.00	£675.00
Theta Data II/ Progen III Bal	£2,750.00	£8,500.00
Thule Spirit CD 150B	£ On Dem	£899.95
Audio Refinement CD Complete	£650.00	£875.00
Boulder 2020 dac	£p.o.a.	£24,000.00
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Pink Triangle Da Capo (1307)	£795.00	£1,595.00
Theta Data II Transport AT + link	£1,995.00	£4,000.00
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Rega Planer 3 + Hi Fi News Out Board		
Power Supply	£320.00	£423.00
Clear Audio Symphono phono stage X-demo		
MM/MC	£640.00	£740.00
Lavardin Reference Phono	£ -	£2,500.00
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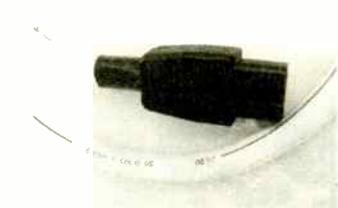
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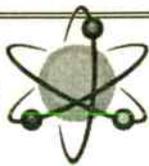
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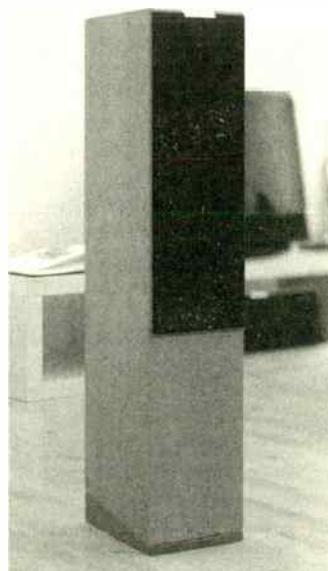
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Arcam Alpha DAB 10	£800	£640
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Jamo 507's (black)	X	750	350
Linn Sondek/Lingo/Mission Mechanic/Kieski Blue (V.D. Hul new)	X	N/A	1000
Oracle Delphi MKII/Rega 250(+)	X	N/A	1500
Sony VPH 1001Q CRT projector	P/E	6000	1500
Davis Home Cinema 1 (DLP)	X	4200	2500
ATC SCA 2/SPA2-150 pre/power	P/E	6800	3700
Proceed audio-Video Pre-Amp	P/E	4700	3000
Rotel 991 THX 200W/Ch Power (2 off, still under guarantee)	P/E	650	350
Marantz PM17 Kl Sign. integrated	P/E	900	450
SME V Pickup Arm	P/E	1600	350
Audioplan Kontraplung Speakers	P/E	1100	450

(Note: offers on the above may be considered)

New Speaker's

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

www.vaudio.co.uk

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1.0m WBT phono to Phono £149.90

0.6m WBT phono to Phono £119.99

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"...There was an overall feeling of neutrality and naturalness with this cable; it performed the vanishing trick that many aspire to but few achieve..."
Tony Bolton Hi-Fi News

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extra 0.5m £25

COMPARED WITH KIMBER
"The main difference between these two leads was the extreme top end, where the True Colours had a slightly 'creamer' sound to it."
Tony Bolton Hi-Fi News



"Given their modest cost they really do represent the minimum you should be spending, even in the context of a budget system."
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SUPERB CABLES at SENSIBLE PRICES

TCI Adder Digital Interconnect

1.0m WBT Phono to WBT Phono £59.99

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★★★★★
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WHAT HI-FI

Overall Winner-Interconnects Supertest



BEST BUY
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Overall Winner Group Test WHAT HI FI

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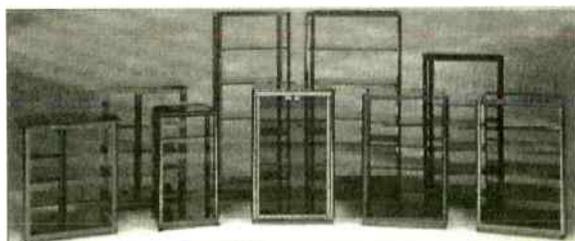
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Marantz CD63 (SH)	£69	(£399)
Sony CDP591 (SH)	£80	(£160)
Sony CDPXE220 (ED)	£69	(£120)

