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ACTIVE
LOUDSPEAKERS**



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THE £900 ALABASTER**

ABC
fastest growing
hi-fi magazine

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Celestion Consumer Division, Dept HFW 16, Eccleston Road, Tovil, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 6QP U.K. Tel: 01622 687442. Fax: 01622 687981.
Celestion Industries Inc., 89 Doug Brown Way, Holliston, MA 01476. USA. Tel: 508 429 6706. Fax: 508 429 2426.

CELESTION

THIS MONTH'S WORLD



● Pink Triangle and VPI prove that beauty can be more than skin deep with two turntables to make CD blush. We take a shine to the PT Tarantella and VPI Junior

● Transistor integrated amplifiers are sloughing off their image as bright, hard, uninvolved components. Sonneteer's smooth, engaging Alabaster is the latest member of the club

● Are you looking to take your first steps along the digital road? AMC's £150 CD8 may be a player to conjure with.

● Can Ken Ishiwata work his sonic magic on Marantz's latest budget tuner, the ST-57? Etherphiles can tune in and find out on p53.

A long, long time ago, when hi-fi was young, amplifiers were built with hot glass bottles and the 78rpm disc ruled supreme, 'speakers were simple beasts. Single drive units, often with twin cones, struggled to cover the entire audio band before new fangled dedicated woofers and tweeters with their passive crossovers came along.

One area where the old single-driver 'speakers scored over their more sophisticated multi-unit brethren though was in their direct connection to the amplifier's output. There were no inductors to smear the bass and capacitors to blur the treble.

It looks like we're coming full circle now with a combination of new and old in active loudspeakers like Soundcraft's Absolute 4Ps. This way of working can bring great benefits to sound quality.

So why aren't active 'speakers more popular? Well, they tend not to be cheap - a two-way design needs four power amps, and a three-way six. But with Soundcraft's Absolute 4Ps weighing in at £800 and Wharfedale planning a set of Active Diamonds to come out later this year at less than £300, it looks like the price of getting active is falling. Vive l'activité!

Jon Marks, Editor

TEST EQUIPMENT



● Hi-Fi World has its own advanced test laboratory and acoustically treated listening room. No other hi-fi magazine has the benefit of such facilities.

● Hi-Fi World has a dedicated in-house team of experienced listeners, and uses selected freelance professionals. We review thoroughly by extensive auditioning, rather than by quick-fire group listening tests.

● Hi-Fi World's engineering team designs a wide range of products in-house. No other hi-fi magazine is so expert and dedicated.

LISTENING ROOM

(TREATED BY RPG ACOUSTIC TOOLS)



IN THE NOVEMBER ISSUE

Here are some of the hi-fi highlights we're hoping to reveal in our next issue:

TANNOY MERCURY m3 LOUDSPEAKERS

Aiming to build on the success of their £140 m2 stand mounters which turned out to be just about the best sub-£200 'speakers around, Tannoy have unveiled the floor standing £230 m3s.

LINN ARCHIV MC CARTRIDGE

If you've an extensive vinyl library and a top-flight record deck, you'll need a quality cartridge too. We find out what Linn's new £1200 Archiv has to offer.

MARANTZ PM-66 KI-SIGNATURE AMPLIFIER

Will Ken Ishiwata's newest Signature project mark another audiophile success for Marantz in the form of this budget £400 integrated? Find out next month.

NAD 118 DIGITAL PRE-AMPLIFIER

If you count digits as the leader in sound quality and are frustrated by having to use an analogue pre-amp, relax. NAD's flexible new 118 digital pre-amp at £900 could be just what you're looking for.

REL Q100E SUBWOOFER

A 100watt direct coupled power amp and a 12in. driver should add up to floorboard-flapping low frequencies from REL's new sub. But is it a £500 bass bargain?

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-DAC HDCD CONVERTOR

As fans of HDCD our eyes lit up when we heard about a compatible DAC for only £300 from Musical Fidelity. We put the X-DAC through its paces in the November issue.

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ABC
CONSUMER PRESS

THIS MONTH'S REVIEWS

AMPLIFIERS

SONNETEER ALABASTER 16

Can Sonneteer build on the success of their
Campion integrated with the new Alabaster?
Nick Tate finds out.



COMPACT DISC

HEYBROOK SIGNATURE 33

Heybrook's latest CD offering sports audiophile
op. amps and capacitors in a bid for high-grade
sound. Ketan Bharadia assesses the results.



AMC CD8 65

For £150 AMC's CD8 is rare in coming with
remote control. Dominic Todd asks if it offers a
rare sound quality too.

VINYL

PINK TRIANGLE TARANTELLA vs VPI JUNIOR TURNTABLES 13

Will it be a case of rule Britannia with PT's £580
Tarantella or God Bless America with VPI's
£600 HW 19 Junior? Jon Marks judges.

LINN LINTO vs ROKSAN ARTAXERXES X PHONO STAGES 28

If your main source is vinyl and you want to get
the best from it, you need a revealing phono
stage. Jon Marks goes for a spin with Linn's £850
MC-only Linto and Roksan's £945 MM/MC
Artaxerxes X.

LOUDSPEAKERS

SOUNDCRAFT ABSOLUTE 4P 20

Active loudspeakers are often found in studios
and don't tend to come cheap. For £800 though
you could have a pair of Soundcraft's 100W
active monitors, the Absolute 4Ps.



KEF RDM1 31

Designed for accurate imaging and use in a small
room, KEF's latest 'speaker incarnation of the
Uni-Q driver is the petite RDM1.

TUNER

MARANTZ ST-57 53

Marantz have enjoyed success with their CD
players and amps. We find out if they excel in
the ether as well.



WORLD VERDICT



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



GOOD - Has strong merit. Well
worth an audition.



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



POOR - Seriously flawed. Not
worth considering.

NEXT ISSUE

A list of equipment reviews we hope to bring you next month barring tornadoes, earthquakes or any other unforeseen disasters.

NEWS

Want to know about the newest products out or the latest industry news? These are the pages to keep a tab on.

READERS' LETTERS

Here is where your queries and problems are answered as you put our hi-fi knowledge to the test.

HI-FI WORLD LIBRARY

This treasure trove contains all the books you'll ever need to give you insight into the world of electronics and hi-fi.

COLUMNS

The informed opinions and views of the Hi-Fi World team.

SPECIALIST HI-FI DEALERS

Whether you're after a demo or just some advice you can't do much better than having a word with these people.

MEET YOUR MAKER

The names and addresses of the companies that manufacture the hi-fi that you own and read about.

HI-FI WORLD KITS

Top quality kits, good value and great sound. This is an excellent place to start if you want to build your own equipment.

DIAL-A-DEALER

Turn here when you need to find your nearest dealer for that hi-fi purchase.

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

This month's reviewees get their lids lifted in an

attempt to find hidden skeletons in their technical closets.

WORLD BUYING GUIDE

Here you'll find all the components that have impressed us enough to make it into our list of favourites.

OLDE WORLDE

Good hi-fi isn't necessarily new. Here we take a look at Michell's classic Focus One turntable.

READERS' CLASSIFIEDS

Six pages chock full of second-hand bargains all looking for a new home.

FEATURES

DEALERS IN DISCS

David Price uncovers the best in vinyl outlets across the country. Go ahead, treat your turntable to some plastic fantastic.

JARGON BUSTERS

Ever had problems figuring out just what a reviewer means with 'sound staging', 'imaging' and so on? Now all is explained.

COSTLY CABLES

Is your carefully honed and balanced system being held back by lacklustre loudspeaker cables? Ketan Bharadia tries two top contenders from Purist Audio Design and van den Hul. But they ain't cheap. . .

AUDIOPHILE ORIENT

A lot of extremely good hi-fi never makes it this far west. David Price unveils some of the latest and greatest components from Japan.

ENGINEERING ENCOUNTER

Jon Marks pays a visit to SME and Alastair Robertson-Aikman in the second of our Designer Interview series.

MUSIC

ROCK AND POP

RECORD OF THE MONTH:
Radiohead, OK Computer

DANCE/AMBIENT

RECORD OF THE MONTH:
Way Out West, Way Out West.

JAZZ REVIEWS**CLASSICAL REVIEWS**

RECORD OF THE MONTH:
Vivaldi, Sacred Music Vol.2

COMPETITION - PAGE 34



It's viva valves this month as we have one of Gamma Acoustics' gorgeous £2500 single-ended Rhythm amplifiers to give away.

B&W's patented method of using Kevlar's unique woven fibres for loud-speaker cones has been a major factor in reducing unwanted standing waves



DM 601



"The 601s sound like the voice coils of God."



CDM1



...the CDM1 gives excellent sound, not only in terms of correct imaging and transparency, but also in precision, extended response and dynamic low-frequency performance."



For more information
please contact
B&W Loudspeakers (UK) Ltd
on +44 (0)1903750750
<http://www.bwspeakers.com>



L I S T E N A N D Y O U ' L L S E E

World Radio History

WILSON BENESCH GO FULL CIRCLE

If you've always wanted a Wilson Benesch turntable and arm but couldn't quite scrape together the readies, don't fret. They've just introduced the more affordable Circle deck and ACT 0.5 tone-arm. Each is priced at £795 when bought individually, and £1499 as a combination. Alternatively, you could go for a Rega RB300 instead of the ACT 0.5 for £975.

Structurally the ACT 0.5 is claimed to be on a par with Wilson Benesch's ACT One and ACT Two carbon-fibre arms, savings having been made in finish and wiring. The heart of the Circle is a tool steel and phosphor bronze bearing surmounted by an acrylic platter driven by a Papst AC synchronous motor.

Wilson Benesch
Falcon House,
Limestone Cottage,
Sheffield S6 1NJ
Tel: 01142 852656



TIME FOR A CHANGE

As of September 1st Apollo cables will change their name to DBF Acoustics as they expand the range of hi-fi components they deal with.

The first newcomers are the Jackson Pyramids. These cloth covered monoliths are pyramid-shaped speakers with reflex loading, the port venting through the peak of the enclosure. This cabinet shape was chosen to reduce standing waves and give a clearer sound. The 8in. bass unit is linked to the tweeter

at 6kHz via a minimalist crossover built from a single inductor.

Priced at £229 the Pyramids will be available on mail order from September 1st.

DBF have also released an upgrade to their Black Velvet interconnect called, surprise, surprise, the Black Velvet SE. This sells at a premium of £10 over the standard cable's £29.99.



DBF Acoustics
11 Fishers Mead,
Puckeridge,
Ware,
Herts. SG11 1SP
Tel: 01920 823208

75 IS ALL

For £199, Mellotone can supply a new limited edition P1 phono stage. This is an all-valve, hard wired device featuring high-grade components throughout. Noise performance is said to be good thanks to Mellotone's Passive Shunt Regulation power supply.

Only 75 P1s are to be made and each will be supplied with a signed certificate of authenticity.

Mellotone
PO Box 67,
Wigan,
Grt. Manchester WN2 3AG
Tel: 01942 257525

Trade winds

Do you really want just another Hi-Fi?



Or do you want NAD?



Big toy or big value?

If you're the sort of person who just likes to look at Hi-Fi, then we recommend the first option.

If, however, you demand the best possible sound at the best possible price, may we recommend your local AudioClub dealer who will be happy to give your eyes a rest and your ears a treat.

Contact us at the address below for more information on the complete NAD range.



15 Faraday Road, Dept. HW10
Aylesbury Buckinghamshire HP19 3RY
Telephone: (01296) 82017
E-mail: sales@nad.co.uk
Web: <http://www.nad.co.uk>

audio club

A STRONGER BEAT

Danish hi-fi specialist Densen has expanded its Beat range of components by adding a 100W power amplifier. The £799 B300 makes extensive use of surface mount components and is claimed to double its output into 4Ω. The power supply uses a 500VA transformer and six smoothing capacitors which together have a storage capacity of 60,000µF. The B300 also has an internal gain selector switch so its sensitivity can be set to match either active or passive pre-amps.



Densen Audio Technologies
Randersvej 28,
6700 Esbjerg,
Denmark
Tel: 01582 561227

SPLENDID ISOLATION

Making their entry to the prolific platform market are Insight Audio with their AirSus, short for Air Suspension. Your £145 buys you an isolation table (in Mahogany, Oak or Black Ash) which has 10 rubber bladders filled with air and arranged hexagonally sandwiched between MDF top and bottom plates. The bladders themselves come ready inflated to the correct pressure to save whipping out the foot pump and working up a sweat.



Insight Audio
19 The Loort,
Windard,
Coeshire
CW7 1EX
Tel: 01606 532010

20/20 LASER VISION

If 'butter fingers' is your middle name and your CDs look like they've been gently rubbed down with a handful of gravel, help is at hand according to ATi-Atlas Ltd. who distribute Disc Rescue.

Selling for £12, a

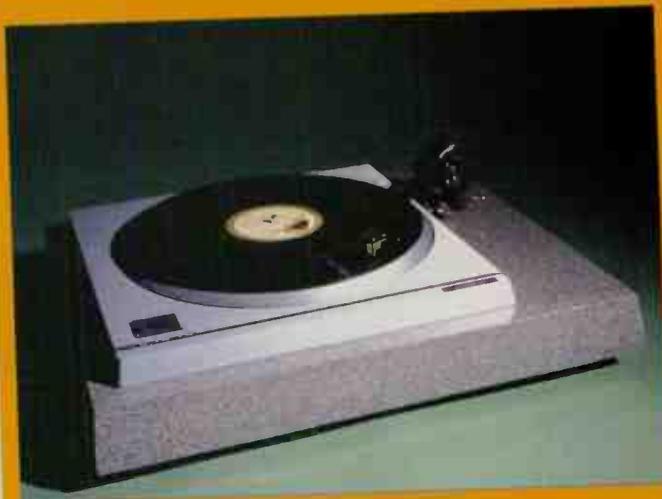
Disc Rescue kit includes enough patented cream and lint-free application pads to rejuvenate about 20 scratched CDs. Apparently, the cream contains an abrasive compound which bevels and polishes the shoulders of a scratch while a separate coating agent reduces its depth. Without this treatment, surface damage diffuses the laser beam reading the pits in the disc thus causing errors and skipping. The result is claimed to be a disc restored to full playing quality.

ATi-Atlas Ltd.
The Grange,
Chichester
PO20 6JN
Tel: 01243 533886



STIRLING STUFF

If you're a proud owner of one of Technics' SP-10MkII motor units you'll know that matching plinths are as rare as the proverbial hen's teeth. Stirling Broadcast have come up with an answer though with their £498 Corsan plinth which can be had in a range of colours. Most arms can be accommodated with the appropriate hole cut directly into the top-plate or with a removable armboard. And if your SP-10 has seen better days, there's a refurbishment service to bring the shine back to the motor unit's finish (which can be the traditional brushed aluminium or black) and a change of bearings.

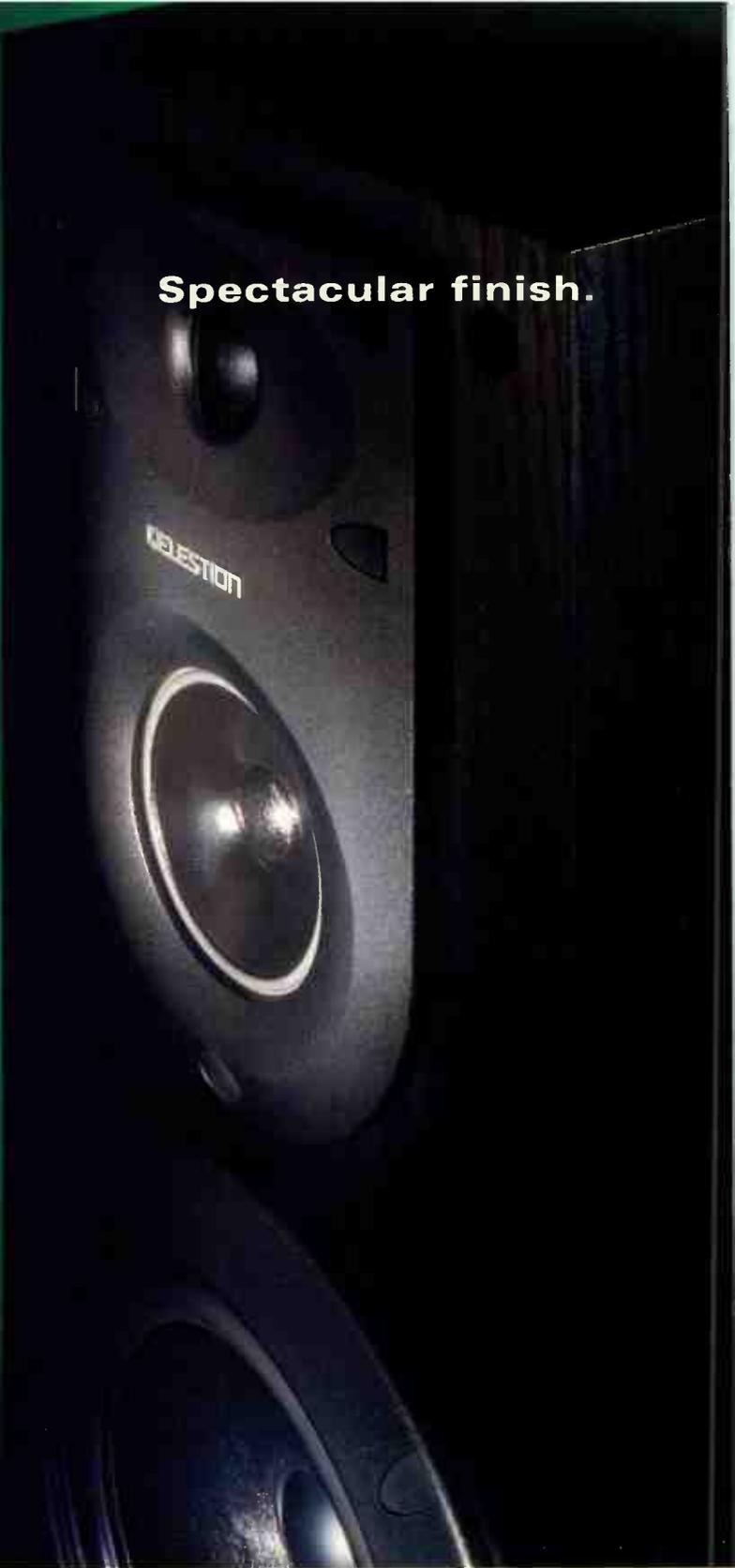


Stirling Broadcast
Charter Alley,
Basingstoke,
Hants. RG26 5PX
Tel: 01256 851001

Predictable start.



Spectacular finish.



Every loudspeaker manufacturer has the basics. The cones, coils, crossovers and cabinets. The woofers, tweeters, magnets and faceplates. But only one really knows how to put them together. The proof, Celestion's new i Series.

Built with 70 years experience of pioneering development in loudspeaker technology, this range blows your mind. It combines the highest level of audio fidelity with outstanding dynamic range. So you fully enjoy the true power of contemporary music and film recordings. Time and time again.

But don't just take our word for it. Take it from Hi-fi World. "Powerful, dynamic, musical and convincing", the i Series "shows just how strong British loudspeaker engineering really is".

Spectacular praise, you might think. But where Celestion's involved, it's almost predictable.



Celestion Consumer Division, Eccleston Road, Tovil, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 6QP U.K. Tel: 01622 687442. Fax: 01622 687981.
Celestion Industries Inc., 89 Doug Brown Way, Holliston, MA 01476, USA. Tel: 508 429 6706. Fax: 508 429 2426.

CELESTION

POPULATION EXPLOSION

Loudspeaker manufacturer JPW has just released a whole slew of new models. Making up the majority of these is the Millennium range, which starts with the £80 model 610. This two-way stand mounter features a 25mm fabric dome tweeter with Ferrofluid cooling matched to a reflex loaded 165mm mid/bass driver with a doped paper cone. The 310 (£90), 410 (£100), 510 (£130) and 610 (£170) round out the stand mounters' ranks.

Moving into tall, slim floor stander territory are the 710 (£230), 810 (£260), 910 (£300) and 1010 (£400). The 1010 itself is a three-way design that uses a 19mm tweeter, 100mm paper cone midrange unit and a pair of 165mm paper cone woofers, giving a sensitivity of 92dB.

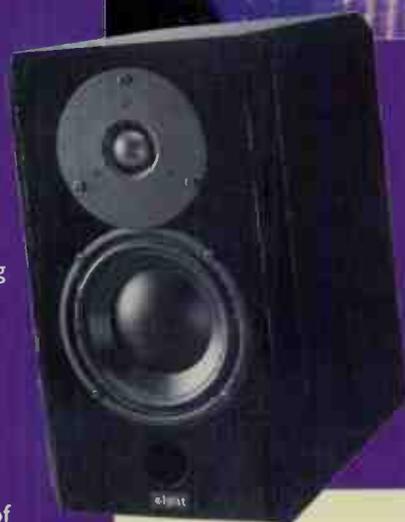
And that's not all. Weighing in at £200 and £400 respectively are the Signature 551 and 553, the former a stand mounter and the latter a floor stander.

JPW Loudspeakers Ltd.
 Ocean Quay,
 Richmond Walk,
 Plymouth,
 Devon PL1 4LL
 Tel: 01752 607008

AND THEN THERE WAS EIGHT

Acoustic Solutions started out in life making interconnects but have now moved on to transducers with their Eight loudspeaker. The front firing reflex port loads a Morel MW142 mid/bass unit while the MDT32-S from the same manufacturer takes care of the treble the two joined through a first-order crossover that uses polypropylene capacitors and air-cored inductors. A pair of Eights in either matt black, piano black or Colombian Pine will cost £1049.

Acoustic Solutions
 42 Corporation Road,
 Chelmsford,
 Essex CM1 2AR
 Tel: 01245 252825



Trade winds

HI-FI HEIST

The ultimate nightmare for any audiophile must be to come home and find out that their hi-fi has been stolen. Unfortunately, this is exactly what has happened to Brian Welch who represents brand names such as Epos, Audiotech and Stands Unique. The list of items stolen is: a Teac P-30 transport (serial number EUR30013), Chord Electronics DSC1500 DAC (serial number JF2144), Chord Electronics CPA2200 pre-amp

(serial number JF1989) and a Chord Electronics SMP 600 power amplifier (serial number JF2090).

If you have any information about any of these items please phone Crime Stoppers on 0800 551111. There may be a reward for any information leading to the safe return of this equipment.



*The alphabet according to
Musical Fidelity.*



X10D Class A
Tube Line Stage



X CANS Class A
Tube Headphone Amplifier



X DAC New Technology
HDCD DAC



XLP Low Noise
MC/MM Phone Stage



X PRE Class A
Tube Preamplifier



X PSU Add on Power Supply
for all X Series



X TONE
High Quality Tone Control

MUSICAL FIDELITY

When music matters most

FOR DETAILS OF
A DEALER NEAR YOU,
CONTACT MUSICAL FIDELITY LIMITED,
15-17 OLYMPIC TRADING ESTATE,
FULTON ROAD, WEMBLEY, MIDDLESEX HA9 0TF,
TELEPHONE 0181 900 2866.

TICKLED PINK, JUNIOR



Vinyl dead? I think not, reckons Jon Marks with a pair of accomplished record decks that will turn heads as well as your LPs.

Ask the question, "Turntable?" of most people and you'll probably get a reply that involves the words, "springs", "wooden box" and "metal platter". More often these days though, designers are moving away from the standard wooden box with a suspended sub-chassis and cast aluminium platter that rings like a bell every time a blue bottle flies past. Pink Triangle's new Tarantella at £750 and VPI's HW 19 Junior at £600 (both with Rega's RB300 arm) are two examples.

THE TECHNOLOGY

The Tarantella sits on three rubber pods to isolate its sub-chassis and non-inverted main bearing from vibration. The platter is hewn from PT's traditional acrylic, favoured for its neutrality and inherent self-damping, neither of which are features of aluminium alternatives. The sub-chassis itself is an eye-catchingly curvaceous

affair cut from a chunk of medite. Form follows function here, the lack of parallel sides preventing the build-up of standing waves in the sub-chassis. The same raison d'être gives the plinth its triangular outline, the three sides of different lengths working against resonances.

And if you think the Tarantella looks skimpy, it is. This isn't down to budgetary protests from the accounts department but the fact that low mass means low energy storage, so yielding a cleaner sound less prone to coloration and smearing. Mounting the arm at the end of a solid aluminium bar cuts down on the amount of vibration transmitted to it from the main sub-chassis too.

Where the bulk of turntables use 24-pole AC synchronous motors from Airpax (Philips) to spin their platters, Pink Triangle use a DC motor fed from the Hornet two-speed power supply in the Tarantella (DC designs generally run

a lot quieter than their AC equivalents) mounted above one of the plinth's three spikes. According to PT, this 'earths' most of the motor's vibration by transmitting it into the platform the Tarantella is sitting on.

Like the Pink, the VPI relies on a round-section drive belt (which transmits less motor noise thanks to its small cross sectional area) for its acrylic platter but where the Tarantella can take a record clamp as an upgrade, the Junior's comes supplied. While the clamp worked on almost all LPs, those with a profile like a piece of corrugated iron tended not to reach pancake flatness. Clamping brittle polystyrene or shellac records is not recommended as it could break them.

Drawing on tradition the Junior's plinth comprises a box on which the AC synchronous motor is mounted to absorb its vibration. The suspension, however, depends on four sorbothane



cylinders to decouple the 1in. thick MDF top plate, giving excellent platter stability unaffected by record weight. It also makes setting up as easy as pie.

The Junior manages to side-step obsolescence later in life because it's backed up by a series of upgrades. These take it from the 19 Junior to the 19 Mk-III (£450 extra) or 19 Mk-IV (£1000 extra) with their more massive platters, interchangeable armboards and sub-chassis of laminated stainless steel and acrylic. Finally, there's the £390 SAMA outboard motor (£200 if purchased at the same time as the Junior), replacing the standard onboard version.

SOUND QUALITY

VPI HW 19 JUNIOR

Hooked up to the rather tasty phono stage inside Audio Analogue's £600 Puccini SE integrated (which was driving Jamo's Concert 8 loudspeakers), the Junior immediately displayed its pedigree. There was a solidity to the basslines and a crispness to the imaging of Bob Marley's Natty Dread album that you normally only hear from record decks costing a couple of hundred pounds more than the Junior's £600 asking price. With a firm foundation like this to work on, the Goldring 1042 on the end of the Rega RB300 arm was relishing its LPs. And the VPI's highly effective record clamp meant that warped records caused only minimal flap with reflex loudspeakers, giving both them and the Puccini SE an easier time of things.

Technically the Junior gets top marks, but is it only a clinical vinyl-spinning machine devoid of emotion?

Nope. The Reggae rhythms of Natty Dread were packed full of emotion, drive and the near-tangible smoke from an array of joints. If you're listening to a deck of this quality in about 20 years' time after the boffins have invented smell-o-rama for hi-fi, you run the risk of getting nicked for being in possession.

A spell with Zubin Mehta on Decca conducting the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra in Virtuoso Overtures confirmed the Junior's impressive stability, the spread of the orchestra never folding together on crescendos. And where on lesser decks more motor vibration makes it into the platter and a main bearing with poor tolerances blurs imaging, the VPI demonstrated its class in these areas by

allowing the 1042 to track securely even the wildest dynamic swings of this disc.

More subtle groove modulations weren't lost in this pursuit of the bigger picture, sound stage depth enriched by the prolonged decay of notes in the acoustic. Above all, the Junior turned out to be a truly engaging performer, none of the pomp and grandeur of Rossini's La Gazza Ladra overture diminished by its transmission through a vinyl front-end costing a lot less than £1000. In this respect, the Junior can take on and defeat even the digitally gifted £900 Caspian CD from Roksan, which is currently the best of the breed at the price.

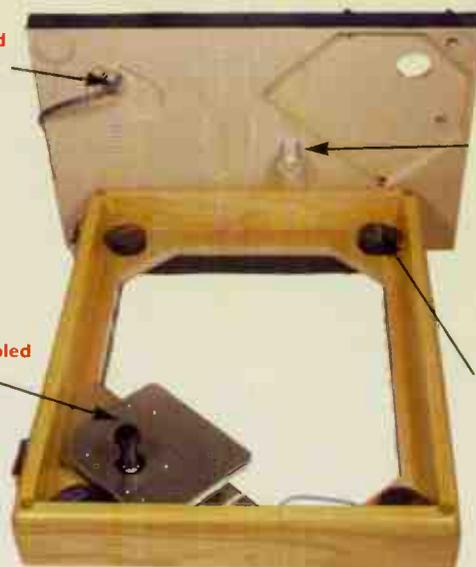
Going for a spin at 45rpm found the VPI laughing in the face of the fat, boomy bass and sibilance ridden vocals that many decks at around this price serve up. Instead, the deep synthesiser notes and John Lydon's lispy vocals on Time Zone's World Destruction remained clear and unalloyed. And since changing speeds is as simple as unscrewing the motor cover plate and dropping the belt on to a lower pulley groove, your singles aren't going to end up forgotten in a box in a dusty corner of the loft.

The Junior is designed to accept arms with Rega-style cut-outs.

The Junior uses a precision main bearing mounted on the 1in. MDF top plate.

The Junior's motor is mounted on a decoupled aluminium plate to minimise vibration.

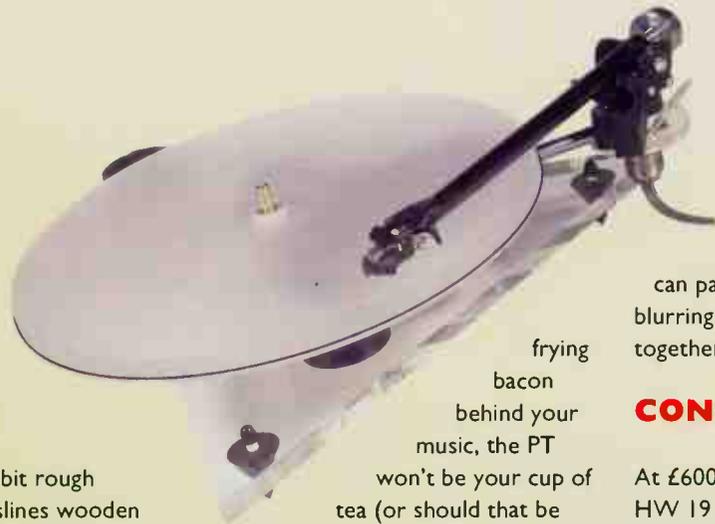
One of the four sorbothane cylinders that isolate the top plate from vibration.



PINK TRIANGLE TARANTELLA

Revisiting Bob Marley, I was initially a little disappointed by the music coming off the Tarantella. Cymbals were sounding a bit rough around the edges and basslines wooden and forced. A spot of positional tweaking was obviously called for. Previously, the deck had been sited squarely in the centre of a Sound Organisation platform. I moved it sideways to allow the Rega RB300's lead-out cable to hang over the side of the platform instead of resting on it. I also re-arranged the lead connecting the Hornet power supply to the motor. Finally I levelled the platform again because the Tarantella's sub-chassis was now sitting in a slightly different position. Result? Wow!

The Tarantella went from being as wooden a performer as Pinocchio to being a wicked groove machine, seeking out every last ounce of emotion in the disc it was spinning. Along with this, the sound stage opened right up, displaying the kind of width and depth you'd normally have to shell out a good few hundred pounds more for. The Goldring 1042 noticed the changes too, tracking more securely and producing much more sharply defined images than before. And if you look for the sound of



frying bacon behind your PT won't be your cup of tea (or should that be bacon butty?)

A 180gm audiophile pressing of Muddy Waters' Folk Singer from Mobile Fidelity Sound Labs with its glorious reverb had the Pink Triangle giving the impression that the back wall of the listening room had been knocked through into the building next door, such was the feeling of spaciousness. The Tarantella proved its dynamic worth by not compressing or roughening up Muddy's vocals, which had quite frightening power at times. It's partly knowing that the Tarantella is free from these twin nasties that makes it such a joy to listen to - you're not counting down to the places in a track where lesser decks normally run into problems.

Listening to Time Zone's World Destruction was prefaced by the kind of manic grin that means a fair amount of low-frequency information is about to come my ears' way. As the music emerged from the Jamo Concert 8s that grin just spread wider. In spite of its delicate appearance the Tarantella

can pack a real bass punch without blurring instrumental or vocal images together in the slightest.

CONCLUSION

At £600 with the Rega RB300 VPI's HW 19 Junior is a very accomplished turntable. It has a solidity and dynamism which lift it above the rank and file at the same kind of price. And with its upgrade path, it's unlikely to need replacing for a very long time.

At £750 with the RB300, Pink Triangle's Tarantella is a truly exceptional piece of equipment. It betters the Junior in all areas, especially sound stage depth and image precision. And not only does it sound superb it looks gorgeous too. If you are after a hi-fi work of art that also reveals the full potential of your record collection, then Pink Triangle can oblige ●

VPI HW 19 Junior £500 (no arm)/£600 (with the RB300)

Pink Triangle Tarantella £575 (no arm)/£750 (with the RB300)

VPI (distributed by Vinyl Demand) PO Box 1532, Fordingbridge, SP6 15B Tel: 01425 654545

Pink Triangle Camberwell Bus. Centre, Camberwell, London SE5 7RR Tel: 0171 703 5498



WORLD VERDICT

VPI HW 19 JUNIOR ●●●● The Junior is very good deck indeed, with an assured and involving sound.

PINK TRIANGLE TARANTELLA ●●●● Simply the best at the money. Combines PT's customary transparency with real authority.

review

SHEER



Sonneteer's new Alabaster integrated amp is sweet music to the ears of Nick Tate.

Yes folks, another specialist integrated from a small British manufacturer. Regular readers will know we've reviewed a lot of these beasts recently, and that from Roksan's Caspian to LFD's Mistral we liked what we heard. This is great news for buyers, but it means any new product has to be more than a little special to justify its existence on Planet Hi-Fi.

Enter Sonneteer's £900 Alabaster, a new big brother to the Champion, itself a charming mid-price integrated of several years' vintage. According to Sonneteer, it's pretty much a Champion with big boots on. Based on the same circuit topology, the Alabaster features upgraded components and a much bigger toroidal transformer to cope with 50watts a side into eight ohms in Class AB mode.

Nothing to write home about you may say, but what's special is its ability to almost double that figure into four ohms. With more pulling power than a Dodge Viper, it's an ideal partner for difficult 'speakers. But unlike big Yank tanks, the Alabaster runs rather hot - or should I say toast-burning, egg-frying, gas-central-heating-type hot. Sonneteer

insist this isn't a problem, pointing out that it cools down when in use, which it does. But put it this way; if it was a car, you'd fit an electric fan.

Still, whatever your opinions on its winter warming potential, you can't dispute the fact that the Alabaster is beautifully screwed together. It's a large, heavy affair with a thick brightened aluminium fascia, chunky knobs for power, volume and source selection and - cue fanfare - a blue power LED. Yes, everyone's at it these days, from Alchemist to Rose to Shearpe. Even though they cost a whole £1 more than boring old red ones, blue LEDs are supposedly *les trucs du chien*. I'm sure Versace would have approved.

Inside, the Alabaster is pretty conventional, comprising the aforementioned huge toroid and two separately rectified boards for pre and power amp sections respectively. No fancy capacitors or resistors here, just your standard ALPS Blue volume pot, good OFC copper wire and military spec. components. Sonneteer's philosophy is that proper basic design is far more important than any amount of designer label parts. Round the back there are bi-wireable 'speaker sockets,

five sets of nickel plated RCAs and the standard IEC mains input.

So how does the Alabaster sound? I must confess that I was initially rather cynical about such an expensive integrated amp, what with its pretty fascia and fancy lights. But my fears were soon allayed as the Sonneteer got down to playing music. Bi-wired to Mission 752 Freedoms, it proved alluring and seductive. Rather than hitting you between the eyes with a whiz-bang sound - like Teac's similarly priced AX-B10, say - it enticed you into the music and held your concentration right to the end.