Amps	Price	New
Meridian 201 pre (SH)	£395	(£760)
Meridian 205 monoblocs (SH)	£795	(£1600)
NAD 3020A (SH)	£95	(£150)
NAD 312 (ED)	£179	(£229)
Pioneer VSA303 (ED) 5*	£249	(£299)

Speakers	Price	New
TDL T.Line 2's Rosewood (ED)	£399	(£600)
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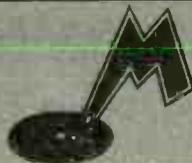
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ARCAM ALPHA 7RE Amp	EX/DEMO	£280	£180
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NAD 917 AV Tuner/PRE Amp	EX/DEMO	£550	£300
YAMAHA AX596 Amp	EX/DEMO	£300	£210
YAMAHA CDX496 CD Player	EX/DEMO	£180	£130
YAMAHA DSP AX1 Black AV Amp	EX/DEMO	£2,000	£900
YAMAHA DVDC 996 DVD Player	EX/DEMO	£500	£350
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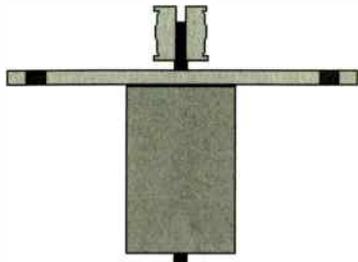
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HI-FI WORLD

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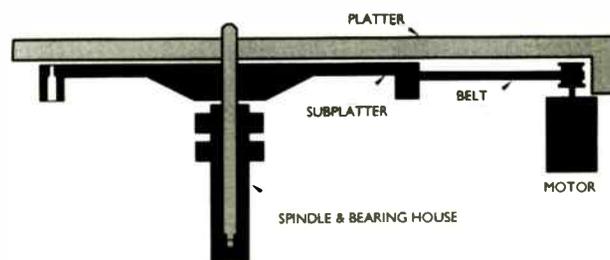
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HI-FI WORLD SUPPLEMENT

"is exceptionally easy to build and professional in both sound quality and appearance"

HI-FI NEWS SUPPLEMENT



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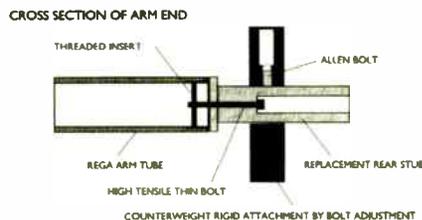
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						Lavardin IS Reference amplifier - new model on demo		2295

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NAIM NAP 135'S BOXED AND IMMACULATE (GREEN CASES)	£1995
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PIONEER CLD95 ELITE LASER DISC PLAYER (£2000 NEW)	£495
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YAMAHA DSP-A1 BLACK (£1800 APPROX NEW) BOXED AND IMMACULATE	£595

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JM Lab Electra 905	1199	999
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Linn Wakonda Pre amp	650	400
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NAD 310 integrated	110	80
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Rogers LS4a	-	150
Sonneteer Byron CD	795	600
Sonneteer Alabaster integrated	900	700
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Yamaha DSP E492 Processor	-	175

Various interconnects, supports, cables at reduced prices.

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 see page 130 for details

Dealers must not advertise in the Private Classified section.
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RUARK EXCALIBERS (Black Piano Lacquer) five months old £5,995.00. Sony SCD-777ES (SACD Player) £1,200.00. Tag McLaren T32R Analogue Tuner (Silver) £850.00. Kef Reference 104/2 (Walnut) £475.00. Technics SCM-100 Power Amp and SU-A40 pre £300.00. All are mint with their boxes / manuals etc. Tel: 01622 721 011 or 07973 899 651. (Dec/1)