Indeed, after Randy Crawford's 'You Might Need Somebody' had finished, I suddenly remembered I was supposed to be reviewing the amp rather than sitting there transfixed, marvelling at the power of her voice and the beauty of the arrangement. Same story with the Crusaders' 'Street Life', where I really got a sense of the musicians' feel for the music. Here was a genuine musical event instead of a mere hi-fi reproduction, the Sonneteer relaying that uncanny spark between players that you so rarely hear outside a live gig.

Doetry

So, how about the Alabaster's technique? Bass was full and fruity - quite Sugden A21a-like in this respect. It was also very tuneful, with basslines playing more of a part in proceedings than, for instance, Meridian's similarly priced (and excellent) 551. Midband was very clean and clear - easily better than Rose's £615 Scion integrated I had to hand for comparisons, and much more transparent than I remember its baby brother the Champion being. Even though there was a lot of detail there - enough to show faults in recordings that many amps can't resolve - the Alabaster didn't let the imperfections interfere with the music, always a sign of good breeding.

Treble was a treat too. Although not quite as transparent as the midband, it was pleasantly sweet and crisp, again in the idiom of Sugden. The Sonneteer really sang with Classic Records' superb remastering of Miles Davis's *Kind Of Blue*. With loads of depth, atmosphere and subtlety to cymbals, you could hear right through the studio acoustic to the old valve tape recorder. Impressive stuff.

Dynamically the Alabaster was spot on as well. It may have lacked the sheer wallop of my reference 100W Sony Esprit V-FET power amp but it was easily better at those tiny little accents, inflections and nuances of playing that bring music alive. Along with its excellent timing (the Alabaster can stop and go better than Eddie Irvine) this

made for a very enjoyable rendition of REM's 'Near Wild Heaven'. Without sounding up-front or aggressive, it conveyed the power and scale of the song along with all its intricacies (such as Peter Buck's masterly guitar picking) like a true pro. In fact, I've yet to hear a more emotive rendition of this lost REM gem on any other integrated.

Faults? Few and far between. If pushed I'd venture that despite its richness and fluidity, the Sonneteer sounds just a tad transistory; it lacks that nth degree of smoothness that the A21a has in spades. But that said, the Sonneteer can easily drive awkward 'speakers that the Sugden wouldn't have a chance with, my Linn Kan 2s being but one example.

The other gripe is that there's no phono stage. As far as I'm concerned this is like strawberries without the cream - just not right. And when you consider that Sonneteer's off-board head amp costs an extra £450, it's time for a quick 'ho-hum'.

Despite my grumbles, the Alabaster is an extremely impressive device. With that elusive combination of a sweet, mellifluous, musical sound with sledgehammer 'speaker driving ability, it could be just what you've always wanted - I know I wasn't too happy



about having to give it back. It's one red-hot amp, and I don't just mean the heatsink casing ●

Sonneteer Alabaster £899.95

**Sonneteer,
PO Box 163c,
Esher
KT10 OYH
Tel: 01372 468676**

WORLD VERDICT

Excellent high-end integrated with a real love of music and plenty of poke.

**Measured Performance
see p103**

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review

ABSOLUTE

Jon Marks goes active with the Absolute 4P



The idea of connecting a loudspeaker's drive unit directly to the output of a power amplifier is nothing new. The first electrical hi-fi systems (as opposed to purely mechanical early gramophones) usually consisted of a valve power amp connected to a full-range driver without any crossover. As drive units and loudspeakers became more complex, with the development of units meant for specific parts of the audio band (tweeters, midranges and woofers), a way had to be found to integrate these drivers and so the passive crossover was born.

Most domestic and many professional loudspeakers these days still use passive crossovers to split the full-range signal from the power amp and feed it to the relevant driver. However, this modus operandi can

cause problems.

Passive crossovers consume quite a lot of power, especially in the bass section with its often sizeable inductors. Inductors also reduce an amp's control over the cone of a drive unit, making for generally flabbier, looser bass than direct connection. Another area where passive crossovers can lag is their limited ability to correct phase and frequency response anomalies, which affect a 'speaker's imaging and overall sonic balance.

One increasingly popular way of solving these problems is to use an active crossover, as Soundcraft do in the Absolute 4P (and Tannoy in their AMS8, reviewed in August 1996).

Where a passive crossover sits between a single power amp (in a single amped system) and the loudspeaker, an active crossover is located between a

pre-amp and a number of power amps (one for each drive unit). In a two-way system like the Absolute 4P, this means you need twice as many power amps, so going active tends not to be cheap but it can sound superb. . .

SOUND QUALITY

Having spent a while shuffling the 4Ps and Atacama SE24 stands around, I ended up with the 'speakers 12in. away from the rear wall and toed in so their axes crossed in front of the listening position. I found this gave the best results with imaging and sound staging. I set the Absolutes' input level potentiometer to 0dBV (it's variable in steps between no signal and +8dBV) and left their 40Hz high-pass filter switched off. This filter allows higher sound pressure levels to be reached by giving the power amps an easier time.

THE POWER

100 watt professional studio monitors from Soundcraft.

With the volume cranked, it also means the amplifiers' electrical and thermal protection circuits cut in less often.

I had hoped that, with no passive crossover to sully the signal from amp to mid/bass driver, the 4Ps were going to come up with something rather special in the bass. I wasn't disappointed.

An HDCD encoded recording of Stravinsky's *The Rite Of Spring* with its thunderous timpani brought an immediate smile to my face. This smile only ever appears when I'm in the presence of an amplifier/speaker combination capable of producing tight, fast, deep and detailed bass. The last time I came across a combination like this was when I played the same piece through Audio Analogue's £600 Puccini SE integrated and Jamo's £1300 Concert 8 stand mounters.

In those vital lower octaves, however, the £800 4Ps actually left £1900 of Audio Analogue and Jamo sounding a tad veiled and tubby. With their modified 170mm Audax Aerogel mid/bass unit and in-built 100W power amps the Absolute 4Ps have a clarity and impact in the bass which makes a lot of the passive crossovers competition sound sluggish, blurred and bloated.

Going active doesn't pay dividends solely in the bass-head stakes though. If you like your sound staging deep as well as wide then the 4Ps score again. They assembled a convincingly layered picture of a full-scale orchestra that started in front of the loudspeakers and went back as far as the rear wall. Credit number three was a scale to Classical works which made Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana* a genuinely hair-raising musical experience.

So the 4Ps get full marks for their bottom end, but how about the midrange and treble? Well, it was in the upper midrange that the only 'flaw' cropped up. String sections were slightly rougher and brighter than usual, losing some of their tonal colour and smoothness. This also happened on Rock tracks where cymbals became harder. Toeing in the 'speakers, firing up our KLPI line-level valve pre-amp and employing smooth sounding cables like DNM's Reson and van den Hul's *The Second* helped (in line with their pro leanings, the 4Ps will take balanced interconnects), although it didn't eradicate the problem.

In spite of this, the 4Ps remained extremely engaging loudspeakers - with John Lee Hooker's *Boom Boom I* had difficulty pulling myself away at the end of the album. It was highlights like the extended decay of reverb on tracks like 'I'm Bad Like Jesse James' and 'Sugar Mama', and the power and weight of J. L. H.'s voice (which can often sound loose and boomy) that kept me hooked.

Partner the Absolute 4Ps with a smooth and tonally adept pre-amp like Technics' battery powered SU-C1000 at £350 and a set of DNM's Reson interconnects at £36/1m and you'd be left with a bill of just under £1200. The passive 'speaker alternative at the same kind of price might consist of Audio Analogue's Puccini SE, B&W's £600 CDM1s or Castle's £450 Edens and a three-metre set of Reson bi-wire loudspeaker cable at £6.95/m.

Weighing up these two options, there's no doubt the Absolute 4Ps and partnering equipment would offer superior sound quality in most areas. In the upper midrange and treble, I suspect the B&W CDM1s and Castle



Edens would be a better bet. The benefits of active operation really shine through though, especially in the bass. With their power, transparency, detail and involvement the Absolute 4Ps make a very strong case for themselves ●

Soundcraft Absolute 4P £799

**Soundcraft
Harman International Industries,
Cranborne Ind. Est.,
Cranborne Road,
Potters Bar,
Herts. EN6 3JN
Tel: 01707 665000**

WORLD VERDICT ●●●

The Absolute 4Ps excel in all areas except for a rather bright, hard treble. Bass is exceptional thanks to active operation.

**Measured Performance
see p103**

The Caspian System by Roksan



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JUST FOR THE RECORD

David Price takes you around the UK's best record shops.

Okay, we've all read the figures telling us how drastically vinyl sales have dropped, but as the saying goes, there are lies, damned lies and statistics. The situation 'on the ground' is very different, and many vinyl lovers know there's a lot of LPs around.

Compared to other major Western economies, this is a pretty unusual state of affairs. Perhaps it's happened because, more than most countries, our towns are dominated by chain stores. This holds true for music retailing too; not a particularly healthy situation since what the chains stock largely determines what people can or cannot buy. This has left a vacuum which the UK's independent record stores have quickly filled.

Enter vinyl. The chains don't like it as it takes up too much space that could be more fruitfully filled by tacky compilation CDs. So in the early Nineties, the independents moved in, only to find there was still plenty of demand for the black stuff. Since then the indies have fine tuned themselves to a select bunch of customers. They know what's coming out on vinyl and when, and as soon as it's out they buy it from their local shop. A surprising number of titles make it on to vinyl - retailers say around 70% of all new Pop, Dance and Jazz releases go under the cutting stylus.

The key to buying vinyl new is:

[1] Find your local independent record shop.

[2] Keep an eye on the release lists printed in the likes of NME and Melody Maker, or posted up in record shop windows.

[3] Pre-order your vinyl from the shop, or go in and buy it within about eight weeks of its release date. If the shop doesn't stock it, they can get it for you within a few days.

[4] Don't expect a discount. Unlike CDs most vinyl isn't available 'mid-price' anymore so you might have to pay upwards of £11 for your new LP.

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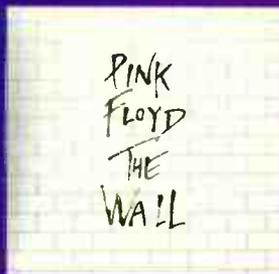


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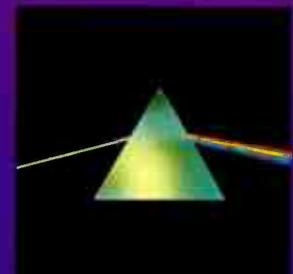
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review

SETTING T



To get the best from your record collection you'll need a capable phono stage such as Linn's new Linto and Roksan's Artaxerxes X.

There are two very good reasons to go for a stand-alone phono stage in these digital days. The first is the simple fact that most modern pre-amps are line-level-only, many manufacturers looking upon the vinyl fraternity as anachrophiles stuck in a niche market. The second, more technically oriented reason, is that with a case and power supply dedicated all to itself, the phono stage will tend to sound better.

Showing there's more than one way of doing things are Linn's MC-only Linto at £850 and Roksan's MM/MC Artaxerxes X at £950 (with flagship £550 Attessa outboard power supply).

Take a look inside the Linto and you'll find their Brilliant switch-mode power supply feeding a single PCB covered in surface mount components. The circuit topology marks a departure in that the cartridge's signal enters via eight paralleled transistors (which lowers noise and input impedance) where it is amplified to line-level before passing through the RIAA correction network again to reduce noise. Normally the RIAA filtering sits between the first and second gain stages in the MM pre-amp or in an IC's feedback loop. The Linto eschews variable cartridge loading on

noise grounds as well.

Roksan's Artaxerxes is more traditional, relying on a mix of surface mount and standard components. There are 12 transistors paralleled up on the input which step up the signal from an MC before it goes to the MM stage which consists of a Burr-Brown OPA604 IC. Keeping power supply rails steady and reducing interference between circuit sections are no fewer than eight LM317/337 regulators. Cartridge loading can be configured to match most MMs and MCs with a set of eight small switches in each channel.

ROKSAN ARTAXERXES X

After adjusting the Roksan's loading, I set the Garrard spinning at 45rpm and lowered an Ortofon MC 30 Supreme into the lead-in groove of Time Zone's World Destruction. The Artaxerxes X scored right from the off with its solidity and power, combined with a depth and layering to the sound stage which clearly showed the quality of Bill Laswell and Africa Bambaataa's production on this 12in.

Dropping the speed to 33rpm and switching to Bob Marley's Natty Dread I

found the Roksan strutting its transparency again. Marley's vocals hung crystal clear between and in front of the 'speakers. The same separation made itself felt with instruments, each occupying its own space in the overall acoustic. This kind of clarity allows you to listen right into a record and, with a phono stage of the Artaxerxes X's ability, does so without sounding sterile. In fact, with a cartridge like Ortofon's MC 30 Supreme on a deck like the 401, Reggae can really skank along.

If the sound of silence is music to your ears, then the Roksan will win you



THE STAGE

over in this area too. It might not be the quietest phono stage we've ever measured but it still produces barely audible hiss with MCs and will do justice to a vinyl source that digs out more music than background noise. And where many alternatives can produce a travesty of treble and midrange with harsh, scratchy upper registers, the Artaxerxes X came clean on Benjamin Britten's *Young Person's Guide To The Orchestra* on Decca with cymbal crashes and violins free from hardness and spit.

Proof of the Roksan's neutrality was the way it transmitted the almost golden warmth of this recording in its entirety while it had seen Bob Marley through appropriately ganja tinted spectacles.

The Artaxerxes X fared equally well with a Moving Magnet cartridge supplying the signal (in this case Goldring's 1042 on which Roksan's own Corus Black is based), showing that MM is no mere after-thought.

LINN LINTO

Turning back to Time Zone with the Linto in circuit found the basslines of this single big and beefy. The song also packed a massive punch thanks to muscular upper bass and incisive midrange and treble. And rhythmically, it was as if someone had doctored my cup of tea with a dose of adrenaline, the Linto's sound had so much get up and go.

The Linto suits bassy, rhythm driven numbers down to the ground, so how did it get on with Bob Marley? Well, that weighty bottom end was present in good

measure once again, as was the sense that the music had been speeded up a tad. One area where the Linto completely failed to deliver was hiss - this is a very quiet phono stage indeed.

While the Linto was doing a good job of getting any dreadlocks within a five-mile radius swinging, it was less impressive when it came to perspectives. On Natty Dread stage width and depth were both a little restricted, backing vocals taking a step closer to lead vocals as if the recording studio had shrunk in size. There was a thin but definite veil across the music too, removing some of the delicate musical detailing, and this in spite of the Linto being a supremely low-noise device very revealing of groove noise.

Suspecting the MC 30 Supreme might not be the most synergetic of matches with the Linto, I wired in its place Linn's new Archiv. Straight away bass firmed up and there was more space to the sound, as you'd expect from an MC costing over twice the Ortofon's £525.

With Benjamin Britten the Linto produced the impressive dynamics and solidity that it had with the previous discs but it still lacked natural acoustic space and tonal colour. The same was true with a top-spec. all-Linn front end supporting the Archiv, although there was an added smoothness to the sound over that from the Garrard 401.

CONCLUSION

There's no doubt that the Linto will find a welcoming home in the many Linn systems across the land. It has that hallmark rhythmic speed and power to its bottom end that Linn are so well known for. Outside a Linn set-up it sits a little less comfortably. Its bass can become rather prominent and it misses out on the tonal colour and three-dimensionality necessary to portray Classical music in a truly convincing way.

Roksan's Artaxerxes X on the other hand is a real all-rounder that'll function happily with decks other than the matching Xerxes X turntable. Regardless of what you feed it, its neutrality and clarity mean what's on the record is what you hear. It's not as instantly impressive as the Linto but give it some time and you'll grow to like it a lot.

Roksan Artaxerxes X with Atessa PSU £945

Linn Linto £850

Roksan Stonehill, Huntingdon, Cambs. PE18 6ED
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WORLD VERDICT

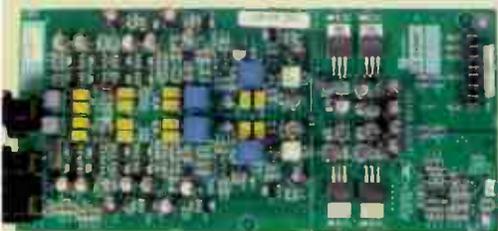
ARTAXERXES X

The Roksan doesn't worry about genre. It just gets on with the job of making music in an even handed and revealing way.

LINTO

Marries perfectly to a Linn system with a characteristically firm, up-beat sound but isn't quite as happy with other components.

Measured Performance
see p103



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World Radio History

POINTING THE WAY

Dominic Todd gets a taste of KEF's point-source driver technology with the new RDMI stand mounters.

Having a clear role in life is always a good start. KEF's new £500 RDMI compact monitor loudspeakers have just such a role. They're for those who fancy one of KEF's Reference models but don't have the room or the money. Mind you, at this price they're up against some impressive opposition - the Epos ES12, Castle Severn and Acoustic Energy AE120 to name but three.

The KEFs certainly look well built at first glance. A solid MDF wrap is sandwiched between wood side cheeks to form an attractive cabinet. There's also a decent quality crossover which allows KEF's famous Uni-Q point-source drive units to be bi-wired.

But take a closer look and you might be disappointed. The drive units are built on a pressed steel frame rather than a die-cast one, and are held on by only three wood screws. The internal cabling is nothing special either. Little of this really matters so long as the 'speakers sound good though, so I bi-wired the RDMIs into my system.

The first disc on was Eels' 'Your Lucky Day In Hell'. The bass was exactly as I'd have expected from a compact, sealed unit - tight, tuneful and well integrated though it couldn't be described as particularly deep or powerful. Another hallmark of the Uni-Q driver was very precise sound staging, each instrument accurately placed within the acoustic. Vocals sounded especially spacious with a fine sense of projection too, midrange and treble information well resolved without becoming harsh or grainy.

At times I suspect some might find the RDMIs' balance a little too smooth and polite, especially when, for example, the electric guitar is straining at the leash. However, the KEFs' control allowed them to produce a careful layering of instruments, each of which enjoyed fine tonal accuracy.



This smooth neutrality continued across musical genres. Representing female vocalists was Kate Bush's 'Infant Kiss'. This is a track many 'speakers have real problems in successfully conveying - either the vocals become hard and sibilant or the balance is simply too dull and flat. The RDMIs managed to steer a steady course between the two extremes, although not with complete success. Vocals were atmospheric and precise, with a faithful string tone complementing the picture. Yet dynamics and scale were lacking due to the absence of deep bass. There was a feeling of detachment from the music, the KEFs lacking the organic flow present in some rivals, sounding instead a touch mechanical.

Mozart's clarinet quintet in A saw the RDMIs more at ease. The instruments themselves were suitably reedy and textured and the piece came across in a spacious and breezy manner that proved relaxing and informative. Again, some may interpret this as leaning a little too much towards blandness, even though it is difficult to pick fault with any one individual area of performance.

KEF's RDMI is sonically a mixed

bag, but this is still a 'speaker I'd recommend you track down. On the positive side it delivers a neutral and precise sound with an above-average level of detail retrieval. On the negative it lacks the dynamics and involvement of many of its rivals. With a little more development I feel the RDMI could lead the field with an inspirational performance rather than lagging behind the best with its inoffensive sound.●

KEF RDMI **£499**

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WORLD VERDICT



The RDMIs sound stage well thanks to their Uni-Q drivers but can be a little uninvolved because of a lack of scale and impact.

Measured Performance
see p103

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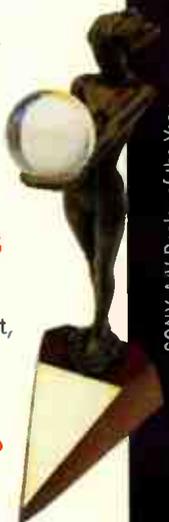
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SONIC SIGNATURE

Is the new Signature CD player from Heybrook a worthy partner to the matching pre/power amps and 'speakers? Judge Ketan Bharadia finds out.



To be honest, I can't imagine the new Heybrook Signature CD player fitting inconspicuously into any system apart from one which included Heybrook's own pre/power amplifiers and Sextet II 'speakers. Then again, as they say, "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. . ." Sonically, beauty is also in the ear of the listener, with accomplished rivals like Roksan's Caspian, DPA's Renaissance and Audiolab's 8000CD setting the standard thus far at £800-£1000.

Getting the Signature's Japanese CEC transport spinning into life was Dave Brubeck's Take Five. The Burr-Brown hybrid 1-bit/18-bit PCM-67U DAC chip assembled a musical picture which was rhythmically adept as my tapping feet testified, the Heybrook capturing the flow inherent in the tunes. However, as listening continued I became aware that the treble had a rather grainy, slightly sharp quality to it.

As our measurements show, the Signature produces relatively high levels of distortion which can produce this sonic effect. And the fact that this player's frequency response favours the treble only served to highlight this.

At the other end of the spectrum plucked double-bass notes were rather insubstantial, diminishing the music's weight and authority. Piano notes lost out in the way of harmonic detail too.

I decided to move on to Wagner's *Rienzi* Overture played by the Philharmonia Orchestra and conducted by Otto Klemperer. To find out how the Signature stacks up against the competition, I hooked up Roksan's Caspian player as well.

Through the Heybrook while individual images were clearly defined the sound stage was quite small in terms of width and depth. Slightly squashed dynamic contrasts and a grey tonality also made it difficult to get involved with the music. Switching to the Caspian proved a different listening experience - within a few moments the music captivated me with its vitality, transparency and tonal colour.

Moving on to Van Morrison's *Moondance* showed the Heybrook in a more favourable light. Without high-power dynamics and complex arrangements to test it the Signature managed a fair performance. Though the drummer lacked his customary power, he was keeping time well enough and Van Morrison's inimitable vocals were immediately recognisable. The treble problems were less apparent here too, allowing the Heybrook to assemble a pleasantly fluid performance. At the end of the day I have to say this player comes as a bit of a

disappointment next to Heybrook's partnering Signature II amplifiers and the Sextet IIs which we use as one of our reference 'speakers. Heybrook's other products show that they can do better ●

Heybrook Signature CD £989

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WORLD VERDICT

The Heybrook loses out to the competition with its less than smooth treble and lack of spaciousness.

**Measured Performance
see p103**

competition



WIN A RHYTHM SINGLE-ENDED AMPLIFIER

If valves set your heart aglow we've a corking prize this month - a Rhythm single-ended amplifier from Gamma Acoustics.

This month's competition prize is a Rhythm amplifier from Slough-based valve specialist Gamma Acoustics. This £2500 line-level integrated features a 211 power triode in each output stage in what Gamma say is a zero-feedback design delivering up to 12watts of single-ended power. The line input stages use the popular ECC83 double-triode and the driver stages ECC81s.

Inside the copper chassis is a component mix of 1% silver-foil capacitors and 0.5% metal-film resistors. Also playing an important part in the Rhythm's overall sound are the 16-section silicon steel mains and output transformers, a large chunk of the amp's 22kg weight.

The Rhythm is more than capable of producing lots of volume from relatively sensitive speakers like Heybrook's 88dB Sextet IIs and provides levels of drive and authority that are rare in the world of valve amplifiers.

Jon Marks found this out in his July 1996 review when he wrote. " 'Sheriff Fatman' was my first port of call. The bassline that bounces along through this song had real authority, control and drive, and the Rhythm managed to reproduce the feeling of space around the bass guitar and drum tracks". He continued by writing of the Rhythm, "It was a tonic compared to some of the rather effete (or gutless?) valve amps that have passed by my ears".

The Rhythm doesn't overlook music's subtleties either in its search for drive and control. Detail and transparency were high on the agenda too with solid imaging and convincingly relayed acoustics.

Jon Marks concluded his review by saying, "In fact, whether it was the string quartets of Ravel or Debussy, Alanis Morissette or Joni Mitchell being fed into the Rhythm, what emerged always impressed with its natural, easy power and control. For those in search of an

alternative to the 300B, one which couples the organic feel of valve amplification with a rather un-valve-like ear-opening bass extension and control, the Rhythm is definitely worth an audition."

If you would like the chance to win this superb Rhythm amplifier, all you have to do is answer the following questions and complete the tie breaker. Send in the entry form on the back of a sealed envelope or postcard to reach us before October 3rd to:

Gamma Rhythm Competition
Hi-Fi World magazine,
64 Castellain Road,
Maida Vale,
London W9 1EX

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

RHYTHM 211

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£2500

COMPETITION ENTRY QUESTIONS

- 1) What kind of foil do the Rhythm's capacitors use?
A. Tin B. Aluminium C. Gold D. Silver
- 2) What valves does the amplifier use in its output stage?
A. ECC83 B. ECC81 C. 211 D. 300B
- 3) How much does the Rhythm cost?
A. £2500 B. £5000 C. £50 D. £250
- 4) Where are Gamma Acoustics based?
A. Slough B. Edinburgh C. Brighton D. Iceland
- 5) What is the Rhythm's power output?
A. 7watts B. 100watts C. 25watts D. 12watts

TIE BREAKER (obligatory)

Complete the following in less than 30 words

Whether it's Dance music or an orchestral performance,
The Rhythm from Gamma won't fail to entrance,
Its glowing bottles will set your heart alight,
And keep you grooving till way beyond midnight,

.....
.....

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Please do not add my name to your mailing list.

COMPETITION WINNER

AUGUST ISSUE COMPETITION

In our August issue we had a superb CD system, built up of Trichord's atmospheric and involving Genesis CD player, Audio Analogue's tuneful and transparent Puccini SE integrated amplifier and Celestion's smooth, revealing A1 loudspeakers, waiting for one lucky winner. And that winner is:

Miss D. Adams
of
Skegness, Lincolnshire

Congratulations!

COMPETITION RULES AND CONDITIONS

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

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What does it all mean?

If you've ever read a hi-fi review and then hunted for the section entitled 'Glossary of Terms', hunt no more. Jon Marks explains.

Whether you're a computer analyst or a vet, you'll know there's a certain vocabulary used in various trades which lets different people talk to and understand each other. The same is true in the world of hi-fi. Most of the words used are

pretty much self-explanatory, but not all. Unfortunately, this can make reviews a bit baffling for recently converted audiophiles, so here are four of the most frequently used terms explained.

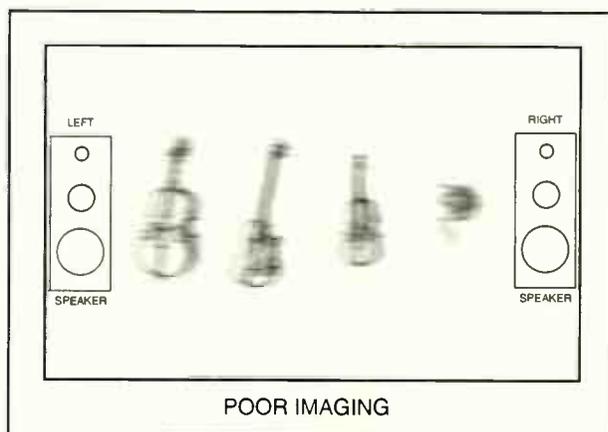
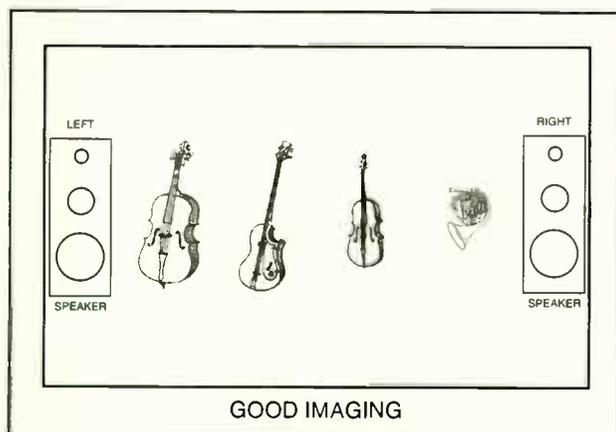
IMAGING

This isn't about getting your hi-fi dressed for the catwalk, as you might reasonably think. A component (usually a loudspeaker) which 'images' well will be able to form believable, clear-cut images of individual instruments and singers whether it be Rock music or Classical.

It will also place the players in specific positions between the 'speakers, according to the intentions of the

recording engineer and/or the traditional layout of an orchestra, with First Violins at left and Horns at right, for example.

A loudspeaker which 'images' badly will produce images with fuzzy outlines and will tend to blur band members together so you can't make them out separately or picture where they are in the group or orchestra.



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SOUND STAGING

Sound staging' is about how spacious a sound your system produces rather than how well it handles Hamlet in front of a theatre audience.

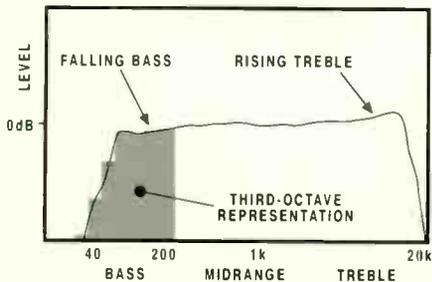
A component with good 'sound staging' will produce a three-dimensional sound which has front-to-back depth as well as width. This means something like an orchestra will stretch from a couple of feet in front of the loudspeakers to a couple of feet behind them and spread wider than the

space between the 'speakers. A component with poor 'sound staging' will produce a flat, two-dimensional sound with little depth. Such a presentation is neither realistic nor convincing.

A lot of modern amplifiers, for instance, produce 'sound stages' which are wide but have little depth while a lot of older valve amps have the same left-to-right spread combined with much more convincing depth.

BRIGHT OR DULL?

Nothing to do with IQ tests for your hi-fi this, but rather what 'tonal balance' your system strikes. Some 'bright' components (including interconnects and loudspeaker cables) seem to have more treble and midrange than bass. This means cymbals, violins and vocals, for example, will be most noticeable in the music while double-basses, drums and suchlike will take a bit of a back seat.

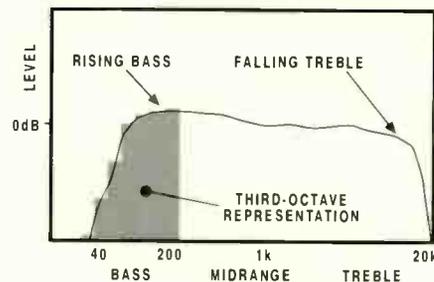


A 'bright' component may have a flat measured frequency response but its perceived response will look like this.

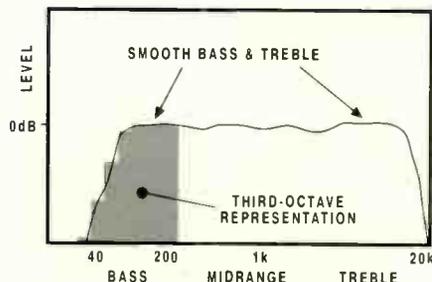
On the other hand, a 'dull' system will major on bass, highlighting drums, bass guitars, etc while vocals and violins are given less prominence.

'Bright' systems are often described as 'in your face' because the music seems to hang well in front of the 'speakers' while the word 'recessed' is frequently applied to 'dull' systems because the action takes place behind the 'speakers'.

The best systems have an 'even tonal balance'. This means



A dull sounding system's perceived frequency response looks like this.



A system with an evenly balanced sound that plays all kinds of music equally well has a perceived response like this.

they exaggerate no one part of the music. Set-ups like this are more enjoyable to listen to in the long term because they produce a more natural version of musical events than 'bright' or 'dull' systems.

TONAL COLOUR

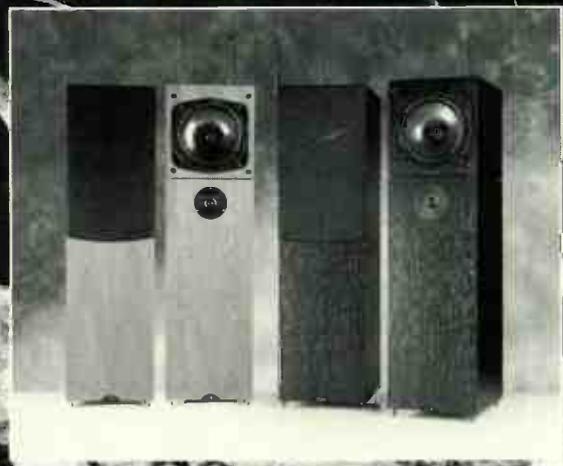
The 'colour' here refers not to whether the guitarist's Les Paul is red or blue but rather how easy it is to recognise that the guitar is a Les Paul and not a Gibson. Each instrument and voice has its own 'sonic signature' that makes it sound the way it does. In a system with lots of 'tonal colour' you can make out individual voices within a choir, for example. Through hi-fi lacking 'tonal colour' it will be much harder to distinguish one

voice from another.

Limited 'tonal colour' usually means that a particular piece of equipment will be able to handle electronic music like Dance without difficulty but fall down when it comes to Classical. In fact, Classical recordings are by far the best all-round test of hi-fi. They need real 'tonal colour', spacious 'sound staging', correct 'tonal balance' and good 'imaging' if they're to sound realistic.

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WORTH THEIR WEIGHT IN GOLD?

This month we take the high road to find out if expensive loudspeaker cables from van den Hul and Purist Audio Design justify their price tags.

VAN DEN HUL REVELATION HYBRID
£239.96/single-wire metre
(termination £90+, depending on plug type)

The Revelation is a hybrid 'speaker cable which uses vdH's patented LSC (Linear Structured Carbon) technology. The core of the cable is a bunch of high-purity multi-strand copper conductors surrounded by the LSC. Around the LSC are strands of pure silver cable which are individually insulated with Hulliflex, which also makes up the cable's outer jacket. The research that went into this unusual mix of ingredients would mean nothing if the sound didn't match up. Fortunately it did, big time.

Listening started with Stravinsky's *The Rite Of Spring*, which is a powerful, dynamic piece that places great demands on a system. Between our K5881 valve power amp (Audio Analogue's Puccini SE integrated was also used) and Jamo's Concert 8 loudspeakers the Revelation lived up to its name.

An inky black background made a fine foundation for well developed dynamics and first rate detail retrieval. This cable's

character is extremely smooth and refined, remaining so even when the orchestra is in full flow with horns and strings working hard.

On a brief encounter this refinement could be seen as softness or lack of attack, but extended listening showed that nothing was missing apart from the edginess and sharpness of most conventional cables. Instruments had believable timbre and a rare expressiveness that only comes from top-class handling of low-level dynamics. In addition, instruments were clearly located in an acoustic which was both deep and wide. Rhythmically the Revelation proved no slouch either with its fine sense of timing.

Overall this is an excellent cable, albeit at a very high price. It's certainly well worth taking a look at if you have a revealing, well balanced system and your pockets are deep enough to afford it.

PURIST AUDIO DESIGN ELEMENTA
£175/first 1m, each extra 1m £45
(termination included)

Though the Elementa is at the bottom of P. A. D.'s 'speaker cable range, its construction is, in its own way, as unusual as that of the Revelation. The Elementa uses twisted OFC copper conductors surrounded by a fluid jacket which is claimed to provide isolation from vibration and enhance sound quality.

Relaying Pink Floyd's *Dark Side Of The Moon* album, the Elementa demonstrated plenty of attack and detail, high-frequency information sounding more prominent than through the Revelation. In no way

could the P. A. D.'s treble be described as sharp or aggressive though.

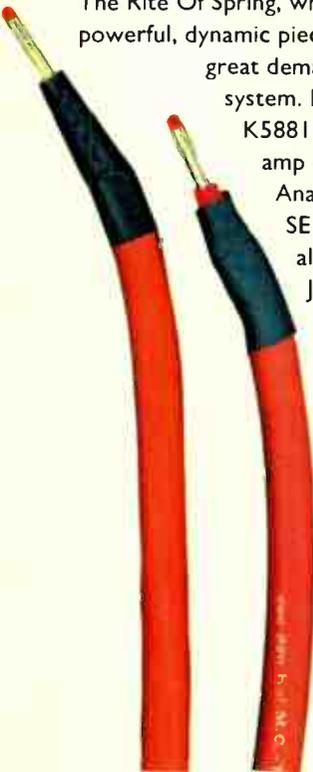
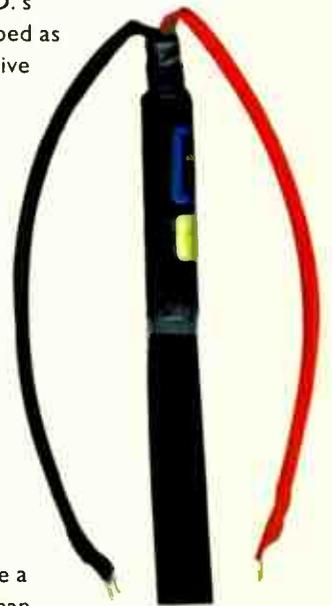
Next to the much more costly vdH the Elementa lacked the quiet background, bass weight (but not definition) and spaciousness. It compensated with greater dynamic attack, seeming to strike a better balance than the Revelation on Rock for example.