NAIM 72 pre amp with phono boards £299. Naim 90 power amp £249. Castle Harlech speakers, light oak, lovely wife, friendly furniture! A steal at £399. Tel: 01793 643 930 or 07971 605 383 (Swindon) (Nov/1)

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

ONE PAIR of KLS 3 Gold Mk 2 with extending port. Piano black finish, excellent condition, can demo £675 ovno. One pair of KLS 10 high tech mini monitor, gold dome, mahogany veneer plus KLS10 sub woofer £530 ovno. All above built professionally. Pair IMF transmission line speakers (TLS50's Mk2) excellent condition £230 ono. Genuine reason for sale. Tel: 0115 975 4070 (Nottingham) (Nov/1)

GARRARD 301, with SME 3009, both very good condition, mounted in heavy MDF plinth - £295. Tel: John 01225 742 451, Email: jrr@euphony.net (Nov/1)

GOLDMUND STUDIO £850. Revox B261 £250. Souther SA3 £250. RTL G30 £130. Teac CD5 £130. Zeta, boxed, needs rewire £150. Adcom 555 £180. NVA integrated £35. Tel: 01472 508 533, Email: sweetpea1@ntlworld.com (Nov/1)

TEAC T1 CD Transport £200. Musical Fidelity X-DAC, X10-D £170. Pioneer A300R Precision amp £170. All good condition. Tel: Colin 0161 368 4105 (Greater Manchester) (Nov/1)

NAIM 82 Pre amp with Hi-Cap £1575. Naim CD5 with power supply £1575. Linn LP12 (black) less arm, Lingo power supply £725. All in excellent condition. Tel: 01706 212 264 or 01706 830 240 (Nov/1)

DYNAUDIO CONTOUR 1.3 MkII speakers + Dynaudio Stands £800. Boxed & as new. Reason - emigrating. Tel: Ben 07813 586 690 or 01491 410 963 or Email: webbski7@hotmail.com (Nov/1)

WANTED: MARANTZ PM-4 amplifier, gold coloured unit with black grill mesh cabinet top. Internally this unit must be in excellent condition and externally excellent to mint condition. No dents, scratches or signs of wear. Must be boxed with manual. For unit in this condition £400 paid. Also require Denon PMA-850 amplifier in same condition as above unit, £400 paid. Tel: 01865 378 578 (Nov/1)

KRELL KSL £875 ono. Magnaplaner MG2C £675 ono. MSB Link DAC HDCD upsample + P100 power base £825. Yamaha NS1000 ebony rare offers circa £900. Audionote AN VSX 4mtr pair £3600 new £1600 ono. Tel: 01403 713 783 (Dec/1)

CELLO PERFORMANCE II, power amplifiers Cello Audio-Suite Master Supply Premium 18k (60k). Cello Stradivani Grand Master speakers 16k (60k) Strings NRG control massive 400 watt Class A monoblocks 5k (13k) Tel: Peter (home) 01787 210 137, (work) 020 7518 2026. Email: pstringer@ltbuk.com (Nov/1)

QUAD 33 £70, Quad 405 Mk1 £180, Quad FM3 £70, purpose-terminated Chord Cobra cables free if bought as a lot (worth over £100). Audionote Kit 2 amplifier assembled £400 (6550 SE 15w) Tel: 07802 936 049 or 01902 751 703 (Nov/1)

MARANTZ PM17 KI Signature integrated amplifier £695 (£1300). REL Strata II Sub £250 (£575). B&W CDMISE speakers, rose-wood £330 (£600). All mint, boxed. Tel: 01484 307 096 (Huddersfield) (Nov/1)

QUAD 405, 34 and FM4 with all accessories and instruction manuals. Original owner, £550. Bose AM5 Series III with fixing brackets £200. Tel: 07887 647 863 (S. London) (Nov/1)

MERIDIAN MI active loudspeakers including power amps £395. Burmester 785 pre-amp with MM-MC inputs, suits above £295. Rare Koetsu tonearm £75. Tel: 01268 732 934 (Essex) (Nov)

MUSICAL FIDELITY Nu Vista pre amplifier limited edition Class A, boxed and in perfect condition £850. Tel: 020 8291 9261 (Nov/1)

B & W LCR6's speakers, Paul Messenger favourites. Cost £700 accept £350. 7 months old. Tel: 02894 479 385 (Nov)

EPOS ESII speakers complete with EPOS stands cabletalk bi-wire and original box. Can dem £130. Tel: 020 8302 5434 (Nov)

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KIMBER SELECT KS-3D35 12 feet speaker cable with jumpers. Hybrid copper silver. Hold graphic imaging. 8 months old. 2/3 Russ Andrews price £3250. Tel: 02890 480 078 after 6pm Email: david.sheridan1@btinternet.com (Nov/1)

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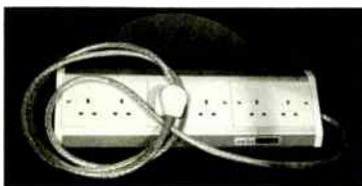
AudioSource is the original Scottish cable company (from 1994). Commercial cables have a house signature, made to a price which has to absorb high development, establishment, marketing costs and margins. High-end cables are priced for low volume recovery of such costs, but aim for neutrality of timbre, maximum detail, and minimum RFI/EMI.



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These cables were the first affordable interconnects to achieve volume sales with a high-performance open-sound. The low price is achieved by direct-mail-order, so no distribution costs, no R&D, no fancy packaging. No compromise has been made in the conductor purity, choice of materials and in the construction. The finest silver-content solder, temperature, timing, and twinning have all been researched by combining theory with tests of over 87 prototypes. Every one is tested and compared to reference before despatch and a test certificate signed. Each Stratos lead is truly high-end lead at a middle price and we are often asked to part-exchange acclaimed interconnects and digital leads costing up to £800. Full specification and user comments available by e-mail or overnight postal mail.

Unhappy with all proprietary mains boxes, The Audio Salon commissioned several engineering firms to develop a distribution box which did not degrade power delivery and a filter which did



Audio Source E4

not change merely the sound (pros and cons). After many delays and disappointments, the AudioSource power ports have emerged, priced at a lower level as a result of low advertising budget and direct-mail-order selling. Six and eight-way outlets are priced at £299 and £319 respectively, and the British Braided Cord (praised in the September issue of *Hi-Fi Choice*) similarly costs only £45 for 1.5 metre 13-amp UK to IEC.

AudioSource has no establishment costs to recover and is distributed direct by The Audio Salon Direct.

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Noise suppressor plug £75
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The Best Value Interconnects

AudioSource Stratos Series 3
0.5 metre £99, 1.0 metre pair £125
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Phonobox 843P-M £379
Phonobox Signature MM/MC £529
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SR-202 with SRM-12 energiser
SRS-3030 Classic System II £695
SR-303 with SRM-313 energiser
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CABLES - JPS Labs

This highly acclaimed full range of audio cables and mains cords is available in the UK at American domestic prices by mail-order. The unique lifelike sound is achieved by rigorous design and construction to minimise RFI/EMI, and by unique and superior materials. Alumiloy, blending copper and aluminium, is the only metal which has been designed from scratch as a signal conductor. JPS is the only

company to design AC mains cords dedicated for video, digital, analogue and power amps. The enhancement of performance has now been experienced by British audiophiles for almost two years. Despite honest, no nonsense pricing by JPS, the famous Kaptovator costing £1,095 for a 2-metre mains cord has all buyers coming back for more! Definitely superior to upsampling or AC regeneration from a mere mains cord. (If AC regeneration worked well, so would your amplifier!) And now, welcome to the Aluminata priced at \$3,500, almost an embarrassment! But I want one! You, please start with our inexpensive cords, you'll be amazed. Refund and upgrade policy plus literature, all available upon request.