With Dave Brubeck's *Take Five*, the Elementa made it easy to distinguish notes struck in different places on the cymbal's surface. The interplay between the various musicians was simplicity itself to follow, subtle timing information and detail retrieval playing their part in getting feet tapping.

The Elementa, while expensive by normal standards, is good value and highly recommendable ●

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THE MAINS WAY

Working from home, I listen to five or six hours of music a day and I was happy with my hi-fi (Marantz CD-63mkII KI-Signature, Audiolab 8000S and TDL RTL3s with DNM interconnects and bi-wires). It's not high-end and I recognised some of its weaknesses, but in a hard-surfaced room it sounded quite good.

The 8000S is more than just

a new 8000A - it has a greater depth of detail and refinement but needs more attack. The RTL3s are tonally attractive and exciting but have bass which occasionally lacks control. I tried a lot of connects and cables, up to £200 each. The DNMs, suggested by Audiolab, are a revelation and a joy, although physically fragile.

Now I'm happier. The DNM importer recently

recommended a £25 solid-core mains lead for the Audiolab. Result? The slightly recessed Marantz/Audiolab combination has taken two steps forward into the room and the TDLs have a more textured, tighter bass. The already wide sound stage is now deeper, and the music more detailed, holographic and dynamic. Not a sea change, you understand, but enough.

LETTER OF THE MONTH

MAINS AND MAGNETS

I have recently purchased some drive units from Lowther which are fitted with rare earth magnets. Could you advise me as to the nature of rare earth magnets and where they fit into the general electrical scene.

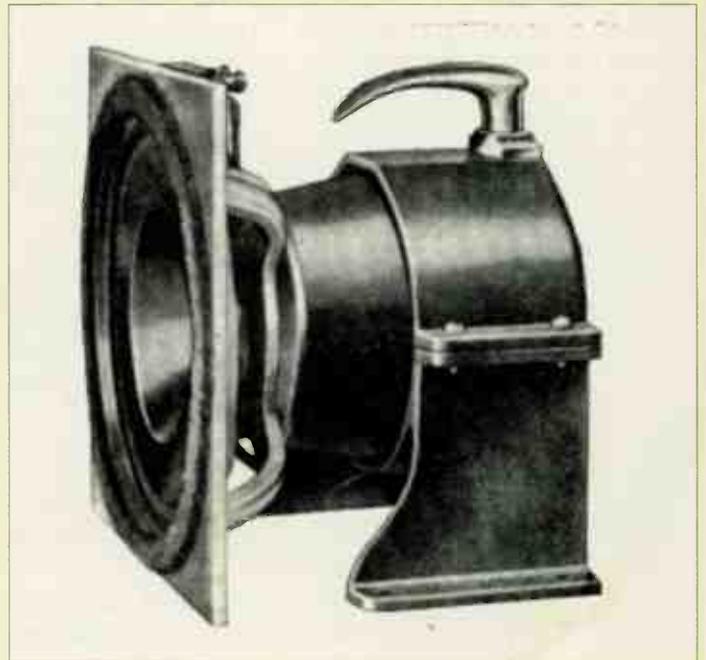
Whilst on the subject of loudspeaker magnets, can you comment on the subject of mains energised magnets?

A set-up which my father put together in 1937/8 comprised an Armstrong receiver with short wave and great, fat Tungram valves and a Magnavox mains energised 'speaker. The set seemed, in retrospect, to be quite powerful, which might indicate a fairly efficient 'speaker. What killed off mains powered loudspeakers?

Brian Charlesworth
Leics.

We asked Diane Hanson at Lowther Voigt to comment:

"The problem with mains energised units was their size and the necessity to have a mains socket



The permanent magnet PM4 drive unit shown here succeeded earlier Lowther mains energised designs. To achieve high flux density though, the rear magnet assembly had to be huge. It needed special support as a result. Lowther units had very high sensitivity and are still in demand today because of it.

available. The magnetic energy comes from a large copper coil with a soft iron core acting as a centre pole which attracts or repels a

voice coil connected to the cone. Mains energised units were large, heavy and difficult to mount inside enclosures. They were

OCTOBER 1997

Can a mains lead make such a difference or is it just my optimistic imagination?

**Keith Taylor
South Knighton,
Leicester.**

Mains leads can, without a doubt, make a difference to sound quality. But their effect seems to vary depending on where they're used. In June, we reviewed the DNM solid-core mains cable and found that in our system it made a subtle but audible improvement. However, when the same

cable was used in one of our contributor's systems, it seemed to have no effect on the sound at all. A bigger improvement can usually be had from cleaning dirty pins on mains plugs. The rule of thumb here, even more so than with other components, is to arrange a home demo before parting with your hard-earned. JM

There are a lot of variables here. Your house could be on a good, tight feed from



To find out if specialist mains leads like those from Moth and DNM work, you need to go for a home demo.

the local distribution transformer, or hanging on

the end of a long, dodgy cable that may be 50 years old. A high quality mains lead will likely have far less influence in the latter case.

Also, amplifiers stress the mains

differently. Capacitor input power supplies basically pulse the mains over a short portion of the duty cycle in Class B amps, a bad idea through and through. Increasing the size of the capacitor, as so many advocate, just makes the problem worse. Only a choke input supply draws current evenly over an entire cycle, reducing stress on the transformer and mains feed, but hi-fi manufacturers have yet to appreciate the benefit of this. Amps that pulse the mains supply heavily are more likely to be cable dependent in their sound quality. NK

LETTER OF THE MONTH (CONT.)

capable of being at least as efficient as permanent magnets though. The early Voigt mains energised units weighed around 20kgs each and were massive.

Permanent magnets, normally a cast alloy containing cobalt and soft iron, overcame all the problems associated with energised units, except for the intensity of the magnetic field that was possible with mains energised coils.

Alnico and ferrites have been around for many years and are likely to be the mainstay of magnetic energy for loudspeakers well into the future. Ferrites have the advantage of being much cheaper to produce than alnico. Higher magnetic strength is obtainable from cast alnico though. The majority of 'speaker manufacturers use multi-driver systems and have no need for the highest possible flux density.

Lowther incorporate high powered magnets within their drive units to meet the demands of covering a wide audible frequency range. This made the use of large ferrite or cast alnico permanent magnets necessary. There are disadvantages to this approach, in that the magnet assemblies are heavy and large, requiring considerable space inside the enclosures and often needing additional supports for the heavy

magnets. The large magnet assemblies may interfere with sound waves from the rear of the cones, causing unwanted reflections at certain frequencies.

These problems are virtually eliminated by the use of neodymium/iron/boron rare earth magnets. These magnets have many times the magnetic power of conventional permanent magnets, which allows magnet sizes to be considerably reduced without loss of magnetic strength. There is also a big advantage in terms of sound quality in being able to reduce the volume of the drive compression chamber in horn-loaded or vented loudspeaker systems.

The costs involved with using neodymium are large as the equipment necessary for magnetising the neodymium is costly - the magnetising equipment used for alnico and ferrite rings is not capable of charging these rare earth magnets. And neodymium magnets are themselves expensive. Above 18,000 gauss, high-permeability alloys are necessary for the magnet's metal circuit. For these reasons, neodymium is unlikely to replace ferrites as the most economical of materials for loudspeaker drive unit magnets."

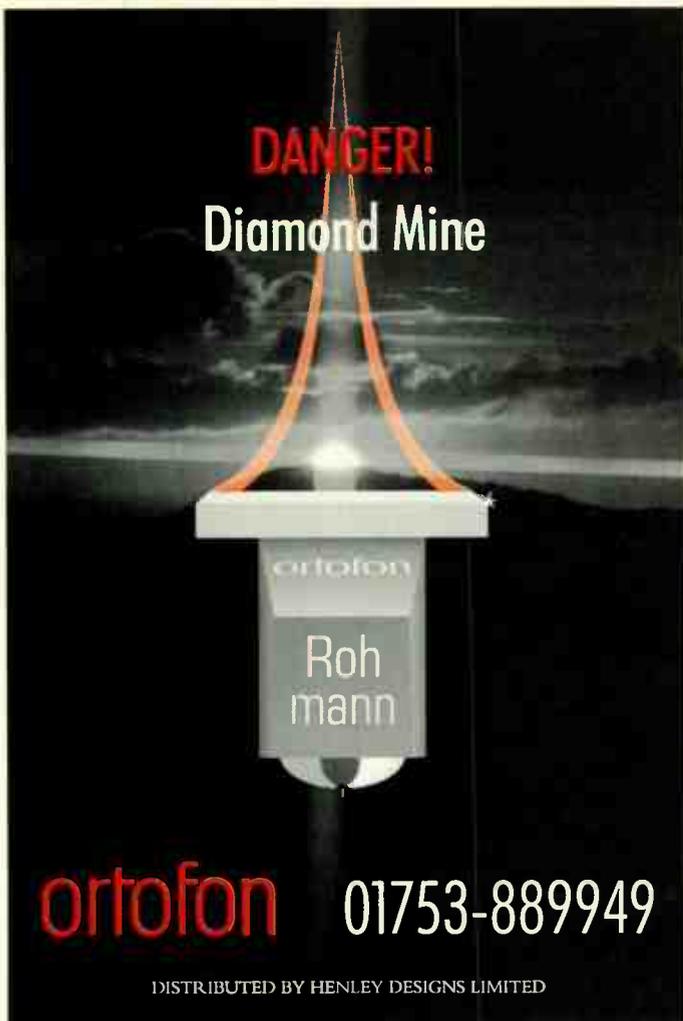
Diane Hanson at Lowther Voigt

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SYSTEM BRUSH UP

At present I have a Linn LP12 with a Pink Linnk power supply, Akito arm and Ortofon MCI Turbo cartridge feeding an Audio Innovations S500 amplifier which drives Snell K2 'speakers. These are mounted on Target R1 stands and are connected to the amplifier via AudioNote Yellow for the woofer and Chord Rumour for the tweeter.

I feel the MCI Turbo doesn't sit too well with this set-up. The trouble is that I will be restricted to moving-magnet cartridges as my amplifier only has this input and good second-hand step-up devices are hard to find in Northern Ireland.

Also, which interconnect could you recommend for use between my CD player and amplifier? I have a budget of £150 for this. And do you think the Chord Rumour should be changed for Audio Note Silver cable as I have been told that the Chord unbalances the system?

Gary Hanna
Belfast,
N. Ireland.

I have to say that I'm a bit surprised to see an Akito and an MC1 Turbo on a deck of the LP12's quality, especially when powered by Pink Triangle's Pink Linnk PSU. I suspect an arm and cartridge upgrade would yield impressive results. Higher quality MMs and high-output MCs to consider are Denon's £70 DL110, the ever-green £120 Goldring 1042 and Shure's £300 V15VxMR. Arm alternatives are Linn's own Ekos and Ittok, either new or second-hand, and Naim's ARO.

There are some very good interconnects around at considerably less than £150 for 1m. You could try DNM's smooth but



When your amp can only handle MM or high output MC cartridges, despair not. One fine option is Shure's £300 V15VxMR.

revealing Reson at £36 and Nordost's Black Knight at £55. If you really want to push the boat out, audition DPA's Black Slink at £220.

While the Chord Co's Rumour is very transparent it isn't as sweet tonally as DNM's Reson loudspeaker cable. I'd be tempted to audition a length of Reson before you try the AudioNote silver. JM

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LARGING IT

I am looking to build a new system which would consist of a CD player, amplifier and loudspeakers. My budget is just over £1000 and my musical tastes are House and Techno. I need a system tailored to produce very low bass and aggressive, punchy beats with clear midrange and high frequencies. The bass beat is very important - we really are talking night-club

style.

In my local hi-fi shop, I listened to a Marantz CD-67 CD player and PM-66 KI-S amplifier with Mission 753 'speakers. Though the sound was an improvement on my current set-up I didn't feel it was worth the £1000 premium. The KEF Coda 9 was also tried without any improvement. Eventually, the B&W 603 floor stander was connected up. The sound went from being bland and unimpressive to clear, punchy and very, very bass orientated. This system brought an uncontrollable smile to my face.

However, being a student, £1000 is pretty hard to come by. I can just about stretch to the Marantz/B&W system at £1170 but I want to make sure I'm getting the best system for my money. Are there any other systems I should consider, bearing in mind my taste?

James Ashberry
Huddersfield,
W. Yorks.

I doubt you'll be able to get exactly the same kind of bass as you get in a night-club because most club bass tends to consist of heavily distorted upper bass (70Hz-150Hz) with little real, low bass. That said, for depth and impact B&W's £350 DM305 floor standers are a good bet, with surprising extension for their price. They also drive a room well, which gives their lower registers an easy power. Midrange is exceptionally clear and treble is clean-cut and controlled as well.

The Marantz CD-67 is a good choice as far as the CD front end goes and would be well partnered by Rotel's £250 100W RA-970BX integrated amp reviewed back in October 1996. And if you wanted more power and control

you could simply bi-amp with a pair of the Rotels. JM

The only way to get physically punchy bass is to move the entire volume of air in the room as one. It



For bass and power on a budget, try B&W's DM305s driven by Rotel's RA-970BX 100W integrated.

isn't possible to do this with a small cone that displaces a small volume of air. All disco 'speakers use large-ish drivers behind short flared horns (loads of distortion) or huge 15in. and 18in. drivers in sealed cabs., often stacked high and wide. It is impractical to recreate this at home without using huge cabinets, although as you have found, some hi-fi speakers can do a good job. NK

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SPEAKER SORT OUT

I have recently upgraded my Linn system (Intek and Powertek, bi-amping into Helix 2s) to the Audiolab 8000C with a pair of 8000M monoblocs, keeping the same 'speakers. The sources are an LPI 2/Lingo (pre-Cirkus) and a Marantz CD-63 mkII KI-S. Although the sound is very clear and detailed, I find the system a little too 'top ended'. I think this may be due to the Helix 2s, therefore I am in the market for some new 'speakers. Do you think I'm on the right track? Or should I be looking to two more 8000Ms? I have a budget of around £1000.

Bradley D. McEwan
bdmcewan@
ra.rockwell.com



If you're looking for a pair of floor standers to partner Audiolab's 8000M monoblocs, audition KEF's Reference 1s.

I suspect that you are right in blaming the 'speakers - there's no point splashing out on an extra pair of 8000Ms as this wouldn't change the tonal balance of the system. Having spoken with Phil Swift of Audiolab about this

problem he suggested you consider the KEF Reference Ones and equivalent models from the Epos, Monitor Audio and ProAc ranges. To that list I would just add the Heybrook Sextet II which we have used successfully with Audiolabs in the past. You don't mention which interconnects or 'speaker cables you use but we've found DNM cables work very well with Audiolabs. These should help to sweeten the sound while not adding any excessive warmth. KB



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A QUESTION OF SUPPLY

I wonder whether you could give me some advice. I'm shortly due to move to the States and want to take my hi-fi with me. Do you know what I would need to do to be able to use it in America?

Giles Chick
giles@spss.co.uk

Check first that your components don't have switches on their back panels which allow you to run them off 115V. If this draws a blank, you should ideally contact the manufacturer or search the handbook/service manual, since many items have an internal 220/110V option

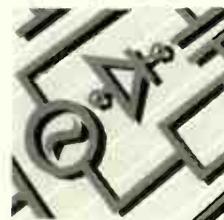


Some components, like Linn's Linto phono stage, have mains voltage switches so they can be used in different countries without the need for step-up or step-down transformers.

(or 240/115V). Should the mains transformer be 220-240V only, then you're going to have to get hold of

source. Camping and travelling accessory shops are good places to start looking. JM

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IAN SINCLAIR

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SOUND AND STYLE

I am currently in the process of selecting a new CD/amp/'speaker system for around £2000 (excluding cables, etc.) Although my knowledge of the market is reasonable I am now confused. Whatever happened to the 'system hierarchy' concept that used to be preached by all and sundry? I am referring of course to the 'rubbish in/rubbish out' concept. We now regularly see suggestions of sub-£500 CD players (mostly from Marantz) being partnered by amps and 'speakers of considerably higher value. Does CD rewrite the rules or did the industry talk rubbish for all those years?

Your advice on a new system would be greatly appreciated. My criteria are that it must be a one-make CD/amp combination (for aesthetic reasons) and the 'speakers must be well

some step-up transformers which will allow your 240V equipment to run on America's (nominally) 110V mains supplies.

When making your choice, remember the transformers will have to be rated to handle a component's TOTAL power consumption. In the case of an amplifier, for example, this means not only the amount of power it can deliver to the 'speakers but also the power it needs to operate. Maplin sell such transformers, although they don't come cased - this is something you'd have to do yourself, because of the mains flowing through the exposed terminals, unless you track down another

finished floor standing models. The current shortlist includes electronics like Naim CD3/Nait 3, but would it make sense to go for, say, a cheaper CD player like the Marantz KI-Signature with a better amplifier than the Nait? As for the 'speakers I have little idea, but a range of good wood finishes is essential. A fast, detailed, clean and enjoyable sound is the objective. My taste is mainly non-mainstream Rock music, but I also like African/World music and occasionally Jazz and Classical.

Final question: why are brands like Marantz/Mission/Tannoy, etc. so popular, when makes like Linn and Naim used to be favourite? Is this a case of the former taking the editors/publishers out to lunch more than the latter, or am I just being cynical?

Philip Hudson
phudson@topas.co.uk

'System hierarchy' was never really preached by all and sundry. It was more an approach to system building espoused particularly by Linn and Naim, who felt it was a logical way to structure your hi-fi. It isn't, however, the only way to go about it.

Some components, Marantz's CD-63 mkII KI-Signature being one of them, stand out sonically at their price and can be used with more expensive amps and 'speakers. Another piece of hi-fi which punches above its weight is Audio Analogue's Puccini SE integrated amp at £600, which works happily with Jamo's exceptionally revealing £1300 Concert 8 stand mounters.

Going for an amp and CD player from the same manufacturer narrows the

choices down a tad with a budget of £2000. You could try the £500 CD-63 mkII KI-S with Marantz's £400 PM-66 KI-S integrated which we've yet to review, although preliminary listens suggest Marantz are on to another winner.

This leaves you with about £1100 for a pair of floor standers. As you lean towards aesthetically



Quality components like Audio Analogue's £600 Puccini SE and Marantz's PM-66 KI-S integrateds will work well with more expensive 'speakers.

pleasing 'speakers and wood veneers Opera's Terza three-way at £1000 with its solid mahogany cabinet should be on your short-list (Opera are distributed by UKD, tel: 01753 652669). This system would have a smoother, more three-dimensional sound than the Naim gear without giving anything away rhythmically. Another alternative is Heybrook's Sextet IIs which we use as part of our reference system, although you might find these a little warm sounding next to a Naim driven system.

If you managed to get your hands on a copy of May 1997's issue, you will have seen David Price's feature on a magazine called The Flat Response. This, along with others, ranked Linn/Naim gear, and especially the LP12 turntable, above almost all

other components during the mid-1980s, in particular those from overseas. This rather xenophobic LP12-centric view has since faded as people realise how many other good hi-fi brands there are out there.

If you're on the lookout for reviews of Linn and Naim products, just check out the Linn Linto phono



stage this month, the LK 240 monoblocs in last month's issue and a complete Naim system in April.

Tannoy, Marantz and Mission are companies who generally produce well engineered products which also sound good. As we are always looking for the best in hi-fi, equipment from these companies makes it into Hi-Fi World's pages. In this case, your cynicism is misplaced - we're after something that sounds good, not something that tastes good! JM

My view is that CD does

demand a different outlook to LP. The LP was an analogue system capable, in theory, of unlimited improvement. Also being a very sensitive vibration transducing mechanism it was incredibly amenable to modification and development.

By contrast, digital systems have a strict performance limit set by their coding scheme. I've long suspected that CD, with its 16-bit/44.1kHz coding, can be pushed little further. Performance gains can be made, but increasingly they are becoming smaller. This in turn pushes the emphasis elsewhere, to the amplifier and - especially - the loudspeakers. It isn't so much that rubbish in/rubbish out is considered invalid any

more, as much as there's little you can do about the situation with CD. This is why we pay attention to LP. NK

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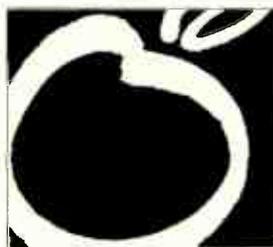
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QUEST FOR A CABLE

Could you please give me some advice. I am separating my Luxman power amp from its pre-amp principally for reasons of available space but also to substantially shorten 'speaker leads. A pre-to-power interconnect of five or six metres will be necessary. This could represent a substantial investment and with auditioning opportunities for such lengths high impossible I want to minimise the risk of mistake.

I currently use two metres of Chord Siren between pre and power. I like it a lot, particularly its clarity, resolution and bass extension, but I sometimes feel control could be better. This is my benchmark below which I do not wish to fall. In order to get some idea of comparative sonic signatures, I have tried two metres of Maplin/Shark audio pair which is good for the money but not a match for the Siren, and also another thinner (5mm dia) Shark which is a clear-sheathed OFC directional coaxial at just over a pound a mono metre, described in the

catalogue as "for no-compromise audio use". This has fabulous treble and great middle, but there's a loss of bass slam and extension.

Any ideas, please?

Stuart Wyss
wyss@mktgspuk.
bytenet.co.uk

If you're keen on the Siren's clarity and bass resolution then another alternative which possesses similar traits but has better control is Nordost's Black Knight. Price-wise the first metre will set you back £55 while each additional metre will cost £26, compared to £65 and £16 for the Siren. I think you'll find it quite difficult to match a ready-made cable of this price with a DIY alternative. JM

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ARMING A CARTRIDGE

I traded my old 'speakers in for a Kenwood (Trio in the UK) direct drive turntable, one of those marble plinthed affairs. After judicious application of damping pads to the platter (rung like a bell before) and the wooden bottom-plate, it is now quite a good turntable.

But the arm and cartridge. . . ? The arm is the standard Kenwood affair (not bad but not much cop really) and I currently use an NAD badged 9200 cartridge. I

intend to get a new cartridge first and upgrade the arm later. So what should I go for?

My own choices (based partly on your recommendations) would be to use a Rega RB300 arm and a Goldring 1042 MM cartridge.

But as my budget is limited to about £250-£300 my question is: would spending a little more (like on that DNM Aciore MC JM liked so much in the July issue) bring substantial benefits? Also, how about something like the Hadcock Unipivot arm instead of the Rega?

Could you also advise me where to turn for the armboard required for the turntable and a source of good tone-arm wire (in case I decide to re-wire the arm for balanced operation).

So what is your opinion?

just about leave you enough cash to get the Ittok, whereas the DNM will push you over budget.

Audio-Links (01724 870432) sell a range of uninsulated 99.99% pure silver wires which, if varnished, could be used to re-wire the Kenwood's existing tone-arm. For a new armboard call Kenwood on 01923 816444 and ask for the Parts Department, specifying the model number of your deck - there's a pretty good chance they'll still be able to provide one.

You could try beefing up the power supply in the turntable with higher-quality reservoir capacitors and better main regulator if you can get the circuit diagram. The old Trio KD550 with its marble-style plinth that I once had used a very basic



A better bet than a new RB300 is a second-hand Linn Ittok arm. DNM's Aciore is an impressive MC but in the Ittok a Goldring1042 would be a sweeter sounding partner.

Thorsten Loesch
tloesh_2@globalnet.co.uk
Rega's RB300 would be one of the most obvious choices of tone-arm. Seeing as you're happy to go second-hand, I'd suggest a Linn Ittok instead as these can now be had for as little as £200. An Ittok will also outperform the Rega without too much difficulty. The Hadcock I haven't heard.

The DNM Aciore is a fine cartridge but it can be fiddly to set up to get the best from it and it doesn't sound as sweet as the 1042. And buying the 1042 would

regulator which didn't do the deck's performance many favours. JM

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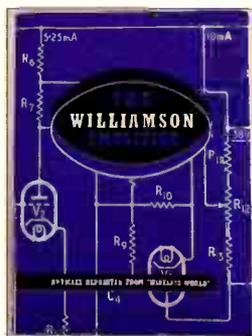
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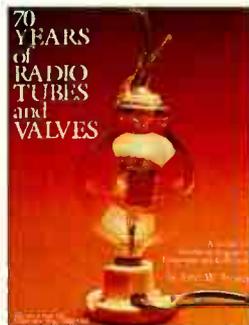
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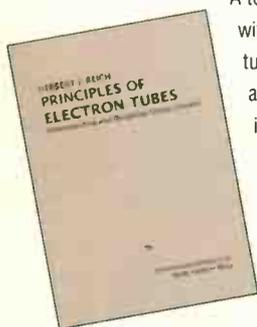
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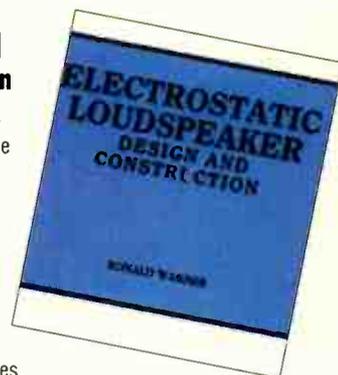
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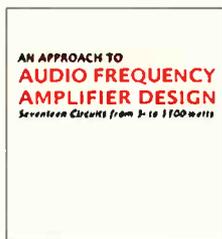
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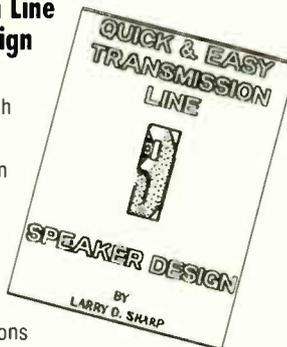
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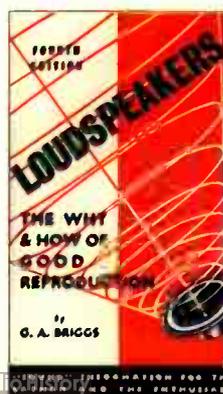
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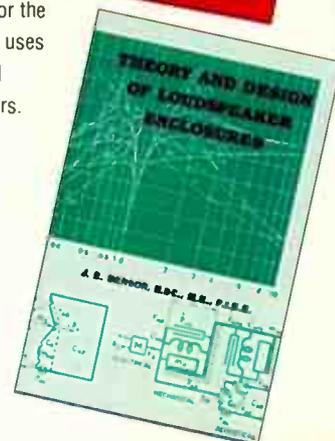
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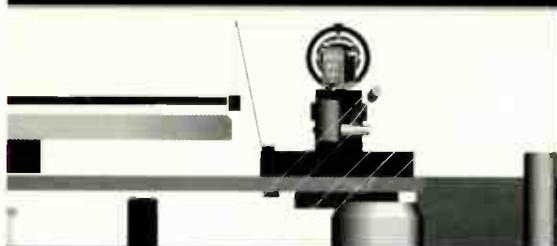
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WARM RECEPTION



Looking to surf the airwaves on a budget? Marantz's £150 ST-57 might be what you're looking for thinks Jon Marks.

When I first fired up Marantz's ST-57 tuner I was left wondering if it had been designed to tune in to brain waves as well as radio waves. Knowing that Ken Ishiwata is the electronic driving force behind Marantz I was looking forward to listening to the ST-57. Then, lo and behold, when I pressed the band selector to move to Long Wave, instead of 'LW' appearing there was the name 'Ishiwata'. Strangely enough, concentrate as hard as I might, I couldn't get the words 'Cindy Crawford' or 'European Monetary Policy' to appear on the RDS display. Turning to the manual, I found the explanation - you can programme the display with your own station names.

Anyway, getting back to Long Wave, not so long ago, most hi-fi tuners regarded this band as an anachronism. These days things seem to be running in LW's favour as more than a few tuners seek to satisfy those who crave the World Service and shipping forecasts. And to save you the hassle of manually tuning into all your favourite stations, there are no fewer than 60 presets.

Homing in on one of the higher fidelity signals out there in the ether, I tuned in to Radio 3. With a series of Proms '97 highlights, the ST-57

impressed by not coming up with the thin, colourless sound that characterised many of the previous generation of budget tuners. The Marantz went in the opposite direction with a deep if slightly over-exuberant bass and smooth, warmish treble.

Next came GLR with The The's classic 'The Beaten Generation'. Here again the ST-57 turned out to be a smoothie, cymbals and sibilants free of harshness and overemphasis, although the bass wasn't toeing the same line. News readers' voices showed that the tuner was adding a plummy bass coloration which could be heard as a boomy chestiness. Mind you, this weighty bottom end did numbers such as Shaggy's 'Take Another Little Piece' no disservice, adding power to vocals and basslines alike.

Returning to Radio 3, another of the Marantz's limitations became obvious. On larger orchestral and choral pieces this tuner couldn't quite muster the clear-cut clarity which Denon's TU-260L won fans with. Instead, the ST-57 had a habit of blending together the musical ingredients and cooking up a rather blurred version of events. But as with its bass foible, the Marantz 'failed' gracefully - where some older tuners have uncontrolled bass and

treble that'll drive the local canine population to distraction, the '57 never verged on the offensive.

While Medium Wave and Long Wave lacked FM's detail and sound staging and could fall prey to various background warblings they had a similarly likeable tonal balance.

If you're after high-octane rhythm and near razor-sharp dynamics you might want to scrape together a few more shekels and go for NAD's accomplished and transparent 412 or save a few with Denon's TU-260L. On the other hand, if a warm and friendly sound is more your style, then tune in to the ST-57.

Marantz ST-57

£149.99

Marantz Hi-Fi
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WORLD VERDICT



The ST-57 is a smooth, warm tuner but lacks a little clarity and transparency.

Measured Performance
see p103

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Mysteries from Noel Keywood

kaleidoscope

I've got a few obsessive ideas that won't leave me. Up 'til now I thought they were best kept a little quiet in case I got taken away by some men in white coats. Recently though, my little obsessions have been firming up into reality - which is a bit of a surprise! Where's the link, for example, between valve amplifiers - one obsession - and modern high-capacity digital recording systems? No, I don't dream about CD-R recorders at night. It hasn't got that bad yet. But I am convinced that replay-only carrier systems are a limiting idea and a future dead duck.

Thank heavens the music business has finally got over its blind love of CD's "perfect sound". Let's just call it a mistake and forget it. The coding scheme was brewed up in the late 1970s and back then it was a real feat to get so much data onto a 5in. disc. That still doesn't make 16-bit digital appropriate for music reproduction however. Which brings me onto my last obsession: the awfulness of CD! Even this is beginning to clarify itself as an issue.

CD isn't awful at all in one sense. The whole concept of a 5in. polycarbonate disc carrying a digital code that is read optically is looking inspired - its successors are becoming a global medium. The awful bit about CD was its Neanderthal 16-bit digital code sampled at 44.1kHz.

CD was badly flawed at launch. In 1984, I went out and blew a wad on a new toy from Hewlett Packard - a 3561A spectrum analyser. This gave me the means by which to measure CD. It was with some glee that we slapped a picture of the HP onto the cover of *The Flat Response*, making the point inside that it took CD to produce levels of distortion in excess of 100%!

Not in the entire history of analogue audio had such a situation existed I suspect. When I first saw '140%' flash up on the HP screen I thought there must be some mistake. Not a bit of it. That 140% was a

symbolic figure if you like. It was saying in effect, "Here, this is what CD is capable of", a somewhat different view from that touted by Philips' cynical marketing department.

The 0.005% distortion figure so commonly quoted for CD is only obtainable at peak level. It is no accident that this best-case figure is

'bell curve' of sales has been reached. The music biz has gone into a little panic over this possibility. So is CD about to die?

My view has always been that replay-only media like CD are unnecessary and unwanted. I speculated that DAT would wipe out CD in 1986 and got taken to the Press Council for it by

number of digital carriers and, in a year's time, recordable DVD will offer 18Gb of recording capacity, enough space to record 30 present-day CDs.

With this capacity, we can afford to forget about coding limitations. CD will become more like open-reel tape. You will be able to record on it and decide

what quality you want. The audio industry will not be able to impose a fixed standard; recording ability deters this. I doubt very much if we'll ever see a standardised 24-bit, 96kHz sampling

audio code for CD. More likely CD will come in the code used by the recording studio to make the final mix-down master. Either your multi-standard CD player will handle it, or if it won't, then your computer will be able to re-code and re-record the disc so it can.

Where do valve amplifiers fit into all this? In the music business, they're suddenly springing up everywhere. Even Trevor Horn relies upon them, I'm told by a friend in the biz, to get that big, powerful sound that is his trademark. And Seal uses a valve powered microphone for the same reason.

So here's to the future. A future where the oldest electronic technology we know is supported by the newest. I'm looking forward to great analogue and even greater digital before they come to take me away for my obsessions.

"CD will become more like open-reel tape. You will be able to record on it and decide what quality you want."

so commonly quoted; Philips specify that it should be so. Analogue systems were invariably quoted for distortion at full level too, but distortion was highest at this level, not lowest. It was an honest view that told us the worst a system would do.

Digital behaves inversely: it gives minimal distortion at full level and goes bananas at low levels. If Philips and the CE business had stuck to the frank spirit of audio engineering as it was, their early distortion figures for CD, at say -60dB, would have been 5% or so, instead of 0.005% - a mere thousand times worse!

CD has had a good run. With UK CD sales at 160million in 1996 it has out-sold the cassette and LP which peaked at 85million in the late Eighties. Now, CD sales are slowing and it may be that the top of its

BREMA, the British Radio Equipment Manufacturers Association, acting on behalf of the big CE manufacturers, notably Philips, Sony, Panasonic and others.

The Press Council seemed to be fascinated by the shenanigans of the industry and what they were willing to obfuscate or deny in order to protect their cash cow. I won my case with some ease, ably helped by Roger Eglin, *Innovations* editor of *The Sunday Times*, for whom I wrote the piece. If anything, this warned the industry about the potential of high-quality recording systems.

That was yesterday. Today's starting to look very different. The unshackled computer business has raced ahead, turning audio and video into a technological and economic backwater. Now we can record audio onto any

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BIG IN JAPAN

David Price brings you the latest in Japanese hi-fi.

The Next Big Thing in Japan is MiniDisc. Not so new of course, but never before has it assaulted the serious hi-fi scene like now. Five years ago, the only MD hardware was a couple of lumpy looking portables, but now, all the major manufacturers are in on the act.



Sony's top MiniDisc sounds superb.

Most impressive is Sony's Y180,000 (£900) MDS-JA50ES, a 15kg monster stuffed with high quality components and 20-bit internal architecture. So impressed were Japanese magazine *Audio Accessory* that they nearly ran out of superlatives when reviewing it! Back down in the realms of sensibly priced kit is Kenwood's DMF-7002, a mini-sized 'lifestyle' MD from their 'CORE' range. TEAC now offer an equivalent in their MD-H500, another brushed aluminium festooned MD machine for their 'Earnest' mini-component system.



Denon's smart £350 MD separate.

Denon have jumped into MD with abandon. The DM-1300 is an impressive Y70,000 (£350) full-width machine with a swish gold front panel, while two

mini-component decks are offered, the DMD-7.5E and DMD-F07 at Y80,000 (£400) and Y65,000 (£325) respectively. They also have the rack mount pro DN-1100R machine at Y248,000 (£1,250) and the DN-990R studio machine. As many jingles on Japanese radio stations are stored on MD, this should prove a nice little earner!

Next on the news front is the sudden proliferation of valve amps in Japan. Tubes have always had a hard-core



Wavac's HE-805 - gorgeous!

following here, but never have they reached the mass-market like this. For example, Yoshiaki Kogyo have introduced their Wavac Audio

Lab HE-805 Class A Single-Ended power amp, producing 45W a side. This 60kg monster is a snip at Y2,500,000 (£12,500)!