Salon Direct is proud to represent the high-achieving, down-to-earth *JPS Labs* company and to distribute direct at US domestic prices, even excluding VAT and carriage!!! A serious challenge to Rip-off-Britain, and to other brands! Revisions are rare from JPS but the new Ultra has no price increase, and the new FX interconnects are down in price, both due to increased volume of production. Call for upgrade programme: the new products really eclipse the old not to mention the competition!

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Single-ended, RCA to RCA 0.5m 1.0m
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New! The SuperConductor FX £179 £219
SuperConductor-2 WBT N/A £499

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New! The SuperconductorFX £319
SuperConductor-2 £999

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New! SuperConductor FX	£195	£219
SuperConductor2	£459	£499
<i>XLR Balanced (AES/EBU)</i>		
New! SuperConductor FX	£269	£299
SuperConductor2	£659	£699

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Power Lead (UK version, 2.0m)	£359
Kaptovator (UK version, 2.0m)	£1,095
New! Aluminata (UK, 2.0m)	£2,495

JPS SPEAKER CABLES

Single Wire Stereo Pairs:	6 ft	8ft
New! Ultra Conductor	£129	£149
Petite Superconductor+	£449	£499
SuperConductor+	£599	£699
SuperConductor2	£1599	£1899
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new! Ultra Conductor	£229	£249
SuperConductor+	£699	£799
SC2 Bi-wire Jumper Wires - set of 4:	£85	

Special Internet offer
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DPA RENAISSANCE CD player £400 ono. Rega Planet CD player £200 ono. Sequence 400 speakers plus stands £125 ono. Sony ST261 tuner £50. Tel: 01262 601 694 (Bridlington East Yorkshire) (Nov/1)

MARANTZ CD 94 Mk II CD player, excellent condition, boxed, a highly reviewed classic £300. Tel: Martin 07768 202 237 (Beds/Northants) (Nov/1)

MUSICAL FIDELITY MC2 speakers £100. Technics SLPS 900 CD SME 3009 S2 IMP.D.H.F.D. Tonearm £80. Dual 522 record deck £30. Koss Pro 4 Mk2 headphones £45. Castle Chester speakers £125. Box assorted valves. Tel: 01224 646 473 (Nov/1)

PIONEER PD91 CD £325. Pioneer A91D amplifier £325. Manticore Mantra record deck £150. Sony STSE500 tuner £40. Teak V970 cassette £50. Equipment rack £30. Thorens TD150 (noisy motor) £30. Tel: 01224 646 473 (Nov/1)

FEED YOUR Orbe! Private sale - classical audiophile and standard issue LP's, reasonable prices for Decca and EMI pressings. Browse large collection in Ealing. Tel: 020 8810 4060 (Nov/1)

RUARK TALISMAN speakers Mk1 upgraded to Mk II by Ruark v.g.c. walnut, will accept £280, boxed. Tel: John 01268 745416 (Nov/1)

RADFORD STA 25 very little use since £700 rebuild, immaculate, offers. Quad FM4 mint, boxed £150. Nakamichi 582 £200. Yamaha KT7000 £325. VPI HR19 Mk3 - RB250 Dynavector 1722 boxed £525. Quad 44 never used £175. Tel: 0771 297 6103 (Nov/1)

KIMBER SELECT KS1030 interconnect, 0.5m pair WBT phono's, new, £671. Mint condition in special box £370. Kimbers ultimate cable, amazing soundstage, clarity and sweetness. Genuine reason for sale. Tel: David 0191 454 6657 (Nov/1)

ZETA TONEARM, van den Hul silver wired, excellent condition, £220 ono. Target TT2 turntable rack, 2 MDF shelves, £20. Kimber Kable PBJ CD interconnect 0.5m - - 16Db, £20 (£45). Ringmat £25 (£50). Tel: 07710 368 611 (Nov/1)

SONUS FABER Signum reference class monitor, excellent condition, original owner, packaging, bought new £1250, sell £900, due to upgrade, can demo. Tel: 020 7677 2745, Email: david.waterman@msow.com (London) (Nov/1)