Tri Audio's bargain 300B kit integrated.

Tri Audio offer their 300B aspirated integrated amp with 21W per channel from Y99,000 (£495) in kit form (tubes extra), while L'ampex have a bizarre pyramid-shaped power amp with 10W per channel from four ECL82s for a modest Y69,800 (£349).



L'ampex's pyramid power amp.

Kyoden have their beautiful Spark integrated for Y390,000 which squeezes 32W a side from four Spark-branded 300Bs, backed up by four 12AU7s and four 12AX7s.

Finally, Prestige's HM300 at Y1,050,000 (£5250) is a huge monobloc

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Spark 300B integrated.

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direct-drive kings, now believe belt drive is the thing to have!



Seiko Epson's top deck - megabucks!

Seiko

Epson, a name hardly synonymous with high-end hi-fi, are also going down the rubber-band

So inspired by the belt drive turntable revival are CEC that they've used it in their latest Y130,000 (£650) TL5100Z CD player!



Prestige's £5250 monobloc.

Although record companies have been pressing vinyl here for several years, up to now there's been fairly little movement on the hardware front. But Micro, once a giant amongst turntable makers, have shocked everyone with their stunning SX-8000/II, so big it makes a Goldmund Reference look like a Dual 505.

route with their mind bogglingly expensive 5000 turntable. Y3,200,000 (£16,000) buys this Takeshi Teragaki designed monster with all the looks of a North Sea oil rig. Still, penny pinchers can always go for its little brother, the 2000, at just Y1,400,000.



CEC's wacky belt drive CD player!

Luxman have a svelte-looking new Y180,000 (£900) HDCD player on the market, while Pioneer have given their top PD-T07HS one-box player with the latest 'Hi-Bit Legato Link S' converters a 'Limited' edition run. Finally, Sony haven't been resting on their



Micro spearhead the belt drive revival.

A mere Y1,150,000 (£5750) buys you the 28kg deck, with a massive metal

Compared to MD, the CD player front is pretty quiet. Ken Ishiwata fails to get his signature on Marantz



Sony's pretty top-loading midi size CD player.

laurels, and are offering a range of high-end midi size (280mm wide) top-loading players, a la Mission dAD7. Any chance of seeing the Y60,000 (£300) CDP-X3000 here soon, Sony UK?

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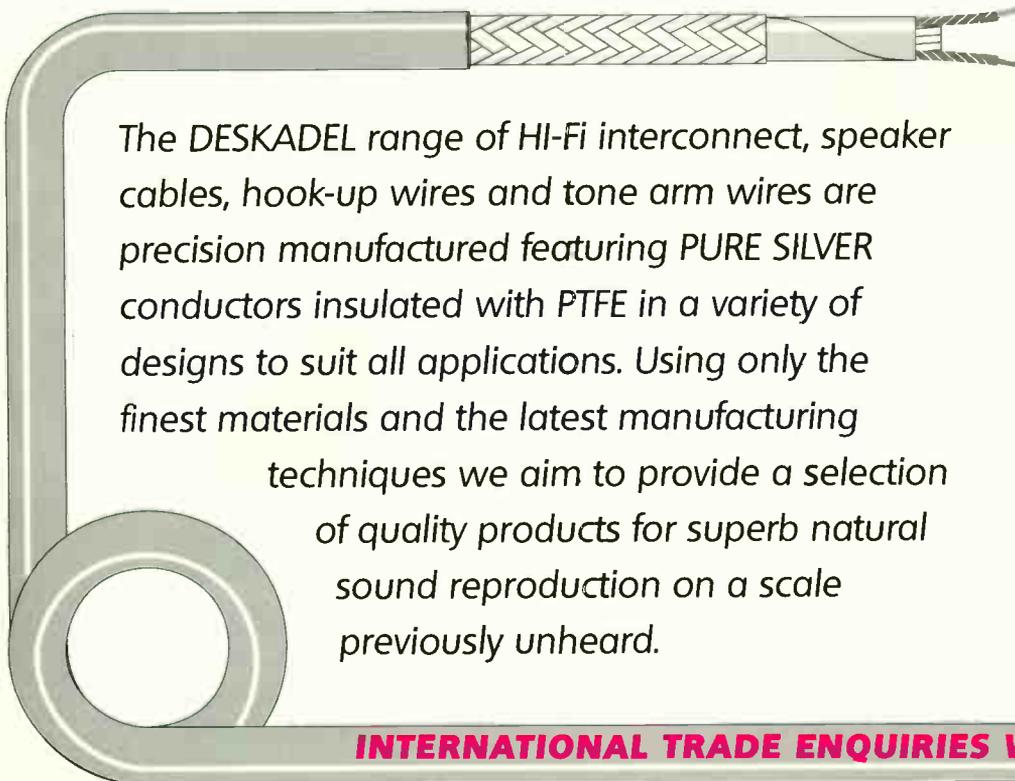
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Ah, the Internet - that repository of useless information perfect for Sunday supplement journos to wax lyrical over. As for me, if I read another wide-eyed exposition of "the Net", its "cyber-surfers" and "techno-freaks", I'll be reaching for the sick bucket.

Fast becoming the supreme Nineties' bandwagon, the Net is packed with dullards who think they're interesting enough to have their own homepage. Hell, even 'Just' William Hague has one! Still, ignore the millions of rainforest-killing column inches devoted to the subject, the countless lists of "cyber-cafes" (yawn) and Internet lifestyle gurus, and you might be surprised to find that there are actually some good reasons to go "on line".

You see, the Internet is particularly suited to specialist subjects, and as World readers surely know, hi-fi is just such a pursuit. Our own website (www.hi-fiworld.co.uk) is a small but perfectly formed contribution to the genre, and there are many, many more. But what has really surprised me is that the best hi-fi related site I've seen is not, as you'd expect, something to do with vinyl tweaking or 'speaker building but, of all things, MiniDisc.

<http://www.hip.atr.co> - known to humans as The MiniDisc Community Page - is quite the most remarkable hi-fi resource you could ever imagine. Sited in Australia, the Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Japan and the U. S. and written entirely in English, it's run by one Eric Woudenburg (eaw@hip.atr.co.jp) who's very possibly the most dedicated hi-fi enthusiast you'll ever encounter.

Pay a visit and you'll find an amazingly comprehensive site, with a complete history of the format down to every last magazine mention, including my own enthusiastic review on Sony's MDS-JE500. There's

audiophilia

David Price



every technical article you could want, reprinted from hi-fi mags all around the world (including Japan's prestigious MJ), links to every MD hardware manufacturer and extensive product

Big Thing (errm, in MiniDisc circles at least).

And then of course there's the politics. Eric is especially hot on this hornet's nest and publishes a litany of features and excerpts from

abandoned policy of refusing to supply other manufacturers with anything newer than version 3.0 - Hello magazine would kill to carry so much tittle-tattle!

As for the format's users, Eric dispassionately observes that people who use MD regularly "become quite fond of the format" and goes on to talk about "cool things people are doing". Be warned, this little disc is being used for everything from restoring antique Music Boxes to ground based sensors in NASA sonic-boom propagation experiments. I kid you not. There are even stories of MD in Russia, of using Sharp MD portables in American square dancing and as an aid to Snowboarding. No one but no one could have made this up. . ."

"There are even stories of MD in Russia, of using Sharp MD portables in American square dancing and as an aid to Snowboarding. No one but no one could have made this up. . ."

overviews. And it gets better.

Rather than featuring the usual manufacturer sponsored advertising spiel, the Community Page is packed with FAQs (Net-speak for Frequently Asked Questions) and some mind-bogglingly detailed technical features on MD hardware.

You can download MS DOS and Windows programmes which hook up to your MD machine to provide extensive editing and titling facilities, the PC software controlling the MD machine's own disc operating system! And how about a MiniDisc Audio Transfer system that decompresses ATRAC and stores it on a PC hard drive, or a list of Sony's MD remote control codes? Yep, MiniDisc hacking is fast becoming The Next

the likes of the Washington Post, the Nikkei and the Wall Street Journal, as well as countless European and U. S. hi-fi mags. Each piece gives this much maligned format a lot of 'good copy', although in the interests of fairness and impartiality, Eric also includes an ill-tempered rant from Stereo Review.

ATRAC, the data compression system that makes MD possible, is the subject of much talk too, rather in the way vinyl junkies chat about exotic moving coils. To wit, we have archive technical pieces on ATRAC 2 (yuk!), detailed tracts on ATRAC 3 and 4 (ATRAC 3.5 seems to be regarded as MD's great leap forward, while 4 is currently considered the only chip to have). There's even insider gossip on Sony's recently

So there you have it, possibly the most comprehensive website on any subject ever and it just happens to be about MiniDisc. As for me, those happy memories of Hi-Fi World's Sony MDS-JE500 review remain, and I'm beginning to get the feeling I might have to buy an MD machine for myself pretty soon. Should I go for a home recorder or a portable? Well, one thing's for sure - if I opt for the latter, I'd be a fool not to access The MiniDisc Community Page's link to Motorola LiIon Cells and Battery Management Techniques!

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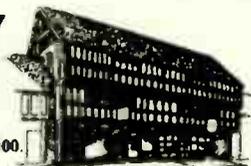
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POLITE PERFORMER



AMC's smooth sounding CD8 is up against some tough competition. Dominic Todd weighs up its chances.

If you're getting that feeling of déjà-vu from AMC's CD8 CD player, there's a perfectly scientific explanation for it - AMC actually base their equipment on components from NAD. And while AMC isn't the best known of companies over here, they've received acclaim in the past for their transistor/valve hybrid amp, the 3030, and CDM7 CD player.

Since then things have been rather quiet. That's about to change, though, thanks to products like the £150 CD8. The player is solidly built and comes with all the toys you'd ever really need - programming features, a remote control and an electrical digital output are all included. Inside is a Technics-based MASH single-bit Digital to Analogue Converter as found in NADs of yore.

As ever in the budget sector, there's some strong competition for AMC to overcome. Front runners include the Technics SLPG580A and Cambridge CD4. And let's not forget, lurking in the wings lies the excellent Kenwood DP-3080 for just £20 more.

If the styling could be described as steady and conservative, then the same might be said of the sound quality. Facing up to 'Waiting Game' from Jools

Holland's Sex and Jazz and Rock and Roll album, the AMC produced a somewhat uninspiring piano tone, lightweight and lacking resonance. At the price, this is a common problem though. Anyway, percussion detail and separation went some way to make up for this, with a spacious and informative rendition of higher frequencies. The overall sound was extremely smooth but almost too polite, rounding off electric guitar's raw energy.

A similar pattern emerged with The Brand New Heavies' 'Dream Come True'. The sound quality was cohesive yet failed to really involve me. This was possibly due to the slightly soft bass and distant vocals. A pity this, as the CD8 managed to open up the layers in the music well for a machine of this price.

Brahms' sonatas for cello and piano revealed a fine sense of timing that dealt confidently with the interplay between these two instruments. However, a lack of bite from the cello and an insubstantial piano meant that most of the music's tension was diluted. Good separation and plenty of space around the instruments went some way to remedying this shortfall.

The AMC CD8 is smooth and polite

with a wide variety of music but seems to have taken the quest for refinement too far. Against competition like the Technics and Kenwood it lacks weight and authority. It also doesn't come close to matching the latter's sense of involvement. The CD8 shouldn't be ruled out altogether though - it could be the perfect tonic for an unruly amp and 'speaker combination. But if it came to the crunch, I'd save up an extra £20 and buy the Kenwood DP-3080 ●

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WORLD VERDICT



The CD8 lacks the harsh treble that afflicts some cheaper CD players but can be too smooth at times.

Measured Performance
see p103

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VINTAGE VIRTUES

by Haden Boardman

Depending on where you stand, Ortofon's SPU MC cartridge is simply the finest device invented to trace record grooves or the worst thing that ever happened in the civilised high-end society.

Fans (which include myself and several thousand Japanese) will tell you about the lucid midrange, the glorious stereo image, the sweetness and the pure, unadulterated soul these things have. Detractors will tell you the SPU cannot track a thing, and distorts all the time and wrecks records as it goes.

One thing that cannot be denied is that in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the SPU was *the* cartridge, blowing away competitors like Shure's 3D, EMI's EPU100 and the infamous Decca FFSS system. Available in different forms, most customers opted for the SPU in a plastic shell (type 'G') fitted with high-gain step-up transformers (suffix 'T') and an elliptical stylus (suffix 'E'), although that came a little later on. In the early 1960s, a full SPU-GTE would cost you the thick end of £30, making it the most expensive pick-up you could buy.

The whole design for the SPU is based around Alan Blumlein's 1931 patent which was the blueprint for stereophonic sound. Mr Blumlein, whose life was sadly cut short testing Radar in the Second World War, was a major contributor to hi-fi. His classic

patent text describes the basics of the stereo Moving Coil system Ortofon developed, as well as full details on the M-S microphone system. Ortofon patented their own Moving Coil technology, choosing to license the design to a few other manufacturers like EMT. EMT stopped paying royalties when Ortofon's patent lapsed a good few years ago.

Throughout the late 1960s and most of the 1970s, MCs were deeply unpopular. The obsession in arm, cartridge and stylus design was to achieve the absolute lowest mass above everything else. A heavy MC had no place in this world (an original SPU

weighs in at just under 30 grams!)

In the early 1980s, Moving Coils were back, mainly because Ortofon's patent had run out so anyone could make an Ortofon-style MC. The market was flooded with strange imports from the Far East, and even today, there are more than a handful of very small manufacturers making expensive Moving Coils, none of which would be here if it were not for the SPU. Ortofon themselves refined the design many





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Audiolab 8000S

times - the basic layout within all their cartridges owes something to the SPU, including the stunning Orthophase models.

The most difficult thing about an SPU is mounting it. It is extremely heavy by modern standards and needs a pretty heavy arm.

The best match is either the MkI or MkII 12in. SME 3012 tone-arm. This marries with an SPU like peaches do with cream. Other classic arms which work well are Ortofon's own SKG and RMG (although they wear

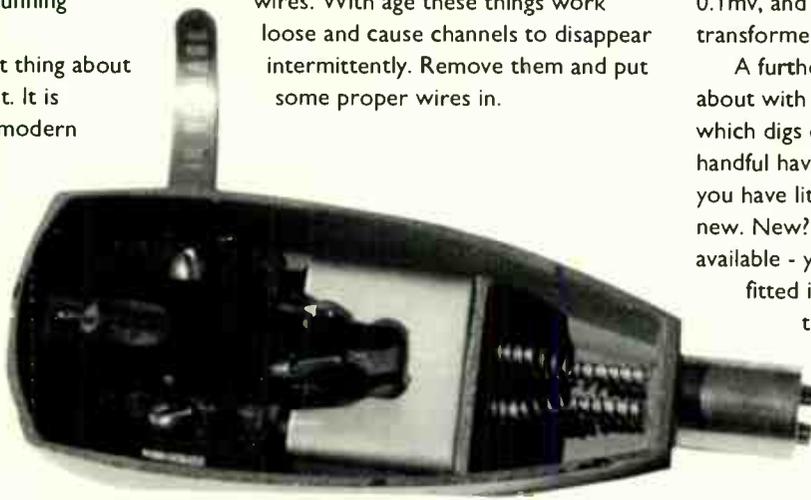
out with age), Audio Technica's AT-1500 series broadcast arms (hard to find) and Fidelity Research's FR64/66S (the FR64 is very rare and the FR66 almost non-existent).

Second-hand SPUs can be found in old Garrard 301s and Thorens' TD124s, nine times out of ten fitted to an SME arm. There are three distinct SPU vintages: the 1950s through to the 1960s, the 1970s and the post-1984 Gold era.

1950s' and 1960s' cartridges are always in a plastic 'G'-type shell. Some enterprising dealers fitted the SPU into an SME drilled metal shell, which is fine, but remember, if mounting an SPU in anything other than its own designated shell, you must use spacers (see picture).

In the 1970s, the 'GM' shell came along, which, as the 'M' suggests, is made of metal. This iteration saw some small detail changes and one mild cock-

up. Ortofon chose to use small tensioned springs instead of headshell wires. With age these things work loose and cause channels to disappear intermittently. Remove them and put some proper wires in.



The tensioned springs which Ortofon chose to use instead of cable in the SPU-GM should be replaced with proper leads.

Bear in mind that a stylus tip does wear, so before damaging any of your records, have the stylus checked out and, if necessary, replaced by one of the specialist re-tipping companies about.

In the 1980s, due to popular demand from the Far East, the SPU got a less than subtle gold and silver finish. In fact, every piece of metal on the cartridge and headshell was covered in a thick layer of gold. Internal wires became high-grade silver and the cartridge was supplied in a little presentation box with an inscribed plaque. Although the built-in transformers had been dropped (as the SPU Gold hit the scales at 32g without the transformers, I don't suppose there was an arm capable of balancing the beast complete with them), the sound of the Gold is better than the originals - it's smoother and altogether more polished thanks to its superior stylus tip. Some, however, prefer the sound of

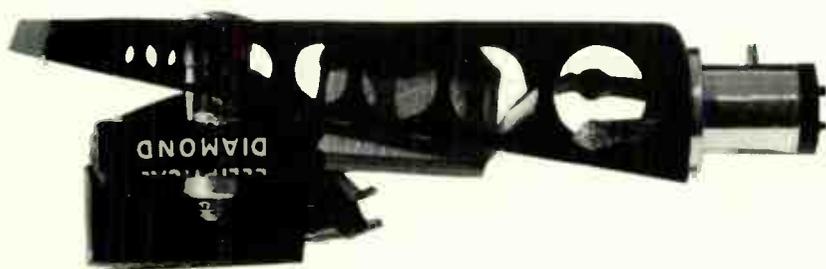
the original transformer model with its high output. The Gold produces only 0.1mv, and so requires a superb step-up transformer to work properly.

A further refining of the SPU came about with the SPU Gold Reference, which digs out even more detail. Only a handful have been imported though, so you have little choice but to buy one new. New? Yes, the SPUs are all still available - you can even have them fitted into the earlier (mono) 'C'-type shell. But be warned, if you go the 'C' route, you will have to import a new arm from Japan to cope with its shortened length. Sticking to the SPU in the 'G' shell and fitting it to a 12in. SME really is the best option.

I have heard the majority of decent high-end cartridges and while some do come close, none for me gets the balance as right as the SPU. When properly set up (i.e. in a heavy arm), it doesn't distort or damage records. OK, it won't track something like Telarc's massively modulated cutting of the 1812 overture, complete with cannons, but then little will. And considering the SPU is all about soul and emotion, you really owe it to yourself to listen to one ●



The bullion-plated SPU Gold weighs in at a massive 32gms and that's without the high-gain step-up transformers of its predecessors.



You can mount a 1950s' or 1960s' SPU in an SME headshell, but spacers must be used.

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Roksan

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radius 3/tabriz/corus black	£1090.00

CD Players

Attesa DP3 Transport/AttesaDA2 Mk2/AttesaDS5	£2439.00
AttesaDP3 CD player	£1595.00
Caspian CD player	£895.00

Amplifiers

Rok L1.5 preamplifier	£2250.00
Rok L2.5 preamplifier	£1295.00
Rok S1.5 preamplifier	£1495.00
Rok M1.5 mono preamplifier	£2250.00
Caspian Integrated	£695.00
Caspian Poweramplifier	£TBA

Loudspeakers

Ojan 3 x Loudspeaker	£1195.00	£1395.00
Ojan 3 Loudspeaker	£795.00	£995.00
Rok-One Loudspeaker	£549.00	£649.00

Other Products Available

Xerxes X upgrades rosewood only	£950 inc. fitting
Artexerxes X phone amplifier	£395.00
Xps v reference xerxes power supply	£320.00
Tabrizi upgrade inc armcable	£170.00
Artemiz upgrade inc armcable	£220.00
Xerxes power supplies XPS 3.5 inc DSU	£320.00
Any aspect or format concerning Roksan please call John Roberts for an informative but informal chat.	

Audio Note

With a new compact disc player now available at an astonishing price of £999.00, it incorporates a 20 bit D/A conversion system and a state of art SONY mechanism. We anticipate a high demand for this baby, so book a demonstration today to avoid disappointment.

Midland Audio Exchange will also be demonstrating the all new M3 Line/Phone preamplifier without a doubt the finest valve pre we have had in the building. At an affordable price of £2950.00 for the line version and £4650.00 for the phono, if three dimensional and an 'open window' is what your system lacks then look no further.

Analogue fanatics will be glad to hear that the old range of Voyd turntables are now available under the Audio Note banner.

The Voyd Valdi is now known as the AN TT Two	£995.00
The Voyd is now known as the AN TT Three	£1995.00
The super version is available at	£2450.00
The reference 0.5 is	£4450.00
The reference is	£9900.00
The super reference is a staggering	£36,500.00
Current Audio Note products on demonstration	
OTO Se Phono	£1495.00
M1 Preamplifier Phono	£750.00
P2 Se Power amplifier	£1499.00
DAC 1 Digital to Analogue Converter	£675.00
AN S1 Moving coil transformer	£449.00
AN TT 1 Entry level turntable in RB250 & IQ 1 Cartridge	£725.00

AN TT 3 Hi end Turntable inc AN 1s/AN V Tonearm	£3190.00
Meishu 300b integrated line amplifier	£2750.00
Conquest mono 300b Se Poweramplifiers	£4450.00
AN-CD2 integrated CD player ECC 82 Output Stage	£999.00
Audio Note Loudspeakers AN-KSP/JSP/ESP	from £830.00 to £1860.00

Audio Note silver interconnects AN-S/AN-V/AN-Vx
from £139.00 to £575.00

Special Limited Offer on Audio Note Loudspeakers
Audio Note have notified Midland Audio Exchange that in their factory inventory there are limited numbers of second quality loudspeakers available with savings of over 30%.

e.g. AN/TYPE J/D	£930.00
Normal Retail	£651.00
Second Quality Retail	£651.00
AN/TYPE E/D	£1520.00
Normal Retail	£1064.00
Second Quality Retail	£1064.00

The speakers will be acoustically perfect and guaranteed as per usual. The cabinets vary from obvious faults to marks you really have to look for. All will be supplied on a first come first buy scheme and there is definitely limited quantities
Midland Audio Exchange are exclusive dealers for Audio Note in Midlands

Michell Engineering Ltd

Becoming one of the most popular analogue manufacturers in the UK at the moment, these beasts never fail to impress, both with Awesome Orbe and Superb Gyrodek. Always a good selection of tonearms and cartridge combinations available to hear on these formidable machines.

Products on full demonstration	
The Orbe inc. SME V/Ortofon Rohmann	£4395.00
The Gyrodek inc RB300/MC20 Supreme	£1474.00
The Gyro Power QC psu	£399.00
The Iso phono stage inc Hera psu	£575.00
The Alecto stereo power amplifier	£1150.00
The Alecto mono power amplifiers	£1989.00
Please ring now to book your demonstration on any Michell products	

ProAc Loudspeakers

Quite a new range at M.A.X. but these are the reference at which all other speakers need to beat.

Tablette 50 - Available in Teak, Oak, Black, Mahogany, Walnut at £600. More exotic finishes to order and price difference.

Tablette 50 - Signature - Our favourite small monitor at any price, coupled with Target R4 stands, there's not much around to touch this! Being a Signature Series Version means that exotic finishes come as standard i.e. Ebony, Yew, Maple etc. £995.00

Response 1 SC - Utilises a new bass/mid range driver with an innovative copper magnet and phase plug assembly, which gives amazing dynamics for a speaker of this size. Also available in many finishes. Prices start at £1199.

Response 2.5 - Well, what can we say? One of the best speakers of it's kind on the planet. It incorporated slim and elegant styling with an astonishing sound quality and pin point imagery. At £2700 per pair they deliver the goods!

New Products

Midland Audio Exchange are pleased to announce the arrival of 'Electrocompanion' range of high quality amplifier and speaker systems.

The ECI-2 affordable high end quality integrated amplifier at £995 a must to hear if no compromise is necessary, then the ECI-1 integrated amplifier, which is rated at 100w per channel and gives 80 AMPS! Peak to peak (awesome) £2195.00
The AWB 100 DMB Dual mono stereo power amplifier 2 x 100w 80 amps £2095.00 coupled with the EC 4R High end line level pre amplifier at £1495.00 complete's our small selection from this popular Scandanavian manufacturer

Recommended Vinyl

Eagles	Hell Freezes Over	£17.90
Ricki Lee Jones	Pop Pop 180 grm	£19.95
Monty Alexander	Live At Montreux 180grm	£19.95
Cassandra Wilson	New Moon Daughter	£19.95
Ben Harper	Will to Live	£15.90
Eels	Beautiful Freak Ltd Edition	£9.90
Van Morrison	Healing Game	£12.90
Van Morrison	Moondance 180grm	£15.90
Fleetwood Mac	Roumers 180grm	£15.90
Donald Fagin	Nightly	£15.90
Ry Cooder	Paris Texas 180grm	£15.90
Art Pepper	Rhythm Section 180grm	£10.95
Jimi Hendrix	R.U. Experienced	£17.95
Jimi Hendrix	Band Of Gypsies	£12.95
Maria Callas	Arias 180grm	£19.95
Mahler	No.4 Klemperer 180grm	£19.95
Paganini	Violin 76276	
	Concerto Rabin 180grm	£19.95
Strauss	4 Last Song Schwarzkopf	£19.95
Janis Ian	Between The Lines	£10.90
EMI	EMI 100 Years 180grm	
	(All titles stocked)	£14.90
Beck!	Odelay 180grm	£12.90
David Bowie	Earthling Limited Edition	£14.90
Prodigy	The Fat Of The Land	£11.90
Tom Petty and	The Heartbreakers	£11.90
She's The One		£11.90
Arthur Louis (featuring		
Eric Clapton)	Knocking On Heavens Door	£11.90
Nina Simone	Sings The Blues 180grm	£19.95
Miles Davis	Tutu 180grm	£15.90

All these titles are available from stock mail order - a charge of £1.50 per consignment will be made.

See our other Advert on Page 112

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Unisis Integrated Line	2,300	935
Unisis Integrated Phono	2,400	995
Unisis Power Amp	1,900	795
Electronic Bias Meter for alignment	-	50

Pink Triangle

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BNC/BNC Hi-Q interconnect cables for DaCapo	25	
BNC & BNC Re-clock input module for DaCapo	-	49
Toslink input module for DaCapo	-	69
Cordinal CD Player (includes 18 bit filter)	1,680	840
18 bit filter	-	99
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Spendor 2040 Floor Stander	899	449
Spendor 2030 AV System (2010, 2020 & 2030)	1,247	599
Spendor 2040 AV System (2010, 2020 & 2040)	1,547	749

"the deliciously smooth and beautifully projected vocals, delicately performed treble and rich and fruity bass were a real treat."
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OPERA DUETTO



If a job is worth doing, then it's worth doing properly. This little piece of homespun wisdom is as true for a pair of budget loudspeakers as it is for the most expensive piece of audio equipment. The Duetto is actually the least expensive model in our Opera range. But when we designed it we did the the job properly. *To start with,* we made the Duetto's cabinet from 25mm thick solid hardwood to give it high mass, great rigidity and hence freedom from resonance.

Solve the problem of resonance and the job of making a fine loudspeaker becomes much easier. But that's only part of the story. Real wood is a beautiful, natural material, and the Duetto, made by our own skilled craftsmen is a tribute to the cabinet maker's art, simple yet supremely elegant.

But the Duetto is not just a pretty face. Top quality components and soundly applied acoustic principles combine to give a sound rich in detail, space and warmth. In short, a thoroughly convincing and enjoyable sound.

What do the reviewers say? Four-star rating from Hi-Fi World's Jon Marks with the words, "A genuinely transparent and musical sound". Whilst the normally hard-to-please Ken Kessler of Hi-Fi News called the Duetto: "So luxurious that it sets new standards for speakers in the sub-£500 bracket".

If, like us, you appreciate a job done properly, we think you'll be impressed by the Duetto. And at £395 for the pair, you might even like the price.

For more information and the name of your nearest stockist contact:

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from
Dominic Todd,
 our man in
 retailing



Tone controls. The very words send shivers down the spine of many an audiophile. Yet it was only as recently as the Eighties that such devices became frowned upon within the hi-fi industry at large. The trouble is, when an amplifier has tone controls, usually just for bass and treble, it is but a short step away from the dreaded graphic equaliser.

As we all know, graphic equalisers ruin the purity of the sound by wildly bending the frequency response and adding distortion and 'grain' because of all the low quality potentiometers involved. Furthermore, graphic equalisers normally sport a myriad flashing lights that many see as the very antithesis of a quality 'minimalist' separates system. And so tone controls are viewed with suspicion as the start of a slippery slope.

But do humble boost/cut switches for bass and treble really deserve such contempt? I don't believe they do. Don't get me wrong - I'm as set against equalisers as the next audiophile, apart from those used in the studio or on cheap personal units. Yet working in retailing I've seen customers reject a particular amplifier, no matter how good it sounds, simply because it doesn't feature tone controls. This

must have dented sales for some brands, especially in the budget to mid-price sector.

Having tone controls needn't be a burden to successful sounding and selling amps though. For proof look no further than the top-selling amps from

pretty much the same. In other words, those companies that have always fitted tone controls, such as Arcam, Audiolab and NAD still do, while those that never used to, such as Naim, Aura and Cyrus, still don't.

However, there is a

"And let's face it, few of us have acoustically perfect rooms. Even if we did, some recordings would still benefit from a bit of extra bass or reduced treble"

Arcam and Audiolab, which have persevered with tone controls for years. No one could accuse the Arcam Alpha or Audiolab 8000A of not making an impact.

The secret of these amps has been to represent all things to all buyers. Sonically they are good enough to be mentioned in the same breath as minimalist amps from Cyrus and Naim. Yet they don't exclude potential customers through a lack of features. And let's face it, few of us have acoustically perfect rooms. Even if we did, some recordings would still benefit from a bit of extra bass or reduced treble.

So where do we stand now? Well, despite the fact that tone controls aren't as unpopular as they once were, and that many customers are put off by having no adjustment, the status quo has remained

realisation from certain companies that there may be a gap in the market for people who chose a particular amplifier for its general sonic qualities but aren't totally happy with its tonal balance.

At one end of the market there's Musical Fidelity. As part of their X-Series they've launched a unit called the X-Tone, which essentially provides a bass and treble control through the tape loop of an amplifier. It seems a little bizarre, especially when you are paying £130 for the privilege. But then none of Musical Fidelity's amps are fitted with tone controls, so perhaps this is their way of ensuring they don't miss out on that final slice of the market. At the other extreme there's B&W's digital room-tune system. A highly sophisticated device using complex electronics to adapt your hi-fi to the

room's sonic signature, this box of tricks is only at the prototyping stage and, unfortunately, B&W have no plans as yet to market a final version.

Of course there's nothing new in tone deviation systems. Remember the BBE Sonic Maximiser? You may well have seen BBE on Midi systems and personals, and just have thought of it as a fancy loudness control. In fact BBE are an American company in their own right, hoping one day to be as internationally recognised as Dolby. Sadly their 1002 model, selling for about £200 over here, never really took off. The BBE 1002 sought to improve sound quality through loudspeakers' natural flaw of delivering higher

and lower frequencies at different times. The result is that the natural relationship between the fundamental and harmonic components of the notes is altered, creating a hazy and imprecise sound. The BBE chip corrected the phase of the signal, boosting the high frequency range and placing a 2.5millisecond delay on frequencies below 150Hz. It worked too, creating more powerful transients and improved depth of sound. Despite glowing reviews at the time, it never really caught the attention of the hi-fi buying public.

The trouble is, with so many lo-fi surround sound and equaliser systems out there, audiophiles have become, rightfully, cautious of such additions. It's a shame, though, as there are some genuinely fine products out there that don't deserve to be tarred with the same brush. Even a humble pair of well designed tone controls can make all the difference. And if more people are listening to more music more of the time, surely this can't be such a bad thing?

KITS HAVE NEVER

K5881 MkII VALVE AMPLIFIER KIT

A 20watt Class A power amplifier that uses reliable Russian 5881 output valves, a military version of the American 6L6, designed for low distortion audio work.

Now with a super shunt regulated push-pull (SRPP) input stage K5881 offers amazing sound quality. It can be used with a simple passive pre-amp or one of our own pre-amplifiers, and it matches modern loudspeakers well.

MkII with SRPP input stage!



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£650

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An audiophile parallel single ended valve amplifier at an affordable price. K5881PSE uses the reliable Russian 5881 output valve. Its 17watts is enough to drive most loudspeakers, making high-end sound quality and design available to everyone. Can be easily monoblocked to give 32watts.

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KLS3 uses extremely light and stiff carbon-fibre cone drive units for a fast, accurate sound. A dedicated 4inch carbon-fibre midrange drive unit provides the clean, smooth and detailed midrange characterised by superb projection. Its high 90dB sensitivity and near flat 8ohm impedance make it one of the easiest loudspeakers to drive. An ideal loudspeaker for high-end valve amplifiers.

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K5881 MkII

£35

Upgrade your pre November '96 K5881 amplifier to MkII status for just £35. Includes new 7025 double triode input stage in place of the original EF86 pentode.

KLS3 Gold

NEW LOW PRICE - £385

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

Beginners. Go for this one and blow your mind!!



NEW!



KLS9 TWO WAY FLOORSTANDER

Here's a storm for you - KLS9, with its BB4 alignment bass cabinet and Audax High Definition Aerogel 8in bass/midrange unit. Designed by Noel Keywood to possess optimal bass damping and a clean step response. Aided by a teensy bit of bass lift, KLS9 really thunders; it will re-arrange your furniture. But it does not waffle, falling silent when there's no bass in the music.

Aided by a high power 1in fabric dome tweeter, KLS9 is detailed, evenly balanced and images superbly. It is an easy 12ohm load and is 88dB sensitive. For amps up to 60W. Easy to build and great for beginners. 93cms high.

Drive units, crossover parts, wool, etc

£230

Drive unit pack

£160



KLS3 Gold ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY THREE WAY LOUSPEAKER

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

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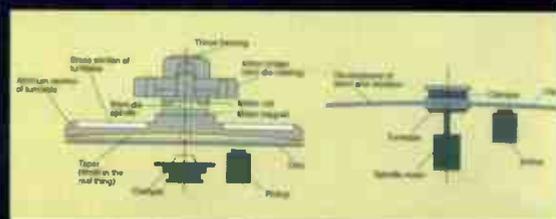
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The gold units featured in this photograph are available as a special order option

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NEW K5881 MkII Built	K5881-B240/120	<input type="checkbox"/>	£595	£550
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K5881PSE Built	K5881PSE-B240/120	<input type="checkbox"/>	£850	£725
300B 28W valve power amplifier (Not inc. Valves)	300B-K240/120	<input type="checkbox"/>	£850	£725
300B Built	300B-B240/120	<input type="checkbox"/>	£1150	£950
KLP1 line level pre-amplifier	KLP1-K240/120	<input type="checkbox"/>	£345	£295
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KLPP1 valve phono pre-amplifier	KLPP1-K240/120	<input type="checkbox"/>	£495	£425
KLPP1 Built	KLPP1-B240/120	<input type="checkbox"/>	£695	£595

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KLS7 2-way carbon fibre driver floorstanding loudspeaker				
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Drive Units	KLS7-D	<input type="checkbox"/>	£110	£95
KLS8 2-way high sensitivity standmounting loudspeaker				
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10inch bass, 90dB	PR240Z0	<input type="checkbox"/>	£75	£65

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8inch bass, 90dB	HM210C0	<input type="checkbox"/>	£55	£50

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10inch paper cone bass, 95dB	PR240M0	<input type="checkbox"/>	£60	£55
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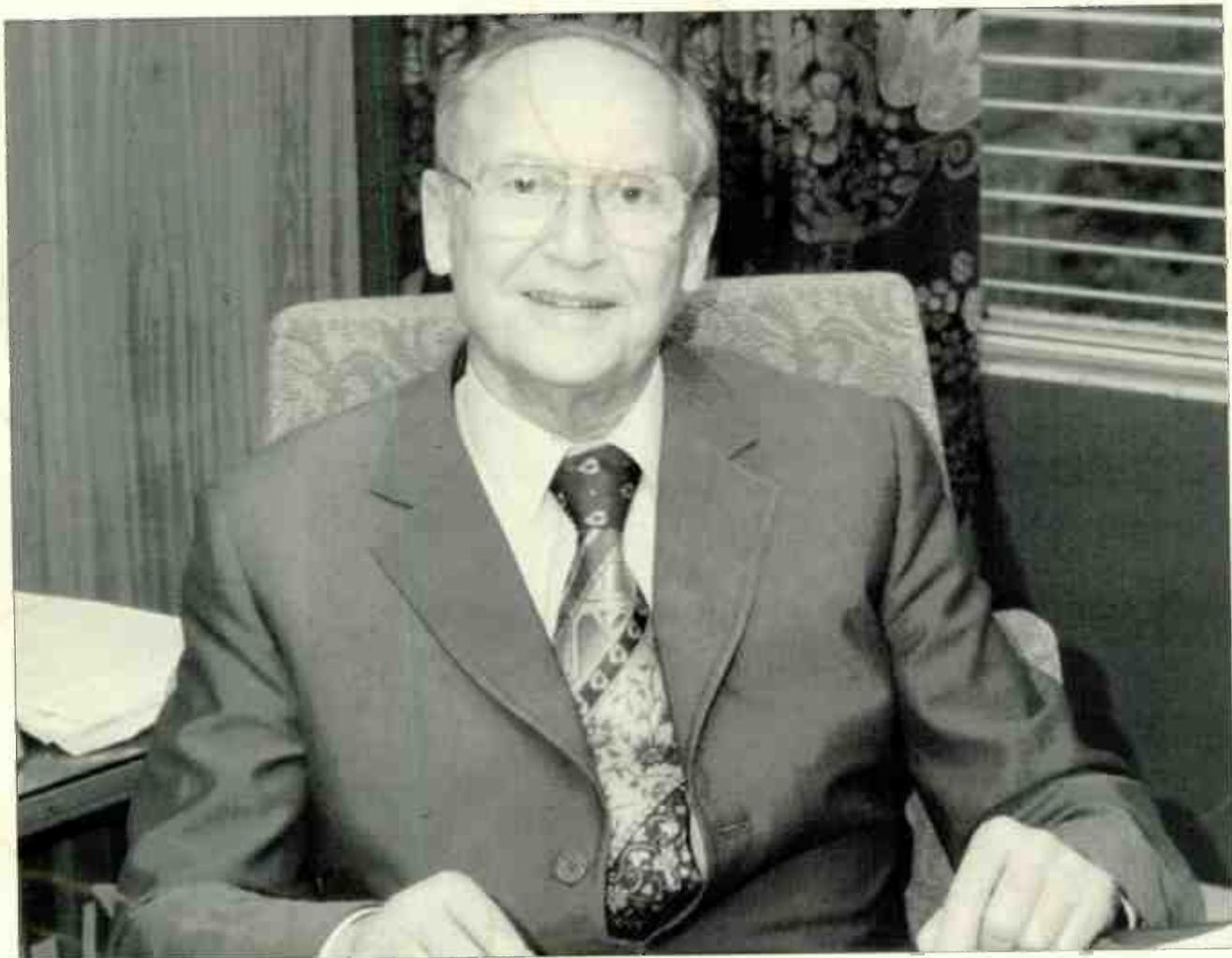
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feature

NO COM

Jon Marks meets SME's Alastair Robertson-Aikman and finds out



Back in our July issue, dedicated vinylholic Nick Tate took a look at SME's arms past and present. Now we meet the man behind the company, Alastair Robertson-Aikman. Renowned for his turntable and tone-arm designs, Alastair is also well known for his somewhat unconventional listening room and hi-fi system. . .

JM: "What kind of components does your system consist of?"

ARA: Well, there are the four Quad

ESL 63s arranged in L-shapes. As you see they have been modified to improve low-frequency definition. The solution employed takes one from the general to the particular as in this form, without stockings, grilles and dust covers they would not meet safety requirements and would be very restricted commercially by their weight and cost.

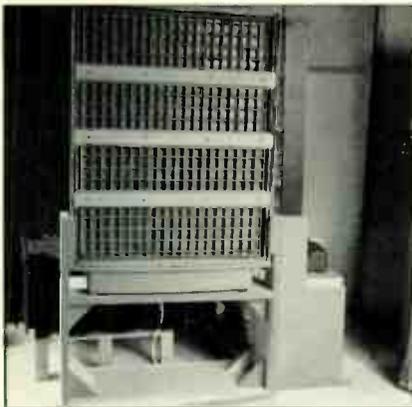
Without these constraints a more disciplined bass performance has been obtained by the addition of six transverse brass beams which clamp the electrostatic panels and also tie them to

the 'speaker frame. The increased stiffness and mass now means that almost all movement is confined to the diaphragms with much less reacted in the rest of the structure. A further increase in overall mass is effected by a 100lb billet of steel placed on top of each 'speaker raising its total weight to 250lbs thereby resisting any tendency for the unit as a whole to react to diaphragm thrust.

JM: Not recommended for sprung floors then, I take it?

PROMISE

about the best of analogue in the second of our Designer Interviews.



Alastair's modified Quad ESL 63s, showing the brass cross-braces used to stiffen the frames.

ARA: Not really!

JM: You were saying that the floor is basically one massive concrete slab, but what about the roof?

ARA: The roof is made of concrete beams with a screed on top and weighs about 20 tons. Normally constructed joist and board roofs flap around at low frequencies. Returning to the floor, even the staircases at the side are masonry rather than of hollow timber construction.

JM: It looks as though your amplification has been built along similarly massive lines.

ARA: I use a pair of Krell's original Reference monoblocs. They're really hard work to move - they weigh 200lbs apiece.

JM: So is the system you have at the moment your ideal system?

ARA: Yes, really. It's been a gradual evolution. The room was built between 1973-1975 and at that time I had eight

of the original Quad 57s arranged in symmetrical arcs, four in each channel. Then, gradually it became the biggest Quad system I know of with 16 ESL 57s, with banks of four in each corner of the room. The rear ones were operated through Lexicon line-delay amplifiers. It sounded absolutely wonderful. The last night of the Proms recorded on a Studer reel-to-reel tape deck from a radio broadcast was incredibly realistic and the walls of the room just fell away and you were there. The seating position was too critical for more than one listener though, so I decided to install a more democratic system using the new Quads.



Doing all the hard work is a pair of Krell's original Reference monoblocs.

JM: Do you leave the components running or in standby the whole time for better sound?

ARA: I don't find that it's wise to leave the Krells on standby - unless they're in the operating mode it doesn't do much for them. Ideally, if you can have them on for about half a day they sound at their very best. The ESL 63s stay on all the time as does the Wadia 16 CD player but not the Audio Research

Reference 1 pre-amp in deference to tube life. However, like the Krells, it benefits from a long warm-up. The record replay amplifier is the original LFD and being battery powered is impressively quiet. The cables are van den Hul. The two balanced channel connections between pre-amp and power amp are four 21m lengths of van den Hul The Second. At this length the choice of cable becomes more critical and these have given great satisfaction.

JM: How about the Clearaudio Insider cartridge you use? Does that take a little while to get into its stride?

ARA: Yes, I think its compliance is optimum when it's been in use for an hour or so. Then it gives a fast, enjoyable sound.

JM: What did you use before the Clearaudio?

ARA: I used Ortofons and one or two Japanese cartridges. In the very early days I tried Shures until the vogue for MCs really came about.

The component which has had the biggest impact on my system is the Model 30 turntable because it has this quality of, "It's not so much what you do hear, it's what you don't hear." When you've been used to the '30 and you hear other turntables, you realise how much they're adding.

JM: That's one thing I like about Technics' SL1000/II deck. Compared to many other decks, it seems a lot drier, leaner, tighter.

ARA: Oh yes, the Technics was one of the best turntables I ever used. I had a number of belt driven turntables after the Technics. It was like getting rid of an



Where it all started for the Model 30 - the original mock-up.

electrostatic loudspeaker and going back to a box - you always wonder whether you made the right decision and most of the time you're sure you haven't!

JM: Another plus point is the fact that it's a solid-sub-chassis deck and, once you've set it up, it just never drifts off level.

ARA: I think that's another thing people like about the '20 and '30 - their stability.

JM: It's something that can be a real problem with very delicately sprung turntables. You can put a 180gm audiophile pressing on the platter and it's level but try a skimpier pressing and it goes off level.

ARA: Speaking of audiophile pressings, I've had a few which have been inferior to the standard production LP in terms of print-through and noise due to defective pressing.

JM: We ran a feature in our August issue where David Price compared classic original pressings to new audiophile reissues and found many of the originals were better.

ARA: At the time the originals were made, the pressing companies had very fine facilities which sadly have been closed down. But it's not only a question of the plant being sold off, it's the staff too. They knew how to get the very best out of the machinery. I think

some modern pressings show a lack of quality control and expertise in doing the job.

JM: So what do you think are the most important ingredients in making the 'perfect' turntable?

ARA: The most important thing in all sound reproduction in my experience is that the vibrations you don't want have to be attenuated as far as you possibly can, while the vibrations you do want have to be there with the maximum speed of rise and decay. That's why I'm a fan of electrostatics. But in a vinyl system, it all starts really with the pick-up arm.

The arm-tube of the Series V, for example, is immensely stiff. It's also, for that stiffness, extremely light because it's pressure die-cast magnesium so you can place the metal where it is needed.

On the subject of stiffness, we make an offer to people: if they can bend the arm in their fingers, we'll give them a



A Series V arm-tube ready to be tumbled in a bath of plastic chips to take off any rough edges.

Series V. Nobody has yet succeeded!

On one occasion at an American show, we told a little lad about this offer and he said, "Do you mind if I get my friend to try?" He went out into the corridor and came back with a 'gorilla' who looked at us pityingly and said, "Do you mind if I break it?" "No", we said, "We'd be delighted if you could!" Of course he tried with all his might but he didn't manage it.

JM: Do you feel stiffness is an important factor in turntable construction as well?

ARA: Oh yes, mass and stiffness go hand in hand, not least in a turntable where once again stiffness stabilises position and mass damps vibration

including, of course, that emanating from the motor.

JM: Which do you feel is more important, inhibiting motor vibration or external vibration?

ARA: They're really on a par. Fortunately, much of what you have to do to treat the one applies to the other. Given all else a vital aspect of motor design is that the stator should be as heavy as possible to damp out pulses reacted in it from the rotor.

JM: Do you have any plans for a turntable to better the Model 30, whether it was for your own use or for sale?

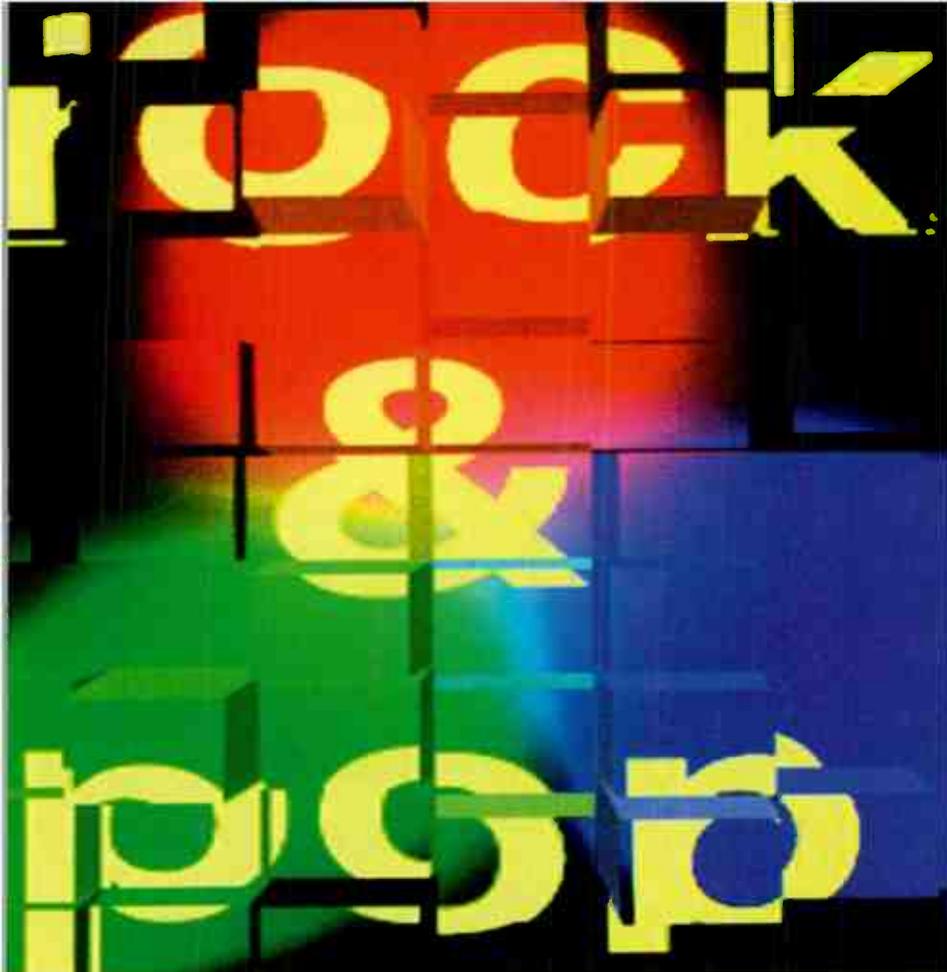
ARA: We've often thought about this. We made the Model 30 first and then we tried to make a less expensive turntable, and that was the '20. To make the '20 better you'd have to do more and more towards making it a '30, raising its price. So no, we wouldn't make a deck beyond the '30.

The Model 20's price is set so it's a possible purchase for quite a lot of people. Then for the super-rich there's the Model 30! We sold a Model 30 to a customer in Cyprus and he said he wanted to come and get it himself so he came in his own personal jet!"

With sales of their arms and turntables rising last year, it looks as though SME, which has already thrived for over 50 years, will be around for a while yet with Alastair at the helm - good news for LP lovers everywhere ●



With the Model 30 "It's not so much what you do hear, it's what you don't hear."



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TEENAGE FAN CLUB
**SONGS FROM NORTHERN
BRITAIN**

CREATION CRECD196

In a world devoid of simple harmonies, one loaded with the brash tones of Oasis and Techno protopunks the Chemical Brothers and their ilk, it is reassuring that Hibernian wunderkinds Teenage Fanclub can still deliver some of the most understated plaintive melodies around.

Once touted as the saviours of Alan McGee's burgeoning Creation record label - the mantle eventually passing,

needless to say, to Oasis - the Fannies have been around long enough to produce a fifth album. So unassuming are they though that it was only recently with the 'Ain't That Enough?' single that they finally made their Top of The Pops' debut.

But the follow-up to 1995's rapturously received Grand Prix is a somewhat muted affair by comparison, with nothing quite approaching the pure, no-holds-barred Pop pleasure of, say, 'Sparky's Dream'. Indeed, the momentum Grand Prix revved up has been dissipated a little by Songs From Northern Britain, which is, sadly, not quite on the same par as the album that could (and it's a very big could) have put them on a level with Oasis.

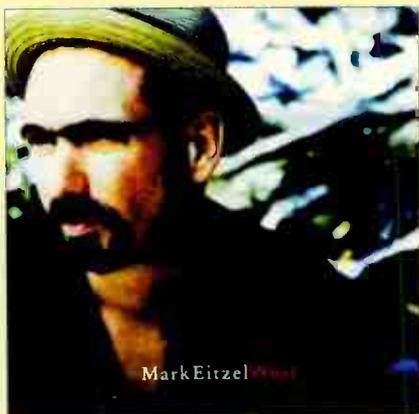
That said, this is certainly no throwaway affair. While it lacks any true sucker punches it is incredibly mellow in true Fanclub style and contains the usual collection of hummable ditties. Inevitably, it latches on to those Byrdsian Rickenbacker and Neil-Young influences in the process. Add Beach-Boy harmonies and you capture the essence of Teenage Fanclub.

The writing core of the band, Norman Blake and Raymond McGinley,

while never acclaimed as a Lennon/McCartney double-act do nonetheless have the knack of writing a simple yet inventive melody. Hence we have the likes of 'Start Again' followed by the summer hit 'Ain't That Enough?' and, without the slightest of pauses, the majestic 'Can't Feel My Soul' - a whole succession of charming guitar based songs that float seductively into your awareness.

When the need to be deep and complex arises the Fannies roll out a series of slightly Rockier numbers like 'It's A Bad World' and, with a nod to Neil Young, Folky ballads such as 'Winter' and 'Mount Everest'. The downside of such influences is that the album is too easy, too guitar orientated and too predictable. At times Songs From Northern Britain is perilously close to denim clad Dad-Rock.

Seldom do the Fanclub really disappoint and, to be fair, they don't here. It's just that by their own high standards they're not going to win many new converts with this one. Songs From Northern Britain is more a comfort to their most loyal fanbase - think of it as a hearty musical mug of Ena Baxter's finest soup.



MARK EITZEL
WEST
WARNER 9362-46602-2

Possessing the title of "The King of Self-Loathing", Mark Eitzel has obviously never been the happiest of souls. The erstwhile American Music Club singer

tends to make even Morrissey seem like The Laughing Policeman by comparison.

Yet in addition to doing the beautiful, melancholy thing better than most, Eitzel also has a delicious sense of humour and a great turn of phrase - not for nothing was he voted Rolling Stone's Songwriter of the Year a few years ago.

Which brings us to West. The executive who first had the clever idea of pairing Eitzel with REM's Peter Buck for the latest offering obviously had no idea of the horrors spawned by other so-called 'super-groups.'

Following low sales of Eitzel's first solo effort last year (the exquisitely understated 60 Watt Silver Lining), the idea of using Buck to make a buck appealed. Unfortunately, the old maxim runs, "When two or three uniquely talented individuals gather together and gain joint song writing credits, the result shall be a dog's dinner."

To be fair, this album is more a curate's egg than an outright let-down. Despite the absence of any classics, at least half the songs here rank as excellent. Those that work best, such as 'Helium', 'Lower Eastside Tourist' and 'Fresh Screwdriver', play to Eitzel's down-beat strengths, complemented as they are with gentle feedback guitar or another of Buck's repertoire of background effects. Where it veers towards REM territory most markedly though is with 'Stunned and Frozen', Eitzel's voice fighting and straining against mismatched instrumentation.

West will partially satisfy the cognoscenti of American Music Club's work. Anyone else should rush forthwith to their local music emporium and get their hands on a copy of California, Everclear or other AMC album to find out how good Eitzel can really be.

rock & pop record of the month

OK COMPUTER
PARLOPHONE 7243 8 55229 2 5

Youth cults come and go. On a whim they are relegated to the backs of wardrobes, like last year's shirts and shoes. Fickle teenagers influenced by fashion, magazines and 'Yoof TV' always look to new vibes and anything else that can be construed as cool.

In the last 10 years we have had Grunge, Britpop and the Baggy Madchester scene. Then it was Techno, then Jungle, etc. Strangely, Radiohead are now fast becoming the latest buzzword on the street and with OK Computer and a headline slot at this year's Glastonbury Festival, they are starting a cult of their very own.

The band that were for years the outcasts of the British music scene have now become the in-thing and quite rightly. In Radiohead we have a new phenomenon. Emotional, poetic and conceptual, OK Computer is the continuation of a saga which has already produced one of the best albums of the Nineties in The Bends. Almost unbelievably this new album is better.

While OK Computer lacks the instant song appeal of The Bends it is a much more far-reaching experimental Rock music album.

It is something quite apart, an alien sound in the mood of a Nineties' Joy Division, with shades of Pink Floyd, the Velvet Underground and the general Prog Rock revolution thrown in for good measure. Little wonder Radiohead



have been touted as the purveyors of New Seriousness along with fellow Oxford passengers Supergrass (who actually co-own a bar with Radiohead - surely a conspiracy afoot here?)

OK Computer is seriously space-age. With its jarring rhythms and moods, it gives the feeling of a distinctly uneasy future for mankind in a fractured world dominated by computer technology and angst. It is the millennium time-bomb arrived early.

Things start off optimistically enough however with the bold, riffy 'Airbag' which sees Thom, "in an instabella burst. . . Back to save the universe".

It is followed, not so reassuringly, by that bizarrest but also bravest of singles, 'Paranoid Android'. The song, in its three parts, is loaded with epic pretensions, partly an operatic opus and partly an all-out Rock assault - overall a staggering six-minute tussle of the senses, which bears the heartening line, "When I am king you will be first against the wall."

The pace of the album then slows down, giving way to Thom's more introspective song writing with numbers like the sad but eerily inspiring 'Subterranean Homesick Alien', the even more melancholy 'Let Down' and the downright tragic 'Climbing Up The Walls'.

In fact you are left feeling so emotionally torn by the end of OK Computer that 'The Tourist', a slow elegy with what sounds like a monastic chorus line in the background, makes a fitting finale. Truly, it is Radiohead gone to heaven.

Bitter, twisted, painful and fraught, this is also an eloquent and inspirational album that certainly sits with the decade's best. It looks like 21st Century Schizoid Man is alive and well and living in Oxford.

HEAVY SOUL

PAUL WELLER
HEAVY SOUL
CID 8058/524-277-2

Nothing changes man rather than Changingman would probably be the fairest description of Weller's latest slice of Rock and Soul. And that of course can hardly mean bad after his last offering, Stanley Road.

While rumours of a shift in sound and vibe were much touted prior to the release of Heavy Soul, these have been firmly put to rest with what at first sounds very much like another leisurely stroll down Stanley Road.

More and more like Elvis Costello or Van Morrison by the year, Mr Weller is really carving his niche as the ultimate '80s hipster who just won't hang up his boots. Here he brings us up to date yet again with songs steeped in a bygone era. This, his third solo album, continues his misty eyed journey into the past, his now-familiar trip into easy riffs, light melodies and raspy, meaningful vocals.

No doubt about it, it's a grower, and once you realise there is nothing new here, and I mean nothing, you can simply sit back and just enjoy it for what it is - classic Weller. And don't labour under the misapprehension that Heavy Soul is a turkey because it most definitely is not.

The 12 songs on Heavy Soul veer from familiar Steve Winwood/Traffic territory to more up-beat R 'n' B standards with a touch of brashness. Not surprising this, given the presence of Ocean Colour Scene's guitarist, Steve Craddock, who really does like to rev things up with those power chords. This is particularly evident on 'Heavy Soul Pts 1 and 2' and the bruising 'Peacock Suit'.

There are some real goodies in the tracklisting, ranging from the acoustic 'Driving Nowhere' (which evokes Free in their softer moments) to 'Up In Suzes' Room', a psychedelic, floating but melancholy number about a hippy chick Weller no doubt crossed paths with in his colourful past.

The final two tracks, 'As You Lean

Into The Light' and 'Mermaids', also qualify as stand-outs. The first, a down-beat, melodic song, creates the same spine-tingling feeling captured by Weller in his searing 'Wildwood' classic, while the second is a catchy Beatlesque singalong that'll leave you smiling.

He sings, "I'm touched by the thought that I can't be beaten and I can't be bought" on 'Heavy Soul Pt1', which somehow represents Paul Weller's unflinching aptitude in just being himself whatever current fashions might happen to be. Always intense he never fails to deliver and Heavy Soul is no exception. The Cappuccino Kid must be drinking something a little stronger these days.



MONACO
MUSIC FOR PLEASURE
537 242-2

New Order's strutting bass god Peter Hook, one of Manchester's legendary landmarks, as familiar as Mrs Merton and the Arndale centre, is back.

After a couple of years swanning around the Manchester celebrity circuit (dating Mrs Merton herself, Caroline Aherne, and even making the front pages fighting over her) Hooky, as he is popularly known, has returned to what he does best. And like many of the bass-playing icons before him - Mick Karn and Jean Jacques Burnel to name but two - it comes as no surprise that he should venture back into the musical territory best described as 'independent'.

What comes as even less of a surprise is that Monaco sound rather similar to New Order and even have a singer, Potsy, who sounds alarmingly like New Order's former lead singer Barney Sumner.

Truth is, while Music For Pleasure may not be quite a pinnacle of innovation and originality (yes, this really is New Order revisited) it should at least please the legions of New Order fans.

This fact doesn't, however, detract from the quality of this album, which on the strength of its individual tracks is often as good, if not better, than New Order.

Take the opening 'What Do You Want From Me?' While it shamelessly steals from New Order's repertoire circa 1988's 'Technique', it is still a brilliant single, one which managed to storm the charts world-wide when it was released earlier this summer. Once the bass starts booming out, great summer-holiday memories of 'Blue Monday' and 'World In Motion' come flooding back. . .

Most of the tracks on Music For Pleasure are written in that infectious Pop style New Order were so fond of, and yes, that bass grinds away throughout. Melodious and moody Dance beat and an occasional doff of the cap to House music, particularly in 'Sweet Lips' and 'Junk'.

It's obvious to all that Hook has an ear for a tune and boundless commercial acumen, but it remains a mystery as to why Monaco have felt it necessary to stray so intentionally into the territory of the band of the moment, Oasis.

'Buzzgum' would not sound out of place next to 'Wonderwall'. Neither would 'Happy Jack' which is, nevertheless, one of the album's finer moments. An uplifting song about leaving a loved one? Obviously Monaco are being a bit playful here.

The album's truly sensitive moments are to be found in the last two tracks, 'Tender' and 'Sedona'. Both are sombre and depressing in true Joy-Division tradition, the latter strongly evoking 'Elegia', the slow, non-vocal track from New Order's Low Life.

You can't go far wrong with a little Pop savvy. Monaco have it in spades which will almost inevitably see this album becoming the big commercial hit that the group are clearly after.

If there is any major criticism it is the fact the band have picked a singer who sounds exactly like Barney Sumner. Fragile and weak, he seems to lack the touch and poignancy of Barney's seemingly drug fuelled emotions. It's all a bit of an Eighties' revisit as well and may be too 'easy listening'. But an enjoyable hour of music? Damn right!

For those of us who really are unsure what Monaco's function is, let's just say it's New Order in drag (possibly true since Hooky shaved off the familiar beard) with the standard fare. We have definitely heard it all before and musically it won't be getting the world in motion, but so what!?



Viv Craske



DEEDRAH
SELF OSCILLATION
 DISTANCE SUB 4853.2

Deedrah is the first project of Dado, one half of the scene stalwarts Transwave. He's spent the last few years touring all over the place and collaborating with the likes of Sid Shanty and Phantasm, which probably explains the more open formula for the tracks on Self Oscillation.

Obviously there are the standard Trance offerings, from the hard and fast approach of 'Alien Dick' and the rollicking pulsations of 'Japonicus Delpinus' to the driving dancefloor dynamics of 'Self Oscillation' itself. But, there's a few surprises in store as well - check the Dub influenced slo-mo groove of 'Blissful Blond' for instance. The Trance-tastic gated strings and chord progressions are still there, just down tempo'd to a mellow smoker's groove. 'Funkybootik' is a 303 led track with crisp drum programming and slowly building sound effects, while mini-

track 'Essential' slides a Classical orchestral movement into a wibbling Psychedelic romp.

While this is interesting indeed, often the tracks don't seem to progress as far as they could. In fact, occasionally they're dull. And whether the underground Trance scene will approve is another matter.



VARIOLS
AUTENTICO IBIZA
 METROPOLE MUSIC AUTIBCD1

In the last few years Ibiza has outgrown the 'clubbers' paradise' tag and become a haven for beered-up 18-30 holiday makers. So it comes as no surprise that Autentico Ibiza is the latest in a succession of mix compilations to cash in on the nostalgia and original vibe of the island that brought Acid House to Britain.

This compo is probably the best so far offering value for money in a four-CD pack positively bulging at the fly

with mixes from the original Balearic DJs Alfredo and Pippi. There's a sense that all four DJs here probably know as much as anyone can (or would want to) about the Balearic spirit: Alex Gold, for example, was one of the first DJs to play Amnesia and Ku, and Danny Rampling returned from Ibiza to start the legendary Shoom club.

Imagine Fonda Rae's 'Living In Ecstasy' being dropped while people take their clothes off in the mellow heat of the night; imagine grinning along to Jaydee's 'Plastic Dreams' or Energy 52's 'Cafe Del Mar' or singing along to 'Age Of Love'.

Sod nostalgia, these are party tunes whether it's '87 or '97. Just live it.



DERRICK MAY
THE MAYDAY MIX
 OPEN OPENC005

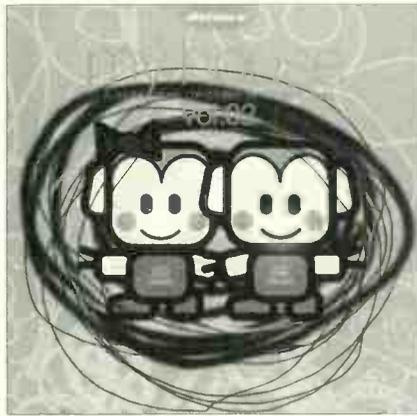
Derrick May makes a rare outing here to carry out mixing duties for Ministry Of Sound's more, er, open imprint,

Open. The Godfather of Techno rips through a massive 32 tracks in just over an hour, which is good, 'coz we're only subjected to a minute and a half of Jeff Mills' not so good 'Alarm'.

May is, as you'd expect, a near-perfect performer, his mixes smooth and fluid, easy and sleazy, the percussion grinding as he drops bass to make your stomach churn. Of course, with May you get much more than technically perfect fades. There's his quirky, jiving 'Frankie Goes To Hollywood' sampling intro, his spin-backs, sudden stops and starts, and the way he mixes in Lil' Louis' 'French Kiss', slow and sexy to match the flavour of the track.

Besides that he checks fellow Detroit DJs Carl Craig (Designer Music) and Stacey Pullen (Silent Phase) and a couple more Jeff Mills cuts, as expected. There are also some less predictable choices - Basement Jaxx, Gene Farris and DJ Sneak smooching up to the likes of Phuture, Luke Solomon and Fruit Loops.

There's nearly always a fresh and exciting groove, a high-pitched squeal here, a tribal vocal there, and funky kick drums everywhere. Which is how it should be.



VARIOUS
MY HOUSE
DISTANCE SUB 4843-2

This disc forms volume two in a collection of laid-back, groovy House CDs, in this case compiled by Parisian DJ Jef K. Everything French seems to be very chic at the moment (ever since they realised what deodorant was for, I suspect). However, contrary to popular belief, not everything French and House is oo-la-la. But luckily not everything on display here is French, and out of the ones that are, two have been touched by Etienne De Crecy,

who is very good. Understand?

Still, that doesn't matter much really. What does matter is the select choice of tracks on offer. The album opens with Chez Damier's Soul infected 'Close' and, erm, closes with the legendary Larry Heard and 'After Hours', which sounds like a groovy after-hours House number. Blimey, easy this isn't it!?

In between is a variety of US and European cuts that come over all pouty and sultry (much like French women but with less armpit hair). British boys, Ambient twiddles and alter-egos of Star Wars-sampling beatmongers Jedi Knights are in effect as Global Communication, reaching out across the Channel to pass over 'The Way'. This is a nice vocal studded ditty, written about a trip to the boulangerie to torture some peasant's geese. Well, that's what it says in my phrase book.

Anyway, Motorbass aren't that strange, just rather 'formidable', cooking up the electro-feeling 'Ezio', a fine example of the French genre 'le groovy beat'.

Go out and get French fried to this one, mes enfants!

dance & ambient record of the month

WAY OUT WEST

WAY OUT WEST

DECONSTRUCTION 74321-477512

A result of three years' hard slog in the studio, Way Out West's debut album is finally complete. If you're wondering where you've heard the name before, they're the ones who produced last summer's beautiful Drum 'n' Bass hit 'The Gift' - yes, the one from the Halifax ad. This long player also features their Top-40 singles 'Domination' and 'Ajare', WOW's first single, with its wistful vocal samples and booty-swaying appeal.

Way Out West hit the vibe of the moment, producing a track listing that effortlessly skirts the boundaries of home listening and the dancefloor, an album that drifts into existence with the melancholic piano melodies of the



latest 12in. 'Blue' and wafts off into the sunset with the acoustic, prophetic air of 'Earth'.

'Sequoia' uses reverb laden strings to sound like a mature brother of Faithless' 'Insomnia', while 'Drive By'

melds Trance chord progressions with scary breakdowns. 'King Of The Funk' slips on its Hip-Hop hat for a couple of minutes, adding twirling guitars and more samples than a coachful of Avon ladies.

Despite the success of 'The Gift' (featuring the heavenly vocals of Joanna Law), the majority of the album is fully instrumental. Residents from Cream - Nick Warren - and Lakota - Jody Wisternoff - pool their DJ experience to draw on the beats of Drum

'n' Bass, the pure, uncluttered melodies of House and the hypnotic power of Trance to create a rounded, rolling musical plain, layers of samples and passionate depths. Expect total global domination ●

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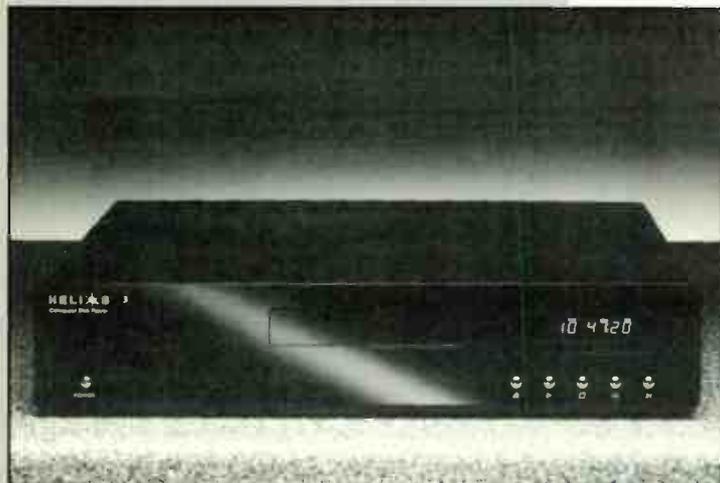
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Jazz



MARION BROWN
SWEET EARTH FLYING
MCA VICTOR (JAPAN) AS-9275

American alto saxophonist, composer, conceptualist and bandleader Marion Brown is one of those figures in Jazz who has somehow slipped through the floorboards of all but the most erudite Jazz histories. This is to the detriment of the music and its fans. On a multiplicity of levels, he is one of Jazz's real major figures: as a player, as a writer of some of the most sublime music, and as a figure who synthesised so many strands of Black American thinking and experience in the early 1970s.

His chief body of work was a trilogy of albums recorded at the turn of the '70s which directly drew on his experiences of growing up in the Deep South in the immediately post-war period - its sounds, its people and, yes, its music.

The first album of the three was *Afternoon Of A Georgia Fawn* which was, as the title with its nod to Debussy might suggest, a tone poem full of lyrical and highly pastoral impressionism, albeit an impressionism performed by some of the cream of Chicago's Jazz avant-

garde AACM collective.

Georgia Fawn was released on ECM and remains to this day one of the label's true masterpieces, if a very early one and a very different record from the type which would make that label famous.

The second and third albums in the series - *Geechee Recollections* and the album at hand, *Sweet Earth Flying* - followed at intervals of a year or two. (It's worthy of note that Brown was a conspicuously unprolific musician by Jazz standards and this may have contributed to his historical neglect). Both albums, along with a third, the entirely different but equally wonderful 'crossover' album *Vista*, have just been re-issued by MCA Victor in absolute to-die-for packages.

Presented in original-artwork miniature sleeves, with the kind of printing quality that only the Japanese ever seem to get close to and with superb 20-bit remastering from the original masters, these are, quite aside from the quality of the music, paradigms of what CD re-issues (or any releases for that matter) should be.

Musically speaking, *Sweet Earth Flying* is miles away from its two predecessors, a far more electrifying - and literally electric - album. The dense sense of place remains, the references to Brown's upbringing and the general feeling of music as description. But the presence of, in particular, Muhal Richard Abrams and Paul Bley on electric pianos and organs give the music here a definite edge. They certainly lend it a contemporary slant.