SONY CDP 502ES top class CD player £200. Pioneer A400 amplifier 60W £200. All as new condition manuals included. Tel: 01634 254 086 (Nov/1)

CASTLE EDEN speakers, pair in solid natural oak, boxed, mint condition £245 ono. Tel: 01296 339 979 or 07941 078947 (Aylesbury) (Nov/1)

NAKAMICHI RX202, Yamaha TC80092 instructions, boxed, Sony EL5 Elcaset plus remote. Thorens TD150 SME 3009. Sony PCM-501 ES digital processor. All mint working, offers. Tel: Stuart 01592 771 951 (Nov/1)

AUDIOLAB 8000Q pre amp boxed as new £600. Audiolab 8000T tuner £350. No box. Tel: after 5pm 01753 748 883 or 07810 030 238 (Nov/1)

TEAC VRDST1+ DT1 DAC £450 ono. Phillips RH544 motional feedback 3 way, excellent condition £300. Acoustic Energy AE505 floorstanders, cherry, immaculate condition £450 ono. Tel: Michael 07788 441 524 (Nov/1)

NAIM NAP 140 amplifier 18 months old, boxed, as new £525. Pioneer SPD07 slimline Dolby Digital processor, ideal hi-fi add on, boxed, as new £195. Musical Fidelity A1 amplifier £65. Tel: 01795 530 326 (Nov/1)

NAIM NAIT2 amplifier with 2 Chord Company Chrysalis interconnects, Naim NAC A5 speaker cable. Excellent starter set £200 complete. Mana Acoustics wall shelf £100. Tel: 01993 842 051. Mobile: 07779 335 910. Email: achaddy@yahoo.co.uk (Nov/1)

THORENS TD126 turntable SME series III arm. Audio Technica AT30E cartridge original packaging £200. Tel: 0121 353 7454. Email: tony@crokadyal.freemove.co.uk (Nov/1)

AUDIOPHILE VERSION
of PrimeDesign A100 integrated amplifier. Innovative design improvements enhancing performance; distortion, damping factor, speed. Suitable for SACD. 6 inputs. 180W/C into 4Ohms. Weighs 32lbs. As new. Manufacturers guarantee. High end sound. Absolute bargain. £400 Email: ian.simpson@freeola.net. Tel: 020 8599 3196 (Nov/1)

CONRAD JOHNSON PVI2 triode preamp. Great phono and linestage £950 (£2500). Art Audio triode monoblocs 60 watts. EL34 based variable feedback very classy and reliable £1250 (£3900) Tel: 01424 755 375 (Nov/1)

JADIS JD2 Signature drive + Sonic Frontier SFD1 DAC £1950. Gryphon Tabu integrated amp 2 x 100w £1900. Tel: 07900 224 959 London (Nov/1)

MICHELL ISO Hera £200. Michell Argo Hera £320. All boxed with instructions. Tel: 01422 203 057 (Halifax) (Nov/1)

CARTRIDGE MAN Music Maker good condition £135 ono. Cable Talk speaker cable model Concert 2.1 bi-wire 2 x 4 m £45. D.P.A. Little Bit 2 £85 ono. Audio Technica ATOC 3 cartridge £30. Tel: 01224 483 642. Email: barmonte@aol.com (Nov/1)

ROCKSAN ATTESSA DP2 Mk2 transport £550. Audiolab 8000 DAC £350. Quad 34 pre two 306 powers £500. Celestion 5000 speakers, dedicated stands £275. All boxed. Tel: 01772 252 126 (Preston) (Nov/1)

SONY XA50ES CD £425 (£1000). Sony FA30ES amp £150 (£380). B & W DM4 speakers £30. Wharfedale headphones WH303 unused £12. Sony CD750 headphones £20 (£90). Tel: 0121 246 0486 (Nov/1)

MISSION 771/772 pre power (superb) Copland CTA 501 with CD direct input. Cyrus One boxed mint Mission 780s. Marantz CD 52 MkII. Nakamichi ZX7 superb offers invited, swaps considered. Tel: Coventry 02476 338 844 (Nov/1)