The music here is hardly Jazz-Rock, but at a time when even the further reaches of 1970s' electric Jazz are finally being explored by listeners and musicians alike, *Sweet Earth Flying* deserves to be more widely heard now

Simon Hopkins

than it ever was. Let's hope it is.



LOVE CRY WANT
LOVE CRY WANT
NEWJAZZ COM NJC-001

And talking of rediscovered 1970s' extreme electric Jazz, an all-too-brief mention for another remarkable release. *Love Cry Want* were a duo of drummer Joe Gallivan and the mysterious, since (at least to my knowledge) unheard-of guitarist Nicholas.

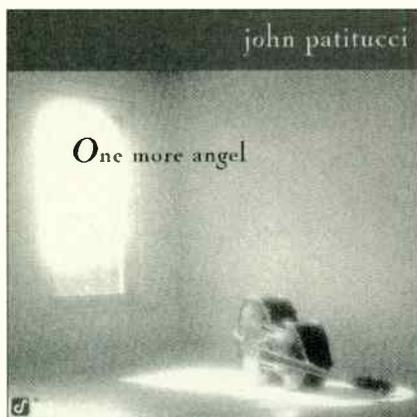
For the recording made here, live in Washington in 1972, the two were joined by percussionist Jimmy Molneiri and legendary Jazz organist Larry Young. The music is fierce stuff, with as much in common with psychedelic Hard Rock as with even the most outlandish fusion: totally engrossing.

It has to be said that the real star here is Young, whose majestic and apocalyptic organ playing is beyond comparison. What *Love Cry Want* did other than this performance, I know not, but if anything else was recorded, I for one will be first in line to pick it up.

The most intriguing, refreshing and unexpected find of the year so far.

Simon Cooke

Jazz



JOHN PATITUCCI
ONE MORE ANGEL
CCD-4753-2

Patitucci is not really a household name even among die-hard double-bass freaks such as Yours Truly, but this has more to do with the company he keeps than the quality of his playing.

Patitucci has been bassist for Chick Corea for some years now, and Corea possesses a name of such magnitude that it tends to eclipse all around him. So don't be surprised by the quality of the work here.

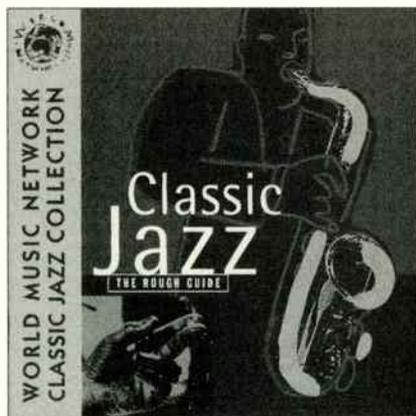
It's not a solo album; Patitucci play acoustic bass and bass guitar (John) as well as acoustic guitar (brother Thomas) and cello (wife Sachi). John Patitucci also produced and wrote nine of the ten tracks. The tenth was written by pianist Alan Pasqua. With the excellent Paul Motian on drums and Michael Brecker sharing the credit with Chris Potter for tenor sax, the group is completed by Steve Tavaglione on soprano sax and John Beasley on keyboards.

Much of the music is contemplative, even sad, since it is a very personal work written over a difficult period for the Patituccis; read the notes if you want to know more - this is a review, not an elegy.

Anyway, the work has an unusually contemplative air for modern Jazz. It's almost classical in approach, but the quality of the sound is unimpeachable as

is usual for Concord releases.

Recommended, although probably too mellow for some palates.



VARIOUS
THE ROUGH GUIDE TO CLASSIC JAZZ
RGNET 1012 CD

Having reviewed a few of Robert Parker's Classic Years in Digital Stereo releases recently, this came as quite a surprise to me, coming as it did under the 'Rough Guide' banner and Parker being relatively reticent about his involvement.

As with the Classic Years series, I'll refrain from commenting on the Parker view of Jazz sounds, not because I have any grievance with manipulation of old recordings but because I don't wish to become embroiled in such an argument.

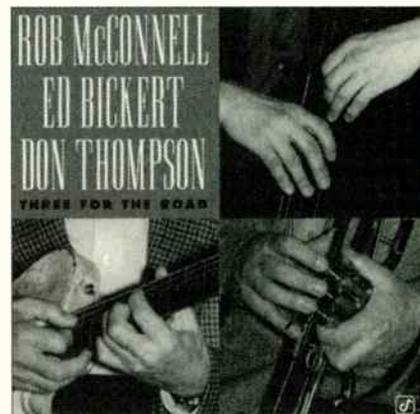
Really, this compilation is a sweeping cross-section taken from the Dixie years of Jazz greats, from the dawn of the Jazz era at the end of WWI until the style was eclipsed by Swing in the early Thirties.

It features names such as Jelly Roll Morton's Red Hot Peppers, Fletcher Henderson, Louis Armstrong and His Hot Five (and Seven), Bessie Smith, Bix Beiderbecke, Fats Waller and Duke Ellington, not forgetting Miff Mole and his Molers (who?!)

The value of this release, however, is less in the tracks selected or the way they are reproduced than in the clarity

and accessibility of the notes. They give not only general information about the bands but precise details of where and when the recording was made, the personnel, arranger, and soloist order (where available).

If your sole ambition is to be crowned King Dixie Jazz Trivia Whiz, your task has just been made a lot harder. Now everybody who simply enjoys the music has access to this information with The Rough Guide To Classic Jazz. Enjoy.



MCCONNELL/BICKERT/THOMPSON
THREE FOR THE ROAD
CCD-4765-2

Concord pull off another crystal-clear recording on an album which is somewhat different from the delicacy of One More Angel. This is a selection of good ol' mainstream standards enjoyed just as they should be.

McConnell employs valve trombone in all of its flatulent, grumpy tonal glory to counter Bickert's beautiful guitar. Sterling work is also provided by Thompson on piano and bass, although obviously not at the same time.

The trio run through 12 good tunes including Arlen/Capote's 'A Sleepin' Bee', Porter's 'Dream Dancing' and Barbour/Lee's 'I Don't Know Enough About You'. Not just another release full of boring old wossnames doing their thing, this really is beautiful ●

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FREDERIC CHOPIN

Nocturnes

Maria Joao Pires, piano

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After her acclaimed recording of Chopin's Preludes, the Portuguese pianist, Maria Joao Pires, has turned to the collection of Nocturnes with equally revelatory results. Too often suffused with a lush coating of hazy romanticism, each of these wonderfully crafted pieces here emerges with all its original brilliance and directness. Rescued from the cloying sentimentality which traditionally accompanies Chopin, the Nocturnes can be heard for what they truly are - concise expressions of the widest range of emotions.

To her credit Pires never underplays the tragedy and turbulence implicit in so many of these miniatures. There is no reining in of the often ferocious climaxes, and the transitions of mood in, for example, the C sharp minor Nocturne Op27 No1 are sensitively and tellingly handled. Yet, as she demonstrates in the D flat major Op27 No2 which follows, Pires is equally comfortable with Chopin at his most meltingly reflective and melancholy.

Refreshingly unmannered and uncluttered with the archetypal Chopin clichés, Pires's interpretations suggest a complete re-evaluation of these scores has been undertaken, and to scintillating effect. There is nothing preconceived or superficial about this playing; unlike some of her contemporaries, Pires does not view technical precision and polish as ends in themselves. The playing is beautiful, the tonal colours opalescent (but without a hint of self-indulgence) and the achievement - consummate artistry at the service of communication - is considerable.

As in her earlier recordings, Maria Joao Pires is admirably served by Deutsche Grammophon's engineers with a relatively close but pleasingly limpid and translucent piano sound. Like the playing, the recording succeeds in combining clarity and definition with appropriate atmosphere. If any interpretations come close to capturing the true essence of Chopin, these are surely they.

the USSR/Grand Symphony Orchestra of Radio and Television

REVELATION RECORDS RV10038
(ADD/74.07)

As this is the first of only two recordings from the Revelation series to be reviewed in these pages, a little background is called for. You might reasonably assert that the 'founder' of the label was Mikhail Gorbachev whose reforms within the former Soviet Union led to the opening of many previously tightly shut doors, including that to the state recording archive. What emerged from that archive was indeed a revelation; The New York Times described it as the "greatest cultural coup of the Twentieth century".

There were over four hundred thousand tapes, the existence of many of which came as a total surprise to Western observers. There were recordings of all the great Russian musicians of the past seventy years: Richter, Oistrakh, Kogan, Rostropovich, Gilels, and of composers such as Shostakovich conducting their own music. Moreover, all were live recordings, mainly made at concerts broadcast by Soviet Radio.

Though artistic and technical quality was bound to be variable, the importance of the 'discovery' was beyond dispute and in recent months the first fruits have begun to appear. The difficulty must have been where to begin but this coupling of the two symphonies of Mily Balakirev is as good an introduction as any to what the Revelation label has to offer.

Balakirev, born in 1837, was one of a group of Nineteenth century Russian composers who collectively became known as 'The Five', or 'The Mighty Handful'. What linked him and his four



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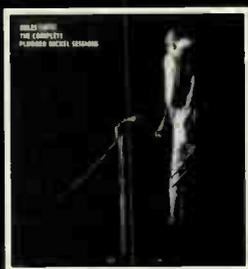
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contemporaries - Mussorgsky, Borodin, Cui and Rimsky-Korsakov - was a kind of musical nationalism. They turned away from classical precepts and instead sought inspiration in the Folk music and dance rhythms of their native land, which also saw a fondness for a colourful 'orientalism'.

From the first bars, Balakirev's First Symphony wears its Russian-ness on its sleeve. After a slow introduction, which supplies the basic material for the entire movement, the opening allegro surges forward with an irresistible momentum and breezy vigour. This mood of exhilaration is maintained in the ensuing scherzo with its sparkling interplay of Folk-like melodies. But the crowning glory of the work is its warmly romantic andante whose themes could easily have come from the pen of Tchaikovsky or Rimsky-Korsakov. The high-spirited finale returns to the world of the dance, combining both Russian and Finnish Folk melodies and a flavour of the exotic East in an orchestral tour-de-force.

Oddly, given the irrepressible spontaneity of this music, it is surprising that the composition of the symphony occupied Balakirev for some fifty years. He appears to have worked on it between 1846 and 1866 and then put the score to one side, returning to it in 1893 and finally completing the work four years later.

The gestation period of the Second Symphony was rather shorter, 1900-1908 and it finds Balakirev in a somewhat less unbuttoned mood from the first. The luscious, sweeping melodies are still there, as are the dance rhythms - the second movement is a blazing Cossack dance - and the exotic orchestration but there is a degree of restraint never apparent in the earlier work. However, the sunny lyricism remains, as does the unmistakable character: this music could only have been composed by a Russian!

Both symphonies receive wonderfully idiomatic performances, recorded a few months apart in 1973 and 1974. The playing from both

orchestras has the warmth, passion and swagger that comes not so much from familiarity as from the feeling that this music is in the blood. There is affection, too, always evident in the conducting of both Svetlanov and Rozhdestvensky.

Some allowance will have to be made for the shortcomings of the recording - some of the orchestral tuttis have a degree of distortion, for example. In the main, though, the sound, with its richly resonant strings and piquant winds, is wholly acceptable. Just let yourself be bowled over by the music and by the kind of utterly characteristic Russian orchestral playing which, post-Glasnost, has been regrettably diluted by the homogenising that has left many a Western orchestra wholly lacking in individuality and personality.



DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH
Symphony No7 in C major, Op60, Leningrad
Grand Symphony Orchestra of Radio and Television;
conductor,
Gennadi Rozhdestvensky
REVELATION RECORDS RVI0059
(ADD/68.29)

Unlike his gripping and idiomatic performance of the Tenth Symphony - arguably Shostakovich's finest - on the Olympia label, Rozhdestvensky seems less committed to the wartime Seventh. This is the work in which the composer paid fulsome tribute to the courage of

his fellow citizens of Leningrad in resisting the Nazis in a siege which lasted nine hundred days, between 1941 and 1943, and in whose first movement he combined brutal brass chords and machine-like percussion to depict what came to be described as a "juggernaut of destruction" (though the revisionist history of the siege of Leningrad has led some commentators to speculate that Shostakovich's stark image of unstoppable terror had its origins as much within the former Soviet Union as outside its borders).

There are more convincing performances of this first movement, which at times teeters dangerously on the brink of the banal, not least in Toscanini's pioneering 1942 recording, still available on RCA. In their defence, Rozhdestvensky and his players are not helped by the bright, constricted and often crudely edited sound; the abrupt fading of the ambience of the final chords of each movement, especially the last, is unforgivable. Considering that the listener is all too aware throughout that this is a live-concert taping (plenty of splutterings and squeaks), the exclusion of audience noise between the movements and the applause at the end seems pointless.

Rozhdestvensky is not one to dwell on the symphony's more reflective and lyrical passages, although having said that, the eloquent and expressive playing of the haunting adagio is the high point of this performance. Overall, Rozhdestvensky takes 13 minutes less than the composer's son, Maxim, in his 1990 recording, and is 11 minutes quicker than Haitink on Decca. Not that brisk tempos are necessarily to be discouraged in this score which at times exposes the composer as less than inspired, but there are depths to this much maligned symphony which Rozhdestvensky's matter-of-fact approach rarely uncovers. The likes of Jansons (EMI), Jarvi (Chandos), Bernstein (DG), the aforementioned Haitink and Maxim Shostakovich all dig deeper and are rewarded for their efforts.

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Deborah York, soprano;
Catherine Denley, alto; James
Bowman, countertenor; The
King's Consort; conductor,
Robert King**

HYPERION CDA66779 (DDD/69.15)

If your notion of Eighteenth century church music is a dull, dolorous dirge, then you surely cannot have encountered the vocal works of Antonio Vivaldi, music as brimful of vitality and virtuosity as the instrumental concertos upon which his reputation is almost exclusively based. Then again, acknowledgement of Vivaldi as a composer of sacred music of lasting distinction is a comparatively recent phenomenon.

Although ordained as a priest, Vivaldi was never in charge of the musical affairs of any ecclesiastical institution. At first, his post at Venice's Pietà, a charitable institution akin to an orphanage, required only the provision of instrumental pieces for his young charges to play. Vocal music was the responsibility of the choirmaster, Francesco Gasparini, at least until 1713 when the latter took a sabbatical from which he failed to return.

For the ensuing six years, Vivaldi assumed the additional role of maestro

di coro and evidently relished the opportunity to provide a steady output of new vocal compositions for the talented choristers and soloists of the Pietà. There was just one constraint: Catholic sensibilities dictated that all the musicians and singers were drawn exclusively from the female occupants of the orphanage.

The predictable consequence of this limitation was that most of the solo parts in Vivaldi's settings of religious texts were specified for high voices, soprano or alto. The soloists employed rapidly became the 'star

King has also imported outstanding solo voices to lead spirited performances of six of the most virtuosic motets - "concertos for voice" as the late Denis Arnold aptly described them. However, given that only two of the works here can be attributed with confidence to Vivaldi's time at the Pietà, no attempt has been made to recreate the conditions of performance there, with precocious teenagers taking the solo parts. Instead, drawing on the knowledge that some of the Pietà's finest graduates went on to enjoy distinguished

operatic careers, the mature voices of Catherine Denley, Deborah York and James Bowman have been recruited and the results are nothing short of exhilarating. Listen, for example, to the lissom soprano of Deborah York take flight in the coruscating *Spirat Anguis of Nulla in Mundo Pax Sincera* - simply glorious!

The accompaniment from the King's Consort is a match for these vocal pyrotechnics. The finely scaled recording, engineered by Philip Hobbs, is richly detailed and thrilling in its depth

and range, satisfyingly embracing both the delicate musings of theorbo and archlute and the surging bass lines, with strings discreetly but effectively underpinned by chamber organ. To judge from the first two releases Robert King's Vivaldi series is likely to become as successful, rewarding - and collectable - as his previous surveys of Handel and Purcell. Hyperion have hit the mark yet again ✧



Vivaldi
Sacred
Music

- 2 -

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KING'S
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attractions' for visitors and, the institution's directors earnestly hoped, subsequent benefactors to the Pietà. Given the uncompromising demands of the solo writing, these young voices must have been pretty special and fully deserving of the many plaudits volunteered by those privileged to hear them.

In this, the second recording in his Vivaldi series for Hyperion, Robert

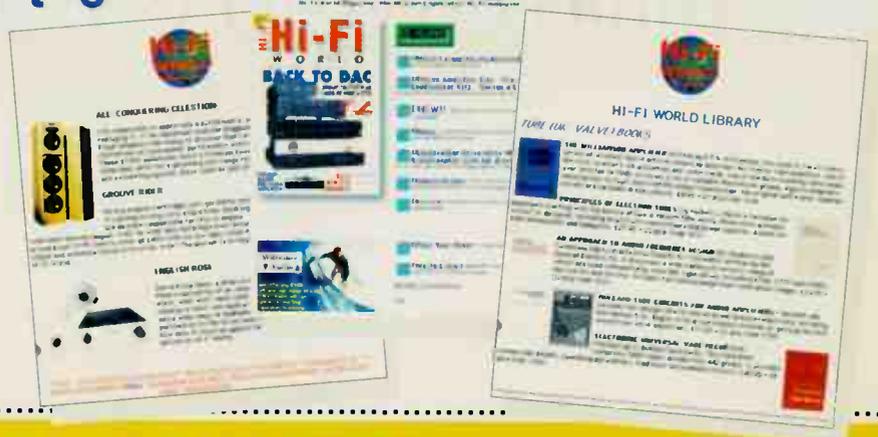
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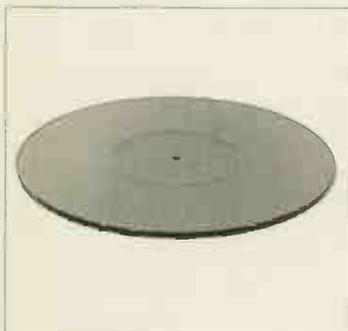
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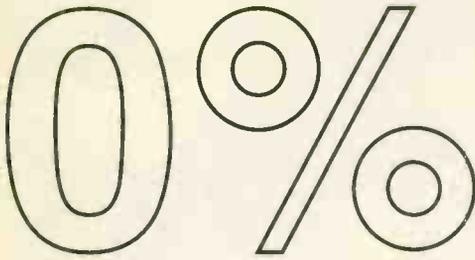
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HI FI NEWS / RR March 97

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sound ★★★★★

facilities ★★★★★

build ★★★★★

verdict ★★★★★

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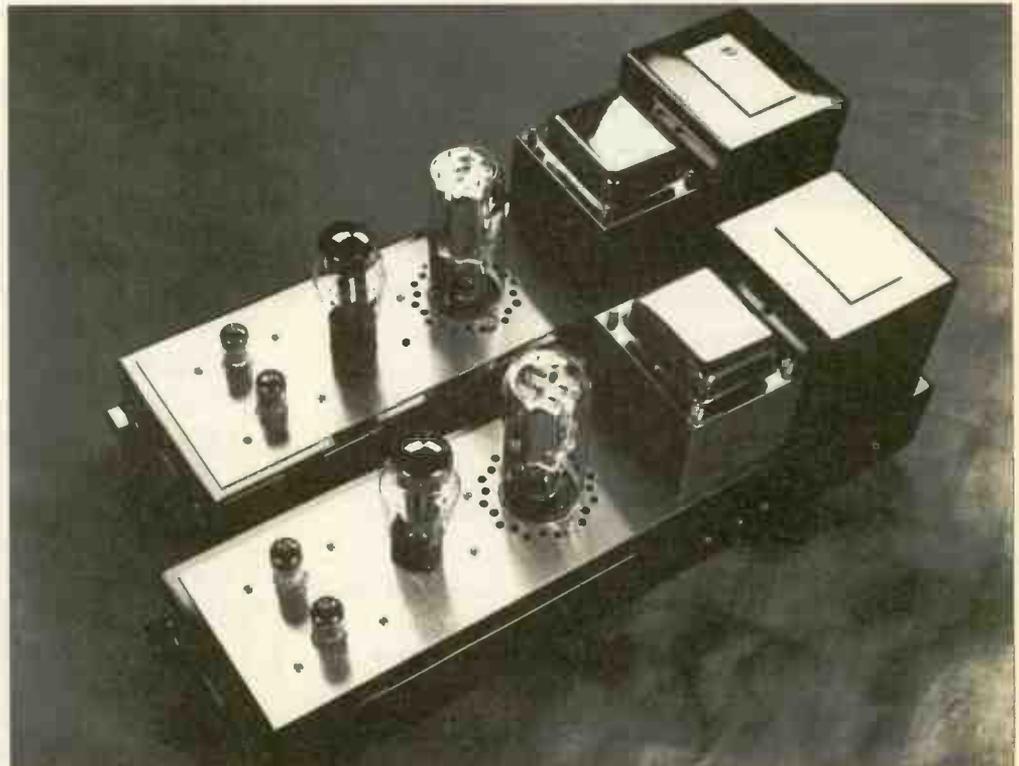
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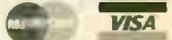
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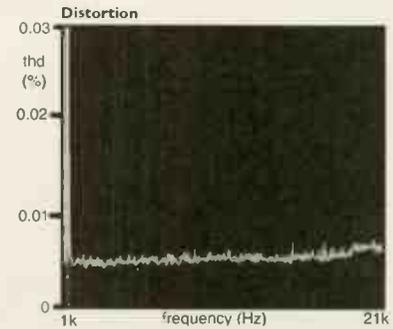
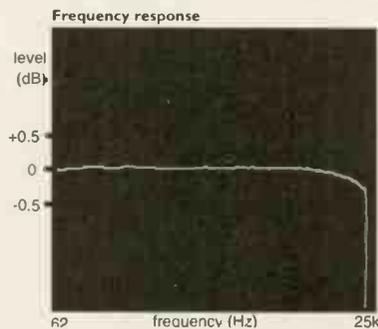
MEASURED PERFORMANCE

CD

AMC CD8

AMC have gently rolled off the treble in the CD8's frequency response just enough for it not to sound bright or sharp. The distortion analysis at -30dB (chosen as a typical value to represent a music signal) shows traces of higher even-order harmonic distortion but nothing severe enough to obviously colour the sound. The distortion measurements were, on the whole, very respectable while separation values at both 1kHz and 20kHz were fine. Dynamic range though was relatively poor at 101dB and noise performance wasn't class-leading at -103dB either. **KB**

Frequency response	4Hz-21kHz		Separation (dB)	left	right
			1kHz	111	112
			20kHz	91	93
Distortion (%)	left	right	Noise		-103dB
-6dB	0.006	0.006	with emphasis		-103dB
-30dB	0.02	0.02	Dynamic range		101dB
-60dB	0.47	0.48	Output		2.2V
-90dB	24.9	25.0			
-90dB dithered	16.7	16.8			



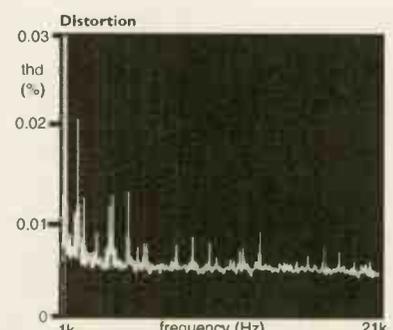
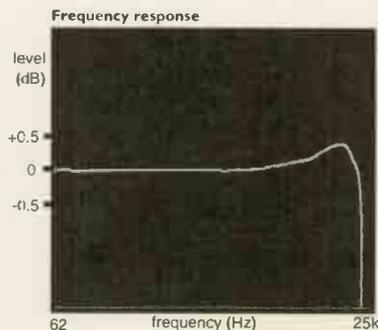
HEYBROOK SIGNATURE

This Heybrook Signature CD player was the second sample we tested, the first showing channel balance discrepancies. The second one, which Heybrook assured us was representative, had accurate channel balance but a problem with the low-frequency test which caused the output waveform to clip. Heybrook should take a look at this as there is no reason this should happen in a well designed CD player.

The -30dB trace shows a noticeable amount of harmonic and non-harmonic related distortion which, combined with the player's treble peak, could lead to an element of sharpness and graininess in the sound.

Although separation was fair at around 105dB (which is below the claimed 115dB), noise performance was mediocre and consequently dynamic range was poor

at 93dB. Spurious outputs weren't well suppressed, the worst case being -22dB for a 20k tone. Technically, this player is unimpressive. KB	-90dB	54	46		
	-90dB dithered	38	33		
Frequency Response	3Hz-20kHz		Separation (dB)	left	right
			1kHz	106	105
			20kHz	76	73
Distortion (%)	left	right	Noise		-96dB
-6dB	0.014	0.013	with emphasis		-101dB
-30dB	0.044	0.034	Dynamic range		93dB
-60dB	2.56	2.35	Output		1.9V



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SONNETEER ALABASTER

The Alabaster produced exactly 50watts under test when feeding a conventional 8ohm load, but this increased healthily to 90watts into a 4ohm load, showing the amplifier has good regulation. I'd expect solid bass delivery as a result.

Frequency response stretched from 13Hz up to 120kHz, plenty wide enough to give a clear, open sound without warmth. Noise measured low at -98dB through the CD and tape input, and little more at -96dB through the more sensitive (200mV) line inputs (L1, L2), making the Alabaster very quiet. This 200mV sensitivity on line inputs is normal, while a lower sensitivity of 470mV on the CD input aids volume matching when

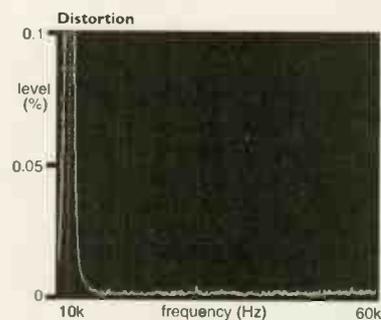
switching between inputs.

Distortion was low even at high frequencies and high outputs - always a severe test. Right across the audio band and at any output level this amplifier proved very linear. With -21mV of DC offset on one channel and -36mV on the other it was well balanced, with effective servos.

The Alabaster is a well engineered medium-power amplifier with enough muscle to work with good modern loudspeakers in normal-size rooms. **NK**

Power	50watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	13Hz-120kHz
Separation	113dB

Noise	-98dB
Distortion	0.004%
Sensitivity	200/470mV
DC offset	-21/-36mV



PHONO STAGES

LINN LINTO

The Linto has been designed to suit Linn's low-output Moving Coil cartridges. It has the lowest noise figure of any MC phono stage we have tested, by a margin of 5dB-8dB. Equivalent input noise (CCIR weighted) measured a meagre 0.026µV, meaning hiss will be at a very low level even with top-quality MCs.

Linn do not use a warp filter in this stage, perhaps because warps are less of a problem with the modest compliance of most Moving Coil cartridges. As a result, the Linto has a frequency response that

stretches down low to 16Hz (-1dB). In practice this gives stronger bass than a stage with a 40Hz filter, but a warped disc is still likely to flap the cones of reflex loudspeakers. Otherwise, RIAA equalisation was accurate, response reaching up to 33kHz.

Stereo channel separation measured a healthy 76dB and gain was a useful x1700, which is about right for a low-output MC - it will take the 50-100µV signal from a low-output MC up to the 80-170mV region, which matches the 200mV sensitivity of most Aux/Tuner inputs. Overload occurred at 3.3mV in/5.5V out,

demonstrating a very satisfactory overload margin.

The Linto is a well engineered MC phono stage designed for high-quality, very low-output types. **NK**

Frequency response	16Hz-33kHz
Separation	76dB
Noise	-87dB
Distortion	0.002%
Gain	x1700
Overload	3.3mV in/5.5V out

ROKSAN ARTAXERXES X

Roksan offer three stages of gain in this pre-amp. MM has x90 gain, taking the 1-2mV of a typical cartridge up to 100mV or thereabouts. This is a little low for a normal 200mV sensitivity input and very low for anything else, so another gain figure of x530 can be switched in. This would be used for low-output MMs, high-output MCs and low-input-sensitivity amplifiers.

The standard input load is 47k/47pF but higher capacitance can be switched in for MM and 100pF/10Ω input impedance is available for MC. Moving Coil gain was a low-ish x1000 - x1500-x2200 is more common - so the MC stage is for higher-output designs, as is the average Equivalent

Input Noise figure of 0.05µV which makes the Roksan +6dB hissier than the Linn Linto, for example. Hiss on MM was very low however.

Roksan have decided not to fit a warp filter, which gives deeper bass but also leads to cone flap from disc warps when using reflex loudspeakers. Frequency response extended from 6Hz-100kHz on both MM and MC, with negligible equalisation error.

There was plenty of overload headroom on MC and MM, with a maximum output swing of 11V.

The Roksan Artaxerxes X phono stage measured well in all respects and offers good matching flexibility. It is not ideal for very low-output MCs though.

NK

MM	
Frequency response	6Hz-100kHz
Separation	98dB
Equivalent Input Noise	0.3µV
Distortion	0.002%
Gain	x90
Overload	10.5mV in/11V out

MC	
Frequency response	6Hz-100kHz
Separation	78dB
Equivalent Input Noise	0.05µV
Distortion	0.002%
Gain	x1050
Overload	10.5mV in/11V out

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LOUDSPEAKERS

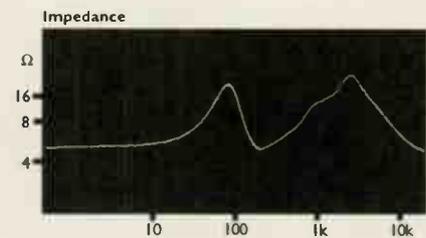
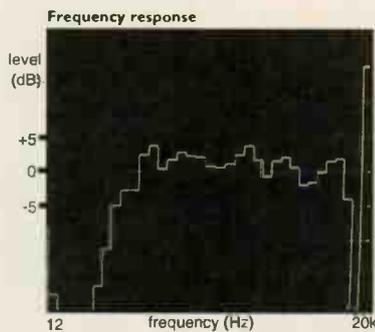
KEF RDMI

The single Uni-Q driver used in the RDMI showed the impressive integration between tweeter and mid/bass unit we've come to expect - measurements on and off-axis were very consistent. The overall frequency response itself was reasonably even, though there are a few peaks and dips present. This 'speaker should give a fairly neutral view of music. Bass began rolling off a little early at around 80Hz however, so don't expect thunderous bass from these small stand mounters.

One thing immediately obvious from the RDMI's impedance plot is the fact that it's an infinite baffle (closed box) design.

Most loudspeakers these days are reflex loaded, which shows up as a double peak towards the bottom end of the plot. The

RDMIs have only a single peak instead. The overall impedance measured 6.9Ω and sensitivity was 87dB, not bad for a small stand mounter. About 60watts should suffice to drive the KEFs loud. **JM**



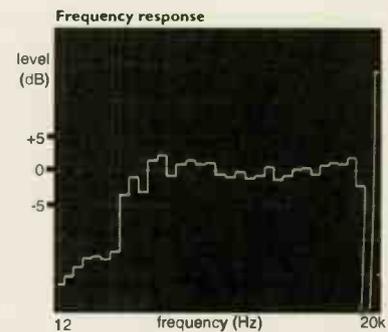
SOUNDCRAFT ABSOLUTE 4P

The Absolute 4Ps turned in a very impressive frequency response generally. Integration between the two drivers was pretty much seamless around the crossover point of 2.4kHz, no dips showing up at all. In fact, with the measuring mic slightly below axis, the response fell between +/-1dB from about 600Hz-16kHz. This is an exceptional result. It was followed by roughly 3dB lift in the bass from 600Hz down to 160Hz.

The fact that the best results were

obtained further below axis than many normal hi-fi 'speakers would seem to confirm the 4Ps' professional pedigree, where they'll probably be sited quite high up on a mixing console.

In a domestic setting, the response at a more normal listening angle was slightly different, with a rising treble which should add some brightness and sharpness. High stands tilted back slightly would help here. On the whole though the response is still very even. The Absolute 4Ps are very competently engineered loudspeakers. **JM**



TUNER

MARANTZ ST-57

The Marantz turns out a strong audio signal of 1V, much more than earlier tuners and a good idea in that it more closely matches CD, thus avoiding large level changes when switching sources.

Distortion was low and frequency response flat from 10Hz-16kHz, a slight lift around 5kHz just enough to ensure good apparent clarity. Stereo separation was fine, even at high frequencies, but at -70dB hiss was a little higher than that from more expensive models (-73dB). Only fastidious Radio 3 listeners would hear this during silences though.

Marantz have applied very effective pilot tone suppression at 19kHz, and sub-carrier at 38kHz was almost non-existent.

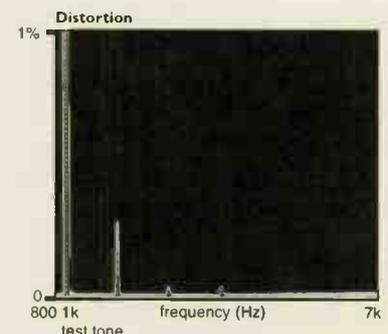
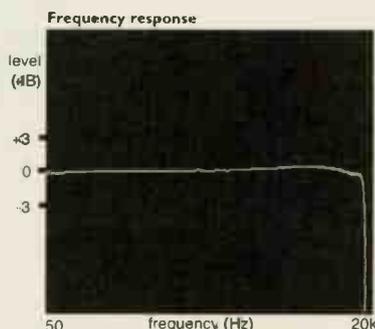
Sensitivity was mediocre at 35μV for -50dB hiss with a stereo signal, but selectivity was very high at better than

80dB rejection of alternate channel (+/-0.4MHz) signals.

The Marantz ST-57 measured well, being just a few dB down in certain respects against more expensive designs. This will not be obvious in use though.

NK

Frequency response	10Hz-16kHz
Stereo separation	40dB
Distortion (50% mod.)	0.2%
Hiss (CCIR)	-70dB
Signal for minimum hiss	1.25mV
Selectivity (at 0.4MHz)	80dB
Sensitivity	
mono	2.5μV
stereo	35μV
signal strength meter:	none



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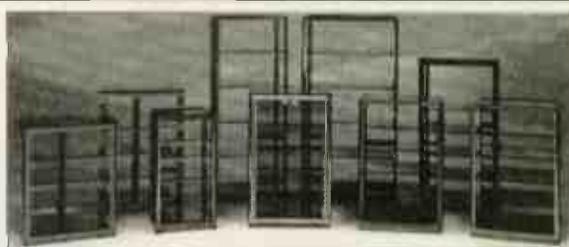
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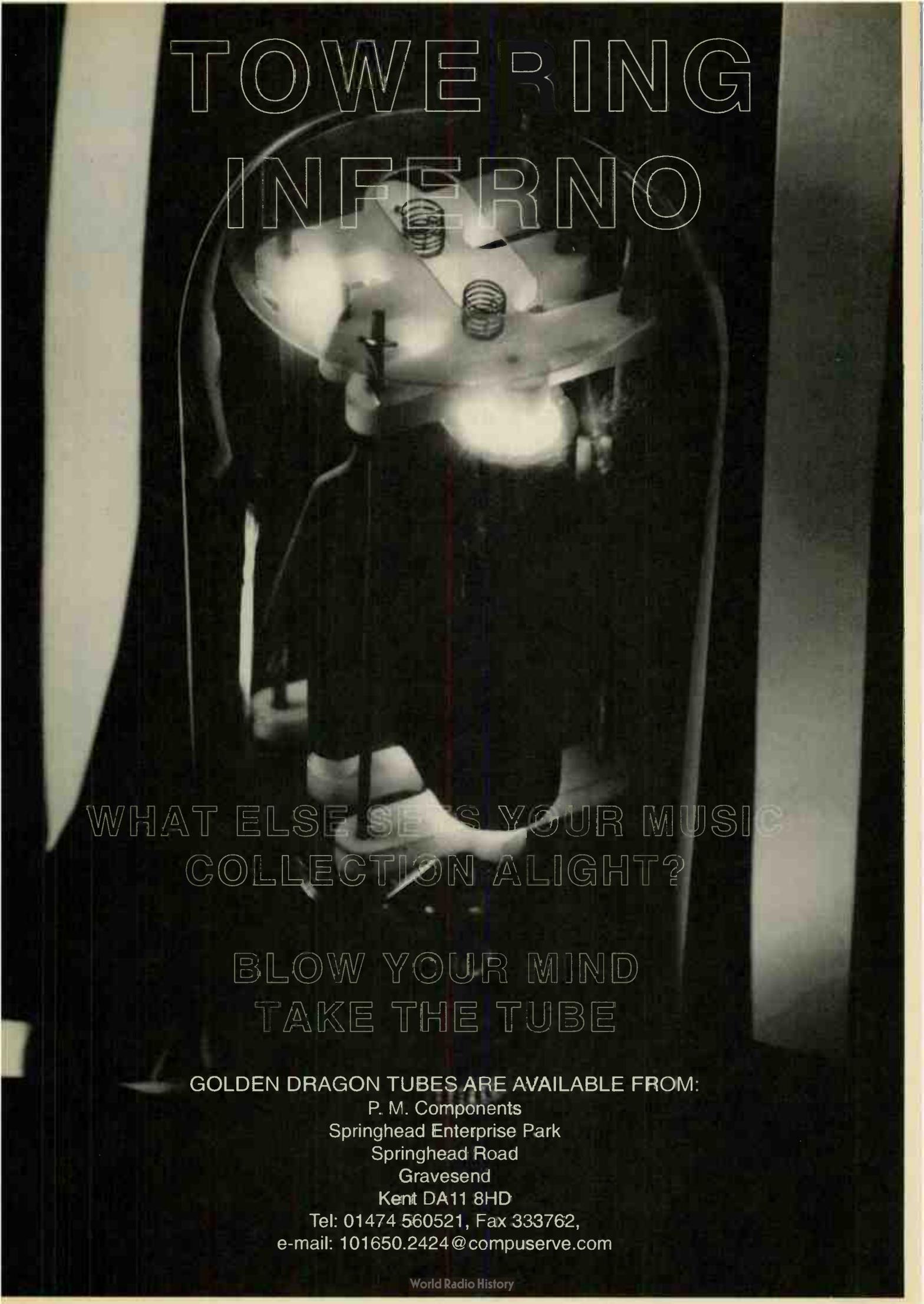
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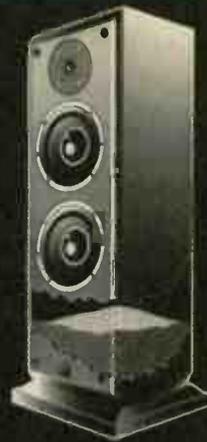


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Hi-Fi World

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DPA Renaissance integrated (new)	600	395
DPA 1024 The Converter	6300	3000
Pierre Lurme Audiomeca Kreatura Transport	1200	600
Audio Innovations Anniversary 800 power	1500	795
Audio Innovations P1 pre amp	370	175
Audio Alchemy DDE 1.0V DAC	395	195
Audio Alchemy DAC In A Box	229	125
Audio Alchemy Digital Decoding Engine 3	699	499
Sony TCK 850 ES 3 head cassette	400	195
Denon DRM 740 3 head cassette	250	150
Restek Prolog Phono Stage	800	450
Linn LP12/Ittock (Black)/Karma	2000	650
Project 6.1 SA MC 30 Supreme (new)	995	795
Ion Systems Obelisk 100 integrated	300	150
Ion Systems Obelisk FMT 100 tuner	400	200
Rega Elex amplifier	398	229
Rega Radio Tuner	230	170
Rega XEL R/Wood	1040	740
Deva Audio 250 integrated (new)	400	275
Deva Audio DAC Converter	400	195
Deva Audio 600 integrated (new)	995	695
Alchemist Kraken (Phono) integrated	630	420
Rotel RA 970 BX integrated (new)	250	195
Rotel RC 970 BX pre amp (new)	175	135
Rotel RB 9 BX 6 channel amp	379	150
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Dalquist DL 10 speakers Hybrid	N/A	395
Ear 802 pre amp inc phono	2000	699
Roksan DP1 transport	1000	495
Bryston 12 B preamp (phono)	1295	325
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Linn Troika (used) 350 hrs	679	250
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Ortofon MC 30 Supreme (used) 500 hrs	525	250
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XLO Signature 1 M power cords (purple)	125	65
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Audio Innovations 500 integrated	1200	499
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Pro-Ac Tablette 50 (Rosewood)	620	450
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Audio Note M1 Phono Pre-Amp	750	495
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Audio Analogue : **Puccini & Puccini SE** integrated amps, **Bellini** pre and **Donizetti** power amps. You should be familiar with these very, and we mean very classy Italian products by now. The **Puccini SE** recently had a storming review in **Hi-Fi World**, the **Bellini** and **Donizetti** will be equally as well received. Available in both silver and high gloss black finishes, these products are destined to become future classics. We strongly urge you to book your demonstration now. Priced from only £ 450.00 for the **Puccini** integrated, the range represents unbelievable value in the sound per pound stakes. Another Italian import heading for the Premier League !!.



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Audio Innovations 2nd audio triode monoblock valve amp (vgc)	3400.00	1195.00
Audio Innovations Series 1000 passive control unit (g.c.)	-	149.95
Meridian MCA Int (vgc)	-	199.95
3 x spare line modules for the above (vgc)	-	69.95
NAD 3020 Int (original) 2 in stock (g.c.)	-	89.95
NAD 3020i Int	150.00	99.95
Quad 66 Pre inc remote control station (vgc)	863.00	499.95
Quad 33/303 pre/power (vgc)	-	149.95
Quad 34/306 pre/power (mint)	764.00	449.95
Rotel RA 960BX Int (vgc)	325.00	179.95
Rotel RA 940 BX II Int (g.c.)	-	139.95
Rogers Cadet II Int valve amp (as new condition) must be seen	-	149.95
Naim NAC 72/Hi-Cap/NAP 140 (half-size-latest style) (mint/as new)	2081.00	1395.00
Naim NAC 42/NAP 110 (vgc)	-	449.95
Yamaha AX300 Int (2 in stock) (vgc)	-	79.95
Proton S20 Int amp (vgc)	-	99.95
Realistic MPA 100 2 x 50 watts power amp (vgc)/s/h	180.00	99.95
Legend P300 2 x 200 watts mosfet power-amp (scruffy) but mega powerful	-	225.00
Yamaha (R 1020 70's 2 x 100 watts tuner/amp (g.c.)	500.00	149.95
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Thorens TD125/Rega RB250/Goldring Elan (g.c.) (as reviewed Hi-Fi World last month)	-	129.95
Another Thorens TD125/SME 3009 fixed head/Ortolon VMS 20E (vgc)	-	129.95
Thorens TD166/AT MM (black) (vgc)	-	159.95
Thorens TD160/Hadcock Unipivot/Arcam C77 (black) (vgc)	-	129.95
Thorens TD 145II/mag. cart. silver plinth) (g.c.)	-	129.95
Thorens TD150/TP 14 arm/Ortolon FF 15E (vgc)	-	89.95
Thorens TD 320 II/arm/new Arcam C77 (vgc)	450.00	229.95
NAD 5120/Ortolon (vgc)	-	79.95
Walker CJ 55/Rega RB250/Ortolon VM 2 (vgc)	-	199.95
Dunlop Systemdek III/ADC ALT/Ortolon (vgc)	-	199.95
Origin/Syninx PUZ/AT MM cart (g.c.)	-	199.95
Project One/Ortolon S10 (mint)	200.00	129.95

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QUAD 44 PRE-AMP MINT	£180
QUAD 306 POWER AMP	£250
QUAD 606 POWER AMP	£400
QUAD 50E PAIR	£300
QUAD 66 PVE AMP	£450

TURNABLES

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QUAD 66 CD PLAYER	£295
QUAD FM66 TUNER	£295

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COMPACT DISC PLAYERS

QUAD 67 second-hand

One of Quad's best products for a long time, the 67 is warmer and smoother than most, yet is highly musical and revealing.

DENON DCD-315 £150

Real hi-fi and real music for a mere £150.

NAD 510 £200

A competent all rounder with lifelike soundstaging and impressive treble clarity.

ARCAM ALPHA 7 £320

This British built player is extremely good value. Upfront, punchy nature suits Techno and Rock.

MARANTZ CD-63MKII KI-S £500

Similar to the CD-63SE but more powerful bass and an all-round smoother sound.

TRICHORD GENESIS £549

Conveys music in a powerful and dramatic fashion. Smooth and sweet, with a good sense of depth. A little soft sounding though.

DPA RENAISSANCE £895

Words cannot describe its infinite variety, but you'll love it or hate it. Highly emotional presentation with not a hint of self-doubt.

ROKSAN CASPIAN £895

The Caspian has a smooth, even sound with some of the clearest treble in the business. Very engaging, dynamic character.

LINN KARIK 3 £1600

Superb one-box player. Its supremely rhythmic, musical sound with delicacy and finesse puts it up with the best of the rest.

NAIM CDI £1600

This single box 16-bit player sounds very engaging compared to your average bitstreamer. Has that vital tingle factor of the larger, two-box CDs.

MCINTOSH CDM7009 £2635

A thoroughly inspiring machine. One of the most musical CD players around; sweet, open and detailed.

COMPACT DISC TRANSPORTS

TEAC VDRS-T1 £550

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

AUDIOLAB 8000CDM £1300

Beautifully built and finished, the CDM is packed with sensible features and performs superbly, day-in day-out.

TEAC P-30 £2500

Cheap it isn't, but then it sounds like a million digital dollars. Nothing short of superb.

CD CONVERTORS

DPA LITTLE BIT III £300

A lot more weight at frequency extremes than the II and far better control. A bargain at £300.

THORENS TDA2000 £700

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

DPA ENLIGHTENMENT £795

Some believe this to be the best convertor around. A truly charismatic performer, it dives into Rock music with rare passion.

PINK TRIANGLE DA CAPO £1450+

Offers a choice of filter modules, all up there with the best. The Da Capo is superb in many respects, but can sound a touch polite on Rock.

DPA 1024 £6000

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

TURNTABLES

GARRARD 401 second-hand

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

THORENS TD124 second-hand

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

SYSTEMDEK IIX900/RB250 £330

A fine all rounder and easy to upgrade too. Has more depth and breadth than Rega Planar 3.

SYSTEMDEK 2X2 £499

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

RESON rs1 £600

A lean, yet vibrant sound quality that really appeals. Good detail and rhythmic integrity too.

MICHELL GYRODEC £800

Stunning looks, build and fine sound. Standard PSU has detailed, architectural, if undynamic sound. With QC PSU, scale and insight kill the competition.

PRO-JECT 6.1SA £999

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

LINN SONDEK LP12 £840 - £1530

Cirkus bearing puts it back up with the best. Superbly beguiling, rhythmic sound that plays Jazz like few others, but lacks the Gyrodec's detail or imaging. You'll forget CDs were ever invented.

PINK TRIANGLE ANNIV. £2495

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

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.

MICHELL ORBE £1950

The Darth Vader of analogue, the Orbe builds on the strengths of the Gyrodec. An ultra-tuneful, expansive sound.

SME MODEL 20 £2495

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

TO NEARMS

REGA RB300 £130

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

SME 3009SII £375

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

SME 309 £570

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

SME V £1235

A masterpiece of precision engineering with a cohesive, ultra-transparent sound.

LINN EKOS £1400

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

CARTRIDGES

ORTOFON VMS-2E £10

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

GOLDRING 1012GX £60

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

GOLDRING 1042 £100

The best moving magnet available. Has an extremely cohesive, weighty sound that's warm but highly involving.

SHURE V15VXMR £295

The Shure produces a warm, dynamic sound which has great detail and impact. Far superior to earlier V15s.

World favourites guide

ORTOFON SUPREMES £225-£450

The MC10, MC20 and MC30 Supremes all offer superb sound and value for money, with a rich, smooth and musical performance.

ORTOFON MC2000 £650

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

ORTOFON ROHMANN £1000

In a way it's MC2000 meets MC7500 with the tonal strengths and dynamo sound Ortofon put into their moving-coil cartridges.

LYRA LYDIAN £649

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

VAN DEN HUL MC-10 £840

Fluid bass, finely etched treble and highly tuneful in between. The MC-10 is honey, pure and simple.

ORTOFON MC7500 £2000

Conclusive proof that there's hope for humankind. CD lovers would die if they heard it.

INTEGRATED AMPLIFIERS

NAD 3020 second-hand

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

NAD 310 £130

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

NAD 312 £200

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

ROTEL RA-970BX £250

With its smooth and powerful sound, the Rotel sings a seductive song with all types of music.

AURA VA-80 £280

The VA-80 is superb for the price - it is capable of embarrassing more up-market competition.

ARCAM ALPHA 9 £500

A detailed and open sound lends great atmosphere to music. Wide range of facilities too.

NAIM NAIT 3 £500

A taste of high-end audio. The most involving, musical design at the price, but low power.

MISSION CYRUS 3 £500

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

SONNETEER CAMPION £579

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

DPA RENAISSANCE £595

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

AUDIO ANALOGUE PUCCINI SE £595

This superbly made Italian integrated has a lucidity and control which leave the competition at up to £1000 standing. Sound stage depth is unequalled.

AUDION STERLING ETSE £600

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

SUGDEN A21a £640

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

MERIDIAN 551 £795

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

UNISON SIMPLY 2 £995

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

UNISON SIMPLY 4 £1495

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

MCINTOSH MA6800 £3735

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

PRE-AMPLIFIERS

QED DISCSAVER £35

A true bargain that offers a cohesive, musical sound but avoid using it in thin sounding systems.

ROTEL RQ-970BX £130

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

LFD MISTRAL PHONO STAGE £300

The Mistral has a warmth and involvement that make many more expensive phono stages sound overpriced.

TECHNICS SU-C1000 £350

At its price, this battery powered pre-amp is difficult to beat. Weak points are lightweight build and average phono stage.

DPA DSP200S £495

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

AUDIOLAB 8000C £520

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

MICHELL ISO/HERA £530

This phono stage has fine midband and treble detail, with taut bass. The £850 ISO/HR brings more of everything.

AUDIO INNOVATIONS P2 £749

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

AUDIOLAB 8000Q £995

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

MERIDIAN 502 £1295

Transparent, detailed sound with good tonal range and a neutral presentation.

MARANTZ MODEL 7 £3500

A '60s reissue, the Marantz pre-amp still sounds superb. Has a great phono stage.

POWER AMPLIFIERS

QUAD II second-hand

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

LEAK STEREO 20 second-hand

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

QUAD 405II second-hand

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

ARCAM ALPHA 9 £400

With 70watts on tap, the 9P will drive most loudspeakers with a spacious and detailed sound. Good bass drive too.

MISSION CYRUS POWER £450

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

ROSE RPI90 £495

Used with the partnering pre-amp it gives 70watts of smooth, relaxing sound.

SUGDEN AU41P £530

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

SHEARNE PHASE 3 £619

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

DPA DPA200S £750

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

NAIM NAP180 £900

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

MICHELL ALECTO STEREO £1300

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

World favourites guide

MERIDIAN 557 £1400

Great control is allied to seductive smoothness. A rare combination of power and delicacy.

MARANTZ MODEL 9 £8000

Authentic reproduction monoblocs still more than cut the sonic mustard. The sound combines grunt with great tonal colour and expressiveness.

TUNERS

LEAK TROUGHLINE second-hand

Our favourite way of listening to the wireless. A deliciously mellifluous sound will have you junking your transistor radio in seconds.

NAD 412 £190

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

MISSION CYRUS FM7 £300

Clear and lucid sound puts it up with the best regardless of price. Superb build too.

ROTEL RT990BX £500

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

NAIM NAT03 £500

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

FANFARE FT-1 £1350

In its native US the FT-1 is no mere tuner but a 'broadcast monitor' no less, a task at which it acquires itself well, with a clear and powerful sound.

NAIM NAT01 £1380

This is the best solid-state tuner available bar none. For better radio, go and live in the studio.

CASSETTE DECKS

AIWA AD-S750 £150

Sonically a very decent machine. For the price there's nothing better. Fitted with Dolby B, C & S.

KENWOOD KX-3080 £160

A simple deck, but high quality head and transport give an unusually high level of performance at this price. Not to be missed.

DENON DRM-650S £230

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

AIWA AD-S950 £300

A stable transport, superb head and Dolby S make the AD-S950 an excellent all rounder.

PIONEER CT-S740S £430

A great piece of engineering from Pioneer, with first rate sound on playback and recording.

NAKAMICHI DR2 £600

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

NAKAMICHI DR1 £850

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

NAKAMICHI CR7 £1500

Kills every other cassette deck and stamps on their graves.

LOUDSPEAKERS

KEF Q15 £199

These stand mounters offer impressive bass and excellent clarity but need a powerful amplifier to perform at their considerable best.

HEYBROOK HB1 S3 £269

Fine tonal resolution through midrange and a smooth and extended treble make the HB1s ideal for Classical/acoustic music. Bass is a little boxy and constrained though.

CELESTION IMPACT 23 £299

A smooth and even handed loudspeaker. Has clear and well extended treble and deep, tight bass. Midrange is focused and pure with plenty of detail and speed.

B&W DM 602 £300

Deep and strong bass, pure, projected and uncoloured midrange. Treble quality a little metallic, but imaging precise. A lively, enjoyable sound.

REL Q-BASS £350

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

CASTLE EDEN £450

Impressively vice-free 'speakers that offer great transparency and involvement. Unbeatable at the price.

EPOS ES12 £495

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

REL STRATA £500

The Strata subwoofer is not a toy. It offers superb, true hi-fi bass depth and power, and opens up sound stage depth in particular.

MISSION 752 Freedom £600

Use advanced High Definition Aerogel bass/midrange driver and silk dome tweeter. Dynamic, punchy and musical, yet refined like few others are at the price. Not as sweet or soft as the original 752s though.

TANNOY D100 £650

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

CASTLE AVON £700

Taut, dry bass and lucid midrange from their carbon fibre driver, but need warm ancillaries to avoiding sounding bright.

HARBETH HL-P3ES £799

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

HARBETH HL-K6 £975

Clean, musical and classy - Harbeth have done themselves proud again.

KEF REFERENCE SERIES ONE £995

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

HEYBROOK SEXTET II £1129

Heybrook have retained the strengths of the original Sextet, improving on bass extension and smoothness. Treble and imaging still excellent.

MISSION 754 FREEDOM 5 £1299

Highly articulate and informative sound with fine imaging and tight, deep bass extension. Uses silk dome tweeter, HDA midrange and 8in woofer.

JAMO CONCERT 8 £1500

With their inch-thick cabinets and fabulous drive units, the Concert 8s are the most transparent stand mounters around. They don't suffer poor sources gladly though.

EPOS ES25 £1505

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

SPENDOR SP7/1 £1970

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

TANNOY AMS8 £2700

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

QUAD ESL-63 £2860

A reference against which all other loudspeakers are judged, the '63s have superb imaging qualities and genuine transparency. Earlier ESL model is a fine second-hand buy.

KEF REFERENCE SERIES FOUR £3099

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

JBL S2600 £3500

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

TANNOY WESTMINSTER ROYAL £10,000

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

MINIDISC PLAYERS

SONY MDS-JE500 £300

An impressive sound and unmatched convenience make this MiniDisc player an excellent buy.

KENWOOD DM-7090 £500

Both replay and recording quality are superb through this Kenwood. Nakamichi owners should start getting worried - at last there's competition.

Grandix

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MUSICAL FIDELITY E60 CDP	£ 500	£ 399
PIONEER A400X	£ 300	£ 239
PIONEER 605R	£ 400	£ 245
PIONEER PDS904	£ 400	£ 325
REGA ELA S/H	£ 400	£ 325
TANNOY 637 R/W	£ 550	£ 249
TEAC VRDS 10 se	£ 550	£ 425
TDL T LINE 3 R/W	£ 850	£ 679
	£ 750	£ 499

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These amplifiers have been designed with power supplies large enough for the demands of the new VV 300B/VV 30B Vaic valve but can be supplied with standard 300B's for later upgrades. (Being fitted with internal switching facilities, they can be rebased for VV300B.)

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What do the critics say:

QUINTET

The Art Audio gives you music with a sense of rightness that you don't really question but just get on and enjoy. Sweet open and lucid, the music is produced with an easy sense of naturalness which makes long term listening fatigue free and especially rewarding.

Roy Gregory Hi-Fi Choice

TEMPO

I feel that the Art Tempo amplifiers are among the finest valve power amplifiers currently available. The imagery that the Tempos create is vivid, lifelike and full of space and air.

Alan Sircom, Hi-Fi World

MAESTRO

...they are just so stunningly gorgeous and open to listen to, I can barely imagine anything more alluring.

Noel Keywood, Hi-Fi World

...the Maestro is part of that rare breed of Hi-fi that makes you forget about the equipment and think about the music. In all, unlike the car, the Maestro lives up to its name

Alan Sircom, Hi-Fi World

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The Phoenix rises..... The first new high-end Garrard turntable for 25 years is unveiled by Loricraft Audio, licencees of the Garrard name and trademark. The Garrard 501 is a classic idler-wheel turntable that continues the design philosophy of the original firm.



Also launched are a new range of Garrard turntable accessories. A unique new "Natural Fibre" record brush evolved during research for the Loricraft record cleaner, "the world's finest vinyl cleaning machine".

The Garrard "SoundStage" turntable support platform was developed with the help of a leading materials company. The entire structure works to damp vibration and pull the best from any vinyl player or other equipment.

Loricraft also offer the Garrard improved power supply, originally developed for the 501. This is now available for all Garrard and other fine turntables.

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FOCUS ON VINYL

It's clear that Michell's Focus One turntable is a classified ad bargain, says Nick Tate.

Looking for a cheap ticket to the wonderful world of vinyl? Funds tight but you don't want to settle for run-of-the-mill decks? What you need is a Michell Focus One, a beautifully styled, fully serviceable, hand-crafted slice of budget exotica. What more could the cash-poor vinyl junkie ask for?

In the business for over 30 years, Michell Engineering is reckoned to be Britain's oldest

surviving turntable maker. A small specialist company, it has survived thanks to innovative products superbly designed and built. New Michell decks range from the £400 Syncro to the £2000 Orbe, but you can have your own used Michell at a fraction of the cost. The Focus One, Michell's 1970s' entry level deck, can be seen going in Classifieds for as little as £50.

A simple belt drive design, the Focus eschews an independent sub-chassis for a one-piece plinth with unusual coiled spring isolation feet. The large, torque motor is mounted on its own decoupled board and drives a one-piece aluminium platter via a long rubber belt. The platter is topped by a beautiful maroon suede mat, which damps resonances well. As with all Michell turntables, the bearing assembly



is a precision affair with an easily replaceable ball bearing. This adds up to low levels of rumble and wow and flutter as well as surprisingly good vibration resistance. The only caveat is motor noise, which can intrude on early decks. The later Focus One 'S' has a modified motor board which eliminates the problem, and is the version buyers should go for. Alternatively, earlier decks can be factory upgraded to 'S' spec. for £15.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the deck is the Focus arm. A superb design, its innovative thinking has doubtless inspired some of today's super-arms. Naim's ARO echoes its unipivot orientation, resonance reducing double-skinned arm tube and low centre of gravity counterweight, while SME's Series V has its rigid, low-

mass magnesium headshell, silicon fluid damping and fine VTA and overhang adjustment.

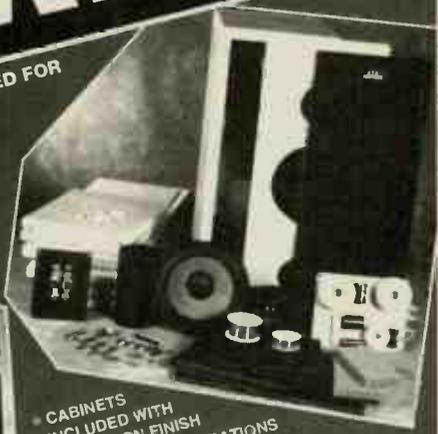
How does the Focus One sound? Best characterised as smooth, detailed and musical, it got to the heart of the music in a typically 'analogue' fashion. Music just ebbed and flowed in a way that made you forget you were listening to hi-fi at all. Sound staging was excellent, far better than expected. Compared to a used Rega Planar 3 the Focus was generally better - although slightly inferior in terms of fine detail

retrieval and with softer, more rounded frequency extremes, it proved by far the more musical and engaging. The midband was particularly sweet and lucid thanks to the deck's excellent arm. Using the optional Michell record clamp improved matters further, bringing a tighter, firmer bass and faster dynamics.

All in all, the Michell Focus One remains an excellent deck that's just as viable today as it was 20 years ago. Like Aston Martin, Michell offers full factory reconditioning on any of its products regardless of age, which is a real plus point for the used buyer. Spend between £50 and £100 depending on condition, fit a good cartridge (anything from Audio Technica's £25 AT110E to Goldring's £130 G1042), and you'll have fine sound, a piece of art and a prime example of Britain's hi-fi heritage ●

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Rega Planar 2 / RB200 / Bias	£350	£225
Roksan Xerxes (Black) / Rega RB300	£1175	£595
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Voyd Valdi / Hellus	£1050	£728

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Braun 301 Tuner	£295	£125
Nakamichi Dragon (No box or instructions)	£2500	£1445
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Audio Innovations P1 Phono amp	£369	£249
Audiolab 8000M (X2) Ex-show stock	£1600	£1125
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Audio Synthesis AI Vishayed Passion Pre	£695	£395
Burmester 846 Line stage pre.	£1495	£695
Classe Audio Audio 3D Pre	£1320	£695
Counterpoint Solid One Pwr	£1495	£795
Cyrus II / PSX	£595	£395
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Incatech Claymore (Finished in Gold) Unused	£575	£428
Krell KMA100 (monoblocks)	£5700	£3995
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Marantz MA6 Monoblocks (Handbuilt by K.I.)	-	£1798
Meridian 551 (Integrated)	£899	£595
Musical Fidelity MVT / P270	£2995	£1245
Naim 250 (Ex dem)	£1576	£1095
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Nakamichi Amplifier One	£630	£375
Pioneer A91D (Reference)	£1250	£595
Quad 77 (inc remote - New)	£849	£649
Quad 34 / 306	£715	£495
Quad 44 (Pre)	£435	£245
Quad 405 (Power) Selection in stock from just	-	£195
Conrad Johnson Sonographe FET (Pre)	£1250	£495
Sugden A48 (Circa 1976)	£295	£128
Sugden Symetra (2 x Mono's)	£1550	£998
Sumo Athena (Pre) + 9 (Power)	£1900	£995
Threshold S300 Power amp	£5500	£1950
YBA 2 (Pre)	£1700	£878

VALVE AMPLIFIERS

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Audio Innovations 1st Audio (7.5watt heated triode)	£1700	£695
Audio Note Oto (10watt Integrated)	£1500	£698
Audio Note M2 Pre-amp	£1000	£598
Audion Sterling (Silver wired power)	£599	£468
Audio Research SP11 Mkl (re-valved/serviced)	£4995	£1998
Audio Research VT 60 (Mono's)	£2650	£1748
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Heath S33-H (3 watt single ended circa 1957)	-	£328
Papworth Audio TVA50	£1950	£998
Sonic Frontiers SFM-160 (Mono's)	£5495	£2498

CD PLAYERS

Audiolab 8000 Transport & DAC (Ex-show)	£2200	£1500
Audiolab 8000CD	£995	£745
Audio Synthesis DAX-1 DAC	£1995	£1098
Carver TL3220	£500	£295
Krell SBP64X DAC (1991)	£7995	£2998
Linn Karik 3 (As new)	£1850	£1298
Marantz CD10	£995	£478
Mark Levinson 30.5 / 31.5 Transport / DAC	£25,000	£17,498
Meridian 602 / 606 Transport & DAC	£3350	£1498
Nakamichi CD2 (2 - 6 multiplay)	£695	£425
Orelle CD100SE (As new)	£549	£395
Parasound D/AC-1000 DAC	£795	£528
Proceed PDT1 Transport	£1795	£895
Proceed PDP1 DAC	£1695	£795
Quad 77 CD (unused)	£850	£650
Sugden SDT1 Transport	£1059	£648
Sugden SDA1 DAVC	£1000	£598
Teac VRDS10	£800	£595

LOUDSPEAKERS

Acoustat Spectra II (Hybrid)	-	£548
Acoustic Energy AE1	£799	£549
Alon V MkII	£4995	£2498
Apogee Centaurus Minor (Hybrid Ribbon)	£1480	£648
Audiostatic ES100 (Line Source Electrostatics)	£2850	£1698
Castle Seven (Rosewood)	£500	£345
Epos ES14 (Including stands)	£675	£478
Harbeth HL-P3	£799	£598
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KEF LS5/1A (BBC Monitors - 1960's)	-	£495
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Roksan Ojan 3 (Rosewood)	£995	£598
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Thiel CS1.2	£1100	£645

WHAT'S NEW?

Most of the hi-fi bargains you'll see listed on the left have come into stock when customers have chosen to up-grade components or systems at The Hi-Fi Company. Generous trade-in allowances are just one of the benefits enjoyed by our customers because - we really want your old hi-fi equipment! And, most importantly, we back up our Easy Up-Grade facility with the most appetising stock of hi-fi equipment at any price level.

As well as virtually every justifiably 'award winning' component and system featured in the serious hi-fi press, we always keep a wide range of equipment which we consider to have outstanding or unique qualities and characteristics, regardless of budgetary constraints or that invidious 'sound for your pound' journalism espoused by 'popular' hi-fi magazines, and which so demeans the aspirations of more discriminating enthusiasts!

In fact it is obvious to us that most of our customers have quite individual and specific expectations, often not met by the 'vanilla' favourites of the popular press! For their (and hopefully, you) we keep right up-to-date with the very latest, and most interesting hi-fi components and systems available for your assessment.

Amongst several exciting new products that have found favour in our demonstration studios in the last few weeks are the following:

- ♦ **SONUS FABER**
 Concerto Grand Piano £2299
- ♦ **MICHELL ORBE** with
 SME Series IV / Lyra Lydian £3445
- ♦ **AUDIOLAB**
 8000 CD Player £1000
- ♦ **NAIM Credo**
 Loudspeakers £1060
- ♦ **KRELL KAV 250 P/A**
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- ♦ **MERIDIAN 565 (7.1)**
 DTS/AC3 Dig. Processor £2850
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So don't delay, **Make An Offer** by mail or fax before Monday 22.9.97. Successful bidders will be contacted immediately. Payments can then be made by cheque, credit/debit cards, and hire-purchase*. Part-exchange (with prior evaluation of your trade-in) is also welcome. (* Subject to status)

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Mission 775SM (Solid) / MC25E	£345
Rega Planet / Acos arm	£120
Revolver / Helius Scorpion / P77	£299
Syrinx PU2 Tonearm	£125
Thorens TD160 Super	£120

TAPE DECKS / TUNERS

Denon DRM10HX	£95
Nakamichi BX1	£175
Nakamichi 700 (Tri-tracer)	£495
Philips DCC600	£149
Pioneer CT830S	£195
Rotel RT820L	£70
Rotel RT850L	£100
Sony STS310	£100
Teac A450 (Circa 1975)	£145
Yamaha T80	£150

AMPLIFIERS

Albarray APS1/PSU/DMP1/M408	£525
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Audio Research LS3 (Black Pre)	£995
BGW Model 202 (Control/Pre)	£275
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Mission Cyrus II	£175
Naim Nait 2	£298
Naim 32160 (Scratched)	£495
Naim 160 (X2 Modified)	£650
PS Audio IV/HPCS (Pre)	£295
Rappaport Pre 2 (Pre)	£295
Hafner DH101 (Pre)	£145

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Arcam Delta 70/Black Box 3	£675
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Pioneer PDS901	£275
Rotel RCD945	£130
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Linn Nexus	£295
Meridian M30 (Active)	£578
Mission 754 (Oak - Ex dem)	£1198
Musical Fidelity MC2	£195
Polk SDL 2TL Signature Series	£1298
Quad ESL57 (Black - marked)	£325
Spendor BC3	£495
Spica TC50 inc extnl crossovers	£495

WRITTEN OFFERS ONLY PLEASE TO ADDRESS OPPOSITE BY FIRST POST MONDAY 22.9.97

PLEASE NOTE: DO NOT SEND PAYMENT

Classified Ads

PRIVATE

THORENS 160MKII Turntable, with SME 3009/III arm and Shure V15/V cartridge boxed £170. Revox A77 low speed, 4 track, Dolby G.W.O. £450. Tel: 01424 211745

HFN HEADPHONE AMP £45 (£85). MICHELL ISO phono stage £225 (£420). 5m pair Deltac Goretex Black 16 speaker cable £225 (£1000+). Jeff Rowland Consummate remote control line stage pre-amp (£5500). Serious stuff. Serious offers (£2000 plus) or high end swaps/p-ex? REL Stentor Mk1 £800 (£1500). Tel: 01372 468266 (Jerry)

VALVE MONOBLOCKS matched pair of Raymond Lumley, M75 monos, balanced & line attenuable inputs. Recent service, documents & test reports: £950 mint condition. Tel: 01246 209578 day & 209578 eves (Mike)

KRELL KST 100 Stereo power amp, Bal & SE, twin speakers terminals, recent importers service, mint, boxed cw handbook & test reports £1700. Tel: 01246 209578 day & 280755 eves (Mike)

AVI S2000MP Pre Amplifier £650. Technics SL-PD867 5 Disc CD Player £180. Both units as new and boxed. Rogers LS4a Speakers, black finish £150. Tel: 0181 874 6262 (daytime)

B&W CDM1 speakers, unpacked competition prize, new £599.95 sell £399.00. Tel: 01903 814352

ARCAM 290 £250, Arcam 290P £200, Digit & Positron £70, all VGC. Tel: 0171 514 2122

MELOS SHA GOLD preamp, brand new, few hours use only £900. Tel: 0171 928 8242 (Andy, evenings, Waterloo area)

LEAK TL12 Point one pair £1200. TL10x 3 £200 each. Gold TL12 + £150 Stereo 20 £250. Radford STA15 £500. Pye Mozart mono £125. Quad 2x power + pre £425. Wanted Quad CD Player. Tel: 01895 823391

ROGERS LS7 SPEAKERS, walnut with stands. Superbly dynamic and revealing sound, very efficient, mint condition £250. Tel: 0181 643 4260 (Sutton)

CONCORDANT QUAD II's £395. Leak Troughline II with studio 12 decoder £100. Hi-Fi World KLP1 line preamp hardly used £325. Rogers LS35A (rosewood) with sand-filled custom stands £325. Boxed Mullard GE 34's £10 each. Tel: 0181 642 7931

TANNOY PROFILE 636 Speakers hardly used still in box and packing £225 ono. Also Rank Domus speakers (weak) magnificent sound £45. Tel: 0161 428 3068

AUDIOLAB 8000S integrated amplifier, 12 months old, immaculate, remote control £500 (boxed). Micromega Stage 3 CD player, 10 months old, immaculate, remote control £500 (boxed). Tel: 01253 770474 (after 6pm)

LUMLEY ST70 Triode switchable £1000, Lumley valve pre-amp £300, Audio Innovations First Audio new valves £750 Grant G100 AMS 100 Watt valve monoblocks new £2500 £750. All equipment excellent condition. Tel: 0121 784 8765

WANTED: GARRARD 401 chassis (optionally in plinth) and SME 3 (not 5) arm. Both must be pristine, preferably boxed. Tel: 01344 485 418 (Berkshire)

AUDIOWOTE M1 PREAMP £450, Audio Innovations Series 200 preamp £200, Mission DADS CD player £100, Snell K loudspeakers with stands £220. Wanted: Audio Innovations P2 phono stage. Tel: 0114 2431542

ACOUSTIC ENERGY AE3 speakers plus stands, awesome sound, mint, snip at £675. Beard 8B100 MkII valve amp mint cond. little use brilliant review first £575. Tel: 0151 920 8471

AUDIO INNOVATIONS SERIES 300 £190. Audio Innovations First Audio (2A3) £495. REL sub-woofer unopened, unwanted. Marantz CD67 player unopened, unwanted £225. Sony S70 Hi-Fi & Dolby Surround r/c amp (boxed) £265. Tel: 0370 435952

MARANTZ PM66SE AMP 4 months old, boxed as new condition £170. Tannoy 631SE speakers, again 4 months old, boxed as new £100, or package £250. Tel: 01920 466389