Special Internet offer
see page 130 for details

AUDIO RESEARCH LS7 pre-amp £695. Audio Innovations First Audio new 2A3 triodes £495. Triangle Comete loudspeakers perfect with valves £195. All equipment boxed, Yamaha NS1000 spares – one perfect £250. Tel: 01935 891 342 (Nov/1)

TECHNICS SLP1200B CD player. Built by Panasonic for the BBC. 32lb 80's monster with balanced outputs. Superb sound. Very good condition with manual. (£2000) £450 ono. Tel: 01302 782 722 (Doncaster) (Nov/1)

ALBARRY 5008/11 monoblocks £375. Ion Systems MA40 power amps. Preamp power supplies £375. Sony TAE88 preamp boxed £250. KEF 105/1 £300 AR Legend turntable with tonearm £75. Tel: 01362 687 615 (Norfolk) (Nov/1)

MAGNEPLANAR 2.7SE high end panel loudspeakers. Light oak. As new with original boxes, manual and accessories amazing sound-stage. House move necessitates sale. £1650 (new £2650). Tel: 01257 277 857 (Lancs) (Nov/1)

NU VISTA 300 power amplifier, one year old, mint condition, boxed, car forces reluctant sale. Retail £3300 will accept £2400 ovno. Ask for Steve after 7pm at home. 01943 864 097 or anytime mobile 07989 651 114 (Nov/1)

LINN: KLOUT (grey finish) £1050, LK140 (Sep 00) £575, Majik £350, Mimik II £400, Ninkas (cherry, March 01) with stands £875, Stereo Aktiv cards for Ninkas/Keilidh £125. All in mint condition. Tel: 01622 858 085 (Nov/1)

ENTHUSIASTS SPEAKER Sale A.V.I. Nu-Nuetron £295. Arcaydis Baby 2 £195. Spondor SP3/1 £350. System Audio 1105 £165. Triangle Zephyr £295. UKD mini £225. Most boxed also some interconnects. Excellent condition. Tel: 0161 338 6249 (Nov/1)

UNISON RESEARCH SRI integrated amplifier, one year old, 80WPC Class A power remote volume control £800. Tel: 020 352 1066 (Nov/1)

VOYD 3 MOTOR turntable, Lexan Reference platter, split phase, PSU, Cylene 2 tone arm £995, Audio Note I metre ANV interconnect £90. Aragon 24K IPS pre amp cost £1700 accept £495. Goertz MI 2 10 metres £195. Tel: 01634 268 660 (Nov/1)

NAIM NAP 250 £1000. NAC 102/NAPSC £800. NAC 72 £450. Hi-Cap £425. AVI pre amp S2000 MP + P £800. AVI monoblocks S2000 MM £800. Mark Levinson ML12A + P/S pre/amp £800. ML II power amp £950. Tel: 01992 414 148 (Herts) (Nov/1)

JEFF ROWLAND Concentra £2990. Sonus Faber Concerto GP £990. Martin Logan Aeriisi £1290. Acoustic Precision Eikos CD player (Lithos A + D, PSU mains filter) £1990. All ex. Cond., boxed, manuals, etc. Tel: 01423 712 351 Email: maddoganderson@aol.com (Nov/1)

AUDIOLAB 8000S amp £300 (£700). Rotel RB991 power amp 200wpc recommended Hi-Fi Choice £350 (£599). Marantz DD82 DCC recorder £150 (£600). Hardly used. Rotel RQ970BX phono stage £50 (£120). Tel: 01332 842 220 (Nov/1)

KEF SPI044 x 2 drivers, boxed, unused. SPI003 x 2 drivers £100 the lot. Linn Axis Basic + Elan mint boxed £250. Exposure XXV integrated mint boxed £450. Tel: 07966 518 144 (Nov/1)