AUDIOLAB 8000M's power amps, mint condition boxed (cost £1600) accept £850. Musical Fidelity P180 Power + CRPS £695. Rothwell preamp 6 line inputs + phono (£250 new) accept £95. Tel: 01634 387686

MONITOR AUDIO 703 PMC loudspeakers 1 year old, superb, genuine bargain £500. Audiolab 8000A, excellent condition, boxed £300. Expensive upgrading forces sale. Tel: 01483 894659 (Steve)

PROAC Studio 100 Monitor speakers for sale, mint condition, boxed. Excellent value at £419. Suitable Target RS2 stands also for sale in good condition for £169. Tel: 01992 628848 Dave (Cheshunt, Herts)

COLLECTORS CLASSIC VINYL: Roksan Xerxes XPS3/DSU/SME 3009 imp, black, superb £550. SME V, boxed £900. Linn LP12/Hadcock 228 £395. Pink Triangle/Ittok £395. Systemdek Transcription/RB300/ATOC5 £195. Epos ES14/stands £350. Naim NAC32 £175. All low hours. Tel: 01793 495140

DENON DL 304 CARTRIDGE £90. Kuzma ST01 tonearm £110. Dias Turntable (black) £90. Audio Technica 1010 tonearm £30. Audio Technica AT637 stylus cleaner £25. Tel: 0161 626 7262

MICROMEGA DUO CD2 Transport and Duo Pro DAC, all cables manuals etc mint condition cost £3000 accept £1450 ono. Tel: 0121 783 8227

LINN LP12 Valhala Circus black plinth and Ittok LVIII latest spec 2 years old boxed and mint cost £1850 accept £850 ono. Tel: 0121 783 8227

PINK TRIANGLE PT TWO rosewood plinth plus Rega 250 new lid, mint condition £275 ono. Tel: 0121 783 8227

NAIM 42-90 (90 1 year old) 42 overhauled by Naim 1 year ago. Both immaculate condition £350 no offers. Tel: 01236 873100

RUARK TALISMAN Mk2, black ash, loaded with lead shot, superb sound, excellent condition, boxed, usual reason for sale, upgrading! £380. Also various cables, phone for details. Tel: 01422 835293 eves (Heath)

QUAD ESL63 SPKRS £1400; Micromega 'Trio' CD silver wired internally/externally (£5000 new) £1999; Audio Innovations L2 valve pre-amp £400; all boxed. Buyer of above will get 3 Target floor stands and 2 wall stands worth £550 free. Tel: 01247 461603 or leave message

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SYSTEMDEK IIX900, Rega RB250 Goldring G900IGC, vgc black £175. Mission 731i, black, new £85. Harmon Kardon PM610 amp boxed, unused £85. All "Best Buys". Mission 733 black, vgc £170. Roksan Tabriz tonearm, mint, boxed £100. Tel: 01706 345418

CHORD 1200B Power Amp and 2800 preamp black, 18 months old, boxed with guarantee £4000. ATC 20SL biwire monitors 6 months old, boxed £1250. Sumo nine plus Class A power excellent £600. Adcom pre £150. Tel: 01226 710605 (Yorkshire)

FOR SALE: EXPOSURE VIII Amplifier £195. Two Kenwood KMX-1000 THX amplifiers £250 each or £450 for the pair. Soundstyle black triangular equipment stand plus extra add on shelf £300 new asking £95. Offers invited for all. Please be patient may be on holiday. Tel: 01423 528256 (Harrogate)

MUSICAL FIDELITY F22 Preamplifier (phono stage) new mint condition 4 year guarantee, (genuine). Tel: 01424 431536 (E. Sussex)

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LINN KEILIDH, stands, immaculate £550. JBL L20T £220. Foundation Stands £60. Meridian MSR £45. Audio Technica ATH70 £70. Linn LK400, 5 metres £90. Audioquest Topaz £25. Wanted: Kimber Cable. Tel: 01793 526796

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PIONEER S703 Transport-Trichord Clock 2 with power upgrade. "DAC in the box" with digital interconnect £420. A.A. DTI Plus (Jitter) £125. Kontak Link interconnect £25. All as new. Tel: 01908 566392 (Milton Keynes)

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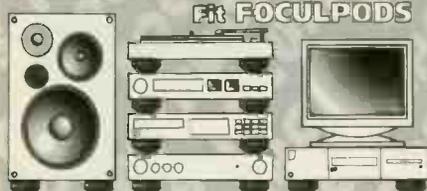
LINN MAJIK I amplifier with phono stage (mint) £450, Origin Live turntable + RB250 arm + Nagaoka Stilton TS10 cartridge £95, Origin Live Skyline Super wall mounted turntable platform £60. Tel: 01285 652649 (Gloucestershire)

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EPOS ES14 Speakers with Epos stands, mahogany finish 3 years old, mint condition, boxed with instructions £395. Tel: 0116 2705149 (Leicester)

NAIM 32.5 £200, Hi-Cap £325, 250 power amp £575. Mint boxed. Leak Troughline Mk3 rebuilt £95 ono. Linn Kans Mk2 inc stands Arkve & Ekos offers. Tel: 01743 821298 eves

CELESTION DITTON 25s, Teak, 12" bass, 12" ABR, 2 mid, tweeter, excellent condition £150. Hi-Fi News, 1984-1996 complete £50. Hi-Fi World, Hi-Fi Choice, last 18 of each £20. Tel: 01843 832926 (Kent)

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BANG & OLUFSEN 9300 Beocenter, Beolab 6000 Tower Speakers in immaculate condition, almost brand spanking new includes boxes and manuals. Price £2800, no time wasters please. Tel: 0956 915294

DPA 2005 Pre & Power amplifiers £675 2x1M pairs White Slink Interconnects £65. 2x5M IS19 speaker cables £90. All equipment as new, boxed, under manufacturers guarantee. Tel: 0117 9239941 (Bristol)

MYRIAD MC100 CD Player £445 ono. Pioneer A300R Precision amplifier £245 ono. Ruark Sceptre loudspeakers £465 ono. Tel: 01246 550064 after 7pm

MERIDIAN 500 Transport £695. Meridian 563 DAC £395. EAR 859 £995. EAR 834P £295. Quad ESL 63 black £1450. Arcici stands £175. KEF 104ab £150. Linn Sara stands £30. SME 3009 s2 £60. Quad FM3 £175. Tel: 0113 2504262 (Leeds)

WANTED: LEAK 2075 or Leak 2060 loudspeakers. Also mid range unit for same (white in colour). For sale: MAF stands for ESL 57 £135. Tel: 01566 781275 (Cornwall)

NAIM AMPLIFIERS. Linn Sondek, Linn speakers, Nakamichi cassette, Ferrograph valve, R.T.R. Lowther drive units, Rega Turntable, Onix amplifier, various arms, cartridges, interconnects, HiCap, Lingo, Trampoline, will split, may PX Tel: 0114 2486493

SME SERIES V, 18 months old £690. Sony SLVE500 4 head video £190. Michell Focus One S, A&R P77MG £110. Rose Scion 2 box integrated amp £395. Castle Avon loudspeaker £395. Sony TAS650 YFET amp £50. All excellent, boxed. Tel: 0171 794 3843

WANTED: SONY CDPX303ES, ST5950, PS6750, RM30 Remote, Rega R200 or Linn LVX, Yamaha, NS1000M, Technics Stylus Gauge. Tel: 016974 78537

MERIDIAN M2 Active Power amps/speakers, 101B preamp MM/MC modules, 104 tuner, all mint and boxed, can demonstrate. Sensible offers considered. Tel: 01494 443671

COUNTERPOINT SA3-1 preamp including tube dampers £650 ono. Onix OA21 + SOAP £350 ono. Naim NACS Tri-Wired 4x3M £80. Tel: 01386 860931 (Evesham)

MISSION 752 RW Speakers £380. Mission Cyrus III Amplifier £350. Arcam Alpha 7 CD player £220. Furakawa FST35 Spkr Cable £100. Furakawa interconnect £60. All guaranteed. Tel: 01582 724414

RUARK EQUINOXES £1050, Crusaders II £890; consider P/Ex ATC10s. AVI 2000M monobloc power amps £750. Tel: 01892 536919 (W. Kent)

WANTED: Naim NATO1 tuner-new style. Tel: 01279 833737

BEAM-ECHO AVANTIC DL7-35 new valve monoblocks, 6 months old, house move forces reluctant sale, wonderful sound and styling. Price new £3500. Offered half price at £1800 ono. Tel: 01425 673135

ROGERS CADET 3 £80 ONO. Lowther Accoustas, recently reconed (original magnets retained) cabinets modified, offered with a third good cabinet, £220 ono. Connoisseur BD2 deck £30. Tel: 01443 814738

LOWTHER ACCOUSTAS recent exchange drive units, silver, cabinets good £325 ono. Lowther Super Accoustas (twin PM6 in each cabinet) mahogany, spotless £420. Kontakt K77 Amplifier-early Japanese single ended valve amp, offers? Leak Stereo 70 £55. Leak Stereo 30, unmarked £50. Tel: 01633 422559

MICHELL ARGO/HERA £450. Teac VRDS-7 £350. Rogers LS3/5A £250. Pioneer PD9700 £250. Denon POA44M/Blocs plus preamp £600. Ruark Talisman II £450. Tel: 0141 647 5364

SPEAKER BUILDER 80-94, Audio Amateur dating back to 1970. Various drive units by Morel Audax etc. offers? and more. Tel: 01494 774900 days or 01494 784842 eves (Tom)

NAIM NAIT 3 AMP £425. Mission 780SE biwire speakers rosewood with stands £200. NAD 6325 tape deck £120. All boxed and immaculate. Tel: 01904 624583 (York)

NAIM SBL SPEAKERS. 6 months old, boxed, black ash finish £1195. Tel: 0171 499 3007 (office), 0171 221 4461 (home), 0468 257237 (mobile)

MUSICAL FIDELITY P180+CRPS power (£1600) £645, Meridian 208+209 CD+PRE (£1609) £545, both mint, recently serviced and upgraded, + manuals. Perfect system. Together £1125. Tel: 0181 455 1376

PM COMPONENTS VAA-70 MkII valve power amp, volume control allows CD direct, 20W/channel. This kit amplifier was built and tested by PM. £250 (£300 new as kit). Wanted: Cyrus PSX power supply (black). Tel: 01332 831 416 Derby (evening) Robbie

WANTED: AUDIO INNOVATIONS P2. Micro Seiki AP-MI turntable, Stax or Koss ESP-950 headphones. FOR SALE: Airtight ATM-1 36W EL34 amplifier £1500, Linn/Naim MC to line phono stage £75, Counterpoint SA6 valve MC step-up £200, Counterpoint SA7 valve preamplifier £300, Wharfedale Harewood speakers (What HiFi 5 star review at £900) £250, Spendor BC1s (silver wired) £150, Tannoy ALF625 sub-woofer £250. Tel: 0181 672 4319

PROAC RESPONSE One Mk I with external crossovers £375. Tel: 0181 452 1452 (eves)

WANTED: SONY TA-N88B power amplifier and TTS 8000 turntable. Also Technics SST-1 horn speakers, SB-RX50 stand mounters and SL-10 turntable. Tel: Jon 0181 992 8952 eves & wends

SUGDEN SDA-1 D-A Converter £450. Sugden A21/a MM/MC board £45. Bespoke D-A converter using 8µrr Brown PCM63P D-A chips (comparable with £200+ converters - excellent upgrade for any CD player) only £225. Creek CAS 4240 SE amplifier £225. Linn Ittok LVIII £150. Quad 506 £275. Linn Klyde MC cartridge £195. Rega ELA loudspeakers £180. Near Mystique loudspeakers (cherry, damaged) only £125. Tel: Steve 01922 640 737

ROGERS A100 Amplifier £50. Rega Planar 2 £60. Leak 2.200 amplifier £50. Leak Delta 75 receiver £60. Aiwa F770 cassette £50. Ferrograph 307 amplifier £50. Armstrong 600 Series receiver £40. Armstrong 421 amplifier £20. Armstrong 521 amplifier £20. Tel: Milton Keynes 674 193 after 7pm.

NAIM NAC 72, NAP180, Hi-Cap £1300. May separate. Micromega T-Drive and TDAC £800. Naim NAP 250 £1100. Everything boxed and excellent condition. Tel: 01536 744 812

LINN LP12, Valhalla power supply, Akito arm. Excellent condition £500. Audiotech turntable stand £30. Tel: 01458 447 424

MARK LEVINSON No.31 £3800. Mark Levinson No.36 £2200 HDDED. Jeff Rowland Synergy pre/amp (new) £2900. Jeff Rowland B.P.S.-2 £1350. Wilson Audio Watt 3. Puppy 2 with Puppy Raws £5500. Strictly no offers on price sorry. Please contact Ian Bodill on 0171 584 5784 or 589 4800 for details.

ARCAM ALPHA CD Player, great sounding player for £220 ono. (Boxed, remote etc) Linn Helix loudspeakers, black (1st editions) £120 ono. Boxed. Tel: Darren 0468 631 683 (day) 01206 867 421 (after 8pm)

LINN AXIS Turntable, Akito arm, K5 cartridge, black, mint condition and boxed. £380 or best offer. Tel: 01325 484 405

KRELL KS450 Power amp. Class A double mono. Perfect £1000 ovno. Mission 73ps subwoofers (pair) £100. Tel: 01225 865 588 evenings (Bath area)

SPENDOR LIMITED Edition SP 2/3's. Uprated crossovers, studio grade drivers. Walnut veneer. Only 50 pairs made. Packaging, owners manual. 10 months old. Target HJ 15/3 stands. £1185 new. Full demo. Gorgeous sound. Mint. £670. Tel: Mark 0131 538 9073 or 0131 343 5574 (Edinburgh)

CD MICRO MEGA Transport 3.1/BS2 DAC. Boxed, mint condition £850 (new £2050) Tel: 01752 787 459

NAD 402 Stereo tuner, mint, boxed £90. NAD 6340 cassette deck, Dolby HX Pro, playtrim, bias control £220 new. £95. Nytech 252 CTAXD teak finish receiver. Excellent condition £90. Tel: 01524 381 389

AIWA ADB10 Cassette deck £80 ono. Beyer DT990 headphones £60 ono. Marantz CD72 CD player £150 ono. Sony WM DD33 cassette Walkman £50 ono. All Hi-Fi magazines best buys. Tel: 01502 716 754

LINN AXIS LVX+, K5, excellent condition £175. Meridian MCA1 modular integrated amplifier MC and tape (can be used for CD, etc) modules, excellent sound £150. Gladly demonstrate. Tel: Chris 01942 269 637

NAIM 62/90 MM £425 ono. 62/140 MM £550 ono (will split). Linn Sondek LP12 Valhalla walnut £350, LP12+62/140+Mission 70's £1900. Wanted: HiCap, 72, MC boards, 250. Tel: Mr Dennis 0181 789 5834

ARCAM 110 (BB50) Digital pre-amp and 120.2 power amp (100wpc) £750. Arcam Delta 250 CD transport & Black Box 50 DAC £950. Linn LP12/Rega RB300 (black) £300. Rega Planar 3 £175. Monitor Audio MA14 Gold - Rosewood £250. Kef Reference Two speakers (rosetta burr) £1100. Over 200 LPs (Classical, Supertramp, Pink Floyd, Doors, M. Jackson etc) £50. Tel: 0171 231 3518

QUAD 67CD/Trichord Clock 2 £450. Pioneer Precision/UKD Duetto as new £330 each. Dynaudio Focuss factory built 2 mths old. Offers. All boxed. 2 x PR240M0 Audax drivers (120) £60. Sound Organisation 5 tier cable £75. Goldring 1042 £40. Rega Elys £30. Tel: 01398 323 101

NAIM NAC 62 £150. Hi-Cap £350. NAP 135 £1600. All new style. Armstrong valve tuner £60. Quad 34 £180. Quad 67 CD £500. Roksan DAC £200 Tel: 01203 460 729 (home) 01203 216 650 (work)

MARANTZ CD52 II, Mission 762'S, Atacama SE24's, Chord Cobra (0.5m), Cable Talk Talk 3 (5m). All vgc, boxes, manuals £400 the lot. May split. Tel: 0117 9656629

NAIM C.D.I. CD player, boxed in very good condition £1150. Naim 32.5 pre amp £220 ono. Tel: 01904 490 796

LINN ISOBARIK Speakers and stands, passive or active speakers, good condition £720. Naim 32.5 pre amp £220 ono. Tel: 01904 490 796

TRILOGY 901 Pre, 948 power, 50wpc, new valves. Meridian 506, CD Kef Reference One Burr wood, Blue Heaven cables, AudioQuest cables, fantastic sound, mint condition., cost new £5300. Bargain £1800 ono. Tel: 01795 430 254 (Kent)

LINN LP12 Lingo, Ittok LVII K18, excellent condition and boxed £950 Tel: 01444 441 519 evenings please

SPEAKERS: ABSOLUTELY Mint in original boxes and packing. Gale 301 £150. JPW Sonata £75. Tel: Steve 01235 532 653 (Oxford)



HIGH END AUDIO BOUGHT/SOLD EXCHANGED

		Sale	List
Krell MD10 CD turntable last version	mint	£3995	s/h £7990
Krell Studio DAC balanced AT+T ect	mint	£1995	s/h £4450
Mendian 508 20 bit CD player latest	mint	£1295	e/d £1685
Meridian 506 Mk2 CD player	mint	£ 595	e/d £ 995
Linn Karik/Numeric CD/DAC latest	mint	£1695	s/h £2572
Micromega 21 CD + Duo Pro 2 DAC latest	mint	£2500	s/h £4000
Micromega T. Drive transport	mint	£ 695	s/h £1200
Audiolab 8000 CDM transport + 8000 DAC	mint	£1695	s/h £2300
Accuphase 80-81L trans/DAC digital vol. rare	vgc	£3995	s/h £10000+
Accuphase DP70 CD player bal/AT+T	vgc	£1895	s/h £6000
Meridian 208 CD preamp phono board MRS	vgc	£ 795	s/h £1665
Meridian 200/203 CD/DAC Trichord	vgc	£ 795	s/h £1660
Audio Research CDT 1 transport	mint	£1795	s/h £3290
Cal Tempest 2 CD player valve	mint	£1295	s/h £3900
Slax Lambda Signature headphones + valve energiser	mint	£ 895	s/h £1450
Teac V80305 cassette deck 3 head	mint	£ 395	s/h £ 650
Oracle Delphi Mk3 turntable/Sumiko The Arm	mint	£1595	s/h £3400
Oxford Crystal Reference turntable wall mount rare	mint	£1495	s/h £2500
Well tempered classic turntable silver wired arm	mint	£ 995	s/h £2500
Alphason Symphony turntable + arm + p/supply	mint	£1295	s/h £2700
Krell KSL Mk2 preamp balanced	mint	£1295	s/h £2300
Krell Pam 1 dual mono preamp superb	as new	£ 995	s/h £1998
Gryphon Limited Edition preamp No. 1	mint	£3500	s/h £8000
Gryphon XT preamp	mint	£2395	s/h £5500
Audio Research LS5 Mk2 preamp latest	mint	£2995	s/h £5690
Audio Research LS3B preamp remote black	mint	£1895	s/h £3025
Audio Research LS7 preamp silver	mint	£1295	s/h £1698
Audio Research SP11 Mk2 preamp silver	mint	£1895	s/h £5350
Audio Research SP8 Mk2 preamp silver	mint	£ 995	s/h £2180
Audio Research SP14 preamp silver	mint	£1495	s/h £3298
Audio Research PH2 phono stage bal silver	mint	£1895	s/h £2898
Levinson 12A preamp + p/supply MM/MC	vgc	£ 995	s/h £2400
Threshold FET 10E phono/line balanced	mint	£2395	s/h £4920
Threshold FET 10 phono/line 'E' supplies	mint	£1895	s/h £4250
Burmeister 838/846 phono/line chrome bal	mint	£1295	s/h £3250
Cary CAD 5500 CD preamp analogue pro	mint	£ 595	s/h £1200
Krell KSA 200S power amp balanced	mint	£4795	s/h £7987
Krell KSA 100S power amp balanced	mint	£3500	s/h £5843
Krell KSA 250 power amp balanced	mint	£3295	s/h £6600
Krell KSA 100A power amp Class A	vgc	£1695	s/h £3450
Audiolab 8000 mono power amps latest	mint	£1195	s/h £1600
Rowland Model 5 power amp balanced	vgc	£2295	s/h £5250
Golmund Minimis 3 power amp balanced	mint	£1995	s/h £5150
Counterpoint SA12 power amp black	vgc	£ 595	s/h £1200
Levinson ML3 Dual mono power amp 'The Best'	vgc	£3500	s/h £8500
Cary 2A3 triode stereo power amp chrome	mint	£ 895	s/h £1495
Audio research V70 power amp balanced	mint	£1995	s/h £4400
Audio Research VT60 power amp	vgc	£1495	s/h £2645
Lumley ST70 valve power amp chrome	new	£1485	s/h £2300
Densen Beat int amp	mint	£ 450	s/h £ 650
Beard P100 Mk2 power amp KT88 valves	vgc	£ 595	s/h £1430
Tandberg A3009/Mk2 power amp monoblocks	mint	£ 995	s/h £2195
Sonus Faber Guameri Ltd Ed speakers + stands	mint	£4495	s/h £6200
Sonus Faber Extrema speakers + stands	mint	£3895	s/h £6890
Sonus Electra speakers	mint	£ 995	s/h £1790
B+W 800 Matrix speakers Blackash rare	vgc	£5500	s/h £10000
Meridian DSP 5000 digital active speakers	as new	£2550	e/d £3460
Ensemble Prima Donna speakers superb	vgc	£3500	s/h £10000
Ensemble PA1 speakers	mint	£1295	s/h £2950
Proac Response 3.5 Burr Oak latest	mint	£3500	e/d £5000
Monitor Audio 20SE speakers + plinths Rosewood	mint	£1695	s/h £2400
Heybrook Sextet speaker Rosewood	mint	£ 595	s/h £1100
Martin Logan CLS 2Z speakers + stands	mint	£1995	s/h £4550
Apogee Stage speakers + stands	mint	£1495	s/h £3450
Alon 4 speakers Black	mint	£1689	s/h £3800

New This Month

B+W 801 Matrix Mk2 speakers Maughan x/overs Sound			
Anchor stands full hoods stunning sound Black	mint	£2750	s/h £5000
Burmeister 850 mono power amps rare	mint	£1995	s/h £5350
Burmeister 838/846 phono/line gold plated	mint	£1495	s/h £3500
Krell KRC HR remote preamp latest	mint	£4500	s/h £6949
Naim CD2 CD player (6 weeks old)	mint	£1495	s/h £2000
Naim 82 preamp + 2 HiCaps (6 weeks old)	mint	£2495	s/h £3400
Naim 135 mono power amps (3 weeks old)	mint	£2495	s/h £3280
Krell Pam 3 preamp	mint	£1395	s/h £3450
Nakamichi CA7 preamp remote	mint	£ 995	s/h £2500
Nakamichi PA7 poweramp (Threshold 200 watt)	mint	£ 995	s/h £1800
Martin Logan Sequel 2 speakers bi/wire	mint	£1395	s/h £3277
Kef 104.2 Raymond Cook special edition speakers	new	£ 995	s/h £1799
Celestion SL600SI speakers + stands	new	£ 495	s/h £ 820
TDL Studio 1M speakers + stands (Rosewood)	mint	£ 695	s/h £1000
TNT Mk2 turntable/Air Tangent 2B auto arm + stand	mint	£3995	s/h £9000
Koetsu Red Signature cartndge	vgc	£ 695	s/h £1555
Linn Achieve cartridge	vgc	£ 495	s/h £1000
Nakamichi RX 505E auto reverse cassette deck	mint	£ 550	s/h £1000
Snell A2 loudspeakers Walnut	mint	£2295	s/h £4995
Arcam Alpha 7 tuner AM/FM tuner 6 weeks	mint	£ 150	s/h £ 230
Micromega Duo 3 CD transport	mint	£ 495	s/h £1000
Marantz CD94 DAC balanced	vgc	£ 250	s/h £ 900

Summer Clearance

Apogee Mini Grand speakers stand subwoofers	mint	£2995	s/h £8595
Apogee DAX x/over	mint	£1095	s/h £4400
Hales Signature 2 speakers Rosewood superb	mint	£2500	s/h £6600
Muse 18 active subwoofer Walnut	vgc	£1595	s/h £4000
Primare 201P/202 pre/power amps s/steer rare	mint	£5995	e/d £13800
Sola cosmos Vacuum turntable SME armboard	mint	£1595	s/h £4400
Audioplan Koncert speakers Black	mint	£ 595	s/h £1750
Ben Duncan Amp 01 preamp balanced (giveaway)	vgc	£ 295	s/h £ ???
Cambridge CD1 CD player (still great)	vgc	£ 500	s/h £1500
Rock original table (rare)	vgc	£ 500	s/h £ ???
Wharfedale Option 1 active speakers (very rare)	vgc	£1500	s/h loads
Spendor SP2.2 speakers + Slate stands	vgc	£ 395	s/h £ 850
Snell A3 loudspeakers Walnut (stunning)	mint	£3295	s/h £6995
Adcom GFA565 mono power amps balanced	mint	£ 995	s/h £2000

ALL MAJOR CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED
RING FOR DETAILS AND DEMONSTRATION

01438 714038

10.00am - 7.00pm MON - SAT ● 10.00am - 1.00pm SUN

NOTE: ALL ITEMS IN STOCK AT TIME OF PRESS

WE ARE NOT AGENTS

Haden Boardman's mellotone

Loudspeakers:

Castle Conway III, Matching Stands, Teak, Mint	£450
Castle York, Mahogany, Mint	£220
Wharfedale W2, Poor Cabinets	£40

Turntables:

Thorens TD125/II, Mint	£120
Thorens TD166, Brushed Aluminium Plinth	£75
Harman Kardon / Rabco ST8 Turntable	£120
B&O 1000, Classic, 33/45 & 78RPM	£50
Garrad 301	£200
Decca FFSS, Various In Stock	Please Call.

Recorders:

Revox G36, High Speed, Half Track	£450
Fostex E-16, 1/2", 16 Track with Remote & Full Loom, Mint	£1700

Amplifiers:

H.H. VX1200, 600w + 600w Pro Power Amp	£750
Leak Stereo 20, Full Perfect Phase Modifications, Stunning Sounding, Various	£200 - £350
Sugden A48, Original	£65

Tuners:

Leak Troughline I	£50
Yamaha T2, Much Better Than CT700	£325

Misc:

Marantz Hifi rack, Glass Front & Top, as New Condition	£75
Soundtracks Topaz Project 8 Desk, PC Windows Automation, Virtually Unused	£2250 + VAT

mellotone.

The mellotone Acoustics Company,
P.O. Box 67, WIGAN, Gt. Manchester. WN2 3AG
TEL: 01 942 25 75 25
Fax: 01942 525861
E Mail: mell@tone.u-net.com

Hi-Fi SYSTEMS AND SEPARATES

Hi-Fi To Clear	Was (£)	Now (£)
Micromega Stage 2 CD (S/H)	700	300
Micromega Stage 6 CD	950	499
Micromega Concept DAC	750	399
Micromega Tempo 1 Amp	750	399
Deltec/DPA T1/Bigger Bit CD (S/H)	1450	550
Quad 66/606 Pre/Power (S/H)	1550	999
Quad 67 CD	690	
Moth 100W Monoblocs (S/H)	700	250
Arcam Delta 170 Transports (S/H)	700	275
Musical Fidelity A200, Amp (S/H)	800	300
Exposure 17/18 Pre/Power (S/H)	1750	995
Arcam Alpha 5 Amp (S/H)	200	110
Cyrus III Amp (S/H)	500	250
ATC 20T/Walnut 2 pairs	2200	1200
Mission 753 / Rosewood (S/H)	700	350
Mission 754 Freedom Oak	1400	700
ATC 50A / Rosewood	5350	3500
Pink Triangle Ventrical / Black	800	450
Spendor SP1 plus stands		399
Mission 751/Black	300	150
Musical Fidelity Ref 3	400	200
Castle Severn / Rosewood	630	450
Castle Severn / Walnut	540	399

All goods new unless marked S/H. Most in mint condition, please ask.

ENGLISH
audio

37 Whitecross Road
Hereford HR4 0DE
Tel: (01432) 355081

Hi-Fi World Classified Ads

PRIVATE

MORDAUNT SHORT Decoder One with Stereo and Dialogue speakers £145 ono. Tel: 01403 (Horsham) 241 304 eves & weekends

MICHELL ISO with Hera, mint £350. Michell Argo with Hera, Mint £550 or £800 for both. DBX 3 band dynamic range expander £95. 10m QED Qudos speaker cable £10. Tel: 01440 739 769

NAKAMICHI 700-ZXL Collectors item all original, including Dolby 'C' processor. Mint condition, boxed, recent service. Audio excellence. £195 cno. Tel: 01792 891 497

CAR HI-FI System. 10 disc CD U300 Sony Kicker Solo bass box (carpeted) Radio Mobile RA 400 4 channel power amp; Kicker Impulse 652 XL power amp. EQX Series 2 graphic. All components on a carpeted board. Serious sounds. 3 months old. Worth £2400. Accept £1100 ono. Tel: 01279 758 308

APOGEE CALIPER Signature ribbon speakers. Wonderfully transparent, detailed and powerful sound. £1150 (£4000) Sonic Link Vermillion cables £80 and £95 (£170 and £195) HFN headphone amp £45 (£85) REL Stentor Mk1 £700 (£1500). Cash or p/ex for interesting kit? Tel: Jerry 01372 468 266

LINN KABER Speakers. 1 year old. Rosewood. Excellent condition. £500 ono. Tel: 0181 207 4000 (ask for Mr Foreman)

NAIM CD2 £1350 as new. Tel: 01303 240 862 (Folkestone)

NAIM NAT 01 VHF tuner. The best. Excellent condition £875 plus carriage. Tel: 01736 757 721 (Cornwall)

WORLD AUDIO Design K5881 power amp and KLPI pre amp. Built and tested by W.A.D. Both in mint condition, unmarked. Can demo. £500. Tel: 01707 372 652

ART AUDIO Tempo monoblocks (valve) Black and polished chrome. Silver wired by manufacturer. Latest specification, 30 watt triode. Boxed and excellent. (Retail £2500) £1250. Tel: 01398 323 101

PIONEER C73 & M73 Reference pre & power amp. Class A & AB £600. Sugden C41 line pre & P41 power amp £600. Pink Triangle Ordinal Dac with 20 bit filter, includes XLO type 0.4 digital interconnect £500. Quad 67 CD player £450. Theta TLC £150. Musical Fidelity B200 Int amp £100 Tel: 01702 306 948 (Southend on Sea)

LOWTHER ACOJSTA Twin loudspeaker. Information wanted. Production started 1960. Working drawings, instruction books, sales leaflets, adverts etc. High reward. Tel: Jeff 0181 924 0207 (best after 12 noon)

VALVE EQUIPMENT Leak Stereo 20, Gold, good condition £225. Rogers HG88 MkII integrated £125 Chapman 306 integrated £175. Matching S68S/FM tuner £50 (pair £200) Acos Lustre arm £60. Tel: 01709 555 403 evenings (Rotherham)

ROGERS LS3/5A 15ohm vgc boxed; £230. Incatche Dirk 50w small, beefy; £100. Harman Kardon valve integrated! vrare american - blows aways Cadets, A1500s; £140. Denon DL304, hardly used; £75. Tel: 01243 553 531

LEAK STEREOFETIC vgc; £40. Leak Troughline stereo, excon; £75. Garrard 301/RB300, good plinth, excellent £125+85 or £200. Naim MC boards, Audiophile psu, top rate phono stage for £150. Tel: 01243 553 531

CD REPLAY System: Marantz CD 63SE, Sonneteer Champion amplifier, Mordaunt-Short 25i speakers. All as new, very domestically acceptable £900. Tel: 01977 620 558

KUDOS CORINTHIAN hi-fi stand. Each of the five shelves has its own electrical point and is fitted with spiked adjustable feet. Only used for one month. Cost £650., would accept £350. For further details Tel: 01709 327 002

KOETSU RED, Low use £350. Mission Mechanic tone arm, mint £350. Croft Super Micro, pre-amplifier, mint £175. Leak Stereo 20 and Point One pre-amplifier, clean £200. Tel: 0191 281 0260

AUDIONOTE AN-K Speakers. brand new, boxed, (black) £400. Tel: 01274 817 035

THORENS TD160B MkII turntable and plinth. SME 3009 Series II arm, Ortofon M20FL cartridge £150. Kef Kit 3 speakers, mahogany veneered £110. Tel: 01895 822198/822185

RUARK TEMPLAR speakers (rosewood) as new, boxed £235. Audiolab 8000A amp, ex condition, boxed £225. Tel: 01702 556 116 (Essex)

LP12 AFRO, Lingo, Cirkus, Trampolin, Ekos, Troika. Retipped by Cartridge Man. £1400 ono. Concorant Exemplar power amp 100w transistor. Smooth and detailed £250 ono. Tel: 01295 257 175 (Banbury)

CLASSIC AMPLIFICATION for sale. Musical Fidelity PRE3A (including excellent phono stage) and two Musical Fidelity MAS0 50w RMS monoblocks. All Class A, many awards. £150 spent with MF in May 97 to bring both monoblocks up to the latest specification. (under guarantee) Very good condition with boxes. Cost £1200 accept £400. Please contact Paul Ferguson Tel: 0118 9845944 (office) or 01252 860438 (eves & weekends)

QUAD 77 Power amp/pre amp. Digital console (black) still boxed. Under manufacturers 2 yr warranty. 6 months old. Enthusiasts bargain. cost £1500 new. Offers around £1000. Tel: 01745 570414. email crowemac@dircon.co.uk

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AUDIOLAB 8000C and 8000P latest spec, vgc. Also Audioquest Ruby interconnect £850. No offers. Tel: 01977 515 544 eves or weekends

SYSTEMDEK 2 x 900, black, RB250, Goldring G900HG, vgc, £195. Mission 733 speakers, black, mint boxed £175. Roksan Tabriz, mint, boxed £100. Mission 733i, new boxed, bi-wire £195. Harman Kardon HK610 amp, punchy, exciting, 'best buy', new, boxed £85. Tel: 01706 345 418

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AUDIOLAB 8000S Integrated amplifier, great sound, 6 months old. Genuine reason for sale, building HFW kits! £495, no offers please. Tel: 01530 831 357 evening (Leics) or 0831 565 010 daytimes

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LINN NEXUS speakers matching stands £220. Technics stereo amplifier £90. Technics CD player £90. Linn Index speakers £100. Philips CDI plus video cartridge £400, accessories £300 vgc. Tel: 0181 681 1054 Croydon

QUAD 303 Pre-power amplifier, serviced £199. Wharfedale SPL satellite speakers & sub-woofer, upgraded £199. Target 20 inch stands £60. Superb 100W Hybrid amplifier £99. Tel: 0973 522 590 after 7 (Leicester)

LEAK TROUGHLINE Stereo tuner, very good condition £120 ono. NAD 3020 amp, excellent phono stage £30 ono. Leak Stereo 70 amp 'Solid State' good phono stage £40 ono. Tel: 01705 552 259 Portsmouth

MUSICAL FIDELITY A370 mint £950 ono. Arcam 170 Mk III transport £275. Meridian 203 DAC £175. Audio Synthesis 138 step precision attenuator £199. REL Stygian subwoofer £150. All the above in full working order. Tel: 01703 470 107

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ROGERS LS4A loudspeakers, black £75 (no offers). Tel: 0181 302 9063 (Sidcup)

REVOX A77 1/4 track (3 3/4 - 7 1/2 i.p.s.) with handbook and service manual £275 ono. QED Digit, Positron and Digiflex £75 ono. Meridian 207 CD/Pre with 209 remote £300 ono. Tel: 0191 422 3415

QUAD FM4 tuner, just serviced by Quad £150. Spendor LS3/5A speakers, 4 years old £240, both boxed and excellent condition. Tel: 01993 704 006 weekday - 01705 690 093 weekend

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