EXPOSURE X 1 preamp 1 x power supply £550 ono. Luxman CO2 pre amp MO2 power 150 wpc £600. Monitor Audio 852 MD speakers plus stands £250. Denon 3020 AV amp (£700) £250. Tel: 01708 457 691 (Nov/1)

TEAC VRDS-TI CD transport, excellent condition £225. Teac V-6030S 3 head Dolby-S cassette deck, excellent condition £225. Tel: 0114 258 6785 (Sheffield) (Nov/1)

B&W MATRIX 801 Series 3 three years old, black finish. Immaculate. Genuine reason for sale. Call 020 7700 4155 (Nov/1)

CHORD CPA 1800 pre amp (£1900) and Chord power amp SPM400 (£1400). Sold together £1400. Jamo Concert 8 speakers (£1320) £625. Harbeth compact HL-7ES speakers (£1300) £700. Tel: 01704 821 146 (Preston area) (Nov/1)

MUSICAL FIDELITY A300 amp. 150 w/c. Full remote. Stunning looks and sound. Immaculate condition, 15 months old. Seller sole owner. £820 (£1400). Tel: 01889 583 275, Email: gavin@grete58.fsnet.co.uk (Nov/1)

RUARK TEMPLAR II speakers, cherry. Immaculate, hardly used, basically run in. £395. Tel: 01928 590 551 after 6pm or weekends (Nov/1)

LAVARDIN IS integrated £895. Dynaco pre/ST 70 £550. Rogers A100 integrated, superb £160. Atacama Europa 5 tier stand cherry-wood (£299) £165. Soniclink Horizon 2 x 5 mts biwire (£200) £95. STD turntable/Mayware/ EEL MC £150. Tel: 0208 952 2044 (Nov/1)

NAIM SUPERCAP £1800. Naim 102 preamp plus 250 power £1800 ono. Quad FM2 "One Thing" valve tuner £175 ono. Leak Troughline mono rebuilt by One Thing £175 ono. Naim CD2 £1250 all superb. Tel: 01202 481 386 (Nov/1)

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SONY TC 377 tape deck plus approx. 40 reel to reel tapes. Very good condition, working order. Offers. Tel: 01293 411 057 (Nov91)

RESTEK TENSOR, stereo power amplifier, balanced, chrome, black, mint £1100. Vincent SV-233 stereo integrated amplifier, remote, balanced (incredible sound) mint £1200. Krell KSP-7B pre-amplifier separate PSU with phono, mint £1295. Tel: Old Days Vintage Audio 020 7349 9675, mobile 07958 607 613 (Nov(I))

DENON POA-440A monoblocks (huge) £400. Audio Alchemy digital CD transport DDS-PRO PSU DAC engine V3.0, Power Station s, four chasis. cost nearly £3000, sale £1400. Wadia WT-3200 CD Transport, needs new mechanism, hence £500. Tel: Old Days Vintage Audio 020 7349 9675, mobile 07958 607 613 (Nov(I))

AUDIO PHYSICS Virgos speakers (birds eye finished) boxed, latest £2000. Nakamichi 1000ZXL computing professional cassette deck £1500. Nakamichi RX-505 cassette 3 heads, auto reverse system £695. Nakamichi RX-202 cassette, auto reverse system £395. Tel: Old Days Vintage Audio 020 7349 9675, mobile 07958 607 613 (Nov(I))

VINTAGE AUDIO RCA Orthophonic High Fidelity monos valve amplifiers (KT66s) £895. Quad II mono amplifiers, pre-amp, tuner £750, original. Various vintage items for sale. Tel: Old Days Vintage Audio 020 7349 9675, mobile 07958 607 613 (Nov(I))

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ATC SCM 70 SL £7995. EAD DSP-9000 Pro DAC £1495. BKS 128 hybrids £1495. Marantz CD 16 £495. VTL 30/30 £495. Beard P35 £495. Audio Analogue Puccini SE £450. Meridian 105 monoblocks £295. Acurus Act 3 pre £995. Tel: Horsham Hi-Fi 01403 272 931 (Nov (I))

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